

The Story of King Mahendra's Successor

In ancient times, King Mahendra was famous for his wisdom and righteousness. People in his kingdom were very happy because their great king ruled justly, and looked after the needs of his subjects.

The king had lived a wonderful life, but he had one regret. He had no children. The question about who would be the next king was very worrying to him. His ministers were becoming anxious too, because the king was advancing into old age with no prince or princess to follow him. And even his subjects were unsure about their future. To solve the question about the successor to the throne, King Mahendra decided to look for a person of good character. He invited everyone to come to his palace on a certain day, so that he could begin the search for the next King.

When the day came, people flocked to the palace.

Much to their surprise each person was given a seed.

Then the king made an announcement, "Plant the seed that you have been given. When all the plants are grown, the person who produces the best grown and most colourful flowers from that seed will be my successor and will be crowned King when I die. A person that can take care of plants and make them prosper can also make the kingdom prosper."

So, the people took the seeds and went back home.

Some weeks later, people started bringing flowerpots with some amazing results. There were happy plants all over the palace grounds with colourful flowers of great variety. Each pot bore the name of the grower in big bold letters on a tag that was attached to the plant. Except for one man. He had no flowers, no big bushy plant – just some soil in an otherwise empty pot. People stared at him. Some people pointed and laughed out loud.

Finally it was time for King Mahendra to judge who would be his successor.

There were loud cheers as the king arrived. Long live the king! Long live the king! .

The king walked around the garden, amongst the plants, to smell the delightful scents of the flowers and to enjoy their beautiful colours.

Then, the king rose from his throne to address the people.

There was a pin drop silence. People felt their heartbeats quicken.

The king was holding the empty flowerpot. "Before I announce my successor," the king said, "Who can tell me the meaning of this?" A man right at the back of the huge crowd raised his hand, made his way towards the King, and said:

"I am so sorry your highness. I tried everything I could think of, but I couldn't get the seed to grow."

The king stood up, put his hands on the man's shoulders and said, "This man is my successor. I was looking for a man with character and I have found him. I had all the seeds roasted before I gave them out. This fact was kept a secret. It was not possible for any of my seeds to germinate. The flowers on your plants are beautiful, but they did not grow from my seeds.

Each of you planted your own seed when the one that I gave you failed to grow. Everyone except this man, your future King.

All the ministers and judges, indeed all the people, knew that King Mahendra had chosen wisely. Their next king had proved himself an honest man.