SKANDA PURĀṆA

BOOK V: ĀVANTYAKHAṆḌA

SECTION II: CATURAŚĪTI-LIṄGA-MĀHĀTMYA

GLORIFICATION OF EIGHTYFOUR LIṄGA SHRINES IN AVANTĪ[1]

CHAPTER ONE

Agastyeśvara[2]

Obeisance to Śrī Gaṇeśa. Obeisance to Śrī Mahākāla. Now the description of the greatness of the eightyfour Liṅgas situated in Avantī (region) is begun:

Umā said:

1. May all the Tīrthas and the meritorious rivers all over the earth, where Śrāddha is assiduously offered, be described.

Īśvara said:

2. There is Gaṅgā reputed in all the world. It flows in three pathways (in heaven, earth and Pātāla). It is resorted to by Devas, Gandharvas and sages.

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1. This Section deals with the eightyfour temples which existed at the time of this Purāṇa in Mahākālavana area. Thus, in a way, it is a complement to the first Section called Āvantya-Kṣetramāhātmya. Here the author states the geographical location of every shrine, the name of the Śiva-Liṅga thereof and a legend to explain the name, 'history' and importance of that Liṅga. The author modifies a Purāṇic legend to suit his purpose and/or attributes a new legend with mythological names, thus giving them a semblance of a real Purāṇic story.

As this Section describes the Śiva shrines in Mahākālavana area, some duplication of the sacred places mentioned in the previous Section is inevitable. Hence we find the repetition of the legends of Agastyeśvara (Ch. 1), Kuṭumbeśvara (Ch. 14), Apsaraḥ Khaṇḍa (Ch. 17), Piśācamocana (Ch. 68), to mention a few.

2. The shrine or rather the Liṅga in the shrine is called Agastyeśvara as it redeemed Sage Agastya, of the sin of Brāhmaṇicide accrued to him due to the destruction of Dānavas by him.

3. The daughter of the Sun-god, Yamunā, sanctifies all the worlds. O goddess, it is a favourite with the Manes (Pitṛs) and it destroys great sins.

4-7. Other holy rivers are: Candrabhāgā (Chenab), Vitastā (Jhelum) and Narmadā in Amarakaṇṭaka.

The holy places are: Kurukṣetra, Gayā, Prabhāsa, Naimiṣa, Kedāra, Puṣkara, Kāyāvarohaṇa and the splendid and holiest Mahākālavana. It is there that Śrī Mahākāla, the fire that consumes all sins like fuel, exists. The entire holy place extending to a Yojana is destructive of even the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. O goddess, it accords enjoyment of pleasures and salvation. The holy spot destroys the sins of Kali. It is not destroyed even in Pralaya (dissolution of the world). It is very difficult even for the Devas to obtain it.

Umā said:

8-9. O Lord Maheśvara, may the power of this holy spot be described. I wish to hear how many Liṅgas are there and also the Tīrthas that are worthy of being bowed to. I have great interest therein.

Īśvara said:

10-16. Listen, O goddess, carefully to the power that destroys sins. This foremost holy spot, O great goddess, is always my favourite. It is there that these four excellent rivers flow: (1) the great Mahāpuṇyā that dispels all sins, (2) the meritorious Gandhavatī, (3) the divine Navanadī, and (4) the pleasant Nīlagaṅgā the fourth one. If a man takes his holy bath at the confluences of these rivers and performs Śrāddha, O goddess, the benefit attained by him is three times more than that from (Śrāddha) performed on Gaṅgā. It bestows the benefit of the four great aims of life.

Know, O lady of great holy vows, that the holy place of Avantī extends to a Yojana. The Siddha Liṅgas that are present there accord worldly pleasures and salvation.

The Īśvaras (Liṅgas) are eightyfour and the Bhairavas are eight. The Rudras are eleven and the Ādityas are twelve. Here the Vināyakas are six and the Mothers twentyfour. When I went there to the splendid Mahākālavana, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and all others too joyously came there.

17-18. Thus the holy spot, O goddess, extending to a Yojana is pervaded by these deities. Viṣṇu, the destroyer of all sins, occupies ten Sthānas (Shrines). A man who repeats devoutly these names in the morning shall be rid of all sins. He will go to Rudraloka.

Umā said:

19-21. Describe in detail all those eighty-four Liṅgas that are mentioned by you as the destroyers of all sins.

Hara said:

Listen, O fair lady, I shall tell their names. At the outset, it is the excellent Agastyeśvara that is reputed all over the earth. Merely by visiting it, a man becomes blessed and contented.

Umā said:

How was the name Agastyeśvara attained by this deity? In which spot and how did it originate? It behoves you to tell all this in detail.

Hara said:

22. O blessed goddess, listen to its traditional legend that quells completely all sins and bestows the desired benefits.

23. Formerly Devas were defeated by Asuras. All their shares (in sacrifices, etc.) were forfeited and they became desperate. The Pitṛs were disappointed. Then the Devas, having lost all their powers and prosperity, roamed over the earth, O goddess.

24. Once, thereafter, those wretched ones saw Agastya, the brilliant one, a performer of great austerities. The radiant sage was blazing like the sun.

25. After duly paying respects to that noble-souled Agastya whom they saw enveloped in an encircling halo, they said thus to the sage renowned in all the worlds:

26. "O eminent sage, we have been overpowered by the Dānavas in battle. All of us have been pushed down from heaven. Hence, save us from this grave danger and fear."

27. On being told thus by the Devas, Agastya became enraged.

The brilliant sage blazed like Kālāgni of the time of ultimate annihilation.

28. O great goddess, thousands of the Dānavas fell down from the firmament, completely burnt by the blazing clusters of rays.

29. On being scorched by the brilliant fiery splendour of that Sage Agastya, all the Daityas fled to Pātāla in terror.

30. Thereupon, after killing them, the noble-souled Agastya became extremely grief-stricken and got agitated mentally with excessive anxiety.

31. 'A terribly great sin has been committed by me because the Dānavas have been killed (by me). For, it is said by Manu that non-injury is the greatest piety. What shall I do? Where shall I go? How can I become pure?'

32-33. Even as he was thinking thus, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, came there. He asked the sage: "How is it that you seem to be grief-stricken? O tiger among sages, may the cause thereof be told immediately." Even as he asked thus, the sage bowed down to Brahmā and said:

34-35. "O Lord of Devas, O Lord of the universe, there is a burning sensation in my mind. The sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter has overtaken me because the Dānavas were killed by me. Suggest a suitable remedy unto me kindly, O most excellent one among the Suras. O Lord, the power of penance accumulated by me in the course of a long time has been wasted."

36-39. The most excellent one among the Suras (i.e., Brahmā) said: "Listen to this great remedy carefully. Thereby all the sins shall certainly be destroyed.

In the divine Mahākālavana to which Yakṣas and Gandharvas resort, there is an excellent Liṅga[1], to the north of Vaṭayakṣiṇī. It is situated in the southern sector of Piśāca Tīrtha. All the sins of one who propitiates it will be destroyed. Adore and propitiate that splendid Liṅga which is destructive of all sins."

The pious-souled one said: "Extremely well," and went to Mahākālavan.

40. O goddess of Devas, the sage was eager to propitiate that Liṅga. Day and night the sage engaged himself devoutly in the exclusive meditation thereof.

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1. The propitiation of this Liṅga redeemed Agastya from sins. Hence it became known as Agastyeśvara. (vv 41-46).

41-48. I became pleased with that noble-souled sage, O goddess. This was said by me: "O sage of great fortune, listen with concentration; choose your boon, O eminent Brāhmaṇa, whatever may be in your mind.

I am pleased with this devotion and the penance very difficult to be performed by others. Due to the prowess of this Liṅga, you have become rid of impurities (sins) now. O eminent sage, the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter arising from the killing of the Dānavas has become destroyed." On hearing my words, O lady of excellent complexion, he said: "O Lord fond of those who seek refuge in you, if you are pleased, O Maheśvara, let my devotion be fixed on the pair of your feet. Let there not be any hindrance to my penance and the performance of religious rites."

On hearing these words of the noble-souled Pot-born Sage, O lady of large eyes, I said: "O sage, it shall be so. This Lord, the destroyer of the sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, adored by you shall become well-known in all the three worlds after your name as Agastyeśvara Deva. It shall be famous in all the three worlds." On being told thus by me, O goddess, the Brāhmaṇa established himself there, adorned by means of the five Mudrās, by the grace of that Liṅga.

49-50. A man who devoutly visits that great Liṅga shall become rid of all sins and embellished with all desired things. Those noble souls shall be blessed with sons and prosperity. At the time of death, they come to me by means of aerial chariots that bestow all desired objects.

51-54. In the eternal Rudraloka, they shall be eulogized by the chiefs of Gandharvas. Those mortal beings who always adore the Lord named Agastyeśvara are the men who have performed meritorious rites and they reach the highest region.

When the Lord of the chiefs of Devas is remembered, the sins of men acquired in the course of crores of births become destroyed. Who does not bow to that Śiva? He who devoutly worships that Lord and resorts to that Lord, is rid of the sins like that of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter which give hell.

55-59. O goddess, the merit that accrues by visiting the Lord shall be more than what is yielded by a hundred Rājasūya sacrifices.

Of what avail are the different kinds of Tīrthas and holy ablutions? Of what avail are the diverse kinds of gifts made? All those devotees will undoubtedly attain every benefit with my favour. He who devoutly performs the adoration of that Liṅga on a Monday or on the eighth and fourteenth lunar days, in accordance with his capacity, redeems a hundred generations on his mother's and father's sides.

Even those persons who visit casually and without ardour, never see a hell in the course of their worldly existence. Thus, O goddess, the excellent greatness of the Liṅga has been recounted to you. The first one of the (eightyfour) Liṅgas has been described. Listen attentively to the second (of those deities) in the world.

CHAPTER TWO

Guheśvara[1]

Śrī Rudra said:

1. Listen to the (glory of) Guheśvara Liṅga that is destructive of sins. Merely by visiting it, excellent Siddhi is achieved.

2-4. Formerly in the Rāthantara Kalpa, in the splendid Devadāru Vana, Sage Maṅkaṇaka[2] performed a penance. He was a master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. He was always engaged in the practice of Yoga. He had equipoise and full mental control and control over the sense-organs. He desired achievement of spiritual powers. 'How can I become a Siddha? How can this fault inherent in the blood, will cease to exist?'

Thinking thus in his mind, he began his excellent penance. O Pārvatī, many thousands of years elapsed thus.

5-15. On a certain occasion, O Daughter of the Mountain, vegetable juice issued from his hand when he was pricked by the tip of a blade of Kuśa grass.

On seeing that miracle, he was struck with wonder. He considered that a great Siddhi had been achieved. Proud of

1. As vv 31-38 explain, the Liṅga is called Guheśvara because it lay concealed in Mahākālavana.

2. This story is adapted from the legend of Maṅkaṇaka found in Mbh, *Vana* 83.115-134.

that, he spoke these words: "Oh! This is the power of penance. Siddhi has been attained by me today. There is no Brāhmaṇa on a par with me, by whom Siddhi has been achieved, despite the fact that this physical body is despicable. It is always associated with faeces and urine and filled with blood and flesh combined with marrow, nerves and suet." In his great delight that Brāhmaṇa began to dance.

While that Brāhmaṇa danced, the entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings was swayed and it danced due to the prowess of that sage. There was no pursuit of the study of the Vedas. Nowhere was Karmakāṇḍa in vogue with the utterance of Vaṣaṭ.

In the meantime, all the dismayed Devas, with Brahmā and Viṣṇu coming forward at their head, spoke to me. "Oh! Lord, do perform your dance. Where Sage Maṅkaṇaka dances, all the three worlds, including Devas, Asuras and mortal ones, have begun to dance all round. The mountains are shaken from their bases. The rows of clouds are agitated. The peaks crumble down. The earth is excessively afflicted. The great rivers have become mere courses of water. The planets are swept off their (usual) orbits. All the three worlds have become chaotic. Restrain it before it causes sure destruction. No one else is capable of doing (controlling) this except you."

16-19. O lady of great renown, on hearing the words of the Devas (remedy) was definitely promised by me. Assuming the form of a Brāhmaṇa, I went very close to him. The excellent Brāhmaṇa was asked by me: "O Brāhmaṇa, why do you dance? Whence comes (what is the cause of) your excessive joy? Dancing with erotic sentiment is against the code of conduct of sages. Singing and dancing are the favourite pastimes of young women. O excellent one, it causes downfall from (the path of) penance and from the traditional course of good conduct of a Brāhmaṇa. Consider this, O Brāhmaṇa, and (tell me) why you are dancing so excessively?"

The Ṛṣi said:

20-23. Don't you see, O Brāhmaṇa, that vegetable juice is exuding from my hand? That is why I dance. I am a Siddha. There is no doubt about it.

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On hearing those words of his, I laughed outright. O Pārvatī, then I hit my thumb with the tip of my finger. Instantly, holy ash as white as snow exuded down from it. The proud Brāhmaṇa was told by me laughingly, O lady of wide eyes: "Look, O Brāhmaṇa, a large quantity of holy ash is dropping down from my thumb. Still I am not exultant, O excellent sage, nor do I dance."

24-29. On seeing that great miracle, the excellent Brāhmaṇa became ashamed. On seeing such an endurance and forbearance (on my part) he was surprised much.

With his mind in dismay, he joined his palms in veneration and said: "Excepting you, the Bull-emblemed One, I do not honour and recognize another Lord. None else in all the three worlds has such a power. Hence, O Lord of Devas, forgive the lapse unwittingly committed by me. Dancing on the part of good people is an act contradictory to, and destructive of, the power of penance. Merit accumulated by me in the course of a long time with very difficult performance of austerities has been lost suddenly due to this dance." On hearing those words, the excellent Brāhmaṇa was told by me: "O excellent Brāhmaṇa, choose your boon; I am delighted. Welfare unto you. I am pleased with this wisdom of yours. O eminent Brāhmaṇa, what shall I do to please you?"

The Ṛṣi said:

30-37. O Lord fond of those who seek refuge in you, if you are pleased, let a course of conduct be advised for checking the loss of the power of my penance.

Delighted with that Brāhmaṇa, O Pārvatī, I said: "O Brāhmaṇa, may thy austerity flourish. Go to Mahākālavana where there is a meritorious *Guhā* (cave) that has continued to exist in the course of seven Kalpas and that accords everything. It is situated to the north of the deity Piśāceśvara. You will see a splendid Liṅga there. It has been in existence for seven Kalpas. Merely by viewing it, the power of your penance will increase. Sin arising from lust and anger combined with covetousness and delusion and sin born of envy and jealousy become ineffective."

The Brāhmaṇa who had mastered the Vedas paid heed to my words, O goddess. After listening with attention to what I said, the Brāhmaṇa restrained himself and bowed down to me again and again. Starting from that place, he came to that excellent Mahākālavana where the cave was situated. There he saw that Liṅga which heightened the efficacy of his penance. By visiting the Liṅga he became one resembling the twelve Ādityas (Sun-gods).

38-44. In the meantime, O goddess, the Devas in the firmament proclaimed: "The Liṅga arising from the cave and worthy of being well-guarded (secret) has been seen by Maṅkaṇaka. Merely by visiting this, very rare Siddhi has been achieved by him." Hence, O fair lady, it will be known as Guheśvara on the earth. If people with great devotion visit Guheśvara, no hindrance to their pious activities and penance ever happens. If a devotee pays a visit to it on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day, the Pitṛs of that embodied one will go to Brahmaloka.

He who comes here with great effort and visits this Lord, will redeem himself as well as twenty-one members of his family. Even after committing thousands of sins, the person who visits it, goes to that great region where Lord Maheśvara dwells. The sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, imbibing liquor, stealing and carnal approach to preceptor's wife—all become destroyed by visiting that Liṅga.

45-48. Everything inauspicious acquired and accumulated in the course of hundreds of crores of births becomes lost merely by touching it, and not otherwise. All those embodied beings defiled by great sins are rid of all the sins after approaching the Liṅga.

On being told thus, that Brāhmaṇa, Sage Maṅkaṇaka of great divinity, built his hermitage in that meritorious penance-grove there and resumed his penance.

Thus, O goddess, the power that (that Liṅga) destroys sins has been recounted. By listening to this or narrating it one is rid of all sins.

CHAPTER THREE

Ḍhuṇḍheśvara[1]

Śrī Rudra said:

1-9. The third Liṅga, named Ḍhuṇḍheśvara, bestows happiness and heavenly pleasures. It destroys all sins of men and eradicates evils.

O goddess, Ḍhuṇḍha was formerly a Gaṇanāyaka (leader of Śiva's attendants) in Kailāśa. He was lustful. His conduct was bad and his organs were overwhelmed with vices.

Once he casually went to the world of Śakra in his whimsical fancy. There Raṁbhā was dancing, displaying and depicting different kinds of emotions. Her glances, gestures of the hands, etc., were pleasing and splendid. She demonstrated Sūcividdha and other Karaṇas, Patākā and other Hastas (various postures, gestures, etc., of classical dance). The dance was attended with the proper gestures of the hands in accordance with the tempo and beating of the time.

The eyes of even Indra along with those of other gods were fixed on her facial expressions. He became thrilled in his mind and experienced horripilation. His face beamed with pleasure.

In the meantime, Ḍhuṇḍha was fascinated, O fair lady, by her graceful dances. As the inevitable future course of action would have it, he was overcome by lustul passion. Raṁbhā who was engrossed in the demonstration on the stage, was hit by him with a bunch of flowers.

On seeing this unjustified conduct of the Gaṇa, Śakra cursed him: "You have interrupted the dance on the stage. Hence, face the downfall in the mortal world." Thus, O goddess, the Gaṇa was cursed by Śakra of unlimited brilliance.

Fallen into the mortal world, he lost his sense. His enthusiasm was blighted. His sense-organs became excited. He found

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1. Ḍhuṇḍha is a Gaṇanāyaka. He was cursed by Indra for disturbing Raṁbhā's dance and regained his former status by propitiating this Śiva Liṅga at Mahākālavana. Hence the Liṅga is named after him.

himself in a wilderness and lamented again and again.

10-19. 'Alas! The fruit of injustice has been obtained by me. This was done by me out of delusion. A knowing (wise) person should always do what is moral and just. I have to resort to the path of moral behaviour whereby I may achieve Siddhi.'

Saying thus to himself, he performed penance in various places on the excellent mountain Mahendra, on Śrīśaila, Malaya, Vindhya, Pāriyātra and Yamālaya. Unable to achieve Siddhi, O goddess, he went to the great banks of Gaṅgā, Yamunā. Candrabhāgā, Vitastā, Narmadā, Godāvarī, Bhīmarathī, Kauśikī, Śāradā, Śivā, etc. Ultimately he reached Carmaṇvatī, had his ablution there, and gave up all rites saying to himself: 'Tīrtha is futile; penance is useless. Pilgrimage to the Tīrthas has not been fruitful. Though I wandered all over and performed sacred rites (of this land) my desire has not become fulfilled.'

In the meantime, an unembodied voice spoke consoling the leader of the Gaṇas: "Go to the holy spot of Mahākālavana. Mahākāla always brings about Siddhi. It is far superior to Prayāga and other Tīrthas on the earth. A highly meritorious Liṅga is present there. It fulfils all desires. Hasten to propitiate it in the vicinity of Piśāceśvara. Due to the favour of that Liṅga, you will go back again to the world of Śaṅkara, accessible to brilliant ones and always inaccessible to sinners."

20-22. On hearing this ethereal voice then, the Gaṇa joyously went to the excellent Mahākālavana. There he saw that Liṅga, the splendid cause of all prosperity. With great devotion he adored the Lord of Devas.

O daughter of the Mountain, thereafter a voice came out from the centre of the Liṅga: "Ha! I am delighted, O dear one. What is it you desire, which I shall bestow on you?."

Ḍhuṇḍha said:

23-27. O Lord of Devas, O Lord fond of those who seek refuge in you, if you are pleased, may my devotion towards your lotus-like feet be ever steady. O Maheśvara, if you are satisfied, give this boon soon. O Lord Parameśvara, let those men who visit you be instantly rid of sins on the surface of the earth.

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On hearing the words of Ḍhuṇḍha, O lady of great renown, the Liṅga said: "Those who adore me with great faith will always be bereft of sins. They will realize all their cherished desires. They will become excellent Gaṇas. They will be worthy of adoration in all the worlds. The will be adorned with all decorations."

28-36. Ḍhuṇḍha who thus obtained the boon, said again: "Let this Liṅga be renowned in the universe after my name." O Pārvatī, the Liṅga that was pleased said: "Let it be so." Ever since then, the deity became well-known as the great Ḍhuṇḍheśvara. Merely by visiting it, men will always attain Siddhi. If the devotees worship the great deity Ḍhuṇḍheśvara, all their sins from birth onwards will vanish instantly.

A man who devoutly visits the great Ḍhuṇḍheśvara Liṅga is the most meritorious one in the world. He alone is dear to me. By visiting Ḍhuṇḍheśvara, the merit accrued shall be more than what is expected out of a hundred Rājasūya sacrifices.

All the sins whether mental, physical or verbal, whether committed secretly, whether seen or not seen (by others), whether casually or incidentally perpetrated—all these vanish quickly by visiting Ḍhuṇḍheśvara."

On being told thus by me, Ḍhuṇḍha was made the leader of the Gaṇas, due to the greatness of the Liṅga. He went to my world. He shone along with the other leaders of the Gaṇas. He became a greater favourite of mine.

Thus, O goddess, the power that destroys sins has been recounted to you. By listening to this or proclaiming it, one is honoured in my world.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ḍamarukeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1. This fourth deity Ḍamarukeśvara in Avantī is well-known. When this Lord of the universe is visited, sins get destroyed.

2-7. Formerly in the Vaivasvata Kalpa, there was a great Asura named Ruru. His son named Vajra was also extremely mighty and powerful. He was terrible with a huge body and sharp fang-like teeth. The Devas were ousted by him from their authorized positions and also from Heaven. All their wealth was taken away from there. They, therefore, went to Brahmā. He too was frightened, with all the sense-organs utterly incapacitated. Knowing him to be indestructible, Brahmā fled along with all the Suras. When they had vanished that mighty Asura, a very wicked soul, killed all the Brāhmaṇas engaged in sacrifices and penances. He killed all others who were righteous. The entire earth became bereft of the study of scriptures and utterance of Vaṣaṭ. O goddess, all the festivities of Yajñas became defunct. Everywhere there was the distressed cry of Hā! Hā! (Alas! Alas!) and loss of consciousness.

The Devas and all the great sages became sad and distressed. They held consultation together (or they invoked a Mantra) for the purpose of slaying that Asura of wicked intentions.

8-14. Even as they were pondering over these affairs, O goddess, a huge body enveloped in a mass of radiance appeared before them suddenly.

From it a Kṛtyā (Ogress) of divine nature with lotus-like eyes rose up brightening all the quarters around through her luminous rays. She said: "O Suras, why have I been created? What should be done by me, may be intimated quickly."

On hearing her splendid words, all the Devas narrated to her all the misdeeds of Vajra.

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1. This Liṅga emerged from the earth when Lord Śiva sounded his Ḍamaru (hand drum) and burnt down demon Vajra and his army, when the latter invaded Mahākālavana, the refuge of the defeated Devas.

On hearing it, that goddess laughed boisterously and frequently. Even as she laughed thus, lotus-eyed maidens issued forth from her. They were terrible in appearance with their faces covered with blazing flames. They held nooses and goads. They made the entire universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings sway to and fro by means of their roaring shouts. O great goddess, all of them went to the place where the great Asura Vajra was present. A noisy, tumultuous and terrific battle ensued between him and them.

15-22. The intervening spaces of the quarters were pervaded by weapons and missiles hurled in diverse ways. They got the entire army mobilised and ready. They fought in the batttle very bitterly. Then the battle between that goddess and the Asuras began in earnest. Vajra saw the Mātṛgaṇa (group of Mothers) furious and suppressing the great Asuras and his own army turning back. He thereupon created his Māyā named Tāmasī who could not be tackled and whereby the young maidens began to faint.

When a great mass of darkness deepened thereby, that goddess became afraid. She came to the excellent Mahākālavana along with them. They came to the place where Hara holding the skull was stationed in the form of a Liṅga.

Thinking that the Māitṛgaṇa had vanished due to the proweess of his Māyā and that the Devas were residing there along with the Devī, Vajra too came there surrounded by his armies.

He entered the divine Mahākālavana surrounded by hundreds and crores of chariots. O fair lady, there was forest and forest all round. He then angrily spoke thus· "I will kill the Devas today along with that wicked woman and the maidens who fled and vanished due to the power of the Māyā."

23-33. In the meanwhile the eager, excellent sage Nārada came to Mandara abounding in beautiful caves. He told me about the defeat of the Devas at the hands of Vajra. "O Maheśvara, the Devas have been hit and struck down in Mahākālavana by Vajra, the son of Ruru. Hence, do come."

On hearing the words of Nārada, O great goddess, I returned quickly from Mandara adopting a terrible form. Serpents of hideous nature adorned me gracefully. I was surrounded by my Gaṇas. The great and terrifying army of the Dānavas was seen in front. All round Mahākālavana was block-

aded by the son of Ruru, O lady of great fame, by Vajra, the unbearable Asura.

The awe-inspiring Ḍamaruka was beaten by me on arrival. Thereby the army of Vajra, the evil-minded one, was enchanted.

At the sound of the Ḍamaruka, the excellent Liṅga rose up penetrating through the earth. It was enveloped in clusters of blazing flames. O beautiful lady, from one of the sides of that Liṅga rose up a great flame pervading the entire Cosmic Egg. From the other side of the Liṅga a violent gust of wind began to blow. That army of the Asuras was burnt and reduced to ash by the cluster of flames kindled by the wind blowing in circles.

34-43. When the mighty son of Ruru was killed, all the sections of the Devas became delighted in their minds and they bowed down. The mighty Vajra was burnt due to the greatness of this deity. He was burnt along with the army. Hence this deity will become famous in this world as Ḍamarukeśvara, the bestower of the objects of all desires. Since the deity originated on the earth with the sound of the Ḍamaruka, he will certainly be worthy of worship. Those who visit Ḍamarukeśvara and worship him will become rid of miseries and free of feverish ailments. By adoring Ḍamarukeśvara one attains that merit which results from hundreds of Cāndrāyaṇas duly performed.

Even those men engaged in sinful deeds will certainly go to the eternal Rudraloka by visiting Ḍamarukeśvara Liṅga in this place.

By visiting the deity men will obtain the fruit of a thousand horse-sacrifices, a hundred Vājapeyas and a gift of a thousand cows. A hero who goes to battlefield after visiting Ḍamarukeśvara will defeat enemies and in the end he is honoured in Rudraloka. This power that destroys sins has been recounted to you, O goddess. Eulogized and extolled he bestows the desired benefit.

CHAPTER FIVE

Anādikalpeśvara[1]

Śrī Rudra said:

1-7a. O Pārvatī, know the deity Anādikalpeśvara as the fifth one in this series. It is praised in hymns as destructive of all sins, beginningless and eternal.

Formerly, O goddess, at the beginning of the Kalpa, this Liṅga manifested itself when there was neither fire nor sun, neither earth nor quarters and firmament, neither wind nor water, neither heaven nor moon nor planets, neither Devas, Asuras nor Gandharvas, neither Piśācas nor Rākṣasas.

It was from this Liṅga that the universe, including the mobile and immobile beings, came forth. In due course, O Daughter of the Mountain, it (universe) gets dissolved in this Liṅga.

The races of Devas, sages and Pitṛs originated from this Liṅga, so also the Manvantaras, the families and genealogy of the kings.

Whatever creations there are, all the dissolutions thereof, oceans, mountains, rivers, forests, worlds beginning with Bhūrloka, nether worlds that are known as seven, movements of the sun, the moon, the planets, the constellations and other luminaries, everything visible and invisible—all these originated from this Liṅga, O lady of excellent countenance.

7b-21. This Liṅga has been mentioned by the great sages as the primordial cause which, they say, has the name Avyakta (the unmanifest) too. It is the subtle Puruṣa, the eternal one, the existent and the non-existent, the stable (permanent) one, the never-fading one, without old age, the immeasurable one requiring no other basis for support. It is devoid of odour, colour and taste. Nor has it sound and touch. Great sages call this Liṅga as the immutable thing without any beginning and end, the source of origin of the universe, the cause of the three Guṇas. It has nothing similar to it. It cannot be

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1. As the name indicates, this Liṅga was there before the creation of the universe. It is this Liṅga which created or manifested the universe.

comprehended clearly. Hence at the close of Pralaya, it was entirely divine.

I am the most enlightened one on the earth, without a beginning. I am the cause of the universe. I am the cause of everything. I am one whose nature cannot be fully comprehended. I am the greatest one who has no other activities.

Revealing the Prakṛti and the Puruṣa, the Lord of the Cosmos immediately caused agitation in them through the great Yogic power.

Just as sweet scent by its sheer proximity causes excitement of the mind and not by active assistance, so also this great Īśvara, the beginningless one, is called the Lord engaged in the causation of the universe.

Agitated by that Liṅga, O Pārvatī, Pradhāna becomes well-known as Brahmāṇḍa (Cosmic Egg), the support of all the worlds. In this Aṇḍa the entire universe, inclusive of Devas, Asuras and mortal beings, becomes evolved and dissolved. Its frontier or limit is not attained (known). The same Lord of the earth is at first the cause of agitation and is worthy of being agitated. In the state of Pradhāna it can get itself ready to expand or contract.

That Lord of the universe, though devoid of attributes, is the enjoyer. He has the attribute of Rajas and adopting the form of Brahmā causes the creation to take place.

In the capacity of Brahmā, he creates the worlds. Then, when Sattva becomes predominant, he attains the form of Viṣṇu and engages in protection by means of righteousness. Thereafter, when the Guṇa of Tamas becomes manifest, he attains Rudratva. As Rudra he brings all the universe to an end, the three worlds to their annihilation. Thus he lies at rest as attributeless or functions as endowed with the three Guṇas.

Just as a farmer is the sower of seeds at the outset, then the protector and thereafter the reaper, so also he attains the states of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra and adopts those names thereby.

22-31. In the state of Brahmā, he creates the worlds; he annihilates them in the state of Rudra; and in the state of Viṣṇu, he sustains them all. These three states are always remembered. Rajas is Brahmā, Tamas is Rudra and Sattva is

Viṣṇu, the Lord of the universe. These alone are the three Vedas and these alone are the three Naras (Men).

In every Kalpa the deity is spoken as Anādi (beginningless) by Devas, Pitṛs, Gaṇas and Siddhas. Hence he is Anādikalpeśvara. Mahākālavana exists always.

O lady of wide eyes, this name was obtained (by the deity) when there arose a dispute between Brahmā and Keśava. At the beginning of the Kalpa, the dispute was as to the cause of the creation. Each said, "I am the greater one, I am the greater one."

Then from the firmament, a divine voice without a body arose: "There is a Liṅga named Kalpeśvara in Mahākālavana. He who sees its beginning or end shall become the Lord. There is no doubt about it. No dispute need be indulged in."

Thereafter, O goddess, Brahmā went to the limitless upper world. On hearing that utterance, Viṣṇu hastened to the nether worlds. Neither the beginning nor the end was seen either by Brahmā or by Keśava. Both of them were surprised. They commended each other and stood in front. By means of the diverse hymns occurring in the Vedas, they began to eulogize: "There is neither beginning, nor end. No Kalpa is seen here. Hence from today, in this excellent Mahākālavana, this will become well-known by the name Anādikalpa.

32-36. Even a man of wicked mind, defiled by the five (great) sins, may attain Śiva by seeing the deity Śiva, named Anādikalpeśvara. May those people always attain welfare to whom you have granted your vision. Blessed are those in the mortal world, who have sought refuge in you. By your vision, O Lord, men obtain that merit or even more than that which is attained through holy baths in all the Tīrthas.

O Lord, people fall into worldly existence, chaotic due to pleasure and pain, as long as the Lord, the redeemer from the ocean of worldly existence, is not seen. When the sins of the people get dissolved, your vision becomes possible.

37-41. A Brāhmaṇa's slayer, he who imbibes liquor, a thief or he who lies on the bed of his preceptor and a man who associates with them and perpetrates great sinful deeds—these attain the great region from where there is no return.

O Lord, by worshipping you, one obtains that merit which is obtained by means of a horse-sacrifice or Rājasūya.

Those men by whom the great Lord Śiva, Anādikalpeśvara, has not been seen are mere brutes in the world. Their birth in the world is purposeless."

After saying thus, O lady of excellent countenance, Lord Keśava and Brahmā stationed themselves on the left and right sides of that Liṅga.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power has been narrated to you. Merely by listening to this, the greatest region is attained.

CHAPTER SIX

Svarṇajvāleśvara

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-9. O lady of great renown, know that the sixth deity is Svarṇajvāleśvara. Merely by seeing it, one becomes wealthy here in this world.

Formerly, O fair lady, I was sporting with you in my mansion. Eagerly engrossed in lustful dalliance, we spent a hundred divine years. Then Vahni (Fire-god) was persuaded by the Devas to come near me. Accordingly, O lady of renown, Vahni came for the good of all the three worlds. My semen was cast into the mouth of Fire-god by me in the course of my love-sport. Thereat Vahni felt an acute burning sensation and he went to Gaṅgā. He cast off the semen therein as he could not hold it himself. Still, O Pārvatī, Vahni continued to feel the burning sensation on account of the residue of the semen. A divine, exquisitely beautiful lump of gold was evolved out of that residue. It was blazing with heat, O dear One. It could not be borne or endured.

On seeing that first child of Agni, O Pārvatī, all became avaricious—Asuras, Suras, Kinnaras, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Sādhyas, Piśācas, Naras, Rākṣasas, Khagas, etc. In their eager desire to seize the gold, they all madly rushed at it. As they impetuously cried out, "This is mine, this is mine, for the sake of the gold there arose a loud roar. Unwittingly it led to a fatal battle.

10-21. Seizing all kinds of weapons mainly intended to overwhelm others, O lady of renown, Devas shouted at other Devas. Asuras fought with Asuras, Naras with other Naras, Gandharvas with the other Gandharvas and Kinnaras with other Kinnaras. Goblins and spirits fought with the other goblins and spirits, Rākṣasas with other Rākṣasas and Vetālas fought a terrible battle with other Vetālas.

Son became inimical to father and a *vice versa*. Wife struck down husband and husband his own beloved. Son hit mother and mother injured son. On account of the gold there arose the persistence of enmity.

In the case of the Suras and Asuras, everything was very great and fierce. Large spears and sharp-edged ones fell in thousands. Sharp- pointed Tomaras and various kinds of weapons were hurled. O great goddess, many vomited much blood for the sake of gold. Swords, javelins, clubs and daggers fell all over the ground. Heads severed with terrible Paṭṭiśas rolled in the battle. With bodies splashed and smeared with blood, the wounded and the slain ones lay upon one another like peaks of mountains covered with minerals. There were thousands of clamorous hues and cries causing mutual fear as they lopped off one another with weapons for the sake of gold. As they mutually hit and struck with iron bolts and adamantine fists and bound one another with nooses and cords, the clamorous sound rose into the sky. "Pierce," "Chop off," "Rush," "Push him down," "Be gone"—fearful sounds like these were heard all round.

22-32. As the terrible, tumultuous battle persisted thus, O goddess, the earth shook and the Devas, including Indra, became terrified. The seas became agitated and the mountains swayed to and fro. As a result everyone, including the Devas, Asuras and human beings, became afflicted.

The sages beginning with Vālakhilyas, and the Devas, chief of whom was Indra, kept Bṛhaspati in front and went to the world of Brahmā. The women whose heads had been shattered narrated with gasps of breath all the incidents in full detail that had caused destruction in all the three worlds.

Brahmā, the grandfather of all the worlds, heard their words, discussed with them and approached me. All of them were asked by me, "By whom have these been shattered? By whom

have they been afflicted with weapons and missiles? Whence has this dreadful thing befallen you? Who is that wicked Dānava by whom you have been harassed much?" O goddess, the entire thing was reported to me by those people who were terribly upset.

Brahmā and other Devas told me the cause of their fear. "All of us are doomed on account of gold. The entire universe including Devas, Asuras and human beings, is afflicted."

Thus I heard their words, O lady of excellent countenance, and understood everything. It was for his sake that such a terrible quarrel had taken place. They called him Brahmaghātaka ("slayer of Brāhmaṇas")—a person by whom the destruction in all the three worlds was brought about suddenly and for whose sake they had to abandon their own lives.

33-40. A killer of Brāhmaṇas was the son of Vahni. It was on account of him that the people died. His body shall be variegated and full of defects. Undoubtedly there shall be Dhātus (metals) in his body. Too much of pain, as a result of cutting, burning and rubbing, is to be experienced.

In the meantime, Vahni himself witnessed the activities of his son. Coming to know that I had become angry, he became afraid on account of his son. He came near me, O goddess, along with Suvarṇa. I was pacified, O lady of excellent countenance, on behalf of his son. "O Lord Śaṅkara, this is your son and he should be protected by you. O Parameśvara, let him be kept in your own treasury. He will be accessible, O great Lord, only when you are pleased. O Lord, let him be given to anyone as you desire."

On hearing the words of Agni who is the mouth of Pitṛs and Devas, O lady of renown, I promised it saying, "Let it be so." It was due to my covetousness that I promised it. The son of Vahni was placed by me on my lap out of affection; he was embraced again and again and kissed on the head.

41-53. "O blessed one, I shall grant you a boon. Choose something splendid. I am delighted. Attain everything as you desire. This is my command unto you. Thus you will attain welfare. On the earth there is a spot that brings about (satisfaction to) my wish. The splendid Mahākālavana, O dear son, is indestructible even at the time of Pralaya (final annihila-

tion). There to the south of Karkoṭaka is the Liṅga that destroys great sins. It accords lustre on being seen. Merely by its sight you shall have your desires fulfilled. You shall become meritorious and inaccessible to one who is not pure. With your favour a man of ignoble birth shall become noble. The impure shall become pure and the ugly handsome. O one strictly devoted to the observance of vows, by making a gift of you, all the sacred rites shall become perfect and complete, such as Dānas, Vratas, Niyamas (observances), Yajñas, holy fasts, Tīrthas, offering balls of rice to Pitṛs, etc. You shall have supremacy over all gems and jewels. You shall become a favourite of Devas and lay people as well."

On being told thus, O great goddess of excellent countenance, he assumed a divine form, meritorious and free from impurities. He was enveloped in clusters of flames.

The Liṅga said: "Fortunately, as good luck would have it, this Suvarṇa will become famous on the earth by the name of Kañcana. O son of Vahni, you will have to remain always by my side. Your fame in all the three worlds shall become imperishable." On being told thus by the Liṅga, the son of Vahni became as refulgent as crores of suns (merged together). With his body enveloped by flames, he was rid of all impurities. Brightness was achieved by Suvarṇa with extremely dazzling flames all round. Hence, O goddess, the deity became well-known as Svarṇajvāleśvara Śiva.

54-61. To a devotee who adores Svarṇajvāleśvara Śiva, O goddess, success, mighty kingdom, royal glory, etc., are assured. He will have the capacity to make gifts. He will have unending succcession of sons and grandsons.

By seeing it, a man shall undoutedly wash off all the dirts from his body and eradicate whatever sin he may commit knowingly or unknowingly.

There is no doubt about this that by its adoration a man will obtain twice the benefit usually obtained by offering balls of rice in Gayā.

By the eulogy of Svarṇajvāleśvara a devotee obtains the same benefit as is obtained by the muttering (Japa) of Gāyatrī hundred thousands of times.

By glorifying the deity, he shall certainly obtain that benefit and merit obtained by duly making the offerings of every-

thing (of one's possessions) as Dāna.

Those who worship Svarṇajvāleśvara on the fourteenth lunar day are adored by the goddess of fortune fulfilling all their wishes.

This Liṅga is being guarded by Devas and different Gaṇas. No one deluded by my Māyā knows it. That excellent Liṅga, O goddess, is seen by my grace. This has been perfectly narrated to you, O lady of excellent countenance. Listen to another one.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Triviṣṭapeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-6. O goddess, O daughter of the Mountain, the seventh deity is Triviṣṭapeśvara. The heavenly world is obtained merely by the sight of that deity.

Formerly, O goddess, the celestial sage Nārada, free from impurities, went to Triviṣṭapa (heaven) with the desire of seeing Indra.

There in the beautiful area of the celestial park, he saw Indra, the Lord of Devas, seated. The park was (as if) illuminated with the Kalpa (wish-yielding) trees. Everywhere gentle wind pleasing to the touch and fragrant with flowers blew. The sweet sounds of flutes and lutes echoed. Devas and Gandharvas moved about the place brightly illuminated with lunar stones, diamonds, sapphires, lapis lazuli and other jewels. The whole place appeared auspicious with remarkable features to which those of Brahmaloka and other worlds cannot be compared at all. Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Kinnaras and other Devas were joyously eulogizing him.

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1. 'Triviṣṭapa' means the dwelling place of Devas. Once Nārada described the glory of Mahākālavana to Devas; so Devas deserted Triviṣṭapa and migrated to Mahākālavana. Finding itself vacant, Triviṣṭapa assumed a form and came to Mahākālavana. He was asked by an ethereal voice to establish a Liṅga there. He complied and the Liṅga was named Triviṣṭapeśvara.

On being requested by Vāsava (Indra), the great sage Nārada recounted the greatness of Mahākālavana:

7-8. "It is beautiful, splendid and always pleasant. It is sacred and conducive to merits. It is the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas worthy of being resorted to. Sins due to Brāhmaṇa-slaughter and the like, of those people who see the splendid, meritorious Mahākālavana, do perish indeed.

9-17a. The Lord himself is stationed here surrounded by all the groups of Bhūtas (goblins). Hence it is called by learned men as the most excellent one among important Tīrthas (holy spots).

Naimiṣa is highly meritorious on this earth and it is destructive of all sins. Puṣkara, the excellent Tīrtha, is declared as ten times more efficacious than it in merit. Ten times more than this too is Prayāga, conducive to the attainment of all desires. The well-known Amareśvara is said to be ten times more efficacious. Prācī (Eastern) Sarasvatī is remembered as ten times more meritorious. Gayākūpa is still better. It is said to be ten times more meritorious than this and is remarkable. The sacred Vārāṇasī is ten times more meritorious. Mahākāla is still better and is ten times more excellent (than Vārāṇasī). O Śakra, indeed Mahākālavana is an ornament unto all the three worlds. There are sixty thousand crores and six hundred crores of Liṅgas there, which accord worldly pleasures and salvation.

Nine crores of Śaktis stay in that holy spot. O Śatakratu, even worms, insects and locusts dying there go to the eternal Rudraloka by means of divine aerial chariots."

17b-24. On hearing this wonderful greatness from Nārada, Vāsava, the most excellent one among Suras, came hurriedly to Śrī Mahākālavana with great joy along with all the groups of Devas. They saw such a beautiful and splendid Mahākālavana. Mahākālavana is proclaimed as one that does not perish even at the time of Pralaya. The mansions are of various types and made of gold. They are inlaid. Hundreds of palaces are embellished with jewels and corals gathered from every part of the earth. They are inlaid with diamonds and sapphires. Some are of pure crystals. The ornamental gates are of various forms and beautified with rubies. On seeing such a beautiful and excellent Mahākālavana, all Devas be-

came delighted and they praised Nārada. They said: "O highly intelligent ones, since this story has been narrated by the celestial sage (we shall believe it). We will not go to Kailāsa nor to Meru which may also be of the same type. We will not go to Mandara. We will not go to Triviṣṭapa. This alone is the excellent Amarāvatī. This is the auspicious Bhogavatī. This is the world of Brahmā, the grandfather. Similarly this is the world of Viṣṇu."

25-31. In the meantime, O fair lady, Triviṣṭapa became deserted and vacant. On realizing itself to be empty and pondering over it again and again, it assumed a physical form of its own and intended to go. "Abandoning me, all the Devas have gone to Mahākālavana. I too shall go there where these Devas have gone." Saying this, it instantly reached the excellent Mahākālavana. Then it enthusiastically visited the most excellent Tīrtha all over the world. It saw the beautiful holy spot surrounded by the Devas.

At the same time an unembodied voice spoke: "O Triviṣṭapa, install me here itself after your own name, to the east of Karkoṭaka and to the south of Mahāmāyā." On being told thus by the Lord of Devas it rejoiced. With the mind dwelling on the deity, Triviṣṭapa installed the deity named Triviṣṭapeśvara after its own name. After adoring it with splendid flowers, O lady of excellent countenance, it spoke thus: "From today onwards, Bhūrloka will become renowned by your name. Even those who perpetrate misdeeds but assiduously see you, will go to the greatest region adorned with divine ornaments.

32-39. A man of devotion, who worships you on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day or particularly on the day of the transit of the sun, will proceed to my vicinity after riding in an excellent aerial chariot. The chariot embellished with jewels can go wherever it wants to. It resembles the rising sun.

He will stay there near me. Of what avail are the diverse kinds of Dānas offered? Of what avail are the diverse kinds of Yajñas performed? Those who see you devoutly will attain all those benefits. There is no doubt about this that they will attain the various desired objectives for the sake of which they worship you."

After seeing my excellent Liṅga Tridaśas (Devas) said: "Those blessed ones who worship Lord Īśvara installed by the blessed

Triviṣṭapa, those who worship Lord Triviṣṭapeśvara will have permanent stay in Triviṣṭapa."

After saying this, they worshipped the Triviṣṭapa Liṅga again. Along with Triviṣṭapa they went to their original region. Thus, the sin-destroying power has been recounted to you, O goddess. By listening to or reciting this, one shall gain a permanent stay in heaven.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Kapāleśvara[1]

Śrī Rudra said:

1-7. O Pārvatī, know that the eighth deity is named Kapāleśvara. Merely by seeing it, the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter vanishes.

Formerly in Vaivasvata Kalpa at the advent of Tretāyuga, O beloved one, a divine Yajña was in progress in Mahākālavana under the guidance of Brahmā. As the Brāhmaṇas were seated all round and the Homa was being performed in the sacrificial fire, I assumed the guise of a Kāpālika and went to the assembly there.

O goddess, I had shaved off the hair and was clad in tattered rags and held a Khaṭvāṅga (a skull-topped club). The ash of the cremation ground had been smeared on my limbs. I was in an ugly state with a loathsome face. Skulls formed my ornaments and a skull was held by me in the hand.

On seeing me in the habit and dress of a rustic rogue with a skull held (in a hand), all of them censured me and frequently hurled on me abuses and words like "Fie upon you," "O sinner, O sinner," "Be gone," "Away," "We have been ridiculed," "How can the Homa be performed when the Kāpālika

1. The story illustrates the efficacy of this Liṅga to redeem the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. This is repeated elsewhere in SkP.

is standing in front? It is loudly proclaimed in the Vedas that skulls are not pure. The sacrificial altar is not suitable unto you who hold a human bone (in hand)."

8-19. I told those Brāhmaṇas: "May this be heard, O excellent Brāhmaṇas. All of you are kind and merciful. You are worried over other's miseries. Mercy should always be shown by good people to all embodied beings. A Brāhmaṇa is said to be friend of all creatures. I am a Kāpālika Brāhmaṇa with my body embellished with holy ash. I roam about on the earth after having duly adopted Kapāla Vrata. I always propitiate Mahādeva, the Lord of the universe. This holy vow is for the destruction of the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. It is to be continued for twelve years. This holy rite undertaken by me is famous in the world as destroyer of sins, O Brāhmaṇas. The aim is expiation. If purified, I will attain beatitude."

On hearing my explanatory statement those excellent Brāhmaṇas said: "O base one, you are excessively sinful. So you speak thus. One embellished by skulls is despicable, especially a slayer of a Brāhmaṇa. Mahādeva was not invited in the great festival of Dakṣa's sacrifice, wherein Ādityas, Vasus, Viśvedevas, Maruts, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, all the oceans, rivers, all the lakes, Suparṇas, mountains and all the serpents had been invited. They came with all their followers and wives. So also Brāhmaṇas who are masters of the Vedas, illustrious Brāhmaṇa-sages and the pure celestial sages." After saying this, they continued: "Even after knowing that Mahādeva embellished with human bones, is impure, how dare you say, 'Let admission be given to me,' particularly when you are also a Brāhmiṇa-slayer?"

20-27. When I was told thus by the Brāhmaṇas, I spoke these words: "Wait for a short while; I shall go off after taking food." When these words were spoken, O fair lady, I was beaten severely with sticks, kicked with feet and hit with fists. Lumps of clay were hurled on me. Thereupon, I laughed and threw the skull down on the altar which was spread over with Kuśa grass. Thereafter I vanished (like the flame of a lamp) without being known by the excellent Brāhmaṇas. After I disappeared they threw the skull out of the pavilion. O lady of renown, another skull of the same colour and form cropped up there.

Thus hundreds, thousands, millions and trillions of skulls appeared and were thrown out and yet cropped up. They were wonder-struck. All the wise ones among them said: "This is not the work of anyone other than Lord Mahādeva having Gaṅgā and crescent moon as his crest jewels." Thereupon, I was eulogized severally by the Brāhmaṇas by means of different kinds of prayers. They performed Homas in the fire uttering the Mantras of *Śatarudriya*. Then I was pleased, O goddess, and said out of sympathy to the Brāhmaṇas: "O ye Brāhmaṇas, may a boon desired mentally be chosen."

28-36a. Then those Brāhmaṇas said: "Unwittingly we had made deadly attack on you. Thereby, O Lord of the universe, a Brāhmaṇa's slaughter has been committed by us. In order to eradicate that sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, O Lord, extend your grace unto us. We request for this boon alone. No other boon is desired."

Thereupon, I said thus to those Brāhmaṇas: "There was a primordial Liṅga where you all hurled the skulls into a heap. It has become hidden due to the efflux of time. May the Brāhmaṇas see that Liṅga that rids one of the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter.

O eminent Brāhmaṇas, Brāhmaṇa-slaughter was committed by me too formerly, when I severed the fifth, excessively luminous head of Brahmā. Thereupon, extremely unbearable sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter was incurred by me. The skull too stuck to my palm and became acutely painful. I was overwhelmed by the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter and was well nigh burnt thereby. I went on a pilgrimage to the holy spots in order to eradicate it immediately. I had visited all the Tīrthas but was never released by that sin. This resulted in my misery and torments and I did not get any happiness anywhere. In the meantime an unembodied divine voice said:

36b-45. 'O Lord, go to Avantī. Why do you suffer the misery unnecessarily? It was by you, O Lord, that the sacred Mahākālavana was created, wherein Rudra of miraculous vision is installed with the skull in his hand. How is it that you do not know that the holy spot is destructive of great sins? In that holy spot, there is a great Liṅga in the vicinity of the deity in the form of an elephant. See it, O Lord of Devas. The sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter will get destroyed.'

On hearing those excellent words, I hastened to this place.

The great Liṅga stationed with the skull in the hand was seen. Then, O Brāhmaṇas, the skull (got unstuck and) fell into the ground from my hand. The name was assigned by me (to it) saying, 'This is the deity Kapāleśvara Deva.' O Brāhmaṇas, may all of you see the Lord named Kapāleśvara. Merely by the sight thereof you all will become free from ignominy."

Thereafter, the Liṅga was seen by them. It was covered by many skulls. By visiting that Liṅga they became blessed and contented. Hence this Liṅga named Kapāleśvara has become famous on the earth. O great goddess, those who worship the deity named Kapāleśvara become men of meritorious deeds and attain the greatest goal. Even after perpetrating terrible sins, including that of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, if a man sees that Liṅga, those sins get destroyed. This deity, worshipped on the fourteenth lunar day, destroys all sins committed mentally, verbally and physically.

46-49. Those who worship it even incidentally, O lady of excellent countenance, do obtain all their desires whatever they may be, even if they are inaccessible. He obtains prosperity, unparalleled piety, longevity, good health, freedom from ailments, incomparable riddance (elimination) of enemies and the like. O my beloved, even the worst of sinners, men engaged in ruthless activities, become rid of sins. They will turn out to be leaders of my Gaṇas. O my beloved, those who regularly visit the deity for a year, will see my favourite abode after casting off their mortal bodies.

Thus, O fair lady, the sin-destroying power of Kapāleśvara Deva has been spoken to you. Now listen to the account of Svargadvāreśvara.

CHAPTER NINE

Svargadvāreśvara[1]

Śrī Rudra said:

1-8. O Pārvatī, know that Svargadvāreśvara Liṅga is the ninth deity. He eradicates all sins and bestows heavenly pleasures and salvation.

O goddess, when your sisters, Aśvinī and others, came to the excellent mountain Kailāsa, they became surprised on seeing you. "O fair lady, we have been invited to be present at the Yajña along with our husbands and other relatives. Father has invited us with due respect and deep affection. O lady of wide eyes, we wonder why father has forgotten (you). Or has he remembered? What may be the reason for which you have not been invited?"

On hearing their words, O Pārvatī, it was due to the dishonour perpetrated in your case that you had cast off your very vital breaths in front of them by means of your Yogic power.

In the height of their grief, they went to the place where the Patriarch was and reported everything to Dakṣa as it had happened. Even after hearing that terrible news, Dakṣa did not say anything. When, O fair lady, you were seen by me fallen dead on the ground, I directed the Gaṇas to destroy the Yajña.

9-18. Hundreds and thousands of those terrible Gaṇas proceeded there. Awful and hideous, those mighty followers of Rudra, wielding many weapons raised terrifying cries as they discharged volleys of arrows.

Then all the groups of Devas, Vasus, Ādityas, Viśvedevas and Sādhyas came out for the purpose of fighting. Those mighty ones had bows in their hands and they discharged sharp arrows. Those Pramathas gathered together and fought with the Devas. They discharged volleys of arrows like clouds pouring down torrential gushes of water.

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1. This Liṅga is called Svargadvāreśvara as Devas, who were prevented from entering Svarga after Dakṣa's sacrifice, got entrance after worshipping this Liṅga.

There was a mighty Gaṇa named Vīrabhadra among them. He hit Indra on his chest with his spear. He lost consciousness due to that blow and so sat down; his elephant Airāvata was struck on his forehead with the fist. Struck down suddenly by him, the lordly elephant gave out awfully terrible cries. Excessively frightened, he rushed towards the sacrificial hall.

In the meantime, the Devas were driven back (by the Gaṇas). They sought refuge in Viṣṇu, the sole leader of the universe. On seeing the heaven-dwellers routed by the Gaṇas, Viṣṇu became furious. He discharged his Sudarśana. That Sudarśana, the discus of Viṣṇu, came on with great speed but (Vīrabhadra) opened his mouh quickly and confined it into his belly. When that discus which had never failed in slaying the Daityas, was thus swallowed, O goddess, Nārāyaṇa became furious and rushed at Vīrabhadra.

19-30. He seized Vīrabhadra by his feet and dashed him on the ground far off and pounded him with his club when Sudaraśana came out of his mouth along with blood vomited. Since this excellent Gaṇa, Vīrabhadra, O goddess, had obtained a boon from me, he did not die, though hit by the club.

Thereupon, all the Pramathas, afflicted by Viṣṇu's mighty power, came quickly but with great difficulty to the place where I was present.

On seeing me armed with the Trident, Viṣṇu disappeared. Indra vanished along with the Devas, Pitṛs and the Brāhmaṇas, as he was overcome with fear of me.

When the Yajña was thus destroyed and the group of the Devas vanished, the Gaṇa was deployed at the entrance to heaven and commanded: "O Lord of Gaṇas, no Devas should be allowed to enter. The doorway should be blocked assiduously at my behest. If any Deva is seen, he should be killed without hesitation." Thereby Svarga was rendered vacant and the Devas were defeated. When the entrance to Svarga was thus blocked, Indra and others became frightened. After a series of mutual consultations the Devas went to Brahmaloka and the details of the blockade of entry to Svarga were recounted to Brahmā. "O Grandfather, the portals of Svarga are covered by the Gaṇas of Maheśvara. The entrance has become too difficult as the gateway has been blocked. By what means

can we go to the heavenly world under the situation? O Grandfather, without heaven, we are not at all happy."

31-36. On hearing their words, Brahmā said thus: "Lord Mahādeva, Śaṅkara, the Lord of the universe, should be propitiated. He is the cause of creation, sustenance and annihilation. He should be eulogized, bowed down to and adored. O Suras, without his favour, Svarga is very difficult to achieve. He is the powerful protector and creator. He is our ultimate refuge. He alone should be propitiated. He is considered as the worthiest of adoration. Hence, by all means, may Śiva be sought as refuge. I shall mention the ways and means. May it be heard with attention. At my behest, O Śakra, hasten to the beautiful Mahākālavana, accompanied by Devas. It is stationed to the east of Kapāleśvara. O Vāsava (Indra), there is the great Svargadvāra Liṅga. It has been created by Mahādeva for blessing the worlds compassionately. All of you propitiate him quickly. He will grant you your desire."

37-47. On hearing the words of Brahmā, the Devas, became overjoyed. O great goddess, then they came to Mahākālavana. They saw the excellent, meritorious Liṅga that gives them the (entrance through) gateway to Svarga. Merely by seeing it, they got the doorway to heaven opened. O lady of great renown, as before all of them went to the heavenly world.

On seeing the Devas free from fear and suspicion, I was duly informed by the Gaṇas. All of them were directed by me: "O excellent Gaṇas, return. How can what has been promised by myself be false? Undoubtedly, the Svarga-bestowing Lord has been certainly seen by the Devas in the beautiful Mahākālavana as said by Brahmā. Śakra and other Devas went to the gateway of heaven. From that time onwards Śiva became famous as Svargadvāreśvara. He will be known as such on the earth because he is the bestower of Svarga. Those men who see Svargadvāreśvara Śiva go to the heavenly world by worshipping Svargadvāreśvara. Those who see Lord Svargadvāreśvara even incidentally need not be afraid of anything even after hundreds of crores of Kalpas. O goddess, by worshipping Svargadvāreśvara one obtains more merit than what has been cited as resulting from a thousand horse-sacrifices. By glorifying this Liṅga all those sins accumulated in the course of thousands of births get annihilated.

48-51. Those men who devoutly visit Śiva named Svargadvāreśvara on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day or on a Monday, O goddess, are indeed persons who have entered my body. They are not reborn. When that Liṅga is adored, it is as though ten thousand crores of Liṅgas are worshipped. By touching that Liṅga, by glorifying it and by adoring it, people easily go to heaven and get all desires fulfilled. Whether they desire it or not, those meritorious and fortunate ones who visit it everyday go to Svarga.

CHAPTER TEN

Karkoṭeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-9. O Pārvatī, know that the tenth deity is named Karkoṭeśvara whose mere sight prevents the effect of poisons.

Serpents had been cursed by their mother due to their non-obedience to her order: "Since my behest was not duly acted upon by you all, because it was an evil act, fire will burn you all in the Sattra (sacrifice) of Janamejaya."

Ever since they heard the curse of their mother, the serpents were in constant fear of death. O lady of renown, they went to their respective places for the purpose of protecting their lives. Śeṣa went to Himālaya, O my beloved, to perform a penance. The serpent named Kaṁbala went to the world of Brahmā. The leading serpent Śaṅkhacūḍa went to Maṇipūra. Kāliya who was exceedingly frightened sub-merged himself in the water of Yamunā. So also those kings of serpents, O lady of splendid smiles, went to Kurukṣetra for the performance of penance, O lady of great renown. The serpent Dhṛtarāṣṭra went to Prayāga, O my beloved. The leading serpent Elāpatra went to the world of Brahmā. After bowing down to him, he

1. When Nāgas were cursed by their mother, Karkoṭaka Nāga came to Mahākālavana, propitiated this Śiva Liṅga and became merged with it. Hence it is called Karkoṭakeśvara.

asked: "We have been cursed, O Lord, in your presence, by our infuriated mother even as we were resting in the lap of our mother. How is it that she was not restrained by you at the time of the curse?"

Brahmā said:

10-16. Your mother was not forbidden by me due to the power of the inevitable future. *Sarpasattra* will indeed be performed by King Janamejaya. O dear one, at my behest you do go to Mahākālavana with great devotion. Go quickly for performing propitiatory rite for all the serpents. Propitiate the Lord of Devas in the vicinity of Mahāmāyā. There you will attain Siddhi by the grace of the Lord of Devas.

After going there, O goddess, Karkoṭa engaged himself in concentration. Stationed before Mahāmāyā, he propitiated the Lord. The Lord was pleased with him, O Lady of great fame, and granted him a boon: "Death and destruction will overtake only those serpents that are cruel, highly poisonous and sinful in conduct and not those who are pious. I am pleased with your devotion. Get merged with me." Serpent Karkoṭa got merged into the Lord, O my beloved one. Lord Maheśvara became famous as Karkoṭakeśvara. Merely by his sight all ailments will be eradicated.

17-23. A devout man who worships that Lord shall redeem a hundred members of his family. He will become prosperous. The sick will be rid of ailments; the miserable of miseries. Due to the sight (of Lord Karkoṭeśvara) he shall instantly become free of sins. Those who regularly see Karkoṭakeśvara will obtain the fulfilment of all desires and in the end stay in my city.

Serpents will never afflict the family of those who see the Lord on the fifth or fourteenth lunar day or on a Sunday.

Even unfortunate women shall obtain perpetual bliss. A pregnant woman will get a healthy son, an ornament of the family. All malefic Planets perish. There is no fear of premature death. A man of devotion shall obtain even rare things and whatever he may wish mentally, due to the sight of Karkoṭeśvara.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Karkoṭeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the great (glory of) Siddheśvara.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Siddheśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-10. O goddess, know that the splendid Siddheśvara Liṅga is the eleventh deity. It is near Vīrabhadra. It bestows all Siddhis.

Formerly, in Devadāruvana, some Brāhmaṇas engaged in the practice of Yoga, vied with one another for the achievement of spiritual powers. With self-control they performed penance.

Some of them were strict vegetarians; some abstained from food. Others sustained themselves on the diet of leaves alone. Some were *Dantolūkhalins* (used to crush grains with teeth as mortar, i.e., ate only such grains). Others were *Aśmakuṭṭas* (i.e., ate only grains crushed with stones). Some of them were in the posture of Vīrāsana. Others imbibed smoke from fires kindled beneath, as they kept their feet up and faces down. Some of them were *Abhrāvakāśikas* (with open sky as their living room). Others performed *Kṛcchra Cāndrāyaṇa* and other expiatory rites with concentration. But none of them obtained the great Siddhi even after hundreds of years.

Bitterly distressed they thought: 'How can Siddhi be gained? It is not obtained here even by means of severe penance. Formerly the sages had said: "Everything is obtained by means of penance. This universe is rooted in penance." This scriptural statement of the former sages has become false. What is essential is the use of sacred Añjana (collyrium), medicated (magical) pills, moving with wooden sandals on, the Siddhi of swords, living in caves and the philosopher's stone.'

Thus those would-be Siddhas thought in their bitter frustration. Giving up the holy rite of penance, they became agnostics and atheists.

In the meantime, an unembodied voice spoke consoling those Siddhas like a mother consoling her bosom-born son:

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1. As the name indicates, this Liṅga grants Siddhis to its devotees, as happened in the case of those frustrated ascetics.

11-23. "O noble Sirs, do not belittle Śruti as false. On the surface of the earth neither penance nor righteousness are to be disparaged. The reason may be heard. O sages, no Siddhi will be achieved by you here. Those who desire Siddhis by vying with one another, will find that their penance is futile. There is loss of the power of penance due to lust. Through egotism, anger, covetousness and delusion there will be dismay and pride, undoubtedly. He who is devoid of contentiousness, free from lust and anger and performs his duty with ardour, attains the benefit of penance. He who is not influenced by desires, he who has single-minded concentration, he who is a believer in God and Śrutis and is faithful, attains the benefit of penance. He who looks upon other men's wives like his mother and other people's possessions like a lump of clod, enjoys the benefit of penance. The perfection of penance is seen only in a person like this, O Brāhmaṇas. You (people) performed the difficult task (i.e., penance) after vying with one another. Spiritual powers will never result therefrom even in the course of a thousand years. If you have any inclination to carry out my instruction with an unhesitating mind, then go ye all to Mahākālavana. With mental concentration, always propitiate the Lord of Devas, the bestower of Siddhis. Excellent Siddhi is attained by (simply) visiting that deity. Sanaka and others who were engrossed in Yogic practice resorted to the Lord and adored (Him) with ardour. Thereby they attained the greatest Siddhi. Formerly the very rare Siddhi of the sword was attained by King Vasumān by the power of the mere sight of this Liṅga. Pādukāgamana (going with the transporting sandals) was obtained by the noble-souled Haihaya. A thousand vehicles (horses) were obtained by the same son of Kṛtavīra. Formerly Adṛśyakaraṇa (the power of making oneself invisible) was obtained by Anūru. The achievement of Svarṇa (gold), Pādalepa (smearing the feet), Rasāyana (Elixir of life) and Añjana (magic collyrium) enabling one to see hidden treasures was obtained by visiting this Liṅga by different Siddhas."

24-33. On hearing the words of the Ethereal Voice, those Siddhas were struck with wonder. They joyously arrived at the excellent Mahākālavana. They saw the excellent Liṅga that bestows all Siddhis. By visiting that Liṅga, they attained the greatest Siddhi. Ever since then, the deity became well-known

as the greatest Siddheśvara. O goddess, on the earth no Siddhi will become inaccessible to those men who see the greatest deity Siddheśvara. Even those with emotional fervour who go to Siddheśvara incidentally, invariably become Siddhas. There is no doubt about it. Even one defiled with great sins, remembers Siddheśvara and becomes a Siddha certainly and one endowed with wisdom and prosperity. If one regularly visits the great Siddheśvara, a Siddhi cherished in the heart, comes within six months. He who visits Siddheśvara on the eighth and fourteenth lunar day, particularly in the dark half, shall see my palace. One without a son obtains a son; a poor man gets wealth; a seeker after learning achieves learning; and one who seeks a wife gets a wife. He who worships the deity on the day of the transit of the sun, or on a day of eclipse or on a Monday, redeems a hundred members of his father's family besides himself, O my beloved. He then rejoices in my world as long as fourteen Indras reign. Thus, O goddess, I have recounted to you the sin-destroying power of the deity Siddheśvara. Now listen to that of Lokapāleśvara.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Lokapāleśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-9. O goddess of Devas, know that Lokapāleśvara Śiva is the twelfth deity. Merely by visiting him, one is rid of all sins.

Formerly, O fair lady, thousands of groups of Daityas came out from the chest of Hiraṇyakaśipu. They were excessively powerful in their exploits. The entire earth consisting of mountains, parks and forests was pervaded (occupied) by them. Excellent penance groves and all the Yajñas were destroyed by

1. Lokapālas (Guardians of Quarters) and other Devas were driven out by Dānavas. They propitiated this Liṅga. A flame of fire-emanated from this Liṅga and burnt down all the Dānavas and re-instated Lokapālas in their posts. Hence the name of this Liṅga.

them. Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas were eaten up (by them). Sacrificial fire-pits were filled with liquor and dust particles. Sacrificial waterpots were broken. Earthen pots, utensils etc. were shattered to pieces. The earth was rendered bereft of study of the Vedas and utterance of *Vaṣaṭ*, *Svadhā* and *Svāhā*. The festivities of Yajña became defunct. Thereupon, the frightened guardians of the worlds sought refuge in Mādhava. With palms joined in reverence, all of them said: "We have been famished with hunger and distressed. O Lord! Denied our due share in the Yajñas, we have become weak and exhausted. Formerly we were saved by you from Namuci, Vṛṣaparvan, Mura, Hiraṇyakaśipu the terrible and Naraka. Similarly, O excellent one among Suras, do protect us now. Great danger has come to threaten us."

10-17. On hearing their words the Lord wielding the conch, discus and club went forth and the Daityas entered the ocean. From there they used to come out during the night and kill excellent Brāhmaṇas, ascetics and the initiated ones engaged in holy rites, O goddess. Then, O beloved one, they (demons) went to Svarga. Śakra, the Lord of Devas, was defeated. In the same manner, they went to the Southern Quarter. Then Dharmarāja was subdued. After going to the Western Quarter the king of waters (Varuṇa) was conquered. In the North, O goddess, Dhanada (Kubera) was defeated by the Daityas. Becoming frustrated they sought refuge in Viṣṇu. Then ways and means were mentioned by Viṣṇu to the Devas. "O Devas: go to Mahākālavana. With mental concentration, purity and devotion, propitiate Śaṅkara, the Lord of all the benefactors of the world. There you will attain fulfilment (of desires) by his grace."

On hearing these words of Kṛṣṇa of immeasurable splendour, the Guardians of Quarters went to the splendid Mahākālavana.

18-26. But they were prevented (from going) there itself by the Daityas holding various kinds of weapons. Again they fled and approached Lord Janārdana. They told him the terrible fact of how the three worlds were held restrained. Again the Guardians of Quarters were advised by Nārāyaṇa: "Do go to the excellent Mahākālavana in the guise of Kāpālikas. Perform holy rites and observances. Adorn yourselves with skulls. Carry Khaṭvāṅgas and assume quietness. Embellish yourselves

with the five Mudrās. All your limbs should be smeared with the holy ash. Shining tiny bells and anklets should be tied to the legs. Go thus to the excellent Mahākālavana in the company of Brahmā." Thus, hearing the speech of Kṛṣṇa all those Guardians of Quarters came here, O great goddess, in the guise of Kāpālikas. There, the great Liṅga, a wonderful mass of refulgence, was seen and repeatedly eulogized by the Guardians of Quarters with different kinds of hymns and prayers.

Thereupon, a shooting flame of fire rose up from that Liṅga. It burned all the Dānavas and reduced them to ash. Realizing the greatness of the Liṅga they named it duly: "The great Liṅga is highly refulgent and has been duly served by the Guardians of Quarters. Hence it will become famous all over the earth by the name Lokapāleśvara." After saying thus all the Devas protected by the Guardians of Quarters went to their respective regions. They were joyous as before.

27-35. Those men who visit the deity Śiva named Lokapāleśvara become rich with plenty in every birth. Neither poverty, nor pestilence, nor premature death will befall them. By visiting him, unparalleled prosperity will result always. The desire with which the deity is seen, will be realized. After death he will attain the greatrest goal. By worshipping Lokapāleśvara, O goddess, one gets that benefit which is usually achieved when a horse-sacrifice is perfectly performed. Even he who casually visits Lokāpāleśvara Śiva, always rejoices in Svarga in the company of (or like) the Guardians of Quarters.

Those men who devoutly visit the deity during equinoxes, Mondays, and particularly on the fourteenth lunar day or the eighth one in both the Ayanas, will become invincible to enemies in a battle. On death they go to the inaccessible world of Śakra in an aerial chariot. In due course gradually they go to Varuṇaloka, Kuberaloka and then to Brahmaloka very rarely attained even by Devas. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power has been recounted to you. Now listen to the mystery of Kāmeśvara.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Kāmeśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-5. Know, O goddess, that Kāmeśvara Liṅga is the thirteenth deity. Merely by visiting it, splendid bliss and fortune result.

While Brahmā was in meditation, O Pārvatī, with a desire for progeny, a great mass of beauty with refulgence of the sun appeared before him fully decked with ornaments and embellished with divine adornments.

On seeing him excessively refulgent, sublime, very difficult to be comprehended and beyond reasoning, Brahmā spoke to him: "Who are you? Why have you come here? You appear to be Kandarpa with all the features of Manmatha (god of Love)."

On hearing the words of Brahmā, he said with due respect: "I have been created by your mental power, as you are desirous of creation. O illustrious Patriarch, what shall I do? Direct me."

Brahmā said:

6-10. Desirous of creation, I have created Prajāpatis (Patriarchs). But, O Kāma, they are incapable of creating progeny. Let them be happy. You are the leader in the creation of progeny. This universe is under your control. O Kandarpa, at my bidding, create beings of diverse kinds.

On being told thus by Brahmā, O goddess, Smara vanished from view. He was cursed by the angry Brahmā: "Certainly you will undergo destruction. You will become destroyed by the fire issuing from the eye of Bhava (Śiva), since you did not carry out my instruction."

On hearing that terrible curse, Kandarpa became excessively afraid. With humility he bowed down to Brahmā and said: "Be pleased, O Lord of the chiefs of Devas, with me who

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1. When the god of Love got burnt by Śiva, he propitiated this Śiva Liṅga. God Śiva blessed and gave him a place near him here.

have no other resort (except you). Masters do not become inordinately furious on dependents."

Brahmā said:

11-18. O highly intelligent one, since your devotion to me is unparalleled, twelve places are being given to you by me, viz. women's side-glances, tresses of hairs, buttocks, the two breasts, navel, armpit, and lower lip resembling tender shoots, young maidens and spring season, cooing of the cuckoo, moonlight and advent of monsoon. For the purpose of love (making) the powerful months of Madhu and Mādhava (are given). Women are nectarine and blessed. They are the cause of the stability of worldly existence. They are the storehouses of conjugal bliss. They have been created for the sake of progeny. The universe is subjected to control by these excellent women. Whence can there be steadiness of mind in a man who is attracted by women? How can there be self-dependence in a man who has surrendered himself to the influence of women? Women alone caused the destruction of the former Daityas. Women alone are the causes of the fright of Indra and other Devas. If a man gets his sustenance through women, his discomfiture is enormous. His helplessness is terrible. To a man whose mind is overwhelmed by women, vulnerability to threat of dangers is easy.

19-29. After saying this, O fair lady, Manmatha was given a flowery bow and five arrows by Brahmā and was sent off. The fish-emblemed, mind-born god of Love, accompanied by *Rati* (Sexual Pleasures) and *Prīti* (Love), overcomes the three worlds. He is a bowman with accomplices overpowering scholars, ascetics, heroes, wise men, men of controlled sense-organs, those who are conversant with the proper time and attitude conducive to welfare, Devas, groups of Pitṛs, goblins, ghosts and vampires, Yakṣas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras, insects, worms and locusts and all the four types of living beings (e.g., those born of eggs, germinating ones, etc.). Attempt was made by him even to attract me, thinking: 'It is heard that Lord Śaṅkara cannot be easily subdued by anyone in all the three worlds. Excepting me who is competent to make that Lord agitated?' After saying thus, he came to the place where I was engaged

in penance. He was accompanied by Rati and the haughty friend Madhu. Kāma saw me with a mass of matted hairs tied up. Serpents constituted my ornaments and I was awake for some reason. I was seated with my back straight and with the eyes fixed to the tip of the nose. Madana then assumed a very minute form like that of the worm Avamaraka. Through an aperture in my hand he entered my heart. Thus scorched by Kāma, you were remembered by me for the sake of sexual pleasure.

