

JAPA(S). A group of Gods (devas) of the third Manvantara (age of Manu). In that Manvantara the Manu was Uttama, Indra was Susānti, and the Devaganas (groups of gods) were Sudharmas, Satyas, Japas, Pratardanas, and Vaśavartins, the five groups, each consisting of twelve members. (See under Manvantara).

JĀPAKA. A Brāhmaṇa who was constantly engaged in uttering Gāyatri. Jāpaka was ordered to go to hell because certain mistakes were detected in the uttering of Gāyatri. But Devī Sāvitrī intervened. She appeared before him and gave him heaven. This Jāpaka was a contemporary of Ikṣvāku. (M.B. Śānti Parva, 3 Chapters from 197).

JARA. A forester. It was this forester who shot an arrow at Śrī Kṛṣṇa and killed him mistaking him for an animal. (See under Śrī Kṛṣṇa).

JARĀ. A harpy (Rākṣasi). Though she was a harpy she loved human beings. It is believed that if the picture of Jarā and her children is placed in the house and venerated, there will be no haunting of any other kinds of demons.

The figure of Jarā was sculptured on the wall of the Palace of Brhadratha, the King of Magadha, and was being worshipped. Because the King worshipped her, she had been looking forward to an opportunity to reward the King. Brhadratha had married two daughters of the King of Kāśī. They were twin sisters. For a long time they remained childless. The King was very sorry, and went to the forest with his wives. He saw the hermit Kākṣivān or Caṇḍakauśika, the son of Gautama and requested that a son should be born to him. The hermit was sitting in meditation under a mango tree and a mango fell on his lap. The hermit took it and by prayer and meditation he invoked divine power into it and gave it to the King. The King divided it into two and gave it to his wives. The queens became pregnant and the three returned joyously.

In due course both delivered. But each of them gave birth to only half of a child. The horrified queens took the uncouth figures outside the palace and left them there. Jarā was watching this. She ran to the spot and placed the two portions together. Instantly it became a child of proper form. Hearing the cry of the child the mothers came out. Jarā appeared there and placed the child before the King Brhadratha. As desired by Jarā the child was named Jarāsandha because he was joined together by Jarā. This child grew up and became the notorious King Jarāsandha of Magadha. (M.B. Sabhā Parva, 3 Chapters from 17).

It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Droṇa Parva, Chapter 182, Stanza 12 that when Arjuna fought with Jarāsandha this harpy had been staying in the weapon of Jarāsandha and was killed in that fight.

JARATKĀRU I. A hermit who is Purāṇically famous.

1) *Birth*. This hermit was born in a Brāhmaṇa dynasty known as Yāyāvaras. He was the only son of Yāyāvaras. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 13).

2) *The name Jaratkāru*. The meaning of the name Jaratkāru is given in Bhāṣābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 40, as follows :—

“Jarā is consumption, Kāru is dāruṇa (awful). By and by his body became hard and awful and by penance he made his body to wear out, and so he got the name ‘Jaratkāru’.”

By means of penance he made his body leap and worn out and so got the name Jaratkāru.

3) *Marriage*. The calm and abstemious Jaratkāru remained unmarried for a long time. One day he happened to meet with his Manes. They were holding on to a grass and were about to fall into hell, and a rat was cutting the root of the grass which was their only hold. The moment the root is severed all the Manes would fall into the deep ravine of hell. It was at this juncture that Jaratkāru, met his Manes. The moment they saw him they said, “See Jaratkāru, we are your Manes. We have to obtain, heaven, life, contentment and happiness by the good deeds of your son. So go and get married quickly.”

At first he did not like the talk about marriage. Still, in order to procure heaven for his ancestors he agreed to get married. But he made a condition that the name of the bride also should be Jaratkāru and she should be given to him as alms. Saying these words, he walked away along the forest.

News reached the ears of Vāsuki, the King of the Nāgas (serpents) that the hermit Jaratkāru was wandering through the forests calling out that somebody should give him as alms a damsel named Jaratkāru. Vāsuki had a sister. Jaratkāru was her name. Vāsuki decided to give her to the hermit Jaratkāru. She was adorned with costly garments and ornaments and was taken to the hermit Jaratkāru. Jaratkāru said :—

“Hear my condition, I will not cherish her if she causes displeasure to me. If she does so I will send her away instantly.”

On condition that if she did anything displeasing to him he would leave her at once, the hermit Jaratkāru married Jaratkāru the sister of Vāsuki. (Devī Bhāgavata, Skandha 2; Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapters 13 and 47).

4) *Leaves his wife*. Jaratkāru lived in the hermitage with her husband looking after him with love and loyalty. One day the hermit was sleeping with his head on the lap of his wife. Though it was sunset the hermit slept on. It was time for the evening worship of the hermit. If he is aroused he will get angry. The wife was in a difficult situation. Anyhow she aroused her husband. The hermit got up full of anger and shouted, “You have hindered my sleep, you wicked woman and teased me. So from today you are not my wife. I am going away.”

She begged him for pardon with tears. But without paying any heed to the entreaties of his pregnant wife, he left her.

The helpless Jaratkāru gave birth to a son named Āstika who later stopped the famous sacrifice, Sarpa Satra meant for killing the serpents. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 47). See under Jaratkāru II.

JARATKĀRU II.

1) *General information*. It occurs in Devī Bhāgavata, Skandha 9, about Jaratkāru, the sister of Vāsuki and the wife of hermit Jaratkāru as follows. This devī (goddess) is the daughter of Prajāpati Kaśyapa, born from his mind. So she got the name Manasādevī (goddess born from mind). Some think that she got the name Manasādevī because she is the deity of mind. There are some who imagine that she got the name Manasādevī because she held Śrī Kṛṣṇa Paramātman (the Supreme Spirit) firmly in her mind. This devī