

The untold pastimes of the Ramayan by His Grace Atma Tattva Prabhu

In this very lengthy two part article consisting of 19 chapters are lectures by Atma Tattva prabhu in the late 80's in Sri Dham Mayapur, India. Most of the information is not known by the general populace hence I am posting this article so you can learn more about the unheard kathas/lila's of the Valmiki's Ramayana.

Kindly note that Prabhuji's lectures are very fun and "off-beat" (in a most respectful way I say this). Hence I loved his lectures and still do.

The first part of this article is chapters one to seven and consists of 52 pages.

Introduction

There are innumerable Vaikuntha planets, and in each planet there is a predominating deity who is an expansion of Lord Vishnu. He has three expansions, and then there are the quadruple expansions, and then there are servants and devotees. In this way the Vaikuntha planets are full of activity. The top of Vaikuntha, before one reaches Goloka, the gateway to Goloka is Ayodhya. In Ayodhya is Lord Ramacandra, and Laksmana, Bharata, Satrughna, Sumantra, Dasaratha, Kausalya, all these characters we find in Ramayana are eternal citizens of this Ayodhya Dham. And from this planet Lord Ramacandra expands into His Rama-avatar, through milk ocean Vishnu, Ksirodakasayi Vishnu. In every Treta-yuga there is Rama-avatar. One may think, "Oh that must be boring. Every time the same activity." But it is never boring. How many times have we heard these Ramayana kathas, but still when someone is reading Ramayana, everyone comes. To hear is not boring, so to experience it can't be boring at all. That is the proof. Ramayana has been heard generations and generations. In all countries. In Indonesia they have their Ramayana. In Malaysia they have their Ramayana. In Thailand, even in Jamaica and Africa. Just a little bit different for every culture. Indonesian Ravana is a big crocodile, and they carry him on sticks. In Bangkok, Thailand all the roads are names Rama 1, Rama 2, Rama 5 etc. So the purpose of the avatar is described in Brahma-samhita: lilyatena bhuvananijayaty ajasram / govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami. The living entities have forgotten their relation with Krsna. And they have been conquered by maya, illusory energy. Krsna bahirmukha haya bhogavanca kori / nikata stha maya tare japatiya

dhare. The conditioned soul has been caught by maya. The Lord comes to reconquer them. That is the mission of the avatar incarnation of the Lord.

Chapter 1: Dasaratha's desire for a child

Ramacandra appeared in the Ikshvaku dynasty. He is known as Ikshvaku Kula dhana. Kula means "dynasty" and dhana means "property" or "valuable jewel." So he is the jewel of the Ikshvaku dynasty. Dasaratha was known as such because he could fight in ten directions simultaneously. Dasaratha was such a great fighter that sometimes Indra would summon for him when there was a fight with the demons. So Dasaratha would go to the heavenly planets and fight with the demons. And these demons were so expert with maya, they would create darkness, expand into various forms etc. So Dasaratha would fight in ten directions, and when you looked at his ratha, his chariot, it would look as though there were ten kings and ten chariots fighting simultaneously. Dasa means "ten" and ratha means "chariot". That is how he got the name Dasaratha. So Dasaratha was famous for fighting for devas and righteous kings. And he married Kausalya. From Kausalya, only one daughter was born. She was named Shanti, or "peace." But Dasaratha had no peace, because he only had one daughter, and that daughter would only get married and go to another dynasty. The Vedic system is that when a woman marries, she belongs to the husband's gotra or family line. So if Shanti married to another dynasty, she would belong to it. What about the Ikshvaku dynasty? Dasaratha was so worried. Then he married Sumitra. At least Kausalya had a daughter, but Sumitra had no child. Then Dasaratha was getting old. He gave up the idea of producing dynasties. As he was getting older he saw that some less powerful kings were doing small yajnas, so he did big yajnas. They were trying to get their name known, because once Dasaratha died Kosala would be broken. The kingdom of Kosala started all the way from what they now call the Dalai lama's line. From up in the north, in Tibet, all the way down to the river Godavari in Andhra Pradesh. So this was Kosala, practically it was the whole of India, not the democratic India but the Vedic India. So he was very worried that this kingdom will be broken to pieces and some small-timers will become emperors. Then Vasistha advised him to go to Kaikeya. This kingdom was right on the border of Afghanistan. They now call it the Sind region. Kaikeyi was the only daughter of the king of Kaikeya. The king's name was also Kaikeya. And when Dasaratha came for marriage negotiation, Kaikeya told him, "You have two queens, and they both have no children. Now you will marry my daughter, but what will happen to her if the other wives have children?" Dasaratha replied, "I don't

think they will have children because they have had none up to now. I am also getting old. They're not going to get any child. Only Kaikeyi will get a child." So Kaikeya said, "That's all right, but you must give this in writing." There is a system in the kshatriya marriage known as kanya-sulka. Sulka means "will". When you accept a virgin in marriage, you must give in writing what properties she will enjoy as your wife if you are a kshatriya. This is kanya-sulka, the "will of dowry." So Dasaratha wrote kanya-sulka. He said, "Whoever is born to Kaikeyi will enjoy my kingdom, even if my other wives produce children later." This kanya-sulka was known to three people. Of course, now we all know it, but at that time only three people knew it. Vasistha knew it, Dasaratha knew it, and Kaikeya knew it. It was kept a secret, because otherwise they would blame Dasaratha, "What is this? He is giving the kingdom to a younger woman." So this kanya-sulka was kept secret. But at the time of the marriage, due to great attachment, Kaikeya told his daughter this secret, that whoever is your son will rule this kingdom. Kaikeyi kept this at heart. Once Vasistha advised Dasaratha to perform ashvamedha-yajna. He was telling him, "If you perform ashvamedha-yajna, then all the devas will personally come to accept the oblations." There are two kinds of offering oblations to the yajna. One is that Agni will take the oblations and offer it to the different destinations. Another is that the devas will personally come in the sacrificial arena. They will stand in the sky holding their hands open, and when you offer in their name in the fire then the harvest will get up from the fire and go into their hands. And they will eat it right there in front of everyone,. These types of sacrifices are considered first-class, because the devas have come in person. So Dasaratha should perform ashvamedha, and all the devas will come. And then Dasaratha will tell them, "You have your kingdom only because of my fighting. So why don't you continue my dynasty and give me blessings that I can get some son?" That was the plan. There was a big arrangement for ashvamedha-yajna, and wherever Dasaratha's horse went, no-one objected. Ashvamedha-yajna means that you have to select a horse with certain lakshanas or qualities. The ears have to be a certain way, the nose a certain way. There has to be a black part behind the tail. The hooves have to be a certain shape, 35 degrees bent. There is a whole description in karma-khanda. So you have to find out that horse, and after finding it you have to tie a golden leaf on his head. There it will be written, "This horse belongs to King Dasaratha. He will perform ashvamedha-yajna, so everyone should donate liberally. And whoever stops this horse will have to meet the army of King Dasaratha." So this horse will go around the whole world, and if any king dares to stop the horse there will be one army which

is following about 100 metres behind the horse. They will have to meet that army. This army would consist of the best fighters in the army, all the generals, and if one can defeat that then more army would be sent. In this way the challenger would have to fight and prove that he is the emperor. So ashvamedha-yajna was already started, and then when the yajna was going on, Sumantra (the minister of Dasaratha) came to Dasaratha and said, "I remember one incident when Sanat-kumara came to our assembly, when you were a prince." At that time Dasaratha was not married, and Sanat-kumarawas visiting Dasaratha's father, Aja. Sanat-kumara made some predictions. "Maharaja Dasaratha will become very famous throughout the three worlds, and he will perform a putra-kamesti yajna, a sacrifice for getting a son. So in this sacrifice, the yajna-purusha, the personification of fire, will come there and give him some sweet rice. And out of this sweet rice Dasaratha will get the Supreme Lord as his sons." This was predicted by Sanat-kumara. At that time Dasaratha was just an unmarried prince, a brahmacari. So Sumantra was a very old man and he suddenly remembered this. He came to Dasaratha and said, "You are doing ashvamedha for getting a son, but Sanat-kumara told you that you should do putra-kamesti." So then there was confusion over which yajna should be performed. In Treta-yuga everything was yajna. For material benefits, for spiritual realization, for anything tretayam yajato makhaih. Makha means "yajna". Now Dasaratha got confused. So he went to Vasistha's house and prostrated himself before him. "Guru maharaja, we have spent 60% of the treasury, and now we come to know that this is not the proper yajna, that there is another yajna. How am I supposed to do this?" So then Vasistha said, "Oh yes, I remember too now. Sanat-kumara said this. It is not a very expensive yajna, but the purohit, the priest who performs the yajna must be a very special person. That is the difficulty. That person must have not seen a woman until the time of his marriage. He should not have even known what a woman is. Such a great personality must perform the yajna. Then only can the putra-kamesti be performed with the purnahoti and we will get a son." Then Dasaratha said, "You must tell me where this person is." Vasistha was a walking encyclopedia, because he had been there three lifetimes with the same remembrance. There is no-one in this world who knows better than Vasistha. So Vasistha said, "Yes, there is a person like that." Dasaratha said, "Who is this person? He has never seen a woman or known what a woman is until marriage? At least he must have known about his mother! What kind of a person is he, that he has never heard of a woman yet he has taken birth?"

Chapter 2: Katha of Rsayasrnga

So then Vasistha told the katha of Rsayasrnga. Srnga means "horns" or "a person possessing horns." Rsa means "deer," so Rsayasrnga means "a human possessing horns." He is a human being with deer horns who performs yajna and speaks Sanskrit. Vasistha said, "I will tell you the katha of Rsayasrnga. Long ago, Kashyapa Muni produced a son while meditating on the sunlight. While he was meditating on the sunlight, suddenly he thought of a personality. When he thought of a personality, that person would come into existence. And he would come out of his mind. Kashyapa was Prajapati, "progenitor." And this person was known as Vibondaka. As soon as Vibondaka came out of Kashyapa's mind, he went to the deepest forests in Madhya Pradesh which is now very famous as Chandal Valley. All the dacoits are there. That is where Vibondaka went, and he performed ugra-tapasa, very severe austerities. He was only performing tapasa for self-realization, but Indra was worried. Indra has a special secretary for this department. He gives him a list of people who are performing austerities, because he is so worried that they may become the opposition and may even try to usurp his own seat. So when he heard the name Vibondaka he asked, "What kind of tapasa is he doing?" The secretary mentioned to him, "He is performing such huge austerities that if he were to ever get angry, this whole universe would be burnt to ashes. And if he ever thinks of anything, it will automatically come to him without his having to perform any sacrifice. This is the potency of his tapovalam." Indra said, "Then he is my candidate. I will have to work on him." He thought of all the damsels on his planet, and he decided, "These are no good." So then he went to Satyaloka, Brahma's planet. In Satyaloka there are damsels who are self-realized souls. They dance only for the pleasure of the deity that Brahma keeps for worship. Indra, for his political purpose, wanted to pollute these damsels. So he went to Brahma, but he couldn't spend much time there because if you are too long in Brahma's planet by the time you return your time will be over, So Indra said, "Give me the best damsel, quickly! I have to go!" So Brahma said, "All right, take this one." There was one lady called Harsha, because she was always smiling. Harsha came with Indra, and even while flying with Harsha, Indra could understand that he was so greedy and lusty, and this woman was so saintly and serene, always meditating on the Absolute Truth. He was thinking, "What happens if I send her and they both become self-realized?" Indra wanted something wrong to happen. So he fell at the feet of Harsha, and said, "Please, protect my seat." Harsha said, "I don't think that this

Vibondaka desires to enjoy anything." Because she was sitting in Satyaloka she could see Vibondaka and what type of austerity he was doing. So she said, "You are unnecessarily sending me there, and I may even get burnt by his anger. But because Brahma has told then I am coming with you. Vibondaka has no such material desires. He won't even look at me. I don't know how I'm going to attract him and make him fall." Indra said, "I don't know what you will do, but at least get it confirmed from him that he has no desire to become Indra. Then my position is safe." So Harsha said, "All right, I will do it. Whatever is given to me as a mission I will accomplish." So Harsha came to that valley, and Vibondaka was coming from the Ganges and going to his ashrama. So she came and sat there, and chanted mantras. There are different ways of making people fall down. Whatever is your weak spot, that can be used. Vibondaka's weak spot was mantras and meditation, so she started chanting mantras. Vibondaka was so absorbed, and then suddenly he heard this clear pronunciation of Vedic mantras, clearer than anything else he had ever heard anywhere in the three planets. He turned back and looked at her, and immediately she fell at his feet. She said, "Only for the prayer of getting tras. Vedic mantras which are chanted should not go in vain. Somebody must give a benediction, and I don't want this benediction from anyone else, not even from Brahma. I only want It from you. If you don't accept this request, then I will perform austerities and I will leave my body. And brahma-hatya will come to you." In this way she blackmailed him. So Vibondaka said, "What is this? I am just trying to peacefully think of God. Why is this trouble coming?" So he looked at her and said, "I am Vibondaka, and I have no interest in this world. I don't know why I was even sent here, but Kashyapa produced me. I am just trying to go away from here. What is this, giving you a son? You can't get a son from anywhere else? You mention any other person, and I will command him to give you a son. If you want a son from Brahma, I will request him. If you want a son from my father Kashyapa, I will request him. Why me, in the whole creation?" So she said, "No, only you. You are the only person who should give me a son." And then he said, "No this is not possible. I am not going to do it. If you have been even been thinking about me like that, that is bad for me." And then he said, "Here is the potency from my body. You can arrange for getting a son." And he dropped some semen and left. Harsha then understood that Indra had nothing to fear, so her mission was fulfilled. But this shukla coming out of the body of Vibondaka, was there burning the whole world. She was now responsible for it, she had to direct it somewhere. She did not want to hold it and produce a son, because that was only a trick she was using. But when she

looked up she saw a very transcendental deer moving around there. So immediately by her potency, she put the semen in the body of the deer, and the deer conceived a child. Since it was the conception of a rishi, it did not stay for more than a night. The next morning, the deer delivered a baby. It had a human form, but with deer horns. This was Rsayasrnga. So this deer ran to the ashrama of Vibondaka and started crying. Vibondaka saw this and thought, "Why are these things happening to me? Some lady wants a son, and now a deer is crying in my ashrama." So Vibondaka asked the deer, "What is wrong? Who is giving you trouble?" The deer started walking away and Vibondaka followed. The deer brought him to where Rsayasrnga was, and Vibondaka saw this shining young baby with deer horns. He thought, "Oh, this is my son. If nobody wants him, then I will take care of him." Then Vibondaka thought, "Now I know why I was sent here, for some reason. Kashyapa did not conceive me for nothing. I am supposed to conceive this son, and God knows what he is going to conceive." So Vibondaka brought him to the ashrama and gave him milk. He taught him Vedas and Upanishads and philosophy. There was no woman in that forest, which was yojanas wide. There was not even any tigresses, only tigers. So Rsayasrnga had no idea of women. He grew up, and for everything he was depending on his father. He would ask his father, "Father, can I take this book and read?" And if his father said yes, then he would do it. He would ask, "Father, should I brush my teeth?" And if the father said yes, he would brush his teeth. He was so dependent on his father. He would always walk everywhere holding his father's hand. In this way Rsayasrnga grew up to be the most innocent person in the creation. Lord Ramacandra had to appear, and if he was to appear then the yajna-purusha has to give the khir (sweet rice/payasam), and if that khir is to come, then the yajna has to be performed by someone who has never seen a woman. Lord Ramacandra's advent was not that easy. This whole katha is already in Vishnu Purana. In this way Rsayasrnga was growing up, never hearing of any woman. Dasaratha, when his daughter was born to Kausalya, he was thinking, "What shall I do with this daughter?" Then one day, from Angadesha, the country of Anga, Dasaratha's friend Romapada (which means "hairy feet") was hankering for a child too. He had some sons, but he had no daughter. This is the material world. He who has daughters, he is hankering for a son. And he who has sons is hankering for a daughter. And he who has no children, they are hoping for children, and those who have children are thinking "How to get rid of them," and they send them to Gurukula. So Romapada came to Dasaratha and said, "You are my very good friend, and you have no sons. You always think, 'What is the use of a daughter?' And I

