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THE
SKANDA-PURĀṆA

Translated and Annotated by
Dr. G.V. TAGARE

PART XII

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

But he has neither the means nor the leisure to embark on that course. We have, therefore, planned to help him acquire knowledge by an easier course. We have started the series of Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium of expression. The publication of the Purāṇas in English Translation is a step towards that goal.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, w—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

| | |
|-------|---|
| AGP | S.M. Ali's <i>The Geography of Purānas</i> , PPH, New Delhi, 1973 |
| AIHT | <i>Ancient Indian Historical Tradition</i> , F.E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi |
| AITM | <i>Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology</i> Series, MLBD, Delhi |
| AP | <i>Agni Purāna</i> , Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957 |
| AV | <i>Atharva Veda</i> , Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh |
| BdP | <i>Brahmāṇḍa Purāna</i> , MLBD, Delhi, 1973 |
| BG | <i>Bhagavadgītā</i> |
| BhP | <i>Bhāgavata Purāna</i> , Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad |
| Br | <i>Brāhmaṇa</i> (preceded by name such as Śatapatha) |
| BsP | <i>Bhaviṣya Purāna</i> , Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai |
| BVP | <i>Brahma Vaivarta Purāna</i> , GM, 1955-57 |
| CC | <i>Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi</i> by Hemādri |
| CVS | <i>Carāṇa Vyūha Sūtra</i> by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa |
| DB | <i>Devī Bhāgavata</i> , GM, 1960-61 |
| De or | <i>The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval</i> |
| GDAMI | <i>India</i> , N.L. De/Dey, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971 |
| DhS | <i>Dharma Sūtra</i> (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama) |
| GP | <i>Garuḍa Purāna</i> , ed. R.S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964 |
| GS | <i>Gṛhya Sūtra</i> (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba) |
| HD | <i>History of Dharma Śāstra</i> , P.V. Kane, G.O.S. |
| JP | <i>Purāna</i> (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi |
| KA | <i>Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra</i> |
| KP | <i>Kūrma Purāna</i> , Venkateśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971 |
| LP | <i>Liṅga Purāna</i> , GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981 |
| Manu | <i>Manusmṛti</i> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Mbh | <i>Mahābhārata</i> , Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014 |
| MkP | <i>Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa</i> |
| MN | <i>Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī</i> , Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016 |
| MtP | <i>Matsya Purāṇa</i> , GM, 1954 |
| MW | M. Monier-Williams' <i>Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> , MLBD, Delhi, 1976 |
| NP | <i>Nāradaīya</i> or <i>Nārada Purāṇa</i> , Venkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay |
| PdP | <i>Padma Purāṇa</i> , GM, 1957-59 |
| PE | <i>Purāṇic Encyclopaedia</i> , V. Mani, English Version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975 |
| PR or | <i>Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs</i> , |
| PRHRC | R.C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948 |
| RV | <i>Ṛg Veda</i> , Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh |
| Śat Br | <i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i> |
| SC or SMC | <i>Smṛti Candrikā</i> by Devanna Bhaṭṭa |
| SkP | <i>Skanda Purāṇa</i> |
| SP | <i>Śiva Purāṇa</i> |
| VāP | <i>Vāyu Purāṇa</i> |
| VR | <i>Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa</i> |
| VdP | <i>Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa</i> |
| VmP | <i>Vāmana Purāṇa</i> |
| VP | <i>Viṣṇu Purāṇa</i> |
| VrP | <i>Varāha Purāṇa</i> |

SKANDA-PURĀṆA

BOOK V: ĀVANTYA-KHAṆḌA¹

SECTION I: AVANTĪKṢETRA-MĀHĀTMYA

CHAPTER ONE

The Greatness of Mahākālavana

Obeisance to Śrī Gaṇeśa. Obeisance to Śrī Jagadāmbā (Mother of the universe): Henceforth the greatness of the holy places of Avantī is being described as a part of Āvantya-Khaṇḍa.

Vyāsa said:

1. May that first Lord of all the worlds named Śrī Mahākāla be victorious. He wears the crescent moon. His manifest Liṅga is encircled by serpents. He holds a skull. Though Devas are creators of the subjects, they make obeisance to him due to their great fear of repeated births in the world. He, the Lord, has permeated the unmanifest cavity of the minds of those who are engaged in meditation with excellent concentration.

Umā said:

2. May all the Tīrthas on the earth and the meritorious holy rivers be carefully described, so that faith in them may be engendered.

Īśvara said:

3. There is the river Gaṅgā which flows through heaven, earth and lower regions and is known in all the worlds. It is being resorted to by Devas and Gandharvas. It is also served by sages.

1. The fifth Khaṇḍa of SkP called Āvantya-Khaṇḍa is divided into three sections:

V. i Avantī-kṣetra-Māhātmya

V. ii Eightyfour Liṅga Shrines at Avantī

V. iii Revā Khaṇḍa (The Greatness of Revā or Narmadā)..

4-8. Yamunā, the noble daughter of Tapana (Sun-god), sanctifies all the worlds. It is favourite with the Piṭṛs and it destroys great sins. [The other holy rivers are:] Candrabhāgā (Chinab), Vitastā (Jhelum) and Narmadā which is in Amarakaṇṭaka. There are these holy spots: Kurukṣetra, Gayā, Prabhāsa, Naimiṣa, Kedāra, Puṣkara, Kāyāvarohaṇa¹ and also highly sacred and splendid Mahākālavana, O goddess.

It is here that Śrī Mahākāla who is like fire unto the faggots of sins, is stationed. The holy spot extends over a Yojana (twelve Kms.). It is destructive of the sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter etc.

It accords worldly pleasures and salvation. It is a holy spot that destroys the sins of the Kali age, O goddess. It survives even Pralaya (the ultimate annihilation of the world). It is difficult of attainment even by Devas.

Umā said:

9-10. O Lord, let the efficacy of this holy place be narrated. O Maheśvara, I wish to hear about all the holy Tīrthas and Liṅgas that are to be found there. I am extremely eager to hear.

Mahādeva said:

11-16. Listen attentively, O goddess, to the sin-destroying power of the holy spot. O great goddess, it is the primordial holy place that destroys all sins. In its vicinity is the peak of Meru marked with jewels. It is the storehouse of many wondrous things and is full of trees. It is very excellent with diverse kinds of minerals. It has many Vedis (raised platforms) made of bright crystals. The blending of the colours and the beauteous forms is very excellent. It is noisy due to the various groups of sages. There are lions and lordly serpents therein. It abounds in groups of elephants. The sprays of the waters of mountain torrents and waterfalls make the spot profusely sprinkled. The flowers of the groves of trees are wafted by winds and they lie embedded there displaying diverse colours. The entire forest region is rendered fragrant with musk. It is the

1. Kāyāvarohaṇa: Modern Karvān in Baroda District of Gujarat. It is the birth place of Nakuliśa (2nd cent. C.E.), the 28th incarnation of Śiva. He is a historical founder of Pāṣupatism.

abode of Siddhas and Vidyādharas and it has many bowers of creepers serving as their rendezvous for amorous dalliance. The place reverberates with the sweet sound of Kinnara groups playing on their lutes (and musical instruments).

17. In that exquisitely charming forest is the mansion of Brahmā, the Parameṣṭhin. It is called Vairāja and all the landings and storeys thereof are highly splendid.

18-21. The celestial court of assembly that accords great delight to the Devas is also there. It is called Kāntimatī. It is resounded with the sweet notes of the songs of celestial damsels. It is rendered excellent through the garlands of the flower bunches of the groves of Pārijāta trees. The loud reports of many musical instruments echo and reecho there with pleasing tempos and time measures of the songs. Millions of pillars are erected there with bright mirrors heightening its splendour. Many things that capture the fancy of the onlookers abound there. The dances of celestial damsels with graceful, seductive footsteps increase its glory.

22. It is completely covered with the (settlements of) groups of seers (Ṛṣis) and is resorted to by hosts of sages (Munis). It is reverberated with the chanting of Vedic Mantras giving delight to all.

23-26a. The Brāhmaṇa-sage Sanatkumāra, a mind-born son of Brahmā, a master of eloquence, was seated there engaged in propitiating Śaṅkara. From among the sages Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, Sage Vyāsa, the son of Parāśara, urged by devotion to Bhava (Śiva) bowed down to him duly and stood there with palms joined in reverence. His face was beaming with pleasure and the hairs stood on end all over the body. With great pleasure, he asked the sage about the greatness of Mahākāla, that destroys the delusion of living beings.

Vyāsa said:

26b-29. Why is this sacred place that is the most excellent of all, called Mahākālavana? O holy Sir, may the power and greatness of the holy spot be narrated. How did it come to be known as Guhyavana (Secret Forest)? How does it have the status of a Pīṭha (a holy shrine associated with Mothers) (see v 30), though it is a saline arid (unproductive) land? What is the merit of those who stay here? What is the goal (hereafter)

of those who die here? What is the merit of the holy bath therein? What is the merit of the monetary gifts made there? How is this Śmaśāna (cremation ground) mentioned as a holy spot? This is asked by me out of my devotion to Śaṅkara. You are an expert in the scriptural texts; do tell me.

*Sanatkumāra said:*¹

30-34. This spot where sins are destroyed is called *Kṣetra* (holy spot of pilgrimage). Since this is the abode of the Mothers (Brāhmī etc.), it is called *Pīṭha*.

People who die (here) are not reborn. Hence it is called *Ūṣara* (arid land). This place is called *Guhya* because it is always a favourite resort of the noble-souled Śambhu. Since this is very much loved by Bhūtas (goblins) it is called *Śmaśāna*.

The following holy spots are called *Divyaśmaśāna*. (divine cremation ground): Mahākālavana, Avimuktaka, Ekāmra, Bhadrakāla, Karavīravana, Kolāgiri, Kāśī, Prayāga, Amareśvara, Bharatha, Kedāra and the divine great abode of Rudra. They are always dear to Rudra.

35-36. The holy Lord sports about in all these Siddhakṣetras always.

Naimiṣa is a great holy Tīrtha on the earth. The holy spot Puṣkara is very excellent. Kurukṣetra is praise-worthy in all the three worlds. The sacred Vārāṇasī is considered ten times more meritorious than Kurukṣetra.

37. O Vyāsa, the excellent Mahākālavana is ten times more efficacious (in giving merits) than it, as well as all holy places all over the earth such as Prabhāsa etc.

38-42. (Out of all holy places) Prabhāsa is the first and foremost holy spot of the Pināka-bearing Lord. Śrīśaila is an excellent Tīrtha. Devadāruvana is also like that. O Vyāsa, the sacred Vārāṇasī is considered more excellent (and meritorious) than that. Ten times more efficacious than that is Mahākālavana because it is the most excellent among all Tīrthas and also because it is a mystic Vana, Siddhakṣetra as well as

1. In vv 30-34, Sanatkumāra explains how the terms 'Kṣetra', 'Pīṭha', 'Ūṣara', 'Guhya', 'Vana', 'Śmaśāna' are applicable to Mahākālavana. The list of 'divya-śmaśānas' favourite with Śiva are also Śivakṣetras. The scale of efficaciousness of these holy places in vv 38-42 is to show the holiest character of Mahākālavana.

Ūṣara. Other holy spots are slightly Guhyas, Śmaśānas and Ūṣaras. But, O sage, Mahākālavana is very famous and reputed in all respects. Except in the case of Mahākālavana, all these five epithets—Śmaśāna, Ūṣara, Kṣetra, Pīṭha and Vana, are not applicable together to a single holy spot.

CHAPTER TWO

The Decapitation of Brahmā¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1-4. Formerly, when all mobile and immobile beings had perished and there remained only one vast expanse of ocean, there was neither fire nor the sun, neither the earth nor the sky or quarters. There were no stars, no luminary, no firmament, neither the moon nor the planets, neither Devas nor Asuras nor Gandharvas, neither Piśācas nor serpents nor Rākṣasas. There were no lakes, no mountains, no rivers and no seas. Everything was like utter darkness. Nothing was known. At that time, Mahākāla alone stood by for the purpose of blessing the worlds. The Lord stood there observing all the regions in the various quarters.

5. For the sake of creation, he stirred round, Kāma who was stationed on the index finger of his right hand, Kāma who was not much emaciated.

6. The embryo became a bubble and developed rapidly. It became an egg of gold, fully round and very strong, massive.

7. Struck by the hand, it became a great thing with two fragments. The lower fragment is known as the earth and the upper one the firmament studded with stars.

1. This is the SkP version of Brahmā's loss of his fifth head. Brahmā eulogized Śiva as being Brahman (vv 13-17). Śiva being pleased asked Brahmā to seek any boon. Brahmā requested him to be his son. Śiva plucked off the fifth head of Brahmā for his audacious request which too he granted and became his son named Nilalohita (vv 18-26, 28-29).

8. Then Brahmā, with five faces and four arms, manifested in the middle. Thereafter Maheśvara concedingly directed him:

9. "By my blessings, O mighty-armed one, start the creation of the universe of diverse kinds." After saying this, the Lord vanished somewhere. But Brahmā did not go.

10-11. Brahmā who was being urged to create, thought of the Lord. Being meditated upon by Brahmā for getting the requisite knowledge, Lord Bhava became delighted by the penance of Brahmā. He granted him (the knowledge of) the Vedas with all the six Āṅgas. Even after acquiring the Vedas, he was not competent to create for a long time.

12. To propitiate Bhava, he began his penance once more. When he did not visualize the Lord, he contemplated on the Lord and eulogized him with devotion.

Brahmā said:

13. Obeisance to Śīva whose mind is of Sāttvika quality, free from impurities; who is beyond the three Guṇas and whose radiance spreads around; who is the redeemer of the the Vedas with the six Āṅgas; who is my creator as well as that of the Vedas with six Āṅgas; who is the eye (of the world) and whose greatest form can be experienced.

14. Obeisance unto you, O Śīva, the bestower of the happiness of liberation. Obeisance to you who resort to the Rajas Guṇa for engaging in the activity of creation (of the world); who have resorted to the Sattva quality for the sustenance of the universe; who are the cause of destruction by means of Tamas and who are greater than the greatest.

15. Obeisance to Śīva who is beyond the Prakṛti of the entire living beings (or beyond all Elements); who is the form of the greatest Ātman; who is the cause of egotism and intellect in the minds of men; who is the Lord of all and who is identical with the twenty-six principles.

16. The universe is permeated by his *Tanus* (forms, bodies) in the form of earth, water, fire, firmament, air, the moon, the sun and the Ātman. I do obeisance to him. He is what is past, present and what is going to be (future).

17. I bow down to him in whose Ātman all these take their origin at the time of creation and all these luminaries that are

present here, all the worlds, all that has been and that will ever become and causes get merged at the time of annihilation.

Sanatkumāra said:

18. O Vyāsa, even as Brahmā was eulogizing thus, the greatest holy Lord said while remaining yet concealed, “O Brahmā, may a boon be requested for.”

19. He chose Bhava to be his mental son because that would give him some importance. After realizing his inner thoughts, the great Īśa, the Lord told him:

20-21. “O Four-faced One, since for some reason you wish to have me as your mental son, I shall cut off your head as what should not have been begged for was begged for by you. My own part Nīlahita Rudra will become your son and he will obscure your lustre.

22-23. One thing more, since I have been remembered by you with devotion of the nature of filial feeling and since the desire to know me in the form of the greatest Brahman has been evinced (by you), your name will be famous in the world as Brahmā; for the same reason you will have the status of being the grandfather. Therefore, you are (known as) Pitāmaha.”

24. After obtaining the curse as well as the boon thus, he (Brahmā) began the creation of sons. While he was performing the Homa in the fire arising from his own brilliance, perspiration began to flow.

25. He wiped off his forehead with the hand holding the *Samit* (sacrificial twig). A drop of blood mixed with the sweat fell down into the fire.

26. He became Nīlahita and Rudra at the behest of Bhava. The son thereafter rose up from his vicinity.

27. He had five faces and ten arms. He was equipped with a trident, a bow, a sword and a Śakti. The fifteen-eyed terrible Rudra had serpents for Yajñopavīta (sacred thread).

28-29. He had the (crescent) moon and matted hair. He wore the hide of a lion as his cloth. On seeing such a son born, Brahmā named him, “O Rudra, holder of the Pināka bow, be Nīlahita by name.” Thereafter the activity of creation of Brahmā, Pitāmaha, started.

30. At the outset he created seven mental sons, Sanaka and others. Then he created the patriarchs, Marīci, Dakṣa, Manu and others.

31. After creating the eight groups of Suras, the five forms of the brutish (non-human) creatures, he created many types of men. Thus he started the activity of creation.

32. The created beings, Suras and others set aside even Brahmā, bowed down and served only Nīlahohita.

33. Then Brahmā said to Rudra: "I have been made not worthy of adoration by you. You are worthy of being worshipped, due to your own brilliance. Hence go to Himālaya."

34. Nīlahohita said to him: "Indeed, I have not been worshipped by you." Thereafter, Rudra went to the place where Bhava was.

35-36. Thereupon Brahmā became deluded and puffed up with Rajas. He blazed with his brilliance thinking thus: 'The creative activity is mine. There is no other god equal to me by whom creation of Devas, Asuras, Gandharvas, beasts, birds and other creatures has been effected.'

37-39. Thus deluded, that Virañcya of five faces became arrogant. His face to the east had a melodious tone. It produced the Sāmaveda chanting. The second face (mouth) of his created the Ṛgveda. Another face had the Yajurveda. The fourth one held the Atharvaveda. He began to recite the ancillaries of Veda and their sub-parts, Itihāsa including the mystic secrets and holy collections and all the Vedas with the fifth face having another eye.

40. Like a lamp at sunrise all the Asuras, Suras etc. faded off, due to the brilliance of the face of that Lord of wonderful splendour.

41-42. Though they were his good sons, the Devas became extremely distressed and mentally lost. They were not able to approach the splendour, look at it for a long time or even get away from it. Unable to know for certain what it was, they thought themselves assailed, though they were not inimical to it. All of them took counsel with one another for their own welfare.

43-44. "We shall seek refuge in that Lord. We have lost our brilliance due to the lustre of Brahmā. But we do not know the place where he has established himself. That terrible

deity we shall see here through devotion and not through anything else." After consulting one another thus, those Devas kept their palms joined in reverence. With excessively rich melody in their tone, they eulogized Maheśa.

Devas said:

45-50. Obeisance to you, O Lord of the chiefs of Devas. Obeisance, obeisance, O Maheśvara. We are extremely deluded. We do not know your unparalleled and exalted greatness, whereby you, the eternal Lord of living beings, are the greatest Brahman. You are the firm basis of all living beings. You are the cause of the creation of everything. You hold the moon, the sun, and the fire stationed in your eyes. Merely by repeating your names all the creatures become rid of inauspiciousness. O Mahādeva, your forms characterized¹ by earth, water, fire, moon, sun, firmament and wind, have pervaded everything entirely. The entire universe is made to toss about and whirl by you, through the *Bhāvas* of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas. It does not understand you because you have assumed all the Mūrtis. At the time of the turning of the cycle of Yugas, you make the lords of Suras beginning with Brahmā enchanted and deluded unbearably.

Sanatkumāra said:

51-53. Due to the compassion for the Devas he granted them direct perception with a face indicating pleasure. He was bowed to by Devas. Accompanied by Devas, Maheśvara made them deluded and enchanted. On being eulogized thus by Devas, sages, Pitṛs and human beings, the Lord said (while) remaining hidden, "O Devas, speak out whatever you wish."

Devas said:

54-56. O Sthāṇu, we always request you for your direct perception. Out of sympathy a boon may also be granted. Whatever great vigour and vitality we had, whatever brilliance and prowess has been restrained and rendered ineffective by

1. Śiva is Aṣṭamūrti (eight-formed). But the list given here omits 'yaṣṭā', the sacrificing priest, and Śiva becomes 'seven-formed' here. Kālidāsa in the 1st verse (Nāndī) of *Śākuntala* mentions these forms.

the radiance of the fifth face of Brahmā, all that has perished. With your favour, O Lord, let it be restored to its original state. O Maheśvara be pleased to bring about such a situation.

Sanatkumāra said:

57. Coming into direct view thereafter, Śarva started and went to that place where was (Brahmā) the personified form of Rajas and egotism. Eulogizing the Lord of Devas and surrounding him, the Devas took their seats.

58. Though he was illuminating the universe with the brilliance of thousands of crores of suns, Brahmā did not come to know that Lord had come because he was enveloped with Tamas.

59-60. Then the Lord (Śiva), the soul of the universe, the creator and the conceiver of the universe, was seen there. He, Rudra, overpowered, with his brilliance, Pitāmaha who was seated in the midst of the assembly of the Devas. The elated Lord Rudra stood in front of him. The face of Brahmā assailed by Rudra's radiance, did not shine.

61-62. It did not shine like the moon at the time of sunrise though its rays are bright during the night. On seeing his son, the eternal Rudra Deva, standing proudly, he simply saluted only with (the gesture of his) hand and spoke the words smilingly. The Lord of uneven (three) eyes replied to Brahmā only in smiles.

63. Since Brahmā did not come to know the Lord as he was enveloped in his lustre, the Moon-crested Lord burst into boisterous laugh.

64. Even as all gods were watching and listening, he deluded God Brahmā with his boisterous laugh and spoke to him (while laughing).

65-66. The Lord who had the brilliance of the moon in its height of refulgence, who had the moon, the sun and fire for his eyes, plucked off the fifth head of Brahmā with the tip of the nail of the left thumb, like a man plucking the inner core of plantain with his fingers. Pitāmaha was not aware of his head that was being plucked.¹

1. This contradicts the statement in v 20 where Śiva is stated to have plucked Brahmā's fifth head for his arrogance or audacity to become Śiva's father unless we presume that v 20 was only a threat.

67-69. On being stupefied by the brilliance of Rudra he did not bow down. Afterwards, the head that had been cut off remained in the hand of Rudra, which he saw along with the Devas. It was dazzling and terrible. Brahmā looked at it with great fear. The head shone due to the nails of the hand of Maheśvara like another moon stationed in the middle of the group of planets. The Moon-crested Lord jumped and danced along with that skull.

70. He appeared like mountain Kailāsa with the sun on its peak. When the head was cut off, the Devas became delighted and puffed up. With different kinds of hymns and prayers they eulogized the bull-emblemmed, skull-handed Lord of Devas.

Devas said:

71-76. Obeisance always to the skull-handed Mahākāla holding Śaṅkha. Obeisance to the Lord possessing lordship, prosperity and knowledge; to the Lord according all enjoyments; to the Lord who destroys arrogance and who is identical with all the Devas.

You are the destroyer of Kāla. Hence you are Mahākāla. You subdue the miseries of the devotees. Hence you are liked (by all) as the destroyer of miseries. You are the benefactor of the devotees. Hence you are remembered as Śaṅkara. After cutting off the head of Brahmā, you are holding the skull. Hence you are eulogized as Kapālin. Be pleased with us.

On being eulogized thus Śaṅkara became delighted in his mind. The Lord, the storehouse of mercy, made the Devas get up. He then vanished there itself.

Victoriously shines that Rudra of extraordinary splendour and prowess after conquering Vedhas. He stands holding the white skull and wearing a garland near Rudra (Śiva). Shining with the rays of the crescent moon his matted hair that could be discerned through the waves of the celestial Gaṅgā drips with water.

CHAPTER THREE

Brahmā's Expiation

Sanatkumāra said:

1. When the head was cut off, Brahmā was overwhelmed with the darkness of anger. He brushed off the perspiration that had appeared on his forehead and struck it on the ground.

2. From that sweat-drop was born a hero with ear-rings, a bow and a huge quiver. The hero, having a thousand armours said, "What shall I do?"

3. Pointing out to Rudra, Virañci (Brahmā) said emphatically, "Let this wicked one be killed, so that he should not be born again."

4. On hearing the words of Brahmā, he became excessively angry. He raised the bow and with the arrow in his hand, he chased Maheśa.

5. On seeing the terrible being with divine arrows and bow in his hands, walking with rapid strides displaying his majesty, Bhava became surprised but went on ahead.

6-12. Īśa thought thus, 'This extremely powerful person should not be killed by me. He will become a friend of Viṣṇu. Hence he (Viṣṇu) who is engaged in penance should be favoured by me for the sake of friendship.' Thinking thus, Īśa went towards the hermitage of Viṣṇu.

O Brāhmaṇa (Vyāsa), after making the man fall and faint, with a sound of *HUM*, he went. He went delightedly to the place where the glorious, powerful Nārāyaṇa was present in his sporting activity in regard to the sustenance of the worlds.

The Lord, soul of the universe, the creator of the universe, reached there without being visible to living beings. Virūpākṣa saw Madhusūdana performing severe penance standing on the ground on a single big toe. He was unagitated. He was wonderfully enveloped in a splendour, as it were, of thousands of suns at the end of the Yuga.

He saw Nārāyaṇa, the excellent Purāṇapuruṣa possessing all the basic merits. Showing before him the skull that blazed like burning fire, Śiva said, "Give me alms."¹ On seeing Rudra with

1. VV 12-34: This is the version of the creation of Nara as per this Purāṇa.

the skull in his hand Viṣṇu thought:

13-14. 'Which other mendicant can be a fit person for the gift of alms now? He is suitable.' After thinking thus, he held out his right hand. The Moon-crested Lord, aware of his inner intention, pierced it with his trident. A stream of blood flowed from the hand of the Lord (Viṣṇu).

15-16. A stream like molten gold, free from impurities like a flame of fire, fell into the skull and was received by Śāmbhu. It was the rapidly flowing, straight Śiprā, like the ray of the sun in the sky, fifty Yojanas in length and ten Yojanas in width.

17-21. That flowed from the arm of Hari for a thousand divine years. Throughout the period, Īśa attentively received the alms gifted by Nārāyaṇa to a deserving person in an excellent vessel. Thereupon, Nārāyaṇa said to Hāra these words: "Your vessel is full." Then Hara, Parameśvara, after hearing the words of Hari resembling and resounding like the sound of water-bearing clouds, looked into the skull with all his three eyes. The Lord with the moon, sun and the fire for his eyes, the Lord shining with the crest-jewel of the moon covered the skull with his finger and spoke to Janārdana: "The skull is overflowing." On hearing these words, Hari stopped the flow of blood.

22-28. At the side of Hari, Īśa churned the blood with his finger for a period of one thousand divine years frequently letting his glance into it. On being rubbed and churned the blood turned into an embryo and gradually into a bubble. Thereafter, a being arose from the skull illuminating it. He had a crown, a bow, red eyes, a thousand arms and a quiver round his neck. He constantly twanged the bowstring. His shoulders were like those of a bull. There was a thimble-like protection for his fingers. The being resembled an Arjuna tree. On seeing him, Lord Viṣṇu said these words to Rudra: "O Lord, who is this Nara (man) who has appeared in the Kapāla (skull)?"

On hearing the utterance of Hari, Īśa said to him: "O Hari, listen. The being here is named Nara. He is the best among those who are masters of the greatest miraculous weapons. Since you already said Nara, he shall certainly become (known as) Nara. Both Nara and Nārāyaṇa will become well-known in

(this) Yuga for their valour in battle, for doing the work of Devas and their protection of the worlds.

29-34. This Nara shall be the friend of Nārāyaṇa. He shall be a friend unto you who are isolated now. He shall help you in battle. He is a great sage. His brilliance shall be conducive to the success of tests regarding austerities and Vijnāna (perfect knowledge). This fifth head of Brahmā had an abundance of brilliance of divine nature. He is brightened by the brilliance of Brahmā, the blood from your arm and my penetrating look into him. All these three aspects of brilliance (fiery splendour) have collectively produced him. Hence he will cause agitation to his enemies. He will become a terror unto those who cannot be (ordinarily) killed, others who cannot be conquered by you or Śakra, and unto all Rākṣasas.” When Śambhu said thus, Hari became surprised at his brilliance. Then he (Nara) eulogized Hara and Keśava:

35-40. “Obeisance to you, O Hara, O Hari, obeisance; O Śaṅkara, obeisance to Viṣṇu. Obeisance to you, to the trident-armed one. Obeisance to you, to the sword-handed one. Obeisance, obeisance to you, to the *Medhya* (the pure one to whom sacrifice has to be performed). O Hṛṣīkeśa, obeisance to you. Obeisance to the Lord of speech. Obeisance, obeisance to Śrīdhara.”

Even as he eulogized devoutly thus, the Lord lifted up Nara who joined his palms in reverence. Catching hold of both the hands engaged in veneration, he lifted him up from the Kapāla and spoke again:

“Waken quickly the terrible Rudrapuruṣa who was born of the sweat of Brahmā and who has fainted and fallen into the slumber of delusion due to my *Huṁkāra*.”

After saying this, Hara vanished.

Within the direct view of Nārāyaṇa, he quickly wakened him by kicking him with his left leg. Nara¹ got up angrily. A big fight ensued between the sweat-born and the blood-born beings.

41-44. The entire earth reverberated with the twanging sounds of the vibrating bows. The sweat-born one had a single armour. The blood-born one had only his arms (to protect

1. This Nara is born of Brahmā's sweat. VV 41-44 describe the fight between (Brahmā's) sweat-born Nara and (Nārāyaṇa's) blood-born Nara.

himself). Thus, on an equal footing, a divine battle between them raged on the earth. O sage, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, nine hundred and ninetyseven years elapsed even as the sweat-born and the blood-born beings fought with each other. On seeing the sweat-born one with a single armour, the two-armed blood-born one pierced the other Nara of Brahmā with the velocity of an arrow. Thereupon Madhusūdana became agitated. He spoke to Brahmā:

45. "O Brahmā, my Nara has come upper-most. Yours has been made to fall." On hearing it the agitated Brahmā spoke to Madhusūdana:

46. "O Hari, even if mine (i.e. Nara) is deficient, (he will make up) in another birth." Hari who was pleased thereby said, "It will be like this."

47-49. After making them fight, he restrained them and spoke to them: "If in another birth my Nara is reborn in Kali age and a great battle ensues, I shall engage him therein." Then Maheśvara and Sureśvara were called by Viṣṇu. He spoke to them thus: "These two Rudras should be protected in accordance with your capacity. This sweat-born one and the blood-born one, these two are our own parts. At the end of Dvāpara, they, being our own parts, should be assigned duties by you on the earth."

50. Then Sureśa said to Viṣṇu the following words of sorrow:

51-52a. "In this Manvantara, when it was Tretāyuga a powerful warrior named Vāli was made to fall down for the sake of Sugrīva. He was made to fall by your own great form (incarnation) who wished for the welfare of the son of Sun. I am agitated due to that sorrow. I am not taking (accepting) your Nara."

52b-53. Viṣṇu said to the Lord of Devas who was not prepared to accept (Nara) and who mentioned other reasons for the same: "O Maghavan, O Lord, I will have my incarnation in the mortal world for the purpose of reducing the burden of the world."

54. Thereupon Śakra became pleased with the words of Viṣṇu. He accepted Nara delightedly and Hari said, "May your words be true."

55. After saying this to Ravi(?) and Indra and having sent them off, Puṇḍarikākṣa (Lotus-eyed Viṣṇu) went to Brahmā's abode and spoke to Brahmā:

56-59. "O Brahmā, a despicable act was perpetrated by you by desiring to kill Īśa. Since the person connected with the Lord of the chiefs of Devas has been addressed by you in anger, you have incurred a sin. In order to expiate for this sin do perform a great expiatory rite, O Brahmā. Take up three fires and perform Agnihotra. Let one be the Gārhapatyā fire, the second Āhavanīyā and the third Dakṣiṇāgni. Consign them to three Kuṇḍas (holy pits). In the circular Kuṇḍa propitiate yourself. Propitiate me in the Kuṇḍa that is bow-shaped. Propitiate Lord Hara in the square one by the names of Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman.

60-62. After performing the Homa in the fires you must adore Hara alone immediately. By performing this Homa in the fire for a thousand divine years you will attain Siddhi (fulfilment). Having purified yourself by means of expiation, you resort to Maheśvara. When you thereby become free from sins, all your grief will disappear."

Having said thus the noble-souled Hari of fierce brilliance, went to his own abode. Brahmā too directed his mind towards penance and performed everything as mentioned by Acyuta.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Origin of Vaiśvānara

Vyāsa said:

1-5. The archer named Nara was born in the skull. Why was he born now after the birth of Viśvakarman? How was he created by Lord Rudra wilfully? Or was he created by Viṣṇu or Lord Brahmā with a difference in idea? How and by whom from among Śaṅkara, Acyuta and Brahmā was he created? Brahmā is Hiraṇyagarbha who was born as four-faced. How did the wonderful fifth face appear even in him? How (why) did Lord Brahmā of deluded mind, who sent Nara to kill Hara, devote his mind to Rudra?

Sanatkumāra said:

6. Maheśvara and Hari, these two alone abide in *Sat* (i.e. Brahman). There is nothing, achieved or not achieved, which is not known to those two noble souls.

7. The fifth head of Brahmā itself became the mental son Agni of the same noble soul and it was held by him on the head.

8. He who is mentioned as Brahmā's Nara is Agni itself, his mental son. Mahādeva held it after keeping it within the fingers.

9-10. (*Defective text*) After observing the birth of the great Nara at the outset, the Kapāla was rubbed against with the finger. With an arrow he killed him which installed Rajas quality in Brahmā. Sattva quality became deluded by the Rajas quality, since the Lord is one who creates according to his will(?)

Vyāsa said:

11. How was that Agni born, that Agni which was held by Sarva (Śarva?—Śiva). O venerable seer respected by sages, explain this in detail.

Sanatkumāra said:

12. At the outset, he (Śiva?) created Avyakta (the unmanifest) etc. The Cosmic Egg was developed out of it. (Out of it) was born God Brahmā, the grandfather of the world, who was of golden complexion.

13. The Self-born Lord performed a great penance for a thousand divine years. While in penance he recited the Śruti text '*bhūrbhuvahḥ svaḥ*'.

14-17. In view of the contact with Śruti, Agni was born thereafter from his mind. When the Agni fell with face down, it began to burn the earth. Brahmā lifted it up with both the hands and placed it above the earth. Therefore fire is always conveyed to the altar with the right hand. At the outset he fell with the flame directed down. When it was held with flame directed upwards, it was placed supine and created by Brahmā. Then the gigantic blazing Fire burning upwards with flames and loud report, spoke to Brahmā of golden colour:

18. “Why, O Lord, was my consuming of the earth prevented by you? I have been overcome with great hunger. My food be given to me.”

19. On being told thus, Brahmā consigned his hairs into the Fire. The lean Fire ate up all the hairs of Brahmā.

20. He then spoke: “I am not satisfied. There is no peace and satiation to my body.” Brahmā consigned his skin. The Fire consumed the skin.

21. Then Fire spoke to him, “I have no satisfaction.” The Prajāpati (Patriarch i.e. Brahmā) then scraped up the flesh and consigned it into the Fire.

22. He said, “I am not satisfied. My body has no complete satisfaction.” Brahmā consigned his bones into the Fire. He was hungry and so ate them.

23. Thereupon, the body without the *Dhātus* (constituent elements like marrow, blood etc.) was placed at the disposal of the Fire. On seeing Brahmā without body he said to him:

24. “O Brahmā, I am not satisfied. There is no peace and satiation for my body.” With a *Humkāra* (bellowing sound of HUM) that Fire was split into two by the infuriated Brahmā.

25. The two crying Fires pleaded to Prajāpati for food. Again with *Humkāra*, Brahmā split each of them into two.

26. Three of them cried (secretly); one of them openly cried. That Fire was struck down with *Humkāra* by angry Brahmā, O Vyāsa.

27. When the Agni continued to cry, Brahmā was moved with pity. He said, “Consume the body along with its constituents, of those who are overcome with lust.”

28-30. Thus he (that Agni) became Kāla (death) unto the lust. That was the means of subsistence granted to him. On seeing the *Akāra* Agni (the first fire) perfectly quiet, the mental *Humkāra* Agni burnt within and said, “What is this?” Brahmā told him, “You too have sustenance as you please in the midst of the Devas or in the hermitages of the sages.” On being told thus by him, he expressed his liking for that means of sustenance.

31-32. Again he said: “I shall give this too further. Since this second Agni was born of *Humkāra*, your means of sustenance for quelling hunger shall be, at my behest, the *Humkāra*, whether it is uttered with pride or with indignity.”

33. Calling *Ikārāgnī* (third Fire), Brahmā spoke thus, “O Agni, this shall be thy means of sustenance, that you burn and consume what is eaten.”

34-36. Summoning *Ukārāgni*, Brahmā spoke: “O holy Sir, whatever there is on the earth meriting deep meditation, you shall resort to it. I shall also assign to you your place of rest and diet.” On being told thus, that Agni (appropriated) the mountains on the earth, because, O great sage Vyāsa, the Agni was told “on mountain in impassable area.” The same *Ukārāgni* is the *Vaḍavāmukha* fire (submarine) in the ocean.

37-40. That other Fire who was split was summoned by Brahmā, because he had the desire for an abode and told thus by Brahmā: “You are the eye of all the world. Hence you illuminate the consecrated speech of the twice-born. The divine meritorious speech destroys sins. The unpolished, unconsecrated (speech) destroys longevity. Hence the speech of the twice-born should be known as meritorious and luminous. Speech is the mother of the twice-born and it is well-established in the mouth. Unpolished speech is inauspicious because untrue words have been incorporated. It kills the utterer. Agni is the *Brāhmaṇa* making use of *Samśkrta* (Polished Speech).”

41-42. *Prajāpati* once again summoned *Akāra* Agni without eyes and uttered the Vedic speech. With closed eyes that Agni said to Brahmā, “I am the mouth (face) of the speech. Give unto me an abode that is the greatest and most excellent of all luminaries.”

43-44. Brahmā spoke to him, “Since you desire a luminous abode, the brilliant orb of the sun shall be your abode. Since the eye that looks at splendour becomes weak, one shall look at that which is bright without opening at all.”

45-48. Then *Pitāmaha* spoke to that split Agni *Ikāra* which was split up and which approached Brahmā looking at him with gentle glance: “O being of great *Sattva* (inherent strength, *Sattva* quality), since you have come here quickly with gentle look, I shall give you an abode charming to all living beings. You will become the moon of cool rays with excessively cool (quiescent) soul. With divinity you will excel all other luminaries. You will be gentle and extremely refulgent. Stationed above the trees, you will excel all other luminaries with your radiance.” After saying this he let him go, and summoned *Ukāra* Agni.

49-51. Saying "Come here," he held him and placed him on his head. Stationed there it became the upper and the fifth head. Thus the *Ukāra* Agni of this form and feature became well-established. Hence one should speak in regard to Agni and Sūrya (Sun) as the same. That (head) in the form of Bhavāgni spoke to the great Brahmā, "Grant unto me too charming abode like that of yours."

52-55. Brahmā said to him, "Oh fire! What abode appeals to you?" Agni replied to him, "Tell me the greatest abode." Then Brahmā said, "There is no (befitting) excellent abode. So it shall be like this. If you wish to stay here, if you will stay here always, move about in the world; be the cause of the maintenance of the world. With all your Sattva and prowess, stay here for the outcome (of everything). You are equipped with the splendour of great flame and you are splendid. If you were to attain the excellent power of excelling in brilliance all creatures, it cannot be the primordial Dharma because there is the deluded desire due to Māyā."

56. On being told thus by Brahmā, that Agni blazed into a thousand forms. He was permeated with infinite flames and resorted to by different Varṇas (colours) etc.

57. It was in the forms of *Akāra*, *Ikāra* and *Ukāra*. Brahmā looked at him (consolingly). But it did not subside. The fire increased once again.

58-60. Everything was enveloped along, below and sideways by Bhavāgni. Brahmā found himself cast above and all-round with the flames. He became afraid and blue with extreme anxiety. Desirous of knowing the Lord of all, the storehouse of brilliance, Prajāpati kept the palms joined in reverence on the head and eulogized him with the mystic words of Niruktas and Sūktas and Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman.

Brahmā said:

61. I make obeisance to you, O seven-splendoured one. Obeisance to the great Ātman, the greatest of the great. Obeisance to the source of wonders, to the storehouse of brilliance.

62. You are the seed of all living beings. You enchant and fascinate. At the time of Yugāvarta you become unbearable darkness(?)

63. Obeisance to you of the upper head; you are of the nature of Sattva; you are the soul of the earth; you are water created through the blazing flames, O lord of *Jalajas* (lotuses, creatures of aquatic origin), O *Jalecara* (one who moves about in the water—submarine fire) (?).

64. O Hutāśana (fire), the lord of the waters, O lord having the eyes blossoming like the petals and leaves of lotus, O Kṛṣṇakānti ('one having dark splendour'), O Kṛṣṇamārga (of dark path), O bestower of the path unto heaven.

65. Obeisance, obeisance, O lord in the form of Yajñas, O lord who consign Āhuti in the course of Yajñas. O Svarṇagarbha ('one with golden womb'), O Śamīgarbha ('one originating from the Śamī fuel'), O eternal lord, be victorious.

66. Obeisance to you, O Citrabhānti, O lord of Devas with darkness as diet, O Mahāhāra (consumer of a great lot), O Svāhāpriya (beloved of Svāhā), O dispeller of darkness, O lord with kindled splendour.

67. Obeisance, obeisance, O fierce Vaiśvānara fire, O Ūrdhwapāvaka ('fire whose flames blaze upwards'), O Sarvaga ('omnipresent one'), O Vibhāvasu ('with splendour as his wealth'). O highly fortunate Kṛṣṇavartman ('of dark path').

Sanatkumāra said:

68. Then on being eulogized thus, Agni spoke to Virañci, "O Brahmā, I am pleased with you. Let good intention and activity flourish."

69. On being told thus, Brahmā bowed down and spoke again, "O lord, I wish to know what and who you are."

70-73. He then spoke to Brahmā, "You are the patriarch but only an individual being. The greatest form cannot be comprehended. Therefore, see my (form) through a befitting (vision)." Thereupon, he saw with the divine (vision) the eternal Lord, the omniscient Īśvara, the creator of even Vidhi (Brahmā), the being beyond the existent and the non-existent, since the Lord creates everything: fire, firmament, earth, the visible and the invisible, the greatest region, the entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings, the past, the present and the future; he enjoys (consumes) everything. Then Prajāpati eulogized the ancient, unborn, immutable Lord referred to

by means of a hymn as excellent and transcending all power.

74-80. Then the Lord, Prajāpati, saw the supreme being of excessively red colour, having (innumerable) hands and feet all around and many fiery heads and mouths around. Bowing down the head to the Lord, the maker of the manifest and the unmanifest, he eulogized thus: "I make obeisance to you, the Ātman, the source of origin of the universe and the observer thereof. You watch and observe by means of your (divine) eye whatever there is in the universe, whether mobile or immobile—earth, wind, sky, the three worlds, the lord of Lokāloka, the universe, mobile or immobile, all the types of creation such as *Tattvasarga* (creation of the Tattvas or entities), *Bhāvasarga* (creation of the subjective feelings, emotions etc.) and *Bhūtasarga* (creation of the living beings) etc. You observe the self too of the splendour of Brahman."

Thus that majestic Lord without beginning was eulogized.

Thereupon the Lord said to Brahmā: "Everything has been seen factually by you. You have become equipped with humility and basic experience. Do create all the subjects. In the matter of the maintenance of all the worlds I am the maker and you the imitator. Make it. It should be in the same model as has been created by me before."

81-82. On being told thus by the Lord of the Devas, Brahmā spoke these words: "I make obeisance to you, O Mahādeva, Bhava; obeisance to you, O Śarva. I wish to get an assistant while creating the subjects with your favour. O Lord of the universe, let him be given by you."

Maheśvara said:

83-84. If you desire that I should be born, if you are desirous of a son and if you wish to create, your intention will be realized when you meditate. I, the Lord, will attain the state of your son and will cut off your fifth head. There I shall create both Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

Brahmā said:

85. How is that Lord Nārāyaṇa to be thought of by us? Do proclaim. He, our blessed friend, shall be worthy of our adoration.

86-91. Thereafter Brahmā saw Acyuta, Hari, the auspicious Lord Nārāyaṇa pervading everything approachable by means of his radiance. He saw Lord Nārāyaṇa who was the very splendour of Maheśvara moving up. The Lord touched, with his finger, the distressed Brahmā who had the form of Śrī because of the similarity of Śakti and said the following words: “O Brahmā, the sage, the follower of Nārāyaṇa who is your own refulgence, shall be born for the sake of protecting the worlds. He will be the most excellent one of all archers. This highly powerful Śakti of Nārāyaṇa belongs to me.”

After saying this, the majestic Lord seized that fire with his hand. He pressed and consecrated the fire held between the nails of the fingers of the right hand. After honouring him thus and after showing Nara to Brahmā, Lord Maheśvara vanished there itself.

92. Thereafter at the end of the Yuga, Brahmā said to that Agni touching him with both the right and left (hands) as though consoling him:

93-94. “Here itself in the family of mine and yours, Bṛḡu and Aṅgiras of renowned activities will undoubtedly be born as the sons. Therefore, Yajña of creation will take place after dividing the Agni into two. You two stay there depending on Dāna (gifts).”

95. The Agnis brought together by Brahmā urged (nudged?) Brahmā. Hence they should be prepared thus duly by means of attrition.

96. That is why the combination of Bṛḡu and Aṅgiras is cited (as existing) in Aśvattha and within Śamī tree. These two together are called *Daiva* (divine).

97. Hence the fourth (Agni) is spoken of as beneficial to the son (? conducive to the birth of a son). Thus, O Vyāsa, this Nara was born in the previous life.

98-100. Thus the fifth head of Brahmā became transformed. He who will understand this excellent *Tejaḥ-sarga* (creation of fire) by the Lord goes to the same world as Brahmā. He is quiescent and he has full-control over the sense-organs. He has conquered the sense-organs.

O Vyāsa, that man of good mentality who faithfully listens always to the origin of Agni, that indicates the greatness of Paśupati, and he who devoutly expounds it to Brāhmaṇas and

gods shall become blessed by Bhava. He will be adored by the gods in Śivapura.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Arrival of the Lord

Vyāsa said:

1-2. When the fight between the blood-born one and the sweat-born one was prevented formerly, what expiation for his activities was performed by Brahmā? O sage, what was done by Janārdana and by Śaṅkara? Narrate all this. O eloquent one, do me this favour.

Sanatkumāra said:

3. Performing Homas with leaves and fruits of the medicinal herbs of forest and also with excellent Kuśas and Samits, Brahmā continued his *Agnihotra* as formerly instructed by Hari.

4. Sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa reached Badaryāśrama and performed fierce penance for the welfare of all embodied beings.

5. The Lord of Devas with the skull in his hand wandered all over the earth and reached Kuśasthalī (Ujjayinī). He entered that excellent forest.¹

6. It was covered all over with different kinds of trees and creepers. It was rendered splendid by many kinds of flowers. It was reverberating with sounds of all kinds of birds and was crowded with different kinds of beasts.

7. It was rendered fragrant with the sweet scent of the bunches of flowers on the trees as if intelligently placed (by someone); it was excellently embellished with fruits and flowers.

8. The juice exuding from ripe and unripe fruits was of different kinds with diverse kinds of flavour. The fruits were charming all-round with rich golden colours.

1. VV 5-36: a beautiful description of Mahākālavana or Kuśasthalī. It was selected for his permanent stay by Rudra.

9. The dry and withered leaves and grasses and other things, the dry twigs and fruits were swept away by the winds. It was a blessing.

10. Wafting the sweet scent of the clusters of flowers of various kinds, the cool wind blew over the region where he entered.

11. The forest was adorned with innumerable trees having their tops covered with glossy green leaves without perforations (holes) in the middle. The trees too did not have too many hollows and cavities (in the stems).

12. With these trees there was that appearance of fulfilment of the families of Brāhmaṇas of excellent conduct and handsome features to look, with the absence of sick ones but haughty and puffed up in some places.

13. The trees covered with splendid shoots scattered by the wind, were like men of noble birth with good qualities, free from frailties and foibles.

14. The trees appeared to touch one another with their tops shaken by the wind. The tops and branches appeared to be the ornaments of one another standing nearby and touching one another through the movement of the wind.

15. In certain places, the Nāga trees with the white flowers having bees hidden in their filaments shone as though they had white eyes with dark pupils.

16. In some places, Karṇikāra trees in pairs with their tops laden with flowers, shone like excellent couples at the time of marriage.

17. With rich display of excellent flowers rows of Sinduvāra appear like adored sylvan deities in personified forms.

18. In different directions, in various places, the creepers of Kunda (a variety of jasmine) brightly adorned with beautiful flowers, shine like the rising crescent moon.

19. The shining Yūthikā creepers in full bloom endowed with splendour excelling that of coral, seem to rise up fanning the flower-laden branches.

20. In some places Arjuna trees in full bloom shine like excellent men in the forest regions, full-dressed (covered) with white silk clothes.

21. The trees with blossoms entangled with the creepers, shine like excellent lovers in close embrace with women.

22. With the bunches of flowers offered by the wind, mangoes and Tilakas make presents to one another like good men with their hands.

23. Tilaka and Aśoka getting entwined with one another with the shoots, appear like friends in close mental communication, touching each another's hands.

24. Trees bending down with fruits and flowers seem to offer one another excellent flowers and fruits like good people in a delicate manner.

25. Gladdened by the embrace of the wind and drenched by the waters of the paddy plants, the trees appear to be standing like noble men gathering together in exchanging friendly gifts.

26. The flowers are wafted quickly displaying as it were, their splendour, like men unable to brook the warlike preparation of those of equal status.

27. Birds in their inebriation endowed with splendid crests dance (like trees) with their tremulous tops bending down with the weight of splendid flowers.

28. Bees resorting to Amṛtavallī creepers tossed about by the wind dance, along with those creepers like men with their beloved ones.

29. In some places trees surrounded by Kunda creepers in full bloom, shine like the sky in autumn with diverse kinds of groups of stars.

30. The Mādhavī creepers on the tops of the trees shine like peaks embellished intelligently.

31. The green trees in full bloom and laden with fruits have the splendour of gold. They appear like men who display their friendship in a gathering of good people.

32. The flowers have plenty of filaments. The inner part is full of filaments. The bees are inebriated due to the filaments. They appear bright like Śārikās (Mainas).

33. Parrots resembling Śirīṣa flowers utter wonderful words in certain places (sitting) in pairs like adored Brāhmaṇas.

34. Peacocks of tails and feathers of diverse colours are accompanied by their mates. They remain in the middle of the forest, as though in isolated places.

35. Flocks of birds warble and chirp producing wonderful notes. They make the already beautiful forest still more beautiful.

36. That forest was on a par with Nandana (Heavenly garden) enhancing (the delight of) mind and eyes. It was infested with many groups of beasts. The birds flew up continuously.

37. The Lord with the skull in his hand looked at that excellent forest comparable to Nandanavana with a gentle glance.

38. On seeing that Rudra had come there, all those rows of trees devoutly offered their wealth in the form of flowers to Śāmbhu (by way of) releasing their flowers.

39. Accepting the gift of the flowers of the trees, Maheśvara said to the trees, "Choose your boons. Welfare unto you."

40. When this was spoken by the Lord, the trees with palms joined in reverence and after bowing down to Maheśvara, spoke unrestrainedly:

41-43. "O Lord of Devas who are pleased, O favourite one of the people, if you (wish to) grant a boon, be present forever in this forest. This is our greatest desire. O Lord of Devas, we offer obeisance to you.

If you wish, O Lord of Devas, O creator of the universe, reside in this forest. Having resorted to you in every respect, we beg for this excellent boon. Of what avail are millions of (other) boons? Let this boon be granted to us."

44. On being spoken thus by all the trees, the Lord, beloved of those who seek refuge in him, granted the boon to the trees. Listen to it as I repeat it.

Maheśvara said:

45-48. Really I shall mentally stay here in this excellent forest. I shall grant further boons to you. My vision cannot be in vain.

Neither fire, nor wind, neither water nor the rays nor sunshine of the sun, nor lightning nor thunderbolt will cause pain to you.

You will be forever endowed with excellent flowers. You will be ever in the prime of youth. You can go anywhere as you please; you can have any form you like. You will be yielding fruits as you wish.

You will be viewed by men as they pleased with blazing eyes of penance during the twilight. You will be blessed with great glory with my favour.

49-50. Thus Śambhu, the bestower of boons, blessed the trees. After standing there for a thousand years he threw the skull on the ground. As it fell down on the ground the nether world quaked. The waves in the oceans became agitated and helplessly they overflowed the shores.

51. Thousands of peaks of mountains abounding in tigers and pythons became shattered as though struck down by the thunderbolt of Indra.

52. The aerial chariots of Devas and Siddhas, the cities of Gandharvas began to fall down and ultimately perished on the ground.

53. The doves and the sheep began to gather in close groups once again. The luminaries and planets took cover and went beyond the sun (some astronomical allusion in this verse).

54. Its loud report made everyone in the three worlds insentient, blind and deaf. The three worlds including the mobile and immobile beings became agitated.

55. The bodies and minds of all the Suras and Asuras became dispirited and trembled. They began to wonder, 'What is this?'

56. All of them beginning with Indra summoned up courage to go to the world of Brahmā. They spoke to Brahmā thus:

57-60. "O Lord, what is the cause of this display of the evil portents whereby the three worlds tremble on being afflicted by Kāla and Karman? The end of the Kalpa has come with the oceans breaking all bounds. Have the four elephants of the quarters, usually motionless, begun to move (i.e. become mobile)? Why has the earth been overflowed with the waters of the seven seas? O Lord, everything has ceased to be born without purpose and aim. The sound heard now is unique. No similar report was heard ever before. Thereby the entire three worlds have been afflicted by the terrible being."

61. On being told thus, Brahmā was made to understand by the great Lord. He became one endowed with special knowledge and came to know that Rudra had approached. He said:

62. "Listen to the reason (for the chaos) in regard to what has been asked by you, O gods. Surely the reason should be known by those who believe in (the miracles).

63. After plucking (my) fifth head from my body, the Lord with (that) skull in his hand went to the hermitage of Lord Viṣṇu.

64. He took up the vessel and requested Lord Nārāyaṇa for alms. Then there arose the archer sage named Nara.

65. Then the Lord went to the excellent forest in Kuśasthalī. Through the line of trees he entered it and was duly honoured by the fragrance of the flowers.

66. After blessing the forest with birds hovering everywhere, the Lord desired to stay there for the purpose of blessing the whole world.

67. The skull that was in his hand was placed on the ground by the Lord. Therefore, the earth shook and all the three worlds became agitated.

68. Hence see Lord Virūpākṣa and seek refuge in him along with me. On being propitiated, the Lord will grant you boons.”

69. After saying thus, Lord Brahmā, accompanied by Devas and Dānavas, went to that forest region where the Bull-emblem Lord was present.

70-71. All of them were delighted in their minds. Desirous of meeting Śaṅkara they entered (the limits of) the forest where the flowers lay scattered and which reverberated with the chirping of cuckoos. That forest which was on a par with Nandana was approached by these. It shone all the more with the splendour of the bowers.

72. On seeing that excellent forest that delighted the minds of all embodied ones, that had been resorted to by groves of flowering trees with diverse kinds of fruits all round, the Suras rejoiced thinking thus, ‘We will see Hara here in the forest that abounds in peacocks, swans, cranes, frogs and fish.’

CHAPTER SIX

Getting Rid of the Skull

Sanatkumāra said:

1. After reaching that forest rendered splendid with all kinds of flowers, the Devas entered it, eager to see Śiva, saying, “Here, here is the Lord; the Lord is here.”

2-4a. Even at the end of that wonderful forest the Suras

searched for Mahādeva but did not see him. The Lord much sought after by the Devas, said to them, "Welfare unto you. You will not see Virūpākṣa; you cannot see Śaṅkara without penance." Brahmā remembered what was proper and spoke to the Devas:

4b-5. "There are always three ways of seeing the Lord. It is said, O Devas, that Yogins see the Lord both as Sakala and Niṣkala (with and without attributes) through faithful knowledge, penance and yogic practice.

6. Those who perform penance see the Lord as Sakala and those with (spiritual) knowledge see the Supreme as Niṣkala. A person lacking faith (Śraddhā) does not see even if *Vijñāna* (perfect knowledge) comes.

7. Yogīs endowed with great devotion see the Supreme Being. This *Pradhānapuruṣeśvara* ('Lord of *Pradhāna* and *Puruṣa*') should be seen as *Nirvikāra* (free from modifications).

8-14a. He cannot be seen by one who is not properly initiated. Hence, O Devas, adopt the Śaivī Dikṣā ('Initiation in Śaiva philosophy and rituals'). Be always in communion with Maheśvara physically, mentally and verbally.

Welfare unto you all. Perform penance and be engrossed in propitiating Rudra. Śarva knows the proper time. (He decides:) 'Opportunity for the vision should be offered by me to the devotees and sages who have taken Śivadikṣā.' "

They heard the words of Brahmā. What he said was beneficial to them. The Suras whose minds were filled with the desire to see Śiva spoke to Brahmā, "We are eager to take Śivadikṣā according to the injunctions and the proper procedure. O Brahmā, initiate us all into the Dikṣā that gives satisfaction to Śiva." After hearing these words, Brahmā replied in the manner he had thought of, with a desire to initiate the Devas quickly in Śivadikṣā: "O Suras, bring all the requisites in ample quantity for performing Śivayajña. Let the altar be constructed here. Śiva endowed with eight cosmic bodies should be worshipped here."

14b. On hearing the words of the Lotus-born Lord, the Suras did everything thereafter accordingly.

15-18. They wore the (prescribed) simple guise. They bowed down to him. (Becoming) sinless, they followed him for the sake of attaining Śiva's favour. The knowledge in the Jñāna-

pāda of Puṣkarāgama¹ is prescribed. Brahmā duly performed the sacrifice of the Crescent-crested Lord. Keeping the Dikṣā procedure in view and in order to bless them, he made the Devas do everything sincerely. Then the great Lord offered, without knowing any opposition, to the Devas the divine *Vrata*, the most excellent of all *Vratas*. This *Vrata* is called *Mahāpāsupatavrata* in the Śivaśākhā.

19-27. It is the vow practised according to the conventions of the scriptural texts of the sages of exquisite brilliance, those who are the chief ones among the worshippers of Śiva. It is said to be in accordance with what is propounded by Śiva.

Śambhu blesses everyone. This *Vrata* of Rudra,² granting equal auspiciousness to all, was intelligently requested for by all the Devas and duly practised by them. Abandoning Conceit, the Lord born of the golden egg (i.e. Brahmā) gave (advised) them (that *Vrata*). It is always proclaimed as auspicious. It fulfils desires. It has the name connected with the holy ash. It destroys sins. It suppresses miseries. It gives (spiritual) nourishment, and enhances glory and strength. It bestows Siddhi. It causes renown. It is attractive. It rids one of the sins of the Kali age. Hence those men who perform *Bhasmasnāna* (purificatory bath by the application of the holy ash) with concentration shall be *Dāntas* (of controlled sense-organs), initiated ones exercising restraints on the senses. All of them hold Kamaṇḍalus (waterpots of gourd). All of them wear Rudrākṣas. All of them are devoid of association with men indulging in seeing and discussing undesirable things. All of them adopted the *Vrata* thus in that forest and propitiated the Consort of Umā, Íšana, Maheśvara, by means of the *Vrata*. They were endowed with great devotion. They practised the great prescribed duties and regulations. In the course of a long period, they realized their desire through meditation alone. Their sins were completely burned by the fire of meditation on Rudra. They became glorious. Then Lord Śambhu, after killing the Asura, became visible (to them).

1. A famous Śiva Āgama Text. Jñānapāda discusses the Śaiva philosophy.

2. The verses that follow glorify Pāsupata *Vrata* but do not give all its details, as we find them in *Pāsupata Sūtra* (with the commentary of Kauṇḍinya).

Sanatkumāra said:

28. All the Devas were blessed by Śarva and they were prepared in regard to the boon accorded by Brahmā. Brahmā too was duly blessed by Īśāna.

29. When a thousand years according to divine reckoning elapsed, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas took pity on them. The illuminator of Devas appeared before them.

30-43. The Lord surrounded by his Gaṇas¹ became visible to them. They (Gaṇas) were of diverse types and were adorned with various kinds of ornaments. They were themselves proud but they destroyed those who were highly haughty and arrogant. They were terrible themselves and they destroyed other terrible fellows. They could assume any form they desired. They were free from desires. They had all their desires fulfilled. They had leonine bodies that could proudly tear up the temples of lordly elephants. They had all Yogic powers, the divine powers or *Aiśvaryas* called Aṇimā (minuteness or power of becoming minute) etc. Their hairs, tongues and fangs shook and produced gruff sounds. They had terrible faces like those of tigers and pythons. They resembled crows and herons. Some of them had no form. Some were similar to one another in form. Some had good comely forms. Some were multiformed. Some had one, some two, some three and some many heads. Some had no head. Some had one, two or three tufts. They shone in different forms. Some had many eyes. Some had no eye and someone, two or three eyes. Some had one, two or three ears; some many ears; some had no ear. Some had one, two or three excellent noses; some had many noses; some had no nose. Some had one, two or three shanks; some, many shanks. Some had no shank. Some had one, two or three feet; some many feet and some had no foot at all. Some were whitish dark and some darkish white. Some were black and some were of variegated colours. Serpents constituted their garlands and bracelets. Some had the sacred thread in the form of the serpents. They had various weapons like trident, sword, Paṭṭiśa (sharp-edged spear), Bhuśuṇḍī missiles, Parighas, discus, saws, bows, clubs and other weapons in their hands. Maces, ham-

1. VV 30-43 describe Śivagaṇas.

mers, boulders, iron clubs and other weapons were in their hands. They held Vajras (thunderbolts), Śaktis, Aśanis, javelins, spears and scissor-like weapons. They played on different kinds of musical instruments like Bhāmbhā, Bherī (drums), Vīṇā (lute), Paṇavas and Veṇus (flutes), Mṛdaṅgas, Vimalās(?), Dhakkās, Kāhalas, Ānakadundubhīs, Huḍaṅkās, Śṛṅgikās and others. Thus there were terrible Gaṇas of awful exploits. Mahādeva was surrounded by the invincible lords of Gaṇas like the sun by planets. O Vyāsa, even as Brahmā and other heaven-dwellers were watching Mahādeva appeared before them, encircled by his own Gaṇas.

44. Brahmā and other Devas saw the leader of the Gaṇas in front. Dazzled and assailed by his brilliance, they became confused in their minds.

45-46. They somehow summoned courage and looked at the Lord duly. In view of the association with the Vedas having the six Aṅgas, they were delighted in their minds and bodies. Joined palms of veneration were on their heads and the feet lay on the ground. (They lay prostrate before him.) They eulogized Īśvara, the cause of creation, sustenance and annihilation.

Devas said:

47. Obeisance to Śīva, the quiescent one, accompanied by the Gaṇas and Nandin. Obeisance to you, the gentle lord seated on a bull, holding the Śūla (trident) and Śakti.

48. Obeisance to the (quarter-clad i.e.) naked one; to the lord clad in hides; obeisance to the pure one, to one of intense splendour, to Brahman, to the body constituted of Brahman, to one employed by Brahman.

49. Obeisance to the slayer of Andhaka; obeisance, , obeisance to the great lord, to Rudra, the five-faced one, to the remover of all ailments.

50. Obeisance, obeisance to Giriśa, the Lord of Suras, to Īśāna; Obeisance to one of forms terrible, fierce etc.; obeisance, obeisance to the victorious one.

51. Obeisance to the Lord of Suras and Asuras. Obeisance to the Lord of Yatis (ascetics), to the terrible, to (dispenser of) terrible punishment, to the holder of great Khaṭvāṅga (club with a skull on the top).

52. Frequent obeisance to the auspicious Virūpākṣa (three-eyed), to universe-formed (omnipresent in the universe) one, to the quiescent, the charming one to the mind.

53. Obeisance to the Vedhas (creator), to the omniformed one, to the slayer of Daityas. Obeisance to the Lord taking much pity on devotees. Obeisance to the one favouring those having the knowledge of Rudra (*Rudra-jñāna-para?*).

54. Obeisance, obeisance to the deformed one, to the one of excellent forms, to the one having a hundred forms. Obeisance to the five-faced one, to the splendid-faced one; obeisance, obeisance to the moon-faced one.

55. Obeisance, obeisance to the bestower of boons, to the Lord identical with the Supreme Boar, with the excellent Tortoise.

56. O three-eyed one, 'O destroyer of the three Puras, may the means for our succour be provided. We have resorted to you, O Maheśvara, verbally, mentally, physically and emotionally.

Sanatkumāra said:

57-63. On being eulogized thus by Viriñci and other Devas, Hara closely observed the emaciated bodies of the heaven-dwellers by means of his inner consciousness having divine power and ability to pierce three fold (? *trivedhena*).

On seeing the mode of adoration and propitiation of Brahmā and others, the Lord of Devas said: "O blessed ones, well done, well done! The Vrata has been practised continually. I have been very well-propitiated with this divine method by all of you perfectly with a desire to see me.

Only those engaged in the Vrata see me whether (they be) mortals or gods. If at all I have to give, I shall grant you some splendid boons. To each severally or to two or three of you, or to all equally, I shall grant this boon, so that all desires can be fulfilled. It is for the welfare of all of you that I have come to Ujjayinī. The skull has been thrown down by me. What more (need to be done)? Welfare unto you all."

Devas said:

64-65. What benefit has been done to us by you by throwing down the skull? Why was the earth made to tremble? Why were

all the three worlds subjected to agitation? (If) this is not in vain, O Lord, let the reason thereof be mentioned.

Mahādeva said:

66-71. It is for the sake of your own welfare that this terror was inspired in you. It is for the protection of Devas. Let the reason hereof be heard.

A powerful Asura named Drohaṇa, expert in Yoga and Māyā, stayed having kept the nether world (Rasātala) under his hold. His followers, the other powerful Daityas, the conquerors of the cities of the enemies, knew that you all were engaged in penance. Hence many of them marched against you, desirous of killing you along with Indra. They moved about in disguise through their power of Māyā. With weapons raised up, they endeavoured to kill Suras and approached this city with golden peaks in the Kuśasthalī region.

Due to the hurling down of the Kapāla (skull) and the shaking of the earth a loud and fierce report arose and hence the vital airs went out from their bodies.

Their attempt was to upset the steady position of the worlds. They became arrogant due to their prowess and royal supremacy. Therefore, they were killed by me.

Devas said:

72-73. Thus the believers have been blessed. You are the Lord blessing Devas and you have been endowed with good qualities and power of memory. O terrible being, we have been made delighted for the enhancement of our fame by you with your divine visions.

After saying this the Devas bowed down. Bhava made them get up and said again:

Śiva said:

74-76. With due attendance and service, you have continuously performed a penance called Ugra(?). It has been effectively performed by means of meditation. The penance performed by you with your body, speech, mind and devo-

tional emotions cannot be performed by others. You are equipped with this penance along with unbearable sufferings. May your radiance and penance progress and develop all-round. It has been practised and perfected by you in the course of a long time through the body with great (effort).

Sanatkumāra said:

77. On being told by the Lord of Devas thus, Devas with Brahmā at their head, said to the Lord raising their heads (faces) and standing on the ground on their knees:

Devas said:

78-79. You are visible, O Lord; you are the cause of our austerities. You instil life into us. O bestower of boons, O Lord of Devas, grant us protection, to all of us and to the human beings who too are engaged (in good work), O bestower of freedom from fear on devotees.

Īśvara said:

80. Due to your effort and strict adherence to rules, a clear audience has been granted to you. Further I shall grant you many rare boons.

81. When this was spoken by the Lord, Brahmā standing in front of Devas said these words to Lord Bhava, the source of origin of the words of the Vedas:

82. “O Lord, we have attained (you). The great boon is very adequate. May our prosperity be ever-enhancing. May our place of residence be permanent.”

Śiva said:

83. In this world they never meet with evil result—they who are devoted to me and they who are killed by me. They acquire great and excellent intellect.

84-88. There with their heads covered with matted hairs shine the trident-armed terrible Gaṇas. These too who are on my left side. It is to control them as well as to waken you all that the skull was thrown down with the inevitable change on

the ground. To those devotees desiring further devotion I granted favour. My residence is perpetual in this forest since I have been requested so by the trees.

O sinless Devas, since I came over here it is called Mahākālavana. To you also who wished to perform austerities, it is Mahākālavana ('forest of great opportunity'). This secret holy shrine will become renowned in the world with this twin name. It is a secret forest. It is the cremation ground. It is the greatest and most majestic of all holy spots.

89-94. This Kapālavratācaryā¹ (performance of Kapāla Vrata) has been proclaimed by me. The devotee embellished with Kapāla Vrata should take food in the Kapāla (skull). The Kapāla should always be held in the hand. He should be contented with the alms thus received in the course of his Vrata. He should (outwardly) adopt terrific features and reside in the cremation ground. He must (show to) be madly elated and deluded in intellect in the performance of the Vrata. He must be delighted in the midst of all living beings. He should equally welcome the pleasing and the displeasing. He should adorn all the limbs with holy ash. He should be one endowed with knowledge. He should conquer the sense-organs. He must not have intimate contact with anyone. He should gather together clay, holy ash and water. He must be in the Yogic communication permanently, all-pervading, uttering the holy Mantras repeatedly. He should master the excellent (Yogic) postures. He should build his hermitage in the meritorious holy spot. He should meditate in the correct accent on the deity. This *Mahāpāsupata Vrata* transcends all the worlds and is conducive to great knowledge. Formerly I too had adopted the *Kapāla Vrata* and practised it. Kapāla is the greatest of all secrets, holy and destructive of sins.

