

THE
SKANDA-PURĀNA

PART XI

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SKANDA PURĀṆA

BOOK IV: KĀŚĪ KHAṆḌA

SECTION II: UTTARĀRDHA

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

Description of Sun-gods Called Aruṇa, Vṛddha etc.¹

Obeisance to Śrī Gaṇeśa :

Agastī enquired:

1. O delighter of the heart of Pārvatī, O Lord born of the body of the Omniscient Lord, I wish to ask something. O Lord, it behoves you to explain it.

2. How did that chaste lady, a daughter of Patriarch Dakṣa, a wife of Kaśyapa and mother of Garuḍa become a slave?

Skanda replied:

3. I shall recount to you, O highly intelligent one, how that pitiable lady Vinatā got into slavery; listen.

4. Formerly Kadrū gave birth to a hundred sons of Kaśyapa and Vinatā to three, namely Ulūka, Aruṇa and Tārksya.

5. In view of his being the eldest, Kauśika (i.e. Ulūka) attained the kingship of birds; but since he was bereft of virtues, he was dethroned from the kingdom by all those birds.

6-7. "This (bird) is evil-eyed; he is blind by day; he is always

1. This chapter describes the legend of the following Sun-gods. Their names and locations are noted as below:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
1. Aruṇāditya	: In Trilocana Temple
2. Vṛddhāditya	: South of Viśālākṣī Temple at Mirā Ghāṭa
3. Keśavāditya	: In Ādi-Keśava Temple
4. Vimalāditya	: In Jaṅgambādi area—south of Goduliā crossing
5. Gaṅgāditya	: At Lalitā Ghāṭa
6. Yamāditya	: At Yama Tīrtha near Vīreśvara.

crooked-nailed; his voice causes extreme alarm to everyone.” Thus those birds censured its qualities in various ways. Hence they did not select anyone else as a king. They moved about as they pleased.

8. Since Kauśika’s lot had been so, Vinatā was excessively eager to see a son. Hence she broke open the egg of the middle one.

9. The egg was to be broken after completion of one thousand years, O Pot-born Sage. But out of eagerness, the egg was broken open by her in eight-hundredth year.

10. By that time all the limbs of that highly refulgent child staying within that egg, had become full-fledged above the thighs only.

11. As soon as it came out of the egg, the mother was cursed by that child with semi-fledged limbs. The splendour of his face was Aruṇa (red) with rage.

12-13. “O my mother, the sons of Kadrū were seen playing in the lap of their mother gracefully by you and the egg was broken open. Hence, I have become one with incompletely developed limbs. I, therefore, curse you. O bird! Be the slave of those very children born of your co-wife.”

14. Trembling due to that curse, the bird spoke thus, “O Anūru (thighless one), my son, tell me the end (redemption) of the curse, unto your mother.”

15. Anūru said: “Do not break open that third egg. It is unfledged like mine. He who is to be born out of this egg, will redeem you from slavery.”

16. After saying thus, Aruṇa flew unto the sacred place called Ānandakānana, where Viśveśvara bestowed blessedness even on that crippled one.

17. Thus the cause of the slavery of Vinatā has been recounted to you as per your query. O sage, incidentally I shall tell you the origin of Aruṇāditya.

18. This child was called Anūru because he had no thighs. He was known as Aruṇa because his (face) had become red in colour due to anger. Penance was performed by him at Vārāṇasī and the Sun-god was propitiated.

19. That Lord too became pleased and granted boons to that Anūru. The Sun-god became known as Aruṇāditya after his name.

The Sun-god said:

20. O Anūru, son of Vinatā, stay forever in my chariot in front of me, dispelling the darkness for the welfare of all the worlds.

21. If men worship the idol installed by you here in Vārāṇasī, to the north of Mahādeva idol, they will have nothing to fear from anywhere.

22. Neither misery, nor poverty, nor sins will affect those who always worship me designated as Aruṇāditya.

23. By resorting to Aruṇāditya they can ward off the affliction from all ailments. They are not affected by evil phenomena, nor are they burned by the fire of grief.

24. Thereafter the Sun-god made Aruṇa mount his chariot and took him away. Even today Aruṇa rises at dawn in the solar chariot.

25. Whence can there be fear from misery unto him who gets up in the morning everyday and offers obeisance to Aruṇa along with the Sun-god?

26. If any excellent man listens to the greatness of Aruṇāditya, he will never incur any sin.

Skanda said:

27. Listen to the greatness of Vṛddhāditya. I shall narrate it to you. The very act of listening to it makes a man avoid sinful acts.

28. Here at Vārāṇasī formerly an old great sage named Hārīta propitiated the Sun-god for the sake of great abundance of penance.

29. Endowed with firm devotion, he installed the image of the Sun towards the south of Viśālākṣī. The image had all auspicious characteristics and was intended to bestow auspiciousness.

30. Bradhna (the Sun-god), being pleased with him, granted a boon unto that old austere sage. He said, "Do not delay. Request me. What boon should be given by me to you?"

31. That sage chose the boon from the delighted Sun-god, the jewel of firmament: "If the Lord is pleased, grant me youth once again.

32. Since I have reached old age, I have no capacity to

perform penance. Having regained my youth, I shall perform an excellent penance.

33. Penance alone is the greatest virtue. Penance alone is the greatest wealth. Penance alone is the great (*Puruṣārtha* called) love. Penance is certainly salvation.

34. Prosperity and riches can be obtained anywhere without penance. Good position was obtained by Dhruva and others only on the strength of penance.

35. Thanks to your liberal gift of the boon, I shall regain youth honoured by all and thereafter perform penance that bestows greatness in both the worlds.

36. Fie upon old age of living beings here! Thereby all become estranged because even women do not remain under one's control, when one's sense-organs are afflicted with old age.

37. Even death is preferable to old age that causes excessive misery. Death is painful for a moment, but the pain of old age occurs every moment.

38. Men who have conquered their sense-organs, desire longevity for the sake of long continued penance, wealth for the purpose of donation, a wife for procreating a son, and intellect for attaining salvation."

39. Bradhna (the Sun-god) removed the senility of the old man immediately and granted him youth that produces charm and becomes the means of attaining merit.

40. After attaining youth from Bradhna thus, that great old sage Hārīta performed a fierce penance in Vārāṇasī.

41. Thereafter that deity Ādītya who dispels senility is remembered as Vṛddhādītya, because he had been propitiated by the old sage Hārīta.

42. Many have attained supernatural powers, O Pot-born One, by propitiating in Vārāṇasī, Vṛddhādītya, the destroyer of old age, wretchedness and ailments.

43. By bowing down to Vṛddhādītya at Vārāṇasī on a Sunday, a man shall obtain the desired benefit. He will not meet with wretchedness.

Skanda said:

44. Hear, henceforth, O sage, about the excellent Keśavādītya and how the Sun-god attained (spiritual) knowledge after associating with Keśava.

45. Once, Ādikeśava was seen worshipping the Liṅga of Īśvara by Saptāśva (seven-horsed one = the Sun-god) who was proceeding ahead in the firmament.

46. Out of curiosity, Ravi descended from heaven and sat silently, motionlessly, steadily near Hari and was greatly amazed.

47. Desirous of asking Hari something and awaiting the opportunity thereof, he bowed down to Hari when the latter had concluded the adoration. He kept his palms joined in reverence.

48. “Welcome to you”, said Hari with great respect. He made the Sun-god who had bowed down, sit near him.

49. Seeing that it was a suitable opportunity and having got the permission of the destroyer of Asuras, Lokacakṣus (‘the eye of the world’—the Sun) bowed down to Adhokṣaja (Viṣṇu) and submitted as follows:

Ravi said:

50. O Viśvambhara, O Lord of the universe, you are the immanent soul of all the worlds. O Mādhava, worthy of being adored by the universe, is there anyone worthy of being adored here, even by you?

51. O resort of all the worlds, all this (visible world) manifests from you. Everything gets dissolved in you. You alone are the protector of the entire universe.

52. I have come to you after seeing this surprising thing. What is this that is being worshipped, O Lord, by you, the destroyer of the distress of worldly existence?

53. On hearing this speech of the thousand-rayed Sun, Hṛṣīkeśa (Lord Viṣṇu) stopped the Sun-god with a gesture of his hand as though saying, “Do not speak loudly.”

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

54. The Blue-throated Consort of Umā, the great Lord, the Lord of Devas alone is worthy of being adored here. He is the cause of all causes.

55. If anyone of deficient intellect worships someone other than the Three-eyed Lord, he should be considered as one devoid of eyes, though actually he may have eyes.

56. Mṛtyuñjaya alone is worthy of being adored. He re-

moves birth, death and old age. Indeed, by worshipping Mr̥tyuñjaya, Śveta (ketu) was able to vanquish death.

57. By propitiating Kālakāla (Śiva), Bhṛṅgī vanquished Kāla (god of Death). Mr̥tyu (god of Death) spared the son of Śilāda (Nandi) and others who worshipped Mr̥tyuñjaya.

58. Who will not become the most adorable of all by worshipping Bhūteśa who vanquished the Tripuras sportingly by discharging a single arrow?

59. The propitiation of the Three-eyed Lord is the noblest act, since he is the cause of the victory over the three worlds. O Bradhna, who does not adore the enemy of Smara, who is the vital essence of all?

60. To whom is Lord Śiva not the most adorable one? This whole universe becomes shrunk (destroyed) when his eyelashes close and becomes full-fledged when his eyes open.

61. By worshipping the Liṅga of Śāmbhu here, a man attains all the four aims of life immediately. No hesitation need be entertained in this respect.

62. Certainly after worshipping Śāmbhu's Liṅga here, a man instantly gets rid of heaps of sins acquired in the course of hundreds of births.

63. Undoubtedly what things—sons, wives, lands, heaven, liberation from Saṃsāra, will not happen (be obtained) by worshipping (Śiva)?

64. O Thousand-rayed One, by the sole worship of Śivaliṅga the riches and prosperities of all the three worlds have been attained by me. It is true, it is certainly true all the times.

65. This alone is the greatest Yoga, this alone is the greatest austerity, this alone is the greatest wisdom whereby Śivaliṅga is worshipped.

66. In this wide world, the receptacle of misery, whence can there be the fear of misery unto those by whom the Liṅga of Pārvatī's Lord has been worshipped even once?

67. O Ravi, O Divākara, even great sins do not harass him who has sought refuge in the Liṅga forsaking everything else.

68. O Bhāskara, interest in the worship of the Liṅga here, shall occur only in those persons whose severance from the mundane existence, Maheśvara wishes to bring into effect.

69. There is nothing else in all the three worlds more meritorious than the propitiation of the Liṅga. One shall have

(the benefit of) having the holy bath in all the Tīrthas by resorting to the holy water with which the Liṅga is bathed.

70. Hence, O Arka, you too worship the Liṅga of Maheśvara in order to acquire the greatest glory increasing with the greatest refulgence.

71. On hearing these words of Hari, the Thousand-rayed Lord made a crystal Liṅga, O sage, and has been worshipping it ever since and even today.

72. Vivasvān (Sun-god) chose Ādikeśava as his preceptor and is worshipping there to the north of Ādikeśava.

73. Hence that Liṅga is called *Keśavāditya*. He is the destroyer of the darkness of devotees. On being adequately worshipped, he shall bestow for ever everything desired in the mind.

74. By propitiating Keśavāditya in Vārāṇasi, a good man acquires highest wisdom whereby he attains salvation too.

75. In the holy Tīrtha Pādodaka at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Varāṇā, one should perform the ritualistic offering of water to one's predecessors and should visit Keśavāditya. He is liberated from congenital sins.

76-77. O Agasti, on the Rathasaptamī day (seventh day of the bright half of Māgha) coinciding with a Sunday, a devotee should take bath early in the morning in the Pādodaka Tīrtha in front of Ādikeśava. He should observe silence and worship Keśavāditya. Instantaneously, he shall be absolved of the sins incurred in the course of seven births.

78-81. *Three Mantras:*

“(a) May the Saptamī of the month of Makara dispel all my sins acquired in the course of seven births and the illness and grief attending them.(b) May these seven types of sins: (i) committed in the current birth, (ii) acquired in the previous birth, (iii) mental ones, (iv) verbal ones, (v) physical ones, (vi) known ones, (vii) unknown ones, be dispelled. (c) O Saptasaptikā (the Solar Śakti), the Saptamī of Makara destroys these seven forms of sins, by my holy bath. Dispel them along with the seven ailments.”

By repeating these three Mantras and by taking the holy dip in Pādodaka and also by visiting Keśavāditya a man shall be

free from sins instantaneously.

82. One who listens to the greatness of Keśavāditya with faith, is never smeared with sins. He acquires devotion unto Śiva.

Skanda said:

83. Henceforth, listen O sage, to the excellent Vimalāditya stationed in the beautiful forest of Harikeśavana in Vārāṇasī.

84-85. Formerly, there was a Kṣatriya named Vimala in the 'Ucca Deśa' (in the country called 'Ucca' or in a hilly country). Though he abided by the path devoid of impurities, he contracted the foul disease of leprosy as a result of the previous Karmas. He left his wife, home and riches. The sensible man repaired to Vārāṇasī and propitiated Bradhna (the Sun-god).

86. He worshipped the Sun-god with the fragrant flowers of Japā, Karavīra, excellent Kimśuka, red lotuses and Aśoka.

87-89. He offered garlands of Pāṭala and Cāmpaka flowers with exquisite workmanship. He offered red sandal mixed with saffron, agallochum and camphor. He offered Devamohana incenses filling the whole atmosphere with profuse perfume, lights with Karpūra, lamps with wicks and also milk and ghee puddings for *Naivedya*. He offered different kinds of *arghyas*, repeated hymns and prayers of the Sun-god in accordance with the (specific) injunctions. While he was propitiating thus, the Sun-god became the bestower of boons.

90. He said: "O Vimala of spotless activities, mention the boon you would have. Let this leprosy of yours disappear. Request for another boon."

91-94. On hearing these words of the Sun-god, Vimala bowed down in prostration on the ground, with hairs standing on end due to exhilaration. He submitted to the Sun-god having mono-wheeled chariot: "O eye of the universe, O incomprehensible soul, O dispeller of great darkness, if the holy Lord is pleased, if a boon may be granted to me, then let there be no leprosy in the whole family of those who are steadfast in devotion unto you. O Thousand-rayed One, let there not be other ailments too; let there be no poverty and let there be no distress unto your devotees."

Śrī Sūrya said:

95. Let it be so, O highly intelligent one. Listen to another excellent boon. This idol has been adored by you, O extremely intelligent one.

96. I will never leave off the vicinity of this idol. This image will be popularly known after your name.

97. Its name shall be *Vimalāditya*. It shall always be the bestower of boons on devotees. It shall dispel all ailments and all sins.

98. After granting these boons, the Sun vanished there itself. Vimala, with a clean spotless body went to his abode.

99. Thus is the *Vimalāditya* at *Vārānasī* the bestower of auspiciousness. Merely by visiting him, the foul disease of leprosy becomes completely destroyed(cured).

100. A man who listens to this story of *Vimalāditya* attains spotless purity. He gets rid of all mental impurities.

Skanda said:

101. There is another (deity) *Gaṅgāditya* to the south of *Viśveśa*. A man attains purity merely by seeing it.

102. When *Gaṅgā* arrived with *Bhagīratha* leading her, the Sun-god stationed himself there in order to eulogize *Gaṅgā*.

103. Even to this day, *Bhāskara* faces *Gaṅgā* day and night and eulogizes her. He is delighted in his soul and bestows boon on the devotees of *Gaṅgā*.

104. An excellent man who propitiates *Gaṅgāditya* in *Vārānasī*, never attains wretchedness at any place. Nor does he fall ill.

Skanda said:

105. O blessed one, listen to another thing connected with *Yamāditya*. On hearing it, a man never sees the world of *Yama*.

106. By visiting *Yamāditya*, O sage, to the west of *Yameśa* and to the east of *Vīreśa* a devotee never sees the world of *Yama*.

107. After taking bath in *Yama Tīrtha* on a Tuesday coinciding with the fourteenth lunar day, the devotee should visit *Yameśvara*. He is quickly absolved of all sins.

108. Formerly Yama performed pure penance in Yama Tīrtha. Then he installed Yameśa and Yamāditya that bestow supernatural powers.

109. O Pot-born One, since Āditya was installed there by Yama, he is known as Yamāditya and he removes the torture arising from Yama.

110. One who bows to Yameśa and Yamāditya installed by Yama and takes his holy dip in Yamatīrtha does not see the world of Yama.

111. One becomes free from indebtedness to Pitṛs by performing libations and offerings of balls of rice in Yama Tīrtha on the fourteenth lunar day on a Tuesday with Bharanī constellation.

112-114. The Pitṛs dwelling in Narakas always desire thus: "If this excellent combination of a Tuesday with Bharanī and the fourteenth lunar day occurs and if some highly intelligent (scion of our family) takes his holy bath in Yama Tīrtha at Kāśī and offers libations along with gingelly seeds, it shall be conducive to our liberation. If Śrāddha is performed in this combination at Yama Tīrtha at Kāśī, of what avail is the pilgrimage to Gayā and Śrāddhas with enormous Dakṣiṇās?"

115. One should be free from indebtedness to the Pitṛs by performing Śrāddha in Yama Tīrtha, adoring Yameśvara and bowing down to Yamāditya.

Skanda said:

116. Thus (the propitiation of) twelve Ādityas who dispel sins has been explained to you. On listening to the origin of these, a man does not fall into a hell.

117. O Pot-born Sage, there are many other Ādityas too installed in Kāśī such as Guhyakārka etc., by devotees of the Sun-god.

118. By listening to these holy Adhyāyas (chapters 45 to 51) explaining the twelve Ādityas and by narrating them to others a man can avert disasters. He never attains wretchedness.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

Description of Daśāśvamedha¹

Skanda said:

1. After the Sun had gone to Kāśī that is fascinating to all the three worlds, O sage, Hara who was stationed in Mandara reached a high degree of anxiety:

2. 'The Yoginīs have not returned till this day. Nor has the fierce-rayed Sun-god. It is surprising that I have no tidings about Kāśī. It has become very difficult to get.

3. Or, what is surprising in this: If Kāśī makes even my steady mind fickle and unsteady, what then is the position in regard to other Suras?

4. I burned down Kāma, the conqueror of the three worlds, by my glance. Alas! the desire for Kāśī burns all the more and torments me.

5. Whom shall I send next to seek the tidings of Kāśī? Brahmā alone is capable of knowing it because he is four-faced (or clever-faced).'

6. After thinking thus, Śrīkaṇṭha invited the Creator (Brahmā) with great deal of respect. After he had taken a seat, he spoke to him:

7. "At first the Yoginīs were sent. Then the thousand-rayed Sun was sent. Till today, they have not returned from Kāśī, O Lotus-born One².

8. O Lord of the worlds, that Kāśī creates eagerness in my mind like a tremulous-eyed girl in that of an ordinary man.

9. Though Mandara here abounds in beautiful caves, I do not feel drawn towards it like a crocodile which does not revel

1. Daśāśvamedha Ghāṭa is the most popular Ghāṭa in Vārāṇasī. In ancient times it was called Rudrasarovara. But it got its name Daśāśvamedha when God Brahmā performed ten horse-sacrifices here under the sponsorship of King Divodāsa. The Brahmeśvara Liṅga established by Brahmā is in a low-lying building inundated every year in floods. The Daśāśvamedheśvara Liṅga is in the compound of Śītalā Devī. Godāvarī (now called Goduliā Nālā) joined Gaṅgā at this Ghāṭa and this had additional sanctity due to this confluence.

The original Ghāṭa is the southern side of the modern Daśāśvamedha Ghāṭa. The northern Ghāṭa was formerly called Prayāga Ghāṭa and was an independent one. (BCL 226-8)

2. The reading 'Kamalāsambhava' is more appropriate than 'Kalaśasambhava'.

in a small lake where the water is shallow as well as turbid.

10. That burning sensation arising from the poison Halāhala did not so torment me as this one arising from the separation of Kāśī which afflicts me very much.

11. Though the cool-rayed Moon is situated on my head and sheds nectarine drops as it were, it is not capable of dispelling the distress arising from the separation from Kāśī.

12. O Brahmā, O highly intelligent one, O foremost among noble ones, go hence to Kāśī quickly and do an investigation for me in this regard as desired by me.

13. O Brahmā, you alone know the reason for my leaving Kāśī. Even a dull-witted one may not leave Kāśī. What to say in the case of one who knows something!

14. O Brahmā, why don't I go myself to Kāśī along with my Māyā (Pārvatī—the Śakti) today itself? But I am not eager to assail Divodāsa who abides by his Dharma.

15. O Brahmā, since you carry out everything that has to be done, the instruction 'Do this and this' is entirely meaningless in your case.

16. Go safe without any ill-luck. May your path lead to auspiciousness."

Brahmā took the order with a bowed head and went joyously to Vārāṇasī.

17. The Self-born Lord with white Swan as his vehicle reached the city of Vārāṇasī quickly and considered himself blessed, as one who has done his duty.

18. 'In this contact with Kāśī, I have gained the benefit of having the Swan as a vehicle, since they say that there are obstacles in regard to the attainment of Kāśī at every step.

19. The root *drś* (to see) has become meaningful in regard to my *Drśau* (eyes) since this Ānandavāṭikā has come clearly within the range of my vision.

20. The celestial river itself waters it with its own current. The trees are blissful here. The people are full of bliss here.

21. All the fruits in Kāśī give delight for ever. Kāśī is a perpetual source of delight. Śiva is a perpetual bestower of bliss.

22-25. Hence, all the creatures in Kāśī become bliss embodied. Only those feet that traverse the ground in the city of Viśvabhartṛ (Śiva) and become blessed, know how to traverse.

Only those ears of great learning, of persons well-versed in the Vedas here know how to hear, because Kāśī has been heard by them once. Only the mind of diligent person here meditates properly because Kāśī, the source of all authorities, is pondered over by it. The intellect of intelligent persons here comprehends everything, because the abode of Dhūrjati has been made its object.

26. Better indeed are those grains and grass blades, even though wafted by wind and fallen within Kāśī, than those people who have not seen Kāśī.

27. Today, my life-span extending over two Parārdhas has become fruitful, because in the course of that period the city of Kāśīkā, rare to be visited, has been attained by me.

28. Wonderful is my asset of righteousness, astonishing is the weightiness of my fortune, since I have seen Kāśī today that has been thought over for a long time.

29. The tree of my austerities sprinkled with the water of devotion to Śiva, has borne the abundant fruits of all cherished desires.

30. Various things have been created by me in the course of my creative activities. But Kāśī that has been created by Viśveśa is unique in itself.'

31. Brahmā, who was delighted in his mind after viewing the city of Vārāṇasī, assumed the form of an aged Brāhmaṇa and visited the king.

32. With raw rice-grains wet with water in his hand, he proclaimed *Svasti* unto the king. He was saluted by the king and offered a seat which he occupied.

33. The king duly honoured him by standing up and offering the seat and the like. On being asked the purpose of his visit, the Brāhmaṇa said to the king:

The Brāhmaṇa said:

34. O king, I am an aged person staying here for a long time. You may not know me but I know that you are Ripuñjaya (in your previous birth) or conqueror of enemies!

35. Hundreds of kings have been seen by me. They distributed much by way of monetary gifts. They successfully fought many battles. They regularly performed sacrifices. They controlled their sense-organs.

36. They eschewed the group of six enemies (lust, anger etc.). They were of excellent conduct. They possessed Sattva quality. They mastered learning. They were experts in statecraft and polity.

37. They are clever yet merciful and chivalrous. They abide by the vow of truthfulness. They are on a par with the Earth in forbearance. By their majesty and gravity they have excelled oceans.

38. They have conquered anger and are brave. They are the source of origin of gentleness and of handsome features, being richly endowed with these and other good qualities. Thus they have amassed good reputation as their asset.

39. But, O saintly king, generally among these kings, two or three of your extremely sacred, good qualities have not been seen by me.

40. You consider your subjects as members of your family. You consider Brāhmaṇas as your deity. You have great austerities to your credit. In this regard the other kings are unlike you.

41. O Divodāsa, you are blessed. You are worthy of honour due to your good qualities. You are worthy of the adoration of all good persons. Afraid of you, even the Devas do not go astray.

42. Of what avail unto you, O king, is the panegyric of Brāhmaṇas like me who are devoid of desires? What can we do? The group of your good qualities makes us your eulogizers.

43. May this chitchat be set apart. I shall state the thing relevant at present. O king, I am desirous of performing a sacrifice. Hence I seek your help.

44. O king, this kingdom has a benign king in you. It is the receptacle of all prosperities. I have some assets in the form of great wealth accumulated by legitimate means.

45. In this land of Karmas, the capital city is the most excellent one. Even on the day of annihilation, there is not reduction in the power to yield benefits in the case of the holy rites.

46. The wealth amassed by persons abiding by the righteous path, should be utilized in Kāśī. Otherwise it will be conducive to pain and distress.

47. O king, no one understands the excellent greatness of Kāśī, except the three-eyed Śāmbhu, the bestower of all wisdom.

48. I think that you are highly blessed since you rule Kāśī, the excellent *Tanu* (physical form) of Viśvabhartṛ (Lord Śiva), as a result of merits incurred in the course of many hundreds of births.

49. This has been decided by great sages that Kāśī is the essence of the three worlds, the essence of the three Vedas and the greatest essence of the three aims of life.

50. This city is protected, thanks to the blessings of Viśveśa, by you. By the protection of even one in Kāśī (it is as good as) the three worlds protected.

51. O sinless one, I shall mention another thing conducive to your welfare if it appeals to you. Viśveśa alone should always be propitiated by means of all rites.

52. Never look upon the Lord of the universe like other gods, O king. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Candra and Arka are mere playthings of Dhūrjaṭi.

53. What is conducive to your welfare has been told by me, since kings should be properly advised by Brāhmaṇas desirous of their ultimate benefit. Otherwise what have I to do with such (anxious) thoughts?

54-57. When the Brāhmaṇa kept quiet after speaking this, the excellent king replied:

The king said:

O excellent Brāhmaṇa, whatever has been spoken by you has been grasped by me in the heart. I am at your service in the matter of helping you who are desirous of performing sacrifice.

Take away all the requisites for the sacrifice from my treasury. Whatever I have in the kingdom consisting of seven constituent elements, you are the lord unto that entirely. With single-minded attention go ahead with the sacrifice. Consider that everything you desire has already been accomplished. In my rule over the kingdom, O Brāhmaṇa, I have no selfish interest.

I do endeavour for helping others with my own person, sons and wives.

58. It has been said by learned men that for kings the sole duty is the protection of the subjects. It is far superior to sacrificial rites and even Tīrthas.

59. The fire arising out of the suffering of the subjects is fiercer and more terrible than the fire of thunderbolt which can reduce to ash two or three persons (only) whereas the former destroys the kingdom, the family and the physical frame (of the king).

60. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, whenever I feel the desire for having the valedictory bath after a sacrifice, I bathe myself with the waters from the feet of Brāhmaṇas.

61. The offerings I make in the mouth of a Brāhmaṇa, O excellent Brāhmaṇa of high intelligence, are, I think, better than sacrificial rites.

62. Among all the desires in my heart, this one is more dominant that at least someone should be seen today requesting for something, even my own body.

63. Oh! Good! My desire has become fulfilled after many days that today you have come to my abode begging for something, O Brāhmaṇa.

64. With the mind concentrated, O Brāhmaṇa, perform many sacrifices with ample monetary gifts. Take it that assistance in everything has been rendered already.

65. On hearing this speech of the virtuous and highly intelligent king, Brahmā, the Creator, became pleased in his mind. He gathered together the requisites for sacrifice.

66. Getting the help of the saintly King Divodāsa, the Lotus-born One performed in Kāśī ten great horse-sacrifices.

67. As the interspaces of the firmament were pervaded by the columns of smoke from the Homas, the firmament has not given up the bluish colour ever since.

68. Since that time onwards, that Tīrtha has become well-known all over the world. The Tīrtha named Daśāśvamedha in Vārāṇasī is the bestower of auspiciousness.

69. Formerly that Tīrtha was known by the name Rudrasaras. It later became 'Daśāśvamedhika' due to its taking over by Brahmā.

70. Thereafter, the heavenly river came into contact with it in association with Bhagīratha. Hence that excellent Tīrtha became extremely meritorious and sacred.

71. After installing the Liṅga Daśāśvamedheśa there, Brahmā stayed there itself. Even till today he has not left Kāśī.

72. He did not find any vulnerable point in that king who was extremely interested in pious acts. Hence what could Brahmā have said after going to Lord Śiva?

73. He realized the power of the holy place. Meditating on Śiva, the Lord of the universe, Brahmā installed Brahmeśvara and remained there itself.

74. It is certain that Kāśī is the supreme form of Viśveśa. Since I serve it, Śambhu will not get angry with me.

75. Who is silly enough to leave after arriving at Kāśī capable of removing Karmas acquired in the course of many births?

76. It is but natural that the body of the Lord of Viśva, the annihilator of the distress of the universe, should feel all the more distressed through the great fire of separation from Kāśī.

77. After attaining Kāśī, the destroyer of masses of sins, if anyone leaves it, he should be known as a human beast, averse to the supreme bliss.

78. If Kāśī is attained by the blessings of Īśa, it should not be abandoned by a person desirous of the glory of liberation after discarding the hellish worldly evils.

79. If anyone of wicked intention abandons Kāśī and goes elsewhere, the outcome of the fruit of the four aims of life surely slips down from his hands.

80. Who is silly enough to abandon it after attaining Kāśī, the destroyer of mass of sin, the heightener of excellent merit and the bestower of the bliss of salvation?

81. Where does one get that happiness in Satyaloka? Where is that happiness in the region of Viṣṇu—the happiness that is obtained in Kāśī even after resorting to it for half a minute.

82. After having come to this decision about the various good qualities of Vārāṇasī, O sage, Druhiṇa (God Brahmā) did not return to Mandara mountain.

Skanda said:

83. O son of Mitra and Varuṇa, I shall narrate the great-

ness of Daśāśvamedha in Kāśī, the crest-jewel of all holy spots.

84. Whatever sacred rite, even if it is very small, is performed after reaching Daśāśvamedhika, the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas, it is said to be everlasting.

85-86. Holy bath, liberal gifts, *Japa*, *Homa*, *Svādhyāya*, worship of a deity, offer of twilight prayers, libation and *Śrāddha* in veneration of the ancestors, everything in Daśāśvamedha is holy. By taking a single bath in Daśāśvamedha Tīrtha and by visiting the Lord of Daśāśvamedha, an excellent man is rid of all sins.

87. On the first day of the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha, the devotee should take the holy dip in the Daśāśvamedha Tīrtha. He is rid of congenital sins.

88. By taking a holy dip in the Rudra Sarovara on the second day of the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, the sins committed in two births perish instantaneously.

89. An excellent man, taking bath on the days in the following order (i.e. third day, fourth day etc.) till the tenth day in the bright half of the month shall get rid of the sins of as many births (e.g. second day—two births, third day—three births, fourth day—four births etc.).

90. On the Daśaharā day that removes the sins of ten births, the devotee should take his holy dip in the Daśāśvamedhika Tīrtha. He shall never experience the torture of Yama.

91. By visiting Daśāśvamedheśa Liṅga on the Daśaharā Tithi, one is undoubtedly absolved of sins acquired in the course of ten births.

92. If one takes his holy dip on the Daśaharā day and worships the excellent Daśāśvamedheśa Liṅga with great devotion, the fate of being conceived in a womb never touches him.

93. In the Rudrasaraś, the man should perform the annual pilgrimage extending over the whole of a fortnight in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha. He is never assailed by obstacles.

94. Certainly, one obtains the benefit of the valedictory baths of ten horse-sacrifices by taking the holy dip in the Daśāśvamedha Tīrtha on the Daśaharā day.

95. On the western bank of the celestial river, one should bow down to Daśahareśvara. He is the holiest of the holy. He never experiences wretchedness.

96. What is glorified as the southern door of the inner shrine at Kāśī, there the devotee should visit Brahmeśvara. He shall be honoured in the world of Brahmā.

97. Thus till the arrival of Viśveśvara, the highly intelligent Druhiṇa stayed in Vārāṇasī in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa.

98. The eminent king Divodāsa got a Brahmaśālā built for the sake of Brahmā in the guise of an aged Brāhmaṇa, when he concluded the Yajña.

99. The beautiful Brahmaśālā is near Brahmeśvara. Brahmā set his abode there making the atmosphere reverberating with the recitation of Vedic passages.

100. Thus, O holy Brāhmaṇa, the extremely great importance of the Daśāśvamedha Tīrtha has been recounted to you. It is destructive of all sins.

101. By listening to this holy chapter and narrating it with faith (Śraddhā), an excellent man obtains the world of Brahmā.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

Śiva's Attendants Go to Vārāṇasī

Agasti said:

1. O Lord who are the foremost among the knowers of Brahman, an unusually interesting story of Brahmā has been narrated. What did Śambhu do, when Brahmā too stayed there itself?

Skanda said:

2. O Agastya, O blessed one, when Brahmā too stayed at Kāśī, Giriśa who was extremely afflicted in mind, began to think.

3. 'That city of Kāśī is a fascinating place. Such a city has never come within the range of my vision.

4. Whoever goes to that city stays behind. Indeed the Yoginīs having come into contact with Kāśī have become Ayoginīs (non-Yoginīs).

5. Even the thousand-rayed Sun has become ineffective. Even Vidhi, clever in arranging everything, has not been able to accomplish my object.'

6-7. After thinking thus, the Lord of Devas called many of his attendants and sent them saying, "Oh, go quickly to the city of Vārāṇasī. After going quickly, find out what the Yoginīs do. What is that Sun-god doing and what Vidhi is doing."

8-15. He called them by their respective names and sent them with due honour. O Śaṅkukarṇa, O Mahākāla, Ghaṅṭākārṇa, Mahodara, Somanandin, Nandiṣeṇa, Kālapīṅgala, Kukkuṭa, Kuṅḍodara, Mayūrākṣa, Bāṇa, Gokarna, Tāraka, Tilaparṇa, Sthūlakarṇa, Dṛmicāṇḍa, Prabhāmaya, Sukeśa, Vindati, O Chāga, Kapardin, Piṅgalākṣaka, Vīrabhadra, O Kirāta, Caturmukha, Nikumbhaka, Pañcākṣa, O Bhārabhūta, Tryaksa, Kṣemaka, Lāṅgalin, Virādha, Sumukha, Āśādhi—all of you are my sons just as these Skanda and Heramba, like this, Naigameya, like this Śākha and Viśākha and Nandī and Bhṛṅgī. Despite your presence, though you possess excessive valour, I do not get any news of Kāśī, nor of King Divodāsa, nor of the Yoginīs, the Sun and Brahmā. Hence let two of you go. This Śaṅkukarṇa and Mahākāla are capable of making even Kāla tremble. Let them go to find out the news of Vārāṇasī and let them return hurriedly "

16-17 Taking a vow accordingly, they quickly reached the city of Vārāṇasī. Just as one, howsoever clever he may be, gets deluded the very moment he sees the tricks of a juggler, so were Śaṅkukarṇa and Mahākāla enamoured as soon as they saw Kāśī.

They thought thus:

18. Oh, how wonderful is the great power of delusion! Oh, what a misfortune! The unwise go away elsewhere after attaining Kāśī, the mass of liberation.

19. Even the salvation which has been achieved slips out of the hands of those persons by whom Kāśī, the ground of great blessings, has been abandoned.

20. If one takes bath even with hot water at Kāśī even the valedictory baths of all Yajñas are excelled. Who shall abandon (such) Kāśī?

21. Even if a single flower is offered on the top of Śiva

Linga at Kāśī the merit thereof is the same as that of a gift of ten gold pieces? Who shall leave that Kāśī?

22. They say that even the position of Indra is insignificant (in comparison with the status) one obtains by means of a single prostration in front of Śiva at Kāśī. Who will forsake that Kāśī?

23. By feeding a single Brāhmaṇa to his satisfaction at Kāśī, one gets more merit than that of Vājapeya (sacrifice). Who will forsake that Kāśī?

24. By duly making the gift of a single cow to a Brāhmaṇa at Kāśī, one gets the merit of gifting ten thousand cows. Which sensible man forsakes that Kāśī?

25. By installing a single Liṅga at Kāśī, one establishes the lordship of three worlds. Who will forsake that Kāśī?

26. Both of them resolved thus; they installed two meritorious Liṅgas and permanently stayed there. They have never left (Kāśī) till today.

27. By visiting Śaṅkukarṇeśvara Liṅga adored by the attendant Śaṅkukarṇa, a creature is never born in the great womb of any mother.

28. By worshipping Śaṅkukarṇeśvara on the north-western side of Viśveśa, a man never re-enters the terrible ocean of mundane existence.

29. Where can one have any fear after bowing down to, adoring and eulogizing Mahākāleśvara Liṅga adored by the attendant Mahākāla?

Skanda said:

30. Śaṅkukarṇa and Mahākāla were late by a great deal of time. Knowing this the omniscient Lord despatched two other Gaṇas.

31. "O Ghaṅṭākarna, you come. O highly intelligent Mahodara, both of you go to Kāśī quickly to know the situation there."

32. Thus, these two Gaṇas after reaching the great city Kāśī, have not returned till today. They remained at some place there itself.

33. After duly installing Ghaṅṭākarnēśvara Liṅga at Kāśī, the excellent Gaṇa Ghaṅṭākarna took excessive delight in it.

34. He dug a sacred pit there itself for performing the

rite of ablution of the Liṅga and meditating upon the Liṅga in the usual manner does not leave Kāśī till today.

35. To the west thereof, Mahodara became engrossed in meditating on Śiva. Even today, O Pot-born Sage, he meditates on Mahodareśvara Liṅga.

36. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, after visiting Mahodareśvara in Vārāṇasī, one never enters the cavity of a mother's belly.

37. After taking the holy dip in the Ghaṇṭākarnahrada and visiting Lord Vyāseśvara, if a devotee dies elsewhere, he will be deemed one that has died at Vārāṇasī.

38. After duly performing Śrāddha in the great Tīrtha, a devotee shall redeem seven ancestors, even if they are suffering in hell.

39. Even today, after dipping down in that holy pit, if one becomes very attentive for a moment, he surely hears the ringing sound of the bells of the great worship of Viśveśvara.

40-41. O Pot-born One, the ancestors say: "Will not there be one offering gingelly seeds and water in our family in the pure waters of Ghaṇṭākarna?" Persons belonging to their family, after performing the libatory rite in the great Hrada Ghaṇṭākarna at Kāśī have attained great supernatural powers.

Skanda said:

42-43. When the Gaṇa Ghaṇṭākarna had gone and when Mahodara too had gone, the Enemy of Smara (Lord Śiva) became wonderstruck. Shaking his head frequently and smiling again and again, Hara said in his mind: 'Oh Kāśī! I know you well that you have a great power of bewitching others.

44. Those who are conversant with the affairs of yore praise you as the destroyer of great delusion. But they do not know this aspect of Kāśī that it is a place possessing a great power of creating delusion.

45. I shall be sending all others and you will enchant them. Thus I know, Kāśī, you, the enchanting herb.

46. Still I shall send all the attendants I have. Wise men do not stop their endeavour in a task that has to be accomplished.

47. Stopping of endeavour should never be resorted to by wise people. Their continuous endeavour can even avert adverse fate.

48. The Sun and the Moon in the firmament, though assailed by Svarbhānu (Rāhu) never abandon till today their endeavour in regard to what they have undertaken.

49. Being adverse in one place, fate frequently frustrates actions. In another place all the actions become fruitful by concentration on adequate effort.

50. It is the Karma performed before (in previous birth) that is called *Dava* (fate) and not anything else. Effort should be made by a sensible man to eradicate it.

51. Foodstuff that is kept in a vessel does not enter the mouth merely by force of fate. By the actions of hands and mouth, it shall enter the cavity of the belly!

52. After justifying endeavour as one that certainly triumphs over fate, the Lord sent five Gaṇas of great impetuosity.

53. They were Somanandī, Nandiṣeṇa, Kāla, Piṅgala and Kukkuṭa. They too have not returned till today, just as dead Jīvas do not.

54. With a desire to propitiate Śambhu, they too installed Liṅgas after their names and stayed at Kāśī, the source of origin of salvation.

55. By visiting the great Somanandīśvara Liṅga in Nandavana, a man with devotion shall attain the greatest bliss in Somaloka.

56. By visiting Nandiṣeṇeśvara to the north thereof, a man shall get an Ānandasenā (immense delight) and instantaneously conquer even death.

57. By bowing down to the great Liṅga Kāleśvara to the north-west of Gaṅgā, one shall avert being bound with the noose of Kāla for ever.

58. By adoring Piṅgaleśvara, a little to the north of Kāleśa, one shall obtain knowledge of the form of Piṅgala and attain identity therewith.

59. Those who display devotion to Kukkuṭeśvara Liṅga having the shape of hen's egg will never be born in a womb.

Skanda said:

60. When the five Gaṇas, O sage, beginning with Somanandī stayed on at Ānandakānana, Sthāṇu said:

61-63. "This alone should be done by us, if due reflection is made. Let these persons of mine stay there under this pretext.

Even if the Pramathas of greatness and virility enter Vārāṇasī, it is beyond doubt that even (it is as good as) I have entered it. I shall send successively whatever attendant I have. When all have gone, I shall also go.”

64. After deciding thus within the heart, four of his Pramatha Gaṇas were sent by the Trident-bearing Lord of Devas.

65. The Gaṇas named Mayūra, Kuṇḍodara, Bāṇa and Gokaṛṇa resorted to their Māyā power and entered Kāśī.

66. They employed hundreds of means, but none of them was capable of making Divodāsa agitated or confused.

67. ‘By which action does the Lord become satisfied, if hundreds of offences were committed.’ Pondering thus, they carried on the excellent propitiation of the Liṅga.

68. If a single Liṅga of Śambhu was duly adored here, the Three-eyed Lord may forgive a hundred offences and bestow salvation.

69. Śambhu is not satisfied with *Yajñas*, *Dānas*, *Tapas* and *Vratas* to the same extent as when a Liṅga is duly adored even once.

70. If he is conversant with the procedure of Liṅga worship and is always engaged in the worship of the Liṅga, even if the man possessed two eyes he should be directly conceived as three-eyed.

71. Neither by the gift of a hundred cows nor by the gift of a hundred gold pieces, is that benefit obtained by men which they get by worshipping the Liṅga once (only).

72. That benefit is not obtained by Yāgas like horse-sacrifice, which is obtained by men by worshipping the Liṅga always.

73. After duly bathing the Liṅga, if the devotee sips thrice the water with which it is bathed, the three types of his sins perish quickly.

74. He who bathes his head with the water of the ablution of the Liṅga gets the benefit of holy dip in Gaṅgā, and he becomes free from sin here itself.

75. After visiting an adored Liṅga, if anyone bows down to it even once, doubt arises in respect to his becoming embodied (in the next birth, i.e. he is not born again).

76. If anyone instals a Liṅga with devotion, there is no doubt in this that he becomes free from sins committed in the

course of seven births. On being purified, he attains heaven.'

77. After thinking thus, Liṅgas that destroy great sins were installed in Kāśī by the Gaṇas for quelling the offence against the master.

78. By visiting Kuṇḍodareśvara Liṅga near Lolārka, one becomes rid of all sins and is honoured in the world of Śiva.

79. One is never conceived in womb, if one adores Mayūreśvara on the banks of Asi to the west of Kuṇḍodareśvara Liṅga.

80. The great Bāṇeśvara-Liṅga is to the west of Mayūreśa. Merely by visiting it, one is liberated from all sins.

81. To the west of Antargeha (inner shrine) a devotee should worship the great Liṅga Gokaṛṇeśa in Kāśī at its very entrance. He is never assailed by obstacles.

82. When the devotee of Gokaṛṇeśvara dies, wherever he dies, he does not experience loss of knowledge.

Skanda said:

83. While these four attendants were delaying, the Lord of Gaṇas described the greatness and importance of Kāśī.

84. 'The whole universe is deluded by the Māyā of Viṣṇu. Indeed, this Kāśī is the personified form thereof. It is the sole enchanter of the universe.

85. Setting aside brothers, wives, son, land, house and wealth, even facing death, all resort to Kāśī.

86. While there is nothing to fear from even death at Kāśī, why should the Gaṇas staying there be afraid even of me?

87. To which can Kāśī be compared, where death is an auspicious thing, ashes an embellishment and a loincloth a silk garment?

88. There the maiden (in the form) of Salvation chooses everyone having Prāntyabhūṣaṇa (the Tāraka Upadeśa at the time of death as an embellishment), whether he is rich or poor, a Brāhmaṇa or a Cāṇḍāla.

89. Even Śakra and other Suras are not on a par with a ten-millionth part of the creatures meeting with death at Kāśī and attaining salvation.

90. A creature that dies at Kāśī is bowed to intently by Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa and others with joined palms on their heads.

91. In the state of a corpse, the creature does not become

unclean in Kāśī. Hence I myself touch its ear.

92. A meritorious person who repeats twice or thrice the word *Kāśī* is holier than all holy things. He is the greatest (of all).

93. I have been meditated upon in the heart, I have been served always by that person by whom *Kāśī* has been meditated upon in the heart and by whom *Kāśī* has been served.

94. If a living being serves *Kāśī* with unfaltering mind, I retain him always in my heart assiduously.

95. If one is unable to stay personally, one should make at least one person stay there by hiring him as a resident of the holy place. Certainly, he gets the benefit of the one who resides.

96. Those intelligent men of fortitude, who resolve to stay in *Kāśī* until death, should be known as liberated ones even while alive. They alone are venerable and adorable.'

97. After reflecting thus on the merits of *Vārāṇasī* many times, *Sthāṇu* called other *Gaṇas* and joyously sent them.

98. "O *Tāraka* come on; O clear-minded one, go to that city which *Divodāsa*, the abode of righteousness, rules.

99-101. O *Tilapaṇṇa*, O *Sthūlakarṇa*, O *Dṛmicanḍa*, O *Prabhāmaya*, O *Sukeśa*, O *Vindati*, O *Chāga*, O *Kapardin*, O *Piṅgalākṣaka*, O *Vīrabhadra*, O *Gaṇa* named *Kirāta*, O *Caturmukha*, O *Nikum̐bhaka*, O *Pañcākṣabhāra*, O *Bhūtakya*, O *Tryakṣa*, O *Kṣemaka*, O *Lāṅgalin*, O *Virādha*, O *Sumukha*, O *Āṣāḍhi*, let all the *Gaṇas*, the blessed ones devoted to their master and of steady resolve, go separately."

102. Desirous of finding out a vulnerable point in the king, they kept awake with winkless eyes. Those clever *Gaṇas* adopted many *Māyās*, forms and shapes.

103. Unable to find out his weakness, they wasted the wealth of their reputation and they uttered in disgust, "Ah! What has befallen?" They censured themselves.

Gaṇas said:

104. Fie upon us who were always honoured by our Lord! It is however pitiful indeed that not even a single man could be brought under our control here.

105. Fie upon us who have failed to do the duty toward the Three-eyed Lord who has bestowed favours upon us along with great honour, gift and friendship!

106. What fate shall befall us, since we have blundered in our duty towards our master? Certainly, our residence shall be in a world full of blinding darkness.

107. Alas! At every step those persons will suffer, who do not fulfil the task of the Lord, yet continue to live with unimpaired activities of the sense-organs.

108. The desires of the servants who take a lot after being honoured, but who spoil the task of the Lord, become frustrated.

109. This earth becomes burdened with those servants who do not fulfil the task of their masters and who shamelessly stand in front of the Lord and stare at his face!

110. The earth, the mother of living beings, does not have great unbearable burden, because of mountains, oceans and huge trees but due to that of the traitors to the Lord.

111. Ha! A famous ancient Gāthā (verse) has been remembered by us. It is for that purpose that we will stay here with steady resolve to stick to it.

112. The city of Vārāṇasī is the refuge unto those who have not acquired Puṇyas, whose wealth and longevity have become reduced and who are devoid of all means.

113. The city of Vārāṇasī is the refuge unto those who are depressed due to the weight of sins, who experience repentance and who move up and around everywhere.

114. There is no refuge anywhere except at the city of Vārāṇasī to those who are disloyal traitors to their masters, who are ungrateful and who kill treacherously.

115. After deciding this to be the meaning (implication) of the Gāthā, the Pramathas remained there without their forms being known to King Divodāsa.

116. Though that king was extremely intelligent, he did not come to know (the existence) of those sensible Gaṇas stationed there in various forms and shapes by the power of Īśa.

117. It is surprising that not even Citragupta knows those creatures stationed in Vārāṇasī. Nothing need be said about others residing in the mortal world!

118. Dharmarāṭ (Lord Yama) never gauges fully persons of unbroken power and influence, of unlimited brilliance, who have installed the Liṅgas.

119. Thus, O Pot-born Great Sage, all those Pramathas who have been regularly worshipping Liṅgas do not leave even today Kāśī, the bestower of welfare.

120. O sage, the excellent Gaṇa named Tāraka worships even today the great Liṅga Tārakeśa that bestows the redeeming Tāraka Jñāna.

121. After showing steady devotion to Tārakeśvara Liṅga, Tāraka knowledge is easily acquired by excellent men.

122. By visiting Tilaparṇeśvara Liṅga installed by Tilaparṇa, there cannot remain sin, even of the size of a gingelly seed sticking to one.

123. After duly performing the worship of Sthūlakarṇeśvara Liṅga, a man attains excellent merit. He never attains a wretched state.

124. To the west thereof, the devotee should propitiate Dṛmicāṇḍeśvara Liṅga and Prabhāmaya Liṅga. He is never assailed by sins.

125. After visiting Prabhāmayeśvara Liṅga, even if the devotee dies elsewhere, he shall go to Śivaloka through a Prabhāmaya (refulgent) vehicle.

126. After adoring Sukeśeśvara in the Harikeśa grove, the devotee does not bear the Ṣāṭkausika ('made of the six dhātus') body repeatedly.

127. By adoring Vindatiśa near Bhīmacāṇḍī, the man casts off even the most horrible sin and attains eternal salvation.

128. By visiting the great Liṅga Chāgaleśa stationed near Pitriśvara, no one touches even Prākṛta sin like a brute.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

The Greatness of Piśācamocana Tīrtha¹

Skanda said:

1. O Pot-born One, I shall narrate the greatness and importance of Kapardīśa Liṅga. May Your Holiness kindly listen attentively.

1. This tank is on the western skirt of Vārāṇasī. By performing Śrāddha of a person who died in an accident etc., the (dead) person becomes free from the state of a goblin. People drive spike in the trunk of a tree in the temple area. (BCL 267-268)

2-3. A certain leader of the Gaṇas named Kapardin, a very great lover of Śaṁbhu, installed the Liṅga of Śaṁbhu to the north of Pitriśa. In front of it, he dug a pit named Vimalodaka. The very touch of the water thereof makes man free from impurities.

4. I shall narrate a traditional legend exactly as the events took place there formerly in Tretā Yuga. O Kumbhayoni, listening to it dispels sin.

5. There was an excellent Pāsupata (devotee of Paśupati) named Vālmiki. The sage performed penance adoring Kapardiśa.

6-7. Once in the Hemanta season in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, that ascetic took his bath in the holy Tīrtha Vimalodaka at midday and then took Bhasmasnāna (smearing holy ash) all over the body. He performed all the midday holy rites on the right side of the Liṅga.

8-9. He placed (applied) the holy dust on the forehead, he meditated on the identity of the soul and the Absolute, repeated the Pañcākṣarī Vidyā (*namaḥ śivāya*) and then pondered over Lord Kapardin. After making the prescribed number of circumambulations along the Saṁhāra Mārga (Apasavya or anticlock-wise direction), he then loudly uttered 'Om huḍum' thrice.

10-12. Prefixing the Praṇava he uttered the Svaras (musical notes) Ṣadja etc. and sang. With great delight he danced depicting the Hasta Mudrās, Aṅgahāras, delightful Cārīmaṇḍalas etc. The sage of great penance then sat for a short while on the banks of the lake. Then he saw a terrible Rākṣasa of hideous features. The bones at the temples and cheeks were dried up. The whole face was pale. The tawny eyes were sunk in their cavities.

13. The ends of hairs were rough and dishevelled. The neck was very long and lean, the nose flat to the extreme, the lips dry and the teeth long and projected.

14. His head was very huge. The hairs on the scalp stood erect. The lobes of ears were hanging loose. He was terrible with his tawny moustache and beard.

15. The lolling, hanging tongue was fearful; the back of the neck was very rough. The bones of the collar region were stout, tough and the two broad shoulders increased his ferociousness.

16. The armpits were deep; the pair of arms were dry and short. The fingers of the palms were separated. The big nails were depressed.

17. The chest was excessively rough and dusty and slightly protruding; the skin of the belly seemed to touch the back. He was fierce with the ample waist and hips. The sacral bone was devoid of flesh.

18. The two buttocks were loose and suspended. The penis was short with shrunk testicles. The thigh-bones were free from (i.e., without) flesh and long. The stout bones of the kneecap appeared like a cage of bones.

19. Mere skin and bones had remained in his body; the entire physical form seemed to be full of sinews and tubular vessels. The shanks were long. He was terrible with the big bones of the ankles.

20. The feet were very broad. The toes were long, thin and crooked. The entire body was prominent with the skin and bone over-spread with sinews.

21. He was awful, terrible in size with thick growth of hairs. He appeared to be very hungry. He looked like a tree burnt in forest fire. The eyes were rolling and unsteady.

22-24. He looked an embodiment of the (poetic) sentiment of fear (*Bhayānaka*). He struck terror in all living beings. On seeing that ghost terrifying the hearts of onlookers though piteous in the face, the old ascetic boldly asked him: "Who are you? Whence have you come here? Wherefore is this condition of yours? O Rākṣasa, I am asking with a compassionate heart. Speak out without fear. We ascetics are adequately protected with the holy ash as a coat of mail. We repeat the thousand names of Śiva (for welfare)."

25. On hearing the utterance of the ascetic joyously, the Rākṣasa said to the sympathetic sage, with palms joined in reverence:

Rākṣasa said:

26. O holy Sir, O excellent ascetic, if you have any sympathy, listen for a short while with great attention. I shall recount the facts about me.

27. On the banks of Godāvārī, there is a region named Pratiṣṭhāna. I was a Brāhmaṇa living there on *Tīrtha-pratigraha* ('monetary gifts from pilgrims').

28. As a result of that act, I have attained this miserable plight in a desert region which is highly terrible, devoid of water and trees.

29. O sage, I have spent a great deal of time in residing there, hungry, distressed with thirst and enduring chillness and heat.

30. When huge clouds shower great downpour day and night, when the wind blows in the rainy season, I do not have anything to cover myself.

31. Those who do not make monetary gifts on festive occasions but accept *Tīrtha-pratigraha* (*Dakṣiṇā* from pilgrims) attain birth like this, involving great misery.

32. After a great deal of time had elapsed, O sage, once a Brāhmaṇa boy was seen arriving there at the desert region.

33. At the time of sunrise, he did not perform the Sandhyā rites. After urinating and voiding the bowels, he did not perform the purificatory rites of *Śauca* and *Ācamana*.

34. On seeing him devoid of *Śauca* and *Sandhyā Karmas* and behaving like a *Muktakaccha* (Buddhist heretic) I passed into his body for the purpose of enjoyment.

35. O sage, because of my ill luck that Brāhmaṇa boy came to this holy city along with a merchant due to greed of wealth.

36. O excellent sage, that Brāhmaṇa went into the interior of the city. Along with his sins I came out of his body instantaneously.

37. By the command of Śiva, O storehouse of austerities, we ghosts and great sins do not have the right of entry in Vārāṇasī.

38. Even today those sins wait outside for him to come out. They are afraid of the Pramathas guarding the border.

39. O ascetic, till today we stood waiting with the hope that he would come out today, tomorrow or the day after.

40. Even today he has not come out. Even today our hope does not cease to be. Thus, fettered by the ropes of hope, we stay on though without any ground to stand on.

41. I shall speak of today's miracle. O ascetic, listen to it

now itself. I think something very good is bound to happen.

42. Everyday with great hunger we go as far as Prayāga with a desire for something to eat, but we do not get it anywhere.

43. Everywhere, in every forest, there are fruit-bearing trees. There are reservoirs with clear water on the earth at every step.

44. There are other types of foodstuff easily accessible to all. There are plenty of varieties of beverages everywhere.

45-47. But, the moment they come within our sight they move far away. Fortunately, O sage, on seeing a pilgrim today afflicted with hunger as I was, I approached him thinking that I should eat him forcibly. I was about to seize him quickly when words purified by the name of Śiva came out of his lotus-like mouth—words which removed all obstacles.

48. By remembering Śiva's name, my sin too became reduced. Hence I got entrance here.

49. I was not immediately observed by the Pramathas at the border, since Yama too does not see those who have Śiva's name always sounding in their ears.

50. Now I came as far as the border of *Antargeha* (Inner Shrine) along with him. That pilgrim went into the inside. I have stayed behind.

51. O sage, having seen you, I regard myself honoured now. O merciful one, save me from this terrible state.

52-54. On hearing these words of the ghost, that compassionate ascetic thought in his mind: 'Fie upon those men who work only for their own sake! All the beasts, birds etc. are mere fillers of their own bellies. In this world only he is blessed who is always engaged for the sake of others. With my power of penance, I shall undoubtedly redeem this sin-distressed ghost who has sought refuge in me.'

55-56. After reflecting thus in his mind the excellent sage said to the Piśāca: "Take bath in this lake Vimaloda for the sake of quelling your sins. By the power of this Tīrtha and the visit paid to Kapardīśa, O Piśāca, your Piśācahood will become weak and then perish."

57. On hearing these words of the sage who was delighted in his mind, the ghost with joy in his heart, bowed down to him. With the palms joined together he said to him:

58-59. "O excellent sage, O my lord, I do not get water even to drink, where then is the possibility of bath? As the deities of water will protect it, there can be talk of drinking here? Even the touch of water is very difficult to get."

On hearing this statement of the ghost, he experienced great pleasure.

60. The ascetic who was capable of redeeming the whole universe said: "You take this holy ash and apply it to your broad forehead.

61. Due to the greatness of this holy ash, O ghost, no one anywhere will harass or create obstacles to even great sinners.

62. On seeing the forehead of even a sinner whitened by the *Vibhūti* (holy ash), the servants of Yama become terrified of the Pāśupata missile and take to flight.

63. On seeing a pond marked (spoiled) with bones, banners etc., wayfarers keep themselves away from them, and similarly the servants of Yama from one who is marked with holy ash and flowers.

64. Even the beasts of prey all-round never approach an excellent man fortified with *Bhūti* as a protecting coat of mail and guarded by *Śivamantras*.

65. If anyone devoutly smears with *Bhasma* sanctified by *Śiva Mantra*, the forehead, the chest, the root of the arm, cruel beings do not injure him.

66-67. The holy ash is declared as *Rakṣā* because it guards us day and night from all the wicked animals. Since it causes prosperity it is called *Vibhūti*. Since it illuminates (*Bhāsana*) the world or dispels (*Bhartsana*) Avidyā and its creations, it is called *Bhasma*. Since it minces sins it is called *Pāmsu*. And since it eradicates (*Kṣāraṇa*) sin, it is called *Kṣāra*. The terms are thus (etymologically) explained by scholars."

68. He took the *Bhasma* from its receptacle and placed it in the hand of the ghost. He received it with veneration and applied it over the forehead.

69. On seeing the Piśāca marked with *Vibhūti*, the deities of waters did not prevent him as he was ready to dive into water.

70. By the time he took his bath, drank water and came out of the lake his Piśācahood disappeared. He attained a divine body.

71. Wearing divine garlands and garments, applying divine scents and unguents he got into a divine vehicle and reached the aerial path.

72. As he went along the sky that ascetic was bowed down to by the Piśāca. He spoke loudly, "O sinless holy Sir, I have been liberated by you.

73. Thanks to the greatness of this Tīrtha. I attained a divine physical form far different from that miserable birth extremely censured (by all).

74. From today onwards, this Tīrtha shall be known by the name *Piśācamocana*. Through ablution, this Tīrtha shall eradicate Piśācahood of others as well.

75-76. If in this highly meritorious Tīrtha, men take their holy dip, offer balls of rice along with Sandhyā prayers and libations, their Pitṛs and Pitāmahas who by ill-luck had acquired Piśācahood will cast off the same and attain the greatest goal (Mokṣa).

77. Today, O ascetic, on the fourteenth lunar day of the bright half of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the rites of ablution etc. should be carried out (as they are) conducive to the eradication of Piśācahood.

78. Those men who perform annual pilgrimage here will be liberated from the sin of *Tīrtha-pratigraha* (acceptance of *dāna* in a Tīrtha).

79. By taking the holy dip at Piśācamocana, worshipping Kapardīśa and making gift of cooked food there, men can be fearless elsewhere (i.e. there is no need to be afraid of death elsewhere).

80. On the fourteenth lunar day in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, if a devotee takes his holy dip (in the Tīrtha) before Kapardīśa, he shall not attain Piśācahood even if he dies elsewhere."

81. After saying thus the divine person bowed down to that ascetic again and again. The blessed one attained divine goal.

82. O Pot-born One, after witnessing that great miracle, the ascetic propitiated Kapardīśvara and attained salvation in due course of time.

83. Beginning with this, O great sage, the Tīrtha at Vārāṇasī, Piśācamocana, the destroyer of all sins, attained great renown.

84. If in the Paiśācamocana Tīrtha one feeds a single Śivayogin, one attains the benefit of feeding ten million persons.

85. By listening to this holy chapter with restrained mind, a man is never attacked by goblins, ghosts and vampires.

86. This great narrative should be assiduously read to bring about peace and quiescence among children attacked by *Bālagrahas* ('goblins attacking children').

87. If a man proceeds to another land, after listening to this narrative, he will be nowhere assailed by thieves, tigers, Piśācas etc.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

Gaṇeśa Proceeds on a Mission to Kāśī

Skanda said:

1. O Kum̄bhayoni (Pot-born Sage), listen. I shall speak to you about the Liṅgas that the other Gaṇas installed there at Kāśī.

2. The Liṅga of Śambhu named Piṅgalākhyeśa was installed to the north of Kapardīśa by the Gaṇa named Piṅgala.

3. Merely by visiting it, sins are eradicated. Vīrabhadra was a great favourite of the Trident-bearing Lord of Devas.

4. Even today, one should steadily meditate upon Vīrabhadreśvara Liṅga. Merely by visiting it attainment of heroic powers takes place.

5. By worshipping Vīrabhadreśvara behind Avimukteśvara, one shall be victorious. He will never face obstacles or defeat in battle.

6. O sage, Vīrabhadra himself possesses the body of a hero. He destroys the mass of obstacles of the residents of Avimukta.

7. By worshipping Vīrabhadra accompanied by his auspicious and splendid spouse Bhadrakālī a man obtains the benefit of residence at Kāśī.

8. Kirāteśa Liṅga was installed to the south of Kedāra in

Kāśī by Kirāta. It bestows freedom from fear on the devotees.

9. A glorious Gaṇa, Caturmukha, is meditating steadily even today on Caturmukheśvara Liṅga near Vṛddhākāleśa.

10. The devotees of Caturmukheśa are honoured by the groups of Suras in heaven including Brahmā. They are endowed with all pleasures.

11. After visiting Nikumbheśvara adored by the Gaṇa Nikumbha and worshipping it, if one proceeds to (his) village one shall surely attain the fulfilment of the task. He is honoured in Śivaloka near Kubereśa.

12. After duly adoring Pañcakeśa, the great Liṅga to the south of Mahādeva in Kāśī, the man shall attain the power of remembering previous birth.

13. By meditating on Bhārabhūteśvara Liṅga adored by Bhārabhūta Gaṇa, at the northern gate of Antargṛha, the devotee shall stay in Śivapura.

14. Those by whom Bhārabhūteśvara Liṅga has not been visited in Kāśī, have become burdens unto the earth like non-fruit-bearing trees.

15. Tryakṣeśvara, a great Liṅga, is being meditated upon even today by the Gaṇa named Tryakṣa in front of the Three-eyed Lord, O Pot-born One.

16. Those who are devotees of that Liṅga become three-eyed ones (like Śiva) on death. No doubt need be entertained in this regard.

17. The leader of Gaṇas named Kṣemaka who assumed a form himself in Kāśī, even today steadily meditates on the omnipresent Viśveśvara.

18. If a devotee worships Kṣemaka, a great Gaṇa, in Vārāṇasī, all his obstacles get dissolved. There shall be welfare (for him) at every step.

19. If someone has gone to another land, Kṣemaka should be worshipped with a desire for his safe return. He will immediately return safe and sound.

20. By visiting Lāṅgalīśvara adored by Lāṅgalin on the northern side of Viśveśa a man never falls ill.

21. By worshipping even once Lāṅgalīśa, one obtains the entire benefit of the gift of five ploughs. It endows all (kinds of) riches.

22. By propitiating Virādheśvara worshipped by the Gaṇa named Virādha, one is free from crimes though one might have committed all the offences.

23. A crime committed by the residents of Kāśī, becomes wiped off instantaneously by the adoration of Virādheśa.

24. By assiduously bowing down to Virādheśa to the south-west of Daṇḍapāṇi, one is freed from all offences; there is no doubt about it.

25. By visiting Sumukheśa, a great Liṅga, that faces west and that was adored by the Gaṇa named Sumukha, one is rid of all sins.

26. By taking the holy dip in Pilipilā Tīrtha and visiting Sumukheśa one will always see the pleasant-faced Dharmarāja (god of Death) and not the wry-faced one.

27. By devoutly visiting on the new-moon day in the month of Āsāḍha, the Liṅga named Āṣāḍhīśvara adored by Āṣāḍhī, a man becomes rid of all sins.

28. By worshipping Āṣāḍhīśa to the north of Bhārabhūteśa, on the new-moon day of the month of Āṣāḍha, one is never distressed by sins.

29. By undertaking the annual Yātrā (pilgrimage) on the fourteenth or fifteenth lunar day in the Śuci months of Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha in the bright half, a man becomes free from sins.

Skanda said:

30-31. O sage, when these Gaṇas stayed behind in Vārāṇasī after installing Liṅgas after their names for the delight of Viśveśa, Viśveśa thought again regarding the city of Kāśī: 'Which good one shall I send today and get the greatest delight?

32. The Yoginīs, the hot-rayed Sun, the Creator, the Gaṇas beginning with Śaṅkukarṇa — these have not returned from Kāśī like the rivers that flow into the ocean.

33. Certainly those who have entered Kāśī have entered my abdomen. They have no outlet like *Havis* offered in a well-kindled fire.

34. Those who are engaged in the worship of Liṅgas and have permanent stay in Kāśī are undoubtedly my mobile Liṅgas.

35. Mobile and immobile, sentient and otherwise—all are my Liṅgas. Those who hate them are wicked ones.

36. Those in whose mouth there is Vārāṇasī, those in

whose ears there is the story of Viśveśvara—only they are the Liṅgas of Kāśī worthy of being worshipped as I am.

37. Yama will not overpower them from whose mouths these clear words—*Vārāṇasī*, *Kāśī* and *Rudravāsā*—come out.

38. Those who, after reaching Ānanda Kānana, yearn for any other place (city) that is not the place of bliss, remain always devoid of bliss here.

39. Let death come today or after a long time, Kāśī should never be abandoned by men for fear of Kali (Age) and Kāla (god of Death).

40. Inevitable events will take place at every step. It is persons without intellect who abandon Kāśī that is the abode of prosperity.

41. It is better to endure thousands of obstacles at every step in Kāśī and not elsewhere. One should never desire an unimpeded kingdom anywhere else.

42. How many moments (eye-winkings) can prosperity be enjoyed continuously? But Kāśikā yields great pleasure continuously here and hereafter.

43. I, the Lord of the universe, am the lord (here). Kāśikā is the illuminator of salvation. The celestial river has nectarine waves. What is it that this combination of three does not bestow?

44. This city is limited to five Krośas (Krośa = three Kms.); but its prosperity is of unlimited extent. It is the cause of the salvation of a devotee.

45. Certainly my city, Kāśī, alone is the place of permanent rest for those who come and go and are distressed due to the burden of the worldly existence.

46. This pavilion of wish-yielding creepers bearing abundant fruits of fulfilled cherished desires, is called Kāśikā. It is always at the disposal of wayfarers of worldly existence.

47. This Kāśī is the wonderful and distress-dispelling umbrella of the emperor Nirvāṇarāja ('king of liberation'). Its supporting rod is my lifted-up trident.

48. For the acquisition of incessant happiness, Kāśī should never be abandoned by men of meritorious nature who sportingly desire the glory of salvation.

49. Those who permanently take up their residence in my Ānandavana get here the tasty fruits of the glorious salvation.

50. Kāśī enchants even me despite the fact that I am *Nirmama* (free from desire of possessions) and *Nirmoha* (free from delusion). By whom should not that enchantress of the universe be remembered?

51. Her very name is also sweet. It manifests the greatest bliss. Why is she not repeated in *Japa* by those with merits in possession?

52. If people incessantly imbibe the nectarine name of Kāśī, their pathway certainly becomes lustrous and nectarine.

53. I am the Ātman of all. I am free from *Mamatā* (sense of possession). Indeed in this world only those who repeat the name of Kāśī are the people belonging to me.

54. It was after knowing this secret of Vārāṇasī that the Gaṇeśvaras along with the Yoginīs, the Sun and Brahmā stayed there itself and not with any other purpose.

55. If not, how can those Yoginīs, Sun-god, Brahmā and those Gaṇas forsake me and stay elsewhere?

56. A great good has resulted by their staying behind in Kāśī. Even one of them may be able to create split in the kingdom without (the assistance) of another country (intervening).

57. Those who have gained entry are entirely persons having my forms. They will surely try for my arrival there.

58. I shall send others too from my attendants. Though those who have gone there are all excellent ones, yet I too shall go.'

59-60. After reflecting thus Mahādeva called Gajānana and sent him after telling him thus: "O my son, go to Kāśī from here. Staying there, endeavour for the accomplishment of our purpose along with the Gaṇas without any obstacle. Create obstacles in the case of the king."

61. Keeping the command of Dhūrjati on his head, Gaṇādhiśa well conversant with the situation, hastened to Kāśī for a stay there.

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

Manifestation of the Māyā of Gaṇeśa

Skanda said:

1. Thereafter, pondering on the means of facilitating Śambhu's arrival at Kāśī, the Elephant-faced One set off from Mandara mountain, duly taking up the behest of Īśa.

2. The Lord reached Vārāṇasī quickly proceeding on a fast chariot. He assumed the form of a Brāhmaṇa and entered at a time when good ones eulogized him.

3. He became an old astrologer visiting every house. He moved about in the city delighting the citizens.

4. He himself showed dreams to the men during the night and went to their houses in the morning explaining the benefits or otherwise thereof.

5. "In order to kindle your enthusiasm, I shall recount the various activities seen by you in dream in the night today.

6.¹ While sleeping at night a big, deep pond was seen by you in the fourth Yāma. You reached the bank after sinking in the same a couple of times.

7. You sank down and got up many times in the mud slimy with its waters. The outcome of this bad dream shall cause you great fear.

8. A person with shaven head and wearing ochre-coloured robes was seen by you. He will cause you terrible distress.

9. The eclipse of the Sun was seen at night. It will certainly cause great evil. The fact that you saw two rainbows at night, is not conducive to auspiciousness.

10. The Sun came to the West and made the Moon fall to the ground even as he was about to rise up in the sky. This indicates something fearful to the entire kingdom.

11. A pair of banners fighting each other were seen. It is not good. It may only bring about split in the kingdom.

12. You saw yourself being carried to the South even as your hairs and teeth were dropping down. This forebodes something awful to the family.

1. VV 6-19 state the fruits of dreams as was believed then.

13. As the night came to a close, you saw the banner on the top of the palace break down. Know that this will certainly cause ruin of the kingdom. It will cause a great danger.

14. In the dream, the city was flooded with the waves of the ocean of milk. I suspect a great danger to the citizens within three or four fortnights.

15. Since in your dream you have been carried in a monkey-vehicle towards the South, O highly intelligent one, the means to nullify its effect is leaving the city for good.

16. The crying woman that you saw towards the close of the night, without clothes and with the hairs dishevelled is the goddess of glory that has departed.

17. The pot-like pinnacle on the top of the temple was seen by you falling down. Within a few days the kingdom will split.

18. In the dream the city was surrounded by excessively crying herds of deer (barking dogs— Comm.). It will be abandoned (uninhabited) within a month.

19. Certainly some grave mishap unto the residents of this place is being indicated by these falcons, owls, vultures etc. hovering over this city.”

20. In this way, recounting often these evil forebodings of bad dreams, that Lord of Obstacles expelled many of the city-dwellers.

21.¹ He pointed out to some that the transits of the Planets were not good. “Saturn, Venus and Mars are in the same zodiac.

22. This Dhumagraha (Ketu) has pierced through the region of the Great Bear in the firmament and has gone to the West. That indicates ruin unto the king.

23. Saturn has gone beyond the zodiac and thereafter is in its regress-path. It is associated with evil Planets (like Rāhu, Ketu and Mars). It is not considered good.

24. O citizens, the earthquake that happened yesterday seems to cause great trepidation even in my heart.

25. This meteor rose from the North and went quickly towards the South. It then got dissolved in the sky itself with a violent gust of wind and thunderstroke. It is not auspicious.

1. VV 21-29 indicate astrological and other evil omens.

26. This Caityavṛkṣa (holy fig tree) despite its being deep-rooted has been uprooted by the velocity of the violent gust of wind and it has fallen down in the quadrangle. It indicates a great evil.

27. At sunrise the crow has perched itself on the top of a dried-up tree in the East and begins to crow harshly making others very much afraid.

28. Two deer have dodged the hunters and have gone fast through the middle of the shopping complex in front of the citizens. They are inauspicious to them.

29. Even in this autumn season, birds are seen untimely on the mango and Śāla trees. I think it is foreboding of great fear and danger to the inhabitants of the city.”

30. Thus, terror was generated by Vighneśvara in the guise of a false Brāhmaṇa and some citizens were driven away from (forced to quit) the city.

31. By using his Māyā power he entered the female apartments and by recounting events experienced by them, he became an object of confidence of the women.

32. “O lady of auspicious features, hundred sons less by seven were born to you. One of them was riding a horse over a bridge outside, when he fell down and died.

33. This pregnant woman will give birth to a splendid daughter. This woman had been wretched before but now she has become blessed and fine.

34. This woman is extremely endearing to the king and the queens. A pearl ornament from his own bosom has been given to her by the king.

35. I think only five or seven days have passed by. Two villages have been promised to be given to her by the king as his favour.”

36. By saying various things directly experienced, thus, the Brāhmaṇa became one worthy of being honoured by the queens. They began to describe his many good qualities indirectly to the king.

37. “How wonderful! This Brāhmaṇa is handsome and has good behaviour in the same way as he is clever in everything. He is truthful and speaks sparingly.

38. He is not greedy. He is liberal-minded. His conduct is good. He has perfect control over the senses. He is satisfied

with even a little. He is averse to accepting monetary gifts.

39. Anger is subdued by him. His face beams with pleasure. He is never malicious or deceitful. He is grateful. His countenance is cheerful. He is averse to calumny and slander.

40. He counsels what is meritorious. He is a pious-souled one. He observes all vows scrupulously. He is clean and his activities are clean. He is efficient in Śrutis and Smṛtis.

41. He is intelligent and conversant with the holy legends and myths. He is honoured by all and he looks at everything keenly. He is adept in a number of arts. He is the best among those conversant with the treatises on Astronomy.

42. He has forbearance. He is of noble birth. He is not miserly. He enjoys keeping the mind free from impurities. No one else has been seen elsewhere so richly endowed with these good qualities.”

43. Thus those women of the inner apartment spent their time enumerating his good qualities every now and then.

44. Once the chief queen of King Divodāsa named Līlāvati spoke to the king about him on a suitable occasion.

45. “O king, there is an aged, learned Brāhmaṇa having a number of excellent qualities. He is a great embodiment and storehouse of the Brāhmaṇical virtues and Vedic knowledge. You must meet him.”

46. The permission having been given by the king, the queen sent her clever female companion and brought that Brāhmaṇa who appeared like an embodied form of Brāhmaṇical splendour.

47. From a distance the king saw the Brāhmaṇa coming and mentally thought thus, ‘Good qualities are present where excellent form and features are found.’ He became delighted.

48. By going a few steps forward, the king received and honoured him duly. He delighted the king by means of benedictory passages taken from the four Vedas.

49. The king duly bowed down to the Brāhmaṇa and offered him a seat which he occupied. The king and the Brāhmaṇa mutually enquired about each other’s welfare.

50. The excellent Brāhmaṇa and the king were adepts in the art of conversation. They were pleased at the (mutual) questions and answers.

51. At the end of the dialogue the Brāhmaṇa was respect-

fully sent home by the king. Having received great honour and due deference he entered his hermitage.

52. When the Brāhmaṇa had gone back to his hermitage, King Divodāsa extolled the Brāhmaṇa before Līlāvati profusely.

53. "O great queen Līlāvati, O highly intelligent lady fond of good qualities, the Brāhmaṇa has been duly praised. He is more meritorious than the way in which he is eulogized.

54. He knows everything that has already taken place. He understands the present. In the morning, he is to be called and asked to tell something about the future."

55. When the night dawned, the king invited the Brāhmaṇa in the morning and offered him many kinds of enjoyable things and rich presents.

56. He duly welcomed the Brāhmaṇa, devoutly offering him a silk-cloth and other things. When they were alone, the king asked the Brāhmaṇa what had been cherished in the heart.

The king said:

57. It is certain that you alone appear to me the greatest among Brāhmaṇas. It is my opinion that the intellect of no one else is as much conversant with truth as thine.

58. On seeing you as a highly intelligent storehouse of austerities, having control over the mind and the sense-organs, O Brāhmaṇa, I am inclined to ask you something which please tell me truthfully.

59. This kingdom has been ruled by me, not so by other kings. Divine pleasures have been enjoyed by me to the (utmost) extent of my prosperity.

60. Without the least lassitude by day or by night, the wicked ones have been controlled by me by force and the subjects have been protected more than my own bosom-born progeny.

61. Of what avail is my enumeration not worthy of being repeated? I know that I have some merit due to the adoration of the feet of Brāhmaṇas. Nothing much.

62. My mind is not inclined and drawn towards any of the activities. Hence, O noble and excellent Sir, ponder over and tell me what is going to be conducive to welfare.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

63. Even the minutest duty of kings should always be explained by a wise man when asked privately.

64. But even the least should not be explained even by the minister when not asked, as he is sure to be afraid of great dishonour.

65. On being asked, I shall tell. Do not entertain any doubt on that account. If what I say is carried out, you shall understand the cause of your dejection and disinterestedness.

66. O king of excellent intellect, listen. I shall not say anything contrary to the fact (truth). You are valorous, extremely courageous and powerful. You are always fortunate.

67. I think that even in Amarāvati, the Lord of the gods (Indra) is not as richly endowed with merit, renown and intellect.

68. I consider you on a par with Guru (Preceptor of the Devas) in view of the excellent intellect; on a par with the Moon in view of brightness and serenity; you are the very Sun in brilliance and on a par with Fire in respect of your valorous exploit.

69. You are on a par with the Wind-god in respect of your strength; on a par with Kubera through gifting of wealth; on a par with Rudra in respect of the ability to chastise; you are the very Nirṛti on the battlefield.

70. You are Pāśī (Varuṇa) who binds the wicked; in regard to the act of controlling the evil ones you are like Yama; you are on a par with Mahendra in respect of your great prosperity; you are on a par with the Earth in forbearance.

71. In the act of abiding by the bounds of morality, you are the ocean; in regard to greatness, you are Himālaya. You are Śukra in royal polity and in the act of ruling a land you are on a par with Manu.

72. You are the dispeller of distress like a cloud; holy like the name of Gaṅgā; you are the bestower of excellent goal on all creatures like Kāśī.

73. In the matter of annihilation you are Rudra; in according protection you are the four-armed Viṣṇu; you are the creator like Brahmā and the Goddess of Speech is in your lotus-like mouth.

74. Kamalā (Goddess of wealth) is in your lotus-like hand;

there is the poison Halāhala in your anger; your speech is on a par with the divine nectar; your arms are the veritable Aśvinīsutas.

75. Everything powerful is in you, O king, because you are the very embodiment of all the Devas. Hence, what is conducive to your auspiciousness is known to me truly.

76. Calculating from today, O king, on the eighteenth day, a Brāhmaṇa from the North will certainly come to you and advise you.

77. His behest should be unhesitatingly carried out by you, O king. Thereby, O highly intelligent one, whatever you have cherished in your heart will be realized.

78. After saying so, the excellent Brāhmaṇa took leave of the king. After receiving his consent, he joyously entered his hermitage. The king was very much surprised (at the events).

79. Thus the entire city including the king, the subjects and the royal Antaḥpura (female apartment) was brought under his influence by Vighnajit through his own power of Māyā.

80. After considering himself one who has fulfilled his duties, that Lord Vighnajit took various guises himself and stayed on in Kāśī.

81. Gaṇādhipa adorned his own spot of that time, O Pot-born One, when Divodāsa himself was not present formerly.

82-83. When King Divodāsa was expelled by Viṣṇu and the city was renovated by Viśvakarman, the Lord himself came to the beautiful Vārāṇasī city from Mandara and eulogized Gaṇanāyaka at the outset.

Agastya said:

84. How was Vighnajit eulogized by the Lord of Devas? How did Vināyaka take various guises himself.

85. By what names did he establish himself in the city of Kāśī? O Six-faced One, tell all those things briefly.

86. On hearing this utterance of the Pot-born One the Six-faced Lord related to him the auspicious story of Gaṇarāja based on facts.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

Manifestation of Dhundhi Vināyaka and Fiftysix¹ Vināyakas

Skanda said:

Lord Viśveśa entered the auspicious city of Vārāṇasī.

1. O excellent sage, Viśveśa was accompanied by Viśvā (Goddess Pārvatī), Mahāśākha, Viśākha and myself. Nandī and Bhṛṅgī proceeded ahead.

2. He was accompanied by Naigameya and surrounded on all sides by Rudras; he was eulogized by Sanaka and others and attended upon by the celestial sages.

3. He was hailed with joy by the commanders of all the Āyatanas (regional shrines) and by the Guardians of the Quarters. All the holy Tirthas displayed their holy waters. Gandharvas sang songs of auspicious import.

4. He was adored by celestial damsels who danced with the gestures of the hands resembling tender sprouts. He was greeted

1. Dhundhi Vināyaka alias Dhundhirāja has a prime position at the centre of Kāśī. He is to be worshipped by pilgrims on entrance to Kāśī. His name is derived from *dhudh*—'to search, to find' (v 33 in this chapter) Śiva got entrance into Kāśī through his machinations. Hence this name.

This chapter gives the locations of the fifty-six Vināyakas at Kāśī. These Vināyakas are arrayed at the eight directional points in seven concentric circles centring around Dhundhirāja near the Viśvanātha Temple, as follows: (See vv 59-114)

<i>Circle No</i>	<i>Names of Vināyakas</i>
I	(1) Arka, (2) Durga, (3) Bhīmacanda, (4) Dehalī; (5) Uddanḍa, (6) Pāśapāni, (7) Kharva, (8) Siddhivināyaka
II	(1) Lambodara, (2) Kūṭadanta, (3) Śālakatanṭaka, (4) Kūsmāṇḍa, (5) Mundavināyaka, (6) Vikatadvija, (7) Rājaputra, (8) Pranava
III.	(1) Vakratunda, (2) Ekadanta, (3) Trimukha, (4) Pañcāśya, (5) Heramba, (6) Vighnarāja, (7) Varada, (8) Modakapriya
IV	(1) Abhayada, (2) Simhatunḍa, (3) Kūṇitākṣa, (4) Kṣipraprasādana, (5) Cintāmani, (6) Dantahasta, (7) Picandila, (8) Uddanḍamuṇḍa.
V.	(1) Sthūladanta, (2) Kalipriya, (3) Caturdanta, (4) Dvitunḍa, (5) Jyeṣṭha, (6) Gajavināyaka, (7) Kālavināyaka, (8) Nāgeśa
VI.	(1) Manikarṇa, (2) Āśāvināyaka, (3) Srṣṭiganeśa, (4) Yakṣavighneśa, (5) Gajakarṇa, (6) Citraghaṇṭa, (7) Sthūlajaṅgha, (8) Mitravināyaka
VII.	(1)—(5) Moda and others, (6) Jñānavināyaka, (7) Dvāravighneśa, (8) Avimuktavināyaka.

all round in the firmament by means of musical instruments sounding automatically.

5. All the quarters reverberated with the deafening sounds of the Vedic chants by the sages. The groups of Cāraṇas eulogized him. He was surrounded everywhere by aerial chariots.

6. The great Lord who was showered with parched grains slipping down through the fists of the ladies of heaven, experienced horripilation due to excess of joy.

7. Many groups of Vidyādhara women offered him garlands as presents. He was greeted and hailed by Yakṣas, Guhyakas, Siddhas and other sky-traversers.

8. Animals and birds went ahead indicating the auspicious omens of the time of entry. Kinnarīs and Kinnaras with beaming faces extolled him.

9. Great festivity was celebrated and displayed by Viṣṇu, Mahālakṣmī, Brahmā, Viśvakarman, Nandin and Gaṇeśa.

10. Nāga damsels performed the rites of Nīrājana (waving of the lights) all round. Thus the great Lord entered the auspicious city of Vārāṇasī.

11. Even as all the Devas were watching, the Bull-emblem Lord got down from the great bull, embraced the Lord of Gaṇas and spoke:

12. "The fact that I have reached the auspicious city of Vārāṇasī, very difficult of access even to me, is due to the favour of this child alone.

13. What is difficult to be accomplished even by a father in all the three worlds can be easily accomplished by a son. The instance for the same is I myself.

14. By the powers of his intellect, something has been achieved by this Elephant-faced One in order to facilitate my entrance into Kāśī.

15. I have really become one blessed with a son inasmuch as he has accomplished through his manliness a long-cherished desire of mine."

16. After saying this, the destroyer of the three cities oft-eulogized by Indra and others, joyously eulogized the Elephant-faced One with clear words.

Śrīkaṇṭha said:

17. Be victorious, O foremost one among those who cause

obstacles. You are the cause of freedom from obstacles unto your devotees. O one free from obstacles, O subduer of obstacles, O one with great obstacles reduced to a single obstacle!

18. Be victorious, O Lord of all Gaṇas! be victorious, O leader of all Gaṇas, O one whose lotus-like feet are bowed to by the Gaṇas, O one with countless good qualities!

19. Be victorious, O omnipresent one, O Lord of all, O single treasure-house of all intellects, O one conversant with all the worlds of Māyā, O Lord worshipped at the beginning in the course of all rites!

20. O auspicious one among all auspicious ones! Be victorious, O cause of auspiciousness unto all. O subduer of inauspiciousness! O cause of salvation! O most auspicious of all auspicious things!

21. Be victorious, O one worthy of the adoration of those who create (like Brahmā and others), O one bowed to by the one who sustains (i.e. Viṣṇu), O one who is venerable to the one who causes annihilation (Rudra)! Be victorious, O one who bestows success in the performance of good acts.

22. O one whose lotus-like feet are worthy of the adoration to Siddhas! Be victorious, O granter of the fulfilment of desires. O sole storehouse of all Siddhis (the eight supernatural powers)! O indicator of great Siddhis and prosperities!

23. O creator of all Guṇas! O one beyond all the Guṇas! O leader of all good qualities! O one with perfect conduct! O one identical with wealth! Be victorious, O you who are extolled!

24. Be victorious, O Lord of all armies! O bestower of strength on the enemy of Bala (i.e. Indra)! O one with the tips of the teeth as bright as cranes! O young boy of great valour!

25. O Lord, O support of infinite greatness, O piercer of the mountain (Krauñca)¹, O one who has lifted up the Elephants of the Quarters by the tips of the tusks! Be victorious, O (Lord) with serpents for ornaments!

26. O merciful Lord of divine form, those who bow down to you on the earth attain salvation though they may be the

1. Here Gaṇeśa is identified with Skanda, as it was Skanda who pierced the Krauñca mountain (Commentator).

doers of all sinful acts. You always remove all their great calamities. You bestow on them heavenly pleasures and salvation too.

27. O Vighnarāja, those who are perceived even for a moment on the earth by means of your benign glances have all their sins reduced. They are Puruṣottamas (Viṣṇus, most excellent ones among men) and Lakṣmī looks at them with benign glances.

28. O Lord who are expert in destroying promptly the obstacles of those who bow down, you are like the Sun unto the lotus-like heart of Dākṣāyaṇī. Those who eulogize thee are heard to have become renowned. There is nothing surprising in it. It is surprising that only they are the leaders of Gaṇas.

29. Those who regularly adore the pair of your feet do flourish with plenty of sons, grandsons, wealth and grain. Their lotus-like feet shall be regularly eulogized by many servants. They will obtain untainted wealth and fortune worthy of being enjoyed by kings.

30. O ultimate cause of all causes, you are the cause of all. You alone are worthy of being known by Vedic scholars for ever. O Lord of divine form incapable of being expressed by ordinary words, you are something worthy of being sought after by the original words (of the scriptures).

31. The Vedas do not know you really, O stage-manager of the mobile and the immobile beings. Even Brahmā and others do not know you. You alone annihilate, protect and create everything. O Lord who cannot be comprehended even mentally, how is it possible to eulogize you adequately?

32. I have killed the Daityas, the chief of whom were Tripuras, Andhaka and Jalandhara who had already been destroyed by the arrows of your angry glances. Excepting you who has the power even to wish for the success of the tasks that yield benefits even if they were to be insignificant.

33. The root *Dhūṇḍh* is well-known to mean "to search for". Your name *Dhūṇḍhi* is due to the fact that you search for everything that your devotees require (and bestow on them). O *Dhūṇḍhirāja*, O *Vināyaka*, which embodied soul can obtain access to *Kāśī* too without your pleasure?

34. If a resident of *Kāśī* bows down to your lotus-like feet first and then bows down to me, I reach up to the root of his ear and impart (the *Tāraka Mantra*), before the departure of

the lifebreath, something whereby he is not reborn in the world.

35. A devotee takes his holy bath in Maṇikarṇikā along with the cloth worn and walks ahead (not minding) the feet getting soiled. He offers libation to the celestial sages, human beings and the manes. He then comes to Jñānodatīrtha (Jñānavāpī) and worships you.

36. First the devotee should propitiate you by means of huge quantities of sweetmeat of great flavour, incense, lights, garlands and sweet-smelling unguents, and then me capable of bestowing the benefit of Kāśī. O Dhuṇḍhi, thereby who does not flourish?

37. A devotee may undertake pilgrimage to Tīrthas and that too without the conventional order. Even then, due to your benign, merciful glances, all the obstacles and calamities antagonistic to his own welfare, shall be removed, O Dhuṇḍhi, and he will obtain the complete benefit here at Kāśī.

38. If anyone bows down to you, O Dhuṇḍhi Vināyaka, everyday early in the morning at Kāśī, all the obstacles shall be removed and no object on the surface of the earth shall be inaccessible to him here and hereafter.

39. If anyone repeats the name of Dhuṇḍhi Vināyaka, all the eight Siddhis will repeat his name in the heart everyday. He will enjoy different kinds of pleasures worthy of being enjoyed by Devas. In the end he will be wooed by Goddess Nirvāṇa Kamalā (Glory of Liberation).

40. O Dhuṇḍhirāja, O bestower of all Siddhis, even if one staying far off remembers the pedestal of your feet everyday, he will get the entire benefit of staying in Kāśī. My words cannot be contradicted or falsified at any time.

41. O blessed one, I know that it is for the removal of innumerable obstacles that you have assumed different forms and stay here in this holy spot.

42. Let these heaven-dwellers listen. I shall mention all those forms of yours, O sinless one, assumed in the different areas.

43. First, you are Dhuṇḍhirāja slightly to my right. You seek out and bestow all the desired objects and wealth on the devotees.

44. O son, O Gaṇeśa, if diverse kinds of adoration are

performed unto you on the *Caturthī* (fourth day) coinciding with a Tuesday with huge quantities of *Modakas* (sweetmeats) of fragrant flavour and scented garlands, I make them Gaṇas.

45. Those who worship you on every *Caturthī* with concentration of mind, O Dhuṇḍhi, are really blessed. O elephant-faced one, they will place their left foot on the head of all miseries and mishaps and attain the status of the Elephant-faced One.

46. O Dhuṇḍhi, the devotees who observe *Naktavrata* (taking food only at night) and worship you on the fourth day of the bright half of Māgha will be worthy of being worshipped by the enemies of Asuras.

47. The devotee shall cover (make) Laḍḍus with white gingelly seeds and eat them on the bright *Caturthī* of Māgha after undertaking the annual pilgrimage.

48. On that *Caturthī*, O Dhuṇḍhi, the *Yātrā* (pilgrimage) should be assiduously performed by those who wish for fulfilment of the worship at the holy spot, for your propitiation. It shall remove all calamities.

49. He who does not perform that *Yātrā* nor offers *Navedya* with Laḍḍus of gingelly seeds should be at my bidding struck with thousands of obstacles.

50. A devotee conversant with the Mantras shall devoutly perform *Homa* with gingelly seeds, ghee and other requisites on that *Caturthī*. His Mantra will become fruitful.

51. O Gajānana, O Dhuṇḍhi, the Mantra, be it Vedic or otherwise, should be repeated in your presence. It will then accord the desired Siddhis (fulfilment of desires).

Īśvara said:

52. It is certain that a person of excellent mind who reads this eulogy composed by me will never be afflicted by obstacles.

53. If anyone recites this meritorious eulogy of Dhuṇḍhi in the presence of Dhuṇḍhi, all the Siddhis will stay near him always.

54. After repeating this eulogy with adequately controlled mind, the devotee shall never be assailed by mental sins at any time.

55. The man who repeats the prayer unto Dhuṇḍhi shall

attain wives, sons, land, excellent horses, excellent houses, wealth and foodgrains.

56. This eulogy uttered by me is named *Sarvasam̐patkara* ('Giver of all prosperities'). It should be assiduously repeated always by one who desires salvation.

57. If anyone is desirous of going anywhere for a specific purpose, he should go after repeating this meritorious prayer. Invariably all the Siddhis (achievements) shall come face to face to him.

58. I shall mention another thing also. Let those heaven-dwellers listen. I shall mention the places where Dhunḍhi had stayed for the sake of guarding the holy spot.

First Circle of Vināyakas:

59. At the confluence of Gaṅgā and Asi at Kāśī is the Vināyaka named Arkavināyaka. If he is visited on Sundays by people, he will subdue all distresses.

60. Gaṇādhyakṣa named Durga is the destroyer of all wretchedness. It is in the southern region of the holy spot and should be assiduously worshipped.

61. On the south-west of the holy spot near Bhīmacaṇḍī is Bhīmacaṇḍavināyaka. On being visited he removes great fear.

62. On the western side of the holy spot is Dehalivināyaka. There is no doubt about this that he will remove all the obstacles of the devotees.

63. On the north-western side of the holy place is the Gajānana named Uddaṇḍa. He will always strike down massive groups of obstacles.

64. On the north of Kāśī, Pāśapāṇi-Vināyaka (Vināyaka with the Pāśa, noose, in his hand) always binds obstacles due to the devotion of the residents of Kāśī.

65. The beautiful Kharvavināyaka is at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Varaṇā. He will subdue and shorten even huge obstacles of good devotees.

66. To the east of the holy spot Siddhivināyaka is always ready to protect the holy spot. It is on the west of Yamatīrtha and is a prompt bestower of powers on a *Sādhaka* (aspirant).

67. These eight Vināyakas are on the outer ring of Kāśī.

They expel non-devotees and bestow all the Siddhis on the devotees.

Second Circle of Vināyakas:

68. Henceforth I shall mention those Vināyakas who protect this holy spot Avimukta on the second external ring.

69. On the western bank of the heavenly river, to the north of Arkavināyaka is Lambodara Gaṇādhyakṣa ('Leader of Gaṇas') who washes off all the mud of obstacles.

70. To the west thereof and to the north of Durga-Vināyaka is Kūṭadanta. He is the annihilator of difficulties and calamities. He always protects this holy place.

71. Slightly to the north-east of Bhīmacaṇḍa Gaṇeśa is Śālakaṭamkaṭa, the protector of this holy spot. This Gaṇādhyakṣa is worthy of being adored.

72. The Vināyaka named Kūṣmāṇḍa is situated on the east of Dehalivighneśa. He is to be worshipped always by the devotees for the suppression of great mishaps and calamities.

73. Muṇḍavināyaka stationed in the south-east direction of the Gaṇapati named Uddaṇḍa is extremely renowned. He is to be adored well by devotees.

74. His body is stationed in Pātāla. The head is situated in Kāśī. Hence the Lord in Kāśī is spoken as Muṇḍavināyaka.

75. One shall attain the position of the lordship of Gaṇas by worshipping the Gaṇapati Vikaṭadvija to the south of the Ganeśāna (named) Pāśapāṇi.

76. The Vināyaka named Rājaputra is on the south-west of the Lord named Kharva. On being worshipped, he will reinstate a king who has lost his kingdom.

77. The Gaṇādhipa named Praṇava is on the western bank of Gaṅgā and to the south of Rājaputra. On being bowed down to he will lead (a devotee) to heaven.

78. These eight Vināyakas are situated in Kāśī in the second external ring. They will dispel all the obstacles of those who permanently stay in Kāśī.

Third Circle of Vināyakas:

79. Those Vighnarājas who are stationed in this holy spot on the third external ring, according protection always, should be mentioned by me now.

80. Vakratuṇḍa, the remover of mass of sins, is stationed to the north of Lambodara who is on the beautiful bank of the heavenly river.

81. Ekadantaka stationed on the north of the Gaṇapati Kūṭadanta shall always protect Ānandakānana from calamities.

82. The monkey-lion-elephant-faced Vighneśa named Trimukha (Three-faced) is situated to the north-east of Śālakataṅkata. He is the remover of the fear of (people of) Kāśī.

83. The Vighnarāṭ named Pañcāśya is in the eastern direction of Kūṣmāṇḍa. With an excellent chariot (drawn by) lions, he protects the city of Vārāṇasī.

84. The Lord named Heramba stationed in the south-east of Mundavināyaka is worthy of being worshipped always. He will fulfil the desires of all the residents of Kāśī like Ambā (Goddess).

85. For the purpose of Siddhi, a wise devotee should worship the Gaṇapati (named) Vighnarāja who destroys all obstacles. He is stationed to the south of Vikatadanta.

86. The Gaṇādhyakṣa named Varada stationed slightly in the south-west direction from the Vināyaka (named) Rājaputra, should be worshipped. He is the bestower of boons on the devotees.

87. The Gaṇeśa (named) Modakapriya is stationed to the south of Praṇavavighneśa on the auspicious bank of the celestial river in the Piśangila Tīrtha. He is worthy of being adored.

Fourth Circle of Vināyakas:

88. Eight Vināyakas should be clearly visualised by men with delighted minds in Kāśī on the fourth external ring. They are the destroyers of the obstacles of the devotees.

89. The Vināyaka Abhayada who is the destroyer of the fear of all, is stationed on the bank of the heavenly river in the northern direction from Vakratuṇḍa.

90. The Vināyaka (named) Simhatuṇḍa is stationed on the north of Ekadaśana (Ekadanta). He destroys the elephants in the form of calamities of the inhabitants of Vārāṇasī.

91. The Gaṇādhyakṣa (named) Kūṇitākṣa is stationed in the north-eastern direction of Trituṇḍa (Trimukha). He will protect Mahāśmaśāna (i.e. Kāśī) from the evil-eye of the wicked.

92. Kṣipraprasādana stationed to the east of Pañcāsya shall protect the city. Siddhis are quickly attained by the worship of Kṣipraprasādana.

93. Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka is stationed to the south-east of Heramba. He is like Cintāmaṇi (wish-yielding stone) unto the devotees. He will directly present (to the devotees) whatever is thought of by them.

94. The Gaṇeśvara (named) Dantahasta is towards the south of Vighnarāja. He will be (commanding) thousands of obstacles to harass men who hate Vārāṇasī.

95. The Lord named Piciṇḍila is to the south-west of Varada. He is surrounded by Yātudhānas (demons) and protects the city day and night.

96. What is it that the Heramba named Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa does not bestow on devotees when visited? He is stationed in Pilipilā Tīrtha to the south of Modakapriya (Vināyaka).

Fifth Circle of Vināyakas:

97. I shall now mention the Vināyakas twice-four (= eight) in number, stationed in Kāśī on the fifth external ring and protecting the holy spot.

98. The Gaṇeśāna named Sthūladanta is stationed on the bank of the heavenly river to the north of Abhayaprada. To the good, he bestows enormous Siddhis.

99. The Vināyaka (named) Kalipriya is stationed to the north of Simhatuṇḍa. Among those who harass the devotees flocking to the Tīrtha, he creates natural quarrel always.

100. The Vināyaka named Caturdanta is on the north-east of Kūṇitākṣa. Masses of obstacles shall perish merely by visiting this Lord.

101. The Gaṇanāyaka named Dvituṇḍa is stationed to the east of Kṣipraprasādana. He looks equally majestic both in front and behind.

102a. By visiting him, men will attain all-round glory and splendour.

102b-103. The Gaṇādhyakṣa named Jyeṣṭha is the eldest of my numerous sons. He is stationed to the south-east of Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka. For the acquisition of surpassing excellence he should be adored well on the fourteenth day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha.

104. Gaja-Vināyaka is to be adored in the southern direction of Dantahasta. By worshipping him devoutly prosperity with elephants will be attained.

105. Kāla-Vināyaka is to the south of the Gaṇapati named Picinḍila. By resorting to him, men will not have the fear of the god of Death

106. The devotee is honoured in Nāgaloka by visiting the Gaṇapa named Nāgeśa stationed in the southern direction from the Gaṇapa named Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa.

Sixth Circle of Vināyakas:

107. Hereafter the Vighnanāyakas stationed on the sixth external ring are being mentioned. Merely by listening to their names men will achieve supernatural power.

108. The Gaṇapati named Maṇikarṇa is the destroyer of obstacles in the east. Āśā Vināyaka is stationed in the south-east fulfilling the hopes and desires of a devotee.

109. Sṛṣṭigaṇeśa in the south is the indicator of creation and annihilation. Yakṣa Vighneśa in the south-west is the destroyer of all obstacles and is the greatest.

110. Gajakarṇa in the west is the cause of welfare to all. The Gaṇapati named Citraghaṇṭa protects the city in the north-west.

111-112. In the north Sthūlajaṅgha subdues the sins of those who control their minds. That auspicious Vināyaka named MitraVināyaka protects the city of Īśa in the north-east. He is to be worshipped in the north of Yama Tīrtha.

Seventh Circle of Vināyakas:

I shall mention the Vināyakas stationed on the seventh external ring.

113-114. The five Vighneśas are Moda and others; the sixth one is Jñānavināyaka; the seventh one is Dvāravighneśa present in front of the great door. Avimukta Vināyaka, the eighth one,

removes all the distress of those with humble minds in my holy spot Avimukta.

115. He who remembers these fiftysix Gajamukhas even when he is in a far-off country, shall attain knowledge on death.

116. If a devotee recites this meritorious eulogy of Ḍhuṇḍhi involving fifty-six Gajānanas, he becomes a meritorious-souled one. He gets supernatural powers at every step.

117. Wherever one may be, all these Gaṇeśvaras should be remembered. They protect a man falling into the ocean of great calamity.

118. On hearing this eulogy of great merit and these Vināyakas, one is never afflicted by obstacles. One is rid of all sins too.

119-120. After saying this, the Lord of the Devas became highly joyous in his mind. He was coronated by Brahmā and others. He granted them whatever they desired. Efficient that he was in doing the proper thing, he entertained all of them duly. He then entered the royal palace built by Viśvakarmaṇ

Skanda said:

121. Thus Vighnajiit ('Subduer of obstacles' i.e. Gaṇeśa) was eulogized by the Lord of Devas. That Vināyaka created thus many of his own forms.

122. O Pot-born One, by repeating these names of Ḍhuṇḍhirāja, a man shall get whatever he desires.

123. There are thousands, nay innumerable, forms of the Gaṇeśa Ḍhuṇḍhi there, devoutly worshipped by many devotees.

124. They are Bhagīratha, Gaṇādhyakṣa, Hariścandra, Vināyaka, the Gaṇapati named Kaparda and then Binduvināyaka.

125. These and others are the Vighneśas installed by everyone of the devotees. By worshipping them too men do attain all riches.