The divine concentration and absorption in the Absolute aimed at vanished, O Pārvatī. My purity seemed to have gone instantly. I became mad, as it were, with excitement caused by sexual urge. But, O goddess, I strenuously regained my fortitude and eradicated the adverse effect.

30-40 Manmatha, the cause of the improper effect (thoughts), was seen in my own heart. Then I thought of burning him while stationed within my body by employing the method of Pratyāhāra (withdrawal). If he enters the heart of a Yogin, he is likely to be born as a non-human creature. One should perform Dhāraṇā (concentration) on the external fire and burn what is stationed there within the body in that fire. In the meantime, Madana too was excessively scorched. Since he could assume any body as he wished and become very difficult to be known, he escaped from his painful situation. He then resorted to the root of a Sahakāra (mango) tree along with his friend Madhu. The fish-emblemed one (i.e. Kāma) then discharged the arrow named Mohana (Fascinator). That arrow easily struck my heart.

Thereupon, O goddess, I got infuriated and opened my third eye. Even as the heaven-dwellers began to cry, Kandarpa, who inflames (as it were) the lustful, was reduced to ash at once by the flames of that eye.

When Kāma was burnt, the grief-stricken Rati lamented miserably due to her fervent devotion to her husband: "O my Lord, O my Master, O my vital breath, why do you forsake me? O Lord, why do you leave me, a chaste wife whose husband is her vital breath?" Even as she was lamenting thus an unembodied voice spoke to her: "O lady of wide eyes, do not cry. By the grace of the Lord of Devas, Śiva, your husband will rise up alive again."

At that time, O my beloved fair lady, I was thus requested: "O Parameśvara, this Kāma has been burnt by you due to anger. Thereby, O Lord, the creation on the earth has come to an end. Have pity (on me), O Lord of Devas. Give this wretched woman her husband once again."

41-53. Then, O goddess, I spoke to Rati who was crying piteously: "My mind was rendered unsteady today by this Madana. Therefore, his body has been burnt by me. I shall resuscitate him because of my favour towards you. Since his body was burnt by me through the fire of the third eye, he will be moving about among the beings of the world as *Anaṅga* (unembodied). When he serves as Anaṅga the Liṅga at Avantī (I shall resuscitate him). It was to show favour to Devas that he has been rendered bodiless by me." Directed by Devas, Kāma went to Avantī. After going there, Anaṅga saw the great Liṅga that bestowed desired benefits. The delighted Liṅga said: "O Kāma, you will attain your desires. Though you are devoid of limbs, you will undoubtedly be efficient and powerful. You will be born of Rukmiṇī's womb after her union with Kṛṣṇa, with the name 'Killer of Śambara' (Śambarasūdana). You will become famous in the world, since I was mentally propitiated by you; because you have no limbs, I shall be well-known after your name, O Kāma, for ever. Those who see you (? me), O Kandarpa, with great devotion will attain the goal that gives perpetual bliss. Those who see you (?me), O Manmatha, will become long-lived. Their complexion and family shall become free from blemishes. They will enjoy great prosperity and highest pleasures and wives endowed with divine arts. Undoubtedly their progeny shall be free from ailments. Those men who devoutly visit me on the thirteenth lunar day of the bright half of Caitra, will rejoice after attaining Devaloka. They shall become Yakṣas, Gaṇeśvaras and Siddhas served by Siddhas and Gandharvas. They will go to Rudraloka by means of aerial chariots that can go as they (i.e. occupants) please."

54-55. On being told thus by the Liṅga, O great goddess, Kāmadeva made his hermitage there in the vicinity of the Liṅga. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Kāmeśvara has been recounted to you. Henceforth, listen to the power of Kuṭumbeśvara.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Kuṭumbeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. Know that the Lord named Kuṭumbeśvara is the fourteenth deity. Merely by visiting him, the family flourishes.

When, O goddess, the Ocean of Milk was churned by Devas and Asuras formerly, an unbearable poison that could not be held (contained) by anyone issued forth. It was Kālakūṭa, the terrible poison that was awful due to its flames. The whole universe including Devas, Asuras and human beings got burnt. Thereupon, all the groups of Devas, accompanied by Asuras, Yakṣas and Rākṣasas became excessively frightened by the flames of the poison and sought refuge in me. I was eulogized by means of different kinds of prayers. This was said by them, O lady of excellent countenance: "We put forth our efforts for the sake of Amṛta (Nectar) but, O Lord, it is death that we obtained. We proposed one way but fate disposed it the other way. Out of greediness the Ocean of Milk was churned too vigorously. Kālakūṭa poison came out and all living beings including mobile and immobile beings have got burnt. Hence, O Lord, our fear has its origin in the Kālakūṭa. Protect us, O Lord of the universe, who are fond of those who seek refuge in you, for the sake of the welfare of all the worlds, lest there should be utter annihilation."

9-19. On hearing the words of those Devas, O lady of renown, I assumed the form of a peacock and held the excessively terrible poison named Kālakūṭa in the throat, on account of sympathetic considerations for the Devas. You became frightened on seeing my form like that of a poisonous tree that cannot be resorted to and fled. Therefore, I became distressed. Gaṅgā accompanied by a group of rivers was seen at (my) side. I told her, O goddess, in respectful tone with a due prayer: "O Gaṅgā, take this Kālakūṭa poison along with

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1. Kuṭumbeśvara means the god who bestows prosperities on families. When the poison Halāhala was deposited in this Liṅga, Lakulīśa (the founder of Pāśupatism and an Avatāra of Śiva) was asked to cover it. Thenceforth, the Liṅga became favourable to families and progeny.

your current to the great ocean. O purifier of worlds, excepting you, no one else is capable of taking it away."

Gaṅgā said:

O holy Lord of the universe, I do not have the power to carry it. It is terrible in form and very difficult to be dealt with. Undoubtedly it will burn.

Thereupon Yamunā was asked. She was not capable enough, nor was Sarasvatī. Many other rivers too were called by me severally. They too were incapable of carrying it, the poison named Kālakūṭa. Then, O goddess, Śiprā born of Brahmā was called by me: "O daughter Śiprā, at my behest go to Mahākālavana taking this Kālakūṭa with you. In front of Kāmeśvara, there is a great Liṅga. Deposit this poison with that Liṅga." On being told thus by me, the great Kalā of Brahmā (i.e. Śiprā) said: "O Lord, at your bidding here I am ready to go undoubtedly. Indeed, this Kālakūṭa of severe touch will devour me. I am sure to become unworthy of being resorted to due to the contact of this defiled thing." Thereupon, I said once again to Śiprā, the destroyer of sins:

20-27. "O lady of charming smile, all those rivers and Tīrthas that are on the earth, or in Pātāla or in Svargaloka or in the sky, all those meritorious ones will, at my behest, come to serve you and carry out your command. Dear daughter, go at my bidding."

On being told thus, Śiprā took the Kālakūṭa with her, O beautiful lady, and reached the place where the excellent Liṅga was present. The poison named Kālakūṭa was deposited on the top of the Liṅga. Thereupon it became a Viṣa Liṅga, the bestower of fatality on being seen. Whether an animal or a bird or a man, whoever sees that deity Śiva immediately dies, O goddess, by the sight of that deity. Some ascetics came there in the course of their pilgrimage. On seeing that deity all of them instantly died. Thereupon, O goddess, there was a great hue and cry in all the three worlds consisting of mobile and immobile beings. On hearing that great cry of distress, O Pārvatī, those excellent Brāhmaṇas were resuscitated by me by letting my glance fall on them. The Brāhmaṇas bowed

down and eulogized me by means of different kinds of prayers. They were told by me: "Choose excellent boons."

28-36. O goddess, after bowing down, seeking the welfare of all the worlds, they said: "O Lord, O Śaṅkara, due to this Liṅga the subjects die, O Lord of the universe; protect them. This is our (request as) boon, O Lord." Due to their sympathetic considerations for all the worlds, the same was promised by me, O goddess: "This Liṅga will undoubtedly be one that brings about prosperity and good health, O Brāhmaṇas; Lakulīśa himself will come here from Kāyāvarohaṇa (mod. Kārwān). Thereafter this deity shall become worthy of being touched. Undoubtedly he will make the family flourish and prosper. He will become famous by the name Kuṭumbeśvara." On being told thus by me, those Brāhmaṇas performed penance there itself. Then, at my bidding, Lakulīśa mounted that Liṅga causing surprise to the people and glory to the whole region. If people visit the deity named Kuṭumbeśvara, O lady of great renown, there shall be flourishing prosperity in that family. There is no doubt about it. One who visits him on the fifth day of the dark half of Āśvina, shall become blessed with many sons and much wealth undoubtedly. He will attain great glory and wealth and will be rid of ailments. Fully realizing all desires, he will rejoice in my world.

37-41. Those who see, touch and worship (this Liṅga) shall fully realize their desires. All of them shall go to my place. The river Śiprā with all her wells and tanks is by its side. Merely by seeing it, a man becomes rid of sins. He who takes his holy dip and visits Kuṭumbeśvara on a Sunday or on a Monday, on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day, attains the fruit of a thousand Rājasūyas and a hundred Vājapeyas, O goddess. It is the truth that has been uttered by me.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Kuṭumbeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Indradyumneśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Indradyumneśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-7. O my beloved, know Indradyumneśvara Śiva as the fifteenth deity. Merely by visiting him, one attains fame and glory.

Formerly, O goddess, there was a king named Indradyumna, by whom the earth was protected like a father protecting his bosom-born son. After performing many Yajñas on the earth with adequate and ample monetary gifts, the noble-souled king went to Svarga that bestows the benefit of all desires. But when he lost all his reputation on the earth, he had a downfall from Svarga. The king, bereft of his merit, suddenly fell on the earth. After the downfall he became excessively grief-stricken and he thought thus:

'The fruit of a (virtuous) action done here is enjoyed in heaven. Nothing else is done which is enjoyed by one who resides on the earth.

That is regarded as a fault here. Hence this is the downfall. By falling down, great misery and distress results. As long as their reputation lasts people enjoy Svarga. The sound (i.e. reputation) of meritorious acts done touches heaven and earth. As long as that sound persists, the Puruṣa is mentioned (and remembered).

8-13. If there is ignominy and ill-repute of anyone who has been in the world, he falls into the lower worlds as long as that ill-repute lasts. Hence one should be of meritorious behaviour. Otherwise there will be downfall on the earth. Even by doing sinful deeds, one should acquire and increase one's fame. I extremely praise that fame which causes long stay in Svarga. That glory and fame is desired even by Devas.

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1. King Indradyumna who fell down from Svarga, attained it again permanently by propitiating this Liṅga. Due to the association of King Indradyumna, this Liṅga came to be known as Indradyumneśvara. The story in Mbh, *Vana*, 199, differs.

As long as the fame of men exists without destruction on the earth, (their) bodies will be enveloped with masses of splendour. There shall not be sweat or bad odour, faeces or urine. An example thereof is the king and the creator in heaven. They shall be adorned with many ornaments and are carried by aerial chariot.'

After thinking thus, O lady of excellent countenance, King Indradyumna went to the excellent mountain Himavān with a desire for attaining Svarga.

14-18. It was there that the great sage Mārkaṇḍeya was performing a severe penance. On seeing him, he bowed down his head and prostrated before him again and again with the eight limbs touching the ground. He then humbly asked the sage of praiseworthy holy rites:

"O sage conversant with pious rites, all these are known to you: Devas, Dānavas, Rākṣasas, the various royal dynasties and the eternal lineages of sages. In this world, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, there is nothing that is not known to you. I wish to hear this. May it be accurately related by you. How is fame rendered permanent in the world? Is it a fruit of penance?"

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

Ha! I shall surely tell you as you aspire after fame. As long as the fame stands established in the earth, stay along with Suras. Hence, O knower of Dharma, go quickly to the excellent Mahākālavana. There is a sin-destroying Liṅga in the vicinity of Kalkaleśvara Deva on the left side. Propitiate it assiduously. Merely by adoring it, you will attain excellent fame and the eternal (stay in) Svarga which is inaccessible even to Suras.

19-26. He went there and adored the Liṅga as instructed. Then Devas and Gandharvas joyously praised him. Stationed in their aerial chariots in the sky, they spoke to the king: "Your glory has become free from impurities by worshipping this Liṅga. From today onwards, O eminent king, this Liṅga shall become famous after your name Indradyumna[1].

1. This is a Purāṇic version. According to Mbh, *Vana* 199, it was the testimony of an old tortoise who remembered him (Indradyumna) as a sacrificer, which reinstated him in heaven.

Those men who adore Lord Indradyumneśvara shall be rid of all sins. They will go to heaven joyously by means of aerial chariots that can grant all desires. They will be eulogized by celestial sages. Nothing will be inaccessible to them. Even in the case of those who visit him casually or out of greed, they will have fame, renown, merit and piety. As long as fourteen Indras reign, they will never fall from Svarga.

Those who perform adoration, especially on the fourteenth lunar day, will redeem their maternal and paternal families."

27-28 After saying this, all the Devas adored the Liṅga carefully and went back to Svarga along with Indradyumna, O my beloved. Thus the sin-absolving power of Indradyumneśvara has been recounted to you. Let another be heard, O my beloved.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Īśāneśvara

Īśvara said:

1-7. O Pārvatī, know that the Liṅga named Īśaneśvara is the sixteenth deity. By merely seeing it, men become very prosperous.

Formerly, O goddess, all the Suras, the highly esteemed sages, Yakṣas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras were attacked and harassed by Tuhuṇḍa. The entire celestial park known as Nandana came under his control. He succeeded in taking the great elephant Airāvaṇa and keeping it at his gateway. The Lord of Dānavas took away (the horse) named Uccaiśśravas. He made attempts to destroy (ravish) all the celestial women. The pathway to Svarga became blocked due to his fear, O Satī. Thus divested of their rights, the Devas had mutual consultation.

At that time Nārada, the great sage of excessive refulgence, who knew the proper time, came there in the course of his peregrinations. The Devas bowed down to him and duly adored him. The evil acts done by Tuhuṇḍa were recounted to him as they had occurred.

8-14. By way of taking counsel with him, they asked the excellent sage Nārada: "O highly intelligent one, tell us. You

know everything. O geat sage, when such an occasion as this arises, what should be done? O most excellent one among celestial sages, nothing in the three worlds is unknown to you."

With his eyes slightly closed, he meditated for a short while and told them the remedy whereby all the miseries could be destroyed:

"O distressed ones, hasten ye all to the beautiful Mahākālavana. Establishing yourselves behind Indradyumneśvara, serve the excellent Liṅga named Īśāneśvara. Formerly in the Īśānakalpa Sage Īśāna, well-versed and engaged in the recital of the Vedas, easily attained a position on the head of Śaṅkara. By propitiating him, everything mentally desired is achieved."

On hearing the words of Nārada the Devas became delighted in their minds. They went to the place where the great Liṅga was and all of them prayed:

15-24. "O Īśāna, O Lord of (Sage) Īśāna, O Tatpuruṣa, obeisance to you. Obeisance to you, O Vāmadeva; O great Aghora, obeisance, obeisance to you, O Sadyojāta. O three-eyed Bharga, O great Lord, O consort of Umā, obeisance, obeisance (to you). Obeisance, O Śiva; obeisance, O Bhīma; obeisance, O Śarva; obeisance, obeisance. Obeisance, O Śaṁbhu. Obeisance, O Rudra; obeisance, obeisance, O Virūpākṣa. Everything has been created by you, O Maheśvara, all the subjects including Devas, Asuras and human beings, all the mobile and immobile living beings, Brahmā, the Vedas, and everything worth knowing.

O Lord, the firmament is your head; the moon and the sun your eyes; the wind is your breath; the imperishable Agni is your refulgence. All the quarters are your arms; the great ocean is your belly. O Lord, the mountains are your thighs; the earth is considered your feet. Indra, Soma, Agni, Varuṇa, the Devas, Asuras and the great serpents devoted to you follow you humbly eulogizing you with different kinds of prayers. O Lord of the Cosmos, all the living beings are pervaded by you. If you are delighted, the universe is delighted. If you are angry, there is great danger and fear. You alone are the remover of all fears. You alone are the slayer of enemies. The destruction of the powerful Asuras has been performed by you. No one attained the great salvation by their own exploits.

You are the sole creator and annihilator of all living beings here."

25-34. After the propitiation, all of them began to make obeisance. In the meantime, O goddess, a great column of fire enveloped with smoke rose up from the middle of the Liṅga, whereby the Dānava Tuhuṇḍa, son of Muṇḍa, was burnt along with his armies that surrounded him.

Due to the power of this Liṅga Suras regained their respective rights. The delighted Devas named the Liṅga also. "We have ascertained that granting prosperity is the very nature of this Liṅga. Hence the deity will become well-known in all the three worlds as Īśāna. If the devotees propitiate the deity named Īśāneśvara, they will have renown, prosperity, pleasure and achievement of powers permanently. They will be always worshipped by Devas, Gandharvas and groups of celestial damsels and will go joyously to Svargaloka by means of brilliant aerial chariots.

There is no doubt about it that the devotees, whether they are Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas or Śūdras, whether they are women or virgins, will obtain all their cherished desires.

If a man strictly adheres to the observances and ardently visits the Lord, he will never incur any loss anywhere for a hundred births thence.

Those who daily see the deity named Īśāneśvara, O lady of great renown, shall always be efficient in all their activities.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Īśāneśvaradeva has been recounted to you. Let the power of Apsareśvara be heard.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Apsareśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-9. Know that Apsareśvara Liṅga is the seventeenth deity. Merely by seeing it, people shall obtain everything desired.

The enemy of Vṛtra (i.e., Indra) was seated in the park named Nandana, O goddess. It was equipped with everything desirable. It was reverberated with the sound of the chorus songs of Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. The chirping sounds of parrots, cuckoos, ruddy geese, Cakoras and ospreys spread everywhere. The park was a spot comparable to the divine world; it was an ornament unto Triviṣṭapa (Svarga).

Indra was attended upon by leading Suras; Raṁbhā was dancing in front of him displaying various *Bhāvas* (emotional expressions) connected with the dance. Remembering something else, she became absent-minded. Hence she committed slips. When the tempo and the beating of the time went awry she was noticed by Vāsava. The king of Suras became angry and cursed her: "Forgetfulness is the habit of mortal beings. It is never seen amongst celestial ones. Hence become lustreless and proceed to the world of men." As a result of Indra's anger, that celestial damsel became distressed and fell down on the earth. Motionless she remained like someone crippled. She loudly lamented much. In her piteous wail she said: "What sin have I committed? Pure penance has not been performed? How is it that the Sura (Indra) is not propitiated?"

All the celestial damsels came in a body there, including her companions. They came to the place where Raṁbhā lay, O lady of excellent countenance. The groups of celestial damsels too became distressed due to the scorching fire of her grief.

10-18. "Just as a lotus pond in deep sleep (i.e., before blossoming) does not shine when the sky is overcast with clouds,

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1. The Liṅga is called Apsareśvara, as Raṁbhā, cursed by Indra, regained her status by propitiating this Liṅga.

so also Raṁbhā (as if) destroyed by the curse does not shine at all."

Raṁbhā surrounded by her friends, O lady of excellent countenance, was seen by the celestial sage Nārada. He was struck with surpise in his mind as to why the celestial damsels were seen suddenly agitated due to grief and why Raṁbhā was crying repeatedly.

Approaching them he asked: "O excellent celestial damsels, why do you appear wretched and pale in the faces? Let everything be said clearly." They told him what had happened earlier. On hearing it, Sage Nārada became engrossed in meditation. He told them the means beneficial to them: "Let all the celestial damsels with effort go to the excellent Mahākālavana. Ye all do propitiate the Lord of Devas, the Liṅga that grants all the desired things. In an earlier Kalpa, Urvaśī at my instance had worshipped it in front of Pṛcchādevī. She got Purūravas as her husband." On hearing the words of Nārada the groups of Apsarās came to the beautiful Mahākālavana with a desire to propitiate the Liṅga. Thereupon Rudra became pleased with their devotion. He himself granted the boons:

19-24. "O Raṁbhā, you will attain conjugal bliss, and regain Svargaloka, O lady of great renown. Certainly you will become the beloved of Jiṣṇu, O blessed one. Hence go back to heaven honoured by this group (of celestial damsels)." The deity was formerly propitiated by Apsarās with a desire to regain Svarga. Hence the deity became well-known in all the three worlds as Apsareśvara. Those who devoutly worship Apsareśvara will become ones who have successfully fulfilled their ambition. O lady of great renown, those who urge others to visit the deity will never find separation or downfall from their positions even in their dreams.

Of what avail are Dānas? Of what avail are austerities? Of what avail are Yajñas with plenty of monetary gifts? By touching (the Liṅga) one obtains successively kingdom, heavenly pleasures and salvation.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Apsareśvara Deva has been recounted to you. May (the greatness of) Kalakaleśvara be listened to.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Kalakaleśvara[1]

Śrī Śiva said:

1-8. Know the well-known Kalakaleśvara as the eighteenth deity. Merely by seeing him, quarrel never breaks out. He subdues all miseries. He rids one of all sins. He suppresses sickness, serpents, fire and thieves. He bestows what is desired.

O goddess, there arose a quarrel between you and me formerly. I shall describe it in detail. Listen with single-pointed attention, O splendid one.

O lady of excellent complexion, when you were born as the daughter of Himavān, O my beloved, I wedded you in accordance with the injunctions laid down.

When the marriage ceremony with you was completed you were known by the name Mahākālī, O lady of excellent countenance. You were so (i.e., black) in complexion too. Your colour was akin to that of a blue lotus. Your locks of hairs were black and curly.

O lady of excellent countenance, after the celebration of the marriage, once you were seated in the midst of the Mātṛs on a raised platform with your lustre on a par with black collyrium.

"O beautiful Kālī, O my beloved one, come and sit by my side. You will shine remarkably in your black lustre against the fair background of my body, like a black serpent entwined round a white sandal tree, or like the night in the dark half. You are the means to avert the evil eye."

9-19. O goddess of charming smile, O Daughter of the Mountain, you were told thus by me.

Then you uttered the following words in a faltering voice: "Why did you not call me thus (Kālī) when the glorious Seven Sages, the masters of the Vedas, were sent by you for the sake of my hand?

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1. This Liṅga arose due to a heated quarrel (Kalakala) between Śiva and Pārvatī. Śiva recounts this to Pārvatī!

Then my father Himavān, the king of Mountains, also was requested by you for my hand. At that time, why did you not call me Kālī? When you uttered in excessive distress, 'O Nārada, do go for my sake; may Pārvatī be sought after soon,' at that time why did you not call me Kālī?

This common adage is true; it never becomes false: 'All get humiliated by the stupidity exhibited by themselves.'

Indeed, one who implores and solicits gets only rebuff and gets one's head completely shaved. Oh! By means of long practice of austerities I sought after you! Hence this insult at every step. O Dhūrjaṭi, I am not crooked, terrible or hideous. I am not of mean birth. I am not one who moves about aimlessly. I am not defiled, nor envious; but you are well-known as *Saviṣa*[1] ('one with Kālakūṭa poison'). You are mainfestly *Doṣākarāśraya* ('support of the storehouse of faults'; 'the support of the moon'). You are *Akulīna* ('having no family'), *Vṛthācāra* ('moving aimlessly': 'one rendering Ācāras futile'). You are always resorted to with *Mātsarya* ('vying with one another'). I do not take away eyes. There you alone are the aggressive one. Let Āditya know you (find out). He is Lord Sun-god *Dvādaśātmaka.* O shameless one, no one's teeth have been pulled out by me. Lord Pūṣan knows it. He is *Dvādaśātmā* and the cause of the day. There is *Śūla* (head-ache, trident) on your head. Hence you insulted me with your own faults.

20-29. You call me Kṛṣṇā (black) though you are well known as Mahākāla (excessively black). This also is a general rumour. Where is your Pravara, O Hara? I say this to cite examples, not out of hatred. Listen, but it behoves you to forgive (me for the same). An ugly man considers himself more handsome than others until he looks at his face in a mirror. When he sees a hideous face in the mirror he considers it (to be) another person, not himself. Not so in the case of others. Even a heretic feels repugnance towards a person deviating from truth and piety as if towards a despicable reptile. All the more so in the case of pious person." Thus you told me, O goddess and I created an uproar: "O Daughter of the Mountain, you are ignorant of yourself! O Mṛḍā, you profess

1. The double meanings of these epithets are interesting.

to be scholarly! It is true I am like your father in respect of various limbs. Hardness leads to obduracy(?); slaying of many due to many minerals (*dhātu* also means constituents of the body); crooked from all (sides?), unworthiness of being a resort like snow (the text needs emendation)." You were told thus by me, O goddess. Again you spoke these words: "Still every bad quality has become transmitted to you due to the contact with the wicked ones. *Anekajihvatva* ('having many tongues,' or 'unreliable speech') has come to you from the pythons; *Snehavarjana* ('absence of viscidity', 'want of affection') from the ashes; *Hṛtkāluṣya* ('wickedness or darkness of the heart,' 'dark spot within') from the moon; *Durbodhatva* ('incomprehensibility,' 'want of understanding') from your bull; cowardice due to long residence in cremation ground. On account of your shamelessness, there is nudity in you; from the skull, want of mercy. Your mercifulness has long disappeared."

30. Thus, O splendid lady, a terrible quarrel causing fear ensued. When it took place, all the three worlds began to quake.

31-38. Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Rākṣasas became afraid on account of that uproar. Then a Liṅga manifested itself piercing through the ground. From the middle of the Liṅga a pleasing, splendid voice arose consoling the Devas and all the three worlds consisting of mobile and immobile beings.

Leading Devas named the Liṅga Kalakaleśvara Śaṅkara which became well-known after the name of the sound (noise). If anyone devoutly adores Lord Kalakaleśvara, neither Rākṣasas, nor Piśācas (ghosts), neither Vināyakas (hindering or obstacle-creating deities) will cause obstacles, O beautiful lady. There will never be a quarrel in the house. By seeing the Lord, O beloved one, one gets a housewife of good habits, beauty and fortune. She will give birth to many sons and will possess much wealth.

If the devotees visit Lord Kalakaleśvara on the fourteenth lunar day, they will never have any misery, old age, sickness or premature death. They need not be afraid of enemies, O daughter of the Mountain. The world they go to, shall be eternal. O goddess, as long as fourteen Indras reign (they will be present there). Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power

(of this deity) has been recounted to you. Merely by listening to this, one will get welfare here and hereafter.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Nāgacaṇḍeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-10. O my beloved, the nineteenth deity is Nāgacaṇḍeśvara Liṅga by seeing which one is rid of the sin arising from crossing Nirmālya (remnants of the adoration of Śiva). I shall extol in detail the auspicious power of that Liṅga. O goddess, listen to it with mental concentration. It is destructive of all sins.

Formerly Devas, Sages, Gandharvas, Cāraṇas and Guhyakas were seated in the divine assembly Sudharmā, discussing auspicious tales. In the meantime, Indra saw the celestial sage Nārada full of humility and given to celibacy, with a girdle (around his waist), dressed in his loincloth and deer skin robe. The staff and the lute embellished him. As the sage of holy vows approached, O goddess, Indra asked him: "You have seen the entire region of the three worlds beginning with Bhūḥ and Bhuvaḥ, their creation, continuance and annihilation thousands of times. Excepting Parameṣṭhin (Brahmā), the unmanifest cause of the universe, the eternal one of the nature of *Sat* and *Asat*, there is none like you in this world and Him you propitiated by means of Yoga, penance and devotion. Hence you know everything clearly regarding the three worlds. So I wish to ask. Let me be given a definite reply. What is the most excellent holy spot on the earth? It should be sacred and conducive to worldly pleasure and salvation."

On hearing this, Nārada meditated and pondered over it for a long time. Then he spoke these words:

11-23. "O king of Devas, it is proclaimed that Prayāga is the meritorious, excellent and leading holy spot. The holy

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1. Crossing the Nirmālya (stale flowers, etc.) of Śiva is a great sin. It is averted by propitiating this deity.

spot is praised as the most excellent one among sacred pilgrim centres. The holy spot of Mahākāla is spoken of as ten times more than that in sanctity. O Vāsava, by mere seeing, it bestows worldly pleasures and salvation."

On hearing this, Indra honoured that sage. He hurriedly seated himself on the aerial chariot along with all the groups of the Devas. Seated in the firmament, Jiṣṇu (i.e., Indra) and the Suras saw the holy spot completely covered over by Liṅgas. There was no vacant space even to the extent of an Aṅgula. There were sixty thousand crores and six thousand crores of Liṅgas in the beautiful Mahākālavana. How can one cross the Nirmālya? 'By transgressing the Nirmālya there shall definitely be committed a sin.' Thinking thus, O goddess, the charming Suras went back to Svarga. Afraid of the fault of crossing Nirmālya, they did not enter the holy spot.

In the meantime, O goddess, an excellent Gaṇa seated in an aerial chariot, and being sung about by the different kinds of Kinnaras, worthy of being served (by various Gaṇas) and being eulogized by Cāraṇas was seen, proceeding towards Svargaloka by the Suras of beautiful eyes.

All the Suras asked one another: "Who is this blessed one of great penance? He is blazing with his refulgence and is being served by Apsarās. Who is this Gaṇa resembling Rudra? Where does this mighty-armed one with a smiling countenance and delighted soul go?"

He was then asked by all the Suras with minds overwhelmed with surprise: "Who are you, O tiger-like being? What meritorious deed has been performed by you?" O goddess, everything was narrated (by him) to the Devas: "Mahākāla, the great Lord, was worshipped and eulogized devoutly. Gaṇahood which is very difficult to be attained was bestowed on me by him who became extremely pleased. A nice name Nāgacaṇḍa also was given (to me)."

24-36. The immortal ones asked respectfully: "O Nāgacaṇḍa, the most excellent one among the Gaṇas! There in the holy Mahākālavana the Nirmālya has fallen down. Since there is a multiplicity of Liṅgas, there is no space to move about. Was it trodden over by you as you passed by?" The means (of avoiding it) was stated by him to the Devas: "O eminent Devas, there is a Liṅga installed there which bestows all benefits. It

is situated to the north-east of the Īśaneśvaradeva Liṅga. If one merely sees it, one does not incur sin. The great sin that arises by transgressing Nirmālya is entirely destroyed by seeing that Liṅga." Thereupon, all the groups of Devas came once again to Mahākālavana. Mahākāla was adored by those blessed ones. That Liṅga which causes destruction of all faults was seen. Merely by seeing it, the defect (sin) due to the transgression of Nirmālya and similar offences became destroyed. Then they named it: "This has been spoken to us by the intelligent Nāgacaṇḍa. Hence this deity shall have the name of Nāgacaṇḍeśvara in this world."

After naming it, the Devas went to their excellent abode Svarga. Those who worship Śiva named Nāgacaṇḍeśvara will find the sin arising from transgressing Nirmālya destroyed. If people see Lord Nāgacaṇḍeśvara everyday, all their sins, perpetrated knowingly or unknowingly, perish. Not otherwise.

By seing the Lord one certainly attains happiness, bliss, health, freedom from illness and handsome features continuously for seven births. By glorifying Nāgacaṇḍeśvara he attains cherished desires inaccessible even to the Devas. There is no doubt in this regard. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Nāgacaṇḍeśvara has been recounted to you. Now listen to Pratīhāreśvara.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Pratīhāreśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-8. O goddess, O my beloved one, know that Pratīhāreśvara Liṅga is the twentieth deity. Merely by seeing it one becomes wealthy here.

Formerly, due to your anger towards Dakṣa, you had cast off your life and you were born at the place of Himācala. O

1. 'Pratīhāra' means 'Door-keeper'. This chapter describes how Nandin, the doorkeeper of Śiva, got dismissed but was re-instated to his post by adoring this Liṅga. Hence the significance of the name Pratīhāreśvara.

beloved one, I got you once again.

O fair lady, sexual dalliance was commenced by me together with you. A hundred divine years and more passed off joyously. You were afflicted by Manmatha and overwhelmed with love.

Perceiving the long-drawn out dalliance, the Devas became agitated in their minds. Vāsava and others took the requisite and timely counsel together. "For a hundred divine years Rudra has been continuously engaged in sexual dalliance with Gaurī on the Mandara mountain full of charming caves. There is no doubt about this that the entire region of the three worlds will perish on account of the son who will be born out of the seed of these two. Certainly, we are not capable of bearing the brilliance thereof. Hence let that means be resorted to whereby this dalliance stops. The highly refulgent Bṛhaspati, the master of the Vedas and scriptures, the eminent preceptor of the Devas, found out the means in that respect:

9-16. 'May all the Devas go near Śiva and may the Lord himself be entreated respectfully. He shall not do that.' "

After deciding thus, O goddess, the Suras hurriedly went to the Mandara mountain. At the splendid doorway they halted in surprise. Nandin, the leader of the Gaṇas, was standing at the threshold alertly. O goddess, I had been indulging in dalliance with you. The access of the Devas to my side was very difficult. Then the Suras stood there thinking deeply.

A statement beneficial to them was made by Agni before them: "I shall assume the splendid form of a swan and go to the vicinity of Śiva after deceiving the gatekeeper."

He did so. O lady of pure smiles, he whispered into my ear in the form of a swan: "Indra and other Devas are standing restrained at the gateway." On hearing his words, I came to the doorway. Then they duly made obeisance to me. The Devas were asked by me: "What shall I do for you?"

17-22. They said, "May this terrific dalliance be discontinued." The suggestion was carried out by me accordingly. Devas returned to heaven. Thereafter Nandin was cursed by me, "Go to Bhūloka at once." Then being expelled by the curse he fell on the earth. His heart palpitated with gasps for breath. He was distressed and miserable with excitement evident from the eyes. Due to grief Nandin rolled on the ground and lamented, "I have been certainly deceived by Agni and

particularly by Indra. Was any evil deed done by me formerly?" That Gaṇa caught in that miserable plight was noticed by the Guardians of Quarters. They asked, "Wherefore, O Nandin, do you lament loudly?" Everything was narrated by Nandin to them and Mahākālavana was suggested as the remedy (under the circumstances, by them).

23-28. On hearing their words, Nandin experienced horripilation. Then that Gaṇa went to Mahākālavana, O goddess. Adopting the guise of a Kāpālika, he worshipped the deity in accordance with the injunctions. Then, O beloved one, an unembodied voice arose from the Liṅga: "O gatekeeper, due to your excellent devotion, liberation from the curse (is effected)." This (deity) was adored with great devotion by Nandin, the gatekeeper. Ever since then this deity is (known as) Pratīhāreśvara. O goddess. the power of Pratīhāreśvara has been recounted to you by me. He is the bestower of desired benefit on all people. If they (people) worship Lord Śiva named Pratīhāreśvara, they will not have separation or forced exit from their position even in a dream. By worshipping Pratīhāreśvara the sins committed in the course of seven births will perish entirely, whether big or small. If people mentally remember Śiva named Pratīhāreśvara, all the members of their families will undoubtedly go to Svarga.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

Kukkuṭeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-6. Know that the Liṅga called Kukkuṭeśvara is the twenty-first deity. Merely by seeing it, birth in the form of a non-human being can be averted.

There was a king named Kauśika, who was always seen during

1. Due to a curse King Kauśika used to become a cock at night. As per advice of Sage Gālava, Queen Viśālā took her husband to Mahākālavana and propitiated this Śiva Liṅga.

the daytime as one adorned with all ornamants but he used to become a cock at night. His sway extended over the entire earth including mountains, parks and jungles. As a result of his previous meritorious acts he inherited a flourishing kingdom with no irritants (enemies). The wife of that king was well-known by the name Viśālā. She had a shapely form and beautiful features. She had mastered all the sixty-four arts. That excellent king ruled the kingdom along with her. Though she was the greatest beloved of the king, esteemed greater than his own very vital breath, yet, O Pārvatī, he never had sexual intercourse with her. Due to this want of sexual pleasure, she was always grief-stricken.

7-11. The time passed on thus. She continued to be love-lorn though in the company of the king. That lady of large eyes, Viśālā, who was conversant with the cries (language) of all animals, once saw a pair of worms engaged in love-quarrel. The male creature was frequently trying to pacify his beloved mate: "O my beloved, I am your slave. O my beautiful one endowed with good colour and graceful charms, give me affectionate company. I am afflicted by the arrows of Cupid. I bow down my head to you. I make my obeisance to you with palms joined together in veneration. There is no other loving and loveable lady in the world on a par with you. Your complexion is of golden colour. You smile sweetly and are devoted to me. Though you are capable of speaking pleasing words, why do you behave like one angry with me? I am so very wretched. O auspicious lady, speak up, why you are wry-faced."

12-17. She too angrily retorted: "Why do you indulge in useless talk with me? You say, I delight your mind. Still, why do you set me aside and offer crumbs of sweetmeat to another female out of infatuation. You are a base creature."

The male creature repeatedly averred: "I will not do so again. I touch your feet truthfully. Be pleased with me. I have bowed down to you."

On hearing these words of his, she relented. The female surrendered herself for the loving dalliance of the male ant.

On observing this wonderful scene, the queen began to wail: "Fie upon my kingdom! Fie upon my fair complexion! Fie upon my youthful charms! I am not loved in return by my lover. I shall surely die."

After lamenting thus in diverse ways, heaving sighs of despair, the lady of large eyes raved like a mad woman. She went to the penance grove of Gālava. On seeing that sage, the abode of austerities, seated there in the steady observance of holy vows, the lady with a grief-stricken mind bowed down and said:

18-24. "O holy Brāhmaṇa, one great doubt assails my mind. Although my husband is very amiable and endowed with comely features, I am not aware of the reason why our union does not occur. It is he who went to the kingdom of women and conquered them in the war that ensued. He carried off by force eight excellent young women. But he does not display his love towards them. How is it, O holy one of excellent vows? I have plenty of horses and elephants; I have infinite wealth and foodgrains. All the people on the earth obey my commands. But what is that baneful act as a result of which the prime of my youth has gone in vain, O excellent Brāhmaṇa? The king does not engage himself in sexual communion. He is visible only during the daytime and not at night. Is this sin committed in this birth or in another world? O holy Brāhmaṇa, it behoves you to tell me the means of wiping off my evil deeds."

On hearing her words, Gālava spoke these words: "Listen, O dear daughter, as you are conversant with Dharma; listen to what occurred previously; what was done as a result of his childishness by this king resulting in his invisibility during the night.

25-31. Certainly your husband, the son of Vidūratha, had been a veritable meat-eater, indulging in crimes with mind engrossed in sensual pleasures. He was then excessively delighted with the meat of cocks. Many cocks were eaten by that prince. Many years thus elapsed when he continued to eat them. After a long time, the king of cocks, Tāmracūḍa, asked his ministers, 'What is the reason that cocks do not come here now?' The fact of the consumption (eating up) of cocks was mentioned by someone: 'Without any justifying reason, O king, all the cocks were eaten away by the wicked Kauśika, the son of Vidūratha.' The infuriated Tāmracūḍa pronounced the imprecation on the evil-hearted Kauśika: 'The awful disease of consumption will befall him.' Ever since then, the prince became feebler and feebler everyday. Medication only aggravated the disease which afflicted him much. Assailed thus by the consumptive disease, his mind felt inclined towards death. With

some such desire in his mind, he went to the hermitage of Vāmadeva. Repeatedly bowing down to Vāmadeva, he asked:

32-41. 'O holy Sir, what is that sin whereby the body wastes away day and night? This body of mine is being nourished by different kinds of meat. Yet why does this happen?'

Vāmadeva told him: 'Cocks were eaten by you. You have been cursed by Tāmracūḍa, the king of cocks. Seek refuge in him alone. He will tell you the remedy.'

Thereupon, the prince went to Tāmracūḍa. After visiting Tāmracūḍa he bowed down to him with great devotion. He said with palms joined in veneration: 'I have sought refuge in you. Save me. Being ignorant of the consequences, just for the sake of nutrition, O Lord, the cocks were eaten away by me. O Lord of Devas, it behoves you to forgive this sin of this miserable person.' Tāmracūḍa said: 'Since you implore, O king, you will have human form during the daytime. You shall be the administrator and protector of the worlds. You will only then be the Lord meting out punishment. But at night you shall be a cock bereft of the ability to enjoy pleasures.' Hence, O dear daughter, he is not seen because he assumes the form of the lower creature."

After hearing the words of that noble-souled Gālava, the queen, the lady of large eyes, honoured the excellent sage Gālava and devoutly asked him: "How is the curse to come to an end?" Gālava concentrated and saw through meditation and said:

42-48. "There is a Liṅga that averts the possibility of being born as a bird. It is in Mahākālavana situated to the east of Jvāleśvara Deva. Merely by perceiving it, the curse will come to an end."

She bowed down to the excellent sage and came hurriedly to the place where the tiger-like king was engaged in hitting and hunting many kinds of animals. The beloved one with tremulous eyes was viewed with blooming eyes and she was delighted with various kinds of tender nectarine words. Thereafter the fawn-eyed lady was asked by the king: "O my beloved, what should be done by me now? Let it be said." She said: "O great king, you accompany me to the meritorious Mahākālavana that destroys all evils." On hearing her words, the joyous king hastened. The king was led to the vicinity of this Liṅga. After adoring that Liṅga that averts the possibility of being born as a bird, O Pārvatī, the king stayed there along with his beloved.

49-58. That night he was not turned into a cock as always had been the case before. By the grace of Śiva, he became a charming one with a divine form. Kāma, the Lord of love, was excelled by him with an unparalleled refulgence. At that the king was struck with wonder. He thought, 'What is this power whereby I have been liberated from the curse that was unsurmountable.'

The king asked his beloved with a face resembling the full moon: "How was I liberated from the curse? By what meritorious deed?" Then she joyously conveyed the report in detail as had been mentioned by Gālava for the sake of getting rid of the curse. "O king, you are liberated from the curse by the power of this Liṅga." Again he propitiated that Liṅga and enjoyed pleasures on the earth for a long time. The king went to Svarga along with her and was eulogized by groups of Suras.

Ever since then, O goddess, that Liṅga became well-known by the name of Kukkuṭeśvara in this world. It bestows all desired benefits.

Those who worship the Liṅga named Kukkuṭeśvara are never again born as lower creatures. Nor will they suffer from separation. They will never fall into hell. They will have no misery, no old age and no fear. Men will not die prematurely, nor will they experience pain. They will be richly endowed with fair complexion and conjugal bliss in every Yuga.

If the devotees visit the Kukkuṭeśvara Liṅga on the fourteenth lunar day, all the Pitṛs in their families will become liberated, whether they have fallen into the hell or are born as lower creatures, or as animals or as trees.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

Karkaṭeśvara[1]

Śrī Viśvanātha said:

1. Know that the Liṅga known as Karkaṭeśvara is the twenty-second deity. Merely by seeing it, birth as lower creatures is averted.

2-7. Formerly, in the Bṛhat Kalpa there was a king who was an embodiment of righteousness. He was a friend of Indra and thousands of Daityas were killed by him. The moon, the sun and other luminaries were rendered lustreless by his refulgence. In war, enemies were killed by him and the subjects were duly protected. He could adopt any form as he wished. He was never defeated in wars. He had a wife named Bhānumatī. She was the most beautiful lady in all the three worlds. She was the senior queen and dearer to the king than his own vital breaths. Among ten thousand ladies, she shone like Goddess Śrī. The king was never free from the attendance of a thousand kings.

Once in a secluded spot, he asked his priest Vaśiṣṭha, the excellent sage. He was experiencing a great surprise in his mind: "O holy Sir, what is that great Dharma whereby I possess the most excellent fortune? How is it that an extensive, unbearable refulgence is seen in me?"

Vaśiṣṭha said:

8-16. O king, formerly you were born in the Śūdra caste. You had a number of defects and as an evil-hearted one you lived for many years along with this wicked lady as your wife.

You used to be overwhelmed with great fury. Harsh words were always uttered in your speech. You took every opportunity to misappropriate assets of Brāhmaṇas. You always censured the Vedas. Ever were you jealous, O king, and always you were guilty of breach of trust. In due course, you died and fell into hell. For fifteen years you were burned in the hell

1. A criminal Śūdra born as a crab was picked up by a crow. The crab bit the crow which dropped it. The crab fell near this Śiva Liṅga and died. Due to the vicinity of this Śiva Liṅga, the crab was born as a great king.

Tāmrabhrāṣṭra. In the hells of Raurava, Kumbhīpāka and Mahāraurava you were cut to very minute pieces of the size of a gingelly seed and blown in moulds. O king, you were torn asunder in Asipatra. In order to wipe off the remnant of your sins, you were brought down to the earth by Yama, after assigning you the form of a crab. O king, there is a famous lake of Śiva in the excellent Mahākālavana. It is well-known that whatever is offered therein such as Dāna, Japa, Homa or adoration of the deities and such other holy rites shall become everlasting in the benefit. You were deposited there at that time in view of the future meritorious results. O king, you remained there for five years.

17-26. Once, you went to the bank of the lake slowly in order to sport about. A crow saw you and seized you with its beak. Lifting you, it flew up into the sky. With your claws and feet you severely attacked it. The helpless and excessively pained crow dropped you down from its beak in the precincts of a temple of Śiva, O goddess, that yields much merit and lies to the east of Svargadvāra. You were too much afflicted by that fall, over and above your pain due to the pressure within the beak. In the presence of Lord Parameṣṭhin you died. The moment the decaying body of the crab was cast off you took up a divine body embellished with divine ornaments. Due to the greatness of that Liṅga you became a leading Vidyādhara honoured and adored by Gaṇeśvaras. Proceeding towards Svarga by means of an aerial chariot that could go anywhere (you) pleased, you were respectfully asked about by groups of Suras: "Who is this great soul that goes along the divine path of the firmament?" Thereupon all the details of what occurred earlier to the end of liberation from the state (birth) of crab were narrated to the Suras by the Rudragaṇa. "O eminent Devas, this is the power of that Liṅga," he concluded. The Devas said immediately: "Since the heavenly pleasure was attained by him after being liberated from the birth of crab by the power of this Liṅga, this deity shall be known by the name Karkaṭeśvara all over the world.

27-32. Ever since then this deity has been named Karkaṭeśvara. O king, great pleasures were enjoyed by you in Svarga as much as you wished. You have come once again to the earth. You have inherited a kingdom without any irritant. Everything has

befallen you by the greatness of that Liṅga. Hence, O king, hasten to propitiate that Liṅga once more."

At these words of Vaśiṣṭha, the king obtained the power of *Jātismaratva* (i.e., of remembering previous births and the details thereof). All the previous activities were remembered by the king. He again went there and adored that Liṅga with concentration, O Pārvatī. He got merged into that Liṅga along with his own body.

Those who always devoutly worship the deity named Karkaṭeśvara enjoy worldly pleasures for a long time on the earth and ultimately attain the greatest goal.

Listen to the merit of those who invariably visit Lord Karkaṭeśvara on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day. On their death, they go to my city along with the members of twenty-one generations of their families, by means of aerial chariots shining with solar splendour and capable of fulfilling all desires. There they stay for hundreds of crores of Kalpas enjoying great divine pleasures along with thousands of women of pleasing features, who will be serving them. At the close of that they will stay in Viṣṇu's abode for an equal period with various Vaiṣṇava pleasures. They will be served by thousands of women. From Viṣṇuloka they will pass over to Brahmaloka. After enjoying different kinds of pleasures, they will attain the greatest region. Due to the pilgrimage to Karkaṭeśvara Deva, one gets that benefit which usually accrues from ten horse sacrifices.

Listen to the glory of Meghanādeśvara.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

Meghanādeśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-10. O goddess, listen to (the story of) Meghanādeśvara Liṅga, the twenty-third deity. Merely by seeing it, all the Siddhis are attained.

1. The wicked rule of King Madāndha caused a terrible drought. Gods approached Viṣṇu who directed them to this Liṅga. By propitiating this Liṅga, a heavy shower was caused by thundering clouds. Hence the name of this Liṅga.

O great goddess, *Yoga* and *Kṣema* (acquisition and security of things acquired), and good rainfall have kings as their cause. The subjects, pestilences, death, fears, Kṛtayuga, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kaliyuga—all these have kings at their root. A king is the basic cause of Dharma, O Pārvatī. Once in this world there was a king named Madāndha. He was wicked and egotistic. He was a thorn unto Devas and Brāhmaṇas. He ruled during the period of transition between Dvāpara and Kali. Due to his fault, O comely lady, there was a great drought extending to twelve years. Indra, the god of rain, did not bring in the showers. The Lord was antagonistic. The clusters of clouds did not appear from anywhere even at the close of the nights. There was but little trickle of water in the rivers. In some places, the rivers completely disappeared. They had to desist from the performance of Yajñas, study of Vedas, utterance of Vaṣaṭ and other auspicious words and phrases. Agricultural enterprises, breeding of cows and cattle, trading activities—all became doomed. There was chaos among people who were reduced to bare skeletons. Cities were practically deserted and void. Rural settlements were reduced to ashes. In the absence of cows, goats, horses and buffaloes, people began to eat one another. Brāhmaṇas in their extreme misery left off their penance groves and hermitages and wandered here and there. They became doomed, ruined and defunct.

11-20. The entire creation including mobile and immobile ones, became eradicated. In the meantime, Śakra and other Devas too became excessively frightened. They sought refuge in Lord Janārdana, the Lord of Devas, worthy of being a refuge.

There is the charming Śvetadvīpa (White Island) on the Northern shore of the Ocean of Milk. It is splendid and the qualities of the worlds of Brahmā and others cannot be compared to those of this Śvetadvīpa. It is always pleasing, quiescent and as lustrous as a crore of suns. The palaces, beds and seats can be placed anywhere according to one's wishes. It is brightened by precious stones such as diamond, sapphire, ruby, lunar crystal, etc. It is perfectly free from all kinds of ailments leading to old age and fear of death. In that island, O goddess, the Lord as refulgent as a crore suns was present.

The Devas prostrated before him with eight limbs touching the ground. Then they eulogized: "You alone are Brahmā, Rudra and Mahendra, the most excellent one among Devas.

You are the creator and annihilator of the worlds, the immutable source of origin. You are thus the greatest truth, the greatest austerity, the greatest and holiest path; O Lord, you are the greatest Yajña, the greatest *Hautra* (worthy of being adored by Homa), the greatest abode. They call you the greatest Puruṣa." Thus the Lord of Devas was eulogized by them, O lady of excellent countenance. Thereupon Kṛṣṇa asked the Devas: "O Suras, what can I do unto you?" It was submitted thus to Hari by the Devas who were afflicted by the drought: "O Lord, may the means be told so that there shall be contentment and nourishment." After meditating Keśava said:

21-31. "O Devas, ye all do go to the splendid Mahākālavana. Formerly a Liṅga that causes shower was installed there by the clouds. All rain-producing (showering) clouds are in that Liṅga. Due to the greatness of that Liṅga there will be rainfall surely. O Suras, it is situated to the north-east of Lord Pratīhāreśvara."

O Pārvatī, on hearing the words of Vāsudeva the Devas came to Mahākālavana where the excellent Liṅga was present. Seeing the charming deity they eulogized with great devotion: "Obeisance to you, O Maheśa. Obeisance to the infinite one, to the garlanded one. Obeisance to you of the fiery form. Obeisance to the beautiful one. Obeisance to Yoga, to Veda; obeisance to you with tawny matted hairs. Obeisance to the Lord with infinite knowledge as (your) body. Obeisance to the powerful Lord incarnate. Obeisance to the one of bright, boisterous laughter. Obeisance to the Lord in the form of peacock. Obeisance to you, the benefactor. Obeisance to the Pināka-wielding one. Obeisance to the destroyer, to the three-eyed one conducive to the welfare (of the world). Obeisance to you. Obeisance to you, the multiformed one. Obeisance to you of incomprehensible form. Obeisance to the embodiment of Yoga. Obeisance to you always. O Śarva, O Lord, the entire world is lost. Everything is afflicted with drought. Save us who have sought refuge in you, by means of excellent rain, O Lord of the chiefs of Devas."

In the meantime, the clouds of the season with the refulgence of shining coal rose up from the middle of the Liṅga making the firmament reverberate. Clashing and dashing one another with great speed they showered rain on the earth.

32-41. Everything became lustreless. Nothing was clearly

seen. The ten quarters shone with thick dense darkness overspreading them. They were delighted with the greatness of the Lord of Devas. The Devas attained great happiness. All those excellent ones appeared as though they imbibed nectar. Thereafter the clouds disappeared reducing the darkness. Cool breezes blew. The ten quarters became calm. The brilliant constellations of pure lustre circumambulated the Moon. The Planets ceased to be malefic. The seas became calmed down. By the power of this Liṅga great sages became free from grief; Gandharvas sang sweetly. There was creation once again by the power of the Liṅga. They adored it and gave it a name true to its meaning. The Devas became much pleased on observing the greatness of this Liṅga. Its name will be Meghanādeśvara.

O my beloved one, the narrative of Meghanādeśvara has been recounted to you. Men all over the earth will become contented and blessed by its power. By seeing this Liṅga, there shall be shower as one desires. One who bathes the Liṅga is honoured in Rudraloka for thousands of crores of Kalpas and hundreds of crores of Kalpas. O Pārvatī, even there will be superabundance of shower on the earth, where its (Liṅga's) glory is read and recited.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

Mahālayeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-8. O highly fortunate one, Mahālayeśvara is the splendid twenty-fourth deity. Formerly I was asked by you thus: "O Lord, this has been heard by me that the three worlds including the mobile and immobile beings beginning with Brahmā and ending with a blade of grass, were created, upheld and pervaded by you, by you alone, the pure one, the great omnipresent soul. The silence-observing, immutable sages were very much pleased and joyous. O Maheśvara, they call you the cause of the three worlds. The three worlds beginning with Bhūḥ and Bhuvaḥ

1. This Liṅga is called Mahālayeśvasa as everything in the universe merged into this Liṅga at the time of Pralaya.

have been created by you. All that has to be created, that has already been created and that has been dissolved, extends to thousands. The creation, sustenance and destruction of Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Sages, Cāraṇas and Serpents have been witnessed by you time and again. But where do you station yourself, O Lord, and re-create the universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings? You annihilate this sportingly. It behoves you to mention this: What is this Mahālaya existing in the form of a planet pertaining to Rudra, wherein the entire aggregate of the three worlds beginning with Bhūḥ and Bhuvaḥ has been held by you?" Now I shall tell you. Listen with attention.

9-19. At the end of Pralaya, all the elements beginning with earth, were held in one place that is Mahālaya in Mahākālavana. The spot named Mahālaya is excessively delightful to me. It is splendid and auspicious. Its excellence surpasses that of Brahmaloka and other worlds. A Liṅga identical with the supreme Brahman stands there for ever. It is in the middle of that Liṅga that all the mobile and immobile beings are retained. Brahmā and other Devas and Viṣṇu too are all stationed there. O goddess, everything abides in the space within the Liṅga. From that Liṅga arose the great Ātman, Mahāmati (the Cosmic Intellect), Bhūtādi (the Principle Mahat), Ahaṁkāra (the great Ego), Viṣṇu and Śaṁbhu, O Pārvatī. Similarly wisdom, intelligence, fortitude, fame, memory, bashfulness and Sarasvatī (goddess of speech) sprang from it. It has hands and feet everywhere; it has eyes, heads and faces everywhere. It has ears everywhere. It pervades everything in the world and it stands supreme. From this were born the Liṅgas, the five great Bhūtas viz. earth, wind, ether, water and fire. They get dissolved there. Just as earth, water, and firmament so also the four kinds of living organisms viz. *Aṇḍaja* ('born of eggs'), the *Udbhijja* (trees etc. that pierce the ground and come out), *Svedaja* (sweat-born ones, worms etc.) and *Jarāyuja* (viviparous ones). The significant marks of the fourfold birth are seen in this same Liṅga. *Tapas, Karman, Puṇya, Vrata, Dāna, Rajas, Sattva* and *Tamas*—all these originate from that Liṅga. In it abides the true refulgence, the eternal Brahman. So also the subtle unmanifest cause which is of the nature of both *Sat* and *Asat,* from which was born Pitāmaha

(Grandfather i.e. Brahmā), the Sole Prajāpati (Patriarch).

20-25. Viśvedevas, Ādityas, Vasus, Aśvins, Yakṣas, Sādhyas, Piśācas, Guhyakas, Pitṛs, Āpaḥ (waters), heaven, earth, wind, ether, quarters, years, seasons, months, fortnights, days (i.e. daytime and night), indeed everything else was born with the Lokas as witness. Whatever is visible now becomes merged therein. Hence it is famous in all the three worlds by the name Mahālaya. It is situated to the south of Muktīśvara Deva. A man who worships that Mahālaya Liṅga as the form of Rudra, shall become the conqueror of the three worlds and be always renowned. When the great Īśvara, the meritorious Mahālayeśvara, is adored with great devotion, O blessed one, all the Devas too are worshipped, because he is worshipped by them also.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

Muktīśvara

Śrī Hara said:

1. O my beloved goddess, know that Muktīśvara Liṅga is the twenty-fifth deity. Merely by seeing it, O Pārvatī, one gets liberated.

2-8. Formerly in the Rāthantara Kalpa, there was an excellent Brāhmaṇa named Mukti. O blessed one, he was a person of consecrated soul with all the sense-organs fully conquered. In the beautiful Mahākālavana near Mahākāla there is the excellent Mukti Liṅga. He used to sit there engrossed in Yogic practice. Controlling (the craving for) food, he performed penance for thirteen years.

Once he went to the great river Śiprā, the meritorious favourite of Brāhmaṇas, the destroyer of great sins. He went to the river for his ablution.

After concluding his holy bath, the Brāhmaṇa remained seated performing Japa (utterance of Mantras). He saw a hunter with a big bow in his hand coming towards him. He looked terrible with red eyes and shouting something as though he wanted to kill him with a desire to take away his bark garments.

On seeing that slayer of Brāhmaṇas, this Brāhmaṇa became agitated with fear. But he remained there itself meditating on Lord Nārāyaṇa.

On seeing the Brāhmaṇa, the hunter was afraid as it were because Hari (Lord Viṣṇu, lion) had gone deep into him. He set aside the bow and arrows and spoke these words:

The Hunter said:

9-17. O holy Sir, I came here desirous of killing you. Now, on seeing you with excessive refulgence, my intellect has come to itself (become sensible).

I am a householder with a large family. For the sake of sustenance, O holy Sir, I had to kill thousands of Brāhmaṇas and ten thousands of women. Hitherto my mind has not wavered or pained. Now I wish to perform a penance near you. It behoves you to grant me your favour by offering suitable instructions.

Though the hunter told him all these things, the eminent Brāhmaṇa did not reply at all, thinking that that was a Brāhmaṇa-slayer of evil activities.

Though no reply was received that pious hunter stood there itself. He took his bath immediately and came near the Mukti Liṅga. After seeing the eternal Lord in the company of the Brāhmaṇa, he suddenly assumed a divine body and merged himself into that Liṅga.

On seeing that miracle, Mukti, the Brāhmaṇa thought within himself, O lady of excellent countenance: 'Salvation has been attained suddenly by a hunter defiled by sins and devoid of holy meditation. As for me, I (for one) had performed a great penance very difficult (for ordinary persons). The great form (Śiva) has not been realized nor is salvation obtained.'

After thinking thus with detachment and disgust for worldly pleasures, the eminent Brāhmaṇa took a dip under water and performed severe penance.

18-28. After some time, O chaste lady, a hungry tiger came to that river. It attempted to kill him. When the tiger was about to seize the Brāhmaṇa moving about under the water, he uttered the words 'Obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.'

The Mantra was heard by the tiger who instantly cast off his

vital breath and became a splendid Puruṣa (Being, Person) wear-ing divine garments. O goddess, he was embellished with divine ornaments and equipped with the refulgence of divine jewellery. He said: "I am going to that place where eternal Viṣṇu is present. Due to your favour, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, I am rid of the curse and free from ailments."

When this was spoken, the Brāhmaṇa said: "O great being, who are you?" He said: "In my former birth I was an eminent king of great exploits, famous by the name Dīrghabāhu. I was a master of all pious rites. I knew the Vedas and Śāstras of diverse kinds. I was proud that I knew what was auspicious and what was inauspicious, that I was an omniscient one on the surface of the earth. I had nothing to do with Brāhmaṇas. What worthless ones are these Brāhmaṇas! On account of this, one day all the Brāhmaṇas became angry. They blasted an inescapable curse upon me: 'For insulting Brāhmaṇas you will become a flesh-eating terrible tiger of ruthless nature.' O excellent Brāhmaṇa, see; as time was against me I became so. On being told thus formerly by the Brāhmaṇas who had mastered the Vedas, the inescapable Brāhmaṇical imprecation was blasted on me, O excellent Brāhmaṇa. Then, O sage, those Brāhmaṇas were bowed to by me and requested to forgive me. O Brāhmaṇa, with faltering words I told them thus:

29-41. 'I know the fiery spiritual power of Brāhmaṇas and the great glory of those intelligent ones. It was by them that the ocean was angrily rendered saline and impotable.

So also, I know the refulgence of the sages of radiant austerity and purified souls. The fire of their anger has not subsided in Kaṇḍaka till today.

Since he insulted and dishonoured the Brāhmaṇas, the evil-natured Vātāpi, the great cruel Asura, came across Sage Agasti and got digested in his body.

For another reason, Vahni (Fire-god) was rendered omnivorous by Bhṛgu. Śakra was formerly converted into one with a thousand vaginas by Gautama.

Due to the insurmountable curse of a Brāhmaṇa Keśava had to take ten births (incarnations). Garuḍa was made the Lord of birds by Vālakhilyas who were pleased. After foiling (the attack with) Kuliśa (thunderbolt), Cyavana, the noble soul, made Aśvins, the physicians of Devas, qualified to drink Soma juice.

With the favour of Dattātreya, a thousand arms were acquired by Kārtavīryārjuna, which is something very difficult for others.

Formerly the heaven-dwellers along with Indra were saved by Vaśiṣṭha. Sound happiness, fame, longevity, renown and strength—the sources of origin for these are Brāhmaṇas.

All the Lords of Lokāloka have Brāhmaṇas as their mentors. These are kings of Soma juice, masters of happiness and misery.

They are visible lords and if infuriated, they may reduce the entire universe to ashes. Instances of the prowess of the expounders of Brahman we hear in plenty.

Their anger is unbounded and sudden. Their attitude of confidence is also sudden. Due to the anger of leading Brāhmaṇas I experienced hellish torture.

One should save one's glory and prosperity from anger; wealth from one having envy; learning from pride and insult; and oneself from error. O eminent Brāhmaṇas, it behoves you to forgive me because I have sought refuge in you. A sin has been committed by me due to ignorance and pride of royalty as ordained by fate.'

42-49. Then all the Brāhmaṇas were pleased. They joyously told me this: 'O king, you shall be a flesh-eater for some time. After taking his bath in the meritorious Śiprā, an excellent Brāhmaṇa who takes food once in six days, will stand in front of you. In the form of a tiger you may be desirous of seizing him and he moving about under the water may utter 'Obeisance to Nārāyaṇa'. Then you will be liberated.'

Incidentally the Mantra (*Obeisance to Nārāyaṇa*) was uttered by you. It was heard by me from you. This is the result thereof. O sage of holy Vratas, with your favour I became one endowed with a divine body. Hence I have become blessed and contented, O holy Sir, due to your sight. A boon may be received from me even if there is doubt in your heart. Out with it, O excellent Brāhmaṇa. I shall get everything accomplished for you. I wish to get freed from indebtedness to you by making to you a gift of sound advice." On hearing these words of the person endowed with a divine body, that Brāhmaṇa's lotus-like face became full-blown and he said with greatest pleasure:

50-55. "Today my knowledge has become fruitful; today

my penance has borne fruit; today my tongue has become fruitful; today my eye has become fruitful. What has been uttered by the Lord has been heard. Embodied beings see only after taking the holy dip. Earlier you had the form of a tiger in your body, O one having practiced excellent penance. Now the body is refulgent, the eternal form of Brahman. If I am worthy of being blessed, if it behoves you to do so, I wish to know the reason which has been in my heart for a long time. O blessed one, how is it that salvation has not been obtained by me, desirous of salvation, despite my effort, though I have been engaged in the practice of Yogic exercises for thirteen years? It is highly surprising because it has not been obtained even through very severe austerities difficult for others. But salvation was obtained even by that hunter in an instant. My doubt is in regard to this. What is the reason? Let it be explained clearly."

56-63. On hearing his words, he spoke thus: "I will tell the means of salvation. It is a secret to be guarded. O sage, though salvation is extremely difficult to attain, it is easily and quickly obtained by adoring Mahādeva. This has been stated by the ancient learned men and noble souls. O Brāhmaṇa, listen with mental concentration. Make genuine effort according to my direction, O excellent Brāhmaṇa. Thereby you will obtain salvation.

When I had been cursed by those Brāhmaṇas I propitiated them very much. Out of genuine sympathy for me they said: 'O king, your salvation will definitely take place. In Mahākālavana there is an excellent Brāhmaṇa Mukti who is desirous of salvation. He is endowed with penance. He will put you certain questions. You will recount to him the (glory of) Muktīśvara Liṅga. In this manner your salvation and the salvation of that Mukti will take place. The Karma recorded before never leaves embodied beings. This is the procedure laid down by the creator in regard to Karmas.'

On hearing his words, that Brāhmaṇa, the foremost among the knowers of Brahman rose up from within the water and spoke these words:

64-72. 'Luckily you have come, O king. It is fortunate that I had the contact with you. Men like this, the guides to salvation, are very rare indeed.' "

After saying this the king and the Brāhmaṇa approached Mukti Liṅga for perceiving it. O lady of wide eyes, after perceiving the eternal Lord both of them merged themselves into that Liṅga along with their bodies at that very instant.' "

Such is the glory (of Mukti Liṅga), O goddess. It has been recounted to you by me. Salvation results by touching this Liṅga and not otherwise. Those who always adore the eternal Mukti Liṅga with devotion, attain the greatest goal though they may be defiled by sins.

O foolish ones, of what avail are austerities? Of what avail are *Dānas* and religious observances? Do visit the Muti Liṅga that bestows salvation. The groups of Devas do not know, nor Asuras, nor the great sages. O lady of wide eyes, this is the greatest form free from impurities which has the lustre of granite. Even the creator himself does not know my supreme form, nor Viṣṇu, nor the excellent Devas. O my beloved, whence can the sages or others know? Śuka and others meditate on this form alone, seen as refulgence in the form of the Liṅga, O lady of renown. With my blessing, Yogins purified through many births may enter my body that bestows salvation.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

Someśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-6. Know, O goddess, that the great Someśvara Liṅga is the twenty-sixth deity. Merely by seeing it a man becomes free from dispute.

The glorious one named Atri, a mental son of Brahmā, became Prajāpati (Creator and Patriarch), O goddess, in the Kalpa named Vārāha. His son was Soma. Dakṣa had twenty-seven daughters who were well-known as Dākṣāyaṇīs. They are to be known as the wives of Soma (Moon). The most excellent

1. For the glorification of this Liṅga, two legends about the Moon-god are modified and amalgamated. Soma got his original glory due to propitiation of this Liṅga.

one among them was Rohiṇī. We heard that he preferred to resort only to her and not to others. The others approached Dakṣa and told him the fact as it was. Dakṣa arrived and advised him. He (Soma) did not do so. When though prevented he did not remain steady, Dakṣa became angry, O beloved. Being infuriated he cursed Soma: "Vanish quickly."

7-17. On being cursed thus, Soma vanished. Soma cursed Dakṣa: "You too will, without attaining multiplicity in this very body and will acquire an aquatic body." Hence Brahmaputra (Brahmā's son) Dakṣa is sung about as Prācetasa ('son of Varuṇa or Pracetas') also. Thus due to the curse of Dakṣa Soma disappeared.

Devas, Nāgas, Yakṣas and Gandharvas along with Pitṛs went to the abode of Brahmā and approached Brahmā, the son of Virāṭ. Bowing down repeatedly they submitted to him: "O holy Sir, you are self-born, the primordial creator of all living beings. You are the creator of Havyas and Kavyas. Save us who have sought refuge in you."

On hearing the words of the Devas and understanding (their grievances), the Lord Creator consoled the Suras by means of well-composed words: "O Devas, he has to reap the fruit of his action certainly. The end of the curse will be brought about only by Lord Viṣṇu."

On hearing these words of the Lotus-born One, the Devas sought refuge in Viṣṇu worthy of being an asylum. O goddess, accompanied by Brahmā, they prayed with mental concentration: "Obeisance to you, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas; obeisance to you, O conceiver of the universe. Obeisance to you, O Hṛṣīkeśa, O ancestor of great men (or primordial great man). O Nārāyaṇa, O Lord of the universe, the Devas have sought refuge in you. Verily you are our great object of meditation. Indeed, you are our great preceptor. Indeed, you are our great Lord, of Brahmā and others, O most excellent one among the Suras. Soma has disappeared, O Janārdana, because of the curse of Dakṣa. O Lord, in the absence of Soma all the medicinal herbs have been destroyed on the earth." On hearing their words Viṣṇu spoke thus:

18-30. "Give up your fear, O immortal ones; I grant you freedom from fear. Undoubtedly I shall bring back the Moon-god that has disappeared." After saying thus and sending away

the leading Devas, the Wielder of the Conch, Discus and Club immediately remembered Soma. When he did not come even after being remembered, Janārdana became angry. The Lord, the Primordial Being, spoke to Brahmā: "Let the Milk Ocean be churned by the Devas and the groups of Asuras. As the great ocean is churned, Candra will reappear. Thereby you will obtain Amṛta (Nectar) and different kinds of jewels also."

O Pārvatī, on hearing those words of Vāsudeva, the Devas as well as Asuras and Dānavas began to churn the ocean, the storehouse of waters, making the Mandara mountain the churning rod and Vāsuki the rope for the rod (for regaining Soma), O goddess. On account of their great eagerness to preserve their dignity the Asuras and Dānavas caught hold of the head (mouth) portion of the king of serpents. All the Devas collectively remained at the tail end. That was because, it was there that Lord Nārāyaṇa remained.

He raised the hoods frequently and let them down. When the ocean was churned, there was a loud report. Many of the aquatic animals were crushed by the great mountain. Hundreds and thousands of them got lost. When the ocean was churned with the effort of Keśava, O goddess, the graciousminded, brilliant and cool-rayed Soma emerged from within. It is this Vidhu, O lady of renown, upon whom all these, viz, Devas, human beings, Pitṛs, trees and medicinal herbs, depend. On seeing him born again Lord Keśava said: "O Candra, protect these subjects. Be the seniormost one of the universe."

31-39. Thus Śaśin was asked by Vāsudeva to protect the subjects. Formerly Soma who had disappeared, entered a dense forest. To him Nārada quickly narrated everything. On hearing the words of the noble-souled, celestial sage, Nārada, Soma who had been afflicted by the curse of Dakṣa and had vanished, O goddess, sought refuge in Brahmā Parameṣṭhin.

After going there, he mentioned with choked and faltering voice the details of the curse. Brahmā spoke on hearing the words of the earlier Candra: "This first son of mine was troubled much by Śaśin. What is to be done by me with the fresh one born of the ocean? Much strength has been granted to this Candramas by Viṣṇu. Hence I shall go there where Lord Janārdana is present."

On seeing him Brahmā spoke to Viṣṇu, the slayer of Madhu:

"It was at your bidding that this Candra was created by me. But he has been afflicted by the fresh one." On being told thus by Brahmā, O goddess, Vāsudeva, the Lord of the universe, mentioned the same event again and again to Brahmā. As for Brahmā, it was for the earlier Candra that he bowed down, stood with palms joined in reverence and eulogized Viṣṇu, to whom obeisance is made by all the worlds.

40-44. "Obeisance, O Kṛṣṇa; obeisance, O Viṣṇu; obeisance, O Jiṣṇu; obeisance; obeisance. Obeisance, O Vāmana, O Govinda, obeisance, O Ananta (Infinite one); obeisance, O Acyuta. Be victorious, O Govinda; of magnanimous virtues. Be victorious, O Viṣṇu. Be victorious, O Padmanābha. Be victorious, O Sarvādya (one who is primordial), O Lord wielding the mace. Be victorious, O Lord of the universe, O Viśvamūrti (the omniformed one)."

On being eulogized thus by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds, O goddess, he looked at Soma who was nearby and spoke thus: "Go to the excellent Mahākālavana at my behest, O Soma. There is a highly refulgent Liṅga to the north of Mukti Liṅga. Propitiate it assiduously. It will grant you a physical body."

On being told thus repeatedly by Vāsudeva and Brahmā, O great goddess, he came to the excellent Mahākālavana. O lady of excellent holy vows, after seeing the Liṅga he eulogized by means of this prayer:

Candra said:

45-53. Obeisance to the supreme Lord of Devas, to the three-eyed great Ātman, to the Lord with red and tawny eyes and a coronet of matted hairs; obeisance to the Lord served by Bhūtas (goblins) and Vetālas (ghosts), to the trident-bearing great Lord. Obeisance to the Lord indulging in terrible boisterous laughter. Obeisance to Sthāṇu having matted hairs. Obeisance to one who smashed the teeth of Pūṣan; to the slayer of Andhaka. Obeisance to the Lord with the excellent abode at Kailāsa. Obeisance to you, the Lord of all gods. Obeisance to the Lord with tresses of hairs raised up hideously; obeisance, obeisance to Bhairava (the terrible). Obeisance to the Lord as terrible as the flames of fire; obeisance to the Lord

who dispel the unholy activities of Kali. Obeisance to the destroyer of Dāruvana; to the wielder of sharp-edged trident; obeisance to the Lord who have made lordly serpents your bracelets and necklace; obeisance to the trident-bearing one. Obeisance to the Lord with a terrible staff in your hand; to the Lord with the sub-marine fire as mouth. Obeisance, obeisance to you who can be understood only through Vedānta. Obeisance, obeisance to you, O Yajñamūrti ('the embodiment of Yajña'). Obeisance to the Lord who destroyed Dakṣa's Yajña; to the Lord causing fear to the universe. Obeisance to Viśveśvara, to the Lord Śaṁbhu who are gross and subtle. Obeisance to you with matted hairs, to the awful one, to the Lord of all."

