

they enquired among themselves as to whose breast-feeding it would get when Indra appeared and said "Mām Dhātā", meaning it would drink me. That was how the child got the name 'Māndhātā'. Indra thrust the child's big toe into its mouth and the child began to suck milk through it. Māndhātā who grew thus drinking its own toe became a mighty man of renown. (7th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

3) *Administration of the state and marriage.* When Māndhātā became a man of great strength his father died and he ascended the throne and became an Emperor of great fame. He conquered many kingdoms. He made his enemies flee from him. Because he intimidated the dasyus he got the name Trasadasyu. He married the perfect-figured chaste daughter Bindumatī of Śaśabindurāja. She got two sons named Purukutsa and Mucukunda.

The Purāṇas state that Māndhātā had another son named Ambariṣa and fifty daughters who were all married to a sage named Saubhari.

4) *How he caused rains in the country.* Māndhātā ruled the country very virtuously without at any time going against truth and justice and his country became prosperous. Once it so happened that there were no rains for three successive years in the country and the greatly worried King went to the forests to know from the great sages there the reason for such a calamity. The sages told the King thus : "Oh King, of all yugas Kṛtayuga is the best. This yuga is a brahmin-predominant one and Dharma stands on four legs. Penance is for brahmins only and no man of any other caste can do penance in this yuga. But in your country a Śūdra is performing penance and that is why the clouds refuse to shower rains. Kill him and then the evil will go". Hearing this Māndhātā replied, "I will never kill an innocent ascetic. Teach me my duty at this time of peril". The sages were pleased at the reply of the King and advised him thus : "Oh King, start observing Vrata on the ekādaśī day. (Eleventh day in each half of a month). The ekādaśī which falls in the bright half of Bhādrapada is called 'Padmanābha', and if you observe it by its cogency you will get not only rains but prosperity and happiness free from misery of any kind. You must persuade your subjects also to observe this".

The King on returning to his palace started observing 'ekādaśī' along with his subjects of all the four castes and then it started to rain. Rains came in plenty and all the crops were rich. The subjects became happy. (Chapter 59, Padma Purāṇa).

5) *Other details.*

(i) Māndhātā had to fight once against Lavaṇāsura but had to accept defeat before the god-given spear which Lavaṇāsura possessed. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

(ii) Aśvinīdevas once helped Māndhātā in his work as an owner of land. (Sūkta 112, Anuvāka 16, Maṇḍala 1, Ṛgveda).

(iii) Māndhātā became pure by yajña and attained Svarga. (Śloka 5, Chapter 257, Vana Parva).

(iv) Once Nārada spoke to Sañjaya about the greatness of Māndhātā. (Chapter 62, Droṇa Parva).

(v) At another time Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke in glowing terms about the yajña of Māndhātā. (Śloka 81, Chapter 29, Śānti Parva).

(vi) Once Mahāviṣṇu came to Māndhātā disguised as Indra and conversed with him on 'Rājadharmā' (duties and responsibilities of a King.) (Śloka 16, Chapter 64, Śānti Parva).

(vii) Utatthya, son of Aṅgiras, once taught Māndhātā the outlines of Rājadharmā. (Chapter 90, Śānti Parva).

(viii) Māndhātā conquered the whole world in one day. (Śloka 16, Chapter 124, Śānti Parva).

(ix) On another occasion Bṛhaspati conversed with him on the subject of Godāna. (The giving away of cows as gifts). (Śloka 4, Chapter 76, Anuśāsana Parva).

(x) Māndhātā gave away as gifts millions of cows. (Śloka 5, Chapter 85, Anuśāsana Parva).

(xi) Māndhātā hated non-vegetarian food. (Śloka 61, Chapter 115, Anuśāsana Parva).

MAṆḌODARĪ I. (MANDODARĪ). (In South India the name Maṇḍodarī is current). Wife of Rāvaṇa. The Uttara Rāmāyaṇa contains a story about the previous history of Mandodarī.

Maya, an asura, was born to Kaśyapaprajāpati of his wife Danu. Once Maya went to Devaloka to see the dances of the celestial maidens there. Devas came to know that Maya was in love with the nymph Hemā and they married her to Maya. Maya went to the southern valley of Himavān and lived there with Hemā constructing there a city called Hemapura. They got two sons Māyāvī and Dundubhi. But they grieved over the lack of a daughter and she went to a side of Himavān and started penance there to get the blessings of Śiva.

Once a celestial damsel named Madhurā after observing Somavāvrata went to Kailāsa to pay obeisance to Śiva. Pārvatī was absent from the place then, having gone to attend the birthday celebrations of one of her sons. So Madhurā met Śiva sitting lonely and this led to a clandestine sexual union between them. When Pārvatī returned she saw traces of the ashes from the body of Śiva on the naked breast of Madhurā and Pārvatī in her anger cursed Madhurā to live in a well for twelve years as a frog. Śiva was stupefied at the curse and he went to the well and consoled her by saying that she would after the twelve years of life as a frog become a very beautiful maiden and would be married by a man of great fame and valour. It was near this well that Maya and his wife were performing penance to get a daughter.

After twelve years the frog changed itself into a beautiful maiden and cried loudly from the well. Hearing the cry Maya and Hemā, who were nearby peeped into the well and seeing the young girl took her home and brought her up giving her the name Mandodarī. Rāvaṇa returning after his victory march by that way visited Maya and seeing the girl fell in love with her and married her according to Vedic rites and took her to Laṅkā. Rāvaṇa got three sons of her, Meghanāda, Atikāya and Akṣakumāra.

Mandodarī was a very beautiful woman. Hanūmān when he entered the bed-room of Rāvaṇa in search of Sītā was dumb-founded at the beauty of Mandodarī and mistook her for a second for Sītā. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa).

MAṆḌODARĪ II. A virtuous princess of the kingdom of Siṅghala. She determined to live an unmarried life