

(vi) Mahāviṣṇu showed grace to Uparicara vasu. (M.B. Śānti Parva, Chapter 337, Stanza 33).

(vii) Mahāviṣṇu once took birth as the son of Aditi. From that day onwards he got the name Āditya also. (For details see under Aditi). For further details regarding Mahāviṣṇu, see under Virāṭpuruṣa, Prakṛti, Puruṣa, Brahmasṛṣṭi, Avatāra, Amṛta, Garuḍa, Lakṣmī, Gaṅgā etc.

**VIṢṆUCITTA.** A noble Vaiṣṇavite devotee, who lived in Tamil Nadu. He lived in Villiputtur. It is said that he was the incarnation of Garuḍa. Viṣṇucitta had another name Periyālvār. Āṇḍāl who was famous among the Ālvārs was the daughter of Viṣṇucitta. Viṣṇucitta sang holy hymns in praise of the beloved god. The hymns of praise he sang are called Pallāṇḍu. He got the name Periyālvār or the foremost of the devotees.

Once at Villiputtur, while he was getting beds ready to plant holy basil, he was attracted by a divine infant. It seemed to Viṣṇucitta that the little girl was lying among the basil plants. He took the child home and named her Godā. It was this Godā who became the famous Āṇḍāl later. Legends say that the birth of Āṇḍāl was in 97 Kali Era. Scholars say that Godā was born in the middle of 7th century. There is another story which mentions that Āṇḍāl was born from a portion of Goddess Earth.

**VIṢṆUDĀSA.** A Vaiṣṇavite devotee who lived in ancient days. The story of this devotee who defeated his king Cola in devotion to Viṣṇu, is given in Padma Purāṇa, Uttara Khaṇḍa, Chapter 110. The story is as follows. In days of old there was a king named Cola in Kāñcī-pura. It was because of his reign that the country got the name Cola. He had performed several sacrifices. On the banks of the river Tāmraparṇī, stood his golden Yūpas (pegs on which sacrificial animals were tied) that the place looked like Caitraratha. Once the king went to the temple and worshipped Viṣṇu by offering flowers of gold and jewels such as chalcedony and prostrated before Viṣṇu and rose up. At that time a Brahmin named Viṣṇudāsa from his own city came there to worship, with holy basil and water as offerings. He worshipped with the leaves and flower-bunches of holy basil. Because of his worship by holy basil, the king's worship by jewels, was dimmed. The emperor got angry and said, "Viṣṇudāsa, you are a poor man who does not know how to worship Viṣṇu. What merit has your worship of holy basil after mine of jewels?" Both began to contest on this point. At last the king said "Let us see who between us will get oneness with Viṣṇu first, you or I"

After saying this the king went to his palace. He appointed Mudgala the high priest and began to perform a sacrifice to Viṣṇu. The sacrifice was going on with pomp and festivities. Viṣṇudāsa also was immersed in devotion to Viṣṇu to the best of his abilities.

Once Viṣṇudāsa, after his usual prayer and meditation prepared rice-food. But somebody took away the cooked rice unseen by Viṣṇudāsa. Fearing that he would miss the time for his evening prayer, he did not think of cooking food again. Next day also he cooked food and went for evening prayer. On that day also the rice was stolen. This continued. One day after cooking the food, Viṣṇudāsa waited close by in a hidden corner. He saw a low-caste man who was a mere skeleton because of

famine, stealing the cooked rice and feeling pity on him he said, "Stop, stop. How can you eat it without any oily thing? See, take this ghee also." Saying so he drew near. The out-caste was terrified at this and ran away. On the way he stumbled and fell. Viṣṇudāsa ran to the spot and fanned him with his cloth. When he rose up the figure in the place of the low-caste was that of the real Śrī Nārāyaṇa with conch, discus and club held in his hands. Because of devotion Viṣṇudāsa stood benumbed. While the King Cola and the people were looking on, Viṣṇudāsa got into the divine Vimāna and went to the world of Viṣṇu.

**VIṢṆUDATTA.** Son of the Brahmin named Vasudatta. The story of Viṣṇudatta is quoted to prove that bad omens at the beginning of a journey is a warning that the journey would not be fruitful and that it would be rather dangerous.

When Viṣṇudatta became sixteen years old he decided to go to the city of Valabhī for his education. Seven Brahmin boys of his age gathered together and joined him. Deciding not to separate from each other, they started for Valabhī, without the knowledge of their parents. When they proceeded a little further they saw a bad omen. Viṣṇudatta stood undecided, but the others pressed him on and they continued their journey. Next day by evening they reached a village of forest tribes. After walking through the village they reached the house of a woman. They got her permission to stay there for the night. They all lay in a corner. Immediately all slept. Viṣṇudatta alone lay awake. When the night advanced, a man entered the house. The woman and the man talked for a while and carried on sexual sports, and they lay together and slept. A light was burning in the room. Viṣṇudatta saw everything through the cleavage of the shutters, and thought, "I am sorry that we have come to this house. He is not her husband. Sure! she is a harlot." As he was thinking thus, foot-steps were heard in the courtyard. A young man fixed his servants in their places. Then he entered the house and saw Viṣṇudatta and his friends. The new-comer was also a forest-man. He had a sword in his hand. He was the owner of the house. Viṣṇudatta said that they were travellers. When he heard it, without saying anything he got inside and saw his wife sleeping with her lover. With the sword in his hand, he cut off the head of the lover. He did not kill the woman, who did not know that her lover was killed. The forester laid the sword down and lay in the same bed and slept. The light was burning.

After a while the woman woke up, and saw her husband who had cut her lover into two. She stood up quickly and took the trunk of her lover and placed it on her shoulder and taking the head in one hand, went out and hid them in the pile of ashes. Then she returned and lay down. Viṣṇudatta had followed her stealthily and seen what she had done. He also returned and sat in the midst of his friends. She rose up and took the sword of her husband and killed him with it. Then coming out she cried aloud. "Oh dear! These travellers have killed my husband." The servants woke up and came to the house and saw their master lying dead. They tried to attack Viṣṇudatta and his friends. Viṣṇudatta told them everything that he had seen, and showed them the head and the trunk of her lover, hidden in the ashes. When they saw this they understood