

island Langabâlûs there is a large star visible, known as the *fever-star*. It appears in winter about morning dawn in the east as high as a date-palm tree, having an oblong shape, composed of the tail of the Small Bear and his back, and of some small stars situated there; it is called *the axe of the mill*. Brahmagupta mentions it in connection with *the Fish*. The Hindus tell rather ludicrous tales when speaking of the figure in which they represent this group of stars, viz. the figure of a four-footed aquatic animal, which they call *Śakvara* and also *Śisumâra*. I suppose that the latter animal is the great lizard, for in Persia it is called *Susmâr*, which sounds much like the Indian *Śisumâra*. Of this kind of animals there is also an aquatic species, similar to the crocodile and the skink. One of those tales is the following.

When Brahman wanted to create mankind, he divided himself into two halves, of which the right one was called *Virâj*, the left one *Manu*. The latter one is the being from whom the period of time called *Manvantara* has received its name. Manu had two sons, Priyavrata and Uttânapâda, the bow-legged king. The latter had a son called *Dhruva*, who was slighted by one of the wives of his father. On account of this, he was presented with the power to turn round all the stars as he pleased. He appeared in the Manvantara of Svayambhuva, the first of all Manvantaras, and he has for ever remained in his place.

The story of
Dhruva.

The *Vâyu-Purâna* says: "The wind drives the stars round the pole, which are bound to it by ties invisible to man. They move round like the beam in the olive-press, for its bottom is, as it were, standing still, whilst its end is moving round.

Quotations
from *Vâyu-
Purâna* and
*Vishnu-
Dharma*.

The *Vishnu-Dharma* says: "Vajra, one of the children of Balabhadra, the brother of Nârâyana, asked the Rishi Mârkaṇḍeya as to the pole, upon which he answered: When God created the world, it was dark and desert.

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