95-97. Indeed this Kapāla Vrata is highly wonderful and very difficult to adopt and practise. Highly fierce and equally gentle, it generates horripilation.

If out of delusion any man hates this Mahāvratā, he will be overpowered by sins. Even after hundreds and crores of births, he is not rid of that sin. Hence no one should hate or violate

1. Kapālavratā is another name for *Mahāpāsupata Vrata* as mentioned below. The details of the Vrata given here describe an advanced stage of the Vrata as shown in the *Pāsupata-sūtra-bhāṣya* of Kauṇḍinya.

it. If it is destroyed (i.e. violated) it is as though ten million persons are killed.

98. Further, if anyone with abiding faith feeds (at least one) after performing this Mahāvratā, it is as beneficial as though ten million Brāhmaṇas reciting the Vedas have been fed.

99. He who gives to Yatis alms filling the Kapāla shall be rid of all sins. He will never meet with ill luck.

100. Taking food in the Kapāla is very excellent. This is the way laid down by the Brahman (Veda). They say that this has been adored in the Vedas by Devas and Dānavas.

101. Those Brāhmaṇas wandering over the earth, who will hold the Kapāla that fascinates Bhūtas (goblins, spirits) are, on a par with me, O Brahmā.

102. Bold and intelligent men solely engaged in (my) Japas with the Kapāla as their ornament, are Mahāpāśupatas, Rudras, in the world redeeming others from the worldly existence.

103. They are beyond Dharma and Adharma (i.e. above petty moral considerations); they are beyond the application of Dos and Don'ts. They redeem living beings through the path of knowledge and by means of their initiation therein.

104. All the hundreds and crores of Tīrthas found in the world do not merit even a sixteenth part of the pure Vijñāna (perfect knowledge).

105. O Pitāmaha, just as I am worthy of being honoured and adored among all the Devas, so also a holy man taking this great Vratā is worthy of being worshipped by all Yogins.

106. This Vratā of Śiva is of highly mystic nature for liberation from all worldly bondages, because it is the cause of the stoppage of rebirth through all holy rites.

107. After having once adopted this Kapālavratā if a man, unable to master the sense-organs, abandons it in the middle, he immediately falls into the Raurava hell led there by the Servants of Yama.

108. He who enthusiastically speaks about it but does not act accordingly is a libidinous wretch of a lustful mind. He is not one favourably disposed towards Dharma.

109-110. A man who speaks to the following types of persons shall go to hell: one who takes food in a lonely spot (avoiding kinsmen); who solely partakes of sweet dishes; who pretends

to love and cheats, one who resides in an evil village or town infested by wicked people; one who resorts to agriculture and business transactions. That is so because he censures my Vrata.

111. On seeing even a well-behaved gentleman a man practising this Mahāvratā should not have physical contact with his body. If he touches him, he should take bath in water.

112. Thus everything connected with getting rid of the Kapāla has been narrated just as it has been placed. It perished itself due to ignorance.

Sanatkumāra said:

113. After saying this, the Lord colonized the holy spot along with the immortal ones beginning with Brahmā. I shall describe it truthfully.

114. This Mahākālavana is cited by excellent men, O Vyāsa, as the first Śmaśāna. It is here that Hara is present.

115. There is no doubt that this part of the earth is for the sake of blessing. It is for blessing all the living beings that meet with death.

116. The earth was rendered into a conch and platform made of gold and (studded with) diamonds. It was rendered flowery with diverse kinds and extremely splendid with jewels.

117. The excellent green pasture ground was paved as it were with gold and diamonds. Thirty or forty pots were filled and kept in the corners.

118. There are four doorways there of various colours and of blazing appearance. The pots placed there shine like the rising sun.

119. There in the excellent forest the Lord diverts himself along with Nandin and the leaders of the Devas and the Gaṇas. He is equipped with Kāladaṇḍa etc.

120-122. All this is directly visible in Kṛtayuga. In Tretā those who are righteous ascetics and lead celibate life, see Śaṅkara, Hara, Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas always wearing Śūla and Paṭṭiśa in the Mahākālavana. In Dvāpara those who are habitually righteous and possess Vedic learning and Vijñāna (can) see the Lord. In Kali Age those who have pure Vijñāna and are rich in penance see the Lord.

123-124. This truth has been recounted to you. It causes blessings to the world. Those Brāhmaṇas who devoutly wor-

ship the great feet of Śambhu in accordance with the injunctions through the Mantras in the order found in the Samhitā texts, stay in the vicinity of the Lord. They are favoured by Mahākāla.

125. During his stay in this world, he (a person) should read the story which has been adored by those of reputed collection of good qualities. It dispels defects. He shall be a man of splendid intellect. He who listens to this with mental concentration goes to the city of Hara, adored by the immortal ones.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mode of Life in Mahākālavana

Vyāsa said:

1-4. O holy Sir, how should men desirous of going to Rudra's world, live in the holy spot? What should be done by men or women who stay in hermitages for the sake of Siddhi? Narrate all this to us. Men and women of all castes and stages of life should be eagerly engaged in the performance of righteous deeds. They should be devoid of arrogance and delusion. They should be devotees of Rudra physically, mentally and verbally. They must control their sense-organs. They should not be petty-minded. They should follow the Śruti (injunctions). They should be always engaged in the welfare of all living beings. Tell us (how) devotion to Rudra (can be enhanced). What holy rites should they perform?

Sanatkumāra said:

5-6. Rudrabhakti (devotion to Rudra) is said to be of three kinds: mental, physical and verbal. Another division is: *Laukikī* (popular), *Vaidikī* (based on the Vedas) and *Ādhyātmikī* (spiritual). Remembering Rudra through Dhyāna (meditation), Dhāraṇā (concentration) and Buddhi (intellect) enhances devotion to Rudra. This is called mental Bhakti.

7. Observance of Vratas, fasts and restraints by which (people) control and check their sense-organs is called Kāyikī Bhakti (physical devotion) to Rudra. It includes knowledge and meditation also of religious people.

8-11. With Maheśvara in view, the worship performed with all these (following) things is known as *Laukikī* (popular) Bhakti: (They are) Cow's milk, cow's ghee, curds, water with scented Kuśa, sweet-smelling garlands, diverse kinds of minerals. Incense, fragrant gum-resin mixed with ghee, fragrant black agallochum, ornaments of gold and gems, garlands of variegated flowers, heaps of smelling powders, hymns, raised flags and fans, dances, instrumental music and songs delightful to all, various kinds of edible stuff and beverages, rice grains etc. are to be offered by men throughout the Pūjā.

12-16. Holy rites and Yāgas performed with Vedic Mantras and offerings of *Havis* are called *Vaidikī* Bhakti. Agnihotra should be performed during the new-moon and full-moon days. All rites associated with Yajñas intended for Rudra should be carried out (rites such as—feeding, giving of monetary gifts, Puroḍāśa offerings, holy rites, sacrificial operation, drinking of Soma, chanting of the Mantras from the Ṛg, Yajus and Sāma Vedas, recitation of the Saṁhitā texts etc.). What is performed thus is proclaimed as *Vaidikī* Bhakti. All the rites performed with Agni, Earth, Wind, Ether, Moon and Sun in view will be *Daivika* ('pertaining to Devas'). O sage, *Ādhyātmikī* Rudra Bhakti is of two types.

17-22. One of them is called *Sāṅkhyā*¹ and the other *Yaugikī*. Listen to these types. There are twentyfour Tattvas (basic entities) in number, beginning with Pradhāna. They are insentient. Puruṣa is the twentyfifth entity. It is sentient. It is the enjoyer. But it does not act. Rudra is the twentysixth entity. He is the sentient, omniscient Lord. He is unborn and eternal. He presides over the Unmanifest. He is the one that induces. Puruṣa is *Nityavyakta* (Ever Manifest). Maheśvara shall be the cause. *Tattvasarga* (creation of the entities) shall be the direct creation. *Bhūtasarga* (creation of the elements/living beings) shall be through the Tattvas.

1. This is obviously 'Seśvara-Sāṅkhya'. It shows the later stage of the doctrine.

Pradhāna constituted of Guṇas is conducive to the creation through Saṅkhyā (deliberation). There is *Sādharma* ('similarity of characteristics') of Īśvara with Ātman. Pradhāna is *Vidharmī* (dissimilar). The cause is the will of Rudra. In every respect *Kartṛtā* (doership) is in Rudra and the absence thereof (*Akartṛtā*) is in the Puruṣa.

23-29. In Pradhāna the Tattva (principle) is known as *Acaitanya* ('absence of consciousness'). The *Kārya* (effect) and the *Kāraṇa* (cause) are liberated by another Tattva. After realizing the dissimilarity in respect to the cause through Asaṅkhyā (non-reckoning), it is mentioned as Saṅkhyā by wise men, the persons who ponder over the Rudra *Tattvārtha*. Thus is its Tattva-hood. The reckoning of Tattva is through reality. Wise men know that Jñānatattva is superior to Rudratattva. This Bhakti performed through Saṅkhyā is considered to be *Ādhyātmika* (spiritual) Bhakti. O great Sura, listen to the Bhakti of the Yogins¹ too from me. The following is known as the great mental Rudra-Bhakti originating from Yogic activity. The devotee is engaged in Prāṇāyāma (control of breath) and restrains his sense-organs. He is engaged in perpetual meditation of Maheśvara with Dhāraṇā (fixation of his image) in the heart. Maheśvara is conceived as seated in the pericarp of the lotus-like heart. He has five faces and three eyes. He has within him the lustre of the moon. His waist is encircled by serpents. He is white in complexion. He has ten arms. He is gentle (assuring) showing the gestures of freedom from fear and granting of boons.

30. He who has devotion only to Rudra is called Rudrabhakta. Listen, O Vyāsa, from me what is enjoined for the residents of the holy spot.

31. It has been laid down by Rudra himself in the assembly of Brahmā and others. It has been explained in details before there in the presence of everyone.

32-34. Listen to the benefit of those who die in Mahākālavana. They should be *Nirmamas* (free from the sense of my-ness i.e. sense of possession); they should be free from ego-tism and undue attachment to others. They should desist from accepting and possessing properties; they should be devoid of too much of affection for kinsmen. They should view alike a

1. It is a peculiar blend of Yoga and Bhakti in which Bhakti dominates over Pātañjala Yoga.

lump of clay, a stone and a piece of gold. By means of their threefold (i.e. verbal, mental and physical) activity they should bestow freedom from fear on all the living beings. They should be conversant with the regulations concerning Sāṅkhya and Yoga; they should know what is righteous and they should be bereft of all doubts and suspicions. Those Brāhmaṇa-residents of the holy spot should perform different kinds of Yajñas.

35. They attain everlasting Sāyujya (identity) with Brahman, usually very difficult to attain. After attaining the eternal salvation, they are not reborn.

36. They eschew the return, and abide by the injunctions of Maheśvara. The return (is inevitable) in the case of those who live in the Prapañcāśrama (worldly life).

37. Those who adopt the injunctions governing householders are always engaged in the Ṣaṭkarmas (six mandatory activities e.g. Fire-worship). They perform Homas duly and perfectly bound and guided by the Mantras and Stotras (Vedic recitation).

38-41. They attain more benefit and are devoid of all miseries.

Such a man has unimpeded movement elsewhere in all the worlds. In view of the divine prosperity and mastery, he along with his family climbs himself in a refulgent aerial chariot having the lustre of many suns brought and accepted by himself. Surrounded by thousands of women, he goes to any abode he wishes to go. Unhesitatingly he traverses all the worlds of the heaven-dwellers. If he slips down from heaven, he is reborn as a handsome fellow in a great family. He will be the most covetable of all men, the most excellent one among all castes and very rich.

42-43. He will be conversant with the principles of Dharma. He will be a Rudrabhakta. He will master all the lores and topics of discourse. He will be fully equipped with the practice of celibacy, desire to serve the preceptor and the regular study of the Vedas. He will adopt begging for alms for his maintenance. He will conquer his sense-organs. He will always maintain the Vrata of truthfulness. He will take delight in doing his own duty.

44-46. On dying in due course, he will be able to move about in an aerial chariot richly equipped with all means of

enjoying pleasures. The aerial chariot will appear like another sun. There is a Gaṇa of Rudra named Guhyaka. He is extremely honoured and worshipped by Devas and Dānavas. He has immeasurable power and prosperity. The (above-mentioned) devotee will be on a par with the members of that Gaṇa. He will have an equal prosperity and glory. He will be most highly honoured and adored among Devas, Dānavas and human beings.

47. Equipped with power and prosperity thus, he will be honoured in the Rudraloka for a period of hundreds and thousands of crores (of years).

48-53. After living there with great affluence and power, when he slips down from the Rudraloka, he will undoubtedly reside on the earth in the holy spot Mahākālavana, continuing in the stage of a celibate religious student. He will always be devoted to Maheśvara. He may continue to stay there or die. If he dies, he will travel by a divine aerial chariot having the lustre of the sun. He will possess the radiance of the full moon. He will be pleasing to the sight like the moon. After reaching Rudraloka, he will rejoice along with the Guhyakas. He will enjoy great power and affluence. He will be the lord of the entire universe. Enjoying all these things, he will be honoured in Rudraloka for thousands of Yugas. Gradually slipping down from that Rudraloka, he will be joyous forever, enjoying the world free from ailments. He is then born in a great aspirant family of twice-borns.

54. He will abide by human values and holy rites. He shall possess superb handsomeness. His person shall be covetable unto women. He will be a master of great pleasures.

55. Performing the rites as a Vānaprastha (retired recluse) he will eschew herbs and vegetation growing in the forest. He will sustain himself through withered and scattered leaves. He will partake of fruits, flowers and holy water.

56. Or he may sustain himself by eating bits of grains. He may pound grains with stone (for chewing thereafter), or he may use his teeth as mortar and pestle. Some means of sustenance he may adopt. He may wear only old bark garments.

57-58. He wears matted hairs and takes bath thrice a day with hairs untied. He holds an excellent staff. He stays in water. He performs five penances (e.g. staying in the midst of

five fires). During rainy season he has only open sky as shelter. He lies down on the ground full of worms, thorns and stones. He sits in the posture of Vīrāsana. He shares (things with others). He is steadfast in his Vratas.

59. He eats and partakes of the herbs of the forest. He grants freedom from fear to all living beings. He is devoted to righteousness always. He observes silence. He has conquered anger and controlled all his sense-organs.

60. A Rudrabhakta in Mahākālavana is a sage residing permanently in the holy spot. He abandons all contacts. He takes delight in himself. He is free from desires.

61-62. O Vyāsa, listen to the goal reached by one who stays here. A Rudrabhakta moves about in an aerial chariot that can go anywhere at will, that is as bright as the rising sun and that shines with a raised platform and pillars. He shines in the sky like a second moon.

63. Surrounded by groups of celestial damsels having melodious voice, singing and playing on musical instruments, he is honoured in Rudraloka for hundreds of crores of years and more.

64. Slipping down from Rudraloka, he is honoured in Viṣṇuloka. Falling off from Viṣṇuloka, he goes to Brahmaloка.

65. Slipping down from that region too, he is born in the (different) continents. He enjoys pleasures as he pleases in heaven and other places.

66-69. After having enjoyed the fortune and power, the man is born among mortals or immortals. He may be a king or someone on a par with a king. He is born happy and rich, handsome and comely, brilliant and famous. He is blessed by Rudra. Whether they are Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas or Śūdras, the residents of the holy spot are fully occupied with their own duties and pious rites. O Vyāsa, they sustain themselves through their own wages. Rudrabhaktas invariably bless all living beings perfectly with all sincerity. Those who are desirous of liberation and stay in the holy spot Mahākālavana go to Rudra's abode after death by splendid aerial chariots that can go as they please, that can take any form they please and where groups of celestial damsels are also present.

70. Or a meditator on Rudra who consigns his body to the fire of *Samvid* (knowledge) becomes a Mahāsattva ('a man of

great strength'). He will stay in the abode of Rudra.

71. To them Rudraloka becomes permanent and never-ending, along with the Guhyakas. It becomes the most excellent of all Lokas and facilitates the achievement of all desired objects.

72. If men cast off their vital airs in Mahākālavana through the observance of fast, O Vyāsa, Rudraloka becomes permanent to those noble souls.

73-74. Those Sāṅkhyas devoid of all miseries eulogize Lord Rudra accompanied by Nandin and groups of Devas. Men of Śūdra caste who die in Mahākālavana by abstaining from intake of food, go about in aerial chariots resembling the sun fitted with lions.

75. They may be of various colours and fitted with gold. They are rendered fragrant with delightful scents. They are charming with incomparable virtues and resonant with the vocal and instrumental music of the celestial damsels.

76. Flags and banners are displayed therein. They are resonant with the tinklings of various bells. They have excellent lustre. They are richly endowed with all good qualities. Excellent peacocks move about there.

77. All those wise men who die through fasts go to Rudraloka. After spending a long time there and after enjoying pleasures as they please, they are born in the mortal world as rich people in the families of Brāhmaṇas. They enjoy pleasures.

78. A man who does *Karīṣa* (cowdung?) *sādhanā* in the Mahākālavana goes to Rudraloka freed from all enjoyments of pleasures.

79-80. He shall stay in Rudraloka till the end of the Kalpa. After enjoying great pleasures, he is born as king of the entire earth. He shall be handsome and comely.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Greatness of Apsaraḥ Kuṇḍa

Vyāsa said:

1-4. Good behaviour is the greatest Dharma. It is far greater than all other Dharmas. Those who abide by their duty, those

who have conquered anger and controlled their sense-organs do go to Rudraloka. There is no surprise in my mind in this regard. Undoubtedly they go to the other worlds with the lustre of moons, even if they do not reside in the holy spot and do not observe restraints. But what about women, Mlecchas (outcastes), Śūdras, animals, birds, beasts, dumb ones, sluggish ones, blind ones, deaf ones etc., who cannot practise penance and observe regulations and restraints? If they die in Mahākālavana what is the goal they reach?

Sanatkumāra said:

5. Women, Mlecchas, dull-witted persons, animals, birds, beasts—all these, O Vyāsa, do go to Rudraloka, should they die in due course (in Mahākālavana).

6. They go there with divine bodies. They enjoy all pleasures. They sport about along with Śāmbhu in the cremation ground full of ghosts and spirits.

7-10. Formerly the Goddess was rebuked by Śaṅkara calling her 'Kālī' ('Dark-coloured') and 'Pārvatī' ('Mountain-girl'). Then the Goddess became angry with Śaṅkara in the Kaṭaka (tableland). When the quarrel between Śiva and Gaurī broke out a deity originated there itself. It is called Kalakaleśvara.

A holy Kuṇḍa was made in front named Kalahanāśana. When bath was (is) taken there, O Vyāsa, the beloved ceased (ceases) to quarrel. By bathing in that holy Tīrtha, worshipping Maheśvara and observing fast for a night, the devotee shall redeem a hundred members of his family.

11. If a person makes a gift there of sandalpaste (even) of the size of a small atom, he could redeem the members of his family, ten among predecessors and ten among successors, along with himself.

12. If a man makes the gift of a plot of land, O Sage, of the size of Gocarma¹ he shall become the lord of the entire earth.

13. He who devoutly makes the gift of a cow red in colour or an Aṅgula of land will become a king.

1. Place sufficient for 100 cows, a bull and their calves (300 × 10 square feet).

14-18. If men make gifts of a cow, horses, gingelly seeds, cloth, a pot, copper, milk-pail, slippers, an umbrella and excellent sandals to Brāhmaṇas, their worlds are everlasting.

To the right side of the back of the holy spot are the deities named Mothers (i.e. Brāhmī etc.). The Goddess there dispels the sin of all the worlds. The excellent Maṇikarṇikā should be known as the (representative of) all the Tīrthas. After taking the holy bath in that Tīrtha, a devotee should respectfully see the Mothers who are on the backside (*Prṣṭhamāṭrs*). He shall be liberated from all sins. He will attain the desired Siddhi.

If a person visits the Mothers and proceeds on a journey, he will not have any fear from thieves, nor has he any fear of Rākṣasa or evil spirits.

19. He has no fear in his native land, in a foreign land, on mountains or in forests or in the sea. He will have no evil thoughts.

20-26. He need not have fear of the king and others or of affliction from all the malignant Planets.

A Brāhmaṇa who slaughters a goat or a sheep or a buffalo with the Goddess in view, attains the desired benefit.

A man who takes the holy dip before the Goddess at midnight on the eighth day in the bright half of the month of Āśvina, attains the greatest Siddhi.

If a woman whose son is dead, takes her bath in the Kuṇḍa along with her husband and then takes the holy dip before the Goddess, she will attain the benefit. After bathing with a pot and fruit, she should not see anyone else's face. O sage, through this Kumbhasnāna ('bathing with a pot') a son will be born to her like the Lord with Six Faces (Skanda).

Behind the Māṭrs is the splendid and highly meritorious Tīrtha of the celestial damsels. A man who takes bath there, shall become richly endowed with handsome features.

Formerly, O Vyāsa, by the power of this Tīrtha, king Purūravas, son of Ilā, was obtained as the husband by Urvaśī.

On hearing this interesting (anecdote) Vyāsa spoke these words:

Vyāsa said:

27-28. O great sage, how did this Tīrtha of celestial dam-

sels come into existence there? Recount it in detail and its secrets: what was the cause thereof and at which time was this established?

Who is this Purūravas? How did the excellent lady, the celestial damsel named Urvaśī come to be his wife? Narrate all this exactly as it happened.

Sanatkumāra said:

29-35. Nara and Nārāyaṇa performed penance in the penance grove of Badarikā. Indra became afraid of it. All the celestial damsels of charming and seductive features, proud of their prime of youth were ordered by Indra to put in obstacles in the penance of the sages. They arrived there. Both of them saw the celestial damsels maddened with pride and sporting about, who had arrived to create obstacles.

Then both the gods (Nara and Nārāyaṇa) spoke to each other: "These have come here to create obstacles since we do not have our own womenfolk." After uttering thus, Nara spoke to Nārāyaṇa,¹ "I shall create a female more beautiful than these." Out of his thighs and using mango blossoms, he created a female. She was unrivalled in beauty in the world and was adorned with all ornaments.

On seeing the excellent lady, the beautiful young maiden having the lustre of fire standing up (created), they returned to Śakra and told him: "We are not capable of tempting them."

36. On hearing their words, Śakra came to those divine beings, bowed down low before them with palms joined in reverence on his head and said:

37-41. "I request for this lady. Be pleased to give her to me." The divine beings, the great Lords, gave her to Indra: "On the strength of our words, accept this Urvaśī created out of his thighs by Nara. Since this excellent lady has been created from the thighs out of the mango blossom, she is known as Urvaśī."²

Purandara took that excellent lady Urvaśī and went to the

1. In Mbh and elsewhere Nārāyaṇa is said to have created Urvaśī.

2. Possibly 'Urvaśī', the historical lady mentioned in the Ākhyāna Sūktas of RV may be a resident of the ancient city of Ur now lost in the desert of S. Iraq.

heaven. He called Citrāṅgada and said: "O Citra, let adequate training be given to her so that she becomes an adept in dance. Let splendid effort be made so that she becomes skilled ere long." Being directed thus, she was made skilful in dance and music.

42-43. Thus that beautiful lady stayed in the celestial abode. After the lapse of a long time, the king, the righteous-souled son of Ilā, named Purūravas, came there. Seated along with Indra on his throne, he witnessed the dance.

44. On seeing Urvaśī dance before Vāsava (Indra) the king's mind was captivated and he became infatuated. He could not understand anything.

45-47. He composed his mind and stayed for a short while. As for Urvaśī, she too was attracted by his sight. With her mind captivated she went away from that place afflicted with love and extremely agitated. That girl fell down from the raised stage of dance.

Consoling herself, she rose from the ground. On being seen by the lion-like king, she became afflicted by the god of Love.

48. Purūravas went to the earth thinking about her. Thinking about the tiger among kings, Urvaśī went home (dejected).

49. She went to the abode of Citrāṅgada and made him her messenger. At night she was taken by him to the place where Purūravas was present.

50. Heaven without Urvaśī appeared to be a void to the heaven-dwellers. On the very same night, she was brought by him to heaven.

51. Separated from her he (Purūravas) wandered absent-mindedly for sixty years. O Vyāsa, the king became mad.

52-53. Wandering about holy Tīrthas, he reached Mahākālavana. That excellent celestial damsel Urvaśī was taken to the heaven by a Gandharva. There she continued to prattle, "Oh King! Oh King!" She never lay (quiet). Nor did she bathe. In the meantime all the other celestial damsels reached that place where Urvaśī was present.

54-56a. Rāmbhā, Menakā, Pramlocā, Puñjikasthalī, Jalapūrṇā, Aśrupūrṇā, Vasantā, Candrikā, Sūryadattā, Viśālākṣī, Candrā and Candraprabhā came there in a group and spoke to Urvaśī: "O excellent lady with charming eyes, why do you cry for a human being?"

56b-57. On hearing these words of those celestial damsels, Urvaṣī spoke:

“A eunuch cannot appreciate the pleasure derived out of the intercourse of a man and a woman. Everything should be known by you from this simile. I am steadfast in my resolve regarding him.”

58. On hearing these words of Urvaṣī, they took counsel together with great concentration. They went to Mahākālavana without the knowledge of Devas.

59-60. They saw the king resting under the shade of trees. On seeing the king, all of them became excessively agitated (with love). On seeing all the celestial maidens lovelorn and enchanted, Urvaṣī laughed and said:

Urvaṣī said:

61. This is that tiger among men, the son of Ilā, separated from whom I have become like this. He is the well-known king of the earth and is named Purūravas.

62. When Urvaṣī said thus, the group of the celestial damsels stood bashfully and silently bowing down their heads for a long time.

63-65. In the meantime, the holy sage Nārada came there. On seeing all of them who had arrived there and the king in the company of Urvaṣī he said: “Why have you silently left the excellent and so charming an abode of Indra? Let a boon be chosen quickly lest there should be separation.” Nārada narrated the greatness of the Tīrtha too.

66. By taking holy dip in this Tīrtha, an unlucky man or woman attains conjugal bliss and all excellent pleasures.

67-69. A devotee weighs himself/herself against gingelly seeds, salt or with sugar without minding the expenses. Or he should weigh himself against jaggery or honey keeping Goddess Pārvatī in view.

If salt is used, he/she will be handsome and beautiful in form. If gingelly seeds are used, brilliance of all the limbs. Increase in wealth, if sugar is used, and perfection in all the limbs, if jaggery is used. If honey is used conjugal bliss is assured. Everything happens by the power of this holy Tīrtha.

70-72. The devotees should feed twelve couples representing the Lord and the Goddess. The following articles shall be gifted: A flask, nail-ornament, earrings, gold, collyrium, cane basket, bodice and safflower-dyed clothes. To the men holy white ash and unguents should be given; to the women saffron should be given. This excellent Vrata should be performed on the third lunar day in the bright half of Āśvina. It can be performed in the months of Āṣāḍha, Śrāvaṇa and Bhādrapada also.

73-74. The woman becomes an excellent lady like Goddess Umā. The devotee makes gold images of Umā and Maheśvara in accordance with his capacity. They should be worn by the woman when sitting in the pan of the balance. Fruits and diverse kinds of vegetables should also be given.

75-76. Everything given as gift, Homa performance, Japas uttered—all these shall have ten million-fold the benefit if done there. The woman who does all these things with purity and concentration shall go to the world of Gandharvas and celestial damsels after death. There is no doubt about this. In this Tirtha, two Liṅgas have been worshipped by Devas and Dānavas.

77. Couples visiting those two Liṅgas attain the greatest Siddhi. Especially in the month of Kārttika the devotees should worship with sweet-smelling flowers and keep awake at night. They attain Rudraloka.

78. Just as the separation of the Goddess from (Śiva) her own form is not seen, so also their mutual separation (of the couples) is never seen.

79-81. After doing like this, O Brāhmaṇa, all of them went to heaven.

The Tirtha of the Apsaras has been described. Other Tirthas are now taken up. To the south of Pṛṣṭhadevī there is the Mahiṣa Kuṇḍa (holy pit). It is there that Dānava Mahiṣa was formerly killed by the leaders of the Gaṇas. By bathing in that Tirtha and assiduously worshipping the Mothers, a devotee is rid of the affliction from ghosts, Rākṣasas and Piśācas (spirits).

CHAPTER NINE

The Greatness of Mahiṣakuṇḍa and Rudrasaras

Vyāsa said:

1. Whence is that Mahiṣa Kuṇḍa? Why is it encircled by the Mothers? How was Mahiṣa, the Dānava, killed in the holy spot of Rudra himself?

Sanatkumāra said:

2-7. Mahādeva, the Lord of the universe, took up the piece of skull that had exquisite lustre, had divine Brahma Tejas (splendour of the Supreme Absolute), and that appeared to blaze with flames.

Playing with it, the Lord fascinated the Suras. The Lord of Yogic Ātman reached this world through Yogic Sport. He came to the holy spot and stayed there. The Great Lord, the Lord of the Devas, placed that great divine skull with flames in front of the Gaṇas.

On seeing it placed, all (the Devas) of great strength and prowess came there. With loud shouts they made the ten directions reverberate. Thereby the sky appeared to be rent asunder as though the oceans were agitated by thunderbolt.

On account of that terrible sound, the Dānava, well-known as Hālāhala, a veritable thorn unto the Devas, rushed to that place.

8. The wicked-souled one could not bear it. He was extremely furious. Due to the boons granted by Brahmā, he was invincible unto the Suras. He came there assuming the form of a buffalo.

9-13. He was surrounded by crores of terrible Daityas with uplifted weapons. On seeing the furious Mahiṣa, the thorn of the Devas, coming onward, the Pināka-bearing Lord said to the Gaṇas: "O leaders of the Gaṇas, this Daitya is a master of Māyā (black magic). He is a thorn as it were unto all the three worlds. He is rushing this side. Do kill him, ye all."

All the leaders of the Gaṇas resorted to the velocity of the Kapāla. The groups of the Devas saw the great Asura rushing towards them, roaring loudly and shaking his huge arms. They

pierced him with a mass of tridents, swords and Musalas (big iron rods). After making him faint with a volley of arrows, they made him fall on the ground.

14. When he was killed, Mahādeva said to the Devas, “Lo, the foolish one deluded by arrogance has died due to it.”

15-17. In the meantime, O Vyāsa, all the greatly terrible Mothers with fiery mouths, came out of that Kapāla. They rushed towards that place with fierce weapons. After intimating to Mahādeva, they tore and pierced the Daitya and ate him up. Those deities of great strength are therefore called *Kapāla Mātaraḥ*. Being of such a nature it is glorified as Mahākapāla.

18-20. Forcing its way out of the Kapāla so placed, there emerged a lake of water well-known as Śivataḍāga. It is destructive of all sins. That lake shines as great and divine one even today. It is well-known in all the three worlds and is resorted to by the Gaṇas and Gandharvas. The lake of Rudra sanctifies one as though one has taken the Avabhṛtha bath, whether one uses the water in a pot after taking it out of the lake, whether it is lukewarm or boiled.

21. Brahmā too came there surrounded by hundreds of Devas. It is proclaimed by Brahmā himself as a ladder leading to the heavenly world.

22-24. Those who cast off their lives here, go to Rudraloka. O Vyāsa, blessed indeed are the men in the mortal world who stay in Mahākālavana. Those who take bath in the lake of Rudra or drink the water thereof, and are engaged in practising their own Dharma, see Īśāna, the Lord. Thus Devas, the heaven-dwellers, always entertain this desire.

25-26. Mahākapāla is auspicious and divine. It is destructive of impiety. It is honoured by Suras and Daityas, is highly refulgent and eternal, rarer than even the world of the Lord of Suras. It is eulogized by groups of Siddhas engaged in penance like the solar disc in the firmament. He who listens to this with concentration and clearness of mind, goes to heaven and is blessed.

CHAPTER TEN

The Glory of Kuṭumbikeśvara

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall describe a Tīrtha well-known in all the three worlds. The self-manifested (Liṅga) of Maheśa is renowned as Kuṭumbikeśvara.

2-8. A person who is pure and who, after performance of Śrāddha, visits the Lord, gets rid of all sins committed in the course of seven births.

He goes beyond all the worlds and goes to the region of Śīva. He who makes gifts of all kinds of vegetables and bulbous roots of various kinds on the banks thereof, attains the greatest goal.

One who observes fast on the first or the eighth day in the bright half of the month of Pauṣa, will get the fruit of a horse-sacrifice.

The pure man who sees the *Paṭṭabandha* (silken headdress) of Maheśa on the full-moon day in the month of Āśvina, becomes free from sins and goes to heaven.

On the fifth day in the bright half of the month of Caitra, the devotee should observe fast and offer camphor, saffron, musk and sandalpaste to the Lord. The food offering shall be milk-pudding with ghee.

He should also feed a Brāhmaṇa along with his wife. He should consider the Brāhmaṇa as the formal representative of the Lord. He will attain Rudraloka and shall stay there for a period covering the reign of fourteen Indras.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Greatness of Vidyādhara Tīrtha

[Sanatkumāra continued:]

1. "Henceforth, I shall describe the Tīrtha of Vidyādhara. One who takes the holy bath there and becomes pure, shall

become the Lord of Vidyādhara.”

Vyāsa said:

2. O great sage, how did this Tīrtha come into being in the holy spot here? Be pleased to narrate this, O great Brāhmaṇa. I wish to hear it now.

Sanatkumāra said:

3. Formerly there was a Lord of Vidyādhara (named) Rūpadhara. A charming garland of Pārijāta flowers was wreathed by him.

4. He took the garland to the abode of Vāsava (Indra). Menakā was seen by him performing dance in front of Vāsava.

5. That garland was given by him to her during the dance. That Menakā was praised by him at the wrong place (Dance stage). She was fascinated by the garland.

6-7a. The Vidyādhara was cursed by angry Indra: “O sinning wretch, go down to the earth. You have caused interruption to the dance programme. Due to this curse of mine you shall lose the status of Vidyādhara now.”

7b-8. On being told thus by Śakra, the Vidyādhara spoke these words:

“O Lord, this crime has been committed by me unknowingly. So, be pleased (to forgive me) and do a favour.”

9-11. On being requested thus, Śakra spoke to the Vidyādhara: “Go to Avantī now itself. There is a cave named Gāṅgaṭī there. To the north thereof is an excellent Tīrtha. It is known all over the three worlds by the name Vidyādhara. It is auspicious. If holy bath is taken there devoutly, one shall become Lord of Vidyādhara. Hence you also assiduously take your holy dip there.”

12-14. On being told thus by Śakra, he came over to the region of Avantī. He took his holy bath in that charming Tīrtha. Due to the efficacy of that Tīrtha, he regained his original position. Thus, O Vyāsa, the auspicious Vidyādhara Tīrtha has been described. He who offers flowers, sandalpaste and unguent there, shall enjoy all types of pleasures in this world as well as the other.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Greatness of Śītalā

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Hereafter I shall describe the excellent Markaṭeśvara. There is a well-known Tīrtha there, which fulfils all desires.

2-3. By taking the holy bath in that Tīrtha a man shall acquire the benefit (of the gift) of a hundred cows.

For the sake of quelling boils and blisters (of smallpox) and for the sake of the children, a devotee takes Masūra lentils by measures and grinds them. Due to the power of Śītalā, children become free from the disease.

4-5. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, neither sin nor poverty afflicts those men who devoutly visit Śītalā, the destroyer of sins. Nor need they fear ailments or the affliction of malignant Planets.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Glory of Svargadvāra

Sanatkumāra said:

1. A man should take the holy bath in Svargadvāra, see Bhairava and perform Śrāddha there itself devoutly, keeping the Pitṛs in view.

2. O Vyāsa, the man who attains the greatest region of Rudra shall redeem the Pitṛs along with himself by (bath etc. in) Svargadvāra.

3. To the east, in front of Bhairava, stands Goddess Āmbikā. On seeing her, a man or woman is liberated from all sins.

4. On the Mahānavamī day, a man offers a goat or a buffalo and toddy, meat and an excellent garland of Bilva leaves to the Goddess devoutly. Thereby he shall attain all Siddhis.

5. The man takes the holy bath there and devoutly worships Maheśvara, O Brāhmaṇa; he reaches the abode of Rudra by means of Svargadvāra.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Greatness of Catussamudra

Sanatkumāra said:

1. After bathing in (the Tīrtha called) Catussamudra¹ ('Four Oceans'), a person should visit Rājasthala Śīva. By the mere visit thereof the man obtains sons.

2. There are four oceans: oceans of salt water, of milk, curds and sugarcane juice, in the vicinity of that Lord. They have been established by Sudyumna.

Vyāsa said:

3. Wherefore have the oceans been established, O excellent sage, in the vicinity of Rājasthala by Sudyumna? Do tell me.

4. The excellent Jāmbūdvīpa extends to a hundred thousand Yojanas. Within this limit has the Salt Sea been established.

5. In Śākadvīpa extending to two hundred thousand Yojanas the Milk Ocean has been established. The Ocean of Curds extending to four hundred thousand Yojanas has been established in Kuśadvīpa. In (the continent called) Śālmaḷa the Ocean of Sugarcane Juice has been established. It extends to eight hundred thousand Yojanas.

6. Thus four oceans have been described by you. How did they come in the vicinity of Rājasthala in Bhūmaṇḍala (earth)?

Sanatkumāra said:

7. In a former Kalpa, there was a very righteous king named Sudyumna. His wife, an excellent lady, was well-known by the name Sudarśanā.

8-9. Meeting Sage Dālbhya, with a desire to get a son, she asked: "O holy Sir, by what means—holy gift, holy bath or other means, could a son equipped with all (auspicious) characteristics be obtained by me? O Brāhmaṇa-sage, explain this factually and in full details.

1. As v 2 and vv 3-5 explain, the Tīrtha has in it the Kalās of four oceans as per blessings of Śīva to King Sudyumna. It is near Rājasthala.

Dālhbhya said:

10-11. O daughter, with a desire for sons, excellent oceans have been created by the Self-born Lord Brahmā, the creator of the worlds. If the king takes his holy bath in them, you will beget sons. Hence, dear daughter, persuade your husband to propitiate Śaṅkara.

12. On the strength of Dālhbhya's statement supported by diverse anecdotes, she quickly sent off her husband for the propitiation of Śaṅkara.

13. He went to Gandhamādana and propitiated Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara having the moon, the sun and fire as eyes, was pleased and said:

14-15. "O eminent king, go to Avantī. You will get a splendid son. At my behest the oceans will go over to Kuśasthalī. In the holy spot resembling Meru near Śaṅkara. O king, foremost among men, you will see the Oceans assembled together. If requested by you, they will stay there forever with a Kalā (one sixteenth part) of theirs."

16. After saying this, Lord Mahādeva vanished. Sudyumna went to Kuśasthalī along with his wife.

17. On arriving at Kuśasthalī, he saw the Oceans. On seeing them near Rājasthala, he bowed down to them.

18. When they saw Sudyumna, dear to devotees, bowing down, all the Oceans said: "O devotee of holy vows, choose your boon."

19. He mentally chose a son endowed with all (auspicious) characteristics. The king said further: "You all should stay here near Rājasthala as long as the earth stays here."

The Oceans said:

20-22. We shall stay here till the Kalpa comes to a close. A son endowed with all (good) features will be born to you merely by your holy bath herein. Hence do take your holy bath, O king, we shall stay here in the splendid Sthala with our Kalā.

Thus, O Vyāsa, the Oceans were brought down by Sudyumna.

23-29. Listen to the meritorious benefit of that person who makes pilgrimage to them. After taking the holy bath in the highly meritorious Ocean named Kṣāra (i.e. salty ocean), O Vyāsa, the devotee should perform Śrāddha unto the Pitṛs with great devotion. He shall also adore the great Lord, the consort of Pārvatī, in the holy shrine. He should offer Maṇḍakas (thin floured cakes) to a Brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas. A copper vessel should be filled with salt and it should be given to a Brāhmaṇa who is a Vedic scholar, along with gold. The seven kinds of cereals should be put in a bamboo basket and covered with a cloth. Then the devotee should assiduously offer Arghya along with fruits and monetary gifts.

Then he should go to the Milk Ocean and take the holy bath as before. There he should offer a copper vessel filled with milk. The śame procedure should be followed in the *Dadhyaabdhi* (Curd Ocean) and splendid rice mixed with curds should be offered. Doing the same in the *Ikṣvabdhi* too, he should give auspicious jaggery as gift. After the pilgrimage is over, O Vyāsa, he should make the gift of a milch cow.

30-31. He who undertakes the pilgrimage near Rājasthala attains fine fortune and pleasing sons. On death he attains heaven and stays there for a period equal to that of the rule of fourteen Indras. After enjoying heavenly pleasures, he shall attain salvation.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Glory of Śaṅkarāditya

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Listen, O Vyāsa. This great Tīrtha named Śaṅkaravāpikā¹ is the excellent Tīrtha created by the Lord while sporting about.

2. The water used for washing the skull was poured down by the Lord of Devas. It is made to form a tank. Hence it is (called) Śaṅkaravāpikā.

1. The name of the Tīrtha suggests the joint presence of the Sun-god and Śiva in the Śaṅkara-vāpī. A strange incident shows that it is Śiva who asks for a boon from the Sun-god (vv 9-12). It appears to be originally a Solar Tīrtha.

3-4. On the eighth day coinciding with a Sunday, a person should perform bath in four quarters (corners) and internal sub-quarters and in the middle of the tank. He should give nine bowls filled with Haviṣya food. He should give greens, roots etc. to Brāhmaṇas. Listen to the meritorious benefit thereof.

5. Whatever worlds there are full of all living beings, here and hereafter, he goes over there and enjoys excellent prosperity.

6. Those men who proclaim the greatness (of this Tīrtha) are worthy of being worshipped in Rudraloka too. They transcend the future. Obeisance to them always.

Sanatkumāra said :

7. Thereupon the Lord of the chiefs of Devas, the Pināka-wielding and the bull-emblem Lord, remained pure and eulogized Divākara (the Sun), the Lord of Devas.

8. The delighted Lord of day (the Sun) came and said to Śāṅkara:

Sūrya said:

9-12. Choose your boon, O Lord of goblins, I am the bestower of boons. I shall grant you a boon.

He said to him: "If you are the bestower of a boon, do what is being requested for. For the sake of the benefit of all living beings, be present here partially." On hearing the words of Maheśvara, Ravi, the Sun-god descended there. At the instance of the powerful Śāṅkara, the Lord of all the Devas, the Sun-god became present there and became well-known under the name Śāṅkarāditya. He caused blessings unto all the worlds.

Devas, Daityas and Gandharvas along with Kinnaras were surprised and said:

13. "Lo, this place is blessed where the Slayer of the Three Puras is present. Bhāskara too is present here in the middle of the Tīrtha."

14. Thereupon, all those delighted excellent Suras beginning with Brahmā adored the Lord of Devas, Śāṅkara as well as Āditya.

15-16. All those Devas assumed forms and descended there. Installing the splendid (idol of the deities) they said these words: "Men who take their holy bath here will never become miserable due to old age, death or griefs. By visiting Śaṅkarāditya here, one gets more benefit than the merit accruing from all the Yajñas and more than all the benefits of all Dānas.

17-19. They will never have mental anguish nor physical illness. They will never face poverty. Unequaled prosperity will be always enjoyed by them. O tiger among sages, by visiting Śaṅkarāditya, ailments are removed, poverty is dispelled and separation from kinsmen is averted. Thus the excellent and great region was established formerly by the Trident-armed Lord of Devas, by the name Śaṅkarāditya.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Efficacy of the River Nilagandhavatī

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Now I shall describe another Tirtha more excellent than the other Tīrthas. O excellent sage, it has been established as the greatest Tīrtha (by the Lord) under his own name.

2-3. Once upon a time, O Vyāsa, Maheśvara took some water from his head by means of a Kapāla for washing it. After washing (the skull) he poured down the water on the ground. An excellent Tirtha came into being there; the meritorious river named Gandhavatī well-known all over the three worlds (flowed) there.

4. In an instant it became filled with the blood of Brahmā. The bath therein is always praiseworthy as told by the Lord himself.

5-12. If one performs Śrāddha and offers libations of water to the Manes there, they attain everlasting satisfaction. The Piṭṛs in aerial forms stay on its southern bank, O tiger among sages. They think about those born of their Gotra: 'When will my son or great-grandson or any of the progeny come here and offer at least once balls of rice mixed with honey of the Kṣaudra variety and gingelly seeds or wheat-cake or milk-pudding or

Śyāmāka or Nīvāra rice?’ By the offer of that ball of rice the satisfaction shall be everlasting.

If a person takes the holy bath and offers a ball of rice on the lunar festival-day, the Pitṛs will become satisfied for twelve years.

Heavenly pleasures are everlasting unto those learned men and Brāhmaṇas who come here and propitiate the Pitṛs. Even if a speck of gold is given as charity there, it is everlasting (in benefit). This has been spoken by the Self-born Brahmā. That satisfaction cannot arise at Gaṅgādvāra, Prayāga, Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, Vārāṇasī and Gayā. The delighted Pitṛs will grant the men all desired boons.

13. Everyone attains that desire with the view whereof he has performed Śrāddha here. If he dies, he attains the greatest goal.

14-16. O Vyāsa, the ninth and the eighth lunar days, the new-moon and the full-moon as well as the days of the transit of the Sun from one zodiac to another (are the auspicious days).

One performing Śrāddha with great faith, propitiates the entire world, Brahmā, Indra, Rudra and other Devas, Sun, Fire, Brahmā and other deities, Viśvedevas, along with Gandharvas and Yakṣas, human beings and animals, reptiles, Pitṛs and whatever is there which exists on the earth.

17-20. The groups of Pitṛs attain satisfaction if the Śrāddha is performed in the dark half of every month on the fifteenth day, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, when the moon wanes, when there is Maitrayoga, when the Moon is in Viśākhā or Rohiṇī Asterism—Śrāddha should be devoutly performed at the time of the Asterism of Ajaikapāt of Indra (i.e. Pūrvābhādrapadā) by a person desirous of the satisfaction of the Pitṛs. The Pitṛs will become pleased thereby. “They are blessed, they are considerate towards us—these born in our family. Those who perform Śrāddha, those who offer rice-balls will give us everlasting pleasure through that offer of rice-balls.”

21-22. After coming here and taking the holy bath in the meritorious waters, a man attains all those desires along with the departed Pitṛs. He is surrounded by the Devas and becomes Siddha. They bestow the following desired things upon men: a pure mind and wealth, auspicious time, the (knowledge of) injunctions laid down, and greatest devotion.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Greatness of Daśāśvamedha¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. By taking the holy bath in Daśāśvamedhika and visiting Lord Maheśvara, a man obtains the merit of ten horse-sacrifices.

2-4. The merit of ten horse-sacrifices has been obtained through the holy plunge here by Manu, the leader of men, King Yayāti, Raghu, Uśanas, the great sage Lomaśa, Atri, Bhṛgu, the intelligent Dattātreyā, the meritorious Purūravas, Nahuṣa and Nala.

Towards the end of Dvāpara, King Bāṣkali too obtained it, O excellent Brāhmaṇa Vyāsa.

5-8. The Liṅga, dark in colour, should be adored always with devotion. By visiting and touching the Lord, one attains the benefit mentioned above.

The devotee should sincerely adore the Lord on the eighth day in the bright half of the month of Caitra and make a gift of a horse of good quality and beauty. The devotee is honoured in Śivaloka for as many thousand years as there are hairs counted on its body. Coming down from Śivaloka he becomes an emperor on the earth.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Glory of Ekānamśā²

Sanatkumāra said:

1. By bowing down to Goddess Ekānamśā well-known all over the three worlds and by adoring her in the prescribed manner one shall attain all Siddhis as the fruit.

1. As in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, a Daśāśvamedha Tirtha is claimed in the *Āvāntya-Khaṇḍa*. It appears that the name 'Daśāśvamedha' is popular in Purāṇas as a *Sthala Purāna* like *Karavīra Māhātmya* claims one at Kolhapur.

2. The story is a contribution of this Purāṇa to explain the greatness of the shrine. Ekānamśā is the former dark body of Brahmā. He invoked her to help gods by her influence at the time of the birth of Kārttikeya, in order to kill Tāraka.

2. When pleased, she will bestow all the Guṇas (supernatural powers) like Aṇimā (power of assuming minuteness), Guṭikāsiddhi (power of making use of magical pills), magical collyrium, sword and sandals, Bilavāsa (residence in cave, like a polecat), Rasāyana (elixir) etc. No doubt need be entertained in this regard.

3. Adored with the offerings of liquor and meat and other edible stuffs, the Goddess becomes pleased and always bestows all desired things on men.

4. He who adores the Goddess on the Mahānavamī day (9th day of the bright half of Āśvina) by (offering) a buffalo or a sheep as and when available, shall obtain all desired things.

Vyāsa said:

5. How was the Goddess born, the Goddess who is well-known as Ekānaṁśā and destroys all sins. I wish to hear everything.

Sanatkumāra said:

6. Formerly, at the beginning of Kṛtayuga Lord Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, remembered Nīśā (Night), his own body born previously.

7. Thereupon, Goddess Rātri (Night) approached Pitāmaha. On seeking Vibhāvarī (Night) in a secluded spot, Brahmā spoke to her:

Brahmā said:

8. O Vibhāvarī, O Mahāmāyā, listen to what should be done exactly on behalf of the Devas by you in near future.

9. The leading Daitya named Tāraka is an unconquered enemy of Suras. All the Devas, the heaven-dwellers, have been terrified by him.

10. Hence, O gentle lady, if Maheśa procreates an excellent son, he will certainly become the slayer of that Tāraka.

11. Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, who was Śaṅkara's wife, became angry with her father for some reason.

12-14. She will be born as the world-sanctifying daughter of Himālaya. Separated from her, Hara thought all the three worlds void. So he performed a penance in a cave of Himālaya resorted to by Siddhas. He will stay there for some time awaiting her birth. Hence the great Lord who will be born of both of them who have performed austerities, will become the slayer of Daitya Tāraka.

15. That Goddess of great shining brilliance will be agitated due to her separation (from Śiva) even as she is born, with only a slight awareness. She will be eager to be in contact with Hara.

16-17. There will be the union of both Pārvatī and Hara who has practised excellent penance and were united so well. Their intercourse, the cause of power, shall take place. For the sake of Suras you have to cause an obstacle. Listen how you are to cause the obstacle.

18-20. O mother, mark her (complexion) with your colour on the region of the womb. Blissfully delighted and holding her in secret, Śarva will in a delightful joke call her Kālī ('black one'). Thereupon she will become furious and will go away for the purpose of penance. Equipped with the power of penance she will give birth to a son who will be luminous like the moon. Undoubtedly he will be the slayer of the enemies of Suras.

21-25. O fair lady, as long as you have not transmitted your qualities to the body of Satī, the Dānavas, invincible to the worlds, should be killed by you. In view of your contact with her, you will be able to kill the Daityas. When this is carried out by you, O fair lady, Kālī will perform the penance. After concluding her observances, she will become Gaurī ('fair-complexioned one'). Then the Daughter of the Mountain shall grant you also *Sārūṣya* (similarity in form to her). Thereupon that Ekānaṁsā will be your sister. Equipped with her form and part, you will have the name Umā. O granter of boons, the world will adore you, the accomplisher of desires, as Ekānaṁsā. You will be able to reach everything due to different forms.

26-32. You alone are Gāyatrī with Omkāra as your face. You will be the expounder of Brahman. Having adopted beautiful form, you will be the natural desire for fight of kings. To Vaiśyas you (are) Goddess Kamalā (Lakṣmī). You yourself are the mother of Śūdras. Unto spiritual knowers you will be in

the form of the object of knowledge. You will be the ultimate goal of all embodied ones.

You are the fame of the famous. You are the prosperity of all embodied beings. You are the bestower of love's pleasure to those of captivated minds. You are the affection of those who are affectionate. You are the lustre of those who have adorned themselves. You are the peace of those of delighted activities. You are the delusion of the ignorant. You are the fame of those who worship (or sacrifice) methodically. You are the great shore of the oceans. You are the grace of the graceful. You are the coming into existence of all objects. You are the sustenance of those endowed with the worlds.

Thus, O fair lady, you will be talked about in the worlds in various forms. O granter of boons, those who see you and those who adore you, will attain all desires invariably. There is no doubt about this.

It was thus that she was born and eulogized by Brahmā. The great Goddess Ekānaṁsā should be meditated upon with devotion.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

*The Glory of Harasiddhi*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth, I shall describe Harasiddhi, the bestower of excellent Siddhis. When Pārvati was taken to that place, Siddhi was attained by Hara.

2. There were two powerful Dānavas named Caṇḍa and Pracaṇḍa. After devastating the entire heaven, they came to Kailāsa mountain.

3-7. They saw there Lord Giriśa with one of the hands holding the dice and holding in the right hand the Lord of serpents, the moon and the Khaṭvāṅga club (as stakes in gambling). He was saying, "O goddess, O fair lady, I am at your service. May the game continue with one more board."

1. The story illustrates the importance of the shrine in Mahākālavana.

The demons reached the place when the Lord was thus in a passionate mood. The Gaṇas of Śiva were assailed and destroyed by them, but they were restrained and resisted by Nandin. Nandin was pierced by them with javelins. Much blood flowed forth equally from both the sides, the right and the left.

On seeing Nandin, the son of Śilāda attacked, that goddess was meditated upon by Hara. She stood in front of him humbly bowing down.

8-10. Śiva said, "May those great Daityas be killed." and she said, "I shall kill them." Taking up the terrible hammer-like club, she hit furiously. When those Dānavas, arrogant of their prowess, were seen killed by her, Hara told her: "O Caṇḍī, the wicked Dānavas have been killed. Hence you will be well-known in the world by the name Harasiddhi." Then onwards that goddess who granted fulfilment to Hara, became famous as Harasiddhi in Mahākāla (vana).

11-17. An excellent man who visits Harasiddhi with the deepest devotion, attains everlasting enjoyment. On death he goes to Śivapura.

He who visits the eternal great goddess, the primordial Siddhi in the form of Vyoman (firmament), he who sees Harasiddhi, obtains the desired benefit.

There is no fear from enemies, nor poverty to one who remembers the four-syllabled Mantra, HA-RA-SI-DDHI (Harasiddhi).

A man who worships Harasiddhi on the Mahānavamī day and offers a buffalo as oblation, shall become a king on the earth.

Adored on the Navamī day, the goddess, Harasiddhi, the beloved of Hara, becomes always pleased, O Vyāsa, with men and grants them *Anavama* (exalted) benefit.

She is meritorious; she is the most sacred bestower of happiness everywhere. On being remembered, adored and visited, she bestows wealth, sons and happiness.

Those buffaloes etc., O Vyāsa, which are killed on the Mahānavamī day, attain heaven. There is no sin unto the slaughterers(!)

CHAPTER TWENTY

Pilgrimage to Fourteen Tīrthas¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. A man should devoutly visit *Vaṭayakṣiṇī* for a month and worship her with golden flowers. His *Siddhi* is never deficient. Thus the greatness of *Vaṭayakṣiṇī*. [Tīrtha No. 1]

2-18. A man who takes the holy bath in the *Piśācaka Tīrtha*, especially on the fourteenth day and offers gingelly seeds devoutly, never becomes a *Piśāca* (ghost, spirit). If the devotee makes any gift with anyone or anything in view, he shall have that everlasting benefit. His family shall be liberated from *Piśāca*-hood undoubtedly.

If the man takes the holy bath uttering anyone's name that man (as named) becomes rid of *Piśāca*-hood. If anyone offers here pots or pitchers full of gruel, he attains permanent salvation. No *Preta* (ghost) is born in his family (i.e. none of his family will attain ghosthood). [Tīrtha No. 2]

By visiting *Śiprāgūmṭheśvara*, a devotee of *Rudra*, who has conquered his sense-organs, is rid of all sins like a serpent getting rid of its slough. [Tīrtha No. 3]

A man of great devotion who takes the holy bath and visits *Agastyeśvara* shall leave off the abode of *Yama* and go to *Rudraloka*. [Tīrtha No. 4]

A man who bathes in *Śiprā* and visits *Ḍhuṇḍheśvara Śiva*, O *Vyāsa*, attains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. There is no doubt about it. [Tīrtha No. 5]

Formerly, O *Vyāsa*, the *Ḍamaru* (handdrum) was played upon by the Lord here. Hence the deity is known by the name *Ḍamarukeśvara*. There is no fear from ailment unto the man who devoutly visits *Ḍamarukeśvara*. On death he shall go to *Śivapura*. [Tīrtha No. 6]

1. The following are the 14 Tīrthas mentioned in this chapter: (1) *Vaṭayakṣiṇī*, (2) *Piśācaka Tīrtha*, (3) *Śiprā-gūmṭheśvara*, (4) *Agastyeśvara*, (5) *Ḍhuṇḍheśvara Śiva*, (6) *Ḍamarukeśvara*, (7) *Anādikalpeśvara*, (8) *Siddheśvara*, (9) *Virabhadra*, (10) *Caṇḍikā*, (11) *Svarṇajāleśvara*, (12) *Karkoṭeśvara*, (13) *Kapāleśvara*, and (14) *Bhairava*.

These sacred places lie on the route of the pilgrims in *Avantī Kṣetra*.

The man who visits Anādikalpeśvara devoutly, obtains a kingdom like Lord Purandara (Indra) who got heaven. O Vyāsa, he is likely to be envied even by Devas always. He rejoices with all worldly pleasures for more than hundreds of crores of Kalpas. [Tīrtha No. 7]

He who visits Siddheśvara, Vīrabhadra and Caṇḍikā attains Siddhi here itself. The man obtains victory everywhere. [Tīrtha Nos. 8, 9, 10]

A devotee should take the holy bath in the Triviṣṭapa Tīrtha and visit Svarṇajāleśvara and worship the Lord with gold. He is liberated from all sins. [Tīrtha No. 11]

The man should take the bath and visit Karkoṭeśvara Śīva. He need not be afraid of serpents. He will never be indigent. He who visits the eternal Mahāmāyā with great devotion becomes rid of Viṣṇumāyā and attains the greatest region. [Tīrtha No. 12]

The man who worships Kapāleśvara with great devotion shall be rid of great sins even if he is a Brāhmaṇa-slaughterer. [Tīrtha No. 13]

The man shall take the holy bath in Svargadvāra and visit Lord Bhairava. By visiting that Lord, one attains the benefit of a hundred Yajñas. [Tīrtha No. 14]

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

*The Greatness of Hanumatkeśvara*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall describe another deity, the Lord named Hanumatkeśvara who is adored by Devas and who bestows worldly pleasures and salvation as the benefit.

2. He who takes the holy bath in Rudrasaras, the lake pertaining to Śīva, and sees Hanumatkeśvara, rejoices in Vāyuloka for thousands of crores of Kalpas.

1. Hanumān brought a Mauktika (pearl) Liṅga from Laṅkā and installed it near Rudrasaras in Avantī. Due to association with Hanumat the Liṅga became known as 'Hanumatkeśvara'.

Vyāsa said:

3. O sinless one, narrate the story of Hanumatkeśvara, previously referred to by you, the ancient legend as it had happened.

Sanatkumāra said:

4. Formerly, the Rākṣasa named Rāvaṇa who was a thorn unto the three worlds, was slain and brought down in Laṅkā by Viṣṇu in the form of Rāma.

5. After killing that wicked one and taking Sītā, the daughter of Janaka, he reached his own city along with the monkeys and bears.

6-7. After regaining the kingdom Rāma seated amidst sages, asked Agastya, the excellent sage, at the end of the discourse, about the powers of the two—of Śambhu and the son of Vāyu. Then Agasti, the excellent sage, said:

8. “Just as Lord Maheśvara is incomparable in regard to heroism in battle, so also the son of Vāyu should be known. I am speaking the truth.”

9-10. On hearing this, Hanumān said (to himself), ‘Since my comparison has been made with Hara by the excellent sage in the presence of Rāghava, I shall go to Laṅkā (city) in order to request for a Liṅga from the blessed king of Rākṣasas, the sinless Vibhīṣaṇa.’

11. Then he went to Laṅkā and requested Vibhīṣaṇa, “O blessed one, give me a splendid Liṅga.”

12-13. The king of Rākṣasas said: “Take any Liṅga as you please. These six Liṅgas were installed by Rāvaṇa, my noble-souled brother, before the conquest of the three worlds. Tell me, O observer of holy Vratas, which Liṅga among these is desired by you? I shall give it to you. This is the truth, O monkey.”

14-18. Thereupon Hanumān took up a Liṅga shining like a pearl: “O sinless hero, give unto me this Liṅga that is seen (before you).” On hearing the words of Hanumān, Vibhīṣaṇa said: “O great warrior, the Liṅga that you are holding has already been given to you. It is reported that formerly Dhaneśvara (Kubera) endowed with devotion to Rudra, worshipped this Liṅga thrice a day. When he was taken a captive by Rāvaṇa,

it was through the power of this Liṅga that Dhaneśvara became free. Due to the favour of that Liṅga Dhaneśvara could preserve his wealth.”

Taking away that great Liṅga, the monkey became happy and satisfied.

Sanatkumāra said:

19. Taking the Liṅga with him he (Hanumat) started his (flight) in the clear sky. On the seventh day he reached the city of Avantikā.

20. Placing the Liṅga on the bank of Rudrasaras (lake), he took his bath. He was thinking of going to Mahākāla for the purpose of adoration.

21. He was desirous of lifting up that Liṅga. He could not lift it up.

22-23. The Lord who had been installed thus told the son of Vāyu: “In this holy spot, O Hanumān, let this be installed in your own name. It shall be known all over the world as Hanumatkeśvara.” The Liṅga that is as high as a mountain has been installed by the son of Vāyu.

24-26. If a man visits Lord Śiva, Hanumatkeśvara, on Saturdays, he need not be afraid of enemies. He shall be victorious in war. He need not be afraid of thieves too. He has (i.e. suffers from) neither poverty nor ill-luck. If a devotee bathes Hanumatkeśvara Śiva with oil, all his ailments perish. He is not afflicted by malignant Planets. The man who visits with devotion this Liṅga becomes liberated.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

The Efficacy of Rudrasaras

Śrī Sanatkumāra said:

1-3. Yameśvara should be bathed with water mixed with gingelly seeds. Then after smearing it with saffron, one should worship it with lilies.

Black agallochum should be burnt as incense. Gingelly seeds and raw rice-grains should be made over as religious gifts. He who visits Yameśvara thus and worships too the Lord armed with a trident will find Yama (as loving) as father, wherever he dies.

Sanatkumāra said:

4. O Vyāsa, I shall describe another Tīrtha, the most excellent of all Tīrthas. It is known by the name Rudrasaras. It is well-known in all the three worlds.

5. A devotee should take bath therein and be pure. He should then visit Koṭeśvara Śiva. He is rid of all sins. He goes to Rudraloka (the region of Rudra).

6-11. Listen to the benefit he attains after performing Śrāddha there. There is no doubt in this, O Vyāsa, that he obtains ten million times the benefit of ten horse-sacrifices and of a hundred Vājapeyas. If anything is given in Koṭi Tīrtha with the Pitṛs in view, everything becomes ten million times more blessed. There is no doubt about this. The man who takes his holy bath in Koṭi Tīrtha and meditates upon the Supreme Absolute is liberated from all sins like a serpent released from its slough.

O Brāhmaṇa, he who gets up early in the morning and takes his holy bath there obtains the benefit of (the gift of) a thousand cows by seeing Lord Mahākāla. The man who takes bath in the Koṭi Tīrtha and stays there for seven nights absolutely pure, obtains the benefit of a thousand Cāndrāyaṇas. He who keeps awake at night enjoys infinite benefit.

12-15. After Mahāsnāna (great bathing) the devotee should perform worship with scented flowers; he should spend the night fasting with the sense-organs controlled. He obtains *Sarvakāmitva* ('fulfilment of all desires') unobtainable even to Suras.

On the full-moon days in the months of Kārttika and Vaiśākha, the devotee should worship the Lord with fragrant flowers of the season, splendid clothes etc. Camphor, saffron, sandal and agallochum should be taken in equal quantities and powdered (pounded) on a rocky slab. Smearing Mahākāla with it, one becomes a servant of Rudra.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

Pilgrimage to Mahākāleśvara

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth, I shall carefully describe the pilgrimage to Mahākāla. It is auspicious, meritorious and conducive to welfare. It bestows the meritorious worlds.

2. After taking the holy bath in Rudrasaras and visiting Koṭeśvara Śiva and bowing down to him, a devotee should proceed towards the eternal Mahākāla.

3. After adoring the Lord of Devas by means of sweet scents, flowers and prostrations and bowing down to him, the devotee should go to Lord Kapālamocana.

4. It was exactly there that the Lord of the chiefs of Devas placed the Kapāla on the ground. No sooner was the Kapāla placed on the ground than the excellent Liṅga came up there.

5-6. Indeed Kapālamocana is destructive of all sins. The deity should be bathed with a hundred *Palas* of ghee or half of that or even a quarter, without undue hesitation for expenses. O eminent Brāhmaṇa, when the time is fully ripe, he is honoured in Śivaloka.

7. After bowing down to him the devotee should proceed towards the excellent Kapileśvara. By visiting this Lord, he is liberated from the sin of killing Brāhmaṇas.

8. Thereafter, he should go with concentration and mental purity to Lord Hanumatkeśvara, O Vyāsa. By visiting this deity, one gets unparalleled *Aiśvarya* (affluence and lordship).

9. Then he should go to the great eternal Lord named Paippala. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, by the mere sight of that deity, there shall be salvation.

10. Thereafter he should go to Svapneśvara with faith and devotion. By visiting this Lord (the effect of) evil dream shall perish.

11. Then he should go to the great Lord Īśāna-Viśvatomukha ('having faces all-round'). Merely by visiting this Lord, one shall be the Lord of the entire universe.

12. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Someśvara with anger fully restrained and the sense-organs properly controlled. By visiting this Lord he is liberated from the defects of leprosy

13. O Vyāsa, with great concentration and mental purity, he should go to Vaiśvānareśvara. Due to this visit, his prosperity always increases in the world.
14. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Lakulīśa with a pomegranate in his hand. There is no doubt about this, that identity with Rudra takes place by visiting that deity.
15. Thereafter, he should go to the great excellent Lord Gadyāṇeśvara. Merely due to the visit thereof all Siddhis are achieved.
16. Since this deity is always requested and adored by Devas for the purpose of attainment of Siddhi, this deity Vighnanāyaka is well-known as Abhyarthiteśvara.
17. Thereafter, the devotee should proceed towards Vayovṛddha (age-old) Mahākāla, the eternal deity. Due to his sight, ailments are prevented and old age checked. There is no doubt in this regard.
18. Then he should go to Prāṇīśa, the excellent Bala (strength? or the brother of Kṛṣṇa), the destroyer of obstacles. He shall bathe the deity with hundreds of potsful of water with devotion and concentration.
19. If the ablation is performed, all the Siddhis are obtained. Heaven too, O Vyāsa, is achieved through his sight.
20. Without passing that son (of Lord Śiva), the devotee should go to Daṇḍapāṇi ('Staff-armed'), the mere sight whereof makes Yamaloka disappear.
21. Then, with devotion and faith, he should go to Puṣpadanta. There, mere sight thereof enables one to be liberated from all sins.
22. Then, with concentration and mental purity, he should go to Guhya Mahākāla, by the sight whereof he is rid of all secret sins.
23. With steadiness in meditation, he should thereafter go to the excellent Durvāseśvara, by the mere sight whereof a man becomes blessed and contented for having done his duties.
24. In the vicinity of Durvāsas, the devotee restrains his breath. After reaching Gaurī Mahādurgā, he should exhale (his breath).
25. There the breath should be let out after worshipping the goddess. Thereafter, he should go to Kāleśvara, Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas.

26-32. By the mere sight thereof, he does not see (i.e. go to) Yamaloka.

Thereafter he should go to Vidhīśa Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, the sight whereof removes deafness.

He shall proclaim his name, place of nativity and Gotra. If the name is not proclaimed that pilgrimage shall become futile. Thereafter, O Vyāsa, he should sit in front of the Lord with concentration and mental purity. He should bow down frequently with devotion and speak this: "O Maheśvara, due to your favour, my pilgrimage has been (concluded and) dedicated to you. O Lord of the universe, redeem me from the terrible ocean of worldly existence." If the devotee circumambulates Mahākāla by this procedure; it is as beneficial as though the earth consisting of the seven continents has been circumambulated.

By circumambulating the Lord of Devas once, one gets the same fruit as is obtained by gifting a hundred thousand cows to a hundred thousand Brāhmaṇas. One shall circumambulate Mahākāla with the greatest devotion.

33-35. Śaṅkara has told me that at every step (in the Yātrā) he gets the benefit of a Yajña. By the worship of Yātreśvara here, it is as though sixty thousand crores and sixty hundred crores of deities have been worshipped.

Listen to the meritorious benefit of that devotee who performs Yātrā thus with due mental concentration on Śiva and makes monetary gifts of a thousand. He is rid of sins committed in the course of seven births.

36-41. A man should thus conclude his pilgrimage and go home. He should feed twenty-six excellent Brāhmaṇas, that being the number of the deities visited in the course of the pilgrimage.¹ He should also feed other devotees of Śiva, engrossed in the meditation of Śiva. He should make monetary gifts along with garments, get the formal permission and then send them off.

