

to Sudarśana, a mere beggar. The assembled Kings, therefore, got themselves ready to pick a row with Subāhu, but, he pacified them with the assurance that the Svayamvara of Śaśikalā would formally be conducted and her husband could then be selected by herself. That night Śaśikalā's parents tried their best to divert her heart away from Sudarśana, to no purpose and the same night she was duly married to him. By the next morning news about the marriage became public and all the Kings, who had come for the Svayamvara decided in conference to kill Sudarśana on his way back home with his wife, and abduct Śaśikalā. Accordingly on the fourth day after the wedding when Sudarśana and Śaśikalā were returning to Ayodhyā escorted by the army allotted to them by Subāhu, King Yudhājit and his followers attacked them from their hiding place. In the battle that ensued Devī appeared and helped Sudarśana, who defeated the enemies. People of Ayodhyā received with enthusiasm the victorious Sudarśana and he was crowned their King. In later years he became famous as emperor Sudarśana.

ŚĀSTĀ. The presiding deity (idol installed) in the Śabarimala temple.

1) *Birth.* Śiva fell in love with Mahāviṣṇu in his assumed form as Mohinī and Śāstā was the result of their union. (Kambarāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa). This story occurs in the 8th Skandha of Bhāgavata and the Asura kāṇḍa of Skanda Purāṇa, but only the Skanda Purāṇa refers to the child by name Śāstā.

2) *Other information.*

(i) In the battle between Indra and the asura called Śūrapadma the former deputed Śāstā for the protection of Śaṅgidevī. (Skanda Purāṇa, Asura Kāṇḍa).

(ii) Śāstā is supposed to have two wives called Purāṇā and Puṣkalā and a son called Satyaka. (Aṣṭottaraśā-takam about Śāstā; also see under Śabarimala).

ŚAṢṬHĪDEVĪ.

1) *General.* A Devī born out of 1/6 part of original nature (Mūlaprakṛti). Since she was born out of 1/6 part, she is called Śaṣṭhīdevī. Also called Devasenā, Śaṣṭhīdevī is the patron-devī of children. She grants them life. She protects them as the real mother and always remains by their side. She has earned Siddhis by the practice of yoga, is the best among the aṣṭamātrīs (eight mothers) and is the wife of Subrahmaṇya.

2) *Blessings of the Devī.* She is foremost among the devīs, who bless children. There is a story in the ninth canto of Devī Bhāgavata revealing the importance of Śaṣṭhīdevī.

Though Priyavrata, son of Svāyambhuva Manu was at first averse to marriage he, at last, married, on the insistence of Brahmā, a woman called Mālinī. For long he had no issues and sad at heart he got a putrakāmeṣṭi yajña performed by Kaśyapaprajāpati as a result of which Mālinī got pregnant, and delivered in the twelfth year. But, the child was still-born and Priyavrata set out with the corpse for the burning ghat. But, he could not make up his mind to give it up and so decided himself also to court death. Then he saw a divine plane stop there with a woman in it, who spoke to him as follows: "I am Devasenādevī, the mental daughter of Brahmā and wife of Skandadeva. It is I, who grant son to the sonless, wife to the wifeless, husband to the husbandless, wealth to the poor and the results of their

actions to all." So saying the Devī took from Priyavrata the corpse of his child and brought it back to life.

ŚAṢṬHĪHRADĀ. A sacred place. Bathing here is more beneficial than gifting away food. (Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 25, Verse 36).

ŚAŚOLŪKAMUKHĪ. A female attendant of Subrahmaṇya. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 46, Verse 22).

ŚĀŚVA. An ancient King in Bhārata. It is said in Mahābhārata, Sabhā Parva, Chapter I, Verse 17, that this King remains in the palace of Yama and glorifies him.

ŚĀTA. A great yakṣa friend of Vaiśravaṇa. (See under Dipakarni for the story about how Śāta became a cursed Yakṣa).

ŚATABALA. A peepal tree on the peak of mount Kumuda. From the branches of the tree milk, butter-milk, ghee, juice of Sugar-cane etc. descend carrying with them divine rice, clothes, ornaments etc. to the Kumuda mountain and flow in rivers towards the north. The people in those places get their rice, clothes ornaments etc. from the river. Minākṣidevī praised by Devas has her abode here. Those who drink milk etc. flowing in the river will not be affected by hunger, thirst and signs of old age. Nor will any danger overtake them. They will live long. (Devī Bhāgavata, 8th Skandha).

ŚATABALĪ. A great monkey under the leadership of Sugrīva. He was the leader of the monkeys deputed to the northern regions to look for Sitā. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa Canto 43).

ŚATABHIṢAK. A star.

He who gives gifts of fragrant materials like sandalwood on the day of this star will, after death, live with the apsarās and enjoy fragrant smell. (Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 64, Verse 30).

ŚATACANDRA. A brother of Śakuni. In the battle of Kurukṣetra he fought on the side of the Kauravas and got defeated by Bhīma. (Droṇa Parva, Chapter 157, Verse 23).

ŚATADHANUS (ŚATADHANVĀ). A Yādava king. (For details see under Kṛtavarmā Para 2).

ŚATADRŪ. The Purāṇic name of the Indian river now called Sutlej. Grief-stricken over the death of his son, Viśiṣṭha once jumped into this river, which, realising that the maharṣi was as powerful as fire, divided itself into many branches and flowed in various directions, and hence the river came to be known as Śatadrū. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 176, Verse 8). Once in talking about sublime rivers to Śiva, Pārvatī mentioned this river also. (Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 146, Verse 18). Śatadrū is also one of the ten rivers referred to in the Rgveda.

ŚATADYUMNA. A King in ancient India, son of Cākṣuṣa Manu by his wife Nadvalā. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Part I, Chapter 13). Nadvalā had ten brilliant sons including Śatadyumna. Śatadyumna once gifted away a house of gold to the brahmin called Mudgala and thereby attained heaven. (Śānti Parva, Chapter 234, Verse 32).

ŚATAGHAṆṬĀ. A female attendant of Subrahmaṇya. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 46, Verse 11).

ŚATAHRADĀ. Mother of the Rākṣasa called Virādha. His father's name was Jaya. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Araṇyakāṇḍa).