

DAMANAKAM. The Tātiri tree (Grislea Tomentosa). The ceremony of worshipping this tree is called Damanakārohaṇavidhi. The Grislea tree is supposed to be Bhairava, who had been changed to a tree by the curse of Śiva. A story to this effect occurs in the Purāṇas. Bhairava was formed from the anger of Śiva. Bhairava, against the will of Śiva, destroyed the devas, and so Śiva cursed him and turned him to a Tātiri tree. It is called Damanaka because Bhairava tried to do 'damana' (restraint or punishment) to the gods. Bhairava felt sorry at the curse of Śiva. He requested Śiva to withdraw the curse. At last Śiva had pity on him and said that all would worship Damanaka tree. The method of that worship is called Damanakārohaṇavidhi. It is given below:

This tree should be worshipped on the seventh or thirteenth lunar day. The worshipper should go to the tree, with those who recite mantras and spells. After the worship is over the worshipper should say, "O, Tree, which has originated by the power of Hari, you come to my presence. On behalf of Śiva, and by his order, I have to take you home." Saying thus the tree should be taken home and consecrated in the evening in accordance with the rituals. In the house, the Sun, Śiva and Agni should be evoked and worshipped and then the root of the tree should be planted in the Iśāna (N.E. point) corner of the house and when it is planted, the spell or incantation of Vāmadeva Mantra or Śiromantra should be recited. In the same way the trunk with the branches of the tree is planted on the Northern part. The fallen leaves and flowers should be placed on the eastern side. When the root is planted the following prayer should be uttered :

Āmantritosi deveśa
prātaḥ kāle mayā prabho/
Kartavyastapaso lābhāḥ
Pūrṇam sarvaṁ tavājñayā.//

After that at dawn he should take bath and with oblations of sweet-smelling flowers etc. should worship Śiva. This is Damanakārohaṇavidhi. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 80).

DAMAYANTĪ Daughter of Bhīma the King of Vidarbha. The most noble of all the Indian heroines, Damayantī has secured a place in the literatures of almost all the languages in the world. The famous hero Nala is her husband.

1) *The background of the story of Nala.* During the time of the forest life of the Pāṇḍavas, Arjuna had gone to Kailāsa to do penance before Śiva for getting divine weapons. The rest of the Pāṇḍavas spent the time till the arrival of Arjuna, in sorrow and sadness. They spent miserable days one by one. At that time the hermit Bṛhadāśva visited them. They welcomed the hermit. In the midst of their conversation Dharmaputra told the hermit with tears that he was the most unhappy man in the world. Hearing this the hermit told them the story of Nala, to console the Pāṇḍavas.

2) *The birth of Damayanti.* The King Bhīma of Vidarbha was childless for a long time. While the King was spending sorrowful days, as he had no children, a hermit named Dama reached his palace. The King welcomed the hermit. Seeing the sorrow of the King the hermit blessed the King and the queen, and as a result a daughter named Damayanti and as her brothers

three sons Dama, Dānta and Damana were born to them.

3) *The Svayamvara (marriage) of Damoyanti.* During this period a son named Nala was born to Virasena the King of Niṣadha. The child was an expert in the game of dice and he would speak only truth. He grew up and became a youth.

Once the swans which came to the palace of Damayanti from Nala, began to praise Nala. They sang about the glory of Nala. Nala also knew about the beauty and the other good qualities of Damayanti. Thus they fell in love with each other. Nala also started for Kuṇḍinapurī, the capital city of Vidarbha, to marry Damayanti. The devas (gods) Indra, Agni, Varuṇa and Yama, having heard of the beauty of Damayanti from Nārada, had gone Kuṇḍinapurī, to take part in the marriage. On the way they met Nala. They were aware of the fact that Damayanti was in love with Nala. So they called Nala and sent him to Damayanti with a message that Damayanti should accept one of the four gods as her husband. By the boon of invisibility, given by the Gods, Nala entered the room of Damayanti unseen by others and gave the message to Damayanti. But Damayanti did not agree to it. The Gods also entered the nuptial hall and took their seats in the shape of four Nalas. Damayanti entered the hall with the nuptial garland in her hands. She saw five Nalas including the real Nala, and prayed to the gods to show her the real Nala her lover. So the devas assumed their real forms and Damayanti put the garland on the neck of the real Nala and accepted him as her husband. Being much pleased with the behaviour and character of both Nala and Damayanti, the four gods blessed them. Agni promised to be near Nala whenever he thought of him. Yama said that Nala would always be righteous. Varuṇa said that Nala would obtain water at the thought of it. Indra blessed him saying that he would get mokṣa immediately after the completion of a yāga. The gods remained till the end of the marriage ceremony and then they departed. Nala and Damayanti lived in Kuṇḍinapurī.

4) *The hatred between Kali and Dvāpara.* Hearing about the Svayamvara of Damayanti Kali and Dvāpara started for Kuṇḍinapurī. On the way they met Indra and the other gods, who were returning from the marriage of Damayanti. They told Kali and Dvāpara that Damayanti had accepted Nala as her husband. Kali and Dvāpara got angry at this and returned saying that they would destroy the kingdom of Nala. After that Kali waited for a chance to enter the body of Nala. After twelve years, once Nala, after passing urine, without washing his legs performed his evening worship. At that moment Kali entered the body of Nala. With that Nala became bereft of all senses of righteousness and duty, and challenged his younger brother Puṣkara to a game of dice. Puṣkara engaged Nala in the game of dice. Kali stood in the shape of an ox as helper of Nala. Nala lost his kingdom in the game. Seeing that her husband was being defeated continuously, Damayanti sent for the charioteer Vārṣṇeya and sent her son Indrasena and daughter Indrasenā to Kuṇḍinapurī. After leaving the children at Kuṇḍinapurī Vārṣṇeya engaged himself in a travel. After visiting several countries he reached Ayodhyā and