

King and left for the forest, (Ādi Parva, Chapter 97).

7) *Aṣṭavasus and Gaṅgā*. While the wife of Dyau, one of the Aṣṭavasus (eight Vasus) was roaming about in the forest she saw Nandinī (the divine cow) grazing with her calf near the āśrama of Vasiṣṭha, and she desired to have the cow to be presented to her intimate friend Jitavati, the daughter of King Uśīnara. She informed her husband, Dyau about this desire of hers, and Dyau told his relations about it. Next day the Aṣṭavasus, in the absence of Vasiṣṭha at the āśrama, stole off Nandinī and her calf. When Vasiṣṭha returned to the āśrama the cow and calf were missing, and he divined the reason for it with his divine eyes. He cursed that the Aṣṭavasus be born as men on earth, and when they prayed for redemption from the curse Vasiṣṭha told them that they would be born as men within one year from that day, die at once and return to heaven. At the same time the sage said that Dyau alone, who took the leading part in stealing the cow, would live on earth for a longer period before he returned to heaven. (The reputed Bhīṣma was this Dyau). The Aṣṭavasus set out for the earth to be born as men and on their way they met Gaṅgā and told her about their curse etc. Gaṅgā also told them about her curse, and permitted them to be born in her womb. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 99).

8) *Gaṅgā became the wife of Śantanu and the Aṣṭavasus were born*. Once while hunting on the banks of the Gaṅgā Śantanu saw a beautiful maiden and they fell in love with each other. She agreed to become his wife on the condition that he would not oppose whatever she said. Śantanu agreed to it and married her. Soon after a child was born to them and in the very presence of Śantanu, she threw the child into the Gaṅgā. As per previous condition Śantanu kept mum at this. She threw into the river the seven Aṣṭavasus, who were born to her in succession. When she was about to throw the last eighth of the Aṣṭavasus (Dyau) into the river Śantanu prevented her. She got angry at this and disappeared with the child. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 98).

9) *Śantanu got back the son*. Thirtytwo years after, Śantanu went hunting again on the banks of the Gaṅgā where he saw the river obstructed in its course with arrows by a handsome boy. Śantanu did not recognise that the boy was his son, who had been named Devavrata by Gaṅgā. Devavrata disappeared after throwing Śantanu into an illusion by his magic power. All of a sudden a doubt dawned in his mind whether the boy was his own son, and he called out to Gaṅgā to show him the boy. Gaṅgā appeared with her son with beautiful ornaments on him and spoke to Śantanu thus: "This is Devavrata, the eighth son whom you entrusted to me. He has mastered everything in archery from Vasiṣṭha, and he is Dyau (the vasu) son of Aṅgiras reborn. You may please take charge of him." After saying this she returned to heaven. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 100).

10) *Gaṅgā and Subrahmaṇya*. (See under Subrahmaṇya).

11) *Gaṅgā and Bhīṣma*. (See under Bhīṣma).

12) *Greatness (divine nature) of Gaṅgā*. Mahābhārata has (Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 26), the following on the greatness of Gaṅgā.—

If, after death, the bones of the dead are deposited

in Gaṅgā the departed will attain heaven. Even if one had sinned throughout his life he would attain Viṣṇupāda (heaven) if he worshipped Gaṅgā. Bathing in the Gaṅgā is as beneficial as performing hundred yajñas. As long as the bones of one remain in the waters of the Gaṅgā so long will he occupy an honourable seat in heaven. He who has come in contact with its water will shine forth as the sun devoid of all darkness. Places which are not favoured by its waters will become barren like night without the moon and trees without flowers. Gaṅgā water is more than enough to satisfy living things in all the three worlds. He who does penance standing on one leg for thousand years, and he who gives up his body in the waters of the Gaṅgā are on a par with each other. God attaches more importance to him who has fallen into the Gaṅgā than to him, who has performed tapas hanging by his head for a thousand years. He who smears the sand on the banks of the Gaṅgā on his body will get the lustre and glow of the devas, and he, who smears the sand on his head will shine forth like the Sun. All the sins of those on whom has blown the air which had come in contact with Gaṅgā water will be swept away. It should be known that Gaṅgā water can wash off all sins and purify mortals. The Agni Purāṇa (Chapter 110) has the following on this subject.

Through whatever places the Gaṅgā flows those places become sublime and sacred. Gaṅgā is the refuge of all created beings who aspire for the final good. If Gaṅgā is worshipped daily it will save families both on the mother's and the father's side from evil fate. To drink Gaṅgā water is better than the observance of a thousand lunar months. If one worships Gaṅgā for a month one will derive all the benefits of having performed all the yajñas. Even the blind (the ignorant) who worship Gaṅgā, will attain equal status with the devas. The sight of Gaṅgā, contact with its waters and drinking Gaṅgā water will purify people in thousands and lakhs.

13) *Gaṅgā and Rādhā*. Gaṅgā is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa liquidified into water. Once in goloka Rādhādevī attempted to drink Gaṅgā dry, who, terror-stricken, hid herself at the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the whole world experienced difficulties due to non-availability of water. Śrī Kṛṣṇa came to know of the situation and made Gaṅgā appear again on earth. (Devibhāgavata, Navama Skandha).

14) *Symbols and vehicle of Gaṅgā*. Gaṅgā, white in colour rests on makaramatsya (a variety of fish) holding in her hands a pot and lotus flowers. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 50).

15) *Synonyms of Gaṅgā used in the Mahābhārata*. Ākāśagaṅgā, Bhāgīrathasutā, Bhāgīrathī, Śailarājasutā, Śaivasutā, Devanadi, Haimavati, Jāhnavī, Jahnukanyā, Samudramahiṣī, Tripathagā, Tripathagāminī.

16) *Synonyms of Gaṅgā*.

Gaṅgā viṣṇupadī jahnutanayā suranimnagā /  
Bhāgīrathī tripathagā Trisrotā bhīṣmasūrapī //  
(Gaṅgā, Viṣṇupadī Jahnutanayā, Suranimnagā, Bhāgīrathī, Tripathagā, Trisrotā, Bhīṣmasū). (Amarakośa).

GAṄĀDATTA. See Bhīṣma.

GAṄĀDVĀRA (M). The place or locality in the Indo-Gangetic plane where the river Ganges falls from the Himālayas. This place is known as Haridvāra also. arHidvāra has an epic importance.