He should follow upto the doorway each one of them, in the order of the deities visited.

Afterwards he should give a milch cow with all appertunances to the preceptor of Dharma. He should not hesitate at all in

1. The statement is not correct. There are twenty-three deities to be visited (as per the list in this text) during this pilgrimage.

spending money over this. Then, O Vyāsa, he should take food accompanied by all servants. He should feed the needy, the helpless, the poor, the blind, the handicapped etc. Listen to the benefit thereof which I shall mention.

He redeems a hundred generations of his mother and of his father and gains satisfaction. He rejoices in Śivaloka for thousands of crores of Kalpas.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

*The Greatness of Vālmīkeśvara*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. He who worships the Lord named Vālmīkeśvara after meditating silently on him, shall attain the status of a poet.

Vyāsa said:

2. Who is this Lord Vālmīkeśvara? What is the origin of such a Lord, the mere sight of whom bestows the power of composing poetry?

Sanatkumāra said:

3. O Vyāsa, formerly there was a Brāhmaṇa named Sumati, born in the family of Bhṛgu. His wife Kauśikī was richly endowed with beauty and youth.

4. A son was born to him named Agniśarman. Though admonished by his father, he did not feel inclined towards the study of the Vedas.

5. After a lapse of many years there occurred a drought. Hence he, a victim of that disaster, went in the southern direction.

1. This Liṅga was installed by Vālmiki, a Brāhmaṇa-robber transformed into a sage-poet. This story is repeated in SkP, *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* (*Vaiśākha Māhātmya* Ch. 21), *Nāgarakhaṇḍa* (Ch. 124) and *Pralhāsakhaṇḍa* (Ch. 298). The names of the robbers are Agniśarmā (in this chapter), Lohajaṅgha and Vaiśākha. These are credited with the authorship of Rāmāyaṇa.

6. Then Brāhmaṇa Sumati accompanied by his wife and son reached a forest in an alien country. He built a hermitage and stayed there.

7. Agniśarman came to be associated with Ābhīras and robbers. That sinner began to kill whoever came that way.

8-9. His memory (of being a Brāhmaṇa) was lost and Vedas, Smṛtis, Gotra etc. all were forgotten.

On a certain occasion, the Seven Sages of great holy vows came that way in the course of their pilgrimage. On seeing them, Agniśarman desired to kill them. He said thus:

10. “Give up these clothes, slippers and umbrellas. You all will be killed by me. You will go to the abode of Yama.”

11. On hearing his words, Atri spoke these words: “How can you think of committing the sin of torturing us. We being ascetics, are engaged in pilgrimage.”

Agniśarman said:

12. This is what I keep in my mind: I have a mother, a father, a son and a wife all important ones to me. I have to make provision for their food.

Atri said:

13-16. Immediately ask your father and others regarding what you earn through your (sinful) activities: “Whose is that sin which is being committed for your sake?” It is possible that they may say, “Do not kill living beings in vain.”

Agniśarman said:

Never before have they been asked like this (by me). It is due to your speech that sense has dawned on me. I shall go and ask all of them: “Who thinks and feels how?” All of you do wait here till I come back.

17-19a. After telling them this, he went to his father and asked, “A great sin is seen being committed by disregarding Dharma and injuring living beings. Whose is that sin of mine? May it be told.” The father and mother said, “The sin is not ours. You know what you commit. Hence what is done should be thought over (experienced) by you.”

19b-20. On hearing the words of the two, the wife spoke these words: "It is not my sin. All the sin is yours."

He said the same words to his son and the son said, "I am only a boy."

21-22. On realizing their feelings in the heart of hearts and their reaction too in the light of the fact, he felt thus, "I am doomed. The sages alone are my refuge."

Then he cast off his black stick wherewith many creatures had been killed. Keeping his hairs dishevelled, he immediately went and stood before the sages.

23-24. He prostrated before them like a log of wood and spoke these words: "I have no mother or father. I have neither a wife nor a son. I have been abandoned by all of them. Hence I am seeking refuge in you. It behoves you to save me from hell by offering excellent instructions and words of advice."

25-27. On hearing him speak thus, the sages said to Atri, "By your words sense has dawned on him. He should be favoured by you. O sage, let him be your disciple." After saying to them, "Let it be so," he (Atri) said to Agni (i.e. Agniśarman): "Practise meditation. By this practice of Dhyāna and the repetition of a great Mantra (i.e. name of Rāma¹), seated at the root of the tree you will attain the great Siddhi, although you have been a slayer of people and perpetrator of many terrible crimes and sins very difficult to subdue."

28. After saying thus, all of them went away as they pleased. He (Agni) became a Yogin remaining in the state of meditation for thirteen years.

29-31. As he remained motionless, an anthill grew over him. On returning by that path, the sages heard someone speaking in the anthill. They were surprised at it. With spikes fitted to logs of wood, they dug up the anthill. On seeing him the sages tactfully (skilfully) lifted him up. That Brāhmaṇa (Agni) bowed down to those eminent sages.

32-33a. With his radiance born of penance, he bowed down humbly and said: "Due to your favour, auspicious knowledge has been acquired by me now. Wretched as I was, I have been redeemed by all of you. I had sunk deep into the mire of sins."

33b-34. On hearing these words of his, those excessively pious sages spoke these words: "O son, since you stayed within

1. "MA-RĀ" in the case of Agniśarman (Vālmiki) as per traditional story.

the *Valmīka* (anthill) with perfect concentration, your name Vālmīki will become well-known all over the earth.”

35-37. After saying this, the sages endowed with penance, went in the direction of their own (choice). When the eminent sages had gone, Vālmīki, the most excellent one among performers of penance, went to Kuśasthali and propitiated Maheśvara and composed a pleasing epic poem, which they call *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is the first among narrative poems.

Ever since then the Lord of Devas named Vālmīkeśvara became well-known in Avantī bestowing poetic ability on men.

38. Thus the excellent Liṅga, Vālmīkeśvara has been described to you. Merely by visiting that Lord, ability to compose poems comes up naturally.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

The Greatness of Śukreśvara and Other Shrines

Sanatkumāra said:

1. By worshipping Śukreśvara with white flowers and unguents and prostrating thereafter with devotion, (a devotee) is honoured in Rudraloka.

2. By visiting Bhīmeśvara and worshipping him carefully and devoutly, O Vyāsa, a devotee does not face fears arising from battle, water, fire and nights.

3. By bathing Gargeśvara with gingelly oil and by worshipping with Bilva leaves, a man attains increase in piety.

4. The devotee should observe fast on the fourteenth lunar day. He should bathe (the Lord) with water mixed with gingelly seeds measuring a Prastha. He should then perform *Homa* with gingelly seeds. Thereby he shall always attain happiness.

5. By offering the gift of a thousand cows with special emotional fervour, the devotee shall be rid of the bondage of the world. He goes to Rudraloka (region of Rudra).

6. By worshipping Kāmeśvara with unguents of saffron etc. the devotee undoubtedly goes to heaven by means of an aerial chariot that can go wherever one pleases.

7. By bowing down to Cūḍāmaṇi on the ninth day in the bright half of Kārttika, a man averts the danger of ignominious birth. He becomes pious-minded.

8. The devotee, should observe fast and worship Caṇḍīśvara on the eighth lunar day in the dark half. He is not touched by grief arising from passing over *Nirmālya* (the remnants of adoration).

9. A man should proceed to all these meritorious and holy Tirthas of Maheśvara. He should keep his mind pure and his soul pious. He goes to the world of Śāmbhu which is very beautiful.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

The Glory of Mandākinī-Kṣetra

Vyāsa said:

1. O sage, sacred shrines in Guhya Sthāna have been described by you. Now tell me the dimensions and extent of Mahākālavana.

Sanatkumāra said:

2. I shall tell you as was heard by me formerly when Brahmā himself was saying. Listen to me as I say it.

3-4. Upto the extent of a Yojana, it shines splendidly in the four quarters by means of golden ornamental gates and arches from where pearl-strings are suspended. There are golden waterpots with white lotuses on their tops (mouths). And the gates are adorned with a number of precious stones.

Pañceśānī Yātrā:

5. At the portals, powerful doorkeepers employed by Maheśvara¹ shine splendidly. They render great favour unto all the worlds.

1. The Dvārādhyakṣas are as follows: Piṅgaleśa (east), Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara (south), Bilveśa (west), Uttareśvara (north). These four shrines with the addition of Mahākāla constitute the five shrines in Pañceśānī Yātrā.

6. Piṅgaleśa, in the form of a boy, is stationed in the east. He is (brilliant) like fire. Fair-complexioned and majestic, he stands facing the Tirtha followed by Gaṇas.

7-13a. The great Yogin, Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara (Nakuliśa) is stationed in the south. In the west, facing the holy spot, is stationed Bilveśa. Appointed by Maheśa, he has occupied the western quarter.

Uttareśvara stands stationed resorting to the northern direction. He has been ordered by Śaṅkara to accomplish all tasks. Righteous men who stay here in this holy spot, go to Rudrapura on death by means of aerial chariots going everywhere as desired.

The devotee should bow down to Pañceśānī ('the group of five Īśāna deities') either on the fourteenth day in the dark half or on the new-moon day when the Sun and the Moon come together. They can be bowed to in the due order or in the reverse order. He should observe fast for a day meditating upon Maheśvara. He is liberated from all the sins committed in the course of many births.

O Brāhmaṇa, thus the devotee who begins the pilgrimage of Pañceśānī goes to Rudraloka with this body of his.

13b-16. I shall explain to you another Pañceśānī Yātrā to facilitate its smooth performance. Listen. It is destructive of all sins.

The devotee takes his holy bath early in the morning on the eleventh day (of the lunar month) with great mental concentration and purity. After the performance of Śrāddha, he bows down to Mahākāla, Īśāna, Īśvara. Thereafter he should go to Piṅgaleśa for taking his holy bath and perform Śrāddha. Then he approaches Lord Gaṇeśa Piṅgaleśvara. After worshipping the deity with scents, incense and flowers, he should return.

17. Again he goes to Mahākāla and takes his holy bath. With the sense-organs under control, he adores the self-born eternal Lord of the chiefs of Devas.

18. He should spend the night at Īśāna after dinner. Meditating on Maheśāna, he should lie down on the ground.

19. On the twelfth day, the man takes his morning bath as before and goes to Kāyāvarohaṇa, where he offers worship as per procedure as in the case of Piṅgaleśvara.

20. On the thirteenth day, he should worship in the same manner Bilveśa in the west. So also on the fourteenth day, he should worship Uttareśvara in the north.

21. On the new-moon day, he should take his holy bath. Thus becoming clean he should worship Mahākāleśvara with scents, incense and flowers as well as food-offerings (Naivedyas) of diverse kinds.

22. After the performance of music, dances, etc., he should bow down and crave pardon (for omissions and commissions). After performing the pilgrimage as mentioned before, he should go home.

23-26. He should feed five Brāhmaṇas devoutly attached to Śiva. Then he should bow down to the Brāhmaṇas, the residents of Mahākāla deemed to be the deity himself. He should adore and propitiate them with gold and fresh clothes of nice texture. The gift to be made at Piṅgalaka is a chariot, that at Kāyāvarohaṇa is an elephant, a horse at Bilveśvara and a bull at Uttareśvara. The gift at Mahākāla is a cow. Everywhere the usual appertenances should be given too. Listen to the benefit and merit of the person who does like this, O Vyāsa.

27. He rejoices in heaven along with all the members of his mother's and father's families accompanied by dance and music etc. of the celestial damsels and also aerial chariots that can go wherever one pleases. Here ends the greatness of the Yātrā of Pañceśānī.

Seven Names of Avantī

28. If anyone regularly circumambulates Kuśasthalī, it is (as beneficial as though) the entire earth consisting of the seven continents has been circumambulated.

29. The man who visits Padmāvati and adores her with lotuses, offering incense along with Naivedya, shall go to Brahmapura on death.

30. O Vyāsa, by worshipping Svarṇaśṅgāṭikā with flowers resembling gold with great devotion, he goes to Śiva's palace.

31. He who visits Goddess Avantiṇī well-known all over the three worlds, goes to the city of Purandara by means of an aerial chariot able to go anywhere as one chooses.

32. He who devoutly worships Goddess Amarāvati with lotuses, becomes highly delighted and always rejoices in heaven with the immortal ones.

33. He who visits Goddess Ujjayanī with devotion, mental concentration and purity, becomes honoured in Rudraloka richly endowed with all amenities of affluence.

34. He who has become pure due to the devotion to Rudra and visits Viśālā becomes rid of the three types of sins. No doubt need be felt here.

Thus Ends the Greatness of Śrī Kalpasaptaka ('Seven names of Avantī in seven Kalpas').

35. Listen, O Vyāsa, to the description of the great Tīrtha formerly adored by Brahmā. It is named Akrūreśvara and there Pitāmaha became a Siddha.

36. A person should worship the deity there after observing fast on the eighth lunar day in the dark half, with sense-organs conquered, mind subdued and body kept clean. He shall attain Rudraloka.

37. While staying in the house in the morning the man should not speak to anyone. By visiting Lord Akrūreśvara he shall attain the fruit of the gift of gold.

Thus ends the Greatness of Akrūreśvara

38. The devotee should take the holy bath, keep himself clean and control his sense-organs and visit Brahmā. He is liberated from terrible sins. On death, he goes to Brahmaloaka.

39. Brahmā seated himself in Padmāsana posture meditating on the highest state. He was approached with a request by Vasiṣṭha and other sages regarding Karmas and Sambhava (birth).

The Sages said:

40. Ādityas, Maruts, Sādhyas, two Aśvins, and Piṭṛs of the worlds—all these are worshipped on the earth by human beings.

41. It is said (in scripture) that planets, sun, stars, Yakṣas, Diggajas, fire, wind and all of us, Devas, are parts of yours.

42. Tell us how do you meditate, O Lord of Devas?

Brahmā said:

43. There are essentially two Vidyās. They are *Parā* and *Aparā*. Both of them are eternal and corporeal. They are my forms.

The Sages said:

44. O Pitāmaha, how shall (can) we know you, the greatest Lord, whereby the greatest Siddhi can be achieved at your sight?

Brahmā said:

45-47. The holy spot called Kuśasthali is very great. It was requested for by me who was desirous of performing a Yajña. Lord Śrīkaṇṭha, the consort of Pārvatī, was requested. I was told by that Lord Parameṣṭhin: "O Pitāmaha, this holy spot extending to more than a Yojana all-round has been given to you except the Mahākālavana." Though restrained I remained hidden there in the forest. I was told angrily by Kapardin (Śiva), "We shall not come near you."

48. Thereupon the Yajña was begun by taking (the help of) Nārāyaṇa. Still my Yajña came to be known by Śambhu, the Lord of Devas.

49. Lord Kapardin came to the Yajñavāṭa (enclosure of Yajña) for the sake of alms. He was told there by the Yajña priests, "Do not stand here, you despicable one."

50-51. Those persons there were told by Kapardin, "Then I shall come again." After saying this he placed the skull on the ground. The great Lord Kapardin went to river Śiprā for bathing. After Kapardin had gone to Śiprā, the Brāhmaṇa said:

52-53. "How is the Homa to be performed? The Kapāla is in the sacrificial hall. Learned men of yore have said that purity is spoilt by skulls (Kapāla)."

The Kapāla (skull) was lifted up by the Sadasya (member priest) himself with his hand. When it was lifted another Kapāla occupied its place. When that was removed another came up.

54. Those excellent sages could not see the end of these Kapālas. Thinking that the Kapardin ('man with matted hairs') was Rudra, they sought refuge in him.

55. Thereupon Maheśvara who was pleased with their devotion made himself visible. The Lord with Kapāla in his hand said to me:

56-57. “O Brahmā, choose a boon, whatever may be in your mind. There is nothing which cannot be granted to you. I shall actually give you everything. O Four-faced One, this place called Brahmottara has been given. Get everything done as you please in regard to the four castes.”

58. I said, “So be it” to Īśāna Parameśvara who said thus in the open assembly. No other boon was chosen by me.

59. The name Ujjayinī was given to Kuśasthalī. Thereafter the holy pit called Mandākinī was made there by me.

60-63. O Brāhmaṇas, if the holy bath is taken there, one is liberated from all sins. The devotee should place four auspicious *Arthaghaṭas* (waterpots of specific purpose) in the four quarters filled with gingelly seeds and wrapped in clothes along with fruits and baked cakes in the festival days in the month of Kārttika or Māgha. They are to be given to scholars of the four Vedas. The first (eastern) one (is to be given) to Ṛgveda, the southern one to Yajurveda, the western one to Sāmaveda and the northern one to Atharvan. He should utter this Mantra: “This has been gifted with the Vedas in view; thus may Pitāmaha be pleased.” Listen attentively to the merit, if this is done.

64. The benefit derived from all other Tīrthas becomes increased thousand-fold in the case of holy bath and hundred thousand in the case of Japas.

65. The gift should be known as increased ten million times in Mandākinī undoubtedly. In the month of Kaumuda (i.e. Kārttika), the devotee should make the gift of a cow.

66. In the month of Kārttika, Gṛta Dhenu (cow made of ghee) should be gifted; in the month of Māgha that of gingelly seeds, of Jaladhenu in Vaiśākha (or the articles referred to are gifted along with a cow). Thereby the devotee shall be rid of sins.

67. By the sight of Mandākinī all sins, verbal, mental and physical, perish.

68. A Tīrtha on a par with Mandākinī is not seen on the earth. The devotee rejoices in Brahmaloaka merely by seeing it.

69. One who takes the holy bath in Mandākinī and performs Śrāddha on the full-moon day and on the new-moon day rejoices in the world of Pitṛs.

70-72. A man who sees Pitāmaha everyday, becomes united with (i.e. gets) the benefit of a thousand horse-sacrifices and a hundred Rājasūyas. There is no doubt in this, O ascetics. This is the truth. After the Manvantara came to a close and Vaivasvata Manvantara arrived again, Maheśvara entered the sacrificial hall of Brahmā with the same guise of an insane person with erected penis.

73. Those Brāhmaṇas began to curse; others censured him. Still others struck the penis with dust. The Brāhmaṇas cursed his (activity).

74. Others, haughty with power hit him with lumps of clay and sticks. Others caught hold of his crown-like matted hairs and pulled him.

75-77a. Others asked him whether it was one of his Vratas and if so by whom was it demonstrated. They continued: "There are women here. How is it that this has been committed by you? Was an action like this committed by Brahmā? Or by Viṣṇu himself or by the Lord Giriśa? By whom has this evil action performed? Do not deride and deceive the Lord of Devas. You are worthy of being killed by us today."

77b-80. On being hit and hurt by the Brāhmaṇas thus, Śaṅkara, the great holy Lord, smiled and told all those Brāhmaṇas: "Why do you hit me—a lunatic who has lost his senses? All of you are compassionate, and well-established in a friendly attitude." Even as Lord Hara in the form of a contemptible man said this those Brāhmaṇas overwhelmed and enchanted by the Māyā of the Lord hit the matted-haired Lord with their hands and kicked him with their feet.

81-86. On being struck by those Brāhmaṇas, he became angry. Thereupon they were cursed by the Lord: "You shall be bereft of the Vedic study. Your tuft will be tied upwards. You will be armed with sticks. You will sustain yourselves through other men's wives. You will be addicted to the game of dice and to prostitutes. You will neglect your fathers and mothers. The wealth and learning of the father will not pass on to the son. They by whom my penis was hit shall become ineffective in all their sense-organs. They will be begging for alms in a terrific manner. They will sustain themselves through other peoples' balls of rice. Devoid of wealth and grain, they will be muttering about themselves and their sufferings.

In the case of those who showed pity while I was being hit by the Brāhmaṇas, all of them will have wealth, sons, slaves, servants etc. With my favour, their women shall be of exalted families." After granting the boons and cursing them Īśvara vanished.

87. After the Lord had gone, they realized that it was Lord Śaṅkara. Carefully searching for him, they went to Mahākālavana.

88. After taking the holy bath in Rudrasaras, they began to utter the *Śatarudriya Mantras*. At the end of the Japa, the Lord told them by means of unembodied speech:

89-92a. "Falsehood has not been uttered by me even wantonly. Where is the happiness therein, O Brāhmaṇas? I shall bless you further. Neither the race, nor the wealth nor the progeny becomes broken in the case of those Brāhmaṇas who are quiescent with control over the sense-organs and who remain devoted to me. Those who strictly adhere to the performance of Agnihotra, those who are devoted to Janārdana, those who worship Brahmā and Divākara (the Sun-god), the heap of refulgence, will never meet with inauspiciousness. Those whose mind is cool and equanimous will never meet with disaster."

92b. After saying this much, the Lord, the Lord of the Devas, became silent.

93. After obtaining the curse and the boon from Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, all of them came to the place where Pitāmaha was present.

94. Propitiating Viriñci too by means of the Japas, they stayed in front of him. The pleased Brahmā told them: "May the boon be chosen and received from me too."

95. All those excellent Brāhmaṇas were delighted at those words of Brahmā. They thought, 'O Brāhmaṇas, what boon should be requested for when Pitāmaha is satisfied?'

96-104. Some of the Brāhmaṇas said: "Let us choose the Vedas." Others said: "Let wealth and grain be requested for unhesitatingly." Others said: "Of what avail are riches unto us, when Pitāmaha is pleased? May the Agnihotras, the Vedas, the different Śāstras, quiescent and affluent worlds belong to us through the grant of the boon." Speaking thus, those Brāhmaṇas became indignant. For the sake (of the specification) of the boon, they attempted to fight with one another. Some of them took up arms and started fighting. Others fled from the scene. Some of the Brāhmaṇas were indifferent. Some remained silent observers.

On seeing them fighting thus, the Lord spoke to the Brāhmaṇas: "Even at the very outskirts of the Śālā (Sacrificial Hall) the ill-advised Brāhmaṇas became angry. They began to fight and flee. The group of people who were indifferent shall become deprived of their jobs. The third group that remained tacit observers shall become learned in the Vedas. The group that took up arms and was ready to fight shall become always addicted to game of dice, prostitutes, thievery and other men's wives. All the four types of Brāhmaṇas shall be deprived of their jobs."

After saying this, Brahmā went to his excellent abode Vairāja.

105. Thus, O sages, is my greatest holy spot in the zone of Avantī. Men on the earth call this a divine city.

106. Nothing will be difficult of access in my world to those quiescent Brāhmaṇas who permanently reside in the holy spot.

107-109. There are these holy Tirthas, viz. Kolāmukha, Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Vārāṇasī, Prabhāsa, Badarikāśrama, Prayāga, Gaṅgādvāra, the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean, Rudrakoṭi, Virūpākṣa and Mitravana. The Siddhi that is achieved by men in these holy shrines in the course of twelve years, can be achieved here in Ujjayinī in a month if the mind is steadfast in celibacy. There is no doubt at all.

110. O excellent sages, this is the most excellent one of all Tirthas: it is the most excellent holy spot. This is always pleasing to me.

111. The greatness of Mandākinī, the excellent origin of the holy spot (has been heard). What else do you wish to hear, O excellent Brāhmaṇas?

Sanatkumāra said:

112. All these sages beginning with Vasiṣṭha heard this statement of Brahmā, O Vyāsa. Thereupon, they entered the greatest meditation.

113. After meditating for a long time, they became inclined to live there. They went to Avantimaṇḍala along with their wives to continue their Agnihotra rites.

114-115. On seeing Mahākālavana, the great river Śīprā, the Śmaśāna, the Ūṣara (barren land) and the river Gandhavatī, they fixed their residence there after taking the holy bath in Koṭitīrtha. Their interest enhanced on frequently remembering the words of Brahmā.

116. On being urged by Arundhatī to go there the noble-souled Vasiṣṭha spoke to his wife, O excellent sages:

117-120. “O wide-eyed lady, who will not like to stay in Ujjayinī? We have Mahākāla, the river Śiprā and a goal free from impurities. A man who takes his holy bath in the great river and bows to Mahākāla who is difficult of access, will never bewail death. The dead one whether a worm, or a locust shall become a follower of Rudra. Where it is heard that salvation is obtained thus (i.e. easily), how can I forsake it.” After saying this, the chief of sages remained there itself. He stayed there with other eminent sages praising the beauty of the forest.

CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

The Glory of Aṅkapāda (Restoration of Sāndīpani’s Son)

Sanatkumāra said:

1. He who sees Rāma and Janārdana in the holy spot Aṅkapāda in Avantī, does not see Yamaloka as a result of their sight alone.

Vyāsa asked:

2. O great sage, how did they go to the holy spot named Aṅkapāda? How is it that one who sees them does not see Yamaloka even if he were a slayer of a Brāhmaṇa?

Sanatkumāra said:

3. In order to lighten the burden (on the earth) Lord Rāma and Janārdana incarnated in the family of Yadu. They were endowed with great lustre and divine forms.

4-5. After killing Kāmsa along with Cāṇūra and crowning Ugrasena as the king, the lion of the family of Yadus (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) asked him, “After your son has been killed what else remains for me to do?” On being asked thus, King Ugrasena said as follows:

6-10. "O Kṛṣṇa, everything will be realized (by you). Nothing is inaccessible to you. Both of you will learn all lores. Go to Ujjayinī. You will be masters of all learning."

Then Rāma and Keśava went to Brāhmaṇa Sāndīpani. They learned by heart all the Vedas and all the Ācāras (Smṛti scriptures). They learned Dhanurveda along with the secrets and the technique of (discharging and) withdrawal. They learned all these things in the course of sixtyfour days and nights. That was really a miracle, O Brāhmaṇa. Sāndīpani pondered over their superhuman and almost impossible achievement and thought that Candra (Moon) and Sūrya (Sun) had come to him. So he did not say anything. Both of them went to the Tīrtha to bathe.

11-14. The Brāhmaṇa entered Mahākālavana along with the disciples. Both of them, Rāma and Keśava too, entered along with the disciples and stood making obeisance to Mahākāla. He said to Keśava: "Since you, the Lord of Devas, incarnated as a man, good people as well as those without sense have become happy for ever. Those who had harassed the people and were always arrogant due to their strength, all those kings, the chief of whom was Kaṁsa, have been killed by both of you. Now, O sinless one, the sustenance of sages, Siddhas, Suras and others should be undertaken by you."

15-21. (*Probably some lacuna here*) "I shall do so," saying to him thus, he bowed down and went away, looking at Sāndīpani. The disciples said this everyday. No one believed in their words (of the disciples) because it was wonderfully mysterious. Therefore he himself went (out) to see the miracle as expressed by the disciples. Then a sound arose when both of them came together. They came home. The preceptor then spoke these words: "I did not know them as the heroic scions of the family of Yadu and Vṛṣṇi." Thereupon Kṛṣṇa who had done his duty, spoke these words to Sāndīpani in a delighted mood: Along with Balarāma, he asked, "What shall I give as the fee unto the preceptor?" On hearing those hearty words, the delighted preceptor said: "Through your effort I wish to get back my son who died in the salty sea. Only one son was born to me. He too was swallowed by a whale at Prabhāsa while I was in my pilgrimage. You do get him back." Kṛṣṇa said, "So be it" and went away with the permission of Rāma.

22. The Ocean told him: “Pañcajana, a great Daitya, in the form of a whale has swallowed the boy. He is staying within me.”

23-28. Then he killed the excessively powerful Pañcajana who was in the form of a whale. He took out the conch from within him. Formerly this conch was taken away sportively by the whale from the house of the Lord of Waters.

When Janārdana did not find the boy within his belly, he thought that he had gone to the abode of Yama. Then he said to Varuṇa: “O Sir, O Lord of aquatic beings, may a great chariot be given to me. Let me be given that chariot whereby Daityas and Dānavas who were haughty due to their strength were killed by me formerly in the course of a battle. After the enemies had been killed, the chariot had been kept with you as a deposit. O Lord of the Waters, let that be returned to me justly. With that chariot I can go and subdue the king of the departed ones in battle.”

On hearing this, the Ocean became delighted in his mind after realizing that Hari was bent upon his task. He gave unto him the chariot that could not be tossed about in battle by Suras and Asuras.

29-33. Hari along with Rāma rejoiced on seeing the chariot. It was embellished with jewels and covered with the hide of tigers. It was surrounded by groups of tigers. Its various parts were shaped wonderfully. It shone with Garuḍa as the emblem on its banner. The horses Śaibya, Sugrīva, Puṣpadanta and Balāhaka were yoked to it. It could not be conquered by Devas, Devendra, Dānavas, Asuras and Rākṣasas. It was equipped with complete sets of many weapons. It was embellished with jewels and corals. It shone like a thousand suns dazzling simultaneously. Its four yokes had beautiful faces (tips). Hundreds of tinkling hells increased its beauty. The bells and chowries shone like discs of the moon. It was tough and rugged in form like Saṁvarta (cloud at the time of annihilation). The Lord of birds acted as its banner. On seeing this, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma rejoiced without being surprised.

34. After circumambulating and bowing down to the deities, Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) got into the aerial chariot more than a Yojana long.

35. Then Janārdana, the abode of the entire universe, hurriedly proceeded towards the southern direction to the city of Yama, enveloped in thousands of rays. Acyuta held up his conch and blew it.

36. The Lord holding the Śārṅga bow, blew his conch-shell. By that sound the residents of the abode of Yama became terrified.

37. Men devoted to sinful activities and hence confined within hells became delighted and happy. The fires blazed at the sight of Kṛṣṇa.

38. The missiles and the machines (of torture) of diverse kinds (in hell) became blunted and crushed by the sight of the Lord of Devas.

39. The (hell) named Asipatra became shorn of (sword-like) leaves. The hell named Raurava lost all its terrifying nature.

40. That which is called Bhairava (terrible) became Abhairava (non-terrible), Kumbhīpāka (hell) became Avācika (name of a hell, speechless). Śṛṅgāṭa (hell) became like a Śṛṅga (horn); Lohasūci (hell with iron needles) became Asūcika (needleless).

41-43. The impassable Vaitaraṇī river became easily fordable to men. When Viśveśvara went there all the Narakas (hells) ceased to be. Thereupon all the men who were consigned to the hells became liberated as their sins perished at the sight of Viṣṇu, the destroyer of *Tamas* (darkness, sin).

On seeing the lotus-eyed Lord, they became rid of all sins. They attained the immutable position. They got into thousands of aerial chariots all-round.

44. Thereupon, O sage, the entire zone of Nirayas (hells) became tenantless, due to the sight of that Lord Viṣṇu identical with the universe (or having multiformed features).

45. Then the extremely fierce messengers of Yama restrained Kṛṣṇa who was entering the Narakas fighting (on the way).

The Servants of Yama said:

46-49. O honourable warrior, do not bring the chariot this way. Those who disturb the peaceful sleep of other men's wives fall deep down in hell. The men of great sins specially ordered by Yama cannot be released even in the course of millions of

years. They too, on seeing you, have become liberated. They have gone to heaven immediately.

On hearing these words of those servants the Slayer of Madhu was much overwhelmed with pity. He said again: "I have come here for the liberation. I am the bestower of heavenly bliss on all. I am one who wards off Yamaloka. O messengers of Yamarāt, convey quickly my word (message) to Yama."

50. On hearing these words the messengers hastened to Yama. They conveyed to him the report regarding the release from Narakas.

51-52. Then Yama got enraged and ordered the servants: "If any man transgresses the limit and comes here, go and withhold him; seize and bring him here. Let this Narāntaka go along with the other servants."

53-58. On being ordered thus by Yama, that servant Narāntaka went and restrained Acyuta with overbearing words. When he could not be checked, Narāntaka got furious. Then Keśava was hit with very fierce arrows. In the course of the battle Baladeva too was struck with various kinds of arrows. Both of them struck by the terrible servants lifted their divine bows and hit the servants of Yama with many thousands of arrows. On being attacked by the powerful Bala (Rāma) in the battle Narāntaka fell down. Split in the head by the mace, his eyes came out. When the heroic servant of Yama, named Narāntaka, fell down, the entire army of the servants became distressed. They withdrew from the battle.

59-62. Those messengers became frightened when struck down by Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. They said to Yama that Narāntaka had already been struck down.

Thereupon Yama himself proceeded ahead furiously, surrounded by servants all-round. The angry Yama said then, "I have never been subdued before by enemies."

Accompanied by the loud reports of the wardrums and other musical instruments, the tumultuous sounds of Ānaka and Gomukha and various sorts of Ḍamaruka, Citragupta too proceeded ahead. Devas, Vidyādharas and Siddhas watched the vast army of Kṛtānta (Yama) proceeding against Kāmapāla (i.e. Balarāma), the Lord of the world who was never agitated in the course of war.

63-70. Then, urged by Citragupta all the *Kiṅkaras* (servants of Yama) surrounded the chariot and attacked with volleys of arrows Bala and Keśava. They hit both of them in the course of the battle by various kinds of arrows even as Citragupta continued to watch it. Piercing and splitting thousands of the *Kiṅkaras* all-round in the midst of the vast army of Kṛtānta, Keśava the unassailable in battle wandered about well-guarded by *Kāmapāla* (Balarāma).

On seeing *Kiṅkaras* and others pierced in the battle, Citragupta raised a huge cry of distress. With five arrows he hit Kṛṣṇa who was rushing against him in the battlefield, but he himself was pierced in his face with eight arrows. Distressed due to the arrows, he sat back in the driving box of the chariot. On seeing him distressed and bereft of consciousness, Kṛtānta himself proceeded ahead in his chariot. Citragupta lay down distressed with arrows and lost his martial fame. (The leader too) became afraid and agitated along with the entire army. Being frightened, he simply sat down. Then, seeing Citragupta shattered, the different important persons of the army too remained shaken. On seeing the enemy of the demons (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) coming (towards him) Kāla fought like the *Vāḍava* (marine) fire blazing furiously for annihilating the living beings. On seeing the fierce Kāla with the army rushing at him, (Kṛṣṇa), covered Antaka with arrows as terrible as Kāla himself.

71. Kāla seized (his) fierce *Daṇḍa* (stick) and hurled it against *Acyuta* even as the *Devas* continued to watch. The *Kāladaṇḍa*, the destroyer of the subjects, came near *Hari*.

72. Then the *Devas*, *Gandharvas*, *Yakṣas* and leading sages became surprised beyond measure when they saw *Rāma*. *Rāma* who was a form of *Ananta* (the Serpent King) sportingly caught hold of the blazing *Kāladaṇḍa*.

73. The *Kāladaṇḍa* was caught by *Bala* in the battlefield. When he was about to hurl it back for destroying *Kāla*, the *Lotus-born Lord* came hurriedly in between and restrained him and *Kṛṣṇa* from fighting further.

74-82. *Vedhas* (*Brahmā*) said (to *Balarāma*): "Do not hurl the weapon of *Kāla* against *Kāla*. The earth that holds the mobile and immobile beings is held (supported) by you, the powerful warrior, on the head. O Lord, there is no one equal

to you in the whole world. Viṣṇu, the Lord of the universe, is always borne by you in the lap. O Rāma, who else can be equal to you who are one capable of burning the universe. You are the creator, the protector and you are the supporter of the universe. You are the Lord of the universe. In view of the fact that Viṣṇu, the sole leader of the universe, is being protected by you, who can adequately eulogize you? Who deserves (i.e. is capable) to comprehend your Guṇas? More so because we are born of the navel of Viṣṇu, who is seated in your lap.”

After saying thus to Baladeva, he spoke to Viṣṇudeva the following words. On being surrounded by Suras, with adequate praise, the Four-faced Lord said: “O Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, take pity on the terrible Kāla, since he did not know when you came that you are Viṣṇu, the sole leader of the universe, the Lord of the universe who redeems people and takes them across the ocean of Narakas. It was by you, O Lord, that Yama was installed in his office formerly for the purpose of consigning men perpetrating crimes to hell. Hence, O Lord of the universe, O Puruṣottama, let him be forgiven. O Lord, have mercy on him. Tell me what you wish to speak.”

83-85. On hearing this Kṛṣṇa said: “O Brahmā, listen. The son of my preceptor Sāndīpani has been brought here. Hence both of us came here. Let the due fee be paid to the most excellent one of all preceptors. It has been promised by both of us. O Lord, let it be honoured.”

On hearing this, Pitāmaha called Yama, the vanquished one in the battle, and said to him, “Carry out what Viṣṇu says.”

86-91. On hearing that, Dharmarāja spoke thus to Brahmā: “O Lord, O creator of the universe, this is not the procedure laid down by you in the world. An embodied being enters Yamaloka without a body. This is not accepted here that he goes out also without a body.”

On hearing it, Brahmā said again: “He is the Lord of this universe. He is the creator of the universe. He is the heart of the universe. Hence do what he wishes. You give him back the son of Sage Sāndīpani. O highly intelligent one, keep him in hell once again; bring him here (now).”

On hearing that, Dharmarāja created the son of Sāndīpani in the form of a boy. He handed over the beautiful boy to Kṛṣṇa. It was something like a miracle to all the Devas.

92-96. Then, after the receipt of the preceptor's son the delighted Kṛṣṇa said to Prajāpati (Brahmā): "O Brahmā, the son of the Brāhmaṇa has been obtained by me in his physical form. O Lord of the world, from now onwards, those who die in the place called Ankapāda in Avantī will not see Yama. Those men who see the five Mūrtis (Idols), the primordial Lord Puruṣottama in Mahākālapura as well as Viśvarūpa, Govinda, Śāṅkhoddhāra and Keśava in Kuśasthalī, O Virañci, will never go to hell. Similarly, due to the arrival of mine and that of Rāma, the Nārakas (those who had been cast into hell), shall become liberated from the terrible sin and let them all attain heaven."

97-100. When these words were spoken, the delighted Vedhas said to Hari: "O Kṛṣṇa, let the words uttered by you be always true. Those who bow down to you, the Ādipuruṣa, the first Puruṣottama, at the outset and then see Mahākāla with flames blazing below after taking bath in Śivasaras shall attain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice."

On being told thus, Hari took the boy with him. After duly honouring Vedhas and Kāla, he accompanied by Balarāma, got into the chariot, the valiant one. After finishing his task Janārdana blew the conch.

101-102. The sound of the conch was conducive to the liberation of the men who had committed sinful activities and therefore had been consigned to hells. Due to the sound of the conch and the recollection of Acyuta, all of them got into divine aerial chariots and went to heaven. That region (of hell) became a void, due to the contact with Nārāyaṇa.

103. After regaining his Daṇḍa from Baladeva Kāla entered his city once again. Thereupon, Dhātr (Brahmā) vanished there itself.

104-106. The mighty intelligent Kṛṣṇa accompanied by Baladeva reached the city of Ujjayinī by means of the fast and quick moving (chariot). Then Keśihā (the killer of demon Keśi i.e. Kṛṣṇa) gave Sāndīpani his son. He became free from indebtedness to his preceptor after carrying out what had been promised.

On seeing the son who had come back, Sāndīpani, the citizens and the king himself became much surprised.

107. They adored the two who were the most excellent ones among all excellent Devas. Sāndīpani spoke thus to Rāma and Janārdana:

108-110. “Your fame shall last here as long as the utter annihilation of all living beings. (What a pity) that the scions of the family of Yadu, the persons born of the family of Yadu and Vṛṣṇi, could not be recognised by me, though they were in my own place! These were not known by me as the heroes Nara and Nārāyaṇa who have come over here for the tasks of the Devas.

He who comes here and takes the holy bath will not meet with premature death; he will not be sick nor will he be wretched. He will rejoice in the heavenly world.”

Five Viṣṇu Shrines and their Yātrā

111. Śaṅkhin, Viśvarūpa, Govinda and Cakrin—these four are the shrines of Viṣṇu. Aṅkapāda is the fifth.

112-116. I shall describe the procedure for the pilgrimage to these shrines as it should be carried out by wise men.

A devotee takes his holy bath in Mandākinī and visits Rāma and Janārdaṇa. Then he bathes in Śaṅkhoddhāra and visits Bala and Keśava. After taking the holy bath in the Kuṇḍa, he should adore Govinda. Then he sees Cakrin and Śaṅkhin, the Lord of Devas. After seeing Aṅkapāda, he should go to Viśvarūpa. After duly taking the holy bath in Karīkuṇḍa in front thereof, he should visit Bala and Keśava in the same manner once again. Thereafter, he should bathe in the Kuṇḍa and adore Govinda. After seeing Cakrin and Halin (Bala), he should go to Keśava.

117-122. The man should devoutly bathe in the waters of Śiprā, adore Keśava and return to Aṅkapāda. There the devotee shall remain pure and spend the night. In the morning, he should feed five Brāhmaṇas of holy vows and restraints. A cow is the gift unto Śaṅkhin, a horse unto Viśvarūpa, an elephant unto Govinda and all these unto Keśava. After observing fast, O Brāhmaṇa, the devotee who worships Aṅkapāda on the Dvādaśī day with sweet-smelling flowers, incense and different kinds of Naivedya (food offerings) should perform Śrāddha.

Listen to the meritorious benefit that he derives. After redeeming a hundred members of his family, he shall go to Vaikuṅṭha by means of aerial chariots that can realize all desires and enjoy the pleasures of music and dance. He shall remain there for a long time. Again he comes back to this world

taking birth in a sacred holy family. He gets infinite line of progeny, and goes to Viṣṇuloka once again.

CHAPTER TWENTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Somavati Tīrtha¹

1. *Candrāditya*

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall describe another deity well-known all over the three worlds. It is renowned as Candrāditya as it had been formerly worshipped by Candra and Āditya.

2-3. The devotee who worships that Lord bowed down to by Suras and Asuras, by means of sweet-smelling flowers, incense and different kinds of Naivedya offerings, attains the world of Candra and Āditya, where he can realize all his desires. He goes there by means of aerial chariots resembling the Sun and stays there as long as Candra and Sūrya remain.

Thus ends the Māhātmya of Candrāditya.

2. *Karabheśvara*

Sanatkumāra said:

4. Thereafter, the person should go unto Karabheśa, Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, the mere sight of whom wards off birth in base species.

1. This chapter contains the description of sacred shrines of Karabheśa, Gaṇeśa, Kusumeśa, Jayeśvara, Śivadvāra-Śiva, Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara, Sarasvatī and also of Brahma-saras, Yajñavāpī (and Paśupati temple), Karikuṇḍa, Viśvarūpa, Ajagandha and Brahmeśvara, Cakra-Tīrtha, Siddheśvara (all associated with Yajñavāpī). It also describes Someśvara Liṅga set up at Somavati-Tīrtha. (The relevance of abduction of Tārā and birth of Budha for the glorification of Somavati Tīrtha or Someśvara Liṅga appears rather far-fetched.) The chapter is named after the last Tīrtha.

Vyāsa said:

5. I wish to hear facts about Lord Karabheśa. How was this Lord named Karabheśa manifested?

Sanatkumāra said:

6. Formerly, Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, was sporting about in this forest along with groups of Devas. He was highly delighted.

7. Sporting about for a long time, Śaṅkara assumed the form of a Karabha (young elephant). Śaṅkara in the form of a Karabha, was not recognized by the Devas.

8-12a. The Devas became surprised and they began to search. When they could not see there the Trident-armed Lord, Brahmā was asked by the Devas: “Where is Lord Maheśvara?” After meditating, it was seen by Brahmā that Hara, the Lord of Yoga, became unmanifest.

Thereupon Brahmā asked Gaṇanāyaka along with the Devas: “Śaṅkara is not seen by us. Where has he gone, O Vināyaka? Do tell us; obeisance unto you, O Lord. We shall give you Laḍḍukas.” On being told thus, Gaṇanāyaka was delighted and he said: “O excellent Devas, this young one of an elephant that is seen is Mahādeva.”

12b-15. On hearing these words, Devas being delighted went up to the young elephant announcing, “Mahādeva has been found out by us.” After going near him, they stationed themselves in the four quarters.

‘How was I known?’ Thinking thus Śaṅkara was wonder-struck. Thereafter casting off the form of young elephant, Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, created the divine Liṅga, Karabheśvara, on seeing which all the Suras prostrated themselves with the eight parts of the body touching the ground.

16-20. Ever since then Śaṅkara became well-known as Karabheśvara. He installed Vighneśvara (Gaṇeśa) to the north of Koṭi Tirtha. He made it (Liṅga) famous after his own name—the highly adored Karabha.

Listen to the benefit enjoyed by those who take their holy bath there, remain pure and worship Śiva with sweet-smelling flowers and Naivedya offerings. He (the worshipper) derives more benefit than what it obtained from all the Yajñas and

all the Dānas. No doubt need be entertained in this respect. Thereafter, he should go to Mahākāla and obtain the fullest benefit. Hence Karabheśvara is well-known in this world as the bestower of prosperity. Thus ends the Māhātmya (greatness) of Karabheśvara.

3. Gaṇeśa

Sanatkumāra said:

21. Thereupon, Vighnanātha was propitiated by the Devas through Laḍḍukas (sweetmeat in the form of balls). Ever since then Vighneśa became famous as one fond of Laḍḍukas.

22. No obstacle hinders one who devoutly worship him. Vināyaka when pleased, grants him all the desired objects.

23-24. The devotee should have his holy bath in Śīprā and observe fast on the fourth lunar day. He should wear red clothes. Muttering Mantras he should bathe the Lord with red sandal water and smear (him with) red sandalpaste. He shall then worship Vināyaka with red flowers.

25. He shall then offer divine incense and sweet scents to the Lord fond of Laḍḍukas, and Naivedya in the form of Laḍḍukas soaked in a mixture of sugarcandy and ghee.

26. Neither ailment, nor fear, nor obstacles assail him at any time. He obtains the desired thing always. On death he goes to Śiva's city.

27. Reborn again in the world, he becomes a king endowed with intellect, progeny and heroism. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

Thus ends Gaṇeśa-Māhātmya.

3. Kusumeśa

Sanatkumāra said:

28. He who faithfully worships at Suradvāra, Kusumeśa who is bowed down to by Suras and Asuras, rejoices in Śivaloka.

4. Jayeśvara

29. He who sees Maheśvara called Jayeśvara, the Lord of Devas, shall become successful in all the undertakings.

5. Śivadvāra

30. If a man worships the Śivaliṅga at Śivadvāra, he goes to heaven by means of a vehicle and attains the lordship of the Gaṇas.

6. Mārkaṇḍeśvara

31. Now I shall describe another (Liṅga), the excellent Mārkaṇḍeśvara, where sage Mārkaṇḍeya performed very great penance.

32. By seeing that Lord Śaṅkara one obtains the benefit of a Vājapeya-sacrifice. The man gets his soul purified of all sins and becomes long-lived.

7. Sarasvatī

33. Listen, O Vyāsa, to that excellent great spot in the city, where Goddess Brahmāṇī with the swan as (her) vehicle abides.

34. She will fulfil the hopes and ambitions of the devotees. She will protect them as though they are her sons. On being seen by persons who are engrossed in perfect peace and quietude, the goddess is like a mother.

35. That goddess was worshipped by Brahmā. She was eulogized by the excellent Suras. With sweet-smelling flowers and Naivedya offerings, one should worship that goddess who bestows all Siddhis and who granted excellent Siddhis formerly even to Brahmā.

8. Brahmasaras

36. He who takes the holy bath at Brahmasaras and sees Śiva named Brahmeśvara, becomes free from worldly bondage and rejoices in Brahmaloaka.

9-10. Yajñavāpī and Paśupati

37. Henceforth I shall describe another excellent Tirtha named Yajñavāpī where formerly a Yajña was performed by Brahmā with all due monetary gifts.

38-39. The holy pit which was dug for the sake of Yajña is remembered as Yajñavāpī. Since a Paśu (individual soul, creature) fell from there, it is remembered as Paśupati (i.e. the Liṅga). O Vyāsa, he who bathes in Yajñavāpī and becomes

clean, shall see Paśupati. O Vyāsa, that devotee redeems and uplifts his Pitṛs even if they were born as lower creatures.

40. By means of aerial chariots that can go wherever they desire to go and that are fitted with gold, jewels, pearls etc., he goes to the divine Rudrapura where Lord Maheśvara is present.

11. Rūpa Kuṇḍa

41. By taking the holy dip in Rūpa Kuṇḍa a man becomes handsome. He gets a body in heaven which will be coveted even by Devas and Gandharvas.

42. By taking the holy dip in Anaṅga Kuṇḍa, becoming clean in body and mind, the devotee shall see the Lord of the chiefs of Devas formerly worshipped by Anaṅga. He obtains all his desired benefits. On death he goes to Śiva's abode.

43. He who performs the rite of keeping awake on the eighth day in the bright half of Āṣāḍha obtains a benefit equal to that said to be the fruit of visiting Kedāra.

12. Karī Kuṇḍa and Viśvarūpa

44. A man who takes the holy bath in Karī Kuṇḍa and worships Viśvarūpa becomes rid of all sins and goes to the world of Viṣṇu.

13. Ajāgandha

45. A man should take his holy bath in Ajāgandha and see Śiva named Brahmeśvara. A sin equal to that of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter becomes quelled instantly.

14. Cakra Tīrtha

46. A man should take his holy bath in Cakra Tīrtha and worship Cakrasvāmin. O Vyāsa, that man becomes an emperor always.

15. Siddheśvara

47. When one sees Siddheśvara after duly taking holy bath, one goes to Rudraloka by means of an aerial chariot that can go wherever one wishes to go.

Thus ends the Māhātmya of Yajñavāpī.

16. Somavatī Tīrtha

48. A man who takes the holy bath in Somavatī and worships Someśvara shall become free from impurities like the moon and rejoice in Somaloka.

Vyāsa said:

49. How did the Tīrtha named Somavatī and the Liṅga named Someśvara originate? I wish to hear about this based on fact.

Sanatkumāra said:

50. Listen, O Vyāsa, how the very excellent Soma Tīrtha and Someśvara Liṅga originated. I shall tell you the facts.

51-55. Lord Soma who greatly nourishes and revives the whole world, had a Brāhmaṇa of great penance as his father.

He was a highly exalted sage in Avantī by name Atri. He kept his arms lifted up for a period of three thousand divine years and performed a great penance engrossed in the meditation on Brahman.

Then, O Vyāsa, the Brāhmaṇical radiance of the great soul went up and dripped through his eyes illuminating the ten directions. On seeing the splendour enveloping the ten direction, O Vyāsa, the directions themselves found it difficult to contain it. Thereupon, the unbearable splendour dropped down from the quarters.

56. Illuminating all the worlds it fell on the earth and became Soma (Moon). Hence the Moon is popular among the ordinary subjects.

57. O Vyāsa, due to the same fiery brilliance, water originated from Soma. That water entered the Śīprā river which was filled with nectar.

58. Thereupon Śīprā became famous as Somavatī ('whose water flowed from Soma'), the bestower of all Siddhis. By visiting the river Śīprā in conjunction with Soma, sin is eliminated.

59-61. It is reputed all over the three worlds as the bestower of merit unto sinners. All these four sinners, a slayer of a Brāhmaṇa, an imbiber of liquor, a thief and a defiler of the preceptor's bed, become rid of their sins certainly due to a visit (to Śīprā).

O sage, when Monday coincides with new-moon day, a wise person should take his holy bath in Somavati and perform the rites of Dāna, Japa and Homa. He will have everlasting benefit thereby as long as the moon and the sun exist.

62-63. Since even after the usual season, the Pitṛs can be propitiated by means of oblations with gingelly seed-water and rice-balls, the rite should be performed duly.

Five *Sakāras* (entities beginning with 'SA') viz. Śiprā, Soma the juice, Soma the planet, Someśvara and Somavāra (Monday) are very difficult to obtain everywhere.

64. O Vyāsa, the water of Soma in Śiprā is the bestower of the benefit of a crore of Tīrthas. When the new-moon coincides with a Monday it is remembered as similar to a Pitṛ-Tīrtha.

65. When new-moon coincides with a Monday and there is also Vyatipāta (conjunction), the benefit in Somavati is glorified as hundred times more than that of Gayā.

66-72. It was thus that the Somavati Tīrtha came into being, O great sage.

On seeing Soma fallen on the earth, Brahmā, the preceptor of the universe, placed him on a chariot with a desire for the welfare of all the worlds. He is Veda incarnate, O Vyāsa, with Dharma for eyes and Satya as the collected possession. He (His Chariot) was yoked with a thousand horses and was urged by Brahmā then. On seeing Soma then accompanied by Brahmā in the chariot, all the Devas became pleased wholly and eulogized him with mental concentration and purity.

While being eulogized the shining splendour of Soma resuscitating the three worlds fell on the earth.

Then by means of that chariot, Brahmā circumambulated the earth girdled by the oceans twentyone times. The circumambulation was that of the ocean too, O Vyāsa. The cool radiance of Soma that fell became right then the divine herbs on the earth devoid of impurities. It was by these herbs that this world and the four types of subjects should be sustained.

73. O sage, Lord Soma was always pleased with the earth. He performed a very fierce (austere) penance for ten thousand years.

74. Thereupon, Brahmā, the grandfather of the world, promised him. Accordingly Soma became the king of Brāhmaṇas and seeds and medicinal herbs.

75. Dakṣa, the descendant of Pracetas, gave twentyseven Dākṣāyaṇīs ('daughters of Dakṣa') of great holy observances as wives to Soma. They are called Nakṣatras (constellations).

76. Having obtained that great kingdom, Soma along with his wives began a Rājasūya with a hundred thousand (gold coins) as monetary gifts.

77. Holy Lord Atri was the Hotṛ; holy Lord Bṛḥgu was the Adhvaryu; Hiranyagarbha was the Udgātṛ; and Brahmā took up the position of Brahmā.

78. Lord Viṣṇu was the Sadasya (member of the sacrificial assembly); he was accompanied by Śaṅkara and others. Soma with great concentration and mental purity gave the three worlds as Dakṣiṇā.

79. The divine Goddesses Sinīvālī, Kuhū, Dhṛti, Puṣṭi, Prabhā, Vasu, Kīrti, Dhṛti (a repetition) and Lakṣmī served him.

80. Without excitement or agitation, Moon had his valedictory holy bath. He was honoured by all Devas and sages. Brightening the ten quarters, he shone all the more.

81-82. On getting very rare prosperity and affluence consecrated by sages, O Vyāsa, he eschewed humility etc. His head became giddy with arrogance. He, setting at nought the son of Aṅgiras (i.e. Bṛhaspati), proudly abducted his chaste wife of great glory, named Tārā.

83. Though taunted and pressingly requested by the Devas and the divine sages, Soma did not give up Tārā to Bṛhaspati.

84. Śakra angrily took the side of Bṛhaspati. Indeed he was a highly brilliant disciple of Bṛhaspati formerly.

85. Thereupon, O Vyāsa, a great battle ensued between Śakra and Soma and therefore between Devas and Dānavas. This caused great consternation.

86. All the frightened Devas took refuge in Brahmā. The news of the battle of Śakra and Soma was conveyed to Brahmā.

87. On hearing the words of the Devas, Pitāmaha went to the battlefield along with the Devas and prevented (from fighting) the Devas and the Dānavas.

88. When prevented, they ceased to fight. The Suras and the Asuras stood aside. Moon took Tārā and gave her to Āṅgīrasa (i.e. Bṛhaspati).

89. On seeing her pregnant, Bṛhaspati said to his wife, "No foetus should be held by you in the womb pertaining to me."

90. Thereupon, Tārā delivered a boy in the form of a god like flaming fire after taking up Iṣikā missile.

91-92a. That child, even as he was born, surpassed the brilliance of Devas. The heaven-dwellers being in doubt asked Tārā: "O fair lady, whose is this child? Of Soma or of Bṛhaspati?"

92b-93a. She did not say anything to the Devas. Vidhi (Brahmā) asked her once again: "O Tārā, tell us the truth here. Whose son is this?"

93b. With palms joined in reverence she said to Lord Brahmā, the bestower of boons.

94-99. She secretly confessed, "This boy resembling the Devas is Soma's."

Knowing that the son was of Soma, Pitāmaha embraced him. He named that son 'Budha'.

The unbearable sin due to the abduction of another's wife made Soma leprous and consumptive.

Thereupon he duly installed his son in the kingdom. With a desire to see the Lord, Soma went immediately to Avantī. He controlled all his sense-organs and took his holy bath in Somavatī on a Monday coinciding with the new-moon. Soma then worshipped Someśvara. Being delighted with his devotion Maheśvara said to Soma:

"With my favour, O Soma, your body shall become attractive and this holy spot will become reputed as Someśvara, the bestower of worldly pleasures."

100-102. Thus, O Vyāsa, that Tīrtha and the Liṅga are very difficult to attain. It has been described truthfully by me who am pleased and satisfied.

Listen to the meritorious benefit of the man who controls his sense-organs and visits Somanātha daily in the month of Śrāvaṇa. He gets the benefit of worshipping Somanātha every-day in Saurāṣṭra. No doubt need be entertained in this regard.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

The Great Efficacy of Anaraka Tīrtha

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Now listen to the greatness of the Tīrtha called Anaraka. If one takes one's holy bath in the Anaraka Tīrtha and visits Maheśvara, he never sees Naraka (hell) even if he happens to be slayer of a Brāhmaṇa.

Vyāsa said:

2. O dear one, how many are the Narakas (hells)? Where are they situated? Where do miserable sinners fall and for what sin?

3. How do living beings, the perpetrators of sinful deeds, go there? Narrate all this, O holy Lord, if you are pleased with me.

Sanatkumāra said:

4. Listen, O Vyāsa, to the Narakas (hells), how many they are and where they are stationed. I shall truthfully state to you how these are averted.

5. (*Obscure* !) All these are proclaimed as situated in Pātāla. They are always the causes of misery. When merit overflows, they go over to the births of non-human beings, thanks to their *Karmas*.

6-9. The various Narakas are:¹ Raurava, Sūkara, Raudra, Tāla, Vinaśaka, Taptakumbha, Taptāyas, Mahājāla, Kumbhīpāka, Krakacana, Devatīdāruṇa, Kṛmibhukti, Raktākhyā, Lālābhakṣa, Gaṇḍaka, Adhomukha, Asthibhaṅga, Yantrapīḍanaka, Sandamśa, Rudhirāṅga, Śvabhojya and Kubhojana. All these Narakas are excessively terrible. They are in the jurisdiction of Yama. They are said to be givers of fear.

10. Persons engaged in sinful actions fall therein. The

1. Hells are deterrents against immorality. The list of hells differs in different Purāṇas. As their names indicate, different kinds of tortures as could be imagined by the ancient writers, are listed here.

men who fall there are boiled and scorched in accordance with their Karmas.

11. They are subjected to diverse kinds of tortures till their terrifying activities become reduced. They are tightly fettered round their hands with red-hot chains.

12. They are hanged from the tops of great trees by the servants of Yama. They bewail their own Karmas remaining quiet and motionless.

13. The perpetrators of sinful activities are struck all over the body by the terrible servants by means of pikes blazing like fire and iron rods fitted with thorny projections.

14. They are thrown all-round. They are cut and shattered. They are burnt with fire kindled on different occasions.

15. A false witness; one who makes incorrect statements due to partiality; others who utter falsehood: all these go to Raurava.

16-17. All these go to Raudranaraka: an imbibor of liquor, slayer of a Brāhmaṇa, one who steals gold, a tale-bearer and traducer. Those who associate with them also fall into the hell. One who kills a foetus, a slayer of preceptor, one who kills a cow and those who commit breach of trust: all these go to Raudranaraka.

18. Those who waste foodstuffs are cooked in Taptaloṣṭhas. One who cohabits with (his) daughter or daughter-in-law is cast into Mahājvāla.

19. He who commits a sinful act everyday and he who denies a word (uttered) (or the gift of a cow?) falls into Kumbhīpāka with face down and feet kept above.

20-21. One who harasses his master, one who terrifies others is cast into Taptakumbha. One who speaks ill of Devas, one who sells the Vedas and those who carnally approach other men's wives, fall into Krakacana. A thief and one who violates the boundary fall into Atidāruṇa.

22-23. One who hates gods, Brāhmaṇas and Pitṛs, one who defiles gems goes to the hell Kṛmibhakṣa. Those who do not attend and serve fathers, gods and preceptors fall into the worm-eating hell called Rakta. One who engages in deceitful activities falls into the fierce Lālābhakṣa.

24-26. One who accepts gifts from the low-born goes to the Adhomukha hell. A man who solely eats sweet puddings, goes to the hell Asthibhaṅga.

An ungrateful person, a slanderer, a ruthless one, one who has false prestige, a deceitful one and one who reveals other people's secrets: all these fall into Yantrapīḍanaka.

A Brāhmaṇa who sells red lac, flesh, gravy, gingelly seeds and juices goes to the hell Śvadaṁśa. There is no doubt about it.

27-33. A destroyer of beehives, destroyer of a village, goes to Vaitaraṇī. Those who do acts contrary to the injunctions pertaining to different castes and stages of life, mentally, verbally or physically, go to the great river (Vaitaraṇī). One who dishonours preceptors and hates the scriptures and transgresses holy Parvans goes to Asipatra.

Those men who, being elated with wealth, and prime of youth, violate the bounds of decency go to the terrible Naraka named Kṛṣṇasūtra which is terrible.

An uncivilized Brāhmaṇa who carnally serves a Śūdra woman and one who marries a Śūdra woman, both of them fall into the hell.

Those who are Ucchiṣṭa (unwashed after partaking of food) and touch cows, fire, mother or Brāhmaṇas and particularly a hater of friends: all these are cooked in Kubhujya hell.

When the prescribed row (for sitting) is transgressed by one, when one sleeps during day time, and those who violate rules of celibacy and those fathers who are taught by the sons: all these fall into Śvabhajana. These and other Narakas are hundreds and thousands in number.

34-37. Perpetrators of crimes are cooked there and subjected to torture. There are as many hells as there are heavens. Those who commit much sin but are averse to expiatory rites (suffer all the more). If after committing a sin, anyone regrets it, his sole expiation is the recollection of Śiva. Hence an excellent man who remembers Śambhu day and night, does not fall into a hell. He becomes pure with all his sins quelled. During the fourteenth lunar day in the dark half of the month of Kārttika, lamps should be lighted in front of the Lord of Devas.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Offering Lights to Anarakeśvara

Vyāsa said:

1. O dear one, narrate to me everything: What is the benefit of offering this lamp? What is the procedure whereby it is offered? What is the splendid origin of the (practices of) lamp-offering?

Sanatkumāra said:

2. Formerly, in Kṛtayuga, O Vyāsa, Śaṅkara approached Pārvatī with a request. But he also was approached by her with a request.

Pārvatī said:

3. O Śaṁbhu, my body is black in colour. It mars the beauty. Hence I earnestly request you. Be pleased, O Lord of divine eyes.

4-6. She was described by Bhava as extremely splendid unto him. "You always appear all the more beautiful like the (black) colour of eyelashes, just as a black bee that settles on a white lotus makes it more beautiful."

Then the bull-seated Dhūrjaṭi was begged by her: "You are the bestower of beauty unto the ugly; but you do not pay heed to my words. Becoming disaffected (unattached to the world) I shall perform a difficult penance."

7-10. Bhava, on being requested thus by her once, caught hold of her hand (in marriage). The Lord then requested his beloved for sexual dalliance. She consented and gave him that pleasure, but he boisterously laughed calling her Kālī. She became very miserable and turned away her face leaving him off. Recollecting the (taunting) words of the Lord, she angrily uttered: "I am going to the penance-grove now for acquiring perfectly white complexion. I can gain your love only when I get excellent complexion and beauty of form, not otherwise."

11-13. Speaking thus, she went to the Vindhya mountain. Hara bewailed her: 'Where has she gone leaving me off?' He remembered her behaviour and the previous words. 'At that time I did not know her (request) duly. In vain did I rejoice (in her discomfiture). The daughter of the Himālaya Mountain, the most beautiful lady in all the worlds, was not respected by me as before. Hence she has gone away forsaking me.'

14. He said thus further: 'I have not the power to endure this severe separation from the beloved.' He then vanished.

15. Thereupon the entire universe became chaotic and excessively frightened. Suras, Asuras and great sages became excessively dejected.

16. They left their abodes because they were extremely sad. Those persons who were almost surprised eulogized Hara.

Sanatkumāra said:

17. When Lord Rudra with the crescent-moon for his crest-jewel was not to be seen, the entire universe lost its light and became a desolate forest.

18. When Rudra was gone, the three eyes of Rudra viz. the sun, the moon and fire, did not shine in this world consisting of mobile and immobile beings.

19. When the darkness became impossible to be penetrated by eyes and caused hairs to stand on ends, the Suras and Asuras were enveloped in darkness. They could not see one another.

20. For the attainment of their object, this (intelligent) plan occurred to them—the plan whereby the Lord of the universe, the consort of Pārvatī could be known.

21-26. Without that (Lord) with the moon, the sun and fire for his eyes, there could not be any light. Miserable on account of the lack of awareness (of each other) they called out to each other: "O Lord, O Sage, O Siddhi, O anchorite, O Night-stalker, O Daitya, O excellent one among Danujas, O guide of men! In which direction have you gone, O dear one? Who has been found by you? Have you any resort for rest anywhere? Have you any support anywhere? Have you any viaticum? In what direction, and what unknown place? Have you light, a vehicle, an umbrella, food, bed, abode anywhere?"

Where are you? How do you get water? Or mental peace and pleasure? Have you any kinsman or son, O dear one who are (like) cool shade of trees?”

Speaking thus to one another in piteous tone, all those Devas with Indra at the head became utterly anxious and worried.

27-29. “Those creatures which resort to the cavities or hollow places of the earth, Daiteyas and Serpents who are stationed in Rasātala, do not have the sun, the moon or the other great planets, or Agni, the mouth of gods, lightning or the crores of stars. Neither the men in this world nor those of the other worlds see with that type of light whereby those stationed in Narakas see.

30-33. He who walks about along (with us), he who bestows hundreds of desired things, he who is like water unto the thirsty cooked food unto the hungry, a vehicle unto the tired, bed on level ground, boat in water, a good attendant during illness, riches during ailment and difficulties, along with excellent medicinal herbs and effective Mantras, a friend in a foreign country, shade in heat, smokeless fire in winter, succour in great danger and guiding light in long great night, the bestower of everything on all, the bestower of hundreds of desired things, you alone are the shining luminary and we know you in the midst of darkness.”

34. Saying thus they heard the sweet speech of Viṣṇu of unparalleled deeds, the voice they had heard before.

35-36. They did not know where Lord Keśava stood and talked: “Listen to these words of mine, ye all, with great attention. *Dāna* alone is the thing well-known as equivalent to Cintāmaṇi (wish-yielding jewel). Of all *Dānas* the gift of a *Dīpa* (light) is praised the most.

37-41. Hence that should be offered by all. Listen to the truth. It was with compassion for the Nāgas in Rasātala that the excellent *Dīpa* was created by me whereby the darkness has been dispelled. That lamp of such a nature is unextinguishable by winds. It has great lustre. It is motionless, free from impurities, pleasing to the mind, steady and having the lustre of the sun. It is neither too hot nor too cold. It has originated through the Yogic power of the Goddess. Gokarṇa experienced great exhilaration through the light of *Dīpa*. Śeṣa and other Nāgas were being urged in groups and they offered thousands of

Dīpas from the original *Dīpa* before Śiva. They diverted themselves by lighting the *Dīpas* brightly on mountains, seas, forests, gardens and banks of the rivers.

42-50. They joyously took the milk, the five divine *Mūlas* (roots), puddings, meats, honey, rice soaked in ghee, cooked rice from Candraśāli paddy, seven types of betel leaf packs, eight types of liquor, the remnant after the wives had imbibed etc.

Embracing one another, they sported about on valuable beds, in the pleasing groves of trees, at the roots of all the trees beautified with ample shade of the trees. They practised all the diverse types of dalliance mentioned in the original texts of *Kāmatantra* (Science of Erotics) and kisses etc. They were free from the fear of sunshine and the fear of the moonlight. Similarly they were rid of the terrible fear originating from ants.

There may be burning due to the sunshine, chillness on account of the rays of the moon, fear of death originating from the ants, on account of the peacock, mongoose etc.

They made lamps of gold and gifted them to Brāhmaṇas. Thereby they made the city of Bhogavatī in Pātāla. They lived there in happiness eight times more than what is available in Svarga. Thus, O Devas, the blinding pitchy darkness of Pātāla disappeared on account of the *Dīpa*. This secret I have revealed due to my compassion for you all. Hence you also carry out the gift of lamps with mental concentration and purity.

51-53. The log of (wood in the form of) pitchy darkness cannot be burnt except through the fire of *Dīpa*." The Devas devoted to Nārāyaṇa listened to this with mental concentration. They then joyously asked Lord Dāmodara: "O Lord of the universe, explain to us the Agni whereby *Dīpa* is kindled. We are submerged in terrible darkness. We do not know Agni." Thereafter the Agni, the mental one (in the case of) of the Devas, was explained by Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu).

54. They kindled the *Dīpa* thereby; the Devas devoted to Śiva offered it with Śiva in view, Śiva—the bestower of all desired benefits.

55. When the *Dīpa* was offered by the Devas, the delighted Maheśvara was seen. That darkness whereby the whole universe was stupefied disappeared.

56. Then the Devas with Indra as the leader attained

happiness in heaven. After attaining the kingdom full of all pleasures, they sported about along with their women.

57. On realizing the benefit of *Dīpadāna*, the Daiteyas became surprised. So also, O Vyāsa, Yakṣas became surprised after knowing the benefit thereof.

58. After worshipping Mahādeva with flowers and pure waters, all of them offered thousands of *Dīpas* with great devotion to Śiva.

