

Śvetā, Surabhi, Surasā and Kadrū. Of the ten girls Surabhi in due course of time became mother of two daughters. Rohiṇī and Gandharvī. From Rohiṇī was born the cattlebreed and horses were born from Gandharvī. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Araṇya Kāṇḍa, Canto 14).

GANDHAVATĪ I. The name Satyavatī (Kālī) was assumed when sage Parāśara had swept away her matsyagandha (fish smell). She got also another name Yojanagandhā. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 63, Verse 80).

GANDHAVATĪ II. The city of Vāyu (the wind God). There are said to be nine cities on top of Mount Mahāmeru: (1) Manovatī of Brahmā at the centre, (2) Just on the eastern side of it Amaravatī of Indra, (3) Agni's Tejovatī in the south-eastern corner, (4) Maya's Saṁyamānī in the south, (5) Nirṛti's Kṛṣṇāñjanā in the south-western corner, (6) Śraddhāvatī of Varuṇa on the west, (7) Gandhavatī of Vāyu in the northwestern corner, (8) Mahodayā of Kubera on the north, and (9) Yaśovatī of Īśāna in the north-eastern corner. (Devībhāgavata, Aṣṭama Skandha).

GĀNDINĪ. A very beautiful princess of Kāśī. Śvaphalka married Gāndinī. (Daśama Skandha, Bhāgavata).

GĀṆḌĪVA. The famous bow of Arjuna.

1) *Make.* It was Brahmā who made the bow. 'This terrible bow which can punish the unjust and the wicked has been made by Brahmā'. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 98, Verse 21).

2) *Specialities of Gāṇḍīva.* This bow is enough to fight one lakh of people at one and the same time. Both Devas and men could be defeated with it. Chiselled very smooth and shining with many colours it was a very long bow. It was worshipped by Devas, Dānavas and Gandharvas. (Virāṭa Parva, Chapter 43). It gained and also decreased in power as the situation called for. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 98, Verse 20).

3) *History of Gāṇḍīva.* Brahmā, who made this bow kept it with him during the first 1000 years. For the next 1000 years Prajāpati kept it with him. Next, Indra got it from Prajāpati and he used it for 3585 years. After that Candra kept it for 500 years with him, and then Varuṇa came in possession of it. After using it for 100 years Varuṇa gave it to Arjuna, who used it for 65 years.

4) *Gāṇḍīva and Arjuna.* Arjuna agreed to protect the Khāṇḍava forest from rain, if Indra sent rain when Agni began eating the forest. But, realising that Arjuna possessed no weapons to effectively oppose Indra, Agni requested Varuṇa to give the following to Arjuna, viz., the Gāṇḍīva bow and a quiver wherein the arrows will never be exhausted, and the chariot marked with the symbol of monkey and drawn by four white horses—all kept by Candra. Varuṇa at once made a present of the above to Arjuna. And, it was with the aid of this Gāṇḍīva, that Arjuna defeated Indra at the time of Khāṇḍavadāha. (See Khāṇḍavadāha). Arjuna had taken a secret vow to cut off the head of anyone who asked him to give the bow to some one else. (Karna Parva, Chapter 69).

In after years Arjuna won many wars with the help of this bow. (See Arjuna).

5) *Arjuna gives up Gāṇḍīva.* The great Kurukṣetra war, which shook Bhārata, to its very foundation came to an end. Dharmaputra was crowned a King. It was at this juncture that the Yādava dynasty got itself anni-

hilated and Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered mahāsamādhi. Now the Pāṇḍavas lost all interest in mundane life, and they set out for the forest on their great journey after crowning Parikṣit, the grandson of Arjuna as King. Their great travel took them to the shores of the Red Sea. The Gāṇḍīva was still in Arjuna's hands. On the shores of the Red Sea Agni Deva appeared before the Pāṇḍavas and spoke to them "Well, Pāṇḍavas, I am Agni Deva. Arjuna requires the Gāṇḍīva no more. I got it from Varuṇa for Arjuna. Return it, therefore, to Varuṇa."

No sooner did he hear Agni Deva speak thus than did Arjuna throw it into the depths of the sea and also the quiver which never got exhausted of arrows with it. Agni Deva disappeared, and the Pāṇḍavas continued their journey. (Mahāprasthānika Parva, Chapter 1).

GAṄGĀ. The famous and holy river of India.

1) *Origin and general information.* Gaṅgā had its origin during the incarnation of Viṣṇu as Vāmana. When Vāmana measured the three worlds in three steps the nails on his left feet were raised high. They caused a pore on the upper side of the universe. Gaṅgā, starting from the finger of Viṣṇu's feet fell in heaven (Bhāgavata).

The famous Viṣṇupadī, the flowing water (tirtha) of which washes away the sins of the people in the universe is the very same Gaṅgā under discussion. For many yugas (eras) this river confined itself to the heights of the sky, otherwise called Viṣṇupada. This particular spot is known as Dhruvamaṇḍala as it is here that Dhruva, son of King Uttanapāda, does, his penance. The seven sages who constantly go round and round the Dhruvamaṇḍala take their bath in this holy river. The course of the river is thus: starting from Viṣṇupada it falls on devayāna glittering with crores of vimānas and therefrom it descends on Candramaṇḍala which it submerges. It follows its course again from there dividing itself into four tributaries called Sitā, Cakṣus, Alakanandā and Bhadrā and then falls in Brahmāloka wherefrom it flows in all directions. Of the four tributaries Sitā falls on the head of Mount Meru, flows down to Gandhamādāna, then circling through Bhadrāśva varṣa falls into the eastern sea. Cakṣus falls on the peaks of mount Mālyavān, flows through Ketumālā and falls into the western sea. Alakanandā falls on mount Hemakūṭa, flows through Bhārata Varṣa and falls into the southern sea. And Bhadrā falls on the head of mount Śṛṅgavān, flows through Uttarakuru and falls into the northern sea. Alakanandā flows through Bhārata Varṣa and is regarded as the most sacred of the four tributaries.

Gaṅgā which flowed through heaven fell on the earth after thousands of years of its origin. (Bhāgavata, Pañcama, Skandha, Chapter 17).

2) *Why Gaṅgā became Śiva's consort.* Mahāviṣṇu was once engaged at Vaikuṇṭha in a pleasant talk with his wives, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā when Gaṅgā cast lustful eyes on Viṣṇu, who, behind the backs of the other two wives returned the lustful glances. Sarasvatī could not put up with that situation for a long time. Therefore, she got up from her seat and beat Gaṅgā. Lakṣmī tried to restrain Sarasvatī lest the quarrel should become fiercer. Angered at this intervention Sarasvatī cursed that Lakṣmī be born on earth. Gaṅgā got angry that innocent Lakṣmī was thus cursed, and she in her