want a daughter, so why don't you give her to me?" And Dasaratha said, "All right, you can have her." So he gave Shanti in adoption to the king of Angadesha known as Romapada. Romapada brought Shanti to his kingdom. And whether it was the girl's misfortune or the king's misfortune, the second day was the day the rainy season was supposed to start but there was no rain. The whole rainy season went by and there was no rain. The second rainy season also went by with no rain. A big famine came about. So the king went to the astrologer and asked him, "Why is there famine in my kingdom? Is it due to this daughter? Everyone is saying it is due to her." They found out that during some yajna that had been performed by Romapada he had cheated a Brahmin. He first promised him, "I will give you this much amount of diamonds," but while he was counting the diamonds to be given as dakshina, he found one diamond which was very valuable, and he thought, "What is the Brahmin going to do with this?" So he took it out, and put a bigger diamond in its place, which was less valuable. When he gave the bag of diamonds to the Brahmin, the Brahmin touched the bag and said, "You cheated me! You removed one of these diamonds and put a bigger diamond to cheat me." It was inside the bag, and the king was thinking, "How does he know this?" The Brahmin said, "I am a Brahmin, so I know this. You are cheating, so all the Brahmins will leave this country." So he formed a big union and all the Brahmins walked out of the country. No more Brahmins means no more yajna, and it was Treta-yuga, so no yajna means no food. The king was wondering what to do, so slowly from here and there he collected some Brahmins from other countries, and he brought them on immigration, so they couldn't stay long. These Brahmins were coming and going, and in this way he was running his kingdom. Now famine had come due to this curse, and the fact that all the Brahmins had left his country. So the astrologer said, "So to solve this problem, you have to bring all the Brahmins back." Romapada said, "But these Brahmins have formed a union. They won't come back." "They will come back if you bring one person here." Romapada asked, "Who is that?" "There is one rishi. He has never seen a woman. And he doesn't even know what is a woman. That person must come, and he must marry your daughter. If that rishi stays in your kingdom, then the Brahmins will not stay anywhere else. They will come here, because he is such a learned person. To see him, they will come. And after they come, they will stay." So now he had to get this Rsayasrnga, and he was thinking "How to get him?" So he asked this to his ministers, and they said, "Rsayasrnga is not an easy object, his father is Vibondaka. If Vibondaka gets angry he will burn the universe to ashes. If you try to get his son he

will get angry, and then there is no necessity of yajna or rain, because the whole universe will be burnt, and you will also be burnt." "So what to do?" Romapada asked. "You have to use some trick," his ministers replied. Then they advised him, "You must go and consult the society girls, the famous prostitutes of the country." So then Romapada made an announcement, "Special interview with the prostitutes of the country." They all came, and they were thinking it had something to do with dance or music, or something like that. But when they heard that they had to bring Rsayasrnga, then they ran away because everybody knew this person. However, one lady came up, and she said, "For the benefit of my country, I will sacrifice myself. I will try; if he comes, that's good. Then the kingdom will be happy. If he doesn't come, only a prostitute will be killed. What's the problem? I don't care, I will go." Romapada asked, "What do you want in return?" "I don't want anything, let the country be happy." "What help do you need?" Romapada asked. "Your treasury, whenever I go, must open. And if I want anything from any department, they must say yes, because you must know I am sacrificing my life." So the king gave her a special green card. Anywhere she goes, anything she wants she would get. She made a boat which was four miles long and two miles wide. On top of the boat she made an ashrama. This boat was totally covered with trees and bushes, flower gardens, lakes and deer. All kinds of things she put in there. And thousands of people were rowing the boat, but you couldn't see anything, it was all covered by bushes. There were pathways, small mountains, waterfalls, everything was created. It looked like an island, but it was moving. No-one knew what it was. They all thought it was the gandharvas who have come. It was a special ashrama, no men. Only women were there. No tigers, only tigresses. It was filled up with women. They all had rudrakshas, tulasi-malas, jasmine flowers tied up in their hair, and they were all praying, doing meditation and chanting mantras. This boat was floating so nicely down the river, and somehow or other they got it into Madhya Pradesh. So as they reached Vibondaka's ashrama, Vibondaka went out to help a sage who had gotten stuck in the mouth of an elephant. He was calling, "Save me! Save me!" And no-one heard him, only Vibondaka. So he told Rsayasrnga, "You must perform the yajna three times daily. Don't worry about cleaning the ashrama, because it's too big for you. Just perform the yajna till I get back." When Vibondaka left, the devas made arrangements and got him involved in so many other things so that Rsayasrnga was left by himself. Rsayasrnga went to the river to take water for the yajna, and he saw this moving ashrama. He'd never been anywhere, but he studied a lot of shastra, and he'd never heard of anything like this

before. And whenever the description came of women, Vibondaka would never explain it. He would never read such parts. In this way he was kept brainwashed to be a brahmacari. He looked at this ashrama, "This is so nice." And then he saw some figures in there. "What kind of rishis are these? This is a different type of rishi." He became very eager. "Anyway, if they are in the area, they must visit my father's ashrama." And they did come. They just made sure that Vibondaka was not around, and then three of the great saintly people walked out of the boat. And then they came, raising their hands and calling "Rsayasrnga! Rsayasrnga!" Usually when the rishis came they called for Vibondaka. So he saw these rishis coming, and he went and addressed them. And after addressing them he was asking, "Where are you coming from? Which planet? What mantras do you chant? How come by the touch of your bodies all my hairs are standing on end?" They were smiling at each other, and they said, "We are rishis from another place, it is eight yojanas from here. It is an island, and no human beings come there. We are born with perfection. We came to see your father. We know that you are very learned, so in our moving ashrama, we want you to come and stay for a few days." Rsayasrnga said, "I would be very happy to do that, but my father is not here. I don't even brush my teeth unless my father tells me to. So how will I go away from here, and who will perform the yajna three times daily?" One lady said, "I will do it, I am expert in this line." And she sat down. Somehow Rsayasrnga fell pray for this. These were saintly people, so why shouldn't they do yajna? And they looked different, very attractive. He couldn't understand what the tejas was that was coming from that body and attracting him. He didn't know it was lust. This was never explained to him. So he left that lady there doing yajna, and they had a flower ladder from the ashrama up to the bank of the river. This ashrama was filled with saintly people, so somehow they engaged him in listening to music, and dancing and so many other things, and slowly they came to Angadesha. In Angadesha there was big reception arranged for Rsayasrnga, brahmacari incarnate. There was purna-kumbha and there was mantras and Brahmins. The Brahmins all came to know that Rsayasrnga was coming, and they came and waited there. He was worshipped like anything. He saw more saintly people were sitting there in that country, and they were sitting with other saintly people. Then he started realizing that something was wrong in his understanding. He asked the king, "Why have you brought me here?" But as soon as he stepped off the boat, rain came. And people were all happy, they were showering akshada and touching his feet. All the people came and told him, "You must never leave our country. You must become the son-in-

law of our king." He didn't know what son-in-law meant. So then they had to have special classes for him to explain how to become a son-in-law. Then he understood everything and finally he blessed the king by marrying Shanti, Dasaratha's daughter. In the meantime Vibondaka had returned to his ashrama, and saw this lady sitting there offering ghee into the fire. He grabbed her by the hair and said, "Who are you? What are you doing with my fire? It's been here for six thousand years. You came and contaminated it. What are you doing?" She said, "I am not this body. I am spirit soul." Vibondaka said, "That's very nice, that you're not this body, but you are not supposed to do this." So then she said, "No no, Rsayasrnga told me to do this." So he said, "So come on tell me, where is Rsayasrnga? What did you do to him? There was one man in this world who was pure, and you spoiled him too!" And then the lady said, "What could we do, this was a nationalistic service. We are serving the nation. In the service of our nation we have done something so we will go to heavenly planet." So then Vibondaka said, "I'm going to curse that king, that Angadesha Raja! He's getting rain, but I will see that he gets nothing any more." The lady fell at his feet and said, "At least do the curse there. Then he will know you are cursing him. Don't do the curse from here." "All right," he said. He was so angry, but Romapada was so clever, he was arranging for many Brahmins chanting mantras, glorifying Vibondaka, showing pictures of Kashyapa Muni just to attract him. But Vibondaka came and said, "Where is the king? Bring him here!" Romapada came and begged, "Please don't curse me! Already there are enough curses! All that I have done is that I have made your son the king of this country." So then something dawned on Vibondaka. "My son has become the king of this country. Now he has become the king, he has to protect the citizens. If I curse, then the blame is on him because he couldn't protect his citizens." So then he called his son, "Rsayasrnga, come here." Rsayasrnga came, and Vibondaka said, "All right, as soon as one son is born, you must be back to the ashrama. You understand?" This was the time when Dasaratha was told, by Vasistha Muni, the katha. And Vasistha said, "If you personally go, then Rsayasrnga may come." So Dasaratha started, with all his paraphernalia, his seven akshauhini-shainyas, and arrived in Angadesha. Romapada was thinking, "What is this? Suddenly Dasaratha is coming with his army. He is going to fight with me or what?" So he came with a white flag. "There is no question that your army can even stay in my country. Your army is so big that they can only just stand inside my country, not much more. Why are you coming with seven akshauhini-shainyas?" Dasaratha said, "No, I am just coming to request Rsayasrnga to come and perform a yajna for me." Romapada said,

"I don't know. I don't know how long the yajna will be. I'm not going to play any more tricks, because already Vibondaka has told him, 'One son and you are back in the ashrama'." Dasaratha said, "I will fall at his feet. He has protected your kingdom, why will he not save my country too? Why will he not do it?" So Dasaratha went there, paid his pranams, and he cried and told Rsayasrnga, "I have no hope. I will jump in the fire of ashvamedha instead of the horse, if you don't come." So then Rsayasrnga calculated, "How many days are left?" It was 28 days more before the delivery. "That's all right. In 24 days I will come and do putra-kamesti." So he came, and right next to the ashvamedha-yajna he created another fire from that, and he quickly started putra-kamesti. And when he was finishing with the purnahoti, the yajna-purusha came, a dark, black figure which was three miles tall. He had a huge big pot in his hand. He was holding Narayana in it, so it was no small affair. He said to Dasaratha, "Please give this sweet rice (kheer) to your queens." Dasaratha was looking at the size of the pot, and he was thinking, "If I give this to my queens, then there will be no more queens." It was a huge big pot. Dasaratha asked Vasistha, "How is this possible? How can they eat this much sweet rice?" So then Vasistha said, "You ask Rsayasrnga, he will tell you." Rsayasrnga asked the yajna-purusha, "Why are you giving such a big pot to these human beings that they can't even hold it?" The yajna-purusha said, "The personality who is coming is so powerful, that you can't reduce him smaller than this." Then Rsayasrnga closed his eyes and said, "Ah! Bigger than the biggest, and smaller than the smallest. He is in this pot. You give it to me." So he took the pot, and it became small. By the request of Rsayasrnga the Lord reduced His aishvarya, and the pot became small. He gave it to Dasaratha and said, "All right, I have two days to get to my ashrama. In between I have to take care of the delivery." So Dasaratha took the sweet rice. He gave half of it to Kausalya. The remainder he split in two, one for Sumitra and one to Kaikeyi. After Kaikeyi drank it, there was still some left, so that was also given to Sumitra. In this way the Lord came as Lord Ramacandra in Kausalya's womb. He came as Laksmana and Satrughna in Sumitra's womb, and he came as Bharata in Kaikeyi's womb. Vasudeva came as Ramacandra, Sankarsana came as Laksmana. The Sudarshan disc came as Bharata, and the Pancajanya conchshell came as Satrughna.

Chapter 3 - Ramacandra's childhood

Now Lord Ramacandra took His advent on the earth planet, and He was growing up. He was learning archery in the ashrama of Vasistha. When the first lesson started, Vasistha told Dasaratha, "I don't want you to be here when your son is learning archery." Dasaratha said, "It is the tradition that the king sits there and watches the son, how he holds the bow." Vasistha said, "Yes, but it is not the tradition that you produce children from sweet rice." So Dasaratha went back, and the education started in confidence. When Ramacandra, Laksmana, Satrugna, and Bharata were sitting, Vasistha got up from his seat and circumambulated them. That is why he got Dasaratha out, otherwise there would be confusion. And then Vasistha said, "You always do this. Whenever you take an incarnation, You select a rishi to become Your guru. And he has to teach You this knowledge of which You are the source. So please excuse me if I commit some offense. "One day Rama and Laksmana saw a girl walking with a huge nose-ring. In India the women wear big nose rings, sometimes so big that when they go on the bus the woman's son can hold it. So she had this huge nose ring, and she was walking with a water-pot. Laksmana looked at it and he laughed. He said, "Look at that nose ring! It's so big." Ramacandra said to him, "Vasistha is looking away, so let us do some pastime." So they looked around and they saw an arrow. They took that arrow, but they had not been taught yet how to do archery. "I will make this small," Laksmana said, and he shot the arrow. While the girl was walking, the arrow came next to her nose and started pouring some sort of mystical substance on the nose ring, which became so small that it got stuck on her nose and she couldn't breathe. Then she dropped the water-pot, and she was trying to breathe but she can only breath in one nostril and she was very confused, so she began to call, "Help! Help!" Laksmana said, "Oh no, now Vasistha will hear and we will have a problem." Ramacandra said, "Don't worry," and he shot another arrow. That arrow made it big enough that she could breathe. So she turned around and said, "What is this you are doing to me?" Laksmana replied, "Oh, we made your nose ring small, but it was too small so then we made it big." "You made it big and then small?" she asked. "I don't believe it." "Oh, you don't believe it?" Laksmana asked, "So then we will take it off." Laksmana then shot another arrow which took the nose ring out of her nose, and all this was happening without touching her face. And then the nose ring was flying in the sky, and she began to cry out, "My nose ring! My nose ring!" Very quickly Rama fired another arrow and put the nose ring back in the nose. These were some of the childhood pastimes of Ramacandra. All these childhood pastimes are all archery and bows and