59. Due to the offerings of *Dīpa* all of them became splendid in their respective regions. Accompanied by kinsmen, servants and others, they enjoyed pleasures as they pleased.

60. Thereupon Piśācas who had neither food nor place of resort, understood the benefit of *Dīpadāna* and all of them were surprised.

61-65. Devoted to Śiva, they took Agni from the (house of) Cāṇḍāla and offered *Dīpa*. They too accompanied by their sons and wives experienced the benefit of *Dīpadāna*. They consumed cooked food licked (by others), devoid of juice, stinking and stale. Even the *Ucchiṣṭa* (remnant of food in dishes after meal) touched by a woman who had recently given birth to a child, the impure food and the food too much disgusting was consumed by them and they sported about joyously in the defiled areas.

Similarly Vidyādhara, human beings and Siddhas with their minds attached to Śiva understood the benefit of *Dīpadāna* and offered *Dīpa* in front of Śiva. Thereupon all of them were endowed with all types of pleasures as a fruit of *Dīpadāna*. They sported about joyously in their regions and they were happy, O Vyāsa. The darkness too in all the worlds disappeared due to the *Dīpa*.

66-74. Thereupon, the terrible Tamas remained in Pretaloka all the while. On seeing Pretaloka enveloped in the terrible darkness, all the excellent Suras said to Dāmodara, the Lord of the universe: "O Lord, all the Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Siddhas, Vidyādhara, Urugas, human beings and we too are always pleased after destroying the terrible darkness. We have all means of pleasures and enjoyments. We sport about in our respective regions happily. Those men who are in Pretaloka and who are enveloped in darkness, O Lord of the universe, continued to be miserable. O Kṛṣṇa, deluded much by the

sins, they have not carried out that task (of offering *Dīpa*). They do not have anything which can shed light. They are submerged beneath the terrible Tamas. They do not have the sun, the moon, fire, assistant, wife, support and preceptors. They do not have vehicle and bed. There is only the great Tamas. The crores of Narakas have been grouped into twenty-eight classes. All of them are full of darkness (Tamas). They terrify the sinners always. O Kṛṣṇa, how are they to get happiness? The men are excessively miserable due to poverty, misery and ailments, Māyā and delusion too.”

Sanatkumāra said:

75. On hearing the request of the Devas, the Garuḍa-embled Lord said these pleasing words:

76-83. “O ye gods, listen to what I am about to tell you. There is a Tīrtha in Avantī which dispels sins immediately. It is a Tīrtha of great merit called Anaraka. It is the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas.

A devotee should with great concentration of mind take his holy bath there on the fourteenth day in the bright half of the month of Kārttika. He should be engrossed in the meditation of Yama and be devoted to the Piṭrs. With the sense-organs under control, O excellent Suras, in midday, he should face the South and offer libations with black gingelly seeds, wearing the sacred thread over the right shoulder and repeating the following Mantras: ‘Obeisance to Yama, to Dharmarāja, to Mṛtyu, to Antaka, to Vaivasvata, to Kāla, to Dakṣa, to Manu, to Kṛṣṇa, to Kṛṣṇagupta, to Pretalokapara (the greatest benefactor of the world of the departed), to Hari, to the son of Ravi, to the brother of Kālidī, to the Śrāddhadeva, to the Lord of Piṭrs.’

The Mantras are to be uttered perfectly with *Om* in the beginning and *namas* in the end. The libations should be offered with Darbha grass and gingelly seeds.

84. A wise devotee should offer the libations to Lord Yama and with great mental attention offer the vessel of gingelly seeds to a Brāhmaṇa. He should not have hesitation to spend money.

85. If anyone offers libation unto Yama in accordance with this procedure, all his ancestors become liberated even if they had fallen into hell.

86-88. At night the man entertaining some desire should offer *Dīpa* for the whole of the month of Kārttika uttering the following Mantras: 'Obeisance to the Pitṛs, to the departed ones; obeisance to Dharma; obeisance to Viṣṇu; obeisance to Sūrya; obeisance to Rudra; obeisance to Kālāntapati.'

The *Dīpa* should be filled with ghee. His riches will increase. When the month of Kārttika is over he should perform the Udyāpana (concluding rite unto the *Dīpa*).

89-90. On a Sunday when the sun has set, the wise devotee should think of Yama with devotion and offer the wick of the *Dīpa* of the size of a man. It should be mounted on a wooden post shaped like a sacrificial post. It is fixed in the ground a *Hasta* (hand) deep. On the top, the extent shall be two *Hastas* with eight petal-like structures. Four excellent (metal) *Paṭṭikās* (flat pieces) should be fixed to them with holes four *Āṅgulas* apart.

91. The wick of great light of the *Dīpa* should be at the pericarp. It is offered with great devotion. In the eight petals the *Dīpas* should be facing the north and will be filled with ghee.

92-93. The cloth used for the wick should be very white or bright red. It should not have been put on before. In each light there should be two pieces unbroken and equal and of good quality, and very smooth. They (wicks) are placed on cakes of rice flour so that they do not slip out or shake. The numbers of the wicks shall be in sets of three and its multiples. The *Dīparāja* (excellent *Dīpa*) should be in the middle.

94. For the sake of additional beauty and for the realization of desires, eight bells should be kept suspended with flower garlands. The beauty of the cloth should add beauty.

95. The ground should be smeared with cowdung and then with scented water. Eight petals should be made with diverse colours and the (sacred) *Maṅḍala* should be completed in the shape of a beautiful lotus.

96-98. Eight beautiful pots should be filled with cool water. Above them fruits, roots and sugarcane along with honey, ghee, curds and milk should be placed (in separate pots). They should be placed from the South-West to South in the following order with the following deities: Dharma, Śaṅkara, Dāmodara, Brahmā, Prajāpatīs, Pretas, Indra and the Pitṛs.

The vessel of Homa etc. should be given to Brāhmaṇas with powered gingelly seeds and with due Dakṣiṇās.

99-100. To the excellent Brāhmaṇas with higher learning and to the Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the Purāṇic lore, gifts should be made with cows, gold, silver, cloth, fruits, roots, barley, grains, horse, elephants and other pleasing things. With the *Dīpas* placed on the petals offered thus, Yama and others shall become propitiated duly.

101. The *Dīpa* in the middle should be offered to Dharma after getting the formal consent of the preceptor. There should be programmes of good dances, songs, and excellent instrumental music.

102. All this should be done in accordance with the injunctions, after carefully considering one's own capacity and wealth. Inviting Brāhmaṇas of good character and intentions, the sensible Brāhmaṇa should tell them with great devotion:

103. 'Excepting nine *Dīpas*, O Brāhmaṇas, you should take everything else that is here.' He should circumambulate them and formally dismiss the Brāhmaṇas. He should take food only at night.

104-106. If everything is performed in this manner, there shall be more happiness unto the people stationed in Pretaloka than what is obtained in Nāgaloka." O Vyāsa, listen with attention to the benefit derived by one who makes *Dīpadāna* in this manner at Anaraka (Tīrtha). He shall go to heaven being borne in divine aerial chariots capable of bestowing all desires and served by celestial damsels. He shall stay there as long as the moon and the sun exist.

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

*The Greatness of Saubhāgyeśvara and Other Tīrthas*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall describe the excellent Kedāreśvara,

1. This chapter describes a number of shrines such as Kedāreśvara, Jaṭaśṛṅga—some twentyfive shrines in all. The Purāṇa offers very little information about them. These shrines certainly existed at the time of the Purāṇa but now many are practically untraced.

the most excellent one among all the Tīrthas, well-known all over the three worlds.

2. Remaining clean after the holy bath therein, a devotee should visit Maheśvara. He will obtain the same benefit here as is mentioned in the case of Kedāra.

3. He shall get rid of all sins. Along with the members of his own family, he goes to Śivaloka in an aerial chariot of solar colour (brilliance). He rejoices in Śivaloka.

4. The man should take his holy bath in Jaṭāśṛṅga. He should be clean and subdue the sense-organs. By visiting Lord Jaṭeśvara he is rid of all sins.

5. At the outset, after performing the rite of Mahātapanā (great austerity) the devotee should then proceed towards Śiva. He shall redeem a hundred members of the families of his mother and father.

6. After taking the holy bath in Indra Tīrtha and visiting Śiva called Indreśvara, the man shall be rid of all sins and be honoured in Śakraloka.

7. He who is devoted to meditation on Śiva and visits Kuṇḍeśvara, O Vyāsa, obtains the benefit of Śivadikṣā ('Initiation in Śaiva Yoga and philosophy').

8. A man who takes his holy bath in the Gopa Tīrtha and visits Śiva called Gopeśvara, goes to Śivaloka like an immortal one as a result of (imbibing) nectar.

9. O eminent sage, a man who takes his holy bath in Cipiṭā Tīrtha and bows down to Lord Śiva averts birth among brutes.

10. The man should take holy bath in Vijaya (Tīrtha) and worship Ānandeśvara. He will be rid of all sins and shall be victorious in the heavenly world.

11. I shall henceforth describe, O Vyāsa, the Lord named Rāmeśvara, the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation. It is installed in Kuśasthalī.

12. Formerly Rāma, accompanied by Maithilī (Sītā) and Lakṣmaṇa came from Citrakūṭa and asked (Nārada) the excellent sage:

Rāma said:

13. What are those meritorious Tīrthas, O great sage, what is that holy spot, by visiting which one can avert separation from kinsmen?

14. O holy Lord and sage, I am tormented by three events: this exile into the forest, the death of our father and separation from Bharata.

15. On hearing the words uttered by Rāghava the bull (prominent one) among Brāhmaṇas meditated for a long time and spoke these words:

16-19. "You have asked pertinently, O heroic one who are the cause of the prosperity of the race of Raghus. A holy place has been created by my father after respectfully requesting Śiva. In the land of Avantī, the city Kuśasthali, O Lord, has become famous in the world as Ujjayinī. Go there and propitiate Daśaratha with the offerings of balls of rice. Mahākāla, the Lord and preceptor of Suras and Asuras, is stationed there. Indeed that Lord is the bestower of desired objects, O king. When that Lord of the universe is seen, separation no more takes place.

20-21. Brāhmaṇas and a powerful king who go there attain the greatest region where Lord Maheśvara has entered the (best) Tirtha of all the Tirthas in the Avantī land. Thereupon that river Śiprā, the bestower of merits, also came to Avantī."

22-25. Rāma took his holy bath therein and propitiated the ancestors (by offering libations etc.). When the delighter of the family of Raghu set off to visit Mahākāla, the Lord of Devas said by means of unembodied speech: "Welfare unto you, O Rāghava; instal me after your own name. This place I have offered for the purpose. Do not hesitate, O Rāghava."

Thereupon the delighted Rāma spoke to Lakṣmaṇa: "O son of Sumitrā, we have been blessed by Śāmbhu, the Lord of Devas. Hence instal the splendid Liṅga named Rāmeśvara in this holy spot."

26. On hearing these words, Lakṣmaṇa installed Śaṅkara. On seeing the Lord in front, Rāma spoke to Lakṣmaṇa:

27. "O Lakṣmaṇa, come here; fetch me water from Śiprā immediately wherewith I shall give a splendid ablution to the Lord here."

28-29. Lakṣmaṇa said these words: "What do you want to do with Sītā? O Rāma, I do not propose to be your servant forever. This lady is well-nourished and strong. She is stout as

compared with me. Tell me the truth, O Rāghava. What will you do with her? (i.e. Why don't you tell her to do this work?)."

30. On hearing the words uttered by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma stood moody and dispirited. Sītā, the lady of excellent countenance, too remained so.

31. Sītā did in accordance with what was told by Lakṣmaṇa. After taking the bath and food, both the heroic warriors went to Mahākāla.

32. After spending the night there, they started to go. "Dear Lakṣmaṇa, get up. We shall go to the southern direction."

33-34. Lakṣmaṇa said: "I will not go away at any cost. O lotus-eyed one, you may go along with this wife of yours. I will not go ahead in the forest, nor towards Ayodhyā." When Lakṣmaṇa said this, Raghunandana said:

35-36. "How is it that formerly you set out from Ayodhyā along with me? You had said, 'O Rāma, I will stay in the forest for fourteen years; be pleased with me, O Rāghava; take me too.' O destroyer of enemies, how is it that you are staying back midway?"

37. Lakṣmaṇa said: "O Rāma, I will not go further into the forest." Knowing that Lakṣmaṇa¹ had become stubborn, Rāma spoke these words:

38-42. "Do not follow me, O Lakṣmaṇa. I shall go to the forest alone. The second one shall be this Sītā." On being told thus by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa moodily gathered his bow and stood up. The destroyer of enemies came to the end of the boundary, the limit of the holy spot. Stepping out of the limit of the holy spot, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: "O Lakṣmaṇa, go back; hand over my bow to me." On hearing the words of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa spoke to Sītā: "Why am I abandoned? What crime have I committed? (If) Abandoned by Rāma, I shall undoubtedly give up my life."

43. Sītā then spoke to Rāma: "O Lord, why is the heroic Lakṣmaṇa, the delighter of Sumitrā, abandoned by you?"

44-47. Rāghava replied to Sītā: "I will never abandon Lakṣmaṇa, a beloved one, even in dream. O lady of excellent lips, the

1. Similar insubordination by Lakṣmaṇa as an effect of a Tirtha is described in *Nāgara Khaṇḍa* wherein Lakṣmaṇa planned to kill Rāma and take away Sītā as his wife. Such imaginary stories show to what extent Purāṇas stoop for the glorification of a Tirtha.

strange effect of this holy spot has been heard of before. There is no fraternal relationship here, in this holy place. Everyone attends to his personal interests. People with vested interests do not honour one another. Sons do not pay heed to father, nor father to sons. A disciple does not listen to the words of the preceptor, nor does a preceptor mind what the disciple does. Love depends upon self-interest. No one is truly the friend or lover of anyone.”

48. After saying this and installing a Liṅga after his own name, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Jānakī went away.

49. A man who bathes in Rāma Tīrtha and visits Śīva named Rāmeśvara will be rid of all sins and go to Śivaloka.

Here ends the Māhātmya of Rāmeśvara.

Sanatkumāra said:

50. By taking the holy bath in Saubhāgyaka Tīrtha and visiting Saubhāgyeśvara, a person shall be rid of all sins and shall attain the greatest fortune and bliss.

51. One should take bath in Ghṛta Tīrtha and bathe Śīva with ghee. He should then consign ghee into fire (in a *Homa*). He is honoured in Rudraloka.

52. By worshipping Goddess Yogīśvarī, bowed down to by Suras and Asuras, a devotee shall be rid of all sins and attain the greatest Yoga.

53. By taking the holy dip in Śaṅkhāvarta, a man shall become rid of all sins. He is reborn in a family free from blemishes and he shall become rich with wealth and foodgrains.

54. For the sake of salvation a man should bathe in Sudhodaka (v.l. Śuddhodaka) Tīrtha on the fourteenth lunar day. By visiting Śīva called Sudheśvara (v.l. Śuddheśvara), he will attain the goal of salvation.

55. Similarly I shall describe another Tīrtha well-known in all the three worlds. It is known by the name Kimpunaka and it redeems one from the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter.

56. Formerly, O Vyāsa, in Tretāyuga, there was a Brāhmaṇa named Sunetra. A son was born to him, who was known by the name Viśvāvasu.

57-61. Due to the curse of Yavakṛita, his own father was killed by him. Defiled by the sin of Brāhmaṇa's slaughter, O

Vyāsa, he wandered from one Tīrtha to another. Ultimately he took his holy bath in the Kīmpunaka Tīrtha. The Brāhmaṇa then went to Dhārā Tīrtha. At Kapiladhāra, he thought within himself: 'How has the Dhārā fallen over me? Could it be that the Śruti is false?' He thought thus and returned to Avantikā. Here while he was once again taking his bath, he heard a voice, "O Brāhmaṇa, what are you brooding about? You have become an excellent Brāhmaṇa. You don't have the sin of Brāhmaṇa's slaughter any more. It has been destroyed by the holy bath in the Tīrtha. Hasten to your house, O Brāhmaṇa, happily free from sins."

End of the Greatness of Kīmpuna

Sanatkumāra said:

62. Again I shall describe another excellent Tīrtha called Pattaneśvara. Standing here, Pattana (Town) was seen by Maheśa.

63-67. The Lord of Devas, Maheśvara, is called Pattaneśvara. A man should duly worship him with devotional fervour with sweet scents, flowers, incense and lamps that delight the mind. His family shall never be terminated as long as the Liṅga stands firm. He goes to Śivaloka by means of a vehicle drawn by swans.

Similarly I shall describe another Tīrtha well-known all over the three worlds. It is well-known as Durddharṣa. It redeems one from the sin of Brāhmaṇa's slaughter. O Vyāsa, formerly Divākara (the Sun-god) made this Tīrtha by the name Durddharṣa. The Tīrtha consecrated by the Sun-god on the banks of the river became very famous. The Liṅga consists of a mass of radiance. It is worshipped by the Gaṇas and Gandharvas.

68-71. A person should take his holy bath there on the seventh or eighth lunar day or on a Sunday or at the time of the transit of the Sun from one zodiac to another.

He should remain clean and fast for the whole day. He should then visit Maheśvara installed on the banks of river Śiprā and devoutly worship the deity.

Listen to the benefit which he gets. He redeems the entire family of his father as well as of his mother and goes to Śivaloka. Whatever is offered there, cow, gold etc., in particular, shall have everlasting benefit as long as the sun and the moon are present.

I shall now describe another excellent Tīrtha named Gopīndra.

72-75. Indra was formerly cursed by Gautama to have the whole body full of vaginal apertures. Ashamed due to these apertures, Śakra entered an excellent forest and propitiated Śaṅkara by means of a fierce penance. O Brāhmaṇa, all those vaginal apertures in his body were converted into eyes ('Go'), a thousand of them in all. Hence the deity is called Gopīndra. One who takes the holy bath there becomes as powerful in exploits as Śakra and goes to heaven. Those who die there do not take further birth on the earth.

A man who takes his holy bath in Gaṅgā Tīrtha attains adequate merit.

76-81. One should indicate the benefit of the bath in Gaṅgā on the tenth lunar day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha (month).

After taking the holy bath in the Puṣpakaraṇḍaka, one goes to heaven by means of the aerial chariot Puṣpaka (by name). He rejoices in heaven.

A man who takes his holy bath in Uttareśvara redeems (his ancestors) from Naraka immediately. Equipped with all desired means of pleasure, he undoubtedly goes to Svarga.

A man should take his holy bath in Bhūteśvara Tīrtha and then worship Lord Bhūteśvara by means of sweet scents, flowers, Naivedya etc. On death he goes to Rudrapura.

If a man bathes in Śīprā and bows down to Kailāsa, his sin perishes like darkness destroyed by the sun.

He who visits Āmbālikā with concentration of mind and due observances shall be rid of all sins like a serpent of its slough.

I shall describe Ghaṅṭeśvara worshipped by Suras too.

82-85. By drinking the water of the well there, one shall attain incomparable bliss and fortune. He who worships Deveśa by means of sweet-smelling flowers, in due order, shall stay in Śivaloka during the period of the rule of fourteen Indras.

He who visits Puṇyeśvara after bath and remains clean by controlling the sense-organs, attains the worship of even Gaṇas, rare for even Suras.

A man should take the holy bath in Lāṃpeśvara and worship Maheśvara. He never goes to Naraka. He is honoured in the heavenly world.

Hence I shall describe another Tīrtha which is inaccessible even to Suras.

86-90. It was worshipped by Brahmā formerly. The deity is called Sthavira Vināyaka. After taking bath there and remaining pure, one should worship Vināyaka, offering sweet scents, incense, Naivedyas and various kinds of foodstuff. Listen to its benefit. His Siddhi shall be what is desired by him. On death he goes to Śivapura.

A wise man should worship Pārvatī near Navanadī with sweet scents, flowers and incense. He shall get incomparable Saubhāgya.

By bathing in Kāmodaka and visiting Kāma, the beloved spouse of Rati, a man possesses a body covetable even unto Devas and Gandharvas.

A man who takes his holy bath in Prayāga and visits Prayāgeśa, goes beyond all the worlds. He is honoured in Śivaloka.

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

Arjuna's Eulogy of the Sun-god¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall describe another deity, Divākara (Sun), called Narāditya, merely by a visit to whom, one is rid of all ailments.

2-4. I shall narrate to you how Narāditya came to be installed. When the battle between the blood-born and sweat-born ones had been prevented, Lord Nara and Nārāyaṇa incarnated on the earth. They were born of fair lady Kuntī and of Devakī in Mathurā respectively. Thus they remained in the world very brilliant and extremely flourishing. The reason for the birth of Kṛṣṇa was different than that of the birth of Dhanañjaya.

5. He (Kṛṣṇa) killed all the Dānavas beginning with Kāmsa in battle. Thereupon, Pārtha went to Svarga for the purpose of learning the use of missiles from Vāsava (Indra).

6-7. After the warrior had completed the learning (the secret of missiles) he proposed to the Lord of Devas what he should give as Dakṣiṇā. The Lord of Devas requested for the following Dakṣiṇā: "May the fierce demons Nivātakavacas, the

1. Arjuna (Nara) established a solar shrine to the northern side of Ujjayinī. Arjuna got the idol of the Sun from Indra after defeating Asuras.

residents of Hiranya-pura, be killed quickly, O Arjuna. This is my Dakṣiṇā.”

8-9. The slaying of those wicked ones was solemnly promised by Arjuna. He rode on the chariot of Indra and took up the bow and arrows. After carrying out that very difficult task of killing them, he delighted all the heaven-dwellers.

10-11. Śakra said to Arjuna who had completed the task, the following words: “O warrior, whatever rare thing in the mortal world is desired by you mentally, O Pārtha, you choose it.” He requested for two idols worshipped by Brahmā himself.

12. They were handed over to Dakṣa by Brahmā who was pleased (with him). They, the idols which dispelled darkness, were worshipped by Dakṣa for more than a Yuga.

13. When the battle between Suras and Asuras began, Śakra who had been defeated by the Dānavas and whose kingdom had been taken away, went to forest.

14. Śatakratu stood on one leg and performed a very severe penance for a period of one thousand divine years. Then Bṛhaspati met him.

15-18a. On seeing the Lord of Devas, Bṛhaspati said to him: “O Śakra, how is it that you have come to this forest leaving the heavenly world? Enemies cannot be conquered by you living in the forest alone. O king of Devas, hasten to the hermitage of Dakṣa after keeping this in mind. The two idols made out of Pārijāta by Viśvakarmā were given to him by Brahmā. Now you request Prajāpati (Dakṣa) for them. By the adoration of those two idols, the enemies will be annihilated.”

18b-19. Lord Śatakratu was delighted by these words of his preceptor. He hurriedly went to the place where Dakṣa, the Prajāpati, was present. He then humbly requested him for the two idols. Thereupon Dakṣa gave the excellent idols to Śakra.

20. O Vyāsa, the idols were worshipped by Śakra for a hundred years. All the Dānavas perished due to the brilliance of those two idols.

21. The idols said to Śakra: “Choose an excellent boon. O Vāsava, know that we have become much delighted by this devotion.”

22-23. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, delighted in his mind, Śakra chose the boon: “Our enemies, the Dānavas, are evil-minded. May all of them be destroyed. This is the boon desired by me.

I wish to worship both of you till I become Indra once again.”

24. Saying “So be it,” the two idols went to heaven. Arjuna said to Śakra: “For the accomplishment of an excellent objective, I request you for the two idols, which are urgently needed.

Indra said:

25-30. Very well, O Pārtha. Excellent! These two idols continue to be here. They have been worshipped by the noble-souled Śaṅkara with red lotuses for a period of a day of Brahmā, for the protection of the three worlds. They have been adored by Viṣṇu with sweet-smelling blue lilies for a period of full thousand years.

Thereafter, Brahmā, desirous of carrying on the activities of creation, worshipped the two idols with lotuses and splendid red lilies with great attention and mental purity. How will you (alone), O Pārtha, take them to the mortal world? Svarga without these two will be on a par with death.

When Devendra was not willing to give them, Arjuna bowed down to him and said: “I do not seek them by means of this boon, O Lord.” Thereupon O eminent sage, Śakra said to Pārtha once again:

31-33. “O brave warrior, take these and instal them in Kuśasthalī. It is on the northern bank of Śīprā where Keśava, the destroyer of all sins, stands near Keśavārka. Instal them there for the sake of destroying all sins. The Yātrā (religious procession) shall be in the months of Āṣāḍha and Kārttika. I shall come there accompanied by a group of Apsarases. Maruts and the Clouds along with Lightning will also come.

34. When the Clouds come up in parts and when I shower, the people will say: ‘Oh! Purandara has come.’

35. After bowing down to Bhāskara (the Sun), the Lord worshipped by Brahmā and others, O Bibhatsu (i.e. Arjuna) I shall return in the manner I had come.”

36. Thus, O Vyāsa, Vāsava gave to Pārtha the pair of idols and sent him back to Bhūrlōka along with his charioteer.

37-39. Nārada went to Dvārakā on being summoned by Kṛṣṇa. He told Keśava all the words uttered by Devarāja secretly: “O Kṛṣṇa, come to Kuśasthalī. The two idols exquisitely fashioned out of Pārijāta by Viśvakarman have been given

to you and to the Pāṇḍava.” On hearing these words, Śauri started for the city of Avantī.

40. From the sky he got down and embraced Phālguna, the son of Pāṇḍu. After embracing him closely, he spoke to him:

41. “O Arjuna, my birth has become fruitful. I am delighted. Since my pleasure is unparalleled let the excellent task be carried out.”

42. After saying thus, O Vyāsa, both of them came to Kuśasthali. Kṛṣṇa whose wish had been completely fulfilled spoke to Pārtha:

43-44. “O Arjuna, go to the east and instal one of the idols. The Lagna will be auspicious and pleasant in the forenoon. O sage, I shall go to the river in the northern direction. With the sound of my conch instal Lord Ravi.”

45. O Vyāsa, Pārtha then went to the east and found out a splendid spot. He installed Dinanātha (the Sun-god) firmly.

46-51. While the son of Pāṇḍu was thinking. ‘I shall instal Lord Arka,’ the idol told him: “Make the spot splendid.” The idol was unbearable in its splendour. When the idol was speaking thus, Savyasācī was afraid to see it. Unable to bear the brilliance, he spoke to the Lord: “O Lord, where shall I instal you? What spot appeals to you? O Lord of rays, be gentle in form and easily perceptible to the subjects. May Devas stationed in heaven, Nāgas residing in Pātāla, and human beings staying on the earth—may all these be sanctified at your sight.” The Lord then spoke to Arjuna, “Do not be afraid of my sight.” Thereafter with a gesture of granting freedom from fear by means of his right hand, he calmed and consoled him. The Lord then assumed a gentle form.

52. His own radiance was displayed by Lord Prabhākara. Then Sūrya said: “This is my permanent spot.”

53. When the Lagna approached, the great conch (Śaṅkha) was blown by Hari. Sūrya eulogized by the immortal ones was installed by Nara.

Arjuna said:

(Arjuna’s Prayer to the Sun)

54. The shining Lord of rays has made his rays cool and calm. He is the abode of all universe. His laughter is loud reverberating in the eastern quarter. By eulogizing him, limbs

of men affected by great many sins and defects become free from sins (or defects).

55. Which poet can aspire to eulogize adequately Pataṅga (the Sun-god) prayed to by Brahmā and other sages? Yet, O Lord of excellent intellect, I shall elaborately eulogize you. When the Moon has risen, does not a lamp also shine?

56. You are eulogized by the sages expert in Śāstras, Artha and Kāma (wealth and love). Is there anything pertaining to you which has not been well-composed (in poems) through diverse usages? The entire universe appears as though (its) full essence has been extracted and drunk by the ancient sages beginning with Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa).

57. Still after deep thinking, I shall glorify the pair of feet of Bhānu (the Sun) (who is) eulogized by the preceptor of the three worlds in rhymes having clear meanings, sweet euphonic junctions of syllables in diverse movements.

58. O Lord, as long as you do not rise with pure disc resembling a lotus, dispelling darkness by means of your rays, the whole of the universe will be motionless and the different kinds of holy rites do not become fruitful.

59. As long as you do not awaken them by means of your excellent lustre, free from impurities, the tops of trees agitated by bees appear to be asleep with their bunches of flowers closed as though they were their closed eyes.

60. As you rise up in the sky, Devas and groups of Suras and Siddhas along with Brahmā, Daityas, Sages, Kinnaras, Nāgas and Yakṣas adore you, with their heads bowed down, emitting excellent lustre from the jewels of their crowns that continue to move.

61. O bestower of boons, when you set, the universe becomes asleep. Again when you begin to blaze (shine), that becomes awakened. This routine procedure goes on forever, for the sake of the welfare of all the worlds. O holy Lord, you are the only dispeller of darkness.

62. O Lord, it is certainly the absence of devotion to you that is the cause, if the tasks of men do not yield fruits despite the fact that they are endowed with enthusiasm, capacity, stratagem and heroism, and that they are eager to adhere to the procedure to an arrangement for the application of service.

63. The fact that in the course of battles men quickly

attain success after conquering their enemies by means of their chariots, elephants, javelins, Śaktis, iron-tipped arrows, discuses, arrows, mallets and terrible swords, is always (really) your own activity, O Lord, favourably disposed towards those who bow down.

64. Those who are caught in difficult, rugged and impassable paths of forests, full of bears, elephants, lions, many robbers and thorny bushes, those who are stupefied in their minds due to many a sorrow, become free from the fear of death only due to their eulogy and glorification of you.

65. You are a mass of refulgence. You alone are the refuge unto those who are miserable in every respect. In the entire universe there is no one equal to you in being compassionate. All types of devotion can be traced solely to you. If men resort to you, how can ailment and misery have their way.

66. 'Who is attacked by leprosy? Who is assailed by enemies? Who is afflicted by ailments? Who are lame, blind and intellectually sluggish? Who is hurt in the leg? Who is incapacitated in his activity?' Thus, O Lord, out of sympathy, you observe and save them. Who else is promptly engaged in helping others as you are?

67. If Dharma is resorted to, it stands in good stead in the other world. Gods become bestowers of boons after a lapse of some time. O Lord, favourably disposed towards those who bow down to you, when served by those who desire prosperity, you immediately accord the benefit desired by them.

68. If you are pleased with men and bestow boons, their houses become filled with graceful, charming women whose attractive and tremulous eyes resemble those of fawns, and who are bedecked in exquisitely beautiful necklaces, jewelled earrings and girdles.

69. O Lord of the universe, if you are bowed to even once by men, if you are meditated upon at the time of death, even evil-doers become free from sins and those who are free from impurities attain the goal (or region) of the meritorious.

70. Those who do not bow down to you with devotion causing their bodies bristle with hairs standing on end, because their minds are filled with evil notions, become poor. With throats parched with hunger and faces emaciated, they eagerly look forward to cooked food cast in front of them in

other people's houses.

71. With magnificent, incomparable Vedic passages, you are being eulogized regularly by the chieftains of Nāgas whose heads bow down shining with the rays of the jewels on their hoods (with tongues) appearing (constantly) to lick up (something), and whose pairs of eyes are tremulous like the agitated waves in the waters of the ocean.

72. O Pataṅga, O most excellent one among Suras, the swarms of bees that rise up from the lotuses in the celestial river, bees that are tinged with brown hue by the pollen dust of the golden lotuses wafted by the wind, follow you as you go ahead and act as your *Cāmaras* (chowries).

73. (*Defective verse*) With the collections of your rays, you station yourself frequently in the vast expanse of waters and blaze for the sake of all living beings, O Lord. Who is equal to you in the entire space of the three worlds? This is the real knowledge.

74. Whether you are stationed on the ridges of the mountain of sunrise (or are enveloped by your halo) at the times of sunrise and sunset, your rays having the lustre of gold charmingly shine imitating the streaks of lightning.

75. As your chariot proceeds ahead in the sky piercing through the masses of thick clouds of darkness, the movement of the agitated, violent gust of wind appears to produce the sound of Dundubhi frequently.

76. With your hands (rays) you awaken the lotus-pond which has closed its beautiful eyes in the form of lotuses, whose girdle in the form of the whirling *Kalahamsas* and chirping ruddy geese is tinkling and which (the lotus-pond) is like a lovely lady lying exhausted as a result of sexual dalliance.

77. The blue lotus of great splendour and beauty gently moving when agitated from above by the feet of the bees, shines very much like ruby when tinged red, lovingly by your lustrous rays.

78. O *Khaga* (the Sun moving through the sky), in your lap the shining sky appears like a motionless garment, free from impurities like the refulgent moon or a pearl necklace. It (the sky) is evenly spread, large and unchangingly pale-red in colour.

79. There shall be inauspiciousness in the quarters

frequently resorted to by darkness only till it becomes more praiseworthy due to your rays. O bestower of boons, it is not possible even for sages of exalted intellect engaged in the eternal path of Mokṣa, to resort to (compose) an adequate eulogy of your good qualities.

80. You are Viṣṇu; you are the Moon. You are the Six-faced Lord (Kārttikeya) suppressing the Asuras; you are the Lord of wealth; you are Kāla (Time or the god of Death); you are the creator; you are the refuge unto the mountain Malaya; you are the Fire-god; you are Omkāra of the Brāhmaṇas; you are the ocean here; you are the arrow; you are Rudra; you are the chief cloud. You are the vows and observances and restraints; you are the entire universe.

81. O Lord of rays, O uncensurable (praiseworthy) Lord. You are the suppressor of the three Puras; it is you who have burnt down Manmatha. You are the subduer of the terrible arrogance of Asuras; do protect me. You are the Lord of Devas, the excellent lotus-faced one; you are the illustrious preceptor of Devas. Who is equal to you in qualities in the whole region of the three worlds?

82. This person (i.e. I) seeks refuge in you, O Lord of the worlds, O Āditya, O Bhāskara, O Divākara, O Saptasapti (seven-horsed), O Lord of the seven fallow horses, O Mārtaṇḍa, O Sūrya, O Bhānu, O Lord whose vehicle is never tired, O illuminator of the sky, O Gabhastimālin ('having a garland of many rays').

83. Obeisance, obeisance to you; you are the *Tilaka* (beautifying mark on the forehead) of the lady (in the form of the eastern quarter); you are her shining earring; the beloved Lord of Mandākinī; the lamp of the universe, as shining as Hemādri (the golden mountain, Meru); the attractive jewel of the firmament; the reddish tinge in the face of the lady, namely the (evening) dusk.

84. You are Brahman itself, the reality, the auspicious splendour, the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of the courtyard of the firmament, eulogized by the sages, the omniformed one (or whose body is the universe). You are the destroyer of the sorrow of the distressed, the protector of the servants. O Lord, be pleased with me. I have sought refuge in you.

85. I have kept my palms joined together in reverence,

on my head, resembling the bud of a lotus. Since you have been eulogized devoutly by me now, hence, O Lord, be gentle to me. Make my mind always directed towards righteousness. Make my glory excellent.

86. Obeisance to Savitr̥ (the Sun), the sole eye of the universe, the cause of birth, sustenance and destruction of the universe, identical with the three Vedas, the holder of the three Guṇas in self, identical with Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara.

Sūrya said:

87. O Pārtha, I am pleased with you now due to this hymn of prayer. O observer of holy vows, I shall definitely grant you a boon that is present in your mind. •

88. Never can my sight be fruitless. There is nothing that cannot be given even with effort especially to heroic ones.

Arjuna said:

89. This alone is the greatest and most excellent of all boons so far as I am concerned, O Lord, that you be present here at all times.

90-92. Wealth, foodgrains, sons, wives and other riches, everything desired in the mind should be given to those men who always devoutly pray to you, bowing down to you. This is my boon.

Sanatkumāra said:

Āditya granted the boons to him and spoke these splendid words: "Never shall he deviate from fortune and glory, he, the excellent man who eulogizes me with the prayer composed by you."

CHAPTER THIRTYTHREE

*The Greatness of Keśavāditya**Sanatkumāra said:*

1. Nārāyaṇa installed the idol (on the northern bank of Śīprā) and forcefully blew the conch-shell. Remaining pure, he eulogized Bhāskara by reciting (108 names of Bhāskara) this prayer.

Prayer to the Sun-God:

2-13. [This prayer consists of 108 epithets of the Sun-god]

Śrīkr̥ṣṇa said:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Āditya | (Son of Aditi) |
| 2. Bhāskara | (Lustrous one) |
| 3. Bhānu | (Possessing rays) |
| 4. Ravi | |
| 5. Sūrya | |
| 6. Divākara | (The maker or cause of day) |
| 7. Prabhākara | (The cause of light) |
| 8. Divānātha | (The lord of day) |
| 9. Tapaṇa | (Blazing one) |
| 10. Tapatām-vara | (Excellent one among scorchers) |
| 11. Vareṇya | (The greatest) |
| 12. Varada | (Granter of boons) |
| 13. Viṣṇu | (The pervader of the universe) |
| 14. Anagha | (Sinless) |
| 15. Vāsavānuja | (The younger brother of Indra) |
| 16. Bala | (Strength-incarnate) |
| 17. Vīrya | (Vigour-incarnate) |
| 18. Sahasrāmśu | (Thousand-rayed one) |
| 19. Sahasrakiraṇadyuti | (Having the lustre of a thousand rays) |
| 20. Mayūkhamālī | (Wearing a garland of rays) |
| 21. Viśva | (Universe) |
| 22. Mārtaṇḍa | (Born of a dead egg) |
| 23. Caṇḍa-kiraṇa | (Of fierce rays) |
| 24. Sadāgati | (Of continuous movement) |

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|------------------------------|---|
| 25. Bhāsvān | (Endowed with brilliance) |
| 26. Saptasaptin | (Having seven horses) |
| 27. Sukhodaya | (Rise of happiness) |
| 28. Devadeva | (Lord of Devas) |
| 29. Ahirbudhnya | (Identical with Rudra) |
| 30. Dhāmnāmnidhi | (Storehouse of refulgence) |
| 31. Anuttama | (Most excellent) |
| 32. Tapa | (Penance-incarnate) |
| 33. Brahmamayāloka | (Having the lustre of Brahman) |
| 34. Lokapāla | (Guardian of the world) |
| 35. Apāmpati | (Lord of waters) |
| 36. Jagatprabodha- janaka | (The awakener or enlightener of the world) |
| 37. Deva | (The refulgent god) |
| 38. Jagad-bīja | (Seed of the world) |
| 39. Jagatprabhu | (Lord of the universe) |
| 40. Arka | |
| 41. Niḥśreyasapara | (The excellent salvation) |
| 42. Kāraṇa | (The cause of everything) |
| 43. Śreyasāmpara | (Excellent welfare) |
| 44. Ina | (Master or 'glorious one' as in RV) |
| 45. Prabhāvī | (Effective, influential) |
| 46. Puṇya | (Meritorious one) |
| 47. Pataṅga | (Sky-floater) |
| 48. Patageśvara | (Lord of the flying ones) |
| 49. Manovāncchita-dātā | (Giver of the desired objects) |
| 50. Dṛṣṭaphalaprada | (Bestower of the seen benefits) |
| 51. Adrṣṭaphalaprada | (Bestower of unseen-destined- benefits) |
| 52. Gṛha | (Home, resort) |
| 53. Gṛhakara | (Maker, bestower of houses) |
| 54. Haṁsa | (Swan) |
| 55. Haridaśva | (Having bay-coloured horses) |
| 56. Hutāśana | (Fire-god) |
| 57. Māṅgalya | (Conferring happiness) |
| 58. Maṅgala | (Auspicious) |
| 59. Medhya | (Pure) |
| 60. Dhruva | (Firm, the fixed one, stable) |
| 61. Dharmaprabodhana | (Exhorter of righteousness) |
| 62. Bhava | (Existent one) |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 63. Saṁbhāvita ¹ | (Honoured one) |
| 64. Bhava | (The present) |
| 65. Bhūtabhavya | (Identical with past and future) |
| 66. Bhavātmaka | (Identical with the present) |
| 67. Durgama | (Impassable, unapproachable) |
| 68. Durgatihara | (Destroyer of wretchedness) |
| 69. Haranetra | (The eye of god Śiva) |
| 70. Trayīmaya | (Identical with the three Vedas) |
| 71. Trailokyatilaka | (The beautifying mark on the forehead of the three worlds) |
| 72. Tirtha | (Passage to heaven) |
| 73. Taraṇi | (Raft) |
| 74. Sarvatomukha | (With faces on all sides) |
| 75. Tejorāśi | (Mass of brilliance) |
| 76. Sunirvāṇa | (Excellent salvation) |
| 77. Viśveśa | (Lord of the universe) |
| 78. Śāśvata | (The eternal one) |
| 79. Dhāma | (Lustre) |
| 80. Kalpa | (A period of one day of Brahmā) |
| 81. Kalpānala | (Destructive Fire at the end of Kalpa) |
| 82. Kāla | (Death or time) |
| 83. Kāla-cakra | (The wheel of time) |
| 84. Kratupriya | (Fond of sacrifices) |
| 85. Bhūṣana | (Ornament) |
| 86. Marut | (Wind-god) |
| 87. Sūrya | |
| 88. Maṇiratna | (The jewel of jewels) |
| 89. Sulocana | (Of beautiful eyes or excellent vision) |
| 90. Tvaṣṭā | |
| 91. Viṣṭara | (Seat) |
| 92. Viśva | (Universe) |
| 93. Satkarmasākṣī | (Witness of good deeds) |
| 94. Asatkarmasākṣī | (Witness of evil deeds) |
| 95. Savitr̥ | |
| 96. Sahasrākṣa | (Endowed with a thousand eyes) |
| 97. Prajāpāla | (Protector of subjects) |

1. For making the number of 108 some words are separated, e.g. *Bhava-Saṁbhāvitam* is emended as *Bhavam* and *Sambhāvitam*.

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 98. Adhokṣaja | (Identical with Viṣṇu) |
| 99. Brahmā | (One with Brahmā) |
| 100. Vāsarārambha | (The beginning of the day) |
| 101. Rakta-varṇa | (Red-complexioned) |
| 102. Mahādyuti | (Of great refulgence) |
| 103. Śukla | (White) |
| 104. Madhyandina | (Midway) |
| 105. Rudra | (Rudra) |
| 106. Śyāma | (The dark one) |
| 107. Viṣṇu | (One with Viṣṇu) |
| 108. Dinānta | (End of day) |

14-18. Thus the hundred and eight names of the divine Sun have been uttered by Viṣṇu. He who remains pure and recites this devoutly, will never have disasters anywhere. He will have perfect movement everywhere. He attains wealth, grain and happiness as well as sons. He gains splendour, intellect, great profit, knowledge and good goal.

After eulogizing thus, the Lord of the universe vanished.

By seeing the face of Keśavārka (i.e. Keśavāditya) as lustrous as ruby, one is rid of all sins and is honoured in the world of the Sun-god. They say that Reṇu Tīrtha is near Keśavārka. By visiting it one is undoubtedly released from all sins.

CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

The Greatness of Śaktibheda Tīrtha¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. I shall describe in detail another Tīrtha known as Śaktibheda where formerly Śiva performed the rite of "Jaṭābhadrā" (arranging the matted hairs) of Skanda. (vide verse 77)

2. After killing the Daitya named Tāraka, the enemy of Suras, the infuriated Skanda himself threw down the Śakti on the ground.

1. Though the heading of the chapter refers to the throwing down of Śakti by Skanda, the chapter mainly deals with the birth of Skanda.

Vyāsa said:

3. O holy Sir, narrate carefully. O great sage, I have a doubt. How was Skanda born? I wish to know this.

Sanatkumāra said:

4. Formerly in the battle between Devas and Asuras, Suras were defeated by Dānavas. Śakra and others became agitated due to fright and abandoning Svarga, they flew in various directions.

5. There, O sage, the three-eyed Lord Mahādeva, the destroyer of the three Puras, was propitiated by the Lord of Devas by means of a severe penance.

6. Thereupon the delighted Mahādeva stood in front of Śakra and spoke these, "I shall grant you any desired boon."

Śakra said:

7. O Lord Śaṅkara, if out of pity for me, you are pleased (to grant a boon), O Supreme Lord, give me a great general.

Hara said:

O Devendra, through my own vital energy I shall procreate a son, the leader of a great army, the remover of the fear of Suras.

Sanatkumāra said:

8-16. After saying this, Lord Hara, the deity of all living beings, vanished. In his anxiety for a son, the Lord went to Himālaya. He stationed himself in the grove of Devadāru trees and engaged in meditation for the purpose of spiritual knowledge. He, the Lord on whom Brahmā and other Yogins meditate and ponder with self-restraint and breath-control. O sage, he who is worshipped by all creatures as Liṅgamūrti (having Liṅga as his form) has begun to meditate himself. Why? We, the seekers of the greatest truth, do not know.

While the Lord was thus meditating, the Goddess was in the abode of Himālaya. She was in the prime of her youth. It was she who was Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, who cast off her own body in her father's house through the power of Yoga. She

was angry at the thought: 'My husband has not been invited to the sacrifice.' About this goddess (who was born as his daughter) Himavān had already heard from Nārada, the divine sage: "She will become the wife of Bhava." Hence he did not bother about another bridegroom.

She was about to perform a penance accompanied by her two female companions for (the hand of) Rudra. Her sole thought was: 'How will Lord Śaṅkara become my husband?' This was the situation with the Lord in meditation and the goddess as Himavān's daughter determined to perform a penance (for Śiva).

17. The Devas kept the Slayer of Bala (i.e. Indra) in their front and came to the sacred abode of Brahmā in order to see the immutable god Brahmā.

18. After eulogizing him, those Suras spoke, "Do be the refuge unto the Devas vanquished by the Dānavas."

19-20a. Thereupon Brahmā spoke to the Suras: "Your task as conceived by you has been understood (by me). But in this matter, the fulfilment is impossible without the semen virile of Śaṁbhu. Try to get the Lord of Devas sexually interested in Pārvatī."

20b. After saying this, Brahmā disappeared like the wealth acquired during a dream.

21-28. Then they all assembled on Meru and began their mutual consultation. To them Śakra said: "Śaṁbhu was already pleased with me. It has been accepted by the Lord that the commander-in-chief of the army will be procreated from his own body. When the matter has come to this (stage) the cause of success (in achieving this) is surely the shark-embled one (Kāma or Madana, the god of Love)."

After thinking thus, the Lord of Devas hurriedly summoned Kāma and spoke these hearty words: "O Kāma, manipulate everything in such a way as out of compassion for the Devas the Lord (Śiva) takes to the Goddess (Pārvatī). This is a great emergency that has come to Devas."

On hearing the words of Indra, Kāma said laughingly: "I shall accomplish everything if only I get Madhu (Spring) as my associate."

Immediately after the words of Kāma, Madhu was commanded, "Follow Kāma quickly."

After getting his friend Madhu, Kāma started along with his wife. With great attention, he made his bow ready and took up the flowery arrow in his hand.

He proceeded towards the grove of Devadāru trees where the Lord of the chiefs of Devas was stationed and Nandīśvara was keeping watch over the entrance like a doorkeeper already with mental concentration.

29. Taking his position on a mango tree, Kāma was about to fix the arrow Sumohana ('fascinating') when the Goddess entered the hermitage of Bhava.

30. The Lord ceased to meditate and observe the usual Vratas. He was so delighted and felt a thrill in his heart. Thereupon he surveyed all the quarters minutely.

31. He saw Kāma seated on a mango tree and became furious. (Kāma) was reduced to ashes by the third eye blazing with the flames of fire.

32. Lord (Śīva) quickly vanished from the place along with the Gaṇas. Pārvatī, the chaste lady, was struck with wonder. She became ashamed and overwhelmed with misery.

33-38. Himavān raised her quickly and took her home. When the Lord and the Goddess had gone the grief-stricken wife of Kāma began to lament, looking at her husband now reduced to ashes. She was extremely miserable. On seeing Rati excessively distressed, an unembodied voice said, consoling her compassionately as though one would console a distressed companion: "O lady with splendid side-glances, do not weep. Though your husband is without a body, he will carry out all activities and duly accomplish friends 'task' when Mahādeva marries Pārvatī. Thereafter, with the blessings and favour of Śāmbhu, he will undoubtedly rise up. At the close of Dvāparayuga, Kṛṣṇa will live in Dvārakā. Then your husband will be born as an embodied one in the form of his son named Pradyumna."

On being told thus by the voice coming from the sky, she gave up her gloom.

39-40. At that time, Goddess Umā thought thus in the abode of Himavān: 'That fiery brilliance of Śāmbhu has burnt down Kāma. How can that Lord be my husband? How shall the resurrection of Kāma be made possible? This task cannot be accomplished anywhere without a penance.'

41. After concluding thus, in the company of her female

companions, the lady of auspicious Vratas performed a great penance at the bidding of her father.

42. During rainy season she remained in the open under the sky performing penance; in winter she stood under water and in summer she allowed her body to be heated amidst five fires. Thus she performed a severe penance.

43. On seeing her engaged in penance, Hara came to her hermitage in the guise of a religious student. Hospitably received by the goddess, he spoke thus:

44. "O lady of slender waist, O lady with tender glances, why do you perform a penance in the prime of your youth? O fair lady, do tell me the reason; for whose sake do you perform the penance?"

45. She answered truthfully and sweetly: "O Baṭu (religious student), the aim of the penance is the attainment of Śaṅkara."

46. On hearing those words, Hara thought that his own purpose would be achieved delightfully. In order to test the devotion of Umā, he began to censure Śiva.

47. The Daughter of the Mountain was unable to endure the words of the Baṭu. Maheśvara thought that Umā was about to go away from that place. Hence he revealed his own form endowed with three eyes and armed with the trident.

48-49. On seeing Īśa, Bhavānī became bashful. She stood there with face bent downwards. Vijayā (the companion of Umā) said to the great Yogin, "She should be sought after at the abode of her parents."

"I shall make efforts to take away Pārvatī in marriage." Saying thus, the Lord vanished. The Goddess returned to her father's abode. The Chastiser of Smara remembered the seven sages for the acquisition (in marriage) of the Goddess.

50. On being remembered, they came there and bowed down to Parameśvara. They said with hands joined in reverence, "What shall we do? Command us without hesitation."

51. Thereupon Īśa told all the sages, "Go to the abode of the Mountain and do everything so that Pārvatī, my beloved, will be mine."

52. After promising to do so, saying "So be it," they fixed the next appointment with Śāmbhu. They then went to the abode of the Lord of mountains accompanied by their wives.

53. Offerings were duly given by the Lord of mountains for their reception and they seated themselves. They said, "Give (in marriage) Umā to Śaṅkara who seeks her as his beloved wife."

54. They were told by the Lord of mountains, "She is already given." After fixing the day of the marriage and taking their leave of him, they returned to the place where Maheśvara was (awaiting them).

55. All of them told Śaṅkara, "Śivā has been offered by Himavān." After carrying out their duty, they returned in the manner they had come.

56-60. Brahmā, Indra and other Suras gathered together all the requisites for the marriage. The Bull-vehicled Lord set out with the Gaṇas, the chief of whom was Nandiśa.

Conchs were blown and Dundubhis were sounded. Brahmā and the immortal beings accompanied him. Īśa reached the abode of the Lord of mountains and the solemn marriage ceremony was performed. After marrying Umā in accordance with the injunctions, he went back to his abode.

There the Lord engaged in love-play and sexual dalliance in a secluded spot. The Devas who became afraid, deputed Agni to Śiva. When Agni went there, Maheśvara was very much ashamed. After concluding the dalliance he deposited the semen into the mouth of Agni. Agni who was scorched by that semen, deposited it in the waters of Gaṅgā.

61. Hara's semen disgorged by Agni fell into the middle of Gaṅgā. Burnt by Rudra's semen, Gaṅgā deposited it on her banks.

62-66. The six wives (? i.e. excluding Arundhatī) of the seven sages went to Jāhnavī for taking a bath. After the bath, they were distressed due to chillness. On seeing the blazing fiery refulgence on the bank, all of them thought that it was fire. They warmed themselves with it as they pleased. O sage, the seed soon went up their bodies penetrating them through the holes in the buttocks. It had six faces. They were not able to cast it off against one another because the fire was in front. Afraid of their husbands, the sages, they became worried. Thereafter, by the power of their penance they extracted it from their stomachs. It was unified by all the six of them. The excellent semen was deposited amidst Śara reeds on the top

of the Śveta mountain.

67-70. He manifested himself on the first day of the bright half, became smooth and equal on the second day, took form on the third day and became characterized with all features; all the limbs full-fledged on the fourth day with six faces and twelve eyes. Embellished on the fifth day he rose up on the sixth day. He shone upon three worlds with his red-white brilliance.

All the Suras beginning with Śakra heard him born thus. Brahmā soon arrived and performed all consecratory rites duly. A firm and splendid, sturdy Śakti was offered by the delighted Lord of Pārvatī.

71. Then a peacock was assigned as his vehicle by Gaurī. A goat was given by Agni. The Lord of the rivers offered him a cock.

72-75. He was honoured by the Kṛttikās (Pleiads) with a Śūla (javelin) and they nourished him with the desire of having a son. Then all consecratory rites having been performed, he was congratulated by Brahmā and others.

His names are sixteen:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Śakti-hasta | Equipped with Śakti in the hand. |
| 2. Deva-senā-samāvṛta | Surrounded by the army of Devas |
| 3. Vittādhipena Sahāyena Abhiṣikta | Coronated and assisted by the Lord of Wealth |
| 4. Pāvaki | Son of Agni |
| 5. Śaṇmukha | Six-faced |
| 6. Gāṅgeya | Son of Gaṅgā |
| 7. Kārttikeya | Son of Kṛttikās |
| 8. Guha | Stationed in the cavity of the heart |
| 9. Skanda | The emitted one |
| 10. Umāsuta | Son of Umā |
| 11. Devasenāpati | Commander-in-chief of the army of Devas |
| 12. Svāmī | Master |
| 13. Senānī | Leader of the army |
| 14. Śikhidhvaja | Having peacock-embled banner |
| 15. Kumāra | Prince |
| 16. Śaktidhārī | Holder of Śakti |

No harassment in regard to that man who recites these

names devoutly.

76. Mahāsenā, the destroyer of the Dānavas, who was born thus was brought by Śambhu to Kuśasthalī in order to assign him a holy spot.

77. He was crowned and coronated by him (Śiva) and the matted hairs were trimmed. Hence this divine Tīrtha is called Bhadrājaṭa.

78. In the assembly of all the gods, Maheśvara spoke sweetly to Mahāsenā whose coronation was concluded and who had acquired all missiles:

79. “Dear son, along with all the Devas, Śakra should be protected by you. The demons who harass the Devas should be exterminated entirely.”

80. When a great festivity went on like this wherein the vast crowd of Pramathas agitated like a sea, all the Mātṛs (Mothers) stationed in the nether worlds came there.

81. I shall tell you, listen. Based on their mode of eating, Śaṅkara has assigned names to them. O great sage, what they are?

82. Those who are fond of eating food placed on. Vaṭa leaves should be known as Vaṭamātṛs. Those who eat out of the palms of their hand are indeed Carpaṭa-Mātṛs.

83. The ninety-six Mātṛs who had assembled at the time of *Paulabhōjana* (Bulky meal—Buffet dinner) of Satī in order to play with Śambhu are the Paulamātṛs.

84. Seeing all these is meritorious. It is destructive of evil spirits and malignant Planets. O sage, these deities should be seen always with effort by men.

85. After acquiring Śakti, Lord Mahāsenā of great holy vows, Devasenā, killed Tāraka, the leader of the Dānavas with force.

86. After giving away the flourishing kingdom rid of thorns to Indra, he returned to Kuśasthalī and stayed there.

87-88. After killing the Lord of the Daityas thus, Lord Gāṅgeya of great strength threw down the Śakti into the waters of Śīprā. It pierced (its way down to) Pātāla. Thereupon, O Vyāsa, due to the piercing thrust of the Śakti, Bhogavatī came out and was duly honoured by all the Devas, sages and ascetics.

89. All the Tīrthas all over the earth falling into the seas etc. were deposited in Śaktibheda. They number hundreds

and thousands of crores.

90. More meritorious than this in all the three worlds is the Koṭi Tīrtha. Śīva, designated Koṭi Tīrtheśvara, has been installed there by Brahmā.

91. A man who takes his holy bath in Koṭi Tīrtha and visits Śīva named Koṭiśvara is rid of all sins like a serpent of its slough.

92. A man who devoutly loves (his) Pitṛs and performs Śrāddha there, O sage, obtains the entire benefit of ten horse-sacrifices.

93. Keeping the Pitṛs in view, whatever is offered as gift at Koṭi Tīrtha becomes undoubtedly ten million times more efficacious.

94. A man who makes the gift of a milch cow there, goes beyond all the worlds and attains the greatest goal.

95. He is honoured in Śivaloka as many thousands of Yugas as there are hairs on his body as well as on those of his progeny.

96. He who visits Śaktidhara on a new-moon day or on a full-moon day, will never be issueless, moneyless or sick in the course of seven births.

97. An excellent man who enters into the waters of that Tīrtha attains everlasting worlds as long as the moon and the sun are present.

98. O sage, a man who loves Pitṛs and performs the rite of Vṛṣotsarga ('setting a bull free') obtains everlasting position rare in the case of even Suras.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

The Greatness of Agastyēśvara

Sanatkumāra said:

1. If a man takes his holy bath in Svarṇakṣura and visits Lord Maheśvara, he acquires merit more than that of a gift of a hundred Kapilā cows.

2. A person with the sense-organs controlled, who takes his holy bath goes to Brahmāloka in a vehicle drawn by swans.

3. He who offers nocturnal oblations to the Mātṛs named Taila (Paula) achieves Siddhi immediately. On death he goes to Śivapura.

4. A man who takes his holy bath in the tank Viṣṇuvāpī in the month of Caitra or Phālguna with control over his sense-organs, observes fast and keeps awake at night, gets rid of all sins and goes to Viṣṇuloka.

5. A devotee of well-controlled mind who witnesses the series of worships of Lord Abhayeśvara with devotion goes to Rudraloka.

6. O sage, a man who goes to Agastyeśvara with mental concentration is reborn on the earth as an emperor ruling the whole of the earth.

7. One should observe fast and control one's sense-organs. He should visit Lord Agastyeśvara at the time of the rise of Agastya (Canopus) (on the 7th day of the dark half of Bhādrapada). He becomes rid of all sins.

8-9. A gold or silver image of Agastya is made in accordance with one's capacity.¹ It is fitted with five precious gems and wrapped with a cloth. The deity is to be worshipped then in accordance with the injunctions. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, I shall describe what those injunctions are in regard to all the four castes.

10-13. There are seven types of principal cereals and as many fruits. One (variety of cereal) and one of fruits should be given up at the outset, O sage, and this Vrata is to be continued for seven years. The Arghya Mantra is as follows:

"Obeisance to you, O Pot-born One, O son of Mitra and Varuṇa, originating from Agni and Māruta (Wind-god), O deity resembling a Kāśa flower."

Listen with attention, O Vyāsa, to the benefit that is derived when Arghya is offered. He becomes blessed with sons and wealth. There is no doubt about it.

14-15. On death he attains Svarga and is reborn in a rich family. After coming to the mortal world, he shall become a great Yogin. He who listens to this always and recites with concentration, becomes rid of all sins. He rejoices in the world of ascetics.

1. VV 8 ff show that there was a sort of Agastya cult in pre-tenth century A.D., in the Avantī area.

CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

The Greatness of Naradīpa

Vyāsa enquired:

1-4. Why is Mahākāla called Śivapada? What is the reason that Koṭīśvara is called Pāvaka? Why Vaṭamāṭṛs are second to(?) Naradīpa? Why is Abhayeśvara known as Śaṅkhoddhāraṇa? Of what purpose is Naradīpa (unto) the second set of Vaṭamāṭṛs. Why is it called Abhayeśvara? Why Śaṅkhoddhāraṇa? Why is Śūleśvara called Omkāra? Why is it called Dhūtapāpeśvara? Why is it called Aṅgāreśvara? How is it that Ujjayinī city is remembered as divine and extending (in period) to seven Kalpas. O excellent sage, narrate to me all its names.

Sanatkumāra replied:

5. Listen, O Vyāsa, how the city Kuśasthalī is famous as the divine city, the most excellent one by name and activity, and how it extends to seven Kalpas.

6-9¹. In the original first Kalpa it was called Svarṇaśṛṅga; in the second, Kuśasthalī; in the third, it is called Avantikā; in the fourth Amarāvati. It is famous in the fifth Kalpa as the Cūḍāmaṇi city; it is to be known as Padmāvati in the sixth and in the seventh it is the city of Ujjayinī. Again at the end of that Kalpa it is (will be) to be remembered as Svarṇaśṛṅga etc. He who gets up early in the morning and recites these seven names is rid of sins committed in the course of seven births. There is no doubt about this.

Formerly there was a king named Andhaka in Ujjayinī.²

10. He had an excessively valorous son named Kanaka Dānava. That powerful one challenged Indra for a fight.

11-13. Fighting in the battle, he was beaten down by Indra angrily. After killing the Dānava, Śakra became afraid of Andhāsura. He went to Kailāsa, the abode of Śaṅkara, in search of Śaṅkara. After seeing the Lord of Devas he bowed down to the

1. VV 6-9 give the seven names of Ujjayini per Kalpa.

2. The story how demon Andhaka became a Gaṇanāyaka of god Śiva extends to chapter 38.32. It is interspersed with many non-relevant matters. That is the Purāṇic way of story-telling.

Crescent-crested Lord. His eyes welled up with tears. He was extremely frightened. He submitted to the Lord, "O Lord, grant me freedom from fear of the demon Andhaka."

14-19. On hearing these words of Śakra, the Lord, gracious unto his devotees, granted him freedom from fear saying, "Do not be afraid of Andhaka."

Mahādeva assumed a very terrible cosmic form with serpents of ferocious nature moving about sportingly. They (serpents) had sharp fangs and they were excessively poisonous. They appeared like the cavities of the nether worlds and hissed angrily and terribly. The Lord had thousands of arms holding many weapons. He was clad in the hide of a lion and that of a tiger used as his upper garment. He displayed the hide of an elephant prominently. The moon, the sun and fire constituted his eyes. His calves resembled huge mountains. He caused everything to be agitated and trembled to the bottom of the nether worlds. After assuming such a form as caused the fright to Danujas and Daityas, Śaṅkara, the terrible one, descended to the earth with one of his legs.

20. A pool was formed there itself. It was bowed down to by all the Devas. Since the Lord pressed with his foot, the place is called Śivapada.

21. A crore of sins were torn (destroyed) by means of the big toe of the foot. Hence it is famous as Koṭi Tīrtha. It is destructive of all sins.

22. The Koṭi (tip, ten million) of the Tīrthas was determined (ascertained) by Agastya. Hence too this auspicious Tīrtha is remembered always as Koṭi Tīrtha.

23. All the Devas visited it and took the holy bath therein with a desire for welfare. The form was manifested by the great Kāla (Time, god of Death). Hence the deity is remembered as Mahākāla.

24. The demon Andhāsura became overwhelmed with the darkness of wrath on hearing that his son was killed. He caused the war trumpets, drums etc. to be sounded.

25. Accompanied by his army, he set off and reached the place where the Devas were stationed along with a vast army consisting of chariots and elephants.

26. On seeing the Dānavas getting prepared for the great battle, they (gods) trembled, though they were well-prepared.

They sought refuge in Śambhu.

27. The Three-eyed Lord said to the Devas "Do not fear." He seized a trident and angrily bit his lip with the curved fang-like teeth.

28-31. When the Three-eyed Lord became wrathful, the entire sky was filled with flames. Ten million unbearable arrows were discharged by the furious Andhaka. The army of the Devas was reduced to the plight of locusts and perished. Discharging flames of fire the Pināka-wielding Lord split them (arrows) into hundreds of pieces and struck him with his own arrows. With the weapons slipping down, Andhaka became feeble; hence he was restrained (and covered) by Śambhu by means of arrows like a lotus by means of bees. His army also was hit by his Gaṇas who fought in the battlefield.

32-38. The army was killed by the excellent warriors of gods who had resorted to Sthāṇu. On seeing his army struck down by the Suras and himself hit and pierced by Maheśa by means of crores of arrows, Andhaka whose body was split up became afraid. Expert in hundreds of types of Māyā (deceitful acts) he then adopted the Tāmasika Māyā. The Lord of Devas hidden by that Māyā went to the north. Śambhu apparently was afraid on being hit in the heart. He wandered all over the earth. The Daitya too pursued the Lord along the path by which he was gone. 'He is not seen; where has the wicked one gone?' Andhaka uttered a sound and then Maheśvara said something. A Tīrtha took shape there, well-known as 'Vāgandhaka'. A person should take his holy dip therein and be clean. On the ninth day in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, he should offer any gift along with sugarcandy. That gift shall have everlasting benefit. The donor shall go to Śivapura.

39. With the Pitṛs in view, anything can be offered devoutly unto Śiva. They will be satiated and remain so till the annihilation of all living beings.

40. The Devas were enveloped in darkness and they became agitated. With the minds utterly confused they could not think about anything.

41.¹ In the meanwhile, O Vyāsa, Narāditya rose up by means of his own self and refulgence in the form of a man dispelling

1. VV 41-75 describe the Sun-cult then prevalent at Ujjayinī.

the darkness of the quarters.

42. When the darkness was dispelled and the Daitya was brought into the light, the Devas became delighted on seeing Nara by means of their own eyes.

43-51. They eulogized Divākara (Sun-god) in the form of Nara with different kinds of hymns and prayers. Since Divākara rose up in the form of a Nara and became illuminated, the Devas named him Naradīpa.

A man who devoutly visits Divākara named Naradīpa is liberated from all sins, even if he happens to be slayer of a Brāhmaṇa.

A devotee should visit the deity, O Brāhmaṇa, on the sixth lunar day coinciding with a Sunday. He should observe fast on the seventh lunar day.

On a day when the moon changes at the beginning or end of a half day (*dinacchidra*), on the day of the transit of the sun, on the day of the equinox, a man should take his holy bath in the Kuṇḍa, remain clean, control his mind, utter the divine names and see the deity Naradīpa. He should recite the prayers accompanied with the play on auspicious instruments of music. He should worship by means of sweet scents, incense, lights and Naivedya offerings. With the accompaniment of musical instruments and songs, he should bow down with the *Aṣṭāṅgas* (eight limbs touching the ground). He should circumambulate in the morning, midday and in the afternoon. He shall become liberated from all the sins committed in the course of seven births.

By means of aerial chariots which are covetable to all and which shine like crores of suns, he shall quickly go to the world of the Sun inaccessible even to the Devas.

Since this deity was installed by Nara himself as a favour, this is called Naradīpa. It was from Śakra that the deity, the Sun, was procured and installed here. Therefore, O Vyāsa, the procedure for the Yātrā has been drawn up by Śakra.

52-54. The Lord said: "O Pārtha (i.e. Nara), I shall come here, in Naradīpa, with due consideration, along with the Devas, on the second day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha. The advent of mine should be known from the showering by the god."

Thereafter the Devas came from heaven and visited the brightly illuminated Naradīpa occupying the chariot thus and performed the Yātrā duly. Thereafter they moved about in divine vehicles.

55. A man who devoutly visits Naradīpa seated in chariot, shall become liberated from all sins. He is honoured in the world of the Sun.

56. O sage, I shall describe the procedure of the *Rathayātrā* of Naradīpa and also the merit acquired thereby as laid down and proclaimed by the sages.

57. On the second lunar day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, the Sun (Divākara) seated on the chariot is taken round in Kuśasthali by excellent Brāhmaṇas who pull him along with their hands.

58. He who sees the Divaspati (the Sun-god) coming to the northern quarter acquires the entire benefits of Agniṣṭoma Yajña.

59. A man who returns from Keśavārka and sees the chariot is on a par with one who performs the Yātrā of Śuṇḍīrasvāmin (i.e. Kārttikeya¹). There is no doubt in this regard.

60. He who pulls the chariot drawing the rope, O sage, redeems the ancestors of his family, the fathers and grand-fathers.

61. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, those with self-control who see Naradīpa proceeding towards the south go to heaven.

62. He who covers the holy spot, the chariot and the deity by means of thread, obtains all desired things and becomes highly meritorious.

63. If men devoutly circumambulate the Sun deity, they are on a par with those who have circumambulated the earth with the seven continents.

64-68. A person should get up early at dawn and silently approach the Sun (deity), O excellent Brāhmaṇa. He sees the deity through the eastern doorway and bows down. Entering through the southern doorway he worships the wheel of the chariot. He should come out through the same doorway, bow down and go away. After resorting to western doorway he should worship the Sun seated in the chariot. He should offer chowries, awning bells and other things. A cow should be gifted at the eastern door; a horse at the southern door; an elephant in the west and in the northern one the chariot

1. Avasthi notes that the correct name is 'Muṇḍīra-Svāmi' and it was one of the great temples of the Sun-god. *Studies in the Skanda Purana* (p. 142, Note 4).

itself. The man who performs Yātrā unto Naradīpa thus, attains all the desires and becomes one who has acquired merits.

69-71. He attains the heavenly world of the divine Gau (Cow), Sūrya, Śiva and Śakra. O sage, it will be as though the circumambulation of the great Meru was carried out by him. If a man makes a gift of thousand cows in the course of a hundred Vyatīpātas, or a thousand horses the same benefit is obtained by the performance of the Yātrā¹ of Naradīpa.

