

(vi) The narration of the great importance and virtues of the Gaṅgā is called a holy Itihāsa containing the praise of the river; one who recites it, or listens to it, is freed of all sins (*itihāsam imaṁ puṇyam śṛṇuyād yaḥ patheta vā / gaṅgāyāḥ stavasaṁyuktaṁ sa mucyēt sarvakulbiṣaiḥ*) 13. 27. 105; (vii) Virtues of the river Gaṅgā are countless; no one can fully describe or determine them (*vaktuṁ śakyaṁ neha gaṅgājalānāṁ ṇ guṇā-khyānaṁ parimātuṁ tathasva*) 13. 27. 97, 96; (viii) Gaṅgā offered shelter, protection, support to those who are without it 13. 27. 44; Lomaśa invoked the blessings of the Gaṅgā, besides those of Varuṇa, Yama, and the Yamunā, on Yudhiṣṭhira and requested her to protect him from the mountains which he was about to enter while on his way to the Gandhamādana 3. 140. 13-14; (ix) Grief due to separation from the Gaṅgā more unbearable than from near relatives or wealth; on the other hand, just the sight of the Gaṅgā is more pleasing than that of the desired objects or sons 13. 27. 74-76; (x) Gaṅgā offers sustenance to those who depend on her 13. 27. 51-52; (11) Relationship with other rivers: (i) Tripathagā Gaṅgā looked upon as the first to be created among the rivers (*tathā tripathagā gaṅgā nadīnāṁ agrajā smṛtā*) 14. 44. 13; (ii) among the Vibhūtis of the Bhagavān, Jāhnavī is said to be the best among the rivers (*śrotasāṁ asmi jāhnavī*) 6. 32. 31; also cf. 13. 27. 50; (iii) the Gaṅgā has the same relationship to other rivers as the sun has to other luminaries (?) in the sky, the moon to the manes, and the king (?) to men (*divi jyotir yathādityaḥ pitṛnāṁ caiva candramāḥ / deveśaś ca yathā nṛnāṁ gaṅgeha saritāṁ tathā //*) 13. 27. 73 (NI. on Bom. Ed. 13. 26. 74 : *divi devānāṁ iti*

*śeṣaḥ / deveśaḥ rājendraḥ*); (12) Service to deities : Gaṅgā is mentioned among those rivers who wait on Śiva for his ablutions (*upasparsanahetos tvā samīpasthā upāsate*) 13. 134. 12, 17; the Bhāgirathī is one of the rivers who wait upon Varuṇa in his sabhā 2. 9. 17; (13) Limitation : Bhāgiratha told Brahmadeva that his stay even for a hundred years on the bank of the Jāhnavī, practising austerities and giving as gift a thousand mules and a host of maidens (*adām ca tatratāsvatarīśahasraṁ nāripuram*) was not enough to take him to the Brahmaloḥka which was beyond the world of the gods, the cows and the sages 13. 106. 10, 5. E. Epic events related to the Gaṅgā: (1) Marriage with Śāmtanu and birth of Bhīṣma : King Pratīpa once went to the bank of the Gaṅgā (*gaṅgātīragataḥ*) and sat down for many years muttering prayers (*japan*) 1. 92. 1; Gaṅgā, in the form of a beautiful woman, rose from the waters and sat on the right thigh of king Pratīpa 1. 92. 2-3; when asked by the king what he might do to please her she requested him to make love with her (*tvāṁ ahaṁ kāmāye rājan kuruśreṣṭha bhajasva mām*) 1. 92. 4-5; but, at the king's suggestion, she agreed to be his daughter-in-law and disappeared 1. 92. 9-12, 15-16; she laid down the condition that the king's son (her future husband) should not know her identity and should never question the propriety of her actions (*sa me nābhijanaññāḥ syād ācareyam ca yad vibho / tat sarvaṁ eva putras te na mimāṁseta karhicit*) 1. 92. 13-14; king Śāmtanu, son of Pratīpa, once went for hunting on the bank of the Gaṅgā; the river appeared before him in the form of a beautiful woman 1. 92. 25-26; when Śāmtanu requested her to be his wife she agreed on condition that