

dharas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas. Here Bhagavān Piṅgala became Gaṇeśvara and Kṣetrapāla and distributor of food to the residents in the city. He was originally a Yakṣa, son of Pūrṇabhadra. He devoted himself to severe austerities and was blessed by Śiva to be a Gaṇapati.¹ It is *Avimukta tīrtha* for here Śiva is omnipresent and is never absent from there. All sinners who die here become Rudras in time. Śiva stands here like a pillar, motionless till the deluge. Every part of the city is holy.² He who remains here for a month gets the benefit of observing the Pāśupata vow. By living permanently one gets true emancipation. By giving up life at the Maṇikārnika ghat one secures the desired goal. Perpetual life in Kāśi leads one to union with Śiva.³ Kāśi's importance on account of its sacred stream, the Ganges; survives all deluge; Śiva addresses Pārvatī on the great glory of the kṣetram in terms of Parama-yoga, Paramagati and Paramamokṣa. It is a place where people of all *varṇas* attain immortality. Gifts of cow and other things in this city are always beneficial.⁴

It is the place where Śiva got rid of the curse of Brahmā to roam about with a skull for having cut off the fifth head of the creator. Through the grace of Hari, the skull fell down in Kāśi and broke into a thousand pieces.⁵ It is the burial ground of all the gods, the ground being the Avimukta temple. It is the seat of Brahmā. But it deludes non-devotees. Here Vedavyāsa resided for 12 years observing the vow of silence. At the end of the vow he felt hungry and asked for alms. None was able to feed him. When he was about to curse the city, Śiva and Pārvatī took the human form and entertained him to his satisfaction. Then Vyāsa knew of his guests who remarked that a man of choleric temper like himself should not live in that city. But he was permitted to visit it twice a fortnight on Aṣṭami and Caturdaśī days.⁶

¹ M. ch. 180. ² Ib. ch. 181. ³ Ib. ch. 182. ⁴ Ib. ch. 183. ⁵ Ib. ch. 184. ⁶ Ib. ch. 185.