

not show any sign of weakness. At this time he saw once the sun travelling on the first side of the earth, and began to think. "When the sun is walking on one side of the earth, the other side must naturally be dark. Will it happen so in our time? In all places at all times it should be bright and there should be no darkness." Thinking thus he got into a chariot as bright as the sun and travelled round the earth seven times. During these travels the wheels of the chariot made seven furrows on the earth. These furrows became the seven seas and the beds between the furrows became seven islands.

3) *Sovereign powers.* Priyavrata made his seven sons sovereigns of the seven islands. These seven sovereign rulers were Agnidhra, Idhmajihva, Yajñabāhu, Hiraṇyaretas, Ghṛtapṛṣṭha, Medhātithi and Vitihotra.

SAPTAGAṆGA. An ancient holy place. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 25, Verse 16, that if one goes to this place and gives offerings to gods and the manes and worships them, one would attain heaven and become a deva (god).

SAPTAGODĀVARA. A holy place near the temple of Śūrpāraka. Those who bathe in this would attain heaven. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 85, Verse 44).

SAPTAJANĀŚRAMA. A holy place where seven hermits called the Saptajanas, went to heaven by standing head downwards in water. This was the place through which Śrī Rāma and Sugrīva went to Kiṣkindhā. Sugrīva told Śrī Rāma about the hermitage of Saptajanas as follows :

"Oh ! Rāgliava ! This vast area is the hermitage where rest could be taken, as sweet fruits and pure water could be obtained and the forest looks like a garden. Here the seven hermits called Saptajanas, who did penance and took vow and fast by standing in water always, with heads downwards, did live in days of old." (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa, Śarga 13).

SAPTAJIT. One of the daughters born to Kaśyapa by his wife Danu. (Matsya Purāṇa 6 : 19).

SAPTAKṚT. An eternal god concerned in Śrāddha (offerings to the manes). (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 91, Stanza 36).

SAPTAMĀTR (S). (SEVEN MOTHERS).

1) *General information.* Saptamātr̥s are the seven goddesses named Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍī.

2) *Origin.* Some are of opinion that the Saptamātr̥s are connected with Śiva. Their names reveal that they were born from the bodies of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and such other gods. There is another story that when Śiva and Viṣṇu joined together and tried to kill the asura named Andhaka and failed, they created the seven mothers to kill the asura. From each drop of blood of Andhakāsura that fell on the ground an asura arose. These seven mātr̥s joined with Yogeśvarī, the creation of Śiva, drank the blood of the asura without allowing it to fall on the ground and so it became easy for Śiva to kill the asura.

There is a story in Vāmana Purāṇa, Chapter 56, about the birth of the Saptamātr̥s, as follows : In olden days a fierce war broke out between the devas and the asuras. When the fierce asuras Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa were killed the famous asura named Raktabīja

entered the battlefield with an akṣauhiṇī of army (21870 chariots, so many elephants, 65610 horses and 109350 infantry). Seeing this immense army of the asuras drawing near, Kauśikī, Māheśvarī and Kālī made a loud roaring sound. Then from the mouth of Māheśvarī, Brahmāṇī came out seated on a swan and wearing rosary and water pot. From her eyes Māheśvarī with three eyes came out seated on a bull and wearing great snakes as bangles and ear-rings and holding a trident. From the loins came out Kaumārī, seated on a peacock and holding a lance. The beautiful Vaiṣṇavī came out from her hand, seated on Garuḍa, holding a conch, discus, club, sword, the bow śārṅga and arrow. From her posterior came out the horrible Vārāhī (Boar) with a great pestle, seated on the Nāga (serpent) Śeṣa, and furrowing the ground with her fierce tusks. From her heart came out the awful Nārasimhī (woman-lion) with fierce claws, who at the shaking of her mane displaced the planets and the stars, and from her foot Cāmuṇḍī came out. (See under Palālā).

SAPTANĀGA (S). (Seven serpents). The Saptanāgas are Ananta, Takṣaka, Karka, Padma, Mahāpadma, Śaṅkhaka and Gulika. All of them should be consecrated in temples as wearing Brahma-string and having the face with the expanded hood of a serpent. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 51).

SAPTARĀVA (SAPTAVĀRA). One of the famous children of Garuḍa. (M.B. Udyoga Parva, Chapter 101, Verse 11).

SAPTARṢIS. (The seven hermits). A group of hermits. There are seven hermits in this group. The Saptarṣis in each Manvantara (age of Manu) are different. As there are fourteen Manvantaras before a great deluge, by that time ninetyeight Saptarṣis will be born and dead. The father of the Saptarṣis in each Manu's age will be different. The Saptarṣis of the present Manu's age, Marīci, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Vasīṣṭha, Pulaha and Kratu are the mental sons of Brahmā. (For further details see under the word Manvantara).

SAPTARṢIKUṆḌA. A holy bath (tīrtha) situated within Kurukṣetra. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 73 that those who bathe in this tīrtha will obtain the merit of good actions.

SAPTASĀLA (S). The cursed forms of the King Maṇibhadra's seven sons who were sorcerers. Due to the curse of Agastya they became seven palm trees (sālas). They obtained liberation from the curse during the incarnation of Viṣṇu as Śrī Rāma. (For detailed story see under Maṇibhadra II).

SAPTASAMUDRAS. (The seven seas). See under Saptadvīpa(s).

SAPTASĀRASVATA.

1) *General information.* A holy place situated within Kurukṣetra. This is a holy bath dedicated to Sarasvatī. Mention is made in Mahābhārata, Śalya Parva, Chapter 37, Verse 61, that during his pilgrimage Balabhadra-rāma visited this holy bath.

2) *Origin.* A story occurs in Mahābhārata, Śalya Parva, Chapter 38 about the origin of this tīrtha. It is given below:—

Once Brahmā performed a sacrifice on the island of Puṣkara. All the devas (gods and goddesses) attended the sacrifice. Among the rivers, Sarasvatī alone did