

Indra Offends His Spiritual Master, Bṛhaspati



Once upon a time, the King of heaven, Indra, being extremely proud because of his great opulence of the three worlds, transgressed the law of Vedic etiquette. Seated on his throne, he was surrounded by various demigods and his associates. All of them were offering Indra their respects and services, and the Apsarās and Gandharvas were dancing and singing with very sweet musical

instruments. Indra was sitting with his wife, Śacīdevī, who occupied half the throne, when the great sage Bṛhaspati appeared in that assembly. Bṛhaspati, the best of the sages, was the spiritual master of Indra and the demigods and was respected by the demigods and demons alike. Nevertheless, although Indra saw his spiritual master before him, he did not rise from his own seat or offer a seat to his spiritual master, nor did Indra offer him a respectful welcome. Indra did nothing to show him respect.

Bṛhaspati knew everything that would happen in the future. Seeing Indra's transgression of etiquette, he completely understood that Indra was puffed up by his material opulence. Although able to curse Indra, he did not do so. Instead, he left the

assembly and in silence returned to his home. Indra, the King of heaven, could immediately understand his mistake. Realizing he had disrespected his spiritual master, he condemned himself in the presence of all the members of the assembly.

“Alas, what a regrettable deed I have committed because of my lack of intelligence and my pride in my material opulences. I failed to show respect to my spiritual master when he entered this assembly, and thus I have insulted him.”

While Indra, the King of the demigods, thought in this way and repented in his own assembly, Bṛhaspati, the most powerful spiritual master, understood his mind. Thus he became invisible to Indra and left home, for Bṛhaspati was spiritually

more powerful than King Indra. Although Indra searched vigorously with the assistance of the other demigods, he could not find Br̥haspati.

Then Indra thought, “Alas, my spiritual master has become dissatisfied with me, and now I have no means of achieving good fortune.” Although Indra was surrounded by demigods, he could not find peace of mind.

Hearing of the pitiable condition of King Indra, the demons, following the instructions of their guru, Śukrācārya, equipped themselves with weapons and declared war against the demigods. The demigods’ heads, thighs and arms and the other parts of their bodies were injured by the sharp arrows of the demons. The demigods, headed by Indra, saw no other course than to immediately

approach Lord Brahmā with bowed heads for shelter and proper instruction. When the most powerful Lord Brahmā saw the demigods coming toward him, their bodies gravely injured by the arrows of the demons, he pacified them by his great causeless mercy and spoke as follows.

Lord Brahmā said: O best of the demigods, unfortunately, because of madness resulting from your material opulence, you failed to receive Bṛhaspati properly when he came to your assembly. Because he is aware of the Supreme Brahman and fully in control of his senses, he is the best of the brāhmaṇas. Therefore it is very astonishing that you have acted impudently toward him.

Because of your misbehavior toward Bṛhaspati, you have been defeated by the demons. Your

enemies, the demons, were extremely weak because of their disrespect toward Śukrācārya, but since they have now worshiped Śukrācārya with great devotion, they have again become powerful. By their devotion to Śukrācārya, they have increased their strength so much that now they are even able to easily seize my abode from me.

O demigods, I instruct you to approach Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭā, and accept him as your guru. He is a pure and very powerful brāhmaṇa undergoing austerity and penances. Pleased by your worship, he will fulfill your desires, provided that you tolerate his being inclined to side with the demons.

Thus advised by Lord Brahmā and relieved of their anxiety, all the demigods went to the sage Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭā. When all the

demigods requested the great Viśvarūpa to be their priest, Viśvarūpa, who was advanced in austerities, was very pleased and performed the necessary priestly activities with great enthusiasm and attention.

The opulence of the demons, who are generally known as the enemies of the demigods, was protected by the talents and tactics of Śukrācārya, but Viśvarūpa, who was most powerful, composed a protective prayer known as the Nārāyaṇa-kavaca. By this intelligent mantra, he took away the opulence of the demons and gave it to Indra.