Translated by

BIBEK DEBROY

SHIVA PURANA

Volume 2

PENGUIN CLASSICS

SHIVA PURANA: VOLUME 2

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For Sadguru, Jaggi Vasudev

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Introduction

The word 'Purana' means old, ancient. The Puranas are old texts, usually referred to in conjunction with Itihasa (the Ramayana and the Mahabharata).[1] Whether Itihasa originally meant only the Mahabharata, with the Ramayana being added to that expression later, is a proposition on which there has been some discussion. But that's not relevant for our purposes. In the Chandogya Upanishad, there is an instance of the sage Narada approaching the sage Sanatkumara for instruction. Asked about what he already knows, Narada says he knows Itihasa and Purana, the Fifth Veda.[2] In other words, Itihasa-Purana possessed an elevated status. This by no means implies that the word 'Purana', as used in these two Upanishads and other texts too, is to be understood in the sense of the word being applied to a set of texts known as the Puranas today. The Valmiki Ramayana is believed to have been composed by Valmiki and the Mahabharata by Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa. After composing the Mahabharata, Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa is believed to have composed the Puranas. The use of the word 'composed' immediately indicates that Itihasa-Purana are smriti texts, with a human origin. They are not shruti texts, which have a divine origin. Composition does not mean these texts were rendered into writing. Instead, there was a process of oral transmission, with inevitable noise in the transmission and distribution process. Writing came much later.

Pargiter's book on the Puranas is still one of the best introductions to this corpus.[3] To explain the composition and transmission process, one can do no better than to quote him.

> The Vayu and Padma Puranas tell us how ancient genealogies, tales and ballads were preserved, namely, by the sutas,[4] and they describe the suta's duty... The Vayu, Brahmanda and Visnu give an account, how the original Purana came into existence... Those three Puranas say-Krsna Dvaipayana divided the single Veda into four and arranged them, and so was called Vyasa. He entrusted them to his four disciples, one to each, namely Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu. Then with tales, anecdotes, songs and lore that had come down from the ages he compiled a Purana, and taught it and the Itihasa to his fifth disciple, the suta Romaharsana or Lomaharsana... After that he composed the Mahabharata. The epic itself implies that the Purana preceded it... As explained above, the sutas had from remote times preserved the genealogies of gods, rishis and kings, and traditions and ballads about celebrated men, that is, exactly the material-tales, songs and ancient lore-out of which the Purana was constructed. Whether or not Vyasa composed the original Purana or superintended its compilation, is immaterial for the present

[1] For example, shlokas 2.4.10, 4.1.2 and 4.5.11 of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad use the two expressions together.

[2] Chandogya Upanishad, 7.1.2.

[3] F.E. Pargiter, Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, Oxford University Press, London, 1922.

[4] Sutas were bards, minstrels and raconteurs.

> purpose After the original Purana was composed, by Vyasa as is said,his disciple Romaharsana taught it to his son Ugrasravas, and Ugrasravas the sauti appears as the reciter in some of the present Puranas; and the sutas still retained the right to recite it for their livelihood. But, as stated above, Romaharsana taught it to his six disciples, at least five of whom were brahmans. It thus passed into the hands of brahmans, and their appropriation and development of it increased in the course of time, as the Purana grew into many Puranas, as Sanskrit learning became peculiarly the province of the brahmans, and as new and frankly sectarian Puranas were composed.

Pargiter cited reasons for his belief that the Mahabharata was composed after the original Purana, though that runs contrary to the popular perception about the Mahabharata having been composed before the Puranas. That popular and linear perception is too simplistic, since texts evolved in parallel, not necessarily sequentially.

In popular perception, Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa composed the Mahabharata. He then composed the Puranas. Alternatively, he composed an original core Purana text, which has been lost, and others embellished it through additions. The adjective 'Purana', meaning old account or old text, became a proper noun, signifying a specific text. To be classified as a Purana, a Purana has to possess five attributes-pancha lakshmana. That is, five topics must be discussed-sarga, pratisarga, vamsha, manvantara and vamshanucharita. The clearest statement of this is in the Matsya Purana. Unlike the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, there is no Critical Edition of the Puranas.[5] Therefore, citing chapter and verse from a Purana text is somewhat more difficult, since verse, if not chapter, may vary from text to text. With that caveat, the relevant shloka (verse) should be in the 53rd chapter of the Matysa Purana. Sarga means the original or primary creation. The converse of sarga is universal destruction and dissolution, or pralaya. That period of sarga lasts for one of Brahma's days, known as kalpa. When Brahma sleeps, during his night, there is universal destruction.

In measuring time, there is the notion of a yuga (era) and there are four yugas-satya yuga (also known as krita yuga), treta yuga, dvapara yuga and kali yuga. Satya yuga lasts for 4,000 years, treta yuga for 3,000 years, dvapara yuga for 2,000 years and kali yuga for 1,000 years. However, these are not human years. The gods have a different timescale and these are the years of the gods. As one progressively moves from satya yuga to kali yuga, virtue (dharma) declines. But at the end of kali yuga, the cycle begins afresh, with satya yuga. An entire cycle, from satya yuga to kali yuga, is known as a mahayuga (great era). However, a mahayuga is not just 10,000 years. There is a further complication. At the beginning and the end of every yuga, there are some additional years. These additional years are 400 for satya yuga, 300 for treta yuga, 200 for dvapara yuga and 100 for kali yuga. A mahayuga thus has 12,000 years, adding years both at the beginning and at the end. 1,000 mahayugas make up one kalpa (eon), a single day for Brahma. A kalpa is also divided into fourteen manvantaras, a manvantara being a period during which a Manu presides and rules over creation.

[5] The Critical Edition of the Valmiki Ramayana was brought out by the Baroda Oriental Institute, now part of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata was brought out by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.

Therefore, there are 71.4 mahayugas in a manvantara. Our present kalpa is known as the Shveta Varaha kalpa. Within that, six Manus have come and gone. Their names are (1) Svayambhuva Manu, (2) Svarochisha Manu, (3) Uttama Manu, (4) Tapasa Manu, (5) Raivata Manu and (6) Chakshusha Manu. The present Manu is known as Vaivasvata Manu. Vivasvat, also written as Vivasvan, is the name of Surya, the Sun God. Vaivasvata Manu has that name because he is Surya's son. Not only do Manus change from one manvantara to another. So do the gods, the ruler of the gods and the seven great sages, known as the saptarshis (seven rishis). Indra is a title of the ruler of the gods. It is not a proper name. The present Indra is Purandara. However, in a different manvantara, someone else will hold the title. In the present seventh manvantara, known as Vaivasvata manvantara, there will also be 71.4 mahayugas. We are in the 28th of these. Since a different Vedavyasa performs that task of classifying and collating the Vedas in every mahayuga, Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa is the 28th in that series. Just so that it is clear, Vedavyasa isn't a proper name. It is a title conferred on someone who collates and classifies the Vedas. There have been twenty-seven who have held the title of Vedavyasa before him and he is the 28th. His proper name is Krishna Dvaipayana, Krishna because he was dark and Dvaipayana because he was born on an island (dvipa). This gives us an idea of what the topic of manvantara is about. This still leaves pratisarga, vamsha and vamshanucharita. The two famous dynasties/lineages were the solar dynasty (surya vamsha) and lunar dynasty (chandra vamsha) and all the famous kings belonged to one or other of these two dynasties. Vamshanucharita is about these lineages and the conduct of these kings. There were the gods and sages (rishis) too, not always born through a process of physical procreation. Their lineages are described under the heading of vamsha. Finally, within that cycle of primary creation and destruction, there are smaller and secondary cycles of creation and destruction. That's the domain of pratisarga. In greater or lesser degree, all the Puranas cover these five topics, some more than the others. The Purana which strictly adheres to this five-topic classification is the Vishnu Purana.

There are Puranas and Puranas. Some are known as Sthala Puranas, describing the greatness and sanctity of a specific geographical place. Some are known as Upa-Puranas, minor Puranas. The listing of Upa-Puranas has regional variations and there is no country-wide consensus about the list of Upa-Puranas, though it is often accepted that there are eighteen. The Puranas we have in mind are known as Maha-Puranas, major Puranas. Henceforth, when we use the word Puranas, we mean Maha-Puranas. There is consensus that there are eighteen Maha-Puranas, though it is not obvious that this number of eighteen existed right from the beginning. The names are mentioned in several of these texts, including a shloka that follows the shloka cited from the Matsya Purana. Thus, the eighteen Puranas are (1) Agni (15,400); (2) Bhagavata (18,000); (3) Brahma (10,000); (4) Brahmanda (12,000); (5) Brahmavaivarta (18,000); (6) Garuda (19,000); (7) Kurma (17,000); (8) Linga (11,000); (9) Markandeya (9,000); (10) Matsya (14,000); (11) Narada (25,000); (12) Padma (55,000); (13) Shiva (24,000); (14) Skanda (81,100); (15) Vamana (10,000); (16) Varaha (24,000); (17) Vayu (24,000) and (18) Vishnu (23,000).

A few additional points about this list. First, the Harivamsha is sometimes loosely described as a Purana, but strictly speaking, it is not a Purana. It is more like an addendum to the Mahabharata. Second, Bhavishya (14,500) is sometimes mentioned, with Vayu excised from the list. However, the Vayu Purana exhibits many more Purana characteristics than the Bhavishya Purana. There are references to a Bhavishyat Purana that existed, but that may

not necessarily be the Bhavishya Purana as we know it today. That's true of some other Puranas too. Texts have been completely restructured hundreds of years later. Third, it is not just a question of Bhavishya Purana and Vayu Purana. In the lists given in some Puranas, Vayu is part of the 18, but Agni is knocked out. In some others, Narasimha and Vayu are included, but Brahmanda and Garuda are knocked out. Fourth, when a list is given, the order also indicates some notion of priority or importance. Since that varies from text to text, our listing is simply alphabetical, according to the English alphabet. Fifth, when one uses the term Bhagavata, does one mean Bhagavata Purana or Devi Bhagavata Purana? The numbers within brackets indicate the number of shlokas each of these Puranas has or is believed to have. The range is from 9,000 in Markandeya to a mammoth 81,100 in Skanda. The aggregate is a colossal 409,500 shlokas. To convey a rough idea of the orders of magnitude, the Mahabharata has, or is believed to have, 100,000 shlokas. It's a bit difficult to convert a shloka into word counts in English, especially because Sanskrit words have a slightly different structure. However, as a very crude approximation, one shloka is roughly twenty words. Thus, 100,000 shlokas become 2 million words and 400,000 shlokas, four times the size of the Mahabharata, amounts to 8 million words. There is a reason for using the expression 'is believed to have', as opposed to 'has'. Rendering into writing is of later vintage, the initial process was one of oral transmission. In the process, many texts have been lost, or are retained in imperfect condition. This is true of texts in general and is also specifically true of Itihasa and Puranas. The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata, mentioned earlier, no longer possesses 100,000 shlokas. Including the Harivamsha, there are around 80,000 shlokas. The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata has, of course, deliberately excised some shlokas. For the Puranas, there is no counterpart of Critical Editions. However, whichever edition of the Puranas one chooses, the number of shlokas in that specific Purana will generally be fewer than the numbers mentioned here earlier. Either those many shlokas did not originally exist, or they have been lost. This is the right place to mention that a reading of the Puranas assumes a basic degree of familiarity with the Valmiki Ramayana and the Mahabharata, more the latter than the former. Without that familiarity, one will often fail to appreciate the context completely. More than passing familiarity with the Bhagavat Gita, strictly speaking a part of the Mahabharata, helps."[6]

Other than the five attributes, the Puranas have a considerable amount of information on geography and even geological changes (changes in courses of river) and astronomy. Therefore, those five attributes shouldn't suggest the Puranas have nothing more. They do, and they have, therefore, been described as encyclopedias. Bharatavarsha is vast and heterogeneous and each Purana may very well have originated in one particular part of the country. Accordingly, within that broad compass of an overall geographical description, the extent of geographical information varies from Purana to Purana. Some are more familiar with one part of the country than with another. Though not explicitly mentioned in the five attributes, the Puranas are also about pursuing dharma, artha, kama and moksha, the four objectives of human existence, and about the four varnas and the four ashramas.

[6]The Bhagavat Gita translation was published in 2006 and reprinted in 2019, the translation of the Critical Edition of the Mahabharata in 10 volumes between 2010 and 2014 (with a box set in 2015) and the translation of the Critical Edition of the Valmiki Ramayana in 2017. The translations are by Bibek Debroy, and in each case, the publisher is Penguin.

The general understanding and practice of dharma is based much more on the Puranas than on the Vedas. Culture, notions of law, rituals, architecture and iconography are based on the Puranas. There is beautiful poetry too.

Perhaps one should mention that there are two ways these 18 Puranas are classified. The trinity has Brahma as the creator, Vishnu as the preserver and Shiva as the destroyer. Therefore, Puranas where creation themes feature prominently are identified with Brahma (Brahma, Brahmanda, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya). Puranas where Vishnu features prominently are identified as Vaishnava Puranas (Bhagavata, Garuda, Kurma, Matysa, Narada, Padma, Vamana, Varaha, Vishnu). Puranas where Shiva features prominently are identified as Shaiva Puranas (Agni, Linga, Shiva, Skanda, Vayu). While there is a grain of truth in this, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are all important and all three feature in every Purana. Therefore, beyond the relative superiority of Vishnu vis-à-vis Shiva, the taxonomy probably doesn't serve much purpose. The second classification is even more tenuous and is based on the three gunas of sattva (purity), rajas (passion) and tamas (ignorance). For example, the Uttara Khanda of the Padma Purana has a few shlokas along these lines, recited by Shiva to Parvati. With a caveat similar to the one mentioned earlier, this should be in the 236th chapter of Uttara Khanda. According to this, the Puranas characterized by sattva are Bhagavata, Garuda, Narada, Padma, Varaha and Vishnu. Those characterized by rajas are Bhavishya, Brahma, Brahmanda, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya and Vamana. Those characterized by tamas are Agni, Kurma, Linga, Matysa, Skanda and Shiva.

Within a specific Purana text, there are earlier sections, as well as later ones. That makes it difficult to date a Purana, except as a range. Across Purana texts, there are older Puranas, as well as later ones. Extremely speculatively, the dating will be something like the following. (1) Agni (800-1100 CE); (2) Bhagavata (500-1000 CE); (3) Brahma (700-1500 CE); (4) Brahmanda (400-600 CE); (5) Brahmavaivarta (700-1500 CE); (6) Garuda (800-1100 CE); (7) Kurma (600-900 CE); (8) Linga (500-1000 CE); (9) Markandeya (250-700 CE); (10) Matsya (200-500 CE); (11) Narada (900-1600 CE); (12) Padma (400-1600 CE); (13) Shiva (1000-1400 CE); (14) Skanda (600-1200 CE); (15) Vamana (450-900 CE); (16) Varaha (1000-1200 CE); (17) Vayu (350-550 CE); (18) Vishnu (300 CE-450 CE) and (19) Bhavishya (500-1900 CE). Reiterating once again that there is no great precision in these ranges, by this reckoning, the Vishnu Purana is the oldest and some parts of the Bhavishya Purana are as recent as the 19th century.

As mentioned earlier, there is no Critical Edition for the Puranas. Therefore, one has to choose a Sanskrit text one is going to translate from. If one is going to translate all the Puranas, it is preferable, though not essential, that one opts for a common source for all the Purana texts. In all the Purana translations, as a common source, I have used, and will use, the ones brought out by Nag Publishers, with funding from the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It is no different for the Shiva Purana.[7] To the best of my knowledge, other than this translation, there are only two other unabridged translations of the Shiva Purana in English. J.L. Shastri was the editor of the first and a board of scholars undertook the translation, published under the title 'Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation'.[8]

[7] The Sivamahapuranam, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1986.

[8] The Siva-Purana, translated and annotated by a Board of Scholars, edited by J. L. Shastri, 4 volumes, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1970.

In the course of this translation, extensive comparisons have been made with the Shastri translation. The Sanskrit texts used for the two translations are similar, but not always identical. However, differences are minor. More importantly, the discerning reader, who compares the two, will find that we have differed in interpreting words and sentences. The second unabridged translation is by Shanti Lal Nagar."[9] In the second half of the 19th century, the contribution of Calcutta and Bengal towards preserving the Itihasa-Purana legacy was remarkable. Consider the following. (1) Kaliprasanna Singha's unabridged translation of the Mahabharata in Bengali; (2) The Sanskrit and unabridged Bengali translation of the Burdwan edition of the Mahabharata; (3) The unabridged Bengali translation of the Mahabharata, published by Pratap Chandra Roy; (4) The unabridged English translation of the Valmiki Ramayana by William Carey and Joshua Marshman; (5) Hemachandra Bhattacharya's unabridged translation of the Valmiki Ramayana in Bengali; (6) Ganga Prasad Mukhopadhyaya's verse translation of the Valmiki Ramayana; (7) Panchanan Tarkaratna's Sanskrit editions and Bengali translations of Valmiki Ramayana, Adhyatma Ramayana and several Puranas; (8) Unabridged translations of the Mahabharata in English by Kisari Mohan Ganguli and Manmatha Nath Dutt; (9) Asiatic Society's[10] Bibliotheca Indica Sanskrit editions of Agni Purana, Brihad Dharma Purana, Brihad Naradiya Purana, Kurma Purana, Varaha Purana and Vayu Purana; and (10) F. E. Pargiter's unabridged English translation of Markandeya Purana. (11) And most important of all, Horace Hayman's Wilson translation of the Vishnu Purana, in five volumes, between 1864 and 1870.[11] Though Wilson's translation wasn't part of the Bibliotheca Indica corpus, it was part of the same broad tradition. Wilson's work was almost certainly the first unabridged translation of any Purana into English and the scholarship was remarkable. An act of research and scholarship still needs to be undertaken, cross-referencing names, genealogies and incidents across Itihasa and Purana texts. Often, when the same incident is narrated in different Purana texts, there are differences in nuances and details. Since ours is a translation, we have deliberately refrained from undertaking such an exercise. But the Horace Hayman Wilson translation did seek to do that. Before that work can be undertaken, the Purana corpus has to be translated, meaning translation into English. More often than not, practices of dharma are based on the Itihasa-Purana corpus. The Purana project, published by Penguin, is part of that translation endeavour. Translations of Bhagavata Purana, Markandeya Purana, Brahma Purana and Vishnu Purana have already been published and Shiva Purana is the fifth.

As has been mentioned earlier, the composition of Shiva Purana is dated to between 1000 and 1400 CE. It is a relatively later Purana. The Shiva Purana has a considerable degree of overlap with the Vayu Purana, dated to between 350 and 550 CE. It is the consensus that the Vayu Purana evolved earlier. R. C. Hazra's dissertation is still one of the best introductions to the Purana corpus, for all the Puranas.[12]

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[9] Shanti Lal Nagar, Siva Mahapurana, An Exhaustive Introduction, Sanskrit Text, English Translation with Photographs of Archaeological Evidence, 3 volumes, Parimal Publications, 2007.

[10] Asiatic Society went through several name changes, but it can simply be called the Asiatic Society.

