

EKAVĪRA<sup>1</sup> (HEHAYA). A founder of the Hehaya line of kings.

1) *Genealogy*. Descending in order from Viṣṇu: Atri—Candra—Budha—Purūravas—Āyus—Yayāti—Yadu—Sahasrajit—Śatajit—Ekavīra (Hehaya).

2) *Birth of Ekavīra*. Once there was a King called Revanta who was an intimate friend of Indra. One day riding on Uccaiṣravas, Indra's horse, he went to Vaikuṅṭha. Fascinated by the arresting beauty of Revanta, Mahālakṣmī sat gaping for a while and did not hear what Viṣṇu talked to her. Viṣṇu was offended and lost his temper. Lakṣmī was looking with interest alternatively at Revanta and the horse when Viṣṇu cursed her to be born as a mare on earth. Horrified, shedding tears, Lakṣmī begged for relief. Viṣṇu decreed that she would return to Vaikuṅṭha after giving birth to a son who would be equal in glory to Viṣṇu himself. Mahālakṣmī came to Earth taking the shape of a mare and lived in a forest situated at a point where the rivers Kālindī and Tamasā meet and where once Sūryapatnī stayed and did penance. Meditating on Śiva she lived there for a thousand divine years and then one day Śiva and Pārvatī appeared before her and asked her what she wanted. She then said "Oh, Bhagavan, Mahāviṣṇu cursed me and made me into a mare. He has decreed that I would go back after bringing forth a son as glorious as Viṣṇu. From whom am I to bear a son like this?" Śiva promised to find a solution and going to Vaikuṅṭha sent Viṣṇu to earth in the form of a horse. Viṣṇu came to Lakṣmī and they lived together for some time and soon a son was born to Lakṣmī. Leaving the child in the forest both of them went back to Vaikuṅṭha. It is this child who later on became the famous King, Ekavīra. It was because he was born of a horse that he got the names, Hehaya and Haihaya. (Skandha 6, Devī Bhāgavata).

3) *How Ekavīra came to the palace*. It was at this time that Śatajit, son of the grandson of Yayāti was doing penance to obtain a son. He was also doing penance in the forest situated at a point where the rivers Kālindī and Tamasā meet. One night a Vidyādhara named Campaka came with a Vidyādhari named Madālasā and seeing the infant lying helpless in the forest took it to Devaloka. Indra recognised it as the child born to Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī on earth while they were living as horse and mare and so the Vidyādhara put it back on earth in the same place as before. Immediately Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇas appeared before Śatajit doing penance there and asking him to take care of a child lying helpless in another side of the forest disappeared. Immensely pleased at this Śatajit took the child to his palace and brought him forth as his own son giving the child the name Ekavīra. When the boy became a prince, Śatajit crowned Ekavīra King and went to the forest with his queen and after doing penance there for sometime attained Viṣṇuloka. (Skandha 6, Devī Bhāgavata).

4) *Ekavīra marries Ekāvālī*. Once Prince Ekavīra accompanied by the son of the minister went for a pleasure trip to the banks of the river Gaṅgā. It was spring and the prince wandering about enjoying the sight of a

flowery forest was soon arrested by the sight of a sweet smelling lotus with a hundred petals blooming in the river. By the side of the lotus was standing a beautiful damsel weeping. The prince went to her and asked her the reason for her weeping. After great persuasion she replied thus: "Oh, Prince, there is a country not far from yours which is now being ruled over by a very righteous King called Raibhya. His queen is called Rukmarekhā. They had no children for a very long time and so Raibhya conducted a Putrakāmeṣṭi yāga. When ghee was poured profusely into the sacrificial fire the flames rose up to great heights and from inside the flames came out a lovely maiden. The King named her Ekāvālī and bought her forth as his daughter. I am Yaśovatī the daughter of the minister there. We were of the same age and so I was asked to live with her as her companion. She was very fond of lotuses and the King constructed big ponds with lotuses in them for her recreation. Yet she used to go to other ponds also in search of lotuses.

One day we came to this side of the river Gaṅgā to play. Then a demon of name Kālaketu came and kidnapped her. I followed her. She never surrendered to the enticements and persuasions of Kālaketu. Her father wanted her to be married to Ekavīra, King of Hehaya. Kālaketu sent her to prison. Without knowing what to do next I am standing here weeping.

Hearing this Ekavīra went to Pātāla and defeating Kālaketu released Ekāvālī and brought both Ekāvālī and Yaśovatī to the palace of Raibhya. Pleased at this Raibhya gave his daughter in marriage to Ekavīra. Kārtavīryārjuna was born in the family of Ekavīra. (Skandha 6, Devī Bhāgavata).

ELĀPUTRA. A serpent born to Kaśyapa of his wife Kadrū. This serpent was very intelligent. Once there arose a dispute between Vinatā and Kadrū over the colour of the tail of the horse of Indra, Uccaiṣravas. Kadrū argued that there were black hairs in the tail while Vinatā held there were none. Really there were no black hairs and Kadrū to win the argument wanted her sons to go and hang on the hairs to create a black colour. The serpents like Vāsuki and others refused to do so and Kadrū then cursed them saying that they would all be burnt to death at the Sarpasatra of Janamejaya. To take measures to get free from this curse a meeting of the serpents under the leadership of Śeṣa and Vāsuki was held and in that assembly Elāputra made a stirring speech. (Chapter 38, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

ELI AND PŪCCA. (Eli=rat, Pūcca=Cat).

The story of the cat and the rat described by the poet Kuṅjan Nambīar is from Kathāsaritsāgara. The story in original is the following.

Once there lived on a big banyan tree near the city of Vidiśā a mongoose, an owl, a cat and a rat. The mongoose and the rat lived in two separate hollows at the foot of the tree, the cat in a cavity in the centre of the tree and the owl on the branches at the top. Of these the rat could be eaten by all the other three and the cat could kill all the rest. The rat and the mongoose afraid

1. The genealogy of Ekavīra is stated differently in different Purānas. Devī Bhāgavata states that Ekavīra is the son of Turvasu, son of Yayāti and that he is the father of Kārtavīryārjuna. It is not correct. The genealogy chronicled here is based on Agni and Viṣṇu Purānas. According to that Yadu, son of Yayāti is the father of the grandfather of Ekavīra: Yadu—Sahasrajit—Śatajit—Hehaya (Ekavīra). Descending from Ekavīra—Dharma—Kunī—Bhadrasena—Dhanaka—Krtavīra—Kārtavīryārjuna. From the grandson of Kārtavīryārjuna, Vṛṣṇi, starts the Vṛṣṇi dynasty.