

(ii) *Son of Kalāvati*. There lived in Kānyakubja the emperor called Drumila. He, along with his wife Kalāvati, performed penance on the banks of the Gaṅgā for an offspring. Kalāvati pleased Kāśyapa, by her worship and with his blessing she became pregnant. Drumila, who in the meantime had renounced everything in life, decided to spend the rest of his life in the forest itself. He gifted away all his wealth to brahmins and died in the forest. Though Kalāvati got ready to follow him in the funeral pyre, a celestial voice stopped her and she refrained from committing self-immolation. She returned to the village and lived as a slave in a brahmin's house. In due course of time she delivered a son. On the birth of the child it rained in the land which was suffering from failure of rains, and because of that the brahmin master of Kalāvati named the child Nārada, meaning he who gives water. When the child Nārada grew up he told his mother the story about his former birth. He turned out to be a great devotee of Viṣṇu. Meanwhile, Kalāvati, who went to milk the cow one night, was bitten to death by a snake, and Nārada was orphaned. Śiva and three attendants of his who went there in disguise were pleased at Nārada's great devotion for Viṣṇu and his service-mentality. He lived on the left-overs given by them. He repeated songs sung by them about Viṣṇu. Gradually Nārada became perfect devotee of Viṣṇu and a unique master of music. Śiva and others imparted Bhāgavata to Nārada before they left him. Nārada who thus attained divine knowledge performed penance for many years on the banks of the Gaṅgā and died there. (Bhāgavata, 7th Skandha).

(iii) *Birth as Kapi (Monkey)*. Nārada, who expired on the banks of the Gaṅgā was again born as the son of Brahmā. Though the father wanted the son to get married the latter preferred to spend his days in the meditation on God. Brahmā then told his son as follows:—“Why are you so much afraid of the house-holder's life? Many people have attained salvation by following the four āśramas (stages in life) like that of the celibate, the house-holder, the anchorite and the sannyāsin. In fact, only such people will be able to serve man and God. A girl named Mālatī alias Damayantī is born to maharṣi Sañjaya, and Śiva has granted her the boon that in this birth you will become her husband. You, therefore, go to Naranārāyaṇas engaged in penance on the Himālayas. They will give Mālatī in marriage to you.”

Accordingly Nārada went to Badarikāśrama where in the presence of Naranārāyaṇas he married Mālatī.

During those days Nārada and sage Parvata started on a pilgrimage in the course of which they went to the palace of emperor Sañjaya to observe Cāturmāsya. The emperor left a well-furnished house at the disposal of the pilgrims. He also deputed his daughter Damayantī to serve them. The humble service of Damayantī pleased them both. But, Damayantī's devotion towards Nārada was more ardent and both of them noticed this fact. One day Parvata asked Nārada whether Damayantī did not take a special interest in him (Nārada) and to this Nārada answered ‘Yes, I too think so’. Parvata got angry at this answer of Nārada and told him thus: “We had agreed at the time when we started on this tour to divulge all secrets to each other. Now you have broken that contract. Why did you not tell me about Damayantī's partiality for you? You become, therefore,

a monkey”. Nārada, in turn, cursed Parvata as follows: “You will live in hell in Yamaloka for a hundred years.”

Accordingly Nārada became a monkey and Parvata lived in hell. At this juncture Sañjaya's ministers advised him to marry his daughter to a prince, and the news made her very sad. Sañjaya understood the reason for his daughter's sadness from her nurse. The father had ultimately to yield to her wishes and Damayantī married Nārada, who had been turned into a monkey. Hundred years rolled by, and Parvata, the period of his curse being over, returned to the palace of Sañjaya. Nārada treated Parvata duly well, and pleased at the treatment, he gave redemption to Nārada from the curse. Nārada lived very happily with Damayantī for a long time at the palace, and after the demise of Damayantī he attained Brahmāloka. (Bhāgavata, 7th Skandha).

(iv) *Born as Dakṣa's son*. After the creation of the Devas was over, Brahmā called Dakṣa to him and asked him to marry Virāṇī and procreate, and Dakṣa accordingly begot five thousand sons of Virāṇī. They were called Haryaśvas. Finding that the Haryaśvas also were interested in the procreation of children Nārada, the Devarṣi, approached and told them as follows:—“Oh ! Haryaśvas ! You who are exceptionally vital people seem to be trying to procreate children. But, you have not enquired as to whether there is enough space on earth for such large numbers of people. You are just like children who know nothing about the world. How will you procreate people? Since you could live absolutely free in the sky, why do you not find out the limit of the earth?”

The Haryaśvas thereupon ran away in different places to find out the limit of the earth, and they have not, like the rivers which entered the ocean, returned yet.

At the loss of the Haryaśvas in the above manner, Dakṣa created the Śabalāśvas, whom also Nārada sent away to various parts of the earth. Dakṣa again created five thousand people whom also Nārada drove away in the above manner. Angry and sad at this, Dakṣa cursed Nārada thus:—“Well, Nārada ! my children roam about like this because of you. Therefore, you too in future will be roaming about without a permanent abode. Moreover, you will have rebirth as my son.”

Nārada became a world-trotter on account of the above curse of Dakṣa. He was also reborn as the son of Dakṣa. (Devī Bhāgavata, 7th Skandha and Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Part I, Chapter 15).

(v) *Born as a worm*. There is a story about Nārada being born as a worm. On the approach of a chariot the worm moved quickly away from its route lest its wheel should crush it to death. The King seated in the chariot burst out into laughter at the above sight when the worm told him as follows:—“There is nothing to be laughed at in my action. In every birth the body is much dear to the ātman (soul). Just as you love your body I also love and protect my body. (Mahābhārata).

3) *Viṣṇu showed Nārada the function of Māyā*. See under Tāladhvaja I

4) *Nārada became a woman*. While staying once with Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā, Nārada and the former went out on a tour in an aerial chariot. On the way they saw a stream and Kṛṣṇa stopped the chariot there as Nārada