[11] Horace Hayman Wilson, The Vishnu Purana, A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition, Trubner & Company, London, 1864-1870.

[12] Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, R. C. Hazra, University of Dacca, 1940. This has since been reprinted several times, by different publishers.

Because of that later date of composition, Hazra paid short shrift to the Shiva Purana, not even mentioning it as a separate Purana. He focused instead on Vayu Purana.

> The Vayu is perhaps the oldest of the extant Puranas. The Mahabharata speaks of a 'Purana proclaimed by Vayu;' the Harivamsa refers to 'Vayu' as an authority; Banabhatta says in his Harsa-carita that he attended the reading of the Vayu Purana in his native village; and Alberuni repeatedly quotes and names a Vayu Purana in his account of India. The character of the Vayu as a Mahapurana has sometimes been called into question. The cause of this doubt is the use of the title 'Siva' or 'Saivya' for 'Vayaviya' in the majority of the lists of the 'eighteen Mahapuranas'. But this substitution, which has been taken wrongly in favour of the comparatively late sectarian Upapurana called 'Siva-purana', is based on the Saiva character of the Vayu. Hence it seems that the attempt to raise the Siva-purana to the status of a Mahapurana was due to a comparatively late sectarian zeal.

A quote from Wilson's Preface[13] will add to what has already been said and Wilson was less dismissive of the Shiva Purana.

> The Siva or Saiva Purana is, as above remarked, omitted in some of the lists; and, in general, when that is the case, it is replaced by the Vayu or Vayaviya. When the Siva is specified, as in the Bhagavata, then the Vayu is omitted; intimating the possible identity of these two works.

In all Puranas, there are chapters that are almost verbatim reproductions of sections from the Mahabharata, Harivamsha and other Puranas. One should not deduce that a specific Purana text has copied from another, since these various texts might have had a common origin. That apart, even when the shlokas seem to be virtually identical, there are interesting changes in words and nuances. This has a bearing on the Hazra and Wilson arguments. Today, given the texts we possess, it is impossible to unambiguously establish the original text. There may very well have been an original proto-Vayu Purana and an original proto-Shiva Purana. Who can determine which preceded which? Suffice to say, there was a consolidation of the present Shiva Purana, perhaps even as late as between 1000 and 1400 CE, though something like 1000 CE to 1100 CE seems more reasonable. After all, each Purana evolved and was added to. In terms of its present structure and attributes, the Shiva Purana displays all the characteristics of a Maha-Purana. One shouldn't be dismissive. The Shiva Purana is an important text in the corpus of texts that forms the edifice of Shaiva dharma. There are Shaiva agama texts that are part of this corpus too, 28 to be precise. There are Upa-Puranas as part the corpus, for instance, Shivadharma Purana, Shivadharmapurva Purana, Shivarahasya Purana and Maheshvara Purana. Whether it is Puranas or other texts, the Shiva Purana exhibits the influence of texts on Shakti and tantra.

We are told in the text [Chapter 9-2(2)] that the Shiva Purana originally consisted of 100,000 shlokas and was divided into 12 Samhitas or sections-Vidyeshvara, Rudra, Vainayaka, Uma,

[13] Op. cit.

Matri, Rudraikadasha, Kailasa, Shatadrudra, Kotirudra, Sahasrakotirudra, Vayaviya and Dharmasamja. These aggregated to 100,000 shlokas. However, we are also told that Vedavyasa abridged the original Shiva Purana and compressed it into 24,000 shlokas, retaining seven Samhitas and eliminating five (Vainayaka, Matri, Rudraikadasha, Sahasrakotirudra and Dharmasamja). In the Sanskrit text of the Shiva Purana used by us, seven chapters and 373 shlokas from the Skanda Purana have also been included, since they concern the Shiva Purana. Accordingly, we have also translated these and our translation has 464 chapters and 24,646 shlokas (as shown in the table that follows). With the Skanda Purana segment deducted, there are 457 chapters and 24,273 shlokas (reasonably close to the stated 24,000). The seven Samhitas that remain are Vidyeshvara (25 chapters, 1,540 shlokas), Rudra (197 chapters, 10,268 shlokas), Shata Rudra (42 chapters, 2,188 shlokas), Koti Rudra (43 chapters, 2,187 shlokas), Uma (51 chapters, 2,679 shlokas), Kailasa (23 chapters, 1,285 shlokas) and Vayaviya (76 chapters, 4,126 shlokas). Rudra Samhita is long and is subdivided into five subsections or khandas (Srishti, Sati, Parvati, Kumara and Yuddha). The longish Vayaviya Samhita also has two subsections or bhagas (Purva and Uttara). A word about the numbering we have followed for the chapters, such as Chapter 423-8.2(1). The first number is a consecutive numbering of chapters of the entire Shiva Purana, while the second number indicates the number of the Samhita. (With the Skanda Purana segment included, this numbering extends to eight, not seven.) If there is a decimal point after the number given to the Samhita, this indicates the part of the Samhita. For instance, 8.2 indicates the second part of Vayaviya Samhita. Finally, the number within brackets indicates a consecutive numbering of chapters within that Samhita.

As with every Purana, there are layers within layers and the account is not recited by a single person. The basic template is, of course, the standard one of Suta reciting the Purana to sages who have assembled for a sacrifice in Naimisha forest. But there are also sub-strands of Vyasa recounting parts to sages, Brahma relating it to Narada, Nandi relating it to Sanatkumara, Upamanyu relating it to Krishna, Vayu relating it to the sages and even Shiva reciting parts to Parvati.

In the translations of the Bhagavat Gita, the Mahabharata, the Harivamsha, the Valmiki Ramayana, the Bhagavata Purana, the Markandeya Purana, the Brahma Purana and the Vishnu Purana,[14] we followed the principle of not using diacritical marks. The use of diacritical marks (effectively the international alphabet of Sanskrit transliteration) makes the pronunciation and rendering more accurate, but also tends to put off readers who are less academically inclined. Since diacritical marks are not being used, there is a challenge of rendering Sanskrit names in English. Sanskrit is a phonetic language and we have used that principle as a basis. Applied consistently, this means that words are rendered in ways that may seem unfamiliar. Hence, Gautama will appear as Goutama here. This is true of proper names, and, in a few rare cases, of geographical names. The absence of diacritical marks causes some minor problems. How does one distinguish Mahadeva Shiva from Parvati Shivaa? Often, the context will make the difference clear. If not, we have written Mahadeva as Shiva and Parvati as Shivaa. In translating, the attempt has been to provide a word-for-word translation, so that if one were to hold up the Sanskrit text, there would be a perfect match.

[14] The Bhagavata Purana, Volumes 1-3, Penguin Books, 2018. The Markandeya Purana, Penguin Books, 2019. The Brahma Purana, Volumes 1-2, Penguin Books, 2021. The Vishnu Purana, Penguin Books, 2022.

In the process, the English is not as smooth as it might have been, deliberately so. In this particular translation, we have also been pedantic, perhaps unnecessarily so. For example, the text refers to Krishna as both Shri Krishna and Krishna. We have strictly adhered to whatever the text says, word for word. There was another minor issue one should flag. In most texts, chapters have headings. If chapters don't have headings, the colophon at the end of the chapter indicates what the heading or title of the chapter should be. The Shiva Purana text has no such chapter headings before the chapter, and sometimes, does not even have them in the colophon. Therefore, the chapter headings we have given are subjective, based on the contents of that particular chapter, unless of course the colophon suggests a chapter heading.

The intention is to offer a translation, not an interpretation. That sounds like a simple principle to adopt, and for the most part, is easy to follow. However, there is a thin dividing line between translation and interpretation. In some instances, it is impossible to translate without bringing in a little bit of interpretation. Inevitably, interpretation is subjective. We have tried to minimize the problem by (a) reducing interpretation; (b) relegating interpretation to footnotes and (c) when there are alternative interpretations, pointing this out to the reader through those footnotes. But all said and done, there is no substitute to reading these texts in the original Sanskrit.

Finally, the Shiva Purana is not an easy Purana to translate, read and understand. That's often because the average reader is relatively unfamiliar with mantra, mandala, tantra, yantra, chakra, Shakti concepts (iccha, jnana, kriya), rituals and the theology (for want of a better word) of Shaiva dharma. Shiva's 36 tattvas are different from the tattvas of samkhya, with many people being somewhat familiar with the latter. Shiva is in the centre of a mandala, surrounded by the five kalaas (Nivritti, Pratishtha, Vidya, Shanta and Shantyatita). Depending on time and space, there are six paths to reach the supreme consciousness (varna, mantra, pada, kaala, tattva, bhuvana) and there are five sheaths (time, limited knowledge, attachment, destiny and limitation) that constrain one from reaching that supreme consciousness. As for Shiva himself, there are the five aspects of Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha and Ishana. If this sounds esoteric, it is undoubtedly so. But a reading of Shiva Purana is also a convenient means of becoming exposed to these topics.

Shiva Purana

	Chapter		Number of shlokas
The Skanda Purana segment	1-1(1)	Greatness of Shiva Purana	51
	2-1(2)	Devaraja's story	40
	3-1(3)	Chanchula's story	57
	4-1(4)	Chanchula's emancipation	50
	5-1(5)	Binduga's emancipation	60
	6-1(6)	Rules for listening	65
	7-1(7)	Rules and restraints	50
Total in the Skanda Purana segment	7		373
Vidyeshvara Samhita	8-2(1)	The sages describe kali yuga	38
	9-2(2)	Greatness of Shiva Purana and its components	67
	10-2(3)	The objective and the means	27
	11-2(4)	More on the means	23
	12-2(5)	Greatness of lingam	31
	13-2(6)	Rivalry between Brahma and Vishnu	28
	14-2(7)	The column of fire	33
	15-2(8)	The humbling of Brahma	21
	16-2(9)	The lingam and Ishatva	46
	17-2(10)	Aumkara mantra	39
	18-2(11)	Worshipping the lingam	69
	19-2(12)	Shiva temples	43

	20-2(13)	Good behaviour	85
	21-2(14)	Agni yajna	46
	22-2(15)	Deva yajna	61
	23-2(16)	Worship of deities	117
	24-2(17)	AUM and panchakshara mantra	153
	25-2(18)	Bondage and liberation	162
	26-2(19)	Parthiva lingam	37
	27-2(20)	Worship of Parthiva lingam	66
	28-2(21)	More on lingams	56
	29-2(22)	Naivedya and bilva	36
	30-2(23)	Rudraksha and Shiva's names	45
	31-2(24)	Bhasma and its greatness	116
	32-2(25)	Greatness of rudraksha	95
Total in Vidyeshvara Samhita	25		1,540
Rudra Samhita			
Srishti Khanda	The section on creation		
	33-3.1(1)	The sages ask	32
	34-3.1(2)	Narada's austerities and pride	55
	35-3.1(3)	Narada and the svayamvara	59
	36-3.1(4)	Narada curses Vishnu	76
	37-3.1(5)	Narada's visit to Kashi	35
	38-3.1(6)	Mahapralaya and Vishnu's origin	59
	39-3.1(7)	Dispute between Brahma and Vishnu	69
	40-3.1(8)	AUM	53
	41-3.1(9)	Shiva tattva	65

	42-3.1(10)	Parama Shiva tattva	40
	43-3.1(11)	Methods of worshipping Shiva	85
	44-3.1(12)	The essential and the non-essential	86
	45-3.1(13)	Description of Shiva's worship	83
	46-3.1(14)	More descriptions of worship	87
	47-3.1(15)	Rudra's avatara	65
	48-3.1(16)	Description of creation	50
	49-3.1(17)	Gunanidhi's conduct	61
	50-3.1(18)	Gunanidhi's virtuous end	67
	51-3.1(19)	Shiva's friendship with Kubera	33
	52-3.1(20)	Shiva's departure for Kailasa	62
Total in Srishti Khanda	20		1,222
Sati Khanda	The section on Sati		
	53-3.2(1)	Sati's conduct in brief	46
	54-3.2(2)	Kama's origin	43
	55-3.2(3)	Kama's curse	78
	56-3.2(4)	Kama's marriage	34
	57-3.2(5)	Sandhya's story	68
	58-3.2(6)	Sandhya's austerities	62
	59-3.2(7)	Arundhati marries Vasishtha	27
	60-3.2(8)	Description of Vasanta	53
	61-3.2(9)	Kama's powers and his aides	63
	62-3.2(10)	Conversation between Brahma and Vishnu	61
	63-3.2(11)	Durga's praise and Brahma's boon	51
	64-3.2(12)	Daksha's boon	37

	65-3.2(13)	Daksha curses Narada	40
	66-3.2(14)	Sati's birth and childhood	59
	67-3.2(15)	Nanda vows and Shiva's praise	67
	68-3.2(16)	Brahma and Vishnu pray to Shiva	58
	69-3.2(17)	Sati gets the boon	73
	70-3.2(18)	Bestowing of the daughter	37
	71-3.2(19)	Shiva's pastimes	76
	72-3.2(20)	Description of Sati's marriage	61
	73-3.2(21)	Sati and Shiva's sport	47
	74-3.2(22)	More on Sati and Shiva's sport	70
	75-3.2(23)	Power of bhakti	56
	76-3.2(24)	Rama's test	61
	77-3.2(25)	Sati's separation	69
	78-3.2(26)	Conflict between Shiva and Daksha	54
	79-3.2(27)	Commencement of the sacrifice	56
	80-3.2(28)	Sati's journey	43
	81-3.2(29)	Sati's words	64
	82-3.2(30)	Sati gives up her life	31
	83-3.2(31)	A voice from the firmament	37
	84-3.2(32)	Virabhadra's origin	59
	85-3.2(33)	Virabhadra's march	39
	86-3.2(34)	Bad omens	26
	87-3.2(35)	Vishnu's words	54
	88-3.2(36)	Conversation between Vishnu and Virabhadra	70
	89-3.2(37)	Destruction of the sacrifice	68

	90-3.2(38)	Conversation between Kshuva and Dadhichi	63
	91-3.2(39)	Clash between Vishnu and Dadhichi	55
	92-3.2(40)	Sight of Shiva	46
	93-3.2(41)	Devas praise Shiva	52
	94-3.2(42)	End to Daksha's misery	55
	95-312(43)	Arranging Daksha's sacrifice	44
Total in Sati Khanda	43		2,313
Parvati Khanda	The section on Parvati		
	96-3.3(1)	Himachala's marriage	32
	97-3.3(2)	An earlier account	42
	98-3.3(3)	Prayer to Devi	39
	99-3.3(4)	Comforting the gods	50
	100-3.3(5)	Mena's boon	50
	101-3.3(6)	Parvati's birth	54
	102-3.3(7)	Parvati's childhood pastimes	25
	103-3.3(8)	Conversation between Narada and Himalaya	56
	104-3.3(9)	The dream	36
	105-3.3(10)	Bhouma's origin	28
	106-3.3(11)	Shiva and the mountain meet	42
	107-3.3(12)	Shiva and the mountain converse	36
	108-3.3(13)	Conversation between Parvati and Parameshvara	60
	109-3.3(14)	Taraka and Vajranga's origin	43
	110-3.3(15)	Tarakasura's austerities and kingdom	56

	111-3.3(16)	Assuring the devas	46
	112-3.3(17)	Conversation between Indra and Kama	43
	113-3.3(18)	Kama's disturbances	45
	114-3.3(19)	Kama's destruction	52
	115-3.3(20)	The Vadava fire	23
	116-3.3(21)	Narada's instruction to Parvati	41
	117-3.3(22)	Parvati's austerities	71
	118-3.3(23)	Attempts to dissuade Parvati	51
	119-3.3(24)	Shiva agrees to the marriage	77
	120-3.3(25)	Test by the saptarshis	73
	121-3.3(26)	Shivaa's conversation with Jatila	44
	122-3.3(27)	The brahmachari's deceptive words	39
	123-3.3(28)	Parvati sees Shiva's form	50
	124-3.3(29)	Conversation between Shiva and Shivaa	42
	125-3.3(30)	Parvati's return	54
	126-3.3(31)	Shiva's maya and the brahmana	53
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	273-5(2)	Greatness of Shiva's lingams	31
	274-5(3)	Anasuya and Atri's austerities	39

	275-5(4)	The greatness of Atrishvara	61
	276-5(5)	Death of the brahmani and Nandikeshvara	39
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	427-8.2(5)	Knowledge about Pashupati	37
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	429-8.2(7)	Shiva's tattva continued	40
	430-8.2(8)	Vyasa's avataras	51
	431-8.2(9)	Shiva's avataras as Yogacharyas	28

	432-8.2(10)	Devotion to Shiva	72
	433-8.2(11)	Jnana about Shiva	56
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	459-8.2(37)	Objective of yoga	67
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	461-8.2(39)	Description of Shiva's yoga	60
	462-8.2(40)	The sages go to the south of Meru	49
	463-8.2(41)	Vyasa's instruction	51
Total in Uttara Bhaga	41		2,362
Total in Vayaviya Samhita	76		4,126
Total in Shiva Purana	464		24,646

Rudra Samhita

Kumara Khanda

Chapter 151-3.4(1) (Shiva's Amusement)

“I worship Shiva. He is pleased and content with show of respect. He loves to show affection. He bestows love. He is complete. He is the one who makes complete. Shiva is the abode of every kind of prosperity. He is truth. He is full of truth. The three kinds of truth[1] are his potency. He loves truth. He bestows truth. Vishnu and Brahma worship him. It is because of his own compassion that Shankara assumes many different kinds of forms.'

'Narada said, "Shankara, who brings welfare to the words, married Girija and returned to his own mountain. I wish to hear what happened next. O brahmana! Please tell me. How was a son born to Shiva, the paramatman? Though he is content within his own atman, it is for this reason that the lord married Shivaa.[2] O brahmana! How did the one who ensures welfare to devas ensure that Taraka was slain? Please show me your compassion and tell me everything about all this.""

Suta[3] said, "Hearing Narada's words, Prajapati was pleased in his mind. He remembered Shankara and replied."

Brahma replied, "O Narada! I will tell you about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest. I will tell you the divine account about the birth of Guha[4] and the slaying of Tarakasura. Let this account be heard. It destroys all sins. If a man hears this, he is certainly freed from all sins. This account is without blemish. It is secret and extremely wonderful. It removes sins and torments. It destroys all impediments. It bestows every kind of auspiciousness. It is pleasing and represents the essence of the shruti texts. It bestows happiness and is the seed of emancipation. It severs the foundation of karma.""

"Having married Shivaa and returning to Kailasa, Shiva became even more radiant. He thought of the task of devas and the hardships of people who would carry out the task of devas. When Bhagavan Shiva himself returned to Kailasa, all his ganas[5] were extremely delighted and arranged for many things to make him happy. When Shiva returned to Kailasa, there were great festivities. Full of joy and satisfaction in their minds, devas returned to their own regions. Mahadeva Shambhu took Girija Shivaa and went to a secluded spot that was agreeable and immensely divine. He constructed a bed for sexual intercourse, decorated with sandalwood paste and flowers. It was wonderful, supreme and auspicious, with many objects of pleasure added. With Girija, Bhagavan Shambhu amused himself there. The one who bestows honours did this for one thousand years of devas.

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[1] In thoughts, words and deeds.