126. By listening to this meritorious chapter with faith, a man gets rid of all obstacles and obtains the desired position.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

*Attainment of Salvation by Divodāsa**Agastya said:*

1. O Skanda, what did Hara do while in the Mandara mountain when even Gajānana was causing delay?

Skanda said:

2. O Agastya, listen to the meritorious story being narrated by me now. Its theme is Vārāṇasī alone and it is destructive of all sins.

3. When the Elephant-faced One was delaying in Avimuktaka, the excellent one among holy spots, Adhokṣaja (Viṣṇu) was quickly met by the Three-eyed Lord.

4. He was addressed thus many times with great respect: "Do not do (it) yourself what was done by others who had gone there before."

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

5. O Śaṅkara, endeavour must be made by all living beings in accordance with their intellect, strength and weakness. But they bear fruits according to your (direction).

6. Actions (Karmas by themselves) are insentient. Even living beings are not free themselves. You are the witness unto their acts and also the prime mover of living beings compelling them to work.

7. But in regard to the devotees of your feet, the mental inclination is such that you yourself will say, "Excellent work has been done by him."

8. Whatever work is performed here, whether it be very small or great in size, O Giriśa, that fructifies if it is performed with due recollection of your feet.

9. If a task is well-prepared (planned), perfectly carried out with keen intellect, it is bound to perish instantaneously, should it be performed without due remembrance of your feet.

10. Excellent effort will be made by me today as I have been sent by Śambhu. In regard to us richly endowed with devotion

unto you, the task is practically accomplished.

11. A task may be extremely unachievable by solely depending on one's own intellect, strength and endeavour; O Śiva, the same task can be easily accomplished by meditation on you.

12. All the tasks of those persons, O Lord, who circumambulate you, O Bhava, and then proceed ahead, become already accomplished due to the fear of you.

13. Know, O Mahādeva, that this task has been accomplished certainly. The only thing is that the auspicious hour for the entry into Kāśī should be thought of.

14. Or, neither the auspicious nor the inauspicious time need be considered in regard to the time for arrival at Kāśī. That alone is the auspicious moment when Kāśī is within reach.

15. After circumambulating and bowing down to Śāmbhu again and again, the Garuḍa-emblem Lord set off from Mandara along with Lakṣmī.

16. After making Vārānaśī the guest (object) of his eyes (vision), he joyously made his name Puṇḍarīkākṣa (Lotus-eyed One) meaningful.

17. Viṣṇu of pure mind washed his hands and feet in the confluence of Gaṅgā and Varāṇā and took his bath with the clothes on.

18. Then onwards, that Tīrtha came to be called *Pādodaka* because his feet, the bestower of auspiciousness, were washed at the outset by the Yellow-robed Lord.

19. If men take their bath in Pādodaka Tīrtha, their sins accumulated in the course of seven births, perish quickly.

20. By offering Śrāddha there and libations with water and gingelly seeds, one will be able to redeem the members of his family three times seven in number.

21. In the Tīrtha (called) *Pādodaka* at Kāśī the satisfaction obtained by the great-grandfathers is the same as obtained by them at Gayā, indeed.

22. *Niraya* (Hell) will never touch a man who takes his bath in Pādodaka, drinks the water thereof and offers the same water (as libation).

23. After drinking Pādodaka once in the Viṣṇu Pādodaka Tīrtha, it is certain that one will never drink the milk of the

breasts of a mother (i.e. will get Mokṣa).

24. A devotee who bathes a Śālagrāma having a discus inscribed (i.e. within it) sprinkled with a conch (filled) with waters of Pādodaka and drinks the water thereof will become immortal.

25. If one drinks *Viṣṇu Pādodaka* in the Viṣṇu Pādodaka Tīrtha, of what avail is heavenly nectar that has been in existence for a long time?

26. If the holy rites with water are not performed at Kāśī with Pādodaka, their very life is futile. They are on a par with a bubble of water in regard to their splendour.

27-28. Accompanied by Lakṣmī and Garuḍa, Viṣṇu performed the daily rites. He withdrew his form pervading the three worlds and fashioned a stone image with his own hands. Ādikeśava himself adored that image, the bestower of all prosperities and Siddhis.¹

29. By worshipping that brilliant image of the great Lord, named Ādikeśava, a man considers Vaikuṅṭha the very courtyard of his house.

30. That area within the limits of Kāśī is well-known as Śvetadvīpa. Men who serve that image do reside in Śvetadvīpa (Region of Viṣṇu).

31. There is another Tīrtha in front of Keśava named Kṣīrābdhi. One who performs holy rites with water there, will stay on the shores of the Ocean of Milk.

32. If a man performs Śrāddha there and gifts away a milch cow along with all ornaments as laid down, he will be able to make his forefathers stay in the Ocean of Milk.

33. One who devoutly gifts a single cow there becomes a meritorious-souled one on the shores of the Milk Ocean and can make hundred and one generations of his family move to the Milk Ocean with plenty of 'mud' i.e. cream produced by the milk.

34. A devotee should offer many excellent cows here with faith along with monetary gifts. He will be able to make everyone

1. Ādikeśava temple sits in a grove of trees on the high bank of the Rājghāt plateau, overlooking Gaṅgā and Varāṇā. But the Tīrthas mentioned after the emblems of Viṣṇu and his *Avatāras* in the following verses are located in the landscape of imagination alone (BCL 204). Some Tīrthas such as the *Prahlāda Tīrtha* are however geographically locatable today.

of his forefathers live there with comfortable quilts for sound sleep.

35. To the south of Kṣīroda is the excellent Śaṅkha Tīrtha. By offering water-libations there unto the Pitṛs, one is honoured in Viṣṇuloka.

36. To the south thereof is the Cakra Tīrtha which is something very inaccessible even to the forefathers. One who performs Śrāddha (there) becomes free from indebtedness to forefathers.

37. The Gadā Tīrtha is very near it. It is destructive of all mental anguish; it causes the redemption of the Pitṛs and the destruction of all sins.

38. Beyond that is the Padma Tīrtha. After taking the holy bath there and offering libations to the Manes duly one is never deficient in fortune and wealth.

39. There itself is the Tīrtha of Mahālakṣmī renowned in all the three worlds. Mahālakṣmī herself, the delighter of the three worlds, took her holy ablution there.

40. One who takes his holy bath in that Tīrtha and gifts jewels and gold and silk clothes to Brāhmaṇas never becomes deficient in fortune and prosperity.

41. Due to the great efficacy of the Tīrtha, wherever he is born he becomes prosperous. His forefathers become brilliant and glorious.

42. An image of Mahālakṣmī is there and it is adored by all the three worlds. By bowing down to her devoutly a man never suffers from sickness anywhere.

43. The devotee should keep awake on the night of the eighth lunar day in the dark half of Bhādrapada and worship Mahālakṣmī. He will obtain the benefit of the holy vow.

44. There, in the vicinity of Tārksyakeśava, is the Tārksya Tīrtha. By taking the holy bath there a man never sees the serpent (in the form) of worldly existence.

45. Beyond that is the Nārada Tīrtha that destroys great sins. It is here that Nārada got the instruction in *Brahmavidyā*.

46. A man who takes his holy dip there, shall obtain *Brahmavidyā* perfectly from Keśava. Hence, in Kāśī, he is said to be Nāradaśeśava.

47. After worshipping devoutly Lord Nāradaśeśava the devotee never occupies a place in the womb of any mother.

48. Prahlāda Tīrtha is beyond it, where the Lord is Prahlādakeśava. By performing Śrāddha etc. there a devotee is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

49. Very near it is the great Ambarīṣa Tīrtha that destroys sins. Performing holy rites with water there a man gets liberated from sins.

50. Ādityakeśava to the east of Ādikeśava is worthy of being adored. Merely by visiting it, a devotee is liberated from great sins.

51. The Tīrtha (named) Dattātreyeśvara is there itself; so also Ādigadādhara. By propitiating the forefathers there itself, a devotee shall acquire *Jñānayoga* ('Path of knowledge').

52. The great Bhārgava Tīrtha is towards the east of Bhṛgukeśava. A man who takes his holy bath there shall become a wise man, a man of excellent intellect like Bhārgava.

53. There to the east of Vāmanakeśava is Vāmana Tīrtha. By worshipping that Viṣṇu, a devotee shall stay near Vāmana.

54. In front of Naranārāyaṇa is the Tīrtha named Naranārāyaṇa. A man who takes his holy bath in the Tīrtha there, shall become Nārāyaṇa.

55. Beyond that is Yajñavārāha Tīrtha that destroys sins. By taking baths therein, one gets the merit of a Rājasūya sacrifice.

56. There is a Tīrtha entirely free from impurities there, named Vidāraṇa-narasimha. One who takes his holy bath there shall tear off the sins acquired in the course of a hundred births.

57. To the east of Gopīgovinda is the Tīrtha named Gopīgovinda. After taking the holy bath there and worshipping Viṣṇu, a devotee shall become a favourite of Viṣṇu.

58. To the south of Gopīgovinda is the Tīrtha named Lakṣmīṅsimha. By taking holy dips in the Tīrtha, one is never abandoned by the Goddess of Fortune.

59. Beyond it, near Śeṣamādhava is Śeṣa Tīrtha. The satisfaction of the forefathers to whom libation is offered there, is thorough.

60. To the south thereof is Śaṅkha Mādhava Tīrtha entirely free from impurities. A man who performs holy rites with water there, shall become free from impurities though he be a sinner.

61-62. Beyond it is the extremely sacred Tīrtha named

Hayagrīva. After taking the holy ablution there and worshipping Hayagrīvakeśava, and also offering balls of rice in the presence of Hayagrīva, a devotee shall attain the splendour of Hayagrīva and get liberated along with his forefathers.

Skanda said:

63. All these Tīrthas have been enumerated to you incidentally because even on a ground extending as much as a gingelly seed there at Kāśī, there are many Tīrthas.

64. O Pot-born One, even by hearing the names of these Tīrthas specially enumerated by me, a man becomes free of sins.

65. Now, O Brāhmana, I shall mention to you the relevant topic. Listen to what the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, the wielder of conch, discus and club, did.

66. After entering into the image of Keśava, Lord Keśava came out of it by a bit of a bit of a part because he had decided in his mind to do something pertaining to the task of Śambhu.

Agastya said:

67. Oh! Where did the Lord with the discus in his hand go out by a bit of a bit of his part? O Six-faced One, after reaching Kāśī, where did Hari go out?

Skanda said:

68. O sage, why did Viṣṇu not go out completely? I shall mention the reason thereof. Listen to me for a moment.

69. One attains the city of Vārāṇasī by a great deal of *Punya*. Thereafter, a wise man should not abandon it even if tempted by great benefits.

70. Hence, O Pot-born One, his image was installed by Murāri at Kāśī and he went out partially by a bit.

71. After going a little to the north of Kāśī the Discus-bearing Lord created an area called Dharmakṣetra for his own stay.

72. Thereafter the Lord of Lakṣmī himself assumed the form of (a follower of) Buddha, that was very beautiful, fascinating unto the three worlds.

73. Śrī (Lakṣmī) became a Parivrājikā (female mendicant) exquisitely beautiful in form. On seeing her, the entire universe remained (motionless) as though painted in a picture.

74. On seeing the mother of the universes, the source of the universe, with a book placed on the palms of the hand, the entire universe stood motionless. Garuḍa assumed the best of forms and became their disciple.

75. He had a wonderfully brilliant intellect. He was devoid of desire for all the objects. He was engaged in attending to his preceptor. He had a book on the palms of his hands

76. He asked his preceptor about the greatest of virtues that can facilitate release from worldly bondage. The excellent preceptor was gentle-faced and delighted in himself.

77. He was an adept in the treatises on *Dharma* and *Artha*. He was endowed with wisdom and perfect in general and specialized knowledge. He was of sweet, sonorous voice. He spoke softly and lovingly uttering the words distinctly.

78. He was proficient in the magical art of stunning, exorcising, attracting persons to him and keeping them under his control. So also in various other activities. At the time of his lecture, even birds were attracted and he could make them experience thrill.

79. He was served by excellent deer which imbibed the nectar-like songs he sang. He checked the swift motion of winds by giving them a great deal of joy.

80-81. He was adored even by the trees under the pretext of the falling of flowers. Then that meritorious-souled follower of Buddha (named) Punyakīrti said to his disciple Vinayakīrti, endowed with great humility:

Punyakīrti said:

82. O Vinayakīrti, the eternal virtue has been asked by you. I shall explain it entirely, O highly intelligent one. Listen.

83. The world has been in existence since beginningless time. It manifests itself (automatically) by itself and it gets dissolved by itself.

84. In all embodied beings beginning with Brahmā up to a blade of grass, the soul alone is the real master (Īśvara)

therein. There is no other (external being like God as) controller thereof.

85. The names Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra etc. are mere names of the embodied ones, like our own names Puṇyakīrti etc.

86. Just as our body perishes in due course, so also the bodies of everything from Brahmā to a mosquito perish when their (respective) time arrives.

87. If it is pondered over (it is evident) that there is nothing special about the body (of anyone). Intake of food, sexual intercourse, sleep and fear are common to all.

88. Every embodied one attains the same (degree of) satisfaction after getting its own usual quantity of food; no more (degree of satisfaction) in any case.

89. Just as we become free from thirst after joyously drinking some beverage, so also others who are thirsty; there is no difference great or small (in the satisfaction derived after drinking).

90. Let there be thousands of women with exquisite beauty and seductive charms; but at the time of intercourse only one can be enjoyed.

91. Let there be hundreds of horses and let there be many elephants, but at the time of riding, only one is enough; no second (is required).

92. At the time of sleeping the same pleasure is experienced irrespective of sleeping on a couch or on bare ground.

93. Just as we embodied ones are afraid of death, so also all those beginning with Brahmā and ending with insects, are afraid of death.

94. If we intelligently ponder (it is evident that) all embodied beings are equal. After decisively thinking thus, no one should be violently injured by anyone, anywhere at any time.

95. There is no other virtue on a par with compassion for living beings anywhere on the surface of the earth. Hence mercy should be assiduously practised by men.

96. If one living being is protected, all the three worlds would get protected; if one is killed, all are killed. Hence one should protect (and) not kill (others).

97. Non-violence has been stated as the greatest virtue by the ancient wise men (or teachers). Hence violence should not be practised by men who are afraid of hell.

98. In all the three worlds consisting of mobile and immobile

beings, there is no sin like violence or injury. One indulging in violence goes to hell and one who abstains from it goes to heaven.

99. There are many kinds of gifts. Of what avail are they, yielding but insignificant fruit? There is nothing like the gift of freedom from fear.

100. After poring over and reflecting upon different kinds of scriptural texts here, four types of gifts have been mentioned by the great sages for the sake of welfare here and hereafter.

101. Freedom from fear should be offered to those who are afraid; medicine should be given to those who are afflicted with ailments; learning should be imparted to those who seek lores; and cooked food should be given to one (who is) distressed with hunger.

102. The power of Maṇi (miraculous gems), Mantra (spell) and Auśadha (medicine) is indeed incomprehensible. That should be assiduously practised for the purpose of earning different kinds of riches.

103. After acquiring wealth in various ways, the twelve *Āyatanas* around should be worshipped well. Of what avail is the worship of other things (deities)?

104. The auspicious twelve *Āyatanas* include the five organs of action, the five sense-organs, the mind and the intellect.

105. Heaven and hell exist here itself (in this world), nowhere else. Happiness is what is termed as heaven and misery what is called hell.

106. If the body is cast off when happiness is being enjoyed, it is the ultimate salvation; there is no other salvation.

107. When Kleśa¹ (distress) is destroyed along with the Vāsanā (Avidyā, nescience) there is *Vijñānoparama* (cessation of Vijñāna). This would be known as Mokṣa (salvation) by persons who ponder over reality.

108. This authoritative statement is quoted by the followers of the Vedas: "One should not injure or kill any living being." There is no other Vedic statement directing one to kill or injure.

1 Kleśas are five: *avidyā* (nescience), *asmitā* (egotism), *rāga* (desire), *dveṣa* (aversion), *abhiniveśa* (tenacity of existence).—MW 324.

109. The Śruti exhorting one to perform *Agniṣomīya* (*Agniṣṭoma*) etc. is something that misleads others and is quoted by evil men. That Śruti which prescribed killing of sacrificial animals is not authoritative in the view of those who know.

110. It is surprising that heaven is sought after cutting trees, killing animals, making slush of blood and by burning gingelly seeds, ghee etc.

111. While Puṇyakīrti was expatiating on Dharma in this manner, the citizens heard about this from others successively and proceeded (towards him).

112. The women of the city were attracted by that Parivrājikā named Vijñānakaumudī who was very proficient in all lores.

113. Before them she elaborated on the tenets of Buddha, exhorting them to believe only those things that are directly seen and adopting only the means of acquiring happiness of the body.

Vijñānakaumudī said:

114. This is mentioned by Śruti that Ānanda (bliss) is the form of Brahman. That should be accepted as it is. The view of its diversity is baseless.

115. One should achieve happiness as long as this body is strong and healthy and the sense-organs are not feeble, even as old age is far off.

116. Where can there be happiness when there is deficiency in the sense-organs and health is not normal? Hence even the body should be given over to suppliants (before old age) by those who wish for happiness.

117. The earth is (really) burdened by those people who are not ready to satisfy the desire of those who beg, and not on account of oceans, mountains and trees.

118. The body is bound to pass off quickly and everything hoarded is attended with the certainty of loss. After realizing this a sensible man should endeavour for the happiness of the body.

119. Ultimately the body is bound to be a prey to dogs, crows and worms. The truth that the body is reduced to ashes in the end, has been accepted in the Vedas.

120. The classification (of people) into various castes is

futile in this world. When the state of being human is common (to all), who is high and who is low?

121. It is said by elderly persons that this entire creation is that of Brahmā and others. Dakṣa and Marīci are reputed to be the sons of that creator.

122. (It is said that) thirteen charming-eyed daughters of Dakṣa were married in a way approved by scriptures to Kaśyapa, the son of Marīci.

123. "This man is worthy of (carnal) approach. This man is not (so)." Futile is such consideration by people of this age who are deficient in intellect and valour.

124. The four castes are said to have originated from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet (of the Cosmic Being). This belief evolved by the forefathers does not stand to reason.

125. If four sons are born to one (woman) from one (man), will they be different in castes?

126. This discrimination between caste and caste does not appear (to be correct) to the mind. Hence nobody should entertain discrimination between man and man at any time and at any place.

127. On hearing this speech of Vijñānakaumudī the women of the city gave up their excellent mind to serve their husbands.

128. By practising the black magic of attracting and winning over (others) men who were fascinated by the wives of others succeeded in their objective.

129. Royal ladies living in inner apartments, princes, citizens and city women were deluded by both of them.

130-131. That lady-mendicant removed the barrenness of barren women with various special devices. Vijñānakaumudī made women with husbands alive, blessed with conjugal bliss. To some she gave (medicated) collyrium, to some others medicine called Tilaka (Comm.).

132. Many (women) were initiated (into Buddhism) with Mantras effective in bringing (others) under control. Some were muttering Mantras while others were drawing Maṇḍalas (magical designs).

133. Some women sitting steady in front of fire-pit began to offer various material as oblations into the sacrificial fire.

134. Best results such as the growth of vegetation without cultivation (and others like provision of honey in cups of leaves from trees) became defunct because of the rise of sins. Slowly the power of the king also got blunted.

135. Though he was stationed far away, Vighneśa (named) Dhunḍhirāja made King Ripuñjaya ('conqueror of enemies') dejected in his mind and disinclined to administer the kingdom.

136. Divodāsa kept count of the eighteen-day period: "When will that Brāhmaṇa who will be instructing me, arrive?"

137. When the eighteenth day arrived and the sun reached the zenith of the sky, that excellent Brāhmaṇa came to the gate.

138. It was Adhokṣaja (Viṣṇu) himself under the name of Puṇyakīrti from Dharmakṣetra who came to the king in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa.

139. The Brāhmaṇa who came was as though fire itself having assumed a physical form. He was accompanied by two or three other holy persons repeating blessings: "*Jaya* (Be victorious); *Jiva* (Be alive)."

140. On seeing him coming from a distance, the anxious king considered him a preceptor capable of imparting to him instructions.

141. The king approached him and bowed down to him frequently. Having received him with welcoming words, he took the Brāhmaṇa into the inner apartment.

142-143. The king offered *Madhuparka* (mixture of honey, curds etc.) and adored him duly. When he dispelled the fatigue due to the journey and attained normal state, with his lotus-like face beaming with pleasure, he offered him foodstuffs to eat and did everything needed. The king then asked the Brāhmaṇa who was contented and comfortably sitting:

The king said:

144. Bearing the burden of the administration of the kingdom, I am afflicted, O excellent Brāhmaṇa. Actually, I have no distress but a slight loss of interest has appeared.

145. What shall I do? Where shall I go? How can I be happy? O Brāhmaṇa, two fortnights have elapsed since I am worried thus.

146. With all my enemies having been destroyed completely unlimited series of pleasures has been enjoyed by me like the Three-eyed Lord (Śiva) in a manifest form.

147. By my own ability, I became identical with Parjanya, Agni and Anila. The subjects have been protected well like my own bosom-born children.

148. Brāhmaṇas have been propitiated everyday with money. While ruling the kingdom I have committed only one offence.

149. All the Devas have been slighted by me due to the arrogance born of the power of my penance. But I swear by you that, that too I did only to render help to my subjects and not for my own sake.

150. Now do become my spiritual preceptor. It is due to the rise of my good luck that you have come here. I shall continue to rule the kingdom thus without caring for and fearing the god of Death.

151. Nowhere in my kingdom is the likelihood of an untimely attack by the god of Death nor is there the fear of old age, sickness and poverty.

152. While I rule no one shall resort to an unrighteous activity. All the people grow richer in piety. All of them have a rise in prosperity and happiness.

153-154. All the people engage themselves passionately in the pursuit of excellent learning; all are experts in traversing the path of good people. Or, what do we get even if the longevity extends up to the end of a Kalpa? All the objects of pleasure appear like chewing what is already chewed. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, of what avail is the kingdom which is like pressing of what is already pressed?

155. O wise one, advise something for the prevention of further stay in the womb. Or, of what avail are the thoughts like these for me who have sought refuge in you?

156-157. Undoubtedly I shall do whatever you say today. By your mere sight all the desires of others too become fulfilled. They have almost become so in my case. I know this. Who have not (i.e. all have) become doomed due to the animosity of Devas?

158-164. The Tripuras were heroic and much devoted to Śiva. They were the followers of their own duty. They used to protect their own subjects. Still they were reduced to ashes

playfully by letting fall a single arrow, by Hara who constructed his chariot out of the earth, made Himālaya the bow, who made Vedas the horses, Vāsuki the bow string, Viriñci, god Brahmā, the charioteer, Viṣṇu the arrow, the sun and the moon as the wheels of the chariot, Praṇava as the whip, the stars and the planets becoming the pegs, the sky as the wooden fender for protection in the chariot, Sumeru as the flagstaff, the lofty Kalpa tree as the banner, serpents as the ropes for binding the Vedas (horses) and the Aṅgas as the bodyguard, Kālāgnirudra being made the arrowhead and the wind the feathered part.

Bali who was the most excellent one among those who performed Yajñas was formerly driven to the nether regions by Hari who fraudulently disguised himself as a dwarf and took three steps.

Vṛtra who was of good behaviour was killed by Sutṛāman (Indra).

165. Bearing in mind the previous enmity of Hari who was defeated by Dadhīci by means of Kuśa grass, although he fought for victory, that leading Brāhmaṇa Dadhīci was killed by the Devas for the sake of his bones.

166. The thousand arms of Bāṇa, a devotee of Śiva, were cut off by Hari formerly during a battle. What offence did that excellent one of good conduct commit?

167. Hence antagonizing the Devas cannot be conducive to welfare. But since I tread the path of the good, I do not have the slightest fear from the Devas.

168. Vāsava and other Devas have attained Devahood through Yajñas. But I have superiority over them due to Yajñas, Dānas and Tapas.

169. Let there be superiority or inferiority. Of what importance is this to me now? This meeting with you, has provided a pleasant pause in the activities of the sense-organs.

170. Now, O great one, who are conversant with the requisite means that is capable of uprooting Karmas, grant that unto me, whereby I shall get beatitude.

Skanda said:

171. On hearing the words uttered by the king thus due

to the entry of Gaṇeśa, Hṛṣikeśa who was in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa said:

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

172. O highly intelligent one, O sinless one, O crest jewel among kings, well-said, (very) well-said! What should have been given as advice by me has been well-indicated by you.

173. At the very outset you have already washed off all the impurities of the sense-organs through the pure waters of excellent penance and hence have become the best bestower of honour on me.

174. What has been said by you, O king, is entirely true, O highly intelligent one. I know your power as well as disinterestedness (in worldly affairs).

175. A king like you has never been before nor will there ever be. You knew well how to enjoy the kingdom. It is but proper that you wish to abandon it now.

176. In spite of the opposition from the Devas no offence has been committed by you. Nor has occurrence of non-righteousness taken place in your kingdom.

177. What piety has been observed by your subjects under your guidance and persuasion has made the heaven-dwellers satisfied.

178. Only one defect in you occurs in my mind, and it is the fact that Viśveśvara has been made to stay far away from Kāśī by you.

179. This I know is the greatest offence on your part, O most excellent one among the rulers of the earth. I shall now tell you the best means of quelling that sin.

180. Even granting that one has committed as many sins as there are hairs on the body, all those sins vanish if one installs a Liṅga.

181. If a single Liṅga is installed here with due devotion to Īśa, it is as though the entire universe has been established by him.

182. The counting of the number of jewels in the ocean is possible by those who are experts in calculation. But the extent of the merit of the installation of Liṅgas cannot be written down.

183. Hence with all endeavour make a Liṅga installed. By that installation of the Liṅga, you will become blessed and contented.

184. After saying this, the Brāhmaṇa meditated for a short while with unwavering mind. Thereafter he touched the king with his hand with his countenance beaming with delight and said thus:

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

185. O king, I see another thing also through my vision of knowledge. O most excellent one among wise men, listen to that too with adequate attention.

186. You are blessed. You have fulfilled your task. You are worthy of being honoured even by great men. Your very name should be uttered in morning by one who wishes to attain auspicious benefit.

187. O Divodāsa, thanks to your presence and proximity. We are highly blessed. Among mortal beings those who utter your name are also blessed.

188. The Brāhmaṇa continued to say smilingly, shaking his head repeatedly, highly delighted in his heart with joyous horripilation.

189. "Oh! The purity of this one (is excellent)! Oh! The rise of the fortune of this one (is praiseworthy) since one should meditate on him always! Viśveśvara should be meditated upon by all.

190. Oh! The resulting fate of this (king) cannot be obtained by anyone (else)! What is far away from even us is not far away from him."

191. After considering thus within his heart, the Brāhmaṇa extolled the king and disclosed everything that he saw during his meditation.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

192. O king, the tree of your cherished desire has borne fruit today. You will be attaining the greatest position with this very body.

193. Viśveśvara does not have any consideration in his heart

for people like us nor for a Brāhmaṇa whose eyes are directed towards his feet in the same manner as he has for you in his heart.

194. Since you have installed a Liṅga, a divine aerial chariot of Śambhu will be coming on the seventh day from today to take you away.

195. O king, you know what that merit is, whereof this is the result. I too know that it is due to your service to the city of Vārāṇasī.

196. O excellent one among kings, even if one takes care of a single resident of Vārāṇasī, one will have this same benefit at the time of the death of his body.

197. On hearing this, the valorous, saintly king Divodāsa who was delighted, granted to the Brāhmaṇa and his disciples what they desired.

198. After repeatedly bowing down to the propitiated Brāhmaṇa, the joyous king said, "I have been redeemed from the ocean of worldly existence."

199. The Brāhmaṇa too was delighted in his heart with his desires fulfilled. He took leave of the king and went to the place of his choice.

200-202. Hari who was in the guise of a sham Brāhmaṇa pondered over this frequently: 'What is that spot highly sacred, which I can occupy and take all my devotees to the highest abode with the great blessings of Viśveśa?' After seeing the Hrada (whirlpool) Pañcanada he decided thus, took his holy dip there duly, and stationed himself there.

203. Expecting an early personal contact with the Three-eyed Lord, the Lord of Lakṣmī sent Tārksya to convey the news about the king.

204-208. The eminent king Divodāsa extolled the leader of Brāhmaṇas and summoned all the subjects, the vassal kings along with their ministers, the keeper of the treasury, cavalry, elephant army etc., the eldest son Samarañjaya and five hundred other sons, the priest, the Ṛtviks, the Brāhmaṇas, the watchmen, the princes of vassal kingdoms, the cooks, the physicians, many foreigners who had arrived on various missions, the crowned queen along with the other members of the Inner Apartment, the elders, the cowherds, and the children, with great delight. He joined his

arms in deference and said to them what the Brāhmaṇa had told regarding the seven-day limit.

209-210. Even as they were listening to the miracle with sad faces, the king himself took Prince Smarañjaya to the royal palace (outside Kāśī). The king of keen intellect and meritorious soul crowned his son and granted favours to the citizens and dwellers of the surrounding districts. He then went back to Kāśī.

211. After returning to Kāśī that highly intelligent king who had conquered his enemies got a palace built on the western bank of the celestial river.

212. That king built a shrine of Śiva spending the whole of the amount he had won by defeating the enemies in battle.

213. Since the wealth and fortune of the kings had been entirely utilized there, that auspicious part of the land became well-known as Bhūpālaśrī

214. The king, the conqueror of enemies, installed the Linga Divodāseśvara and considered himself blessed for having fulfilled his tasks.

215-218. On a certain day the king worshipped that Linga duly, bowed down to it and eulogized the Linga that accorded him satisfaction. By that time a divine aerial chariot came down quickly from the sky with the attendants sprawled about in it all-round. They had tridents and Khatvaṅgas (skull-topped clubs) in their hands. Their splendour surpassed the dazzling radiance of the Sun and fire. They had eyes in their foreheads and had matted hairs. Their limbs shining like pure crystals illuminated the sky. Their physical forms had venerable appearance due to the jewels on the hoods of the serpents which constituted their ornaments. Their necks appeared to be resorted to (i.e. had blue tinge) by the darkness terrified by the perpetual brilliance.

219-222. The aerial chariot was surrounded by hundreds of Rudrakanyās with the fingers of their hands busily engaged in moving chowries.

Thereafter the king was embellished by the attendants in a joyous mood, with divine garlands, unguents and silk robes. His excellent forehead became three-eyed. His throat became blue. All his limbs were rendered white. His hairs became matted. His body had four arms and was adorned with ser-

pents. A crescent-shaped moon adorned his head. The attendants then took the king to heaven.

223-224. Ever since then, that holy Tīrtha became renowned as Bhūpālaśrī. The devotees should perform Śrāddha etc. there. They shall make monetary gifts in accordance with their capacity. They should visit Divodāseśvara and worship him devoutly. They shall then listen to the narrative about the king. No such devotee shall ever be reborn in a womb.

225. A man who reads and teaches or causes to read this sacred narrative of King Divodāsa becomes liberated from sins.

226. If anyone enters a battlefield after listening to the auspicious account of Divodāsa, he need not have any fear from the enemies.

227. The meritorious story of Divodāsa destroys great calamities. It should be read assiduously for the suppression of all obstacles.

228. Where the story of Divodāsa that destroys all sins is read, there is neither drought nor fear from premature death.

229. By reading this narrative, all desires will become fulfilled like those of Viṣṇu who carried out what Śaṁbhu had thought of.

CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

Pañcanada¹ Comes into Being

Agastya said:

1-3. O Six-faced Lord, O delighter of the heart of Sarvajña (Omniscient Śiva), whose hairs have been kissed by Gaurī, O

1. Pañcanada is Pañcagaṅgā, one of the five sacred-most Tīrthas on Gangā. Before Gangā was brought there by Bhagīratha there were two streams (rivulets)—Dhūtapāpā and Kiraṇā, joining the pool called *Dharmanada*. At Prayāga Gangā was joined by Yamunā and Sarasvatī. These three rivers coming from Prayāga, assimilated the local two rivulets Dhūtapāpā and Kiraṇā. The confluence of the five rivers at this place became known as Pañcagaṅgā Tīrtha and the fine *Ghāṭa* here is known *Pañcagaṅgā Ghāṭa*. (BCL, p. 237)

Today, to the north of the bathing Ghāṭ is a trickle of water called Dhūtapāpā. To the south (of what is called Lakṣmana Bal Ghāṭ), there is a rectangular Kuṇḍa opening towards Gangā and it is called the “river” Kiraṇā. In fact these Purāṇic ‘rivers’ are symbolically represented today.

The present chapter describes how this spot became “Pañcanada” (Pañcagaṅgā).

slayer of Tāraka, O storehouse of all knowledge, obeisance to you, the son of Sarvajña, the cause of welfare and the redeemer. Obeisance to the noble-souled Kumāra who conquered Māra completely in every respect. I offer obeisance to you who, after perceiving Kāmāri (enemy of Kāma, Śiva), Ardhanārīśa (the Lord half of whom is female) as brought about by Kāma (Love) conquered Māra though yet a Kumāra (a person of tender age)

4. O Lord Skanda, it has been mentioned by you that Hari with a sham physical form of a Brāhmaṇa, occupied the extremely holy Tīrthas (called) Pañcanada at Kāśī.

5. Kāśī is the most sacred Tīrtha among all the regions of Bhū, Bhuvah and Svah (the three worlds). Even therein the extremely sacred Tīrtha called Pañcanada came to be known by Hari.

6. Whence, O Six-faced One, is the name Pañcanada (was given) unto that Tīrtha? How did it become the holiest of all Tīrthas?

7-8. Lord Viṣṇu is the immanent soul, the Lord of the universe, the protector, the creator and the playful destroyer of all the worlds. How did he happen to have a form though he is formless? How did he, the unmanifest one, become manifest? How did he, one without shape, happen to be one with shape? How did he who is transcendent, happen to be immanent in the world?

9-11. He who has no birth, took many births; he who is nameless, took many distinct names; he who has no support, is the supporter of everything; he who is devoid of attributes, became the basis of attributes; he who has no sense-organs, became the Lord of sense-organs; he who has no legs, has become the traverser of all places. How did the omnipresent Janārdana withdraw his form and station himself at Pañcanada, the most excellent Tīrtha, in the form of being the soul of all?

O Six-faced Lord, narrate this as it has been heard by you from the Five-faced Lord.

Skanda said:

12. After bowing down to Maheśvara, I shall tell this story that subdues all sins and brings about all welfare.

13. I shall tell how the Tīrtha called Pañcanada at Kāśī became well-known. Merely by repeating its name, sin gets shredded into a thousand bits.

14. Prayāga is the Lord of all Tīrthas. It forcibly draws out the sins of sinners through its own power.

15-17. It is by the power of Prayāga that all the Tīrthas remove the sins of sinners. In the month of Māgha when the Sun is in the Zodiac of Capricorn they come into contact with the king of Tīrthas (i.e. Prayāga) every year and get rid of their impurities. Prayāga, the Lord of all Tīrthas, gets rid of all the impurities dumped into it by all the other Tīrthas and also the great sins of great sinners, thanks to the power of Pañcanada. Throughout the year the Tīrtha Nāyaka ('Lord of the Tīrthas' i.e. Prayāga) gathers together masses of sins. In the month of Kārttika, by a single dip into Pañcanada, all those sins are dispelled.

18. I shall mention how Pañcanada originated. O blessed son of Mitra and Varuṇa, listen.

19. Formerly there was a sage of great penance named Vedaśiras, born in the family of Bhṛgu. It was as though he was another embodied form of the Vedas.

20. While that sage was performing the penance, Śuci, the most excellent one of the celestial damsels, endowed with beauty and well-shaped limbs came into his view.

21. Merely at her sight the mind of the sage became extremely agitated. He had an emission of semen immediately. The excellent celestial damsel became frightened.

22. She bowed down to him from a distance. Śuci's limbs shook excessively due to her fear of the curse of the sage. She spoke to him:

23-24. "O storehouse of extremely rigorous penance, I have not committed even the least offence. (If so) I should be excused. O receptacle of forgiveness and forbearance, ascetics are personified forgiveness. The minds of sages are generally softer than even a lotus. O extremely good one, in their own form, women are hard-hearted."

25. On hearing these words of that celestial damsel Śuci, the sage curbed the flow of the great current of anger by means of the dam of discrimination.

26. Pleased within himself he said: "O Śuci, you are in-

deed Śuci (pure). In this matter there is no fault on my part nor on yours, O fair lady.

27. 'Young maidens are of the form of fire, and men are like butter', so say those who are less informed. If we ponder there is a great difference.

28. Even butter melts only on coming into contact with fire, but it is wonderful that man melts even from a distance, merely when the name of a woman is mentioned.

29. Hence, O Śuci of pure mind, you need not be afraid, Since you came unexpectedly, I had the emission of semen.

30. If a sage is free from lust there is no harm in this emission of semen as much as there would be from a fit of anger which is inimical as well as blinding within a moment.

31. The power of penance accumulated with very great difficulty becomes reduced due to anger, like the lustre of the sun and the moon when covered with a patch of cloud.

32. How can wealth and human aspiration flourish, should there be anger, the cause of ruin and disaster? How can good people prosper if wicked people gain the upper hand?

33. When anger grips the mind, how can love stir out? When Rahu completely eclipses the Moon, how can there be the moonlight?

34. When the forest-fire of anger blazes, how can the tree of peace stand safe and sound? Has the safety and soundness of a baby elephant been seen anywhere by anyone when a lion is nearby?

35. Hence anger which is antagonistic to and destructive of the four aims of life should be eschewed by a sensible man.

36. Now, O fair lady Śuci, listen, what should be done by you. Our semen never goes waste. Hence accept it (within you).

37. Should this semen that got emitted at your sight be taken care of by you, an extremely pure jewel of a female child will be born of you."

38. On being addressed thus by the sage, that celestial lady was reborn as it were. "This is your great favour", saying so she swallowed the semen of the sage.

39. In due course of time the celestial lady gave birth to a jewel of a female child that was the storehouse of loveliness, delighting much the eyes of onlookers.

40. Leaving her in the hermitage of Sage Vedaśiras, Śuci, the most excellent one among the celestial damsels, went somewhere as she pleased.

41. By means of the milk of a doe in his own hermitage, Vedaśiras affectionately brought up that doe-eyed girl.

42. The sage gave her a meaningful name *Dhūtapāpā* ('One who has shaken off sins') by merely uttering which all the clusters of sins quake (through fear).

43. She had all the characteristic features of brilliance. She was beautiful in every limb. The sage did not keep her away from his lap even for a moment.

44. Looking at her growing steadily day by day, he was extremely glad like that Ocean of Milk looking at the beautiful digit of the moon at night.

45. On observing that she reached the age of eight, the great sage thought within himself: 'To whom is she to be given?' and so asked her directly:

Vedaśiras said:

46. O my blessed daughter, O Dhūtapāpā of splendid eyes, to which bridegroom shall I give you? You yourself tell about that bridegroom.

47. On hearing this utterance of her father whose mind was drenched with excessive affection, that girl Dhūtapāpā said with her face lowered:

Dhūtapāpā said:

48. Dear father, if you consider that I should be given away to a handsome bridegroom, then give me unto that person of whom I am telling you now.

49. He should appeal to you too, dear father. May you be pleased to listen attentively?

He should be the holiest of all. He should be one devoutly bowed to by all.

50. He should be one whom all love, from whom all happiness originates, who never perishes and who continues to be ever present.

51. He must be one who certainly guards from the rise

of great calamities here in this world as well as hereafter, by whom all cherished desires get fulfilled.

52. He must be one in whose presence conjugal bliss shall increase day by day and by continuously carrying out whose service, there should be nothing to fear.

53. He should be one on mentioning whose name, no one can harass and with whom as support, the fourteen worlds stand steady.

54. For your welfare as well as that of mine, dear father, give me unto that *Vara* (excellent one, bridegroom) who possesses these and other good qualities and whose activities are excellent.

55-57a. On hearing this, her father experienced great joy: "I am blessed. My ancestors are blessed in whose family there is a daughter like her. Certainly this girl whose intellect is thus inclined is verily (as her name indicates) Dhūtapāpā ('one whose sins are shaken off'). Who can he be here who is really endowed with qualities like these. Or, how can he be obtained without the appearance of the fruit of great merits?"

57b-58. Then the eminent sage concentrated his mind for a while and visualized by his spiritual knowledge, a bridegroom with such good qualities. Then he spoke to the blessed girl:

The Father said:

59. Listen, O wise girl! Verily there certainly exists a bridegroom, the receptacle of the good qualities as enumerated by you.

60. He who is extremely handsome in his features, cannot be easily obtained. He should be purchased (won over) by means of penance as the price in a market in the form of some excellent Tīrtha.

61. O (my) daughter, he cannot be easily obtained through a lot of wealth, or through nobility of birth, or by the study and practice of the Vedas and Scriptures or through the power of prosperity.

62. Neither by the beauty of physical form can he be obtained, nor by intellect and never by valour. The only means (to obtain him) is the purity of the mind through subduing the sense-organs.

63. That befitting husband of great intellect is to be obtained with the help of great austerity together with *Dama* (controlling the sense-organs). *Dāna* (gifts) and *Dayā* (compassion).

64. On hearing these words that girl bowed down to her father. Having decided to perform penance, she requested her father for the requisite permission.

Skanda said:

65. On being permitted by her father, she performed a great penance in the extremely sacred spot (of Avimukta)—a penance not easily performed even by ascetics.

66. (What a great contrast!) Where is that girl of exquisitely soft limbs? Where is such an uncommon penance of that sort which can be performed only with a sturdy physical frame? Wonderful is the fortitude of persons of excellent mental set-up!

67. In rainy season when there was continuous down-pour together with violent gusts of wind, she spent many nights on large slabs of stone.

68. She did not tremble even slightly when she heard the terrible thundering sound, nor when she saw the dazzling streaks of lightning and when she got drenched in torrential downpour.

69. During dark nights there were frequent flashes of lightning in the penance grove. It appeared as though it passed to and fro inspecting her practice of penance.

70. Verily the season of summer itself had come down to the penance grove under the guise of that girl and started performing penance with five fires all-round.

71. Though scorched by the five fires the girl never felt thirsty for water, nor did she drink even a drop from the tip of a *Kuśa*.

72. She appeared to be wearing a shawl in the form of horripilation; her very skin trembled; she was lean and emaciated through the penance. Thus she spent the early wintry nights.

73. In late winter during the nights she resorted to the lakes, when she was thought by the *Sārasa* birds there as though

a new lotus-plant had sprung up.

74. Even the minds of ascetics become passionate during spring but the passion of her mind and the reddish tinge of her lips were taken over by the sprouts of māṅgo trees.

75. During her stay in the forest in spring season, that girl kept her mind steadily engaged in penance though she heard the Kākalī sound of the cuckoos.

76. In autumn she became engaged in the penance, after depositing as it were the lustre of her lips in the Bandhujīva (China rose) and the charming gaits in the swan.

77. The ascetic girl Dhūtapāpā who had eschewed all contacts with pleasures resorted to the practice of Bhogins ('those who enjoy', serpents) (i.e. the only intake was air) in order to prevent the rise of hunger.

78. Just as a jewel when whetted on a whetting stone attains greater lustre, so also her body, though lean on account of the penance, shone all the more.

79. On seeing her in continuous penance with purity of mind, Brahmā approached her and said: "O girl of excellent intellect, I am pleased. Choose a boon."

80. On seeing the Four-faced Lord seated on his vehicle, the swan, she became delighted. Bowing down with palms joined in deference, she spoke to the Grand Patriarch:

Dhūtapāpā said:

81. O Grandfather, O bestower of boons, if a boon is to be granted to me, make me the purest of all pure ones.

82. On hearing of her desire, the Creator was excessively delighted and contented in his mind. He spoke in reply to that pure girl seeking purity:

Brahmā said:

83. O Dhūtapāpā, by my boon, do become the most sacred and purest without parallel of all the pure things here all-round.

84. O girl, there are three and a half crores of pure Tīrthas in heaven, on the earth and in the atmosphere. They are capable of purifying more and more.

85. At my behest may all those Tīrthas reside in your body in every pore of hair. Be the most sanctifying of all.

86. After saying this, Brahmā vanished. That girl Dhūtapāpā whose sins had become dispelled went to the hut of Vedaśiras, her father.

87. Once Dharma who had been attracted by her power of penance, saw her sporting about in the courtyard of the hut. He requested the girl:

Dharma said:

88. O fair lady of splendid countenance, O slender-bellied one of huge buttocks and large eyes, I have been bought as it were by thy richly beautiful form; grant me the pleasure of secret intercourse.

89. O fair-eyed One, thanks to thee, the Lord of Love harasses me excessively.

Thus she was often requested in secret by that (Dharma) whose name she did not know.

She said:

90. My father should be the giver. O wretch of wicked intention, request him because a girl should be given in marriage by her father. This is the injunction of the eternal Śruti.

91. After hearing these words, Dharma continued his importunity to that girl of forbearance, he himself having lost it due to the gravity of what was destined to happen.

Dharma said:

92. O beautiful girl of great fortune, I do not (wish to) request your father. Carry out my desire through the Gāndharva form of marriage.

93. On hearing these importunate words, that girl wished to pay regard due to her father because of her being a daughter. She therefore, spoke to the Brāhmaṇa thus:

94. "O dull-witted one, do not speak thus again. Go away from here." Though admonished thus by the girl, he did not remain quiet because he was utterly afflicted by god of Love.

95. Then the girl cursed him, having become powerful due to her penance: "Since you are utterly insensible, become a river, a receptacle of water."

96. Cursed thus by her he too became angry and cursed her thus: "O wicked-minded one of hard heart, become a rock."

Skanda said:

97. Thus on account of their mutual curse, O sage, Dharma became a river in the great Tīrtha named Avimukta. It became well-known as the great Dharmanada.

98. Very much frightened, she told her father the reason of her becoming a rock. By means of his meditation, the sage understood that it was Dharma and said to his daughter:

99. "Do not be afraid, dear daughter. I shall do unto you everything that will end in an auspicious result. His curse cannot become otherwise. Become a lunar stone.

100. When the moon rises you will become melted, dear daughter, and be a river, dear chaste one, well-reputed as Dhūtapāpā.

101. O girl, that Dharmanada is your splendid husband. He possesses all those good qualities as expressed by you.

102. O wise one, listen to one thing more. By the power of my penance there shall be two forms of both of you, the original and the liquidized."

103. O scorcher of enemies, thus the father consoled the daughter. The wise sage blessed her duly when she became a lunar stone.

104. Ever since then, O sage the *Hrada* (still Pond) became famous as Dharmanada in Kāśī. In the liquid form Dharma is the destroyer of great sins.

105. That splendid river Dhūtapāpā consists of all Tirthas. It shall remove masses of great sins as though they are trees growing on its banks.

106. Before the advent of the celestial river Bradhna (the Sun-god) performed a penance in that Tīrtha called Dharmanada along with Dhūtapāpā.

107. The Ray-garlanded Lord (the Sun-god) meditated on Maṅgalā Gaurī in the presence of *Gabhastīśvara* (Śiva) and performed his fierce penance.

108. While he was performing the penance in the name of Mayūkhāditya, great sweat issued forth from his rays due to the strain involved.

109. The continuous perspiration that issued forth from the rays, became a holy river named Kiraṇā.

110. In conjunction with Dhūtapāpā, the river named Kiraṇā shall destroy the darkness of the mass of great sins merely through the holy bath therein.

111. At the outset, the holy Dharmanada joined Dhūtapāpā whereby all sins were destroyed because it consisted of all Tirthas.

112. Kiraṇā augmented by the Sun joined with her. Merely by remembering the name of Kiraṇā great delusion becomes destroyed

113. Kiraṇā and Dhūtapāpā fall into the auspicious Dharmanada. These two rivers in Vārāṇasī with their holy waters destroy all sins.

114. Thereafter Bhāgīrathī arrived there along with Bhagiratha, son of Dilīpa. Yamunā and Sarasvatī came there like Bhāgīrathī.

115. Five rivers are glorified here: Kiraṇā, Dhūtapāpā, Sarasvatī of holy waters, Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

116. Hence the Tīrtha became renowned in all the three worlds by the name *Pañcanada*. A man who takes his holy dip therein does not take up a physical form consisting of the five elements.

117. In this confluence of five rivers that destroys masses of sins, one should take one's ablution whereby one passes off splitting the pavilion of the cosmos.

118. There are many Tīrthas here in Kāśī at every step, but they are not on a par even with a ten-millionth part of Pañcanada Tīrtha.

119. By taking the holy dip on a single day in Pañcanada at Kāśī that benefit one certainly gains which one gains by taking sedulous bath in Prayāga for the whole of the month of Māgha.

120. After bathing in Pañcanada Tīrtha and offering liba-

tions to the forefathers, a devotee should worship Bindumādhava. He will not be reborn.

121. The contentment of the forefathers shall be for as many years as there are gingelly seeds in the libation to the forefathers in the holy Tīrtha of Pañcanada.

122. If Śrāddha is offered with great faith in the splendid Tīrtha of Pañcanada, the forefathers shall become liberated, though they might have taken birth in different species of creatures.

123. On observing the greatness of Pañcanada in respect to the injunctions regarding Śrāddha this Gāthā (folk rhyme) is being sung by the groups of ancestors in the world of Yama.

124. "Will someone belonging to our family come to Pañcanada at Kāśī and perform Śrāddha whereby we shall get liberated?"

125. This Gāthā pertaining to Pañcanada at Kāśī is being sung everyday in front of Śrāddhadeva (god of Death) by the forefathers.

126. If even the least of money is given away there in the Pañcanada Tīrtha there shall be no reduction to that Puṇya (merit) even if the Kalpa comes to a close.

127. Even a barren woman shall certainly give birth to a son after taking a holy bath in the Pañcanada Hrada for a year and worshipping Maṅgalā Gaurī.

128. If the deity of one's own choice be bathed with the holy waters of Pañcanada filtered with a cloth, the devotee shall attain great benefit.

129. A drop of water of Pañcanada when weighed against hundred and eight potfuls of Amṛta has excelled (those pitchers of Nectar).

130. By taking in a drop of Pañcanada water with faith, one gets as much purity as is cited as the benefit of taking in Pañcakūrca (Pañcagavya).

131. By taking the holy bath in the waters of Pañcanada one gets hundred times the benefit that one gets after *Avabhṛtha* (valedictory) baths after Rājasūya and Aśvamedha.

132. Rājasūya and Aśvamedha may very well be the means of achieving heaven; but the holy bath in Pañcanada is conducive to salvation for two Ghatikās of Brahmā.

133. Coronation in the heavenly kingdom is not as much

worthy of honour to good people as the holy dip in Pañcanada which accords immense pleasure.

134. Better to go to Vārāṇasī and be a servant to those who sprinkle themselves with the waters of Pañcanada than be a king elsewhere with million kings as servants.

135. Those who do not take their holy dips in Pañcanada in the month of Kārttika that removes all sins, continue to stay in a mother's womb even today. They are doomed to be in the womb again.

136. In Kṛtayuga the Tīrtha is named Dharmanada; in Tretā it is Dhūtapāpaka; in Dvāpara it is Bindu Tīrtha and it is remembered as Pañcanada in Kali age.

137. What is obtained as benefit in Kṛtayuga after performing penance for a hundred years is obtained as benefit by a single bath in Pañcanada in the month of Kārttika.

138. By performing holy ablution in Dharmanada in the month of Kārttika, one shall get the same benefit as is obtained elsewhere by performing holy rites such as *Istāpūrtas* for the whole life.

139. There is no Tīrtha anywhere on the earth like Dhūtapāpā where a single holy dip destroys sins accumulated in the course of three births.

140. By gifting gold to the extent of a Kṛṣṇala (a Raktika) in Bindu Tīrtha a man is never kept in want of gold. He will never be poor.

141. At Bindu Tīrtha any of these things can be gifted: a cow, a plot of land, gingelly seeds, gold, a horse, clothes, cooked food, garland or ornaments. Thereby one gets those things perennially.

142. By offering a single Āhuti in a well-kindled fire in accordance with the injunctions at the holy Tīrtha called Dharmanada, one obtains the benefit of ten million *Homās*.

143. No one is capable of extolling adequately the infinite greatness of Pañcanada Tīrtha which is the splendid abode of all the four aims of life.

144. By listening to this meritorious narrative and making others listen devoutly, one becomes purified in the soul of all sins and is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER SIXTY

Manifestation of Bindumādhava¹

Skanda said:

1. The origin of Pañcanada has been narrated, O Son of Mitra and Varuṇa. Now I shall narrate the great story of the manifestation of Mādhava.

2. On hearing it with faith, an intelligent man shall become liberated instantaneously from sins. He will not be separated from wealth and glory. He will be united with virtue.

3-5. Upendra took leave of the Moon-crested Lord and reached the city of Vārāṇasī riding on his vehicle Garuḍa. He completed the journey in a moment after starting from the mountain Mandara. By means of his Māyā, he evicted King Divodāsa. Thereafter he stationed himself in the Pādodaka Tīrtha by the name and form of Keśava. He thought of the greatness of Kāśī. On seeing the Tīrtha of Pañcanada he became extremely delighted.

6. The delighted lotus-eyed Lord said: "The good qualities of Vaikuṇṭha cannot be fully reckoned. Still they have been ignored by me.

7. The number of spotless qualities as are conspicuously present in the whirlpool of Pañcanada in Kāśī are not present in the Ocean of Milk.

8. Even in Śvetadvīpa where is that big collection of good qualities like what is present in the Tīrtha named Dhūtapāpā? It is extremely holy and sacred.

9. The contact with Kaumodakī is not so much conducive to my joy as is the touch of the holy waters of Dhūtapāpā in every respect.

10. Even when the Daughter of the Milky Ocean (Lakṣmī) touches my limbs, I do not get that much pleasure as I get

1. Bindu Mādhava temple was built at the top of Pañcagaṅgā Ghāṭa Its glory is described by Tulasīdāsa (16th cent.). The European traveller Tavernier (17th cent.) notes this 'great Pagoda' as most impressive. But the temple was destroyed by the orders of Aurangzeb and a mosque was built there. Today the temple called Bindu Mādhava is located in an inconspicuous building in the shadow of the big mosque of Aurangzeb. (BCL 206-207)

here when touched by Dhūtapāpā.”

11-13. He had already sent Tārksya (Garuḍa) to the presence of the Three-eyed Lord to intimate the events of Ānadakānana; and he described the good qualities of King Divodāsa and the merit arising from Pañcanada. Thereafter the Consort of the Daughter of the Ocean of Milk (Viṣṇu) became highly pleased when he was comfortably seated there thus.

Viṣṭaraśrava (Viṣṇu) of keen vision saw a sage engaged in penance. His limbs were not well-nourished (i.e. emaciated).

14-22. That sage Agnibindu of great austerities approached the lotus-eyed Acyuta. He joyously bowed down to him placing his head on the ground. He could espy the Lord (lit. make him the guest of his eyes) whose form and size neither the Vedas nor the Upaniṣads nor the Devas beginning with Brahmā could understand. The Upaniṣads could not describe him. The Lord was like this.

He was adorned with sylvan flower garlands. He was seated close to Kamalā (Goddess Lakṣmī). He had the conch, lotus, mace and discus hanging from his four hands. His chest shone with the jewel Kaustubha. He was clad in yellow robes. His complexion had the lustre of a blue lotus. His form was sweet and shining. A lotus gracefully came out of his deep naval. His lips were excessively reddish in tinge. His teeth resembled the seeds of a pomegranate. His crown brightened the atmosphere. His feet were adored by the Lord of Devas. He was eulogized by Sanaka and others. His glory and greatness was sung about by Nārada and other divine sages. His mind was extremely delighted by Prahlāda and other devotees of the Lord. He had chastised all the Dānavas. He held the bow called Śārṅga. He was the slayer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha. He was the indicator of the death of Kāmsa. By the devotion of devotees the very Kaivalya, the invisible and formless supreme Brahman, had become manifested in human form in him.

23-24. His (Agnibindu's) palms joined in reverence were kept close to his head and he prayed with great devotion. There, very near Pañcanada frequently resorted to by Mārkaṇḍeya and others, that sage Agnibindu eulogized Acyuta who caused Bali's downfall. Delighted in mind he prayed to Govinda who had occupied a large rocky slab.

Agnibindu said:

(Agnibindu's Prayer)

25 Om, obeisance to you who accord external and internal purity, O lotus-eyed one. You are the thousand-headed, thousand-eyed and thousand-footed Puruṣa.

26. With an unfettered intellect, I bow down to the pair of your feet that dispel all *Dvandvas* (the three types of distresses inimical to human life), O Viṣṇu who are saluted by Jiṣṇu (Indra) and other Suras.

27. Who is competent to eulogize him wherefor even the words of Vācaspati (Preceptor of Devas) do not get a chance? (But) devotion is all-powerful here (Hence I do pray).

28. (You are) that Supreme Lord and Master, who is beyond the ken of mind and words. How can he who is beyond words be adequately prayed to by people of paltry intellect like me?

29. Who can be powerful enough to eulogize him who is beyond mind and words, the Lord whom words cannot penetrate and whom mind cannot worship with comprehension.

30. By whom is the supreme excellence of that Lord understood, whose breath is the collection of the Vedas along with the six Angas (ancillaries) recited in *Pada* and *Krama Pāthas*.

31. Sanaka and others possess minds, intellects and senses without the least lethargy and they meditate upon him. Yet they do not get him exactly in the Hṛdākāśa (ethereal space of the heart).

32. His acts are being sung about by Nārada and other excellent sages who observe celibacy from childhood. Yet he is not perfectly understood.

33. O Lord who are identical with the mobile and immobile beings due to Māyā but are really different from them, none understands you. You are subtle in form, unborn, immutable, single, the primordial one, imperceptible to Brahmā and others, invincible, of infinite powers, perpetual, free from ailments, unembodied and of imponderable form.

34-35. Everyone of your names, O Murāri, shall dispel the sins of sinners accumulated in the course of many births and likely to bring in great prosperity. These names shall accord the honoured benefit of great Yajñas, when uttered repeat-

edly—the names Mukunda, Madhusūdana, Mādhava, Nārāyaṇa, Narakārṇavatāraṇa, Dāmodara, Madhuhā, Caturbhujā, Viśvambhara, Virajas and Janārdana. Where is the fear from the god of Death unto those who repeat the names? They will not be reborn.

36. O Lord Trivikrama whose form is clothed in silk cloth that shines splendidly like the lightning streak, those who always meditate upon you in their hearts, you, the lotus-eyed one having the sparkling splendour of the cluster of clouds, came into contact with your splendour of imponderable form.

37. O Hari having a curl of hair named Śrīvatsa on your breast, O Acyuta, O slayer of Kaiṭabha, O Govinda having Garuḍa as your vehicle, O Keśava having the discus in your hand, O consort of Lakṣmī, O slayer of Danujas (demons) having the Śārṅga bow in your hand, there is no fear for a man endowed with devotion unto you.

38. With the garlands of the flowers of the celestial tree Mandāra, the entire hosts of Devas assiduously adore those persons of character and conduct free from impurities, by whom, O Lord, you have been worshipped with Tulasī flowers having divine fragrance that dispels the fragrance of musk.

39. Even the status of kings is not difficult to obtain for those people, O lotus-eyed one with no form in reality, in whose speech rests your name that bestows all cherished desires, in whose ears reverberate the sweet words of your stories and in the wall of whose minds is indelibly engraved your form.

40. The Vṛndārakas (Devas), the chiefs among whom are Yama, Indra and Kubera, always venerate in heaven those who adore you always, O Śrīpati who rest on the couch of the serpent Śeṣa and are efficient in granting a series of pleasures of heaven and salvation.

41. O Lord with the lotus shining in the hand, groups of Siddhas, Devas and celestial damsels eulogize in heaven those people who always eulogize you. O Lord, O bestower of all supernatural powers, who have eyes as large as a lotus, excepting you who grants the charming glory of ultimate salvation?

42. O Lord who adopt physical forms sportingly, O Lord the pair of whose feet are bowed to by Brahmā, you destroy, you protect and you create all as your sporting activities in-

stantaneously. O supreme one, you alone are the entire universe; you alone are the Lord of the universe; you are the seed of the universe. Hence I always bow unto you.*

43. O foe of the Lord of Danujas (Demons), you are the eulogizer, you are the eulogy and you alone are the object worthy of being eulogized. I do not think that anything is different from you, O Viṣṇu. O Lord inimical to the mundane existence, dispel my eagerness (thirst) for worldly existence.

44. After eulogizing Hṛṣīkeśa thus, Agnibindu of great austerities remained silent. Then Viṣṇu, the bestower of boons, spoke to the sage:

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

45. O highly intelligent Agnibindu, O storehouse of great austerities, I am highly pleased. Choose your boon. There is nothing which cannot be given to you.

Agnibindu said:

46. If you are pleased, O Lord, O Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, O Lord of the universe, O consort of Laksmī, grant me what I am requesting for.

47. Being permitted by Hari with a gesture of his eyebrows that sage became highly delighted. After bowing down he chose the boon from Keśava.

48. "For the sake of the welfare of all creatures, particularly of those who are desirous of liberation, stay here in the whirlpool of Pañcanada, O Lord, although you are omnipresent.

49. This boon should be unhesitatingly granted to me by the Lord of Lakṣmī, so also (grant me) devotion unto your lotus-like feet. I do not desire any other boon."

50. On hearing thus about the boon of Agnibindu, the Slayer of Madhu became pleased. For the sake of helping others, the Consort of the Daughter of the Ocean (i.e. of Lakṣmī) said, "So be it."

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

51. Certainly I shall stay here, directing the path of salva-

tion unto persons having devotion to Kāśī, O Agnibindu who are the most excellent one among sages.

52. O sage, I am highly delighted. Mention a boon further I shall grant you. You are already a great devotee of mine. May your devotion to me be firmer.

53. O storehouse of austerities, even at the outset I have been desirous of staying here. Then it has been requested for by you. I shall stay here forever.

54. If anyone has any sense, who is dull-headed enough to leave Kāśī after reaching it? After acquiring a ruby of inestimable value who will desire a piece of glass abandoning that (ruby)?

55. With a very little effort, merely by casting off the body here, the body that has to go in any case, one gets salvation. Where else can one have it thus?

56. Why won't a sensible man take up the immortal divine physical form by exchanging the earthly body already worn out by old age?

57. Neither by austerities, nor by monetary gifts nor through Yajñas in which much is given away as gifts, is salvation obtained in the manner it is obtained at Kāśī through giving up the body.

58. Even those who practise Yogic exercises, even the Yogins of well-restrained minds are not liberated in a single birth. But people are liberated through the loss of the body (i.e. death) in Kāśī.

59. The fact that the body courts death in Kāśī is itself a great *Dāna*; it is the great austerity, and it is the most excellent *Vrata*.

60. He who does not leave Kāśī after reaching Kāśī alone is the most sensible scholar in the world; he alone is meritorious and blessed.

61. O sage, I shall stay here as long as Kāśī exists. Being propped up on the tip of the trident of Śiva, even at the time of Pralaya (final annihilation) it has no destruction.

62-65. On hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the great sage Agnibindu said with hairs standing up due to delight: "I shall choose another boon. O Consort of Lakṣmī, stay here in the auspicious Tīrtha of Pañcanada adopting my name and grant

salvation to devotees as well as to non-devotees. Grant salvation unto those people also who take their holy ablution here in Pañcanada but go to other lands and die there. Although she (Lakṣmī) has the twin forms of being steady and unsteady, let not Śrī forsake those men who adore you after taking the holy bath in Pañcanada.”

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

66. O Agnibindu, O sage, let what has been sought by you be so. My name shall occur along with half of your name and also of Mā (Lakṣmī) (Hence *Bindu-Mā-dhava*).

67. My name Bindumādhava shall be well-known in all the three worlds. O sage, in Kāśī it will be (considered) as one that destroys groups of great sins.

68. Where is the fear from worldly existence to those who will always adore me here in the meritorious whirlpool of Pañcanada? They are blessed men.

69. If people keep me in their hearts as stationed in Pañcanada always, Lakṣmī in the form of Vasu (Wealth) and Lakṣmī named after salvation (i.e. Mokṣalakṣmī) shall always be at their sides.

70 After reaching Pañcanada, if Brāhmaṇas are not propitiated with monetary gifts, they will be likely to be overwhelmed by disaster quickly and their riches will weep (i.e. will be lost).

71. Only they are blessed in this world; they alone are to be considered as having fulfilled their tasks if after reaching my vicinity all the riches are dedicated to me.

72. O Agnibindu who are the most excellent one among the sages, this Tīrtha shall be known as Bindu Tīrtha after your name. It will be destructive of all sins.

73. If in the month of Kārttika, a devotee strictly abides by the vow of celibacy and takes the holy ablution in the Bindu Tīrtha before sunrise, why should he be afraid of Yama, the son of Sun-god?

74. Even after, out of delusion, committing thousands of sins, if a man takes his holy bath in Dharmanada in the month of Kārttika, he will become free from sins instantaneously.

75. As long as the body is healthy, as long as there is no weakness in the sense-organs, a devotee should observe the holy vows because a vow has the body as its fruit.

76. This body, the receptacle of uncleanness, should be purified by means of fasting or taking a single meal or living on what is obtained without begging.

77. *Kṛcchracāndrāyaṇa* and other *Vratas* should be observed assiduously since this impure body becomes pure by the observance of vows.

78. *Dharma* stays firm in the body purified by *Vratas*. *Artha* and *Kāma* along with *Mokṣa* stay there where *Dharma* too stays.

79 Hence those *Vratas* that contribute to the attainment of *Dharma* should be observed by men who are desirous of the gain of the fourfold aim of life.

80. If a man is unable to observe *Vratas* always, he should at least perform them during the *Cāturmāsya* (four months of rainy season from *Āṣāḍha* to *Kārttika*).

81-82. Some of the *Vratas* are: Lying down on bare ground, celibacy, abstaining from eating certain foodstuffs, the vow of taking single meal etc., some *Dāna* everyday in accordance with one's capacity, listening to the *Purāṇas*, acting in accordance with the themes therein, maintaining continuous lights of lamps (before deities), keeping awake and the great worship of the deity of one's choice.

83. For the purpose of increasing piety, a sensible man should assiduously avoid going to and fro in places with seeds and seedlings in abundance.

84. Persons with whom conversation is prohibited should not be talked to by those who maintain *Cāturmāsya Vratas*. They will maintain silence always or should speak only the truth.

85. An observer of *Vratas* should avoid grains and lentils like *Niṣpāva*, *Masūra* and *Kodrava*. One should always stay among clean people. A non-observer of vows should not be touched.

86. Teeth, hairs, clothes etc. should be scrupulously washed everyday. No evil thought should be entertained in the heart by an observer of vows.

87. Those who scrupulously maintain the *Cāturmāsya Vratas* are entitled to complete benefit as an observer of vows in all the twelve months.

88. If one lacks physical power for the observance of *Vratas* even in the stipulated four months, he should maintain the *Vratas* at least in the month of *Kārttika*, should he wish

for the benefit of the year-long *Vratas*.

89. If a person was silly enough to pass the month of Kārttika without the observances of *Vratas*, he is a pig-souled one. Such persons will not deserve even the least of merits.

90. At the advent of the month of Kārttika a highly meritorious devotee should observe *Kṛcchra*, *Atikṛcchra* or *Prājāpatya*.

91. When the month of Kārttika has arrived one will observe *Vratas* like Fasts (e.g.), *Ekāntaravrata* (fasts on alternate days), *Trirātra Vrata* (meal once in three days), *Pañcarātra* (meal once in five days) or *Saptarātra* (meal once in seven days).

92. A devotee may observe the *Vrata* once in a fortnight or once in the month. No observer of *Vratas* shall make the month of Kārttika barren (vowless) anywhere.

93. In the month of Kārttika, an observer of *Vratas* should stick to the diet of vegetables, milk, fruits or cooked barley grains.

94. A man of *Vratas* should perform *Nitya Snāna* (bathing everyday) or *Naimittika Snāna* (bath on ceremonious occasions). Seeking the benefit of the great *Vrata* the devotee should observe celibacy in the month of Kārttika.

95. If a devotee of pure mind passes the dark half of the month while strictly observing celibacy, it will be on a par with the performance of *Brahmacarya* throughout the year.

96. If a devotee concludes the month of Kārttika with fasts, it is as good as though the whole year is spent by him in holy fasts.

97. If a devotee passes the month of Kārttika sticking to the diet of vegetables and milk, it is as good as the whole *Śarat* (autumn) has been spent by him with that diet.

98. One shall take food only on leaves in the month of Kārttika. Bell-metal vessel should be scrupulously avoided. If a devotee takes food in bell-metal vessels, he shall not get the benefit of that *Vrata*.

99. If one invariably (takes food) in a bell-metal vessel, he should make gift of a bell-metal vessel filled with ghee. During the month of Kārttika one should not take in honey which gives inferior birth.

100. If one abandons honey one should make the gift of ghee or milk pudding with sugar. One should avoid oil in the month of Kārttika for application over the body or taking in as food.

101. For, O sinless one, that embodied soul shall become a resident of hell on smearing himself with oil on that occasion. If one has eschewed oil, one should make a gift of gingelly seeds measuring a *Droṇa* supplemented with gold.

102. He who eats fish in the month of Kārttika is reborn in the species of whales. One who eats fish in the dark half of the month, becomes a worm in purulent blood.

103-104. Kings who habitually eat meat should abstain from it in the month of Kārttika. One who is engaged in the observance of *Vratas* after eschewing fish and flesh shall become exonerated from the fault of eating fish and flesh certainly. If there is restraint in fish and flesh in the month of Kārttika, the observer of the *Vrata* shall make a gift of an ashgourd along with blackgram and ten gold pieces.

105. He who takes food silently in the month of Kārttika really takes in nectar. An observer of the vow of silence shall make a gift of an excellent bell accompanied with gingelly seeds and gold.

106. A virtuous man observing *Vrata* in Karttika who eschews salt has actually abandoned all juices. That observer of *Vrata* should make gift of a cow.

107. One who observes the vow of lying down on bare ground will not touch the earth again (i.e. will not be born again). An observer of the vow of lying down on the earth shall make gift of a palanquin with cotton and pillows.

108. He who makes the gift of continuous unextinguished light with wicks soaked in ghee, never attains the disaster of being in the blinding darkness of delusion.

109. He who makes *Dīpakaumudī* (the splendour of moonlight through lamps) at night in the month of Kārttika shall never see the hells of *Tāmisra* and *Andhatāmisra*.

110. One who is angry with the darkness of sins through the gifts of lamps in Kārttika, never sees the son of the Sun-god (i.e. Yama) with the face darkened due to anger.

111. He who illuminates in front of me a lamp with dazzling wicks, shall see the three worlds including mobile and immobile beings flooded with light.

112. A man who bathes me with pots of *Pañcāmṛta* becomes very meritorious. He will stay there for the period of a *Kalpa* after reaching the shores of the Ocean of Milk.

113. He who makes moonlight arising from lamps on every night in the month of Kārttika in front of me, becomes endowed with devotion. He will never enter the dark area of a womb.

114. One who illuminates a light in front of me with the wick soaked in ghee in the month of Kārttika, never meets with slips of intellect even when there is the great fear of death.

115. Salvation is not very far off from those devotees who take their holy bath in the Bindu Tīrtha in the month of Kārttika and organize *Yātrā* (religious procession and congregational worship) unto me.

116-119. The devotee repeats the following two Mantras: "O Dāmodara, O slayer of the king of Dānavas, accept my *Arghya*; I am observing the *Vrata* in the month of Kārttika, after taking the holy ablution.

O Kṛṣṇa, may Your Lordship accept in company with Rādhā, the *Arghya*, offered by me in the course of the *Naimittika* (periodical as per certain condition) *Snāna* (holy bath) in the month of Kārttika that dispels sins." He who thus offers *Arghya* unto me through a conchshell with water flowing out over gold, jewels and flowers is a meritorious person. He should conceive it as the entire earth filled with gold when offering the *Arghya* water; it will be as though a befitting thing has been gifted by him to a deserving person on the occasion of a holy festival.

120-124a. On Prabodhini Ekādaśī day (the eleventh day in the bright half of the lunar month of Kārttika) a devotee should take his holy dip in the Bindu Tīrtha. He should keep awake the whole of the night. In accordance with his capacity he should light many lamps after adoring me. There should be sound of musical instruments in triple symphony as an entertainment. He should listen to Purāṇas etc. There shall be great festivities till the Tithi (lunar day) is complete. In order to propitiate me, he should make ample gifts of cooked food. Even though he might have committed great sins, he will not thereafter enter the womb of a woman.

He who takes his holy bath in the Bindu Tīrtha and worships me here in the name of Bindumādhava attains salvation.

124b-126a. O sage, in Satyayuga I should be worshipped with the name of Ādimādhava. In Tretā I should be known as

Anantamādhava, the bestower of all Siddhis (supernatural powers). In Dvāpara I named Śrīmādhava bring about the fulfilment of the greatest aim. In Kali age I, Bindumādhava, should be known as the destroyer of the impurities of Kali.

126b-127a. In Kali age men burdened with sins do not attain me, being deluded by my Māyā alone. They are eagerly engrossed in arguing about the differences.

127b-129. Persons though performing many devotional rites aimed at me should be known as my enemies if they are inimical to Viśveśa. They attain the status of Piśācas (vampires). After being born as Piśācas, they will have to spend thirty thousand years in the ocean of misery at the bidding of Kālabhairava. Thereafter, by the blessings of Viśveśa alone they will attain salvation.

130. Hence hatred should not be entertained against Viśveśa, the Supreme Ātman, because there is no expiatory rite unto those who hate Viśveśa.

131. Those base men who hate Viśveśa even mentally shall, after death, enter the hell Andhatāmisra forever.

132. Those who are engaged in censuring Śiva and those who censure the Pāśupata cult and devotees, should be known as my enemies. They fall into a dirty hell.

133. Those who hate and censure Viśveśvara shall successively rot in twenty-eight crores of hells spending a Kalpa in each.

134. It is because I have attained the blessings of Viśveśa, O sage, that I too am a bestower of salvation. Hence Viśveśvara should always be resorted to, particularly by my devotees.

135. This Vārāṇasī should be known, O sage, as a Pāśupata Sthalī (holy spot pertaining to Śiva). Hence Paśupati (Śiva) should be resorted to in Kāśī by those who seek salvation.

136. Here in this Pañcanada Tīrtha Viśveśvara himself always takes his holy ablution in the month of Kārttika along with his Gaṇas, attendants and Skanda.

137. Brahmā, the Vedas, Yajñas, Brahmāṇī and other mothers, the seven oceans, rivers—all these take their holy bath in Dhūtapāpā in the month of Kārttika.

138. The entire sentient beings and embodied ones in all the three worlds come to Dhūtapāpakā for taking their holy dip in the month of Kārttika.

139. Those embodied ones who have not taken their holy dip in Pañcanada in the auspicious month of Kārttika waste their lives as futile as the bubbles in water

140. Anandakānana is meritorious. Pañcanada^o is more meritorious than that. My vicinity is more so, O great sage Agnibindu.

141. In the same way, by implication know the greatness of Pañcanada which is the most excellent one among all excellent Tīrthas, O highly intelligent one.

142-143. Merely by hearing about it, a highly intelligent one becomes liberated from great sins.

After hearing this directly from Viṣṇu's mouth, Agnibindu, the great sage, bowed down and further asked Bindumādhava, Acyuta:

Agnibindu said:

144-145. O Lord, I wish to hear. O Bindumādhava, narrate it. O Janārdana, how many forms have you in Kāśī? What are those likely to occur in future? Tell me those by worshipping which your devotees will attain blessed contentment, O Acyuta.

CHAPTER SIXTYONE

The Greatness of Vaiṣṇava Tīrthas

Agastya enquired:

1-2. O Six-faced Lord, the narration of Mādhava that is destructive of sins has been heard by me. The excellent greatness of Pañcanada too has been heard perfectly. Tell me what the Slayer of Madhu replied when Agnibindu asked Mādhava, the destroyer of Daityas.

Skanda replied:

3. Listen, O great sage Agastya, to what is being related by me now, as told by Mādhava to Sage Agnibindu.

Bindumādhava said:

4. O highly intelligent Agnibindu, at the outset know me as Ādikeśava in the Pādodaka Tīrtha, the bestower of salvation on the devotees.

5. Those who worship Ādikeśava in the immortal nectarine holy spot Avimukta do attain immortality free from all miseries.

6. After installing the great Saṅgameśa Liṅga that destroys sins of men by its very sight, Ādikeśava always accords worldly pleasures and salvation.

7. To the south of Pādokada there is the greater Tīrtha of Śveta Dvīpa. Under the name of Jñānakeśava I bestow knowledge on men there.

8. After taking the holy ablution in the presence of Jñānakeśava in Śveta Dvīpa, a man should worship Jñānakeśava. He never slips down from knowledge (into ignorance).

9. I am named Tārksyakeśava in the Tīrtha named Tārksyatīrtha. I should always be worshipped by excellent men with devotion. They become dear to me like Tārksya.

10. There itself in the Nārada Tīrtha, I am Nāradakeśava, the instructor in Brahmavidyā unto those whose bodies are washed in that Tīrtha.

11. Prahlāda Tīrtha is also there itself. It should be adored under the name Prahlādakeśava by devotees for the increase of great devotion.

12. There in the Ambarīṣa Tīrtha under the name Ādityakeśava I destroy the mass of the darkness of sins even due to mere visit.

13. To the south of Dattātreyeśvara, I, Ādigadādhara, remove the series of illnesses of worldly existence of the devotees there.

14. There itself, in the Bhārgava Tīrtha, under the name of Bhṛgukeśava I fulfil the cherished desires of the men residing in Kāśī.

15. In the great Tīrtha named Vāmanatīrtha which is auspicious and which accords everything prayed for even mentally, I should be worshipped in the name of Vāmanakeśava by persons desirous of auspiciousness.

16. In the Naranārāyaṇa Tīrtha, the devotees worship me

in the form of Naranārāyaṇa and then attain identity with Naranārāyaṇa.

17. In the holy place named Yajñavārāhatīrtha I should be worshipped by men desirous of the fruits of Yajñas under the name Yajñavārāha.

18. I, named Vidāranarasimha, dispel the obstacles of Kāśī. I should be resorted to in the Tīrtha named so for quelling the torments of the Tīrtha.

19. By worshipping me named Gopīgovinda devoutly in the Gopīgovinda Tīrtha, a man can avoid the touch of my Māyā.

20. O sage, I am Lakṣmīṅśimha in the holy Tīrtha named so. To those endowed with devotion, I always accord the glory of salvation.

21. In the Śeṣatīrtha that dispels sins, I am named Śeṣamādhava. I distribute among devotees all things desired by them.

22. After taking the holy dip in the Śaṅkhamādhava Tīrtha and bathing me, Śaṅkhamādhava, with water through a conchshell, a devotee shall become lord of the treasure Śaṅkhanidhi.

23. In the great Hayagrīvatīrtha a devotee bows down to me, Hayagrīvakeśava. Thereby he shall attain certainly the great region of Viṣṇu.

24. To the west of Vṛddhakāleśa, I am named Bhīṣmakeśava. When resorted to with *Bhaktiyoga*, I dispel terrible torments and calamities.

25. To the north of Lolārka, I am Nirvāṇakeśava showing (the path of) salvation to devotees and I dispel the fickleness of mind.

26. To the south of Trilokasundarī I am well-known in Kāśī as Tribhuvanakeśava. A venerable devotee who adores me thus does not enter any womb (attaining Mokṣa).

27. In front of Jñānavāpī know me as Jñānamādhava. By worshipping me there with devotion, one attains eternal wisdom.

28. I am named Śvetamādhava in the vicinity of Viśālākṣī. Adored with devotion I make the devotee of the form of Śvetadvīpeśvara.

29. To the north of Daśāśvamedha, a devotee should worship me in the name of Prayāgamādhava after taking the holy bath

in Prayāgatīrtha. By visiting me, he becomes free from all sins.

30. By taking the holy dip here in front of me, one gets ten times the benefit reputed to result from going to Prayāga in the month of Māgha.

31. Here in Kāśī in my presence the merit of those who take their holy dips is ten times the merit at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

32. Here in Kāśī one gets ten times more benefit than what is obtained in Kuruksetra by those who make gifts when the Sun is swallowed by Rāhu (i.e. during solar eclipse).

33. Where Gaṅgā flows northwards¹ and Yamunā eastwards, a man who goes to that confluence is rid of the sin of Brāhmana's slaughter.

34. There one should get the head shaved; balls of rice should be offered with emotional fervour and great Dānas should be made by one who wishes to get great benefit.

35. All those good points which were enumerated in the Prajāpatiksetra become innumerable in the great Avimuktakṣetra.

36. The great Līṅga named Prayāgeśa stands there granting the desired object. Thanks to its nearness, the Tīrtha is glorified as Kāmada.

37. If people do not take their holy baths at dawn in the month of Māgha at Kāśī and in Prayāga when the Sun is in Capricorn, how can they attain salvation?

38. Those who have self-control and take holy baths in the month of Māgha, in the Prayāga at Kāśī certainly will attain the benefit arising from ten horse-sacrifices.

39-40. Those who devoutly worship everyday Prayāgamādhava and the wish-yielding Prayāgeśa after taking the holy dip in Prayāga in the month of Māgha, obtain wealth, grain, sons, and properties and enjoy pleasures delighting the mind in this world and attain the greatest bliss of salvation (in the next world).

41. In the month of Māgha all the Tīrthas flow into Prayāga from east, north, west, south, nether region and heavenly region.

1. But at Prayāga (Allahabad) Gaṅgā flows southward. At Vārāṇasī there is no Yamunā. There is no confluence.

42. O sage, the Tīrthas stationed in Kāśī do not go anywhere. If at all they go, they go to the three excellent Tīrthas.

43. In the month of Kārttika everyday in the morning they come to me in the Pañcanada Tīrtha which subdues masses of great sins and produces welfare.

44. In the month of Māgha that is inimical to sins, all the Tīrthas take their bath near Prayāgeśa after me.

45. In the midday all the Tīrthas go for their bath everyday to Maṇikarṇikā that accords salvation.

46. O sage, this great secret in Kāśī has been narrated to you, how the three Tīrthas are superior especially at their own times.

47. I shall tell you another secret. It should not be divulged anywhere and everywhere. It should be strictly kept secret from non-devotees. It should not be concealed from people of devotion.

48. All the Tīrthas in Kāśī are superior one to the other. Assailing with their splendour, they dispel great sins.

49. Lifting up one single finger this secret of Vārāṇasī is being told to you that only Maṇikarṇikā is the most superior one.

50. Only after resorting to the great power pertaining to Maṇikarṇikā all Tīrthas, sticking to their respective abodes, roar.

51-52. After dispelling many great sins of sinners, the Kāśī Tīrthas become desirous of expiation. Whether it is the day of specific astrological importance or otherwise, they observe certain regulations and submerge into Maṇikarṇikā at midday. They thus do become pure.

53. Everyday at midday Viśveśa in the company of Viśvā takes his holy ablution near Maṇikarṇikā.

54. With great joy I reach Maṇikarṇikā travelling from Vaikuṅṭha everyday and take the holy plunge along with Padmā, O sage.

55. I am competent to remove the sins of those who utter even once my name; hence I have attained the title *Har*. That is the power pertaining to Maṇikarṇikā.

56. Everyday Pitāmaha (Brahmā) comes to Maṇikarṇikā riding his vehicle, the Swan, from Satyaloka, for the performance of midday rituals.

57. The Guardians of the Quarters beginning with Indra, the great sages beginning with Marīci come to Maṇikarṇikā for performing the midday rites.

58. From the world of serpents, the serpents, the chiefs of whom are Śeṣa and Vāsuki, come to Maṇikarṇikā at midday for taking their holy bath.

59. All the sentient ones among all mobile and immobile beings do take their holy bath at midday in the waters of Maṇikarṇikā (which are) free from impurities.

60. Which qualities among the weightiest (greatest) qualities of Maṇikarṇikā that cannot be enumerated by me and others, can possibly be described, O Brāhmaṇa?

61. Those saints by whom this Maṇikarṇikā, the ground for salvation has been attained, have actually performed intense austerities in the forests.

62. Those excellent men who successfully reached Maṇikarṇikā in their last years are definitely those by whom great gifts have been donated.

63. Those by whom the soft ground of Maṇikarṇikā has been converted into their bed have definitely observed all *Vratas* exactly according to their respective injunctions.

64. They alone are blessed ones among mortal beings, they are (on a par with) those who have been initiated into all *Kratu*s (sacrifices), if they have seen Maṇikarṇikā after spending their wealth acquired by meritorious means.

65. If in their old age Maṇikarṇikā has been reached, then definitely many kinds of pious rites as well as *Iṣṭāpūrtas*, (must) have been performed by those men.

66. Jewels, silk clothes, gold, elephants and horses should be assiduously gifted away near Maṇikarṇikā by a sensible and intelligent man.

67. If money acquired through legitimate meritorious means, be it even so little, is given (as *Dāna*) at Maṇikarṇikā, O sage, it becomes everlasting unto those men.

68. If an excellent man performs a single *Prāṇāyāma* as laid down in the scriptures, it is as good as the excellent *Yoga* has been practised along with its six ancillaries.

69. By reciting the *Gāyatrī* only once after reaching Maṇikarṇikā, one certainly attains the benefit of reciting the *Gāyatrī* ten thousand times.

70. Offering a single *Āhuti* (oblation into sacrificial fire) near Maṇikarṇikā a sensible man derives undiminished benefit of the performance of Agnihotra throughout the life.

71. On hearing these words of Hari, Agnibindu of great penance, bowed down with great devotion and asked Mādhava further:

Agnibindu said:

72. O Viṣṇu, what is the extent of this meritorious Maṇikarṇikā? Tell me, O lotus-eyed one. No one else is more conversant with truth (in this matter) than you.

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

73. Maṇikarṇikā extends from Gaṅgākeśava to the Mandapa (pavilion) of Hariścandra and from the middle of the divine river up to Svadvāra.

74. This one is the gross extent. I shall mention to you the subtle one. Hariścandravināyaka is in front of the Tīrtha of Hariścandra.

75-76. Sīmāvināyaka (Vināyaka at the boundary) is to the north of the whirlpool of Maṇikarṇikā. After devoutly adoring Sīmāvināyaka by means of Modakas (sweetmeats) along with the requisite services, an excellent man should go to Maṇikarṇikā. Devotees should offer libations to the Manes in the great Hariścandra Tīrtha.

77-82. The ancestors shall become propitiated for a hundred years. They will accord the desired benefit.

After taking the holy bath in the great Hariścandra Tīrtha, a man endowed with faith should bow down to Hariścandreśvara. He will never swerve from truth.

Beyond that, in the vicinity of Parvateśvara is the Parvatatīrtha which is the basis of Mahāmeru and is destructive of great sins.

After taking the holy bath there, adoring Īśa, gifting something in accordance with one's capacity and occupying the peak of Meru, a devotee enjoys celestial pleasures.

Kambalāśvatara Tīrtha is to the south of Parvateśvara. The auspicious Liṅga named Kambalāśvatareśa is to the west of that Tīrtha. If a devotee takes his holy bath in that Tīrtha and

adores that Liṅga, persons born in his family shall become persons conversant with music and equipped with glory. Cakrapuṣkarinī there is conducive to the avoidance of Yonicakra (cycle of births).

83. Cakrapuṣkarinī Tīrtha is my excellent resort. A man who takes his holy bath there does not enter the dense entangled cycle of worldly existence.

84. Great penance was performed by me there for so many years extending to a Parārdha in number. Viśveśvara, the great Lord, then became visible to me.

85. There, very great and indestructible power and prosperity was acquired by me. Cakrapuṣkarinī became well-known as Maṅikarnikā.

86. Abandoning the liquid form there, Maṅikarnikā appeared directly to me having assumed the form of a woman.

87-90. I shall mention her physical form that bestows auspiciousness profusely on the devotees. If men meditate on that form thrice a day for six months, Maṅikarnikā will appear as a visible goddess. She has four arms and large eyes. Her eye in the forehead sparkles. She faces the west always with palms joined together. She holds a garland of blue lotuses in her right hand. In the lifted left hand in the gesture of according boons, there is a splendid pomegranate fruit. She is in the form of a virgin always. Always twelve years old.

91. Her lustre is like that of pure crystal. Her glossy hairs are dark blue in colour. Her beautiful lips have surpassed corals and rubies.

92. A fresh Ketakī flower in full bloom adores the braided hairs on her head. Pearl necklaces and ornaments beautify her limbs. She is clad in silk cloth having the lustre of the moon.

93. She also wears a splendid garland of lotuses on her bosom. She should be meditated day and night in this form in the heart by those who are desirous of salvation.

94. The glorious Maṅikarnikā is the abode of Nirvāṇalakṣmī ('Glory of Salvation'). I shall mention a Mantra named *Bhakta-Kalpadruma* ('wish-yielding celestial tree unto devotees') pertaining to her. If this is repeated, even the eight supernatural powers will be acquired by men.

95-96. First Mantra: "*vāgbhavabija—am, māyā-bija is hrīm, lakṣmībija—śrīm, madanabija is klīm, praṇava—om, bhāntyam—*

ma, hr̥t-namaḥ. Hence the Mantra of fifteen syllables [*om aṛm hr̥m śr̥m kl̥m om maṇikarṇikāya namaḥ om*]. This Mantra consisting of fifteen syllables is on par with the celestial tree. It accords all series of happiness. It should be repeated. To the persons of pure *Sattva* quality, it accords the highest region.

97. Second Mantra is *om maṁ maṇikarṇike praṇavātmiḥ namaḥ*. It has fourteen syllables.

98. This Mantra should always be repeated by men desirous of salvation. The Homa should be performed one-tenth in number by men with faith and eagerness.

99. An intelligent devotee always remaining pure shall perform the Homa with lotuses soaked in milk products and *Havis* together with sugar and honey.

100. If the Mantra is repeated three hundred thousand times, even if the devotee dies in other lands, he certainly attains salvation by the power of this Mantra.

101. A gold image decorated with freshly cut diamonds should be worshipped assiduously. The form of the image should be as described before.

102. By men who desire only salvation, the image should be worshipped in the house or after worshipping assiduously should be thrown into Maṇikarṇikā.

103. Even if they are staying far away, means should be resorted to by men (who being) afraid of the worldly existence, have faith and eagerness.

104. One who takes the holy bath in Maṇikarṇikā should visit Maṇikarṇīśa. Thereby the man does not stay further in the womb of a mother.

105. Maṇikarṇīśvara Liṅga was installed by me formerly in the eastern entrance of the Antargṛha (Inner Shrine). Here Maṇikarṇīśvara should be worshipped by those who desire salvation.

106. To the south of Maṇikarṇī is the Pāśupata Tīrtha. A devotee should perform all the rites like water-libations there and visit Paśupatiśvara.

107. It is there that Pāśupata Yoga was imparted by the Pināka-wielding Lord. It is he who removes the ignorance and bondage of Suras, the chief of whom is Brahmā, and also my bondage.

108-109. Paśupati has assumed the form of a Liṅga himself

and shines always in Kāśī for the removal of the bondage of the individual souls. There, on the fourteenth day in the bright half of the month of Caitra, men of pure minds should assiduously perform Yātrā (religious festival, procession etc.). They should keep awake at night.

110. Devotees should fast on the fourteenth day (in the bright half of all months) and then worship the Lord. They must have Pāraṇā (ritualistic breaking of fast) on the new-moon day. Thereby they are never fettered by Māyā.

111. Beyond that, in front of Pāsupata Tīrtha, is Rudrāvāsa Tīrtha. After taking their bath there, men should worship Hara, Rudrāvāseśvara.

112. By propitiating Rudrāvāseśvara to the south of Maṇikarnīśvara a man (devotee) should undoubtedly stay in the world of Rudrāvāsa.

113. To the south thereof is the Viśva Tīrtha occupied by all the Tīrthas of the world. After taking the holy bath there devoutly, a devotee should visit Viśvanātha.

114. Thereafter he should adore with great devotion Viśvā i.e. Gaurī. He will thereby become venerable unto the whole universe. He should identify himself with the entire cosmos.

115. Thereafter, is the Mukti Tīrtha. A devotee should take his holy ablution there also and worship Mokṣeśvara. He will undoubtedly attain salvation.

116. After visiting Mokṣeśvara behind Avimukteśvara a man never moves about in this mortal world.

117. Avimukteśvara Tīrtha is beyond Mukti Tīrtha. A devotee should take holy dip there and worship Avimukteśa. He will become liberated.

118. Beyond that is the Tāraka Tīrtha where Viśveśvara himself mentions the Tāraka Brahma which is like ambrosia unto the ears of the dead.

119. A devotee who takes his holy bath in the Tāraka Tīrtha and visits Tārakeśvara, crosses the ocean of worldly existence and redeems his own ancestors also.

120. Very near is Skanda Tīrtha. An excellent man who plunges therein and visits the Six-faced Lord eschews the (physical) body having six Kośas (sheaths i.e. skin, flesh, blood, semen, bone and marrow).

121. By visiting the Six-faced Lord to the east of Tārakeśvara,

a devotee can assume the body of Lord Kumāra and stay in the Ṣaḍānana world.

122. Beyond that is the meritorious Dhuṇḍhi Tīrtha. A man should perform all the rites in water there and ṣulogize Dhuṇḍhi Gaṇapati. He is never assailed by obstacles.

123-125. The unparalleled Bhavānī Tīrtha is to the south of Dhuṇḍhi Tīrtha. A devotee should take his holy bath there and worship Bhavānī by means of silk garments embellished with jewels, Naivedya, foodstuffs of a great variety, flowers, incense and lights. Worshipping Bhavānī and Īśa is as though all the three worlds including the mobile and immobile beings have been worshipped. Bhavānī and Śāṅkara should be worshipped with great faith.

126-127. A wise devotee should arrange for the great Yātrā of Bhavānī on the eighth day in Caitra. One hundred and eight circumambulations should be made. Thereby it is as though the entire earth consisting of the seven continents has been circumambulated by him along with mountains, hermitages, forests and oceans.

128. Eight circumambulations are to be made everyday by those who are satisfied with that much. Bhavānī and Śāṅkara are to be always bowed to assiduously.

129. Bhavānī accords to devotees what they desire. Bhavānī always bestows garments. Hence Bhavānī should be worshipped in Kāśī by the residents of the Tīrtha.

130. Bhavānī always accords to the residents of Kāśī what they do not have and preserves what they acquire. Hence Bhavānī should always be resorted to by the residents of Kāśī.

131. Alms should always be prayed of her by a mendicant desirous of salvation, since Viśveśa's consort is the giver of alms at Kāśī.

132. Here in the house is Viśveśa. Bhavānī is the lady of his house. She gives the alms in the form of salvation to all the residents of Kāśī.

133. On being worshipped by men, Bhavānī makes easily available what is difficult to attain, to the residents of Kāśīkṣetra.

134. A man observing *Vrata* on the Mahāṣṭamī day shall keep awake during the night and worship Bhavānī in the morning. He will acquire the desired benefit.

135. There is no doubt in this that all the desires of the

devotee will be fulfilled, if he visits Bhavānī to the west of Śukreśa.

136. If enjoyment of pleasures and salvation are to be acquired, one should always reside in Kāśī, should take bath in (the river Gaṅgā) flowing northwards and serve Bhavānī and Śaṅkara.

137. *The Mantra:* "O Mother Bhavānī, I shall become the dust of your feet. O Mother Bhavānī, I shall become the most obedient among your slaves. O Mother Bhavānī, I shall always become a devotee of yours if I should not be born in this world. I shall not have rebirth in the world."

138. For the purpose of the attainment of happiness this Mantra should always be repeated by the residents of Kāśī, while standing, walking, sleeping or keeping awake.

139. Īśāna Tīrtha is also there near Bhavānī Tīrtha. He who takes his holy bath there and worships Īśāna does not take birth again.

140. Jñāna Tīrtha too is there, that bestows wisdom on men. One should take bath in that Tīrtha and visit Śiva Jñāneśvara.

141. If Jñāneśa stationed near Jñānavāpī is worshipped by people, they will never meet with loss of wisdom even when they die.

142-143. There alone is Śailādi Tīrtha that gives greatest prosperity and glory. There a devotee should perform Śrāddha etc., make gifts in accordance with one's capacity and visit Śailādiśvara to the north of Jñānavāpī. He will attain the status of a Gana. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

144. To the south of Nandī Tīrtha is my Viṣṇu Tīrtha. There a devotee should offer riceballs and become free from indebtedness to Pitṛs.

145. After taking the holy bath, the devotee should visit me, Viṣṇu, on the right side of Viśveśa. He will go to the world of Viṣṇu.

146-147. During every Ekādaśī (11th day), Śayanī (Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha) and Bodhinī (Ekādaśī in the bright half of Kārttika) the devotee should keep awake at night near my image. At dawn he should worship me devoutly, feed Brāhmaṇas and make gifts of cows, gold and plots of land. He does not come to the earth again.

148. There the devotee can finally conclude the *Vrata* without

being very parsimonious in spending money. At my bidding, the intelligent devotee shall attain the benefit of the *Vrata* perfectly.

149-150. The auspicious Paitāmaha Tīrtha is to the south of my Tīrtha. There the devotee should propitiate ancestors through the performance of Śrāddhas and worship Pitāmaheśvara Liṅga stationed above Brahmanāla with devotion. The man will attain Brahmaloaka.

151. A Karma performed near Brahmasrotas whether auspicious or inauspicious attains great Akṣayatā (state of permanence). Hence one shall do only what is auspicious.

152. O excellent sage, whatever has been done here whether auspicious or inauspicious, ever if it be so very little, is not lost even at the time of final annihilation.

153. This is called Nābhi Tīrtha because it is as though the navel of the earth. This is the navel of the spherical cosmic egg and it causes rise of prosperity.

154. It is the navel of Maṇikarnikā, the ground of depth (*gāmbhīryabhūmikā?*). It is in this that the entire cosmic egg merges and it is from this that is comes forth.

155. Brahmanāla is a great Tīrtha well-known in all the three worlds. By taking his holy bath in its confluence a man shakes off the impurities of ten million births.

156. If even a bone were to fall into Brahmanāla those people never enter the pavilion of the cosmic egg.

157. Beyond that, to the south of Brahmanāla is the Bhāgīrathī Tīrtha. By taking his holy bath there a man is completely rid of the sin of Brāhmaṇa's murder.

158. The Liṅga called Bhāgīrathīśvara is in the vicinity of Svargadvāra. The sight of that Liṅga is said to effect the Puraścaraṇa of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter.

159. If one's ancestors had fallen into inauspicious state (Hells), one should assiduously offer libations unto them in the Bhāgīrathī Tīrtha.

160. He should perform Śrāddha in accordance with the injunctions in the Bhāgīrathī Tīrtha and feed Brāhmaṇas. Thereby he will take the ancestors to Brahmaloaka.

161-163. To the south thereof is the great Tīrtha named Khurakartari. Cows which arrived from Goloka have made the ground here uneven by means of the tips of their hoofs. Hence

it is called *Khurakartari*. The devotee should take his holy bath in that Tīrtha, offer balls of rice, perform all the rites in water and visit *Khurakartariśa Liṅga*. He will thereby attain *Goloka*. He will never be devoid of cattle wealth, thanks to the worship of that Liṅga.

164-165. To the south of *Khurakartari* is the excellent *Mārkaṇḍa Tīrtha*. A devotee who performs all the Śrāddha rites in that Tīrtha that dispels sins, and visits *Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara Liṅga* shall attain longevity, increase in the Brāhmaṇical splendour and greatest renown in the world.

166-167. *Vasiṣṭha Tīrtha* is the greatest destroyer of great sins. After offering libations to Pitrs there and visiting *Vasiṣṭheśa*, a man can prevent getting contamination with the sins acquired in the course of three births. Fully equipped with Brāhmaṇical splendour, he stays in *Vasiṣṭhaloka*.

168. There itself is the *Arundhatī Tīrtha* that heightens the conjugal bliss of women. That Tīrtha should particularly be plunged into by chaste women.

169. The sin arising from harlotry shall instantaneously vanish if one plunges into that Tīrtha. That is due to the power of *Arundhatī*.

170. By worshipping *Vasiṣṭheśvara* to the east of *Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara* a man becomes rid of sins. He will acquire great merit.

171. The images of *Vasiṣṭha* and *Arundhatī* should be assiduously worshipped there. A woman does not become a widow nor does a man become separated from his wife.

172-173. To the south of *Vasiṣṭha Tīrtha* is the excellent *Narmadā Tīrtha*. After performing Śrāddha there a wise person should visit *Narmadeśa* and make great gifts there. He is never abandoned by *Padmā* (Goddess of Fortune). Beyond that, to the east of *Trisandhyeśvara* is the *Trisandhyā Tīrtha*.

174. A man who takes his holy bath there, and offers *Sandhyā* prayers in accordance with the injunctions is not assailed by sins arising from the omission and irregularity of performing *Sandhyā* prayers.

175. A Brāhmaṇa who visits *Trisandhyeśvara* and performs *Sandhyā* rites thrice a day with great faith, shall attain the merit of reciting three Vedas.

176. Beyond that is the *Yoginī Tīrtha*. A man who takes

a plunge therein and visits Yoginīpīṭha shall attain Yogic Siddhī.

177-179. Agasti Tīrtha that dispels masses of great sins is there. An excellent man who takes his holy bath there assiduously, visits Lord Agastīśvara, offers libations to the grandfathers thereafter in Agastikuṇḍa and bows down to Lopāmudrā accompanied by Agasti, shall become rid of all sins and free from all distresses. He will go to Śivaloka along with his ancestors.

180. To the south of Agastya Tīrtha there is a highly sacred Tīrtha named Gangākeśava which destroys all sins.

181. There, O sage, the intelligent devotee who worships my auspicious image named after the Tīrtha (i. e. Gaṅgā-Keśaveśvara) with great faith, is honoured in my world.

182. By offering riceballs there and offering Dānas in accordance with his capacity, he should proffer contentment unto the Pitṛs extending over a hundred years.

183. Thus the extent of Manikarnī has been narrated to you. It is to the south of Sīmāvināyaka who dispels obstacles.

184. I am Vaikunṭha Mādhava (stationed) to the east of Vairocaneśvara. By worshipping me with devotion there the devotee shall attain the benefit of being worshipped in Vaikunṭha.

185. I am named Vīramādhava to the west of Vīreśa, O sage. If the observer of vows worships me there, he does not meet with the torture of Yama.

186. I am named Kālamādhava in the vicinity of Kālabhairava. It is certain that neither Kali nor Kāla affects my devotee.

187. The devotee should observe fast on the eleventh day in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa and keep awake during the night. He shall not meet with Yama anywhere.

188. To the south (right) of Pulastīśvara, I am (called) Nirvānanarasimha. Even by bowing down to that image the devotee attains salvation.

189. O sage, to the east of Onkāra, I am (called) Mahābala Nṛsimha. One who worships that image does not see the extremely strong messengers of Yama.

190. I am (called) Praçaṇḍanarasimha to the east of Caṇḍabhairava. By worshipping that image, the devotee shall be free from sins even if he has committed very grave ones.

191. To the east of Dehalivināyaka I am (called) Girinrsimha, the tearer of elephants in the form of masses of powerful sins.

192. O great sage, I, Narasimha, am the remover of great

fears too, to the west of Pitāmaheśvara, creating alarm unto the fright of devotees.

193. To the west of Kalaśeśvara, I am (called) Atyugranarasimha. If worshipped with faith, I remove even the mass of very fierce sins.

194. In the vicinity of Jvālāmukhī I am (called) Jvālāmālīṅsimha. When adored perfectly, I burn down the grasses in the form of the masses of sins.

195. I am (called) Kolāhalaṅsimha, the subduer of Daityas and Dānavas, because there arises chaotic noise among sins when my name is uttered.

196. If a devotee worships me devoutly in the place where there is Kaṅkālabhairava who is intelligent and efficient in the protection of Kāśī, he is never interrupted by torments.

197. Behind Nīlakantheśvara I am (called) Viṭaṅkanarasimha. A man becomes free from fear by worshipping me there with great faith.

198. In the vicinity of Ananteśvara, I am (called) Anantavāmana. On being worshipped, I remove even the endless sins of the devotee.

199. I am named Dadhivāmana (because) I bestow curd-rice on the devotees. Merely by remembering the name (of that Lord), a man ceases to be poor.

200. In Kāśī to the north of the Three-eyed Lord, I am (called) Trivikrama. On being worshipped, I bestow wealth and remove sins.

