

Tara

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Genesis

1 The Beginning

The First

- 1 Let it be known to all who come,
- 2 For now and for ever more,
- 3 These be the true words of the Beginning:
- 4 Of the origins of the first races of men,
- 5 And the creation of all forms of life;
- 6 Of the origin of the changes of seasons,
- 7 And the creation of the entire world;
- 8 Of the origin of the sun and moon,
- 9 And the creation of all the heavens;
- 10 Of the meaning of life and death;
- 11 And the existence of life beyond death.
- 12 Let it be known to all whom these presents come,
- 13 These be the true words of the Ancients:
- 14 Of the wisest and holiest of men,
- 15 And the knowledge of the true words of the Beginning;
- 16 Of the origin of good and evil,
- 17 And the remembrance of many great heroes;
- 18 Of great tribulations and calamity,
- 19 And how such trials were overcome;
- 20 Of the rule of law and community,
- 21 And by what means law and harmony be restored.
- 22 Let all then who have ears, hear!
- 23 These be the words of the Creator of all existence,
- 24 The Father-Mother of all lesser gods.
- 25 Change then not one word,
- 26 Lest you be judged for such transgression.
- 27 Utter then no falsity,
- 28 By which you may condemn yourself.
- 29 Instead, may you honor the word,
- 30 As the word does honor you.
- 31 May you and your children be blessed;

- 32 May your path of life be joyous and fruitful;
33 And may you remember what and who you are.

The Word

- 1 In the beginning was the Word,
2 And the word be the Divine Father-Mother Creator:
3 For no other thought had yet been created,
4 No other word had yet been spoken,
5 Nor other form yet existed.
6 All was void.
7 No light or darkness;
8 No stars or heavens;
9 No earth and rivers;
10 No life and seasons;
11 And no animals or races of men.
12 And the Divine Father-Mother Creator said:
13 Let there be existence,
14 For the Divine Father-Mother Creator was alone.
15 And so the Divine Father-Mother Creator did conceive a thought,
16 A thought of himself and herself,
17 And the Divine Father-Mother Creator did then create the Universe,
18 As a dream of infinite potential.
19 As the great primordial waters called Yahu.
20 And the Divine Father-Mother Creator did say,
21 As you are my mirror, if I were to look away,
22 You would cease to exist;
23 So I pledge to remain observant,
24 As you are my reflection,
25 Yet all change must come from within you.
26 So it be every thought has meaning,
27 And every action comes from intention,
28 And the simplest of thoughts never die,
29 And everything is connected,
30 And everything has purpose.
31 Honor then the Divine Creator-Mother,
32 And guard your thoughts.
33 For your word and intention is your binding to the otherworld.



1 Honesty

The Shepherd Boy

- 1 A young shepherd boy tending the village sheep alone,
- 2 Did wish for an easier burden,
- 3 When at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest,
- 4 He did strike upon a plan.
- 5 He rushed down towards the village crying:
- 6 Wolf! Wolf!
- 7 The villagers armed themselves,
- 8 And rushed forward to greet the boy,
- 9 Yet no wolf was to be found.
- 10 This pleased the boy so much,
- 11 A few days after he repeated the same trick,
- 12 And again the villagers rushed to protect the boy and the flock.
- 13 Yet the villagers had grown wary of the young boy,
- 14 So when a wolf did appear from the forest and menace the sheep,
- 15 The boy cried Wolf! Wolf! in earnest,
- 16 And no one stirred or did come to his rescue.
- 17 Thus said the village elder:
- 18 A liar may not be believed, even when he may speak the truth.

Luki and the Axe man

- 1 An Axe man was felling wood by the side of a deep river,
- 2 When his axe slipped from his hands and flew into the waters.
- 3 Deprived of his means of livelihood,
- 4 The man sat down by the river bank and lamented his ill fortune.
- 5 Luki then appeared and demanded to know the cause of his lament.
- 6 Upon which the man repeated the tale of his misfortune.
- 7 At that moment Luki plunged into the river,
- 8 Then returned holding a golden axe.
- 9 He asked the man if this is the source of his ill fortune?
- 10 The man replied, that although a thing of beauty and value,
- 11 It is not rightfully mine to keep.
- 12 Luki then plunged again into the river and then produced as Silver Axe.
- 13 Again the man replied it was not his to use.
- 14 Finally, Luki plunged and returned from the river with an iron axe.

- 15 The man then exclaimed to Luki that this was indeed his to use,
16 And that his fortune be restored.
17 To which Luki replied:
18 Good and honest sir, though your body shall weaken and decay,
19 And that you shall have days of grief and woe,
20 Your life shall be all the richer,
21 For you value that to which you have been entrusted,
22 And do not covet that which does not belong to you.

The Goatherd and Horn

- 1 A young apprentice Goatherd sought to return a stray Goat to the flock.
2 The Goatherd had entrusted him with his prize horn to which all the Goats were well acquainted.
3 Yet as hard as he tried, the apprentice Goatherd failed to entice the Goat back with the Horn.
4 In frustration and anger, he threw down the Horn causing it to break.
5 Whereupon, at the ceasing of such berating, the Goat returned to the flock by his own volition.
6 As the Goat passed by, the young Goatherd begged the Goat not to speak of the broken horn.
7 To which the Goat said thus: Verily, my testimony shall not matter. For the horn will speak for itself even if I be silent.

2 Unity

The Old Man and the Sticks

- 1 An old man near death summoned his sons,
2 For soon would be his last words.
3 Before they did come he commanded his head steward:
4 Bring me an axe and a bundle of sticks,
5 Wrapped tightly by a leather strap.
6 When the eldest son appeared, the old man said to him:
7 Pick up the axe and with one strike break this bundle of sticks.
8 But with all his strength, he could not break the bundle of sticks.
9 The old man repeated the challenge to the rest of his sons,
10 And all failed to break the bundle of sticks with one clear blow.
11 The old man then commanded his steward to untie the bundle,
12 And hand each son a separate stick,
13 That they may seek to break it by their own strength.
14 And so it was each son was given a stick,
15 And each son easily broke a stick with their own strength.
16 Thus, said the old man:
17 Even the weakest when united,
18 Are unconquerable.

The Four Oxen and the Crocodile

- 1 A Crocodile used to lurk about the waterways near a field in which four Oxen did dwell.
- 2 Many a time he did try to attack them,
- 3 But whenever he came near, they turned their tails to one another,
- 4 So that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them.
- 5 One day, the Crocodile came upon a plan.
- 6 The Crocodile did say to the Oxen:
- 7 Honorable foe, your strategy to defeat me is most deserving.
- 8 Pray tell me, which one of you is more deserving of praise for such a plan?
- 9 Whereupon the Oxen fell into a quarrel amongst themselves,
- 10 As to whom was more deserving.
- 11 Soon quarreling turned to blows as the four Oxen fought amongst themselves.
- 12 Finally, when all four Oxen had finished quarreling and fighting one another,
- 13 The Crocodile snatched each one and made an end to all four.
- 14 As the final Oxen was within the jaws of the Crocodile he cried out:
- 15 Alas! Even Pride and Arrogance may destroy even the safest of lands.

3 Respect

The Master and the Talents

- 1 A wealthy master planning to take a great journey,
- 2 Did first entrust a great fortune to his most trusted servants.
- 3 Upon his return after a long absence,
- 4 The man called his servants for an accounting:
- 5 The first did account: My Lord, you entrusted me with the wealth of one talent,
- 6 Whereupon I did work day and night and have produced one more in value.
- 7 The master then said: Well done, good and faithful servant.
- 8 You were entrusted with only a few things, but have proven you can and shall be entrusted with much more.
- 9 The second did account: My Lord, you entrusted me with two talents,
- 10 Whereupon I did use my skill and effort and produced three more.
- 11 The master then said: Well done, wise and gifted servant.
- 12 You were entrusted with more and yet have proven you can and shall be entrusted with all the riches of this house.
- 13 The third did then account: My Lord, you entrusted me with five talents,
- 14 Yet I was afraid of what might be lost and did fear your retribution and so did hide such talents in the earth until your return that they might not be lost.
- 15 But the master answered him: You ungrateful and selfish servant.
- 16 Of all my most entrusted servants I gave you the most, and yet you did the least.
- 17 I did not seek profit nor demand great hardship from you,
- 18 Only that you honor and use that which I entrusted to you.

- 19 Pity the man then who is given so much yet does so little to better the world.
- 20 For better if he never had been born than to suffer the ages of torment and infamy,
- 21 Of being known as one who wasted so much of that which was entrusted to him.

The Heifer and the Ox

- 1 A Heifer saw an Ox hard at work harnessed to a plow,
- 2 And tormented him with reflections on his unhappy fate in being compelled to labor.
- 3 Shortly afterwards, at the harvest festival, the owner released the Ox from his yoke,
- 4 But bound the Heifer with cords and led him away to the altar to be slain in honor of the occasion.
- 5 The Ox saw what was being done and to the Heifer said thus:
- 6 As heaven is my witness, I forgive you.
- 7 For this you were allowed to live in idleness, because you were presently to be sacrificed.

4 Honor

The Lion and the Mouse

- 1 A Lion was once asleep when a little Mouse chasing a moth did run up and down upon him.
- 2 The scurrying on his fur awoke the Lion,
- 3 Who then trapped the offending Mouse by its tail with one of his paws.
- 4 Just before the Lion was about to devour the Mouse, it did plead:
- 5 Pardon me Oh King. For I, such a little mouse, did awake and offend thee.
- 6 Forgive me this day, and I pledge my word I shall some day return the favor.
- 7 Upon such a boastful and eloquent plea, the Lion did reply:
- 8 You speak well Mouse, though I cannot foresee a time when you could possibly fulfill your oath.
- 9 Go on your way and for the sake of a long life, do not go aggravating any more beasts.
- 10 The Lion lifted his paw and the Mouse hurried away.
- 11 Some time later, the Lion was caught by hunters who brought him to the city of a cruel King,
- 12 Who did enjoy creating the false spectacle before an audience of himself as a great hunter defeating wild beasts.
- 13 Within the dungeons, the same little Mouse which the Lion had previously spared did pass by.
- 14 At seeing the Lion, the Mouse did remind him of his solemn oath and proceeded to seek a way for his release.
- 15 The Lion in response did say: Save your strength little Mouse, for my fate is sealed. There be nothing even an elephant could do for me.
- 16 Upon these words, the Mouse hatched an idea.
- 17 He spoke to the other animals who were also imprisoned as to his oath that he would repay his honor debt to the Lion.
- 18 So it was the elephant that used its trunk to steal the keys;
- 19 The monkeys that used the keys to release the beasts and the Lion;
- 20 The horses that protested to the soldiers they were lame;
- 21 And the rats and mice that gnawed the ropes to the gates so that none of the Kings guards could escape after them.

- 22 At the edge of the forest, the Lion bid farewell to the Mouse that saved him and said thus:
- 23 Above all, you have proven that when even the smallest and weakest have honor, wit and courage,
- 24 They can defeat even the greatest of enemies.