[2] Shivaa (Parvati) is written in this way, to distinguish from Shiva (Shankara).

[3] Suta narrated the Puranas to the sages, led by Shounaka, assembled in the forest of Naimisha (Naimisharanya), repeating what Prajapati (Brahma) told Narada.

[4] Kumara, Kartikeya, Skanda.

[5] Ganas are Shiva's companions and attendants.

In his pastimes, as soon as he touched Durga, Shiva lost his senses. As soon as she touched Shiva, she lost her senses and did not know whether it was day or night. Following the dharma of customary practices in the world, Hara engaged in enjoyment. O unblemished one! A long period of time elapsed. But to them, it seemed like an instant.""

"O son! On one occasion, all the gods gathered together. With Shakra[6] at the forefront, they started their consultations on Mount Meru. The gods said, 'Shambhu Ishvara got married to accomplish our task. He is the lord of yoga. He is without transformations. He finds delight in his own atman. He is without blemish. However, a son has not been born to him and we do not know the reason. Why is Ishvara, the divinity, causing this delay?' Meanwhile, through Narada, who possesses divine insight, the devas got to know about the infinite pleasures and sporting the couple was engaged in. Knowing that their enjoyment had lasted for a long time, the gods were worried. With Brahma leading the way, they went to Narayana. I bent down before him and told him everything about what had happened and what we wished. All the devas stood there, like painted images. Brahma said, 'For one thousand divine years, Shankara has been engaged in the pleasures of intercourse. The yogi is not stopping.' Bhagavan[7] replied, 'O creator of the entire universe! There is nothing to worry. All will be well. Seek refuge with the great lord, Shankara, lord of devas. O lord of subjects! With happy minds, if people who devotedly seek refuge with Mahesha, they have nothing to be scared of. O Vidhatri![8] The task of cessation from shringara will happen at the right time, not now. A task meets with success at the right time, not otherwise. If Shambhu Maheshvara wishes to enjoy himself, who can stop it? When another one thousand years are over, he will stop of his own accord. If a person devises methods for separating a man and a woman at the time of intercourse, from one birth to another birth, he will be separated from his wife and sons. He is dislodged from his jnana. His deeds and prosperity in this world are destroyed. When the sinner dies, he goes to kalasutra[9] for one hundred thousand years. When Shakra was engaged in intercourse with Rambha, Durvasa, the great Indra among sages, separated them. Consequently, he was separated from his wife.[10] He suffered the pangs of separation for one thousand divine years and eventually accepted the hand of another woman as his wife. When Kama was engaged in intercourse with Ghritachi, Guru restrained him. Within six months, Chandra abducted his wife.[11]He then worshipped Shiva and engineered the Taramaya war. He got back the pregnant Tara and his pangs of separation were over. Maharshi Goutama stopped Chandra from intercourse with Mohini. Therefore, he was separated from his wife.[12]

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[6] Indra.

[7] Vishnu.

[8] The creator, Brahma.

[9] The name of a hell. Literally, the thread of time/death.

[10] Rambha was a famous apsara. Durvasa was prone to cursing. Since Indra was with Rambha and ignored Durvasa, Durvasa cursed him. Durvasa's wife was Kandali. As a result of Durvasa's anger, Kandali was burnt to ashes.

[11] Ghritachi was another famous apsara. Guru is Brihaspati and Chandra (the moon) abducted Brihaspati's wife, Tara. The resultant war is known as Taramaya or Tarakamaya war, the war over Tara.

[12] The text says Mohini, but probably means Rohini. Chandra was married to 27 nakshatras but loved Rohini nakshatra the most. When Indra seduced Goutama's wife, Ahalya, Chandra was keeping watch. Goutama cursed both Indra and Ahalya.

A person who tills with the plough was engaged in intercourse with a vrishali. Harishchandra expelled him, so that he was forced to wander around in a desolate forest. Listen to the consequences of this. He was dislodged from his kingdom and separated from his wife and son. He was chastised by Vishvamitra. After worshipping Shiva, he was freed from all sins.[13] Ajamila, best among brahmanas, was associated with a vrishali. However, because of their fear, the gods did not prevent this. O Vidhatri! Everything can be accomplished through the sprinkling of semen. The sprinkling of semen is powerful. If the sprinkling of semen is going to lead to fruits, who is capable of preventing that sprinkling? Shambhu's act of intercourse will last for one thousand divine years. O lords among gods! When those one thousand years are over, go to him. Act so that the semen certainly falls down on the ground. From that semen, a son named Skanda will be born to the lord. O Vidhatri! Along with the large number of gods, return to your own residence now. In a desolate spot, let Shambhu engage in the act of intercourse with Parvati.' Saying this, Kamala's[14] lord quickly entered inside his own city. O lord among sages! Along with me, the devas returned to their own respective abodes.""

"As Shakti[15] engaged in amusing herself with the powerful one, the earth trembled under the burden, along with Shesha and Kacchapa.[16] Because of the weight of Kacchapa, the air that holds everything up was stupefied. The three worlds were overwhelmed with fear. Along with me, all the devas sought refuge with Hari. Distressed in our minds, we told him everything. The devas said, 'O lord of devas! O Rama's[17] consort! O lord who saves everyone! We have sought refuge with you. Please save us. Our minds are agitated with fear. In the three worlds, the breath of life has been stupefied. We do not know the reason. We, the sages and everything in the three worlds, mobile and immobile, are agitated.' Along with me, all the devas said this. Having said this, we stood silently in front of Vishnu, distressed and miserable. Hari heard everything that the gods said. Taking us with him, he quickly went to Kailasa, loved by Shiva. Hari, loved by the gods, went there with me and the devas. He went to Shiva's excellent region, desiring to see Shankara. Unable to see Shiva there, Vishnu and the gods were amazed. They humbly asked Shiva's ganas, who were present there. Vishnu said, 'O Shankara's ganas! Where has Shiva, the lord of everything, gone? Lovingly, please tell us that. We are miserable and are seeking compassion.' Hearing the excellent words spoken by Hari and the immortals, Shankara's ganas affectionately replied to Rama's husband. Shiva's ganas answered, 'O Hari! Out of our love for Shiva, we will tell you about the true state of affairs. O Brahma and the immortals! We will tell you everything. Sarveshvara[18] Mahadeva has gone to Girija's residence. Extremely affectionately, the one who is accomplished in many kinds of pastimes has left us here. O Rama's lord! We do not know what Shambhu Maheshvara is doing inside that cave. Many years have passed.'

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[13] While vrishala means shudra, it also means outcast. Vrishali is the feminine. King Harishchandra suffered at the hands of Vishvamitra.

[14] Kamala or Padma is Lakshmi's name.

[15] Devi.

[16] The earth rests on the hood of the naga Shesha and the back of Kacchapa/Kurma, Vishnu's avatara in the form of a turtle/tortoise.

[17] Rama is Lakshmi.

[18] The lord of everyone/everything, Shiva.

O best among sages! Hearing their words, Vishnu, I and the immortals were amazed. We went to Shiva's door. O sage! Having gone there with me and devas, Hari, loved by devas, uttered loud cries of affliction. O best among sages! Stationing ourselves there, Hari, I and the immortals lovingly praised Shambhu Hara, the lord of all the worlds. Vishnu said, 'O Mahadeva! O Parameshvara![19] What are you doing inside? All the gods are suffering on account of Taraka. We have sought refuge with you. Please save us. In this way, along with the immortals and me, he praised Shambhu in many kinds of ways. O lord among sages! Suffering on account of Taraka, Hari wept there. The residents of heaven raised tumultuous cries of misery there. O lord among sages! Suffering from the asura, [20] their words were mixed with words of praise for Shiva.""

Chapter 152-3.4(2) (Birth of Shiva's Son)

“Brahma said, "Mahadeva, accomplished in jnana about B yoga, heard this. Though he had given up desire, scared of Parvati, he did not give up the intercourse. Shiva appeared at the door of the residence, near the gods. As a result of the daityas, they were suffering. Shankara is affectionate towards his devotees. Along with all the devas, Hari and I saw the lord Shiva. We were happy to see the one who is affectionate towards his devotees. Hearing the words of the gods, Bhagavan Bhava[21] was depressed in his heart and his mind suffered. He replied. Extremely delighted, the immortals lowered their shoulders down and prostrated themselves. O sage! Along with Hari and me, all of them praised Shankara. The devas said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O ocean of compassion! O lord! O Shankara! You are inside everyone's heart, and you know everything. O lord! O Maheshvara! Accomplish the task of the devas and save the devas. Show us your compassion and slay the daityas, Taraka and the other great lords.' Shiva replied, 'O Vishnu! O Vidhatri! O all of you devas! You are the destinations in the minds of everyone. What is going to happen, is certain to happen. No one can counter it. What has happened, has already happened. O immortals! Listen. Who is capable of accepting the semen that has now exuded out? Let him accept it.' Saying this, he flung it down on the ground. Urged by all the immortals, Agni assumed the form of a dove. Using his beak, he swallowed up all of Shambhu's semen.""

"O sage! At that time, because Shiva was taking a long time to return, Girija arrived there and saw the bulls among gods. Getting to know everything, Shivaa was filled with great rage. She spoke to all the gods, Hari and the others. Devi said, 'O large number of gods! You are especially wicked. To accomplish your own selfish objectives, you always inflict misery on others. It is because of your selfish objectives that you worshipped Mahesha, the great lord. O gods! You spoilt our amusements and rendered me barren. O immortals! No one who opposes me can ever be happy. O wicked residents of heaven! Therefore, you will face miseries.' Saying this, she cursed Vishnu and all the gods. Shivaa, the daughter of the king of the mountains, was blazing in rage.

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[19] Supreme lord.

[20] Asuras are demons, the enemies of suras (gods). Asura is used Synonymously with daitya or danava. Daityas are sons of Diti and danavas are sons of Danu. Both Diti and Danu were married to the sage Kashyapa. Brahma granted Taraka asura a boon that he could only be killed by Shiva's son.

[21] Shiva.

Parvati said, 'From today, the wives of devas will be barren. Let all the devas who have opposed me face miseries.' In this way, the one who is Ishvari over everyone cursed Vishnu and all the other devas. She next spoke to Pavaka, [22] the one who had swallowed Shiva's semen. Parvati said, 'O pure one! You will devour everything, and your atman will always suffer. O foolish one! You have performed the task of the gods. You do not know Shiva's tattva,[23] O deceitful one! O extremely wicked one! You have accepted wicked instructions from the wicked. You have swallowed Shiva's semen. You should not have wished to do that. Nor is it right.' After cursing Vahni, [24] along with Isha, [25] the mountain's daughter swiftly returned to her own residence. O sage! At the time, she was dissatisfied. O lord among sages! After having left, Shivaa made efforts to make Shiva understand and gave birth to another son, known as Ganesha.[26] O sage! I will describe that entire account to you later.""

"At the moment, I will tell you about Guha's birth. Listen lovingly. The immortals devour the food offered as oblations into the fire, to the utterance of words from the Vedas. Hence, all the gods became pregnant. The gods were unable to tolerate the semen and suffered. Because of Shivaa, Vishnu and the others had already lost their intellect and their jnana. Vishnu and all the other devas were deluded. Scorched, they quickly sought refuge with Parvati's lord. All of them humbly went to the gate of Shiva's residence. The gods joined their hands in salutation and lovingly praised Shivaa and Shambhu. The devas said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O Girija's lord! O great lord! O protector! What has happened now? Your maya[27] is impossible to violate. We have become pregnant and are being scorched by your semen. O Shambhu! Take pity on us. Please counter this miserable plight.' O sage! Hearing the praise of the immortals, Paramesha, [28] Shivaa's husband, quickly arrived at the gate, where the devas were standing. When Shankara arrived at the gate, Achyuta[29] and all the devas lovingly bent down. They prostrated themselves and praised the one who is affectionate towards his devotees. The devas said, 'O Shambhu! O Shiva! O Mahesha! We are specially bowing down before you. Please save us. We have sought refuge with you. We are being scorched by the semen. O Hara! Please remove our misery. We will certainly die. Barring you, who is capable of countering the grief of the devas?" The lord, king of the gods, heard these piteous words. Affectionate towards his devotees, he laughed and replied to the gods. Shiva said, 'O Hari![30] O Vidhatri! O all the devas! Listen to my words. You will be happy. But you must be careful now. O all the gods! You must quickly vomit out my semen. O extremely radiant ones! If you listen to my words, you will be happy. Vishnu and all the other gods accepted this command on their heads. Remembering Shiva, who is without decay, they swiftly vomited it out. Shambhu's semen was golden in complexion and extraordinary. It was as large as a mountain. Extremely radiant, it fell down on the ground and seemed to touch heaven.

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[22] The one who purifies, Agni, the fire god.

[23] The word tattva means principles. But the sense of the true or essential nature, is not captured by the word 'principles'.

[24] Agni.

[25] The lord, Shiva.

[26] Lord of ganas, Ganesha or Ganapati.

[27] The power of illusion.

[28] The same as Parameshvara.

[29] One without Tapas, Vishnu's name.

[30] Vishnu.

All the gods, Achyuta and the others, were happy. They praised Paramesha Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees. O lord among sages! Pavaka was the only one who was not happy. Parameshvara Shankara gave him a supreme command. O sage! The disabled Vahni joined his hands in salutation and bent down. Unhappy in his mind, he praised Shiva in these words. Agni said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahesha! I am foolish. I am your servant. Please pardon my crime and counter this scorching. You are affectionate towards those who are distressed. You are the lord who is Parameshvara Shankara.' Affectionate towards the distressed and pleased in his mind, he replied to Pavaka. Hearing the pure one's words, Shambhu Parameshvara, who is affectionate towards those who are distressed, was pleased in his mind and replied to Pavaka. Shiva said, 'You have done what should not have been done. You have swallowed my semen. That is the reason, obeying my command, your sin has increased, and the scorching has not been countered. O one who is known as the pure one! However, since you have sought refuge with me now, you will be happy. You will be happy now. I will destroy all your miseries. Carefully deposit my semen in the womb of an excellent woman. You will then be happy. In particular, this burning sensation will go away.' Hearing Shambhu's words, the pure one replied slowly. He bent down and joined his hands in salutation. He cheerfully addressed Shankara, who brings welfare to his devotees. 'O lord! O Maheshvara! This energy of yours is impossible to bear. In the three worlds, no womb, other than that of Shakti's,[31] is capable of holding it.' O supreme among sages! When Vahni said this, you were sent by Shankara, and you also wished to do Agni a good turn. Therefore, you spoke to him. Narada said, 'O Vahni! Listen to my words. They are auspicious and will take away your scorching. They are beautiful and will bestow supreme bliss on you. They will counter all your miseries. O Vahni! There is a means whereby you will be happy, and your burning sensation will go away. O son![32] Obeying Shiva's command, I will affectionately tell you what must be done properly. O pure one! At daybreak in the month of Magha,[33] when women take their baths, deposit Shiva's great semen in their bodies.' At that time, the wives of the seven sages arrived there."[34]

"O sage! In the morning in the month of Magha, they followed niyamas[35] and desired to have their baths. O sage! Having had their baths, six of them suffered from the great cold and desired to approach Vahni's flames. Arundhati[36] saw that they were deluded. She possessed excellent conduct and good understanding. Instructed by Girisha,[37] she tried to restrain them. O sage! But those six wives of the sages were deluded and stubbornly went there. They wished to counter the chill they were suffering from.

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[31] Shakti is Devi.

[32] The word used is tata. It means son but is affectionately used for anyone who is younger or junior. Depending on the context, the word tata also means father, but is affectionately used for anyone who is older or senior.

[33] The month of Magha corresponds to January/February. The text uses the word Tapas, meaning Magha.

[34] The saptarshis are the seven great sages. The list varies, but the standard one is Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha. In the sky, the saptarshis are identified with the constellation of Ursa Major (Great Bear).

[35] Niyama means the rules and restraints.

[36] Vasishtha's wife.

[37] Shiva.

In addition, they were deluded by Shiva's maya. O sage! Through the pores on their bodies, drops of the semen immediately entered their bodies and Vahni was freed from the burning sensation. Vahni, who was in the form of flames, instantly vanished from the spot. He was happy. Remembering Shankara in his mind, he returned to his own residence. O virtuous one! The women became pregnant and suffered from the scorching. They returned to their own residences. Arundhati was miserable at what Agni had done. O son! Witnessing what had happened to their own wives, their husbands were immediately overwhelmed with rage.
O son! Having consulted each other, the wives discarded it. Those six wives saw that they had transgressed. O son! They were immensely miserable, and their minds were agitated. Shiva's semen was now in the form of a foetus. The wives of the sages cast this away on the slopes of Himachala[38] and were freed from the burning sensation. Mount Himalaya could not tolerate Shiva's semen and trembled a lot. Unable to bear it and suffering from the scorching, he flung it into the Ganga. Ganga could also not tolerate the paramatman's semen. O lord among sages! She used her waves to fling it into a clump of reeds. Having been flung there, the semen quickly turned into a boy. He was handsome and extremely fortunate. He was prosperous and energetic and enhanced delight. O lord among sages! It was the month of Margashirsha, and it was shashthi tithi in shukla paksha. [39] That is when Shiva's son manifested himself on the surface of the earth. O brahmana! At the time, on their own mountain, the daughter of Mount Himalaya and Girisha were delighted. As a result of her joy, milk oozed out from Shivaa's breasts. O sage! Having gone there, everyone was even happier. O son! The three worlds were auspicious, and this brought joy to those who were virtuous. There were impediments for the crooked, especially daityas. The supreme sounds of drums were suddenly heard from the firmament. O Narada! Flowers were showered down and quickly descended on the boy. O supreme among sages! Vishnu and all the devas were filled with supreme bliss and there were supreme festivities.""

Chapter 153-3.4(3) (Kartikeya's Pastimes)

“Narada said, "O lord of devas! O lord of subjects! O Brahma! O creator! O lord! What happened after that? Please show me your compassion and tell me that now.""

'Brahma answered, "At that time, the powerful Vishvamitra was sent by Vidhatri. Pleased and wandering around as he willed, he arrived there. He saw that extremely energetic son, who possessed a radiance that was not of this world. His wishes were completely satisfied. Rejoicing, he bowed down. With an extremely happy mind, he uttered his praise. The eloquent and powerful Vishvamitra had been sent there by Vidhatri. The son was pleased and was also a source of great pleasure. He smiled, and causing great surprise, spoke to Vishvamitra. Shiva's son said, 'O one who is great in jnana! It is because of Shiva's will that you have suddenly arrived here.

[38] Mount Himalaya.

[39] The month of Margashirsha is November/December and is also known as Agrahayana. Tithi is a lunar day and shashthi is the sixth. Shukla paksha is the bright lunar fortnight during which the moon waxes.

