

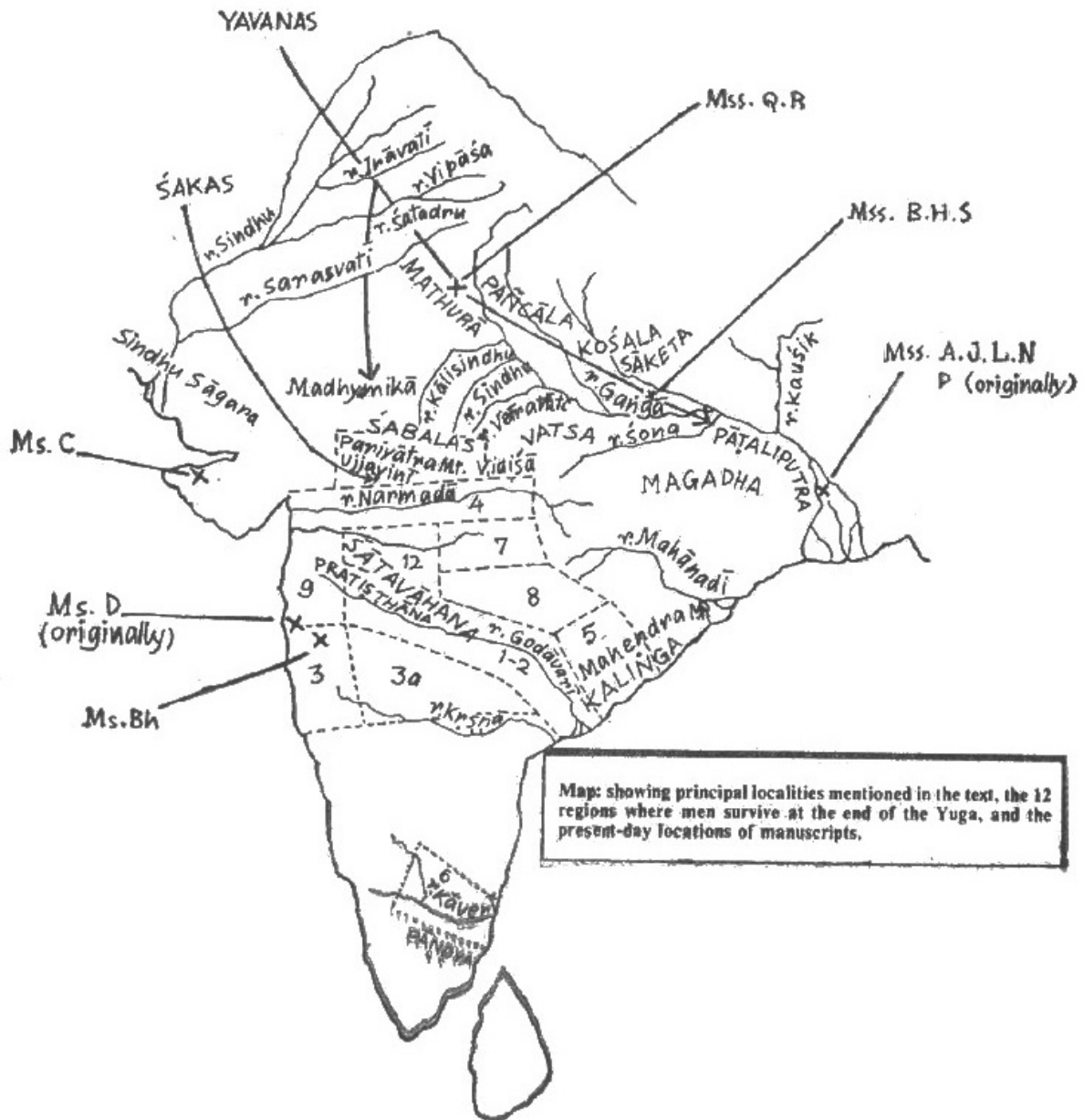
THE YUGA PURĀṆA

The Yuga Purāṇa Chapter of the Vṛddha Gārgīya Jyotiṣa

[An account of the progression and end of this Kaliyuga, in the region of India]

English Translation by John Mitchiner (1986)

THE YUGA PURANA GEOGRAPHY



(See Legend below)

THE YUGA PURĀṆA GEOGRAPHY MAP – LEGEND

The twelve maṇḍalas or regions in which men are said to survive at the end of the Kali Yuga (slokas 98-113) are as follows:

Region -

1-2. By the river Gavedhukā, eight yojanas (? 20 miles) broad and flowing past the Ajātā mountain: the locations of both of these are uncertain, but the breadth (clearly an exaggeration, yet indicative of a very broad extent) and extent (over two regions) of the river suggest an identification with the Godāvarī, or perhaps less likely (since shorter) the Mahānadī.