arrows. Anyway, Rama was growing up and one day a rishi came, Visvamisra Muni. He came in the entrance of the palace, and he said to the messenger, "Where is that Dasaratha? You tell him that Kaushika is here." He is known as Kaushika because he is coming in the dynasty of Kusha. Kusha and Kushanabha were great kings. In the Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana you read about them. So Kaushika was known for his anger. If he gets angry, he would curse and he will use all his tapovalam, all the strength of his austerity simply to place some obstacle. On one occasion he was sitting doing his meditation, and a bird passed stool on him. It's natural for a bird to pass stool, and it's natural for a rishi to sit under a tree. But stool on the head was not natural, and Visvamisra was very upset. He looked at the bird and burnt it. In burning that bird he used 50 years worth of tapovalam, because that bird had a long lifetime and he reduced it and suppressed it by his tapovalam, so now he lost the strength of that austerity. Then he got up and said, "This situation will make me remember that incident always, so now I will go to another tree." Then he would perform more austerity for another thousand years, and he was spending his whole life like this. So Dasaratha looked at Vasistha and said, "Kaushika is here. What am I supposed to do? I don't know what wrong I did, why he came to my palace, because he only goes to curse people or kill a demon or something." Vasistha said, "First of all, you must go from here to the messenger, and tell him to say that 'The whole kingdom is yours. I am just taking two minutes to walk to the entrance. Please don't lose your temper'." So the messenger went back to Visvamisra and said, "King Dasaratha said that the whole kingdom is yours. He will take only two minutes to walk here. He wants you to be peaceful and take this nice asana." Visvamisra said, "I don't want any asana! Where is the king! Bring him here!" By the time Dasaratha got there, he fell at his feet and said, "What do you want? If you want the whole Kosala then please take it." "What?" the rishi asked. "I am not into kingdoms. I had a kingdom too." He was a great prince, a ksatriya, and by some arrangement of the Lord he had become a Brahmin. "I do not want your kingdom," he said. "I have come here to ask something, and you must tell me that you will give it." Dasaratha was thinking, "I wonder what it could be that he wants? Maybe my head. I don't mind giving him that, but please don't let him ask for Rama." Visvamisra said, "What are you thinking? You are trying to save something." Dasaratha said, "No no, you just ask and I will give it." So then Visvamisra said, "I want Rama and Lakshmana." Dasaratha immediately fainted. When he woke up, Visvamisra said, "See! You fainted, this means that you don't want to give. And you lied to me! I am rishi and you lied to

me that you will give everything, and now you won't give. I'm not going to take them away forever, I only need them for a small purpose. I am doing a yajna, and someone is passing stool and urine on it. I want these children to come and play there, and then these demons will go away." "What? Demons?" And then Dasaratha fainted again. He couldn't bear his being taken to demons, so he said, "I will come. I will defeat them!" Visvamitra said, "Don't you think I can defeat them? I could easily defeat them, but I want Ramacandra and nothing else. What do you say?" "All right," Dasaratha said. "But please take good care of my son, and also teach Him something since you know so many things." Visvamitra said, "I know what I will do with Rama, and he is coming with me. Now." Dasaratha said, "But you have come a long way, you should rest a while in my palace." "I don't stay in palaces," Visvamitra said. "Where is Rama and Laksmana? Give Them to me." So he took Rama and Laksmana and he left. They were walking, and as they were crossing so many rivers and going through so many different forests, Visvamitra was telling them stories, and Rama and Laksmana became so happy because there was no class and no study, this was like a complete vacation for them. They were swimming here and swimming there, and Visvamitra was such a nice teacher that he would swim with them and play with them, tell them far-out stories of demons and goblins and ghosts. They were so happy. In the evening time at sunset, Visvamitra told them, "Now you do your sandhya, and then you sit here and listen to these mantras. I'm going to teach you some great, powerful mantras. One is known as Bala, strength. Another is known as Adibala, great strength. You may need them for these demons. So Rama and Laksmana sat down and listened to Bala and Adibala, and then they massaged the teacher, Visvamitra. Visvamitra took rest. The next day Visvamitra woke them up and they reached the ashrama of Visvamitra and they began a yajna. Then came this demon, a very famous demon called Marica. Marica was a great magician. Whenever he would come, then you would see that trees would be falling, the rivers would be flying up in the sky, and stars would be falling. The animals would also go crazy, the birds would scream, and the rishis would die as Marica's breakfast was saintly persons only. For lunch he ate something else like ksatriyas or kings, but breakfast was sages. He was a cannibal, human eater. So Marica was coming there, and with him was Dusana. His very name is the same as his character. Dusana means "all bad things." His father named him like that, so it must have been a good family. Dusana and Marica were flying in space and were coming. So Rama and Laksmana were sitting there and Visvamitra was the head priest, he was offering ghee into the fire. He

looked at Rama to signal that the demons were coming. Rama looked at Laksmana and said, "So Laksmana, what are you going to do?" Laksmana said, "Yes, we will do something." So he took several arrows and shot them into the sky. They went up into the sky about three or four miles, and then from each arrow came a million arrows, and all together they formed a huge wheel of arrows, and this wheel started circling on top of the fire. So Marica and Dusana came and all that they saw was a wheel and some spokes. "Where is the fire?" Dusana said, "I told you I wanted to pass water three hours ago and you said I should wait till we got here. I have been holding it in, and I can't see the fire. What are you doing to me? Let me go pass somewhere." "No no," Marica said, "Visvamitra's fire, that is where we should pass." "But I can't see the fire, I only see this wheel." Then Marica said, "This must be the trick of these Brahmins. Let me come closer and see." So he came closer, and as he came close he got stuck with one of the spokes of the wheel, and he was thrown miles away. While he was already thrown, Ramacandra took one blade of grass (kusha grass), and he threw it at Marica. It got stuck on his back and carried him to the ocean. He fell in the ocean, and after that he never touched the Indian land again. He opened an ashrama and became a babaji somewhere in Sri Lanka, and didn't even go back to see his family. That was what happened to Marica, and Dusana was killed. All this killing was done by grass. Then the yajna was over and Visvamitra came to Ramacandra and he said, "What a great, wonderful thing you did! I saw Marica flying away and falling into the ocean." Then Visvamitra said, "There's only one small question I want to ask You." "What?" Ramacandra replied. "What about Bala and Adibala and all those mantras I gave You?" Ramacandra said, "That is for an emergency, then we will use these ones. Grass is sufficient for these demons." Then Visvamitra said a famous verse, that for a mighty person even grass becomes anastra. Ramacandra is so mighty, He's the source of all Bala. So why should He take Bala and Adibala? In this way He finished the demons.

Chapter 4 - Visvamitra

Now Visvamitra is not just some mystic yogi or a gurukula teacher or something. Visvamitra himself was such a great powerful personality. He was a great kshatriya. One day he was going on a big hunting tour, and while he was going, the tradition was that when you pass by a gurukula or an ashrama, the kings must stop. And they must go there and respect the saint. The saintly person in turn will feed the king, because the king will not carry so much ration when he goes into the forest. And he's not going to

live on fruits and roots, because he's the king, not some saintly person. He needs some feast, so the saintly person must arrange the feast. And for arranging the feast the kings will always donate a lot of things to the saintly person. In this way there was a nice arrangement for making feasts and taking feasts. So this great army of Kaushika, Visvamitra, was coming, and he had his hundred sons and he was thinking, "That's a small ashrama there." He looked down into the valley and the ashrama was about four houses, and there was stream running nearby. He thought, "My army of a hundred sons shouldn't go. You all stay here," he said to his sons. "It is a custom that I should go and respect this saintly person, so I will go there and then I will come back. And if he asks to feed something to me that is alright, but he can't feed my whole army." So Kaushika went down, and there was two brahmacaris washing cloth in the stream, so he asked them, "Whose ashrama is this?" The brahmacaris replied, "This is the ashrama of Vasistha Muni." "Vasistha?" Kaushika asked. "He's in my country and I didn't even know." "He came three months ago," the brahmacaris replied. He would always go like that. He stays in a place for about three hundred years and then he moves to another ashrama, because too many students come there and he doesn't like a big population. So whenever there is too many people he disappears with one or two students and goes to open another school somewhere else. "I would like to see him," Visvamitra said. So the brahmacaris brought him before Vasistha. Vasistha was making some thread from cotton. He was wearing a gamsha around his waist and another around his shoulders. Kaushika was coming with many ornaments and a golden crown, so he came in there and took his crown off, and touched Vasistha's feet. He then said, "I am Kaushika and I am on a hunting trip. I have a hundred sons who I have left on the highway and I have come here just to see you. So you please bless my kingdom." Vasistha said, "How is this possible that you are coming to my ashrama and going without a feast?" Visvamitra looked at the house with its grass roof and cow-dung floor and the whole ashrama was only three or four houses. "You're going to give me a feast?" Visvamitra asked "How will I eat it without my sons?" "No no, your sons, your army, your castle, everyone. Bring them here." "But where will they sit? You have only four huts." "Bring them here," Vasistha said very determinedly. "If I don't bring them, he will curse," Visvamitra thought, so he went back to his sons. "All of you come with me to this ashrama," he told them. "You must be joking!" the sons replied. "If we all go to that ashrama, we will be crushed. There's no place in there." Visvamitra said, "This great rishi has asked, so we must go." They were thinking, "Even if we passed by there, by the sound of these

chariots the roofs will cave in." Their chariots were huge with eighteen horses each. Kaushika said, "I don't want to be cursed, so let's go down there." As they were going down into the valley they saw that a big township was there. Palaces, roads, and swimming pools. People were running out of the city. It was a city suddenly, and Kaushika was thinking, "This is wonderful. Just in the time of closing my eyes there is a big city here. It's bigger than Mahismati, my capital! Look at these palaces!" They were all looking at this and wondering, and then Vasistha came out and said, "What are you doing? You must all go and take bath. Feast is already prepared. It will get cold." So then after they took bath they came and thousands of them sat down on a big grass lawn. They saw no plates or anything in front of them, and Vasistha made them sit in rows. Visvamitra said, "What items are you going to give us, and how are you going to serve it?" Vasistha replied, "You can think of any plate you like, and you can think of any item you like, and you can think of any quantity you like, and you will get it." Visvamitra thought, "A diamond plate." Boom! And the diamond plate was there. And whatever he liked at that time was coming, heaps and heaps and they were eating and eating, but still it was just coming and coming, and they were just eating all the items they had ever heard about. One person said, "What Indra eats on his birthday, I want that." So he got it. Everyone got everything they liked. They were so satisfied, and then they wanted to see a dance. "What dance do you want to see?" Vasistha asked them. Visvamitra said, "The dance that is seen by Narayana in Svetadvipa, I want to see that." "All right, you can see," Vasistha replied. Immediately there was a stage. And there was a wonderful stage by the celestials of Vaikuntha. And Visvamitra was so envious. He was thinking, "What is this? Some baba, he is having so much opulence. I am a king, and I look like a beggar in front of him." So he came to Vasistha and asked, "Please tell me, what is the source of your opulence? I'm sure it's not this beard." Vasistha replied, "No, it's not my beard. It's my cow." Then he clapped his hands and he said, "Kama-dhenu, come here." And then akama-dhenu came. This cow had a long tail like a braid, and a peacock feather on the back. It had the breasts of a human female on her chest and the body of a cow. And in her whole body is the potency of all the devas. This cow came when the milk ocean was churned for nectar, and was given to Vasistha by the Supreme Lord, because he performed wonderful sacrifices so he needed a lot of wealth. Where could he go, because the kings were such small timers. Sometimes they would have wealth, and even though they had sometimes they would say that they don't have. So he gave this cow. "You can get anything from this cow." Visvamitra said, "I will give

you one million ordinary cows. You give me this cow." Vasistha said, "You must be a fool. One million ordinary cows, why should I take them and give you this special cow. If you give me one million kama-dhenus then I can think of giving you this one." "But you know," Visvamisra said, "according to the shastras, whatever is in this land belongs to the king, and I am the king so it belongs to me." Vasistha said, "Look at the kama-dhenu again, Kaushika." Visvamisra looked at the cow and noticed that it was four feet off the ground. "This cow does not belong to you," Vasistha said. "Only if it touches the earth does it belong to you." So Visvamisra was defeated. He said to Vasistha, "Look, you may have so much tapovalam, but I am a ksatriya and I have so much strength, one hundred sons. I am not going to ask you for the cow, I am just going to take. So he came behind the kama-dhenu and started to pull, and his hundred sons were helping him. "What are you doing?" the cow said to Vasistha. "You are my protector, and you are not doing anything. This mlechha is taking me away." Kaushika said, "You are calling me a mlechha?" "Yes, you are taking the property of a Brahmin, so you are a mlechha at least now, or in the next life you are going to be. Why are you doing this? This is nonsense, and even the Lord will not be tolerant of this, you will be finished. Your whole dynasty will be finished, this is my curse." Visvamisra said, "You are a cow, so don't talk so much. Just come with me." So then Vasistha said, "Don't do this. She does not like it. If she liked it, then you could take her, but she does not like it." Still Vasistha was keeping his anger inside, not showing it. "You keep quiet," Kaushika said. "I am taking the cow." Vasistha said, "Where are your 100 sons? I will show my power on them, because I don't want to finish you. If you are there you can produce another 100 sons. Show me your sons." "Here are my sons," Kaushika said, and then Vasistha looked at them and they were all gone. And then he said, "Kaushika, do you want to become a heap of ash? Then you'd better run away from me." Then Kaushika, in great disgust left the ashrama. He went to the Himalayas and performed austerities for 300 years to please Mahadeva. Lord Shiva came, and asked Kaushika, "What benediction do you want?" There's one great thing about a benediction from Shiva. If you take a benediction from him, it is only for your destruction. His benedictions will only destroy, they will never give anything good. Unless you ask for love of God, or devotion, but if one has approached Shiva he generally doesn't ask for these things. So Shiva was asking, "What benediction do you want?" Or in other words, how do you want to be destroyed? So then Kaushika said, "I must have all the divine weapons. All the weapons that Indra has, Agni has, Varuna has, all of them must come to my mind, and I must control them. I must be a rajarishi."