O father! In accordance with what is revered in the Vedas, please perform my samskara.[40] From today, you will be my priest and will bring me pleasure. There is no doubt that you will always be worshipped by everyone.' Hearing these words, Gadhi's son[41] was extremely pleased. But greatly surprised too, he replied in an anudatta tone, [42] Vishvamitra replied, 'O son! O child! I am not a brahmana. I am Gadhi's son and a kshatriya. I am famous as Vishvamitra. I am a kshatriya and serve brahmanas. O supreme child! I have thus told you everything about myself. Whose son are you? Tell me about yourself. I am astounded at all this.' Hearing these words, he told him everything about himself. Hearing this, Gadhi's son was extremely pleased and extremely surprised. Shiva's son said, 'O Vishvamitra! As a result of my boon, there is no doubt that you have become a brahmarshi. [43] Vasishtha and the others will always praise you, affectionately. Therefore, follow my command. You should do my samskara. But all this is secret, and you must never reveal it.' O devarshi! Therefore, he lovingly performed all the samskaras for Shiva's son, as supremely laid down in the Vedas. Shiva's son was immensely pleased. The lord performed an extremely beneficial act and bestowed divine and supreme jnana on the sage Vishvamitra. The son of the pure one[44] made Vishvamitra his priest.""

"O supreme among brahmanas! From that day, he became accomplished in many kinds of pastimes. O sage! I will tell you about the pastimes he engaged in. O son! Those pastimes were supreme. I will describe them to you. Listen lovingly. O son! At that time, he was known as Shveta. [45] Pavaka went there and saw his divine son, who was supremely purifying. Having seen him, he embraced him and kissed him. He addressed him as 'son' and gave him a spear as a weapon. Guha accepted the spear and climbed to the summit of the mountain. He struck the peak with his spear, and it fell down on the ground. Ten padmas[46] of infinitely valiant rakshasas had arrived there earlier, desiring to kill him. However, as a result of that strike, they were quickly destroyed. There were great sounds of lamentation and the earth and the three worlds started to quake. Along with the devas, the lord of gods arrived there. He struck him on the right flank with his vajra.[47] As a result of this, an immensely strong man, named Shakha, was born. Shakra quickly struck him on the left flank with the vajra. Another strong man, known as Vishakha, was born.

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[40] There are thirteen samskaras or sacraments. The list varies a bit. But one list is vivaha (marriage), garbhalambhana (conception), pumsavana (engendering a male child), simantonnayana (parting the hair, performed in the fourth month, sixth month, or eighth month of pregnancy), jatakarma (birth rites), namakarana (naming), chudakarma (tonsure), annaprashana (first solid food), keshanta (first shaving of the head), upanayana (sacred thread), vidyarambha (commencement of studies), samavartana (graduation) and antyeshti (funeral rites).

[41] Vishvamitra's father was Gadhi, a king. Vishvamitra was thus born a kshatriya, though, through his efforts, he eventually became a brahmana.

[42] Udatta is a high-pitched accent and anudatta is a low-pitched one.

[43] The highest state as a rishi. Maharshi (great rishi) is superior to rishi and brahmarshi is superior to maharshi.

[44] That is, Agni.

[45] White.

[46] A padma is one thousand billion but can simply be taken as a large number.

[47] Indra's weapon, the thunderbolt.

Shakra now struck him on the chest with the vajra. Another extremely strong man, known as Naigama, was born. Including Skanda, those four extremely valiant and extremely strong ones swiftly rushed forward to kill Shakra. I offered him refuge. O sage! Shakra and the large number of immortals were scared of Guha. They did not know any better and, agitated, left for their own respective abodes. Rejoicing, the child remained there. O son! As was the case earlier, the lord was fearless and engaged in many kinds of pastimes. O sage! All the women known as the Krittikas[48] made up their minds to take him. Greatly desiring to accept him, they argued amongst themselves. O sage! To pacify them, he assumed six mouths and drank milk from their breasts. They were content. O sage! Knowing what was in his mind, all the Krittikas took him and happily went to their own world. The child, known as Kumara, desired a breast and they offered him their breasts. Isha's son was reared in this way, and he became more resplendent than the sun. They never let the boy out of their sight. Full of love, they gave him garments and excellent ornaments that were very rare in the three worlds. From one day to another day, they reared the extremely radiant child, especially feeding him on tasty and praised food. O son! One day, the child, son of the Krittikas, went to the divine assembly of devas and exhibited his great conduct. Vishnu and all the others witnessed the body's wonderful deeds. Witnessing this, Achyuta, the rishis and the gods were filled with wonder and asked the boy, 'Who are you?' Hearing this, he didn't say anything in reply. He quickly returned to his own abode and remained hidden, as he had been earlier.""

Chapter 154-3.4(4) (Search for Kartikeya)

“Narada asked, "O lord of devas! O lord of subjects! O Vidhatri! What happened after that? Please show me your compassion and tell me that. Also tell me about Shiva's pastimes.""

'Brahma replied, "O sage! After Shambhu's son had been accepted by the Krittikas, a period of time passed. However, the daughter of Mount Himalaya did not know this. With a smiling face that resembled a blossoming lotus, Durga spoke to her husband, the lord and divinity Shambhu, lord of devas. Parvati said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! Listen to my auspicious words. O Ishvara! Because of the load of my earlier good merits, I have obtained you. You are the best among yogis. Yet, you became intent on amusements. O Bhava! But devas caused an interruption in the intercourse between you and me. O lord! Your semen fell down on the ground, not inside my womb. Where did it go? Which deva has hidden it? O Maheshvara! How can my husband's semen be rendered futile? Has it been unsuccessful or has a son been born somewhere?' Hearing Parvati's words, the lord of the universe laughed. O lord among sages! He summoned the devas and sages and spoke to them. Maheshvara said, 'O devas! Listen to my words. You have heard Parvati's words. How can my semen be futile? Who has concealed it? Scared, if he instantly flings himself down,[49] he does not deserve to be punished. If a capable king does not punish, his subjects are no longer obedient, but become those who devour.' Hearing Shambhu's words, they discussed this with each other. Scared in front of the lord, all of them spoke, one by one.

[48] The Pleiades. Kartikeya/Kumara/Skanda was reared by the Krittikas. They adopted him as their son, and he came to be known as Kartikeya.

[49] At Shiva's feet.

Vishnu said, 'In Bharata, a burden of sins is borne by a person who is false in speech, one who violates his guru's wife and one who constantly criticizes his guru. Let the person who has concealed the semen bear a similar burden.' Brahma said, 'Let the person who has concealed the semen in this sacred land of Bharata be barred from serving or worshipping you.' The guardians of the worlds said, 'The person who has concealed the semen is a sinner. In his delusion, he has fallen down. Let him constantly suffer torments on account of the deed. The devas said, 'A person who makes a pledge and does not fulfil it, is foolish and a sinner. Let the person who has concealed the semen suffer the same consequences.' The wives of devas said, 'Women who criticize their own husbands and go to other men are deprived of mothers and relatives. Let the person who has concealed the semen suffer the same consequences.' Hearing the words of the devas, the divinity Hara, lord of devas, spoke these words to Dharma and all the others who are witnesses of karma, scaring them. 'You are constant witnesses to all karma in the universe. Did you conceal it, or do you know who did it? You should speak.' In that assembly, hearing Ishvara's words, they trembled. In front of the lord, they looked at one another and spoke one by one. Brahma said, 'In the course of the intercourse, the semen fell down on the surface of the ground. I know this much. Shankara's rage is infallible.' Kshiti[50] said, 'I was incapable of tolerating that semen. Therefore, earlier, I flung it into the fire. O Brahma! I am weak and it was impossible to bear. You should pardon me.' Vahni said, 'O Shankara! I was incapable of bearing that semen. It was extremely difficult to bear. Therefore, in the form of a dove, I immediately flung it down on Mount Kailasa.' The mountain said, 'O Shankaral O lord of the worlds! I was incapable of bearing that semen. O Parameshvara! It was impossible to bear. Therefore, I immediately hurled it into Ganga. Ganga said, 'O Shankara! O lord of the worlds! I was incapable of bearing your semen. O lord! O protector! I was agitated and flung it into a clump of reeds.' Vayus[51] said, 'The semen that fell in the reeds instantly turned into a child. O Shambhu! He was exceedingly handsome. This occurred on the sacred banks of the celestial river.'[52] Surya[53] said, 'O lord! Seeing that the child was weeping, I went to Mount Astachala.[54] However, goaded by the wheel of time, I was incapable of remaining there during the night.' Chandra said, 'O Shambhu! The Krittikas picked up the weeping boy. They then went to their own residence in Badarika ashrama.'[55] The water said, 'O lord! They suckled the weeping boy at their breasts. O lord of gods! They reared your son, and he is as resplendent as the sun.' Sandhya[56] said, 'Now, the Krittikas are nurturing your son in the forest. In their love and affection, they have named him Kartikeya.' Ratri said, 'They do not let the child out of their sight.[57] They love him more than their own lives. If a person nurtures, the son becomes his.' Dina said, 'They give him the best of garments and ornaments. They feed him food that is tasty and praised.'

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[50] The earth.

[51] The wind god.

[52] Ganga.

[53] The sun.

[54] Mountain behind which the sun sets.

[55] Badari or Badarikashrama is Badrinath.

[56] Sandhya is the period between day and night and means dawn or dusk. Sometimes, midday is also referred to as sandhya. This is the personified form. This is also true of Ratri (night) and Dina (day).

[57] A few shlokas are repetitions of shlokas in the preceding chapter.

Hearing their words, the destroyer of cities[58] was satisfied. Delighted, he happily gave the brahmanas a lot of dakshina."[59]

"Hearing news about her son, Parvati was delighted in her mind. She gave the brahmanas crores of jewels and many riches. Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Mena, Savitri, all the women and Vishnu and all the devas gave the brahmanas wealth. Urged by the devas, sages and mountains, the lord sent his ganas as messengers to the spot where his son was. O Narada! There were Virabhadra, Vishalaksha, Shankukarna, Karakrama, Nandishvara, Mahakala, Vajradamshtra, Mahonmada, Gokarnasya, Dadhimukha, who blazed like the flames of a fire, one hundred thousand Kshetrapalas, three hundred thousand bhutas,[60] Rudras and Bhairavas who were like Shiva in their valour and other innumerable ones with malformed figures. All these messengers of Shiva held astras and shastras in their hands.[61] They encircled the residence of the Krittikas. Seeing them, the minds of the Krittikas were agitated. They were scared. They spoke to Kartikeya, who blazed with the energy of the brahman. The Krittikas said, 'O child! Innumerable soldiers and others have encircled our residence. There is great fear. What will we do? Where will we go?' Kartikeya replied, 'O fortunate ones! Discard your fear. As long as I am here, what is the reason for fear? O mothers! Though I am a child, who is capable of countering me?' Meanwhile, Nandikeshvara, the leader of the soldiers, presented himself before Kartikeya. He sat down and spoke to him. Nandishvara[62] said, 'O brother! O mothers! Listen to the auspicious message I am bearing. I have been sent by Mahesha, by Shankara, who is the destroyer. O son! An assembly is going on in Kailasa, with all the devas, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and the others. They are there and there are great and auspicious festivities going on. In that assembly, Shivaa questioned Shankara, who brings welfare to everyone. She spoke to him, asking him to search for you. Therefore, to get you back, one by one, Shiva asked all the devas. Each of them replied, as they should. They told the lord of gods that you were here, in the residence of the Krittikas. Dharma and all the others are witnesses to all karma, both of dharma and of adharma. In earlier times, in private, Parvati and Shiva were engaged in their amusements. The gods saw that Shambhu's semen fell down on the ground. The earth flung it into the fire and the fire flung it onto the mountain. The mountain flung it into Ganga and the flow of the waves conveyed it to a grove of reeds. To accomplish the task of the devas, the lord manifested himself in the form of a child. The Krittikas got you from there. You will now go to earth. There, along with the gods, Shambhu will perform your abhisheka.63 You will obtain every kind of weapon and kill the one known as Taraka. You are the son of the one who destroys the universe and they are incapable of keeping you. The hollow of a dry tree is incapable of hiding a fire. You will illuminate the universe.

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[58] Shiva, a reference to his destroying Tripura.

[59] Dakshina is usually given to brahmanas as a sacrificial fee, or is the payment made by a disciple to his teacher on the successful completion of studies.

[60] Here, bhuta means Shiva's attendant.

[61] The text uses both astra and shastra. These are both weapons and the words are often used synonymously. However, an astra is a weapon that is hurled or released, while a shastra is held in the hand.

[62] Nandikeshvara is the same as Nandishvara.

[63] Abhisheka is anointment, instatement, crowning, with the head sprinkled with water.

[64] The Krittikas.

Just as a king among elephants is not radiant when it has fallen into a large pit, you are not radiant in this house. If your energy is not hidden, you can illuminate the world. This is like the sun's rays when they are not hidden by a cloud. O Shambhu's son! You, and no one else, can pervade the universe. This is like the sky, which pervades everything, but is not pervaded by anything. An Indra among yogis is not attached to objects of pleasure he needs to nourish himself. The atman is not attached to any deeds a living being is engaged in. You are the lord of the beginning of the universe. You cannot remain in this place. Like a yogi, you are a mass of qualities and energy. O brother! Men who do not know you have lost their intelligence. Even though a toad resides in the same place as a lotus, it is not equally respected.' Kartikeya replied, 'You know everything and possess jnana about the three periods of time. [65] Since you possess jnana and since you have a refuge with Mrityunjaya,[66] there is no need to praise you. Karma depends on the species one is born in. O brother! Their obtaining of nivritti[67] also depends on that. The Krittikas are yoginis[68] and possess jnana. They are portions of Prakriti. They have reared me with milk from their breasts and have always done what is good for me. I am the son they have nourished and therefore, I am also a portion of these ladies. They are portions of Prakriti and I have been born from the semen of Prakriti's lord. O Nandikeshvara! Though there is no portion of the daughter of the Indra among mountains in me, following the dharma revered by everyone, she is my mother. Shambhu has sent you. You are great and are like Shambhu's son. I will come with you and see all the devas.' Having said this, he quickly informed the Krittikas about this. Along with Shankara's attendants, Kartikeya departed.""

Chapter 155-3.4(5) (Kumara's Abhisheka)

“Brahma said, "Meanwhile, he saw an excellent chariot there. It was wonderful, eternal and beautiful and had been constructed by Vishvakarma.[69] It was extremely large and possessed one hundred wheels. It was charming and possessed the speed of thought. It had been sent by Parvati and was surrounded by excellent attendants. Kartika, [70] born from Paramesha's semen and possessing supreme jnana, ascended it, though his heart was shattered. The Krittikas arrived there. Their hair was dishevelled, and they were afflicted and grieving. It was almost as if the mothers were mad, and they spoke the following words. The Krittikas said, 'O ocean of compassion! You are cruel. Leaving us, you are going away. This is not dharma. A son must not abandon the mothers who have reared him. Our love for you has increased. Following dharma, you are our son. What will we do? Where will we go? What should we do?" Clasping Kartika to their breasts, all the Krittikas said this. As a result of separation from their son, they quickly lost their senses. Using words about adhyatma,[71] Kumara made them understand. O sage! Along with the attendants, he mounted the chariot. Many kinds of auspicious things were heard and seen, and they brought pleasure.

[65] The past, present and future.

[66] The one who has conquered death, Shiva.

[67] Nivritti is detachment from fruits and renunciation of action. Pravritti is action with a desire for the fruits.

[68] Yogini is the feminine of yogi.

[69] Architect of the gods.

[70] The same as Kartikeya .

[71] Transcendental knowledge about the paramatman and the jivatman.

Along with the attendants, Kumara went to his father's house.""

"They were on a chariot that could travel as fast as thought and Nandi was on the right. He reached Kailasa and, with the Krittikas and the excellent attendants, stood near the root of the eternal nyagrodha tree.[72] Kumara, Shankara's son, accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, was pleased. The large number of gods, rishis, siddhas, charanas, Vishnu and Brahma announced that he had arrived. [73] Delighted, Shiva and all the others, Hari, Brahma, gods and rishis, went to see Gangeya. [74] Many conch shells and drums were sounded, and many trumpets were blown. Satisfied in their minds, devas arranged for great festivities. Virabhadra and all the other ganas themselves played around, with many kinds of tones and talas.[75] He was praised by those who eulogized him, reciting his qualities. Pleased in their minds, they uttered sounds of 'Victory' and 'I bow down to you'. They went to see Shiva's excellent son, born from the clump of reeds. Parvati had agreeable auspicious signs placed along the royal road. All around, the city was decorated with rubies and other jewels. She stood in front, leading Lakshmi and thirty other goddesses. They were followed by virtuous women who possessed husbands and sons. There were Rambha and other divine apsaras, [76] smiling and properly dressed. Following Shivaa's command, they sang and danced. Those who looked at Gangeya, who was just like Shankara, saw a great mass of energy that pervaded the three worlds. The boy was surrounded by this energy, which had the hue of molten gold. Everyone instantly worshipped Kumara, whose radiance was like that of the sun. Lowering their shoulders in joy, they lovingly said, 'I bow down before you'. As he advanced, they surrounded him, on the left and on the right. Vishnu, Shakra, I and all the devas prostrated ourselves like rods on the ground in front of him and surrounded Kumara.""

"In the midst of those great festivities, Shambhu and Girija arrived and, full of joy and happiness, saw their son. The supreme lord of the world, the only friend the universe possesses, and the supreme Bhavani[77] saw their son and rejoiced. Sarveshvara Paresha[78] was surrounded by pramathas[79] and serpents were coiled around him. He was full of affection. Holding the spear, Skanda saw Shiva and Parvati. He quickly got down from the chariot and lowering his head, prostrated himself. Shiva Shankara embraced Kumara and inhaled the fragrance of his head. Paramesha, the cause of affection, was pleased and full of love. Parvati respectfully embraced Guha and overwhelmed with affection, fed him the milk that flowed from her breasts. Along with their wives, devas happily performed the rite of nirajana. [80] Sounds of 'Victory' pervaded the earth and rose up into the sky. Rishis chanted sounds of the brahman. Singers sang. Many kinds of musical instruments were played before Kumara.

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[72] Nyagrodha is the Indian fig tree.

[73] Siddhas and charanas are semi-divine, the latter are divine minstrels.

[74] Since the semen had been flung into Ganga and the clump of reeds grew along the banks of Ganga, Kartikeya is also known as Gangeya, Ganga's son.

[75] Tala is the measurement of time in music.

[76] Celestial dancers and singers, often in the company of gandharvas, who were celestial musicians.

[77] Bhava's wife, Parvati.

[78] The supreme lord, Shiva.

[79] Pramathas are Shiva's attendants.

[80] Nirajanalniranjana means spotless. The rite involves the waving of lamps.

Mahesha placed the extremely radiant Kumara on his lap. Bhavani's husband seemed to be the personified form of prosperity and seemed to be the best among those who have sons. Following Shiva's command, along with his own attendants, Kumara went to Shiva's residence. Amidst those great festivities and with the devas, he was extremely happy. As the couple stood there with him, they were resplendent. Rishis and the best among gods surrounded them and worshipped them. Rejoicing, Kumara played on Shiva's lap. With his hands, he crushed Vasuki,[81] who was coiled around Shiva's neck. Seeing this, Bhagavan Shambhu pointed this out to Girija and laughed. In his pastimes, he is the one who shows compassion and he merely glanced, with eyes of compassion. With a smile of pride, Bhagavan Mahesha, along with the supreme Girija, was greatly delighted. The love choked his throat. The single friend of the universe, the single lord and master of the world, could say nothing.""