The Travelers and the Bandit King

- 1 A party of Travelers were attacked on a remote stretch of road by fierce bandits killing all, except two men.
- 2 Of the two survivors, one man was known to always speak the truth and the other to speak nothing but lies.
- 3 One of the robbers, who had raised himself to be King, commanded them to be brought before him.
- 4 He ordered that all the bandits stand to attention in a long row on his right hand and on his left in front of a great throne.
- 5 After these preparations the captured men were brought before him and the Bandit King greeted them saying:
- 6 Verily, your life hangs in the balance of the question I ask you thus: that what sort of a king I be to you, O strangers?
- 7 Before the lying Traveler could speak, the truthful Traveler replied: Alas! You be a murderer and a tyrant.
- 8 For no amount of ceremony or pageantry can hide the truth that you are without right or Rule of Law.
- 9 Behold, all men must die. And if it be my time now to die, then I die with a clear conscience and in honor to heaven.
- 10 Upon hearing these words, the Bandit King replied: As you have neither pledged your alliance nor pleaded for your life, you shall be executed.
- 11 Yet as you have spoken the truth, I shall grant you a swift and honorable death.
- 12 Thus, the man who always spoke the truth was led away to his fate.
- 13 The lying Traveler then spoke and said: Oh great and noble King! In thee I see the model of authority,
- 14 And your men as worthy companions of an army to be feared by all nations.
- 15 I pledge myself to your service and humbly petition for your mercy.
- 16 Upon hearing these words, the Bandit King replied: As you did pledge your alliance and pleaded for your life, you will be spared.
- 17 But as you lied and showed such weakness of character, you are not fit even to be known as a bandit,
- 18 And so I shall chain you as if a lowly dog. For better you had died a noble death than the thousand torments of a scoundrel.

5 Persistence

The Hare and the Tortoise

- 1 A Hare did come by a Tortoise on its travels,
- 2 And ridiculed the Tortoise for its slow and steady pace.
- 3 In reply the Tortoise said:
- 4 Though you be swift as the wind, I would surely beat you if the test be substantial.
- 5 Upon hearing the challenge, the Hare accepted,
- 6 And called upon a nearby Crane to set the course and be judge.
- 7 On the day appointed for the race the two started together.

- 8 The Tortoise never stopped for a moment,
9 But went on with a slow but steady pace straight towards the end of the course.
10 The Hare, assured of her victory chose instead to prepare herself a meal and then take a nap.
11 Yet instead of waking up with plenty of time, she overslept.
12 As fast as she could run, the Hare could not beat the Tortoise who reached the goal ahead of her.
13 As the Hare reached the Tortoise, the Tortoise did say:
14 My words are proven to be truth,
15 For persistence triumphs talent.

6 Necessity

The Birdcatcher, the Partridge, and the Rooster

- 1 A poor Birdcatcher about to sit down to a dinner of herbs,
2 Was alerted by his dogs to the arrival of a stranger to his home.
3 The stranger did call out to the Birdcatcher:
4 Kind sir, I entreat that you may give me food and shelter till the morning.
5 The Birdcatcher welcomed the stranger in as was good custom.
6 Yet as he had caught no bird or fowl for some days,
7 And had nothing to offer the stranger for dinner,
8 He prepared to kill his prize partridge.
9 But before any mortal blow was struck, the bird spoke earnestly for its life, saying:
10 Master, what would you do when next you spread your nets?
11 Who would chirp you to sleep, or call for you the covey of answering birds?
12 The Birdcatcher agreed and returned the Partridge to its cage and then went outside to fetch the Rooster.
13 The Rooster protested intensely: If you kill me, who will announce to you the appearance of the dawn?
14 Who will wake you to your daily tasks or tell you when it is time to visit the bird-traps?
15 The Birdcatcher replied thus: It is true, you are a fine bird at reminding me my obligations.
16 Yet circumstances demand I make a choice. And now I must choose to fulfill custom,
17 And to honor your memory by remembering my duties.

7 Gratitude

The Slave Boy and the Lion

- 1 A young slave once escaped from his wicked master and sought refuge in the forest.
2 Without the adequate means of survival, the boy grew weaker and hungrier,
3 Whereupon in a clearing he discovered a lion in great distress and pain.
4 At first the boy sought to flee, but finding the lion did not pursue him,
5 He returned to the lion and as he neared him the lion raised its paw.
6 In its paw, the boy saw a huge thorn, swollen and bleeding.
7 The boy removed the thorn from the paw of the lion and attended the infection.

- 8 Yet without food and water, the boy himself had grown so weak.
- 9 Instead of devouring the weak runaway slave, the lion dragged the boy to his den.
- 10 Whereupon he brought him the meat of animals it slew in the forest,
- 11 Until the boy himself was stronger.
- 12 Soon after the lion itself was captured, followed by the boy.
- 13 Upon hearing of the trials and ordeal of the boy, the king considered clemency,
- 14 But the wicked master of the boy demanded the king put the boy to death as according to law,
- 15 So after several days in prison, the boy was placed in an arena in front of the whole city,
- 16 Soon a hungry lion was set loose to devour the boy in front of the king and the city.
- 17 Yet when the lion saw the boy it stopped and seeing him in great distress, licked his hands.
- 18 When the king saw this spectacle he immediately ordered the boy and lion freed,
- 19 And the wicked master be put to chains.
- 20 The king did say: Behold! As the Divine Gods ordain, let no man dishonor.
- 21 For this boy has already been judged by them and found to be without blemish.
- 22 Thus it is the one who falsely accused that must be held account.

The Mice and the Moths

- 1 The Mice of a field believed themselves so persecuted,
- 2 That at the approach of any large Beast they did run away in fear and hide.
- 3 One day, upon the arrival of some horses, the Mice were so distressed,
- 4 They ran off to the edge of nearby lake to end their lives by drowning.
- 5 But upon reaching the lake,
- 6 The Mice witnessed Moth after Moth falling from the sky onto the lake,
- 7 Only to be eaten by fish and bird alike.
- 8 The Mice then said to one another: Truly, our lives are not so bad as it seems.

8 Humility

The Fowl and the Eagle

- 1 Two male Fowl were engaged in a fierce fight for mastery of the hens of a marsh.
- 2 One at last put the other to flight. The vanquished retreated,
- 3 While the victor moved to the highest point and called out in his loudest voice:
- 4 Now truly, I am the victor of all!
- 5 Just then an Eagle sailing through the air spotted the exposed Fowl,
- 6 And swooped in to snatch him away.
- 7 As the mortally wounded fowl was carried away within the talons of the Eagle he cried:
- 8 Woe is me. For my pride destroyed me,
- 9 While my vanquished foe shall now rule in undisputed mastery.

The Axeman and Grove

- 1 A great Axeman went in search of a new branch from which to handle his new Axe head.
- 2 First he came to a grove of Ash and did say: Oh wondrous and mysterious Ash!
- 3 Grant me a limb from which I may fashion a new handle for my new Axe?
- 4 The Ash did reply and said: We give no consent unto thee to cut or tear our limbs.
- 5 Besides, if you desire a timber worthy of your Axe then best it be the Oak.
- 6 The Axeman did honor the word of the Ash and did not retrieve any branch or limb.
- 7 Upon coming upon a grove of Oak, the Axeman did say: Oh ancient and fine Oak!
- 8 They say you are the finest wood from which to fashion a handle worthy of my Axe.
- 9 The Oak did reply: We respect your words but fear your intent Axeman.
- 10 Begone! For we do not give you consent to touch our branches or limbs.
- 11 Besides, if it is the finest wood you seek, then it must be Rose wood.
- 12 Finally, the Axeman came upon an ancient Grove of Rosewood and did say:
- 13 Oh mighty Rosewood! Above you there is none. Grant this humble servant but one limb?
- 14 The Rosewood replied: Truly you have spoken. We are without peer.
- 15 Thus we grant you this piece and limb you seek.
- 16 Whereupon the Axeman had it fashioned into the finest handle.
- 17 A few days later he returned to the grove and leveled the Rosewood.
- 18 As the final tree was about to fall, he cried out thus: It is a double grief to me,
- 19 That I should perish not only for my arrogance, but from a weapon fashioned from my own form.

9 Preparation

The Ant and the Grasshopper

- 1 A Grasshopper one day passed a line of Ants,
- 2 As they carried supplies of food to their nest.
- 3 The Grasshopper said to the Ant at the head of the line:
- 4 It is a beautiful day. There is plenty of food.
- 5 Why then do you toil when instead you could play and sing as I?
- 6 The Ant replied: Dear Sir, while Indeed it be a fine day and they're be plenty of food,
- 7 We prepare for the worst so that when the harshest winter comes, we do not die of hunger.
- 8 The Grasshopper replied: You silly Ant. Life will provide for us without our worry.
- 9 If you do not enjoy such moments, then you will have none.
- 10 But soon a harsh and bitter winter was upon the land,
- 11 And the Grasshopper near death came upon an Ant guarding the nest and cried:
- 12 Please sir, have pity on a poor Grasshopper with nothing to eat.
- 13 The Ant replied: Alas you poor selfish fool! When it was time to prepare, you mocked us.
- 14 Now in your time of need you demand we sacrifice our own survival.
- 15 Be gone! For there is no benefit in helping a selfish spirit that has no desire to first help themselves.

The Wild Boar and the Fox

- 1 A Wild Boar stood under a tree and rubbed his tusks against the trunk.
- 2 A Fox passing by asked him why he thus sharpened his teeth,
- 3 When there was no danger threatening from either hunter or hound.
- 4 The Wild Boar replied thus: I do it as our ancestors have taught.
- 5 For it be too late to sharpen my weapons just at the time I ought to be using them.

The War Horse

- 1 A Soldier during a great conflict took the utmost care with his trusted stallion.
- 2 As long as the war lasted, he looked upon him as his equal and fed him carefully with hay and corn.
- 3 But when the war was over, he only allowed him chaff to eat and made him carry heavy loads of wood subjecting him to much slavish ill-treatment.
- 4 When war was again proclaimed, the Soldier prepared his armor and then put on his horse its military trappings.
- 5 Yet when he mounted the horse, it immediately fell down, no longer equal to the burden, saying thus:
- 6 Alas oh Master! You must now go to the war on foot, for you have transformed me from a Horse into an Ass.
- 7 Verily, no man can expect one to turn in a moment of trial from an Ass to a Horse.