201. I am called Balivāmana. I was worshipped by Bali. To the east of Balibhadreśvara, I am the augments of the strength of the devotees.

202. To the right (south) of Bhava Tīrtha, I am Tāmravarāha by name. I came here from Tāmradvīpa. I am the bestower of what the devotees desire.

203-204. O sage, (I am) Dharaṅivarāha in the vicinity of Prayāgeśvara. The devotee should take his holy bath in the Varāha Tīrtha, visit me here in the form of a Boar and worship me with great fervour. He will never face the torture of being in a womb. By giving a very small quantity of cooked food, he acquires the benefit of a gift of lands.

205. People sinking into the deep ocean of great sins will

not get drowned even in Pralaya after obtaining the raft of devotion unto me.

206. In the vicinity of Kiṭiśvara, I am (called) Kokāvarāha. A man worshipping me there gets whatever fruit is desired by him.

207-208. There are a hundred Nārāyaṇas, five hundred Jalaśāyins, thirty in the form of tortoise, twenty in the form of fish, a hundred and eight Gopālas, Buddhas are thousands in number, Paraśurāmas are thirty in number and there are a hundred and one Rāmas.

209. I am only one in the form of Viṣṇu resorting to the middle of the pavilion of Mukti (salvation) by the grace of Viśveśa who himself gave me that favour.

210. There are six million Gaṇas in the form of Nārāyaṇa with the discus and the club lifted up. They keep watch around the holy spot.

211-212. On hearing this, Agnibindu became delighted with hairs standing on ends. The intelligent sage asked further: "O Lord, mention the different forms for the welfare of your devotees and to quell my doubts. O infinite one, how many are your Mūrtis? How are they to be known? Tell this."

213-214. On hearing the words of Agnibindu, the storehouse of austerities, Lord Viṣṇu mentioned the different Mūrtis in due order. On hearing these, a man can avoid being a victim of Yama. Prajāpati (i.e. Viṣṇu) mentioned twenty-four different Mūrtis beginning with Keśava.

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

215. O Agnibindu of great intellect! Listen, I am enumerating to you (the different forms), O sage. Beginning with the first right-hand (upper) one understand these things in the Sṛṣṭi order (clock-wise).

216. Understand the Mūrti of Keśava through Śaṅkha (upper right hand), Cakra (upper left hand), Gadā (lower left hand) and Padma (lower right hand). On being worshipped, this Mūrti shall undoubtedly fulfil the wish (of the worshipper).

217. (The Mūrti) Madhuhā should be understood through Śaṅkha (upper right hand), Padma (upper left hand), Gadā

(lower left hand) and Cakra (lower right hand). By serving this Mūrti, enemies become destroyed.

218. (The Mūrti) Sankarṣaṇa should be worshipped with the following as weapons: Śaṅkha (upper right hand), Padma (upper left hand), Cakra (lower left hand) and Gadā (lower right hand). If this Mūrti is worshipped, the creature is never reborn.

219. Dāmodara is worshipped with Śaṅkha, Kaumodakī (Gadā), Cakra and Padma (in the order mentioned above). He bestows wealth, sons, cattle-wealth and grains.

220. Vāmana is equipped with Śaṅkha, Cakra, Padma and Gadā. When installed in the house, he makes people prosperous.

221. Pāñcajanya (i.e. Śaṅkha), Gadā, Padma and Sudarśana (i.e. Cakra) of variegated forms (indicate) Pradyumna who is worshipped by men. He bestows much wealth.

222. The six Mūrtis beginning with Viṣṇu are mentioned beginning with upper left hand in the clock-wise order. Merely by remembering it heaps of sins become dissolved.

223. For prosperity, Viṣṇu (equipped) with Śaṅkha, Cakra, Gada and Padma should be worshipped by men. Mādhava with Sankha, Padma, Gadā and Cakra is the bestower of greatest prosperity.

224. For perfect achievement Aniruddha should be meditated upon as having Śaṅkha, Padma, Cakra and Gadā lifted up. Purusottama (should be meditated upon) as equipped with Śaṅkha, Gadā, Cakra and Padma.

225. With Śaṅkha, Cakra, Padma and Gadā, O sage, Adhokṣaja is the remover of further rebirth. Janārdana with Śaṅkha, Kaumodakī (Gadā), Padma and Cakra should be meditated upon.

226. The six Mūrtis beginning with Govinda (have the weapons) clock-wise beginning with left lower hand. Govinda always wields Śaṅkha (lower left hand), Cakra (lower right hand), Gadā (upper right hand) and Padma (upper left hand).

227. Trivikrama should be worshipped for good fortune with Śaṅkha (lower left hand), Padma (lower right hand), Gadā (right upper hand) and Cakra (left upper hand). Śrīdhara wielding Śaṅkha, Padma, Cakra and Gadā is for prosperity.

228. Hṛṣīkeśa is esteemed with Śaṅkha, Gadā, Cakra and

Padma. Nṛsimha is comprehended through Śaṅkha, Cakra, Padma and Gadā.

229. Acyuta is a permanent holder of Śaṅkha along with Gadā, Padma and Cakra. The six Mūrtis beginning with Vāsudeva should be comprehended beginning with right lower hand.

230. Vāsudeva always holds Śaṅkha (right lower hand), Cakra (right upper hand), Gadā (upper left hand) and Padma (lower left hand).

231. O sage, Padmanābha should be known as having Śaṅkha, Padma, Cakra and Gadā. Upendra has always Śaṅkha along with Gadā, Cakra and Padma as his weapons.

232. Equipped with Śaṅkha, Cakra, Padma and Gadā Hari removes the sins of men. Kṛṣṇa is said to be with Śaṅkha, Gadā, Padma and Cakra.

233. O great sage, these different Mūrtis of mine have been enumerated, knowing which a man certainly obtains enjoyment of pleasures and liberation.

234. While Govinda was narrating to Sage Agnibindu thus, the Lord of Birds who sets aside his enemies by means of his wings, came within the range of vision.

235. After quickly bowing down, he joyously announced the arrival of the Three-eyed Lord. Thereupon Hṛṣīkeśa excitedly said, "Where is the Lord?"

Garuḍa said:

236. May this great Bull-emblem Lord be perceived, the lustre of the jewels of whose banner fills the space between heaven and earth.

237-240. The bull-emblem chariot was very exquisite. It was capable of making the creating of the eyes of the people fruitful. The faces of the quarters were brightened with the splendour of ten million suns as it were. The entire courtyard of the firmament was covered with aerial chariots of Devas. The caves of mountains echoed with the sounds of great musical instruments. And it was rendered fragrant by handfuls of flowers scattered by Vidyādhara damsels. The Louts-eyed Lord saw the chariot of the Three-eyed Lord from afar and became delighted. Hairs stood on ends and he bowed down his head.

The Lord who wielded Śaṅkha, Cakra and Gadā desired to get up.

241. The bestower of salvation, the storehouse of joys told Agnibindu, "Touch this Sudarśana Cakra with your right hand."

242. On being told, Agnibindu touched Sudarśana. Immediately he became *Sudarśanaḥ* ('of excellent knowledge and wisdom') due to the favour of Hari.

Skanda said:

243. By his service of Bindumādhava, the sage assumed the form of luminous splendour, O Pot-born One. He merged as one into Kaustubha, the form of splendour.

244. O Pot-born One, it is definite that those who had made their minds function like bees around the louts-like feet of Bindumādhava became comparable to Agnibindu.

245. One should always stay in Kāśī. Bindumādhava should be visited. This narrative is to be heard. The (good) goal of the worlds should be attained.

246. *The Origin of Pañcanada* is conducive to merit. The story of Mādhava is conducive to merit. The residence in Vārāṇasī is meritorious. All this occurs to those of meritorious births.

247. He who reads Agnibindu's prayer here in front of Madhava shall have his desires richly fulfilled. He will become master of the glory of salvation.

248. For the sake of highest satisfaction, this excellent narrative should be recited always at the time of Śrāddha, in front of the Brahmaṇas who take their food.

249. This narrative should be particularly repeated at the time of festivals, in the holy vicinity of Pañcanada, for the increase of the glory of merit.

250. For the fullest realization of enjoyment of pleasures and salvation, the story of the manifestation of Bindumādhava should be assiduously read and listened to with great devotion.

251. At the time of Harivāsara (i.e. Ekādaśī) a devotee should keep awake during the night. By listening to this narrative of great merit, he will attain residence in Vaikuṅṭha.

CHAPTER SIXTYTWO

Manifestation of the Bull-emblem Lord

Agastya said:

1-6. O Skanda, I am not satiated by hearing the story narrated by you. The wonderful description of Bindumādhava has been heard. I desire to hear now the contact between the Lords of Devas. After hearing from Tārksya about the activities of Divodāsa and the display of Viṣṇu's Māyā what did the Three-eyed Lord tell the Garuḍa-emblem Lord? Who were all those who came from the Mandara mountain along with Śāmbhu? How was Īśa faced by Brahmā whose eyes were overcome with shame? What did the Lord say to Brahmā? What was said by the Sun-god? What was narrated by the Yoginīs? What did the ashamed Gaṇas say? Describe all this to me, O Skanda. I am very eager to hear.

On hearing these questions of the Pot-born Sage, the son of Īśa replied after bowing down to Śiva and Śivā, the bestowers of supernatural powers on those who bow down to them.

Skanda said:

7. O sage, listen to this story that dispels all sins, that subdues obstacles without leaving anything behind and increases great welfare.

8-9. Thereafter (Viṣṇu) the Lord inimical to Asuras joyously gave a reward to the king of birds, on hearing the arrival of Śāmbhu, when he announced the happy arrival of Śāmbhu near Vārāṇasī. Then Hari kept Brahmā at the head and proceeded forward.

10. He was accompanied by the Sun-god; he was surrounded by the Gaṇas and followed by the Yoginīs. He was in close touch with Gaṇeśa. (He went hand-in-hand with Gaṇeśa—Comm.).

11. Immediately after seeing the Bull-emblem Lord of Devas, the Consort of Śrī quickly got down from Tārksya and bowed to him.

12. The aged Pitāmaha bent down his head immediately.

He was prevented from bowing down further by Mṛḍa (Śiva) himself to whom he had already bowed down.

13. Showing raw rice grains which were wet along with fruits, the Unborn Lord (Brahmā) chanted *Rudra Sūktas* with a hand raised up by way of hailing (*Svasti*).

14. Gaṇeśa hurriedly prostrated keeping his head on the two lotus-like feet (of Śiva). With great pleasure Hara kissed the head of Gajānana (smelt the crown of the head).

15. He embraced him and made him sit in his own seat. Somanandī and other Gaṇas prostrated themselves like a log of wood.

16. After bowing down to Īśa, the Yoginīs sang auspicious songs. Then the Sun-god bowed down to Hara, the Lord of Pramathas.

17. Thereafter the Crescent-moon-crested Lord (Śiva) made Hari sit near his throne on the left side with due honour.

18. He offered a seat to Brahmā and made him sit on the right side. All the Gaṇas who had bowed down to him were glanced (kindly) at and honoured thereby by Śarva.

19. The Yoginīs were favoured by a nodding gesture of the head. Ravi (Sun-god) was rendered satisfied with a gesture of the hand indicating "Sit".

20. Thereafter, Brahmā joined his hands together in reverence and submitted to Śambhu whose lotus-like face was beaming with pleasure:

Brahmā said:

21. O Lord, O Lord of Devas, O consort of the Daughter of the Mountain, let me be forgiven for not returning after coming to Vārāṇasī.

22. O Moon-adorned Lord, who will abandon Kāśī even after casually visiting it? Even when he is old, who will abandon it, if he is capable of doing something?

23. Being a Brāhmaṇa, it is not possible to do anything harmful, or even if one is capable of harming, who will desire to do it to a meritorious person?

24. This is the command of the esteemed Lord too that no sensible man should deliberately commit harassment in regard to a person following the righteous path.

25. Who will have any adverse intention towards Divodāsa,

the king of Kāśī, even slightly? He is a king of such meritorious activities, always alert in following the path of righteousness.

26-30. On hearing these words, Śrīkaṇṭha ḍf pure intellect became pleased. Laughingly he said to Brahmā:

The Lord of Devas said:

O Brahmā, I know everything. First you are a Brāhmaṇa; your defects are to be condoned. Further you have performed ten horse-sacrifices. Further still, much welfare has been carried out by you, O Brahmā. Against thousands of offences, my Liṅga has been installed. Even if one Liṅga of mine was installed by one anywhere, no trace of offence on him remains, even if he may have committed all the offences. If anyone commits any offence against a Brāhmaṇa, though he (the Brāhmaṇa) may have committed a thousands offences, his wealth will perish in a few days.

31. While the Lord of Devas said this, the Gaṇas and the Mothers heaved sighs of relief looking around at one another's face.

32. On realizing the opportune moment, Arka (the Sun-god) who looks after mobile and immobile beings, noticed Śambhu, the consort of Umā (pleased in his mind) with a beaming face, and submitted thus:

Arka said:

33-36. O Lord, after proceeding to Kāśī from your presence, and adopting some strategic steps, I found that I was utterly inefficient though I have a thousand rays, in respect to King Divodāsa who performed his duty righteously. I stayed behind here knowing fully well that Your Lordship will certainly come here. O Lord of Devas, I have been awaiting your esteemed arrival. I divided myself into many forms and was eagerly engaged in propitiating you. My cherished desire has become fruitful now, thanks to the glorious sight of Your Lordship. The tree of my desire was sprinkled with the waters of a modicum of devotion and it has blossomed due to meditation.

* * *

37-38. On hearing this utterance of Ravi, the Sun-eyed Lord of Devas said: "O Bhāskara (Sun), you are not at fault. You have actually carried out my task since you preferred to stay here where the Suras had no access while that king was ruling."

39. After consoling the Sun-god thus, the Lord of Devas, the storehouse of mercy, consoled the Gaṇas who remained bowing down due to shame.

40. The Yoginīs too were keenly observed by Śāmbhu and appeased. They stood close together with their necks pressed down as it were due to the weight of shame.

41. Then the Three-eyed Lord passed his eyes towards the Discus-bearing Lord. Before Sarvajña (Omniscient Śiva), the magnanimous Hari did not say anything.

42. Īśa who had already heard from Garuḍa the activities of Gaṇeśa and Śārṅgin became mentally pleased, and did not say anything.

43-44. In the meantime five divine cows came there from Goloka, namely Sunandā, Sumanāḥ, Suśilā, Surabhi and Kapilā the fifth one, the destroyer of all masses of sins. Due to the fondling glance of Bharga (Śiva) their udders flowed.

45. (Like) clouds, their udders showered continuous and unbroken streams of milk till a whirlpool formed itself there.

46. It was perceived by the attendants like a second Ocean of Milk. With the presence of the Lord of Devas that became a great Tīrtha.

47. Maheśvara named it Kapilā Hrada ('Pool of Kapilā'). Thereafter at the behest of the Lord all the heaven-dwellers took their holy ablution there.

48. Thereupon, the divine grandfathers emerged from the Tīrtha. On seeing them all the Suras joyously offered libations.

49. The divine grandfathers such as Agniṣvāttas, Barhiṣads, Ājyapas and Somapas as well as others became propitiated. They prayed to Śāmbhu:

50-51a. "O Lord of Devas, O Lord of the universe, O bestower of freedom from fear unto the devotees! We had everlasting contentment in this Tīrtha due to your vicinity. Hence, O Śāmbhu, grant us a boon with a delighted mind."

51b-52. On hearing the words of the divine ancestors, Śarva,

the Bull-emblem Lord, said these words with great satisfaction to all the Pitṛs, even as all the Devas were listening:

The Lord of Devas said:

53-54. Listen, O Viṣṇu of mighty arms; listen you, O Pitāmaha. If in this Kapilā Tīrtha filled with the milk of Kapilā (and other cows) devotees offer riceballs with great faith as Śrāddha offerings, their ancestors will be pleased at my behest.

55 I shall speak another extremely satisfying thing. The Śrāddha offered here when Monday and new-moon day coincide, is everlasting in its benefit

56. During Samvarta period (i.e. 'annihilation of all created beings') all waters and water reservoirs dry up and perish; but the Śrāddha performed here during the new-moon-Monday conjunction is never wasted.

57 If a Śrāddha can be performed here in the Kāpiladhāra Tīrtha during new-moon-Monday conjunction, of what avail is Gayā and Puskara?

58. Where you are, O Gadādhara, O Pitāmaha, where you too are and where I the bull-emblem one am, there certainly is the river Phalgu (the river in Gayā).

59 All those Tīrthas, stationed in heaven, firmament and earth will reside here on a day when new-moon coincides with Monday.

60. What is obtained through performing Śrāddha at the time of eclipses in Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣa and the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean can be obtained in the Tīrtha of Vṛṣabhadhvaja.

61-64 O divine grandfathers, I shall tell you all the names of the Tīrtha. They are the bestowers of satisfaction on you all.

At first this Puṣkariṇī is remembered as (1) Madhusravā. Thereafter it should be known as (2) Kṛtakṛtyā, then (3) Ksīranīradhi, (4) Vṛṣabhadhvaja Tīrtha, (5) Pitāmaha Tīrtha, (6) Gadādhara Tīrtha, (7) Pitṛ Tīrtha, (8) Kāpiladhāra, (9) Sudhākhani, and (10) Śīvagayā. Thus this auspicious Tīrtha is known by ten names.

65. O grandfathers, these are the ten names of this Tīrtha. Even without Śrāddhas and libations they bring in satisfaction unto you all.

66. Those who are desirous of the satisfaction of the Pitrs, should feed Brāhmanas at the time of the conjunction of the sun and the moon (new-moon day). Their Śrāddha is infinite (in fruit).

67. If a devotee makes gifts of auspicious Kapilā (tawny) cows at the time of Śrāddha for the satisfaction of the Pitrs, the ancestors shall stay on the shores of the Milk Ocean.

68. If Viṣotsarga (setting free a young bull to roam at will) is performed in this Tīrtha of Vṛṣabhadhvaja, the Pitrs will be propitiated as though through the Purodāśa (oblations) in horse-sacrifices.

69. O grandfathers, through Śrāddhas in the Kāpiladhārika Tīrtha on a new-moon day coinciding with a Monday, the merit is eight times that performed at Gayā.

70. Those who become dead through abortion and those who die before teeth are cut, become redeemed through the Kāpiladhārika Tīrtha.

71. Balls of rice offered here for the redemption of (those who die) before the investiture with the sacred thread and before marriage, become everlasting

72. In the Kāpiladhārika Tīrtha, all these become satisfied: those who die on being burnt by fire (accidental) and those who are not cremated in fire.

73. Those who were denied religious funeral rites and (the requisite) sixteen Śrāddhas get satisfaction by offering oblation at Ghṛtakulyā (i.e. Kṛtakṛtyā)

74. If libations are offered in Madhusravā all these derive satisfaction: those who die without male issues or heir for offering libations.

75. To those who meet with unnatural death or are killed by thieves, through lightning strokes or by drowning in water Śrāddha can be offered here and that yields good goal.

76. Those who commit misdeeds and commit suicide also derive satisfaction (of redemption) through balls of rice offered at Śivagayā.

77. The balls of rice offered here to the dead ancestors of father's Gotra and mother's side, shall become the yielders of everlasting satisfaction.

78. If libations are offered at Vṛṣabhadhvaja Tīrtha, those who die among the relatives on wife's side or on friend's side

also derive satisfaction.

79. Whether the dead ones belong to the families of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras or Antyajās, if their names are uttered and offerings are made, they become redeemed.

80. Through offering libations in the Kāpiladhārika Tīrtha all these are lifted to higher status: those who die during transmigration among brutes or those who become ghosts and vampires.

81. If libations are offered in Madhusravas, the Pitṛs who are reborn among men in the mortal world become celestial beings

82. If libations are offered in the Vṛṣabhadhvaja Tīrtha, those Pitṛs who, through Punyas, have gone to the celestial world and assumed the form of Devas, go to Brahmāloka.

83. This Tīrtha is full of milk in Kṛtayuga; full of honey in Tretā, full of ghee in Dvāpara and full of water in Kali age.

84-86. This Tīrtha should be known as auspicious though it is beyond the frontiers. Within Vārāṇasī this is very excellent due to my close presence. Since my banner with the emblem of a bull was observed by the men staying in Kāśī, O grandfathers, I shall stay here under the name of Vṛṣabhadhvaja in the company of Pitāmaha (Brahmā), Gadādhara, Ravi and the attendants for your satisfaction, O grandfathers.

87. Even as, with these words, the Bull-bannered Lord was granting boons to the grandfathers, Nandin came there, bowed down to the Lord and submitted:

Nandikeśvara said:

88-94. The chariot has been kept ready. May the victory procession start. There are eight lions there (i.e. Mūlaprakṛti and the seven Tattvas beginning with Mahat). There are eight splendid bulls (eight Dhātus—constituents of the body). Eight elephants (those of the quarters) shine there. There are eight fast horses (Citta, Ahāṅkāra, Buddhi and five sense-organs). The controlling mind with whip in hand is seated there. The chariot poles are Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Mornings and evenings are the two wheels presided over by Pavana (Wind-god). The clean umbrella is the region of heaven. Clusters of stars constitute the nails. Serpents are the binding cords. Śrutis are the path-

finders. Smṛtis are the protecting chariot-fenders. Dakṣiṇā is the firm yoke. Makhas (Sacrifices) are the guards. Praṇava is the seat. Gāyatrī is the footstool. The Vyāhṛtis with the ancillaries are the series of steps. The Sun and the Moon are the perpetual gatekeepers. Agni is the snout-like projection, shaped like an alligator. Moonlight constitutes the chariot-ground. Mahāmeru is the flagstaff. The lustre of the Sun is the banner. The Goddess of Speech herself is the holder of chariot.

Skanda said:

95-98. The Lord of Devas, the Consort of Umā, was informed thus by Śailādi (Nandikeśvara). The eight divine Mothers performed the Nīrājana rite Thereupon the Pināka-wielding Lord stood up supported by the hands of Śārṅgin (Viṣṇu). The sound of the divine musical instruments filled the space between heaven and earth It was heightened by the Cāraṇas who sang auspicious songs. The quarters became deafened by that divine sound. As though summoned by it, the residents of all the worlds around came there.

99. The Devas were thirty-three crores in number; the Ganas were one crore and two hundred thousand; there were nine crores of Cāmuṇḍās and one crore Bhairavīs.

100. Eight crores of highly powerful followers of mine came there; they were six-faced, Kumāras and peacock-vehicled.

101. Seven crores of elephant-faced gods with huge bellies came there in great speed. Wielding shining axes in their hands, they are reputed to be obstacles unto obstacles.

102. Eighty-six thousand sages expounding the Vedas came there. There were as many householders too.

103. There were three crores of serpents residing in the nether regions; two crores of each of these—the Dānavas and the Daityas of auspicious souls.

104. There were eight million Gandharvas; Yakṣas and Rākṣasas were half a crore (five million). Vidyādharas were two million and one hundred thousand.

105. There were sixty thousand celestial damsels of great splendour, eight hundred thousand Gomātrīs (Cow-mothers) and six hundred thousand Suparṇas.

106. The seven Oceans came there proffering different

kinds of jewels. There were fifty-three thousand Rivers.

107. Eight thousand Mountains, three hundred Vanaspatis (varieties of trees and herbs) and eight Diggajas (elephants supporting the quarters) came to the place where the Pināka-yielding Lord was present.

108. Accompanied by these and eulogized everywhere there the contented Lord Śrikanṭha rode in the chariot and entered the auspicious Kāśī.

109. Accompanied by the Daughter of Lord of Mountains, the Three-eyed Lord, the abode of joys, the mine of bliss saw Kāśī which is far better than even heaven.

Skanda said:

110. By listening to this meritorious narrative that destroys the sins of ten million births, by reading it and by making it read (by others) one shall attain identity with Śiva.

111. Particularly during the Śrāddha period this should be assiduously read. That Śrāddha shall be everlasting and extremely pleasing to the Pitrs.

112. By reading the greatness of Vṛṣabhadhvaja (Tīrtha) in the presence of Śiva everyday for a year, a man without a son will beget a son.

113. The story of the grand entry into Kāśī of Viśveśvara that has been narrated is certainly the seed of the bulbous root of great bliss.

114. After joyously reading this narrative one should enter a new house. There is no doubt in this that he will be the enjoyer of every kind of happiness.

115. This excellent narrative causes delight unto the three worlds. Merely by listening to this Viśveśvara becomes pleased.

116. Since the Lord had the great acquisition of what was unobtainable, the narrative named *Kāśīpraveśa* is an excellent *Jāpya* (holy text to be recited).

CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

The Story of Jyesthēśa

Agastya said:

1. O Slayer of Tāraka, tell me what was done by Purāri (Śiva) after seeing Kāśī that gives delight to the eyes and was attained as fulfilment of his highly cherished desires.

Skanda said:

2. O husband of a chaste lady (Lopāmudrā), O Agastya, listen, I shall tell you everything in full. Kāśī was made a guest of his vision (i.e. attained) with great eagerness by the Moon-crested Lord.

3. Thereafter, Jaigīṣavya, an excellent sage, was seen living within a cave by Lord Saravajña (Śiva) whose mind is very affectionate towards his devotees.

4-5. Ever since the day Rudra set out to the Mandara mountain riding on the Lord of Bulls along with the Daughter of the Mountain, O Pot-born One, the blessed Jaigīṣavya of great intellect took a firm resolve:

6. 'I shall take in even a drop of water only when I shall be able to see the louts-like feet of the Thrice-eyed Lord.'

7. O sage, perhaps due to his Yogic Dhāranā power or due to Śambhu's grace, Yogī Jaigīṣavya managed to survive without eating and without drinking.

8. None else but only Śambhu knew this fact. For the same reason as soon as he returned from that place (Mandara), the Lord of Pramathas came there at the outset.

9. Hence men should perform great religious festival there on the fourteenth day in the bright half of the month of Jyēṣṭha or when Monday coincides with Anurādhā Star.

10. Therefore, that spot in Kāśī became a very important place of pilgrimage according merit. There the Liṅga named Jyēṣṭhēśvara manifested itself.

11. Just as darkness vanishes as soon as the Sun rises, so sin incurred in the course of a hundred births is destroyed instantaneously as soon as the Liṅga is seen by men.

12. If a man takes his holy bath in Jyēṣṭhavāpī, offers libations

to the ancestors and visits Jyeṣṭheśvara, he is not reborn on the earth thereafter.

13. There very near Jyeṣṭheśvara Gaurī who bestows all spiritual powers all-round, appeared as Jyeṣṭhā and Śreṣṭhā.

14. For the sake of increase in wealth, a great festival should be celebrated there on the eighth day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha and the devotees should keep awake during the night.

15. A woman who plunges herself into the Jyeṣṭhavāpī and bows down to Jyeṣṭhā Gaurī shall enjoy conjugal bliss and great fortune.

16. Since Śāmbhu himself made his stay there at that spot, the great Liṅga there became well-known thereafter as Nivāsésa.

17. By resorting to Nivāseśvara Liṅga riches of all kinds abide in the house at every step.

18. After performing Śrāddha in accordance with the injunctions in Jyeṣṭha Sthāna, a most excellent man gives excellent satisfaction to the Pitṛs.

19. By making many gifts in accordance with his capacity in the Jyeṣṭha Tīrtha in Kāśī, a man attains excellent heaven and salvation as well.

20. At the outset, Jyeṣṭheśvara should be worshipped in Kāśī by men who seek welfare. Then Jyeṣṭhā Gaurī should be worshipped by men who desire to attain the state of being the most excellent one among all.

21. Thereafter, calling Nandin, Dhūrjaṭi, the storehouse of mercy, spoke these words even as all the Devas were listening:

Īśvara said:

22. O son of Śilāda, there is a beautiful cave here; you enter it quickly; therein stays my devotee, Sage Jaigīsavya.

23. He practises great observances and restraints. Only the skin, bones and sinews are left of him. Fetch unto me my devotee, steadfast in his resolve to see me.

24. Ever since I left Kāśī and went to Mandara, a most beautiful (mountain), he has observed great restraints and has stopped taking in food.

25. Take this toy-lotus which will nourish him like nectar. Touch his limbs with this which will cause excellent nourishment.

26. Thereupon, Nandin took that toy-lotus of the Lord, bowed down to the Lord of the chiefs of Devas and entered the deep cave.

27. On seeing him with his mind fixed in the Dhāraṇā state and the limbs dried up in the fire of austerities, Nandin touched him with the lotus.

28. At the very touch of that lotus, that eminent Yogin became happy and fresh like a frog in a crevice at the end of summer, due to the association (touch) of rain.

29. Then Nandin immediately took the great sage with him, bowed down in front of the Lord of Devas and made him (the sage) fall at his feet.

30. Seeing Śaṅkara in front, Jaigīṣavya became bewildered. He bowed down to the Lord with the Daughter of the Mountain resting on his left side.

31. After prostrating himself like a log of wood on the ground and rolling round, the sage eulogized the moon-crested Lord with great devotion.

Jaigīṣavya said:

(Prayer by Jaigīṣavya)

32. Obeisance to Śiva, the quiescent, omniscient Lord of auspicious soul, the bulbous root (concentrated form) of the bliss of the universe, the cause of supreme delight!

33. (Obeisance) to the Lord endowed with form, without form and having different forms; to the three-eyed Lord eulogized by Vidhi (Brahmā) and Viṣṇu; to the cause of extreme blessedness.

34. Obeisance to you, the stationary one; obeisance to you, the mobile one; obeisance to you, the soul of all. Hail to you, the supreme soul!

35. Obeisance to the Lord covetable to the three worlds; to the Lord who burned down the physical form of Kāma; obeisance to the Lord according special significance to things, to the entire (creation); obeisance to you having Śeṣa as your bracelet.

36. Bow to you, O Śrīkaṅṭha; obeisance to you having poison sticking to the throat; obeisance to the Lord whose feet are venerable unto Vaikuṅṭha (Viṣṇu); obeisance to the Lord of unobstructed prowess.

37. Obeisance to the Lord half of whose body is taken over by Śakti; obeisance to the Lord without physical form; to the Lord having excellent physical form; to the lord who prevents further acquisition of a body by an embodied soul when bowed down to even once.

38. Obeisance to the Lord identified with Kāla (Time); to Kālakāla ('Slayer of god of Death'); to the Lord who devoured the poison Kālakūta; to the Lord having serpents for the sacred thread; to the Lord wearing serpents as ornaments.

39. Obeisance to you, O Khaṇḍaparaśu (Śiva); obeisance to the Lord wearing (on his head) the crescent moon; to the Lord who dispels the misery of everyone; to the Lord equipped with sword and shield.

40. Obeisance to the Lord sung about by Devas; to the Lord having the waves of Gaṅgā serving the purpose of a garland; to the consort of Gaurī; to the Lord of the mountain; to Giriśa; to the begetter of Guha.

41. Obeisance to the Lord having the crescent moon for his excellent ornament; to the Lord having the moon, the sun and fire as eyes; obeisance to you, O Lord with hides for robes; obeisance to you the quarters-clad (nude one).

42. To the Lord of the universe, to the elderly one, to you the dispeller of birth and old age; obeisance to the enlivener; obeisance to you, the dispeller of the sins of those who mutter prayers repeatedly

43. Obeisance to the Lord holding the Damaru (a hand-drum) in his hands; obeisance to you having the bow in the hand; obeisance to you the three-eyed one; obeisance to you, the eye of the universe.

44. Obeisance to the Lord holding the trident, O holder of Gaṅgā of the triple stream (flowing through three worlds); to the over-lord of the heaven, praised in all the three Vedas.

45. (Obeisance) to the Lord identified with the three Vedas; to the satisfied one; to the bestower of satisfaction on the devotees. Obeisance to you, the initiated one; obeisance to you, the Lord of Devas.

46. Obeisance to you, the Lord who have taken away all the sins completely; to the long-visioned one; to the Lord staying far off; to the Lord difficult of access; to the destroyer of defects.

47. O lord, O holder of the digits of the moon; to the Lord accessible only to those who are free from defects; obeisance to you, O Dhūrjaṭi, O Lord fond of Dhattūra flowers.

48. Obeisance to the intelligent one, the righteous one; obeisance to you, the protector of piety. O blue-throated Lord, obeisance to you; obeisance to you of red-blue complexion.

49. O Lord who fill with (endow with) prosperity and abundance of the three worlds, those who merely remember your names; obeisance to the Lord of Pramathas; to the Lord holding the Pināka in the raised hand.

50. Obeisance to the Lord of Paśus (individual souls); to the Lord releasing the souls from bondage; to the Lord removing great sins even when only the names are uttered.

51. (Obeisance) to the Lord beyond the Para (Unmanifest); to the Lord who redeems persons; to the Lord beyond cause and effect. Obeisance to the Lord whose acts are beyond comprehension; to the Lord whose stories are very sacred.

52. Obeisance to Vāmadeva; to the Lord half of whose body is female; to the Lord moving about on a bull; obeisance to Bharga; to Bhīma and to the remover of the fear of those who bow down.

53. Obeisance to Bhava; to the destroyer of worldly existence; obeisance to the Lord of living beings. O great Lord, obeisance to you; O Maheśa, O Lord of splendours.

54. Obeisance to the consort of Mṛḍānī; obeisance to you, the conqueror of Death; obeisance to you, the destroyer of (Dakṣa's) sacrifice; to the Lord of whom the king of Yakṣas is a favourite.

55. To the performer of Yajña; to the bestower of the fruit of Yajñas; obeisance to Rudra; to the Lord of Rudras; to the Lord who rejects despicable cooked food; to you, O bestower of fortune.

56. Obeisance to the trident-bearing Lord; to the permanent lord; to the Lord moving about in the cremation ground; to the lover of Śivā; obeisance to Śarva, the omniscient one.

57. Obeisances to Hara, forbearance incarnate, O forgiver;

to you identified with Kṣetrajña (individual soul); to one who is powerful; to the destroyer of Kṣiti (Earth); obeisance to you, fair-complexioned as milk.

58. Obeisance to you, O slayer of Andhaka; to the Lord devoid of beginning and end; to the sustainer of the earth; to Īśa who is eulogized by Indra and Upendra (Viṣṇu).

59. Obeisance to the lover of Umā; obeisance to you, O Ugra (fierce one); to Ūrdhvaretas (of sublimated sexual urge i.e. who have controlled sexual energy); to the Lord having a single form; to the single one, whose form is great prosperity.

60. Obeisance to you of infinite capacity for action. Obeisance to the consort of Ambikā. You are Omkāra, Vaṣaṭkāra and you alone are the three worlds, viz. Bhūḥ, Bhuvah and Svah.

61. O Lord of Umā, you are all that exist here, visible or invisible. I do not know how to pray; you alone are one who enables the eulogizer to pray.

62. You are the person to be addressed; you are the speaker; you alone are the speech; I bow down to you, O Mahādeva; I do not know anyone else; O Maheśvara, I do not eulogize anyone else.

63. O Consort of Gaurī, I do not bow down to anyone else; O Śiva, I do not utter anyone else's name; I am dumb in regard to the expression of another's name; I am deaf in respect to listening to another's story.

64. I am lame in regard to the act of approaching another (god) and blind in looking up to anyone else. You are the only lord; you are the only creator.

65. You alone are the protector and the annihilator. Diversity is a misconception of the ignorant. Hence you alone are the refuge more and more, again and again.

66-67. O Maheśvara, lift me up drowning in the ocean of worldly existence.

After eulogizing Maheśāna thus, Jaigīṣavya, the great sage, kept quiet before Sthāṇu (Śiva) like a pillar.

On hearing this prayer of the sage, the Lord adorned with the moon, became delighted and said to the sage, "Ask for a boon."

Jaigīṣavya said:

68. If the Lord of Devas is pleased, O Lord of Bhavānī, O bestower of the remote (inaccessible) status (Mokṣa), let me not be far off from your lotus-like feet. •

69. O Lord, this is another boon which should be given without hesitation: May there be your presence in the Liṅga installed by me.

Īśvara said:

70. O blessed Jaigīṣavya, O sinless one, may everything mentioned by you take place. Further, I shall grant you another desirable boon.

71. The Yogaśāstra that will facilitate the achievement of salvation is passed on to you. You will be the foremost Yogācārya among all Yogins.

72. O ascetic, with my favour, you will understand correctly the secret of Yogavidyā whereby you will attain salvation.

73. You will be my devotee devoid of old age and death like Nandin, Bhṛṅgin and Somanandin.

74. There are many *Vratas*; there are many varieties of holy observances and restraints. There are many kinds of austerities and there are many types of *Dānas*.

75. There are many ways of attaining the good and destroying sins. But greater than everything else is the holy observance practised by you.

76. This is the greatest holy observance that food is taken in only after seeing me. If anything is eaten without seeing and visiting me, it means only consumption of sin.

77. He who takes in leaves, fruits or flowers without worshipping (me) shall become deluded with the regular intake of semen (as food) for twenty-one births.

78. Other Niyamas and Yamas do not deserve even a sixteenth part of the great holy observance practised by you.

79. Henceforth you will be near the feet of mine in every respect forever. Hence there itself you will certainly attain the glory of ultimate salvation.

80. The Liṅga named Jaigīṣavyeśvara in Kāśī shall be the most precious of all. There is no doubt in this that after serving (that Liṅga) for three years one will attain Yoga.

81. With my blessings, a devotee eagerly engaged in practising Yoga after entering the cave of Jaigīṣavya, shall attain the desired fulfilment within six months.

82. This Liṅga of yours should be assiduously worshipped and the beautiful cave should be visited by devotees who desire the greatest achievement.

83. Hence in this Jyeṣṭheśvara Kṣetra, your Liṅga that yields all spiritual powers will, on being seen, touched and worshipped, destroy masses of sins.

84. If Śivayogins are fed in this Jyeṣṭheśvara Kṣetra the benefit thereof shall be that of feeding ten millions for each one (of the Yogins so fed).

85. Jaigīṣavyeśvara Liṅga should be assiduously guarded, especially in the Kali age, from those of perverted intellect.

86. O ascetic, I shall make my presence felt in this Liṅga forever, in order to bestow Yogic powers on the aspirants.

87. Listen, O blessed Jaigīṣavya, I shall grant another boon. The prayer composed and recited by you will be highly conducive to the achievement of Yogic power.

88. It will subdue great sins; it will increase great merits; it will suppress all great fears; it will increase great devotion.

89-91. Nothing is impossible to attain through the recitation of this prayer. Hence it should be assiduously recited by excellent aspirants.

After granting this boon to him, the smiling destroyer of Kāma turned towards the Brāhmaṇas residing in the holy spot who had assembled there.

Skanda said:

By listening to this unparalleled narrative assiduously a sensible man becomes free from sins. That man is never tormented by calamities.

CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

The Secret of Jyeṣṭheśvara

Agastya said:

1-2. O Six-faced One, what did the Brāhmaṇas say on seeing Śambhu? Tell me also what different Liṅgas are there. What miracle happened in the highly meritorious holy spot Jyeṣṭhasthāna much appreciated by the Lord of the Devas? Tell me, O Six-faced One.

Skanda replied:

3. Listen, O Agastya. I shall tell you what has been asked by you. In deference to Brahmā, the Lord went to Mountain Mandara.

4. Then those Brāhmaṇas, the sinless Sannyāsins of the holy spot (compelled to) desist from accepting monetary gifts, became bereft of support.

5. They sustained themselves with bulbous roots etc. Digging incessantly the ground with the tips of thick sticks, they created a beautiful pond named Daṇḍakhāta.

6. Around that holy Tīrtha, they installed many great Liṅgas. Eager to propitiate Maheśa, they assiduously performed penance.

7. Always smeared with holy ash and wearing Rudrākṣa, they were ever engaged in the adoration of Liṅgas. They regularly repeated the Śatarudriya passages also.

8. O sage, when they heard of the return of the Lord of Devas, though they were lean due to austerities, they became filled with pleasure.

9. Five thousand Brāhmaṇas who were practising severe austerities, came from Daṇḍakhāta, the great Tīrtha, for the vision of the Lord.

10. From the holy spot named Mandākinī Tīrtha the Brāhmaṇas engaged in Pāśupata Vrata, solely propitiating Śiva, came there in a body numbering ten thousand.

11. Ten thousand three hundred sages reached there from Haṁsa Tīrtha. One thousand two hundred came from the Tīrtha of Durvāsas.

12. Six thousand Brāhmaṇas came from Matsyodarī; seven hundred came from Kapālamocana.
13. One thousand two hundred came from the Tīrtha named Ṛṇamocana. O sage, five thousand came from Vaitaraṇī.
14. From the holy pit named Pṛthūdaka caused to be dug by King Pṛthu, one thousand three hundred Brāhmaṇas set off.
15. From the holy pit named after the celestial damsel Menakā, two hundred came. From Urvaśī Kuṇḍa one thousand two hundred came.
16. Similarly from Airāvata Kuṇḍa three hundred Brāhmaṇas came. From Gandharvāpsaras Tīrtha, nine hundred Brāhmaṇas came.
17. From Vṛṣeśa Tīrtha, three hundred ninety came. From Yakṣiṇī Kuṇḍa came one thousand three hundred.
18. From Lakṣmī Tīrtha came one thousand six hundred. Seven thousand excellent Brāhmaṇas came from Piśācamocana.
19. From Piṭṛ Kuṇḍa, a few more than a hundred came; From Dhruva Tīrtha, six hundred; five hundred from Mānasa Saras.
20. From Vāsukihrada ten thousand Brāhmaṇas came. Similarly from Jānakī Kuṇḍa eight hundred Brāhmaṇas came to see the Lord.
21. They all came to the Lord of Kāśī, the bestower of supreme bliss. Similarly from Gautama Kuṇḍa nine hundred Brāhmaṇas came.
22. From the Durgatisaṃhartr Tīrtha one thousand one hundred Brāhmaṇas came there to see the Lord, Consort of Umā.
23. O Pot-born One, the Brāhmaṇas residing on the banks of Gaṅgā from the confluence of Asī till the Saṅgameśvara Tīrtha, came there.
24. Eighteen thousand five hundred fifty-five Brāhmaṇas came there from the banks of Gaṅgā.
- 25-26. With auspicious Sūktas (hymns) Śaṃbhu was eulogized by the Brāhmaṇas shouting slogans of victory. They had wet rice-grains and Dūrvā grass, flowers and fruits and garlands of fragrant flowers in their hands. He was bowed down to repeatedly. After granting them freedom from fear, Śaṃbhu

gladly enquired after their welfare.

27. Thereafter with the hands joined in reverence, the Brāhmaṇas said: "O Lord, to us the residents of the holy spot, there is always increase in happiness and welfare.

28. Particularly you have been made visible to our eyes, you whose real form even the Śrutis did not know really.

29-30. Those who are averse to your holy spot will not have happiness at any time. All the fourteen worlds will always turn away their faces from them. O Lord who have serpents as bracelets, if Kāśī is always in the hearts of people, the poison of the serpent of worldly existence will not be effective in regard to them anywhere.

31. The two-syllabled Mantra *KĀ-ŚĪ* is the jewel which destroys rebirth (i.e. leads to Mokṣa). How can then be the negation of welfare, if it is retained in the throat?

32. He who always drinks the nectar in the form of the two-syllables *KĀ-ŚĪ*, gives up (six) changes such as old age and becomes immortal and liberated.

33. He by whom the pair of syllables acting as nectar unto the ears, namely, *KĀ-ŚĪ* has been heard never hears the story arising from conception.

34. If the dust of Kāśī, being wafted by the wind, were to fall on a head, that head becomes characterised by the digit of the moon, O Moon-crested Lord.

35. Even if casually, Ānandakānana were to come within the range of the vision of people, they are not reborn here (and hence) they never see the cremation ground.

36. If anyone were to repeat this great Mantra, namely *Kāśī*, while moving about, standing, sleeping or walking, he becomes free from fear.

37. If the two *Bijākṣaras* *Kā-śī* (*KĀ* is the Bija of *Kāma* and *ŚĀ* is the Bija of *Śrī*) were to be retained in the heart, all the *Karmabījas* (seeds of *Karmas*) become ineffective in regard to him.

38. If anyone were to die muttering *Kāśī-Kāśī-Kāśī* even while staying elsewhere, salvation shines in front of him.

39. This *Kāśī* is weal incarnate. O Bhava, you are the weal in person. The triple stream *Gaṅgā* is the form of weal. This triad of weal exists nowhere else."

40. On hearing these words fully expressive of devotion

to the holy spot from the Brāhmaṇas, Hara, the lover of the Daughter of the Mountain, became highly pleased.

41. The Lord, delighted within, said: "Blessed are you, O excellent Brāhmaṇas, since you have such a devotion to my holy place of excessive sanctity.

42. I know that you have all become fully endowed with Sattva Guṇa by resorting to this holy spot, free from *Rajas* and *Tamas* and hence capable of crossing the ocean of worldly existence.

43. Those who are devotees of Vārāṇasī are certainly my devotees. They are certainly living-liberated ones, the objects of the benign glances of the glory of salvation.

44. Those by whom the meanest of creatures stationed in Kāśī, has been antagonized, have actually antagonized the entire earth along with me.

45. He who rejoices on hearing the eulogy of Vārāṇasī has actually congratulated joyously the entire cosmic egg.

46. Those men who reside in this Ānandakānana are free from sins. They will reside within my mind.

47. Those who stay in my holy spot and do devotional acts unto me, those who bear the distinguishing marks of my devotees, only to them do I impart the means of salvation.

48. I do not impart to them (salvation), to those who neither stay here, nor are devoted unto me, nor bear the significant marks.

49. If Kāśī, the city of salvation, shines in the hearts of people, they shine before me and are enveloped by the glory of salvation.

50. Those to whom this Kāśī, the glory of salvation, does not appeal are undoubtedly fallen ones, inferior to those who desire the glory of heavenly pleasures.

51. The four aims of life of those who eagerly wish for Kāśī, shall stand in front of them like servants, O Brāhmaṇas, with my favour.

52. I am the blazing fire of forest in the Ānandakānana here. I burn down the seeds of Karmas of the creatures; I do not let them grow.

53. One should always stay in Kāśī. I should be adored assiduously. Kali and Kāla should be overcome. The lady Mukti (Salvation) should be enjoyed.

54. Even after reaching Kāśī, a man of evil intellect, who does not serve me properly (will find) that the glory of salvation though within the grasp of his hands, perishes quickly.

55. Blessed are you Brāhmaṇas, residents of Kāśī, noted prominently for devotion. I am not far from your thoughts nor is so Kāśikā.

56. What boon should be given to you here? Choose it from me as you please, since you, the Sannyāsins of the holy spot, are my favourites.

57. On imbibing the nectar emanating from the ocean of milk of the mouth of Maheśāna, all the Brāhmaṇas became satisfied. They chose an excellent boon.

The Brāhmaṇas said:

58. O omniscient Maheśāna, consort of Umā, this is our boon. Kāśī, the dispeller of the distress of the worldly existence, should never be abandoned by you.

59. In view of the prayer of the Brāhmaṇas let not any curse pronounced by anyone be an obstacles unto salvation, at any time; let is not be effective in Kāśī.

60. Let our devotion to the pair of your lotus-like feet be unaffected by the opposing pairs of entities. Let our stay in Kāśī be continuous till death.

61. Of what avail is another boon. This boon itself should be given to us. But, note, O Slayer of Andhaka, still we shall choose another boon.

62. Let there be your presence in the Liṅgas as your representation installed by us, purified by the devotion unto you.

63. On hearing these utterances of those Brāhmaṇas the Pināka-wielding Lord said: "So be it": and another boon was also granted, namely "You will be endowed with knowledge."

64. The Lord of Devas said further: "O Brāhmaṇas, listen. I shall tell you what is beneficial to you. Let it be certainly carried out.

65. The north-flowing river (Gaṅgā) should always be resorted to. The Liṅga should be assiduously adored. Self-control, offering gifts and compassion for others should be practised

always by those who desire salvation.

66. This alone is mentioned as the secret of the inhabitants of the holy spot. Thoughts for others' welfare should be entertained. Words causing grief and affliction should not be uttered.

67. Sins should not be committed here by persons desirous of eminence, since good and evil deeds committed here are everlasting.

68. The sin committed elsewhere perishes in Kāśī. The sin committed in Vārāṇasī perishes in Antargeha (Inner sanctum Sanctorum of Kāśī).

69. The sin committed in Antargeha causes Paisācyā (state of being a vampire) and downfall in hell. If the sin is committed outside, the attainment of vampirehood and hell goes away (after entering Antargeha).

OR: If a man commits a sin within Antargṛha and goes (out of Vārāṇasī), he gets the vampirehood and hell.

70. A Karma done in Kāśī is not wiped off even in crores of Kalpas, but to those who die here Rudrapisācatva happens for thirty thousand (divine years).

71-72. If a person staying in Kāśī is always engaged in sinful activities, he attains the species of Piśācas continuing for thirty thousand years. Thereafter he continues to stay here. He will attain excellent knowledge. Therefore, when knowledge is attained, he will attain perfect salvation.

73. In the case of those who commit sins here, but die elsewhere, I shall tell you the goal reached by them. Listen, O Brāhmaṇas.

74. There are some Gaṇas of mine called Yāmas. They are ferocious and hideous in forms. At the outset they put evil-doers of the holy spot in a crucible and blow.

75. Thereafter, in rainy season they take the persons of evil action to the eastern marshy places rarely accessible (to others). They then put them in the vast expanse of water.

76. They are bitten day and night by winged leeches, aquatic reptiles and mosquitoes that cannot be warded off.

77. Thereafter in the season of winter, they are taken to the Himālaya mountain. They deprived of food and clothing, are subjected to great distress day and night.

78. Thereafter, in summer season, they are kept in desert

region devoid of water and vegetation. They are (continuously) kept thirsty and scorched by the rays of the sun.

79. They are tortured and harassed by the ferocious Gaṇas all-round in this manner for an unlimited period of time and ultimately brought here.

80-81. Those Yāmas convey the information to the presence of Kālarāja. Inspecting them Kālarāja reminds them of their sinful actions. He unites them with other Rudrapīśācas keeping them naked, distressed by hunger and thirst and having the skins at the belly and back touching each other.

82. Thereafter, those Rudrapīśācas continue to be the attendants of Bhairava and endure much fatigue arising from the severity of hunger and thirst.

83-84. Occasionally they get some food and that too contaminated with blood. Thus, they remain there in an excessively miserable condition for a period of thirty thousand years. With cords round their necks, they are taken around the impaling stake in the cremation ground. Although very thirsty, they do not get any opportunity to even touch water.

85. When ultimately at the sight of Kālabhairava their sins become destroyed, they are born here itself and become liberated at my behest.

86. Hence one should not feel drawn towards sinful activities, thoughts and utterances. Those who desire to attain great benefit, should always abide by the path of purity.

87. No sinner dying in Avimukta falls into hell. With my favour, he attains the greatest goal (Mokṣa).

88. If my devotee of excellent holy vows observes fast, he will not return (to the worldly existence) even in the course of a hundred crores of Kalpas.

89. Realizing that the life of human beings is not permanent and it is full of sins, Avimukta should always be resorted to. It causes release from the fear of worldly existence.

90. Excepting the city of Vārāṇasī that suppresses all sins, I do not see any other means of expiation in the Kali age for the creatures.

91. Whatever sin has been incurred and accumulated in the course of thousands of previous births, becomes dispelled entirely as soon as one enters Avimukta.

92. On death here itself the greatest salvation is obtained,

which the Yogin is likely to get after practising Yoga in the course of thousands of births.

93. Animals of the lower strata having their habitation in Avimukta attain the greatest goal (Mokṣa) after meeting with death in due course.

94. Those deluded ones enveloped in darkness (ignorance) who do not resort to Avimukta, frequently stay in the midst of faeces, urine and seminal fluid (in the womb).

95. If a sensible man reaches Avimukta and installs a Liṅga, he has no rebirth even in the course of hundreds of crores of Kalpas.

96. Certain indeed is the downfall of planets, constellations and stars in the course of time. But there is no problem of a downfall in the case of those who die in Avimukta.

97. After committing murder of a Brāhmaṇa, if one later repents and gains mental control and meets with his death in Kāśī, he undoubtedly becomes liberated.

98. Chaste women with mental purity and concentration due to devotion unto me, attain the greatest goal, O Brāhmaṇas, if they die in Avimukta.

99. O excellent Brāhmaṇas, at the time of death I myself impart Tāraka Brahman whereby an embodied soul becomes identical with that (Supreme Soul).

100. Nowhere else does anyone attain Mokṣa like my devotee here itself, with the mind centred round me and all his activities dedicated to me.

101. After realizing that death is certain and inevitable, return (to life) is full of misery and every created thing is unsteady (i.e. what comes surely goes away) one should resort to Kāśī.

102. The Glory of Salvation will resort to those men of pure intellect by whom Kāśī is resorted to in thought, word and deed.

103. It is as good as the entire three worlds including me have been pleased by him, if a person could please at least a single person residing in Kāśī through wealth legitimately earned.

104. If a meritorious soul propitiates a man of the City of Salvation, through abundance, by granting (four) aims of life, O Brāhmaṇas, I too propitiate him.

105. The saintly king Divodāsa, righteously protecting Kāśī, has attained my region along with his physical body. There is no return from that region.

106. Here within a single birth, Yoga, knowledge and salvation (are attained). Hence after reaching Avimukta one should not go to another penance-grove.

107. After fully comprehending that salvation is difficult to attain, and the worldly existence excessively terrible, one should hit (one's) feet with a stone and wait for Kāla, here.

108. When men of defiled intellect leave Avimukta and go elsewhere, Bhūtas (living beings, spirits) will laugh clapping the hands together (at that).

109. Which creature will be mentally inclined to go out after coming to the meritorious Vārāṇasī, the most excellent holy spot?

110. The benefit obtained by men through *Mahādānas* (most valuable gifts) elsewhere is obtained when (only) a Kākiṇī (20 Varāṭikās, ¼ (one fourth of a Paṇa) is given away in Avimukta.

111. One man may worship a Liṅga. Another may perform penance. Between these two, he who worships the Liṅga is superior.

112. One has duly gifted away a crore of cows in the other holy spots. The other stays in Kāśī for a single day. Between these two, the resident of Kāśī is better.

113. The benefit that is obtained by feeding a crore of Brāhmaṇas elsewhere, can be obtained if a single person is fed in Vārāṇasī.

114. Giving alms in Kāśī shall be on a par with *Tulāpuruṣadāna* (giving things equal in weight of the devotee as a gift) on Sannihati in Kurukṣetra when there is solar eclipse.

115. Here my great luminous splendour is established from Pātāla. It has gone beyond the seven worlds. The infinite firmament has taken the form of Liṅga.

116. It is certain that those who remember my Avimukta Liṅga even at an extremity of the earth, are liberated from great sins.

117. One by whom I am seen, touched and worshipped in this holy spot, acquires *Tāraka Jñāna*. He is not reborn.

118. One who worships me here but dies elsewhere, attains me in the next birth. He will then be liberated."

119. After telling the gr̥atness of the holy spot before the Br̥hmanas, Hara vanished there itself even as they were watching.

120. Those Br̥hmanas too, after seeing the Three-eyed Lord directly, became extremely delighted in their minds. They then returned to their respective hermitages.

121. After thinking over the speech of Śambhu, the storehouse of mercy, the Br̥hmanas abandoned other activities and worshipped the Liṅgas.

Skanda said:

122. By reading and causing the excellent narration of the secret to be read, a faithful devotee becomes rid of the sins and is honoured in the world of Śiva.

CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

Manifestation of Parāśareśvarādi Liṅgas

Skanda said:

1. O Pot-born One, the Liṅgas around Jyeṣṭheśvara are five thousand in number. They are perfectly capable of according spiritual powers to the sages.

2. The Parāśareśvara Liṅga is a great Liṅga to the north of Jyeṣṭheśa. Merely by seeing it, pure knowledge is gained.

3. There itself is the Liṅga called Māṇḍavyeśvara which accords *Siddhis*. By visiting it, a man does not become evil-minded.

4. The Liṅga named Śaṅkareśa is there itself. It bestows auspiciousness always. The Deity Bhṛgunārāyaṇa there bestows all spiritual powers on devotees.

5. The Liṅga named Jābālīśvara there also accords great *Siddhis*. If one visits it, one will never attain evil state or go to hell.

6. Śreṣṭha Āditya (Excellent Sun-god) has been installed there by Sage Sumantu. As a result of visiting it, the disease of leprosy is cured.

7. Goddess Bhairavī there is named Bhīṣaṇā. She has a

terrible form. On being worshipped eagerly and fervently, she destroys everything terrible.

8. The Liṅga of Upajāṅghani there liberates (the devotees) from the bondage of Karmas. Devoutly resorted to by men, this great Liṅga bestows spiritual powers within six months.

9. The Liṅga named Bhāradvājeśvara and Mādriśvara are excellent. These two are situated in one place and they should be visited together by a person of meritorious soul.

10. O Pot-born One, the Liṅga installed by Aruṇi is also there. By doing its service, one shall attain all prosperities.

11. There is a very beautiful Liṅga called Vājasaneyā there. By visiting it men shall attain the benefit of Vājapeya.

12-21. *The Various Liṅgas in the Holy Region around Jyeṣṭha Sthāna:*

Kaṇveśvara is the auspicious Liṅga, Kātyāyaneśvara Liṅga, Vāmadeveśvara Liṅga, Autathyeśvara, the Liṅga named Hārīteśvara, Gālaveśvara Liṅga, the Liṅga of Kumbhi of great merit, Kausumeśvara, Agnivarṇeśvara, Naidhruveśvara, Vatsēśvara the great Liṅga, Parṇādeśvara, Saktuprastheśvara Liṅga, Kanādeśa, another great liṅga there installed by Māṇḍūkāyaṇi, Bābhraveyeśvara Liṅga, Śilāvṛttīśvara, Cyavaneśvara Liṅga, Śālaṅkāyanakeśvara, Kalindameśvara Liṅga, Akrodhaneśvara Liṅga, Kapotavṛttīśa Liṅga, Kaṅkeśa, Kuntaleśvara, Kaṅṭheśvara, Kaholeśa, the Liṅga adored by Tumbaru, Mataṅgeśa, Marutteśa, Magadheyeśvara, Jātūkarṇeśvara Liṅga, Jāmbukeśvara, Jārudhīśa, Jaleśa, Jalmeśa, Jālakeśvara—these and other Liṅgas number about five thousand. O Pot-born One, if a man remembers, visits, touches, adores, bows down to and eulogizes these auspicious Liṅgas in the excessively sacred Jyeṣṭhasthāna, there arises no sin in him.

Skanda said:

22. O great sage, listen; I shall tell you what happened here at the Jyeṣṭhasthāna. It is destructive of sins.

23. Even as Maheśa was enjoying himself as he pleased at Jyeṣṭhasthāna, Śivā too played eagerly games with her ball.

24. She demonstrated the sprightliness of her limbs that

moved up and down. As the bees hovered round her, being attracted by the fragrance of her breath, her eyes became slightly disturbed.

25. As her tresses of hairs became loosened, the excellent garland fell down and covered the ground. Drops of perspiration flowing down her cheeks washed away the lines of cosmetic painting and made her shine all the more.

26. The brilliance of her body was completely revealed as the upper cloth over her breasts was tossed about. The lotus-like palms of the goddess became excessively red as she continuously beat the springing ball.

27-29. Her eyebrows seemed to dance as her eyes closely followed the ball. Mṛḍānī, the beautiful mother of the universe, was playing thus and she was seen by the Ditijas (demons) named Vidala and Utpala who happened to go through the firmament. They were extremely haughty, due to the boons they had received from Brahmā. They were so mighty that they considered all the men in all the three worlds as worthless as grass. In fact, they were caught within the range of vision of the god of Death present nearby.

30. Afflicted by the god of Love, they were eager to abduct the goddess and hence they quickly descended from the sky, resorting to sorcery.

31-32. In the guise of the attendants of the Lord, they came near the mother divine. Those extremely wicked and fickle-minded demons were recognized by Sarvajña, Śiva, the omniscient one through their tremulous eyes. Presently Durgā, the destroyer of terrible enemies, was glanced at significantly.

33. Understanding the significance of the glance the goddess sharing half the body of the omniscient Lord simultaneously killed both of them with that very ball.

34. Hit with the ball by the great goddess, the wicked demons of great prowess whirled round and round and collapsed.

35-36. Those great Daityas, the wicked ones, who had attempted a criminal misdeed, fell down like two ripe fruits shaken off from the stalk by wind or like peaks of a great mountain struck down by thunderbolt. Thereafter the ball transformed itself unto a Liṅga.

37. It became a Liṅga named Kanduḷeśvara very near

Jyeṣṭheśvara. It wards off all evil-minded ones.

38. How can fear of misery assail that devotee who listens joyously to the manifestation of Kandukeśa and adores it?

39. Bhavānī who eradicates fear, brings about the *Yogaṣema* ('acquisition and preservation of desired objects') to men who are devotees of Kandukeśvara and are devoid of sins.

40. Mṛḍānī always worships that Liṅga. There itself is the perpetual presence of Goddess Pārvatī according spiritual powers to the devotees.

41. How can Bhavānī and Īśa be the bestowers of all desired things on those men by whom Kandukeśa, the great Liṅga, has not been worshipped?

42. That Liṅga named Kandukeśvara should be visited assiduously. It is destructive of all the masses of torments and calamities.

43. Even on hearing the very name of Kandukeśvara, a mass of sins becomes destroyed immediately like darkness meeting with the hot-rayed sun.

Skanda said:

44. Listen, O blessed one, O Brāhmaṇa, listen to what took place near Jyeṣṭheśvara. It is certainly extremely wonderful.

45-46. When Brāhmaṇas were performing great austerities without any desire or motive in Daṇḍakhāta, the great Tīrtha that accords satisfaction unto the Devas, sages and forefathers, the wicked Daitya (named) Dundubhinirhrāda, the maternal uncle of Prahlāda, thought about the means of easily conquering the Devas.

47-48. He thought over this many times: 'What is the source of their (Devas') strength? What is the food of the Devas? What is their support?' He came to this decision which, he thought, was the real fact: 'Certainly on consideration Brāhmaṇas seem to be the real causes.' So, thereafter, he endeavoured to kill Brāhmaṇas frequently.

49. 'Since the Devas live on *Kratu* (Yajñas), the *Kratu* are based on the Vedas and those Vedas are in the custody of Brāhmaṇas, Brāhmaṇas constitute the power of the Devas.

50. It is certain that all the Vedas along with Indra have

the support of Brāhmaṇas. There need not be any hesitation in concluding that Brāhmaṇas are the power behind the Devas.

51. If Brāhmaṇas are annihilated, the Vedas are automatically destroyed. When the Vedas are destroyed, Yajñas get destroyed.

52. When Yajñas are ruined, Devas become deprived of their food and so weak that they can be easily conquered.

53-54. When Devas are conquered, I myself will become the honoured Lord of the three worlds. I shall then take away all the unlimited riches of Devas. When the troublesome fellows have been destroyed in the kingdom, I will solely enjoy pleasures.'

After deciding thus, O sage, he directed his thoughts in the following direction:

55. 'Where do those Brāhmaṇas with abundant Brāhmaṇical brilliance, richly endowed with the study of the Vedas and possessing the power of penance, live mostly?

56. Vārāṇasī must be the spot where Brāhmaṇas preponderate. After destroying them at the outset, I shall go to the other Tīrthas.

57. Whatever may be those Tīrthas, whatever may be those hermitages where there are Brāhmaṇas, all those Brāhmaṇas are to be devoured by me all-round.'

58. After deciding thus as befitting his race, the wicked Māyāvī (one capable of sorcery) came to Kāśī and killed Brāhmaṇas.

59. Wherever excellent Brāhmaṇas went to collect sacrificial twigs and *Darbha* grass in the forest, the evil-minded Daitya (attacked and) devoured them.

60. He took the form of a hunter in the forest or an aquatic animal under the water and hid himself so that no one could recognise him.

61. That Daitya endowed with Māyā-power remained invisible even to Devas. Sometimes he used to sit in the guise of a sage engrossed in meditation like an ascetic during daytime.

62. He used to watch them entering the huts and going out. Then at night he assumed the form of a tiger and devoured many Brāhmaṇas.

63. He used to carry them off without making any noise. He did not leave behind even their bones. Thus many Brāhmaṇas were killed by that wicked demon.

64. Once on the Śivarātri day, a certain devotee performed the adoration of the Lord of Devas in his hut and remained in meditation.

65. Haughty on account of his strength, Dundubhinirhrāda, the king of Daityas, assumed the form of a tiger and desired to seize him.

66. He could not attack that devotee engaged in meditation with a firm resolve to realise Śiva, because he (the devotee) had uttered the Astra-Mantra with due Vinyāsas (protective arrangement by Mantra) thereof.

67. Thereupon, Śambhu, the omnipresent one, Hara, understood the intention of the wicked Daitya and decided to kill him.

68. Even as the tiger was about to seize him, Hara, the esteemed protector-jewel of the universe against evil-spirits, efficient in the means of protecting the devotees, appeared before him.

69. On seeing Rudra coming out of the Liṅga worshipped by that devotee, the Daitya grew in size, comparable to a big mountain, retaining the same form (of a tiger).

70. The Dānava looked at Sarvajña with contempt (and went ahead). On seeing him come, the Lord squeezed him within his machine-like armpit and pressed.

71-74. The Pañcāśya (tiger) struck at Pañcāśya (Lord Śiva) with his fist on his head.

Being pressed and squeezed within the armpit the tiger retaining its form howled and roared in distress. His cries filled heaven and earth. With their minds trembling due to that sudden roar, the ascetics came there following the sound in the darkness of the night. There they saw the Lord with the king of beasts locked up in the armpit.

75. "O Īśa, bless us. O Preceptor of the universe, stay here itself in this selfsame form adopting the name Vyāghreśa.

76. O great Lord, afford protection to Jyeṣṭhasthāna always. Save us, the residents of the Tīrtha, from other torments and calamities."

77-80. On bearing their words, the Moon-embellished Lord said: "So be it" and continued thus, "O eminent Brāhmaṇas, listen. Undoubtedly I shall destroy the mass of calamities of that man who will visit me here faithfully, in this form itself. If a man worships this Liṅga and goes ahead on his journey, he will not have any fear arising from thieves, tigers etc.

After listening to this story of mine and remembering the Liṅga the man may enter battlefield. He will win (the battle). Not otherwise."

81. After saying thus, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas merged into that Liṅga. Surprised and dismayed thereby, the Brāhmaṇas went back in the morning to the places where they had come from.

Skanda said:

82. Ever since then, O Pot-born One, the Liṅga came to be known by the name Vyāghreśvara. It is to the north of Jyeṣṭheśa. If visited and touched, it removes fear.

83. The servants of Yama are afraid of the devotees of Vyāghreśvara. Even if the Yāmas (servants of Yama) are very cruel, they will deign to say, "Be victorious. Be alive."

84. On hearing the manifestation of Parāśareśvara and other Liṅgas here, a man can avoid being smeared with the mud of great sins.

85. On listening to the stories of the manifestation of Kandukeśa and Vyāghreśa, a man will never be distressed due to calamities.

86. Uṭajeśvara Liṅga is situated to the west of Vyāghreśa. It has sprung up for the sake of according protection to the devotee. One shall be free from fear after worshipping it.

CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

Śaileśa and Other Liṅgas

Skanda said:

1. I shall narrate to you the details of the other Liṅgas around Jyeṣṭheśvara. Listen, O scorcher of Vātāpi.

2. To the right (south) side of Jyeṣṭheśa is the auspicious Liṅga of celestial damsels. There itself is the well of the celestial damsels named Saubhāgyodaka.

3. Those men or women who take their holy bath in the water of that well and visit Apsaraseśvara never meet with misfortune.

4. There itself, near the tank, is a Liṅga named Kukkuṭeśa. By worshipping it the family of the men flourishes and becomes prosperous.

5. The auspicious Pitāmaheśvara Liṅga is on the bank of Jyeṣṭhavāpī. By offering Śrāddha there, the man will make the forefathers joyous.

6. To the south-west of Pitāmaheśa, Gadādhareśvara Liṅga should be worshipped with great care. It accords satisfaction to the forefathers.

7. O sage, in the south-west quarter of Jyeṣṭheśvara is a Liṅga named Vāsukīśvara. It should be worshipped completely.

8. Holy ablution, *Dāna* and other rites there in the Vāsukikuṇḍa remove the fear of men from serpents due to the power of Vāsukīśa.

9. If anyone takes his holy bath in the Vāsukikuṇḍa on the Nāgapañcamī day, he will never be touched (affected) by the poison issuing forth from serpents.

10. The religious festival should be performed on the Nāgapañcamī day during rainy season there. Serpents become pleased always with that family.

11. On the western side of that Kuṇḍa is Takṣakeśvara Liṅga. It should be carefully worshipped. It accords all the spiritual powers to the devotees.

12. O sage, to the north thereof is the Takṣakakuṇḍa. One who performs libations and other rites in water there, is never attacked by serpents.

13. To the northern side of that Kuṇḍa is Bhairava named Kapālī, who destroys the agitation and fear of the devotees and always accords welfare to the entire holy spot.

14. That great holy spot of Bhairava accords fulfilment of a spiritual endeavour of an aspirant. The Vidyās (Mantras) repeatedly practised there attain fulfilment within six months.

15. There Goddess Caṇḍī with a huge head destroys great obstacles of the devotees. For the achievement of one's cherished desires, she should be worshipped with the requisite offerings of adoration, oblations etc.

16. An excellent man who makes the pilgrimage to her (holy spot) on the Mahāṣṭamī day becomes famous, wealthy and endowed with sons and grandsons.

17. To the west of Mahāmuṇḍā ('goddess with a huge head') is a well-called Catuṣsāgara Vāpikā. One who takes holy bath therein, shall (be deemed to) have taken his bath in all the four oceans.

18. That holy spot is extremely well-known. It is named Catuṣsāgara. There are four Liṅgas there installed by four Oceans.

19. Liṅgas on the four sides of that tank, burn sins on being worshipped. To the north of it is a Liṅga named Vṛṣabheśvara.

20. That has been installed by the Bull of Hara himself out of his devotion (to Hara). By visiting it men will attain salvation within six months.

21-22. To the north of Vṛṣeśvara is (a Liṅga) named Gandharveśvara. To the east of it is Gandharvakuṇḍa. An excellent man should take his holy bath there, worship Gandharveśvara, make gifts in accordance with his capacity and offer libations to the forefathers and Devas. He will rejoice in the company of Gandharvas.

23. There is a serpent named Karkoṭa to the east of Gandharveśvara. A well called Karkoṭavāpī and a Liṅga named Karkoṭakeśvara are also there.

24. A man who takes his bath in that Vāpī (tank), adores Karkoṭeśa and propitiates Karkoṭa Nāga is honoured in the world of Nāgas (Serpents).

25. If Karkoṭa Nāga is visited by men who perform all the rites in the water of Karkoṭavāpī, no poison (originating) from mobile and immobile beings will affect them.

26. To the west of Karkoṭeśa is a Liṅga named Dhundhumārīśvara. The worship of that Liṅga dispels the fear of men from enemies.

27. To the north thereof is stationed Purūraveśvara Liṅga. It should be visited with effort. It accords fulfilment of the four aims of life.

28. To the east thereof is a Liṅga adored by the elephant of the quarter named Supratika. It is named Supratīkeśvara. It increases fame and strength.

29. A great lake named Supratika shines in front of it. By taking holy dip in it and by visiting that Liṅga, a devotee attains the position of the Lords of the quarters.

30. A Mahāgaurī deity Vijayabhairavī is also there. She is stationed in the northern gateway for the sake of protection. For the attainment of a desired object, she should be worshipped.

31. On the beautiful banks of Varaṇā are the Gaṇas Huṇḍaṇa and Muṇḍaṇa. They watch and guard the holy spot. They eradicate all obstacles.

32. They are to be visited with effort for the purpose of keeping the holy spot free from obstacles. After visiting Huṇḍaṇeśa and Muṇḍaṇeśa a devotee shall become happy.

Skanda said:

33. O Enemy (killer) of Ilvala, be attentive. Listen to a story of what happened as an excellent event on the charming banks of Varaṇā formerly.

34. Once on seeing the Lord of the Mountains delighted in his mind, the chaste lady Menā, who was reminded of Umā, heaved a sigh and she spoke thus:

Menā said:

35. O son of venerable elders (Āryaputra), O Lord of Mountains, I have no news of Gaurī ever since her marriage.

36. Where is that Lord now—he who habitually moves about on a stately bull, wears ornaments of serpents and ashes, whose habitation is the extensive cremation ground and who is clad with nothing but the bare quarters?

37. O beloved one, I think that the eight mothers¹ Brāhmī etc. who appear in their exquisite forms, may cause some distress to the girl.

38. That Trident-bearing Lord is without a second; he has no one else. Hence, O lord, may effort be made to get some news about him.

39. At the speech of his beloved wife, the Mountain fond of his child, spoke these words with tears, his speech being obstructed by excessive affection for Umā.

The Lord of Mountains said:

40. I myself shall go, O Menā, to enquire after her. My fondness for her is being scorched unduly, due to the fire-like fact of not being able to see her.

41. Ever since Gaurī set out from my house, I think the Goddess of Fortune too has gone out of my house.

42. O my beloved, accustomed to imbibe the nectarine lispings words of her, my ears have ceased to pay heed to other words ever since that day.

43. Ever since my long-lived daughter went out of my sight, even moonlight causes great distress to me.

44. After saying this the Lord of Mountains took with him jewels and clothes of various kinds and set out when the time was auspicious.

Agastya said:

45. O Six-faced Lord, what were those jewels and how many of them did he take with him, when he set out? Tell me even as I ask.

Skanda said:

46. (He took with him) two crores of *Tulās* (weight of a hundred *Palas*) of pearls and a hundred *Tulās* of white shining diamonds.

47. O Brāhmaṇa, there were more than nine lakhs of a

1. The eight mothers are: Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasimhī, Kaumārī, Māhendrī, Cāmuṇḍā and Caṇḍikā.

hundred *Tulās* highly brilliant (diamonds) of six angles (six cut faces). There were two hundred thousand *Tulās* of Vidūras (Lapis lazuli) of spotless splendour.

48. O sage, know that there were five crores of *Tulās* of rubies and nine hundred thousand *Tulās* of topaz.

49. O sage, in the same way (he took with him) there a hundred thousand *Tulās* of Gomeda jewels and half a crore of *Tulās* of blue sapphires.

50. There were a million emeralds and nine crores of *Tulās* of pure coral.

51. O, sage, it is impossible to calculate the number of the ornaments intended for the eight different parts of the bodies or of the clothes of tender fabric of diverse colours.

52. There were many Cāmaras and fragrant articles. O sage, innumerable were the gold pieces, slaves (men and women) etc.

53. The Lord of Mountains took all these things and set out. After coming to the banks of Varāṇā he looked at Kāśī.

54. All the different storeys (of the buildings there) were studded with many gems. The extensive firmament **above** was lighted up by the splendour of the rubies of the various palatial buildings.

55. The different quarters shone brightly, due to the golden pinnacles of the mansions. Through the different banners such as Jayantī and Vaijayantī, the city appeared like heaven.

56. It was the wonderful sports-ground of the great eight Siddhis. Due to the various groves abounding in all kinds of fruits, it far excelled the gardens of Kalpa trees.

57. On seeing the exuberance and opulence of Kāśī thus, the Lord of Mountains became ashamed. He spoke these words to his own mind.

58-61a. 'The jewels and the rubies put forth excellent lustre on the palaces, streets, ramparts, houses, turrets, doors of diverse kinds etc. The space between heaven and earth is fully brightened with the masses of lustre. I know that such opulence and abundance does not find a place even with the abode of Kubera. It does not exist even in the region of Vaikuṇṭha. What to say of other (worlds)?'

61b-62. Even as the Lord of Mountains was thinking thus in his mind, a pilgrim came within his view. The Lord of Moun-

tains beckoned to him respectfully and asked him:

Himavān said:

63. O excellent pilgrim, sit on this seat. O traveller, tell me the details of your city. What are the special characteristics of this place? What unprecedented thing has happened?

64. Who is the chief administrative head here now? What are his activities? If you know tell everything to me.

65. On hearing the speech of the Lord of Mountains, O sage, the pilgrim began to narrate:

The Kārpatika (pilgrim) said:

66-67. I shall narrate, O eminent king, listen; I shall mention everything that you ask. O honoured one, only five or six days have elapsed since the arrival of the Consort of the Daughter of the Lord of Mountains, the Lord of the universe from the beautiful Mandara mountain after Divodāsa had gone to heaven.

68. He who is omnipresent and the presiding deity of the entire universe is the ruler and administrator here. He is Śarva, the bestower of everything. He has vision all-round. O lord, how is he not known (to you)?

69. I think you have a stony form, a heart harder than stone, since you do not know the Consort of the Daughter of the Mountain, Viśveśvara in Kāśī.

70. Better indeed is that mountain Himālaya, though his interior is naturally hard, because he propitiated the Ruler of the universe by giving (in marriage) his daughter dearer to him than his very vital breath.

71. Though Gaurī's father has congenital hardness, he has become worthy of the esteem of even Viśvaguru (Brahmā), because he had propitiated Śāmbhu by means of his daughter who was like a garland (worthy of being worn on the head).

72. Who can profess to know the activity of that Lord worthy of being known only through the Vedas? I know only this much that the entire universe is activated by him.

73. The presiding deity (of this city) has been mentioned by me. So also the activity of the said presiding deity. The

unprecedented thing about which you have asked, I shall now mention. Listen.

74. The Companion of the Daughter of the King of Mountains rejoices on having come to Kāśī. At present, he, the Consort of Umā, is stationed in the excellent Jyeṣṭheśvara Sthāna.

Skanda said:

75. Whenever that traveller uttered the nectar-like letters that constitute the tender name of Girijā, the Lord of Mountains became excessively delighted.

76. If the nectar-like name Umā has been imbibed by anyone in the universe, O Pot-born One, he will no more suck the breasts of a mother thereafter.

77. If anyone remembers day and night, the two-syllabled Mantra, namely Umā, O Brāhmaṇa, Citragupta will not remember him even if he were a sinner.

78-79. Again the delighted Himavān heard the utterance of the Kārpaṭika.

The Kārpaṭika said:

O king, have you not even heard with your ears that unprecedented thing viz. that a big mansion is being built by Viśvakarman for the sake of Viśveśvara, the bestower of salvation on all living beings? The mansion is being built elaborately.

80. There the walls of the palace all-round are made of (bars of) jewels, and rubies. Their splendour excels even the brilliance of the Sun.

81. There are one hundred and twelve sparkling pillars as though eight of them were intended to support each of the (fourteen) worlds.

82. In that palace the splendour and beauty all-round is hundred crores of times more than what exists in the fourteen worlds.

83. The foundation slabs of lunar stone jewels that have the sparkling lustre of the pillars made of jewels of diverse colours are covered by those pillars.

84. Dolls of remarkable splendour made of blue sapphire and rubies hold jewel-set lamps and perform Nirājana ('waving of lamps') rites day and night.

85-86. On the glossy rocky platform shaped like a lotus and made of glittering crystals, various forms of objects made of gems appear as though perfectly set up by a painter in his picture. They have various colours like pale red, yellow, madder, blue and spotted.

87. Rows of ruby-studded pillars dazzle the eyes. They appear like the sprouts of the Glory of Salvation in the surrounding holy spot Avimukta.

88. Near that palace huge heaps of jewels resembling peaks of mountains have been made by the Gaṇas who brought them from various oceans.

89. The Gaṇas have brought masses of jewels from the treasuries of the Nāgas from the nether worlds and have heaped them near the palace like huge mountains.

90. The devotee of Śiva, the son of Pulastya (i.e. Kubera) has caused crores of gold peaks to be brought through Rākṣasas from the excellent mountain (Meru) and dumped there (near the palace).

91. O king, on hearing that a palace is being built, the devotees residing in other Dvīpas (continents) have brought numerous ruby pieces.

92. Cintāmaṇi (wish-yielding divine jewel) itself has distributed all kinds of jewels wished for by Viśvakarman in the course of his building activity day and night.

93. The wish-yielding celestial trees yielded many banners of different colours with great devotion everyday there.

94. Day by day, the oceans of curds, milk, sugarcane juice and ghee bathe it continuously with pots of Pañcāmṛtas.

95. There the divine wish-yielding cow, Kāmadhenu, bathes devoutly Lord Viśveśa in the form of a Liṅga with currents of honey milked by herself.

96. Mountain Malayācala serves the Lord by means of sandal juice. The divine camphor-producing trees named Karpūrārambhā serve devoutly the Lord by means of masses of camphor.

97. These are the various unprecedented wonderful things that happen everyday in the abode of Śaṅkara. How is it, O hard-hearted one, that you do not know the Lover of Umā?

98. On perceiving such an opulence of his son-in-law, the

King of Mountains was overwhelmed with excessive shame, O Pot-born One.

99. The King of Mountains gave a handsome reward to the Kārpaṭika and when he went away, he was lost in thought.

100. With his eyes bulging out due to dismay, he said to himself: 'It is good, O ashamed one, since you have heard (what should be heard).

101-102. So much of rich opulence is seen here in the abode of my son-in-law who sports about and who is the Lord of the three worlds that the presents brought by me for my daughter and to satisfy my son-in-law appear to me worthless.

103. I have been thinking that he continues to be what I had seen of him formerly, as one with a senile, feeble bull as his sole asset and one averse to all active pursuits.

104. No one knows him fully. He had no family at any time. He does not have even a single name. It cannot even be guessed as to which family he belongs.

105. What is his conduct? What are his activities? He is an Īśvara (Lord) only in name. There is nothing to be seen around him that would indicate his prosperity and affluence.

106. He who was so before, has begun to bestow riches in the form of salvation on even the meanest of a wretch. With a pleasant face, he makes all rites fruitful.

107. He is the omniscient one to be known only through the Vedas. The entire universe is his progeny. He is one whom no one has known even at the outset. It is he who is (reputed to be) one who should be known through the Vedas.

108. He alone is the omniscient one who always has remained misunderstood and unknowable. Not even a single name of his can be fully comprehended by any man.

109. It is certain, he bears all the names of everyone as his names. He belongs to all climes and regions. He is bestower of all supernatural powers on all.

110-112. His native land is unknown. He is averse to all avocations, whom, hard-hearted that I have been, I had viewed formerly as one devoid of all good conduct. But he is actually one from whom the Śrutis and Smṛtis learn all good conduct. He whom I had taken to be an Īśvara only in name is the real Īśvara, one who displays his affluence through others. He is the basis of all Guṇas; he is beyond all Guṇas. He is both *Para*

(cause) and *Apara* (effect).

113. He is junior to me. He is elder to me and beyond me. He is greater (and older) than the greatest (the Elder-most). I am the Lord of Mountains. Umā's husband is the Lord of the universe.

114. I am one of limited assets. He is one with immense, immeasurable wealth. The presents I have are worthless and insignificant. This is not the opportune moment to meet him.

115-116. After returning (home) and coming back later I shall do something.'

After resolving thus in his mind, the Lord of Mountains called together all his followers in the evening, all the mountains of great prowess. He gave them the order in these words:

"All of you are greater in power than others.

117. You have to carry out this sole behest of mine before sunrise (tomorrow). Erect a temple of Śiva hurriedly.

118-121. If this is carried out, I shall become contented here in this world and in the other world too. If anyone erects a temple of Śiva after coming to Kāśī, it is as good as he has made all the three worlds equipped with temples. It is as meritorious as though all great gifts have been duly made by him on an excellent day of festivity to a deserving person with more faith than even for his daughter's sake. If the great abode of Śaṃbhu is built by anyone in accordance with his wealth acquired through righteous means, the Goddess of Fortune will never forsake him. It is as though all austerities involving the sole intake of withered leaves have been performed by him.

122. If after reaching Kāśī, a Śiva temple is caused to be built by anyone, it is as though all the excellent and great *Makhas* (sacrifices) have been performed by him.

123-124. If the temple of the Lord of Devas is built in Ānandakānana, it is as though all sacrifices have been performed by him with special excellence."

On hearing his command thus, the followers built an excellent temple before the night dawned. At the same time Śaileśvara Liṅga was installed by the Lord of Mountains. The entire Maṇḍapa (Pavilion) was rendered white due to the sparking lustre of lunar-stone jewels.

125. He caused a laudatory inscription too to be made with excellent writings of the characters, mentioning his supe-

riority over all the other mountains.

126-127. Thereafter, at the break of dawn the King of Mountains took his holy dip in the whirlpool of Pañcanada, bowed down to Kālarāja, worshipped him and discharged the heap (of jewels) all-round. He hurriedly left the place followed by his attendants, the Mountains, and went back to his abode.

128-130. In the morning the two Gaṇas, Huṇḍaṇa and Muṇḍaṇa, saw the beautiful temple of the Lord on the auspicious bank of Varaṇā and became delighted. They came to Mahādeva to intimate to the Lord about the temple not seen before. On seeing Mahādeva to whom Umā was showing the mirror, the two Gaṇas prostrated themselves on the ground before him and stood with palms joined in reverence. When the permission was granted with a gesture from the eyebrows, they submitted:

131-132. "O Lord of Devas, we do not know (by whom) a very beautiful palace has been erected on the banks of Varaṇā. He must be someone of steadfast devotion. O Lord, till last evening it was not seen by us both. It has been seen only this morning." On hearing this utterance of the Gaṇas, Īśāna spoke to the Daughter of the Lord of Mountains.

133-134. Though the omniscient Sarvajña (Śiva) had come to know of everything, he spoke like one who did not know: "O Daughter of the King of Mountains, we shall go to see that palace." After saying this, Īśa set out along with his Gaṇas and the Daughter of the Mountain, O sage, riding on a great chariot since he was eager to see the palace.

135. Giriśa saw the palace on the banks of Varaṇā. Though it had been built in the course of a single night, its structure was extremely beautiful.

136. Getting down from the chariot, he entered the sanctum sanctorum where he saw the great Liṅga entirely made of lunar-stone.

137. It was extremely sparkling with its brilliance. It was like a sprout of the glory of salvation. It accorded great pleasure to the eyes. It was destructive of the likelihood of rebirth.

138. While Īśvara evinced a desire to know by whom the Liṅga was installed, he saw before him the laudatory inscription commemorating the constructor.

139. After reading it as it were a little within his mind, the Slayer of Kāma said to the goddess: "Well; see your own father's creation."

140-142. On hearing it, Umā was extremely delighted. She had experienced horripilation all over her body. It was as though the sprouts of the glory of bliss spread over her body attaining the splendour of Kadamba flowers. Thereafter the goddess bowed down to the feet of the Lord and said: "O Lord, you must station yourself in this excellent Liṅga day and night. To those devotees of this great Śaileśa Liṅga of Maheśa you will grant great opulence here and glory hereafter."

143-144. After saying "So be it", the Lord said to Pārvatī further: "The devotees should take their holy dip in Varāṇā and worship Saileśa. They should offer libation to the forefathers and joyously make gifts in accordance with their capacity. They will never experience a return to the worldly life.

145. O fair lady, I shall be ever present in the great Śaileśvara Liṅga. I shall grant salvation to those people who worship this Liṅga.

146. No misery shall ever assail those residents of Kāśī who see Śaileśvara on the excellent banks of Varāṇā."

147. A boon was granted by Umā in respect to the Liṅga there, O Pot-born One: "There is no doubt about this that the devotees of Śaileśvara are my own sons."

Skanda said:

148. Thus Śaileśvara Liṅga has been described to you, O great sage. Now, I shall explain to you the origin of Ratneśvara.

149. After hearing the greatness of Śaileśa with great faith, a man will give up the slough of sin and attain Śivaloka.

CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN

In Praise of Ratneśvara'

Agastya said:

1-2. O Six-faced Lord, narrate to me the origin of Ratneśvara, the great Liṅga in Kāśī reputed to be made of jewels. What is the greatness of this Liṅga? By whom has it been installed? Describe this in detail, O delighter of the heart of Gaurī.

Skanda said:

3. O sage, I shall tell you the greatness of Ratneśvara and how that Liṅga manifested itself on the earth.

4. O sage, I shall narrate how that Liṅga came to appear. This is a Liṅga the name of which, when heard, shall destroy sins accrued in the course of three births.

5-6 The jewels that were kept in a heap by the King of Mountains to the north of Kālarāja (Kālabhairava) became a Liṅga consisting of all jewels, due to the meritoriousness of that Mountain. It has the lustre of all the previous stones and the splendour of Indra's bow (Rainbow).

7-9. The jewel of wisdom is obtained merely at the sight of that Liṅga.

After visiting Śaileśvara, Śiva and Śivā came to the place where, O sage, the *Ratnamaya* Liṅga constituted of jewels, had manifested itself. The vast region of the firmament was pervaded by its sparkling clusters of lustre. On seeing that splendid Liṅga created out of all Ratnas and not seen before, Bhavānī asked Śaṅkara:

10-12. "O Lord of Devas, O Lord of the universe, O bestower of freedom from fear on all devotees, whence has this Liṅga come? Its root penetrates as far as Pātāla. With its flames and rays it permeates the sky fully. Through its lustre it illuminates the quarters. What is its name? What is its form? O dispeller of Bhava (worldly existence), what is its power? Mere sight of

1. Ratneśvara Liṅga is in the middle of the road from Maidagin to Mṛtyuñjaya (BCL 358)

this delights my mind, which feels pleased here alone. O Lord, be pleased to describe it.”

The Lord of Devas said:

13. O Aparṇā, Listen. I shall tell you, O Pārvatī, what you have been asking, the features of this Liṅga, the receptacle of all brilliance.

14. O fair lady, for your sake a huge collection of jewels was brought here by your father Himavān, the Lord of Mountains.

15. All these jewels had been acquired by Himādri through his own merit. He kept all those *Ratnas* (jewels) as a heap here and went back to his abode.

16. O sinless lady, whether it is for your sake or for my sake, whatever is offered with great faith at Kāśī will bear the fruit in this manner.

17. This Liṅga named Ratneśvara has my form and features alone. In Vārāṇasī its influence is very great, indeed, O Umā.

18. It is the very crest-jewel of all the Liṅgas here. Hence its name Ratneśvara. It bestows the greatest jewel in the form of salvation.

19. O Māheśvarī, get a mansion erected for this Liṅga with this gold kept in a heap by your father.

20. The merit of installing a Liṅga can be easily obtained by getting the mansion of the Liṅga built by a person of manifested fervour.

21. Saying “So be it”, the goddess engaged the numerous Gaṇas beginning with Somanandin in the construction of the mansion, O sage.

22. Within a Yāma (3 hours) a golden palace resembling the peak of Meru was built by the Gaṇas. The palace had many wonderful things enhancing its variegated character.

23. As evidenced by her beaming face, the goddess became highly delighted on seeing the completed construction of the mansion. She honoured the Gaṇas by distributing presents among them.

24. Again, after due obeisance, the goddess asked Mahādeva

about the greatness of this Liṅga, O great sage.

The Lord of Devas said:

25. O Devī, this Liṅga has already been in existence as it is beginningless; but it manifested itself due to the greatness of the merit of your father.

26. This is the greatest among great secrets in this holy spot. It accords whatever is thought of. In Kali age, it should be carefully kept as a secret from persons of defiled intellect.

27. Just as a precious stone kept hidden in the house is not known to others, so also is this Liṅga evolved out of *Ratnas* in my house Avimukta.

28. If Ratneśa is adored, O Pārvatī, it is as though all the Liṅgas in the entire universe have been worshipped by them.

29. O Gaurī, if people were to adore Ratneśa Liṅga even by some mistake, they will invariably become kings ruling the seven continents.

30. By adoring once the Liṅga named Ratneśvara, a man obtains all the objects which in value or importance are on a par with jewels in all the three worlds.

31. Those who worship Ratneśvara Liṅga without any desire will become my Gaṇas in the end and see me here.

32. Oh goddess, by adoring Ratneśa, that merit is obtained which, it is proclaimed, is the merit of chanting the *Rudriya Mantras* a crore times.

33. With respect to this Liṅga that has been existing without a beginning there is an event that happened before. I shall tell you that wonderful legend which will destroy all sins.

34-36. Formerly there was a dancing girl here named Kalāvati. She was an adept in the art of dance. Once in the month of Phālguna, on the Śivarātri day, she kept awake throughout the night, danced and sang very sweetly. She was clever in playing on musical instruments too which she herself played. That dancing girl thus propitiated Ratneśvara Mahāliṅga by means of triple symphony and returned to her desired land.

37. There that excellent dancer met with death. She became the daughter of Vasubhūti, a king of Gandharvas.

38. That was due to the merit she acquired through music, instrumental and vocal, and dance displayed before the Lord

during the period of keeping awake on the Śivarātri night.

39. She became famous by the name Ratnāvalī. She was beautiful with exquisite form and features. She was clever in all fine arts. Her speech was very sweet.

40. O Pot-born One(?), she delighted her father Vasubhūti always as she was very clever in all Gandharva arts and a veritable mine of the gems of good qualities.

41. O sage(?), she had three female companions of great skill and cleverness. Their names were Śāṣilekhā, Anaṅgalekhā and Citralekhā.

42. Along with those three girls she (Ratnāvalī) meditated on the goddess of speech in one place. The delighted Sarasvatī granted all of them all the arts.

43. O Gaurī, due to the latent impressions of her practice in the previous birth, Ratnāvalī imposed upon herself the auspicious vow and observance of Ratneśvara Liṅga.

44-45. Her vow was: "It is only after visiting the jewel-made Liṅga in Kāśī of Ratneśvara everyday that I will utter a word." That excellent daughter of the Gandharva used to visit the Liṅga everyday accompanied by those friends.

46. Once after propitiating this excellent Liṅga of mine, that girl adored me with a series of sweet songs.

47. O Umā, all the three friends had gone away for circumambulation. Satisfied by her songs, remaining stationed in the Liṅga, I granted a boon:

48. "O Gandharva girl, he who has a name similar to yours and will have his dalliance with you this night, will become your husband."

49. After imbibing the nectar-like words that issued from the Liṅga even as the nectar issued from the ocean, she became highly delighted as well as bashful too.

50. Thereafter, along the aerial path she went to her father's house in the company of her companions when she joyously divulged the news of the boon to the companions.

51. She was congratulated by the companions saying, "Excellent! Good fortune! Good luck!" They said further: "Today your desire will become fulfilled, due to your adoration of Ratneśvara.

52. If to-night that person who will take away your virginity comes, that thief should be carefully fettered with the cords of your creeper-like arms.

53. (If he is fettered) that fortunate fellow, your lover, directed by Ratneśa can be seen by us in the morning as the person granting you your desired boon.

54. It is a miracle that you could see the Lord directly in the Ratneśvara Liṅga, due to your weighty merit, when we had gone away delightedly.

55. Wonderful is the outcome of the fortune of men. Wonderful is the excess of their merit. Realization of the desire occurs only to one while many are standing together in one place.

56. 'It is the fate alone that becomes fruitful. Neither endeavour nor any other powerful thing.' So say those who support the contention of those who give importance to fate. They speak truth not falsehood.

57. Your endeavour as well as ours is one and the same. But fate makes one fruitful as in your case, and not so in our case.

58. But, O friend, it is only what is generally believed by people that is given expression to by us incidentally. But actually the fulfilment of your cherished desire is clearly the same as that of ours."

59. Even as they were speaking thus, a long, endless way was left behind by them in a moment as though it was very insignificant. They reached their respective abodes.

60. Again in the morning, they all got up and gathered together in one place. She was silent but was clearly seen by them as though she had been sexually enjoyed.

61. Remaining silent throughout, she reached Kāśī and took her bath in the waters of Mandākinī along with her companions. She visited my Liṅga named Ratneśvara.

62. After fulfilling the conditions of her vow and observances, she became nervously bashful with eyes shrinking like buds. On being persistently asked by her friends she said:

Ratnāvalī said:

63-66. After concluding the journey to the shrine of Ratneśvara when you all returned to your respective abodes, I continued to remember the nectar-like words of Ratneśa. After elaborate and scrupulous make-up and embellishment of

the limbs, I entered the bed chamber. As I was overzealous for seeing him, my eyes were deprived of sleep. But due to the weightiness of the inevitability of the future events, I was led to a dreamy state forcibly. There had been two causes for my self-forgetfulness. Utter lassitude and the gentle touch of his limbs dispelled my consciousness. I was already helpless due to lassitude and further due to his touch.

67-70. I do not know what happened thereafter including who I was, where I was and who he was. As he was about to go out, dear friends, I stretched my arms to catch hold of him, when my bangles behaved inimically jingling excessively. I was brought to the state of wakefulness slightly on account of that loud sound. After being submerged in the nectarine whirlpool of continuous pleasure, I was forcibly made to fall within a moment into the flames of the fire of separation from him. I do not know to which family he belongs or to which land. I do not know what his name is. But, O friends, the great fire of separation from him distresses me very much.

71-75. My mind is excessively anxious with the hope of a subsequent contact with him. There is only one effective medicine for the vital breaths which are about to depart from the body, O friends, and that is seeing again that man enjoyed in the night. The chance for a second vision of him for me depends upon you all, O my companions. Which girl will utter a lie to her friends charming and affectionate? The vital breaths will continue within me if he is seen. Otherwise they will depart. The tenth state (of certain death) will get ready to afflict me.

On hearing these words of that distressed girl, they too experienced trepidation of the heart. They looked at each other and said:

The Girl Companions said:

76. O fair lady, how is he to be found out when neither his name, nor his native village, nor his ancestry are known? What means of remedy can be employed?

77-79. On hearing their words expressive of doubts, that girl could say only partially what she wanted to say. Before

completing her statement she swooned. She evidently wanted to say, "O my friends, you have no power in the task of enabling me to meet him again." Thereupon the female companions did everything necessary to remove distress and restore consciousness by applying cooling materials.

80. When she could not be brought back to consciousness from the swoon by means of the cooling process, *Ratneśa-Snapanodakam* (the water with which the Ratneśvara Liṅga was bathed) was brought by one of the friends.

81. When she was sprinkled with it, she was revived from the state of swooning immediately, as though she woke from sleep. Just then she began to say, "Śiva! Śiva!"

Skanda said:

82. Even when there is great calamity and torment no devotee with abiding faith has any other remedy except the water with which the feet of the Lord have been washed.

83. Even those ailments within the body or outside the body (i.e. internal and external ailments) which are incurable, perish by touching (and sipping) the water of the Lord with great faith. Not otherwise.

84. He, by whom the water from the feet of the Lord has been resorted to, becomes pure within and without. No wretched state overtakes him.

85. The water from the glorious feet (of the Lord) shall dispel all the three types of distress—that caused by other living beings or *bhūtas* (elements), that by supernatural beings, and that caused by bodily ailments.

86. The daughter of the Gandharva got rid of her feverish ailment. Tender and decisively bold in her intellect and fully aware of what was relevant, she said thus to her companions:

Ratnāvalī said:

87. O Śaśilekhā, Anaṅgalekhā and Citralekhā, how are you all incapacitated to fulfil my desire? Where are your famous arts and skills?

88. With the favour of Ratneśvara, an effective means of getting at my lover has been perceived by me. You wish me well. So carry it out.

89. O Śaśilekhā, you draw all the Devas for the purpose of getting at the desired one. O Anaṅgalekhā, you draw all the young men moving about all over the earth.

90. O Citralekhā, you draw pictures of all those who are in the nether worlds embellished with the freshness of youth.

91. On hearing this, those companions praised her cleverness and drew the pictures of the young men richly endowed with prime of youth.

92. The Gandharva girl who was (fresh and beautiful) like dawn, looked at those kings and others possessing glorious forms above the state of boyhood and fully endowed with the vigour of manhood.

93. That girl of splendid eyes looked at all the Suras, but did not give up the unsteadiness of her eyes in regard to those heaven-dwellers.

94. Next even after seeing the sages and princes residing in the middle world (i.e. Earth) the love-lorn girl did not get any pleasure anywhere.

95. Thereafter, Ratnāvalī, a girl with excellent eyes extending up to the ears, saw the pictures of the young men of the nether worlds.

96. That Gandharva girl saw the young men of Daityas and Danujas but did not feel any attraction for them. She became all the more distressed by the arrows of Manmatha.

97. Her tender limbs became excessively distressed even when the nectarine rays of the moon touched her. Seeing the serpent youths she heaved a slight sigh.

98. Even when she saw those Bhogins (Serpents, enjoyers of pleasure) painted in the picture, it is surprising that the princess became for a moment as though she had enjoyed the pleasures.

99. She saw severally all the youths born of Śeṣa family, Takṣaka family as well as Vāsuki family.

100. After seeing the scions of the families of Pulīka, Ananta, Karkoṭa and Bhadra and other Nāga youths she saw Śaṅkhacūḍa.

101. Merely at the sight of Śaṅkhacūḍa she became excessively bashful. She experienced horripilation in every limb and joint.

102. From that excess of bashfulness her lover who deprived her of her virginity was inferred by Citralekhā, the most skilful of all.

103. Thereupon Citralekhā, clever in practical jokes, quickly threw the hem of a variegated cloth over the painting canvas and covered it.

104. Keeping quiet due to bashfulness, Ratnāvalī looked at Citralekhā with a crooked glance, while her lips throbbed.

105. Anaṅgalekhā was glanced at suggestively by Śaśilekhā. She removed the hem of the variegated cloth thrown over by Citralekhā.

106. The daughter of Vasubhūti, the splendid girl Ratnāvalī, saw Ratnacūḍa in the midst of the members of his (Ratnacūḍa's) family.

107. At the very moment when he was seen, her eyes were filled with tears of joy. Her cheeks were covered with drops of perspiration.

108. Her creeper-like tender body trembled with hairs standing on ends all over. With eyes closed giving them the appearance of buds, she stood (motionless) as though painted in a picture.

109. Thereupon Citralekhā came near the distressed girl and comforted her: "Do not be worried, O Gandharva girl. Now your desire has been fulfilled.

110. O friend, do not grieve over (anything). Everything concerning this (lover) has become known, such as nature, land, name, lineage etc. Moreover he is easy of access, since he has been given to you by Ratneśvara.

111. Indeed, you have been made satisfied by Ratneśa through the acquisition of a befitting bridegroom. Get up. We shall go home. Ratneśa is the bestower of everything on us."

112. As they were travelling by the aerial path they were seen by chance by Subāhu, a Dānava, residing in the nether worlds.

113. Carrying off all those four like a lion with awful fangs and jaw seizing hinds in a desolate forest, he set out towards his abode.

114. On seeing the Dānava with a countenance rendered hideous through his curved fangs and the eyes blood-red, those Gandharva girls began to tremble (through great fear).

115. "O mother, O father, save us. Alas! Fate, do not let this happen that is about to happen in a cruel way to helpless girls.

116. Alas! O Fate, what is it that we, the unfortunate ones, have done? Is even a sinful word ever uttered even mentally?

117. Excepting children's toys, excepting the adoration of Ratneśvara and excepting the good acts by way of being the dependents of our parents, we do not know of anything self-willed.

118. We are going towards the nether worlds. We are wretched. We do not have anyone to help and lead. We are feeble girls seeking succour, O omnipresent Ratneśa, O Śāmbhu, who are there to protect us?"

119. As the Gandharva girls were lamenting thus like afflicted ones seeking compassion the magnanimous Ratnacūḍa, the king of Serpents, heard them.

120. "Who is this uttering the name of my Lord Ratneśa, the great Lord of Liṅgas, the Lord who severs the bondage of Karma?"

121. Again he heard the cry of distress issuing from the mouths of those girls: "O Ratneśa, save, save us." On hearing it, he seized his weapons and set out.

122. Ratnacūḍa saw that demon of evil activities who was excessively frantic and furious by imbibing liquid suet and human flesh.

123-126. He rebuked him thus: "O wretched one, O abductor of cultured girls, having come within my view, where will you go, you base one?"

O evil-minded one, your life-breath will be knocked off by my arrows as my mind is determined to save the distress ones. So proceed ahead in your journey towards the city of Yama.

At the time of danger or even of utter annihilation, if people utter the name of Ratneśvara with terrified minds, they need not entertain fear from people like you.

If men are given succour by the great name of Ratneśvara, they need not be afraid of rebirths, old age, sickness, Kali age and the god of Death."

127. After saying thus (to the demon), he assured and

said, "Do not be afraid", to those terror-stricken (girls) with their eyes turned towards his face like hinds sniffed at by a tiger.

128. After consoling the Gandharva girls thus, that son of the Serpent king drew the bowstring fully up to his ear and discharged the arrow.

129. That king of demons who became infuriated like a serpent kicked by foot, whirled with great force a huge iron bar that resembled the staff of the god of Death and hurled it.