Thus eulogized by Candra who had vanished, Mahādeva, in the form of the Liṅga, became pleased and spoke these words: "I am pleased with this prayer. Tell me, O Soma, what you wish. There is no doubt about this that I will accomplish everything that you desire."

Soma said:

54-64. If I am to be blessed, O Lord, if you are pleased with me, O Maheśvara, with your favour I wish to carry out my official duty with a physical form, with due splendour, with refulgence and with beauty.

Instantly it was said by the Liṅga: "O Rajanīkara, let it be so." That was attained by Dvijarāja (Moon) with the favour of this Liṅga. O great goddess, since the Lord of Devas was propitiated by Soma, the deity is well-known by the name Someśvara all over the three worlds. O great goddess, those who worship the great Lord Someśvara are men of meritorious deeds. Those men do attain the greatest region. O beloved one, a man who devoutly visits the Someśvara Liṅga becomes rid of the misery of births and the likes and gets merged within me.

Those men by whom Lord Someśvara is not visited nor adored are brutes. What is the use of their life in the world? In this excessively terrible world confused and chaotic due to the fear of births and ailments, Someśvara is the sole Lord worthy of being adored. He is the destroyer of Kuṣṭha Roga (leprosy).

In this world he alone by whom Someśvara is adored, is meritorious; the entire family is embellished by him; he is the basic support of all the worlds.

By worshipping Someśa but once with Bilva leaves, a man shall stay in my world for a long time after fearlessly and without ailments enjoying pleasures and ultimately be liberated.

A man who worships Someśvara Liṅga devoutly with golden flowers, O my beloved goddess, attains the greatest goal.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Someśvara deity has been recounted to you. Listen to (the glory of) Anarakeśvara.

CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

Anarakeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-12. O goddess, the Liṅga named Anarakeśvara is the twenty-seventh deity. If it is only seen, Naraka (hell) is not seen even in dreams.

O goddess, in the Kaliyuga of an earlier Kalpa named Vārāha, truthfulness became defunct on account of the adverse nature of the times. The people became bereft of moral restraints. They were atheists, without proper abodes, supportless. The (system of) various castes and stages of life became disturbed. People began to deceive one another. Brāhmaṇas did not worship Devas. They pursued despicable avocations. The men were overwhelmed with covetousness and delusion. They were too lascivious. They became extremely inimical and engaged them-

1. Though this deity is described in the previous (Āvantya) Khaṇḍa, the legend of Nimi is used to confirm its sanctifying nature. Nimi is a very respectable king in Buddhist, Jaina and Brāhmaṇical traditions, though this legend about him is not found in Jaina, Buddhist and other Brāhmaṇical Purāṇas. Nimi's offer to stay in hell till all hellish beings are relieved smacks of a Buddhist Bodhisattva. That a Kalā (1/16 part) of Nimi's merit of seeing Lord Anarakeśvara is enough to redeem all *jīvas* from hell, shows the greatness of the merit of visiting/serving Anarakeśvara.

selves in mutual destruction. Yajñas, study of the Vedas, offerings of balls of rice and libations (to Pitṛs)—everything fell into disuse. Brāhmaṇas began to eat everything. They engaged themselves in false argumentations. Traṇsaction of buying and selling the merchandise was carried through false weights and measures. O my beloved, men were seen with greying hairs (even) in their sixteenth year. Life expectancy of men began to decline. Men and women came to such a stage.

On account of their sins, they began to fall into hells they deserved. Their heads were pierced with hatchets. Others were cut with saws. With pincers and tongs blazing like fire their eyes were plucked out and pierced with sharp red-hot iron nails thrust into them. They were attacked with boulders and peaks of hills. Rocks were ruthlessly used to pulverise them. They were cast into blazing abysmal pits. They were burned in heaps of fires. Others were hung with faces downwards into filth and rubbish. They were struck and pounded with huge batons and sticks held in the hands. They were tied with iron fetters and kept suspended with faces down. Being hurled into the air they kept on wailing and crying piteously.

13-21. Men were bitten and eaten by worms, black bees, flies with sharp stings, mosquitoes and ruthless birds with beaks as hard as steel. Some of those who were hewn and cut thus used to run about for water in their acute thirst. But fierce guards of Yama compelled them to drink their own urine and made them agitated through forceful smites. Only those limbs with which heinous crimes were committed by persons on the earth were subjected to infliction of injuries by the guards in charge of tortures. The eyes of those persons who see the preceptor, Devas and Brāhmaṇas with angry looks and the wives of others with evil eyes are pierced and plucked out through iron spikes and rods. The ears of those who had passively listened to the wilful abuses and censures of preceptors, friends, deities and chaste women were bored with iron rods. Then they were scraped with sharp weapons and then heated nails were thrust in. Afterwards they were rapidly struck with iron bars. The tongues and mouths of those men who had been indulging in calumniation of others and speaking harsh words to preceptors and mothers were cut and served by means of darts dazzling like fire, and sharp-pointed rods

were thrust into their mouths. Thereafter wind was forced into them. The limbs of those men of evil conduct who plucked flowers and leaves in the gardens or parks, specially meant for deities, were also cut.

22-27b. A red-hot iron image of a woman was placed on the chests of those wicked men by whom other people's wives were embraced. They were then struck by fierce servants of Yama. Women in a similar position were forcibly made to embrace red-hot iron images of men. After a lapse of some time, they were hurled into big iron cages (furnaces) blazing with fire along with men.

The pain of limbs in the hells was hundred times more than what is experienced in the body in this world.

Other men were pecked at and eaten by crows, scorpions and vultures. Those who were being burnt and scorched began to cry in distress, "Oh brothers! Oh father!" repeatedly. They never attained peace. They experienced unbearable miseries, O Pārvatī. Thus they certainly had the misery of torture.

27c-33. A blessed man named Nimi saw the path of Yama. It was terrible, impassable and hideous, filled with persons of sinful activities. It was completely enveloped in darkness. It appeared like a meadow with tresses of hairs spread everywhere like weeds. Flesh and blood constituted a marshy spot stinking with the odour of the sinners. It was surrounded by blazing flames of fire. It was infested with crabs and vultures flying with faces down. Ghosts as huge as the Vindhya mountain, with needle-like faces, moved about here and there. Trees lay scattered all round. Blood and flesh oozed out from arms, thighs and palms severed down. Bodies with bellies and hands cut off lay about everywhere. The foul smell of the corpses made the path unwholesome and devoid of joy. The hell Asipatravana was also surrounded by these. It was filled with gravel and sand as well as pieces of rocks and lumps of iron. He also witnessed the physical torture suffered by the evil-doers.

34-41. Observing such a foul-smelling atmosphere he spoke to the man (servant of Yama) there to know how far they were to go along that path. "I wish to know this: What is this region? Does it belong to Devas?" On being asked thus, the messenger

of Yama wielding a big staff in his hand and blazing with the lustre of fire, pointed out the path in front and said, "Come this way."

The king requested the servant humbly: "O officer of Yama, tell me what sin has been committed by me for which this suffering has to be borne by me who am righteous. I am well-known by the name Nimi in the family of Janaka. I was born in the land of Videha. I have been perfect protector of men. The four castes were ably sustained by me by keeping them righteous in the same way as by Manu formerly through texts giving importance to piety. I performed many Yajñas. The earth was ruled piously. I was never guilty of abandoning the battlefield. No guest was turned away by me. I evinced no interest in other men's wives, wealth, etc. That being the case, how is it that I have been put into Naraka that is excessively awful."

On being asked thus by Nimi, the servant of Yama bowed down to him. Though he was cruel he spoke politely.

The Puruṣa said:

42-49. O great king, what you say is true. There is no doubt about it. But a small sin has been perpetrated (by you). I shall remind you. In the course of a Śrāddha you had earlier promised a monetary gift, but, O king, it was not given by you. It was an oversight, a case of forgetfulness. This is the result of that sin. Your sin is only this much. There is nothing else. O Vaideha, O king, come on for the enjoyment of the merits."

On hearing this, Nimi, the saintly king, spoke to the messenger: "O follower of the Deva, I shall go there where you take me. But may I ask you a question? It behoves you to speak truthfully. These crows with adamantine beaks are plucking out the eyes of these persons. But the eyes are replaced again and again. O great messenger, what mean and despicable act has been done by them? Tell me this. In the same manner, they remove the tongues that continue to come out afresh. Why are these miserable ones hewn and cut with a saw? Why are these unconscious men afflicted day and night? These and many other tortures of the evil-doers are seen. How long will this continue? Give me a general estimate."

The Puruṣa said:

50-60. What you are asking me, O king, regarding the outcome of the sinful actions, I shall explain to you briefly and as it actually exists. A man experiences the results of merits and demerits in succession. As the benefit is enjoyed (or the adverse result endured) the merit and demerit get reduced. O leading king, no man can get rid of a pious or sinful deed without the enjoyment or suffering of its results. The truth has been spoken by me. Thus these great sinners remain within the hells and get their highly terrible sins reduced through the tortures continuing day and night. Whether in the state of Devas, or human beings or brutes, auspicious and inauspicious results arising from merit and demerit, i.e., happiness and misery, they experience undoubtedly. O king, this has been recounted to you by me in a general way as regards the results of their meritorious or sinful actions, salvation, etc. Come on, let us go elsewhere. All has been seen by you now.

Thereafter the king began to proceed keeping him ahead. At that time the men undergoing tortures shouted: "Do us this favour, O king. Stop for a short while. The wind blowing after contact with your limbs delights us. O tiger among men, it removes distress from our limbs, of all the troubles and tortures. O king, be merciful."

On hearing their words the king asked the officer of Yama: "How do these persons get delighted when I stay back? What is that merit done by me in the mortal world which has this power to cause delight? May this be explained."

The Puruṣa said:

61-69. On the fourteenth lunar day in the month of Āśvina, the well-known deity Anarakeśvara in Mahākāla(vana) was visited by you. This is the benefit thereof. That is why, O king, the wind in contact with your body is delightful to those evil-doers. The torture does not harass them.

The King said:

If in my presence the torture does not harass them, O fair-faced friend, I shall stay here itself, motionless like a post.

The Puruṣa said:

Come on, O eminent king, let us go. Enjoy the pleasures acquired by you by your own merit. You will not bear this torture of the sinners.

The King said:

Neither in heaven, nor in Brahmaloka, men obtain that happiness which one gets in bringing relief to those who are distressed. My idea is to cause that relief. Hence I will not go away as long as these are excessively distressed. Let the hell-dwellers be happy due to my presence. If those many persons derive pleasure when I am (apparently) miserable, actually all those things have been attained by me. Hence, You may go. Do not delay.

The Puruṣa said:

Here Dharma and Śakra have come to take you with them. Necessarily you have to go away from this place. O king, do go.

70-72. In the meantime, Dharma accompanied by Śakra spoke thus: "O Nimi, O knower of the highest Dharma, Devas are pleased with you. Come, do come, O tiger-like one, this is enough. O Lord, O king, Siddhi has been acquired by you and the everlasting worlds too. You need not be grief-stricken. Listen to my words, O Lord. Naraka should of necessity be seen by all kings. I shall take you to Svarga. You have performed Upāsanā perfectly. Get into this excellent aerial chariot and proceed to the place free from impurities."

Nimi said:

73-81. In Naraka thousands of men are tormented. O Dharma, they are lamenting and wailing saying to me, "Save." Hence I will not go away.

Indra said:

It is due to the acts of these evil-doers that they have fallen into the hell, O king; you have to go to Svarga for your meritorious deeds.

The King said:

You know well, O knower of Dharma, or you, O Śakra, the consort of Śacī, what is that special auspicious merit of mine. It behoves you to recount it.

Dharma said:

On the fourteenth lunar day in the dark half of the month of Āśvina, O mighty one, the Lord, well-known as Anarakeśvara, the bestower of Svarga, was seen by you in the excellent Mahākālavana. Hence your merit is something special. There is no limit to it. O king, enjoy happily the merit acquired by yourself. Let all these hellish ones suffering the torture due to their own acts get it reduced (by the endurance of the results).

The King said:

If in my presence no progress is achieved by these men, how can they be expected to crave for the association of good people? Hence, with that little special merit of mine that remains to my credit, let the sinners undergoing torture be released from the hell.

Dharma said:

O king, formerly you had visited Anarakeśvara. Give unto these a fraction (one-sixteenth) of the merit resulting therefrom. By the power of that merit these will be liberated from the hell.

The king did accordingly and they were liberated from the hell.

82-93. Thereupon Dharmarāja in the company of Śakra spoke to Nimi: "Thus the excellent place (position) has been attained by you, O Lord of the earth. See these hellish people; they are liberated from their sinful deeds." Thereupon, a shower of flowers fell on that king. Hari (Indra) made him get into the aerial chariot and took him to Svargaloka. All the sinners who were there, were saved from the tortures. O my beloved, they went to Svargaloka by the power of that Lord.

Hence that deity is well-known as Anarakeśvara Deva. The saviour from Naraka was eulogized by all the groups of the Devas. A man who visits Anarakeśvara Deva everyday becomes meritorious. His family is sanctified by him alone.

Those men who devoutly worship Anarakeśvara Deva, get their sins accumulated in the course of a hundred previous births dissolved.

O Daughter of the Mountain, those who support and encourage the (desire to) visit this Lord, become rid of sins and proceed towards my place.

By visiting that Liṅga, a man enables the past and future ten thousand members of his family to go to my Loka (Region).

The fourteenth lunar day in the dark half in combination with the astrological position Śivayoga is said to be a great favourite of that Lord. It is destructive of all sins.

Those men who observe fast on that day and approach Anarakeśvara Deva become liberated from sins arising (committed) in the course of a hundred births.

This Lord, on being adored on that lunar day, washes off sin acquired mentally, verbally and physically. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power has been recounted to you. Listen to the excellent greatness of Jaṭeśvara Deva.

CHAPTER TWENTYEIGHT

Jaṭeśvara[1]

The Lord of the Devas said:

1-4. Know the well-known Jaṭeśvara Liṅga as the twenty-eighth deity. Merely by seeing it, a man gets liberated.

Formerly in the Rāthantara Kalpa there was a king named Vīradhanvā. He became well-known all over the world as pious-

1. King Vīradhanvā killed five sons of Saṁvarta, who were in the form of deer. He committed many more sins, e.g., a Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, cow-slaughter. The mass of sins became as if a mass of hair on his head. Sage Vāmadeva directed him to Jaṭeśvara in Mahākālavana. King Vīradhanvā prayed sincerely to God Jaṭeśvara who absolved him of all sins and sent him to Śivaloka.

souled and glorious. Once, O lady of excellent countenance, he went to a forest for hunting deer. Highly excited due to anger he killed many herds of deer with his bow (and arrows). Ultimately he came to that place where there were five brothers of excellent holy vows. They were the sons of Saṁvarta, O goddess. They remained there in the forms of deer.

5-19. Once they (the five sons of Saṁvarta) saw five fawns in a forest. They were gasping for breath immediately after being born. The boys of the sage out of curiosity took up one fawn each but all of them died. Extremely distressed, all those five sons went to their father. Desirous of performing expiation, they reported to Saṁvarta who was surrounded by an assembly (of other saints) their killing of the young ones of the deer:

"O holy Lord, five fawns have been unintentionally (and unwittingly) killed by us. Hence the expiatory rite may be laid down."

He said: "One attains purity when the atonement is made. If anyone lays down (gives) an expiatory rite without a deep study of Dharmaśāstras (Codes of pious acts), though the performer of expiatory rite may be sanctified, the sin clings to the one who has laid down the rites. What is uttered even jokingly by Brāhmaṇas who have mastered the Dharmaśāstras and armed themselves with the sword of the Vedic injunction is proclaimed as the greatest Dharma (Virtue). If justified by Brāhmaṇas, a flaw in (the interpretation of) Vedic passages and omissions and commissions in the course of a Japa or Yajña shall be null and void. If Brāhmaṇas utter the word *Acchidram* (No loophole) all sins are destroyed and one gets the benefit of Agniṣṭoma."

Even as Saṁvarta, the excellent Brāhmaṇa, was saying thus, Bhṛgu, Atri, Aṅgiras and other sages came there. The sons of Sage Saṁvarta narrated everything to them as it had happened, repeatedly exhibiting their humility and devotion, though they were distressed.

The sages said: "The Dharmaśāstras have been composed truthfully. The expiation varies in accordance with place and time. In the case of an old man above eighty and a boy under sixteen, the expiation is only a moiety. Expiatory rite should be imposed in the case of a woman or a sick man after con-

sidering scrupulously the place, the time, the age, the physical capacity and the sin committed. This is the Dharma as established. Now all of you undertake the holy vows after wearing deerskins. Move about thus for five years. Thereafter you will become pure."

On being told thus, those boys adopted the conduct befitting deer. They entered the forest and meditated on the eternal Brahman without losing composure.

20-28. When a year elapsed King Vīradhanvā came to that place where those sons of the sage were moving about in the guise of deer. At the root of a tree the boys, continuing deer-like activities, remained performing Japa and they were seen by the king who took them to be deer and hit them with arrows. Those expounders of Brahman died.

On seeing them dead, realising that they were Brāhmaṇas with strictly disciplined observances, the king trembled with fear and went to the hermitage of Devarāta.

There, on being asked, the king explained: "O great sage, I have committed Brāhmaṇa-slaughter." From the beginning to the end the story about the slaughter was conveyed by him. Utterly grief-stricken and overwhelmed with misery, he cried much.

Resembling a divine being, that sage said to the crying excellent king: "Do not be afraid, O king. I shall remove your sin. The earth was about to sink down to the nether world named Sutala and it was lifted up by Viṣṇu, the Lord of Devas, in the form of a boar. In the same manner, O eminent king, this Lord Janārdana will himself lift you up, now overwhelmed by the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter."

On being told thus, the king spoke these words due to his sinful nature: "Of what use is this Brāhmaṇa, a wicked soul devoid of lustre? The base Brāhmaṇa is incapable of saving me himself."

29-37. After saying thus, the king became angry. His eyes became red. With the sword itself, he killed him. On seeing the Brāhmaṇa dead, the king was further defiled by anger. Further, O goddess, deluded by the mass of sins, he killed a Kapilā (tawny) milch cow of Gālava along with her calf. With his foolishness, delusion and hastiness, he became distressed due to hunger and thirst. His intellect became ruthless and

his sins heaped up like matted hairs. With the sins thus heaped up on his head, he roamed about in the dense forest.

Once he was led by his horse very far, deep down into the forest. The forest was full of tigers, lions and elephants. It was equally resorted to by the hunter and the hunted, the deer.

The king who was riding alone left the horse beneath a tree and fearlessly went to sleep on Darbha grass. The hunters who passed by saw the king asleep without fear. They hastened to their master and leader, to report this. As ordered by their master they were about to seize him when a fair white goddess embellished with ornaments rose up from the king's body with a discus held (in her hand). The barbarians were caused by her to fall down. After killing the Dasyus (barbarian robbers) the goddess vanished there itself.

38-51. Liberated by her, the king woke up instantly. On seeing the barbarians killed the king thought: 'I had been ruthless. See how the terrible series of sins of cow-slaughter and Brāhmaṇa-slaughter were committed by me in this forest!'

After thinking thus and heaving sighs repeatedly, he rode the same horse and went to the hermitage of Vāmadeva. The king was seen by Sage Vāmadeva in that predicament, afflicted and rendered miserable by the heaped-up sins.

Vāmadeva said:

This is that tiger among men, the king Vīradhanvā, born of the lunar race. He has come to a miserable plight. I shall redeem this king, the most excellent man.

After thinking thus Brāhmaṇa Vāmadeva of great austerities, replied to King Vīradhanvā who was in great distress: "O king, O ruler of the earth well-known as Vīradhanvā, O son of Vidūratha, famous throughout the three worlds! In your previous birth in the form of a hunter, you had kept fully awake beneath an Āmalakī (Indian gooseberry) tree after killing deer in the forest. The eleventh lunar day in the bright half of Phālguna is auspicious. It is called Āmalakyekādaśī. It coincides with Puṣya constellation when Jāmadagnya Prādakṣiṇā (Paraśurāma-circumambulation) and adoration is performed by the people. Formerly you witnessed it with surprise. Though

unwillingly, fast was observed and this vigil in addition to that. By its power, you became a king with great strength and exploit. Now you were saved from the barbarian hosts, O king, by the goddess. All the enemies were killed. Thanks to her alone, you will attain auspiciousness. It was on account of the fruition of previous Karmas that the sin of Brāhmaṇā-slaughter befell you. This has been known by me through the power of penance and Yogic practice. Your body became heaped up by the group of sins, O king.

Now I shall protect you. Listen to my reliable words."

52-58. On being told thus by Sage Vāmadeva, that king bowed down with self-restraint and repeatedly asked: "How will my sins of killing cows and Brāhmaṇas disappear? It behoves you to do me the favour by imparting instructions."

On hearing his words, O lady of renown, the great sage Vāmadeva recounted the greatness of this Liṅga: "At my bidding, O great king, proceed to Mahākālavana. Jaṭeśvara, the Lord of Devas, who pervades the whole cosmos, is there. In all the Vedas he is spoken as the remover of masses of sins. He is situated to the north of Anarakeśvara Deva." On hearing the words of Vāmadeva, the king hurriedly came to the excellent Mahākālavana. There he visited Jaṭeśvara, the Lord of Devas, worthy of being saluted by the universe. Then with great devotion the leading king eulogized:

59-69. "Obeisance to Śiva forever, obeisance, obeisance. Obeisance to you, O Lord with the universe as (your) physical form. Obeisance to the divine being, to the Lord worthy of being kept as secret, to the Lord who is the embodiment of secret Vrata. Obeisance to Jaṭa, the fascinating one, who has occupied (the universe) through Māyā. Obeisance to the multiformed one. Obeisance to the being with blue lustre and form. Obeisance to *Bhoga* (Pleasure), to Dhūmra (Smoky one). Obeisance to one with the firmament as soul. Obeisance to the mass of fiery brilliance. Obeisance to you, the mine without impurities. Obeisance to the dazzling sun unto the great darkness. Obeisance to you, the destroyer of enemies. Obeisance to the Lord transporting the devotee to the other side of the ocean of worldly existence. Obeisance to one with divine form and physical appearance. Obeisance to one with golden complexion. Obeisance to one who enchants the deluded ones. Obei-

sance to one with excellent form, to one adored by Suras; obeisance to one devoid of forms, to one who is beyond Prakṛti. Obeisance, obeisance to one independent of forms and colours. Obeisance, obeisance to one of excellent form of Goddess Śyāmā." On being eulogized thus, O goddess, Maheśvara, the great Lord, with all his limbs covered with matted hairs issued forth from the middle of the Liṅga. All his limbs were smeared with holy ash. The bodies of the serpents constituted his bracelets and he shone thereby. His lustre resembled a mass of snow. He was as spotless as a silver mountain. The Lord was embellished with matted hairs resembling pearl strings. He was covered with tawny-coloured, hideous and terrible matted hairs. They were tied up by the hoods of big serpents. They had various colours such as white, yellow etc. This Jaṭeśvara was resplendent with those matted hairs that had the appearance of rivers. O daughter of the Mountain, he spoke these words to the king: "O eminent king, I am delighted with this prayer. I have been pleased by you. Due to my vision the heaped- up sins of yours have disappeared. Hence, joyously go to my eternal abode."

70-77. On being told thus by the Lord of Devas, King Vīradhanvā went to the greatest place devoid of dissolution and incineration. O my beloved one, as he proceeded in an aerial chariot that could go wherever it pleased, he was eulogized by the Gaṇas. By perceiving the Lord who was Jaṭībhūta (covered with matted hairs) he got rid of the mass of sins. Therefore, the Liṅga too was called by the name Jaṭeśvara. The heaped-up sin of those who see Jaṭeśvara with great devotion, O beautiful lady, perishes at the same instant.

Strength, great influence and conjugal bliss will accrue to those persons who always adore Jaṭeśvara, the Lord of Devas, O fair lady. Others too, Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and human beings who worship the Liṅga duly with devotional ardour will also attain cherished desires whatever they may be, even if very rare and inaccessible. They will attain overlordship, unequalled piety, longevity, freedom from ailments, absence of rivals and the like. Even sinners of cruel activities who resort to the Liṅga shall become rid of all sins and feverish ailments.

Those who devoutly visit Jaṭeśvara everyday will become endowed with piety, wealth and conjungal bliss.

78-85. The sick will be rid of sickness; the miserable become liberated from misery by visiting the Lord. They shall become bereft of all sins immediately.

Those who read the greatness of Jaṭeśvara, O Pārvatī, and those who listen to it with devotion to me and endowed with faith and restraint will attain all cherished desires and in the end they will get the goal of my city.

An unfortunate woman will always obtain conjugal bliss. A pregnant woman obtains a son without illness. He will be having fame as ornament. Malefic Planets affecting infants, perish. There is no fear from premature death. This is conducive to auspiciousness and longevity. It is the great reservoir of Dharma and Kāma (Love). Fears arising from evil dreams and terrible sins perish. On hearing the narrative regarding the Liṅga, evils of adverse intake of food and contact with wicked people and those producing loss of longevity: all these perish undoubtedly.

If this splendid narrative of Jaṭeśvara is read at the time of Śrāddhas, it increases the delight of the Pitṛs. The Śrāddhas will have everlasting benefit.

Thus, O fair lady, the sin-destroying power of Jaṭeśvara has been recounted to you. Listen to the power of Śiva named Rāmeśvara.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

Rāmeśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-7. O my beloved, know that *Rāmeśvara* Liṅga is the twenty-ninth deity. Merely by seeing it, one is liberated from the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter.

Formerly in Tretāyuga, O goddess, there was a heroic one

1. This Rāmeśvara Liṅga is different from the Rāmeśvara Liṅga installed by Dāśarathi Rāma. Here it is *Paraśurāma* who was haunted by *Brahmahatyā* for his genocide of Kṣatriyas. On Nārada's advice Paraśurāma went to Mahākālavana and propitiated the great Liṅga called Brahmahatyāvināśana. He propitiated it and as a boon sought that the Liṅga should be known after him as Rāmeśvara.

endowed with all good qualities. He was the foremost among persons wielding weapons. He was a great devotee of his father. He was born of the womb of Reṇukā. He was Viṣṇu himself incarnated as Rāma due to the irrevocable curse of Bhṛgu.

Once he was directed by Sage Jamadagni: "O my son, cut off this big head of your mother." On hearing the words of his father, Rāma cut off the heads of his brothers and his mother. Jamadagni granted him a boon: "You will become invincible to all the rulers of the earth. Ere long, O Bhārgava, there shall be a holocaust. Take this axe, dear son. It is strong. It has come out of flames of fire. Hence you will become famous on account of this sharp weapon."

8-16. After a lapse of some time, an evil-minded King Kārtavīryārjuna, born of the family of Haihaya and well-known as Sahasrabāhu (thousand-armed), killed Jamadagni for the sake of Kāmadhenu. On seeing his father killed, Rāma furiously spoke thus: "May the three worlds see my eternal proweess. Let that wicked Brāhmaṇa-slayer, the son of Kṛtavīrya, also see. I will certainly cut off the thousand arms of that (king) by whom my father, though always engaged in good deeds, has been killed." After saying this, the scion of the family of Bhṛgu, with eyes turned red due to anger, hurled Kārtavīryārjuna on the the ground. Even as he was howling hoarse repeatedly, he cut off all the thousand arms with his sharp axe. O my beloved, that king seated on a chariot, was pulled down and killed along with his kinsmen. The earth was rendered bereft of the Kṣatriyas twenty-one times by him.

After rendering the earth bereft of Kṣatriyas, that extremely powerful Bhārgava performed a horse-sacrifice for the destruction of all sins. In that Yajña marked by great gifts, the scion of the family of Bhṛgu gave the entire earth as Dakṣiṇā to Kaśyapa, the son of Marīci.

17-28. That highly intelligent, extremely renowned Paraśurāma, the most excellent one among warriors riding in chariots, made other gifts also in the course of that great horse-sacrifice, such as white and splendid western horses, chariots, infinite quantities of gold, cows, lordly elephants, etc. Still the sin of slaughter of many a living being did not leave him off.

The mode of expiation for those who slay persons having

trust in them, is known from Purāṇas and different Āgamas indeed: "The sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter perishes through a horse-sacrifice or if the sinner sits in the same posture (*Ekāsya*[1]) or in the same seat continuously for twelve years. But many living beings were ruthlessly killed by me again and again—persons having full trust in me, erring ones and those in the wombs. Women, old men and boys were repeatedly killed by me. Even my own mother was killed by me." Saying so Rāma, the miserable, felt utmost grief. After pondering for a short while, he went to the Raivataka mountain and performed there severe penance for many years, O my beloved. Still the sin of killing many a living being did not vanish.

Then Rāma went to Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Himālaya and the beautiful and meritorios Badarikāśrama. After roaming over all the mountains, he went to the holy rivers for the sake of ablution—rivers such as Narmadā, Yamunā, Candrabhāgā, Gaṅgā of triple streams, Irāvatī, Vitastā, the extremely splendid Carmaṇvatī, Viśālā, Kapilā, Durgā, the majestic and auspicious Gomatī, Godāvarī, Daśārṇā and the meritorious Bhīmarathī. He went to holy spots such as Gayā, Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Aṭṭahāsa, Prabhāsa, Kedāra and Amareśvara.

29-38. Bhārgava continued to be distressed even after having performed the pilgrimage. He thought thus: 'Now-a-days the great efficacy of Tīrthas is not seen (experienced). My sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter has not vanished. Pious rites have been performed in vain. What is said in the scriptures, viz., that by means of pilgrimage and gifts and other auspicious rites (sin is dispelled), is false. If this were true, why is it that my (good rites) have become ineffective?'

At that time, Nārada, the eminent sage, came to that place where Rāma was sitting with a morose face, helpless and worried. On seeing Nārada, Rāma in such a state said thus to him: "O celestial sage, Nārada, listen to what I say which is very important. O excellent one among Brāhmaṇas, my mother was killed by me earlier at the instance of my father. On account of the attack on my father, kings were killed by me. Wombs of women were torn asunder. Young girls, old women and maidens were

1. V.L. *ekāśya*—with one meal per day.

continuously killed by me, unrepenting and unrelenting. It was only later that compassion arose in me, as I looked unto the world hereafter. A horse-sacrifice was performed. Various kinds of Dānas were made. I took holy baths in all the Tīrthas and all springs and streams. Penance was performed in mountains. Japas and Homas were continuously performed. Oh! What did I not do (I did everything) for dispelling the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter! But that sin for slaughter did not vanish. Everything became futile."

39-45. On hearing his words, the holy sage Nārada meditated for a long time and spoke out what was beneficial and truthful. "Oh! O Rāma, why don't you remember that you are Hari? It was you alone who earlier said what was destructive of the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. In the holy spot of Mahākālavana is a holy shrine, the most excellent one of shrines. There is a great Liṅga there which is destructive of the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. O blessed one, there is the Liṅga named Jaṭeśvara that bestows all Siddhis. O incarnated one, O Rāma, do go there without further delay."

On hearing the words of Nārada and remembering the excellent holy spot, O goddess, he hastened to Mahākālavana. He propitiated that Liṅga and thereby the sin of slaughter got destroyed. O goddess, extremely pleased, I issued forth from the middle of the Liṅga. Then I spoke to Jāmadagnya: "I shall grant you what you wish, O dear one." Thereat Rāma, with his shoulders stooping down due to humility and devotion, spoke: "O Maheśvara, if you are pleased, grant unto me this boon that my devotion to your lotus-like feet shall always be perfect." On being asked thus by him then, O Pārvatī, I granted him the desired boon, a position conducive to renown.

46-54. "Henceforth the deity shall be well-known after your name." It is sung about in all the three worlds as Rāmeśvara. If people adore the great deity Rāmeśvara, their sins ever since their birth perish instantaneously. Only the man who sees devoutly Śiva named Rāmeśvara Deva, is meritorious and worthy of being adored in this world and the world hereafter. Also those who encourage a visit to, and worship of, that Lord become rid of sins and proceed to my place. Even the terrible sin, the sin of a thousand Brāhmaṇa-slaughters becomes dissolved by adoring Rāmeśvara.

By visiting Śrī Rāmeśvara one can easily attain that benefit which is unattainable by Brāhmaṇas through Vājapeya and other Yajñas.

By seeing Śiva named Rāmeśvara, one attains a goal superior to what is attained by heroic persons who meet with death in battlefield for the sake of cows and Brāhmaṇas.

If one sees Śiva named Rāmeśvara Liṅga always devoutly, it is as though one has conquered the worlds like Rāma who conquered the three worlds. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Rāmeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (the greatness of) Cyavaneśvara.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Cyavaneśvara[1]

Śrī Viśvanātha said:

1-8. O goddess, know that Cyavaneśvara Liṅga is the thirtieth deity. Merely by seeing it, one's fall from Svarga never takes place.

There was a great sage named Cyavana, O Pārvatī, the son of another great sage Bhṛgu. He performed a penance without taking food and remaining steady like a post on the banks of Vitastā for many years.

The Brāhmaṇa was completely covered by an anthill and overgrowth of creepers as much time elapsed. Ants were practically scattered around. Being completely covered, that intelligent sage appeared like a huge lump of clay.

A righteous king named Śaryāti joyously accompanied by his family came to that spot in order to sport about in that excellent forest. His retinue consisted of four thousand women. But he had only one daughter, a girl of lovely eyebrows, named

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1. The chapter is based on the story of Cyavana Bhārgava given in Mbh, *Vana*, Chs. 122, 123 and 124. The only difference is: In Mbh, *Vana* 124, it was Cyavana who by his power of penance paralysed Indra's arm, while here the credit is given to Cyavana's propitiation of a Liṅga in Mahākālavana which subsequently became famous as Cyavaneśvara after the name of Sage Cyavana.

Sukanyā. She was embellished with all ornaments. Surrounded by her female companions, she roamed about and saw the two eyes (alone) of Bhārgava in the anthill. Out of curiosity she uttered, "What is this?" With her intellect deluded, she pricked the eyes with a thorn.

9-18. On being pierced in the eyes by her, he (Cyavana) became extremely distressed. Thereupon the urine and faeces of the soldiers of Śaryāti became blocked. When the urine and faeces got blocked, the king became excessively inflamed (with wrath). The infuriated king spoke in faltering words: "Who has offended the noble-souled Bhārgava? The old sage is perpetually engaged in penance. He is likely to be exceptionally angry. Knowingly or unknowingly this offence has been perpetrated. Speak out. Do not delay."

All the soldiers said: "We are not at all aware of any misdeed." Thereupon, the king made use of cajoling words as well as fierce threats and himself asked again and again his people in sadness. On seeing her father distressed Sukanyā told him: "Some animal was seen by me in the anthill. It appeared very sparkling. It seemed to be something like a glowworm. I went near it and pricked it." On hearing this, Śaryāti went quickly to the anthill. There he saw the aged Bhārgava of a long-standing penance to his credit. On behalf of his army, the king joined his palms in reverence and requested: "O Brāhmaṇa! Out of ignorance the girl has offended you. I shall offer you this girl herself. She has undertaken holy vows and is steadfast in it. Do accept her as wife. Be pleased, O excellent Brāhmaṇa." Thereupon, Cyavana, son of Bhṛgu, spoke to the king:

19-27. "If it is so, I shall accept her, O king, and excuse them." The king gave his daughter to Cyavana. Having accepted that girl, the holy sage became pleased whereupon the king went to his land accompanied by his army.

After getting a sage as her husband, Sukanyā, the praiseworthy one (lit. non-censurable one), joyously served him through her austerities and observances.

After some time, O my beloved, Nāsatyas alias the Aśvins saw Sukanyā returning after her bath meagrely clad. On seeing that maiden of beautiful limbs resembling the daughter of the king of Devas, they approached her and asked: "O

highly splendid lady, to whom do you belong?" That highly fortunate, extremely chaste, lady said that she was the daughter of Śaryāti and wife of (Sage) Cyavana. Thereupon, both Aśvins laughingly said to her again: "Why do you, though being such (a lovely one), have such an old decrepit (shattered) husband? O good lady, you are now excluded from the enjoyment of love sport. Discard the old Cyavana. Leave him off and woo one of us as your husband. O lady having the splendour of someone born of divine womb, do not waste your youth thus." On being told thus, Sukanyā spoke to the two Dasras (Aśvins):

28-36. "I am attached to Cyavana, my Lord. Do not entertain any doubt about me like this." Thereupon they said to her again: "We are divine physicians. We shall make your husband young and handsome. Under this agreement, O lady of splendid waistline, you do invite us." (Probably the text hints as follows: "All of us, the three shall stand before you and he whom you invoke as your husband will be your husband.") On hearing their words she conveyed the suggestion to the son of Bhṛgu. On hearing it, Cyavana spoke to his wife: "Let it be done." They spoke to the princess: "Let your husband get into the water." Thereupon Cyavana who sought handsome features, entered the waters immediately. Aśvins also entered the lake simultaneously, O my beloved. After a short while all of them emerged from the lake. All had divine forms and features. They were equally youthful. They had divine earrings. Having the same guise and dress all were pleasing to the mind. All of them collectively said: "O lady of excellent complexion, O fair lady, choose one among us, splendid and desirable as your husband." She observed all of them standing there in similar forms and features. Making use of her mental and intellectual powers, she unerringly spotted her husband and wooed him.

After regaining his wife in addition to the desired youth and youthful charms, Cyavana became delighted. The excessively brilliant sage spoke these words to Nāsatyas:

37-42. "Since I have been turned into a youth of handsome features by you and since I regained this wife of mine, I shall lovingly make you both Somapāyins (worthy of having share in the Soma juice) even as the king of Devas watches

on. This is the truth. There is no doubt about it."

On hearing it the two gods went to heaven delighted in their minds. Cyavana performed a Yajña invoking Nāsatyas as deserving Soma. (Indra told him:) "They are only the physicians of the Devas. By that very profession, they are despicable. If you yourself offer Soma to them, I will have to strike you with the terrible thunderbolt." On being told thus, Bhārgava smilingly looked at Indra. He realized that Indra was more powerful and so thought soon, 'I shall propitiate Lord Maheśvara, the great deity. Śakra is only his servant and all the Devas are under his control. He is the efficient protector of the universe. He is the creator and annihilator.'[1]

43-51. After saying this, O goddess, Cyavana went to Mahākālavana. The Liṅga that was situated to the north-east of Rāmeśvara Deva was devoutly propitiated by the noble-hearted Cyavana. Rudra was pleased with him. He granted him freedom from fear of the thunderbolt. By the power of this Liṅga that was pleased by the propitiation, Bhārgava could paralyze the arm of Indra even as he was about to strike. In the meantime, flames of fire issued forth from the middle of the Liṅga. All the groups of Devas were scorched by those flames. Dispirited and rendered blind by the smoke, they spoke with a faltering voice: "O Slayer of Vala, may the Aśvins be made the partakers of Soma juice." On hearing the words of Devas, the terrified Śakra bowed down with stooping shoulders and said: "O Bhārgava, from today these Aśvins shall drink Soma juice. I am speaking the truth. O ascetic, you will not be guilty of assailing a guest (i.e., himself). It is by the power of the Liṅga that I had become lustreless. Therefore, its renown by your name will spread over the earth."

O goddess, since it was propitiated by the noble-hearted Cyavana, this Liṅga became well-known in all the three worlds as Cyavaneśvara Liṅga.

If people worship Cyavaneśvara, the lord of gods, devoutly, all their sins originating from their very birth will perish instantly.

52-58. A man who visits the Lord named Cyavaneśvara everyday, shall be rid of future births, old age and ailments and be liberated. By seeing Cyavaneśvara a man shall obtain

1. This is a modification of the Mbh story.

all the desires mentally conceived even if they be very difficult to obtain. Those who regularly visit Cyavaneśvara Deva, O beloved one, go to my world after leaving the body. He who listens to this meritorious narrative, splendid and destructive of all sins, is a meritorious soul and he goes to the highest divine abode undoubtedly. O lady of great renown, even if one devoid of devotion and negligent of holy rites sees the Liṅga occasionally, he attains meritorious goal accessible only to Yogins. Those who adore Cyavaneśvara Deva with flowers of different colours, cross the ocean of worldly existence and attain the greatest region.

O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Cyavaneśvara Deva has been recounted to you. O Śivā, listen to (the greatness of) Khaṇḍeśvara.

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

Khaṇḍeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-9. O my beloved, know that Khaṇḍeśvara Liṅga is the thirty-first deity. By visiting it Vrata etc. become completely fruitful.

O fair lady, there was a king named Bhadrāśva in Tretāyuga. A sub-continent called Bhadrāśva is named after him. Once the excellent sage Agastya came to his abode and said: "I will stay in your house for seven days." Bowing down his head, the king told him, "Welcome; you may stay." He had a very splendid wife named Kāntimatī, Her splendour was like that of twelve suns. O lady of excellent complexion, her co-wives numbered a hundred. Due to the great power and influence of Kāntimatī those ladies of beautiful eyes were excessively afraid. They toiled everyday like slaves.

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1. It was due to the service to Khaṇḍeśvara that a maidservant and her husband of Vaiśya community of Vidiśā were born as Queen Kāntimatī and King Bhadrāśva.

On seeing the very splendid queen of such a kind, with eyes fixed on her face, Agastya joyously said, "Excellent! Excellent! O ruler of the world." On the second day too, on seeing the queen of excessive splendour, Agastya said, "The entire universe, including the mobile and immobile beings has been (as if) robbed by a woman." Thus spoke Agastya on the second day on seeing her.

10-20. On seeing her on the third day, he said again, "Alas, foolish ones do not know the excellent greatness of the Liṅga. In the holy place of Mahākālavana, to the east of Cyavaneśa, is that Liṅga by visiting which incomplete Vratas become complete. That is why it is so." On the fourth day, he raised up his hands and said again: "Very nice! Excellent! O lord of the world. Excellent! O Bhadrāśva of good holy rites." Thus on the fifth day too as well as on the sixth (he said the same). On the seventh day the king saw him dancing. He witnessed this in the company of his wife. With his heart full of surprise, he asked him, "O holy Sir, what is the cause of your delight on account of which you are dancing?"

Agastya said:

Alas! O king, you are deluded. The ministers are great fools. Alas! The family priest is also deluded and immature. These do not understand the intention of mine by whose sight such kings are born?

On being told thus, the king joined his palms in reverence and asked, "O holy Sir, we do not comprehend the implied meaning of your words. O glorious one, if you wish to bless us, kindly tell us."

Agastya said:

This your queen was a maidservant of a Vaiśya named Haridatta in the city of Vaidiśā. You were her husband. As a result of the incomplete Vrata you became a servant. That Vaiśya went to Mahākāla and worshipped Lord Maheśvara duly with splendid scents, flowers, etc. After worshipping, he returned home where both of you were the supervisors.

After a long time the couple died. Due to that merit, your

birth took place in the abode of Priyavrata. The former slave girl of the Vaiśya became your wife.

21-31. Thus due to the contact with others (i.e. to the merit of others, i.e. seeing the worship by the Vaiśya) the land became excellent. So also the kingdom, the wife and the daughter. So I said the words, "Well, excellent!" By the greatness of that Lord, O king, I see you performing different kinds of *Makhas* (sacrifices) and recognized (as emperor) by a hundred (other) kings. Hence, O king, I said, "Excellent."

On hearing these words of the pot-born, noble-hearted sage the king wished to go to Mahākālavana. He went there along with the great sage and the ladies of his house (Antaḥpura). The king faithfully visited the Liṅga mentioned by Agastya and duly worshipped it in the company of his wife. Then the delighted Lord of unmeasured splendour said to the king: "May your penance fulfill your wishes. May you attain all pleasures, prosperity, nobility, influence, conjugal bliss, longevity and freedom from iliness. After ruling the kingdom devoid of rivals, you will attain Svarga."

On being told thus by the Lord of Devas, he went to his own country.. After ruling the kingdom free from rivals, he went to Svarga, O my beloved.

Due to the efficacy of this Liṅga. O fair lady, all Khaṇḍa Vratas ('incomplete religious observances') performed in the course of many births become complete. Hence the deity became well-known all over the three worlds as Khaṇḍeśvara.

O fair lady, if men visit the deity Khaṇḍeśvara Śiva, all the incomplete penances, vows and charity etc. immediately become complete.

32-39. By visiting Lord Khaṇḍeśvara one becomes rid of sins and obstacles, whether mental, verbal or physical, acquired in the course of seven births. By visiting Lord Khaṇḍeśvara, contentment and fulfilment is obtained. All the ill-luck extending over the period of seven births, O my beloved, perishes.

O fair lady of excellent complexion, if Khaṇḍeśvara Deva is worshipped, all the Devas including Vāsava (Indra) become pleased and they bestow boons.

All the embodied beings who faithfully worship Khaṇḍeśvara

Deva by means of different kinds of holy ablutions, sweet scents in particular, incenses, lights, prostrations, Japas, prayers of different kinds etc. become richly endowed with what they desire. They become prosperous with vast kingdoms, longevity and good conduct. They become free from impurities. The goal (in the other world) of those people shall be highly excellent, free from grief and also everlasting in their benefits. Undoubtedly everything comes with the favour of Khaṇḍeśvara.

It is by adoring Khaṇḍeśvara that Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra, Kubera, Dahana (Fire-god) etc. attained the greatest Siddhi. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Khaṇḍeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Now listen to (the greatness of) Pattaneśvara.

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

Pattaneśvara

Īśvara said:

1-8. Know that the excellent Pattaneśvara Liṅga is the thirty-second deity. It is well-known in all the three worlds. It is the bestower of Siddhis unto men.

Formerly, O goddess, I was sporting about along with you on Mountain Mandara abounding in beautiful caves, when once I was asked by you while staying in a secret place, "O Lord, why have you left off the beautiful Kailāsa mountain and taken up your abode in the desolate Mahākālavana? Kailāsa was as splendid as a slab of pearls, as free from impurities as a conchshell or the rays of the moon. It used to be reverberating with the loud musical notes of Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. It was always covered with trees in full bloom. A grove of plantain trees shone therein. Birds like cuckoos, Cakravākas (ruddy geese), Cakoras, ospreys made the place full of their chirping sounds. On the whole, the spot could very well be compared to a meritorious world, an ornament unto heaven itself. On the other hand, Mahākālavana is desolate, overgrown with various kinds of hedges and creepers.

It is crowded with lordly elephants leading the herds of elephants, tigers, lions and Śaṁbaras. It shone with animals like bears, monkeys, jackals etc., and also with peacocks, serpents, cats, mice etc. I am eager to know this."

9-15. Thus I was asked by you, O fair lady, to reveal the reason of your preference of Mahākālavana to Mandara abounding in beautiful caves. O my beloved, (being) highly pleased, I then told you that the beautiful Mahākālavana was my Pattana (city) and it was more conducive to happiness than Svarga. It has a cremation ground, a pedestal, an excellent shrine, a park and arid land as well. O Daughter of the Mountain, know that the qualities of Pattana are beyond comparison. In all the three worlds such a deity as the one at Pattana has not been seen. It vies with the abode of Suras by means of the skilful expositions of vocal and instrumental music.

In the meanwhile, O goddess of great renown, Sage Nārada, the celestial sage, came to Mandara with a desire to see me. Just by way of amusement as well as to please you, he was asked by me out of curiosity as it were: "O great sage, where was this period of time, extending to Kalpas spent by you? In which hermitage was the power of penance accumulated by you? What are those Tīrthas where you have been roaming about? In which place did you get the greatest delight for the longest period? O excellent sage, if there is anything interesting seen by you, recount it to me."

On being asked by me thus, the great sage, the son of Brahmā, narrated to me assiduously the details of Pattana:

16-28. "In the course of my wanderings, many Tīrthas, shrines, towns of diverse kinds, countries and cities were visited by me. O great Lord, I chose the charming continent of Jambūdvīpa for my wanderings and supreme Pattanarāja that delights everyone excessively forever was seen. It has been conceived and set up in accordance with one's wish and it consists of hundreds of palaces. Whatever is wished for and eagerly desired is immediately attained. It accords happiness which cannot be adequately set forth (in so many words). The winds that blew there were pleasing to the touch and the fragrance of the flowers of all the seasons was wafted all round. Sounds of lutes and flutes rose up causing great delight to the mind. It is brightly illuminated by diamonds, sapphires, lapis

lazuli, lunar stones and other precious gems. It is free from the fear of old age and death. It is devoid of all types of ailments. It is served and resorted to by Śakra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Soma and Īśa (the Guardians of Quarters). The Devas reside in all the meritorious seven worlds above and below and they are always joyous. But they too desire for Pattana. O Maheśvara, quiescent noble souls reside there. They have controlled their sense-organs and have illuminated the quarters. They have the lustre of the sun and fire. They are intelligent people wearing divine garments. They have matted hairs serving (as if) the purpose of crowns. The Brāhmaṇas are devotees of Maheśvara. The meritorious Kṣatriyas are devotees fond of Hara. The Vaiśyas desirous of salvation strictly adhere to austere practices. The Vaiśyas and the Śūdras are long-lived. That deity of splendid forms is sometimes white. He himself is red in complexion. He is also yellow and sometimes black. He has names and he is devoid of names. He is invisible as well as visible. In some places he has a thousand suns as his eyes. In some places he has the lustre of a single sun. In some places he surprises the moon (in pleasant light). In some places he has the lustre of the fingers. If Pattaneśvara is pleased, all the different kinds of miseries get dissolved—the miseries originating from births, deaths, old age and ailment."

Such, O goddess, is the sin-destroying power of the deity Pattaneśa. Henceforth listen to (the story of) Ānandeśa.

CHAPTER THIRTYTHREE

Ānandeśvara

Śrī Hara said:

1-7. Know that Ānandeśvara Liṅga is the thirty-third deity, meritorious and destructive of sins. It always causes (gives) all types of riches.

Formerly, in the Rāthantara Kalpa, there was a king named Anamitra. He was an emperor on the earth, pious and noble-souled. The king was endowed with wealth of exploits. He

excelled all other living beings and shone immutable like the Sun. He was impartial to his enemies, sons and friends. He was conversant with the greatest Dharma. O Daughter of the Mountain, he married Giribhadrā, a lady of excellent complexion. She was his greatest favourite, dearer to him than his own life. He had a son named Ānanda of good intellect and was engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. Immediately after the birth when the child rested in the lap of the king steadily he began to lisp again and again. The king used to embrace him with great affection and make him lisp again and again. He had the power of remembering previous births. Lying in the lap of his mother, he laughed. The excited mother spoke these words:

8-15. "I am afraid. What is this, dear child? Laughter is visible in your face. Have you attained premature enlightenment? What is the blessed thing that you see?"

On being asked thus, he replied to his mother: "Everyone desires his own personal benefit. A female cat in front wishes to seize me. Don't you see? This second one, the spirit that takes away the newborn young one, has vanished. With affection for the son, therefore, O dear mother, you too wish for your own benefit. You make me utter words many times and embrace me repeatedly. This excitement due to affection for the newborn son is present in all women. Hence I was forced to laugh. Listen to the cause thereof. This pet female cat attached to her own benefit covetously looks at me. Similarly this second one, the spirit that takes away a newborn young one and that has vanished, also does so. You wish to enjoy the benefit derived from me gradually. You do not know who I am, nor what help I have rendered to you. The association with children is also not of very long duration. It has been only for five or seven days. Still you love me dearly and embrace me always. You falsely speak to me, 'O dear one, O dear child, O fair one.' " On hearing these words of her son, the angry mother said thus:

16-23. "It is not for your return help, dear child, that I lovingly embrace you. My own benefit that is likely to be derived from you, has been given up by me."

After saying this she discarded him and went out of the lying-in-chamber. Then Jātahāriṇī (a spirit taking away newborn ones) carried away the abandoned child.

O my beloved, the boy had the power to remember previous births. The spirit Jātahāriṇī took the boy to the bed of Haiminī, the spouse of king Vikrānta. The king thought him to be his own son and gave him the well-known name Ānanda.

The (real) son of Vikrānta was taken away (by Jātahāriṇī) to (the abode of) a Brāhmaṇa Bodha. The child was named Caitra by him and consecrated through Vedic Mantras. The third (one involved in this process), the (real) son of Bodha, was eaten by an ogress. The Upanayana (sacred thread ceremony) of Ānanda, who could remember the previous births, was celebrated. The preceptor directed him to pay obeisance to his mother nearby at the outset. On being told so, he spoke these words: "Which mother has to be saluted by me, one who gave birth to me or one who nursed me?" On hearing Ānanda's words the preceptor spoke these words:

24-33. "O blessed one, here is your mother, the chief queen of Vikrānta, named Haiminī, daughter of Janaka."

Ānanda said:

I am the son of Giribhadrā. This is the mother who gave birth to Caitra. This Caitra is in the house of a Brāhmaṇa. He is consecrated by the Brāhmaṇa through Mantras.

Then the preceptor asked: "Who are you? Who is this Caitra mentioned by you?" Thereupon he narrated the previous details from the beginning.

The Preceptor said:

O dear child, a grave emergency has arisen. I do not comprehend anything. My mental faculties whirl due to delusion and enchantment.

Ānanda said:

Where is the occasion for a delusion or fascination? This is the established thing in the world. Who is whose son, O Brāhmaṇa- Sage? Who is not whose kinsman? Hence, the state of worldly existence destroys the worldly existence of all living beings. Their mind is afflicted with great delusion. How can there be anything surprising (in this), O preceptor? Jātahāriṇī,

the daughter of Dussaha, the wicked son of Brahmā, changes the children. In this very birth I have had two mothers. This fact has been comprehended by me on remembering the previous births. So I shall perform penance. Let Caitra be brought here.

The king, his wife and all the kinsmen began to wonder. He caused his attachment to him recede. He then brought Caitra and made him eligible for the kingdom.

34-39. Ānanda duly honoured the Brāhmaṇa by whom he (Caitra) was brought up, considering him his own son, and performed penance in the splendid Mahākālavana. He devoutly propitiated the excellent Liṅga to the west of Indreśvara Deva. He performed a very difficult penance. As he performed the penance, O lady of pure smiles, the deity spoke to him: "O dear one, why do you perform this severe penance? Tell me. You shall be the sixth Manu. Go and act accordingly. Enough of your penance. You will get liberation thereafter." On being told thus by the Lord of Devas, the highly intelligent one said: "So be it." O goddess, he became Manu of a very great fame, on a par with Brahmā. By worshipping this Liṅga he begot sons. The excellent deity was then named Ānandeśvara.

40-45. Since the rare Siddhi has been obtained by Ānanda, it became well-known on the earth as Ānandeśvara. O lady of large eyes, those who visit Ānandeśvara, the deity, will be richly endowed with sons and grandsons. By seeing Ānandeśvara the men attain that excellent devotion, and their sins accumulated in the course of crores of births are dissolved. Instantaneously the man becomes liberated from births, deaths, old age etc. when he sees the deity named Ānandeśvara.

Thus the vision of Ānandeśvara that bestows salvation on men, has been recounted by me. Ānandeśvara Liṅga is the excellent deity that bestows Svarga and Apavarga (salvation). O lady of wide eyes, the excellent Liṅga has been adored here by Devas. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Ānandeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (the story of) Kanthaḍeśvara.

CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

Kanthaḍeśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-8. Know that Kanthaḍeśvara Liṅga is the thirty-fourth deity. Merely by seeing it, one is liberated from all sins.

Long ago on the beautiful banks of Vitastā, a Brāhmaṇa was living. His name was Pāṇḍava. He was excessively afflicted by poverty. He was forsaken by his kinsmen and also by his wicked wife. He had only a patched garment as his exclusive favourite. He was desirous of a son and I was propitiated by him in a cave of a mountain. O lady of wide eyes, I readily said, "You will have a son."

From the midst of the rags a son was born to him as *Ayonija* (not born of the womb i.e., without a mother). The rags protected his son from heat and chill. O lady of excellent countenance, it was by my grace that the boy was obtained by him. A boon had also been granted by Rudra that a son would be born of the rags. After six years had elapsed, he thought of *Mauñjībandha* (thread ceremony or tying of a grass girdle at the time of Yajñopavīta). He invited all the sages and repeatedly honoured them. He bowed down to all the saints and adored them, devoutly offering them fruits in accordance with his capacity. His girdle of Muñja grass was duly tied. After propitiating them repeatedly he spoke to the sages:

9-14. "O excellent sages, may blessings be given to this son of mine. May my son be long-lived, blessed with sons." On hearing his words all of them remained silent. They did not reply. Thereupon, the excellent sage himself meditated and realized his son to be short-lived and fainted suddenly. Distressed with grief and affection for the son, he began to lament.

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1. This Chapter explains why this Liṅga is called Kanthaḍeśvara. By the grace of Śiva, a poor Brāhamṇa got a son from his patched garment. The son named Kanthaḍa was to be short-lived but by propitiating this Śiva Liṅga he became long-lived. At his request God Śiva adopted the name Kanthaḍeśvara.

The Vāḍava i.e. Brāhmaṇa said:

How can my son granted by Maheśa himself be short-lived? Formerly Rudra who had been pleased with me granted me the boon, "From the midst of the rag, a son with power and vigour on a par with that of mine, will be born to you." Having granted me a short-lived son Tryakṣa (Three-eyed Lord) has uttered those false words.

The sage then kept quiet.

On seeing his father distressed, the boy suddenly spoke these words enhancing his delight:

15-23. "Eschew your fear for my sake now, O ye dispirited ones. I shall nullify the efforts of the king of the departed ones (i.e. Yama). Listen to my words, O Guardians of Quarters including the Lords. This is my firm vow to have victory over Pitṛpati (Yama). I shall propitiate Śaṅkara with very severe austerities and devotion to my father. Thereby I shall frustrate the hopes for victory entertained by the god of Death. O dear father, why are all these excessively agitated and grief-stricken? I shall immediately bring the Lord of the Manes (Yama) under my control. I shall seek refuge in Rudra, the great Lord Maheśvara who is never separated from Umā. Let all the sages around listen. A person like me is not going to be defeated by the god of Death. I shall propitiate the feet of Śitikaṇṭha (the blue-throated Lord Śiva) and ere long subdue Death."

The eyes of the sages beamed at the nectar-like words of the rag-born child. They experienced horripilation and perspired due to delight. They asked the child: "How do you know that great Rudra? For a long time we have been performing Upāsanā (earnest adoration and meditation) along with severe penance and a series of Vratas. Still we do not know Maheśa. How can it be that you, a mere child, came to know him? With horripilation caused by wonder and excessively delighted, O dear son, we wish to hear the details thereof. How was Maheśa, the great Lord, the sole overlord of the worlds, known by you and where?"

On hearing the words of those sages of sanctified souls, the boy recounted to them the news, O Daughter of the Mountain: "While I was playing about here, there came a great Siddha

(a spiritually advanced sage), a bestower of Siddhis. On coming to know that my life span was of a short duration he spoke these words out of affection for me:

24-32. 'Go, my son, at my behest, to the excellent Mahākālavana. To the south of Ānandeśvara Liṅga there is another Liṅga. Propitiate it quickly; you will live for a long time.' By the instruction imparted by him to me I have perfectly understood that there is no other Lord greater than Maheśvara in all the worlds. It is the truth, (I repeat) it is the truth, O leading sages. Hence I shall go to the splendid Mahākālavana today itself. I shall propitiate the Liṅga. Let your grief end."

On hearing his words, the great sages and the surprised father all came to this place. With a desire to destroy Kāla, the boy pro-pitiated the Lord. Thereupon, O daughter of the Mountain, a voice issued forth from the midst of the Liṅga: "Oh! I am contented and glad, dear child. What desire shall be granted to you?"

The boy said:

If you are contented, O Lord Śaṅkara, let those who visit you be freed from the rags of sins and live for a long time.

On hearing the utterance of the boy, O lady of renown, this was said by the Liṅga: "Those who worship me with deep faith will become devoid of old age and death. They will always realize their great desires. They will become excellent Gaṇas, worthy of being worshipped in all the worlds and adorned with all ornaments."

33-40. After obtaining the boon thus, the Kantha (child) stood with palms joined in reverence. He was told by the delighted Liṅga: "O child of excellent vows, choose once again a boon that is very difficult to obtain in the world by Devas, Dānavas and Guhyakas, since you have been brought down (created) here and, therefore, there is nothing which cannot be given to you now."

The child said:

O Mahādeva, if a boon has to be given once again, O Lord,

let you be known in the earth, nay, in all the worlds, after my name.

This was spoken by the delighted Liṅga, O Pārvatī: "Let it be so."

Ever since then the Lord of Devas became well-known as Kanthaḍeśvara. Merely by seeing it a man becomes long-lived. He who visits the Lord, Kanthaḍeśvara Liṅga, O Gaurī, will become freed from the rags of sins and attain salvation. The Liṅga is meritorious and destructive of sins. It is worthy of being praised and a giver of fame. It purifies all sins by repeating my name. Those persons by whom this Lord Kanthaḍeśvara has not been seen in Mahākāla(vana) are wretched in the world. Their birth in the world is purposeless. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Kanthaḍeśvara Deva has been recounted to you.

Listen to (the greatness of) Indreśvara Liṅga.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

Indreśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. O goddess, the excellent Indreśvara Liṅga is the thirty-fifth deity. It yields great Siddhis and destroys the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter.

There was a patriarch Tvaṣṭṛ and his son was Kuśadhvaja. He had control over his senses and was always engaged in his religious duties. He was struck down by Vāsava.

On seeing the son killed, Tvaṣṭṛ, the Prajāpati (Patriarch), became furious and plucking a single hair from his matted hairs, he spoke these words: "Let the three worlds, including the Devas, see my power today. Let that evil-minded Brāhmaṇa-slayer Indra also see it. He has struck down my son engaged

1. The Liṅga is called Indreśvara as by propitiating this Liṅga Indra could kill the demon Vṛtra.

in his (religious) duties."

After saying thus and with eyes reddened due to anger, he consigned that matted hair to the sacrificial fire. Therefrom Vṛtra issued forth with flames of fire spreading around. He had a huge body with big curved fangs. His lustre was akin to that of freshly cut heap of collyrium. This Indra-Śatru (Enemy of Indra) grew in strength by the fiery refulgence of Tvaṣṭṛ. His inner strength could not be measured or comprehended. Everyday he increased in size and strength to the extent of the range of an arrow.

On seeing Vṛtra, the great Asura capable of killing him, Indra pondered over this immediately: 'What rite can be meritorious?'

9-18. In the meantime, Vṛtra, the most excellent one of all strong persons, came there, O lady of excellent countenance, and saw Vāsava along with the Devas.

Vṛtra, the Daitya of a huge body, fought a furious battle. Many weapons and missiles were used therein to increase the confu-sion. The battle was perilous due to clash of soldiers. In their rage they cut and pierced armours and the battlefield was rendered red with the blood splashed on the ground. Many a face resembling a lotus-flower had been cut and scattered all over. Sprout-like (severed) hands made the place impassable. Heaps of headless trunks got entangled with one another. The army of the Devas arrayed themselves everywhere. Many ornaments that had adorned the limbs of the warriors were profusely scattered about and they glittered remarkably. Waves were set in motion in the blood that gushed about and rendered the faces of the quarters pink in colour.

In the course of that excessively terrible battle Vṛtra struck and severed the Devas along with the Guhyakas, bound Indra and took him to Svarga. O lady of excellent countenance, he then unhesitatingly ruled the kingdom without rivals. When Devendra was thus bound, the liberal-minded Bṛhaspati came to that place where Śakra was bound. On seeing Śakra in such a plight, he blessed him and caused him to be released (from bondage). Thereafter he spoke thus: "The time is not favourable to you now, O Sureśa. The Asuras are seen extremely enterprising and they have gathered together in great masses. All the leading great Asuras were seen by me there. In my opin-

ion, each of these is capable of conquering you. Such a collection of the Asuras, O Śakra, as is seen now has never before been seen or heard."

19-24. On hearing the words of Bṛhaspati, Śakra became bewildered. After cogitating for a short while he said; "O highly intelligent Bṛhaspati, what counter-measure should be adopted here? Kindly tell me. In a few days many of these strong Dānavas will be coming here and so also Vṛtra of great power." On hearing these words of Śakra, Bṛhaspati told him: "Hasten to do something, O Śakra. At my bidding you go to the beautiful Mahākālavana. There to the south of Khaṇḍeśvara, O Vāsava, is a Liṅga that brings about all prosperities. Propitiate it assiduously. It will grant you your desire."

On hearing the words of Bṛhaspati, Śakra went hurriedly to Mahākālavana, O goddess. After seeing the excellent Liṅga he bent down his neck in devotion and eulogized.

25-33. "Obeisance to the overlord of Devas, to Śaṅkara, to Vṛṣa (Bestower of piety). Obeisance to the multi-formed one wor-thy of being sought, the Lord with a snake for the sacred thread. Obeisance to the most excellent one. O bestower of all desires, perpetual obeisance to you. You are the first creator of the subjects. You alone, as Kāla, annihilate the subjects. You alone are the Lord of waters, Lord of the elements. You are Dhaneśvara (Kubera); you alone are Dahana (Fire-god). You alone are the Moon, the Sun and the Wind, the creator, the dispenser of destinies; you are the most ancient one. You are the reservoir of water; you alone are Varuṇa; you are the most excellent mountain and the Lord of serpents. You alone are Ḍiṇḍi, O Mahākāla. You alone are Vṛṣa; you alone are Vināyaka, the most excellent one of Guhyakas."

On hearing this eulogy, the Liṅga said to Śatakratu: "At my bidding, O Śakra, go to the battlefield. You have grown in strength by my radiance. There is no doubt, O slayer of enemies; you will kill Vṛtra."

By the greatness of that Liṅga, O Pārvatī, he killed Vṛtra in battle through the foam in the water, even as the enemies of the Devas were watching. Afterwards he sportingly killed the Dānavas. Hardened by the war, Indra said to the Devas: "Vṛtra is killed in the great battle. By my power you have regained the suzerainty of the three worlds."

On being told thus by Śakra, the Devas began to wonder. Due to the greatness of this deity, Vṛtra the great Asura, was killed. The sins clinging to the bodies were annihilated by the sight (of the Lord). Since Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, was propitiated by Indra, the deity will become well-known over the earth by the name Indreśvara.

34-39. By visiting this Liṅga sinners, freed from sins, will go to the splendid city of Indra. A man who visits the deity named Indreśvara always will become rid of all sins and will rejoice in heaven for a long time. He who adores the Liṅga propitiated by Indra devoutly, attains the highest place (and lives there) for a period of four divine Kalpas. "If anyone devoutly worships Indreśvara Deva perfectly, it is as good as the perfect worship of all we Devas beginning with Viṣṇu and including Vāsava, the sages, the Guardians of Quarters etc. There is no doubt about this."

On being told thus by the Suras including Vaikuṇṭha, Śakra, the Lord, went back to Svarga accompanied by them all.

O Pārvatī, the power of Indreśvara Deva has been told. Now listen to (that of) Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara.

CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara

Śrī Hara said:

1-7. Know that Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara Liṅga is the thirty-sixth deity. Merely by seeing it, a man becomes endowed with a son.

There was an ascetic named Mṛkaṇḍa. He was born of the family of Brahmā. He regularly practised the study of the Vedas. Unfortunately he had no son. He began to think about the means of getting a son.

'How can there be a son (to me)? The Vedas declare that none without a son can attain (the good) Loka. Hence I shall perform penance whereby I will get a son.'

Thinking thus within himself in various ways, he went to Himālaya. He built an abode there and conditioned his soul for the practice of austerities. (Sometimes) his only intake was air; (sometimes) water; (sometimes) taking in nothing. He used to stand topsy- turvey, with the feet upwards. He had the intake of greens, roots and fruits; he used to eat only leaves, taking in one or two. The sage practised these and similar austerities in the course of twelve years. O goddess, I did not feel satisfied even with his severe and rare type of austerities.

8-13. Then you comprehended his mind (desire) and informed me: "For the sake of a son, the great sage is engaged in a severe penance. He illuminates the mountains with his fiery brilliance. He dries up the water reservoirs. On account of this severe penance the heaven-dwellers are excited. The seas are agitated and so also are the Sun and the Moon. The sages have sunk in oblivion. Heaven and earth tremble. O Lord, undoubtedly there will be a premature Pralaya (ultimate annihilation of the world). May a son be given to that sage Mṛkaṇḍa."

Thereupon I said: "O beautiful lady, he wishes for an *Ayonija* ('not born of the womb') son who will be everlasting (immortal) like another Indra of a thousand eyes. He will (should) have the lustre of the moon; be moon-faced; favourite with all the worlds like the moon; dark in complexion like the petals of a blue lotus; having eyes resembling the petals of a blue lotus; with ample and handsome waist and adorned with beautiful earrings, O goddess. This great sage Mṛkaṇḍa wishes for a son of such a type, O goddess of the Devas."

14-25. O goddess affectionate towards devotees, out of compassion you said again: "If you do not grant a son to the sage engaged in the severe penance, how is this justified that you are praised by learned men as the bestower of the fruit of austerities?

Who will seek refuge in you, O Bhava, O source of origin of all the worlds? You enable all the Daityas to harass all the Devas. O Lord, O compassionate one, I have been honoured by you for a long time. No one else can grant me excellent boon out of sympathy. You, O Lord of all the Cosmos, are the master, doer and administrator. You are the cause, you are the master, the greatest Lord, the merciful one, affectionate to

devotees. O Lord of all, you are eulogized. How is it that the desired thing is not given to the Brāhmaṇa? This sage has eliminated all sins through penance. He has identified himself with Brahman. At my instance, O Śiva, grant a son unto him."

At that, O goddess, you were extolled by me with auspicious and splendid words of affection: "O Gaurī with eyes like tremulous lotus petals, O daughter of the Mountain, O mother of Skanda, O lady with a countenance resembling the disc of the moon perfectly complete with all digits, O lady with a lean belly, O lady with the lustre of burnished gold, O lady with the gait of an elephant, I shall carry out the request made by you. You are the Siddhi (spiritual attainment); you are the Sādhaka (aspirant). You are the Sādhya (the object of attainment). You are the rite based on the proper procedure. You are the Māyā; you are the Śrī; you are the lustre; you are the lovely series of prosperous faith; O beautiful one, with me also you display diverse kinds of petulant huff; you shine resplendent in various forms enchanting the entire universe."

And you said again, O goddess: "May my words be carried out, O Maheśvara. This sage has made all his limbs emaciated through penance now. May the boon be granted to the Brāhmaṇa."

26-34. I too said,: "O lady of wide eyes! Let my words be heard. May this leading Brāhmaṇa go to the excellent Mahākālavana. There, to the east of Pattaneśvara, there is the excellent Liṅga that yields a son. O lady of wide eyes, it is destructive of great sins."

On hearing my words you told the excellent Brāhmaṇa: "O excellent sage, go to Mahākālavana for the sake of a son. After propitiating the Liṅga there you will get an excellent son."

On being urged by you, the Brāhmaṇa resolved to do so. With great hope, the Brāhmaṇa who desired a son went to that place. On seeing the great Liṅga that grants a son and destroys sins, he served it with devotion and austerities very difficult to perform.

Then, as the time elapsed, O beautiful lady, I issued forth along with you, from the centre of the Liṅga and spoke to that excellent Brāhmaṇa: "Know that I am Śarva. Tell me, what shall I do for you? We two were pleased with you even earlier. All your activities are known to us. O Brāhmaṇa, I shall grant you now whatever boon you may wish for."

On being told thus by me with great pleasure, the sage became extremely surprised, O lady of excellent heart. The excellent sage said humbly and joyously: "O rulers of Devas, I am yearning for a child. Will it be impossible to get?"

35-44. Then, O goddess, the excellent sage Mṛkaṇḍa was informed by me: "A human son, not born of womb shall be obtained by you. He will be richly endowed with prosperity and wisdom. He will live for a long time. He will be omniscient and wise." In the meantime, O goddess, Mārkaṇḍeya, the great sage of extensive austerities and highly righteous-souled, manifested as his son. Immediately after the manifestation (birth) that pious-souled one became engaged in penance. He propitiated the deity who joyously granted the boon: "O excellent Brāhmaṇa, immediately after your manifestation you have delighted me with your penance. Hence I will become well-known after your name. O leading Brāhmaṇa, those who see me with great devotion will attain forever the goal of perpetual bliss. The men who go there incidentally are always devoid of misery. By propitiating the Lord of Devas, they will rejoice. The men who are my devotees will become three-eyed Gaṇeśvaras and Siddhas served by Siddhas and Gandharvas. Those who worship me with charming, fragrant flowers will become long-lived and free from miseries." When this was said by the Liṅga, Mārkaṇḍeya of great penance stayed there itself in Mahākālavana and performed penance.

O goddess, the power of Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara has been recounted. Now listen to the greatness of Śiveśvara Deva.

CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

Śiveśvara

Śrī Hara said:

1-7. Know the infinite Śiveśvara Liṅga as the thirty-seventh one. Merely by seeing it one acquires all riches.

In the beautiful Mahākālavana, there lived formerly in the Brahmakalpa, a king named Ripuñjaya. He was ardently devoted to the protection of the subjects. He took no cognizance of anything other than worship of gods, Vrata, Dāna, meditation, self-study of the Vedas, holy rites and protection of the subjects. He looked after the subjects. Protected like children, all the subjects flourished in happiness, bereft of old age and death. They were blessed with sons, wealth and foodgrains and they realized all their desires. O my beloved, the entire Mahākālapura was pervaded by his radiance alone.

In the meantime, as he was ruling the earth, O Pārvatī, O goddess, Mahākālavana was marked as my city by me. I was not interested in going anywhere else except Ujjayinī.

Then Gaṇeśa, the leader of Śivagaṇas, was thought of by me. Instantly he arrived there and said, "What shall I do?"

