

ŚĀKAVAKTRA. A warrior of Subrahmaṇya. (Mahābhārata, Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Verse 78).

ŚĀKAYANYA. A maharṣi. (For details see under Brhadraṭha).

ŚĀKHA. According to one view Śākha was the younger brother of Subrahmaṇya while there are others who maintain that he was Subrahmaṇya's son. In verse 37, Chapter 44 of Śalya Parva it is stated that Śākha was the son of the Vasu Anala and the younger brother of Subrahmaṇya and that he had two brothers called Vaiśākha and Naigameya. It is stated in Chapter 15, part I of Viṣṇu Purāṇa as follows:- "Āpa, Dhruva, Soma, Dharma, Anila, Agni, Pratyūṣa and Prabhāsa are the aṣṭavasus. Vaitaṇḍa, Śrama, Śānta, and Dhvani were sons of Āpa. Kāla, who annihilates the entire world is the son of Dhruva and Varccas is Soma's son. Varccas gives people the vital glow. Draviṇa, Hutaḥavyavaha, Śiśvara, Prāṇa and Varuṇa were the sons of Dharma by Manoharā. Anila's wife was Śivā, and two sons, Manojava and Avijñatagati were born to the couple. Kumāra, son of Agni was born in Śarastamba and he had three brothers called Śākha, Viśākha and Naigameya."

The following story about the birth of Śākha is from Taraṅga 6, Lāvānakalambaka of Kathāsaritsāgara: Defeated in battle by Tārakāsura, Indra decided to have no more fight with him and retired to Mount Mahāmeru. Devas and maharṣis sought asylum with Subrahmaṇya, who gave them protection. Indra came to know of it and fought with Subrahmaṇya feeling that the latter had captured his kingdom. Two sons, Śākha and Viśākha were born from the face of Subrahmaṇya wounded by the Vajrāyudha of Indra.

ŚAKRA. A synonym of Indra. (See under Indra.)

ŚAKRADEVA. A prince of Kaliṅga, who fought on the Kaurava side in the great war and got killed by Bhīma. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 54, Verse 24).

ŚAKRAKUMĀRIKĀ. A sacred place from very olden days. Those who bathe there will attain heaven. (Vana Parva, Chapter 82, Verse 81).

ŚAKRAVĀPI. A nāga, which lived in a forest near Girivraja. The forest was near the āśrama of Gautama. (Sabhā Parva, Chapter 21, Verse 9).

ŚAKRĀVARTTA. A holy place. He who worships Devatās and the souls of his ancestors here will attain the holy world. (Vana Parva, Chapter 84, Verse 29).

SAKR DGRAHA. A rural area in ancient India. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Verse 66).

ŚAKTA. Son of Manasvī, the great-grandson of emperor Pūru. Sauvīri was his mother. He had two brothers called Saṁhanana and Vāgmi, both of them great in warfare. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 94, Verse 7).

ŚAKTI I.

(1) *General.* Son of Vasiṣṭha by Arundhatī. He was the first-born among the hundred sons of Vasiṣṭha. Kalmāṣapāda, the Rākṣasa captured and ate Śakti and his pregnant wife Adṛśyanti spent her days in great grief with Vasiṣṭha. Parāśaramuni, father of Vyāsa, was Adṛśyanti's son. (For details see under Adṛśyanti).

(2) *Other information*

(i) It was Śiva, who incarnated himself as the son of Vasiṣṭha.

(ii) Gopāyana, Bharadvāja, Āpastamba and Arṇodara

belong to the line of disciples of Śakti. (Vāmana Purāṇa, Chapter 6).

ŚAKTI II. The weapon of Subrahmaṇya is called Śakti, and it was made by Viśvakarman. Viśvakarman once grilled Sūrya (sun) on his machine and reduced his glow. The glow thus released by Viśvakarman fell on the earth and Viśvakarman made with that glow the cakra (disc) of Viṣṇu, the triśūla (trident) of Śiva the Puṣpaka, aerial chariot of Kubera and the Śakti of Subrahmaṇya. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Part 3, Chapter 2).

ŚAKTI III. The sound 'Ś' means welfare or prosperity and 'kti' prowess. Therefore Śakti means she, who is the embodiment of prosperity and prowess or she, who grants prosperity and prowess. The definition of 'Bhagavati' is, she who combines in herself knowledge affluence, wealth, reputation, power and the female organ. Therefore the word 'Śakti' may be taken to mean Bhagavati and Pārvatī, and what are termed as Bhagavati, Śakti, Devī, Ambikā, Pārvatī etc. are the manifestations of Śakti, Śiva's spouse. This Śakti exists fractionally in all Devas. When, once upon a time the devāsura war broke out the Śaktis of Devas like Brahmā emerged to help Caṇḍikā. The vehicle, ornaments, weapon etc. of each Deva, his Devī also possessed. The Śaktis (Devīs) of the Devas appeared in the following manner. Brahmāṇī, wife of Brahmā, rode on the swan wearing beads around her neck and holding the water-vessel in her hands. She was followed by Vaiṣṇavī Viṣṇu's Śakti on Garuḍa wearing yellow clothes and with the conch, disc, lotus etc. in her hands. Śāṅkarī Śiva's Śakti rode on the ox with the crescent moon and serpents as ornaments and holding in her hands the Śūla. 'Kaumārī', Subrahmaṇya's Śakti rode on Airāvata with śūla in hands. The Śakti called 'Vārāhī in the form of a great boar rode carrying a corpse, Nārasimhī' Śakti took the form of narasimha (half man and half lion). Yāmyā, Yama's śakti, rode on buffalo holding in her hands a long stick. Śaktis called Kauberī and Vāruṇī took their respective forms and in this manner all the Śaktis came to the help of Devī. This sight pleased not only the Devas, but the mother of the universe also. Along with them incarnated on earth Śaṅkara, who gives 'śam' (happiness) to the world and blessed Caṇḍikā on the battle-field (Devī Bhāgavata, 5th and 9th Skandhas).

ŚAKTIBHADRA. A dramatist in Sanskrit, who lived in the seventh century A.D. He belonged to Chengannur in the Kerala State. He was a disciple of Śaṅkarācārya. The Dramatic composition 'Āścarya-cūḍāmani' is his work.

Śaktibhadra, after writing his drama, once read it out to Śaṅkarācārya. As the ācārya was observing silence that day, he made no comments about the drama. Disappointed at this silence of his Guru, the dramatist burnt his work to ashes in fire. When his observance of silence was over, the Guru asked his disciple for the drama. When told about the burning of the drama the ācārya repeated from memory the whole drama. The above legend is widely prevalent in Kerala.

ŚĀKUNA (OMENS).

(1) *General.* In ancient times people in all countries used to consider Śakunas to be harbingers of good or evil things. Today also many people believe in omens. In India