130. If Ratneśvara Liṅga manifests prominently within the heart, even the thick staff of Kāla is but a small firebrand in his case.

131. With his great arrows, he (Ratnacūḍa) split the iron bar into two while it was in the middle (in the air) like the life of one of wicked activity gets cut short in the prime.

132-134. Thereafter, he discharged an arrow having the lustre of Kālānala (Death-fire) against the demon. That arrow entered his heart, searched scrupulously within (and understood the wickedness within his heart), dislodged the life breath within and returned to the quiver by itself. Probably the arrow of the serpent prince had gone to proclaim these things to the Maidens of the Quarters.

135. (The arrow might have said:) "If anyone wishes to enjoy happiness through articles acquired by illegitimate means, those articles along with his vital breaths do vanish. Where is his happiness then?"

136-138. After killing the Dānava in this manner, the mighty king of Serpents spoke to the girls: "Who are you? Whose daughters? How did you come into contact with this wicked demon? Where was Ratneśvara Liṅga seen by you all? By uttering the syllables constituting his name you could have got rid of the great dangers. You all tell it quickly so that I can get at the facts."

139. On hearing these excessively loving and endearing words, the girls (whispered to each other) looking at each other's face: "Who is this resembling someone seen before?"

140. Who is this friendly person without an ulterior motive? He has somehow made his presence in the desolate wilderness staking his life. He has saved us, the girls.

141. The senses are fickle naturally, but on seeing him

they have become relieved (i.e. calmed down) as if nectar has been imbibed (by them).

142. Even after seeing another more beautiful object, our eyes are not inclined to proceed elsewhere.

143. After tasting the sweetness of the nectarine words, our ears do not evince any expectation of grasping other words from the source.

144. These feet though they are usually active in moving about, have become lame even though they have perceived this youth who is the thief of the excellent jewel of our minds.”

145. Thus those girls spoke to each other in undertone. Though those girls had already seen him in the picture standing amidst (others), they did not recognize him.

146. Those fawn-eyed ones perhaps did not see him clearly because their eyes had been rendered blind due to the excessive agitation caused by the confrontation with the demon of extremely terrible form and features.

147-149. They spoke to that youth who had saved their lives: “Indeed, Sir, what has been asked by your esteemed self with an endearing mind, we shall explain completely. Please be attentive for a moment. This is the daughter of Vasubhūti, the king of Gandharvas, Ratnāvalī by name. This girl is a veritable mine of the gems of good qualities. We are her friends, following her always like a shadow.

150. Ever since her childhood, she has been going to Kāśī always for worshipping the Liṅga named Ratneśvara. She has been permitted by her father too.

151-152. A boon has been granted to her by the delighted Lord Śaṁbhu: ‘(Someone) having his name similar to yours, O virgin, will violate your virginity in dream. He will be your husband.’ This girl is excessively sad after enjoying the youth with whom she had dalliance during the dream.

153. She is further distressed much with the fire of separation from him. Through our skill in arts that youth has been shown to her in a picture.

154. She has been revived by seeing him painted in a picture, albeit the name of his residence or family was not known.

155-159. Thereafter, we bowed down to Ratneśvara. She was eager to return to her abode. We were also going along with

her when in an isolated place in the aerial path, a certain base demon came there all of a sudden. Seizing us he entered the nether worlds. Subsequently your esteemed self, yourself have known the base fellow. Indeed, Sir, our personal information has been narrated to you. O storehouse of mercy, be gracious enough to reveal to us who you are. Ever since that evil demon was seen by us our eyes have become blinded as though lightning has struck them down. We are ones who flee due to fear, O saviour from fear; we do not know anything. Where are we? Who are we? Who are you? What has happened? What is about to happen?"

160. On hearing this, the prince of serpents, a meritorious soul with decent intellect, consoled those terror-stricken girls speaking thus:

161. "Come with me. I shall show Ratneśvara to you." Inviting them thus, he led them to the tank of sports with pleasing excellent water.

162. The steps leading to the water were made of gems of different colours. Swans and ruddy geese were chirping loudly. It appeared as though the tank itself was welcoming them under the pretext of the shrill cries of the aquatic birds.

163. There in accordance with his instructions, they got into the sport tank along with their clothes, flowers and ornaments and then emerged therefrom.

164-165. After coming out, the Gandharva girls found themselves made invisible as it were. On seeing the temple of Ratneśa near Kālarāja, they spoke to one another in great surprises: "Is this a dream or reality? Or is this a playful trick of Ratneśvara?"

166. Are we ourselves under some illusion? Are we not Gandharva girls at all? What is this, we do not know. This is something like the play of a juggler.

167. This is Gaṅgā flowing northwards, it is quite clear. This is the tank of Śaṅkhacūḍa. This is the temple of Śaṅkhacūḍa.

168. This is the Pañcanada Tīrtha. This is the temple of Vāgīśvara, a visit to which results in the enhancement of eloquent speech.

169. This is Śaṅkhacūḍeśvara installed by Śaṅkhacūḍa. The visit to this Lord removes the fear arising from Kālasarpa (Black Serpent, i.e. god of Death).

170. This is the pool named Mandākinī, the receptacle of meritorious holy waters. Men performing all the water rites herein, do not re-enter the mortal world.

171. This is Goddess Āśāpurī on the splendid banks of Mandākinī. She was eulogized by Tripurāri (Śiva) when he was desirous of conquering Tripura.

172. Even today when she is adored by men, she fulfills the hopes and ambitions of the suppliants.

This deity Siddhyaṣṭakeśvara is to the west of Mandākinī.

173. By his adoration one will clearly get the eight Siddhis in one's house. There itself is the holy pit named Siddhyaṣṭaka with waters free from *Rajas* (dust particles, *Rajas* quality).

174. One who takes his holy bath here and performs Śrāddha, shall go to heaven free from *Rajas* quality. Those eight Siddhis are corporeal spiritual powers granting all the Siddhis in Kaśi.

175. This deity Mahārāja Vināyaka is the bestower of all Siddhis. If men bow down to him their obstacles perish.

176. This is the lofty palace of Siddheśvara shining with gold and having gemset flagstaff and banners. By visiting this deity one shall attain Siddhis.

177. In the middle portion of the holy spot is the deity Madhyameśvara. By visiting this deity one can terminate one's stay in the middle and nether worlds.

178. By adoring Madhyameśa ardently men shall become lords of the Earth extending to the oceans. Thereafter, one attains salvation.

179. Airāvateśvara Liṅga is towards the east thereof. It causes the achievement of the desired objects. In the banner thereof is seen the elephant Airāvata.

180. This is the place of Vṛddhakāleśvara built with jewels. On the night of every new-moon day, the Moon stays there along with the stars.

181. If the deity is visited by men, Kāla will not be powerful in the worldly existence. Kali will not be powerful. Truly, heaps of sins will not be powerful."

182. Even as the excited girls were discussing Vasuvibhūti, the Gandharva, came there hurriedly.

183-187. He had heard everything beginning with the news regarding the demon Subāhu; how his daughter Ratnāvalī who

was pleased (on account of the boon from Ratneśvara) was abducted along with her friends while returning from the shrine of Ratneśvara in an isolated place in the aerial path; how he took them to Pātāla; how a fight ensued; how he was killed by Ratnacūḍa, a devotee of Ratneśa; how that demon Subāhu was killed by that great warrior wielding a big bow with a single arrow; how (Ratnacūḍa) who was asked about the news, brought them through the sport tank to Śaṅkhacūḍa's tank which extended to Pātāla too; how they saw Kāśī when they emerged therefrom and; how they became extremely excited though they eagerly saw everything.

188. The king of Gandharvas saw his daughter as though she was reborn. The natural beauty of her lotus-like face was a bit faded due to fear lurking yet. She was there along with her friends.

189. He embraced her again and again, sniffed at her head and kissed her forehead. He took her on his lap and eagerly asked her about all the events.

190. She told him the details of the story of the abduction omitting the acquisition of the boon from Ratneśvara and the incident of the dream.

191. Understanding perfectly what Ratnāvalī was thinking in her mind through her facial gestures, Śaṣilekhā narrated in clear terms everything in detail

192. The king of Gandharvas became pleased and considered himself blessed. He joyously extolled the prowess of Ratneśvara.

Skanda said:

193-198. Listen, O excellent sage, O restrainer of the growth of Vindhya. Everyday Ratnacūḍa who had perfect control over his senses, used to come out from Nāgaloka through the path of the tank. After taking his holy bath in the waters of Mandākinī, he worshipped Ratneśvara offering eight handfuls of gems. Then he joyously placed eight golden lotuses (near the deity). Once during sleep, Ratneśa in the form of a Liṅga spoke to Ratnacūḍa, his devotee of steadfast vows: "You will rescue a girl abducted by a demon after defeating him in battle. She will become your wife." That magnanimous king of serpents

remembered this boon. After killing the demon he released the girl by his prowess. Through the path of the tank he brought her to the earth once again.

199-203. Thereafter he did as he was wont to do everyday. The wise youth worshipped the Liṅga, circumambulated and came out of the beautiful Maṇḍapa of Ratneśvara. Thereupon he was repeatedly pointed out to Vasubhūti, the king of Gandharvas, with the tip of the index finger by them, "This is that blessed youth."

On seeing the prince of serpents, the king of Gandharvas became delighted with hairs standing on ends. His eyes beamed with smile in his face. He thought in his mind thus after seeing him, of youthful form and nobility of birth: 'I am blessed. I have been favoured by Ratneśa by offering me an excellent bridegroom This girl too is blessed, because her husband is quite suitable to her.'

204-206. After thinking thus he called the charming youth to him and asked him his name and family. He considered the pros and cons and before Ratneśvara gave his daughter to him joyously he took him to the world of Gandharvas and performed all the auspicious rites. He honoured him with *Madhuparka* and made him hold her hand (in marriage ceremony). As required by the due marital rite, he gave him many jewels.

207. Śaśilekhā, Anaṅgalekhā and Citralekhā too informed their respective parents and wooed him as their husband.

208. After marrying all the four splendid Gandharva girls Ratnacūḍa went to the palace of his father along with them.

209-210. He went to his father like Praṇava proceeding towards Śiva along with the four Śūtis. The king of serpents prostrated at the feet of his parents along with the newly wedded brides. He duly informed him about the grace of Ratneśa. He was congratulated duly by the parents and he spent the days happily along with them.

Īsvara said:

211. O Daughter of the Mountain, Ratneśvara is my immobile Liṅga. It bestows everything on everyone. It's power is unparalleled.

212. In this Liṅga thousands of Siddhas have attained great spiritual powers. O lady of slender waist, till today this Liṅga remained hidden.

213. Ratneśa has been brought into manifestation through great jewels acquired through merit by Himavān, your father and a devotee of mine in all respects.

214. O Daughter of the King of Mountains, I love this Liṅga very much. This Liṅga should be assiduously worshipped in Vārāṇasī.

215. O Umā, O my beloved, by the blessings of Ratneśa many jewels are acquired, jewel of a son, jewel of a wife etc. and even heavenly pleasures and salvation.

216. One who bows down to Ratneśvara but dies elsewhere never returns from heaven even after hundreds of crores of Kalpas.

217. A devotee should observe fast on the fourteenth day in the dark half and keep awake at night in the vicinity of Ratneśvara. He will attain Sānnidhya i.e. proximity to me.

218. O my beloved, in your previous birth, due to your devotion to me, Dākṣāyaṇīśvara Liṅga was installed by you to the east of this Liṅga.

219. A man can avoid going to wretched state by visiting it. There your name is Āmbikā and I am Āmbikeśvara.

220. O lady of excellent waist, your son Ṣaḍānana is also in the form of an image there. O Umā, by visiting these three a man can avoid re-entry into a womb (i.e. is liberated).

221. The greatness of Ratneśvara has been described to you by me. It should be carefully kept secret from persons whose minds are defiled by the sins of Kali age.

222. He who reads always this narrative of Ratneśvara is never separated from sons, grandsons and cattle wealth.

223. On hearing the origin of Ratneśvara along with the legends thereon, an excellent bachelor obtains an excellent jewel of a girl, befitting his family. This is true.

224. A girl who listens to this fascinating legend with faith gets a good husband and will be a chaste lady.

225. On hearing this Itihāsa (legend) no man or woman will be distressed due to the fire of separation from the beloved ones.

CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

The Origin of Kṛttivāsa¹

Skanda said:

1. Listen to another event, O eminent Brāhmaṇa, that happened there. It causes great wonder and dispels great sins.

2. While Maheśvara was narrating the story of Ratneśa thus, there was heard a great tumultuous cry everywhere, "Save, save."

3. "This son of deṃon Maḥiṣa, the demon Gajāsura is coming here, crushing all the Pramathas. He is haughty and proud due to his prowess.

4. Wherever he sets his foot, the ground (under his feet) shakes there due to his weight.

5. By the force of his thighs trees fall down. On being hit by his baton-like arms, mountains and their peaks get crushed to powder.

6. Getting entangled with his hairs, clouds leave off the sky but do not give up the blue colour due to the contact thereof.

7. By the heavy exhalation of his breath oceans get surged up with high tides, while rivers along with aquatic animals, become full of heavy waves.

8. The body of this demon, an adept in sorcery, is nine thousand Yojanas in height and as many in girth.

9. The tawny colour and the glaring lustre of his eyes has gone over to lightning-streak, which is not given up even today (by it). And here he dashed hurriedly.

10. Whichever quarter this irresistible Dānava approaches, it becomes level and even throughout without ups and downs, as if by the terror of him certainly.

11. Having acquired boons from Brahmā, this demon considers the three worlds as insignificant as a blade of grass

1. This Liṅga is to the north-east of Maidagin. It is one most ancient Liṅga in Kāśī. The temple was destroyed by Aurangazeb and a mosque was built but it is opened to Hindus on Śivarātri day.

(thinking within), 'I cannot be killed by women or men overwhelmed by lust.'

12. The Trident-wielding Lord knew that the great Daitya rushing towards him could not be killed by anything else and hit him with the trident.

13. Pierced through by the trident (and raised aloft) the demon Gajāsura thought that he was made to resemble an umbrella. He said to Hara (Śiva):

Gajāsura said:

14. O Trident-armed Lord of Devas, I know that you are the slayer of Smara (Lord of love). O destroyer of Puras, my death at your hands is conducive to my welfare indeed.

15. I wish to submit something. Please attend to what I say. I tell you the truth, not the untruth. O Mṛtyuñjaya ('conqueror of death') consider this.

16. You are the only Lord worthy of the reverence of all the worlds. You are stationed above the entire universe and I am now stationed above (you). Hence this is my victory!

17. If I am to die at the tip of your trident I am blessed. I have been favoured. Everyone has to die in due course of time. But a death like this is conducive to welfare.

18. On hearing these words of his, the Lord of Devas, the storehouse of compassion, Śāmbhu laughingly replied to Gajāsura, O Pot-born One:

Īśvara said:

19. O Gajāsura with great manliness as your asset, I am delighted. Mention a boon befitting you. I shall grant it, O Asura of good intellect.

20-21. On hearing this, that great Daitya replied to Maheśvara:

Gajāsura said:

O Lord with the quarters for your robes, if you are pleased, O three-eyed one, always wear this hide of mine. It has been

sanctified by the fire from your trident. It fits you in size. It is smooth to touch. It has been won as a stake in the battle-field.

22. May it always have a pleasing odour. May it always be very tender. May it always be free from impurities. May it always be an excellent decoration.

23. O Lord, though it was subjected to the flames of the fire of great penance for a long time (or as it had survived the fire of your third eye), this hide has never been burnt. Hence it is the storehouse of merit and fragrance.

24. If my hide had not been meritorious, O quarter-clad one, how could it have come into contact with you in the battlefield?

25. O Śaṅkara, if you are pleased, grant me another boon. From today onwards, may you have the name 'Kṛttivāsas.'

26. On hearing these words of his, Śaṅkara said, "So be it" and further said to that Daitya whose mind was purified by devotion:

Īśvara said:

27-28. O storehouse of merit, O great Daitya, listen to another rare boon. You have cast off your body in a battle in the great holy spot Avimukta. May this holy body of yours become my Liṅga in this holy spot, the means of salvation, the bestower of salvation on all here.

29. This will be known by the name Kṛttivāseśvara. It will be destructive of great sins. It will be at the top (i.e. greatest) of all Liṅgas. It will be the most excellent.

30. It will be the most excellent of all the Liṅgas in Vārāṇasī, even of the greatest ones. It will be the most excellent one (among them) like the head.

31. For the sake of the welfare of men, I shall stay here along with the members of my family and followers. When this Liṅga is visited, worshipped and eulogized, the man will become blessed. He will not reenter the world.

32-38. I shall stay in the Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga in order to bless all those who stay in Avimukta—Rudras, Pāśupatas, Siddhas, sages, philosophers, quiescent ones, men with control of sense-

organs, those who have conquered anger, persons unafflicted by the opposing pairs (such as pleasure and pain), those who do not have possessions, those who are devoted to me, those who are desirous of salvation, those who are equally unaffected by honour and insult, and those who view a lump of clay, a stone and a piece of gold alike.

Undoubtedly three times everyday, ten thousand crores of Tīrthas approach Kṛttivāsa. All these become rid of their sins when they approach Kṛttivāseśvara: Men of Kali and Dvāpara ages with foul and sinful intellect, those who do not follow the practice of the good, those who are averse to truthfulness and cleanliness, those who are carried away by Māyā, hypocrisy, covetousness, delusion and egotism, Brāhmaṇas partaking of the cooked food of Śūdras, gourmets, gourmands, too greedy ones, and those whose minds are far removed from Sandhyā prayers, holy baths, Japas and adorations. They will attain salvation easily like persons of great meritorious deeds.

39-41. Hence Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga in Kāśī should be resorted to by men. Salvation which cannot be easily achieved elsewhere in thousands of births can be obtained in Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga within a single birth. The sins committed in the previous births shall perish slowly due to penance, Dāna etc. But if Kṛttivāseśvara is visited they perish immediately. Men who worship Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga have actually entered my body. They are not reborn.

42. In Avimukta, people should stay here. They should chant *Śatarudriya Mantras* and Lord Kṛttivāseśvara should be visited again and again.

43. By worshipping Kṛttivāsas in Kāśī, one obtains that benefit which is obtained when seven crores of *Mahārudra Mantras* are chanted flawlessly.

44. On the fourteenth day in the dark half of Māgha a devotee should observe fast, worship Kṛttivāseśa and keep awake at night. He will attain the great goal.

45. He who celebrates great festival on the full-moon day in Caitra month around Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga will not enter any womb.

46. After saying this, the Quarter-clad Lord of Devas accepted the great hide of Gajāsura and wore it.

47. O Pot-born One, there was a great celebration of a festival on that day when the Quarter-clad attained Kṛttivāsatva (state of wearing the hide).

48. When the trident was lifted up at the place where the Daitya was impaled on the trident and raised up as an umbrella, a great holy Kuṇḍa (pit) took shape (was formed).

49. A devotee should take his holy bath in that Kuṇḍa, offer libations to the ancestors and visit Kṛttivāseśvara. He will be blessed.

Skanda said:

50. Listen, O Agastya, to what happened in that Tīrtha. By the power of that Tīrtha crows got transformed into swans.

51-53. Formerly there was a religious festival at Kṛttivāsa on the full-moon day in the month of Citrā. The cooked rice offered was obtained and kept in a heap by many priests. O Brāhmaṇa, birds flocked there on seeing it and they began to fight with one another in the sky for the cooked rice. The crows with limbs not developed well began to crow in harsh sounds when hit by the crows of fully developed limbs. The weaker ones were struck down by the stronger ones.

54. On being struck down, they fell down into that Kuṇḍa from the sky above. Since they were destined to live further, the crows were saved. They were transformed into swans.

55-56. People assembled there for the festival became surprised. Pointing out to them with their fingers, they exclaimed, "See, O Lord! Even as we were watching, the crows which fell into the Kuṇḍa here became Dhārtarāṣṭras (swans with black feet and beaks), due to the power of this Tīrtha."

57. Ever since then, O Pot-born One, that Kuṇḍa near Kṛttivāsa became well-known in the world by the name Haṃsa Tīrtha.

58. Those who become highly defiled in their souls due to excessively dirty, sinful activities become pure instantaneously when they perform all the water rites at Haṃsa Tīrtha.

59. One should always live in Kāśī, should bathe in Haṃsa Tīrtha, Kṛttivāsa should be visited and the greatest position (*Mokṣa*) should be attained.

60. O sage, at every step, there are many Liṅgas in Kāśī.

But Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga is remembered as the head of all the Liṅgas.

61. After propitiating Kṛttivāsa with the mind full of devotion, one attains the benefit arising from the worship of all the Liṅgas in Kāśī.

62. Whatever rite is performed in the vicinity of Kṛttivāsa—*Japa, Dāna Tapas* and *Homa*, libations and adoration of the deity, becomes endless in its benefit.

63. This Tīrtha has been in existence from times immemorial, O Pot-born One. It manifested itself, due to the presence of Lord Maheśa.

64. These Siddha Liṅgas become concealed in the different Yugas. By the presence of Śāmbhu, they manifest themselves again.

65. Around Haṁsa Tīrtha, O sage, there are ten thousand and two hundred Liṅgas installed here by excellent sages.

66. Everyone of these Liṅgas, beginning with Kātyāyaneśa and ending with Cyavaneśa, accords spiritual powers to the residents of Avimukta.

67. The great Lomaśeśa Liṅga was installed by Lomaśa to the west of Kṛttivāsa. If a devotee visits it, where is the fear of the god of Death?

68. The great auspicious Mālatīśa Liṅga is to the north of Kṛttivāsa. By adoring that Liṅga a king becomes lord of elephants.

69. The Liṅga called Antakeśvara is stationed to the north thereof. One even with great sins becomes rid of all sins by visiting it.

70. The great Janakeśa Liṅga at its side is the great bestower of knowledge. By worshipping that Liṅga knowledge of Brahman is attained.

71. To the north thereof is Bhairava of dark-coloured limbs and a huge image. By visiting it men can ward off the sight of Yama.

72. Goddess Śuṣkodarī with awful eyes is also there to the north of Kṛttivāsa. She devours the obstacles of Kāśī.

73. To the south-west of the goddess is the Vetāla (Spirit, ghost) named Agnijihva. Adored on Tuesday, he bestows all desired objectives and powers.

74. There is the Vetālakuṇḍa there that dispels all ail-

ments. Cuts, tumours and other ailments and pain vanish when the waters of the Kuṇḍa come into contact with them.

75. A devotee who scrupulously takes his holy bath in the Vetālakūṇḍa and bows down to Vetāla shall obtain all the desired objectives difficult of access to all embodied beings.

76. There is the Gaṇa there with two arms, four feet and five heads. Immediately after visiting it, sins are destroyed and split into a thousand.

77. O Sage, to the north thereof is Rudra, the terrible one, with four horns (Vedas), three feet (the *Savanas*), two heads (the *Prāyanīya*, introductory rite, and *Udayanīya*, concluding rite). He has seven hands (the Vedic Metres).

78-81. O Pot-born One, he (Lord Rudra) cries out as follows, in the shape of Vṛṣa (Bull, Dharma) and bound in three ways (by means of Mantras, Brāhmanas and Kalpas): “Those who are evil-intentioned ones in Kāśī and those who bring in obstacles to Kāśī—it is to cut them off that I am holding the dagger. Those who are pious-minded in Kāśī and those who remove obstacles in Kāśī—it is to make their families flourish that I hold the Amṛta jar in my hand.”

If a devotee visits Vṛṣarudra and worships him with devotion and great means of service, he is never assailed by obstacles.

To the northern quarter of Rudra is the serpent deity named Maṇipradīpa.

82-83. Beyond it is Maṇikuṇḍa. It is a great holy Kuṇḍa that dispels poison and ailments. A devotee should take his holy ablution in the Kuṇḍa and visit the serpent-deity. He should obtain a kingdom full of jewels and rubies, abounding in elephants, horses and chariots and richly endowed with excellent wives and sons.

84-85. There is no doubt in this that if Kṛttivāseśvara Liṅga in Kāśī has not been visited those people will be mere burdens of the world.

Skanda said:

Those men who hear the origin of Kṛttivāsa and visit his Liṅga will attain welfare. There is no doubt about it.

CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

The Assembly of Sixtyeight Holy Spots

Skanda said:

1. Listen, O Agastya, O mass of penance, to the description of all the Liṅgas in Kāśī which, if resorted to, shall be conducive to the salvation of men of purified souls.

2. The spot where the hide was sportingly worn by the Lord, is well-known as Rudrāvāsa. It accords all spiritual powers.

3. When Kṛttivāsa stationed himself voluntarily there along with Umā, Nandin came there and submitted after due obeisance:

4. "O Lord of the chiefs of Devas, O Lord of the universe, sixty-eight very fascinating and charming mansions full of jewels have sprung up here.

5. Whatever splendid holy shrines are there in the three worlds—Bhūḥ, Bhuvah and Svaḥ—capable of bestowing salvation, have been brought here by me from all-round.

6. Which has been brought from where, which has been installed in what place, I shall describe, O Lord. Be pleased to attend for a short while.

7. The salvation-giving great Liṅga of the Lord of Devas named Sthaṇu, has sprung up here from Kurukṣetra. Only a sixteenth part thereof is present there.

8. In front of it there is the great splendid Puṣkarinī (holy lake) named Sannihati to the western side of Lolārka. It is (called) the holy spot Kurukṣetra Sthala.

9. Whatever holy rite is performed there, say, holy bath, offerings, Japas, penance and monetary gifts, by those who seek welfare, shall truly be crores of crores (of times) more beneficial than those at Kurukṣetra.

10. O Lord, accompanied by Brahmāvarta the Lord of Devas has manifested himself in Kāśī from Naimiṣa, after leaving a mere part there.

11-17. To the northern side of Dhuṇḍhirāja is the Liṅga called Devadeva (Lord of the Devas) which bestows all spiritual powers on the aspirant. Beyond it is the excellent well, well-known as Brahmāvarta, which dispels the likelihood of

coming back (into this world) in the case of men. A devotee should take his bath in the waters of that well and adore Devadeva. The merit thereof is known as crores of crores of times that at Naimiṣāraṇya.

From the shrine and holy spot of Gokaṛṇa has sprung up here voluntarily the great Liṅga named Mahābala in the vicinity of Sāmbāditya. By visiting and touching it, every powerful (great) sin is thrown far off like a mass of cotton wafted by wind.

By visiting Mahābala Liṅga in front of Kapālamocana, a devotee attains great power and he will attain the city of salvation.

The Liṅga named Śaśibhūṣaṇa has been installed here to the east of Rnamocana. It was brought from the excellent holy spot Prabhāsa. By resorting to that Liṅga a man will attain the state of the Moon-embellished Lord (i.e. Śiva).

18. He attains crores of times more the merit from the religious festival at Prabhāsakṣetra.

Lord Mahākāla has himself come here from Ujjayinī.

19-23 Merely by remembering his name, a devotee ceases to have the fear of Kali and Kāla. This Liṅga named Mahākāla is situated to the east of the great Liṅga named Praṇava. Through its visit, it bestows great salvation and it destroys all sins.

Ayogandheśvara Liṅga has manifested itself here from the excellent Puṣkara Tīrtha along with Puṣkara (holy lake). A devotee should visit Lord Ayogandha in the northern side of Matsyodarī and take his holy bath in Ayogandhakuṇḍa. He redeems his ancestors from the worldly existence.

Mahānādeśvara Liṅga has come here from the holy spot Aṭṭahāsa. It is to the north of Trilocana. If visited, it is conducive to salvation.

Mahotkaṭeśvara Liṅga has come here from the holy spot Marutkoṭa. It is to the northern side of Kāmeśvara. When visited, it accords spiritual powers devoid of impurities.

24. Vimaleśvara Liṅga has come here from the holy spot Viśvasthāna. It is to the western side of Svarlīna. If visited, it accords spiritual powers devoid of impurities.

25. The great Mahāvratā Liṅga has come over here from the Mahendra mountain. It is in the vicinity of Skandeśvara. It bestows the merit of great Vratas (holy observances and vows).

26-29. In the course of the first Yuga i.e. Kṛtayuga when the groups of celestial sages were reciting the prayers, a great Liṅga appeared after piercing through the ground which was very difficult to break through. Since their desire was fulfilled, they proclaimed it "Mahādeva". Ever since then, it became Mahādeva in Kāśī. It was by that great Liṅga that Kāśīkā was made the holy spot of salvation. A man who visits Mahādeva here in Avimukta, shall surely go to Śāmbhu's world wherever he may die. That Liṅga should be assiduously resorted to in Avimukta by those who desire salvation.

30. Ānandakānana has never been given up by Mahādeva in the form of Liṅga even in the course of other Kalpas.

31. Its shrine (of the Liṅga) of auspicious form is incomparable. It consists of all gems. It is the favour of that Lord Mahādeva.

32. That is the presiding deity in Vārānasī fulfilling all desires. It is in the form of all Liṅgas and is named Mahādeva.

33. Undoubtedly all the Liṅgas of the three worlds have been seen by the person who has seen Mahādeva having form of Liṅga in Vārānasī.

34. By worshipping Mahādeva once in Vārānasī, a man will joyously reside in Śiva's world until the annihilation of all living beings.

35. The Mahādeva Liṅga should be assiduously invested with the sacred thread or Kuśa grass in the month of Śrāvaṇa on the fourteenth day. The devotee shall never be in a womb (thereafter).

36-37. Accompanied by Phalgu and other Tīrthas numbering eight and a half cores, Pitāmaheśvara Liṅga came here from Gayā Tīrtha at the place where Dharma performed austerities for one million Yugas keeping as witness the great Liṅga named Dharmeśvara.

38. A man should joyously worship Pitāmaheśvara Liṅga there. There is no doubt about this that he gets liberated along with twenty-one generations of his family.

39-43. From Prayāga, the kings of Tīrthas, Maheśvara named Śūlaṭaṅka came here by himself accompanied by the Tīrtharāja himself and stayed south of the beautiful Nirvāṇamaṇḍapa. The pure mansion of that Lord excels Mount Meru. It is refulgent like gold. It is a boon granted by the Lord himself in a previous

Yuga. Maheśvara should be worshipped at the outset in Kāśī. He dispels all sins.

One who takes his holy bath in Prayāga (stationed) here, bows down to Maheśvara after adoring in accordance with the injunctions, with elaborate requisites of services, and visits Śūlaṭaṅka undoubtedly obtains merit crores of times more than that arising from the holy bath at (the original) Prayāga.

44. From Śaṅkukarṇa, a great holy spot, the Liṅga called Mahātejas appeared here. It bestows increase in great splendour.

45. His mansion is the storehouse of great splendour. It is extremely pure. It pervades the sky with its sparkling flame-like splendour. It is (as if) solely constructed with rubies.

46. By visiting, touching, eulogizing and adoring that Liṅga, that greatest region is attained, on reaching which no one comes to grief.

47. By adoring Mahātejas to the east of Vināyakeśvara the devotee goes to the region of Maheśvara in a fire-like resplendent vehicle.

48. The great Mahāyogīśvara Liṅga revealed itself from the extremely sacred Tīrtha named Rudrakoṭi.

49. It is in the vicinity of Pārvatīśvara Liṅga. It bestows all miraculous powers. By visiting that Liṅga, men get the merit of (visiting) a crore of Liṅgas.

50. All-round the mansion thereof, mansions of beautiful structure, about a crore in number, belonging to Rudras, have been erected by Rudramūrtis.

51-54. That is called Rudrasthalī at Kāśī by expounders of the Vedas. Those who die in Rudrasthalī, whether they be worms, insects, locusts, animals, birds, beasts, men of barbarian descent or learned Dīkṣitas, become Rudras. They (who have become Rudras) do not have any return to the world. All the sins accumulated in the course of thousands of births, become entirely destroyed as soon as the devotee enters Rudrasthalī. The devotee may be desirous (of fruits) or free from desires or one born as a brute (non-human being), but if that being dies at Rudrasthalī, he will attain the supreme liberation.

55. Kṛttivāśas has come down here voluntarily from the holy spot Ekāmbara (Bhuvaneśvara) and stationed here in the Kṛttivāśas Liṅga.

56. In this holy spot the Lord in the company of Ambā and hosts of sages, imparts into the ears of his own devotees the knowledge of Brahman revered by the Śrutis.

57. From Marujāṅgala (Marwar, Rajasthan) Caṇḍīśa has come down to the Siddhi-bestowing holy spot here. Merely through his look, he will split the mass of fierce sins into a hundred parts.

58. He who visits the great Caṇḍīśvara Liṅga in the vicinity of Gaṇādhyakṣa, armed with the noose, attains the greatest goal.

59. Lord Nīlakaṇṭha himself has arrived here from the Kālañjara mountain. He is the destroyer of worldly existence and has stationed himself in the vicinity of the Gaṇas called Dantakūṭa.

60. Those devotees by whom Nīlakaṇṭheśvara Liṅga in Kāśī has been duly adored, shall themselves become blue-throated moon-embellished ones.

61. The Liṅga with the epithet Vijaya has come down here from Kāśmīra. (It has stationed itself) to the east of Śālakataṃkata and always bestows success on men.

62. By adoring Vijayeśa, men become always victorious in battle, royal palace, gaming table and scholastic disputation.

63. From Tridaṇḍa city Lord Ūrdhvaretas himself has arrived here. He has established himself keeping in front of him Kūṣmāṇḍaka, the presiding officer of the Gaṇas.

64. By viewing Ūrdhvaretas a devotee attains an elevated status. There is no question of going downwards (in status etc.) in the case of the devotees of Ūrdhvaretas.

65. The Liṅga named Śrīkaṇṭha (has come) from the holy spot Maṇḍaleśvara and established itself to the north of Vināyaka called Maṇḍa.

66. Men who are devoted to Śrīkaṇṭha are Śrīkaṇṭhas themselves. They are not short of glory and fortune either here or hereafter.

67. The Lord with the appellation Kapardīśvara himself manifested in the Piśācamocana Tīrtha from the great Chāgalāṇḍa Tīrtha.

68. One who assiduously worships Kapardīśa, does not fall into hell, nor does he become a vampire even if he commits the most heinous sin.

69. From the holy place Āmrātakeśvara, the Liṅga named Sūkṣmeśa has arrived in this holy spot, the source of all welfare.

70. By visiting Sūkṣmeśvara Liṅga in the vicinity of Gaṇeśa called Vikatadvija, one attains the subtle goal.

71. (The Liṅga named) Deveśa Jayanta has arrived here from the holy spot Madhukeśvara. It is stationed in front of Gaṇapati (named) Lambodara.

72. One who takes his holy bath in the splendid waters of Gaṅgā and visits Jayanta shall attain the miraculous powers desired. He will be victorious everywhere.

73-76. Tripurāntaka, the Lord of Devas, manifested from Śrīśaila. The merit that has been mentioned as obtained by visiting the summit of Śrīśaila, can be easily obtained by visiting Tripurāntaka.

If a man worships with great devotion Lord Tripurāntaka on the western side of Viśveśa, he does not enter a womb.

Lord Kukkuteśvara has come here from Saumyasthāna. He is stationed in the vicinity of Gaṇeśa called Vakratuṅḍa. By visiting and adoring him, all miraculous powers can be acquired.

77. Lord Triśūlī has himself come here from the holy spot Jāleśvara (stationed) in front of Gaṇapati (named) Kūṭadanta. He bestows all Siddhis.

78. Lord Jaṭī has come from the great holy spot Rāmeśvara. He is on the northern side of Ekadanta. If worshipped, he bestows all desired things.

79. Lord Tryambaka has come from the holy spot Trisandhya. He is on the eastern side of Trimukha. If worshipped, he accords the state of Tryambaka.

80. Hareśvara has come here from the holy spot Hariścandra (and is) in front of Hariścandreśvara. If worshipped, he always bestows victory.

81-82. Śarva has come here from (the holy place) Madhyamakeśvara. It is established keeping (itself) in front of Caturvedeśvara Liṅga. The Liṅga Śarva in Kāśī bestows the highest attainment (Mokṣa). By worshipping the Liṅga called Śarva no man falls into the status (category) of a lower being.

83. Another great Liṅga has appeared here from Sthaleśvara (at a place) where is Yajñeśvara Liṅga. It bestows the benefits of all Liṅgas.

84. By worshipping Mahā Liṅga, a devotee having great

faith attains great glory in this world as well as in the other.

85. Sahasrākṣa Liṅga has come here from the holy spot named Suvarṇa. By visiting it men obtain the eye (vision) of knowledge.

86. By visiting Lord Sahasrākṣeśvara (which is) to the south of Śaileśvara, a devotee can cast off the sins of hundreds and thousands of births.

87. From the holy spot Harṣita has appeared the Liṅga Harṣita that dispels darkness. On being visited and touched, it bestows delight on men.

88. The mansion (shrine) of Harṣiteśvara is in the vicinity of Mantreśvara. By visiting it men will always enjoy series of delightful events.

89. Rudra himself has come here from Rudramahālaya. By visiting it men clearly pass on to the world of Rudra.

90. There is no doubt in this that those men by whom Rudreśvara Liṅga here in Kāśī has been worshipped should be known as embodiments of Rudra.

91. If Lord Rudreśvara is visited in the vicinity of Tripureśa, those devotees are to be known as on a par with Rudra, whether alive or dead.

92. The great Lord Vṛṣeśa has come here from the holy spot Vṛṣabhadhvaja. He is in the vicinity of Bāneśvara Liṅga. He always bestows piety.

93. The Liṅga named Īśāneśvara has come here from the holy spot Kedāra. That should be visited in the west of Prahlādakeśava.

94. A devotee who takes his holy bath in the waters of the north-flowing (Gaṅgā) river and worships Īśāneśa, shall stay in the city of Īśāna with splendour like that of Īśāna.

95. The beautiful Mūrti (image, form) Bhairavī has come here from the holy spot Bhairava. Its name is Saṁhārabhairava. It should be assiduously visited.

96. It is to the east of Kharvavināyaka. If worshipped it will be conducive to all Siddhis. Saṁhārabhairava in Kāśī shall destroy series of sins.

97. Ugra, the bestower of Siddhis, has manifested himself here from the holy spot Kanakhala. By visiting him, men can get rid of their fierce sins.

98. Ugra Liṅga should always be resorted to. It is to the

east of Arkavināyaka. Even very fierce obstacles shall perish on its being worshipped.

99. O Lord, the Lord named Bhava has manifested himself from the great holy spot Vastrāpatha here in the vicinity of Bhīmacaṇḍī.

100. If a man worships Bhavaśvara, he never appears again in the world. He will become the lord of all kings carrying out his behests.

101. Lord Daṇḍī arrived in Vārāṇasī from Devadāruvana chastising masses of sins, and has stationed himself in the form of a Liṅga.

102. It is to the east of Dehalivināyaka that Lord Daṇḍīśvara should be worshipped. If men worship him, their rebirth never takes place.

103. From the holy spot Bhadrakarṇahrada Śiva came here directly followed by the pool Bhadrakarṇahrada. He is the bestower of happiness on all when worshipped.

104-105. That excellent Tīrtha is to the east of Gaṇapati named Uddaṇḍa. A devotee who takes his holy bath in Bhadrakarṇahrada and adores the Liṅga named Śiva, attains welfare everywhere. By worshipping Bhadrakarṇeśa, the devotee shall hear the welfare of all living beings; he sees the well-being of all with his own eyes.

106. Śaṅkara has come from the holy spot called Hariścandra and shines in front of you. By worshipping him there occurs no rebirth from the womb of a mother.

107. Kāla Liṅga, well-known as Kalaśeśa has come from Yama Liṅga, a great holy spot. It is stationed to the west of Candreśa.

108. If a man takes his holy bath in the Yama Tīrtha to the right side of Mitrāvaruṇa and visits Kāla Liṅga, whence is the fear of Kali and Kāla?

109. He who conducts his pilgrimage there on Narakacaturdaśī day will not proceed to Yama's abode, even though he may be a sinner.

110-111. From the great holy spot of Nepāla, Paśupati came here where the system of Pāśupata Yoga was imparted by you, the Pināka-wielding One, the Lord of Devas, to Brahmā and others for the sake of salvation. Merely on visiting it one is rid of the brutish bonds.

112. From the holy spot Karavīraka Kapālīśa came here. He should be assiduously visited in the Kapālamocana Tīrtha.

113. Merely by visiting it, the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter is dispelled.

Umāpati has come here from the city of Devikā (Devīpāṭaṇa?) and established himself.

114-117. Visited to the east of Paśupati, he dispels sin accumulated in the course of a long time.

The Liṅga named Dīpteśa has come here from Maheśvarakṣetra (Kailāsa). He stands near Umāpati for the purpose of illumination. The Liṅga (named) Dīpteśa situated in the middle of Kāśī bestows enjoyment of pleasures here and salvation hereafter.

Ācārya Nakulīśvara (Lakulīśvara) has come from the holy spot Kāyārohaṇa (Baroda Dist. in Gujarat). He stands surrounded by his disciples observing the great Pāśupata Vratas. Visited to the south of Mahādeva, he bestows knowledge. He destroys quickly the *Ajñāna* (Ignorance) that causes conception and worldly existence.

118. The Liṅga named Amareśa has come from Gaṅgāsāgara (confluence of Gaṅgā and the Sea). If it is visited, immortality is not difficult to be achieved.

119-120. Lord Bhīmeśvara from Saptagodāvarī Tīrtha shines here in the form of a Liṅga for the sake of (granting) enjoyment of pleasures as well as salvation of all men. If a devotee visits Lord Bhīmeśvara in front of Nakulīśvara, even terrible sins perish instantaneously.

121-122. From the holy spot Bhūteśvara, (the Liṅga named) Bhasmagātra manifested itself here. A devotee shall assiduously worship it on the southern side of Bhīmeśa. By visiting Bhasmagātra, that merit is attained which one usually acquires after a perfect practice of Pāśupata Yoga for a hundred years.

123. From (the holy spot) Nakulīśvara Lord Hara has himself manifested in the form of a Liṅga in Kāśī and is well-known as Svayāmbhū.

124. A devout man should take his holy bath in Siddhahrada and worship Svayāmbhū Liṅga in front of Mahālakṣmīśvara. He will never be reborn.

125-127. Very near Prayāga Tīrtha is a palatial mansion with the lustre of corals. This is the great palace of the Lord named

Dharaṇī Varāha. He has come down from Vindhya mountain after hearing that Your Lordship have come down to Kāśī from Mandara having caves full of jewels. He was accompanied by the Gaṇas, sages and gods. That Lord Dharaṇīvarāha should be assiduously visited. He will redeem one who is immersed in the ocean of disaster and seeks refuge.

128. From the holy spot Karṇikāra has come Gaṇādhyakṣa having the hue of Karṇikāra flowers. He should be worshipped as having a club in his hand. He is the destroyer of thousands of obstacles.

129. By worshipping Gaṇādhyakṣa stationed to the west of that deity Dharaṇīvarāha a devotee shall obtain the status of Gāṇapatya ('leadership of the attendants').

130. From Hemakūṭa the Liṅga (named) Lord Virūpākṣa has manifested itself here, to the south of deity Maheśvara. If visited, it will redeem the devotee from worldly existence.

131. From Gaṅgādvāra, the Liṅga (named) Himastheśa (has manifested itself). It is conducive to the attainment of miraculous powers. It should be visited to the west of Brahmanāla.

132. O Lord, from Kailāsa Gaṇādhipa has come. Other Gaṇas of great strength numbering seven crores have come from Kailāsa mountain.

133-135. Seven forts have been built by them. They are on a par with seven heavens. They have huge doorways fitted with mechanical devices and panels fixed intricately. They are richly endowed with all requisites. Each of them contains a crore of warriors. (The forts were) respectively made of gold, silver, copper, bell metal, brass, lead and lead stone. They are firm and reach as far as the sky. Thereafter a big fort was made all-round Kāśī (as huge as) a mountain by them.

136. A moat was also made by them below, with the water of Matsyodarī flooding it. Matsyodarī was split into two, the external one and the internal one.

137-139. Mixed with the waters of Gaṅgā it became famous as a great Tīrtha.¹ When the waters of Gaṅgā begin to flow

1. These verses describe the condition of the last millennium. *Matsyodarī*: Formerly i.e. a thousand years ago, Matsyodarī was a rivulet flowing into Varāṇā. Rarely Gaṅgā over-flooding into the course of Varāṇā swelled Varāṇā so much

in the opposite direction i.e. southwards, the Matsyodarī Tīrtha is obtained due to the weightiness of the merit. If the festival of the Sun and the Moon occurs (i.e. eclipses or entry into a new Zodiac sign), then the merit thereof is hundred crores of times. When Gaṅgā and Matsyodarī join together (i.e. waters of Gaṅgā enter Matsyodarī), all the festivals, all the Tīrthas and all the Liṅgas are there.

140. Devout men who take their holy baths in Matsyodarī at any time and offer balls of rice, will never again lie in the belly of a mother.

141. This holy spot Avimukta shall assume the shape of a fish (Matsya) when the water of the celestial river is seen flowing all-round.¹

142. Those men who take their holy bath in Matsyodarī, are the best among men. Even after committing many sins, they will never see the city of the god of Death (Yama).

143. Of what avail is the bath in many Tīrthas? Of what avail is the performance of difficult austerities? If a devotee takes bath in Matsyodarī, whence need he fear a chance of being conceived and born?

144. One who takes one's bath wherever there are Liṅgas installed by men, Devas or sages, and in Matsyodarī, attains salvation.

145. There are many Tīrthas present in Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ or Svaḥ (in the three worlds), but it is certain that they are not equal to a ten-millionth part (of Matsyodarī).

146. Thus, O Lord, the Tīrtha has been rendered very great by that resident of Kailāsa i.e. Gaṇādhipa of esteemed and exalted activities.

147. From the Gandhamādana mountain, the Liṅga named Bhūrbhuvah manifested itself to the east of Gaṇādhipa.

148. After visiting the Liṅga called Bhūrbhuvah men become meritorious enough to stay for a long time far above the worlds

that it pushed back the waters of Matsyodarī in the opposite direction. Hence the propriety of v 137b-138a and also v 141. The mingling of the backward flowing waters of Gaṅgā, Varanā and Matsyodarī was regarded very auspicious. Matsyodarī Tīrtha was a big lake. This great Tīrtha was drained in 1826. Today Matsyodarī is a small park with a pond called "Machodarī" just to the south of Omkāra. (BCL 116-118)

1. This happened when Gaṅgā was over-flooded.

of Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svah and Mahah enjoying divine pleasures.

149. O Lord, from beneath the bottom of the seven nether worlds, the great Liṅga (named) Hātakeśa came here accompanied by Bhogavatī (the river of Pātāla).

150. Its palace was built by serpents, the chief of whom are Śeṣa and Vāsuki, with masses of jewels, rubies and diamonds. The great palace was erected assiduously.

151. That Liṅga is made entirely of gold and equipped with necklaces of jewels. It is to the east of Īsāneśvara. It should be adored assiduously.

152. A devout mān should worship that Liṅga with great devotion. He will become blessed with all prosperity. After enjoying numerous pleasures, he will attain salvation after death.

153. From the world of Tāraka (stars) in the sky, the Liṅga in the form of refulgence came here and manifested in front of Jñānavāpī. That Liṅga (is called) Tārakeśvara.

154-156. Tārakajñāna (Knowledge of redemption) shall be obtained by worshipping that Liṅga. A man should take his holy bath in Jñānavāpī, visit Tārakeśa, perform all the due rites at twilight after offering libations to grandfathers and observe the vow of silence till the Liṅga is visited. He is liberated from all sins and he attains perpetual merit. At the end of the life, he gets Tāraka Jñāna through which he gets liberated.

157. From the holy spot of Kirāta where formerly the Lord became a hunter, Kirāteśa has manifested here.

158. A man should bow down to that Kirāteśvara Liṅga behind Bhārabhūteśvara. He will never lie thereafter within the belly of a mother.

159. The Liṅga called Marukeśvara came from the city of Laṅkā. By worshipping that Liṅga men have no fear of Rākṣasas.

160. That Liṅga named Nairṛteśvara is in the south-western quarter. Worshipped after Paulastyarāghava it destroys all evils (men and things).

161. Jala Liṅga is fond of water. It is more meritorious than Sthala Liṅga. It has come there from and established itself in the middle of the waters of Gaṅgā.

162. Its (mansion or shrine) is very wonderful. It is seen in the middle of Gaṅgā. It is very excellent and consists of all

metals. It is splendid and is full of all jewels.

163. Even today it is seen by a few due to the weightiness of merit accumulated.

The Liṅga (named) Śreṣṭha came here from the holy spot Koṭīśvara.

164. By visiting that Liṅga one attains the merit of visiting ten million Liṅgas. The Liṅga (named) Śreṣṭha is behind Jyeṣṭheśvara. It bestows excellent Siddhis.

165. The Liṅga (named) Analeśvara has come out of the mouth of Vaḍavā (submarine fire). Worshipped here in front of Naleśvara it bestows all Siddhis.

166. Having come from Virajas Tīrtha the Three-eyed Lord of Devas stationed himself in Triviṣṭapa Liṅga of beginningless existence.

167. From Amaraṅṭaka Lord Omkāra manifested himself in the meritorious Pilipilā Tīrtha that bestows redemption on all.

168. That is the first Liṅga with Tāraka (Praṇava) as its source while Gaṅgā had not yet arrived at Kāśī. However, it had manifested for the sake of uplifting the three worlds.

169. A great Liṅga with its (Praṇava's) shape manifested itself therefrom. None other than our Lord knows its greatness.

170. O Lord, I brought these great Āyatanas (holy spots) after leaving only a part in the different original holy spots.

171. All those meritorious ones have arrived with great fervour, not otherwise. O Lord, all the places all-round are beautiful in every respect and are capable of scraping the sky.

172. They are constructed of many metals and are brilliant with all variegated jewels. Merely by viewing their pinnacle, salvation is attained.

173. O most excellent one among Suras, if the names of these Liṅgas are heard, heaps of sins arising in thousands of births perish.

174. O Lord, what behest is to be carried out now by me? The Lord may be pleased to utter it and it should be considered as fulfilled.

Skanda said:

175. On hearing these words of Nandin, Hara, the Lord

of the chiefs of Devas, joyously commanded Śailādi (Nandin) and said thus, O Pot-born One:

Śrī Devadeva said:

176-178. O Nandin, you have done well. O perpetual performer of what is pleasing, carry out this behest. Employ the Caṇḍīs now. There are nine crores of Cāmuṇḍās accompanied by their deities, Bhūtas, Vetālas and Bhairavas. Their forms are impossible to be assailed. In order to guard the city, post them all-round in every fort along with their vehicles, armies and weapons.

Skanda said:

179-182. After commanding Nandin thus, Mṛḍa in the company of Mṛḍānī, went to the holy Traiviṣṭapa that enables the seed of salvation to grow.

The son of Śīlāda took up the behest of Īśa on his head, called the Durgās and established them in every fort. By listening to this chapter describing the sacred Āyatanas, in due order, with great faith, a man will attain heavenly pleasures and salvation. If a man listens to this group of sixtyeight great Āyatanas, he will never enter the cave of the belly of a mother.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

Establishment of the Deities

Agastya said:

1. O son of Kātyāyanī, tell me how the deities were appointed in their duties at the behest of the Lord of Devas by Nandin, the delighter of the universe.

2. O Lord, please do me a favour. Narrate factually where which deities were posted for the protection of Avimukta.

3. On hearing this request of Agastya, the son of Mahādeva joyously narrated which places were assigned to which deities in Ānandavana.

Skanda said:

4. After creating Viśāla Tīrtha in Gaṅgā in Vārāṇasī, Viśālākṣī¹, the great bestower of cherished things, was established on the back of the holy spot.

5. (A devotee) who takes his holy bath in Viśāla Tīrtha and bows down to Viśālākṣī attains profuse riches and glory according to great welfare both here and hereafter.

6. On the third day in the dark half of the month of Bhadrā (Aug.-Sept.) men should observe fast and keep awake at night in the vicinity of Viśālākṣī.

7. In the morning, after embellishing fourteen virgins with garlands, clothes and ornaments according to the capacity (of the devotee), they should be fed assiduously.

8. Thereafter, Pāraṇā rite (breaking the fast) should be performed in the company of sons and servants. Thereby, O Pot-born One, the benefit of a perfect residence in Vārāṇasī shall be obtained.

9. On the same day a great religious festival should be organized by the residents of the holy place for the purpose of quelling troubles and for the acquisition of glory of salvation.

10-17. In Vārāṇasī, Viśālākṣī should be assiduously adored by means of incense, lights, splendid garlands, fascinating presents, ornaments of gems, pearls etc., wonderful canopies, chowries, excellent silk garments not used before and fragrant scents, for the enrichment of the Glory of Salvation by the residents of any place. Even the least thing offered by excellent men to Viśālākṣī is conducive to bring in endless benefit in both the worlds.

The perfect fruit of whatever is offered at the seat of Viśālākṣī, of Japa, Homa, eulogy etc., is salvation. No hesitation need be entertained in this regard.

By the adoration of Viśālākṣī a husband endowed with the wealth of handsome features and embellished with good qualities and habits is obtained by virgins, an excellent son by a preg-

1. *Viśālākṣī*: Near Viśvanātha Temple towards Gaṅgā. The shrine is a Śaktipīṭha (where a part of Satī's body fell). Viśālākṣī is regarded as connected with Kāmākṣī of Kāñcī and Kāmākhyā of Assam and also with Mīnākṣī of Madurai. (BCL 172-173)

nant woman and capability of conception by barren women. Great conjugal bliss is obtained by women hitherto denied that bliss; widows are assured that in the next life there will be no widowhood. Worshipped, heard or seen in Kāśī, Viśālākṣī fulfills the desires of women and men desirous of the greatest liberation.

18. There in the vicinity of Gaṅgā-Keśava, there is another Tīrtha called Lalitā Tīrtha. Goddess Lalitā¹, the great protectress of the holy place, is there.

19. She too should be assiduously adored for the augmentation of all affluence. Obstacles never come in the way of the worshippers of Lalitā.

20. By worshipping Lalitā in the month of Āśvina (Sept.-Oct.) on the second day in the dark half, a devotee, whether man or woman, attains the desired status.

21. By taking the holy bath in Lalitā Tīrtha and bowing down to Lalitā the devotee shall obtain blessedness everywhere even if he utters anything (by way of prayer).

22. O sage, Goddess Viśvabhujā, an aspect of Gaurī is stationed in front of Viśālākṣī, destroying always the great obstacles of those having devotion to the holy spot.

23. For the augmentation of all desired things the religious festival of Goddess Viśvabhujā should be assiduously celebrated during the nine days of the Śarat season (first to the ninth day in the bright half of Āśvina).

24. If any man does not bow down to Goddess Viśvabhujā in Vārāṇasī, how can that evil-souled one get mental peace from great calamities.

25. Those by whom Goddess Viśvabhujā is eulogized and adored in Vārāṇasī, are never harassed by masses of obstacles. They are meritorious souls.

26. There is another deity in Vārāṇasī namely Vārāhī in the vicinity of Kratuvarāha. By devoutly bowing to her, a man can avoid sinking down into the ocean of disaster.

27. Śivadūtī should be visited there itself. She destroys calamities. She keeps her trident lifted up for the protection of Ānandavana. She threatens enemies.

1. She is at Lalitā Ghāṭ, formerly known as Gaṅgā Keśava Ghāṭ. Lalitā is an important deity at Vārāṇasī and Prayāga. (BCL 231-32)

28. On the southern side of Indreśa is the deity Aindrī holding the thunderbolt in the hand and seated on a lordly elephant. She should be worshipped. She always confers affluence.

29. In the vicinity of Skandeshvara is the deity Kaumārī riding the peacock as her vehicle. She should be assiduously visited for the increase of great benefit.

30. To the south of Maheśvara, goddess Māheśvarī seated on the bull as her vehicle should be worshipped by men. She bestows cattle wealth.

31. In the vicinity of Nirvāṇa-Narasimha is the deity Nārasimhī with the discus raised up in her beautiful hand. She should be adored by those who are desirous of salvation.

32. The deity Brāhmī riding the swan as her vehicle is stationed to the west of Brahmeśa. She strikes down enemies with a handful of water out of her Kamaṇḍalu (waterpot).

33. For acquiring a perfect knowledge of Brahman, she should be worshipped everyday by Brāhmaṇas, ascetics and those desiring to know the truth about Brahman.

34. A devotee should always resort to the deity Nārāyaṇī in Kāśī. She eradicates obstacles by means of great arrows discharged from the Śārṅga bow here and there.

35. Great rise in prosperity in Kāśī comes to that person who bows down to Nārāyaṇī who is to the west of Gopī-Govinda. She rotates the discus in her raised index finger.

36. Thereafter, a man with devotion should worship Gaurī in the form of Virūpākṣī, in the northern direction of Devayānī. He obtains the desired glory.

37. The deity Śaileśvarī who is stationed near Śaileśvara and who, with her index finger threatens calamities and torments, should be duly worshipped.

38-39. A man with devotion should take his holy bath in Citrakūpa that bestows various kinds of benefit on men, visit Citragupteśvara and worship the deity Citraghaṇṭā. One who worships Citraghaṇṭā will not be adversely reported by Citragupta even if he has committed many sins and left the path of righteousness.

40. If a devotee in Kāśī, whether man or woman, fails to worship Citraghaṇṭā, thousands of obstacles will come to him or her at every step.

41. It is on the third day in the bright half of the month of Caitra that devotees should assiduously arrange the religious procession and pilgrimage. A very great celebration should be held and vigilance be kept during the night.

42. If a devotee worships Citraghaṇṭā with all the great requisites of a great adoration, he does not hear the knell of the bell of the god of Death tied round the neck of his buffalo.

43. The deity Citragrīva should be bowed to in the east of Citrāṅgadeśvara. The man never sees the tortures of various kinds (inflicted by Yama).

44. A man with devotion should perform all rites in the water in Bhadravāpī and visit Bhadrakālī in front of Bhadrānāga. He never sees inauspiciousness and sorrow.

45. By assiduously worshipping Harasiddhi to the east of Siddhivināyaka, the excellent man obtains all great powers.

46. After duly worshipping Vidhi by means of different kinds of offerings, in the vicinity of Vidhīśvara, the devotee attains various kinds of powers.

47. The devotee should take his holy bath in the Prayāga Tīrtha and worship the deity Nigaḍabhañjanī ('breaker of fetters'). He is never tormented with fetters.

48. With the desire for liberating a prisoner, a devotee should always worship Nigaḍabhañjanī on a Tuesday, devoutly taking only one morsel of food. (The name of the deity may be Bandī—Comm.)

49. On being worshipped she accords even the severance from worldly bondage. Of what reckoning are fetters etc. through her adoration?

50. There is no doubt in this that due to the faith of men resorting to the feet of the deity Bandī, even a kinsman staying very far off will return soon.

51. If she is served perfectly after taking up some vow and observances, she will fulfil all desires soon removing all doubts regarding Kāśī.

52. This deity, the breaker of the bondage of the devotees, has a hammer and a chisel in her hands. She is in the vicinity of Tīrtharāja. What desires does she not fulfil? (i.e., fulfils all desires.)

53-55. Behind Paśupati and in the vicinity of Amṛteśvara is the goddess (Amṛteśvarī). She should be assiduously bowed to

after taking a holy bath in the well Amṛtakūpa. A man should devoutly worship the deity Amṛteśvarī. By resorting to her lotus-like feet the devotee shall gain immortality. Who will not gain immortality if he meditates on the deity Mahāmāyā holding a pitcher of nectar in the right hand and granting fearlessness with the gesture of left hand?

56. The deity Siddhalakṣmī, the mother of the universe, is to the west of Amṛteśvara. She is in front of the Prapitāmaha Liṅga. She bestows great powers.

57. Who will not attain glory and fortune by visiting the mansion of Siddhalakṣmī, that has the shape of a lotus and is called Lakṣmīvilāsa.

58. Thereafter the deity Kubjā, the mother of the universe, who is in front of Nalakūbara Liṅga and to the west of Prapitāmaha (Liṅga) should be worshipped

59. On being worshipped, Kubjā removes calamities entirely. Hence Kubjā should be assiduously worshipped in Kāśī by those who seek auspiciousness and welfare.

60. Kubjāmbareśvara Liṅga is to the west of Nalakūbara. There the deity Trilokasundarī Gaurī should be worshipped. She bestows everything desired.

61. The deity Trilokasundarī shall bestow spiritual powers (and make a female devotee) the most beautiful lady in all the three worlds. By worshipping that goddess widowhood does not befall.

62. The deity of great power named Dīptā is in the vicinity of Sāmbāditya. By worshipping her, devotees become endowed with brilliant splendour.

63. Goddess Mahālakṣmī, the mother of the universe, is in the vicinity of Śrīkaṅṭha. The mother of the universe should be worshipped after taking holy bath in Śrīkuṇḍa Tīrtha.

64. The devotee should offer libations to the ancestors duly in the Tīrtha designated Śrīkuṇḍa and make due gifts. He will never be abandoned by the goddess of Wealth.

65. The holy spot of Lakṣmī is a great Pīṭha (sacred pedestal) that accords spiritual powers (to the aspirant). A man who practises *Mantras* there shall attain *Siddhi*.

66. There are many Pīṭhas in Kāśī conferring spiritual powers, but nothing else is the great cause of fortune and affluence like Mahālakṣmīpīṭha.

67. On the sacred day of Mahālakṣmyaṣṭamī, men should celebrate religious festivals there. On being worshipped here duly, Padmā (goddess Lakṣmī) never abandons their abodes.

68. To the north of Mahālakṣmī is the deity Hayakaṇṭhī holding an axe. Everyday she cuts off the great trees of obstacles in Kāśī.

69. The deity Kaurmī Śakti (the Śakti of Kūrma, Viṣṇu's incarnation as Tortoise) is to the south of Mahālakṣmī. She holds noose in her hand. She binds the masses of obstacles of the holy spot every moment.

70. On being worshipped and eulogized by men, she accords Kṣetra-siddhi (Siddhi of the holy spot?).

Śikhī Caṇḍī is the great protectress of the holy spot in the north-west.

71. She consumes the mass of obstacles and produces the sound akin to that of a peacock. By visiting her, all the ailments of men perish.

72-73. Always alert, Bhīmacaṇḍī guards the northern gateway. A devotee should visit Bhīmacaṇḍī holding a noose and mallet in front of Bhīmeśvara, and perform all rites like water libations in Bhīmakunḍa. He will become contented and blessed. He will never see anywhere the messengers of Yama of excessively terrible appearance and size.

74. The goddess Chāgavaktreśvarī is to the south of Vṛṣabhadhvaja. Day and night, she eats off the shoots of the trees of masses of obstacles.

75. It is due to the grace of that goddess that the opportunity of living in Kāśī is obtained. Hence one should sincerely worship Goddess Chāgeśvarī on the Mahāṣṭamī day (eighth day in the bright half of Āśvina).

76. Goddess Tālajaṅgheśvarī keeps the palm tree as her weapon. She eradicates clusters of obstacles in Ānandavana (i.e. Kāśī).

77. A devotee should bow down to the hideous-faced Tālajaṅgheśvarī (who is) to the south of Saṅgameśvara Liṅga. He is never assailed by obstacles.

78. In the Tīrtha named Uddālaka, to the south of Uddālakeśvara Liṅga, the deity named Yamadaṁṣṭrā chews the mass of obstacles.

79. Those by whom Yamadaṁṣṭrā is bowed to in the Tīrtha

named Uddālaka, are never afraid of Yama here even after committing a number of sins.

80-85. In Dārukeśvara Tīrtha in the vicinity of Dārukeśa is the deity well-known as Carmamuṇḍā. She has the nether worlds constituting her palate and mouth. The sky is her upper lip and the earth the lower lip. She holds a skull and a dagger in her hands. She is fond of swallowing the whole of cosmos. (She is so lean that) her belly is dried up. She appears as though she is bound with sinews. She protects the eastern part of the holy spot from masses of obstacles. She has thousands of huge brawny arms shining. She is squint-eyed. She holds a discus and sweetmeat in the hands extending like the ocean. She wears the hide of a leopard. She laughs harshly and boisterously. She chews the bones of sinners quickly as though they were merely lotus stalks. She keeps the bodies of betrayers of the holy spot with wicked habits stuck up at the tip of her trident. A garland of skulls adorns her. She is terrible in form. By bowing down to Carmamuṇḍā a man is never assailed by the obstacles of the holy spot.

86-87. This (other) deity Mahāruṇḍā is also like Carmamuṇḍā. There is only this difference that she has the garland of headless trunks as her ornament. Both the goddesses are excessively powerful and they guard the holy spot. They spread their hands before each other, clap them and laugh boisterously.

88. The deity Mahāruṇḍā of fierce countenance always stands in Hayagrīveśvara Tīrtha to the north of Lolārka. She removes the obstacles of her devotees.

89. In between these two deities named Carmamuṇḍā and Mahāruṇḍā is stationed Cāmuṇḍā with her form made up of skulls.

90-91. These three deities should be assiduously worshipped by the residents of the holy spot. They bestow wealth and foodgrains. They accord sons and grandsons. They destroy all calamities. They grant the Glory of Salvation when remembered, visited, bowed to, touched and adored by men with great faith.

92. To the west of Mahāruṇḍā is the auspicious goddess Svapneśvarī. She foretells the future, whether good or bad, to the devotee directly in the course of a dream.

93-94. A devotee should take his holy bath in the holy confluence of Asi on any lunar day. Whether man or woman that wise one should observe fast and worship Svapneśvara Liṅga and the Goddess Svapneśvarī. He or she should lie down on bare ground. He (she) will be able to see the future in dream.

95. Even today this can be tested there and believed in by the persons who know. Svapneśvarī will tell the past, present and future.

96. She should be assiduously worshipped in Kāśī on the eighth, ninth or fourteenth lunar day by men who seek knowledge during day or night.

97. To the west of Svapneśvarī is stationed Goddess Durgā. She always protects the southern side of the holy spot.

CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

Exploits of Durgā

Agastya said:

1. O son of Umā, how did the goddess get the name Durgā? How should she be worshipped in Kāśī? Narrate this to me.

Skanda said:

2. O highly intelligent Pot-born One, I shall tell you how the goddess got the name Durgā and how she should be worshipped by the aspirants.

3. There was a great Daitya named Durga born of Daitya Ruru. After performing an intensively fierce penance, he got the boon of invincibility by human beings.

4. Thereupon, all the worlds beginning with Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, and Svaḥ were brought under his control after conquering them in battle with the prowess of his arms.

5. That powerful demon himself became (assumed the powers of) Indra, Vāyu, Candra, Yama, Agni, Varuṇa and Kubera.

6. He himself took up the position of Īśāna, Rudra, Arka

(the Sun-god) and Vasus. Fearing him even the great sages gave up penance.

7. Agitated through fear for him, Brāhmaṇas ceased to study the Vedas. Enclosed sites for the performance of Yajñas were destroyed by his soldiers of unendurable (ferocity).

8-9. Many chaste women were outraged by them (as they, i.e. the demons were) determined to follow evil path. After carrying away others' possessions by force, they enjoyed them because they were unconquerable. They were evil in their conduct and ruthless in every activity they took up. Rivers became diverted from their regular course. Fires ceased to blaze.

10. The luminaries ceased to be brilliant due to the fear for him. The faces of the maidens in the form of the quarters became lustreless all-round.

11. All pious rites ceased (to be performed). Impious ones prevailed. They alone transformed themselves into clouds and showered sportingly.

12. In great fear for him, the earth put forth plants even though the seeds had not been sown. Even barren, non-fruit-bearing trees bore fruits.

13. The wives of gods and sages were imprisoned by that excessively arrogant demon. All the heaven-dwellers were made forest-dwellers by him.

14. Extremely terrified, men did not honour gods who visited their houses even with a polite conversation, because they would in that case face difficulties and disasters.

Skanda said:

15. Neither nobility of birth nor good habit and conduct contribute to greatness. High position alone is conducive to welfare. A fall from high position is thought to be meanness.

16. Only they are blessed who, even in adversity, forced by wretchedness, do not step into the courtyard of persons with mind defiled by affluence.

17. Death is better in the world because there is no indignity therein. Even immortality is not conducive to welfare if there is meanness.

18. Only they live truly, only they are meritorious, they whose mind like the ocean does not give up its dignified majesty even in adversity.

19. At times there is rise in prosperity. At times there comes adversity. A wise man of fortitude should not give up courage on either of these chance occasions.

20. The rise and fall of the meritorious should be kept in mind by wise men. Equanimity should never be abandoned. Happiness and sorrow are impermanent.

21. He who becomes depressed at the times of adversity is ruined. Both the worlds are lost in regard to him. Hence one shall avoid dejection.

22. If people remain courageous even in disaster in this world and in the other one, no misery and disaster, being slighted and driven away by their courage, will touch them again.

23. The Devas who had lost their kingdom sought refuge in Maheśa. Thereupon the Goddess was directed to suppress the demon by the omniscient one (Śiva).

24. On receiving the great Lord's behest joyously, Bhavānī assured freedom from fear to the immortal ones and set about for the war.

25. She summoned Kālarātri, the most beautiful one in all the three worlds by her radiance. Rudrāṇī sent her to challenge the demon.

26-30. After coming to that Daitya of evil conduct, Kālarātri said: "O Lord of Daityas, give up the wealth of the three worlds. May Indra get back the three worlds. You go to Rasātala. May all the sacred rites enjoined in the Vedas and binding on the expounders of the Vedas be performed. If at all there is a vestige of pride (in you), come on for a fight; otherwise, if you wish to live, seek refuge in Indra. I have been sent by the goddess of great auspicious features to you to convey this message. If you are indifferent to it, your death is certain. Hence, O great Asura, do what is proper. If you care to hear what is beneficial to you, go unto her to retain your life (and save your life)."

31-38. On hearing these words of Goddess Mahākālī that king of Daityas blazed with fury: "Catch her; seize her. This enchantress of the three worlds has come here due to my good luck. This is the great fruit of the creeper in the form of affluence born of the reign of the three worlds. It is for this woman alone that Devas, sages and men were imprisoned

by me. Without any strain on my part and due to the rise of auspiciousness, she has come to my own abode. Due to the power of good luck, what one deserves shall certainly come to one whether staying in forest or in own residence. May the attendants take her to the great Ladies' Apartment. My kingdom has become adorned with this lady of excellent embellishment. Highly intelligent that I am, I have had this great rise in my fortune today. The fortune is not mine alone but of the entire race of the Daityas. Let the ancestors dance; let the kinsmen rejoice in the happiness. Let Mṛtyu, Kāla, Antaka, rather all the Devas, feel the terrific impact of fear." When he said thus and the attendants came near her to carry her away, the leader of the Daityas was replied to by Kālarātri.

Kālarātri said:

39-40. O king of Daityas of great wisdom, this is not proper on the part of people like you. We are only messengers. We are extremely dependent on others, O most excellent one among statesmen. Even the most insignificant one should never harass a messenger. What then in the case of great and powerful lords like you?

41-42. O great king, why this favour on mean ones like she-messengers! On her arrival, when the goddess comes, we too shall come without giving you any trouble. O Lord of Daityas, defeat my mistress in battle and enjoy as you please thousands of women like me.

43-49. Today itself you will have the great happiness on seeing her. Along with your ancestors all your kinsmen shall be happy. All your long-cherished desires will become fulfilled today. There is no one to protect her. She is a weak woman.

She possesses all exquisite features. It behoves you to see her. I shall show you where she, the great mine (of gems) in the whole universe, is. If only one (like me) is held what fulfilment shall there be to your love? Till the end of this day, I shall not leave your vicinity. So restrain these attendants who desire to seize me.

On hearing her utterance thus, that Asura, deluded by lust and anger, preferred that she-messenger alone (though) she was his own death.

He commanded the eunuchs thus, O sage: "Let the atten-

dants take her to the Antaḥpura quickly.” Those powerful eunuchs tried to seize her with force.

50-52. With the fire issuing from her grunting sound of HUM, she quickly reduced them to ash. On seeing them reduced to ash in a moment by that she-messenger, the Lord of Daityas became furious. With a motion of his eyes he created thirty thousand Daityas such as Durdhara, Durmukha, Khara, Sīrapāṇi, Pāśapāṇi, Surendradamana, Hanu, Yajñāri, Khaḍga-loman, Ugrāśya, Devakāṃpana etc.

53. “Let the Dānavas bring this wicked woman quickly tying her with ropes, making her tresses dishevelled and making her robes and ornaments loosened.”

54. At this behest of the Lord of Daityas, the demons with Durdhara as their leader endeavoured to seize her holding ropes, swords and mallets in their hands.

55. All those demons with bodies huge and heavy like big mountains, keeping their hands raised, holding weapons and missiles were forcibly struck by her exhaled breath and hurled to the ends of the quarters.

56. As those Daityas numbering hundreds of crores were blown away, Goddess Kālarātri set off by the aerial path.

57-60. Crores and crores of thousands of great Asuras filled the space between heaven and earth and followed her as she moved on. The great Daitya named Durga set off angrily accompanied by a hundred crores of chariots, two hundred *Arbudās* (i.e. 2000 crores) of elephants and a crore of *Arbudās* of horses having the velocity of wind. The foot soldiers were innumerable. They reduced huge rocks into powder under their feet. They were very huge and terrible. They struck terror into all the three worlds and they kept their arms and weapons lifted up.

61-66. After her arrival, she reported the Daitya’s misdemeanour. On seeing Mahādevī (‘great goddess’) camping on the Vindhya mountain, the leader of the Daityas felt his heart pierced through by the arrows of the god of Love. She had a thousand huge arms. She was excessively radiant with various terrible weapons (in the hands). She was eager to fight. Her splendid face appeared to be washed clean by the innumerable rays of the rising moon. She appeared like the unusual moonshine of a peculiar moon moving up from the

ocean of beauty. Her person was pervaded by the lustre of a collection of great rubies. She was the very luminary illuminating the beautiful cities of the three worlds. She was like the great herbal creeper enlivening the god of Love burnt down by the fire of the eye of Śiva. She resembled the great medicinal plant enchanting the universe with all the components of gracefully shining beauty. The demon of fierce tyrannical power commanded the chiefs of his great army thus:

67-73. O Jāmbha, Mahājāmbha, Kujāmbha, Vikāṭānana, Lambodara, Mahākāya, Mahādaṁṣṭra, Mahāhanu, Piṅgākṣa, Mahiṣagrīva, Mahogra, Atyugravighra, Krūrākṣa, Krodhanākraṇḍa, Saṁkrandana, Mahābhaya, Jitāntaka, Mahābāhu, Mahāvakra, Mahīdhara, Dundubhi, Dundubhirava, Mahādundubhi, Nāsika, Ugrāsya, Dīrghadaśana, Meghakeśa, Vṛkānana, Simhāsya, Sūkaramukha, Śivārāva, Mahotkaṭa, Śukatuṇḍa, Praçaṇḍāsya, Bhīmākṣa, Kṣudramānasa, Ulūkanetra, Kaṅkāśya, Kākatuṇḍa, Karālavāk, Dīrghagrīva, Mahājaṅgha, Kramelaka-Śīrodhara, Raktabindu, Japānetra, Vidyujjihva, Agnitāpana, Dhūmrākṣa, Dhūmaniḥśvāsa, Caṇḍa, Caṇḍāṁśutāpana and others with Mahābhīṣaṇa as your leader, listen attentively to my command.

74-75. If anyone among you or others can bring this Vindhyavāsini boldly and intelligently, with force or through deceit, I shall undoubtedly grant him the position of Indra today. On seeing this beautiful woman my mind has become agitated.

76. Let all of you go immediately, lest my mind already afflicted by the arrows of Kāma, should become further perturbed due to the want of the attainment thereof."

77. On hearing this utterance of Durga, the lord of Daityas, all the Daitya attendants joined their palms in reverence and said:

78-85. "Listen attentively, O great king. Is this assignment difficult at all, being particularly that of a helpless, feeble woman? O lord, what great effort is needed in bringing her? Who can dare to face us in all the three worlds? We are inherently very powerful beings on a par with the masses of flames of the fire appearing at the time of the annihilation of all beings. Moreover we are active in this endeavour through your grace. If only your majesty give us this command, immediately we will bring Indra along with his women and the entire hosts of

Maruts and throw him down in front of your feet. The worlds of Bhūḥ, Bhuvāḥ and Svaḥ have come under your command. The worlds of Mahāḥ, Jana, Tapaḥ and Satya are those where you exercise your authority. O great Asura, there too there is nothing which we cannot achieve through your command and direction. The Lord of Vaikuṅṭha always obeys your behests by joyously sending all the beautiful gems. The Lord of Kailāsa has already been left off (ignored) by us because he swallows poison and adorns himself with ash, hide and serpents due to excessive poverty. Due to his fear for us, a woman has been concealed by him in half of his body. In his entire village, there is no other quadruped.

86-95. He has only one old bull. That too does not depend upon anyone else. In his entire city, the attendants of this sort live. All of them are habitual residents of cremation grounds and clad only in their loin cloths. They appear white with the ash. they have single matted tress of hairs.

O Lord, what are we to do with those Gaṇas gripped with poverty? Indeed the oceans regularly send collections of gems everyday. The pitiable serpents cause illumination for our sake every evening through the gems on their hoods, O Lord. The wish-yielding celestial tree, the divine cow, the groups of Cintāmaṇi jewels—all these are present even in our houses, due to your favour. Wind-god does the work of a fan for assiduously serving you. Varuṇa supplies pure water everyday. Fire-god washes the clothes. The Moon himself is your umbrella-bearer.

The Sun causes the full-bloom of the lotuses in your pleasure-ponds. Who is it among human beings, Devas and Serpents who does not look up to your benign favour. All living beings beginning with Suras, Asuras, birds and Sky-walkers etc. depend upon you. O king, see (for yourself) our manliness. We shall forcibly bring her.” After saying thus all of them became simultaneously agitated like the oceans at the time of *Samvarta* (ultimate dissolution of the world) to flood the entire universe. The sound of martial instruments rose all-round.

96-100. On hearing that cowards experienced horripilation. Though the Devas are not cowards usually, yet they became frightened. The earth quaked. All the oceans became agitated. The garlands of stars fell down. The tumultuous sound of the wardrums pervaded heaven and earth.

Thereupon the goddess created out of her body hundreds and thousands of Śaktis. The extensive army of these powerful Daityas that resembled the ocean crossing the limits of the shores, was checked all-round by those Śaktis (surrounding each one). The weapons and missiles discharged by the Daityas in the course of the war were very fierce. Yet they were treated contemptuously like blades of grass by the Śaktis and destroyed.

101-103. The demons, the chief of whom was Jambha, became excessively furious and they showered arrows, missiles etc. like clouds showering water. They discharged and wielded swords, discus, Bhuśuṇḍīs, maces, mallets, iron rods, tridents, axes, javelins, spikes, spears, crescent-shaped sharp weapons, razor-edged arrows of various sorts that pierced through the vulnerable parts of the bodies. They hurled huge trees and big boulders too.

104-108. The great goddess camping on Vindhya, equipped with Māyā power, lifted a big bow fitted with arrows having a missile presided over by Wind-god. With it she sportingly scattered far away the multitudes of weapons and missiles of the Daityas.

On seeing his army stripped of all their weapons, Durga, the great Asura, seized a burning Śakti (Spear) and hurled it towards the goddess. As the spear approached her rapidly in the course of the battle, the goddess reduced it to powder with the arrows discharged from her bow. On perceiving the Śakti split up, Durga the great demon discharged a discus that delighted the circle of the Daityas very much. That too was reduced to minute particles with hundreds of arrows by the goddess.

109. Thereupon the tormentor of the immortal ones seized a bow evolved out of horn which resembled the bow of Indra and hit the heart of the goddess with an arrow.

110-111. Though that arrow was obstructed by the goddess through her arrows of great velocity, O sage, it rapidly rushed towards the goddess. Thereupon, she struck at it with the frame of her bow moving it rapidly and warded it off—a veritable shaft of the god of Death himself, it was.

112-115. When the arrow became ineffective, the infuriated unassailable demon seized a trident that had the brilliant lustre of the fire appearing at the time of the great ultimate anni-

hilation of the world, and hurled it at the goddess. As the trident approached her, Caṇḍikā cut it off by means of her own trident along with the hope of victory, in the demon. When that great trident was rendered ineffective by the trident of the goddess, the great lord of the Daityas seized a huge club and rushed suddenly at the goddess. The powerful demon struck her on the shoulder.

116. Hitting the shoulder of the goddess, the club resembling the peak of a big mountain split into a hundred and thousand bits.

117. Then, with the left foot, the goddess kicked the leader of the Daityas who was afflicted in the heart and fell on the ground.

118. After the fall, the leader of the Daityas got up immediately and vanished in a trice like a lamp extinguished by the wind.

119. Thereupon the Śaktis urged by the mother of the universe moved about in the hosts of the Daityas like the army of the god of Death at *Samvarta* time.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTWO

Victory of Durgā

Agastya said:

1. O Skanda, O son of the omniscient Lord, O delighter of the heart of Pārvatī, who were all those Śaktis? Tell their names to me.

Skanda said:

2. O Pot-born Sage, I shall tell the names of those great Śaktis born of the limbs of Umā. Listen to them factually:

3. Trailokyavijayā, Tārā, Kṣamā, Trailokyasundarī, Tripurā, Trijaganmātā, Bhīmā, Tripurabhairavī,

4. Kāmākhyā, Kamalākṣī, Dhṛti, Tripuratāpanī, Jayā, Jayantī, Vijayā, Jaleśī, Aparājitā,

5. Śaṅkhinī, Gajavaktrā, Mahiṣaghni, Raṇapriyā, Śubhānandā, Koṭarākṣī, Vidyujjihvā, Śivāravā,

6. Trinetrā, Trivaktrā, Tripādā, Sarvamaṅgalā, Humkāraheti, Tāleśī, Sarpāsya, Sarvasundarī,

7. Siddhi, Buddhi, Svadhā, Svāhā, Mahānidrā, Śarāsanā, Pāśapāṇi, Kharamukhī, Vajratārā, Ṣaḍānanā,

8. Mayūravadanā, Kākī, Śukī, Bhāsī, Garutmatī, Padmāvati, Padmakeśī, Padmāsya, Padmavāsini,

9. Akṣarā, Tryakṣarā, Tantu, Praṇaveśī, Svarātmikā, Trivargā, Garvarahitā, Ajapā, Japahāriṇī,

10. Japasiddhi, Tapaṣiddhi, Yogasiddhi, Parā, Amṛtā, Maitrikṛt, Mitranetrā, Rakṣoghni, Daityatāpanī,

11. Stambhanī, Mohanī, Māyā, Bahumāyā, Balotkaṭā, Uccāṭanī, Maholkāsya, Danujendrakṣayaṅkarī,

12. Kṣemaṅkarī, Siddhikarī, Chinnamastā, Śubhānanā, Śākambharī, Mokṣalakṣmī, Trivargaphaladāyini,

13-14. Vārtālī, Jambhalī, Klinnā, Aśvārūḍhā, Sureśvarī, Jvālāmukhī and others. They numbered nine crores. All of them were extremely powerful. Sportingly the armies of the mighty Dānavas were shrunk by them like the worlds shrunk by the flames of the fire at the time of the ultimate annihilation.

15-16. In the meantime, Durga, the mighty leader of the Daityas, made a shower of hailstones with the velocity of gusts of winds from behind the clouds. Thereupon, the esteemed goddess checked the shower of hailstones by discharging Śoṣaṇa ('drying up') missiles.

17-18. Just as a lustful young woman remains unsuccessful even after getting a eunuch, so also the shower of the hailstones by the Daitya was ineffective in regard to the goddess. Thereupon, with the anger due to the sprain in his arms, the king of demons uprooted a peak of mountain and hurled it from the sky above.

19. On noticing the huge mountain peak rushing towards her, she split it into millions of bits by striking it with the thunderbolt.

20. Frequently shaking his head embellished with the earrings, the demon took the form of an elephant and rushed at the goddess.

21-22. On seeing the elephant coming forward huge in

size like a mountain, the goddess bound him with a noose and quickly cut his trunk off with a sword. On the trunk having been cut off by the goddess, the elephant excessively trumpeted. Rendered ineffective in his action, he assumed a buffalo's form.

23-26. Kicking with his hoofs, he made the immovable earth tremble. That powerful animal hurled many boulders and rocks with his horns. Struck down by his exhalation, huge trees fell down on the ground. The seven vast expanses of water lashed against the shores and overflowed them. The pavilion of the three worlds was shaken by that powerful demon in the form of a great buffalo as though by the violent gusts of wind at the close of the Yugas. The entire Cosmic Egg became bewildered by the sudden, terrible fight. On seeing it, the goddess became furious and struck him with her trident.

27-28. Flurried on being struck by the trident, he fell down and rose up again. Abandoning the form of the buffalo he became (a Daitya) with a thousand arms. Invincible (to others) that Durga shone excessively in the battlefield, holding thousands of weapons and resembled Kāla, the destroyer.

29-36. Then that highly powerful Daitya king seized the goddess (though) an expert in the battle and carried her quickly along the sky. Thereupon, he hurled the mother of the universe far off from the sky. In an instant the highly impetuous Daitya covered her with masses of arrows.

The goddess within the circle of arrows high up in the sky above, shone like a streak of lightning encircled by masses of great clouds.

Dispersing the multitude of arrows perfectly by means of her own arrows, she pierced the leader of Daityas by means of a great arrow.

Pierced in the heart by the goddess with that great arrow, he became highly agitated and fell on the ground with eyes rolling about and created a river (of blood) by means of great torrents of his blood. When that Durga of highly impregnable exploits fell down, the divine war drums were beaten. All the worlds became delighted. The sun and the moon along with fire regained their original splendour. Making a shower of flowers, the Devas came there along with the great sages. They

eulogized the great goddess respectfully with great hymns.

The Devas said:

[The Prayer of the Devas:]

37. Obeisance to you, O goddess, the nursing mother of the universe, the source of origin of the three worlds (like the Araṇi producing fire), O great Śakti of Maheśvara, O destroyer of Daityas, like an axe felling trees.

38. O śivā pervading the three worlds, O wielder of conch-shell, discus and club, obeisance to you in the form of Viṣṇu engaged in holding forth in your hand your own Śārṅga bow.

39. Obeisance to you, O goddess with the swan for vehicle, O creatress of all created things. O ground of origin of all worlds without beginning, O goddess in the form of the Four-faced Lord.

40. You are the Śakti of Indra, of Kubera, of Vāyu (the Wind-god), of Varuṇa, of Yama, of Nirṛti, of Īśa and of Fire-god.

41. You are the light of the Moon; you are the Śakti of the Sun; you are the Śakti of all the gods; you are the supreme goddess.

42. You are Gaurī; you are Sāvitrī; you are Gāyatrī; you are Sarasvatī. You are Prakṛti; you are the (cosmic) intellect; you are in the form of the great Ego.

43. You are in the form of the mind; you are in the form of all Indriyas (sense-organs). You are in the form of the five Tanmātras (subtle elements); O Āmbikā, you are in the form of all (gross) elements.

44. You are in the form (of the qualities like) sound etc. You are one who blesses all the organs of action; you are the creator of the Cosmic Egg, O goddess. You are identical with the Cosmos.

45. O great goddess, you are the supreme goddess; you are greater than the greatest; you are in the form of the supreme soul, greater than everything beyond.

46. O Īśānī, you are in the embodiment of everything; you are the formless one; you are present everywhere. O great

Māyā, you are the power of Consciousness (*Cicchakti*). O immortal one, you are Svāhā; and also Svadhā.

47. You are in the form of Vaṣaṭ and Vauṣaṭ; you are in the form of Praṇava; you are in the form of all the Mantras; Brahmā and others are born of you.

48. You are in the form of the four aims of life; you are the outcome of the benefit of the four aims of life; this entire universe is (born) from you; O storehouse of the universe, everything is in you.

49. Whatever is visible and invisible, whatever is gross and subtle you are in the form of Śakti therein. There is nothing anywhere without you.

50. O mother, the great leader of Asuras, Durga, who had employed the entire host of armies of the Daityas against the genuine Devas (Brahmā and others), has been killed by you. O refuge of those who bow down, we have been protected. Who else is there whom we shall seek as refuge?

51. O goddess, only they whom you look with favour can be prosperous in the world with wealth and grain; only they can be blessed with sons, wives, grandsons and excellent friends; only their fame can spread all over the universe and make it bright as if with rays of the moon.

52. O consort of the enemy of Tripura, not even the least of trouble can befall the people in whose mind there is devotion unto you. Where can there be distress to the men who bow down unto you? Where is rebirth in the world to those who resort to your name throughout their lives?

53. It is surprising, O Bhavānī, that the Daitya Durga fell within the range of your vision in the course of the battle and was subjected to the control of the god of Death, though your vision is the storehouse of nectar. It is clearly well-known. Even a wicked one does not attain wretchedness (or return to the earth by being born again) if he falls within the range of your vision.

54. The Daityas who had attained the state of the locusts in the fire of your weapons, pierce through the (disc of the) Sun and attain heaven. This is because good persons do not have evil-intentions towards even wicked ones. Loving them like good persons, they direct them to their own pathways.

55. O Mr̥dānī, always protect us in the East (since) we

have always bowed to you. O Bhavānī, protect us in the South at every step from adversity. O wife of Tripura-Tāpana ('destroyer of the three Puras'), protect us in the West. O Maheśī, do protect your devotees in the North.

56-57. O Brahmānī, always protect (us) whose heads are bent down to you. O Vaiṣṇavī, protect the families (of devotees) from beneath. May Mṛtyuñjayā, Trinayanā, Tripurā and Triśakti, protect in the quarters of Rudra, Fire (South-East) Nirṛti (South-West) and the Wind-god (North-West). O goddess devoid of impurities, may your trident protect our hairs; may the goddess Śaśikalābhṛt (wearing the crescent moon on her head) protect our forehead; may Umā protect the eyebrows; may the bride of the Three-eyed Lord protect our eyes; may the daughter of the Mountain protect our nose; may Jayā protect the upper lip; and may Vijayā protect the region of lower lip.

58. May Śrutiravā protect the pair of our ears; may Śrī protect the row of teeth; may Caṇḍī protect the pair of our cheeks; may Vānī protect our tongue; may Jayamaṅgalā always protect the chin; and may Kātyāyanī protect the entire facial region.

59. We make obeisance (to you). May Nilakaṅṭhī protect our neck here; may Bhūdāraśakti (Vārāhī) always protect the nape of the neck; may Kaurmī protect the region of our shoulders always; may Aindrī (Indra's Śakti) protect the upper arm and may Padmā protect the hand.

60. May Kamalajā protect the fingers of the hands; may Virajā protect the nails; may the destroyer of darkness stationed in the solar disc protect the armpit; may Sthalacarī protect the chest; may Dharitrī protect the heart; may the slayer of night-stalking demons protect both sides.

61. May Jagadīśvarī always protect the cavity of the stomach; may Nabhogati protect our navel; may Ajā protect the back; may Vikatā protect the waist; may Paramā protect the buttocks; may Guhāraṇi ('Mother of Guha') protect the private parts; and may Apāyahantrī ('Destroyer of danger') protect the anus.

62. May Vipulā protect the pair of thighs; may Lalitā protect the knees; may Javā protect the calves; may Kaṭhoratarā protect the pair of ankles here; may Rasātalacarā protect the

feet; may Ugrā protect the region of the toes; may Cāndrī protect the nails; and may Talavāsīnī protect the soles of the feet.

63. May Lakṣmī protect our house; may Kṣemakarī always protect our fields; may Priyakarī protect our sons; may Sanātānī protect our longevity.

64. May Mahādevī protect the fame; may Dhanurdhārī protect our virtue; may Kuladevī protect the family; may Sadgatipradā always protect the goal of the good.

65. May Śarvānī protect from all sides in the battlefield, in the royal palace, at the gaming table, at the hostilities, when there is danger from the enemy, in the house, in the forest, in water etc.

66. After eulogizing the mother of the universe thus, all the Devas including Indra, sages, Gandharvas and Cāraṇas bowed down to her again and again.

67-71. Thereafter the delighted mother of the universe spoke to those excellent Suras:

Durgā said:

May all the Suras take up their administrative task in their respective positions of authority as before.

I have become pleased with this prayer and eulogy perfectly based on reality. I shall grant you another boon. Oh! Listen ye all excellent Suras. If any man of pure habit eulogized me devoutly by means of this prayer, I shall destroy his adversity at every step.

If a man wears the coat of mail of this prayer, he has no fear anywhere as if he is within the Vajrapañjara (Adamantine Cage).

From today my name will become famous as Durgā because I have caused the downfall of Durga, the Daitya, which was very difficult to accomplish.

72. Those who seek refuge in me, Durgā, will have no wretchedness anywhere. This eulogy of Durgā is named *Vajrapañjara* and is highly meritorious.

73-75. Making an armour with this, one can cease to be afraid of even Yama. Ghosts, goblins, vampires, evil Planets,

groups of Śākinīs and Dākinīs wicked spirits like Jhoṭīngas, demons, cruel poisonous serpents, fires, thieves, Vetālas, fevers arising from gaseousness or biliousness etc.—all these flee on hearing this splendid prayer.

76-77. This hymn named *Vajrapañjara* is laudatory of Durgā. One who is protected by this hymn is free from the fear of even the thunderbolt.

If anyone repeats this eight times and drinks the water consecrated therewith, he will never have pain in the stomach.

78-80. Consecrated with this hymn, one will never have any affliction in the womb. Children will experience great peace and tranquillity by drinking the water consecrated with this hymn. All the Śaktis along with me will be present where there is the presence of this hymn. At my behest, they will accord protection to all my devotees.

After granting boons thus to the Devas, the goddess vanished.

81-84. All those heaven-dwellers joyously went to their respective abodes.

Skanda said:

It was thus, O great sage, that the goddess got the name *Durga*. Listen how she should be worshipped (and resorted to) at Kāśī, I shall tell you.

Durgā, the destroyer of wretchedness, should always be adored at Kāśī on the eighth and the fourteenth lunar day and especially on Tuesdays.

During the autumnal nine-day festivities, she should be adored everyday. She will then destroy collections of obstacles and grant wisdom and knowledge. Due to the presents of great adoration and the food offerings of sweet cooked rice Durgā in Kāśī shall be the bestower of cherished things. She will grant spiritual powers. There is no doubt in this.

85-89. During the autumnal Navarātra every year, pilgrimage and festivals should be performed unto her by the devotees along with the members of their families, seeking auspiciousness.

If anyone of evil intellect fails to perform the annual pil-

grimage and religious festival of Durgā at Kāśī, there shall be thousands of obstacles at every step of his.

A man who takes his holy bath in Durgākuṇḍa and duly worships Durgā, the destroyer of all insurmountable distresses, shall get rid of the sins of nine births.

That Goddess Durgā protects Kāśī all-round in the company of the Śāktis. They, the chief of whom is Kālarātri, should be assiduously worshipped by men.

Similarly, there are nine other Śāktis who protect this holy spot from thousands of oppressive torments. They are the following deities (protectors) of the quarters in due order.

90-91. They are Śatanetrā, Sahasrāsya, Ayutabhujā, Aśvārūdhā, Gajāsya, Tvaritā, Śavavāhīnī, Viśvā and Saubhāgya-Gaurī. They have been posted in the eight directions beginning with East and (the last one) in the middle. These deities protecting the holy spot should be assiduously worshipped.

92. Similarly, there are eight Bhairavas established in the eight quarters, who always protect Kāśī, the abode of the goddess and glory of salvation.

93. They are Ruru, Caṇḍa, Asitāṅga, Kapālī, Krodhana, Unmattabhairava, Saṁhāra and Bhīṣana in due order.

94. There are sixty-four Vetālas of extremely terrible forms. All of them have garlands of skulls and headless trunks. They have scissors and skulls in their hands.

95. They are nude with dishevelled hairs. They are inebriated with blood as their wine.

96. All of them could assume many different forms. They have different kinds of weapons and missiles in their hands. They have crores and crores of servants surrounding them with the same characteristics and features as they themselves (have).

97-100. Some of these sixty-four are the following: Vidyujjihva, Lalajjihva, Krūrāsya, Krūralocana, Ugra, Vikaṭadamṣṭra, Vagrāsya, Vakranāsika, Jambhaka, Jṛmbhaṇamukha, Jvālānetra, Vṛkodara, Gartanetra, Mahānetra, Tucchanetra, Antramaṇḍana, Jvalatkeśa, Kambuśiras, Kharvagrīva, Mahāhanu, Mahānāsa, Lāmbakarna, Karṇaprāvaraṇa, Anasa and so on. O sage, these and others protect the holy spot always. They are fond of the blood of the people of evil actions and conduct. They terrify the people of wicked actions and habit.

101-102. O Pot-born Sage, the Śaktis I mentioned beginning with Trailokyavijayā and ending with Jvālāmukhī protect Kāśī all-round in the four quarters with their weapons raised aloft. For quelling all great obstacles they should be assiduously worshipped.

103. Bhairavas, the chief of whom is Ruru, are the dispellers of great fear. They should always be adored in Kāśī. They are the causes of all riches.

104. Vetālas beginning with Vidyujjihva are fierce in their forms. On being worshipped here, they will remove even excessively fierce masses of obstacles.

105. Similarly, the group of Bhūtas here of diverse and terrible forms numbering a hundred crores, O sage, protects the city with the weapons lifted up.

106. All these deities who protect the holy spot of the glory of salvation at every step, should be worshipped in Kāśī by those who desire Salvation.

107. On listening to this meritorious chapter named *Durgajaya* and containing the names of the various Śaktis a man will surmount all difficulties quickly.

108. On hearing the names of Bhairavas and Vetālas enumerated and cited here, the man does not become dispirited due to obstacles.

109. Those Bhūtas, even when not visited directly will assiduously protect the reader of this narrative along with those who listen to it.

110. Hence this narrative that removes great obstacles should be listened to attentively by men devoted to Kāśī.

111-112. If this is copied and worshipped and kept in the house the deities will destroy thousands of the obstacles befalling that owner of the house. This narrative resembling the adamant cage should be listened to with great respect by one who has any love for Kāśī.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTHREE

The Greatness of Omkāra¹

Agastya said:

1. After reaching the holy shrine Trilocana, what did the Lord of Devas do in the company of the Mother of the universe? Tell me quickly.

Skanda said:

2-6. O Pot-born Sage, I shall explain what has been asked. Listen. The Pīṭha named Virajas has been mentioned as the bestower of all Siddhis. Merely by visiting that Pīṭha, a man becomes rid of Rajas quality. It is there in Vārāṇasī that the great Liṅga Trilocana (is stationed). The Tīrtha named Pilipilā in the waters of the celestial river is well-known. It is being praised as a Tīrtha in Kāśī containing all the Tīrthas. Since, O sage, all the Devas, sages, men, serpents along with rivers, mountains and forests exist there, that Tīrtha and that Liṅga named Trilocana have been called Triviṣṭapa. For this same reason it is really very great.

7. O sage, I shall describe the greatness of Triviṣṭapa Liṅga as described by the Pināka-wielding Lord to the Mother of the universe.

Devī said:

8. O Lord of Devas, O Śarva, O Lord of the universe, the omnipresent bestower of all, O procreator of all, the vision of all, I am asking something. Do explain it.

1 A thousand years ago, Omkāra, one of the most important Śiva Lingas in Kāśī, was a grand temple on the bank of a large inland lake Matsyodarī. Today Omkāra temple is scarcely known. It is in the open on a small hillock surrounded by a Muslim locality. In ancient times, it was a group of five temples representing A, U, M, *Nāda* and *Bindu*, the components of OM. The main temple was rebuilt by the Maratha queen Ahalyabai Holkar who appointed a Brāhmaṇa to look after the worship and management of the temple. There are Muslim graves in the foreground of the temple (See picture BCL 112). *Nāda* and *Bindu* temples have disappeared and others are in a dilapidated condition. (BCL 112-120)

9. This holy spot is your favourite. It is a great medicine for stopping the growth of the seed of Karma. It is the abode of the Glory of Salvation. It gives me great delight.

10. Before the dust of this holy spot, even the three worlds become a mere blade of grass. By whom can the greatness of the whole of that holy spot be comprehensively understood?

11. It is true that all the Liṅgas that are here are undoubtedly causes of the attainment of salvation. They are also self-manifested ones.

12. Granting that this is so, O Lord, it behoves you to mention the speciality thereof. O Śaṅkara, what are the Liṅgas in Kāśī that exist primordially?

13-16. What are those Liṅgas where the Lord stays forever along with his beloved even during *Samvarta* (final annihilation); by which Kāśī has become well-known as the city of liberation; by merely remembering which there shall be the destruction of sin; by visiting and touching which (a devotee shall) attain heavenly pleasures and salvation; O Lord, by worshipping which, even once in the course of a birth, it will be decisively asserted that all the Liṅgas in Kāśī shall be deemed to have been worshipped?

O ocean of the nectar of compassion, have pity on me and mention this. O Śaṁbhu, I have prostrated myself at your feet.

17-18. On hearing this excellent utterance of the goddess, O enemy of Vindhya, O excellent one, Maheśāna recounted all the great Liṅgas, by listening to the names whereof heaps of sins become reduced, mass of merit is attained, which causes salvation in Kāśī.

The Lord of Devas said:

19. O goddess, listen to the secret that brings about salvation in this holy spot. Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa and others do not know this.

20-21. O Pārvatī, the Liṅgas in Ānandakānana cannot be reckoned. There are gross and subtle ones; there are Liṅgas made of gems of various kinds and of various metals. O goddess, there are many Liṅgas made of stone. Many of them are self-

manifested (i.e. natural ones). Many have been installed by Devas, by sages.

22-26. They are worshipped by Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas and Rākṣasas. There are many Liṅgas engraved with their respective names and made by Asuras, serpents, men, Dānavas, celestial damsels, the elephants supporting the quarters, mountains, Tirthas, bears, monkeys, Kinnaras, birds etc., O Goddess. All of them are causes of the attainment of salvation. Some are visible. Some are invisible. O dear one, some of them have become ruined; some are shattered due to passage of time. O fair lady, they are also to be worshipped. Once they were counted as a hundred Parārdhas (Parārdha=one followed by seventeen zeros). Sixty crores of Liṅgas are stationed within the waters of Gaṅgā. O goddess, those Siddha Liṅgas have become invisible in this Kali age.

27. There is no limit, O beloved one, to the Liṅgas installed by my devotees since the day on which they were counted (by me).

28. O fair lady, I shall mention those Liṅgas that confer salvation, about which you have asked and due to which, this holy spot has become the most excellent.

29. In Kali age, O Daughter of the Lord of the Mountains, they will become totally concealed but their power will never disappear from their respective spots.

30. Those who are full of the sins of Kali age, those who are wicked, heretics and rogues, will never know even the names of these Siddha Liṅgas.

31. O lady of fair countenance, all sins get destroyed even when the names of these Liṅgas are heard. Heaps of merit become increased.

32-36.¹ Omkāra is the first Liṅga; the second is Trilocana.

1. Locations of 14 Liṅgas mentioned in vv 32-36:

<i>Name of the Liṅga</i>	<i>Present Location</i>
1. Omkāreśvara	North of Macchodarī
2. Trilocana	Between Macchodarī and Gaṅgā
3. Mahādeva	North-east of Trilocana The first tīrtha of Vārāṇasī
4. Kṛttivāseśvara	North-east of Maidagin. Temple demolished. Now a mosque. Open to Hindus on Śivarātri.
5. Ratneśvara	In the middle of the road from Maidagin to Mṛtyuñjaya

Mahādeva is the third and Kṛttivāsas is the fourth. Ratneśa is the fifth Liṅga; the sixth Liṅga is called Candreśvara. Kedāra is the seventh Liṅga, O beloved one, and the eighth is Dharmeśa. Vireśvara is the ninth one. They know that Kāmeśa is the tenth Liṅga. The highly splendid Viśvakarmeśvara Liṅga is the eleventh one. The twelfth one is Maṅikarṇīśa and Avimukta is the thirteenth. The fourteenth Liṅga of mine is the great Liṅga named Viśveśvara. O my beloved fair lady, these fourteen Liṅgas are the causes of welfare. The combination of all these is called Muktiṣetra ('Holy spot of Salvation').

37. These great deities are the presiding deities of this holy spot. Propitiated duly they grant to men the glory of salvation.

38. O fair lady, O my beloved one, these fourteen great Liṅgas in Ānandakānana are mentioned as worthy of the worship of all embodied ones.

Skanda said:

39. Beginning with the auspicious first lunar day in every month, the religious festival of these should be carefully carried out.

40. O Pot-born One, this is the truth, this is the truth. I shall repeat it again and again. Who will get salvation in Kāśī without propitiating Mahādeva in these Liṅgas?

