

ŚĀRṄGA. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bow. The following facts about the bow are gathered from the Mahābhārata.

(i) When Kṛṣṇa exhibited his Viśvarūpa (cosmic form) in the assembly of the Kauravas he had held in one hand this bow. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 131, Verse 10).

(ii) Kṛṣṇa's Śārṅga is on a par with Indra's bow called Vijaya. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 158, Verse 4).

(iii) Śārṅga is one of the three divine bows. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 158, Verse 5).

(iv) Śārṅga was made by Brahmā and presented to Kṛṣṇa. (M.B. Southern text, Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 141).

ŚĀRṄGAKOPĀKHYĀNA. The story of the Śārṅgaka bird. (See under Khāṇḍavadāha).

ŚĀRṄGARAVA. A maharṣi. He was one of the officiating priests at the Sarpasatra of Janamejaya. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 25, Verse 6).

SARPA. A son of Tvaṣṭā. According to Agni Purāṇa the sons of Tvaṣṭā were called Ekādaśarudras; But according to Mahābhārata, Sarpa, one of the Ekādaśarudras is the son of Sthānu and the great-grandson of Brahmā. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 66, Verse 2).

SARPABALĪ. An offering made by Hindus in South India to propitiate serpents. Serpents are pleased by songs by Pulluvan and Pulluvatti (Male and female members of a Hindu sub-caste). To draw Kalam (drawings on floor conveying certain esoteric meanings), to make offerings and for the Pulluvas to sing—these form important elements of Sarpabali. The bali has a connection with the story of Khāṇḍavadāha. The legend behind the bali is that a Pulluva woman saved Takṣaka, who escaped to the ocean after the Khāṇḍava forest was burnt down. Songs by Pulluvan and Pulluvatti are unavoidable items in Sarpabali.

Drawing the Kalam is a very important item in Sarpabali. It is drawn on a platform made of puṭṭumaṇṇu (small heaps of earth thrown up by earthworms and termites), the platform being demarcated by four pieces of arecanut wood. The platform is covered with silk and tender coconut leaves are hung all around it. The Kalam is drawn with rice powder, and other coloured powders. The husk of paddy burnt into charcoal is powdered and with it serpents are sketched first on the maṇḍapa (platform). The nāga drawings are tinted with colours. The (colour) powders are collected in coconut shells and sprinkled on the drawings through holes in shells. Pulluvas exhibit wonderful artistic talents in making the drawings.

When the kalam is drawn worship of nāga is begun compulsorily by a male member of the house, and he is technically called 'Kalattil Kaimal'. He has been observing 'vrata' during two days previous to the pūjā (worship). Having taken his bath and wearing an additional cloth across his shoulders (Uttariya) he comes with water in a jar. Four lamps should be burning on four sides of the kalam. Also, paddy, rice, tender coconut, milk, fruit etc. should be placed on its four sides. As directed by the Pulluvan the 'Kaimal' conducts the worship by offering flower, water etc. The Kaimal is to sit on each of the four sides of the kalam and do the pūjā. Then wicks (made of cloth) should be lighted, water sprinkled on it and with that the Kaimal should go around the kalam thrice. With the wicks placed on a leaf with paddy underneath it and also with burning camphor he should go round the

kalam. Then the Pulluvan playing on the Viṇā in front and a male member of the house with a vessel containing milk, a female member holding a lamp, two girls holding brass plates and the Kaimal and all of them following the Pulluvan go round the Kalam thrice and proceed to the serpents' temple in the compound, pray and return. After all these persons are seated, the Kaimal washes the feet of and puts flowers on the heads of the two girls, who had held the brass plates; seats them on two pieces of round wood in the kalam. The girls will have mirror etc. in their hands. They should concentrate their eyes on the heads of the serpents. Now begins the Pulluvan pāṭṭu (song by Pulluvan). At the time of the worship they will be beating tunes on a brass pot, music being made on the Viṇā.

'Pulluvan pāṭṭu' is the most important item in the whole programme. The songs relate to the burning of the khāṇḍava forest, Kāliyamardana (suppression of the nāga king) etc. One Pulluvan sings songs and a second one repeats them. A minimum of two Pulluva males and two females are required for the purpose. As the songs acquire momentum the girls begin to shake their heads and to wipe off the kalam. Then the girls are asked questions and they answer. Within a short time the girls will swoon and fall on the ground. They are brought back to consciousness by water being sprinkled on them and by fanning. This is in general the nature of a Sarpabali.

SARPADEVĪ. Sarpadevī, also called nāgatīrtha, is a sacred place in Kurukṣetra. A bath here is as beneficial as the performance of an agniṣṭoma yajña. (Vana Parva, Chapter 83).

SARPAMĀLĪ. A maharṣi gifted with divine powers. He had a talk with Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the latter's way to Hastināpura. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 83).

SARPĀNTA. A bird born in the line of Garuḍa's children. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 101, Verse 12).

SARPASATRA. See under Janamejaya, Part 5.

SARPĀSYA. A Rākṣasa. He was the commander-in-chief of the army of Khara and Dūṣaṇa, who had clashed with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa at Pañcavaṭī. Khara and Dūṣaṇa had twelve reputed army-chiefs, including Sarpāsyā. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Canto 27).

SARPIRMĀLĪ. A maharṣi, who flourished in the court of Yudhiṣṭhira. (Sabhā Parva, Chapter 4, Verse 10).

ŚARU. A Devagandharva. He participated in the birth-day celebrations of Arjuna. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 122, Verse 58).

ŚARVA. One of the eleven Rudras. (Bhāgavata, 6th Skandha).

SARVA. Another name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 70, Verse 12).

SARVĀ. A Purāṇic river. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 89, Verse 36).

SĀRVABHAUMA I. A king of the Bharata dynasty. He was the son of Viḍūratha and the father of Jayatsena. (Bhāgavata, Skandha 9).

SĀRVABHAUMA II. A son born to King Ahaṁyāti of the Lunar dynasty, by Bhānumatī, daughter of Kṛta-vīrya. This Sārvabhauma married Sunandā, daughter of the King of Kekaya. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 95).

SĀRVABHAUMA III. An elephant born in the family of the Diggajas (Eight elephants supporting the globe). Mention is made about this elephant in Mahābhārata, Droṇa Parva, Chapter 121, Verse 26.