3. On the borders of the ocean: since the next region is to the south-east of this one, the western ocean (Arabian Sea) must be intended.

3a. In a great forest in the adjacent region to the south-east.

4. By mount Pālapañjara, on the banks of the river Narmada: the Pālapañjara mountain mentioned in the Nāṭyaśāstra while the river is well-famed, running along the southern edge of the Vindhya.

5. In a great forest in the southern parts of mount Mahendra: the southern section of the Eastern Ghats.

6. On the banks of the river Kāverī: the Cauvery, in present-day Tamil Nadu.

7. In the vicinity of Bhojakaṭa: a part of Vidarbha or Berar, the abode of the Bhojas.

8. In a great forest in the adjoining realms of Kuvinda: the identification is uncertain, but evidently a region adjacent to Bhojakaṭa.

9. By mount Trikūṭa: in Devīkūṭa probably the abode of the Traikūṭakas, around present-day Nasik in the north-west Deccan.

10. By mount Jaradgava or Śūla: the identification is uncertain.

11. By mount Trikūṭa in the Pāriyātra mountains: in the western section of the Vindhya.

THE YUGA PURĀṆA

1. Formerly the spear-holder Skanda questioned Śaṅkara (Śiva): “What was the nature of the time which has gone by in the past, and what is to be the nature [of time in the future]?”
2. What [will be] the length of life and what the bodily form of living beings: and what also will be the strength of tapas (ascetic practices) at the end of the Yuga?
3. What [will be] the degree of authority at the start of the Yuga, and the dharmas (forms of righteous conduct) in each Yuga: and at the end of the Yuga, [what] will be the state of affairs at that time, O Lord of Creatures? ”³
4. Having heard this agreeable speech of Skanda, who is unwearied in action, the Lord God (Śiva), the Supreme One, himself spoke to the spear-holder.
5. The Time which has gone by has been heard about, and what was formerly made known [about it] sets out the measure and the name-and-form⁴ of the Yugas.
6. In a very pleasant [time] there arose a Yuga of supreme virtue called Surakṛta: then were born men of great fortune, resembling Sūrya and Agni.
7. There was no fear among them about sustaining life, nor was there death, nor thieves: they had trees which bore fruit at will, and the earth was full of corn.
8. Their life-span extended for 100,000 years in the Kṛta Yuga; there was no greed among them, nor anger in the bodies of created beings.
9. There was neither passion nor deceit, neither depravity nor meanness: neither carnal contact nor sexual union, nor superiority through force.
10. In that Kṛta Yuga were born Devas (gods), Gandharvas (heavenly musicians) and Kinnaras (creatures half-men and half-beasts), Dānavas (demons) and leading Yakṣas (rural demigods), Rākṣasas (flesh-eating demons) and also mighty Uragas (semi-divine serpents).
11. They ascended upwards to the sun, and they shone like the sun: [and] all men then possessed strength of tapas (asceticism) in the age of the Kṛta Yuga.
12. Then at the end of the Kṛta Yuga, Kṛtānta (Death) drew near; and a great battle then commenced, (called) the damage of Tāraka.

13-14. After that great battle had been set in motion by the Devas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras together with Deva-R̥ṣis (godly sages), Siddhas (perfected beings), Rākṣasas and mighty Uragas, then, once that battle had passed, those who remained were possessed of life: and for the sake of their protection, the Kṣatra (power of the warrior-caste) was created by Svāyambhu (Brahmā).

15. Then feminine qualities and women [came into existence]: and for [the sake of] those two, a [new] Yuga was announced in which all the four varṇas (castes) became occupied with their own deeds.

16. Dharma was established among the four varṇas, and the Agnihotra (fire-sacrifice) was performed: there were then many śāstras (sacred books), mantras (sacred formulae) and Japas (prayers).