10 Forewarning

The Stag and the Ox-Stall

- 1 A Stag ill prepared for winter, sought shelter in an Ox-stall.
- 2 Upon entering the wisest Ox did warn the Stag:
- 3 O unhappy creature! why of your own accord do you condemn yourself?
- 4 For this be the house of your enemy.
- 5 The Stag did then reply:
- 6 Allow me, friend, this briefest of respite,
- 7 Whereupon I shall make effect my escape.
- 8 Yet upon the morning, when the herdsman came to feed the cattle,
- 9 He did not see the Stag.
- 10 When he had left, the Stag thanked the Oxen and implored to spend one more night.
- 11 The wisest Ox did warn the Stag again:
- 12 O thoughtless creature! We wish you no harm,
- 13 Yet the gravest of danger is not yet passed.
- 14 Whereupon in the morning the farm bailiff and several worker did come,
- 15 Yet none noticed the Stag.
- 16 When they had left, the Stag boasted of his invisibility.
- 17 The wisest Ox did warn the Stag against his boast:
- 18 O reckless creature! One is still yet to pass through,
- 19 Who possesses as if a hundred eyes,

- 20 And until he has come and gone, your life remains in grave peril.
- 21 At that moment the master of the house himself entered the stall,
- 22 And upon seeing the condition of the oxen did complain:
- 23 Why is there such a scarcity of fodder?
- 24 Why is there is not half enough straw for them to lie on?
- 25 While he thus examined everything in turn,
- 26 He spied the tips of the antlers of the Stag peeping out of the straw.
- 27 Then summoning his laborers,
- 28 He ordered that the Stag should be seized and killed.
- 29 Upon his last mortal breath, the Stag did bemoan:
- 30 Woe is me that I be the architect of my doom.
- 31 For I sought refuge in the house of my enemy,
- 32 And yet did ignore three forewarnings as to my peril.

The Old Lion

- 1 A Lion afflicted with growing infirmities from old age,
- 2 Resolved to provide food for himself not by brute force, but cunning artifice.
- 3 The Lion let it be known to all the forest that he was gravely ill,
- 4 Then returned to lie down in his den.
- 5 Friend and foe did then come, one by one, either to pay their respects, or to claim his throne.
- 6 Some time later as almost none visited, the Lion ventured to the mouth of the cave, where he spotted a Hare moving past and said:
- 7 Pray thee Hare we may speak of these difficult times. For I long for amicability between us and have not yet received your visitation.
- 8 To which the Hare did reply: I thank thee great King for such gracious gestures. Yet I shall presently be on my way.
- 9 Alas, I note there are many prints of feet entering your domain, yet no trace of such returning.

11 Sacrifice

The Ant and the Caterpillar

- 1 An ant in search of food, did come across a caterpillar,
- 2 As it gathered stick and leaves for its cocoon.
- 3 The ant did mock the caterpillar:
- 4 Poor creature what life is this?
- 5 While I spend my time running where I please,
- 6 You are condemned to spend your life making your coffin.
- 7 A few days passed and the ant did pass now the chrysalis.
- 8 As he moved closer he saw it moved and he did mock it again:
- 9 Poor creature what life is this?
- 10 While I enjoy the sun and the rain,
- 11 You are condemned to spend an eternity neither dead nor alive.

- 12 And when the ant passed by for the third time,
13 He found nothing but the remains of the shell.
14 Yet before he could speak,
15 He was covered by the shadow of a beautiful creature flapping its wings.
16 The ant fear cried out in fear:
17 Oh wondrous and radiant beauty, do not harm me,
18 For I am but a lowly ant.
19 The butterfly then replied:
20 Poor creature what life is this?
21 Behold, to become what I now am,
22 I did sacrifice what you choose to be.

The Two Princes

- 1 Two young princes of separate ancient kingdoms were one day at play in a beautiful garden,
2 When one the princes fell from the limb of a tree onto his skull and was mortally wounded.
3 The grandfather and King of the dead young prince did accuse the grandfather and King of the other of negligence and malice,
4 To which war was declared despite the protests of the young prince that it was a mere mishap.
5 A vicious and bloody battle ensued during which both Kings were killed and many brave men lost their lives.
6 Whereupon the father of the deceased prince vowed eternal vengeance now as King and the father of the living prince now King pledged to defend the honor of their house.
7 A second great and bloody battle followed at which the cities of each kingdom were plundered and many more soldiers and innocents lost their lives including the father of the surviving prince.
8 Upon being made King, the prince rode to face the mortal enemy of his kingdom for now the fate of both kingdoms held in the balance.
9 But before a single trumpet or sword was struck the young king rode out in front of both armies and said thus:
10 Alas, but for one misadventure and a thousand deaf ears, the fields of our kingdoms are soiled with blood.
11 I fear that nothing can save our destiny, but an act of honor to balance the fate of heaven.
12 Whereupon the young king removed his sword and thrust it into his own heart.

12 Prevention

The Elephant and the Tick

- 1 An Elephant very much tormented by a Tick caught him at last in his trunk.
2 He decried: Who are you who dare to feed on my blood,
3 And cause me so much pain in my shoulders and limbs?
4 The Tick did reply: O dear sir, I pray you spare my life and destroy me not,
5 For you are so huge and I am such a small and insignificant creature.
6 The Elephant replied as thus: Now you shall certainly die by my mighty step.
7 For I did not grant you my blood and yet you took it without consent.

- 8 And Behold! No evil, whether it be small or large, ought to be tolerated.

The Birds and the Swallow

- 1 A Swallow was busily removing seeds from a field when some passing Birds observed him and said:
- 2 Fair Swallow, why do you move too and fro? There is plenty of seed in this field for all of us.
- 3 The Swallow did reply: Good Birds, be not for food but the prevention, I remove and eat these seeds.
- 4 For the Farmer is sowing hemp and without your aid, it will be at your peril.
- 5 The Birds replied: We thank you kind sir for alerting us. As we prefer the sweeter tastes of barley,
- 6 Than to feast on such bitter seeds.
- 7 With that, the Birds flew away, leaving the Swallow to continue its work.
- 8 So it was that much of the hemp seed remained and grew and was harvested,
- 9 And strong rope and netting was made from its stalks.
- 10 And come the following season, the farmer trapped many of the Birds that had ignored the Swallow.
- 11 To the trapped birds, the Swallow said thus: Alas foolish Birds, what did I tell you?
- 12 Destroy the seed of evil, or it will grow up to your ruin.

The Lion and the Boar

- 1 Upon a day of great heat, a Lion and Boar came to the same watering hole to drink.
- 2 The Lion declared that he has right of first use as king of the beasts.
- 3 The Boar protested that he was first.
- 4 Thus both were soon engaged in the agonies of mortal combat.
- 5 During a brief respite in which each prepared for the final match, both spotted some Vultures that had arrived.
- 6 The Lion then said to the Boar thus: Behold, be it one day we may be called to stand unto death upon a point of honor.
- 7 Alas, it be but my arrogance and your stubbornness that was sorely injured.
- 8 Better for us to make friends, than to become the food for Vultures.

13 Virtue

The Boy and the Small Fishes

- 1 A wise old man walking along a shoreline at low tide, did see a small boy in the distance.
- 2 As he came closer it appeared the young boy was dancing.
- 3 But as he came even closer, he could see the young boy catching small fish exposed from dwindling pools,
- 4 And throwing them back into the ocean.
- 5 As the old man came close to the little boy he said: Good morn to you young man! Pray, what are you doing?
- 6 The boy replied: I am trying to catch these little fish and throw them back into the ocean before they die. Will you help me?
- 7 The old man then said: Oh dear and virtuous soul! Yet there are many miles of shore and thousands of fish.
- 8 As much as I wish to come to your aid, such a quest is futile. For how can anyone make a difference with such providence?

9 Whereupon the little boy returned to picking up a fish gasping for its life and returned it to the ocean.

10 He then spoke to the old man thus: It made a difference for that one.

14 Discipline

The Thief and His Mother

1 A Boy one day did steal some apples from an orchard and took them home to his Mother.

2 Both hungry and with little means, the Mother did not ask how the Boy his good fortune.

3 Instead, she praised him for his providence.

4 Some years later and upon a bitterly cold winter, the Boy now a Youth did steal a fine cloak.

5 And did bring it to his Mother.

6 Again, she failed to ask how her son did obtain such a valuable garment,

7 Instead commending him for his resourcefulness.

8 Some years passed again and upon a time of great hardship,

9 The Youth now a Man was caught stealing the valuable grain provisions of the town.

10 Upon the Man being led to his execution, his Mother burst forth and begged to take his place, saying:

11 As the Gods be my witnesses, it is I, not my son who has transgressed.

12 For when he needed to learn the price of right and wrong, I abandoned him.

13 And when he needed to be punished, I spared the rod and instead gave praise.

14 Kill me now, for his unjust death seals my own fate.

The Farmer and the Cranes

1 Some Cranes made their feeding grounds on some newly sown plowlands.

2 For a time the Farmer, chased them away by the terror he inspired brandishing an empty sling.

3 But after a while, when the birds found that the sling was only swung in the air, they ceased to take any notice of it and would not move.

4 The Farmer, on seeing this, charged his sling with stones, and then killed a great number.

5 The remaining birds at once forsook his fields, crying to each other thus:

6 Alas, our contempt did blind us to what we believed as hollow threats of fear and terror.

7 Verily, for where there is smoke, there is surely some fire.

15 Character

The Farmer and the Stork

1 A Farmer one day placed nets across some of his newly sown plowlands,

2 To catch a flock of Cranes which had made a habit of stealing his seeds.

3 With them he trapped a Stork that fractured his leg in the net.

4 As the Farmer came near, the bird earnestly beseeched him and said:

5 Pray save me Master and let me free. My broken limb is pity enough.

6 Besides, I am no Crane, I am a Stork, a bird of excellent character.

7 To which the Farmer replied thus: Your words of self reference may be true as you say.

8 Yet all I know for certain is that I have taken you in the company with these robbers, the

Cranes.

- 9 Alas therefore, it is in keeping such company you doom yourself.

The Bat, the Birds and the Beasts

- 1 A great conflict did emerge in the forest between the Birds and the Beasts.
- 2 As the two armies began to form, the Bat hesitated which to join,
- 3 For he did not wish to be associated with the side that may be defeated.
- 4 The Birds that passed him said: Come with us.
- 5 Yet the Bat did reply: Thank you kind Birds. Indeed, I can fly.
- 6 Yet I fear the Beasts have greater strength. Alas! I am a Beast.
- 7 Later, some Beasts who did pass underneath the Bat did call out: Come with us.
- 8 Yet the Bat did reply: Thank you kind Beasts. Indeed, I am an animal.
- 9 Yet I fear the Birds are greater in number. Alas! I am a Bird.
- 10 As it so happened, war was averted so no battle took place.
- 11 The Bat then came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings,
- 12 But the Birds turned against him and he had to fly away.
- 13 He then went to the Beasts,
- 14 But soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces.
- 15 Upon his exile, the Bat did say: I see now the folly of my ways.
- 16 He that stands for neither one thing nor the other has no friends.

The Scorpion and the Frog

- 1 A Scorpion found itself trapped on a sand bank soon to be submerged by the torrent of a river in flood.
- 2 Seeing a Frog, the Scorpion pleaded that the Frog to carry him safety.
- 3 The Frog replied and said: As a creature known for its insanity, how then can I be assured you will not sting me?
- 4 The Scorpion said thus: Kind Frog, for reason assures that upon such act, we would both assuredly die.
- 5 Upon these words, the Frog felt satisfied and they set out.
- 6 But midstream, the Frog did feel the horrendous pain of the Scorpion sting.
- 7 As the Frog could feel the paralysis course throughout his body and they star to sink, he called out in his final breath the single word of why?
- 8 To which the Scorpion said thus: Alas!, it is the curse of my character that I destroy which I cherish most.

