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THE SKANDA-PURĀṆA

PART XXII

Translated and Annotated by

SHRIDHAR BALOONI

PRATOSH PANDA

Book VII: Prabhāsakhaṇḍa

Section III: Arbuda Khaṇḍa

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden at the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive deep into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which keeps on changing with the passage of time. 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. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium expression. Therefore, we have started the series of *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* under which we plan to publish Purāṇas in English translation.

Acknowledgement

It is our pleasant duty to put on record our sincere thanks to Dr. R.N. Dandekar and the UNESCO authorities for their kind encouragement and valuable help in the publication of the volumes in this series.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—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 Purāṇas</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 Series</i> , MLBD, Delhi
AP	<i>Agni Purāṇa</i> , Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
AV	<i>Atharva Veda</i> , Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
BdP	<i>Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa</i> , MLBD, Delhi, 1973
BG	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
BhP	<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i> , Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br	<i>Brāhmaṇa</i> (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BsP	<i>Bhaviṣya Puraṇa</i> , Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BVP	<i>Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa</i> , GM, 1955-57
CC	<i>Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi</i> by Hemādri
CVS	<i>Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra</i> by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	<i>Devi Bhāgavata</i> , GM, 1960-61
De or	<i>The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval</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 Purāṇa</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>Purāṇa</i> (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	<i>Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra</i>
KP	<i>Kūrma Purāṇa</i> , Venkatesvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	<i>Liṅga Purāṇa</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' Sanskrit-English Dictionary, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	<i>Nāradya or Nārada Purāṇa</i> , Venkatesvara Press, Bombay
PdP	<i>Padma Purāṇa</i> , GM, 1957-59
PE	<i>Purāṇic Encyclopaedia</i> , V. Mani, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	<i>Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs</i> 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 Rāmāyana</i>
VdP	<i>Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa</i>
VmP	<i>Vāmana Purāṇa</i>
VP	<i>Viṣṇu Purāṇa</i>
VrP	<i>Varāha Purāṇa</i>

SKANDA PURĀṆA

Book VII: Prabhāsakhaṇḍa Section III: Arbuda Khaṇḍa

CHAPTER ONE

A Hollow Near the Hermitage of Vasiṣṭha

Obeisance to gracious Gaṇeśa. Now the *third section of Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa* entitled *Arbuda Khaṇḍa* starts.

Vyāsa said:

1. Obeisance to that endless, subtle, pure, God of gods, the creator knowable through the means of knowledge, and the cosmic-formed Śaṁkara.

The Sages said:

2-3. O Sūta! You have already described the Lunar and Solar races in a detailed manner. You have also described all the Ages of Manu and the different types of creations. Now, we want to hear about the greatness of the principal places of pilgrimage. O Sūta of great intelligence! which are the auspicious places of pilgrimage on this earth?

Sūta said:

4. There are many centers of pilgrimage in this world which cannot be counted. Their number has been stated to be three and a half crore in olden times.

5-7. Different regions, rivers, mountains and large rivers have attained distinguished and exalted position through the austerities and heroic acts of sages. Among these is a place of pilgrimage named Arbuda which is free from sins, destroyer of all sins and exempted from the touch of vices of the Age of Kali through the influence of Sage Vasiṣṭha. All places of pilgrimage purify by means of offering of free gifts and bathing. But all the sins of humans get destroyed by a mere sight of Arbuda from a distance.

The sages said:

8-9. What are the dimensions of this Arbuda mountain? Where is it situated? How could it get the fame by the greatness of Vasiṣṭha? Which are the main places of pilgrimage on this Arbuda? Please explain in details. We have a great curiosity to know.

Sūta said:

10. O great Brāhmaṇas! I describe the sin-destroying story of Arbuda mountain, the way I have heard.

11-13. Vasiṣṭha, the son of Brahmā, was a divine sage. Descending on earth, he performed severe austerities. He used to live in open during rains and in water during winter. He used to take fixed food and kept himself engaged in the welfare of all living beings. Undergoing the pain of self-torment under five fires during summer, he used to keep himself continuously engaged in muttering names of deities and in making offerings to fire. He had a wish-fulfilling milch cow named Nandinī with him.

14. Once while wandering about on earth, she fell into a deep and dark cleft affected by extreme thirst.

15. Coinciding this, the Sun god set down but the cow did not return to the hermitage.

16. Everyday in the morning and in the evening Vasiṣṭha, the observer of religious vow used to perform the ritual of offering oblation to fire with the milk of that cow.

17. Now worried with the fear of atonement, Vasiṣṭha went in search of the cow in the higher and lower regions of that mountain.

18. Going near that ditch, he heard the painful voice of the cow. He asked the auspicious cow, "How could you fall down here?"

19-20. Becoming nervous as to how offering oblation to the sacrificial fire could be continued, I have come out to see you." The cow said, "I have fallen down here due to my desire to have grass. Please save me from this difficult, intolerable pain." Having heard those words of hers, Sage Vasiṣṭha, resorted to meditation.

21-23. He meditated on the (divine) river Sarasvatī, the purifier of all the three worlds. She on being meditated on by that sage filled the ditch completely at once with pure water. The ditch having thus been completely filled, Nandinī then came out of it. Becoming happy, the cow came back to the hermitage with the sage.

24-27. That great sage saw depth in the middle of the ditch and he, the wise one, thought of filling it up. O Brāhmaṇas! a thought that this ditch be filled up with stones brought from the mountain dawned on Vasiṣṭha and he thought, "Let me proceed towards Himālaya soon. Himālaya will send stones here. This ditch will get filled up by this great soul." Sage Vasiṣṭha then went to Himālaya. Having seen Vasiṣṭha coming, the Himālaya mountain became happy. Then having received him by washing of feet and making deserving offering he said:

28-29. "Welcome to you, O great sage! My life has become fruitful today that you, the one adorable to all gods, have arrived at my house today. O great sage! Tell me the job to be done, any job, which I, of course, will do, even by sacrificing my life for your sake."

30-32. Vasiṣṭha said: "There is a dangerous hollow near my hermitage. Nandinī, my best cow, had fallen into it. I took her out with great effort. I have come to you with the fear that she may fall into it again. O Lord of the Earth! No one else is able to accomplish this task (of filling the hollow). Hence, O great one, please send any mountain there, by which the hollow gets filled up. Send something like this."

33. Himālaya said: “O great Sage! how does that hollow measure? I will send a mountain after considering the size equal to the same measurement.”

34. Vasiṣṭha said: “Its breadth and length measure respectively 2000 and 3000. I cannot tell its depth.”

35. Himālaya said: “What could be the cause for the formation of a hollow of such measurement. I have a great curiosity. Describe this in greater details.”

CHAPTER TWO

The Acts of Uṭṭaṅka, a Disciple of Gautama

Vasiṣṭha said:

1. There was a great sage named Gautama in earlier times, who had practised severe austerities. His wife was renowned by the name Ahalyā.*

2. This sage had taught crores of disciples and he used to send them back home after making them accomplished in the learning of sacred texts.

3. Attached firmly with faith in the teacher, one of his intelligent disciples named Uṭṭaṅka used to stay in his (the teacher's) house.

4. Despite old age afflicting him (i.e., the disciple), he was not sent back home. His hair turned grey. But as he (Uṭṭaṅka) was the best disciple, he used to put up there.

5. Proficient in studies and remaining engaged in all activities, some time he went out to fetch firewood.

6. Collecting a heavy load of firewood he came back to the hermitage and the firewood fell down on the ground.

* The text has Ahilyā.

7-11. Seeing one of his hair stuck to the wood Uttāṅka became very sad and worried. He began to think, "My life is ruined and has become a matter of reproach! What use has it been left with! As a person devoid of intelligence, I have not got married even. Cursed have I become to waste my life and with my thoughtless action my lineage will come to an end." Ahalyā, the wife of the teacher noticed that Uttāṅka was very unhappy. As she informed the great Sage Gautama about Uttāṅka's pain, with a soft voice the Sage said, "O Son! go home and together with your wife perform Agnīhotra (offering oblation to fire) etc. as prescribed and without any hesitation."

12-13. After the teacher said like this Uttāṅka said, "Tell me the fee which I will definitely give." Gautama said, "O dear son! You have already served me in a big way and my fee has been paid through the same. There is no doubt in this." Uttāṅka said, "Of course, you have to take something by which I will have my satisfaction. O best Sage! I have already become proficient in studies with your grace."

14-16. Gautama said, "O son! I have nothing to take. I am pleased with your service and I have no desire for your wealth. Go back to your own house with all happiness." After the utterance of words 'Service to teacher' Uttāṅka told the wife of the teacher, "O Mother! I have to make an offering by which I will have my satisfaction."

17-18. The wife of the teacher said, "O son! you go to Saudāsa and follow my orders fast. His wife is renowned as Madayantī. O pupil! get the earrings of Madayantī fast. I will curse you if you do not turn up by the fifth day."

19-20. Uttāṅka left and reached Saudāsa's house as soon as the teacher's wife said so. He saw Saudāsa having the face of tiger. Having seen this Brāhmaṇa, Saudāsa said, "You have arrived for my food. O Brāhmaṇa! I will undoubtedly eat you up."

21-22. Uttāṅka said, "O King! you, of course, eat me up but before that listen to these words of mine. You give me both of your earrings. After giving them to the teacher, I will come back and then you can eat me up."

Saudāsa said:

22-23. You go to the temple difficult to approach where my wife stays. With fear of your own life, you go there carefully and ask her for the earrings as per my words, which she will give you. O Brāhmaṇa! you do not have to do anything other than this truth.

Vasiṣṭha said:

24-25. Going near Madayantī, the best Brāhmaṇa said, “O revered lady! Please give me both the earrings as per the command of Saudāsa to you.” Madayantī said, “O Brāhmaṇa! I have doubt whether to give you the earrings. Please show me a token of proof with regard to the identity of the King.”

26. Instantly he rushed to the King and asked for his identity.

Saudāsa said:

27. Go and tell that righteous lady these words of mine: “One without whom welfare cannot be attainable and only misfortune awaits.” She in turn will, of course, hand over to you the bejewelled earrings.

Vasiṣṭha said:

28-30. Having taken such identity Uttanka went and communicated it to her. Then having said, “O Brāhmaṇa! take the earrings,” she gave the earrings. She also said, “You must carry these earrings with great care. O Brāhmaṇa! the goldsmith always had the desire for these two earrings.” Having taken these, the Brāhmaṇa became wonderstruck with wide open eyes. However, he was perplexed over the words of the King for which he proceeded to the King again with curiosity.

He said:

31-32. After bringing to notice your identity, I have obtained the two glittering earrings. But I could not understand your statement, for the comprehension of which I have come to you

again. O King! I was settled in whichever way in my own work. But I have curiosity to know as to the reason for which welfare or well-being cannot be possible and one is driven towards misfortune.

Saudāsa said:

33. The act of worship causing pleasure to a Brāhmaṇa brings in welfare while the same act resulting in displeasure causes misfortune as was my previous (old) condition.

34-35. I had a curse of Sage Vasiṣṭha on me, according to which, I would be released from the sins of my vices when someone could only enable an unpressed declaration of this question from me. O best Brāhmaṇa! I have become free from the curse today by your kindness and have attained the sacred Abode. Take leave from me and my due respects to you."

Vasiṣṭha said:

36-38. Thereafter becoming free from Saudāsa, Uttāṅka took to his way swiftly. While on way, becoming intently troubled with hunger he happened to see a Bilva fruit (a wood-apple) on a tree. Then tying up both the earrings with the haired skin of a black antelope, he kept them on the ground and climbed up the tree. In the intervening period, Takṣaka, the Nāga prince, taking away both the earrings went away in the Southern direction of the grassland.

39. Having eaten the fruit, Uttāṅka descended to the ground and began to look intently for the earrings on all sides. He saw Takṣaka, the King of Nāgas in front entering a frightening dark hole.

40-44. Picking up a stick lying nearby in hand Uttāṅka entered the hole full of darkness and got engaged in searching. Seeing Uttāṅka to be sad and stressed due to the teacher's job Indra put the mighty thunderbolt onto the stick and Uttāṅka could dig up to the bottom of the earth very soon. Having entered the lower region of earth, i.e., hell, he went on moving around with an eye upon the earrings. He saw a horse of superior

quality of full white colour there. The horse told him, “You touch my private part and your job will be done.”

45-46. Smoke soon spread across there after its saying so. The fire engulfed all places in the nether region including the mountains supporting the earth. Then agitated snakes began to run here and there. Along with the earrings, Takṣaka, the king of Nāgas, was there before them. Then he handed over the earrings to Uttāṅka and after paying his respects left for home.

Vasiṣṭha said:

47-54. Now Fire said to the assured best Brāhmaṇa, “I am Agni, whom you had worshipped earlier as per the direction of your own teacher. Out of mercy, I have come here seeing you sad. You sit on my back fast. I will take you to the teacher the storehouse of all qualities.” Then Uttāṅka seated on his back started heading towards the teacher’s hermitage and instantly reached near the abode of Gautama. At that time, after having a bath and getting herself dressed up Ahalyā was by the side of her husband and happened to be saying, “Uttāṅka has not come today. I am determined to curse him. He shows laxity in performing the teacher’s assignment.” Hardly had she spoken like this when Uttāṅka appeared before her with a bright face. He had brought both the earrings and after paying respects gave those with faith. Having taken those earrings, Ahalyā wore them on her ears at that time and then sent Uttāṅka back home.

Vasiṣṭha said:

55. Thus that cleft was caused by Takṣaka and Uttāṅka. Intent upon thinking like this, I am, therefore, for it to be filled up due to my cow.

56. Hence, you please fill it up quickly for no one else other than you is able to do this even with one hundred meritorious actions. O Himālaya, O King of mountains, complete my work without any hesitation.

CHAPTER THREE

Vasiṣṭha's Order to Nandīvardhana to Fill Up the Cleft

Sūta said:

1-2. Having listened to this statement of the great soul Vasiṣṭha, Himālaya began to think how to fill up the cleft. After thinking on the matter for a long duration Himālaya asked Sage Vasiṣṭha to tell the way mountains can be brought there.

3. He continued, "Indra had cut off the wings of all mountains since olden times. Hence, O best Sage, make this work certain."

Vasiṣṭha said:

4-6. O great mountain! there is a way to fit mountains there. You have the son famous as Nandīvardhana. His best friend is of the name Arbuda. He is the best among all bearing life. He is powerful, and roams about in the sky. As one always on the move to higher regions, he must have reached there fast and there is no doubt about it. I have come here having known that all works are his sport.

7. You give him orders and do not get worried. If you are a devotee of mine, send him fast there, of course.

Sūta said:

8-10. After hearing the words of Vasiṣṭha, Himālaya, affectionate toward son became very sad and thought: "Our son Maināka has entered the sea and Vasiṣṭha has arrived to take away the eldest one. Now what should we do that will be for the good of all of us. There was fear of curse on one side while on the other was excessive sorrow of separation from son. But then separation from son is right while incurring the curse of a Brāhmaṇa is not."

11-12. Resolving like this he told Nandīvardhana, “O Son, go to Vasiṣṭha’s hermitage obeying my words. There is a frightening cleft there. Fill it up fast. Take along Arbuda, and the Nāga best among your beloved living beings.

Nandivardhana said:

13-14. O Lord! that country is full of sinners. No fruit or flower appears there. Only Palāśa, Khadira and cotton trees (Śālmali), etc. grow there. There is no river there. All inhabitants there are wicked. O King of mountains! I am in no way fit to go there.

15-18. Vasiṣṭha then told the nervous Nandīvardhana, “There is no need for you to fear or to be affected by anyone’s wickedness there, for there will always be my abode on top of your head. Places of pilgrimage, rivers, gods, auspicious mansions and many kinds of trees having fruits, foliage and flowers will be there. As good signs, there will be deer and birds there. I will get Lord Śaṅkara there for your need, as a result of which along with Indra all gods will shine forth there.

Sūta said:

19-26. Nandīvardhana became exalted after hearing the statement of Vasiṣṭha. Going near the Arbuda mountain and repeating the same statement he said, “O friend! we will go there. Let there be good fortune for you. I consider this time to be fit for the job related to the Brāhmaṇa”. Arbuda said, “O son of Mountain! with myself originated from mountain, I will come there due to my love for you and will undoubtedly dwell there with you till the accomplishment of your job. But, O brother, due to my love, I want to say something. Till my voice lasts, I am speaking out of love and if you feel I am right, do not think differently. May this place earn its fame by my name and I do not have any other debt.” Then after admitting, and bowing down to mother and father, he left along with the sage getting mounted on Arbuda.

27. Possessed of heavenly trees, rivers, fountains, deer and full of the melodious sounds of birds, Arbuda stayed on top of the fissure as per the words of the sage. All of these arrived there and the great soul Arbuda, left all in the fissure. Sage Vasiṣṭha became satisfied with the fissure filled up. He told Arbuda mountain to ask for a boon saying he was fully pleased with his actions.

Arbuda said:

28-31. O great Sage! You are pleased. This is the best boon. However, O Brāhmaṇa! If you have to give something then listen: Let there be a stream of clean water on the peak of this mountain which be renowned by the name 'Nāgātūrtha' in all directions of the land. Due to love for my friend I will always dwell there and with your kindness let all humans attain the heavenly world after having a bath in this place of pilgrimage. Let a barren woman taking bath in this place of pilgrimage get happiness, good fortune and children.

Vasiṣṭha said:

32-35. A barren woman who takes a bath only once in this whole water will obtain a son endowed with all good features. A woman worshipping with fruits on the fifth day of the brighter half of the lunar month of Śrāvaṇa (July-August) will obtain sons despite being one hundred years old. The humans who take bath with faith in this place of pilgrimage will attain the highest place after getting exempted from old age and death. Those performing the ceremony in honour of the dead forefathers here on the fifth day of a month with all strictness, will get the complete fruits of pilgrimage performed in the month of Śrāvaṇa.

Sūta said:

36-37. Sage Vasiṣṭha after having given boon in this way came near Nandīvardhana and said these words, "O Son! ask for a boon. O sinless one! I am pleased with you. Because of

your humility and good-heartedness, I am giving you whichever object that is difficult to obtain.”

Nandivardhana said:

38-39. O Best one of Sages! Your earlier statement is true. Your presence be always here by virtue of which I and Arbuda earn fame on the earth. It is established in my mind that all these happened by your grace.

Sūta said:

40-47. The blessed sage Vasiṣṭha told him that it would be like this and inspired by his statement he built up his own hermitage there. Trees like Pansa (bread fruit), Campaka (a tree bearing yellow fragrant flowers), mango, Priyaṅgu, Bilva, three leaved Bela (asafoetida) and pomegranate etc. are there on this mountain. Many kinds of birds also dwell here. Gods and the heavenly musicians (Gandharvas) serve it. Sage Vasiṣṭha dwells there along with Arundhatī. Through (the power of) penances, Sage Vasiṣṭha had brought the river Gomatī here by bathing in which the extremely vicious humans also go to the heavenly world. Those who take bath in the month of Māgha (corresponding to the months of January-February) especially during the period when the Sun remains in Makara (the Zodiac sign of Capricorn), attain the highest status. Especially, a human being making offering of sesames in the month of Māgha dwells for a number of years equal to the number of sesame grains in Heaven. What more to say! One should take bath here. A human being does not take a rebirth after seeing the face of Sage Vasiṣṭha. Arundhatī is worshipped particularly here.

CHAPTER FOUR

Origin of Acaleśvara

Sūta said:

1. Sage Vasiṣṭha made his own hermitage on that Arbuda mountain and began the pursuit of intense religious austerities for making the dwelling of God Śaṁkara on it.

2. The sage continued to have fruits for food as per rule. He remained dependent on having leaves for food for two hundred years.

3. He spent five hundred years drinking water only and another ten hundred years by breathing air only.

4. He practised Pañcāgni (remaining in the middle of five fires) during summer and stayed under water during winter. He stayed in the open for a thousand years during rains.

5. Then being pleased with the austerities of that great sage, the Liṅga of Śiva worshipped in the form of a stone came up instantaneously piercing the mountain. Then witnessing the presence of that Liṅga of Śiva, Sage Vasiṣṭha began recitation of hymns in wonder.

6. He recited: "Homage to you, O holy one! O Lord Śiva! whose sacredness everyone praises, O bearer of braided and knotted hair and the bearer of the image of three gods.

7. Homage to you, having the gross form yet omnipresent through the fine form and the bearer of bow and arrow and the three-eyed one.

8. Homage to you, O Śaṁkara holding the crescent moon and pervading all directions! Homage to you, O bearer of the Pināka bow and one having the body of eight forms!

9. O Śaṁkara! You are of the form of knowledge, you are comprehensible through the path of knowledge. You are the embodiment of knowledge. Homage to you- the image of all wisdom.

10. Obeisance to you, O ruler of Kāśī and the God of mountains! Homage to you, O great Lord! O creator of this world!

11. Homage to you, O husband of Gaurī, O one of the image of well-being! I bow to you, O bearer of the image of Viṣṇu and Brahmā and the Three-eyed one.

12. Homage to you, O Great Soul! O bearer of the image of universe and holiness! I bow down to you, O bearer of all images including images of gods.

Sūta said:

13. In the meantime a statement issued from the Incorporeal, saying that it was pleased by the gentle behaviour (of the worshipper) and that he could ask for any boon for well-being.

14. Having said so, the Liṅga of Śiva worshipped in the form of a stone pierced out from within the body of the mountain.

Vasiṣṭha said:

15. O God Śaṁkara! You please dwell for ever in this Liṅga. I have prayed for the same at this great soul earlier. If you are pleased then, O Śaṁkara! let my words be true.

The gracious God Śiva said:

16. I will have my appearance in this Liṅga from today onwards. O best Brāhmaṇa! everything true happens as per your words.

17. Everything true will happen whenever any human sings this hymn with faith on the fourteenth day of the waning period of the moon in the month of Āśvina (*i.e.* September-October).

18. O best of Sages! to please me, Indra, the King of gods has sent the famous river Mandākinī here, which makes the three worlds holier.

19. As a reservoir holding water it will always remain on the northern side of the Liṅga. That human who after taking a bath in it has a look at the Liṅga everyday will obtain the ultimate place becoming free from old age and death.

20. Having pierced this immobile mountain, my Liṅga has come up. Hence it will be renowned in the world by the name Acaleśvara.

21. The greatness of this (Acaleśvara) Liṅga will never dwindle. Even its greatness will not loosen up till the time of final destruction of this world.

Sūta said:

22. Having said this much, the great God stopped. The great soul Vasiṣṭha became pleased in heart followed up by Sages like Gautama etc.

23. Gods like Indra etc. were also happy. The Brāhmaṇa sage had brought other places of pilgrimage, temples and mansions on this mountain through his own austerities.

24. Now becoming happy, the great God got settled down here.

CHAPTER FIVE

Greatness of Nāga Tīrtha

The Sages said:

1. O Sūta! describe to us in detail the greatness of Arbuda. We have a great curiosity. Please tell us this auspicious tale.

Sūta said:

2. Pulastya, the illustrious sage, in ancient times, came to the house of king Yayāti. After paying homage, the king told the sage.

3. O best of the sages! welcome to you. My life has become fruitful. With pleasure, please let me hear the story of the Arbuda mountain.

4. There is a renowned mountain by name Arbuda on the surface of this earth. O best one of the Brāhmaṇas! please narrate the sequence of visits to this mountain and their fruits.

5. Undertaking pilgrimages has been your principal object. Please describe all in details. Please tell me so that I can undertake pilgrimage in a befitting manner.

Pulastya said:

6. O king Yayāti! this best of the mountains—Arbuda has abundant religious merit. A detailed description of it is not possible in hundreds of years.

7. Hence, I am describing only the principal centers of pilgrimage on it in brief. Among these in the very beginning is Nāga Tīrtha which fulfills desires of all people.

8. This center of pilgrimage especially grants the good fortune of gift of children to women. Due to this, its ancient history is a matter of great wonder.

9. There was a loyal, faithful and virtuous Brāhmaṇa lady by name Gautamī who had made visits to places of pilgrimage the principal objective of life for becoming a widow in childhood.

10. She had come to Arbuda and had approached Nāga Tīrtha. She had taken a dip in its water with all her mind.

11. A woman named Nāyakā had also come here with her son for the purpose of pilgrimage. O king! that son had performed many kinds of services here.

12. He performed service with all paraphernalia. But becoming sad with separation from son, Gautamī began to worry (thinking).

13. “Fortunate is that child always engaged in service. Fortunate is she having a son like this. I am reproachable for being devoid of child.

14. I, a widow, am very sad without a child.” O king! she then came out of the reservoir.

15-16. Without union with husband she became pregnant immediately. As a virtuous lady she got ashamed for being

enjoined with all traits of pregnancy. Driven by the idea to kill herself she kindled fire. At the sametime bodiless voice arose.

17-19. It said: "O Gautamī! do not enter into the fire of this worry. There is no fault of yours. Your pregnancy is due to the influence of pilgrimage. Standing in this water whatever any human desires (in mind), all those women or men obtain all those desires without any doubt. Having seen the Nāyakā's child, you had nurtured the desire for a child in your heart. Hence O daughter! a son which has come in your womb will be born.

20-22. Hence, stop worrying. There will be your welfare. O you! having fidelity to your husband, you are blameless."

O king! then the virtuous Gautamī restrained herself from death. Having heard this statement from the heavenly announcement made by a divine messenger and having seen the pregnancy without husband she said, "The unusual effect of this place of pilgrimage never occurred in my mind where women can bear foetus without semen and *Rajas* (menstrual fluid) getting mixed.

23. I shall not go anywhere else leaving this best centre of pilgrimage."

Having said so the virtuous lady Gautamī settled there forever.

24-25. She gave birth to a son endowed with all traits. O king Yayāti! 'the lineage' of people who perform the Śrāddha (ceremony connected with memory of the dead relatives in a family) at Arbuda during the waning period of the moon in the month of Aśvina (September) never gets destroyed.

26. No one in their family becomes a Preta (ghost). The man who takes a bath and performs Śrāddha there without any desire obtains the eternal world.

27-28. A woman who immerses fruits and flowers in this place of pilgrimage is blessed with a son. She obtains the celestial world of the gods difficult to attain even without a desire for the same. Hence, one must perform pilgrimage to this place with all efforts.

CHAPTER SIX

Greatness of Vasiṣṭha's Hermitage

Sage Pulastya said:

1-3. O best king ! thus humans need to go near Vasiṣṭha—the storehouse of austerities—a sight of whom enables humans to attain their objects. There is a pond full of water there which takes away sins of humans. The great soul Vasiṣṭha had brought the river Gautamī in this pond through perseverance. Humans become completely free from their sins with a bath in this pond.

4. An individual performing Śrāddha here with Ṛṣi dhānya (coarse grain used by Ṛṣis) will be free from the bondage of the ancestors on both maternal and paternal sides.

5-6. The great soul Nārada had sung fully the glory of this place. A bath in the auspicious water followed by a sight of the best Sage Vasiṣṭha is much more meritorious than the Śrāddha, performed by offerings made and yajña conducted with extensive details at Gayā. O King! the human being who conducts Śrāddha on coming to this hermitage of Vasiṣṭha suitably ensures the cross-over of his ancestors along with his ownself.

7-13. Objects of all desires are obtained through the special worship of virtuous Arundhatī after coming near Vasiṣṭha here. All wrongdoings of individuals committed during childhood, youth and old age get wiped out instantly by the sight of sage Vasiṣṭha. One who, becoming aware, lights an earthen lamp before Vasiṣṭha attains happiness and good fortune and becomes a bright man. One observing fasting and having a sojourn for a night here, reaches the ultimate place of the Seven Sages. One who observes fasting carefully for three nights before Vasiṣṭha attains Mahaloka getting exempted from old age and death. Emancipation is obtained by one who observes the ritual of fasting for a month before Vasiṣṭha. He does not return to the river of worldly existence. One who propitiates Sage Vasiṣṭha

on the full-moon day of Śrāvaṇa (July-August) goes to Brahmā's world.

14-15. All the sins of a human being get destroyed instantaneously when he recites the *Gāyatrī mantra* eight hundred times before Vasiṣṭha. O king! one who performs the ritual offering to fire with regard for Vāmadeva obtains the fruits of the '*Agniṣṭoma Yajña*'.

16-17. Hence, the ultimate position is obtainable by all those who have a sight of this great sage with all sorts of efforts and with purity and faith. Hence, O King! with a wholehearted devotion, worship Vāmadeva here.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Influence of Acaleśvara

The sage Pulastya said:

1. O king! after this one needs to go to the good giving Acaleśvara, a look of which with faith accrues accomplishment.

2. Any human who performs Srāddha (i.e., ceremony connected with death of family members) of his paternal ancestors near the Acaleśvara on the fourteenth day of the waning period of moon in the month of Āśvina (i.e., September) or in Phālguna (i.e., February-March) attains the ultimate passage.

3. The fruits of Aśvamedha Yajña accrue to the human who, while remaining in the Southern direction performs the worship with fruits, flowers and leaves and with due faith.

4. The human who propitiates his forefathers with the presentation of mixture containing equal quantities of milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar, gets closer to the World of Śiva and obtains it.

5. The human who after taking a round of this pays his homage, all his sins get destroyed on each of his step involving the right turn or clockwise turn.

6. O intelligent king! listen to a wonderful thing which had happened here earlier. I had heard that Nārada happened to tell it to Indra in Heaven.

7. A parrot happened to have made its nest on a tree there before and while moving to and fro to its nest, it used to take a clockwise turn around the nest.

8. O king! it had no devotion due to being born in the species of birds and it was obtained to death as time had approached.

9. Later, it became renowned as King Veṇu among the royal families. Having memory of his own clan, he achieved victory over all his enemies.

10. Remembering that his influence could have arisen from taking a round of the Acaleśvara, he began to take a clockwise turn of Acaleśvara by going near it.

11. O king! day and night, he did not do anything other than this. Neither did he make any special effort as a measure of austerity. He did also not make any offering of edible things to gods.

12. He did not make any offering of flowers or incenses. He was only engrossed in taking the round. Sages came there after sometime.

13-19. Nārada, Śaunaka, Harīta, Devala, Galava, Kapila, Nanda, Suhotra, Kaśyapa and many kings were getting the Liṅga of Śiva on that mountain bathed with faith. Apart from them other people were engaged in many kinds of worships and in recounting repeatedly names of gods in their minds. O King! some were dancing while some others were singing. Some were presenting the sacrifice in the form of food while some others were singing praises to god. They were surprised to see Veṇu taking rounds. Filled with curiosity they said, "While doing this act of taking round we must know the reasons behind this act." The sages said, "O king Veṇu! why are you taking the clockwise turn of this God specially? Please tell us the truth."

20. They continued, "You are not offering water onto this beautiful Liṅga of Śiva. You are neither lighting earthen lamps nor incense nor are you reading out hymns in praise of God. O

king! you are capable of making all gifts. Please speak out as we have a curiosity in this matter.”

Veṇu said:

21. O Brāhmaṇas! listen to what am I saying. This description of my past life is specially true.

22. A bird by name Suka used to stay here in this palace in olden times. Then I used to take round of the God day and night.

23. I have become one having memory of one's family by its grace and influence. I am now doing this act of taking round out of Supreme faith.

24. I do not know what fruit will accrue out of the influence of this God. O sages! I am not doing any other thing due to this reason.

Pulastya said:

25-26. After hearing these words of king Veṇu, with wonder and exhilaration, the sages said, “all right! all right!” Then all the great sages continued keeping themselves engaged in the act of taking round. They got imbued with great faith.

27. With the grace of God Śaṁkara, the fortunate king Veṇu obtained that difficult place in comparison with gods.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Greatness of Three-eyed in the Pond of Bhadrakarṇa

Pulastya said:

1. O best of kings! then one needs to visit the great pond known as Bhadrakarṇa where the bearer of the three lustrous eyes is even visible now-a-days in many stones.

2. There is the Liṅga of Śiva on the Western side of that Bhadrakarṇa pond by seeing which a human being becomes like the Three-eyed One.

3. There was one by name Bhadrakarṇa in olden times who was counted among those dear to Śiva. He had founded this Liṅga and constructed this pond.

