

the products of the soil could sustain, or human labour manufacture. Of all the descriptions of the Purāṇas it is in their numerical delineations that the smallest element of truth is found.

It may here be asked who were the gods, demi-gods, and demons, spoken of in all Brahminical writings. Of the gods some were personifications of the elements and heavenly bodies, and some were perhaps certain highly favoured and opulent A'rya monarchs. The demi-gods were probably such among the aboriginal inhabitants of the country as were in alliance with the A'ryas, and the demons were no doubt their enemies. The Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Yakshas, Siddhas were among the former, while the Daityas, Asuras, and Rákshases were among the latter.

But who were the Nágas? In some respects they are represented as men, and in some as snakes. They had corporeal constitutions capable of (sexually) attracting and being attracted by human beings, and yet they were not without the serpentine furniture of the hood and the venomous fang. The word *nágas* is evidently the same as the *náchas* of Genesis, and we feel no difficulty in recognizing, in the Brahminical mythology, a confirmation of the Biblical account of the serpent, which was originally perhaps a species corresponding to the *nága* of the Brahmins, before the sentence was pronounced by which it became a creeping reptile.

Of the allegorical descriptions in the Purāṇas, the *Deví-máhátmya* presents a singular example. It is difficult to imagine what the Brahmins could mean by representing the discomfiture of the asuras by a single youthful lady. It has been supposed that the appearance