"After this, Jagannatha[82] Shambhu happily carried out the customary practices of the world. He made Kartika sit down on a beautiful, bejewelled throne. There were one hundred bejewelled pots, filled with water from all the tirthas[83] and sanctified with mantras from the Vedas. With this, he bathed him. Hari gave him a crown, a diadem and bracelets studded with the best of jewels, his own Vaijayanti necklace and the chakra. Shiva gave him his trident, Pinaka,[84] battle axe, spear, the pashupata arrow, the weapon of destruction and supreme learning. I gave him, the sacrificial thread, the Vedas, the mother of the Vedas, [85] a kamandalu,[86] brahmastra weapon and learning that crushes the enemy. The lord of gods gave him an Indra among elephants and the vajra. The lord of waters[87] gave him a white umbrella and a necklace made out of gems. Surya gave him a chariot that could travel as fast as thought and extremely firm armour. Yama gave him Yama's staff. The store of nectar[88] gave him a pot full of nectar. Hutashana[89] lovingly gave his own son a great spear. Nirriti gave him his own weapon. The wind god gave him the vayavya weapon. Kubera gave him a mace. Isha lovingly gave him a trident.[90] All the devas happily gave him many kinds of weapons and techniques. Rejoicing and full of great joy, Kamadeva lovingly gave him Kama's weapon, a club and his own knowledge. The ocean of milk gave him special gems and bejewelled anklets. Himalaya gave him divine ornaments and silken garments. Garuda gave him his own son, named Chitrabarhana.[91] Aruna gave him the powerful cock known as Tamrachuda,[92] who uses his legs as weapons. Smiling, Parvati happily bestowed supreme prosperity on him.

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[81] The king of nagas. Nagas are the same as uragas/pannagas. They are not quite the same as snakes (sarpas), since they can assume any form at will and have semi-divine traits. We will translate sarpas as snakes and nagas as serpents.

[82] Lord of the universe.

[83] A tirtha is a sacred place of pilgrimage with water. A kshetra is a sacred place of pilgrimage without water.

[84] Pinaka is the same of Shiva's bow or trident. Here, it obviously means the bow.

[85] Meaning the Gayatri/Savitri mantra.

[86] Water pot.

[87] Varuna.

[88] Chandra, the moon.

[89] Agni. Since Agni carried the semen, Kartikeya is also referred to as Agni's son.

[90] Since Shiva has already been mentioned, this is a repetition.

[91] Literally, Chitrabarhana means a wonderful peacock.

[92] Literally, coppery-red on the crest.

Extremely happy, she gave him eternal life. Lakshmi gave him divine prosperity and a large and beautiful necklace. Savitri happily gave him all the knowledge for attaining siddhi.[93] O sage! There were other goddesses who had assembled there. They gave him whatever belonged to them and so did the ones who had reared the infant.[94] O supreme among sages! Great festivities took place there. Everyone was pleased, in particular, Shiva and Shivaa.""

"O sage! Meanwhile, the powerful Rudra Bharga spoke to Brahma and the other devas. Shiva said, 'O Hari! O Vidhatri! O all the devas! Listen to my words. I am pleased in every possible way. Ask for the boon you desire.' O sage! Hearing Shambhu's words, with pleasure written on their faces, Vishnu and all the gods spoke to the divinity, the lord Pashupati. 'O lord! Kumara will certainly kill Taraka. That is the reason he, possessing excellent conduct, has been born. Therefore, we should leave, ready to kill Taraka. Please command Kumara, so that, for our happiness, he kills him.' Full of sentiments of compassion, the lord agreed to this and gave the devas his son, so that Taraka might be killed. Following Shiva's command, all the gods, with Brahma and Vishnu leading the way, placed Guha at the forefront and collectively, immediately left the mountain. Once they emerged outside Kailasa, following Hari's command, Tvashtris[95] constructed a beautiful and wonderful city near the mountain. There was a wonderful, divine and beautiful residence there, extremely resplendent. Tvashtri built this for Guha and there was an excellent throne there. Along with the gods, the intelligent Hari had the auspicious rites performed for the abhisheka of Kartika, with water brought from all the tirthas. In the proper way, he lovingly arranged for festivities and collected every kind of ornament and garment for him. Rejoicing, Hari bestowed on him lordship over the universe. Along with the gods, he worshipped him and made the mark of a tilaka on his forehead. All the devas and rishis affectionately prostrated themselves before Kartika. With many kinds of hymns, they praised Shiva's eternal form. On that excellent throne, Kartika was extremely radiant. He assumed the role of lord and protector of the universe.""

Chapter 156-3.4(6) (Kumara's Extraordinary Conduct)

“Brahma said, "There, Gangeya displayed the quality of his Bbirth. O Narada! With great joy, hear about it. It will bestow devotion on you. There was a brahmana named Narada who arrived there. The prosperous one had been performing a sacrifice and he came and sought refuge with Guha. Pleased in his intelligence, the brahmana approached near Kartika. He prostrated himself properly and with auspicious words of praise, told him about his intention.""

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[93] Siddhi generally means success. But siddhis also mean powers. Specifically, yoga leads to eight major siddhis or powers. These are anima (becoming as small as one desires), mahima (as large as one desires), laghima (as light as one wants), garima (as heavy as one wants), prapti (obtaining what one wants), prakamya (travelling where one wants), vashitva (powers to control creatures) and ishitva (obtaining divine powers).

[94] The Krittikas.

[95] The divine architect.

"The brahmana said, 'O lord! Listen to my words and counter my hardships today. You are the lord of the entire universe and I have sought refuge with you. I started a sacrifice that involved the sacrifice of a goat. The goat freed itself from its bonds and wandered away, far from my house. I do not know where it has gone. Though I have searched for it a lot, I have not been able to get it. This will cause a serious obstruction in my sacrifice. When you are established as the lord, how can my sacrifice be possibly spoilt? O lord! Think about this properly and act so that my desire is satisfied. O lord! O Shiva's son! Other than you, who can I go to for refuge? You are the lord of the entire universe, and all the immortals serve you. You are a friend to the distressed. You are an ocean of compassion. You are affectionate towards devotees who serve you well. You are the supreme lord, praised by Hari, Brahma and other devas. You are Skanda, Parvati's delight. You alone are supreme. You are the scorcher of enemies. You are the paramatman. You are the lord who offers refuge to the virtuous. O protector of the distressed! O great lord! O Shankara's son! O lord of the three worlds! O lord! O lord of maya! I have come and have sought refuge with you. You are loved by brahmanas. Please save me. You are the lord of everyone and are loved. You know everything. Brahma and the other devas praise you. Through maya, you assume different forms. You bring happiness to your devotees. You are intent on protecting. You possess maya. You love devotees more than your own life. You possess gunas but are beyond the three gunas[96] and are distinct from them. You are Shambhu himself. You are Shambhu's son. Pleased, you confer happiness. Your form is great. You exist in the form of consciousness. You are the son of the omniscient Shankara, who destroyed Tripura. You are always subservient to virtuous love. You possess six faces. You love virtuous ones who bow down before you. You are loved by Sarveshvara Shankara. You destroy those who possess hatred towards the virtuous. You are a guru, even for Shankara. You are the lord of the universe. You are the lord of everyone. All the immortals serve at your feet. O one who loves service! Please save me. You cause terror among enemies. You ensure welfare to people who seek refuge with you. You are the one who ensures happiness. I worship your lotus feet. O Skanda! Use your ears to hear my entreaty. In the minds of people, please instil devotion towards you. Please always instil this. If you are on a person's side, protect his flanks and grant him freedom from fear, what can a powerful and accomplished adversary do to him? You are accomplished and if you are the protector, what can Takshaka[97] or a predator who eats flesh do to him? O lord! Even the guru of the gods is incapable of praising you properly. How can I be capable of doing that? I am wicked in intelligence and an inferior human. You may be pure or impure, noble or ignoble. O Skanda! Whatever be your nature, I am praying before your lotus feet. O lord of everything! O one who is affectionate towards devotees! O ocean of compassion! I belong to you. I am your servant. I am not the servant of hundreds of leaders of ganas. O virtuous lord! O lord! You know about every kind of devotion, even if it is in the mind. You destroy the afflictions of your servants. In truth, there is no protector other than you. O illustrious one! There is no man or immortal. You are the one who ensures welfare. You destroy the sins of kali yuga. You are Kubera's friend. Your heart melts with compassion. You possess twelve eyes, and your six faces are radiant. O Guha! Please ensure that my sacrifice is completed. You are the protector of the three worlds. You are affectionate towards those who seek refuge. You are the one who performs the sacrifice. You are the one who nurtures the sacrifice. You remove those who cause impediments.

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[96] Sattva, rajas and tamas.

[97] A venomous naga.

O one who removes impediments! O one who creates the virtuous, in every possible way! O Ishana's son! Please ensure that my sacrifice is completed. I prostrate myself before you. O Skanda! You save everyone. You are also the one who knows everything. O lord of everything! You are the lord who penetrates and protects in every possible way. You know about music. You are the supreme lord who knows the Vedas. You are the creator. You are the lord of devas. You are the destination of the virtuous. You are loved by Bhavani. You are Shambhu's son. You are wisdom personified. You are self-ruling. You are the one who meditates. You are the one who is meditated on. You are the ancestor of the ancestors. You are the origin of virtuous atmans.' The emperor of devas, Shambhu's son, heard these words. He sent his own attendant, named Virabahu for the task. Virabahu was instructed by his master to search. The immensely valiant one devotedly prostrated himself and left immediately.""

"He searched everywhere in the globe that is the universe. Though he heard about the hardships it had caused, he could not find the goat anywhere. Eventually, he went to Vaikuntha[98] and saw the goat there. It was immensely strong and with the sacrificial stake tied around its neck, was causing havoc. The brave one caught it by the horns and subdued it. Though it was bleating a lot, he brought it before his master. The lord Kartika possessed the greatness to hold up the entire universe. He was the origin of great prosperity. When Guha saw the goat, he mounted it. O sage! Within one muhurta,[99] the goat circled around the entire universe and without being exhausted, returned to its original spot. The lord descended and sat down on his own seat. The goat was also there. Narada[100] spoke to him. Narada said, 'O divinity! O lord of devas! O ocean of compassion! I prostrate myself before you. Please give me my goat. Let me happily complete my sacrifice. Please be my friend. Kartika replied, 'O brahmana! This goat does not deserve to be killed. O Narada! Return to your own residence. Through my favours, your sacrifice will be completed in every possible way.' Hearing the words of the lord, the brahmana was pleased in his mind. Pronouncing excellent benedictions over him, he returned to his own abode."

Chapter 157-3.4(7) (Start of the War)

“Brahma said, "Hari and the other gods witnessed the lord's conduct. They were extremely pleased, and their minds were filled with trust. Permeated by Shiva's energy, they shouted and roared. Placing Kumara in front, they advanced, to kill Taraka. The immensely strong Taraka heard about the efforts the devas were making. With a large army, he advanced immediately, to fight against the gods. The devas saw Taraka advance with a large army. They were surprised at the size of the army but roared like lions. From the sky, a beautiful voice was immediately heard. This was urged by Shankara and addressed Hari and the other gods. The voice from the sky said, Place Kumara at the forefront and prepare yourselves. You will defeat the daityas in the battle. You will be victorious.' Hearing the voice from the sky, all the devas were filled with enthusiasm. They roared bravely and lost any sense of fear. With Kumara at the forefront, they were no longer agitated.

[98] Vishnu's residence. The word Vaikuntha is also applied for Vishnu himself.

[99] A muhurta is a period of 48 minutes. Here, it indicates a short span of time.

[100] The brahmana.

Desiring to fight, the gods went to the confluence of the Mahi with the ocean.[101] With the large army, Taraka quickly arrived at the spot where devas were and was surrounded by many gods. Battle drums were sounded, thundering like clouds at the time of dissolution. When that gathering took place, other harsh musical instruments were also played. Accompanying Taraka, daityas and asuras roared. As they roared, the earth trembled under their footsteps. Despite hearing the fierce roars, all the devas were without fear. They collectively prepared themselves, wishing to fight against Taraka. Indra of the devas made Kumara mount an elephant and placed him at the forefront. He was surrounded by a large army of gods, with the guardians of the worlds supporting him. Many battle drums, drums, kettledrums and trumpets were sounded. There were the sounds of veenas, flutes and mridangas, mixed with the singing of gandharvas.[102] Kumara retuned the mount of the elephant to the great Indra. Instead, he ascended a vimana[103] that was decorated with many jewels and was greatly extraordinary. Shankara's son was immensely illustrious and handsome and possessed every quality. He possessed supreme prosperity and was being fanned with large and extremely expensive whisks. The extremely resplendent umbrella given by Varuna,[104] dazzling with many kinds of jewels, was held aloft his head. It was as if the extremely radiant beams of an infinite number of moons dazzled above Kumara's head. All the devas, with Shakra leading the way, gathered around him, with their own respective armies. Those immensely strong ones wished to fight. In this way, desiring to fight, devas and daityas assembled on the ground. With those large armies, they devised their own separate vyuhas.[105] Contrasted against each other, the gods and the daityas were radiant. They wished to kill each other and were praised by bandis.[106] Both armies resembled forests and roared at each other. They caused terror to cowards and delight to the brave.""

"Intoxicated with their strength, the immensely valiant daityas and devas fought against each other. They were overwhelmed by rage. There was a tumultuous battle between devas and daityas. In a short while, the ground was strewn with hundreds and thousands of severed heads and torsos. Limbs were severed with large weapons. Revered heroes were slain. Extremely terrible strikes of the sword sliced off the arms of some. In the battle, the thighs of other revered heroes were sliced off. With clubs and bludgeons, all the limbs of some were smashed. Others were brought down, their hearts shattered with nooses and javelins. The backs of some were mangled with swords and goads. The heads of others were severed and fell down on the ground. Many headless torsos seemed to be dancing there. Mangled by weapons, hundreds of heads seemed to speak. Hundreds of rivers of blood started to flow.

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[101] The river Mahi flows into the ocean in Gujarat.

[102] Mridanga is a type of drum. The other drums mentioned are dundubhi (a large drum) and bheri (a kettledrum). Turya is a trumpet.

[103] The word vimana has several meanings and is also used for a palace or mansion. It is used for a divine vehicle that travels through the air. But the word is also used for any chariot or vehicle.

[104] The text uses the word 'Prachetas'. Here, it means Varuna.

[105] A vyuha is a battle-formation and there were many types of these.

[106] The sutas were charioteers, as well as raconteurs of tales. Magadhas were minstrels and bards. So were bandis. But magadhas seem to have also composed, while bandis sung the compositions of others.

Hundreds of bhutas, pretas and others assembled there.[107] Many male and female foxes fed on the flesh. There were vultures, hawks, wild crows and other birds that fed on flesh. Many such devoured the flesh of those who had fallen down. Meanwhile, the immensely strong one, known as Taraka, took a large army with him and advanced to fight against the gods. The devas saw that Taraka, invincible in battle, was advancing. Shakra and the others immediately advanced, wishing to fight. Those two large armies roared at each other. Duels and battles ensued between gods and asuras, crushing each other. Witnessing this, the brave rejoiced and eunuchs were filled with fear. Taraka, Diti's powerful son, fought against Shakra. Samhrada fought against Agni. Jambha fought against Yama himself. Nairrita [108] fought powerfully against the great lord who wields the noose.[109] Suvira fought against Vayu. Pavamana fought against the king of the guhyakas.[110] Ishana fought against Shambhu, accomplished in fighting. Shumbha fought against Shesha. The danava Kumbha fought against Chandra. In the battle, the immensely strong and extremely valiant Kumbara fought against Mihira.[111] He was accomplished in many modes of fighting and used supreme weapons to fight. In this way, there were great duels between gods and asuras. In the clash, they were firm in their resolution and fought using all their strength. The immensely strong daityas and immortals challenged each other. On sage! In the battle between devas and asuras, both sides were invincible. As they sought to be victorious, the battle between gods and danavas turned tumultuous. It brought pleasure to the brave and the spirited but caused fear among those who were otherwise. The ground turned extremely fearful, impossible to traverse. Many gods and asuras were destroyed and fell down. The ground was impassable and caused terror. However, it brought great happiness to those who were spirited.""

Chapter 158-3.4(8) (The Battle in General)

“Brahma said, "O son! I have thus described to you the soldiers of the devas and danavas. O Narada! Now hear about the greatness of that extremely tumultuous battle. The extremely tumultuous battle led to the destruction of devas and danavas. Taraka struck Indra of the devas with an excellent javelin. He lost his senses and fell down on the ground from the elephant. The lord of the gods, the wielder of vajra, was filled with great lassitude. O son! In that way, in the battle, all the guardians of the worlds were defeated in the battle by the asuras, who were superior in strength and extremely accomplished in fighting. As they fought against the daityas, other gods were also defeated. They could not withstand their energy and resorted to flight. Successful in their attempts, the asuras were victorious and roared like lions. They shouted in joy."

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[107] A preta is a ghost, the spirit of a dead person or simply something evil. A bhuta has the same meaning. Strictly speaking, there are differences between preta, bhuta and pishacha (one who lives on flesh). A preta is the spirit (not necessarily evil) of a dead person before the funeral rites have been performed. A bhuta (not necessarily evil again) is the spirit of a dead person who has had a violent death and for whom proper funeral rites have not been performed and may not even be performed. A pishacha (necessarily evil) is often created deliberately through evil powers. But the three terms are often used synonymously.

[108] Nirrita's son.

[109] Varuna,

[110] Kubera.

[111] Mihira is Surya.

