

(M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 78). Kalmāśānghri and Kalmāśapāda were names which he got as a result of Vasiṣṭha's curse.

3) *Mitrasaha became a Rākṣasa.* Mitrasaha was a reputed and glorious king belonging to the solar dynasty of kings who ruled over Ayodhyā. He had a queen named Madayantī. While they were leading a happy and enviable married life, Mitrasaha was forced to lead the life of a Rākṣasa in the forest for a period of 12 years, as the result of a curse. The story of this curse is given in different Purānas in different versions and they are given below;—

4) *Śakti Cursed Mitrasaha.* One day Mitrasaha went to the forest for hunting. Viśvāmitra wished to get this mighty King as his disciple. While the King was passing through the forest, he saw Śakti, Vasiṣṭha's son, coming towards him. The King was a Kṣatriya and Śakti was a Brāhmaṇa. They were faced with the problem of whether the Kṣatriya should make way for the Brāhmaṇa or vice versa. Neither of them made way for the other. At last, Mitrasaha struck Śakti with his whip. In his anger Śakti cursed Mitrasaha that he should become a Rākṣasa and roam about in the forest for 16 years. Viśvāmitra who was standing nearby at the time introduced a devil into the body of the King and from that day Mitrasaha wandered about in the forest in the form of a Rākṣasa. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 176).

5) *Vasiṣṭh: cursed Mitrasaha.* Mitrasaha once went to hunt in the forest. While hunting he came across two tiger cubs. Actually, they were two Rākṣasas in disguise. The King who was unaware of it, killed one of them with an arrow. The other cub suddenly assumed his own form as a Rākṣasa and after giving Mitrasaha a warning that he would take revenge on him at the proper time, vanished.

After the hunt the King returned to his palace. He informed Vasiṣṭha that he wished to perform Aśva-medhayāga like his ancestors. The sage offered to assist him in it. Shortly after, one day, the old Rākṣasa-tiger, disguising himself as the sage Vasiṣṭha, came to Mitrasaha and said;— "Oh King! I will tell you a secret. Don't tell anyone else. I have a great desire to eat meat food. Please send some cooked meat to my Āsrama without anyone knowing about it." After saying this, the disguised Rākṣasa-sage left the place.

The King told this secret to his wife Madayantī. They prepared the meat-food secretly and took it to Vasiṣṭha's Āsrama. When Vasiṣṭha saw the meat food, he took it as a personal insult and transformed the King into a Rākṣasa. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

6) *Another story of Vasiṣṭha's curse on Mitrasaha.* Once while Mitrasaha was hunting in the forest, he happened to kill a Rākṣasa by accident. The dead Rākṣasa's younger brother swore to avenge his death. He went to the King in the disguise of a young Brāhmaṇa cook. Mitrasaha appointed him as a cook in the royal kitchen.

At about that time, one day, Vasiṣṭha came to Ayodhyā, on the invitation of Mitrasaha for a Śrāddha. Mitrasaha, accompanied by his queen, greeted the sage with honour. He ordered the cook to prepare food for the guest at once. The Rākṣasa disguised as cook, decided to make the best of this opportunity. In a short time

he cooked some human flesh and offered it as food for Vasiṣṭha. The enraged sage cursed the King to become a man-eating Rākṣasa who would roam about for twelve years in the woods. Thus Mitrasaha became a Rākṣasa. (Śiva Purāṇa, Śivarātri Māhātmya).

7) *How Mitrasaha got the name "Kalmāśapāda."* Mitrasaha became very angry when he was cursed by Vasiṣṭha. He decided to pay back in the same coin by cursing Vasiṣṭha also. He took water in his hand and was about to throw it down with the words of curse. But his queen Madayantī stopped him. She reminded him that it was not right to curse a Brāhmaṇa and requested him to sprinkle that water on his own feet. The King's anger cooled down and he sprinkled the water on his own feet. Since his feet were polluted by the water of sin Mitrasaha came to be called "Kalmāśapāda", and Kalmāśānghri" from that day. (Śiva Purāṇa, Śivarātri Māhātmya).

8) *Kalmāśapāda's life as Rākṣasa.* The curse-ridden Kanmāśapāda began to look upon Vasiṣṭha and his sons with inveterate hatred. He roamed the countryside and forests in the form of a Rākṣasa. He started man-eating by feeding upon Śakti, the eldest son of Vasiṣṭha. After that he ate all the remaining 99 sons of Vasiṣṭha. Distressed at the loss of his children, Vasiṣṭha left his Āsrama, bent on committing suicide. He tied his own hands and feet securely with a rope and jumped into the river to drown himself. This attempt, like several other attempts to commit suicide, failed and he did not die. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 177). In the Mahābhārata there is a story which says that once Uttanka, a disciple of the sage Gautama went to beg the Kuṇḍalas (ear ornaments) worn by Kanmāśapāda's (Saudāsa's) queen, for the sake of Gautama's wife. (For details, see under the word "Uttanka").

9) *Brāhmaṇi's curse on Kalmāśapāda.* In the course of his wanderings through the forest as a Rākṣasa, Kalmāśapāda happened to come across a Brāhmaṇa youth engaged in amorous pleasures with his wife Āṅgirasī. The King caught hold of the youth and killed him. His wife, the Brāhmaṇi wept loudly and after cremating her husband's body in a funeral pyre, jumped into it and burnt herself to death. Just before her death she pronounced a curse on Kalmāśapāda that if he touched any woman in future he would die immediately.

After the death of the Brāhmaṇa couple, the sin of Brahmahatyā (killing of Brāhmaṇa) continued to pursue Kalmāśapāda in the form of a terrible monster. He fled for life from it and at last reached the presence of King Janaka. There, he happened to see the sage Gautama who taught Kalmāśapāda Divyajñana (Divine wisdom). As advised by the sage, he went to the temple at Gokarna and spent some years in deep meditation. (Śiva Purāṇa, Śivarātri Māhātmya).

10) *Śāpamokṣa. (Liberation from Curse).* Towards the close of the twelve years which Mitrasaha (Kalmāśapāda) spent as a Rākṣasa, Vasiṣṭha saw him. The sage sprinkled holy water on Mitrasaha and at once the Rākṣasa (the spirit of the Rākṣasa) left his body and he resumed his original figure of the King. He accepted Vasiṣṭha as his preceptor. They went back together to Ayodhyā.

Although Madayantī, queen of Mitrasaha was there, the King was not able to touch her owing to the Brāhmaṇi's