4. At some point of time, he had gone along with many others to fight the demons counted as dear to Śiva.

5. Being frightened, they all left. Skandha fled away from the scene when other soldiers got killed. Virabhadra lost out and the final victory appeared imminent.

6. The demon Namuci by name and stronger among the demons ran towards Saṁkarji with sword and spear in hands.

7. Seeing the demon coming from the front, Bhadrakarṇa told him 'Stay where you are.'

8. This stronger one cut his spear and sword by his own sword. O king! then the demon got wounded under the influence of anger.

9. The wounded demon then entered the dense darkness (i.e. became unconscious) and fell down on the ground like an axed tree.

10. Then coming near Lord Śiva the hurt demon stood up. God Śiva got pleased to see that the demon was still remaining steadfast on the observance of religious and moral duties.

The benevolent God said:

11. O demon! I am satisfied with your power and especially your adherence to moral and religious duties. You can ask for that specific boon in your mind.

Bhadrakarṇa said:

12. O great God! let there be your closeness to the Liṅga I have founded on this Arbuda mountain and you remain fixed in this pond.

The gracious God said:

13-14. There will be my closeness to this Liṅga and pond on the fourteenth day of the waning period of moon in the month of Pausa i.e. January. One who takes a bath in this Bhadrakarma pond and follows it up with a look of Śaṅkara diligently, will certainly attain that eternal place.

15. Hence, with all efforts one needs to have a bath there. The man who worships this Liṅga of Śiva goes to the abode of Śiva.

CHAPTER NINE

Eminence of Kedāra

Pulastya said:

1. O king! then one must visit Kedāra—the place of pilgrimage renowned in the three worlds, a visit to which takes away all sins of human beings.

2. The river Gangā known as Mandākinī has arrived here by joining the river Sarasvatī. O king! the human being, after having a bath here, gets free from all sins.

3. O king! listen to the old historical description of this place of pilgrimage. The sages have sung this in many ways in this mountain of Arbuda.

4. Ajapāla—the best of kings born in the Surya dynasty was undoubtedly the protector of this earth comprising seven islands.

5. This king neither had elephants nor any infantry nor did he have any horse with him. He also did not have a chariot and treasury in any form.

6. The king never used to collect excess taxes from his subjects. By this, he used to rule in the welfare of people.

7. If there was any individual committing offence of any kind, he used to go immediately and bring that rogue to book.

8. People used to live happily and without any difficulty with such a king on earth.

9. There used to be adequate rains resulting in flow of crops. Cows used to give milk in abundance with such a king around.

10. Now the God-like sage Vasiṣṭha came to his house sometime in connection with pilgrimage.

11. Seeing him, the king got up from seat, welcomed him after paying due homage as per the prescribed rituals in Śāstras, and offered him all goods as necessary adjuncts of the activity of worship.

12. Pleased with the homage offered with highest faith, the good mannered Vasiṣṭha sat down to take rest. Then he started to speak out the stories of all royal as well as divine sages.

13. After the completion of speech of the Sage, the well-disposed king with all humility and in some context asked the sage as to what could be the well-settled practice of religious activity in connection with undertaking of austerity.

Ajapāla said:

14. O Brāhmaṇa! you know everything—the past, the present and the future through the influence of your perseverance.

15. O Sage! I have a curiosity in heart. With grace towards me and pleasure in mind, please explain me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

16. O king! please speak out everything that is in your mind. I will let you know all those difficult things.

The King said:

17. What could be that deed of mine as a result of which this kingdom of mine is running in the best possible manner without any difficulty and with all actions getting accomplished with results?

18. O great Sage! neither there are the poor, the pitiables, the unhappy souls nor are there souls affected with diseases in this kingdom of mine.

19. This virtuous wife of mine is more important to me than even the life-giving breath. I accept that her mind is with me and her life is dependent on me. O Brāhmaṇa! please tell me in details all that she has thought about me.

20. O Sage! are these due to the influence of my giving gifts, or conduct of Yajña, or perseverance or due to the observance of rules connected with performance of religious austerities?

21. I have a curiosity that all these may be due to the good work done in my previous birth. O best Brāhmaṇa! kindly speak out to explain me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

22. O king! listen in details as I say. Do not get hurt or feel ashamed.

23. O king! in the other previous body (i.e., past life), you, were born in the last, i.e., the Śūdra Varṇa of the four-fold Varṇa system. So was also your virtuous wife.

24. At certain juncture of time in that period, famine had occurred. Everywhere in the world, there was suffering from hunger due to the destruction of crops.

25. At that time you had proceeded to another country. In that country, ascending a range of mountains, you had crossed over a fountain.

26. There, after seeing an auspicious pond full of an enticing forest of lotus, you took a bath there and offered libations of water to your parental ancestors.

27. You thought 'let me take these lotuses and sell them so that we could arrange our food.'

28. O king! then carrying along many lotuses, you went to a place where many people were already there.

29. Being sufferers of famine, no individual purchased the lotuses. Moving around in the four directions you got tired and became dejected.

30. With the day ending you took rest in a cave. Putting the lotuses down on the ground you receded into sleep overtaken with hunger.

31. In the meantime, the reverberating sounds of best Brāhmaṇas reading out the Veda and the Purāṇas reached out to your ears.

32. Hearing that you became alert and got up. Carrying the lotuses, you went to the Śiva temple along with your wife.

33. A prostitute by name Nāgavatī engrossed in devotion towards Śiva was sitting awake there in the Kedāra temple throughout the night.

34. Then O king! you asked the maid putting up beside the temple as to what for such religious activity of staying awake in front of this God is being performed.

35. She said: “This beautiful prostitute Nāgavatī is performing the religious activity of staying up for the night with faith and devotion to comply with the stipulations required for the ritual conducted in honour of Śiva on the fourteenth day of the waning period of the moon in the month of Chaitra, i.e., March.

36. Any individual who performs the religious activity of keeping awake in the night and worships Śiva with faith and devotion attains that ultimate position.

37. One who observing the religious ritual of keeping awake in the night worships the three-eyed Śiva obtains the service of divine beauties and attains that world of Śiva representing His lower image.

38. Obtainance of desires even of those difficult for gods do materialise. Hence you give me the lotuses in exchange of three grams of gold. Protect your life taking this much as value for the lotuses.

39. Then while accepting the value in the form of gold, your wife said, ‘O Lord! do not accept the value for these.

40. ‘In any case, with scarcity of grains, there has been fasting for both of us under compulsion. Today, both of us will worship Śiva with these lotuses with all certainty.

41. ‘It is our duty today to worship Śiva. Hence foresake the value offered in terms of gold.’ After hearing the words of wife, Śiva was worshipped with lotuses.

42. O king! along with wife, you performed the religious activity of staying up for the night with faith before Śiva in the Śiva temple.

43. So O great king! having got up after hearing the Purāṇas you the well-behaved in the earthly world worshipped Śiva with lotuses on the fourteenth day of the waning period of moon in the month of Chaitra (i.e., March).

44. O king! with the mind centered and with faith, you performed the religious activity of keeping awake throughout the night in front of God at Kedāra.

45. Then when the morning set in O king! you, after begging, had food along with wife before Śiva.

46. Then with the passage of time death obtained you. Your wife as representing your other half entered into the fire along with you.

47. Then you got birth as son of king of Daśarna, and became the best king of the city of Vaideha.

48. Becoming dear to all living beings you became renowned by the name of Ajapāla on earth.

49. It is due to this reason that your wife has been born dearer to you more than your own life. Hence, what has happened, is solely due to you which you are asking me.

50. Hence, O king! it is due to the greatness of the God Kedāra that people are happy in your kingdom and it has been divested of all difficulties.

51. You have got this kingdom out of pleasure of the great God Kedāra and it is due to this that despite having no soldier you have become the full-fledged protector of this region on earth.

Pulastya said:

52. The king got into a state of astonishment hearing these words of Vasiṣṭha. The king then made up his mind to visit Kedāra.

53. Then having gone to the mountain and having worshipped Lord Kedāra, the king remained engaged for years in observance of the religious ritual undertaken on the fourteenth day of the waning period of moon in the month of Chaitra, (i.e., March).

54. The king went to the Arbuda mountain after handing over the kingdom to son. Then along with wife, he obtained salvation.

55. O king! I have described all this with regard to the greatness of Kedāra. It is an agent of goodness for all and the destroyer of sins.

56. The religious ritual undertaken on the fourteenth day in between the period of Māgha and Chaitra (i.e., February and March) is well-known on earth.

57. O king! You thus need to observe visiting Kedāra by all means on that day. You must worship Kedāra in the best possible way and manner.

58. By observing the ritual of staying up the night on the fourteenth day of the waning period of the moon in the month of Māgha (i.e., February) and by fasting, O king! you can attain the world of Śiva.

59. Those who after taking a bath in the wish-fulfilling confluence of Gangā and Sarasvatī take a look of Kedāra obtain the ultimate passage.

60. Those who drink the clear water of the pond named Kedāra, fix the cross-over of seven ancestral generations before and after them.

61. O king! one who hears this story with supreme faith becomes free from all sins. This is the impact of the great God Kedāra.

CHAPTER TEN

Pilgrimages in the Arbuda region during Kali Yuga

Yayāti said:

1. You have heard about Kedāra in the supreme mountain Himālaya. The river Gangā has come out of it and has entered the sea in the east.

2. And the river Sarasvatī has come out of the mango groves. Absorbing the heat of big fires, it has flown into the sea on the west.

3. How could a place Kedāra come up there? This is very astonishing and I have a curiosity. O Brāhmaṇa! please narrate all these strange things in details.

Pulastya said:

4. O king! what all you are asking are true. Listen carefully to the way it has been and as I have heard.

5-8. In olden times, centres of pilgrimage like Gangā, resting places of gods like Kedāra along with gods like Indra and others and with other great sages went to Brahmā. All of them conducted many and different types of religious discourses there. O king! all places of pilgrimage, regions, forests and gardens belonging to gods were present in this congregation. Eventually, in the course of discussion, Indra told Brahmā, “O king! this be happened to utter in curiosity.”

Indra said:

9. O God! now I desire to hear about the greatness of good. As a matter of proof please tell me about the distinction of ‘Kṛta yuga’ amongst all.

Brahmā said:

10. O Indra! Yugas have been said to comprise 70 lakh years. From these, one half of twenty eight thousand years is said to constitute the Kṛta Yuga.

11. Twelve lakh years from that stated above is named as Tretā Yuga. In mutual give and take in commercial exchanges it has been measured to comprise more than one hundred thousand years.

12. There has been a Yuga renowned to comprise eight lakh and sixty-four thousand years. This has been proclaimed as the Dvāpara Yuga by gods.

13. There has been still another Yuga well-known as comprising four lakh and thirty-two thousand years which is called the Kali Yuga. This is how it has been the established practice of laying down Yugas in thousands of years by the best God.

14. There were four steps of righteousness and Viṣṇu was having a fair complexion in the Kṛta Yuga. There was hardly any famine or disease in this Yuga.

15. With religious and moral duties being performed, there was no untimely death of humans at that time. Crops could be yielded without ploughing and the cows used to give abundant milk.

16. Bad qualities like lust, anger, fear, greed and jealousy could hardly be possible in that Yuga.

17. Then ushered in the Treta Yuga in which there were three steps to righteousness. With people having a long life Viṣṇu was of red complexion in this Yuga.

18. There used to be Yajñas as a measure of fulfilling peoples' aspirations. People did not have the disposition towards enjoyment of desires.

19. People's occupation in that Yuga happened to be remaining engaged in austerity, observance of chastity, having a bath as fulfillment of religious activity, making offerings, having a different type of Yajña, making of sacrificial offerings to fire and taking the name of God repeatedly in one's mind.

20. Then the third Yuga named as Dvāpara let people little loose. In this Yuga there were two steps to religious righteousness and Viṣṇu was yellow complexioned.

21. Repeatedly taking of name of God within one's mind, Yajñas and religious austerities were all conducted with desire for fruits. People were followers of truth and were equally inclined towards dance (Merriment) and the King was well-disposed during this Yuga.

22. The kings on earth at this time were fighting among one another. They used to go to the heavenly kingdom after attaining purity through worship of Viṣṇu by Yajña.

23. Then the fourth Yuga, i.e., Kali Yuga starts in which there is only one step to religious righteousness. People remain fearful in this Yuga and regular worship is undertaken.

24. Viṣṇu becomes of a black complexion and there is relatively a greater prevalence of sins. So also cheating, jealousy, greed, anger and fear prevail.

25. Becoming followers of greed and desire, people in the kingdom remain occupied with how to gain wealth. The age (Longevity) of life with people reduces and the earth also yields less crops.

26. Cows give less milk and the Brāhmaṇas become bereft of truth. People cheat and stay assrued under the garb of happiness of taste and sex.

27. With deterioration of truth, sins proliferate in Kali Yuga and hairs of people get gray at the age of sixteen.

28. Women get pregnant at the age of twelve and O Indra! people become of a dirtier and mixed complexion at this time.

29. All Varṇas and Āśramas become one in this age. Yajnas and the regular rituals followed for ages in a family head towards ruination.

30. All places of pilgrimage become meaningless due to their coming in contact with outcastes, non-Aryans. Even the best of kings become bereft of influence.

31-32. Having heard these statements of Brahmā whose birth is unknown, the centers of pilgrimage stationed there told Brahmā, "You have stated what our position will be in the

difficult Kali Yuga. With no place for us O God! please tell the selected places that could always be ours in this Yuga.”

33. Brahmā said, “there is the best of mountains by name Arbuda where Kali cannot prevail. Hence that is the destination for all centres of pilgrimage to have their station.

34. “Any individual who, despite having committed the biggest of sins, takes a look of the Arbuda mountain, obtains the ultimate passage becoming free from all the shortcomings of Kali Yuga.”

Pulastya said:

35. Saying like this O king! Brahmā then went to the Brahma world. Then all the centres of pilgrimage went to the Arbuda mountain in the Kali Yuga.

36-37. With the presence of Arbuda, the Chief of Mountains on earth, the rivers Gangā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī and even the ponds and places of pilgrimage such as Kurukṣetra, Prabhāsa, Brahmāvarta including all other pilgrim centres, spread over three and a half crore lands went to the Arbuda mountain out of fear of Kali Yuga.

38. This is how every pilgrim centre could have its place of fixation on the Arbuda mountain and this is how Gangā and Sarasvatī also came there.

39. People with their minds bent upon peace attain emancipation from rebirth with all certainty there. All ancestors of a family go to heaven by conduct of religious ceremony there in honour of the departed souls.

40. O king! there was some astonishing happening there. There was a sage by name Mankana staying on the banks of Sarasvatī.

41. Giving up desire and anger that pure soul was engaged in performance of religious austerity. While continuing in that state once shivering with cold he began to sneeze.

42. There was some bile lying there. That was appearing like red in colour. Having seen that the sage Mankana became pleased.

43-44. 'Perceiving (Thinking) that I have become accomplished he began to dance.' With him continuing in that condition, the entire world both mobile and immobile as well as the seas got excited. The seas began to sprinkle water out. Everyone ceased to attend to his household duties and remained astonished.

45. O best king! with his dancing like this everyone in the world too began to dance influenced by the truthful and best of sages on earth.

46. Then all gods went near Saṁkara and said, "O Great God! please do something so that he does not dance."

47. Then assuming an image of Brāhmaṇa, Śiva told that best of Brāhmaṇas, 'Why are you dancing while pursuing the highest perseverance?'

Mankana said:

48. "O Brāhmaṇa! is it not visible to you that my bile has turned red? I have attained that accomplished fulfilment as my bile has already become red.

49. O Brāhmaṇa! due to this reason, I am dancing out of pleasure." He told in this way to the Great God.

50. O virtuous king! Śaṁkara struck his thumb with the index finger of his own and then white-like ash similar to the fibre of lotus came out of his thumb.

Then he said:

51. O Brāhmaṇa! look at this feat of mine with all curiosity where white ash is coming out of my finger.

52. Pulastya said, "That Brāhmaṇa got perplexed after witnessing this and then having recognized him as the image of Śiva, kneeled down and bowing before him started saying like this.

Mankana said:

53. You are of course the Great God. I am seeing you directly. Please be pleased with me. My heart says that I have perhaps recognized you.

54. Whatever you exhibited before me cannot be possible under anyone else's influence. O Śaṁkara! be kind and rescue me.

The great God said:

55. O Brāhmaṇa! You have recognized me correctly and there is no doubt about it. Let there be your welfare. Ask for a boon as you have already danced excessively.

Mankana said:

56. Let the fruits awaiting that specific worship in which horses are offered to the fire or the one in which a king makes offerings to fire to win the consent of everyone for his coronation be obtainable by a mere bath in the Sarasvatī river undertaken with undivided sincerity of mind.

Śri Mahādeva said:

57. Those who take a bath in this Sarasvatī with undivided attention will obtain that ultimate position becoming free from old age and death.

58. O Brāhmaṇa! those who perform the religious ceremony in this confluence of the Gangā and Sarasvatī in this world in remembrance of their family ancestors, will attain that ultimate passage.

59. Those who donate gold to the good Brāhmaṇa as per their abilities will attain that ultimate passage getting free from all sins.

60. O king! having said in this manner, Mahādeva—the God of all gods disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Eminence of Koṭīśvara

Pulastya said:

1. O foremost king! then one needs to visit the supreme God Koṭīśvara by having a look of which humans definitely attain fulfilment.

2. Before that O king! listen to one astounding incident that happened there. It was a proven fact that one crore prominent sages used to live in its southern side.

3-4. Competing among one another like in a game of play they all came to this Arbuda mountain presupposing within themselves that the sage arriving last would become a dog, and become devoid of devotion and faith.

5. In this way, playing in mutual competition like in a game, they all came to Arbuda mountain and then in conformity with time they all got themselves engaged in the performance of worship as a fulfilment of some mental resolve made respectively in their minds.

6. All the Brāhmaṇas were composed in mind, devout in religious austerities and adroit in the learning of Veda. Śaṁkara became eager to know their wish.

7. Driven by their feeling of devotion, Śaṁkara placed there with great kindness a crore of Liṅgas of Śiva worshipped in the form of stone separately from one another.

8. The glimpse of Śaṁkara in crores of number could be seen by everyone distinctly.

9. Seeing Śaṁkara all together, all the sages then keeping their eyes wide open in wonder said 'excellent! excellent!'

10. All the Brāhmaṇas with devotion sang the Vedic hymns meant for Śaṁkara. Being pleased, Śaṁkara started to say:

The gracious Mahādeva said:

11. O Sages! I am pleased with your highest faith. Now each one of you can have boon from me.

The sages said:

12. We all wish for a single boon in our minds that the good fruit be received by all of us taking a look of yours together.

The gracious Mahādeva said:

13. A look of mine never goes in vain for a Brāhmaṇa in particular. The fruit of pilgrimage is obtainable for those who have a look of mine.

The sages said:

14-15. O Śaṁkara! if it is definite that you have to give us a boon please make crores of Liṅgas like this worshipable in the form of stones and by taking a look of which people will get the fruits of crores of Liṅgas worshipped. O Śaṁkara! we desire such a type of boon.

Pulastya said:

16. With the sages making such a prayer together, the worshipable Liṅga of Śiva pierced out of this best mountain all of a sudden.

17-20. Just at that moment a voice from the bodiless came out and told those sages, “This Liṅga of mine will be famed by name Koṭīśvara in the world. Crore times fruits will be attainable by all those Brāhmaṇas who will worship it on the fourteenth day of the waning period of moon in the month of Pausa (i.e., January). Whichever Brāhmaṇa from the Southern country performs the religious ceremony in memory of his ancestors here will get crore times fruits equal to the same such religious ceremony performed in Gayā. Therefore, people should worship this Liṅga of mine.”

Pulastya said:

21. The voice stopped after sounding like this. Then the sages with faith worshipped (the Liṅga) with incense and flavoured oil.

22. O king! the act of worship was done with great faith in this way and all the Brāhmaṇas after worshipping attained fulfilment with the grace of the worshipable Liṅga.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Greatness of Rūpa Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. O best king! after this go to the centre of pilgrimage with good appearance, i.e., Rupa Tīrtha. All sins of men go away by a visit here and good appearance and fortune is attained.

2. O king! in a place by name Vapu there was a renowned divine beauty. It is mentioned that she had attained fulfilment there.

3. Earlier there was an ugly woman having a disfigured face for whom fear was unknown. Having a fat belly and crooked neck, she had such horn-like big teeth that the same appeared as if piercing out of her head.

4. Once she was roaming about in the Arbuda region in search of fruits. That was the third day of the rising period of moon in the month of Pauṣa (i.e., January). She fell off into a fountain in the mountain.

5. In that beautiful and bright reservoir she got enjoined with a beautiful complexion, with lotus eyes, good hairs and with all traits pronounced.

6-7. O king! the emergence of hers with such a body was out of the influence of this centre of pilgrimage. In the meantime, a King arrived there in the same pronounced mountain for the purpose of playing. But then by beholding such a beautiful sight in that auspicious moment the king got pierced with an arrow of lust.

Indra said:

8. Tell me who you are like a diamond? What for have you come here? Are you a goddess or the daughter of King of snakes Nāga or are you the embodiment of fulfilled knowledge?

9. I have been hijacked in mind by your well-moving brows and lotus eyes. I am the King of all gods. O beauty with a pleasing smile! entreat me.

The woman said:

10. I am a woman having thirty husbands and hence fearless. Having come here with the aim of fruits, I have fallen into the fountain in the mountain.

11. I have got this beautiful and good appearance by dint of a bath here. You, yourself is even difficult to obtain for gods. So what to speak of the mortals subject to repeated births and deaths?

12. Having all gods under your control what for are you desiring me? As the Lord of gods, you can have a share of mine according to your desire like my thirty husbands.

Pulastya said:

13-14. After her saying like this the King, i.e., Indra possessed with desire and desirous of winning her over, told her, “O giver of welfare! ask for the boon that is in your mind. I am pleased with your polite behaviour. I will give you a good boon.”

The woman said:

15. Let all the gods be pleased by any man or woman taking bath here with faith on the third day of the rising period of the moon in the month of Pauṣa (i.e., January).

16. Let the unattainable beauty of gods be obtainable for them. O King of gods! please take me along to the Heaven.

Pulastya said:

17. Saying 'let it be so' the King of gods, taking her along left for the heavenly kingdom in a space vehicle.

18. This is how after having got a pure body while on earth, the place is renowned as Vapu and she has got the same name as a divine beauty.

19. The gods with faith take bath in that pond in morning on the third day of the rising period of the moon in the month of (Pauṣa, i.e., January).

20. O king! the other divine unmarried girls as well as Yakṣa girls taking a bath there at that time also attained fulfilment.

21. Appearance is gained over there as she got it completely there. Everyone becomes accomplished there endowed with learning.

22. There is a beautiful cave on the eastern side where the unmarried girls inhabiting hell take bath.

23. After taking a bath there, they proceed to the cave carrying a bit of water with them. From there they take a bit of water from the stone at the sitting place of Lord Gaṇeśa.

24. After mixing both the water humans become accomplished. The living beings carrying that water go here and there.

25. There is a tree by name Tilaka on the doorway of that cave which cannot be seen anywhere either in heaven or on the surface of earth.

26. All works get accomplished by its flowers and fruits. The man becomes fulfilled by eating or bearing those on the body.

27. The stones in that cave spread across all directions are like conches. It appears they wish to have a touch of that water through which they turn golden.

28. If a woman sterile for years and centuries drink the water mixed with sandalwood, she becomes pregnant.

29. By practising to take bath there, a man suffering from diseases becomes free from ailments and one, afflicted with planetary debilitations, slows down the same affectations through such a practice.

30. A touch of that water throws instantly away the afflictions in the form of ghosts, satans etc. and all bad deeds get ruined.

31. Even worms, flies, satans, birds, deer etc. will attain the ultimate passage instantaneously by touch of this water.

Yayāti said:

32. This very strange and supernatural greatness of this pilgrimage centre as told, has impressed me. It has neither any past nor a future.

33. What could be the specific reason about this place so that its supernatural greatness is being remembered? I have a great curiosity. Please describe in detail.

Pulastya said:

34-35. In earlier times, with the downfall of the kingdom of Indra followed by the demon Bala becoming king of three worlds, the mother Aditi observed severe penance here. Then the four-armed Viṣṇu descended into the womb of Aditi. Then the great Viṣṇu came out but afraid of the terror of the demon, remained clandestinely inside the pond on the doorway of the cave.

36. So that way as soon as Hari took birth, he placed himself in that pond. Due to that the pilgrimage acquired its sacredness and people's wishes get actualised by a visit here.

37. O King! there is no other reason. I have narrated the truth to you. On the third day of the rising period of moon in the month of Pauṣa (i.e., January) the dwarf Trivikrama was born here.

38. The tree Tilaka placed ahead of all trees was brought up here like a son by Aditi. She had served it with the auspicious water everyday in her own hands.

39. In this way, I have narrated to you the greatness and goodness of this centre of pilgrimage as mentioned by all. Hence, everyone must make good effort to have a bath there. It fulfills desire of all people in this world as well as in the next world.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Greatness of Viṣṇu

Pulastya said:

1. O best king! after this one should go to that excellent centre of pilgrimage situated in the north-east direction established by the royal sage Ambarīṣa famed in the three worlds as the destroyer of all sins.

2. In this place of pilgrimage, even in the time of Kali Yuga, Ambarīṣa himself continued to stay respecting that particular saying.

3. In old times during Satya Yuga, a king named Ambarīṣa having undergone an impregnable penance, had pleased God Viṣṇu.

4. Frugal, the king of kings Jitendriya survived on eating fruits for one thousand years in this place of pilgrimage.

5. Then for two thousand years he ate only dried leaves. For another two thousand years more he had only water.

6. Then remembering God Viṣṇu and inclining the mind with faith he lived on breathing air for another three thousand years.

7. Then God Viṣṇu was pleased to come before his sight after ten thousand years.

8. Bearing the form of Indra and seated on the back of elephant Airāvat, Viṣṇu came and told King Ambarīṣa, "I want to give you boon."

Indra said:

9. O King! ask for the best of boons as desired in your mind. I have come here after having seen you engaged in the act of devotion without any doubt.

Ambariṣa said:

10. You cannot give me salvation. I have killed the demon Vṛtra. By your grace, O God! the running of affairs in the three worlds is done according to me. O King of Gods! welcome to you, but you please go as boons do not interest me.

11. By getting pleased in all ways, the four-armed Viṣṇu will only give me a boon. That only I will accept. O King! please go. Homage to you.

Indra said:

12. O King! ask for the boon there in your mind. I am even the Lord of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śaṁkara.

13. I am the Lord of the other gods and of the three worlds. Therefore, ask for the difficult boon with pleasure from me.

14. All gods remain pleased with my getting pleased. Act as per my words and ask for the good boon, O King!

Ambariṣa said:

15. You are the king of all gods and the lord of the three worlds. I am the king of land having seven islands and I have killed the demon Vṛtra.

16. O Father! it is for sure that I am a true devotee of Viṣṇu in accordance with perceived ways. You are the Viṣṇu and will give me a boon.

Indra said:

17. O King! if you do not accept the boon as given by me, I will apply my weapon of thunderbolt and kill you definitely.

18. Having said like this Indra took out the thunderbolt weapon in the right hand and moved it around itself like a snake with skill.

19. Great disorder began to happen with his circling the weapon around in this way. The mountains including the peaks as well as rivers got affected.

20. With the sky covered with dark clouds, the ground below got under its shadow. Nothing was visible as everything got covered with darkness.

21. In the meantime that king—the devotee of God sat in concentration with closed eyes.

22. Then becoming pleased, the God of the world came to direct manifestation. Airāvata—the elephant became Garuḍa—the king of birds.

23. Viṣṇu—the bearer of conch, cakṛa (a discus) and mace (a weapon) told that king engaged in concentration with a deep and vibrant voice like the clouds.

The gracious God said:

24. There is no other devotee like you the king. O son! I am fully satisfied with you. Let there be your welfare. You can ask for the most difficult thing as a boon.

Ambariṣa said:

25. God! if you are happy to give me a boon, kindly give me such a boon which will enable me to swim across this sea of world.

Pulastya said:

26. Then God Viṣṇu, as a grant of boon, instructed King Ambariṣa about the well extensive Jñāna Yoga that operates as the cause behind obliteration of the world.

27-29. Like a man born leaves the world instantly, the King Ambariṣa after hearing this properly paid homage to Viṣṇu and said, “O God! this path of Yoga which you have narrated to me is specially beyond the comprehension of people in the Kali Yuga. If you are pleased with me, kindly instruct about the Kriyā Yoga, O bearer of conch, the discus and the mace! This will be meaningful for the people to swim across this world.”

Pulastya said:

30. Then God Keśava, i.e., Viṣṇu appropriately narrated the Kriyā Yoga to the king.

31-33. Pleased within heart having listened to the same king Ambariṣa said: “If God Mādhava! You are satisfied with me—the king, let there always be the proximity of the King of Gods with my hermitage. There, I shall be worshipping the idol of yours according to established rules and procedure. People all over the world will be worshipping you—the bearer of conch, discus and the mace.”

Pulastya said:

34. With Mādhava granting permission in this regard, Ambariṣa started to construct a temple for Hari and began to worship the idol with offerings of flowers, incense and oil.

35. Then after passage of a long time, the God Himself in His own body along with son and other kith and kin came to that Viṣṇu temple.

36. Even today, in the Kali Yuga, God Viṣṇu, keeping with the truthfulness of words given to the king has permanently positioned himself here.

37. O Great King! from then onwards till the present time in this Kali Yuga, the ritual of making and fixing of idols on the surface of earth has started.

38. Those who worship Lord Viṣṇu here on this Arbuda mountain with faith go to the same world as of Viṣṇu with His grace.

39. Placing the self in front of Viṣṇu, one who performs the activity of keeping awake throughout the night and that too without food on the eleventh day of a month goes to that place of Viṣṇu which is even difficult for gods to attain.

40. The same fruit is obtained by the mortal men by having a look of God Viṣṇu, as is obtained by gifting of the Kapilā cow at the pre-eminent Puṣkara (a celebrated place of pilgrimage at Ajmer in Rajasthan) in the month of Kārtika (i.e., October).

41. The fruits of the sacrificial activity of offering of horses to fire, i.e., of the *Aśvamedha Yajña* are obtained by having a look of Viṣṇu on the specific day demarcated for him either in the rising or waning period of moon in a month.

42. Hence with all efforts there should be worship of Viṣṇu and with due procedure. One who adheres to the vowed observance of religious austerities for four months and worship God Viṣṇu, does not get rebirth.

43. O virtuous king! only one pilgrimage of this kind fulfills all pilgrimages undertaken. A look at Viṣṇu assembles together the vowed observance of religious austerities of four-month period.

44. Some people gift everything to Brāhmaṇas. Some others worship God Viṣṇu carefully during the vowed religious observance for four months.

45. Some make a gift of one thousand unmarried girls as per established rules and practices. Still others serve Viṣṇu with all sincerity during the period of four months of vowed observance of religious austerities.

46. Some make the offering of best of all gifts on the occasion of solar eclipse at Kurukṣetra. Others serve Viṣṇu with all eagerness during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

47. Some worship God Viṣṇu through the *Agniṣṭoma Yajña** followed up with offering of presents to Brāhmaṇas at the end of the sacrificial rite. Some others worship Viṣṇu with all eagerness during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities (i.e., the *Caturmasya*).

48. Someone, after going to the Himālaya, gives up his body. Another individual serves God Viṣṇu with care during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

49. Some leave their bodies aside falling at the feet of Sage Bhṛgu in the Uttana pilgrimage. Other men remain engrossed in the service of Viṣṇu during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

50. Someone gives up life through continuous fasting for days together. Someone else remains engaged in the service of

Viṣṇu during the vowed observance of religious austerities in the four-month period.

51. One man proficient in knowledge listens to the factual reports related to the Supreme Being while another takes a look of Viṣṇu with care during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

52. O king! some perform the religious rite connected with remembrance of their ancestors during the period meant for paternal side, i.e., Pitru Pakṣa while some others bringing all forces of their minds together within do service of Viṣṇu.