16 Perception

The Three Stone Masons

- 1 Three Stone Masons were busily at work on the foundations of a new structure,
- 2 When a passing traveler inquired what was the task at hand?
- 3 The first Stone Mason responded harshly: Do not torment me with such inquiry.
- 4 For clearly I am condemned to this task of cutting stone.
- 5 The second Stone Mason was more collegiate and said: Pray forgive my companion,

- 6 For we build the foundations to a small temple.
- 7 The third Stone Mason was even more resolute and said thus: We be not condemned to such labor,
- 8 But blessed to witness a miracle. For by will and flesh and stone alone,
- 9 We build a most beautiful temple that will glorify Heaven long after our death and for centuries to come.

The Fox and the Grapes

- 1 One hot day of summer, a Fox in great thirst was travelling across an orchard,
- 2 When he spotted a bunch of grapes ripening on a vine trained upon a lofty branch.
- 3 The Fox did declare: Oh what bounty! Verily you shall surely quench my thirst.
- 4 Yet try as he might, the Fox could not reach the grapes.
- 5 Once, twice, three times he sought the grapes and then surrendered to such quest.
- 6 As the Fox was departing the orchard, a Horse did enter and asked: Pray sir Fox you tell me,
- 7 I did observe you seek that bunch of grapes. Be they ripe and ready?
- 8 To which the Fox said thus: Do not waste your time stranger. For they be sour and full of misery.

17 Consequence

The Trumpeter and the Enemy

- 1 A Trumpeter during battle ventured too near the enemy and was captured.
- 2 They were about to proceed to put him to death when he entreated them to spare his life and said:
- 3 Before heaven and the gods I pray you spare my life. For I carry no weapon, nor do I fight.
- 4 I am but a lowly Trumpeter who blows this horn and causes no harm. Surely this is sufficient for clemency?
- 5 A leader of the enemy replied thus: It is true you carry no weapon nor do you fight.
- 6 And if you be a mere musician we would gladly set you free.
- 7 Yet with your horn it is you who encourage and guide the men to battle, and thus you are more responsible than all the men who fight.

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

- 1 A hungry Wolf unable to defeat the honor of a noble Shepherd, did entreat the heavens for a sign.
- 2 The Wolf did say: Oh heavens or demons for I know not which, be that as I am without piety or integrity.
- 3 Show pity upon this hungry servant and grant me a sign that I might circumvent the law and seize some sheep.
- 4 Soon after, the Wolf did find the rotting carcass of an old sheep that had wandered over a steep ravine.
- 5 The Wolf did then declare: I thank you oh darkness for your most cunning of sign.
- 6 For I shall take this fleece and slip past the guardian unnoticed as an enemy within.
- 7 So the Wolf did take the fleece from the dead sheep and make himself as if a sheep.
- 8 Upon the evening of the next day, as the Shepherd returned the flock to his fold and locked them safely inside,
- 9 He noticed a Sheep in poor condition.
- 10 He then commanded his apprentice: Stay with this Sheep this night and make sure it eats.

- 11 For I shall neither let one of my flock be in sickness or suffer.
- 12 The Wolf in fear of his life could do no more than pretend to chew the grass.
- 13 In the morn the Shepherd returned and upon the witness of his apprentice he said thus:
- 14 Alas, the time has come to do my duty. For while the wheels of divine justice may move slowly,
- 15 Not even the smallest suffering goes unnoticed nor the greatest evil.
- 16 Whereupon the Shepherd killed the Wolf in Sheep's clothing instantly.

18 Volition

The Three Brothers

- 1 The goddess Ana did wish to test the character of man,
- 2 That they be worthy of her continued favor and protection.
- 3 But as her husband did so love mankind, she called upon the lesser gods to petition him instead.
- 4 Upon the plaint of Shu and Danu and Kel, Lord Bel did say thus:
- 5 If be not unfair thee gods, I grant such test. That by the volition of equal men ye shall decide.
- 6 Whereupon Ana selected three orphaned brothers and commanded Luki,
- 7 That he bring the fortune of land near the sea to the brothers.
- 8 The goddess Bris did bathe lands in spring with life,
- 9 And the first brother said to the others: I care not for effort,
- 10 For these days surely are enough and life is without worry.
- 11 My home shall be spun from these fine tall grasses,
- 12 And not a moment shall be wasted on hard labor.
- 13 The second brother said to the others: I be not as care free as thee,
- 14 For times will change and the cold winds shall come.
- 15 So I shall make my house of wood,
- 16 And my efforts shall be rewarded with peace.
- 17 The third brother said to the others: My foolish brothers,
- 18 This land be near the sea and surely upon Autumn Lug and in winter Mene shall test us.
- 19 I shall begin building my home deeper into the earth of thick stones,
- 20 That neither storms, nor winter shall destroy me.
- 21 Thus when Autumn came and the god Lug did bring fierce storms,
- 22 And when Shu the god of wind and air did blow, the house of straw of the first brother was destroyed.
- 23 Then when Winter came, the goddess Mene did bring great snows and cold,
- 24 And Danu the goddess of rain and moisture did splinter and crush the house of wood of the second brother.
- 25 Only the house of the brother who made his home of stone survived.
- 26 Then Ana called upon Kel the goddess of the earth to rumble,
- 27 Yet as hard as she tried, the home of stone of the third brother stood.
- 28 Finally upon spring, the great Lord Bel called out to Ana and the lesser gods to cease.

- 29 And spoke thus: Though man is tested and many fail,
30 Enough remember the lessons of previous lives,
31 And choose by their own volition to be more than beasts.
32 For if but one chooses to be free, all are free,
33 And thus no god nor man may claim another to be slave or beast.

19 Intention

The Bee and Bel

- 1 The first Queen Bee ascended to present Bel some honey.
2 The God was so delighted with the offering,
3 He promised to grant whatever wish she should ask.
4 She therefore besought him, saying: Give me, I pray thee, a sting,
5 That if any mortal shall approach to take my honey, I may kill him.
6 Bel was much displeased, for he loved the race of men,
7 Yet could not refuse the granting of the request because of his promise.
8 He thus answered the Bee: You shall have your request,
9 But it will be at the peril of your own life.
10 For if you use your sting, it shall remain in the wound you make,
11 And then you will die from the loss of it.

20 Courage

The Wealthy Merchant and the Painted Lion

- 1 A Wealthy Merchant, whose only son was fond of hunting, had a fearful dream,
2 In which he envisaged his son would be killed terribly by a lion.
3 Fearful the dream be an omen, he forbid his son any further adventures.
4 Instead, he built him a beautiful high walled garden,
5 Full of great life sized sculptures of animals and murals including a painting of a lion.
6 One day in front of the painted lion in a fit of frustration,
7 The son did speak: O you most detestable of animals!
8 Upon your account within the false visions of my father,
9 I am condemned to this palace as if a virgin princess.
10 With these words he stretched out his hands toward a thorn-tree,
11 Meaning to cut a stick from its branches so that he might deface the image.
12 But one of the tree's prickles pierced his finger and caused great pain and inflammation,
13 So that within a few days the son died from a violent and terrible fever.
14 Upon returning from business the Wealthy Merchant grieved:
15 Curse thee fear and cowardice. For you did conspire to manifest the very destiny I sought to delay.
16 Better then my son had died in honor, than a prisoner of my own making.
-

21 Frugality

The Flies, the Ants and the Honey-Pot

- 1 A house keeper too hasty in her work, did cause a jar of honey to break.
- 2 But instead of cleaning it up, she did conceal her error behind other unbroken jars.
- 3 Some Flies and Ants did observe the honey, yet the Ants remained at some distance.
- 4 The Flies then mocked the Ants thus: Poor Ants! The broken jar is concealed,
- 5 And it shall be some time before the cook returns to prepare supper.
- 6 Yet the Ants did reply: Let fools rush in! For we await not for fear or hesitation,
- 7 But until the honey is hard enough to be safe.
- 8 The Flies ignored the Ants and did land and gorge themselves upon the honey,
- 9 So that their feet and wings became so smeared with it, they could not release themselves.
- 10 Before the last Fly did expire, he cried out: For the sake of indulging our foolish desires,
- 11 We have destroyed ourselves.

The Goose With the Golden Eggs

- 1 A Poor farmer cried out to Luki: Oh God of Good Fortune,
- 2 Grant me this day reprieve from my ills,
- 3 For I have been a good and honorable servant.
- 4 In the morning the farmer came to the nest of his Goose,
- 5 Only to find it had laid a Golden Egg.
- 6 Overjoyed, he thanked Luki for his good fortune and went to the town and paid his debts.
- 7 Twenty eight days later, the farmer found another Golden Egg.
- 8 This time he seized the egg and took it to the local King.
- 9 Whereupon he gave the gold egg to the King saying: Your Majesty, a gift to you,
- 10 In exchange for your patronage. For I seek to purchase substantial lands.
- 11 The king replied: Fine sir, I give gratitude for your gift,
- 12 And indeed if such wealth was produced for ten cycles of the moon,
- 13 Then such lands you shall have. And I shall make you a Baron and then to your heirs and successors.
- 14 But caution to you, for upon such claim you be bound to fulfill, or your head is mine.
- 15 The farmer did then say: Your majesty, I need not ten cycles to fulfill,
- 16 As I shall return with haste.
- 17 Whereupon the farmer returned home and killed the goose, only to find nothing inside.

The Fir-Tree and the Ash Tree

- 1 A Fir Tree said with boast to an Ash Tree: Verily you are poor of use, for your timbers easily break.
- 2 Whereas I am richly trusted for home and roof, for bridge and post.
- 3 The Ash Tree replied thus: It is true I am no match for the wealth of your use.
- 4 Yet beware your boasts, for come now the axe to cast you down.

22 Appreciation

The Goat herder and the Wild Goats

- 1 A Goat herder driving his flock from its pasture at eventide,
- 2 Discovered some Wild Goats had also mingled among them.
- 3 So he shut them up together with his own for the night.
- 4 The next day an early winter storm came with wind and snow,
- 5 That the Goat herder was obliged to keep them in the fold.
- 6 He gave his own goats just sufficient food to keep them alive,
- 7 But fed the strangers more abundantly in the hope of enticing them to stay.
- 8 When the thaw set in, he led them all out to feed,
- 9 Yet the wild Goats quickly started to scamper away.
- 10 The Goat herder called out in anger:
- 11 Ungrateful Goats! I did take you in and keep you warm.
- 12 I did give you food even at the expense of the health of my own Goats.
- 13 One of the wild Goats did turn around and reply:
- 14 Oh selfish Goat herder, you admit to your own faults, yet do not see them.
- 15 For yesterday you treated wild Goats better than your own.
- 16 Thus it is plain if others came, you would in the same manner prefer them to ourselves.
- 17 That is why we depart your company.

