

Śivaśarman had, due to Śiva's blessing, achieved all kinds of siddhis (spiritual gifts). By the power of illusion he showed the sons their mother lying dead and all the sons wept uncontrollably. Then he asked his eldest son Yajñaśarman, to cut the dead body of his mother into pieces and throw them off. After having done so he came and saluted his father.

After bidding adieu to Yajñaśarman, who proved his devotion to his father as above, Śivaśarman called his second son Vedaśarman to him and told him thus: "I find it difficult to get on without a woman. Look, there is a beautiful woman there endowed with all qualifications. (And he created such a woman by illusion). You go and fetch her to me." Vedaśarman, after saluting his father went to the woman and requested her to become the wife of his father. But, the woman did not want to become the wife of an old man, and she told Vedaśarman that she would love him, and not his father, to have as her husband. He shuddered to be told thus, and by the power of his tapas he got down Indra and other Devas on earth and showed them to her. She then told him in indifferent tone the following: "Yes, I have seen the prowess of your tapas. But, I have nothing to do with Devas. If you want me as wife for your father, please cut off your head with your own hands for my pleasure." Vedaśarman drew his sword and very happily cut off his head and presented it to the woman. She came to Śivaśarman and requested him to accept his son's head, which he (son) had voluntarily cut off for the sake of his father.

The other sons of Śivaśarman shuddered at the sight of their brother's head. They told among themselves thus: "Our mother entered eternal Samādhi, but this brother of ours, who courted death on behalf of father is really blessed." Then Śivaśarman asked his third son Dharmasārman to receive his brother's head. He received it and went out with it and prayed to Dharmadeva, who, on his appearance, was requested to restore Vedaśarman to life. Dharmadeva did so, and the first question asked by Vedaśarman, who returned to life as though awakened from sleep, was about the woman, whom he had brought as his father's wife. Then Vedaśarman and Dharmasārman returned to their father, and Dharmasārman told the father about his bringing back to life his dead brother. Though the father felt very happy about the great devotion of his son he did not answer him (son).

Śivaśarman fell into contemplation for sometime and then told his fourth son, Viṣṇuśarman as follows: "You go immediately to Indraloka and bring amṛta (nectar) for me to drink along with this woman. Nectar removes diseases. Now, this woman has no interest in me. It is only natural that young, beautiful women will feel no love towards an old man and unless I regain my youth this woman of mine may sleep with others. You, my son, should act in such a manner that I can enjoy life with this woman in all the three worlds.

As soon as he heard his father, Viṣṇuśarman, by the power of his tapas ascended to the sky and started for Indraloka. Being told about the object of his visit Indra deputed Menakā to make him withdraw from the plan. Immediately Menakā put on her best clothes and singing sweet music occupied the hanging seat in Nandanavana, and Viṣṇuśarman lost not a minute to divine the object of her presence. Without even casting a look

upon her, he hurried forward. But, she jumped down from her seat, blocked his path and made enquiries about him. She also tried to make love to him. But, Viṣṇuśarman turned down her overtures of love. At this stage Indra adopted many magical tricks to frighten away the unwelcome visitor. Angered by such attempts Viṣṇuśarman got ready to destroy Devaloka along with Indra, who then begged pardon of him and handed over to him a pot full of nectar.

When Viṣṇuśarman gave the nectar to his father the latter asked him to choose any boon he wanted, and according to his request the father brought back to life Guṇavati. Now Śivaśarman very much pleased with his sons sent the first four of them to Viṣṇuloka. He decided to live for some time more on earth with his youngest son, and he told the latter that he was going on a pilgrimage and asked him to keep the pot of nectar with him. The son kept it very carefully for ten years. Now Śivaśarman with his wife returned from pilgrimage. By magic he had become a leper, and made his wife also a leper. Somaśarman, his youngest son felt pained that his parents had fallen victims to such a fell disease and served them with meticulous care in every way. He foresaw their wants and desires and satisfied them to the full. Yet, the father lost temper with the son and used even to fust him. But, the son did not lose his temper in any manner and to the least degree. He continued to serve his parents most cheerfully.

A century was over in this manner. The parents were greatly satisfied and pleased with their son, and ultimately the father cast one more illusion on the son. After stealing away by magic the nectar from the pot, he asked the son for it. When Somaśarman looked into the pot for nectar, to his horror it was missing. But, he took the pot to his father saying to himself, 'Let there be nectar in it if I am truthful, if I have served my elders well and if I have observed pure tapas', and lo! the pot was filled with nectar.

Śivaśarman blessed his son, and by the power of his yoga ascended to Vaikuṅṭha in the company of his wife. After this Somaśarman began practising the most intense form of tapas. When the time for his death was near asuras approached him. Fear about asuras gripped him, who was in deep meditation, and as he breathed his last thinking about asuras he was born in his next life as Prahlāda, son of Hiranyakaipu and got killed by Viṣṇu in the war between Devas and Asuras. (Padma Purāṇa, Bhūmi Khaṇḍa).

ŚIVASVĀMI. A great poet in Sanskrit in the court of king Avantivarman, who ruled Kashmir between 854 and 884 A.D. Only one poem by him, Kapphiṇābhuyadayaṃ, composed on the model of Kirātārjunīyam, has been unearthed yet.

ŚIVODBHEDA. A sacred spot. One, who lives here taking the holy bath will derive the benefit of making a gift of a thousand cows. (Vana Parva, Chapter 82).

ŚIYĀLI. A Purāṇic place in Tanjore District in South India. Indra once fled to this place in fear of the asura called Śūrapadma and did tapas there. (Skanda Purāṇa).

SKANDA. Subrahmaṇya. (For further details see under Subrahmaṇya).

SKANDAGRAHA. An evil spirit which afflicts boys up to the age of sixteen. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 230, Stanza 43, that this spirit