

Lava and Kuśa captured the horse. Śatrughna could not defeat Lava and Kuśa, and they routed the additional force also which arrived under the leadership of Lakṣmaṇa to help Śatrughna. Then Vālmīki intervened and the horse was returned to Śatrughna. Afterwards, Vālmīki, Sitā and Lavakuśas also attended Śrī Rāma's yajña where Lava and Kuśa recited the poem Rāmāyaṇa composed by Vālmīki. Rāma recognised the boys and they were made to live in Ayodhyā. Thus did Kuśa visit Ayodhyā.

The Kathāsaritsāgara tells the following story about Kuśa's visit to Ayodhyā.

Vālmīki duly performed the thread-wearing ceremony of Lava and Kuśa and taught them, even in their very childhood, all arts and sciences including the secrets about divine arrows. The boys one day killed a deer in the āśrama and worshipped with its flesh the liṅga, which Vālmīki used to worship daily, and as a result of that the sage became ill. Sitādevī requested for penance for the action of her children, and Vālmīki said that Lava should bring golden lotus flowers from Vaiśravaṇa's pond and flowers of Kalpakavṛkṣa from his garden, and that Lava and Kuśa together should worship the Śivaliṅga with those flowers. Lava then went to mount Kailāsa and after killing many yakṣas collected the flowers. On his way back he rested for some time at the foot of a tree. Just then Lakṣmaṇa, who was on the look-out for a human being for the naramedha (human sacrifice) of Śrī Rāma, also reached the spot. He decided to take Lava captive with him, and they fought with each other for some time. At last Lakṣmaṇa took Lava captive by using mohanāstra (arrow which makes the opponent unconscious) and took him to Ayodhyā. Sitā was pained that Lava had not returned yet, and Vālmīki with his divine vision understood the reason for his absence. He deputed Kuśa to Ayodhyā to bring back with him Lava somehow or other. When Kuśa reached Ayodhyā, Śrī Rāma was conducting the Aśvamedha yajña, and Kuśa, successfully confronting a number of people, got into the yajña ground. In the combat that ensued between Kuśa and Lakṣmaṇa the latter was defeated, as he could not defeat Kuśa due to the greatness of Vālmīki. When Śrī Rāma asked Kuśa who he was he replied that he was the brother of Lava and that he had heard from his mother Sitā that both of them were the sons of Śrī Rāma. Rāma was overjoyed to hear that and he covered the boys with kisses. Sitā also was brought down from the āśrama of Vālmīki, and all of them lived very happily. (Kathāsaritsāgara, Alamkāravatīlambaka, Taraṅga 1).

3). *Kuśa's reign.* Following the demise of Lakṣmaṇa Śrī Rāma divided the country between Kuśa and Lava. A city called Kuśāvati was built in the Kosala Kingdom and Kuśa was crowned King thereof. Thirtytwo out of the sixtyfour akṣauhīnis of the kings of the solar dynasty, four out of the eight ministers and half of the movable property were allotted to Kuśa. Lava was crowned king of north Kosala where a city called Śarāvati was built for him, and the other half of the army, ministers etc. became his share. While Kuśa and Lava were ruling the country thus, Śrī Rāma immolated himself in the depths of the river Sarayū (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

4). *Kuśa's successors.* Descended from Śrī Rāma thus: Kuśa—Aditi—Niśadha—Nabhas—Puṇḍarika—Kṣema-

dhanvā — Devānika — Rkṣa—Pāriyātra—Vindorala—Vajranābha — Khagaṇa — Vidhṛti — Hiraṇyanābha—Puṣya — Dhruva — Sudarśana—Agnipūrṇa—Śighra—Maru. The solar dynasty was annihilated at the advent of Kaliyuga (Bhāgavata, 9th Skandha).

KUŚA III. A king born in the Kuru dynasty. To Kuru, who built Kurukṣetra was born a son called Sudhanvā, and to him was born Suhotra, who became the father of Cyavana. Suhotra begot of another wife Girikā seven sons called Bṛhadratha, Kuśa, Yadu, Pratyagraha, Bala, Matsyakāla and Vira. Kuśa was one of the seven sons. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 78).

KUŚABINDU. An urban region in ancient India. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Verse 56).

KUŚACĪRĀ. A river the water of which Indians of ancient days used to drink. (Bhīṣma Parva. Chapter 9, Verse 24).

KUŚADHĀRĀ. A river the water from which Indians used to drink. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Verse 24).

KUŚADHVAJA I. A brahmin, son of Bṛhaspati. Penniless and poor, the brahmin once sought the help of King Śālva. The miserly king did not give him anything. Thereafter he began worshipping Bhagavatī with the object of making some money. While meditating upon Bhagavatī a girl emerged out of his mouth. She was named Devavatī. When she came of age an asura called Śambhu desired to marry her; but Kuśadhvaja did not agree to the proposal. Enraged at the refusal Śambhu killed Kuśadhvaja while the latter was asleep one night. But Devavatī cursed and reduced the asura into ashes. Then she took herself to penance to secure Mahāviṣṇu as her husband when Rāvaṇa happened to come there, and he tried to make her his wife. But, she repelled all his attempts at which he caught hold of her by the hair. She escaped by cutting her hair. She then immolated herself in burning fire. It was this Devavatī, who was, in her next life, born as Sitā, daughter of King Janaka (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

KUŚADHVAJA II. Brother of King Janaka, father of Sitā. He lived on the banks of the river Ikṣumatī. (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa, Canto 70). See under JANAKA I.

KUŚADHVAJA III. A King. The following story about him is quoted from the Skanda Purāṇa.

Kuśadhvaja was a monkey in his former birth, and as he had then performed the auspicious action of swinging Śiva in a cradle throughout day and night, in the next birth he was born as King Kuśadhvaja. One day the King abducted the daughter of the Sage Agniveśa when she was bathing. The Sage cursed the King into the form of a vulture. He was promised redemption from the curse that he would regain his human form on the day on which he helped Indradyumna.

KUŚADVĪPA. One of the seven islands. Kuśa island is rich in pearls. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 13). Jambū, Plakṣa, Śālmālī, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śāka and Puṣkara are the seven islands (Saptadvīpas). Śālmālī island has double the area of Plakṣa. Each island, in this order, is twice as large as the preceding one. (Devī Bhāgavata, 8th Skandha).

Kuśa island encircles the sea of Surā (Wine.) Jyotiṣmān was the chief over the island. He had seven sons called Udbhida, Veṇumān, Vairatha, Lambana, Dhṛti, Prabhākara and Kapila. The Subcontinents, are called by their names. In Kuśa island, along with Daityas and