53. Some undergo (crores of) the vowed observance of the religious austerity of Candrāyana as per established rules. Some others do service to Viṣṇu during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

54. Some remain adherents to the vowed observance of religious austerities for thousands of years while some others visualize the opportunity of service to Viṣṇu during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

55. Some Brāhmaṇas read the four Vedas as per rule. Others serve Viṣṇu during the four-month period of vowed observance of religious austerities.

56. O king! there is no need for more description here. Hence listen in brief. There are all these things of the world on one side while on the other there is vision.

57. Hence everyone, with efforts must remain close to Viṣṇu. All sins get destroyed by residing in this place of Ambariṣa.

58. On one side there is Viṣṇu. On the other side there is the line of 'action/work'. O king! taking shelter under Him is the best.

59. O king! even one going nearer to Viṣṇu even after committing great sins becomes free immediately by a sight of Viṣṇu.

60. One who places one piece of flower on God Viṣṇu, attains all good fortune in this world as well as in the next.

61. One who massages the idol of God Viṣṇu with scented oil and with faith, goes to that ultimate place becoming relieved of old age and death.

62. Leaving behind every thing, one who entreats Him remaining engrossed and with an undivided mind, gets liberation immediately by a sight of Him.

63-64. O good king! one who lights earthen lamps before Viṣṇu in connection with the vowed observance of the religious austerities meant solely for Lord Viṣṇu (i.e., Pravodhini Vrata) on the eleventh day of the rising period of moon in the month of Kārtika (i.e., October), happens to witness sins committed in previous birth and as one after the other sin comes before his eyes, all his sins get effaced from the body at that time.

65. One who employs the mixture containing equal parts of five contents, viz., milk, curd, ghee, sugar and honey in the worship of Viṣṇu or worship with curd or milk, does not get rebirth.

66. It is due to this that Viṣṇu must be worshipped with all efforts. O King! man attains freedom from the worldly bondage through this.

67. It is the duty ever to specially worship Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Greatness of Siddheśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then, O best of kings! one must visit the place of supreme God Siddheśvara. He is the giver of fulfilment to living beings. This was founded by a Siddha long ago.

2. A Siddha (accomplished one) by name Viśwāvasu had practised penance here for many years and had set up the idol of Śiva here.

3. He had won over anger, arrogance and all sensuous actions. Then after a thousand years Śaṁkara, i.e., the God having the bull on His emblem came to his sight on His own in the form of a king.

4-5. The great God Mahādeva in the form of King said: “I have come to this earth to give you a boon. You can ask for any auspicious boon in your mind. As I am pleased, I shall grant you the same even if that may be difficult to attain”.

Viśwāvasu said:

6. O best king! let there by fulfilment of desires of people by the grace of Śaṅkara after bearing this worshipable Liṅga in the mind with all certainty.

Pulastya said:

7. After saying ‘let it be so’ Śiva then disappeared from sight there. Since then thousands of people have attained fulfilment after going to the Siddheśvara temple.

8. By the influence of the worshipable Liṅga all desires have been fulfilled. Therefore, all righteous actions have disappeared from the surface of the earth.

9. Neither anyone has any need to perform sacrifice (Yajña) nor has to make any offering as charity. By Siddheśvara’s courting of God’s favour like this, humans on earth can be equally entitled to reach that stage of fulfilment.

10. O virtuous king! with the uprooting of Yajñas and charity, all gods along with Indra became unhappy.

11. Learning about the destruction of the Yajña, Indra put across his weapon thunderbolt as an impediment so that fulfilment could not be attained.

12. Even then, with the place being in proximity of Siddheśvara there, O best king, all actions meet with fulfilment and all sins get destroyed there.

13. O king! One who touches this, on the fourteenth day either during the waxing period or the waning period of the moon in the month of Pauṣa (i.e., January), that man becomes a Siddha (accomplished).

14. Even today also Siddhi (fulfilment) happens there. I have told this truth to you. Therefore, Sadgati (a good or happy state) can be possible (for you) by going and bowing down there.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Greatness of Śukreśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to Śukreśvara established by Śukra in ancient times. By having a look of this, a man instantly gets rid of his sins.

2-3. O virtuous king! seeing the demons who were defeated once by gods, Bhārgava, the intelligent Brāhmaṇa was prodded to think as to how could the demons win over the gods and attain great fame? Thinking that by worshipping Śaṁkara he could proceed on the path of fulfilment, he began to nurture such a desire in mind.

4. Having decided like this, he proceeded towards the high region of Arbuda and finding a cave in the valley began performance of difficult austerities.

5. Having installed the worshipable Liṅga of Śiva he got himself intently engaged in worship with incense, perfume and by anointing the Liṅga with scented oil.

6. Then after a thousand years of nurturing such a desire, the God finally came before him and said:

Mahādeva said:

7. O good Brāhmaṇa! I am satisfied with the faith of yours. You can ask for that auspicious boon even if that is difficult to obtain.

Śukra said:

8. If Mahādeva is satisfied, the great God may grant me that learning by which I may bring to life the living beings who have met with death in a battle.

Pulastya said:

9. O virtuous king! having imparted him that learning, Śiva told Śukra that he could enjoy and ask for yet another boon.

Śukra said:

10-11. Whoever touches or worships this Liṅga on the eighth day of the waxing period of Moon in the month of Kārtika (i.e., October), let there be no fear for him or her of untimely death by your grace. Let them all obtain their wishes nurtured in the mind.

Pulastya said:

12. Saying, 'it will be so', Śiva then disappeared from sight. Śukra also got demons killed by gods many a time.

13. By the power of that learning, the sage brought many back to life. On the head of that Sukreśvara temple there is a great pool with clean water which is the destroyer of sins.

14. A human being gets completely free from sins by having a bath there. O king! the grandfathers become pleased by the performance of Śrāddha here.

15. They become satiated with the water alone here. So the need for making the offerings again in the form of cooked rice-balls becomes superfluous. Hence everyone, with all possible efforts, needs to observe the ritual of having a bath there.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Greatness of Maṇikarṇikeśvara

Pulastya said:

1. O best king! then one has to go to that sin-destroyer centre of pilgrimage widely heard of and known by the name Maṇikarṇikā.

2. O king! the great Bālakhilya and other sages had attained Siddhi (perfection) here. The pond they had built up inside a cave in the charming mountain is a remover of sins.

3. O king! by their taking a seat, a great astonishing event happened there. Listen to that.

4. There was a Kirāta woman (i.e., belonging to the degraded mountain tribe) named Maṇikarṇikā who was very dark, ugly, having a horrible shape.

5. Once, with the sun right over head during noon, she became thirsty. She came there and entered into the water. But soon Rāhu had a mouthful of the sun (i.e., leading to solar eclipse).

6. In the meantime she got a body of celestial appearance. When the sages saw, they found her coming out of the middle of the water.

7-9. Her husband who was in a hurry to look for her came there and unhappy with the sorrows of separation from wife asked that woman, "My wife had come here. If you happened to see her please tell me fast. This boy is born out of her. He is crying repeatedly affected by thirst and hunger. If you beautiful-eyed woman have seen her, please tell. Without her this boy of mine will die."

The woman said:

10. O my husband! I am that wife of yours. By the power of this centre of pilgrimage, I have got this celestial appearance which is even difficult for gods.

11. You also go and have a bath quickly in the water. You will also obtain that excellent appearance like me.

12. Then he, along with his son entered into that water for a bath. But, O King! with the Sun coming out coincidentally at that time, he again got back his usual ugly appearance.

13. With sorrow, he embraced death in that condition in the pond. On her part, overwhelmed with grief for the husband's death, she decided to die.

14. Having prepared the pyre with selected pieces of wood to burn the dead body she set fire to it.

15. O good king! it was a matter of great surprise for everyone to see her courage and her being full of mercy.

The sages said:

16. You have got the wonderful appearance which is even difficult for gods to get. So, O beautiful woman! Why are you following this sinful man?

The woman said:

17-19. O great Brāhmaṇas! I am a devoted wife always engaged in the service of my husband. What shall I do with the beautiful appearance without my husband? Ugly or beautiful, poor or wealthy, whatever one may be, there is no other way than this singular aspect of having a husband for women in the three worlds. O eminent sages! this boy of mine has come to you as resort. Joined as I am with my husband, I will enter the funeral fire.

Pulastya said:

20. This is how she brought it to the notice of the sages as well as of all others about her decision made with full determination. In return, all assembled there became full of mercy within themselves and began to look in the direction of the body on the pyre.

21. Then at that time, the great sages brought her husband alive. He was endowed with saintly appearance and with all supernatural traits.

22. In the meantime, as desired in their minds a space craft full of celestial maidens arrived there.

23. So in this way the sages on their own brought the couple back to life. The couple then offered to the sages their homage and started for Heaven.

24-25. Then all those sages told that woman Maṇikarṇikā, "O auspicious woman! please ask for boon as we have been pleased with you. We are pleased with your quality of devotedness to your husband and especially your truthfulness. A sight of us never goes in vain."

Maṇikarṇikā said:

26-27. O Sages! if you are pleased, grant me the boon too with pleasure. Let the great worshipable Liṅga here be named after me. Such is the wish in my mind at this time. I do not need any other thing. With all your blessings, I am going to Heaven now.

The sages said:

28. O one with a beautiful face! let this centre of pilgrimage be known as having the worshipable Liṅga after your name. This pilgrimage centre goes by your name as Maṇikarṇikā.

Pulastya said:

29. She went to Heaven along with husband and the sage, Bālakhilya, sincere in observance of religious austerities stayed there with the boy.

30. Religious duties like taking a bath and making of charities here in Maṇikarṇikā on the day of solar eclipse produce the same fruits as in Kurukṣetra.

31. O King of kings! taking a bath here with the mind centered, results in simultaneous realization of desires of the mind alongside the very action of bathing.

32. It is due to this that everyone with all efforts must nurture the habit of taking bath here. One must make charities here in

this pilgrimage centre according to one's capacity and offer libations to godly sages and forefathers.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Greatness of Paṅgu Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one should go to the Paṅgu Tīrtha—the destroyer of all sins. Earlier a Brāhmaṇa named Paṅgu had performed austerity here.

2. In earlier times a Brāhmaṇa by name Paṅgu was born in the lineage of Sage Cyavana. Due to his disability, he was unable to walk.

3. Once while occupied with some household work, he was unable to go with friends and family relatives. O king! he felt very sad.

4. Given up by them, he then went to the Arbuda region. There on the banks of a pond, he began performing penance.

5. Having installed a Liṅga of Śiva there, he began to worship it. He used to offer perfumes, flowers and other associated items to it with due faith.

6. Moved by devotion to Śiva he used to subsist only on air. The good Brāhmaṇa Paṅgu was invariably engaged in offering oblations to sacrificial fire and in muttering the God's name.

7. Then, O great king! Mahādeva satisfied with the Brāhmaṇa spoke thus to Paṅgu:

The God said:

8. O Paṅgu! Mahādeva is pleased with you and you can ask for a good boon. I shall grant you all that even if the same may be difficult to have.

Paṅgu said:

9-10. O God of gods! let this sacred place be famous after my name. O Saṅkara! I, being disabled, have come here for your blessings. Let there always be your presence along with your wife here.” With him saying like this, the Lord said the following to the Brāhmaṇa.

The God said:

11-12. This centre of pilgrimage will be named after you O best of Brāhmaṇas. This pilgrimage will acquire its popularity by the fame of your religious austerity. There will be my presence in this place on the fourteenth day of the bright period of moon in the month of Phālguna (i.e., March).

Pulastya said:

13-14. By a mere bath only the Brāhmaṇa acquired supernatural appearance. This God of gods and the greatest God, i.e., Maheśvara dwells here with Gaurī. O best of kings! one should take bath there on that day when the lame Brāhmaṇa getting free from his disability had attained supernatural appearance there.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Greatness of Yama Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then, O best of kings, one has to go to that good place of pilgrimage known as Yama Tīrtha. It is a destroyer of sins of living beings and giver of freedom from hell.

2. In olden times, there was a king named Citrāṅgada who was excessively greedy. Neither did he do anything good nor was good behaviour known to him on earth.

3. Extremely cruel, wicked, he was a pain-giver to gods and Brāhmaṇas. He used to embezzle others' wealth and kidnap others' wives.

4. Devoid of truth and honesty and at the same time full of cunningness and insatiable greed, once, he went to the Arbuda mountain as addicted he was to hunting.

5. Roaming about here and there, he got agitated with excessive hunger and thirst. Then he found a lake full of clean water.

6. It was full of lotuses as well as of crocodiles and turtles. Full of different kinds of birds it was well spread out and enticing.

7. O virtuous king, as he entered the pool to quench his thirst, a crocodile caught him and devoured him.

8. Yama had created terrible hells for him. The Messenger of Yama hurried and took him, the perpetrator of evils, there.

9. However, coming in contact with him, everyone in hell became happy. With his eyes struck with wonder on seeing everyone happy in a place like hell, the Messenger described such state of affairs before Yama, the king of righteousness.

Then Yama said:

10-11a. The Arbuda mountain is there on this land where this centre of pilgrimage dear to me is situated. Observance of religious austerities by me has materialised here. It is certain that he has met with death there for this reason. As per saying, truthfulness is only the foundation for death at the region of Arbuda.

The Messenger said:

11b. But O king! such a lower man has attained death there by the crocodile catching him.

Yama said:

12. Leave him aside. In any case there are different types of wickedness. He has died in this place of my pilgrimage which is the destroyer of all sins.

13. O best king! following such words of Yama and his servant leaving him free, he went to Heaven getting served in turn by the divine damsels.

14. Hence there is a need of having a bath there enjoined with devotion. One who does so, goes to that ultimate place becoming free from old age and death.

15. Therefore, everyone needs to follow the practice of having a bath there with all efforts. Yama had attained fulfilment there on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of the Moon in the month of Caitra i.e. March.

16. The human being performing the appropriate religious ceremony connected with remembrance of his near and dear ones (Śrāddha) there gets blessed with residence in Heaven along with his paternal ancestors.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Greatness of Varāha Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. After that, O best king, one needs to go to that place of pilgrimage which Hari, i.e., Viṣṇu in His incarnation of Varāha (i.e., boar) inhabited and which always gives happiness and destroys all sins.

2. In the Varāha incarnation, Viṣṇu had rescued the Earth there and Hari (i.e., an epithet of Viṣṇu) had stayed back there in that unchanged form. There is no need of fear for anyone at anytime.

3. In this part of Earth, Viṣṇu told Earth herself to ask for any boon—even the one difficult to attain—as He had to go back again to the auspicious Vaikuṇṭha. (i.e., the abode of Viṣṇu)

The Earth said:

4. O Bearer of Conch, Discus and Mace, if you have to give me a boon, then always remain in no other body than this in this place.

Hari said:

5-8. O Goddess! I shall stay with this body in the Arbuda mountain as per your statement and will remain incessantly engaged in the welfare of people. This lake in front of me is full of clear water. The human being undergoing the religious duty of taking a bath here with devotion on the eleventh day of the bright period of Moon in the month of Māgha (i.e., January-February) will free him from the sin of murdering a person having knowledge of Veda. Men performing Śrāddha with great faith will give satisfaction to their ancestors, which will continue till the time of final destruction of this world. Hence with all necessary efforts everyone must have a bath here with all sincerity.

Pulastya said:

9. Having said this, O king, Govinda, i.e., Viṣṇu disappeared from sight on the Garuḍa, i.e., the king of birds (which is the insignia with which God Viṣṇu has always been associated with). Hence O best king! take the ceremonial bath specifically on that day there.

10. Any inhabitant on earth who makes offerings with libation of water and rounded balls of cooked rice to his ancestors with all eagerness through devotion goes to a place nearer to Viṣṇu along with his ancestors.

11. Going there and making offerings as donations is always praised. O best king, also present cows here.

12. O king! all humans making gifts of cows here stay for as many years in Heaven as the number of hairs on the cow's body.

13. Fulfilling the religious duty of having a bath and of making gifts according to one's capability specially on the eleventh

day of a Lunar month results in attainment of the highest spiritual status for one.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Greatness of Candraprabhāsa

Pulastya said:

1. Then, O virtuous king, one needs to go to the radiant Candreśa Tīrtha where the great soul Candra had attained brightness completely.

2. O king! Candra had married twenty-seven daughters of Dakṣa, Aśvinī being the first among the stars.

3. Amongst them, he always used to remain engaged in making love with Rohiṇī. (Hence) all other daughters of Dakṣa finding themselves rejected by Candra were very unhappy. Crying, they went and surrendered themselves to their father.

They said:

4-5. O lord of the citizens! despite being blameless, we have been rejected by our husband. Hence with sorrow, we have come seeking a respite under you relying on your greatness. You, the best of kings, always do welfare of all. Hence improve our current state. Chalk out a middle path by which our situation will improve as well as Candra can be dissuaded from his obsession with Rohiṇī.

Pulastya said:

6. After hearing them, he then went to Candra and told him to behave equally with all his daughters.

7. Then ashamed of himself Candra told Dakṣa that he would act as per his words and then after paying homage he asked Dakṣa to let him take leave.

8. As soon as Daṁṣa left, Candra got back to his usual excessive involvement with Rohiṇī and continued with rejection of all those daughters born of Prajāpati.

9. Thus, being unhappy, they all went to Daṁṣa again and told him that Candra had not fulfilled the words given to him.

10. They said: "We are unfortunate and tormented with sorrow. It is beyond doubt that death is the only way out for us than having such a life."

Pulastya said:

11-12. Thus being angry, Daṁṣa went to Candra and told him, "You have committed a sin by not honouring my words. Hence, undoubtedly you will have death by tuberculosis." Giving such a curse, Daṁṣa returned to his own place.

13-14. Subsequently by suffering from tuberculosis and the gradual spread of the same disease throughout his body, Candra became emaciated and bereft of his usual brightness. Then he began to deliberate telling himself, "What could then be my duty with such a difficult and cruel curse on me? Why should I not worship Śiva who fulfills all desires?"

15. Resolving like this and winning over anger, he then went to the peak of Arbuda and got sincerely engaged in performing austerities, offering oblations in sacrificial fire and muttering names of God.

16. Then after passage of years together, Mahādeva being pleased, appeared before him saying, "I have come to grant you a boon."

God said:

17. Let there be your well being. You can ask for a boon cherished in your mind. I shall grant the same to you, O Candra, even if it may be very difficult to attain.

Candra said:

18. O best of Gods and the destroyer of the three worlds! Please kill my disease. O Lord of the world! Tuberculosis has spread throughout my body.

The God said:

19-21. O Candra, the tuberculosis in your body has been due to the curse of Dakṣa. Nothing can be done about the curse of this great soul. Hence, you adopt all those daughters as your own as per my words. By looking upon them with an equal mind your disease can be cured. During the waning period of moon your condition will deteriorate further while the waxing period will bring an increased aggravation of the same. You ask for a different boon desired in the mind even if that may be difficult to attain.

Candra said:

22-23. O Śaṁkara, a man who takes a bath on Monday with all devotion in the pool meant for Candra attains the ultimate status. O God of gods! let the ancestors of one offering balls of cooked rice here go to Heaven. Let this centre of pilgrimage, by your grace, bestow liberation on one.

The God said:

24. That will materialise completely for human beings in exchange for a bath here. As you have obtained radiance here, so there will arise purity through this centre of pilgrimage.

25. This place of pilgrimage accordingly will earn fame by the name Prabhāsa. The planet Soma will specially be available here on Monday.

26-27. Those humans who will have a bath here, will attain the highest status. Similarly, the observance of religious activity by human beings in memory of their ancestors (i.e., Śrāddha) and the offering of balls of cooked rice (i.e., Piṇḍa) will yield the same auspiciousness that comes by performing Śrāddha at Gayā. Hence it is the most desirable duty to make presents here keeping with fitness of the Soma planet.

Pulastya said:

28. Having said like this, the God having manifold forms disappeared from sight. Candra also keeping with the desire of

Dakṣa began to treat all his daughters equally as wives as could be possible.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

Greatness of Piṇḍodaka Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. After that, O good king! one has to visit the Piṇḍodaka Tīrtha. Piṇḍodaka, a Brāhmaṇa, had performed religious austerities in this centre of pilgrimage.

2. In ancient times, there was a Brāhmaṇa by name Piṇḍodaka on this great earth. Though taught by a teacher, he turned out to be less intelligent and less meritorious.

3. O king! he could not succeed in study due to his idiocy. Then adopting the path of ultimate renunciation he went inside a cave in a mountain.

4. Just at the same juncture of time, Goddess Saraswatī entertainingly playing the Vīṇā and roaming around arrived there.

5-6. After seeing the Brāhmaṇa quite depressingly engaged in the pursuit of renunciation the great Goddess Saraswatī got carried with kindness and said, “Why are you so sad and appear to be displeased? You are not smiling from within your mind. What for have you come here? Tell me fast. I am there near you.”

7-9. Piṇḍodaka said: “Due to being condemned by the teacher, I have embraced renunciation. Madam, as one without learning, I am seeking death at the moment. Goddess Saraswatī, does not dwell at the tip of my tongue. O beautiful-faced one, there is no other reason for my death than this. I have to go to another place, as you have seen me all of a sudden. Death is

desirably the best for me rather than living the life of a dumb one.”

Saraswatī said:

10. I am Goddess Saraswatī who always dwells here in this mountain as the night sets in on the thirteenth day of each month. Hence, you can pray for the desire nurtured in the mind even if that may be very difficult to obtain.

Piṇḍodaka said:

11. O Benevolent one! by your grace let me have the knowledge of all that desired in the mind. O goddess with pure smile! let this place of pilgrimage acquire fame by my name.

Saraswatī said:

12-14. Starting from today you will be the bearer of all knowledge in this world. As you have wished, this place of pilgrimage will be renowned by your name. One who performs the religious act of having a bath here with the setting in of the night on the thirteenth day of a Lunar month, will be a bearer of all knowledge despite of him lacking in intelligence. O good Brāhmaṇa! my association will always be there with this place of pilgrimage. Hence it is your duty to have a bath here with all earnestness.

15. Having said like this, the Goddess disappeared from sight then and there. Becoming all-knowing, Piṇḍodaka returned to own home. All were surprised to know the impact of drinking the water as well as of taking a resort to this place of pilgrimage.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Greatness of Gracious Mother

Pulastya said:

1. Then, O best king! you go to the place of ŚrīMātā worshipped by gods also. It is a giver of fulfilment to actions of human beings in this as well as the next world.

2. She is also the all-power spread across this world. She has on her own chosen to dwell on this mountain.

3. There was a demon by name Kalinga in the ancient Deva Yuga. Free of old age and death, he was a threat to the gods.

4. His actions had extended over the three worlds. He had won over the Heaven along with its king Indra by dint of his power. He had reached the Brahmā World along with all gods.

5. The gods as well as humans were all terrorised by that demon. That demon named Kalinga had himself become Indra.

6. Then that demon appointed all demons, as per their abilities in the place of Vasus, Maruts, Sādhyas, Viśvadeva and of the divine sages.

7. The demons themselves ate up all those shares of Yajñas intended for the gods. Then all the gods went to the Arbuda mountain in pursuit of austerities.

8. Even now this place is famous in the three worlds as one where the gods tilled the land, and subsisted on leaves, flowers and fruits as a part of their observance of religious vow.

9. It cannot be spoken as to what extent they were equally engaged in the activity of meditation while in a state of utter fear. Some of them were sincerely engaged in the observance of religious vow by practising penance in the midst of five fires.

10. Some were having food only once a day while some were not taking food at all and were subsisting only on air. Some others were fasting for a month altogether and were observing the religious vow called cāndrāyaṇa.

11. Some having the eligibility to cross over were engaged in the observance of the most painful and arduous religious vow while others were excessively engaged in having water, air, foam or heat as food only.

12. Some were doing the religious activity of conducting the sacrificial fire with repeated pronouncements of names of gods within their minds, while some, with all intensity, were engaged in meditation. Some were making sacrifices, giving presents and offering edible things while others were trying to please through offering perfumes and incense.

13. O king! they were worshipping the supremely powerful Goddess to accomplish their own works for by observance of religious vows and austerities in this way all get free from the bondage of work.

14. Then, O virtuous king! after completion of a thousand years the Goddess appeared before them in the manifested form of an unmarried young girl.

15. O king! earlier (i.e., initially) she was a frightening smoky statue. Then she became a bright girl draped in a white dress. Seeing her and becoming pleased, the gods got up with folded hands out of sheer gratefulness.

The gods said:

16-22. Homage to you, O Goddess! in motion everywhere and worshipped by everyone. Homage to you, O Goddess! who is always invoked for fulfilment of all desires. Homage to you, O giver of resort to all gods. Homage to you, the Supreme Goddess to whom homage is also offered by all those keeping association with Brahmā. Homage to you, the inhabitant in less than half a space, in half a space of a letter. Homage to you having eyes like lotus leaves and the mother of the Universe. Homage to you, O Goddess, O granter of all boons, O one being the essence of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Present in distinct forms of your own, you, the Goddess, represent the traits of the material world. You are the bearer of intelligence. Side by side patience is your own nature as part of the disposition of tolerance.

O Goddess! you are intelligence, you are the motion and the agent. You are also Śacī, Lakṣmī, Pārvatī, Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, the invulnerable one and destroyer of all sins. Whatever different names, O Goddess! may be taken of you in places in the three worlds other than this mountain, those are of the same form in which you have placed yourself in this mountain. As fire pervades wood or threads constitute cloth, so are you encompassing the entire world with yourself present everywhere in disguise.

Pulastya said:

23-24. After such hymns were sung in praise of her, the Mother of the world told all the good gods, “Do ask for the boon fast as desired, O best gods. Why are you all putting up here clandestinely in the middle, in such a poor and helpless state? There is no fear for my devotees with me ever present in the three worlds—both living and non-living.”

The gods said:

25-27. O Goddess! we have been repeatedly defeated by the demon Kalinga in wars. His influence has spread out in the three worlds encompassing both the living and the non-living. Having usurped our share of Yajña, he has brought it under the control of the demons. By his occupation of the Heaven all gods have been ineffective. In no other way can Indra regain his own position than the murder of the demon. Hence, O highly fortunate one! do something like this. We desire a boon like this.

The Goddess said:

28-29. As I have created you, so also this great demon. Hence there is nothing which I can do specially for both you as well as the demon, O best gods. Therefore I will prevent those demons from entering Heaven and make Indra as well as other gods inhabitants of Heaven again.

Having said so the best Goddess sent for a messenger with a rider.

30. She sent the message through the messenger asking the demon Kalinga to leave Heaven fast. Going to the demon Bāṣkali, (son of Baskala, i.e., Kalinga) i.e., the messenger conveyed the same with all sobriety.

The Messenger said:

31-32. That Virtuous Mother, all-encompassing, having the appearance as manifested power, with a pure smile, the mother of world worshipped by all gods is telling this to you for being pleased with the gods, "You hurry and get back to your own place so that Indra can return to Heaven. O best of demons! do not be excited as you cannot attain godhood".

Pulastya said:

33-37. After having heard the words of the messenger, the demon, thinking of himself as the Lord of the world and self-conceited as he was in excitement said, "Who is this virtuous lady or who even are the gods? I do not know anything or anyone of that sort, nor am I going to give up Heaven. Go and tell this order of mine to her. I shall not part with Heaven under any circumstances out of fear. Even the King does not kill the fearsome/difficult enemy. For this reason, O messenger! I am not depriving you of life. O messenger! after this, if you enable me to have a look at the gracious mother, I shall present to you the thing as per desire of your mind. This statement of mine is true. I shall accompany you there where she is putting up and making my statement true, I will subjugate her."

Pulastya said:

38. After saying like this the demon, wild in excitement went swiftly to the Arbuda mountain along with the messenger with anger.

39. Seeing (i.e., noticing) the arrival of Bāṣkil, the gods along with Indra began to retreat despite the Goddess asking them not to do so.

40. Possessed by fear, the gods in any case, had already run away equally in all directions. Then Bāṣkali arrived along with a great army.

41. Then king, Kaliṅga through the messenger, told the gracious Mother after whom that particular region of Arbuda is named.

Bāṣkali said:

42-44. O best messenger! go and tell the gracious Mother having a beautiful smile that “let her be my wife and I shall ever remain under her control. The entire kingdom of mine will be there under her control. Otherwise, by winning over all the gods, I shall take her forcefully. O one with the best face! What need have you of the less powerful Indra and of other gods similar in that respect. Neither the thousand-eyed God nor the other gods nor any other demon are comparable to me.”

Pulastya said:

45. Having heard all this, the messenger then went and conveyed the same. O King! he conveyed all that as told to him.

46. After hearing all this, the Goddess began to deliberate with a gentle smile on her. She thought that the king of demons had been made free from old age and death, is the doing of Śambhu, i.e., Lord Śiva.

47. As per what action to be initiated by me, could I kill him and oblige the gods. When the Goddess was deliberating like this once and again with regard to the course of her action in respect of the demon, he (i.e., the demon) restless with desire came towards her in a hurry.

48. Learning that the Lord of the demons was having such a lowly vision, she decided for all certainty on her part to bring his downfall as far as possible.

49. Then, O virtuous king! as the Goddess began to laugh slowly, ferocious soldiers began to creep out of her mouth.

50. In that army of soldiers there were separate groups of elephants, cavalry and infantry. There were also thousands of other fighters seated on chariots.

51. The soldiers of the demon were all brought down by weapons of such soldiers before the demon himself who became still to witness this.

52. After the killing of his soldiers, the gods as well as Indra told the Goddess, "O Goddess! kill this demon for neither can we live nor can there be our reign in the Heaven with his remaining alive."

Pulastya said:

53. After hearing such words of theirs, despite their awareness of him (i.e. the demon) being free from death, the Goddess gave them the great peak of the mountain with herself placed on top of that.

54. Since then, has this gracious Mother of the world who can assume a form as per her own sweet will, been dwelling on this best mountain and, O king! she is still present there even today for the welfare of the world. Her dwelling there is manifested through the fulfilment of desires of human beings.

55. At that time, becoming pleased all gods began to sing hymns in honour of that supremely powerful Goddess who took away all their fears.

56. O king! the Goddess became fully pleased with the hymns of gods in her praise. With their pain/difficulty gone away, the gods—all of them, retreated to their own places. They all went back to places of their own with the obstruction on the way taken away and with all their difficulties gone away.

57. O Indra! O King of Gods! ask for any boon that your mind is cherishing. Saying so the Goddess assured that she would grant all his boons, herself being satisfied with his devotion.

Indra said:

58-61. If you are satisfied with me, O Goddess! who is eternally fond of devotion, please stay here till I am the lord of Heaven. I am ruling over the gods, O one eternally fond of devotion. I am the Indra as this demon is immortal and free from old age. Made by Hara (i.e., Śiva) earlier he has remained unmoved by old age and death. Let there be no disease in the three worlds by your grace. We all will be worshipping you equally here. Let them, who worship you on the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of moon in the month of Caitra (March) go to that supreme position free from old age and death.

Pulastya said:

62. After saying like this, the thousand-eyed, i.e., Indra together with other gods became pleased to get back Heaven and returned to Heaven.

63. She—the Goddess also stayed back there for the welfare of gods.

64. One who takes a look of her, O king! on the fourteenth day of the month of Caitra (i.e., March) when the earth is bedecked with the white rays of moon, attains that ultimate place becoming free from old age and death.

65. So O king! what values the observance of religious vows or regulations or making of charities can have. All these cannot even equal one-sixteenth part of the results that awaits taking a full and complete look of her.

66. O king! the divine foot-wear of hers there even sets a pathway of vision. Taking a look at it is relatively more important for one doing so does not have to look forward to the world again. He attains all desires of this world as well as of the other world.

Yayāti said:

67. At what time in the past, a best Brāhmaṇa attained freedom by the footwear of the Goddess? Please tell me in great details as to how could it be and what were the reasons behind it?

Pulastya said:

68. O virtuous king! men attain two kinds of supreme fulfilment accruable to the conduct of a religiously righteous deed by seeing that Goddess.