8-16. I told Gaṇeśa: "Dear son, go to my dear city of Mahākālapura ruled by King Ripuñjaya." On being told thus by me, O goddess, he joined his palms in reverence and said, "So be it." He went to the mortal world with the delight of carrying out my order manifest on his face. When the Śivagaṇa had gone, O goddess of bright smiles, I became satisfied. It is, indeed, rare to find a servant of the Lord, who is efficient as well as endowed with wisdom and power of reasoning.

He (Gaṇeśa) assumed the guise of a mendicant holding many medicinal herbs. Keeping a drum suspended from his shoulder, he proclaimed: "Who is possessed by spirits? Who has been administered poison? Who is afflicted by blemishes and failures? Who has an acute chronic ailment? I shall cure it. Who is sonless? Let him be blessed with a son by resorting to the power of my Mantras. I am a physician conversant with all compounds and mixtures. I am the bestower of all desired objects."

On hearing his words, the populace flocked to him with evident eagerness and curiosity. There were children, women and old men as well. He removed their ailments, even the most incurable ones. They were highly delighted and they began to worship him. They propitiated him with gold, jewels, garments, money, foodgrains, villages, cities etc. Thus he stayed there for fourteen years keenly watching for a vulnerable point in the king. He could not find one.

17-24. That Śivagaṇa in the guise of a mendicant thought thus: 'It is very difficult to find fault with this king. He is so popular. He is brilliant and heroic. He is highly intelligent and invincible.' He then concealed himself in the dense growth of creepers and brushes in an almost ruined garden.

In the meantime, the chief queen of that king, so solicitous of public welfare, called Nirjarā, sought the help of the mendicant. She was dearer to the king than his own life. She was unrivalled in beauty. Having no son, she wanted one because she had many co-wives. She had heard that the mendicant was one who could grant everything desired by the citizens. The beautiful lady eagerly sent her female companion named Sunandā to the abode of the mendicant secretly even as she herself was in the Antaḥpura itself but watchful. The companion searched for him throughout the city and came across him sitting, musing with the alms he had received. She bowed to him free from mental anguish. For the sake of the matter on hand she spoke to him: "O holy Sir, the chief queen is dearer to the king than his own life. The queen is barren and so she wishes to see you secretly. You are merciful and have bestowed on the subjects almost all that they desired."

On hearing this, the Śivagaṇa had a suitable opportunity. He said to her:

The Bhikṣu said:

25-32. O fair lady, how dare you speak this improper thing like, "Come to the palace unknown to others." Only a very rash and venturesome person can be seen moving about anonymously in the city. Realize this, O fair lady, and hasten to the Antaḥpura. I will not come there without the king's express order.

* * *

On hearing the words of the mendicant she became agitated in her mind. She went back to the Antaḥpura in a hurry and reported it to the queen. On hearing the words of her female companion, the queen became distressed. She spoke to her: "O Sunandā, how can the king be persuaded to permit the mendicant to come over here before he proceeds elsewhere?" Sunandā who always spoke befitting words, spoke thus tactfully: "You are the beloved one of the king, dearer to him than his own life. Hence you pretend to the king that you are ill and disturbed in your mind. For that reason the king will carry out your suggestion."

At this time the king entered the Antaḥpura desirous of seeing the queen. He saw the queen, his beloved, distressed. With his mind melting with love, the king asked her:

The King said:

Oh queen! What a nasty look you have taken on! You speak as though you are dispirited. What misery overwhelms you? Who has misbehaved thus?

33-40. On hearing the words of the king, the queen spoke these words: "I have no sons, O king. Hence I have no pleasure or interest. To those who have no sons, any sports or pastimes give but pain and misery. All the sonless ones in the world are wretched ones. Persons bereft of sons are miserable. There is no redemption unto one without a son or a daughter. Happy are those persons in the world who embrace their children, their own bosom-born sons, although soiled with dust and lisping incoherently. It is for this reason that I have become excessively disgusted. But now a means for obtaining a son has been found out by me. A certain mendicant has come here. He has the form of the eternal Lord, the veritable God (Himself). It is heard that he has unobstructed power in all matters. Here all the people, including women and children, have sought refuge in him. O king, we shall become blessed with sons with the favour of the mendicant. I have no doubt about this in my mind."

On hearing her words the king, accompanied by his beloved, went to the dilapidated park and saw the mendicant.

As soon as he was seen by the king, the mendicant turned into a Liṅga. On seeing this great miracle, the king became humble with devotion. He duly worshipped that Liṅga, the transformation of the mendicant.

41-53. He said: "I have no son. This blessed lady is my chief queen. O holy Lord, grant a son unto me. You are Śiva, Maheśvara."

On being addressed thus by the lion-like king, the mendicant in the form of the Liṅga replied to the king: "O king, a son will be born to you." Ever since then that highly intelligent king along with his wife joyously sought refuge in that Lord in all respects.

By the grace of the Lord of Devas, a very powerful son was born to him. He was pious-minded, renowned, majestic and superior in qualities.

Thereafter, I came here from Mandara out of curiosity and saw the Gaṇa in the form of a Liṅga with the king as the attendant. By my lordly Yogic power, my city was created there. It shone remarkably due to the various jewels and their lustre. It was resorted to by different Siddhas. An auspicious eternal spot was given by me, O goddess of excellent complexion. It is to the north of Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara Deva. Ever since then this deity is remembered as Śiveśvara.

Those who always adore the excellent Śiveśvara will become excellent Gaṇas rid of all sins.

Those who visit Śiveśvara after realizing that the world can have an infant also as a preceptor, shall be granted excellent knowledge by me at the close of their lives.

After considering that salvation is rarely obtained and the worldly existence is excessively terrible, this Śiveśvara should be resorted to, because he brings about non-recurrence of rebirth. Whatever may be his plight, if a man resorts to Śiveśvara, he attains that goal which is obtained by Yajñas and Dānas. A man who, with restraint and purity, listens, reads or recites this narrative is rid of all sins. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Śiveśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (that of) Kusumeśa hereafter.

CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

Kusumeśvara

Īśvara said:

1-7. O goddess, know that the Liṅga named *Kusumeśvara* is the thirty-eighth deity that yields heavenly pleasures and destroys great sins.

Formerly in the Vaivasvata Manvantara, at the advent of Vārāha Kalpa, O lady of large eyes, I came to the beautiful Mahākālavana from Kailāsa. O Pārvatī, while I was playing with the dice with you in that beautiful Mahākālavana, a loud report was heard. On hearing the unbearable noise, I was asked by you about it. The origin of the sound was narrated to you, O goddess: "These Gaṇeśas (Chiefs of Gaṇas) are playing. Gaṇa Vīraka is in the middle. He is profusely adorned with flowers. He is my greatest favourite. He is being struck with flowers. He is being honoured ardently with showers of flowers. He is *Vīraka*, O goddess, who always gives me delight. He is the owner of many wondrous qualities. He is adored by a hundred Gaṇeśvaras." On hearing these words, O lady of excellent countenance, you too said:

8-14. "The lotus-like face of a son is not seen without merits. O Maheśvara, I have great eagerness and ardour for such a son. When shall I see such a son who bestows delight?" On hearing your words I repeatedly laughed, O Pārvatī, and said: "This Vīraka is given now to you as the son. Let him alone be your son, the bestower of delight to your eyes. Vīraka adored with flowers shall become contented and blessed with you as mother." On hearing my words Vijayā was sent by you, "O Vijayā, a son has been given to me by Hara. Bring him quickly." Vijayā said to the leader of the Gaṇas stationed in the middle of the Gaṇas: "Come on, Vīraka, the Lord has been made angry by you through your fickle pranks. Why were you enchanted by the over-attachment to dances (behaving) like a mad man?" On being told thus, the Gaṇapa bedecked in flowers became terrified. Following Vijayā, he slowly came to you. On seeing Vīraka bedecked in flowers but excessively afraid, he was invited by you, O goddess, with sweet-syllabled words:

15-25a. "Come, come, Son Vīraka. You have been given to me by the Lord as my son." After saying thus you placed him on your lap; kissed him on the cheeks. Even as he spoke sweetly, you sniffed at his head and stroked his limbs. You then adorned him with ornaments yourself, such as anklets and girdles with tinkling bells, armlets and necklaces with excellent jewels and gold coins stringed together exquisitely. Becoming pleased with him, you decorated him with tender sprouts of various colours. Uttering divine Mantras you applied white ash over his body. With the mixture of white mustard, you carried out the ritualistic protection to his limbs. Then you tied a garland on his head making it sparkle with Gorocanā and ornamental painted figures. You said: "Dear boy, go and play along with the Gaṇas as the other boys are doing. Do not be careless. Engage slowly in your boyish pranks." Then Gaṇeśādhipa playing about here and there caused a great delight to the Devas. A moment he played on small hills where Siddhas abounded and where jewels were scattered about. Another moment he played in places where huge Śāla trees and palm trees graw in plenty. A moment he played in places where there were Tamāla trees in full bloom with bees hovering around. The next moment he played at the foot of a tree where swarms of bees flew about. A moment he played in water with some mud therein. Another moment he played in marshy places. The next moment he played among groves of trees spotlessly splendid.

Even as Vīraka was playing thus along with the Gaṇas, twilight came spreading darkness. O beloved, you then told me, "O Śaṅkara, may lordship and wealth be given to my son, a moiety of the body with Gaṇeśatva (status of being the Lord of Gaṇas) and Lokapālatva (status of being a Guardian of Quarters) later on. He can have the status of a Liṅga, everlasting, of a place divine and rare. He should be honoured and adored by Siddhas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras, Brahmā, Indra, Varuṇa, Ādityas, Lokapālas and Lord of Lords. Along with these Gaṇas, he should be eulogized by the noble-souled ones. Let him be well-known by the name Kusumeśvara because he was bedecked by me with different kinds of splendid flowers."

25b-35. O lady of large eyes, I too said: "Vīraka is my beloved one. He has divine powers on a par with mine. He is always

attended upon by the Lords of Gaṇas. Listen to the nectarine sweetness of the songs of the Gandharvas. See the fascinating beauty of the Kinnara women who are singing. Witness this continuous dance of the Apsaras groups. O lady of excellent countenance, Kusumeśa is surrounded by Vidyādharas. O goddess, he is the first Pramatheśvara who has been particularly made Kusumeśvara when he was bedecked in flowers (by you). A spot has been assigned to him, O lady of wide eyes, to the north of Śiveśvara Liṅga. It is an esteemed boon which is inaccessible even to the Devas, that he has been granted. O Gaṇapa, if people see you, O Kusumeśvara, sins will not contaminate them like water not sticking to a lotus leaf. Those men who worship Kusumeśvara with flowers will attain my place (region) and rejoice free from pain. A man who sees you at least one day with concentration, shall be liberated from all sins and go to my world. He who adores Kusumeśvara Liṅga with flowers with great emotional fervour will attain the greatest place from which there is no return."

With these and similar boons Kusumeśvara was rendered well-nourished. The Gaṇa became contented and blessed, O goddess, and he attained divinity through the Liṅga. The power of Kusumeśvara Deva has been thus recounted. Let that of Akrūreśa Deva be listened to hereafter.

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

Akrūreśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-7. Listen to the description of Akrūreśvara, the thirty-ninth deity. Merely by seeing this men's intellect becomes pure and excellent.

Formerly at the beginning of the Kalpa, O beautiful lady, the entire group of the three worlds, including the mobile

1. A Śiva Gaṇa Bhṛṅgiriṭi was cursed by Pārvatī for denying her motherhood and was exiled to the earth. By performing penance at Mahākālavana, he realized the oneness of Śiva and Pārvatī by visualizing Śiva's Ardhanārīśvara form. At this he eschewed his cruelty (in penance). Hence this Liṅga became known as Akrūreśvara.

and immobile beings, was created by you alone in the form of the great Śakti. Then you were eulogized by the Devas along with Kinnaras and great Serpents. The different kinds of Gaṇas began to circumambulate you. Others prostrated before you and uttered prayers. But one of them Bhṛṅgiriṭi did not make the obeisance. He had become cruel in the intellect and arrogant due to pride of great magnitude thinking thus, 'Mahādeva is the only God. Of what avail to me is this lady?' When he did not come near you, you approached him and said: "Why don't you perform adoration, circumambulation or eulogy (of mine)? You are one of my devotees and, therefore, under my control. You have been made by me, my son. You being thus, O Lord of Gaṇas, why do you behave as a self-willed one?"

8-17. On hearing this, Bhṛṅgiriṭi became angry and said to you haughtily: "O Pārvatī, I am not your son. I am Śaṅkara's son. He alone is both my mother as well as my father. Day and night I seek refuge in him who is Parameṣṭhin. You too, O Pārvatī, have resorted to him and taken refuge in him. If I have to salute you, I will have to salute all the Gaṇas."

On hearing these words of Bhṛṅgiriṭi, O timid lady, you said to Bhṛṅgiriṭi, the Lord of Pramathas: "Although you are my son, why do you speak so impolitely to me? The skin, flesh, blood and the entrails of a son are inherited from the mother, O Gaṇapa; the nails, teeth and skeleton of bones, penis, speech and head and also semen the son derives from the father's body."

On hearing thus, Bhṛṅgiriṭi by his Yogic power immediately shed off everything beginning with flesh etc., the part belonging to the mother. Ever since then, O lady of excellent thighs, he retained only the nails, teeth, bones and the nose. His mind became cruel and the eyes reddened due to anger. He left you and came to me very much distressed with grief. Then, O my beloved, you cursed Bhṛṅgiriṭi: "Since you adopted a ruthless attitude and became evil-minded, you will undoubtedly proceed to the mortal world."

18-27. On being told thus by you, O goddess, Bhṛṅgiriṭi, the Gaṇa, fell down into the mortal world like a meritorious person when his merits are exhausted. He went to the Puṣkara Dvīpa with a mind directed towards penance. There he stood for ten Padma years (crores of years) on a single leg with the

hands raised up. By that severe penance, the universe got burnt. Thereafter, O lady of beautiful waist, all of us, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śakra and others along with the Devas went to him. After approaching him, I said to him thus: "Enough of this ruthless penance that exterminates the world. When you are stationed thus, the group of all the three worlds has become bereft of consciousness. Withdraw this terrible austerity that scorches the worlds excessively. O dear son, may Pārvatī be prayed to. She will grant you a boon. With her favour you will be liberated from the curse."

He was told thus. You, O Maheśvarī, were prayed to by him. Bhṛṅgiriṭi, the Gaṇa, became humble due to devotion and prayed to you with great respect. Then, O lady of large eyes, you told him: "At my bidding, O son, gō to the beautiful Mahākālavana. There you will become Akrūra ('free from cruelty'). You will come again to Kailāsa which is resorted to by Siddhas and Gandharvas.

The Liṅga is in front of Aṅkapāda. It is a great Liṅga and will continue (to exist) for seven Kalpas. Merely by seeing it the intellect becomes auspicious, splendid. Men who are ungrateful, faithless, cruel, treacherous, highly sinful and accursed—all these attain Svarga by seeing this Liṅga.

28-39. Having become cruel-minded Keśihan (Kṛṣṇa) killed Kaṁsa. Accompanied by Baladeva he left Mathurā city and went to Mahākālavana. There he propitiated Maheśvara and acquired *Akrūratva* ('absence of cruelty'). Perpetual fame was also acquired by him."

On hearing your words, Bhṛṅgiriṭi, the Gaṇa, became a believer. Saying, "So it shall be," he went to Mahākālavana. He propitiated the Lord by means of a different and severe penance. In the meantime, O goddess, you rose up from the centre of the Liṅga. Half of your body was mine and the other half was your own. In one half the matted hairs were tied up by the great serpents. The other half was beautified with plaited hairs. One helf was embellished with Patravallī (paintings of creepers, etc.). The other half was shining with the crescent moon. One half was beautified with pearl necklaces, while the other half was encircled by serpents. Then, O goddess, Bhṛṅgiriṭi saw that great miracle and thought thus within his heart: 'I committed a blunder due to ignorance. Umā and Śaṅkara

together constitute one eternal physical form. The single form that cannot be specifically distinguished, appears as two differently.' Even as he was thinking thus humbly with devotion, O Pārvatī, you said: "Dear son, I am pleased; choose a boon."

He said: "O my mother, O Maheśvarī, if you are pleased, let this deity be named Akrūreśvara and may it be well-known thus. It is due to the greatness of this Liṅga that the ruthlessness of my intellect has vanished. You are mentioned, O goddess, as the sole cause of all living beings. You are the personified form of the mass of merits. You are the ultimate goal of those who resort to merits. You are the father, mother, friend, kinsman and the sole great cause. Make this holy spot the most meritorious and destructive of the sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter etc., the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation and that which yields the desired objects."

40-48. You said, "So let it be," in a sweet voice. "O dear child, I shall bring about everything that pleases you. O golden-lustred son, nothing on your behalf is difficult for me to do. Men may be even engrossed in sins. But if they even incidentally see the deity named Akrūreśvara in this holy spot, they will invariably become Gaṇas on a par with you.

Those men who eulogize devoutly the name of this Liṅga shall be liberated from mental sins and will go to everlasting Svarga.

A man who after taking his holy bath duly adores it, shall be rid of all sins and will attain the Solar Sphere. By touching this Liṅga, a man attains longevity, health, prosperity, everything desired, and the merit of gifting a thousand cows.

A devotee should take his holy bath in Mandākinī Kuṇḍa and worship Lord Akrūreśvara with different kinds of flowers. Even if he is tainted with great sins, he will go to Svarga seated in a divine aerial chariot. He will stay there for a period of four Kalpas. He will be sung about by Gandharvas."

On being told thus, O goddess, that Gaṇa, liberated from the curse, came to me along with you. O lady of excellent countenance, has this been forgotten by you? Thus the sin-destroying power of Akrūreśvara Deva has been recounted to you, O goddess. Listen to that of the great deity Kuṇḍeśvara.

CHAPTER FORTY

Kuṇḍeśvara

Īśvara said:

1-7. Know that the fortieth deity is Kuṇḍeśvara Liṅga. Hence listen to it. Merely by seeing it, attainment of the good goal is possible.

On Mandara abounding in charming caves, O goddess, I was respectfully requested by you that you wished to see Vīraka: "Where has my son gone?" I replied: "O lady of wide eyes, he is in the midst of water in the excellent Mahākālavana. He performed an excessively severe penance in the company of sages. The intelligent one is shining like the sun, O lady of excellent countenance. We shall go there along with the Gaṇas to see him." On hearing my words you urged me saying: "Get up, O Śaṁbhu. We shall go. Mount the bull quickly." As you suddenly remembered Vīraka, your breasts began to exude milk. O goddess, my bull, the eternal Dharma personified, was remembered by me. Knowing that I was thinking of him, he came to me. Then I mounted the bull along with you.

8-19a. Accompanied by different kinds of Gaṇas, I set out at great speed along with you supported by the shoulders of the bull. I was closely embraced by you with your arms with the bangles producing tinkling sound. When the bull was urged to move faster, you became afraid. O lady of wide eyes, the bull was pulled by the leaders of the Gaṇas. On seeing it pulled and moving faster, you spoke out in fright: "O Lord, I am tired now. Further, I have become terrified by this great speed. Hence, O Lord, I wish to rest on the ridge of the mountain for a moment. I would rather walk on foot. But this great mountain is rugged." On hearing your words, O my beloved, I said: "Very well, O lady having a charming waist, do take rest for a short while sitting at the foot of the hill. I shall go ahead quickly and try to find out a path where you can walk easily. This Kuṇḍa, the leader of the Gaṇas, will stay near you. He has been placed here by me as your servant acting in accordance with your behest." Thereafter, placing the Gaṇa as guard, O goddess, I climbed on to the ridge of

the mountain like the sun rising on the eastern mountain. The beautiful great mountain was observed very carefully by me. Even as I observed the various parts of the excellent mountain exclaiming "How beautiful! How beautiful!" ten years passed by. You began to think in dismay, O goddess: 'Where has the Slayer of Tripura gone? Certainly he is not aware that I being deprived of the pleasure of dalliance, am scorched by Madana (god of Love). Where is Mahādeva staying carefree after abandoning me? Hara having gone away, the mind-born god of Love has remembered the old enmity. Though he has no limbs (body), he has fitted the arrows to his bow and is now tormenting me.'

19b-31. You then began to lament and look this way and that. On seeing you so lamenting frequently, Kuṇḍa, the leader of Gaṇas, knew your state of mind. He spoke out loudly: "O goddess, do not become dispirited. Your husband will come presently. Do not get your mind excited." On hearing the words of Kuṇḍa, O lady of a lotus-like face, you said with great distress: "O Kuṇḍa, I am at a loss (to know). I do not know where Śaṅkara has gone or what he is doing all this time. Show Mahādeva to me." He was repeatedly asked to show (me) but he could not, O lady of excellent countenance. When I was not found by Kuṇḍa, the Gaṇa guard, he was cursed by you, O fair lady, as you became angry: "Since Hara is not traced by you, you go to the mortal world." In the meantime, O fair lady, I reached the place near you. I was asked by you: "Where did you go? You have left me alone in the impassable desolate mountain. Hence I will cast off my life after going to the top of this mountain. What have you been doing, O Lord?" On hearing your words, I clearly narrated everything: "The mountain is excessively rugged and intractable, O fair lady. In order to do something pleasing to you, O blessed one, I was surveying (and exploring) the paths in order to decide the particular one along which we could proceed without worries, O lady of excellent waistline. But his Kuṇḍa, O fair lady, has become sad and bewildered." You said: "O Mahādeva, Kuṇḍa, the Gaṇa, has been cursed by me since he did not carry out my behest. My words cannot be ineffective. Hence let him go to the splendid Mahākālavana in the guise of a Bhairava where you are stationed in the northern sector. In front of it there

is a Liṅga that always bestows everything desired. Merely by seeing it he will become the leader of the Gaṇas. That deity will become well-known as Kuṇḍeśvara."

32-37a. This was said by you. Then he was approached and repeatedly told thus: "Proceed, O Kuṇḍa, at my bidding to Mahākālavana quickly. By propitiating the Liṅga quickly, O son, you will attain permanent fame in all the three worlds."

On being told thus he went there instantly. After seeing the eternal Liṅga in front of Uttaraśiva he devoutly adored it. Thereupon, Devas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, great sages, Yakṣas and Apsarās came there in thousands, surrounded by the Gaṇas. Then I too came here at that moment along with you. On seeing Kuṇḍa, the leader of the Gaṇas, engaged in propitiating the Liṅga and engrossed in concentration, we respectfully told him:

37b-43. "O son, Pārvatī is pleased with you. May the excellent boon be requested for. By seeing the Liṅga you have attained an everlasting position. From today this deity will become well-known on the earth by the name Kuṇḍeśvara." Since the deity is always the bestower of all riches, a man who devoutly visits the beginningless Kuṇḍeśvara obtains the fruit of a thousand horse-sacrifices, and not otherwise. He who devoutly worships Kuṇḍeśvara Liṅga always obtains the entire fruit of Dānas and the merit of (visiting) all the Tīrthas always. By touching Kuṇḍeśvara one obtains the fruit of ten horse-sacrifices and a hundred Agniṣṭomas (sacrifices). Those who devoutly visit the deity invariably in the morning, will become delighted undoubtedly and attain the fulfilment of all desires.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Kuṇḍeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the (story of) the great deity Lumpeśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

Lumpeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-10. The Liṅga, well-known on the earth by the name Lumpeśvara, is the forty-first deity, O Pārvatī.

In a country populated by clans of Mlecchas (Barbarians) there was a king well-known as Lumpādhipa. In valour he was on a par with Mahendra. He had a beloved wife named Viśālā. She was unrivalled all over the earth in her beauty. She was endowed with all the elegances of youth. That king was fond of fighting. He enquired from the excellent Brāhmaṇas (about persons worthy of fighting). Someone told him: "There is a Brāhmaṇa Sāmaga in a certain penance grove. O mighty one, O excellent king, do fight with him." Then the king set out with thousands of Mlecchas, Tuṣāras, Barbaras, Lumpas, Pahlavas and Śvagaṇas (groups of hounds). He was surrounded by cruel dacoits. He himself was overwhelmed with anger. Thus he entered the holy penance grove of Sage Sāmaga. The king was duly honoured by the sage with the offer of seats, Madhuparka etc. In the meantime, the king saw the *Homadhenu* (the cow intended for the holy Homa rites) and requested for it. The sage refused to give. Thereupon, the king devastated the hermitage and took away the sacrificial cow. Even as the Brāhmaṇa was watching, the entire forest was destroyed by him. Seeing the calf extremely miserable and the cow tortured mercilessly, the Brāhmaṇa said, "O king, do not indulge in a rash act."

11-20. The highly infuriated and wicked Lumpa surrounded by wicked people, attacked and killed the eminent Brāhmaṇa with sharp arrows even as he was protesting thus and lamenting frequently uttering, "Oh my son! Oh my son!" The king went to his abode after killing the Brāhmaṇa Sāmaga.

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1. The story is based to some extent on the Paraśurāma legend, and not on the Turkish invasion as presumed by some other scholars. Lumpādhīśa killed an ascetic called Sāmaga for not giving his Homa Dhenu. The son of the sage cursed the Mlecchа king to become a leper. Nārada advised him to propitiate this Liṅga in Mahākālavana. The king became "divine-bodied" at the sight of the Liṅga. Hence it came to be known as Lumpeśvara.

In the meantime, the son with sacrificial twigs in his hands came there. On seeing his father, the innocent, noble-souled Brāhmaṇa, killed outright, he was stricken with intense grief and he lamented: "By whom was this despicable deed perpetrated? Even when my old father did not resist he has been slain by the sinful wretch with hundreds of sharp arrows."

After lamenting thus in various ways very piteously, he performed the obsequial rites of his father in accordance with the injunctions. He cremated his father in funeral fire. Presently he took some water in the hollow of his palm and gave an excessively terrible curse to the king Luṁpa:

"Let that sinful soul of wicked deeds by whom my learned father, scrupulously engaged in performing his duties, was killed, incur the fell disease of leprosy."

In the meanwhile, the king was afflicted with leprosy. O lady of excellent countenance, the king became a cripple. The disease became more virulent even when medicines were administered, due to the power of the curse of the Brāhmaṇa. In utter disgust and detachment, he decided to die. Accordingly the grief-stricken king gathered fuel and began to make a pyre. Nārada came at that instant and was honoured by the miserable king.

21-32. Thereafter, the king Luṁpa asked Nārada, the excellent sage: "O divine sage, all of a sudden I contracted the fell disease of leprosy. I am extremely afflicted. The disease did not abate. Why does it aggravate despite the use of medicines? It behoves you to explain this. There is nothing unknown to you in this world or in the other world."

On hearing the words of Luṁpādhīśa, Nārada said everything in detail regarding the insurmountable curse of the Brāhmaṇa. Thereupon, the king accompanied by his wife prayed to Nārada: "How can, O holy Sir, this insurmountable curse of mine be ended?" On being spoken thus by Luṁpa, Nārada, the holy sage, explained everything, O lady of renown, out of compassion for the king and his wife: "O king, there is a great Liṅga that dispels leprosy and brings about riches, in Mahākālavana. It is destructive of sins also. It is situated on the beautiful banks of Śiprā to the east of Keśavārka. Do go there, O great king. You will be endowed with splendour."

On being told thus, Luṁpa hastened to this place, the beautiful

Mahākālavana resorted to by multitudes of great sages. The king reached the place comparable to Svarga and rendered splendid by Śiprā. He entered the precincts and saw the excellent Liṅga. He took his bath in the holy water of Śiprā, destructive of great sins. By seeing the Liṅga, he assumed a divine form. Rid of the disease of leprosy and liberated from the sin of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, the king became blessed, O Pārvatī, by seeing (the Liṅga) alone. The king spent that night there along with the wife and honoured the sages very much.

33-41. Then the holy rite of Svastyayana was performed by the noble-souled sages. O lady of lotus-like face, a name was assigned to that Liṅga by those sages endowed with divine knowledge and with the splendour of the Sun and Fire: "Since this deity, the destroyer of leprosy, was propitiated by Lumpa, it will become well-known as Lumpeśvara in the world.

Those who take their holy dip in the meritorious water of Śiprā and devoutly worship the great Lumpeśvara Liṅga, will reach the highest position. By visiting Lumpeśvara they will undoubtedly attain all the desires mentally cherished and prayed for. Even if he is defiled with great sins, the person who sees, with mental concentration and purity, the Lumpeśvara Liṅga, will become equal to the Devas. A cow-slayer, an ungrateful one, one guilty of matricide, a defiler of the preceptor's bed, one habitually indulging in wicked deeds, one guilty of the slaughter of his brother or father is rid of all sins by visiting Lumpeśvara but once. One worshipping the deity shall burn the sins acquired in the course of seven births."

After saying thus, all the sages performed a collective worship. The king, rid of the disease of leprosy, went to his realm.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Lumpeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the (story of) great Gaṅgeśvara Liṅga.

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

Gaṅgeśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-9. Listen to the Gaṅgeśvara Liṅga, the forty-second deity. Merely by seeing it one obtains the merit of (pilgrimage to) all the Tīrthas.

The foot of Nārāyaṇa, the source of origin of the universe, is the support of Dhruva (Pole Star). The divine Gaṅgā, the river with triple course (in heaven, earth and Pātāla), originated from that foot. She then entered Soma (Moon-god), the source of origin of Sudhā (Nectar) and the basic support of waters. Being sanctified by the contact of the solar rays, she increased in size and fell on the peak (upper part) of Meru. Thereafter she flowed in four streams. The river of great fame falling from the peaks and ridges of Meru had no further support and fell down with waters spreading around. Then the waters flowed over Mandara and other mountains, shared equally by them. The river well-known as Sītā went to the park Caitraratha. The excellent river flooded it and went to Aruṇoda. In the same manner, the river named Alakanandā flowed over Gandhamādana to the south and reached the forest at the foot of Meru and flowed on to the park Nandana that delights the Devas. After flooding the Mānasa lake with great speed, she passed on to the King of Mountains with three peaks (Triśikhara). From there, O my beloved, all the mountains were flooded. After flooding all of them, the river reached the great mountain Himavān.

10-20. There itself, O Pārvatī, she was held by me in my Jaṭā (matted hairs). When Gaṅgā was not released by me, she

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1. This is a modification of the legend of King Mahābhiṣak, a king of Ikṣvāku dynasty, who was cursed by Brahmā for looking at the naked part of Gaṅgā's body (Mbh, *Ādi*, 96). Gaṅgā is said to have been cursed to go to the mortal world and marry Mahābhiṣak who was to be born as Śāntanu, of Kuru dynasty. Our Purāṇa is not interested in the follow-up of the curse but in giving the credit of Gaṅgā's restoration to her heavenly form to the adoration of this Liṅga, called Gaṅgeśvara after this incident.

became angry with me. O lady of excellent countenance, all my limbs were flooded. She was restrained by me in anger in the midst of the matted hair, O lady of renown. There alone she performed penance for a period of hundreds of Kalpas. I was propitiated by Bhagīratha by means of fasts and eulogies. Then, O goddess, Gaṅgā flowing in three paths was released by me. After flooding the Northern Kurus she reached Mahākāla. She became the chief queen of Samudra (Ocean), dearer to him than his own life. Gaṅgā was made the most excellent one among the rivers by Samudra. That Samudra, the Lord of rivers, sported about with her.

Once Suras performed the *Upāsti* (adoration) of Brahmā. So Arṇava (ocean) went to the eternal Brahmaloka along with Gaṅgā, O fair lady, for viewing the great festivity. Then Gaṅgā, the most excellent one among rivers, approached Pitāmaha. Her garment having the lustre of the moon was wafted by the wind. Thereupon groups of the Suras bowed down their heads. But Mahābhiṣa (?) [Mahābhiṣak], a saintly king, looked at the river unhesitatingly. Noticing his attitude, Brahmā condemned him and told him: "You will be born in the mortal world and thereafter will attain the (heavenly) worlds." O lady of renown, Gaṅgā was cursed by the angry Samudra: "Leaving me you have become attached to another. Hence you will go to the mortal world of short life span. Distressed much, you will undergo there great miseries." On hearing that terrible curse, Gaṅgā spoke these words:

21-30. "Why have I been cursed without any fault in the presence of the assembly of Devas? I am chaste, actually considering my husband as my very vital life. It is only a slight slip that the garment was lifted up by the wind who is present everywhere." Thereupon, Brahmā replied to that river that sanctifies the whole world: "O divine one, O great river, you have been cursed by Samudra on account of the Vasus, in view of the inevitable future. Hence go quickly to the beautiful Mahākālavana resorted to by Siddhas and Gandharvas. There is an excellent Liṅga on the southern side of Śiprā. It is meritorious and it confers all Siddhis. It is destructive of all sins. Propitiate it assiduously. It will grant you the desire."

On hearing the words of Pitāmaha, the river of triple stream became glad. The divine river thought thus: 'I too desire to

go there because my dear friend Śiprā too is there. She is meritorious and destructive of great sins.'

After thinking thus, she came to Mahākāla and saw the excellent Liṅga. With her divine water she adored the Liṅga in accordance with the injunctions. She saw Śiprā, her companion, and both merged with each other. Ever since then Śiprā became one flowing to the east. The deity is well-known in all the three worlds by the name Gaṅgeśvara because he was propitiated by Gaṅgā and is the bestower of the benefit desired. At that time Gaṅgā, the divine river, was eulogized by Devas, Gandharvas, by Vālakhilyas and other sages and saints joyously.

31-41. Samudra came there and that great river was honoured. Gaṅgā was told by the Liṅga: "May a sixteenth fraction (of Gaṅgā) stay here near the Liṅga that is highly meritorious, as long as the earth stays." It was consented to by Samudra: "Let it be so." After this, Gaṅgā returned after leaving behind one-sixteenth part of her. O my beloved, one who takes the holy bath in the waters of Śiprā and visits Gaṅgeśvara obtains undoubtedly the benefit of (gifting) a thousand cows. He will get the benefit of all Tīrthas and all the holy rites. He will get the benefit of all the Yajñas performed well and that of all the Dānas. O fair lady, he will certainly obtain the benefit of all the Yogas practised continuously. O beautiful lady, all the Tīrthas of the earth are present there, such as Dharmāraṇya, Phalgu Tīrtha, Puṣkara, Naimiṣa, Gayā, Prayāga, Kurukṣetra, Kedāra and Amareśvara. All the holy rivers, viz. Candrabhāgā, Vipāśā, Sarayū, Devikā, Kuhū, Godāvarī, Śatadrū, Bāhudā and Vetravatī are in confluence with Gaṅgā. All secret holy Tīrthas, Siddhakṣetras and all the spots are stationed there, O Pārvati, by means of a Kalā (one-sixteenth fraction). He who views the deity Gaṅgeśvara with concentration and purity after taking the holy bath attains the benefit of these holy spots. A devotee shall visit the deity Gaṅgeśvara and the benefit is accrued. It is the truth that has been mentioned by me. Hence, O goddess honoured by the Gaṇas, this holy spot is praised as the most meritorious. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Gaṅgeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Now listen to the (story of) great deity Aṅgāreśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

Aṅgāreśvara[1]

Śrī Śiva said:

1-7. O daughter of the Mountain, know the forty-third deity, Aṅgāreśvara Merely by seeing it one acquires all the riches.

Formerly, in the Ādi Kalpa, a Vakrāṅga ('one with crooked limbs') of red complexion, terrible in appearance and resembling a burning coal, was born from my body. He was kept on the ground by me. He became well-known as Bhūmiputra ('Son of Earth').

As soon as that terrible son of huge body was born, the earth trembled and the Devas including Vāsava became afraid. The seas became agitated. The mountains shook. Everyone including Devas, Asuras and human beings was afflicted by him. The sages Vālakhilyas and the Devas with Indra as their leader went to Brahmaloka keeping Bṛhaspati in front, O my beloved. Gasping for their breath they bowed down to Pitāmaha and told him the news in detail regarding the destruction of the three worlds: "The three worlds have been assailed, afflicted and swallowed by the being originating from the body of Hara. He has done it immediately after the birth."

8-15. On hearing their words, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, deliberated on everything with them and then came near me along with them. All of them were asked by me: "Why are all of you so very frightened with hearts palpitating? Why do you pant for breath? Why are you distressed? Whence has fear overtaken you?" O goddess, everything was reported by those frightened ones to me: "O Lord of the Cosmos, the whole world including Devas, Asuras and mortal ones has been afflicted and swallowed by the being born of your limbs." On hearing their words (the son) was summoned by me with consideration for their welfare. He told me thus: "O Lord, O most excellent one among eloquent ones, may the command be given. What shall I do?" I said: "I have repeatedly told you not

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1. Mars is called Aṅgāraka as he was born from the Limbs (body) of Śiva (v 2). The shrine of Aṅgārakeśvara is at the confluence of Khagartā and Śiprā (v 37).

to down (overpower) the universe. You are born of my limbs through the Rajas quality. Hence you are called Aṅgāraka. For the perpetual happiness and welfare of the worlds, you have been created as Maṅgala ('Auspicious') by me. Now you have become crooked. So you are sung about as *Vakra* by the scholars." When my speech was heard by him, he spoke thus: "O Lord, how can there be satisfaction without the intake of food? Hence give me an excellent spot; give me lordship. Give me power quickly. Give me food, O Lord."

16-27. On hearing his words I thought thus: 'This is my pet son. Hence I shall grant him excellent and everlasting spot in the excellent Mahākālavana.' After thinking thus, I remembered that excellent spot. I placed the son on my lap and said lovingly and repeatedly: "Dear son, the spot in the excellent Mahākālavana, to the east of Gaṅgeśvara, has been granted to you as a praiseworthy excellent spot. The confluence of Khagartā and Śiprā is there. When Gaṅgā was held by me, she had slipped down by mistake from the lunar zone and had fallen on the earth in the excellent Mahākālavana. After slipping down from the firmament, she fell on the earth. She became well-known as Khagartā. Hence promptly I had my incarnation there. Dear son, I stand there in the form of a Liṅga and am adored by the Suras. The place is inaccessible even to the Devas. Hence go there quickly. On being adored by you there in the confluence worshipped by the worlds, I shall become well-known in all three worlds after your name. In the midst of all the Planets the overlordship has been granted to you by me. It is your third spot. There you will be satisfied. Well-established in the middle of the Planets, you will get the adoration. A lunar day, the fourth one, is also granted to you. Undoubtedly you will have full satisfaction through the holy rites (adoration rites) for averting evil etc. along with the requisite monetary gifts and the like, which people ardent to perform the Vrata may carry out on your behalf. One day of the week (Tuesday) is also granted by me for the purpose of auspiciousness. If people wear new clothes, begin their study or take oil bath on your day (Tuesday), they will never attain power."

28-35. On being told thus by me, my son well-known as Vakrāṅga, Maṅgala and Aṅgāraka accepted everything, saying, "So be it." Satisfied with that statement of mine, O lady of

excellent countenance, he came joyously to the excellent Mahākālavana, on the beautiful banks of Śiprā near the confluence of Khagartā. I was seen by him in the form of the Liṅga and he attained great satisfaction. He was lovingly embraced and kissed on the head, O my beloved. O lady of wide eyes, a boon was granted: "You will obtain what is desired. I was seen, dear son, and devoutly propitiated by you. Hence, O Maṅgala, I am pleased because you have carried out my suggestion. From today, dear son, I will undoubtedly become well-known by the name Aṅgāreśvara in all the three worlds. There will be no return unto the earth in the case of those persons who visit me established always in the confluence here. Those men who perfectly worship me on the day of Aṅgāraka (i.e. Tuesday) in Kali Yuga will undoubtedly be blessed.

36. The men of excellent Vratas who visit me when the fourth lunar day coincides with Tuesday will never suffer from worldly existence which is terrible and full of hundreds of miseries."

37-38. O goddess, listen to the meritorious benefit accrued to those persons who, when the new-moon day coincides with Tuesday, take their holy bath in the confluence of Khagartā and Śiprā, a confluence adorable to Devas, and visit me installed here (Mahākālavana) itself.

39. They will get more benefit—the benefit said to accrue from Vārāṇasī, Gayā, Prayāga, Kurukṣetra and Puṣkara.

40. Thus the sin-destroying power of Aṅgāreśvara Deva has been recounted to you, O goddess. Listen to (the story of) Uttareśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

Uttareśvara

Śrī Śiva said:

1-7. Know the forty-fourth great deity Uttareśvara. By merely seeing him, one will attain the desired benefit. The Liṅga well-known as Uttareśa bestows the desired benefit.

Formerly the entire universe along with mountains and surface of the earth was flooded by the rain-bearing clouds employed by Śakra.

When it turned out to be a single vast expanse of waters and Svādhyāya (study of the Vedas) and utterance of Vaṣaṭkāra became defunct (thereby), the Devas deprived of Svadhā and Svāhā became afraid, O lady of excellent countenance.

They said to one another: "Without Homas there is no satisfaction for us. We are being rendered prosperous by Brāhmaṇas by giving our proper shares in the Yajñas. On being adored through Yajñas and the like we bestow on them what they desire. Now all this is not forthcoming."

On seeing the earth sunk beneath water, they sought refuge in Brahmā. Those distressed ones bowed to Pitāmaha and said: "The earth has been turned into a single vast sea. O Lord, Kratus have become defunct. O Pitāmaha, the entire universe has been deprived of Svādhyāya and Vaṣaṭkāra."

8-18. On hearing the words of the Devas, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, wondered. He thought for a short while: 'What could this be? Why should there be an untimely deluge? Why has the earth sunk beneath the waters? My creation is destroyed. My words have become futile.' After thinking thus within himself, he remembered the Slayer of Vala (i.e. Indra). On being remembered, the Slayer of Vala approached Pitāmaha. After bowing down to Pitāmaha, he spoke these words: "O Pitāmaha, for what purpose have I been remembered? Order may be given." Then Brahmā asked Śakra: "Why is the earth flooded? What has been perpetrated all of a sudden by your absurdly non-sensical clouds?" Thereupon, O Pārvatī, all the clouds were summoned by Śakra. Instantly they came to Pitāmaha. Limits were assigned to them by Pitāmaha and Śakra. The great cloud named Gaja was employed in the Eastern Quarter surrounded by ten thousand clouds of elephantine size. Gavaya was made the Lord of six thousand (clouds) in the Southern Quarter. Śarabha was made the Lord of a thousand in the Western Quarter. The cloud named Uttara surrounded by crores of clouds was installed as the Lord in the Northern Quarter. Thus, O goddess, the boundary (jurisdiction) was assigned by Brahmā and Vāsava: "Do shower in the rainy season when the constellations are productive of water.

They are the ten Nakṣatras beginning with Ārdrā and ending with Svāti."

19-30. On hearing the words of Brahmā and Śakra, the clouds decided accordingly and showered during the scheduled seasons called after their names. Thus when everything was settled duly, the clouds confined themselves to the bounds. Brāhmaṇas became free from feverish excitement and Devas rejoiced much.

Then later, those rain-bearing clouds were thwarted by cruel Planets Saturn, Mars, Sun and Ketu. On being afflicted and frightened, they sought refuge in Indra. With fear they mentioned everything repeatedly by making obeisance. On hearing the words of the clouds, Vāsava too was frightened and he said to them: "O clouds, I am not competent to ward off the Planets. I am incapable in every respect. Formerly I was ousted from my realm by these cruel Planets. Once I was re-established in my office when these Planets became pleased. The Planets are to be esteemed and honoured by me, since they are more powerful. This is my opinion that the Planets be declared as the destroyers of all." In the meantime, there was an excessively awful drought on the earth extending over a hundred years, destroying all living beings. Bereft of water, O Pārvatī, the earth was turned out to be a skeleton of bony fragments resembling a row of white mountain ridges. All the Devas became afraid once again and sought refuge in Brahmā. Prostrating before him they said: "Save us. We seek refuge in you. O Pitāmaha, the whole universe is afflicted by want of water and rain. Once again utter annihilation has befallen untimely as before. The clouds employed by you and Vāsava have been overpowered by the inordinately fierce and cruel Planets."

31-41. On hearing the words of the Devas, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, said: "O Devas, I too am afraid of those superior Planets. I know fully well the great power of the cruel-minded Planets. You (people) are always afflicted by the retrograde Saturn. Varuṇa, the Lord of aquatic beings, is adversely affected by Maṅgala (Mars). Vāsava has often been ousted from his realm by Ketu. Formerly I too was beheaded when the Sun was in regression. Even severally they are so powerful. Much more so when they act collectively! Hence let

all of us seek succour from Mahādeva. "On hearing the words of Brahmā, all the Devas including Vāsava kept Brahmā at their head and sought shelter under me. I was appealed by all the Devas: "Save us who have sought refuge in you. You are our creator and dispenser of destiny, the cause of creation and destruction. O Mahādeva, the clouds have been thwarted by the cruel Planets all round. They do not shower rain, O Lord. The drought is extremely terrible. It has extended to a century (of years) only to bring about the annihilation of all living beings."

On hearing their words, O lady of excellent countenance, I realized that the power of the cruel Planets was the same as was known to me.

After realizing this, O great goddess, the means of remedy was thought of by me. The cloud named Uttara who was surrounded by crores of clouds was summoned. He came instantly and said: "What shall I do?" He was advised by me: "At my bidding, go to the beautiful Mahākālavana, the bestower of the benefit desired. Take all the clouds with you. There is the excellent Liṅga to the south of Gaṅgeśvara Deva. Propitiate it assiduously. He will grant you the desire."

42-54. On being advised by me thus, Uttara in the company of his clouds hastened to the excellent Mahākālavana. After seeing the rain-producing Liṅga, he devoutly worshipped it, after taking the waters from Śiprā and bathing assiduously until all the waters came back to Śiprā.

O my beloved, O beautiful lady, in the meantime a column of smoke arose from the midst of the Liṅga. It was huge and clusters of flames intensified it. Everything present in the sky was pervaded by the flames. The entire planetary system up to the orbit of the constellations was consumed by the cluster of flames. O my beloved, the Planets became frightened. Blinded by the column of smoke, they sought refuge in the cluster of flames. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra surrounded by the Devas saw that great miracle and approached the Liṅga. The great flames of fire issuing from the Liṅga covered the firmament. Too dazzling to be looked at and incomprehensibly terrible, it appeared to increase in size. In the twinkling of an eye it increased to ten thousand Yojanas in size. Gazing at the wonderful Liṅga increasing in size Sureśa (Indra) fainted and the Planets

too lost consciousness. Currents of waters flowed out from the Liṅga in a single direction, O beautiful lady, and the earth was turned into a sea. From another part of the Liṅga a violent gust of wind blew. From still another part of the Liṅga streaks of lightning came out. From a part of the Liṅga flames of fire issued forth along with smoke. On seeing this wonderful miracle of the Liṅga increasing in size and filling (covering) the whole of the sky, the Planets became bewildered and tormented. Being burnt from all sides they eulogized the Liṅga.

The Planets said:

55-65. Obeisance to the beautiful-formed one; obeisance to the Lord adored by the Suras. Obeisance to the Being activising the deformed Prakṛti. Obeisance, obeisance to one devoid of form. Obeisance to the Being in the form of Waters. Obeisance to you.

O my beloved, O goddess, when this eulogy was offered by the cruel Planets, a form in the shape of an idol manifested from the Liṅga. All its limbs were rendered grey with holy ash. The bodies of serpents were its dazzling bracelets. It had the appearance of heaps of snow and was free from impurities like a silver mountain. It spoke to the Planets who were bowing down with trembling necks: "What is your desire? What is wished for mentally by you? What shall I give you all? My vision is rarely achieved but it is never futile. In order to satisfy the worlds, I shall grant you all my vision."

On being told thus, all the Planets spoke with palms joined in veneration: "O Lord, if the boon is to be granted, O Śaṅkara, if you are pleased, then, O Mahādeva, see that we are all worshipped at the beginning of all functions. There will be satisfaction due to that." After saying, "It will be so," he said to Uttara: "O my dear child, I am pleased with you. Accept the desired boon." On hearing those words, Uttara who was delighted said: "O holy Lord, if you are pleased with me, may a boon be granted to me. O Lord, it behoves you to cause rain always on the earth and see that no one harasses us much. There should be succour unto all the clouds. We should be protected by you." O Daughter of the Mountain, then the Liṅga said: "Let it be so. From today I shall be well known on the

earth after your name. I shall undoubtedly become designated as Uttareśvara.

66-72. I will always grant the desired benefit to those who worship me with great devotion. Those who remain self-controlled and regularly visit me will go to the city of Śiva and remain there for eighty thousand Kalpas. They will be seated in aerial chariots resembling the Sun and capable of bestowing all desires, abounding in Rudra Kanyās as attending girls and drawn by swans and Sārasa birds. Dances and musical instruments cause sweet notes reverberating clearly therein. The aerial chariots shall be swung by men and the devotees will be eulogized by Suras and Asuras. Even if a man is devoid of devotion but sees me without any protestations, I grant him prosperity and lordship in the Northern Kurus."

He who remembers Uttareśvara everyday in the morning attains the high place devoid of burning and destruction due to deluge. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Uttareśvara Deva is narrated to you. Listen to (the story of) Trilocaneśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

Trilocaneśvara

Śrī Devadeva said:

1-8. Know, O goddess, that the Trilocaneśvara Liṅga is the forty-fifth deity. Merely by seeing it, all Siddhis (spiritual powers) are obtained.

This is a traditional legend that in the Pīṭha (holy shrine) named Viraja,[1] in the palace of Trilocana (Śiva) built of jewels and rubies, a pair of doves had built their nest and lived as they pleased. The palace (of Śiva) had various windows having various artistic shapes. It appeared like another Ratnasānu ('jewel-peaked') Mountain. It shone remarkably with a resplendent

1. A country around Jajpur in Orissa. Viraja is known as Gadā Kṣetra of Śāktas—N.L. De, p. 38.

dome made of burnished gold. Even the full moon came to rest there out of fatigue as it were.

They (the pair of doves) used to circumambulate the temple in the morning, midday and evening everyday. As they flew round the temple here and there, they produced wind with their wings. Thereby they removed the dust particles sticking to the palace in all the ten quarters. The names (of Śiva viz.) Trilocana, Triviṣṭapa etc., always uttered by the devotees fell on their ears. The four kinds of musical instruments delighting Śaṁbhu very much, entered the cavity of their ears and reverberated. The luminous radiance of the auspicious lights that used to be waved to and fro before the Liṅga entered their eyes and showed the activities of devotees.

9-20. Even abandoning self-sustenance, those birds of steady mind never flew as they pleased seeing various fanciful things. While they circumambulated, they used to swallow rice and other grains or offerings scattered frequently by the people on the ground.

To the south of the Lord there was water originating from Viṣṇu's body, where they used to bathe and drink if they were thirsty, after which they came back to their perch. Much time thus elapsed even as those two birds of good behaviour moved about in the vicinity of the Three-eyed Lord.

Once they were sitting perched happily on the parapet wall of the temple inside a round window, when a vulture cast his evil eyes on them. The vulture wanted to seize the pair of doves. He descended quickly from the sky and sat on the temple of Śiva. From there he observed the coming and going of the doves. He observed carefully the difficult path through which the birds entered, through which they went out, what did they do, when did they do what they do, how could the two together be easily seized. Thereafter the vulture praised the strength of a fortified place of resort as: 'Even a weak enemy cannot be captured easily if he is in a fortified place. The task that can be achieved through a single fort by a king cannot be achieved through a thousand elephants and a hundred thousand excellent horses. If the fortress is self-sufficient and has a way out (in case of need), the enemy stationed in the fortress cannot be assailed by anyone anywhere.'

On seeing the Kalarava (dove) birds devoid of agitation and

fear, the vulture with eyes turned red through anger, flew up into the sky. Then the clever female dove spoke to the male, her husband, who was very powerful because of the strength of fortification and who, therefore, wanted to thwart enemies (thereby):

Kalaravī (the female dove) said:

21-33. O dear dove, O most intelligent one whose mere voice yields all the pleasures of love, this vulture who has come within the range of your vision is a powerful enemy.

On hearing her words, that Pārāvata, the excellent husband of the female dove, said to her:

Pārāvata said:

O my beloved, why should you worry? O beautiful one, many indeed are the sky-stalkers (birds). Many birds do live near holy shrines and the like. O my beloved, many do not see us staying happily here. If we are to be afraid of all those, O my beloved, we will not have happiness at all. O splendid one, leave your anxiety. Divert yourself in my company. I do not consider this wretch of a vulture as one of any importance.

On hearing these words of the excellent male dove, the female remained silent with her eyes directed towards the feet of her husband. A wife who desires the welfare of her husband may very well advise but with a desire to do what is pleasing to him; she should keep quiet and always carry out his instructions.

The next day also the vulture came and remained watching the pair with unrestricted watch in the same manner as the god of Death who watches a person whose days are numbered. Thereafter, in a circular motion the vulture flew around the palace. The beloved wife said: "Dear Lord, was the wicked enemy seen by you?" On hearing her words the Kalarava said again: "O timid one, what can he do to me, a sky-wanderer? My fortress is on a par with Svarga, where I have no fear from the enemy. This (vulture) does not know those modes of movement in the firmament with which I am fully conversant. These are the eight modes of movement in the sky: *Praḍīna, Uḍḍīna,*

Saṇḍīna, Kāṇḍa, Vyāṇḍa, Kapāṭikā, Sraṁsinī, Maṇḍalavatī. Nowhere does any bird has the skill of moving in the sky in the same way as I have, O my beloved. Take it easy. Why worry when I am alive and active, O my beloved?"

34-44a. On hearing his words, the chaste one kept mum like a dumb person. The next day also, the vulture came and sat on the rock as if he was very happy; he was a little away from the perching place of the birds. After sitting there an *Āyāma*[1] away from them, the vulture went away at the end of a *Yāma* (three hours). The female dove said again then: "O my lover, this place is defiled by the sight of the wicked and so should be abandoned. The cruel bird was sitting very close to us, as if he was very much delighted." He (male dove) contemptuously replied once again: "What will he do, my beloved? By their very nature females are generally very timid." That vulture of great strength came there the next day too. He sat there facing them for two *Yāmas*. Thereafter he observed their pathway and quickly went away in the direction from which he had come.

After the departure of the bird, she said to the male: "Lord, we shall go to another spot. Death is imminent. If he comes into view next time our abode as well as our happiness will be destroyed. O my lover, can one who has the power of the wing capable of moving everywhere jeopardise one's life through an undue attachment to the native place? A sensible one who does not go elsewhere after leaving his own place likely to be visited by misfortune becomes a cripple and gets doomed like a tree on the banks of a river."

After listening to the utterance of his beloved the male dove afflicted by the inevitable fate, repeated the same words: "O my beloved, do not fear though harassed by that bird."

44b-53. The next day the vulture came in the morning itself. He stayed steadily at the threshold till the evening. When the sun had disappeared behind the western horizon and the bird had gone, the female dove came out of the nest and spoke to the husband: "Dear Lord, this is the opportune moment

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1. When one's two hands are stretched outwards, the distance between the tip of the middle finger of one hand and that of the other is an *Āyāma*.

for clearing out. Even as the god of Death is far off, do go away abandoning even me who loquaciously plead thus. As long as you are alive nothing is difficult for me to get in this world. If the self is protected by men forsaking even the wives and riches, they can have wives, sons, riches and abodes once again. Everything can be regained as in the case of King Hariścandra. This Ātman (Self) is the dearest kinsman. This Ātman is the greatest asset. This Ātman is the greatest means of earning Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. As long as there is the well-being of one's self, so long there is the well-being of the three worlds. The well-being is to be wished for along with fame leading to heaven. Death is preferable to well-being bereft of fame. Fame is attained by persons treading on the ethical path. Hence the moral path is to be considered carefully. O Lord, go away from this spot. If you do not go away at dawn you will ruefully remember me (i.e., regret your mistake)."

Even after being advised thus by his wife, the female dove of great intellect, he, prevented by the inevitable fate, did not clear out of that spot.

54-65. The next day, early in the morning, the powerful vulture came near the exit door with some food for his later use. The way-out was blocked by him. The highly powerful vulture stayed there for many days. He spoke to the dove: "Fie upon you, devoid of manliness! O evil-minded one, either you fight or you come out at my instance. If you die of starvation, you will later certainly meet with hell. Even fate will be incapable of extending assistance though nudged and prodded."

On being taunted thus by the vulture, the dove in the company of his wife fought with the former resorting to the portals of his own fort. Hungry and thirsty, he was firmly grasped and held by the powerful vulture with his powerful claws and the female dove was held with the beak. The vulture soon carried them off and flew into the sky thinking about a place free from any other bird where he could make a meal of them (undisturbed).

Then the male dove was told by his wife of excellent intellect: "O Lord, thinking me to be a mere female you slighted me. Hence you got into this messy affair. What could I do? I am only a feeble female. Even now, my dear, if you carry

out a single suggestion of mine, I will suggest something beneficial to you. Do this unhesitatingly. Acting in accordance with a single suggestion of mine will not make you hen-pecked. Even as I am held within his beak, even as he continues to be hovering in the sky not yet touching the ground, bite his claws with your beak to get yourself out." On hearing these words of his wife, the bird did so. Afflicted much in the legs, the vulture squeaked and squealed much. As he squealed the female dove was let off the beak. As the claws were chipped, the male dove also fell down.

66-76. Effort should never be abandoned by wise men even in calamities. Where is the beak! Where is the injury to the claws! Where is that miraculous release of the two! (Seemingly insignificant incidents have a good cumulative effect.) It is proclaimed in scriptural treatises that continued effort on the part of a weak man is conducive to welfare. In accordance with the destiny effort will always bear fruit. Hence learned men praise effort even during the time of calamities.

As time passed on, both of them died in Jaṁbūmārga.[1] Those who die in Jaṁbūmārga attain everlasting Svarga. With the remnant of the merit he was born as a splendid Gandharva youth named Parimalālaya, son of Mandāradāma. He was a storehouse of many a lore, and was endowed with skill in arts. Attaining a youthful body (i.e. youth), he became one interested in devotion to Śiva. Having conquered the sense-organs and the mind, he adopted the vow of having only a single wife. Attachment to another man's wife will affect longevity, fame, strength and happiness and prevent the attainment of Svarga. Hence a sensible man should avoid it. Another regular observance the pure and clean prince took up as a result of the practice in the previous birth was to resort to Trilocana. He decided that even as the body is devoid of ailments, as long as the sense-organs are unimpeded, Trilocana should be meditated upon undoubtedly in Avantī. The Lord is the abode of all merits, the illuminator of all the objects, the cause of the realization of all desires, the cause of the supreme bliss.

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1. (Mod.) Mount Abu—N.L. De, p. 80.

77-87. Thus Parimalālaya, the son of Mandāradāma, assiduously used to visit Triviṣṭapa in Kāśī. The female dove was born in the palace of Ratnadīpa, the king of Serpents, in Pātāla with the name of Ratnāvalī. The daughter of the Serpent king Ratnadīpa was the single crest-jewel of all Nāga girls in regard to beauty, behaviour and skill in arts and good qualities. She had two female companions. One of them was Prabhāvatī by name and the other Kalāvatī. Both of them were splendid and followed her as though they were her shadow and bodily lustre that never parts from her body. They were the companions of Ratnāvalī, O Maheśvarī.

As childhood passed off and youthfulness began to bloom, she started regular worship of Śiva following her father, a devotee of Śiva (doing the same). Her vow was: "I will break silence everyday only after worshipping the Three-eyed Lord at Kāśī in the company of these two friends. Not otherwise." Thus that Nāga maiden, accompanied by the two companions, worshipped the Three-eyed Lord, and only then did she go home. She worshipped me with excellent fresh flowers, splendid and sweet-scented. She herself wreathed garlands of variegated colour with those flowers and worshipped the Lord. All the three sang melodiously and gracefully. All the three danced with different groups of women (to accompany them). All the three used to play Vīṇās (lutes), Veṇus (flutes) and Mṛdaṅgas joyously and conclude the play (on the musical instruments) simultaneously. They were all experts conversant with tempos and the beating of the time.

88-98. Thus those three Nāga maidens propitiated Īśa with garlands of various designs and patterns.

On the fourth lunar day, they took their holy bath in the auspicious Pilipila Tīrtha, worshipped Trilocana and went to sleep in the pavilion itself. While they were asleep the three-eyed Śiva with the moon as ornament came out of the Liṅga. Goddess Śakti shone on the left side and the Lord had serpents as the sacred thread. Serpents of the river Gaṅgā constituted his girdle. The Lord then said to those girls, "Get up."

After getting up they rubbed their eyes which were large enough to reach the ears. They twisted and contorted their limbs and rolled their eyes (thus shaking off the vestiges of sleep). When they looked in front, their minds became bewil-

dered and excited. Then the Three-eyed Lord coming there unexpectedly was seen by them. They came to know through the familiar signs that it was Īśvara. The girls then saluted and eulogized delightedly with choked throats and were overcome with awe.

"Be victorious, O Śaṁbhu. Be victorious, O Īśāna. Be victorious, O Lord, the bestower of all, the omnipresent one. Be victorious, O destroyer of Tripuras. Be victorious, O slayer of Andhaka. Be victorious, O slayer of Jalandhara. Be victorious, O destroyer of the arrogance of Kandarpa. Be victorious, O creator of the three worlds. Be victorious, O Lord saluted by the three worlds. Be victorious, O Lord of devout people. Be victorious, O leader of the Pramathas. Obeisance to you; obeisance to you; we bow to you. Obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to you, O three-eyed one. Obeisance to you, O Triviṣṭapa."

After saying this, the girls prostrated on the ground like logs of wood. Then the Moon-adorned Lord raised those girls and said:

99-109. "The son of Mandāradāma named Parimalālaya, the most excellent one among Vidyādharas, will be the husband of you all. After enjoying the pleasures all around for a long time in the Vidyādhara world you will go to Avantikā, meditate on me and attain Siddhi. Even in the previous birth you all and he had evinced devotion to me. Hence your birth is free from impurities and sanctified by devotion. If people recite or read this prayer of Prabhāvatī in front of me, I will grant them all desires. This is my boon unto you."

When the Lord of Devas said thus, those girls became delighted in their minds. They bowed down to Īśāna with hands cupped together in veneration.

The Nāga Maidens said:

We ask, O Lord. Do recount, O Śaṅkara, the merciful one, how all the four of us served you in the previous birth. Therefore, the incidents of the previous birth of this worthy person and all of us may kindly be narrated, O storehouse of mercy.

On hearing this utterance of their wishes revealed lovingly by the girls, the Lord spoke about the activities of a previous birth of those girls as well.

Īśvara said:

Listen ye, all the three Nāga maidens, attentively. I shall recount to you the story of the previous birth of his as well as yours. This Ratnāvalī was formerly a female dove. That excellent Vidyādhara was the husband, male dove, of hers. These two stayed in my palace happily for a long time. The dust particles clinging to the palace were removed by them through the wind from their flapping of their wings.

110-120. Above and below, many circumambulations were made as they flew in the sky and frisked about in the courtyard of the temple. They took their bath in the Caturnada Tīrtha, the water whereof they drank also frequently. These two Kalaravas (doves, sweet-warblers) joyously produced sweet notes too. You (i.e. Gaurī) were much delighted by these two with steady minds after seeing the fanciful activities of my devotees. Auspicious lamps of mine were seen by these two many times. The nectar-like syllables constituting my name were drunk by these. On account of the power of their being of non-human species, they did not die in my presence. They died in Jaṁbūmārga that caused the attainment of heaven. Then this female dove became the daughter of Ratnadīpa. Her husband, the male dove, was born as the son of a Vidyādhara.

This Prabhāvatī who is born in this life in the abode of the king of Nāgas is your companion. I shall recount her previous birth. This Kalāvatī is the daughter of Triśikha, the Lord of serpents. Listen to the details of her previous life which I shall narrate. In the third previous life, they were the daughters of the great sage Cārāyaṇa. They were of excellent behaviour and they loved each other much. Urged by them, their father Cārāyaṇa gave them to Nārāyaṇa, the son of Amuṣyāyaṇa. Before attaining the prime of youth, he went to a forest for bringing sacrificial twigs. As adverse fate would have it, he was bitten by a serpent. The names of the two daughters of Cārāyaṇa were Bhavānī and Gautamī. They had to suffer the misery of widowhood. They were distressed very much.

121-129. Hence a sensible man intending to marry should scrupulously avoid a girl whose name is after a deity or a river.[1]

1. A peculiar old superstition recorded elsewhere as in the commentary on Manu (III.9) and in Vātsyāyana's *Kāma Sūtra* II.1.13.

Once, out of delusion these two girls plucked and ate banana fruits, not offered to them, at the hermitage of a certain sage of divine features. The daughters of the Brāhmaṇa performed many Vratas, fast etc. (by way of atonement) and died. In their next birth they became monkeys. As a result of their stealth of fruits, they had to be born as monkeys. Due to their preservation of modesty, they were born in Avantī. That Brāhmaṇa Nārāyaṇa who had regularly served his parents but was bitten by a serpent was reborn as a dove at Kāśī. Thus in a previous birth he had been the husband of these two as well. He will be the future husband of all of you three.

There was a big Nyagrodha tree at the side of the palace (Temple). On that tree that was habitable, these two became monkeys. They sportingly had dips in the Tīrtha constituted by the waters from the body of Viṣṇu. When they were thirsty, they drank water from the same Tīrtha. Due to their natural (congenital) fickleness they made many circumambulations of the shrine and saw the Liṅga many times.

130-137. In the vicinity of the Nyagrodha tree, they moved about as they pleased. They were then bound in a noose by a wandering mendicant in the guise of a Yogin. They were then trained by him for begging alms. When their carefree gamboling and frisking stopped ultimately those two monkeys died somewhere. Due to the merit of residence in Avantī, service to the Three-eyed Lord, and the (merit of) circumambulation, these were born as daughters of the Nāgas. Now they will obtain the Vidyādhara prince as husband, enjoy the pleasures of Svarga and attain salvation in Avantī.

If auspicious rites are performed, even so little, by persons, they will attain salvation as the fruit with my favour. In all the three worlds, Avantī is always the most excellent city. There the Oṁkāra Liṅga is excellent and more than that certainly is the Trilocana Liṅga here.

Stationed in the Liṅga here, I grant worldly pleasures and salvation. Hence with all efforts the Three-eyed Lord (Trilocana at Avantī) should be worshipped.

After saying this, the Lord of the chiefs of Devas entered the inner precincts of the palace in the form of the Liṅga that is the most auspicious in all the three worlds. The girls re-

turned to their abodes, narrated all the details to their mother and became fully contented.

138-147. Once, in the month of Mādhava, Vidyādharas and Nāgas came there along with all their retinues and belongings and met one another in the great holy spot devoid of Rajas quality, in the vicinity of Trilocana. Due to the boons granted by the Lord the three Nāga girls were offered to the Vidyādhara after the (formal) enquiries about the antecedents and nobility of one another.

Mandāradāma became pleased on getting the three daughters-in-law. Ratnadīpa the leader of the Nāgas, Padmī the Lord of Bhujagas and Viśikha (Triśikha) the Lord of the Phaṇins—these three were delighted on acquiring the splendid Parimalālaya as son-in-law. Having become mutual kinsmen, they rejoiced much and their eyes beamed and bloomed. After celebrating the marriage, they entered their respective abodes extolling the greatness of the Trilocana Liṅga.

The glorious Vidyādhara prince enjoyed great pleasures along with the Nāga maidens. Then he visited Avantī and served Trilocana. Singing sweet songs in the company of the Nāga maidens, he completely forgot himself in the contented bliss and got merged into the Liṅga. The greatness of Trilocana was meticulously guarded in the Kali Age by the Lord. Therefore, men of deficient power do not worship that Liṅga.

By hearing this story of Trilocana, even a great sinner will be a man free from sins. He attains liberation. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Trilocana Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the (story of) great Vīreśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

Vīreśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-10. O goddess, listen to the (glory of) Vīreśvara Liṅga, the forty-sixth deity. Merely by seeing it, there will certainly be the prosperity and augmentation of the family. Listen, O great goddess, to the esteemed manifestation of Vīreśa. By listening to it, the Pitṛs acquire ample merit, O Śivā.

There was a king named Amitrajit. He conquered the cities of his enemies. He was righteous, richly endowed with Sattva quality. He was eager and prompt in pleasing his subjects. He was a liberal donor and considered fame as his asset. He was sensible and intelligent and he considered Brāhmaṇas as deities. His hairs were always wet because of his Avabhṛtha Snānas (valedictory holy bath at the conclusion of a Yajña). He was disciplined and well-equipped in the knowledge of politics. He was efficient in all activities. A master of all lores, he possessed good qualities and was fond of all persons of good qualities. Sweet in speech and grateful to others, he desisted from sinful activities. Truthful in speech, he was clean and pure. Unerring in words, he mastered all the sense-organs. He was the veritable god of death in battlefield and a scholar of great learning in deliberations of the Assembly. He was aware of the proper time to indulge in dalliance with loving women. Though he was a young man, yet he liked old people. His riches and treasury were for righteous and pious rites. He had armies and vehicles in plenty. He was handsome and graceful, very highly intelligent and fond of his good subjects. He was endowed

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1. The story tries to synthesize Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism. Young king Amitrajit was an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu. Nārada reports to him the abduction of princess Malayagandhinī by demon Kaṅkālaketu. The demon was invincible by the divine gift of Triśūla. He decided to marry that Vidyādhara princess but as per advice and guidance of Nārada Amitrajit reaches in time and takes away the Triśūla while the demon was asleep. Amitrajit kills Kaṅkālaketu and marries the Vidyādhara princess. Queen Malayagandhinī observes the Vrata of Abhīṣṭa Tṛtīyā and gets a son called Vīra. Vīra propitiated Lord Śiva at Avantī and the Liṅga came to be known as Vīreśvara.

with steadiness and bravery. He was clever in selecting proper place and time. He honoured those who were honourable. He was bereft of all defects. He fixed his mind at the pair of the feet of Vāsudeva and ruled the kingdom without any rival and without being censured by anyone. He did not have any *Ītis* (troubles like droughts, floods, rodents, etc.).

11-22. No one dared to transgress his behests. The glorious king was engaged in devotional service to Viṣṇu. He enjoyed excellent pleasures all round well-consecrated by Viṣṇu (or like those of Viṣṇu). Adorations of Viṣṇu were loudly held in every abode everywhere in the kingdom of that glorious king, O Śivā.

The various holy names of Viṣṇu uttered by women, old men, children and cowherds were heard everywhere such as Govṛnda Gopa ('Protector of herds of cows'), Gopāla ('cowherd'), Gopījanamanohara ('Captivator of the minds of the cowherdesses'), Gadāpāṇi ('Armed with a club'), Guṇātīta ('Transcending all attributes'), Guṇāḍhya ('Rich in good qualities'), Garuḍadhvaja ('Garuḍa-emblemed'), Keśihan ('Slayer of Keśin'), Kaiṭabhārāti ('Enemy of Kaiṭabha'), Kaṁsāri ('Enemy or killer of Kaṁsa'), Kamalāpati ('Consort of Lakṣmī'), Kṛṣṇa, Keśava, Kañjākṣa ('Lotus-eyed'), Kīnāśa-bhayanāśana ('Destroyer of the fear of Death'), Puruṣottama, Pāpāri ('Enemy i.e. destroyer of sins'), Puṇḍarīkavilocana ('Lotus-eyed'), Pītakauśeyavasana ('Clad in yellow silk'), Padmanābha, Parātpara ('Greater than the great'), Janārdana, Jagannātha, Jāhnavījalajanmabhū ('The source of the waters of Gaṅgā'), Janmināṁjanmahāraṇa ('Destroyer of the rebirths of living being'), Jañjapūkaughanāśana ('Destroyer of masses of sins'), Śrīvatsavakṣas ('Having the mark of Śrīvatsa on the chest'), Śrīkaṇṭha, Śrīkara, Śreyasāṁnidhi ('Ocean of bliss'), Daityāri ('Enemy of Daityas'), Dānavārāti ('Enemy of Dānavas'), Dāmodara, Durantaka ('Slayer of the wicked'), Devakī-hṛdyānanda ('Delighter of the heart of Devakī'), Dandaśūkeśvareśaya ('Lying on the couch of lord of Serpents'), Viṣṇu, Vaikuṇṭhanilaya ('Having abode in Vaikuṇṭha'), Bāṇāri ('Enemy of Bāṇa') Viṣṭaraśravas, Viṣvaksena, Vibhu ('Lord'), Vīra ('Hero'), Vanamālin, Balipriya ('Found of oblations'), Trivikrama, Trilokeśa ('Lord of the three worlds'), Cakrapāṇi ('Having discus in the hand'), Caturbhuja ('Four-armed') etc. The beautiful names of Viṣṇu were heard (in

every temple and place). In every house, very beautiful parks were seen.

23-32. In every house, the wonderful stories of the doings (of the Lord) were sung. Man-made paintings were seen on the walls of the palaces. No other news except that of the stories of Hari was heard. Due to the fear of that king, deer fat with plenty of flesh were not killed by hunters. They roamed about as they pleased in forests. Due to the fear of that king neither fish, nor cranes, nor boars were killed by anyone even if he was an eater of fish and meat. Men were not sonless anywhere in the kingdom of Amitrajit.

Even the animals do not suck breast milk on the Harivāsara (i.e. Ekādaśī). On Hari's day (i.e. Ekādaśī) they eschew eating grass and observe fast. Much more so in the case of men.

While this king was ruling the earth, a great festival was conducted by all the citizens on the Harivāsara. In the realm of King Amitrajit it was only a person devoid of devotion to Viṣṇu who was considered fit for being punished with death or fine and so he was meted out such punishment.

Even the Antyajas (low-born ones) in that kingdom bore the markings of conch and discus after being given Vaiṣṇavī Dīkṣā (Initiation in Viṣṇu cult). They were established as Dikṣitas (Initiated ones).

People were not covetous of benefits of auspicious rites they performed everyday. These acts were dedicated to Vāsudeva. Excepting Mukunda, Govinda, Paramānanda, Acyuta no other personality (or god) was bowed to, honoured and had the Japa (repeated utterance of names). To that king, Kṛṣṇa was the sole kinsman.