The Ass and His Masters

- 1 An Ass bound in service to a herb seller who gave him too little food did petition Bel to be released.
- 2 Bel thus appeared and said: Where there be no consent, no binding may stand. Therefore you are free to go.
- 3 The Ass soon found employment with a tile maker who did feed him, but worked him so hard, he could not move.
- 4 The Ass then called out to Bel and pleaded: Oh wise Lord Bel, I fear the tilemaker may kill me under my oath.
- 5 I seek an agreement where I neither work too hard and have all the food I seek.
- 6 Suddenly Bel appeared again and said: Where there be bad faith even if there be consent, no binding may stand. Therefore you are free to go.
- 7 Whereupon the Ass agreed to a solemn binding with a merchant that promised him all the food he could eat without any work for but one day of distress.
- 8 Soon after he discovered the merchant was none other than a tanner and upon his final end, cried out to Bel and said: Oh merciful Bel, save me!
- 9 For better to have been either starved by the one, or overworked by the other than a good to be slaughtered and skinned for profit.
- 10 Bel did appear to the Ass and said thus: Where there be consent and good faith, all agreements must be met.

23 Compassion

The Dove and the Ant

- 1 An Ant upon the edge of a river to fetch some water did lose his footing and fall into the torrent.

- 2 A Dove sitting in a tree above did watch the event and in a moment of compassion took a small bough from the tree,
- 3 And threw it into the river near the Ant, by which means the Ant was saved and gained the Shore.
- 4 Soon afterward, the Ant did see a man with a bow take aim at the Dove in the tree,
- 5 Without hesitation the Ant bit the man in the foot sharply, causing him to miss his aim,
- 6 And so saved the life of the Dove.

24 Benevolence

The Wicked Lord

- 1 There was a great King who sought harmony across his kingdom,
- 2 And that there was law and order and all debts were paid.
- 3 So he called each of his Lords to account of their affairs.
- 4 One Lord was brought before the great King owing one thousand talents.
- 5 But because he couldn't pay, the King commanded him to be sold,
- 6 With his wife, his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.
- 7 The Lord then fell down and knelt before the King and said: Oh wise and benevolent King,
- 8 Pity your humble servant and have patience with me, for while it shall ruin me and my people,
- 9 Better I die trying to repay what I owe, than to bring dishonor to my lands.
- 10 The King upon hearing the great hardship that was to befall his Lord, did decree:
- 11 Upon this day and henceforth, as I now forgive my servants debts,
- 12 So shall all long term debts be forgiven,
- 13 That no man be required to die in debt and dishonor.
- 14 The Lord having his own debts forgiven returned to his lands,
- 15 Yet did not enact the laws of the King.
- 16 Instead, he forced upon his own servants a terrible toil and misery to pay their debts,
- 17 And destroyed homes and imprisoned even children for failure to repay debts.
- 18 When the Great King heard these terrible acts,
- 19 He had the Lord seized and brought before him in chains, saying thus:
- 20 Oh wicked and vile servant! By Divine Decree, I demanded that all debts be forgiven,
- 21 That as you so prayed to be forgiven, so even the poorest be forgiven their debts.
- 22 Yet in your arrogance you forgot both my power and my laws.
- 23 Henceforth, any Lord who fails to honor Divine Law is a tyrant,
- 24 And any lender who fails to forgive long term debtors is a thief.
- 25 And it be the sacred obligation upon every able bodied man,
- 26 That such vermin as these tyrants and thieves be extinguished from the earth.

25 Piety

The False Sacrifice

- 1 A powerful and feared warlord prepared to do battle by first making an offering to the gods.

- 2 He commanded his men seize one hundred bulls from the farmers on land under his control.
- 3 When the bulls were brought before him and slaughtered, the warlord did declare: Oh mighty Lord Bel!
- 4 Grant me victory this day through your favor with this humble sacrifice.
- 5 Yet the battle did not favor the warlord and he was soundly defeated, losing more than half his lands.
- 6 Whereupon, he rallied his troops and then seized his own first born son, calling out: Oh fearful Lord Bel!
- 7 Grant me retribution upon my enemies, by this most earnest sacrifice of my first born son.
- 8 Yet when the warlord attacked the enemy, his remaining troops were routed and the warlord captured.
- 9 Sitting in prison and awaiting his uncertain fate, the captured warlord cried: Oh mysterious Lord Bel!
- 10 By my own honorable death, grant my house eternal vengeance against such enemies that forced me to sacrifice so much.
- 11 Suddenly Bel appeared before him and said thus: Behold, I am thee in whose name you have caused much calamity.
- 12 Alas, no favor did the death of innocent bulls give thee, when they were not yours to offer.
- 13 Verily, you disgraced heaven and earth upon the turpid waste of the most precious gift of the gods to you.
- 14 Thus of all your offerings, only the offer to end your miserable life be vaguely pious.
- 15 Therefore, I accept your offering and your life be now mine.
- 16 Behold, I bind you to not die for one hundred years and unto your vainglory.
- 17 That you may be punished for your false sacrifices and may warn others.
- 18 For not the flesh of innocent beasts or children be pleasing to the gods, but honor in life and death.

26 Value

The Stag at the Pool

- 1 A Stag overpowered by heat came to a spring to drink.
- 2 Seeing his own shadow reflected in the water, he said:
- 3 Oh mighty form! Crowned be thee by noble horns, yet cursed by heaven with slender limbs.
- 4 Alas! If but the gods had been kinder in design, that we might have had limbs to match our crown.
- 5 Whereupon a Lion also at the side of the spring to drink.
- 6 The Stag immediately took to flight before the Lion did see him.
- 7 With all his strength and agility the Stag did quickly have a distance from his foe.
- 8 But entering a wood his antlers became entangled by his horns.
- 9 Trapped and easy pray for the chasing Lion, the Stag said thus:
- 10 Woe is me! How I have deceived myself! These feet which would have saved me I despised,
- 11 And I gloried in these antlers which have proved my destruction.

The Farmer and his Sons

- 1 A Farmer holding domain over difficult and rocky soil implored his sons to aid him in its improvement.

- 2 Yet his sons upon reaching majority preferred a life of leisure and immorality.
- 3 Later, being upon the point of death, the Farmer called his sons to witness his final testament and said:
- 4 My sons, I gave you all you wanted and asked nothing in return but that you aid me in improving this difficult and rocky soil.
- 5 Behold, now that I am soon to leave you, I tell you verily that there is a great treasure hidden within these fields.
- 6 After the death of the father, the Sons each took inheritance of their fields.
- 7 To protect their claims, the Sons each built walls between the fields by clearing many of the stones.
- 8 The Sons then dug each field deeply, cutting channels in search of the treasure that filled with water from the rains.
- 9 After many months, the Sons finally surrendered in search of the treasure and surveyed the land.
- 10 The fields were green and abundant with growth. The walls were solid and strong. There was plenty of water in store.
- 11 The eldest upon seeing what he could not see before, said thus: Bless you father for your wisdom.
- 12 Verily, you did bequeath us a great treasure in the value that with motivation and effort even the most difficult can be transformed.

The Lioness

- 1 A controversy erupted among the leading females of the Beasts,
- 2 As to which of them deserved most credit for producing the greatest number of sons.
- 3 They called upon the Lioness to settle the dispute.
- 4 The Fox proclaimed she deservedly should win as she produced many sons.
- 5 The Hare disputed the Fox and proclaimed she produced even more sons.
- 6 The Lioness then spoke up and said:
- 7 Neither of you are correct, for I am the winner of any such contest.
- 8 The Fox protested and said:
- 9 Pray then Lioness, how you might win such a contest when you may produce so fewer than even the Stag?
- 10 The Lioness replied: It is true I produce less. But if one cub be a Lion, then he shall be King,
- 11 Whereas you Fox may only produce foxes.

27 Learning

The Great Teacher and the Cup

- 1 A famous scholar once went to meet an old and Great Teacher at his simple abode.
- 2 As a gift, he brought the old Teacher a rare and valuable pitcher of wine.
- 3 After the scholar introduced himself and spoke of his many accomplishments, the old Teacher asked the scholar:
- 4 As you are a man of great learning, pray tell me your sense of the meaning of life.
- 5 The scholar did begin to recite a wide and rich array of claimed facts and knowledge,
- 6 As the old Teacher placed two cups on a table and began to pour the wine into the cup closest to the Scholar.
- 7 The scholar did continue to speak as the old Teacher did pour, even after the cup was overflowing,

- 8 Until he could stand it no longer and said: Wise and Great Teacher, pray tell me?
- 9 Why did you permit such rare and beautiful wine to overflow when my cup was already full?
- 10 The old and Great Teacher replied as thus: Indeed you are correct. Your cup is full.
- 11 And such a beautiful and rare wine this be to waste.
- 12 Verily, a mind is much like the cup and true wisdom like the fine wine your brought me.
- 13 Only when the mind is empty of its preconditions and confusions, is it ready to accept such a valuable gift.
- 14 Behold! I asked not what you thought the meaning of life to be, but your sense of its meaning,
- 15 Proving to me that while you are an intelligent man, your cup is already full.

28 Knowledge

The Scholars and the Boatman

- 1 Three learned scholars once sought to visit an ancient island observatory in order to calculate a rare celestial event.
- 2 Upon their journey across the waters, the scholars engaged in animated discussion as to their respective knowledge.
- 3 One of the scholars noticed that as they spoke, the boatman was listening.
- 4 The first scholar asked the boatman: What say you then to our discourse?
- 5 The Boatman then replied: I have nothing to offer you sir, for I did not comprehend any of it.
- 6 The second scholar did then ask: Pray, tell us your education if you do object to our arguments?
- 7 The Boatman replied in protest: I do not seek to offend you wise men, I am a mere boatman,
- 8 And am without learning. For while I can read and write I have never before heard of the things you three speak.
- 9 The third scholar did speak mockingly: Alas poor boatman! This is the price of a poor education.
- 10 For while you may read and write, you know little of the universe and have wasted your life.
- 11 Suddenly a great wave did wash over the boat and all were thrown overboard.
- 12 The scholars cried out to the boatman: Help us boatman! For we cannot swim!
- 13 As the boatman began to swim to shore, he called out to the drowning scholars thus:
- 14 I leave you not through callous intent, but not to waste my life as you have yours.
- 15 For one of you could take me under yet three surely would.