69. At this time, O king! with the evolution of undertaking of pilgrimages and observance of religious vows on earth, such activities like conduct of sacrificial fires, i.e., Yajñas and the offering of presents disappeared.

70. All the hells of King Yama became empty and difficulties arose without gods having the participatory shares of Yajñas.

71. Hence all gods, O best king! assembled there and went to the Supreme and gracious Mother on top of Arbuda.

The gods said:

72-74. O queen of gods! all actions like conduct of offerings to eight sacrificial fires (Agniṣṭoma Yajña) have gone to dogs. We are therefore affected by such severe activities in the mortal world. All beings with sins along with their ancestors are attaining the passage of fulfilment by having a look at you, O Goddess. Hence by your grace let us also attain that prosperity. The demon Bāṣkila is not moving out from here. Hence please do something of this sort.

Pulastya said:

75-81. After hearing like this from them, the Goddess then began to deliberate deeply and after making a footwear for her out of stones, she left the same there. Then, O king! coming nearer to the gods and with her body bowed down, the Goddess said, "As per your statement, I have left this best of Mountains and have left my footwear there for your protection from the demon Bāṣkila. O best gods! under the weight of my footwear that demon has become unable to move and henceforth is like an immobile pole there by my power. For the purpose of this footwear, I have made the rules in Śāstras. These rules are for the spiritual well being of living beings on the surface of earth. One who worships the footwear with utmost devotion and

according to the path laid down in Śāstras and in no other way, fulfilment will await him as an evolution from that sight. I shall be ever present in guise, in the caves of this mountain on the fourteenth day of the bright period of moon in the month of Caitra (March). I love this mountain and am not giving it up out of my own will. However, I am leaving this for all of your welfare.”

Pulastya said:

82. After saying like this to the gods and all others having deformed bodies, the Goddess left for heaven listening to the hymns in her praise and leaving the pair of her footwear there.

83. Even today, the yogis acquire fulfilment here through well-intended meditation. The meditation conducted with all sincerity of mind is like having a sight of Goddess.

84. I have described all this as you asked me. Welfare is also possible on the land by the worship of footwear of the gracious Mother.

85. O king! reading of this with devotion and extolling it with faith relieves one of all sins and makes him inclined towards wisdom with all sincerity.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

Greatness of Śukla Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to the Śukla Tīrtha which is good. In olden times, it acquired fame by its association with a tribe of fishermen who were staying in the vicinity of the pilgrimage.

2. In olden times, O king! there was a washerman by name Śanlaksha. He used to rinse clothes dipping them in indigo, O great king.

3. While doing so, fear engulfed him once with his becoming aware of the paradoxical situation with the clothes. Accompanied by his own kith and kin, he left for some other land.

4-5. As a result, O king! his daughter became very sad and going near one of her good friends among the daughters in the community of fishermen, she began to describe her about the fear arising out of clothes and with a choked voice told her the same reason for which they were heading for a foreign land.

6-11. The fisherman-girl became equally sad by her sorrows and with repeated beating of heart as well as with a wet voice began to say, "There is a great way out of this as per my knowledge which is good. It is certain that by doing so all of you as well as your father will be fearless. There is a waterfall here in this Arbuda mountain which bestows one with the best of fair complexion and appearance. I, my brother as well as others go there to catch fishes. All other things apart from this, i.e., fish thrown into the auspicious water here turn into white as can be seen in his (i.e., the brother's) body. Like the fishermen, all your sins will go away by having a dip in this water. Like that by putting all your clothes well in the middle and by washing those swiftly, those would also become white. There is no need to fear for your action in the mind here and stop your father from going elsewhere. Do not leave for any foreign land nor do you nurture any consideration of getting your work accomplished anywhere else other than here."

Pulastya said:

12. After hearing such words of hers, she went and conveyed it to her father. Her father got into a feeling of self-contentment by this.

13. With the ushering in of morning, he hurried to the waterfall and got himself wet. Then, O king! he threw those clothes he had carried along as well as his ownself into the waterfall.

14. Then all those clothes quite plenty in number became white there, so also his own appearance. He became happy to witness such a supremely beautiful sight.

15. Struck with astonishment as a result, he, carrying along the clothes, hurried and went to the king and described him the happening as unfolded there.

16. Then taken by surprise, the king himself went to the waterfall and threw all clothes both indigo and red in colour into the water there.

17. It happened so that all those specially turned into white. Then having a realisation that, this is a supreme place of pilgrimage, he had a bath there as per laid down procedures.

18. Then giving up his kingdom, the king practised penance there. As a result, the king attained ultimate fulfilment by the impact of this centre of pilgrimage.

19. O king! the human being who observes here the religious act connected with remembrance of his ancestors (i.e., Śrāddha) on the eleventh day of a month, he enables attainment of the divine place for his forefathers extending over ten generations before his birth. By a bath here also, all sins go away instantaneously.

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Greatness of Kātyāyanī

Pulastya said:

1. Then O best king! one must visit the Goddess dwelling inside the cave. The Goddess Kātyāyanī, the killer of demon Śumbha abides here.

2. In olden days, there was a demon by name Śumbha on the surface of the earth. With his victory over the gods, his influence had spread throughout the world.

3. Blessed with a boon by Lord Śaṅkara, he was free from getting killed by gods, demons, satans and all other creatures on earth except a woman.

4. Then all the gods went to the summit of Arbuda and began penance in the first half of the day with the sole aim of bringing down Śumbha to earth. They began to worship the Goddess of gods in her well-manifested form there.

5. Thus being pleased she appeared before them and told, "I will grant you all a boon. Tell as to what you all want to get done."

6-7. The gods said, "This bad soul demon Śumbha, O Goddess! has snatched away everything of ours. O giver of welfare! please kill him for he cannot be killed in a war. We have been earlier protected by you from Bāškila. O Goddess with a beautiful smile! there is no other way for our freedom than your protection."

Pulastya said:

8. After the gods said like this, the Goddess went to the dwelling of Śumbha and began to humiliate him repeatedly so that he would be instigated into a war through anger.

9. O king! after having come to know that he is being incited for a war by a woman, the demon as well as his fellow demons began to nurture a sense of utter disrespect.

He said:

10. Catch hold of that wicked and bad-mouthed woman and bring her alive to me. Then, give her the harsh punishment beyond any doubt, and without waiting for my orders.

11. Then all the demons having faith in the calling as per their master's orders went hurriedly, encircled her from ten directions and called her bad names.

12. The Goddess reduced the demons to mere ashes by merely looking at them. Then Śumbha, as it is, got enraged and arrived himself.

13-14. Raising his powerful sword he said, 'Wait! wait'. But then, O great king! as soon as the Goddess looked at him, he met with his final destruction by turning into ashes instantly like a kite on fire. Then with the killing of the demon, the

remaining demons who used to be continuously there on earth, left it and like the wind having no existence in the lower region of earth, went to the nether world, i.e., Hell out of fear.

15. Then becoming pleased and uttering hymns in praise of the Goddess of gods, the gods told the Goddess to ask for whatever boon occupying her mind.

The Goddess said:

16. O good gods! let me always be here in this Arbuda mountain. As I desire this mountain within, let it be named as Arbuda.

The gods said:

17. With you present there and after having a look at you, the mortals will go to heaven. The road to Heaven will be shorter without the religious conduct of Yajña, i.e., the sacrificial fire and offering of presents. There is no other reason which can prevent us to deny this to you.

The Goddess said:

18. O gods! there, I shall be staying inside the charming but desolate cave. Only a living being miniature in shape can have access to me there. For the purpose of having a sight of mine, people need to proceed ahead towards the mountain only.

19. The gods said, "Let it be so as desired by you and let you, O Goddess with a gentle smile do accordingly. We shall ever come there to have a look of yours on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of moon every month.

Pulastya said:

20. After the Gods having said like this, they pleased as they were, entered the heaven. The Goddess also, O king! went there to the mountain Arbuda.

21. She got well settled for ever there inside the cave for the welfare of the world. Separated from all but truly happy within herself, she is difficult to attain for gods as well as humans.

22. Thus having a look of her on the eighth day of the rising period of Moon with the mind completely withdrawn towards her always results in the attainment of desires nurtured in the mind, O king! even though those may be difficult to attain.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

Greatness of Pindāraka Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then the king, one has to go to the Pindāraka Tīrtha which takes away sins. A Brāhmaṇa by name Manki had earlier attained fulfilment here by the influence of this place of pilgrimage through penance.

2. Manki was a Brāhmaṇa by name only in old times. O King! as an idiot, he was ignorant of the observance of the generous activities of the Brāhmaṇas.

3. O virtuous king! he used to remain engaged in grazing the buffaloes of people in this beautiful mountain.

4. In course of time, he earned some money through that. Then once, he was carrying a pair of cows back home with great difficulty and with the little money that he made for that day.

5. Then O virtuous king! he tied a pair of cows to a camel. As a result, the cows became afraid as per the circumstances so provided to them.

6. Now with its neck region thus obstructed and pressurised out of situational force, the camel, O king! got up swiftly and stood up.

7. With the camel's getting back into its usual (and normal) posture of long and erect neck, the pair of cows having their

safe protection on that camel, got killed which the Brāhmaṇa, witnessed, O king.

8. Then O virtuous king! Manki embracing non-attachment left for forest giving up his village. He went and began to put up near some waterfall in the Arbuda mountain.

9. Having a bath three times in a day, he repeatedly recited the Gāyatrī Mantra well within mind with the intention that by doing so he would get rid of sins and have a divine vision while on earth.

10. In the meantime Lord Śaṅkara came along his way. He had stepped out along with Gaurī for sport in that beautiful mountain.

11. Then O king! that great soul Pindāraka, i.e., the grazer of buffaloes, having seen him, instantly paid homage to Śaṅkara.

Then Śaṅkara said:

12. Having a sight of me does not go in vain. O Brāhmaṇa! I have accepted your homage from a distance. O priest! you can ask for the thing desired in the mind, even if that may be difficult to attain.

Pindāraka said:

13-14. O God of gods! let me be your follower till the end of the three worlds. Please do accordingly. There is nothing other than this prevailing in my mind. Let this Pindāraka centre of pilgrimage here be famous after my name.

The God said:

15-16. O good Brāhmaṇa! you will remain my follower till the end of this body of yours. There will be a centre of pilgrimage by name Pindāraka here. O great mind! I shall be present here on the eighth day in each month. Those who undergo the religious activity of having a bath here on the eighth day of a month, will go to that ultimate place with myself ever present here on the same day.

Pulastya said:

17. Having said like this, the great God Mahādeva disappeared then and there. The grazer Manki remained engrossed day and night in penance there.

18. With passage of time that great soul went to that divine place giving up body. Becoming His follower, he went and remained there where God Rudra, i.e., Śaṅkara stays.

19. Therefore with all efforts and with incantation, there should be the observance of the religious rite of having a bath here.

20. O king! buffaloes need to be presented specially here on the eighth day of a month so that all desires wished for within, of this world as well as of the after-world get materialized.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

Greatness of Kanakhala Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then O best of kings! one has to go to that centre of pilgrimage which is heard of in the three worlds. As a destroyer of sins, it is known by the name Kanakhala in the Arbuda mountain.

2. O king! listen to the astonishing incident here earlier. A king by name Sumati had happened to come to the Arbuda mountain.

3. The king had gone to the Kanakhala Tīrtha during solar eclipse and by prayer, he got gold produced there.

4. But due to lack of caution on the part of the king plenty of the same fell off somewhere. Despite the king's earnest efforts to retrieve them, he could not get them.

5. Then after having a bath, he returned home equally burdened with repentance. After passage of substantial time, he again came there.

6-7. Setting out to have a bath there on the day of Solar eclipse, he began to look at the region. He, the meritorious one began to recollect as to how could he never gain back the gold fallen off his hands in that region.

Pulastya said:

8-10. While thinking like this, a voice came from a formless body which said, “O king! nothing of this or the other world is destructible here. The gold you had managed to obtain earlier, and the loss of which you have already repented vehemently, have grown by a crore more times. From their original quantity, they have also grown into numbers beyond imagination. Those who observe the religious act connected with remembrance of their ancestors, i.e., Śrāddha, need to do so with faith, O virtuous king. Hence, you perform the Śrāddha carefully and specially with gold. If you make them as presents to Brāhmaṇas, their numbers grow into such countless proportion which cannot be imagined. If you look for them in this region, there is no doubt of your getting them.”

12. Hearing the flow of that voice emerging from the sky, O king, he began searching for the gold and got them back in that region.

13. Bestowed with gold endowed with brightness of crore times, he got joined with pleasure. Thus learning the effect of the centre of pilgrimage, he distributed them benevolently to thousands of Brāhmaṇas with the intention of uplifting his ancestral forefathers equal to gods.

14. Thus with the effect of that and by his making of gifts, the king got reborn with the name Yaḁṣa meaning the giver of wealth and himself becoming a giver of many types of wealth.

15. O king! one who performs Śrāddha here on (day of) the Solar eclipse with libation of water joined with all good intentions, his forefathers attain that degree of unimagined satisfaction.

16. The sages, the gods and the divine snakes with human faces become happy through a bath here. It leads to germination of forces forever that kill sins on the surface of earth.

17. Hence, O virtuous king! with all earnest efforts, one needs to undergo the religious activity of having a bath there. One must also make offering through charity as per one's ability and conduct Śrāddha here.

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

Effect of Cakra Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best king, go to the Cakra Tīrtha, in comparison to which there is no other better place of pilgrimage. The influential God Viṣṇu had left his Cakra, i.e., His discus here.

2. Killing the demons, the God Viṣṇu entered into the beautiful torrent here and had washed Himself completely by a bath.

3. Those who perform the Śrāddha here both in the retiring i.e. the sleeping place of Hari as well as in His place of contemplation, get their forefathers contented till the persistence of the Creation, O king.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

Greatness of the Manuṣya Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then O best king! one has to go to that pool known as 'human pool' which is very auspicious. By having a bath there, man attains humanness for ever.

2. Despite having committed great sins, he does not become a foetus in the wombs of animals and birds. There was an astounding happening there in this regard which has no comparison. O king! listen to that.

3. Following a flock of deer, the hunters had spread out in all directions and they were present everywhere. Frightened, those deer then entered into middle of the water.

4. But then as soon as they remembered their previous birth, they instantly attained humanhood. Coinciding this, the hunters, altogether appeared before them.

5. Bearing bows and arrows in hands, all the hunters appeared as if they were servants of Yama. Then they asked all those deer the bearers of human bodies as to how could humanhood arrive on them.

6. We had come here to get hold of the deer who have taken resort in the middle of water. By which way could we bring their end by swiftly killing them for we all have been tired of hunger and thirst in particular?

The deer in human bodies said:

7. While being deer, all of us have become humans by taking a resort here. This has been possible as an effect of this place of pilgrimage. This is the truth beyond any doubt.

Pulastya said:

8. Then having foresaken all their bows and arrows and having had a bath in the water there, all those earthly beings, O king! who had come to the mountains, attained fulfilment.

9. Thereafter O king! Indra having seen this place of pilgrimage as taking away sins of all, embanked this pool with earth completely and from all sides, so that it does not get polluted.

10. O king! even today, human beings who take a bath here, never follow the pursuit of animalhood.

11. Through Śrāddha accompanied with charities and a bath here, the results equivalent to that of the sacrificial fire conducted in memory of one's forefathers, can be obtained here.

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

Greatness of Kapilā Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then, O best king! one has to go to the Kapilā Tīrtha. By having a bath here, the human being definitely becomes fit to get rid of all sins.

2. There was a powerful king by name Suprabha in earlier times. Very fond of deer he used to remain engaged in their hunting/killing.

3. He had no interest in women or in luxuries or in horses or in elephants. With such an unusual obsession, he accordingly became a killer of deer.

4. O best king! given such an indulgence for hunting deer, once upon a time, he went to the Arbuda. There, in a lower region of the mountain, he found a doe surrounded with her babies.

5. With all affection and love, she was feeding milk to her babies. To kill her, the king immediately took out a weapon. But then that fell down the mountain.

6. Then the doe saw the earthly being, i.e., the king taking out another arrow which after fixing on the bow, he struck at her babies.

7-10. Thus saddened with pain to see the anger on king, she told him, "Today, the action you are pursuing cannot be remembered to have ever been followed by a Kṣatriya. O king! it is in vain to kill the doe as well as her babies asleep, suffering from diseases and clinging onto the nipples inseparably with fidelity. O very bad king! all those born of me have met with death. Your weapon has activated (i.e., actuated) the same situation for the children without me—the doe-mother. Due to this, O king! as you have killed me quite unrighteously, you will, therefore, become a ferocious tiger, here-on this mountain."

Pulastya said:

11. After hearing that he has committed a great sin, the king became full of fear. Then he thought of invoking mercy of the doe till her last breath left over.

12. "My killing of you—the auspicious, clearly shows my lack of consideration and the lowest degree of cruelty. O good-self doe! please consider and do something by which I shall be free from your curse and that too a pitiable one like this."

The doe said:

13. When you will happen to see a milch cow by name Kapilā and then enter into a conversation with her on an equal footing you shall again get back your natural form.

14. Saying like this, the doe, with unbearable pain of the wound by the weapon and with her left-over affection for her offsprings parted with life before the king.

15. Soon after, the earthly king got instantly animated into that ferocious form. Becoming a tiger with big and ferocious teeth as well as with sharp nails, he stepped out to harm his own soldiers by devouring them with himself remaining unconscious with anger.

16. Then those soldiers who got left out from being killed by the king got back to their own homes with sorrow and narrated the things as happened to others in the palace.

17. They described in details and brought it to the notice of all as to how the king attained tigerhood in the Arbuda mountain while taking a round of it for hunting with his weapons.

18. After hearing those words of their's, his son named Asu and renowned for his great power and strength enthroned himself.

19. O good king! once in the course of time, it so happened that in a cowshed on the summit of the mountain, some milkmen along with their womenfolk as well as their flock of cows had died badly affected with thirst.

20. One cow in the same fleet however, had got waylaid for grass out of hunger and had proceeded much ahead of the flock of the cows. She was famous as Kapilā.

21. O king! this cow always used to eat those grasses with their top uncut or not severed. In the process, she had got into a deep, desolate and hence frightening cave in the mountain.

22. There the same tiger with visibly great teeth attacked her. The cow got frightened in the same way as the doe was terrorized when the king took out arrows to kill her.

23-24. Remembering her calves left behind in the cowshed and dependent on her milk, she began to weep. Seeing her condition, the master of deer, i.e., the tiger said, "Why are you crying in vain O cow, for it is well known that one coming in the vicinity of my mouth can not remain alive. Hence remember your favourite God."

Kapilā said:

25-27. O tiger! One never cries out of fear for one's own life. My baby calf feeding on my milk is waiting for me in the herd. Even till now, she does not take grass. This is the reason behind my sadness for I shall be leaving my duty incomplete. O tiger! my crying out is solely out of affection that my own offspring will get killed. So, the powerful, after feeding my small children, then seeing and speaking to my own people, I shall come back if you agree.

The tiger said:

28-29. I cannot believe that after going near your offspring and after seeing your own kith and kin in the cowshed, you will come back again. You are speaking like this out of fear of me. There is nothing that can equal the fear for life. Therefore, out of fear for life, it is certain that you shall not come back.

Kapilā said:

30. I vow to come back. You can take it as the truth on my part. If you have your faith in what I say, you—the lord for deer, may grant me this much liberty.

The tiger said:

31. Proclaim truthfully with a vow again that I shall come back. Then sensing whether to believe you, I may or may not let you leave.

Kapilā said:

32-47. Let the sin for not following the words given to a Brāhmaṇa adept in the learning of Vedas wait upon me, if I do not come back again. Let the sin of disobedience or sedition against the teacher await me, if I do not come back again. Let the sin evolving out of killing a Brāhmaṇa or a cow also apply to me if I do not come back again. Let the same sin that befalls cheating friends and the elderly people apply to me if I do not come back again. Let the sin that awaits crushing a cow, or a Brāhmaṇa with feet or the fire with feet, engulf me if I do not come back again. Let the sin that accrues to humans for dismantling a well or a pool or a garden also take me within its hold, if I do not come back again. Let the sin that happens to the ungrateful and also to those who bring bad name, also affect me, if I do not come back again. Let the sins that come to people through indulgence in wine and meat also take me within hold, if I do not come back again. Let the sin that arises out of the action of dethroning or disrobing a king, take me in its wrap in equal proportion, if I do not come back again. Let that sin that generates from sale of Veda, also take me within its hold, if I do not come back again. Let the sin that awaits one who prevents even a lesser amount of charity to Brāhmaṇa, take me in its grab if I do not come back again. As the sin of killing the faithfuls burns all completely and without any distinction, let the same sin also cover me if I do not come back again. Let that sin which follows indulgence in enmity towards the Brāhmaṇas also cover me, if I do not come back again. Let the sin that awaits those who remain engaged in condemning others or those bad souls, may cover me if I do not come back again. Those who commit the sinful act of eating

barley with curd at night, let the fruit of that sin cover me if I do not come back again. Let that sin which arises after having brinjal, raddish, white onion and red carrot, may cover me if I do not come back again.

Pulastya said:

48. After hearing such a vow of hers, the tiger got his eyes exalted with wonder. Then developing faith in her, the tiger accordingly made the following statement.

The tiger said:

49-51. O good self! please go to the cowshed and come back again. But never think that acceding to such a request of yours is any indication of my being deprived. O affectionate Kapilā! go, have a look at your male calf. Feed milk to him fully and have a smell of his forehead. Meeting your mother, brothers, partners, own kith and kin and friends, come back truthfully and do not do anything otherwise.

Pulastya said:

52. This is how, after getting the permission of king of deer i.e. the tiger, Kapilā having deep affection for children, left for the place where the herds of cows were placed, with tears rolling down her face and evoking pity for herself.

53. Trembling with fear like an elephant in face of a ferocious lion and well in the middle of the ocean of sorrow, she entered the place where the herd of cows were putting up making sounds repeatedly.

54. Then hearing her voice and becoming aware that it was his own mother, the calf got incited to hurry up and arrived before her raising its tail.

55. Seeing her coming in an odd time and that too hearing her making difficult sounds, the calf became apprehensive and asked her.

The calf said:

56. I do not see you in a pleasant mood. You appear to be depressed. Tell me what for have you come here untimely?

Kapilā said:

57-60. O son! first have milk. After that you will hear the reason from me. I have come here out of sheer love for you. Get satisfied as per your desire. This is my last appearance before you for after this O son! your having a look of your mother will be very difficult. Right now I have to return, O son! as per my vow. The tiger which can assume form as per his sweet will, has granted me life for the time being. He has granted me to meet you, the son only after my having proclaimed a vow before him. Now, I have to go near the king of deer i.e. the tiger. As bound by vow, I have to, O son! offer this body of mine to him.

The calf said:

61-66. I shall also follow you along there where you desire to go for it is beyond doubt that praises will be sung in respect of my death beside you today. As it is, I have to die all alone without you. Hence, if it could be that the tiger kills me along with you. It is certain that I shall also attain that divine passage which accrues out of devotion for mother. It is due to that I shall of course, go with you without any doubt. Otherwise you stay back here and I shall fulfill your vow then. I shall take up the venture in your place, O mother! if you permit me from within your mind. Separated from mother, life will no more be dear to me. There is no one like mother nor can babies sustain life without milk. There is no one good like mother nor is there any better way than engagement in mother's service. The sons, engaged ceaselessly in the mother's service attain the ultimate passage.

Kapilā said:

67-75. It has been destined for me to die in this way. For you— the son, it is not fit to die at the moment. Death of any living being cannot be visualized on the basis of someone else's death. O son! this is the best message of the mother and it is also final. Listen to this carefully and this bears conducive results. O son! always graze in the forest, but while doing so, be above carelessness. For there is no doubt that danger is the cause behind destruction of all living beings. Never graze in dangerous places in greed for grass. Greed is the cause behind destruction of animals in this as well as in the other world. Prompted by greed, people enter into the oceans, the forests and the battles. Carried by greed their actions get added with cruelty of the highest order. Hence give it up. Men are tied up to these three viz. greed, carelessness and assurances. Hence neither greed nor carelessness nor reliance on assurances should be anyone's duty. O son! always be careful to protect yourself from the preying, violent and ferocious animals. One also needs to protect one's self from the crooked and those born of sins who roam about in the forest. It is not your duty to grieve also as death is certain for all. Listen to this statement of mine which takes away all sorrows. As a traveller tired of journey looks for the shade of a tree, takes rest under it and resumes the journey again after having rest, so is the coexistence of all living creatures.

Pulastya said:

76. Speaking like this to her son and then kissing his forehead, she proceeded ahead to meet her mother and other friends.

77. Grieved with separation from her son, she then told her own mother 'please listen to these last words of mine.'

78. You all have to rear this weak son of mine, awaiting orphanhood, pitiable with foam coming from mouth as if on the eve of his final end.

79. With such a state of affairs going to happen for my child, please rear him specially and befittingly by feeding him your own milk like you feed your own.

80. Friends! stop him from grazing in uneven surface or among other strange species. Also stop him from doing undesirable activities.

81. O greatly fortunate ones! pardon me. I have to follow the truth. At present as it is, I have to go to the tiger staying here for he has left me free for the time being.

82-84. All were taken with sadness after hearing her words. Possessed with sorrows of the highest order they then said with overwhelming unhappiness, “O Kapilā! you need not go and there will be no sin on your part by not going for no sins happen to those who flee away with an eye to life in difficult battles. The sages known for their observance of righteousness have already stated one thing in this context since old times. The saying is that ‘no sin awaits one who fails to adhere to vows at the stake of life.’

Kapilā said:

85-87. I can only drive at this point for the sake of protection of life of other living beings. I cannot drive at this even to the slightest for the sake of self. A thousand of the religious acts where sacrifices of horses are made to the fire have been weighed up with truth and it has been specially found out that truth outweighs thousands of sacrifices of horses made at the altar of fire. I cannot drive at hither and thither in the hope of life. Please accord me the necessary permission so that I can go near the king of deer, i.e., the tiger.

88-89. Her peer friends said: “Kapilā! you will command homage of all including gods and demons as you are giving up life in the pursuit of the supreme truth even though that is highly painful. This truth can, of course, never be the cause for your death. You can proceed if you have to prove the truth and cannot retreat from the same path. Let there be happiness for you.

Pulastya said:

90. Having said like this, Kapilā then went to the place where the king of deer, i.e., the tiger was. Then seeing Kapilā, the tiger became astonished and its eyes remained wide-open exalted with happiness. Then brimming with happiness it made this statement humbly:

The tiger said:

91-93. Welcome to you! O good and truthful Kapilā. Can anything inauspicious ever happen to those who always speak the truth? O Kapilā! as per your vow, you had stated to come back and have come back also. My curiosity is how having gone once, you could come back again. I left you free because you could go there, i.e., the cowshed where your son stayed, who, as it is being dependent on your milk, would otherwise have been very sad.

Pulastya said:

94. In the meantime, it, i.e., the tiger regained its previous natural form of the king by getting free from the curse of the deer and became a bearer of good and divine body with matching appearance. Then with happiness, he told Kapilā—the speaker of truth.

The king said:

95. By your grace, I have got free from the curse which was equally painful. Tell me fast what is dear to you—the cow, so that I can do it.

Kapilā said:

96-97. I have been gratified O king! that you have been free from your sin. As thirst is hurting me at the moment, please get some water for me. I do not know how to beat about the bush. Hence, I only speak the truth.

Pulastya said:

98. Then the earthly being, i.e., the king raised his bow swiftly in hand and after that tightening up the string put the arrow onto it and then struck it into the surface of earth after holding the arrow at its hindmost point.

99. Then auspicious, clear and cool water sprang up and Kapilā having her bath there got her thirst quenched.

100. The God of death, Yama appeared there in the intervening period and seeing the grateful and happy Kapilā there, he told her to ask for a boon.

He said:

101. I am pleased with your observance of truth. There is hardly anyone who can be like you in this regard. There can be hardly any other cow in the three worlds which can be so complete in grace.

Kapilā said:

102-103. By your grace let me along with the king as well as with the other herds of cows attain that divine position becoming free from old age and death. Let this pool—the giver of all good, acquire fame by my name. Let it also take away sins of humans and fulfill all their wishes.

104-108. The God of death (i.e., Yama) said: Those who take a bath here in this auspicious and well-being causing water especially on the fourteenth day of a month, will attain that ultimate passage. It will happen that this place of pilgrimage which is an inducer of all goodness will be named after you. The mortals who come here for the sake of having a look at this pilgrimage will obtain a thousand of cows. By having a bath here lakhs of qualitative traits will be earned and the goodness that is earned through the religious deed of making presents/donations here will be imperishable. If men perform the religious ceremony connected with remembrance of their family members, i.e., Śrāddha here with all earnest application,

those great souls will obtain the fruits of both enjoyment and liberation accruing to the attended act of making presents / donations in Śrāddha. The insects and the birds having a dip here in this good-giver water out of thirst will also go to Heaven—the abode of gods. So what to speak of humans enjoined with full devotion and those who are the speakers of truth. Similar will also be the case with the wise, the highly fortunate, the utterly faithful and the farsighted

109. Pulastya said: At this conjuncture O king! thousands of winged vehicles arrived there as a result of the impact of Kapilā.

110. Then ascending onto them, Kapilā, the milkman and the herds of cows, all together enjoined with good radiance attained and reached that ultimate position.

111. It is due to this that the religious activity of taking a bath there should be observed with all efforts. The earthly beings should truthfully conduct the religious ceremony connected with remembrance of their family members and must make presents/donations there as per their ability.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Eminence of Agni Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then O king! one has to go to that supremely pure centre of pilgrimage known as Agni Tīrtha. Fire had become obsolete there but the gods brought it back.

The King Yayāti said:

2. O best of Brāhmaṇas! how could and what for the fire get completely obsolete? (And if so) how could the fire be brought back again there? Please tell as I have the curiosity in this regard, O great Sage.

Pulastya said:

3. In old times, once it had stopped to rain on earth for twelve years and beyond any doubt, the condition of all in the world had become pitiable with hunger.

4. Almost all living beings were dead and those who were left out were on the brink of death. Forests, villages, animals, birds and deer—all were ruined.

5. Seeing such hardships befalling the mortal world, O king! the best of sages Viśwāmitra became very apprehensive.

6. Given the scarcity of water, the left-over medicinal herbs appeared as if they were fanning out in the air waiting for a spark of fire. On another day, while roaming about in another direction, he saw the parched land having dust enough to cause sneezing.

7. Then being excessively affected by hunger and thirst, the sage reached the house of an outcaste. There he saw a dog lying dead on the dry earth giving an impression as if it was characterised by some good actions.

8. Taking hold of it, he brought it home and washed it with water. Hungry as he was, he then put it on fire so as to make it digestible.

9. Then O king! becoming aware that the thing that cannot be eaten is being converted into something eatable by offering it to the fire, the fire God got enraged with Indra.

10. With the vanishing away of medicine and water from the world, it appeared that whatever was available as per time could be deemed as appropriate food for fire.

11. “I may better give up this land, but shall never eat the uneatable. By my doing so, Indra and other gods will have that painful situation of a high order.”

12. Thinking like this and with heightened anger in mind, the Fire God ascending onto his bearer disappeared completely from the mortal world consisting of the living and non-living.

13. With the disappearance of fire, all religious activities specially connected with offering of oblations into fire like the sacrificial fire and the Agniṣṭoma Yajña disappeared

immediately. With ruination of such activities people specially became apprehensive.

14. As a result, all gods receded into a state of severe doubt. Deprived of their share accruing from the conduct of sacrificial fires, i.e., Yajña, all gods, grouped together began to chalk out a plan clandestinely amongst themselves.

15. They began to deliberate that with the desertion by fire, men have gone to a state of ruination in the mortal world. We are left out awaiting destruction and there is no doubt that we will be destroyed.

16. Hence let fire be looked for at the moment wherever it may be. Let a law be worked out by which, it may move about in the mortal world.

Pulastya said:

17. After deliberating like this, all gods along with Indra, then spread themselves out in all directions of the earth in search of fire.

