

DHRUVA

EDITED BY

R. W. ROSS, I. E. S., (Retd.)



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DHRUVA

1. DHRUVA'S PARENTS

When the world began there was a great flood. It covered all the world. In time it ceased.

Then Brahma woke from sleep. He wiped his eyes and looked about him. He saw Narayana afloat on a leaf. The Lord said to him, "Do *tapas* and create the world."

Brahma did *tapas* and did as he was bidden. He made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He filled the world with living beings.

At last he created the world of man. The first men were sages like Sanananda. They were pure of heart and did not marry. They lived to seek after God.

Brahma created other men. Among them was Manu, the very first king that the world ever saw.

Manu married Satarupa. She bore him two sons. One of the two was Uttanapada.

In time Uttanapada became king. He had two wives, Suneethi and Suruchi. The king liked Suruchi very much. She was vain and proud but was fair as the morning. By her, he had a son named Uttama.

He had another son named Dhruva, the hero of our story. Dhruva had good looks, sweet smiles and winning manners. But the king did not like him because he was the son of Suneethi, the wife for whom the king did not care.

2. DHRUVA TOLD TO DO TAPAS

The king spent most of his time with Suruchi. Every day he went only to her rooms. Hers was the only child he cared for.

One day Dhruva went to see his father. He saw Uttama seated on the king's lap. He also wished to sit there. He went to the king and played with the king's robes. The king merely looked at him, but said nothing,

This gave Suruchi courage to speak out her mind. Said she to Dhruva, "True, you are a prince; yet you are not fit to sit on the king's lap. You were born not of me, but of Suneethi. If you wish to sit on the king's lap, go and pray to be born my son."

Dhruva did not know what to



You are not fit to sit on the king's lap.

say. He looked into his father's eyes. Again the king said nothing.

Dhruva was helpless. Suruchi's words hurt him. He heaved heavy sighs and ran away weeping.

3 DHURUVA'S RESOLVE TO DO TAPAS

Dhruva ran straight to his mother's rooms. His wails rent the air. The mother heard them from afar. She ran out to meet him with hands stretched out. Dhruva flung himself into her arms.

Suneethi was sorry to see her son weeping. She did not know what to make of it. She asked him what the matter was. Bitter sobs were the only answer she got.

She kissed his forehead and stroked his chin. She wanted him to stop crying. Poor Dhruva could not do so. Suneethi began to wonder; for,

she couldn't guess the cause of his sorrow.

Just then a servant came that way. He told her all that had passed. Suneethi's misery increased. Suruchi's words pierced her like so many arrows. She shed the bitterest tears that a woman ever shed.

In her misery, she spoke to her son thus: "My dear child, there is no use your envying Uttama. What Suruchi told you is very true. Indeed you are not fit to sit on the king's lap. Are you not the son of one, whom the king hates so bitterly. If like Uttama you would be, do as his mother bade you do. Go and do *tapas*. It is by *tapas* all our fathers became great. By *tapas* Brahma became the father of things created. By *tapas* again, Manu came to enjoy the good thing of two worlds. Do *tapas* to Vishnu and

seek him in the temple of the heart."

All this Suneethi said to her son. She little knew what he would do. She thought that he would wait. In this she was sadly mistaken.

Dhruva said to her: "If that is the way, do let me go at once." She told him to wait. Said she, "My dear child, the time for *tapas* has not yet come. Wait till you are old enough. Then you may do as you like."

His mother's reasoning did not appeal to Dhruva. He felt the Lord's call to pray. Stay at home he could not. With tears in his eyes, he sought of her leave to go.

Suneethi saw her son's fixed resolve. All that she said could not change it. She did not like his going to the forest. But what could she do? She hid her grief, blessed him and let him go.

4. NARADA'S HELP

Next morning Dhruva left his father's city for the forest. He was a tender child and only five years of age, but he went all alone to the forest. He was not afraid of wild animals.

