

boon whereby he could become a Brāhmaṇa; Indra vanished after saying that it was impossible. After that Mataṅga performed penance for hundred years, standing on one foot. Indra appeared again and repeated that it was impossible for Mataṅga to become a Brāhmaṇa. Then Mataṅga continued his penance for a thousand years, standing on his toe. Indra appeared again and transformed Mataṅga into a Deva named "Chandodeva". Indra told him that though he could become a Deva, he could never achieve Brahminhood. In his extreme grief Mataṅga renounced his life and entered Heaven. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapters 27, 28 and 29).

46) *Indra and Śaṁbara*. There is a story in the Malā Bhārata in which an Asura named Śaṁbara explained the greatness of Brahminhood to Indra. Once Indra approached the Asura, Śaṁbara and asked him what was the source of his glory and prosperity. Śaṁbara replied that it was all due to his whole-hearted worship of Brāhmaṇas. From that time Indra began to offer worship to Brāhmaṇas and thus he won the place of Indra. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 36).

47) *Indra loved Ruci*. There is a story in the Mahābhārata of how a sage named Vipula who was born in the family of Bhṛgu once saved Ruci, his Guru's wife from Indra. Long ago, a great sage named Devaśarmā lived in a forest. His wife Ruci being enchantingly beautiful, many suitors were attracted to her. Chief among them was Indra. Devaśarmā was aware of this. Once he had to leave his āśrama in connection with a yāga. So he ordered his disciple Vipula to guard his wife Ruci during his absence. He had given a hint to Vipula that Indra who was an expert in disguises, might appear in the āśrama in any form. Vipula, by means of his mystic power entered into his guru's wife and guarded her.

After some time, Indra reached the Āśrama in the guise of a handsome youth. He disclosed his real identity to Ruci and told her that he had come there to spend a night with her. Ruci fell in love with him. But since she was under the mystic control of Vipula, Indra was unable to fulfil his desire. At last Vipula sent him away in disgrace. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 4, 44).

48) *Indra's theft of Lotus*. Indra once stole Agastya's lotuses. (See under Agastya).

49) *Indra's theft of an Elephant*. Indra once stole an elephant belonging to the great sage Gautama. The sage complained to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who advised him to offer prayers to Indra. Accordingly Gautama pleased Indra by his prayers. Indra appeared and after returning the elephant took both the elephant and Gautama along with him to Devaloka. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 102).

50) *Indra and Marutta*. Long ago there was a famous king named Marutta. Indra was closely associated with him in many of his activities. (For more details see Marutta).

51) *Indra and Dharmaputra*. Another anecdote about Indra which deals with the last part of Dharmaputra's life is given in the Mahābhārata.

The Pāṇḍavas, towards the end of their lives entered the forest and were travelling to the north. Dharmaputra who was walking in front, was followed by a dog. On the way the four brothers and Pāṇcāli fell down dead. Dharmaputra continued his journey accompanied

by the dog without turning back or looking behind. At the end of the journey, Indra was waiting for him with his chariot. He told Dharmaputra that his brothers and wife had already taken their places in Heaven and that he should leave behind the dog and get into the chariot to go to Devaloka. Dharmaputra pleaded that it was not right for him to enter Devaloka after deserting the dog which had followed him so far. Even though Indra pressed him very much to enter the chariot without the dog, Dharmaputra did not yield. At last the dog assumed the form of Yama who appeared and explained to them that he had taken the form of a dog and followed his son Dharmaputra to test his noble nature. They were all happy and all the three of them proceeded in the chariot to Devaloka. (M. B. Mahāprasthānika Parva, Chapter 3).

52) *Indra and Bāli*. In Uttara Rāmāyaṇa there is a story as given below, about the birth of Bāli, a son of Indra :—

Aruṇa, the charioteer of Sūrya (the sun-god) went one night to Indraloka to see the goddesses dancing. Men were not allowed to enter the dancing hall. So, Aruṇa managed to enter the hall by disguising himself as a beautiful lady. The moment Indra saw her he fell in love with her. The name she assumed at that time was Aruṇī. Indra secretly took her outside and they had a sexual union. Bāli was the son born from their union.

53) *Indra's theft of a Horse*. A King named Sagara once performed a sacrifice. Devendra stole the sacrificial horse. Sagara sent all his 60,000 sons in search of the horse. They dug up the earth and went to the Nether worlds where they saw the horse tied in front of the sage Kapila. The enraged sons of Sagara tried to capture and bind the sage. But Kapila reduced all the 60,000 princes to ashes by his curse. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa, Chapter 39).

54) *Indra cut an embryo to pieces*. Diti and Aditi were the daughters of Dakṣa. Kaśyapa married them. Indra was born as the son of Aditi. At this birth of a son to Aditi, Diti became jealous of her sister. One day she told her husband Kaśyapa that she too wanted to have a virtuous, heroic and brave son who would be equal to Indra in every respect. Kaśyapa promised to grant her wish.

In due course, Diti became pregnant. Now it was Aditi's turn to become jealous of Diti. She could not bear the thought of Diti having a son equal to her own son Indra, in glory and splendour. So she called Indra and secretly instructed him to destroy Diti's child in the womb, by whatever means.

In obedience to his mother, Indra approached Diti pretending friendship and spent a lot of time in her company. He soon won her confidence and love by his affectionate attentions. On one occasion, when she was in sound sleep, Indra, by his mystic power, entered into Diti's womb with his weapon Vajra and cut the child in the womb into seven pieces. The child began to cry loudly, but Indra said "Mā ruda" which means "do not cry" and cut each of the pieces again into seven parts. Thus the embryo (child) was finally cut into forty-nine pieces, which later became the forty-nine "Mārutas" or "Maruts". When she woke up, Diti realized Indra's treachery and in her fury she cursed Indra and Aditi. She cursed that Indra would lose his kingdom of Devaloka and that Aditi would be im-