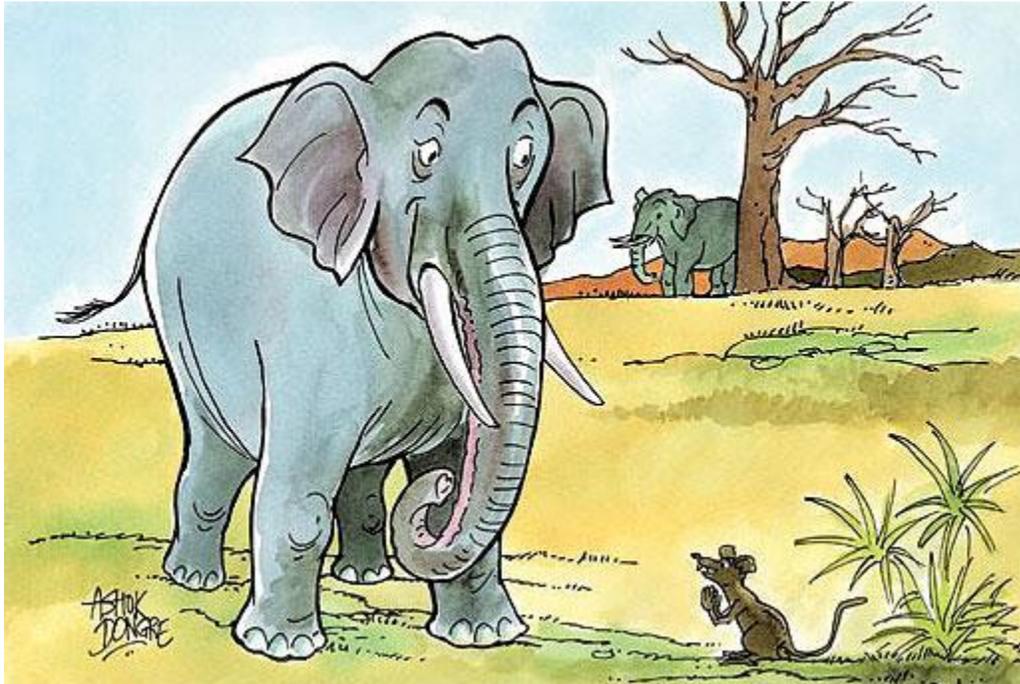


THE LITTLE MICE AND THE BIG ELEPHANTS

image: <http://www.kidsgen.com/stories/panchatantra/img/the-mouse-and-big-elephants.jpg>



Once upon a time a village was devastated by a strong earthquake. Damaged houses and roads could be seen everywhere. The village was, as a matter of fact, in a total ruin. The villagers had abandoned their houses and had settled in a nearby village. Finding the place totally devoid of residents, the mice began to live in the ruined houses. Soon their number grew into thousands and millions.

There was also a big lake situated near the ruined village. A herd of elephants used to visit the lake for drinking water. The herd had no other way but to pass through the ruins of the village to reach the lake. While on their way, the elephants trampled hundreds of mice daily under their heavy feet. This made all the mice very sad. Many of them were killed while a large number of them were maimed.

In order to find a solution to this problem, the mice held a meeting. In the meeting, it was decided that a request should be made to the king of elephants to this effect. The king of mice met the king of elephants and said to him, "Your Majesty, we live in the ruins of the village, but everytime your herd crosses the village, thousands of my subjects get trampled under the massive feet of your herd. Kindly change your route. If you do so, we promise to help you in the hour of your need."

Hearing this the king of elephants laughed. "You rats are so tiny to be of any help to giants like us. But in any case, we would do a favour to all of you by changing our route to reach the lake and to make you more safe." The king of mice thanked the king elephant and returned home.

After sometime, the king of a nearby kingdom thought of increasing the number of elephants in his army. He ordered his soldiers to catch more elephants for this purpose.

The king's soldiers saw this herd and put a strong net around the elephants. The elephants got trapped. They struggled hard to free themselves, but in vain.

Suddenly, the king of elephants recollected the promise of the king of mice, who had earlier talked about helping the elephants when needed. So he trumpeted loudly to call the king of mice. The king of mice hearing the voice of the king of elephants immediately rushed along with his followers to rescue the herd. There he found the elephants trapped in a thick net.

The mice set themselves on the task. They bit off the thick net at thousands of spots making it loose. The elephants broke the loose net and freed themselves.

They thanked the mice for their great help and extended their hands of friendship to them forever.