"Chaameeeeee, where are you, I have brought a surprise for you..... come and see here". It was Buddu as usual on an evening. In his hands was an object resembling a spinning top with which the children of his age would usually play. Chaami on that evening was busy helping her mother in the kitchen. On hearing him calling again, she replied while still being inside the kitchen. "come on in Buddu, I am here in the kitchen... what is that so interesting?", she was curious to know. “Guess what I could have brought”, holding out his hand with a closed fist, Buddu rushed into the kitchen asking her; he was eager to get a right answer from her. On seeing his closed fist, she commanded, “What is there with you show me”, instead of giving alternative answers. As if to obey, Buddu opened his fist and stretched his hand to her. There it was, a dark coloured fruit resembling a spinning top. “it looks so dull and dingy... I don’t want this, keep it for yourself”, Chaami shunned him on being not happy with his finding. But Buddu persisted, “No Chaami, It’s a magic fruit, you can spin this like a top and play with it. You neither need a leverlock nor a whip to spin this. It’s so easy and you can have plenty of these unlike the ones brought from the toyshop”. It seemed Chaami was convinced with Buddu’s explanation. Washing her hands, she came out of the kitchen. “Show me how does it spin”, she insisted.

Buddu was satisfied to see his finding accepted by Chaami. He looked at that object again. It was a compressed ball with a nail like part at the bottom resembling a spinning top. He tried spinning it. Holding the nail like stalk with his thumb and the middle finger he gave a firm and rotatory jerk to release it on to the ground. There it was! Swirling on the ground with the same speed as that of a top released by a whip. Whirl and whirl and whirl! After sufficient whirling it came to a halt. Chaami was struck while Buddu was beaming with joy. “Where did you find this Buddu”, Chaami was appreciative of his finding. “My gardener gave me this’, replying with a tinge of pride Buddu continued, ‘he says there is a tree in his village which gives out such fruits in plenty”. Eager to get one for herself, Chaami pleaded, “Can you please ask your gardener Buddu, to spare one fruit for me also”. Buddu however was reluctant to do that for her, but agreed after a bit of cajoling and said. “OK ! let me ask him tomorrow when he comes here. He had told my father that he would be here tomorrow”. Later, Chaami and Buddu went out to play with the top.

The next morning Buddu took Chaami to his house where they saw in the porch, the gardener standing with a person sitting in a chair. He was seen smearing some thing on the dark blotches on continued on page no.16
the cheeks of the other person! Beside him on the stool in a plate were some fruits, similar to those spinning tops. There were several halved fruits lying around. Chaami could not ascertain what the gardener was trying to do. Pointing at the gardener, she asked Buddu in a whisper, “What is he trying to do?”. Buddu whispered back in her ears, “He is treating a patient with ringworm”. A patient with ringworm being treated by a gardener!? Chaami was amused to see the gardener doing the job of a doctor.

After a while when the gardener finished treating the person, the kids approached him. “What’s the news kids”, asked the gardener in a sweet tone while packing up his tools. Buddu spoke for Chaami, “Chaami wants a top for herself like the one which you have given me…can you give her one?”. The gardener did not tell any thing. The kids were silent. They were awaiting a favorable reply from him. Chaami was feeling more and more uncomfortable. As if to answer them, nodding his head in affirmative, the gardener turned to Chaami and said, “I have no problem giving you a fruit child, but Buddu says you are an intelligent girl; why don’t you look one for yourself from the tree that is right in your neighbourhood, I shall give you the hints to recognise the tree”. He sounded like questioning the intelligence of Chaami. Accepting the challenge, Chaami invited him to throw the hints at her. “Imagine a medium sized tree’, the gardener continued, ‘a tree with the leaves resembling that of Peepal, its flowers resembling that of Hollyhock and lots of spinning tops with long stalks hung from the branches all over and that’s the tree you are looking for”. For a moment Chaami was confused and she thought that the gardener was making fun of her. She looked at him and found nothing suspecting. She recollected his words, a tree with leaves of Peepal, flowers of Hollyhock and dangling tops all over- quite a different tree indeed, she thought.

Considering these three striking features, the kids went in search of the tree in the evening. The streets in the neighbourhood were lined with ornamental flowering trees while those in the nearby cropfields on the outskirts were more for fodder purposes; She had even seen those in the temple garden. Decided to avoid all these sites, Chaami and Buddu took the mud road that had gone out of the town in the direction of nearby villages. It was actually a cart track full of dust and small stones difficult to tread. Yet, the kids found it delightful in the midst of green crop fields and chirping birds. Observing the trees along the road, they had walked for quite a distance; yet they had not sighted the right tree. At one point of time, feeling tired and disappointed, they decided to return. Then they found it! The medium sized tree at a little distance along the road. Chaami and Buddu rushed towards that and they were no longer feeling tired. With a globular crown and dense foliage, dotted with bright yellow conical flowers resembling those of the Ladiesfinger and the Hollyhock, and the dangling fruits with long stalks - the kids were joyous to have found out the right tree.

Buddu with a joyful and loud cry climbed the tree to pluck a branch bearing the flowers and fruits. Looking at the branch with wide opened eyes, Chaami asked Buddu, “What is this tree Buddu, its amazing!” ( Before Buddu could give any reply, They heard a pleasant voice coming from the direction of the tree crown above. What did Chaami and Buddu hear ? turn to page 14).