Soon he was in the thick of the forest. Then he saw a very holy man. It was sage Narada, come down from the skies. Dhruva fell at his feet and asked the Great Man's blessing.

The sage laid his hand on the head of Dhruva and heartily blessed him. He had come there to fix Dhruva in his resolve. Yet he talked like one, who wished to change it.

Narada :— My dear child, from your looks you seem to be the son of a king. What made you leave the palace and seek the depths of the forest? Perhaps some insult made you do so.

Dhruva:— O Holy one! I do not know who you are. Yet I like your looks. You seem to me so wise and good. To you I shall tell all. I could not bear to hear Suruchi's words. My heart had no peace; so I came to the forest. But, holy sir, how came you to read these, my thoughts? Was it by devolution or by use of yogic powers?

Narada:— By-the-bye, who are you?

Dhruva:— I am the son of king Uttanapada by his first wife. My name is Dhruva.

Narada:— Come back, come back, I will take you to your father. What has the forest to do with you or you with the forest? Now is the time for you to read and play. What has a child like you to do with honour or insult? I wonder why you came

here.

Dhruva :— I came here to do *tapas*. I wish to see the Lord face to face.

Narada :— You are but a child of five. You cannot see God. He is not reached even by penance during countless births. Forget the insult and return the way you came.

Dhruva :— I cannot go back. I *will* not go back. Father does not want me at all. God *wants* me and I *want* Him. Him must I seek, and Him must I find.

Narada was glad to see the courage of the child. He was pleased to see its rare spirit. He resolved to help it in every way.

He said to the child, "What thy mother told thee is very true. God Narayana alone [can bless thee, and end thy misery. He alone can grant

all the wishes of man. Go and do *tapas* in *Madhu Vana*, so sacred to Him. Now I will teach you the *mantra* that enables men to see angels in seven days."

Then the sage taught him the mantra. He also taught him the right way to search for God. Dhruva walked thrice round the sage and fell at his feet. Narada heartily blessed the child and went his way. Dhruva then turned his steps towards *Madhu Vana*.

5. NARADA AT THE COURT

But what about the king? He came to know that Dhruva had left the city. He was not glad about it, but was very sorry. He blamed himself for what had passed. Night and day his heart knew no peace.

One day Narada came to the court. The king received him with all respect. He also gave him a seat next his own.

Then Narada said to him, "Why seem you so sad, mighty king? Does the world go well with you ?

The king made answer : "A sinner am I, O sage. I was cruel to my good son and his sweet natured mother. That son has now gone to the forest. What will betide him, I know not. I have done ill. Love for Suruchi made me do so. When shall I see the face of my beloved son again ?"

Then said Narada : "Why spend one thought on his account. God Himself has the care of him. He is doing a great and good thing. For his sake, I wish you joy. Due to him, your fame will soon reach the

ends of the world. For him, you need not be anxious. He returns here in a short time."

Narada then took leave of the king and went his way. The words of the sage brought the king's mind some rest. But then he could not do the kingly duties. He passed the time some-how and awaited Dhruva's return.

6. DHURVA'S TAPAS

And so Dhruva reached **Madhu Vana** at last. He found it to be a beautiful place. Grassy plains, shady heights and gentle water-falls added to its beauty. There were in it birds and beasts of many, many kinds. But of them Dhruva was not in the least afraid.

Then he began to do his *tapas*. Every day he bathed thrice in the

Jumna and began to pray. He ate but little food and that once in three days. As time went on, he ate less and less food.

In the fifth month of penance he ate nothing at all. He fixed all his thoughts on God. Nothing could he hear or see or smell or taste or touch. So fully lost in God was he.

He stood on one leg and did the *tapas*. It affected all things in the three worlds. The earth began to reel; creatures could not breathe; while the angels could lift neither hand nor foot. The angels could not endure this state of things. They went together to the Lord of the world.

