

At that time Kaśyapa [There is a version that it was Dhanvantari who was thus sent back by Takṣaka. 9th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata] was the greatest of all physicians and māntrikas and, greedy that he was, he started to the palace of Parīkṣit thinking that it would be the best opportunity to obtain some money from the King. Takṣaka also was going to the palace in the guise of a brahmin. On the way Takṣaka met Kaśyapa and knowing well that the presence of the celebrated Kaśyapa at the palace would be an obstacle to the achievement of his mission, he approached Kaśyapa. They talked on the way and Kaśyapa said he was going to the palace to save the King from the bite of Takṣaka. Then Takṣaka, revealing his identity, said that it was impossible to save anybody from the result of his bite. Both then decided to test their skill then and there. A huge banyan tree with many branches spreading wide was standing nearby and Takṣaka gave it a bite. Within seconds the huge tree was charred to destruction; Kaśyapa then took some water and reciting a mantra poured the water over the ashes of the tree and then to the surprise of Takṣaka, the tree rose up and stood in its original form. On seeing that Takṣaka confessed that Kaśyapa was superior to him. Takṣaka then coaxed him to his side and giving him a huge amount as bribe bade him return home.

Six days went by and on the seventh day Takṣaka reached the palace of Parīkṣit. He found the palace well-guarded and watched. There was no way to go in. Takṣaka then called all his relatives and had them disguised as brahmins. He sent them in with fruits and roots, like people who had come to pay homage to the King. Takṣaka crept into one of the most attractive of the fruits as a tiny worm. The guards at the gate stopped them. The fake brahmins then said that they had come a long way from a far off tapovana and should be allowed to see the King. The information was carried to the King. The King said he would see the brahmins the next day but ordered their gifts to be brought to him. When the fruits and roots were brought to him, he gave a fruit each to the ministers, himself taking the most beautiful fruit of the lot. When he cut the fruit open he saw a worm with two black eyes and a red body sitting inside it and was a bit surprised. Then he addressed his ministers thus : "Oh, best of ministers, by your earnest and sincere endeavour nothing has happened to me till now. The Sun is going to set and the term of the curse is going to end. There is no need to be afraid of any poison now. But let not a curse of a sage go futile. Let this worm bite me and fulfill the curse." So saying the King took the worm and placed it on his neck. The worm changed itself into the fierce Takṣaka and bit the King and the King fell down dead. (12th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

3) *How Takṣaka became Indra's friend.* Once the son of a sage of great divine splendour named Uttāṅka was studying under a Guru named Veda. When his education was complete, the Guru asked him to bring as dakṣiṇā (fees) the ear-rings worn by the Kṣatriya wife of King Pauśya. Indra made Takṣaka steal the ornament and created many obstacles on the way. (For details see under Uttāṅka). That incident made them mutual friends and gradually Takṣaka became an intimate friend of Indra.

From that day onwards Uttāṅka waited for an opportunity to take vengeance on Takṣaka. It was at that time that Janamejaya, son of Parīkṣit, became the king. Janamejaya was only eleven years old when he became king and he was not then aware of the details of the death of his father. Uttāṅka went to him and told him how Takṣaka killed his father. Janamejaya became furious and asked him how to wreak vengeance on him. Uttāṅka suggested the performance of a Sarpasatra to which all the serpents should be attracted by mantras and burnt to death there. The young king agreed and Uttāṅka with other ṛṣis commenced the Sarpasatra.

One by one all the serpents came and fell into the sacrificial fire but Takṣaka was not to be found. Where is Takṣaka? This question was heard from many lips. Takṣaka was specially invoked by Uttāṅka. Takṣaka could not bear the power of Uttāṅka and he ran and prostrated before Indra. Indra not only did give refuge but gave him half of his seat in the throne and Takṣaka sat on it fully confident of security. Uttāṅka was enraged, when after repeated calls by mantra, Takṣaka did not appear and so he sat in meditation for some time to know the cause. He then saw Takṣaka sitting on the throne of Indra and the sight threw him into fury and he invoked Takṣaka, Indra and the throne and all. Lo! in an instant Indra, Takṣaka, the throne and all started moving towards the sacrificial fire! Within seconds all would have been burnt to death but for the timely intervention of a brahmin boy named Āstika, son of the sage Jaratkāru. (See under Āstika, Takṣaka escaped death that time).

Takṣaka by instructions from Indra was living in the forest of Khāṇḍava and when that was burnt by Agni, it was Indra who saved Takṣaka from the fire. (See under Khāṇḍavadāha).

#### 4) *Other details.*

(i) A king called Candrāṅgada lived in the house of Takṣaka for some time. (See under Candrāṅgada).

(ii) Takṣaka in the guise of a brahmin named Kṣapanaka went to the sage Uttāṅka and stole the ornaments from him. (See under Uttāṅka).

(iii) Once the Earth was made into a cow and everybody milked from her what each wanted. The serpents milked poison from her and they then used Takṣaka as the calf. (See under Pṛthu).

(iv) During the burning of the forest of Khāṇḍava, Arjuna slew the wife of Takṣaka. (See under Khāṇḍavadāha).

(v) When the soul of Balabhadrarāma, after his death, reached Pātāla, Takṣaka received it with respect. (Śloka 15, Chapter 4, Mausala Parva).

(vi) Takṣaka lives in the court of Varuṇa worshipping him. (Śloka 8, Chapter 9, Sabhā Parva).

TAKṢAKA II. The elder of the two sons of Lakṣmaṇa of his wife Ūrmilā. The other was Chatraketu. Following the instructions of Śri Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa went to the east sea coast, defeated the forest tribe there. He then constructed a city there named Agati and made Takṣaka the king there. He then went to the west sea-coast and destroying the barbarous tribe there constructed a city there called Candramati and made Chatraketu (? candraketu) the king. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

TAKṢASĪLĀ. A place of Purāṇic celebrity situated in the north-west of Bhārata. Even from ancient times this