

along with Kuntī, Mādri and others. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 118, Verse 47).

NĀGAŚRĪ. Wife of King Dharmadatta of Kosala. Tārādattā was their daughter. (See under Dharmadatta).

NĀGĀSTRA. A destructive weapon (arrow). The following story about the astra is told in the Yuddha Kāṇḍa of Kamba Rāmāyaṇa.

In olden times there was a very powerful and mean asura called Nāga. Brahmā resorted to virulent black magic to kill Nāga, and from the fire-pit arose a terrible goblin called Nāgapāśa. It was deputed to kill Nāga and the Trimūrtis followed it. Nāgapāśa went to the city of Nāgāsura called Viramahendra, ascended its tower and made a terrible noise the echo of which caused abortion in all the pregnant nāga women. Many children fainted and many died. Nāgāsura deputed his army chieftain Virasena with an army to kill the nāga goblin. At the sight of the army the goblin raised another terrible cry, which blew off Virasena and his army, reducing them to powder. Then Nāgāsura's minister with a big army attacked the goblin. But the minister was devoured by him, and the army annihilated. Enraged at this defeat of his minister, Nāgāsura attacked the goblin with an army of crores of soldiers. But, within seconds the goblin devoured the mighty army. At last Nāgapāśa and Nāgāsura engaged themselves in a duel which lasted for years. Ultimately the goblin swallowed up Nāgāsura also. Then he went to the Trimūrtis and saluted them. They granted him many boons, and Śiva, in excess of joy, wore it as one of the ornaments round his neck. Some time later Nāgapāśa set out on a tour to see the fourteen worlds, and Śiva specially instructed him not to visit the Śālmali island. He visited the various worlds earning all knowledge and started for mount Kailāsa. On his way he saw Śālmali island, the abode of nāgas, and in violation of Śiva's instructions, he entered the island. The nāgas there did not honour him and his false pride made him tremble with rage. Then the nāgas of the island told him thus : "We have a powerful enemy, who visits us every month, and unless we feed him sumptuously he will devour all of us for food. He is to come today, and if you are capable enough, you defeat and drive him off and save us. If you do so, we shall crown you as our King and honour you."

The powerful enemy of the nāgas was Garuḍa and he came. All the nāgas ran off at his sight. Garuḍa then attacked the goblin Nāgapāśa, who was standing unperturbed before him. There being no chance of victory for the goblin he ran away and took refuge with Śiva. Garuḍa also followed him, and demanded of Śiva to return to him, his enemy, the goblin. Śiva told Garuḍa thus:—"If, in future he (the goblin) interferes with anybody connected with you, you may either punish or eat him. Do not do anything with him now".

Garuḍa agreed to the above proposal of Śiva. From that day onwards Nāgapāśa lived in Vaikuṇṭha entwined with nooses. He became the arrow called nāgapāśa or nāgāstra.

NĀGATĪRTHA I. A holy place situated on the boundary of Kurukṣetra. Those who drink the water of this holy bath will obtain the fruit of performing an

Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 83, Stanza 14).

NĀGATĪRTHA II. A holy place which is situated near Gaṅgādvāra or Kanakhala and which keeps up the memory of Kapila, the King of the Nāgas. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 84, Stanza 66).

NĀGAVĪTHĪ. Daughter born to Yāmī, the daughter of Dakṣaprajāpati. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Part 1, Chapter 15).

NAGNAJIT I. A Kṣatriya King. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 37, Stanza 21 that this King was born from a portion of an asura called Iṣupāda. This Nagnajit who was the King of Gāndhāra was killed by Karṇa and his sons were defeated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 254 and Udyoga Parva, Chapter 43).

NAGNAJIT II. An asura. This asura who had been the disciple of Prahlāda took rebirth as a King named Subala. (Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 63, Stanza 11).

NĀGODBHEDA. A holy place near Vinaśana tīrtha. Sarasvatī is supposed to dwell here in invisible form. He who bathes here will attain nāgaloka. (Vana Parva, Chapter 82, Verse 112).

NAHUṢA I. A famous King of the Lunar dynasty.

1) *Genealogy.* Descended from Viṣṇu in the following order:—Brahmā-Atri - Candra - Budha-Purūravas-Āyus-Nahuṣa.

2) *Birth.* Āyus, the son of Purūravas, married the princess named Indumatī (Svarbhānukumārī). Nahuṣa was the son born to the couple, thanks to the blessing of the great hermit Dattātreyā. Nahuṣa married Aśokasundarī, the daughter of Śiva.

There is a story about the birth and marriage of Nahuṣa and Aśokasundarī in Padma Purāṇa as given below :

Once Śiva and Pārvatī were engaged in love-making in Kailāsa. Pārvatī requested Śiva to show her the best garden ever created by Brahmā. Śiva took her to Nandanavana, where she saw the Kalpa tree, which was beautiful all over, and she asked Śiva about its special features. Śiva replied that anything asked of it would be granted by the Kalpa tree. Pārvatī made a request to the Kalpa tree for a girl just for a test. Instantly a very beautiful girl was born from the tree. Pārvatī named her Aśokasundarī and brought her up as her daughter. Once Pārvatī gave her a boon that she would become the wife of King Nahuṣa of the Lunar family, who would be equal to Indra.

One day, when the beautiful Aśokasundarī was walking with celestial maids in the Nandanavana an asura named Huṅḍa the son of Vipracitti, came there. The moment his eyes fell on Aśokasundarī he fell in love with her. The asura spoke to her of his love and requested her to be his wife. Not only did she refuse his request but also told him that according to the boon given by Pārvatī she would become the wife of Nahuṣa, the King of the Lunar dynasty.

Hearing this Huṅḍa smiled and said : "That righteous man named Nahuṣa is yet to be born in the Lunar dynasty. You will be much older than he. He will not suit you as he will be too young. So don't waste your blooming youth. Come and enjoy life with me." But Aśokasundarī did not concede. Huṅḍa was disappointed. So he began to think about ways to get her. He disappeared from there and reappeared in the guise of a beautiful woman