They said to Him, "We are in a fix, O God, and know not what to do. Dhruva performs penance and the world cannot go on. Extend thy grace to us and end all our troubles."

Then God said unto them: Don't give way to vain fears. I shall shortly turn Dhruva from his *tapas*. All your troubles will come to an end." The angels then took leave of God and went their way.

7. THE LORD SHOWS HIMSELF TO DHRUVA

It was the sixth month of penance. Dhruva was blind to things of the outside world. His eyes were closed, for within his heart he even saw God. Dhruva's bliss was perfect.

One morning it was not so. God suddenly vanished from his heart. Dhruva opened his eyes to see what was the matter. Lo! he saw the same God in front of him. In His mercy, He, seated on his holy kite, had come to bless Dhruva.



Lo ! he saw the same God in front of him.

Dhruva fell down and began to worship him. He rose up and drank in the beauty of the Lord with his eyes. Blessed tears rolled down his cheeks like pearl drops. He wished to pray, but did not know how to do so. He could not find words with which to say his prayers.

God helped the child to over-come its misery. He touched its cheeks with His *Sanka*. Divine words flew to its lips. The child of tender years could pray now.

The prayer itself ran as follows :—
I was dumb, O! Lord. Thou gavest me the power of speech. Thou art indeed the ruler of the world. Thou gavest Brahma the power to create the world. Thy creatures look at the world and forget Thee. And so it was with me. When I came here, I wanted the rank of a king. Now I do not

want it. I want Thee and Thee alone. Grant, O God, that I never forget Thee, night or day. Grant me the company of those that love Thee. Then may I be sure not to ever lose Thy grace."

In answer, God said, "My dear child, in thee am I well pleased. I know what you desire, and I will grant it. I will give you a place, never reached by others. You shall in time be the best of all the stars and round you shall move the *Devas* and even the seven *Rishies*. Meanwhile, go home and stay with your father. In a short time he will crown you king and retire to the forest. Make the hearts of your subjects glad, ruling over them long and well. Rule over twenty-six thousand years and come back unto me. Then you will abide with me for ever."

There was no resisting the will of God. Dhruva fell down again at the feet of the Lord. God blessed him and vanished. Dhruva prepared to obey the Lord's commands.

8. DHURVA'S RETURN HOME

One day the king was sitting in his hall. A man entered. He brought news of Dhruva nearing the city. The king was right glad to hear it. In the pride of his heart, he presented the man with a fine pearl necklace.

Then he prepared to receive the prince. By this time the people also had heard the news. They now came to know the king's wish, and lost no time in adorning the city.

The king then ordered a procession to start. It was altogether the finest thing man ever saw. It started from



He took his son in his arms and pressed him to his bosom.

the palace to the sound of music. People of all classes were on it. There were brahmins, ministers, and members of the king's house-hold. There followed the two queens, riding with Uttama in a gay palanquin. At the head of the procession, rode the king himself in his chariot, the first in all the land.

The procession at last reached the city gates. From his chariot the king saw Dhruva coming. He got down from his chariot and ran up to his son. He took the son in his arms and pressed him to his bosom. He kissed him on the forehead and bathed him in tears. All this while, the king could hardly speak a word.

It was some time before the king released Dhruva from his embrace. Then alone was Dhruva free. He fell at his father's feet and saluted his

mothers. Suruchi could find it in her heart to bless him now. Suneethi was simply overjoyed to see her son. Uttama for very love shed tears. All was joy in the royal house-hold.

The people, who thronged the streets cried cheers. Sages praised Dhruva for his devotion. Common people talked of his beauty. Women in the streets blessed and praised Suneethi. They felt it a merit to be the mother of such a son.

The king then had gaily-dressed elephant brought and mounted on it, with his two children. Thus rode he back to the palace through lines of well-dressed subjects along gaily decked streets. It was a happy day for the royal family.

