

Karṇa. Mahāviṣṇu incarnated himself as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The meeting of the three in the battle-field is well-known.

RAKTĀṆGA. A nāga born in Dhṛtarāṣṭra's dynasty. It was burnt to death at the yajña of Janamejaya. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 57, Verse 18).

RAMĀ. A synonym for Mahālakṣmī. There is a story in the eighth Skandha of Devī Bhāgavata as to how the name Ramā came to be attached to Lakṣmī.

Revanta, the very handsome son of Sūrya one day came to Vaiṣṇava mounted on his horse Uccaiśravaṣa to pay his respects to Mahāviṣṇu. Even Lakṣmīdevī stood aghast speechless for a very short time at the charm of Revanta changing her looks between him and his horse. Mahāviṣṇu did not at all like this and cursed that since Lakṣmī's eyes enjoyed the sight of some one she would come to be called Ramā also and that she would be born as a mare on earth.

RĀMA (ŚRĪ RĀMA). The seventh incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu, a very powerful king of the solar dynasty.

1) *Genealogy.* Descended from Viṣṇu thus: Brahmā - Marīci - Kaśyapa-Vivasvān - Vivasvata Manu-Mahābāhu - Prasandhi - Kṣupa-Ikṣvāku - Vikukṣi - Śaśāda-Kakutṣtha (Puraṇjaya) - Anēnas-Pṛthulāśva-Prasēnajit-Yuvanāśva-Māndhātā-Purukutsa-Trasadasya-Anaraṇya-Hryaśva-Vasumanas-Sutanvā - Traiyyāruṇa-Satyavrata (Triśaṅku)-Harīścandra - Rohitāśva - Harita - Cuñcu-Sudeva - Bharuka - Bāhuka - Sagara - Asamañjasa-Amśumān-Bhagīratha-Śrutānābha-Sindhuvīpa-Ayutāyus-Rtuparna - Sarvakāma - Sudās - Mitrasakha (Kalmāṣapāda) - Aśmaka - Mūlaka - Khatvāṅga - Dilīpa (Dīrghabāhu)-Raghu-Aja-Daśaratha-Rāma.

2) *Reason for his birth.* When Rāvaṇa was ruling over Lāṅkā as a terror to the world, evils and cruelties like matricide, patricide, fratricide, killing of cows, hatred for good people, children's death, abduction of women, killing of munis, thefts etc. became rampant. When the world became grief-stricken Bhūmīdevī (Goddess of earth) assumed the form of a cow and took refuge with Indra in Svarga. She told him about the atrocities committed by Rāvaṇa and the other Rākṣasas. Then Indra took Bhūmīdevī (cow) to Brahmā, who took them to Śiva at Kailāsa as killing Rāvaṇa was beyond his (Brahmā's) power. Śiva thought it improper on his part to kill Rāvaṇa and so he took Brahmā and others to Viṣṇu and submitted their grievance to him. Viṣṇu consoled them by saying as follows:—"I have decided to incarnate myself as the son of Daśaratha, king of Ayodhyā. You Devas also should take birth on earth to help me to kill Rāvaṇa and other evil Rākṣasas and to protect Bhūmīdevī and the good people on the earth." (Kamba Rāmāyaṇa, Pūrva Kāṇḍa).

3) *Birth* King Daśaratha of the solar dynasty ruled Kosala with Ayodhyā as his capital. Mahārṣi Vasiṣṭha was his family preceptor. With the cooperation of eight ministers such as Sumantra and others he ruled the country in the path of supreme welfare and prosperity. A daughter, Śāntā, was born to him of his wife Kausalyā. Years passed by, yet he had no son. One of those days King Lomapāda, close friend of Daśaratha visited Ayodhyā. Lomapāda, who was childless requested Daśaratha for Śāntā and she was given as his adopted daughter by Daśaratha. Lomapāda gave her in marriage to Rṣyaśṛṅga, who had once caused rain-fall in Aṅga. (For details see under Rṣyaśṛṅga).

To have a son, Daśaratha took as his second wife Kaikeyī, daughter of the King of Kekaya and younger sister of Yudhājit. But she turned out to be barren. Then he married Sumitrā, daughter of the King of Kāśī. Even after many years none of the three wives of Daśaratha presented him with a son.

One of those days Daśaratha went deep into the forest, hunting. While resting on the banks of river Sarayū he heard a sound like that of an elephant drinking water in the river. Without realising the fact that the voice was that of the son of a muni filling water in a pot for his aged parents, the King released an arrow against him. When Daśaratha walked to the spot, he realised his mistake. He had hit unknowingly a brahmin-boy, a muni's son. The boy lay wounded about to die. The boy explained to Daśaratha who he was and how he had come to the river to carry water to his aged parents. After telling the King details about him he breathed his last. Sobbing at his misadventure, Daśaratha went to the aged parents of the dead boy with the pot filled with water. The parents, who were blind thought that it was their son who was approaching them when Daśaratha revealed the sad story to them. After cursing Daśaratha that he too would die of separation from his son, the aged muni expired; his wife also died in his funeral pyre. The grief-stricken King returned to Ayodhyā.

Only Vasiṣṭha and Sumantra were told about the curse, which, though a cause for great sorrow, implied that Daśaratha would have sons. Vasiṣṭha, therefore, advised Daśaratha to get the yajña, called putrakāmeṣṭi performed by Rṣyaśṛṅga. Accordingly the King invited his daughter Śāntā and his son-in-law, Rṣyaśṛṅga to Ayodhyā, and the yajña began. Rṣyaśṛṅga made offerings in the sacred fire chanting the putrakāma hymn. Then a divine person arose from the fire with a golden vessel full of pudding (nectar of the Devas) and disappeared again in the fire after giving the vessel to Rṣyaśṛṅga. Rṣyaśṛṅga handed it over to Daśaratha, who as advised by the mahārṣi divided the pudding between Kausalyā and Kaikeyī. They gave a part of their shares of the pudding to Sumitrā also. The three queens conceived, and in due course of time Kausalyā and Kaikeyī delivered a son each and Sumitrā two sons. The son of Kausalyā was named Rāma, the son of Kaikeyī, Bharata, and sons of Sumitrā were named Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa).

4) *Boons granted to Kaikeyī.* Before the sons were born to Daśaratha, the mighty asura called Śambara once attacked Devaloka. Daśaratha was at that time known as Nemi, and he was a great friend of Indra, and on his invitation Nemi, along with Kaikeyī, went to Devaloka in a chariot. Nemi killed the asura army within half an hour. Then Śambara assumed the form of ten Śambaras and attacked Nemi from ten points. In this context Nemi turned and twisted his chariot in all the ten directions at the same time and killed all the ten Śambaras and recaptured Svarga. It was from that day onwards that Nemi came to be known as Daśaratha.

In the fight with the Śambaras on all points Daśaratha's chariot was so violently shaken that the key of its axle was about to slip off and fall down. Noticing the threatened danger Kaikeyī applied her finger to the