17. All the Vipras (Brāhmaṇas) had their abodes in forests, and were learned in the Vedas; once the second Yuga had arrived, men were upright and not deceitful.

18. Kṣatriyas, too, were skilful in protecting the people, destroying (enemies) in battle: and they were judicious and steadfast guardians of the Vipras.

19. The protection of cattle, agriculture, and the support of Brāhmaṇas [were engaged upon]; Vaiśyas were intent upon their own deeds, and Śūdras upon service.

20. When the world was thus devoted to dharma and absorbed in the practice of truth, then both anger and greed descended upon the surface of the earth.

21. The life-span-together with roots, fruits and flowers - was reduced by a tenth part: the life-span in the Tretā Yuga was established as 10,000 years.

22. Then at the end of the Tretā Yuga, once Kṛtānta had approached, the earth was made devoid of Kṣatriyas thrice-seven times by Rāma (Paraśurāma).

23. Then, when the Kṣatra had been destroyed [and] another Yuga had approached, there thereupon commenced the terrible third Dvāpara Yuga.

24. Here the length of life of beings was shortened by a tenth part: the sad people left the body after 1,000 years.

25. There was among them no fettering and slaying, terrible because of the employment of violence; in the third Yuga, men [and] the earth [were possessed of] dharmas free from distress.

26. The lords of men, the guardians, were skilled [as] protectors of the people: [and] there were truth, righteousness and sacrifices in the renowned Dvāpara Yuga.

27. Because dharma had [still] one quarter left on the surface of the earth; no remaining man strode [on the earth] who questioned his own dharma.

28. And at the end of that Yuga, the earth will go to destruction: men, having come under the control of time, will cook [for] their own bodies.

29-31. Keśava (Viṣṇu) will arise at the end of the Dvāpara, in order to destroy horses and elephants, princes and men: four-armed, of great valour, bearing the conch, disk and mace: [he will be] called Vāsudeva, the strong one, dressed in yellow clothes, along with Halāyudha (Baladeva), resembling Kailāśa, wearing a garland of flowers [and] bearing the plough as weapon. Then there will arise Yudhiṣṭhira - the excellent king of the Pāṇḍavas - for the purpose of slaughter at the end of the Dvāpara, together with [his] four brothers:

32-33. [namely] both Bhīmasena the son of Vāyu, and Phālguna of severe tapas, and the two brothers Nakula and Sahadeva, born of the Aśvins, also Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others, and the prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Karṇa the king of Aṅga, together with Aśvatthāma the invincible;

34. Devaka and Śatadhanvan, and Daruka the illustrious - they will arise at the end of the Yuga, in order to protect the world of men.

35. So too Śakuni and Dantavakra, and Śiśupāla the haughty: together with Śalya, Rukmi, Jarāsandha, Kṛtavarma [and] Jayadratha.

36. The cause [of strife] of these mighty kings will be Kṛṣṇā, the daughter of Drupada: [and] the earth will go to [her] destruction.

37. Then, when the destruction of men has occurred and the circle of kings has ended, there will be the fourth [and] final Yuga called Kali.

38. Then at the start of the Kali Yuga, Janamejaya Pārīkṣit (son of Parīkṣit) will be born, illustrious and celebrated on the earth - there is no doubt.

39. And that king will cause a quarrel with the Twice-born: his anger for his insulted wife having come under the power of Time.

40. Then in the Kali Yuga [there will be] a strong king called Udāyin, born of [the line of] Śiśunāga, [who will be] righteous [and] celebrated on earth for his qualities.

41. On the southern [and] most excellent bank of the Gaṅgā, that Rāja-Rṣi (royal sage) will cause a pleasant city to be founded, filled with people and flower-gardens.

42-43. And that pleasant city, the City of Flowers (Puṣpapurā), the son of Pāṭālī (Pāṭaliputra) will endure for 5,000 years - there is no doubt of that: and for 500 years, and for five years, and for five months, and for five days and muhurtas.

44. In that beautiful Puṣpapurā, occupied by fewer than a hundred kings, there will be Śālīśūka, born for the destruction of truth, the offspring of karma (Fate).

45-46. That king, the offspring of karma, cheerful-minded [yet] fond of conflict, [will be] an oppressor of his own kingdom, of righteous speech but unrighteous conduct; that deluded one will cause his eldest brother - famed as the “Banner of Sadhus” because of his qualities - to establish a righteous [person] called Vijaya.