A person never gets bereft of Śrī (glory, wealth) if he performs the rite of *Vaṇana* ('shaving off the hairs on the head') when Naradīpa has mounted the chariot. He is honoured in the world of the Sun.

72. In the tank in front of Sūrya, the river Sarasvatī is present for the whole of a month. If a man views it everyday, evil dreams will cease to afflict him.

73-75. O Vyāsa, he who sees Naradīpa devoutly everyday, attains the excellent region accompanied by sons and grandsons. He sports about along with kinsmen. On death he goes to the city of Sūrya.

O Brāhmaṇa, when the darkness was dispelled and light spread everywhere, when Andhaka was killed by Maheśa with the trident, all the Suras, the chiefs of whom were Brahmā and Indra, became delighted.

76. At that time, with a desire for the welfare of the Suras, Viṣṇu blew the conch. There the Tīrtha named Śaṅkhoddhāraṇa emerged.

77-81. To the southern side of the deity, very near the Liṅga that has four faces, Viṣṇu is present, stabilized there with the trident.

Those persons with the sense-organs subdued shall have all the masses of their sins exhausted. They will attain the greatest goal.

He who duly offers oblation unto the Yoginīs is never harassed by Bhūtas (spirits), ghosts, vampires etc.

A person should observe fast on the Dvādaśī day and take his holy bath. He shall thereafter visit Lord Janārdana, the Lord having the conch-shell. He shall thereby attain the *Acyuta* (eternal) region.

1. *yad-yāvāt* seems to be misprint for *yātrāyām*, a reading found in the Gurumaṇḍal Ed. (XX) 8.122.

82. Obeisance to that Puruṣottama who has subtle and gross forms and who clearly manifests himself, who is identical with all yet not identical, from whom this world has originated and who is the cause of the universe.

CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

The Importance of Aṅgārikī Caturthī¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. When Andhaka was pierced with the trident the voice of Rudra rose up; there the (holy) Omkāra originated; it is Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas.

2. A devotee should take his bath there and be clean. With the observance of restraints and meditations, he should see Lord Omkāra, Mahādeva and he shall be released from all sins.

3. After Andhaka was killed, the Trident went into the waters of Bhogavatī. On seeing the radiant Trident, Hāṭaka (Meru, gold, Lord in that form) became surprised. He asked, "What for have you come here?"

4-5. The Trident replied: "I have been hurled by Śaṅkara in order to slay the wicked Andhaka of sinful activity. I have come here after piercing him, to the splendid waters of Bhogavatī. I shall return again to that place where Śaṅkara is staying."

6-10. On hearing the words uttered by the Trident, Hāṭaka quickly went out along with the Trident because he was desirous of seeing the great Lord. The Śūla became Śūleśa and Hāṭakeśvara radiant, charming and multifaced.

On seeing him radiant like a blooming lotus, all the Devas experienced (joyful) horripilation. The Devas with Brahmā and Viṣṇu at the head, eulogized him by means of different kinds of prayers. The Lord came to be known by the name Hāṭakeśvara.

1. Aṅgārika is Mars. The fourth day in the dark half of a month coinciding with Tuesday (Maṅgalavāra, the day of Aṅgāraka) is called Aṅgārikī Caturthī. Its observance etc. is given in vv 40-54.

The deity was stationed in Pātāla. Since the Lord came out through the way of the Trident, he is known as Śūleśvara.

To the north of the Lord of Devas a Tīrtha came up where the powerful and sinful Lord of Daityas was taken by means of the Trident. Hence, O Vyāsa, this Tīrtha is called Dhūtapāpa.

11-15. A person should observe fast for a night on the full-moon day or on Saturday. With devotion to Śiva and the sense-organs well-controlled, he should visit Lord Dhūtapāpeśvara, Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas. He shall be rid of all the sins committed in the course of seven births. He will redeem a hundred members of his family and go to Śivaloka.

A man who sees in the month of Pauṣa the Lord after the ablution has been performed, is rid of the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter by the power of Śūleśvara. On death he goes to the greatest region by means of a thousand aerial chariots.

By the time the trident of Andhaka went to Bhogavatī, terrible Asuras arising from the blood got up.

16. Hundreds of those extremely powerful Asuras with swords in their hands positioned themselves in all the four quarters. Maheśvara was struck by those terrible fellows. On being thus afflicted by those wicked-hearted wretches, the Lord roared like a lion.

17. Those sinners swooned and fell down on the ground due to that leonine roar. They got up again and went upto Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas. Thereupon, the Devas with Brahmā and Viṣṇu at the head became frightened.

18-24. Considering them to be unvanquishable the Devas, the well-wishers, had mutual consultation. They thought of creating a woman. Brahmā himself created a woman who had assumed his own form with four faces and arms. The splendid lady was seated on a swan. She is Brahmāṇī.

Kumāra created the woman Kaumārī with peacock as her splendid vehicle. Her garlands and clothes were red in colour. She held a cock and a Śakti (trident).

After creating Kaumārī with the excellent lord of birds as her vehicle, Lord Kumāra created Cāmuṇḍā with the vehicle of Dharmarāja (god of Death) as his host vehicle. She was dark-complexioned with awful teeth. She was capable of pounding down the bodies of the Daityas. She held a staff and a Mudgara (mortar-like iron club). She had an eye on her forehead. A

skull embellished her hands. She was bluish dark in colour. She was clad in the hide of a lion. She was adorned with all the ornaments. She held a *Kartrī* (scissors), a sword, a *Kheṭa* (a shield) and a *Khaṭvāṅga* (skull-topped iron club). Her body was covered with bones, skin and hairs. These Lokamāṭṛs were created in the vicinity of Vaṭa (holy fig tree). Hence they are visible to the people and became famous as Vaṭamāṭṛs.

25. A man who takes his holy bath there, remains clean and sees the mothers, becomes rid of all sins. He is honoured in the Māṭṛloka.

26. O great sage, in the place where a leonine roar was let out by the Lord, the deity called Simheśvara manifested himself. He is destructive of all sins.

27-29. By seeing that Lord a man becomes strong like a lion. Where the body experienced horripilation when the leonine roar was given out, the deity named Kaṇṭeśvara manifested himself bestowing everything always. The man shall take his bath in the Tirtha there and see Śiva named Kaṇṭeśvara. He will never experience fear of malignant Planets, evil spirits and ghosts. Thereafter all those Māṭṛs were commanded thus by Hara.

30-38. "Quickly drink up the blood of this terrible Andhaka Asura."

In the meantime, O Vyāsa, Śaṅkara who blazed like burning fire said, "O Śakra, do not be afraid." At the place where he said so, an excellent Liṅga named Abhayeśvara manifested itself. This deity is saluted by Devas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas and Serpents. A person should take his holy bath there, be clean, observe fast and control all his sense-organs. He should then adore the Lord of the chiefs of Devas. He shall obtain the merit of a horse-sacrifice. There is no fear to him from spirits, ghosts and vampires. He goes to Śivaloka by means of a vehicle drawn by lions.

The Māyā that originated from the body of Andhaka and was the cause of Raktāsuras (demons getting up from the blood-drops of Andhaka) became completely destroyed by the Māṭṛs who were fighting. The divine Māṭṛs were drinking the blood oozing out from the body of the Daitya. Six of them were fully satisfied but the Māṭṛ born of the forehead did not become so. The Asura that remained after the destruction of the Māyā,

got his trident and armour split. The powerful Andhaka pulled out the trident towards the north (upwards). That huge-bodied Asura was obstructed and checked by Gaṇapa (leader of Gaṇas). Hence he became famous as Mahāvināyaka in the world, O sage. If a man visits that Lord he is never harassed by obstacles.

39. If the devotee worships Gaṇeśa on the fourth day every month, he has never to face obstacles in this world or in the next.

40. From his forehead a drop of sweat fell on the ground. From it Aṅgāraka (Planet Mars) was born with red garlands and unguents.

41. (Thus) Aṅgāraka was born as the son of Mahādeva and Dharā (Earth) in the Āvantya country. He is Raktākṣa (red-eyed) and Lohitāṅga (red-bodied).

42. He was eulogized by his names by Brahmā and was established in the middle of the Planets. An excellent Tīrtha called Aṅgāreśvara came into existence.

43-44. A Liṅga (named Aṅgāreśvara) was installed by Brahmā there. It is resorted to by the Gaṇas and Gandharvas. A pure man who takes his holy bath there on a Tuesday and visits Aṅgāreśvara is rid of all sins. He should offer Arghya by the night when the fourth lunar day coincides with a Tuesday.

45-48. This should be continued with effort till four Caturthī days are over. Five *Karakas* (bowls) should be made of copper. They should be filled with jaggery and Pīṭha (Piṣṭa-cake made of flour) (or¹ these Karakas should be placed over small pedestals made of jaggery). They should be covered with red cloths and smeared with red sandalpaste. They are worshipped with red flowers. There itself a vessel should be filled with gingelly seeds and raw rice grains. The second one should be filled with Laḍḍus (sweet balls of Bengal grain flour). The third one is filled with milk. The fourth one is filled with Uttarīs (a kind of grain?) and the fifth one with Mūlakas (esculent roots of radish). After doing like this in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee should offer *Arghya* repeating this Mantra:

49-52. "Obeisance, obeisance to Kuja (Mars: *Ku-Ja*-born of the Earth), of reddish body-stationed in the middle of Planets.

1. This is probable in view of the following verses.

Obeisance to the deity similar to Kārttikeya (Skanda), having excellent features.

O deity born from the forehead of Śiva, O deity born of the womb of the Earth, I have resorted to you for the sake of comely form. Accept my Arghya. Obeisance to you.

O deity having splendour resembling the splendour of burning coal! O deity shining like the smooth coral! I have resorted to you seeking a son. Accept my Arghya, O son of Dharā (Earth).

You are born in the region of Avantī, of Earth through Śiva. Grant me a son. Grant me wealth; grant me fame. Obeisance to you.¹

53-54. O excellent sage, Bhauma (Mars) is worshipped thus on the Caturthī day (4th lunar day). The devotee shall enjoy all pleasures on the earth and attain sons. On death he goes to heaven and stays there as long as fourteen Indras reign.

CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

The Story of Andhaka

Sanatkumāra said:

1. When the blood of the Rākṣasa no longer remained after being drunk, the face of Cāmuṅḍā became red and resplendent.

2-4. When Andhaka blazed, her terrible teeth and lips became dark and similar (to those of) the death at the end of the Kalpa. The eyes with blazing filaments (as it were) became quiescent. She shrieked and howled with loud gruff tone of terrible volume. She had a coronet made of the feathers of Garuḍa and her face shone awfully, with the sharp curved fangs of teeth bursting out like shoots. With an angry wry face she placed the tip of the skull therein. Caṇḍī embellished with fierce brawny arms drank his blood.

1. This is a Purāṇic prayer meant for all castes. The Vedic Mantra used is: *Agni-mūrdhā* etc. (RV VIII.44.16).

5. As she drank the blood, the king of the Daityas became emaciated. His eyes became excited and he became weak and wasted.

6. Thus Andhaka, the Dānava, lost all the virility in his body. By force he withdrew all his Māyā (power of creating illusions). He became excessively weak.

7. In his excess of fright, he eagerly desired protection of his life. On seeing no other go in the world, the Daitya eulogized Śaṅkara.

8. He kept his palms joined together in reverence. His body experienced excess of horripilation. He forsook his qualities of Rajas and Tamas and adopted Sāttvika (pious) feelings of inner fervour.

9-10. With his mind free from impurities, he eulogized Lord Śaṅkara of praiseworthy features, having the crescent-moon for his ornament on the head. Possessed of devotion with a permanent knowledge, he prayed to the Lord, the cause of all the worlds, the chief of all the gods.

Andhaka said:

Andhaka's Prayer:

11. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara who offers refuge at the time of annihilation (of the world) (or death) though he is the cause of the world—Śaṅkara who is the creator of the entire universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings and who is the giver of pleasure and pain to what is created.

12. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of succour, whose grandeur and dignity is highly divine and on whom meditate the Yogins who are devoid of delusion, darkness and Rajas Guṇa, from whom desires have receded, whose minds have single-pointed concentration due to devotion and whose intellects are unimpeded.

13. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of protection, who always holds on his head the divine river, the pure disc of the moon with shining rays and half of whose body is resorted to by the Daughter of the King of mountains.

14. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of refuge, whose lotus-like feet are served by Siddhas and Cāraṇas and who held on his head like a garland Gaṅgā who is impassable

due to great waves and who dropped down from the sky sanctifying the three worlds.

15. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of succour, who by pressing with his lotus-like foot steadied the peak of Kailāsa that was being shaken by the Ten-headed One (Rāvaṇa) who (himself) resembled the peak of Kailāsa.

16. I seek refuge in that Lord Śaṅkara, the bestower of succour, who, at the time of the sacrifice of Dakṣa shattered the eyes of Bhaga as well as the row of the teeth of Pūṣan and who paralysed and benumbed Indra who had taken up the thunderbolt in his hand.

17. I seek shelter in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of refuge, by whom the sons of Diti, the sons of Danu, Vidyādharaṣ, Serpents, Gaṇas and excellent sages whose food consists of fruits and roots, have been blessed with all (kinds of) boons.

18. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of succour, by resorting to whom people became enjoyers of happiness and even in Kṛta Yuga those who were attached to worldly pleasures, have been endowed with knowledge and known qualities.

19. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of shelter, who saved (my) charioteer from the jaws of death, who had given boons a great many times to Brahmā, Indra, Viṣṇu and Maruts along with Ṣaṅmukha (Skanda).

20. The great soul (Lord Śaṅkara) who cannot be approached by others and who was propitiated by the penance of Dhūmravrata ('imbibing smoke as an austerity') bestowed Sañjīvanī (the power to resuscitate the dead) to Bhṛgu (Śukra). I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of succour.

21. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of succour, the Lord who for the sake of pastime created the seven worlds of meritorious names, worlds embellished with different kinds of rivers, birds and trees along with Brahmā.

22. I seek refuge in that Śaṅkara, the bestower of shelter, the Lord who with the tip of the nails of the lotus-like left hand, suddenly plucked the fifth head of Brahmā, the head with an awful hole resembling a lotus (blooming) in sunshine.

23. Those persons who are deluded and who do not know you, the most excellent preceptor (Patriarch) of all the Suras and the creator of this universe including the mobile and immobile beings, experience torture afterwards when their

prosperity and false prestige disappears. They experience this even as I experience it.

24. A person of righteous acts who recites this prayer, a devotee of Śiva who listens to it always in the assembly of Brāhmaṇas and who always performs auspicious rites, goes to the world of Śiva permanently [without any break(?)].

Sanatkumāra said:

25. Even as a hundred years elapsed while he was eulogizing thus, Lord Śaṅkara, the trident-bearing Lord, with a bull as his emblem, was pleased and he spoke thus:

26. "Son, welfare unto you. I am pleased with you. Now you have become free from impurities. I shall give you divine vision. Look at me without mental affliction.

27. O excellent Dānava, tell me whatever benefit has been desired mentally by you; I shall grant you."

The Dānava said:

28. The position of Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Indra is characterized by coming and going (i.e. impermanence). All this is known to me. I do not desire it at all.

29. O Lord of Devas, if you are pleased, grant me Gāṇapatya—lordship of the Gaṇas. That is something especially pure and everlasting.

Mahādeva said:

30. You shall become the presiding officer of the Gaṇas, devoid of death, without old age and all kinds of miseries. You shall be bowed down to by the entire world.

31. You can assume any form you like. You shall be a great Yogin of excessive strength and vigour. You shall be endowed with Aṇimā (minuteness) and other spiritual powers. You shall be my favourite forever.

Sanatkumāra said:

32. Thereupon that glorious Andhaka obtained those rare boons and became an attendant of Mahādeva and vanished there itself.

33. When Andhaka departed, Brahmāṇī and other goddesses came to the place where the Lord was present, the Lord who bestowed the boons on Andhaka.

34. They prayed to Mahādeva. The delighted Maheśvara made Cāmuṇḍā, his confidante Śivā.

35. On seeing Śaṅkara stationed before them and eulogized by them, Brahmā and others became delighted and praised him by means of different kinds of hymns.

36. When those imbibers of blood became pacified by Śaṁbhu and they were pleased, he spoke these excellent words for the sake of their establishment:

37-38. "Since all of you, excessively powerful ones, were born in the Āvantya region, you will become well-known in the world as *Āvantiyamātaraḥ* ('Mothers of the Āvantya region'). Residing in Avanti steadily, richly endowed with pleasure and destroying all sins, you will be the bestowers of boons on the worlds.

39. If, with concentration and mental purity, anyone were to visit you on the new-moon day in the month of Śrāvaṇa devoutly, he shall have the worlds of great prosperity.

40. A person without a son will beget a son; a seeker of wealth shall get wealth. He shall have comely features and good fortune. He shall be an enjoyer of pleasures and expert in all the scriptures.

41. He shall go to the world of the ancestors by means of a vehicle to which swans are yoked. He will be honoured there. Protect ye all this city duly in every Kalpa."

42. After saying thus, the Lord of Devas, went to Mountain Kailāsa. He was eulogized by the terrible attendants of Rudra and the chiefs of groups of immortal ones and Daityas.

43. He who faithfully reads and listens to the praise worthy of the Lord of the groups of Asuras and Suras shall go to Rudraloka, the storehouse of all happiness, the eternal resplendent world adored by the leaders of the groups of Suras and Danujas.

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

The Greatness of Mahākālavana

Vyāsa said:

1-2. O holy Sir, the greatness of the holy spot has been duly narrated. The most excellent one of all Tīrthas, the increaser of the merit of all holy ones, has been explained. How many Tīrthas are here and how many Liṅgas? Kindly narrate it to me even as I ask you.

Sanatkumāra said:

3. O Vyāsa, there are sixty thousand crores and six thousand crores of Tīrthas. There is no limit to the number of the Liṅgas.

4. A man who is born here in the beautiful Mahākālavana, whether he desires it or is free from desires, is honoured in Śivaloka.

5. The Tīrthas, places and shrines shall accomplish whatever (a devotee) desires. A devotee becomes pure after bathing there and is honoured in Śivaloka.

6-7. All the Tīrthas, are meritorious. They are the shrines of spiritual fulfilment. Know the excellent ones of those Tīrthas, the most important one among them. He who listens to this with great devotion attains the highest goal.

CHAPTER FORTY

The Origin of the Name Kanakaśṛṅgā

Vyāsa said:

1. O holy Sir, all the abodes of the Lord all-round within (the radius of) more than a Yojana have been described by you. They are the destroyers of the fear from worldly entanglement.

2. They are the holy spots where, if excellent men of righteous activities die, they will go to the city of Īśvara riding

on aerial chariots and abide there (permanently).

3. Apart from Mahākālavana, what is that other meritorious holy spot where, worms, locusts and other (lower beings) that die, attain the highest goal.

4. Further, answer, O sage, another question of mine now truthfully. Why was this city formerly called **Kanakaśṛṅgā**?

5. How did it get the name **Kuśasthalī**? Why is it remembered as **Avantī**? O good Sir, why is it known as **Padmāvati** and also **Ujjayinī**?

6. Hence, O excellent sage, tell me the reason for these names.

Sanatkumāra said:

7-10. Listen, O Vyāsa, I shall narrate as recounted formerly to Vāmadeva by Virañci (Brahmā) in the ancient Gaura Kalpa. Vidhi (Brahmā) was asked for adequate reasons by the holy Lord Mahēśa: "Where should those that fall down from heaven live for the sake of happiness? How can those that roam about as they please and do whatever they like attain heaven? What is that most excellent and excessively meritorious region that destroys sins? What is that place where, if the people live anywhere, their mind shall turn back and where this-worldly and other-worldly happiness is assured? O holy Sir, tell this to me for the sake of the welfare of all embodied beings."

Sanatkumāra said:

11-12. That excellent Lord Pitāmaha was thus addressed by Śāmbhu in a former Kalpa. (Being) Delighted, the Lord spoke to the Lover of Pārvatī: "O holy Sir, you are **Sadāśiva**, the creator of all, the surveyor of everything.

13. O eternal one, you ask me everything like one who does not know. You are the one where the Fire that annihilates the Kalpa is stationed with all the fiery flames.

14-15. You alone are **Mahākāla**. Everything is known to you. O Lord, those men of righteous conduct and others who live there, are no men but they are undoubtedly **Suras**. On death, in the course of time, they attain heaven again.

16. At that place, there is a splendid city with charming

mansions. Different kinds of grand buildings of various colours and sizes shine therein.

17. Palaces with golden pinnacle have been made by Viśvakarman. Devas are present there always. So also are different kinds of Tīrthas.

18-20. Where I, you and Keśava were present in a previous Kalpa, celestial sages, Siddhas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Dānavas, all the worlds came there to see the same city Avantikā. They came along with Sthāṇu and Vedhas, the origin of Brahman (Vedas). Similarly excellent ladies, the beloved ones of the Devas flocked together in thousands to see the wonderful city.

21-23. After reaching the place along with the Devas, Maheśvara surveyed the beautiful city full of palaces with golden pinnacles embellished with gems. The holy, cosmic-formed king, the sole leader of the universe, stays there in the splendid divine palace embellished with gems. He is being served by Suras, Siddhas, Sages, Vidyādharas, and Serpents.

24. Thereafter Maheśa and Pitāmaha came there and approached the Lord of the universe. They were delighted. They were duly honoured along with their followers. He then asked them the reason of their visit.

25-26. “Why have you come down to the earth from heaven along with your followers? May your purpose of visit be disclosed.” Thereupon those two, Īśvara and the Lotus-born One said. “O Hari, we are pleased to be where you stay. Without you we have no happiness in heaven, earth or Rasātala. When was this city with golden pinnacles and mansions of diverse kinds established by you?”

Hari said:

27. O Īśa, it is for your own sake that this city of special features was created by me. It is the mine of all good qualities.

“O Viśveśvara, grant us both some place here. May the Tirtha remain intact even at the time of Pralaya.”

28. “O Prajāpati (Brahmā), I grant you both the desired abode. Your situation shall be in the north. O Maheśvara, please do go to the southern abode. Excellent place has been well-gifted unto you both.”

29. Parmeśvara, Mahākāla, the Lord, immanent soul of

the universe stationed himself there with the flames of fire beneath and surrounded by many thousands of Gaṇas.

30. “For the sake of pastime, the city was created by me, desirous of the welfare of all living beings. It has been given over to you both, after forsaking my own mountain.

31. Since it (the name of the city) has been called by both of you as Hemaśṛṅgā (‘a city with golden pinnacles’), it will be well-known all over the world as Kanakaśṛṅgā-Purī.”

32-33. Thus the first name Kanakaśṛṅgā has been explained. It is the place where Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are stationed performing Japas (utterance of divine names). Bestowing all the desired benefits on the devotees they enjoyed themselves there.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

The Genesis of the Name Kuśasthālī

Sanatkumāra said:

1-2. Listen, O Vyāsa, (to the reason) why this was called Kuśasthālī, in the Tatpuruṣa Kalpa, formerly by learned men well-versed in the Vedas. The entire universe was created by Vedhas (Brahmā) including Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas who became mutually inimical and fought in battle. Each was haughtier than the other.

3-8. The Devas and Dānavas vied with one another and fought in battles. Men fought with other men and Siddhas and Vidyādharas. Cāraṇas fought with Kinnaras. Full of hatred, in this manner they continued to fight incessantly shouting words the meanings whereof were not clear. Stronger men fought with weaker men. Stronger animals fought with weak animals and birds with birds. Thus the entire world became devoid of the rules of propriety and decorum due to these mutual bickerings.

On seeing this situation, Brahmā thought within his mind thus: ‘I shall seek refuge in Viṣṇu, the great Lord and Creator of the universe. I shall seek refuge in Lord Hari, the destroyer of the distress of those who seek refuge.’ After thinking thus, he meditated on Mādhava.

When meditated upon thus, the glorious Hari who is a great Yogin who has assumed many forms, held up an iron staff and spoke to Pitāmaha:

9. “O Brahmā, I have been perfectly meditated upon by you, in accordance with the yoga of meditation. Look at me, coming in the manner meditated upon, ready to protect the worlds.”

10-11. Thereupon, the creator, on hearing thus, ceased to meditate. On seeing him, he got up and made obeisance with concentrated mind. Then he worshipped Keśava with the offerings of Pādya, Ācamaniya and Madhuparka. After adoring the Lotus-born One addressed these words to Acyuta:

Brahmā prayed:

Eulogy of Viṣṇu :

12. “O Lord of the universe, O Lord of Devas, this universe has been created by you. O Viṣṇu, without you this universe cannot stay (be stable).

13. You are the controller of this pure world. None else. This entire universe exists due to you. Hence, do govern and administer it.

14. Without you, the lotus-eyed one, Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas along with Yakṣas, Serpents and Rākṣasas have spread everywhere every type of belligerence, dispute and split. They kill mutually. You are capable of saving them.

15-16. You are the permanent sustainer of the breath (life) in the form of the (supreme) Soul of this universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings. This entire universe is held by you. Hence you have been designated ‘Upendra’. This entire universe has been pervaded by you. It is your abode. Hence you are called by the leading sages ‘Viṣṇu’.

17. Now this universe has been enveloped and inhabited by you. As per the root √vās¹ (to envelop, to people) you are Vāsudeva. This universe is your follower. You are all-powerful. You shine like the king of the entire universe.

18. This universe is a befitting army of yours. Hence, indeed,

1. The root is √vas changed to √vās for metrical convenience.

you are remembered as 'Viśvasena'. Due to the digging and furrowing of the universe with all mobile and immobile beings, originating from the root \sqrt{kr} 'to furrow', you are 'Kṛṣṇa.'¹

19. The triad of the worlds, O Lord, was conquered by you, from the root \sqrt{ji} 'to conquer'. Hence you are 'Jiṣṇu'. Hence, O Almighty one, for all time do protect the universe consisting of all the planets and the guardians of the quarters.

20. You be the primordial king of everything visible. May your excellent throne be unparalleled with no other equal. The conch curved to the right which is stationed (held) in the hand of the Puruṣa (the great Being) appears splendid.

21. You have a discus named Sudaraśana. Hence you have been sung about as 'Cakrin' by poets. O Lord, your flag has been resorted to by Suparṇa (Garuḍa). So also, Suparṇa is your vehicle.

22. O Hari, O Hṛṣīkeśa, may you forever have horses as well as tuskers having excellent tusks; (you may have) also the crown, golden bracelets, earrings, necklaces and excellent gold (sacred) threads.

23-24. Be adorned with garments of various colours and red garlands. Be you one having terrible host of soldiers. You are never deserted by glory and goddess of fortune. You have infinite riches forever. Let there be pious devotion here closely following you. O Mukunda, hence be pleased with me, your devotee."

Sanatkumāra said:

25-26. When Lord Hari was told (prayed) thus in front of the heaven-dwellers, he became pleased and said: "O Lord Viriñca, show me its zone left off by you and hence always inauspicious. Show me the spot where I can make the universe stable." Thereupon Brahmā took up a handful of Kuśa grass. He went to the meritorious (sacred) hermitage of Cyavana in order to point out a sacred holy place (spot).

27-29. Then he attained the highest spot. Pitāmaha then respectfully spoke to Keśava: "Here is the holy spot having its

1. The etymology is not correct. The reading should have been "Kṛṣeśca dhātoḥ" instead of 'Kṛteśca' etc.

origin in you. O Lord, (though) left by you it is always (in) auspicious(?) You alone are Viṣṇu permanently adored by the Devas. You alone are remembered by the leading sages as Viṣṭaraśravas ('having the well-known seat of Kuśa grass'). O Lord of the universe, be seated resorting to the spot of Kuśa in the form of the month of Mādhava (the month of Vaiśākha). Be seated resorting to the Kuśa spot." Thus Puruṣottama was eulogized by the Creator. He occupied the spot of Kuśa, resorted to by the Devas and the leading sages, the spot where Kuśa grass was spread.

30. It extended to a Yojana all-round. Thus Vidhātṛ and Puruṣottama named it Kuśasthalī. Both of them gave it the famous name Kuśasthalī.

31-32. There the glorious Lord of the universe governed the universe. The Lord is the creator of the universe, the soul of the universe, the leader of all the universe. It was thus that, what was well-known formerly as Hemaśṛṅgā became famous as Kuśasthalī because it was strewn over with Kuśa grass. Thereafter it is remembered as Kuśasthalī.

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

*The Genesis of the Name Avantī*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1-3 Listen how the city came to be known as Avantī formerly in the Īśāna Kalpa. In the days gone by, when the Suras were defeated by hosts of Daityas, (gods went to) the summit of Meru full of caves and covered by forests abounding in bulbous roots. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, they went there and began to consult one another. Approaching and greeting one another, the groups of the Suras went to the place where Brahmā, the patriarch, was present.

4-11. They related to him the whole reason of their visit. On

1. As w 41-43 explain, the name of the city is derived from the root √av, 'to protect'. The city protected the seeds of gods, animals etc. in every Kalpa. Hence the name Avantī.

hearing the words of those Devas, that Lord of the subjects went to Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, along with the Tridaśas (Devas). He too went to that region of Vaikuṅṭha that was resorted to by the sages and the Cāraṇas always. It is the bestower of prosperity and spiritual achievement. Kinnaras sing about it. Celestial damsels resort to it in groups. All these were present there, viz. the sages beginning with Bhārgava, the excellent celestial sages such as Nārada, the chiefs of Siddhas and Gandharvas, Sanaka and other Kumāras (eternal bachelors), the groups of Prajāpatis (Patriarchs), the fourteen Manus, Vasus, Viśvedevas and excellent groups of Pitṛs. It was worthy of being served (and inhabited) by people of great merits and excellent conduct. It was beautified with divine places and divine trees. It was gracefully adorned with steps and rungs set with jewels. It was full of Swans and Kāraṇḍava (aquatic birds) birds. It shone with the radiance of gems. It is a place devoid of the six infirmities of human beings (viz. grief, delusion, hunger, thirst, old age and death). It abounded in birds. With a desire to see Vāsudeva, all the Suras went there and began to praise and eulogize the Lord of the universe, the Lord of Devas.

The Devas praised:

12-14. Obeisance to Ananta (the infinite one), to the supreme one, to the Kūrma (divine Tortoise). Obeisance to the fierce one in the form of the Man-lion. Obeisance to the deity in the form of the Boar. Obeisance to Brahman (Absolute) of infinite power, to Rāghava, to Rāma, to Vāsudeva, the quiescent one; obeisance to the Lord of Yadus. Obeisance to the pure Buddha (Enlightened One), to Kalki the destroyer of the Barbarians.

15a. Even as they were engaged in eulogy thus, an unembodied voice spoke:

15b-24. "Listen ye all, O Suras, with single-minded attention. In the beautiful forest of Mahākāla that is resorted to by groups of Brāhmaṇa-sages there is a meritorious city that bestows all the desired benefits. Its name is Kuśasthalī. It is very charming and is resorted to by Siddhas and Gandharvas. Hara is present there in the beginning and in the middle of the Kalpa. When the Kalpa comes to a close, all the mobile and

immobile beings perish. Even the Tīrthas and all the meritorious shrines (elsewhere) perish. All the rivers, all seas, the lakes and the parks, medicinal herbs, trees and creepers, Yantras (mystical drawings), Mantras, the auspicious and the inauspicious, the luminaries, the moon and the sun—all the world becomes Viṣṇumaya (merged and identical with Viṣṇu). Lord Śaṅkara then at the close of the Kalpa conserves the seeds thereof, the Puṅyas and the Jīvakarmāśayas (good and bad Karmas the activities that cause pleasure and pain) and stays there. Gaṅgā is Sarva-tīrthamayī (identical with all the Tīrthas). Hari is identical with all the Devas. The Veda is identical with all the Yajñas. Dayā (compassion) is identical with all righteous activities. Revā is the most excellent one among rivers. It is highly meritorious. O excellent Suras, even more beneficial than it is Kurukṣetra. I consider Prayāga as ten times more meritorious and excellent Tīrtha (than Kurukṣetra). Kāśī is ten times more efficacious than it and Gayā is ten times more efficacious than Kāśī. Kuśasthalī is the bestower of merit and is said to be ten times more efficacious.

25. Thousands of Uparāgas (Eclipses), ten thousands of Vyatīpātas and a hundred thousand Amāvāsyas (new-moon days) do not deserve even a sixteenth part of this (i.e. Kuśasthalī).

26-28. A religious gift of a hundred thousand at the time of a lunar eclipse, a gift of a thousand at the time of the two Ayanas (transits of the Sun), a gift of ten millions in the Vyatīpāta and indefinite (infinite) gifts on the full-moon day—are all meritorious and beneficial. But this divine city Kuśasthalī is more beneficial than that. Even something given as a religious gift is reckoned as infinite and of infinite benefit. O excellent Suras, all those things shall be of everlasting benefit. Hence ye all go there assiduously. Do not delay.

29-30. Your merits have become exhausted, O Suras. Hence you are being harassed. This beautiful city of Kuśasthalī is in the charming Mahākāla forest. Go there on the earth and perform holy ablutions, donations etc. in accordance with the injunctions. Due to the merit thereof you will attain heaven.”

31-34. On hearing these words from the sky, of that unembodied voice, all the Suras with Brahmā and Īśāna as their leaders went to the place where there was the forest of Maheśvara. They went to the city, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, that

bestows all desired benefits. It was full of the people of all the four castes. It was resorted to by sages and Gandharvas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas and filled with meritorious men. No sluggish, stupid, sick or envious man was seen there. Neither the impoverished nor the ailing, neither the unhelpful nor the revengeful were seen anywhere there.

35-36. Men and women who live there are quiescent, well-behaved and devoid of old age and sickness. They have perfect control over their sense-organs. They are engaged in their duties and good conduct. They are fond of (i.e. hospitable to) guests. The women are chaste. There were great festivities and good music. In every house there were Havya and Kavya offerings.

37-39. On seeing a city like this, the Devas were delighted very much. There the Tirtha was known by the name Paiśācamocana. It was worthy of being resorted to always by meritorious persons. It was resorted to (lit. served by) by all the Tirthas. The gods took their holy bath there, performed Japas and Homas and made gifts too. After attaining everlasting merit they went to heaven once again. After defeating the excessively vicious Asuras, they attained their respective places.

40. If people of great merits perform at Avantī holy ablution, charity, adoration, *Havana* (oblations to fire), water libations to the Pitṛs—all those rites shall be of infinite benefit.

41-43. Hence this should be performed by wise men with all efforts. Since the protection of seeds of gods, holy Tirthas, medicinal herbs is carried out here in every Kalpa, the city is remembered as Avantī till today.

“From now onwards Kuśasthali will be known by the name Avantī.” After saying this the Devas went to their great abode. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, since then Avantī has become very renowned on the earth.

44-46. He who listens to or recites this divinely meritorious, excellent story that destroys sins, shall be rid of all sins. A man without a son gets a son; one without wealth obtains wealth. After obtaining merit more than that of thousands of Vājapeyas and hundreds of Rājasūyas, the man is honoured forever in Śivaloka.

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

The Greatness of the Name Ujjayinī¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. O Vyāsa, listen attentively. I shall explain how this city was known as Ujjayinī in one Manvantara.

2-5. A great Daitya named Tripura, the Lord of all Daityas, performed a very severe penance for propitiating Brahmā.

He resorted to fires even in bright sunshine (during summer) and to powerful cloud-bursts in the course of rainy season. He practised self-denial and resorted to a water-reservoir in winter. He used to eat withering leaves and water and devoid of every means of sustenance, took in only air. He adopted Gāyatrī Vrata and forsook all personal possession and acceptance thereof.

In this manner a penance very difficult to be performed was performed by him for a thousand years. When the thousand years were completed, Brahmā became highly pleased and said:

6-7. “O most excellent Asura, any boon desired by you may be requested for from me. I shall grant it all to you.”

On being told thus by Brahmā, the Daitya named Tripura immediately spoke to Brahmā words which accorded with his firm vow:

Tripura said:

8. O Brahmā, if you are pleased in your mind and wish to grant me a boon, then let me be one who cannot be killed by Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, Uragas and Rākṣasas. I shall choose this boon.

Brahmā said:

9. O dear one, let this be so. Move about without any fear from anywhere.

After saying this Brahmā vanished there itself.

1. As explained in vv 53-57, the name Ujjayinī is derived from *ud-jī*. the story of Tripura is added in support of the derivation.

10. Since then, the great Daitya, remembering the previous enmity became wrathful and began to inflict great destruction on the Devas.

11-18. He established mobile Triads of cities here and there. All the residents of this place who were devoted to the duties of the Varṇas and Āśramas were destroyed by the Daitya of sinful inclination in various ways.

In that city where wicked ones resided, the Brāhmaṇas who had mastered the Vedas did not perform Agnihotra nor did they imbibe Soma juice. O sage, nowhere did the people do any righteous act or rite.

They were without the utterance of Svāhā, Svadhā and Vaṣaṭ. No festivity was seen performed in any house of anyone all over the earth.

There was no shrine for any deity. No adoration of Śiva. There was neither Yajña nor giving of religious gifts nor the worship of cows and Brāhmaṇas.

There were no men of good conduct. People were devoid of compassion and veneration. There was no donor nor a man of helpful inclination. No ascetic was seen.

Thus, O Vyāsa, in that city the world appeared to be ruined. Brāhmaṇas are at the root of the common people. Brāhmaṇas have their roots in the Vedas. The Yajñas are dependent upon their root, the Vedas, and the deities are rooted in the Yajñas. Hence, O Vyāsa, everything was destroyed by that wicked-souled one.

19. Thereby all the groups of the Devas were practically destroyed with the destruction and loss of their vigour. Defeated by him, the Devas moved about on the earth like mortal beings.

20. Meeting and taking counsel together with great concentration, they all went to the place where the patriarch devoid of impurities was present.

21-22. The Tridaśas (gods) narrated the cause of their great calamity. On learning it, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, got up promptly and went along with the Tridaśas to the excellent Mahākālavana where Lord Śiva is always present in the company of Umā.

23-24. Arriving at the place where Avantī, the divine city, resorted to by all the Tīrthas is situated; the self-born Four-

faced Lord performed along with the Devas all the holy rites in Rudrasaras, such as holy ablution, Dāna (charity), Japa and Homa. After adoring Mahākāla, Brahmā spoke these words:

Brahmā said:

25. O Mahādeva, O Lord of Devas bestowing fearlessness on the devotees, O most excellent one among Suras, may the most excellent task (problem) of the Devas be listened to:

26. The Lord of Daityas named Tripura, who censures Devas and Brāhmaṇas inflicts destruction on the Devas excessively and incessantly.

27. After establishing three extensive cities, he moves about. On account of this wicked soul, all the living beings stationed there perish.

28-29. Thus, all the subjects, both mobile and immobile ones, have become exterminated. The continents including cities, villages and all the hermitages of sages and the abodes of ascetics and recluses have been depopulated. All the Suras have been defeated and ousted from their kingdom.

30-32. (The Suras) Tormented by the wicked Tripura are wandering about like mortal beings. Having obtained boons from me, he roams about with no fear from anywhere. Hence with all efforts (a means of) killing him should be devised.

On hearing these words of Brahmā of a disciplined mind, Mahādeva meditated for a long time and then spoke to Brahmā:

Mahādeva said:

33. O excellent Suras headed by Brahmā and Śakra, I shall arrange for the means of victory over this wicked-souled Daitya.

34-41. If desirous of your own victory, ye all, do perform penance at Avantī. Whatever is offered as Havana and Dāna at Avantī is entirely everlasting.

After saying thus to all the Devas, Śiva vanished there itself. He went to the abode of the cremation ground resorted to by all the goblins and ghosts.

For the purpose of gaining victory over that wicked-souled Daitya Tripura, the leaders of the Suras performed the Upāsānā

(worship) of Cāmuṇḍā.

After worshipping the goddess with buffaloes fit for great sacrifices, along with the offerings of animals, flowers and other materials of adoration, oblations of various kinds, Dānas, incenses, lights etc., the Bull-emblem Lord (too) adored her—Goddess Durgā, the auspicious one, redeeming (the devotee) from the impassable (ocean) of Saṃsāra, the (prospective) destroyer of Tripura, the ferocious one who attempted (and achieved) the death of (demons) Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, the goddess who was wildly excited and maddened with the suet of Daityas, one known as Raktā (the red one) of red teeth, the courageous (or intelligent) one wearing red garments and red flowers (garlands), having a buffalo as a vehicle, the dark-complexioned one, the deity who had taken up the Yakṣa for her seat, and is wearing the hide of a tiger, extremely terrible with dry meat (consumed).

After the worship, the Lord became delighted with himself and remained there meditating. Then Bhadrā, the goddess, by whom this universe is held and supported, became delighted with her face beaming with pleasure. Caṇḍikā directly spoke:

Devī said:

42. O most excellent one among the Suras, may any boon desired by you be requested for. Everything mentioned by you and of great help to the worlds, I shall grant.

Śrī Hara said:

43. O goddess, if you are pleased, grant me this excellent boon whereby I can kill Tripura, the great Daitya, the thorn unto the Devas.

Śrī Devī said:

44-48. O Mahādeva, conquer him. Take this excellent missile Pāśupata given by me. O most excellent one among the Suras, it is destructive of the Daitya.

Holding in his hands, the missile Mahāpāśupata, Śaṃbhu, Śaṅkara hurriedly proceeded ahead for the destruction of the Daitya. He lifted the missile up with proud pomp and

displayed that he could terrify all living beings. After eulogizing (the goddess) with words, he went ahead and the Suras followed him closely behind. With a single arrow Rudra killed that great Asura. In the Māyāyuddha (fight with the use of magic) Śaṅkara split the fellow resorting to magic into three and went back to this city of Avantī, resorted to by the immortal ones.

49. The sages, Siddhas and Cāraṇas pronounced benedictions of victory. The Devas became delighted and eulogized him with shouts of "Victory".

50. Celestial damsels danced there. Gandharvas sang gracefully melodious songs. Auspicious wind blew making the people happy.

51. In every house of living beings shout of victory rose up. Fires blazed and calmed down. The sounds that rose in all the quarters calmed down.

52. (As before) the Yajñas began to function with joyous festivities and monetary gifts. The Devas went back to their respective abodes.

53-57. Since the Dānava was conquered (*Ujjita*) and fame was established in all the three worlds, the name Ujjayinī (*Udjayinī*) was given to Avantī by all the excellent Suras and the sages including Sanaka.

It (name Ujjayinī) is destructive of sins. Formerly Avantī, this city that bestowed everything desired as boon, O Vyāsa, adopted the name Ujjayinī from that day.

If men perform holy ablution, and charity in this city, no sin arising from evil actions remains stuck to their bodies.

In Ujjayinī, people honour and adore the deity of their choice. He who seeks learning adores Giriśa (Śiva); he who seeks riches worships the Lord of Wealth (Kubera); he who seeks a son worships Sureśa (the Lord of Suras); he who seeks happiness worships the Sun; he who seeks intellect worships Gaṇeśa; and he who seeks pleasure stays there honourably.

58-60. O blessed one, one who resides here always enjoys all pleasures mentally desired by him and on death goes to Śiva's city.

There he stays forever, for hundreds of crores of Kalpas. He who reads or listens to this meritorious story becomes rid of all sins. He obtains the benefit of (the gift of) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

The Greatness of the Name Padmāvati¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall explain how it (Ujjayinī) became Padmāvati. Listen with respect, O Vyāsa, to the highly meritorious story.

2-13. Once there was a great loss of precious gems due to wicked souls. There was loss of and obstruction to (the practice of) righteousness due to (the activities of) wicked Dānavas.

Then the ocean was churned by the Suras and Asuras who worked in collaboration. Meru (Mandara?) became the central shaft, the ocean the vessel and the serpent Vāsuki the churning cord.

They placed the main plant of activity on the back of the (divine) tortoise and churned out the precious gems. Lakṣmī came out at the outset and was handed over to Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu).

On account of this there was much disappointment among the Devas and Dānavas. In the meantime, there came Nārada, the divine visionary.

The quarrel of the Devas and the Daityas was restrained by him. "Let that Padmā born of the ocean be in the Mahākālavana. There are different kinds of gems. I shall gather them together and hand over to you all. Let the ocean be churned quickly. No hesitation should be herein."

The Suras and Asuras made further effort for the sake of Amṛta (nectar).

As the ocean was being churned by them, the Kaustubha gem was acquired, the divine Pārijāta tree thereafter and Surā (liquor) emerged thereafter.

Then Dhanvantari rose up. Then the moon came up. Thereafter Kāmadhenu was born and the jewel of an elephant afterwards.

The most excellent one among horses viz. Uccaiśravas; then Sudhā and Rāmbhā thereafter. Afterwards the bow Sāraṅga (Śārṅga?) arising from all missiles.

1. As vv 32-34 explain, this city became the permanent residence of Padmā at Mahākālavana. Hence the city came to be known as Padmāvati. The story of Amṛta-Manthana is used here to show that the distribution of gems from the sea (and Amṛta) took place at this place.

Then the conch Pāñcajanya which remains in the hand of the enemy of Mura. Then this treasure Mahāpadma; then the poison Halāhala.¹

All the fourteen precious jewels were acquired. They took all these with them and went to Maheśvara Vana.

14-15. After going there, they sat together and had consultation with one another. They were overwhelmed by the desire to be the first claimant.

A chaotic noise arose. Nārada came again on the scene. On seeing their unhealthy quarrel, he began to propitiate Viṣṇu.

16-19. Hari assumed the fascinating form of a woman and came there. She was an extremely beautiful young lady. On seeing her the great Asuras became the target of the arrows of Kāma (god of Love). Their entire bodies, and limbs became excited. In the meantime, Sureśvara (Indra) gave them the Surā (liquor). With a sleight of hand he gave the Amṛta to the Devas. In the meantime O Vyāsa, Rāhu assumed the form of one of the gods, went in their midst and drank the excellent Amṛta. On knowing it, Viṣṇu quickly cut off his head with his discus.

20-24. Due to the contact with Amṛta the Asura did not die then. O excellent sage, in this holy place, Rāhu and Ketu are also well-known.

Plenty of blood arising from the body of Rāhu flowed out. In that holy spot it turned out to be a great Tīrtha that destroys all defects.

If persons who take their bath there, become pure and visit Rāhu they are never harassed by Rāhu at any time. The devotee attains the desired objective and obtains the benefit of the gift of a thousand cows.

The Suras then shared those precious gems (among themselves) and became enjoyers of excellent jewels. Nārada gave the (Kaustubha) jewel, Padmā (Lakṣmī), the Śārṅga bow and the Pāñcajanya conch to Viṣṇu.

25-28. To the Sun-god, he gave the seven-faced horse, the horse that arose from the ocean. He gave over Airāvata, the

1. The order of emergence of these "jewels" is different in the Mbh and other Purāṇas.

excellent elephant, to Vāsava (Indra). He gave Pīyūṣa (Amṛta) to the groups of heaven-dwellers and the Moon to Śambhu. He placed Pārijāta, the excellent tree, and Rāmbhā, the excellent woman, in Nandana, the beautiful pleasure park of Indra. He gave the cow Kāmadhenu to the sages for the sake of the fulfilment of the (requisites of) Yajñas. Thus treasure Mahāpadma went to the abode of Kubera. What is named as Halāhala poison was not respected (sought after) by any one.

29-31. Wherever it (Halāhala) spread, the creatures began to die there. With a desire for the welfare of all the worlds, Śambhu took in that poison. Ever since then Mahādeva is remembered as Nīlakaṇṭha. If a person takes his holy bath in the Ratnakuṇḍa and visits Nīlagrīva, he shall be rid of all sins and shall become an enjoyer of all jewels. After obtaining the merit of performing a hundred horse-sacrifices, he shall go to Śīvapura.

32-34. After taking it, all the Suras with Brahmā and Viṣṇu as their leaders, became much delighted in their minds, O Vyāsa, and said thus: "After approaching Ujjayinī, we had become enjoyers of jewels. Due to the residence of Padmā, we enjoy all happiness. Hence let Padmā stay here permanently for all times. From today this city is (to be) remembered as Padmāvātī.

35-36. Those blessed ones who perform holy ablution, Dāna, adoration, libation to gods and Pitṛs, will never incur any sin or disaster or poverty. They will redeem from hell a hundred families.

37-39. One who seeks wealth, one who seeks a son, one who seeks learning, one desirous of plentifulness (or love) must remember Padmāvātī, wherever he may happen to be present physically. He shall obtain all desires. That man shall directly become Śīva. O Vyāsa, this is the benefit of the name. What then (will he not acquire) by serving it for a long time?

Those who listen to the meritorious story and those who recite it daily, shall never have any sin. They may obtain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

*The Efficacy of Kumudvatī*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Listen attentively, O Vyāsa, to the story that is extremely destructive of sins, explaining how this city Padmāvātī became Kumudvatī. I shall narrate exactly as Lomaśa narrated it to me.

Lomaśa said:

2. Listen, O dear one. A very meritorious city was seen by me. Once in the course of my pilgrimage, I went to Kuśasthalī, a holy place that is the most guarded of all worthy of being guarded, where Hara abides.

3. The mere sight thereof removes the sin of Brāhmaṇa's slaughter. (In that city) wherever Brāhmaṇas reside they loudly chanted the Vedic hymns.

4. Rtviks, expert in the performance of rituals, and illustrious sages perform various kinds of Yajñas with great concentration.

5. So also the chaste wives of those sages attend upon them. Ten (incarnations) are famous like Viṣṇu and all of them reside there.

6-15. The various gods, demigods etc. attend upon and perform the Upāsana (adoration) of the Consort of Umā, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas. They are the eleven Rudras, twelve Arkas (Suns), eight Vasus, thirteen well-known Viśvedevas, eight elephants of the quarters, fourteen Manus, the whole group of Maruts with Indra as their leader, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Kinnaras, Serpents and Rākṣasas, Siddhas, ascetics, O dear one. All these are present there itself: The eight Bhairavas, four sons of Pavana (Wind-god), six Vināyakas and twentyfour Devīs. These are mentioned as the groups of gods and the groups of Rudras.

Brahmā, the most excellent of all who know the Vedas, Marīci, Kaśyapa and others, Dakṣa the chief of the patriarchs,

1. After claiming every important sacred place to be present in this city the name Kumudvatī is explained as 'The city full of blooming lotus-ponds'

Diti, the mothers of Devas, cows, chief of whom is Surabhi (Kāmadhenu), the mobile and immobile beings, all the Tīrthas, rivers, streams and rivulets, all the holy spots that are excessively meritorious, seven cities, three Grāmas (villages), nine Araṇyas (forests), nine Ūṣaras (arid lands), fourteen secret doorways of salvation over the earth, four oceans, different kinds of Ratnas, chaste holy women of virtue, Brāhmaṇa-sages free from impurities, royal sages (saintly kings), quiescent Brāhmaṇas, masters of the Vedas, the Vedas, the Purāṇas, the Smṛti texts, the Gāthās, the Gītis, the Prahelikās (riddles)—all these performed the adoration of the Consort of Umā.

16. Merely at the sight thereof, I became devoid of feverish excitement and impurities, long-lived and free from old age and ailments due to prolonged penance.

17. I took my holy bath in all the Tīrthas, became pure and composed. My mind became pleased and I was averse to all kinds of sins.

18-24. On seeing the pure Padmāvātī that fulfils all cherished desires, I became delighted. No sick or a grief-stricken man is to be seen there. There is neither the miserable nor the impoverished, neither the foolish nor the lecherous without control over the sense-organs. No one inimical to others is seen among men or the brutish creatures. All of them are friendly to one another, rendering help to one another. All had mental restraint and control over the sense-organs. All were calm and quiet. All were ready as instructors of learning.

The gardens are beautiful; the forests and the parks are splendid. The mansions are very bright and they appear splendid in their beautiful rows. They shine with golden domes studded with various kinds of gems of great splendour. They reverberate with echoes of festivities and musical instruments and vocal songs.

It is there that the moon-crested Lord Śaṅkara wearing the hide and smearing his body with the ashes of the cremation ground as with unguents, resides with Umā permanently. The city shone with full rays with the entire digits of the moon always. There is no darkness, no dark half of a month and no new-moon day.

25-27. It is always in full bloom like Śyāmā (middle-aged beautiful woman) endowed with beauty and youth. All the

quarters appear white and bright with moonlight over the mansions, windows, doorways, inner apartments, bowers, mountain caves and dark cavities, beautiful hermitages, beautiful forests and parks, domestic ponds and lakes and charming halls everywhere.

28. The lakes shine in full bloom with Kumudvatīs (lily ponds) like the firmament in autumn with groups of luminaries spread everywhere.

29. The rivers, all the lakes, the tanks, wells and puddles became over-spread with lilies and the earth appeared to be full of moon.

30. Since for all times the city was full of lilies, the city of Padmāvati became Kumudvatī.

31-33. If men perform Śrāddha rites in the city of Kumudvatī with concentration, their ancestors will never slip down from heaven. Everything given to the Pitṛs, the Śrāddha performed unto them shall be of everlasting benefit. The holy bath, Dāna, Homa and propitiation of the deities, whatever holy rite is performed there, shall be of everlasting benefit. Thus, O Vyāsa, the eternal city became Kumudvatī.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

The Genesis of the Name Amarāvati¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1-3. How this city of Kuśasthalī became Amarāvati, O illustrious Vyāsa, I shall describe in detail as Brahmā spoke to the Devas.

Once, for the sake of progeny (subjects) the excellent sage Kaśyapa, the son of Marīci, as instructed by Brahmā, performed a very severe penance, very difficult to be performed, in the beautiful Mahākālavana of divine features.

4-9. That great sage controlled all his sense-organs. His diet

1. VV 22-24 explain: This city in Mahākālavana has all the amenities and treasures of heaven and Devas have made this city their permanent residence. Hence it became known as Amarāvati.

consisted of withered leaves and mere air. When the period of a thousand years was completed, an unembodied voice (of Goddess) spoke thus: "O excellent Brāhmaṇa, may my excellent statement be listened to. Since you have performed a very severe penance with a benefit in view, O highly virtuous sage, your progeny i.e. sons and grandsons etc. will continue as long as the moon and the sun (shine) on the earth with great renown. Your chaste wife too performed penance along with you as though she was your shadow. She is thus renowned and hence Devas including Viṣṇu and Indra as their leaders will become her sons. They are always famous as immortal ones, devoid of old age, shining forever in heaven. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, at my instance you too, O most excellent one among sages, will become a Prajāpati (Patriarch) free from sins. There is no doubt about it."

10-11. After saying this, the Goddess vanished there itself. Ever since then, O Vyāsa, Kaśyapa resorted to the excellent city Kuśasthali along with the daughter of Dakṣa, maintaining the holy fires. His progeny including the Devas, Asuras and human beings also flourished.

12. Kaśyapa was born of Marīci and all are established henceforth (from him). The Devas imbibed Sudhā incessantly and so were made immortal.

13-17. The heavenly garden Nandana was present there in the excellent Mahākālavana. Kāmadhenu was known and reputed to be the bestower of desired boons. She always served Mahākāla Maheśvara there. The excellent tree Pārijāta (served him). Bindusaras with never-fading lotuses, is said to be the excellent Mānasa lake. It is full of swans and Sārasa birds. It is resorted to by Suras and Siddhas. Pearls and jewels are scattered everywhere and splendid *Ratnas* made it shine. This *Nidhi* (treasure of Mahāpadma) shone with Kalhāra and Kumuda. Whatever divine things are present in the cosmos are present in the splendid Mahākālavana.

18. The human beings stationed here had all those powers of the soul. Their diet and activities, their features and exploits were the same as those of the Devas.

19. They roam about like the immortal beings in this city. The people of the earth were on a par with the Amaras mingling with one another.

20. The women were always on a par with the celestial ladies in permanent youth. O Vyāsa, such an eternal city was seen on the earth.

21. Inhabited by Devas, Dānavas and Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Urugas and Rākṣasas, this city is eternal, the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation and perpetual benefit lasting for a long time.

22-24. There is the permanent camp of Amaras here. Hence it became Amarāvati. Those blessed ones who casually visit this city and perform holy rites such as ablution, charity and visiting Maheśvara, will never be bereft of anything such as sons and riches. They will obtain all pleasures and will go to Śivapura on death. By reciting or listening to this one will obtain the merit of reciting Śatarudriya hymns.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

The Genesis of the Name Viśālā¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1-9. Listen, O illustrious Vyāsa. This city of Amarāvati was named and praised in all the worlds as Viśālā too.

I shall repeat what was narrated by Brahmā formerly. The holy spot has to be guarded as the greatest secret of all secrets. It is destructive of all sins.

The Lord alone roamed in the forest accompanied by Umā. Thereafter all the goblins and ghosts and all the Suras and Asuras followed him. There Viṣṇu in ten different forms (incarnations) was present. The goddesses, the Mothers of the worlds, Vināyakas, Vetālas, Kūṣmāṇḍas, Bhairavas and others, different Kalpas, eightyfour Liṅgas, holy spots, the guardians of the Kṣetras, Rddhi, Siddhi, the Piṭṛs, the guardians of the worlds, the Siddhas who bestow Siddhis (spiritual achievement), illustrious sages, wives of the sages of pure mind, Kinnaras, divine Gandharvas, Apsaras, excellent ladies, all the groups of Maruts and of Sādhakas (spiritual aspirants), Yakṣas, the groups

1. For the significance of this name see vv 39-46.

of Guhyakas, Piśācas, Uragas (Serpents), Rākṣasas, all the mobile and immobile beings resorting to meditation—all these performed the Upāsanā (adoration) of the Lord of Devas, the Consort of Umā. On seeing them, Goddess Pārvatī, the daughter of the Mountain, spoke with gentle voice to Śaṅkara, the support of the universe:

Pārvatī said:

10-14. O Lord of Devas, O Lord of the universe, O Lord eager to support the universe, see these fortunate ones dependent on you and meditating on you. All those persons are not to be treated indifferently; they are distressed due to gusts of winds, storms, blazing sunshine etc. O glorious one, do something for their benefit. Create an abode befitting them as their residence and highly splendid. O my Lord, build a city that accords all desired things for their residence. O Lord, if this desire (idea) of mine appeals to you (please do so).

On hearing these words of Pārvatī, Parameśvara created a beautiful city captivating the minds of all living beings, a meritorious one, beneficial to himself too in every respect. Śambhu created a divine city extending to many Yojanas and pleasing to divine persons.

15-19. It had a divine design. It was pleasing due to the divine spot therein. It had all celestial features. It was Viśālā ('large'), splendid and devoid of dust. It had many market places, palatial apartments and quadrangles where trading activities of buying and selling went on vigorously. There were many mansions and abodes. It shone with rows of tall mansions. The buildings had crystal walls with storeys studded with lapis lazuli gems and excellent coral pillars adorned with gold plates and ornaments. The gem-paved thresholds were red in colour (with rubies). The doorways were decorated with branches of trees. The door panels were finished with gold plates and the bolts were excellently made of adamantine gems.

The ground level was paved with gems. The entrances, courtyards and inner apartments were also similarly embellished. The clusters of cowherds' colony nearby were beautiful with strings of pearls suspended.

20-25. The flagstaves and pillars were made of gold. There were banners in every house. Domelike posts made of gold and set with jewels shone in every house.

The tanks, wells, lakes and vast water reservoirs were pure, pellucid and they were fragrant with the stamens and filaments of lotuses. There were machines for lifting up water heightening the beauty of the city.

Swans and Kāraṇḍava birds, flocks of peacocks abounded there and shone. There were platforms, supporting devices, for the water-drawing machines. There were many domestic tanks and parks in the city.

Peacocks danced in some places and cuckoos cooed in some. The groups of sylvan parks were full of bunches of flowers licked by bees.

Men and women thronged the streets. They were of various castes and stages of life. The women came out of their houses and stood gazing (the streets). Then it appears beautiful with a row of festoons over arched doorways as if they consist of garlands of moons.

26-32. Thus, O Vyāsa, the beautiful city was established and populated by the yogic power of the Supreme Soul.

There was (a replica of) the beautiful city of Alakā marked by the abode of Kubera. It is white in colour and full of Puṇyajanas and beautified by birds.

There, the divine Bhogavatī, the excellent abode of Varuṇa, was present. It was full of noble Nāga damsels and Nāga wives.

There was the city of Saṁyamini, the excellent city protected by Dharmarāja and filled with people of good conduct conversant with what is done and what is not done (i.e. duties and omissions thereof).

There was the beautiful city of Devas protected by Vāsava (Indra). It was full of groups of meritorious ladies or Puṇyajana ladies and adorned by the loud-singing Kinnaras.

In this manner there were many kinds of charming cities, extensive and unbounded as well as extremely clean.

In certain places the entrances were decorated with plantain trees and pots filled with barley grains placed for auspiciousness. Gandharvas sang in certain places and dancers danced in other places.

In some places Brāhmaṇa boys were found studying and

reciting Vedic passages. In some places sacrificial priests performed Yajñas along with the Ṛtviks.

33-38. In some places people took their Avabhṛtha (valedictory baths at the conclusion of Yajñas) ablutions. In some places they made different kinds of gifts. There were the ceremonies of the sacred thread, marriage and maintenance of sacrificial fires.

In some places the *Pūrta* rites of digging wells, tanks and lakes or constructing parks and gardens were conducted as per ritual along with Yātrās (religious processions).

In some places expounders of mythological stories conducted discourses. In that excellent city, in some places poets composed poems and read songs.

In some places, wrestlers conducted their duels. In some places actors were engaged in dancing. Lakes shone with rows of steps studded with jewels.

Active and restless Śyāmā (dark-complexioned) girls of around sixteen years were seen with raised gold pots adorned with jewels, engaged in bringing water.

Thus, O Vyāsa, the beautiful city was built through Yogic Māyā by Śāmbhu with a desire to do something pleasing to his beloved. The city is destructive of all sins.

39-46.¹ It is wide and extensive. It is meritorious and is the resort of Puṇyajana (meritorious persons, Yakṣas). Hence in all the worlds for all times, it is well-known by the name Viśālā.

This is a beautiful eternal city. Wherever one may stay, whatever may be his condition, one shall always utter the word "Viśālā". (Thereby) one is then honoured in Śivaloka. O Vyāsa, there is no other city like this in the entire Cosmic Egg, bestowing on men enjoyment of pleasures and salvation.

If men perform Śrāddha at the proper time with the Pitṛs in view, it will be everlasting. It is stated thus in Pitṛkalpa (scriptural texts prescribing rules of Śrāddha etc.).

Even if people perform holy bath, Dāna etc. in Viśālā, even casually and if they go anywhere else and die, they go to Śivālaya.

Those whose love for Viśālā is always steady are excessively meritorious in the world. Even the serpent king, Śeṣa, is not

1. These verses explain the significance of the name of this city.

powerful to describe the permanent benefit from Viśālā.

Merely by listening to the story being expounded a devotee is instantly liberated from great sins. There is no doubt about this.

Thus, O Vyāsa, the city of Kuśasthalī has become Viśālā. How it came to be known as Pratikalpā, listen to it even as I recount.

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

The Genesis of the Name Pratikalpā

Sanatkumāra said:

1-5. Listen attentively, O Vyāsa, to the position with concentration of mind. In a different Kalpa this auspicious (splendid) story was heard by me directly from Vyāsa.

It is an excellent story, the greatest secret of all secrets. It should not be given to anyone and everyone; never to an atheist, ungrateful one or one who is not a disciple.

This highly meritorious story, O Vyāsa, is excessively destructive of sins. Even if it is merely listened to, one is never afflicted by the defects of the Kalpa.

In all the Manvantaras, in all the Kalpas of diverse kinds, the extent (of one day) of Brahmā, Parmeṣṭhin is upto a Kalpa.

Listen, O highly excellent one, to what its number and extent is. The Sun is a (visible) deity of human beings. He creates the division of day and night.

6-15. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, listen to the numbers based on that calculation Fifteen Nimeṣas (twinklings of the eye) make one Kāṣṭhā. Thirty Kāṣṭhās make one Kalā. Thirty Kalās make one Muhūrta. Learned men say that the period of a day and night is made up of thirty such Muhūrtas. It is then that the Sun and the Moon move. Due to his special movement, the Sun goes away everyday at dusk. That period is the day of human beings. The period of the night is also similar. The units of time viz. Pakṣas (fortnights), Māsas (months), Ṛtu (season), Abda (year) and Ayana (transit of the Sun) have already been mentioned in the case of Manes, Devas and Brahmā

correctly. (Just as the numbers of these are calculated, similar is the end of the life of these from Pitṛs to Brahmā.) Fifteen days and nights together are termed as Pakṣa (fortnight). Two Pakṣas make one Māsa (month) and two Māsas make one Ṛtu (season). Three Ṛtus make one Ayana (transit of the sun) and the Abda (year) is known as having two Ayanas (transits of the sun) viz. the southern and the northern, by those who are experts in calculation.

Those who know Kāla (time) understand that a Māsa consisting of two Pakṣas (fortnight) according to this calculation is the day and night of the Pitṛs. Śukla Pakṣa (bright half) is their day and Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa (dark half) is their night, O Brāhmaṇa. The Śrāddha of the Pitṛs takes place in the Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa.

The period known as a Saṁvatsara (year)*according to human reckoning is the period of a day and a night of Devas. The time of northern transit is the day and the southern transit is the night (of Devas) as declared by wise men expert in knowledge of reality.

16-24. The divine years, one hundred in number (is the span of life of the Devas). A thousand divine years' period is declared by sages conversant with the truth as the period of a day and a night of Manu. Ten times the period of Ahorātra is called a Mānava Pakṣa (fortnight of Manu). Ten such Pakṣas make one Māsa. Twelve Māsas make one Ṛtu of the Manus as mentioned by wise men, the seers (knowers) of truth. Six such Ṛtus are declared as one Varṣa (year). The reckoning is thus fixed.

Kṛtayuga consists of four thousand such Varṣas. The Sandhyā (interim period) is as many hundred years i.e. four hundred. Sandhyāṁśa (part of joint of juncture) is also like that i.e. four hundred (hence 4,800 years=Kṛtayuga). Three thousand such Varṣas is Tretā in the same manner. Its juncture is three hundred Varṣas and the Sandhyāṁśa is that much (therefore Tretā Yuga consists of 3,600 years). Dvāpara is reputed to have two thousand Varṣas. Two hundred Varṣas constitute its Sandhyā and another two hundred Varṣas its Sandhyāṁśa (i.e. Dvāpara consists of 2,400 years). Learned men say that the reckoning of Kali is a thousand Varṣas. Its juncture is a hundred Varṣas and Sandhyāṁśa is similar (Kali consists of 1,200 Varṣas). Thus the number of Varṣas in a Yuga (i.e. Caturyuga) is twelve

thousand. Understand that the Yuga reckoning is on the basis of this divine years calculation.

Then, O dear one, he created all this universe. Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali constitute a Caturyuga.

25. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, the period of seventyone such Caturyugas is declared as a Manvantara, by persons expert in calculations.

26-28. Ayana has also been mentioned. There are two Ayanas, the Dakṣiṇa and the Uttara. One Manu merges into the Lord of the universe. When this (i.e. Manvantara) takes place another Manu comes up, O Rājendra¹, and remains (presides) for that much period of time (as that of the previous Manu). The details of Saṁvatsara and Ayana have been declared by the sages who visualize the Truth. What is called a day of Brahmā is (also) called Kalpa.

29-33. (For a thousand Yugas, a day of Brahmā lasts), and a period of a thousand Yugas is called a night (of Brahmā) by wise men. During that period the earth along with the mountains, forests and gardens gets submerged when the period of a thousand Yugas (of the night) is completed, O excellent Brāhmaṇa. When a day of Brahmā is completed, it is said that a Kalpa has come to a close.

The details of the period of seventyone Yugas have been mentioned to you. They consist of Kṛta, Tretā etc. It is called a Manvantara. In all the Vedas along with the Purāṇas, these powerful Manus of great renown have been mentioned as fourteen in number. O Vyāsa, they are Prajāpatis (patriarchs). Their glorification is conducive to prosperity.

34. In all the Manvantaras, there are *Samhāras* (annihilation) and after *Samhāras* there are *Sambhavas* (creations). Even in the course of hundreds of years their details cannot be told in full.

35-40. There is further creation of the subjects after *Samhāra*, O Bhārata² (?), O bull among the descendants of Bharata(?). *Samhāra* is heard in the Manvantaras (interval between two Manus). All the Devas stay there (during that period) along with the seven sages. They possess the power of penance, celibacy

1. The word 'Rajendra' here shows that the verse is a quotation as the word is irrelevant in this context.

2. Probably a quotation. 'Bharata' is irrelevant here.

and learning. When a thousand Yugas are complete, a Kalpa is said to have come to a close. Then all living beings are burnt by the rays of the sun.

Keeping Brahmā at the head along with the groups of Ādityas (sons of Aditi) (or Devas) they enter into Lord Hari Nārāyaṇa, the most excellent one among Suras.

He is the creator of all living beings after the close of the Kalpa again and again. He is the eternal unmanifest Lord. This entire universe belongs to him.

O Vyāsa, he alone exists accompanied by Maheśa. The Lord of the universe resided in Mahākālavana.

41. O Vyāsa, Pralaya (ultimate annihilation) never affects people in the excellent Mahākālavana. This beautiful city Kuśasthālī is the same in every Kalpa.

42-50. It is free from ailments and distress and free from aberrations and alternations in Yugas after Yugas. Kalpas do take place as mentioned by Mārkaṇḍeya.