33-45. While the king was thus ruling the kingdom perfectly, the glorious ascetic Nārada came there one day with a desire to see him. With the offering of Madhuparka, in accordance with the injunctions, the king duly honoured Nārada. He extolled King Amitrajit thus:

Śrī Nārada said:

O king, you see Govinda in all living beings. Hence you are blessed and contented. You are worthy of being respected even by Heaven-dwellers.

It is Viṣṇu who is Vedapuruṣa. It is Hari who is Yajñapuruṣa.

He is the immanent soul of this universe, the Lord who creates, protects and annihilates. O most excellent one among kings, you see the entire universe permeated by that Lord. Having seen a person like you, a bestower of auspiciousness, I have attained very great purity. He alone is the real essence of this worldly existence which is ephemeral. Veneration to the lotus-like feet of the Lover of Goddess Lakṣmī bestows everything. All the objects resort to that highly intelligent person who after abandoning everything else always worships Viṣṇu alone. He alone whose sense-organs have become steadfastly attached to Hṛṣīkeśa maintains stability in the Cosmic Egg (Brahmāṇḍa) which is very fickle. After realizing that youth, wealth and age are extremely unsteady like water on a lotus-leaf, one should always resort to Acyuta alone.

He who has Lord Janārdana present in his speech, mind and ear is the person solely to be respected as Janārdana in the form of a man.

After repeatedly meditating sincerely on the Lord of Śrī, who has not attained the state of being Puruṣottama (Lord Viṣṇu, best of men) on the earth?

My senses and mind are delighted at this devotion of yours to Viṣṇu. With an intention to help you I shall tell this, O king. Kindly listen to it. A young maiden named Malayagandhinī, daughter of a Vidyādhara, was playing in the park of her father when she was abducted by Kaṅkālaketu, a powerful Dānava, son of Kapālaketu. It is reported that the marriage is to be celebrated in the coming third lunar day.

46-56. She is now in Pātāla in the city of Caṁpakāvatī. While I was returning from Hāṭakeśa, I was seen by her. With eyes filled with tears, she told me thus, after doing due obeisance; listen to it: "O celibate one, O most excellent one among sages, from the Gandhamādana Mountain where I was enamoured of some childish sport and toys, Kaṅkālaketu of wicked activities abducted me even as I was mentally shocked to the utmost. No one can slay him in battle. He will die only when he is struck with his own Śūla (trident). After causing confusion in the whole of the universe, he goes to sleep here fearlessly. If any person of right conduct kills the wicked Dānava by means of the trident given by me and takes me away, it will be a nice deed. If you have any desire to help me in this matter, save

me from the wicked Dānava. Indeed an earlier boon has been granted to me by Goddess Umā: 'A young man, a devotee of Viṣṇu, will marry you before the third lunar day.' You become the instrumental cause and see that her statement turns out to be true. Do try."

At the instance of that girl, O king, I have come to you, an intelligent young man devoted to Viṣṇu. So, do go ahead for the fulfilment of the task. Slay that wicked Dānava, O mighty-armed one, and bring here that splendid girl Malayagandhinī quickly. On seeing you, O Lord of men, that Vidyādhara maiden will certainly give you that trident. Undoubtedly you will kill the wicked one in accordance with the words of Pārvatī.

On hearing these words of Nārada, King Amitrajit experienced horripilation in regard to the Vidyādhara girl. Further he asked him for the means of going to Campakāvatī.

57-67. Nārada further spoke to the king, O Daughter of the King of Mountains: "O king, hasten to the ocean on the full-moon day. You will see a celestial damsel seated on a divine couch in a chariot on a wish-yielding Kalpa tree set up on raft. She will be singing this Gāthā (verse) in a sweet voice to the tune of her lute: 'If a Karma (deed) has been done by a person, auspicious or inauspicious, truly he alone will have its fruit. Fate is restricted in its action there.' After singing this Gāthā, she will enter the middle of the ocean along with the chariot, tree and couch in an instant. You will also fearlessly follow her into the great ocean in emulation of the Yajñavarāha (Lord Viṣṇu in the form of a boar). Thereafter, O king, you will see the city of Campakāvatī in Pātāla. You will also see that the excessively charming city is occupied by that young maiden." After saying this, O goddess, the Son of the Four-faced Lord vanished. The king went to the sea and saw everything as mentioned (by Nārada). He entered the sea and reached that city. The Vidyādhara maiden was also seen by that king like the sole paragon of the glorious beauty of the three worlds. On seeing her, the king thought: 'Is this the deity of Pātāla or a special creation of the creator evolved solely for delighting my eyes? Or is this the lustre of the moon that has taken the form of a maiden to stay here fearlessly away from the frightening Rāhu and Kuhū (Amāvāsyā)!' After thinking thus

for a moment the king approached her.

68-77. She looked at the young man of extremely beautiful features. A Tulasī garland was hanging loose on his broad chest. He shone with a beautiful pair of arms marked with conch and discus. The row of his teeth appeared to be washed bright by the nectar of the syllables constituting the names of Hari. He seemed like a tree coming out of the seed of devotion to Bhavānī, in the form of a man. She frequently made her eyes sad by opening them wide to know as to which house has been adorned by that young man.

Then the Vidyādhara maiden told him thus: "Kaṅkālaketu of wicked deeds cannot be killed by other weapons (or by weapons of other people). Stay concealed in the hiding place of the armoury here. Due to my ability as well as the boon granted by Caṇḍikā, my vow of virginity has not been violated. That evil-minded Dānava wishes to celebrate the marriage day after tomorrow on the coming third lunar day. Due to my curse his days have become numbered. O young man, do not be afraid of him. Your task will be carried out ere long."

On being told thus by the Vidyādhara maiden that mighty-armed hero stayed concealed in the armoury waiting for the arrival of the Dānava.

Afterwards in the evening that Dānava of terrible features came there wielding the trident in his hand. The trident appeared to strike terror even unto the god of death.

After coming, the terrible Dānava, with his eyes rolling through inebriation, spoke to the Vidyādharī in a voice as loud as the thundering sound of clouds at the time of Pralaya:

78-89. "O lady of excellent complexion, take these divinely exquisite jewels. You are the bride. Your wedding takes place the day after tomorrow. O beautiful lady, in the morning I shall give you ten thousand slave girls of Asura, Sura and Dānava classes or the Gandharva and Kinnara clans as your constant attendants. The following shall be your personal servants, O lady of pure intentions: six hundred each of Vidyādhārīs, Nāgīs and Yakṣīs, eight hundred Rākṣasīs and a hundred excellent celestial damsels. As soon as you become my wife you shall become the mistress of as much of riches and assets as there are in the abodes of the Guardians of Quarters. By becoming my wife, you will enjoy divine pleasures along with me. When

will this day-after-tomorrow arrive when the rites of matrimony will be performed? Its sweetness shall become highly enhanced by the pleasure of the touch of your limbs. I will get the maximum bliss if this day-after-tomorrow comes still closer. On the day-after-tomorrow, due to your close contact, I will be able to fulfil the cherished desires that have been increasingly accumulating in my heart. I will conquer all the Devas beginning with Indra, O fawn-eyed maiden, in battle and will make you the owner of the riches and glorious overlordship of all the three worlds."

After prattling thus, that demon who had become satiated and maddened by the taste of human flesh, went to sleep without the least flurry after having carefully placed the trident on his lap.

Remembering the boon granted by Gaurī and noting that the intoxicated demon had gone to sleep, the Vidyādhara maiden called the fearless excellent man, handsome in all the limbs, who, she was convinced, had been protected by his devotion to Viṣṇu. Addressing him as "Lord of my vital breath," the beautiful lady gave him the trident which she had taken away from the lap of the Dānava.

90-97. Then King Amitrajit took up the trident. Mentally remembering the discus-bearing Hari, the protective jewel of the universe, he shouted: "Get up, you wicked one desirous of violating the virginity of a maiden. Fight with me. I do not kill a sleeping enemy." On hearing this, the demon approached shouting, "To whom has the god of Death become visible? Who has been forsaken by Āyus (the life span) and has come well within the range of my vision? O beautiful lady, this man will be as delicate as a garland of flowers, only fit to remove the itching sensation from my fierce, robust arms. Do not be afraid. What will the trident do? This fellow will constitute my food now sent as a present by the god of death himself, who is afraid of me."

After saying thus, he struck the king in his chest as hard as rock, with his fist. The hard-chested king protected by the Discus-bearing Lord, did not feel even the slightest pain. It was the hand of the demon that felt the acute pain. The angry king slapped him in the face. The demon's head reeled dizzily and he fell down on the ground. Getting up once again, the

highly powerful demon mustered his courage and spoke these words:

The Dānava said:

98-108. I know the truth now. You are a man, the Four-armed Lord himself in the form of a man, O Dānavāntaka ('slayer of the Dānavas'). You have made use of a vulnerable point in order to kill me. If you are Lord Madhubhid ('Slayer of Madhu') of this sort, if you are powerful, then, set aside this great trident and fight with me using only your own weapons. Kaiṭabha and others were not killed in battle by you using your strength. Not by your strength, they were killed only deceitfully. Adopting the form of a human dwarf you made Bali go to Pātāla. In the form of a Man-lion you killed Hiraṇyakaśipu. In the form of a man with matted hairs, you struck down the Lord of Laṅkā. Kaṁsa and others were slain by you in the guise of a cowherd. You deceived the Asuras by becoming a woman and took away the nectar (from them). Śaṅkha and others were killed by you in the form of an aquatic being. O Mādhava conversant with the vulnerable points of everyone, innumerable persons have been killed by you, the employer of Māyā (deception). I do not fear you today. Embodied beings are likely to fall (dead) all of a sudden. Death by means of deceit or physical force is the boon I seek from you. If you do not set aside the trident, I will not fight with you. Certainly I have to die in the morning by virtue of being an embodied being. This Vidyādhara maiden has not been defiled by me. She is chaste. She should be considered as Goddess Lakṣmī in a visible form. She has been preserved by me for you."

After saying this, the Dānava hit him hard with his brawny left arm that could smash even rocky boulders. In that fight, the king endured it and steadied himself. Then quickly he hit the cruel (demon) in his chest with the trident.

109-119. At that thrust, the mighty demon died instantly. Weighing (wielding) the trident in his hand he scrutinized the demon's face. Even as the mighty-armed king was observing, he (the demon) cast off his life in a moment. After killing Kaṅkālaketu, the frightener of Suras, with his hair standing on

end due to joy, he (the Prince) spoke to the Vidyādhara maiden who was watching: "O lady of excellent hips, your desire has been fulfilled by me at the instance of Sage Nārada. O lady who are aware of what has been done, tell me what more I shall do now"

On hearing his words she said serious-mindedly:

Malayagandhinī said:

What is it that you ask me, a youthful virgin for whom you staked your life? I belong to a noble family and I have not been defiled.

Even as the maiden was saying thus, Sage Nārada who habitually roamed about freely and whose arrival was unexpected, came there from the heavenly world. On seeing that excellent sage, they made obeisance and eulogized him. The sage blessed them and they were united in wedlock duly in accordance with his earlier promise. After the auspicious rites were over, they proceeded along the path pointed out by Nārada.

Accompanied by Malayagandhinī, King Amitrajit went to Ujjayinī where the citizens performed all the rites for their due reception. By merely seeing this city a man averts the possibility of falling into hell. That highly intelligent king entered that city to which Indra and others have no access. The king entered that victorious city which conquers salvation (i.e., enables one to attain salvation).

120-124. The Vidyādhara maiden also saw the prosperous city of Avantī from afar. She was so impressed that she condemned even Svargaloka and the city in Pātāla. Oh! In fact, that lady was not so much delighted after getting Amitrajit as her husband as she was delighted on seeing Avantī that bestows great bliss. That lofty-minded lady considered herself as one who had successfully realized all her desires. Along with her husband, she attained the greatest pleasure in Ujjayinī. After getting Malayagandhinī as his wife, Amitrajit engaged in love (making) with due deference to Dharma and hence attained excellent happiness. The beautiful lady said once to her husband devoted to the adoration of Viṣṇu:

The Queen said:

125-131. O king, I will observe a great Vrata on the Abhīṣṭa Tṛtīyā (third lunar day).

The King said:

O queen, of what nature is the Vrata on the Abhīṣṭa Tṛtīyā? Tell me.

On being asked thus by the king, the queen began to explain how the Vrata was to be performed and the rules of procedure regarding it.

The Queen said:

Formerly this Vrata was explained and imparted to Goddess Lakṣmī by the celestial sage (Nārada). All her desires regarding heavenly pleasures and salvation were realized by her. On the third lunar day in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, on a *Kalaśa* (pitcher) a copper pot filled with raw ricegrains should be placed. It should be new and without cracks and holes. A new cloth without slit must cover the pot. It should be of very super-fine texture and yellow-coloured. A lotus blooming well in the rays of the sun should be placed thereon for the sake of auspiciousness. On its pericarp Vidhi [Idol of Brahmā(?)] made of four gold coins should be worshipped with red garlands, clothes etc., and adored with sweet-smelling flowers, camphor, musk etc. The devotee should keep awake during the night, with great festivities organized by Brāhmaṇas.

132-141. A thousand Homas should be performed with great devotion. A tawny-coloured cow that has calved recently and yields plenty of milk should be gifted away. Fully bedecked and accompanied by monetary gifts it should be given to the excellent Ācārya (Preceptor). On that day the couple should observe fast as well.

In the morning on the fourth lunar day, the couple should take their holy bath and wear fresh clothes. At the outset the Ācārya is honoured with clothes, ornaments, garlands and monetary gifts. The devotee should joyously give the idol together with the accompanying articles to the Ācārya.

The following Mantra is to be recited:

"O Vidyā (Learning) conversant with the structure of the universe, performing diverse activities, grant me a son who will cause welfare. O goddess delighted due to this excellent Vrata, grant a son."

After devoutly feeding a thousand Brāhmaṇas the devotee should have the Pāraṇā (formal ritualistic breakfast) with the food left over after their meal.

O Lord, thus the Vrata is to be performed. I wish to perform it by your permission. Kindly do me this favour for getting the desired benefit.

The request was heard by the excellent king with a delighted mind. With his permission the Vrata was performed. She became pregnant.

Gaurī who was delighted with the devotion of the pregnant queen, was requested by her thus: "O Mahāmāyā, give me a son directly born of a part of Viṣṇu, who shall go to Svarga as soon as he is born and return too therefrom. He should be an ardent devotee of Sadāśiva and famous all over the earth. Even without sucking the breasts, he should grow up in an instant to the size of a sixteen-year-old. O Gaurī, do something so that I can have such a son." Mṛḍānī (Gaurī) who was excessively pleased with the devotion of the queen, said, "So it shall be."

142-152. In due course, she gave birth to a son when the constellation was Mūla. Even as she was in the lying-in-chamber the ministers who were well-wishers told her: "O queen, you wish well of the king. Abandon the son born on the evil constellation." On hearing the words of the ministers, the queen who considered her husband as a deity and who was very prudent, abandoned the son got in such a condition. The queen summoned the nurse and told thus: "In the Mahāpīṭha (great shrine) called Pañcamudra there is the Mātṛkā (Mother-goddess) named Vikaṭā. Dear nurse, place the body in front of her and say thus: 'This child granted by Gaurī has been presented to you by the queen who wishes for the good of her husband and who has been urged by the ministers (to abandon him).' "

On hearing what was said by the queen, she placed in front

of Vikaṭā the child having the lustre of the crescent moon and returned home. That goddess Vikaṭā summoned the Yoginīs and said: "Take this child soon to the group of Mothers (Mātṛgaṇa) and convey to them the behest, 'Assiduously protect the child.' " At the bidding of Vikaṭā, the Yoginīs, who usually traversed through the sky, quickly took the child along the aerial path to the place where Brāhmī and other Mothers were present. After making due obeisance the group of Yoginīs placed the child having the splendour of the Sun before the Mothers and told them the message as wished by Vikaṭā.

The Mothers, Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Raudrī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṁhikā, Kaumārī, Māhendrī, Cāmuṇḍā and Caṇḍikā saw the beautiful child sent by Vikaṭā. They at once put to him the question: "O son, who is your Pramukhyaka (Chief one)?"

153-162. When he did not say anything though asked thus by the Mothers, they said to the group of Yoginīs: "O Yoginīs, this child will become one befitting the kingdom. He is marked with great features (showing royalty). He must be taken over back there itself without delay where the great goddess Pañcamudrā, the bestower of desires, is present. By serving her, men's Glory of Salvation cannot be far off. By resorting to that Pīṭha, this child of the size of a sixteen-year-old will attain great Siddhi by the great blessings of Rudra."

At the instance of the Mātṛs, the Yoginīs quickly took the child from the Mothers to the vicinity of Pañcamudrā. Having returned here from Svargaloka the child reached that great Pīṭha and performed severe penance in the meritorious Mahākālavana. He performed a very austere penance with steady mind and sense-organs. The Lord of Umā became pleased with the excessively severe penance of that prince. Śaṅkara appeared before him in the form of a Liṅga and said: "I am pleased, O Prince. Ask for the boon (that you wish to have)." He saw in front of him the Liṅga entirely of luminous splendour, that rose up piercing the seven Pātālas, with the intention to bless. He prostrated on the ground like a log of wood and eulogized Lord Dhūrjaṭi by means of the hymns with Rudra as the deity (which he could recall) due to the repeated practice in the previous births. He was extremely pleased and had his hairs standing up on his body, indicating his delight. He requested for a boon.

163-170. "O Mahādeva, O Lord of the Devas, if a boon has to be given to me, then Your Lordship should stay here always removing the distress of worldly existence. O Śaṁbhu stationed in this Liṅga, grant what is desired by a devotee. O Lord, even without the Mudrās etc. and Mantras, the devotees of this Liṅga must always be blessed by you. This is the boon I seek."

On hearing his request for the boon, the Lord in the form of the Liṅga said: "O heroic one, let it be as requested by you, the son of a devotee of Viṣṇu. O Vīra, this Liṅga in Avantī shall be named Vīreśvara after your own name. I will grant the wishes of the devotees here in Avantī. There is no doubt about this that whatever is performed here, such as Dāna, Homa, Japa, eulogy and adoration, shall be of everlasting benefit to the devotees. You will attain a great kingdom difficult of attainment unto all kings. After enjoying abundant pleasures, you will attain Siddhi in the end."

Thus the sin-destroying power of Vīreśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (the story of) Nūpureśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

Nūpureśvara[1]

Śrī Devadeva said:

1-7. Know the Liṅga named Nūpureśvara as the forty-seventh deity. Merely by seeing this all Siddhis are attained.

Formerly in the Rāthantara Kalpa, there was a Gaṇa named Nūpura. He was always devoted to Rudra and was adorned with five Mudrās. Once he had come to Kubera's assembly in order to witness a great festivity performed by celestial damsels. Urvaśī, the best among young damsels, with Raṁbhā, Tilottamā, Menā and others danced there with great delight.

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1. This Liṅga is called Nūpureśvara as a Śiva Gaṇa called Nūpura, who was cursed by Kubera, regained his post by propitiating this Liṅga.

After witnessing the dance, the chief of Gaṇas, Nūpura, was afflicted by the arrows of Kāma and he too danced in their midst. Tormented much by the arrows of Kāma and dancing joyously, he hit Urvaśī on her breast with a bunch of flowers. On being hit with the bunch of flowers, Urvaśī became furious. She sought refuge in Lord Dhanada, the bestower of all desires.

8-17. Dhanada with the mind agitated with anger said: "Since the stage has been disrupted by you, afflicted by Kāma, so you fall down into the mortal world, O sinful person." On account of the curse of Kubera he went to the earth and lamented due to excessive misery: "What has been done by me, a sinner!" After lamenting much, O goddess, he sought refuge in you, the great goddess, the bestower of boons. Delighted, you, the great goddess, manifested yourself to him. You said joyously to the leader of the Gaṇas, who was bowing down with devotion: "O son, go at my bidding to the splendid Mahākālavana. The Prācī (Eastern) Sarasvatī is present there in the form of a tank. To the south thereof, dear son, is the excellent Liṅga. After taking your bath in the tank, devoutly propitiate the Liṅga. That Prācī and that Lord of Devas will become well-known with your name associated with them." On being told thus, O goddess, Nūpura went to Mahākālavana. He was directed by you, O goddess, "Go there for the sake of renown."

On being told thus, the divine Gaṇa was pleased and he joined the palms in reverence. He saw Mahākālavana, the beautiful holy place which has been resorted to by Devas and Gandharvas. There he saw that Liṅga served by Suras and Gandharvas.

18-25. Prācī Sarasvatī was present there in the form of a tank. After taking his bath therein, Nūpura worshipped the Lord. The Deva became pleased and spoke to Nūpura: "Well done, Nūpura! Welfare unto you. Attain blessedness forever. You shall become a favourite of Goddess Pārvatī and Śaṅkara." O my beloved, Nūpura was told thus by that Liṅga. In an instant he became like the rising sun with the lustre like that of fire. He became a mass of splendour, too dazzling to be viewed by the Devas.

On seeing such a power, O lady of excellent countenance, the Devas said: "Oh! What a greatness of the Liṅga! It is seen as a wonderful miracle on the earth."

By seeing it, Nūpura attained the desired Siddhi. Hence the deity from then onwards became well-known on the earth by the name Nūpureśvara. He is the bestower of all desires. Those who take bath in the tank and visit the deity with concentration and mental purity, go to the great region of Nūpureśvara Rudra. Those who adore it with devotional fervour reside joyously there until the annihilation of all the living beings.

26-30. When Nūpureśvara is adored, different kinds of miseries of birth, death, old age and ailment become dissolved immediately. That tank is on a par with Gaṅgā herself, O lady of splendid eyes. It is on a par with the confluence of Yamunā with Vitastā,[1] O lady of excellent Vratas. Know that this is on a par with Prayāga, O Daughter of the King of Mountains. So also, O goddess, it is on a par with Soma Tīrtha destructive of all sins. By taking his holy dip there, O goddess, a man obtains the benefit of Vājapeya. He who takes his holy bath here on the eighth lunar day in the dark half and worships Nūpureśvara redeems a hundred generations of the families of his mother and father.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Nūpureśvara Deva is recounted to you. Let Abhayeśvara be listened to.

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

Abhayeśvara[2]

Śrī Rudra said:

1-7. Know the forty-eighth deity, O my beloved. Merely by visiting him, one can avert the fear of worldly existence.

O lotus-eyed lady, at the end of the first Kalpa, i.e. Pādma, when the moon, the sun, and the constellations had vanished, when the earth and the heaven had been dissolved, Brahmā began to ponder: 'How can the creation be effected?'

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1. This confirms the traditional theory of the ancient Yamunā flowing westward before it turned its course to the east and joined Gaṅgā.

2. The Liṅga is called Abhayeśvara as it protected Brahmā and Viṣṇu from Dānavas.

When he was vexed on this account, big drops of tears fell down from his eyes. A big tear-drop fell down from the noble-souled one's left eye. From that drop of tear, a Dānava named Hārava was born. He had sharp curved fangs with a huge body. He had the lustre of powdered collyrium. From the right eye was born a Dānava known by the name Kālakeli. He was very tall and had a dark-complexioned body, with hair standing erect on it. He too had big fangs. The wicked fellow had a terrible face. He with a terrible form like that of Yama was unapproachable. He resembled a mass of collyrium. He with a noose in his hand was terrifying. The twosome arrived with threatening gestures as though they wished to kill Brahmā. They madly rushed at him.

8-15. Brahmā was gripped by fear. He fled from the scene and wandered. In the deep and vast expanse of waters, he saw a Being of unmeasured splendour, clad in yellow robes and holding a conch, discus and club. On seeing him, Brahmā who became all the more frightened, said: "Who are you, Sir, lying here when all mobile and immobile beings are extinct?" Thereupon Viṣṇu said: "I am the father of the Cosmos, the creator and destroyer of the worlds and one who sustains the worlds." On being told thus by Kṛṣṇa of undistressed activities, the lotus-born Brahmā said: "I am the creator in all the three worlds. The entire universe, including Devas, Asuras and human beings, has been created by me."

In the meantime, those two Daityas, arrogant of their inordinate strength, arrived there. On seeing them overwhelmed by hunger and so desirous of swallowing him, Brahmā spoke thus with his sprout-like lips quivering, to Kṛṣṇa with eyes like the petals of a lotus: "If you are being spoken of as some cause of this world, then it behoves you to kill these two terrible Asuras." On hearing this, Viṣṇu realized that the misery was common to both. He said: "Rest for a while. The duel can take place afterwards."

16-24. After saying this, he signalled to the two Daityas who were proud of their prowess and had a mutual understanding. They hurriedly rushed at Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa to kill them. On seeing that the two Dānavas were invincible in fight, Brahmā and Viṣṇu became frightened, perspiring and trembling all over the body. They spoke to each other what

was befitting the place and context: "What should be done by me or by you? A great danger is imminent. What is to be done in this connection?" On seeing death imminent Brahmā said to Keśava: "O Kṛṣṇa, go immediately to the excellent Mahākālavana. It is said that even in Pralaya it cannot be destroyed. We will get protection there. I will be going there. You too proceed there, O Keśava."

On being told thus by Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa accompanied him. They reached Mahākālavana but Maheśvara was not seen. Even as those two were roaming there, a period of ten thousand (years) elapsed. Then they saw that great fiery Liṅga of divine features to the south of Nūpureśvara. Then Brahmā and Viṣṇu directly requested the deity: "O Lord of Devas, be our refuge. We are tormented by the two Dānavas." Thereupon, O Pārvatī, protection from fear was granted by the Liṅga. Pitāmaha then heard the roar of the two Dānavas. With his neck trembling, the terrified creator spoke to the Liṅga:

25-39. "Here comes our terrible death fast." Then, O my beloved, Kṛṣṇa said: "O Lord, may freedom from fear be granted!" On hearing the piteous distressed words of Brahmā and Keśava, those two deities were placed within its belly by that Liṅga. The entire universe, including the sun, the moon and the mountains were seen there by them. The families of Siddhas and Gandharvas were seen. Many places full of mountains, big palm trees and creepers were seen therein. There were shrines with Mudrās. People of different castes and stages of life brightened the place, O goddess. The nether worlds with serpents and huge trees, the group of the seven worlds inhabited by Devas, Asuras and Rākṣasas were also seen by them. They came out of the belly all the more struck with wonder. O Pārvatī, the Daityas were seen immediately reduced to ashes by the Liṅga. Brahmā and Viṣṇu devoutly eulogized the great Liṅga. The delighted Liṅga then said: "What shall I give you both? O deities, seeing me never goes futile. It is very difficult to get." Thereupon Brahmā and Viṣṇu chose the boon: "If a boon has to be granted to us, be the bestower of freedom from fear on men. Be the bestower of freedom from fear on those who adore with concentration and mental purity, those who perform Yajñas and those who remember you always. You will become well known on the earth by the name Abhayeśvara.

Those who devoutly visit you will become contented and blessed. There will be no fear or fall in Saṁsāra. He will never be bereft of wealth, sons and wife. If an unfortunate, unhappy woman sees it (the Liṅga), she will undoubtedly become endowed with conjugal bliss. A virgin will obtain a splendid husband and a pregnant woman will give birth to a brave son. Men will obtain all the desires cherishing which they visit you. There is no doubt about this." "It will be so." Saying this, O great goddess, the Liṅga dismissed those two Devas, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, towards their abodes.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Abhayeśvara Deva was recounted to you. Listen to (the story of) Pṛthukeśvara.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

Pṛthukeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-8. Listen to (the story of) Pṛthukeśvara Liṅga, the forty-ninth Lord of Devas. Merely by seeing it a man becomes an emperor.

In the family of Svāyaṁbhuva (Manu), O goddess, there was a king named Aṅga. Sudurmukhā, the daughter of Mṛtyu, was married to him. A son named Vena was born to him. He was an atheist and a detractor of Dharma (Piety, Righteousness). He used to misappropriate assets of shrines and Brāhmaṇas and kidnap other men's wives. On being cursed by Brāhmaṇas, O goddess, he died instantly.

His thigh was pressed and churned. From it barbarian classes of people issued forth. They were born of the maternal part of the body. They were black in complexion like a mass of

1. The object of this Chapter is to explain the name Pṛthukeśvara and its efficacy in absolving King Pṛthu of his sin of killing a woman (Pṛthvī) and intending to kill a cow. The story of Pṛthu in Mhh, *Śānti* 59.98-128 does not mention his intention of self-immolation for absolving himself from his sin. Nor does Nārada appear there to direct him to Mahākālavana. The Purāṇa utilises the story of the great ancient King Pṛthu for the glorification of this Liṅga.

collyrium. A righteous son was born out of the paternal part of the body, when the right hand was pressed and churned by the excellent Brāhmaṇas. It was Pṛthu of well-known exploits. He was coronated by the excellent Brāhmaṇas. He performed a very severe penance. By a great boon of Viṣṇu, the king achieved overlordship. On seeing the subjects weeping and wailing in great distress without regular study of the Vedas, without the utterance of Vaṣaṭ in the course of sacrifices and without adequate wealth, the king became miserable. He wished to milk[1] (the essence from) the three worlds including Devas, Asuras and human beings.

9-18. In the meantime Nārada, the excellent sage, came there. On seeing the infuriated Pṛthu, he spoke these words: "O king, do not give vent to anger that will bring about only the destruction of the three worlds. The different kinds of vegetation and crops have been swallowed (withheld within) by this earth. This is my opinion."

On hearing the words of Nārada, Pṛthu became excessively furious. He felt inclined to burn down the Earth completely along with the mountains, forests and parks. He discharged an arrow with Fire-god as the deity, whereby the Earth became scorched. In her distress and fear, she assumed the form of a cow and approached Pṛthu. On being about to be assailed by him also, she spoke to the king: "O excellent king, as a cow I have sought refuge in you. O king, the cow should not be killed. Bring a calf and milk me." On hearing her words, the excellent king made Himālaya a calf and milked lustrous jewels and vegetation (medicinal herbs and food). The subjects became happy with beaming faces. A great festival began to be celebrated. Yajña, Dāna and other holy rites were inaugurated with auspicious acclaim. Then the king began to think: 'A sin has been committed by me. It is ordained that women should not be killed. A cow and a Brāhmaṇa too should not be killed. The Earth in the form of a woman has been struck by me out of delusion. I was inclined to kill a cow. Hence I shall set up a pyre and certainly enter the fire therein.

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1. From v 10 below, the reading should be '*dagdhum*' (to burn) and not '*dogdhum*' (to milk).

19-27. Even as Pṛthu of unmeasured splendour was pondering thus, Nārada the holy sage came there again. O my beloved, on seeing Pṛthu distressed and in such a situation the intelligent Nārada, said: "What is this, O king?" Thereupon he mentioned: "A sin has been committed by me. O Brāhmaṇa, a woman who should not be killed has been assailed and I have even the inclination to kill a cow. What horrible worlds I will have to go to, after perpetrating this horrible deed! I am a Brāhmaṇa-slayer, a sinful man; I will undoubtedly die. Hence redeem me, O Brāhmaṇa, by instructing what is good." On hearing his words, Nārada said, explaining the excellent greatness of the Liṅga that subdues great sins: "O king, there is a Liṅga that destroys great sins in Mahākālavana. It is to the west of Abhayeśvara. Go there immediately, O king; you will become pure."

On hearing the words of Nārada, Pṛthu went there and saw the beautiful Liṅga. Instantly he became rid of sins. The king became lustrous like an aggregate of suns.

Thereupon, O lady of excellent countenance, a name also was assigned by the beings moving in the sky: "From today this deity will become well-known as Pṛthukeśvara because he has been adored by Pṛthu.

28-34. Those who visit the deity Pṛthukeśvara, the Lord of Devas, will have their desires fully realized on the earth. By seeing Pṛthukeśvara a sin committed wilfully or unknowingly will disappear quickly. By visiting Pṛthukeśvara one can destroy quickly all the sins perpetrated verbally, mentally or physically, whether secretly or openly or incidentally. Those who devoutly adore the deity Pṛthukeśvara attain sovereign kingdom in the mortal or heavenly world. After enjoying the realm of human beings on the earth and of the Devas (in heaven), they will go to the greatest region of Brahmā Parameṣṭhin." After saying thus, the groups of Devas adored Pṛthukeśvara. Pṛthu then ruled the earth along with the cities and mountains.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Pṛthukeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (the story of) Sthāvareśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTY

Sthāvareśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-7. Listen carefully, O goddess, to (the story of) the fiftieth deity. By merely seeing him, one can avert the evil effects of Planets.

The wife of Ravi (Sun-god) was named Saṁjñā. She was daughter of Viśvakarman. Saṁjñā could not endure the fiery brilliance of her husband. So once she created her own image by means of her power. Chāyā, the image, was told thus: "Stay respectfully in the vicinity of the Sun. My departure should not be revealed to Ravi even if you were asked about it." After saying thus, Saṁjñā went to the abode of her father.

Thinking the second wife to be Saṁjñā herself, Divaspati (Sun) begot of her the son named Śanaiścara. At his birth all the Devas, Asuras and human beings became afraid. Immediately after the birth, he overpowered the three worlds consisting of mobile and immobile beings. Indra too was frightened and he sought refuge in Brahmā and recounted to him the doings of the son of the Sun-god in words choked (with emotion). "The Rohiṇī zone was split and stellar sphere was pervaded. The three worlds were overpowered by the son of Ravi immediately after the birth."

8-14. On hearing the words of Vāsava, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, quickly summoned Sūrya and spoke these words: "O Bhānu (Sun), let the decorum be maintained. Let (your) bosom-born son be curbed. He has overpowered the three worlds Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ etc."

On hearing the words of Brahmā, Ravi said: "My son of this nature is intractable. Restrain him yourself. See, my feet have been burnt sportingly by him through the eyes alone."

Brahmā too was frightened and he mentally approached Hari. Hari came to know of the words of the Sun and came

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1. This Liṅga protects persons from the evil effects of the Planets Śanī and others; *inter alia*, the story of Śani's birth and the havoc caused by him are described. Sthāvara is a name of Saturn (v 24) from which the Liṅga got the designation Sthāvareśvara (v 33).

on the scene in a trice. On hearing the words of Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa became afraid and said, "Let us go where Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, is present."At the instance of Kṛṣṇa all of them came near me. O Pārvatī, the full details of Ravi's son were recounted to me.

On being remembered by me, the son of the Sun-god came to me instantly.

15-22. His eyes were directed below, when I saw him. He was black in complexion and crooked in limbs. He steadied himself, bowed down and told me slowly: "O Lord, why have I been remembered? O Śaṅkara, command me. I shall abide by your command. What shall I do? Direct me duly." I was thus told by the son of Ravi, O Pārvatī.

He was restrained by me: "Do not harass the three worlds too much." He said: "Grant me food and drink as well as a place to rest in." O lady of wide eyes, an excellent place was granted by me for his honour: "Be stationed in Meṣa (Aries) and other signs of zodiac and trouble human beings for thirty months in due order. O dear one, therein you will be contented and pleased. You will always be antagonistic when stationed in the first, second, fourth, eighth or twelfth house in the horoscope. You will be beneficial to people, when stationed in the third, sixth or eleventh house. Hence you will be adored. But when stationed in the fifth, seventh or ninth house you will be neutral. Thus while men are engaged in their Karmas, you shall be in the different Rāśis (in the zodiac).

23-33. You will be getting plenty of adoration, much more than what the other Planets get. Your movement will be steady and slow and your boon excellent. Hence your name on the earth will be *Sthāvara.* Stationed in the zodiac, you will be moving slowly because you are bigger than any of the other Planets. Hence your name on the earth will be Śanaiścara ('Slow-mover') always. Your shape will be like that of the cheek of an elephant. In colour you will be like my throat. Hence your name on the earth will be *Asita* ('Black'). Among the Planets your vision will be directed downwards and the movement will be slow. When pleased, you will bestow a kingdom. When angry, you will take away everything instantly. Devas, Asuras, human beings, Siddhas, Vidyādharas and Serpents will be destroyed on being struck by your cruel glance; not otherwise.

With your favour, they will attain their desired things even if difficult to be obtained. I shall give you another spot also, secret and charming. It will bring about what is desired. It is meritorious and inaccessible unto Devas and Dānavas. The great Mahākālavana is declared as indestructible even at the time of Pralaya. Go there, at my bidding. To the west of Pṛthukeśvara there is a Liṅga. It will be known after your name. Your fame will certainly spread all over the three worlds."

On being told thus, O goddess, Sthāvara (Saturn), obeying my command, went quickly to the splendid and auspicious Mahākālavana. There itself he saw my Liṅga and attained the excellent position. That Liṅga is well-known in the universe by the name Sthāvareśvara.

34-43. Śani (Saturn) said: "Harassment from me will never affect those people who devoutly visit the Liṅga that has been adored by me and that has become well-known as Sthāvareśvara. On my day (Saturday), if a devotee visits the Liṅga invariably, I will undoubtedly suppress all his adversities. I will burn out (destroy) the torment of other malefic Planets too. Even in dream he need not be afraid of me. When I am favourably disposed, neither the Planets, nor Vampires, neither Yakṣas nor Rākṣasas create any obstacles for him. There is no doubt about this. On the days of transit of the Sun, on Saturdays, when there is Vyatīpāta (an astronomical combination), men should devoutly visit Sthāvareśvara Liṅga. Their stay in heaven will be steady and everlasting.

If men regularly visit the deity on Saturdays, they will have neither sins nor calamities arising from sins. They will never face poverty or separation from beloved people. To one who longs for a son, I grant the benefit of a son. I bestow wealth on a poor man, freedom from fear on one distressed with fear, heavenly pleasures on one who wishes for it."

After saying thus, Śanaiścara worshipped the Liṅga once again. After adoring with splendid flowers, he stationed himself there alone devoutly.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Sthāvareśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (that of) Śūleśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

Śūleśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-7. Know, O goddess, that Śūleśvara Liṅga is the fifty-first deity and destroyer of all ailments.

When the first Kalpa began, O lady of excellent countenance, there occurred a fierce battle between Devas and Dānavas for the sake of kingdom, where Jaṁbha was the Lord of Daityas and the Consort of Śacī that of Devas. Devas were defeated and Daityas became victorious. Andhaka came to Mandara and sent a messenger to me. That evil-minded messenger arrogantly told me loudly. "O Śaṅkara, listen to my words. I have been directed by Andhaka to tell you: 'Give Gaurī unto me as wife. Let this Mandara be abandoned (by you). If this is done, you can stay contented. Otherwise you have no other way.' "

I was told so, when I was on the great mountain along with you. With a face beaming with smile for a moment, I spoke these words: "O messenger, go at my bidding and tell Andhaka immediately: 'Come here; fight with me; defeat me and take away this lovely lady.' "

8-15. On being told thus, the messenger went away. My words were repeated by him. Daitya Andhaka came to Mandara seeking a battle, along with his ministers and with a four-division army. Thereupon, a fierce, protracted fight ensued between me and him. The terrible chariot of Andhaka was broken and shattered all round. Thereupon, O goddess, the infuriated Andhaka jumped down from the chariot. The powerful fellow seized my chariot. Displaying his strength, the great Daitya fought with me. He was hit with the trident by me. With the trident deeply thrust within, the great Asura was held aloft by me in the air. Suspended thus from the trident, the wicked wretch was whirled by me. There was a profuse

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1. This Liṅga is called Śūleśvara as demon Andhaka who was impaled on the trident by Śaṅkara was ultimately blessed by Śaṅkara and sent to this Liṅga in Mahākālavana.

flow of blood from his body. From every drop of the blood Dānavas on a par with him cropped up. Thus, O goddess, crores of such Daityas came up and I was harassed by them. O beautiful lady, I stood still there for a short while thinking, 'What should be done?' The excessively terrifying Durgā with red teeth was created by me and she drank up the blood flowing profusely. When the blood was thus drunk, O goddess, no more Dānavas rose up. Those who had risen up before were struck by herself with the same trident. Those leaders of Dānavas, when struck by her, died instantly.

16-26. Pleased in his mind, Andhaka joined his palms in reverence and spoke to me: "Let my devotion be always directed towards you. Rare indeed is your appearance (to devotees) which is very difficult to obtain. I have been struck down by (you), my Master. Who can be more blessed than I? Pierced through by your trident, I was held suspended in the space. Despite that I seek refuge in you who create and destroy (the world) with a mere will, the Lord promoting the functions of the Kalpa and possessing a thousand faces and heads.

I seek refuge in you, the Lord of the Daughter of the King of Mountains, having as abode the peak of the Lord of mountains, and residing in Mahālaya."

Thus I was eulogized, O beautiful lady, by the Daitya kept suspended with the trident thrust through (him). Thereupon, I became compassionate and made him a Gaṇa.

That excellent Śūla (Trident) was joyously told then by me, O goddess: "Come on, O Śūla, the wicked Daitya, Andhaka, was killed by you in battle. As I am pleased (with you) I grant you an excellent great place of rest. Without propitiating me it cannot be attained by Devas, Gandharvas or great sages who have destroyed their sins." Then the Śūla bent down and spoke to me: "If the holy Lord is pleased, if you have pity for me, tell me the great place of rest where my mind can get purified and also wipe off the sin arising from the contact of the wicked ones and other sins as well."

Thereupon, he (the Śūla) was advised and directed by me whose mind became compassionate: "The beautiful Mahākālavana yields the fruit of great merit. A Liṅga that enables one to attain us, which blesses all the worlds, is there to the east of Pṛthukeśvara. Propitiate it with effort."

27-38. On hearing my words, he went away hurriedly. There he saw that Liṅga, the bestower of many benefits. The Śūla, the favourite of Śaṅkara, when seen by the Liṅga, became endowed with many faces and was surprised in his mind due to delight. He was closely embraced lovingly and his health and welfare were enquired after. The mode of the subjugation of the wicked Andhaka was narrated by the Śūla. He said: "For the purpose of purification I have been directed by the Lord to come to your presence. I have been purified by your sight. I shall go to the presence of Śiva. From today onwards you will become well-known after my name in Bhūrloka. By seeing you, more than that shall happen. This is what I choose. Of what avail are the different kinds of Tīrthas where holy bath is taken? Of what avail are the different kinds of Dāna rites performed? Those who devoutly see you will obtain all those benefits. A man endowed with devotion, who performs your adoration on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day or on a Tuesday, joyously moves about, seated in an excellent aerial chariot well-adorned with jewels resembling the rising sun and capable of going anywhere at will. Those who are excessively frightened, those who are afflicted with ailments always or excessively distressed by miseries will repeat your name. They will not have any fear in this terrible ocean of worldly existence. If men devoid of emotional fervour or devotional ardour even casually visit you, they will not be reborn in the world or fall into the excessively terrible Naraka (Hell)." Thus said the Śūla after closely embracing the Liṅga. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Śūleśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of Oṁkāreśara.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

Oṁkāreśvara[1]

Śrī Viśveśvara said:

1-10. Know, O goddess, that the name of the fifty-second deity is Oṁkāreśvara (well-known) in all the three worlds.

In the first Kalpa named Prākṛta, O goddess, a being tawny in colour was procreated by me through the mouth at the outset. Then that being of divine nature stationed himself there saying, "What shall I do?" When I told him, "Divide yourself", he vanished like the blowing out of a lamp. His movement was not noticed. Thereafter he began to consider, 'How is the self to be divided?' Even as he was pondering thus, he turned out to be named Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman with the three-vowel syllables (accents?) and four measurements, yielding the four aims of life as the benefit. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva constituted his soul. With his extensive powers he pervaded all the worlds. With pleasure I gave him the name 'Oṁkāra'. Vaṣaṭkāra issued from the heart of that deity bedecked by the liberal-minded Vāṇīs (speeches) uttered then. Gāyatrī of sweet utterance, well-known in the world as Sāvitrī, was stationed nearby there as a shining goddess. She was the most excellent of the Chandas (Vedic Metres) with twenty-four syllables, six bellies, three feet and five heads.

O Pārvatī, I told Oṁkāra: "Along with this Gāyatrī at my bidding, evolve the wonderfully variegated creation."

11-21. On being told thus, he assumed a form resembling gold with three projections. At my bidding he evolved the creation from his body.

In the beginning, the group of Devas, the thirty-three deities, human beings and sages were created on the authority of the Vedas. Just as the Sun has the rising and setting constantly, so also the manifestation shall occur again, even after they had entered his body. After suppressing all the Devas, Asuras and

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1. This is the glorification of Oṁkāra created by Śiva. This Oṁkāra is merged in a Liṅga in Mahākāleśvaravana and hence came to be known as 'Oṁkāreśvara'.

Serpents into the Oṁkāra, within his womb, the holy Lord of the universe, Oṁkāra, created all the living beings at the end of the Kalpa, O daughter of the Mountain.

He is unmanifest and eternal. This entire visible world belongs to him. The great Being is the maker, transformer and annihilator of everything. The Vedas have Oṁkāra at the beginning. Yajñas have Oṁkāra at the beginning. Oṁkāra precedes knowledge; penance begins with Oṁkāra. He should be known as self-born. He is Brahmā, the Lord of the universe. He should be known as Vāyu (Wind). That omniscient one is the creator of subjects. He created all these: Viśvedevas, Sādhyas, Rudras, Ādityas, Aśvins, Prajāpatis, the seven great sages, Vasus, Apsarās, Gandharvas, Rākṣasas, Daityas, Piśācas, Rakṣasa groups, different kinds of spirits and goblins, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, Barbarians and others on the earth, all the quadrupeds (beasts and animals), mobile beings and whatever is termed as Jīva (having life). After creating everything, he came near me.

22-29. He bowed down with modesty and spoke these words: "O Lord, O Maheśvara, with your favour, the creation has been completed by me. Grant me a grand place so that the fame may be eternal." On hearing the words of Oṁkāra, I said, O lady of excellent countenance: "My divine Mahākālavana is the most desirable grand place. It is eternal, immutable and unfading. It is auspicious and conducive to all the wealth. There your fame will remain permanent undoubtedly. It is situated on the eastern side of Śūleśvara. Originating in the course of the three Kalpas, it will become well-known after your name. The name *Oṁkāreśvara* will spread in the three worlds."

On being told so, O goddess, Oṁkāra was delighted in his mind. He saw the Liṅga there and got merged therein. Ever since then Oṁkāra is included in the Vedas by Brāhmaṇas at the outset for the sake of merit and auspiciousness. O Pārvatī, this is the convention ever since the time when Oṁkāra got merged. Listen to the inordinate power of the Liṅga as being recounted by me.

30-37. O goddess, the merit from a visit to Oṁkāreśvara is more than what has been cited as resulting from meritorious action done in the course of thousands of Yugas etc., hundreds of Vyatīpātas and thousands of Ayanas (solar tran-

sits). The benefit accruing from visiting Oṁkāreśvara is more than the benefit acquired when all the four Vedas have been studied. The merit from visiting Oṁkāreśvara is more than the merit got by practising celibacy throughout one's life. O goddess, the merit from visiting Oṁkāreśvara is more than the merit got from Karīṣa Sādhanā (spiritual achievement through the mastery of Karīṣa fire) and the merit in keeping the vow of non-killing. Limitless, indeed, is the benefit mentioned as resulting from the adoration thereof. Of what avail are Yajñas involving the expenditure of abundant wealth? Of what avail are austerities very difficult to be performed, since the same benefit is obtained merely by visiting Oṁkāreśvara? Men shall achieve liberation from the worship, touch, glorification and listening to the story of Oṁkāreśvara Deva.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Oṁkāreśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of the great Viśveśvara Liṅga.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

Viśveśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. Know the great Viśveśvara Liṅga as the fifty-third famous deity well-known in all the worlds.

2-4. Formerly in Vidarbhā, there was a king named Vidūratha. He ruled a realm free from thorns (of dissidents and disgruntled ones). He had a large Antaḥpura full of queens numbering ten thousand. When he went on hunting he killed by mistake a Tāpasa (ascetic) clad in the skin of an antelope and calmly

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1. King Vidūratha of Vidarbhā killed by mistake a sage, for which he suffered pain in hell and underwent despicable eleven births. In the last birth, he was hanged from a tree when he happened to see a Śiva Liṅga. He went to heaven by seeing it and was born as a king named Viśveśa. Due to memory of the last birth, he went to serve that Liṅga. He saw the universe in that Liṅga. The Liṅga was pleased with him and as a favour to him the Liṅga adopted the king's name. Hence it is called Viśveśa.

meditating on the eternal Brahman. Deluded by fate, he (wrongly) thought the Brāhmaṇa in the great forest to be a deer and that was why he killed him. As a result of that Karma, he fell into Raurava on death.

5-16. There he endured terrible tortures for the requisite period of time. From there he was reborn into the mortal world as a very poisonous serpent. O my beloved, he angrily bit a Brāhmaṇa in his foot. Hit with a thick stick, he died instantly.

After coming out of Naraka, he became a lion in the second birth. This terrible lion killed a king and so was struck down by the attendants of the king.

Again in the third birth, he became a tiger. With the sharp claws of his paws, he used to kill boars. A certain Vaiśya was killed by him in a certain forest. He was hit with arrows by hunters and thus was killed.

In the fourth birth he was born as an elephant and was killed by a lion.

In his fifth birth he was born as a crocodile in the saline waters of the great ocean. Highly sinful, he killed a woman who wanted to bathe. Fishermen with baits and hooks challenged him and struck him down.

Again in his sixth birth, he was a flesh-eating Piśāca (ghost). By means of well-tested Mantras of great power a Brāhmaṇa, the most excellent one among those conversant with Mantras of Atharva, did away with him.

In the seventh birth he was born a Brahmarākṣasa with a body too despicable to be looked at calmly. He had sharp curved fangs, a terrible mouth and dried-up limbs. Flesh and blood constituted his diet. The highly sinful evil spirit was born in desert lands. King Nimi, a deadly enemy of Rākṣasas, wielded a bow and attacked him in war and struck him down with Brahmāstra.

In the eighth birth, he became a ferocious dog of very black colour. Therein he died due to the wounds inflicted by the kicks of the hoofs of boars.

17-22. In the ninth birth, he became a flesh-eating fox in a cremation ground. On account of his greed, he met with his death when highly distressed with grief in the midst of a forest fire.

In the tenth birth he became a terrible vulture with a sharp beak. Habituated to a diet of putrefying flesh, he was sick and he died ere long.

In his eleventh birth, O lady of excellent countenance, he was born as a Cāṇḍāla in Avantī. He entered the abode of a Brāhmaṇa for taking away some money. The watchman caught him red-handed and bound him instantly. He was brought for being executed and was hanged from the top of a tree. There was a Liṅga there itself, O chaste lady, very near, to the north of Śūleśvara. When the Cāṇḍāla was extremely dispirited in his mind, the Liṅga came within the range of his vision. After dying instantly, he went to heaven. There he enjoyed excellent pleasures and later descended to the earth.

23-29. He was born in Vidarbhā and became well-known as King Viśveśa. Due to the merit of seeing the Liṅga, he could remember previous births. He ruled the kingdom he inherited and enjoyed rare pleasures. Conversant with disciplined and righteous activities, he crowned his well-disciplined and polite son as the king of the realm. Recollecting the earlier incidents, he went to the city of Avantikā. He saw there the great Liṅga too dazzlingly bright to be looked at. With his divinely endowed vision, he saw all the mobile and immobile beings in the centre of the Liṅga. In the middle of the Liṅga were stationed all the oceans, rivers, continents, mountains and other things of divine powers. There was the Moon with the Stars, the Sun with Fire, Dhanada (Kubera), Varuṇa, Yama, Śakra, the Lord of winds, Maruts, Devas, Gandharvas, sages, ascetics, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Piśācas and Rākṣasas of terrible exploits. There were the other deities, including Brahmā, Skanda, Laṁbodara, etc. O goddess, all the three worlds were seen in the centre of the Liṅga.

30-38. After understanding perfectly the power of that Liṅga, the king with great restraint (of the senses) adored Maheśvara, the source of origin of the universe.

The Lord became pleased with him and spoke these words: "Welfare unto you. Choose a boon. What desire of yours shall I grant?"

The king said: "O Lord, if you are pleased with me, I shall have this boon. If men visit you with faith or otherwise, let them not fall into the terrible ocean of worldly existence. Be

famous in the world by the name of Viśveśvara."

When these words were uttered, Viśveśa was again adorned by the Gaṇas. In a brightly illuminated chariot, he went to my world. He was eulogized, O lady of excellent countenance, collectively by the different groups of Gaṇas. He wore a crown. He was adorned with earrings and pearl necklaces. His divine aerial chariot hovered all round. Different kinds of heaven-dwellers along with Indra, Dhanādhyakṣa (Kubera), sages, Siddhas, Gandharvas, groups of Apsarās, all hailed him. Viewing various interesting things along with dances of celestial women, he stayed with me a thousand crores of Yugas. Hence, O goddess, the deity is well-known as Viśveśvareśvara. By perceiving the Viśveśa Liṅga, one is rid of sins.

39-46. An embodied being is rid of the sins committed in the course of seven births, mentally, verbally or through physical activities. By seeing the Viśveśvara Liṅga blessedness and contentment is attained. His ill-luck is destroyed and loss of glorious fortune is averted. The embodied being realizes his desires and acquires mental richness. When Viśveśa is adored, O beautiful lady, evil dreams, ailments, cruel malefic Planets and terrible spirits and goblins perish.

Those few who are endowed with faith, and propitiate the Liṅga become enriched with immediate realization of all their desires. They are born again and again in every Yuga. In the end they realize the ultimate divine goal with my favour.

Auspicious rites are performed when the Liṅga is worshipped. There is no fear of famine there nor fear from premature death. No one is born of the womb of Pretas or of Vetālas. There is no fear of serpents, of fanged creatures.

Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra, Kubera, Varuṇa and others of great refulgence and vigour attained great Siddhi through the worship of the Liṅga

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Viśveśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Henceforth listen to the story of Kaṇṭeśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

Kaṇṭeśvara

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-7. O my beloved, know Kaṇṭeśvara Liṅga as the fifty-fourth deity. Merely by seeing it a man gets all his objectives achieved.

Formerly, in the first Kalpa, O goddess, there was a king named Satyavikrama. He was defeated by his enemies in battle. His treasury was confiscated. He became highly distressed. He went along into a dense forest. He became lean and feeble due to fatigue. There he saw the hermitage of the noble-souled Vaśiṣṭha. Immediately after seeing the king, Sage Vaśiṣṭha duly honoured him by offering a seat etc. as befitting a king, very respectfully. By the power of his penance, the sage knew that the king belonged to the Solar race. He enquired after his health and welfare, O goddess, and the cause of his visit again and again. The deeply grieved king told Vaśiṣṭha: "O holy Sir, the entire kingdom has been taken away by my enemies. I have sought refuge in you because I suffer only miseries. O holy one, how can the kingdom be regained after eradicating all the thorns (enemies)? It behoves you to grant me your favour by offering suitable advices."

8-17a. On hearing his words, the holy sage Vaśiṣṭha meditated and then said with great ardour: "O king, do go to Mahākālavana for the accomplishment of the work ahead. There is a well-known divine river there famous in all the three worlds. On its bank there is an auspicious Liṅga to the south of Pṛthukeśvara. O tiger among kings, you will see an ascetic performing penance, with bones and skin alone remaining in his body and clad in bark garments." At the instance of that noble-souled Brāhmaṇa Vaiśiṣṭha, the king hastened to the splendid Mahākālavana. There he saw the indefatigable sage of long life span. He was thin and weak due to observance of fasts but had the brilliance of twelve Ādityas.

The king was seen by the ascetic who realized that he (the king) had been previously a dear friend and had been ousted from the kingdom. So he spoke these words: "Come, do come, O tiger among kings; fortunately you have come to me." After

saying this, the ascetic made a hissing *Hum* sound. At that sound five girls came up after piercing through Pātāla. One of them held a golden footstool. Another girl came out with a golden waterpot. A third stood there ready to wash the feet. Another pair held fans and stood by his side.

17b-24. Again the sage of great penance gave out another Huṁkāra. Then a group of celestial damsels arrived from the world of Devas and began to perform a charming dance and sing melodiously. Thereafter, he saw the Liṅga excessively luminous, from which the universe issued forth and into which it merged along with the mobile and immobile beings.

On seeing it, the excellent king was very much surprised. He bowed down to the Brāhmaṇa and asked: "O excellent Brāhmaṇa, what is all this?" On being asked thus by the king, that Brāhmaṇa spoke these words: "O eminent king, I have been propitiated by you for seven births. Hence the Māyā has been displayed to you by (the power of) the penance which is difficult to perform. By the power of this Liṅga, see the strength of my penance."

Then in an instant the earth was filled with water by means of a Huṁkāra. Through the Huṁkāra itself the water was checked and fire issued from the mouth. Through the Huṁkāra alone the entire earth became ablaze and fiery. In an instant he withdrew the fire and wind issued from the mouth.

25-32. O Pārvatī, everything was created with a Huṁkāra in an instant. Instantly there was nothing there, neither the quarters, nor the intervening spaces of the quarters, neither the stars nor the planets. There was nothing moving there. The king became struck with wonder and he thought: 'Where is the Liṅga? Where is the sage?' Even as he thought thus, there was a loud sound. From that sound a city encircled with a rampart was produced. Suddenly the king saw that city. It was large and wide, adorned with pure gold, with halls and mansions duly arranged. It was resorted to by divine beings who had realized the self. Again there was a loud sound. Therefrom a pair of women appeared. One of them was clad in white garments and the other in black. Again there was a sound and an excellent man issued forth with two heads, six mouths and twelve feet. When a sound was again made the man became split into seven. After showing this everything was retracted by

the Brāhmaṇa. O lady of large eyes, the king experienced horripilation and the ascetic told him: "O king, see this world created by me by means of the power of penance. It is to please you that this world was displayed to you, O excellent king."

33-42. On being told thus by the ascetic, the highly intelligent king of great purity, who had been wondering, asked: "O holy Sir, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, who were those two women in black and white clothes? Who was that twelve-footed person with two heads and six mouths? Who was that person who split himself into seven?"

On hearing his words the ascetic explained: "O excellent king, those two women in black and white seen by you are known as Night and Day, created by Brahmā before. The two heads seen by you are proclaimed as the two transits of the Sun. The six mouths seen by you are remembered as the six seasons. The twelve feet seen by you are remembered as the twelve months. The person who was seen split into seven and united again as one, O king, should be known as the ocean that appears as seven (separate oceans) but really stabilised as one. This cycle of the year has been displayed to please you. Having understood it thus, O eminent king, it does not behove you to grieve over it. The entire world including Devas, Asuras and human beings, is liable to destruction. This has been seen by me many times by the power of this Liṅga. Do see this Liṅga for the destruction of the enemy. Undoubtedly, O king, your kingdom will be devoid of the irritant or enemies." On being told thus, the king viewed the excellent Liṅga. On visiting the Liṅga, the thorns i.e. the enemy kings were heard as dead by the king.

43-54. The king went to his realm and became an emperor. By the power of this Liṅga he administered the kingdom, performed many kinds of Yajñas involving great sums of money and attained the greatest salvation.

All these things were heard by the ascetic and also seen by means of meditation. "By seeing this Liṅga, the kingdom devoid of irritant thorns has been regained by my friend who was ousted from the kingdom suddenly. Hence undoubtedly the name (of the Liṅga) will be well-known on the earth as Kaṇṭeśvara. There is no doubt that it bestows a realm through the vision.

Henceforth if people visit Lord Śiva named Kaṇṭeśvara, all their thorns (enemies) will undoubtedly be eradicated immediately.

By visiting Śrī Kaṇṭeśvara one will entirely obtain that merit which usually is obtained by bathing and performing sacrifices at Naimiṣa, Kurukṣetra, Gaṅgādvāra and Puṣkara. They may be householders or religious students; if they devoutly visit Lord Kaṇṭeśvara while observing Vratas with self-restraint, they will achieve Siddhi. By visiting Śrī Kaṇṭeśvara all those sins accumulated earlier in the course of a thousand births will perish quickly. All holy rites such as Dāna, Japa, Homa, Yajña, penance performed, meditation and study of the Vedas etc., performed here become everlasting in their benefits."

When that Brāhmaṇa, the ascetic, a keen observer of Vratas, said thus, O lady of large eyes, the Liṅga that became delighted, said after duly granting the boons: "He will be rid of old age and ailments; he will be devoid of all griefs. He will become the presiding officer of the Gaṇas, a bestower of boons, adored by all and endowed with the lordship and glory of the Yogic practice. None can slay him."

On being told thus by the Liṅga, the ascetic became a Gaṇa. Surrounded by the Gaṇas, O goddess, he came near me.

55-57. When formerly during a fight with me Andhaka roared like a lion, O goddess, my body experienced the sensation of horripilation (*Kaṇṭakita*). This Liṅga, destructive of all enemies appeared then. Since the thorns (*Kaṇṭakas*) of the Devas were burnt by the fire from the Liṅga, the deity became well-known as Kaṇṭeśvara in the three worlds. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Kaṇṭeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of great Siṁheśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

Siṁheśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-9. Know, O beautiful lady, that the fifty-fifth deity is the Siṁheśvara Liṅga that destroys great fear (i.e. of Saṁsāra).

In the present Kalpa, O goddess of blue lotus-like eyes, a great penance was performed by you to attain me. It was very severe with keen observance of Vratas. Indeed, the three worlds were scorched by your terrible penance. Coming to know of your strenuous penance the Four-faced Lord of Devas approached you and said to you in auspicious words: "O daughter, what do you desire to gain? What unobtainable rare thing shall I grant you? Kindly desist from this painfully tedious penance at my bidding."

The pleasing, truthful and beneficial words of the elder one firmly expressing his intent (*varṇanirṇītavāñchitam*) were listened to by you. You replied to Brahmā, after bowing to him with humility: "With a strenuous penance Śaṅkara was obtained as husband by me. But Bhava called me 'Dark-complexioned one' many times. My present penance is to ensure how I will become golden-complexioned instead of a black one and be reunited with my husband and how my husband Bhūtapati (Lord of the goblins, Śiva) would be favourably disposed towards me."

On hearing your words, Lord Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, the bestower of boons, who is competent to grant boons, said: "It will be so. After some time, your desire will be fulfilled. Your form will become bright with splendour. You will be (known) by the name Gaurī."

10-18. On hearing the words of Brahmā Parameṣṭhin, you became angry because the desire would be fulfilled after some time (in future). Due to your anger a lion was produced from your mouth. He was terrifying and excessively ferocious with

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1. A lion was born out of the wrath of Pārvatī while performing penance for fair complexion. She sent the lion to Mahākālavana where he attained a divine form. Hence Pārvatī named the Liṅga Siṁheśa.

wide open jaws. His shoulders were overgrown with manes. The beautiful tail was lifted up. His curved fangs made his face hideous. O goddess, you tried to jump into his jaws. Being hungry already the lion attempted to devour you, but he could not even look at you because of your superiority in penance. He was scorched suddenly by the power of your penance and splendour. He turned back in order to save himself. Thereupon, O lady who are a regular observer of holy Vratas, you took pity on the lion. From your breasts you produced milk on a par with nectar to give to the hungry lion. Still he felt himself burnt very much since he had a wicked intent. He said: "Mother, I have been scorched by your refulgence. I am wicked and ill-behaved. I am sin incarnate. Despite the fact that I have been created by you, I have become so evil-minded as to desire to devour you. Hence I am guilty of matricide, a slayer of elder ones. I will fall into hell."

19-30. On hearing the words of your miserable son, O lady of large eyes, you spoke to the lion with maternal affection: "Dear son, there is a sin-destroying holy spot named Mahākālavana. At my bidding go there soon. In the vicinity of Kaṇṭeśvara Deva there is an excellent Liṅga made by the Lord himself. It issued from the leonine roar of the noble-souled Śaṅkara formerly in the course of the fight with Andhakāsura when Indra had been oppressed by him. On hearing your words, the lion went to Mahākālavana in rapid strides. The deity was seen instantly. By perceiving the Liṅga, the lion became endowed with a divine body. On account of your feeling of love towards the Liṅga, O Pārvatī, you assumed the form of a lioness and went there. O my beloved, soon you saw the lion that had become endowed with a divine body by the power of this Liṅga. On seeing the lion of great brilliance, you became excessively delighted. O goddess of excellent countenance, you named this Liṅga too. "This deity will become well-known on the earth as Siṁheśvara Deva because the lion became endowed with a divine body by perceiving the Liṅga."

In the meantime, O lady with excellent Vratas, Brahmā came there surrounded by Devas. O beautiful lady, he spoke to you: "The lion that issued forth due to your anger is your son. Hence, O goddess, he shall undoubtedly be your vehicle. He who devoutly visits the Liṅga Siṁheśvara with concentration

and mental purity, shall have everlasting celestial residence. By glorifying the Liṅga one is rid of sins; by seeing the Liṅga one realizes the good. By touching the Liṅga the devotee sanctifies his family upto the seventh generation.

31-36. He obtains all the desired things in abundance. When one visits Siṁheśa, the deity redeeming devotees from the ocean of worldly existence, one becomes liberated from births, old age and miseries. By seeing Śrī Siṁheśvara, one averts the fear of pythons, tigers, robbers and aggressive marauders. By seeing Siṁheśvara Śiva ardently, one attains that benefit which results from Yajñas, penances, Dānas etc. He who, with effort, visits the deity Siṁheśvara attains my world to which Suras and Asuras pay obeisance."

After saying this, O my beloved, Brahmā went to his world. Your body which was formerly black-complexioned became fair with white complexion miraculously by the power of penance.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-eradicating power of Siṁheśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Henceforth listen to the story of Revanteśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

Revanteśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-7. Know the Liṅga named Revanteśvara as fifty-sixth deity. Merely by seeing it one attains great Siddhi.

Unable to endure the unbearable brilliance of Ravi (Sun-god) Saṁjñā went away to perform penance, O goddess. Sūrya came to know what the lady of excellent Vratas did. He as-

1. Revanta was a son of Sun-god and Saṁjñā. He conquered gods and demons. Gods went to Brahmā who in turn led them to Śiva. Śiva called Revanta, fondled him and established him near a Liṅga in Mahākālavana. The Liṅga came to be known Revanteśvara after Revanta's name.

Revanta is not mentioned in Mbh anywhere. Probably this legend is Skanda Purāṇa's contribution to explain the name 'Revanteśvara'.

sumed the form of a horse and went to Northern Kurus. There he saw Saṁjñā in the form of a mare. Eager to protect her hind parts, she came face to face with him. Thereupon a nasal intercourse took place when the two met each other. Nāsatya and Dasra, two horse-faced sons issued forth. At the consummation of orgasm, Revanta came out with a sword and shield and clad in armour. He was seated on a horse. He had a bow and arrows also. Having been born with a horse as his mount, immediately after the birth he sportingly conquered the entire universe including Devas, Asuras and human beings.

8-14. Thereafter, the defeated Devas sought refuge in Brahmā. With the necks trembling due to fear, they bowed down and said: "All our affluence and brilliance and assets have been destroyed by Revanta, a leading Sura and son of Ravi. Listen, O grandfather of the worlds. The fire emanating from his body runs about conquering Kāla (Time, god of Death). Trees get ablaze thereby and peaks topple down. Everywhere there is a hue and cry, bewailing and lamentation. Everything has become confused due to the clusters of flames, and tormented by him. The raging fire has spread in all the ten directions. Everything blazing thus appears like a Kiṁśuka flower (red in colour)."

On hearing their words, O lady of excellent countenance, Brahmā said: "O excellent Suras, what I am required to do by you is already known to me. O excellent Suras, what you desire will surely take place. Hurry up; O Suras, seek refuge in Śaṅkara."

15-18. On hearing the words of Brahmā, the terrified Devas came to me. After bowing down they spoke thus: "O Maheśvara, the entire area of the three worlds has been burnt by Revanta, the son of Āditya, through the fire issuing forth from his body, the refulgence of his great exploit and vigour. O most excellent one among the Devas, he is unmanageable even if we all fight collectively. O Śaṅkara, you alone are competent (to restrain him), no one else. We resort to you; all of us are distressed due to fear; we seek refuge. O Maheśvara, you are the Lord and refuge of the Devas, the bestower of boons."

19-27. Instantly, O my beloved, I remembered Revanta, the son of Sūrya. He came with delight brimming up in his soul and spoke these words: "O Lord, what should be done

by me. Say everything without omitting anything." Thereupon I took up the son of Sūrya in my lap, kissed him on the head affectionately and embraced him again and again: "O devotee of excellent Vratas, O blessed one, I shall grant you a boon. Choose one. I am pleased with you. Get whatever you wish for. This is what I command you to do. In this way you will attain welfare. On the earth itself, there is a holy spot highly appreciated by me. O son, it does not perish even in Pralaya (ultimate annihilation). It is the splendid Mahākālavana. There I shall grant you a grand place of rest. There you will earn renown. It is to the east of Kaṇṭeśvara. The spot is very difficult to attain. O Revanta, do reside there. You will see the eternal Liṅga. You will undoubtedly be worthy of the constant adoration of the Devas. In the heavenly world you will become the Lord of Guhyakas. You will be adorable in all the *Aśvaśālās* (stables of horses). You will reside in royal palaces well-honoured. My refulgence is present in that spot in the form of an eternal Liṅga. It is worshipped by the Devas. It should be assiduously served by you."

28-37. On being told thus be me, O goddess, the Sun-born Revanta proceeded along the sky in a trice to Mahākālavana. He saw the Liṅga there in the form of a luminous eternal radiance. O Pārvatī, Revanta, the son of Sūrya, was seen by the Liṅga. He was addressed lovingly: "O son of Sūrya, luckily you have been noticed by me. From today I will become well known all over the earth after your name. O Sūrya-Putra, you must stay in my vicinity forever. Your renown will extend to all the three worlds and be everlasting. Undoubtedly I will be called by the name Revanteśvara, O Revanta. If people visit me with great devotion, they will have a big number of horses and their renown shall be powerful. Their prosperity and the capacity for donation shall be infinite. They will have sons and grandsons. The devotee shall reside in the heavenly world after becoming the Lord of Guhyakas."

On hearing the words of the Liṅga, Revanta, the son of Ravi, said with a contented mind, O lady of wide eyes: "Grant me unflinching devotion. Grant me the excellent place of rest. Grant me the greatest (spiritual) knowledge. Grant me permanent renown also. O holy Lord, O Lord of the past and future, O Lord, O destroyer of worldly bondage and the fear thereof!

By perceiving you, the Lord, I have become one with desires well-consecrated. The embodied beings who have become purified through crores of births and who visit you will never return to the terrible ocean of worldly existence."

38-39. After saying thus, Revanta, the son and favourite darling of Ravi, established himself in the vicinity of Revanteśvara.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Revanteśvara has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of Ghaṇṭeśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

Ghaṇṭeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-8. Know that the Ghaṇṭeśvara Liṅga is the fifty-seventh deity. Merely by visiting him one attains everything one desires.

An excellent Gaṇa named Ghaṇṭa was my favourite. During the period of Cākṣuṣa Manu, once, out of curiosity, he proceeded to Brahmā's abode to see Brahmā, the immutable one. On seeing Citrasena, a Gandharva expert in music, coming, the excellent Gaṇa joyously enquired after his welfare: "I have to go there itself, to the abode of Parameṣṭhin. I will propitiate Brahmā, the Lord of the worlds, with my songs." Citrasena, who was thus addressed, told Ghaṇṭa: "The Lotus-born God is engaged in secret consultations with Devas." On hearing this Ghaṇṭa, the Gaṇa, stood surprised. He was stopped by the gatekeeper. Hence he began to ponder: 'Leaving Lord Īśāna, I have come to see Brahmā but even entry is not obtained by anyone and everyone who comes to meet Brahmā. Need it be said that the chance of one's getting the Lord's favour is far off?' Even as he was thinking thus, more than a year passed off. O goddess, Ghaṇṭa did not get an entry at the gates of Brahmā.

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1. Ghaṇṭa, a Gaṇa of Śiva, went to God Brahmā to show his musical proficiency. He was not admitted but cursed by Śiva to fall on the earth. On the advice of Nārada and other sages, the fallen Gaṇa went to Mahākālavana and visited a Liṅga near Revanteśvara. Ghaṇṭa was restored to his position thereby.

9-19. The excellent Gaṇa saw Nārada, eagerly holding the Vīṇā in his hand, coming out of the inner apartments of the abode of the Lotus-born One. Then he said immediately: "O Nārada, I am a Gaṇa well-versed in the theory and practice of music. I am a favourite of Mahādeva. I have come here to meet Brahmā Parameṣṭhin. Kindly make a mention about me (to Brahmā)."

On hearing the words of Ghaṇṭa, Sage Nārada became pleased. He consoled (the Gaṇa) and spoke thus deceptively: "O chief of the Gaṇas, I have been sent to the abode of Bṛhaspati by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds, in order to enquire about some matter. I will return in a moment. Wait till then."

After saying this, O goddess, Nārada came to me. The excellent sage told me the news about Ghaṇṭa.

"O Lord, a servant like Ghaṇṭa is rare indeed. This Gaṇa has left you and has been waiting for the service of Parameṣṭhin for more than a year. But the poor fellow has not gained entry yet."

On hearing the words of Sage Nārada, I cursed angrily: "O Ghaṇṭa, as you have left me and have gone to another abode for service, be fallen on the earth." When these words were uttered by me, Ghaṇṭa fell down on to the earth near the forest of Devadāru even as he was standing at the threshold of Brahmā.

On realizing that he had fallen on the earth, Ghaṇṭa spoke these words choked with grief and faltering: "He who goes elsewhere for service after leaving his own Lord, falls into terrible hell and incurs ignominy. On being deceived by Nārada, I have lost both. Neither Brahmā nor Lord Maheśvara is my master now."

20-29. Even as he was lamenting thus, the excellent sage, Nārada, came to that place where Ghaṇṭa was standing in the Devadāru forest, O goddess, for meeting the sages. It was a terror-stricken Ghaṇṭa with a confused mind who saw Nārada. The Gaṇa thought thus: 'He has brought me to this wretched condition. I do not know what else he will do to me.' While he was thinking thus, Nārada spoke these words to him: "O Gaṇādhyakṣa, resentment or grief causes destruction of merit. Do not be sad. Ghaṇṭa! Your downfall will lead you back to fame. It is for the sake of atonement (at the outset). After

purifying your soul through expiation you will attain Lord Śaṅkara. Hence, at my bidding go to the splendid Mahākālavana. To the east of Revanteśvara there is an excellent Liṅga. It is divine and conducive to all riches. It will become well-known after your name."

