

Caitanya Reader Book Four

Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa A Children's Reader

Adapted from the writings of
His Divine Grace
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Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

There once was a brāhmaṇa who was very, very poor. His name was Sudāmā. Sudāmā was so poor that he didn't have any nice clothes. His wife didn't even have a dress. They had only a small amount of food so they seemed to be very lean and thin.

One day, Sudāmā's wife said, "My dear husband, you are a great devotee. Lord Kṛṣṇa is your friend. You went to school with Him when you were a boy. Please go to Him. He will help us."

Sudāmā wanted to see Lord Kṛṣṇa so he went. His wife gave him a small bag of chipped rice to give to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When Sudāmā got to the city of Lord Kṛṣṇa he felt very blissful. He passed through many big gates and camps. He passed by many big palaces. At last he came to one palace and went in. There he saw Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī.

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw Sudāmā and left His seat. He embraced Sudāmā with His two arms. He felt very pleased upon seeing His friend. Then Kṛṣṇa gave the brāhmaṇa a seat on His own bed. He gave him fruits and drinks. He then washed Sudāmā's feet and put the water on His head. He put sandalwood pulp on the body of the brāhmaṇa. Then Kṛṣṇa offered ārātika to the brāhmaṇa. Rukmiṇī fanned Sudāmā with a yak tail fan.

After this, Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled at Sudāmā and they talked. They talked about their school days and their guru. They were very, very happy.

Sudāmā was still wearing the bag of chipped rice on his shoulder. Kṛṣṇa knew this so He asked, “Have you brought Me any nice offering?”

Sudāmā did not want to give the chipped rice to Kṛṣṇa because he knew that it was not a nice offering. So Kṛṣṇa told him, “My dear friend, I do not need anything but if My devotee gives Me some small offering with love then I will take it.”

Kṛṣṇa took the bag of chipped rice from Sudāmā's shoulder. He looked at the rice and said, "Oh you have some nice chipped rice for Me." Kṛṣṇa then ate one bite of the rice. He was very pleased.

Sudāmā spent one night at Kṛṣṇa's palace. After that, he went home without asking Kṛṣṇa for anything. He was very happy that he had seen his friend Kṛṣṇa. He did not want to ask anything from Kṛṣṇa, he just wanted to love Kṛṣṇa.

When he got home, Sudāmā saw that everything had changed. His hut was gone and in its place were great palaces. The palaces had jewels and stones that looked like the sun, moon and fire. There were decorated parks, nice lakes with lotus flowers and birds and beautiful people. The brāhmaṇa was very surprised. "Is this my place?" he asked.

Sudāmā was his wife. She looked like the wife of a demigod. He saw the beautiful palace and he thought, "This has all come from the kindness of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He took one bite of rice

from me and now He has given me all of this. I want to be His servant life after life.”

The brāhmaṇa and his wife were very happy in their palace. They used everything to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Questions

1. Why did Sudāmā go to see Kṛṣṇa?
2. List some of the things that Kṛṣṇa did to worship the brāhmaṇa.
3. Did Sudāmā want to give Kṛṣṇa the rice? Why or why not?
4. Why was Sudāmā happy when he left Kṛṣṇa’s palace?
5. For Sudāmā, a palace and a hut were equally nice. Why?

New Words

clothes
guru

lean
brought

camp
Sudāmā

The Curse

One day the great Mahārāja Parīkṣit went to the forest to hunt. He became very tired, hungry and thirsty while chasing the stags so he went to the hermitage of an old sage in the forest.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit was a great king yet all he wanted from the sage was some water and a sitting place. The sage was meditating and did not even see the king.

The tired king felt unwanted in the sage's hermitage. Any poor man should offer water, a sitting place and sweet words to a guest. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was ruling the whole world so he was the greatest guest of all but the sage did not stop his meditation to serve the king.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit became very angry. As he left the hermitage he picked up a dead snake with the tip of his bow. He hung the dead snake on the shoulders of the sage and went to his palace.

Śṛṅgi, the son of the sage, was just a young boy. He was playing with his friends when he heard about his father's snake garland. Although he was young, Śṛṅgi had mystic powers. He decided to cause great trouble to the king.

Śṛṅgi said, "The king is just like a watch dog. He should have stayed outside the door of my father's house. He should never have entered the house looking for help. I must punish him myself."

Śṛṅgi was very puffed up and wanted to show his power to his little friends. He touched the water of the river and began to curse the king.

"On the seventh day from today, a snake-bird will bite the wretched king. Then he will die!"

When Mahārāja Parīkṣit heard about the curse, he thanked Lord Kṛṣṇa for His kindness and went to the bank of the Ganges. He gave up his kingdom, family and wealth. Great sages came to see the king who was sitting and fasting until death.