41. Hence, O sage, these Liṅgas should be very devoutly worshipped with all care by those who desire the benefit of Kāśī.

Agastya asked:

42. O Six-faced One, are these great Liṅgas the only causes

6.	Candreśvara	West of Saṅkaṭā Devī Temple
7.	Kedāranātha	At Kedāra Ghāṭ
8.	Dharmeśvara	East of Viśvanātha at Dharma Kūpa
9.	Vireśvara	South of Saṅkaṭā Devī
10.	Kameśvara	Just east of Macchodarī
11.	Viśvakarmeśvara	North-east of Mṛtyuñjaya
12.	Maṅikarṇīśvara or Maṅikarṇikeśvara	Above Maṅikarṇikā Ghāṭ—Just in City
13.	Avimukteśvara	Inside the Viśvanātha Temple
14.	Viśveśvara	The centre of Kāśī

of salvation? Are there others too? If there are, kindly mention.

Skanda said:

43. O sage of excellent observances, there are other great Liṅgas too, but they will be hidden ones due to the power of Kali.

44. He who has perpetual devotion to Īśvara, he who knows the truth about Kāśī, will know these Liṅgas; no one else can do so.

45-50. Even the utterance of the names of these brings in the destruction of the sins of Kali. These fourteen great Liṅgas in Kāśī are the Liṅgas that cause salvation in Ānandakānana: Amṛteśa, Tārakeśa, Jñāneśa, Karuṇeśvara, Mokṣadvāreśvara, Svargadvāreśvara, Brahmeśa, Lāṅgala, Vṛddhakāleśvara, Vṛṣeśa, Caṇḍīśa, Nandikeśa, Maheśvara and the fourteenth one well-known as Jyotirūpeśvara Liṅga. (*The Lord tells the Goddess.*) “O fair lady, these are the fourteen Liṅgas in Kāśī. They should never be mentioned to those with intellect defiled by Kali. If anyone propitiates these fourteen Liṅgas, he has no further return to the path of worldly existence. This unparalleled treasure of Kāśī should not be revealed to anyone and everyone.

51. O lady of excellent countenance, this is the greatest of the secrets of this holy place. O goddess, even the utterance of the names of these Liṅgas in great disaster removes all miseries.

52. Indeed all the fourteen Liṅgas bring about proximity to me. O Daughter of the Lord of Mountains, this is the heart of Avimukta.

53. These are those Liṅgas that grant liberation unto all. Out of compassion for great devotion these have been evolved by me taking the entire essence from each of the (fourteen) worlds.

54. O beloved one, these fourteen Liṅgas of mine are the cause behind the reputation that liberation is assured in this holy spot.

55. Only they are the genuine observers of vows, O my beloved, only they are the real ascetics, those devotees, by whom these Liṅgas are meditated upon in Ānandakānana.

56. Only they are the persons who have adopted the excellent Yoga path, only they can be deemed to have made genuine gifts, they by whom these Liṅgas have been seen in Kāśī even if it be from afar.

57-58. O Pārvatī, if, after arriving at Avimukta, the great Liṅgas are worshipped even once by anyone, he is free from sins and is on a par with one who has performed all those pious rites of *Iṣṭa* and *Pūrta* enjoined by excellent sages. There is no doubt about this that he is a liberated soul.”

Skanda said:

59-62. O Brāhmaṇa, O enemy of Vindhya, other Liṅgas too have been mentioned to the Goddess by Śaṁbhū for the benefit of his devotees. Listen to them. They are Śaileśa, Saṅgameśa, Svarlīna, Madhyameśvara, Hiraṇyagarbha, Īśāna, Goprekṣa, Vṛṣabhadhvaja, Upaśānta Śiva, Jyeṣṭha, Nivāseśvara, Śukreśa, Vyāghra Liṅga and Jambūkeśa the fourteenth one. O sage, a man will attain salvation by worshipping these too.

63. These Liṅgas should be earnestly worshipped by excellent persons starting on the first lunar day in the dark half of Caitra and concluding on the fourteenth day.

64. The annual religious procession, festivity and pilgrimage of these should be celebrated with great pomp and ceremony by those who are desirous of salvation.

65. O sage, if anyone visits these fourteen great Liṅgas with earnestness, he is never reborn in the world, the ocean of misery.

66. “O my beloved, this alone is the (underlying) greatest fact of the holy spot, to be sure, that this is the greatest panacea for those who have been overwhelmed with the sickness of worldly existence.

67. This is the Upaniṣad (‘secret’) of the holy spot. This is the greatest seed of salvation. This group of Liṅgas, O my beloved, destroys the forest of Karma like a veritable forest fire.

68-69. The greatness of each and everyone of these Liṅgas has no beginning and end. O goddess, it is known only to me and not to anyone else.”

On hearing this, O sage, the goddess became glad and experienced horripilation. After bowing down to Lord Īśāna, the omniscient Śiva, the bestower of everything she said:

Devī said:

70-75. On hearing this great mystic secret of Kāśī mentioned now, O dear Lord, my mind has become very eager.

It is said that each and everyone of the Liṅgas is highly potent, O Kāraṇeśvara, and the cause of salvation in Kāśī.

O Lord of the worlds, tell the greatness severally of these fourteen Liṅgas that dispel sins.

How is the arrival of Omkāreśa Liṅga here from that excessively meritorious holy spot Amaraṅṭaka?

Of what intrinsic form is this Omkāra, O Hara, and what is its greatness? By whom was this formerly propitiated? What did it bestow on being propitiated?

After making these nectarine words of Mṛḍānī reach his ears, the Lord narrated the very wonderful tale of Omkāra.

Devadeva said:

76. O Aparṇā, I shall describe to you the story how the Omkāra Liṅga manifested itself here. Listen.

77. Formerly, here in Ānandavana, O great goddess, a great penance was performed with very intensive concentration by Brahmā, the creator of the universe.

78. When a thousand Yugas passed, a supreme radiance sprang up in front of him piercing the seven nether worlds and illuminating the faces of all quarters.

79-80. That same brilliance which had originally manifested itself within himself, due to his genuine concentration, presented itself before Brahmā. On account of the crackling and splitting sound that arose from the ground Brahmā who had good control over the senses, gradually came back from *samādhi*.

81-82. Even as the Creator ceased to meditate and gradually opened his eyes and looked before him, he saw the first letter "A" (अ) endowed with Sattva quality. It is the cause of Ṛgveda and the protector of the creation. It is identical with

Nārāyaṇa and is established beyond all darkness (Tamas guṇa).

83. Thereafter he saw the letter "U" (उ) beyond it, having the Rajas form. It is the source of Yajurveda. It was the creator of everything. It was his own reflected form.

84-88. Beyond it he saw the letter "M" (म) resembling the abode of tryst of silent darkness especially with Tamas form. It was the source of Sāmaveda and the cause of dissolution. It has Rudra's form. Then in front of him, the meditator (Brahmā) saw the Cosmic form of Śabda Brahman (Sound Absolute) endowed with and without attributes. It was the abode of *Anākhyānāda* (*Parā*, the subtlest sound). It was the embodiment of the supreme bliss. It is well-known as Śabdabrahman. It is the cause of all verbal utterance.

Thereafter above the *Nāda* (Sound Absolute) he saw the subtlest ultimate form of *Bindu*, the cause of all causes, the absolute cause of the universe. Brahmā saw this due to his power of penance.

89-92. It is well-known as *OM* because it protects (*Avanāt*) and also because it raises up the devotee by its power.

It is formless and also endowed with form. It was seen by the Creator. It is also well-known as *Tāraka* because it redeems persons whose mind is engrossed in the contemplation and Japa of itself. Brahmā saw that. It is glorified as *Praṇava* because it is ardently eulogized by those who are desirous of the great salvation. Hence it is greater than everything else. It is also called *Praṇava* because it leads (*praṇayet*) one who resorts to it towards the greatest region (*Mokṣa*). Hence Brahmā perceived that quiescent *Praṇava*.

93. That is constituted of the three Vedas or is identical with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra; that is the fourth one, the great Ātman; that is really beyond the fourth (viz. Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña and Turīya) (*Omkāra* is beyond the Turīya.) It is *Akhilātma* (identical with everything through *Māyā*). It has the forms of *Nāda* and *Bindu* and it was seen by Brahmā whose vehicle is a bird.

94. It is from it that the Vedas along with their Aṅgas, the source of everything began to function. That cause of the Vedas was seen in front of him by the Lotus-born One.

95. The Bull (sacrifice-formed Viṣṇu), tied in three ways (with Mantra, Brāhmaṇa and Kalpa), roaring (praised with

Mantras of the Ṛg, Yajus and Sāma mantras), of brilliant form (brilliance itself) was seen by Brahmā.

96-100. That Lord (Mahādeva) was seen by Brahmā—the Lord who had four horns (the four Vedas), seven hands (seven important Vedic metres), two heads (the sacrifices Prāyanīyā and Udayanīyā) and three feet (the three *Savanas*). That in which the entire thing, the past, the future, and the present became dissolved again and again, that seed, the cause of all but itself having no cause was seen by Druhiṇa (Brahmā). That Liṅga was seen where the receptacle of everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is dissolved and is being sought and therefore is honoured by all good people. That was seen by Brahmā—that where the five entities (i.e. *Asti*, *Bhāti*, *Priyam*, *Rūpa* and *Nāma*) are revealed, that which consists of five Brahmans (the four Vedas, Itihāsas and Purāṇas) and that which has the letters “A” (अ) etc. as its features. After observing Īśvara in the form of Liṅga and evolved of five syllables (A, U, M, Nāda Bindu), he eulogized Śaṅkara as distinct from the Prapañca (visible world).

Prayer to Omkāra
(101 to 140)

Brahmā said:

101. Obeisance to the Lord in the form of Omkāra. Obeisance to the Lord assuming the form evolved of the syllables. O Sadaśiva, obeisance to the source of origin of “A” and other letters.

102. You are “A”, you are “U” and you are “M” (constituting OM), O Lord devoid of form (in reality). Obeisance to you, the embodiment of ṚK, YAJU and SĀMA Vedas and (in reality) beyond all forms.

103. Obeisance to you in the form of Nāda (sound termed Parā, Paśyantī, Madhyamā and Vaikharī); obeisance to one in the form of the part of Bindu; obeisance to one identical with the visible and the invisible, to one identical with all forms.

104. Obeisance to you, the storehouse of radiance; O Lord, devoid of Vikāras like death etc. (i.e. birth, existence, increase, change and decrease); obeisance to you, O Śarva, Rudra, Bhava.

105. Obeisance to Ugra, the terrible one, to the Lord of

Paśus (individual souls). Obeisance to one in the form of Tāra (OM); obeisance to you, the source of origin (of all i.e. the cause of all).

106. Obeisance to you, free from Māyā. Obeisance to you, the most auspicious one; obeisance to you, Kapardin (having matted hairs); obeisance to you, the blue-throated one.

107. Obeisance to you, the most excellent one among the bestowers of benefits. O Giriśa, obeisance to you who have penetrated Paśus as Yajña (*obscure?*). Obeisance to the long one, to the short one, to the huge one increased in form.

108. Obeisance to the sire of Kumāra, to you having the body of a youth; obeisance to the white, black, yellow and pink one.

109. Obeisance to one with smoke colour, the tawny one. Obeisance to one with the variegated radiance; obeisance to the pale red-coloured one; obeisance to the Lord with green brilliance.

110. Obeisance to one in the form of different Varṇas (letters, castes), to the Lord of Varṇas; obeisance to you in the form of the vowels, to one in the form of the consonants.

111. Obeisance, obeisance to the acute-accented one, to the accentless one and to the circumflexed-accented one, to the Lord of the short, long and prolated vowel; obeisance to you one with the (form of) *Visarga*.

112. Obeisance to you in the form of Aṅusvāra, O Lord with the nasal sounds; obeisance to one without nasal sounds; obeisance to one in the form of the dental and palatal consonants.

113. Obeisance to one in the form of the labials and the letters issuing from the bosom (*upadhmāniya*); obeisance to one in the form of the sibilants; obeisance to you identical with semi-vowels, to the Pināka-wielding Lord identical with the Pañcama note (in music).

114. Obeisance to you identical with the Niṣāda note; obeisance to the Lord of Niṣādas (forest tribes); obeisance to you in the form of Viṇā, flute, drum and other musical instruments.

115. Obeisance to *Tāra* (the high pitched note); obeisance to the *Mandra* (the low-pitched) note, to the terrible one, to one in the form of Aghora; obeisance to one in the form of

Tānas (49 protracted key-notes); obeisance to the Lord of *Mūrcchanas*.

116. Obeisance to one in the form of Bhāva based on the difference of *Sthāyins* and *Sañcārins* (permanent or stable and evanescent feelings); obeisance to one identical with Tāla (beating of the time); to one fond of Tāla; to one, the source of origin of Lāsya (graceful) dance and Tāṇḍava (aggressive) dance.

117. O Lord, extremely fond of *Tauryatrika* (union or triple symphony of dance, vocal and instrumental music), to one identical with *Tauryatrika*, O bestower of the glory of salvation on those who present *Tauryatrika* with devotion!

118. Obeisance to you in the form of the gross and the subtle, the visible and the invisible; obeisance to the modern one; obeisance to you, the ancient one.

119. Obeisance to one in the form of the extensive domain of words, to one beyond the extensive domain of words; obeisance to the only one manifesting in many different forms; obeisance to the Lord of the real and the unreal (controller of cause and effect).

120. O Śabdabrahman (the Vedic Scripture), obeisance to you. Obeisance to you, O supreme Brahman. Obeisance to one comprehensible only through the Vedānta. Obeisance to the controller of the Vedas.

121. Obeisance to the Lord in the form of the Vedas. Obeisance to one whose form is self-manifest. O Lord of Pārvatī, obeisance to you. Obeisance to you, O Lord of the universe.

122. Obeisance to you, O Lord of the chiefs of Devas, O bestower of the divine position on the Devas; obeisance to you, O Śankara; O Maheśvara, obeisance to you.

123. Obeisance to you, O delighter of the universe. Obeisance to you, O Moon-crested one; obeisance to you, O conqueror of death and obeisance to you, the three-eyed one.

124. Obeisance to the Lord with the Pināka in the hand; to one who holds the weapon (called) trident. Obeisance to the destroyer of the Tripuras. O slayer of Andhaka, obeisance.

125. Obeisance, O subduer of the pride of Kandarpa (god of Love). Obeisance to the enemy of Jālandhara, to Kāla; obeisance to the Kāla of Kāla, to one who swallows the poison Kālakūṭa.

126. Obeisance to the Lord who destroys the distress of devotees, who contributes to the distress of only the non-devotee; obeisance to the cause of knowledge; to the Lord in the form of knowledge; obeisance to you, the omniscient one.

127. You are the bestower of Yogic Siddhi; the most excellent one of Yogins; you are the bestower of the benefit of all austerities to ascetics, O Lord whose wealth is penance.

128. You alone are in the form of the sacred Mantras; you are the bestower of the fruit of Mantras; you are the fruit of the great gift (Mokṣa); you are the maker of the great gift.

129. You alone are the great Yajña, O Lord, the bestower of the benefit of great Yajñas. You are all; you move everywhere. You are the bestower of all; the seer of all.

130. The consumer of all, you are the creator of all, O annihilator of all. Obeisance to you, O Lord having the abode in the ether of the cavity of the heart of Yogins.

131. You alone protect the three worlds in the form of Viṣṇu, O wielder of conch, discus and club. O saviour, obeisance to you, O Sattvamūrti (of Sattva as form).

132. You alone create this (universe) having become Vidhi (Brahmā). Conversant with the technique of arrangement you assume the Rajas form, O bestower of the position free from Rajas.

133. You alone are the great Rudra; you are the great Ugra, the wearer of serpents. You alone are the great terrible one, O Lord moving about in the great cremation ground.

134. You adopt the Tāmasic body, O death unto the god of death; you become Kālāgnirudra in the end and make Saṁvarta (the period of ultimate annihilation) active.

135. O unborn one, in the form of Puruṣa and Prakṛti you make the entire universe beginning with Mahat manifest once again by raising the eyelashes.

136. The closure and the opening of your eyes cause the dissolution and resurrection. You move about unfettered and this entire process is but the playful pastime of you having the garland of skulls.

137. O Dhūrjaṭi, the skull that sparkles round your neck is clearly the garland of the seed (Ajñāna, ignorance) of all who have been consumed by the fire of ultimate annihilation.

138. O Śāmbhu, the entire mobile and immobile beings are in you; they issue from you. Who knows how to eulogize you (adequately), you who are beyond the ken of primordial (or Vedic) words?.

139. You are the eulogizer; you alone are the eulogy; you alone are the object of eulogy always. I know "Om namaḥ śivāya" alone. I do not know anything else.

140. You are my refuge; you alone are the ultimate goal; O Lord, I bow down to you alone, I bow down to you; obeisance, obeisance.

141. After saying this Brahmā bowed down to Maheśvara many times. He prostrated himself like a log of wood on the ground before the Lord named Praṇava, in the form of great Liṅga.

Īsvara said:

142. Thereupon, O Daughter of the Lord of Mountains, on hearing the great hymn of prayer of Brahmā, that was extremely wonderful and that causes great wealth and lordship, I became satisfied.

143. Though I am formless, I assumed the form of Śaṅkara and emerged from that Liṅga. I spoke to the Four-faced Lord: "I am delighted. Tell me what boon you will have."

144. The Four-faced One, on seeing me directly, got up, said again and again, "Be victorious, be victorious" and bowed down with palms joined in reverence.

145. Tears due to delight welled up in his eyes. He had horripilation due to excess of delight. The Lotus-seated One spoke in faltering tone:

Brahmā said:

146. O Lord of Devas, if you are delighted, if a boon is to be given to me, then, O Śaṅkara, may your presence be in this great Liṅga.

147. This boon alone should be granted. I do not choose any other boon. May this be named Omkāreśvara bestowing salvation only on the devotee.

Skanda said:

148. O Brāhmaṇa Sage, on hearing this utterance of Brahmā, the Lord said these words to the Four-faced One, “May it be so.”

149. Extremely propitiated by that hymn the Lord immediately granted other boons too to Vidhi, the performer of a penance of long duration:

Īśvara said:

150. O most excellent one among Suras—excellent due to the austerities—be the storehouse of all the Vedas. With my favour, may you have the capacity to create things.

151. You will be the grandfather of all. You will be worthy of everyone’s honour. It is to bestow the benefit of your penance that this Liṅga has sprung up.

152. O Brahmā, this is the greatest Liṅga in the form of Omkāra. It is identical with *Śabdabrahman*. The region of Brahman (Mokṣa) cannot be far away if men propitiate this.

153. This Liṅga is named ‘Akāra’; this is the great Liṅga named ‘Ukāra’. It is called ‘Makāra’, *Nāda* and *Bindu*.

154. For the sake of the liberation of all creatures here, in this Ānandakānana, this Liṅga has come up and it is called Īśāna, the abode of five entities (“A” etc. or Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva).

155. If a creature takes its holy ablution in the Matsyodarī Tīrtha and visits Omkāra Īśvara, he is never reborn in the belly of a mother.

156. This is Nādeśvara¹ Liṅga. This Liṅga is very rare. If it is visited on the beautiful shore of Matsyodarī and touched, it bestows salvation.

157. Since a reddish tawny radiance is seen in this Liṅga it is called Kapileśa (*Kapila*—tawny, Viṣṇu). This Liṅga is very rare.

158. When Matsyodarī mingles with Gaṅgā in the pres-

1. As noted above the shrines of Nāda and Bindu are untraceable now.

ence of Kapileśvara, a man will take his holy bath there. He dispels the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter.

159. When Varāṇā becomes flooded with water and gets mingled with the water of the celestial river¹ a man, a devotee shall take his holy bath therein and visit Nādeśvara. What is it that he bewails thereafter? He need not be sorry for anything thereafter.

160. On the eighth and fourteenth lunar days, sixty crores of Tīrthas along with the oceans enter Matsyodarī.

161. When Gaṅgā comes near Praṇaveśa, it is an extremely meritorious time dear to Devas, sages and Pitrs.

162. At that time the ablution, *Japa*, *Dāna*, *Havana* and adoration of the deity in Matsyodarī in the vicinity of Omkāreśvara, is of everlasting benefit.

163. One shall attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice merely at the sight of Omkāra. Hence Omkāra Īśvara should be assiduously visited in Kāśī.

164. Human birth, the sole means of achieving the four aims of life, is very rare. Even that shall be as futile as a water bubble unto him by whom Nadeśa has not been seen.

165. A devotee shall take his ablution in the waters of Matsyodarī, visit Kapileśāna and offer balls of rice—he will be free from indebtedness to the ancestors.

166. Even after committing many great sins due to delusion, if a devotee visits Omkāra at Kāśī, why should he be afraid of Yama?

167. On seeing a man born of their family ready to proceed towards Omkāra the grandfathers joyously dance about.

168. Whichever name of the ancestors the intelligent (scion) remembers and bows down, he causes the uplift of that ancestor to the region of Brahman.

169. By visiting Omkāra devoutly one attains that benefit which is obtained after chanting earnestly a hundred-thousand times, the Rudra Mantra.

170. The birth of a man is only a burden unto the earth if he does not visit Omkāra, the bestower of every desire in Ānandavana.

1. This was possible some ten centuries ago when Gaṅgā was in spate. Now this is impossible in the present Macchodari.

171. If Omkāra alone is visited, it is on a par with the visiting of all the Liṅgas in the entire earth, undoubtedly.

172. If a man dies elsewhere after bowing down to Praṇaveśa, he attains heaven, is reborn in Kāśī and attains salvation afterwards.

173. O Brahmā, certainly I shall stay always in this Liṅga and shall always grant salvation to one who worships this.

174. After bowing down to Omkāra even once with assiduity, a man will certainly become blessed and contented, thanks to my great blessings.

175. To the west of Omkāra is the excellent Tāra Tirtha; a man who performs all aquatic rites there, surmounts all wretchedness.

176. Devotees of Omkāreśa should not be considered mere human beings. They are Rudras covered with human skin. They attain salvation.

177. The greatness of this Liṅga here is not known to others. It is because of the rise of your merit, O Brahmā, that it thus manifested itself here.

178. By the power of this Liṅga, you will understand everything factually. O Brahmā, hence you create the entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings.

179. After granting this boon to the lotus-born Brahmā Śambhu disappeared within that great Liṅga.

Skanda said:

180. Brahmā worships this Liṅga even today eulogizing by means of *Brahmastava* composed by himself.

181-182. A man repeating *Brahmastava* is rid of all sins. He is filled with all great merits. He obtains the most excellent knowledge. If the devotee repeats this *Brahmastava* thrice a day for a full year, he will attain knowledge at the time of death whereby he is liberated from all bondage.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFOUR

The Greatness of Omkāra (Continued)

Skanda said:

1. Listen, O destroyer of Vātāpi, to the story of Damana, a Brāhmaṇa. The story is capable of dispelling sins. It took place in Kāśī in the Padmakalpa.

2-3. The son of Bhāradvāja was called Damana by name. After the sacred thread ceremony had been performed, he learned all lores. He realized that the worldly existence was full of misery and life was transient. After realizing this, the learned scholar Damana set out from his house.

4-6. In utter disgust for all worldly pleasures, he proceeded in some direction aimlessly. He wandered from penance grove to penance grove, mountain to mountain, sea to sea, forest to forest, Tīrtha to Tīrtha and river to river practising austerities. With the sense-organs and the mind fully controlled he stayed in everyone of all the holy spots and shrines all over the world. But he could not obtain steadiness of mind anywhere.

7-8. A person who could instruct and guide him in accordance with his desire was also not seen anywhere. Once by chance that ascetic named Damana saw the Tīrtha called Amaraṅṭaka on the banks of Revā. There was the great meritorious shrine of Omkāra also there.

9-11. On seeing it he became pleased in his mind. His mind attained steadiness.

There he saw the ascetics of the Pāsupata cult. They had embellished their bodies (smearing them) with holy ash. They regularly worshipped the Liṅga. They sustained themselves by means of alms. They pondered over and discussed the Āgama scriptures. They were seated before their preceptor with their minds steady. He too bowed down to him and sat in the vicinity of the preceptor.

12-14. With the neck bowing down very low and with the pair of hands joined together (in reverence), he sat there. The great sage named Garga, the preceptor of the Pāsupata cult had a very slender physical frame due to the continuous performance of austerities and also because of the onset of the old age. He was considered the most excellent one among all

ascetics engaged in propitiating Śambhu. He asked Damana thus: "Who are you? From where have you come here? Though you are young, you are not drawn towards worldly pursuits. How is it so, tell me, O excellent one."

15-27. On hearing this speech full of affection, Damana said: "O venerable one, O Preceptor of Pāsupatas, O Sir who are fond of propitiating the omniscient one, I shall tell you truthfully what is in my mind. I am son of a Brāhmaṇa. I have put in adequate efforts in (studying) the Vedas and scriptures. After realizing the worthlessness of the worldly existence I have resorted to Vānaprastha ('Forest recluse') stage of life. I desired to attain spiritual powers with this body itself. I took holy ablution in many Tīrthas; I have recited Mantras crores of times. Many deities have been resorted to. Many *Havanas* (sacrifices) have been performed. Many teachers have been served for a long time. Many nights have been spent in great cremation grounds. Peaks of great mountains have been indeed resorted to by me. Many thousands of medicines of divine potency have been adopted and made use of by me. *Rasāyanas* (life-prolonging medicines) have been taken in plenty by me. Caves of terrible appearance like jaws of Death, wherein Siddhas stayed, have been entered by me fearlessly. Great penance also has been performed with the requisite observances and restraints, O Lord. But nothing bringing about Siddhi has been sighted by me. Now after wandering over the entire earth, I have approached Your Holiness. It appears as though my mind has obtained steadiness, as if the Siddhi has been obtained. Indeed the words that will issue forth from your louts-like mouth will grant me Siddhi. Surely not otherwise. So, in this very earthy physical form." On hearing this utterance of Damana, Preceptor Garga spoke these words narrating an excellent miracle seen by him directly, even as the disciples were desirous of salvation and so had adopted the great Pāsupata Vrata.

Garga said:

28-35. If you are desirous of Siddhi with this very physical form, listen attentively. I am recounting it to you. O highly intelligent one, I am narrating what has been directly seen by me in the great holy spot Avimukta. It is the bestower of all Siddhis on good persons. It is the great mine of the jewels

named Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa.

To all the creatures resorting to it, it is like a burning lamp unto the locusts of all their Karmas; it is the great dispeller of the mass of darkness. It is like a forest fire unto the trees of Karmas; it is a flame of the submarine fire unto the ocean of worldly existence; it is the veritable ocean of milk for the glory of salvation; it is the home of highest bliss and happiness. It accords the greatest awakening to those who are in the prolonged slumber of ignorance. To living beings in utter fatigue due to (incessant) coming and going (birth and death) it is like a (shady) wayside tree. It is like the thunderbolt for the mountains of great sins accumulated in the course of many births. It accords the great Śreyas (good) to the persons who utter its name. It is the greatest abode of Viśveśa. It is the limit of heaven and salvation. Its ground is washed perpetually by the rolling waves of the celestial river. It is the dispeller of all miseries. What happened in the holy spot of such a nature, I shall tell you.

36. Who is competent to extol adequately the greatness of that holy place where there is no fear of the god of Death and where there is no fear of sins.

37. All the Tīrthas all-over the world that dispel the sins of creatures, always come to Kāśī for the sake of (their) purification.

38. Even one eating all (including prohibited) things and selling everything (including his own daughter) attains that meritorious position in Kāśī which cannot be attained by performing sacrifices, giving gifts, or otherwise.

39. The great tree of worldly existence originating from the seed of passionate attachment does not grow in Kāśī. It is cut off by the axe of *Dīrghasvāpa* (death or long absorption in the meditation of Viśveśa).

40. Of all barren lands Kāśī is the most barren where the seed in the form of Karma, even if sown, does not grow.

41. Certainly those who remember Kāśī here are good people. Rid of all the masses of sins they will attain excellent goal.

42. The attainments of all the worlds including Satya are destructible but those of Avimukta cannot be destroyed and they can be had only at the behest of Śiva.

43. In the whole cosmos where can one see that distinc-

tion which even worms, insects and locusts attain on giving up their bodies in Avimukta?

44. If Kāśī is somehow reached after a long time, means should be found out whereby there is no exit therefrom.

45-48. Maṇikarṇīśa is in the East; Brahmeśa is stationed in the South; Gokarṇa is in the West and Bhārabhūta in the North.

Thus is this excellent holy spot Avimukta the bestower of great benefit. If a devotee takes his holy bath in the whirlpool of Manikarṇī, visits Lord Viśveśvara and circumambulates the holy spot, he obtains the benefit of Rājasūya sacrifice. The ancestors of one who offers Śrāddha there get liberated.

A holy spot on a par with Avimukta does not exist anywhere in the Cosmic Egg, conferring Siddhi on the aspirant. It is true (certainly), it is true.

49. Mahāpāriṣadas ('Great attendants of Śiva') equipped with noose and swords in their hands, always protect the holy place there. They are fierce to cruel people while kindly disposed to others.

50. The terrible attendant (named) Aṭṭahāsa surrounded by a crore of Gaṇas, protects the Eastern Gate day and night, from evil ones.

51. Similarly, Bhūtadhātrīśa is the protector of the Southern Gate of the holy spot. Gokarṇa surrounded by a crore of Gaṇas, protects the Western Gate.

52-53. Ghaṇṭākarna, the great Gaṇa, protects the Northern Gate. Chāgavakra protects the North-eastern corner. Bhīṣaṇa protects the portion of South-eastern direction. Śaṅkukarna protects the South-west direction and Dṛmicāṇḍa protects the North-west. Thus, these highly brilliant Gaṇas always protect the holy place.

54. Kālākṣa, Raṇabhadra, Kauleya and Kālakampana are the Ganas stationed on the other bank of Gaṅgā according protection from the East.

55. Virabhadra, Nabha, Kardamāliptavighraha and Sthūlakarṇa of powerful arms are posted on the other side of Asi.

56. Viśālākṣa, Mahābhīma, Kuṇḍodara and Mahodara are stationed at the entrance to the region. They protect the Western Gate.

57. Nandiṣeṇa, Pāñcāla, Kharapāda, Karaṇṭaka, Ānanda, Gopaka and Babhrū protect on the banks of Varaṇā.

58. In that holy spot of great merit, there is the Liṅga named Omkāra. Aspirants have attained great Siddhis there with this physical body.

59. These Pāsupatas, Kapila, Sāvarni, Śrīkaṇṭha, Piṅgala and Amśumān have become Siddhas due to the propitiation of that Liṅga alone.

60. Once all these five performed the worship of that Liṅga and began to dance, making the noise of a bull. Thus they got themselves merged into that Liṅga.

61. I shall mention another miracle that happened there. Listen to it, O Damana, O highly intelligent and most excellent Brāhmaṇa.

62. O sage, once a she-frog lingered around the Liṅga circumambulating it always and eating the rice grains from the remnants of the materials of worship.

63. In view of the fact that she ate Śivanirmālya, she did not die there. Due to this sin (of voracious eating) her death took place out of the region of the holy spot.

64. One shall rather imbibe even poison but should not eat Śiva's belongings. Poison kills only one (person) but the possessions of Śiva kill sons and grandsons also.

65. People who develop their limbs by means of Śivasva should not be touched by good men. As a result of their sins, they become dwellers of the hell Raurava.

66. A certain crow saw the frog hastily hopping about here and there. It seized the frog with its beak and went out of the holy spot.

67-69. The frog was cast off outside the holy spot by the crow. In course of time, due to the merit as well as sin committed by her, she was born as daughter in the house of Puṣpabaṭu with some physical defects. Her merit was due to the circumambulation of the Liṅga and touching the same. Her limbs were splendid and proportionate. She had all the auspicious characteristics, but her face resembled the face of a vulture due to the sin of eating the raw rice grains among the remnants of the materials of worship of Śiva.

70-76. She had a very sweet voice and she was perfectly conversant with the intricacies of music such as the seven notes,

three *Grāmas*, twenty-one *Mūrcchanās*, forty-nine *Tānas*, one hundred and one *Tālas*, six main *Rāgas* each having five *Aṅganās* (*Rāginīs*, wives etc. etc.) (six *Rāgas* and thirty *Rāginīs* in all). Thus the thirty-six *Rāgarāginīs* delighted persons in love with music. Based on the distinctions of place and time, there are sixtyfive other *Rāgas* (such as *Mālava*, *Śrī* etc.). Others think that there are as many *Rāgas* as there are *Tālas* (i.e. one hundred and one). With the secrets of *Gīta* (song) understood perfectly that girl (named) *Mādhavī* of sweet voice and excellent *Vratas* worshipped *Om̐kāra* always. Though in her excellent prime of youth, the daughter of *Puṣpabaṭu* considered *Om̐kāra* with great honour, due to the fine impressions of the previous birth. Her mind though fickle by nature, O *Damana*, attained stability due to the service of that *Liṅga* like that of a noble-souled (sage) with mind absorbed in the Supreme Absolute due to the practice of *Yoga*. Neither hunger nor thirst worried her during the day nor sleep during the nights.

77-80. Her mind was free of lethargy in viewing that *Liṅga*. By day or by night she had perforce to wink her eyes. That chaste lady considered those occasions as great obstacles. She thought thus: 'How can I expiate for the time spent in vain in winking and not being able to see the *Liṅga*?' With this thought she never desisted from the service rendered to *Om̐kāra*. Urged by the desire for water, she drank the nectarine name of the *Liṅga*. Her long eyes reaching the ears of either side did not desire to see anything else except the *Om̐kāra Liṅga* stationed in the ether of the heart of good persons.

81. Her ears were not interested in listening to other words and sounds. Her hands became very efficient in making the excellent garlands of the Lord.

82. Her feet did not wander elsewhere for pleasure abandoning the precincts of the shrine of *Om̐kāra* occupied by the glorious goddess of salvation.

83-89. Her organ of speech pronounced the names of *Om̐kāra* refraining from uttering other names. (She uttered names of) *Om̐kāra*. *Īśvara* is *Praṇava*. It is *Sāra* (permanent) even in *Pralaya*. It is *Para* (greater than all). It is the illuminator of *Brahman*. It is the embodiment of *Śabdabrahman* as the three *Vedas*. It is the abode of the *Kalās* of *Nāda* and *Bindu*.

It is the excellent immutable one. It is the primordial form.

It is in universal form. It is in the form of *Para* (cause) and *Avara* (effect). It is the most excellent of all. It is *Vareṇya* (worthy of being desired). It is *Varada* (bestower of boons). It is *Śāśvata* (eternal), *Śānta* (quiescent), *Īśvara* (the powerful Lord).

It is the sole creator of all the worlds; it is the sole protector of all the worlds. It is the sole annihilator of all the worlds; it is the sole adored one of all the worlds. It has neither beginning nor end; it is everlasting; it is auspicious. It is *Śaṅkara* (benefactor). It is *Avyaya* (unchangeable). It is one. It is beyond the three Guṇas. It is embodied in the minds of devotees.

It is unconditioned. It is *Nirākāra* (free from forms or shapes), *Nirvikāra* (free from modification); it is *Nirañjana* (free from the limitations of causes), it is *Nirmala* (devoid of passions or impurities), *Nirahamkāra* (devoid of the ego), *Niṣprapañca* (devoid of ramifications), *Nijodaya* (ever rising and flourishing), *Svātmārāma* (rejoicing within itself), *Ananta* (infinite), *Sarvaga* (moving everywhere), *Sarvadarśin* (seeing everything), *Sarvada* (bestower of all), *Sarvabhoktr* (enjoyer of all), the all, the abode of all pleasures.

90-92. Her tongue tasted the juice of the syllables constituting its name day and night. It did not know any other Rasa. Mādhavī swept the space round the palatial shrine and the hall of pictures. She washed all the utensils of the worship. She devoutly served all the Pāśupatas who were engaged in adoring Praṇaveśa considering them like her father.

93-95. Once on the fourteenth day in the month of Vaiśākha, Mādhavī observed fast during the day and kept awake at night. When the pilgrims and devotees who had gathered there for the festival had gone away in the morning, she swept everywhere and joyously worshipped the Liṅga. She sang sweet songs and danced gracefully. Meditating on Omkāra Liṅga, she got merged within the Liṅga.

96-98. The highly intelligent lady merged into the Liṅga with this physical body itself, even as the ascetics, the chief of whom was my own preceptor, were watching. A radiance issued forth from the Liṅga pervading the sky. The girl also assumed the form of a luminary and merged into it. Even today the residents of the holy spot celebrate great festival with pomp and ceremony on the fourteenth day in the bright half in the month of Vaiśākha.

99. The devotees who observe fast then and keep awake at night on the fourteenth day attain great knowledge wherever they may die ultimately.

100. All the Tīrthas in the entire universe arrive there on the fourteenth day in Vaiśākha to visit Omkāra.

101. In front of the Liṅga, there is the most excellent cave named Śrīmukhī. It is the doorway to Pātāla. Indeed Siddhas stay there.

102. Those who observe excellent Vratas and stay in that cave for five nights, will see Nāga Girls who will recount auspicious and inauspicious things.

103. To the north of the cave there is a well with tasty juice for its water. One who drinks it for six months actually drinks Brahmāmṛta (elixir of Brahman).

104. By visiting Nādeśvara Liṅga, the cause of Nāda (divine sound), there one can hear the entire world of sounds.

105. By taking the holy ablution in Matsyodarī mixed with the waters of the celestial river and Varaṇā a devotee shall become blessed and contented. He never grieves over anything anywhere.

106. Innumerable devotees serving Omkāreśvara have attained Siddhi with their earthy body transforming itself into divine one instantaneously.

107. Avimukta is the greatest sacred place in the entire cosmos. Even greater than it is Omkāra on the banks of Matsyodarī.

108. Alas! What for are they born, those by whom Praṇaveśvara is not worshipped in Kāśī? They have merely caused the youth of their mothers decline.

109-110. Ever since Viśveśa came from Mandara mountain to Ānandakāmaṇa, O excellent one, all other holy places along with the oceans, mountains, rivers and Tīrthas and continents went there itself.

111-112. O sage, it is my good luck that I have been reminded now by you. I shall also come. We shall go to Kāśī slowly. All these disciples of mine who observe the great Pāśupata Vratas are desirous of going to Kāśī because all of them desire salvation.

113. If after attaining old age, Kāśī is not visited, how can they have the great happiness after the rare human birth is lost in vain?



114. Before the weakness of the sense-organs takes place, before the span of life comes to a close, Śaṁbhu's Ānandakānana should be assiduously resorted to.

115. If people resort to Ānandavana of Śaṁbhu, the abode of glory, steadfast Śrī (Wealth or Glory) will never leave them. They will be inexhaustible store of happiness.

116. After narrating this exquisite story, Garga, the most excellent one among Pāśupata devotees reached the city of Vārāṇasī along with Bhāradvāja.

117. Accompanied by Gargācārya, the pious-souled Damana propitiated the glorious Omkāra and merged into that Liṅga.

Skanda said:

118. O sage, O enemy of Ilvala, Omkāra is a great shrine in Avimuktaka. Many Sādhakas have attained Siddhi there.

119. The greatness of Praṇaveśvara should never be recounted in the presence of men of vitiated minds in Kali age and not at all in the presence of heretics.

120. Those who censure Mahādeva, those senseless ones who censure the holy spot and those who censure the Purāṇa, should never be talked to.

121. "There is no Liṅga like Omkāra anywhere on the earth." Thus the Lord of Devas has decisively told Gaurī.

122. After listening to this chapter with the mind completely engrossed in it, a man will be rid of all sins. He will attain Śiva's world.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFIVE

Manifestation of Trilocana¹

Agastya said:

1. O Viśākha, I am not fully satiated after listening to the story of Omkāra that dispels great sins. Narrate the story of Triviṣṭapa.

1. Trilocana is one of the oldest and most famous of Liṅgas. Its temple is just above Trilocana Ghāṭ (BCL 231).

2. O Six-faced One, O highly intelligent one, how was the highly meritorious manifestation of Trilocana narrated to the Goddess by the Lord of the Devas?

Skanda said:

3. Listen, O sage, I shall narrate the story that dispels fatigue—the story of Triviṣṭapa, in the manner in which it has been narrated by the Lord.

4. That Pīṭha (Seat of holiness) is called Viraja. The Liṅga there is Triviṣṭapa. By visiting that Pīṭha, a man becomes rid of Rajas.

5. O Pot-born One, three streams have their confluence there. All the three dispel sins. (They flow) to the south of Trilocana.

6-7. Sarasvatī, Kālindī and Narmadā who gives excessive happiness assume the forms of the streams for the purpose of bathing the Liṅga directly. All those three rivers with pitchers in their hands bathe the Liṅga Triviṣṭapa of great refulgence, three times a day.

8. All-round, Liṅgas named after themselves have been installed by them. By visiting them, men will obtain the benefit of holy ablution in them.

9. Sarasvatīśvara Liṅga is to the south of Triviṣṭapa. On being seen, it accords the region of Sarasvatī. On being touched, it dispels sluggishness.

10. Yamuneśa is to the west. If devoutly worshipped by men, even if they be sinners, this prevents (falling into) the world of Yama.

11. Seen to the east of Trilocana, Narmadeśa accords excellent welfare. By adoring that Liṅga, men's further (likelihood of) staying within the womb is prevented.

12. A devotee who takes his holy bath in the Pilipilā Tīrtha near Triviṣṭapa and visits Trilocana Liṅga need not bewail anything further.

13. Even by recollecting Triviṣṭapa Liṅga, a man will become the Lord of Triviṣṭapa (heaven). One should not bother about that.

14. Those who visit Triviṣṭapa shall undoubtedly become the creators (of the world). They alone are contented and

blessed. They alone are men of great intellect.

15-21. There is no doubt about this that those devotees will be free from the sins accumulated in the course of seven births, if the Triviṣṭapa Liṅga in Ānandakānana is bowed down to by them; if those persons of pure intellect had heard even the name of Trilocana.

If Triviṣṭapa is visited in Kāśī, one shall get that benefit which is attained when all the Liṅgas all-over the earth have been visited.

He will instantaneously be rid of all sins. He will never be reborn in any womb. He is (to be considered as) one who has bathed in all the Tīrthas. He is one who has performed all valedictory baths (after sacrifices).

The devotee shall take his holy bath in the waters of the north-flowing river (Gaṅgā) in the Pilipilā Tīrtha, where those highly meritorious rivers always stay. If one performs Śrāddha etc. what will he do in Gayā? The devotee who takes his holy bath in the Pilipilā Tīrtha, offers balls of rice and visits Triviṣṭapa Liṅga, shall obtain the benefit of crores of Tīrthas.

The sin that has been acquired elsewhere shall vanish on visiting Kāśī.

22-26. A sin committed in Kāśī gives the state of a Piśāca (vampire, evil spirit). If someone commits a sin in Ānandakānana due to ignorance, he should visit Triviṣṭapa Liṅga. He will get rid of that sin. Ānandakānana is the most excellent (place) in the whole of the earth.

There too all the Tīrthas are superior. Still superior is the place of Omkāra. Trilocana is in the form of ultimate Śreyas (welfare). It is more excellent than the excellent Liṅga Omkāra that illuminates the path of salvation.

Just as the Sun is the best among the luminaries, just as the Moon is the best among things worthy of being seen, so also the Trilocana Liṅga is the greatest among all Liṅgas.

27. Salvation, the sole treasure of supreme bliss, is not out of reach of the worshippers of Trilocana.

28-31. By worshipping other Liṅgas throughout the life, one cannot attain the good that is obtained by worshipping Trilocana once.

Persons of great intellect who worship Trilocana Liṅga at Kāśī should be worshipped by the dwellers of the three worlds

who desire to get my favour.

Why should men be afraid if even after having renounced everything and performed Pāsupata Vrata they have deviated from the regulations, when the great Liṅga (named) Triviṣṭapa exists, which dispels masses of great sins, is the heap of merit and is the pawnshop of salvation?

32. By worshipping even once the great Trilocana Liṅga, one is rid of all sins acquired in the course of hundreds of births.

33-40. All these great sinners can have redemption from sins by bowing down to Trilocana Liṅga: Sinners such as a Brāhmaṇa-slayer, a liquor-drinker, a thief, a defiler of the preceptor's bed, one who associates with the preceding persons (sinners) for a year and hence becomes a great sinner, one who carnally approaches another man's wife, one who is interested in committing violence to others, one who habitually reviles at others, one who betrays trust, an ungrateful wretch, a destroyer of foetus, paramour of a Śūdra woman, one who forsakes parents and preceptors, one guilty of arson, one who administers poison, a cow-slayer, a woman-slayer, a Śūdra-slayer, a violator of a virgin, a cruel one, one indulging in scandal, one who is averse to one's own Dharma, a censorer, an atheist, one who persistently indulges in perjury, one who eats prohibited things, one who sells prohibited articles. All these with the sole exception of a slanderer of Śiva, attain expiation from sins by bowing down to Trilocana Liṅga.

A deluded fool engaged in censuring Śiva, a censorer of Śaivite scriptures—there is no expiation for him. No such redemption is seen in any scripture by anyone. He who performs the act of censuring Śiva should be known as a soul-killer, a murderer of the three worlds. He is baser than the basest. He should not be talked to.

41. Those who are engaged in censuring Śiva in the midst of the devotees of Śiva, fall into the terrible hell as long as the Sun and the Moon (shine).

42. Followers of Śiva should be carefully adored in Kāśī by those who desire salvation. Even when they are adored, Śiva undoubtedly becomes delighted.

43-45. With a desire for the expiation of all the sins committed here, the following words should be unhesitatingly

uttered by those who believe in authority. If you are desirous of making a beginning, if you are afraid of sins, if you consider our words true on the authority of scriptures, then forsake everything, make up your mind and go to Ānandakānana where Viśveśvara himself is present.

46-53. If men enter the holy spot with such a definite resolve within themselves, no mass of sins harasses them. The greatest virtue is attained. The devotees should take their holy ablution in the great Tīrtha, in the triple stream devoid of impurities, in the meritorious Tīrtha named Pilipilā served by three rivers, where the great sins have been hurled off by the glance of the eyes of the Three-eyed Lord. They must offer libations to those who should be offered them in accordance with the injunctions in the Gṛhya Sūtras. They must make monetary gifts without any dishonesty in the matter of spending but in accordance with their capacity. They should visit Triviṣṭapa Liṅga and adore it with great devotion with all these necessary requisites, namely sweet scents, different kinds of garlands, Pañcāmṛta, incense, lamps, *Naivedya* (food) offerings, clothes, ornaments, necessary articles of adoration, bells, mirrors, chowries, flags and banners of diverse colours, dances, musical instruments, excellent songs, Japa, joyous circumambulations and prostrations to the fullest satisfaction of the attendants. After adoring thus, he should say "I am free from sins." He should then request the Brāhmaṇas to make the proclamatory utterance. A wise man who does these shall instantly become sinless.

54. Then he should take his bath in Pañcanada and next perform ablution in the pool Maṇikarnikā. Thereafter he should worship Viśveśa whereby he attains great merit.

55. This expiatory rite is cited as one that purifies great sins. This should not be mentioned to an atheist who downgrades the greatness of Kāśī.

56. One who performs this auspicious expiatory rite giving monetary gifts avariciously, goes to hell. It is true; it is true, O Pot-born One.

57. At the time of *Pradoṣa* (dusk of the thirteenth lunar day), if a devotee circumambulates seven times the Trilocana shrine, he attains that merit which is acquired after completely circumambulating the whole of the earth.

58. If a devotee visits in Kāśī the Triviṣṭapa Liṅga girdled by a serpent but dies elsewhere, he will become liberated in the next birth.

59. Elsewhere, in the case of all the Liṅgas, a time of meritorious significance is specified, but at Triviṣṭapa night and day are equally meritorious times for men.

60. The Liṅgas, the chief of whom is Oṃkāra, are of adequate power of destroying sins, but, O Pārvatī, the power of Trilocana is something very unique.

61. O Aparṇā, listen to the reason why this Liṅga is superior to all the other Liṅgas. I shall tell. Retain it in the ear.

62. Formerly as I was absorbed in Yoga, this great Liṅga pierced through the seven nether worlds from beneath the earth and issued forth in front of me.

63. I was stationed well-concealed in this Liṅga formerly and I gave unto you, O Gaurī, three eyes and you saw the excellent Liṅga.

64. Ever since then, O Goddess of Devas, this Liṅga is praised as Trilocana, the bestower of vision of knowledge, by people residing within the three worlds.

65. Those who are the devotees of Trilocana are all themselves three-eyed; they are my attendants; they are indeed liberated ones even while living.

66. O Maheśānī, no one fully understands the greatness of Trilocana Liṅga; it has been kept well-concealed by me alone.

67-70. The devotees should take their holy bath in the Pilipilā whirlpool on the third day in the bright half of Vaiśākha, observe fast devoutly and keep awake at night. They should take bath again there itself in the morning and worship Trilocana. After worshipping the Liṅga, they should offer Dharma-ghaṭas i.e. 'pots offered for merit' filled with cooked rice along with monetary gifts. They should joyously do this keeping in view their ancestors, O Goddess. They should then break the fast in the company of the devotees of Śiva. After casting off their earthly bodies (later on), O Goddess, they will invariably become my Gaṇas going ahead (in processions etc.) as a result of that merit.

71. Devas, men and the great serpents wander in their worldly life (of birth followed by death), O Gaurī, only till

they see Trilocana Liṅga in Kāśī.

72. By seeing Triviṣṭapa once, after taking bath in the Pilipilā pool, a creature never sucks at the breasts of a mother here (i.e. gets Mokṣa).

73. Every month on the eighth and the fourteenth days, O fair lady, all the Tīrthas come to see Lord Triviṣṭapa.

74. Taking bath in the waters of Pilipilā to the south of Triviṣṭapa and offering Sandhyā prayers once, one shall attain the merit of performing Rājasūya.

75. There itself, there is a well named Pādodaka which destroys sins. Drinking its water a man is not born again as a man.

76. At the side of that Liṅga, there are many Liṅgas according to salvation on being seen and touched.

77. Śāntanava (installed by Śāntanu) Liṅga has been installed on the banks of Gaṅgā. By seeing it a man distressed by worldly existence attains peace.

78. To the south of it, O Sage, there is the great Liṅga named Bhīṣmeśa. If it is seen neither Kali nor Kāla (Death) nor Kāma (lust) harasses men.

79. To the west of it there is the great Liṅga renowned as Droṇeśa. By worshipping that Liṅga, Droṇa assumed the form of a luminary again.

80. In front of it is the Aśvatthāmeśvara Liṅga that accords great merit. It is due to the worship thereof that the son of Droṇa does not fear even Kāla.

81. To the north-west of Droṇeśa is the great Vālakhilyeśvara Liṅga. By visiting it with great faith one shall obtain the merit of performing all Yajñas.

82. To the left thereof the Liṅga named Vālmīkeśvara can be seen. By seeing it, a man becomes rid of all grief.

83. I shall narrate another incident that happened here itself, O Pot-born One. The greatness of Triviṣṭapa has been recounted to the Goddess by the Lord.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSIX

The Power of Trilocana

Skanda said:

1. Listen, O son of Mitra and Varuṇa, to what happened in the Pīṭha named Viraja in a former Kalpa called Rathantara.

2-6. Two pigeons had made their nests and lived freely in the mansion of Trilocana, the mansion that was built of Māṇikya (Rubies) and other precious stones. It (the mansion) was as large as the Meru mountain. It had many windows with various shapes and undulations. It appeared like a pillar of support fixed by the creator (or Śiva) himself, in view of the likelihood of the heavenly world falling down during the annihilation at the end of the Kalpa. O sage, when the banners were wafted by wind, it appeared that it warded off masses of sins from entering. It shone with its brilliant golden pinnacle. It was as though out of fatigue the full moon settled (for rest) there. The pair of doves circumambulated the mansion everyday in the morning, noon and evening.

7. While they flew around, the winds from their fluttering wings removed the dust particles sticking to the mansion everyday.

8. The names Trilocana and Triviṣṭapa constantly uttered by the devotees reached their ears.

9. The four types of musical instruments that adequately delighted Śambhu echoed after entering the cavities of their ears.

10. The radiance of the auspicious Ārātrika ('waving of lights') during the three Sandhyās (morning, noon and evening) entered the eyes of the two birds revealing the activities of the devotees.

11. Watching the festivities, the two birds of steady minds did not care to fly to their desired places, thereby denying themselves the opportunity to get their food.

12. They circumambulated the mansion filled with the devotees pecking at the ricegrains etc., O sage.

13. O Brāhmaṇa, to the southern side of the Lord there is the water of the four streams (viz. Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Narmadā). Sometimes the birds took their bath therein. When they were distressed due to thirst, they drank it.

14. In the vicinity of Trilocana those two birds thus moved about busy with their activities resembling those of pious men. A long period thus elapsed.

15. Comfortably ensconced within the windows in the precincts of the temple, they were once seen by a certain vulture of cruel vision.

16. The vulture desired to seize the pair of doves. He quickly descended from the sky and entered another Śiva temple.

17-21. From there he observed the arrivals and departures of the two (birds) and thought thus, 'By which way do they go out? Where, when and what do they do? How can these two be caught by me freely and simultaneously? They have entered well within their fort. Would it be that they may not come under my control?' Thinking thus the vulture paused awhile with his vision directed solely towards them. It is for this reason that wise men praise the strength of excellent forts. Even a weak enemy cannot be caught all of a sudden. What can be achieved by a single fort, cannot be attained by a king even with a thousand elephants or a hundred thousand horses.

22. An enemy well-entrenched in his fort cannot be attacked by anyone at any time, if the fort is self-dependent and is not exposed by one who knows the secret.

23. Noticing that the doves were fearless, the vulture became angry with red eyes. After praising thus the strength of a fort, he went up into the sky.

24. Then the clever female dove whose sole strength was the fort observed the enemy, the bird of great strength. She then said to her husband:

Kalaravī (the Female Dove) said:

25. O highly intelligent dear dove, having pleasing chirping sound delighting all lovers, this vulture who has come within the range of your vision is a powerful enemy.

26-29. The male dove heard these words of the female with contempt and indifference and said to her:

Pārāvata (Male Dove) said:

O fortunate one, how many sky-wanderers (birds) are not present here? How many of those birds do not roost in these

temples? O my beloved, how many do not see us comfortably perched here? If we are to be afraid of all those, whence can we have that happiness as we have now? Divert yourself with me. Cast off this worry, O auspicious one. I do not have any thought for this poor hawk in my heart.

30-31. On hearing these words of the male, the female kept quiet with her eyes resting on the feet of her husband. After pointing out the beneficial path, a chaste female should remain silent with a desire to do what is pleasing to her husband. She should always carry out the commands of her husband.

32. The falcon came another day also and saw the couple, seeing them with a constant, undeviated gaze like the god of Death looking at a person whose span of life has come to an end.

33. Thereafter he circled round the mansion in a quick whirling movement. After observing their movements and activities he went away through the sky.

34. When the hawk had gone far into the sky, the beloved, female dove said, "O Lord, has the wicked enemy been seen by you?"

35-39. On hearing her words the Kalarava (Pigeon) said again: "O timid one, what will he do to me, the one sporting about in the sky? My fortress too is on a par with the heaven where there is nothing to fear from the enemy. He does not know the diverse modes of flight in the firmament. Eight modes of flight have been cited: *Pradīna* (flying forward), *Uddīna* (flying up), *Sanḍīna* (flying perfectly), *Kaṇḍa* (stem-like flight), *Vyāḍa* (serpentine flight), *Kapāṭikā* (door-like movement, swinging movement), *Sramsini* (pendulous) and *Maṇḍalavatī* (encircling flight). O my beloved dove, no other bird anywhere is so clever in these modes of flight as I am in the sky. Relax comfortably, dear one. What should worry you as long as I am alive?" On hearing his words that chaste one remained quiet.

40. Another day the hawk came and occupied the rock-cut frieze a little away from them, perching on it very comfortably.

41. He stayed there for the duration of a Yāma (3 hours) closely observing their nest. Then the hawk flew away. The frightened (female) dove said again:

42. "My dear, this place should be forsaken. It has been defiled by the evil one's sight. This ruthless fellow was sitting very near joyously."

43. With the same indifference and contempt as before, he said again, "My dear, what will he do? This is the nature of fawn-eyed ones. Generally they are very cowardly."

44. The powerful vulture came the next day too. He sat facing them for the duration of two Yāmas.

45. Carefully observing their path he went away soon in the manner he had come. After the bird had gone the female bird spoke:

46-48. "Lord, we shall go away to some other place since death is close to us here. After the wicked one has gone for good, we can be happy, dear one.

Why should a wise man face destruction with undue attachment for his native land? Equipped with *Pakṣas* (wings, followers and partisans) his movement anywhere shall yield success:

If anyone does not leave off his own native land infested with troubles, he is no better than a lame man. He meets with destruction like a tree standing on the banks (of a river)."

49. Even after hearing the words of his beloved uttered thus the male, overwhelmed by the inevitability of the future events, said arrogantly and with contempt, "My dear, do not be afraid of that bird."

50. The next day the powerful falcon came to their threshold early in the morning and stayed there till the evening.

51. When the Sun had set and that bird had gone away the female dove came out of the nest and spoke to her husband:

52-58. "O Lord, this is the time to go out. Even as the death (i.e. falcon) is far off, go out, O dear one of excellent intellect, even after forsaking me.

When you are alive, there is nothing which is difficult to get all over the earth; new wives, new friends, new wealth and new house—all these you will get again. If the self is protected at the expense of wife and wealth, everything is obtained as by King Hariścandra.

The Ātman (self) is the dear kinsman; this Ātman is great wealth; this Ātman is the great means for earning piety, wealth, love and salvation.

As long as there is safety and well-being in the Ātman, there is safety and well-being in all the three worlds. But that well-being is desired along with renown by one with excellent intellect.

Death is preferable to well-being devoid of renown and renown is earned by men by acting along the path of justice.

Hence paying heed to the path of justice and good policy, dear Lord, go away from this place. If you do not go away in the morning you will have (cause to regret) and remember my words.”

59. Though he was warned thus by his wife, the female dove of great intelligence, he did not leave his abode because he was prevented by the inevitable future.

60. The next day in the morning the falcon came there equipping himself with something to eat, O sage. The exit of the doves was obstructed.

61-64. The highly intelligent falcon stayed there for a few days and said to the pigeon: “Fie upon you, devoid of manliness!

O dull-witted one, either fight or come out at my behest. If you starve yourself to death, you will surely fall into hell.

You are two. I am alone. Victory and defeat are uncertain and fluctuate. Either heaven or fort itself can be attained by one who fights for the strategic base with full strength.

Urged by the intrinsic strength and earnestness of those highly intelligent ones who strive to attain their aim, the fate too shall come to their assistance.”

65. Thus taunted by the falcon and further encouraged by his wife, the pigeon resorted to the entrance of his fort and fought with the hawk.

66. The hungry and thirsty pigeon was ultimately seized with its firm feet by the powerful vulture and the female dove was held with its beak immediately.

67. Holding both of them the hawk flew into the sky quickly seeking a place where there was no other bird so that he could eat them.

68-71. Thereupon, the pigeon was thus addressed by his wife of supreme intelligence: “O Lord, you considered me a mere female and slighted my words. Hence you have come to this plight. What shall I do? For I am only a feeble female. If even now, my dear, you will pay heed to a single request

of mine, it will be to your benefit, I assert. Do so unhesitatingly. Acting in accordance with this single advice of mine will not make you one unduly controlled by a female. Even as I am held by him in his beak, even as he continues to be in the sky without touching the ground, do bite his foot with force for releasing yourself.”

72. On hearing these words of his wife that bird did so. Afflicted very much in his foot the vulture shrieked very loudly.

73. On account of that shriek, the female dove was let off from the closed mouth (beak). As the claws lost their grip the male pigeon also fell down free.

74-75. Even in adversity endeavour should not be abandoned by wise men. What a powerful beak it was! What an amount of affliction did the foot give! That was because luck will yield benefit to an endeavouring person, though weak.

76. Hence (it is true that) endeavour always bears fruit in accordance with luck. Therefore thinkers extol endeavour (even) at the time of adversity.

77-79. In course of time, they died on the banks of Sarayū, by dying where creatures attain Kāśī. One of them (the male pigeon) became a Vidyādhara in the city of Ayodhyā, a city of salvation. He was the son of Mandāradāma and his name was Parimalālaya. He was the abode of many lores and of great skill in arts. Even in his childhood, he was endowed with devotion to Śiva.

80. Conquering his sense-organs and the mind he resolved, ‘I shall observe the vow of having only one wife.’

81. Attachment to other men’s wives will dispel and reduce fame, longevity, strength and happiness. It shall prevent the likelihood of going to heaven. Hence a sensible man should avoid it.

82-84. That brilliant (Vidyādhara youth) took up another resolve too, due to his practice of the previous birth, namely seeking shelter (in the shrine of) Trilocana: ‘As long as my body is free from illness, while there is no loss of the power of the sense-organs, I will not take in even a bit before worshipping Trilocana in Kāśī. The Lord is the abode of all merits. He is the illuminator of all aims of life. He is the producer of all (healthy) desires. He is the sole cause of the greatest bliss.’

85. Thus Parimalālaya, the son of Mandāradāma assiduously went to Kāśī always to visit Triviṣṭapa.

86. The female dove was born in Pātāla in the palace of Ratnadīpa, the king of serpents. Her name was Ratnāvalī.

87. That daughter of Serpent Rantadīpa was as it were a singular gem, evolved out of the beauty, good habits, qualities and skill in arts of all the Nāga girls.

88. She had two female companions. One of them was Prabhāvatī by name and the other Kalāvati. Both of them always followed her.

89. O Pot-born One, those two companions were as though inseparable from the body of Ratnāvalī like her bodily lustre and shadow.

90-91. After childhood when she became a young woman, she imposed upon herself this restraint, on seeing her father devoted to Śiva: "Dear father, everyday I will break silence only after worshipping Trilocana in Kāśī in the company of these two friends. Not otherwise."

92. Thus, that Serpent Princess accompanied by her two female companions worshipped Trilocana everyday and returned home.

93. Everyday she wreathed garlands of various kinds and colours with fresh flowers of pleasing fragrance and adored the Lord.

94. All the three used to sing songs exquisite in their Gāndhāra (and other) Rāgas. All the three used to dance gracefully with many circular Rāsa movements.

95. All the three joyously played on Viṇā, flute and Mṛdaṅgas in the presence of the Lord. They were extremely efficient in *Laya* and *Tāla*.

96. Thus through fragrant garlands of diverse kinds, unguents and smearing pastes etc. all the three Nāga girls worshipped the Lord.

97-98. Once in the month of Mādhava, they observed fast on the third lunar day. At night they observed the rite of Jāgarāṇa (keeping awake) through dances, songs, narration of tales etc. On the morning of the fourth lunar day, they took their holy bath in the auspicious Pailipilā Tīrtha and worshipped Trilocana. Then they went to sleep in the pavilion itself.

99-101. When they were asleep, the Three-eyed, Moon-crested Lord whose limbs were as white as pure camphor, came out of the Liṅga with serpent-like girdle. His throat was blue like a Tamāla tree; his serpent ornaments shone. His left half was occupied gracefully by Śakti. He had a serpent as his sacred thread. Then the Lord told the girls, "Get up".

102-103. They got up in great excitement and wiped their eyes which reached their ears. They shook their limbs and pressed their bodies while yawning; their mouths seemed to tinkle. When they looked in front with bewildered minds the Three-eyed Lord who had unexpectedly arrived, was seen by them.

104. Recognizing by the characteristic features that it was the Lord, those girls bowed to him and eulogized with delighted faces and throats falteringly choked.

Prayer of the Nāga Girls

(105-115)

105. Be victorious, O Śāmbhu, be victorious, O Īśāna, be victorious, O omnipresent Lord and bestower of everything. Be victorious, O destroyer of Tripuras. Be victorious, O slayer of Andhaka.

106. Be victorious, O destroyer of Jālandhara. Be victorious, O Lord who dispelled the arrogance of the god of Love. Be victorious, O progenitor of the three worlds. Be victorious, O Lord who make the three worlds flourish.

107. Be victorious, O Lord with the three worlds as (your) abode. Be victorious, O Lord esteemed and saluted by all the three worlds. Be victorious, O Lord who are at the back and call of devotees. Be victorious, O leader of Pramathas.

108. Be victorious, O Lord the sides of whose matted hairs are washed by the waters of Tripathagā (Gaṅgā). Be victorious, O Lord who have illuminated the three worlds with the brilliance of the crescent moon.

109. Be victorious, O Lord whose person has been rendered bright by the lustre of the gems on the hoods of serpents. Be victorious, O Lord half of whose body has been bought through penance by the daughter of the King of Mountains.

110. Be victorious, O Lord with the cremation ground as your abode. Be victorious, O Lord fond of Vārāṇasī. Be victo-

rious, O bestower of salvation on all living beings occupying Ānandakānana.

111. Be victorious, O Lord of the universe, O Śarva devoid of Śarvarī (darkness of Māyā). Be victorious, O Lord fond of dance. Be victorious, O Ugra who are expert in singing.

112. Be victorious, O Praṇava. Be victorious, O refuge of the good. Be victorious, O great storehouse of refulgence. Be victorious, O trident-wielding Lord. Be victorious, O Virūpākṣa (odd-eyed one). Be victorious, O bestower of everything on those who bow down.

113. Though conversant with all creations, Brahmā is not competent to eulogize you adequately. O Lord, the words of Vācaspati become dull and impeded while eulogizing you.

114. Though the Vedas know (everything), they do not know you really, O Omniscient Lord, the mind cannot comprehend you properly, because you are infinite and beginningless.

115. Hail to you! Bow to you! Obeisance to you! Obeisance! Obeisance! O Trilocana, obeisance to you. O Triviṣṭapa, we make obeisance to you.

116. After saying this, the girls fell on the ground like a log of wood. Making the girls get up the Moon-crested Lord said:

117. "The son of Mandāradāman, the Vidyādhara chief, named Parimalālaya will become the husband of all of you.

118. After enjoying worldly pleasures of all sorts in the Vidyādhara world for a long time, you will become detached and attain what is achieved by residing in Kāśī.

119. All the three of you are devotees of mine. So also that Vidyādhara youth. All the four will attain salvation at the end of this life.

120. In the previous birth too, my service had been performed by all of you and also by him. Hence this birth has become free from impurities, purified by devotion.

121. Whoever reads this prayer of yours in front of me, will be granted all that he desires as in the case of yours.

122. If a pure man recites this in the morning, he rids himself of the sin committed at night. By reading this in the evening he clearly destroys the sin committed during the day."

123. When the Lord of Devas said thus those girls became

delighted in their minds. They bowed to Īśāna with palms joined in reverence and said:

Nāga Girls said:

124. We dare to ask, O Lord, O Śaṅkara, the merciful one: How was service rendered to Your Lordship by the four of us in the previous birth? Be pleased to tell.

125. O Bhava, kindly narrate the events that happened in the previous lives of that meritorious soul as well as of ours. O storehouse of compassion, be kind.

126. On hearing these words lovingly spoken by the girls, the Lord narrated those incidents which took place in their lives and that of his.

Īśvara said:

127. Listen, O Nāga girls, with concentrated attention, all the three of you. I shall narrate the (details of) your as well as his previous birth.

128. This Ratnāvalī was formerly a female dove and that leader of Vidyādharas was a male dove, her husband.

129. They spent a long time very comfortably in my palace here. With the winds of their wings, they removed the dust particles sticking to the (various parts of) the palace.

130. Many circumambulations were performed both above and below by them hovering in the sky or fluttering about in my courtyard.

131. They took their bath in the Caturṇada Tīrtha and drank the water too there many times. Pleasing chirping sound also was made by the pigeons for the pleasure (of the devotees).

132. Various joyous and pleasant activities of my devotees here were watched by these two with great pleasure and steadfast mind.

133. Many times the auspicious lights shown to me were seen by them and the nectarine syllables of my names had been imbibed through the ears.

134. Due to the powerful influence of the (sub-human) bird life they led, they did not die in my presence. Of course, they died in Ayodhyā that is competent to accord the attainment of Kāśī.

135. By virtue of their death in Ayodhyā, she became the daughter of Ratnadīpa and her husband was born as the son of the Vidyādhara.

136-137. I shall tell you the previous birth of this Serpent girl Prabhāvātī who has become the daughter of Padmin, the Nāga King. This Kalāvātī is the daughter of Triśikha, the king of Serpents. Listen to her antecedents too. I shall narrate.

138. In their third previous birth these two girls were well-behaved daughters of Sage Ārāyaṇa. They loved each other very much.

139. Urged by themselves, they were given (in marriage) to Nārāyaṇa, the son of Āmuṣyāyaṇa by their father Ārāyaṇa.

140. Nārāyaṇa who had not by then attained his youth, had once gone to fetch sacrificial twigs. As fate would have it, he was bitten by a serpent in forest.

141. The names of the daughters of Ārāyaṇa were Bhavānī and Gautamī. They met with the misery of widowhood. They found themselves in a wretched condition.

142. Hence a sensible man should scrupulously avoid marrying a girl named after a goddess or a river.

143. Incidentally once these two girls, out of delusion, plucked banana fruits without being permitted, from the wonderful hermitage of a certain sage.

144. Though they had performed many rites and vows such as fasting for a month etc., the daughters of the Brāhmaṇa died in due course and became monkeys in the next birth.

145. As a result of the theft of fruits, they attained the state (birth) of monkeys. Due to the merit of preserving their modesty, they were born in Kāśī.

146. That Brāhmaṇa Nārāyaṇa attending to the service of his father dutifully, became a pigeon in Kāśī after being bitten by a serpent.

147. In his earlier birth he was their husband thus. Now he will be the husband of you three.

148. There was a great Nyagrodha (holy fig) tree at the side of the palace (temple of Śiva). Those two became the monkeys living on that tree with many branches.

149. They playfully immersed themselves in the Catuṣsrotasvinī (four streams) Tīrtha. When they were thirsty, they drank the water from the same Tīrtha.

150. In view of the natural fickleness of their life they playfully circumambulated the mansion (of Śiva) and visited the Liṅga many times.

151. While they were wandering thus very freely near the Nyagrodha tree, they were caught and bound with ropes by someone in the garb of a Yogin.

152. They were taught simian gambolling tricks and dances for the purpose of getting alms. In course of time those two monkeys died somewhere.

153. Thanks to the merit of living in Kāśī and service to Trilocana in the form of circumambulation etc., they were born as serpent girls.

154. Now all of you will attain that Vidyādhara prince as your husband and will enjoy heavenly pleasures and ultimately attain salvation in Kāśī.

155. If any auspicious rite howsoever small or insignificant, is performed in Kāśī, certainly the result thereof is salvation by my blessings.

156. Of all the cities in the entire three worlds, the city of Vārāṇasī is the most excellent. There too the Omkāra Liṅga is excellent and even more excellent is Trilocana here.

157. Stationed here in this Liṅga, I grant salvation to the devotees. Hence with all effort Trilocana is to be worshipped in Kāśī.

158. After saying this, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas entered the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine, regaining his form that is (invisible and) beyond the ken of mind and words—the form that is more perfect than (anything else) in the three worlds.

159. Those girls too went to their respective abodes and reported everything that had happened to their mothers. They thought themselves blessed and contented.

160. Once in the month of Mādhava, the day of the great religious festival arrived. The Vidyādharas and the Nāgas met together along with their retinue.

161-162. In the great holy shrine Virajaska in the vicinity of Trilocana, as a result of the boon granted by the Lord, they formally enquired about each other's family antecedents. The Nāgas offered the three princesses to the Vidyādhara (youth).

On getting those three daughters-in-law, Mandāradāman became very pleased.

163. All these three also became delighted, namely Ratnadīpa the Lord of Nāgas, Padmin the Lord of Bhujagas (Serpents) and Trīśikha the leader of Phaṇīs (Cobras).

164. After getting the excellent (Vidyādhara) Parimalālaya as their son-in-law, they became mutual kinsmen and their eyes began to beam with pleasure.

165. After celebrating the marriage, they entered their respective abodes extolling the greatness of Trilocana Liṅga.

166-167. The glorious Vidyādhara youth enjoyed great pleasures along with the Nāga princesses. He reached Vārāṇasī and served Trilocana contentedly singing sweet songs in the company of the Nāga princesses. He then meditated much on the Ātman and merged into the middle of the Liṅga.

Skanda said:

168. The greatness of Trilocana was well-concealed and guarded by the Lord in Kaliyuga. Hence men of inferior intellect do not adore that Liṅga.

169. On hearing this story of Trilocana even a sinful person will become rid of sins and attain the greatest goal.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSEVEN

*The Greatness of Kedāra*¹

Pārvatī said:

1. Obeisance to you, O Lord of the chiefs of Devas. O ocean of kindness for those who bow down, do narrate the

1. 'Kedāra' means 'field'. The Kedāra-Liṅga is not a smooth-surfaced shaft set into a Pīṭha but a rough mound with a white line in the middle like a mound of *Khicharī* cut at half. For king Māndhātṛ offered his half of Khicharī to Śiva in the guise of a guest, when the whole mound turned into a stone Liṅga.

The temple is at the top of Kedāra Ghāt on Gaṅgā and was providentially saved from Aurangzeb's destruction. Kedāreśvara is said to be senior. The section of Kedāra in Vārāṇasī is regarded as the most sacred part of Kāśī. (BCL 136-142)

greatness of Kedāra out of compassion for the devotees.

2. The great love you show to that Liṅga in Kāśī is superb. The devotees thereof, O Lord of Devas, are persons of great intelligence.

Devadeva said:

3. Listen, O Aparṇā, I shall narrate to you the details of the tale of Kedāreśvara, on hearing which even a sinner becomes instantly rid of all sins.

4. If a man is desirous of going to Kedāra and if he has so resolved in his mind, all his sins acquired since his birth perish instantly.

5. If a man has set out from his house with an intention to go in the direction of Kedāra, the sins acquired in the course of two births go away from his body.

6. As soon as he reaches half the way, the sins committed in the course of three births get out of their abode in his body and go away in despair sighing grievously.

7. One who continues to stay in the house repeating "Kedāra, Kedāra, Kedāra" thrice in the evening, shall certainly attain the benefit of the pilgrimage (to Kedāra).

8. By visiting the mountain peak of Kedāra, and by drinking the water (of Kedāra Tīrtha) a devotee shall undoubtedly be rid of the sins acquired in the course of seven births.

9. By taking the holy ablution in Harapāpa Hrada and by worshipping Kedāreśa, a devotee is undoubtedly rid of the sins acquired in the course of a crore of births.

10. After bowing down to Kedāra once and performing all water libation rites in the Harapāpa Tīrtha, a devotee shall fix the Liṅga in the lotus-like heart. On death he will attain salvation.

11. He who performs Śrāddha with great faith in Harapāpa Hrada, redeems seven generations. He will then attain my world.

12. O Aparṇā, listen with great attention to what happened formerly in the Rathantara Kalpa. I shall describe it to you.

13. The son of a Brāhmaṇa came here from Ujjayinī. After the investiture with the sacred thread had been performed by his father, he adopted the vow of celibacy.

14-16. He visited the holy spot of Kāśī of Paśupati and saw it all around. It was full of Brāhmaṇa followers of Paśupati, adorned with crown-like matted hairs. They regularly adored the Liṅgas. Their bodies were embellished with holy ash. They were contented with the meals got by way of alms. They nourished themselves with the nectarine waters of Gaṅgā. He became highly delighted in his mind and got initiated in the most excellent *Vrata* called *Mahāpāśupata* by the preceptor Hiraṇyagarbha.

17-18. That disciple Vaśiṣṭha (of that name, or having perfect control of sense-organs) became the most excellent one among the Pāśupatas. Everyday he got up early in the morning and took his bath in Harapāpa Hrada. He took the bath with *Vibhūti* (holy ash) and also adored the Liṅga three times everyday. He never differentiated between Śiva Liṅga and his preceptor.

19. That disciple Vaśiṣṭha aged roughly twelve years went on pilgrimage to Kedāra in the great Mountain, the father of Gaurī.

20. After going there and imbibing the water in the form of Liṅga, the devotees assume the form of Liṅga and they never become grief-stricken like worldly men.

21. After reaching the mountain Asidhāra, the preceptor named Hiraṇyagarbha of the ascetic Vaśiṣṭha passed away.

22. Even as the sages were watching, the attendants (of Śiva) joyously took him to Kailāsa in an aerial chariot covetable unto all.

23. He who has started from his house towards Kedāra but casts off his vital airs midway without any trace of cowardice, shall live in Kailāsa for a long time.

24. On observing this miracle, the ascetic Vaśiṣṭha decided that Kedāra alone is worthy of the greatest honour among all Liṅgas.

25-26. After concluding the pilgrimage to Kedāra he returned to Vārāṇasī. He took up a resolve and later acted accordingly: 'As long as I live I shall certainly visit Kedāra on the Pūrṇimā day every year in the month of Caitra while residing in the city of Vārāṇasī.'

27. He joyously and perfectly made sixty-one such pilgrimages staying as a celibate religious student in Ānandakānana permanently.

28-31. On the next Caitra month also he made prepara-

tion for the pilgrimage with great pleasure and enthusiasm, though he was assailed by old age and greying hairs and though he was dissuaded by the (other) ascetics who suspected that he would die and also by other associates with hearts full of compassion. Still there was no loss in his enthusiasm because his mind was steadfast. The pure sage Vaśiṣṭha decisively resolved in his mind thus: 'Even if I die midway I shall have salvation like my preceptor.' Further he never took in food given by Śūdras. O Caṇḍikā, hence I became pleased with him.

32-36. Vaśiṣṭha, the excellent sage, was told by me in dream: "O ascetic of steadfast vow, I am pleased. Know that I am Kedāra. Unhesitatingly request for any desired boon from me." Even when I said thus, he insisted that the dream was false. Thereupon, he was again assured by me: "It is a dream of persons who are not pure that is false; but not so in the case of people like you who behave in the manner befitting their name (i.e. Vaśiṣṭha = having full-control of the senses). Tell me the boon you will have. O Brāhmana, leave off your doubts regarding the dream. There is nothing which I cannot or will not give you who are full of Sattva quality." On hearing this statement of mine, Hiranyagarbha's disciple, the most excellent one among saints, choose the boon thus:

37. "If you, the Lord of Devas, are pleased, then all these people along with their followers, O Trident-wielding Lord, should be blessed. This alone is my boon."

38. O goddess, on hearing these words of that (sage) by nature helpful to others, I became extremely pleased and said to him, "It will be so."

39. By his further act of rendering help to others, his penance became doubly effective. On account of that merit, he was further urged by me, "Choose (another) boon."

40. That highly intelligent Vaśiṣṭha, steadfast in his Pāśupata vow, O goddess, requested for my stay here away from the mountain Himālaya.

41. Then, attracted by his penance I stationed myself there on the Himālaya Mountain with only a sixteenth of my power but here with the full-complement thereof.

42-43. Then, when the day dawned, even as all were watching, I eulogized by Suras and sages, started from Himālaya keeping Vaśiṣṭha in front accompanied by all of his followers. After

arriving here. I stationed myself in the Harapāpa Hrada Tīrtha for obliging him.

44. All these persons who offered libations with water in Harapāpa and propitiated me, have attained Siddhi with their own physical forms with my favour.

45. Ever since then I have been stationed in this Liṅga in the great holy spot of Avimukta for conferring Siddhi on the aspirants especially in the age of Kali.

46. By seeing Kedāra in Kāśī one obtains seven times as much merit as obtained by visiting Kedāra after climbing Himālaya.

47. In Kāśī we have everything that is there in Kedāra, like Gaurī Kuṇḍa, Haṁsa Tīrtha devoid of impurities and Madhusravā ('honey-pouring') Gaṅgā.

48. This Harapāpa Tīrtha is destructive of the sins acquired in the course of seven births. Afterwards when it mingles with Gaṅgā it becomes destructive of the sins committed in crores of births.

49. Here (in the Haṁsa Tīrtha), formerly two ravens who were fighting in the sky had fallen. Even as the people assembled there were watching, they transformed themselves into swans and came out.

50. O Gaurī, formerly you had taken your bath in this great *Hrada*. Ever since then, it is well-known as Gaurī Tīrtha. It is the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas.

51. The Amṛtasravā (nectar-pouring) Gaṅgā here dispels the darkness of great delusion. It destroys the ignorance produced in the course of many births.

52. The Holy Mānasa lake performed a great penance here formerly. Hence among the people, this has become renowned as Mānasa Tīrtha.

53-57. Formerly here men became liberated merely by taking their bath. Afterwards, I was propitiated by the Devas who had difficulty in attaining salvation, by saying, "All should become liberated." (Then I said) "If Devas or human beings take their holy bath in Kedāra Kuṇḍa, they will have progress (and salvation). So it will grant salvation to people of all castes, stages of life and righteousness practised merely by casting off the bodies here and not otherwise." Then at his importunity, I said, "So be it." Ever since then, O great goddess, I am granting salvation to those who cast off their bodies elsewhere

too, if they take bath in Kedāra Kuṇḍa, devoutly worship me and repeat my names.

58. If a devotee takes bath in the Kedāra Tīrtha and offers balls of rice without hurrying through the riṭes, a hundred and one generations of his family cross the ocean of worldly existence.

59. When new-moon day coincides with a Tuesday, one should go to Kedāra Kuṇḍa and offer Śrāddha. If so, of what avail is Gayā Śrāddha?

60. Advice should be given thus to a person who is desirous of going to Kedāra (i.e. in the Himālaya) by other men: "Touching Kedāra (Līṅga) in Kāśī, you will be one who has done his duty."

61. On the fourteenth day in the dark half of Caitra, a devotee should observe fast and drink three mouthfuls of water. He thus occupies the *Hṛllīṅga*.

62. There is no doubt about this that men and women will obtain that benefit here itself that is obtained there, by drinking the water of Kedāra.

63. By honouring, adoring a devotee of Kedāra with clothes, food, monetary gifts etc., one dispels the sin committed ever since the birth and goes to my abode.

64. Yama and other guardians of the worlds will bow down always to that person who bows down to Kedāreśa three times a day, for a period of six months.

65. In the Kali age, anyone and everyone will not understand the greatness of Kedāra. A man of meritorious soul who understands that, will certainly understand everything.

66. By visiting Kedāreśa even once, O goddess, a man becomes my follower. Hence one shall assiduously visit Kedāreśa in Kāśī.

67. Citrāṅgadeśvara Līṅga is to the north of Kedāra. It is very auspicious. By continuously worshipping it, a man enjoys heavenly pleasures.

68-72. To the south of Kedāra is Nīlakaṇṭha. By visiting it one who is bitten by the serpent of worldly existence, need not be afraid of the poison i.e., misery. To the north-west thereof is Ambarīṣeśa. A man who visits it is never compelled to stay in a womb in the miserable worldly existence. By worshipping Indradyumneśvara Līṅga in its vicinity, a devotee

goes to heaven in a luminous vehicle and enjoys. The man will visit Kālañjareśvara Liṅga to the south thereof. He will conquer old age and Kāla and live in my world for a long time. By visiting Kṣemeśvara Liṅga to the north of Citrāṅgadeśvara, a devotee obtains welfare everywhere, both in this world and elsewhere.

Skanda said:

73-74. O Enemy of Vindhya, the supreme greatness of Kedāra was thus recounted by the Lord of Devas formerly to Ambā. It has been recounted to you by me. A man becomes contented and blessed by listening to the origin of Kedāreśvara Liṅga. He becomes rid of sins instantly and attains Śiva's world.

CHAPTER SEVENTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Dharmesa¹

Pārvatī said:

1-4. O Śāmbhu, O Īśāna, narrate to me (the qualities of) that Liṅga in Ānandakānana, which causes increase in merit. Merely by remembering the name of it great sins get annihilated. The Liṅga should be always resorted to by the aspirants; where a devotee will have the most excellent delight. Here the result of what is gifted, offered in the sacred fire, repeatedly muttered and meditated upon is of everlasting merit. Remembering it, visiting, bowing down to and touching this Liṅga and adoration of it and bathing with Pañcāmṛta etc. shall result in a series of benefits.

Skanda said:

5. O Pot-born One, I shall expound to you what is recounted by the omniscient Lord, on hearing the request of the goddess. Please listen.

1. Situated to the east of Viśvanātha Temple near Dharma Kūpa.

Devadeva said:

6. O Umā, what is asked by you is conducive to release from the bondage of worldly existence. There I shall extol the Liṅga. Be steady in mind.

7. This is the greatest secret of mine in Ānandakānana here. It has not been revealed to anyone by me. Nor does anyone know what to ask about it.

8. O my beloved, in Ānandavana there are many of my Liṅgas, but I shall recount to you only what you have asked.

9. It is here, O Viśvagā (Omnipresent One), that you are yourself present in the form of Mukti (Liberation) and here your son is also present destroying obstacles.

10. When I was desirous of victory in the battle with Tripuras, my hope thereof was fulfilled by the offer of eulogy and many gifts of Modakas (sweetmeats) here.

11. Here is a Tīrtha that increases the pleasure of ancestors and destroys sins; it was by taking his bath here that the Slayer of Vṛtra (Indra) became rid of the sins of killing Vṛtra (a Brāhmaṇa).

12. It was here that Dharmarāja (Yama) obtained Dharmādhikaraṇa (authority over matters pertaining to merit and demerit and their rewards and punishment) after performing a very difficult penance with the greatest concentration.

13. Here itself birds obtained knowledge that effected liberation from worldly existence. There is a beautiful golden tree here with many roots.

14. It was after visiting the Liṅga here that the king named Durdama became pious-minded instantly though he had previously outraged all the worlds.

15. O beautiful lady, listen to the origin and the greatness of that Liṅga. It is destructive of great sins. I shall recount it.

16. Here in my Ānandavana, it is specifically called Dharmapīṭha. By visiting that Dharmapīṭha alone, a man is liberated from sins.

17. Formerly, in front of you, O Viśālākṣī, Yama, the son of Sun-god, performed a severe penance with great self-control.

18-21. During winter he used to stand in water; during rainy season he used to stand directly under the sky; and during summer he used to stand in the middle of five fires. Some-

times he performed the penance standing for a long time, touching the ground with the tips of his feet (i.e. big toes). Sometimes he stood on a single leg for a long time. That fortunate one had the intake of only air for a long time. When he felt thirsty, he drank only a few drops of water through the tips of *Darbhas*. Performing the penance thus, he spent the period of a cycle of four Yugas in accordance with the reckoning of Devas, with the greatest concentration and mental absorption to see me four times.

22. Then becoming pleased with the penance of that steady-minded (Dharma), I went there to grant the boons to the noble-souled Śamana (Yama).

23-31. There was a banayan tree called Kāñcana-śākha ('having golden branches') according shelter to many birds and having extensive shade which removed his distress due to the penance.

When gentle wind shook the tender sprouts resembling hands, it appeared as though it invited the wayfarers distressed due to their travel and as if it wanted to remove their fatigue. The tree delighted groups of suppliants very much through their round fruits which were fully ripe and tasty emitting fragrance and affection.

Beneath it I saw the distinguished son of the Sun-god with the body straight and motionless like a post. His eyes were fixed at the tip of his nose. He resembled the Sun in the blue sky surrounded by his own radiance, when the brilliance of his own austerities made a halo around him.

He had installed a great Liṅga named after himself (i.e. Dharmeśvara Liṅga) which was made of crystalline solar stone and worshipped with great devotion as if with a mass of splendour.

Yama was performing the penance keeping this Liṅga as witness.

I spoke to Dharmarāja: "O Bhāskari ('son of the Sun-god'), speak out the boon you would have, O highly fortunate one. Enough of your continuance of penance, O splendid-vowed one. I am delighted." On hearing this and seeing me Śamana bowed down. The son of the Sun-god whose sense-organs and mind were delighted stopped his meditation and eulogized with genuine sincerity.

Prayer of Dharma:
(32-41)

Dharma said:

32. Obeisance, obeisance, O cause of all causes. Obeisance, obeisance to one without a cause. Obeisance, obeisance to you, the presiding deity of all effects. Obeisance, O Lord with a form different from effects.

33. Obeisance to one in the form of formlessness. Obeisance to one having all the forms. Obeisance to the subtlest one; obeisance to one identical with cause and effect. Obeisance to Apārāra (the perfect and extensive one). Obeisance to one according access to the other shore of the greatest ocean (*Samsāra*). Obeisance to you, the moon-crested one.

34. You are Anīśvara (having no other Lord over you). You are the lord of the universe. You are identical with the Guṇas. You are free from attributes; you are beyond Kāla (Time). You are beyond Prakṛti. Obeisance to you, the embodiment of Kāla (Time). Obeisance to you, O ultimate cause devouring Kāla (Time, god of Death).

35. You alone are the bestower of the status of salvation, O Lord of infinite power. You alone are the salvation (personified). You are identical with the individual soul; you are the supreme soul. You are the immanent soul of the mobile and immobile beings.

36. O sole kinsman of the universe, the universe originates from you; you are directly the universe itself; and the universe is yours. You are the first creator, the protector and the annihilator. Obeisance, obeisance to you, O Lord of Vidhātṛ (Brahmā) and Viṣṇu.

37. You are Mṛḍa (bestower of happiness) unto those who follow the path of the Vedas; you alone are Bhīma ('the terrible one') unto those who do not follow the path of the Vedas. O Soma ('one with Umā as his consort'), you are the benefactor of those having excellent devotion. O Rudra, you are Ugra ('the fierce one') to those devoid of devotion.

38. You alone are Śūlin ('the trident-bearer') unto the enemies; you alone are Śiva ('the auspicious one') unto those with humble mind and polite words. You are the sole Śrīkaṇṭha ('glorious-throated one') to those who resort to your feet. You

are the fierce-throated one with the poison Halāhala to the wicked ones.

39. I offer obeisance to you, O Śaṅkara, the quiescent one. Obeisance to you, O Śaṁbhu, embellished with the digit of the moon; obeisance to you, the lord with serpents for ornaments. O Lord having Pināka in the hand, obeisance to the enemy of Andhaka.

40. He alone is blessed who has devotion unto you. He alone who is your worshipper is meritorious. He who always eulogizes you, shall be eulogized by Indra and other Devas.

41. O Lord with infinite power, who like me with very limited intellectual power can eulogize you adequately—you who are incomprehensible to the words of the ancients? This prayer unto you is mere bowing down unto you.

Skanda said:

42. After uttering (this prayer) the son of the Sun-god said, "Obeisance to Śiva with great devotion." With great delight he touched the ground with his head and bowed down to Śaṁbhu a thousand times.

43. Then Śiva, the Lord, prevented him from further obeisances as he was already distressed due to the penance and granted the boons to the son of the Seven-horsed One (the Sun-god): "You be Dharmarāja by name also.

44. You alone have been employed by me in the administration of Dharma unto all embodied beings, mobile as well as immobile. At my behest rule over all. Your duty commences today.

45. You are the Lord of the southern direction. Be the witness unto the Karmas of all creatures. May the good and the bad ones from the mortal world attain the goal of their respective Karmas along the path pointed out by you.

46. O Dharma, men shall obtain without delay the Siddhi by visiting, touching and worshipping this Liṅga which has been propitiated here by you with full devotion unto me.

47. If any man of spotlessly pure mind takes his holy bath here in this Dharma Tīrtha in front and visits at least once Dharmeśvara, the achievement of the aims of life is not out of his reach.

48. If in spite of committing a thousand sins, any one

sees Dharmeśvara by chance, he will not suffer from hellish pain at any time; the immortal ones speak highly about him in heaven.

49. If any man does not endeavour for his good even after obtaining Dharmapīṭha at Kāśī, O Dharmā of exceeding splendour, how can he, like you, make himself one of fulfilled duty?

50. There is no doubt about this that the desires of the devotees of Dharmeśvara will become fruitful as in your case. O Dharmarāja, all your cherished desires have been attained by you through your excessive austerities.

51. Wherefore should one be afraid if he performs even once the adoration of Dharmeśvara, despite commission of great sins here? A devotee of the Liṅga worshipped by you is your own kindred.

52. If anyone adores Dharmeśvara, O Dharmā, with a leaf, flower, water or Dūrvā grass, the Devas with nectar as their food will be exceedingly delighted and they will honour him with garlands of the divine Mandāra flowers.

53. (Usually) people who commit sins are afraid of you. But they need never be afraid if only they make arrangement for the adoration of Dharmeśvara and thereby captivate your mind through kinship.

54. O Dharmā, even in the future Yugas (and Kalpas) whatever men offer here in the Dharmapīṭha after having their holy dip in the celestial river and bowing down to your Liṅga becomes everlasting.

55. Those men who observe fast on the eighth lunar day in the bright half of the month of Kārttika and celebrate the festivities, keeping awake during the night, before Dharmeśvara, are not born again on the earth.

56. Those men who recite this prayer uttered by you in front of your (Liṅga) become free of sins, go to my world and attain your companionship.

57. O Dharmarāja, the son of the storehouse of splendour (the Sun), ask for any other boon desired by you. I shall grant it to you. There is nothing here which cannot be given to you. Simply make the effort of uttering the word."

58. On seeing Śāṅkara full of mercy and delighted in form ready to bestow everything he cherished in his mind

(Yama) became immersed in the lake of a mass of bliss. For a moment he was unable to utter anything.

CHAPTER SEVENTYNINE

Dharmesākhyānam (Episode of Dharma)

Skanda said:

1. On seeing that his throat was choked with tears of joy, Mr̥ḍa (Śiva), the ocean of nectar, touched him with both the hands exuding nectar.

2. With the joy of his touch, Dharmarāja of great austerities, whose body had been burnt in the fire of penance, put forth sprouts once again (i.e. became nourished).

3. Then the son of Bradhna (the Sun-god) said to Umāpati, the Lord of Devas, who was quiescent, joyous in countenance and surrounded by the tranquil attendants:

4. "O omniscient Īsāna, O storehouse of mercy, if you are pleased, of what avail is another boon, because you have been seen in person by me?"

5. If I am considered worthy of being granted a boon (because I have seen you directly), to you whom neither the Vedas nor the Vedic Puruṣas (i.e. Brahmā and Viṣṇu) know adequately, I shall then make this request, O Lord:

6-7. O Śrīkaṇṭha, be the grantor of boons to these young ones of birds, the parrots who speak sweetly and were witnesses to my penance for a long time, who have been deprived of their parents but who are conversant with the stories of mythology and who have eschewed their food and play.

8. While giving birth to these the she-parrot being attacked by a sickness (v.l. pain of delivery) passed away and the he-pigeon was eaten by a hawk.

9. O Lord of the helpless ones, these helpless birds have been always looking up to my face and were protected by you in the remaining part of their life."

10-12. On hearing these words of Dharma, pure because they were intended to help others, O sage, Śāmbhu called

those young ones of the parrot. They bowed down their heads with humility. He who was so delighted with Dharma said: "O birds, O good ones in association with Dharma, what boon has to be given to you all who served Dharmeśa and whose great sins of the previous births have become nullified due to contact with saintly people?"

13-14. On hearing these words of Maheśa, those birds after bowing down to the Lord of Devas submitted to him:

The Birds said:

Obeisance to you, O destroyer of worldly birth, O Lord of helpless ones, O omniscient one, O three-eyed Lord, what boon should be desired by us beyond this that we have been seen (by you) despite our being of the brutish category?

15. May there be hundreds and hundreds of profits, O Girīśa, unto the persons of great enterprise and efforts here; but this is the greatest profit that you should be within the range of our vision.

16. O Lord, these things that are visible are entirely momentary. You alone are permanent and free from destruction. The worship done unto you is not momentary (in yielding fruit).

17. By viewing the adoration of the Liṅga performed by this sage (Yama), we are able to recollect crores of our births of diverse nature.

18. O Lord, we have had our births in the category (life) of the celestial ones for a long time. Thousands of divine damsels had been enjoyed sportively.

19. We have had our births in the womb of Asuras, Dānavas, Nāgas, Nairṛtas, Kinnaras, Vidyādhara and Gandharvas.

20. While being human we have attained the status of kings many times; in water (we had) the state of aquatic beings and on the ground the state of ground walkers.

21. We have been forest-dwellers in the forests, rustic ones in villages; we have been donors and beggars, protectors and murderers.

22. We have been happy and we have been miserable too. We had become the victorious ones as well as the vanquished ones.

23. We have been serious students and the dullest fools; we have been masters as well as servants. We have had births in the four types of living beings (oviparous, viviparous, sweat-born and shooting shrubs) of high level, medium level and the basest one.

24. From one womb to another and to a third therefrom, we have various forms. O Śāmbhu, but nowhere did we have any stability.

25-26. O Pināka-wielding One, not even the least quantum of happiness was attained by us anywhere. But now, thanks to our accumulated merits, we have visited Dharmeśvara. Our sins have been burnt by the flames of the fire of the austerities of the son of Tapana (the Sun-god). O Three-eyed Lord, on seeing you directly we have become blessed. We feel the satisfaction of having achieved our objective.

27-28. Still, if a boon is to be given, O Dhūrjaṭi, O omniscient one, grant that knowledge to the miserable, pitiable creatures like us—knowledge whereby we can be released from this worldly bondage. We are fettered and by the bonds of Māyā not to be easily cut by persons like we.

29. O Śāmbhu, we do not covet the position of Indra, not that of the Moon, nor do we covet anything else. We desire only the death at Kāśī after which there is no rebirth.

30. O omniscient one, we understand everything due to your presence in the vicinity, just as all trees gain fragrance due to contact with a Sandal tree.

31. This itself is (the cause of) the great knowledge that brings about the destruction of worldly existence, namely casting off of the body at the proper time in your Ānandakāna.

32. Formerly this great essence has been extracted and stated by Brahmā after churning the entire verbal expanse: (There is) 'Salvation to those who cast off the body at Kāśī.'

33. What could be expounded through many passages was uttered by Hari to Ravi (the Sun) in eight syllables: "Kaivalya (Salvation) in dying at Kāśī" (*kaivalyam kāśīsamsthītau*).

34. The excellent sage Yājñavalkya said in the assembly of sages: "Having studied the Nigamas (scriptures) from Ravi (Sun-god), the great position (salvation is to be gained) in Kāśī in the end."

35. Formerly this alone was said by you too to Jagaddhātṛi

(Goddess Pārvatī, the mother of the universe) on the Mandāra Mountain: “Kāśī is the birth-place of salvation.”

36. O Śāmbhu, Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (Vyāsa) too will be saying this, “Where Viśveśvara is directly present salvation is acquired there at every step.”

37. Other ancient sages, Lomaśa and others, who establish holy spots, say, “Kāśikā is the illuminator of salvation.”

38. We too know thus: Certainly there alone is salvation, in Ānandakānana, where the celestial river flows.

39. We know everything that happens in heaven, in the mortal world and in the nether worlds—the past, the present and the future, due to the great blessings of Dharmeśa.

40. That is how, O Śāmbhu, we know all these, the utterances of Hiraṇyagarbha (Brahmā), Hari, the sage and Your Lordship as well.

41. Due to our resorting to Dharmapīṭha, the entire Cosmic Egg is within the range of our verbal expression like a fruit of Emblic Myrobalan on the palm.

42. O Lord, even we, birds, have become the possessors of undoubted knowledge in its entirety, due to the power of penance of Dharmarāja.

43-45. On hearing the speech of the birds, beneficial, soft, sweet, truthful, self-evident through experience, polished, brief (to the point), explained with illustration, the Lord became excessively surprised. He himself then extolled the magnificence of the *Pīṭha*: “Among all the cities in the three worlds, Kāśī is my royal palace. There too the mansion of enjoyment is built of jewels of inestimable value. My palace named Mokṣalakṣmīvilāsa (‘Graceful sport of the Goddess of the glory of Salvation’) is the place of origin of great weal.

46. By circumambulating it, even birds become liberated. So also the Devas who walk in the firmament and move about as they please.

47. By viewing the palace named Mokṣalakṣmīvilāsa even the sin of the slaughter of a Brāhmaṇa goes away from the body. Not by any other means.

48. *Nidhānakalaśas* (‘treasure pots’) do not become separated anywhere from those people by whom the *Kalaśa* (pinnacle-dome) of Mokṣalakṣmīvilāsa is seen.

49. They will always be my guests—they by whom the

banner fluttering aloft my palace was seen even from far away.

50. This is a great mysterious shooting sprout of the bulbous root named Ānanda, which has pierced the ground and issued forth under the pretext of that palace.

51. There, many forms beginning with Brahmā and ending with an immobile being are painted in pictures, and it is surprising that (even) they adore me always.

52. In the entire world that mansion is the sole place of my greatest happiness. It is the beautiful chamber of my sports. It is my ground of confidence.

53. Although I am omnipresent, this palace is my great resort. I am that Supreme Brahmā well-known through the great words of the Upaniṣads. Though unembodied I shall also become embodied to do favour to the devotees.

54. To the south thereof is the *Dhāman* (abode) of the *Naiḥśreyasī Śrī* ('Glory of Salvation')—my pavilion. I stay there always. That is my *Sadomaṇḍapa* ('Assembly Hall').

55. If anyone stands there motionless for the duration of half a Nimeṣa, it is as good as if Yoga has been practised by him for a hundred years.

56. That spot is named *Nirvāṇamaṇḍapa*. It is well-known all-over the earth. One who chants (even) a single ṚK (Vedic verse) there, shall obtain the benefit.

57. If anyone performs a single Prāṇāyāma in the Mukti Maṇḍapa it is on a par with the eight-limbed (of eight stages) Yoga practised elsewhere for ten thousand years.

58. If anyone utters the six-syllabled Mantra (i.e. *om namaḥ śivāya*) once in Nirvāṇamaṇḍapa, he will derive the same benefit as is obtained by repeating the Rudra Mantra a crore times.

59. A devotee who takes his bath in the water of Gaṅgā remains pure (in body, mind and speech). One who repeats *Śatarudriya* in Nirvāṇamaṇḍapa should be known as Rudra himself in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa.

60. By performing *Brahma Yajña* in the southern Maṇḍapa once, one attains Brahmāloka and realizes the Supreme Brahman.

61. If without any personal desire, one reads Dharma Śāstra, Purāṇas and Itihāsas there, one shall stay in my abode.

62. If one stands in the Nirvāṇamaṇḍapa for a moment with the fickleness of the senses dispelled, he will be blessed

as one who has done his duty, whereas elsewhere he has to perform a great penance (to get the same result).

63. By observing silence for half a Ghaṭikā in the Southern Maṇḍapa, one attains the same merit as is obtained elsewhere through the austerity of living solely on the intake of wind for a hundred years.

64. If in the Mukti Maṇḍapa anyone makes a gift of gold, even if it be a *Kṛṣṇalaka* (i.e. Ratti) in weight, he moves about in heaven in a golden vehicle.

65. A devotee may perform the rite of *Jāgaraṇa* ('keeping awake at night') there on any day after observing fast. Then he should adore the Liṅga. He will attain the merit of having observed all *Vratas*.

66. By making great gifts there, by performing great *Vratas* there and by learning all the Vedas there, the man does not fall from the heavenly region.

67. A man whose vital airs make their exit in my Mukti Maṇḍapa, will enter me and become stationed here as long as I stay here.

68. In Jñānavāpī I shall have aquatic sports always along with Umā. Merely by drinking the water thereof, one gets knowledge devoid of impurities.

69. That spot for aquatic sports is extremely delightful to me. In this royal abode, it is filled with water that dispels sluggishness.

70. In front of that palace is my *Śṛṅgāramaṇḍapa* (Pavilion for enjoyment, elegant dress and makeup etc.). This should be known as Śrī Pīṭha bestowing glory and wealth on those who are devoid of it.

71-73. A person who makes for my sake gifts of pure silk clothes, garlands of various kinds, together with *Yakṣakardama* (fragrant ointment prepared with saffron, camphor etc.), ornaments and embellishments of various kinds and the materials required for worship, shall be adorned with glory. Wherever that excellent man may stay, the Glory of Salvation will woo him for accepting the acquisition of the status of salvation. It does not matter where he meets with his death (he will certainly have salvation).

74. To the north of the palace called *Mokṣalakṣmīvilāsa* is the beautiful *Aiśvarya Maṇḍapa* (Pavilion of opulence and

Royal Glory). It is there that I bestow *Aiśvarya* (opulence).

75. To the eastern side of my palace, there is the *Jñāna Maṇḍapa*. There I grant the (spiritual) knowledge to the good people who meditate on me.

76. In the royal mansion of Bhavānī (?) there is my culinary hall which I enter joyously to accept whatever is offered there, which yields merits (to the donor).