"Yes, you are a rajarishi," Shiva said. "Now stop doing austerities, because it is burning my body. Go." Then Visvamitra immediately flew to Vasistha's ashrama. Vasistha was having an oil bath, having oil massaged on his body. When someone is having an oil on the body you're not supposed to talk to him or talk in conversation. Kaushika did not even give him a challenge or anything, he just immediately started doing all the astras on Vasistha. Vasistha was still sitting there getting oil on his body, and the first thing that Visvamitra threw was a brahmastra. "Suddenly so much heat is in mustard oil," Vasistha said. "It's not that hot!" So then Vasistha looked over his shoulder and saw the brahmastra. "My God! What is he doing? Who taught him these weapons? He doesn't know where to put them! He's throwing them here, but I am having an oil massage here. Kaushika, stop doing this nonsense!" Then came Agni astra, and then came Vayu astra. They were all coming one after another. "This is too much," Vasistha said, and he looked around. He saw his walking stick, which was getting old, so he took that and threw it out. Then he continued with his massage. The walking stick came out and faced the brahmastra. The brahmastra touched this walking stick, and it became like ice, and fell down. Then came the Agni astra, which came emanating so much fire, and all the trees were burnt, but when it faced the stick this astra was also pulled down. Then Vayu astra came, and all the astras that he learnt from Lord Shiva were all used up, pulled down by the stick. Then the stick started moving towards Visvamitra, so Visvamitra started running away. As he crossed the area of Vasistha's ashrama, the stick went down and Vasistha kept it down. Then Visvamitra sat up and he was thinking, "That is just a stick that he uses for walking. What will happen if he takes a bow? What will happen to me then? So this rajarishi is no good, I will become a brahmarishi." So again he went up to the Himalayas, and he performed tapasya for such a long time that Brahma came to him. "What do you want?" Brahma asked. "Why are you troubling me like this?" "I want to be a brahmarishi," said Visvamitra. Brahma said, "Well I am Brahma, and I am calling you a rishi, so you are a brahmarishi. You be satisfied." Visvamitra said, "No, Vasistha should say it." So Brahma brought Visvamitra to Vasistha and said, "Please call him brahmarishi." Vasistha looked at him and said, "What a great tapasa you have done! After all you are a ksatriya, you are supposed to be enjoying your senses. Simply by my challenge, you have become such a great rishi. Why brahmarishi? You are ajnanarishi, the rishi of saintly people. You are worshipable by me. Now Visvamitra, you stop your austerities." So Visvamitra stopped his austerities there, and he became well known as brahmarishi and was

moving around. Now, Tri-shanku, who was in the Ikshvaku dynasty suddenly developed desires to go to the heavenly planet in this body. So he went to Vasistha who was his guru, Vasistha is guru for so many generations. "Please my guru, send me to the heavenly planets." Vasistha said, "Yes I can send you to heaven. You perform some pious activities, next life you will go." Tri-shanku said, "No, not next life, this life." Vasistha said, "You die in this life, and then in the next life you can go to heaven." "No, I don't want to wait. I want to go in this body." Vasistha asked, "Where did you get this crazy idea from?" Tri-shanku replied, "I am a very pious person. I have done so many nice things, and there is no complaint against me. Why shouldn't you send me?" Vasistha said, "That is very good, you are a pious person, a great king, but heavenly planet cannot be attained in this body." Tri-shanku said, "But you can adjust things, you are a great rishi." Vasistha replied, "No I can't adjust things, I can only follow the rules of God." Vasistha said, "If you can't adjust things, then what kind of a guru are you?" Vasistha said, "Well if you don't want to be my disciple then I will go. I'm not going to teach the Ikshvaku dynasty any more." Vasistha took his danda and walked out. Then Tri-shanku remembered that Vasistha also had a hundred sons, and they were doing tapasya somewhere in South India, so he went to South India and met these sons. He asked them, "Please send me to heaven in this same body." "What is this nonsense? We can't do this," the sons replied. "Your father also said the same thing." The sons said, "You mean our father said it could not be done and now you are coming to us?" Tri-shanku said, "Yes, because young students like to do this sort of evolutionary stuff." The sons said, "Yes, we will do some evolution, you become a chandala." So they cursed him, and suddenly his whole body turned black. Even his chadar which was golden turned black. All his golden ornaments turned into iron ornaments and his face became cruel. So when he went back to Ayodhya, people laughed at him and kicked him out of the country. Then he was wandering in the forest and one day he saw a rishi standing on one leg. That was our Kaushika, Visvamitra, doing some other austerity now. He came to him and said, "You are so effulgent, like the Sun-god." Kaushika said, "Tell me what you want. And you seem to be a bit of a chandala, but either way you are talking like a royal family man." The king replied, "I am Tri-shanku from the Ikshvaku dynasty. I have been cursed by Vasistha's sons." As soon as he heard Vasistha's name, he got fired up. "Why did they curse you? Who are they to curse you?" The king said, "I just asked them a small thing." "What did you ask?" Visvamitra inquired. "I asked them if I could go to heaven in this body, and then they cursed me." Visvamitra said, "What?

You want to go to heaven in this body? Where did you get this idea from?" The king replied, "One fine morning I got up, and I thought like that." Visvamitra said, "See what happened to you, for entertaining this idea?" The king thought that Visvamitra is cooling down, this is no good. I had better get him fired up again. The king said, "That Vasistha said that no-one could do it." Visvamitra said, "What was that? Repeat that again." "He said, no-one can do it." Visvamitra replied, "Who said no-one can do it? I can do it." So then he sent word to all the rishis saying, "I am doing a yajna, so you also come. I am going to ask the devas to take him just like this." All the rishis came because they were scared of Visvamitra, that he would curse them too. So they came there, they were all doing yajna and they were so scared. And then the devas came. Indra approached Visvamitra and asked, "Now what is the purpose of this yajna? What do you need?" Visvamitra replied, "We want this man to go to heaven." Indra said, "So many people are coming to heaven, I have no objection." "No no," Visvamitra replied, "Like this." Indra said, "What? Like this? No, that's not possible. I can't let him in like this. I can't do it." Visvamitra protested, "But this is a special case." Indra said, "No, special case nothing. I can't do it." Visvamitra said, "All right, if I cannot do it by yajna then I will do it by my austerities." So he took the shruva, spoon which he was using to pour ghee, and he touched Tri-shanku and said, "All right, Tri-shanku, fly now to heaven by my power." Then Tri-shanku disappeared from the earthly planet, and he was flying, flying through space. Indra was back in his planet, and everyone was saying, "Indra, look who is coming. It's Tri-shanku." "Tri-shanku?" Indra said in disbelief. Then he took his Vadra and hit him on the back and Tri-shanku came back at full speed. So Visvamitra was sitting there peacefully and Tri-shanku was crying, "Visvamitra, help me!" Visvamitra said, "You are not coming back, you are going to heaven!" Visvamitra then used some more of his power and sent him back up. And then Indra sent him back again, and Visvamitra sent him back again, and then Indra sent him back. The third time when he was going towards heaven Tri-shanku said, "I don't want to go to heaven! I would rather go to hell! Anything is better than this. What am I doing in outer space? You send me anywhere, but please stop this!" Visvamitra said, "No, I made a promise to you. That promise must be kept, even if you don't want. You must go to heaven!" And he sent him back. Indra said, "I don't want you," and he kicked him back. This time Tri-shanku said, "Please Visvamitra, I don't want heaven. I realize now that it is very bad to think like that. I just want to be a king somewhere. I'll be a beggar somewhere. Stop pushing me like this." Visvamitra said, "No. If they won't let you into heaven, I will

create you a heaven. So he created a heaven. He created devas, he created Indra, he created Airavata, he created everything by his tapovalam, and austerity was finished. So now, the planet has to be in orbital so. No more tapovalam, so how are we going to put it in orbit? Then the whole heaven started to come down to earth, because that is where it was created. Now Visvamitra said, "O my God! Now heaven is coming down and everything will be finished! What am I going to do?" Then he lifted his hands and said, "Hari! Hari!" The Lord appeared and asked, "Visvamitra, what is the problem? Usually you call Brahma, you never call Me. What happened to you?" Visvamitra said, "Look, look! Do something please, it is coming down!" The Lord said, "What is it? What is falling down?" Visvamitra replied, "It is my creation." "Oh, it's your creation!" Vishnu said. "So you maintain it, I'm going." "No no no! Don't go, please do something. I only created it, I can't maintain it. It's not possible for me." The Lord said, "I will put My energy into it and maintain it." So the Supreme Lord entered into that heaven. This heaven is known as Tri-shanku svarga, and it is still existing. The Lord put Tri-shanku there to please Visvamitra. And then Visvamitra was saved, otherwise these heavenly planets would come down and burn the earth planet and everything else would be burnt. Then Narayana said, "Don't get into this area. My zone is a very difficult zone, creating, maintaining, destroying. This is my work. You simply do tapasya, and bless people. Don't try to become Hari or there will be trouble." Visvamitra said, "I have realized it once and for all. I will not do this any more." Then the Lord was so pleased with him for his immediate surrender that He said, "I will become your student in Treta-yuga." So in this way Ramacandra became Visvamitra's student.

Chapter 5: The lifting of the bow

After Rama's fight with the demons Marica and Dusana, Visvamitra didn't come back to Ayodhya, instead he told them, "There is going to be a big fire sacrifice in Mithila." King Janaka was ruling. So Visvamitra said, "A great sacrifice and all the rishis and pandits will be there. I will take you there so you can see it." On the way so many other pastimes happened, these are already famous pastimes. Ahalya, the wife of Gautama Rishi had been cursed to become stone, and she would not be released until Ramacandra touched her with His lotus feet. Then she would come alive again. So those pastimes happened within the travel from Visvamitra's ashrama to the present Lucknow, and from there up to Mithila. Mithila, the country of Janaka is known as Mithila because long before Janaka there was one king in the Ikshvaku dynasty. Vasistha was the guru for a many generations, and

the king at that time wanted to perform a yajna. Vasistha had agreed to perform a yajna for Indra in the heavenly planets, so he told him, "I will finish this yajna, then I will come back and perform yours." The king did not say anything. He didn't want to displease Vasistha, he was a great devotee. Vasistha went to the heavenly planets, and before he came back the king called some other rishis, Gautama and his brother, and he engaged them as priests and completed his yajna. He did not tell them that Vasistha was only in the heavenly planets. Vasistha came back. Very quickly he completed his yajna, he didn't even wait for receiving payment for it. He told Indra, "Just keep it in credit and I will collect it later." Very quickly he returned, but when he got back he saw that Brahmins were coming out of the palace with cows. "What's happening here?" he asked. "Oh, big yajna. It's all over now, though. We just received dakshina and now we are going." So Vasistha was very upset. He called the king and said, "What is this? First you tell me that I should do the yajna, so I finished my job in the heavenly planet very quickly and even displeased Indra and his party, and I have come here because I am your Kula-guru, your family spiritual master. So how is this proper that you have taken some other person and performed the yajna?" The king was still keeping quiet, not saying anything. Actually Vasistha should not have gone to the heavenly planets to perform yajna because he is the family guru of the Ikshvaku dynasty. So if Ikshvakus are having a yajna he is supposed to do that first, and then if it is necessary he can go to the heavenly planets. So it was actually a mistake on the part of Vasistha, because he was a little greedy from the great remuneration he would get from the heavenly planets. A Brahmin should not be greedy. By doing that, a great trouble happens. What was the trouble? Vasistha became so angry that he said to the king, "You become nirdeha." Deha means "this body" and nir means "without." "So you will be without body." All this time the king was tolerating, but now he said, "What is this? I must perform my yajna on time, and you went there because you are greedy. Now you are cursing me." So the king got angry with Vasistha and said, "You also become nirdeha." So at the same time, both bodies were lost, and they both became nirdeha. When Vasistha became nirdeha he was going here and there and then one group of rishis who were meditating took him and put him inside a pot and kept him inside the pot for a long time until he could take another body. In the same pot another rishi's soul was kept. They became brothers. Vasistha is therefore known as kumbha-muni, the rishi coming from a pot, and another kumbha-muni was Agastya. He was thumb sized. Not thumb sized of our thumb, but the thumb of the devas, so he was much taller than us. In

Dvapara-yuga people were ten times taller, eating was ten times bigger, lifetime was also ten times longer, and in Treta-yuga it was a hundred times. So now we are living a hundred years, in Dvapara yuga they lived 1000 years, in Treta-yuga it was the lifetime in Satya-yuga. So that is why in Satya-yuga the process is meditation, because if you are living 100,000 years, what is the problem with spending 30,000 years meditation? Agastya lived through all the yugas. He is even living now in the southern part of India. There is a mountain in South India called Kozwala mountain, and on Kozwala mountain there are caves, and the scriptures say that Agastya is still there. These rishis are chiran-jivas, meaning that up to Brahma's life-span they will also live. So Agastya and Vasistha came from the same pot. In this way Vasistha got his body, and this person who became nirdeha couldn't get a body because of the rishi's curse, no-one tried to give him an artificial room like Vasistha got. These test tubes are nothing new. The rishis have been doing it for ages. They take the sperm and put it in a pot, create some artificial climate and it would grow in there and become a saintly person. These two rishis became test tube babies, but the other person just remained nirdeha and he remained for a long time, and then he went to the heavenly planets and from there to the spiritual world. His dead body was there, so all the saintly people in the country churned the body as there was no dynasty, just like in the Srimad-Bhagavatam there is the pastime of how Vena's body was churned and Prthu Maharaja came. So this churning was done, and this churning is called Mithi. When churning the body you have to keep the foot from the body of that person and take the leg and then churn it. So this is why it was called Mithila, and the man who came out of that body was called Mithi Janaka. Ja means "birth" and Janaka means "one who has taken birth by churning." So Mithi Janaka means "one who has taken his birth by churning of someone's body." And this Mithi Janaka, he didn't want to be in Ayodhya because of all the prestige the family had. So he left Ayodhya and created a separate kingdom, and that kingdom was known as Mithila, because the Mithi Janaka created that kingdom so it was called Mithila. And all his sons were known by the name Janaka. He was Janaka, and then Janaka I, Janaka II, Janaka III and so on. Janaka had a great property in his palace. This property was the bow which was used by Mahadeva, Lord Siva, in a battle between him and Lord Vishnu. Once there was a battle between Vishnu and Shiva. There was no cause for this, it was just Narada Muni's jubilation. He was once in the assembly of Indra, and Indra was praising Mahadeva. He was saying, "Lord Siva has three eyes, and fire comes out of his third eye and all that." So Narada Muni said, "There are so many

Shivas. In every universe there are eleven Shivas. My Lord is different. He has no third eye but He knows everything." Then Indra said, "No no no, you don't know. Vishnu is alright, he's the avatar, but Shiva is the great powerful person." "If it is so," Narada said, "Why don't you go and ask Shiva to have a fight with Vishnu? Then we will see who is more powerful." Then Indra thought, "That would be a nice thing to do," so he went to Kailash. Shiva's bull, Nandi, was asking, "What are you doing on Kailash? This is meant for people who meditate." Nandi is a great yogi, and an astrologer too. He saw Indra and knew there would be trouble, so he said, "Get out of Kailash. You are an enjoyer, so what are you doing here?" Indra said, "No no, I have only come here for Shiva's darshana without any motive." Nandi said, "I am an astrologer, and I can see on your face that you have come here to create trouble. Don't give any trouble to my Lord, he is peacefully meditating." Then Indra said, "Let me in Nandi." So he was allowed. When he came in, Shiva was in deep meditation. Indra came in there and prayed to Mahadeva so much, and finally Shiva opened his eyes. "Indra! Why are you here? There is no trouble happening. I don't think you have come here to ask me to fight with someone." Indra said, "I must say that I only visit Kailash to ask you to fight with someone, but this time it's not a demon." "Who is it then?" Mahadeva asked. "Well we had a little argument," Indra said. "Myself and Narada. I said that you are the most powerful, but Narada said that Vishnu is the most powerful." Shiva said, "You see this japa-mala I am holding? Do you know what I am doing with this? Do you know what I am chanting?" "I heard that you chant Rama's name," Indra replied. Shiva said, "So I am chanting Rama's name. And then you are asking who is more powerful. If I am more powerful than Him, then He must be chanting my name. But it would never happen, I am chanting His name." Indra said, "That is right, that is Purana, but I want to see it." Shiva said, "Why do you want to see it? I am telling you, He is the most powerful and all power comes from Him. I only destroy this universe, that is all the power I have." So Indra said, "Even though you say these things, I don't believe it." "Why don't you believe it?" "Because you are so powerful that you burnt the fort which was flying in the sky." Then Shiva said, "I know what you are up to. You want to have some entertainment. So you go to Visvakarma and ask him to make a bow for me. I am a babaji, but you want me to fight. So at least give me some weapons." So Visvakarma used his mystic power and made a bow. This bow was so big that 300 people had to carry it. Actually it was in a cart. The cart had so many wheels, and 300 people had to push it to move it an inch, and then they had to rest for half an hour. So this was the size of the bow. It was unstrung also, the thread

