

(Amarāvati). (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 30, Stanza 16).

(viii) In ancient days a hermit named Saṁvartta used to come here daily to worship Śiva. It was at this place that the emperor Marutta accepted the hermit Saṁvartta as his priest. (M.B. Aśvamedha Parva, Chapters 6 and 7).

VĀRAṆĀVATA. The place where Duryodhana built the wax-house for the Pāṇḍavas. It is believed that the modern village Varṇava, 19 miles north east to Meerut in North India, is the place where this Purāṇic Vāraṇāvata stood. Information about Vāraṇāvata found in Mahābhārata, is given below ;

(i) Once the ministers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra made a consultation about the festival in this city. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 192, Stanza 3).

(ii) Vāraṇāvata was one of the five villages requested for by the Pāṇḍavas, on their return after their life in the forest. (M.B. Udyoga Parva, Chapter 31, Stanza 19).

(iii) Yuyutsu, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, carried on a battle here for six months. (M.B. Droṇa Parva, Chapter 19, Verse 58).

VARĀṄGĪ I. The wife of Vajrāṅga, an asura. (For more details see under Pārvatī, Para 2).

VARĀṄGĪ II. Wife of Saṁyāti, a King of the Lunar dynasty. The father of this Varāṅgī was Dṛṣadvān. A son named Ahaṁyāti was born to Varāṅgī. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 95, Stanza 14).

VARARUCI. An ancient Indian scholar in astronomy and astrology. (Some details regarding Vararuci are given under Bhartṛhari).

1) *Birth*. It is stated in Kathāsaritsāgara, Kathāpīṭhalaṅkara, Taraṅga 1, that Vararuci was the rebirth of a Gaṇanāyaka (guard of Śiva) named Puṣpadanta. Once Śiva happened to tell Pārvatī some previous stories of the Vidyādhara. Puṣpadanta eavesdropped and heard everything. Pārvatī understood this and cursed him to become a man. Accordingly Puṣpadanta was born in the city of Kauśāmbī under the name Vararuci or Kātyāyana. (For details about the curse see under Guṇādhyā).

2) *Of sharp intelligence*. Vararuci was born as the son of the Brahmin Somadatta at Kauśāmbī. Agniśikha was another name of Somadatta. Vasudattā was the mother of Vararuci. In the previous birth, Vasudattā was a hermit maid. Due to a curse she lost her hermit-maidhood and took birth as a woman under the name Vasudattā and became the wife of Somadatta.

As his father died in his childhood, Vararuci was brought up by his mother. She was in great penury after the death of her husband. One day two travellers came to her house. While they were sitting on the veranda, the sound of a conch was heard. Then the mother called Vararuci and said to him. "Son, the dance of Nanda, the friend of your father, is about to begin." Vararuci requested his mother to let him go to the temple and see the dance so that he might learn it. Hearing this, the guests were amazed. How can one learn dance by seeing only once? That was the doubt in the minds of the travellers. "Vararuci could learn anything by hearing only once", his mother said. As a test, they recited to him a portion from the Vedas. Vararuci repeated the portion to them without any mistake. After this the guests took the boy and

showed him the dance and brought him back. The boy performed every item of the dance he saw, before the guests. They were immensely pleased.

3) *Getting a teacher*. The guests had actually been searching for a boy who could understand anything at the first hearing. There was reason for it.

In the great city of Nandarāja, there was a great Brahmin named Śaṅkarasvāmī. He had two sons named Varṣa and Upavarṣa. Both married and lived in separate houses. By and by Varṣa became cruel and wicked and poor. Upavarṣa became learned and wealthy. The rainy season approached. In those days it was a custom for women to make a sweet food of rice flour with sugar and give it to cruel Brahmins. It was to prevent the extreme cold in the winter and the extreme heat in the summer from affecting them severely. The wife of Upavarṣa made this sweet food and gave it to Varṣa. When he brought it home, his wife scolded him. Varṣa felt very sorry because of his foolishness. He gave up all his desires and began to worship Kumārasvāmī. Kumārasvāmī was pleased with him and blessed him with all kinds of knowledge. Kumārasvāmī had ordered him to teach all of this knowledge to one who could learn at first hearing. From that day onwards Varṣa had been waiting for a disciple who could learn at first hearing.

During this period there lived two Brahmins named Devasvāmī and Karambhaka in the city of Vetasapura. They were friends. A son was born to each of them. The son of Devasvāmī was named Vyāli. The name of the son of Karambhaka was Indradatta. When Vyāli was a child, his father died. Seeing their grief the father of Indradatta left the country. Both of the boys, having nobody to look after them, went to perform penance, before Subrahmaṇyasvāmī. Subrahmaṇya ordered them in their sleep to go to Varṣa in Pāṭalikā, the city of King Nanda, and to learn every thing from him. The boys immediately went to the city of King Nanda and enquired about the teacher Varṣa. The people told them that Varṣa was a fool. They were sorry to hear it. Still they did not turn back. They reached the house of Varṣa, and entered the house which was the abode of rats and bats, the walls of which were crumbling due to rain as it had not been thatched for a long time. The courtyard was full of Cassiata plants. Inside the house, here and there on the floor, Cyperus-grass was growing. The wife of Varṣa who was in utter penury stood up and welcomed them. She told them about her husband. "He is waiting for a disciple who would learn everything at first hearing." Vyāli and Indradatta agreed to bring such a disciple and they started on a journey in search of such a boy. They were the two travellers who came to the house of Vararuci.

Vyāli said all about these things to the mother of Vararuci. She was very glad and said. "Everything fits well. At the birth of my son, an ethereal voice said : "At first hearing he will learn everything. He will learn everything from the teacher Varṣa. He will publish works in grammar and astronomy". If he has interest in good things he will get the name Vararuci. So I had been thinking how and where to find this teacher Varṣa."

Next morning, with the permission of his mother, Vararuci started for the house of Varṣa, with Vyāli and