Here itself in the beautiful forest are all these: Brahmā the grandfather of the worlds, the Prajāpatis such as Dakṣa the son of Pracetas, Marīci, Kaśyapa, Rudra, Bhṛgu and others. They created the worlds including the mobile and immobile beings as before (in the previous Kalpa). Thus, O Vyāsa, the (new) Kalpa becomes like previous Kalpa (with all its salient features). Different Kalpas of Vārāha, Vāmana, Viṣṇu and the Pitṛs are current in the splendid Mahākālavana.

O excellent Brāhmaṇa, thus eightyfour Kalpas passed off. As many Yogaliṅgas exist in this forest, O excellent one.

The earth, oceans, mountains—all these are created and they get perished again and again. They will be born in future too. But this city is declared as unmoving (stable). Hence it is praised for all times and in all the worlds as *Pratikalpā*. O Vyāsa, it will become well-known. Men with full control over their sense-organs, who perform Snāna, Dāna, Japa, Homa and Śrāddha with the Pitṛs and the deities in view in this city, are never reborn in hundreds of crores of Kalpas.

51-56. If people casually visit Pratikalpā, see Lord Maheśvara, take holy bath once on a full-moon day in the month of Vaiśākha in the waters of Śīprā, all their Rajas qualities perish. They will never incur any sin. They reside in Viṣṇuloka. A creature obtains that benefit which is acquired in the course of residence in

Kāśī for a thousand Manvantaras, if it stays even for a moment in Pratikalpā.

In every Kalpa and at the close of the Kalpas, this remained the same splendid city. Hence it is glorified as Pratikalpā by all people, O excellent Brāhmaṇa.

If men of great fortune love this, they do not experience the difference of Kalpa. It (change of Kalpa) remains for a moment like a dream(?).

He who listens to this meritorious story of Pratikalpā or recounts it assiduously dispels the sin of Brāhmaṇa's slaughter.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

*Śīprā: The Remover of Jvara*¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Thus, O Vyāsa, this beautiful city exists eternally. How it came to be known in the different Yugas has been explained by me, O sinless one.

Vyāsa said:

2-6. O most excellent one among those who know Brahman, I wish to know further the sacred and meritorious story of Śīprā, destructive of sins.

The beautiful Kuṇḍa Piśācamocana has been described. Nīlagaṅgā and Karkarāja mentioned thereafter, all the Puṣkaras (holy lakes), the excellent Gayā Tīrtha, Gomatī Kuṇḍa and the lake named Dharmasaraḥ, the Tīrtha arising from the confluence and the story of the birth of Śāni—all these have been described. I wish to know what happened at Cyavana's hermitage as well as at the splendid abode of Nāgas as also the greatness of Puruṣottama. What will happen, how and at what time as well as whatever you have in (your) mind (may be described).

1. To glorify the river Śīprā an imaginary fight between Śiva and Viṣṇu is described. And their final missiles "Jvaras" clash with each other only to be submerged and extinguished into the Śīprā river. Hence Śīprā is 'Jvaragñi' (vide vv 19-41). The fight between Hari and Hara for the sake of Bāṇāsura has some basis in the *Harivaṁśa* but no Śīprā river is mentioned therein.

Sanatkumāra said:

7. Listen, O illustrious Vyāsa, to the story that is extremely destructive of sins. I shall mention what event happened in the splendid Mahākālavana.

8. O dear one, in the whole earth there is no river equal to Śīprā on the banks of which one gets salvation in an instant. What to say if it is resorted to for a long time!

9-10. It is born in Vaikuṅṭha as Śīprā; in heaven it is Jvaraghñī ('remover of the evil spirit Jvara'). In Mahādvāra it is Pāpaghñī ('remover of sins'); in Pātāla it is Amṛtasambhavā ('born of nectar'). In Vārāha Kalpa it is known by the name Viṣṇudehā ('Viṣṇu's body'). Śīprā, is well-known in Avantī as born of Kāmadhenu.

Vyāsa said:

11. O excellent sage, this is a mysteriously wonderful thing mentioned by you. It behoves you to recount the splendid story of Śīprā succinctly.

Sanatkumāra said

12-18. Holding the skull of Brahmā, Mahādeva, the pure soul, wandered everywhere in all the worlds for the sake of alms. The Lord did not get alms. Seeking alms he went to Vaikuṅṭha. Wandering here and there, he went there at the time (prescribed for offering) of hospitality. Hungry in the course of many days, he became angry and engaged himself in censuring the whole world. "O holy Sir, I am hungry and have practised (yogic) concentration. Give the alms." He said thus again and again holding the skull.

Hari said, "O Hara, let the alms be taken. I shall give it to you." After saying so, he raised his hand and placed his index finger (in the skull). At that time Rudra became inflamed and excited. Angrily he struck (the finger) with his trident. Much blood flowed out of the finger then. With that the vessel held by Śaṅkara in his hand became full. It overflowed and the current passed in all directions. At that spot Śīprā manifested herself arising from the flow of blood.

19-22. That river in Vaikuṅṭha became quickly one sanc-

tifying all the three worlds. Thus Śīprā, the most excellent of all rivers, became well-known in all the three worlds.

How it came to be called Jvaraghñī, I shall explain, O Vyāsa:

The leader of the Daityas named Bāṇa having teased and contemptuously insulted Aniruddha, fought with Kṛṣṇa in a battle. The herioc Asura held various kinds of weapons in his thousand hands. Hence Vāsudeva became very angry. He quickly seized his discus and (sparing Bāṇa's two hands) cut off his thousand arms with that fast-moving weapon with sharp edge.

23. The demon then became afflicted with wounds. All his hope and ambitions became shattered when his arms were cut off. He turned away (from the battle) and sought refuge in Śaṅkara.

24-29. On seeing the frightened Mahā Daitya approaching him, O Vyāsa, Maheśvara became overwhelmed with compassion. He came to the place where the angry Kṛṣṇa of mighty arms was standing unmoved after cutting off the thousand arms of the king of Daityas in the course of the battle. The excellent Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of enemy's army, stood there like a mountain. Maheśvara came there. He tried to restrain Kṛṣṇa by showering him with volleys of arrows.

Pitted against each other, they fought a terrible battle by means of terrifying weapons and missiles that frightened all living beings.

With a desire to kill Hara, Kṛṣṇa directed (discharged) a missile with Viṣṇu as deity. Śaṁbhu who was eager to take away the life of Kṛṣṇa held up the missile named Pāśupata that could destroy all. A great tumultuous cry arose and was heard in all the worlds.

30. Again Kṛṣṇa discharged the Mohanāstra (enchanting, depriving consciousness) upon Śiva. Due to that missile, Śaṁbhu became enchanted by the divine Māyā.

31-34. For some time he remained in the battlefield yawning and writhing frequently. When in that great battle Rudra regained consciousness, Maheśvara-Jvara (the evil spirit of fever pertaining to Maheśvara) was created by him who became overwhelmed with fury. Immediately the exceedingly powerful Virabhadra issued forth from his forehead. He was short in stature with three heads and three eyes. He had the shape of a goat with three legs. Though he was insignificant in size, he had matted

hairs and had smeared his body with ash. He was a great ailment, very difficult to overcome. Dispatched by Mahādeva, he approached the army of Kṛṣṇa and harassed and tormented all the living beings connected with Kṛṣṇa.

35. Afflicted by the onslaught of Jvara, O Vyāsa, the army under the protection of Kṛṣṇa became shattered suddenly. It turned away its face from the battle.

36-41. On seeing his army in that plight, yawning and writhing on being afflicted by sickness by the Jvara of Maheśa with all hopes and ambitions shattered, Kṛṣṇa created the Vaiṣṇava Tāpa (Jvara pertaining to Viṣṇu) with his fury excessively aroused. A great and terrific battle ensued between the Jvaras of Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. After fighting for a long time, the Jvara pertaining to Maheśvara became hit and split. Fleeing in all the worlds, he could not get peace and rest. Afflicted by it (the Jvara of Viṣṇu) Maheśvara Jvara reached the beautiful Mahākālavana. He immersed himself in Śīprā and hence attained great peace. On seeing the ferocious Jvara of Maheśvara quiescent the Vaiṣṇava Jvara too came to Śīprā and immersed himself therein. Due to its power, the two Jvaras issuing from Hari and Hara perished.

42-45. Hence it became instantly known as *Jvaraghñī* (remover of fever) for all time. Persons afflicted with fever and experiencing great misery come to Śīprā, O Vyāsa, and plunge into it in morning with great concentration. They ~~are~~ never afflicted with feverish pain. Then, O Vyāsa, this fact was told by Hari, Hara and Brahmā.

If men listen to this divine story with concentrated mind, they need not be afraid at all of the heat of fever.

CHAPTER FIFTY

The Greatness of Śīprā

Sanatkumāra said:

1. O scorcher of enemies,¹ I shall succinctly explain how Śīprā of holy waters became well-known as destroyer of sins.

1. Probably a quotation.

2. Formerly, O Vyāsa, in Kṛtayuga, there was a king named Damana, in the land of Kikaṭa (Magadha). That king was very notorious for his excessive irascibility.

3-8. He followed evil ways. He used to censure all pious rites, cows and Brāhmaṇas. He used to imbibe liquor and confiscate gold. He was envious and he defiled the bed of his preceptor. He used to confiscate and misappropriate all the possessions of his subjects. He outraged the modesty of other men's wives. He himself was a rogue and he associated himself with rogues. He was a scandal-monger and he emulated thieves. He used to take away forcibly herds of cows. He used to attack other cities. He used to imprison people. He was fond of bards or flatterers. He was despicable and always wrathful. He was hostile to the Vedas and scriptural texts. He avoided the society of good men. Himself very wicked, he liked other wicked people. He deserted women of noble family. He was a paramour of prostitutes and Śūdra women. Always censuring righteousness, he took pleasure in vice whereon his mind indulged. He never performed worships or sacrifices. He censured the Vedas and Yajñas. The idols of the deities used to be kicked with feet by him. A king more vicious and wicked has never been before nor will there be one in future.

9. Once moving about in the terrible forest in the course of his hunting expedition, the wicked one was wandering here and there surrounded by hunters.

10-16. The hungry and thirsty rogue could not find any hamlet (for succour). He stayed alone from the group and went near Mahākālavana. Night fell by that time in all its terrible aspects, for it was the time when terrible beings seek refuge in it. He came to the root of a tree. Oppressed by hunger he wanted to lie down somewhere. He tied the horse to a branch and sat himself down. At that very same time, a serpent fell down on his head. "What is this mystery? How has this happened?" Saying thus it was warded off with his hand. The king who wanted to ward it off was bitten in his thumb by that serpent. As soon as he was bitten, the king became distressed and he tottered on to the ground. In a short while the distressed king swooned without any hope of recovery. In another moment he became a ghost and was led to the frightful group of hells by the messengers of Yama, who struck him

with different kinds of weapons as a result of his own previous actions. All the delighted groups of servants of Yamarāja bound him with ropes. They led the sinner to the palace of Yama.

17-20. In the meantime, O Vyāsa, the corpse was eaten by carnivorous animals. A bit that remained was seen by a crow in the morning. It flew into the sky and reached that place. It fetched the bit of flesh with its beak. Assailed by other crows, it hovered around and reached the place where the divine Śīprā of holy waters flowed. As the fruition of Karmas turned out, the piece of flesh from the king's corpse fell from the beak of the crow into the waters of Śīprā. Due to the meritorious power thereof, the king instantly became Śīva.

21. He had three eyes and matted hairs. He was clad in the hide of a tiger. Seated on a bull he held a trident in his hand. He became identical with the Consort of Umā with the crescent-moon on the forehead.

22-27. On seeing this miraculous turn of events, the messengers (of Yama) were taken aback. They were attacked by the attendants (of Śīva) and thrashed. Thereupon they went and informed Dharmarāja (Yama): "O great king Dharmarāja, we make obeisance to you. Please listen to the words of your messengers, at once amusing and very much surprising to you.

There was a king called Damana, ruler of Kikaṭa. That dull-witted husband of a Śūdra woman was the greatest sinner all over the earth. O excellent one, all the sins on the earth on a par with slaughter of a Brāhmaṇa had been committed by him. He broke all the conventional rules of morality and righteous conduct of all castes and stages of life. The deluded rogue in league with vicious people, madly indulgent in games of dice and full of dark spots should be meted out due punishment by Yama increasing our delight. How can he assume the form of Śīva? What else can be more mysterious than this?

28-32. Formerly many sinners were present here. All of them were redeemed by Kṛṣṇa then when he sought the son of the Brāhmaṇa (Sāndīpani, Kṛṣṇa's teacher). Ever since then, all the chasms and crevasses of Naraka appear dry and arid like pools in summer season. In your palace, no cry of distress is being heard. There is no means of our sustenance. What is the remedy? Tell us. O Yama, O master, only one person from the world came here providing us with some sustenance.

He too now has become Śiva. How is it? How can we keep alive?" On hearing those weighty words of the servants, Dharmarāja meditated for a while and said to his servants words befitting the place and the occasion:

Dharmarāja said:

33-39. O attendants, let this be heard by you all with fully concentrated minds as to how and by the power of what merit the utmost sinner assumed the form of Śiva.

In the most excellent land of great merit on the earth, in the splendid Mahākālavana, there is the excessively splendid river named Śīprā which is exceedingly destructive of all sins.

O my servants, no sin afflicts those people who come into contact with the waters of Śīprā. He who dies there shall go to the city of Śiva.

Different kinds of sins committed mentally, verbally or physically, perish instantaneously by resorting to the river Śīprā.

A man may remain anywhere and utter the name of the river, 'Śīprā', 'Śīprā'. He too assumes the form of Śiva. I do not know the benefit arising from the holy bath therein. (But one thing I do know.) If the worms, locusts and aquatic beings of Śīprā die, they go to Śivapura merely by having resorting to the waters of Śīprā.

Those who ultimately resort to the banks of Śīprā after committing great sins elsewhere and die here, go to the abode of Śiva.

40. If excellent men take bath in it in the month of Mādhava, they do not fall into hell at all. They move about in the form of Śiva.

41-44. The piece of flesh of that sinful king was fetched by a crow and cast into the deep waters of Śīprā. Why should one lament over it?

Tanks, wells, lakes etc. yield more and more merit. In the rivers, the merit is ten times more. Tāpī river is ten times more efficacious. Godā river is more meritorious than that. Revā river is ten times more efficacious than that. Gaṅgā is more meritorious than that. Śīprā is holy and destructive of sins. It is ten times more meritorious. The flesh from the body of Damana came into contact with Śīprā. Due to the power thereof, he became one with the form of Śiva.

45-48. A beautiful river like this is in Avantī on the earth. All the Devas desire the rare visit thereof.

On hearing the words of Dharmarāja, the servants were surprised. Free from agony, they mentally sought refuge in Śīprā.

Sanatkumāra said:

Even since then, this Śīprā became well-known as Pāpanāśinī ('destroyer of sins'). Her excellent greatness is being sung about in the Purāṇas. There is no doubt about this that one will get salvation on hearing about the liberation of Damana, the excellent greatness of Śīprā and the conversation of the messengers of Yama.

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

The Genesis of the Name Amṛtodbhavā

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Listen, O highly intelligent Vyāsa, to the excellent greatness of Śīprā and how it came to be well-known as Amṛtodbhavā in the nether worlds dear to Nāgas.

2. Once Rudra, being hungry, came to Bhogavati (city of Nāgas) in the world of Nāgas with a skull in his hand for the sake of begging alms.

3. At every house he repeated the piteous words "Do give me alms." Alms were not given by anyone to the hungry Dhūrjaṭi.

4. Then the Trident-bearing Lord became very angry. His eyes turned red as he became more and more afflicted with hunger. After wandering over the entire city, he slowly came out of it.

5-6. Lord Śāmbhu, the source of origin of all souls, went to the place where there were twentyone deep pits (Kuṇḍas) of Pīyūṣa (Nectar) by way of according protection to the Nāga Loka. Śānkara quaffed off the entire quantity of Pīyūṣa through his eyes.

7. After making the pits of Pīyūṣa empty, he stood up. Then the entire world of Nāgas trembled.

8-11. “Whose act is this? What has happened? Why has the Nectar disappeared from here?” Saying thus all the Nāgas with Vāsuki as their leader came out of the city suspecting a grave act of omission. “What shall we do? Where shall we go? Who has committed this cruel joke? Who has become so infuriated as to take away our excellent Amṛta which is our very sustenance. O serpents, how can we live now?” After saying thus all the serpents along with their children, womenfolk and possessions sought refuge in Hari. They were in great mental suspicion and fear.

12-19. By way of blessing them, an unembodied voice spoke thus: “O ye all serpents, may this be heeded to. Wanton insult to the Lord has been committed by you all. Śambhu afflicted with hunger came to every house for the sake of alms. In full knowledge, he visited at the time set apart for guests. He came as a mendicant with a skull in his hand. Alms were not given to the Pināka-bearing Lord by anyone in Bhogavatī. Then the Lord, the personification of piety, went out (despite) his hunger. Therefore, O excellent serpents, the entire quantity of Nectar in the pitchers has become lost. Go ye all from the nether worlds to the excellent Mahākālavana. There is the most excellent river well-known by the name Śīprā. It sanctifies the three worlds and bestows all the desired benefits. A mere sight thereof destroys all sins. All of you must go there and perform the holy rite of ablution in accordance with the injunctions. Resort to the Lord of Devas. Then perform the worship. By resorting to the Lord of Devas and by taking bath in the waters of Śīpra. you will get the Nectar immediately as before.” After addressing those serpents thus, it vanished there itself.

20-29. O Vyāsa, on hearing the divine voice all of a sudden, the serpents said, “So be it.” On hearing the voice uttered by the Lord, the witness of the whole world, the serpents got ready and went to Mahākālavana, along with the children, womenfolk and old people.

There they saw the river respectfully bowed to by all the three worlds. It was filled with flowers strewn everywhere. The trees nearby had plenty of shade. Aquatic birds like Swans and Kāraṇḍavas (were seen) everywhere. It was full of jewels and adorned with clusters of lotuses.

Brāhmaṇas (were seen) both at dawn and dusk seated (on

the banks) engaged in the twilight prayers. So also the illustrious sages headed by Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras, Gandharvas, Nārada and other, celestial sages, Vasus, Ādityas, Aśvins, Maruts, Rudras, Sādhyas, Devas and Pitṛs of pure mental predilections resorted to Śīprā at twilight with great concentration for the sake of adoration.

Wives of the sages, highly fortunate groups of Devas and Apsaras maidens, noble and chaste ladies were also present there along with their husbands. Engaged in adoration were the people of all castes and stages of life. They were of good conduct. Sainly kings traversing the path of salvation, Siddhas, Yogeśvaras, calm and quiescent ascetics of severe holy vows and restraints, pilgrims from the different parts of the world had all gathered there, both men and women. They were seated on the banks of Śīprā.

30-34. There they performed various religious rites and offered great gifts (of all kinds). On seeing the nectarine river honoured and respected by the three worlds of such nature, O Vyāsa, all the Nāgas were extremely delighted. After performing the routine rites of holy bath, making gifts etc., the excellent serpents approached Mahādeva. All the devout, excellent serpents adored in accordance with the Vedic injunction, Mahādeva with the holy ablution of five Aṅgas (salient features), the application of the holy unguent Yakṣakardama, the offer of garlands of unfaded lotus flowers, different kinds of flowers, raw rice-grains, holy clothes, sandalpaste and other unguents, sweet scents, incense, lights, Naivedyas, betel leaves, monetary gifts, waving of lights with camphor pieces etc. Then the Urugas desirous of Sudhā began their prayer:

Prayer by the Serpents:

The Serpents said:

35. Obeisance to the Supreme Infinite One. O Lord of everything, obeisance, obeisance. O Moon-crested Supreme Ātman with matted hairs, obeisance to you. O Bull-emblemmed One, obeisance to you, O holder of the excellent trident.

36. Obeisance to the Three-eyed Lord, to you wearing the coronet of matted hairs. O Lord with serpent Śeṣa as a garland, obeisance to you whose limbs have been smeared

with ash of funeral pyres from cremation ground.

37. Obeisance to you, O Lord wearing the elephant hide; obeisance, obeisance to Giriśa (Lord of the mountain). O destroyer of the Tripuras, obeisance to you. O slayer of Smara, obeisance to you.

38. O Mrgavyādhā (hunter of deer), obeisance to you. Obeisance, obeisance to *Ghasmara* (the annihilator). Obeisance to you, O Śaṅkarātman (Identical with Śaṅkara), O Lord, O bestower of all desired benefits.

39. O witness of everything, obeisance to you, O multi-shaped one immanent in all living beings. Obeisance to you, the supporter of all, to the Lord holding all Śaktis.

40. Obeisance to you having all pleasures, O Lord, O source of origin of all seeds. O Lord of divine laughter, obeisance to you. Obeisance to the Lord flowing with Amṛta (Nectar).

41. Obeisance to you who are desirous of what is desirable, bestower of the boon of all desires. Obeisance to Śiva, the quiescent. Obeisance to the Lord of Paśus (beings bound by the bond of Karmas).

42. Obeisance to Mṛḍa with control over the sense-organs, of the quiescent form.

43. On being propitiated thus by Nāgas the Bull-embled holy Lord appeared with a beaming face and said to the serpents:

Śrī Mahādeva said:

44. Listen ye all, O serpents. I shall tell you the fact. Formerly I had been to the world of Nāgas for begging everyday alms.

45. I wandered from house to house in Bhogavatī excessively hungry, holding the skull in the hand and wearing the excellent bark garment (though) in rags.

46. Though I sought alms, I did not get it and so returned home. As a result of this sinful act, the Sudhā vanished from your place.

47. Due to the presence of a slight merit you all have been fortunate enough to come to the excellent Mahākālavana after leaving Nāgālaya.

48. Accompanied by your womenfolk, children and old people you have seen Śīprā, the most excellent one of the rivers, by the mere sight whereof I became free from sins formerly.

49. Of what sort (greatness) is the Puṇya (merit) arising from the holy ablution in Śīprā, I am incompetent to tell fully. O serpents, by visiting it, one becomes Śāmbhu instantly.

50. Since the holy ablution has been performed by all the excellent serpents, a great merit has accrued. By the power of that merit, let there be Sudhā in every house.

51-56. Take the sacred waters of Śīprā and sprinkle the Kuṇḍas therewith. Thereby all the twentyone Kuṇḍas shall be filled with Amṛta permanently, O excellent Pannagas (serpents).

Saying "So be it" all of them took the waters of Śīprā in their hands, bowed down to Maheśvara and went to their own world. Thereafter, O Vyāsa, the river Śīprā became reputed as Amṛtodbhavā not only in the Nāgaloka but also in all the worlds.

If men on the earth perform bath etc., in that river, they will never incur any sin, adversity or wretchedness. They will never be separated from their sons, wives and others. Their friends will not be adverse. They will have neither sickness nor poverty.

By reading or by listening to the story that is meritorious, destructive of sins and according the boon of all desired benefits a devotee will obtain the benefit of the gift of a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

The Glorification of Śīprā

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Listen further, O illustrious one, to the excellent greatness of Śīprā. The mere listening (to it) yields the merit of a horse-sacrifice.

2. Everywhere Śīprā is meritorious (in all respects). It is sacred and destructive of sins, especially so in Avantī where it flows northwards.

3. Still listen even as I explain in details how the auspicious river became the daughter of Varāha, arising from Viṣṇu's

body.¹ Listen, O Vyāsa to the highly meritorious story, the auspicious legendary tale (about its birth).

4-8. Formerly there was a great Asura, the highly powerful Hiraṇyākṣa. He brought under his control the entire earth with the help of the wicked-souled Dānavas and established an imperial kingdom.

He conquered all the worlds and the Suras with Indra as their leader. He set aside the guardians of the quarters and Vasupālas (the guardian-deities of riches). He became the Lord of Asuras.

He dominates all the worlds. Ousted from the heaven by him, all the groups of the Devas, having been defeated and deprived of their kingdoms, wandered over the earth like (ordinary) human beings. Unable to get refuge (elsewhere), all of them sought refuge in Brahmā.

9-12. After going there and bowing down to him, they reported the activities of the Daitya: “O holy Sir, what is this? (Something) should be done by you, the great Lord Parameṣṭhiṇ. The heaven devoid of thorns (opponents) has been forcibly taken away by Hiraṇyākṣa, the Daitya, whereby all the groups of the Devas have become practically extinct instantly. He partakes of (our) shares of Yajñas. By what means can we remain alive? How can we continue to stay on the earth?”

On hearing these piteous and despondent words of the Devas, Pitāmaha spoke charming words befitting that occasion.

Brahmā said:

13-21. O excellent Suras, listen ye all with attention. Formerly this fellow was a most excellent attendant, the doorkeeper of Viṣṇu of incomparable radiance, in the beautiful mansion of Vaikuṅṭha. His name was Jaya and this mighty one was accompanied by Vijaya. Both these ministerial officers were in the guise of Viṣṇu himself. They had perfect control over their sense-organs. Holding their batons, the heroic ones always used to stand at attention at the portals, O excellent Suras.

Once the mental sons of Brahmā, the illustrious Sanaka and

1. This legend is a new contribution of the SkP for the glorification of Śīprā. The Mbh and other Purāṇas do not connect the Varāha-incarnation of Viṣṇu with Śīprā, though they regard the fall of Viṣṇu's doorkeepers (Jaya and Vijaya) into demonhood as a result of the curse of Kumāras.

others, came to the abode of Viṣṇu while they were roaming freely. They expressed their desire to see the Lord but were prevented by these two (gatekeepers); all of them fell down on the ground. O Vyāsa, these Kumāras swooned due to their extreme misery. Thereupon the mighty lotus-eyed Lord came there. Viṣṇu suddenly espied the Kumāras lying miserably on the ground. Madhusūdana raised them up, kept them on his lap and embraced them. Sniffing on the crown of their heads and embracing them with both the hands, he asked: “Whence is this dejection in you? You have been made miserable by someone. O children, well-versed in piety and the most excellent of all those conversant with righteousness, tell us the reason therefore.”

The Kumāras said:

22-24. O great king, may this be listened to. Our misery is of this sort. Listen, O great Lord, how we have been brought to this plight. We, the four brothers, have been wandering over the worlds. O Lord of Ramā, we were desirous of seeing you but now we are afflicted with grief. We were suddenly forbidden by the two doorkeepers. Hence we were in this plight, but now we have been saved by you.

Bhagavān said:

25-30. From now onwards these two have no permanent stay in this region. Since they are inimical to me, they will attain birth in a demonic species.

O Vyāsa, they suddenly attained Asuraic birth—those two of wicked nature named Jaya and Vijaya. If men expiate their sins by means of penance, charity and meditation, they will obtain the devotion to Kṛṣṇa in the course of a thousand births. If with wicked intention they pass off three births, then in future great devotion to Viṣṇu is generated in them. They attained the rebirth in the womb of Tāmasa nature as extremely powerful Hiranyakaśipu and Hiranyākṣa, as Daityas Kumbhakarna and Ravana who made the world cry and as Dantavakra and Śiśupala. These are the three births known (to people).

31-40. The Daitya of great power known as Hiranyākṣa became evil-minded. He censured Brāhmaṇas and Devas. He

conquered all the Devas and occupied heaven himself. All of them were driven out of Svarga. Defeated and deprived of their kingdom, they began to roam over the earth like mortal beings. Nowhere is seen (heard) the utterance of Svadhā, Svāhā and Vaṣaṭ. There is no adoration of Devas nor respect for Brāhmaṇas in particular. No Tīrtha shone nor (did) sacred holy spots and shrines in the Āśramas of noble-souled sages. The wicked Daityas struck and committed heinous crimes. The pious activities of the people in different castes and stages of life, and the chastity of women stopped while he was ruling as a despot. Wicked in mind and activities, indulging in devilish magic and witchcraft, extremely arrogant, heretic in their way of life, all of them were averse to righteousness. Brutish in behaviour, all of them could be only mentioned as Brāhmaṇa in name. (They professed to be Brāhmaṇas.) The entire earth became full of barbarians, painful and overwhelmed by many torments. What is Veda? What is Smṛti? What is Yajña? What is Dakṣiṇā? (People were indifferent towards all these.) The entire earth became dark and ignorant. Thus, O Vyāsa, all the three worlds became defective and defiled.

41-47. "O descendant of Bharata, whenever there is decline and decay of righteousness and unrighteousness gets respectability, I create myself."¹ Mahāviṣṇu recalled this and incarnated as a Boar.² He was divine and auspicious comparable to Śvetadvīpa ('White continent'). In this physical form of a Boar sportingly adopted by the Lord, the curved teeth served the purpose of the Yūpa (sacrificial post); his natural odour is the Havis; the hairs over the body are the seeds and medicinal herbs; the feet are the Vedas; the staff the sun; the tongue is fire; the palate the ghee offering. This Yajñakāya (embodiment of Yajña) was highly skilful, firm and mighty with the lustrous interior mouth. His grunting gruff sound is the Udgāna (chant of Sāman hymns); his sporting about is the activity of the Ṛtviks. His breath is the activity of the Ṛgveda priest Hotṛ. The intelligent members of the assembly are represented by his limbs. His eating was the *Pucchakarman* (valedictory rites in a Yajña). The Yajamāna (sacrificer) was

1. Cf. BG IV. 7

2. The description Yajña-varāha is common in Purāṇas such as the *Matsya* and others.

highly honoured. The puddle was the extension of the altar; Brahmā was the Adhvaryu; the forest was his abode. He was the witness of the Loka, having the manifestation of the world. He bore the greater and the lesser and was pure. The primordial Puruṣa, Īśāna (Lord), Puruhuta (oft-invoked), Puruṣtuta (oft-eulogized). By him (i.e. Yajña-Varāha), Hiranyākṣa, the Daitya, unapproachable to many, was killed.

48-49. After fighting many battles with great difficulty, he was killed by Viṣṇu.

Previously afflicted by Daitya, the earth had caved into the bottom of Rasātala. It was raised up by the Varāha by means of his curved teeth (tusks) resembling the crescent moon. All the Dānavas were killed. All those who remained went to Pātāla.

50. Auspicious, sacred winds blow. The sun became brighter. The quiescent fires blazed; the sounds arising in the quarters became calm.

51. The rivers flowed along their proper beds. The oceans attained normal state. On seeing everything, O Vyāsa, the Lord became pleased within himself.

52. The Lord in the physical form of the boar bestowed all desired benefits. The Lord who killed the Daitya, became highly blissful and became bestower of boons.

53. This eternal river flowed out of his heart filled with the waters of bliss (and became) the bestower of all bliss as boons.

54. It extended over many Yojanas. With profuse water it flowed as it pleased. It is full of lotuses and aquatic birds such as Haṃsa (swans) and Kāraṇḍava (ruddy goose).

55. It was straight in its flow, with sparkling beauty. It is resorted to by Yakṣas and Gandharvas. It is being sung about by Kinnaris and flocks of birds.

56. The Apsaras danced in its honour, the great sages eulogized it. Persons performing Havana into the fire invoked it. It is resorted to by saintly kings.

57. Young women with protruding breasts sported in it. It shone charmingly in certain places where lordly elephants stirred up its waters.

58. It is worthy of being served by Brāhmaṇas conversant with the Vedas. It is resorted to always by Siddhas and sages of praise-worthy souls. It is the bestower of spiritual fulfilments on men.

53-62. The beautiful city of Padmāvati is in the enjoyable Mahākālavana. There is an ancient splendid and beautiful Kuṇḍa. People who bathe there go to the eternal Śivaloka and it was here, O Vyāsa, that the great Śiprā that sanctifies the worlds became merged (*Līnā*). Everything conducive to the annihilation of the wicked Daityas was done by the Varāha. Hence the Devas had been rendered free from agony and anguish by the Lord in the form of the boar. All the Devas with Indra as their leader with the palms joined in reverence stood in front of Mahāviṣṇu and eulogized perpetually.

63-64. “O Lord of the universe! O Lord of Devas! O one listening to whose name and glorification of whom is meritorious! What is the rite (to be performed by us)—making of gifts, penance, (visiting) holy places, (viewing) the deity etc. on our part—by the holy efficacy whereof, the heaven will be regained by us? Considering all these, O Lord, tell us all this secret.”

Viṣṇu said:

65. O Suras, listen ye all to the means of your fulfilment. The splendid Mahākālavana is holy, meritorious and the greatest secret of all secrets.

66-67. There Śiprā of holy waters arising out of my body has merged itself. (It is called) Nilagaṅgā (v.l. Līnagaṅgā), the excellent river and the eastern Sarasvatī. It also is there. There are Puṣkara, Gayā Tīrtha and the splendid Puruṣottamasaras. Go there quickly. You will regain your worlds.

68-71. On hearing this great speech of the Lord of Devas, the Lord of the universe, all the groups of the Devas with Brahmā and Śakra as their leaders went there in the charming Mahākālavana where there is the excellent river Śiprā. They performed the holy rites such as Snāna, Dāna etc., and performed Śrāddha in the proper manner. By the meritorious power thereof, the Suras went back to their own worlds.

Thus, O Vyāsa, Śiprā, the sanctifier of the worlds, has been extolled. (From it) was born the lake of Varāha, of Viṣṇu of incomparable brilliance. Merely by seeing it one can quell the sin of (even) Brāhmaṇa’s slaughter.

72. By taking the holy bath here, drinking the water, performing the requisite Śrāddha and by gifting a milch cow one is honoured in Viṣṇuloka.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

Sundara Kuṇḍa and Piśācamocana

Sanatkumāra said:

1. O observer of holy vows, all the Tīrthas on the earth are always stationed in Sundara Tīrtha in Avanti.

Vyāsa said:

2. What is this Sundra Kuṇḍa? At what time did it originate on the earth? By whom was it created? Who is the deity? What benefit thereof has been proclaimed?

Sanatkumāra said:

3. Listen to the time when the Kuṇḍa named Sundara originated in the holiest of holy spots. It is destructive of all sins. It accords the objects desired.

4. Merely by hearing about it, even the sin of Brāhmaṇa's slaughter becomes dispelled. It is more meritorious than horse-sacrifice. It is superior to a hundred Vājapeya sacrifices.

5. Formerly, O Vyāsa, at the close of the Kalpa, the whole earth was almost destroyed. The mountain Meru shook on account of fierce winds and heavy downpour.

6. Then, O Vyāsa, its peak as excellent as the top of Vaikuṇṭha fell into the terrible Mahākālavana here, which is eternal, imperishable and something mysterious and secret.

7-10. When the peak fell, all of a sudden, a well-demarcated pool originated. It had clear water. The steps were made of jewels. There were pearls filling it up like sand. The elevated place was made of gold. It appears splendid with golden lotuses. A number of Kalpa trees created a good shade therein. Cintāmaṇi gems covered the altitude. The Kuṇḍa was full of Haṁsas (swans) and Kāraṇḍavas and brightly adorned with Cakravāka birds. Seeds of medicinal herbs were scattered around. It was enriched by all *Tattvas* (Principles). These *Tattvas* did not perish even at the close of the Kalpa all-round. All those great *Tattvas* remain there in personified form.

11-15. The Vedas, scriptures, Purāṇas, Gāthās, Gītis (songs), Kṣārākṣaras (perishable and imperishable), Omkāra, Vaṣaṭkāra,

the great three-footed Gāyatrī, units of time, Kalās, Kāṣṭhās, Muhūrtas, Lavas, Truṭis, Palas, Ghaṭis, day, night, Yāmas, Pakṣas (fortnights), months, Rtus, years, and Yugas: all these are stationed in the Kuṇḍa in personalised forms. Devas, Yakṣas, Nāgas, Guhyakas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yakṣas, Siddhas and Kimpuruṣas became bewildered due to the adverse effects of the Kalpa and so performed adorations (*Upāsanās*). Brahmā, Kāla, Rudra, the powerful guardians of the quarters also did the same. Some Siddhas and sages of excellent vow became engaged in meditation.

16-20. They stay there for many Yugas, O Vyāsa, till the close of the Kalpa. The Kuṇḍa had the shape of the discus Sudarśana. It is filled with nectarine waters. It was endowed with divine trees. It had all the attributes of Pārijāta (divine tree). It had the fragrance arising from the scented water utilized by the celestial damsels for bathing. Peacocks dance in certain places; cuckoos coo in some places. The *Kekā* sounds of peacocks were heard somewhere. In some places it was reverberating with the rumbling sounds of clouds. It is beautiful with a beautiful shape and size. Hence it is called Sundara. O Vyāsa, it causes much merit. It is the greatest destroyer of all sins. It is the place where Viṣṇu is present. So also does Śiva, the self-controlled one, accompanied by Śakti. All these stay near each other at all times.

21-24. A man should stay in Sundara Kuṇḍa for a fortnight or even half of that. (As a result) his residence shall invariably be in Vaikuṅṭha for a hundred Kalpas.

Birds, worms, locusts etc. that die there go to the abode of Śiva. What to speak of men who are purified by their holy ablution there! O Vyāsa, I do not know fully well the extent of the merit accruing from holy gifts to those who make gifts (such as) of gingelly seeds, cows, elephants, horses, chariots, plots of lands, slave girls, male servants, gold, different kinds of gems, beds and aerial cars etc.

25-27. The merit of Sundara Kuṇḍa has been proclaimed. Listen to another thing, O Vyāsa.¹ Once a Piśāca that had fallen among sinful creatures on account of many sins attained

1. Now follows the description of Piśācamocana Tirtha. As usual with such stories, a part of the bone of the Piśāca of Devala fell into the Tirtha and he entered the Liṅga of Maheśvara.

salvation. He went away assuming the form of Śiva. Even if one happens to be slayer of a Brāhmaṇa, one becomes rid of all sins by taking the holy bath in Piśācamocana and seeing Maheśvara.

Vyāsa said:

28-29. Who is this that became notorious as a Piśāca? What sin was committed by him whereby he attained the state of a ghost? O excellent Brāhmaṇa, how did it chance that he came to be in the holy spot? O foremost among the knowers of Brahman, I wish to know this from you.

Sanatkumāra said:

30. Listen, O Vyāsa, to the great narrative of the excellent greatness of the Tirtha, merely by listening to which all sins will be destroyed.

31-34. There was a base Brāhmaṇa of south named Devala. He was always engaged in sinful activities. He was very avaricious. He committed perjury. He was lascivious. He was a roguish gamester hating his own preceptor. He killed elders. He defiled the bed of his preceptor. He stole gold, imbibed liquor, killed Brāhmaṇas. He was disloyal and rebellious to his master. He used to eat forbidden food. He neglected the study of Vedas and scriptures. His sins got accumulated in the course of many births. He was estranged from all righteous activities. He was treacherous, proud and desirous of associating with thieves. He was a rogue and dull-witted. He went to other countries in order to achieve his objective by committing theft.

35. On the way many living beings were killed by that man of sinful activities. Due to association with other sinners, that wicked fellow went to Magadha.

36. There was a great Brāhmaṇa who had mastered the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. He was self-controlled and he regularly performed sacrifices with the holy fire. He possessed pure Sattva quality and was engrossed in all Brāhmaṇical rites.

37. His wife was in his father-in-law's house. He took that lady of spotless fame and proceeded ahead seated in a vehicle, but he was killed by this sinful Brāhmaṇa.

38-41. His wife was very beautiful with excellent features.

She was chaste and of noble qualities. She used to smile pleasantly. She was of firm mental resolve. When her husband was killed, she became miserable. She was badly distressed due to the separation from her husband. She was left in the lurch in the terrible forest. The beautiful woman gathered fuel and twigs together and kindled the funeral pyre which she ascended along with her husband. She was mentally pleased in doing so.

The other wicked fellow collected together all the means of sustenance of this Brāhmaṇa and fled. But he was arrested by the king's servants on the way. He was bound over along with the stolen stuff and taken to the palace. The king was duly reported.

42. A rope was tied round his neck and he was thrown into the hollow of a tree. He was crushed and pounded on the ground and dragged here and there by Cāṇḍālas, the dog-eaters.

43. As a result of his evil actions, he went to the Raurava hell. Then for sixty thousand years he lived as a worm in faeces.

44. By the executors of the order of Yama he was taken to another hell named Asipatravana where iron arrows (blades of swords) were made red hot.

45. He was struck with iron hammers and dragged with iron chains by the servants (of Yama). He began to cry when he reached Kumbhīpāka and was excessively tortured in Vaitaraṇī.

46. After experiencing the fall thus into pits and chasms of diverse and new types of hells, the sinful one attained the state of a *Preta* (ghost) for seventyfive Yugas.

47-51. He had a huge body. His voice was loud. His stomach was huge and his face was pointed like a needle. Overwhelmed with hunger and thirst, he resorted to a desert region. After experiencing pains and difficulties, he assumed the body of a Piśāca. He was crooked and wicked-intentioned. He was nude and perpetrated wicked actions. Faeces, urine, foul, stinking and stale leavings of other's foodstuffs constituted his food. He lived in cremation grounds eating the remnants of other's food. He used to wear hides of animals. He was bereft of eyesight. He always liked to live in tanks and lakes, in ruins, withered dry trees, dry, waterless regions, ramparts,

moats, vacant houses, banks of rivers etc. He liked to live in nooks and corners and joints. When many Yugas elapsed thus, he went to Mahākālavana.

52-58. It was the place where the Liṅga of Maheśvara and also the beautiful and excellent Sundara Kuṇḍa are present. As soon as he stayed there, he was attacked and caused to fall down by a lion. After killing that sinner, the hungry lion desirous of drinking water entered the Kuṇḍa. From its mouth the bone (of the Piśāca) that had got entangled with his curved tooth fell into the water. By the power of that meritorious thing, all his sins perished. After death the Liṅga came to his vision. He abandoned the ghostly body and a fiery lamination (from his body) entered the Liṅga. Ever since then, O Vyāsa, the Tīrtha became known as Piśācamocana.

The deity became famous as Piśācamocaneśa since then. As long as one does not reach the Piśācamocana Tīrtha of the river Śiprā the sins roar like elephants maddened in rut. O Vyāsa, after taking the holy bath in Piśācamocana, one should be clean and mentally concentrated; worshipping, Lord Piśācamocana duly, one becomes rid of all sins. There is no doubt about this.

59-60. O Vyāsa, one should make great gifts at Piśācamocana. He will never return from Śivaloka.

One who reads and listens to the sacred story of Piśācamocana that dispels sins, shall attain the merit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

The Greatness of Nilagaṅgā¹

Vyāsa said:

1. O most excellent one among those who know Brahman, I wish to hear from you, O holy Sir, as to when Nilagaṅgā came into Śiprā Kuṇḍa.

1. Gaṅgā became blue with the sins deposited in her by bathers. As per God Brahmā's advice, she went to Mahākālavana and became pure. She built a hermitage there, now known as Nilagaṅgā Tīrtha.

Sanatkumāra said:

2. Listen, O Vyāsa. This is a great Tīrtha that bestows the benefit of all Tīrthas. After taking holy bath in Nilagaṅgā, one should worship Saṅgameśvara.

3-6. Defects arising from evil association never occur to (i.e. affect) him. Once Gaṅgā, the Tripathagā ('which goes through the three paths—worlds') who sanctifies the three worlds went to Brahmāloka. She was tormented by the grief arising from the (garment of) blue colour. "O Lord, what has happened here? Has sin been committed by me formerly, whereby I have been reduced to this plight as though due to the fault of evil activity. All the sins of all the embodied beings of all the worlds and of the people of the earth get deposited in me. Hence I have become burdened. I cannot move over the earth.

7-12. I have become afflicted by the blue colour and paleness. I have become one with face averted from all righteous activities. All creatures discharge in me whatever Karma they pursue, whether auspicious or inauspicious. They become free from dirt and get sanctified. They stay in the meritorious worlds that bestow worldly pleasures as well as salvation.

Oh Creator! Much pain has been caused to us! The dirt accumulated is great. (I have) neither happiness nor peace, neither sleep nor relief from distress. I have become sinful and I have no permanent stay in the world today. O preceptor of the universe, I have become flooded and swept away by the defects arising from evil contact. What should I do? Where should I go? What is it whereby I will attain peace? What penance should I perform? What religious gift should I give? What sacred place should I visit? What are the means whereby I who have been smeared with sins, shall regain my own original nature? O great Yogin, take into account this and do what is befitting."

Brahmā said:

13-15a. O excellent one among rivers, let the means that brings about the destruction of sins be heard. In the beautiful Mahākālavana there is the city of Amarāvati. Śīprā, the most excellent among rivers, is there. It is a sacred river on the

earth. Merely by its sight all sins will be destroyed. O highly fortunate one, go there for self-purification immediately.

15b-21. On hearing this (as uttered by Brahmā), Gaṅgā, the most excellent river, understood it well and reached the splendid Mahākālavana. To the south-east of Puṣkara (lake) is the deity, the son of Marut (i.e. Hanumān). There is the excellent hermitage of Añjanī on the northern side of Vindhya. She performed a penance along with her son remaining pure and celibate. She was accompanied by all chaste ladies and their husbands who remained celibate. There were many celestial ladies and the young elephants that played about. Kālhāra flowers were in full bloom in the lakes and the intoxicated bees hummed and hovered all-round. The whole forest was resorted to by creatures bereft of mutual enmity. Groups of Brāhmaṇa-sages also were there. The place was pleasing to the mind, meritorious, sacred and destructive of sins.

Merely by entering the place the blue-coloured, excellent river immediately became white-garmented (coloured). All the inauspicious dirt of-sins was washed off. The river with plenty of waters got rid of her sins. Her form then resembled the moon in autumn.

22-26. She built a hermitage there itself, which gives delight to the mind. The merit-bestowing hermitage, O Vyāsa, was called Nilagaṅgā. This Tirtha is destructive of all sins.

After bathing in this Tirtha, one should worship Hanumān. He will easily attain perfect Siddhi. There is no doubt about it.

In the month of Āśvina, during the dark half, the man with great concentration and faith should perform Mahālaya Śrāddha with the manes in view. By him the entire family has been redeemed, the family consisting of hundred and one members including himself. Those ancestors born of the same Gotra who stay in hells attain the good goal. Their worlds will be eternal.

27. After the bath he should offer handfuls of water with gingelly seeds, with the ancestors in view ardently. Their satisfaction will be endless. He is honoured in the heavenly world.

28. After performing Śrāddha by means of milk pudding he should feed seven Brāhmaṇas. He shall attain never-ending

merit. The Śrāddha shall have the same fruit as that of a horse-sacrifice.

29-34. O Vyāsa, listen, I shall tell you about another more meritorious Tīrtha. It is famous in the three worlds as Dugdha Kuṇḍa.

It is meritorious and destructive of all sins. It bestows all desires as boons. Formerly Goddess Dugdhadharā ('holding milk') deposited the entire milk offered by Pṛthu who was piety personified, by way of pure Havis, the bestower of life unto all. Hence this is known as Dugdha Saras.

The devotee should bathe in the Kuṇḍa and drink it (*Payas* = water and milk). By offering a milch cow he shall be rid of all torments and become endowed with wealth and foodgrains at all times. On death he shall go to the heavenly city.

Then he should go to Puṣkara and perform Snāna (holy ablution), Dāna etc. He will be rid of all sins and become pure-souled. He shall attain the benefit of Puṣkara (the Yajña called Pauṇḍarīka).

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

The Greatness of Vimaloda Tīrtha¹

Vyāsa said:

1. O holy Sir, what is this Vindhya giri mountain? At what time did it come to Mahākālavana, the beautiful spot? By whom was it formerly sent?

Sanatkumāra said:

2-4. O Vyāsa, formerly this earth was flooded by the waters of Revā. Then the extremely venerable sage Agastya was propitiated by all the Devas for providing relief unto the earth. Then that excellent sage came to the beautiful mountain Vindhya. With full concentration of the mind he adored Goddess Bhavānī

1. The legend explains the genesis of the Vimaloda Tīrtha and the presence of Vindhyaśīnī in Mahākālavana.

Vindhyavāsini, with a desire for the acquisition of boons.

Prayer to Vindhyavāsini

Agastya's prayer:

5-12. (I bow unto) the goddess who routed Kaṁsa; who brought about the destruction of Asuras; who brought down all burdens; who is the meritorious younger sister of Baladeva; who is the splendid (daughter) born of the womb of Yaśodā; who is the suppressor of the prowess of Cāṇūra; who is stationed in the sky with the splendour of lightning; who is dark coloured; who subdued the black serpent; who is the mother of Devasena; who is Vāk, the goddess of poets; who is Gāyatrī of the chief of Brāhmaṇas; who is the Vyāhṛti; who is the most excellent of all Chandas; who is the thousand-eyed goddess of Indra; who is the greatest Arundhatī of the sage (Vasiṣṭha); who is the Kāmaduhā (wish-yielding cow) of all cows; who is Śyāmā (dark-coloured); who is fond of the very sweat intoxicating wine; who is Aditi of all mothers; who is Pārvati of all women; who is the *Jyotsnā* (moonlight) of Candramas (moon); who is the Bālā (young maiden), the bestower of the boon of all desired things; who is Śārādī (the autumnal goddess) in Ṛtuelā (time of the seasons); who is the most excellent stroller of Vṛndāvana; who is the Vaiṣṇavī Māyā of all Māyins (possessors of Māyā powers), who brings about the delusion of all Daityas; who is Lakṣmī, the favourite of the prosperous ones; who is Yakṣiṇī adored by Dhanada (Kubera); who is the Velā (Foreshore) liked by the great ocean; who is the royal prosperity (property) of the kings; who is the Vedikā of sacrificial halls; who is the splendid Havir-āhavanī (worthy of offering of Havis); who is the Dakṣiṇā (monetary gift) of the Dikṣās (initiations); and who is the bestower of the fruit of all desires.

13. On being eulogized thus, Goddess Vindhyavāsini became visible. With the excellent countenance beaming with pleasure, she said to the sage (Agastya), the most excellent one among sages:

14. "O excellent Brāhmaṇa, what has been desired from us may be wooed; O dear one, desirous of what has this eulogy been composed by you, the pure one?"

Agasti said:

15-20. O mother, O benefactress of Devas, if a boon is to be given let it be this: This Revā has flooded the world, terrifying all the people; the entire universe has been submerged in flood by her. Restrain her.

On being requested thus at that time by that great sage, O Vyāsa, the good lady went then to the splendid Mahākālavana. Then with consoling attitude, she said these words to Agasti: "O sage, I shall immediately restrain the increasing Devī (Revā). Till then the great mountain named Vindhya should not grow up. As long as you, O excellent sage, shall remain in the Trikūṭa Dvāra, endeavouring for the tasks of the Devas in the excellent southern quarter let the mountain remain low.

Kuśasthalī is extremely meritorious, pure and remover of sins. O excellent sage, this city is famous in all the three worlds. I shall live there itself along with the Mātṛs (Mothers) for a long time.

21-28. There you shall always attain the lordship of the Siddhi Kṣetra. My lake of pure waters is meritorious and well-known. It is the place where meritorious persons reside. Crores of goddesses stay there. Men should take their holy bath in that Tīrtha, become clean and shall be endowed with concentration. They shall worship me devoutly by means of incense, lights, sacrificial fires and libations. They should duly feed Brāhmaṇas with various kinds of foodstuffs, sugarcandies and milk. In all the three worlds nothing shall be in access to them.

Various kinds of enjoyments are attained by them with wealth, foodgrain, grounds, riches, sons, wives and other possessions. These pleasures are very rare even unto the Devas. They need not be afraid of enemies, robbers or angry kings.

Never shall any mishap occur to them through weapons, fires, waters etc. They shall be long-lived and wise. After staying in the world for many years they shall become rid of all sins. On death they shall go to Śivapura." Thus, O Vyāsa, Goddess Vindhyaśinī reached the splendid Ujjayinī and resorted to it ultimately. A man who takes his holy bath in that Tīrtha becomes rid of all sins.

29-30. If women have menstrual disorder, if they are Kākavandhyās (have only one child) or Bakavandhyās (having still-born children), if they are unfortunate, if they are devoid of chastity, if they are bereft of all desired objects, they should take their holy bath in Vimaloda and visit Vindhyaśinī. They will be rid of all defects. There need not be any doubt in this matter.

31-33. Those who have no sons will get sons; a virgin will get a bold husband; all good fortunes are obtained; all boons granting desires will be obtained. A Brāhmaṇa becomes learned, a Kṣatriya becomes victorious, a Vaiśya will obtain much profit, and a Śūdra gains happiness.”

One who reads or listens to this meritorious story that grants all desires and boons shall obtain the mērit of gifting a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

The Greatness of the Confluence of Kṣātā

Sanatkumāra said:

1. O Vyāsa, there is another Tīrtha abiding at the confluence of the Kṣātā river, where one is rid of great sins merely by a holy dip.

2-3. When the new moon coincides with a Saturday, a person should with concentration and mental purity perform Śrāddha and offer libation with gingelly seeds with the Pitṛs in view. Thereafter, he should visit Śanaīścara Deva, the immovable excellent Liṅga. He will never be afflicted by Planet Saturn.

Vyāsa said:

4. A great Tīrtha has been talked about (by you) in the splendid Mahākālavana. O great ascetic, I wish to hear further in detail.

Sanatkumāra said:

5. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, let the auspicious traditional legend be heard. By hearing this story alone great sins become destroyed.

6. Revā, Carmaṇvatī and Kṣātā—these three rivers originated formerly from Amaraṅgaṅga on the earth. O sinless one, they are sanctifiers of the three worlds.

7. All these rivers are meritorious. Their waters are sanctifying. They are beautiful and holy. They remove sins. By ablution and by imbibing (the water) these rivers purify all the worlds.

8-12. Once these happy (rivers) amused themselves with sports in the beautiful park, in the excellent Māndhātṛkṣetra with a desire to defeat each other.

On account of the incidence of some defect, they had a split. (Kṣātā river) left the contact with Revā and pierced through the excellent Vindhya mountain.

The excellent river came to the beautiful Mahākālavana where the highly meritorious river Śīprā flowed and this city Amarāvātī was situated.

There is an excellent lake which is superior to all the Tirthas. It is known as Rudrasaras. It is resorted to by Siddhas and groups of Ṛṣis. It always grants worldly pleasures and salvation.

Formerly, Kṣātā came there and resorted to the contact of Śīprā. It became a great Tirtha named Kṣātāsaṅgama. It is reported that Vibhāvasu (the Sun) became free from Rajas (sin) immediately.

Vyāsa said:

13. As mentioned by you, how did the Sun-god become free from Rajas formerly? O foremost one among those who know Brahman, I wish to know this from you.

Sanatkumāra said:

14-20. (*Slightly defective passage*) Formerly Tvaṣṭṛ gave Anusūryā Sāvitrī, his daughter, to Sūrya. Devoutly attached to her husband, she always served the Sun, the eye of the world. Twins were born to the Sun-god, the witness of the world. Yama and Yamunā, the sanctifier of the world were born as

a son and a daughter of Vivasvān.

Thereupon the daughter of Tvaṣṭṛ said to her Chāyā (Shadow) the following true and pleasant words: “O Chāyā, the twins are placed in your lap. Protect and bring them up till I go on a sojourn to my father’s house. Be devotedly attached to Ravi and move about in my house constantly. Ravi should not be told by you, O Chāyā, as to when I went to my father’s house.” Perturbed due to the fear of the Sun, Sāvitrī had an understanding with Chāyā and went to her father’s house. Immediately she was prevented by her father. So she assumed the form of a mare and moved about in the beautiful forest with plenty of water and green grass.

21-25. Once (Chāyā) was requested by (Yama), the hungry son of Vivasvān, for cooked food. B̄ut it was not given immediately to him, though he had requested for it. Then Chāyā was kicked by him. She then cursed him, “Since out of childishness you kicked me with the foot, you shall certainly become lame of foot.” On being cursed thus, he became distressed with pain and lamented grievously. In the meantime, O Vyāsa, Vibhāvasu (Sun) who moved among the Planets favouring the worlds and encircling the Earth, saw his son lame. Vibhāvasu said thus: “O dear one, what is this painful suffering unto you? O sinless one, whence has this distress been contacted by you?”

26. On being asked by Savitr̄, the illuminator of the worlds, Yama, the Lord of Saṁyaminī, said in faltering words:

27-30. “O Lord, going near mother, something for breakfast was requested by me. The food was not immediately given. Hence out of childishness, she was hit (by me). As a result of the curse by my mother, my feet dropped down immediately.”

On hearing this Ravi was confounded. He began to ponder. ‘This story is strange; the cause leading to the curse by a mother (is not convincing).’ After pondering for a long time the many-rayed Sun came to know: ‘Surely this is not that daughter of Tvaṣṭṛ, the lady of charming side-glances, the sanctifier of the world. Who is she? Whence has she come?’ After thinking thus he asked her, “O lady of pure smiles, who are you?”

Chāyā said:

31-32. O great king, I am not Anusūryā; I am Chāyā born

of her. She has gone to her father's place. O sinless one, I have been restrained by her saying, "O Chāyā, nothing should be mentioned to Savitr̥ at any cost." This is the agreement binding on me, O Lord. Therefore I kept quiet.

33. On hearing it Lord Bhānu became furious. In that excessively angry mood, he hastened to the vicinity of Tvaṣṭṛ.

34. On seeing him, Tvaṣṭṛ, the grandfather of the world, rose up immediately and adored him with Pādyā, Arghya, Ācamanīya and Madhuparka.

35. He bowed down to his feet, respectfully circumambulated and said in sweet voice: "What can I do to propitiate you?"

Ravi asked:

36-41. Where is that Sāvitrī, Anusūryā who does everything pleasing to me, who takes pleasure in following my path? Has she come to your house, dear father?

Tvaṣṭṛ replied:

O dear one, I do not know where my dear daughter has gone.

On this statement of Tvaṣṭṛ, Ravi became worried in his mind. He said, "What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where is my dearest one?" When he spoke thus, Tvaṣṭṛ made this statement: "The frail creature has been overwhelmed by your excessive refulgence and has got lost somewhere. If your wife is dear to you get your refulgence subdued (modified)."

Sūrya said:

O my ancient grandfather, if my refulgence is so unbearable, then whatever is needed to make it bearable may be done in the manner that appeals to you.

On hearing these words of Sūrya, he was whetted by making Sudarśana the whetstone. He was trimmed by means of the edge of the discus as sharp as that of an arrow. He became pure and lighter.

42. (*Defective passage*) With the splinters after whetting this Vivasvān, Tvaṣṭṛ made Sudarśana, the discus, and the (sand) particles into various kinds of gems.

43-47. Then Tvaṣṭṛ made this sweet statement in the presence of Sūrya: "She is in the beautiful forest of Mahākālavana in the form of a mare. O most excellent one among the Suras, let her be taken. Be pleased to go to that grassy place quickly where there is the excellent river Śīprā, where Kṣātā has joined it. Where there is the confluence of both, there is undoubtedly the salvation (for a devotee). There undoubtedly you will obtain your charming wife."

On hearing his words, Savitṛ, the scorcher of all, went to that place where the holy Mahākālavana was situated. It was there that Śīprā, the river with plenty of waters, joined Kṣātā. There one shall obtain wealth and foodgrain, worldly pleasure as well as liberation.

48-54. The Sun-god in the guise of a horse approached his dear wife who had the form of a mare. He saw the dark-complexioned lady once again. Merely by his sniffing at the tip of the snout, the two sons, Aśvins, of pleasing limbs and appearance, were born. They are the physicians of the heaven-dwellers.

O excellent Brāhmaṇa, Chāyā too gave birth to twins, (river) Tāpī and Śanaīścara, the scorcher of all the worlds.

When the new-moon coincides with Saturday, all desires are fulfilled. One should perform bath, *Dāna* and Śrāddha then. One shall then acquire wealth thereby and it will be in his possession forever on the earth.

At the confluence of Kṣātā, a man should take his holy ablution, offer *Dāna* in accordance with his capacity and adore Sthāvareśa (Śani). His sins will be destroyed.

All men should repeat the following names of Śani early in the morning: Śauri, Śanaīścara, Manda, Kṛṣṇa, Ananta, Antaka, Yama, Piṅga, Chāyāsuta, Babhru, Sthāvara and Pippalāyana.

55. He will never be afflicted by Śani. Yamadharmā too performed a very severe penance here itself.

56. On the north of the Yajñakuṇḍa where Māruti (Hanumān) is stationed there is an excellent Tīrtha well-known by the name Dharmasaras.

57-60. It is the place where the son of Pavana (i.e. Hanumān)

attained the greatest Siddhi by means of penance. A man (devotee) should take his holy bath in that Tīrtha and make the gift of a bronze pot, an excellent one embellished with gold, cloth, gems and pearls to Brāhmaṇas conversant with the Vedas. This should be offered after duly adoring them and with great veneration. That devotee shall go beyond the Mātṛloka (the world of the Mothers). He will be honoured in Brahmaloaka.

In the month of Śrāvaṇa, on the eleventh day in either fortnight, one should perform the rites of Snāna, Dāna etc., in Dharma Tīrtha. He will attain the eternal Viṣṇuloka.

61-64. It is in the Cyavanāśrama (hermitage of Cyavana) that the meritorious Aśvins, the most excellent ones among physicians, attained Siddhi. There the man (devotee) should take his holy bath and visit Cyavaneśvara. With the favour of Cyavana who regained the ability to see as a result of the divine remedy (of Aśvins), the Aśvins attained the status of Devas (Devahood). A man who bathes in that Tīrtha, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, shall become endowed with divine vision.

It is here itself that Sūrya attained the great Sāgnihotra Āśrama and got the great fortunate Anusūryā Sāvitrī well-known in the world. After reaching Sūryaloka, he enjoyed abundant glory.¹

65-67. Hence, O Vyāsa, the Tīrtha named Kṣātāsaṅgama became the greatest Tīrtha. It is meritorious. It fulfils all desires. It destroys all sins.

Listen to the merit of one who gets up early in the morning and reads this meritorious story or listens to it. He shall obtain that merit which one obtains by (the gift of) a thousand tawny-coloured cows at the time of Parvans (holy festival occasions). There is no doubt in this.

1. The Purāṇa author has utilised the legend of the birth of Śani and Aśvins to glorify a Tīrtha in Mahākālavana. Mbh, *Ādiparva* 66 and other Purāṇas state that Sūrya's wife was called Saṅjñā. She stayed in Uttarakuru in the form of a mare. But here for the glorification of Mahākālavana she is stated to be staying in Mahākālavana.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

Praise of Gayā Tīrtha¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1-2. Listen, O Vyāsa, I shall describe a Tīrtha hereafter. The Tīrtha named Gayā is the most excellent one among all the Tīrthas. By taking his holy bath there always, a man becomes rid of the three debts. By adoring Devas and Pitṛs, he goes to Viṣṇuloka.

Vyāsa said:

3-4. Gayā in the Kīkaṭa (Magadha) country is highly meritorious. The river Punā (Phalgu?) is a meritorious river. Cyavana's hermitage is meritorious. Similarly Rājagiri (Modern Rajgir, Bihar) is meritorious. How is it (that it) then became known to be in the splendid land of Mahākālavana. I wish to know this in detail, O ascetic.

Sanatkumāra said:

5. Listen, O Vyāsa, to the meritorious and sacred story that destroys sins. Merely by listening to it, the Pitṛs attain good goal (release).

6-9. Formerly, in the meritorious Kṛtayuga there was a righteous king named Yugādideva. Listening to his glory is meritorious. He was perfectly carrying on the work of protecting his subjects like his own bosom-born sons. They flourished and became possessors of all riches. While this king was administering the kingdom, Dharma (Piety) had all its four feet firmly set down. Clouds gave rains at proper time. Seasons had their regular cycles. The earth produced much foodgrains and vegetation and was full of fruits. Cows yielded plenty of milk. Brāhmaṇas were engrossed in discussing Vedic passages. Kṣatriyas were powerful in their arms.

10-16. Vaiśyas were always engaged in monetary transactions. Śūdras were engaged in services (of others). All were

1. This Purāṇa claims that the original Gayā was in Mahākālavana. Chapters 57, 58 and 59 describe the importance of Gayā Śrāddha.

abiding by the duties of their Vārṇas and Āśramas. All were expounders of righteousness and piety. The Dharma in accordance with Śrutis and Smṛtis makes people delighted and well-nourished. No man is seen afflicted with mental anguish or physical illness. No woman of unchaste habits or of ill fortune, no widow also was seen. There were neither barren women nor women with very few or too many children or dead children. All were endowed with lovely features, good behaviour and excellent qualities. They were loyally attached to their husbands. No highway was scattered with thorns (pestering anti-social elements) or defiled by desperate activities of robbers. Always there were shouts in every house of: "Let the Havana be performed. Let the food be eaten. Let this be given." Everywhere such people are seen as are devoted to sympathy, liberal-mindedness (in gifts), practice of penance, Homa, Japa, Yajña and other rites. They were attached to all pious activities. Dharma moved about on all the four feet. Adharma (impiety) was devoid of feet and physical form. Thus that righteous-souled king named Yugādideva ruled. By him the earth was piously protected and the subjects were made to flourish.

17-21. Formerly, O Vyāsa, he performed a crore of Yajñas in Avantī. At that time there was a valorous Dānava named Tuhaṇḍa.¹ This world consisting of mobile and immobile beings was entirely brought under his control. That mischievous fellow had performed terrible penance and meritorious activities and obtained boons from Brahmā. They were devoid of the Vedic path. They did not (honour) the Devas or Yajñas. There was no adoration of the Devatās. Neither Svadhā nor Svāhā was observed. The eternal path of righteousness was upset by the evil-souled one. The Suras and all the excellent Brāhmaṇas were made almost extinct. They sought refuge in Brahmā along with the Piṭṛs and good citizens. (They said:) "What shall we do? Where shall we go? We have been vanquished by Tuhaṇḍa."

22-24. On hearing their words, Brahmā, the grandfather of the world, rose up from there. Then he went to Viṣṇuloka along with all of them. For propitiating Viṣṇu of uncomparable

1. The propriety of Tuhaṇḍa's interference in the region of Yugādideva is not clear. The end of Tuhaṇḍa is not given.

splendour they recited Puruṣasūkta, for their own prosperity. Then an Unembodied Voice desirous of their welfare uttered thus:

25-35. “O excellent Suras, let this be heard. This is conducive to your excellent welfare. All of you go to the earth quickly towards Mahākālavana. It is more mysterious than all other mysteries. It is meritorious, sacred and destructive of sins. There the Māyā of the deceptive Māyins cannot prevail. It is full of all the Tīrthas. It bestows the boon of access on a crore Tīrthas. Śīprā, the most excellent of all rivers, fulfils all desires. The divine Mahākālī, the destroyer of the Daityas, is the family deity. She is surrounded by crores and crores of her Gaṇas. She increases the power of the Mātṛs.

The highly meritorious Gayā and the gr̥eat river Phalgu are there.¹ The excellent Puruṣottama mountain and Buddhagayā are said to be there. So also the Ādyagayā is well-known in all the three worlds. The Ṣoḍaśapadī Tīrtha of Viṣṇu has been created by Gadādhara. The meritorious Prācisarasvatī destructive of all sins is there. The great river of the Suras, Puṇyadā, is said to flow there. The Akṣaya (imperishable) Nyagrodha is said to be there by the great sage. There itself is the splendid Śilā (rock) that is said as the liberator of ghosts. There itself are stationed all the deities arising from Pitṛkalpa. (Just as) Omkāra permeates all the letters, Hari permeates all the Devas. The Devas permeate all the Tīrthas. Hence the Gayā Tīrtha is excellent. Go there quickly, you will attain great Siddhi. The moment one enters it the Pitṛs stationed in hells go to heaven. A devotee gets absorbed in Brahman.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

The Procedure of Śrāddha

Vyāsa said:

1-3. The narration by you of the excellent greatness of Gayā is wonderful. O holy Sir, everything is known to you of

1. These verses try to show that all the important places found in Gayā of Magadha exist here also in Mahākālavana.

cosmic form. Hence I wish to hear from you completely the excellent benefit of performing Śrāddha. O ascetic, O most excellent one among Brāhmaṇas, I also wish to hear the fruit of visiting the holy place in detail. How many Pitṛs go to heaven gratified everyday. Of whom were they declared formerly to be the Pitṛs and who are they? O sinless one, what was their purpose?

Sanatkumāra said:

4. You are blessed. You have fulfilled your duties because your mind is filled with steadiness of devotion. Even then, O dear one, listen to the excellent procedure of performing Śrāddha.

5. The worlds are established in Śrāddha. Dharma is well-established in Śrāddha. Yajñas indeed abide in Śrāddha. They yield the fruits of all Karmas.

6. What little is given with faith (Śraddhā) for propitiating the deity, Brahman and sacred fire, know that as Śrāddha. It has been proclaimed by the great sage.

7-8. Men, sages, all the Suras and Siddhas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Nāgas, Brahmā, Īśāna, and Sureśvara should with concentration and mental purity, offer Śrāddha with the three (generation of) Pitṛs in view. They attain all their desires cherished in their minds, O Vyāsa.

9-12. Thus they keep the continuity of the traditional eternal path. Still these Pitṛs are the most famous ones on the earth. I shall relate everything as has been heard by me. You also listen to it. Those who are the Pitṛs are Devas. And the Devas are Pitṛs. The Pitṛs and the Devas are mutually related. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, this question was asked formerly by Mārkaṇḍa. Listen what has been said and understand it thoroughly with great concentration and mental purity as to how many are the groups (categories) of Pitṛs that have gone to that world.

