

that they were cursed by Vasiṣṭha to be born as humans; they requested Gaṅgā to assume a human form so that she could give birth to them as humans; Gaṅgā agreed and asked them whom would they like to be their father; they chose Śamitanu, the son of Pratiṭha; Gaṅgā also had thought of the same person, hence she would do what was dear to the king and to the Vasus; Vasus requested Gaṅgā to throw them into water no sooner they were born; Gaṅgā agreed to even that request, but asked them to spare one of them so that Śamitanu's union with her would not be totally fruitless; Vasus consented to do that, each one of them contributing one-eighth share for Gaṅgā's son; and they also told her that the son of the Gaṅgā would beget no son; having come to this agreement with the Gaṅgā the Vasus, delighted, went their way 1. 91. 4-22; (ii) The lustre (*tejaḥ* 13. 84. 11) of Rudra fell in Agni; Agni was to beget through that lustre a son on the Gaṅgā for killing the enemy of the gods; Agni went to the Gaṅgā Bhāgīrathī and became mixed with her; as a result, Gaṅgā became pregnant; Gaṅgā could not bear the embryo, was mentally distressed, and was in great agony; when Agni laid the lustrous embryo in the Gaṅgā, an Asura (not named) roared fiercely; terrified, the Gaṅgā was unable to bear the embryo; Jāhnavī, with her body covered with lustre and trembling, told Agni that she could not contain his lustre within her; she was very much uneasy and was agitated; she would like to cast away the embryo, as she could hold it no longer, and not because of her sweet will; she was no longer her usual self; Agni, however, asked her to contain the embryo within her: as she was capable of bearing and containing the whole earth there

was nothing which Gaṅgā could not achieve except (perhaps) containing the seed of Agni; in spite of the entreaties of Vahni and the other gods the Gaṅgā cast off the embryo on mount Meru; Gaṅgā was capable of holding an embryo, but she could not do it on this occasion as she was overcome by the lustre of Rudra; when she cast it off, she appeared before Agni who asked her if the delivery was happy (*kaccid garbhaḥ sukhodayaḥ*); he asked her to describe to him the colour, the form and the lustre of the child; having described to Agni the form of his son the goddess (*devī*) Gaṅgā disappeared 13. 84. 8, 12, 52-72; 9. 43 8-9 (where the embryo is said to have been cast off on the mountain Himavanta; when the embryo was cast off that part of the mountain became of gold 9. 43. 14); the son Kumāra was first Gaṅgeya (son of Gaṅgā), then became Kārttikeya (the son of the Kṛttikās); the Gaṅgā, the best among the rivers, waited on him 9. 43 20; when the child approached Śiva, Pārvatī, Gaṅgā and Pāvaka (Agni) each one of them wondered whom he would show his honour by going to him or her first (*kiṁ nu pūrvam ayaṁ bālo guṇavād abhyupaiṣyati | api mām iti sarveṣāṁ teṣāṁ āsīd manogatam*) 9. 43. 34-35; knowing their mind the child assumed four forms (*tato 'bhavac caturmūrtiḥ*), of which the form Naigameṣa went to the Gaṅgā 9. 43. 37, 39; then all the four, Rudra, Devī, Pāvaka and the Gaṅgā, bowed down to Pitāmaha (Brahmadeva) and requested him to grant Kumāra the overlordship of all beings i. e. of the kings of all the classes of gods (*ādhipatyam; senāpatyam dadau tasmai sarvabhūteṣu bhārata | sarvadevanikāyānām ye rājāṇaḥ pariśrutāḥ | tān sarvān vyādeśāsmi sarvabhūtupitāmahaḥ*) 9. 43. 42,