47. Then, having approached Sāketa together with the Pañchālas and Mathurās, the Yavanas, valiant in battle, will reach Kusumadhvaja (Pāṭaliputra).

48. Then, once Puṣpapurā has been reached, its celebrated mud [and wooden walls] cast down, all the realms will be in disorder - there is no doubt.

49. There will then finally be a great war of wooden weapons^{*1*2} and there will be the vilest men; dishonourable and unrighteous.

^{*1} the Mahshilakantaka

Ajātaśatru (c.1800 BC - from Matsya Purana) was a king of the Haryanka Dynasty of Magadha. He was the son of King Bimbisara and was a contemporary of Vishnu-Buddha. Modern historians state he forcefully took over the kingdom of Magadha from his father and imprisoned him. He fought a war against Vajji, ruled by the Lichchavis, and conquered the republic of Vesali.

Ajātaśatru followed policies of conquest and expansion. He defeated his neighbours including the king of Kosala. Ajātaśatru occupied Kashi and captured the smaller kingdoms. Magadha under his rule became the most powerful kingdom of North India.

He is the inventor of two weapons used in war called rathamusala (fore-bladed chariot) and mahshilakantaka (catapult for ejecting large stones).

^{*2} Alternate translation and analysis:

“After having conquered Sāketa, the heavenly provinces of Pañchala and Mathura, the Yavanas, wicked and valiant, will reach Kusumadhvaja (Pāṭaliputra). The thick mud-fortifications at Pāṭaliputra being reached, all the provinces will be in disorder, without doubt. Ultimately a great battle will follow, with tree-like engines (siege engines). The Yavanas will command, the Kings will disappear. (But ultimately) the Yavanas, intoxicated with fighting, will not stay in Madhyadeśa, there will be undoubtedly a civil war among them, arising in their own country, there will be a terrible and ferocious war”

In this translation, similar to Mitchiner's, the Yavanas are identified with the Indo-Greeks, and Bactria (2nd Century BC Afghanistan) was their country. However, some historical records indicate that King Ajātaśatru (Buddhist King of Magadha) was the first to breach the walls of Pāṭaliputra with huge wooden catapults "Tree-engines" or the "Mahshilakantaka". The term 'Yavana' was traditionally identified in the Epics and Puranas with the low-class Kings of west Bhārata now called Afghanistan and Pakistan, the descendants of Turvasu. Thus, as they migrated north-west, they became the founders of both Greek and Turk civilizations during the course of pre-history.

However, there is immense confusion about the dating of the dishonourable patricidal dynasty of Asoka, Bimbisara and Ajātaśatru – Recent Indian Historians [e.g. Vedveer Arya, Kota Venkatachalam, Prof. Narayan Rao, Sri B.P. Keśava Goswami & Dr Pingali Gopal] place King Udāyin and the Buddhist Kings in the 17th Century BC, nowhere near the Indo-Greek invasions of 2nd Century BC. We can assume, though, that this fortified city called Puṣpanāma, Puṣpapurā and Kusumadhvaṇī is actually Pāṭaliputra, as indicated by sloka 42-43 "Pāṭaliputra".

50. At the end of the Yuga, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras will be similar in dress, and of similar conduct - there is no doubt.

51. At that end of the Yuga, men will be allied with Pāṣaṇḍas (heretics): they will make friends for the motive of [gaining] women - there is no doubt.

52. There will be low-born Bhikṣukas (mendicants) in the world, clothed in bark-cloth [and] wearing matted hair and bark-garments - there is no doubt.

53. Once the end of the Yuga has approached, low-born men— contemptible and loathsome - will offer the three sacred fires as sacrifice in the world, with mantras celebrated by the sacred syllable 'om'.

54. Śūdras who are persistent in feeding the fire with ghee, in chanting, and in all to do with the [sacred] fire, will exist at the end of the Yuga - there is no doubt.

55. Śūdras will also be utterers of "bho" (my inferior), and Brāhmaṇas will be utterers of "ārya" (my superior) the elders, most fearful of dharma, will fearlessly exploit the people.