18. Then seeing a parrot before them, the gods tired as they were, asked it with due regards to say, if at all, it has seen the fire.

The parrot said:

19. I have seen the great and lustrous fire disappearing only in this burnt out log of big bamboo lying in the front.

20. With the parrot saying like this the Fire God got angry and then cursing it saying that 'You would have a stammering voice', he left quickly.

21. Then he entered deep into the middle portion of the auspicious pipal tree which is usually stated to contain fire deep within itself. This was brought to the notice of gods by the king of elephants.

22. Then cursing the elephant that let its tongue turn upside down, the Fire God entered into the pool in the mountain called Arbuda.

23-25. The Fire God entered there without the gods noticing. A frog coming out from there brought it to the notice of the gods by saying, "With the fire putting up there in the mountain brook, all living bodies in the water got burnt out with the water becoming hot. O gods! I have extricated myself from the face of death in that painful fire." After learning this, the Fire God then entered into the sacrificial oblation to fire with all care.

26. O king! then the Fire God cursed the frog that you be deprived of your tongue.

27. Then O king! all gods stepped out of that pool and encircling it began to recite hymns of Veda to please the Fire God.

The gods said:

28-31. O Fire! you precede others in staying inside all beings. Without you, everything in the world will get destroyed fast. You are the giver of happiness to all gods. On you are founded the worlds. With your giving up the earth, all of us along with Indra will meet with destruction. Hence you save us. You are the Brahmā. You are also the Viṣṇu, the Mahādeva and the Sun. You are also the Lord of Moon, wealth and the wind. O Fire! Indra etc. as well as all other gods are your inheritors. Why have you placed yourself here leaving the mortal world? O God! what for do you intend to leave innocents like us?

Pulastya said:

32-34. When the gods, thus encircling the mountainous brook were singing hymns with all sincerity, the Fire God appeared on the shore of the brook and said, "O Indra! you have propelled me to eat the non-edible. Due to that the God of gods! I have stopped it to rain in the mortal world. I have entered into the brook here giving up the land. With the drying up of water in the human world I am left with no will to put up there."

Indra said:

35-37. O Fire! listen, as to why have I stopped it to rain. Devāpi, the king so named and a learned man in the field of

scriptures was instrumental behind spreading the fame of Kṣatriyas. His son Prateepa was a noble soul and was best among those bearing good nature. (But) with Devāpi's passage to Heaven, putting aside his eldest son, Śantanu, his younger son began to rule over his kingdom. Due to this reason, I have expelled rains from his kingdom. However, O Fire! as per your orders, I will actuate rains there.

Pulastya said:

38. Saying so, the Thousand-eyed, i.e., Indra commanded the clouds Puṣkara and Āvarta to arrive fast for the purpose of raining on the surface of earth.

39. Ordered so by Indra, rows of heavily thunderous clouds with lightning began to fill the surface of earth with abundant water. O king! it appeared as if they were out to fill with all intensity the surface of earth with water with themselves ablaze with lightning.

40. Then the Fire God became supremely satisfied and as per gods' wishes made the earth pleasurable by settling down on it.

Then the gods said:

41. O Fire! as per your wishes rains have been brought into action i.e. restored. If you have any other work dear to you, please plead for the same hurriedly.

Fire said:

42. Let this pool yield goodness and be a good centre of pilgrimage named after me. Let it attain fame on the surface of earth by all of yours grace.

The gods said:

43. This centre of pilgrimage will acquire fame by your name. By having a bath here man will proceed to the world of fire.

44. The fruit of sacrificial fire called Agniṣṭoma Yajña will happen to that man who makes the offering of sesame with all sincere application of mind.

Pulastya said:

45. Having said so all gods went back to their respective places. And the Fire God also, O king! remained present there for having no other way out.

46. One who after getting up in the morning regularly reads the hymns in honour of Fire here becomes free from all sins by virtue of the greatness of Fire.

47. By listening to the same day and night, one also gets free from the sins so committed.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

Greatness of Raktānubandha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to that place of pilgrimage which is related to blood and which is heard of in the three worlds. The man taking bath here generally gets free from the (sin of) murder of Brāhmaṇa.

2. In olden times there was a king on earth by name Indrasena. His dear wife named Sunandā was very beautiful. A devoted wife treating her husband as holding an important part of her life force, she used to remain engaged in such actions by which she could always be dear to her husband.

3. At a certain time, the same king along with family went to a foreign land to kill his wicked enemy Sandha.

4. Killing him and winning over plenty of wealth, he was returning home. On his way back O king! he sent a fictitious messenger.

5-6. He asked the messenger to go near Sunandā and tell her that “the king got killed in the war” which as per king’s commands was a pointer to her bad actions not in commensurate with the qualities of a devoted wife. If she, the beautiful queen decides to go for death, save her with all earnest efforts keeping in view the fact that such words of mine were adequate enough, i.e., just intended to generate laughter.

7. O virtuous king! after the king (having) said so, the messenger went immediately to convey the words so told to the queen.

8. O best of kings! hearing such words of his, the life force went out of Sunandā—the queen with a beautiful smile, the devoted wife and the great *Satī*.

9. As Sunandā endowed with good nature died, the king at the same time came equally under the burden of sin for that.

10. Then another shadow became visible to the king from above his body. With that heavy body, the king became immobile like a tree.

11. O virtuous king! then becoming devoid of lustre, with a colourless body and emitting foul smell, the king reached home (palace) and heard of his wife’s death.

12. Submerged in sorrow for causing the annihilation he in any case had to perform the sacred ritual bound up with death. He realized to have polluted himself by the killing of a woman and to have made the sin his own creation.

13. Then after performing the activity of cremating the corporeal body on fire, he made himself to feel light and undertook pilgrimage as per the direction of Brāhmaṇas. He went to Vārāṇasī first and made lot of presents.

14. Kapālamocana, i.e., place of pilgrimage takes away all sins. The three-eyed, i.e., Lord Śiva had made himself free from the sin of Brahmanicide there in ancient times.

15. O king! the second shadow of that did not get destroyed there. Then the king proceeded to the Kanakhala Tīrtha which is auspicious and a giver of purity to men.

16. After that he visited Puṣkara and following that he visited Amarakantaka. After that O virtuous king! he arrived at Kurukṣetra.

17. Then he went to the Prabhāsa Tīrtha and the centre of pilgrimage known as Soma. Thereafter, he proceeded to a barbarous place full of worms. Then he went to the undulating, auspicious and prime Hamsa Tīrtha, O king.

18. Then O great king! after acquiring a great deal of goodness for himself after visiting Rudrakoti, Virupākṣa and thereafter the five rivers, the king became tired.

19. Then after a lapse of one thousand years, the king reached the Arbuda mountain where he took a sight of the centres of pilgrimage and the temples (i.e., visited them).

20. The king made many charities to the communities of hermits and many types of Brāhmaṇas including those astutes in the Vedas as per their wishes.

21-22. There in that Arbuda mountain, the king arrived at that particular place of pilgrimage connected with a continuous flow of blood, i.e., Raktānubandha. Then after having a bath there, as the king came out, he saw that second shadow which had erupted before him following the sin accruing from the evil of killing of wife. Sighting this, the king then felt light and relaxed in his entire body.

23. Then the foul smell on the body of the king disappeared and he came under the influence of bright intelligence. Witnessing such a happening he made abundant gifts. After that, inspired by the praises of his followers he left for home.

24. Then O leading King! hardly had the king crossed over the boundary of Raktānubandha, he got back his previous state of condition as it was.

25. O virtuous king! the alternate second shadow became again visible in the body of the king. The same foul smell again engulfed his body and the brightness also disappeared.

26. Then getting distressed, he got back there immediately. After arriving at Raktānubandha, he got into that repulsive and venomous state again.

27. Then realizing the greatness of the place of pilgrimage as the best option for the virtuous on earth, the king with all intention collected pieces of wood and set them on fire. After that making charities to the foremost Brāhmaṇas, he entered into the fire to make a sacrificial offering of himself.

28. Then ascending onto the winged vehicle, giving of his temporal body and endowed with a beautiful garland, the king went to the world of Śiva.

29. With his, i.e., the earthly being's obtaining the world of Śiva, the divine sages uttered the following statement with great wonder.

They said:

30. This centre of pilgrimage will always remain on the top among all centres of pilgrimage in ensuring freedom from sins, because Indrasena became free from his sins by coming in contact of this pilgrim centre.

31. Since then, that centre of pilgrimage has acquired fame on the surface of earth. It reminds the living beings of their relationship with blood.

32. It is a rule that its fame is derived from such a relationship based on blood. O king! those who offer libation of water here as part of the religious activity connected with remembering their forefathers, i.e., Śrāddha can claim to have equally worshipped the gods.

33. The man who takes a bath here with utmost faith on that day from which the summer solistice begins indicating the ascension of Sun in the northern hemisphere, becomes free from Brāhmaṇicide.

34. The man who performs Śrāddha here connected with remembrance of his family members during the time-zone meant for forefathers, i.e., Pitru Pakṣa and in a similar fashion as in Gayā, he gets the same fruits from such a religious ceremony here like in Gayā.

35. O virtuous king! the man who makes a present of cows here either on the Solar or the Lunar eclipse, ensures liberation for seven generations in the family.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

Greatness of Vināyaka

Pulastya said:

1. After this, the earthly beings need to go to the Great Vināyaka. By taking a look here, men can generate those forces that do away all impediments.

Yayāti said:

2. How could there be the greatness of Vināyaka and when did it happen? O best of the Brāhmaṇas! please tell me all those in details.

Pulastya said:

3. O king! in old times, Pārvatī, for amusement, had made a youthful boy from some good quality smear meant for application on the body.

4-5. But due to exhaustion of the smear she could only give shape to a form of body having complete limbs but without a head. Then she told Skanda, “O Skanda! please arrange for some smear fast for the head. Herein lies your welfare, for by this, the invincible son of mine, your brother can be devised.”

6. Then O virtuous king! following the instructions of Gaurī, he stepped out to get the smear and finding a furious yet chief of the elephant got back with its head.

7. Then when it was taken for fixation on the body given shape out of the smear, a question was put to him as to wherefrom had he brought that heavy head for her son.

8. Then O chief of kings! when the same head was fixed upon the body despite Pārvatī’s repeated pleading not to do so, a good fortune occurred.

9. With the head going well with body, the same appeared specially like a master and the statue of the boy with a handsome body endowed with all qualities came to the fore.

10. O king! with thickness in three regions, with four hands, with red colour in seven portions, with a high head, with five long limbs and equally with five subtle limbs, the body was very beautiful.

11-12. O great king! seeing him with a body extending over the three worlds, Gaurī became very astonished and as the powerful Goddess put life-force into it, he got up instantaneously and solicited for orders humbly with bowed head.

13. Seeing him having such a miraculous appearance she said 'son' and 'son' repeatedly. Then very elated within, she took him near Śambhu.

14. She told him, "O God! grant a boon to this son born out of my body smear so that he can attain the passage to greatness."

The gracious God said:

15-19. As the head remains master of the body, so this head will have prominence, O daughter of the hills! as told by you to have been fixed onto the body by Skanda. With his existence in this body in this manner, he will be the ruler in all speciality. Due to that his name will be the great Vināyaka. He will also be the superintendent of the attendant demigods on Śiva. With this boon of mine, he will happen to be the ruler of demigods. Mortals have to remember this ruler of demigods, i.e., Gaṇeśa on the eve of commencing any fresh work so that there will be no hurdles before their actions. As the hammer has been given to him by Skanda for sport, that will remain inseparably dear to him for ever.

20. Then Gaurī gave him a plate full of edible ladoos out of affection for son. Getting that he began to dance gently.

21. A rat came out of the hole with the flavour of edible ladoos. It became immortal after eating that and became the carrier for Gaṇeśa.

Pulastya said:

22. O king! this is how the birth of the Great Vināyaka happened there. Listen with undivided attention to the welfare that accrues after having a look of him.

23. O king! a man gets free from all sins committed either in childhood days or during the period of youth and old age (by a look of him).

24-25. Coming here on the fourth day of the bright period of the moon in the month of Māgha (i.e., January) one who takes a look of it, becomes a good speaker with a fairly wide range of knowledge arising in him. There is a great pool full of clean water in front of it. All in a family of the man become knowledgeable by his taking a bath here, O king, and then following it up with taking a look of Vināyaka with faith.

26. After uttering the incantation that “you are this among the demigods”, one who takes a round of this place thrice and takes a look of him, sins do not remain visible to him from a far off distance.

27. Therefore, with all efforts, one needs to take a look of Vināyaka here. By doing so, all desires of one in this world as well as the other get fulfilled.

28. The worldly individual who remembers him with all devotion on the eve of executing any work can get all those accomplished completely.

29. A mortal being remembering Vināyaka after waking up in the morning can get accomplished all activities coming forth on the same day.

30. Remembering Vināyaka on the eve of marriage or battle or war or in setting forth on a voyage or before commencing any agricultural activity and the auspicious entry to a new home, can get all these activities successfully accomplished by his grace.

31. One who appeases the great Vināyaka with all earnestness and as per prescribed procedures can hardly be disturbed by the departed spirits, planets and diseases, by his grace.

Yayāti said:

32. O virtuous Sage! please tell me about the appeasement of great Vināyaka. How can this be, by which invocation and by which procedure as laid down? I have great curiosity.

Pulastya said:

33. In the rising period of the moon on that particular auspicious day when the star is free from any malefic effect and when the force of the moon is at its pre-eminence, one has to observe the religious conduct of appeasing Gaṇeśa.

34. Erect a temporary hall on the plain land in the north-east direction. Then make an altar for the conduct of ritual sacrifice. Place a lotus with eight petals in the middle of the altar tied with a thread.

35. O king! after taking the initial consecration, place all god-rulers like Indra etc., and Gaṇeśa and the sixteen mother goddesses and then specially perform the activity of worship.

36. Placing a couple of pitchers full of water and covered with white cloth, make oblation to him through offerings of scented garland and gifts as laid down in details.

37. After this put a golden fruit on the eastern point of the pitcher.

38. Then O virtuous king! taking the invocation repeatedly upto one thousand eight times within that 'you are this among the demigods' worship him as agreeable to the Hindu calendar.

39. Then folding your own hands together to form a circle, make a girdle on the four sides of the pool and decorate it with the female organ of generation.

40. After the conduct of the sacrificial fire with honey, bent grass and offering of whole grains, make the invocation that 'you are this among the demigods' ten thousand times.

41-44. Then be seated facing the Brāhmaṇas from the direction of North. Then putting on the yellow cloth. having a yellow mark applied on the forehead by the four astute Brāhmaṇas and putting on a gold finger ring perform the act of sacrificial fire. Then O best king! after the completion of the

sacrificial fire be seated on the deer skin while making the invocation as per accepted practice and procedure. Then getting covered with white dress, remain calm facing the East. Keep reciting the hymns in praise of Gangā, Yamunā and the Puṣkara along with the well-spoken hymn in honour of Viṣṇu and the purifying hymn in the name of Taurus.

45. All hurdles follow the path of destruction by a proper pronunciation of it. The planets mellow down and all that might have occurred in the past get destroyed instantly.

46. Mental agonies, all diseases including those tormenting and persistent get eclipsed fast. So also any havoc having dimensions of affecting all severely.

47. All these are the details which I have described to you as you have asked about the greatness, importance and the ways to appease Vināyaka.

48. O best of kings! one who sings his praise with undivided attention on the fourth day of a month or even listens to the same celebrated songs gets all hurdles away from the path of his actions.

49. One who perseveres through actions according to the nurtured desires within that regard while keeping him unabatedly in mind, gets the desired fruits with all certainty by his grace.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

Greatness of Pārtheśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to Pārtheśvara— the destroyer of all sins. By having a look of it, a human being usually gets free from all sins.

2. O king! Pārthī— a virtuous woman was the faithful wife of Devala. She had earlier undergone penance there.

3. She— the famous wife of the Sage was sterile and thus had no child. Thus becoming highly dejected, she went to the Arbuda.

4. Subsisting only on air, she remained without food. But then she remained fixed on her seat. Then O king! a thousand of years passed in the pursuit of devotion of hers in this manner.

5-8. Then tearing apart the surface of earth, a procreative Śiva Līṅga came up instantaneously. Coincident with such happening, a voice came from the incorporeal saying, “O greatly fortunate lady! worship this purifying Līṅga of Lord Śiva. It has come out from within the surface of the Earth by virtue of your devotion and to fulfill your great desire. Whoever human being worships keeping this in mind and in pursuit of his desires, not only his but also of others including the desires of the bodiless spirit get fulfilled and there is no doubt about this. This will be renowned in this world by the name Pārtheśvara.” Having said so, O king! the voice then stopped.

9. Then completely taken over by wonder, she began to worship that then and there. Then getting one hundred sons, she got the beautiful line-up to foster/perpetuate her future family generations.

10. Beginning from that, this worshipable Līṅga has acquired fame on the surface of earth. Since then also, clean water has been springing up from inside the cave in this mountain.

11. A human being if, after having a bath here takes a look of that (i.e., the worshipable Līṅga of Śiva) can never have sorrow accruing due to lack of children. Otherwise, he will have the same sorrow.

12. One who worships it, remaining awake throughout the night and that too without food on the fourteenth day of the bright period of moon, is sure to get a son.

13. One who performs the religious activity of offering balls of cooked rice here in remembrance of one’s forefathers with all sincerity, will welcome fatherhood by the grace of one’s forefathers.

CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

Greatness of Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. After that go to the Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha which is always dear to Kṛṣṇa. O king! Viṣṇu always remains close to it.

Yayāti said:

2. O virtuous Brāhmaṇa! how could this place of pilgrimage so-called after Kṛṣṇa come up and when did it come up? O Sage! please narrate this in detail to me.

Pulastya said:

3. When both the movable and the immobile met with great destruction due to lightning and storm then all the planetary bodies had also got ruined due to the same reason.

4. Then after passage of time-span of thousand years the enlightened and lotus-seated Brahmā began to deliberate all alone as to how could Creation materialize.

5. Then moving about here and there, the four-faced Brahmā saw the Supreme Soul of the Universe in the form of large-eyed and four-armed Viṣṇu, to be present in a far off distance.

6. Then the four-faced (Brahmā) told him, “From where have you come and how have you been made? For what purpose have you come here? Please tell me all in details.”

7-8. Then to tell him, Govinda keeping aside all deceit and mockery said, “I am the Supreme Soul since the beginning and you are also created by me. I am wishing to create four types of creatures.”

Pulastya said:

9-10. Then hearing these words of his, the great Father and God, i.e., Brahmā became very angry and mockingly repeated ‘the Supreme Soul statement’ once and again. He said, “O fool!

I have only created you in the first place. There is no doubt about this and I can make thousands like you without any doubt.”

11. In this way, O king! the two with great brilliance remained mutually engaged in a verbal duel with each others eyes reddened with anger.

12. Pulling each other's arms and clenching fists as well as bringing nails and teeth as under, the mutual fight between the two continued for thousands of years.

13. Then O good king! after a thousand years, appeared in the interval, a great worshipable Liṅga— celestial, bright and auspicious.

14-16. Coinciding with the time, a voice came from the incorporeal saying, “You, i.e., Brahmā as well as Viṣṇu, please disengage from war as per my command. This is the Liṅga of Great God. He who, from both of you can make it to its endpoint will without any doubt be the higher, powerful and the chief creator here. As per my orders let one of you proceed to the lower region while the other go to the higher/upward region.” Hearing this, Brahmā took recourse to the pathways of space swiftly.

17. Tearing apart the Earth, Kṛṣṇa went down and after penetrating down he reached the seventh lower region of the Earth, He— the great soul could see the ferocious fire supposed to come at the time of final destruction of Creation.

18. With desire to go there, as he speeded up in that direction, he got burnt up by the fire and his body became black.

19. After getting burnt up fast by fire and becoming unconscious with pain, when Viṣṇu came out, he attained that ultimate state when his body became devoid of any distinctive sign/quality.

20. Then O king! taking recourse to that worshipable Liṅga, Viṣṇu began to worship it with devotion reciting the series of the subtle hymns of praise as per the supreme utterances in the Veda.

21. Seated on his bearer Swan, Brahmā followed the path in the sky. But for thousand years, he could not reach his destination.

22-23. Then after a thousand years, he saw Ketakī coming before him in the path of sky, who happened to ask him, “O Brahmā! what for have you been roaming about in such a deserted place? Seeing a wise man like you moving about in a vacuum, I am having a great curiosity.”

Brahmā said:

24-26. O beautiful and fortunate lady! it has arisen from my contest with Viṣṇu as to who can reach the final limit of the worshipable Śiva Liṅga to finally get it. Between two of us one is relatively less while the other is better and more powerful. These are the words of Śiva after hearing which, I proceeded towards the higher regions while Viṣṇu has proceeded to the lower, i.e., nether world. After covering the entire circumference of the worshipable Liṅga, I shall return to the world.” After hearing these words of him, the flower (i.e., Ketakī) said:

27-30. O Brahmā, O Lord of the World! all efforts will be vain for I am yet to comprehend the final limit of the worshipable Liṅga, despite my passage for thousands of years constituting a major period of the Creation by remaining on top of it. After falling down from the top of the worshipable Liṅga, I kept reciting the hymns in praise of Lord Śaṁkara, O Lord of great radiance. But I could never get to the bottom of the world. I travel hundred times the distance that is 8 miles that you take to move on the back of your Swan. Hence basing yourself firmly on what have I said you go and citing me as a proof vindicate your point having greater power in comparison to Viṣṇu.”

31. Then with all happiness and carrying that (flower) the four-faced, i.e., Brahmā appeared again on the surface of the Earth after a thousand years to show it to Viṣṇu as proof of being there above the worshipable Liṅga.

Brahmā said:

32. I have got this white garland O Four-armed (i.e., Viṣṇu), after making it to the ultimate point. O best of the male force! do not tell me a lie as to whether you have got it or not.

Viṣṇu said:

33-35. O Brahmā! I could never succeed in crossing over the limitless limit of Śaṁkara. Brahmā! if at all you have succeeded in crossing over the boundary, Maheśvara—the God of Gods must certainly have been pleased by that. The boundary in no other way than this has ever been seen by anyone else. Therefore you—the elder have become the superior and better.

Pulastya said:

36. In the meantime, the God having bull as His insignia (in other words the God Śiva) got angry instantaneously, O great king! with Brahmā.

37-40. Then coming before his eyes (i.e., sight) to condemn such childishness he said, “How could you fare such a thing falsely and uncautiously. For this untrue statement of yours to have seen my complete stretch over Creation, you can never be worthy of worship of all classes. Those men who worship you, unaware of this, will get difficulties of highest order with themselves getting completely destroyed. As whatever you said has been impelled by the wickedness of Ketakī, hence anything you touch in the world will become severely inferior.

41. After giving such a curse, the great God then spoke to Keśava (the other name of Viṣṇu) being pleased with him and with a smiling face.

42. The God said, “O strong and powerful Vāsudeva! (another name of Viṣṇu) I am pleased with your great mind speaking the truth. You can ask for a boon for your following the resolution in a good manner.”

43-44. Śri Vāsudeva said “Your, i.e., the great God’s appreciation of mine as well as being pleased with me, is itself a boon. O God! you can never be pleased with one having no credit of goodness for oneself nor can you be so pleased. However, O God of gods! if you still have to give me a boon then let this so-called and ever eternal Liṅga get little smaller in size and spread across the happening world to make the expansive Creation just indicative of your universal mind.”

Pulastya said:

45-48. After that having made that procreative Liṅga shorter and bearing it, the great God said, “O Hari (another name of Viṣṇu)! listen to these words of mine. O Hari! place this Liṅga of mine in sacred places. Worshipping it as per laid down procedure will result in highest welfare of yours. You had got burnt up and got blackened by the heat erupted out of me. Hence you will be renowned in the world by the name Kṛṣṇa. Any human being who after getting up in the morning, sings your name as O Kṛṣṇa! O Kṛṣṇa! with all faith, will attain the supreme passage”

Pulastya said:

49. Having said like this Iśan (the other name of Śiva) disappeared. Carrying that Liṅga, Vāsudeva arrived on the Arbuda mountain and placed it in a mountain's brook having good and clean water.

50. That is how got born the centre of pilgrimage known as Kṛṣṇa pilgrimage on the surface of earth. Now O prominent man on earth! listen to the fruits of taking a bath there.

51. Taking a bath in the Kṛṣṇa lake and after that having a look of that worshipable Liṅga results fittingly in accrual of well-being for mortals equal to the results of all pilgrimages together.

52. Those who make charities without being attended with desire can derive results. Even those with desires, happen to derive results difficult to attain.

53. Therefore, one needs to undergo the religious ritual of taking a bath here with earnest efforts. One having a desire for incessant welfare must do it without giving heed to any other activity.

54-55. O the winner over senses! one who remaining awake throughout the night and observing fasting pays homage to the worshipable Liṅga with all faith and devotion and observes the Śrāddha in the following morning, enables emancipation of all those learned in righteous conduct as well as of one's own forefathers.

56. Any mortal being who makes offering of black sesame to Brāhmaṇas here is certain to get free from the sin of Brahmanicide etc.

57. O King of kings! taking a look of the worshipable Liṅga here at the Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha absolves a man of all sins and there is no need for thinking about any other action in this regard.

CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

Origin of Māmu Lake

Pulastya said:

1. Then O best of kings! go to that centre of pilgrimage renowned as Māmu Lake situated on the outskirts of the mountain which kills all sins.

2. A bath there by a human accompanied with desirable faith relieves him of the deeper sins of previous lives.

3. O king! there, on the Western side of the mountain is a worshipable Liṅga. The same—a fulfiller of all human desires, is founded there by a Brāhmaṇa named Mudgal.

4. If a human being takes bath in the Māmu Lake on the fourteenth day of the bright period of Moon in the Month of Phālguna i.e. February and takes a look of the Liṅga there, he/she obtains superiority and best result difficult even in all centers of pilgrimage.

5. One who performs the ceremony, connected with remembrance of forefathers, i.e., Śrāddha near the statue situated on the Southern direction, happens to get his forefathers inundated with pleasures which seem to have not happened before.

6. Eulogy of great sages and mendicants for making offering of gifts there is already there. O king! conduct of Śrāddha with edible leaves and fruits is a source of great contentment.

Yayāti said:

7. How could the manifested Māmu Lake as such derive its name in the first instance? What is the Mudgal hermitage? Please narrate all methodically.

Pulastya said:

8. O king! in olden times, a Divine Messenger had come in a winged vehicle to Mudgal—the great soul residing there.

He said:

9. O virtuous Sage! this winged vehicle has been sent to you as per the orders of Indra—the King of gods. This is meant for you to ascend onto it and proceed to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Mudgal said:

10-11. O Messenger! please tell me the qualities and lacunas of Heaven as proclaimed to be. After hearing the same, I will act fittingly. O messenger! after your detailed description of all those, I shall proceed on my own.

The Divine Messenger said:

12. As per Indra's words there has been enough of your arrogance. O best of Brāhmaṇas! by virtue of your earning enough of goodness, follow there as a result.

Mudgal said:

13. Without listening to those, I shall not go. This is my mental resolve for all certainty. I shall continue with my severe penance and keep worshipping Maheśvara—the great God.

The Messenger said:

14-24. The qualities of Heaven cannot be counted even in a hundred years. However, if this is your firm decision, I shall narrate them in brief. There are very beautiful and excellent

forests in the Heaven which cause happiness in the mind. O good Brāhmaṇa! there are so many incomparable and unique enjoyments to give contentment in the Heaven. Hunger, thirst, lethargy and idleness do not prevail there. Divine beauties like Rambhā and chief among divine singers like Tumbura are there. Songs and dances enchant human beings there. O Sage—the bearer of wealth of penance! human beings stay in this way in the Heaven. The moment, goodness declines with them there, starts their downfall. O Sage! if one fault manifests itself in the Heaven, that leads to the ferocious downfall of the inmates of Heaven. O Brāhmaṇa! there is never any opportunity to earn goodness there. O Brāhmaṇa! this land is the place for work while Heaven is to be remembered as the place for enjoyment. The fruits of good work done here can only be enjoyed there. Hence look at the breathing beings enjoined with abundance of righteousness there on the winged vehicle. O good Brāhmaṇa! those with lesser volume of goodness in their favour remain always in state of sadness repenting in comparison to those having relatively brighter goodness. He or she keeps deliberating for not doing plenty of good deeds in the mortal world. This way seeing his own downfall from the Heaven in comparison to thousand others, he gets into more sadness within a faster way. I have narrated to you all these about qualities and faults and as these evolve. Now O Brāhmaṇa, engaged in the endeavour for attaining Heaven, do as you wish.

Mudgal said:

25-27. There is fear of downfall as well as that of abatement of goodness there. Hence O messenger! I shall never try for Heaven. You go back as per my orders and tell (Indra) the King of gods very clearly that I may be pardoned for my mistake that I do not have any desire for the Heaven. I shall keep on doing the fitting work in which there is no fear of downfall. I shall persevere for a different world free from downfall.

Pulastya said:

28. Saying so, O best of kings! Mudgal disinterested in Heaven, continued to put up there keeping himself incessantly and devotedly engaged in meditation on Śiva.

29-31. Then after hearing the words of the messenger in details, Indra told him with a relatively higher equanimity, “O Divine Messenger! you have disproved the heavenly winged vehicle which has hardly been done by anyone before nor can anyone ever do so in the future. Therefore hurrying up, you go and bring the Sage by force, otherwise, I shall curse you beyond any doubt.

Pulastya said:

32. So hearing Indra, the Divine Messenger was taken over with fear. He left swiftly for the place where Mudgal was putting up.

33. Seeing the arrival of the occupied winged vehicle, Mudgal entered into the water in Māmu Lake.

34. The Messenger as it is, stunned with the words of the Sage as if they were written, was unable to walk.

35. Learning that it is too long since the Messenger left, Indra—the ruler of three directions, i.e., Heaven got very angry and seated on his bearer elephant Airvata came there.

36. Then seeing the Messenger to be made immobile by Mudgal, he took out his thunderbolt and began to move it around in circles to kill him.

37. Coinciding with the time, a severe chaotic scene came up. The deer, the animals and the birds began to move in reverse direction. Witnessing all these, Mudgal began to worry and became astounded.

38. Seeing Indra coming in the sky with his thunderbolt raised in hand, Mudgal made him still and stationary like a pole by merely looking at him.

39-41. Then O good king! with his enthusiasm broken, Indra began taking to the series of hymns in praise of the Brāhmaṇa

pleading "O best of Brāhmaṇa! please release me so that I can get back to the heaven. O Brāhmaṇa! stay either in the Heaven or in the mortal world according to your sweet will. All these efforts of mine have been made keeping in view your, i.e., the Sage's welfare. O virtuous! ask for the boon that is always there in your mind. I shall grant all those to you even if those may be difficult to attain."

Mudgal said:

42-46. This itself is an adorable boon for me that O King of gods! you have become visible before me. O Thousand-eyed! a vision of yours even in dream is difficult. However, O Killer of the demon Vrutra! if you have decided to grant me a boon, let me then get liberation fast by your grace. After coming to this Māmu Lake, the Messenger spoke to me as I also did to him. That is how this Māmu Lake got its fame on the earth's surface. Let this centre of pilgrimage, O Thousand-eyed! be the destroyer of all sins and O King of gods! a bath here yields one the divine passage by your grace. Let the offering of cooked balls of rice by one here yield the pleasure of forefathers.

Indra said:

47-49. This centre of pilgrimage named Māmu Lake will acquire fame by this name and O good Brāhmaṇa! there will be no doubt that it will be the highest among all centers of pilgrimage with my grace. Those who take a bath here on the full moon day in the Month of Phālguna, i.e, February with all earnestness will attain that ultimate passage. Offering of balls of cooked rice to forefathers (connected with religious activity of remembrance of forefathers i.e. Śrāddha) here will yield good results comparable to the fruits obtainable by the same such act at Gayā. O good Brāhmaṇa! the results of making good gifts here are countless.

Pulastya said:

50. Having said so and getting hold of his Messenger, Indra—the bearer of thunderbolt left for Heaven. Mudgal in turn continued to remain engaged in deliberating upon the Supreme Brahmā.