Nārada said thus and Jaigīṣavya came there. He too said everything: "O Gaṇādhyaksa, Nārada has spoken the truth. Your fame shall be everlasting." Kaśyapa, Mṛkaṇḍa, Kaṇva, Jamadagni, Atri, Bhṛgu, and the celestial sage Lomaśa, all advised Ghaṇṭa, O goddess, thus. He hastened to the splendid Mahākālavana, where I was fighting in a battle, making the sound of a bell, at which, O goddess, the excellent Liṅga, destructive of sins, was produced. There the splendid refulgent Liṅga was seen by the Gaṇa himself.

30-38. By seeing that Liṅga, Ghaṇṭa became a Gaṇa once again. He was endowed with splendid lustre with the brightness of the thousand-rayed Sun. Ghaṇṭa was acclaimed very much and brought to my side by aerial chariots that could grant all desires. He became my great favourite.

O lady of wide eyes, those who visit Lord Ghaṇṭeśvara Śiva will go to my eternal world by means of aerial chariots that could grant all desires. The bells therein will loudly proclaim (their glory). They will stay there for a very long time. Ghaṇṭeśvara Liṅga should not be divulged to anyone and everyone. A man may be sick, wretched or grief-stricken, O my beloved, but even if he perceives Lord Ghaṇṭeśvara casually he will be taken by aerial chariots having the lustre of molten gold and the ability to grant all desires. The man then rejoices amidst Gandharvas and celestial damsels in Svarga. He will obtain the cherished desires. He will be entertained by music played on flutes and lutes. Having slipped down from Svarga, he will be born in a prosperous family with an abundance of gold and foodgrains. He will be endowed with all riches and glory of lordship. He will be a king or someone similar to a king. He will be the overlord of Jaṁbūdvīpa.

He who is endowed with great faith and worships the Lord of Devas attains the greatest position with no cause for further rebirths. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Ghaṇṭeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of Prayāgeśa.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

Prayāgeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-8a. Know that the fifty-eighth deity is the Liṅga named Prayāgeśvara. It is excessively conducive to the attainment of all desires.

Formerly in the first Kalpa, there was Svāyaṁbhuva Manu whose son Priyavrata was extremely pious. He performed many Yajñas. After performing many Yajñas at the conclusion of which he distributed monetary gifts in all the seven continents, O my beloved, he begot Bharata and other sons. He then went to the extensive holy spot Badarī and performed a great penance. After a long time Nārada came there. King Priyavrata offered him a seat and Arghya and honoured him duly. After the adoration, he asked Nārada: "What miracle have you seen? Tell me."

Thereupon, the excellent sage began to narrate:

(Nārada said:)

In the Śveta Dvīpa, O king, a girl was seen by me in a lake. She was asked (by me): "O girl of wide eyes, why do you stay in this desolate place? Who are you, O fair one? How do you do? What is your job here? O splendid girl beautiful in every limb, tell me what you intend to do here."

8b-15. On being asked thus, she looked at me and then recollecting something she stayed silent with eyes closed till I found myself bereft of (my) excellent knowledge. All the Vedas and Śāstras were forgotten by me. I was dismayed and worried. I sought refuge in herself, O king, and looking at her, a divine person in her body was seen by me. In the heart of that man there was a second man. In his heart in turn

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1. While King Priyavrata was performing a penance at Badarī, Nārada came to him and told him how at the sight of Sāvitrī he had lost his knowledge of the Vedas. He then performed a penance at Prayāga. Prayāga assumed a human form and led him to Mahākālavana where at the sight of the Liṅga, he recovered his knowledge. Priyavrata then was merged in the Siddheśvara Liṅga.

another one was stationed. Then somehow I asked that girl of divine origin: "O dear girl, I have forgotten all my Vedic knowledge. What is the reason? Tell me."

The Girl said:

I am the mother of all Vedas. My name is Sāvitrī. It is because you do not know me that the Vedas were taken away from you.

When this was said, O king, I asked her in surprise: "O sinless one, you are indeed the mother of the Vedas. Tell me: Who are these three men, O goddess, in your heart?"

The Girl said:

16-26. This being of splendid limbs, beautiful and graceful, stationed in my body is named Ṛg Veda. The second one is Yajur Veda. The third one is Sāma Veda. The three Vedas are abiding in me. O Brāhmaṇa, the three fires and the three Devas are also staying in my person.

After saying this, O king, even as I was watching, that girl vanished suddenly. So I became surprised. 'What shall I do? Where shall I go? Which Lord am I to seek refuge in? How will the Vedas and Śāstras manifest themselves now? Prayāga is cited in the Veda as the king of holy spots fulfilling desires. I shall go there. I will regain knowledge there. Excellent Siddhi has been achieved there by Raibhya who had forgotten the Vedas. It is reported that in the vicinity of the Akṣayyavaṭa Sāvitrī is present.'

I thought thus in my mind, O excellent king, and went to the holy spot Prayāga that fulfils all desires and is bowed to by all the Devas. Severe penance extremely difficult for others to perform was performed by me there. Then, O eminent king, Prayāga in a personified form came there. He lovingly told me: "O Nārada, O son of Brahmā, I am Prayāga. Do not scorch me (with your penance). I have been terrified by your penance. O sage, I have come to your side through affection. O holy Sir, you are blessed in every respect, especially so through your penance. O holy Sir, unhesitatingly you must

accompany me to the beautiful Mahākālavana. There, undoubtedly, you will regain excellent knowledge. By fame too will become everlasting and steady."

27-34. Even as Prayāga was speaking thus, O excellent king, the yellow-robed Janārdana appeared before us suddenly in the sky seated on Garuḍa and holding the conch, discus and club in the hands. Lord Puruṣottama spoke these words in a voice as majestic as the thunder of a cloud: "Come, Nārada, we shall go where Prayāga goes."

On hearing the words of Kṛṣṇa, I spoke to Janārdana: "O Lord of Devas, grant me knowledge. How can I who am bereft of knowledge of Vedas, go to Mahākālavana?" On being requested thus, O king, Śrīdhara took me to Mahākālavana in a trice accompanied by Prayāga. Even as I was watching, O king, Prayāga worshipped that eternal, beginningless Liṅga in the form of refulgence (situated) to the east of Ghaṇṭeśvara and to the south of Navanadī.

The delighted Liṅga asked: "Why have you come here, O Prayāga, with full restraint and purity? I am always pleased with you. Visiting me will never be fruitless."

35-44. On being told thus by the Liṅga, he made a request for my sake: "Grant knowledge unto this noble-souled Brāhmaṇa, Nārada. O Lord, because he did not know Sāvitrī, Vedas and Śāstras became lost unto him." Thereupon, Brahmā came out of the Liṅga accompanied by the Vedas together with the six ancillary treatises, occult treatises and the Purāṇas as well. Then, O excellent king, I was told thus by Goddess Sāvitrī: "By the power of this Liṅga, O Nārada, the Vedas and Dharmaśāstras will manifest themselves to you as requested by Prayāga." When these words were uttered, O king, the Vedas were regained by me along with the different kinds of Śāstras and the knowledge of the six Aṅgas. O eminent king, with the acquisition of the knowledge I spoke these words: "The deity has been adored by Prayāga for the sake of knowledge unto me. Hence the deity will become well-known in all the worlds by the name Prayāgeśvara.

From then, that Liṅga surrounded by hundreds of crores of Tīrthas has yielded the benefits of heavenly pleasures and salvation. O excellent king, of what avail is the performance of a horse-sacrifice? By visiting that Liṅga one derives the

benefits of a hundred horse-sacrifices. Of what avail is penance even if it is perfectly practised? Indeed it causes pain unto the body. One can get the desired thing immediately by visiting Prayāgeśvara.

Īśvara said:

45-50. On hearing the words of Nārada, O great goddess, King Priyavrata, the son of Svāyaṁbhuva, went to Mahākālavana and visited that Liṅga there to the south of Navanadī.

After that he came to my vicinity. O goddess, he was duly honoured by me and made the Lord of Gaṇas. Those who devoutly visit the deity Prayāgeśvara are blessed ones in the human world. Others undergo sufferings unnecessarily. By perceiving Prayāgeśvara properly one gets that goal which belongs to a learned one of Sattva quality practising Yogic Sādhanā. Those men who are able to see Prayāgeśvara in the month of Māgha will get the benefit of a horse-sacrifice at every step.

Thus the sin-destroying power of Prayāgeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of great Siddheśvara.

CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

Siddheśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-9. O my beloved, know that Siddheśvara Liṅga is the fifty-ninth deity. By seeing it men acquire Siddhi.

There was a king named Aśvaśiras. He was extremely righteous. He performed Aśvamedha Yajña with plenty of Dakṣiṇā. He joyously performed Avabhṛtha (valedictory) bath and was seated surrounded by Brāhmaṇas. While that saintly king was

1. King Aśvaśiras was a great devotee of Viṣṇu. When Kapila, the great Siddha, and Jaigīṣavya visited him, he declared Viṣṇu (and not Śiva) as the supreme God. Kapila, an Avatāra of Viṣṇu, showed his original form as Viṣṇu. Kapila advised him to go to Mahākālavana and propitiate the Siddheśvara Liṅga. But being a staunch devotee of Viṣṇu, he merged in the Viṣṇu form of the Siddheśvara Liṅga.

seated thus, there came the glorious Siddha Kapila conversant with the efficacy of various kinds of medicinal herbs and expert in Mantras (spells) and Tantras (magical formulae and rituals). The glorious Jaigīṣavya, king of Siddhas, too arrived there.

The king got up with great joy and soon performed the customary rites of duly welcoming them.

Those two were duly adored and were properly seated. Those eminent sages were glorious and powerful, characterised by forgiveness and of pure religious vows and desirous of salvation. Those sages were richly endowed with learning and humility and strictly devoted to the practice of celibacy. They were engrossed in the task of creation, maintenance and annihilation (of the world). They resembled the rising sun and their lustre was on a par with that of the Fire-god. They had a mass of brilliant halo around them and they were too dazzling to be seen by low type of men.

The king approached them with humility, prostrated before them and put this question after joining the palms together in reverence.

Aśvaśiras said:

10-20. O excellent sages, I have heard that there is no greater god than Janārdana. If meditated upon and worshipped, he bestows liberation from the worldly bondage. When Hṛṣīkeśa is remembered all the inauspicious things of men arising from crores of births get annihilated. Why then should one not bow down to Hari? It is by propitiating Jagannātha that Śakra and other heaven-dwellers stay joyously in Svarga and become endowed with divine lustre. If the Garuḍa-emblemed Lord is pleased, different kinds of miseries arising from births, deaths, old age and ailments get dissolved immediately.

On being asked thus by that renowned king, those Siddhas, expert in the perfect knowledge of Siddhis, spoke to the king: "O king, who is this Nārāyaṇa of whom you speak? We both are Nārāyaṇas, O king, who are visible to you."

Aśvaśiras said:

Both of you are Brāhmaṇas and Siddhas. Through penance

you have burnt down sins. How can you be Nārāyaṇas?

He further said: "Janārdana holds a conch, a discus, a club in his hands. He is clad in yellow robes. Hṛṣīkeśa is seated on Garuḍa. Who can be equal to him?"

On hearing the words of the king, those Siddhas, expert in Yogic feats, assumed the form of Nārāyaṇa and displayed it to him. Due to the great power of his Mantras, Kapila himself became Viṣṇu instantly, clad in yellow robes and holding the conch, discus and club in his hands. At the same moment Jaigīṣavya became Garuḍa. This aroused a great deal of curiosity in the royal household.

21-33a. On seeing such a wonderful spectacle of the eternal Lord Nārāyaṇa seated on Garuḍa, the king was no doubt surprised but he submitted: "O Siddhas, I may be pardoned but Viṣṇu is not like this. Brahmā is born from the centre of a lotus coming out from his navel. Rudra issues from Brahmā and that Viṣṇu is the greatest Lord." On hearing these words of the king those excellent Siddhas, the great preceptors of Yoga and experts in making use of Mantras, created a great Māyā (magical illusion). Kapila became a lotus-navelled one and suddenly through his Yogic power became Prajāpati (Brahmā) in the centre of the lotus. Jaigīṣavya turned into Rudra and became stationed on his lap. The king witnessed the miracle and was fascinated by the Yogic feat. Out of dismayed curiosity, he spoke again with his neck shaking: "The Lord of the universe is not like this. This is the jugglery of the Yogins. The glorious Hari is omniformed and is remembered as omnipresent and bestower of everything."

Then, O Daughter of the Mountain, as soon as the speech of the king concluded, all over the royal assembly hall crores and crores of creatures were seen. There were mosquitoes, bugs, lice, bees, birds, animals, both domesticated and wild, such as horses, cows, mares, lions, tigers, buffaloes and others as well. On seeing such a multitude of living beings, the king became mystified in his mind. When he reflected, 'what could this be?' he suddenly realized everything and knew the greatness of Jaigīṣavya and the noble-souled Kapila.

With palms joined together in veneration, King Aśvaśiras asked the Brāhmaṇas devoutly: "What is this, O excellent Siddhas?

By the power of what penance was such a capacity acquired? Today my very birth has become fruitful. Today my learning has borne fruit. The working of my mind has become fruitful by the sight of both of you."

33b-41. On hearing his words Kapila spoke these words: "O king, there is an excellent Liṅga in Mahākālavana. It is well-known by the name Siddheśvara. It is always adored by Siddhas. It is stationed to the east of Saubhāgyeśvara and it bestows conjugal bliss and freedom from illness. By the potency of that Liṅga excellent Siddhi has been acquired, O excellent king, by Jaigīṣavya, a Siddha, and by me. Hence do go to the splendid Mahākālavana, O mighty-armed one. There you will see the Lord of all holding the conch, discus and club, Lord Viṣṇu stationed in the form of Liṅga. He will grant you Siddhi. Sanaka and many others have become Siddhas there, O king."

On hearing the words of the noble-souled Kapila, King Aśvaśiras hastened there. There near Siddheśvara Deva he saw (once again) those two Siddhas. There were many other Siddhas and Siddhanāthas. Coming to know that Siddheśvara Deva was adored by multitudes of Siddhas and realizing that Viṣṇu was stationed in the centre of the Liṅga, the excellent king worshipped him with great fervour of meditation.

42-51. Then the delighted Lord said: "O king of excellent holy vows, choose a boon; I shall grant you everything desired by you." On hearing the words of the Liṅga, the king said thus: Listen to it. "O Lord, if you have pity on me, if you are pleased, O Lord, O Acyuta, reveal to me your great form. This alone, O Lord, has been a constant desire in my heart ever since my birth, O Jagannātha, 'When will I see Janārdana?' This, the most excellent one of all boons, I wish to receive from you that you become well-known over the earth as Siddheśvara."

On hearing the words uttered by the king, O lady of excellent countenance, the Liṅga said: "O excellent king, neither the groups of Devas, nor Asuras, nor the great sages have understood my supreme form. I am Kṛṣṇa turned into the Liṅga. The sages equipped with a knowledge of Mantras, who have attained my world, do not actually know me, O king. Brahmā and others, these Devas meditate only on my refulgence seen here in the form of the Liṅga. Hence no one is

competent to see my great form. With my favour Yogins purified in the course of many births become liberated from worldly bondage and enter my body." Even as he was saying thus, Siddhi was attained by the king. He assumed the form of Viṣṇu and got merged into the Liṅga.

52-56. Hence, O goddess, the Liṅga has become very famous as Siddheśvara. Those men who devoutly see it get eternal Siddhi. They may gain the Siddhis of *Añjana* (collyrium), *Pādalepa* (smearing the feet), *Pādukā* (sandals i.e. ability to move about anywhere), *Guṭikā* (magic pills) and *Khadga* Siddhi (Siddhi of the sword). Mahāsiddhi (Ultimate Siddhi) is rare. There are other Siddhis too, such as those obtained through divine medicines, those through Mantras, *Laghimā* (weightlessness) etc. Then there are the Siddhis of piety, wealth, love and of salvation which is the most excellent. All these are obtained by visiting Śrī Siddheśvara. Thus the sin-destroying power of Siddheśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Mataṅgeśa.

CHAPTER SIXTY

Mataṅgeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. O goddess, know that the sixtieth deity is the Liṅga named Mataṅgeśvara which is always destructive of sins and conducive to the attainment of what is desired.

There was an eminent Brāhmaṇa named Sugati in Dvāpara Yuga. He had control over his sense-organs. He was truthful always and engaged in the study of the Vedas. Mataṅga was his son who was excessively terrible ever since his childhood. Once, O goddess, with a stout stick he, out of rashness, struck

1. Mataṅga was son of Brāhmaṇa Sugati. As a child he hit a young one of a donkey. The mother-donkey cosoled her child telling that Mataṅga was born of a rape of his mother by a barber and was a Cāṇḍāla. When Mataṅga heard it, he determined to be a Brāhmaṇa by performing penance. Indra dissuaded him and at last sent him to Mahākālavana where, by the sight of this Liṅga, he became a Brāhmaṇa and went to Brahmaloka. Hence the Liṅga came to be known as Mataṅgeśvara.

a young donkey standing near its mother. On seeing the young one beaten severely, the female ass, fond of her son, said: "Do not be grief-stricken, son. This is a Cāṇḍāla, not a Brāhmaṇa. There is no ruthlessness in a Brāhmaṇa. A Brāhmaṇa is called Maitra (friendly being). This fellow is a sin incarnate, so he inflicts pain. He does not take pity on a child. A man always resorts to his innate characteristics."

On hearing these awful words of the ass, Mataṅga cast off the stick and said to her: "Tell me, O Rāsabhī (female ass) of auspicious features. By whom was my mother defiled? I am born of a Yāyāvara family. Why do you regard me as a Cāṇḍāla? How have I become a Cāṇḍāla? Why has my Brāhmaṇahood become lost?"

Gardabhī said:

9-16. You are a Cāṇḍāla. Since you are begotten by an intoxicited barber of a low caste, of a Brāhmaṇa woman, therefore your Brāhmaṇical status is lost.

On being told so, Mataṅga spoke these words to his father: "Dear father, a surprising incident has been heard by me today. It seems, I have been begotten by a barber. So says the Gardabhī correctly. I shall assiduously perform a great penance."

After saying this to his father, he started with grim determination. He went to a forest and performed an austere penance. Thereby being equipped with the power of penance, he became a distress to the Devas. Harivāhana (*Indra*) spoke to that boy endowed with the power of penance: "O Mataṅga, why do you perform penance after giving up all human pleasures? I shall grant you a boon. Choose whatever you wish."

Mataṅga said:

I have begun to perform this penance because I ardently wish for a Brāhmaṇical status. You grant me the Brāhmaṇical status permanently, O Śakra. This is the boon chosen by me.

On hearing these words, Purandara (Indra) said to him: "You request for Brāhmaṇical status inaccessible to those who have not mastered themselves! You will come to ruin, O evil-

minded one. Desist from this without delay. It cannot be attained by any means by one born of Cāṇḍāla womb."

17-25. On being told thus, Mataṅga of disciplined soul and firm vow, stood on a single foot for a hundred years. Thereupon the highly renowned Śakra told him once again: "O heroic one, Brāhmaṇical status is very difficult to get. Do not be rash and foolhardy unnecessarily. In this manner it is impossible to get. Ere long you will be ruined; so choose another desired thing. Brāhmaṇical status is very difficult to attain." On being told thus Mataṅga of disciplined soul and firm vow remained standing on a single foot for a thousand and one years. The Slayer of Baia and Vṛtra repeated the same words: "It cannot be attained by you born of Cāṇḍāla womb by any means. You choose another boon. Do not undergo this labour in vain." On being told thus, Mataṅga became very much grief-stricken. He went to Gayā and engaged himself in the difficult task of Yogic exercise and Prāṇāyāma and stood on a single big toe for a hundred years.

Reduced to mere skin and bones, the pious-souled Mataṅga performed the greatest penance. Even as he was performing the penance, Vāsava, the doer of good to all, the Lord and bestower of boons, hurriedly approached him and seized him.

Śakra said:

26-36. O Mataṅga, Brāhmaṇical status appears to be inaccessible to you. O dear one, Brāhmaṇical status is very difficult to be attained by those who are not good and who are habitually sinful. *Yogakṣema* ('acquisition and preservation of what is good') of all living beings lies safe in Brāhmaṇa. Having forsaken it, the Brāhmaṇical status becomes very difficult to be achieved by those who have not mastered their own selves. Choose another boon. This boon is very difficult to be attained.

Mataṅga said:

Why do you inflict pain on me already distressed with grief? Why do you kill me who am already dead? I really bewail him who, after attaining Brāhmaṇical status, does not retain it. O Śatakratu (Indra), if Brāhmaṇahood is very difficult to be attained by the other three Varṇas, how was it attained through penance

by King Viśvāmitra (a Kṣatriya)? The saintly King Vītahavya attained Brāhmaṇahood through penance. Hence I shall perform penance, being free from *Dvandva* (mutually opposing pairs) and avoiding *Parigraha* ('acceptance of gifts'). I am steadfastly adhering to non-violence, control over sense-organs and truthfulness. Why don't I then deserve Brāhmaṇical status? If I am brought to this plight due to the fault of my mother, O Purandara (Indra), it is surely brought about by fate. Since I persevere, O Lord, and yet I do not attain Brāhmaṇahood, it comes to this that fate cannot be averted through manly effort. O Lord of Devas, bearing all this in mind, it behoves you to grant me the boon. If I am worthy of being blessed, if there is any vestige of merit in me, suggest the means to me, whereby I become a Brāhmaṇa, O Purandara, and my fame can be everlasting. It behoves you to do accordingly. I propitiate you through my head bowed down.

37-43. On being spoken to thus by Mataṅga, Vāsava, the slayer of Bala and Vṛtra, became pleased and recounted to him the excellent greatness of a Liṅga

Indra said:

Formerly a divine Liṅga was installed by Brahmā in Mahākālavana. It has a physical form of divine features and is stationed to the east of Śrī Siddheśvara. Merely by visiting it you will attain the status of Brāhmaṇa.

At the instance of Vāsava, Mataṅga then went to the beautiful Mahākālavana, the esteemed holy spot of Siddhas. There he saw that Liṅga that bestows all benefits. After visiting it, he adored it with diverse kinds of flowers. On being adored the excellent deity spoke thus:

"Oh, how greatly fortunate you are that I have been delighted by you! Everything has originated from me, the entire Cosmic Egg beginning with Bhūḥ and Bhuvaḥ. I am the bestower of boons on those who deserve boons and curse the wicked ones. Your Brāhmaṇical status shall be undiminished with my favour."

44-51. Then, by seeing the Liṅga, Mataṅga attained Brāhmaṇahood. Further by the power of the adoration, the

Brāhmaṇa went to the world of Brahmā.

By the power of this Liṅga, the rare status of Brāhmaṇa was attained by Mataṅga, O beautiful lady. Hence the deity is particularly known as Mataṅgeśvaraka in this world. He is the bestower of the world of Brahmā.

Men who cross the bounds of decency, who do not follow the conventional duties of one's Varṇa, who are considered accursed among the people of various Varṇas and stages of life, who abide by the words of heretics, who unhesitatingly display covetousness, who are bereft of compassion and who engage themselves in ruthless activities in the Kali Age, they, despite all this, attain Svarga by visiting that Liṅga.

O goddess, those pure and fortunate ones who meditate and so are destined to attain liberation visit the deity Mataṅgeśvara in the Kali Age. Those who are devoutly engaged in meditation on Brahman, those who are eagerly devoted to Yajña, Dāna and other holy rites, O goddess, get a view of Mataṅgeśvara Deva in Kali Age. O great goddess, those who adore Mataṅgeśvara Deva are men of meritorious deeds in the mortal world. Their residence in heaven is everlasting.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Mataṅgeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Saubhāgyeśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYONE

Saubhāgyeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-7a. Know Saubhāgyeśvara Liṅga as the sixty-first deity. By merely visiting it, one attains great fortune and unparalleled conjugal felicity.

In the first Prākṛta Kalpa there was a king named Aśvavāhana in the beautiful city of Prāgjyotiṣapura. He was a pious soul of increasing fame. He was intelligent. He performed many

1. King Aśvavāhana exiled his queen Madanamañjarī despite her deep love for him. In the forest she learnt from a sage that propitiation of Saubhāgyeśvara Liṅga in Mahākālavana would restore her to her previous position.

Yajñas. He was never defeated in battles. O lady of wide eyes, the name of his wife was Madanamañjarī. That lady of excellent eyebrows was daughter of the king of Kāśī. She was highly splendid in her beauty. She was excellent in her habits, clever in her duties, righteous and very skilful in domestic duties. She was well-versed in the sixty-four fine arts and pursued whatever was beneficial to her husband. That gentle lady, with a countenance resembling the full Moon, always spoke sweet words. But, O goddess, due to her previous Karmas, she was deficient in good luck as far as her conjugal felicity was concerned. She was not liked by the king. She was a perpetual eyesore unto him. Her words caused discomfort to the ears of the king. The very sight of the queen appeared to scorch the eyes of the king. By her mere touch the king appeared to suffer from an unbearable fainting fit.

7b-8. Once, O lady of excellent countenance, the king was looked at by her with great love and affection. Thereupon the king behaved as though he was scorched by a blazing fire. He said to the gatekeeper:

9. "O porter, take this wretched wife of mine and abandon her away in a dense forest. You need not doubt these words of mine."

10-11. Thereupon he considered the king's words not to be trifled with and so took her in a chariot and left her in the forest. Thus abandoned in the desolate forest, she lamented continuously remembering the king whom she considered a deity.

12-14. The lady, beautiful in every limb, with her mind and soul attached to him, spent the remaining part of the day and the whole of the night sighing and lamenting, "Alas! Alas!" The lady of exquisitely beautiful eyes censured herself as being deficient in luck. She never felt interested in the caves of the mountains, the beautiful forest, or in any type of sport therein or even in the intake of food. Abandoned by him (the king), O lady of excellent countenance, she censured her own youthful age:

15-20. "I am unfortunate. How have I been brought under the control of the wicked fate? How did I get that excellent king as this sort of husband? He is blessed. He is highly meritorious. In his prime of youth, he will undoubtedly de-

light the other ladies even though they are unchaste. The wife is a beloved only to someone. The husband is excessively liked only by some woman. It is extremely difficult to come across a married couple blessed with mutual love. This king is my beloved. I am not the beloved of the king. Only blessed people have this deep mutual love. If the king does not come into contact with me today, the unendurable fire of his love will consume me certainly. This forest which is echoing with the chirping, cooing sounds of the cuckoo and is considered beautiful, burns me today because it is bereft of my lover."

21-23a. Thus the lady overcome by love was lamenting again and again. She saw there a sage of firm vow. He was conversant with the events of the three divisions of time. He had a girdle of sacred grass, antelope-skin, a loin-cloth and a sacred staff. He was highly fortunate and possessed great spiritual power. The eminent sage ardently desired for salvation. He had a lustre on a par with that of fire and he resembled the rising sun.

23b-24. On seeing him the queen, vexed in mind, got up suddenly, approached him with humility and bowed to him. Then she asked him as to what caused the separation from the king:

25-28. "O holy Sir, I am a most favourite daughter of the king of Kāśī. I am a sister of Śatrusena. I am a great pet of my mother and brother. O great sage, I was given in marriage to King Aśvavāhana who is on a par with the god of piety, Dharma, and equal to Prajāpati (Brahmā) too. O holy Sir, I have been in love with that king. But how is it that I am not loved by that king? By what Karma have I become a wretched woman, O sage? How will that excellent king, my husband, become amiable and favourably disposed towards me? How can I have conjugal felicity? May you kindly tell me exactly."

29-31a. On hearing her words the sage of firm vow, understood the cause of the great ill-luck through his (spiritual) knowledge and spoke to her: "At the time of the celebration of the marriage when the king formally grasped your hand malefic Planets glanced at you. Dear daughter, your husband, the king, was glanced at by the benefic Planets. Therefore, although you love the king, you are not the beloved of the king."

31bc. On hearing his words the queen, mentally worried and distressed, asked him in all humility after bowing down with devotion:

32-36. "O holy Sir, how and by what type of holy bath, Dāna, pious observance and holy rite, can one attain the greatest conjugal felicity?" On hearing her words that sage of firm vow mentioned the greatness (of the Liṅga) whereby conjugal felicity could be attained. (He said:) "Dear daughter, in Mahākālavana, near Mataṅgeśvara Deva there is a Liṅga that bestows conjugal felicity. It bestows everything desired. Merely by seeing it you will attain conjugal felicity. Formerly this Liṅga was propitiated by Indrāṇī for the sake of Saubhāgya (conjugal felicity). She attained it to a remarkable degree. Śakra who was lost was regained. Hence at my bidding, go to the splendid Mahākālavana. There you will attain conjugal felicity. Visit it along with your lover. O auspicious lady, by visiting that Liṅga you will beget a son."

37-40a. On being told thus, O lady of excellent countenance, by that sage, she went to Mahākālavana where that Liṅga was present. With love and ardour she visited the Liṅga that bestows Saubhāgya. Due to her perceiving that Liṅga, the king remembered his beloved. He asked Jamadagni: "O holy Sir, where has my beloved wife gone? O Brāhmaṇa, was she devoured in the forest by lions, tigers or demons? I have been cruel enough to abandon her though I was loved by her."

40b-45. When the king said thus, Jamadagni replied: "O king, she has not been eaten up by lions, tigers or night-stalkers. Her chastity has been upheld (undisgraced). She is your devotee with the vow of fidelity unto you. With an earnest desire for Saubhāgya, O king, she has gone to Mahākālavana. The excellent Śruti avers that one's wife should be well-protected. If the wife is protected with care, the progeny too is well-preserved. O king, one's own self is reborn in her. Hence she should be well-protected. One separated from wife incurs loss of Dharma everyday. Slipping away from the daily round of rites brings about downfall. A wife should be favourably disposed, whatever be the habits and idiosyncrasies of the husband. O king, a wife should be maintained well even though she is unlucky and ill-behaved."

46-51. On hearing his words thus, the king came to the

beautiful Mahākālavana and then saw his beloved. After embellishing herself for the purpose of Saubhāgya, the lady of excellent eyebrows was adoring Maheśvara. After seeing his beloved he embraced her affectionately and said to her: "O lady of excellent countenance, I am extremely distressed due to the separation from you. Today my eyes have become fruitful and my life has become excellently lived since I see you. I have been rendered contented with fulfilment (of my desires) by you." Thus seen with great delight, she looked at her husband with great pleasure and said joyously, "Be pleased," again and again. Thereupon the king embraced the beautiful lady impetuously and said: "My beloved, I am indeed pleased; why should I say it repeatedly?" Then their union took place and an extremely righteous son was born. By the greatness of that Liṅga, he is sung about by the name "Datta".

52. O Daughter of Himālaya, that fair lady obtained unparalleled Saubhāgya. Ever since then the deity is named Saubhāgyeśvara.

53-60. If people visit Saubhāgyeśvara Deva, O lady of wide eyes, there will not be ill-luck in their family. There will never be poverty nor separation from kinsmen, sons, friends or wives by the worship of the Liṅga. If they visit the deity named Saubhāgyeśvara, O lady of excellent countenance, they need not be afraid of unforeseen calamities or malefic Planets. By visiting Saubhāgyeśvara, O fair lady, a man becomes rich by acquiring wealth and foodgrains. He gets rid of all kinds of oppressions and obstacles. He will be worthy of adoration in all the worlds and be the storehouse of Saubhāgya. By visiting Saubhāgyeśvara a king becomes an emperor; a woman shall be blessed with a son; she will never be devoid of wealth; she will never be miserable or wretched; she will never be unlucky. As a result of the visit to the Liṅga, O my beloved, all these can be averted: widowhood, sickness, premature death, misery on account of husband or sons. By visiting Saubhāgyeśvara a woman stands on a par with Lakṣmī the beloved of Hari, Sāvitrī the beloved of Brahmā, Rohiṇī the beloved of Moon and Sácī the beloved of Śakra. Thus, the sin-destroying power of Saubhāgyeśvara Deva has been recounted to you, O goddess, O my beloved. Now listen to that of Rūpeśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYTWO

Rūpeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O my beloved, let it be known that the Rūpeśvara Liṅga is the sixty-second deity. Merely by visiting it a man becomes endowed with a handsome form.

2-8a. O great goddess, in the Pādma Kalpa there was a king named Padma. He was born of the inner core of a lotus and was extremely brave. That powerful king engaged in pious rites, ruled the earth having the four oceans as the boundary. Once that mighty-armed king possessing plenty of vehicles and army divisions went to a dense forest with hundreds of horses and elephants surrounding him. The forest abounded in many kinds of trees like Bilva, Khadira, Kapittha, Arka and Dhava and terrible animals like lions and other forest-dwelling beasts. Accompanied by his vehicles and armies, the king hunted thousands of wild animals. Lured by a deer which he followed, he entered another forest alone. Though he was very powerful, he was overwhelmed with hunger and thirst. After reaching the extremity of the forest, he passed on to a great forest. Beyond that, the king saw an excellent hermitage that, being attractive to the eyes, caused great pleasure to his mind. Trees in full bloom were growing all round and there was a pleasing green meadow too.

8b-9. Here he left his ministers and went further in. He could not see the hermit of excellent vows in the hermitage. He enquired loudly, "Who is here?" His voice found a ready echo all over the forest.

10-12a. On hearing that sound, a girl appearing like glory

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1. King Padma, a handsome and powerful king, went a-hunting in a forest, lost his way and by chance entered a beautiful hermitage. He was received by the beautiful foster-daughter of the celibate Sage Kaṇva. They married per Gandharva form of marriage. On his arrival Kaṇva cursed them both to be ugly in appearance. When they begged pardon, he advised them to go to Mahākālavana and propitiate the Liṅga Rūpeśvara. They complied and recovered their original beauty by the grace of Rūpeśvara Liṅga.

and beauty incarnate came out of the hermitage in the guise of a female ascetic. On seeing the king born of the inner core of a lotus, she honoured him with the offer of a seat and asked him his name. She smilingly asked: "What is the mission to be carried out?"

12b-14a. Looking at the sweet-voiced girl of blemishless limbs, the king, who was glad on being duly honoured, said to her: "O blessed girl, I have come here to pay respect to the excellent sage. O fair lady, where has the revered one gone? Tell me, O splendid lady."

14b-16. On being asked thus by the king in that hermitage, the girl smilingly replied in very sweet words: "O king, I am the daughter of Sage Kaṇva. He is reputed as a celibate ever since his boyhood. He is a lofty-minded sage conversant with Dharma, He is reputed for his fortitude. O king, let it be known that I consider him my father. I do not know who my (real) father is."

17-19. On hearing her words, O lady of excellent countenance, the king said: "From the manner in which you speak, O lady of great weal, it is quite clear that you are daughter of a king. O lady of excellent buttocks, be my wife. Tell me what I should do on my part. Gold, jewels, garments and earrings of charming quality, I shall fetch today for your sake. O splendid girl, be my wife by Gāndharva type of marriage. O beautiful lady with thighs resembling a plantain stem, the Gāndharva form of marriage is proclaimed as the most excellent one of all modes of wedding."

20. On hearing the words of the king the girl spoke thus: "Wait for a short while. He will give me unto you."

The King said:

21-22. O lady of exquisite features, I desire you. O lady who could never be censured! I am waiting for you. My mind has been captivated by you. Self is the kinsman of self. Self is the goal unto self. It behoves you to offer yourself according to the law.

The Girl said:

23-25a. If this be lawful, if my soul is my Lord, promise

unto me that your own self has been given unto me.

On hearing her words thus, the king who was passionately attached to her, married her, O Pārvatī, by the Gāndharva type of wedding. After the desire had been fulfilled by the king, he was about to set off.

25b-29. In the meantime, O goddess, Kaṇva came to the hermitage. Even after seeing her father, the girl did not go near him out of bashfulness. But the sage of great power of penance understood everything through his divine knowledge. Highly infuriated, he said to the girl infatuated with love: "O wicked girl, disregarding me, you have chosen your lover in secret out of delusion. Hence you will turn black and despicable, wretched, pitiable and shameless. You will be devoid of your beauty. This king, your husband, too shall become defiled in form."

30. On being spoken (cursed) thus, that girl became rid of beauty instantly. Due to the curse of the noble-souled sage, the king became deformed.

31-33. Thereupon the girl herself pacified her father: "I am an ignorant girl under delusion, afflicted by the god of Love. The sin has been committed due to ignorance. Dear father, it behoves you to forgive me. This king has adopted great holy vows and is fully devoted to the immanent soul. Not that I had been sought by him. This king had been requested by me. Hence, father, it behoves you to bless us both."

34-38. On hearing her words thus, the Brāhmaṇa was moved with great pity. After consoling his daughter repeatedly, he said thus: "Dear daughter, as far as I remember, my words have never been untrue. I consider fate as supreme. Fie upon my intellect! Fie upon this attack! I have been compelled to do what should not have been done, O uncensurable girl. I shall advise you and it behoves you to do accordingly. In the meritorious Mahākālavana, to the east of Paśupeśvara there is a Liṅga that bestows what is desired, and that bestows beauty of form. Therefore, hasten thereto along with the king, your husband. Merely by visiting the Liṅga, you will attain the beauty of form very difficult to attain otherwise."

39-40. On being told thus, that girl, O my beloved, went to the beautiful Mahākālavana where there was the excellent

Liṅga. She was accompanied by her husband. She saw the excellent Liṅga with great devotion. That king, the most excellent of all men, too did so. Instantly she became endowed with a divine body and extremely charming through her beauty. She was clad in divine garments and was embellished with divine ornaments.

41-50. By seeing that Liṅga, the king became one resembling the god of Love in physical features, and unrivalled in the world in beauty of form. Hence, O my beloved, the deity became well-known as Rūpeśvara. The deity is bestower of beauty, wealth, sons and heavenly pleasures. The king went back to his realm abounding in plenty of good grains and vegetation. He administered the territory in the company of his devoted wife, the territory devoid of irritant thorns (enemies). At the conclusion of his reign, O Pārvatī, he went to Svarga along with his wife. Like a second Sun-god, he shone with a brilliant body. He was carried thereto by a shining aerial chariot. In heaven he was duly venerated. By visiting that Liṅga, he attained a position devoid of ailments. O lady of wide eyes, those who see Lord Śiva called Rūpeśvara will never be deficient in beauty, fame and nobility of birth. The Liṅga perpetually causes beauty and bestows worldly pleasures and salvation. To those who visit the deity, the worlds are everlasting (i.e., they attain eternal worlds). Men who adore the great deity Rūpeśvara are themselves adored and they go to my eternal world by divine vehicle. Only he who worships Rūpeśa, the bestower of beauty and of conjugal felicity, is the most virtuous one in the world. His whole family is adorned by him. He becomes an ornament of his family. O Pārvatī, even he who worships the Lord of the Devas incidentally becomes wealthy and a king of the earth endowed with physical beauty.

51. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Rūpeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Dhanussāhasraka.

CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

Dhanuḥsāhasraka[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1. O Pārvatī, listen to the (glory of the) divine Liṅga named Dhanuḥsāhasraka, the sixty-third deity that is destructive of sins through a visit to it.

2-5. There ruled on the earth a king of wide reputation, named Vidūratha. He had two sons named Sunīti and Sumati. Once that king Vidūratha went to the forest ahunting. He saw a very great hollow pit, the yawning mouth of the earth, as it were. On seeing it, the king began to reflect, 'What is this? It resembles sub-marine fire.' Even as he was reflecting thus in the desolate forest, he saw a Brāhmaṇa-saint devoid of sins, named Suvrata.

6. The king asked him: "O Brāhmaṇa, what is this?"

The Brāhmaṇa replied:

7-10. There is a terrible Dānava of inordinate strength living in Rasātala. He is well-known by the name Kujaṁbha. He breaks open the earth. O king, how do you enjoy the kingdom leaving him unconquered? O king, he comes out during night and slays Brāhmaṇas. He has attacked many countries and demolished the hermitages. This powerful Daitya becomes all the more powerful when he wields the weapon *Musala* (threshing rod). If you can kill him in Pātāla itself, you will become the king of the entire earth.

11-13. On hearing these words of the Brāhmaṇa and having realized that the *Musala* never became ineffective, O daughter

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1. King Vidūratha wanted to kill Kujaṁbha who came up through a tunnel from Pātāla and harassed people. The king sent both of his sons against him. Kujaṁbha had a *Musala* (pestle) with mystic powers. He defeated the princes and made them captive. The king got dispirited but was advised by Mārkaṇḍeya to go to Mahākālavana where the Liṅga called *Dhanuḥsāhasraka* would give him a special bow. The king adored that Liṅga, got the bow, killed Kujaṁbha, freed his sons and performed a great worship of the Liṅga along with his retinue.

of the Mountain, the king consulted his ministers. While he was consulting the ministers along with his two sons, the daughter Mudāvatī, who was standing nearby, heard everything. A few days after that, Daitya Kujaṁbha abducted the lotus-eyed girl from amidst her female companions, from a garden.

14-16a. On hearing about this the king became angry with eyes turned turbid. He said to his sons: "I know. It is Kujaṁbha, the great Asura. Dear sns, earlier when I saw the deep chasm I was in doubt. At that time an eminent Brāhmaṇa told me when I asked him about it. It is that very evil-minded Asura who has kidnapped Mudāvatī. Let him be killed."

16b-21. With devotion to the king, they set off surrounded by their army. At the bidding of their father, those two sons duly reached Pātāla. With the best of their capacity and accompanied by their army, the two sons fought with Kujaṁbha. Thereupon there was a terrible, prolonged battle with swords, javelins, tridents, axes and arrows between them.

The demon had inordinate strength and he made use of Māyā, O lady of excellent countenance. With his never-failing, unrivalled *Musala*, the demon killed the soldiers of the army and held the powerful princes prisoners. On hearing about this, the king's face turned pale. O Daughter of the Mountain, he became highly distressed on account of the capture of his sons.

22-29. On account of his love for his sons, he lamented in diverse ways. Even as he was lamenting thus, the great sage Mārkaṇḍeya came near the king and saw him. This sage was one who had already witnessed many creations and annihilations and many activities high and low. He resembled the rising sun in splendour. He was in existence for seven Kalpas successively. He had perfect control over his sense-organs. The great sage who was aware of the events of the three divisions of time said to the king: "Do not bewail, O king. You are a Kṣatriya of firm vow. There is a great incongruity between grief and a king who is invincible like the guardians of the world. O excellent one among kings, leave off this grief suffered by base men. O eminent king, make proper effort. You will kill Kujaṁbha. To a person who has an enterprising nature as his companion, the peak of Meru is not too high nor Rasātala too deep down below. Nor will he find the great ocean far off.

With concentration and mental purity, do propitiate the Liṅga situated to the south of and very near Rūpeśvara Deva in Mahākālavana. O eminent king, you will get a bow that is on a par with a thousand bows and that will thwart the *Musala*. You can strike down Kujaṁbha, O king of kings. This Liṅga has been guarded by excellent warriors with a thousand bows in their hands. During the war between Devas and Asuras, this Liṅga was resorted to by Indra who gained (this) bow whereby Jaṁbha was struck down."

30-33. On hearing his words, King Vidūratha, O goddess, hurriedly went to the splendid Mahākālavana. There he saw the Liṅga and devoutly adored it. The deity was pleased with him and gave him the divine bow. After getting the bow that was on a par with a thousand bows and that could ward off the *Musala*, the brave king wore finger-guards made of Godhā-leather and went to Pātāla through that chasm. He made a fierce sonorous twanging sound from the bowstring, whereby the entire Pātāla reverberated.

34-39. Hearing the twanging sound, Kujaṁbha, the leader of Dānavas, came there angrily surrounded by his armies. Then, O lady of excellent countenance, he fought with the king for three days. Then he angrily rushed at the *Musala* that was being adored with scents, garlands and incense. Even as he was about to seize the *Musala*, Mudāvatī touched it under the pretext of applying sandalpastes of various kinds repeatedly. Then the leader of the Asuras took it up and went to the battle. All the blows with the *Musala* were rendered lustreless (ineffective) by the bow. The Dānava named Kujaṁbha fell down on the ground at the twanging sound of the bowstring and went to the world of Vaivasvata (god of Death).

40-51. A shower of flowers fell on the king. The leaders of Gandharvas sang and the celestial musical instruments were played. Regaining his sons and the daughter Mudāvatī after killing him, the king was too delighted to speak. Accompanied by the sons, O goddess, and having realized his desire, he returned along with the members of his Antaḥpura and the attendants to the beautiful Mahākālavana where that excellent Liṅga was present. He adored it with jewels, garments and ornaments. Then he too was honoured repeatedly by the Devas and Indra. The bow was obtained by the king due to the

greatness of this Liṅga. Kujaṁbha, the Daitya inimical to Devas, was killed. Hence the deity will become well known by the name Dhanuḥsāhasraka. The enemies of those who devoutly worship the deity Dhanuḥsāhasraka will undoubtedly perish. When the Lord of the chiefs of Devas, Śiva named Dhanuḥsāhasraka is adored all the Devas become worshipped and undoubtedly they will bestow boons. Men who bow down everyday to Śiva named Dhanuḥsāhasraka in the morning, midday and afternoon never fall into hell. Just as Gaṅgā among Tīrthas is well-protected by excellent warriors, so also is this deity-protector named Dhanuḥsāhasraka. There different kinds of Tīrthas beginning with Gaṅgā are present. They are highly meritorious and endowed with mystic powers. They immediately destroy sins. Those who devoutly visit Dhanuḥsāhasraka, the destroyer of enemies, will get that benefit bestowed by the Tīrthas referred to above.

52. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Dhanuḥsāhasraka Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of God Paśupati.

CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

Paśupatīśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. Do listen to the (greatness of the) Liṅga named Paśupatīśvara, the sixty-fourth deity. By merely visiting it one averts birth in animal womb.

2-9. O great goddess, there was an extremely righteous king well-known all over the earth as Paśupāla. He was engaged in the protection of animals. Once, with a desire to see the ocean, he went on a visit to the ocean. There he saw five male beings stationed conspicuously. There was a woman with loose dishevelled hairs moving about constantly. Struck with fear, the

1. It is an allegory. King Paśupāla was advised by Nārada to see the Liṅga Paśupatiśvara to get rid of Paśutva (the state of being bound due to *Mala*).

king swooned. He was encircled by those robbers and particularly by that woman. Another group (of five robbers) came simultaneously and surrounded the excellent king. The king was bound by all of them who stood surrounding him. As the king stood restrained, all the robbers became merged into one. They were struck by Paśupāla but they did not die. They rose up again. On seeing the undauntedness of the king and his steadfastness in the fight, all those ten robbers became merged into the body of the king. As if originally incorporeal, all of them became united together. On seeing them, King Paśupāla immediately became sad. Then he saw the great sage Nārada, the son of Brahmā, who was endowed with penance, coming to him. The king asked him:

Paśupāla said:

10-16a. O holy Sir, O son of Brahmā, a curious thing was seen by me today. All of a sudden, five terrifying male beings came on me. I was encircled by those wicked ones who made me agitated by striking with fists. But, O Brāhmaṇa, in an instant I became normal. Then another group of five persons came and wrestled with me. "Let this base king desirous of liberation be killed, be struck down." Saying thus, they afflicted me very much. I swooned again. In the meantime that woman repeatedly advised me: "O great king, be firm and steadfast. O Lord, do not become sad. These robbers are deficient in vigour. But you are efficient. Hence do be steady." At her instance, O great Brāhmaṇa, courageously I fought with those ten important persons and defeated them. They did not die, O holy Sir; they got merged in my body. Who are they? Who is that woman?

16b. On hearing the words of Paśupāla, Nārada spoke these words:

17ab. "The men who were conquered by you in fight (but) were seen merged in your body by you, were five cognitive organs and five conative ones.

17c-18a. O excellent king! The woman who was seen moving about by you, was Buddhi (Intelligence). In the form of mind she always wanders and is never steady.

18b-19a. They (the sense-organs) were formerly subdued by

Brahmā, the Creator of the world, (but) even he got infuriated through objects of senses dear to him.

19b-20. The share of Śaṁbhu was not appropriated by Brahmā in his sacrifice. Mahādeva is the annihilator of the universe. (But,) O king, he (too) was deluded by his sense-organs and he became angry with Suras (Devas).

21-25. The Suras are the *Vibhūtis* (empowered parts) of Śiva. All the three worlds are solely intended for his sport. Yet, by him the bow was strung well for the sake of a share! The teeth of Pūṣan were shattered. Divākara (the Sun) was made unconscious. The eyes of Bhaga were plucked and the god of Yajña in the form of an antelope was hit. The Devas were turned into *Paśus* (animals). The sages were denied the Vedas. The Dharmaśāstras of the sages were taken away by the all-powerful Lord. (Hence) sages who have mastered the Vedas say that the sense-organs are invincible. The intellect in the form of mind is excessively so and cannot be brought under control. Hence, O king, do not be grief-stricken for no reason."

On hearing the words of the noble-souled Nārada, O great goddess, Paśupāla began to speak.

Paśupāla said:

26-29. O holy Sir, I wish to hear how the Devas with Indra as their leader, as well as Brahmā were liberated by you from the state of *Paśu.* Let it be narrated.

On hearing his words, Nārada spoke again: "Even during the state of Paśu, the Devas in the company of sages and saints kept Brahmā at their head and sought refuge in Īśvara. The deity who invariably blesses the devotee was pleased with the eulogies. O king, he said: "Let what should be done be told."

The Devas said:

30. O Bhava, if Maheśvara is pleased with us as before, do not delay; grant us the Vedas and the Śāstras as well as perfect knowledge.

Īśvara said:

31-33a. All of you are Paśus. Accompany me to the holy

spot Mahākālavana that causes liberation from the state of *Paśus*. I shall become your *Pati* (Lord) and thereby you will attain liberation. In order to be sympathetic to you and to bless the worlds I shall assume the form of a Liṅga by the name Paśupatīśvara.

Then all the Devas visited the Lord and became liberated from the state of *Paśu*. They went to heaven in great delight.

33b-37. Brahmā spoke to Paśupati with the mind fully pleased: "As regards the people who see you, the Lord of Devas, with great devotion, all the persons in their families, all the Pitṛs who have attained Paśutva (animal status) due to the fruition of their Karmas, will get liberated. Let the sins committed by men knowingly or unknowingly, be dissolved by worshipping that deity. If Paśupati, the liberator of persons from animal state is not visited by men, they are no better than animals in the world. Of what avail is their life? By seeing Śiva named Paśupati, the sins incurred during childhood, youth or old age, get dissolved.

38-44. If men visit you in the month of Pauṣa, you shall be the bestower of boons on them, O Lord who always confer what they desire to have. If in the course of a day in the month of Pauṣa, men visit you, O Lord of Devas, undoubtedly they will attain more than the benefit mentioned as resulting from the gift of gold to a deserving person made over during a solar eclipse, especially in Kurukṣetra. It shall be everlasting and undiminished. But by visiting the Lord one day in the month of Pauṣa, the benefit will be greater. There is no doubt about it." (Nārada said:) "After saying this Lord Brahmā went to Brahmaloka, O king, along with sages and wise men. He considered his duty fulfilled. He was pleased with himself. Hence, O great king, if you desire the greatest goal, propitiate that Liṅga that liberates one from brutish womb. Go to Mahākālavana and worship the deity to the south of Indreśvara."

On hearing the words of the noble-souled Nārada, O my beloved, Paśupāla went to Mahākālavana. By visiting that Liṅga he attained the highest goal.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Paśupatīśvara has been narrated. Listen to (that of) the deity Brahmeśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

Brahmeśvara

Śrī Hara said:

1. O my beloved, know Brahmeśvara Liṅga as the sixty-fifth deity. Merely by seeing it, one attains Brahmaloka.

2-7. There was a leader of Daityas named Pulomā. He had great strength and valour. He was regularly honoured and adored by thousands of Paulomas (attendants and followers). They worshipped him in the same way as Devas worship Sureśa.

Once in the presence of the Daityas, he said: "If even now there is the name (and fame) of the Guardians of the Worlds, of Indra, Dhaneśa, Yama and Varuṇa, of the Sun, of the Moon, of the Fire, and of the Waters, of what avail is the penance and very life of myself surrounded (and supported) by all these Paulomas of supreme strength! I shall drive out all the heaven-dwellers."

After saying thus, O goddess, he, surrounded by his Daityas, went to the ocean. He saw Lord Madhusūdana (Viṣṇu) lying down there. He had the lustre of an autumnal cloud dark in the middle. On seeing him he spoke to his Daityas:

8-14. "Here is that Madhusūdana who acts like thunderbolt unto the mountains in the form of Dānavas. He destroys the fame, women, and pleasure-sports of his enemies. He mars and destroys (erases) the refulgent decorative paintings on the persons of the womenfolk of Daityas. He is our great foe causing widowhood to our *Jayavadhūs* (brides in the form of victory). He is asleep alone and without the least suspicion. He is always mentally crooked. The wicked one should be killed at once. Even as I wish for it he has come into my view."

After saying thus Pulomā, the extremely angry leader of Daityas, rushed in full speed. He saw ahead Brahmā meditating repeatedly in the lotus of his novel. On seeing the wonderful columns of the army of leonine Daityas invincible in battle, Brahmā became bewildered and agitated. Soon the highly powerful enemy of Kaiṭabha woke up. He saw Pulomā in front of him surrounded by his own army. The Lord who cannot be defeated in battle spoke to Brahmā thus:

Viṣṇu said:

15-25. Let endeavour be made for the destruction of Pulomā. This Daitya has been granted boons. He will defeat me with his powerful force. Hence hasten to the splendid Mahākālavana. There itself, to the north of Cyavaneśa you will see a great Liṅga that has been in existence for six Kalpas and that is endowed with Śiva-Śakti (the Śakti aspect of Śiva). You will get permanent power due to the greatness of that Liṅga. There is a stream of water that touches the hand of Kuṇḍeśvara continuously. Fetch that water and let this fellow be killed thereby.

On hearing his words thus, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, came within a short time to the place where that excellent Liṅga was present. Immediately Pitāmaha devoutly perceived the Lord and eulogized.

Brahmā said:

Obeisance to you of divine form; obeisance to you, the multiformed one. Obeisance to the Lord whose vigour is unbearable. Obeisance to you, the soul of all universal activities. Obeisance to the Lord with tawny matted hairs. Obeisance to the Lord bearing the crescent moon. Obeisance to the golden-coloured one. Obeisance to one who always stays in forest. I salute you, the Lord of all living beings, the permanent destroyer of enemies, one with tinkling golden armlets, one who holds aloft the disc of the full moon. I bow to you, the presiding deity of the Devas, the presiding deity of the entire universe, the great Lord, who annihilate the mass of miseries of the worldly existence and whose feet are always meditated upon by sages. I always salute you, the Lord who destroy the mass of Daityas and who hold the axe, the trident, the excellent bow, the sword, the Paṭṭiśa and the club.

26-39. On being eulogized thus, Lord Maheśvara in the form of the Liṅga with a slightly smiling face said to Brahmā, the creator of the worlds: "What is it you desire, O Pitāmaha? What can I do? What shall I give you? O most excellent one among the sages, why do you eulogize? Why do you seem distressed?" On hearing these words of the Liṅga, Brahmā told

everything in detail. Then, O my beloved, the Liṅga said: "O Consort of Vāṇī, take 'the water produced through weapons.' It can avert the attack of the enemies. In an instant you will kill Pulomā along with his army." On being told thus, Brahmā hurriedly went to the place where Janārdana was present. With that water he struck those Daityas down to the ground. That Pulomā was a great man in the Svārociṣa Manvantara. Along with Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa came to Kuśasthalī. Janārdana saw the Liṅga there and assigned a name to the Liṅga. "For the sake of getting me blessed, the deity was eulogized by Brahmā. Hence he will be well-known in all the worlds by the name Brahmeśvara. Those men who devoutly visit Śiva named Lord Brahmeśvara will go beyond Brahmaloka and reach me. He who (even) casually sees Lord Śiva named Brahmeśvara shall have his desires fulfilled. He will never bewail death. The merit of a person who visits Brahmeśvara is more than that of a person who goes to Puṣkara and performs penance for a hundred years. Even a man of wicked mind who is guilty of the five deadly sins, will go to the region of Śiva after visiting Śiva named Brahmeśvara. By perceiving Brahmeśvara one obtains the benefit of ten Cāndrāyaṇas duly performed." After saying this, O my beloved, Viṣṇu went back to the eternal Vaikuṇṭha. Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, went to Brahmaloka.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Brahmeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (that of) Jalpeśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

Jalpeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O my beloved, know Jalpeśvara Liṅga as the sixty-sixth deity. Merely by seeing it great sins become subdued.

2-9. O great goddess, there was a king well-known on the earth by the name Jalpa. He was always engaged in prattling and talking. He used to provoke argumentation always through his prattle. He was very much imaginative and used to reflect on the ways of the world. He had five mighty sons, with Subāhu as the most prominent among them.

O beautiful lady, the five sons of the king were personified forms of the five fires as it were. They were Subāhu, Śatrumardana, Jaya, Vijaya and Vikrānta, the fifth son. All of them were masters of weaponry and use of missiles.

The sons were installed in separate lands by the father, Jalpa. They were made rulers of separate realms.

Subāhu became the king in the east, Śatrumardana in the south, Jaya the king in the west and Vijaya became the king in the north. In the middle country the Prince named Vikrānta was appointed in his own place. After making this arrangement, he himself went to the forest.

Their hereditary well-wishers became their ministers. The new kings enjoyed their respective kingdoms. The minister of Vikrānta was one who was solely given to contrivances. In a secluded spot he said to King Vikrānta:

10-18. "He who has this entire earth in his possession is

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1. King Jalpa divided his kingdom into five regions and installed each of his five sons as the king of a region. Vikrānta was ill-advised by his minister to kill his brothers and annex their kingdoms to his own. When the minister of Vikrānta adopted black magic for the destruction, they, in return ordered their family priests to perform the same rite. They did and the ogresses created ate up the five sons, the priests, dependents, and the citizens. King Jalpa blamed himself. He was advised to go to a particular Liṅga. Jalpa visited and propitiated the Liṅga and the Liṅga came to be known after King Jalpa as Jalpeśvara.

glorified as the most powerful. Even the noble-souled Vāsava gained his position only through endeavour. The Amṛta (Nectar) was acquired, O king, by the Devas only through exertion. Men devoid of endeavour, Kṣatriyas in particular, become laughing-stocks (of the common people) and they become reduced in vigour and vitality day by day. A brother covetous of the kingdom shows love of wealth. The king makes (him) contented only with the strength of the wealth. O king, why is my counsel not accepted? The entire kingdom of yours is forcibly enjoyed by me, your minister. A stranger should be considered as a kinsman if he is a well-wisher. Even a kinsman who wishes ill is an enemy. An ailment though born of the body is not beneficial. A medicine brought from the forest is beneficial (though not related to the body). Those (i.e. those who are not well-wishers) swallow the earth like serpents devouring the beings lurking in their holes. They swallow a king who does not resist and a Brāhmaṇa who does not go abroad. Everything is deluded by Māyā (Ignorance). Who is whose kinsman? (None.) Hence let endeavour be made for controlling your brothers quickly. For the sake of kingdoms all the brothers have been killed by (certain) brothers. After realizing that righteousness prevails forever, Asuras have been killed by Suras."

19-28. On hearing the words of the minister, that king was surprised. He laughed and said:

Vikrānta said:

This is my enemy that has come. All of us, we five, desire for the earth. If unsatisfied, how can the several sovereignties become one. "How will the entire earth be mine?" The eldest brother is Subāhu. The second one is Śatrumardana. Then Jaya and Vijaya. I am the youngest of all.

The Minister said:

With excellent means of honour, they adore one who rules the kingdom as the eldest. Otherwise what is there in this state of being the youngest or the eldest in the eyes of men who seek the kingdom?

When King Vikrānta assented to the suggestion the minister proceeded ahead in the performance of *Abhicāra* (black magic). Through the Mantras found in Atharva Veda, the priest verily performed everything. This became known to priests of other brothers. They also did likewise with concentration. A Kṛtyā (ogress) issued forth. After her there arose four other Kṛtyās. These Kṛtyās swallowed them (the kings) along with the priests and servants simultaneously. A great surprise overwhelmed the entire world, because the citizens of separate regions perished at the same time. On hearing about the death of his sons, King Jalpaka who was in the forest asked Vaśiṣṭha: "O holy Sir, what is this?" The noble-souled Vaśiṣṭha understood the details through his divine knowledge and told the same to the king. The king was in a dilemma.

The King said:

29-38. I am the instrumental cause of this destruction. Fie, fie upon my life! Along with the sons and the ministers five Brāhmaṇas are dead. Who else can be a greater sinner than I in the world? If only I had not been born on this earth, the priests of my sons would not have been dead. Fie upon this kingdom! Fie upon my birth in the great family of kings! I have become the cause of the death of the Brāhmaṇas. The priests of my sons were performing the rites for the sake of their masters and in it they perished. They are not defiled. Being the cause of the destruction, I am defiled.

Distressed extremely in his heart thus, Jalpa, the king, humbly asked Vaśiṣṭha, the most excellent one among wise men:

The King said:

O holy Sir, tell me about that Tīrtha which prevents separation forever. O holy Lord, mention a Liṅga which instantaneously destroys sins.

On hearing the words of King Jalpa, O Pārvatī, Vaśiṣṭha who was endowed with divine knowledge, said: "O Jalpa, at my bidding do go to the excellent Mahākālavana. It is here that Paraśurāma performs his penance after making the earth devoid

of Kṣatriyas. There, to the west of Kukkuṭeśvara is the beginningless Liṅga. Staying in the hermitage of Jāmadagnya, propitiate it, O eminent king."

On hearing the words of Vaśiṣṭha, King Jalpa left Devadāru forest and went to Mahākālavana. There he visited that beginningless Liṅga eulogized by Devas. He duly adored it with great concentration and meditation.

39-45. O lady of excellent countenance, a voice issued forth from the centre of the Liṅga: "You are not a sinner, nor are you the cause of the death of your sons or the Brāhmaṇas. O king, *Adṛṣṭa* (the unseen result of Karma) is the cause. They have gone to the city of Vaivasvata (god of Death) due to the fruition of their Karmas. O great king, do not be grief-stricken. Inscrutable indeed is the way of Karma. O excellent king, I am pleased with your purity of feeling. Ask for a boon you desire. I shall grant it to you."

The King said:

If you are pleased with me, O Lord, if a boon has to be given to me, let not my (future) life be (spent) in this terrible worldly ocean. Grant me everlasting fame. Let this deity propitiated by Jalpa be well-known by the name Jalpeśvara. May all the Devas say this. This is the rare boon I wish to be granted. May the men who visit you, well-known after my name, be free from separation from their sons and wealth. They should never face the fear from worldly existence, nor from robbers, nor from kings, and let them never be afraid of goblins, malefic Planets and ailments.

46-51. May they be blessed with happiness and welfare forever—they who have been granted your vision. In the mortal world, only they are blessed who have sought refuge in you. O Lord, by visiting you, one gets more merit than what is acquired by men through holy ablution in all the Tīrthas. One falls into and remains in the terrible worldly existence complicated on account of hundreds of miseries, only as long as the deity, the redeemer from the ocean of worldly existence, is not visited. Your vision occurs only when the sins are destroyed, O Lord, through the great meritorious deeds of men and not through only a modicum of penance.

* * *

O Pārvatī, after saying, "It will become thus," the Liṅga took him within its body even as all the Devas were watching. When King Jalpa got merged into that Liṅga, O lady of excellent countenance, the deity became well-known as Jalpeśvara all over the earth. The deity was mentioned by the Devas as the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation. He is remembered as the bestower of all desires.

52. Thus the sin-destroying power of Jalpeśvara Deva has been recounted to you, O goddess. Listen to the story of the deity named Kedāreśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN

Kedāreśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O beautiful lady, listen to the sixty-seventh deity named Kedāreśvara who destroys sins through his vision.

2-9. Formerly at the time of creation, O goddess, Devas were covered with snow. All of them were distressed through chilliness and were bewildered. They sought refuge in Brahmā:

"O Lord, O Lord of the universe, all of us are distressed by the mass of snow of the Himālaya Mountain. O Four-faced Lord, save us, the terror-struck ones. O Pitāmaha, obeisance to you."

On hearing the words of the Devas, O my beloved, Brahmā said: "You have been afflicted by the Hima-mountain, the father-in-law of Śaṅkara. I am not competent enough to protect you. This is the truth I have admitted. Excepting Mahādeva, O Devas, there is no other refuge to go to. That Lord alone will be our refuge. It is at his behest that all the mountains were created by me formerly. Diverse forms of creation were evolved. Himālaya also was created by me. This mountain cannot be

1. The great Liṅga Kedāreśvara in Himālaya being difficult of access to people, it came to Mahākālavana at the request of Devas. It awards the same rewards as does the Liṅga in Himālaya.

resorted to by any creature. It cannot be assailed. It cannot be traversed. But Lord Maheśvara is the ruler of the same Himālaya. Hence, O Devas, we all shall go to Kailāśa, the excellent mountain where Maheśvara, the Lord of Devas, the immanent soul of the universe, is staying."

After saying thus Brahmā approached me along with the Devas. I am visited, honoured and eulogized by means of diverse prayers by them.

10-22. The Devas were honoured by me. The Four-faced Lord was adored. After the adoration Brahmā was asked by me the reason for his visit: "O Pitāmaha, what is your errand? You have come accompanied by the Devas." Everything was reported by Brahmā. O my beloved, everything was heard by me. I summoned Himālaya and the various limits were assigned. Himādri was installed as the emperor of all Mountains.

The regions of Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Nāgas, Kinnaras and the sporting grounds of Vidyādharas were separately demarcated. The Lord of the Mountains shone in a form similar to that of pure crystal. The father of Śarvāṇī appeared like one with a turban in the form of the streams of Jāhnavī. He was rendered divine, one full of all the Devas and all the Tīrthas. He became the abode of all hermitages. He was resorted to by all the immortal ones. After establishing the Lord of the Mountains, I stood there in the form of the Liṅga. I became well-known in all the three worlds by the name Kedāreśvara. O my beloved, water infused with Mantras was created there by me. The greatness of the Liṅga and the water (thereof) has been spoken in diverse ways. If a man devoutly comes here and perfectly adores me, O lady of excellent countenance, and if he carries water from here in accordance with the injunctions, I will undoubtedly be present within him in the form of a Liṅga.

When this was announced, O goddess, Devas, Asuras, Serpents, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas, Bhūtas, Vetālas, Kinnaras and groups of Vidyādharas came there with a desire to see me. After drinking the auspicious water, O my beloved, O beautiful lady, I was perceived duly by them as one present in the form of a Liṅga. They became like me and stationed themselves in that excellent mountain. O lady of excellent countenance, they were being adored by the Siddhas present in Janaloka.

23-31. As a long period of time elapsed, as the greatness of Kedāreśvara Deva and the holy water in particular spread around, men of predominant Rajas and Tamas qualities began to come there. O lady of wide eyes, then I assumed the form of a buffalo to terrify them but they were not afraid. Desirous of seeing the deity they roamed about saying, "Here is the Lord, here is the Lord." O great goddess, they could not see because I had assumed the form of a buffalo and remained invisible. They were distressed. They heaved sighs of grief. They became bereft of attachment. "The Lord is not here. There is no holy Tīrtha here, nor the merit-bestowing Gaṅgā. There is no Dharma. There is no world hereafter. Everything is a fraud. But afterwards it is said in the Purāṇas and the Vedas that in Himālaya there is the Kedāra Liṅga that accords salvation."

Even as the men were speaking thus, O lady of renown, a voice issued from the firmament as uttered by me in compassion: "Do not say anything out of the way. The immutable Śrutis should not be censured. The Purāṇas spoken by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds, cannot be otherwise. The atheists who censure the Purāṇas and Dharmaśāstras fall into the terrible hell and remain there till all the living beings are annihilated.

32-41a. Lord Kedāreśvara is always the bestower of heavenly pleasures and liberation. He is honoured by Devas always, but is not directly perceived. Himavān performed adoration regularly for eight months. Due to that merit Himādri was made the Lord of Mountains by the Mountains themselves. He is beautiful. He is worthy of being resorted to. All the Tīrthas bow down to him. He is the storehouse of all jewels. He is a favourite of Devas. During Grīṣma (Summer) and Vasanta (Spring), the Lord of Devas is seen here by men in the specified periods, if there is great inclination for perceiving me.

I shall recount the means thereof. Let it be attentively listened to. No doubt should be entertained in this respect. You will attain all desires. O men, Mahākālavana has been proclaimed as the most excellent holy spot of all holy spots, yielding worldly pleasures and salvation. It is not annihilated even at the time of Pralaya. There I will manifest myself, out of compassion for the worlds, in the form of a Liṅga on the meritorious

and splendid banks of Śiprā. The excellent spot is to the west of Someśvara Deva. It is well-known and I shall be present there by the name of Kedāreśvara. The vision of mine there shall be permanent. Undoubtedly I shall grant all desires to everyone. There I will grant more benefit than what is to be obtained here."

41b-49. On hearing this pleasing divine voice arising from the sky, causing great delight to the mind, all the men went to Mahākālavana remembering Maheśvara with a strange doubt whether it is true and not otherwise. After taking the holy dip in the meritorious water of Śiprā, when they looked up towards the Sun, the Liṅga that destroys sins came within the range of their vision. Then they joyously expressed: "This is Kedāra; there is no doubt about it. He has been seen by us. Gaṅgā is abiding in the water of Śiprā." Then they adored with flowers of various kinds. When worshipped by them, O lady of excellent countenance and wide eyes, I became pleased with them. Great boons of rare occurrence were granted. The excellent place of rest in Kailāśa was granted. So also the everlasting position of no return therefrom was given. Hence I was mentioned by the Devas by the name Kedāreśvara. I was prayed to with great devotion out of sympathy for all the worlds. "If men come here and visit you with great devotion more benefit should be granted to them, O Lord, by you. The men will always obtain that benefit which is usually obtained through pilgrimage unto Himanātha on Himālaya. No hesitation need be here.

50-55. All sinners whether they are Brāhmaṇa-slayers, liquor-imbibers, thieves, defilers of the preceptor's bed or associates of all sinners, shall go to the great place with no return therefrom after visiting you.

By seeing Kedāreśvara, one obtains that benefit which is usually obtained by performing hundreds of Cāndrāyaṇas duly.

If the deity named Kedāreśvara is not seen by men, they are brutes in the world and their life in the world is futile. By seeing Kedāreśvara all the sins incurred in infancy, childhood, youth and old age become dissolved.

By seeing Kedāreśvara one obtains that fruit which is mentioned as the usual fruit of the pilgrimage to Himālaya." So was I requested then, O goddess, by the Devas with due bowing-

down of the head. I too said, "So be it." Those Devas went to heaven.

56. Thus the sin-destroying power of Kedāreśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (the story of) the Liṅga named Piśāca.

CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

Piśāceśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. Listen attentively, O goddess, to the story of the Liṅga named Piśāceśvara, the sixty-eighth deity. It is destructive of sins through its perception.

2-6. At the beginning in the Kali Age, O goddess, there was an extremely rich Śūdra well-known by the name Soma. He was an atheist and used to censure the Vedas. He was against Brāhmaṇas. He was a cruel miser, never ashamed of any thing. He was guilty of breach of trust and was always engaged in taking away the wealth of others. He did everything to prevent others from benefiting through Dharma, Artha and Kāma. He always followed his own will and desire, O goddess. Ultimately he died after suffering great distress. He became a Piśāca (ghost) in a desert land, nude, wretched and terrible. He was a destroyer of other Piśācas. He would exterminate persons belonging to his group. Even many more powerful Piśācas were thrashed by him.

7-11. A learned, eloquent, yet quiescent man named Śākaṭāyana came along that path. He was always engaged in the study of Vedas. He used to travel in a cart. He resembled the rising sun in splendour. He had the lustre like that of fire. O Daughter of the Mountain, while he proceeded ahead looking about carefully, he saw that terribly hideous Piśāca who being overwhelmed with hunger rushed at him in his desire to gobble him up. But when he saw the Brāhmaṇa Śākaṭāyana

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1. This is the story of how a sinner Soma who became a Piśāca, was redeemed by visiting Piśāceśvara and attained the eternal region.

seated in his cart, when he espied such a refulgent form of the Brāhmaṇa, when he heard the rumbling, creaking sound of the cart, he found his ears deafened. Though he himself had a terrible form, the Piśāca became deaf in both the ears and was afraid. With very great difficulty, O Pārvatī, he wanted to save himself and so fled.

On seeing the Piśāca fleeing, the Brāhmaṇa asked:

12-23. "O Piśaca, you appear to be in a hurry and are afraid too. Where do you go? Say, whence has fear overtaken you?"

The Piśāca said:

On hearing the terrible noise of this great cart I have become deaf in the ears. I have become unconscious by seeing you.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

Among Piśācas the Brahmarākṣasas are reported to be the most powerful. You are desirous of eating me. It is not well-known that you are a Brahmarākṣasa.

The Piśāca said:

I am competent to manage the Piśācas. By seeing you, I have become doomed. To everyone death is a cause of misery. Life is very rare and valuable to all. Hence I am fleeing for life for the sake of happiness.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

Whence is happiness unto you? Death is more beneficial to you. The Piśāca race itself is despicable. It is meant only for sinners.

The Piśāca said:

Wherever a creature is born it resorts to pleasure. Hence I wish to be alive. Be pleased, O Brahmarākṣasa.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

I am not desirous of eating you. I am a Brāhmaṇa and not a Rākṣasa. I roam about over the earth for the sake of the

welfare of all living beings. A Brāhmaṇa is said to be friendly unto all creatures. Do not be afraid of me. Indeed I have become friendly.