56. And in the city the Yavanas and princes will become acquainted: but the Yavanas, infatuated by war, will not remain in Madhyadeśa, there will be mutual agreements among them [to leave], [due to] a terrible and very dreadful war having broken out in their own realm - there is no doubt.

58. Then, at the disappearance of those Yavanas due to the power of the Yuga, there will be seven mighty kings in Sāketa.

59. [Their] soldiers in like manner, wounded in battle by blood-soaked warriors, will make the earth desolate, hideous with blood, and violent.

60. Then all those Magadha-peoples dwelling by the Gaṅgā (will become) violent: and so, there will finally be bloodshed and war.

61. All those Agniveśya kings, when they have created hostilities, will go to destruction in battle, as too the peoples having recourse to them.

62-63. And then the mighty king of the Śakas [will be] greedy for wealth, [and] vicious and evil once his destruction has approached: he will go to his destruction on account of king Śata of Kaliṅga - he will go while plundering, through [the agency of] the Koveḍukhaṇḍa Śabalas.

64. All the youngest men will be killed - there is no doubt: and when the Śaka realm has been destroyed, the earth will be desolate.

कनिष्ठास्तु हताः सर्वे भविष्यन्ति न संशयः ।

विनष्टे शकराज्ये च शून्या पृथिवी भविष्यति ॥ ६४ ॥

65. Then Puṣpanāma (Pāṭaliputra) will become empty and hideous, a forest: there may be some prince - or there may not be some [prince].

66. Then, in the conflict, there will be a mighty temporary possessor of power. Āmrāṭa, called Lohitākṣa (Red-eyed), will go to Puṣpanāma.

67. All those who have gone to the city, having approached [it through] the desolate hill-area, will all be mighty and greedy for wealth.

68. Then he, Āmrāṭa the Mleccha (outcaste), red-eyed [and] wearing red garments, having robbed the helpless people, will then cause them to be destroyed.

69. Then that king will destroy the four varṇas, having made established all the varṇas which were traditionally unestablished.

70-71. And Āmrāṭa Lohitākṣa will perish, together with his kinsmen. Then there will be a king called Gopāla: but then, when king Gopāla has ruled the kingdom for a year conjointly with Puṣpaka, he will then go to his death.

72. Then [there will be] the righteous king called Puṣpaka: he, having ruled the kingdom for a year, will [then] go to his death.

73. Then there will be that mighty and virtuous king Anaraṇya: he, having ruled for three years, will finally go to his death.

74. Then [there will be] Vikuyaśas, a certain Brahmin famed in the world: his reign will be rejoiced for [a period of] three years.

75. Then indeed Puṣpapurā [will be] pleasant and overflowing with people: it will be eminent and successful, full of birth-ceremonies.

76. On the southern side of the city is seen its [principal] draught-animal, a caparisoned draught-elephant, [together with] two thousand horses.

77. Then in the Bhadrakā country [there will be] Agnimitra, in the Kīlaka year [42nd year of the 60-year cycle] will be born a young girl of exceedingly beautiful form.

78. On account of her, that king [will have] a terrible quarrel with the Brāhmaṇas: then, by the decree of Viṣṇu, he will depart from the body - there is no doubt.

79. Once that very dreadful and very terrible conflict has passed, then Agniveśya will be king, a mighty lord.

80. His reign will be successful for twenty years: then king Agniveśya, having obtained his kingdom like Lord Indra, will engage in a struggle with terrible encounters with the Śavaras.

81. Then, occupied with a very strong encounter with the Śavaras, that king will go to his death through the shot of a strong man.

82. Then, when that very terrible great battle has passed in time, the earth will be desolate, terrible, and predominating in women.

83. Women will do the ploughing, with hands the texture of the plough: [and they will be] warriors with bows in the fields, due to the scarcity of men.

84. Men will then have twenty mistresses once people have diminished [in number] in the world in every region and division.

85. Then women will abound in numbers - there is no doubt: when men have observed women from an inferior [social] position, they behold an extraordinary sight.

86. Women will trade in the villages and towns, [while] men will be at ease as gr̥hasthas (house-holders), dressed in red.

87. Then king Satuvāra, having afflicted the earth with his rule, will go to his death once his tenth year has passed.

88. Then the terrible Śaka will cause the peoples, acting for their own destruction [and] afflicted by [the results of] their own deeds, to be also scattered - so it has been heard.

