

were wonder-struck to see this army of Kāma. All those great beauties stood before Naranārāyaṇas in salutation. Some of them began to sing, others to dance and yet others to take up the tunes. Nārāyaṇarṣi could easily divine the reason for the show. He thought to himself thus—

“None but Devendra could have sent all these people here, and his object must be to hinder our tapas. But I shall prove to Indra that all these mean nothing to me. Let Devendra understand that I can create more beautiful ladies than these women of his here and that I am not in the least attracted by any of them here.”

Thinking thus Nārāyaṇa beat gently on his thigh and immediately arose therefrom an exceptionally beautiful woman. Since that woman, the most beautiful in all the three worlds, was created from the Ūru (thigh) of Nārāyaṇa she came to be known as Urvaśī. Others were wonder-struck by this new creation. He created some other beauties also, and an equal number of other women to serve them. All of them stood before him in humble salutation.

The celestial women almost fainted with fear. In repentance they begged the munis pardon for their mistake. The munis were kindly disposed towards them. They told them that they (munis) cherished no animosity towards them, but in fact were pleased with them, and they further asked them (celestial women) to choose their boons. The munis also asked them to take Urvaśī to Devaloka as a present from them to Indra. Let the Devas prosper.

Having heard Nara speak like this the celestial women returned in great humility to Devaloka with Urvaśī and the other women. (Devī Bhāgavata, 4th Skandha).

3) *Other information.*

(i) Nara and Nārāyaṇa were two incarnations of Mahāviṣṇu. (Śānti Parva, Chapter 384)

(ii) A dark hair of Nārāyaṇarṣi was born as Kṛṣṇa and a white one as Balabhadrarāma. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 196, Verse 32).

(iii) He was a star member in Brahmā's assembly. (Sabhā Parva, Chapter 11, verse 52)

(iv) Once he appeared before Māndhātā in the guise of Indra. (Śānti Parva, Chapter 64, Verse 14).

(v) He once fought with Śiva and won. (Śānti Parva, Chapter 382, Verse 110)

For complete details about Nārāyaṇarṣi see under Nara Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa)

NĀRĀYAṆĀŚRAMĀ. A holy place. (Vana Parva, Chapter 29, Verse 6)

NĀRĀYAṆĀSTHĀNA. (ŚĀLAGRĀMATĪRTHA). A sacred place where Mahāviṣṇu is always present. Brahmā, Devas, Sannyāsins, Ādityas, Vasus and Rudras are also ever present here in the service of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is called Śālagrāma as he is being thus worshipped at Śālagrāma. Those who visit the place will enjoy the fruits of Aśvamedha yajña and ascend to Vaikuṇṭha. (Vana Parva, Chapter 84, Verse 115).

NĀRĀYAṆĀSTRAMOKṢAPARVA. A sub parva of Droṇa Parva comprising of Chapters 193-220.

NĀRĀYAṆAVARMAMANTRA. Imparted by Viśvarūpa, son of Tvaṣṭā, to Indra, this mantra is competent to destroy enemies. He who desires to chant this mantra should do so silently after having first washed his hands and feet and holding Kuśa grass in his hands with face

turned towards the north. The mantra is to be chanted when some danger is imminent.

NĀRĪ. A daughter of Meru. She and her sisters were married by the following sons of Agnidhra, i.e. Nābhi, Kimpuruṣa, Hari, Ilāvṛta, Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya, Kuru, Bhadrāśva and Ketumāla. (Bhāgavata, 5th Skandha).

NARIṢYANTA I. Son of Vaivasvata Manu. He was a brother of Ikṣvāku. (Bhāgavata, Skandha 8).

NARIṢYANTA II. A King who was the son of Marutta. Indrasenā was his wife; Dama was his son. While Nariṣyanta was leading the life of a house-holder in the forest, Vapuṣmān killed him. Indrasenā jumped into the funeral pyre of her husband and died. (Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa).

NĀRĪTĪRTHA. Common name for the five tīrthas, i.e. Agastya tīrtha, Saubhadratīrtha, Paulomatīrtha, Kārandhamatīrtha and Bharadvājatīrtha. Once Arjuna bathed in Bharadvājatīrtha. The Apsarā women called Vargās were living in the five tīrthas in the form of crocodiles as the result of a curse. With the arrival of Arjuna there, the crocodiles resumed their previous forms as Apsarā women and returned to Devaloka. (For the curse etc. see under Vargā).

NARMADĀ I. A famous holy river of South India. This river which springs from Amarakaṇṭaka flows through the valley called Khambhāta and falls into the ocean.

1) *Birth.* This river which is considered to be a holy river was the rebirth of Tapatī the daughter of the Sun. (To know how Tapatī was reborn as Narmadā, see under Tapatī).

2) *The divine nature of the river Narmadā.* Mention is made in most of the Purāṇas about the river Narmadā which is one of the holy rivers of Bhārata. Once Nārada said to Yudhiṣṭhira about the river Narmadā as follows: “Gaṅgā has more divinity in Kanakhala and Sarasvatī has more divinity in Kurukṣetra. But Narmadā is a holy river everywhere, whether in the villages or in the forests. Sarasvatī purifies us in three days and Gaṅgā in one day. But the moment we see Narmadā we are purified.”

The river Narmadā, the former half of which embraces the mountain Amarakaṇṭaka in the country of Kaliṅga, is the purest of rivers in the three worlds. The devas, asuras, Gandharvas and hermits bathe in the river and attain eternal bliss. He who controls his organs of senses and takes fast for one night and bathes in this river would be prosperous for hundred generations. This great river is hundred yojanas long and two yojanas wide. There are sixty crores and sixty thousand holy ghats in this river around the mountain Amarakaṇṭaka. Anybody who dies by fire, by drowning or by fast on this mountain Amarakaṇṭaka, will never have rebirth. (Padma Purāṇa, Chapter 13).

3) *Mahābhārata and Narmadā.* Throughout Mahābhārata mention is made about Narmadā. Important of them are given below :

(i) Goddess Narmadā stays in the palace of Varuṇa worshipping him. (M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 18).

(ii) While leading forest life Dharmaputra with his brothers visited Narmadādevī. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 121, Stanza 16).

(iii) Indra and the Aśvinīdevas once drank Soma sitting on the mountain Vaidūrya on the banks of the Narmadā. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 121, Stanza 19).