

KING CITRAKETU GOT A TEMPORARY LIFE



In response to the request of Mahārāja Citraketu, Aṅgirā Ṛṣi, who was born of Lord Brahmā's mind, was very merciful toward him. Because the sage was a greatly powerful

personality, he performed a sacrifice by offering oblations of sweetrice to Tvaṣṭā.

O Parīkṣit Mahārāja, best of the Bhāratas, the remnants of the food offered in the yajña were given by the great sage Aṅgirā to the first and most perfect among Citraketu’s millions of queens, whose name was Kṛtadyuti.

Thereafter, the great sage told the King, “O great King, now you will have a son who will be the cause of both jubilation and lamentation.” The sage then left, without waiting for Citraketu’s response.

Kṛtadyuti, having received semen from

Citraketu, became pregnant after eating remnants of food from the yajña performed by Aṅgirā. Thereafter, in due course of time, a son was born to the King. Hearing news of this, all the inhabitants of the state of Śūrasena were extremely pleased.

King Citraketu was especially pleased. After purifying himself by bathing and by decorating himself with ornaments, he engaged learned brāhmaṇas in offering benedictions to the child and performing the birth ceremony.

Unto the brāhmaṇas who took part in the ritualistic ceremony the King gave charity of

gold, silver, garments, ornaments, villages, horses and elephants, as well as sixty crores of cows

As a cloud indiscriminately pours water on the earth, the beneficent King Citraketu, to increase the reputation, opulence and longevity of his son, distributed like rainfall all desirable things to everyone.

When a poor man gets some money after great difficulty, his affection for the money increases daily. Similarly, when King Citraketu, after great difficulty, received a son, his affection for the son increased day after day.

The mother's attraction and attention to the son, like that of the child's father, excessively increased. The other wives, seeing Kṛtadyuti's son, were very much agitated, as if by high fevers, with a desire to have sons.

As King Citraketu fostered his son very carefully, his affection for Queen Kṛtadyuti increased, but gradually he lost affection for the other wives, who had no sons.

The other queens were extremely unhappy due to their being sonless. Because of the King's negligence toward them, they condemned themselves in envy and lamented.

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Being

neglected by their husband and seeing Kṛtadyuti's opulence in possessing a son, Kṛtadyuti's co-wives always burned in envy, which became extremely strong.

As their envy increased, they lost their intelligence. Being extremely hardhearted and unable to tolerate the King's neglect, they finally administered poison to the son. Unaware of the poison administered by her co-wives, Queen Kṛtadyuti walked within the house, thinking that her son was sleeping deeply. She did not understand that he was dead.

Thinking that her child had been sleeping for

a long time, Queen Kṛtadyuti, who was certainly very intelligent, ordered the nurse, “My dear friend, please bring my son here.”

When the maidservant approached the child, who was lying down, she saw that his eyes were turned upward. There were no signs of life, all his senses having stopped, and she could understand that the child was dead. Seeing this, she immediately cried, “Now I am doomed,” and fell to the ground.

In great agitation, the maidservant struck her breast with both hands and cried loudly in regretful words. Hearing her loud voice, the Queen immediately came, and when she

approached her son, she saw that he was suddenly dead.

In great lamentation, her hair and dress in disarray, the Queen fell to the ground unconscious. Hearing the loud crying, all the inhabitants of the palace came, both men and women. Being equally aggrieved, they also began to cry. The queens who had administered the poison also cried pretentiously, knowing fully well their offense.

When King Citraketu heard of his son's death from unknown causes, he became almost blind. Because of his great affection for his

son, his lamentation grew like a blazing fire, and as he went to see the dead child, he kept slipping and falling on the ground. Surrounded by his ministers and other officers and the learned brāhmaṇas present, the King approached and fell unconscious at the child's feet, his hair and dress scattered. When the King, breathing heavily, regained consciousness, his eyes were tearful, and he could not speak.

When the Queen saw her husband, King Citraketu, merged in great lamentation and saw the dead child, who was the only son in the family, she lamented in various ways.

This increased the pain in the cores of the hearts of all the inhabitants of the palace, the ministers and all the brāhmaṇas.

Accompanied by his wife, who was thus lamenting for her dead son, King Citraketu began crying loudly with an open mouth, being greatly aggrieved.

As the King and Queen lamented, all their male and female followers joined them in crying. Because of the sudden accident, all the citizens of the kingdom were almost unconscious. When the great sage Aṅgirā understood that the King was almost dead in an ocean of lamentation, he went there with

Nārada Ṛṣi.