9. AT WAR WITH KUBERA

In time Uttanapada grew tired of kingly state. He made Dhruva king and retired to the forest. One day Uttama went to the forest to hunt. There he was killed by a *Yaksha*, a man of Kubera's land. Dhruva heard this and vowed vengeance.

Dhruva ordered his car to be got ready. He got into it and soon reached Kubera's land. He put his *Sanka* to his mouth and blew a very loud blast. The *Yakshas* knew what that meant.

Whole armies of *Yakshas* marched against Dhruva. They could not prevail against him. His arrows sped through the air and killed all of them. Other armies were then sent against him. They too met with the same fate. Terrible was the havoc wrought by Dhruva's arrows that day.

Sage Manu saw all this from afar. He could not bear to see the *Yaksha* race in this plight. He came before Dhruva and said to him, 'My dear child, put away anger, which only leads to hell. On account of the misdeed of one you try to kill a whole race. This kind of thing is not worthy of our family. Nor is it worthy of you, who sought after God at the age of five. Further, by this action you may invite the anger of the Great. Shame on you that you forget that Kubera is as a brother to God Sankara. I fear that your folly may end in the ruin of our own race. Before anything ill betides it, make peace with Kubera.'

Thereon Dhruva fell at Manu's feet and promised to make amends. The sage then blessed Dhruva and left the scene. And so Dhruva stopped

the carnage.

Kubera came to know this through his messengers. This was indeed news to him. He thanked Manu from the bottom of his heart. Then came he to Dhruva to extend the hand of friendship.

He said to Dhruva, "I am so happy that you have put away hate. You did so at the command of sage Manu. I know he told you the truth. Neither party to the war is to blame. The war was verily the work of God. So I am not angry with you. Ask what boon you like and it shall be granted."

Dhruva chose wisely. He asked for the enduring love of Hari by way of a boon. Kubera readily granted it and vanished. Dhruva then made all haste to return to his city.

10. DHRUVA AS KING

Dhruva, as you may be sure, made a very good king. Well and wisely did he rule over his subjects. Joy and peace then reigned in the land. All classes of his subjects were happy. The king himself was as a father unto his people. Long was the reign itself, lasting for twenty six thousand years.

As time went on, Dhruva became more and more pious. Many were the *Yagnas* he did. Many also were the gifts he gave unto the poor.

These brought him new knowledge. He began to see God in his creatures.

This feeling made him all at once a sage. He was wearied of rank and state. He wished to enter the depths of the forest for ever. So he had his son crowned king. Then he felt free to retire to the forest.

11. DHRUVA'S PLACE IN HEAVEN

One fine morning Dhruva started for the forest. On and on he went. His aim was to reach the holiest spot in the world. That is *Bhadrika Asrama*.

At last he reached the place. Full well he knew its nature as a holy place. He was anxious to pray there. Day after day he bathed in the waters and worshipped God. We may be sure that his whole heart and soul went out to God Narayana.

One day Dhruva saw a celestial car coming towards him. He saw in it two angels. They were the *Dasas* of Hari, and Dhruva knew it. He saluted them and sang praises unto the lord

Down came the car and out stepped the angels. They came to Dhruva

and introduced themselves. They said they were the *Dasas* of Hari. They had come to take Dhruva to heaven.

Dhruva began to prepare for the long journey. He bathed again and said his prayers. He walked round the rishies and took leave of them. He then came and stood before the car and worshipped it. Thereon the angels asked him to enter the car.