was separate. So that was brought in front of Lord Shiva. "This is a good bow," he said, and took it up. When he took it up all the devas fainted. It was such a huge bow and Shiva was just lifting it so easily. Then Indra was saying, "See? I told you, he's very strong. Don't think that he's just a babaji meditating. He's got so much strength." Shiva then strung the bow and he said, "All right, I am ready." Then they went to Brahma and asked, "Please bring Lord Vishnu for a fight." So Brahma went to the milk ocean and meditated. Vishnu was sitting there in the Svetadvipa, and He said to Lakshmi, "I wonder what Brahma is calling for now?" Lakshmi said, "Maybe some demon is there." "How can a demon have come without My knowledge? There is no demon," the Lord said. "Then You must also know why he is calling You," Lakshmi said. "Yes I do. He wants Me to have a fight with Shiva." "Oh," Lakshmi said. "I would like to see that." "Then I'll have to do it," the Lord said. So then He got up from His seat and He came to the other side of the milk ocean. He said, "All right Brahma, I am ready." And then Indra said, "But there is one condition - You don't bring any bow or anything from Your spiritual world. We will give You something from this world. Otherwise You will overpower him easily, we know that. We want a straightforward fight." So Visvakarma made another bow. Shiva's bow was called Mahesha-chapa, and Vishnu's bow was called Vishnu-chapa. Both were made by Visvakarma and were equal in strength. They were exactly the same. They were copies. So Vishnu came and said, "No problem, I will take it." So He took the bow, and He came and lifted it. When He lifted the bow, because He has an eternal associate called Sarnga, who is His bow, and when Vishnu touches any bow Sarnga will come in there and it will become Sarnga-dhanu. He took the bow and Sarnga entered. Nobody could see this happen. So He came and Shiva was there, and as soon as Vishnu was in vision of Mahesh, Shiva offered his obeisances and clapped his hands, rolling on the floor in ecstasy. Indra said, "What's going on?" He turned to Narada Muni and said, "Go and tell him to give up his devotion and fight!" Narada Muni went to Shiva and said, "You have forgotten that there is supposed to be a fight. You have surrendered." So then Mahesha said, "Please, bless me so that I can fight with You." Vishnu blessed him, "All right. You can fight with Me." So they were fighting, fighting, fighting, and it was going on for a long time. Finally Shiva put the bow down and started running away from the battlefield, and all sorts of astras were coming out of Sarnga, and Shiva ran away. He ran, and he was shouting to Indra, "I told you! I told you! Now I am in trouble!" Of course, Vishnu was not angry, he was only smiling. But then all the devas prayed to Lord Vishnu, "Please stop the war. We need Lord Shiva."

So then the war was over, and Shiva was saved. Vishnu took His bow and gave it to one rishi called Rcika. Rcika gave that bow to Jamadagni, another great rishi. Jamadagni was the father of Parasurama, so that bow of Vishnu eventually came to Parasurama. Parasurama was holding this bow. Of course, he didn't need this, as he had his axe with which he killed then ksatriyas twenty-one times. And the bow of Lord Shiva was given to one of the Janakas. Not the original Janaka who was made from churning. Seven generations after him there was one Janaka called Devarata Janaka. He was very attractive to the Devas so he was known as Devarata. Devarata got Shiva's bow and he kept it in the palace as a worshipping object. In this way it was coming down in the family, and this Janaka we are dealing with was also worshipping the bow. He did not have any children, so they suggested to him to do ahola-yajna. You take a plough and draw a line around the palace. When you move the plough, it will get stuck in the mud, and every time it gets stuck you have to donate gold to the priests. And every movement you make it will get stuck, so you have to give gold. When all the Brahmins are satisfied, you move it again and when it gets stuck you have to get more gold. In this way you are giving a lot of charity and you are getting a lot of blessings so you will get children. So Janaka was doing this, moving the plough and giving gold. In one place it got stuck, and after giving all the gold, still the plough would not move on. "There must be some big rock there," everybody said, so they dug and found a box. And inside the box was a baby, a female baby, and she looked just like Lakshmi. She was known as Janaki, the daughter of Janaka, and she grew up in the palace. She was six years old. Janaka had a brother, and he had three daughters. So these four daughters were running around and playing at the palace. Once they made a stick with a hook on it to take some flowers from the trees. So Janaki was trying to get it, but somehow or other there was a mystic tree there, and whenever she reached up, it grew more. Somebody was in that tree. So Janaki could not get it and she was the only daughter of the emperor, so she was very frustrated. "I want to get it, and I know what I will use to get it." She ran into the puja room, and in there was this big bow inside a box. She opened the box and took the bow in her hands, and then she walked outside with the bow. When the soldiers saw her they all swooned. Three hundred people were supposed to push the cart, and this little girl was holding the bow. Whoever was able to stay conscious ran to Janaka and said, "Do you know what's happening? Your little girl is holding Lord Shiva's bow!" "Send this man to the doctor," Janaka said. "There's something wrong with his head." Then another lady came and said, "Yes, yes, it's true! And if you want to see it come quickly."

"What's wrong with these people?" Janaka said. Then he called his doctor. "Supply 1000 lemons to the palace. And put at least 500 lemons on these people's heads, to cool them down." And then Janaka's minister came running and said, "No, it is no joke. I just saw it myself." This time Janaka said, "It must be true," so he came running, and the last thing he saw was Janaki lifting the bow into the box. Then she came towards Janaka as if she had done nothing. When questioned by Janaka, she innocently said that she had performed no great task. But Janaka had seen it happen, and he went to his ministers and said, "My daughter must be haunted by some big brahma-rakshasa ghost, more powerful than Lord Shiva. Otherwise how was it possible for her to lift it?" So then the ministers thought over it and said, "Janaka, we think that your daughter is Maha-lakshmi. From all the symptoms of her bodily features, we can understand that she is none other than Lakshmi. And if she is Lakshmi, then naturally her Lord is Narayana. Now your problem is, how are you going to get Narayana to marry her? There is no Narayana here." Then Janaka came up with an idea. He said, "Anyone who can take this bow and string it will marry my daughter." All the ministers laughed. They said, "In this way your daughter is going to remain unmarried. Because who on this earth has the strength to do this?" Janaka said, "Narayana obviously knows that Lakshmi is here. He is not going to leave her unmarried. She is not going to take some woman sannyasa or anything. No. Narayana must come here." So everyone was shocked. They were saying, "What is this man doing? This is as good as saying, 'No-one can marry my daughter.'" Anyway, this was going on, and a yajna was performed. The special feature of this yajna was that they were going to bring the bow and put it for darshana, and the ksatriya kings could try. So Visvamitra knew this, so he told Rama and Laksmana, "This is the bow used by Lord Shiva, and if you want to see it I will take you there." "We must see it," they said. Rama and Laksmana came there, and the rest of the pastime is known. We are only dealing with those parts of the pastimes that are not well-known. All the ksatriyas came and they were seeing the bow and Janaka told Visvamitra, "You must call your young student to come and have a look at this." So Ramacandra came and saw it, and Laksmana said, "Try it." Janaka announced, "If anyone wants to try and string this bow and get my daughter, then please come." So one or two very puffed-up ksatriya kings came. The first one could not lift it, and another got his hand stuck between the floor and the bow, and he had to be pulled out. Just then the whole assembly became dark and the earth was shaking. They heard someone laughing loudly. So then Janaka caught hold of Visvamitra's hand and said, "Tell me what is now happening."

Visvamitra said, "This must be a demon. Very soon he will enter." In another three minutes there was a flash of light, and between the light came Trilokeshvara, Ravana. He had arranged that before he came, two other demons would precede him and announce, "Trilokeshvara Ravana is coming." Everyone was scared, "What is this demon doing in our assembly?" So then Ravana appeared. "What is this svayamvara? You are all spineless people. You can't even lift this bow! You must know who I am. I am Ravana, and I have lifted Kailash with Lord Shiva on it. This is only his bow. This is the bow of Lord Shiva, and Lord Shiva, his whole family, his entire troop of ghosts and goblins and the whole Kailash mountain was lifted by me, and I flew to Lanka. That is my strength." So then everybody thought, "He can easily lift this bow." So Ravana came, and he put his hands on each side, and he lifted the bow. Everyone was amazed. "Ah! He has lifted the bow!" Then Lord Shiva in Kailash was thinking, "What's going on? I didn't leave it for him. I left it for Lord Rama." So then Shiva went inside the bow and pressed down. Ravana got stuck. That also happened when he lifted Kailash mountain, when he put it down he got stuck. Now he was also stuck. He was crying and pleading, and finally Lord Shiva let go, and he got his hand out. And then Rama came, but He didn't use two hands, only one. He put His foot on the other end of the bow and He took the string. As He pulled it, the bow broke into two pieces. Everyone clapped their hands, and flowers fell from heaven. Then Lord Ramacandra got married to Sita, and those other three girls were married to Bharata, Satrugna and Laksmana. And they were coming back to Ayodhya. On the way back, again everything became dark and the earth shook, and all the birds stopped singing. Dasaratha asked Visvamitra, "Is Ravana coming again?" "No, this is Parasurama," Visvamitra said. "He is about one hundred miles away, that is why it is shaking. He is angry." Dasaratha said, "What are you going to do? Are you going to do anything to protect us?" And he asked Vasistha too. They replied, "In this we have only one opinion. Usually we have two opinions, but here we have only one opinion. We're going to lay down and close our eyes, because Parasurama is coming." So they laid down and closed their eyes, and Parasurama was coming closer and closer, and he was doing his umkara. Every step he was taking he was going, "Oom! Oom!" And by this sound all of Dasaratha's army fainted, and the elephants screamed. By his attachment to Rama, Dasaratha didn't faint, because he wanted to look after Rama. Finally when Parasurama came, only two people were conscious, the supremely conscious people, Rama and Laksmana. Even Bharata and Satrugna were on the ground. Rama looked at Laksmana and said, "You have planned

something?" So then Parasurama came to him and said, "Who is this Rama?" Ramacandra said, "It is you. You are the only Rama. You are Parasurama. Who else is Rama?" Parasurama said, "Some young child from Ikshvaku's dynasty, how dare he break Lord Shiva's bow? I have controlled the ksatriyas so much. I have finished them all. And now someone else is coming. He must know that I am still here." Ramacandra said, "No, no, what's the problem? I didn't break it, but the bow was so weak that I just lifted it and it broke into two pieces." Parasurama said, "You mean to say that You are so strong and Lord Shiva's bow is so weak? So the ksatriyas are becoming strong again, and I am not going to leave it like that. If you think that you are so powerful, then why did you insult Lord Shiva? You don't think that you have done aparadha? He's the great Mahesha and you broke his bow! And how does this Janaka make a svayamvara like this, that someone should string Shiva's bow? So he is also an impostor. Now again I will start, and I will finish all of you. Finish Dasaratha, finish Janaka, finish everyone." So then Ramacandra said, "Yes, many people are supposed to be finished, but it is supposed to be done by Me." Parasurama said, "Now you are competing with me?" He took his axe and said, "You look at this. Rama and Laksmana paid obeisances. "Why are you paying namaskar to my axe?" Parasurama asked. They replied, "Because it killed all the bad ksatriyas. It is a famous weapon. It is a weapon of Vishnu, and we are in the Surya dynasty so we must pay our obeisances." So Parasurama was perplexed. At one point they are instructing, and then they are paying obeisances. "There is something here that I am not able to figure out," Parasurama said. "So I will have to give them a test." Then he addressed them. "If you are so courageous and so strong, I will give you the bow of Vishnu. Let us see if you can string it." Ramacandra said, "Anything you give, I will take, and anything you say I will do by your blessing." So then Parasurama closed his eyes and lifted his hands. He was invoking Sarnga-dhanu, the original bow of Lord Vishnu. He was calling and calling, but it was not coming. And then he opened his eyes, and he saw that Rama was already holding it, and it was already strung. Then he said, "You are the source of all strength. Now I understand that it is You and not me. You are the Rama, I am not the Rama. So I have no worries, and now I will only do meditation. That was what I was doing, but Narada came to me and said, "What are you doing, Parasurama? The ksatriyas are becoming powerful again." And he told me that some king, he didn't tell me who, he just told me that some king has a son, and this son has broken Lord Shiva's bow. He never told me it was You." So then Parasurama paid obeisances, and Ramacandra said, "Now what am I supposed to do? I have strung the

bow, I have put an arrow upon it. I need some object. I am Rama. My arrow and my word never go wrong. This arrow has to get an object. So where should I aim it? You tell me. Just then he saw Mother Sita. "Oh!" he exclaimed. "You look horrible with this tree bark and renunciate clothing on. This is the dress of a renunciate, not of a grhasta. You come with me." Compared to him, Sita was very small, and she was wondering, "What is this demon trying to do to me?" So he told Sita, "After finishing these two, I will reduce my form and then we will be a good match." Ramacandra said to Laksmana, "Look what has happened! You had so many plans that we would go to Dandakaranya and kill all the demons and return to Ayodhya. But now, my wife is gone. Look, she is being carried away by this demon! We can't do anything, look what he has on his trident." Laksmana said, "Why are you saying all this? Just finish him!" So they both took their swords, and they cut his legs, and he fell down. Then they brought Sita away, and they began cutting the demon into pieces. The demon was screaming and shouting, "Who are you? Tell me!" Ramacandra replied, "I am the son of King Dasaratha, and this is My brother Laksmana." Immediately the demon said, "I am actually a gandharva, and I was cursed to become a demon. They told me that only when Rama and Laksmana cut me into pieces would I be relieved of this curse. So please do it, quickly, and then dig a big hole and bury me there." So they did that, then from the hole came Tumburu, a great gandharva musician who had been cursed by Kuvera for singing some sense gratification songs. So he told Ramacandra, "If you walk this way in Dandakaranya, you will come to the ashrama of Sarabanga Rishi, and then you will find so many rishis. Eventually you will come to Agastya, and he will give you divine weapons. After receiving these weapons you will go to Panchavati, and in Panchavati some bad things will happen, but I won't tell you what they are. However, these deeds will make you most famous." In this way Tumburu was sent there in disguise, and Ramacandra entered into the Dandakaranya forest, and his pastimes with the different rishi's will be discussed later. At the end of Dandakaranya, after Sita was taken away, and Jatayu was given cremation by Ramacandra, Rama and Laksmana were coming to Kishkinda, because one rishi told Ramacandra that in Kishkinda they would get information where Mother Sita was. As they reached Kishkinda, there was a very very old man with matted locks of hair walking in front of Lord Rama. He looked at them and said, "You are saintly people, or are you kings, or are you hunters, or devas? Please tell me who you are. I am a beggar in this area, and anyone who comes here, I beg something from them. So according to your business I will make my demand. You tell me whether you are a deva

or a king or saintly person." So Ramacandra looked at Lakshmana and said, "This is a wonderful beggar. According to the standard of the donors his demands increase or decrease." Then he looked at the beggar, and he saw a wonderful diamond necklace on his neck. He said, "You are a strange beggar. You have a very nice diamond necklace, and yet you are begging. I can't understand. You have so much wealth. How can one have such a nice necklace, and still be begging?" The old man said, "You are able to see my necklace?" Ramacandra replied, "Yes, I can see it." Then the beggar asked, "Is he able to see my necklace?" So Rama asked Lakshmana, "Can you see it?" Lakshmana said, "No. I don't see a thing." Ramacandra asked, "How come I can see the necklace and Lakshmana can't?" Then the sage very excitedly began to explain. And this is explained in the next pastime.

