The Monkey's Meddling



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A large wooden wedge had been driven into the split of a log. The log-cutters had sawn the timber halfway through and inserted the wedge before leaving. While sawing wood, workers drive wedges in as they proceed so that the split does not close back up from the other side and the saw does not get jammed.

Just then, a troop of monkeys arrived. Hopping here and jumping there, they were making "terenk, terenk" sounds. What can one say about the nature of these monkeys? You know the clown character (Kodangi) that appears in traditional folk plays—that concept originated from the monkey itself! You must have heard the expression "monkey tricks" (Kapi Cheshte).

Before eating fruit, these monkeys touch it to their rump to check its size. According to the tale, this habit began when a monkey swallowed a large mango seed whole after chewing on it. The hard seed could neither be digested nor pass out of its body. Since then, monkeys have supposedly checked whether their food will fit through their

rear opening. The proverb “Like giving a ruby to a monkey” reflects a similar idea: a monkey held a ruby against its rear, sniffed it, and found it had neither scent nor taste. It kept the gem there, thinking, “I’ll swallow it later!”

While things were such, one of those monkeys noticed the wedge driven into the log. First, it tried to pull it, but it wouldn't come out. Then, placing its legs on either side of the split in the log, the monkey sat down and started shaking the wedge back and forth. Its testicles hung down inside the split of the wood. Without giving up its persistence, the monkey rocked and wriggled the wedge back and forth until, finally, it popped the wedge out! That was it—the moment the wedge came free, the split log instantly snapped shut. The monkey let out a loud scream and died on the spot with its mouth open. Both of its testicles were crushed and pulverized inside the log.