The Seeds and the Sower

- 1 A Lord called in a Servant and commanded to him: Go to my storehouse and seed all my fields.
- 2 The Servant gave his oath and went to the storehouse and began seeding the fields, except one.
- 3 The field that he did not sow had poor and rocky ground. So he decided to keep that grain for himself.
- 4 But upon the winter, the grain which the Servant had kept for himself also became food for vermin,
- 5 Whereupon the coming of spring there was a great plague of mice and the crops of all the fields were ruined.
- 6 The Lord summonsed his Servant to give account, whereupon he threw himself down and said:

- 7 Forgive me Lord! For I disobeyed your commands. I did not sow all the seed, but kept some for myself as profit.
- 8 For I did not see how such seed could take hold upon rocky and poor soil.
- 9 To which the Lord did reply thus: Oh vile and wicked Servant! I did not ask you to judge. Nor did I ask you to reap.
- 10 For any grain that did land on sandy and poor soil be food for the birds in winter, that they may have young and in spring may gobble up any vermin.
- 11 Yet by obstructing my word, you gave rise to the evil that defiled my crops and now I will have to wait another season.
- 12 Thus, let no messenger defy or interpret Divine Revelation, but be a sower of the seeds of knowledge to all men.

29 Wisdom

The Belly and the Body

- 1 The members of the Body resolved themselves one day to decide who amongst them were of greatest importance.
- 2 The first to speak were the arms and legs who said: Without our skills, you would be without the means to gather food or escape.
- 3 The second to speak was the ears that said: Indeed the limbs are important, but without my hearing you would be deaf to friend or foe.
- 4 The third to speak was the eyes that said: Indeed the limbs and ears are important, but without my sight you would be blind to life and death.
- 5 The fourth to speak was the mouth and said: Without my skill, you would be mute to expression and unable to eat.
- 6 The fifth to speak was the brain who said: While all of you play a part, it is I the intellect that directs you all, for without my brilliance you would simply fail.
- 7 Upon this boast the belly did say: Beware such boasts oh mind. For it is I the belly that directs you.
- 8 All the members did laugh at the claim of the belly who then resolved to make its point.
- 9 For three days, it refused to do its duty until finally as the limbs did fail, the ears and eyes and mouth did fail, the weary mind did say thus:
- 10 Forgive our arrogance oh belly! Truly you are not only the source of true knowledge, but the ruler of the body.
- 11 For if you should fail, we all shall surely soon after be doomed.

30 Law

The King of the Frogs

- 1 A community of Frogs were living amicably and peacefully in a creek pond,
- 2 With no law other than the Golden Rule of equality for all.
- 3 Then one day, some of the Frogs called for change and a sense of formal identity.
- 4 For they did not trust the Golden Rule and instead sought an assembly of elders ruled by a great King.
- 5 So they prayed to Bel and said: Oh mighty Bel! Grant us our petition!
- 6 Send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order.
- 7 Suddenly an old rotten tree by the pond did snap from its base and fall into the pond.
- 8 The Frogs were at first frightened at this omen.
- 9 But after a time seeing that the log did not move,
- 10 A handful of them ventured out to the Log and declared:

- 11** We thank thee Lord Bel! We honor then our new King Log!
- 12** Gradually more and more Frogs jumped upon the Log until it became common practice,
- 13** Until many of the Frogs did not take the slightest notice of their King Log.
- 14** Yet this did not suit the elder Frogs, so they sent another petition to Bel and said:
- 15** Oh mighty Bel! Grant us our petition!
- 16** We seek a great King with great power, who will punish those who do not obey your laws.
- 17** Not long after there was a heavy storm with wind and lightening and hail stones as large as apples.
- 18** The wind and the hail did cause great destruction and misery upon the Frogs, destroying the Log.
- 19** When the storm had passed, the surviving Frogs did cry out: Oh mighty Bel! Grant us our petition!
- 20** We thank thee for our great and powerful King, yet fear we shall not survive his wrath.
- 21** We seek a real and living king and one that will really rule over us.
- 22** Soon after a stork did arrive to the pond and upon spotting the Frogs began gobbling them up.
- 23** As the last Frog was about to meet his end, he said thus: Alas! Better be no government than cruel government.

31 Fairness

The Wolf and the Lamb

- 1** A Wolf finding a Lamb astray upon a path, resolved not to lay violent hands on him,
- 2** But to find some plea to justify to the Lamb the Wolf's right to eat him.
- 3** He thus addressed him: Sir, in the year past you grossly insulted me.
- 4** The Lamb replied: You are mistaken honorable Wolf, as I was not then born.
- 5** Frustrated, the Wolf then said: You trespass and feed in my pasture.
- 6** The Lamb replied: You are mistaken mighty Wolf, as I have not yet tasted grass.
- 7** Angry the Wolf then said: Then you steal and drink of my well.
- 8** The Lamb replied: Alas! fearsome Wolf you are in error, but for my mothers' milk, as yet I have never yet drunk water.
- 9** The Wolf seized the Lamb and cried out: Be that as it is you refute all my imputations,
- 10** There is one you cannot deny, for I am a Wolf and you a Lamb.
- 11** In one final breath, the Lamb did say thus: Indeed you are a Wolf and tyrant,
- 12** And a tyrant will always find a pretext to justify his tyranny.

The Widow and the Sheep

- 1** A poor Widow had a solitary Sheep due to be sheared.
- 2** Wishing to avoid any expense, the Widow sheared him herself but used shears so poor that she badly sheared the flesh as well.
- 3** The Sheep in great distress and pain did cry out and say thus: Why do you hurt me so, Mistress?
- 4** For what weight can my blood add to the wool?
- 5** If you want my flesh, there is the butcher, who will kill me in an instant.
- 6** But if you want my fleece and wool, there is the shearer, who will shear and not hurt me.

The Eagle and the Wolf

- 1 An Eagle and a Wolf did form a truce that they may live in peace.
- 2 The Eagle built her nest in the branches of the tallest tree,
- 3 While the Wolf did find an ample lair by a beautiful stream.
- 4 Then one day a great drought and famine came to the lands.
- 5 The Wolf said to Eagle: To provide for my young ones, I must travel far.
- 6 Whilst I am gone, I entreat you keep watch over my young ones.
- 7 The Eagle agreed.
- 8 Yet no sooner had the Wolf departed than the hungry Eagle swooped and snatched a cub.
- 9 Thus she and her hungry young ones were fed that day.
- 10 The Wolf upon return was enraged and cried out to the Eagle:
- 11 I grieve not least for the one unjustly slain, but all shall now die upon your treachery.
- 12 For your act of perfidy dooms not one generation, but many yet to come in perpetual feud.
- 13 Wherever the Eagle sought to hunt, the Wolf did disrupt or snatch the prey.
- 14 Until one day the Eagle spotted a village sacrificing a goat upon an altar.
- 15 She swooped down and tore some flesh and sticks with her talons,
- 16 Carrying them back to her nest.
- 17 But upon arrival, the sticks still smoldering set the nest alight,
- 18 And her young ones were roasted dead,
- 19 With the nest and their bodies falling from the tree.
- 20 There, in the sight of the Eagle, the Wolf and her young gobbled them up.
- 21 The Eagle in her woe called out:
- 22 What have I done?
- 23 By one act of desperation, I have condemned so many to Pyrrhic retribution.

The Farmer and the Fox

- 1 A Farmer who bore a grudge against a Fox for stealing his poultry succeeded in his capture.
- 2 Upon his fate, the Fox did say:
- 3 Fair thee Farmer, for I be the one culpable and you be my swift executioner.
- 4 Yet the Farmer did not seek to simply kill the Fox but to exact revenge by burning him alive.
- 5 The Farmer tied a rope covered in oil around the tail of the Fox and set it alight.
- 6 The Fox upon seeing the intention of his fate did cry out:
- 7 Oh cruel Farmer! There be no justice in such torment and fate shall surely be my judge.
- 8 Thereupon the Fox leapt past the Farmer and rushed into the barn, setting it alight,
- 9 Then rushing into the house setting it alight and finally to his end in the fields also ablaze.
- 10 Upon the destruction of his barn, his home and his livelihood, the Farmer cried out:
- 11 Upon one unjust act of cruelty, I have destroyed my kingdom.

- 12 Never to have judged at all, than to have broken the laws of the Divine.

The Philosopher, the Ants and the Viper

- 1 A Philosopher standing upon a shoreline, observed the recent wreckage of a vessel.
- 2 As he stood and counted the bodies and observed the crabs and carrion,
- 3 He reflected thus: Oh providence! What heavy hand of justice that for the sake of one night and one voyage,
- 4 You would condemn so many innocent souls to the Otherworld.
- 5 At that moment, he felt a sting on his leg from an Ant defending his nest.
- 6 For below his feet he had been standing on an Ant nest causing them great consternation.
- 7 The Philosopher immediately set about not only killing the Ant that offended him,
- 8 But stomping fiercely upon the nest until all the Ants were dead.
- 9 When he had finished and did survey his handiwork, a fierce pain gripped his leg as a viper struck.
- 10 The Viper said to him: Your fierce steps awoke me only to see your vengeance upon these lowly Ants.
- 11 Thus, by your actions I had no choice.
- 12 The Philosopher gripping his leg and the mortal wound did reply thus: I forgive you Viper.
- 13 For but a moment I insulted heaven and judged as if a terrible god.
- 14 And in judging heaven unfairly, I did condemn myself to be judged.

33 Love

The Wolf and the Princess

- 1 The great Wolf of an ancient forest once stumbled upon a lost young Princess.
- 2 Upon the sight of the giant Wolf, the girl cried out: Please Oh mighty Wolf!, I pray you show mercy!
- 3 My father is King and for my return, he will gladly reward you, with as many sheep as you could wish to eat.
- 4 The Wolf replied and said: Oh beautiful little princess, indeed I am a Wolf.
- 5 Yet, I have never seen a more divine creation. For I could no more harm you than surrender my own life.
- 6 Whereupon the Wolf let the little girl sit on his back as he returned her to the village.
- 7 Yet when they arrived, the villagers were fearful of such a great beast,
- 8 And once the little girl was safely in the arms of her father the King, they slung arrows and rocks at the Wolf.
- 9 Many years later, when the Princess had become a young woman, her party was attacked on a road by robbers.
- 10 But before the bandits could do their worst, the great Wolf appeared and forced them to flee.
- 11 Upon seeing the great Wolf the young woman cried: Oh mysterious Wolf! Forgive me!
- 12 For I begged you to forswear, yet my father cast you out as a scoundrel.
- 13 The Wolf replied: Fair and most beautiful princess, no man may judge against the call of heaven.
- 14 Fate binds us, yet it is how we honor our own heart that will decide how we are remembered.
- 15 Whereupon, the great Wolf let the young princess travel on his back to return to the village.

