

hands and received it. At the end of the year he cut it into four pieces and divided them among earth, water, tree and woman. The earth received it with the boon that depressions will be filled. That sin is now seen as salt beds. Water got it with the boon, "Will be swollen when joined". That sin is foam and bubbles. The tree got it with the boon, "Will not die even if cut into pieces". That sin is the sap of the tree. Women got it with the boon, "Amour will last without break". That sin is the menstruation of women.

When Tvaṣṭā heard that his righteous son was killed by Indra unreasonably, he became angry and began to make burnt offerings with spells and incantations of Atharvaveda. This offering continued for eight days. On the eighth day at night, an extremely bright male person arose from the fire pit. He rose higher and higher as the flame of fire. Then that figure of power asked Tvaṣṭā. "Father ! what is my name ? What have I to do for you ? What is the reason for your grief ?" He said that he was prepared to drink up the ocean dry or smash the mountains, or prevent the sun and the moon from moving or any such thing for the sake of his father. The father ordered him to kill Indra. From that day onwards Vṛtra got ready to kill Indra. (Devi Bhāgavata, Skandha 6).

3) *The slaughter of Vṛtrāsura*. Hearing about the prowess, strength, and the martial radiance of Vṛtrāsura, Indra grew afraid of him and began to think about means and ways to kill him. Indra called the Saptarṣis (seven hermits) and sent them to Vṛtra. His intention was to make a treaty. The seven hermits approached Vṛtra and requested him to make a treaty with Indra, and told him that Indra was prepared to give half of the position of Indra.

Vṛtra :—Look hermits ! If Indra honestly desires to be in peace with me, I have no objection. But what is the surety that Indra will not deceive me ?

Hermits :—If Indra proves to be false and deliberately deceives you, he has agreed to bear the sin of Brahmahatyā incurred, by himself.

Vṛtra agreed to make a treaty on this condition. The hermits took Vṛtra to the palace of Indra. Seeing Vṛtrāsura who was coming to be friends with him Indra rose from his royal chair and offered half of it to Vṛtra. Both embraced each other and vowed that they would be brothers born from the same womb.

Thus having engaged Vṛtra in a treaty deceitfully, Indra waited for an opportunity to kill Vṛtra. Once Indra sent Rambhā to infatuate Vṛtra. "Look, beautiful girl ! Make Vṛtra senseless somehow so that I may kill him." Hearing this, with a beautiful laugh, Rambhā went with her maids to the Park Nandana and waited for Vṛtrāsura. At this time Vṛtra, with some Dānava friends, came to the park Nandana for entertainment. Indra walked beside watching for the opportunity to kill him. Without fearing any danger from Indra, Vṛtra walked through the park, seeing the celestial maids singing and dancing and playing various games in the garden, and they reached a corner where Rambhā had been singing sweet songs and swinging with her maids. This sight made Vṛtra amorous. He approached Rambhā and prayed to her to become his wife. Under that sandalwood tree Rambhā asked him. "Oh handsome youth ! I am Rambhā. I came here with my maids to play. Who are you, my Lord ?"

Vṛtra : "Beautiful maid ! I am the son of Kaśyapa and the friend of Indra. I enjoy half the position of Indra. I, Vṛtra, have brought the three worlds under my control. I shall be complete in all aspects, if I could marry you."

Rambhā agreed to the marriage on condition that Vṛtra would not gainsay her in anything. They engaged in amorous plays and Rambhā made the Brahmin drink liquor in large quantities and he became unconscious. Indra took this opportunity and sent his thunderbolt which took away the life of Vṛtra. Instantly Indra became affected with sins such as Brahmahatyā etc. (Padma Purāṇa, Bhūmikhaṇḍa, Chapters 23 and 24).

4) *Other details*.

(i) Indra washed away the sin of Brahmahatyā incurred by killing Vṛtra, at the place called Karūṣa. (See under Aṅgamalada).

(ii) It was at the time of the killing of Vṛtra by Indra, that Jaṭāyu and Sampāti made bets and flew up to the region of the Sun. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa, Sarga 58, Stanza 4).

(iii) Mention about the conflict between Indra and Vṛtrāsura occurs in various places in the Ṛgveda. Ṛgveda, Maṇḍala 1, Anuvāka 16, Sūkta 80 refers to the battle between Indra and Vṛtra. In many other Sūktas songs about Indra and Vṛtra occur.

(iv) Mention is made in Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 65, Stanza 33, that Vṛtra was the son born to Prajāpati Kaśyapa by his wife Danu.

(v) It was Vṛtrāsura who took rebirth later as King Maṇimān. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 67, Stanza 44).

(vi) The thunderbolt of Indra hit on the head of Vṛtrāsura and was broken into ten big pieces and hundred small pieces. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 169, Stanza 50).

(vii) It is stated in Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 48, that Vṛtrāsura was born from the fire of Sorcery and witchcraft of Tvaṣṭā.

(viii) In the fight between Indra and Vṛtra, Indra was swallowed by Vṛtra. But Indra contracted the members of his body and became smaller and smaller and came out of Vṛtra's belly. (M.B. Udyoga Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 52).

(ix) Once the teacher-priest Śukra asked Vṛtra certain questions to all of which Vṛtra gave proper answers. (M.B. Śānti Parva, Chapter 279, Stanza 13).

(x) Vṛtra entered heaven after his death. (Śānti Parva, Chapter 180, Stanza 57).

(xi) Everybody was terrified because the fight of Indra with Vṛtra prolonged without any termination. At last Vṛtra gaped and taking this opportunity, Indra sent his weapon the thunderbolt into the mouth of Vṛtra. Thus Vṛtra met with death. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 101, Stanza 15; Udyoga Parva, Chapter 10, Stanza 30; Śānti Parva, Chapter 232, Stanza 9; Śānti Parva, Chapter 283, Stanza 59).

(xii) In Mahābhārata, the words, Asura, Asuraśreṣṭha, Asurendra, Daitya, Daityapati, Daityendra, Dānava, Dānavendra, Ditija, Surāri, Tvāṣṭar, Viśvātmā etc. are used as synonyms of Vṛtra.

VRTTA. A nāga (serpent) born to Prajāpati Kaśyapa by his wife Kadrū. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 35, Stanza 10).

VYĀDHĪ. Vyādhī, Jarā, Śokā, Trṣṇā and Krodhā, were