

(precincts of an āśrama) of Gautama Rṣi. It is believed that one would go to heaven if one bathes in it.
AHARA. A son born of Danu to Kaśyapa. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Śloka 25, Chapter 65).

AHICCHATRA. This was the capital of the state Ahicchatra which Droṇa got from Drupada, the King of Pāncāla.

AHICCHATRA (M). A state under the sovereignty of King Pāncāla. On the completion of his studies under Droṇa Arjuna brought before his preceptor King Drupada as a captive in discharge of the duty he owed to him as his master. Drupada then gave the state of Ahicchatra to Droṇa and got his release. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Ślokas 73 to 76, Chapter 137).

AHIMŚĀ. Non-injury. There are opinions both in favour of and against Ahimśā in the purāṇas. Śukrācārya extols the importance of Ahimśā to the asuras (demons) thus :

Bho ! Devaripavaḥ satyaṃ
 Bravīmi bhavatāṃ hitam
 Ahimśā paramo dharmo
 Hantavyā hyātatāyinaḥ
 Dvijairbhogaratairvede
 Daiśitam himsanam paśoḥ
 Jihvāsvādaparaiḥ Kāma—
 Mahimśaiva parā matā.

“Oh, foes of the devas, I shall tell you the truth which is good for you. Non-injury to any living being is the most righteous thing. Do not molest even those who come to kill you. Even that act would be ‘himśā’ (injury). It was those brahmins who were attached to worldly pleasures and addicted to overeating that enjoined in the Vedas that himśā is permissible for yāgas.” (Devī Bhāgavata, Skanda 4). Mārkaṇḍeya Muni (sage) says thus : “Why should I mind the innumerable killings going on unnoticed in this world full of life. People of old speak very sacredly about Ahimśā. But O best of brahmins, who can live in this world without injury to another life?” (M.B., Aranya Parva, Ślokas 32 & 33, Chapter 208).

AHIRATHA. A King of the Pūru dynasty. (See under Pūru vaiśa).

AHIRBUDHNYA. One of the sons of Viśvakarmā. Five sons and one daughter were born to Viśvakarmā of his wife Surabhī. They were Ajaikapāt, Ahirbudhnya, Tvaṣṭā, Rudra, Barhiṣmatī and Sarṃjñā. (See under genealogy of Viśvakarmā).

AHITĀ. A river of ancient Bhārata. (M.B., Bhīṣma Parva, Śloka 21, Chapter 9).

AHORĀTRA (M). (See under Kālamāna).

AHOVIRA. A sage who adhered strictly to the injunctions associated with the Vānaprastha stage of life. (M.B., Śānti Parva, Śloka 17, Chapter 144).

AI (ṛ). This diphthong means a female sage (yoginī) according to the Agni Purāṇa (Chapter 348 of Agni Purāṇa).

AIKṢVĀKI. Wife of Suhotra who was a son of Emperor, Bhumanyu. Suhotra had three sons by Aikṣvāki. They were Ajamīḍha, Sumīḍha and Purumīḍha. (See Chapter 94 of Ādi Parva of the M.B.).

AILA I. Son of Ilā; Purūravas. (See under Ilā).

AILA II. A member of the court of Yamarāja. (See Śloka 16, Chapter 8, Sabhā Parva, M.B.). In Śloka 65, Chapter 115 of Anuśāsana Parva, it is said that he never ate non-vegetarian food in his life.

AINDAVA. (See paragraph 13 under the word BRAHMĀ).

AIRĀVATA I. A large elephant, son of Irāvati.

1) *Genealogy.* Descended from Viṣṇu in this order :— Viṣṇu - Brahmā - Kaśyapa - Bhadramatā - Irāvati - Airāvata. Kaśyapa married Dakṣa's daughter, Krodhavaśā who bore him ten daughters. They were : Mṛgī, Mṛgamandā, Harī, Bhadramatā, Mātāṅgī, Śārdūlī, Svetā, Surabhī, Sarasā and Kadru. Of these Bhadramatā had a daughter named Irāvati and Airāvata was her son. Airāvata was not human in shape; he was a large elephant. (See Sarga 14, Aranyakāṇḍa, Rāmāyaṇa).

2) *Indra's Vāhana.* Indra made Airāvata his conveyance (vāhana). Indra was Kaśyapa's son by Aditi. Airāvata also was descended from Kaśyapa. So Indra took Airāvata as his vāhana.

3) *Airāvata caused the churning of the ocean of Milk.* There is a story of how Airāvata was responsible for the churning of the milk-ocean (Kṣīrābdhi-mathanam). Once some maidens of devaloka presented a garland of flowers to sage Durvāsas. When Durvāsas visited Indra's court he gave that garland to Indra. Indra put it on the tusks of his vāhana, Airāvata. The fragrance of the flowers attracted a swarm of bees which became an intolerable nuisance to Airāvata. So Airāvata tore the garland off his tusks and hurled it away. When Durvāsas heard this, he took it as an insult. In his anger he cursed all the gods—the curse was that all gods should become subject to old age and the decrepitude and infirmities of old age. But though Durvāsas cursed the gods, he also prescribed a remedy. The gods could redeem themselves from the curse by drinking Amṛtam obtained from the ocean of Milk (Mahāviṣṇu lies on the serpent, Śeṣa on this ocean). The curse began to operate and the gods lost their perennial youth. The gods then befriended the Asuras and with their help they churned the ocean of Milk. They got the nectar (Amṛtam), drank it and regained their youth. (See under the word AMṚTAM).

4) There is another story about Airāvata—A story of how he also rose out of the ocean of Milk. It is said that when the devas and asuras churned the ocean of Milk, Airāvata also came up along with the other good things. This story is narrated in the 18th Chapter of Ādi Parva of the Mahābhārata. The explanation given is that when Durvāsas cursed the gods, Airāvata was oppressed with a sense of guilt because he was responsible for the curse. So he took refuge in the ocean of Milk and there started propitiating Mahāviṣṇu. There is however no warrant for such an explanation in the purāṇas. But the explanation sounds plausible because it explains the absence of Airāvata during the interval between Durvāsas's curse and the churning of the sea. Airāvata is represented as a white elephant. It is probable that he became white after his long residence in the ocean of Milk. This lends some additional plausibility to the above explanation.

5) *Airāvata, the Lord of the elephant.* In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa we are told how Airāvata was made the chief of all elephants. When the Maharṣis had crowned Pṛthu as the sovereign King, Brahmā gave new posts of honour to many of the devas. He made SOMA (Moon) the lord of the Stars and Planets, of Brahmins, Yajñas and herbs. Kubera was made the overlord of all Kings; Varuṇa was made the master of the seas and all water; Viṣṇu, the lord of the Ādityas and Pāvaka (Fire) the lord of