Chapter 6: Birth and youth of Hanuman

Hanuman is originally the son of Vayu, the air deity. And he is also an expansion of Lord Shiva. All the devas were helping Lord Ramacandra in his battle. Lord Shiva was thinking, "I must also help Him." So long before Lord Ramacandra incarnated, Lord Shiva had a pastime. Once Shiva and Parvati were playing in Kailash, and they saw a monkey. Lord Shiva, by looking at this monkey, he also took the form of a monkey. Parvati also took the form of a monkey, and they played. During that time, Lord Shiva gave Parvati a conception. Then immediately she became Parvati again and said, "I'm not going to give birth to a monkey." So Shiva said, "Well you have a conception so now you have to give birth to it." Parvati said, "No no, when you gave the conception you were a monkey, so my son will become a monkey. Already I have an elephant, that is enough. I can't have this." So Shiva said, "All right then, I will make some arrangement." Shiva then called Vayu, and Vayu came there. Once before Shiva had given a conception and Agni had carried it, and Agni had said that he would never do it again. So Vayu came, and Shiva said, "Vayu, you have not done anything for me up till now, so please do this for me. Take this conception and look after it." Vayu said, "But you are the most hot person, and I am going to be carrying this around when I am supposed to be cooling everything. The wind will be hot." Shiva said, "You make some arrangement." So Vayu was carrying this conception wondering what to do, and then he saw the sapta-rishis going somewhere. He went before them and asked, "This is a conception from Lord Shiva. This has to be preserved until the Supreme Lord incarnates as Ramacandra. That is a long time away, but it has to be kept. Please make some arrangement." The sapta-rishis said, "Oh we will make some arrangement." So they went to origin of

the Mandakini river and they took a leaf which was made of metal, and put the conception there. In this way it was preserved, and Vayu was supposed to come and see that to the heavenly planets. You do not want this?" And then she remembered all her previous activities. She took that conception, and what was this conception? It was originally conceived by Lord Shiva, carried by Vayu for so long, and Vayu gave it to her, so it was Vayu's son and it was Siva's angsha, or expansion. And then Anjaneya was born. As soon as he was born he grew into a sixteen year old boy. That was the potency of Lord Shiva. So then Anjana immediately rose up to go to the heavens, and Anjaneya caught hold of her cloth and said, "Wait a minute, where are you going? You gave birth to me, and now you are leaving? What will I eat?" She was looking around, and it was sunset so she said, "Any fruit which is as red and as ripe as the sun planet, you can eat it." Then she left, and he was very hungry. He thought and then said, "Why as red as sun and as ripe as sun? Why not just eat sun?" So he jumped up, and straight away went to the sun planet and jumped on the chariot of Lord Suryadeva. He was extending his hands, and he took the whole sun planet and reduced it to a small ball and put it in his mouth. Just then he looked and saw Rahu coming. "I am going to eat the sun," Rahu said. Rahu always says this but he only ever half eats it. So then Anjaneya said, "Oh you are going to eat the sun? Well I have already eaten the sun and now I will eat you also." So then he swallowed Rahu. Indradeva had been sitting in his seat discussing politics, but suddenly everything had become dark. Agni was there, so due to his light he could see. He asked Agni, "Why is this? Why is there no light?" Agni replied, "Somebody has taken the sun away." "What? Somebody has taken the sun away?" Agni said, "Why are you wondering who has taken it? Just use your shabda-viddhi." Shabda-viddhi means that just by hearing the sound you shoot your weapon. So he threw his vadra. While throwing it he was already jumping on his white elephant, Airavata, and he was coming. Anjaneya saw that everything was dark, and then he saw this white elephant coming. "Oh, I will eat that also," and then he jumped on Airavata. While he was jumping on Airavata, the vadra came, and hit Anjaneya on his teeth. Anjaneya quickly caught hold of it. Indra turned around and saw Anjaneya holding the vadra, and he thought, "This must be some big Vishnu avatar. I'd better keep quiet. Out of living entities, only Indra can hold this thunderbolt, so he must be some incarnation with a tail." So Indra went back. Now Anjaneya had the sun, Rahu and this vadra weapon, and he went back to his place in Kishkinda to eat it. He sat down looking at this vadra, and thought, "Should I bite it or chew it?" At that time everyone went to Brahma and asked him, "What is

happening in this universe? Rahu is gone, sun is gone." Brahma said, "Don't worry. This is the potency of Lord Shiva, and this person is a great devotee of Lord Rama." Brahma lives for a long time, and so many Ramayanas are happening. So he knows that it is almost the same every time, but the pastime is a little different in each kalpa. So he said, "This is Hanuman. All of us have to go there and touch his feet and beg him. If you do that you will get the sun, otherwise no sun." So all the devas came, thirty three crores of them. They all came therewith folded hands. "Please Anjaneya, open your mouth." He was upset because Indra's vakra had hit him on his teeth. "You have already broken my jaw. If I open my mouth you will just break my other jaw." So then Brahma said, "My dear boy, I will give you anything you like. You can live as long as I live." Anjaneya was not satisfied. Then Agni came forward and said, "Fire will not burn you." Still he was not satisfied, so Indra came forward. "You are already holding my Vakra, so what benediction can I give you? But I tell you this, you will become the most famous, as famous as me." Still not satisfied. Then Vayu came. "You will be as fast as me." He smiled a little bit. One by one they all came and offered benedictions, and after everyone came and offered benedictions, still Anjaneya was not satisfied. Brahma said, "Don't worry, I will use my mystic powers." And he read Anjaneya's mind. Anjaneya was thinking "Why is there no fruit in this world?" Brhaspati came to know of his desire and he came forward and said, "Anjaneya, I will give you all the fruits in this world, and I will give you the knowledge of Ayurveda by which you will know all the fruits, all the plants, and all the trees. Any plant in the creation, you will know it, and what is the use of it you will also know. This is my benediction to you." Then Dhanvantari spoke, "I will be at your command. You put any medicine on anyone and they will come alive." So Anjaneya opened his mouth, and the Sun-god was there, and the devas were very much satisfied. So then Brahma called him "Hanuman." Hanuman means one who has got some kind of a defect in his teeth. That is the meaning of Hanuman. Hanuman is also known as Vajranga, which means the same thing. Vajra means teeth and anga means missing one part. One other name for him is Marut-suta, the son of the wind deity. He is known as Anjaneya, the son of Anjana. And lastly he is known as Mahavira, or a great king. These are some different names of Hanuman. And then Brahma gave him a diamond necklace, and told him, "This is the highest benediction you can get. You will be the eternal servant of the eternal Lord, and only the eternal Lord will be able to recognize this necklace. That means you will be recognized by Him, and He will be recognized by you as the one who recognized the necklace." When

Ramacandra asked the beggar, "What kind of a beggar are you? You have a wonderful necklace on your neck." So Hanuman immediately recognized, that this is my worshippable Lord. And he immediately surrendered to Him. In this way he went to Sugriva, and Hanuman had so many other exploits too, when he was a small boy. After the sun-swallowing pastime there were so many other pastimes. He used to take elephants and tigers and play with them. One day he caught hold of a very wise elephant. He was holding it by the tusk, and he was also holding a tiger by the tail, and swinging them around. They were making some sound. This was Hanuman's fun. And then he saw an ashrama. The sage who lived here had never gotten angry in his life. He was known for his sense control. Hanuman thought to himself, "Now we will test his sense control." So he put the tiger and the elephant tied up together in front of his ashrama. This was early in the morning, during the brahma-muhurta time. So the rishi slowly opened the door and took his lota for taking bath. And then he looked out and saw this tiger, so he closed the door quickly. Up to that time he had constipation, but when he saw this tiger suddenly he felt nature calling. So he had to go out. But what could he do? There was a tiger outside his door. He looked out the door again, and this time he saw the elephant as well, so he quickly shut the door again. He had to pass. But how could he pass inside? He had to go out of the window, and there was a tree outside of the window, and he looked up and saw Hanuman at the top of the tree. "So you are the cause of this mischief. Come here!" Hanuman thought, "He's becoming angry. I must go." So he came down, and he became small and entered the window. The rishi gave Hanuman a curse that limited his strength. "Why did you curse me like this?" Hanuman asked. "This is only good for you. You are having your strength controlled so you can use it only for the Lord's service. And when the service is coming, the Lord will arrange for someone to remind you." So then Hanuman said, "I will never tie an elephant to a tiger any more. And I will certainly not put it in front of your ashrama. I'll put it somewhere else." So then he came back, and he did not play for a whole week. Ketari was asking, "Hanuman, how come there have been no complaints from anyone for a whole week? Have you become a good boy?" Hanuman said, "I don't want to give trouble to anyone." Then they heard a sound, a very nice sound. Ketari said, "What is this? It is Narada Muni coming!" Hanuman asked, "Who is this person?" Ketari replied, "He is a very great soul. He doesn't need any introduction. You just go to him and you will find out the greatness of this man." Immediately Hanuman jumped up and Narada was just on his way past their place, going to see some rishi, so Hanuman

jumped in his way and paid pranams. "Narada Muni, I heard that you are a very great person, so you must bless me. Without blessing me, you are not allowed to go." Narada said, "What blessing do you want?" Hanuman said, "Already the devas have given me so many blessings. I cannot think of anything else, so you think of a blessing, and you give it to me." Narada thought, "What blessing does Hanuman not have?" And so he said, "You will become expert in music." That was the only benediction left to give. So Hanuman got that benediction, and Narada Muni said, "So I have given you the benediction, and now I am going." Hanuman said, "One minute, one minute." "What do you want?" Narada asked. "How will I know that I am the most expert in music?" Hanuman inquired. "My father told me that you are the most expert in music, so you must do me a favour today. Give me the benediction that I will be more expert than you." So Narada said, "All right, I will sit somewhere and listen to you." "Shall I start singing?" Hanuman asked. "Yes." Narada Muni put his vina on a rock, and he sat down on the ground. So Hanuman selected that tune which would melt the rock, and he began to sing it. The rock melted, and the vina was in the liquid. He was singing and singing, and the vina was floating in the liquid rock. Narada was closing his eyes and enjoying, and he said, "All right Hanuman, you are the best musician. You can stop singing now." Hanuman said, "You open your eyes and tell me if I should I stop singing." Narada said, "How do you mean?" Hanuman replied, "You open your eyes." So Narada opened his eyes and looked around. He didn't notice the vina floating in the stone water. "Yes, you can stop singing." So then Hanuman stopped singing, and the liquid stone became rock, and the vina got stuck. Narada said, "I am going," and he took his vina, but it wouldn't move. "What did you do, Hanuman?" Hanuman said, "I only sung a song. You told me to sing a song, and you also gave me the ability. Now you are complaining. I have been a good boy for a whole week." Narada said, "One week of doing nothing means that before that week you did too much." And then Hanuman told him all about what he had done, swallowing the sun etc, and Narada became very pleased. Then he said, "Now whatever it was, you please sing the tune again, so I can get my vina." Hanuman said, "Well, I don't know...." Narada Muni said, "Please do it!" "No I won't," Hanuman said, and he jumped up and ran inside the palace. Narada Muni came in there and called out, "Hey Hanuman, come and get my vina out! I have to go." Just then Ketari came out, and when he saw Narada Muni he touched his feet. "What is my son doing, he is giving you some trouble?" Narada said, "Oh no, no trouble, just that he got my vina stuck in the rock." Ketari said, "Oh no, he has started his mischief again. Hanuman, get Narada's

vina out of the rock!" And then Hanuman said, "I want Narada Muni's feet to touch every room in this palace, that is why I was doing this. Now he has touched all the rooms, and I will release his vina. The dust from his lotus feet is so rare that what is the use of just having it in one part of our kingdom? We should have it all over." Narada said, "You are already blessed, because you are Lord Rama's eternal servant." So Hanuman went and sung for Narada, who quickly took his vina and left. In this way, Hanuman had so many wonderful pastimes. Then he told Ketari, "I want to get education. I have so many benedictions, but I need some education too, I need vidya. I am very much hankering for vidya." Ketari said, "But who could give you vidya? You have so many benedictions, but you also have uncontrollable behaviour. I can't find a guru for you, because you are so strong, and so naughty also." Hanuman said, "This means that you are not going to perform the duty of the father. You're not giving me any education." Ketari said, "I have to give you education, but you do one thing. You go to the Sun-god. He is the most powerful. Some time ago he was suppressed by you, but I can't think of anyone else. So you go to him." Hanuman went to see the Sun-god, and when the Sun-god saw Hanuman coming, he said, "It's Hanuman again. What is he here for? He's grown up now, so he must have stopped playing his mischief." Hanuman came up and paid his obeisances. The Sun-god said, "What are you here for now? Whom are you going to swallow?" Hanuman objected, "No, no, all that was because I was in ignorance. I still have so much ignorance, but I want to get some knowledge. I've heard that you are a great pandit, so please teach me. I've come to join your gurukula." So then the Sun-god looked down. He has a big sitting place in the front of his chariot. There, there are six million rishis sitting, and they are constantly reciting Yajur-veda, Rg-veda, Sama-veda and Atharva-veda to the Sun-god. So he looked to see if there was any vacant seat, but the whole place was filled up, so he said, "Sorry, but no admission." Hanuman said, "If there is no seat then I will stand and learn from you." The Sun-god said, "But I have to keep moving. If you stand in front of me then I won't be able to move and the seasons won't be there. I will be in trouble." Hanuman said, "Then I will move and learn." The Sun-god said, "All right. But you have to face me and move backwards. In this way you have to listen to me, and whatever I say you have to learn. I won't repeat it." So Hanuman was there in front of the Sun-god, and he was walking backwards. He was so sense-controlled that he could join the orbit of the sun. In 60 orbits he learnt everything, Rg, Sama, Yajur and Atharva Vedas.

