

The Magic Stone – from the Yogavasistha

There was a hermit who knew the hymn by which one could get the *Chintamani-sheela* or the wish fulfilling stone. Whatever one wished to have holding the magic stone in his grip, one could have it.

But the magic stone was not transferable. One had to earn it oneself – by going through a rigid discipline and reciting the difficult hymn for an indefinite period.

A merchant went to the hermit and served him well and then said, “Sir, teach me the hymn by which I can get a magic stone.”

“Why do you want it? Don’t you have enough wealth to live happily?” asked the hermit.

“The wealth I have is got through hard labour. Today it is there. Tomorrow it may be lost. Besides, I have to pass anxious times in order to safeguard my wealth. Once I have the magic stone, I need have no other wealth. The magic stone will give me whatever I need!” explained the merchant and he kept on pleading for the hermit’s favour.

The hermit taught the necessary hymn to the merchant.

“How long should I go on reciting it?” asked the merchant.

“As long as you have not got the stone!” replied the hermit.

The merchant lived a disciplined life and went on reciting the hymn. A year passed. He was coming out of the river Ganga after a dip when he saw a white stone lying on the edge of the water. It was the magic stone.

He picked it up and looked at it. It was not very bright. “What a fool I am to think that this dull thing could be the magic stone! The magic stone is not likely to fall into my hands so easily!” he mumbled to himself.

He then flung the stone into the river and went his way.

Five years passed. One day, he saw a glittering stone lying before him. “At last I have the magic stone!” he cried out in joy. He squandered away all his wealth, for he was sure that whatever he needed will be given to him by the magic stone.

When nothing of his old property was left, he went into the forest and asked the stone to build for him a new house there. But there was no result. He was hungry and he asked the stone to give him at least some food. There was no result, for it an ordinary stone except for its glitter! The magic stone comes only once. It had come to him, but he had spurned it, because it did not look very bright.