89. He will destroy a quarter of living beings by arms: the Śakas will take a quarter of the wealth to their own city.

90. Then the god will cause a drought for twelve years among the peoples remaining after the destruction of the realm of that one [Śaka]. people will go to destruction, afflicted by famine and fear.

91. Then, when the world is rent by evil in the terrible famine, there will be the end of the Yuga, the destruction of all living beings.

92. There will then be a terrible epidemic - there is no doubt; [and] on the earth, all the waters of living being will unite together (to flood?).

93. So too in both the oceans and the rivers, the water will then stand still: [such things] are seen also in the surrounding areas - in the Gaṅgā, and in the Sindhusāgara. (Indus Delta).

94. in the Irāvātī, in the Viśākhā, and in the Vetravatī - everywhere; also indeed in the Suvarṇa, in the Kauśikī, and in the Sarasvatī.

95. The condition of men will be painful, once the destruction of the world has approached: but calmness, patience and self-restraint will indeed remain at the end of the Yuga.

96. These who will ever cause disbelief, avaricious conduct, [and] that which is un-Brahmanical and dear to the Kali twill turn away, they will remain at the end of the Yuga.

97. Speech towards old men, Twice-born and children [will consist of] blunders or [will be] of evil meaning: [but] those who will maintain firmness will remain at the end of the Yuga.

98. When the world has been afflicted with famine and has become a terrible fire, [then] from regard for the welfare of living beings, twelve regions were created.

99. The remnant in the world who are dear to dharma, those men who resort to dharma, they will remain at the end of the Yuga, wearied by hunger and thirst.

100. Two regions were created where is the river Gavedhukā - eight yojanas*³ broad, and adorned by the Ajātā mountain.

*³ A yojana is a distance variously computed as either 2.5, 4.5, 9 or 18 miles: the most common equivalent is that 1 yojana = 4 krośas = 9 miles, hence each region may be envisaged as consisting of 900 square miles (vis. 100 yojanas).

101. Those who will seek refuge there, longing for a better condition in that realm, will attain excellent happiness once they have resorted from all sides to that auspicious place.

102. Then the third region is known as [being] on the shores of the ocean, where [men] will live on fish and costly flesh at the end of the Yuga.

103. Then [there is a region] in the great forest in the adjacent areas in the south-eastern region: those will be dwelling there will remain at the end of the Yuga.

104. On the banks of the Narmadā is the mountain Pālapañjara: there the seeds [of living beings], will remain as the end of the Yuga occurs.

105. Then [there is a region] in the great forest in the southern parts of the Mahendra [mountain]: those [who] used to dwell there will maintain many living beings.

106. Then [there is a region] on the banks of the Kāverī, in a region of 100 yojanas: men will achieve contentment there, through fish and boars.

107. Then [there is a region] in the vicinity of Bhojakaṭa, in a region of 100 yojanas: men will attain contentment there, through fish and birds.

108. Then [there is a region] in the great forest in the adjoining territories of Kuvinda: living beings will prevail there, where there is created [a region] possessed of excellence.

109. In Devīkūṭa there is a famous chief of mountains called Trikūṭa, men will remain there, anxious through fear of hunger and thirst.

110. There is a mountain called Jaradgava, or the pre-eminent Śūla (Trident), there the bodies of men will endure at the end of the Yuga.

111. [There is] a famous [mountain] called Trikūṭa in the Pāriyātra mountains, living beings will remain there, on lotus-fibres and lotus-flowers.

112-113. Then [there is a region] in the Bhadrayaka land, in the Pāñcakānana forest (Pāñcavaṭī-kānana) where there is a famous and illustrious river like the Aśokātī, on vegetables, grain, roots and fruits men will sustain themselves in that terrible end of the Yuga.

114. This account of the future has been declared by me to you, O one whose emblem is the peacock (Skanda): those who will continue to live in that way will indeed always [attain] complete well-being.

115. A hundred [times] 100,000 [years], this is always known as (the extent of) a Kalpa: at the aforesaid end of 1,000 Yugas^{*4}, the Kalpa is said to be finished.

*Thus ends the Yuga Purana chapter
of the Astronomical Treatise of Vṛddha-Gārgīya.*

^{*4} A Kalpa is generally defined as 1,000 yuga-cycles called Caturyugas or Mahāyugas.