At this time, the great devotee, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, spoke about Lord Kṛṣṇa's glory to the dying king. At the time of his death, Mahārāja Parīkṣit was peaceful and happy.

The young Śṛṅgi was not so happy, however. He had made a great offence to a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because of Śṛṅgi's foolishness, all brāhmaṇas are weak and foolish in this age of Kali.

Questions

1. Why did Śṛṅgi curse the king?
2. Was the king sad about the curse?
3. What did the king do when he heard about his death?
4. Why wasn't Śṛṅgi happy in the end?

New Words

hermitage	punish	mystic	watch dog
guest	wretched	unwanted	fasting
stags	Mahārāja Parīkṣit		Śṛṅgi

The Appearance of Śukadeva Gosvāmī

Mahārāja Parīkṣit was sitting on the southern bank of the Ganges. The straw roots of his mat faced east; he, himself faced north. The king was fasting and waiting for the bite of the snake-bird of death.

Demigods and great sages had come to see the king. He had been cursed by the boy, Śṛṅgi and was waiting for death. Flowers were dropping from the heavens. Everyone was praising the great king.

At that moment, the beautiful Śukadeva Gosvāmī arrived. He was sixteen years old and very powerful. His hands, thighs, arms shoulders and forehead were perfectly formed. His eyes were wide and beautiful. His nose and ears were high; his neck was as beautiful as a conch shell. His arms were long and his curly hair was scattered over his face. He was naked and the colour of his body was just like Lord Kṛṣṇa's.

As soon as the sages saw Śukadeva, they got up from their seats. Mahārāja Parīkṣit bowed his head before the boy. Then Śukadeva Gosvāmī took his seat. Sitting in the midst of great sages and demigods, he looked like the moon with stars and planets all around.

Mahārāja Parīkṣit said, “By thinking of you our homes become purified. We all become purified by seeing you, touching you, washing your holy feet and offering you a seat. You are the master of the great saints and devotees. Please show me the perfect path for I am about to die.”

“Please tell me what to hear, chant, remember and worship. I know that you stay in men’s houses only long enough to milk a cow. Therefore, I pray that you will tell me now.”

The great Śukadeva Gosvāmī said, “My dear king, one who wants to be free from sadness must hear about, chant and remember Kṛṣṇa.

For seven days, Śukadeva Gosvāmī spoke to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Everyone became joyful while hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

At the end of his life, Mahārāja Parīkṣit went back home, back to Godhead.

Questions

1. What does Śukadeva Gosvāmī look like?
2. What did Mahārāja Parīkṣit want to know from Śukadeva Gosvāmī?
3. What did Śukadeva say was the most important thing?

New Words

southern
western
planets

northern
scatter
purify

eastern
midst

Word Study

Scrambled Words

Unscramble

tca	okob	eagrt
yks	sifh	lebat
rac	enni	engre
ite	ilma	tapr
mpo	latl	rbdoa
npe	kesd	drsse
toh	lkim	moeh

Read and Answer

Find two words in each of these scrambled words:

apn pti apt ared tela

Unscramble and write

1. ṛKṇṣa ehld het moned yb the ootf.
2. dhRāā eawrs a der essdr.

The King and the Poor Brāhmaṇa

In the city of Mithilā there lived a faithful brāhmaṇa named Śrutadeva. Being a pure devotee, Śrutadeva was always engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. He lived very peacefully as a householder and always thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The king of Mithilā was also a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Although he was very rich, he never desired anything but Kṛṣṇa's service.

Kṛṣṇa was very fond of these two devotees. One day He asked His chariot driver to take Him to visit many towns and villages near Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa was really desiring to visit His two devotees in Mithilā.

When the residents of Mithilā heard that Kṛṣṇa, along with many other great sages, had come to their city, they all ran to offer Him nice gifts. Upon seeing Him, their hearts became full, just as a lotus flower blooms in the sun.

The king of Mithilā and Śrutadeva both fell at the feet of the Lord and asked Him to come to their homes. Out of His kindness Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into two Kṛṣṇas. Not only Kṛṣṇa but all the sages expanded themselves in order to go to the king's palace and the brāhmaṇa's cottage at the same time.

When Kṛṣṇa and the sages went to the palace of the king, they were treated very royally. The king offered them nice chairs and pillows. He washed the feet of Kṛṣṇa and all the sages and sprinkled the water on the heads of his family members.

