

and told the story to his wife, Jayā. Jayā on another occasion told the story to Pārvatī and the latter was taken aback and she went to Śiva and complained: "Your Lordship told me that the story was unique, not heard of before by anybody. But even Jayā knows it." And she wept with disappointment. Then Śiva stood in meditation for sometime, and knew how Puṣpadanta had entered the room unnoticed and how he had told the story he had heard to Jayā. Śiva explained this to Pārvatī and she immediately sent word for Puṣpadanta who came trembling and confessed everything. Pārvatī then cursed Puṣpadanta and also Mālyavān who came to speak on behalf of Puṣpadanta and made them men. They begged for relief from the curse and then she said, "Long ago Vaiśravaṇa cursed a Yakṣa named Supratīka and converted him into a devil named Kāṇabhūti. This devil is now living in the deep forests on the Vindhya mountains. When you talk with him you will become your old selves again. Puṣpadanta should first tell the story he has heard from Śiva to Kāṇabhūti and then he will be relieved from the curse. Kāṇabhūti will then tell Mālyavān many stories. Then Kāṇabhūti will get release from the curse. Mālyavān should make public all the stories he had heard from Kāṇabhūti and then he will also get release from the curse." Accordingly Puṣpadanta was born as Vararuci in the city of Kauśāmbī and Mālyavān as Guṇādhya in the city of Supratīṣṭhita. (For details see under Vararuci).

The story of how Supratīka became Kāṇabhūti is this: The Yakṣa, Supratīka, got friendly with a demon named Śūlaśiras and they moved about freely as chums. Vaiśravaṇa did not like this and he cursed Supratīka and converted him into a satan. At once, Dīrghajāṅgha, elder brother of Supratīka, came and begged for relief. Vaiśravaṇa then said: "Puṣpadanta will be born on the earth by a curse as man and he will one day come and tell Supratīka many great stories. After hearing them he should narrate them to Mālyavān who will then be born on the earth as man. Supratīka will then get release from the curse and become his old self again". Supratīka was born in the forests of Vindhya as Kāṇabhūti.

This is the story of the birth of Guṇādhya. There is a city called Supratīṣṭhita in the country of Pratiṣṭhāna and there lived a brahmin named Somaśarmā. He had two sons, Vatsa and Gulmaka and a daughter named Śrutārthā. Before long the parents died and Śrutārthā grew up under the protection of her brothers. Kīrtisena, brother of Vāsuki, married her by gāndharva rites and Guṇādhya was the child born to them.

Even while he was a boy he went to the south for his education and there from a brahmin he studied all arts and sciences. When he completed his studies he started on a tour and at that time became the minister of a king called Sātavāhana. He married from there. One day his (Sātavāhana's) wife rebuked the king when the latter made some linguistic errors and Sātavāhana became dejected and moody from that day onwards. Then there came to the court of the King a brahmin named Śarvavarman who promised to make the King proficient in languages within six months. But Guṇādhya said that it was not possible to do so within six months. They made a bet. Guṇādhya swore that if Śarvavarman would teach the King the Śabdasāstra (science of language-sounds)

within six months he (Guṇādhya) would abandon his knowledge of Sanskrit, Prakrit and local language. On the other hand if Śarvavarman failed to accomplish the feat the latter should wear on his head for twelve years the chappals of Guṇādhya. Śarvavarman agreed and went to do penance to please Subrahmaṇya. Subrahmaṇya granted him a boon by the power of which Śarvavarman made Sātavāhana a scholar in Sanskrit. Defeated, Guṇādhya abandoned his knowledge of all languages and bidding adieu to the King by gestures left for the Vindhyan forests.

When Guṇādhya went to the forests Kāṇabhūti, King of the Satans was not in his place. He heard the satans speaking in their peculiar language and intelligent that he was he picked up the language. and when Kāṇabhūti came he spoke to him in his own language. Kāṇabhūti told in the satanic language the great stories of seven Vidyādhars. Guṇādhya took seven years to write the stories in the satanic language and compile them into seven lakhs of granthas to form a Mahākāvya. There were no writing materials available for him and Guṇādhya wrote them all on leaves using blood and twigs. When he started reading his book all the devas assembled in the sky to hear it. On hearing it Kāṇabhūti got release from the curse. It is this book containing seven lakhs of granthas that is called the Bṛhatkathā.

Guṇādhya then thought of how to keep alive such an interesting and gigantic book and then two of his companions Guṇadeva and Nandideva suggested to him to dedicate the book to the King, Sātavāhana. Guṇādhya agreed to that and the two disciples took the book to the King. The King read the whole story. But did not like it. It was very elaborate. The language was satanic. It was written with blood. The King looked at the book with contempt.

When the disciples found that the King was not in favour of the work, they took it back to Guṇādhya. Guṇādhya felt a great dejection. He went to a hillock nearby with his disciples and made a big fire-pit. He set aside the story of the Vidyādhara named Naravāhana-datta composed of a lakh of granthas for the use of his disciples and then started putting into the fire-pit the rest, reading aloud each leaf before he put it into the fire. The sad disciples watched it weeping. Even the wild animals of the forest flocked to the place and stood there listening to Guṇādhya. At that time Sātavāhana became a sick man. The physicians of the palace said that the illness was caused by the dry flesh he was taking. The cook was called in and he accused the hunters who supplied them with flesh daily. The hunters were questioned and they informed the King that only such flesh was available since all the beasts and birds were standing without food listening to a man who was reading something from a leaf and then burning it in a fire-pit before him. Sātavāhana immediately went to the place guided by the hunters. There to his astonishment he found Guṇādhya sitting before a fire-pit surrounded by weeping beasts and birds and throwing leaves of his book one by one into the fire after reading each before it was put into the fire. Sātavāhana ran to him and prostrated before him. Guṇādhya then told Sātavāhana his story in satanic language beginning from the curse on Puṣpadanta down to his destroying his own work in the fire.