- 16** When they arrived and before the villagers could arm themselves, the young woman called out to them:
- 17** Before all heaven and the gods this day, I pledge my heart and love to this great Wolf,
- 18** Who saved me, not once but twice. It is he whom I shall marry.
- 19** The King did not know what to say to his daughter and was terrified of the great Wolf until he devised a plan and said:
- 20** Be that the gods through fate have ordained this union, I have no quarrel, except one.
- 21** That you be so mighty and powerful and my daughter be so fragile,
- 22** Unless you be willing to sacrifice the power of your teeth and claws,
- 23** I fear I could not in good conscience betroth my daughter to certain death.
- 24** The Wolf was so much in love that he agreed, whereupon his teeth and claws were removed.
- 25** But when he came again to the King, the villagers and the King simply laughed at him and banished him.
- 26** Soon after, a fearsome Lion came upon the village and stalked the villagers.
- 27** One by one the villagers in sheer terror did fall to the claws and jaws of the terrible Lion, until it finally trapped the frightened Princess.
- 28** Yet before the Lion could dispatch the Princess, the Wolf returned and pushed the Lion aside.
- 29** The Lion in anger tore at the toothless and clawless Wolf, mortally wounding him.
- 30** The Lion stood over the dying Wolf and said: Oh sad and pathetic creature!
- 31** Whereas you were once the most feared of creatures, Love destroyed you!
- 32** At his last breath, the Wolf replied thus: From dust we come, and to dust we all must return.
- 33** Verily, my life was surely not in vain. For where I now go, soon shall you join me, by the spears of the villagers now rallied upon you.

Esus and the Monster

- 1** Esus once journeyed along a path in the otherworld, when he was challenged by the smallest of forms.
- 2** Upon this strange-looking being, Esus declared thus: Stand aside and let me pass, for I have no quarrel with thee.
- 3** Yet the form continued its belligerence until Esus using his great rod did thrust the being to the side.
- 4** Before Esus could continue and to his surprise, the form was now ten times larger and more ferocious before.
- 5** Again, Esus thrust all his strength against this foe and again the nemesis grew now a hundred times larger, dwarfing Esus.
- 6** Suddenly Ana appeared and said thus: Cease your blows mighty Esus. For the name of your foe is strife.
- 7** Behold! The more you fight, the more it is fed and the stronger such a monster grows.
- 8** Verily, if you make peace, despite its madness, it shall surely expire without its sustenance.

34 Clemency

The Prodigal Son

- 1** A Wealthy Landowner had several beloved Sons and Daughters whom he raised in privilege and duty.
- 2** Yet the eldest of the Sons and Daughters yearned for adventure and to enjoy wealth without work.

- 3** He confronted his Father and said: Father, if you truly loved me, you would set me free from my obligations,
- 4** That I might choose my own path to use my birthright by my own will, rather than according to your guardianship.
- 5** Upon hearing the entreat of his eldest Son, the Father agreed and granted him his fair share.
- 6** Soon after the eldest Son departed with his fortune to distant lands,
- 7** Whereupon he quickly squandered his wealth with extravagant and immoral living.
- 8** After the Son had spent everything, there was a severe famine.
- 9** Destitute and in need of food, the Son approached a local publican with whom he had spent much money and said:
- 10** Robust friend, in times of merriment you did seek my company. Pray you grant me food and lodging in my hour of need.
- 11** Yet the local publican refused, saying: A Fool and his money are soon parted. Farewell thee fool.
- 12** The eldest Son then approached a local temple and the head priest and entreated him:
- 13** Noble Spirit, while I lived an extravagant and immoral life, I did frequent this fine temple and help in its upkeep.
- 14** Surely as a man of benevolence, you could extend the hand of charity and provide me some little food?
- 15** Yet the local priest refused, saying: As much as your gifts are a grateful reward,
- 16** If I were to show such charity, I fear in these times, we too would be destitute before long.
- 17** The eldest Son in great distress wept upon the street before a local merchant, known for his cruelty, did see him and said:
- 18** I shall grant you lodging and meal, if you swear on all that is sacred you shall do your duties that I set for you.
- 19** The eldest Son in desperation agreed and soon found himself sleeping with the pigs and ensuring their keep.
- 20** He longed to fill his stomach with the grains that the pigs did eat, but was only permitted the scraps.
- 21** Many days passed until the eldest Son, weak with hunger did cry out:
- 22** Alas oh Spirits!, it has come to this. For no good reason do I see that my earthly form should bear witness to another morn.
- 23** Suddenly a vision of his previous life and his father appeared, to which the eldest Son did say:
- 24** Oh Terrible torments and ghosts of past! I now see the error of my ways. Better to be a servant in the house of my Father, than the slave of a merchant.
- 25** So he got up and returned to his homeland and to the House of his Father.
- 26** But while he was still a long way off, his Father saw him and then ran to him and then kissed him.
- 27** Before the Son could speak, the Father ordered his servants thus: Take him to be bathed and put upon him the finest robes and sandals.
- 28** The Father then ordered a fattened calf be slaughtered and a great feast prepared.
- 29** Yet the Son returned not in the finest of robes but in the simple cloth of a servant and threw himself down before his Father:
- 30** Forgive me Father for I have transgressed against Heaven, against the Gods and against your name.
- 31** I am no longer worthy to be called your Son. Instead make me be a servant in your home and I will honor my duties.

32 The Father embraced him and said thus: My Son, I shall never abandon you, nor ever forsake you. Yet Character is nothing if not tested.

33 For we celebrate then with this feast your death and rebirth, your loss and your return.

35 Cheerfulness

36 Imagination

The Divine Gift

- 1 The Divine Father-Mother Creator spoke thus to Yahu, the great primordial waters:
- 2 Of all creation within the dream of the Universe, mankind is to be the greatest paradox.
- 3 Surely, without our intervention, they shall not survive themselves.
- 4 Therefore, I am resolved to give unto them a Divine Gift of immeasurable value.
- 5 It is the realization they have the power to create their own reality.
- 6 Yet they must not find it before they are ready, lest it be used for ill and not for good.
- 7 So Yahu spoke to the Beasts, the Trees, the Fish and Birds of the Earth as to where to hide the Divine Gift.
- 8 The Eagle said: I shall take it to the Mountains.
- 9 Yahu replied: Yet some day, man will climb the highest peaks.
- 10 The Whale said: I shall hide it in the oceans.
- 11 Yahu replied: And yet someday, man will sail the furthest seas.
- 12 The Squirrels said: Let us then hide it in the earth.
- 13 Yahu replied: Verily, even the deepest caverns of the earth shall not be safe from the reach of man.
- 14 Then the most ancient of Trees did speak: Put it inside of them.
- 15 And Yahu said thus: It is done.

37 Intelligence

The Farmer and the Snake

- 1 One winter, a Farmer found a Snake stiff and frozen with cold.
- 2 He felt compassion for its demise, and taking it up, placed it in his home near his own chest.
- 3 The Snake was quickly revived by the warmth and care of the Farmer,
- 4 And resuming its natural instinct, bit its benefactor, inflicting on him a mortal wound.
- 5 Upon his last breath, the Farmer said thus: Alas Oh Gods! For I be a foolish heart!
- 6 That I took pity upon a scoundrel and believed by love alone I could force it to change character.

38 Influence

The North Wind, the Sun and the Seafarer

- 1 The Spirits of the North Wind and the Sun were in dispute as to which was the most powerful force on man.
- 2 The Spirit of the North Wind did declare: Upon my might, I have smashed a thousand ships upon the rocks,
- 3 And laid waste to whole lands and stock.
- 4 Thus the spirit of the Sun proposed a test and said: Fair wind of the North, let us resolve our dispute,

- 5 Without the demise of a single man. Instead I propose a single test.
- 6 Let us find a Seafarer and see who can strip him of his cloak.
- 7 They agreed and so found a single Seafarer on his vessel.
- 8 The North Wind agreed and went first by blowing with all his might upon a Seafarer and his boat.
- 9 But the keener his blasts, the closer the Seafarer wrapped his cloak around him.
- 10 Until at last, resigning all hope of victory, the Wind called upon the Sun to see what he could do.
- 11 The Sun then shone out with all his warmth.
- 12 The Seafarer no sooner felt his genial rays than he took off his cloak.
- 13 To the Spirit of the Wind of the North, the Sun said thus: Indeed fair wind, my powers are strong and when unchecked can cause great hardship.
- 14 Yet persuasion is always better than force.

39 Strength

The Cart and Esus

- 1 A Cart bearing a heavy load and driven along a muddy and uneven path became stuck.
- 2 In frustration, the driver of the Cart yelled out: Alas Oh gods! For what minor transgression warrants such imposition?
- 3 The driver then pulled out his whip and started to torment the horses to pull the Cart out.
- 4 Yet the more the driver lashed the horses, the deeper the wheels of the Cart sank into the mire.
- 5 Again, the driver called out in frustration: Damn ye gods! For now even if I remove myself from this predicament, my horses are lame.
- 6 With no amount of yelling or cursing moving the Cart, the driver then stepped down and knelt upon the side of the path, saying:
- 7 Oh mighty Esus, grant me your strength in my hour of distress.
- 8 At that moment, Esus appeared and said thus: Behold! Neither gods, nor beasts, nor other man be responsible for your heavy load but thee.
- 9 Cease your cursing and your whining and get up and put your shoulder to the wheel.
- 10 Verily, the gods help those that seek in honor to help themselves.

40 Integrity

The King and the Burden

- 1 A great King one day ordered: I wish to reward the most deserving of the kingdom.
- 2 So an invitation was sent out to all people, of all types to come to his kingdom.
- 3 But some distance from the gates, the King then ordered his men to place a huge rock as an obstacle upon the main path.
- 4 The King then hid himself as a peasant to observe the reaction to such obstacle.
- 5 Many of the wealthiest of merchants upon seeing the burden, surrendered and turned back from whence they came.
- 6 Others, simply skirted around the burden and continued upon their way, leaving their friends and family behind.
- 7 Finally, almost upon dusk a peasant carrying a cart of vegetables came to the huge rock obstructing the path.
- 8 He called upon the melee of people to assist him, yet none did except the King dressed as a fellow peasant.

- 9 So finally, the King and the peasant farmer removed the rock to reveal a purse of gold coins.
- 10 Before the reward could be snatched from the peasant by greedy onlookers, the King revealed himself and said thus:
- 11 Verily, my most trusted of lords and merchants did surrender or fail to address this burden, but you.
- 12 Behold! Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

The Bear and the Two Travelers

- 1 Two men were travelling along a forest road, when suddenly confronted by a Bear.
- 2 The quicker of the two, abandoned his companion and climbed up a nearby tree, concealing himself.
- 3 The other, upon such mortal danger fell to the ground and feigned death.
- 4 The Bear did then approach the man upon the ground and after briefly examining him, spoke a few words in his ear and departed.
- 5 Upon their reunion, the man who had retreated inquired upon the other: Pray tell me brother,
- 6 What did such a Beast say to you that he did spare your life?
- 7 Whereupon the man who had faced mortal danger did reply: Verily, he did say thus:
- 8 Never travel with a friend who abandons you at the approach of danger.

41 Choice

The Young Priest and Luki

- 1 At dusk, a Young Priest wearied from a long journey, lay down to sleep unbeknownst on the very brink of a deep ravine.
- 2 Being within inches of the edge, Luki appeared to him and waking him from his slumber thus addressed him:
- 3 Young man, I pray thee awake and make haste away from your mortal peril.
- 4 For had you fallen into the ravine, the blame shall be thrown on me, and I shall get an ill name among mortals.
- 5 Alas, as much as men shall claim their good fortune upon skill, men are sure to blame their calamities upon me.
- 6 However much by their own folly they have brought distress on themselves.