He offered nice flower garlands, sandalwood pulp, incense, clothes, jewels, lamps, cows and bulls to the guests. He fed them fine prasādam and soothed their feet. All the while he spoke sweet words about the glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

At the same time, Kṛṣṇa and the sages entered the simple home of the brāhmaṇa, Śrutadeva, who was very poor. He could only offer them wooden planks and straw carpets to sit on. But in his great happiness over seeing the Lord,

Śrutadeva began to dance joyfully. He and his wife washed the feet of the guests and Śrutadeva sprinkled the holy water on the heads of his family members.

Being very poor, Śrutadeva offered simple fruits, incense, scented water, clay, tulasī leaves, kuśa straw and lotus flowers to his holy guests. Because these simple items were offered with the brāhmaṇa's love, Kṛṣṇa was pleased to accept them.

Śrutadeva's wife cooked dhal and rice and fed the sages on simple foods. All the while, Śrutadeva chanted the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa and the sages left Mithilā feeling very pleased. The love of the brāhmaṇa and the love of the king were both pure and Kṛṣṇa blessed them both equally. Kṛṣṇa is desiring love from His devotees. He does not care for wealth.

Questions

1. What did the king offer to Kṛṣṇa?
2. What did the brāhmaṇa offer to Kṛṣṇa?
3. Was Kṛṣṇa more pleased with the king or the poor brāhmaṇa?

New Words

Mithilā
Śrutadeva
residents

plank
cottage
equally

householder
royally

Lord Brahmā Steals the Cows

While the cowherd boys, the cows and Kṛṣṇa were playing in the forest, they found a very nice place to eat lunch.

“My dear friends,” said Kṛṣṇa. “This is a good place to eat our lunch and play near the sandy river Yamunā. The lotus flowers are fully bloomed and their flavour is everywhere. The birds are chirping and the peacocks are cooing. The whispering leaves in the beautiful trees make this place very peaceful. Let’s eat our lunch here while the cows drink the water of the Yamunā.”

Putting Kṛṣṇa in the centre, the cowherd boys all sat in a big circle and began to eat their prasādam. They laughed, joked and played while eating their lunch with Kṛṣṇa.

Suddenly the boys saw that the cows had wandered deep into the forest. They were nowhere to be seen.

“Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” cried the boys out of fear for the cow.

“My dear friends,” said Kṛṣṇa. “Please go on eating your lunch. I will go find the cows and bring them back.” With His flute and His bugle pushed into His belt, Kṛṣṇa went off to find the cows.

At that time, Lord Brahmā wanted to play a trick on Kṛṣṇa. He stole all the cows and all of the cowherd boys and put them in a cave.

Kṛṣṇa looked and looked for the cows. When He couldn’t find them, He returned to the spot where the boys were eating lunch but the cowherd boys were also gone.

Because Kṛṣṇa knows everything, He thought, “Lord Brahmā has stolen all of the cows and all of the cowherd boys. How can I go back to Vṛndāvana without them? All of the mothers will cry.”

Kṛṣṇa knew just what to do. He expanded Himself into many, many cows and cowherd boys. Each Kṛṣṇa looked just like a cow or cowherd boy who had been stolen. Thus Kṛṣṇa was able to return to Vṛndāvana.

Lord Brahmā was very eager to see what Kṛṣṇa would do without all of His friends so he quickly flew back to the forest to find Kṛṣṇa. When he came to the same spot where he had stolen the cows and cowherd boys, Lord Brahmā saw all of the same cows and boys still playing with Kṛṣṇa.

This was a great surprise for the demigod. He didn't know what to say. He knew that he had just put all of the cows and boys in a cave and they were all asleep. How did Kṛṣṇa get so many more cows and boys to play with?

While Lord Brahmā was watching the boys, Kṛṣṇa wanted to show him what had happened. All of the cows and cowherd boys then took on their real Viṣṇu forms.

They each had four hands holding a club, disc, lotus and conch. Each had a jewelled helmet, necklaces, earrings and nice flower garlands. Their necks were smooth like conch shells. Their legs and waists were dressed with golden bells. Their bodies were all covered with fresh tulasī buds and all of them were very beautiful.

Lord Brahmā became so baffled that Kṛṣṇa felt sorry for him. He took away Brahmā's vision of all the Viṣṇu forms. Lord Brahmā fell down like a stick in front of Kṛṣṇa. With great respect he began to worship Lord Kṛṣṇa with nice prayers.

Having seen that Kṛṣṇa was really the most powerful person, Lord Brahmā returned all of the sleeping boys and calves. They woke up and began to play in the forest with Kṛṣṇa just as they had when Lord Brahmā stole them.

Questions

1. Why did Lord Kṛṣṇa leave the cowherd boys alone?
2. Why did Lord Brahmā steal the cows and cowherd boys?
3. How did Kṛṣṇa trick Lord Brahmā?

New Words

eager

baffled

whispering