

Pāñcāla in the great city of Kāmpilya. The King loved his father. He was mighty and powerful. He was regular in performing sacrifices and giving offerings to the manes. He had the attainment of harmony with the supreme spirit. He understood the thought and speech of birds and animals. He married Sannati, the daughter of Sudeva (Devala); she was in her former birth the cow of Garga.

Once as the King was walking in the garden with his wife, he saw two ants. The minute creatures, who were husband and wife were engaged in a petty quarrel. The male one, with loving words, pacified the female one, who instantly came close to her husband and they became happy. The King felt amazed at this conversation of the ants, and he laughed. Because of the attainments of his previous lives, he had the power to understand the language of animals, birds, etc. Seeing the King laughing without any reason the queen Sannati asked him why he laughed. She said that there was no reason whatsoever for the king to laugh just then. The King replied, "Oh, beautiful one! just now there was a quarrel between a female and a male ant. I heard it, That is why I laughed. There is no other reason." The queen did not believe the King. She thought that the King had been scoffing her. She asked him how he came to understand the language of such creatures. The King could not answer her question. He fasted for seven days. On the seventh day Brahmā appeared before him and told him, "The King will know everything from the words of a Brāhmin, whom he would meet when he goes to walk in the streets."

Brahmadatta returned to the palace and spent the night there. Next morning he started with his wife and ministers, for a walk. When they left the palace they saw an old Brahmin coming towards them. Seeing the king the Brāhmin recited a verse:

"Brāhmaṇas in Kurukṣetra

which seven as wild men in Daśapura ?

Stags in Kālāñjara, ruddy geese in Mānasa,

Then, are we, now living here".

When the King heard this verse the memory of his former births revived and he fell down in a swoon.

There is a reason why the old Brāhmin recited the verse. The Ruddy geese mentioned before took their next birth as sons of a poor Brāhmin in the same city. They had the memory of their previous births. They were called Dhṛtimān, Sarvadarśi, Vidyācandra and Tapodhika, names suitable to their character. The Brahmin boys decided to go for penance to attain supreme bliss. Then the poor father asked them, "My dear sons, what is this? You are going away leaving your poor and aged father. Is that dutiful? The sons replied, "We will tell you a way to earn wealth. You recite to the King, to-morrow morning this verse, which we will teach you now. You will get plenty of wealth." The boys taught their father this verse and then they went to the forest. Their father, the old Brahmin, came to the gate of the palace at Kāmpilya. The King was Brahmadatta.

There is another story how Brahmadatta became the King of this place. Long ago Aṇuha, the King of Pāñcāla did penance before Brahmā, who appeared before the King and asked him what he desired. The King made his request that he might have a son who should be a

mighty hero, a learned man, a great hermit and who could understand the language of all living creatures. Brahmā granted him boon and thus Brahmadatta was born to Aṇuha. It was before this Brahmadatta that the Brāhmaṇa recited his verse and it was that King who swooned and fell down.

The two ministers were Subālaka the son of Bābhṛavya who was the author of the Kāmaśāstra and Puṇḍarika the son of Pāñcāla who propagated the science of medicine. They also remembered about their former births and also fell down unconscious. When they recovered the King Brahmadatta and the minister Subala and Puṇḍarika bemoaned the loss of powers they had attained before by devotion, meditation, penance and sacrifice. They cried, "Fate has made us desirous of the objects of our senses and we have lost our harmony with the Supreme Spirit." They repeated the cry again and again and they spoke about the blessings obtained by offering oblation to their manes. Brahmādatta gave the old Brāhmaṇa plenty of wealth and several villages and sent him fully satisfied. Then he anointed his capable and fully qualified son Viśvaksena as King and with his retinue retired to Mānasa-saras for penance.

3) *A bird as his wife when he was King.* When Brahmādatta was the King of Kāmpilyapura a bird named Tapaniyā become his friend. Her head was purple coloured and body black. By and by this bird became his wife. A daughter named Sarvasenā was born to Brahmādatta by his bird-wife. The King had sons by other wives. Tapaniyā would wash her child and place her in the cradle early in the morning and then go to the forest and fly about in the air. She would return in the evening and tell the King news all over the world. It went on like this for a long time.

Once, when there was nobody in the room a prince took Sarvasenā from the cage and choked her to death. Tapaniyā returned and seeing the dead body of her daughter, waited for a long time. Finally she pecked out the eyes of the prince and flew away into the air. (Harivaṁśa, Chapter 20).

BRAHMADATTA II. Another King who ruled over Kāmpilya. This King was the son of the hermit Cūli and his wife Somadā, a Gandharva woman whose mother was Ūrmitā. When he was ruling Kāmpilya, Kuśanābha was the King of Kānyakubja. One hundred beautiful daughters were born to the King Kuśanābha. One day while they were playing in the jungle Vāyubhagavān (wind-god) saw them and grew lustful. But they did not yield to his request. So he got angry and cursed them and they became hump-backed. The King was very sorry. He presented his hundred hump-backed daughters to King Brahmadatta, who, by his divine power straightened their backs. When they regained their former form they became the wives of Brahmādatta. This story occurs in Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa, Sargas 32 & 33.

BRAHMADATTA III. Mention is made in Mahābhārata, Bhaviṣya Parva, Chapter 104, about another Brahmādatta. He was the King of Sālva. Though he had two wives he had no children. Finally by the grace of Śiva two children were born to them. They were called Haṁsa and Dībhaka. (For further information see Dībhaka).