"At that time, Virabhadra reached the spot, full of rage. He was with his brave ganas and advanced against Taraka, who prided himself on being brave. The powerful one, generated from Shiva's rage, kept the immortals at the rear. The leader of the ganas desired to fight and placed himself at the front. All the pramathas and daityas regarded this as a great festival. Addicted to the great clash, they fought against each other. Skilled in fighting, in that great battle, they killed each other with tridents, double-edged swords, nooses, swords, battle axes and spikes. Virabhadra struck Taraka severely with a trident. He fell down violently on the ground and for a while, lost his senses. However, the brave Taraka, supreme among daityas, quickly got his senses back and stood up. He used force to strike Virabhadra with a spear. In that way, the brave and immensely energetic Virabhadra swiftly struck Taraka with a fierce and sharp trident. In the battle, he also struck Virabhadra with a spear. Taraka was the lord of the sons of Diti. He was powerful and revered as a hero. In this way, the two of them fought against each other and struck each other. Skilled in knowledge about fighting, in that clash, both used many kinds of weapons. The duel that ensued between them was great. Everyone watched it. It was tumultuous and made the body hair stand up. Bheris, mridangas, patahas, anakas and gomukhas were sounded[112] by valiant warriors and could be heard, causing fright. Though they were armoured, as those two extremely angry ones fought against each other, they were mangled by the blows. They resembled Budha and Angaraka,[113] Witnessing the clash, you, loved by Shiva, went to Virabhadra and addressed him in these words. Narada said, 'O Virabhadra! O immensely valiant one! You are supreme among the leaders of ganas. Withdraw from the battle. The idea of you killing him does not appeal to us.' Hearing these words, Virabhadra, supreme among the ganas, was enraged. However, he joined his hands in salutation and spoke. Virabhadra replied, 'O noble sage! O immensely wise one! Listen to my great words. I will kill Taraka! Behold my valour now. Brave ones who bring their masters to the field of battle are sinners. They are eunuchs. Having gone to fight, they are destroyed. There is no doubt that they obtain a wicked destination in hell. Know that you should never speak of Virabhadra in this way. Even if their bodies are mangled with astras and shastras, those who continue to fight are praised in this world and in the next one. They obtain wonderful happiness. Let devas, with Hari at the forefront, hear my words. Without my lord, today, I will rid the earth of Taraka.' Saying this, Virabhadra thought of Shambhu in his mind. Wielding his trident and accompanied by pramathas, he fought against Taraka. There were many who rode bulls, wielding excellent tridents. Possessing three eyes, the immensely valiant one was radiant in the field of battle. Hundreds of fearless ganas created a great tumult. With Virabhadra leading from the front, they fought against the danavas. Asuras, who owed their lives to Tarakasura, also fought. They were immensely valiant and intoxicated with their prowess. They angrily crushed the ganas. On repeated occasions, there were great clashes between the excellent daityas and ganas. Eventually, ganas, who were skilled in the use of supreme weapons, were victorious and jubilant. The powerful ganas triumphed and the asuras withdrew from the field of battle. Distressed, their minds were intent on running away. On seeing that his own army had been destroyed, Tarakasura was filled with rage. He advanced, to slay the devas and ganas. He assumed ten thousand hands and mounted a speedy lion. In the field of battle, he brought down devas and ganas. Witnessing his deeds, Virabhadra, foremost among ganas, was filled with great rage.

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[112] Pataha is a kind of war-drum, anaka is a drum, gomukha is a musical instrument.

[113] Respectively, Mercury and Mars.

The immensely strong one remembered Shiva's lotus feet and seized an excellent trident, so that he might kill him. His energy blazed in all the directions and in the firmament.""

"Meanwhile, his master[114] stopped the clash. He wished to display a great wonder. Therefore, he restrained Virabahu and the others. Following his command, Virabhadra withdrew from the clash. The immensely brave Taraka, leader of the asuras, was still full of anger. The asura showered down arrows on the gods. He was accomplished in the use of many kinds of weapons and the gods were instantly scorched by him. Taraka, the protector of asuras, performed great deeds in this way. All the devas were incapable of taking on the supreme among strong ones. Achyuta saw that the devas were being killed and that they were agitated by fear. Angry, he quickly armoured himself and headed for the battle. He seized Sudarshana chakra, the Sharnga bowl[115] and weapons. In the battle, Bhagavan Hari advanced against the great daitya. There was a great clash between Hari and Achyuta. O sage! It was fierce and made the body hair stand up. Everyone watched it. Raising a mace, Hari struck the asura with force. However, using a trident, the immensely strong daitya severed it into two. Bhagavan, who saves devas from fear, became angry. Achyuta used arrows affixed to the Sharnga bow to pierce the leader of asuras. However, the daitya Taraka, the slayer of enemy heroes, was extremely valiant. Using his own sharp arrows, he quickly severed all those arrows. Tarakasura then quickly struck Murari[116] with a javelin. As a result of the blow, Hari fell down on the ground, senseless. In a short while, Achyuta stood up and seized his chakra, which blazed with flames. He roared loudly, like a lion. Using that, Hari struck the lord of the daityas. Distressed by that great blow, he fell down on the ground. However, Taraka, Indra among daityas and leader of asuras, got up again. With his own javelin, the exceedingly strong one swiftly severed the chakra. With that great javelin, he again struck Achyuta, loved by the immortals. The immensely valiant one struck him back with Nandaka.[117] In this way, the powerful Vishnu and the asura fought against each other in the field of battle again. O sage! Their strength was unabated.""

Chapter 159-3.4(9) (Taraka Fights against Shakra, Vishnu and Virabhadra)

“Brahma said, 'O lord of devas! O Guha! O lord! O son of Shankara and Parvati! It is not right that this futile battle between Vishnu and Tarakasura should take place. The powerful Taraka cannot be killed by Vishnu. I have bestowed such a boon on him. This is the truth. I am speaking the truth. O Parvati's son! Other than you, no one can kill that sinner. O great lord! Therefore, you should act in accordance with my words. O scorcher of enemies! Quickly armour yourself and kill the daitya. O son of Shankara and Shivaa! You have been born to kill him. O immensely brave one! The gods are distressed in the battle. Please save them. Protect them. O lord! You are not a child. Nor have you attained youth. What of that? You are the lord of everyone. Look at Shakra and Vishnu.

[114] This should mean Shiva but might mean Kartikeya.

[115] Vishnu's bow, made of horn.

[116] Vishnu (Krishna) killed a demon named Mura and is known as Murari (Mura's enemy).

[117] The name of Vishnu's (Krishna's) sword.

They are agitated and so are the gods and ganas. Kill the great daitya and make the three worlds happy. Earlier, this one defeated Indra and the guardians of the worlds. As a result of the strength of his austerities, the immensely valiant one chastised Vishnu too. The evil-souled asura has conquered all the three worlds. Now, in your presence, they are fighting again. Therefore, you should kill the evil being, Taraka. O Shankara's son! As a result of my boon, he cannot be killed by anyone else."""

'Brahma continued,[118] "Hearing my words, Kumara, Shankara's son, laughed. Pleased in his mind, he spoke words of assent. Shankara's son, the great lord, made up his mind to kill the asura. He descended from the vimana and proceeded on foot. As he rushed forward on foot, Kumara, Shiva's extremely brave son, was radiant. He held the extremely resplendent spear in his hand. It blazed, like a large and flaming meteor. He possessed six faces and was immeasurable. He was extremely fierce and without any agitation. On seeing Kumara advance, the daitya addressed the excellent gods. 'So, this is the one who will strike the enemy. I will fight with this brave one alone and with all the other brave ones who are with him. I will slay all the ganas, the guardians of the worlds, Hari and other leaders.' Saying this, the immensely strong one advanced, to fight against Kumara. Taraka seized the extremely wonderful javelin and addressed the best among devas. Taraka said, 'How is it that you have now placed Kumara in front of me? O devas! You are shameless, especially Shakra and the lord.[119] You have placed him in the front. This is against the path indicated in the Vedas.[120] Listen to what I have to say. I will specifically describe it. Vishnu is deceptive and tainted. In particular, he lacks a sense of discrimination. Resorting to deception, the sinner formerly bound Bali,[121] Earlier, he made efforts and used his crookedness to slice off the heads of the asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha.[122] He deviates from the path of the Vedas. When devas and asuras sat down to partake of amrita, he assumed the form of Mohini and created a division in the rows.[123] He deviates from the path of the Vedas. Becoming Rama, he killed a woman.[124] He killed Bali in a distrustful way and also killed the brahmana Vaishravana.[125] He destroyed the good policy laid down in the shruti texts. Though she committed no sin, the sinner abandoned his own wife.[126] For his own selfish objectives, he violated the path of the shruti texts there too. In the sixth avatara, he severed his own mother's head.

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[118] The narration to Narada.

[119] Meaning Vishnu.

[120] Since Kumara was still not an adult.

[121] A description of Vishnu's vamana (dwarf) incarnation, where the generous Bali gave everything away and was bound.

[122] In one version of the story, Madhu and Kaitabha were tricked by Vishnu and granted boons to Vishnu that they would kill each other.

[123] After the churning of the ocean, devas and asuras sat down in separate rows to have amrita. Assuming the form of Mohini, Vishnu distributed amrita to devas, but not to asuras.

[124] Tadaka.

[125] Rama killed Vali while Vali was fighting with Sugriva. Ravana (Vaishravana) was the son of Vishrava and therefore, a brahmana.

[126] Sita.

The evil-souled one insulted his own guru's son.[127] As Krishna, he tainted the family dharma of the wives of others. His own marriages were arranged in violation of the path of the shruti texts. Later, in his ninth incarnation, he criticized the path of the Vedas and established the nastika[128] point of view, contrary to the path of the Vedas. These are the sins he has committed, deviating from the path of the Vedas. Having been an avatara of adharma, how can be victorious in this battle? His elder brother, Shakra, is held to be a greater sinner.[129] For his own reasons, he has committed many sins. In particular, for his own selfish motives, he severed Diti's foetus.[130] He violated Goutama's wife.[131] He killed Vritra, the son of a brahmana.[132] He severed the head of the brahmana Vishvarupa, his guru's nephew. In this way, he destroyed the norms of the shruti texts. Hari and Shakra have repeatedly committed many sins. Their energy has been destroyed. Specifically, their valour has been destroyed. Depending on their strength, you cannot possibly be victorious in the battle. Why have you foolishly come here, ready to give up your own lives? These two do not know dharma. They have lascivious minds and pursue their selfish objectives. O immortals! Without dharma, everything that is attempted is unsuccessful. These two shameless ones have now placed a child in front of me. If I kill the child, they will be successful. Let the child go far away and save his life.' Having said this to Hari, he spoke to Virabhadra. 'Earlier, in Daksha's sacrifice, you killed many brahmanas. O unblemished one! Today, I will show you the fruits of those deeds.' Having said this, through the act of censure, he destroyed all his good merits."" "Taraka, supreme among those who fought, seized an extremely wonderful javelin and advanced towards the child. Placing himself ahead of Guha, Shakra used his vajra to strike Tarakasura powerfully. The blow with the vajra made Taraka, who had already sapped his strength through the act of censure, suffer. He fell down violently on the ground, unconscious. However, though he had fallen down, he arose in a short while. Enraged, he hurled a javelin at Purandara,[133] who was astride the elephant, and brought him down on the ground. When Purandara fell down, great sounds of lamentation arose. Depression entered the soldiers of the immortals. Hear from me about Taraka's deeds, causing misery. These were against dharma and brought about his own destruction. When Shakra fell down, he kicked him with his feet. He seized the vajra from his hand and using the vajra, struck him with great force. Seeing that Shakra was being abused in this way, the powerful Bhagavan Vishnu raised his chakra and struck Taraka with it. As a result of the blow with the chakra, he fell down on the ground.

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[127] The number and listing of Vishnu's avataras (incarnations) varies. The usual list of ten has Matysa (fish), Kurma (tortoise), Varaha (boar), Narasimha (half-man, half-lion), Vamana (dwarf), Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. The sixth incarnation is thus Parashurama. Commanded by his father, Jamadagni, Parashurama cut off his mother's (Renuka's) head. The insult to a guru's son probably refers to Parashurama fighting with Ganesha.

[128] Nastika should be translated as non-believer, rather than atheist, the non-belief applying to rites and rituals. This is a reference to Buddha.

[129] As sons of Kashyapa and Aditi, Vishnu was Indra's younger brother and is known as Upendra.

[130] Resulting in the birth of the 49 Maruts.

[131] Indra seduced Goutama's wife, Ahalya.

[132] Vritra was the son of Tvashtri. Vishvarupa, also known as Trishira, was Tvashtri's son and was beheaded by Indra. Trishira's mother was Yashodhara. Indra's guru must be Brihaspati, but Yashodhara isn't described as Brihaspati's sister.

[133] Destroyer of cities, Indra's name.

However, the Indra among daityas rose again and struck Vishnu with a javelin. As a result of the blow of the javelin, Achyuta fell down on the ground. There were shrieks of great lamentation from the immortals. However, in a short while, Vishnu stood up again. Meanwhile, at that very moment, Virabhadra presented himself before the asura. The powerful Virabhadra raised a trident. Strong and intolerant, he struck Taraka, the lord of the sons of Diti, with this. As a result of the blow with the trident, he fell down on the ground. Though he had fallen down, the immensely energetic Taraka stood up again. The immensely valiant one, the leader of all the asuras, was filled with rage. With an excellent javelin, he struck Virabhadra on the chest. Instantly, Virabhadra lost his senses and fell down on the ground. He had been determinedly struck on the chest with that excellent javelin, hurled in wrath. The ganas, devas, gandharvas, uragas and rakshasas repeatedly emitted screams of great lamentation. However, in a short while, the immensely energetic Virabhadra, the slayer of enemies, got up. He raised a trident that blazed like lightning. It was radiant in its blazing resplendence. Its rays illuminated the directions and there was a halo around it, resembling the sun, the moon and the fire. It was extremely radiant and caused fear amongst the brave. It blazed in radiance and was like the great destroyer, spoken of as Kala. The immensely strong Virabhadra raised the trident, wishing to kill the asura. But he was restrained by Kumara.""

Chapter 160-3.4(10) (Taraka's Death)

“Brahma said, "Kumara, the slayer of enemy heroes, restrained Virabhadra. He remembered Shiva's lotus feet and desired Taraka's death. The immensely strong and greatly energetic Kartikeya roared. He was angry and armoured, surrounded by a large army. All the devas and ganas raised sounds of 'Victory. Victory.' He was praised in eloquent words by all the divine rishis. There was a duel between Taraka and Kumara that was extremely difficult to tolerate. It was extremely terrible and caused terror among all beings. With spears in their hands, those two brave ones fought against each other. O sage! It was extremely wonderful, and everyone looked on. With great skill, they mangled each other's bodies with the spears. Like two extremely strong lions, they deceived each other. A spear clashed against another spear, and they used mantras like vaitalika, khecharaka and papanta.[134] Using such mantras, those two immensely valiant ones fought an extraordinary duel. They were immensely strong and valiant and used various methods against each other. Desiring to kill each other, they exhibited great force. Accomplished in fighting, in that clash, they struck each other with spears. They pierced each other on the head, throat, thighs, knees, waist, heart, chest and back. Desiring to kill each other, those two immensely strong ones fought. Accomplished in many techniques of fighting, they used heroic words to boast. All the devas, gandharvas and kinnaras[135] watched and asked each other, 'Who will be victorious in this encounter?' An invisible voice was heard from the sky, comforting the devas. 'Kumara will slay the asura, Taraka. None of the gods should grieve. They will be established in happiness. For your sake, Shankara himself is stationed there, in the form of his son.'

[134] Vaitalika mantras are used for magical purposes. Khecharaka means they rose up into the air to fight. Papanta means 'end to the sinner'.

[135] Equivalently, kimpurusha, a semi-divine species.

Hearing the auspicious words uttered from the sky, Kumara rejoiced. Surrounded by the pramathas, he desired to kill Taraka, the lord of daityas, and assured himself. The mighty-armed Kumara was filled with rage. Using the spear, he struck Tarakasura between the breasts with great force. Taraka, bull among daityas, ignored the blow. He angrily struck Kumara back with his own spear. Struck by the spear, Shankara's son lost his senses. However, within a muhurta, he regained his senses and was praised by the maharshis. He was like a maddened and intoxicated lion and desired to kill the asura. Powerfully, Kumara struck Taraka with the spear. In this way, Kumara and Taraka fought. They were both extremely angry and accomplished in fighting with spears. They had practiced exceedingly well and desired to defeat each other. They fought on foot. Spirited, they fought in colourful ways. They struck each other with several different kinds of blows. Those two extremely valiant ones used different kinds of modes and roared. All the devas, gandharvas and kinnaras watched. They were filled with great wonder and did not say anything. The wind did not blow, and the sun lost its radiance. The earth, with all its mountains, forests and groves, quaked. Meanwhile, the mountains, with Himalaya leading the way, arrived there. They suffered on account of their affection and hastened to seek Kumara. Shankara's son saw that all of them were scared and terrified. Girija's son spoke to the mountains, making them understand. Kumara said, 'O immensely fortunate ones! O mountains! Do not be dejected. Do not worry. While everyone looks on, I will slay this sinner now.' In this way, he comforted the mountains, the immortals and the ganas.""

"He prostrated himself[136] before Girija and Shambhu and picked up his radiant spear. Making up his mind to kill Taraka, the great lord grasped the spear in his hand. The immensely brave Kumara, Shambhu's son, was resplendent. Kumara struck Tarakasura, who had caused hardships to the worlds, with the spear. His excellent energy was like that of Shankara himself. With his limbs shattered, the asura fell down on the ground violently. The one known as Taraka was exceedingly brave and was the lord of large numbers of asuras. The immensely brave Taraka was thus killed by Kumara. O sage! While everyone looked on there, he was conveyed to his destruction. The exceedingly brave Taraka fell down in the battle. However, on seeing this, the brave one did not approach him and strike him again. The immensely strong and great daitya, known as Taraka, was killed in this way. The large number of devas conveyed many asuras to their destruction. In the battle, some were scared and joined their hands in salutation. The limbs of others were sliced and mangled. Thousands of daityas were killed. Some of them sought refuge and found a refuge in Kumara. Those daityas joined their hands in salutation and said, 'Save us. Please save us. Some were killed. Others fled. Distressed, while they were running away, they were harassed by immortals and ganas. Desiring to live, thousands entered Patala.[137] O lord among sages! In this way, all the soldiers of the daityas were destroyed. Out of fear for devas and ganas, not a single one remained there. All the thorns that resulted from these evil-souled ones were removed. All the devas, Shakra and the others, were happy. In this way, Kumara and all the gods were victorious. The three worlds were also seen to be full of joy.""

[136] Mentally.

[137] Patala is a generic term for the nether regions. But seven separate nether regions are also mentioned-Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala and Patala.

"Getting to know about Kartika's victory, full of delight, Shiva went there, along with his ganas and beloved. He placed his son Kumara, who was as radiant as the sun, on his lap. Full of affection, Shivaa fondled him with great joy. Himalaya arrived there, surrounded by his sons, relatives and followers. He praised Shambhu, Shivaa and Guha. Intensely satisfied, all the devas, ganas, sages, siddhas and charanas praised Shambhu, Girija and Shankara's son. The minor gods showered down a great downpour of flowers. The lords among gandharvas sang and large numbers of apsaras danced. Musical instruments were specially sounded. From the sky, sounds of 'Victory' were repeatedly heard. I and Achyuta were particularly pleased. We lovingly praised Shiva, Shivaa and Kumara. In front of Kumara, Hari, Indra, gods and sages lovingly performed nirajana. Repeatedly, there were the sounds of singing, the playing of musical instruments and recitals of the brahman. There were great festivities, with a great deal of chanting. O sage! Pleasing him with singing and the playing of musical instruments, all the devas and ganas joined their hands in salutation and praised Jagannatha.[138] Lauded by everyone, Bhagavan Rudra and Jagadamba[139] Bhavani returned to their own mountain, surrounded by all the ganas.""

