

and told Aśokasundarī thus:—“Lady, I have taken a fast. Huṇḍa has killed my husband. I am doing penance to curse him. You may come to my hermitage on the banks of the Gaṅgā”.

Aśokasundarī believed these false words. She went with her. Both of them walked on and at last entered a palace. Then only did she understand that it was the palace of Huṇḍa, who assumed his original form and tried to violate her chastity. Aśokasundarī became angry and cursed Huṇḍa that he would die at the hands of Nahuṣa, and ran away to Kailāsa.

Huṇḍa was sad for two reasons. On the one hand he did not get Aśokasundarī and on the other hand he had incurred the curse that Nahuṣa would be his slayer. Now what was the way to get out of the trouble? He asked his minister Kampana to take Indumatī the wife of Āyus by stealth and bring her to his palace. They decided to destroy Nahuṣa in the womb of Indumatī, in case it was not possible to carry her away. They waited for an opportunity.

Āyus was an emperor of righteousness. After the marriage, for a long time he was childless. Once he visited the hermit Dattātreyā, in his hermitage. Dattātreyā who was the son of Atri and the most famous and the noblest of all the hermits, was quite senseless and red-eyed because of drinking, and without even the Brahmasūtra, was playing with a young woman, seating her in his lap. His body was besmeared with sandalwood and aloe and adorned with garlands and necklaces of pearl and he was surrounded by many women. The King seeing the divine hermit bowed him with reverence and fear. The moment the hermit saw the King, he sat in deep meditation. This continued for a hundred years, at the end of which period, seeing the devotion of the King, he said, “Oh King! why do you take this trouble. I have left off the customs and manners of Brahmins. I have no Brāhmaṇya (Brahminism). I am immersed in liquor, meat and women. So you had better go and serve another Brahmin.”

Āyus refuted all that the hermit said and requested him to bless him that he might get a son. Finally the hermit ordered the King to bring meat and liquor in a skull. The King obeyed him. Dattātreyā was pleased at the devotion and willingness to serve as a disciple and told the King that a son would be born to him; that the son would be a worshipper of Devatīrthas (Holy baths), that he would not be defeated by devas, asuras, Kinnaras giants, and Kṣatriyas, that he would be the protector of his subjects and that he would be a great scholar in Vedas and Śāstras. Saying this he gave the King a fruit to be given to his wife. The King returned to his palace.

The King gave the fruit to his wife Indumatī. She ate it and became pregnant. One night she gave birth to a son. When the servant-maid went out of the room of confinement Huṇḍa entered into her body and went in. When all were asleep he took the child and ran to his palace at Kāñcanapura. He gave the child to his wife Vipulā and asked her to make a sauce of the child for him. Vipulā gave the child to the servant woman to cook it. With the aid of the cook she hid the child and prepared a sauce with some other flesh. The cook took the child to the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha and placed it at the door of the hermitage, in the night. At dawn Vasiṣṭha came out of the hermitage and seeing the

child took it, named it Nahuṣa and brought him up. The King and his wife Indumatī cried for a long time over the loss of the child. At that time Nārada came there and told them that their son would return soon.

Once Nahuṣa was bringing Samits (butea-fuel) when he heard some devacāraṇas (heavenly singers) saying among themselves the history of Nahuṣa. Nahuṣa heard it. He told Vasiṣṭha all that he had heard. Vasiṣṭha told him all the stories from the beginning to his being kidnapped by Huṇḍa. Nahuṣa was amazed at what he heard. He wanted to kill Huṇḍa instantly. So he bowed before Vasiṣṭha and taking bow and arrow went away to kill Huṇḍa.

Believing that he had eaten Nahuṣa, Huṇḍa approached Aśokasundarī again and told her that he had actually eaten Nahuṣa. Aśokasundarī felt very sad when she heard this. At that time a Kinnara named Vidyuddhara and his wife came there. They consoled Aśokasundarī and told her that Nahuṣa was alive. He continued.

“Oh beautiful lady, that great sage will kill Huṇḍa-sura and marry you, and live with you as an emperor in this world, as Śakra (Indra) in heaven. From Nahuṣa will be born to you a son named Yayāti, who will be righteous, kind and loving towards his subjects and equal to Indra, and a hundred daughters who would be exceedingly beautiful and of very fine character. Then Nahuṣa will go to heaven and become Devendra. At that time your son Yayāti will be the emperor and will rule his subjects with kindness. Four sons, who would possess prowess and valour, who would be second to none in archery will be born to him. They will be known by the names Turvasu, Puru, Kuru and Yadu. Powerful and mighty sons called Bhoja, Bhīma, Andhaka, Kukkura, Vṛṣṇi, Śrutasena, Srutadhāra and Kāladamṣṭra will be born to Yadu. They will become famous by the name Yādavas. Several sons will be born to them. Thus the family of Nahuṣa and yourself will increase.”

By this time Nahuṣa had arrived at the spot fully armed and ready to fight Huṇḍa, who was killed in the terrible battle which ensued. Nahuṣa married Aśokasundarī in the midst of devas and after the marriage the couple reached the palace of Nahuṣa. (Padma Purāṇa, fifteen chapters from 102).

### 3) Nahuṣa became Indra.

*Became a python by the curse of Agastya.* To get remission from the sin of Brahmahatyā, incurred by killing Vṛtrāsura, Indra hid himself in a cluster lotuses in the Mānasa lake. The devas who were worried due to the absence of Indra, elected Nahuṣa as Indra temporarily. Nahuṣa wanted to get Indrāṇi. Agastya cursed Nahuṣa and changed him to a python. At the sight of the Pāṇḍavas he regained his original form and went back to the world of Indra. (For detailed story see under Agastya).

### 4) Other details.

(i) Nahuṣa had six sons Yati, Yayāti, Saṃyāti, Āyati, Ayati and Dhruva. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 75, Stanza 30).

(ii) Nahuṣa was allowed to enter heaven because he made himself pure by performing the sacrifice Vaiṣṇava yajña. (M.B., Vana Parva, Chapter 257, Stanza 5).