

ing Yajñas. Mahābhārata gives the following details about this yajña lover:

(i) Śvetaki performed numerous Yajñas. He was a King who was deeply absorbed in Yajñas. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 222).

(ii) Once the Yajña he performed was so prolonged that the Rtviks were utterly tired and left the Yajña in the middle. After that the King had to bring in other Rtviks to complete it. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 225, Verse 21).

(iii) He worshipped Śiva and propitiated him to get a blessing to enable him to perform many Yajñas. Śiva advised him that he should do "āhuti" (homa or sacrifice) in Agni continuously for twelve years. Accepting this advice, the king invited Durvāsas to make arrangements for the Yajña. Appointing Durvāsas as Rtvik, Śvetaki continued the Yajña for a hundred years. (For more information see under Khāṇḍavadāha).

ŚVETAPARNA. King of the city of Bhadrāvati, which was situated to the east of Hastināpura. In Jaimini Aśvamedha Parva, Chapter 10, Verse 15, it is stated that Bhīma after a fight captured and took with him the beautiful horse of this King for the purpose of Yudhiṣṭhira's Aśvamedha Yajña.

ŚVETARAŚMI. An elephant. A Gandharva happened to be born as a white elephant in the Kālīṅga country, as a result of a curse. Śvetaraśmi is the name of that elephant. The King Ratnādhipa mounted that elephant and did many exploits.

King Ratnādhipa was the ruler of the island Ratnakūṭa. He was a prominent Vaiṣṇava. He did tapas to Viṣṇu with the object of conquering the whole earth and to get all princesses as his wives. Mahāviṣṇu appeared before him and said:—"A Gandharva has been born in the land of Kālīṅga by a curse as a white elephant. His name is Śvetaraśmi. As directed by me, he will come to you. You may ride him and he will take you through the air across the sky. All the Kings against whom you fight, will be defeated and they will offer their daughters to you as tribute."

Next day, the elephant Śvetaraśmi descended before him through the air. As advised by Mahāviṣṇu Ratnādhipa mounted the elephant and conquered the whole world and secured numerous princesses. One day as the King was riding the elephant and travelling through the air, an eagle came and pecked at the forehead of the elephant. Ratnādhipa drove it away by a thrust with his spear. But the elephant fell down unconscious. Even after five days he did not rise. The King offered prayers to the "Lokapālakas". He was about to cut off his own head and offer it as sacrifice to them. Just then he heard a mysterious voice saying:—"Do not be rash; Śvetaraśmi will rise at the touch of a chaste woman."

The King at once went to the palace and brought his chief queen who was kept closely guarded and asked her to touch the elephant. But he did not rise. Then he ordered all the rest of his wives in turn to touch the elephant. Still the elephant did not rise. When he found that none of his 80,000 wives was a "chaste woman", the King was ashamed of himself. Then he brought every one of the women in his kingdom and made them touch the animal one by one. But it was all in vain. At this stage, when Ratnādhipa was very much depressed, a merchant named Harṣagupta from Tāmralipti happened to come there. He was accompanied by his

wife Śilavatī. She touched the elephant and immediately it stood up. Ratnādhipa was very much pleased and married Śilavatī's sister Rājadattā. After offering many rich presents to Śilavatī and Harṣagupta Ratnādhipa took Rājadattā on the back of Śvetaraśmi to a deserted island Catusśāladvīpa and left her there under the protection of several women attendants. The King spent his nights at Catusśāladvīpa and days in his own palace.

One day Rājadattā was remaining alone in her residence. The attendants had gone out to attend to various duties. At this time a man happened to arrive there from somewhere. He was Bhavanasena, the son of a Vaiśya. He reached the island with the help of a piece of wood which was floating in the sea after a shipwreck. Rājadattā who heard his story, was irresistibly attracted by him and she embraced him. Just then the King arrived on the scene. Consoling himself by thinking that this was also the will of Fate, he let off the Vaiśya youth.

The King returned to his palace and decided to spend the rest of his life by doing tapas in the forest, after giving away all his wealth and property to the poor. When he was about to mount Śvetaraśmi, the animal suddenly transformed itself into a man of divine glory, dressed in gorgeous clothes and jewels. He spoke to the King as follows:—"I am a Gandharva. My name is Somaprabha. There is my elder brother Devaprabha who lives on the Malaya mountain. My brother had a wife named Rājavatī. Once all the three of us went to worship in a Viṣṇu temple at a place called Siddhāvāsa. At that time my sister-in-law sang a devotional song. A Siddha who was enchanted by her song was looking fixedly at her. Enraged at it, my brother asked the Siddha why he was staring at his wife with lustful eyes. The innocent Siddha was naturally provoked by the question and pronounced a curse that my brother and his wife would be born in human wombs and in that birth, he would see his wife having sexual union with a stranger. When I heard my brother being cursed I became very angry. I hurled a toy elephant which was in my hand at the time, at the Siddha. He then cursed me also to become a white elephant just like the toy with which I hit him. I am that younger brother and you are my elder brother. This Rājadattā, your queen was my sister-in-law Rājavatī. Our curse is now over." As soon as he concluded, all the three of them renounced their earthly bodies and were restored to their original forms. (Kathāsaritsāgara, Ratnaprabhālabhāṅga, Taraṅga 2).

ŚVETASIDDHA. A warrior of Subrahmaṇya. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Verse 68).

ŚVETĀSVATARA. He was the author of the famous Upaniṣad known as "Śvetāsvatara. Many spiritual and philosophical topics are discussed in this work divided into six chapters.

ŚVETAVĀHA. Another name for Arjuna. (See under Arjuna).

ŚVETAVAKTRA. A warrior of Subrahmaṇya. (M.B. Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Verse 73).

SVIṢṬAKṚT I. Another name of Agni (Fire). It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 219, Verse 22, that this Agni was the sixth son of Brhaspati.

SVIṢṬAKṚT II. The Agni (fire) called Viśvapati, who was the second son of Manu. Rohiṇī the second