Chapter 161-3.4(11) (Bana and Pralamba Are Killed)

“Brahma said, "O sage! Meanwhile, the mountain named B Krouncha arrived there. Having been oppressed by Bana, he sought refuge with Kumara. Unable to tolerate the lord's excellent energy, he[140] had fled from the field of battle. However, with an army numbering ten thousand crores, he was making Krouncha suffer. He[141] devotedly prostrated himself before Kumara's lotus feet. With words full of affection, he lovingly praised Guha. Krouncha said, 'O Kumara! O Skanda! O lord of devas! O destroyer of Tarakasura! I have sought refuge with you. Please save me. I am being oppressed by Banasura. He was over-shadowed in the great battle and ran away. O protector! O ocean of compassion! However, he came to me and harassed me. I am extremely miserable because of his oppression. I have run away and have come here to seek refuge with you. O lord of devas! O one born from the reeds! Please show me your compassion. O lord! Destroy the daitya known as Bana and make me happy. In particular, you are the one who destroys daityas. The devas have made you their emperor.' Hearing what Krouncha said, Skanda, who protected his devotees, was pleased. He remembered Shiva in his mind and took up his unmatched spear. Shankara's son hurled it in Bana's direction. With a great roar, it blazed in the firmament and the directions. In a mere instant, it reduced the asura and his forces to ashes. O sage! Having done this, the supreme spear returned to Guha's presence. The lord Kumara spoke to Krouncha, supreme among mountains. 'Without any fear, return to your own residence. The asura and his forces have been destroyed.' Hearing the lord's words, the king of mountains was delighted. He praised Guha, the slayer of his enemy, and returned to his own residence. O sage! Following the norms, Skanda lovingly established three lingams of Mahesha there, so that sins might be destroyed. They are known as Pratijneshvara, Kapaleshvara and Kumareshvara.

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[138] That is, Shiva.

[139] Mother of the universe.

[140] Bana.

[141] Krouncha.

These three yield every kind of success. Near a pillar set up to commemorate the victory, Guha also established another lingam to Sarveshvara, known as Stambheshvara.[142] Rejoicing, Vishnu and the other gods established a lingam to the lord of devas, wielder of the trident. The greatness of all these Shiva lingams is extraordinary. They yield everything that is desired. They bestow emancipation and increase devotion. All the gods, Vishnu leading the way, were pleased in their minds. Placing the foremost among mountains at the front, they happily went to see Guha.""

"Meanwhile, Shesha's son, known as Kumuda, came and sought refuge with Kumara. He was suffering at the hands of daityas. An asura known as Pralamba[143] had run away from the battle we were engaged in. This powerful follower of Taraka's was creating difficulties there. Shesha's son, Kumuda, was greatly tormented on his account. Having sought refuge with Kumara, he praised Girija's son. Kumuda said, 'O lord of devas! O son of the supreme Mahadeva! O great lord! I am being oppressed by Pralamba and have sought refuge with you. Please save me. I have sought refuge with you. I am being oppressed by the asura Pralamba. O Kumara! O Skanda! O lord of devas! O Taraka's enemy! O great lord! You are a friend to the afflicted. You are an ocean of compassion. You are affectionate towards those who lower themselves. You chastise the wicked. You are the refuge. You are the destination of the virtuous.' He was praised in this way by Kumuda, who asked him to do the killing. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he seized his spear. Girija's son hurled this in the direction of Pralamba. Thundering loudly, it blazed in the firmament and the directions. The spear instantly reduced him and his infinitely large army to ashes. Having done this, without any great effort, it returned to Guha's presence. Kumara spoke to Kumuda, the son of the naga. 'Without any fear, return to your own residence. The powerful asura has been destroyed.' Hearing Guha's words, the son of the lord of serpents praised Kumara. Bending down, he happily returned to Patala. O lord among sages! I have thus described Kumara's victory to you. I have spoken about the conduct of the one who performed supreme and extraordinary deeds and killed Taraka. This account is divine and destroys all sins. It gives men everything that they wish for. It is blessed and bestows fame, a long lifespan, objects of pleasure and emancipation on the virtuous. If men chant this greatly illustrious and divine account of Kumara's conduct, they obtain infinitely great good fortune and go to Shiva's world. If people are full of devotion and faith and listen to these deeds, they enjoy supreme happiness in this world. After this, they obtain divine emancipation.""

Chapter 162-3.4(12) (Kartika, Shiva and Shivaa)

“Brahma said, "Seeing that Taraka had been killed, devas, with Vishnu at the forefront, devotedly praised Shankara's son. All of them had pleasure written on their faces. The devas said, 'I prostrate myself before the one who is beneficial in form. I prostrate myself before the one who brings welfare to the universe. I prostrate myself before the one who is a friend to the universe. I prostrate myself before the one who creates the universe.

[142] The Stambheshvara lingam and temple are in Kavi Kamboi in Gujarat, near the Bay of Cambay. When the tide is high, this temple disappears inside the water. The other three lingams, probably under the water now, must also have been in the vicinity,

[143] Not to be confused with the Pralamba who was killed by Balarama.

I prostrate myself before the divinity who robbed Banasura of his life and killed that noble danava. I prostrate myself before the one who is pure in form, Pralamba's destroyer. I prostrate myself before Shankara's son. You are the creator of the universe. You are the preserver, and you are the destroyer. O one born from the one who purifies![144] Please show us your favours. This visible universe is your image. Be pleased. O Shambhu's son! O friend of the distressed! O one who protects devas! O lord! Always protect us. O lord who always gives life to devas! O ocean of compassion! Please show us your favours. O lord! You killed daitya Taraka and his followers. O supreme lord! You freed all the devas from fear and calamity.' In this way, devas, with Vishnu as the foremost, praised the lord Kumara. O sage! One by one, he granted them new boons. Girisha's son saw that the mountains were praising him. Extremely pleased, he replied, bestowing boons on them. Skanda said, 'All of you mountains will be worshipped by ascetics. You will be served by those who follow karma and jnana. You will assume special forms, the forms of Shambhu's lingam. O mountains! There is no doubt that what I have said will happen. Himalaya, supreme among mountains, is my maternal grandfather. From now on, the immensely fortunate one will bestow fruits on ascetics.' The devas responded, 'By bestowing these boons and by slaying Taraka, lord of asuras, you have made all of us, mobile and immobile entities, happy. Now, full of great joy, you should go to Kailasa, Girisha's abode. You should see your mother and father, Shivaa and Shambhu. Vishnu and all the other devas told him this. Taking his permission, they organized great festivities. Along with Kumara, they left for that mountain.""

"The lord Kumara proceeded towards Kailasa, Shankara's abode. There were excellent and auspicious signs and sounds of 'Victory'. Kumara mounted an extremely prosperous vimana. It was beautiful and ornamented everywhere, more radiant than everything else. O sage! With undivided attention and with great pleasure, I and Vishnu happily held whisks above Guha's head. Indra and all the other immortals served Guha. As is appropriate, they happily surrounded him from the four directions and advanced. Exclaiming 'Victory to Shambhu', they reached Shambhu's mountain. Amidst the sounds of auspicious chants, they happily entered. Vishnu and the others saw Shiva and Shivaa. They immediately clasped their hands, lowered their heads and devotedly prostrated themselves before Shankara. Humble in his atman, Kumara got down from the vimana. He happily prostrated himself before Shambhu and Shivaa, who were seated on a throne. They saw their son Kumara, whom they loved more than their own lives. O Narada! The divine couple, Shiva and Shivaa, was delighted. The great lord raised him up and placed him on his lap. Rejoicing, he inhaled the fragrance of his head and affectionately touched him with his hand. Full of great joy and great love, Shambhu kissed the face of Kumara, the great lord who was Taraka's enemy. Shivaa also got up and placed him on her lap. With great love, she kissed his head and lotus face. O Narada! The couple's great joy increased. O son! The couple, Shiva and Shivaa, were following the practices of the world. There were many kinds of great festivities in Shiva's abode. In every direction, there were sounds of 'Victory' and 'I bow down before you'. O sage! All the large number of gods, Vishnu and the others, and the sages happily prostrated themselves before Shambhu and praised Shiva. The devas said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who bestows fearlessness on devotees! I bow down before you. O one who shows compassion! I repeatedly prostrate myself before you. O Mahadeva! Your great pastimes are extraordinary.

[144] Agni.

O lord! I do not know your avahana.[145] Nor do I know your wonderful progress. O one who holds up waters of Ganga! O support! O one who has the gunas in his atman! I bow down before the lord of the gods. I prostrate myself before Shankara. I bow down. You have the bull on your banner. You are Mahesha. You are lord of the ganas. I prostrate myself before you. O Sarveshvara! O divinity! O lord of the three worlds! I prostrate myself before you. O protector! You are the destroyer of the universe and everything in it. I bow down. I prostrate myself before you. O lord of the devas! You are the creator, and you are the one who preserves. You are the lord of the three gunas. You are eternal. You are devoid of attachment. You are Paresha. You are Shiva, the paramatman. You are beyond the visible universe.[146] You are pure. You are supreme and without decay. You have the staff in your hand. You are Kala.[147] You have the noose in your hand. I prostrate myself before you. In the mantras of the Vedas, you are the foremost. O one with one hundred tongues! I prostrate myself before you. O Parameshvara! Everything, the past, the present and the future, the mobile and the immobile, has emerged from your body. O lord! Please save us always. O Bhagavan! O lord! Be pleased. O Parameshvara! We always seek refuge with you. O one who is blue in the throat! O Rudra! O one who takes the form of svaha![148] I prostrate myself before you. O one without form! O one with form! O one with the universe as form! I prostrate myself before you. O Shiva! O Nilakantha![149] O one who smears his limbs with ashes from funeral pyres! You are eternal. The lock of hair on your head is blue. O one with the handsome throat! I bow down before you. I prostrate myself before you. All those who possess bodies prostrate themselves before you. All those who control themselves prostrate themselves before you. O Mahadeva! O Sharva! Your feet are worshipped by everyone. Among all devas, you are Brahma. Among all Rudras, you are Nilalohita.[150] Among all beings, you are the atman. In samkhya,[151] you are spoken of as Purusha. Among mountains, you are Sumeru. Among nakshatras, you are Chandra. [152] Among rishis, you are Vasishtha. Among devas, you are Vasava. 1[53] Among all the Vedas, you are Aumkara.[154] O Maheshvara! Be the saviour. For the welfare of the worlds, you are the one who nourishes beings. O Maheshvara! O immensely fortunate one! O witness of good and bad deeds! O lord of devas! We act in accordance with your words. Please make us flourish. You have thousands of crores of forms. You have hundreds of crores of forms. O lord of devas! We are incapable of reaching your limits. We prostrate ourselves before you.' All the devas, Vishnu and the others, presented themselves before the lord and praised him in this way.

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[145] Avahana is invoking the deity's presence.

[146] Prapancha, the word used in the text, is the visible universe.

[147] Time, destiny, the destroyer.

[148] Svaha is the exclamation made when oblations are offered to gods. Svadha is the exclamation made when oblations are offered to ancestors.

[149] Blue in the throat, Shiva.

[150] Shiva's name, the blue-red one.

[151] The six schools of darshana or philosophy are nyaya, vaisheshika, samkhya, yoga, mimamsa and Vedanta. Vedanta means the end of the Vedas and refers to the Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad texts. The samkhya school originated with the sage Kapila.

[152] The nakshatras aren't quite stars. They can be constellations too. There are 27 nakshatras and all of them are married to Chandra (the moon). These shlokas are reminiscent of Chapter 10 of Bhagavat Gita.

[153] Indra.

[154] The sound of OUM.

Placing Skanda at their head, they repeatedly prostrated themselves before him. Sarveshvara Shiva, the one who rules himself, heard the praise uttered by devas. He was greatly pleased. Full of compassion, he smiled. Pleased in his mind, he spoke to Vishnu and the other excellent gods. Paramesha Shankara is a friend to the distressed. He is the destination of the virtuous. Shiva said, 'O Hari! O Vidhatri! O devas! Listen lovingly to my words. I save the virtuous in every possible way. I am an ocean of compassion and will save the devas. I slay the wicked. I am the lord of the three worlds. I am Shankara. I am affectionate towards my devotees. I am the creator, preserver and destroyer of everything. But I am without transformations. O excellent devas! Whenever you face miseries, you should worship me, and you will obtain happiness.' Spoken to in this way, Vishnu and the other devas and lords among sages were filled with joy. They prostrated themselves before Shiva, Shivaa and Kumara. O sage! Delighted, they returned to their own respective residences, chanting about the charming fame of Shiva, Shivaa and Shankara's son. Along with Shivaa, the ganas and Kumara, Parameshvara Shiva happily resided on that mountain, full of joy. O sage! I have thus told you everything about Kumara's conduct. This is divine and brings delight to Shiva's devotees. What else do you wish to hear?""

Chapter 163-3.4(13) (Ganesha's Origin)

“Suta said, 'Hearing the wonderful and extraordinary account Narada was extremely happy. Delighted, he of Taraka, Narad questioned Vidhatri.'

"Narada said, "O lord of devas! O lord of subjects! O reservoir of jnana about Shiva! I have heard about Kartika's account, and it is superior to amrita. Now I wish to hear about Ganesha's excellent account. His birth and conduct are divine. Amongst all things that are auspicious, it is the most auspicious.""

Suta continued, 'Hearing the words of Narada, the great sage, Brahma was pleased in his mind. He remembered Shiva and replied.'

"Brahma replied, "Because of differences in kalpas, the story of Ganesha's birth is spoken about in different ways,[155] He was born from the lord. Shani took a look at him, and his head got severed.[156] Thereafter, he got an elephant's head. I will now speak about Ganesha's origin during the kalpa known as Shveta.[157] In this instance, driven by compassion, Shiva severed his head. O sage! This does not mean that one should harbour doubts about Shankara being the cause of prosperity. He is the lord of everything. Shambhu is both nirguna and saguna. In his pastimes, he creates and preserves the entire universe.

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[135] Kalpa is the duration of Brahma's day. At the end of Brahma's day, when it is Brahma's night, there is a secondary cycle of dissolution/destruction. When night is over, the secondary cycle of creation begins afresh. Therefore, in every kalpa, Ganesha (and others) are born afresh. Hence, there are different stories about birth.

[156] Shani or Shanaihshchara (the slow moving one) is Saturn. As a result of Shani's evil glance, Ganesha's head fell off and was replaced by an elephant's head.

[157] Brahma lives for one hundred years. For the present Brahma, 50 years have passed, and we are in the 51st year. The first day in Brahma's 51st year is known as Shveta kalpa or Shveta Varaha kalpa, since Vishnu saved the earth in the form of a white (shveta) boar (varaha).

O best among sages! He also destroys it. Listen lovingly. After the marriage, Shiva went to Kailasa. After some time had passed, Ganapati was born.[158] On one occasion, Parvati's friends, Jaya and Vijaya, got together and made a serious suggestion. 'All Rudra's ganas, Nandi and Bhringi as the foremost, are devoted to carrying out Shiva's commands, despite the fact that they belong to us too. The pramathas are numerous, but they do not belong to us. All of them stand at the doors, intent on carrying out Shankara's commands. Even though they should be our own too, their inclinations towards us are not the same. O unblemished one! You should create one who is only meant for us.' Devi Parvati was addressed by her friends in these beautiful words. Considering these to be beneficial words, she decided to act accordingly.""

"On one occasion, when Parvati was cleaning herself, Sadashiva rebuked Nandi and entered the house.[159] On seeing Shankara arrive at the wrong time, Jagadambika [160] got up from her bath. The beautiful lady was ashamed. As a result of this incident, Devi enthusiastically thought that those words were beneficial and would bring happiness. Parvati Shivaa is the supreme form of maya. She is Parameshvari. [161] At that time, in her mind, she thought the following. 'I must have a servant who will be auspicious and successful in carrying out his tasks. He must not deviate the least bit from my instructions.' Thinking in this way, Devi used the dirt from her body to create a being. He possessed all the auspicious signs. There was no blemish in any of his limbs. All his limbs were handsome. He was large and possessed every kind of excellent radiance. He possessed immense strength and valour. She gave him many kinds of garments and ornaments and pronounced many excellent benedictions over him. She told the being, 'You are my son. You are mine. There is no one else I can call my own.' Thus addressed, he bowed down and spoke to Shivaa. Ganesha asked, 'What task must I accomplish now? I must act in accordance with your instructions.' Addressed in this way, Shivaa replied to her son. Shivaa said, 'O son! Listen to my words. From now on, you will be my doorkeeper. You are my son. You are mine. There is no one else who is my own. O son! Without my permission, no one should be allowed to enter inside the house. O son! As a result of obstinacy, no one should do that. I have told you the truth.' O sage! Having said this, she gave him an exceedingly firm staff. Seeing his handsome form, she was filled with joy. Showing her compassion towards her son, full of great joy, she embraced him and kissed his face. She O son! The gana, established Ganadhipa at her door, with the staff in his hand. Devi's son, stood at the gate. The immensely valiant one stood with the staff in his hand, wishing to ensure Parvati's welfare. Shivaa established Ganesha, her own son, at the door. Along with her friends, she went off to have a bath. At this time, Shiva arrived at the door. O tiger among sages! He was accomplished in many kinds of pastimes and was curious. Not knowing that this was Shiva Isha, Ganadhipa told him, O divinity! Without my mother's command, you cannot enter now. My mother is having a bath. Where are you trying to go now?' Saying this, he picked up the staff, so as to prevent him. Seeing this, Shiva said, 'Who is this foolish-minded one who is trying to prevent me? O one with wicked intelligence! You do not know me.

[158] In general, Ganapati means any lord (pati) of ganas. But the word is usually used for the specific deity known as Ganapati or Ganesha. Ganadhipa has the same meaning as Ganapati.

[159] Nandi told Shiva that Parvati was having her bath.

[160] The same as Jagadamba.

[161] Feminine of Parameshvara.

I am Shiva and no one else.' At this, Maheshvara was beaten by Ganesha with the staff. The one who engages in many kinds of pastimes was enraged and replied to his son. Shiva said, 'You are foolish. You do not know that I am Shiva, Girija's husband. O child! I am going to my own house. Why are you restraining me?' O brahmana! Saying this, when Mahesha sought to enter, the leader of ganas became angry and beat him again with the staff. At this, Shiva was enraged and instructed his own ganas. 'Who is this and what is he doing here? O ganas! Go and look.' After saying this, Shiva remained outside the house, angry. The lord engages in many kinds of pastimes and was engaged in following the customary practices of the world.""

Chapter 164-3.4(14) (Quarrel with the Ganas)

“Brahma said, "The ganas were filled with rage. Following Shiva's instructions, they went. who was acting as a doorkeeper then. Shiva's ganas asked, nt. They asked Girija's son, Who are you? Where have you come from? What do you wish to do? If you wish to remain alive, go far away from here now.' Hearing these words, Girija's son, the doorkeeper, had no fear. With the staff in his hand, he replied. Ganesha said, Where have you come from? You are ugly. Go far away. Why are you standing here, opposing me?' Hearing these words, all Shiva's extremely valiant ganas laughed and spoke to each other. When they had finished laughing and speaking to each other, with anger in their minds, Shiva's attendants replied to Ganesha, the doorkeeper. Shiva's ganas said, 'Listen. We are Shiva's excellent ganas and doorkeepers. Following our lord Shankara's command, we have come here to counter you. Since we think of you as a gana, you should not be killed.