The Sun-god spoke it, he heard it and immediately he knew it. And then he said, "Now I have finished. Everything you have said I have heard and I remember it." The Sun-god said, "Very good, but you have to give me some dakshina." Hanuman said, "Well what do you want? Do you want Indra's crown? You tell me anything and I will get it for you in a second." The Sun-god said, "No, I don't want any of that. Only one guru-dakshina I need from you. I have a monkey friend. You must become his minister. You must always protect his life." Hanuman said, "Oh? You have a monkey friend, and I should protect him? This is only glory for me. I will do it, I will protect him as my life." And then the Sun-god told him who was that monkey. It was Sugriva, and he is the son of the Sun-god. How Sugriva became the Sun-god's son is a wonderful pastime. There was one lady who was known as Narayani, and her husband was called Ugra-tapas. That means "ferocious austerities," but he never did any austerities. He was only engaged in sense gratification. He became so diseased and paralysed that he had to be carried in a basket. Narayani would carry him in a basket so that he could go to different places and get sense gratification. Ugra-tapas told Narayani, "You must take me to such and such prostitute today." So she was carrying him. While Ugra-tapas was in the basket and Narayani was carrying him, there was one rishi whose name was Bishmanda Rishi, and he had been put on a trident by a king because of some misunderstanding, and was suffering in that condition. He had tri-kalajnah, knowledge of past, present and future, and when he saw Ugra-tapas he knew he was going to a prostitute's place, and that he was crippled and being carried by his wife. So he got so upset, and forgot about his pain. He called out, "Hey Ugra-tapas, what are you doing? Your name is Ugra-tapas, and what is your life like? And now you are asking your wife to carry you to a prostitute's when you are paralysed. What kind of a person are you? You should die immediately. When the sun rises tomorrow you will die." When Narayani heard this she said, "When the sun rises tomorrow my husband will die? Then I curse that the sun will not rise." She cursed the sun. So the sun became motionless. The Sun-god's charioteer Aruna was getting ready, packing the horses etc, and then he looked back and saw the sun had become static. "Oh? It is a vacation for me. I never got any holiday, because there was never any chance. Let me have some fun." So he went and asked the sages that sit on the Sun-god's chariot, "How come the sun is not moving any more?" "This is the curse of a chaste lady," they replied. "How long will this curse last?" Aruna asked. "At least one day." "That's good," Aruna said. "One day is good. I can enjoy nicely." So Aruna got one day's holiday. He was thinking, "How can I enjoy this day? It never happened in the creation

before, and it will probably never happen again. The sun never goes on holiday. I only have one day, so I must get the highest enjoyment." So he took a book, like a tourist guide for the heavenly planets, and he found out that Indra was having a special feast and dinner in respect of some great personality, and Menaka was dancing at that festival. "Oh I must go and see that," he said. But in this party, only the invited guests were allowed. You had to bring an invitation, and you had to be dressed in a special design. It was only Indra's close friends. So he was wondering, "How will I go? I know, I will also become a dancer." So he turned into a woman, Aruna became Aruni. And this Aruni was so beautiful, because he always sat with the sun and he was shining so brightly. He came in front of Indra's palace. The gateman said, "Hey, who are you?" "I am Menaka's make-up assistant," she said. She forgot to put one line on her face, so I have to do it. I am the only one who is expert enough." "All right, you may come." So then Aruni entered. Menaka was dancing on one side and Aruni was hiding. And then Indra was looking through the crowd, and suddenly he saw Aruni. "She is more beautiful than Menaka," he said. So he immediately cancelled the party, and started showing everyone out. Aruni was going to leave, but Indra caught hold of her and said, "Wait a minute! Who are you?" Aruni said, "I am Menaka's make-up assistant. Leave me alone! I am going." "No you are not going, you are staying," Indra said. "I'm staying where?" "With me," Indra said. "No, I am not staying with you. I know your history," Aruni said. Indra said, "No, no, I will keep you next to Indrani." Aruni objected, "Even if you keep me more than Indrani, I cannot be here because I am a man." Indra said, "Don't play these games with me, I know you are a woman." Aruni said, "No I am not a woman! I am a man! I just turned myself into this form." Indra said, "Even then, you are the most beautiful woman that I have seen." Aruni said, "If you were to give me a conception, who would bring up the child? I am the charioteer of the Sun-god." Indra said, "Whatever or whoever you are, and whatever will come out of it, I'm going to enjoy you." Aruni agreed, and immediately there was a conception, and a deva was born. And then Aruni ran, because it was getting late already, and the Sun-god was slowly getting his movement back. At the last moment Aruna jumped on the chariot and grabbed the reins. The Sun-god said, "You're sure cutting it fine. Where did you go?" "Oh, nowhere," Aruna answered. "Tell me!" "Oh, I went to Indra's planet." "What did he do to you?" the Sun-god asked. "He gave me a conception." "How did he give you a conception?" Aruna said, "It's getting late now, we only have a few moments." The Sun-god said, "A few moments is alright. It needs only one moment. Let me see that beautiful form." Aruna objected, "No, no. This will

only cause more trouble." "No, I must see," said the Sun-god. "You are my servant." "Alright," said Aruna, and he became Aruni. In the next moment there was another conception. So this is deva life. Only a very few of them are thinking of Vishnu. The bulk of them think of Vishnu only when the demons come, and then when the demons leave they go back to their sense gratification. It is mentioned in the Vishnu Purana that one who hears this pastime loses the attraction for going to the heavenly planets. So now two babies were crying. This was not usually the way that birth happened in the heavenly planets, so all the devas were disturbed in their sense gratification. They all went to Brahma and Brahma approached Indra, saying, "You are the cause of this problem. You settle this down." "I can't have babies in the heavenly planets," Indra said. "We'll have to give them to someone." Then he remembered the king of Varanasa, Riksharaja, who had no children. He was performing austerities to please Indra so he could get a son. A benediction from the devas is usually something that devas don't want in the heavenly planets, so they give it away. So Riksharaja was standing on one leg to get some children, and Indra came and said, "Why are you standing on one leg? Here are two babies you can have." So they had two sons, Bali and Sugriva. Bali was the son of Indra, and Sugriva was the son of the Sun-god. And the Sun-god got the benediction of guru-dakshina from Hanuman that he would always protect Sugriva. In this way, when Bali was anointed the king after Riksharaja, Sugriva became his minister, and Hanuman became the counsellor or minister of Sugriva.

Chapter 7: The great monkey army

When the monkeys were looking for Sita, they were going to commit suicide on account of their not being able to find her. Angada was putting the kusa grass, and he said, "I'm going to die. I can't find Sita." The other monkeys said, "No, no, there is a nice secure place where we can go to live." Hanuman chastised them. "This is illusion," he said. Hanuman got so upset, and he was chastising Angada and the rest of the monkeys. "What are you trying to do? Do you want to end your life in a prestigious way, or do you want to go for some 'security'?" They were on a mission for Ramacandra. They had to find Sita and then come back with that information. Thirty thousand monkeys went on that mission. That was only in the south. In the north there were eighty thousand monkeys. And because east and west were not so important, there was only ten thousand in those places. The greatest corporals and generals of Sugriva were ordained to go, and they were told not to come back until they found Sita. Unfortunately all the other groups came back. The north, the east and the

west. But the southern party was still going. Hanuman, Jambavan, Angada and Nila were the greatest leaders of that group. We have discussed Hanuman's appearance already. Now we will discuss Jambavan. Jambavan is the oldest created being in the universe, apart from Brahma.

When Brahma was thinking of making the creation and he had the vision of the Lord, the Lord shook hands with him and gave him the information of Bhagavatam, aham evasya evagre. "I am before everything and after everything." Brahma was contemplating to create, and he was thinking, "How great is this creation, and how am I going to do it?" In the meantime, the Garbhodakasayi Vishnu was laying down on the snake, and from both of his ears, two drops of sweat came out. One drop became Madhu, a great demon, and the other became Kaitabha, another great demon. Madhu and Kaitabha came and met, and shook hands. They looked back and said, "We must finish this." "This is a demon. You take shelter of something, and then when you are done with it you destroy it. This Rakshasa mentality of Madhu and Kaitabha created a bad atmosphere and Brahma started sweating. The sweat came from his four faces. Lord Vishnu got up and looked at Madhu and Kaitabha and said, "O great personalities Madhu and Kaitabha, please give me a benediction." They said, "This is easy! He is surrendering to us. Do you know who we are?" they addressed Him. "Oh, you are the great Madhu and Kaitabha, supremely powerful persons." They said, "What benediction do you want, Vishnu?" Lord Vishnu said, "You give Me a benediction that I can fight with you." "Oh, you want a fight?" they said. "That is what we are expecting too. Now it is more prestigious for us, because it is our benediction. Yes You can fight with us, but one thing. If ever you think that You want to kill us, You can only kill us in a place where there is no earth, no water, no air, no fire, no ether, no mind, no intelligence and no false ego. You can kill us in that spot." That means that they cannot be killed anywhere in the universe, that was what they were thinking. They didn't know anything beyond the universe, because they were demons. Then Vishnu started fighting with them, and it went on for a long time. While the fight was going on, Brahma was sweating again because of the whole evil atmosphere created by Madhu and Kaitabha. This time with the sweat came a small entity, and it was there on his cheek. It was moving around there. Brahma said, "What is this?" and he looked at it. It started growing, so he threw it on the floor. It grew more, and it was a bear. No species were present at that time. "What is this?" Brahma said. Black bear with so much hair on the body, and it grew and grew and became so strong. It spoke in Sanskrit. He spoke to Brahma, "You have created me, so where shall I go?" Brahma said, "I created something

without my knowledge. You go to Jambunada." That was one piece of land in the water of dissolution, Jambunada-ksetra. So immediately he entered Jambunada, and he sat down there and was looking around. What he saw was Madhu and Kaitabha fighting. He was clapping his hands and whistling, and he called out, "Wonderful! Hit him on the head!" He was the audience. Vishnu was going up into the sky and picking them up and throwing them. They were so strong, coming from the ear of Vishnu, so they were giving a good fight. Garbhodakasayi Vishnu was laying down on Sesha naga for a long time, so he wanted to have some pastime. He wanted to have some entertainment, so He created somebody and started fighting. He took Madhu and Kaitabha on his lap, and then with His hand he crushed them. They were finished, because there was no earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence or false ego. His was a transcendental body. Jambavan jumped up and down and said, "Wonderful, wonderful fight! Can I see more?" Vishnu said, "You wait for the creation to start. Then there will be so many fights." So creation started, and the Manvantaras came one by one. There was a great dissolution, and Satyavrata was on the boat, and a golden fish came, a huge big fish with a horn. With Vasuki, the snake, they tied the fish's horn to that boat. The sapta-rishis were there and Jambavan was sitting there looking. "Aah, what a nice fish," he said, and he circumambulated the fish. The fish was circumambulating the whole universe. In this way Jambavan had a good engagement at that time. Jambavan will not die, he is a ciran-jiva. He was getting old, but he was quite strong. Then Kurma-avatar came, and Jambavan witnessed that also. He also was there when Varaha-avatar slapped Hiranyaksa. Hiranyaksa was slapped and he went up circling around, and while he was circling around his eyes came out of his sockets, and Jambavan was playing with them. "What a wonderful fight!" That was finished, and he saw Nrsimhadeva also. And then Vamanadeva appeared. When Vamanadeva grew into a huge big figure lifting his leg and piercing the universe from the top, Jambavan, in six moments, circled this great form of Trivikrama eighteen times. That was the speed of Jambavan. He was in ecstasy, "Oh! What a beautiful form!" He was going around and around, eighteen times in six moments. When he was coming back down he was in so much ecstasy, and he scratched Mount Meru with his toe-nails. Meru got upset. Meru came in person and said, "Hey, you dirty bear! What are you doing to me? You are touching me with your foot. Even the sapta-rishis don't do this, they float over me. They don't set foot on me. You are doing this, so you become old. Because you are young and so fast, you have offended me. You become old and weak." He cursed him. So Jambavan became very old.

Meru told him, "Although you are old, when the pastimes of Lord Ramacandra come, you will do a lot of service for Him." This was Jambavan. And Jambavan was called by Sugriva, who said to him, "Jambavan, you are the oldest. There is nothing that you don't know. There is no deva that you don't know. There is no avatar that you haven't seen. There is no ocean that you don't know. You know everything in this creation. So you must help Angada, the son of Bali. Find out where Sita is." Jambavan agreed, and he told Angada, "Don't worry. I cannot fly like before, but I know every place. I can be your guide in this area of south India. Somehow we will find Mother Sita." Then there was Nila. Nila was also a Brahma-putra, a mental son of Brahma, and he was an engineer, a chemist and a scientist. He was also a bear, a bear scientist. So this scientist could float stones, reduce and increase the density of stone, he was such a physicist and chemist that he could take different things, mix them up and create diverse effects of colour, smell, and various feelings. He could change feelings by chemical combination. He could take something and mix with something else, and you would feel miserable. By another combination he could make one's mind by chemicals, without that person having to take it, unlike the drugs of today. He constructed a kingdom in Kishkinda which was so strong. It was complete stone, no cement or concrete. Just stone on top of stone. It was constructed so each stone was holding another, and it was a huge big palace, very strong. This is Nila. Hanuman, Jambavan, Nila and Angada set forward with thirty thousand vanaras. They looked everywhere, but couldn't find anything. Then they came to the Vindhya mountains. By the time they had crossed the forest, which had no leaves (big trees are there, but they are only branches because one rishi's son cursed the forest, "You will become barren"). So many trees are there but there are no leaves. No leaves means no flowers, and no flowers means no fruit, so all the monkeys were hungry. Already they had been about three weeks with no water and no food. They didn't know what to do. They saw a black cave in front of the Vindhya mountains. Hanuman said to Angada, "We are great warriors, so we must have some thrill. Let us enter this cave." All the monkeys said, "No, no, we are not going inside this cave. Already there is no water, no food, and if you go inside this cave there will be no light. And if you go deeper there will be no air, and we will all die." So Hanuman said, "Whoever wants to go, raise their hand." So Jambavan, Angada, Nila and of course Hanuman, and a few other monkeys, they all raised their hands. Hanuman said, "All right, hold my tail." So Angada was holding his tail, and Nila was holding Angada's tail. Jambavan was in the middle, because he was old and they didn't want to lose him, and there

were other monkeys and all of them started walking into this cave. The only symptoms that they saw was some birds coming from inside, and their wings were wet. Hanuman said, "Look, their wings are wet. That means some water is there. And if the birds are coming from inside the cave that means some people must be living there. It must be a nice place, so everyone should come." He was preaching like this, and the monkeys were one by one joining. A few were standing there and wondering what to do. They thought, "Hanuman, Jambavan and everyone else are all going, and we are standing here. There is no water here, and they are the only protection for us. If they are gone, what will we do?" So they also decided to go. All the monkeys joined, they all went into the cave. Every five minutes Jambavan was shouting the names of all the different monkeys, just to check that everyone was there, because it was so dark, you couldn't see anything. And after crossing eighty miles in complete darkness, finally there was a glimmer of light coming. Hanuman shouted, "Rama! Rama! Rama! There is light here. Maybe there are some people and we can get some food. We are hungry monkeys." So they all went towards the light and discovered a beautiful city inside the cave. And so many mansions were there. These mansions were all made with gold and rubies and diamonds, they couldn't believe their eyes. There was lakes and lotus flowers, nice creepers and fruits. Angada said, "Don't believe this. It may be the work of some demon, that as soon as we go in he will swallow us. Don't touch anything. Keep leaping." They were leaping from one place to another, and then they leaped into a mansion. Without making any sound they were inside and looking around. They found one woman who was dressed in tiger skin, with matted locks of hair. She had a trident in her hand. "What is this?" they said. "She looks like a babaji, and she is in this wonderful palace." Hanuman went in front, and he folded his hands. Hanuman is very good in talking. He gave a smile. He said, "Please tell us who you are. You look like a very spiritually advanced person." Flattery. "I hope you are not a demoness. But you don't look like one, you look very pious. So you must tell us who you are." She said, "First you tell me who you are. How did you get inside this place? This is my place human beings, gandharvas, vanaras, can never come here. Only celestials can come here." Jambavan was mumbling, "Yes, yes, they are all celestials. They only look like monkeys." Angada asked him, "What did you say?" "No, no, " Jambavan replied. "I am just telling something old." Jambavan had been in Rama-lila before, and every time they had gone in search of Sita, and every time they had gone into this cave also. Every time he saw something like that, he would say, because he has seen it so many times. They were seeing it for the first time, because

devas keep changing, but Jambavan is the same Jambavan. Hanuman said, "We are all servants of Lord Ramacandra, the son of Dasaratha." Then she said, "This Ramacandra, I don't think He's the son of an earthly king, because otherwise how just by chanting His name could you cross that dark cave. It is not possible for anyone to do that. This must be an incarnation of Vishnu." Jambavan said, "She also knows so much. I know that He is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and I also know who will find Sita." Some monkeys said, "What did you say?" Jambavan said, "Don't listen to me. I'm just an old bear, and old people always mumble like this." Hanuman and this lady got into a good conversation. Hanuman pleased her, and she told her identity. She was a friend of Hema, and Hema was the daughter of Mount Meru. This Hema was once being kept captive in that city by one great demon called Mayasura. He was a great magician. Indra came, and he sent his vakra, and he finished this demon Maya. He took charge of Hema, and she became Indra's wife. Hema was alone in that huge big magical city, so Indra requested Meru to send his daughter so they could have some association. Hema had gone out somewhere, so that is why this lady was there. She was an ascetic, and she believed in worship of impersonal Brahman, and mukti. She was there with tiger skin and trident. This was the pastime. Hanuman said, "We are very hungry, and we are monkeys. Please give us something to eat." "No problem," she said. "You just go into this garden and you can eat plenty of fruits, fill your stomachs." So the whole army went into this beautiful garden of Mayasura, and they ate stomachs full. They came to drink water, and after drinking water she supplied them with wine which they also took. They took a little wine. The wine back then was just a drink, not an intoxicant. In this way they enjoyed nicely, and they asked her, "You please tell us how we can now get out of the cave." She said, "Get out of this cave? No, you can never get out of this cave." They said, "What? You've fed us nicely, you've given us so much nice drink, and now you're going to keep us in prison?" Hanuman took his club and said, "You want to see this?" She said, "Wait a minute, you just ate in my house. You can't fight with me. I said, 'You can't get out of the cave'. I never said that you won't go out of the cave. All of you, close your eyes." They all closed their eyes. And then she said, "Now open your eyes." And when they opened their eyes they were not there. In front of them was a huge big ocean, Mahodadhi. They were somewhere between Rameshvara and Puri, but this land extended so many miles down in Treta-yuga. The Ceylon that we are seeing today is not the same Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is further down, because Hanuman flew one hundred yojanas. A yojana is eight miles. Eight hundred miles is not the distance from Rameshvara to