51. Observing meditation with all purity, Mudgal obtained undecaying liberation.

52. The great Nārada had sung the poem in praise of this episode. A congregation of a good number of Brāhmaṇas O king! had listened to this here in this mountain.

53. After taking a bath in the Māmu Lake and by following it up with taking a look of the godly Mudgal, a human being gets liberation after enjoying all desires. O king! it is due to this reason that the Māmu Lake is remembered.

54. It is heard to be the best among the centres of pilgrimage in the world. Hence with all care and earnestness, one needs to fulfill the religious ritual of having a bath here.

55. Those having a desire particularly to attain the ultimate state of liberation can obtain the same and be contented by visiting the hermitage of Candī here.

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

Origin of Eminent Āśrama of Candī

Yayāti said:

1. O foremost Brāhmaṇa! when did the hermitage of Candī happen to come up there? What is the time in which by taking a look of it, fruits can accrue to human beings?

Pulastya said:

2. Listen O king! I am narrating the story of it as a destroyer of sins. By listening to it, a human being can definitely get free from all sins.

3. In olden times, in the Divine Age, O king! there was a demon named Mahiṣa. By a boon of Brahmā he had turned out to be ferocious for all gods.

4. He had earned victory over Indra as well as thousands of other gods. With his fear, the gods had moved about hither and thither for their own welfare.

5. Having subjugated the three worlds, he had become like Indra.

6. He had put demons forcefully above Viṣṇu, Śiva, the semi-gods, Maruta (the king of solar dynasty) and the Earth.

7. Getting distressed with fear, Fire also then gave up the company of gods and began to accept the offerings to it by the demons.

8. The Sun also radiated in accordance with his will. The Ṛṣis also got affected deprived of their share accruing from the conduct of Yajñas i.e. the religious ceremony of sacrificial fire.

9. All kings in the world got meddled up in the wheel of his deeds. The best on earth deprived of their share of offerings made to sacrificial fire began to live like slaves.

10-11. Then once, all the gods assembled together and approached Bṛhaspati, the best among the Brāhmaṇas and asked him very humbly, "O Godly Self! what shall we do—destitutes as we have become? Therefore, suggest the way to destroy the bad soul Mahiṣa."

12-17. O king! when the Teacher of gods was so told, giving hope of life to the residents of heaven, he said, "The demon has got firmly settled on power after getting a boon from Brahmā. He cannot be killed by all gods together. Only a young woman can free you from him. Hence, all of you together proceed to the Arbuda—the foremost of all mountains. By your observing penance for a considerable time in the lake there you will make your goal. The goddess Candī will assume the form of a powerful, yet enthralling beauty. Worship her in a distinct manner as this world is encompassed by her. She needs to be pleased for the killing of the bad soul Mahiṣa. She will make her endeavour by descending in her incarnation. By her

hand the wicked-minded will of course, be killed. I shall narrate you the befitting incantation to invoke her power as a means of solution. I shall also do so with regard to the procedural worship by which the auspicious liberation can be availed of.

Pulastya said:

18. After his saying so, all gods were taken over by a sense of happiness. Then along with him, O king! all of them proceeded to the Arbuda mountain.

19. Making them to take a bath there, Bṛhaspati got them purified. Then O king! imparting them the incantation of supreme power, he made them accomplished.

20. Then along with family, the gods worshipped there with flowers, incense, oil, garlands and with offering of sacrifices for three hours per day.

21. With different incantations and by taking enchanting hymns with all devotion they continued to pray there regularly by lighting up earthen lamps.

22. Without cheating, without ego, intent on faith in the Teacher, enjoined with the congruent incantations keeping in mind the placement of gods in different parts of the body, the gods appeared to be on the threshold of having equanimity of vision.

23. O virtuous earthly being! with their remaining engaged like this and after a lapse of seven months, the Goddess of gods became pleased.

24. O king! with brightness similar to an assemblage of lamps together coming onto their bodies and with purity acquired through incantation, the brightness of gods' bodies appeared to increase.

25-30. Within six months, the gods had acquired more than the brightness of twelve Suns together. Then the king, noticing that they had thus been endowed with brightness Bṛhaspati, giver of all fulfilment, who was present there created a circle and made all the gods—inhabitants of Heaven sit in its circumference. He pulled together the brightness of their bodies O king, through invocation of the right incantation for the

purpose of placing them in the circle as conceived. Then a lustrous and beautiful girl came alive there. Having a great body, she was the apparent form of power endowed with all divine qualities. Indra gave her his thunderbolt. The God of oceans gave her the net. The Fire God also gave her the power. The Chief of Wealth, Kubera, gave her the vehicle, i.e., the carrier in the form of lion. All other gods also gave their weapons with pleasure. O best of kings! their offering of weapons to her was accompanied with earnest recounting and recitation of hymns.

The gods said:

31. Homage to you O Goddess of gods! having the golden resplendence. Homage to you, O Lotus-eyed! and the Mother of the World. Homage to you through whom the world is exhibited and homage to you also for whom hymns have been rendered world-over. In your heart, you are the abode of beauty and for gods you are like an offering of beverage for the night. O Goddess! in your different forms, you are the image of tolerance, prosperity and radiance. You are also the wife of Fire. You are Sāvitrī, Kamalā, Sati, Gaurī, Mahāmāyā, Chāmundā and Sarasvatī. You are Bhairavī having that ferocious form and the bearer of Chanda, Munda and the sword. You are the darling of Śiva and having a great body you are greater in courage than an army of elephants. You are always fond of meat and wine and always devoted to the protection of your devotees. You encompass both the living and the non-living in the three worlds.

Pulastya said:

36. With such singing of glory by all the gods, the Goddess became pleased and told them to ask for a boon from her.

The gods said:

37-38. Mahiṣa—the demon so named among all the demons has become invincible to all living beings as well as even to gods by a boon of Brahmā. We can only be liberated by a woman. Hence O Goddess! you therefore kill him.

The Goddess said:

39-40. O Gods! you go back to your own places happily. I shall kill him when the appropriate time comes. Having been said so, all gods then became pleased and went back to their places.

41. Given such a liability, the Goddess stayed back there in the mountain with all pleasure. Then in due course of time, the godly saint Nārada came there.

42. As devoted he was to undergo pilgrimage, he, after having a look of the Goddess there, then followed his way to Heaven where Mahiṣa was (forcibly) putting up.

43. Seeing the Sage there, the demon Mahiṣa got up and paid homage bowing down with all humility.

44-46. Then he offered him his worship with the mixture containing equal proportion of five ingredients viz. milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar etc. and gifts and then offered him a seat. Then seeing him receding well into rest after getting comfortably seated, he made the following statement: “O virtuous Sage! wherefrom and to gain what have you come here? I have no sorrow. I have my sons, wife, kingdom and wealth too. I have also servants attending upon me. But O good Brāhmaṇa! what shall I do with all these! I shall give you everything and you can have it from me as per your need.

Nārada said:

47-48. I greet you. You are fit for all these. Having taken recourse to the regular pursuit of duties as part of sagehood, we have become desireless. Coming from the mortal world, I am on my way to the place of Brahmā. Your place has come in between my way and I have become curious after seeing you.

49. The demon Mahiṣa said, “O Sage! has anything surprising been ever seen by you on the surface of the earth? Did you ever come across any powerful godly figure or man or for that matter any demon?”

50-71. Nārada said, “O King of demons! I have seen something very astonishing on the surface of the earth which I never saw either among the mobile or immobile in the three worlds. There is a mountain famous by the name Arbuda on the earth’s surface which like the Heaven is ornamented with trees yielding fruits and flowers in all the seasons. Trees like Bakul, Champak, Mango, Ashok, Kaner, Palm, Date palms, Banyan, Bhallataka and Dhabala are there in this mountain. There are also the trees like Saral, Jackfruit, Ninduka, Karveer, Hibiscus, Parijata, Malaya and Sandalwood in the mountain. There are also many kinds of flower trees with different types of fragrance. The mountain is also full of many types of edible fruits. There is no such tree, creeper and medicinal plant on the plains, O *Primus* among the demons! which I did not find on this mountain. The place is full of the melodious sounds of birds like Chakor, Peacocks, Chatakas, Cuckoos, Swans and birds with white feather. With such sounds dropping in the ears, the sages engaged deeply in meditation get pierced with the arrow of amorosity. With brooks offering a sight of high delight to the eyes, the mountain also has rivers with clean water and is enjoined with pools full of thousands of lotuses. Men with large eyes like the lotus leaves but with slender waists and sweet smile intent upon observance of religious vows as per the scriptures are to be found there. What more do I say about it? The insects born out of heat here, the birds, the trees, the plants, the animals and the human beings on this mountain are among the best in the world. Having a breadth of ten Yojanas, two times as much of the same for length and five Yojanas in height, this mountain is similar to Heaven in the mortal world. While roaming about here and there in the mountain out of sheer curiosity, I saw a beautiful and powerful woman who appeared to be a matter of wonder to me from all respects. I have never seen nor heard of such a goddess, a divine lady singer, a demoness, a woman or of any such best woman. All women even Rati, Preeti, Uma, Lakṣmi, Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī can (only approximate) a fraction of this woman as far as beauty is concerned. Then after seeing such a beautiful

woman, I, O prominent demon! got afflicted with desire and became highly excited. Then after composing the mind, I resolved that I would never get into any conversation with this woman. A mere sight of this woman is heightening up desire in the mind. So, I cannot be sure as to what will happen to me by getting into a dialogue with her. I have adapted myself to celibacy in the long and enduring process of pursuit of penance. Further continuance of mine at this place may nullify my victory over the sense objects obtained through perseverance. I better proceed to some other place so that my penance does not go waste. Brahmā has created the woman as a name for impediment in the path of penance. She is not only like a lock on the door to Heaven but is very much a step on the road to Hell. Forbearance, penance, truth and persistence of family name remain as long as a woman is not sighted especially in isolation. Keeping my eyes closed and after repeatedly thinking like this, I have come here and stayed put without speaking to that beautiful woman.

Pulastya said:

72. After hearing such words of Nārada, Mahiṣa got affected with desire and to hear again, O king! he asked the Sage again.

73-74. The demon Mahiṣa said, “O Nārada, the best of Brāhmaṇas! where is that beautiful woman by the sight of whom you got afflicted with desire? Whether she is a goddess or having a human form or is she a female Yakṣa or a female Serpent or is she a maiden or simply a woman with a beautiful body? Please narrate in greater details to me.”

75-77. Nārada said, “I do not know anything about her including her lineage, as I never asked her anything in this regard. Simply this much I can tell that the same glorious woman has occupied my mind fully. She bears the garland made of rosaries and she has been carrying that earthen or wooden water pot generally borne by the ascetics. She appears to be engaged in penance on that mountain for some good cause. O Lord of the demons! I am now proceeding to the primeval world of

Brahmā. I shall not speak anything about her lest the fear of physical desire may overtake me.”

78. Then the king, having said like this, the Sage (Nārada) proceeded to the perpetual world of Brahman. Remembering quite attentively as to what did the Sage say, the demon Mahiṣa commanded his messenger to go to her.

79. (Mahiṣa commanded his messenger) saying, “Go there quickly, have a glimpse of the glorious woman there and be seized of the matter as to for what purpose has she been engaged in penance there.”

80-81. As per the orders of Mahiṣa, the messenger went quickly to the Arbuda region and sighted her having the beauty similar to the interior portion of a lotus. Then after gathering all information about her with due efforts, he came back and told Mahiṣa, the chief of demons, with a sense of astonishment that he happened to come across a woman endowed with all good qualities.

The messenger further said:

82-84. Born of the might of gods and blessed with all boons, the girl, taking resort to virginity, is practising penance to kill you. I asked all the ascetics engaged in penance there who happened to state the same to be true. Now you Great King, do as you please after hearing this. Her beautiful form appearing to be an act of weaving cannot be described. O King! the girl does not speak to anyone there.

Pulastya said:

85. After hearing those words, Mahiṣa was again overpowered with desire. He sent an able-bodied demon as messenger there.

86. (Mahiṣa told his messenger) “O able-bodied! go quickly and bring that female ascetic to me either by treachery or by force”.

87-90. Then the able-bodied demon messenger after paying homage to the King stepped out quickly and reached that region

of the Arbuda mountain where that all-mighty Goddess was putting up. Then after paying his homage to her, he spoke out gently: “O Goddess! there is a powerful king named Mahiṣa who is quite famous in the three worlds. He is born in the lineage of Dānu and in appearance, he is as handsome as Kāmadeva. He desires to have you as his wife through all righteous means. Your welfare lies in this and he will fulfill all your desires as his wife. If you become his dear wife and he, your handsome husband, it will fulfill both of yours’ youthhood. There can be no doubt about this.”

91. After his saying like this, the Goddess got angry and with movements of her lips said:

The Goddess said:

92-94a. It is universally known that an envoy is not fit to be killed. Hence in the present situation, I am not turning you into ashes. You go back and tell the mischievous and stupid demon Mahiṣa that no one like him would ever get me. All this strategy of mine has been to kill him.

94b. After hearing these words of hers, the envoy returned to Mahiṣa.

95. Taken aback completely by her beauty as well as overtaken with great fear, the envoy narrated all his efforts (to convince her) to Mahiṣa. He described the details of his dialogue with her as well as her unwillingness.

96. As it is, already affected with severe desire (for her), the King Mahiṣa after hearing those words of the envoy, called for the General of his forces and conveyed what the envoy stated before him.

97. Mahiṣa told the General, “Proceed to the Arbuda mountain with the invincible army and let the forces be fully equipped with cavalry, elephantry, infantry and charioteers.”

98. Then the General constituted an army with four divisions having defenders with powerful weapons and decorated with flag carriers.

99. Mounted on elephants, the brave soldiers appeared as fully prepared. They appeared as if carrying the mountains on their heads while running hither and thither.

100. The marvellous horses of variegated colour with speed similar to the wind, a swollen army comprising thousands of soldiers with their bodies equipped with defensive guards, was presenting a scene of vigour and energy.

101. The chariots were designed in the shape of mansions. Decorated with tinkling bells, banners were fluttering on them.

102. The infantry was strong with erect bodies and equipped with bows and sharp arrows and with spears.

103. There were one lakh elephants and chariots numbering three times of the same. There were ten times the horses and innumerable infantry.

104. Then encircling the Arbuda mountain from a distance he (i.e. Mahiṣa) confronted the Goddess along with some of his close Ministers.

105-108. Beholding the Goddess in a meditative posture, he, got pierced with the arrow of cupid, but with all humility said, "O Goddess with a beautiful face! I have come here after hearing about your glorious beauty. Hence you take me as your husband as per the Gāndharva ritual of marriage. O you, having a gentle smile, I have sixty thousand wives. Making me feel proud, you be my mistress. O virgin girl! penance is not fit for you. Have all enjoyments as per your desire. By sharing days and nights with me, be the mistress of three worlds."

109. She did not respond despite his saying like this. Then completely taken over by physical desire, he approached nearer to her.

110. Then becoming aware of his eager desire, the Goddess got seized with anger and began to be reminded of her carrier, the lion. Then as soon as the lion came, the Goddess got herself mounted onto it.

111. The Goddess said repeatedly, "Go back, go back from here. Otherwise, I shall kill you, the stupid demon, here itself."

112. Then he (i.e., Mahiṣa) along with his Ministers encircled her from all sides. Afflicted with the weapon of desire, his aim was to take her in confinement.

113. Coinciding this, the Supreme Goddess made sounds of derisive laughter when a number of violent and impenetrable male figures erupted out.

114. Holding weapons and brimming with anger they were eager to fight. The Goddess then asked them to strike down that (demon) of heinous crimes.

115. Then they all together confronting Mahiṣa from close angles began to let loose their large number of weapons slowly and steadily.

116. Then happened the war between the followers of the Goddess as well as the demons resulting in all the Ministers (of Mahiṣa) heading towards the domain of Yama, i.e., the death God.

117. With all his Ministers struck down, Mahiṣa became angry and then moved ahead to the mountain along with his troops of soldiers.

118. Then mounting on the best of his chariots, he directed his charioteer to take turn towards that particular place in the mountain where the Goddess had stationed herself.

119. He said, "I shall kill her today and get relieved of my severe anger." No sooner did he say so than the charioteer, O king, had prepared himself fully on the chariot to proceed.

120. He (the charioteer) steered the chariot on the path that would definitely take to the place where she (the Goddess) was putting up. In the meantime, disorder of the highest order happened there.

121. O king, strong and unbearable wind was blowing on the way, he was taking.

122. Striking the solar system, a large meteor fell onto the earth. Deer were running on the left side of the road, O king, the demon Mahiṣa was following.

123. Either sitting or flying, the birds were excreting plentiful urine. Sitting on the flag staff of the chariot, the vulture was making sound.

124. Without taking any note of the severely disorderly scene, he (Mahiṣa) proceeded ahead and confronted the Goddess with anger.

125. Releasing arrows in plenty, he was uttering 'stay fixed, stay fixed' (to his adversaries) and the king! nothing was visible amidst the rows of arrows.

126. Any one from the group of the opponent troop coming face to face to check the angry Mahiṣa, got killed by him and the entire scenario was converted with the area full of red-dyed (i.e. soaked with blood) mud.

127-131a. Then approaching the Goddess, O king! he (Mahiṣa) said with all pride.

"O coward! it would definitely not be fit for me to fight and kill you. It is your childishness that you neither gave any weightage to my heroism, my good fortune and wealth nor did you pay any heed to my words. With all certainty, I know it correctly that you—the beautiful woman has become very proud and haughty. You can follow my words even now and become my dear wife. After having firmly established myself in virility, I do not want to kill you—a woman. In any case I have already earned the fame of victory many a time in wars with Indra—the King of Gods. O ignorant woman! there is no man equal to me in the three worlds."

131b-137a. When he said like this, the Goddess got possessed with the highest degree of anger. Then lifting the bow and arrow in hands, the Goddess said, "I should not commit the sin by getting into a dialogue with you. It is not in the fitness of things for a virgin to speak to a lecherous man. Despite this, listen to what I say, "It is never that you at all won over Indra in a war by virtue of your own courage. O stupid demon! the gods consider that the boon of their forefather, i.e., the Brahmā is usually more powerful. Glorified by the power of that boon of Him that you are reckoning yourself to be quite superior. As per Brahmā, only a beautiful woman arousing libido can make the world free from your sins. As it is, He has made you invincible to all men on earth. It is Brahmā's boon which has brought victory to you here on Earth. If you have any virility

of your own, show it quickly. I shall send you to the Abode of Yama (i.e., God of death), by sharp weapon.”

137b-139. Saying like this, the Goddess released a cluster of eight arrows. With four arrows, she immobilised the four horses pulling the chariot and the severed head of the charioteer by another arrow of hers got thrown up to a distance. One arrow tore apart the banner on the chariot while with the other, his (Mahiṣa's) chest got wounded. With pain due to his body being so pierced, he took support of the flag staff on the chariot.

140. Then O king! being unconscious for a while, he remained still with his face downward. However, after sometime, he regained consciousness and released arrows towards the Goddess.

141. The Goddess as well as her companions got every region of their bodies thrashed (as a result). Then releasing her sharp-edged best weapon, she broke open his bow and arrow into two pieces.

142. When his bow and arrow got broken, the demon took up spear and shield in hand instantaneously and proceeding towards the Goddess shouted 'wait' and 'wait'.

143. Then the Goddess cut down his sword swiftly with her weapon. She also made his shield immobile with the other half of her arrow.

144. Then the ignorant demon, O king, devoid as it is of weapons and chariot, began to remember various arms and weapons.

145. Then taking a stick of grass in hand and invoking the Brahmāstra (i.e., the weapon given by Brahmā) in mind, he released the same towards the Goddess for his own rescue. However, as soon as he released it, the same appeared like a darkened blown off wick of an earthen lamp.

146. All gods along with Brahmā were taken over with extreme fear at this time to see her courage.

147. Then the king! the Goddess after concentrating for a while, cut off that Brahmāstra swiftly and the same became defunct evidently.

148. When the Brahmāstra became a failure, the best of demons got infuriated and released the weapon of fire which the Goddess also defused with a water cannon.

149. In this way he (i.e., Maḥiṣa) employed different kinds of weapons, all of which, running into thousands were defused by the circular weapon in the hand of the Goddess.

150. Thus all the weapons of the strong demon got exhausted. Then he employed the highly divine, yet magical weapon on the Goddess of Gods.

151. Then assuming the form of a buffalo with long and incisive horn and tooth, he appeared like one having a huge body like that of a mountain and came before the Goddess.

152. Mounting herself on the lion, the Goddess then severed his head with her sharp spear.

153. As the Goddess pierced the back of Maḥiṣa with spear, then a huge masculine body emerged out of his body.

154. Holding onto the shield and sword, the ferocious Maḥiṣa shouted 'wait' and 'wait' when the Goddess of gods held onto his hair in her hand.

155. Then with the sharp sword, the Goddess struck the demon which took away the life-force from his body. When this happened O king! the lion beside the Goddess tore apart the body of the demon into two pieces.

156-159. After that, assuming the appearance as if seated on excessive anger, the Goddess struck down the remaining demons who out of fear for life ran for and entered the impregnable region beneath the earth. Then all Gods including Maruta, Aswinī, Viśwadeva, Sādhyā, Rūdra, Guhwaka, Kinnara, Āditya appeared making offering of beautiful flowers to the Goddess. They recited several hymns paying their respectful homage to the Goddess with intense admiration.

160-161. They said, "O Pārvaṭī! you have done the befitting job by rooting out the severity of sins. You have exquisitely destroyed the sins pervading the three worlds. You have got Indra back his kingdom again encompassing the three worlds. Let there be your welfare for such act of redemption. You please

ask for the desired boon in your mind. All the gods will be pleased to grant the same to you without any doubt.”

The Goddess said:

162-163. If the gods are indeed pleased and desire to grant me a boon, let goodness accrue to this hermitage of mine here and let its fame spread with such an enjoiner. O gods, I shall remain for ever in this prominent mountain.

Brahmā said:

164-169. O Goddess! human beings after seeing your face in this form here will obtain that supreme passage by virtue of the greater goodness of the hermitage here. Those humans will be endowed with the knowledge of Brahmanhood. As you have performed the ferocious deed of killing the demons here, you will therefore be famous in the world by the name of Candikā. This hermitage of yours here will be renowned as per the same name of yours. O beauty! those who after taking a bath here on the fourteenth day of the waning period of the moon in the Month of Āśvina, i.e., October perform the ritual of offering of balls of cooked rice in memory of their deceased forefathers, will obtain the same fruits like that of Śrāddha conducted at Gayā. Taking a look of yours here will also absolve one of all sins.

Kṛṣṇa said:

170-171. Sins of those who spend a night here with full faith and due observation of fasting, will get completely wiped out and for all times to come. It is beyond doubt that a childless man or woman performing the ritual of offering balls of cooked rice here in memory of his/her forefathers with all sincerity of mind and as per prescribed procedure will definitely be blessed with a child very quickly.

Indra said:

172. If a king deprived of his kingdom observes the ritual of taking a bath here followed up with making of charities will

not only get all his enemies dissipated but his kingdom will also expand.

Agni (i.e. Fire God) said:

173. A man doing Śrāddha here with all purity and in terms with his financial capability will accordingly derive the fruits of the same Yajña.

Yama said:

174. Untimely death will never occur to those who after taking (the ritual of) bath here offer sesame to Brāhmaṇas.

The demons said:

175. O Goddess! the human beings who observe the ritual of offering of cooked balls of rice to their forefathers in your hermitage here will never be affected by the fear of rising of ghosts.

Varuṇa said:

176. Those who offer water to the Brāhmaṇas here after taking bath, will attain purity for all time to come in this as well as the other world.

Vāyu said:

177. Those who offer specially the flavoured paste of sandalwood to Brāhmaṇas will remain free from all diseases.

The Giver of Wealth (i.e., Kubera) said:

178. Those who donate wealth to Brāhmaṇas here in commensurate with their capacity will never be deprived of wealth in society.

Īśvara said:

179. One who observes the religious rite of conducting yajña here with all resolution and sincerity at the interval of every

four months will obtain happiness for ever in this as well as the other world.

Indra said:

180. A man who, after observing fast for three nights, performs yajña here will be free from all sins starting from his birth till death.

Aditya said:

181. Men making gifts of umbrellas and footwear (which relieve the feet) here in this auspicious hermitage with all devotion and faith, will obtain the eternal world.

Aświnī Kumar said:

182. Those who offer sweets to Brāhmaṇas here with utmost regards will be bestowed with the supreme and undying love.

Tīrtha said:

183-184. Today onwards, there will be presence of all centres of pilgrimage here. This hermitage will specially earn a place of renown and will be heard from the mouths of people. Following the (religious) ritual of taking a bath with fasting here on the fourteenth day of the waning period of moon in the Month of Aśvina, i.e., October will result in attainment of fruits encompassing fruits of all centres of pilgrimage.

Gandharva said:

185. Those who undertake the religious activity of Bhajans and Kirtans here will attain the appearance of beauty for seven life-times to come.

The Sage said:

186. One observes the ritual of fasting here for three nights will attain the fruits equivalent to a thousand Cāndrāyana Vrata (i.e., the Yajña accompanied by reduction in intake of food

progressively on each successive day culminating in no food on the New Moon Day).

Pulastya said:

187. Thus all gods bestowed their blissful boons on the Goddess. O best of kings, and that is how the Goddess has been present here as per the direction of gods.

188. As a result of taking a look of the Goddess in the hermitage here and empowered with her blessings, the mortals started to proceed to the Heavenly Kingdom which in turn became full of the mortals without any difficulty with their penetration.

189. In the wake of this, religious rituals including the relatively longer cycle of Yajña connected with making offerings to the Fire God lost vitality on the surface of earth. Same also became the fate of other religious activities. The gods became deprived of their due worship.

190. Then becoming scared, the Thousand-eyed i.e. Indra through connivance with Bṛihaspati made a quick invocation of desire, anger, fear and excitements.

191-192. Then instructing them he said, all of you along with thirst, deceit and qualities to induce attachment towards offsprings, proceed quickly to the mortal world so as to incite desire in mortal beings both men and women so that they can stay back (instead of proceeding to the Heaven). All of you, as per my orders, be there in the auspicious hermitage of Candī in her service and especially remain there upto the last day of the fourteen day period of the waning period of moon in the Month of Aśvina, i.e., October.”

193. Your Highness, thus directed, all of them (i.e., desire, anger, attachment, etc.) hurriedly proceeded to the mortal world and kept themselves engaged in its upkeep and preservation.

194. After knowing all this, you—the virtuous earthly being, also proceed quickly there, if at all, you desire the best of both this and the other world.

195. O king he who visits Arbuda mountain and takes a look of Candī, his forefathers get elated and dance, while his great grandfathers get into an uproarious mood.

196. The son (of an individual) who performs Śrāddha (i.e., the religious ritual performed in memory of one's forefathers) in this hermitage here with all sincerity, besides his forefathers, he enables all of us to successfully cross over this worldly life.

197. O king! one obtains a kingdom from a maiden visit here while the second and third visits enable attainment of the Heaven and Liberation respectively.

198. Therefore, with all sincere efforts, one needs to undertake a pilgrimage here in this Arbuda mountain—the best of the mountains and the best among centres of pilgrimage for results of goodness and welfare.

199. The great Sage Nārada had sung the glory of this hermitage after taking a bath here and in an assembly of Brāhmaṇas.

200. It is of course beyond doubt that the act of taking a bath followed up with making offering of gifts in other centres of pilgrimage give results. But with a look of the Arbuda, all sins fade away.

201. One who listens to its proclaimed greatness with all faith, that human soul attains excellence with all desires nurtured in his mind getting fulfilled.

202. In all homes where the text on the greatness of Arbuda is preserved O king! all desires of the inmates not only get fulfilled but also it begets wealth and prosperity for them.

203. O king! even a human being who reads this with faith, that best of men obtains fruits of pilgrimage and attains prominence.

CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

Origin of Eminent Nāga Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one needs to go to that centre of pilgrimage—the destroyer of sins, called the Nāga (i.e., cobra) lake. There in some beautiful interior region of the mountain, one can come across the Nāgas, i.e., the cobras engaged in penance.

2-3. It is said that in olden times hearing about the curse inflicted on Kadru (i.e., their mother) all the Nāgas became fearful and then headed to see Śeṣanāga. Bowing before him they all asked him, “Where shall we go and what should we do O virtuous King of the Nāgas! so as to free her from the curse? As it is we are heavily depressed with the curse on our mother.”

Śeṣa said:

4-8. I had to initially satisfy the Mother Goddess to get rid of the curse, who in turn, exhorted me that the self-righteous souls who as it is observe self-control and remain incessantly engaged in penance, must never raise the fire in the Yajña of Parikṣita. A mountain called Arbuda is there on the surface of earth for this purpose. The Goddess Candī remains there on her own. You proceed there and get yourself engaged in penance as per the laid down procedure. Prayers to and before her definitely root out all dangers. Hence as per my words, you remain engaged in her worship day and night. It is her blessings by which only all distress can be put an end to. He further said that he would not visualize any other alternative. For him neither gods nor the humans nor could there be any other means to liberation.

Pulastya said:

9. After the King of Nāgas said so, all the Nāgas, O king! after paying their homage to the King, proceeded towards the Arbuda mountain.

10. Digging up the earth on the mountain they made their own extended pathway in the form of a hole.

11. Then making a resolution in mind and with sincere devotion they began to dwell there engaged in the worship of the Goddess.

12. Observing the ritual of making offerings to the Fire God, muttering the name of Goddess repeatedly in a befitting manner and either having food once in a day or observing fast or simply subsisting on air, they began to put up there for good.

13. For some of them, the mere mastication of teeth was agreeable as having taken food, while for some grated stone was acceptable as food. Some were subsisting on the offerings made to five fires set up for performance of yajña while some remained occupied with only washing themselves.

14. Seeing the incomparable devotion of those good snakes, the gods got pleased and began to sing accompanied with musical instruments in their kingdom.

15. Then the Goddess, herself becoming very pleased made this statement:

16. The Goddess said, “I am pleased, my dear children. What for are you all doing such arduous penance? You can ask for the desired boon in your mind.”

17-18. The Nāgas said, “O Goddess! distressed with the curse on our mother, we have become destitutes for having no support. Directed by the King of Nāgas we have come here and taken refuge under you. You can only rescue her (i.e., our mother) from the fear of the fire of sin engulfing her. Due to some reason our mother has been cursed in some time in the past as per which the fire from the yajña of Parikṣit will swallow her up.”

19-23. The Goddess said, “You all stay here, near me till his Yajña finishes. Without any fear, have full enjoyment of the adequate amenities here. As the Yajña gets over, you proceed to your own abode for you have already made a hole inside the cave of this mountain. This place on earth will be known as Nāga Lake pilgrim centre and men complying with the religious practice of taking bath here with sincere faith on the fifth day

during Śrāvaṇa (i.e., July-August) every year will never be taken over by the fear of Nāgas. Following it up with the performance of Śrāddha (i.e., the religious activity connected with remembrance of one's forefathers) will help their forefathers to swim across (the worldly existence). All those enjoyments which are renowned both on the Earth as well as in the Heaven will always be attainable for human beings without any doubt."

Pulastya said:

24. Then the persisting fear (in the minds) of the Nāgas faded away and they became happy. Taking the shelter of Goddess as their own, they began to roam around there (in the Arbuda region).

25. Then in the inevitable course of time, which supercedes everything, the (procedurally fixed) duration of Parīkṣit's Yajña got over. All the Nāgas feeling peace within entered the region under the surface of the earth.

26. O king! with the grace of Goddess they, i.e., the Nāgas became free from the frightening curse. Therefore paying their homage repeatedly to the Goddess they remained unmoved in their faith and devotion for her.

27. Even today, O king! they come there especially on the fifth day of the waning period of Moon during Śrāvaṇa (i.e., July-August) to get a look of the Goddess with all eagerness.

28. Hence, with all sincere efforts, O best of kings! one needs to conduct the ritual of Śrāddha observed in remembrance of one's forefathers here. The best wishes of one's self get materialized by the ritual of having a bath here.