Sanatkumāra said:

13-19. All these seven are proclaimed as groups of Pitṛs, the most excellent ones among those who perform Yajñas. Four of them have no Mūrtis (corporal form). Three of them

have corporal forms. I shall proclaim their world and *Visarga* (creation). Listen to it, its influence and its greatness in detail, O ascetic.

Those among them who assume Dharmamūrtis have attained the great penance. I shall announce their names and worlds. Listen to it.

Those worlds are eternal ones. They are Sanātanas where the refulgent ones stay. Pitṛgaṇas have no forms. They are the sons of Prajāpati Virāja. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, we have heard that they are Vairājas. Groups of Devas worship them by means of the rites prescribed as per injunctions. Those who have slipped off from the path of Yoga attain the Sanātana worlds. Then at the end of a thousand Yugas, they are born as Brahmavādins (expounders of Brahman). They regain that recollection of excellent Sāṅkhya-Yoga. (Becoming) Siddhas, they attain the goal of Yoga from which their return (to Saṃsāra) is impossible.

20-21. O dear one, these shall be the Pitṛs who increase the Yogic power of Yogins. It is they who nourish Soma at the outset by means of yogic power. Hence, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, Śrāddhas are to be offered to Yogins. This is the first excellent Kalpa of (Pitṛs called) Somapa.

22-27. The mental daughter of these (Pitṛs) is Menā by name. She is the excellent wife of the great mountain Himavān. Maināka was born of her. The glorious son of Maināka is the great mountain named Krauñca. The refulgent groups of Pitṛs called Agniśvāttas stay there. The (Pitṛs called) Barhiṣads were in the south and the Yamas in the western quarter. Somapas reached the northern quarter presided over by Dhanada (i.e. Kubera). Kavyavāt and Anala are in the sky. They have no form. On the earth, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Piśācas of purified souls worship them. Sādhyas worship Devas. Viśvedevas worship the sages similarly. Human beings worship Śrāddhadeva and the sages, the eternal Brahman. Thus the eternal holy rite of Śrāddha is handed down traditionally.

28-32. The rite of Pitṛs is more efficacious than that of Devas.

The seven sons of Bharadvāja were devoted to the rite of Śrāddha. They could remember the (incidents of) previous births and they attained the path of salvation.

Previously these seven had killed the milch cow of the preceptor. Hence they became base Brāhmaṇas and Yogabhraṣṭas ('fallen from Yogic Path'). Famished with hunger all of the them ate (the beef of their preceptor's cow) with the Pitṛs in view. Due to the efficacy of that merit (of performing Śrāddha) they attained heaven even though they were fallen from the path of Yoga.

All those seven, by means of Yogic practice became capable of remembering the incidents of previous births. Hence Śrāddha has been mentioned as the greatest rite by the teachers (saints) of pure minds.

All the worlds are well-established in Śrāddha. O Scorcher of enemies(?)¹, Yoga is stabilized in Śrāddha. Thus the Pitṛs have been expounded to you. Listen to the order of the procedure of Śrāddha.

33-40. A performer of Śrāddha should be devoted in observance of celibacy, self-control. He should not be wrathful and jealous (of others). He should scrupulously observe purity and good conduct, be intelligent and looking through scriptures as his eye and have his sense-organs subdued. If one performs Śrāddha thus the Pitṛs will be propitiated. If Śrāddha is performed in a Tīrtha it has special significance. O Vyāsa, if it is performed during the period of waning moon, the satisfaction of the Pitṛs is greater still. It is said so on behalf of Vṛddhiśrāddha (performed during delightful occasions such as the birth of a son etc.) It has hundred times more power and benefit than that performed in Mahālaya. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, if it is performed in Prayāga, its benefit is ten times more. The satisfaction (of Pitṛs) at Kurukṣetra is ten times that at Prayāga, O excellent one. O Vyāsa, Gayā is proclaimed as ten times better than Kurukṣetra. Ten times more than that, O Vyāsa, is the Śrāddha performed in the splendid Mahākālavana. That (Śrāddha performance) in Avantī is more meritorious than all and that in the Gayā Tīrtha is always meritorious. This Tīrtha is very rare (difficult) in accessibility in the matter of redemption of those people whose Pitṛs have fallen into hells

1. Probably a quotation as Vyāsa was not *parantapa* or a scorcher of enemies.

in the course of many births. Even by remembering (this Tīrtha) once what is offered to Pitṛs becomes everlasting. "For the redemption of the following people let the Śrāddha be performed here":¹ those men who died in the course of a battle; those whose paternal family has become extinct; those who died at the time of abortion; those who are fallen due to the absence of Nāma (Name) and Gotra (Family); and those who died in one's own Gotra or another Gotra by committing self-immolation.

41-42. Śrāddha is performed here for the redemption of those people who died due to suicide by hanging themselves, who died by the administration of poison or wounding with a weapon, who were killed by animals with fangs, who died when limbs were cut off and who died on account of activities not proper for Brāhmaṇas.

43-49. ²Śrāddha is performed here for the redemption of the following souls: those who were consumed by fire; those others who did not get cremated by fire; those who died due to stroke of lightning; those who were struck down by mallets; those who had fallen into Raurava, Andhatāmisra and Kālasūtra; those who have gone to the world of ghosts and suffered many tortures; those who have gone to Asipatravana (hell) and the terrible Kumbhīpāka; those who were born among non-human creatures; those who were born among birds, worms and reptiles; those who died by drowning and those who died during parturition of women; those who were killed by horses, boars, worms, fanged animals, horned animals and vehicles; those whose teeth were shattered (killed) by weapons, missiles, tigers, serpents, elephants and kings; and those who were killed by locusts, scorpions, fanged ones and robbers.

50-51. Śrāddha is performed here for the redemption of those who died due to the eight types of *Salyas* (distress; splinters): those who were devoid of cleanliness and conventional good behaviour; those who died of cholera, or of dysentery; those who died due to possession by Śākinī and other evil spirits;

1. This is the burden of every verse which lists causes of death.

2. This line is the burden of every verse listing those for whose redemption Śrāddha is performed here.

those who died in the midst of waters; those who had watery grave; those who committed sins by coming into contact with those who were not worthy of being touched; and those who had no issue.

52. May the Śrāddha be performed for those who had human birth rendered unobtainable and those who wander through thousands of other births, due to their Karmas.

53. Śrāddha is performed here for the uplift of those who had no kinsmen in the previous birth, those who had been kinsmen in the previous birth, those who were closely related in the previous birth, those who were friends and those who were enemies.

54. Śrāddha is performed here for the redemption of those who died in the family of the father, those who died in the family of the mother, or in the families of the preceptor, father-in-law and kinsmen and those other kinsmen who died.

55. (A performer of Śrāddha should say:) “Śrāddha is performed for those in my family who were deprived of the customary balls of rice, who are devoid of sons, wives etc., and those who could not have avoided the loss of sacred rites.”

56. “Śrāddha is performed for those who were lame, hump-backed, deformed and of immature conception and died, those who had died within our knowledge or otherwise.”

57. “Śrāddha is performed here for the redemption of those who had unnatural deaths anywhere beginning with Brahmā’s world.”

58. “Śrāddha is performed here for the redemption of those who died being distressed with thirst and hunger, who were expelled, who had entered the category of ghosts and barbarous tribes etc.”

59. Thus, O Vyāsa, the devotee should perform Śrāddha in that Tirtha in accordance with the injunctions. Freed from the three types of debts, he shall obtain the desired objects. After reaching Gayā, the Suras with Indra as their leader did everything duly as mentioned by the divine voice.

CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

The Greatness of Gayā Tīrtha

Sanatkumāra said:

1-8. Thereafter, all the groups of the Suras rid themselves of their sins and became pure. They regained (their) Yogic power as well as their former (official) position(?).

O Vyāsa, thus Gayā Tīrtha has a definite place in Kumudvatī.

A man should take the holy bath in the different Tīrthas and meritorious sacred shrines in Gayā (Tīrtha). He shall attain the benefit of the respective Tīrthas. •

Similarly Gayākṣetra yields the benefit of Gayāśrāddha. Phalgu is the most excellent one among the rivers. So also it is the bestower of benefits.

(So are) Ādigayā, Buddhagayā, what is remembered as Viṣṇupadī, Gayākoṣṭha that has been said, the feet (footprints) of Gadādhara, the Vedikā that has been mentioned as Ṣoḍaśī and also Akṣayavata. The rock that brings about liberation from ghosts has been mentioned. The river Acchodā has been mentioned and also the excellent Āśrama of the Pitṛs. Similarly (there are) the best Āśramas of Devas, Dānavas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Rākṣasas and of all the Pannagas.

In all these spots, the rites of Snāna, Dāna etc., as well as Śrāddha must be performed dully. The performer shall obtain the benefit of the respective Tīrthas.

9. Janārdana is present in Gayā in the form of the Pitṛs. By meditating on Puṇḍarīkākṣa (Viṣṇu) one is rid of the three debts.

10. Thus, O Vyāsa, Gayā Tīrtha was formerly established in Avantī. Afterwards¹ it originated in Kaikāṭa (Magadha) where the Asura (i.e. Gayāsura) was present very near.

11. Ever since then, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, Gayā has become established there. The great Asura was felled down by the kicks of Gadādhara.

12. The greatness has been brought to that region by Janārdana.²

1. The Purāṇa claims the original Gayā at Avantī(?)

2. Metrically *mahimānan* is not correct. If *Mahi* is emended as *Mahī—,Mahīmānam* will mean 'the extent of the earth, that is of Gayākṣetra'. The emendation suits the next verse. (*Translator*)

13. Gayākṣetra measures five Krośa. Gayāśiras measures one Krośa. What is offered there unto the Pitṛs becomes everlasting. Gayāśrāddha is always performed at any time.

14. But, O Vyāsa, in the whole year one day alone is fixed definitely. When the Sun is in the Zodiac Vṛgo in combination with the constellation Hasta, it is called Mahālaya. What is offered to the Pitṛs then becomes everlasting.

15. Gayāśrāddha is performed always and at any time.

16-17. But, O Vyāsa, one day alone in the whole year is well-established. On the Anvaṣṭaka days (i.e. 9th of Pauṣa, Māgha and Phālguna in the dark halves) they perform the excellent Śrāddha of the Mothers. The satisfaction of the Pitṛs becomes everlasting in Kalpā reckoning. Thus, O Vyāsa, the city is beautiful for the rites of Snāna, Dāna etc.

18. Again I shall expound the wonderful greatness. Listen to that as narrated by me. It is holy and destructive of sins.

19-23. The wives of seven sages, the chaste wives of the sages, got polluted due to the faults of Svāhā. They were defiled by Pāvaka (Fire-god¹). Hence they were forsaken by the sages. They wandered from forest to forest.

When a long time elapsed, Nārada of divine vision came into that forest desirous of doing something beneficial and pleasing to them. He was received and honoured by them. The sage who always observed sacred vows, sat there. Words befitting the occasion and the place were uttered by him blandly and sweetly.

“What unnatural (incident) took place (resulting in) the humiliation of respectable ladies (like you)? You are chaste mothers of the world. Why were you abandoned by the sages?”

The wives of the sages replied:

24-27. O dear one, we do not know our fault on account of which we have been forsaken suddenly by the sages who maintain sacrificial fires. Arising in the context of Kārttikeya as bad luck would have it, something sinful originating from popular rumour has immediately come out. What shall we do?

1. As v 24 explains: This refers to Agni's transfer of Śiva's semen to the wives of the sages. Arundhatī was the only exception as she refused to warm herself. It is a part of the legend of Skanda's birth.

Where shall we go? What shall be the expiatory penance? What is the deity the propitiation of whom may bring in the merit enabling us to regain the proximity of our husbands? O holy Sir, tell us this decisively. You know everything accurately.

On being asked by those wives of the sages, Nārada meditated for a long time and said what should be conducive to their welfare.

Nārada said:

28-30. O great ascetic ladies, may the expiation be heard. In the beautiful Mahākālavana, there is the excellent Gayā Tīrtha. There itself is the Nyagrodha (fig tree) named Akṣaya, the most excellent one among trees. Merely by going to that place you all will be free from sins. The Tīrtha dispels all faults. It bestows the boon of (fulfilling) desires. It is meritorious. It causes all happiness. Go there. Do not delay.

31-33. On hearing the words of Nārada, the wives of the sages were prompted. O Vyāsa, desirous of their own welfare, they came to that forest (area) in Mahākālavana where there was the Tīrtha called Gayā.

On being purified by going there, they performed holy acts like (sacred) bath, charity etc. On the fifth lunar day in the bright half of Bhādrapada called Ṛṣi (i.e. *Ṛṣi-Pañcamī*), a Vrata (called *Ṛṣi-Pañcamī*) was properly observed by those meritorious ladies.

34-39. They fasted for a night (i.e. day) and along with it kept awake at night too. As soon as the Vrata was performed by them, O Vyāsa, they were rid of all sins instantly.

They shone well. They who had been degraded due to the anger of their husbands, immediately regained their Gṛhāśrama (the stage of a house-wife) offered by the sages along with the sacred fire as before, O excellent sage.

Ever since then this Pañcamī was named after the sages as Ṛṣi Pañcamī. Men or women should perform Vrata on that day by remaining pure and mentally concentrated. They should take in only *Nivāra* (wild rice that grows without being sown) as food. They will never have any adversity or unhappiness.

Women will never become unfortunate (e.g. widow) or distressed. They shall never be separated from mothers, sons, wealth etc. Thus, O Vyāsa, what was asked by you has been narrated.

40-42. On the earth in Avantī, O excellent one, there is a Tīrtha like this. Such a merit-yielding Tīrtha does not exist in the universe. If a man performs great Dāna rites in this Tīrtha, everything will be free from destruction. He is honoured in Viṣṇuloka.

He who observes restraint and listens to this story and reads it always, O Vyāsa, shall obtain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER SIXTY

The Importance of the Intercalary Month¹

Vyāsa said:

1. O sinless one, earlier it was said by you that Puruṣottama Tīrtha is a great sacred place. O holy Sir, narrate to me in detail the greatness of that Tīrtha. I wish to hear this from you, O most excellent one among those who know Brahman.

Sanatkumāra said:

2-8. Listen, O most excellent one among Brāhmaṇas, to the great story that removes sins. Merely by listening to it great sins will be destroyed.

O holy Sir, during the earlier Kalpas, in the splendid and pure Vaikuṇṭha, the Lord of Ramā was seated along with Sanaka and others as well as his attendants. There were great sages of excellent conduct and also the creator, the Grandfather, who were endowed with Ṛddhis, Siddhis and other good qualities. He was served by Mahat and other principles. He was served by Gaṇas, Gandharva groups etc. who were singing

1. Verse 21 explains the title. It is also called Malamāsa.

aloud all round. Groups of celestial damsels were dancing in the charming yards beautified with Cintāmaṇi jewels.

The Slayer of Mura was seated in the shade of Kalpa trees. All of them were engaged in the discussion of religious topics. They were fully conversant with the paths of Brahman. From their midst the Parābhāṣā (Great Speech, Parāvāṇī) asked Kamalāpati:

Lakṣmī said:

9. O Lord, I wish to hear the injunction regarding the meritorious rites exactly. O highly intelligent one, you are omniscient. Let it be narrated if it pleases you.

Śrī Bhagavān said:

10-15. O fair lady, Dāna (charity), Snāna (bath), Tapas and Śrāddha are always praise-worthy indeed. But (if) performed according to the injunctions all these shall be of unending benefit.

Dāna, Snāna, Tapas and Śrāddha have been glorified by the sages (as having everlasting benefit) when performed at the proper place, time, *Parva* (special occasion) in a Tīrtha, shrine or region.

The increase of (the benefit of) Dāna is proclaimed when performed on a full-moon day, new-moon day, on Saṁkrānti (transit of the Sun), on a day of eclipse and in the Vaidhṛti and Vyatīpāta Yogas.

What is consecrated to the sacred fire and what is given as (religious) gift on Gaṅgā, in the holy places of Bhāskarakṣetra, Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, Godāvārī, Gayā, Amarakaṇṭhaka Tīrtha and Avantī shall be everlasting in benefit. Hence during festive occasion, one should visit a Tīrtha. Certainly a man who is unmindful of Tīrthas and *Parvas* becomes one clad in dirty rags, unlucky, foolish, sluggish and afflicted with sickness.

Śrī Rukmiṇī said:

16. What are the Yogas which are particularly to be observed by meritorious persons?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

17. O sinless lady, a pertinent question has been put by

you regarding Puṇyakas. When a Malamāsa (intercalary month) arrives, if men do not observe Vratas, O splendid lady, they will be pestered by poverty in the course of every birth.

Śrī Rukmiṇī said:

18. Of what nature is Malamāsa? On what Yoga (combination of stars) does it come? At what time does it arrive. Describe this to me in detail.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

19-25. O fair lady, what is relevant has been mentioned by you. A question like this is proper to the occasion. All rites regarding Devatās and Pitṛs should be performed in accordance with the injunctions in a Malamāsa.

Shaving, wearing of Mauñjī (sacred thread ceremony), marriage, Vratas and fastings should be particularly avoided by householders.

At the end of three years this month appears when there is no transit of the Sun. Hence it is called *Adhikamāsa* ('additional month')¹.

(In the form of) Puruṣottama I always have the presiding lordship of Adhimāsa. The Tirtha in Mahākālavana named after me is very splendid.

My abode called Puruṣottama is established here always. Hence by all means I must go there along with you to Mahākālavana where the Tirtha named after me is situated.

Never can there be anything that cannot be given by me, O dear one, to the living beings who come there for the holy bath. Wealth, foodgrains, sons, wives etc., and perpetual happiness is awarded.

26-30. Even when there is no solar transit one should perform the holy vow with me in view. (In the form of) Puruṣottama, I have the presiding lordship of Adhimāsa always.

If excellent men perform Snāna, Dāna, Japa, Homā, study of Vedas, libations to the Pitṛs and adoration of deities at

1. It is also called 'Puruṣottama Māsa,' 'Malimluca' or simply 'Adhi-Māsa.'

midday, everything will certainly be of everlasting benefit to them, O Kamalā.

O goddess, if out of negligence Malamāsa becomes void (without sacred acts) in regard to them, they will be afflicted with poverty always. Their grief and illness become increased.

When the Adhimāsa arrives, one should observe Vrata in Avantī. Undoubtedly I will offer even you (i.e. prosperity, wealth etc.) unto them out of love.

Even a small gift is enough. What they do (by way of service) may be very little. With my favour, O lady of pleasing sight, everything shall be infinite (in its benefit).

Śrī said:

31-38. O Lord of holy Vratas, such is the greatness of Adhimāsa mentioned by you. It bestows all desires as boons. Be pleased to narrate the details of the meritorious Vrata pertaining to Adhimāsa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

O beloved, when the month without solar transit arrives, great festivities should be organized by men desirous of their own welfare. The Vrata that destroys grief should be observed, O goddess of the Suras, on the eighth, ninth or fourteenth lunar day of the dark half in the *Malimluca* month. Charitable gifts include whatever there is in one's possession.

On the meritorious day, he should get up early in the morning and perform the customary rites of the forenoon. He then formally proclaims that he has taken up the vow. Thereafter he should remember Vāsudeva in his heart. He should either fast or take a single meal or take only nocturnal meal, O proud lady.

After deciding on the observance of the vow, he should invite Brāhmaṇas along with their wives. They should be of good conduct and noble family, preferably kinsmen. Then at midday he should ritually establish the Eternal Lord in union with Lakṣmī. The deity is to be installed by the Brāhmaṇas through the utterance of Vedic Mantras, in a pot without any crack or fissure.

39-43. He should worship the Lord and Pitāmaha

(Creator Brahmā) with great devotion along with *Gotrins* (persons of the same Gotra). The deity should be installed with scented water and Pañcāmṛta. The Naivedya should consist of nine types of sweets. Incense, light, garments, covering cloth of yellow silk etc., should be offered. The observer of the Vrata should perform Ārārtika (waving of lights) with camphor, agallochum and sandal to the accompaniment of bells, Mṛdaṅgas etc. sounded loudly. For the sake of the infinite benefit he may use firebrands too (instead of camphor etc.) if they are not available. He should then put sandal, raw rice-grains and flowers in water held in a copper pot. The devotee along with his wife should offer the Arghya with a delighted mind. He should add five different types of gems to the things placed in the water. He should join the palms together with great devotion and knees down keeping the knees on the ground.

The Mantra for offering Arghya

44. “O lord, merciful unto all living beings, O cause of the delight of the universe, accept this Arghya and be the bestower of full benefit.”

The Mantra for Prayer (Prārthanā)

45. “O self-born Brahmā, obeisance to you of unmeasured splendour. Obeisance to you, the delighter of Śrī, the Bliss of Brahman, the cause of compassion.”

46. After praying thus to Govinda himself and even as he remembers Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, he should adore the pure Brāhmaṇas and their wives after they have had their baths.

47-52. After adoring them in accordance with the injunctions he should feed them with ghee and milk pudding.

After feeding the Brāhmaṇas endowed with learning and humility along with his wife in accordance with the injunctions, in a suitable manner, he should adore them with clothes, ornaments and saffron according to his capacity.

The following shall be served while feeding: Grapes, mangoes, wood apples, dates, bananas, jack fruits, coconuts, oranges, pomegranates, rice and wheat cooked in ghee, soft Vaḍas (pies), sweetmeats such as Karnikas and Khaṇḍamaṇḍakas

filled with ghee and sugar, varieties of cucumber, Śṛṅgaberā (ginger) with radish, and various kinds of vegetables, ripe and unripe mangoes separately etc. All the four types of foodstuffs such as *Bhakṣya*, *Bhojya*, *Lehya* and *Peya* should be served. Particularly bulbous roots should be served.

53-62. After serving sweet-smelling milk products he should speak slowly and gently: "This tasty juice and foodstuffs have been prepared for you all. Whatever appeals to your taste may be asked for. O Lord, what has been caused to be cooked by me is for you all. I am blessed. I have been favoured. My house has been rendered purposeful." Then he should send off those Brāhmaṇas after offering betel-leaves and monetary gifts. O goddess, Tāmbūla (betel-leaves) mixed with four things is dear to me. A man who offers it to an excellent Brāhmaṇa shall become prosperous. O beloved, through Tāmbūla, his wife becomes fortunate, well-behaved and endearing to his people as well as blessed with sons. Keśava is pleased with the leaves. Īśa with Umā is pleased with the arecanuts. Fire-god is pleased with the lime. Manmatha is pleased with Khadira (Accacia catechu). With all the four, this Viśvarūpa who nourishes the three worlds, is pleased.

He should thus make the Brāhmaṇas with their wives well-satisfied, offer sweetmeats in their hands and follow them till the limit (of the village etc.). Thereafter, he should take food himself along with his kinsmen.

O my beloved, a woman who performs this Vrata at the time when there is no solar transit (i.e. Malamāsa) shall not be afflicted with poverty, grief due to the absence or death of sons and widowhood.

There is no doubt in this that whoever, whether man or woman, performs Vrata in Malamāsa shall enjoy all happiness.

If I, Nārāyaṇa, am not adored with great devotion when Malamāsa arrives, how can people have good qualities? How can they be endowed with happiness, sons, wealth, friends and excellent wives?

CHAPTER SIXTYONE

The Greatness of the Intercalary Month

Sanatkumāra said:

1. If Adhimāsa has arrived and a man makes himself present in a place other than Mahākālavana, he is a fool.

2. O Vyāsa, if men take their holy ablution in the Tīrtha named Puruṣottama during Adhimāsa and make liberal gifts, their worlds (hereafter) are eternal.

3-4. After adoring Puruṣottama whose feet have been fondled by Ramā and worshipping Goddess Umā along with Śāṅkara, one attains a hundred desired objects and is honoured in Viṣṇuloka. On the eleventh day in the bright half of Bhādrapada, the devotee should duly observe fast with concentration and mental purity and observe Jāgaraṇa (keeping awake).

5. He should perform the adoration of Viṣṇu too and conduct the aquatic procession (of the deity) everyday in the lake Puruṣottamasaras. Listen to his meritorious benefit.

6. (He will get) sons, wives and wealth, perfect longevity and riches. Nothing shall be inaccessible to them (i.e. such devotees) in the three worlds.

7-9. In the region to the east of it there is Jaṭeśvara-Maheśvara. On its bank, King Bhagīratha stands as an ascetic. That most excellent one of meritorious persons attained great merit by performing penance. He brought Gaṅgā to the earth for the happiness of all the worlds. The man should take the holy dip in the Tīrtha and make a gift of Tiladhenu (figure of cow made of gingelly seeds). He shall obtain the merit of all Yajñas and also be endowed with sons.

10. In the place to the north-east of it Rāma, the excellent scion of the family of Bhṛṅgu (i.e. Paraśurāma), the pious-souled one, performed penance for the purification of his own body.

11-12. Kauśikī is the most excellent of all rivers. It bestows the boon of the benefit of all Tīrthas. After taking his holy dip there, a man becomes rid of all sins of genocide. By visiting Rāmeśvara the man shall become free from sins.

CHAPTER SIXTYTWO

The Glory of Gomatī Kuṇḍa

Vyāsa said:

1. O holy Sir, earlier the eternal Gomatī Kuṇḍa was mentioned by you. At what time was it created? Kindly describe it in detail to us.

Sanatkumāra said:

2-8. O highly intelligent one, listen to the story of the origin of Gomatikuṇḍa. It is highly destructive of sins. It is a meritorious story formerly narrated by Rudra.

In the Naimiṣa forest, Śaunaka and other sages gathered together and held meritorious discussion regarding the splendid origin of all Tīrthas.

On that great auspicious occasion, the excellent greatness of Kāśī that is holy and destructive of sins was described by Nārada himself.

“The city of Vārāṇasī is blessed. It is an arid land for both merits and sins. Both Cāṇḍālas and Paṇḍitas (learned Brāhmaṇas) equally attain salvation here certainly.

Pañcakrośī (the tract of land extending to five Krośas, i.e. Vārāṇasī) being between Asī and Varaṇā is productive of great benefits. Even the immortal ones desire death (there). What need be said about other people!

O Vyāsa, on hearing this, the Self-born Lord spoke then even as all the Devas and sages were listening, O scorcher of enemies(?).

There is no river on a par with Gomatī; there is no deity on a par with Kṛṣṇa. In the midst of all the worlds (including Pātāla and the earth there is no city equal to Dvārakā.”

9-10. On hearing this firm assertion, the sages beginning with Śaunaka, those sages of accepted vows wherever they were stationed, decided to perform early morning Sandhyā prayers there itself on the banks of Gomatī. Sāndīpana (Sāndīpani) also performed his morning Sandhyā prayers there itself.

11-13. Sāndīpana, a resident of the city of Avantī observed this vow for a long time, O Vyāsa. Balarāma and Janārdana of

fine and tender limbs came to his place to become his students seeking the lores (but actually) for the sake of fulfilling his desires.

O scorcher of enemies(?), they stayed in the house of the teacher himself who taught all lores perfectly and all the Vedas too.

14-18. Everyday in the morning the preceptor was not seen there. They asked, “This is the time for teaching the lores; where has our excellent preceptor gone?”

The wife of the preceptor replied, “O dear one, he performs his Sandhyā prayers and worship in the morning there itself. Your preceptor goes there in the morning for the purpose of holy abluion. In Dvārakā Gomatī is the most excellent one of all rivers. It is holy.”

On hearing this Kṛṣṇa in the company of Rāma thought (said) thus, ‘What should be done by us in our best interest? I wish that the preceptor arrives soon. I wish to stay here itself.’ In the meantime Sāndīpani came home.

19. Thereupon the two heroic (boys) rose up and saluted the preceptor with great humility and said to the preceptor:

20-26. “Let this be heard, O great Yogin, the reason for our stay here. We have come here to your excellent house as seekers of learning. O venerable one, (it seems) you have no time for us in the morning.” On hearing these words of Kṛṣṇa and Bala, the venerable one, O Vyāsa, told the reason of his holy observance: “O dear one, this Vrata is considered by us as the perpetual (lifelong) Vrata. The abluion in Gomatī must be performed always by the wise ones in the morning. Performing worship there during twilight is definitely meritorious. After realizing this whatever course is proper can be adopted by you.”

On hearing it, Lord Viṣṇu who had assumed the form of a Māyāmānuṣa (in the guise of a human being) performed the worshipful propitiation of Gomatī in Kuśasthalī itself, O excellent Brāhmaṇa.

Gomatī came there where Lord Śiveśvara was installed and where the excellent Yajña Kuṇḍa (sacrificial pit) was in the northern side of Kanthaḍeśvara. She came along with Sarasvatī after breaking through the upper surface of Pātāla.

27. Waking up in the morning, O Vyāsa, all of them saw

the beautiful Gomatī, the most excellent one among rivers, flowing by their hermitage.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

28-32. O holy Sir, Gomatī, the most excellent one among rivers, has come here itself. Perform here itself all your rites of Snāna, Dāna etc. Gomatī has merged into the Yajña Kuṇḍa here. So did Sarasvatī.

Ever since then it is called Gomatī Kuṇḍa in the world. The path for all the worlds is here itself. Hence, O Vyāsa, this is highly meritorious and excellent Tīrtha on the earth. Thus Gomatī Kuṇḍa has been described. It is destructive of all sins.

On the eighth day in the dark half of the Bhādra month,¹ Kṛṣṇa's birth day (is celebrated). Devotees shall take holy dip there on that day and keep awake at night. After due observance of fast, O Vyāsa, they shall duly worship Vyāsa with his disciples²(?)

33-39. They should propitiate the excellent devotees of Viṣṇu eager to celebrate Kṛṣṇa's birthday with various sweet-smelling flowers, scents, garments and ornaments. Along with it, they should worship cows and Brāhmaṇas with mental purity and concentration. Nothing shall be of difficulty of achievement to them in all the worlds.

There is no doubt in this that they will achieve their desires due to the merit arising from the holy ablution in Gomatī and the contact with Vāsudeva.

Similarly in the bright half of the month of Caitra on the Ekādaśī (eleventh) day, a devotee should take his bath in Gomatī and keep awake during the night. After adoring Viṣṇu, he should offer Āmalakī (Indian gooseberry) and derive at every step during circumambulation (the benefit of donating a thousand cows). All of them will obtain it (the benefit of donating a thousand cows). There is no doubt about this.

Those who hear this sacred and sanctifying story that destroys sins, shall be rid of all their sins and go to the world of Viṣṇu.

1. The author seems to follow Pūrṇimānta Māsa (month-end on a full-moon day).

2. These two Vyāsas appear to belong to two different Kalpas.

CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

The Greatness of Tīrthas and a Thousand Epithets of Viṣṇu

Sanatkumāra said:

1-8. There is an excellent Tīrtha well-known as Kanthadeśvara. A man who takes his holy bath there in the Tīrtha and visits Lord Maheśvara, is pure and of controlled mind, is liberated from all sins. Equipped with a hundred aerial chariots, he is honoured in Śivaloka.

Where there is the confluence of Khagartā in the vicinity of Gaṅgeśvara, there is (another) great Tīrtha that removes all sins. It is the most meritorious on the earth. This sacred Tīrtha destroys great sins and yields great merit as the benefit. It is there that Gaṅgā, the sanctifier of the three worlds, fell down from the sky and was immediately held on his head by the great Lord Śāmbhu.

A person should take his holy bath in that Tīrtha and visit Gaṇeśā. After attaining the benefit of the holy ablution in Gaṅgā, he is honoured in Viṣṇuloka.

Resorting to Vireśvara, the man should stay on that Tīrtha. With his soul rid of all sins and purified, he shall attain Viraloka.

There is another Tīrtha of great merit. It is well-known as Vāmana Kuṇḍa on the earth and glorified by great sages. It is famous in all the three worlds. The mere sight of this dispels the sin of Brāhmaṇas's slaughter.

9a. After realizing a hundred cherished desires, he shall go to Viṣṇupura.

Vyāsa said:

9b-10a. O sinless one, at what time formerly did this Tīrtha named Vāmana originate? O most excellent one among the knowers of Brahman, I wish to know everything from you.

Sanatkumāra said:

10b-11a. Listen, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, to the great story that destroys sins. Merely by listening to it one is liberated from all sins.

11b-17. There was a leader of Daityas formerly who was said to be a devotee of Viṣṇu. He is well-known as Prahlāda. He was the most excellent one among all righteous persons. Dharma was conquered (won over) by means of good, conventionally approved conduct; Ramā (goddess of fortune) was won over by means of truth. The worlds were upheld by him through fortitude. The earth was held (supported) by him by means of forbearance. The divine seas were vanquished by him through his grandeur and majesty. Groups of enemies were subdued by him through his heroism. Guests were won over by that noble-souled one through his humility. Yajña was won over through monetary gifts. The sacred fire was won by him through the Havis offerings. His soul was purified by means of purity and traditional canons of good conduct. He destroyed all inauspiciousness by means of penance. Brāhmaṇas were won over by him through honour and Dāna, food and garments offered to them. The very birth was won over by him through refinement and education. The eternal self was conquered by him through the control of the sense-organs. The vital air was controlled by him through Prāṇāyāma. Hari was won over by him through Yoga and Dhyāna (meditation). Such a great Yogin was he who was eagerly devoted to truth and piety. There has never been a wise hero on a par with Prahlāda, nor will there ever be.

18-23. His grandson of good conduct was called Bali. As he protected them well, the subjects flourished very well.

On the earth none was short-lived, sluggish, foolish, sickly or envious. There was no one devoid of sons or wealth.

The king was a great administrator and protector (of the people). He performed sacrifices with large monetary gifts. The earth consisting of the seven continents was always well-protected by him.

Once when he was seated on a splendid throne in the assembly, there were shouts of "Victory" and Gandharvas sang in gracefully splendid tune.

As the instruments were duly played, the celestial damsels danced. Splendid discourses were conducted by expert exponents.

Bards and panegyrists, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, sages of vast learning etc. came there, O excellent Brāhmaṇa.

24-27. Sunda, Upasunda, Tuhūṇḍa and others, Maḥiṣāsura, Ulbaṇas (persons of very powerful features), Śumbha, Niśumbha, Dhūmrākṣa, Kālakeya and other Dānavas, the valiant Kālanemi, Daurhṛda, Mūśaka, Yama, Nikumbha, Kumbha, Viśaṭha, the mighty Andhaka, Śaṅkha, Jalandhara, Vātāpi of terrific features and inordinate strength, Sarvajit, Viśvahanṭṛ, Kāmacārin, Halāyudha (weilder of a plough as a weapon)—these and many other leading Dānavas attended upon the sinless king Bali.

28-34. Siddhas, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Kimpuruṣas, Khecaras (Sky-walkers), Bhūcaras (Earth-walkers), boys and terrible Rākṣasas—these and many others attended upon the king. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, there the great divine assembly shone like the sky in autumn when brilliant luminaries are scattered there.

King Bali was seated in that assembly. He shone like Vāsava (Indra) in heaven surrounded by Maruts and gods.

Once Nārada of divine vision came to that assembly, even as all the Dānavas were present there. On seeing him come, all the sons of Diti stood up. Along with Bali all of them saluted the excellent Kinnara. The king received him with great honour, offered him a seat and enquired after his health.

After the elementary rites of hospitality were over, the excellent Nārada sat and spoke. The excellent sage said to Bali in a voice as majestic as the (rumbling of) cloud:

Nārada said:

35-48. O most excellent one among the sons of Diti, let this be heard. (Once) I went to the palace of Indra. There the beautiful assembly of the Devas was being held and discussions were going on. With Indra as their leader, Devas and Gandharvas seated there began their mutual discussion and holy discourses.

They could not brook the splendid narration about the Daityas conducted by me. (They said:) “Formerly there was a king of Daityas named Hiraṇyakaśipu who conquered all the three worlds. He was the leader by whom the earth was conquered. After making the entire universe come under his control, he enjoyed the earth. He was endowed with great brilliance and great prowess. He had good self-control. He could go everywhere but he was lustful. He was felled down by Nṛsimha (the Lord in the form of Man-lion). That being the case you

praise Bali. How much strength has he?" On saying this Indra, the guardian of the quarter, challenged me, O excellent Dānava, and began to make bitter comments in diverse ways. Hence, O leading Dānava, it behoves you to reconquer the earth got by inheritance and establish your imperial power and be the lord of the earth. How much indeed will be the extent of the army commanded by the Devas? O excellent Danuja, certainly the Devas will be more inclined to flee. They are always subdued and mild, being afraid of war. Take my word and become the overlord of all the three worlds.

On hearing the words of Nārada, Bali, the son of Virocana, became very angry and keenly desirous of the conquest of the three worlds, O Brāhmaṇa. After taking the counsel of all the Asuras, the Lord of all Daityas carried on a fierce war against the powerful Indra. After defeating all the Devas along with Vāsava, he brought them under his control.

The son of Virocana, Bali the Asura, became the sole Lord of all the worlds. The Devas were deprived of their rights (posts) after being defeated and ousted from the kingdom. Therefore the Devas began to roam over the earth like human beings.

After the lapse of some time, they sought refuge in Brahmā: "O Brahmā, O scorcher of enemies, we have been driven out of Devaloka by Bali. What shall we do? Where shall we go? What remedy can we adopt (to regain Svarga)?"

Brahmā said:

49-55. O excellent Suras, listen to these best means you have to adopt. O excellent immortal ones, ye all go to the beautiful city of Padmāvati. There is an excellent Tīrtha named Uttaramānasa where the city is reputed as the bestower of the eight Siddhis, the bestower of great Siddhis on men. O excellent ones, the nine Nidhis (treasures of Kubera) too are kept there. To the south thereof is the excellent Viṣṇu Tīrtha. By taking the holy ablution therein one should see Siddheśvarī, the bestower of excellent Siddhis. He shall become endowed with Ṛddhi (prosperity) and Siddhi (achievement of spiritual powers). He is then honoured in Viṣṇuloka.

On the tenth day in the bright half of the month of Āśvina,

one should worship Gaṇeśvara in the region of Aṣṭasiddhi-śamīdeśa. There is no doubt in this that he becomes victorious in all the worlds. He should always worship Gaṇeśa, the bestower of all desired things. The deity is always stationed at the root of the Śamī tree and grants the boon of Rddhi and Siddhi. After obtaining all cherished things as boon, he shall be endowed with sons and wealth.

56-61. Hence with all efforts, one should go to Mahākālavana. Do not tarry. Go to the place where the Tīrtha of Viṣṇusaras is situated. O excellent Suras, perform the Upāsana (adoration) of Viṣṇu of incomparable splendour. O excellent Suras, he shall be the saviour from all fears.

On hearing the words of Brahmā of esteemed soul, those Devas, bent upon achieving their purpose, came to Mahākālavana.

After coming to this place, they purified themselves by means of Snāna, Dāna and other rites. The sanctified ones engrossed in devotion to Viṣṇu performed the Upāsana. Thereafter all those Devas with Śakra (Indra) as their leader, asked Brahmā the procedure of the Upāsana of the Lord.

Devas said:

O Brahmā, by what means should the devotion unto Viṣṇu become best? O most excellent one among those who know Brahman, we wish to know everything from you.

Brahmā said

62-74. O excellent Suras, may this excellent procedure of worship to Viṣṇu be heard:

For the sake of the suppression of all obstacles, one should meditate upon the Four-armed Lord who is clad in white garments, whose complexion is on a par with the moon and whose countenance beams with pleasure.

If Lord Janārdana of complexion dark like a blue lotus is stationed in the heart of people, all acquisitions are theirs, all victory is theirs. Whence can there be defeat unto them?

Obeisance to that Lord of Gaṇas who destroys all obstacles and who is adored even by the Suras for the sake of the achievement of the desired benefit.

I was urged by Śāuri (Viṣṇu) who was desirous of creation

at the beginning of the Kalpa. I became engaged in the meditation of Viṣṇu. Yet I was incapable of creating the subjects.

In the meantime, the great sage Mārkaṇḍeya who had subdued all the sense-organs, who has a long span of life; who is the Lord of all Siddhas, was seen by me all of a sudden. Thereupon, I approached him. Both of us were delighted with the eyes in full bloom as it were. We honoured each other and enquired after each others health and welfare. O excellent Suras, we were then comfortably seated. Then that great sage Mārkaṇḍeya was asked by me, "O holy Sir, revered by sages, by what means may my subjects be free from ailments? I wish to hear everything from you who are bowed to by sages."

Śrī Mārkaṇḍeya said:

Devotion to Viṣṇu is eternal and the greatest, destroying all worries and miseries. It is meritorious and destroyer of all sins. It yields all happiness.

This Mahāvidyā (secret lore) pertaining to Brahman should not be given to all and sundry. It should not be imparted to an ungrateful fellow, to one who is not one's pupil, to an atheist, to one who is untruthful, to one who is lustful. These people put obstacle in everything that is within it. It is the eternal Dharma. This esoteric knowledge destroys all sins. It is the holiest of all holy things, the sanctifier of all sanctifying things. The thousand names of Viṣṇu are conducive to the development of devotion to Viṣṇu, auspicious and capable of according all Siddhis. They give worldly pleasures and salvation.

Introductory Injunctions and Meditation

Om. Mārkaṇḍeya is the sage of this holy Mantra in the form of eulogy with a thousand names of Viṣṇu. The deity is Viṣṇu. The Chandas is Anuṣṭup. Its application is the Japa for the sake of the acquisition of all desired things.

Now the Meditation:

75. I extol the cowherd lad who is dark in complexion like a cloud filled with water, who has shown his nobleness, who held up the mountain (Govardhana) on his palm, who took great pleasure in playing the flute, who protected the people

of Vraja, who is enamoured of sports with the loving maidens (of Vraja) and who wears the garland of big Tulasī leaves.

Garland of a Thousand Epithets of Viṣṇu¹

76. Om Viśvam (universe), Viṣṇu, Hṛṣīkeśa, Sarvātmā (the soul of all), Sarvabhāvana (creator of all), Sarvaga (reaching all), Śarvarinātha (the Lord of the night, the moon), Bhūtagrāmāśayāśaya (lying within the heart of the group of living beings),

77. Anādinidhanaḥ (without beginning and end), Deva (the lustrous one), Sarvajña (omniscient), Sarvasāmbhava (the source of origin of everything), Sarvavyāpī (pervading everything), Jagaddhātā (creator of the universe), Sarvaśaktidhara (possessor of all powers), Anagha (sinless),

78. Jagadbījam (the seed of the cosmos), Jagatsraṣṭā (creator of the cosmos), Jagadīśa (Lord of the cosmos), Jagatpati (master of the cosmos), Jagadguru (preceptor of the cosmos), Jagannātha (Lord of the cosmos), Jagaddhātā (one who conceives the cosmos), Jaganmaya (one who is identical with the cosmos),

79. Sarvākṛtidhara (one who assumes all shapes), Sarva-viśvarūpī (having the form of all the universe), Janārdana, (the chastiser of wicked people). Ajanmā (unborn), Śāśvata (eternal), Nitya (permanent), Viśvādhāra (support of the universe), Vibhu (omnipresent), Prabhu (lord),

80. Bahurūpa (multiformed), Ekarūpa (single-formed), Sarvarūpadhara (possessing all forms), Hara (destroyer), Kālāgniprabhavaḥ Vāyuḥ (wind arising from *Kālāgni*), Pralayāntakara (cause of end of dissolution), Akṣaya (one that has no destruction),

1. Viṣṇu-Sahasra-Nāma (Garland of a Thousand Epithets of Viṣṇu): This *Sahasranāma* has little in common with the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* found in the Anuśāsana Parva of the Mbh. That is much superior to this in the SkP. In some of the common epithets between the two, I followed the commentary of Śaṅkara on that in the Mbh, though I know that the identification of this Śaṅkara with Ādi Śaṅkara is disputed.

In this *Sahasranāma* Viṣṇu is regarded as 'All-pervader' in the sense that as Kṛṣṇa, he is identified with all persons from Kaurava side, Pāṇḍava side and Yādavas. After all Viṣṇu is Brahman and they say : *sarvam khalvidam brahma!*

81. Mahārṇava (great ocean), Mahāmegha (great cloud), Jalabudbudasaṁbhava (born of water bubbles), Saṁskṛta (well-consecrated), Vikṛta (altered), Matsya (fish), Mahāmatsya (great fish), Timiṅgila (whale),

82. Ananta (endless, serpent Ananta), Vāsuki, Śeṣa, Varāha (boar), Dharaṇīdhara (holder of the earth), Payaḥkṣīravivekāḥya Haṁsa (the swan that separates milk from water), Haimagiristhita (stationed on the mountain of snow),

83. Hayagrīva (horse-necked), Viśālākṣa (wide-eyed), Hayakarṇa (horse-eared), Hayākṛti (of the form of a horse), Manthana (one who churns and curshes), Ratnahārī (one who takes away jewels), Kūrma (tortoise), Dhara-dharādhara (one who supports the mountain and the earth),

84. Vinidra (sleepless), Nidrita (sleeping), Nandin (one who is delighted), Sunanda, Nandanapriya (fond of the garden Nandana), Nābhi-Nāla-Mṛṇālin (having the lotus, the stalk of which comes out of the navel), Svayāmbhū (self-born), Caturānana (four-faced),

85. Prajāpati-paraḥ Dakṣa (Dakṣa, the great patriarch), Sṛṣṭikartā (creator of the world), Prajākara (creator of subjects), Marīci, Kaśyapa, Vatsa (v.l. Dakṣa), Surāsura-guru (the preceptor of Suras and Asuras), Kavi (Śukra, a poet),

86. Vāmana, Vāmamargī (follower of the left path), Vāmakarmā (of exquisite actions), Bṛhadvapuḥ (large-bodied), Trailokyakramaṇa (one who measured the three worlds with three steps), Dīpa (light), Baliyajña-vināśana (destroyer of Bali's sacrifice),

87-88. Yajñahartā (destroyer of sacrifices), Yajñakartā (performer of sacrifices), Yajñeśa (lord of Yajñas), Yajñabhuk (partaker of Yajñas), Vibhu (omnipresent), Sahasrāṁsu (thousand-rayed), Bhaga, Bhānu (Sun), Vivasvān (Sun), Ravi (Sun), Amṣumān (Sun), Tigma-tejas (of severe brilliance), Alpatejas (one with modicum of brilliance), Karmasākṣī (witness of actions), Manu, Yama, Devarāja (Lord of Devas), Surapati (master of Suras), Dānavāri (enemy of Dānavas), Śacīpati (Indra, husband of Śacī),

89. Agni, Vāyusakha (friend of the Wind-god), Vahni, Varuṇa, Yādasām Pati (lord of the aquatic beings), Nairṛta, Nādana (producing sound), Anādī (devoid of sound), Rakṣa-Yakṣo-dhanādhīpa (lord of Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and wealth),

90. Kubera, Vittavān (possessor of wealth), Vega (velocity), Vasupāla (protector of wealth), Vilāsakṛt (of graceful lovely action), Amṛtasravaṇa (exuding Amṛta), Soma (Moon, Soma juice), Somapānakara (imbibing Soma juice), Sudhīḥ (intelligent),

91. Sarvauṣadhikara (one who creates all medicinal herbs), Śrīmān (glorious), Niśākaradivākara (creator of night and day), Viṣāri (enemy of poison), Viṣahartā (remover of poisons), Viṣakaṅthadhara (one holding the poisons in the throat), Giri (mountain),

92. Nīlakaṅtha (blue-throated), Vṛṣī (rider of bulls), Rudra, Bhālacandra (having the moon on the forehead), Umāpati (Śiva), Śiva (Śiva), Śānta (quiescent), Vaśī (having self-control), Vīra (heroic), Dhyānī (meditating), Mānī (honourable), Mānada (bestower of respect),

93. Kṛmikīṭa (worm and insect), Mṛgavyādha (hunter of the deer i.e. sacrificial fire of Dakṣa), Mṛgahā (slayer of a deer), Mṛgalāncchana (deer-spotted), Baṭuka, Bhairava, Bāla (child), Kapālī (holding the skull), Daṇḍavighraha (staff-bodied). Daṇḍa (discipline *or* rod of justice incarnate),

94. Śmaśānavāsī (resident of the cremation ground), Māmsāśī (one who eats meat), Duṣṭanāśī (destroyer of the wicked), Varāntakṛt (one who causes the destruction of the leading one), Yoginītrāsaka (one who frightens Yoginīs), Yogin, Dhyānastha (seated i.e. absorbed in meditation), Dhyānavāsana (having the inclination to meditation),

95. Senānī (commander-in-chief), Senada (bestower of armies), Skanda, Mahākāla, Gaṇādhipa, Ādideva (primordial lord), Gaṇapati, Vighnahā (destroyer of obstacles), Vighnanāśana (destroyer of obstacles),

96. Ṛddhisiddhiprada (bestower of Ṛddhis and Siddhis), Dantī (elephant *or* having a tusk), Bhālacandra (having the moon on the forehead), Gajānana (elephant-faced), Nṛsimha, Ugradamṣṭra (having fierce fangs), Nakhin (having claws), Dānavanāśakṛt (destroyer of the Dānavas),

97. Prahlādapoṣakartā (one who nourishes Prahlāda), Sarvadaityajaneśvara (lord of all the Daitya people), Śalabha, Sāgara (ocean), Sākṣī (witness), Kalpadrumavikalpaka (an alternative *or* a substitute for the Kalpa tree),

98. Hemada (bestower of gold), Hemabhāgin (sharer of

gold), Himakartā (creator of snow), Himācala (Himālaya mountain), Bhūdhara (one who holds the earth), Bhūmida (bestower of lands), Meru, Kailāsaśikhara, Giri (mountain),

99. Lokālokāntara (one who is midway between Loka and Aloka), Lokī (of the world), Vilokī (onlooker), Bhuvaneśvara (lord of the universe), Dikpāla, Dikpati, Divya (Divine), Divyakāya (divine-bodied), Jitendriya (subduer of sense-organs),

100. Virūpa (deformed or of a special form) Rūpavān (comely), Rāgī (lover), Nṛtyagītaśārada (expert in dance and music), Hāhā Hūhu, Citraratha, Devarṣi (the celestial sage), Nārada, Sakhā (friend),

101. Viśvedevāḥ, Sādhyadevāḥ, Dhṛtāsīḥ (holding blessings ready) Cala (moving), Acala (stable), Kapila, Jalpaka (prattler), Vādin (arguer), Datta (giver), Haihaya-saṅgha-rāt (king of the clan of Haihayas),

102. Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Saptarṣipravara (foremost among the seven sages), Bhṛgu, Jāmadagnya Mahāvīra (the great heroic son of Jamadagni), Kṣatriyāntakara (one who destroys Kṣatriyas), Ṛṣi (sage of vision),

103. Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa, Harapriya (favourite of Śiva), Agasti, Pulaha, Dakṣa, Paulastya Rāvaṇa (Rāvaṇa, the son of Pulastya), Ghaṭa (one who accomplishes),

104. Devāri (enemy of the Devas), Tāpasa (sage), Tāpī (scorcher), Vibhīṣaṇaharipriya (Vibhīṣaṇa, the favourite of Hari), Tejasvī (brilliant), Tejoda (bestower of brilliance), Tejī (brilliant), Īśa (lord), Rājapati (Lord of kings), Prabhu (Lord),

105. Dāśarathi (son of Daśaratha), Rāghava (scion of the family of Raghu), Rāma. Raghuvāriṣa-vivardhana (one who makes the family of Raghu flourish), Sītāpati (husband of Sītā), Pati (lord), Śrīmān (glorious), Brahmaṇya (helpful to Brāhmaṇas), Bhaktavatsala (favourite of the devotee, favourably disposed to devotees),

106. Sannaddha (ready), Kavacī (one clad in coat of mail), Khaḍgī (one having a sword), Cīravāśas (clad in bark garments), Digambara (nude), Kirīṭī (one having a crown), Kuṇḍalī (one having earrings), Śaṅkhacakrī (one having the discus and the conch), Gadādhara (the wielder of the mace),

107. Kausalyānandana (delighter of Kausalyā), Udāra (liberal-minded), Bhūmiśāyī (lying i.e. sleeping on the ground), Guhapriya (favourite of Guha), Saumitra (Sumitrā's son Lakṣmaṇa),

Bharata, Bāla (boy), Śatrughna, Bharatāgraja (elder brother of Bharata),

108. Lakṣmaṇa, Paravīraghna (slayer of the enemy warriors), Strīśahāya (a helper of women), Kapīśvara (lord of the monkeys), Hanumān, Rkṣarāja (king of bears), Sugrīva, Vālināśana (slayer of Vālī),

109. Dūtapriya (fond of a messenger), Dūtakārī (maker of messengers), Aṅgada, Gadatāmvara (foremost among speakers), Vanadhvaṁsī (destroyer of forests and parks), Vanī (a forester), Vega (speed), Vānaradhvaṇa (monkey-emblem), Lāṅguli (tailed one),

110. Ravidāntṛī (having the Sun as the curved tooth), Laṅkāha (striker of the deity of Laṅkā), Hāhākāra (making hue and cry), Varaprada (bestower of boons), Bhavasetu (bridge of the ocean of worldly existence), Mahāsetu (the great bridge), Baddhasetu (one who built the bridge), Rameśvara (lord of Ramā),

111. Jānakīvallabha (lover of Jānakī), Kāmī (lover), Kiriṭī (one having a crown), Kuṇḍālī (one wearing earrings), Khagī¹ (one having a bird), Puṇḍarikaviśālākṣa (one having eyes as large as a lotus), Mahābāhu (mighty-armed), Ghanākṛti (having the complexion or shape of a cloud),

112. Cañcala (unsteady), Capala (fickle), Kāmī (lover), Vāmī (adverse one), Vāmāṅgavatsala (darling of the left limb i.e. wife), Strīpriya (loved by women), Strīpara (devoted to women), Straiṇa (belonging to women), Striyaḥ Vamāṅgavāsaka (making woman stay on the left side),

113. Jitavairī (one who has subdued enemies), Jitakāma (one who has conquered Kāma), Jitakrodha (one who has full control on anger), Jitendriya (one who has conquered the sense-organs), Śānta (quiescent), Dānta (one who has controlled the senses), Dayārāma (garden of mercy), Ekastṛivratadhāraka (one who has undertaken the vow of having a single wife),

114. Sāttvika, Sattvasamsthāna (stabilized in Sattva), Madahā (destroyer of arrogance), Krodhahā (destroyer of anger), Khara (strict, firm), Bahurākṣasa-samvīta (surrounded by many Rākṣasas), Sarvarākṣasa-nāśakṛt (destroyer of all Rākṣasas),

1. Probably a misprint for *Khagī* (one having a sword).

115. Rāvaṇāri (enemy of Rāvaṇa), Raṇa-kṣudradaśa-mastakacchedaka (one who cuts off the ten heads of Rāvaṇa as if they were insignificant in battle), Rājyakārī (one who administers a kingdom), Yajñakārī (one who performs Yajñas), Dātā (donor), Bhoktā (enjoyer), Tapodhana (ascetic, one who regards penance as wealth),

116. Ayodhyādhipati (overlord of Ayodhyā), Kānta (shining or lovable one), Vaikuṅṭha (Vikuṅṭhā's son), Akuṅṭhavagraha (of vigorous body), Satyavrata (one with the vow of truth), Vratī (observing vows), Śūra (heroic), Tapī (performing penance), Satyaphalaprada (bestower of the fruit of being truthful),

117-118. Sarvasākṣī (witness of all), Sarvaga (pervading everywhere), Sarvaprāṇahara (one who takes away the life of everyone), Avyaya (immutable), Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna, Samāna, Nāga, Kṛkala, Kūrma, Devadatta, Dhanañjaya (identical with all these types of vital airs), Sarvaprāṇavid (one who knows all types of vital airs), Vyāpī (pervader), Yogadhāraḥkadhāra (one who supports the person who maintains Yoga practice),

119. Tattvavid (one who knows truth), Tattvada (bestower of truth), Tattvī (knower of truth), Sarvatattvaviśārada (knower of all truth), Dhyānastha (stationed in meditation), Dhyānaśālī (regularly meditating), Manasvī (steady-minded), Yogavittama (best of those conversant with Yoga),

120. Brahmajña (knower of Brahman), Brahmada (bestower of Brahman), Brahmajñātā (one having full knowledge of Brahman), Brahmaśambhava (born of Brahma), Adhyātmaavidvidā (knower of one who knows the spirit), Dīpa (light), Jyotirūpa (one in the form of a luminary), Nirañjana (unstained, pure),

121. Jñānada (one who imparts knowledge), Ajñānahā (dispeller of ignorance), Jñānī (endowed with knowledge), Guru (preceptor), Śiṣyopadeśaka (guide and adviser to disciples), Suśiṣya (a good disciple), Śikṣita (well-trained), Śālī (shining one), Śiṣyaśikṣā-viśārada (expert in teaching disciple),

122. Mantrada (bestower of Mantras), Mantrahā (destroyer of other people's secret counsel), Mantrī (one who knows Mantras), Tantrī (one who makes use of Tantra), Tantrajanapriya (one fond of the people of Tantra practice), Sanmantra (one having excellent Mantra), Mantravid (one who knows Mantras),

Mantrī (counsellor, giver of advice), Yantramantrikabhāṅjana (sole breaker of Yantras and Mantras),

123. Māraṇa (slayer), Mohana (enchanter), Mohin (deluder), Stambhoccātanakṛt (one who paralyses and extirpates by magic), Khala (roguish), Bahumāya (having many black magic tricks), Vimāya (free from illusion), Mahāmāyāvimohaka (one who fascinates through great Māyā i.e. enchantment),

124. Mokṣada (bestower of salvation), Bandhaka (one who causes bondage), Bandī (prisoner), Ākarṣaṇa (one who attracts), Vikarṣaṇa (one who drags away), Hrimkāra¹, Bījarūpī (one in the form of Bija), Klīmkāra¹, Kīlakādhipa (lord of Kīlaka i.e. ritualistic nailing),

125. Saumkāra (having Omkāra), Śaktimān (endowed with power), Śakti (power), Sarvaśaktidhara (one who holds all Śaktis), Dhara (one who supports). Akāra (letter A), Ukāra (letter U). Omkāra (Om), Chandas, Gāyatrāsāmbhava (originating from Gāyatrī),

126. Veda, Vedavida (knower of the Vedas), Vēdī (one having the Vedas), Vedādhyāyī (one who studies the Vedas), Sadāśiva, Ṛg-Yajus-Sāmātharveśa (lord of the Ṛk, Yajuḥ, Sāman and Atharvaṇa), Sāmagānakara (one who sings the Sāma hymns), Akārī (one who is inactive),

127. Tripada (one who took three steps), Bahupādī (one with many feet), Śatapatha (name of a Brāhmaṇa text), Sarvatomukha (one having faces on all sides), Prākṛta (ordinary language), Saṃskṛta (polished and perfect), Yogin, Gītagranthaprahelika (one with musical texts and riddles),

128. Saguṇa (having attributes), Viguṇa (devoid of attributes), Chanda (self-willed), Niḥsaṅga (devoid of attachment), Viguṇa (having special characteristics), Guṇī (having good features), Nirguṇa (devoid of features), Guṇavān (one with good qualities), Saṅgī (having association), Karmī (one with action), Dharmī (one with Dharma—righteousness, characteristics), Karmada (bestower of Karma),

129. Niṣkarman (devoid of activities), Kāmakāmī (having desires), Niḥsaṅga (devoid of attachment), Saṅgavarjita

1. *Hṛim*, *Klīm* are the seeds (*Bījas*) of Mantras. Just as Omkāra = Om, so Hrimkāra = Hṛim, Klīmkāra = Klīm.

(bereft of attachment), Nirlobha (free from greed), Nirahaṁkāri (free from egotism), Niṣkiñcanajanapriya (fond of penniless people),

130. Sarvasaṅgakara (causing all associations), Rāgī (liking), Sarvatyāgī (renouncer of everything), Bahiścara (moving out), Ekapāda (single-footed), Dvipāda (biped), Bahupāda (many-footed), Alpapādaka (one with very few feet),

131. Dvipada (two-footed), Tripada (three-footed), Apādi (devoid of feet), Vipādi (one with remarkable feet), Padasaṅgraha (collection of words), Khecara (sky-walker), Bhūcara (walking over the earth), Bhrāmī (wanderer), Bhr̥ṅgakītamadhupriya (fond of bees, worms and honey),

132. Kratu (sacrifice), Saṁvatsara (year), Māsa (month), Gaṇitārka (the sun who has been reckoned), Aharniśa (day and night), Kṛta (Kṛtayuga), Tretā, Dvāpara, Kali, Caturākṛti (of clever features—with four Yugas as his form),

133. Deśakālakara (cause of space and time), Kuladharmā (family convention), Sanātana (eternal), Kāla (time), Kalā, Kāṣṭhā, Kalā, Nāḍyaḥ, Yāma, Pakṣa Sitāsitaḥ (black and white lunar fortnights),

134. Yuga, Yugandhara (yoke-bearer), Yogya (befitting), Yugadharmappravartaka (one who causes the traditional activities of the different Yugas function), Kulācāra (conventions and traditions of the family), Kulakara (founder of the family), Kuladaivakara (one who makes the family deity), Kulī (of noble family),

135. Caturāśramacārī (one who functions in the four stages of life), Gṛhastha (householder), Atithipriya (one who likes to have guests), Vanastha (forest-dweller), Vanacārī (forest-walker), Vānaprasthāśrama (one in the stage of the forest-dweller), Aśramī (devoid of fatigue),

136. Baṭuka (religious student), Brahmācārī (celibate), Śikhāsūtrī (one having the tuft and the sacred thread), Kamaṇḍalī (one having a water-pot), Trijaṭī (having three-plaited hair), Dhyānavān (performing meditation), Dhyānī (engaged in meditation), Badrikāśramavāsakṛt (one residing in Badrikāśrama),

137. Hemādriprabhava (one originating from the gold mountain), Haima (golden), Hemarāśī (heap of gold), Himākara (source of snow), Mahāprasthānaka (one who has undertaken the great journey), Vipra (Brāhmaṇa), Virāgī (detached), Rāgavān

(having passion), Gṛhī (householder).