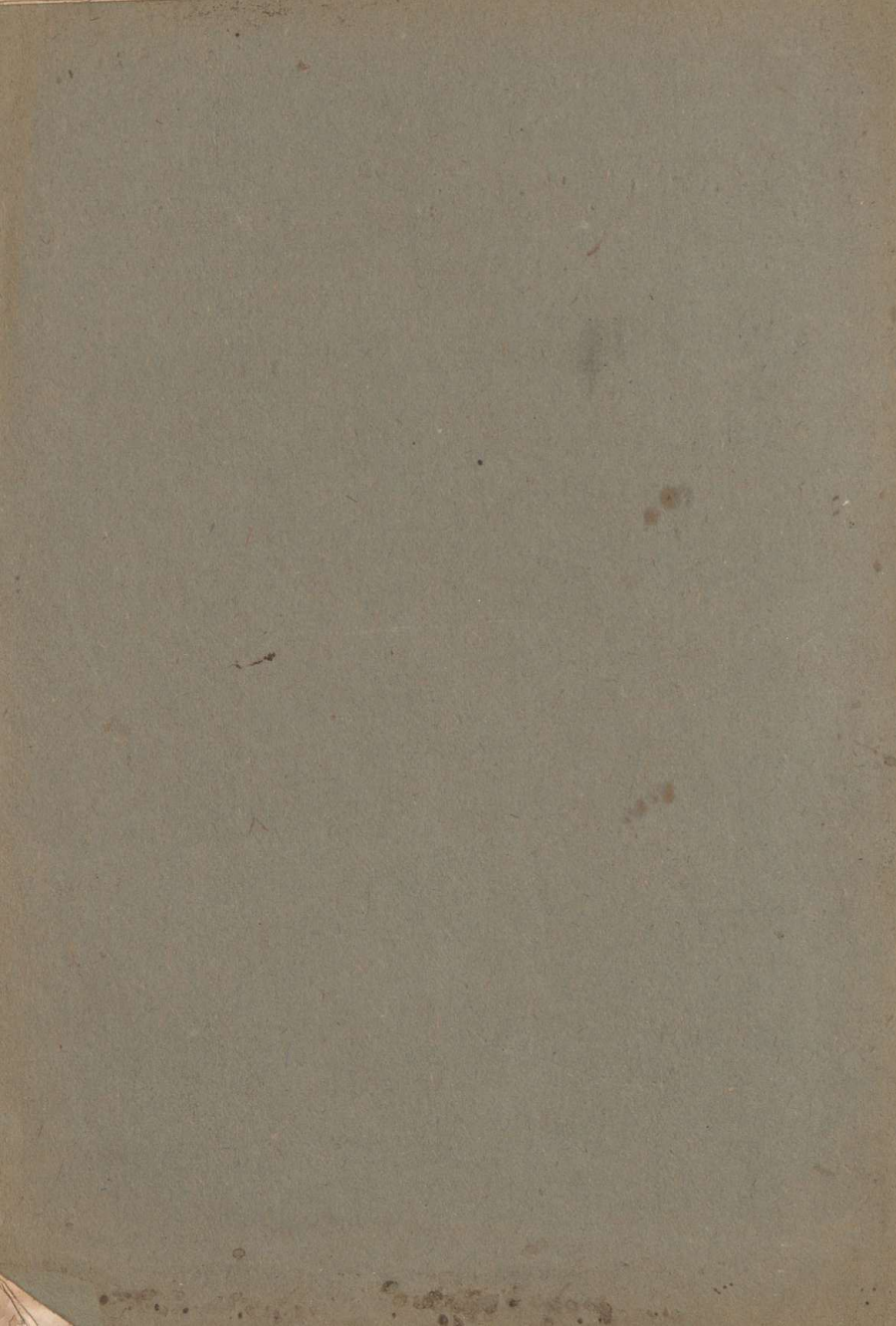
Soon the car rose high into the air. Dhruva was not happy. He thought of his mother. He was anxious for the soul of his mother. The angels knew his thoughts. They pointed out to him Suneethi winging her way along the path of the *Devas*. Dhruva's joy knew no bounds.

As for the car, it flew through space at lightning speed. All the way *Devas* rained celestial flowers. The car took Dhruva past the three worlds

and the seven rishies to his goal

There was he given the place promised,— a place no one else can reach. Dhruva became the pole-star, which guides the course of the world. And such he remains unto this very day.

THE END



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