

(v) Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, Chapter 334, Verse 35, mentions that Marīci is a Prajāpati.

(vi) Marīci is one of the group of sages known as Citraśikhaṇḍins. (M.B. Śānti Parva, Chapter 335, Verse 29).

(vii) Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, Chapter 340, Verse 44, describes Marīci as one of the Aṣṭaprakṛtis.

(viii) Marīci once visited Dhruva who was performing penance and gave him advice. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Part I, Chapter 11).

**MARĪCI II.** A celestial woman. In Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 122, Verse 62 we find that she attended a dance at the celebrations at the time of Arjuna's birth.

**MARĪCI III.** An author of Dharmasāstra. His statements are quoted in Aparārka, Smṛticandrikā, Mitākṣarā and other works.

**MĀRIṢĀ I.** A nymph created as a maiden of the Flora (See under Kaṇḍu).

**MĀRIṢĀ II.** A river of Purāṇic fame. (Śloka 36, Chapter 9, Bhīṣma Parva).

**MĀRIṢĀ.** A place of habitation of ancient Bhārata. (Śloka 69, Chapter 9, Bhīṣma Parva).

**MĀRJĀRA.** Son of Jāmbavān. It is said in Brahmapurāṇa that the mārjāras (cats) have their origin from this son of Jāmbavān.

**MARKA.** See under the word Śaṇḍāmarka.

**MĀRKAṆḌEYA.** The son of Mṛkaṇḍu. He was a great devotee of Śiva.

1) *Genealogy.* Bhr̥gu, son of Brahmā, begot of his wife Khyāti a daughter named Lakṣmī and two sons named Dhātā and Vidhātā.

Dhātā and Vidhātā married Āyati and Niyati daughters of Mahāmeru. Dhātā begot of his wife Āyati a son named Prāṇa and Niyati bore Vidhātā a son named Mṛkaṇḍu. Mārkaṇḍeya was the son of Mṛkaṇḍu and Vedaśiras was the son of Mārkaṇḍeya.

2) *Birth.* Mṛkaṇḍu did not have sons for a long time and so he performed penance for several years to please Śiva to get a son. Śiva appeared before him in person and asked him thus "Do you desire to have a virtuous, wise and pious son who would live up to sixteen years or a dull-witted evil-natured son who would live long?" Mṛkaṇḍu chose the first type and soon a son was born. He was named Mārkaṇḍeya. Even from boyhood Mārkaṇḍeya knew all the Vedas and śāstras. His pleasing manners got the approval of his teachers and the boy was liked by one and all. But the parents were sad and whenever they looked at their son a gloom spread over their face. The secret of the short span of his life was hidden from him. The sixteenth year was fast approaching and one day unable to control their grief they wept before him. Mārkaṇḍeya asked them the reason why they wept. Mṛkaṇḍu with tears running down his cheeks told him the story. From that day onwards Mārkaṇḍeya started performing penance wearing barks of trees for his dress and growing matted hair. The boy was soon engrossed in severe austerities.

The day of his death came and the boy sat before the idol of Śiva in deep meditation. The servants of the god of Death could not approach Mārkaṇḍeya for the radiation from him was too hot for them. So Yama, the god of Death, himself came to fetch him. Then Mārkaṇḍeya crying loudly for help embraced the idol before him. Yama threw his rope in a loop and it went and circled round the idol also. Angry Śiva rose from the idol and

coming down killed Yama to save the child. From that day onwards Śiva got the names Mṛtyuñjaya and Kālākāla. After that at the request of the devas Śiva gave life to Yama again and made Mārkaṇḍeya to be of sixteen years for ever.

3) *Penance of Mārkaṇḍeya.* The Purāṇas state that after getting the blessing from Śiva, Mārkaṇḍeya lived for ten crores of years. While he was in deep meditation six Manvantaras passed away. When Mārkaṇḍeya continued his meditation to the seventh Manvantara Indra got frightened and he made an attempt to abort the penance of Mārkaṇḍeya. Indra sent his troops of Gandharvas, nymphs, Manmatha and Vasanta to the āśrama of Mārkaṇḍeya. The āśrama of Mārkaṇḍeya was at a place which was on the northern side of the Himālayas and was famous by the presence there of the river Puṣpabhadrā and the rock Citra. The agents of Indra came there and tried to entice him with many temptations. Beautiful celestial maidens danced around the āśrama. Flowers fell from their hair when their waists shook by the weight of their heavy breasts. Enchanting girls played with balls here and there. As they played the bracelets on their waists fell down and the thin garments that hid their bodies flew up showing an alluring nakedness. Kāma (God of Love) sent his arrows at that time against the sage. But Mārkaṇḍeya sat unconcerned as rigid as a rock and Indra accepted defeat. When Indra and his troops returned disappointed Mahāviṣṇu with many sages went to Mārkaṇḍeya. He awoke from his meditation and worshipped Viṣṇu.

4) *Vision of Pralaya.* On one evening at dusk Mārkaṇḍeya was sitting at Puṣpabhadrātīra when from somewhere a wind began to blow. The wind increased in strength and the sky became covered with clouds. The place resounded with peals of thunder and soon it began to rain. Rains became heavy. Rivers became flooded and water-level in the oceans rose. Everything around was submerged in water and Mārkaṇḍeya alone stood there with his matted hair swinging in the wind. It was impossible to know the directions and Mārkaṇḍeya started walking. He fell into whirlpools but was the next instant thrown up on to the top of surging waves. Then he saw on the top of a high wave a banyan tree. On a branch on the north-east of the tree he saw an infant lying, devouring the darkness by its effulgence. He was attracted to the infant by its vital force and went inside the infant as it inhaled. Inside the belly of the kid Mārkaṇḍeya had a vision of the entire universe. He saw the sky, the horizon, the stars, the oceans, the mountains expanses of land, Suras, Asuras, forests and all that the universe contained in its proper set-up. He saw passing before his eyes the elements, the Yugas and the Manvantaras. After some time he was thrown out by an exhalation of the infant. He stood on the waters. The old banyan tree was still there. An infant was still lying on a leaf on that tree. Mārkaṇḍeya then knew it was Mahāviṣṇu. He rushed to embrace the child; but the child disappeared before he reached it. Mārkaṇḍeya praised Mahāviṣṇu.

5) *Pārvatī and Parameśvara come to Mārkaṇḍeya.* When Mahāviṣṇu disappeared from his vision he felt he was sitting at Puṣpabhadrātīra and he again went into meditation. At that time Pārvatī and Parameśvara came that way and appeared before Mārkaṇḍeya. The sage worshipped them and they both blessed Mārkaṇḍeya