On hearing his words the Piśāca had mental peace. He bowed down to the Brāhmaṇa Śākaṭāyana and said: "If you have granted the gift of freedom from fear to all living beings, if you have maintained friendliness physically, mentally and verbally, O illustrious one, I shall ask you to clarify a doubt lurking in my heart. After listening to it sympathetically, you should explain it to me. By what type of fruition of Karmas does a man attain the state of Piśāca? How can sinners get liberated from the state of Piśāca?"

24-33. O lady of excellent countenance, on hearing these words of the Piśāca, Śākaṭāyana became overwhelmed with the feeling of affection and spoke to him: "Men become highly sinful after committing the sin of taking away the wealth of a Brāhmaṇa and misappropriating that of a temple deity in particular. Thereby they become Piśācas.

A man who deceives his father, mother, wife, son, or a Brāhmaṇa and takes away their wealth becomes a Piśāca.

If a man accepts money from a king and does not make use of it in Yajña or Dāna, but uses it for selfish purposes, he attains the state of Piśāca.

Those who commit breach of trust, those who have sex with other men's wives and those who speak ill of the Vedas, attain the state of Piśāca.

Men who always decry the Purāṇas and Dharmaśāstras and who calumniate others become Piśācas.

Thus I have recounted to you everything on the authority of the Vedas. Now I shall narrate to you as to how you came to have your birth. You were a Śūdra named Somaka. You used to reveal the foibles of others. You committed breach of trust. You used to censure Devas and Brāhmaṇas. In your seventh birth also you were an atheist and violated conventions and rules of etiquette. You caused the downfall of all the members of your family. They have fallen into terrible hell. Now you have taken the form of a Piśāca. You will successively fall into these hells: Raurava, Mahāraurava, Krakaca, Kālasūtraka, Yantrapīḍanaka, Raudra, Mathana and Kumbhavāluka."

34-43. Even as that Brāhmaṇa went on saying thus, O lady of renown, due to the association of a good man, the Piśāca remembered the earlier birth which had been deplorable.

He was overwhelmed with misery while saying repeatedly, "Fie upon me! Fie upon me!" He fell down on the ground and remained motionless. O goddess, then he spoke these words: "I am deficient in merit. I am wretched and miserable, but some (unknown) merit has enabled me to meet you. There is no friend on a par with Dharma. There is no ultimate goal on a par with Dharma. There is no protection like Dharma. But, O holy Sir, I am devoid of it. I have sunk deep into the ocean of misery. I have got entangled in the mire of sin. I have been roaming about in blinding darkness. Hence I have sought refuge in you. I make obeisance to you. O illustrious one, what shall I do? Directly instruct me. This opportunity has been gained by me as guided by the power of your penance."

Even as the Piśāca was recounting thus, O lady of excellent countenance, the Brāhmaṇa Śākaṭāyana expatiated on the greatness (of the Liṅga):

"All the Tīrthas that are present all over the earth bounded by the oceans, are present here too. This is the merit-yielding holy spot of all those Kṣetras. The holy spot of Mahākālavana does not perish even during Pralaya. In that great Kṣetra there is a Liṅga that dispels the state of Piśāca. It is situated to the south of Ḍhuṇḍheśvara Deva. It has been adored by Devas. The Piśāceśvara Liṅga eradicates birth as a Piśāca. Merely by visiting it, you will be rid of the state of Piśāca."

44-51. On hearing his words, O lady of excellent countenance, the Piśāca bowed down to the Brāhmaṇa and hastened to the meritorious Mahākālavana that bestows the desired benefit. He took his holy bath in the splendid and auspicious waters of Śiprā and visited the Liṅga there. By the perception of that Liṅga, O lady of excellent countenance, that Piśāca became instantly endowed with a divine body embellished with divine ornaments. Seated in a divine aerial chariot he went to the eternal world after redeeming the members of his mother's and father's families fully.

On seeing that great miracle, that pre-eminent greatness, O my beloved, Devas seated in aerial chariots and Siddhas moving about in the sky said: "(Merely) by seeing this Liṅga

even the Piśāca has gone to Svarga. Hence that deity will become well-known over the earth by the name of Piśāceśvara, the destroyer of all sins. If men see that Liṅga named Piśāceśvara, all their Pitṛs held up in hell will become rid of the state of Piśāca and go undoubtedly to Svarga."

By visiting Piśāceśvara one obtains that benefit which is the usual benefit of an Aśvamedha Yajña perfectly performed.

52-59. By visiting Piśāceśvara, it should be known that, one obtains more merit than what is proclaimed as the merit accruing from offering balls of rice at Gayā.

If men perceive the Liṅga named Piśāceśvara on the fourteenth lunar day, *Pretatva* (ghosthood) and *Piśācatva* (vampirehood) will never occur in their family. If a man (even) casually visits the Liṅga named Piśāceśvara, he will never be born of base wombs nor will he ever see hell. By visiting Piśāceśvara he rejoices in the Pitṛloka accompanied by all kinsmen and endowed with all kinds of riches.

By glorifying the Liṅga one is rid of sins, by seeing it one goes to Svarga and by touching it one sanctifies all the family members upto the seventh generation. Immediately after seeing the Liṅga named Piśāceśvara, a man becomes liberated from the fetters etc. of the worldly existence. By seeing it the benefit derived is a crore times more than the benefit of Yajñas, Tapas and Dānas. Infinite is the merit if a devotee visits it on the fourteenth lunar day in Vaiśākha or Kārttika.

60. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Piśāceśvara Deva is recounted to you. Listen to that of Saṅgameśvara.

CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

Saṅgameśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O Devī Pārvatī, listen attentively to the (story of the)

1. The Liṅga is situated at the confluence of Śiprā with other two rivulets and hence is called Saṅgameśvara. But the story of King Subāhu and Queen Viśālākṣī shows that the god brought about their union in two births and hence came to be known as the 'union-making god' (Saṅgameśvara).

sixty-ninth deity. Merely by seeing it, one can always have reunion.

2-8. In the realm of Kaliṅga, O goddess, there was a king named Subāhu. He was well-known all over the world as a highly pious person and a performer of Yajñas. His wife Viśālākṣī ('one of wide eyes') was the daughter of Dṛḍhadhanvan, a resident of Kāñcīpura, devoted to the duties and vows of a Kṣatriya. They had ardent mutual love. At midday the king used to have a headache. O my beloved, the medicinal concoctions prepared by physicians, and even the chief of those well-versed in the science of medicine, were of no avail. The pain increased day by day. When much time had elapsed in this manner, O goddess, Viśālākṣī who was greatly afflicted by the misery of her husband, said to the king:

"O Lord of the earth, old age befalls you with this headache. O Lord, the physicians are many. They are all experts in the different branches of the science. They endeavour to cure it. Still it is not subdued."

On being asked thus, King Subāhu replied lovingly to his loving wife:

9-16. "O fair lady, the body of every embodied one undergoes both happiness and misery. It is in accordance with the previous Karmas that one gets happiness or misery." Though she was thus enlightened by that king, O lady of excellent countenance, the queen continued to be deeply grieved for him out of her affection. She put the same question once again. The king very much tried to dissuade her. Yet she continued to ask him again and again. Thereupon the king laughed and said to the queen: "If you do desire to hear about the origin of this ailment, O fair lady, I will not narrate the real cause at this place. After going to Mahākālavana, resorted to by Siddhas and Gandharvas, I shall tell you if you still continue to have the curiosity. Tomorrow morning, I shall go there along with you, O lady of pure smiles." On hearing his words thus the queen stood surprised and became eager to go to the auspicious Mahākālavana.

The night passed off. At dawn, the excellent king set off with his wife and surrounded by a great army. In due course, he arrived at the splendid Mahākālavana. The intelligent king camped on the banks of Śiprā.

17-26. Gaṅgā flowing along the triple path appears there through the nether worlds. The second river is Nīlagaṅgā. These two join with Śiprā. The Liṅga that is at the confluence of those (three) rivers, is Saṅgameśvara. It was adored by Gaṅgā along with Śiprā and Nīlagaṅgā. Having arrived there, the queen who had been wondering about Subāhu, asked him lovingly: "Let the cause be recounted here. Earlier you had promised to me, O Lord, that the cause would be told here."

On being told thus by his beloved, King Subāhu said lovingly to his beloved, laughing repeatedly: "O lady of fair limbs, sleep comfortably. O uncensured (praiseworthy) one, we are rather tired now. I shall tell you the cause of the headache in the morning."

That night passed off. Early in the morning, the excellent king recounted the greatness of Parmeṣṭhin:

"I was a base Śūdra always despising and decrying the Vedas. I committed breach of trust always and you too were likewise. A son was born to us. He was habitually of bad character and used to deceive Brāhmaṇas and Devas. Ugly and rough, the wicked fellow had the innate qualities of a sinful person. Then there was a terrible protracted drought lasting for twelve years. It terrified all living beings. I was separated from you as well as from the son. That made me distressed through misery. I was disgusted to the utmost.

27-37. I wished to die and presently these words were uttered by me: 'I am devoid of merit. I am always engaged in thinking about sinful deeds. A reunion with my son and wife is very difficult. How can an extremely sinful person sleep in a carefree manner after committing fearful crimes! For the sake of his family, he commits crimes thus, but he has to extricate himself alone. Dharma alone is the greatest kinsman. Dharma alone is the greatest goal. Everything is achieved through Dharma. Hence one should resort to Dharma.'

Even as I was thinking thus, my life became extinct, O my beloved. Diverse kinds of tortures were experienced by me in crores of Narakas. I had uttered some words in praise of Dharma even at the time of death. Due to the merit thereof, I was born as a fish in the auspicious waters of Śiprā. You were born as a female vulture in the same excellent Vana. At the advent of rainy season, when the sun had entered the constellation Āśleṣā,

I was carried off by the current of the three rivers and cast out of water surface. You seized me by the head, O beautiful lady, and tore me with your claws. O fair one, I was brought to the presence of Lord Saṅgameśvara by you. Simultaneously, O lady of excellent countenance, you met with your death at the hands of the fishermen (along with me). I visited thus Lord Saṅgameśvara at the time of death. I had a perfect ablution in the waters of Śiprā, Gaṅgā and Nīlagaṅgā. Merely by visting that Lord I was born as a king in the realm of Kaliṅga, O fair lady. I was saluted by all the kings. You were born as the beautiful daughter of Dṛḍhadhanvan, the king of Kāñcīpura, who was engaged in the holy vows and observances of Kṣatriyas.

38-51. Both of us attained royal status by visiting that Liṅga. I was torn by you with the claws and thrashed by them with sticks. At midday I remember this sorry incident and hence my headache. Due to the vision of this deity, I have the power to recollect previous births of mine. Thus, O fair lady, I have recounted what you had earlier asked me. Go hence, O fair lady, wherever you feel inclined to. I have to remain here itself. This deity Saṅgameśvara is to be resorted to."

Thereupon that lady of blemishless limbs, with eyes like a blue lotus, uttered a shrill piteous cry and spoke to her husband: "O Lord, I too recollect the activities of the previous birth though they took place in the course of the life in a non-human womb. It is on account of the greatness of this Liṅga that we have regained human life in the families which are pure and devoid of impurities. Incomparable glory and prosperity has been attained. A kingdom devoid of thorns (enemies) too has been acquired. You gained a loving wife in me and I have got you, O king. This deity is well-known in all the three worlds by the name Saṅgameśvara ('god bringing about union'). Due to the greatness of this deity there will never be our separation as in the case of Kṛṣṇa with Lakṣmī and Śiva with Pārvatī."

After bowing down again, she said once more in her great excitement due to the Lord of Love: "Even in another birth of mine here, may Subāhu be my husband, O Lord, with your favour if you are really Saṅgameśvara (i.e. Lord bringing about union)."

Then the king heartily looked at his beloved who was shaken (afflicted) by the arrows of the god of Love. He appeared to

drink her with his eyes. He then spoke to the lady of tremulous eyes: "O Viśālākṣī, you have been acquired by me. You have been endowed with congenital nobility. You are embellished with good qualities and splendour. The benefit of my birth has been attained."

Thereafter he held the hand of his beloved who was afraid and whose lips were trembling and entered his Antaḥpura saying, "Fortunately I have been bitten by the Serpent of Kandarpa (god of Love) now." He thought within his mind that the worldly existence was insignificant.

52-63. O beautiful lady, he sported about in my city for a long time in the company of that queen. Thus the king got back his beloved to whom he recounted the (life) story. He enjoyed the kingdom along with her for an extended period of great festivities. After realizing that wealth is not permanent, he bestowed much wealth on supplicants. On account of such an unprecedented renunciation, all the three worlds wondered. After ruling the kingdom for a long time and enjoying extensive pleasures, the excellent king merged into that Liṅga along with his wife. Hence, O goddess, the deity became well-known as Saṅgameśvara.

If a devotee visits Saṅgameśvara Liṅga with great devotion, he will never be separated from his sons, brothers, wife and others. One who regularly visits Saṅgameśvara Liṅga obtains a benefit more than that of a thousand Rājasūya sacrifices. By visiting Saṅgameśvara one gets the benefit of the holy bath in Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā and Candrabhāgā. If one visits Saṅgameśvara Liṅga in the month of Śrāvaṇa, he will undoubtedly get the benefit of the pilgrimage to the shrine of Kārttikasvāmin. If one visits Saṅgameśvara Liṅga in the month of Aśvayuja (Āśvina), O lady of excellent countenance, it is as good as if he has performed a thousand Vājapeya sacrifices. If one visits that Saṅgameśvara Liṅga in the month of Kārttika, it is as good as his performing a thousand Rājasūyas. There is no doubt (about it). One who visits Saṅgameśvara during the period of the four months of rainy season attains my region, O my beloved, much desired (by all).

Thus the sin-destroying power of Saṅgameśvara Deva has been recounted to you, O goddess. Listen to that of Durddharṣeśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

Durddharṣeśvara

Īśvara said:

1. Listen to (the greatness of) the Durddharṣeśvara Liṅga, the seventieth deity. Merely by seeing it, O goddess, a man is rid of sins.

2-9. Formerly in the realm of Nepāla, there was a king named Durddharṣa. Meritorious deeds constituted his emblem. He was renowned, truthful and steadfast in his vows. He had three wives, all extremely befitting him and extremely charming.

Once during spring season the king was sporting in a park at the outskirts of a forest. He was so enamoured of the deer he wanted to pursue that he was carried off by the horse as speedy as wind and arrived at a forest abounding in beautiful trees. It consisted of many animals such as lordly elephants, deer, tigers, lions, Sāṁbaras, bears, monkeys, boars, rhinoceros etc.

In the forest he saw a large lake full of water as clear as mirror. Aquatic birds such as swans, Kāraṇḍavas and Cakravākas (ruddy geese) and lotuses made it appear splendid. Groves of plantain trees adorned it. The water thereof had turned reddish yellow with the saffron (washed) off the breasts of the bevy of Siddha women taking their bath there.

There itself he saw a girl who appeared like the sylvan deity (of that forest). On seeing the girl of exquisite limbs, he was afflicted by Manmatha (god of Love). Being struck with wonder instantly he stood motionless as though painted in a picture. Like a female serpent attracted with Mantra, she went to the vicinity of the king.

10-20. She spoke to the king who was on a par with a crore of Kandarpas and was taking rest: "O great king, know me to be the daughter of Kalpa, favourite to him like his very life. Kalpa is a quiescent sage of perpetual (life-long) celibacy. May the Brāhmaṇa be requested for my sake. He will give me to you."

On hearing these words of the girl, the king became excited

due to love. Shamelessly he made importunate appeals to her in the secluded spot: "O lady of excellent eyebrows, my death is imminent in case I am to be without you. When the life is at stake who will wait to ponder over what is proper to be done and what should not be done. It indicates deficiency of intellect, if the nectar that one comes across is discarded. Who knows what will befall one in the other world? Resort to me, O lady of blemishless limbs. If you do not allow me to sip the nectar from your lips, understand, O my beloved, that I am no better than dead. If I myself forcibly sip it, understand that I will be transported unto the other world."

On hearing this, the dismayed maiden spoke politely: "If I slip down and my virginity is lost, my father's family will fall, nay, all that belongs to us will fall. Hence this must be considered carefully. If, O king, your love unto me is intense, let the Brāhmaṇa be requested for my hand. He will certainly give me to you."

On hearing her words the king thought that there was no other alternative. He understood that she was the daughter of the Brāhmaṇa Kalpa, the celibate. He went unto his penance-grove and the eminent sage joyously gave the moon-faced girl to him.

21-31. The king under the control of the god of Love united with her there itself. He sported with her in loving contact with her. He did not care to remember anything concerning his city. The king enjoyed the new bride among the groves of banana trees, among the beautiful rows of sylvan trees, and the thickly grown mango-parks. The clever king had charming intercourse with the excessively pretty yóung girl.

O lady of excellent countenance, even as Durddharṣa continued thus, a highly terrible and unassailable Rākṣasa came there. He was blazing in his hideous form with terrible curved fangs in his mouth. Overwhelmed with infatuation, he swiftly enchanted the king and abducted the tremulous-eyed maiden endowed with beauty and youth. Seeing the maiden of exquisitely beautiful limbs thus carried off, the king well-nigh swooned due to the poison of separation. Repeatedly recollecting the splendid (very beautiful) girl he lamented with all the sense-organs utterly agitated. "Alas, my beloved one! Oh nectar of love! Lovely lake of the elixir of affection! Oh lady of wide,

large eyes! Oh beautiful lady, where have you gone, leaving me alone? When shall I see again your delightful moon-like countenance?" Thus he lamented remembering the maiden of charming smiles. Disturbed by the god of Love, he roamed here and there like an insane person.

Even as King Durddharṣa wailed in grief, Kalpa, the excellent Brāhmaṇa, came to that spot and saw the king wandering there like a black bee. Realizing that it was his son-in-law, he consoled him thoroughly and spoke these words: "Come on, O eminent king, Durddharṣa. The way of Karma is inscrutable. O king, where has your realm Nepāla gone? Where have your lovely three queens of exalted nobility gone? Where has your kingdom gone? Where has my daughter gone? Everything in the world is perishable. It is comparable to the Gandharva city (city-like formation in the sky); the life is transient, O king; the kingdom too is evanescent like a water bubble."

32-43. Thus consoled repeatedly by Kalpa, the king continued to be afflicted by the god of Love and went on recollecting that maiden of exquisitely beautiful limbs. "O holy Sir, tell me specifically, if you have compassion for me. How can I regain my kingdom? How can our friends return to us? O Brāhmaṇa, how will I meet again on this earth my three wives endowed with the nectar of beauty and charm? O excellent Brāhmaṇa, how will the reunion of your daughter with me take place?"

On hearing his words, O lady of excellent countenance, the Brāhmaṇa said: "O king, go to Nepāla and then to Mahākāla. In that excellent Tīrtha, there is a Liṅga that accomplishes all tasks. It is there that Sūrya performed a very difficult penance on the meritorious beautiful banks of Śiprā to the west of Brahmeśvara. Merely by visiting it, you can realize your desire."

On hearing the words of Kalpa, the excellent king hurriedly went to Nepāla and consoled his friends. Thereafter, accompanied by the member of the Antaḥpura and attendants he went to Mahākālavana which is the permanent resort for all Siddhis and a place of glory and prosperity. He took his bath in the meritorious waters of Śiprā that yielded Siddhi immediately and visited the Liṅga propitiated by Sūrya. He worshipped it with jewels, divine garments and excellent orna-

ments. The worship of the Liṅga was performed with sweet-smelling camphor, pearls of excellent lustre and continuous flow of water also. Eulogizing it with different kinds of prayers, he devoutly danced in front of it. In the shrine he heard a song that was like nectar unto his ears. On hearing the music, he was actuated by curiosity and looking up he saw his charming beloved endowed with the maximum degree of womanly beauty.

44-51. On seeing her, he became wonder-struck as evidenced by his beaming eyes. The mere sight of that lady made him agitated through love. He thought: 'This is my wife whom I am able to see with the favour of the deity. The lady too, the very lotus-pond of physical beauty, experienced horripilation on her breast on seeing the king, the royal swan as it were. In the meantime, O goddess, a voice issued forth from the Liṅga: "This is the dear and darling daughter of Viśvāvasu, the Lord of the Siddhas. She was brought up carefully by Kalpa for your sake, O excellent king. I brought this wife of yours after killing that Rākṣasa leader. Accept her now given unto you. Enjoy the kingdom devoid of thorns."

On being told thus and having regained his beloved wife by the power of the Liṅga, the king went away along with the members of his Antaḥpura and the royal attendants. Ever since then, this deity is named Durddharṣeśvara because it was propitiated by the great king, the noble-souled Durddharṣa

He is well-known in all the three worlds as the bestower of desired benefit. O lady of wide large eyes, those who view the deity named Durddharṣeśvara become invincible to enemies in battle.

52-59. O goddess, those who go to that deity and worship Durddharṣeśvara Liṅga on the solar transit days, Sundays and during solar or lunar eclipse go to my excellent region by means of an aerial chariot.

By visiting Durddharṣeśvara, even a sinful person, one engaged in evil actions, becomes immediately rid of the sins.

By seeing, touching and uttering the name, even a thousand sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter perish at the very moment.

An ungrateful wretch, a censurer, the wicked, a sinner and a man with evil intention, a thief, a man enamoured of other men's wives, a Brāhmaṇa-slayer, a defiler of the preceptor's

bed—all these are rid of all sins by visiting Durddharṣeśvara.

If in the course of the solar transit, during the equinox, on auspicious days and on Mondays, people visit Durddharṣa after bathing in the auspicious waters of Śiprā, undoubtedly the merit is three times that accruing from (the bath in) Gaṅgā.

Whatever gift is made over there becomes infinite, the Pitṛs are pleased with him and the Ātmā is delighted. For a thousand crores of Kalpas he shall stay in my city duly honoured. When he goes back to the earth, he shall become a king.

He will never be assailed by the hosts of his enemies. He will attain everlasting benefit, the region that is worthy of being revered by Devas and from which there is no return.

60. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Durddharṣeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Henceforth listen to that of Prayāgeśa.

CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

Prayāgeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. Know that the seventy-first deity is the Liṅga named Prayāgeśvara and that it is without a second (i.e. matchless) and destructive of great sins.

2-8. In Vaivasvata Manvantara, in Dvāpara Yuga, there was a glorious king named Śāntanu in the city of Hastināpura. He was wonderfully endowed with great power. He was a young man with adamantine physical frame. He was a master of all Śāstras and an adept in all the arts. He was on a par with Viṣṇu in strength and in brilliance. He was comparable to the Sun. Once hat mighty king wandered alone near Gaṅgā resorted to by Siddhas and Cāraṇas. Accompanied by a large army and

1. The story of the marriage of Śāntanu and Gaṅgā and her leaving him when he obstructed her when she was about to throw the eighth child (Bhīṣma) into Gaṅgā is given in Mbh, *Ādi*, Chs. 96-99. Skanda Purāṇa uses the story to make Gaṅgā come to Prayāgeśvara at Mahākālavana, an episode not known to Mbh.

vehicles, he went to a dense forest with hundreds of horses and elephants. He sportingly killed deer and tigers. The excellent king killed buffaloes, (wild) horses and boars.

Once, in the forest, he saw a most excellent lady resplendent in her body like another Goddess Lakṣmī. He was struck with wonder and he experienced horripilation of joy at the sight of her wealth of physical beauty. He appeared as if to drink her with his eyes but was never satiated.

9-17. On seeing the king of great lustre moving about, the graceful lady felt extremely overwhelmed with love and she too never felt satiated. In soft conciliatory words, the king enquired: "Are you a goddess, a Dānavī, a Gandharvī, or an Apsaras? Are you a Yakṣī or Pannagī or a human being, O lady of excellent waistline? O lady having the softness of the inner core of a lotus, O splendid lady, I beg you to be my wife."

On hearing these words of the king softly and sweetly presented, O goddess, she assented but requested the king to abide by conditions. "If I am restrained or if something I do not like, is done, I will undoubtedly leave you. O king, I am never to be asked: 'Who are you? Whose are you? etc.' " The king said, "So be it." The king was secretly glad at her truthfulness, good behaviour, excellent habits and conduct, good qualities of beauty and magnanimity and readiness to serve.

Indeed she was the divine Gaṅgā, the river of triple path, in the form of a goddess. Adopting human guise, the lady of excellent complexion gave pleasure to the glorious king so much so that he did not realize the many months, seasons and years that passed by on account of his attachment to the pleasure, as he was captivated by the qualities of an excellent lady (which she had).

18-27. Sporting about with her as he pleased, the king begot of her eight sons of divine complexion. As and when a son was born, she used to throw him into the sacred current of Gaṅgā saying, "I please you for the sake of your liberation." This was not to the liking of King Śāntanu but he did not say anything then to the fair lady, because he was afraid of her leaving him.

When the eighth son was born the distressed king, seeking to retain his own son, said to her when she appeared to be in a laughing mood: "Do not kill (the child). Who are you?

Whose are you? Why do you kill the sons? Do not incur the great sin of inflicting injury on your own son. O despicable woman, stop."

Gaṅgā said:

O most excellent one among those blessed with sons, I too love the son. I will not kill your son. My stay here has come to an end in accordance with the condition stipulated. I am Gaṅgā, the daughter of Jahnu, served and attended upon by great sages. I spent my days with you for the task of Devas. These are the divine eight Vasus of great power, excessively awe-inspiring. It was on account of the curse of Vaśiṣṭha that they were born as human beings. There is no one on the earth except you who could bring them forth. Nō mortal woman can ever be a mother like me. Hence I adopted a human form for the sake of their conception. Hail unto you! I shall go, O king of great holy observances. Protect the son.

28-38. After having said this, the lady in human form began to lament as she was deluded by the Māyā of Viṣṇu. "What a pity! The sons were killed by me, a wicked one. Out of delusion the boys were cast into water. Alas! My dear children, Oh my sons, Oh my sons, where have you gone forsaking me? How is it that my heart is not torn asunder! When will these come themselves crying piteously 'Oh mother, Oh mother'? When will I embrace my sons with affection saying, 'Dear child! Dear child!' When will the limb of which son coming into contact with the tawny dusty particles of the ground spoil my lap and upper cloth? These dear children who were born out of my limbs, these who delight minds and hearts have been killed and taken to their death by me, the mother. Having perpetrated this hideous job what will be the worlds I will be going to? How can I, a merciless slaughterer of sons, be meritorious once again?" Thus she cried piteously again and again and fell into a swoon onto the ground, distressed and motionless.

In the meantime, O fair lady, Nārada, the excellent sage, reflected thus on hearing suddenly the sound of her lamentation and went near her. In surprise his eyes became dilated,

'What is this? This Gaṅgā, the daughter of Jahnu, the holy one revered by Devas, the river of triple path, the meritoriously divine queen of the Ocean! Why does she cry in agitation in her mortal form?'

39-49. After thinking thus, Sage Nārada, the son of Brahmā, came near the lamenting Gaṅgā. Stationed in the firmament itself, he spoke to her loudly: "Obeisance to you, O goddess Gaṅgā. I am Nārada, O highly meritorious and holy one. Why do you weep? You are well-known as the daughter of Himālaya Mountain resorted to by Devas and Gandharvas. You have been held on his head by Śiva, the Parameṣṭhin (Supreme Absolute)." On hearing the words of Nārada and seeing the great sage seated in an aerial chariot, the celestial river said; "O Nārada, due to delusion, despicable (sinful) deed has been committed by me. Very great sin has been incurred by me knowingly. Seven sons were killed by me. As brought about by fate, my separation from Samudra (Ocean) took place and I became the wife of a man. Sons were born to me and they were killed too. Hence I lamented, deeply immersed in the sea of grief. Tell me, O celestial sage, whereby can I become meritorious once again?"

On hearing her words, Nārada, the excellent sage of pure soul, who could know the events of the three divisions of time, spoke to Gaṅgā these words.

Nārada said:

O divine one worthy of being revered by the whole universe! Has the sacred condition of the Devas been forgotten? O fair lady, it was promised by you for the cause of the liberation of the Vasus. Those Vasus have regained their worlds, with your favour, O lady of excellent vows. O goddess, Śāntanu is remembered as Samudra himself, whose incarnation was caused by you alone.

On hearing these words of the noble-souled Nārada, the holy Gaṅgā of triple path replied to the great sage:

50-60. "O holy Brāhmaṇa! What you say is the truth. Now I have understood everything. But I have become enchanted because of the human birth that I have had. I became afraid

of the accusations and insinuations. Hence I sought refuge in you. May proper advice be given to me! Let an excellent holy spot be mentioned to me."

Nārada said:

O worthy one deserving the veneration of the universe, has the agreement entered into with the Devas been forgotten, when you say, O goddess bestowing merit, that you are afraid of the accusations and insinuations? You are asking me about the greatest spot. Listen, I shall tell you, O lady of excellent vows. Avantī has been mentioned as the eternal one (place) lasting for seven Kalpas. There your companion Śiprā, the perpetual favourite of Brāhmaṇas, is always present. On the banks of the same there is the auspicious Liṅga to the south of Durddharṣeśvara. It is worthy of adoration of the Devas and it is resorted to by all the Tīrthas. Merely by perceiving it, you will have your purpose achieved. Hence go, O excessively meritorious Gaṅgā resorted to by the celestial sages.

On being told thus by the noble-souled Nārada, the river of triple path and of great merit, went there and saw her companion Śiprā. Getting into a confluence with her and having seen the highly sacred Liṅga, she adored it with great emotional fervour and remained there for a long time.

Then the divine Yamunā, the daughter of Sūrya, the destroyer of sins, came there affectionately where Gaṅgā was present. The goddess saw Gaṅgā meditating on Śiva, Śaṅkara. She too remained there adoring the great Śiva. Then, at the same time Sarasvatī, the Prācīdevī, came there well-concealed into the waters of Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

61-70. In the meantime, O goddess, Nārada spoke to Śakra: "Prayāga who had gone to Mahākālavana is not to be seen. The holy spot between Gaṅgā and Yamunā where Sarasvatī too is present in a concealed form should be known as Prayāga, the destoyer of all sins. Now for some reason not known to me, Prayāga has gone to the excellent Mahākālavana."

On hearing these words of the noble-souled Nārada, all of them accompanied by Śakra went to Avantī eulogizing the splendid Gaṅgā of triple path by means of different kinds of

prayers: "O Goddess Gaṅgā, O destroyer of all sins, obeisance to you. O goddess, you are the mother of Vasus and also the bestower of salvation on Vasus. You always sanctify the three worlds and you are held on his head by Hara. You are attended upon by Vālakhilyas and you are the supreme Kalā of Kṛṣṇa. O Yamunā, we bow down to you, O Kālindī, the most excellent river; O goddess, you are the sanctifying goddess, the daughter of Mārtaṇḍa, the Lord of Divas (heaven, day). O goddess Śiprā, O auspicious one originating from the body of Brahmā, obeisance to you. You alone are the well-known Prācī, the Sarasvatī of meritorious body. She who is Prācī in Kurukṣetra and Puṣkara and Mahālaya is famous as Śiprā, the destroyer of all sins. You are *Dayā* (Mercy) unto all creatures. You are the heaven, the refuge of men. You are the mother unto all creatures. You are sung about on the earth as Prācī.

71-83. On seeing the stain of the sins of many births of the embodied beings on the earth, O goddess, you wash it off, stationed in all the three worlds. The confluence of these is remembered as Prayāga by learned men. The deity installed and bathed by you all, after coming here, will from today be named Prayāgeśvara and well-known in all the three worlds. The deity when remembered is destructive of sins.

Those who come here and see Prayāgeśvara will become contented and blessed, devoid of all sins. The family of their mothers and fathers will become redeemed by them. By visiting Prayāgeśvara, the benefit of the four aims of life will be acquired through the merit that is three times more than that of Gaṅgā.

By seeing Prayāgeśvara merely for a period of a month, the Siddhi achieved shall be on a par with that attained in the course of twelve years by visiting these shrines: Prayāga on Gaṅgā, the auspicious Devadāruvana, Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Śrīśaila, Tripuṣkara, Tryaṁbaka, Dhautapāpa, Bhairava, Mahendra, Gokarṇa and the confluence, named Suvarṇa, of Revā and Kapilā.

If the devotees visit devoutly the Liṅga named Prayāgeśvara after performing the requisite observances on the eighth and fourteenth lunar days in particular, they will never come back (to worldly life) even after hundreds and crores of Kalpas. The Liṅga will be the bestower of pleasures (while one is) on the

earth as well as salvation. There shall be three Kalpas (units, aspects) in this splendid Liṅga that bestows salvation. They are Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Prācī that destroy all sins."

After saying thus, Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī were eulogized by the Devas with prostrations. Then they went to their own places. After adoring and eulogizing the Liṅga named Prayāgeśvara by means of different kinds of prayers, the delighted Devas headed by Śakra went to Svarga.

84. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Prayāgeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to the story of Candrādityeśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTWO

Candrādityeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O my beloved, know that the Candrādityeśvara Liṅga is the seventy-second deity. Merely by seeing it a man shall become one having done his duties and contented.

2-9. Formerly, O goddess, Suras were defeated in battle by Śaṁbara. They left the battlefield and fled. They were eager to save their own lives.

After seeing the Moon swallowed (eclipsed) by Rāhu and realizing that he was highly agitated, Sūrya (Sun) spoke to his charioteer, the eldest son of Vinatā: "O Aruṇa, take away the chariot quickly to a place where there is no battle. Candra and Sūrya are well-reputed as stronger than Daityas. But Rāhu, the third one, hideous on account of his curved fangs, is extremely terrible. It is not known whether the Moon is killed in the battle or he has fled or is dead. It is not known where Śakra or Varuṇa has gone. It is not known where Yama is or what

1. Śaṁbara mentioned in RV as the enemy of Indra and said to have been killed by Pradyumna (in Mbh, *Anuśāsana* 14.28; also *Sabhā* 38.22), is stated to have been burnt down by this Liṅga at the request of Candra and Āditya. Hence the Liṅga became known as Candrādityeśvara.

has happened to Dhanada."

On being told thus by Ravi in the middle of the fight, the disabled Aruṇa guided the chariot to a place where there was no fight. In the meantime, Candra came there instantly to the place where the Lord of heaven (Sun) was present, though he was seized by Planet Rāhu.

On seeing Lord Divākara (Sun) suddenly, Candra became momentarily senseless and terrified. His eyes became tremulous.

10-23. "Even the Rudras kept engaged in battle by Śaṁbara fled in terror. Terrified by the leading Asuras, they dispersed themselves in various directions. All the Sādhyas became excessively afraid and they went to a place where there were no Dānavas. The Devas who survived in the battle were also hit. The Asuras assailed all the limbs and armours of the Devas who were fleeing, by means of still more powerful arrows. They were hit from behind and thousands of them were split and wounded. When the Asuras were busy in this, I escaped and fled by adopting the guise of an Asura because I was over-anxious to save my life. It is better that we escape before Śaṁbara returns."

Thus the Moon, who was afraid said, O Pārvatī. Aruṇa took Candra and Āditya away in the chariot in a trice to the place where Janārdana, the Lord of the universe, was seated on Garuḍa on Mandara, in the caves whereof groups of Suras and Kinnaras had their rendezvous and, therefore, they had scattered themselves; where there were excellent sandalwood trees which delighted the womenfolk of the Suras. O lady of great renown, on seeing the Lord of the universe, holding the conch, discus, and club, the Devas, Candra and Sūrya, eulogized thus: "Obeisance, O Lord, O presiding deity of all the three worlds; (O Lord) who have defeated (surpassed) the Sun by means of your refulgence. Obeisance, O Viṣṇu; obeisance to you, O Jiṣṇu, O slayer of Kaiṭabha. Obeisance to the performer of all rites, to the saviour of the universe. Obeisance to you. Obeisance, O invincible Lord having the discus as the weapon. Obeisance to the slayer of Dānavas. Obeisance, O Lord who have occupied (measured) all the three worlds by means of three steps. O Lord whose origin is hidden, obeisance, O god of death unto the fierce hordes of the leading Daityas, O highly powerful one. Obeisance; O great Lord from whose

tank-like navel, the lotus-born Lord Brahmā manifested himself. Obeisance to the Lord who procreated Virañca, the Lord of all worlds. Obeisance to the Lord who fight great battles for the destruction of the enemies of Devas. Obeisance to you, the overlord of Devas; O Lord, be our refuge."

On hearing the prayer composed by Candra and Sūrya, Lord Janārdana consoled them, encouraging them by praises. Lord Adhokṣaja said to them:

Viṣṇu said:

24-38. Welcome, O Candra and Sūrya. Both of you are worthy of being eulogized. What is the reason for your visit here? Tell me without excitement or hesitation.

On being told thus by Nārāyaṇa, Candra and Bhāskara (Sun) said: "The Devas have been defeated in battle by Śaṁbara, the wicked demon. It is not known where the others have gone. With great effort we two escaped. We have been brought here by Aruṇa. It is our good fortune, O Lord, that you are seen. The Devas have been defeated by Śaṁbara and he is seen everywhere. Śaṁbara, the ruthless being, appears both in water and in the dry ground. As the leading Devas fled, he cut off their armours, umbrellas, bows, shields of diverse kinds, large crowns, big bows, visors of diverse kinds etc., with showers of arrows from behind. Elephants with ichor smeared all over the cheeks and horses with floccules embellished with jewel-set saddles were killed in crores. The Devas were stripped of their equipments, horses and foot-soldiers. The army of the Devas became a veritable mine of all disasters.

Then the proud leader of the Daityas returned from the great battle. Having defeated the enemies, he became highly refulgent like fire with leaping flames. He was bowed to by the groups of sages and eulogized by the great sages. Leading Daityas delighted him with blessings of victory. There in the auspicious mansion the Lord of the Daityas occupied the throne embellished with gold indicating the fullness of prosperity. Seated there the exceedingly famous king of the Daityas appeared resplendent. His limbs appeared to have grown stronger with the application of divine sandalpaste. He shone with the heavenly

flowers. His limbs were touched with the lustre of crowns (of those who fell at his feet). He was fanned with white chowries. He was attended upon by the Daityas and leaders of the Daityas resuscitated after death. The mighty one was served by personified forms of Kratus (sacrifices) with bunches of all kinds of flowers reverberating with the chirping sounds of all kinds of birds. The glory there was incomparable all over the world. There the fortune is unrestricted. Where Dānava Śaṁbara is present, there lustre, splendour and beauty are present. Thus the king of the Daityas rejoices there in the company of his attendants. He himself has become Indra. Candra and Sūrya now are his own subjects."

39-51. On hearing his words thus, Lord Puruṣottama reflected in his mind for some time, O my beloved, and then spoke thus: "O Candra and Sūrya, the misdeeds of Śaṁbara are known to me. He has to enjoy the benefit of his penance through the granting of the boons by Brahmā. The thunderbolt was hurled at Śaṁbara formerly by Indra. He was hit in the chest, yet the Asura did not die. O Candra and Sūrya, at my bidding, do go to the excellent Mahākālavana. There you will attain Siddhi. There the infinite Mahākāla Maheśvara is present in the form of a Liṅga. In a place to the north of it there is the auspicious Liṅga that fulfils desires. Merely by seeing it, you will have your object achieved. There is no doubt that the death of Śaṁbara will be brought about by the mass of its flames. Hence, do go there."

On being told thus by Vāsudeva, O lady of great renown, Candra and Sūrya hastened to Mahākālavana experiencing horripilation. After seeing there Mahādeva, the immutable mass of refulgence, they worshipped him with splendid flowers and praised him with different kinds of hymns. In the meantime a voice issued forth from the middle of the Liṅga and consoled Candra and Sūrya soon, O daughter of Himālaya:

"That Daitya Śaṁbara was slain; those wicked Candra and Bhāskara (Sun) created by the Daityas went away and remained in the Pātāla region. Rāhu and Ketu were assigned positions at the extremity of the Planets with specified conditions. Along with the Devas, undoubtedly Śakra was reinstated in his post. All the Guardians of Quarters joyously returned to their respective places re-endowed with lustre and valour. You two will

be moving in the firmament in all the three worlds accompanied by Planets and Constellations. As before, you will continue to be the witnesses of merits and sins."

52-62. On being told thus by that divine voice, O lady of excellent countenance, Candra and Sūrya became delighted and contented by seeing the Liṅga. In the meantime, the Devas seated in aerial chariots came to the place in the splendid Mahākālavana where Candra and Sūrya were present. After knowing the greatness of the Liṅga, they named it with mental purity and concentration: "This highly refulgent Liṅga has been served by Candra and Sūrya. Hence it will become well-known all over the earth by the name Candrādityeśvara. By the service rendered by Candra and Sūrya, Śaṁbara along with his attendants and followers was burnt down by the mass of flames issuing from this Liṅga." After saying this all the Devas stood in the vicinity (of the Liṅga) all round and eulogized Śiva named Candrādityeśvara with different kinds of prayers. Candra and Āditya too who were already present there, stood near the Liṅga propitiating the Lord of Devas and attained their position as before. The men who devoutly visit Śiva named Candrādityeśvara go to the region of Sūrya as well as that of Candra by means of aerial chariots resplendent like the Sun and having the auspicious splendour of the Moon. They will have happiness as long as Candra and Sūrya exist.

If men take their holy ablution in the sacred Śiprā and devoutly visit Śiva named Candrādityeśvara at the time of solar or lunar eclipse, hundred generations of their family, maternal as well as paternal, will rejoice in the worlds of Candra and Sūrya for many many years. Even those who casually perceive Candrādityeśvara Deva when Monday falls on a New-Moon day do not go to Yama's abode.

63. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Candrādityeśvareśa has been recounted to you. Let the details of Karabheśvara Liṅga be heard.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTHREE

Karabheśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1. O lady of excellent countenance, know the Karabheśa Liṅga as the seventy-third deity. Merely by seeing it, birth in base womb can be averted.

2-9. There was an intelligent king of Ayodhyā named Vīraketu. He was full of the nectar of learning, humility, conjugal bliss and exquisite physical charm. He efficiently protected his subjects like his own bosom-born sons. His mind perfectly dwelt on the knowledge of past and future.

One day, the king went to a dense forest infested with deer, elephants and lions and crowded with tigers and Saṁbaras (species of elks). The destroyer of the warriors of the enemy killed different kinds of wild animals—deer, buffaloes and boars in thousands. The entire forest teeming with beasts, birds and antelopes became fully agitated. The entire forest was rendered bereft of all beasts of prey by that king. When beasts of prey could not be seen in that dense forest, the king pierced a *Karabha* (a camel) with an arrow bent at the joints. But, O goddess, though he had been hit, that *Karabha* took away the arrow with him quickly. He slipped away even as the king stood watching. The mighty king rushed after the *Karabha* immediately. The flat-footed camel ran down the sloping region, O goddess, many Yojanas in a short while.

10-20. On account of his youthful spirit and the strength of his heart, the king on his horse pursued him, equipped with a bow and a sword. The king followed the wild beast crossing

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1. King Vīraketu of Ayodhyā once, while hunting, was deluded by a camel which the king shot with an arrow. When he could not trace him, the sages told him that the camel was Dharmadhvaja of Haihaya family, who was cursed to be a camel and he will be absolved of the curse when he would be shot at and wounded by King Vīraketu and that the camel had gone to Mahākālavana. Vīraketu reached Mahākālavana only to find Dharmadhvaja (the camel) who, while going to heaven, thanked him for relieving him from beasthood. The Liṅga being associated with a camel (Dharmadhvaja) came to be known as Karabheśvara.

all the fordable rivers and streams, puddles and forests. The camel too, O goddess, sometimes came within the reach of the king but immediately sped away very quickly. Hit, agitated by many arrows from behind and from the sides, the *Karabha* now and then came near him. Picking up speed again, he was seen at the sides now but soon in front.

Then entering an extremely terrible forest the *Karabha* quickly disappeared. The king entered deep into the forest. Proceeding further, the king came to a hermitage of sages. Finding his horse tired, he sat down.

On seeing the king armed with a bow but fatigued and hungry, the sages approached him and honoured him duly. Accepting the hospitality offered by them duly, the king enquired of them whether their penance and pious rites flourished. Responding to the words of the king suitably, the ascetics and the sages asked him about the purpose he had in view.

"O gentle Sir, what special pleasure made you come to this penance grove? O leader of men, you have come on foot with a sword on your person and holding a bow and arrows. O bestower of honour, we wish to know this. Whence have you come? In which family are you born? What is your name? Tell us, O king."

21-42. Thereupon the king, the leader of men, told all those Brāhmaṇas everything truthfully regarding his family and Gotra:

"O eminent Brāhmaṇas, I am Vīraketu born of the Ikṣvāku family. I am wandering here and there hunting herds of deer in thousands. I had come accompanied by a great army as well as attendants and ministers. When I did not come across a deer, boar, buffalo, cittala, rabbit, or elk in the dense forest, a *Karabha* was hit with an arrow having curved joints. Even as I was watching he vanished in a moment taking away the arrow with him. Pursuing him as he sped away, I have come to this forest by chance. Having lost my splendour and hope and having become emaciated due to fatigue, I have come to you all. Indeed, ascetics are omniscient ones. Everything is known to you. You are esteemed ones. Hence I am putting this doubt for clarification. Where has that *Karabha* hit by me with an arrow gone? Where can I get at it? Do tell me with precision."

Thereupon Sage Ṛṣabha, the most excellent one of all those

sages, recollected that *Karabha*, O goddess, and spoke thus: "O king, that *Karabha* has gone to that splendid Mahākālavana where in order to amuse Devas Lord Mahādeva adopted the form of a *Karabha* formerly and remained in the form of a Liṅga to the west of Kṣetrapāla of Kailāśa. O king, near it is Vighneśa named Modakapriya. O king, he was worshipped by Brahmā for the accomplishment of the task of Devas. Once king Dharmadhvaja, a scion of the family of Haihayas, was carried off by his horse to Badarikāśrama, famous in the three worlds as the hermitage of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. There, O mighty king, he saw a lean Brāhmaṇa clad in deerskin. His body was peculiar, unlike that of any other man. It was wrong on the part of the king who laughed at him. Thereupon the excellent king was cursed by the Brāhmaṇa: 'Since you laugh at me, you will surely become a camel with hanging lips and teeth, ugly and deformed and awful in voice.'

The king pleaded to the Brāhmaṇa. He was pleased and pacified. He spoke thus: 'O king, my words cannot be untrue. Certainly you will become a *Karabha*, but later on you will attain liberation, when you turn out to be a *Karabha* and become hit by Vīraketu, the king of Ayodhyā. After being hit by an arrow, you will go to the divine Mahākālavana. By seeing the Liṅga there you will attain the great region where there is Lord Maheśvara. That mighty Vīraketu born of Ikṣvāku race will attain Emperorship as a result of seeing the Liṅga.' On being told thus, O king, that king became a *Karabha*. It is he whom you hit with an arrow bent at the joints. You will see him seated in the aerial chariot after being liberated by seeing the Liṅga."

On being told thus by the Brāhmaṇa Ṛṣabha, the king (Vīraketu) hastened to the auspicious Mahākālavana.

43-52. There he saw the Liṅga always adored by Devas. In the meantime, that king heard a voice sweetly uttered by the *Karabha* seated in an aerial chariot: "O king, look at me (seated) in the splendid aerial chariot held aloft. The greatest goal has been acquired by me by seeing this Liṅga. I was hit by you with an arrow. Then I came into the forest near this Liṅga, Hence you are my great kinsman." After saying this to the king in a sweet voice, O goddess, he went to the greatest region, eternal, immutable and everlasting.

Thereupon groups of Devas, Kinnaras, great Serpents, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, celestial damsels, Devas, chief of whom were Brahmā, Indra and Viṣṇu—all these arrayed themselves in the sky. Eager to see the wonderful thing, they joyously came there.

On seeing the liberated *Karabha* shining and seated in the aerial chariot as a result of seeing the Liṅga, they eulogized it with different kinds of prayers. The crown was blazing refulgently with many excellent jewels. It had the brilliance of a crore of Suns. It delighted the whole universe. After observing the excellent greatness the Devas assigned a name to it. "Since the *Karabha* was liberated by seeing the Liṅga, it will undoubtedly be well-known as *Karabheśvara* in all the three worlds. It shall rid devotees of birth in brutish wombs."

53-61. After saying thus, all the Devas went to their respective abodes. Vīraketu, the heroic Lord of Ayodhyā, went to his palace and then ruled unrivalled the flourishing kingdom.

One who visits the Liṅga named Karabheśvara, O goddess, proceeds to the everlasting worlds adored by the Lords of Gaṇas. The great Rājarājeśvara who comes here shall become the sole emperor of the earth and attain salvation in due course. Even if people see the Karabheśvara Liṅga incidentally, they will never experience misery, ailment, grief or fear. O goddess, by seeing Karabheśvara one gets more benefit than what is expected from all the Yajñas and all the Dānas. Ailments never harass him nor poverty at any time. By seeing the Liṅga unparalleled prosperity accrues to them. Those who have attained brutish womb, the miserable Pitṛs, stand in the sky thinking about a member to be born of their Gotra. 'When will our great-great-grandson among our successors see the Lord of the Devas named Karabheśvara? Thereby, merely by seeing the Lord, we will certainly attain salvation. Whatever may be the desire with which he sees, he will realize it. After death he will attain the greatest goal.'

62. Thus the sin-destroying power of Karabheśvara Deva has been recounted to you, O goddess. Listen to that of Rājasthaleśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFOUR

Rājasthaleśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1. Know Rājasthaleśvara Śiva as the seventy-fourth deity. Merely by seeing it, one is rid of all sins.

2-10. O beloved, formerly in the Viṣṇu Kalpa, when the Manvantara began there was anarchy in the world and Brahmā became very much worried. 'The Devas are not capable of sustaining the world without human beings. It is through Dāna, Yajña and Japa that the Devas get excellent nourishment. Who shall then be the king worthy of protecting the subjects? Who shall be fondly affectionate to the people?' He then found the saintly king Ripuñjaya engaged in penance. He was endowed with all the earthly good qualities and he was engaged in great Vratas. Then the Lord of the Devas, Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, spoke to him.

Brahmā said:

O Ripuñjaya, understand these words of mine. O dear son, let the kingdom be protected with a single-pointed mind. Enough of your penance, O dear one, now. It is too strenuous. O excellent one among men, you have conquered all the worlds by means of your Dharma. Now, at my bidding, let the protection of the worlds be carried out, since the use of a being with his body is the obligations or help rendered to others. There is no other piety (Dharma) like that. Nothing else can accomplish the purpose. It is preferable to fall into hell after rendering help to others. The lordship of the universe cannot be so (achieved) if there is *Apakāra* (harm done) to living beings. For the sake of the work of the worlds and due def-

1. This is an adaptation (nay distortion) of the Ripuñjaya legend. Ripuñjaya, a king of Vārāṇasī, was duped by Gaṇeśa and *Adharma* spread. Ripuñjaya had to vacate Vārāṇasī. Here God Brahmā made Ripuñjaya a king of Avantī. He exiled all the Devas from the earth. But when Śiva came there, Ripuñjaya requested him to stay permanently at that Rājasthala by the name Rājasthaleśvara to bless all people. The Chapter has a section on the geography of India in the form of lists of rivers, mountains and sacred places.

erence to my behest, protect efficiently the ocean-girt earth and the subjects.

11-20. On being told thus by Brahmā, O daughter of the Mountain, the saintly king Ripuñjaya joined his palms in veneration and spoke to Brahmā: "The earth formerly created by you is immovable by nature. If there is no protector, where can the earth go? O grandfather, if it is necessary that the earth is to be protected by me, give me the beautiful city of Avantī that has been in existence for seven Kalpas. It is well-known all over the mortal world that it is Amarāvatī established for the residence of Devas fallen from Svarga. If the heaven-dwellers agree to abide by the limitation thus stipulated by me, no one shall stay in a place not granted by me. O Lord, I shall protect the earth in accordance with this stipulation."

Brahmā said:

O excellent one among men, the desire that you have given expression to, shall be honoured. Those Devas who happen to be here shall, out of deference to me, obey your command. They will be under your control. The name shall be Devanātha, O king of excellent holy vows.

After saying this Brahmā occupied his vehicle, the swan, and vanished. Then the king who had been promised by Brahmā the facility for protecting the earth, proclaimed thus on the earth: "Svarga has been assigned to you, the Devas, and the earth to human beings. Those who have stayed behind in caves, other places or mountains, should go away. This earth belongs to human beings." On hearing this proclamation of that king the Devas who were afraid, went back to Svarga out of deference to the statement of Brahmā (made to the king).

21-30. Thereafter that king righteously protected the subjects like his sons with an affectionate heart. The subjects became extremely happy (as they were) brought up comfortably by him. They were devoid of old age and death. They had sons, wealth and foodgrains. They realized all their desires. They enjoyed perpetual youth and were free from the distress due to the mutually opposed pairs. They always resorted to piety. There was no mountain, plain ground or continent on the

earth which was not fertile. Without being ploughed, the earth abounded in tasty fruits. The earth became like the world of Devas shining brilliantly with all desired qualities.

Thus, time passed off and the king went on administering the kingdom. The Devas became highly infuriated and they endeavoured for bringing about disorder. They brought many grievous disasters to the subjects frequently. Then the chastiser of Pāka (i.e. Indra) caused a protracted drought. When the common people began to perish (of starvation), the excellent king became a cloud, ascended the sky and brought about a good downpour. Protected and nourished by him alone, O lady of great renown, the people became happy. After some time, once Indra became the Saṁvarta cloud (i.e. one at the time of ultimate annihilation) and caused the fall of many clouds. Thereupon the king assumed the form of wind and restrained it. Thereafter, fire vanished from the surface of the earth all over. There was neither Yajña nor Japa, neither Homa nor cooking activity. Then all the people became agitated with ailments and got into difficulties.

31-42. On seeing it, the king himself became Havyavāhana (Fire). He sustained all the subjects, the Yajñas and the heaven-dwellers too. In the meantime, O goddess, accompanied by you, I came here to see my own city. I was surrounded by the multitudes of Bhūtas. Thereupon all these too came: All the groups of Devas, Kinnaras, great Serpents, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Uragas (reptiles, serpents), Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, all the other beings moving in the sky, the four oceans, the salt sea, the milk-ocean and other oceans, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sindhu, Candrabhāgā, Sarasvatī, Carmaṇvatī, Bhīmarathī, the holy Godāvarī river, Vipāśā, Gomatī, Dhūtapāpā, Bāhudā, Dṛṣadvatī, Pārā, Vedasmṛti, Vetraghnī, Narmadā, Śivā, Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, Nirvindhyā—all these came there.

Then Puṣkara, Prayāga, Prabhāsa, Naimiṣa, Pṛthu Tirthodaka, Amarakaṇṭaka, Gaṅgādvāra, Kuśāvarta, Bilvaka, Nīla Parvata, Varāha Parvata, Kanakhala Tīrtha, Bhṛgutuṅga, Sukakṣa, Ajagandha, Kāliñjara, Kedāra, Rudrakoṭi, Mahālaya, all the holy spots and meritorious shrines, Meru, Mahendra, Malaya, Mandara, Gandhamādana; the sages (named) Vālakhilyas, the four Vedas—these and many others came here along with me.

43-54. Thereafter Meru was turned into a level ground by

me. O goddess, I stationed myself on that ground and sat there surrounded by the Suras. The four Sāgaras, the salty one and others, were employed at the sides. King Ripuñjaya became agitated. On seeing me stationed at his place, he came towards me. Though he was scorched (dazzled) by my refulgence, O lady of excellent countenance, though he was afraid, he propitiated me: "Obeisance to you. Who are you, O Lord?" I said jokingly, "O king, I am the king of this place in four groups, in four forms and stationed in four aspects. Therefore, in all the world of sound and speech consisting of the mobile and immobile beings I have been seen from all sides."

Thereafter, O my beloved, I was eulogized with very great devotion. On seeing my incomparable extensive supreme power, O goddess, he sought refuge in me with great devotion. Again I was eulogized by him. I was pleased with the king. He said: "O Lord Parameśvara, if you are pleased, O Lord of all, let my perpetual devotion to you be firm." I was delighted by those words and told the king again: "It will be so." After saying this, I continued: "O king, tell me; the desire within your heart shall always be fulfilled. You will be invincible to all the Devas always." Again he requested for an excellent boon: "O Lord, this Sthala (place) shines very well by your presence. There is no doubt at all that this Meru is always your favourite. You will become well-known in all the three worlds as Rājasthaleśvara. It behoves you to do so.

55-65. If anyone endowed with great devotion comes here on pilgrimage with deep devotion in accordance with the injunctions laid down in the Purāṇas, you will grant him whatever is desired by him. All the Guṇas (Siddhis) beginning with *Aṇimā,* the Siddhis of *Guṭikā* (magical pills), collyrium, sword and sandal, the ability to be under water, the divine *Rasāyana* (medicine of great potency)—all these should be given to him. O Maheśvara, a man who devoutly visits Rājasthaleśvara with due observances, particularly on the tenth lunar day, shall attain the status of being the Lord of Devas. He should be worshipped by the Devas like Lord Indra. If anyone performs pilgrimage and visits the Lord in Rājasthala, he will have glory and success. This shall be my boon. May the enemies perish and the desires be achieved. O Śaṅkara, by your vision let there be rising prosperity in the whole family. Let all the

Devas stay here. Let Meru remain here. O Lord, let all the oceans stay in your vicinity." Thus he said. Then, O lady of excellent countenance, I replied: "When the king named Sudyumna comes here along with his wife for the sake of a son, I shall grant him the desired thing. Then all the four oceans will be staying fruitfully. Due to his propitiation I shall give him a splendid son. A man who undertakes pilgrimage to his place devoutly will undoubtedly attain all the desires." King Ripuñjaya was made Gaṇādhīśa by me on account of his devotion.

66. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Rājasthaleśvareśa has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Vaḍaleśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFIVE

Vaḍaleśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O goddess, know that the Liṅga named Vaḍaleśvara is the seventy-fifth deity that destroys sins. It is the bestower of desires on men merely through a visit to it.

2-9. There was a friend of Kubera named Maṇibhadra, O goddess. His son named Vaḍala was ruthlessly bad-tempered, powerfully influenced by jealousy. Though handsome, he was always lustful, ever inebriate and very powerful.

Once he went to a beautiful lotus-pond of Dhanada (Kubera). It had been specially constructed as a secret spot for amorous dalliance. It was covered with flowers and embellished with diamonds and lapis lazulis. Corals and pearls covered it. There was plenty of shade everywhere and golden lotuses beautified

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1. Vaḍala was son of Maṇibhadra, a friend of Kubera. Vaḍala enjoyed himself in the special pond reserved for Kubera. For this offence, Maṇibhadra cursed his son to be blind, deaf and lame. When Vaḍala fell on the earth in the accursed condition, Maṇibhadra came there and took his son to this Liṅga. Vaḍala was immediately absolved of the effects of the curse and went to heaven with his father. The Liṅga became known as Vaḍaleśvara after Vaḍala's name.

it extremely. It was very near the palace of Kubera who liked it much. The noble-souled Rājarāja Kubera used it as his special spot of recreation. Sword-wielding Rākṣasas and Kinnaras always guarded it.

On seeing it, Vaḍala was delighted excessively. Accompanied by his wife, he sported about in a secret charming spot. Under the influence of Anaṅga (god of Love) he diverted himself through amorous sports (*Ramaṇaka Yoga*). A hundred thousand heroic Rākṣasas, experts in battle, guarded it with all types of weapons readily kept for use.

10-20. The guards saw Maṇibhadra's son Vaḍala and understood that he had come there for amorous dalliance. Various edibles had been stuffed into his mouth. He had beautified himself with the application of divine sandalpaste. His face had a divine lustre, with the teeth resembling the inner core of a Ketakī flower. He had a mighty figure with a sword kept tied at his waist for fighting in case of emergency. He was seated on a couch in an elated, inebriated condition. Having understood his intention, they protested: "O warrior, it does not behove you to go along this path in the company of your wife. This is the sport-resort of Kubera, the noble-souled Dhanada (bestower of wealth). Devas, celestial sages, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras etc. seek the permission of the chief of Yakṣas and only then do they sport about or play here. Without the special permission, no one can sport about here for long, whether he be his brother, minister, friend or even son. If anyone disregards Dhaneśvara and arrogantly indulges himself in sports, he will undoubtedly perish."

Thus Vaḍala was restrained by the terrible Rākṣasas. They began threatening him angrily, "Do not do so," and surrounded him. The Yakṣa of powerful exploits disregarded those Rākṣasas. The highly refulgent one forcibly entered the precincts though all of them tried to stop him once again, shouting, "Seize him. Bind him. Cut him. We shall drink and gulp him because he is devoid of good behaviour." They raised their arms and rushed at him quickly, with eyes rolling round. Thereupon he lifted up his big, gold-plated club. It resembled the staff of Yama. He rapidly rushed at them and said, "Stop! Stop!"

21-32. On seeing his vigour and prowess, power of learning and might of arms and being unable to endure it, those

warriors who were hit by him suddenly turned away in a body. They were followed and hit again by the Yakṣa youth. On being split and pierced, they lost their senses and rose up in the sky. Then the guards who were afflicted and defeated by the Yakṣa rushed to the peaks of Kailāśa.

Like Śakra who defeated groups of Daityas and Dānavas, he valiantly defeated them. The son of the Yakṣa, who had been tormented with love, entered the lotus pond. The powerful Yakṣa began to sport about as he pleased.

The guards who were thus routed by Vaḍala collected together and went to Dhaneśvara in great fear and duly recounted to him the courage and great prowess of the Yakṣa in battle. On hearing their words, the renowned Maṇibhadra cursed his dear son Vaḍala out of deference for his Lord: "The lotus-pond is highly favoured and esteemed by Kubera and so is like a mother unto the boy Vaḍala. But he enjoyed himself in that beautiful pond. So let this son of mine be deprived of all pleasures. He will become lame, blind, deaf and distressed. He will fall a prey unto the consumptive disease."

On being cursed thus, Vaḍala was deprived of pleasures. He fell down on the earth and there became afflicted with tuberculosis. He could not move about. Afflicted by the curse of his father, he became blind and deaf. He immediately began to reflect: "This curse is very mysterious. By whom was I cursed suddenly? Even as I was alive, I have taken another birth. I am a pet of my father Maṇibhadra; why have I been cursed by him? I am his youthful son, bold and capable of defeating enemies. Blessed indeed is Maṇibhadra, my father, by whom his own son was cursed and thrown down on the earth due to his loyalty to his Lord."

33-43. Vaḍala continued: "I am fortunate due to the Lord. To those who sustain themselves by means of the food granted by the Lord, death should be pleasant like a festival. My actions of my past life have been accumulated for a long time. I have unjustly been acting as I pleased. Hence I have become a victim of the curse. Certainly I will fall into hell."

Even as Vaḍala was lamenting thus, O lady of excellent countenance, the powerful Maṇibhadra came to that place and saw his son afflicted by pulmonary consumption and rendered lame and blind. He was sighing in his distressed state and was

lamenting again and again. Yakṣa Maṇibhadra too was very sad. He said to his son: "Dear son, I have been a bad father because you have been cursed out of my deference to the Lord. The lotus-pond, the highly prized beautiful lotus-pond of Dhanada, was resorted to by you as you were afflicted with love. The leading Rākṣasas (Guards) were killed. Hence, my son, you have been cursed by me. It cannot become untrue. The Lord (employer) is our deity; the Lord is our master; the Lord is our mother; and the Lord is our father. He who forsakes his dear life in a battle for the sake of the master, goes to the highest region, the eternal Brahmaloka. This curse cannot be nullified by Mantras, Auṣadhas (medicines), Vratas, Dānas or observances. Hence do as I say. I have heard, in the world of Śakra, the Purāṇa glorified by Skanda as he was explaining it to Nārada in the presence of the Devas. The power of Mahākālavana was extolled by him. There is a great Liṅga in this holy spot to the south of Svargadvāra. It suppresses all ailments and it bestows handsome features and conjugal felicity. I shall take you there by means of a swift aerial chariot."

44-57. After saying this, Maṇibhadra brought his son to the place where the Lord of Devas was present to the south of Svargadvāra. By touching that Liṅga, he (Vaḍala) became handsome and powerful. He regained his sight and he was able to walk well and hear clearly in an instant. O Pārvatī, on seeing that great miracle, Maṇibhadra became delighted. He named the deity after the name of his son. "By the power of this Liṅga Vaḍala regained his vision. Hence this deity will be named Vaḍaleśvara from today. It will become well-known in all the three worlds as the bestower of eyes. Those who adore the deity named Vaḍaleśvara, the Liṅga well-known in all the worlds, will attain their desire. On being seen, it will dispel sins; on being touched, it will bestow a kingdom; on being adored with devotional fervour, it will undoubtedly grant salvation. The twelfth day in the bright half of the month of Kārttika is auspicious. Devotees who worship Vaḍaleśvara on that day and offer gifts always, will attain the greatest region. It is as though they have performed penance in Prayāga, Prabhāsa and the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean. They will undoubtedly become liberated. They will never have the ordeal of being in the womb. They will get all happiness. They will

become Gāṇapatyas (leaders of Gaṇas) and great favourities of Śaṅkara. By visiting Vaḍaleśvara, men become richly endowed with handsome features and conjugal felicity. They will have sons and grandsons. If the ordeal of remaining in the womb and experiencing great pain is not liked, then the devotee should fervently adore the deity Vaḍaleśvara. Without the Liṅga there is no *Siddhi*; the great region is difficult to attain; the goal of Svarga cannot be attained until the Liṅga is adored. *Siddhi* is inaccessible to those who are negligent in the adoration of the Liṅga. My son attained his desire only through the Liṅga." After saying thus, Maṇibhadra went to his own abode, accompanied by his son, where Lord Kubera was present.

58. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Vaḍaleśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Now listen to that of Aruṇeśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSIX

Aruṇeśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O goddess, the Liṅga named Aruṇeśvara is the seventy-sixth deity. Through seeing it dispels sins and bestows cherished desires on men.

2-7. Formerly, O goddess, in Devayuga, there were two blessed daughters of Prajāpati. The two sisters were very beautiful and free from sins. They became wives of Kaśyapa. They were Kadrū and Vinatā. The Delighted husband who was on a par with Prajāpati granted them boons. Kaśyapa who was extremely joyous, granted the boons to his righteous wives. On hearing that he was granting them boons the excellent ladies derived

1. The story of the birth of Aruṇa, son of Vinatā (Mbh, *Ādi*, 16.16.23) is adopted to explain why the Liṅga in Mahākālavana came to be known as Aruṇeśvara. Aruṇa repented after cursing his mother for his deformity, when Nārada came and took him to Mahākālavana near that Liṅga. The Liṅga absolved him of his curse and appointed him as the charioteer of the Sun-god.

the most exquisite delight. Kadrū wanted a thousand serpents of equal splendour as her sons while Vinatā wanted two sons superior to the sons of Kadrū in strength, virility, splendour and exploit. The husband granted her the boon: "You will get two excellent sons. Let it be so," Kaśyapa said to Vinatā.

8-14. Vinatā became satisfied when she got the boon as she wished. After getting the sons superior in strength, she considered her desires fulfilled. Kadrū also became glad on getting a thousand sons of equal splendour. "You must be careful in carrying the children in the womb," said Kaśyapa. When the wives were naturally delighted, due to the boon, Kaśyapa went to forest for great penance. After a long period Kadrū, the lady of charming limbs, begot a thousand (eggs of) Nāgas and Vinatā brought forth two eggs. The delighted nurses kept the eggs of both in pots (heated) with vapour i.e. incubators, for five hundred years. During that period of five hundred years, Kadrū's sons came out. From the eggs of Vinatā neither of the two children was seen. Eagerly wishing for a son, that poor lady was ashamed. Vinatā then broke open an egg and saw a half-developed son. The upper part was developed and the other part not yet manifested. It is heard that the infuriated son cursed her:

15-24. "O my mother, you were greedy and so made me thus with the limbs not fully developed. Hence you are bound to become a slave for five hundred years, of this lady with whom you always compete. This son, dear mother, will release you from slavery if you do not make him also deficient in limbs like me, by breaking open the egg. He shall become then very powerful. Hence you must patiently wait for his natural birth, if you wish that he should be endowed with special power. You will wait for five hundred years from now."

After cursing Vinatā, his mother, thus, O goddess, Aruṇa lamented, overwhelmed with grief: "Alas, I have been cruel enough to curse my own mother without any fault! How can I attain a happy state! The mother is Araṇi (i.e. sacrificial wood from which fire is made) unto this body of men. The mother endures much of misery. Only a mother knows the great pain of pregnancy. Hence more affection for children is seen in a mother than in a father. Mother is remembered

as the seniormost person worthy of veneration among all those who are to be venerated. The Śruti does not mention any way of redemption for the son (who commits a fault) even if he offers rice-balls in Gayā. If the father dies, it is the mother, who gives relief and happiness to the son. If the mother dies, the father does not show so much affection for the son. A son without a mother is said to be one very deficient and handicapped. When he becomes old, the son becomes more miserable. But when mother passes away the son feels that the entire world is a void.

25-36. As for me, I have become highly sinful and antagonistic to my mother. Undoubtedly I will die after setting myself on fire. It is on account of my previous Karmas that I am born with deficient limbs. Since one must experience the fruit of one's action, one cannot accuse one's mother as the cause."

While Aruṇa, the son of Kaśyapa, was lamenting thus, O lady of wide eyes, Nārada arrived there. On seeing Aruṇa very miserable and disheartened and lamenting frequently, Nārada of cheerful mind laughingly said to himself: 'Oh, this Aruṇa, son of Kaśyapa, is crying now! This is the elder son of Vinatā born of the storehouse of penance. Brought out within a few days, only half of his body has become developed though he is powerful enough. I shall console this lamenting one, born of the womb of Vinatā. Since he cries out of delusion, if I console him, I will have the credit thereof certainly.'

After thinking thus within his mind, Nārada, the excellent Brāhmaṇa, spoke to Aruṇa these words comparable (in sweetness) to honey and nectar: "O dear one, O Kaśyapa's successor born of the womb of Vinatā, O mass of splendour of unassailable features, do not be grief-stricken in vain. Events destined to happen, do happen whether for happiness or for misery. The fact that Vinatā is cursed by you is the mysterious working of the Devas. If you have any repentance in your mind for having cursed your own mother, then come to the splendid Mahākālavana at my bidding to the north of Yātreśa, the Lord of Devas, where there is the meritorious Liṅga worshipped by Devas. It is the bestower of everything and is auspicious."

On being told thus by the noble-souled Nārada Aruṇa came to the splendid Mahākālavana within half a moment.

37-47. He saw the splendid Liṅga there, which appeared

like a peak of brilliant mass of light. With flowers he adored it duly and fervently. Aruṇa was told by the Liṅga, O goddess: "Be the charioteer of the Sun-god who wanders. There is no charioteer like you. I have given you the capacity for that purpose. You shall be before the Sun always. O Aruṇa, you will rise before and the Sun will rise afterwards. After your name, I shall be known in all the three worlds undoubtedly as Aruṇeśvara. I shall bestow wealth unto men. Those who always visit me, Aruṇeśvara, named after your name, will go to the greatest place, free from burning and annihilation. Those who visit me with concentration and mental purity will rejoice along with generations of the maternal and paternal families for thousands of crores of Kalpas. Those who visit on a Sunday will never experience the misery born of the ocean of worldly existence for the period when fourteen Indras rule. He who visits Aruṇeśvara on the fourteenth lunar day in the dark half of a month shall undoubtedly raise to Svarga his Pitṛs staying in Naraka. If a devotee visits Aruṇeśvara on Saṅkrānti day (transit of the Sun) and on Sunday, it is as good as if the pilgrimage of Śuṇḍīrasvāmin (i.e. Kārttikeya) was performed by him. There is no doubt about it." On being told thus by the Liṅga the contented son of Vinatā came to the place where Lord Sun was present. Due to the greatness of this Liṅga, Aruṇa, the son of Kaśyapa, is seen in the sky before the Sun always.

48. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Aruṇeśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Puṣpadanteśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSEVEN

Puṣpadanteśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1. O goddess, listen to the (story of the) Liṅga named Puṣpadanteśvara, the seventy-seventh deity. Merely by seeing it, one can avert the necessity of staying in a womb.

2-11. Formerly a Brāhmaṇa named Śini had no son. He worried about a son and thought of many penances for that purpose, such as having air alone as his food, water for food, being without any food, keeping the arms lifted up, taking in greens, bulbous roots and fruits as his intake, eating leaf alone, eating one or two leaves etc. 'Penance like these and others are for (i.e. lead to) welfare but one of these penances I shall resort to for the sake of great benefit. But for the sake of cessation of obstacles, I shall first propitiate Īśvara.'

After thinking thus in his mind, he performed the penance of keeping the arms and feet(?) lifted up. With these two the purpose will not be difficult to achieve nor will there be any fault. Therefore, the sage performed such a penance for twelve years. On seeing his performing the penance and observing great vows and rites, O goddess, I was requested by you while on Mandara of many charming caves:

"This great sage is performing a very severe penance ruthlessly for the sake of a son. With his brilliance he brightens the mountain and dries up water reservoirs. Due to his penance very difficult to be performed, the heaven-dwellers have become agitated. Big *Vyālas* (pythons or tigers) have become bewildered; lordly mountains have become distorted; the sages have sunk into oblivion; and the heaven and earth tremble. Brāhmaṇa Śini who is Ayonija (not born of any womb) desires

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1. Puṣpadanta was a Gaṇa of Lord Śiva. Sage Śini was performing penance for having a son. Śiva asked his Gaṇas if one would like to go as Nimi's son. None replied. Puṣpadanta explained to Śiva the unwillingness of Gaṇas to go to wretched Mṛtyuloka. At this Śiva got infuriated and cursed him. Puṣpadanta deeply repented. Pārvatī advised him to go to Mahākālavana, propitiate the Liṅga, which Puṣpadanta did and was restored to his position. The Liṅga propitiated by Puṣpadanta became well-known after him.

a son who should be Ayonija. You are the Yoni (sources or origin) of all good qualities; you are the Yoni of penance; you are the penance itself; you are the greatest abode, O Lord having Fire, Sun and Moon as eyes. O Sarveśvara (Lord of all), why is not a son as desired given to the Brāhmaṇa?