138. Naranārāyaṇa, Anāgaḥ (sinless), Kedārodāravigraha (having an exalted physical form in Kedāra), Gaṅgādvāra-tapaḥsāra (performing the essential penance at Gaṅgādvāra). Tapovanataponidhi (storehouse of penance in penance grove),

139. Nidhiḥ Eṣaḥ Mahāpadmaḥ (He is the esteemed treasure named Mahāpadma), Padmākaraśrīyālaya (the glory of the hands of Lakṣmī), Padmanābha (lotus-naveled) Parītātmā (one whose soul is surrounded), Parivrāt (recluse), Puruṣottama (the supreme Man),

140. Parānanda (great bliss), Purāṇa (ancient one), Samrāt (emperor), Rājavarājaka (one shining with the kings), Cakrastha (stationed in the discus or circle), Cakrapālastha (stationed amidst the guardians of the circle), Cakravartī (emperor), Narādhipa (lord of man),

141. Āyurvedauida (one conversant with Āyurveda—medical science), Vaidya (physician), Dhanvantari, Rogahā (remover of diseases), Auśadhībījasāmbhūta (originating from the seed of medicinal plants), Rogī (the sick), Rogavināśakṛt (one who causes eradication or cure of ailments),

142. Cetana (sentient), Cetaka (one who induces consciousness), Acintya (incapable of being thought of), Cittacintāvināśakṛt (one causing the destruction of mental worries), Atīndriya (beyond the ken of sense-organs), Sukhasparśa (of pleasing touch), Caracārī (moving about like mobile beings), Vihāṅgama (one that goes through the sky, bird),

143. Garuḍa, Pakṣirāja (king of birds), Cākṣuṣa (visible to the eyes), Vinatātmaja (son of Vinatā), Viṣṇuyānavimānastha (seated in the aerial chariot), Manomayaturaṅgama (having a horse in the form of the mind),

144. Bahuvṛṣṭikara (one who causes heavy rain), Varṣī (one who causes downpour), Airāvaṇavirāvaṇa (roaring like Airāvaṇa), Uccaiśśravas, Aruṇa, Gāmī (always on the move), Haridaśva (green-horsed) Haripriya (fond of horses),

145. Prāvṛṣa (the rainy season), Meghamālī (having the garland of clouds), Gajaratnapurandara (one who breaks through the city of excellent elephants), Vasuda (bestower of riches), Vasudhāra (pouring the current of wealth), Nidrālu (sleepy), Pannagāśana (devourer of serpents),

146. Śeṣaśāyī (lying on Śeṣa), Jaleśāyī (lying in water), Vyāsa,

Satyavatīsuta (son of Satyavatī), Vedavyāsakara (one who divided the Vedas), Vāgmī (eloquent), Bahusākḥāvikalpaka (maker of many branches of Vedic texts),

147. Smṛti, Purāṇadharmārthī (seeking the piety of the Purāṇas), Parāvaravicaṣṇa (clever in discriminating the greater and the lesser), Sahasraśīrṣa (having a thousand i.e. innumerable heads), Sahasrākṣa (having a thousand eyes), Sahasravadana (having a thousand faces), Ujjvala (sparkling),

148. Sahasrabāhu (having a thousand arms), Sahasrāśū (having a thousand rays), Sahasrakiraṇa (having a thousand rays), Nara (the human being), Bahusīrṣa (having many heads), Ekaśīrṣa (single-headed), Trīśīras (three-headed), Viśiraḥ (headless), Śīri (having heads),

149. Jaṭila (having matted hairs), Bhasmarāgī (having a liking for ash), Divyāmbaradhara (wearing divine garments), Śuci (clean), Aṅurūpa (atom-sized), Bṛhadrūpa (large-sized), Virūpa (deformed), Vikarākṛti (of a handleless form),

150. Samudramāthaka (one who churned the ocean), Māthī (the churner), Sarvaratnahara (one who has taken away all jewels), Hari, Vajra-vaidūryaka (having diamonds and lapis lazulis), Vajrī (having the thunderbolt or diamond), Cintāmaṇimahāmaṇi (having the great jewel Cintāmaṇi),

151. Anirmūlya (not without value), Mahāmūlya (of great value), Nirmūlya (invaluable), Surabhi (sweet-smelling), Sukhī (happy), Pitā (father), Mātā (mother), Śīśu (infant), Bandhu (kinsman), Dhātā (creator), Tvaṣṭṛ, Aryaman, Yama,

152. Antaḥṣtha (stationed within), Bāhyakārī (acting outside), Bahiḥṣtha (stationed outside), Bahiścara (moving outside), Pāvana (sacred), Pāvaka (purifier), Pākī (cooking), Sarvabhakṣī (omnivorous—eating everything), Hutāśana (consuming what is consigned to the sacred fire),

153. Bhagavān (lord), Bhagahā (slayer of Bhaga), Bhāgī (sharer), Bhavabhaṅja (breaker of Samsāra or worldly existence), Bhayaṅkara (terrible one), Kāyastha (stationed in the body), Kāryakarī (carrying out the task), Kāryakartṛ (executor of the task), Karaprada (giver of the helping hand),

154. Ekadharmā (single-featured), Dvidharmā (two-featured), Sukhī (happy), Dūtyopajīvaka (subsisting on messengerhood), Bālaka (boy), Tāraka (redeemer), Trātā (saviour), Kāla (God of Death), Mūṣakabhakṣaka (devourer of mice),

155. Sañjīvana (enlivener), Jīvakartā (resuscitator of life), Sajīva (having life), Jīvasāmbhava (originating from life), Ṣaḍviṃśaka (the twenty-sixth principle), Mahāviṣṇu, Sarvavyāpī (all-pervading), Maheśvara,

156. Divyāṅgada (having divine armlet), Muktamālī (wearing a pearl necklace), Śrīvatsa (the mark so-called or endearing to Śrī, Lakṣmī), Makaradhvaja (shark-emblem), Śyāmamūrti (dark-complexioned), Ghanaśyāma (dark like a cloud), Pītavāsas (yellow-garmented), Śubhānana (of auspicious countenance),

157. Cīravāsas (putting on bark garment), Vivāsas (bereft of garments), Bhūtadānavavallabha (lover of goblins and Dānavas), Amṛta (nectar), Amṛtabhāgī (sharer of nectar), Mohinīrūpadhāraka (one who assumed the form of Mohinī),

158. Divya-dṛṣṭī (of divine vision), Samadrṣṭi (impartial), Devadānava-vañcaka (one who cheats both Devas and Dānavas), Kabandha (headless trunk), Ketukārī (creator of flags or of the planet Ketu). Svarbhānu (Rāhu), Candratāpana (scorcher of the Moon),

159. Graharāja (king of Planets), Grahī (having Grahas), Grāha (alligator), Sarvagrahavimocaka (releaser from all Planets), Dānamānājapa (dāna, honour, japa), Homa (offering of sacrificial offerings), Sānukūla (favourable), Śubhagraha (auspicious Planet),

160. Vighnakartā (creator of obstacles), Apahartā (remover), Vighnanāśa (destroyer of obstacles), Vināyaka (Gaṇeśa), Apakāropakārī (helper of even those who do disservice), Sarvasiddhiphalaprada (bestower of the fruit in the form of all Siddhis),

161. Sevaka (servant), Sāmadānī (making use of the means of Sāma i.e. peaceful overtures) and Dāna (giving gifts), Bhedī (sowing dissension), Daṇḍī (meting out punishments), Matsarī (rivalry, jealous), Dayāvān (merciful), Dānaśīla (habitually making gifts), Dānī (donor), Yajvā (performer of sacrifices), Pratigrahī (accepting gifts),

162. Havis, Agni, Carusthālī (vessel of sacrificial offerings), Samidh (sacrificial twigs), Anila (wind), Yama, Hotā (performer of Homas), Udgātā (singer of Mantras), Śuci (pure or fire), Kuṇḍa (sacrificial pit), Sāmaga (singer of Sāman hymns), Vaikṛti (change and modification), Sava (sacrifice),

163. Dravya (articles of sacrifice), Pātrāṇi (utensils), Saṃkalpa

(mental resolve or intention), Muśala (pestle), Araṇi (Śamī piece for making fire by means of attribution), Kuśa (Darbha grass), Dīkṣita (initiated one), Maṇḍapa (pavilion), Vedī (altar), Yajamāna (one who performs a sacrifice), Paśu (animal brought for sacrifice), Kratu (sacrifice),

164. Dakṣiṇā (monetary gift), Svastimān (hale and hearty), Svasti (offering blessings like 'Svasti'), Āśīrvāda (blessings), Śubhaprada (bestower of auspiciousness), Ādivṛkṣa (primordial tree), Mahāvṛkṣa (great tree), Devavṛkṣa (divine tree), Vanaspati (vegetation),

165. Prayāga, Veṇumān, Veṇī, Nyagrodha (fig tree), Akṣayavata (the banyan tree of imperishable nature), Sutīrtha (good holy spot), Tīrthakārī (maker of a Tīrtha), Tīrtharāja (king of holy places), Vratī (observing Vṛatas), Vrata (vow),

166. Vṛttidātā (giver of sustenance), Pṛthu, Putra (son), Dogdhā (milk), Gauḥ (cow), Vatsa (calf), Kṣīra (milk), Kṣīravaha (flowing with milk), Kṣīrī (possessor of milk), Kṣīrabhāgavibhāgavit (one who knows the divisions and sub-divisions of milk),

167. Rājyabhāgavida (conversant with the parts of the kingdom), Bhāgī (sharer), Sarvabhāgavikalpaka (assigner of all parts), Vāhana (vehicle), Vāhaka (one who conveys through vehicles), Vegī (having velocity), Pādacārī (pedestrian), Tapaścara (ascetic),

168. Gopana (one who conceals), Gopaka (cowherd), Gopī (cowherdess), Gopakanyāvihārakṛt (one who diverts himself with the cowherd lasses), Vāsudeva, Viśālākṣa (having large eyes), Kṛṣṇa, Gopījanapriya (dear to cowherd women),

169. Devakīnandana (delighter of Devakī), Nandī (delighter), Nandagopa-grhāśramī (living in the house of Nanda, the cowherd, as though in hermitage), Yaśodānandana (delighter of Yaśodā), Dāmī (bound with a rope around his neck), Dāmodara (bound with a rope around the belly), Ulūkhālī (having the mortar bound to him),

170. Pūtanāri (enemy of Pūtanā), Padākārī [shaking (?) the feet], Lilāśakaṭabhañjaka (breaker of the cart sportingly), Navanītapriya (fond of butter), Vāgmī (eloquent), Vatsapālakabālaka (the boy who looks after the calves),

171. Vatsarūpadhara (one who assumed the form of a calf), Vatsī (having a calf), Vatsahā (slayer of Vatsa), Dhenukāntakṛt (one who killed Dhenuka), Bakārī (enemy of demon Baka),

Vanavāsī (resident of the forest), Vanakrīḍāviśārada (expert in forest sports),

172. Kṛṣṇavarnākṛti (having a dark-complexioned body), Kānta (beautiful), Veṅuvetravidhāraka (holding a flute and a cane), Gopamokṣakara (one who bestowed salvation on the cowherds), Mokṣa (salvation), Yamunāpulinecara (one who walks on the sandy banks of Yamunā),

173. Māyāvatsakara (one who created calves through Māyā), Māyī (possessing Māyā), Brahmamāyāpamohaka (one who deluded Brahmā by means of Māyā), Ātmasāravihārajña (conversant with the sports of persons possessing strength of soul), Gopadārakadāraka (a child among the children of cowherds),

174. Gocārī (one who takes cows for grazing), Gopati (owner of cows), Gopa (cowherd), Govardhanadhara (one who held up Govardhana mountain), Balī (strong), Indradymna (having the splendour of Indra), Makhadhvaṁsī (one who destroyed the sacrificial offering to Indra), Vṛṣṭihā (one who restrained the downpour), Goparakṣaka (protector of the cowherds),

175. Surabhi-trāṇakartā (saviour of the divine cow Surabhi), Dāvapānakara (one who drank off and quenched the forest fire), Kalī (instigator of strife), Kāliyamardana (suppressor of Kāliya), Kālī, Yamunāhradavihāraka (one who sports about in the eddy of Yamunā),

176. Saṁkarṣaṇa, Balaślāghya (praiseworthy due to strength), Baladeva, Halāyudha (one having the plough as weapon), Lāṅgalī (wielder of the plough), Musalī (having the threshing rod), Cakrī (having the discus), Rāma, Rohiṇī-nandana (the delighter of Rohiṇī),

177. Yamunākarṣaṇoddhāra (one who drags and lifts up Yamunā), Nilavāsas (blue-garmented), Hala (plough), Halī (having the plough), Revatīramaṇa (lover of Revatī), Lola (Eagerly desirous), Bahumānakara (one who honours), Para (the great),

178. Dhenukāri (enemy of Dhenuka), Mahāvīra (great hero) Gopakanyāvidūṣaka (jester of the daughters of the cowherds), Kāmamānahara (one who destroys the pride of Kāma), Kāmi (lover), Gopīvāsopataskara (one who stole the garments of the cowherdesses),

179. Veṅuvādī (one who plays the flute), Nādī (producing musical notes), Nṛtyagītaviśārada (expert in dances and music), Gopīmohakara (the enchanter of cowherdesses), Gānī

(one who sings), Rāsaka (one who performs Rāsa dance), Rajanīcara (moving about at night),

180. Divyamālī (having divine garlands), Vimālī (having excellent garlands), Vanamālāvibhūṣita (one who is embellished with garlands of sylvan flowers), Kaiṭabhāri (enemy of Kaiṭabha), Kāmsāri (enemy of Kāmsa), Madhuhā (slayer of Madhu), Madhusūdana (killer of Madhu),

181. Cāṇūramardana (one who crushed Cāṇūra), Malla (wrestler), Muṣṭī (Having the fist clenched), Muṣṭikanāśakṛt (one who killed Muṣṭika), Murahā (slayer of Mura), Modaka (rejoicer), Modī (rejoicer), Madaghna (destroyer of arrogance), Narakāntakṛt (one who slew Naraka),

182. Vidyādhyāyī (one who studied the lores), Bhūmiśāyī (one who slept on the ground), Sudāmāsuśakhā (the excellent companion of Sudāmā), Sukhī (happy), Sakālā (having attributes), Vikala (free from attributes), Vaidya (physician), Kalita (one who is counted and reckoned), Kalānidhi (storehouse of Kalās or Arts),

183. Vidyāśālī (studious in lores), Viśālī (huge), Piṭṛmātṛvimokṣaka (liberator of father and mother), Rukmiṇīramaṇa (lover of Rukmiṇī), Ramya (handsome), Kāḷindipati (lord of Kāḷindī), Śaṅkhahā (destroyer of Śaṅkha),

184. Pāñcājanya, Mahāpadma, Bahunāyakanāyaka (leader of a host of leaders), Dhundhumāra (slayer of Dhundhu), Nikuṁbhaghna (slayer of Nikuṁbha), Śaṁbarānta (slayer of Śaṁbara), Ratipriya (beloved of Rati),

185. Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Sāttvatāmpati (lord of Sāttvatas), Arjuna, Phālguna, Guḍākeśa, (messenger or controller of sleep), Savyasācī, Dhanañjaya,

186. Kirīṭī, Dhanuṣpāṇī (wielding the bow in the hand), Dhanurvedaviśārada (an adept in the science of archery), Śikhaṇḍī, Śātyaki, Śaibya, Bhīma, Bhīmaparākrama (of terrible exploits),

187. Pāñcāla, Abhimanyu, Saubhadra, Draupadīpati (lord of Draupadī), Yudhiṣṭhira, Dharmarāja, Satyavādī (truthful in speech), Śucivrata (of pure vows),

188. Nakula, Sahadeva, Karṇa, Duryodhana, Ghṛṇī (merciful), Gāṅgeya (son of Gaṅgā), Gadāpāṇī (having the club in the hand), Bhīṣma, Bhāgīrathīsuta (son of Gaṅgā i.e. Bhīṣma),

189. Prajñācakṣuḥ (with intellect for sight), Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa, Jahnu, Yuddhaviśārada

(expert in war),

190. Sīmantika, Gadī (having a club), Gālva, Viśvāmitra, Durāsada (very difficult to approach), Durvāsas, Durvinīta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Mahāmuni (the great sage),

191. Lomaśa, Nirmala (devoid of impurities), Alomī (hairless), Dīrghāyu (long-lived), Cira (of long duration), Acirī (of short duration), Punarjīvī (living once again), Mṛta (dead), Bhāvī (one who will be), Bhavya (that which is being born), Bhaviṣyaka [born(?) in future],

192. Trikāla (the three periods of time), Triliṅga (three-signed one), Trinetra (three-eyed), Tripadīpati (lord of Tripadī i.e. Gaṅgā), Yādava, Yājñavalkya, Yaduvarṣavivardhana (one who causes the family of Yadu to flourish),

193. Śalyakriḍī (one who played with the darts), Vikriḍa (devoid of sports), Yādavāntakara (one who brought about the end of the Yādavas), Kali (strife), Sadaya (compassionate), Hṛdaya (heart), Dāya (share), Dāyāda (giver of share), Dāyabhāk (partner in inheritance?), Dayī (merciful),

194. Mahodadhi (great ocean), Mahīpṛṣṭha (surface of the earth), Nilaparvatavāsakṛt (resident of the Nila mountain), Ekavarṇa (of single hue), Vivarṇa (pale), Sarvavarṇabahiścara (moving out of all castes),

195. Yajñanindī (one who censured Yajñas), Vedanindī (one who censured the Vedas), Vedabāhya (one outside Veda), Bala (strength), Bali, Bauddhāri (enemy of the Bauddhas), Bādhaka (oppressor), Bādha (oppression), Jagannātha (lord of the universe), Jagatpati (lord of the cosmos),

196. Bhakti (devotion), Bhāgavata (devotee of the Lord), Bhāgi (partaker of share), Vibhakta (divided), Bhāgavat-priya (beloved of the Lord), Trigrāma (having three villages), Navāraṇya (of fresh forest), Guhyopaniṣadāsana (seated in the esoteric Upaniṣads),

197. Śaligrāma, Śilāyukta (joined with the rock), Viśāla (large), Gaṇḍakāśraya (one resorting to Gaṇḍaka), Śrutadeva, Śruta (renowned), Śrāvī (one who makes others listen), Śrutabodha (of well-known enlightenment), Śrutaśravas (one whose fame is well-known),

198. Kalki, Kālakala (reckoning the time), Kalka (Kalki), Duṣṭamlecchavināśakṛt (destroyer of the wicked barbarians), Kumkumī (having saffron), Dhavala (white), Dhīra (bold),

Kṣamākara (forgiver), Vṛṣākapi,

199. Kīm̐kara (servant), Kinnara, Kaṇva, Kekī (peacock), Kīm̐puruṣādhipa (lord of the Kīm̐puruṣas), Ekaromā (single-haired), Viromā (hairless), Bahuromā (having plenty of hairs), Bṛhatkavi (great poet),

200. Vijrapraharaṇa (having the thunderbolt as the weapon), Vajrī (having Vajra), Vṛtraghna (slayer of Vṛtra), Vāsavānuja (younger brother of Vāsava), Bahutīrthaṅkara (one who has caused many holy spots to flourish), Tīrtha (holy shrine), Sarvatīrthajaneśvara (the lord of the people of all the Tīrthas),

201. Vyatīpāta (the astronomical combination of that name), Uparāga (eclipse), Dānavṛddhikara (one who increases munificence), Śubha (auspicious), Asaṅkhyeya (innumerable), Aprameya (immeasurable), Saṅkhyākara (cause of reckoning), Viśaṅkhyaka (countless),

202. Mihika (fog), Uttāraka (redeemer), Tāra (Om̐kāra), Bālacandra (the crescent moon), Sudhākara (nectar-rayed one), Kīm̐varṇa (of indescribable complexion), Kīdṛṣa (of what sort?), Kiñcit (something), Kīm̐svabhāva (of incomprehensible nature), Kimāśraya (of unimaginable basis?),

203. Nirloka (devoid of world), Nirākārī (devoid of shape), Bhavākāra (many-shaped one), Ekakāraka (cause of one), Dauhitra (daughter's son), Putrika (son), Pautra (grandson), Naptṛ (great-grandson), Vamśadhara (sustainer of the family), Dhara (the supporter),

204. Dravībhūta (liquefied), Dayālu (compassionate), Sarvasiddhiprada-maṇi (jewel that yields all the Siddhis),

205. Ādhāra (supporting base), Vidhāra (special support), Dharāsūnu (son of the earth), Sumaṅgala (auspicious, mars), Maṅgala (auspicious), Maṅgalākāra (of auspicious shape), Māṅgalya (conducive to auspiciousness), Sarvamaṅgala (all-auspiciousness).

206. This set of thousand names of Viṣṇu of incomparable brilliance causes all Siddhis. It is desirable. It is meritorious. It is in the form of Hari and Hara.

207-208. He who gets up early in the morning, becomes clean and remains with mental concentration and reads this, one who listens to this always with a steady mind in all the three Sandhyās (i.e. dawn, midday and dusk) with great faith, becomes liberated from all sins. He rejoices with sons, grand-

sons and wives. He is adored by servants.

209. He attains huge fortune. He is rid of all difficulties. He obtains all desired objects. He gets great renown.

210. A Brāhmaṇa becomes learned. A Kṣatriya becomes victorious. A Vaiśya gets good profit and money. A Sūdra attains happiness.

211. He becomes victorious always in the terrible battles, disputes, business transactions and in subsidiary enterprises, always in every activity.

212. If a man reads once, ten times, hundred times, or thousand times, he obtains the benefit befittingly.

213. He who seeks sons, gets sons. He who seeks wealth, gets imperishable wealth. He who seeks salvation, gets salvation and he who seeks righteousness, gets righteousness.

214. He who seeks a virgin, attains a virgin inaccessible even to Devas. He who seeks knowledge, becomes learned and a Yogin becomes united with Yogas.

215-217. This should always be remembered by men on these occasions: during great upheavals, famine, the battles of kings, when a great pestilence like cholera is rampant, during poverty, when afflicted by miseries, in a forest, in a solitary path, in a place encircled by forest fire, when attacked by lions, tigers etc., in a forest infested by elephants, when the angry king orders something adverse, when there is an encounter with robbers and in terrible occasions of fall of lightning.

218-219. By reading or listening to it, people can avoid miseries at times of malignant Planets becoming aggressive, or when imprisoned or about to be executed or when one is in a raft in a great river or in the ocean. Even when one is afflicted with ailments and has become pale-faced with hairs, nails and skin gone, he becomes one having a divine body.

220-222. Devotees should read this in a place where there is a park of Tulasī plants, in temples, in lakes, in islands, at Badarikāśrama, in a splendid place at Gaṅgādvāra, in a penance grove, at Madhuvana, at Prayāga, at Dvārakā and in Mahākālavana. They must have great concentration. They should restrain themselves and they may desire anything. If they are devout with control over the sense-organs and read this a hundred times, they shall become Siddhas. They will then roam about on the earth bestowing spiritual powers on others.

223. When there is difference of opinion and dispute this causes excellent friendship. It is the most fascinating of all fascinating things. It is pure and sacred. It destroys sins.

224. It is an excellent thing acting as the suppressor of Bālagrahas (evil spirits affecting children). It is destructive of the evil intentions of the wicked and sinful persons.

225. A woman suffering from frequent abortions, a barren woman, a woman who has profuse bleeding, a woman who has only one son—these give birth to sons always.

226. Cows will yield plenty of good milk. Agriculture will yield plenty of good crops of grain. Servants become loyal to masters and woman becomes chaste.

227. Everywhere this should be remembered by men always during efforts made for peace and for the sake of preventing premature death and the effects of evil dreams.

228-229. If a man sits pure and alone in the presence of Viṣṇu, abstaining from food and restraining the sense-organs and avoiding anger, and reads this everyday, he gets the form with yellow garments and four arms. He gets all desires fulfilled in this world. Seated on Garuḍa, he goes to Viṣṇuloka.

230. On one (pan) there are all lores, entire penance and all piety and on the other pan the thousand names of Viṣṇu, i.e. these names are on a par with all those things.

231. If a Brāhmaṇa wants to recite a single Śloka and get the benefit of the hymn of a thousand names, he can do so with the following Śloka:

232. "Sahasrākṣa (thousand i.e. innumerable-eyed), Sahasrapāt (thousand-footed), Sahasravadojjvala (shining brilliantly with thousand faces), Sahasranāma (thousand-named), Anantākṣa (of infinite eyes), Sahasrabāhu (thousand-armed), I do obeisance to you."

233. The Viṣṇusahasranāma is indeed ancient and approved by the Vedas. It is the most auspicious of all auspicious things. It should be read always by the devotees.

234. In view of this, O Brāhmaṇa, the Devas there resorted to the hymn. Consequently the Lord, the bestower of boons and one adored even by the bestowers of boons, appeared directly and said to them:

The Lord (Viṣṇu) said:

235. O Suras, let the desired boon be chosen by all. I shall give everything. No hesitation be entertained in this case.

The Devas said:

236. O Viṣṇu, if you are the bestower of boons, kindly grant us this boon. Be born in the womb of Aditi and become the younger brother of Śakra.

237. On being requested thus by the Devas with Śakra as their leader, the Lord said, "So be it" and vanished there itself.

238. Thereafter, when some time elapsed the Lord was born as the delighter of Aditi. It was the infinite Viṣṇu himself in another form. He, being a dwarf, was known as Vāmana.

239. (In the meantime) O Vyāsa, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, Bali, the son of Virocana, performed (was performing) a hundred horse sacrifices with a desire to take away the kingdom of Indra.

240. He made Kaśyapa the Ṛtvik and the excellent Bhṛgu the Hotṛ. Pitāmaha (Creator of the world) himself became the Brahmā.

241. Atri the holy lord, the excellent sage, was the Adhvaryu. Nārada was the Udgātṛ and Vasiṣṭha the member of the Assembly.

242. The different leading sages who were there, were all employed in various activities. O Vyāsa, Bali, the excellent king, became duly initiated there.

243-244. O excellent sage, thus the sacrificial rites were started. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, these words were heard there: "Let the offering be made. Let this be eaten. Let this be given. Let this be placed." These splendid words were heard there. At that time, when diverse kinds of rites were being performed, Vāmana of excellent smiles arrived there.

245-248. This (arrival) was announced by the doorkeeper, O Vyāsa, entirely to the king: "O eminent king, an excellent Brāhmaṇa, Vāmana is standing at the door reciting orally the Mantras of all the four Vedas." The great king got up. Bali,

the son of Virocana, took the entire materials of reception and went there along with the members of the Assembly. He duly adored Vāmana, the benefactor of the worlds, brought him to the centre of the hall, offered the seat which he accepted and said: "O holy Brāhmaṇa, whence have you come? What is your desire? I shall give you the same."

Vāmana said:

249-253. The entire creation is of Brahmā, Parameṣṭhin, O king of kings. Hence, O great one, I have come here with a desire to see the Yajña. O sinless one, the Yajña of Varuṇa was seen by me formerly. Certainly I have seen the Yajña of the Lord of the Yakṣas. O excellent one, the Yajña of Dharma and Prajāpati, O great king, the Yajña of Vāyu that was duly performed was also seen by me. O great one of noble vows, the Yajñas of saintly kings were seen by me. O great king, O leader of the kings of kings, there was never before such a Yajña as the one of yours, nor will there ever be. Hence, O sinless one, O king, I have come here to beg of you.

Bali said:

254. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, you request for whatever is desired by you. I shall give it to you.

Vāmana said:

255. O leader of the kings of kings, give me three feet of earth for my residence, if, O excellent king, it is approved by you.

Bali said:

256-258. What is this that has been asked? It is very little. Don't you have anything else to ask? O excellent Brāhmaṇa, request for elephants, horses, chariots, earth, jewels of various kinds, men and maid servants, beautiful women, different kinds of riches, articles, splendid garments etc. O Brāhmaṇa, O master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, you are a deserving person; you are blessed; you have done your duty.

Vāmana said:

259. O king, O bestower of honour, I have no desire on the earth. Give me three feet of earth, if you have any faith.

260. When this was said by Vāmana, Bali spoke these words: “Accept three feet of earth for the sake of residence, O bestower of honour.”

261. After saying this the saint-like king granted the earth to the Brāhmaṇa, O Vyāsa, though he was checked by Bhṛgu. He had thus been urged by fate.

262-264. As soon as the water was offered, Hari immediately occupied the cosmos. The entire region of earth including mountains, forests and jungles was covered by two and a half feet. Then, O Vyāsa, wealth was offered by Bali. After (thus) conquering the group of Asuras, Viṣṇu in the form of Vāmana gave the kingdom to Śatakṛatu and returned to earth.

265-270. O Vyāsa, the excellent Sura created a Tīrtha originating from himself in the meritorious Ṛddhi-Siddhi Āśrama and resided there itself. The Tīrtha created by Vāmana is called Vāmanakuṇḍa.

The twelfth day in the bright half of the month of Bhādrapada, coinciding with Śravaṇa constellation, is called Vāmanadvāṣī. It destroys (the sin of) crores of slaughters.

A man should take his holy bath in this Tīrtha, observe fast on the eleventh day and keep awake during the night. He becomes qualified to become Brahmā himself. On the twelfth day, they should make great gifts. There is nothing inaccessible to them in all the three worlds.

Thus the Vāmana Tīrtha has been formerly described by the great sage. It is destructive of all sins. It is meritorious. It bestows the boon of all desired things. Everything is attained by him. No hesitation (doubt) in this affair should be entertained.

CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

The Pilgrimage to Kālabhairava Tīrtha

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Henceforth I shall describe Vireśvara Tīrtha. Listen. By taking the holy ablution in that Tīrtha, one shall attain Viraloka.

2. There is an excellent Tīrtha of Nāgas that bestows the boon of all desired objects. That Tīrtha which is called Kālabhairava, is known as a great Tīrtha.

3a. Merely by its sight, one shall transcend all miseries.

Vyāsa said:

3b-4. At what time did this Tīrtha called Kālabhairava become renowned, O excellent sage; narrate this in great detail.

Sanatkumāra said:

5-6. Formerly this Yogin Bhairava caused great fight to Yoginīs. There were Kṛtyās created by Kālacakra (Time-cycle). Among them the Yoginī called Kālī is well-known as the greatest and most excellent. The pure Bhairava was brought up like her son by that Yoginī.

7. O excellent one, all the three types of defects and calamities well-known in the world as the causes of all types of great obstacles, were destroyed by him.

8-10a. Kālakṛtyās also were dislodged by that noble-souled one. They are nine and are known as Mātṛkās, viz. Mahāmārī, Pūtanā, Kṛtyā, Śakunī, Revatī, Khalā, Koṭarī, Tāmasī and Māyā. They are vicious and bring in calamities to the wicked ones. They cause great terror to all living beings. That pious-souled one (i.e. Bhairava) brought them under control and made (them) bestowers of boons of all desires.

10b-11a. He is stationed in the splendid northern bank of Śīprā. He is also stationed in the far east of the Uṣara (desert land) forever.

11b-15. Men should be of steady mind. They should retain great concentration of the mind. On the eighth, ninth, and fourteenth days of the bright half of Āṣāḍha, especially when it coincides with a Sunday, they should perform special Pūjās to

bring in auspiciousness at the time of marriage, birth of a son and other auspicious occasions. They must worship (Bhairava) in the form of the bestower of boons, with leaves, flowers, excellent scents, Naivedyas (food offerings) of various kinds, betel leaves, incense etc. They should propitiate Brāhmaṇas with meals and the great Lord with Homas. This brings a great welfare. This is the great auspiciousness. After bowing down to that Lord, they should eulogize thus for the achievement of all desired objects:

Bhairavāṣṭakam (Verses 16-23):

16. “May that Bhairava who attracts (our) feelings (bhāva) be the cause of happiness; he is the remover of all sins; he destroys rogues and the wicked; his conduct is excellent and he moves on for a long time; he wears garlands of skulls and wears Muñja grass (round the waist); in his hand he holds a skull; he wears earrings and holds a staff in the hand.

17. I remember the foot of Bhava forever, forever. It gracefully adorns different kinds of Rāsa dances with maidens of fresh youth. He sets at nought the exploits (of others). At every *Goṣpada* (pits made by cow’s hoofs) he remains moving to and fro with inebriation.

18. O people, worship Bhairava, the Lord of goblins; he is the form of Śiva; he is the cause of the destruction of Dākinīs; he avoids (wards off) all disasters. His eyes are like a pure lotus. He is adorned with the beautiful moon. He is the greatest due to all good qualities. He has the form of Kāma in regard to women.

19. O people, worship Bhairava, the Lord of goblins; he is the form of Śiva; he destroys the strength of the mighty; he is the sole protector of the Kṣetrapālas. He appears hideous with the big and broad hips. He laughs boisterously. He holds a sword in the hand. Serpents constitute his sacred thread.

20. O people, worship Bhairava, the Lord of goblins; he is in the form of Śiva. He wards off the fear of worldly existence (Saṃsāra). He causes fright in Yoginīs. He is the Lord of all the groups of Suras. The moon and the sun constitute his beautiful eyes. His forehead is beautiful with a crown. He wears a necklace of pearls. He is large and huge.

21. I worship the Lord, the bestower of good habits. He is the protector of Śaṅkara. He has four arms. He holds a

conchshell and a club as his weapons. He is clad in yellow garment. He is beautiful like a thick cloud. The Śrīvatsa mark adorns him. The Kaustubha jewel shines round his neck.

22. I seek refuge in that Lord of goblins who is fascinating unto the world, charming to the universe, enchanting to all beloveds; he is charming due to his renown and glory; he is beautiful due to his penance.

23. I bow unto Bhairava who is resorted to by good people, who is the primordial eternal Brahman; who is devoted to those who are pure; who bestows Siddhis and desires; who is worthy of being served with due devotion by good people like Hari and Hara along with all created beings; who is befitting; who is pondered over by the Yogic lore (texts); who holds (controls) the Yuga; whose countenance is befitting; who is a Yogin; who has attributes and is devoid of stigmas.”

24-26. This *Bhairavāṣṭaka* is meritorious. This should be read in the morning. It destroys bad dreams. He will get the desired benefit. At the king's threshold, during arguments, during difficulties and times of war, when the king has angrily ordered his punishment and when one is held as a prisoner by the enemy, this should be read, for the destruction of poverty by people with great concentration. None of their desired things on the earth will be inaccessible to them.

Thus the *Bhairavāṣṭaka* ends.

27. In this Tirtha, Snāna, Dāna etc., should be performed by men who are afraid of worldly existence. When worshipped, Bhairava is the most excellent one. Hence with all efforts the Tirtha of great excellence should be resorted to.

CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

The Greatness of Nāga Tirtha

Vyāsa said:

1-2. O holy Sir, earlier the Nāga Tirtha was referred to by your renowned good self. I wish to hear further the greatness of that Tirtha also from you, O most excellent one among

those who know Brahman. At what time did this excessively glorious Tīrtha come into existence. Tell me in detail.

Sanatkumāra said:

3-4a. Listen, O Brāhmaṇa, I shall recount to you the most meritorious story of Nāga Tīrtha. It is highly destructive of sins. Merely by listening to it, a man shall be liberated from curses.

4b-5. Formerly serpents were cursed by their mother, and they slipped down. They were burnt by Janamejaya but were rescued by Āstika. Then, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, they asked the son of Jaratkāru:

Nāgas said:

6-7. O Brāhmaṇa, with your favour we have been saved from fire in this Yajña of Janamejaya in the presence of the king of Devas. O scorcher of enemies, desirous of our prosperity (mention some place) for our residence where it shall be free from fear.

Āstika said:

8-15. O excellent maternal uncles, listen to what is in your best interest. There is a holy spot known as Kuśasthalī in the beautiful Mahākālavana. To the south thereof is an eternal ancient Tīrtha. It is said that earlier it was the abode of Nāgas where Hari is present. That eternal Brahman, Hari, has resorted to Yoganidrā and lies down there. He is well-known as Śeṣaśāyī ('one who sleeps on Śeṣa') and is praised with hymns in all the worlds.

The defects of the Kalpa do not bother the people there. Sage Bakadālbhya performed penance there observing great Vratas. Lomaśa of excessive splendour and the great sage Mārkaṇḍeya who attained longevity are stationed there alone.

Due to the power of Mahākāla, Kālacakra does not function there. In that excellent Tīrtha, Kapila has attained Siddhi. From the despicable Cāṇḍāla state, Hariścandra became liberated. The excellent seven great sages attained salvation there. For this reason, may ye all take rest there forever. The defect due to your mother's curse will not harass you there.

16-18. On hearing these words of Āstika, a great sage, those excellent serpents quickly went to that place for residing there. They were Elāpatra, Kāmbala, Karkoṭaka, Dhanañjaya, Vāsuki the most excellent one among serpents, Takṣaka, Nīla, Padmaka, and Arbuda. All these serpents came here and made their own respective abodes. For a long time, they continued their Vratas.

19. O excellent one, great and beautiful Tīrthas sprang up there. They made new Kuṇḍas that became Tīrthas.

20-21. They say that these Tīrthas are destructive of great sins. They bestow great merits. There Siddhas, Gandharvas and sages of esteemed Vratas, are always served by groups of celestial damsels. Śeṣa, the great Nāga, mentioned earlier by the sage, is also present there.

22. Where the lotus-eyed Lord Viṣṇu is stationed, is lying on Śeṣa, there all the Tīrthas are always present on the earth.

23. That is well-known as Śvetadvīpa where the ground is paved with jewels and where the trees all-round are meritorious and in full bloom.

24. Birds of various kinds such as swans, Kāraṇḍas, crows, cuckoos, Sārasas (cranes) and peacocks dance about among the lotus ponds.

25. The splendid Nidhi (treasure) Mahāpadma is rendered fragrant by the wind wafting the sweet scent of blue lotuses. It is reverberating with the songs sung by Kinnaras.

26. Sura women of great culture and sophistication sport about there. It is a place adorned by beautiful Nāga girls. It is extremely wonderful.

27-28. By taking his holy bath there, a man goes to the splendid abode of Vaikuṇṭha. Where Hari, the consort of Ramā lies, there is a Tīrtha named Ramāsaras. It is extremely splendid. By taking his holy bath there a man becomes glorious. Not otherwise.

29-33. Thus, O Vyāsa, is that spot destructive of all sins. Here itself is the great Tīrtha and Āśrama (hermitage) of Bali. It is wonderful. Hari is present there. *Snāna* etc. should be performed there. Immediately a man becomes rid of all sins and purified in the soul. Those who make a gift of land of any size there attain eternal worlds and imperishable prosperity for as many years as there are hairs (on one's body).

The worship of Nāgas is to be performed on a Monday, or on the fifth day or a new-moon day in the month of Śrāvaṇa. Śrāddha is performed on a new-moon day. The Śrāddha has everlasting benefit. All desired things will be attained.

CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

The Greatness of Nṛsimha Tīrtha¹

Sanatkumāra said:

1-3. Listen further, O Vyāsa, to (the story of) an excellent Tīrtha, the most excellent one among all the Tīrthas. That Tīrtha which destroys all sins is that of the noble-souled Nṛsimha. Merely by seeing it one crosses all the sins.

Formerly there was a great king of Daityas well-known as Hiranyakaśipu. The entire Earth was once captured by that wicked one. Oppressed by the armies of the wicked Daityas, it became over-burdened. Hence she was afflicted with grief.

4-12. She (Earth) assumed the form of a cow with the face filled with tears. Along with the Devas, the Earth sought refuge in Brahmā.

On seeing the Earth overwhelmed with the burden, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, spoke thus with sweet words, in order to remove her fatigue: "O Earth, of great merit, what is helpful to you may be heard. I shall tell you the truth and what is befitting the time and place.

Formerly a severe penance, very difficult of all embodied beings to be performed, was performed by this demon. With the self severely controlled, the Upāsana of Gāyatrī was performed by him. I too was delighted in mind and hence a boon was granted to him: 'Neither during the day nor at night, neither in the atmosphere nor on the ground, neither by means of a very dry thing nor by a wet one, nor by striking with missiles and weapons, neither by Devas nor by Asuras,

1. The author narrates the story of Nṛsimha Avatāra of Viṣṇu to glorify this Tīrtha. The story is given in *Nṛsimha Purāna*, Chs. 40-44.

neither by Gandharvas nor by Yakṣas nor by Serpents nor by Kinnaras, neither by Piśācas, nor by Guhyakas and others, never by Rākṣasas, never by men nor by flocks of birds should my (Hiraṇyakaśipu's) death occur. The heroic one who will kill me along with my family, army and vehicles, with a single blow of the palm of hand shall be my ultimate death.'

I told him, 'So be it.' with the self excessively delighted at that time, O Earth. Then I went back to my world. That Daitya wields a severely terrible administration. With incomparable valour, he has become the ruler of all the world.

13-19. Only those who were authorized by him in the world became free from worries. The Lord of all the Daitya folks enjoyed the three worlds forever. Hence, you all go to Mahākālavana of the great Lord. A great Tīrtha, the most excellent one among the Tīrthas, is there, to the south of Saṅgameśvara and to the north of Karkarāja. It was on the splendid bank of Śīprā in an excellent region. It was on a par with Vaikuṅṭha. There is a great holy spot named Nṛsimha. This Tīrtha is established there.

O excellent Suras, go there and perform Snāna, Dāna and other holy rites immediately. All of you will regain your worlds."

On hearing his words, the Devas reached Mahākālavana with Indra as the leader. It was there that Śīprā of profuse waters flowed. They stayed near the banks of Nṛsimha Tīrtha for many years and performed Snāna, Dāna etc., and the worship of Nṛsimha also. By doing all this in accordance with the injunctions, they attained great Siddhis and departed from here.

20-26. In the middle of the Assembly Hall, O Vyāsa, the leading Dānava was killed by Hari, the destroyer of his enemies, in the form of Man-lion. Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed with a single blow of the hand. Thereafter, all the groups of Suras regained all their rightful positions.

Ever since then all the Suras perform the midday Upāsana of Hari at the Tīrtha where he killed the enemy.

Such a Tīrtha exists in Avantī on the earth. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, those meritorious men who perform Snāna, Dāna and other rites attain the greatest goal. Always, at all times, this Tīrtha is excellent and bestows great merit.

Even if one casually performs the worship of the intelligent

Nṛsimha on the fourteenth lunar day which happens to be the day of Nṛsimha, after performing the holy ablution if a man worships with great concentration and mental purity the Lord of Devas i.e. Nṛsimheśvara, the goddess of fortune shall undoubtedly be within the grasp of that devotee.

27. Thereafter, the devotee should visit Lord Agastyeśvara with great concentration and mental purity. O Vyāsa, nothing is seen as inaccessible to him on the earth.

28-31. It was here that Hanumān, the son of the Wind-god, attained great Siddhi. He is stationed here for the purpose of the attainment of all desired objects as Brahmācārī (celibate), an ascetic of chaste conduct and the achiever of all objects. He is a knower of the highest deity.

The son of Mitrāvaruṇa (i.e. Agastya) performed a severe penance very difficult to be performed by others, formerly near a Vaṭa tree for the sake of Siddhi. It is now called Bodhi Nyagrodha ('enlightening tree of Nyagrodha') and Agastivaṭa.

A man should perform Sāvitrī Vrata in the company of his wife. O scorcher of enemies, from Sāvitrī, he always obtains the great fortune.

32-35. In this Tīrtha, the man should perform holy ablution and make the gift of *Saubhaga* (good fortune) i.e. a bamboo basket filled with eight auspicious things (gold, ghee etc.) along with fragrant clothes. It must be given together with seven types of grains and embellished with five gems, and also scents, garlands, Maulisūtra etc. (crest jewel). A gold image of Sāvitrī should also be made in accordance with one's capacity and be given to an intelligent (Brāhmaṇa) well-versed in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. He obtains vast wealth capable of giving splendid enjoyment. After enjoying various pleasures, he shall attain heaven.

36. A woman who performs Sāvitrī Vrata becomes a favourite wife of her husband, chaste and highly fortunate. She shall never be a widow.

CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN

The Greatness of Kuṭumbēśvara

Sanatkumāra said:

1-6. Listen, O Vyāsa, to (the story of) a great Tīrtha which is very excellent and well-known. Maheśvara, the deity there, is well-renowned as Kuṭumbēśvara.

The Tīrtha there is very excellent and bestows the benefit of all the Tīrthas. By bathing in that Tīrtha a man shall certainly possess a large family.

Formerly Dakṣa, the patriarch, performed penance for the sake of a family. O Vyāsa, earlier his sixty sons had been rendered exiles (recluses) by Nārada. That pious soul (i.e. Dakṣa) was desirous of progeny and he performed the Vrata for a long time in the company of his wife. The brilliant patriarch abstained from food and controlled the sense-organs. He took his holy bath in this Tīrtha and became pure. He began to perform the Japa of the eternal Brahman. O Vyāsa, he continued his terrible penance for ten thousand years. By the power of the Tīrtha, he obtained a big family of progeny. Dakṣa of great exploits became renowned as Prajāpati (Patriarch).

7. Afterwards Brahmā too performed a very difficult penance there. Instantly Vidhi (i.e. the Creator) attained a form devoid of stigma and impurity.

8. Mahādeva too attained the state of Brahman there itself. O excellent one, the Liṅga having four faces is seen here even today.

9. The Goddess seated on the auspicious Piṭha (pedestal) and well-known as Bhadrakālī, O Vyāsa, always enjoys (herself) there performing Vratas.

10-12. There itself, at the threshold, stands Bhairava, the Kṣetrapālaka. Earlier he had been afflicted by the foremost among the Daityas and had become lame. He was brought up by the Goddess like her own son. He stands at that place always.

All the groups of the Devas too are (established) installed in that Tīrtha. Sages of great fortune come to the lake that bestows many sons. During all the *Parvas* (festival days) they

come there for performing Sandhyā prayers.

13. Those men of good conduct who take their holy dip in this Tīrtha will not find anything difficult of access in the course of any birth they may take.

14-16. At the time of great calamities and terrible pestilence, *Havana* is performed by his devotees with mustard, Rājika (black mustard), barley grain, milk pudding and different kinds of food offerings. No evil occurs to them. In the course of all adversities like famine, banishment from kingdom, severely terrible battle etc., one should with great concentration and mental purity worship Kṣetrapāla. Undoubtedly he becomes rid of all miseries.

17-18. After taking the holy bath in the Kuṭumbaka Tīrtha and worshipping Maheśvara, a person should make a gift of a Kūṣmāṇḍaka (a kind of white gourd) to an ascetic Brāhmaṇa along with gold, jewels, pearls, garments and ornaments. The man shall be blessed with a large family and endowed with wealth and foodgrain.

19. The fourteenth day in the bright half of Phālguna with a touch of Trayodaśī (thirteenth lunar day), O Vyāsa, is called Śivarātri.

20-22. On that day, a man should take his holy bath and keep awake at night. He should devoutly worship the great deity Giriśa along with his attendants, offering *Bilvodaka* (water with Bilva leaves), scents, many fruits and flowers, incense, lamps, Naivedyas, garments, ornaments etc. His sin becomes destroyed. He is honoured in Śivaloka. The man gets as much merit as one who observes the Ekādāsī Vrata twelve times.

23-25. For every moment of his keeping awake, he obtains the benefit of one horse sacrifice. Afterwards in the morning, he should get up early and perform Snāna, Dāna and other rites duly. O Vyāsa, he should duly worship Śiva and feed seven Brāhmaṇas.

Listen to the fruit of his meritorious act. He obtains the benefit of gifting fourteen thousand tawny cows along with their calves and also the benefit of a thousand Vājapeya sacrifices. Not otherwise.

CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Akhaṇḍeśvara

Sanatkumāra said:

1-8a. Listen, O Vyāsa, to the (story of) highly meritorious and extremely splendid Tīrtha named Devaprayāga. It is destructive of all sins.

O scorcher of enemies, there where the Tīrtha is, is the great spot of Devas. The Tīrtha is established to the north of Soma Tīrtha, to the south of Prayāga and to the east of Śīpā.

After taking holy bath in the Tīrtha, a man should visit the excellent Sura named Lord Mādhava. He is the bestower of all benefits. The Lord of Devas, the Lord of cosmos, grants him all desired objects.

Ānandabhairava there is bowed to by all the Devas. Merely by visiting him, one can destroy one's sins entirely, O Vyāsa. Never can he be tortured by Bhairava. At the gateway of heaven, O Vyāsa, the man becomes fearless.

The combination of the (following) ten, O dear one, is called *Daśālā*¹: Jyeṣṭha month, bright half, tenth day, Budha (Wednesday), Hasta constellation, Garānanda Yoga (astronomical combination), Vyatīpāta, moon in Virgo, sun in the Vṛṣa zodiac (Taurus). At that time was Gaṅgā born. It is an auspicious occasion. If a man takes his holy bath on that day, he shall obtain the benefit of all the Tīrthas.

8b-9a. Henceforth, O Vyāsa, listen to the (story of a) great Tīrtha called Akhaṇḍa.

If one merely listens to it he shall avert the fault of *Vratabhāṅga* (interruption or break in Vratas).

9b-15. Once there was a Brāhmaṇa who was the most excellent one among the knowers of Brahman. He was well-known as Dharmaśarman. He was pure and was always engaged in good conduct. He used to observe many Vratas. He was a master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas and had perfect control over his senses. But on account of some default, he could never conclude any Vrata properly.

1. Also called *Daśaharā*.

Thus much time elapsed. Once Nārada of divine vision and great penance came to his house as a guest, O Brāhmaṇa.

The Brāhmaṇa thereupon got up with great respect. He duly received Nārada, O great one, in the manner laid down in the injunctions. After the adoration, the excellent Brāhmaṇa asked the excellent sage: "O holy one, everything is known to you by means of your mind's eye (intellectual vision). O sinless one, but on our part, I fear, there has been some fault. Due to the association of some sin there was interruption in the Vratas, certainly. O Lord, tell me the cause thereof. What is the fault involved here?"

Nārada said:

16-20. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, what was formerly committed by you may be heard. You were a well-known Brāhmaṇa in Mahārāṣṭra, addicted to the habit of hoarding wealth. This Brāhmaṇa was named Brahmadata. He used to censure Vedas and Brāhmaṇas. He was avaricious of wealth. He was aggressive to others. He was averse to the performance of all pious rites. He was an atheist not believing in Devas and Tīrthas. He used to take away other people's wealth. He was after the wives of others. He was a robber and gamester. As old age set in, he lost his wealth. He began to wander here and there, as a base and fallen man. He came to the banks of a river in great agitation with the intent of thievery. He mixed with travellers. After some time, the evil, hated one became afflicted with sickness and died.

21. The Brāhmaṇa was immediately taken to Saṁyamini by the servants of Yama. The Brāhmaṇa, the perpetrator of many sins, came to the city of King Yama.

22. He was seen by Dharmarāja. On seeing the sinner he suddenly spoke out the following words of righteousness:

23-27. "Whatever was done by him were evil acts, sins, one and all. The sinner died on the banks of Godāvāri river. There is no reason for us to take action. On the banks of Gautamī, three and a half crore of Tīrthas come day and night when Bṛhaspati (Jupiter) is in Leo. Contact with them took place in his body through wind. Due to the efficacy of that merit again, there is so sufficient reason that can be offered by us to deal with him. He should not be seized by you. Let

him be released, O my servants and attendants.”

Thus the Brāhmaṇa was released by them. He was again born as a Brāhmaṇa. It is due to the evils (of those years) that you have become a *Vrata-bhaṅgī* (one with broken Vratas).

The Brāhmaṇa said:

28-29. O holy Sir, by what means can all the sins be wiped off? What penance, what Dāna and what Tīrtha has to be resorted to? What is the merit whereby *Vratabhāṅga* can be averted?

Nārada said:

30-33. Listen, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, Mahākālavana is well-known and it is there that there is a lake called Rudrasaras by the sage, the knower of truth. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, there are crores and crores of excellent Tīrthas there.

Hence, O Brāhmaṇa, it has become famous as the eternal Koṭi Tīrtha. To the north of that Tīrtha, there is another Tīrtha that bestows all desires. It is well-known by the name Akhaṇḍasaras. It is in the vicinity of Akhaṇḍeśvara. By merely visiting it, one shall obtain the benefit of all Yajñas. Hence, O dear one, go there by all means. Do not delay.

34-35. On hearing his words, the Brāhmaṇa went to Kumudvatī. He took his bath in Akhaṇḍasaras, O Vyāsa, visited Lord Maheśvara and instantly attained the worlds of meritorious persons, O Vyāsa. Such is the excellent great Tīrtha Akhaṇḍeśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

The Greatness of Karkarāja Tīrtha

Sanatkumāra said:

1. Listen further to the description of a great Tīrtha that accords the benefit of all Tīrthas. Formerly it was gloriously described by Brahmā when Markaṇḍeya asked him about it.

2. Listen, O dear one. There is a very divine river on the earth named Śīprā. The excellent Tīrtha well-known as Karkarāja is on its banks.

3-7. By merely visiting it, great sins can be destroyed. All mental aberrations too are destroyed. Candra is born of Mānasa. The Sun during his southern transit went to his (i.e. of the Moon) place. The three Ṛtus covering this period are collectively called Vidhūmrārcis. Those who die then even if they are Yogins, do not get salvation. They become active in this world itself. Those men who do not perform Vratas during the four months when Hari is asleep, O dear one, never attain good goal. I tell you the truth. It is to redeem those who die during the Cāturmāsya period (four months) and in Dakṣiṇāyana (southern transit of the Sun) that this Tīrtha has been created. This Tīrtha is well-known and praised in all the worlds. It is named Karkarāja.

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

8-9. O holy Sir, everything here, the entire world consisting of the mobile and immobile beings, has been created by you who have the Cosmic form, O Lord of the Cosmos. There are certain injunctions in the Smṛti texts regarding the holy rites to be performed during Cāturmāsya when Hari is asleep, O most excellent one among the knowers of Brahman. I wish to hear about them from you.

Brahmā said:

10. Listen, O dear one, to the great merit, the splendid benefit derived from Cāturmāsya. On hearing this, salvation cannot be inaccessible to men in Bharat Khaṇḍa.

11. This Lord is the bestower of liberation. He is the cause of redemption from worldly existence. Merely by remembering him, all sins can be destroyed.

12. Human birth is very difficult to obtain. There too nobility of birth. There again the state of having control over sense-organs and there the splendid association with the good.

13. Where there is no association with saintly people, the devotion to Viṣṇu and Vratas is impossible. Particularly in Cāturmāsya, a person who observes Viṣṇu Vrata is auspicious.

14-15. Futile indeed is the merit of that person who does not observe Vrata in Cāturmāsya. When Cāturmāsya has arrived all the Tīrthas and meritorious shrines are stationed

(function) with the support of Viṣṇu. That Viṣṇu always depends upon the excellent Tīrtha Karkarāja.

16. Splendid indeed is the life of that person with a well-nourished body by whom Hari is always adored when Cāturmāsya has arrived.

17-22. The Devas remain contented and delighted with him and they bestow boons on him as long as he lives. After attaining a human body, if one is averse to Cāturmāsya (*Vrata*), they say that undoubtedly he will incur hundreds of sins located in his body.

Human birth is rarely achieved in the world and devotion to Hari is still rare. Further (rarer) (is it) in Cāturmāsya, particularly when Lord Janārdana is asleep.

O excellent Brāhmaṇa, after taking the holy bath in Cāturmāsya in Karkarāja, a man attains the benefit of all Kratus and rejoices in heaven like a Deva.

The special opportunity to take the holy bath when the Sun is in Cancer (zodiac) is inaccessible to all creatures including Suras, Asuras and human beings.

One can attain the path of salvation by purifying the body at the outset and that too in a rivulet, well, tank or lake. Hence that has been considered more meritorious by Suras and Asuras. If a person regularly takes his holy bath there, his sins get destroyed.

23-27. It has been proclaimed by Suras and Asuras that a river is more meritorious than that (i.e. tank etc.). If a person takes his holy bath in Cāturmāsya in Puṣkara or Prayāga or wherever there is a great water reservoir, his merit is said to be more than that.

If a person can take his holy bath at least one day during Cāturmāsya, in Revā, in the holy spot of Bhāskarakṣetra or in the confluence with the sea in the east, he will never experience misery.

If a person takes his holy bath for three days with great mental concentration and purity in Narmadā when Lord Jagannātha is asleep, his sin goes away in a thousand pieces. A person who takes his holy bath at sunrise in Godāvārī for a fortnight, breaks through his body born of Karma and attains the same world as that of Viṣṇu. That in Karkarāja in Avantī will transform the man into Viṣṇu himself. One should

not waste even a moment or half of a moment during Cāturmāsya.

28. I do not know adequately how much more will be his merit. What and of what nature is the benefit declared by sages, if a person takes bath with gingelly seeds water mixed with Āmalaka (Indian gooseberry) and Bilva leaves as well?

29. If a person regularly goes near a well and remembers Gaṅgā, it becomes Gaṅgā-water and he should take his holy bath thereby.

30. Gaṅgā flows from the great toe of the foot of the Lord of Devas. It is declared as the destroyer of sins forever and particularly so during Cāturmāsya.

31. During Cāturmāsya, Lord Nārāyaṇa stays in water. That holy bath which is in contact with a part of the refulgence of Viṣṇu is superior to (one) in all other Tīrthas.

32. *Snāna* has to be performed in ten ways. It is of great benefit when done with (the utterance of) the name of Viṣṇu, particularly when the Lord is asleep. The man attains Devahood.

33. A holy rite, a pious activity, if performed without a bath becomes futile to a Brāhmaṇa. Rākṣasas take it (the fruit) over.

34. Through *Snāna* one attains the truth. The eternal Dharma (piety) lies in truth. After attaining the path to salvation through Dharma, one never suffers again.

35. People may be meritorious and knower of the spirit (soul); they may be masters of Vedānta; still their activities, making gifts (etc.); become purified through *Snāna* only.

36. Indeed Hari occupies the body of one who has taken his holy bath. All the rites yield full benefit only (through *Snāna*).

37. Taking bath in water during Cāturmāsya is conducive to the destruction of all sins and propitiation of all deities. It causes the destruction of all sins.

38. One should not take bath at night nor in Sandhyā (dusk) except when there is an eclipse. One should not take bath with hot water at night. No purity accrues (results) thereby.

39. In all rites purification occurs as laid down, through viewing the Sun. Particularly during Cāturmāsya purity occurs through water.

40. When one is not physically strong, one becomes pure by means of *Bhasmasnāna* (bath through ash smeared over the

body). O eminent Brāhmaṇa, he may become pure through Mantra Snāna or the water from the feet of Viṣṇu.

41. Snāna should be taken in front of Nārāyaṇa in a holy spot, Tīrtha and rivers, particularly in the excellent Tīrtha named Karka on Śīprā.

42. A man who regularly bathes, goes to the region of Viṣṇu. Hence, O excellent Bhārgava, go there. Do not tarry long.

43. All the Tīrthas and holy shrines all over the earth lie (exist) always in the waters of Karkarāja.

44. If men perform Snāna when the Sun is in Cancer (zodiac) they will never come back (from salvation) even after hundreds of crores of Kalpas.

45. When Cāturmāsya comes, I stay there itself. There is no river as meritorious as Revā in the whole of the Cosmic Egg (or) on the earth.

46. There is no Lord other than Maheśa; there is no other bestower of salvation than Janārdana; there is no city equal to Ujjayinī bestowing the boon of whatever is desired.

47. O dear one, there is no other Tīrtha on a par with Karkarāja on the earth. By the mere vision thereof, a man attains salvation.

48. Thus, O Vyāsa, it was narrated by Brahmā to Bhārgava. Hence, with all effort, go to Mahākālavana.

49. To us also staying there alone is highly splendid during the Cāturmāsya when Hari is asleep, till Prabodhinī arrives (eleventh day in the bright half of Kārttika).

50-52. Till then undoubtedly there is salvation there. If one gives up the body during Cāturmāsya when Hari is asleep, one will stay in Yamaloka for a long time. There is no doubt about it. Hence, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, till the Prabodhinī Dvādaśī (twelfth lunar day) comes, one shall stake the soul in a part of Tulasī leaf or Śāligrāma or a temple and unite it therewith.

53-57. Afterwards he should redeem himself by offering ghee or gold. The fault arising from Cāturmāsya does not affect a man who takes his holy bath in the waters of Śīprā in Karkarāja. Thus, O Vyāsa, this excellent Tīrtha yields the benefit of all the Tīrthas. All the Tīrthas, rivers and seas on

the earth come here during Cāturmāsya, O excellent Brāhmaṇa. Hence that Tīrtha Karkarāja is proclaimed as the most excellent Tīrtha.

If people listen to or narrate this meritorious story, they will never have the fault arising from Cāturmāsya.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

Index of All Tīrthas (in this Text)

Sanatkumāra said:

1. To the south of Meru and to the north of Dugdha-kuṇḍa, there is the excellent mountain Ṛṣabha that is resorted to by Devas and Gandharvas.

2. There is a lake named Ramyasaras, O Brāhmaṇa, at that place. It bestows all desired things. The beautiful wives of Devas sport about there always.

3. By taking his holy bath in the Tīrtha there, a man becomes fortunate and charming. He will be greatly renowned on the earth and will be sporting with Devas.

4-10. If the eighth day of the bright half of the month of Bhādrapada coincides with Mairarkṣa (Constellation Anurādhā), on that day a person should come here and perform *Snāna*, *Dāna* and other rites, O Vyāsa. They (such persons) attain eternal worlds.

To the north-east of Meru, there is a divine Tīrtha of great splendour. It is famous by the name of Bindusaras. It bestows the boon of all desired objects. Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, the meritorious Śarayū with plenty of water—these excellent rivers go there, O son of Satyavatī.

Siddhas, Sādhyas and ascetics observing great Vratas, perform the worship of that Tīrtha always. By taking his holy bath in that Tīrtha a man certainly attains all objects.

The fourth day in the bright half of Bhādrapada is said to be Siddha (full achievement). That is the day of nativity of Gaṇādhīpa. He is reputed as Manaḥkāmeśvara (Lord of all mental desires). He is the bestower of the boon of all desired objects. A man should take his holy bath in the Tīrtha there

and visit Lord Gaṇeśvara. He shall obtain hundreds of desires and can move anywhere he pleases.

Vyāsa said:

11-12. How many Tīrthas and shrines of deities are there in this splendid holy spot, the excellent Mahākālavana, O holy Brāhmaṇa? How many of them are well-known? Tell us everything in detail.

Sanatkumāra said:

13-16. Listen, O Vyāsa, O most excellent one among sages, to the great story that dispels sins. O great sage, even the Four-faced Self-born Lord (Brahmā) cannot by any means describe all the Liṅgas and Tīrthas in Avantī in the course of sixty thousand years.

No one can say how many drops fall down from clusters of clouds, how many blades of grass there are on the earth, how many sand-particles there are on the ground and how many luminaries are there in the sky. O ascetic, there is no limit to the number of Tīrthas and Liṅgas in Avantī.

17-24. This city is one of the Tīrthas both in the sky and on the earth. Everything everywhere is a Tīrtha: the tanks, wells, lakes etc., springs, rivulets, rivers, ponds etc. dug up there are Tīrthas themselves. Still in the context of Devayātrā (pilgrimage) know the relevant ones from me. I shall tell you the chief ones on knowing which you will be liberated from the auspicious and inauspicious things previously contracted.

A person should get up early in the morning regularly and remain pure mentally and physically. Remembering Viṣṇu he should complete the routine duties as he pleases. Then he should take all scents, gingelly seeds, raw rice-grains etc., and take his holy dip in Rudrasaras. There itself he should observe the Vrata.

Devayātrā is praiseworthy in the months of Ūrja and Mādhava, Vaiśākha and Aṣāḍha and especially on Śivarātri day. The holy ablution and the worship of the deity should be performed in the respective Tīrtha and the shrine nearby. He who performs everything in accordance with the injunctions obtains all benefits. Hence one should perform Devayātrā (pilgrimage, religious procession).

Vyāsa said:

25. O holy Brāhmaṇa, how should a man perform Devayātrā? O ascetic, I wish to know everything.

Sanatkumāra said:

26. Listen, O Vyāsa; I shall mention a great secret as I have heard from the conversation of Umā and Maheśvara in regard to the rites of Devayātrā etc.

Umā said:

27. O Lord Maheśvara, may the power of this region be told. How many Tīrthas are there, and how many Liṅgas are there? O great one, O eloquent one, tell me from the very beginning.

Īśvara said:

28-33. Listen, O goddess, with concentration to the sin-destroying power. The first Kṣetra, O great goddess, is always a great favourite of mine. It is here that the highly meritorious Śīprā, the divine beloved Navanadī, Nīlagaṅgā confluence and the river Gandhavatī flow. In Kumudvatī, O fair lady of excellent Vratas, these four rivers are my favourites. The Īśvaras are eighty-four; there are eight Bhairavas, eleven Rudras and twelve Ādityas. Here there are six Vināyakas and twenty-four Devīs. That is why, O fair lady, I have come here to the excellent Mahākālavana.

Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others are installed here, O splendid one. O Devī, this holy spot extending to a Yojana is pervaded by Devas.

34-36. Viṣṇu (shrines) are ten. Listen to their names: Vāsudeva, Ananta, Balarāma, Janārdana, Nārāyaṇa, Hṛṣīkeśa, Vārāha, Dharaṇīdhara, Viṣṇu in the form of Vāmana and Śeṣaśāyī the abode of Śrī. These ten Vaiṣṇava shrines are mentioned as great removers of all sins.

Umā said:

37-38. O Lord, I wish to hear in the proper order about all the deities, the Lords of Suras, who are stationed in the beautiful Mahākālavana. Tell the names of all these: Vināyakas,

Bhairavas, Devīs, the sons of Pavana, (i.e. different shrines of Hanumān), Rudra, Ādityas and others.

Īśvara said:

39-47. There are six great (shrines) of Vināyakas who destroy obstacles: Ṛddhida, Siddhida, Kāmada Gaṇādhīpa, Vighnahā, Pramodī and Caturthīvratakapiya.

The following are eight Mothers: Umā, Caṇḍī, Īśvarī, Gaurī, Ṛddhidā, Siddhidā, Vaṭayakṣiṇī and Vīrabhadrā.

There are various Devīs: Mahāmāyā and Satī are famous. Kapālamātrkā, Āmbikā, Śītalā, Ekānamśā, Siddhidā, Brahmāṇī, Pārvatī, Yoginī, Yogaśālīnī, Kaumārī, Bhagavatī, the six Kṛttikās, the Carpaṭāmātrkā and Vaṭamātrṣ are famous. Sarasvatī and Mahālakṣmī are famous. Yoginīmātrkā are famous. They are declared as numbering sixty-four. Kālikā, Mahākālī, Cāmuṇḍā, Brahmācāriṇī, Devī called Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Vindhyaśinī, Āmbā, Āmbālikā and twenty-four others.

The Pavanātmajas are four: Hanumān, Brahmācārī, Kumāra and Mahābalī. They have been mentioned to you by me.

48-52. There are eight Bhairavas famous as great removers of great sins, viz. Daṇḍapāṇi the valorous, Mahābhairavasitāsita, Baṭuka, Bālaka, Nandin, Pañcāśatika (the sixth), Kālabhairava who is very famous and the eighth one Kṣetrapāla.

The Rudras, eleven in number, are mentioned as follows: Kapardī, Kapālī, Kalānātha, Vṛṣāsana, Tryāmbaka, Śūlapāṇi, Cīravāśas, Digāmbara, Girīśa, Kāmacārī and Sarva with ornaments in all the limbs. They destroy enemies.

The following are the twelve great Ādityas. They remove all diseases. They (Ādityas) are: Aruṇa, Sūrya, Vedāṅga, Bhānu, Indra, Ravi, Amśumān, Suvarṇaretas, Ahaḥkartā, Mitra, Viṣṇu and Sanātana.

53. O daughter of Himācala, listen to the names of the eighty-four Liṅgas, the chief of whom is Agastyēśvara. They are:

54-83. Agastyēśvara has already been mentioned. Thereafter is Guheśvara. Then Ḍhuṇḍheśvara is mentioned. O lady, then Ḍamarukeśvara. Anādikalpeśvara, Śāmbhu. The great Svarṇajāleśvara. Lord Triviṣṭapeśvara. One called Kapāleśvara. Karkoṭakeśvara Śāmbhu. Thereafter Siddheśvara. Svargadvāreśvara Rudra. Another one Lokapāleśvara. One famous as Kāmeśvara.

Thereafter Kuṭumbēśvara. The famous Indradyumneśvara. Thereafter Īsāneśa. One famous as Apsareśvara. Kalkaleśvara. Lord Nāgacaṇḍeśvara. Another one Divāpāhara. Pratihāreśvara. Thereafter Kukkuṭeśa. The meritorious Meghanādeśvara. The great Mahākāleśvara. One mentioned as Mukteśvara. Thereafter Someśvara. Lord Anarakeśvara. Thereafter Jaṭeśvara. The great Lord Rāmeśvara. Thereafter Cyavaneśa. One mentioned as Akhaṇḍeśa. Thereafter Pattaneśa is remembered. Then Ānandeśa is mentioned. Thereafter Kanthaḍeśa. One famous as Indreśvara. Then Mārkaṇḍeśa. One mentioned as Śiveśvara. Thereafter Kusumeśa. One famous as Akrūreśa. Thereafter Kuṇḍeśvara. One named as Lumpeśvara. Thereafter Gaṅgeśvara. One famous as Śūleśvara. Then Omkāreśa is remembered. The great Rudra Kaṅtakeśa. Thereafter Simheśvara. The great Lord Revanteśvara along with Ghaṅṭeśvara. The great Lord Prayāgeśvara. Thereafter Siddheśvara. The great Lord Mātaṅgeśvara. Then the great Saubhāgyeśa. One famous as Rūpeśvara. Thereafter Brahmeśvara. Then the Lord Jalpeśvara. Kedāreśvara. Piśāceśvaraśāmbhu; then the great Saṅgameśa. The famous Durdharṣeśa. Then Caṇḍādityeśvara. The great Karabheśvara has been mentioned. Rājasthaleśvara Śiva. Then Vaḍaleśvara is mentioned. Then Aruṇeśa is remembered. Lord Puṣpadanteśvara. Thereafter Avimukteśvara. Lord Hanumanteśvara. Thereafter Viśveśvara. One famous as Svapneśvara. Thereafter the great Siddheśvara. Lord Nilakaṅṭheśvara. Thereafter Sthāvareśa. One mentioned as Kāmeśvara. Thereafter Pratihāreśvara. Paśupatiśvara has been mentioned. Thereafter is the great Viśveśvara. Svarṇajāleśvara is mentioned. Thereafter Manaḥkāmeśvara. This deity named Durvāseśvara. Thereafter Nāgacaṇḍeśvara, Kharpareśa is famous. Thereafter Brahmeśvara. Pātāleśvara has been mentioned. Then the great Gupteśvara. One called Kapileśvara. The great Yogayogeśvara. One famous as Bhīmeśvara. Another named Dhanuṣsahasra. Another one is mentioned as Agnīśvara. Then the great Deveśvara. One named Dvādaśārka. Daśāśvamedhikeśvara. Gadādhareśvara is famous. Śāmbhurāṭ named Vaijanātha. Somanātheśvara is famous. Then the great Ghuṣmeśvara. One named Bhimaśāṅkara. Then the great Ghaṅṭeśvara. One named Ūṣareśvara. The great Candrādityeśvara. Keśavārka is mentioned. The great Śaktibhedeśvara. The great Lord Rāmeśvara, Vālmīkeśvaraśāṅkara. Jyāleśvara Śiva has been

mentioned. Then the great Abhayeśa. Vighnahasteśvara has been mentioned. Then the great Cañcaleśa. One famous as Puruṣottama. Then the great Vireśvara. Karṇeśvara is famous. Thereafter Pṛthukeśa. Ānandeśa is famous. Then the great Koṭeśvara. Avimukteśvara has been mentioned. Hanumatkeśvara is great. One famous as Vimaleśvara. Then the great Candreśvara. Bindukeśa is famous. One named Vālukeśvara. The Lord Bṛhaspatiśvara. Then Asaṁkhyāteśvara.

84. O excellent one, all the Tīrthas and all the Liṅgas installed there should be adored and bowed to.

85-89. The Dvārapālas are known as four (as mentioned) by great men. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, one famous as Piṅgaleśvara is in the eastern gate. Similarly in the southern gate is Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara. One famous as Bilvākeśvara has occupied the western door. Then Dardureśvara is mentioned as stationed in the northern gate. These and many others are the Lords of the universe and are called Liṅgas in the beautiful Mahākālavana. They are sanctifying, sixty crores of thousands and sixty crores of hundreds in number. O Vyāsa, there is no reckoning of the number of Liṅgas in Mahākālavana. Yet they have been mentioned on the basis of their importance.

90. The respective Deva and the Tīrtha attached to him and named as such, should be resorted to. After the holy bath and making the gifts, one shall obtain the benefit of that Tīrtha.

91-94. Then the meritorious nine Planets are mentioned formerly, O sinless one. Listen to their names and the meritorious Tīrthas. They are famous as Narāditya, Someśvara. Then the great one, Maṅgaleśvara has been mentioned; thereafter Budheśvara, Bṛhaspatiśvara is mentioned. Then Śukreśvara Śiva. Mahādeva has been mentioned by the great sages as Sthāvareśvara. Then Rāhu and Ketu are mentioned. They have Tīrthas, O excellent one. By taking the holy dip in the different Tīrthas, one is liberated from all sins.

95. The Planets bestow kingdom. The Planets take away the kingdom. All the three worlds are pervaded by the Planets, the worlds including mobile and immobile beings.

96. A man should take the holy dip in the Tīrthas of the Planets and worship the Planets. He will never be harassed by the Planets.

97. Thus, O Vyāsa, the Devas and Tīrthas have been mentioned by me. The Yātrā is excellent and meritorious, sacred and destructive of sins.

98. The Devayātrā is glorified for redemption from severe afflictions and Planets, poverty and great adversities.

99-101. Those excellent men who always perform the shorter Yātrā within the holy spot (antargṛhī) will not find anything difficult to get in the three worlds.

One without a son gets a son; one devoid of wealth shall get wealth. A Brāhmaṇa becomes learned; a Kṣatriya becomes victorious. His progeny is everlasting (unending) and is honoured in Śivaloka.

CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

The Glory of Avantīkṣetra

Vyāsa said:

1-2. O holy Sir, everything has been mentioned by Your Holiness having divine form, regarding the greatness of Avantī Tīrtha which is sacred and approved by the Vedas. I wish to hear further from you, O most excellent one among the knowers of Brahman. O Excellent one of good Vratas, how many Tīrthas are there in the beautiful Mahākālavana in the country of Avantī?

Sanatkumāra said:

3-4. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, may the great story that dispels sins be heard. During a dialogue between Umā and Maheśvara in the presence of Nārada, the intelligent one, this question was put by Nārada.

Nārada said:

5-6. O Lord, I wish to hear. Kindly describe to me in detail all the Tīrthas that are in the splendid Mahākālavana.

O sinless Brāhmaṇa, on being asked thus formerly by Nārada,

Hara in the company of Umā, spoke thus in sweet words:

Śrī Mahādeva said:

7. Listen, O excellent sage; in the splendid Mahākālavana there are many Tīrthas. O sage of holy rites, I shall mention them to you.

8-13. Whatever Tīrthas are on the earth such as Puṣkara etc., all those are present in the excellent Mahākālavana.

Innumerable thousands and crores and crores of them, O excellent one, reside in Rudrasaras. Hence it is to be Koṭi Tīrtha.

Kinnaras shower drops of snow on the mountain. They are seen in Hemanta in the Tīrtha Piśācamōcana. I do not know the number of the Tīrthas on the earth, O excellent one. I do not know how many Tīrthas and Liṅgas are there. Still I shall name the important ones.

O excellent Brāhmaṇa, as many days in a year there are so many famous Liṅgas should be obtained (adorned duly). When the year is over, the pilgrimage of Avantī is completed.

14-19. He who makes this pilgrimage duly shall become Śāmbhu himself.

In Avantī, within five days in Vaiśākha, one can get all the benefit that is obtained by residing in Kāśī for thousands of Manvantaras.

Pilgrimage to Avantī must be performed assiduously by one desirous of salvation.

In the month of Mādhava too, one should perform Avantī Snāna particularly. In the month of Vaiśākha, O Vyāsa, a man should observe the *Samvatsaravrata* (Vrata which lasts one year) and take holy dips in every Tīrtha duly. After making all gifts he enjoys the entire benefit. After enjoying vast (ample) pleasures, he is honoured in Śivaloka.

This Māhātmya is conducive to increase devotion to Śiva. It causes fame and increases merit. He who devoutly listens or narrates (this) shall uplift the family and will go to the region of Hari.

:: End of Avantikṣetra-Māhātmya ::

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