

PĀKKANĀR. Vararuci, the celebrated astronomer, got of a Caṇḍālī wife twelve sons. They were called "Paracci peṭṭa pantīrkulam (The twelve sons born of a Caṇḍālī).

They were

1. Agnihotrī. 2. Rajakan 3. Uliyanūr Tacan. 4. Vallon 5. Vāyillākkunnilappan. 6. Kārakkalmātā. 7. Vaṭutala Nāyar. 8. Uppukuṭṭan. 9. Pāṇanār. 10. Nārāyaṇa-bhṛāntan 11. Akavūr Cāttan 12. Pākkanār.

Pākkanār's wife was a very chaste woman devoted to her husband. There are two stories demonstrating the devotion she showed to her husband.

(i) It was usual for all the sons of Vararuci excepting Vāyillākkunnilappan to assemble at the house of Agnihotrī for the Śrāddha of their father annually once. Once after the Śrāddha, all of them sat together for their meals and the antarjanam (wife) of Agnihotrī refused to serve an assembly consisting of Pākkanār, a Caṇḍāla. When Agnihotrī compelled her to do it she came to the place hiding her face with an umbrella. Pākkanār enquired about the purpose of the umbrella and Agnihotrī replied that it was the duty of chaste and devoted wives to hide their faces from other men. Then Pākkanār argued that still the brahmin wives who hid their faces were lacking in devotion and chastity and the Caṇḍāla women were the only class of women who were chaste and devoted to their husbands. Everybody present there joined sides with Agnihotrī and opposed the argument of Pākkanār. To demonstrate the devotion of Caṇḍālī wives Pākkanār took Agnihotrī to his house. On reaching there Pākkanār called his wife and asked "How much paddy do you have here?" "Five measures", she replied. "Pound half of it and bring it to me", Pākkanār instructed. The dutiful wife pounded the paddy, cooked the rice and brought it to Pākkanār. Pākkanār asked her to throw the rice into the drain. She did it without the least hesitation. Pākkanār then asked his wife to pound the remaining paddy and bring the rice cooked as before. She did so and when she brought it before Pākkanār he asked her to throw that also away into the drain. She instantly obeyed. That day both of them went without meals. They were so poor.

The next day Pākkanār along with Agnihotrī went to the illam (house) of Agnihotrī. Pākkanār then asked Agnihotrī to make his wife do exactly like what Pākkanār's wife was made to do. Agnihotrī immediately called his wife and asked her to take two and a half measures of paddy, pound it, cook it and bring it to him. "There is rice here ready in stock and so why should we pound paddy now?" Agnihotrī's wife questioned. But Agnihotrī insisted and so surrendering to the compulsion she did as she was instructed. When she brought the rice before him cooked, Agnihotrī asked her to throw it away into the drain. She hesitated first but when Agnihotrī insisted she did so very reluctantly. Then Agnihotrī asked her to take another two and a half measures of paddy, pound it and bring the cooked rice once again. The antarjanam (wife) flew into fury and showered on her husband a heap of abuses. She went and hid inside and despite repeated requests from Agnihotrī she never showed her face out again. Agnihotrī admitted defeat and accepted Pākkanār's view that a Caṇḍālī woman was more chaste than a brahmin woman.

(2) Once Agnihotrī came to the hut of Pākkanār. Pākkanār called his wife to bring a 'palaka' (a wooden plank used for sitting) for Agnihotrī to sit on. She was at that time drawing water from a well and the bucket was midway in the well with water. The instant she heard her husband call her she left the grip on the rope and rushed to the side of her husband. She did what was asked of her to do and then returned to the well. Pākkanār followed her taking Agnihotrī along with him. When they reached the well Agnihotrī was dumb-founded. The bucket with water was staying in mid-air in the well exactly at the position at which Pākkanār's wife had left it. The power of the chastity of the woman. (See under Vararuci).

PAKṢA. See under Kālamāna.

PAKṢĀLIKĀ. A female follower of Subrahmaṇya.

PAKṢIVAMŚA. The Purāṇic version of the origin of birds is given below:

Descending in order from Viṣṇu came Brahmā—Marīci—Kaśyapaprajāpati. The latter got of his wife Tāmṛā (daughter of Dakṣa) five daughters named Krauñci, Bhāsī, Śyenī, Dhṛtarāṣṭrī and Śukī. From Krauñci were born the Ulūkas, Bhāsī gave birth to Bhāsa, Śyenī to vultures and Dhṛtarāṣṭrī to swans and geese. From these originated the entire bird family of the world. (Chapter 4, Araṇya Kāṇḍa, Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa).

PAKTHA. A King of Vedic times who was a protege of the Aśvins. Indra was kind to this King. In the Dāśarājña battle Paktha fought against Sudās on the side of Trasadasyu. (Maṇḍala 7, Ṛgveda).

PALA. A measure of ancient times. (See under Trasa-reṇu).

PĀLA. A serpent born of the race of Vāsukī. This serpent committed suicide at the Sarpaśatra of Janamejaya. (Śloka 51, Chapter 57, Ādi Parva).

PĀLAKA. A son born to the King Caṇḍamahāseṇa of his wife Aṅgāravatī. Aṅgāravatī got two sons. The other son was named Gopālaka. (Kathāmukhalambaka, Kathāsaritsāgara).

PĀLAKĀVYA. The author of the famous book 'Hastyāyurvedasaṁhitā'. This book contains 160 chapters dealing with Mahārōgasthāna (great diseases), Kṣudrārōgasthāna (minor diseases), Śalyasthāna (extraction of extraneous matter from the body) and Uttarasthāna (diseases of the head). Pālakāvyā taught this Āyurvedasaṁhitā to Rāmapāda, King of Aṅgadeśa. (Agni Purāṇa).

PĀLĀLĀ. One of the seven mothers of Subrahmaṇya. The other six are : Kākī, Halimā, Brahmikā, Mālinī, Āryā and Mitrā. (Śloka 10, Chapter 228, Vana Parva).

PALĀŚAVANA. A sacred forest. Once the sage Jamadagni performed a sacrifice in this forest. On that occasion all the rivers in the world were present there carrying their water. The sage at this Yāga gave wine to all the other sages to their heart's content. (Śloka 16, Chapter 94, Vana Parva).

PĀLĪ. A corrupt form of Sanskrit.

PALITA. A rat, a character in 'Bīḍālopākhyāna'. This rat held a conversation with Lomaśa, a cat. (See under Bīḍālopākhyāna).

PĀLITĀ. A female follower of Subrahmaṇya. (Śloka 3, Chapter 46, Śalya Parva).

PALLĀṆṬU. The name of the devotional songs sung by the Tamil devotional poet, Viṣṇucittar,