77. My floor of rest (*Viśrāmbhūmikā*) is the great mansion of *Viśālākṣī*. There I bestow ultimate rest (salvation) on those who are distressed due to worldly existence.

78. *Cakrapuṣkariṇī* is the Tīrtha for my regular (midday) bath. To those persons who take their holy bath there, I grant that freedom from impurities (salvation).

79. At the end there, I grant that which they call the supreme truth, that which they mention as the excellent Brahman, that the realization of which emerges from within.

80. At the end there, I grant that which they call the knowledge giving redemption, that which they call supremely pure and that which they call that resting within its own soul.

81. Here there is the excellent *Maṇikarṇikā* which is the source of auspiciousness unto the universe. There I redeem from fetters *Paśus* (ignorant beings) bound by *Karmas*.

82. In the matter of granting salvation there, I never think whether they deserve it or not. In *Ānandakānana* that is my place of giving gifts day and night.

83. To the living beings which get drowned in the most unfathomable ocean of worldly existence I become the sole helmsman and I take them across (the ocean of *Samsāra*).

84. *Maṇikarṇikā* is very famous as the fortunate source of conjugal bliss. There I give everything unto both a *Brāhmaṇa* and a *Śūdra*.

85. In *Maṇikarṇikā* even pitiable ones attain that salvation which is very difficult to obtain elsewhere even by those who resort to the knowledge of Brahman and those richly endowed with the practice of great *Samādhi* (i.e. *Yoga*).

86. Whether he be an initiated one or a *Cāṇḍāla*, whether an erudite scholar or an illiterate fellow, once he comes to *Maṇikarṇikā* everyone is equal unto me in the matter of granting salvation.

87. After reaching *Maṇikarṇikā* I give unto all creatures

everything that was accumulated for a long time, the asset of liberation, in granting which I am miserly elsewhere.

88-89. If by chance the extremely difficult, simultaneous combination of three entities is obtained here, unhesitatingly should one accept the entire thing that had been accumulated for a long time. This simultaneous combination of three viz. physical body, wealth and Maṇikarṇikā, is unobtainable to even Indra and other Devas.

90. After considering this again and again I perpetually grant the glory of salvation to all creatures (without any distinction) who approach Maṇikarṇikā.

91. In Vārāṇasī that is the spot for the grant of salvation for me. In all the three worlds there is nothing similar to the dust particles of that spot.

92. Avimukteśvareśvara is the greatest spot of adoration of the Liṅga. By worshipping it there even once, a man will have the satisfaction of having done his duty.

93. I shall perform the evening Sandhyā rite in accordance with Pāśupata cult in the Paśupatiśvara shrine. By applying the holy ash there, a devotee can avoid Paśupāśa (bonds of Paśus, ignorant souls).

94. I am always performing the early morning Sandhyā rite in Omkāraniketana. Even a single Sandhyā rite performed there destroys all sins.

95. Always on every Caturdaśī (fourteenth lunar day) I stay in Kṛttivāsa. A devotee who performs *Jāgarāṇa* (keeping awake) rite on the Caturdaśī day here is not born in a womb thereafter.

96. If devoutly adored, Ratneśvara bestows great gems. A man who adores that Liṅga with gems, shall get the jewel of a woman and such other things.

97. Though I am stationed in all the three worlds, I abide in the Triviṣṭapa Liṅga always for facilitating the fulfilment of the desires of devotees.

98. There the man will serve the great *Pīṭha* called Virajaska. Thereby he definitely becomes free from Rajas quality. He will perform all aquatic rites in Caturmada (i.e. Pilipilā Tīrtha).

99. In the Mahādeva Liṅga my great *Pīṭha* accords spiritual powers to aspirants. Merely by visiting that *Pīṭha* one is rid of great sins.

100. The *Pīṭha* entitled *Vṛṣabhadhvaja* accords delight to the ancestors. One who offers libation to the ancestors there instantly redeems the *Pitṛs*.

101. I assume the form of Ādi Keśava in Ādikeśavapīṭha. I lead all the loving devotees of Viṣṇu to Śvetadvīpa.

102. There itself near the Pañcanada Tīrtha, in the Maṅgalāpīṭha that bestows all auspiciousness, I redeem the devotees.

103. That is the greatest region of Viṣṇu where I lead in the form of Bindumādhava the devotees of Viṣṇu who take their bath in Pañcanada.

104. Within a short time they attain the greatest salvation—they who serve Vīreśvara in the great *Pīṭha* called Pañcamudra.

105. There, in the vicinity of Candreśvara in Siddheśvaripīṭha, spiritual powers can be attained within six months by those who make themselves present there.

106. *Uccāṭana* (magical power of expulsion) and other Siddhis are obtained by many Sādhakas (spiritual practitioners) in Yoginīpīṭha that bestows Yogasiddhi in Kāśī.

107. There are many *Pīṭhas* in Kāśī at every step. But the power of Dharmeśa Pīṭha is something unique and very excellent.

108. It is there that these young parrots who were crying, 'Save, save' became the receptacles of pure knowledge due to my good advice and instruction.

109. O son of Tarani (Sun-god), I shall never leave off your excellent penance-grove from today, nor this Dharmeśvara Pīṭha.

110. O son of Ravi, see these parrots. They will be going to my great city, with my blessings, seated in a divine aerial chariot.

111. There, they will enjoy pleasures for a long time and acquire the knowledge imparted by me. They are extremely pure, due to your contact. They will attain salvation here."

112. When the Lord of Devas said thus, a divine aerial chariot comparable to the peak of Kailāsa came there embellished with Rudra-Kanyās.

113. Those pure birds assumed divine forms and took leave of Dharma. They then went to Kailāsa, riding in that vehicle.

CHAPTER EIGHTY

*The Vrata Called Manorathatṛtīyā**Skanda said:*

1. O Pot-born One, on seeing that wonderful incident Jagadāmbikā bowed down to the great Lord Śāmbhu, the destroyer of the distress of those who bow down and said:

Ambikā said:

2. O great Lord, O Maheśvara, it is the greatness of this Pīṭha that even brutish (non-human) creatures attained knowledge that facilitates release from worldly existence.

3. Therefore, having understood the power of Dharmapīṭha, O Dhūrjaṭi, I shall stay in the vicinity of Dharmeśvara from this day onwards.

4. I shall always enable the devotees of this Liṅga, be they men or women, to achieve the fulfilment of their desire.

Īśvara said:

5. You have done well, O Goddess, in adopting and supporting this Dharmapīṭha that enables good people to realize their desires.

6. Only they are the enjoyers of all, only they are worthy of being honoured by all, who adore you, O Viśvabhuje, here.

7. O Viśvabhuje, the bestower (cause) of the origin, sustenance and annihilation of Viśva (the universe), people all over the world who worship you here, will become men of pure souls.

8. If anyone performs devotional rites unto you on the third lunar day (in the bright half of Caitra) called Manoratha Tṛtīyā, whatever he desires will be realized, due to my blessings.

9. O beloved, whether it is a woman or a man, the devotee who performs your *Vrata* realizes all desires and in the end obtains (spiritual) knowledge.

Devī said:

10. O Lord, be pleased to tell this: What sort of *Vrata* is

Manoratha Tṛtīyā? What is the story? What is the benefit? By whom has it been observed?

Īśvara said:

11. Listen, O Goddess, O redeemer from worldly existence, I shall answer what has been asked by you. This Manoratha Vrata is a greater secret than the greatest one.

12. Pulomā's daughter (i.e. Śacī) formerly performed a great penance in order to attain some desire, but she did not get the benefit of the penance.

13. Thereupon, she worshipped me joyously with great devotion. She had a sweet melodious voice and she worshipped to the accompaniment of music with the secret (implied) therein.

14. I was extremely delighted by her song which was soft and sweet; the Tāla (beating the time), the setting, the Dhātu (Tānas), Māna and Kāla were excellent.

15. I said, "O Pulomajā, speak out the boon you wish to have. I am delighted by this excellent song and the adoration of the Liṅga."

Pulomajā said:

16. If the Lord of Devas is pleased, O Mahādeva, the great beloved of the great goddess, fulfil the desire I do cherish.

17. May he be my husband, he who is honoured among all Devas, is the most handsome among all the Devas, is the most excellent one among the regular performers of sacrifices.

18. O Bhava, delighted that you are, grant me beauty as desired, happiness as desired and span of life as desired.

19. Whenever with a hearty desire for happiness I do have physical contact with my husband, let me have another body after casting off that one.

20. O Bhava, O destroyer of worldly existence, let my devotion to the adoration of the Linga be excellent, removing old age and death.

21. Even at the departure of the husband, let me not have widowhood even for a moment. O Mahādeva, but my chastity shall not be violated.

Skanda said:

22. On hearing this desire of Paulomī, the Lord, the destroyer of Puras, became surprised for a moment. Smilingly he said:

Īśvara said:

23. O daughter of Pulomā, you will have this desire that you have cherished fulfilled through the observance of a Vrata. Perform it, O lady, with the sense-organs controlled.

24. It will be fulfilled by the observance of Manorathatṛtīyā. I shall describe the Vrata for the fulfilment thereof. Perform it as recounted.

25. If that Vrata which yields great conjugal bliss is performed, O girl, your desire shall definitely be fulfilled.

Pulomā-Kanyā said:

26. O Śāmbhu, O ocean of compassion, O bestower of everything on the living beings who bow down, of what nature is that Vrata? What is its efficacy. What deity has to be invoked there?

27. When should it be performed? What is the mode of procedure?

On hearing these words, Śiva spoke to her:

Īśvara said:

28. O Paulomī, that splendid Vrata is to be observed on Manorathatṛtīyā. Goddess Viśvabhujā Gaurī, having twenty arms, should be worshipped.

29. Āśāvināyaka should be worshipped before the goddess by the observer of the Vrata. He is the bestower of boon and grantor of freedom from fear with the gestures of his hand. A rosary and sweetmeat are held in the hands.

30-35. On the eve of Caitra Śukla Tṛtīyā, the devotee first cleans his teeth. After the performance of the evening rites (Sandhyā prayers etc.) he should take a meal in moderate quantity, not for full satiation. Controlling anger, curbing the sense-organs, he should be pure, avoiding the touch of those

precluded from being touched and keep the mind fixed on the deity. Then he should formally resolve to take up the *Vrata*: 'I shall observe the *Vrata* in the morning, O faultless mother Viśvabhujā. Please do be present there for the fulfilment of my desire.' After succinctly stating and formally adopting the *Vrata*, he should go to sleep at night meditating on auspicious things. The sensible devotee should get up early in the morning and go through the essential daily routine. After Śauca purificatory rites like Śauca and Ācamana, he should take up the tooth-brush twig of Aśoka tree which is auspicious and destructive of all grief. The day routine is duly concluded and the excellent devotee conversant with the rules enjoined shall take his bath again the evening. Wearing pure (fresh) clothes, he shall perform the adoration of Gaurī.

36-39. At the outset Vināyaka is to be worshipped with the Naivedya offering of Ghrtapūra (sweetmeat) Then the devotee worships Viśvabhujā with excellent Aśoka flowers. *Aśokavarti* (wick of Aśoka twig), Naivedya offerings, incense of agallochum etc. should be offered. The deity is smeared with *Kumkuma* (saffron powder). *Ekabhakta* (single ball of rice) should be then offered along with Aśokavarti lamp and charming Ghrtapuras. Thus Caitra Trtīyā passes off, O daughter of Pulomā. The devotee should observe the *Vrata* on all the Trtīyās beginning with Vaiśākha and ending with Phālguna. I shall describe the twigs to be used as tooth-brush in the proper order:

40-42. I shall describe the objects used as unguent and also the flowers. O Girl of auspicious Vratas, I shall describe the Naivedya of Gaṇanāyaka and the goddess. I shall describe the cooked food for Ekabhakta also. Listen to them for the purpose of acquiring the desired benefit. The following twigs are to be used as tooth-brush (in those eleven months in due order): Jambū, Apāmārga, Khadira, Jāti, Cūta, Kadambaka, Plakṣa, Udumbara, Kharjūri, Bijapūrī and Dādimī. These are the trees from which the tooth-brush twigs should be taken by the persons observing the *Vrata*.

43-46. O girl, the unguent shall be as follows: Sindūra (saffron), agallochum, musk, sandal, red sandal, Gorocanā, Devadāru, lotus-seed, turmeric (for two months) and Yakṣakardama. If anyone or all of the previous are not available, then Yakṣakardama is recommended. This Yakṣakardama is a favourite

of Devas and is prepared as follows: Take two parts of musk, two parts of saffron, three parts of sandal and one part of camphor. After smearing with the unguent, the devotee should worship with flowers. I shall mention those also.

47-52. The flowers are Pāṭalā, Mallikā, Lotus, Ketakī, Karavīra, Lilies, Rājacampa, Nandyāvarta, Jāti, Kumārī and Karṇikāra. If any flower is not available the leaf thereof can be used. If all these flowers are not available, the devotee should worship with some fragrant flowers that he can get.

In the month of Kārttika the following can be joyously offered as Naivedya to the goddess along with Vighneśvara: *Karambhu* (flour mixed with curds), rice mixed with curds, gruel with mango juice, *Phaṇikās*, *Vaṭakas*, milk pudding with sugar, rice with green gram and ghee. In the month of Māgha, Inderikā, Laḍḍus, and the splendid Lampasikā should be offered. In the month of Phālguna, Muṣṭikā with sugar within and fried in ghee should be offered as Naivedya. What is offered in ghee should be used for *Ekabhakta* (single meal). A devotee offering anything else as *Naivedya* or partaking of the same incurs downfall. He is deluded.

53-54. The devotee should continue to worship thus for a year, worshipping on the Tṛtīyā of every month. In order to complete the *Vrata*, the devotee should worship fire on the ground repeating *Jātavedasa* Mantra and offering gingelly seeds and clarified butter as well as monetary gifts. The devotee performing the *Vrata* should offer one hundred and eight *Āhutis* in accordance with the rules.

55. It is prescribed that the adoration is to be performed in the night always; the meal is taken always at nights. This Homa is also at night and *Kṣamāpanā* (request for forgiveness) is also at night.

56-61. Gaurī and Vināyaka are to be worshipped with these two Mantras: "O mother accept this devout adoration of mine along with that of Vighneśvara. Obeisance to you; O Viśvabhujā, fulfil my desire quickly. Obeisance to you, O destroyer of obstacles; obeisance, O Āśāvināyaka. You do grant me my desire along with Viśvabhujā." At the time of concluding the *Vrata*, the following should be made over as gifts: a cot with cotton mattress, pillow, a doll for holding the lamp and a mirror.

The presiding preceptor and his wife should be made to sit

on the cot and the devotee observing the Vrata should joyously honour them with garments, ornaments for the hands and ears, sweet scents, sandalpaste, garlands and monetary gifts. In order to make the *Vrata* perfect he should also give a milch cow, objects of utility and pleasure, umbrella, footwear and waterpot.

62-65. The Ācārya should be addressed thus: "This Vrata of Manoratha Tṛtīya has been performed by me. If it is deficient or redundant, let it be perfectly balanced at your words (of blessings)." Then the devotee takes leave of the preceptor and the latter says, "So be it." The devotee follows the preceptor till the external boundary (of the village etc.). Gifts are made to others also in accordance with the capacity of the devotee.

The night is spent along with the dependents in good humour. On the Caturthī day in the morning, four boys and twelve virgin girls are (to be) honoured with scented garlands and fed duly. Thus this pure *Vrata* becomes complete.

66-68. For the sake of realizing one's wishes this excellent Vrata should be performed by all. A bachelor performing this Vrata for a full year will clearly acquire a pleasing wife belonging to a noble family. She will be closely following his mental predilections. She will be chaste and redeem him from the ocean of miserable worldly existence. A virgin will get a husband rich and endowed with all good qualities. An auspicious woman with a living husband will get sons and unobstructed (continuous) happiness of the husband.

69-70. An unfortunate woman will become fortunate; a poor one rich; a widow will never become a widow (in the next birth); a pregnant woman gives birth to a son of long life. A Brāhmaṇa will acquire learning which will confer all luck.

71. By resorting (observing) to this Vrata a dethroned king will regain his kingdom; a Vaiśya acquires profit; a Śūdra attains all that he wished for.

72. A seeker after piety acquires piety; one desirous of wealth will obtain wealth; a lustful man will get all that he loves and a seeker of salvation, salvation.

73. By performing the Vrata of Manoratha Tṛtīyā the devotees shall certainly get whatever desire is cherished by them.

Skanda said:

74. On hearing from Śiva thus, Śivā was delighted in her mind. With palms joined in reverence, she asked Viśveśa again:

75. “O Sadāśiva, if the devotees perform this Vrata elsewhere, how will they worship me and Āśāvināyaka?”

Śiva said:

76. You have asked pertinently, O goddess, who dispel all suspicious. O Viśvā, you are directly visible in Vārāṇasī and as such you should be worshipped there.

77. You will be worshipped along with Āśā-Vināyaka who fulfils all hopes and desires, who removes infinite number of obstacles and seeks the auspiciousness of my holy place.

78-79. Those who perform this Vrata elsewhere should fetch (all concerned persons) quickly, make obeisance to those who are far removed and make them contented with (the realization) of their desires. O Viśvā, they must make images of gold of yours as well as that of Vighneśvara with gold more in weight than five *Kṛṣṇalakas* (Rattīs).

80. The devotee should make a gift of both the images at the conclusion of the *Vrata* to the Ācārya. If this Vrata is performed (even) once, the performer of the Vrata shall become blessed and contented.

81. Then, O Goddess, after hearing of this excellent Vrata, Pulomajā performed it and realized her desire in the manner she had wished in her heart.

82. Vaśiṣṭha was obtained by Arundhatī and Atri by Anasūyā. Dhruva, the most excellent of all sons, was obtained by Sunīti from Uttānapāda.

83. The wretchedness and misery of Sunīti vanished by performing this Vrata again. The four-armed husband was acquired by Goddess Lakṣmī, the daughter of the Ocean of Milk.

84. Why need more be told? O lady of excellent hips, if this Vrata is performed by anyone, it is as though all the Vratas have been performed by him.

85. A sensible man should listen to this meritorious story with concentration of mind. He attains auspicious intellect and gets rid of all sins.

CHAPTER EIGHTYONE

The Legend of Dharmēśvara

Agastya said:

1. O Skanda, be pleased to tell me how the greatness of the Dharma Tīrtha was narrated by Lord Śāmbhu to the Goddess. Have mercy on me.

Skanda said:

2. O subduer of the loftiness of Vindhya, O highly intelligent one, listen. I shall narrate the origin of Dharma Tīrtha as explained by the Lord.

3. After killing Vṛtra, Indra incurred the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. Being distressed excessively, he asked his preceptor the mode of expiation (of that sin).

Bṛhaspati said:

4. O king of Devas, if you are desirous of dispelling this sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter which is usually very difficult to get rid of, go to Kāśī protected by Viśveśa.

5. O Śakra, except the great capital city of Viśveśa, no other great remedy for the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter is seen anywhere.

6. O enemy of Vṛtra, go quickly to that place in Ānandavana where the head of Brahmā fell from the tip of the hand of Bhairava.

7. Reaching even the outskirts of Ānandavana, O Śakra, *Brahma-Hatyā* (sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter) shall flee trembling, without anyone to support (her).

8. Kāśī presided over by Viśveśa, is the great destroyer of other sins also of even great sinners.

9. O Śatakratu (Indra, the performer of a hundred sacrifices), it is only in Kāśī that one gets liberated from great sins. It is only in Kāśī that one gets liberation from the great worldly existence, not other places.

10. Kāśī is the city of salvation; Kāśī dispels all sins. Kāśī is very dear to Viśveśa. Even heaven is not like Kāśī.

11. Kāśikā, the illuminator of salvation, should never be abandoned by one who is afraid of the sin of Brahmahatyā or by one who is afraid of the worldly existence.

12. If they cast off their bodies there, the seeds of the Karmas of the creatures do not germinate because they are burnt up by the eye of Śiva.

13. O enemy of Vṛtra, for the purpose of dispelling the sin of the slaughter of Vṛtra go to that famous Kāśī and propitiate Viśveśa, the bestower of salvation on all the world.

14. On hearing these words of Bṛhaspati, the thousand-eyed Indra came hurriedly to Kāśī, the destroyer of great sins.

15-16. After taking his bath in the north-flowing river (Gaṅgā) for the purpose of expelling the sin of Brahmahatyā, he went round Dharmeśa and stood worshipping Mahādeva. Sutrāmā (Indra) was engrossed in chanting the *Mahārudra Mantra*. He saw the Three-eyed Lord stationed in the middle of the Liṅga brightening the atmosphere with his own radiance.

17. Again he eulogized many times with *Rudra Sūkta*, as mentioned in the Vedas. Thereupon Bhava came out of the Liṅga, manifested himself and said:

18. "O husband of Śacī, I am pleased. Choose your boon. O Suvrata ('one of excellent *Vratas*'), you have sought refuge in Dharmapīṭha; what should be granted to you? Tell me quickly."

19. On hearing these loving words of the Lord of Devas, the Slayer of Vṛtra said thus: "O omniscient one, what is it that is not known to you?"

20. Urged by compassion for him, since he served Dharmapīṭha, Īśa created a Tīrtha there and said, "O Indra, take your bath here."

21. No sooner did Indra take his bath there than he became endowed with divine fragrance. He regained his previous exquisite splendour as the performer of a hundred sacrifices.

22. On seeing that miracle, Nārada and other sages joyously took their holy bath in Dharma Tīrtha, the dispeller of sins.

23. They offered libations to the celestial Pitṛs and performed Śrāddha with great faith. With potfuls of the waters of that Tīrtha they bathed Dharmeśa.

24. Ever since then, that Tīrtha became famous by the

name Dharmāndhu (Dharma Kūpa). It is the greatest Tīrtha that washes off sins like that of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter without any strain.

25. Merely by taking bath in Dharmāndhu, one gets a thousand times as much benefit as is proclaimed to be the benefit of a bath in Tīrtharāja (Prayāga).

26. In Dharma Tīrtha one obtains the same benefit as in Gaṅgā Dvāra, Kurukṣetra and in the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean.

27. In Dharmakūpa that benefit is obtained which one gets by taking holy dip in Narmadā, in Sarasvatī and in Gautamī (Godāvarī) when Guru (Jupiter) is in the Zodiac Siṃha (Leo).

28. In the Dharmajalāśaya, the same benefit is obtained which one gets by taking a holy bath in the Tīrthas of Mānasa, Puṣkara and the ocean around Dvārakā.

29. Here the benefit is the same as in the holy spot Sūkara on the Kārttikī day, in Gaurī Mahāhrada (in Kedāra) on the Caitrī day and in Śaṅkhoddhāra on the day sacred to Viṣṇu (Ekādaśī day).

30. With the hope of receiving balls of rice, Pitrs expect men to take their holy dips in the two Tīrthas, viz. Gaṅgā and Dharmakūpa.

31. Great-grandfathers become elated in Phalgu Tīrtha near Pitāmaha, and in Dharmakūpa in front of Dharmeśa.

32. After taking the holy dip in Dharmakūpa and offering the libations to the ancestors, what more can a man expect to do to delight the Pitrs by going to Gayā?

33. In Dharma Tīrtha too the ancestors become pleased by the offer of balls of rice as in Gayā, to the same extent, neither less nor more.

34. They are blessed devotees of their Pitrs; the Pitāmahas are propitiated by them; they are the sons who become free from indebtedness to the Pitrs in Dharma Tīrtha.

35. Due to the power of that Tīrtha Indra became sinless instantly. After bowing down to the Lord of Devas, he went to Amarāvati.

36. O Pot-born One, the greatness of Dharma Tīrtha is unfathomable. Even by seeing one's own reflection in that Kūpa (holy well) one shall obtain the benefit of the offer of a Śrāddha.

37. A man need make the gift of only a Kākiṇī there for the delight of the Piṭrs. He will have everlasting benefit due to the power of Dharmapīṭha.

38. If a person feeds Brāhmaṇas, ascetics or sages, he will clearly obtain the benefit of a Vājapeya sacrifice^o for everyone of the particle of rice (they eat).

39. After reaching Amarāvati, Indra extolled in the presence of the heaven-dwellers the greatness of Dharmapīṭha in Kāśī.

40. Again he went to Ānandakānana of Śāmbhu accompanied by the sages and the Devas and installed a Liṅga there.

41. This Liṅga is to the west of Tārakeśa and is called Indreśvara. The world of Indra will not be far from men who visit it.

42. To the south thereof is Śacīśa installed by Śacī herself. By the worship of Śacīśa women will have unparalleled conjugal bliss.

43. Near it is Rāmbheśa, the bestower of excessive happiness and great prosperity. All round Indreśvara is another deity Lokapāleśvara.

44. By worshipping it the Guardians of the Quarters can be propitiated. They will bestow opulence. To the west of Dharmeśa is Dharaṇīśa. He is glorified much. By visiting him one will have courage in the kingdom, royal household etc.

45. To the south of Dharmeśa, the great (Liṅga) named Tattveśa should be worshipped by men. By worshipping that Liṅga the knowledge of truth dawns uninterruptedly.

46. The devotee should worship Vairāgyeśa on the eastern side of Dharmeśa. By touching that Liṅga, the mind shall turn away (from worldly inclinations).

47. Jñāneśvara Liṅga to the north-east is the bestower of knowledge on all embodied beings. To the north of the splendid Dharmeśvara Liṅga is Aiśvareśa.

48. By visiting it, men will attain opulence (as) mentally desired. These Liṅgas, O Pot-born One, are the forms of Pañcavakra (five-faced Lord Śiva) (Dharaṇīśa, Tattveśa, Vairāgyeśa, Jñāneśvara and Aiśvareśa).

49. A man should surely resort to these (Liṅgas). He attains salvation. Another event that happened there itself, I shall narrate. O sage, listen.

50. On hearing it a man can avoid being drowned in the terrible ocean of worldly existence.

There is a great foot of Mountain Vindliya here named Kadamba Śikhara.

51-52. There was a king named Durdama, son of Dama. After the death of his father, he became the king. He had no control over his sense-organs. Overwhelmed with lust he used to abduct young women of the citizens. Intrinsically bad people were his favourites and good people turned enemies.

53. He punished those who never deserved it. He was not inclined to punish culprits who deserved it. He was in the habit of hunting and was always in the company of hunters.

54-56. People who gave him sound advice were banished from the country by him. Śūdras were appointed as judicial authorities and Brāhmaṇas were taxed. He was contented with the wives of others and remained aloof from his legally wedded wives. He never worshipped Śiva and Viṣṇu, the Lords of all, the dispellers of misery and all sins, the bestowers of all desires, the very essence of the whole world

57. In regard to his subjects, the king named Durdama was like another comet rising up suddenly for their utter destruction.

58. Once that king of sinful prosperity, addicted to vices, entered forests along with hunters closely following a boar.

59. As luck would have it, that king Durdama riding on a horse and armed with a bow, entered Ānandakānana alone.

60. He saw the trees all round fruitless but they were extensive and had plenty of shade. He felt his fatigue dispelled.

61. He was fanned for a moment as though by the trees with the sprouts for the fans through excellent wind, fragrant, cool and gentle.

62. On seeing that forest, the fatigue (of sin) congenital with him vanished; only the fatigue due to hunting did not subside (completely).

63. In the middle of the forest he saw a palace kissing the sky above. It was the sole beautiful receptacle of great rods of gems and jewels.

64. That king was highly surprised. He got down from the horse. On reaching Dharmeśamaṇḍapa he congratulated himself.

65-68. 'I am blessed. I am delighted. My eyes have become blessed today. This very day is blessed since I espied this piece of land.'

Further, due to the power of Dharmapīṭha he cursed himself for his previous association with the wicked people to the exclusion of good people.

He said: "Fie upon me who have been outraging all creatures, who was an expert in afflicting the subjects harshly, who under delusion, considered myself happy by the abduction of other men's wives and misappropriation of other men's wealth!

Till today my life has been utterly futile. I have been deficient in sanity. It is a pity that religious sacred spots like this were not seen anywhere by me before."

69. After cursing himself thus very much, he bowed down to Lord Dharmeśvara. King Durdama then mounted his steed and went back to his kingdom.

70. Then he invited all the old hereditary ministers dispensing with the services of all new appointees. He invited the citizens too.

71-73. He bowed down to Brāhmaṇas and allotted to them ample means of subsistence. After establishing the subjects on the righteous path, he crowned his son as the king. He punished those who deserved punishment and gave delight to good people. Averse to worldly pleasures, he set aside even his wives and went alone to Kāśī, the city that enhanced welfare. He propitiated Dharmeśvara and in due course attained salvation.

74. It is due to his visits to Dharmeśvara everyday that the uncontrollable Durdama of such a (bad) nature became the most excellent one among those who controlled their sense-organs and in the end attained salvation.

75. Thus the greatness of Dharmeśa has been narrated by me in short. O Pot-born One, who can adequately comprehend the greatness of Dharmapīṭha?

76. He who listens to this narration of Dharmeśa is the most excellent one among men. He will instantly be rid of sins committed ever since birth.

77. A sensible man will get this excellent narration of Dharmeśa recited particularly at the time of Śrāddha among Brāhmaṇas. It causes satisfaction to the Pitr̥s.

78. A man of excellent intellect listening to this Dharmākhyāna even from a distance, will be freed from all sins. In the end he will go to the palace of Śiva.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTWO

Exploits of Amitrajit

Pārvatī said:

1. O Maheśāna, the greatness of Vīreśvara is being heard. Hundreds of persons have performed penances there and have attained great *Siddhis*.

2. How did that excellent Liṅga manifest there in Kāśī? It is a quick bestower of spiritual powers. O Lord of the universe, narrate this unto me.

Maheśvara said:

3. Listen, O great goddess, to the great manifestation of Vīreśa, O Śivā, on hearing which a man obtains a lot of merit.

4. There was a king named Amitrajit. He conquered the cities of his enemies. He was endowed with Sattva quality and was very righteous. He was always engaged in delighting his subjects.

5. Fame was his asset; he was liberal in making gifts; he was intelligent and considered Brāhmaṇas as Devas. His hairs always remained wet because he took valedictory baths after the performance of sacrifices.

6. He was polite, versed in statesmanship, expert in all activities. He had mastered all (ocean-like) lores; he possessed good qualities and was a favourite of people of good qualities.

7. He was grateful; sweet in speech; averse to all sinful activities; truthful in speech; abode of cleanliness; a man of few words; he subdued his sense-organs.

8. In battlefield he resembled the god of Death in refulgence. In the assembly of the learned he shone as a learned person; he was completely conversant with the amorous sports

of lustful women; though young he was a favourite of the aged.

9. He got his treasury increased for use in pious acts. His armies and vehicles were plenty and well-equipped. He was wise and a refuge unto good subjects.

10. He was endowed with steadfastness and courage; clever in the awareness of the proper time and place; he honoured all those worthy of honour always; he was free from faults.

11. Dedicating his mind and thoughts to the pair of Vāsudeva's feet, he ruled the kingdom without hostile elements and free from all calamities like too much of rain, absence of rain etc.

12. With no one to transgress his command, he enjoyed glory. He was devoted to Viṣṇu and enjoyed pleasures after dedicating them to Viṣṇu.

13. There were many lofty shrines of Viṣṇu in every mansion in the kingdom of that king, the storehouse of great fortune, O Śivā.

14-22. In every house the sweet names of the Enemy of Madhu were heard uttered by the tongues of women, children, old men and even cowherds, e.g. Govinda, Gopa, Gopāla, Gopī-jana-manohara (fascinating to the cowherdesses), Gadāpaṇi, Guṇātita (beyond all attributes), Guṇādhyā, Garuḍadhvaja (Garuḍa-embled), Keśihṛt (Killer of Keśi), Kaiṭabhārāti (enemy of Kaiṭabha), Kaṁsāri, Kamalāpati, Kṛṣṇa, Keśava, Kañjākṣa (Lotus-eyed), Kīnāśabhayanāśana (destroyer of the fear of the god of Death), Puruṣottama, Pāpāri, Puṇḍarīkavilocana, Pita-kaūśekavasana (clad in yellow silk), Padmanābha, Parātpara (greater than the greatest), Janārdana, Jagannātha, Jāhnavijalajanmabhūḥ (origin of the water of Gangā), Janminām janma-haraṇa (dispeller of the births of all living beings), Jañjapūkāghanāśana (destroyer of the sins of those who repeatedly utter the names), Śrīvatsavakṣas, Śrīkānta, Śrīkara, Śreyasānnidhi, Śrīraṅga, Śāṅgakodaṇḍa, Śauri, Śītāṁsulocana (Moon-eyed), Daityāri, Dānavārāti, Dāmodara, Durantaka (slayer of the wicked), Devakīhṛdayānanda, Dandaśūkeśvareśaya (lying on the couch of Serpent King), Viṣṇu, Vaikuṇṭhanilaya, Bāṇāri, Viṣṭaraśravas (heard in every seat) Viṣvaksena, Virādhāri, Vanamālin, Venapriya, Trivikrama, Trilokīśa, Cakrapāṇi, Caturbhujā etc.

23-24. In every house, groves and groves of Surasā (Tulasī)

plants alone were seen. The sacred and wonderful activities of the Consort of the Ocean-born Goddess were seen painted in the pictures on the walls of the mansions. No other talk was heard except (that about) the story of Hari.

25. Due to the fear of that king, Hariṇas (deer) that happily roamed about in forests were not killed by hunters because they had the name of Hari as a component part of their names.

26. Neither fish, nor tortoises, nor boars were killed by even meat-eaters, because they were afraid of him.

27. On Harivāsara (i.e. eleventh lunar day) even sucking children did not drink breast-milk (of their mother) in the kingdom of Amitrajit.

28. On Hari's day (eleventh lunar day) even animals avoided grazing grass. They were keen in observing fast. What then will be the case of men?

29. While he was ruling the earth, on Harivāsara great festivals were celebrated by all the citizens.

30. Only one devoid of devotion to Viṣṇu became worthy of being punished with death or fine in the country of that King Amitrajit.

31. In his kingdom even Śūdras were stamped with the marks of conch and discus after initiation into Vaiṣṇava cult. They shone like those initiated in Yajñas etc.

32. Everyday the auspicious rites performed by the people who never yearned for the benefits thereof, were dedicated to Vāsudeva.

33. Excepting Mukunda, Govinda, Acyuta, Paramānanda (the highest bliss) no one (other deities) was chanted about, honoured or served by the people.

34. To that king Kṛṣṇa alone was the greatest Lord; Kṛṣṇa alone was the ultimate goal; Kṛṣṇa alone was the greatest kinsman.

35. While that king was ruling properly the kingdom, once the venerable Nārada came there to see him.

36. Adored by the king in accordance with the injunctions with (curds mixed honey and water) *Madhuparka* etc. Nārada extolled that King Amitrajit.

Nārada said:

37. Seeing only Govinda in all living beings, O king, you

are blessed; you have fulfilled your task; you are worthy of being honoured by the heaven-dwellers.

38-39. O excellent one among kings, I have attained the greatest purity after seeing you, who see the entire universe pervaded by that Lord who is Vedapuruṣa Viṣṇu, who is Hari the Yajñapuruṣa, who is the immanent soul of this universe, who is the creator, protector and the destroyer of this world.

40. In the worldly existence that is transitory, there is only one thing of great essence, the devotional fervour to the lotus-like feet of the Consort of Kamalā (Goddess Lakṣmī). It is the bestower of everything.

41. All the objects of the world resort to that wise and intelligent one who forsakes everything else and always resorts to Viṣṇu alone.

42. In the whole Cosmic Egg that is excessively changeable, only he attains steadiness, he whose sense-organs have been firmly attached to Hṛṣīkeśa.

43. One should resort solely to Acyuta after realizing that youth, wealth and life are very fickle like a drop of water on a lotus leaf.

44. Only he is always worthy of being saluted whose speech, mind are pervaded by Lord Janārdana. He is Janārdana himself in the form of a man.

45. On this earth who is there who has not attained the state of Purusottama (Viṣṇu, the best among men) by meditating on the Consort of Goddess Lakṣmī with sincere *Praṇidhāna* (deep mental absorption).

46. I have become delighted in all the senses and the mind by this devotion to Viṣṇu that you evince. I have decided in mind to help you. O king, listen to what I say.

47-51. The daughter of a Vidyādhara, named Malayagandhinī was playing in the pleasure grove of her father. She was abducted by Kaṅkālaketu, a powerful Dānava and son of Kapālaketu. It is (proclaimed) that the marriage of the girl is to take place on the next Tṛtīyā. She is at present in Campakāvātī, a city in Pātāla. While I was returning from Hāṭakeśa I was seen by her with eyes filled with tears. After bowing down to me, she requested thus." Listen to it, O celibate one, O most excellent one among sages. Kaṅkālaketu, the wicked one, has abducted me from the Gandhamādana Mountain after enchanting me (by his Māyā),

as I was absorbed in childish play. He cannot be killed with any other weapon.

52. He is destined to die by the stroke (thrust) of his trident, not otherwise, in battle. (Now) he is fearlessly asleep here, after outraging the whole world.

53. If any man who is fully aware of what he does, kills this wicked Dānava by means of the trident given by me and takes me back, it will be conducive to welfare.

54. If in this matter you are desirous of helping me, save me from the wicked Dānava. O great sage, a boon too has been granted to me by the goddess:

55-56. 'An intelligent young devotee of Viṣṇu, O dear daughter, will marry you by the (next) Tr̥tīyā.' Do something yourself so that this statement (of the goddess) becomes true. You be the main cause alone.' O king, at this instance of that girl, I have come to you, who are an intelligent young man engrossed in devotion to Viṣṇu.

57. Hence, O king of mighty arms, go for the accomplishment of the task. After killing that wicked Dānava, bring back the splendid (girl) Malayagandhinī quickly.

58. That Vidyādhara girl will manage to live on seeing you, O king. Without any (extra) effort she will cause the death of the wicked one through you, at the instance of Pārvatī.

59. On hearing these words of Nārada, King Amitrajit experienced a thrill raising the hairs on the body in regard to that Vidyādhara girl.

60. He asked him (the sage) the means to go to Campakāvati. O Daughter of the Lord of Mountains, that king was thus told by Nārada again.

61. "On the full-moon day, O king, go quickly to the ocean. Seated on the boat you will see the divine Kalpa tree stationed in a chariot.

62. There you will see a celestial lady seated on a divine couch singing in a sweet voice the following Gāthā (verse set to music) holding the Vīṇā.

63. 'A Karma, whether good or evil, done by one will certainly get its consequence experienced by the same person guided by the (invisible) thread of fate.'

64. After singing this Gāthā, she will instantly dive into the

deep ocean along with the chariot, tree and conch.

65. Your Highness should unhesitatingly follow her into the great ocean quickly from the boat, eulogizing Yajñavarāha.

66. Thereafter you will see the beautiful city of Campakāvati in Pātālā along with that girl, O king.”

67-68. After saying thus, O goddess, the son of the Four-faced Lord (Brahmā) vanished. The king reached the ocean and saw everything as it was described. He entered the ocean and reached that city. The Vidyādhara girl too became the guest of his eyes (was seen).

69-71. A girl was seen by that king, who appeared to be the sole glory of the beauty of all the three worlds. He thought for a short while: ‘Is this the deity of Pātāla created by Viṣṇu, the enemy of Madhu, for according festivity for my eyes? It is the very splendour of the Moon created completely different from the creation of Brahmā probably due to the fear of Rāhu and the New Moon. She stands here in the guise of a young woman having nothing to fear from anywhere.’ After reflecting thus the king went near her.

72-75. The girl, saw that excessively handsome king with broad chest on which a Tulasī garland was seen hanging down. The pair of his excellent arms was marked with the figures of conch and discus. The two rows of his teeth were bright and sparkling as though they had been washed clean by the nectar of the letters constituting the names of Viṣṇu. He himself was like a tree growing out of the seed of the devotion to Bhavānī having the guise of a man and laden with the fruits of cherished desires. On seeing him she experienced horripilation caused by delight. The girl stepped down from the swinging couch with the shoulders stooping down due to bashfulness. Controlling the tremor, she spoke thus to the king:

76-78. “O handsome-featured one, who may be you? It appears as though you have entered the very abode of the god of Death. You have upset my mental feelings, ill-fated that I am. The wicked Dānava, Kaṅkālaketu is of hard features. He has frequently outraged the three worlds and he cannot be killed by the weapons of his enemies. O handsome one, as long as he does not come back stand well-concealed in the deep and spacious armoury.

79-80. Due to the boon of Umā, he is not competent to

violate my modesty as a virgin. The vicious one desires to marry me the day after tomorrow, the next Tṛṭiyā. Due to my curse, his life has practically come to an end. O young man, do not be afraid of him. His work will be over ere long.”

81. On being advised thus by the Vidyādhara girl that warrior of mighty arms stayed concealed in the armoury awaiting the arrival of the Dānava.

82. In the evening that Dānava of terrible features returned wielding in his hand the trident that instilled fear into even the god of Death.

83. The ferocious Dānava roared on his arrival with his voice resembling the rambling sound of the clouds at the time of universal annihilation. He rolled his eyes in his inebriation and spoke to the Vidyādhari thus:

84. “O lady of excellent complexion, accept these jewels. With your marriage day after tomorrow, your virginity is coming to an end.

85-87. O fair lady, I shall be giving ten thousand slave girls to you in the morning, all very charming. They are Asurīs, Surīs, Dānavīs (and of other classes). Besides them there will be hundred each of Gandharvīs, Nārīs (human being) and Kinnarīs and six hundred each of Vidyādharīs, Nāgīs and Yakṣiṇīs. There will be eight hundred Rakṣasīs and a hundred excellent celestial women. O lady of pure thoughts, these will be your servants.

88. As my wedded wife here, you will be the owner of the entire assets and possessions of the Guardians of the Quarters in their abodes.

89-92. Being married to me, you will enjoy all divine pleasures in my company. Oh, when will the day after tomorrow dawn when the rite of marriage is to take place? It will be full of a series of happiness arising from the intimate contact and touch of your limbs. Day after tomorrow I shall be getting the greatest thrill. It would have been more if the day was nearer. Day after tomorrow I shall be fulfilling all my desires cherished in my heart for a long time. O Fawn-eyed One, I shall make you the sole mistress of all my opulence spread over all the three worlds acquired by me after defeating in battle all the Devas beginning with Indra.”

93. After prattling thus, that demon who was in great



intoxication due to the tasting of human flesh and suet, went to sleep without fear, keeping the trident in his own lap.

94-97. Recollecting the boon of Gaurī and observing that the fearless demon was out of his senses and in deep sleep, the Vidyādhara girl called that excellent king exquisitely handsome in every limb and soundly protected by his devotion to Viṣṇu. She even muttered within herself, “Dear Lord.” Taking away the trident from the lap of the demon, she said: “Take this; kill him quickly.” On hearing this, King Amitrajit whose lustre was akin to that of the rising Sun, took the trident from the girl. The king of powerful arms joyously shouted, according freedom from fear to the timid girl.

98-99. Fearlessly, he kicked the demon with his left foot, remembering within his mind the discus-bearing Hari, the protective jewel of the universe. He said “O wicked flesh-eater, get up. Fight with me you who desire to outrage the modesty of a virgin. You are my enemy but I do not want to kill you while asleep.”

100-103. On hearing this, that Dānava got up in great excitement and said again and again, “My dear beloved, give me the trident.” He then continued: “Who is this fellow that has entered the abode of death? With whom is the ultimate killer (god of Death) angry? Who has fallen within my vision? This insignificant puny man will not be even competent to scratch my itching powerful arms. O fair lady, of what need then is my trident? Do not be afraid. See my fanciful sport. This fellow will now be my morsel. He has been sent as a present unto me by Kāla (god of Death) himself afraid of me.”

104. After saying this, the king was quickly hit in his chest as hard as rock, by the Dānava, with a blow of his fist with full force.

105. The hard-chested king well-protected by the Discus-bearing Lord, did not experience even the least pain; on the other hand it pained his (Demon’s) hand.

106. Then hit by the infuriated king with a blow from his outstretched hand on his face, the demon’s head shook. He fell down on the ground but soon got up.

107. Summoning up courage the excessively powerful demon then said:

Dānava said:

108. It is known that you are not a human being. You are the Four-armed Slayer of Dānavas, who has come here in the form of a man after getting a loophole, in order to kill me.

109. O Madhubhid ('Slayer of Madhu'), you (really think you) are powerful. Kindly do this much. Keep aside this great trident and fight with me with your own weapons.

110. Powerful (demons) Kaiṭabha and others were never killed by you in battle through your power. They were deceitfully killed by you in fraudulent disguise.

111. You took the form of a human dwarf and sent Bali to Pātāla. Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed by you by assuming the form partly human and partly beastly.

112. The Ruler of Laṅkā was felled down by you in the form of one with matted hairs. Kāmsa and others were killed by you who had taken the guise of a cowherd.

113. In the form of a woman you cheated the Asuras and took away the Sudhā (divine ambrosia). Śankha and many others were killed by you in the form of aquatic animals.

114. O you foremost among Māyāvins (deceivers), O knower of the vulnerable points of everyone, I am not at all afraid of you if only you will leave off this trident.

115. Or, of what avail are these piteous utterances worthy of only cowherds? you will not abandon the trident and I shall not defeat you in the battle.

116. Indeed this embodied one has to die this morning. Better that it is at your hands, be it through strength or through deceit.

117. This Vidyādhari girl has not been defiled by me. She is chaste. She should be considered to be Goddess Lakṣmī herself, guarded by me for your sake."

118. After saying this, the Dānava hit him with a blow of his left hand that could even shake a big mountain.

119. In the course of the fight the king endured that blow on the chest, but balancing the trident in his hand he aimed at his chest.

120-122. The king of powerful arms hit him and he died instantly. After killing the demon Kaiṅkālaketu thus, he spoke to the Vidyādhara girl who was watching with hairs rising up due to delight: "O lady of exquisite hips, at the instance of

Sage Nārada I have carried out your desire. O lady who are aware of what has been done, tell me what (more) shall I do now." On hearing these words of the king of magnanimous mind, she said:

Malayagandhinī said:

123. O liberal-minded hero. O my life-saving medicine, why do you ask me? I have already been bought by you with your own life at stake. I am the undefiled daughter of a noble family.

124. While the girl was saying so, Sage Nārada habitually roaming about as he pleased came there unexpectedly from the world of gods.

125. On seeing the excellent sage, they two were delighted. They bowed down their heads and were blessed by the sage.

126. They were sprinkled (with water) by Nārada after they had gone through the rite of clasping the hands (merrying). After the auspicious rite was over, they went along the path pointed out by Nārada.

127-128. Accompanied by Malayagandhinī, King Amitrajit reached the city of Vārāṇasī where auspicious ceremonies had been arranged by the citizens. The king entered that city, the mere sight of which enables wise man to avert the downfall into a hell.

129. The king entered that city where even Indra and others do not get free access and which causes the attainment of salvation.

130. That king entered the city Kāśī remembering which a man averts the contingency of being contaminated by sins and which is desired by all the three worlds.

131. That Lord of subjects entered that Kāśī, on entering which a man is never assailed by even great sins.

132. Seeing the glory and opulence of Kāśī from afar, that Vidyādhara girl censured the heavenly world and even the city in Pātāla.

133. That newly wedded girl was not delighted on getting Amitrajit as her husband as much as when she saw Kāśī, the wonderful abode of the highest bliss.

134. Considering herself blessed, that lady of great mental ability acquired the greatest delight through her husband and (staying in) Kāśī.

135. Attaining Malayagandhinī as his wife, King Amitrajit resorted to love with predominance of piety and so obtained the most excellent happiness.

136. That queen, loyal to her husband and desirous of a son, once sincerely submitted to her husband engrossed in devotion to Lord Viṣṇu.

The Queen said:

137. O king, if there is the consent of my husband. I shall take up the great Vrata of Abhīṣṭa Tṛtīyā that fulfils the cherished desire for a son.

The King said:

138. O queen, tell me. Of what nature is the Vrata of Abhīṣṭa Tṛtīyā? What is the deity to be worshipped therein? What is the benefit of the rite?

139. If a woman, without being permitted by her husband were to perform Vrata etc., she will become miserable if she lives, and will go to hell if she dies.

140. On being requested thus by the king, the queen began to narrate the mode of performing that Vrata along with its secret principle.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTHREE.

Manifestation of Vīreśvara

The Queen said:

1. O king, pay attention. I shall describe the actual mode of performing this Vrata, its benefit and the desired deity.

2. Formerly this Vrata was recounted by Nārada, the son of Brahmā, to Ṛddhi, the wife of Kubera, of glorious countenance who was desirous of a son.

3. It was duly performed by that goddess and the son Nala Kūbara was born. Due to this Vrata sons have been acquired by many other women too.

4. Gaurī conversant with the mode of the rite should be duly worshipped along with the child sucking the breast milk with upturned face.

5-10. On the third day in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, the devotee places a pot upon which a copper pot is placed. This copper pot is (to be) filled with rice grains. A cloth, new, untorn and coloured with turmeric is to be placed (as a cover) on the copper pot. It will be of very fine texture. A splendid lotus blossomed by the rays of the Sun is placed upon it. An idol of Brahmā made of four gold coins (eighty Rattīs) is placed on the pericarp of the lotus and is adored devoutly with jewels, silk clothes etc., flowers of various kinds, and with sweet fruits such as oranges etc., sandalpaste and other fragrant substances, camphor and musk, Naivedya offerings such as milk pudding etc., and sweetmeats of diverse shapes and sizes and with incense in which Agallochum is prominent. At night the devotee and his people should keep awake in a flower-bedecked pavilion keeping the sleep away performing great festivities.

11-15. In the sacrificial pit a Hasta in diameter the Brāhmaṇa conversant with Mantras should consign into the fire full-blown thousand lotuses after soaking them with ghee and honey repeating the Mantra *Jātavedase*.

He should make the gift of a newly calved, tawny-coloured, well-behaved milch cow to the preceptor, with befitting ornaments. After devoutly observing the fast, the couple will wear fresh clothes.

In the morning of the Caturthī day, the joyous couple should honour the preceptor with clothes, ornaments, garlands and monetary gifts. The idol with all the requisite appurtenances should be given to the Ācārya. The couple observing the Vrata should repeat this Mantra.

16. "O creative energy! O Goddess conversant with the mode of creation of the universe and creating diverse things! Propitiated by this splendid Vrata, grant us a son who will continue the lineage."

17. A thousand Brāhmaṇas should be fed with great devotion.

(The Vrata-observing couple) should break the fast with the remaining food.

18. O king, it is thus that I wish to observe the Vrata along with you. Do this favour unto me for the sake of the acquisition of the desired benefit.

19. The excellent king heard this with great delight in his mind. O sage, the Vrata was duly observed and she became pregnant.

20-22. Gaurī who was propitiated with devotion was requested by the pregnant woman: "O Mahāmāyā, grant me a son born of a part of Viṣṇu. As soon as he is born, he will go to the heaven and return here. He will be a great devotee of Sadāśiva and become well-known in the entire world.

Without being fed at the breasts, he will instantly be a sixteen year old boy. O Gaurī, make if possible that such a son is born to me."

23. The words "So it will be" were uttered by Mr̥dānī who was much pleased with the devotion. In due course she gave birth to the son with the Mūla star at his nativity.

24. Even as she lay in the lying-in-chamber she was informed by the ministers, her well-wishers, "O queen, if you seek (the well-being of) the king abandon the son born under the malignant star."

25. On hearing the words of the ministers she who considered her husband as her deity and who was wise in following what is expedient, abandoned the son who was acquired in that manner.

26-30. She summoned the nurse. The queen spoke this to her, "There is the Mātrkā deity named Vikaṭā in the great Pañcamudra Mahāpīṭha. Dear nurse, place this child in front of her and submit thus, "This child is granted by Gaurī. He has been placed in front of you by the queen who desires the well-being of the husband and who has been urged by the ministers." The nurse listened to the speech of the queen. She placed the child, gracefully shining like the moon, in front of Vikaṭā and went home. Then Goddess Vikaṭā summoned the Yoginīs and said, "Take the child immediately before the Mātṛgaṇa (group of Mother-deities) and do as they bid you do. Protect the child with great effort."

31-34. At the instance of Vikatā, the Yoginīs went through the sky and took him to the place where Brāhmī and other Mothers were. The Mothers are Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Raudrī, Vārāhī, Nārasimhikā, Kaumārī, Māhendrī, Cāmuṇḍā and Caṇḍikā. The group of Yoginīs bowed down and placed in front of the Mothers that boy who had the lustre of the Sun. On seeing the beautiful boy sent by Vikatā, they simultaneously asked the child, “Who is your father? Who is your mother?”

35-39. On being asked by the Mothers thus he did not say anything. Then the group of Mothers said to the great Yoginīs: “This (boy) is marked with excellent characteristics. He deserves a kingdom. O Yoginīs, he should be taken back to that place without delay, where the great goddess Pañcamudrā, the bestower of desires, stays. By resorting to her the glory of salvation does not remain far away from man.

There is salvation at every step, everywhere in Kāśī, the creator of auspiciousness. Still that Pīṭha is specially the cause of all spiritual powers. By resorting to that Pīṭha and due to the great blessings of Viśveśvara, Siddhi shall accrue to this child having the shape and size of a sixteen-year old boy.”

40-41. Thus with the blessings of the group of Mothers the boy was instantly brought to the Mahāpīṭha marked with the five Mudrās at the instance of the Mothers. Thereafter from the heaven he came here to Ānandakānana and performed an extensive penance of divine quality.

42. Umādhava (Lord Śiva) became pleased with the very severe penance of that prince of steady mind and sense-organs.

43. Śaṅkara manifested himself to him in the form of a Liṅga and said, “I am pleased, O son of a king; speak out the boon (you will have).”

Skanda said:

44-45. Seeing the Liṅga consisting of speech (Vedas) with all rediance, standing before him penetrating through the seven nether worlds, due to the blessing of the Supreme Almighty, he bowed down lying on the ground like a log of wood and eulogized Dhūrjaṭi joyously through the Sūktas (hymns) with Rudra as their deity—the Sūktas he had repeatedly practised in the previous birth.

46. Then Lord Maheśvara, the bull-emblemcd Lord of Devas became pleased with his penance and said:

Devadeva said:

47. Choose a boon. By means of the penance performed by you, your tender body has been subjected to pain by you though still a boy in body. My mind has been captivated hence.

48. On hearing the repeated speech of Śiva urging him to accept the gift of a boon, he became delighted experiencing horripilation. He requested for the boon.

Kumāra said:

49-52. O Mahādeva, O Lord of Devas, if a boon has to be granted to me, Your Lordship shall stay here always alleviating the distress due to the worldly existence. O Śambhu, do favour the devotees by granting what they desire, even as you are stationed in this Liṅga. They will get their desires realized even without showing the ritualistic Mudrās etc. O Lord, you grant the great Siddhi to those who merely visit, touch and bow even without chanting the Mantras. You must bless always those who are devoted to this Liṅga mentally, verbally and physically. This is my boon.

On hearing about the boon he wished to have the Lord in the form of the Liṅga said:

53-55. “O Vīra, let what you, the son of a devotee of Viṣṇu, said, be real. Since your father King Amitrajit is a devotee of Viṣṇu, you are born with a part of Viṣṇu. You are son of one who is engrossed in devotion to me also. After your name this Liṅga will be known, O Vīra, as Vīreśvara Liṅga. At Kāśī it will bestow the cherished desires of the devotees, nay all that they think of. From today, O Vīra, I shall stay in this Liṅga always.

56. Undoubtedly I shall grant great Siddhi unto those who resort to me. But no one will understand my greatness in the Kali age.

57-59. He who understands fortunately, will obtain the great Siddhi. Whatever *Japa* is performed, *Homa* is offered

gifts are donated and deities adored and pious works such as renovation of dilapidated shrines etc. done, all these cause everlasting benefit.

As for you, you will attain the kingdom inaccessible to all other kings, enjoy pleasures of unlimited extent and in the end will attain Siddhi.

The city of Vārāṇasī is the most beautiful one in the entire world.

60-64. There, the confluence of the rivers Asi and Gaṅgā is meritorious. Above that the Hayagrīva Tīrtha is more meritorious. It is here that Viṣṇu in the form of the horse-necked god accords what the devotees yearn for. Gaja Tīrtha is better than Hayagrīva Tīrtha. It is here that one obtains the benefit of the gift of elephants, merely by taking a holy bath.

Kokāvarāha Tīrtha is more meritorious than Gaja Tīrtha. By worshipping Kokāvarāha people will cease to take births.

Dilipa Tīrtha in the vicinity of Dilīpeśvara is more excellent than Kokāvarāha. It dispels sins immediately. More than this is the Sagaratīrtha in the vicinity of Sagareśa.

65-69. By getting himself immersed therein, a man averts getting immersed further in the ocean of misery. More auspicious than Sagara Tīrtha is the Saptasāgara Tīrtha, by taking the holy dip where a man attains the merit of taking the holy bath in all the seven seas. Better than Saptābdhitīrtha is the Tīrtha well-known as Mahodadhi. An intelligent man who takes his holy bath there at least once, burns the great ocean of sins. More meritorious than this is the Caura Tīrtha in the vicinity of Kapileśvara. Sins of stealing gold etc. shall perish by taking a holy bath there. Haṁsa Tīrtha in the vicinity of Kedāreśvara is more worthy of adoration. There I lead the embodied beings to Brahman in the form of a Haṁsa (Swan).

70. Beyond that is the highly meritorious Tīrtha of Tribhuvana-Keśava. Men who take bath there do not enter the mortal world.

71. More than that is the Govyāghreśvara Tīrtha where both of them (Cow and Tiger) attained Siddhi by eschewing their natural enmity.

72. O Vīra, more excellent than this is the holy spot named Māndhātṛ Tīrtha where that king (i.e. Māndhātā) attained the position of an Emperor.

73. More meritorious than this is the Mucukunda Tīrtha. A man who takes his holy bath there is never attacked by enemies.

74. Pṛthu Tīrtha is a greater and higher means of all welfare than that. A man who visit Pṛthvīśvara there, will become Lord of the earth.

75. More than that is the highly Siddhi-bestowing Tīrtha of Paraśurāma, where the son of Jamadagni became liberated from the sin of killing Kṣatriyas.

76. Even today a sin due to the murder of a Kṣatriya perishes by means of a single bath performed knowingly or unknowingly.

77. A Tīrtha that causes welfare better than that is indeed that of Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, where Baladeva became liberated from the sin of murdering a Sūta (narrator of Purāṇas, Romaharṣaṇa).

78. The Tīrtha of King Divodāsa of excellent intellect, is also there. A man who bathes there at any time does not slip from knowledge till the end.

79. A great Tīrtha better than that is destructive of all sins. It is there that Bhāgīrathī stands visible directly in the form of an image.

80. If one takes the holy bath in the Bhāgīrathī Tīrtha, offers Śrāddha with a correct knowledge of its procedure and makes gifts to deserving persons, he will never be in a womb again.

81. O Vīra, Harapāpa Tīrtha is also on the banks of Bhāgīrathī. By taking the holy bath there, multitudes of great sins become destroyed.

82. A man who visit Niṣpāpeśvara Liṅga there becomes rid of sins, O Vīra, at that very instant (of visiting the Liṅga).

83. Daśāśvamedha Tīrtha is considered more excellent than that. By taking the holy dip there, one attains the benefit of ten Aśvamedhas (horse-sacrifices).

84. They call Bandī Tīrtha a better bestower of auspiciousness, O Vīra. By taking bath there, the man will be liberated from the worldly bondage.

85. Formerly many Devas were imprisoned by Demon Hiraṇyākṣa. They were fettered too and they eulogized Jagadāmbikā (Mother of the universe).

86. The Mother of the universe, who was bowed to by those Devas who had been freed from the fetters is being sung about since then as Bandī. Even now she is prayed to by men.

87. Bandī Tīrtha that breaks great fetters is there itself. One who bathes there is liberated from all bonds of Karmas.

88. O king, Bandītīrtha in the city of Kāśī is highly excellent. A man who bathes there will attain salvation due to the blessings of the goddess.

89. More excellent than that is well-known as Prayāga Tīrtha where Prayāgamādhava is the bestower of the benefit of all Yāgas.

90. Kṣonī-Varāha Tīrtha is a better bestower of auspiciousness than that. A man who bathes there is never born in brutish (non-human) species.

91. Kāleśvara Tīrtha is greater and more excellent than that. Kali and Kāla do not affect and torment the excellent man who bathes there.

92. There itself is Aśoka Tīrtha, more auspicious than that. A man who bathes there never falls into the ocean of misery.

93. O son of the king, purer than that is the Śukra Tīrtha. The excellent man who bathes there is not reborn through semen virile.

94. Better merit-bestowing than that is the excellent Bhavānī Tīrtha, O king. If one takes bath there and visit Bhavānī and Īśa, one is never reborn.

95. Prabhāsa Tīrtha is well-known as the bestower of auspiciousness on men more than that. It is in front of Someśvara. One who takes bath there is never born into a womb.

96. Beyond it is the Garuḍa Tīrtha destructive of the poison of worldly existence. After adoring Garuḍeśa and taking bath therein one does not meet with an occasion to feel sorry.

97. O Vīra, beyond that is the meritorious Brahma Tīrtha in front of Brahmeśvara. By taking his holy bath there, a man attains Brahmavidyā.

98. Beyond it is Vṛddhārka Tīrtha and thereafter is Vidhi Tīrtha. A man who bathes there proceeds to the world of Ravi (Sun) free from impurities.

99. Thereafter is the Nṛsimha Tīrtha that averts great fear. Why should one be afraid of even Kāla (god of Death) after bathing there?

100. Better bestower of merit than that on men is the Citraratheśvara Tīrtha. If one takes bath there and makes gift, one does not see Citragupta.

101. Beyond that is the meritorious Dharma Tīrtha stationed in front of Dharmeśa. One shall be free from indebtedness to ancestors after performing Śrāddha etc. there.

102. Beyond it is the Viśāla Tīrtha free from impurities and the bestower of extensive benefit. Having bathed there and visited Viśālākṣī, one is never reborn in a womb.

103. Jarāsandheśa Tīrtha is in the vicinity of Jarāsandheśa. One who bathes there never becomes deluded by the afflictions of the fever of worldly existence.

104. Beyond that is the Lalitā Tīrtha that augments conjugal bliss. If one bathes there and adores Lalitā one never becomes poor and miserable.

105. Beyond it is the Gautamī Tīrtha that washes off all sins. After bathing there and offering balls of rice (to the Manes) one never bewails anything.

106-112. (There is) a series of Tīrthas beyond it, viz. Gaṅgākeśava Tīrtha, Agastya Tīrtha, Yoginī Tīrtha, Trisandhyākhyā Tīrtha, Narmadā Tīrtha, Ārundhateyaka Tīrtha, Vaśiṣṭha Tīrtha, the excellent Mārkaṇḍeya Tīrtha. All these Tīrthas are the bestower of merit. The latter is more (efficacious) than the former (preceding). Then there is the excellent Tīrtha named Khurakartari. By performing Śrāddha and other rites a man will get rid of sins. Beyond it is the saintly King's Tīrtha named Bhagīratha Tīrtha. It accords excessive merit. If anyone makes the gift of even the least of things there, it becomes everlasting in benefit even at the close of the Kalpa. More than these Tīrthas, more than the three crores of Liṅgas, O Vīra, this Vīreśvara Liṅga will be extremely excellent. If a man bathes in the Vīra Tīrtha and worships Vīreśa, it is as though he has bathed in all these Tīrthas, and not otherwise. If anyone worships Vīreśvara Liṅga at night it is as though three crores of Liṅgas have been worshipped by him here.

113. Vīreśvara Liṅga should be assiduously resorted to by the person who wishes for Lakṣmī, the bestower of salvation as well as worldly pleasures.

114. If a man performs a single act of Jāgaraṇa (keeping awake at night) and worships Vīreśa on the fourteenth lunar

day, he does not take the body consisting of the five elements.

115. This Liṅga should always be worshipped by those who have attained Siddhis as well as those who wish for Siddhis, because it causes the realization of all desires pertaining to this world as well as the other world.

116. If a man bathes Vīreśa with Pañcāmṛta, he will attain the merit of a crore of pots of Pañcāmṛta bath for each moment's duration.

117. There is no doubt in this that with a single flower offered to Vīreśa one will get the benefit of offering a crore of flowers elsewhere.

118. No doubt or hesitation need be felt in this regard that by offering a single Āhuti in the vicinity of Vireśvara, one will attain the benefit of a crore of *Homas* done perfectly.

119. Even the least thing offered to Vīreśa gives inexhaustible benefit. In the *Navedya* (food offering) the devotee gets the benefit of offering a crore of lumps of boiled rice for every lump that he offers.

120. If anyone repeats Mahārudra Mantra once or makes someone else repeat it once in the presence of Vīreśa, certainly he will attain the benefit of repeating Rudra Mantra a crore of times.

121. Whatever is performed by men observing Vratas such as the rite of *Vratotsarga* etc. (formal concluding rite after observance of vows etc.) will undoubtedly increase by a crore of times.

122. If the devotee performs eight Namaskāras (prostrations) in front of Vireśvara, he will obtain the benefit of eight crores of Namaskāras. There is no doubt about this.

123. O Vīra, with my favour this Vireśvara Liṅga shall be the abode (cause) of all riches. There is no doubt about it.

124. Even as they are alive, by my behest, men will have knowledge, entitled *Tāraka* (the redeemer). Hence this Liṅga should be resorted to by those who seek auspiciousness."

125-127. On hearing this, the heroic son of Amitrajit said again after bowing down to the Lord of Devas with fully realized desires: "O Lord of Devas, all these Tīrthas have been narrated to me. O Lord, be pleased to recount other Tīrthas too. Kindly narrate the Tīrthas beginning with Ādikeśava and concluding with Bhagīratha Tīrtha. On hearing about these a man becomes free from sins."

128. On hearing this speech (request) of the prince, Maheśāna began to recount the Tīrthas in Gaṅgā.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFOUR

*Tīrthas from the Confluence of Gaṅgā and Varanā up to
Manikarnikā*

Skanda said:

1 O Brāhmaṇa, listen how Sthānu (Śiva) created a holy spot by means of the meritorious confluence of Gaṅgā and Varanā.

2. A person who takes his holy bath in that confluence and worships Saṅgameśa, shall never again meet with the contact of a mother's womb.

3 The Tīrtha called Pādodaka is there. It is there that the Lord wielding Śārṅga bow (i e. Viṣṇu) washed his feet at the outset as soon as he came from Mandara.

4. On the Vyatīpāta day (New-Moon day on Sunday etc.) the devotee should perform all the rites such as offering water-libation in Viṣṇupādodaka Tīrtha. He will never have any return to the worldly existence.

5. A person who bathed in Pādodaka Tīrtha and worshipped Keśava becomes an excellent man rid of the residence in Saṁsāra.

6. That spot in Kāśī has been pointed out by Brāhmaṇas as Śvetadvīpa. After acquiring merit there, the devotee shall become lord of Śvetadvīpa.

7 Beyond Pādodaka Tīrtha is the Tīrtha called Kṣīrābdhi (Milk Ocean). One who acquires merit there will stay on the shore of the Milk Ocean.

8. To the southern side of Kṣīroda is the excellent Śaṅkha Tīrtha. A man who takes his bath there, will certainly become lord of the treasures, Śaṅkha etc.

9. Behind Śaṅkha Tīrtha is the excellent Cakra Tīrtha. By getting immersed in the waters of that Tīrtha, one averts fall

into Saṁsāracakra (cycle of worldly existence).

10. Beyond that is Gadā Tīrtha that is destructive of the ailments of worldly existence. By performing Śrāddha etc. there, one shall see Lord Gadādhara.

11. Beyond that is Padma Tīrtha that causes glorious fortune and satisfaction of the Pitṛs. By performing the rites of holy ablution etc. there one shall accomplish the reduction of sins.

12. Thereafter is the Tīrtha of Mahālakṣmī that bestows great merit. By adoring Mahālakṣmī there one shall obtain the glory of salvation.

13. Thereafter is Gārutmata Tīrtha that is destructive of the poison of worldly existence. One who performs rites such as offering water-libations there, achieves residence in Vaikuntha.

14. Thereafter is Nārada Tīrtha, the sole cause of the attainment of Brahmavidyā (knowledge of the Absolute). By taking the holy bath there and viewing Nāradakeśava, one shall become liberated.

15. To the south thereof is Prahlāda Tīrtha that bestows the benefit of devotion. Merely by taking the holy bath there one shall become extremely endearing to Viṣṇu.

16. Thereafter is Ambarīṣa Tīrtha that destroys great sins. People who perform auspicious rites there, do not enter a mother's womb (i.e. are not reborn).

17. Thereafter is the excellent Tīrtha named Ādityakeśava. One who takes the ablution there too shall get coronation bath in heaven.

18. The Tīrtha of Dattātreya, the most sacred one in all the three worlds, is also there. By devoutly taking the holy bath therein, one shall attain perfection in Yoga (Yogasiddhi).

19. Beyond that is Bhārgava Tīrtha that bestows great knowledge. By taking the holy bath duly there one shall attain Bhārgava's world.

20. Thereafter is Vāmana Tīrtha that causes the presence of Viṣṇu. By performing Śrāddha rite there, one is liberated from indebtedness to Pitṛs.

21. Thereafter is the Tīrtha called Naranārāyaṇa that bestows auspiciousness. By getting immersed in that Tīrtha, people rarely find residence in the womb.

22. To the south thereof is the auspicious Yajñavarāha Tīrtha.

Men who take their holy bath there, certainly obtain the benefit of Rājasūya.

23. The holy Tīrtha named Vidāranārasimha is also there. By a single holy bath there the sin acquired in the course of a hundred births perishes.

24. Thereafter is Gopīgovinda Tīrtha that bestows the world of Viṣṇu. A wise man who takes his holy bath there will never know the pain of being in a womb.

25. To the south of Gopīgovinda is Lakṣmīrsimha Tīrtha. The excellent man stationed there is wooed by Nirvānalakṣmī (glory of salvation).

26. In the southern direction thereof is the excellent Śesa Tīrtha. If one gets immersed there, no trace of one's mass of great sins remains there.

27. In the southern direction thereof is Śāṅkha-Mādhava Tīrtha. Whence is the great fear of sin to men if they resort to that?

28. Thereafter is the Tīrtha called Nilagrīva which is unparalleled. It is more sacred than Śāṅkhamādhava Tīrtha. It accords Siddhi at the same instant. One who bathes there, is always pure.

29. Uddālaka Tīrtha too is there. It is destructive of all the mass of sins. Merely with the holy bath there, it bestows on men great prosperity.

30. Thereafter, in the vicinity of Sāṅkhyeśvara is the Tīrtha called Sāṅkhya. By resorting to that Tīrtha Sāṅkhya-Yoga becomes clear to man.

31. In the vicinity of Svarlīneśvara is Svarlīna Tīrtha, so called because Lord Umāpati himself got merged therein from the heavenly world.

32. There all sacred rites of men such as the rites of ablution, making gifts, feeding Brāhmaṇas faithfully, Japas, *Homās* and *Araṇās* become indestructible.

33. The extremely sacred Mahisāsura Tīrtha is near it. That leader of demons could conquer all the Suras due to the penance he performed there.

34. A person resorting to that Tīrtha even today is never harassed by enemies nor by great sins. He will obtain the benefit sought.

35. Very near it is Bāṇa Tīrtha that bestows a thousand

arms. A man taking his holy bath there will obtain (develop) steady devotion to Śāmbhu.

36. Beyond it is the excellent Tīrtha named Gopratāreśvara. If a man without a son takes his holy bath there, he will easily cross Vaitaraṇī.

37. To the south thereof is the Tīrtha called Hiranyagarbha which dispels all sins. One who takes the holy ablution there is never devoid of gold.

38. Beyond that is Praṇava Tīrtha which is the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas. A man will become liberated while still living merely by taking his holy bath there.

39. Beyond it is Piśāṅgilā Tīrtha which dispels sins even by the vision thereof. O Sage Agastya, it is the site of my abode, the bestower of excellent Siddhi.

40. If one takes his holy bath in Piśāṅgilā Tīrtha and makes the gift of something, why should he be afraid of the sin committed by him even if he dies elsewhere?

41. A person who takes his holy bath in Piśāṅgilā Tīrtha and adores me, will become my friend having the lustre akin to that of the Sun.

42. Thereafter is the Tīrtha named Pilipilā that is entirely sanctified by the vision of Triviṣṭapa (i.e. Lord Trilocana). It destroys the impurities of the mind.

43. By performing Śrāddha and other rites there and fully satisfying the distressed and the helpless ones, a man obtains great and steady prosperity.

44. Thereafter is Nāgeśvara Tīrtha that dispels great sins. By immersing oneself in that Tīrtha one can achieve the reduction of all sins.

45. To the south thereof is the excellent Tīrtha of great merit named Karṇāditya. A man who bathes in it will attain the brilliance of the Sun.

46. Thereafter is Bhairava Tīrtha that bestows the destruction of the masses of great sins, causes the rise of the fourfold aims of life and dispels all obstacles.

47. On the Bhaumāṣṭamī day (i.e. eighth lunar day coinciding with a Tuesday) if a man takes his holy bath there, offers libation to the Pitṛs and visits Kālabhairava, he will subdue Kali and Kāla.

48. The Tīrtha called Kharvaṅṛsimha is in front of Bhairava

Tīrtha. How can a man who takes his holy bath there have the fear originating from sins?

49. To the south thereof is the exceedingly pure Tīrtha of Sage Mṛkaṇḍa. Men who take their holy bath there, will not meet with accidental death anywhere.

50. Thereafter is the Tīrtha named Pañcanada which is resorted to by all Tīrthas. A man who takes his bath there, does not continue to be a worldly being (i.e. becomes free from Saṁsāra).

51. All the Tīrthas of the entire Cosmic Egg enter that Tīrtha during the month of Kārttika for getting rid of their own sins.

52. Always all these excellent Tīrthas stay there for three days from the Daśamī (tenth day) onwards for the sake of ridding themselves of their own impurities.

53. Within Kāśī, at every step, there are all sorts of Tīrthas. But the greatness of Pañcanada is unique. Nowhere else has it been obtained by any of them.

54. If people make at least one Kārttika day fruitful by means of Japa, Homa, Arcanā and Dāna, they alone are blessed ones who have fulfilled their tasks.

55. If all the Tīrthas (consolidated together) are simultaneously weighed against Pañcanada, they do not attain equality with even a sixteenth part of Pañcanada.

56. An intelligent man who takes the holy bath in Pañcanada Tīrtha and visits Bindumādhava is never reborn in the belly of a mother.

57. Thereafter is Jñānahrada Tīrtha which dispels the sluggishness and ignorance of even the dull-witted. A man who takes his holy bath there, never experiences loss of wisdom.

58. A man should take his holy bath in Jñānahrada and visit Jñāneśvara. He will thereby obtain that knowledge by which he is never tormented (by ignorance).

59. Thereafter is Maṅgala Tīrtha that destroys all inauspiciousness. By diving into it a devotee shall be the recipient of auspiciousness.

60. All inauspiciousness shall perish. Auspicious results take place. This happens in the case of a person who takes his bath in Maṅgala Tīrtha and bows down to Lord Maṅgala.

61. Beyond that is the Tīrtha of the Sun which is destruc-

tive of impurities. One who takes the holy ablution there and visits Gabhastīśa shall be free from impurities.

62. There itself Makha Tīrtha is in the vicinity of Makheśvara. An excellent man who takes his holy bath there acquires the benefit and merit of performing a sacrifice.

63. By the side thereof is Bindu Tīrtha, the cause of the greatest knowledge. By performing Śrāddha etc. there one shall get the excellent merit of good deeds.

64-65. The Tīrtha of Sage Pippalāda is situated to the south thereof. On a Saturday the devotee should take his holy bath there, visit Pippaleśvara and eat a Pippala fruit uttering the Mantra beginning with *aśvatthe* etc.¹ He will never be afflicted by Saturn. It will destroy evil dreams too.

66. Thereafter is the Tīrtha called Tāmra-Varāha. It is exceedingly sacred. If the devotee bathes there and makes some gifts, he will never become immersed in the ocean of sins.

67. Beyond it is Kālagāṅgā that destroys the sins of the Kali age. A sensible man who bathes there becomes rid of sins instantly

68. The great Indradyumna Tīrtha is in front of Indradyumneśvara. By performing aquatic rites there one shall attain the world of Indra.

69. Thereafter is Rāma Tīrtha in front of Vīrarāmeśvara. Merely by bathing in that Tīrtha one shall attain the world of Viṣṇu.

70. Thereafter is Aikṣvākava Tīrtha destructive of the masses of all sins. An excellent man becomes sanctified in his soul by taking his bath there.

71. Marutta Tīrtha is by its side in the vicinity of Marutteśvara. By taking bath there and adorning the Lord, one shall attain great prosperity.

72. Thereafter is Mairāvaruṇa Tīrtha, destructive of sins. By offering balls of rice there, one becomes a favourite of the Pitrs.

73. Thereafter is the great and pure Agni Tīrtha in front of Agniśa. By diving in that Tīrtha, one attains Agniloka.

74. There itself in the vicinity of Aṅgāreśvara is Aṅgāra

1. The Mantra is "*aśvatthe vo nisadanam*" etc. (RV.X.97.5).

Tīrtha. On the Aṅgāra Caturthī day (the 4th in the dark half falling on Tuesday) a devotee taking his bath there becomes liberated from sins.

75. Thereafter is Kali Tīrtha in the vicinity of Kalaśeśvara. If one bathes there and adores that Liṅga, he need not be afraid of Kali age and Kāla (god of Death).

76. There itself is Candra Tīrtha in the vicinity of Candreśvara. By taking bath there and worshipping Candreśvara the devotee attains the world of the Moon.

77. Beyond that is Vīra Tīrtha in the vicinity of Vīreśvara which has already been mentioned to you. It is the greatest and most excellent of all Tīrthas.

78. Thereafter is Vighneśa Tīrtha that removes all obstacles. Even one who has perfectly bathed therein is not assailed by obstacles

79. Thereafter is excellent Tīrtha of the saintly King Hariścandra. One who takes his holy bath there, never swerves from truth.

80. The merit acquired in the Tīrtha of Hariścandra, O Vīra, gives inexhaustible enjoyment in this world as well as the other.

81. Thereafter is Parvata Tīrtha in the vicinity of Paravateśa. The holy bath therein whether on Parva Kāla¹ or otherwise, yields the benefit of all festive occasions.

82. Kambaleśvara Tīrtha there eliminates all kinds of poisons. A man who takes his holy ablution becomes an expert in musical lore.

83. Thereafter is Sārasvata Tīrtha that bestows all Lores. The Pitṛs shall be present there along with the celestial sages and human beings (Pitṛs of that category).

84. Umā Tīrtha is there itself. It possesses all power. Merely by taking bath therein it will be conducive to the attainment of Umā's world.

85. Beyond that is the most excellent Tīrtha the name of which is Maṅikarṇikā. It is well-known in all the three worlds. It is capable of uplifting the three worlds.

86. That is the same as Cakrapuṣkariṇī Tīrtha made at the

1. *Parvakāla*: The time at which the Moon at its conjunctions or opposition passes through the node (MW 609A).

outset by Viṣṇu. Merely by hearing its name one is rid of all sins.

87. The heaven-dwellers perform the Japa of Maṇikarṇikā in all the three Sandhyās (dawn, midday and dusk). The utterance of the name thereof is conducive to the great welfare of all men.

88. O Vīra, only they are blessed, they can be considered as persons of fulfilled tasks by whom Maṇikarṇikā is heard, seen and remembered.

89. O Vīra, thrice a day I perform the Japa of those men of meritorious deeds who perform the Japa of Maṇikarṇikā in all the three worlds.

90. If the five-syllabled great Mantra, Ma-ṇi-kar-ṇi-kā is uttered by anyone, it is as though he has performed many great Yajñas with a hundred thousand (gold coins) for Dakṣiṇā.

91. O Vīra, if after reaching Maṇikarṇikā I am worshipped by anyone, he is a man of meritorious deeds, by whom great gifts have been donated.

92. If the ancestors have been propitiated by anyone by means of the waters of Maṇikarṇikā, it is as though Śrāddhas have been performed by him at Gayā with honey and milk puddings.

93. *Somapānas* ('Drinking Soma juice frequently') are characterized by a return to this world. Of what avail is *Somapāna* (Drinking of Soma juice) to that man of purified intellect by whom the water of Maṇikarṇikā is drunk (as Mokṣa is attained thereby)?

94. If the holy ablution is performed in Maṇikarṇikā it is as though they have taken baths in all the Tīrthas again and again during the great Parva occasions. Similarly, they have had all the Avabhṛtha baths.

95. If Maṇikarṇikā is adored with gems and flowers of gold, it is as though they have worshipped all the Suras beginning with Brahmā and Viṣṇu by means of holy sacrifices.

96. If Maṇikarṇikā is worshipped by anyone, it is as though I have been daily worshipped along with Umā after the Śāmbhavī Dīkṣā (Initiation in the adoration of Śāmbhu).

97. If the glorious Maṇikarṇikā has been faithfully served by anyone, it is as though austerities have been performed by him for a long time with withered leaves etc. (for diet).

98-99. One may very well make plenty of gifts, one may perform many sacrifices and one may perform austerities in the forests for a long time. Still after enjoying heavenly opulence one has to return to the earth. But if Maṇikarnikā, the charming Tīrtha in Pañcakrośī (the holy spot extending to five Krośas), in the extensive earth is resorted to, those devotees go away never to return (to Saṁsāra).

100. I think that this alone is the benefit of gifts, Vratas, sacrifices and austerities that Manikarnikā becomes accessible.

101. This glorious Manikarnikā is the Glory of Salvation itself directly. Even I do not know clearly the (entire) greatness of this Manikarnikā practically.

102-105. To the south of Maṇikarnikā is the great Pāśupata Tīrtha; beyond it is the Tīrtha called Rudrāvāsa and thereafter is the great Viśva Tīrtha. Thereafter is the beautiful Mukti Tīrtha; then the excellent Avimukta, Tāraka Tīrtha and Skanda Tīrtha. Beyond it is the Tīrtha of Dhunḍhi. Then there are the Tīrthas of Bhavānī, Īśāna, the excellent Jñāna Tīrtha, Nandī Tīrtha, Viṣṇu Tīrtha and the Tīrtha of Pitāmaha. This is the Nabhi Tīrtha and beyond it is Brahmanāla. Then the Bhagiratha Tīrtha which has already been recounted to you.

106. On the north-flowing celestial river there are many meritorious Tīrthas near Kāśī but only a few have been mentioned by me.

107. O Prince, among them Pañcatīrthī (set of five Tīrthas) is exceedingly excellent. By the holy ablution therein a man can well forget further stay in a womb.

108-110. The first one is the confluence of Asi (with Gangā), the greatest and the most excellent one among the Tīrthas. Thereafter is the Tīrtha called Daśāśvamedha which is resorted to by all the Tīrthas. There is the Pādodaka Tīrtha in the vicinity of Ādikeśava; then is the meritorious Pañcanada which removes mass of sins merely by the ablution. O highly excellent one, apart from these four Tīrthas the fifth one named Maṇikarnikā accords the purity of the mind and the limbs.

111. I take bath here always in the company of Umā during Parvan days (religious festivals) and also with Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and other Suras and sages.

112-113. That is why this Gāthā (verse current among the

folks) in accordance with the Vedas, is being sung always by those who reside in Nāgaloka and also by the heaven-dwellers: 'It is the truth. It is the truth. (I repeat) Again it is the truth. This is the truthful statement. There is no Tīrtha on a par with Manikarṇikā anywhere in the Cosmic Egg.'

114. By taking the holy bath in Pañcatīrthī a man ceases to take up the body consisting of five elements. Or he becomes Pañcāśya (the five-countenanced Lord Viśveśvara himself)."

115. After granting to Vira these boons, Lord Hara vanished. That Vira adored Vireśa and attained his desire.

Skanda said:

116. O Agastya, if anyone listens to this meritorious chapter on Tīrthas, his sins become reduced even if they have been acquired in the course of hundreds of births.

117. This narrative of Vireśvara has already been told to you in the context of Tīrthas. Hereafter I shall describe Kāmeśa.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFIVE

Granting of Boons to Durvāsas

Skanda said:

1. I shall narrate unto you, O Agastya, the meritorious story in the manner recounted by Purārī (Śiva) to Pārvatī, the mother of the universe.

2-3. Formerly Durvāsas, a great ascetic, excessively retulgent and irascible, wandered over this earth consisting of oceans, mountains, forests, rivers, big lakes, villages, towns and cities. Ultimately he reached Ānandakānana of Śambhu.

4. On seeing the whole of the pleasure-grove of Śambhu beautified with many palaces and consisting of many ponds and lakes, he became delighted.

5. On seeing at every step the beautiful huts of the sages who had conquered the excessive fear of the god of Death, Durvāsas became surprised.

6. On seeing the trees with blossoms pertaining to all the seasons, having plenty of shade and glossy tender sprouts, yielding excellent fruits and entwined by excellent creepers, the sage became pleased.

7-11. Durvāsas was exceedingly delighted on seeing the excellent Pāśupata devotees whose limbs were all embellished with holy ash. Their heads were covered with matted hairs. A loin cloth alone constituted the robe of everyone of them. They were engrossed in meditating on Smarāri (Śiva). Big bottle gourds were tucked in their armpits. The Huḍutkara (Huḍ-like bellowing sound) produced by them was louder than the rumble of clouds. Their sole possessions were a Karanda (cane-vessel for holding the Linga), a staff and a drinking pot. In certain places, he saw the Tridaṇḍins (Sannyāsins having three staffs) devoid of possessions and contacts, not afraid of even Kāla because they had sought refuge in Viśveśa. In certain places he saw life-long celibates conversant with the mystic doctrines of the Vedas. On seeing the Brāhmaṇas in Kāśī with hairs turned tawny because of their daily bath in Gaṅga, Durvāsas rejoiced all the more.

12. “In Kāśī there is a unique sense of satisfaction in the domesticated animals, a special lustre in the animals of the forest such as the deer etc. and an excessive joy seen in birds and other creatures not so very manifest elsewhere.

13 This spot is the abode of excellent welfare. Where is such a spot available to the immortal ones in heaven? In the creatures of this place too, it increases the greatest pleasure.

14. Far superior are these animals that wander in Ānandavana with permanent bliss, and not the Devas who resort to Nandanavana.

15. Better to be a Mleccha (Barbarian) resident of Kāśī with an auspicious future, than a Dīkṣita (initiated Vedic Brāhmaṇa) elsewhere, who does not merit salvation.

16. The entire earth, the heavenly world and the world of serpents, do not attract my mind in the same way as this city of Viśveśvara.

17. Though I have been wandering all over the earth nowhere else did my mind gain steadfastness as it has here.

18. In the entire Cosmic Egg, this must necessarily be the most beautiful city.” After eulogizing thus, Durvāsas attained

some steadiness of the mind.

19. Though that sage of excessive penance performed the austerities for a long time, he did not attain any fruit thereof. Then he got excessively angry.

20. “Fie upon me, a defiled ascetic! Fie upon my penance which is difficult to be performed! Fie upon this holy spot of Śāmbhu that deceives all!

21. I shall do something to bring about such a state as no one gains salvation here.” Saying thus he was about to curse. Then Śīva laughed loudly.

22. A Liṅga appeared there and it became well-known as Prahasiteśvara (‘Lord of boisterous laugh’). On visiting this Liṅga, men will attain delight at every step.

23. The surprised Maheśitā (Śīva) said in his mind: ‘I offer obeisance to ascetics like this again and again.

24. These Brāhmaṇas became unduly indignant with the place where they perform penance, where they have built their hermitages for penance and where they have been established.

25. If they do not get the least of what they have only just thought of, they are overwhelmed with anger that deprives them of the glory of austerities.

26. Still ascetics should be honoured by those who desire their own welfare. Why mind this in regard to the ascetics whether they are hot-tempered or otherwise?’

27. Even as Maheśāna thought within himself thus, the fire due to the anger of the (sage) pervaded the entire firmament.

28. Since the entire expanse of the sky was permeated by the masses of columns of smoke arising from the fire of his anger, the sky retains its great bluish colour even today.

29. Then the attendants (of Śīva) became agitated like the waters of the ocean at the time of the ultimate annihilation. They asked one another, “What! What is this!!”

30. Roaring and making gestures of threat and lifting their weapons in their hands, the Pramathas stood in readiness all round the abode of Śāmbhu.

31. “Who is Yama? Who is Kāla? Who is Mṛtyu (Death)? Who is the Antaka (destroyer)? Who is Vidhātā (creator)? Who are these Devas (like Indra)? When we are angry, who can be our enemy?

32. We shall drink fire like water. We shall turn all the

mountains into powder. We shall convert all the seven oceans into desert region.

33. We shall pull up Pātāla or pull down heaven. We shall make a mouthful of the entire sky.

34. We shall shatter the entire cosmos into pieces. We shall hurl Kāla and Mrtyu against each other like palm fruits.

35. Or we shall be swallowing the universe excluding the city of Vārāṇasī where the creatures become liberated soon after death.

36. Whence is this mass of smoke? Whence is this mass of flames? Who is deluded by arrogance and conceit and does not know Rudra, the conqueror of the god of Death?"

37. Prattling and boasting thus, the attendants of Śaṁbhu, the strikers of fear into even great terror, built a rampart that touched the sky.

38-46. They split the fire of Pralaya (arising from the anger of Durvāsas) into many pieces as though they were rocky boulders. The following Gaṇeśānas unassailable to others like thunderbolt, checked even the movement of the wind in Kāśī. They were: Nandin, Nandiseṇa, Somanandin, Mahodara, Mahāhanu, Mahāgrīva, Mahākāla, Jitāntaka, Mrtyuprakampana, Bhīma, Ghaṇṭākarna, Mahābala, Kṣobhaṇa, Drāvaṇa, Jrm̄bhīn, Pañcāsya, Pañcalocana, Dviśīras, Triśīras, Soma, Pañcahasta, Daśānana, Caṇḍa, Bhr̄ngirīti, Tundin, Pracaṇḍa, Tāṇḍavapriya, Picinḍila, Sthūlaśīras, Sthūlakeśa, Gabhastimān, Ksemaka, Ksemadhanvan, Virabhadra, Ranapriya, Caṇḍapāṇi, Śūlapāṇi, Pāśapāṇi, Kṛśodara, Dīrghagrīva, Piṅgākṣa, Piṅgala, Piṅgamūrdhaja, Bahunetra, Lāmbakarna, Kharva, Parvataviṅraha, Gokarna, Gajakarna, Kokilākhyā, Gajānana, I (i.e. Skanda), Naigameya, Vikāṭāsya, Aṭṭahāsaka, Sīrapāṇi, Śivārāva, Vaiṇika, Veṇuvādāna, Durādharṣa, Duḥsaha, Garjana and Riputarjana.

47. When those warriors were agitated, all the three worlds shook and became bewildered by the flames of the anger of Durvāsas.

48. The Sun and the Moon had their lustre dimmed by the refulgence of the Gaṇas and so (out of pity) were permitted by them to enter Kāśī.

49. Umādhava (Śiva) checked the army of Pramathas, which was highly perturbed (saying), "This sage, the son of Anasūya, is a part of mine."

50. Thereafter Śambhu of great refulgence, the storehouse of compassion, came out of the Linga of Durvāsas thereby saving the city from the curse of the sage.

51. "Let not the curse of the sage be an obstacle to the people's salvation at Kāśī." Pitying thus the Lord became directly visible to him.

52 He said: "I am pleased, O sage of excessive wrath; unhesitatingly choose what boon is to be given to you by me?"

53-58. Thereupon, O Agastya, the sage who had raised his hand for cursing became ashamed. He said, "Becoming blind with anger, I of an evil intellect, have committed a serious crime." He repeatedly said, "Fie upon me who have been overpowered by anger! Fie upon me who attempted mentally to curse Kāśī that bestows freedom from fear on all the three worlds!

Kāśī alone is the means of salvation to all those who are immersed in the ocean of misery, who are extremely distressed due to the frequent coming and going (i.e. transmigration) and whose necks have been fettered by Karmas.

To all the creatures, Kāśī alone is the mother who accords the milk of great nectar and who leads them to the highest position. There can be no comparison between Kāśī and a mother. The mother conceives one in the womb and Kāśī releases one from the womb.

If anyone also curses Kāśī of such excellence, he himself will get cursed; but Kāśī will never."

59. On hearing these words of Durvāsas, the Three-eyed Lord became exceedingly delighted with the added pleasure due to his praise of Kāśī.

60. The intelligent one who eulogizes Kāśī, he who keeps Kāśī in his heart (is blessed, for) a fierce penance has been performed by him, a crore of sacrifices have been performed by him (by such a person).

61. If the two syllables "Kā-śī" find a place at the tip of the tongue of anyone, he is of highly gifted intellect. He will never be conceived in a womb.

62. One who utters the two-syllabled Mantra, namely Kāśī, in the morning, conquers both the worlds and attains the position beyond all the worlds.

63. O son of Anasūyā, what knowledge you have gained due

to the merit of eulogizing Kāśī now has not been acquired before (by you) by means of penance.

64. O sage, a Dīksita who eulogizes and adores me is not as dearly loved (by me) as one who is fond of eulogizing Kāśī. This is the truth.

65. Through the eulogy of Kāśī I derive a pleasure the like of which I never get through religious gifts, sacrifices or penance (performed by devotees).

66. If Ānandakānana is eulogized with genuinely sincere mind by anyone, it is as though I have been perfectly eulogized with all the Sūktas occurring in the Śrūtis

67. O ascetic, O son of Anasūyā, all your desires shall be fulfilled; you will have the greatest knowledge that is destructive of the great delusion (Samsāra).

68. Mention, O sinless one, what other boon is to be granted to you, because sages like you alone are worthy of the praise of good men.

69. It is only one who is competent and capable by the performance of penance who can become angry. What can one who is incompetent do, even when he is angry? He is like one who is (destitute, and) bereft of means of sustenance."

70. On hearing this, Durvāsas eulogized the Lord clad in elephant hide. He experienced horripilation due to excess of delight and prayed for a boon.

Durvāsas said:

71-73. O Lord of Devas, O Lord of the universe, O Śankara, the merciful, O destroyer of great sins and crimes, O enemy of Andhaka, O destroyer of Smara, O Mrtyuñjaya ('conqueror of death'), O Ugra, O Lord of goblins, O Lord of Mṛḍāni, O three-eyed Lord, if the Lord is pleased with me, if a boon is to be granted to me, let this Liṅga be called Kāmada here. O Dhūrjaṭi, let this pond of mine be called Kāmakunḍa.

Devadeva (Śiva) said:

74-78. Let it be so, O sage of great splendour, O excessively irascible one; this Liṅga named Durvāseśvara installed by you will be Kāmeśvara (by name) bestowing desired things on men. An intelligent man who takes his holy bath in Kāmakunḍa

that has been your resort, at *Pradoṣa* (dusk) when Trayodaśī (thirteenth day) coincides with Saturday and visits Kāmeśa Liṅga installed by you, will never be subjected to the tortures of Yama due to the fault effected by lust. Many sins committed in the course of many births become destroyed instantly, due to the holy dip in the waters of Kāma Tīrtha. By resorting to Kāmeśvara desires will become fulfilled.

79-81. After granting these boons, Śambhu merged into that Liṅga.

Skanda said:

By propitiating that Liṅga all the desires were attained by Durvāsas. Hence Kāmeśvara should be carefully adored in Kāśī always by those who have great desires. For the quelling of great sins they should take the holy bath in Kāmakuṇḍa. A meritorious man who reads this Kāmeśvarākhyāna and the sensible one who listens to it, all of them become free from sins.

CHAPTER EIGHTYSIX

Manifestation of Viśvakarmeśa

Pārvatī said:

1. The Viśvakarmeśvara Liṅga in Kāśī is very well-known. O Lord of Devas, narrate to me the origin of that Liṅga.

Devadeva said:

2. Listen, O goddess, I shall narrate the story that destroys sins, the charming story of how Viśvakarmeśa Liṅga manifested itself.

3. Formerly there was Viśvakarman who was another physical form of Brahmā (the Creator). He was the son of Patriarch Tvaṣṭṛ. He was (indeed) clever in all arts and crafts.

4. After being invested with the sacred thread, the boy was living in the abode of his preceptor (for education). He

had his daily meal out of the alms of cooked rice he got. He served his preceptor duly.

5-7. Once, at the advent of rainy season, his preceptor said to him; "Make a hut for me where the shower of rain will not torment us. It should never collapse nor should it become old and dilapidated." He was addressed thus by the wife of the preceptor: "O son of Tvaṣṭr, make a bodice for me befitting my limbs. It should neither be too tight nor too loose. It should be made of bark and not of cotton. Make it carefully so that it will always remain bright."

8-9. He was commanded by the son of the preceptor: "Make a pair of sandals for me, on wearing which my feet can avert contamination with mud. It should not have any leather strapping. Even when I run it should be comfortable. With the sandals on, I should be able to wade through water as quickly as on dry ground."

10-15. The daughter of the preceptor told him: "O son of Tvaṣṭr, you will, with your own hands, make a pair of gold earrings for me. Give me fanciful toys worthy of girls. These also should be made by you yourself out of ivory. O intelligent one, make domestic instruments too such as mortar and pestle; make them unbreakable. O excellent one, make foot-stools which will always be bright even without being washed. Also cooking pans and pots. O son of Tvaṣṭr, instruct me in the art of cooking too, so that the fingers do not get burned but the dishes get cooked properly. Also make a single-pillared house, out of a single piece of wood, O son of Tvaṣṭr, which I can hold (like an umbrella) wherever I wish."

16. Those who studied along with him, those who were senior to him, all desired that something should be made by him.

17. O Daughter of the Mountain, he promised everyone: "Let it be so" but, afraid and worried, he fled and entered into the middle of a forest.

18. He did not know how to make any of the things which had been promised by him. He had decisively committed himself by assuring everyone that he would do everything.

19-25. That son of Tvaṣṭr cogitated thus: 'What shall I do? Where shall I go? I am in the middle of the forest. Who will help me and guide my intellect? Whom shall I seek refuge in? The foolish fellow who undertakes to do something at the



instance of the preceptor, his wife or his child but does not fulfil the same certainly falls into hell. The sole duty of a religious student is the ministration of service to the preceptor. How can I discharge my duty without carrying out his behest? By fulfilling the tasks entrusted by preceptors and elders, one can realize all one's desires, not otherwise. Hence his (Preceptor's) behest should be fulfilled. Staying here in this forest, how can I hope to carry out their instructions? Who will help me here? I am weak and deficient in intellect. Leave aside the case of the preceptor. Even in the case of another of inferior status, if one assents to something but does not carry it out, he incurs downfall. Ignorant and having none to assist, how am I going to do all these things undertaken out of fear for them? Obeisance to you, O inevitable fate!

26. While that son of Tvaṣṭṛ, held up in the middle of the forest, was thinking thus, a sage was seen by him who had come there then only.

27-31. After bowing down to the ascetic seen in the forest, he said to him: "O esteemed Sir, who may you be? You have excessively pleased my mind. My body has been scorched due to feverish anxiety; but at your sight, it has become instantly cool as though it has dived through a mass of snowflakes. Has my previous Karma assumed your form of an ascetic and come here? Or are you Śiva himself, the ocean of compassion manifested before me? Whoever you may be, I offer obeisance to you. Instruct me as to how I shall be competent to carry out the task entrusted by the preceptor, his wife and his children? Tell me the procedure thereof. Give me intellectual assistance. You have come as a kinsman in this isolated place."

32. On being requested thus in the forest by the religious student, the ascetic with his heart full of compassion advised him accordingly.

33. If a person approached as an authority on being asked for guidance misguides one, he is sure to fall into a terrible hell, to stay there till all the living beings are annihilated.

The Ascetic said:

34. O Brahmācārī, I shall tell you. Listen. Is this any mysterious thing? Due to the blessings of Viśveśa, even Brahmā

has become clever in the act of creation.

35. If you, O son of Tvaṣṭṛ, propitiate the omniscient Lord Śiva at Kāśī, your name Viśvakarman ('one who performs all tasks') shall be truly meaningful.

36. With the blessings of Viśveśa in Kāśī, no desire shall be unattainable, even if it be for salvation; it is easily obtained. Mokṣa too difficult to achieve, is easy to people casting off their bodies here.

37. It is due to the great favour of Viśveśa that the ability to create things was obtained by Brahmā and the capacity to protect the creation by Viṣṇu.

38. If you desire the realization of your wishes, O boy, go to the abode of Viśveśvara presided over by the glory of ultimate salvation.

39. Indeed Śāmbhu is the bestower of everything. On being requested for milk only by Upamanyu he granted him the entire ocean of milk.

40. To a person staying in Ānandavana, mass of piety is attainable at every step. In fact, what is it that cannot be obtained in Śāmbhu's Ānandakānana and who is it by whom it is not obtained?

41. Who will not resort to that Kāśī where masses of great sins become reduced merely by the touch of the celestial river.

42. Even through crores of sacrifices such a mass of piety is not obtained, as is obtained at every step, while walking through the streets of Vārāṇasī.

43. If there is any desire for piety, wealth, love and salvation, go then to Vārāṇasī, go then to the sanctifier of all the three worlds.

44. Certainly men will attain the fruits of all desires, when Śarva, Viśveśvara, the bestower of everything, is resorted to in Kāśī.

45. On hearing the utterance of the ascetic thus, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ became highly pleased. He asked the ascetic himself the means of reaching Kāśī.

Tvaṣṭṛ said:

46. O excellent one among ascetics, where is that Ānandavana of Śāmbhu where nothing existing in all the three worlds becomes

difficult to get for Sādhakas (Aspirants)?

47. O sage, is it in heaven, or in the mortal world or in the abode of Bali? Where is that Ānandavana where there exist the Glory of Bliss?

48. It is the place where Lord Viśveśvara, the helmsman of all the worlds, imparts the Tārakajñāna (knowledge) whereby the devotees become identical with him.

49. It is the place where the Glory of Salvation is invariably easy of access to a person traversing Ānandavana. What to speak of lesser desires!

50-54. Kindly tell me, who will take me there to the city of Śambhu? How should I go?

On hearing these words full of faith, that ascetic said: "Come. I shall take you. I too am desirous of going there. After obtaining human birth, if Kāśī is not resorted to, where is human birth once again? Where is Kāśī, the cause of welfare, the destroyer of the bondage of Karmas? If the human life is wasted by being bereft of the access to Kāśī, the future and the whole span of life, everything is gone waste. Hence in order to make this highly fickle human life fruitful, I will go to Kāśī. Come on, after setting aside Māyā (Delusion)." On hearing this, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ reached the city of Viśveśvara accompanied by that highly sympathetic sage. He regained the satisfaction of mind.

55-59. After taking him as far as Kāśī, O Pot-born One, the ascetic went somewhere unexpectedly. Then the son of Tvaṣṭṛ thought thus, 'Indeed it is Viśveśa himself, the bestower of anything thought of on everyone. Though he is far off, he is present in the vicinity of those who steadily persist in the path of the good. If the Three-eyed Lord casts the benign glance on anyone, he is drawn very near to himself despite his being far off and he himself imparts instruction regarding the right path. Where was I, a lonely boy in the forest with mind bewildered due to anxiety? Where was that ascetic who advised me properly and brought me here? (A great disparity, indeed!) This is the playful pastime of this Three-eyed Lord whose devotee has nothing difficult to get. Where am I? Where is Kāśikā? (What a great difference between us!)

60. Śambhu has not been propitiated by me anywhere in

the previous birth. This is definitely known as an inference from (my being) an embodied being.

61. In this birth too, it is obvious that he has not been propitiated because I am only a boy. This is directly observed. How does he have the inclination to bless?

62. Yes, it is known! my devotion to the preceptor is the cause of propitiation of Śāmbhu; it is due to that that I have been blessed by the compassionate Viśveśa.

63. Or the Three-eyed Lord does not depend upon a specific cause like other gods. He blesses even the poorest man and the cause thereof is compassion alone.

64. If he has no pity on me, what accounts for my contact with the ascetic? In the form (of that ascetic) Śāmbhu himself has certainly brought me here.

65. Neither charity nor performance of sacrifices, neither austerities nor Vratas can be the cause of Śāmbhu's pleasure. The cause thereof is his grace alone.

66. When one does not leave off the path ordained in the Śrutis and traversed by the good, this Lord Viśveśvara does have the greatest pity.'

67. After invoking the sympathy of Śāmbhu, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, with real purity, installed the Liṅga of Īśa and adored it with a steady mind.

68. He used to take bath everyday and worship Īśāna after bringing from the forest a huge collection of flowers blossoming in the changing seasons. He sustained himself by eating bulbous roots, roots and fruits alone.