12-17a. O preceptor of Suras and Asuras, why don't you give a son unto him? O Śiva, at my request, make the gift of a son to this Śini who has eradicated all defects by means of penance and who has established his own self within Brahman. The great sage is very much distressed due to the difficult penance. Established in his due observances, he dispelled the splendour of all great luminaries by means of his own brilliance like the sun dispelling darkness. Why should the exertions of your devotees be fruitless, O Lord of gods? When the sun has risen, darkness can never exist. O Lord of Devas, it is not proper to subject your devotee to the great pain of misery."

O goddess, O daughter of the Mountain, I was requested thus by you to be compassionate to the Brāhmaṇa, for giving him a son in particular.

17b-22. Out of due deference to you, O goddess, the Gaṇas were summoned by me: Rudras, Harabhaktas (devotees of Śiva), Kūṣmāṇḍas, Gaganacārins (sky-walkers), Romaraudras, Mahānīlas, Śikhāvantas (Tufted ones), Kokilas, etc. Many others too of diverse types, such as Kālāsyas, Haripiṅgalas, Jaṭājūṭadharas (wearing matted hairs), Citras, Vīthinakṣatracārins (movers through asterisms), Nīlagrīvas, Kṛṣṇamukhas, Piṅgadhauta-Jaṭāsaṭas (those with tawny or white matted hairs and manes), Jvara, Ḍiṇḍi, Mahākāla, Lāṅguli, Maheśvara, Ghaṇṭākarṇa, Viśākha and all the remaining Gaṇas, Vṛṣārūḍhas (those riding bulls), Kāmatulyas (comparable to Kāma), Kāmarūpabalas (having form and strength as they wished), Śūlacandradharas (holding the trident and the moon). All these were of equal exploits. All of them came there at my behest and stood with palms joined in veneration.

23-35. Eulogizing by means of diverse kinds of prayers, they said thus with a concentrated mind: "O Lord, what should be done by us here? May the command be given."

After hearing the words of the Gaṇas and after realizing such a devotion, I glorified the great power of the penance

of Brāhmaṇa Śini: "Śini, the excellent Brāhmaṇa, is performing a penance for the sake of a son. At my instance who among you will offer himself as the son of the Brāhmaṇa? I shall grant him all the desires, everything wished for. Now the sage desires for a never-aging son, immortal son. Let my words be carried out immediately and let the Brāhmaṇa be liberated from his difficulty. The ardent desire of my devotee does not deserve to become futile."

On hearing my words, all of them stood with faces turned downwards and necks trembling. All of them were engaged in deep thought. No one spoke anything. No one looked at anything. Then the respected Puṣpadanta spoke suddenly: "O Lord, without knowing my own mind, I, on account of the compassion for the Gaṇas, say that the Gaṇas will not leave you off and go to the earth. Undoubtedly they will stay here forever in your vicinity. After enjoying the excellent joy, how will they enter human womb that is despicable, full of Rajas and Tamas qualities and always very wretched? How will we forsake Svarga and go to the greatest hell?"

O lady of wide, large eyes, Puṣpadanta, the leader of the Gaṇas, committed the blunder of speaking thus because he was nudged by the inevitable future. I told him thus: "Since you did something to displease me, do fall into the mortal world."

After cursing Puṣpadanta, Vīraka was thus urged by me: "At my bidding, dear son, do be the son of the Brāhmaṇa. I shall grant you everything you wish."

36-43. On being told thus, O goddess, Vīraka became the son of the Brāhmaṇa. Puṣpadanta was excessively distressed and he lamented. He repented much and sighed frequently saying: "Alas, that birth is fruitful where men carry out the commands of their masters. It is proclaimed that those servants who carry out the commands of the masters with single-minded attention are very rare. They will attain merit (Dharma) and wealth (Artha) and their family is redeemed by them. Devas become pleased with those who are devoted to the masters. The duties of those who serve are very mysterious and very difficult even for Yogins to perform. It cannot be known on what (condition or act) the Lord can be propitiated and by means of what thing. The Lord will be very difficult to be

propitiated. Even if there is a single fault, the Lord becomes angry. Even acts to oblige him become futile. Hence service is too difficult to be performed. A master, a serpent and fire get hotted up soon. Hence they are to be resorted to and served carefully by those who are desirous of protecting themselves. I had disobeyed the command of the Lord. Hence I have been forced to fall on the earth. (I wonder) to what worlds I may have to proceed to, like a sinner who destroyed a foetus." After lamenting thus many times he sought refuge in myself. He repeatedly bowed down and spoke in a piteously distressed voice:

44-54. "I am distressed. I am devoid of wisdom. O Śaṅkara, I bow down unto you. O Lord of Devas, be pleased. Forgive my offence. Dependents do not fulfil the tasks of the Lords through anger. Be pleased, O Lord of the chiefs of Devas, unto this wretched and miserable devotee. At your bidding, I am ready to be born as an insect or worm. I am a devotee, O Lord, well-established in the state of being your son."

On hearing these words of Puṣpadanta, O Pārvatī, you were overwhelmed by affection and you spoke thus: "Do go, son, at my bidding to the splendid Mahākālavana. Propitiate the Liṅga soon. It will be named after you. Son, your glory shall continue to be, till all the living beings are annihilated."

When this was advised by you, O goddess of excellent countenance, I too said: "O son, my words cannot be untrue in any manner. By visiting my Liṅga you will become my favourite. You will get into the aerial chariot of Puṣpapāda. Being adored with flowers you will attain the eternal position. Along with me and the Gaṇas you will joyously move about. Dear one, I shall also not be happy without you. I shall also come to the splendid Mahākālavana. I am always pleased by this pure devotion. You will be made the leader of Gaṇas. Undoubtedly you will become one who helps the worlds after going to that holy spot certainly."

55-67. Thus, O goddess, the leader of the Gaṇas, Puṣpadanta, was advised by me. Honoured and keeping silence at my behest, he propitiated the Liṅga in the splendid Mahākālavana, to the north of Durvāseśa. The Liṅga told him suddenly: "O excellent one among the Gaṇas, I am delighted. I shall be well-known after your name. I have granted you my favour now."

In the meantime, O goddess, I went there along with you, Śakra and other Devas and the different kinds of Gaṇas. Puṣpadanta came to my vicinity once again delighted, seated on a splendid flower-bedecked seat and showered with flowers. I embraced him and placed him on my lap. A place for rest was granted, O Viśālākṣī, and instructed thus: "The men who visit the Liṅga adored by you on the earth will go playing to Svarga by Puṣpaka. They will become Gaṇādhyakṣas adorned with everything desirable. They will be so till fourteen Indras complete their rule. By the visit, the sins of this birth as well as of the previous one perish. Thereafter, with my favour, all knowledge will be revealed. He who adores (it) on Mondays, eighth or fourteenth lunar day, rejoices delightedly along with the Devas in heaven always. He shall be accompanied by seven generations of maternal and paternal families. A man should get up at dawn. Without speaking to anyone he shall visit Puṣpadanteśvara. He obtains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. Even a wicked one who visits is liberated from sins. After death, he goes to Gandharvaloka surrounded by Vidyādharas. He who visits daily will never have the line broken. He becomes Gaṇādhyakṣa for the period of a day of Brahmā. After enjoying the prosperity in seven worlds and pleasures, he will become an emperor on the earth and come to my lap.

68. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Puṣpadanteśvareśa has been recounted to you. Listen to (that of) Avimukteśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYEIGHT

Avimukteśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O my beloved, know that Avimukteśvara Liṅga is the

1. The daughter of King Citrasena of Śākala could remember her former birth. When the king asked her about her marriage, she behaved like a mad person. She explained that she was not insane but in her previous birth she used black magic to control her husband—a sin which was finally eradicated by a visit to Avimukteśvara. The king went to see that deity along with his daughter who got merged in that Liṅga.

seventy-eighth deity. Merely by visiting it, one attains the benefit of a pilgrimage.

2-8. In the city of Śākala, O goddess, there was a king well-known all over the world by the name Citrasena. He was more handsome than Manmatha (the god of Love). His wife Candraprabhā was dearer to him than his own life. She was a righteous, chaste lady endowed with beauty and youth. The king had no son, but a charming daughter was born. The father, the excellent king, named his daughter richly endowed with all characteristic features as Lāvaṇyavatī. O goddess, she could recollect her previous births. She remembered ancient events (of the past births). The slender-waisted lady observed celibacy due to absence of attachment (to the world). When she attained youthful age, the king placed her in his lap, sniffed her head in delight and asked her: "Dear daughter, it is time to give you away in marriage. To what type of bridegroom are you to be given: to a king, a prince, an honoured Brāhmaṇa, an old man with many wives or a rustic fellow already having sons?" Thus the king in his hilarious mood asked his daughter repeatedly.

9-19. On being asked, the princess did not say to the king anything. She simply lowered her face. The king again said to her: "Dear daughter, if my advice does not appeal to you, now you make your own choice according to your wish." On being told thus repeatedly by her father, the king, she reacted strangely. She cried piteously on the first hearing of a despicable state (of getting married). Then she laughed boisterously. She further began to sigh. Immediately she became highly delighted. Then she began to shed tears.

Seeing his daughter in such a condition of insanity, the king began to worry. 'What is this? Has she become mad? Has she been afflicted by a malefic Planet? Has my daughter endowed with all good characteristics been possessed by spirits or vampires?'

O lady of good renown, when the king became thus anxious, the daughter began to speak: "Father, do not be dispirited. I am not afflicted by any malefic Planet or by a spirit or a demon. O king, your daughter is not seized by any vampire or Yakṣa. I am by birth *Jātismara* (capable of recollecting previous births). Let my previous birth be heard.

In the city of Prāgjyotiṣa, there was a Brāhmaṇa named Harasvāmin. O king, I was his unlucky wife. Though endowed with beauty and youthful features, I did not become favourite with him. He always hated me and used to speak harsh words. Excepting me, O king, he did not have any hatred towards anyone else. At the time of marriage, I was adversely glanced at by evil Planets.

20-31. Though I was married to a noble-born Brāhmaṇa endowed with many good qualities, O leader of men, that Brāhmaṇa was looked at by auspicious Planets. Therefore, I was his lover, O king. Yet I was not his beloved. He was habitually well-behaved. He was interested in Vedic Study. Established in the vow of celibacy, he never set his heart on anyone else. This made me furious and overzealous to acquire the technique of Vaśīkaraṇa (black magic for captivation of hearts). I enquired of some young women who were openly neglected by their husbands. I was told by them, O king: "The husband can be brought under your influence. We have been convinced. Hence it behoves you to do so. If your husband can be administered different kinds of medicines and powders, if some great efficacious Mantras capable of enchantment can be uttered, if different kinds of unguents can be smeared over him, he will behave like a slave.

Thereupon believing in their words, I hurriedly went ahead and procured the powder and Mantra. Back at the husband's place, I administered the powder dissolved in milk to my husband. The Mantra (written on plaques and tablets) was used on his neck and the joints of all limbs. When he drank the potion, when the Mantra (with plaques) covered him fully, he came under my control instantly by the power of those Mantras and the powder. He stood at the doorway proclaiming: "I am your slave, O splendid lady. I have sought refuge in you. Save me. I am under your control, O splendid lady." Perceiving his squealing and squeaking as a result of the great efficacy of the Mantras, I made use of the medical concoction necessary to bring him down to normal condition. Ever since then my husband was under my beck and call staying at home. In due course, I met with death. There was a series of hellish tortures after that. I was burned and roasted in the Naraka called Tāmrabhrāṣṭra for fifteen Yugas. In the Naraka I was minced

into pieces of the size of gingelly seeds. I was afflicted by Kālasūtra in the Ghrāṇayantraka (mechanical device pressing the nose).

32-48. I was boiled in a pot of hot oil, stirred up with a ladle, ground on the top of a rock and pounded with iron rods. In Dantadalana (hell) I was split up and in Raurava I was burned and scorched with face down. I was immersed in dirty faeces and putrefying blood. Dear father, any other maiden who makes use of *Vaśīkaraṇa* technique is considered of wicked conduct and futile piety. She will be cooked in Naraka. The husband is the Lord; the husband is the preceptor; the husband is the greatest deity; the husband is the master; the husband is the friend; and the husband is the greatest position. If the husband is pleased, all the deities are pleased with women. If he is adverse, all of them are adverse. Hence the husband should be served always. If the husband is not propitiated, the woman is doomed. How can a woman who applies *Vaśīkaraṇa* techniques to a husband with whose favour diverse kinds of pleasures are always got, derive happiness? She may be born in hundreds of brutish wombs or those of worms and birds. Hence the words of the husband should be carried out by women. In this manner, highly terrifying Narakas were gone through by me. On account of the despicable action I was born into a thousand brutish wombs. In order to atone for some sin I was born into a thousand brutish wombs. I was born in the house of a Cāṇḍāla. I was blessed with great beauty but was afflicted by various kinds of wounds. I was surrounded by dogs and bitten repeatedly by them. I became distressed. For being a wicked one I was bitten and obstructed by wolves and was afflicted much, yet I went to Mahākālavana. Seeking something here and there I casually visited Mahādeva in the vicinity of Pippalādeśvara, the Lord of Devas. Merely by visiting it, I proceeded towards Śakra's city by means of a very brilliant aerial chariot with chains of tinkling bells suspended from it. I was clad in divine garments and adorned with divine garlands. There I was adored by Devas and eulogized by Cāraṇas. As a result of visiting that Liṅga, I was born in your abode in the splendid city of Śākala. I am endowed with beauty and am your favourite daughter. Remembering the despicable womb, I cried piteously.

On remembering the greatness of the Liṅga I was delighted

immediately. I am neither crazy nor am I seized by malefic Planets. I was born with an inborn faculty of recollecting previous births, dear father, and am steadfast in the vow of celibacy. Hence, O Lord, I shall go and visit that Deity again, lest I should be born again in the ocean of worldly existence."

49-56. On hearing these words of his daughter, King Citrasena went to Mahākālavana accompanied by his servants and ministers. He visited the Liṅga there and devoutly adored it. She too, on seeing the Liṅga, got merged into it.

O my beloved, as a result of visiting the Liṅga the king was blessed with a son. He became an emperor like Svāyaṁbhuvamanu. In the meantime, O great goddess, seeing that the princess had got merged into the deity, they joyously assigned a name to it. Since everything happened only by visiting Avimukta Liṅga, the deity shall be well-known as Avimukteśvara Deva. In Kāśī, Śiva is famous as Lord Viśveśvara. The same deity is well-known here by the name Avimukteśvara. Just as Vārāṇasī is meritorious, so also Avantī is the bestower of salvation. Here the merit is heard ten times more than at that holy spot (i.e., Vārāṇasī).

Hence Lord Viśveśvara came to Kuśasthalī. Arriving at this place, men become very learned and of disciplined holy Vratas. Those who visit Śiva known as Avimukteśvara, with great devotion, will certainly attain salvation which shall be permanent and stable.

57-63. Those who are not (destined to be) liberated do not visit and the liberated ones do see always (Avimukteśvara). By visiting Avimukteśa one obtains that benefit which usually is obtained through disciplined vows of celibacy and all Yajñas performed very well. The meritorious goal of salvation is obtained only through visiting Avimukteśvara. By visiting Avimukteśa properly one obtains that goal which is obtained by Sāṅkhyas and Yogas. Eschewing the fear of birth and death, he attains the greatest goal, who ardently adores Avimukteśvara Śiva. Even a Brāhmaṇa-slayer who goes to Avimukteśvara and worships the deity is rid of that sin by the greatness of that Liṅga. Even a wicked one who roguishly visits Avimukteśvara Śiva becomes free from old age, death and ephemeral birth. On being remembered, devoutly adored or eulogized by different kinds of prayers, Avimukteśvara Śiva, the Lord of Devas, grants salvation.

64. Thus the sin-destroying power of Avimukteśvareśa is recounted to you, O goddess. Listen to that of Hanumatkeśvara.

CHAPTER SEVENTYNINE

Hanumatkeśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1. O my beloved, know that Haṇumatkeśvara Liṅga is the seventy-ninth deity. By merely visiting it, one obtains the desired benefit.

2-9. When the Rākṣasas had been killed and Rāma had obtained the kingdom, O goddess, sages came there to congratulate Rāghava. All those Brāhmaṇas, the chief of whom was Agastya, were adored by Rāma. Delighted in their minds the Brāhmaṇas spoke these words to Rāma: "O Rāma, Ravāṇa with his sons and grandsons was fortunately killed. Formerly we saw you with your wife coming victorious, accompanied by Hanumān, the noble-souled monkey, the slayer of the Rākṣasas, the son of Pavana. May the monkey Hānumān be long-lived. He is a part of Rudra on the surface of the earth. He is born of the womb of Añjanā. May all the Guardians of Quarters—Indra, Agni, Lord Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Pavana, Kubera and Śiva accompanied by Brahmā always protect him."

On hearing the words of those sages of purified souls, Rāma was very much surprised. With palms joined in reverence, he spoke: "Why have you ignored Lakṣmaṇa and praised the monkey instead? Of what nature is he? What is his power? What is his vigour? What is his prowess?

10-19. Then they said: "As a matter of fact, this is the

1. The Liṅga came to be known as Hanumatkeśvara as it resuscitated Hanumān who, during his childhood, was killed by Indra with his Vajra. By the grace of that Liṅga Hanumān became very powerful and was able to perform the valorous deeds in the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. The guest-sages of Rāma advised him to visit Hanumatkeśvara in Mahākālavana. The creation of this Rāma episode is obviously for the glorification of this Liṅga.

reason in the case of the excellent Vānara. There is no one else in all the three worlds who may be equal to him in vigour. O Lord, this highly intelligent one leapt over a distance of a hundred Yojanas. After overpowering (destroying) the city of Laṅkā, he entered the Antaḥpura of Rāvaṇa. He assumed a size of only a span, saw and talked to Sītā, enquired the details of her and she was consoled. The leaders of the Rākṣasa army, the sons of the ministers, the servants and the sons of Rāvaṇa were killed by Hanumān. They were struck by him in the very palace of Rāvaṇa. Again after getting liberated from bonds, he had a talk with the Ten-headed King of Rākṣasas. Laṅkā was reduced to ash like the earth by sin(?). Brave deeds as those of Hanumān have not been heard in the case of Kāla, Śakra, Viṣṇu or Vedhas (Brahmā).

Rāma said:

It is due to the might of the arms of this Hanumān, that I was able to get back Sītā, Lakṣmana, victory, kingdom, friends and kinsmen. How could anyone except this great monkey find out the detailed news of Jānakī? Even this friend of mine, the Lord of the monkeys (i.e. Sugrīva), would not have been able to know the news about Jānakī. When the enmity (of the brothers) started (I wonder) why Vāli was not reduced to ash like grass by this Hanumān with a desire to do something pleasing to Sugrīva? When the Lord of the monkeys was suffering torture, why was he neglected? I think Hanumān did not realize his own strength.

20-30. When Rāma said this, the sages spoke these words: "O most excellent one among the descendants of Raghu, what you say about Hanumān is true. There is no one equal to him in strength nor in speed of movement nor in intellect. But formerly a curse had been pronounced on him by the sages whose statements never turn false or ineffective. It is due to this that his own strength was not realized by this powerful (monkey) at the time when Vāli was torturing Sugrīva. A wonderful feat of this noble-souled one during childhood cannot be easily described. His strength (even then) was great. If you wish to hear, listen, we shall recount.

Immediately after his birth he had a physical form brilliant like that of the rising sun. Desirous of seizing the rising sun he jumped into the sky. While he was rushing speedily, O Rāma, his jaw was suddenly hit with the thunderbolt by Śakra who had understood this quickly. Struck by the thunderbolt of Śakra, he fell on a mountain. When he was falling headlong his jaw got broken. When the infant fell down almost dead due to the blow received from the thunderbolt, Vāyu (Wind-god) carried him on to Mahākālavana. For the sake of his son, Pavana (Wind) propitiated the Liṅga then. As soon as he came into contact with the Liṅga, the monkey rose up like a drying plant after being watered. He was fully restored to life. After seeing him revived, Pavana was excessively delighted in his heart. He took up the child quickly and said: 'My son rose up due to the contact with this Liṅga. Hence this deity will become well-known as Hanumatkeśvara.'

31-41. In the meantime Śakra came there surrounded by the Suras, holding a garland of blue lotuses. He said: 'Since his jaw was shattered by the thunderbolt hurled with my hand, this powerful monkey will be called Hanumān.'

Varuṇa granted him this boon: 'He will never meet with death. Yama granted him immunity from death due to a blow with (his) stick. Dhanada granted him freedom from illness. Lustre was granted by Sūrya. Speedy movement was granted by Pavana. Then the following boon was granted by the Liṅga in the presence of the Devas: 'He will not be killed by any of the weapons. Undoubtedly he will become unaging and immortal. He will be a terror to the enemy. He will grant freedom from fear to his friends. He will be invincible in battle.' This the Liṅga said repeatedly: 'In order to exterminate the army of the enemy and to get the favour of Rāma always, he will not forget his strength but due to the curse he will not remember it for some time. When Rāvaṇa is killed, he will stay under Rāma's guidance. After requesting Vibhīṣaṇa he will install me (i.e. the Liṅga) here. Then all the Devas will adore me with devotion. I will become well-known all over the world after the same name.'

Then Gandhavāha (Wind-god) took up his son and brought him home. He told Añjanā the fact of the acquisition of the boon from the Liṅga. Thus on account of the power of the

Liṅga, the son of Maruta (Wind-god) became powerful in all the th ee worlds. Hence, Rāma! he is praised by us.

42-53. Who is superior to Hanumān in this world in respect to these things: prowess, enthusiasm, intellect, valour, good character, sweetness, good expediency etc., majesty, cleverness, virility and courage? Who can stand before Hanumān, as in the case of all of us, before (Agastya) me who have rendered the sea agitated, before Pāvaka (Fire) about to burn the worlds and before Antaka (Yama) desirous of seizing the people? Thus what you asked has been explained to you. O king of miraculous prowess, these were the acts (exploits) of Hanumān as a child. O Rāma, we have met you. We have been honoured by you. Now we shall go back."

After saying this, all the sages went to the region of Avantī. They worshipped Śiva named Hanumatkeśvara. Those who devoutly adore Hanumatkeśvara Liṅga worshipped by the Devas, are blessed in the Kali Age. They will attain the rare privilege of identity with Brahman. After being born again, they will attain the everlasting salvation. O my beloved, a man who visits Hanumatkeśvara Liṅga will get more benefit (and become) free from all miseries. His movement will not be restrained in any of the worlds. Undoubtedly he will be equipped with divine prosperity. He will be surrounded by thousands of women and will go and come as he pleases by means of a lustrous aerial chariot resembling the rising sun. Unhesitatingly he will move about in all the worlds of heaven-dwellers. Among men he will be the most desirable and among all castes the most excellent. After slipping down from heaven, he is born in a great family and is endowed with handsome features. He will be pious, a devotee of Rudra and master of all lores. By visiting this, he will become a king or someone equal to king; by touching, attain great merit and by worship the greatest region.

54. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Hanumatkeśvara Deva is recounted to you. Listen to that of Svapneśvara.

CHAPTER EIGHTY

Svapneśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1. O my beloved, know Svapneśvara Liṅga as the eightieth deity. Merely by visiting it, one can certainly dispel evil dreams.

2-8. O goddess, there was a king born of the Ikṣvāku race. He was famous in the world as Kalmāṣapāda. By his refulgence, he resembled the Sun on the earth. Once he came across Śakti, the bosom-born son of Vaśiṣṭha, in a forest. He was conversant with the highest virtue and he had subdued all the sense-organs. This sage of great penance happened to be on the way the king was going along. "Move away," said the king to him. Then, out of delusion, the great king, like a demon, struck with his whip that excellent sage who did not keep off from the way. On being struck with the whip the great sage, the son of Vaśiṣṭha, became very furious. He angrily cursed the king: "Since you are injuring a sage like a Rākṣasa, O wretched king, you will become a man-eater from today. You will be constantly wandering over the earth strongly addicted to meat."

On being cursed thus, the king instantly sought refuge in Śakti and requested him to become pleased. Though the Brāhmaṇa-sage was besought by the king, the highly infuriated Śakti was not pacified. Thereupon the king ate him up.

9-25. After devouring Śakti, he ate up all the other sons of Vaśiṣṭha also suddenly, like a lion devouring puny creatures.

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1. Here the legend of Kalmāṣapāda is used to glorify this Liṅga. Kalmāṣapāda was harassed by bad dreams after devouring Vaśiṣṭha's son—a demoniac act perpetrated by him under the influence of Śakti's curse. As per advice of his ministers, he approached Vaśiṣṭha along with them to seek his advice. Adṛśyantī, Śakti's wife, got terrified at the sight of Kalmāṣapāda. Vaśiṣṭha consoled her. He paralysed the movement of Kalmāṣapāda, freed him from the curse of demonhood and advised him to go to this Liṅga in Mahākālavana. The king did so and was spared such dreams. Hence the Liṅga came to be known as Svapneśvara.

Ever since then, the excellent king became a veritable cannibal later. Deluded by a mass of sins, he began to see evil dreams at night. On seeing these terrifying dreams, the king became very distressed. Overwhelmed with repentance and great distress he lamented much.

He was enquired of by the ministers: "What do you do, O king? How do you appear lean and pale? Wherefore is your lustre dim?" The king narrated to them the evil dreams in the proper sequence:

"I have witnessed in the dream the ocean getting dried up and the moon fallen on the ground. The earth is enveloped by dense darkness and overspread by clouds. I saw myself dirty and with dishevelled hair. I saw myself falling from the peak of a mountain into an eddy of cowdung and drank Añjali*-fuls of oil, laughing all the while. All my limbs were smeared with oil. I waded through oil. With the face downcast, I sat on an iron stool. Some maidens red in complexion, wearing red garlands and smeared with red pastes, were singing. Others were clad in black garments, wearing black garlands and smeared with black pastes. Being dragged by them, I was led to the southern quarter. I was bound with cables of gold, silver and iron. Bound in iron fetters, I sank deep into dust and mud. I was tortured by pigeons and terrible vultures and crows. I was gnawed at by jackals. I was seated on the head of a Madgura (Mudgara?). Seated in a vehicle drawn by bears and monkeys, I went in the southern direction. Without any movement, I got sunk in a waterless river, level with its bed. At night I was tormented and torn by means of teeth. I was kicked in the chest forcefully with adamantine hoofs by a donkey. The eyes were pricked with iron pikes by Vetālas (Vampires). By black men, having weapons raised up, I was pricked with terrible black thorns. In the course of the dream, I was hit hard with huge sharp arrows. Thus I saw (these) in the course of this terrible night. It is difficult to describe many other evil dreams I saw. Seeing this series of evil dreams of many forms never imagined of by me earlier, I experience a great fear. My heart is not clear and calm. Grasping the arms together, I lament as though I am helplessly orphaned."

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* The two open hands placed side by side and slightly hollowed.

26-32. On hearing the words of the king, the ministers became distressed much. They saw evil omens, such as the fall of comets, etc. The city appeared to be adversely affected by Saturn, Sun and Mars. Karaṇas such as Nāga, Catuṣpāda, Viṣṭi, Kiṁstughna, Śakuni are not favourable and cannot be lauded. The Muhūrtas became awful. Knowing that anything untoward in the case of the king meant disaster to the realm and doom of the family, they, however, spoke these words by way of consolation to the king: "O descendant of Kakutstha, do not subject yourself to grief. Apprehensions true or untrue are transferred to dream as imagined on account of the action of the seven vital ingredients in the bodily secretions. So adore the Pitṛs and others and Devas as well as Brāhmaṇas. Through them you will be rid of the mental hallucination, since fate alone can save, when fate strikes." On being consoled thus by the ministers, experts in pious rites, the king confessed to them his sins, such as the killing of the sons of the preceptor and the like.

The King said:

33-44. Śakti, the eldest son of Vaśiṣṭha, was eaten by me, O ministers. I had been ruthless enough to eat about ninety-nine (one less than hundred) ones (sons of Vaśiṣṭha). I am distressed on account of that sin. How can I be normal and calm? Even a single Brāhmaṇa-slaughter is unfortunately a very wicked act. I have been cruel and so I did not hesitate to do so. What worlds are destined for me after the perpetration of this terrible deed! I am a Rākṣasa and I have brought an end to the family with this same body. Born in the family of Raghu and his descendants, I have reduced myself to the state of a wretched sinner, the origin of all sins. Hence I shall court death by setting myself on fire.

On hearing these words of Saudāsa, the ministers, the masters of all Śāstras conversant with the principles of the Vedas, became extremely surprised: "Alas, great sin has been committed! We do no know the means of atonement. No one except Vaśiṣṭha knows it now. Hence for the sake of the king, we must go now itself to the place where the holy sage Vaśiṣṭha, the Brāhmaṇa, is present."

After saying thus, the distressed ministers accompanied by

him went to the hermitage where Vaśiṣṭha, the holy sage, was consoling his daughter-in-law Adṛśyantī. The distressed Adṛśyantī saw the king, the perpetrator of the cruel act, before her. In a terrified voice she spoke to Vaśiṣṭha these words: "Here comes the haughty, hideous Rākṣasa with a staff held in his hand, like the god of Death with his fierce staff. O sage, O most excellent one among all the masters of the Vedas, excepting you no one on the earth is capable of restraining him. Save me from this sinner of awful appearance. Certainly this Rākṣasa has come here with the intention of devouring us."

Vaśiṣṭha said:

45-55. O daughter, do not be afraid. You have nothing to fear from the Rākṣasa. This is not a Rākṣasa whom, you think, there is something to fear from. This is King Kalmāṣapāda who is accompanied by his ministers. He has come to me in this forest region.

On seeing him coming, Vaśiṣṭha, the holy sage of great refulgence, uttered *Hum*, a menacing sound of defiance, and restrained the excellent king. He then sprinkled him with water purified by means of Mantras and released the excellent king from the state of a Rākṣasa. Regaining his consciousness in due course, the king duly bowed down to the excellent sage Vaśiṣṭha and spoke to him with palms joined in reverence: "I am Saudāsa, O illustrious one, of excellent holy vows. I am your slave. Tell me what you wish to have now, what I shall do for you." On hearing these words of the king and coming to know through the power of his penance that everything was the result of Viśvāmitra's action, the excellent Brāhmaṇa said to the king, who was bowing down with humility: "Everything has been understood at the proper time. O king, do go to Kuśasthalī. In the vicinity of Mahākāla, there is the Liṅga destructive of evil dreams. It is one of divine power, capable of granting royal wealth. It makes the devotees endowed with sons and grandsons. It destroys even thousands of the sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter. It dispels all sins. Merely by visiting it you will become rid of sins. Undoubtedly the terrible fear arising from evil dreams will perish. O excellent king, the

Planets too will become favourable to you." On being told thus again by his preceptor, the noble-souled Vaśiṣṭha, the king hastened to the splendid Mahākālavana, O goddess. There he visited the Liṅga that destroys evil dreams. All the evil dreams perished. Good dreams appeared. Becoming rid of his sins the king regained his position. After going back to Ayodhyā, he joyously ruled the kingdom.

56-63. Ever since then, this deity is named Svapneśvara and has become well-known thus. It is destructive of all evil dreams. If the devotees take their holy bath in the auspicious waters of Śiprā and visit Svapneśvara Śiva on the eighth and fourteenth lunar days, their congenital evil dreams perish. He alone is to be adored always in this world and in the other, who devoutly visits Svapneśvara Śiva. By visiting Svapneśvara one attains even the rarest of wishes with which he proceeds to the shrine. Those who regularly visit the deity Svapneśvara always go to my abode, O my beloved, after casting off this mortal body. If one devoid of devotion, one without pious holy rites, even casually visits the Lord, O lady of renown, he attains the meritorious goal usually attained by Yogins. The embodied beings who worship the deity on festival days with diverse kinds of flowers become endowed with wealth, strength and health. They realize all desires. They will be long-lived. Their conduct will be splendid. They will be pure. It is by visiting Śrī Svapneśvara that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Kubera, Dahana (Fire-god) and others attained the greatest good.

64. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Svapneśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to that of Liṅgacatuṣṭaya (four Liṅgas).

CHAPTER ĒIGHTYONE

Piṅgaleśvara[1]

Īśvara said:

1-9. O goddess, listen to the (story of the) four Liṅgas installed at four doorways. Merely by visiting the Liṅgas a man becomes blessed and contented. You were enquiring of me out of curiosity, O goddess of excellent countenance: "O Lord, show me a spot that is exquisitely beautiful. It must be one resorted to by many Siddhas who desire to return there again. It should be well-concealed, holy and indestructible even at the time of Pralaya. It should be divine unlike any other thing whether a Tīrtha or a penance grove. It should be endowed with innumerable qualities. It should be splendid causing worldly pleasures and salvation. It should be a place where there are golden-peaked palaces, different kinds of mansions, wonderful gardens and splendid pathways of different kinds. It should be a place where the acquisition of the desired benefit is easy. It should be reverberating with the high-pitched songs of Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. It should be a place comparable to a meritorious Loka. It should be an ornament unto heaven." Thus I was requested, O goddess, on Mandara abounding in charming caves.

I replied with joy: "Listen to that eternal spot. The beautiful Mahākālavana is more pleasant than Svarga. It is endowed with incomparable good qualities. It is splendid conferring worldly pleasures and salvation. Another blessed place on a

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1. Śiva installed four Liṅgas at the four quarters of this Vana. Piṅgaleśvara is to the east. Piṅgalā was a beautiful daughter of a learned Brāhmaṇa. After his wife's death, he took his daughter with him and went to a forest to perform penance. When he died Piṅgalā lamented. Dharma assumed the form of an old Brāhmaṇa and explained to her that her present calamity was the fruit of her act in the former birth in which she was cursed by a Brāhmaṇa lady for enticing her son. But her act of making another Brāhmaṇa happy caused her birth in a Brāhmaṇa family. As a way out of her present calamity, Dharma advised her to visit this Liṅga in the eastern part of Mahākālavana. She went to that Liṅga, propitiated it and got merged in it. Since then the Liṅga became famous as Piṅgaleśvara.

par with it has not been seen in all the three worlds.

10-21. It is worthy of being resorted to by Devas, Gandharvas and Siddhas desirous of salvation. It has been created by me as a pastime out of eagerness to please you. It is the *Tilaka* (auspicious mark on the forehead) of all the Tīrthas in the charming Jaṁbūdvīpa. The acquisition of the desired benefit is secured without any effort. It is devoid of old age, sickness and fear. There is no trace of any ailment there. It is resorted to by Śakra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Soma and Īśa (the Guardians of the Quarters). Even Devas who enjoy the pleasures of Svarga always yearn for it. Here the benefits derived are innumerable. The goal (position secured) is everlasting. Those men who did not resort to that spot have missed a lot on the earth. It is not possible for Devas, Dānavas and human beings to extol adequately the good points of the holy spot where I myself am stationed. Whatever inauspicious thing has been committed in the course of human activity becomes reduced to ash entirely after going to Mahākālavana. Neither in Kurukṣetra nor in Gaṅgādvāra nor in Tripuṣkara is that goal possible to attain which has been ordained unto men in Mahākālavana forever. Even brutish creatures going and staying in Mahākālavana and courting death there attain the highest goal. The heap of sinful acts may be of the size of Meru and Mandara. But when one goes to Mahākālavana, all that becomes destroyed. O my beloved, Mahākālavana is called Śmaśāna (cremation ground) too. There Brahmā and other Devas with Nārāyaṇa as their leader, Yogins, Sāṁkyas, Siddhas, Sanaka and others—all these propitiate me with great devotion. They are solely devoted to me. In the holy place, Mahākālavana, I have fixed the same goal as that of Yoga and Tapas and that of the performers of Yajñas.

22-33. Stationed there I annihilate the three worlds consisting of the mobile and immobile beings. Hence, O goddess, the splendid holy spot is called Mahākālavana." On hearing the diverse good points elaborated thus, O goddess, you became surprised and felt inclined to go there. Your mind became highly ardent to visit the holy spot. I arrived at the splendid Mahākālavana along with you and said: "See, O goddess, the spot of wondrous splendour described by me. It vies with the city of the Lord of immortals. It is beautiful and it heightens

all pleasures. O goddess, it brings about worldly pleasures as well as liberation (from Saṁsāra). "O lady of wide large eyes, after visiting the excellent holy spot you told me: "In order to guard this holy spot, may four devout Gaṇas be employed, O Mahādeva, O my Lord, as well as for my satisfaction. O Parameśvara, may four gateways be made and four golden Kalaśas (Domes) splendid and firm should also be made. Let the four aims of life (viz. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa) be assigned to the quarters beginning with the East." On hearing your words, O goddess, four Gaṇas were recollected by me with effort for the purpose of protecting this holy spot. They too were installed as the four deities thereafter, viz. Piṅgaleśa (Dhanādhyakṣa), Kāyāvarohaṇa, Bilveśvara (the excellent Gaṇa) and Durdarśa, the leader of the Gaṇas. These were employed by me as capable of guarding the holy spot in the quarters beginning with the East, O lady of excellent countenance, for the sake of your pleasure. They were employed in accordance with the suggestion you made. Piṅgala was employed in the eastern quarter. Similarly, O my beloved, Kāyāvarohaṇa was employed in the southern quarter, Bilveśvara in the west and Durdarśa in the north.

34-45. They were told: "O excellent Gaṇas, at my bidding, scrupulous protection of those men who die here, in the middle of the holy place, should be carried out by you." Listen to the story pertaining to Piṅgaleśvara. By merely listening to it a man shall become blessed and have his desire fulfilled.

In Kānyakubja, O goddess, there was a girl named Piṅgalā. Her behaviour and dress were excellent and her beauty was the most exquisite ever created. Her father was highly intelligent and was conversant with the principles of all the Śāstras. He was always engaged in meditation and pursuit of knowledge. He engaged himself in the self-study of the Vedas. This leading Brāhmaṇa was named Piṅgala. His chaste wife Piṅgākṣī was well-known in the world but died prematurely. On account of this grievous calamity the Brāhmaṇa became disinterested in householder's life. Taking his daughter with him he went to a penance grove of great merit, resorted to by sages whose diet consisted of greens, fruits and bulbous roots. Along with those sages the Brāhmaṇa engaged himself in

meditation and Yogic practice. He stayed there, O goddess, duly looking after Piṅgalā. The righteous-souled Brāhmaṇa protected his daughter like his very heart. The Brāhmaṇa of great penance always thought of his chaste wife and did not marry again, having consideration for her who was motherless. The illustrious one was disgusted with the worldly existence. He was aware of all pious practices. He had perfect control over all sense-organs. Yet he did not enter into Saṁsāra (Gṛhastha) stage because he had to look after his daughter properly. Thus, protecting the motherless, pitiable girl, that Brāhmaṇa eventually met with death and went to Svarga.

Thereupon, bereft of her father that Piṅgalā became wretched and deeply grief-stricken. Having fallen into the ocean of grief, she lamented much.

46-59a. 'Today, as ill-luck would have it, my father too has passed away. Though he was kind, he has gone alone leaving me off as though he was bereft of attachment. He was impartial towards all living beings, though engaged heartily in what is beneficial to me. Abandoning me without another help, he has gone to the other world from this. Though extremely miserable and agitated due to the grievous separation from my father, I hold on to this miserable, fruitless life. My father had realized Brahman. He had perfect control over his mind and sense-organs. Yet out of consideration for me, a motherless child, he brought me up. Being separated from my father by whom I was well-protected during infancy and by whom I have been brought up till now, I will never live peacefully. Without my father, having lost all support, I shall fall into a river, or in a well-kindled fire. Or I shall jump down from a mountain.'

Thus the grief-stricken girl lamented repeatedly. She was advised by the esteemed, excellent sages accompanied by their wives. Her girl companions of the same age gathered round her. Embracing her they tried to console her. They too cried along with her. The girl was afflicted and miserable.

Dharma (Lord of piety) ever engaged in what is beneficial to others, took pity on her. He came to the place in the form of an old Brāhmaṇa and spoke these words: "O girl, enough of your terrible lamentations. Your father cannot be got back. Hence it does not behove you to bewail. Youth and beauty,

life and hoarded wealth and association with beloved ones—all these are not permanent. Hence learned men do not bewail these. O splendid girl, in your previous life you have perpetrated such deeds as have caused separation from your father in the forest frequented by the sages. See, dear girl, the power of fate. Your father has forsaken you and has gone away.

Persons think thus: 'This has been done. This has to be done. This is another thing half-done and half-undone.' Mṛtyu (god of Death) thus subjects people, addicted to desires, to his control. Hence, O splendid girl, it behoves you to listen, forgetting all misery, how, due to your Karma, you had to experience separation from your parents.

59b-69. Formerly you were a courtesan named Sundarī. You were beautiful in form, expert in dance, singing etc. and clever in playing on flute and lute. In respect of ornaments and garments you were the foremost among prostitutes.

On seeing you, richly endowed with beauty, dressed well and exquisitely adorned, a Brāhmaṇa of good qualities became afflicted by Madana (god of Love). After coming to know that the Brāhmaṇa had come to such a plight being afflicted by Madana, you sported with that lover for four years. That Brāhmaṇa became interested in sinful deeds and deluded by sensual pleasures. He was killed by a certain Śūdra, another lover of yours, in your abode. The Bāhmaṇa had left his splendid-minded (immature) daughter of twelve years due to the contact with a Śūdra woman. He met with his death and went to the terrible Naraka. The (Brāhmaṇa's) scholarly father and excessively miserable mother were distressed due to the separation from their son. They gave you a terrible curse.

The Mother said:

O woman of wicked activities, medical potion was administered by you in order to entice my son. He was deceived in order to cause separation from us. She has also actually brought about our separation. Hence let her be a wretched one without a husband in the next birth.

The Father said:

You will become separated from your mother even in your

infancy and become distressed. Precluded from marriage, you will become bereft of your father too.

(Dharma said:)

Hence, O lady of excellent complexion, you have met with this misery even as a girl, on account of the Karma perpetrated before.

Piṅgalā said:

70-73. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, the incident of the previous birth of mine has been narrated by you. Hence clarify decisively a question I shall put to you. I had committed very terrible sins in this manner. I am a base woman of sinful conduct. How then was I begotten by a Brāhmaṇa, an expounder of Brahman? One Dhvaja (a distillery where liquor is made) is equal to ten Cakrins (mechanical device to extract oil) and ten Sūnās (broomsticks etc.) equal a Cakrin. A Veśyā (courtesan) is equal to ten Dhvajas. A king is equal to ten Veśyās. Thus say the men conversant with pious rites, the Brāhmaṇas of disciplined vows. So how is it that my birth was from an excellent Brāhmaṇa?

The Brāhmaṇa said:

74-80. Though you were engaged in sinful conduct, you were born in the splendid family of Brāhmaṇas. I shall mention the reason thereof. Listen, O Piṅgalā. A certain Brāhmaṇa addicted to sensual pleasures was imprisoned at the command of the king. Theft had been committed by him, O beautiful maiden, because he was infatuated over a courtesan. You said: "Let him be released. He is not a thief. No sin has been committed. If theft has been committed it (is as good as) has been committed by me alone. I shall give more than the amount stolen. Let the excellent Brāhmaṇa he released." After saying this, you brought him to your house. You set up a household along with him. The bright house was rendered fragrant with flowers, incense etc. The Brāhmaṇa was delighted by you with sensual pleasures. Due to the greatness of that merit, you went to the excellent Svarga. You were born in a noble family, especially, as the daughter of a Brāhmaṇa. It is on account of

the curse, O daughter, that you have now suffered separation of great magnitude.

Piṅgalā said:

81-87. In the previous birth I was born a courtesan committing sinful deeds. I was defiled and after the wealth of others. I was devoid of purity and good conduct. Now I have become miserable due to the separation from my parents. O Lord, due to the curse I am precluded from marrying. Be pleased with me, O holy Sir. Tell me who you are. How can I forestall future birth? How can I have salvation? How will I attain the excellent goal, be liberated from worldly bondage?

The Brāhmaṇa said:

I am Dharma. I have come here in the form of a Brāhmaṇa to test you. As per my advice, by visiting a Liṅga with the favour of the holy spot you will attain the great salvation.

Piṅgalā said:

In which holy spot shall that great salvation be attained? By visiting which Liṅga (is it attained)? I wish to know this, O Dharma. How is this to be obtained quickly?

Dharma said:

There is a well-guarded (secret) holy place, the splendid Mahākālavana. It is the cause of the salvation of all creatures always. In that excellent meritorious holy spot, in an area extending to a Yojana, O daughter, there is the Liṅga that yields salvation. It is stationed in the Eastern Direction. Merely by visiting it, you will obtain salvation, O Piṅgalā.

88-97. On hearing the words of Dharma, O lady of renown, Piṅgalā hastened to the place where the excellent Liṅga was present. She devoutly visited it and touched it repeatedly. Due to the visit to that Liṅga, she got merged into that Liṅga. On that occasion the Devas, stationed there itself, said: "Highly sinful in the other birth, O Piṅgalā, you have been liberated instantly. Hence this deity will become well-known in the worlds

by the name Piṅgaleśvara. He will undoubtedly be the destroyer of great sins. Those who go to the Eastern Direction and visit Piṅgaleśvara will be blessed by Śatakratu. Delighted in heart, he will adore them perfectly. The Devas will be favourable to them. They will have Svarga undoubtedly. The city of Amarāvatī will come under their control. In their family piety will never become defunct. It will always be endowed with wealth. The world will be under the control of those who carry on pious activities. Undoubtedly the Pitṛs will be satisfied permanently. By visiting Piṅgaleśvara perfectly, one will get entirely the benefit cited as the merit of a thousand horse-sacrifices. By visiting Piṅgaleśvara it shall be as good as the adoration of all the Liṅgas existing in this holy spot, whether they be secret or openly manifested."

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Piṅgaleśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Listen to (that of) Kāyāvarohaṇa.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTWO

Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara[1]

Mahādeva said:

1-8. O Pārvatī, listen also to the origin of Kāyāvarohaṇa. Merely by listening to it, a man ceases to be embodied. While Brahmā was desirous of creation at the beginning of Vaivasvata Manvantara, Dakṣa, the Prajāpati, was born from his right thumb. The wife of the noble-souled one came forth from the left thumb. The Lord begot of her fifty daughters. All those were

1. Kāyāvarohaṇa (Mod. Karvān, Baroda District, Gujarat) was the birth place of Lakuṭī(lī)śa, the 28th Avatāra of Śiva. He was the founder of the Pāśupata sect. He belonged to the 2nd century A.D. But the Purāṇa-author is not aware of the historical facts. This is a garbled version where Kāyāvarohaṇa is the name of the Liṅga to the south of Mahākālavana.

According to this Purāṇic legend, after the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice Vīrabhadra killed Tuṣita and other Devas. Brahmā came to Śiva at Mandara mountain with a request to restore the bodies of the Devas. Śiva advised them to go to this Liṅga which is to the south of Mahākālavana. The Devas propitiated the Liṅga and recovered their bodies.

of blemishless limbs and lotus-eyed. The patriarch who had earlier lost his sons, placed these daughters in their place. He gave ten of them to Dharma, thirteen to Kaśyapa and twenty-seven to Indu (Moon-god). All the marriages were celebrated in the Divya (divine) mode. Rohiṇī became the ever-favourite of Candra. On behalf of the other twenty-six (daughters) Candra was cursed by Dakṣa, O Pārvatī. Dakṣa too was cursed by Candra and was rendered a Prācetasa. (Dakṣa) reborn as the son of Pracetas, performed a horse-sacrifice. O daughter of the Mountain, out of delusion, Dakṣa did not invite me. Havyavāha (Fire) took with him the shares of the Yajña of the groups of the Devas entirely.

9-22. O lady of wide large eyes, Havyavāha stood in the supportless firmament invoked by the Mantras, bearing the shares. You saw him there. Recollecting the previous enmity, O my beloved, you said to me: "You are the Lord of all the Devas, the goal and refuge unto them. You are Yajña, you are Vaṣaṭkāra, Hotṛ and Adhvaryu, O Lord of all Devas. How does the Yajña function without you? This Agni bears the shares of the Devas with fear. Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas, is arrogant indeed. Since he recollects the earlier enmity, so unless chastised, he will never give up. Dakṣa and Vahni should be made bereft of their Kāyā (body). O slayer of the Tripuras, O Śaṅkara, those Devas who have been invoked for the Yajña should all be made bereft of their bodies." When this was spoken by you, O goddess of excellent countenance, I spoke thus: "O lady of pure smiles, this Dakṣa has been your father in the previous birth. O my beloved, Vahni is only one who obeys the orders. The Devas are but toys." On hearing these words of mine, O my beloved, you became furious. You knitted the eyebrows and heaved deep breaths repeatedly. Out of anger you rubbed the tip of your nose with your hand many times. When the tip of the nose was being rubbed and pressed, O Daughter of the Mountain, a woman of four curved fangs and three eyes with knitted eyebrows was born. She had the finger protectors made of Godhā-skin. Over her girdle she had worn the coat of mail. She held a bow and a sword, a quiver and a flagstaff. She had a thousand faces, hundred arms and thousand feet and bellies. O goddess, she shook the earth with her turned feet. On seeing her of completely Tāmasika form, O goddess,

bowed to by all the worlds, you named her Bhadrakālī and Māyā. A male being of similar features was created by me. He caused horripilation (due to fear) in the onlookers. With palms joined in reverence, he requested me repeatedly: "O Lord of Suras, command me. What shall I do?"

23-35. After guessing your mind, I gave him the charming name of Vīrabhadra and commanded him: "O Vīrabhadra, accompanied by this Bhadrakālī, go and fetch the haughty and terrible Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas, along with the Devas. O Gaṇādhyakṣa, destroy everything along with the Yajña and the attendants. You have innumerable good qualities and I am giving you a great army and to Bhadrakālī too a terrible army has been given. The never-ending group of the Mothers armed with Kapālakartrikās (scissors to cut skulls) also has been given to her." Thereupon both of them, surrounded by the vast army, went to the place where Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas, was seated, performing Yajña. He was surrounded by the Devas along with the members of the assembly and Brāhmaṇas. Then, O Pārvatī, the Devas who had been confidently drinking the Soma juice in the *Adhvara* (Yajña), purified by means of Mantras, were held up by that army. Lord Śakra, the chief of Devas, who was seated in the middle of the *Adhvara* was terrified by the three-eyed Gaṇa armed with the trident. Yama (god of Death), who was engrossed in imbibing the Soma juice in the sacrifice, was dragged by the Gaṇa who was named Yama and who had the lustre similar to that of Yama. The heroic Lord of the Western Quarter, Varuṇa, was bound with a noose by Pāśa, the leader of the Gaṇas. O Parameśvarī, Anila (Wind) was struck by the Gaṇa named Prāṇa. In the Northern Quarter, O goddess, of the *Adhvara*, Naravāhana Kubera, the Lord of the Northern Quarter, was held along with his *Nidhānas* (Treasures). All of them employed by Vīrabhadra fought the battle terribly. There the terrifying Bhadrakālī too fought excessively. There were hundreds of women fighters adorned with human skulls, viz. Vikarālī, Mahākālī, Kālikā, Kalaśodarī, Prajvālajvalanākārā, Śuṣkamāṁsā, Atibhairavā etc. The Mothers armed with Kapālakartrikās killed the multitudes of Devas. On seeing the furious group of the Mothers striking and suppressing the Suras, the Devas called Tuṣitas came there eager to fight.

36-45. Some of them hurled Śaktis, some others Prāsas

(spears). Some of them attacked with Tomaras and some with swords and Paṭṭiśas. The group of the Matṛs (Mothers) were afflicted and the Pramathas were troubled. Then the furious Bhadrakālī having the refulgence of six Suns assailed them in the battle with club, volleys of arrows, and swords and other weapons. The eyes of Bhaga and the teeth of Pūṣan were plucked from the face and shattered. She cut off the hands of Dinakara and the feet of Bhāskara. The eight Vasus who were expert in battle were struck with Musala (threshing rod). With their heads shattered, they fled vomiting blood. The Devas named Tuṣitas proud (of fighting in) battle were deprived of their bodies. Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas, was tightly tied with a noose. The remaining Devas became terrified and they sought refuge in Brahmā. At first Devas named Tuṣitas were deprived of their bodies. The Devas called Vasus fled. The Bhāskaras were afflicted in the battle. O great Lord, it is not known where Indra, Yama, Dhaneśvara, Varuṇa, the Lord of aquatic beings, and others had gone. Everything was destroyed by Bhadrakālī and the Gaṇa Vīrabhadra. The sacrificial post was broken. The Kalaśa (dome) was demolished. The great sacrificial hall was set on fire. The gateway of the Yajña-hall was shattered. On hearing their words Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds, became compassionate. He came to the place on Mandara where I was stationed.

46-57. After eulogizing me, he made this statement: "The earliest Devas named Tuṣitas have been deprived of their bodies by Bhadrakālī, O Mahādeva. The Vasus have been overpowered and shattered, the Bhāskaras have been injured in the battle. The remaining ones have fled in various directions. How shall the Kāyāvarohaṇa (growing of the body once again) of the Tuṣitas take place?"

On hearing the words of Brahmā, O lady of excellent countenance, I said: "Let these Tuṣitas go to the holy spot Mahākālavana where Lakuṭīśa has gone home after Kāyāvarohaṇa.[1]

1. The author seems to have heard a confused tradition about Lakuṭīśa. Lakuṭī(lī)śa is the 28th Avatāra of Śiva born in Kali Age. He was born at Kāyāvarohaṇa (Mod. Karvān, Baroda city). He then proceeded to Ujjain. He had four famous disciples. The author is not aware that Kāyāvarohaṇa is a place in Gujarat. The garbled version is based on the etymological meaning of *Kāyāvarohaṇa*—a Purāṇic way of creating legends.

At my bidding the Brāhmaṇas, accompanied by four disciples, attained the Kāyās when Kaliyuga arrived after Dvāpara was over. All these are my disciples and comparable to me. They stayed on the earth contented and blessed for the purpose of protecting Brāhmaṇas. To the south of that Kṣetra (holy spot) there is an excellent Liṅga. It is divine and it bestows all riches. It accords Kāyā unto the Siddhas. With the favour of that Liṅga, these Suras will attain their Kāyās." On hearing my words, O my beloved, those Tuṣitas went away delighted in the company of Brahmā to the place where the excellent Liṅga was present. With the favour of that Liṅga, excellent Kāyās were attained by them. Those Tuṣitas became the same as they were before. Hence the name Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara was given by the Devas. The deity shall be bestower of desired things and will be well-known. If the devotees go to the southern quarter and visit the deity Kāyāvarohaṇa with great devotion, Yama shall be their father (a protecting guardian). By visiting it alone, all those sins acquired in the course of thousands and crores of births become dissolved, not otherwise.

58-63. If the groups of Pitṛs who have gone to Naraka due to their Karmas, visit that Liṅga, they will become liberated. If people incidentally visit the deity Kāyāvarohaṇa, they will not return (to the earth) even in the course of hundreds and crores of births. By touching that Liṅga, even men who are great sinners will go to the great abode bereft of all sins. The deity Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara, tenaciously adored, grants kingdom, the eternal Svargaloka and other pleasures. Those who take their holy bath on the twelfth lunar day and then visit Kāyāvarohaṇeśvara pierce through the abode of Brahmā and attain the greatest goal. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Kāyāvarohaṇeśa has been recounted to you. Listen to Bilveśvara now.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTHREE

Bilveśvara[1]

Śrī Hara said:

1-10. O beautiful lady, listen to the greatness of Bilveśvara. Merely by listening to it one is liberated from all sins.

In the Ādikalpa, O Mahādevī, while Brahmā was meditating out of compassion for all the worlds, the Kalpa trees were born. Among them the Bilva tree is praised as Śrīvṛkṣa. Beneath that tree there was seated a gold-lustred being. He was seen by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds. He was joyously and heartily eating different kinds of soft fruits as well as leaves. His fingers were protected with Godhā-skin gloves. He had a bow and arrows. He was adorned with a crown and earrings. He wore a coat of mail and held a sword. He was a young man with a broad chest and leonine body. He was full of enthusiasm. The famous name Bilva was assigned to him by Brahmā. Indra wooed him: "You do become the king on the earth. Though you are stationed on the earth and I am stationed in Svarga, you can be my dear friend. I shall give you a garland of victory (Vaijayantī) with never-fading lotuses. By its power no weapon shall afflict you in war."

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1. Bilva is one of the Kalpa Vṛkṣas and is known as Śrīvṛkṣa. Brahmā after meditation found a sublime person under a Bilva tree. He made him a king. Indra promised to lend his Vajra when "remembered". Kapila, a learned Brāhmaṇa, became his fast friend. Once an argument developed out of a pleasant talk and Bilva struck Kapila with Vajra on the head. Kapila reunited his head by his Brahmavidyā. He went to Brahmā and got invincibility against Vajra. Again Bilva and Kapila became friends and in another quarrel Bilva struck him with Vajra to no purpose. Kapila refused to be cowed down and say: "I am afraid." Bilva propitiated Viṣṇu and Kapila defied him. Viṣṇu hurled his discus Sudarśana which became ineffective due to Śiva's blessing. Kapila challenged Viṣṇu to fight, took a handful of Kuśa grass, charged them with Mantra and hurled it at Viṣṇu. The Mantra-charged Kuśa and Viṣṇu's missiles had such a terrific fight that Brahmā requested Viṣṇu to stop it. Bilva felt humiliated. He was advised by Indra to go to this Liṅga. While Bilva was propitiating it Kapila came there. He saw Śiva in Bilva's person. He uttered to the god "Submit". The king was delighted. They became friends again. But as this Liṅga was propitiated by Bilva, it became known as Bilveśvara.

He said: "If you give me your weapon Vajra (Thunderbolt), I shall be the king on the earth; otherwise it (kingship of the earth) does not appeal to me. On that condition I shall protect the earth truthfully."

Indra said:

11-21. Let it be so. Welfare unto you. Be king doing what is beneficial to the subjects. On being remembered, the Vajra shall come over to your hand. It will not do so otherwise.

On being told thus, Bilva, the brilliant one, became the king. An excellent Brāhmaṇa-sage, a pious-souled master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, named Kapila, became the companion of Bilva. O lady of excellent countenance, associating with him, he remained comfortably seated and held discourses of wonderful purport with him repeatedly, and derived much pleasure thereby. But in the course of the discourse there arose a dispute between them. Bilva said: "Dāna and Tīrtha are important things." He said so repeatedly. But Kapila said: "Brahman is the most excellent thing. Tapas is the most excellent thing."

Bilva said:

Through Dāna kingdom, happiness, pleasures, prosperity, everlasting heavenly pleasures—all these are obtained, O tiger among Brāhmaṇas. How is it that you praise Brahman?

Kapila said:

Through Veda Yajñas function; through Veda *Iṣṭi* (sacrifice) for the achievement of desired things functions; through Veda holy rites function. The entire universe has Veda at its root.

Bilva said:

In the world, kings are the most excellent ones. They are efficient in the protection of the world. They are comparable to the Guardians of Quarters in this world. Why do you praise Brahman?

Kapila said:

Brāhmaṇas are reputed as chief ones who can curse or bless. They are the parents of kings. Why don't you accept it, O Bilva?

Thus when the eagerness was aroused, Kapila, the excellent Brāhmaṇa, was struck on the head by Bilva with the Vajra having bent joints. Kapila who had been cut into two with the Vajra, unified his body through Brahmavidyā and then came to me.

22-36. I was eulogized with various kinds of prayers. I was perfectly propitiated. Immutability from Kuliśa (Vajra) was granted by me to the Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa returned to Bilva and their friendship was renewed. Again such a dispute arose, O Daughter of the Mountain. Bilva kicked the Brāhmaṇa with his left foot. Further he raised the Vajra and hit him very hard. But the Vajra did not cause death or even pain unto him. Realizing that the noble soul could not be slain, Bilva approached Nārāyaṇa and prayed to him to grant him what he desired. The delighted Viṣṇu said: "I am the bestower of boons." He was joyous. O goddess, the lofty-minded one bowed down to Viṣṇu and said this:

Bilva said:

There is a Brāhmaṇa-sage named Kapila. He cannot be killed or injured. O Hṛṣīkeśa, he is a friend of mine. He says thus always: "I am afraid neither of a Deva nor of a Rākṣasa, nor of an Asura, neither of a Piśāca nor of a Yakṣa nor of anyone else." It behoves you to do something to make him say to me "I am afraid."

On being told thus by Bilva, Lord Puruṣottama said: "It will be so," and went to the hermitage of Kapila. The Lord entered the hermitage. He was highly adored by Kapila. Janārdana spoke thus gently to Kapila: "O holy Sir, O most excellent one among Brāhmaṇas, O master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, I will choose a boon now. O leading Brāhmaṇa, it behoves you to grant it (to me). I have been propitiated by Bilva, the leading king, repeatedly. I told him, 'I am the bestower of boons.' O great sage, he chose the boon that you should utter, 'I am

afraid.' Hence say so to bless him. You are not afraid but, O holy Sir, say so for my sake." On being told thus by Viṣṇu sweetly, Kapila said again and again: "O Janārdana, I am not afraid. I will not say, 'I am afraid.' What is said by him will not be uttered by me." On hearing the words of Kapila, Janārdana lifted the discus to terrify the Brāhmaṇa. He said:

"If you don'ts say, 'I am afraid,' I will strike you with the discus."

Kapila said:

37-46. O Viṣṇu, why do you wish to give painful strain to your dear discus? With the favour of the Three-eyed Lord, I am not an easy target to your discus.

Thereafter Kapila took a handful of Kuśa grass, approached Vāsudeva and said, "Stop, stop. Today I shall destroy your pride, arrogance and your miraculous power, everything. Wait, O Janārdana." Then a tumultuous fight took place between Kṛṣṇa and Kapila. It caused hairs to stand on their ends within a moment. A pitched battle between divine weapons and Kuśa grass took place in the supportless firmament, O goddess. The Devas were bewildered. In the meantime, the highly distressed Brahmā came there surrounded by Suras. He spoke to Kṛṣṇa these words: "O holy Lord, O Lord of the past and the future, O Lord, O dispeller of the fear of worldly bondage, O Hṛṣīkeśa, O Lord of the sense-organs, O cause of creation and annihilation! It is by propitiating you, O Lord of the universe, that the heaven-dwellers beginning with Śakra live joyously. All of them get what they desire. The three worlds, including mobile and immobile beings, beginning with Brahmā and ending with a blade of grass, are produced, sustained and pervaded by Viṣṇu, the powerful one, the only pure, omnipresent and noble-souled one. This is what all sages, excellent sages, say.

47-57. They say that Janārdana is the cause of the three worlds. O Garuḍa-emblemed Lord, you are adored by excellent persons seeking boons, by Devas, Dānavas, Daityas, sages, Cāraṇas and serpents. Then why you yourself, O Govinda, fight with the Brāhmaṇa? Don't you know fully about Brāhmaṇa Kapila who has secured boons from Hara? Don't you know that with the favour of Parameśvara he has secured the boons

of invincibility in battle and impossibility of being slain? O Lord, people like you do not act against Brāhmaṇas. You yourself have earlier conceded that Brāhmaṇas are the basis of Brahman. Hence, O Lord, consider him a Brāhmaṇa and do withdraw quickly." On hearing the words that issued from the mouth of Brahmā and having understood the Yogic power of Kapila, the Lord of Devas went to the great world of Śaṅkara where he was adored by the heaven-dwellers. When Janārdana went away Bilva lamented repeatedly on hearing about the terrible fight between Kṛṣṇa and Kapila: "How will I defeat Kapila? How will I have felicity? Who shall I take refuge in? Who will be my protector? Kapila was not defeated in the battle by Viṣṇu, the powerful one. He competes with me always. How can I defeat him? Brāhmaṇas can curse and bless. They are invincible. They may reduce everything to ash, including Devas, Asuras and human beings. The Brāhmaṇical splendour is inordinate and unapproachable even to Devas." Even as he was lamenting thus, Vāsava came there.

58-70a. On seeing the lean Bilva holding the Vajra and lamenting, Purandara felt his heart captivated by a sense of kinsmanship and said thus: "Enough of grief, O king; listen to my great advice. When I was assailed in battle by Śaṁbara, the haughty and powerful, evil-minded one, I asked my preceptor, the highly refulgent Bṛhaspati. He said then, O king: 'At my bidding, O Śakra, do go to the splendid Mahākālavana where there are divine Liṅgas of various sorts. They bring about worldly pleasures and salvation. They bestow the desired objectives. O consort of Śacī, propitiate one among those Liṅgas. Merely by visiting it you will become audacious.' O Bilva, at his instance perfect adoration of the Liṅga was performed by me with delight. Śaṁbara was defeated then. That deity became famous by the name Indreśvara. Hence you go to the western quarter of that holy spot. Propitiate assiduously the Liṅga that was adored by Varuṇa. That Liṅga will become well-known in all the three worlds after your name. Kapila, your friend, the Brāhmaṇa, will say: 'I have been conquered.' Due to the greatness of that Liṅga, he will maintain friendliness (with you)." After saying thus, O lady of renown, Śakra went back to Devaloka. King Bilva went to the splendid Mahākālavana. On the western side, he saw the Liṅga worshipped by Devas. He worshipped it with pure feel-

ings, offering divine flowers of great fragrance, pearls, jewels, garments and ornaments. In the meantime, Kapila too came there. He saw King Bilva repeatedly worshipping my excellent form. In the body of Bilva, he saw my excellent form. Considering it Mahādeva the Brāhmaṇa said, "I have been defeated. In the presence of Śiva, I seek an endless friendship with you."

70b-75. On being told thus by the noble-souled Kapila, Bilva became delighted. With palms joined in reverence, he spoke to the excellent Brāhmaṇa Kapila: "Let it be so. I am contented and blessed. Let the friendship with the noble-minded one be the same as you have been saying always and thinking about." They said so to each other and their excellent friendship was established. With great delight they enjoyed themselves for a long time. Bilva administered the realm once again, due to the greatness of that Liṅga. He rejoiced along with his friend. Ever since then the deity became well-known all over the earth as Bilveśvara, because it was propitiated by Bilva. The deity bestows the objects desired. O lady of wide large eyes, those who visit the great Lord Bilveśvara will become contented and blessed, relieved of all sins.

76-83. O Daughter of the Mountain, those who take delight in the practice of visiting the deity will also become rid of sins and go to my palace. By visiting that Liṅga, a man takes ten thousand members of his family, the past as well as the future, to my world quickly. By visiting the Liṅga, the Pitṛs become rid of terrible sins, of lethargy, and they go to my world. By visiting Śrī Bilveśvara, a man gets his sin dissolved even after committing terrible sins such as Brāhmaṇa-slaughter and the like. O goddess, the thirteenth lunar day in the dark half of a month is said to be dear to the deity. It is destructive of all sins. If men adore the deity Bilveśvara, O my beloved, on that day, they will never have a return into the terrible cavity of worldly existence. This deity, ardently adored on that lunar day, washes off all the sins acquired mentally, verbally and physically.

Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of Bilveśvara Deva has been recounted to you. Let Uttareśvara be listened to.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFOUR

Uttareśvara[1]

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-12. O Pārvatī, listen to the greatness of Uttareśvara, which is destructive of sins in their entirety and which dispels births, deaths, old age and ailments.

There was a king in Ayodhyā named Pārīkṣit. He was highly intelligent and was born of a very distinguished family. He went for hunting. He followed a deer and the deer ran far away. In the long weary path, he was exhausted and overwhelmed with hunger and thirst. In a certain part of the forest, he saw a blue forest and entered it. In the southern part of the forest region, he saw a lake which he entered along with his horse. Having strewn lotus stalks in front of the horse, he got down to the lake and laid himself for rest. He heard someone singing as he lay there. On hearing the songs he began to think: 'I do not see human habitation or approach here. Whose may the voice be?' He looked around. he saw a girl of exquisite beauty gathering flowers. The king approached her and asked, "Oh! You are a girl of great beauty, very nice to look at and you are gathering flowers. To whom do you belong?"

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1. 'Uttareśvara' is not a repetition of Ch. 44 of the same name. This Chapter is a mixture of prose and poetry. This Chapter should have been titled 'Dardureśvara Māhātmya', but as it is installed in the north, it is named Uttareśvara. The story is simple. King Parīkṣit of Ayodhyā lost his way while hunting. He saw a beautiful girl near a pond. The girl consented to marry him on condition that she should not be shown water. Once he showed her a beautiful tank full of frogs. The stipulation being violated, she jumped into the tank and disappeared. The king ordered the massacre of all frogs. So the king of frogs requested him to stop killing. The girl married to the king was his daughter and had gone to Nāgaloka. She would come when remembered. She was called and offered to the king. The frog-king told that formerly he was a king, called Āyuḥ, cursed by Gālava to be a frog. Gālava told him to visit a Liṅga at the northern side of Mahākālavana and that he would be released after offering his daughter to a solar king. He went to see that Liṅga and went to heaven. The Devas decided to call it Uttareśvara. Hence it is so named. The pieces of prose sentences and verses show that the original writer left a rough draft before composing verses. The final redactor copied that draft and presented practically a prose Chapter.

13-27. The king added: "I seek you (for marriage)." The girl said: "I can be attained by you only under certain stipulated conditions. Not otherwise." The king asked her: "What are your conditions?" The girl said: "Water should not be shown to me." The king said: "Certainly so," and remained in close association with her. When they continued to stay there, his army too came there and stood round the king who was seated along with her. The king who was duly honoured, went back to his own city in a palanquin along with her. He held secret amorous dalliance with her and never looked into any other matter. The chief minister asked the ladies who were attending upon the king within the palace: "What is the purpose here?" The women said: "We find something unusual. Water is never resorted to here." The minister made the place devoid of water. The trees were mere wood with plenty of fruits and flowers in autumn season. Thereafter he said to the king: "This forest is devoid of water. May you be pleased to sport about here." At his suggestion the king entered the forest along with her. Accompanied by his wife, he sported about in that beautiful forest. After entering along with his beloved, the king saw a tank full of crystal-clear water. He saw the tank full of frogs and stood on its banks along with that fair lady. Then the king said to that fair lady, "The water in the tank is very calm." On hearing his words, she sank under the water in the tank and did not come up. The king searched for her but could not see her.

28-39. On seeing the tank full of frogs, the king commanded his servants: "Let all the frogs be exterminated. If anyone wants to come to me for any favour, let him come with frogs as presents." Accordingly, when the slaughter of frogs went on in every direction, a big frog came there and knowing him to be furious, the frog said to him thus: "Be pleased. It does not behove you to kill the innocent frogs. There is a relevant verse: 'Oh Acyuta ('Unswerving One')! Do not kill the frogs. Control your anger. The Great Dharma becomes reduced even as the people watch and know.' " As the big frog said thus, the king admitted himself as one grief-stricken at the separation from the beloved one and said: "She could not have been killed by one without a motive. These wicked frogs have killed my wife. In every respect these frogs should be

killed. O learned one, it does not behove you to prevent me." On hearing the words of the king, he became grief-stricken and pained mentally. He said: "O king, be pleased. I am the king named Āyuḥ. The girl you came across is my daughter. That girl has gone to the world of serpents where the king of serpents is Nāgacūḍa. If she is remembered, she will come back." The king said to him: "Let her be remembered, brought and be given to me." Thereupon he remembered her, gave her to the king and said: "Gālava, the great sage with limbs emaciated through penance, was laughed at by me. But he remained powerfully patient. He was rendered furious through *Dardurabālya* (pranks of a small frog). Therefore, I was cursed: 'You disrespected me and laughed at me through *Dardurabālya*. Hence you will become a *Dardura* (frog).'

40-50. On being pacified, the Brāhmaṇa said: 'My curse cannot become futile and untrue. Hence in your next birth you will become a frog-king. After giving your daughter to a king born of the Ikṣvāku race and possessing all good qualities you will go to Mahākālavana. After visiting the Liṅga in the northern part of that holy spot, you will attain salvation. Your daughter will go to Pātāla but on being remembered she will come.' Hail unto you! I shall carry out my own tasks." After saying this Dardura went to Mahākālavana. He visited the Liṅga in the northern part. As a result of visiting, he got into an aerial chariot which was studded with rubies and attended by Siddhas and Gandharvas. Then he went to Śakraloka. Noticing its greatness, Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of Devas, spoke these words: "How great is the Liṅga! What a great super-human power of the Liṅga! Indeed the accursed Dardura has come to Vāsavaloka (Indra's world). King Āyuḥ who had become a Dardura is liberated." On hearing these words of the preceptor of the Devas, O Pārvatī, all those Devas became delighted in their minds. With great attention and care, they assigned a name to the deity. "King Dardura has been rid of the birth as a frog, by visiting that Liṅga; hence the deity will become well-known as Uttareśvara Deva. He will be destroyer of sin and curse." After saying this, all the Devas adored Uttareśvara. O goddess, the Gaṇa who had been employed by me for the sake of the protection of the holy spot is the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation. He is the destroyer of great

sins. Dardura too was unassailable. He also attained god-hood.

51-60. After going to the northern direction, if a devotee visits Uttareśvara, he becomes endowed with all prosperity and goes to the higher Loka. He will be comely, always self-controlled, endowed with good features and sons, devoid of ailments and meritorious in habits in the course of seven births. By visiting Uttareśvara one will get the prosperity of Kubera, Śakra, Yama and Varuṇa and even more. O lady of great renown, those who visit the deity named Uttareśvara on the fourteenth lunar day in the dark half, become blessed in Kali Yuga. Of what avail are Dānas, penances and Yajñas with a lot of monetary gifts? Merely by visiting (the deity), one gets kingdom, heaven and salvation in due order. By visiting the deity Uttareśvara, a sin committed ever since the birth whether very small or very big perishes entirely.

Thus eighty-four deities in Mahākālavana about whom you asked, have been recounted to you. O goddess, those men who perform the pilgrimage of these shrines, whether clockwise or anti-clockwise, with great devotion, will attain the great region. A man who devoutly adores the Liṅga there redeems a hundred members of his maternal and paternal family. Thus, O goddess, the sin-destroying power of eighty-four Liṅgas has been recounted to you. What further do you wish to hear?

: : The End of Caturaśītiliṅga-Māhātmya : :

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