

PUNḌARĪYAKA. A Viśvadeva. (Chapter 91, Anuśā-sana Parva).

PUNḌRA I. An ancient King in Bhārata. (Śloka 224, Chapter 1, Ādi Parva).

PUNḌRA II. An ancient region of Bhārata. The region comprised then the present district of Mālada, certain portions on the east coast of river Kosi and certain portions of Dinājpur. King Pāṇḍu conquered Puṇḍra. (Chapter 112, Ādi Parva). The people of Puṇḍra came to the Rājasūya of Yudhiṣṭhira with presents. The Pauṇḍrakavāsudeva mentioned in the Bhāgavata was the King of Puṇḍra. Karṇa and Arjuna conquered this country at different times. (Chapter 52, Sabhā Parva; Chapter 8, Karṇa Parva; Chapter 82, Āśvamedhika Parva).

PUNJIKASTHALĀ. A nymph. She was the servant-maid of Brhaspati. One day she was collecting flowers for her Guru in a garden when a set of young men and women came to the garden for amorous sports. They were roaming about in the garden in pairs doing all sorts of erotic acts and Puñjikasthalā stood watching them for some time with passion aroused in her. She returned to the āśrama thinking all the way about her miserable lot of having no husband to enjoy a similar life. She was full of lust when she returned to the āśrama and on seeing Brhaspati she caught hold of him by the hand and pleaded to satisfy her passion. Brhaspati was angry at this improper request and cursed her "You have become rotten. You have become lustful by seeing the amorous sports of others. May you be born as a monkey. Get out of this āśrama." Puñjikasthalā came to her senses and regretting her hasty act begged her Guru to grant her release from the curse. Brhaspati felt pity on her and said "Go and enjoy to your full sexual life with a lover whom you like best. Then you will get a son from the vitality of Śiva. When that son is born you will be released from the curse and you will go to heaven." She became immediately a monkey girl named Añjanā and started living in a forest of that name itself. She fell in love with a monkey boy named Kesari there and lived for many years enjoying an amorous life. She did not get a child even after several years and then she prayed to Śiva for a child.

It was at that time that Pārvatī and Parameśvara played amorous sports in the form of monkeys and Pārvatī became pregnant. Pārvatī expressed reluctance to be the mother of a monkey child and then Śiva by his divine powers deposited his semen virile through Vāyubhagavān (god of wind) into the womb of Añjanā who was then praying to him for a child. Coming to know of this through Nārada and fearing that his lordship over the monkeys would be lost if such a monkey were born to Añjanā Bāli poured into the belly of Añjanā molten liquid of pañcaloha (five metals). Añjanā was not the least injured and she gave birth in due course to a monkey son who became the celebrated Hanūmān, the life-force of the Rāma-Rāvaṇa tussle. (Pūrvakāṇḍa, Kamba Rāmāyaṇa; Kiśkindhā Kāṇḍa, Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa).

This Puñjikasthalā belongs to the famous set of eleven devakanyakās. They are : Menakā, Sahajanyā, Karṇikā, Puñjikasthalā, Rūsthalā, Ghṛtācī, Pūrvacitti, Ullocā, Pramlocā, Urvaśī and Viśvācī. These were the celebrated courtezans of Svarga. (Chapter 123, Ādi Parva).

Puñjikasthalā was the dancer at the court of Kubera. (Chapter 10, Sabhā Parva). She took part in the Janmotsava of Arjuna. (Chapter 122, Ādi Parva).

PŪNTĀNAM NAMBŪTIRI.

1) *General information.* The illam (house) of this Nambūtiri who was a contemporary of Meppattūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri was in Nenmeni aṇṇa of the taluk of Valluvanādu in south Malabar. Though some say that his original name was Brahmadatta there are no sufficient records to support the statement. His Guru according to the work 'Śrī Kṛṣṇakarmāmṛta' was a nambūtiri named Nilakaṇṭha. Pūntānam had only ordinary education. He worshipped Kṛṣṇa at the temple of Guruvāyūr for a very long time and became a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He lived for ninety years. When he became very old he found it difficult to come to Guruvāyūr for worship and so one day he bade farewell to the deity. Then a voice from heaven said "Do not worry. I will be near you on your left side." He went and sat on a hill named Tirumāndha and to his astonishing ecstasy he found Kṛṣṇa sitting on his left side. He then constructed a temple there and installed his deity Kṛṣṇa there and continued his worship. That was the Vāmapura (left place) of Pūntānam.

2) *Kṛtis (works).* The following are the works of Pūntānam : (i) Bhāṣākarmāmṛta (ii) Kumārāharaṇam (Pāna) (iii) Jñānappāna (iv) Pārthasārathistava (v) Ghanasaṅgha (vi) Nārāyaṇakīrtanas (vii) Govindakīrtanas (viii) Ānandanṛtya (ix) Dvādaśākṣaranāmakīrtana (x) Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtanas (xi) Aṣṭākṣarakīrtana (xii) Brahmaaparagovindakīrtana (xiii) Gopālākṛṣṇakīrtana (xiv) Gaurīkīrtana (xv) Vāmapureśakīrtanas (xvi) Padmanābhakīrtana (xvii) Vivekodayakīrtana (xviii) Jayakṛṣṇakīrtana (xix) Viṭakolkīrtana (xx) Śrī Rāma Kīrtana (xxi) Mukundakīrtana (xxii) Daśavatāraṣṭotra. Besides these he has composed some philosophical songs in Tamil also.

3) *Jñānappāna.* Pūntānam got a son after a long time of prayer and for the ceremony of Annaprāśana (feeding rice for the first time) all the people of his community were invited. The women who came for the function threw their upper garments on to the cradle where the little child was suffocated to death. Pūntānam thereafter became disgusted with life and Jñānappāna was written at that time.

4) *Santānagopālam.* Pūntānam spent most of his time in the temple of Guruvāyūr after the death of his child. It was at this same time that the great scholar Nārāyaṇabhāṭṭatiri, author of the famous Nārāyaṇīya, was in the temple worshipping the deity there. Pūntānam had written a poem 'Santānagopālam' in the pāna style and he took it to the great pandit Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri for correction. With the haughtiness that was his trait he said "What is there for correction in a Malayālam poem? Nothing but blunders will there be in it. Especially when Pūntānam is not well-versed in Sanskrit grammar. It will therefore be full of mistakes." Pūntānam could not contain the rebuff and he wept bitterly. Then from the inside of the temple came a voice which said "Though Pūntānam is not a grammarian like you Bhaṭṭatiri, he is a greater devotee of mine than you. His Bhakti is more appealing to me than your vibhakti." The divine voice made Bhaṭṭatiri feel sorry and ashamed of his behaviour and he begged Pūntānam to grant him