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

Origin of Eminent Śiva Gangā Pool

Pulastya said:

1. Thereafter O king! head towards the pond having a similar appearance of the worshipable liṅga of Lord Śiva. O virtuous king, Gangā puts up here clandestinely.

2. The fruits of all pilgrimages accrue to a man by a bath here. Besides, he gets free from all sins committed since birth till death.

Yayāti asked:

3. O great preceptor! what for Gangā happened to be there? In which Age did she come there? There is an intense curiosity within me.

Pulastya said:

4-7. Once upon a time when the gods after appeasing Lord Śiva, who usually mounts upon a bull, asked him to remain ever present in the Arbuda mountain, the radiant God himself proceeded to put up there. On his own he founded his worshipable Liṅga there. But that worshipable Liṅga was brought down by the great sage Vālakhilya. The Sage had done so due to excess anger for some reason. Then Lord Śiva made a promise before all gods saying that he would not move out of there under any circumstances and would stay there beyond any doubt. Since then and in the unchangeable march of great Time he has been present there.

8. Then the thought of Gangā occurred in the mind of the everlasting God impelling him to think as to how could togetherness of his other half (i.e., Gangā) be there at that place forever.

9. Then he thought of great ways of bringing along the caring and supreme Goddess Gaurī. Accordingly he ordered his loyal followers waiting upon him.

10. Zeroing on one way by which togetherness with Gangā could be possible in that lake, he then ordered his followers viz., Nandi, Bhrungi, the Gangā and other fountains.

11-12. He told them, "I have a feeling that by taking resort to water, performance of the religious activity of penance can be possible. Hence all of you go and try to make a proper pool there in the interior region of the mountain. There, I shall put myself in the middle of the pool to observe the religious penance which can not be possible without water." Hearing this, the group of his attendants hurried up towards the mountain region to make a good number of pools, which they finally made.

13. There was clean water in those pools where one could swim well. Taking a bath there was good enough to give pleasure. Then with the desire for company of Gangā, he sought due permission of Gaurī.

14. Then with a view to observing the religious ritual associated with giving effect to his mental resolve, the God entered into the water and began to meditate on Gangā—the purifier of the three worlds with its flow of water.

15. With his earnestly holding Gangā within mind, Gangā immediately appeared to give company to Śiva. As per Pulastya's words, the God has been uninterruptedly making his entreaties to Gangā there.

16. O king! Gaurī could not fully make out the purpose behind Śiva's persistently observing the religious ritual connected with giving effect to his mental resolve. In the course of time, the Gods' Sage Nārada happened to come there at a certain juncture while he was moving about here and there in the pursuit of Kaivalya Yajna.

17. He was taken aback to see Mahādeva in penance in the midst of water and his life-force to be completely taken over by desire.

18. How could the performer of *Vrata* (i.e., the religious activity connected with fulfilment of a mental resolve) be afflicted with desire as Śiva's eyes evinced? How could it be possible? Thinking like this the Sage (i.e., Nārada) began to ponder.

19. Visualizing that Maheśwara's (i.e., Śiva's) enamourment of Gangā was only through meditation which could be due to fear of Gaurī, he (i.e., Nārada) got surprised.

20. Then he narrated all efforts of Hara, i.e., Śiva and the intention behind it to Gaurī.

21. Then the Goddess hurried to the place where Maheśwara was. Her eyes were red and so also her body trembling with anger.

22. Seeing Maheśwari (i.e., Śiva's better half) coming towards the place where Śiva was, with anger, Gangā with her devout mind could understand everything and with fear spoke out.

23. She said, "With the Goddess being told about our being together by Nārada, she seemed to have come here with anger. Hence, you please do whatever you consider fit in the meantime."

24-25. The gracious Mahādeva said, "O Jāhnavī! (i.e., Gangā) the best action will be to go to my own abode in the mountain i.e. the Himalaya and bring the sensitive lady (i.e., Parvatī) under control by propitiating her. Her loyalty to husband will be evoked by such action instantly. Otherwise, along with me, she will give a curse to you also."

26. O virtuous king! as Rudra (an epithet of Śiva) said so, Jāhnavī came out of the pool and then proceeding towards Gaurī, appeared before her.

27-31. Ashamed of herself and with folded hands, Gangā bowed down before her to pay homage and then spoke these golden words, "In olden time, when I fell off onto the Earth, your beloved upheld me on his head. You must be aware of this. As a result, he had a developed affection for the name Bhagiratha. It was solely due to fear of you that our togetherness was not possible. Now, O Goddess of gods! either as per your words or as per the good and pure wishes of Rudra, i.e., Śiva that I have been called for here. It is as per the directions of the Lord of the three worlds that I have come out before you to bare open the truth."

Pulastya said:

32. The Goddess became glad to hear such words of hers and told her politely that she had put forth the right position.

33. Hence you may ask for any good boon as desired in your mind. Leaving aside the beloved Maheśwara who is the only medium of my pursuit of duty of loyalty to husband, you may ask for anything else.

34-36. Gangā said, "Is it my misfortune that as wife of Śiva I have to be put on the sharp-edged iron-bar. Hence, grant me at least one day when I can have my playful fun with him. O Goddess of gods! let the road of Śiva to his abode take turn towards this pool especially on the thirteenth day of the rising period of moon in the month of Caitra, (i.e., March-April) when this pool becomes my abode. O daughter of the mountains ! let this pool here in this mountain acquire fame with your grace, by the name of Śiva Gangā on the surface of earth".

Pulastya said:

37. Let this be so, said the Goddess to the great river Gangā and then embracing each other, both parted.

38. Then as Gangā left, Gaurī bringing her face down and after holding the hands of Śiva for a while, left for her abode moving around here and there.

39-40. O king! this is how the old story of this pool has been described. With sincerity and with all efforts, one needs to observe the religious ritual of taking a bath here especially on the fourteenth day of the rising period of moon in the month of Caitra, (i.e., March-April) as togetherness of both the God Śiva and Gangā remains here on this day, the virtuous king.

41. (A bath) here dissipates all bad deeds and by donation of bulls to Brāhmaṇas here O best of kings! one is sure to attain residence in heaven for as many years as the number of hairs on one's body.

CHAPTER THIRTY NINE

Importance of Offering Barley to the Worshipable Liṅga of Śiva

Yayāti said:

1-3. O bearer of spiritual knowledge! on the sidelines of narrating the glory of this (the centre of pilgrimage) you had stated in the very beginning that as a matter of obliging the satisfaction of gods, Maheśvara founded his worshipable Liṅga here permanently. The great soul Vāḷakhilya had uprooted the worshipable Liṅga at some juncture of time. But then how and when Maheśvara again came back there? I have a great curiosity in this regard. Accordingly, you the Great Sage, please speak out appropriately. What goodness awaits upon men by a visit there and by having a look of it?

Pulastya said:

4. The virtuous earthly being, now listen to the greatness of Maheśvara. I shall bring to you another version of the glorified story in this regard which has been narrated.

5-6. When due to humiliation of Dakṣya for not being invited to Yajña, Satī, i.e., the manifested force exhibiting the power and victory of truth got consummated by death, Kāmādeva taking his bow and arrow of flowers in hand arrived there swiftly. Seeing the invincible Kāmādeva, Śiva then put him as an arrow onto his bow.

7-8. Apparently out of fear Śiva disappeared. Then he, i.e., Kāmādeva moving about here and there, reached the hermitage of Vāḷakhilya which was bearing a beautiful look with a good tree outside it. Vāḷakhilya's wives then got a glimpse of the handsome Kāmādeva.

9. Seeing the bare-bodied and amiable Śiva, all those women got enamoured and leaving their sons and homes behind followed him continuously making entreaties like 'make me/us your own.'

10. The group of same women began to embrace the worshipable Liṅga following it up with kissing and repeated touching.

11. Yet, he is the detached supreme Sage and God Śambhu. Pervading the entire world, he remains present in all living beings with their bodies serving as his dwelling unit.

12. He, the Lord Śambhu therefore, was taking them ahead with himself remaining in the front and all those women were simply following his steps afflicted as it was with being enamoured by him.

13. The Sage saw change in the women manifesting all the possibility of their going wayward. Unaware as he was, the great soul simply got enraged with Mahādeva.

14. Heated up with distress, he (i.e., the Sage) therefore, to save his wives took out his curse on the worshipable Liṅga of Śiva saying 'let this worshipable Liṅga fall down for having caused such evils/sins'.

15. A mere sight of the worshipable Liṅga which is reason enough for causing deceit among women is an immediate enemy of the body. Hence, there should be a downfall for this and let this Liṅga fall down.

16. With the omnipotent, i.e., unchangeable words of the royal Sage, the Earth then began to shudder. The peaks on the mountains began to crumble and with their submersion under water, the land gave a terrible sight.

17. Then considering that the prevailing situation is adequate enough for an untimely annihilation of the three worlds, all the gods, O king! got frightened enough.

18-19. Then going to their grandfather, i.e., Brahmā, all gods said, "O supreme God! signs of final destruction are visible. O best of gods and our Lord! we do not know what is this for"? After hearing such words of theirs, Brahmā receded into his usual state of contemplation.

Then he (i.e., Brahmā) said:

20-22a. All these difficulties and chaos having portents of giving rise to fear, have been solely due to Vālakhilya bringing

down the worshipable Liṅga of Pināki (an epithet of Śiva). Hence, all of you gods accompany me there. The purpose of our journey there is to restore the worshipable Liṅga to its pre-designed place. Until that is done, the possibility of final destruction of the world will continue.

22b-23. Speaking to one another like this, all of them i.e. the gods reached the Arbuda mountain. The fallen worshipable Liṅga was lying there in the hermitage of Vālakhilya. To please it the gods began to recite the varied hymns of the Veda.

The gods said:

24-29. Our homage to you O God among gods and the giver of fearlessness to the faithful followers. Homage to you who dwell in all and a reflection of all yajñas. Homage to you, O God of all gods as well as the Supreme Light. Homage to you O Creator! fit to be comprehensible either in the broadest or subtlest way. O Trayamvaka, O Bhima, O the Bearer of the best bow and arrow or the Trident in hand, all these are like pearls tied up in a thread (of yours). Either the manifest diversities in the world in their best forms including the mobile as well as the immobile or hardly there is anything coarse or subtle in the three worlds which is not encompassed by you. The creation ranging from its evolution to dissolution can have no other causal agent behind it except you, O Lord Śaṁkara. The world with its attendant difficulties and sorrows is but a device as per your will. It will merge into your body subsequent to its dissolution. Hence O God of gods! replant your worshipable Liṅga in the same region of the mountain where it was there already for the welfare of subjects. Till that materialises, damages will continue to accrue for the subjects.

The God said:

30-34. It is out of sheer indifference that Vālakhilya has uprooted this worshipable Liṅga of mine. How can I accept it any further without its necessary purification. I can punish Vālakhilya appropriately as per my sweet will. But I consider

Brāhmaṇas worthy of respect, O virtuous gods. My worshipable Liṅga here is unmovable. This is the only fixed place for it and I cannot think of any other way out. O Brahmā! if you have worshipped this worshipable liṅga previously, then all gods followed by Brāhmaṇas in due course will worship it here, as it is. As a result, peace will return to the world encompassing the mobile as well as the immobile.

Pulastya said:

35. As Śamkara said like this, then Brahmā, O best of kings! first of all began to worship the same (i.e., the worshipable Liṅga) then and there with sincerity of faith and devotion.

36. After Brahmā, Viṣṇu did the same. Subsequently, Indra followed up. Vālakhilya and other Brāhmaṇas also worshipped it reciting the difficult Śatrudriya incantations from the Veda.

37. Then the terrible disorderly situation soon began to recover. Happy days returned to the world with people becoming good-natured and gentle and fragrant breeze began to blow.

38. Then Mahādeva asked all the gods to seek boons as desired in their respective minds.

The gods said:

39-40. O God of gods! let the hurdles for all those evil-doer humans on their road to Heaven be destroyed by a simple touch of the worshipable Liṅga of yours here. O Lord and King of the gods! let you wish so that Indra's sword of thunderbolt acts as a protective shield to this beneficial worshipable Liṅga of yours.

The God (Śiva) said:

41. O God born of the lotus (i.e., Brahmā)! such a wish has been equally gaining ground in my mind. Let Indra—the King of gods do so in the interest of growth and development of all religions.

Pulastya said:

42. Hence, Indra—the King of three worlds covered the worshipable Liṅga with his sword of thunderbolt which require to be won over or brought under control for any mortal being to get a look of the same (object of worship).

43. Even now, a mere touch of the (same) sword of thunderbolt entitles a man acquire proximity (to the worshipable Liṅga). It is beyond doubt that he gets liberated not only from sins but also from the cycle of birth and death.

44. So Śaṅkara has sung the glory of the worshipable Liṅga while it is Indra who by his thunderbolt gives it the protective cover on the surface of Earth.

45. Since then worshipping of Lord Śaṅkara has been commenced in the mortal world. Before this either his idol or some form of stone as a symbolic icon of him used to be worshipped in the three worlds.

46. This is the account, as to how the worshipable Liṅga used to be worshipped before and after its downfall since ancient days in this best of mountains called the Arbuda which you were asking.

47. One who makes offering of cooked food made of freshly harvested wheat to the unmovable worshipable Liṅga on that particular fourteenth day of the waning period of Moon in the month of Phālguna (i.e., February), which is (considered as) the great destroyer of all sins, will never have rebirth.

48. One who makes offering of food prepared of the same freshly harvested wheat to Brāhmaṇas with due faith will be entitled to enjoyment of the Heavenly World amounting to the same number of years as per the counted number of wheat seeds.

49. The offering of barley here by the sages observing austerities is specially appreciated. This the God Śiva has himself stated.

50. So why to undergo the religious act of making offering of various gifts or conduct of yajñas with greater details or undertake several pilgrimages or undergo penance?

51. The results of all these (given above) cannot even equal a sixteenth part of the effect that accrues to one by obtaining proximity of Maheśwara on that particularly auspicious fourteenth day of the waning period of Moon in the month of Phālguna (i.e., February).

52. O king! listen to an amazing incident which happened there in olden time. Once upon a time, a man due to some sin on his part got down with leprosy as a result of which his body became frail and feeble.

53. For the sake of seeking alms, he came there joining a crowd of people. Then there O king! he earned twelve *añjali** barley as alms.

54. But due to pain in his body because of the disease, he could not eat it. His body as it is was quite hot. So without devotion he entered the water there for a bath and as the night descended, he went up to sleep, keeping the barley beside his head.

55. A dog came there when he was asleep and pulled it (i.e. the carry-bag containing the barley) away and began to eat it along with other hungry dogs.

56. But then O king! it is a matter of great wonder that he got reminded of his belonging to the lineage of king of Vidarbha and got born in the same king's home.

57. He was the best of kings by name of Bhīma and was the father of Damayantī. He was already aware of the effect of barley there in that mountain.

58. Every year on the fourteenth day of the month of Phālguna (i.e., February), he used to go there and observing fasting and remaining awake throughout the night he used to make invocation to the God.

59. He used to make offering of (plenty of) barley as well as of gold to Brāhmaṇas there nearer to the abode of unmovable God. He also used to feed the same to animals including deer as well as birds.

* *Añjali* refers to the cup-shape that is formed after lossely bringing together both palms of the hands.

60. Then the king, all sages with the prominent sage Gālava among them out of curiosity asked the king as to what could be the reason behind his making offering of barley there.

61. The sages asked, “You have got amazing power to make gifts of elephants, horses and chariots. Thus O king! why are you not willing to make offering of anything other than barley?”

Pulastya said:

62. After their (i.e., the Sages’) asking like this, the king then narrated the details of his previous life and impressed upon them the value of offering of barley in his context.

The King told them:

63-64. In the form of dog, I had previously stolen barley without faith. As a consequence of that I have got this life, O best of Brāhmaṇas. Now I am making the offering of barley here with due faith. I do not know what fruits shall be reaped out of this. (But) I am offering barley here out of this reason. I am only doing this here in this centre of pilgrimage with the sole purpose of regaining my faith.”

Pulastya said:

65. Then with pleasure, the sages uttered, “let there be your well being”. They began to make offering of barley there for themselves in a befitting manner and as per their affordability.

66. O king! this is all about the glory of making offering of barley. This is also how the truth of the greatness of Maheśvara has been acclaimed.

67. There is no doubt that one who listens to the glorified story of this with faith from the Brāhmaṇas will certainly get rid of his/her incessant sins.

CHAPTER FORTY

Eminence of Kāmeśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to Kāmeśvara established by Kāmadeva. By taking a look of it, the mortal being always attains good appearance as well as high influence.

Yayāti said:

2-3. You had earlier stated that Śambhu (i.e., an epithet of Śiva), taken over with fear by the weapon of Kāma had fled to the hermitage of Vālakhilya where he had seen his worshipable Liṅga fallen down and lying on the ground. Now, I have a great curiosity as to why he, i.e., Kāmadeva worshipped Śambhu. O best of Brāhmaṇas! do also narrate all the details about the abode of Kāmeśvara (here).

Pulastya said:

4. Even after the downfall of the worshipable Liṅga, Kāmadeva had not given up following Śiva. Carrying his weapon in hand and aiming it at Śiva from behind he was following him.

5. Then out of fear, the Lord of the ultimate dissolution of the three regions, i.e., Śiva went to Vārāṇasī. On his way he also saw Kāmadeva following from behind with a similar mindset carrying his bow and arrow in hands.

6. Then Śiva changed his onward journey and via Prayag, he reached Kedārnāth. Then through Naimiṣya and Bhadrakarma and taking route of Jambu he entered Tripuṣkara.

7. Then passing through the sacred Gokarna and Prabhāsa as well as through the savage water bodies full of worms and insects, he went to Hardwar that forms one of the pathways of Gangā, Gayā that is the master of all the centres of pilgrimage and the Vateśvara of which hymns of praises have been sung through Ages.

8. What more to mention about so many places of pilgrimage. On his way to the countless centres of pilgrimage, the God saw Kāmadeva following from behind.

9. So O king! wherever the God went out of fear of Kāmadeva, he saw Kāmadeva with his bow and arrow on his (i.e. God's) heels behind him.

10. As time moved on he (i.e., the God) reached the Arbuda mountain again. There also he saw Kāmadeva with his bow and arrow pulled up in hand and intent for a fight. With his focus fixed and himself following one path single-mindedly, he (i.e., Kāmadeva) seemingly emerged as an impediment, O best of kings.

11. (As it is) the God was distressed for his beloved and his peace of mind was disturbed. So seeing him (i.e., Kāmadeva) the God became angry in particular.

12. Then O king! due to excessive anger, fire emitted out of the third eye of the Lord in which Kāmadeva got burnt out completely and turned up into ashes.

13. Then the king, with the extermination of Kāmadeva, along with his bow and arrow, the anger of Śaṁkara subsided and happiness again dawned on him.

14. Then evoking reverence of all gods, Śaṁkara went to the best of the mountains— the Kailāśa. But Rati, the devoted wife (of Kāmadeva) got tormented within and remained immersed in pitiable fear due to sorrow resulting from loss of her husband.

15. Then the depressed woman after preparing the funeral pyre for her husband ascended onto it to get herself dissolved in the radiant fire for she was so distressed (by the loss of her husband, O King). But as she stepped out to do so, a voice echoed from above for the reputed lady.

16. The voice exhorted, "O daughter, do not get into any such misadventure. Rather you, the beauty, get into arduous penance by which you can appease Śaṁkara and get back Kāma, your husband."

17. As she heard such words, she got up well in the middle and began to worship the God, day and night incessantly and without retiring to bed for sleep. As part of her resolve, she remained fully engrossed in activities such as making offer of gifts, muttering the name of God repeatedly in mind, pacifying the Fire God through offerings and observation of fasting.

18. Then after a lapse of thousand years, Maheśvara became gratified and asked her to solicit the boon in her mind which might cause her welfare.

19. Rati said, "If God Śiva—the Creator of three worlds is pleased with me, let my husband Kāma regain life with all his limbs of body intact and without any handicap or disability."

20. As soon as she completed saying so, the great king (i.e., Kāmadeva) instantly came to presence before her with his usual beaming appearance as if freshly awoken from a deep sleep.

21. Equipped with the bow resembling the pole of sugarcane and with flower-like arrows and the bow-string appearing like a row of black bees, he (i.e., Kāmadeva) was presenting a captivating sight.

22. Thereafter paying homage to Maheśvara along with Rati, Kāmadeva proceeded on his work after seeking permission of the Lord.

23. O best of kings! thus after experiencing the greatness of Lord Śiva, he (i.e., Kāmadeva) with full faith accompanied with complete awareness founded (the idol of) Śiva there on the Arbuda mountain.

24. O great king! bad fortune never touches either a man or a woman for a time span of seven rebirths after taking a look of Śiva here.

25. This is how I narrated to you (i.e., the King) the much recounted story with regard to the burning down of Kāmadeva and the greatness of Kāmeśvara which you were asking for.

CHAPTER FORTY ONE

Mārkaṇḍeya: the origin of his place of hermitage

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, head towards the hermitage of Mārkaṇḍeya where the great soul/Sage Markaṇḍeya had undergone penance.

2. In olden time a Brāhmaṇa named Mrukando got blessed with the birth of a very handsome son for him towards the ultimate years of his life through observance of a religious vow here.

3. Full of all qualities, he was sober and had the brilliance like Sun. Once, in course of time O king! a passerby came on the pathways of their hermitage.

4. The incomer Brāhmaṇa was somehow well acquainted with and had good knowledge of all things that have some linkage with the sea or having origin from the sea. At that time, the boy who was five-year old, was playing.

5. (That Brāhmaṇa) watched the child from nose to the string of hair on top of his head for a little longer and then began to laugh instantly. Mrukando was equally watching him (i.e., the Brāhmaṇa) at the same time.

6. He (i.e., Mrukando) said, “O Brāhmaṇa! you saw my son and after that you have been laughing continuously and relatively excessively. Would you please tell me the reason for the same?”

7. When Mrukando asked the best Brāhmaṇa the reason behind his stop-over once and again, the Brāhmaṇa began to speak out his purpose.

8-9. He said, “O best of Brāhmaṇas! the signs on the body of this boy indicate that something unageing and unfading is definitely going to happen. But somehow it is again definite that this boy is going to have death in the normal battle of life.

It is due to this reason that I laughed. I never pretended to act as if I am on a stage with my enemies.”

Pulastya said:

10. After saying like this, the wise Brāhmaṇa spent the night there and as dawn broke in the next day, he proceeded ahead towards the region of his wish and desire.

11. Though got hurt to learn that his son had a short life, Mrukando, however, O king! performed the ritual of sacred thread ceremony of his son when he was five years old.

12. “(He told him) Whenever you O son! come across anyone accomplished in the learning of Scriptures, always greet him and try to share and have the taste of his knowledge.”

13. The son followed such advice of his father in particular.

14. Then the boy paid his reverence to everyone whether old or young whom he came across with all politeness.

15. Once, in the course of time, seven sages who had made up their mind to undergo pilgrimage with all sincerity arrived there near their (i.e., Mrukundo’s) hermitage.

16. Then the king, the boy hurried and moved towards them to pay his homage. He offered his reverence to all those sages one after another in due order.

17. Seeing the zeal on the part of the boy (to pay reverence) they (i.e., the sages) became pleased. And then blessing him saying ‘let you have long life’ they all moved ahead on their way to the region as already planned in their minds.

18. There was (the Sage) Agira adept in spiritual knowledge among them who observed the boy in a relatively more absorbing and intense manner.

19. With surprise he told the other sages that they were blessing the boy with long life while he was not going to have that in any way.

20. (He said): “This prince-like boy was going to have death on the fifth day then onwards. Hence, as virtuous sages their words should not prove to be untrue. Hence, some way should be found out by which this boy would really have a long life.”

Hence the king, all the sages became fearful deliberating that their words would not be true.

22. Then taking the boy along, they all headed for the world of Brahmā. There after seeing Brahmā all of them—the god-like sages paid their reverence to the Four-faced God (i.e., Brahmā).

23. Following them, the boy also conveyed his greetings to Lord Brahmā. Brahmā also blessed the boy saying ‘let you live long’.

24. The virtuous king, the seven sages then felt quite happy for themselves within. Brahmā after resting (i.e., sitting quietly) for a while to relieve his tiredness began speaking to them.

25. Brahmā said, “Speak out as to what work is intended to be accomplished through me for which all of you have come here.”

The Sages said:

26-28. We were taking a round of the Earth in the context of undergoing pilgrimage. In the course of our journey, we reached the various centres of pilgrimage on the mountainous region of Arbuda. When we reached here, this boy hurried up, came before us and began to worship us. We blessed him saying repeatedly ‘let you have long life’. But the God, on the fifth day from now, death will occur to him. So let all of us including you, the Four-faced Brahmā, be not liars. O God! therefore devise some way out.

29. Then with all pleasure Brahmā looked at the sages, the boy and said, “With my grace, this boy will attain life-time of an era.”

30. Then all the sages with pleasure within paid their reverence to the Four-faced God (i.e., Brahmā) and returned from Brahmā’s kingdom taking the boy along towards his abode.

31. Back at home, his father, the virtuous sage Mrukundo highly distressed was weeping along with wife.

He i.e. Mrukundo said to himself:

32-33. O son! a great lover of religion, how could you proceed on the great path of death leaving us behind. How can you surrender to death without fully complying with and completing the worldly duties? I can never live without you, my son.

34. When the boy was on his return-path to home, his parents stay put in their abode in the kingdom weeping continuously, O virtuous king.

35. Very happy within, the boy returned back and seeing him on the road back home, his father became very happy.

36. Then taking the boy onto his lap, the father asked him the reason behind getting back so late. Then the boy began narrating to him all the efforts of the sages, his taking a look of the kingdom of Brahmā and the Lotus-handed God, i.e., Brahma's boon.

37-38. The boy said, "The Creator (i.e., Brahmā) himself has made me ageless and immortal. This is a fact. Thus the fever of fear will end from your mind now. Henceforth, I shall also worship the Four-faced God, i.e., Brahmā in a similar way (i.e. the way the sages did in the kingdom of Brahmā). I shall make this seat of hermitage of mine quite attractive in this good-giver Arbuda mountain."

39. Fully pleased hearing those nectar-like words from the son's mouth, the Brāhmaṇa Mrukundo started to speak to him like this.

40. He said, "I shall also hurry up and go there to the beautiful mountain of Arbuda." Thus Mārkaṇḍeya went up there to the mountain and kept himself engaged and engrossed in meticulously meditating on the Forefather of gods, i.e., Brahmā.

41. O king! fruits equivalent to the Pitṛmedha Yajña (i.e. the religious activity of making offerings to fire in connection with remembrance of one's forefathers) accrue to one by observing the ritual of offering of water to one's forefathers here especially on the full moon day in the month of Śrāvaṇa, (i.e., during July-August).

42. O king! one who observes the ritual of offering water here to Brāhmaṇas by the particular method whereby Rusiyoga (i.e., the yajña completed the same day) is performed, achieves permanent abode for himself/herself in the kingdom of Brahmā.

43. The fear of short life to anyone in his/her lineage will never happen to him/her, who undergoes the religious ritual of taking a bath here with usual faith.

CHAPTER FOURTY TWO

Eminence of Udālakeśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, visit the place of worshipable Liṅga of Śiva which takes away all sins. It is popularly heard to have been founded by the Sage Udālaka.

2. A mere touch of this (i.e., the worshipable Liṅga) or a look of this or the worship of it specially relieves man of all diseases and makes him entitled to happiness as a house-holder.

3. Becoming free of all sins, one attains the greatness of the world of Śiva.

CHAPTER FOURTY THREE

Eminence of Siddheśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, visit the place having the worshipable Liṅga of Śiva—known as the giver of all fulfilment. Siddha had founded this worshipable Liṅga that destroys all sins.

2. An auspicious pool full of clean water is there where observance of the ritual of bath by man relieves him generally of the crime of Brahmicide.

3. O king! if a man nurturing any desire in the mind goes there to meditate on the same and after that observes the ritual of taking a bath there, he not only attains the fulfilment of his desires, but the sincerity of his faith enables him attain the supreme passage.

CHAPTER FOURTY FOUR

Effect of Gaja Tirtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, follow the undertaking of pilgrimage towards Gaja Tirtha. In ancient times eight competent elephants had undergone penance here.

2. To bear the burden of Earth, Airāvata along with other elephants had adopted penance here onto the self, the king. Observance of the religious ritual of taking bath here brings the same results as that of donating elephants.

CHAPTER FOURTY FIVE

Origin of eminent Devakhata

Pulastya said:

1. Then visit the welfare-causing and good centre of pilgrimage called the 'Devakhata' (i.e., God's fame). All the gods here had acquired fame for themselves on their own.

2. O king! one who observes the Śrāddha ceremony here especially on the New Moon day when the Sun is believed to take its transit along four zodiac signs, attains that supreme position. His forefathers falling victims to their respective bad deeds are also facilitated to tide over the same.

CHAPTER FOURTY SIX

Eminence of Vyāsa Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then visit Vyāseśvara founded by Vyāsa. By having a look of it, the mortals become meritorious and their minds become pure. And this condition/state of affairs continue with one for life-times encompassing seven rebirths. This is how Vyāsa himself has stated it to be.

CHAPTER FOURTY SEVEN

Greatness of the Hermitage of Gautama

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, visit the best hermitage of Gautama which is a giver of fulfilment. The great soul Gautama had earlier undergone penance here.

2. In ancient time, there was a highly religious Sage named Gautama. With faith and devotion, he had worshipped the God of gods, Maheśvara.

3. O king! as a result of his devoted worship, a huge worshipable Līṅga of the supreme Maheśvara erupted piercing out of the surface of Earth.

4. In coincidence with the same, an incorporeal voice was heard from the above saying, "As a result of your devoted worship the big worshipable Liṅga has come into presence. You may ask for the conducive boon that is persisting in your mind."

5-6. Gautama said, "Let it be one of your volitions Śambhu, the Lord of the World, to remain always close to this hermitage, if you are pleased with my devotion, O Lord. May those who look at you here with all truthfulness of devotion, go to the world of Brahmā."

7. The voice from above said, "One coming here to take a look of me on the fourteenth day in the waning period of Moon in the month of Māgha (i.e., January) will obtain the ultimate passage, the best of Brāhmaṇas."

8. O king! having said like this, the voice went into abeyance i.e. stopped and the pool there got filled with sacred water. By fulfilling the religious ritual of taking a bath there, a man always facilitates the members of his entire clan cross over the worldly river.

9. If one performs the religious ceremony of Śrāddha here especially in the waning period of Moon, one is sure to attain the same fruits successfully as that of Śrāddha performed at Gayā.

10. The Sages have sung the glory of making offer of sesame here. The king, it is said that a man is entitled to a stay of equivalent number of years in the heaven matching the number of the sesame made in the offering.

11. Jupiter remains on transit in the Zodiac sign of Leo on the New Moon day falling specially on Monday during the pilgrimage of the hermitage of Gautama. Availing the opportunity of a bath here especially on that Monday results in obtaining the same result as that of the twelfth bath in the river Godāvarī.

12. The outcome of the ritual performance of taking bath in the Bhagīrath river for sixty thousand years gets accomplished by a single bath here in Godāvarī river on the day when Jupiter transits in the Zodiac sign of Leo.

CHAPTER FOURTY EIGHT

Eminence of Kulasantāvana Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then follow the pilgrimage by visiting that known for its enabling all members of one's lineage to successfully cross over the worldly life. A bath here helps the same.

2. Observance of the action/ ritual of making gifts here by a man with due faith leads to the release of his previous ten generations as well as of his ten forthcoming generations in the future, the best of kings.

3. In olden time there was a king by name Aprastuto who was fond of sins. Neither did he make any charity nor did he engage himself in the pursuit of knowledge or meditation. He never used to do any good work.

4. People were hardly happy during his reign. His interest was always in others' wives and in meeting out severe punishments to others.