Ceylon. You can reach it in forty five minutes by a boat. It's not that far. It is mentioned that they were on top of a mountain from where Hanuman flew, and in the area of Rameshvaram you don't find any mountains. So that area from where Hanuman jumped, the Gandha-madana hills, is much more down. And that is all eaten up by ocean. We shouldn't think that this was the shore where they were standing. They were miles down at that time, because the ocean comes and eats the land. Hanuman and the others saw this Mahodadhi ocean. It was very fierce. Angada said, "We have come to the end of the land. Where is Sita? We have not found her. How can we go back, now that is a month? We started on the full moon night, and now it is again full moon night." Angada felt very bad. He said, "Bring some darba grass." He placed it with the tips facing the north. He was going to do a Prayopavesha. Prayopavesha means that when a great personality cannot accomplish a task which he promised he would do, he would sit on the kusa grass and leave his body by fasting. He was sitting there on the kusa grass. Hanuman was sitting there with his head in his hands looking at the ocean. He thought, "We have come to a blank disc. What is going on now? Should I go back or forward? What should I do?" Jambavan was taking rest, because he was tired after drinking wine and eating so many fruits. Other monkeys were wandering around and looking here and there. Hanuman saw the monkeys, and he asked them, "What are you going to do?" They said, "We have a good idea. We will go back to the cave. Plenty of fruits, plenty of wine. You cannot get out. If you cannot get out, you cannot get in, and no-one will come to trouble us. We will be happy there." Hanuman said, "What a silly idea. This is maya. Ramacandra is our Lord. What do you need this security for? You want to take shelter in wine and fruit? You must be a monkey." He chastised them. Angada was sitting there chanting mantras, and preparing to leave his body. Hanuman also approached him. "Angada, you are a prince. What are you doing looking to the north, sitting on kusa grass? This is not meant for strong people. Look at your shoulders, they're so strong. They are supposed to be for fighting for Lord Ramacandra. Here you are fasting, preparing to die. What are you going to accomplish because of this? You will die. And everyone will say, 'That son of Bali is a useless monkey. He died because he couldn't accomplish his mission.'" Angada said, "You are saying all this, but you tell me, what are we supposed to do? If I go back Sugriva will kill me and take the kingdom. Already he planned somehow to kill my father. Now he has got a reason to kill me. He will say, 'Now you didn't accomplish your mission so I will kill you.' No-one will say anything, and he will have the kingdom. Let him have the kingdom anyway, let me just die. At least he won't die." Hanuman

realised he would have to use politics here. Samadhana bheda danda. There are four ways of preaching. First you speak nicely, and then you offer something, then you make a bheda, a difference of opinion between the groups. "Do you know what he said about you?" If none of those work, you use the stick, danda. Hanuman thought, now I have to use bheda, politics. He said, "Yes, Sugriva is like that. He may take the whole kingdom, but your mother is there. If you die, she will certainly suffer. He will give her no food, no cloth and no respect. She will beg in the street. Your mother!" Angada said, "No!" And he threw the kusa grass away. "I'm not fasting!" Hanuman said, "If you die, what is the benefit? You must go back now. Somehow or other we must convince him that we couldn't find Sita." Angada said, "How will I go back? I have no strength." Hanuman said, "You sit down. I will tell you the pastimes of Lord Ramacandra. Then you will gain strength." He began to describe the pastimes of Ramacandra. They discussed all these wonderful things of how Lord Ramacandra broke the bow, how he defeated Parasurama, how he caressed Jatayu and cremated him. As soon as they were talking about that, they saw some change in the atmosphere. Everything was trembling and shaking. Hanuman caught hold of Angada and said, "Some demon is coming." They were looking everywhere, and then from under the mountainside they saw two big feet coming out. They looked like bird's feet, and each nail was about two kilometres long. Angada said, "That's it. All thirty thousand monkeys will be eaten by this bird demon now. Look at his fingers, they are so big!" Slowly the bird came into sight, and then they noted that this bird did not have any speed. It was dragging itself, slowly. They saw the wings also, which were each 14 yojanas long. However, the wings were broken, and they looked completely burned. They looked like charcoal. He was dragging himself with great difficulty, and then slowly his face came into view, a huge beak. He opened his mouth and spoke, "Who is talking about my brother Jatayu?" So many monkeys were blown over just by the air coming out of his mouth. Jambavan was called, and Hanuman said, "Look after the monkeys, we must take care of this person. He may be useful to us." They both came to him, and asked him, "Who are you? We are talking of Jatayu, and I am Hanuman and this is Angada. I am the son of Vayu, and we are messengers of Rama." Slowly the bird opened his eyes and said, "Rama? Is this the son of Dasaratha?" Hanuman said, "Yes, this is the same Rama." The bird continued, "He was exiled to the forest. Has he completed his exile?" "What a wonderful bird," Angada remarked. "He is sitting under the mountain and cannot see anything, yet he knows history. Yes they are still in exile because they lost their wife. Sita has been taken by Ravana." "The

bird said, "Ravana! Aargh! I will eat him up." Hanuman said, "Oh very good! Please do it." The bird said, "But I cannot fly. My wings are broken. I am Sampati, the elder brother of Jatayu. I am much stronger than Jatayu. I heard that Jatayu was killed by Ravana. I want to kill him, but I can't kill him as I have entered into an agreement with him." Long ago when Sampati was flying, when he was young and very strong, Ravana was flying with somebody's wife. This is what he does all the time. Once he was doing a fire sacrifice, and when Agni came to give a blessing, he took Agni's wife. Ravana is famous for taking people's wives. Sampati stopped him and said, "Where are you going? Who is this woman?" Ravana said, "This is Nalakuvera's wife." Sampati said, "You had better leave her right here, otherwise you don't know what I will do to you." Ravana said, "Ah, you are just a dirty bird." So he took one of his feet and caught hold of Ravana and crushed him. Blood came out of his body, and that is why Ravana has five holes in his body, from Sampati's claw. Ravana covers these so no-one can see him. But there is one hole which he doesn't cover on his chest. That is the tusk of Airavata. He wants to show that because it is a great fighting wound. At that time Ravana touched Sampati's feet. "Although you are a bird, I touch your feet. Please make an agreement with me. I won't come in your area and do anything, and you don't come in my area." They signed an agreement. Because of this, Sampati was bound by dharma. Hanuman asked Sampati, "And how have you become old like this?" Sampati said, "Once Jatayu and I were having a competition, and we were flying higher and higher. But we came very close to the sun, and I saw Jatayu was burning. So to protect him I put my wings over him. However, I also was very close to the sun, and my wings got burnt and came loose. After that I don't know where my brother went. You are the first I have heard say that he died in the service of Lord Ramacandra. I have stayed here so long, and a rishi once told me that when I told you where Sita was, at that time I would get my strength back." Hanuman became very excited, "What did you say?" Sampati repeated, "When I tell you where Sita is..." Hanuman cut him short, "You know where Sita is?" And all the monkeys started jumping up and down. "We've found Sita, we've found Sita!" Sampati said, "Can you please move me out of this cave? I have to climb on top of the Vindhya mountains to look at it." Angada asked, "Look at what?" "To look at Lanka," the bird replied. Angada said, "Look at Lanka? It is eight hundred miles away!" Hanuman came close to Angada and said, "Just look at this bird. He's so huge, fourteen yojanas each wing. This bird itself is about thirty yojanas long. Can you imagine how much power he must have in his eyes? He can sit here and see Lanka!" With great difficulty all the

monkeys came under Sampati and moved him. Thirty thousand monkeys were trying so hard. It was difficult for them to somehow put him on top of the rock with his wings like that. Then he lifted his beak and said, "I can see Sri Lanka. I can see the ten-story building of Ravana. I can see the roof, and Ravana standing on the top." He could see everything, he had such optical power. Sampati is the son of Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun-god, so he must be very powerful. "I cannot see Sita," he continued, "But Ravana is walking here and there. So many demons are around. I can see a forest of Ashoka trees. I can see a yellow cloth hanging there." As soon as he said that, Hanuman said, "Yes, yellow cloth. That is what Mother Sita was wearing." Previously Sita had taken some ornaments, put them in yellow cloth that she tore from her sari, and threw them down. Hanuman picked them up before Rama came to Kishkinda, and Laksmana identified them as Sita's jewellery. Hanuman became very happy. Even while they were looking, slowly Sampati's wings became straight, and new feathers were coming out of his body. Next moment they heard a loud, "Rama! "Sampati had chanted Rama. When he started "Ra" he was already up in the sky. By the time they had heard the whole world he was just a point in the distant sky. Sampati went to the heavenly planets. He didn't want to be there, because he wanted so desperately to kill Ravana, but because of the pact he couldn't do it. So he just helped them and then went. They had found out where Sita was. Hanuman was asked by Jambavan, "You must leap over this ocean, and go to Sri Lanka." Hanuman said, "This ocean is so big. How will I do it?" Jambavan then told Hanuman his own pastimes. How he got the sun planet inside his mouth etc. As Jambavan was narrating, Hanuman began to grow. He became bigger and bigger and bigger. He became so big that Valmiki says his shadow was fifty yojanas long. All the monkeys were like mosquitoes in front of him. Then he said to Jambavan, "Yes, I am the servant of Rama! I am the son of Vayu. No-one can stop me! I will crush Ravana with my thumb, and I will bring Sita on my shoulder! There is no need for Ramacandra to go. I am going now." He chanted "Rama!" He started with "Ra," and he ended with "m". When he said "m" he was in Sri Lanka. That was how fast he was. Being an angsha of Lord Shiva, he took the path that Lord Shiva travels. There are different levels that different entities travel at. Gandharvas travel very close to earth, and after Gandharvas come Kinnaras, after Kinnaras come Vanaras, and after Vanaras come Siddhas, after Siddhas come Caranas, and after Caranas come bigger devas like Ganesh or Kartikeya, and then comes Lord Shiva's tract. In that area no-one flies. It is Lord Siva's zone. That is where Hanuman went. He was flying fearlessly. In this way, by chanting Rama

only once, Hanuman reached Sri Lanka. Before reaching Sri Lanka he encountered many disturbances, as well as much help on the way. There was one mountain called Mainata Parvata. which can grow simply by thinking. The ocean king told Mainata Parvata, "Hanuman, the servant of Rama, is coming, and he must take some rest. He is leaping in one breath, so you must grow upwards and give him somewhere to rest." Mainata Parvata grew upwards to the sky and stopped Hanuman. Hanuman said, "What's this? There is no mountain here. Who are you?" Hanuman can speak not only from his mouth but from any hole in his body, this was his yogic perfection. He had only one breath, so he didn't use his mouth which he was using to chant Rama. "M" had to be pronounced in Sri Lanka, and he was still on "Ra". He was talking through some other hole. Mainaka Parvata thought, "This is a wonderful phenomenon. A monkey with a long tail speaking through the holes of the body. Please put your lotus feet on my head," the mountain said, "because I have to show to the ocean king that I have served you." Hanuman said, "No rest when I am doing Rama-seva. I am going." The devas thought, "This is not correct that he reaches Lanka so easily. There must be some fun." So they called a great snake called Sarasa. This Sarasa was ordered to stop Hanuman. This Sarasa took the form of a demoness. She came there and opened her mouth. Hanuman was flowing and she was growing upwards, her mouth open like a big cave. Hanuman said, "Please move away from here. I am on the Lord's mission." "No no no," she said. "Brahma has given me a benediction that unless somebody goes in my mouth, he cannot pass by." Hanuman said, "Ah, but this mouth is too small for me." And he started growing more. She started growing also, making her mouth bigger, so he also grew. She grew more. They were growing and growing, and her mouth became half the size of the universe. At that time Hanuman suddenly became small, and he entered the mouth and came out. Then he said, "See, I have defeated you. I entered your mouth and came out again. Now you please bless me." So she gave blessings, and then he went. Another great demoness came and said, "She didn't swallow you, but I must swallow you." She also did the same thing. Hanuman also asked the same thing. "You please open your mouth a little wider so you can eat me comfortably." She opened her mouth wider, and Hanuman became small. Though he became small, the strength is same. He went inside the mouth, and hit the back of her mouth. By that hitting, blood came out and she died. Then Hanuman got her blessings too, while she was dying. She was some Gandharvika that had been cursed to become a demoness. She said, "Now I am killed by Hanuman, I will get liberation." So she blessed Hanuman. She said, "There is one more person that you

have to kill, at the entrance gate." Hanuman landed in Sri Lanka. He looked at Lanka, a beautiful city. He felt very bad. "Why should a demon have such a beautiful city?" He made up his mind, "Before I go from here, I will destroy this city, somehow or other." He came and Lankani was sitting there, a great demoness with a trident. So Hanuman became a small monkey, very small, and he was running inside the gate. She was sitting there and she said, "Wait! You are not going." "She is very intelligent," Hanuman said. "I am so small and she saw me." He climbed on her hand and up to her shoulder. He looked at her and said, "I am a small monkey, please let me in. I want to eat some fruits." "Fruits?" she asked. "What fruits are you going to eat?" Hanuman said, "I heard that there are beautiful mangoes, and Ravana is keeping them only for himself." She said, "I will get you any mango outside this gate. There are so many gardens here. Why are you going inside for food?" Hanuman said, "Don't waste my time. You'd better let me in." She was shocked. "What? You are just sitting on my shoulder. Don't you know who I am? I am Lankani." Hanuman said, "You are Lankani? I will slap you." She was amused. "You will slap me? You can't even reach my cheek." "Please take me to your cheek," Hanuman said. She took Hanuman and placed him next to her cheek. He slapped her and she fell down and blood came from her mouth. He was so small, but his strength was the same as when his size was normal. Then he went inside the city.

This article was a pravachan (lecture given by His Grace Atma Tattva Prabhu

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