69. When the son of Tvaṣṭṛ spent three years thus with the mind directed towards the propitiation of the Liṅga, the Lord, the storehouse of mercy, became pleased with him.

70-72. Coming out of that Liṅga itself, Bhava said: "O son of Tvaṣṭṛ, choose a boon, O boy who have determined in mind to work for the sake of the preceptor. I am pleased with your steady devotion. You will have the capacity to make the things in accordance with the request made by the preceptor, his wife and the two children of his.

73. O son of Tvaṣṭṛ, I shall grant you other boons too. I am satisfied with your adoration. O highly blessed one, listen to them. (It is due to the power) of this Liṅga of wonderful glory.

74-78. Like another Brahmā (the Creator) you will know how to make things out of gold and other metals, wood, stones, gems, jewels, flowers, clothes, camphor and other scented things, water, bulbous roots, fruits, skins and peels of things—nay of all things. Whatever people may be interested in, houses, temples etc. and whatever may be the mode of liking, you will be able to carry out the task to their full satisfaction. You will know how to create things, the mode of making the dresses of all kinds, varieties of dishes from lentils, all types of fine arts, the triple symphony etc.

79-80. Different kinds of machines and musical instruments, different types of weaponry, arrangement of artificial ponds and reservoirs of water, building of forts—you will know how to create all these in such a manner as to excel others. Due to my boon, you will master all the arts.

81-83. All (tricks of) jugglery and magical arts will be known to you. You will be clever in all tasks. Your intellect will be the most excellent one. Due to my boon, you will understand the mental predilections of everyone. Why say more? Whether in heaven or in Pātāla or here, you will know everything supernatural and superb.

84. O sinless one, your name shall be Viśvakarman because you will be knowing all the activities of all the worlds and of everyone.

85. What other boon should be given to you? Request for it quickly. There is nothing that cannot be given to you since you have been engaged in the adoration of the Liṅga.

86. Desired things should be granted even to that devotee of excellent mind who worships the Liṅga elsewhere. All the more so in the case of one who worships the Liṅga especially in Kāśī.

87. He by whom a Liṅga has been installed in Kāśī, has been adored in Kāśī and has been eulogized in Kāśī, is a mirror unto my form.

88. You are the bright and clear mirror of my three-eyed form, because you have adored the Liṅga in Kāśī. O son of Tvaṣṭṛ, O performer of religious vows, choose the boon.

89. He who setting me aside worships another deity in Kāśī, my capital city, is a poor wretch, deficient in intellect, deprived of (good things) and devoid of salvation. He has to be satisfied with lesser things.

90. Hence here in Ānandavana, I am to be worshipped by those who desire salvation, by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Moon and Indra. No one else is adored here.

91. Just as you have come to Ānandavana and have worshipped me, so also other persons of meritorious deeds have worshipped and attained me.

92. You are to be blessed completely. Hence choose a boon that is rare and know that it is already granted. Oh, speak out; do not delay.”

Viśvakarman said:

93. O Śaṅkara, though this Liṅga has been installed by me, ignorant that I am, yet let others also be the recipients of excellent knowledge by propitiating it.

94. O Lord, you have to be requested for another thing too and you will grant it. When will Your Revered Lordship make me build your palace?

Devadeva said:

95. Let what you said be so. Those who worship your Liṅga shall become the recipients of excellent knowledge and well-initiated in the process of salvation.

96. When Divodāsa becomes the king due to the boon of Vidhi, then at my instance he will make you build my palace.

97-98. Kāśī has been renovated and colonized by that king. Due to Gaṇeśa's Māyā, he will become disgusted with kingdom. At the advice of Viṣṇu, he will seek refuge in me. Abandoning the glory of royal bliss, which is fickle, he has attained (will attain) the glory of salvation here.

99. O Viśvakarman, go ahead. Endeavour to fulfil the command of the preceptor, since those who devoutly serve their preceptors are my devotees. There is no doubt in it.

100. Those who dishonour their preceptor, are worthy of being dishonoured by me. Hence do what is advised by the preceptor. That should be your desire.

101. Thereafter you will come to stay with me—(you) a sanctified soul carrying out what is beneficial to the Devas till you finally attain salvation.

102. Here, in your Liṅga, I shall abide forever as the

bestower of their desire. The Glory of Salvation is not far from the devotees of this Liṅga.

103. Those who adore your Liṅga which is to the north of Aṅgāreśa, will attain at every step the fulfilment of their desires.

104. After saying thus the Lord vanished. The son of Tvaṣṭṛ went back to his preceptor. After carrying out many things desired by the preceptor, he returned to his house.

105. At his home too, he made his parents contented through his activity. After fulfilling properly their behests as declared by them, he came back to Kāśī.

106. The son of Tvaṣṭṛ is eagerly attached to the propitiation of his own Liṅga. That sensible devotee does not leave off Kāśī till today. He is continuing the activities pleasing to all the Devas.

Īśvara said:

107. O goddess, O daughter of the Lord of Mountains, all those Liṅgas in Kāśī efficacious in causing salvation and specifically asked by you, have been described by me to you.

108-110. They are: the Liṅga named Omkāra, Lord Triviṣṭapa, Mahādeva, Kṛttivāśas, Ratneśa, Candra, Kedāra, Dharmeśa, Vireśvara, Kāmeśa, Viśvakarmeśa and Maṇikarnīśvara, that which is worthy of my adoration named Avimukta, then O goddess, that which has my name i.e. Viśvanātha which is well-known in the universe and which accords happiness to the whole universe.

111. If after reaching Avimukta, Viśveśvara is worshipped by anyone, he does not take birth again in the course of hundreds of crores of Kalpas.

112. *Yatis* (mendicants) of well-controlled souls are allowed free movement for eight months. It is not desirable for them to stay in a place for a whole year, but only four months are enjoined.

113. In the case of those who have entered Avimukta free movement is not proper. Salvation is undoubted here. Hence, Kāśīkā should not be abandoned.

114. One should not abandon Ānandavana and go to a penance-grove elsewhere, since, with my support, penance, Yoga

and salvation—all belong to this place only.

115. Out of compassion for all creatures, this holy spot has been created by me. In this holy spot, all those who are desirous of Siddhi, do accomplish it.

116. On merely seeing Ānandavana all the sins of the past and present committed knowingly or unwittingly become destroyed.

117-118. It is easily obtained in Kāśī whatever one gets by means of great strain in practising severe austerities, by means of great Dānas (gifts), great Vratas, observances and restraints, great sacrifices, Yogic practices, repeated studies of the Vedānta Śāstras and resorting to all the Upaniṣads.

119. Living beings wander about after being fettered by the cords of Karma, unless and until they forsake their bodies in the abode of Viśveśvara.

120. O goddess, I sportingly grant unto even lower non-human beings in Kāśī in the end that place where even Yājñikas (performers of sacrifices) do not go.

121. All living beings having their residence in this holy spot of salvation, dying in due course, do attain the greatest goal.

122. Even a person attracted by worldly pleasures, even one who has no interest in piety, casting off the body here in due course, does not reenter the world.

123-125. In Vārāṇasī one gets every moment a crore times more the benefit obtained in Prayāga, O goddess, by taking the holy dip in the morning in the month of Māgha.

The greatness of this holy spot is something beyond the pale of words. Only a few parts have been mentioned by me out of love for you.

By listening to the narratives of the fourteen Lingas, an excellent man attains excellent respect and adoration in the fourteen (i.e. all) worlds.

CHAPTER EIGHTYSEVEN

Dakṣa's Sacrifice

Agastya said:

1-5. O Six-faced Son of the omniscient Lord Śiva, O Lord proficient in everything, I have become exceedingly pleased on hearing the manifestation of these Liṅgas that accord salvation.

I am now on a par with the unaging Deva after drinking the nectar. Through the Liṅgas, the chief of which is Omkāra, this Ānandakānana generates only bliss even to sinners. I have obtained the greatest bliss on listening to this narration of the Liṅgas.

I have become a living liberated soul after listening to the truth about the holy spot. O Skanda, narrate the details of the fourteen Liṅgas beginning with Dakṣeśvara, which you have enumerated. Speak out fully their efficacy.

Dakṣa was a person who censured the Lord in the assembly of Devas. How did he instal the miraculous Liṅga of the Lord?

6. On hearing this utterance of the Pot-born One, O Sūta, the Peacock-vehicles Lord narrated the origin of Dakṣa.

Skanda said:

7-8. Listen, O sage, I shall narrate the story that destroy sins. Dakṣa went to Kāśī for performing the *Puraścaraṇa* rites when urged by the Self-born Lord (Brahmā) for expiation. He was ugly-countenanced with a face resembling a goat and he had been refused by Dadhīci.

9. Once Viṣṇu went to Kailāsa for the purpose of serving the Moon-crested Lord of Devas. He was followed by the Lotus-born Lord.

10-12. There were present the Guardians of the world beginning with Indra, Viśvedevas, group of Maruts, Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Sādhyas, Vidyādharas, serpents, sages, celestial damsels, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas. The Lord of the chiefs of Devas was bowed down to by them and they experienced horripilation due to the excess of joy. He was eulogized through many songs of prayer. They were duly received

by Śāmbhu. With their eyes revetted to his face, they occupied their respective rows of seats.

13. When all were seated, Viṣṭaraśravas (Viṣṇu) was duly honoured by Śāmbhu by grasping his hand and eagerly asked thus:

14-19. “O Hari marked with the Śrīvatsa, O destroyer of the race of demons like a forest fire burning the trees, I hope, your ability to protect the three worlds is unobstructed and undiminished. I hope, you adequately chastise the wicked Ditiyas and Danujas in battlefield. Do you, like me, honour Brāhmanas even if they are angry? I hope, the cows are free from harassment all over the earth. I hope, women retain their glorious splendour and the vow of chastity and fidelity to their husbands. I hope, Yajñas are performed in accordance with injunctions on the earth with due offering of monetary gifts. I hope, the penance of the ascetics is always free from molestation. I hope, the excellent Brāhmaṇas study and recite without obstacles all the Vedas together with their Aṅgas (ancillaries). O Keśava, do the kings protect the subjects like you? I hope, the four castes and stages of life scrupulously adhere to their respective duties with delighted minds and sense-organs.”

20-26. After asking thus the delighted Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, Dhūrjati (Śiva) asked Brahmā too: “I hope, your spiritual splendour flourishes. O Vidhi, I hope, truth does not slip in the pavilion of the three worlds; hindrance to pilgrimage is not brought about by anyone anywhere. I hope, Indra and other Suras administer their own respective realms complacently on being well-protected by the brawny arms of Viṣṇu.” The Lord thus asked everyone of them who evinced deep respect and esteem. After asking them the purpose of their visit, the Lord met their desires duly and discharged them. Thereafter he entered his palace as the Devas happily returned to their respective abodes.

Half way during his return journey Dakṣa, the father of Satī, began to ponder very worriedly. He had been honoured (by the Lord) on the same level as the other gods without any preferential treatment. He was extremely agitated in his mind like the ocean when churned with Mandara mountain. He said thus to himself blinded by the flurry of great anger:

[*Censuring Śiva (double meaning with implied eulogy)*]

27. 'He has become highly arrogant after getting my daughter Satī. He does not belong to anyone and no one belongs to him anywhere.

28. Does he come under anyone's control? What is his Gotra? What is his native land? What is his nature? What is his job of sustenance? What is his conduct of life? He eats poison. His vehicle is a bull.

29. Generally he is not an ascetic. Where is penance? Where is the taking up of weapons? He cannot be considered one among the householders, because his place of residence is cremation ground.

30. He is not a religious student with a vow of celibacy, because his status is that of a wedded man. How can he be a forest-dweller, because he is deluded by the maddening influence of Lordship and prosperity.

31. He cannot be a Brāhmaṇa, because the Veda does not know him. In view of his wielding weapons and vehicles perhaps he may be a Kṣatriya. But he is not one.

32. A Kṣatriya is one who protects others from injury and loss. How is it relevant in the case of this one who is fond of *Pralaya* (Annihilation)? He is also not a Vaiśya, because he is perpetually functioning like a moneyless one.

33. He cannot be a Śūdra, because he flaunts his sacred thread of serpents. Thus he is beyond the Varṇas and Āśramas. Who is he? He cannot be decisively proclaimed.

34. Everyone is known through his Prakṛti (Nature). But this Sthāṇu (Śiva, a post) is devoid of Prakṛti. Mostly he is not a male because of his semi-feminine body.

35. He is not a female as well, because of the moustache on his face. He is not at all a eunuch because his Liṅga is adored.

36. He is not a boy because he has seen and been in many years. He is sung about as *Ugra* (fierce), an old one without beginning.

37. Hence youth cannot certainly be expected as possible in him, the ancient one. He is not an old one, because he is devoid of senility and death.

38. In the end he annihilates Brahmā etc. Still he is not a sinner. There is not even a trace of Puṇya (merit) in him because he cut off one of Brahmā's heads angrily.

39. Where can be cleanliness in him who is *embellished* with bones and bereft of clothes? Of what use is uttering too much? Nothing about his activities is known.

40. The height of impudence seen in this person of matted hairs is surprising. He did not get up even after seeing me, his father-in-law and senior.

41. Persons not disciplined by mothers and fathers will certainly be like this, devoid of nobility and attributes, uncontrolled and negligent of rites.

42. Self-willed in their movements, unguided and conceited in every respect, not possessing anything, they consider themselves lords.

43. This is the nature of all sons-in-law. Acquiring some power and pelf, mostly they become arrogant undoubtedly.

44. The Moon too, much in love with Rohinī became arrogant. Not affectionate towards Kṛttikā and other stars he was cursed to become a victim of pulmonary consumption.

45-46a. I shall extirpate this arrogance of the Trident-bearing One entirely. Just as I have been insulted by him, when I went to his house, so also I shall spoil his honour completely.'

46b-50. After thinking and deciding thus in various ways, Patriarch Dakṣa went home and summoned all the Devas including Indra. "I am desirous of performing a sacrifice and you all will assist me in performing it. May all of you quickly bring the requisite things soon." He then went to Śvetadvīpa and made the Discus-bearing Lord, Acyuta, the Upadraṣṭā (main observer) of the great sacrifice and Yajñapurūṣa (the person presiding over the Yajña). All the sages, the expounders of Vedas, became his Ṛtviks. Then began the great sacrifice of Dakṣa. On seeing the groups of the Devas in that great sacrifice of Dakṣa without Śiva, Brahmā went home under some pretext.

51-57. Dadhīci saw the residents of all the three worlds present at the sacrifice of Dakṣa except Satī and Īśvara. They had received duly all the honours along with garments and ornaments. Desiring that Dakṣa should have an auspicious result, he said thus:

Dadhīci said:

O Dakṣa, O skilful Patriarch, having the form of the creator himself! It is certain that nowhere has anyone the same capa-

city as you have. O highly intelligent one, arrangement and collection of the requisites of a Yajña seen by us here in your case, have not been recently seen anywhere else. (They say) A *Kratu* cannot be (easily) performed. There is no enemy on a par with *Kratu* (if not performed properly). If it has to be performed it should be performed only when the wealth (one can command) is like this. Fire-god himself is directly present in the sacrificial pit. Indra and other deities are also directly present. All the Mantras are also directly invoked. The Yajñapuruṣa (Viṣṇu) is also directly present. The preceptor of gods himself is the presiding priest here. Brahmā himself is present and Bṛghu, well-versed in *Karmakāṇḍa*, is also here.

58. This Pūṣan, this Bhaga, this Goddess Sarasvatī, all these Guardians of the Quarters—they themselves accord protection here.

59-62. You have undergone the auspicious initiation accompanied by Her Ladyship Śatarūpā. This Dharma, your son-in-law, is here along with his ten wives and he himself supervises all the pious rites carefully. This lord of medicinal herbs, the Moon, the best among your sons-in-law, works on your behalf along with his twenty-seven wives. The highly sensible Dvijarāja (Moon) supplies all the medicinal herbs. Mārīca Kaśyapa initiated into the Rājasūya sacrifice, gifting away all the three worlds as Dakṣiṇā, the foremost among the patriarchs, works on your behalf along with his thirteen wives.

63-65. The divine cow Kāmadhenu yields the *Havis* (sacrificial oblation). The divine tree Kalpavṛkṣa yields sacrificial twigs and the Darbha grass. Viśvakarmā makes all the wooden utensils, the carts, the pavilion etc., as well as the ornaments intended for the guests and the Ṛtviks. The eight Vasus give (distribute) the wealth and garments. Lakṣmī herself adorns the Suvāsinis (noble ladies) present here.

66. O Dakṣa, as I see all round, all things are conducive to my happiness. But one thing, the very thing you have forgotten, makes me miserable.

67. Just as the body bereft of the soul does not look beautiful even when it is embellished, so also the Yajña does not shine without Īśvara (Śiva). It appears like a cremation ground.”

68. On hearing these words of Dadhīci, Dakṣa, the Patri-

arch, flared up with anger very much like fire when ghee is poured in it.

69. He was seen before very much delighted with the eulogy offered by Dadhīci. The same Dakṣa was seen now emitting fire from his countenance.

70. With his whole body trembling with rage, Dakṣa, the Patriarch, said to the Brāhmaṇa as though he was bent upon murdering him.

Dakṣa said:

71. O Dadhīci, you are a Brāhmaṇa. What can I do to you in this regard? Alas! I am in the initiated state. Nothing is within my power to do.

72. By whom have you been invited here? Why have you, a highly dull-witted one, come here? Even if you have come, by whom have you been asked to offer your opinion?

73. You say thus: how can that sacrifice where the glorious Hari, the most auspicious of all auspicious ones, is the Yajñapuruṣa, be like a cremation ground?

74-78. You are comparing with a cremation ground this great sacrifice where Śakra, the wielder of thunderbolt, the performer of a hundred sacrifices, the Lord of thirty-three crores of immortal ones is himself present. Here Dharmarāja, the sole judge of the righteous and the unrighteous, is also present. You are comparing with an inauspicious ground that Yajña where Fire-god himself is present directly and Kubera bestows glory and wealth. Out of arrogance, you call that sacrificial ground a place for cremation, the place where the preceptor of gods himself is the presiding officer of the Kratu. You compare with the inauspicious ground and call it one, the sacrificial ground where those sages, the chief of whom is Vasiṣṭha work as Ṛtviks.

79-80. On hearing thus, Sage Dadhīci, the most excellent one among the wise, replied, "Hari the auspicious of all auspicious ones may be the Yajñapuruṣa. Still in the Vedas, Viṣṇu is being cited as a Śāmbhavī Śakti (Power) belonging to Śāmbhu. The left limb of the first creator is Hari and the other one Vidhi (Brahmā).

81. (Indra) with the thunderbolt as his weapon might have performed a hundred sacrifices but the fact is that as soon as he was cursed by Durvasas he became bereft of glory in a moment.

82-84. He propitiated the Lord of goblins (Śiva) again and regained Amarāvati. Dharmarāja has been mentioned by you as the protector of your sacrifice. His power is known to all when he formerly tried to bind Śveta with cords. Dhanada (Kubera) is afraid of the Three-eyed Lord. Fire-god is his (Śiva's) eye Rudra rushed to the help of the preceptor of gods when Dvijarāja (Moon) ravished the exceedingly beautiful Tārā.

85-87. Vasistha and others who work as your Rtviks know him (Śiva). Rudra is one without a second. These and the other sages know this well, yet they are working in your sacrifice because they honour you. If you listen to my words, the words of a (real) Brāhmana, that will be beneficial to you. Pay heed to me, and invite Viśveśa, the Lord of the fruits of a Kratu Without him this Kratu, though performed (successfully) is no better than one not performed.

88. If that Mahādeva, the sole observer of all activities is present, your desires as well as the desires of all these will become realised.

89. Just as insentient seeds do not germinate themselves, so also all the insentient activities and rites do not bear fruit without Īśvara

90. A religious rite without Śiva is like a speech without purport, a body without piety and a woman without a husband.

91. A rite without Śiva is like regions without Gaṅgā, a house without a son and wealth without liberal gifts.

92. A rite without Śiva is like a kingdom without a minister, a Brāhmaṇa without Vedic Study and happiness without a woman.

93. A rite without Śiva is like twilight (prayer) without Darbha grass, libation without gingelly seeds and Homa without ablution."

94. Deluded by Śambhu's Māyā, even the alert, efficient Dakṣa did not pay heed to the words thus uttered by Dadhīci.

95-101. He replied furiously: "Why should you worry about my Kratu? All the rites, the important and essential ones for (performance of) Kratu become invariably fruitful by proper

performance. Even the rite of your Īśvara does not achieve its result through incorrect performance. Everyone is Īśvara (master) in the matter of making his rite fruitful. It was said by you just now that Īśvara is the witness of all rites. That may be just so, but nowhere does the witness offer the object desired. As to your statement that the insentient rites do not bear fruit without Īśvara, I shall cite a counter-example. Even the insentient seeds germinate, blossom and fructify when their proper time and season come. In the same manner a sacred rite bears fruit without Īśvara. Of what avail is then that Īśvara of great inauspicious features?

Dadhīci said:

102. By proper performance, a rite may perhaps bear the fruit but if Īśvara is not favourable the fruitful one perishes quickly.

103. A rite performed contrary to the injunctions may bear fruit due to the power of the divine wish. How can all the others here below him and dependent on him be called Īśvaras!

104. Īśa is not like an ordinary witness. He is the undoubted witness of all the activities of everyone and the bestower of the benefits.

105. It is the Lord, the creator of everything, who penetrates the seed in the forms of earth, water etc., and in the form of the Time causes the germination of the seed.

106. You said that the rite will bear fruit at the proper time even without Īśa, but that time is the Lord himself the maker of all, the lord of all.

107. Another thing mentioned by you is the only true thing. Of what avail is Īśvara here, Īśvara the personified form of great auspiciousness!

108. Those who are really great, those whose forms are of auspicious nature, and those who really deserve the name Īśvara, what have they to do here near you?

109. When Brāhmaṇa Dadhīci replied thus point by point, Dakṣa became all the more furious, due to arrogance born of excellent prosperity.

110-111. He looked around and commanded those who were

in the vicinity: "Quickly remove this base Brāhmaṇa. Take him far away from this excellent sacrifice. His mind is dwelling on something not very good." On hearing this Dadhīci said laughingly:

112-113. "O foolish one, why do you attempt to remove me far away. It is certain that you too are far removed from everything auspicious along with all these. O Prajāpati, all of a sudden the angry punishment of the great Lord, the administrator of the worlds, will fall on your head."

114-116. After saying this the Brāhmaṇa went out of that sacrificial hall. When he went out all these also followed him: Durvāsā, Cyavana, you (i.e. Agastya), Uttaraṅka, Upamanyu, Ṛcika, Uddālaka, Māṇḍavya, Vāmadeva, Gālava, Garga, Gautama and others who knew the true nature of Śiva.

After Dadhīci's departure the great sacrifice was resumed joyfully.

117. Dakṣa, the Prajāpati, gave the Brāhmaṇas who remained there twice the usual Dakṣiṇā and more money to the others also.

118. All the sons-in-law were pleased by him with plenty of wealth. The daughters too were elaborately adored with display of great affluence.

119. The wives of the sages, the wives of the Devas and also the ladies of the city—all these were made the recipients of great honour.

120. With the loud sound of the Vedic chant of the Brāhmaṇas who were excessively delighted in their minds, the firmament was clearly made one with sound as its attribute by Dakṣa.

121. Agni became Mandāgni ('one with the gastric fire impaired') when the priest (profusely) offered the Āhutis. Ladies in the form of quarters were propitiated by the fragrance of the ghee-offerings.

122. The Suras became pot-bellied through Svāhākāras and Vaṣaṭkāras. Mountains of excellent cooked food were made by him at every step.

123. Streams of ghee, thousands of rivulets of honey, great lakes of milk and huge eddies of liquid raw sugar were also made by him.

124. Heaps of silk garments, peaks of jewels were made. The ground of the sacrificial hall was paved with gold and silver.

125. In his Kratu even the much sought beggars were not to be found. Even the servants were delighted and well-nourished

126. The sound of auspicious songs pervaded the courtyard of the firmament. Groups of celestial damsels became delighted and Gandharvas became excessively joyous.

127. Vidyādharas became jubilant. The earth flourished much in that great Kratu of Dakṣa, full of the display of affluence. When the sacrifice proceeded smoothly, Sage Nārada went to Kailāsa.

CHAPTER EIGHTYEIGHT

Satī Casts off Her Body

Agastya said:

1. O Six-faced One, tell me the interesting story as to what was done by the sage, the son of Brahmā, after reaching the world of Śiva.

Skanda said:

2. Listen, O Pot-born One, I shall tell you what was done by the noble-souled Nārada after hurriedly going to Kailāsa, the abode of Śaṅkara.

3-8 By the celestial path the sage arrived at the abode of Śaṁbhu. On seeing Śiva and Śivā, he bowed down and Śiva returned the salute respectfully.

The sage occupied the seat pointed out by him watching their game of dice. They continued the play with the dice and when they did not stop, the sage was prompted by eagerness and said:

Nārada said:

O Lord of Devas, the entire Cosmic Egg is your play. O Lord, the twelve months are the houses in the chess board and the thirty lunar days the dark (squares) and the bright ones

are the chessmen. The two Ayanas (transits of the Sun) are the two dices. The two stakes are success and defeat entitled *Sṛṣṭi* (creation) and *Pralaya* (annihilation). The success of the Goddess is *Sṛṣṭi* and the success of Dhūrjati is *Pralaya*. The duration of the game of both of you is cited as the maintenance (of the universe). Thus the entire Cosmic Egg is a mere play of the Lord and the Goddess.

9. Neither the Goddess will defeat her Lord nor Īśa will defeat the Śakti. I am desirous of submitting something. O mother, let it be heeded to.

10. Despite being the leader of omniscient ones, the Lord is not aware of anything because he is stabilized far above honour and dishonour.

11. He is Sporting Soul (one who assumes body sportively) endowed with certain attributes but on pondering over deeply, he is (found) utterly without any attribute. In spite of his engaging himself in activities, he is not affected by those activities.

12. Stationed in the middle (heart) of everything he takes up an attitude of neutrality. This Maheśāna has an impartial vision of (equally viewing) friends and enemies in respect of everything.

13. You are the Śakti of this Lord, the greatest object of honour to everyone. Even to Dakṣa, you have given honour as befitting a progeny.

14. But certainly you alone are the one mother of all the universe. Brahmā, Keśava and Vāsava have come out of you.

15. Being deluded by the Māyā of the Three-eyed Lord, you do not know yourself. That is why, O Satī, my mind is pained.

16. Other women too who are chaste and endowed with great fidelity to their husbands do not take into account anything except the pair of feet of their husbands.

17-18. Or, let this matter be set aside. I shall mention the relevant matter on hand. Today I have seen something unusual near Nilagiri in the vicinity of Haridvāra. Therefore, I have come to you. I am eager to say something urged by a very surprising and sad event.

19-20. This is the cause of surprise that in the sacrificial pavilion of Dakṣa, all the men in the whole of the three worlds

along with their women-folk were seen. All of them were equally well-adorned with their lotus-like faces beaming with pleasure. Oblivious of all other activities they all took part in the sacrifice of Dakṣa.

21-22. The event that caused grief was this that the couple of Bhava and Bhavānī that dispels worldly existence (Saṃsāra), that from which this world originated, in which it functions and in which it will certainly merge, was not seen. The inability to see you both (absence of both of you) made me very sad

23. It was not only this that took place there, something else also happened. It is not possible for me to describe it. That Dakṣa was the person who spoke it

24. On hearing those words, Brahmā walked away. He (Dakṣa) was rebuked very much by the great sage Dadhīci

25. Even as the Devas and the sages stood watching the patriarch was cursed. On hearing the words of abuse he used, ears were closed by me

26. On hearing the abusive censure of Bhava many Brāhmaṇas, the chief of whom was Durvasas, walked out in protest along with Dadhīci

27-28. But the great Yāga went on with the lay public jubilant and well-nourished. I was unable to bear to look at it. Hence I came away, O Goddess! I am not enthusiastic enough to speak anything further out of deference to your sisters there along with their husbands.

29. On hearing this Goddess Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, cast off the dice from her hand and meditated for a short while.

30-31. She said, "Let it be so. My refuge is Bhava alone." After deciding thus in her mind, Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, got up immediately and bowed down to Śaṅkara. Joining her palms in reverence over her head, the Goddess submitted to the Lord:

Devī said:

32-33a. Be victorious, O destroyer of Andhaka, O Three-eyed Lord, O slayer of Tripuras! Your feet are my refuge, O

Sadāśiva; grant me the permission (to go). Pray do not prevent me. I shall go to my father.

33b. After saying this, she placed her head at the lotus-like feet of the enemy of Andhaka.

34. Then Goddess Mṛḍānī was told by Śāmbhu: "O fair lady, get up. Tell me, O beautiful lady enjoying conjugal bliss, what is it that you lack here?"

35. O Goddess, it was by you that conjugal bliss was granted to Lakṣmī, excellent lustre to Brahmānī, and the state of being ever fresh to Śacī.

36-37. It is due to you that I am competent to protect the vast prosperity and overlordship. Having attained you as Śakti assuming a sportive form, I create this, protect this and consume this (universe). O lady, I am encouraged by you. O sharer of my left half, why should you wish to forsake me?"

38-39. On hearing this utterance of Śiva, Śivā (Satī) said to Maheśvara: "O Lord of my life, I am not going anywhere leaving you. My mind will stay steady at the pair of your feet. I am going to see the Kratu of my father. I have not seen a Yajña anywhere."

40-42. On hearing the words of Kātyāyanī, Śāmbhu said then: "If a Kratu has not been seen by you, I shall perform a Kratu then Or you, the holder of my Śakti, create another Kratu rite. Let there be another Yajñapurusa. Let there be other guardians of the worlds. Create quickly other sages for performing the duties of Rtviks."

On hearing this utterance of Śāmbhu, the Goddess said again:

43-44. "O Lord, the festivities of my father's Yajña should be seen by me certainly. Grant me permission. Do not let my words be otherwise. Who is competent to turn back one's mind or the water that flows downwards, O Lord? Do not prevent me now."

45-48a. On hearing this, the omniscient Lord of goblins said: "O Goddess, do not go forsaking me. Once you go you will never meet (me). Today it is Saturday. It should stop you from going towards the east. O my beloved, the star (constellation) is Jyeṣṭhā. The lunar day is the ninth. The Yoga is the seventeenth one (i.e. Vyatīpāta); separation today is inauspicious.

You were born when half of Dhaniṣṭhā was over. Therefore it is the fifth day today. Do not go, O Goddess. If you go now, you will never see me again.”

48b-49a. Again the goddess said: “If I am, even by name, Satī, I shall be able to serve you with another body.”

49b-52. Thereupon Bhava spoke again: “Who is competent to prevent a woman or a man if his mental predilection is extremely excited. O Goddess, there is no meeting again. I am speaking the truth. But, O fair lady, O my beloved, should one value and wish for great honour as the prized asset, one should not go even to the house of parents, if (one is) not invited. Just as a river having flowed into the ocean does not flow back, so also your return after going now is impossible.”

Devī said:

53. If I am attached to the pair of your lotus-like feet, you alone will be my Lord in the next birth.

54-56. After saying this, the Goddess departed with eyes blinded due to anger. What should be done by persons desirous of going on some purpose was not done. She did not bow to Mahādeva, nor did she circumambulate him. That was why she did not return after her departure.

Even today, those who depart without bowing down to Maheśāna and without circumambulating him do not return like the days that elapse.

57. The walking on foot even that holy path was considered very hard by that queen of the Lord of the three worlds.

58. On seeing Satī walking on foot, the Lord too was pained in his mind very much. Then he called his Gaṇas:

59. “O Gaṇas, take the aerial chariot with mind and wind as its wheels, yoked with ten thousand lions and having the main pole of the flag rising like Sumeru.

60. The great gust of wind (Pravaha) shall be its banner and the cosmic intelligence shall be the marked middle pole and Narmadā and Alakanandā shall be the shafts.

61. The sun and the moon shall act as the umbrella there and the excellent Vārāhī Śakti shall be the *Makaratuṇḍa* (the fitting in front shaped like the snout of a crocodile).

62. Gāyatrī itself shall be the yoke; Takṣaka and others shall be the ropes; the charioteer is Praṇava and the sound of Omkāra shall be the creaking sound.

63. The Aṅgas (ancillary subjects) shall be the protective fittings and the seven metres shall be the front fender (for protection against collision)."

On being ordered by Hara thus, the Gaṇas took the chariot quickly.

64. After the goddess had been seated in the aerial chariot, the attendants accompanied the great Goddess shining with divine splendour (surpassing that of the sun—Comm.).

65. In a moment the wife of the Three-eyed Lord saw the open yard of Daksa's assembly. She got down quickly from the aerial chariot stopped in the firmament.

66-69. Observed (fearfully) by the awestruck guards, she entered the hall of sacrifice. She saw her mother wearing a crown and dressed in auspicious clothes, and her sisters dressed and adorned duly accompanied by their husbands. They had various emotions. Some were surprised. Some were arrogant. Some were delighted and some were frightened. They looked on probably with the thought, 'This beloved of Hara has come unexpected and uninvited. How could she come in a moment in the aerial chariot?' Without saying a word to all those, Sati went near Daksa. The father and the mother said, "You have come. It is good."

Satī said:

70. O my dear father, if it is good that I have come, how is it that I was not invited like these my sisters?

Dakṣa said:

71. My dear daughter, O blessed one without a parallel, O auspicious one to all, this is not at all your fault. This is my own fault.

72-75. It is my mistake that you were given to such a husband by me who is ignorant and senseless. If I had known him that this Īśvara is no Īśvara at all, how could I have given you to that person having Māyā (deceit) for his form? I was contented with his name Śiva ('Auspicious One') but did not

know that he was not auspicious in form. He was extolled before me by Pitāmaha in diverse ways. 'This is Śaṅkara ('Benefactor'), this is Śāmbhu ('Enjoyer of Bliss'), Paśupati ('Lord of Animals'), Śiva ('Auspicious'), Śrīkaṅṭha ('Embraced by Glory'), Maheśa ('Great Lord'), Sarvajña ('Omniscient'), Vṛṣadhvaṅga ('Piety-emblemmed'). You give your daughter to this Mahādeva wielding the bow.'

76-80. O faultless one, you were given to him (in marriage) at the instance of Brahmā by me. I did not know that he is Virūpākṣa ('Odd-eyed'), Uksaga ('Moving about on a bull'), Viṣabhakṣin ('Swallower of poison'), Resident of the cremation ground, Śūlin (Trident-bearing, suffering from colic pain), Kapālin (holding the skull), appearing to be handsome by the contact of *Dvijhva*'s (serpents, scandal-mongers), Supporter of *Jala* ('water, sluggish ones'), Kapardin ('having matted hairs'), Having Kalaṅki (spotted one the Moon) kept on the head, soiled and smeared with dust. Sometimes he wears only a loin cloth; in some places he is nude like a madcap. In some places he wears a hide; he is fond of begging for alms; hideous goblins are his followers; Sthānu (Standing like a post), Ugra (fierce), having such fearful ones for attendants. assuming the body of Mahākāla; human bone constitutes his weapon. He is devoid of caste and race.¹

81-84. Where is Hara and where is this sacrifice, the abode of auspiciousness! No one knows him well. Even one who knows him is deceived. Of what avail is much talk? O daughter equipped with all good behaviour, he is covered with dusty clothes (i.e. only *Bhasman*—holy ash constitutes his robes). His ornament is human bone. Serpents tied to his arms are his bracelets. Matted hairs hang loose from his head. The tips of his hands are busy in playing on his *Ḍamaru*. He has the fragmented (crescent) moon as the crest-jewel. He is interested in displaying his *Tāṅḍava* dance. All his activities are inauspicious. Where is that (inauspicious) Hara and where is the sacrifice, the abode of all auspiciousness! Hence, O *Mrdāni*, auspicious unto all, you were not invited. (What a great difference between Hara—the dispeller of Ignorance and its effects,

¹ All these above-mentioned epithets have two meanings, one derogatory and one complimentary

granting liberation to all and the sacrifice, the resort of the inauspicious Samsāra—Comm.).

85. Superfine silk clothes, splendid jewels, gems and ornaments, all these have already been kept ready for you. Come, see them and accept them.

86. How can the odd-eyed trident-bearing Śiva fit in here, among the Devas and Indra of very auspicious dress and features?

87. On hearing this utterance of her father, the chaste lady Satī became very grief-stricken in her heart. She began to speak:

Satī said:

88-89. O Lord, after hearing two *Padas* (words of a verse) nothing else was heard by me even as you continued to speak. That I shall explain to you. You have aptly said, “No one knows him well. Even one who knows is deceived, who knows that Sadāśiva?”

90-94. You were deceived before by contracting an alliance with him. You are deceived even now as you are prattling without any sense. If you had considered Śambhu then as you describe him now, how could you have given me to him whom no one knows? Or, in the matter of an alliance with him, it is not your intellect that was the cause. Dear father, the cause thereof was the weightiness alone of my merit.

After repeating (such words) many times she continued: “You are the procreator of this body. Rebuke of my husband has been heard by me through this body alone. An expiation for this is that it should be cast off. A good woman of esteemed birth must continue to live as long as the rebuke and insult of her dear Lord is not heard.”

95. After saying this, she consigned the sacrificial twig of her body to the fire ignited by her wrath, by way of restraining her breath.

96. Thereupon, all the Devas including Indra lost their colour and radiance. The fire did not burn as brightly as before through the Āhuti.

97-101. Instantly, the capacity of the Mantras became re-

duced. Some of the excellent Brāhmaṇas enquiring one another said, "Alas, what great calamity has befallen like this?" A violent gust of wind blew, capable of swaying even mountains. Within a moment the ground of the pavilion of the sacrifice was covered (with grass and dust). There appeared an unexpected streak of lightning and thunderblast that shook the earth. Meteors fell down from the sky. Ghosts and vampires danced. Falcons and vultures hovered in the sky above. Jackals and vixen howled inauspiciously beneath the Sun. The clouds showered drops of blood there.

102. A loud report of earthquake rose from the earth causing tremor of the hearts. Divine weapons clashed with one another terribly.

103-106. The sacred sacrificial objects and offerings were defiled by jackals and hounds. Cakoras and crows flew over the sacrificial pavilion. The sacrificial hall turned instantly into a cremation ground. Everything got stuck up in the place where it was. All objects became motionless as though painted in a picture and lacked lustre. Viṣṇu and others became awestruck and suspicious. Dakṣa and his attendants became pale-faced. The Brāhmaṇas then resumed the Yajña somehow.

CHAPTER EIGHTYNINE

Manifestation of Dakṣeśvaru

Skanda said:

1. Again, O Agastya, Nārada who had approached the Goddess, went back to intimate to Hara all the news about the Goddess.

2. Nārada saw Śāmbhu holding conversation with Nandin with the gestures of his index finger and bowed to him.

3. He sat on the excellent seat vacated by Śailādi exhibiting a bit of embarrassment and kept quiet for a short while.

4. By the facial expression (of Nārada) itself, the omniscient Lord knew the full details. Śāmbhu asked the sage: "For what reason is this adoption of silence by you?"

5. The natural state of the embodied ones consists of coming into existence and disappearing altogether. Even the divine

bodies depart thus in course of time.

6. Everything that is visible is perishable, especially that which is not of independent nature. Hence, O Brāhmaṇa, what is surprising in this? Whom does Kāla not sweep off?

7. The coming into existence of a totally non-existent thing is not possible. There cannot be (total) negation of an existing one. Hence learned men do not get deluded."

8. On hearing the utterance of Śaṁbhu, the eminent sage said thus: "Indeed what the Lord has uttered is true.

9-10. What should have occurred inevitably has happened. There is no doubt about it. But a mind-boggling anxiety torments me much. In fact, in your case, nothing gets decreased and nothing gets increased. Due to your immutability and perfection, there is neither loss nor gain to you. How can there be decrease or growth in you?

11. Alas! How can this wretched world devoid of Īśvara (Lord Śiva) exist (at all)? It will be a piteous state if some will not worship you from today.

12-13. Dakṣa, the patriarch, did not invite you to the Kratu. So on seeing the disrespect shown by him, Devas, sages and human beings too will begin to dishonour you. Of what avail is prosperity unto the people prone to disrespect? Even those who have overcome the fear of Kāla, have been insulted. Are they men of prestige merely because they are endowed with opulence?

14-18. Of what avail is their very long life and enormous wealth? Those who value honour as their asset do not get insulted at every step. I do not glorify those unumbrageous, insensible ones though they live long. Among all women that Satī, to whom honour was the asset is the most blessed. On hearing your censure she considered her life worthless like grass." On hearing this, Mahākāla fully understood the demise of Satī. (He said:) "It is true, O sage, that the Goddess considered her life worthless like grass." When the sage kept quiet due to the fear of Mahākāla, Rudra became all the more fierce, flared up with the fire of excessive wrath. A great lustre manifested itself from that fire, rising from that wrath.

19. It became visible and assumed the shape of a colossal person (image). He was holding the great missile Bhuśuṇḍī. He was powerful enough to make Kālamṛtyu (god of Death)

tremble. He bowed down to Īśa and said:

20. “O father, give me the order. What excellent service shall I offer to you? At your behest I can make a mouthful of the entire cosmos.

21-22. I can make a handful of all the seven seas and drink it up. At your behest I can convert Rasātala into Pātāla or *vice versa* and bring it off, O Īśa, sportingly. I can bring here Indra along with all the guardians of the world, dragging them with their tresses of hair

23. Even if the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha were to assist him, I can, at your behest, render his missile ineffective.

24. Who are these pitiable wretches, sons of Ditijas and Danujas, weak and feeble in war? If anyone among them were to show his might, I shall crush him to death.

25-28 Shall I bind up Kāla in battle? Shall I strive to bring about the death of Mrtyu? If I became furious in battle-field, O Maheśāna, none among mobile and immobile beings will be able to steady itself. This is because of the strength I derive from you. If I were to kick with my foot, the entire earth shall tremble along with Rasātala like the leaves of a plantain tree in the gust of wind. I can reduce to powder these *Kulācalas* (principal mountains) with a blow of my hand. Why say much? Command me. There is nothing that I cannot achieve with the support of your powerful feet. Know that whatever is thought of is (already) accomplished.”

29. On hearing this assertion of him, Īśa considered it accomplished. He joyously told him as though he had already done his duty:

30-32a. “O blessed one, you are a great hero among all my Gaṇas. You be highly well-known by the name Vīrabhadra. Quickly carry out my task. Destroy the sacrifice of Dakṣa. All those who show disrespect to you and those who come to their help should be slighted by you. Go ahead, my son, with splendid future.”

32b-36. After receiving this Ājñā (command) of Parameśvara respectfully (with his head) he circumambulated Hara and rushed ahead very fast. Thereafter Śambhu created out of his breath hundreds of crores of other Gaṇas to follow him. Some of those Gaṇas went ahead of Vīrabhadra who had already left. Some followed him and some accompanied him on both his

sides. The entire firmament was pervaded by them who excelled even the Sun with their brilliance. The peaks of the mountains were struck down by some. The roots and peaks of some mountains were uprooted by some.

37. After uprooting huge trees, some of them reached the courtyard of the sacrificial hall. The sacrificial posts were pulled out by some. Some of them filled up the sacrificial pits

38. Some of the highly ferocious Ganas destroyed the pavilion. Some of them armed with tridents dug up the sacrificial altars. Some of them ate the cooked rice offering soaked in ghee. Others drank the curds and the ghee.

39. Some of them destroyed cooked rice heaped up like mountains. Some made the milk pudding their (regular) food. Some drank up the milk.

40. Some of them with their limbs nourished with sweetmeats smashed the Yajña utensils to pieces. Some with brawny arms crushed the handles of the sacrificial ladles

41. Some broke the carts. Some swallowed the animals. Some whose rediance surpassed the splendour of fire, extinguished the sacrificial fire.

42. Others joyously wore the silk garments. Some appropriated the jewels heaped into a mountain already.

43. Even as Lord Bhaga was looking on, one of them deprived him of his eyes. Another infuriated Gaṇa felled down the row of teeth of Pūṣan.

44. The Yajña who assumed the form of a deer was seen fleeing by one of them. He beheaded it from afar with his discus.

45. One of them saw Sarasvatī going away and he cut off her nose. The pair of lips of Aditi were cut off by another infuriated Gaṇa.

46. Another one ripped off the arms of Aryaman. A certain Gaṇa forcibly took out the tongue of Agni.

47-53. Another attendant of great exploit cut off the testicles of Vāyu. A certain one bound Yama with cords and asked, "Where is Dharma if Maheśa is not worshipped at the outset?" Another Gaṇa caught Nairṛta by the hairs and dragged him up many times, saying, "The holy offering without the Deity (Śiva) was eaten up by you." He kicked him with his foot. Another one caught hold of Kubera by the legs and shook him

with force making him vomit the many Āhutis already taken in. There were the eleven Rudras in the same row as that of the guardians of the world. They were slighted by the Pramathas for their wrongful claim to the title of Rudra. Another Pramatha pressed the belly of Varuṇa with force and made him vomit out what had been offered without reference to Īśa. The thousand-eyed Indra of great intellect took up the form of a peacock, flew on to a mountain and watched the scene. The Pramathas bowed down to the Brāhmaṇas and said "Go away, go away."

54. The Pramathas took to task the other Yājñakas (performers of the Yajña). While the Yāga was thus devastated by the Pramathas who had come earlier, Vīrabhadra himself reached the spot surrounded by the army of Pramathas.

55. On seeing the sacrificial hall reduced to a pitiable condition on a par with a cremation ground by the Pramathas earlier, Vīrabhadra said:

56-58. "O Gaṇas, see This is the state of the rites begun by the evil-minded ones without acknowledging Īśvara. Why should there be hatred for Maheśvara? Those who despise Mahādeva, the sole witness of all religious rites, and still engage in ritualistic acts, will attain a condition like this. O Gaṇas, hurry up; where is that Dakṣa of foul activity? Where are the Suras who partook of the offerings in the Yajña? Catch hold of all of them and bring them here."

59. On hearing this command of Vīrabhadra when those Pramathas rushed forward, the infuriated Mace-bearing Lord was seen.

60. Though they were very strong and valorous, those Pramathas were brought to the state of dried leaves caught in the wild gust of wind by that (Mace-bearing One).

61. Thereupon due to the fright of Hari the Pramathas dispersed helter-skelter. Vīrabhadra on a par with the tornado at the time of annihilation, became all the more fierce.

62-63. He saw ahead the Śārṅga (name of Viṣṇu's bow)-bearing Lord eulogized by his own attendants who were numerous, endowed with four hands and who had conquered the extremely powerful Daityas. On seeing the slayer of Daityas served (by those attendants) holding discus, maces, swords and Śārṅga bows, Vīrabhadra said:

64-67. "You are the Yajñapuruṣa here performing and

supervising the great Yajña. By your vigour and power you act as the protector of Dakṣa, the enemy of the Three-eyed Lord. Either you bring Dakṣa and surrender him to me or fight with me. If you don't care to surrender Dakṣa, you have to protect him with extra care. Mostly among the devotees of Śaṁbhu, you are cited as the foremost one, since, when the number of lotuses was one less than a thousand, you offered your lotus-like eye. The discus Sudarśana was granted to you by Śaṁbhu who was pleased. It is due to the assistance of that discus, that you defeat leading Danujas in war."

68. On hearing this spirited speech of Vīrabhadra Viṣṇu desirous of probing his inherent strength spoke to him.

69-70. "You are more or less a son unto Śaṁbhu; you are foremost among the Gaṇas. Equipped with the command of the king (Śiva) you have become more powerful. Whosoever you may be, I am also competent enough to protect Dakṣa. I shall see your strength, how you will be able to take him away."

71. On being told thus by the Śārṅga-bow-wielding Lord, Vīrabhadra encouraged the Pramathas to fight by means of the gestures of his eyes.

72. Thereafter the followers of Viṣṇu were told (taunting words) and were reduced to the state of animals picking up grass blades with their mouths (i.e. were brought to a humiliating condition).

73. Thereupon the infuriated Garuḍa-vehicled Lord struck each of them in the chest by means of a thousand arrows in the course of the battle.

74. Pierced in their chests, all the Gaṇas shed blood and attained in the battlefield the lustre of Kimśuka flowers in autumnal season.

75. The Gaṇas shone like elephants with ichor oozing down and like mountains exuding liquids reddened with minerals.

76-77. Then the leader of the Gaṇas laughingly told the chief of Vaikuṅtha: "O Śārṅga-bow-wielding One, I know you. You are expert in fighting; but your fight has been confined to Daityas and leading Dānavas and not with the Pārśadas (attendants of Śiva)." After saying thus a Bhuṣuṅḍī was taken up in his hand by Vīrabhadra.

78. Immediately the Mace-bearing Lord took up his mace

that used to reduce to powder the huge bodies of the leading Daityas resembling mountains. Thereafter Vīrabhadra struck Gadādhara with his Bhuśuṇḍī.

79-81. Clashing with his body, the Bhuśuṇḍī broke into a hundred pieces. Vāsudeva struck with force by means of a blow with Kaunodakī (name of the Gadā) the valorous Vīrabhadra who did not feel the pain at all. Thereafter Vīrabhadra took up a Khaṭvāṅga, struck the Mace-wielding Gadādhara in his brawny right hand and made the mace fell down. The infuriated Slayer of Madhu hit him with his discus.

82-84. On seeing the approaching discus, he remembered Śaṅkara. Due to the recollection of Śaṅkara, the discus became slightly crooked and coming into close contact with Vīra's neck became perfectly Sudarśana (pleasing to the sight). With that discus the Lord of Gaṇas shone all the more like one wooed in the battle by Vīralakṣmī with the garland of victory. On seeing Sudarśana held up as an ornament of his neck, Hari slightly smiled with a trace of surprise. Then he took up his Nandaka (sword).

85. Even as the Siddhas stood watching in heaven he produced a bellowing sound *Hum* (*Humkāra*) and made the raised hand of Viṣṇu holding Nandaka paralysed stiff.

86-89. Seizing a brilliant trident he rushed against him wishing to kill Hari. Thereupon the king of Gaṇas was checked by a celestial speech: "Do not commit any rash deed." Then Vīrabhadra, the most excellent one among the Gaṇas, left him alone and went over to Dakṣa shouting loudly: "Fie upon you who censured Īśvara! Why a person like you who has skill, whose opulence is so vast as this and who has assistance of the Devas, does not perform the sacred rite with Īśvara (present)? With the blows of my open hand I shall smash to pieces that defiled mouth with which Śīva was censured by you."

90. After saying thus, he struck a hundred blows with the open hand and smashed the face of Dakṣa who said harsh words about Hara.

91. Thereafter, he chopped off the ears and other parts of those who had assembled there for the festivity, the chief of whom was Aditi.

92. The straight-plaited tresses of some of them were cut off by that excessively infuriated (Vīrabhadra); the hands of

some were chopped off and the breasts of some also were cut off.

93. The Pārṣada tore up the noses of others. So also the favourite of Śiva pared off the fingers of still others.

94. He split into two the tongues of all those who censured the Lord of Devas and chopped off the ears of all those who listened to it then.

95. Some of them who consumed the sacrificial offering ignoring the Lord of Devas were tightly tied with cords round the neck and were suspended from the sacrificial posts with faces down.

96. The Moon, Dharma and others, the chiefs of whom were Bhrgu and Marīci were excessively insulted by him.

97. These were the (other) sons-in-law of the evil-minded Dakṣa. He discarded Maheśvara and considered these more than Śiva.

98-101. Those holy pits, those sacrificial posts, those pillars, that pavilion, those altars, those utensils, those diverse sacrificial offerings, the various requisite things collected for the purpose of the Yajña, the various functionaries of the Yajña, those watchmen on duty and those Mantras—all were sportingly smashed and destroyed. The inauspicious affluence of Dakṣa went off (was destroyed) in a short while in the same manner as the riches acquired by deceiving others. When the great Kratu was brought down to such a plight by Vīrabhadra along with the Gaṇas, Brahmā (became sorry) for the omission (annihilation?) of the due rites. He informed Hara and brought him there.

102. Śiva was brought to that place where the sacrifice devoid of Śiva's (adoration) had become like this. When Mahādeva came Vīrabhadra became very much ashamed.

103. He bowed down but did not say anything. The Lord himself understood everything. After propitiating the Lord of the chiefs of Devas, Brahmā spoke again:

104-109. "O storehouse of mercy, though Dakṣa is guilty, he should be shown kindness. O Śaṅkara, get all these reinstated as before.

O Śaṁbhu, let order be passed so that the Vedic rites can be resumed as before. This rite shall be duly fulfilled with Īśvara (present).

O Parameśvara, in all those rites without invocation of Īśvara, there shall be thousands of obstacles in this manner.

If considered properly, this Dakṣa, the pitiable wretch, is a great devotee of yours, because by undertaking a sacred rite without Īśvara he has set an example for others.

Another person performing a holy rite by setting aside Maheśāna will have the same result as in the case of Dakṣa. Hence no one will (dare to) undertake any holy rite anywhere without Śiva, after having heard and understood (the consequences) of such an act of Dakṣa."

110. On hearing the utterance of Brahmā thus, Lord Maheśvara smiled and commanded Vīrabhadra, "Reinststate everything as before."

111-112. After getting the command of Śarva, Vīrabhadra rearranged everything as before except the face of Dakṣa. Those who censure Īśvara are certainly dumb animals. So Vīrabhadra, the Gaṇa, made Dakṣa goat-faced.

113. Thereafter the Lord took leave of Brahmā. His duty as a householder having been concluded, he went to Himaprastha accompanied by his Pārṣadas for performing penance.

114. Since no person will remain even for a short while bereft of some stage of life, the excellent Āśrama (stage of life) is beneficial.

115. Hence that Maheśvara, the bestower of the fruit of all penances, performed penance along with his Gaṇas. Brahmā instructed Dakṣa (as follows):

116-120. "Go to Vārāṇasī, if you desire to wash off the dirt of sins arising from censuring Hara. It is otherwise irremovable. After reaching the meritorious Vārāṇasī that removes masses of sins, do instal the Liṅga. Śambhu will become pleased thereby. When Maheśvara is satisfied the entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings becomes satisfied. Excepting in Vārāṇasī nowhere else will your sin be removed. Expiatory rite for sins like Brāhmaṇa-slaughter has been laid down by learned men, but not for the censure of Hara. In that case, Kāśī alone (is the redeeming feature). If meritorious persons instal a Liṅga in Kāśī, it is as though all pious rites have been performed by them. They alone are the seekers of all aims of life."

121. On hearing these words of Brahmā, Dakṣa hurried to

Avimukta, the great holy place, and performed a great penance.

122. He duly installed a Liṅga and became engrossed in propitiating the Liṅga. He did not care to know anything in the world other than the Liṅga.

123. Dakṣa, the efficient patriarch, eulogized Maheśāna day and night, worshipped, bowed down to, mediated upon, and saw him alone.

124. Dakṣa thus meditated on the Liṅga of Īśvara with great concentration of the mind for 12,000 years.

125. In the meantime, Satī took the form of Umā, born of Menā, the chaste wife of Himālaya. By means of a severe penance, she attained the Pināka-wielding Lord as her husband.

126-128. Dakṣa continued to worship the Liṅga and remained steady in the penance. The Daughter of the Lord of Mountains had come to Kāśī with her husband. On seeing (Dakṣa) engaged in adoring Śiva Liṅga with steadiness of mind, the Goddess submitted to Hara: "O Lord, this devotee has become feeble on account of his penance. O ocean of mercy, do a favour unto this Prajāpati by granting him a boon." On being told thus by Aparṇā, Śaṁbhū, the Lord, said to Dakṣa:

129-131. "O highly fortunate one, tell me the boon you will have. I shall grant you whatever is mentally desired by you." On hearing this utterance of Īśa, he bowed down to Hara many times, eulogized by means of different kinds of prayers and on seeing Śaṅkara pleased, he spoke to the Lord of the chiefs of Devas: "If a boon has to be granted to me, let there be unruffled fixed devotion of mine to the pair of your feet. This is a great Liṅga which I have installed here. O Lord, you should station yourself in this Liṅga forever.

132. O Lord, O ocean of mercy, may the offence committed by me be pardoned. Let there be only these boons. Of what avail are other boons even if they be ever so excellent?"

133-136. On hearing this, the great Lord Bhava became all the more pleased and said: "Let what is uttered by you be so and not otherwise. I shall grant you another boon too. O Prajāpati, listen to it. This Liṅga that has been installed by you is Dakṣeśvara by name. If men serve this Liṅga, I shall undoubtedly forgive a thousand offences. Hence this should be

adored by people. Due to the worship of this Liṅga you will be worthy of the esteem of everyone. At the end of two Parārdhas you will attain salvation.”

137. After saying thus, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas merged into that Liṅga. Dakṣa went home having realized all his desires.

Skanda said:

138-139. O Agastya, I have thus narrated the origin of Dakṣeśvara. On listening to this a creature is rid of hundreds of offences. If a man listens to this meritorious narrative pertaining to the origin of Dakṣeśvara, he is not touched by sins, even if he happens to be the committer of all crimes.

CHAPTER NINETY

The Story of Pārvatīśa

Agastya said:

1. O delighter of the heart of Pārvatī, narrate the origin of Pārvatīśa which has already been described by you as a dispeller of sins.

Skanda said:

2-4. O Agastya, Listen. Once Menā, the chaste wife of Himālaya spoke to her daughter, the daughter of the King of Mountains: “Do you know what is the native place of Śiva? Where is his residence? Who is his relative? Probably there is no relative and no home of the son-in-law anywhere.” On hearing the words of her mother, the daughter of the Lord of Mountains became very much ashamed. On getting an opportunity, Gaurī bowed down to Śaṁbhu and submitted:

5. “O Lord, O husband, certainly today I have decided to go to my mother-in-law’s house. I should not stay here. Take me to your own house.”

6. On hearing the words of the daughter of Himālaya (Pārvatī)

thus, Giriśa who was aware of the reality, left Himālaya and came to his own Ānandavana.

7. On reaching Ānandavana, the cause of great bliss, the Goddess forgot the abode of her father and became one of the very form of bliss.

8. Then Gaurī intimated to Giriśa once: "How is it that in this holy spot here, there is a mass of continuous bliss? Kindly let me know."

9-15. On hearing this speech of Gaurī, the Pināka-bearing Lord replied: "In this holy spot, the abode of salvation, extending over five Krośas, O Goddess, there is not a spot even as minute as a gingelly seed without a Liṅga. Around each of these Liṅgas, the ground to the extent of a Krośa too shall be the giver of bliss. O Goddess, here in this Ānandavana, the cause of great bliss, there are many Liṅgas in the form of highest bliss. By the contented and blessed people living in all the fourteen worlds, excess of contentment has been attained by making Liṅgas here after their respective names. Even Śeṣa with his special knowledge does not know the extent of the welfare of a person by whom my Liṅga has been installed, O great Goddess. O Goddess, born of the Mountain, that is why this holy spot is the cause of great bliss which is beyond calculation due to the numerous Liṅgas."

16-18. On hearing this the great Goddess bowed down to the feet of the Lord once again and cajoled him: "O Mahādeva, grant me permission to instal my own Liṅga. Getting the permission of the husband a chaste lady attains welfare. There is no loss of her welfare even in Saṁvarta." After propitiating the Lord of Devas and getting the consent of Maheśitā, the Liṅga was installed in the vicinity of Mahādeva by Gaurī.

19. By visiting that Liṅga all sins including Brāhmaṇa-slaughter will get dissolved. There is no doubt about it. There shall be no further bondage within a body.

20. O sage, listen to the boon granted by the Lord of Devas in respect to that Liṅga with a desire for the welfare of devotees.

21. At the death of the person who worships the Liṅga named Pārvatīśa, he will become a Kāśī Liṅga.

22-25. After becoming a Kāśī Liṅga he will enter me.

One who adores Pārvatīśa on the third lunar day in the

bright half of Caitra, gets all fortune here and excellent goal hereafter. If the woman or man propitiates Pārvatīśvara, she or he will never enter a womb thereafter. She/he will attain all good fortune. If the devotee utters even the name of Pārvatīśa Liṅga, the (accumulated) sin of a thousand births perishes instantly. The excellent man who listens to the greatness of Pārvatīśa becomes a man of great intellect and obtains all the desires of this world as well as that of the other world.

CHAPTER NINETYONE

The Greatness of Gaṅgeśvara

Skanda said:

1-4. O sinless one, the greatness of Pārvatīśa has been recounted to you. O sage, listen now to the origin of Gaṅgeśvara, on listening to which one shall attain the merit of a bath in Gaṅgā wherever he may be. When Gaṅgā along with Dilīpa's son Bhagīratha had a confluence with Cakrapuṣkariṇī Tīrtha in this Ānandakānana, she knew the unparalleled power of the holy spot born of the protection assured by Śaṁbhu. After recollecting the superb benefit of the installation of a Liṅga in Kāśī, a splendid Liṅga was installed by Gaṅgā.

5-9. Rare indeed is the sight of Gaṅgeśvara Liṅga in Kāśī. If a devotee worships Gaṅgeśa on the Daśaharā (tenth day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha), his sin accumulated in the course of a thousand births perishes instantly.

In Kali age, Gaṅgeśvara Liṅga shall mostly be concealed. It's sight is conducive to merit unto all men. If the rare Gaṅgeśvara Liṅga is seen by anyone, undoubtedly Gaṅgā is directly seen by him. O son of Mitra and Varuṇa, there is no doubt about this that Gaṅgā, the remover of all sins, is of very rare accessibility in Kali age. Kāśī is of still rare accessibility when Tiṣya (Kali age) arrives.

10-11. More than that, the Liṅga named Gaṅgeśvara is of yet rarer accessibility in Kāśī. The visit thereof is conducive to the destruction of sins. If a devotee listens to the greatness

of Gaṅgeśa, he will never fall into a hell. He will obtain the mass of requisite merits and derive whatever is coveted.

CHAPTER NINETYTWO

The Story of Narmadeśvara

Skanda said:

1. O sage, I shall narrate to you the greatness of Narmadeśa. Merely by thinking of it all the great sins perish.

2. In the beginning of this Vārāhakaḷpa the leading sages asked: "O son of Mṛkaṇḍu, which is the most excellent river? Tell us."

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

3. O sages, listen all of you. There are hundreds of rivers. All of them remove sins. All of them are bestowers of merit.

4-5. Of all the rivers, those that fall into the seas are the most excellent. Of all those rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā and Sarasvatī are the most excellent rivers. Among the rivers, O eminent sages, these four are highly meritorious.

6. Gaṅgā is the embodiment of Ṛgveda. Yamunā is certainly Yajurveda. Narmadā shall be Sāmaveda personified and Sarasvatī Atharva Veda.

7. Gaṅgā is the origin of all rivers and it fills the ocean. No excellent river can attain equality with Gaṅgā.

8. But formerly Revā (Narmadā) performed penance for a long time. O excellent one, the creator (Brahmā) who was ready to grant the boons was requested thus:

9-13. "O Vidhi (Creator), O Lord, if you are pleased, grant me equality with Gaṅgā." Thereupon Narmadā was told smilingly by Brahmā: "If equality with the Three-eyed Lord can be attained by anyone else, the equality with Gaṅgā can also be obtained by another river. If at any place another man can be equal to Puruṣottama, then another river can attain equality with Gaṅgā. If at any place another woman can be on a par with Gaurī, another river shall attain equality with the celestial

river. If by any means another city can be equal to the city of Kāśī, then another river can obtain similarity with the heavenly river.”

14. On hearing these words of Vidhi (Brahmā) Narmadā, the excellent river, refused the boon of the Creator and came to the city of Vārāṇasī.

15. Of all the meritorious rites no other rite than the installation of a Liṅga at Kāśī has been declared by some as a rite causing greatest welfare.

16. Thereafter, the meritorious river Narmadā made the installation duly in the Pilipilā Tīrtha near Triviṣṭapa.

17. Thereupon Śambhu became pleased with that splendid-souled river and said: “O blessed one, O sinless one, choose whatever boon appeals to you.”

18-27. On hearing this, Revā, the most excellent river, said to Maheśvara: “O Dhūrjati, of what avail here is a worthless boon, O Lord of Devas. O Maheśvara, may my devotion be unswerving towards the pair of your feet.” On hearing this very excellent statement of Revā the Lord became extremely delighted and said: “Let what you said be so. O abode of merits, I am granting you another boon. Take it.

By my blessings, O Narmadā, all the stones on your banks will be in the form of Liṅgas.

I shall grant you another excellent boon unachievable in fact by means of masses of austerities. Hear that too

Gaṅgā removes sins instantly. Yamunā does it in seven days and Sarasvatī in three days but you remove merely at your sight.

I shall grant another boon too, O Narmadā that dispel sins at mere sight. The Linga named Narmadeśvara installed by you is highly meritorious and it will accord eternal salvation. The son of Sūrya (i.e. god of Death) will assiduously bow down on seeing the devotees of this Linga for the sake of increasing great welfare. O noble lady, there are many Liṅgas in Kāśī at every step, but the greatness of Narmadeśa is something miraculous.”

After saying thus the Lord of Devas merged into that Liṅga.

28. After attaining the miraculous sanctity Narmadā became extremely delighted. The remover of sins at the mere sight, Narmadā returned to her own land.

29. On hearing the words of the saintly son of Mr̥kaṇḍa, those eminent sages became delighted in their minds. They carried out the tasks beneficial to them.

Skanda said:

30. On hearing the greatness of Narmadeśa, a man endowed with devotion shall cast off the slough of sins and will attain excellent knowledge.

CHAPTER NINETYTHREE

Manifestation of Satīśvara

Agastya said:

1. The greatness of Narmadeśa which destroyed sins has been heard. Now, O Skanda, recount the origin of Satīśvara.

Skanda said:

2-3. O sage born of Mitra and Varuṇa, I shall narrate the story, listen, how Satīśvara Liṅga manifested itself in Kāśī. O sage, formerly Śatadhṛti (Brahmā) performed a very great penance. Pleased by that penance, the Lord of Devas was ready to grant the boons.

4. The omniscient Lord, fond of Brāhmaṇas, told Brahmā, "O creator of the worlds, choose the boon."

Brahmā said:

5. O Lord of Devas, if you are pleased and if you will grant me the desired boon, then you be my son and may the Goddess be the daughter of Dakṣa.

6. On hearing this as the boon desired by Brahmā, the great Lord looked at the face of the Goddess and smiled. Then he spoke to the Four-faced Lord:

7. "O Brahmā, may your desire come to be true. O Grandfather, what is it that cannot be given?" After saying this, the

Moon-crested Lord came out of the forehead of Brahmā.

8-10. That boy went on crying looking at the face of Brahmā. Thereafter Brahmā saw and spoke to the crying child, “Why do you cry again and again even after obtaining me as your father?” On hearing what was said by Brahmā, the child said, “I am crying for the name. Give me a name, O Creator, O Grandfather.” That magical infant (*Māyāḍimbha*) got the name *Rudra* because he cried.

Agastya said:

11. O Six-faced One, though Īśa assumed the form of an infant, why did he cry? If you know explain it to me. My eagerness is very great.

Skanda said

12. Due to the fact that I am a son of the omniscient Lord, I know something. I shall tell the cause of crying. Listen, O Pot-born One.

13-14. A thought occurred in the mind of the Lord, the Supreme Soul, to test the sharpness of the intellect of the four-faced Parameṣṭhin (Brahmā), *Vedhas*, the sole lord of Satyaloka. Hence out of delight there was abundance of tears in (the eyes) of Maheśa.

Agastya said:

15-16. What is that sharpness of intellect of Brahmā noticed by Śambhu in his mind, whereby there was abundance of tears of joy in the Lord even during the time of infancy? Tell me this, O wise one, O increaser of the bliss of the omniscient Lord.

On hearing the words uttered by Agastya the enemy of Tāraka said:

17-23. “O Pot-born Sage, it was this that the Lord mentally considered. The Lord aware of everything knew that Vidhi’s wish was like this: ‘Who is competent to redeem the father except his progeny? This is one of my desires. The second desire is certainly this. This (Lord Śiva) is the remover of the rebirth of a person who remembers (him). If he becomes the

child, I shall obtain every moment perfect vision, the touch of the limbs, the opportunity of sharing the same bed, seat and diet etc. with him. After becoming the child, what wished-for thing will not be given to me by him. who is beyond the ken of speech and mind? The creature that touches him once, that joyously sees him once will not be born again. It will become great in bliss. Undoubtedly I shall become the receptacle of the greatest happiness if he somehow becomes a plaything in the house.' Thus by realizing the wish of Vidhi, the Lord had tears of joy in all the three eyes."

24-25. On hearing this utterance of Skanda, Agastya rejoiced very much. He bowed down at his feet and said: "Be victorious, O son of the omniscient Lord; obeisance to you, the soul of bliss. The mind of Vidhi and the innermost thought of Śaṁbhu have been perfectly understood by you."

26-27. Skanda too was extremely satisfied to notice the delight of the listener. "O Agastya, you are blessed, you are blessed. You know how to listen correctly. My effort in narrating this tale to you has not gone in vain." After saying this to Agastya, the Six-faced Lord said once again:

28-29. "When the Lord assumed the form of Rudra, the Goddess became the daughter of Dakṣa. Satī, that daughter of Dakṣa, was desirous of a husband. She performed a fierce penance in Kāśī. She saw Hara in front manifesting himself in the form of Liṅga and saying clearly, 'O great Goddess, enough of your penance.'

30-35. (He continued) "This Liṅga will be named Satīśvara Liṅga after your name. O daughter of Dakṣa, just as your desire has been fulfilled here, so the desire of anyone else also will be fulfilled by propitiating this Liṅga.

A virgin will attain a husband far beyond her expectation by propitiating this Liṅga; similarly a young man, an excellent wife. Whatever whoever desires, that will be realized by him by adoring Satīśvara. There is no doubt about it.

After worshipping Satīśvara if anyone desires anything, that desire will soon be fulfilled. On the eighth day from today your father, the Patriarch, will give you, his daughter, to me. Your desire is fruitful." After saying this, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas vanished there itself.

36. That Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, joyously went home.

On the eighth day the father gave her to Rudra

Skanda said:

37-38. Thus Satīśvara Linga manifested itself in Kāśī. O sage, if it is even recollected the Liṅga shall accord the greatest Sattvagūṇa. By visiting Satīśvara Liṅga to the east of Ratneśa, the devotee is rid of sins immediately and he derives knowledge in due course.

CHAPTER NINETYFOUR

Manifestation of Amrteśa and Other Lingas

Skanda said:

1-2. O great sage, I shall describe other Liṅgas too, the chief among which is Amrteśa. The very name of these Lingas bestows nectar.

Formerly there was a sage here (in Kāśī) leading the life of a householder. His name was Sanāru. He was always engaged in Brahmajāna (teaching Vedas). He always considered guests as his deity.

3. He was always engaged in the adoration of the Liṅga. He never took monetary gifts from pilgrims in the holy spot. The son of Sage Sanāru was Upajāṅhani.

4. Once he went to a forest where he was bitten by a serpent. Then he was brought to his hermitage by his friends.

5. After heaving a heavy sigh Sanāru took Upajāṅhani to the cremation ground in the vicinity of Svargadvāra.

6-7. A Linga in the shape of a Bilva fruit (Śrīphala) was lying as if hidden there. The sensible sage had placed the dead body there and thought: 'How can the boy bitten by a serpent be cremated?' In the meantime the boy Upajāṅhani was revived to life. He got up like one who had been sleeping.

8. On seeing Upajāṅhani alive and active once again, Sanāru was struck with great wonder.

9. 'What is the cause of my son Upajāṅhani's ability to

be alive and active? The serpent that bit him outside the holy spot had not made him dead (when brought within this holy place).’

10-12. Even as the sage was pondering over the resuscitation of the son, an ant brought another dead ant there itself, which also regained life and walked away. After knowing the truth indicated by the revival the sage dug up the ground with his soft palm. There a Liṅga of the size of a Bilva fruit was seen by him.

13-14. That Liṅga was adored there by Sanāru along with all the members of his family; a name Amṛteśvara also was assigned to that long standing ancient Liṅga. One shall certainly attain immortality by touching this Liṅga in Ānandakānana.

15-16. After worshipping Amṛteśa that sage reached his home with the son resuscitated. It was seen by the people with wonder. Ever since then, O eminent sage, that Amṛteśa Liṅga has been bestowing spiritual power on men in Kāśī. It may become hidden once again in Kali age.

17. On coming in touch with Amṛteśvara dead persons come to life instantly. Merely by touching it those who are alive attain immortality.

18. There is no other Liṅga anywhere on the earth equal to Amṛteśa. In Kali Yuga it is rendered hidden by Śambhu intentionally.

19. If even the name of Amṛteśvara in Kāśī is remembered by people, they will never have the fear arising from malignant Planets etc.

20. O sage, there is another great Liṅga named Karuṇeśvara in the vicinity of Mokṣadvāra in front of Mokṣadvāreśvara.

21-23. By visiting that highly merciful Liṅga no one will be able to go out of the holy spot (i.e., will get salvation there itself).

Holy ablution should be taken in Maṇikarṇikā. Karuṇeśvara should be visited. Fear arising from obstacles to the holy spot should be joyously discarded.

On Mondays the devotee shall observe the vow of taking in food once only (per day). The observer of the Vrata should worship Karuṇeśvara with Karuṇamalli flowers.

24. Satisfied with that Vrata Lord Karuṇeśvara will never

banish him from the holy spot. Hence this Vrata should be observed.

25-28. Karuṇeśvara may also be worshipped with the leaves or the fruits thereof (i.e. of the Karuṇāmallikā plant). If a person devoid of perfect knowledge does not know that Liṅga, he will worship Karuṇā plant uttering “May the Lord of Devas be pleased.”

If a twice-born observes this Vrata every Monday for a year Karuṇeśa shall become pleased with him and shall grant him whatever is desired. Karuṇeśa should be visited purposefully here in Kāśī by men.

Thus the excellent greatness of Karuṇeśa has been narrated to you, on hearing which no fear arising from obstacles shall occur in Kāśī.

29. By visiting both, i.e., Svargadvāreśvara¹ and Mokṣadvāreśvara in Kāśī, one shall obtain heavenly pleasures and salvation.

30. Another Liṅga namely Jyotīrūpeśvara Liṅga shines in Kāśī. By worshipping it the devotees become brilliant in form.

31. There is no doubt about it that a man obtains radiance in form by worshipping the great Lord Jyotīrūpeśvara on the banks of the Cakrapuṣkariṇī.

32. Ever since the advent there of the excellent river Bhāgīrathī, the celestial river joyously worships that Liṅga.

33. Formerly when Viṣṇu was performing penance here, that lustrous Liṅga manifested itself here. Hence, this holy spot is splendid.

34. Even if a person meditates on Jyotīrūpeśvara on the banks of Cakrapuṣkariṇī or from a long distance, Siddhi cannot be far away from him.

35. O excellent one, among all these fourteen Liṅgas, eight Liṅgas are of great power. They are like forest-fire unto the seeds of Karmas.

36-37. These thirty-six Liṅgas are conducive to the greatness of the holy spot: the fourteen Liṅgas beginning with Omkāra, the great eight Liṅgas beginning with Dakṣeśvara and the fourteen Liṅgas beginning with Śaileśa.

1. *Svargadvāreśvara*—A temple set into the city of Vārāṇasī several hundred yards up-hill from the river along the lane called Brahma Nāla which was formerly a rivulet. (BCL. 251)

38. Sadāśiva in the form of the thirty-six Tattvas¹ (viz. five *Śuddha*, seven *Śuddhāśuddha* and twenty-four *Aśuddha*) is stationed in these Liṅgas always in this holy spot and imparts the Tāraka knowledge.

39. This is the central principle indeed in the form of thirty-six Liṅgas. By resorting to these, all wretched states (such as Hell) can be averted.

40. O sage, certainly these Liṅgas are highly mysterious and esoteric. Due to the power of these Liṅgas, salvation here is assured.

41. O highly intelligent one, Kāśī is the holy spot of salvation, due to these Liṅgas. These other Liṅgas manifest themselves in every Yuga.

42. This holy spot Ānandakānana of Śambhu is beginningless. Those who attain permanent stability (or death) here are undoubtedly liberated ones.

43. Yogic Siddhi is definitely achieved here; so also *Tapassiddhi* (i.e. the fruit of penance); Siddhis (attainment of 'fruits') in Vratas, Mantras, Tīrtha are certainly achieved here.

44. The Ānandavātikā ('pleasure grove') of Śambhu is the source of origin of what is called the set of eight Siddhis, the great ones, beginning with Aṇimā.

45. This Ānandakānana is the abode of the glory of salvation. This is attained through merits and should not be abandoned by one afraid of worldly existence.

46. This alone is the great profit; this alone is the most excellent penance; this alone is the highest merit that Vārāṇasī is obtained.

47-48. Death is inevitable to one who is born and it may happen anywhere. The goal to be obtained afterwards may be auspicious or inauspicious in accordance with the Karmas. After realizing that death is inevitable and that one attains a condition in accordance with one's Karmas, Kāśīkā should be resorted to positively because it eradicates all Karmas.

1. The thirty-six Tattvas are as follows:

- (i) Five *Śuddha Tattvas* are: Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara and Vidyā.
- (ii) Seven *Śuddhāśuddha Tattvas* are: Māyā, Kāla, Niyati, Kalā, Avidyā, Rāga and Purusa.
- (iii) Twenty-four *Aśuddha Tattvas* are: Prakṛti, Buddhi, Ahaṁkāra, five Tanmātras, five Mahābhūtas, Manas, five cognitive organs and five conative organs.

49. After attaining human birth, though the life may be extending over only a moment, those who do not resort to the city of Kāśī, are deprived of everything they possess. They are dull-witted.

50. Rare is human birth and rare is the city of Kāśī. Those who are in contact with both are undoubtedly liberated.

51. Where are such austerities here; where is that excellent Yoga whereby liberation is obtained? The most excellent salvation is obtained by residing here in Kāśī.

52. It is truth. Again (I affirm that) it is the truth. Again and again, it is asserted as truth. There is no other place on the earth like Kāśī for the attainment of salvation.

53. Viśveśa is the bestower of salvation always. The north-flowing (river) is conducive to salvation. There is liberation in Ānandakānana. Salvation is to be attained nowhere else.

54. The only bestower of salvation is Viśveśa. No one else. He makes (people) reach Kāśī and grants salvation (to them) and not through other means.

55. Sāyujya Mukti (i.e. liberation in the form of complete unification in God) is to be attained here alone. Sānnidhyādi ('nearness to Śiva etc.') can be attained through other means. This too is not easily obtained certainly (elsewhere). But salvation in Kāśī is easily obtained.

Skanda said:

56 Listen, O Agastya, the most fortunate one; I shall tell you the future that Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vyāsa will speak as a great statement later on and what he will do afterwards in order to come to a decisive conclusion.

CHAPTER NINETYFIVE

Vyāsa's Arms Get Paralysed

Vyāsa said:

1. Listen, O highly intelligent Sūta, to what has been stated by Skanda as the future concerning me to the highly intelligent Pot-born (Agastya).

Skanda said:

2. Listen, O blessed sage, O son of Mitra and Varuṇa, how the excellent sage, the son of Parāśara, will be getting deluded.

3-5. The highly intelligent Vyāsa divided the Vedas into many Śākhās (branches). He taught Sūta and others the eighteen Purāṇas. He composed a work entitled Mahābhārata that can be called the innermost secret (essence) of the Śrutis, Smṛtis and Purāṇas and which is the most fascinating one. It subdues all sins. It gives perfect peace. By merely listening to it, the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa is destroyed.

6-10. Once that glorious sage was wandering over the earth when he reached Naimiṣāraṇya where there were leading sages Śaunaka and others. These ascetics numbered eighty-eight thousand. Tripuṇḍras embellished their great foreheads and they wore shining Rudrākṣa necklaces. Vyāsa saw them piously smeared with holy ash, desirous of frequent reciting with devotion Rudra Sūktas, engaged in the propitiation of Liṅgas. They were reverently and with attention uttering the name of Śiva. They were decisive in their minds and so were always asserting: "Viśveśa is one alone. He and no one else is the bestower of salvation." On seeing them all with their souls in communion with Giriśa, Sage Vyāsa lifted up his index finger and said thus again:

Vyāsa's Statement: 11-19.

11. "After churning the vast expanse of words and coming to firm conclusions again and again, this alone has been understood (by me that), Hari, the Lord of all, should be resorted to.

12. In Veda, in Purāṇas, in Rāmāyaṇa and in Bhārata, Hari alone and no one else comes in the beginning, middle and end.

13. This is the truth; this is the truth; this is the truth, thrice asserted. It is not false to assert that there is no scripture other than Veda; there is no God other than Acyuta.

14. The Lord of Lakṣmī, is the bestower of everything. No one else. Lakṣmīśa is the bestower of salvation. Hence Lakṣmīśa alone should be meditated upon. No one else.

15. No one other than Janārdana is the bestower of enjoyment of pleasures here and of salvation hereafter. Hence the Four-armed Lord should always be resorted to by those who desire happiness.

16. Those men of little intellect who serve another (deity) abandoning Keśava, enter the mysterious and painful cycle of worldly existence again and again

17. There is only one Lord of all. Hr̥ṣīkeśa is greater than the greatest. One who serves him shall be worthy of being served by the three worlds.

18. There is only one bestower of virtue, who is Viṣṇu. There is only one bestower of much wealth, who is Hari. There is only one bestower of enjoyment, who is the Discus-bearing Lord. There is only one bestower of salvation, i.e. Acyuta

19. Those who adore another Lord forsaking the Śārṅga-wielding Lord, should be banished like a twice-born (Brāhmaṇa) bereft of the Vedas."

20. On hearing the words of Vyasa thus the residents of Naimisa forest became agitated in their hearts. They said these words:

The Sages said

21-22. O highly intelligent sage, O son of Parāśara, you are worthy of our honour and esteem because the Vedas have been classified by you and you are conversant with the Purāṇas. Also, because you are the author of the great work Bhārata that gives a definite understanding of virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation.

23-25. O son of Satyavatī, who else can be more conversant with the reality and truth here (in this world)? The students hereof do not have faith in what has been asserted by you raising the index finger. They are more likely to have faith in the words uttered by you when you emphatically utter those words in the Ānandavana of Śambhu.

26. O Vyāsa, go to Vārāṇasī where Viśveśvara himself is present. There are not seen changing features of the different Yugas there. Nor does it touch the earth.

* * *

27 On hearing this, Sage Vyāsa who became angry in his mind, left the place quickly accompanied by his disciples numbering about ten thousand.

28 On reaching Vārānasī, Vyāsa, the brilliant and glorious one, took his holy bath in the pond named Pañcanada, adored Mādhava and went to Pādodaka.

29-40. (Adoration of Ādikeśava) Vyāsa took his bath and performed other rites there and visited Ādikeśava. He spent five nights there and was duly honoured by the devotees of Viṣṇu. He was delighted with conchs blown behind and in front of him. He uttered the various names of the Lord: "Be victorious, O Viṣṇu Hṛsikeśa, Govinda, Madhusūdana, Acyuta, Ananta, Vaikuntha, Mādhava, Upendra, Keśava, Trivikrama, Gadāpāni, Śarṅgapāni, Janārdana, Śrīvatsavaksas, Śrīkānta, Pītambara, Murāntaka, Kaitabhāri, Balidhvaṁsin, Kaṁsāri, Keśisūdana, Nārāyana, Asuraripu, Kṛṣṇa, Śāuri, Caturbhuja, Devakiḥṛdayānanda (the delighter of Devakī's heart), Yaśodanandavardhana (the increaser of the delight of Yaśodā), Puṇḍarikākṣa, Daityāri, Dāmodara, Balapriya, Balārātistuta, Hari, Vāsudeva, Vasuprada, Visvakamū, Tārksyaratha, Vanamālin, Narottama, Adhokṣaja, Ksamādhara, Padmanābha, Jaleśaya, Nṛsimha, Yaṇṇavaraha, Gopa, Gopalavallabha, Gopipati, Guṇātīta, Garudadhvaja, Gotrabhṛt. Be victorious, O Cānuramathana; be victorious, O protector of the three worlds; be victorious, O beginningless one; be victorious O bliss, be victorious, O Lord having the lustre of the blue lotus; O Lord with the chest adorned by Kaustubha, O Lord who dried up all the secretions of Pūtana; protect, protect, O protective jewel of the universe; O destroyer of Naraka, O thousand-headed Puruṣa, O bestower of happiness on Indra. What is past and what will be the future, there you are the sole Puruṣa." Vyāsa eulogized the Lord having a garland of sylvan flowers by uttering the names of the Lord. He sang with graceful freedom and danced with great joy.

41-44 Sage Vyāsa came to the abode (Temple) of Viśveśa with great delight. He stood along with the devotees of the Lord in front of Jñānavāpī. An excellent garland of Tulasi leaves made his neck shine. He beat the time himself, holding the cymbals. He himself became the dancer. He was conversant with playing on the flute. He himself held the Śruti. After concluding the dance thus, Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, stood

in the middle of his disciples and lifted up his right hand. He recited the same verses singing them aloud:

45. "After churning the vast expanse of words and coming to firm conclusions, this alone has been understood (by me) that Hari, the Lord of all, should be resorted to."

46-47. All the verses beginning with the above indicating his assertion, Vyāsa recited with the left hand raised. Thereupon Śailādi made the hand paralysed playfully. There was also stupefaction of the power of speech of the excellent sage Vyāsa.

48. Thereupon Viṣṇu came there secretly and spoke to Vyāsa: "O Vyāsa, a great offence has certainly been committed by you

49. Even I am greatly afraid due to this offence of yours. There is only one Lord of the universe, and he is Viśveśa. There is no one else

50. I am the discus-bearer, due to his favour. I am the Lord of Lakṣmī due to his power. It was by Śambhu himself that the capacity to sustain the three worlds was granted to me.

51. Due to the devotion to him the greatest *Aśvanya* (prosperity, lordship) was obtained by me as a boon from him. If you desire my welfare, eulogize Śambhu.

52. Do not entertain a thought like this to eulogize me on any other occasion, O son of Parāśara." On hearing this, Vyāsa expressed by means of gestures.

53-54. "The paralysis of the arm has been brought about by that Nandin by his mere eyes. The stunning of the speech has been caused by my fear of him. Touch the root of my throat so that I shall be able to eulogize Bhavānisa, the destroyer of worldly existence." After touching his throat, Viṣṇu secretly went away.

55. Thereupon the son of Satyavati whose arm had been paralysed in that manner, began to eulogize Mahieśāna liberal-mindedly.

Vyāsa said:

(Vyāsa's Prayer)

(56-63)

56. Brahman alone is one. There are not many entities here. Hence Rudra is only one. There is none second to him.

If there be anyone else anywhere, let him who has the capacity to do so, explain it to me.

57. Highly terrible poison Kālakūṭa with flaming sparks around was born of the Milk Ocean, due to the churning with Mandara. No one other than Maheśa could endure it. On account of its flames, Viṣṇu turned back.

58. Śrīpati (Viṣṇu) was his arrow. The entire earth was his chariot. Brahmā, the Lord of the world, was his charioteer. The horses were the Vedas. Who is on a par with Rudra by whom the group of three *Puras* was burned by the discharge of the arrow?

59. Kandarpa who was the sole conqueror of the universe through his flowery arrows, viewed Rudra as of the same level as the other Devas. He himself was reduced to ashes. Who is worthy of eulogy other than that conqueror of Kāma?

60. Which man of meagre intellect like me (can) understand Viśvanātha in his true self, because the Veda does not know him? Neither Viṣṇu nor Brahmā, neither mind nor speech know that Lord of Devas.

61. I bow down to him wherein everything is stationed, who is everywhere, who is all, who is the maker, who is the protector, who is the destroyer, who has no beginning, who is the beginning (cause) of everything, who is the sole one, who has no end and who causes the end of everything.

62. (He is that Lord) the utterance of whose one name is on a par with a horse-sacrifice; by a single bowing down to whom Lakṣmī (glory) was attained by the insignificant Indra; by whose eulogy Satyaloka is obtained and by whose adoration the glory of salvation is not far off.

63. I do not know any other Lord than Śrīmaheśa; I do not eulogize another Lord except Śāmbhu; I do not bow down to a Lord other than the Three-eyed One. This is the truth, the truth, the truth, not a lie."

64. When the great sage eulogized Śāmbhu thus, there was a favourable glance from Śāmbhu whereby Nandin undid the paralysis of his arm and smilingly said, "Obeisance to all of you Brāhmaṇas."

Nandikeśvara said:

65. O Vyāsa, this prayer proclaimed by you is highly meri-

torious. Śaṅkara becomes pleased with the wise one who will read and recite this.

66. This Vyāsāṣṭaka ('Eulogy in Eight Verses by Vyāsa') is to be read and recited in the morning with concentration. It makes evil dreams and sins subside. It gives the devotee (salvation in the form of) vicinity to Śiva.

67. By repeated utterance of this prayer, all the sinners become rid of their sins, such as a slayer of mother, a slayer of father, a killer of cows, a killer of boys, an imbiber of liquor, a stealer of gold etc.

Skanda said:

68-69. Ever since then the son of Parāśara became devoted to Śambhu. Beyond Ghaṇṭākarnāhrada, he installed the Liṅga called Vyāseśvara. He always embellished himself with holy ash. He adorned himself with Rudrākṣas always. He became forever a worshipper of the Liṅga.

70. He renounced (all other) holy spots. After knowing the reality of this holy spot that bestows salvation, he does not leave off Kāśikā till today.

71. A man should take his bath in Ghaṇṭākarnāhrada and visit Vyāseśvara. Wherever he happens to die, he will be on a par with one who dies in Vārāṇasī.

72. After adoring Vyāseśvara Liṅga in Kāśī an excellent man does not suffer from loss of knowledge at any time. He is never assailed (affected) by sins.

73. To the devotees of Vyāseśvara there is no fear from Kali and Kāla; there is neither the fear of sins nor of obstacles to the holy spot.

74. Vyāseśvara should be visited with effort by the residents of Kāśī who are afraid of sins. They take their holy ablution in Ghaṇṭākarna(hrada).

CHAPTER NINETYSIX

Vyāsa Released from the Curse

Agastya enquired:

1-2. O Skanda, how will he curse the city of Vārāṇasī if Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana is an ardent devotee of Śāmbhu, if he knows the secret of the holy place and has known (by personal experience) the efficacy of the holy spot (Vārāṇasī) and if he was the most excellent among the knowers (of spiritual wisdom)?

Skanda replied:

3. O sage, it is the truth that has been enquired about by you. I shall narrate it; listen. On your having enquired, I shall recount the future story of Vyāsa.

4. Ever since Nandin paralysed the arm of that sage, he began to eulogize Maheśāna with great reverence.

5-6. "There are many Tīrthas in Kāśī. There are many Liṅgas in Kāśī. Still Viśveśa is to be resorted to and Maṇikarṇikā should be used for the holy ablution. Among Liṅgas the only (important one) is Viśveśa and among Tīrthas it is Maṇikarṇikā." Saying thus Vyāsa honoured both of them.

7. Discarding much of verbose talk, everyday he bathed in the morning and began to extol the greatness of Maheśītā in the Pavilion of Salvation.

8. Everyday, in front of his disciples, the greatness of the holy spot was joyously described by Vyāsa, the great sage.

9. Whatever is done here, in this holy spot, auspicious or otherwise, does not perish even in *Samvarta* (final annihilation). Hence one should regularly practise what is conducive to welfare.

10. Maṇikarṇikā should never be abandoned by the wise as long as they live, if they, highly intelligent persons who have completed their work (duties), desire to attain Siddhi of this holy place.

11. Ablution should be performed everyday in the Cakrapuṣkariṇī Tīrtha (Maṇikarṇikā). Viśveśvara should always be adored with flowers (and Bilva) leaves, fruits and water.

12. The duty pertaining to one's own Varṇa and Āśrama

should not be discarded even in the least. The greatness of the holy spot should be incessantly listened to everyday with faith.

13. Religious gifts are to be made here very secretly and in accordance with one's capacity. Cooked food also should be given by one who wants to avoid obstacles.

14. Extending help to others should be carried out always by a sensible man. So also the rites of ablution, making gifts etc. especially on festive occasions.

15. Special worship should be conducted with elaborate celebrations. So also worshipful processions should be taken out. The deities of the holy spot should be worshipped.

16. No weak and vulnerable points of anyone should be mentioned anywhere here by the wise. One should (refrain from) other men's wives, other people's possessions and injury to others.

17. Scandalous words about others should not be uttered. Jealousy should not be evinced in regard to others. Untruth should not be uttered even when the vital airs are choked in the throat.

18-19. One can utter untruth in order to save a creature living here. All living beings of this place should be assiduously protected by any means whatsoever, auspicious or inauspicious. If one creature is assiduously saved here in Kāśī, there is no doubt about this that one will attain that merit which one is likely to get by protecting the three worlds.

20. Those who stay in Kāśī always, those who establish the installations within the precincts of the holy spot, should be considered Rudras. They are undoubtedly living liberated souls.

21. They should be adored. They should be bowed to. They should be made happy. If they are happy Viśveśvara himself will be happy.

22. For the joy of Viśveśa, everything possible for acquiring and preserving the good of the people who stay in Kāśī should be done by even those good men who are far off.

23. Free play of passions should be curbed by those who stay here. The fickleness of the mind too should be assiduously avoided here.

24. Death should not be directly desired here. Salvation

too should not be wished for ardently. Means for drying up the body should not be undertaken by a sensible man.

25. Perfection in functioning of the body should be desired for the fulfilment of the Vratas, ablution etc. Ample longevity should be thought of here for the flourishing growth of the great benefit.

26. Self-protection should be done here for the increase of the good. One should not even mentally think of abandoning one's body.

27. The good that is obtained in Kāśī in the course of a single day is not obtained in the course of even a hundred years anywhere else.

28. What is obtained elsewhere by means of Yogic practice throughout the life, is attained in Vārāṇasī by means of a singly Prānāyāma.

29. What is obtained by taking bath in all the Tīrthas throughout the life, can be obtained in Ānandavana by bathing in Manikarnikā alone

30. What is obtained as merit by worshipping all the Līngas throughout the life, is obtained by worshipping Viśveśa (only) once with faith.

31. Obtaining a sight of Viśveśa may be possible by exchanging that faultless merit which has been acquired in the course of a thousand births

32. By having a sight of Viśveśvara that merit is perfectly obtained that is acquired by duly making the gift of a crore of cows.

33. The merit said by the great sages to be obtained by making sixteen great religious gifts, comes to men by offering flowers unto Viśveśa.

34. Whatever merit is obtained by everyone through horse-sacrifice and other Yajñas is acquired by bathing Viśveśa with Pañcāmṛta.

35. A hundred times of the merit acquired by a faultless performance of a thousand Vājapeyas, is obtained by offering valuable *Naivedyas* unto Viśveśa once (only).

36. He who dedicates unto Viśveśa a banner, an umbrella and chowries shall obtain the rulership of the entire earth under his single Royal Umbrella.

37. Affluent collection of all requisite things will never

leave a person who offers to the Lord of the universe all the ingredients of the great worship.

38. Wish-yielding celestial trees will spread cool shade in the courtyard of the devotee who makes a flower-garden with all the flowers of all the seasons.

39. If a devotee offers unto Viśveśa a cow for the purpose of milk intended for bathing the Lord, his grandfathers will reside on the shores of the Milk Ocean.

40. If a devotee gets the coating with lime done in the palatial abodes of Viśveśa or gets paintings done (on the wall), his own abode will be painted in Kailasa.

41-43. If a devotee feeds Brahmanas, ascetics or Śivayogins here in Kāśī, there is no doubt about this that he will get the benefit of feeding a crore of persons with faith for each of such persons.

Penance should be performed here; gifts must be made here; Viśveśa should be propitiated here by means of baths, Homas, Japas etc. What is obtained elsewhere by men by making a crore of Japas is obtained here by a hundred and eight Japas only.

44. What is said to be the merit acquired through a crore of Homas elsewhere by learned sages, can be acquired here in Ānandakānana through a hundred and eight Āhutis.

45. If *Rudrasūktas* are recited in Kāśī in the vicinity of Viśveśa, the merit of the recitation of all the Vedas is obtained.

46. I do not know (adequately) the merit of one who meditates on the great immutable, Absolute. Residence should always be made in Kāśī. The north-flowing (river) should always be resorted to.

47. Even at the time of terrible disaster Kāśī should never be abandoned, because Lord Viśvapati is the protector (of devotees) and the remover of their adversities.

48. Through holy baths, gifts, Japas etc., the day should be made fruitful, because the rite performed in Kāśī is conducive to greatness.

49. Kṛcchracāndrāyaṇa and other (expiatory) rites should be assiduously performed so that the aberrations of the sense-organs do not at all harass one here.

50. If the sense-organs corrupt the embodied ones inordinately the desire of obtaining a residence here is not fulfilled on account of obstacles.

Agastya said:

51. O Skanda, narrate the characteristic features of those rites of Kṛcchracāndrāyaṇa etc., which Vyāsa will be expounding for purifying-the sense-organs.

Skanda said:

52. O highly intelligent one, I shall describe to you Kṛcchra¹ etc., through the performance of which a man obtains great purity of the body.

53. *Pādakṛcchra* has been explained thus: the devotee takes only a single meal at night of what is obtained without requesting for it or he fasts a single day.

54. *Parṇakṛcchra* is described as that expiation in which the water wherein leaves of banyan, Udumbara, lotus, Bilva (are boiled separately² on each day (in succession) is drunk (with Kuśa dipped therein) everyday.

55. *Saumyakṛcchra* has been explained thus: Each of the following is separately eaten each day: oil cake, ghee, buttermilk, wheat flour and water and fast is observed (cf. *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* III.321).

56-57. A Brāhmaṇa observing *Atikṛcchra* does as follows: He eats Havis in the morning for three days; Havis in the evening for three days obtained without request; Havis for three days and then observes fast for three days or as before takes in a morsel of food and observes fast for three days.

58. *Kṛcchrātikṛcchra* rite consists of taking in milk for twenty-one days. *Parāka* rite is explained as a rite in which a devotee observes fast for twelve days.

59. A Brāhmaṇa performing the *Antyaprajāpatya* rite does as follows: He takes food in the morning for three days, then in the evening for three days, and then takes in food not begged for three days, and then observes fast for three days.

60. This (following) rite is known as *Sāntapanakṛcchra*. Cow's urine, cowdung, milk, curds, ghee and Kuśa water—all these are mixed together and consumed. Fast is observed for a night.

1. *Kṛcchra*—A generic term for several kinds of expiation. The procedures of different kinds of expiation given here in Skanda have variations in other Smṛti works. For the details see HD IV pp. 132-152.

2. Vide HD IV, p. 142 for varieties.

61. This rite is known as *Mahāsāntapanakṛcchra*: In it the articles prescribed for Sāntapana are taken severally for six days and fast is observed on the seventh.

62-64. A Brāhmaṇa performing *Taptakṛcchra* expiation takes bath once. With great concentration and purity he drinks for three days hot water, milk, ghee and wind. For three days he drinks hot water, then he drinks hot milk for three days and then he drinks hot ghee for three days and for three days he takes in only air (i.e. observes fast). If it is milk or water, he drinks one Pala thereof and in the case of ghee it is two Palas. I have explained *Taptakṛcchra*.

65. *Ekāhnikakṛcchra* is described as follows: The devotee takes in cooked barley mixed with cow's urine. It purifies the body.

66. This is on a par with *Prajāpatya* rite. The hands are kept stretched out the whole day. Only air is inhaled. The devotee stands in water throughout the night till dawn.

67. The following rite is known as *Cāndrāyana*: During the dark half of the month, the devotee reduces the number of morsels by one everyday and during the bright half increases it by one everyday and drinks water three times everyday (The maximum number of morsels is fifteen on full-moon day).

68. This is the injunction regarding *Cāndrāyana*: In the bright half the number of morsels is increased by one everyday and is reduced by one in the dark half. Nothing is eaten on the new-moon day.

69. A Brāhmaṇa with mental concentration and purity shall eat four lumps of rice in the morning and four lumps after sunset. This is known as *Śiśu Cāndrāyana*.

70. A devotee with controlled self eats eight riceballs of sacrificial food at midday regularly. This is known as *Yaticāndrāyana*.

71. With concentration and mental purity the devotee on the whole eats three times eighty (i.e. 240) *Haviṣya* lumps in the course of a month (i.e. eight morsels per day). He goes to the world of Candra (Moon).

72. Limbs become pure with water, mind with truth, ego (*Bhūtātmā*) through learning and austerities and intellect becomes pure with knowledge.

73. That knowledge comes to men by serving or residing in Kāśī. The rise of compassion of Viśveśa also occurs by serving (resorting) to Kāśī.

74-80. Then (is) the attainment of *Mahōdaya* ('great rise' i.e. salvation) capable of eradicating Karmas. Hence one shall duly observe and practise assiduously holy bath, make gifts, penance, Japa, Vrata, listen to the Purāṇas, resort to the path indicated by Smṛtis, think of the feet of Viśveśa every moment, everyday, do worship of the Liṅgas three times, instal Liṅgas, converse with good men, repeat the name Śiva, Śiva, give hospitable reception to a guest, make friendship with the other residents of the holy spot, to have faith in God, practice humility, remain unmoved by honour and insult, be free from lust, give up arrogance, practice non-attachment, abstain from violence, maintain (oneself) without receiving monetary gifts, be inclined to favour others, be free from hypocrisy, jealousy and spirit of competitiveness, acquire wealth without craving for it, practice non-covetousness, absence of lassitude, want of harshness and wretchedness. All these activities of a good man should be pursued by a resident of the holy spot. Thus he will impart instruction in piety to his disciples everyday

81. Vyāsa will be staying thus: taking bath thrice everyday, partaking of the alms received everyday and worshipping the Liṅgas everyday.

82-88. Once Hara was desirous of testing him. He spoke to the Goddess: "When Vyāsa, the extremely pious one, comes for alms today, O fair lady, do not give him alms anywhere." Saying "So it shall be" to Bhava, the eradicator of worldly existence, Bhavānī went round every house. She bowed down to all and forbade giving alms to him (and his disciples). Unable to get the alms the sage and his disciples became dejected. Seeing that the time had elapsed, he wandered in the city again. Alms were duly received by all the other mendicants at every house but that sage and his disciples did not receive the alms anywhere. Accompanied by his disciples, he concluded the evening rites and remained without food thus for the whole day and night. The next day the sage performed the midday rites and went round the city begging for alms along with his disciples. He wandered everywhere visiting every house again and again.

89. He did not get alms anywhere like an unlucky fellow unable to get money. Then Vyāsa, utterly weary after his wandering thought:

90. 'What may be the reason that alms cannot be obtained though assiduously sought after?' He summoned his disciples Vyāsa asked everyone:

91-95. "It seems that all of you too did not get alms. What has happened in this city? At my behest two or three of you go out. If alms cannot be got even on the second day despite best efforts, it is certain that some calamity has befallen arising out of great disaster. Instantly there has broken out a great famine for food in the entire city. Or a royal punishment has been meted out to all the citizens. Otherwise alms have been forbidden by someone out of malice towards us. Have the citizens become wretched by some mysterious portent foreboding evil. Go and find out all these things and return quickly." Getting the permission from the holy preceptor two or three disciples noticed the opulence of the citizens and after returning said thus:

The Disciples said

96-97. May the worthy Sir listen. There is no great disaster here. There is no dearth of cooked food anywhere in the entire city. How can there be the fear of any mysterious portent where sages like you are present and where Viśveśvara is directly stationed and the celestial river also flows?

98. Even in Vaikuntha there is no such affluence as that of the householders here in the city of Viśveśa. (Cities like) Alakā etc. are extremely insignificant

99. O great sage, there are not as many jewels in oceans as there are in the houses of these people, who partake of the remnants of the worship of Viśveśa.

100. There are heaps of grain in every house. Such heaps are not present anywhere in the city of Indra bequeathed by the celestial trees.

101. There is no poor man anywhere in that entire city where Viśālākṣī herself bestows extensive benefits.

102. This Ānandakānana is the abode of the glory of salvation where salvation is easily accessible. How can anything else be rare there?

103. All the women are chaste and have their husbands alive. All of them have the form of Bhavānī. They have dedicated their righteous activities to Viśveśa.

104. The entire menfolk in Kāśī are the leaders of Gaṇas. All of them are Kumāras (Lord Kārttikeya). All have Tārakadr̥ṣṭi (vision of redemption).