5. He used to acquire wealth by both just and unjust means. He also used to kill both the sinners and the non-sinners.

6. In course of time old age dawned on him. However he did not sober down. Then his forefathers exhorted him saying he was only giving effect to the sorrows of Hell by remaining unawakened.

His Forefathers said:

7-9. Following good dealings, we have always remained intent followers of religious righteousness. Inclined to make offering through charities, performance of Yajña and penance, we uninterruptedly observe the principle of generosity. By our own deeds we have got the Heavenly Kingdom. But the same is getting shattered by you as a black sheep. As a bad son, you are giving effect to the advent of Hell for us. Hence, you must at least perform something good and adorable. Otherwise all

our good deeds cannot be saved. Your evil deeds have already made Hell to be our abode. Side by side the same fate awaits the next ten coming generations of ours.

10. Saying like this, all the forefathers extremely depressed as they were left for Hell presuming the same to have been obtained by them. But the king got awakened.

11. Then remembering the words of his forefathers he became very distressed and began to cry aloud after getting up early in the morning. His wife began to say:

12. Indumati said, "What for are you crying aloud, the powerful king? Is everything fine with your body and your kingdom and your palace?"

13-16. The King said, "O queen! just now and at the end of my dream, I saw my father and grandfather to be unhappy. Alongwith them I also saw my forefathers in a similar state. My deeds have been visualized to have harmed them. My remaining active in unrighteous deeds has yielded the painful hell for them. This will also be the fate for another ten future in-coming generations. Hence by virtue of good deeds I have to draw them out of such downfall. I awoke by my forefathers saying so. I am sad by remembering such words of theirs within."

Indumati said:

17-19. The king, whatever the grandfathers *et. al.* have stated are true. I cannot remember you to have done anything good in the past. O king! like enabling forefathers to crossover (the worldly life) gets actuated by good sons, spoilt sons get them the passage to Hell and there is no doubt about this. Hence, you send for the prominent Brāhmaṇas and those adept in religious scriptures and after consulting them do the desirably best in which lies the welfare of forefathers.

20. Then the king invited several Brāhmaṇas adept in both the Veda or in parts of it and those enlightened in religious knowledge and began to entreat them with all humility along with his wife.

21. The king asked, “O best of Brāhmaṇas! please describe with all clarity as to how one’s forefathers already in the Hell can successfully cross it over to reach Heaven by fitting deeds as a good son.”

22. The Brāhmaṇas said, “O king! with the performance of Pitṛmedha Yajña (i.e., the Śrāddha ceremony connected with remembrance of one’s forefathers) as per due religious procedure (by a son) forefathers, even of those committing sins, obtain the passage to Heaven.”

23. The king said, “O Brāhmaṇas! (please) give me the necessary instructions by which I can fulfill the resolve taken up in mind for the same. Whatever duties that may be required on my part for that purpose and to be followed serially, please speak out.”

24. As the king said like this to the Brāhmaṇas—the adherents of truth, they explained to him the necessary details and about the rituals of yajñas in totality.

25-29. (They, i.e., the Brāhmaṇas said): The best of kings, first of all, you need to acquaint yourself with the lessons (of Veda) in this regard and have to adopt yourself to the same completely. By this your body will be purified and become desirably fit for the same. You, the king, have embraced evil deeds since childhood and have committed innumerable sins. Hence, you engage yourself in pilgrimages. With the sprinkling of water on yourself through a bath in all centres of pilgrimage and the attended repentance, you, the king can be virtuous and fit to perform yajña. There is no other way than this. You go to all centres of pilgrimage including the one by name Prabhāsa on the surface of Earth. After visiting all such places of pilgrimage, have a bath everywhere with good faith. With heart within visit the centres of pilgrimage accompanied with making offering of gifts/presents there. Whatever bad deeds, get destroyed by this with the arousal of the perception of Brahmā within. O king! without the observance of ritual of taking a bath through pilgrimage, no fruit accruing to bad deeds of men can be destroyed.

Pulastya said:

30. After listening to the Brāhmaṇas, the king began to get inclination towards faith. With a keenness for pilgrimage, he began to take a round of such places on Earth.

31. Having food as per need, he began to make charities in plenty. Giving due/rightful place to children of subjects in the kingdom, he began to pursue the all powerful truth.

32. In course of time and during the course of pursuit of pilgrimage, the king reached the pool with clean water on the Arbuda mountain.

33-34. With devotion within he underwent the ritual of bath there. And as soon as he took the bath there, he became free from the sin of bringing the tormenting Hell for his forefathers and became very happy. Embellished with beautiful garlands, his forefathers began to ascend onto the divine airplanes.

35-37. Then the forefathers said, “O son! you have enabled us to cross over the worldly life through your pilgrimages. Not only we, the same will be the case with the ten forthcoming generations due to the effect of your pilgrimages. O best of the earthly beings! by the very activity of taking bath as well as by making offering of water, you have also taken your own self successfully across (the worldly existence). By virtue of your pilgrimage, you have taken our entire clan across as well. Henceforth this centre of pilgrimage will be known as ‘Kulasantāvana’. Now you also leave for Heaven along with us. You can accompany us with your body due to the effect of the pilgrimages.”

Pulastya said:

38. After the completion of dialogues (between both the sides) in this manner, the king then got onto the airplane and went to Heaven along with them (i.e., his forefathers).

39. I have narrated to you, the royal Sage, the influence of ‘Kulasantāvana’. I have described you the normal influence that this (the place of pilgrimage) bears on itself. Now if you have anything to ask, please go ahead.

Yayāti said:

40. By virtue of which influence could the king attributed with sins go to Heaven along with his body at the end? I have a great curiosity in this regard.

Pulastya said:

41. On the Full Moon day of Somvati coinciding the time when Moon remains in the most chaotic state, the king had undertaken the religious ritual of bathing here by virtue of which welfare and wellbeing accrued to him.

CHAPTER FORTY NINE

Eminence of Rāma Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to visit Rāma Tīrtha which the sages have made it their own. The mortals get their sins destroyed by a bath here.

2. A bath here keeps one's forefathers satisfied till the time of the final deluge of the world. In ancient times, Paraśurāma the best of the bow and arrow bearers and hailing from the lineage of Bhṛgu was born here.

3. Initially he had undergone penance here with the motive to destroy his enemies. The supreme weapon 'Pāśupata' was obtained by him here.

4. Mahādeva was pleased with his penance after three hundred years and had told that he would be blessed with the enemy-destroyer weapon.

5. Accordingly he was handed over with Śiva's supreme weapon called Pāśupata. A mere recall of this (weapon) leads to wearing out of enemies.

6-10. With a gentle smile on him, he, the Bearer of a flag, post on the back of a bull (i.e., Lord Śiva) told him (i.e. Parśurāma) 'O son of Jamadagni! listen to these powerful words of mine. When you carry this weapon, you will remain invincible to anybody corporeal. This will happen out of my grace O Bhārgava. There can be no doubt about this. This waterpool will bring about welfare of both the mobile and immobile in the three worlds out of my grace. It will be famous as 'Rāma tirtha'. The fruits of Pitru-medha Yajña will accrue to one who performs the 'Śrāddha' ceremony here with mind and body together especially on the Full Moon day in the Month of Kārtika, i.e., November having conjoining of the Krutika Star. All enemies of a king will get destroyed with him having unfading years of stay in the Heaven."

Pulastya said:

11. After saying like this Mahādeva then disappeared from sight on his own. Parśurāma also got distressed with the sorrow of death of his father.

12. As per his, i.e., the great soul's vow subsequent to Jamadagni's death, he made the offering of blood of his enemies twenty-one times to his forefathers with all pleasure.

13. Twenty-one Kṣatriyas having the mindset to harm, to wound, had killed his father when he was in meditation and not in a condition to retaliate. This is how one bearing weapons arrived in the community/society of Brāhmaṇas.

14. To avenge the killing of his father he thus got enraged with the Kṣatriyas and undertook penance to kill them. Blessed to be invincible he thus made the offering of blood of twenty-one Kṣatriyas to his forefathers.

15. He (i.e., Parśurāma) made offering of water to his forefathers due to the sole purpose of making the Earth free of Kṣatriyas. From all this that the eminence of this place of pilgrimage has arisen.

16. Hence with all efforts towards compliance with the procedure, one must observe Śrāddha here. This place has

significance specially in fulfilling the goal of destruction of the Kṣatriyas.

CHAPTER FIFTY

Impact of Koṭi Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to Koṭi Tīrtha which is a destroyer of all sins. Among the centres of pilgrimage, the king, the birth of Koṭi was not preceded by any special effort or by undertaking any specific perseverance.

2. The king, when the difficult Kali Yuga came on earth, most of the people became mean and most of the places of pilgrimage began to lose vigour and shake with agitation.

3. There were about three and a half crore places of pilgrimage on Earth. From them about one crore places of pilgrimage were situated on the Arbuda mountain.

4. There were one crore in Puṣkara followed by another one crore in Kurukṣetra. There were about half a crore in Vārāṇasī. Such is the figures of centres of pilgrimage as sung by the gods themselves. O king! all gods together used to protect them.

5. Whenever they (i.e. the places of pilgrimage) got seized with the fear of pollution by the touch of meanness, they began to shift and got stationed here (i.e., at Koṭi) in greater number.

6. There are three and a half crore centres of pilgrimage on this Earth which take away all sins.

7. Hence with due endeavour one needs to follow the religious ritual of having a bath there especially on the thirteenth day of the waning period of Moon in the month of Bhādrapada (i.e., September).

8. O king! it is beyond doubt that activities such as taking a bath here or taking the name of God repeatedly or conduct of

sacrificial fire here yield three crore times the results/fruits in comparison to other places of pilgrimage.

CHAPTER FIFTY ONE

Greatness of Candroudbheda Tirtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, follow up your pilgrimage by a visit to that place where the Moon pierces out to bloom. Brought into being by the Lord of the night (i.e., Moon) this centre of pilgrimage takes away sins of humans.

2. O king! after Lord Viṣṇu severed the head of Rāhu, he out of enmity had taken the vow on himself to eat away the Moon and the Sun to cause eclipse.

3. Then visualising that the demon (i.e., Rāhu) was on a venture to drink the unobtainable nectar, the Moon was taken over by fear and he headed towards the interior region of the Arbuda mountain.

4. Then piercing the surface of the mountain he made a well-entrenched burrow and remaining inside the pit he kept himself engaged in austere penance.

5. Then in the course of all-mighty time Maheśvara became pleased to appear before him and said that he might put forward the boon wished for in mind towards his welfare.

6-11. The Moon said, "O the best of gods! Rāhu has taken the vow to devour me. He is very strong and as a son of lioness he is indomitable by nature. The virtuous God, he has at present drunk the nectar and has taken hold of me who, as it is unaccessible. Earlier, when he failed in the race for nectar among the gods, he tried his best and entered the same race in the guise of assuming the form of God onto himself. However, as he, the rogue, managed to have the nectar for himself, he became free from death. That is how he became a source of

fear for gods themselves. To pacify him, the gods then granted him the worshipable position of a planet and established him as such. I am afraid as he has promised to devour me on the Full Moon day. Out of fear of him, the best of gods, I have made this pit in the peak of this mountain through digging into it. Being deeper in shape, this pit is the best place, the God, for pursuit of penance. Hence do grace me and kill him.”

12-17. The God said, “He is very strong and tough, cannot be killed by gods and is non-contestable. It is certain that, taken over by anger, Rāhu will take you, in custody. However, for the upholding of your image, I shall devise some alternative. Whenever your eclipse (i.e., Lunar eclipse) occurs, people in the World will observe fittingly and desirably the religious activities of taking bath as well as making charities etc. As a result, there won’t be the slightest degree of grieving on your part. All such activities of them (i.e., the people) will lead to good deeds which cannot perish. My words will fructify beyond any doubt during the time of Lunar eclipse. There will be nothing different here due to the sole purpose of your undergoing penance on the peak of the mountain here. The Moon pierces out to bloom (i.e., Candroudbheda)—by this name, this centre of pilgrimage will be famous in the world. Those who will observe the ritual of taking a bath here on the day of your eclipse will never have rebirth in this world. It is certain that those who, after taking a bath here on Monday, take a look of the Moon, will earn a place of residence in the world of Moon.

18. Having said like this the God Hara (i.e., Śiva) disappeared from sight. The Moon also, the virtuous king, getting assured and pleased left for his own place.

CHAPTER FIFTY TWO

The Commanding Peak of the Mountain

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, proceed to the commanding peak of the mountain. Here Gaurī had undergone penance and earned her well-being. This is how it has been heard of in the world.

2. A man becomes free from all sins by just having a look of it. He also attains fortune of the highest order surpassing a span of seven rebirths.

Yayāti said:

3. O chief of the Sages! when did the Goddess undergo severe penance there? What for and what is the significance of this ? I have a curiosity. Please speak out.

Pulastya said:

4. O king! listen to the god-given and wonderful story of this as heard of in the world. By merely listening to this one gets relieved of all sins.

5. In olden times, after learning about Śiva's intense attachment with Gaurī, all gods taken over with fear, sat down in a group and began to consult one another.

6-7. Sitting in separate groups they told themselves that "if the semen of the Three-eyed, i.e., of Lord Śiva fell in the region of Gaurī, definitely ours as well as of the entire world's downfall would happen. Hence, let all of us step out on the mission of killing the offsprings."

8. Discussing amongst themselves like this, all gods then reached the Kailāśa mountain. But there Nandi stopped them from moving ahead without losing any time.

9. Nandi said, "The God is spending time with Gaurī in seclusion. Hence all of you please return to your respective abodes."

10. Without reacting to the attendant, the gods left quickly. But they sent 'air' in disguise there asking him to tell (Lord Śiva).

11. They told, "Air, go near Śiva and ask him not to produce offsprings for the gods themselves are pleading for the same out of fear."

12. Then 'Air' hurried to the place where Maheśvara was there for the time being and told him the words aloud as desired of him by the gods.

13. The God (i.e., Śiva) then became very ashamed of himself. He immediately left the company of Gaurī, got up and proceeded ahead saying it would be like that.

14. Gaurī then became too unhappy to curse the gods.

15-16. Gaurī said: "Like the gods having come here, have deprived me of offspring, similarly they would also be deprived of children. As Air has come to this place which is prohibited for people, he will thus remain without body forever."

17. After saying like this, the Goddess who was full of anger, took a deep breath, left her husband behind and headed for the meritorious Arbuda mountain.

18-20. With her body and mind together, she engaged herself in penance there for a son. Then after a passage of thousand years, Maheśvara along with Indra and other gods came before her. Indra told her with all humility, "The God Śiva out of his own feeling of shame desisted from getting intimate with you. Now he has come back. You evince your greatness by making him your own gracefully."

21. The Goddess said, "The King of gods, my husband left my side as per your words which was conveyed to me in the flow of time. Only after getting a son that I shall again come near him."

22. Apprised of her determination in this manner, the God (i.e., Śiva) himself came before her and asked her with a gentle smile to be kind towards him.

23-27. (The God said): O beautiful-faced Pārvatī! the all-round welfare of gods has always remained my pursuit either (be it) as a gift of vision on my part or as my words. I have only

prevented you from having an untimely son. O Goddess of gods! your efforts at our physical union were only in the direction of having a son. Darling, a son will be born out of your own body. Without any doubt, it is going to materialize on the fourth day (from now) by virtue of my grace. The Goddess of gods, putting together the dirt collected from different parts of your body, you can give shape of a form and appearance as per your sweet will. Assuming many forms, he will be the cause of fulfilment of all gods and especially of the demons as also of the mortals.

28. After the Three-eyed God's (i.e., Śiva's) saying like this, the Goddess of gods (i.e., Gaurī) became satisfied and began getting into rounds of conversation with her husband in an effective manner.

29. Then the king, as the fourth day approached Pārvatī taking the body smear with all curiosity in her hand, gave shape to Four-handed Vināyaka as per the words of Hara (i.e., Śiva).

30. The given shape got life coincidentally as per the words of Hara. Then the great king, the same turned out and became the leader of all mortals on earth. That is how its fame began to spread.

31. Glorified as Vināyaka, he became an object of worship of the inhabitants of three worlds. From the mouths of all gods, he was named 'Vināyaka'.

32-36. Then all gods got themselves engrossed in performance of activities dear to the Goddess. Then the king, to bless the Goddess with a boon they said, "This son of yours, the Goddess, will always remain in the forefront of us. After complying with his worship at the first instance that all gods will be fit for acceptance of their respective worship. The very act of worship here in this pleasing summit of the mountain is auspicious. Taking a look of it takes away all sins of humans. Those who take a bath here in the good and welfare-causing water of the pool will attain the ultimate place, devoid of old age and death. A bath here, backed with all sincerity and earnestness on the third day of the waxing period of Moon in the month of Māgha (i.e., January) will be like welcoming happiness beyond the span of seven rebirths."

37. Having said all this, the gods then left for their respective abodes. The God (i.e., Śiva) also left for the Kailasa mountain along with the Goddess (i.e. Gaurī).

CHAPTER FIFTY THREE

Origin of Centre of Pilgrimage with Brahmā's foot

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to visit the centre of pilgrimage where Brahmā was stated to have put his foot, i.e., the Brahmapada Tīrtha. This is heard of in the three worlds. Brahmā, the Creator of the world had placed his foot here initially.

2. Once in the past, Brahmā came along with other gods to the beautiful Arbuda mountain to meet the Sages, who were spotless in their disposition/dealings.

3-6. The king! after their, i.e., the Gods' pilgrimage to the stationary worshipable Liṅga there with due devotion, the Sages got influenced and in turn began to ask the grandfather god, i.e., Brahmā, "With full compliance of the rules and procedures, we have been daily performing the sacrificial fire, observing the ritual connected with fulfilment of our mental resolve, the religious ritual of bathing and fasting. But when shall we be liberated from all these, O Brahmā? O Lord of gods! provide us with the suitably higher instruction in this regard if any, by which we can successfully be able to swim across this fortress of worldly ocean. Suggest us the way to the attainment of Heaven other than the very difficult means of recounting the name of any God repeatedly in the mind or the performance of sacrificial fire or invocation or the ritual connected with fulfilment of a resolve of the mind or making offering of gifts etc."

7. After hearing those words of them, the God then got an inclination towards becoming gracious. He began to deliberate

on it for a little longer while retaining a bit of smile on his person at the same time.

8. Then leaving his own appointed place Brahmā came to the pleasing interior of the mountain. Then as Brahmā began to speak to all the Sages, the characteristic definition with all associate attributes followed.

Brahmā said:

9-14. The Sages! this beautiful Arbuda mountain has a high position as the destroyer of all sins. All of you will attain the divine passage by coming in touch of this. There is no need for observance of the ritual of taking a bath (in religious places) or of making offerings of gifts or for that matter of observance of ritual connected with execution of a mental resolve or of sacrificial fire or of recounting the name of any particular God repeatedly in the mind of one's self. I have placed my auspicious foot here for the welfare of the entire world. The insignia of my foot here is itself an indication for thousands of people to attain that ultimate passage. You, the Sages as well as all the gods even can attain the same by a touch of this (i.e., the foot). There is the need of only one duty here, i.e., of ardent faith without any deviation. One attended with reverence here will attain the ultimate position, the distinguished Sages. Those who worship here with water, fruits, varieties of garlands with scented flowers, and apply the perfumed smear followed up with feeding sweets to the Brāhmaṇas as per affordability, on the specific Full Moon day in the month of Kārtika (i.e., November) will obtain the world of mine which, as it is, is difficult to attain without any doubt.

Pulastya said:

15. After that, all the Sages by worshipping the Foot there attended with complete faith, proceeded to the world of Brahmā.

16. Hence the king, the Foot is worshipable with all efforts. The worship of the Foot of the grandfather God, i.e., Brahmā with full faith is a giver of Heaven.

17. O king! there is another highly unusual thing about the Foot here after listening to which people get very surprised.

18. O king! despite the opportunity for expansion in the epoch of Kṛta, the numerical growth of the white-complexioned among the human race could not be ascertained (who might have paid their homage to Brahmā's Foot here).

19. As the epoch of Treta approached then humans with brown complexion could be visible. About them it is well-stated that most of them and in good number used to pay their homage to the Brahmā's Foot here.

20. In the epoch of Dvāpara it (i.e., the worshipable Foot) became light bearing a reddish tinge while in the epoch of Kali this became very small with a black colour in this pleasing interior of the mountain.

CHAPTER FIFTY FOUR

Eminence of Tri-Puṣkara

Pulastya said:

1. Then go to the place having confluence of the three Puṣkaras, a celebrated place of pilgrimage which materialized as per the wish of Brahmā. It is understood that Brahmā had brought them over here to the Arbuda mountain in its honour.

2. The king! in olden times, Brahmā as well as other best gods had together come to the summit of the mountain in the context of Vasiṣṭha's conducting of a sacrificial session (i.e., a Yajña).

3. Then the great king, taking a vow onto himself Brahmā whose birth is unknown, stated that as long as he would remain in the human world, he would keep giving salutation here, every evening, with all earnestness in this confluence of the three Puṣkaras.

4. After this as the Lotus-born, i.e., Brahmā began to take steps towards Puṣkara, Vasiṣṭha then began to tell him.

Vasiṣṭha said:

5-6. The virtuous God! the time as per the part of your associated role and actions in this Yajña has arrived. Without compliance of that specific ritual associated with you, this yajña cannot be completed in a wholesome way. Hence the Lotus-born (i.e., Brahmā) bring the confluence of the three Puṣkaras here. By this, after enabling yourself to pay the evening reverences here, you, the Lord of gods, can comply with the greatness of your Brahmanhood and be kind enough to discharge the part of your rituals in this sacrificial fire.

7. Soon after Vasiṣṭha said so, Brahmā, the grandfather of the world after meditating for a while, brought the three, i.e., the largest, the larger and the smallest Puṣkaras and placed the confluence of auspicious water-body there.

8. That is how the emergence of the confluence of the three Puṣkaras in the Arbuda mountain having such a backdrop to their foundation has been understood to have happened since then.

9. One who with utmost sincerity undergoes the religious ritual of taking a bath here on the Full Moon day in the month of Kārtika (i.e., November) and complies with the activity of making charities, attains the Eternal World, i.e., the World of Brahmā.

10. There is an uppermost pool called Sāvitrī on the Northern side of this. Fulfilment of the religious rituals of taking a bath followed up with making offering of gifts lead one to attain the path which promotes happiness.

CHAPTER FIFTY FIVE

Greatness of Rūdra Lake

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings, visit the auspicious lake, equally a promoter of happiness which is called Rūdra. A bath here attended with devotion results in a man attaining the chief position among attendants.

2. In olden times, the God—bearer of the flag on the back of a bull (i.e., Lord Śiva) along with his attendants killed the demon Andhaka and thereafter took a bath here in the lake. That is how this lake acquired the formidable name Rūdra.

3. The virtues of all the centres of pilgrimage accrue on their own to a man, the great king, by virtue of his having a bath here on the fourteenth day of a Month.

CHAPTER FIFTY SIX

Greatness of the Lord of Caves

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best king, follow your visit towards the prominent and Lord of the caves lying hidden. In olden times, people acknowledged to be accomplished in their objectives, used to worship the worshipable Liṅga of Śiva placed inside the cave there.

2. A man who worships here with whatever wish and longing in the mind, the same goes on getting realized one after another and in the process, he attains liberation, the king, becoming free from all desires at the end.

CHAPTER FIFTY SEVEN

Greatness of the Undivided Region

Pulastya said:

1. Then the virtuous earthly being (i.e., the king), go to the united and undivided forest region. By taking a look of this, a man can never be separated from his fondly desired objects and people.

2. Sacī, the wife of Indra had come here grief-stricken when Nahusa seized the kingdom of the great God Indra.

3. Due to the influence of this, she (i.e., Sacī) could again happen to get back Indra from whom she was incidentally separated. Thus, she had granted a boon to the forests, O king.

4-5. (The boon is as follows) “Separated from each other, if a man or a woman spends a single night here in this forest, he or she will then get back each other’s company as happened to me.” Thus a single night’s stay (in the forests) can lead to get back one’s dear ones, the king.

6. The great Brāhmaṇas have already sung the glory of this centre of pilgrimage in respect of its granting of fruits. Even the barren women in particular get blessed with offsprings here.

CHAPTER FIFTY EIGHT

Majesty of Umāmāheśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then the king, visit the well-being causing Umāmāheśvara. Dhundhumāna, with sincere devotion, had established this in olden times.

2. O king! those who worship the matrimonial relations here with utter faith and belief will never have misfortune to affect them beyond the span of seven rebirths.

CHAPTER FIFTY NINE

Impact of the Mahoujasa Tirtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then one has to go to that centre of pilgrimage which is a symbol of great victory and the destroyer of all sins called the Mahoujasa. The king, conforming to the religious ritual of a bath here definitely endows man with brightness. In old time, Indra, tormented with Brahmicide, had made a very pitiable situation for himself.

2. Deprived of the splendour, his body began to give a bad smell. Deserted by all gods, he became very depressed and began to lament.

3. Then the God Indra desired to ask the best Brāhmaṇa Bṛhaspati in this regard. He asked him “O Godly Sage! please tell me as to how could there be an increase in my lustre so that I regained my old form completely.”

4. Bṛhaspati said, “The best of gods, undertake pilgrimage on the surface of Earth for without this it is certain that there would be no enhancement in your lustre.”

5. Then the king, Indra moved about several places of pilgrimage and in course of his journey reached the Arbuda mountain. There, he came across a water pond. Out of exhaustion he entered into the ring of water there for a bath and regained his greater brightness.

6. Then becoming free from the bad smell on his body, he turned back towards the gods and told them in a jocular manner O gods, listen to me.

7. (He said): “Those who take bath here on the eve of day of the festival observed in honour of Indra (i.e., on the twelfth day of the bright period of Moon in the month of Kārtika i.e. October-November) will attain the ultimate passage on the last day of the rising period of moon (i.e., on the Full Moon day) in the same month. They will also be blessed with beautiful bodies for ever in the cycle of repeated births.”

CHAPTER SIXTY

The impact of Jambū Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then the best of kings follow up your journey with a visit to the centre of pilgrimage called Jambū. A bath there enables a man to give effect to the earnest desires of mind. The upliftment accruable through Jambū Tīrtha is equivalent to all pilgrim centres, the virtuous king.

2. There was a Kṣatriya by name Nimi hailing from the Surya dynasty in olden times. Under the aftermath of age (i.e., at old age) he proceeded to the Arbuda mountain.

3. Making a seat for himself there he stayed put there with all sincerity. (In course of time) like the flow of wind, thousands of sages came near him.

4. They used to discuss recurrently the good religious discourses of the royal sages amongst themselves. The discourses also included those of the godly sages, from the Purāṇas as well as those stated by other great minds.

5. At some juncture during the course of summing up discussions, a sage named Lomaśa present amidst them began to present the account of glorified greatness rising out of all centres of pilgrimage.

6. The earthly being! hearing that, the king Nimi became mentally very upset, as he, on his part, had never taken a dip before in the pools of water at centres of pilgrimage.

7. Then he asked the best of Brāhmaṇas to suggest him a way out with regard to any particular centre of pilgrimage which would yield him the results equivalent to all centres of pilgrimage.

8-10. Lomaśa said, “A sense of mercy for you has got onto me, for as I look at you the king, I understand you to be excessively sad. I shall do all that dear to you to help you on pilgrimage. Through the power of invocation, I can bring forth all places of pilgrimage here on this island of Jambu without any doubt. O king! have a bath here in this conjunction of all centres of pilgrimage. It is a fact that a bath in the pool of water here in this island beckons welfare.”

11. Having said so the Brāhmaṇa Sage got engrossed in the cycle of meditation. Then all the centres of pilgrimage instantly became evident there.

12. The manifest Jambu tree there strengthened the faith of the king in the Royal Sage's efforts. Then becoming convinced that the place has a confluence of all centres of pilgrimage, the king took bath there.

13. After completing the religious ritual of having a bath there, the king then could be able to proceed to Heaven along with his body in fact. Since then this place of pilgrimage has been remembered as the Jambu Tīrtha.

14. The fruits of the Śrāddha, i.e., ceremony conducted in connection with remembrance of one's forefathers by a man here on that particular day of Sun transiting in the Zodiac sign of Virgo has been described to be of same importance as that of fruits accruing to the same ceremony at Gayā by the Great Sages.

CHAPTER SIXTY ONE

Eminence of Gaṅgādhara Tīrtha

Pulastya said:

1. Then go to the place of pilgrimage holding the clean water of Gaṅgā known as the place bearing Gaṅgā or Gaṅgādhara. Here, the king! Ganga has been held up before its descending down to the earth's surface.

2. After invoking Gaṅgā, the God among gods, i.e., Śiva after assuming the stationary form of a mountain had held her forcibly under captivity which has already been narrated before.

3. Conforming to the ritual of taking a bath here with all sincerity and earnestness on the eighth day of Month accrues one that supreme and ultimate place which is even difficult for gods.

CHAPTER SIXTY TWO

Eminence of Kaṭeśvara-Gaṅgeśvara

Pulastya said:

1. Then go to the pilgrim centre known as Kaṭeśvara where Gaurī herself had built up the worshipable Līṅga of Śiva. And Gaṅgeśvara (i.e., an epithet of Śiva) was made by Gaṅgā herself.

2. In olden time, there was a conflict between Gaurī and Umā. The king, their mutual clash was only in respect of reclaiming each one's fortune. In this regard Gaurī happened to put forward a condition.

3. Gaurī said, "In our mutual contest through the platform of worship she, before whom Śambhu, i.e., Śiva appears in person, will be certainly considered very fortunate."

4. After saying so, Gaurī then hurried up and went to the mountain in search of the worshipable Liṅga (of Śiva). After making efforts for a long time in this regard, she could finally get hold of one.

5. That is after coming across a hollow space in the beautiful mountain resembling the shape and size of the hollow space in the human body above the hip bones, the king, Gaurī thought that the same would serve her purpose of a worshipable Liṅga of Śiva and she began to worship it for a month.

6. Then seeing her earnest love Maheśvara became pleased and appeared in person before her asking her to put forward the boon sought by her, to him.

7-10. Gaurī said, “O God, out of jealousy for a rival wife, I perceived this hollow space in the mountain similar as a worshipable Liṅga and then prepared myself to worship it. Hence let this be worthy of worship in the world as Kateśvara. Let any woman either deserted by her husband or very distressed for having a rival counterpart of hers in matrimony be freed from torment soon after her visit here and having a look of this. Blessed with the fortune of a son, let her son be as dear to her as her husband. The God! you had already granted a similar boon consequent to Gangā’s worship. Hence, let the two worshipable Liṅgas here deserve a look of the rulers of men, i.e., the kings equally. Let it, in particular, kill the weak point of any woman regarding a rival wife in matrimonial relations. Always a giver of happiness and good fortune, let this confer wish fulfilment on all men.”

CHAPTER SIXTY THREE

Eminence of fruits of Arbuda as heard of

Pulastya said:

1. This is all that I have summarised to you about the eminence of Arbuda which has been proclaimed and which you were asking for.

2. Describing about them including their number will take hundreds of years. There are numerous centres of pilgrimage as well as sacred places in the mountain of Arbuda. Step by step one can come across hermitages put up by prominent Sages.

3. The king! there is no such place of pilgrimage, no such place endowing one with perfection, no such force, river or God in the world, which cannot be found out there in the Arbuda mountain.

4. The king! those who definitely put up here in this beautiful Arbuda mountain by virtue of their good deeds, do not have any visible inclination even for Heaven.

5. What utility can be in his remaining alive, in his accumulation of wealth or in his continuous muttering of God's name within himself, the king, if he does not subdue his intellect and take a look of the Arbuda which is complete in itself.

6-7. O king! whether they are insects or flies, or are animals or birds or deer or are born out of heat or eggs or plants or from the womb, when they die on this Arbuda mountain either with desire or without desire, they attain proximity of Śiva becoming free from old age and death.

8. The king, one who listens to this Purāṇa everyday attended with due faith will attain the same fruits of pilgrimage to Arbuda.

9. Hence with all care and efforts, one needs to undertake pilgrimage there (i.e., to Arbuda). By such desire, the self attains spiritual fulfilment in this as well as the other world.

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