42 Identity

The False Soothsayer

- 1 An infamous merchant of false antiquities exiled and no longer able to make a living by his trade,
- 2 Called out in poverty and exhaustion upon a lonely road to the gods:
- 3 May the gods have mercy upon a broken man! Behold! I have done no transgression before heaven!
- 4 For what a priest creates in faith, I give as form. Yet both seek to lift the spirit.
- 5 Upon his desperate petition, he spotted the edge of a buried box under a tree.
- 6 When he opened the box, he discovered an elaborate gold and jewel encrusted text in ancient language the merchant knew from his trade.
- 7 The merchant did thank the gods for his good fortune and pledged: Upon this sign, I shall henceforth use this knowledge for good and not evil.
- 8 So the merchant changed his appearance and when he entered the next city, he established a market stall and soon became popular for his accurate predictions and prognostications as a Soothsayer.

- 9 Each time, the Soothsayer would produce the gold and jewel encrusted text, saying a spell and then would find a page and speak in eloquent yet vague terms.
- 10 Yet above all, the merchant would simply tell the people what they wanted to hear.
- 11 Before long, the merchant now as a Great Soothsayer was as famous as any in the land and had become fabulously wealthy from patrons.
- 12 Soon, the great and wise King of the land summonsed the Soothsayer to his palace and said thus:
- 13 Oh great Soothsayer, I implore your wisdom on matters of the gravest concern. For this day we choose whether to wage war with our neighbors.
- 14 The merchant in his disguise then produced the gold and jewel encrusted text, then did say a spell and sought to quote from its passages.
- 15 Yet the King was unconvinced by such words and demanded a clearer demonstration of his claimed powers.
- 16 Three men in chains were brought into the court and placed before the Soothsayer and the King. The King then spoke thus:
- 17 Before you oh Soothsayer is one man sentenced to death and two innocent men. Without speaking to them, you must choose whom it is.
- 18 Yet be careful Soothsayer. For your decision shall be final and the penalty of a judge executing an innocent man is death to such a false judge.
- 19 The merchant under such condition looked to the King and then collapsed to the ground, prostrating himself, saying:
- 20 Forgive me oh great and just King! For I am no more a Soothsayer than I am a judge of character.
- 21 I be but a failed merchant, whom the gods saw fit to bestow the gold and jeweled text before you and whom pledged an oath to the gods not to do evil.
- 22 Have mercy on me, for I could no more sentence a man to death, than live with such fraud. I merely gave men what they wished to hear.
- 23 In reply the King said thus: In my court, I have witnessed soothsayers who knew far less than you, but did not flinch at condemning a man.
- 24 I have honored priests who could speak far less eloquently than you, yet had never slept a night on an empty stomach.
- 25 As the gods spared you, so you are now spared. For while you think you came to me an impostor, your heart did not lie.
- 26 Verily, we are what we choose to be by our words and deeds Soothsayer.

The Crow and the Raven

- 1 A Crow was jealous of the Raven, because he was considered a bird of good omen,
- 2 And thus attracting the attention of men, who noted by his flight the good or evil course of future events.
- 3 Seeing some travelers approaching, the Crow flew up into a tree,
- 4 And perching himself on one of the branches, cawed as loudly as he could.
- 5 The travelers turned towards the sound and wondered what it foreboded,
- 6 When one of them said to his companion thus: Let us proceed on our journey, my friend,
- 7 For it is only the caw of a crow, and his cry, you know, is no omen.

43 Self

Two Wolves

- 1 An old scholar one day was speaking to his grandson about the battle of self within all of us and said thus:
- 2 Verily, my son, the battle within all of us is between two wolves.

- 3 One is Malevolent. It is anger, envy, jealousy, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, pride and ego.
- 4 The other is Benevolent. It is joy, peace, love, humility, kindness, empathy, generosity, truth and compassion.
- 5 The grandson replied and said: Oh wise grandfather, tell me which wolf wins?
- 6 To which the old scholar replied thus: The one you feed.

44 Reason

The Rich Farmer and Poor Farmer

- 1 A farmer of poor means suffered a grave loss when his only horse ran away.
- 2 A wealthy neighbor did then come calling and said to the farmer: Surely this be a sign of ill fortune!
- 3 With no horse to plough your fields, you shall surely starve. Better then to sell your plot, than to die a pauper.
- 4 Yet the farmer did reply and say: I be neither against the gods, nor surrendered to my fate. We shall see.
- 5 Soon after, the horse returned with three wild horses which the farmer claimed and then sold two to pay his debts.
- 6 Yet when his only son sought to ride the best one they had kept, the horse threw him off and he broke his leg.
- 7 The wealthy farmer did return and said: Alas!, your fortune has not improved. For your injured son has robbed you of your laborer.
- 8 Best then you sell such unruly stallion to pay for supplies, than risk dying without heir.
- 9 Yet the farmer did reply and say: Such trials indeed are great, yet I do not resign my affection for life. We shall see.
- 10 Soon after, the local Lord sent out his troops to round up able bodied men to fight.
- 11 But upon the son of the farmer being injured, they did move on and seize the sons of the wealthy neighbor.
- 12 Upon hearing his neighbor losing his sons, the poor farmer called upon him:
- 13 When the wealthy farmer sighted his neighbor he called out: Do not mock me in my hour of shame!
- 14 For the gods indeed shine on you with all the richness of good fortune!
- 15 The poor farmer in response said thus: Verily, it is you, not I who should give thanks.
- 16 For though you have never worked, you are bestowed the choicest of lands;
- 17 And despite your character, your neighbors rally to your aid.
- 18 Surely then your sons shall return. For neither the gods nor men of good conscience have abandoned you.

45 Beauty

The Fox and the Leopard

- 1 The Fox and the Leopard found themselves in dispute,
- 2 As which of them was the more beautiful of the two.
- 3 The Leopard did declare: By the hand of the most beautiful of Gods,
- 4 It is I who carries the marks of greatness upon my skin.
- 5 The Fox replied: Indeed Leopard, how much more beautiful are you than I,
- 6 Whom the Gods chose to decorate not in body, but mind.

46 Death

The Little Girl

- 1 A young girl witnessed her mother endure great sickness.
- 2 Yet she was deprived of witnessing her body after death.
- 3 Instead, the father said to her: Your mother has gone away to another place.
- 4 Whereupon the young girl was greatly saddened and melancholy henceforth.
- 5 Until one day, her father gravely ill from injury of battle summonsed her and spoke thus:
- 6 It grieves me most not only that you become an orphan, but that you did not see your mother.
- 7 For she did not abandon you but died. And surely if you had seen her body you would know.
- 8 Soon after the father also died and the little girl was at first denied the chance to see his body.
- 9 But upon insistence she did witness the corpse and said thus: Now I see, Oh Father! I thank thee!
- 10 For before me is but an empty vessel. And what I love has truly gone on a new journey.
- 11 Thus I know you are always with me, as nothing that is created can be uncreated and nothing immortal can ever die.

47 Life

The Father and Son

- 1 A peaceful seaside village was once attacked by ruthless bandits with only a few escaping by ship.
- 2 Some days later, the ship itself was attacked by pirates with only a husband and wife and small child escaping in a small boat.
- 3 Yet the god Lir chose to be unkind to the stranded family and their boat traveled further out to sea, than towards the shore.
- 4 With few rations and with the boat sinking, the wife said to the husband: Beloved husband, surely the currents shall change in our favor.
- 5 Alas! I fear we may be starved before such fortune arrives. For either we lighten the boat or we shall surely drown.
- 6 Better that which I love survives, than we all perish for naught.
- 7 After much protesting and with the wife having made up her mind, she stepped off the boat and met her end.
- 8 With a lighter load, the level of flooding of the boat eased, and the father collapsed briefly from exhaustion.
- 9 Soon after, the currents changed course bringing the boat towards land.
- 10 As the boat continued to take on water, when the father stepped out and lightened the load further, the flooding stopped.
- 11 With land in sight, the father clinging to the side of the boat said to his young son thus: That you live, I shall live. For love can never die.
- 12 Be gentle my son to your children and to your grandchildren and never forget me.
- 13 For when I return, I will depend upon you to remind me.
- 14 With those final words, the father gave up the ghost as the boat finally made it to shore.

48 Life after Death

The Pious Widow

- 1 There was a poor and pious Widow, who so dearly sought to please the gods,

- 2 She did attend the Temple daily offering much of what little she possessed.
- 3 Having pity upon her, one day Luki placed a bucket of gold coins in her path.
- 4 Yet upon sight of the gold coins, she declared: Praise ye gods for such grace!
- 5 Verily, I shall bring this divine gift with haste to the priests, for so much greater be my reward in the next life.
- 6 Upon seeing her actions and frustrated by her obstinate mendicancy, Luki then placed three goats on her path each wearing a gold bell.
- 7 Upon sight of the divine gift, the Widow expressed: For you give me much abundance I thank thee!
- 8 Faithfully, I shall guide these handsome goats to the priests, for now even greater be my reward in the next life.
- 9 Yet soon after, the Widow fell gravely ill and almost upon death Luki appeared to her.
- 10 When the Widow saw his divine form she called out: Dear Luki of the gods. Have I now passed and have you come to show me my reward?
- 11 For I have followed the commands of the priests. I have given all I own to the temple. I have prayed and sacrificed every day.
- 12 To which Luki said thus: Oh ungrateful woman. The gods gave you a beautiful life, which you chose to sacrifice to kneeling in a mausoleum of burnt flesh and stone.
- 13 The gods still felt pity on you and granted the reward of a fortune which you squandered to men of ill repute.
- 14 Finally, the gods gave you a reward of three handsome goats which you surrendered to these same people who know nothing of heaven.
- 15 Now you wish upon me some other reward? Alas, oh mistaken woman your time in transition will be hard and with great regret.
- 16 Behold, any who fail to embrace the rewards of one life, surely must learn difficult lessons upon their next life.

49 Immortality

The Vulture and the Dying Man

- 1 A man lost in a vast desert without food or water was close to his doom,
- 2 When a great Vulture arrived and perched itself upon a nearby rock.
- 3 Upon seeing the vulture, the man did say: Behold death! You shall not be kept waiting.
- 4 Verily, before I depart, I entreat thee? For I wish to know if there is something more?
- 5 To which the Vulture replied: In answer to your dying request, what then do you see with your eyes but wasted land?
- 6 Yet upon the rains, this void be but a cruel mirage. For all life does bloom with fierce determination.
- 7 The man close to expiry did reply: Alas! That before I die it be impossible to witness such a miracle.
- 8 To which the Vulture replied thus: Then close your eyes and imagine such life and so you have your answer.
- 9 For your mind knows more than what your eyes cannot see. Thus only your body shall decay and be my meal.
- 10 Yet your mind is immortal and no god, nor form, nor man or beast may claim it or seize it.

50 Reincarnation



Diatuair



Nome



Anacanain