105-107. Those whose foreheads are marked with Tripuṇḍra (three parallel lines of holy ash) have become moon-crested ones. Even those afflicted with thousands of calamities, do not leave Kāśī. All of them are *Sarvajñas* (identical with omniscient Lord Śiva). In every house there are students expounding and discussing the topic of Brahman. All their sins have been washed off by the heavenly river. They have become the four-faced lord Brahmā (They are very clever and eloquent.) They are the lords of the glory of liberation. They stay permanently at the holy spot.

108. Those who have resorted to this holy spot are Hṛṣikeśas, Purusottamas, and should be known as Acyutas.

109. Whether women or men, all of them are entirely perfect, identical with the Three-eyed Lord and the Four-armed Lord.

110. All of them are Śrīkaṇṭhas here. All have certainly conquered death. Since they are Ardhanārīśvaras, they have their persons resorted to by the glory of salvation.

111. The mass of piety here is great. There are many great heaps of wealth. All desires bear fruit here. Kaivalya (Salvation) is free from impurity here.

112. Those who die in Kāśī do not have any contact with a womb thereafter. Neither Kali nor Kāla torment this holy spot.

113-114. Sins do not torment those who seek refuge in Viśveśa in this place. Where Viśveśvara is directly present in the form of Nāda, Bindu and Kalā, Praṇava with Mantras for its physical form is present in the form of *Dhvani* (sound). Hence it is certain that the Vedas in their physical form are here (they are present in personified forms).

115-121. Sarasvatī is in the form of a river. Therefore, the whole of Ānandakānana is an abode of scriptures; the Dharmaśāstras have their abode here. It is not false that all the Devas in heaven are entirely present here. Serpents come here from Rasātala and perform the rite of Nīrājana ('waving of lights') to Viśveśa every night by means of the lights of the jewels in their hoods. All the oceans along with the herds of

Kāmadhenus bathe Viśveśvara with the flow of Pañcāmṛta. The five celestial trees, Mandāra, Pārijāta, Santāna, Haricandana and Kalpadruma, are always present here along with the other trees. All the groups of Suras, all the great sages and all the Yogins attend upon the Lord of Kāśī. Kāśī is the abode of lores. Kāśī is the great home of Lakṣmī. Kāśī is the holy spot of salvation. The entire city of Kāśī is in the form of the three Vedas.

122. On hearing this, the son of Parāśara of great austere penance spoke thus to his disciples: "Repeat this Śloka."

The Disciples said:

123 Kāśī is the support of all lores. Kāśī is the great home of Lakṣmī. Kāśī is the holy spot of salvation. Kāśī is the entire extent of the three Vedas.

Skanda said:

124. On hearing this, Vyāsa shall become blinded with anger. His whole body will be burning with the fire of hunger O Pot-born One, he will curse Kāśī.

Vyāsa said (i.e. will say):

125. May not scholarship continue for three generations! May not wealth continue for three generations! May salvation not be continuous for three generations!

Thus Vyāsa curses Kāśī.

126. 'Here arrogance of scholarship is excessive. The arrogance of wealth is also excessive here. The residents of this place do not give alms due to the arrogance of certainty of salvation.'

127. Thinking thus Vyāsa cursed Kāśī then. Even after cursing, the angry sage went for alms.

128. He entered every house hurriedly with his eyes directed to the sky. He wandered all over the city, but did not get alms anywhere.

129. Seeing the Sun slightly reddish in its disc (in the evening), he threw the begging bowl down and went towards his hermitage.

130. While he was going on, he was requested to be the guest receiving alms by Mahādevī (Pārvatī) who had assumed the form of a laywoman and was seated at the portals of her house.

The Housewife said:

131. O holy Sir, mendicants were not seen anywhere today. My lord will never take food without extending hospitality to a guest.

132. The lord of my house has concluded the rites of Vaiśvadeva etc. He is waiting for the arrival of a guest. Hence do you be the guest.

133-134. A householder who eats food alone without a guest, actually partakes of a great sin along with his grandfathers. Hence do come quickly. Fulfil the desire of my husband who wishes to make the life of a householder fruitful by honouring a guest.

135-137. On hearing this, Vyāsa was not angry any more. He was surprised. He said to her:

Vyāsa said:

O fair lady, who are you? Whence have you come? You have not been seen before anywhere. I think, you are piety personified uniquely. You are pure-minded. All my senses have become delighted on seeing you. O Lady who are beautiful in every limb, you are sure to be the heavenly nectar itself. Due to the fear of being struck by Mandara mountain, you avoided staying behind in the Milk Ocean.

138. Or (you are) the digit of the Moon who being of the New-Moon day and afraid of Rāhu is standing in the form of a lady fearlessly in Kāśī.

139. Or you are Kamalā (Goddess Lakṣmī) who have forsaken your residence in the lotus that closes at night and taken up permanent residence in Kāśī that (always) shines extensively.

140. Or are you the embodiment of compassion, removing all the masses of misery of the residents of Kāśī and bestowing the greatest bliss?

141. Or are you the presiding deity of Vārāṇasī? Or are

you the glorious salvation well-sung about in Kāśī?

142. Has my good fortune transformed itself into this female form? (Are you the deity) that treats impartially a Cāṇḍāla and a person performing sacrifices?

143. Or you may be Bhavānī, the destroyer of worldly misery and the bestower of a raft (to cross the ocean of Saṃsāra) on the devotee, as a fruit of his devotion. She is certainly sung about in the holy spot.

144. In every respect you are neither a mortal woman, nor an Asura woman, neither a Kinnarī nor a Vidyādhari or a lady of Nāga, Gandharva and Yakṣa tribes.

145. You are certainly the desired deity, someone who eradicates my delusion. O fair lady, whatever you may be, why should I be anxious about it?

146. I have become a dependent (of yours) on seeing you. I shall certainly carry out your behest. Do command me.

147. With the only exception of wasting (the power of my penance), I shall do, whatever you command me to do. I am at your disposal, O lady of splendid eyes.

148. The words of noble ladies like you cannot belittle the greatness of good men. But anyhow tell me the truth, O auspicious lady. Who are you?

149. O lady of vision free from impurities, how can there be untruth in this body of yours?

On being asked thus by the sage, O Pot-born One, she, the very vital life of the universe, said:

150. "O sage, I am the lady of the house of a householder staying here itself. I see you everyday seeking alms surrounded by the group of your disciples.

151-152. You alone do not know me. I know you very well. Of what avail is too much of a talk? O sage, before the sun sets, make the hospitality of my dear lord fruitful."

On hearing it the sage said bowing down with humility:

Vyāsa said:

153. O splendid lady, I abide by a certain rule. If that is duly observed, I shall receive the alms once. None on another occasion.

* * *

154-155a. On hearing the utterance of the sage she said thus: "O sage, speak out unhesitatingly. O learned one of excellent intellect, what is your rule? By the grace of my husband there is no shortage of anything here."

155b. On hearing this that ascetic became pleased within himself and said:

156. "I have ten thousand disciples. I request for cooked food for all of them. Before the sun sets I must take my food. Otherwise not."

157. On hearing this she too was delighted and said to the sage: "Why delay? Go and fetch all your disciples."

158. Again he asked her: "O good lady, have you such a power as to make all my disciples satisfied?"

159-166a. Smilingly she said to him: "Due to my husband's grace, O sage, everything is kept ready in my abode so that everyone of the suppliants is satisfied in every respect. We are not one of those women who begin to doubt (the power of) their husbands. As soon as a guest or seeker of food comes at the house, the rite (of hospitality) is fulfilled. All the quarters are full. All the desires are perfectly fulfilled. Due to the grace of the feet of the Lord, the entire household is full. Go quickly and return along with as many of the seekers of hospitality as are there. My husband is one of those of olden times. He does not brook delay. My loving husband is fond of guests. Hence for the sake of perfect hospitality go hurriedly and return before sunset."

On (hearing this) he was delighted. Hurriedly he called together all the disciples from everywhere. After coming back he saw her with her eyes waiting for his return. He said, "Mother, all have come. Give us food quickly. The sun has come very near the mountain of sunset."

166b. After saying this the ascetics entered the temple.

167-168. As the sages reached the middle of that palace they became resplendent like daylight due to the radiance of the jewels in the pavilion thereof. They were immediately received and the feet were washed by some and others were duly honoured. By a few they were seated and served with food.

169. On seeing the collection of foodstuffs cooked in divine manner their eyes attained the greatest satisfaction and their

noses were delighted through the odour.

170. By taking in the cooked foodstuffs, they became extremely satisfied. After the washing of the mouths, they were adorned with garlands, garments and sandalpaste.

171-174. After concluding the evening rites the sage and others sat for a while in front of the householder. They showered him with blessings and got ready to leave.

Then the hint of a glance was directed at the lady by the old householder. She asked: "What is the main pious duty of those who reside in holy spots? We shall regulate our life in the holy spot in accordance with it."

On hearing the words of the housewife Sage Vyāsa, the most excellent one among those who know all about pious duties and who were propitiated by the taste of dainty delicacies drenched with the nectar of her esteem, smilingly replied to the lady, the greatest among all-knowers.

Vyāsa said:

175-180. O mother of pure inner feelings, O bestower of honour along with dainty food, that alone is the main pious duty that is being practised by you and nothing else.

You alone who are engrossed in serving your husband are aware of the righteous duty. If you ask me still, I shall mention some truism to you.

On being asked, something should be said by one even if one knows but very little. O auspicious lady, that alone is Dharma whereby your aged husband becomes pleased. Nothing else.

The housewife said: "Well, may this be Dharma. Certainly it is being practised in accordance with my capacity. But I am asking you about the general acts of piety, something common to all."

Vyāsa replied:

Words that do not cause disgust and distress, ability to bear with the ascendancy of others, doing the duty after careful consideration, concern for the prosperity of one's own abode.

The householder asked: "O learned one, tell me, which one of these Dharmas do you have (performed)?"

181. *Thereupon Vyāsa stood stunned as one cornered. He did not say anything. So the ascetic was further addressed by the householder:*

182. "If these alone that you have enumerated are Dharmas, then asceticism was seen among them by you alone. Pronouncing curses was seen excellent by you.

183. Compassion is perfect in you alone. Fortitude is excellent in you. There is the possibility of curbing lust and wrath in you.

184. You alone know very well how to speak words that do not cause disgust and distress. Ability to bear with the ascendancy of others is seen perfectly in you alone.

185. You alone are the greatest abode of doing the duty after careful consideration. Certainly you show great concern for the prosperity of your own abode.

186. Tell me one thing, O learned one. If a person does not attain his selfish interest due to absence of fortune and if he curses angrily, on whom does that curse fall?"

Vyāsa said:

187. If a person does not attain his selfish interest due to absence of fortune and he curses angrily, that curse, on the contrary, falls on the person who has cursed because he has been thoughtless.

The Householder said:

188. O Brāhmana if, Alas, alms are not received by you even after wandering, what is the crime committed by the poor residents of the holy spot?

189. O ascetic, listen to my words. If a person is unable to bear seeing the opulence in this capital city of mine, he alone is one cursed.

190. O wrathful sage, from now onwards do not stay in my holy spot unaffected (by your) curse. You are not worthy enough to stay here.

191-192. The state of being a Rudrapisāca will be the result of the wickedness, even if it be very little, perpetrated towards the residents of this holy spot. Get out now itself. Be outside this holy spot. My holy spot is the sole cause of salvation. It

is not suitable to persons like you.

193. On hearing this his (Vyāsa's) lips and palate became dry. He began to tremble. Rolling in front of the feet of Gaurī he sought refuge in her.

194. Crying bitterly he spoke these words: "Mother, save me, save me. I am helpless. I shall be saved if you help me. I am puerile. I am your son.

195. Save me who have sought refuge in you. Protect me who seek refuge in you. Our defiled mind is the abode of many sins.

196-197. The imprecation of Śambhu cannot be altered even by your holiness. I too have sought refuge in you. Hence, O Śivā, let this be done. Grant me the permission to enter this holy spot on the eighth and fourteenth lunar days. The Lord will not go against your words "

198. On being requested thus by the sage, Bhavānī the source of compassion, looked at the face of Maheśītā and at his bidding said, "So it will be."

199. Then both of them Śiva and Śivā who bring about the happiness to the holy spot vanished. Vyāsa too confessing his own fault went out of the holy spot.

200. Day and night he used to look at the holy spot not far from his vision. On the eighth and fourteenth lunar days he used to enter the holy spot.

201. Even today he looks at the row of palaces in Kāśī, being stationed on the eastern bank of the celestial river in the south-east of Lolārka.

Skanda said:

202. Thus, O Pot-born One, Vyāsa will pronounce his imprecation on the holy spot. After giving his curse he will go out instantly.

203. That is why everything will be auspicious to one praising the splendour and auspiciousness of the holy spot. Otherwise everything will be otherwise.

204. If one listens to this meritorious chapter entitled "*Vyāsaśāpavimokṣaṇam*" ('Release of Vyāsa from a curse') one will never have the fear from great impassable difficulties and portents.

CHAPTER NINETYSEVEN

*Holy Spots in Vārānasī¹**Agastya said:*

1. O Son of Śiva, after listening to the future of Vyāsa, I am greatly surprised. Now, do narrate the details of the holy spots.

2. O Six-faced One, recount to me all those holy shrines that are located in Ānandakānana in the form of Liṅgas.

Skanda said:

3. O Pot-born One, I shall tell you how this very question was clarified unto the Goddess then by the Lord. Listen.

The Goddess said:

4. O Lord Maheśvara, do describe to me all those holy shrines and (the places) where they are located in Kāśī.

The Lord of Devas said:

5. Listen, O Large-eyed Goddess, Liṅga is called Tīrtha. A reservoir of water also is called Tīrtha because of its association with an idol.

6. The idols are (of) Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Arka (the Sun), Śiva, Vighneśvara etc. Where there is a Liṅga of Śiva, that is indeed a Tīrtha.

7. Mahādeva in Vārānasī is mentioned as the first Tīrtha. To the north thereof the great well bestows Sārasvatapada (the position of a devotee of Goddess Sarasvatī).

8. Seen in the north-east of the holy spot, it dispels the bondage of a Paśu (individual soul). Behind it, Vārānasī in embodied form should be worshipped by men.

9. Assiduously worshipped, it always bestows comfortable residence (habitation). To the east of Mahādeva is the excellent Liṅga called Goprekṣa.

1. The locations of most of these holy spots have been noted in previous chapters.

10-11. On visiting it, one acquires an excellent gift of cows as a fruit thereof. It is known as Goprekṣa because, formerly cows were sent by Śāmbhu himself from the World of Cows (*Goloka*) and they came to Vārāṇasī. To the south of Goprekṣa is (the Tīrtha) called Dadhīcīśvara.

12-13. As a fruit of visiting it, men will derive the benefit resulting from the performance of Yajñas. The Tīrtha (Liṅga) Atriśvara worshipped by Madhu and Kaiṭabha is to the east thereof. By visiting that Liṅga assiduously, one attains the region of Viṣṇu. The Liṅga (named) Vijvara is known as situated to the east of Goprekṣa.

14. By worshipping it a man becomes free from fever instantly. To the east thereof is Vedeśvara, the bestower of the merit of reciting the four Vedas

15. To the north of Vedeśvara are Kṣetrajña (Īśvara) and Ādikeśava. By visiting it, the three worlds are certainly seen.

16-17 By visiting Saṅgameśvara to the east thereof, one becomes sinless. The four-faced Liṅga named Prayāga installed by Brahmā, the four-faced Lord, bestows the world of Brahmā when worshipped. If Gaurī, the begetter of Śānti (peace) is worshipped there, she brings about peace.

18. To the east (the Liṅga named) Kuntīśvara should be worshipped by men on the banks of Varāṇā. As a result of the worship thereof, sons illuminating one's own family are born.

19-21. The Tīrtha to the north of Kuntīśvara is the eddy named Kāpila Hṛada. Merely by taking bath there and worshipping the Bull-emblem Lord, one shall derive the full benefit of a Rājasūyayajña. If a Śrāddha is performed by the sons there, the Manes numbering crores and crores residing in hells beginning with Raurava pass on to the region of Pitṛs.

O sage, the Liṅga named Ānusūyeśvara is to the north of Goprekṣa.

22-24. By visiting it, women shall clearly attain the benefit of chastity.

To the east of that Liṅga is Siddhivināyaka who should be worshipped. One obtains that Siddhi (spiritual power) which one desires, as a result of making obeisance unto him.

The Liṅga of Hiraṇyakaśipu is to the west of Gaṇeśa. The well Hiraṇyakūpa is beyond that and it brings about abundance of gold and horses and wealth.

25. The Muṇḍāsureśvara Liṅga to the west thereof is also the bestower of spiritual power.

Vṛṣabheśvara to the south-west of Goprekṣa yields the desired fruit.

26. O sage, the Skandeśvara Linga is to the west of Mahādeva. By worshipping that Linga, men shall attain the state of living in the same world as I.

27-29. Verily by the side thereof are Śākheśa, Viśākheśa, Naigameyeśvara as well as other Gaṇas beginning with Nandin. Thousands of Liṅgas are installed by them. By visiting them, men shall attain the state of being in the same world as those Gaṇas. Śilādeśa, the destroyer of corrupt intellect, is to the west of Nandiśvara. There Hiranyākṣeśvara bestows great strength. He is auspicious and splendid.

30. To the south thereof is the Liṅga named Aṭṭahāsa that bestows all happiness (happiness unto all). To the north thereof, is the auspicious Liṅga named Prasannavadaneśa.

31. As a result of the auspicious vision thereof, a devotee stands with face beaming with pleasure. To the north of this is the holy pīt (named) Prasannoda that bestows freedom from impurities on men.

32. To the west of Aṭṭahāsa are the Liṅgas named after Mitra and Varuṇa. They dispel great sins and bestow their worlds. They are to be worshipped.

33. To the south-west of Aṭṭahāsa is the Liṅga named Vṛddhavaśiṣṭha. By worshipping it men get great knowledge.

34. Kṛṣṇeśa installed in the vicinity of Vaśiṣṭheśa bestows the world of Viṣṇu. Yājñavalkyeśa to the south thereof increases spiritual energy.

35-36. Thereafter, one should worship Prahlādeśvara that increases devotional fervour and assiduously worship Svalīna Liṅga to the east thereof. With a desire to bless his devotees Śiva himself has merged therein. The goal of those who cast off their bodies in Svalīna is the same as has been laid down as the goal of those who wish for the greatest bliss and who always abide by spiritual knowledge.

37. Vairocaneśvara Liṅga is stationed in front of Svalīna. To the north thereof is Balīśa that causes great strength.

38-39. Bāṇeśa Liṅga (which is there itself, if) worshipped bestows all desires. To the east of Candreśvara is the Liṅga

named Vidyēśvara. By resorting to that Liṅga, all the goddesses of learning become propitiated. Vīreśa to the south thereof is the deity that confers great Siddhis.

40. There itself is the Goddess Vikaṭā that redeems (the devotees) from all miseries. That Mahāpīṭha named *Pañcamudra* should be known as one that yields all Siddhis.

41. Great Mantras repeatedly recited there become fruitful quickly. Not otherwise. Sāgareśvara should be worshipped in the north-west corner of that Pīṭha.

42. Complete benefit of a horse-sacrifice will be derived by worshipping Sāgareśvara. Vālīśa to the north-east thereof is the preventer of birth in animal species.

43. To the north thereof is Sugrīveśa who destroys masses of great sins. Hanūmadiśvara there is the bestower of the merit of taking to celibacy.

44. There Jāmbavatiśvara who bestows great intellect should be worshipped. Āśvineyeśvara (the idol installed by the twin gods Āśvinīkumāras) should be worshipped on the western bank of Gaṅgā.

45-48. To the north thereof is Bhadrahrada filled with the milk of cows. A man who takes his holy dip in Bhadrahrada certainly attains that merit which one derives when a thousand Kapilā (tawny) cows are duly gifted away.

When the constellation Pūrvābhadrapadā falls on a full-moon day, that period is highly auspicious bestowing the merit of a horse-sacrifice. By visiting Bhadreśvara which is on the western bank of the Hrada (Eddy), a devotee shall attain Goloka (The World of the Divine Cows) due to the merit thereof. There is no doubt in this.

O sage, Upaśantaśiva is to the south-west of Bhadreśvara.

49-50. One attains great peace by touching that Liṅga. By visiting Upaśantaśiva Liṅga, a devotee gets rid of all evils and attains a heap of the good.

To the north thereof, is Cakreśa who causes prevention of the cycle of births in wombs.

51-52. To the north thereof is the Cakrahrada whirlpool that increases great merit. A man should take his bath in the Cakrahrada and worship Cakreśa. With the innermost soul purified, he will attain the world of Śiva. To the south-west thereof, there is Śūleśa. He should be visited with all efforts.

53. O lady of excellent complexion, formerly a trident was fixed there for the purpose of taking bath. In front of Śūleśa, a great deep lake came into existence.

54. After taking bath in the Hrada and visiting Lord Śūleśvara, men attain Rudraloka leaving behind the abyss of the worldly existence.

55. To the east thereof a severe penance was performed by Nārada. An excellent Liṅga was installed and an auspicious holy pit was made.

56. There is no doubt about this that after taking his holy bath in the auspicious Kuṇḍa and visiting Nāradeśvara a man will cross the extremely terrible ocean of worldly existence.

57. By visiting Avabhrātakeśvara to the east of Nāradeśvara one attains the goal free from impurities and gets rid of the mass of sins.

58. In front of it is the Tāmrakuṇḍa (Holy Copper Pit). One who takes a holy dip therein, does not resort to any womb (i.e. gets Mokṣa). To the north-west thereof is Gaṇādhyakṣa, the remover of obstacles destroying them completely.

59. There is the holy Kuṇḍa that removes obstacles there. One who bathes there never faces obstacles.

In the northern direction thereof, there is the excellent Anārakeśvara Liṅga.

60. There is the holy Kuṇḍa too named Anāraka. One who bathes there never falls in a hell.

To the north thereof in the charming banks of Varāṇā is Varāṇeśa.

61. O great sage, Akṣapāda, the holy Siddha and devotee of Paśupati, attained the ultimate fulfilment (Śivaloka) with this physical body itself.

62. To the west thereof is Śaileśa, the bestower of the desired greatest salvation.

To the south thereof is Koṭīśvara Liṅga, the bestower of everlasting Siddhis.

63. By taking a bath in the Koṭī Tīrtha and worshipping Koṭīśa, a man obtains the merit of a religious gift of ten million cows.

64. There is a Mahāśmaśānastambha ('pillar of the cremation ground', otherwise known as Kulastambha—now known as Lāt Bhairava—BCL 192-193) stationed in the south-east di-

rection of Kotīśa. Mahārudra stays in that pillar along with Umā.

65-68. By embellishing that pillar, a man (devotee) attains his (Rudra's) foot.

There is the greatest Tīrtha named Kapālamocana there itself in the vicinity of Kapāleśa. One who takes the holy bath there gets the merit of a horse-sacrifice. The splendid Rṇamocana Tīrtha is on the northern direction thereof. A man who takes his bath in that Tīrtha becomes rid of the three debts.

There itself is the Aṅgāraka Tīrtha and the holy Kunda as bright as a burning coal. After taking the holy bath in the Aṅgāraka Tīrtha, one ceases to take rebirths. A man who takes the bath there on the fourth lunar day that coincides with a Tuesday is never assailed by ailments. He is never miserable.

69. To the north thereof is Viśvakarmeśvara Liṅga that bestows knowledge. To the right thereof is the splendid Mahāmuṇḍeśvara Liṅga.

70-72. There is also a well named Śubhoda. One must take one's bath there positively (without fail).

A very splendid garland consisting of skulls was hurled there by me. Thereupon, Goddess Mahamundā, the destroyer of sins, was born. A Khaṭvāṅga (skull-topped club) was held. That gave the origin to Khaṭvāṅgeśa. By visiting Khaṭvāṅgeśa a man becomes rid of sins.

To the south thereof is Bhuvaneśa and the holy pit is Bhuvaneśvara.

73. A man who takes his bath in the holy pit there, shall become lord of the worlds. To the south thereof, are Vimaleśa and the holy pit Vimalodaka.

74-75. After bathing therein and visiting Īśa, a man becomes rid of impurities. A Pāśupata devotee named Tryambaka became a Siddha there and reached Rudraloka with this self-same physical body.

To the west thereof is the shrine of Bhṛgu which confers much merit.

76-78. By worshipping it in accordance with the injunctions, one shall attain the palace of Śiva. To the west thereof is Śubheśvara who bestows auspicious benefits. Sage Kapila, a devotee of great penance, became a Siddha there. There indeed in the vicinity of Kapileśvara is a beautiful cave. He who enters

that cave does not enter any womb (i.e. is not reborn) anywhere. The well Yajñoda there bestows the merit of a horse-sacrifice.

79. This alone is Omkāra consisting of "A" and other syllables. I myself am Nādeśa on the northern bank of Matsyodarī.

80. Nādeśa is the great Brahman. Nādeśa is the greatest goal. Nādeśa is the greatest region that gives redemption from the miseries of worldly existence.

81-82. Jāhnavī (Gaṅgā) comes within the view of that Lord sometimes. That is called Matsyodarī. The bath therein is obtained through merits. O great Goddess, when Matsyodarī Gaṅgā reaches Kapileśvara to the west, that is a rare combination.

83. Uddālakeśvara Liṅga is to the north of Kapileśvara. By visiting it, the greatest Siddhi is attained by all.

84. To the north thereof is Bāskulīśa Liṅga, that yields the attainment of all objects and riches. To the right of Bāskulīśa is the Kaustubheśvara Liṅga.

85. As a result of its worship, one is never isolated from a heap of jewels. Śaṅkukarṇeśvara Liṅga is to the south of Kaustubheśvara.

86. By resorting to Śaṅkukarṇeśvara Liṅga, an aspirant obtains the greatest knowledge even today. Aghoreśa is at the entrance of the cave. There is an auspicious well to the north thereof.

87. It is famous by the name Aghoroda (the water of which gives redemption from worldly existence) and it bestows the merit of a horse-sacrifice. There are two splendid Liṅgas named Gargeśa and Damaneśa then.

88. In the place where they both attained Siddhi with this self-same physical body, a devotee should worship those two Liṅgas. Thereby he attains the desired Siddhi.

89. To the right side thereof is the great holy pit known as Rudrāvāsa. By worshipping Rudreśa there, one shall obtain the merit of ten million Rudras (i.e. chanting of *Rudra-Sūkta* ten million times).

90. O Aparṇā, when the fourteenth lunar day coincides with the Rudra-constellation (Ārdrā), bath in that holy pit is considered to be highly meritorious and exceedingly fruitful.

91. If a man takes his holy bath in the Rudrakuṇḍa and visits Lord Rudreśvara, he will certainly attain Rudra's world

at any place where he happens to die

92. In the south-western direction of Rudra is the Mahālaya Liṅga. In front of it is the Pitṛkūpa, the greatest abode of the pitṛs.

93. A man should perform Śrāddha there and cast rice-balls into the Pitṛkūpa. The performer of the Śrāddha shall attain Rudraloka along with twenty-one generations of his family.

94. There is another big lake named Vaitaraṇī there facing the west. O Goddess, a man who takes his bath there never falls in a hell.

95. To the west of Rudrakunḍa is the Bṛhaspatiśvara Liṅga. By visiting it when the Puṣya constellation falls on a Thursday, a devotee obtains supermatual faculty of speech.

96. To the south of Rudrāvāsa is the excellent Kāmeśa Liṅga. Still to the south of it is the Mahākunḍa that fulfils the wish thought of (intensely) as a result of the holy bath.

97. The Yātrā (ceremonial procession) there on the thirteenth lunar day in the bright half of Caitra fulfils wishes.

The splendid Nalakūbara Liṅga is to the east of Kāmeśvara.

98-100. The sacred Kūpa (well) in front of it is the bestower of plenty of wealth and foodgrains.

To the east of Nalakūbara are the Sūryacandramaseśvaras (Lingas installed by the Sun and the Moon). When worshipped they remove the mass of the darkness of ignorance.

To the right thereof should be seen Adhvakeśa who removes delusion.

The Siddhīśvara Liṅga there bestows great Siddhis. Maṇdaleśa there itself bestows the position of a Mandaleśa (Lord of a great county or tract of land).

101. To the east of Kāmakuṇḍa is Cyavaneśa, the bestower of plenty. Sanakeśa too is there itself and he bestows the merit of a Rājasūya sacrifice.

102. Behind it is the Sanatkumāra Liṅga that brings about Yogic Siddhis. To the north thereof is Sanandeśa, the enhancer of great (spiritual) knowledge.

103. To the south of it is Āhutīśa. When seen it bestows the merit of Homas. To the south thereof is Pañcaśikheśvara Liṅga that brings about merit.

104-105. To the west thereof is Mārkaṇḍeya Hrada, the lake that enhances merit. If a man takes his bath in that deep lake,

why should be bewail anything further?

Bath and charity performed there bestows endless merit. To the north thereof is Kuṇḍeśa worshipped and bowed to by all the Siddhas.

106. O Brāhmaṇa, by visiting Kuṇḍeśa a man obtains that merit which is obtained in the course of twelve years after receiving Pāśupata initiation.

107. To the east of Mārkaṇḍeya Hrada is Śāṇḍilyeśa that bestows excellent merit. Behind it is Caṇḍeśa that removes as much sin as the religious observance at the time of solar eclipse does.

108. To the right of Kapāleśa is the holy pit (Kuṇḍa) named Śrīkaṇṭha. By taking his holy bath in that Kuṇḍa, a man will become a donor, due to the power of Śrī (Goddess of Wealth).

109-111. In the vicinity of that Kuṇḍa is Mahālaksmīśvara Liṅga. A devotee should take his holy bath in the waters of that Kuṇḍa and worship Mahālaksmī. He will be fanned by celestial damsels with their hands holding chowries. When the heaven-dwellers go to Matsyodarī from the heavenly world, it is this path alone that they take. They march through that path happily surrounded by their women. Hence, O excellent sage, that region is well-known by the name Svargadvāra ('doorway to heaven'). The Liṅga to the south of that Kuṇḍa bestows the position of Brahmā.

112. Gāyatrīśvara and Sāvitrīśvara should be assiduously worshipped. Satyavatiśvara Liṅga is on the charming banks of Matsyodarī.

113-115. It should be worshipped to the east of those too. It causes increase in power of penance and prosperity. The great Ugreśvara Liṅga is situated in the eastern direction from Lakṣmīśa. By worshipping that Liṅga a man becomes *Jātsmara* ('capable of remembering previous births'). To the south thereof is Ugrakuṇḍa which by virtue of the holy dip therein surpasses even Kanakhala Tīrtha (in efficacy).

To the west of that Kuṇḍa is Karavīreśvara Liṅga. Due to the visit thereof men obtain destruction of ailments.

116. To the north-west thereof is Marīcīśa Kuṇḍa that is destructive of masses of sins. Behind it is Indra Kuṇḍa, O sage, as well as Candreśvara Liṅga.

117-118. In the southern direction from Indreśa is the splendid

Karkoṭavāpikā (tank named after Karkoṭa). A devotee should take the bath in the waters of the tank and visit Karkoṭakeśvara. It is undoubted that he will obtain the overlordship of Nāgas (Serpents). Behind it is Lord Hara (Śiva) named Dṛmicanḍeśa) who dispels the sin of Brāhmana slaughter.

119. To the south thereof is Mahākuṇḍa that bestows the merit of attaining Rudraloka. To the west thereof is the great Liṅga well-known as Agnīśa.

120. To the east thereof is the Kuṇḍa named Āgneya which bestows *Saloka* ('having the same world') with Agni. It is the Kuṇḍa to the east of Āgneyeśvara. There is Śubhakuṇḍa to its south.

121. A man who bathes there in the Kuṇḍa stays in heaven along with the ancestor. To the east thereof is Bālacandreśa, the bestower of the goal of attaining Candraloka.

122. All-round Bālacandreśa there are many Gana Liṅgas. By visiting those Liṅgas one attains the lordship of the Gaṇas.

123. In the vicinity of Bālacandra there is a well favourite with the Pitr̥s. One who takes the holy bath there and performs Śrāddha redeems seven generations of ancestors.

124. To the east of that well is the meritorious Liṅga named Viśveśvara. To the east of Viśveśvara is Lord Hara (known as) Vrddhakāleśvara.

125-126. In front of it is the well-named Kāloda which removes all ailments. If any man or woman drinks the water thereof, he (she) never returns to the mortal world even in the course of hundreds of crores of Kalpas. By drinking it, the one becomes rid of the fear arising from the bondage of births.

127. O Pot-born Sage, even at the time of the ultimate annihilation, there cannot be the destruction of what is offered at that well as (a religious) gift unto those whose souls are engrossed in Śiva.

128. Those men who resuscitate and renovate (shrines etc.) broken and in ruins there, attain Rudraloka and rejoice happily forever.

129-130. In the southern direction from Kāleśa is Mṛtyviśa (Lord of death) who wards off premature death. The Liṅga named Dakṣeśvara is in the northern direction from that well. By worshipping it, even a thousand crimes (sins) perish.

131-132. The great Mahākāleśa Liṅga is to the east of Dakṣeśa.

Indeed this entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings has been worshipped by the man who takes his bath in the Mahākunḍa and worships Mahākāla.

If one visits Antakeśvara to the south thereof, there is no fear of the god of Death.

133. O sage, to its south is Hastipāleśvara Liṅga. By worshipping it one attains the merit of making the gift of an elephant.

134. Airāvata Kuṇḍa and Airāvateśvara Liṅga are there itself. A man worshipping that Liṅga enjoys plenty of wealth and foodgrains.

135. Mālatīśvara Liṅga to its south is conducive to welfare. Jayanteśa to the north of Hastīśvara bestows victory.

136. The auspicious Bandīśvara is to the north of Mahākāla Kuṇḍa. Bandi Kuṇḍa is famous in Vārāṇasī as the destroyer of great sins.

137-138. Through the holy bath there, making of gifts and performance of Śrāddha, one enjoys everlasting merit. The Liṅga is Dhanvantarīśvara and the Kuṇḍa should have been named thereafter. But, the name of the Liṅga is Tuṅgeśvara and the Kuṇḍa is named Vaidyeśvara.

139. Great medicinal herbs full of nectar and conducive to excellence of intellect have been cast therein. Hence through the bath therein and the visit to that Liṅga, all the ailments perish along with terrible sins.

140. To the north thereof is Halīśeśa, the destroyer of all ailments. The auspicious benefactor Śiveśvara is to the south of the deity named Tuṅga.

141. Jamadagnīśvara Liṅga is very auspicious and it is to the south of Śiveśa. Bhairaveśa is to the west thereof. There is a splendid well to the north thereof.

142. Merely by touching the water thereof one shall obtain the merit of performing all Yajñas. To the west of that well is Sukeśa, the bestower of Yogic Siddhis.

143-144. To the south-west thereof is Vyāseśa and there is a well of pure water. A man who takes his bath in the Vyāsakūpa and offers libations to Suras and Pitṛs, attains everlasting world wherever it is desired. To the west of Vyāsa Tīrtha is the great (a deep lake called) Ghaṇṭākarna Hrada.

145. If a devotee takes his bath in Ghaṇṭākarna Hrada and

visits Vyāseśa, wherever he may happen to die, he would derive the merit of having death at Vārāṇasī.

146-147. Near Ghaṇṭākarna is the lake Pañcacūdāpsaraḥ. After bathing in the waters of Pañcacūḍa and visiting that Lord a man attains heavenly world. He will be a favourite of Pañcacūḍa (celestial damsel). To the south thereof is Gaurīkūpa that destroys all sluggishness.

148. To the northern direction of Pañcacūḍa there is the Tīrtha named Aśoka. Still to the north thereof is the great Mandākinī Tīrtha that destroys great sins.

149. She (Mandākinī) is highly meritorious in the heavenly world. All the more so, O sage in the mortal world To the north thereof is Madhyameśa who sleeps in the middle of the holy spot.

150. A man will keep awake on the eighth lunar day in the month of Caitra, called Aśokāṣṭamī. He will never be miserable. He will always be cheerful.

151. The extent of Muktiṣetra (Kāśī, the holy spot of salvation) is one Krośa (3 Kms.) in every direction starting from this Madhyameśvara, the merit-giving Liṅga.

152-155. All the great-grandfathers always say this alone: "Will anyone born in our family take bath in the waters of Mandākinī, be pure in every respect and feed Brāhmanas, ascetics and Pāśupata devotees?"

A man who bathes in Mandākinī and sees Madhyameśvara shall stay in Rudraloka for a long time accompanied by twenty-one generations of his family.

To the south of Madhyameśa is the auspicious Viśvedeveśvara. By the worship of this deity, all the thirteen Viśvedevas can be deemed to have been worshipped. To the east thereof is Vīrabhadreśa the bestower of the position of the greatest warrior (Mahāvīra).

156. To its south is the auspicious welfare-bestower Bhadrakālī. There is a deep lake named Bhadrakālī Hrada, the bestower of great auspiciousness.

157. To the east thereof is Āpastambeśvara Liṅga the greatest bestower of knowledge. There is a meritorious Kūpa to the north thereof and Śaunaka Hrada is behind it.

158-159. The Liṅga to the west of the Hrada named Śaunakeśa Liṅga bestows excellent intellect. A man should take his bath

in the lake there and visit Śaunakeśvara. Thereby he will obtain that divine knowledge whereby he will cross death. To the south thereof is Jambukeśa who prevents birth in animal species.

160-161. To the north thereof is Mataṅgeśa, the instructor in the musical lore. To the north-west of Mataṅgeśa, there are many Liṅgas all-round installed by sages here. They bestow all Siddhis. Brahmarāteśvara Liṅga is to the south of Mataṅgeśa.

162. If one visits that Liṅga, one's span of life is never cut in the middle. There is Ājyapeśvara Liṅga and also many other Piṭṛ Liṅgas. Due to the service rendered to that Liṅga, all the great-grandfathers become pleased.

163-164. To the south thereof is the Siddhakūpa where there are thousands of Siddhas. Some of these Siddhas are in the forms of Wind and some Siddhas abide in the rays of the Sun. The Liṅga installed by them is called Siddheśvara. Merely due to a visit to it, one shall have all Siddhis free from impurities.

165. To the west thereof is the Siddhavāpī tank. If the waters are drunk and if the holy dip is taken, the tank bestows Siddhis. To the east of the Siddhakūpa is the Liṅga called Vyāghreśvara.

166. By visiting that Liṅga, men cease to be afraid of tigers and thieves. Jyeṣṭheśvara is to the south thereof. It bestows great Siddhis in the Jyeṣṭha Sthāna (in the region of the greatest).

167. To the south thereof is the Prahasiteśvara Liṅga, the abode of joys. To the north thereof is Nivāseśa who bestows the merit of residence in Kāśī.

168. There is a well Catussamudra Kūpa that bestows the merit of holy bath in the ocean. Goddess Jyeṣṭhā is there. On being bowed to, she bestows the greatest position.

169. To the south of Vyāghra Liṅga is the Liṅga named Caṇḍīśvara. to the north of it is the lake dug with a staffs (*Daṇḍakhāta*) which brings about joy to the Piṭṛs.

170. Bath after an eclipse in Daṇḍakhāta bestows great merit. The cave Jaigīṣavyaguhā is there and the Liṅga there has the same name.

171. One who undertakes fast for three nights there, acquires knowledge devoid of impurities. To the west thereof is

the Devaleśvara Liṅga which bestows great merit.

172. The deity there is Śatakāla in the vicinity thereof. The Consort of Umā disposed of a hundred Kālas, O Pot-born One, in the course of the manifestation of that Liṅga.

173. By visiting that Liṅga a devotee shall enjoy a hundred years' life-span without break. To the south thereof is Śātātapeśa, the bestower of the merit of great Japas.

174. To the west thereof is Hetukeśa who is the giver of great benefit. To the south of it is Akṣapādeśa, the promoter of great (spiritual) knowledge.

175-176. In front of it is Kaṇādeśa. There is a well of meritorious waters. After taking bath in Kaṇādakūpa, a devotee should worship Kaṇādeśa. He is never forsaken by wealth, or foodgrains. Bhūtīśa who causes the prosperity of good persons should be seen to the south of it.

177. To the west thereof is the Liṅga that is named Āśāḍhīśvara and destroys sins. To the east thereof is Durvāseśa that causes plenty of fulfilment of all desires.

178. To the east of Vyāseśvara there are two deities, Śaṅkhalikhiteśvaras. They should be seen with effort in Kāśī. They are the promulgators of knowledge.

179. The merit that is obtained by concluding the due performance of the rite of Pāsupata Vrata can be obtained here instantly by seeing once the deities Viśveśas (Śaṅkhalikhiteśvaras).

180. To the north-east thereof is Avadhūteśa who is the promulgator of the knowledge of Yoga. The Avadhūteśa Tīrtha causes the destruction of all sins.

181. To the east of Avadhūteśvara is Paśupatiśvara Liṅga. By rendering service to that Liṅga men get rid of Paśupāśas (Kārmic shackles of the individual soul).

182. To the south of it is Gobhileśa that bestows the fulfilment of great ambitions. Behind it is the excellent Jīmūtavāhaneśa Liṅga.

183. As a result of the service rendered to that Liṅga, one attains the position of a Vidyādhara. Mayūkhārka and Gabhastīśa are there in Pañcanada.

184. To the north thereof there is a great holy well named Dadhikalpa Hrada. Rare indeed is the holy bath in that well and the vision of the deity.

185. In the northern part of Gabhastīśa is Hara named Dadhikalpeśvara. If a man visits the Lord promptly he will stay in Tryakṣapura (City of the Three-eyed Lord) for the period of a Kalpa.

186. To the south of Gabhastīśa a devotee should visit Maṅgalā, the abode of the auspicious goddess Gaurī, and feed a Brāhmaṇa couple.

187. They should be adorned in accordance with one's capacity. There is no end to the merit thereof. One circumambulation of Maṅgalā has the same merit as the circumambulation of the Earth.

188. To the north of Mukhaprekṣeśvara near Maṅgalā is the Goddess Vadanaprekṣanā. She is Goddess Śivā who causes all Siddhis.

189. To the north of Mukhaprekṣā there are two splendid Liṅgas named Tvaṣṭrīśa and Vṛttīśa. They say that a visit paid to those two deities has the same merit as that of the gift of a plot of land along with gold.

190. To the north thereof is Goddess Carcikā, a visit to whom is auspicious. In front of Carcikā is the Revateśvara Liṅga that causes peace.

191. In front of it is the Pañcanadeśvara Liṅga that is conducive to great auspiciousness. To the west of Maṅgalā is the great splendid well Maṅgaloda ('a well of auspicious waters').

192. To the west of Maṅgalā is the great splendid Liṅga of Upamanyu. Behind it is the Vyāghrapādeśvara Liṅga that removes the fear of tigers.

193. To the south-west of Gabhastīśa is Śaśāṅkeśa who removes mass of sins. To the west thereof is Caitraratha Liṅga that bestows divine goal.

194. To the west of Revateśa is Jaiminīśa, the destroyer of great sins. O excellent one among the sages, there are many Liṅgas of (i.e. installed by) many sages.

195. To the north-west of Jaiminīśa there is the Rāvaṇeśvara Liṅga. Due to paying a visit to it one ceases to have great fear of the Rākṣasas.

196. To the south thereof is Varāheśa. Māṇḍavyeśa is still to its south. Further south of it is Pracaṇḍeśa and Yogeśa is still to its south.

197. To the south thereof is Dhāteśa (? Dhātrīśa). Someśa

is in front of it. To its south-west is Kanakeśa, the bestower of gold on the good.

198. To the north thereof are the five Lingas of the Pāṇḍavas conducive to the joy of the good. In front of it is Saṁvarteśa and Śveteśa is to its west.

199. Behind it is one Kalaśeśa and the Liṅga that bestows freedom from fear of the god of Death. O sage, it rose up from a pot when Śveta was fettered by Kāla.

200. To the north thereof is Citragupteśvara Liṅga that eradicates sins. Behind Citragupteśvara is Drḍheśa who gives great merit.

201. Graheśa is to the south of Kalaśeśa. The Liṅga there is excellent. A visit to that Liṅga subdues harassment by (malignant) Planets.

202. Behind Citragupteśvara is Yadrcheśa granting great merit. Utathyavāmadeveśa Liṅga is to the south of Graheśvara.

203. To the south thereof are the auspicious deities Kāmbaleśa and Aśvatareśa. There itself is the pure Liṅga worshipped by Nalakūbara.

204. To the south of it is Manikarṇīśa Liṅga and Paliteśvara is to its north. There itself is the Jarāhara Liṅga. Behind it is Pāpanāśana.

205. To its west is Nirjareśa and to the south-west thereof is Pitāmaha. Pitāmahasrotikā stream is also there and a Śrāddha performed there yields great merit.

206. To the south thereof is Varuneśa and Bāneśa is to still further south. Kūṣmāṇḍeśa in Pitāmahasrotikā brings about Siddhis.

207. To its east is Rākṣaseśa and Gaṅgeśa is to its south. To its north there are many Liṅgas. They are (called) Nīmṇageśas.

208. Vaivasvateśa is there and the Lord prevents Yamaloka (death). Behind it is Aditīśa and in front of it is Cakreśa.

209. In front of it is the great deity named Kālakeśa. He brings about visible proofs. The shadow (i.e. reflection of the deity) is seen there. One who sees it becomes free from sins.

210. Behind it is Tārakeśa and further ahead is Svarṇabhārada ('the bestower of Bhāras of gold'). To its north is Marutteśa. Śakreśa is ahead thereof.

211-212. To its south is Raṁbheśa. Śaśīśvara is there itself. To the north thereof are Lokapeśas viz. many Liṅgas of (i.e.,

installed by) Nāgas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Apsarās, celestial sages and groups of the Gaṇas. They bestow different kinds of Siddhis.

213. To the south of Śakreśa is Phālguneśa, the destroyer of great sins. To the south thereof is Mahāpāsupateśa who brings about great auspiciousness.

214. To the west thereof is Samudreśa. Īśāneśa is to its north. To the east thereof is Lāṅgalīśa who confers all Siddhis.

215. Those who worship without passionate attachment and hatred attain Siddhi. Salvation of these has been announced by me. O Goddess, they are not (ordinary) men.

216. In Lāṅgalīśa the ascetics Madhupīṅga and Śvetaketu attained excellent Siddhi with this self-same physical body.

217. There itself are Nakulīśa and Kapileśa. Both resort to my holy Vrata. It is a great secret.

218. In its vicinity is Prītikeśa. O my beloved, I take pleasure therein. Due to a single fast observed there, the benefit lasts more than a hundred years.

219. If during my Parva (i.e. Śivarātri) a devotee observes fast in Prītikeśa and performs a single Jāgaraṇa (keeping vigil), it is assured that he attains the position of a Gaṇa.

220. In the southern direction of the deity there is a tank of splendid waters. Imbibing the water thereof is conducive to the cessation of rebirths of men.

221-222. To the west of that holy water Daṇḍapāṇi (Staff-handed deity-like Bhairava) accords perpetual protection. There are three Liṅgas to the east, south and north thereof, viz. Tāra (Tārakeśa), Kāla (Kāleśa) and Śailādaja (Nandikeśvara). With faith in them a devotee should drink water and offer it to the lotus-like heart. Those excellent men by whom that water is drunk are blessed. They have achieved their objectives.

223. Mokṣeśa, the bestower of the sense of liberation, should be worshipped in the vicinity of Avimukta. Karuṇeśa the abode of compassion, is to the north thereof. A devotee should worship that deity.

224. Svarṇākṣeśa, the bestower of knowledge, is to the east thereof. To the north thereof, Saubhāgyagaurī should be duly adored for the purpose of full conjugal bliss and prosperity.

225-226. In the southern portion of Viśveśa, Nikumbheśa who brings about the prosperity of the holy spot should be

assiduously worshipped. Behind it Vighnanāyaka, the destroyer of all obstacles, should be worshipped, especially on the fourth lunar day. Virūpākṣa who accords excellent Siddhis should be worshipped in the south-eastern direction from Nikumbheśa.

227. To the south thereof is Śukreśa who grants increase of sons and grandsons. To the north thereof is a great Liṅga named Devayānīśvara.

228. In front of Śukreśa is the deity named Kaceśa. He should be (properly) worshipped. By bathing in the Śukrakūpa one shall obtain the merit of a horse-sacrifice.

229. To the west of Śukreśa, Bhavānī and Īśa should be bowed down to. They are auspicious and they always accord to their devotee *Bhakta* (foodstuff) and *Pota* (raft for crossing the ocean of Saṃsāra).

230. Alarkeśa stationed in the eastern direction of Śukreśa should be worshipped. Madālaseśvara is there to the east thereof. He destroys all obstacles.

231. Ganeśvareśvara Liṅga is very great and it bestows all Siddhis. O Brāhmaṇa, it was installed by Raghunātha (Rāma) after slaying the king of Laṅkā.

232. By touching that Liṅga, even the slayer of a Brāhmaṇa becomes pure instantly. Another Liṅga that accords great merit, named Tripurāntaka, should be worshipped there.

233. To the west thereof is the splendid Dattātreyeśvara Liṅga. To the south thereof is Harikeśeśa. Gokaṇṇeśa is beyond that.

234. Ahead of it is a lake that destroys sins. Behind it is Dhruveśvara. In front thereof is Dhruvakunḍa that is extremely delightful to the Pitṛs.

235. Piśāceśa installed to the north thereof removes the state of a Piśāca (ghost or vampire). To the south thereof is Pitṛīśa and Pitṛkunḍa is in front of it.

236. The great-grandfathers become pleased with men who perform Śrāddhas there. Ahead of Dhruveśa is Tāreśa (Praṇaveśa). The same deity is Vaidyanātha.

237. To the south-west thereof is Manu's Liṅga that is great and that causes increase in the family. Priyavrateśvara Liṅga is in front of Vaidyanātha.

238. To the south thereof is Mucukundeśa. By the side thereof is Gautameśvara. To its west is Bhadreśa and to the

south thereof is the Lord of Ṛṣyaśṛṅgin.

239. Brahmeśa is in front of it. Parjanyaśa is in the north-eastern direction. To the east thereof is Nahuśeśa. Viśālākṣī is in front thereof.

240. Viśālākṣīśvara Liṅga is there itself and it grants residence in Kāśī. Jarāsandheśvara Liṅga is to the south thereof and it destroys fevers.

241. In front of it is Hiranyaḅkṣa Liṅga that confers gold. It should be worshipped. To the west thereof is Gayādhīśa and further to the west is Bhagīratha.

242. Ahead of it, O sage, and to the west of Brahmeśa is Dilipeśa. There the Liṅga along with the holy Kuṇḁa bestows the desired benefit on a devotee who takes the holy bath.

243. Viśvāvasu's Liṅga is there. Muṇḁeśa is there to the east. To the south of it is Vidhīśa. Still further to the south is Vājimedhaka (Vājimedheśvara).

244. A man should take the holy bath in Daśāśvamedhika and visit the excellent Liṅga. He earns the merit of ten horse-sacrifices.

245-246. To the north thereof is Mātṛ Tīrtha that removes the fear of rebirth of a man who takes his holy bath. One who takes the holy bath there, whether man or woman, attains the desired benefit, with the favour of the Mothers (Brāhmī etc.). To the south of your (Agastya's) Kuṇḁa is the great Puṣpadanteśvara.

247. In the south-east direction thereof there are many Liṅgas installed by gods, sages and Gaṇas. To the south of Puṣpadanta is Siddhīśa who bestows the great Siddhi.

248. As a result of the adoration consisting of five Upacāras (services) the deity may accord great Siddhi in dream. By means of service unto Hariścandreśa men will attain kingdom.

249. To the west thereof is Nairṛteśa. Aṅgiraseśa is further to the south. To the south thereof is Kṣemeśa and Citrāṅgeśa is further to the south.

250-251. To the south thereof is Kedāra that bestows the state of being a follower of Rudra. In the region of south of Kedāra, hundreds and thousands of Liṅgas were installed by the kings of the lunar and solar races. In the direction south of Lolārka (the deity Arkavināyaka) fulfils all hopes and ambitions on being adored.

252. To the west thereof Karandhameśvara Liṅga bestows great benefit. To the west thereof Mahādurgā (great goddess Durgā) destroys great distresses.

253. Śuṣkeśvara Liṅga to the south thereof is adored by the dry river (i.e. Asi). Janakeśa is to the west thereof. Śaṅkukarna is to the north thereof.

254-255. To the east thereof is Mahāsiddhīśvara Liṅga that bestows all Siddhis. A man (of devout nature) should take the holy bath in the Siddhakuṇḍa and visit the great Siddheśvara Liṅga. He will achieve all the Siddhis. To the north-west of Śaṅkukarneśa is the Liṅga called Vādavya.

256. Ahead of it is Vibhāndeśa. To the north thereof is Kaholeśa. The Liṅga there is Dvāreśvara and the goddess is the auspicious Dvāreśvarī.

257. Siddhi is achieved by the adoration thereof, according residence in Ānandakānana. There the guardians are, O sage, the Ganas of various forms and weapons.

258. There itself are Haridīśa Liṅga and Kātyayana Liṅga. To the side thereof is Jāṅgaleśa and behind it is Mukuteśvara.

259-262. There itself the Kuṇḍa is free from impurities. It accords the merit of pilgrimage to all places. By bathing in Mukuṭakuṇḍa and visiting Mukuteśvara that merit is obtained which is considered to be the merit of pilgrimage to all the Liṅgas. This great earth (country) is the bestower of the Siddhi of penance and Yoga. O Sage, there are hundred thousands of Lingas conducive to Siddhi there. O Goddess, the only quarter, the northern one, in Vārāṇasī, is my favourite. There too, O my beloved one, I take more interest in Pañcayatana (Omkāra). I am stationed there always at the time of creation, maintenance and also of annihilation.

263. He who knows thus, is never touched by sins. It is the truth, the truth. (I repeat) it is the truth again. O my beloved, three times the truth. It cannot be anything else.

264. If one wishes residence in my world, one should go there quickly. Only a brief statement about the Liṅgas has been made by me, O sage.

265. Some Liṅgas are devoutly installed twice or thrice. They have not been repeated. They should be adored faithfully in every respect.

266. These Liṅgas, Kuṇḍas, wells and tanks which have

been described should be faithfully revered by men of good sense and intellect.

267-270. The merit of paying a visit to and bathing in there is ever more and more. Who is competent to reckon the number of the Liṅgas, wells, lakes, tanks and idols present here. Even the grasses growing in Ānandakānana are superior. No place elsewhere is fit for even the heaven-dwellers to take rebirth. Kāśī is full of all Liṅgas. It is the sole place of origin of all Tīrthas. If it is seen and served till the death of the body; it bestows heavenly pleasures and salvation. But, O Goddess, you alone are my greatest beloved, because of the power (of your) penance.

271-272. This Kāśī is naturally the ground of rest for me. Those who take (utter) the name of Kāśī, those who rejoice therein, are on a par with Śākha and Viśākha; they are like Skanda, Nandin and Gajāśya. O fair lady, they alone are my devotees, they alone are my pious attendants.

273-275. Only those who dwell in Ānandavana are real aspirers for salvation. If people are regular dwellers of Ānandavana, it is as good as though great penance has been performed by them, great holy rites have been performed by them and great charitable gifts have been made by them. They have taken their holy plunge in all Tīrthas; they are initiated in all Adhvaras (sacrifices). They have practised all pious rites. If people do not dwell in Ānandavana even in their last days, they all are mere burdens of the earth, whether they are Suras, Asuras, serpents or human beings.

276. Even a Śūdra (here) is better than one who has mastered the Vedas elsewhere. The former is one who has crossed the ocean of worldly existence and the latter is baser than the Śūdra.

277. Indeed he alone is Sarvajña (Śiva, the omniscient); he alone is Adhikekṣaṇa (Śiva, the surplus-eyed)—he who casts off the physical body in Kāśī and takes up a nectarine one.

278. By listening to this meritorious chapter that encompasses the secret of all Tīrthas, a man duly obtains the merit arising from visiting Kāśī.

279. If anyone reads this chapter in the morning everyday, indeed all the Tīrthas have been visited by him, not otherwise.

280. A sensible man who recites in low voice this chapter

consisting of (references to) all Liṅgas is never harassed by Yama, his messengers or by sins.

281. If a man of meritorious soul remains pure and keeps mind in full concentration and recites mentally this chapter, he derives the benefit of Brahmajñāna.

282. He who regularly recites this Adhyāya is (like) one who has bathed in all holy Kuṇḍas, (like) one who has sipped the waters of all the holy tanks, one who has adored all the Liṅgas.

283. Of what avail are other diverse *stotras* (Hymns to a deity) that accord only very little benefit? This chapter of great benefits should be regularly recited by those who love me.

284. By reciting once this great chapter, that benefit is obtained which is usually obtained when great gifts are given.

285. The benefit that is obtained by taking the holy bath in all the Tīrthas and by visiting all the Liṅgas can certainly be obtained by men by reciting this (chapter).

286. This alone is the most severe penance; this alone is the greatest Japa, namely the recitation of the chapter enumerating all the Liṅgas in Kāśī, O sage.

287. This Japa should never be given, should never never be given, to one who hates me, to an atheist, to one who is engaged in decrying the Vedas.

288-292. By repeating this Adhyāya all the sins are destroyed—the sin arising from slaying a Brāhmaṇa, cohabiting with a prohibited woman, eating forbidden edibles, enchanting and ensnaring the wife of the preceptor, stealing gold, slaying father and mother, killing a cow, destroying a foetus etc., all the great sins, known and unknown, all the minor sins committed verbally, physically or mentally. By my bidding undoubtedly these perish. There is no doubt in this that the learned one who repeats this chapter obtains sons, grandsons, wealth, foodgrains, wife, lands, everything desired by the mind, heavenly and other pleasures and salvation.

293. Even as the Lord was narrating this story before the Goddess, Nandin came there, bowed down and submitted thus:

294-296. "The work of the construction of the great palace is completed. The chariot has been kept ready. Brahmā and other Suras have assembled. The Lotus-eyed Lord seated on

Garuḍa is waiting at the doorway along with his followers. He has kept the leading sages in front waiting for the opportunity. All the people of holy rites in all the fourteen worlds have heard about the festival of (your) grand entry and have assembled."

Skanda said:

297. On hearing these words of Nandin, the Lord accompanied by the Goddess got into the divine chariot and set out from heaven.

CHAPTER NINETYEIGHT

Departure unto the Pavilion of Salvation

Vyāsa said:

1. Listen, O blessed Sūta, how the extremely great festival of Śambhu was recounted to the Pot-born One who had been asking.

Skanda said:

2. Listen, O highly intelligent one, to the narrative of the grand entry of Śambhu, a narrative that causes delight to all the three worlds and destroys great sins.

3. Coming from Mandara at the time of *Damanaparva* (thirteenth lunar day in the bright half in the month of Caitra), Śambhu moved about here and there though he reached Ānandagahana.

4. When the royal mansion exhibiting the grace of the glory of salvation had been completed, the Lord entered the inner apartment from the *Virajah* pedestal (seat of the Three-eyed Lord).

5-7. It was on the first lunar day in the bright half of the month of Kārttika when the constellation Anurādhā was in conjunction with Budha (Mercury). The Moon was in the seventh sign of zodiac and the other Planets were in their ascendancy.

Musical instruments were played. All the quarters were bright and clear. The sound of chanting of Vedic Mantras by Brahmanas drowned all other sounds. The track between Bhūrlōka and Bhavarlōka was reverberating. All were thus joyous at the time of the festivities connected with the grand entry of Śāmbhu.

8. Groups of Gandharvas sang; groups of celestial damsels danced. Cāraṇas eulogized and the assemblages of the gods were delighted.

9. Winds blew wafting fragrance; clouds showered flowers. All people wore auspicious dress; all spoke auspicious words.

10-15. All mobile and immobile beings became extremely delighted. Among all the Suras and Asuras, Gandharvas, Serpents, Vidyādhars, Sādhyas, Kinnaras, human beings, among all women and men, the four aims of life had a prominent place. O sage, when the sky got smeared with columns of smoke from the incense, it became blue and it has not given up till today the blue colour it acquired then. For the purpose of the Nīrājana rites (waving of lights ceremoniously) all the lamps were lighted and the same can be seen in the sky even today in the (assumed) form of stars. In every mansion banners of different sizes and colours shone, brightened by the beautiful lustre of the flagstaff on every Śiva temple. Musicians sang in some places and dancers danced in some other places in every shrine of Śiva.

16-17. In some places the four types of musical instruments were played. In everyone of the paths, the ground became slippery and glossy on account of the sandalpastes having many hues such as green, white, madder colour, blue and yellow. In every courtyard garlands of festivity with auspicious features shone.

18. On the tops of the ornamental tower-gates jewels and jewel-set platforms shone. Series of mansions bright like nectar acquired the name of Saudha (Mansion)

- (i) Mansion
- Saudha: (ii) Whitewash
- (iii) Nectarine

19-20. Even insentient things shone like sentient beings whatever are said to be auspicious things, O Pot-born One, it became the birth anniversary of their own.

Then the Lord of Devas arrived and entered the Pavilion of Salvation.

21. Then the Lord of Devas was given the coronation bath by the Four-faced Lord as he was seated on an auspicious seat along with Bhavānī and surrounded by groups of sages and the assemblages of Kumāras (Sanaka etc.).

22. With innumerable jewels, silk garment and sweet-smelling garlands of various colours the groups of Devas as well as those great lords of serpents worshipped Maheśa then.

23. O Pot-born One, Śambhu was duly adored by the gem-bearing oceans, excellent mountains and other meritorious souls in accordance with their possessions. Then the Lord was given Nīrājana (waving of the lights) by the groups of mothers.

24. At the outset Śiva, worthy of being saluted by all the groups of the immortal ones, propitiated all the leading sages by means of the fulfilment of their life-long desires cherished within the hearts. After addressing Brahmā he spoke to Viṣṇu.

25. With great honour (he made him sit near) saying, "Sit here. You are the sole cause of all my lordship. Even though you may be standing far off you are very near to me. There is no one other than you who can carry out my task.

26. The excellent king Divodāsa was given good advice so that he attained the greatest Siddhi and my (his) desire was completely achieved.

27. O Viṣṇu, ask for a boon. You will have whatever you desire. There is nothing here that cannot be given to you. It is due to you and this Gaṇeśa, that Ānandavana was obtained by me.

28. In all the three worlds, there is nothing else so lovable to me as this Vārāṇasī, the origin of the greatest happiness. It is the mine of Brahmarasāyana (Elixir of realization of Brahman). People who take the long sleep there (i e. those who die there) do not have further birth."

29. On hearing these words of the Lord of the universe, Viṣṇu spoke to Maheśa, the bestower of boons: "If, O Pināka-bearing Lord, you are pleased, then let me not be far removed from your feet."

30. On hearing this speech of the Slayer of Madhu, Purāri was delighted and said thus: "O Enemy of Mura, stay forever near me here, in this resort of the Glory of Salvation.

31. Someone may be devoted to me; but if he resorts to me without propitiating you at the outset, his desire will definitely not be realized through me, the deity greater than the greatest, O Lord having the lotus and the discus in the hands.

32. O Acyuta, there is all happiness to one who abides here in this Pavilion of Salvation. That cannot be had even in Kailāsa mountain utterly free from impurities, nor even in the mind of a devotee with permanent glory.

33. If the devotees stay even for a moment here in this southern pavilion of mine, with steady mind, without thinking about anything else and having perfect concentration of mind, they will never be reborn in a womb.

34. Those who duly bathe in the deep Cakrasaras lake, the crest-jewel of all the Tirthas, and enter this (pavilion) for a short while without any wish in the mind, become free from sins. They are verily my attendants.

35. Those who remember me in the pavilion of salvation, and make gift of some money according to their capacity, those who listen to meritorious narratives even for a moment with steadiness, earn the merit of the gift of ten million cows.

36. O Upendra, if the devotees bathe in the Maṇikarnikā Hrada and sit for a short while in the pavilion of those desirous of salvation, it is as fruitful as though penances have been performed by them for a long time and they have had their holy plunge in all the reputed Tirthas

37. O Hari, there are holy Tirthas here at every step, but can they be compared to Maṇikarnikā? Are there not many auspicious pavilions here? But this is the greatest resort of the glory of salvation.

38. In the coming Dvāpara Age, O Hari, this Kaivalyaṁḍapa (Pavilion of Salvation) will become reputed in the world as Kukkuṭaṁḍapa."¹

Hari said:

39. O Lord with an eye in the forehead, do recount to me. How is it that this Pavilion of Salvation will become reputed as said by the Lord?

1. VV 39-88 narrate the legend why Mukti Mandapa came to be called Kukkuṭa Maṁḍapa.

Devadeva said:

40. O Four-armed Lord, a Brāhmaṇa will be born here by the name Mahānanda practising the rituals of Ṛgveda. He will be one abstaining from acceptance of monetary gifts in the holy spots.

41-43. He will be devoid of hypocrisy. He will not be cruel-minded. He will always be the favourite of guests. But when his father passed away, he, in his prime of youth, was led astray by the fierce arrows of the Lord of Love. He became friendly with someone and abducted his wife. Urged by her and deluded utterly, he drank what should not be drunk. Fascinated by the god of Love, he contracted a taste for prohibited foodstuffs.

44. On seeing the devotees of Viṣṇu of great wealth, he immediately adopted the guise of a Vaiṣṇava. The deluded soul then begins to censure devotees of Śiva, the giver of salvation from hell.

45. On seeing the devotees of Śiva ready to give something, he may despise Vaiṣṇavas entirely and sustain himself through (what was offered to) the Śiva Liṅga.

46. Thus he became fully conversant with the practice of heresy. He was averse to the routine baths and prayers at dawn and dusk. He used to put big Tilaka marks (on the forehead), wear garlands and pure bright-washed clothes.

47. He flaunted the tuft of hairs (on the head). His hands were ready to receive anything and everything. He used to receive illegitimate gifts from everyone. He followed the path of the insane. A pair of sons was born to him.

48. Even as he behaved thus, a certain rich man would be arriving there for the purpose of pilgrimage.

49-50a. After taking bath in the Cakrasaras lake, he would be saying thus: "I am a man with ready cash willing to donate. By birth I am the best among Cāṇḍalas. Is there anyone ready to accept gifts, so that I can offer this wealth."

50b-51. On hearing his words, this fellow who was seated there was pointed out with a gesture of the fingers by some people: "Only he who utters prayers and adopts the postures of meditation, will take the gift. None else."

52. On hearing these words of those people, the low-caste fellow goes near him, prostrates before him and speaks thus:

53. "O great Brāhmaṇa, redeem me. Make my pilgrimage fruitful. I have something which you do take and bless me."

54. Thereupon he placed the rosary on the ear and ceased to meditate. With a gesture of his hands he asked, "How much wealth do you have?"

55. He took the hint and spoke as though extremely delighted, "I shall give you as much as will satisfy you. Not less."

56-58. On hearing his words, that Mahānanda who was highly delighted broke silence and said thus: "I am not keen in accepting the gift. But I shall accept in order to bless you. O most excellent one among all excellent people, if you carry out my behest I shall do so. Whatever you have, from it, not even a bit should be given to anyone else. Then alone I shall accept and not otherwise."

The Cāṇḍāla said:

59-61. Whatever money has been brought by me for the propitiation of Viśveśa, I shall give unto you, because, to me you are Visveśa himself. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, those who stay in the royal capital of Viśveśa, be they important or insignificant creatures, all of them form part of Viśveśa. Those who habitually uplift and redeem others, those who fulfil the desires of others, those who regularly render help to others, are part of Viśveśa.

62. On hearing these words, he became highly delighted in his mind and all sense-organs. The Brāhmaṇa spoke to the low-caste man from a hilly tract:

63. "Come on. Take the Darbha grass. Perform the rite of *Utsarga* (giving up) quickly." The magnanimous man from the hilly tract did accordingly.

64-66. He uttered, "May Viśveśa be pleased." He then went away. That Brāhmaṇa continued to stay there though despised and abused by the other Brāhmaṇas. The moment he came out he was assailed by many of them. "Here is a Cāṇḍāla Brāhmaṇa who has taken money from a Cāṇḍāla. He is verily a Cāṇḍāla, excommunicated by the entire world." Saying thus they chased him, O Hari, producing *Thuthāra* (sound of spitting out).

67. Afraid of them, he never stirred out for some time like an owl afraid of crows. He dropped down his head due to shame.

68. Once that fellow censured by the people consulted his wife and went to Kīkaṭa land abandoning the city of Vārāṇasī.

69. On the way of his destination, he was observed travelling with gold on his person. Though he was in the middle of the caravan of pilgrims, he was waylaid by highwaymen.

70-71. They took him to a dense forest along with all his possessions. They seized his wealth and consulted one another saying: "This vast wealth can be fully used up by us only if he ceases to live. He should be killed along with his servants."

72. After deciding thus they said, "O traveller, remember what should be remembered. We are surely going to kill you along with your retinue."

73-75. On hearing this, that Brāhmaṇa thought thus within his mind, 'Alas! My family for the sake of which much wealth was taken by me as gift has become ruined. The wealth received as gift has also been lost. My life is lost and the residence in the city of Kāśī has also ceased. Everything has been ruined simultaneously owing to the activity of my evil intellect. Due to that defiled gift of money, I could not even die in Kāśī.'

76. Since he remembered his family during the last moment of his life as well as Kāśī, he was reborn as a cock in the Kīkaṭa land, though he was killed by the thieves.

77. The woman became a hen and both the sons also became cocks. Due to the recollection of Kāśī, he was able to recollect the previous birth.

78. After many years had passed by, four excellent pilgrims came to that wayside place where the cocks were living.

79-87. They were speaking the tales (topics) of Vārāṇasī to one another loudly. On hearing the story of Kāśī, those cocks also set off in their company, thanks to the power of their memory of the previous birth. The kind-hearted pilgrims saw them on the way, cast ricegrains etc. (for them to eat) and brought them to the excellent holy spot. Having reached the holy spot, those cocks would be moving round the excellent Pavilion of Salvation. The residents of the holy place saw them following certain set of rules. They had conquered (the desire) to eat. They performed religious observances. They were averse to anger. They were highly delighted to hear the talks and stories about me. They were devoid of greed and delu-

sion. Their heads were wet, due to the plunge within the celestial river. They were engrossed in repeating my names. They paid due attention to my stories. Their mental activities were directed towards me. The residents of the holy place honoured those cocks as beings treading the paths of the good. Due to the impressions of the previous activities, they consulted one another and reduced their intake of food. Thus they would be casting off their lives. O Viṣṇu, by my grace, they will get into an aerial chariot even as all the people watched and will reach Kailāsa, my abode. For a long time they will enjoy excellent divine pleasures. Then they will become endowed with knowledge and attain eternal salvation.

88. After this incident the people will begin to call this Pavilion of Salvation the Pavilion of Cocks.

89. Those men who come to the Muktimāṇḍapa and remember their story will certainly attain the good (i.e. Mokṣa).

90. Even as Śāmbhu narrated this future story to Hari, a tumultuous sound of ringing bells arose there.

91. Thereupon the Lord of Devas, the Consort of Umā, called Nandin and said, "Nandin, go and find out whence (comes) this sound."

92. Then Nandin returned and spoke to the Bull-emblem Lord after bowing down to him with palms joined in reverence, and face beaming with pleasure.

Nandin said:

93. O Lord of Devas, O Three-eyed Lord, what new thing can I say to you. The graceful charms of the Glory of Salvation are being adored by some here.

94-95. Then Śāmbhu said smiling, "Our desire has been fulfilled." The Lord of the chiefs of Devas, in auspicious guise, got up. Accompanied by the Goddess, Brahmā and Hari, he went to the Raṅga Maṇḍapa.

Skanda said:

After listening to this meritorious Adhyāya, the giver of great bliss, a man will attain the greatest joy and will certainly reach Kailāsa.

CHAPTER NINETY-NINE

The Greatness of Śrī Viśveśvara

Vyāsa said:

1. Listen, O Sūta, to the (activities of the) life of the Lord of Devas, of Viśveśa, the great Ātman, in the manner narrated to the Pot-born One by the Śaravana-born Lord (Kārttikeya).

Agastya said:

2. O Senānī (Commander-in-chief i.e. Kārttikeya), do narrate to me what the Lord did after coming out of the Nirvāṇa Maṇḍapa accompanied by the Devas and Indra.

Skanda said:

3. I shall describe what Śambhu did after reaching Śṛṅgāra-Maṇḍapa from Mukti-Maṇḍapa, keeping Brahmā and Viṣṇu as forerunners.

4-7. The Lord sat facing the East along with us and the Goddess. Brahmā sat on his right and Śārṅgin (Viṣṇu) sat on his left side. He was fanned by Mahendra and surrounded by the sages. He was silently served by the Gaṇas with arms lifted up. They were standing at the sides with respectful veneration to the utmost. Śambhu raised his right hand and showed the Liṅga to Brahmā and Viṣṇu saying: "Look. This is the greatest splendour. This alone is greater than the greatest.

8-14.¹ This alone is my immobile form that accords the highest Siddhi. These are Pāśupata devotees, Siddhas observing celibacy ever since childhood. They have conquered their sense-organs. They are fully engrossed in their penance. They are free from impurities due to their knowledge of the five topics (entities)² (or the four Vedas, Itihāsas and Purāṇas). They lie down on a heap of holy ash. They have mental restraint.

1. VV 8-13 describe the Pāśupata way of life.

2. Pañcārthajñāna—Knowledge of the Omkāra (Consisting of A, U, M, Nāda and Bindu (°)); or the knowledge of the Mantra of five syllables 'śivāya namaḥ'.

They are well-behaved. They are *Ūrdhvaretas* (They have sublimated their sexual energies). They are always engaged in the adoration of the Liṅga. Their sense-organs and minds do not turn towards anyone else. They are always pure on account of *Vāruṇa* (shower) and *Āgneya* (ash) baths. Their food consists of bulbous roots, roots and fruits. Their eyes are dedicated to the Supreme Being. They are truthful. They have conquered anger. They are devoid of delusion. They do not possess anything. They do not desire anything. They have no sense of identity with the body etc. They have no sorrow. They are free from ailments. They are *Nirbhagas* (i.e. have abandoned riches), *Nirupāyas* (do not employ means of expediency); they have no contact with others; their hearts are free from impurities. They have crossed the terrible ocean of the worldly existence. They have no doubts. They are free from sins. They are free from opposing pairs (e.g. pleasure-pain). They have certain firm views. Their activities are uncontaminated by egotism. They are always my great favourites. They are my sons in my own form. These are to be adored and bowed to, thinking them to be I myself, by those who solely worship me.

15. If they are adored, I become pleased undoubtedly. In this holy spot of *Viśveśvara*, *Śivayogins* should be duly fed.

16-19. If each one is perfectly fed, it has the merit of feeding ten million persons. This *Viśveśvara* is Lord of the universe himself in the form of a stationary being.

He brings about all the *Siddhis* of all persons who are devoted to him. I may be manifest sometimes and sometimes unmanifest.

O *Devas*, I stay in this *Ānandakānana* as I please, independently for the purpose of blessing all devotees here for ever.

I shall be staying in the form of a *Liṅga*, bestowing the object thought of. All the *Liṅgas* (whether) they are self-born or not, always come to see this *Liṅga*.

20. There is no doubt about this that I stay in all the *Liṅgas*. But this is the greatest of my forms as a *Liṅga*.

21. O heaven-dwellers, it is as good as I have been seen directly by the person by whom this *Liṅga* was seen faithfully with a pure vision.

22. May the *Devas* listen along with the sages. If one hears about this *Liṅga*, all his sins accumulated in the course of a birth perish in an instant.

23. In one remembers this Liṅga, all the sins accumulated in the course of two births necessarily perish immediately at my behest. There should be no doubt about it.

24. With this Liṅga in view, if one sets out from his house, all the sins accumulated in the course of three births perish instantly.

25. O immortal ones, by seeing this Liṅga, one gets the merit arising from a hundred horse-sacrifices invariably, due to my blessings.

26. O Suras, the merit of a thousand Rājasūya sacrifices accrues merely by the touch of this self-born Liṅga of myself, of Viśveśvara.

27. Merely by offering flowers along with a palmful of water with devout feelings, one attains the merit of (offering) a hundred Suvarṇas (gold pieces).

28. By performing the worship alone with great devotion of this king of Liṅgas, the merit of adoration with a thousand golden lotuses is obtained.

29. By performing the great adoration of this Liṅga with Pañcāmṛta as the main constituent, one obtains all the four aims of life.

30. O immortal ones, if an excellent devotee bathes the Liṅga of mine with the waters filtered and purified through a cloth, he obtains the merit arising from a hundred thousand horse-sacrifices.

31. If anyone devoutly smears the Liṅga with sweet-smelling sandal juice, he will be smeared (in heaven) with scented Yakṣakardama (mixture of camphor, agallochum, musk and Kaṅkola) by celestial damsels.

32. By offering sweet-smelling incense (a devotee) becomes the receptacle of divine scent. By lighting lamps of clarified butter, he moves about in an aerial chariot in the form of a radiant splendour.

33. By offering a lamp with camphor-wick once, a devotee attains white splendour of the body like camphor and becomes three-eyed with an eye in forehead.

34. By offering Naivedya alone, an intelligent devotee will enjoy great pleasures and reside on the Kailāsa Mountain at the rate of a Yuga for each particle of boiled rice.

35. If anyone offers rice pudding with ghee and sugar

unto Viśveśa, it is as though all the three worlds including Devas, Pitṛs and human beings have been propitiated by him.

36. Great indeed is the merit of one who offers *Mukhavāsa* (perfume to make the breath fragrant), mirror, beautiful chowries, awning and comfortable couch.

37. It is somehow possible to calculate the number of the jewels in an ocean; but who can calculate the merit of the offerings of *Mukhavāsa* etc.?

38. He who devoutly offers the means and materials of worship like bell, water-pot etc. in any abode (temple) shall stay here near me.

39. If a devotee makes arrangement for either vocal, instrumental music or dance for propitiating me, in front of him there shall be great triple symphony.

40. One who makes arrangement for pictures and paintings in my mansion, shall enjoy great pleasures of diverse kinds staying before me.

41. By bowing to Viśveśvara once in the course of life, a wise man becomes the lord of the earth with his feet bowed down to by all the three worlds.

42. If a devotee visits Viśveśvara but dies elsewhere, he will undoubtedly become liberated in the next birth.

43. How can there be rebirth if the name of Viśveśvara is at the tip of the tongue, the story of Viśvanātha in the ear and the regular meditation of Viśveśa in the mind?

44. After seeing Viśvanātha's (my) Liṅga if one rejoices, he will be counted as one among my Gaṇas, because he has the strength of the merit.

45. If one repeats during the three *Sandhyās* (morning, midday and evening) everyday Viśveśa, Viśveśa and Viśvanātha I too shall utter the name of that meritorious devotee.

46. O Suras, this great Liṅga is worthy of being worshipped even by me for ever. Hence it should be assiduously worshipped by Devas, sages and human beings.

47. If Viśveśvara is not seen and if Viśveśvara is not remembered, they are seen by the messengers of the god of Death and they have to recollect (experience) the sufferings of the womb.

48. If this Liṅga is bowed to, they will be bowed to by Suras and Asuras. When considered against a single bow to the Liṅga, the position of the Guardian of a Quarter

is worthless. There is downfall from the position of a Guardian of a Quarter, (but) there is no downfall from the obeisance to Śiva.

49. May all the groups of Devas, sages and Gaṇas listen. I shall speak the truth and that too for helping others. Nowhere within the worlds of Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svarga, Mahaḥ and Jana, is there a Liṅga equal to Viśveśa.

50. Neither in Satyaloka, nor in Tapoloka nor in Vaikuṅṭha, Kailāsa and Rasātala is a Tīrtha anywhere on a par with Maṅikarṇikā, or a Liṅga like Viśveśa.

51. There is no Liṅga equal to that of Viśvanātha. There is no Tīrtha other than Maṅikarṇikā. There is no splendid penance grove anywhere else on a par with my Ānandavana.

52. The whole of Vārāṇasī is full of Tīrthas. Its very name is 'Tīrtha of all Tīrthas'. There itself is the highly sacred Maṅikarṇikā, the very ground of my happiness.

53.¹ From the site which is my royal palace, the city extends in between the north and the east; to the left it is three hundred hands (up to Hariścandreśvara) and to the right it is two hundred hands (up to Gaṅgā Keśava—Comm.).

54. In Gaṅgā, Maṅikarṇikā extends to five hundred hands north to south. It is the very essence of the three worlds. It is the basic support of the great soul. Those who resort to it lie in my heart (They are of the form of Sat—Comm.).

55. In this Ānandakānana of mine, this Liṅga which is the abode of nectar (of Salvation) and from which the radiance of the Self originates has come out by itself from the bottom of the seven Pātālas out of compassion for the devotees.

56. The greatest punishment for those people who resort to this Liṅga after indulging in reasoning alone is this that they will never cease to be born and reborn in the womb.

57. Whatever is beneficial (or desirable) to oneself should be offered to this Liṅga by people who are devoted to me. Neither here nor elsewhere does the sin committed by sinners perish as it perishes here.

58. If any Liṅga here is worshipped by highly intelligent ones stationed far away, the Glory of Salvation shall abide in them along with auspicious things given by me alone.

1. VV 53-54 delimit the sacredmost part of Vārāṇasī.

59. O Viṣṇu, listen, O Creator (Brahmā) listen; may all the Devas, sages and the Gaṇas listen. This Liṅga gives the greatest Siddhi unto the good, due to being in my vicinity. There is not the slightest change in this regard.

60. If the wealth earned by means of good merit is offered to this Liṅga that is the means of the achievement of all Siddhis. I accord to them the Nirvāṇapada (Position of Salvation) that is the means of obtaining every happiness beyond measure and which affords freedom from fear.

61. Lifting up the hand, I assert again and again that, in this world having the three Vedas, only three things are essential: Viśveśa Liṅga, Manikarṇikā water and the city of Kāśī. This is the truth, threefold truth.”

62. Then the Lord got up along with Śakti, performed the excellent worship and merged into the same Liṅga. The Suras uttered, “Be victorious, be victorious” and eulogized the Lord.

Skanda said:

63-64. O son of Mitra and Varuṇa, O highly intelligent one, only a part of the great efficacy of the holy spot Avimukta has been narrated. It dispels sins. I have narrated it to you in accordance with my understanding because you are being distressed due to separation from Kāśī. Ere long you will reach the excellent Kāśī.

65. The Sun has come to the peak of the mountain of setting. To you as well as to me, this is the time for silence.

Vyāsa said:

66. On hearing this, O Sūta, the sage along with Lopāmudrā bowed down to the Son of Umā repeatedly and set out for the Sandhyā prayers.

67. After learning well the secret of the holy spot of the Moon-crested Lord, Agastya with a firm mind became engrossed in the meditation of Śiva.

68. O Sūta, who is capable of adequately describing the exalted greatness of Ānandakānana even in a hundred years.

69. The greatness has been recounted to the Pot-born One by Skanda in the same manner as it was narrated to the Goddess by the noble Lord.

70. O excellent one, it has been narrated to you as well as Śuka and others. Now tell me what you have been desirous of asking me. I shall narrate it to you.

71. On hearing this meritorious chapter that is destructive of all sins and that accords all the benefits desired, a man will become contented.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED

Index to Kāśikhanda

Sūta said:

1 I am exceedingly satisfied on hearing this excellent Kāśikhanda of the Skanda-Purāṇa. It has been retained in the heart.

2. O Son of Parāśara, narrate the chapter covering the Anukramaṇikā as well as the excellent Māhātmya (greatness of the Kāśikhanda) in order to make this like the previous one.

Vyāsa said:

3. O righteous-souled Sūta, O Son of Jātukarṇi, listen. May the Sons Śuka, Vaiśampāyana and others also listen.

4. I shall narrate the chapter of Index and contents as well as the Māhātmya of this Khaṇḍa for the purpose of dispelling sins. It enhances the merit.

5. The conversation of Vindhya and Nārada has been mentioned in the first (chapter). The power and greatness of Satyaloka has been cited in the second (chapter).

6. The arrival of the Devas to the penance-grove of Agastya (chapter third), the conduct of chaste women (chapter 4) and the departure of the Pot-born One (chapter 5).

7. The praise of the Tīrtha (chapter 6), then the seven cities are remembered (chapter 7); the nature of Saṁyamini (chapter 8), and thereafter the world of Bradhna (Sun-god) (chapter 9).

8. Then Śivaśarman's arrival at the worlds of Indra and Agni (chapter 10). Then the origin of Agni (chapter 11). Thereafter the origin of Kravyāt (i.e. Nirṛti) and Varuṇa (chapter 12).

9. The origin of the lords of Gandhavatī (Capital of Vāyu) and Alakā (Capital of Kubera) (chapter 13), and the arrival of the Brāhmaṇa Śivaśarman in Candraloka (chapter 14).

10. Then the tale of the stellar world (chapter 15). Then the origin of Śukra (Venus) (chapter 16). Then the description of the worlds of Māheya (Mars), Guru (Jupiter) and Sauri (Saturn) (chapter 17).

11. The world of the Seven Sages (chapter 18), the penance of Dhruva (chapter 19), the arrival of Viṣṇu (chapter 20) and the arrival at the world of Dhruva (chapter 21).

12. Śivaśarman's vision of Satyaloka (chapter 22), the coronation of the Four-armed Lord (chapter 23), Śivaśarman's Salvation (chapter 24).

13. The conversation between Skanda and Agastya begins (chapter 25); the origin of Maṇikarnikā (chapter 26). Then the greatness of Gaṅgā and the hymn of Daśaharā (chapter 27).

14. The efficacy of Gaṅgā (chapter 28), the thousand names of Gaṅgā (chapter 29). Eulogy of Vārānasī (chapter 30). The manifestation of Bhairava (chapter 31).

15. The origin of Daṇḍapāṇi (chapter 32), the origin of Jñānavāpī (chapter 33). The anecdote of Kalāvati (chapter 34), then (rules of) good conduct (chapter 35).

16. Brahmācāriprakarāṇa (Duties of celibate students) (chapter 36), the salient characteristics of women (chapter 37). Prescriptions and prohibitions (chapter 38). Description of Avimukteśa (chapter 39).

17. Then the duties of a householder (chapter 40). Review of Yoga (chapter 41). Kālajñāna (chapter 42). The story of Divodāsa (chapter 43).

18. Description of Kāśī (chapter 44). Description of Yoginīs (chapter 45). Narration (legend) of Lolārka (chapter 46). The story of Uttarārka (chapter 47).

19. The greatness of Sāmbāditya (chapter 48); the eulogy of Drupadāditya (chapter 49) as well as Mayūkhāditya. The story of Garuḍa (chapter 50), Aruṇārka etc. (chapter 57) including

the Sun-gods, viz. Vṛddha Keśava, Vimāla Gaṅgādityas.

20. The Tīrtha of Daśāśvamedha (chapter 52). The arrival of the Gaṇas from Mandara (chapter 53). Legend of Piṣācamocana (chapter 54) and deputation of Gaṇeśa (chapter 55).

21. Māyāgaṇapati described (chapter 56). The manifestation of Dhuṇḍhi (chapter 57). The series of Viṣṇu's Māyā and Divodāsa being sent to Kailāsa (chapter 58).

22. The origin of Pañcanada (chapter 59); the origin of Bindumādhava (chapter 60). Then the greatness of Vaiṣṇava Tīrthas (chapter 61).

23. Departure of the bull-embled, trident-bearing Lord of Kāśī from Mandara (chapter 62). The dialogue of Jaigīshavya and Maheśa at the Jyeṣṭha Sthāna (chapter 63).

24. Then the narration of the secret of the holy spot which destroys sins (chapter 64). The origin of Kandukeśa and Vyāghreśa (chapter 65).

25. Then is the story of Śaileśvara (chapter 66); the vision of Ratneśa (chapter 67); the origin of Kṛttivāsas (chapter 69).

26. The Adhiṣṭhāna of the deities (chapter 70); the exploits of Durga (Demon) (chapter 71); Victory of Durgā (Goddess) (chapter 72). Then the description of Omkāra (chapter 73).

27. Further description of the greatness of Omkāra (chapter 74). The origin of Trilocana (chapter 75). The power of Trilocana (chapter 76). Narration of Kedāra (chapter 77).

28. The greatness of Dharmeśa (chapter 78). The story of the birds (chapter 79). The narration of Viśvabhujā (chapter 80). Then the story of Durdama (chapter 81).

29. Then the narration of Vireśvara (chapter 82). Further greatness of Vireśa (chapter 83). Gaṅgā in combination with the Tīrthas (chapter 84). Then the greatness of Kāmeśa (chapter 85).

30. The greatness of Viśvakarmeśa (chapter 86); the beginning of the Yajña of Dakṣa (chapter 87); Satī casts off her body (chapter 88); then the origin of Dakṣeśvara (chapter 89).

31. Then the glorification of Pārvatīśa (chapter 90); then the greatness of Gaṅgeśa (chapter 91); the origin of Narmadeśa (chapter 92).

32. The origin of Satīśvara (chapter 93); the description

of Amṛteśa etc. (chapter 94), Vyāsa's arm benumbed (chapter 95). Redemption of Vyāsa's curse (chapter 96).

33. The groups of holy spots and Tīrthas (chapter 97). A detailed narration of Muktimanḍapa (chapter 98). The manifestation of Viśveśa (chapter. 99). Then the Yātrā Parikrama (order in the pilgrimage) (chapter 100).

34. Thus the hundred narrations have been enumerated in due order. On hearing this alone the benefit of the entire Khaṇḍa is acquired. In this chapter covering the contents, there is Yātrā Parikrama.

Sūta said:

35. Narrate the Yātrāparikrama, O excellent son of Satyavatī, with a desire for the welfare of the people desirous of the respective Siddhis

Vyāsa said:

I. Pañca-Tīrthikā Yātrā:

36-40. Listen, O highly intelligent Lomahaṛṣaṇa. I shall tell you how the pilgrimage is to be joyously performed first by Pilgrims.¹

The following pilgrimage is called Pañcatīrthikā (Yātrā of the group of five Tīrthas): At the outset a devotee should take bath, along with the cloth worn, in the waters of Cakrapuṣkarinī. He then duly offers libation to the Devas along with the Pitṛs. Then he propitiates the Brāhmaṇa suppliants. He then makes obeisance to Āditya, Draupadī, Viṣṇu, Daṇḍapāṇi and Maheśvara. Then he goes to visit Ḍhuṇḍhi Vināyaka. He performs ablution in Jñānavāpī and adores Nandikeśa. Thereafter he worships Tārakeśa and Mahākāleśvara thereafter. Then he adores Daṇḍapāṇi once again. This is Pañcatīrthikā.

41. This should be done everyday by those who wish for great benefits.

II. Vaiśveśvarī Yātrā

Thereafter Vaiśveśvarī Yātrā (Pilgrimage to Viśveśvara) should

1. VV 36-40 describe the first (shortest) Pañca-Tīrthikā Yātrā. It is limited to five Tīrthas only.

be performed. This bestows the achievement of all objectives.

42. Then the pilgrimage to the fourteen Āyatanas should be duly performed beginning with the first lunar day in the dark half and ending with the fourteenth.

43-47. Or the pilgrimage can be performed on every fourteenth lunar day by the people who desire the mastery of the holy spot. A pilgrim obtains the benefit if he takes bath in the different Tīrthas, worships the different Liṅgas and observes silence while travelling. He will visit (1) Oṃkāra at the outset after performing aquatic rites in Matsyodarī. Then he should go to (2) Triviṣṭapa, (3) Mahādeva, then (4) Kṛttivāsas, (5) Ratneśa, (6) then Candreśa and then (7) Kedāra, then he should go to (8) Dharmeśvara, (9) Vīreśa, and (10) Kāmeśvara. Then (11) Viśvakarmeśvara, then (12) Maṇikarṇīśvara. After seeing (13) Avimukteśvara he will worship Viśveśa (14) This pilgrimage should be assiduously performed by a resident of the holy spot.

48. If someone stays in the holy spot but does not perform this pilgrimage, he will be beset with obstacles indicating expulsion from the holy spot.

III. Aṣṭāyatana Yātrā

49-50. Another pilgrimage of eight Āyatanas should be performed for the purpose of subduing obstacles, especially on every eighth lunar day. They are: Dakṣeśa, Pārvatīśa, Paśupatiśvara, Gaṇeśa, Narmadeśa, Gabhastīśa, Satīśvara and the eighth one Tārakeśa.

51-62. All these Liṅgas should be visited for suppressing great obstacles.

IV. Bath and Darśana of 14 Liṅgas

There is another splendid pilgrimage that always brings about Yoga and Kṣema (acquisition and preservation). It destroys all obstacles and it should be performed by the residents of the holy spot.

Taking holy bath in Varāṇā. (1) Śaileśa should be visited at the outset. (2) Then holy dip is taken in the Saṅgama and Saṅgameśvara should be seen. (3) Then the devotee takes the holy plunge in Svalīna Tīrtha and visits Svalīna Īśvara. (4)

After bathing in Mandākinī Tīrtha Madhyameśvara should be seen. (5) Then he should perform aquatic rites in Hiraṇyagarbheśa Tīrtha and he should visit Hiraṇyagarbheśa. (6) Then he should take bath in Maṇikarnikā and visit Īśāna, the Lord. (7) Then he should perform the aquatic rites in Goprekṣakūpa and visit Goprekṣa. (8) After taking bath in Kāpileyahrada, he should visit Vṛṣabhadhvaja. (9) He should visit Upaśānta Śiva after making use of the water in the well concerned. (10) After bathing in Pañcacūḍāhrada he should adore Jyeṣṭhasthāna. (11) After bathing in Catuḥsamudra Kūpa he should adore the Lord. (12) After *Upasparśana* (bath) in the tank which is in front of the Lord, he should visit Śukreśvara and perform the aquatic rites in the well concerned. (13) After bathing in Daṇḍakhāta, he should worship Vyāghreśa. (14) After bathing in Śaunakeśvara Kunda he should worship the great Jambukeśa Liṅga. After performing this pilgrimage, the man is never reborn in the ocean of worldly existence, the ocean of misery. The pilgrimage unto these Āyatanas should be successively performed in this order, beginning with the first lunar day in the dark half and ending with the Caturdaśī thereof. After performing this pilgrimage a man is never reborn.

V. *Ekādaśāyatanī Yātrā*

There is another pilgrimage consisting of eleven Āyatanas. It should be performed.

63-66. Having bathed duly as per prescriptions in Agnīdhra kuṇḍa, the devotee should visit Lord Agnīdhra. Then he should proceed to Urvaśīśa and thereafter to Nakulīśvara. After visiting Āṣādhīśa and Bhārabhūteśvara thereafter, after visiting Lāṅgalīśa and Tripurāntaka thereafter, and then Manahprakāmeśvara he should proceed to Prītikeśa. Thereafter he should visit Madālaseśvara and then Tilaparṇeśvara. This pilgrimage of eleven Liṅgas should be assiduously performed. A man performing this pilgrimage shall attain Rudra's status.

VI. *Gaurī Yātrā*

67-73. Hereafter I shall narrate the excellent Gaurī Yātrā that should be performed on the third lunar day of the bright

half. It bestows all riches. Having bathed perfectly in Goprekṣa a devotee shall go to Mukhanirmālikā. After taking the bath in the Jyeṣṭhāvāpī tank, the man should worship Jyeṣṭhāgaurī. Saubhāgyagaurī should be worshipped by those who have performed aquatic rites in the Jñānavāpī tank. Then after performing the same rite there itself, he should worship Śṛṅgāragaurī. After bathing in Viśālagāṅgā he should proceed to Viśālākṣī. After a bath as per prescription in the Lalitā Tīrtha, the devotee should worship Lalitā. After bathing in the Bhavānī Tīrtha, he should adore Bhavānī. Then Maṅgalā should be worshipped by the devotees who have performed aquatic rites with the waters of Bindu Tīrtha. Thereafter, for the purpose of steady increase in the prosperity, he should go to Mahālakṣmī. By performing this pilgrimage in this holy spot that causes salvation no man will be assailed by miseries anywhere here or hereafter.

Pilgrimages of Gaṇeśas, Bhairava etc.

One shall always perform the pilgrimage of Vighnarāja on every Caturthī day (fourth lunar day).

74. With him (Gaṇeśa) in view *Modakas* (ball-shaped sweetmeat) should be given to Brāhmaṇas for their happiness. During Tuesdays Bhairava Yātrā that removes sins should be performed.

75. The pilgrimage unto Ravi (Sun-god) should be performed on Sundays, on the sixth lunar day when it coincides with a Sunday and also on Ravisaptamī day, for the purpose of subduing all obstacles.

76. Caṇḍī Yātrā is considered auspicious when performed on the eighth or ninth lunar day. Everyday the pilgrimage of the inner apartment (Sanctum) should be performed.

Antargṛha Yātrā:

77. At the outset, the early morning bath is taken. Then the five Vināyakas are bowed to. A devotee then makes obeisance to Viśveśa standing in the Nirvāṇamaṇḍapa.

78. The devotee resolves thus: 'I shall perform the Yātrā of the inner Sanctum for subduing the mass of sins.' After taking up the vow thus, he goes to Maṅikarṇikā.

79. After the bath he will return silently and worship

Maṅikarṇikā. Then he bows to Kambala and Aśvatara and offers obeisance to Vāsukīśa.

80. Then he visits in order Parvateśa, Gaṅgākeśava, Lalitā and Jarāsandheśvara.

81. Then after seeing Somanātha, he goes to Varāha. Then bows to Brahmeśvara and Agastīśvara.

82. He should pay obeisance to Kaśyapeśa and Harikeśavana. After visiting Vaidyanātha he should visit Dhruveśa.

83-86. The following are to be visited, worshipped and bowed to: Gokarṇeśvara, Hātakeśvara, Kikaseśvara in the lake where bones are cast (Asthiḥṣepa), Bhārabhūta, Citragupteśvara, Citraghaṅṭā, Paśupatiśvara, Pitāmaheśvara, Kalāśeśvara, Candreśa, Vīreśa, Vidyeśa, Agniśa, Nāgeśvara, Hariścandra, Cintāmanivināyaka and Senāvināyaka, the remover of all obstacles.

87. Vaśiṣṭha and Vāmadeva in the form of idols should be deliberately seen in Kāśī. They are destroyers of great obstacles.

88-90. The following are then visited and bowed to: Sīmāvināyaka, Karuṇeśa, Trisandhyeśa, Viśālākṣī, Dharmeśa, Viśvabāhukā, Āśāvināyaka, Vṛddhāditya, Caturvaktreśvara Liṅga, then Brāhmīśa, Manaḥprakāmeśa, Īśāneśa, Candī and Caṇḍīśvara, Bhavānī and Śaṅkara. Dhuṅḍhi should be worshipped. The devotee then should adore Rājarājeśa.

91-95. Lāṅgalīśa should be worshipped then. Then Nakulīśvara. After bowing to Parānneśa the devotee bows to Paradravyeśvara, Pratigraheśvara or Niṣkalaṅkeśa. After worshipping Mārkaṇḍeyeśa he should bow to Apsaraseśvara. Then Gaṅgeśa is to be worshipped; then he should take his bath in Jñānavāpī tank. Then he should bow down to Nandikeśa, Tārakeśa, Mahākāleśvara, Daṇḍapāṇi, Maheśa and Mokṣeśa. After bowing down to Vīrabhadreśvara and Avimukteśvara, the five Vināyakas, he should go to Viśvanātha. Then he will break silence and utter this Mantra.

96. "May Lord Śaṁbhū be pleased with this pilgrimage of the Antargṛha (Inner Sanctum), which has been duly performed by me, even if it be deficient or superfluous in any respect."

97. After uttering this Mantra, the devotee rests for a short while in the Muktimanḍapa. He should then go home. The man is rid of his sins. He is meritorious.

98. On the day of Viṣṇu (i.e. Lunar eleventh) the pilgrim-

age to all the Viṣṇu Tīrthas should be assiduously performed for enhancing one's great merit.

99. On the fifteenth day in the month of Bhādrapada (August-Sept.) the devotee should worship Kulastāmbha. The worship thereof will remove misery and Rudrapīśāca state.

100. These Yātrās should be performed by the residents of the holy spot with great faith. During the days of great festivals especially, the Yātrās should be performed.

101. The *Kṛtin* (one who wishes to be blessed) should never make the day deficient in Yātrās. Two Yātrās should be assiduously performed everyday.

102-104. Certainly it is bath in the celestial river at the outset and then (visit to) Viśveśa. If while staying in Kāśī, the day has been spent in vain, the Pitṛs become disappointed on the very same day. He is indeed bitten by the serpent of Kāla (death, time). He is seen by death to be sure. He is robbed, if he does not visit Viśveśa on that day. He who bathes in Maṇikarnikā and visits Viśveśa, has bathed in all the Tīrthas.

105. Truth! Truth! Again it is the truth, truth, truth again and again! Viśveśvara should be seen everyday and Maṇikarnikā should be bathed in.

Vyāsa said:

Phalaśruti (Fruit of hearing etc.) of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa

106. O Sūta, on hearing this excellent greatness of Kāśī as described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, no man falls into hell even if he commits a thousand sins.

107. By listening to Kāśīkhaṇḍa, O Sūta, one undoubtedly attains that merit which is acquired after bathing in all the Tīrthas.

108. Certainly then the man gets by thus listening that merit which is acquired by making all kinds of gifts and performing many Yajñas.

109-110. By listening to Kāśīkhaṇḍa, that great merit is acquired which is usually acquired after performing severe penances and also by learning all the four Vedas along with their ancillaries.

111. Grandfathers become satisfied by listening to this in

the same manner as the ancestors are satisfied after gifts are made in Gayā.

112. If Kāśikhāṇḍa which is the cause of all welfare is heard by persons of steady intellect, then all the Purāṇas have been heard.

113. If the excellent greatness of Kāśī is listened to by men of steady minds, they acquire great heaps of merits and all the Dharmas have been paid heed to by them.

114. If the whole Khaṇḍa is recited (silently), that alone is the worship of the Lord. It is glorified as the greatest adoration. The entire Khaṇḍa should be listened to with faith, O Brāhmaṇa.

115. If anyone listens to even one story of Kāśikhāṇḍa, undoubtedly all the Dharmasāstras have been heard by him.

116. This Kāśikhāṇḍa is known as the sole cause of great Dharmas, the expounder of great truths and the cause of the acquisition of all desires.

117. By listening to this, Kaivalya (Salvation) ceases to be far off in the case of men. All the Pitṛs become pleased on hearing this excellent Khaṇḍa.

118-119. All the immortal beings beginning with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva become pleased. The sages rejoice. Sanaka and others become elated. All shall certainly be delighted; all the four types of living beings become pleased by listening to this greatness of Vārāṇasī.

120-121. If a learned man expounds this excellent narrative entirely, or even half, or even a quarter or half of that or one excellent episode, he should be assiduously bowed to, he should be worshipped like a favourite deity. In order to please Viśveśa much should be given to him.

122-132. If he is satisfied, Viśveśa too is undoubtedly satisfied. There cannot be any powerful inauspicious thing in the place where this Khaṇḍa, the cause of the greatest bliss, is being read. The learned man who listens to this, the sensible scholar who expounds this and the meritorious-souled man who reads this, all these are forms of Rudra.

If anyone copies this and offers this beautiful book to anyone else, it is as though all the Purāṇas have been given by him, not otherwise.

A giver of the manuscript is honoured in heaven as many

thousands of Yugas as there are episodes in this, as there are verses in this, as there are words, as there are syllables in this, as many Mātrās (Syllabic instants) there are here, as many rows of words are here, as there are threads in the string, as many threads in the cloth, as many pictures there are in the beautiful book.

He who listens to this excellent Khaṇḍa twelve times, will be rid of the sin of even Brāhmaṇa-slaughter immediately, with the favour of Śambhu.

If a man without a son listens to this after due bath with great faith, he will surely have a son by the power of the command of Śambhu.

Of what avail is speaking much, O Sūta? Whatever may be one's wish one shall be blessed by listening to this and obtain the same.

Even if a man listens to this excellent Kāśīkhaṇḍa from a far-off land, he will have the merit of residing in Kāśī at the behest of Śiva.

By listening to this a man will be victorious everywhere. He will be of pure heart and he will enjoy bliss everywhere.

133. One shall have interest in listening to this, only if Viśveśa is pleased with one. He is meritorious. His mind is free from impurities.

134. This book is the most excellent one of great auspiciousness among all auspicious things. It must be copied in writing and should be worshipped for the attainment of all auspiciousness.

:: End of Kāśīkhaṇḍa Uttarārdha ::

:: End of Kāśīkhaṇḍa ::

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