Otherwise, we would have killed you. You should yourself go far away. Why do you wish for death?" Despite being told this, Ganesha, Girija's son, had no fear. He did not leave the gate and censured Shiva's ganas. All Shiva's ganas heard what he had said. Having heard, they went to Shiva and told him what had happened and what he had said. Maheshvara was engaged in the ordinary pastimes of beings of the world. O sage! He spoke, reprimanding his own ganas. Maheshvara said, 'Why has he acted in this way? Why has he spoken like an enemy? What is this evil-minded person doing? He certainly desires his own death. Throw this new doorkeeper far away. Why are you standing here, like eunuchs? Why have you told me what happened?' Their master, Shambhu, was engaged in his wonderful pastimes. Hearing what he had said, they returned again and spoke to the doorkeeper. Shiva's ganas said, 'O doorkeeper! Why are you standing here? Why have you been stationed here? If you ignore us, how can you wish to remain alive? All of us are established as doorkeepers. What are you saying? A jackal has seized a lion's seat[162] and desires to be well. O foolish one! You will roar only as long as you have not experienced the valour of the ganas. When you experience it, you will fall down." Addressed in this way, he became extremely angry. He seized the ganas with his hands and struck them, even as they were abusing him. Shivaa's son, Ganeshvara, [163] was without any fear. He spoke to Shankara's immensely valiant ganas and rebuked them. Shivaa's son said, 'Go.

[162] Simhasana, throne.

[163] The same as Ganesha.

Go far away. Otherwise, I will show you my own fierce valour. Leave this place. Otherwise, you will be laughed at.' Hearing the words spoken by Girija's son, Shankara's ganas spoke to each other. Shiva's ganas said, 'What should be done? Where should we go? What should we do? We have followed the boundaries drawn by respect. Otherwise, he wouldn't have spoken to us in this way. Shiva was standing at a distance of one krosha away from Kailasa.[164] Shambhu's ganas went and told him this. Shiva, fierce in his intelligence, laughed. Parameshvara, the wielder of the trident, spoke to his own ganas, who prided themselves on being brave. Shiva said, 'O ganas! You are thought of as eunuchs. You are not brave, though you pride yourselves on being brave. You are not worthy of standing before me and speaking. If you only rebuke him, he will again speak in a similar way. If any one of you possesses any powers, go and strike him. What is the need to speak a lot? He should be driven far away from here. O lord among sages! Rebuked in this way by the divinity, Mahesha, all the excellent ganas returned and spoke to him. Shiva's ganas said, 'O child! Why are you speaking as if you are strong? If you do not desire to die, go far away from here.' Hearing the determined words of those who followed Shiva's commands, Shiva's son miserably wondered, 'What will I do?'"""

"At this time, Devi heard the quarrel at the gate. She asked her friend to go and see. The friend went there and understood what was going on, even though she witnessed it only for an instant. O sage! She went to Shivaa's presence and told her everything that had happened. In front of Girija, the friend reported everything. The friend said, 'O Maheshvari! The one who is our gana is stationed at the door. Shankara's brave ganas are rebuking him determinedly. When you are not free, how can Shiva and all his ganas stubbornly enter your house? This is not good for you. This one has acted well. He has not permitted anyone to enter, despite being subjected to grief, rebuke and other things. In addition, they are arguing with each other. Since they are arguing, they cannot be allowed to enter easily. O loved one! Since they are arguing, let them defeat him. All of them should be allowed to enter only after they are victorious, not otherwise. When this one is rebuked, it is like all of us being rebuked. O Devi! O fortunate one! Therefore, you should not give up your excellent pride. O Sati! Shiva always treats you like a monkey.[165] What will he do now? What will he do with his ahamkara? [166] He has to be favourably inclined towards us.' Since Sati was obedient to Shiva's wishes, she stood there for a while. Thereafter, full of pride, Parvati spoke in rage. Shivaa said, 'He did not wait for some time. Why was he so stubborn? What should be done now? Will I behave humbly? What is going to happen, is bound to happen. There is no way it can be countered.' Having spoken to her friend in this way, she lovingly sent her again. She went there and told Ganesha, Girija's son, what he had been affectionately told. The friend said, 'O fortunate one! You have acted properly. They should not enter forcibly. In front of you, who are these ganas? Can they defeat someone like you? Whether it is something that should be done, or whether it is something that should be done, you should carry out your duty. If you are defeated, there will certainly be no reason for enmity.' Hearing his mother's words, Ganeshvara was filled with great joy. There was a great enhancement in his strength. He armoured his flanks, tied a headdress and slapped his thighs and calves.

[164] One krosha is 2 miles. However, the definition of krosha was not standardized.

[165] The word used is markata, which has several meanings, the obvious one being monkey. However, in a secondary and more relevant meaning, the sense is of Shiva treating Parvati as an object of sexual gratification.

[166] Ego, pride.

Without any fear, he happily addressed all those ganas. Ganesha said, 'I am Girija's son, and you are Shiva's ganas. Both sides have obtained equality. Therefore, carry out your duty. You are doorkeepers, Why should I not be a doorkeeper? You are standing here. I am also certainly standing here. Therefore, it is your duty to carry out Shiva's command. Now, it is my duty to carry out Shivaa's command. O brave ones! I have decided that I must truly carry out the task assigned to me. Therefore, all of you ganas should attentively listen to my words. Whether rashly, or humbly, you will not enter this house again.' Addressed by Ganesha in this way, all the ganas were ashamed. They went to Shiva's presence, prostrated themselves in front of him and stood there. Standing there, they told him everything about this extraordinary account. They clasped their hands, lowered their shoulders and stood in front of him, praising him. Shankara heard everything that his own ganas reported. Following the customary practices of the world, he addressed them in the following words. Shankara said, 'O all you ganas! Listen. It may not be proper to have a fight. All of you are mine and he is Gouri's gana. However, if I act in humility, it may be said that Shambhu is always subservient to his wife. O ganas! In that case, I will be reprimanded in this world and obtain ill fame. The policy of countering an act with another is superior. But that gana is a child and alone. What valour will he show? O ganas! In this world, you are known as those who are skilled in fighting. How can those on my side give up a fight and be regarded as inferior? How can a wife act with force, especially in front of her husband? Girija must certainly reap the fruits of what she has done. O all you brave ones! Therefore, listen affectionately to my words. Whatever happens, in every possible way, this battle must be fought.' O brahmana! Shankara is accomplished in many kinds of pastimes. O best among sages! Saying this, he exhibited the ways of the world and stopped.""

Chapter 165-3.4(15) (Description of Ganesha's Battle)

“Brahma said, "When the lord addressed them in this way, Bthey became extremely firm in their determination. They armoured themselves and went to Shiva's house. Ganesha also saw that the excellent ganas were arriving, advancing for the fight. He stood there and spoke to them. Ganesha said, 'O ganas! All of you obey Shiva's commands. Come. I am alone and a child, but I will carry out Shivaa's command. Let Devi Parvati behold her son's strength. Let Shiva also behold the strength of his own ganas. The fight between those on Bhavani's side and those on Shiva's side will be between a child and those who are strong. All of you have fought earlier and are skilled in fighting. I am a child. I have not fought earlier, but I shall do so now. If you are shamed, that will reflect on both Girija and Shiva. That is also the case if I suffer the reverse. If I am shamed, that will reflect on both Girija and Shiva. O lords among ganas! Knowing this, it is our duty to fight. You will look towards your master, and I will look towards my mother. What kind of a battle will it be? Whatever is destined to happen, is certain to happen. No one in the three worlds is capable of countering that.' When they were rebuked in this way, they held many kinds of weapons and rushed forward. Their hands were decorated with staffs. They gnashed their teeth and roared repeatedly. 'Behold. Look.' Saying this, the ganas advanced.""

"Nandi arrived first. He caught hold of one leg and tugged at it. Bhringi arrived next and caught hold of another one of Ganesha's legs. Before they could pull at his legs, Ganesha struck those two with his hands and got his own legs free. Devi's brave son then seized a large club. Ganapati stood at the gate and uprooted all of them with this. Some had their

hands shattered. Others got it on their backs. The heads of some were shattered and the foreheads of others. Some got it on their knees, others on their shoulders. All those who were in front were struck on their chests. Some fell down on the ground. Others fled in different directions. Some had their legs mangled. Others fled to Sharva's presence. Among them, there was no one who faced him from the front in the battle. It was like deer fleeing in the ten directions when they see a lion. In that way, thousands of ganas ran away. Having defeated them, he stood at the gate again. He was terrible to behold, like Kala at the end of a kalpa. That is the way he appeared to everyone, like one who would bring about dissolution. At that time, urged by Narada, all the devas arrived, Rama's lord and the lords among the gods. Desiring Shiva's welfare, all of them spoke to him. They stood in front of Shiva, bowed down and told him, 'O lord! Command us. You are the supreme brahman. You are Sarvesha. All of us are your servants. Parameshvara is always the creator, preserver and destroyer. You are nirguna. But in your own pastimes, you assume the forms of sattva, rajas and tamas. O lord! Please tell us, what is this pastime that you have devised now?' O best among sages! Maheshvara heard their words and saw that the ganas had been routed. He told them everything."" "O supreme among sages! After this, Sarveshvara Shankara laughed, Girija's lord spoke to Brahma. Shiva said, 'O Brahma! Listen. A solitary child is standing at my gate. He is immensely strong and has a staff in his hand. He is preventing anyone from entering the house. He strikes exceedingly well and has driven away my attendants. He has used his strength to defeat all my ganas. O Brahma! You should go there and seek to pacify this extremely strong one. O Brahma! O Vidhatri! You should do everything to chastise him.' I was deluded by lack of jnana. O son! Hearing the lord's words and not understanding, I went near him, along with all the excellent rishis. Seeing that I was advancing, the immensely strong Ganesha became full of anger. He approached and pulled at my beard. 'O divinity! Forgive me. Please pardon me. I have not come here to fight. I am a brahmana. Please show me your favours. I have come to establish peace, not to harm you.' O brahmana! Ganesha was extremely valiant. Though a child, his valour was unlike that of a child. While I was saying this, he seized a club. Seeing that the immensely strong Ganesha had seized a club, I started to quickly run away. Others were struck by the club and exclaimed, 'Go. Leave. Some fell down themselves. Others were brought down by him. Some instantly fled to Shiva's presence and told Shiva in detail what had happened. He saw them in that state and heard what had happened. Hara is accomplished in pastimes, and he was filled with infinite rage. He instructed Indra and other devas, ganas, the one with six faces [167] being the foremost, and all the bhutas, pretas and pishachas. All of them raised the appropriate weapons and approached from all the directions. Following Shiva's command, they wished to kill Ganesha. Each one approached and with force, released the specific weapon towards Ganesha. There were great sounds of lamentation in the three worlds, among mobile and immobile objects. All the people in the three worlds were filled with great anxiety. 'Brahma's lifespan is not yet over, but the universe is being destroyed at the wrong time. This is certainly because it is subject to Shiva's wishes.' All of them arrived there, including the one with the six faces. However, the weapons of all the devas were rendered futile and they were filled with great wonder."

[167] Kartikeya.

"At that time, Devi Jagadamba, who awakens understanding, got to know everything and was filled with infinite rage. O lord among sages! Devi created two Shaktis [168] there. She created them so that they might help her own gana. O great sage! One of them assumed a terrible form and stood there. She resembled a dark mountain, and she opened her mouth, which was like a cave. The other one assumed the form of lightning and possessed many arms. She was a terrible Mahadevi, [169] who ensured chastisement for the wicked. The gods and ganas hurled many weapons. She quickly caught them in her mouth and hurled them back at them. None of the weapons of the devas could be seen anywhere around the club. In this way, those two performed this extremely wonderful deed. A solitary child agitated that impassable army, just as in ancient times, the supreme mountain had agitated the ocean.[170] Alone, he struck Shakra and the other immortals. Shankara's ganas became anxious. All of them sighed repeatedly and gathered together. Suffering from those blows, they spoke to each other. The devas and ganas said, 'What should be done? Where should we go? The ten directions cannot be discerned. Both on the left and on the right, he is whirling the club around.' At that time, the best among apsaras arrived there, with flowers and sandalwood paste in their hands. You and all the rishis also arrived, extremely eager to witness the fight. O supreme among sages! All of them arrived to witness the fight. All the routes in the firmament were filled by them. Witnessing the clash, they were filled with great wonder. None of them had witnessed such an excellent battle before. The earth, with all its oceans, trembled. Because of the battle, mountains fell down. All the planets and nakshatras were agitated and the firmament was whirled around. All the devas and all the ganas fled. The valiant one with the six faces was the only one who did not run away and remained there. The immensely brave one remained in front and tried to restrain everyone. The two Shaktis repulsed everyone in the battle. All the weapons hurled by the immortals and the ganas were countered. All those who remained went to Shiva's presence. All the devas and all the ganas fled. All of them assembled and repeatedly bowed down before Shiva. They quickly uttered the following words. 'O lord! Who is this supreme gana? We have heard of many battles fought earlier and there are many being fought now. But we have never heard of, or seen, anything like this. O divinity! Let us reflect on this a little. Otherwise, no victory is possible. O lord! There is no doubt that you are the one who protects the entire universe.' Hearing these words, Rudra was filled with great rage. Angered, he went there, along with his own ganas. The large army of devas, along with Vishnu wielding the chakra, followed Shiva with great enthusiasm. Meanwhile, you, Narada, devotedly prostrated yourself before Maheshvara. Joining your hands in salutation, you spoke to the lord of devas. Narada said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O lord! Listen to my words. You alone are the lord who goes everywhere. You engage in many kinds of pastimes. You have indulged in this great pastime, whereby the pride of the ganas has been destroyed. O Shankara! Bestowing great strength on him, you have destroyed the pride of devas. O protector! You have shown the world your own wonderful strength. O Shambhu! You rule yourself. You have destroyed everyone's pride. O Isha! O one who is affectionate towards devotees! Please do not indulge in pastimes anymore. Please let your own ganas and the noble gods regain their great respect. O one who bestows the state of the brahman! Please do not let him play any longer. Kill him.' O Narada! After saying this, you vanished from the spot.""

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[168] Female divinities.

[169] Great Devi.

[170] Mount Meru was used to churn the ocean for amrita.

Chapter 166-3.4(16) (Severing of Ganesha's Head)

“Brahma said, "Mahesha shows favours towards his B devotees. O Narada! Hearing the words you spoke, he wished to fight with the child. He summoned Vishnu and consulted him. With a great army and the immortals, the three-eyed divinity faced him. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, devas fought along with him. Since Shiva cast a favourable glance towards them, they were filled with great strength and great enthusiasm. Hari, extremely brave and valiant, fought along with him. The brave and devoted one was Shiva's form and he used great and divine weapons to fight. Using the staff, Ganadhipa struck the bulls among immortals. The Shaktis had bestowed great strength on the valiant one and he fought violently against Hari. O sage! As a result of his strength, all the immortals and ganas were embarrassed. Struck by him with the staff, Vishnu retreated from the battle. O sage! With the soldiers, Shiva fought with him for a long time. Seeing how terrible he was, he was filled with great wonder. 'He has to be killed through deceit. He cannot be killed through any other means.' Resolving in this way, he remained in the midst of the soldiers. The divinity Shiva is nirguna. But he had assumed a form with gunas. Seeing this, Vishnu and all the other devas returned to the battle. So did Mahesha's ganas, who were filled with great delight. All of them happily got together and were full of enthusiasm. Shakti's brave son traversed the path followed by heroes. He first worshipped[171] Vishnu, who bestows every kind of happiness, with his staff. 'O lord! I will delude him. He can then be killed by you. [172] He is full of tamas and impossible to assail. He cannot be killed otherwise.' Vishnu is accomplished in creating delusion. Having made up his mind thus, he consulted with Shambhu. Obtaining Shiva's permission, he acted in that way. O sage! Seeing Hari in such a state, the two Shaktis handed over their strength to Ganesha and disappeared. When the two Shaktis vanished, Ganesha became stronger. He hurled his club at Vishnu, who was himself stationed there. He[173] remembered Shiva Mahesha, his lord, who is affectionate towards his devotees. In this way, he somehow made efforts to dodge the progress of the weapon. Shankara saw the solitary one's face and arrived there. Enraged and desiring to fight, he seized his own trident. Shivaa's brave and extremely strong son saw Shambhu Maheshvara advancing to kill him, with the trident in his hand. Remembering his mother's lotus feet, he struck him in the hand with a spear. The immensely valiant Ganesha's strength had increased because of Shivaa and the two Shaktis. The trident fell down from the hand of Shiva, the paramatman. Seeing this, the one who bestows prosperity, seized his Pinaka bow. Ganeshvara used his club to make it fall down on the ground. Five of his [174] hands were struck, and he seized the trident with five other hands. 'I have indeed suffered a great misery now. What will happen to the ganas?' Following the norms of the world, he spoke in this way.""

"Meanwhile, using the club, the brave Ganeshvara struck the devas and the ganas. Because of what had been given by the Shaktis, he was strong. Struck by the club, the devas and the ganas fled in the ten directions. In the battle, no one was capable of standing up to his blows. Looking at Ganesha, Vishnu said, 'He is blessed.

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[171] That is, struck.

[172] This is Vishnu speaking to Shiva.

173 Vishnu.

[174] Shiva's.

He is immensely strong and immensely valiant. He is immensely brave and loves to fight. I have seen many devas and many danavas, daityas, yakshas, gandharvas and rakshasas. None of them is equal to this leader of ganas. He possesses all the energy, beauty, prowess and qualities in the three worlds.' As Vishnu was saying this, Shakti's son, Ganeshvara, whirled the club around and hurled it towards him. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, Hari seized his chakra. The chakra swiftly shattered the club into fragments. Ganesha hurled the fragmented club towards Hari. The bird Garuda seized this and rendered it unsuccessful. In this way, for a long time, the immensely valiant Vishnu and Ganesha fought against each other. Shakti's supremely brave son remembered Shiva. [175] The powerful one again picked up his unmatched staff and struck Vishnu with this. Unable to withstand the blow, he fell down on the ground. However, he got up quickly and fought with Shivaa's son again. At this time, the wielder of the trident arrived there. Having arrived, he used the trident to sever his head. O Narada! The head of the leader of the ganas was severed in this way. The army of ganas and the army of devas stood immobile. O Narada! You went to Devi and told her everything. 'O proud one! Listen. Do not cast aside your pride now.' O Narada! You love to create dissension. Saying this, you vanished from the spot. Though you are not subject to deviations, you are a sage who always follows what is in Shambhu's mind.""

Chapter 167-3.4(17) (Ganesha Gets His Life Back)

“Narada said “OBrahma! O immensely wise one! Please tell me everything that happened. When she heard this, what did Mahadevi do? I wish to hear the truth about this.""

"Brahma replied, "O tiger among sages! Listen. I will certainly tell you now about what Jagadamba did and what happened thereafter. The ganas played on mridangas and patahas. When the leader of ganas was killed, they organized great festivities. Having severed his head, Shiva grieved. O lord among sages! Devi Girija was filled with rage. 'What will I do? Where will I go? Alas! A great misery has befallen me. How will I dispel my sorrow? I am extremely miserable now. My son has now been killed by all the devas and ganas. I will destroy all of them and bring about dissolution.' Lamenting in this way and enraged, the Maheshvari of all the worlds instantly created hundreds and thousands of Shaktis. Created in this way, they prostrated themselves before Jagadamba Shivaa. Blazing, they said, 'O mother! Please command us.' Hearing this, Prakriti, Shambhu's Shakti, was overwhelmed with rage. O lord among sages! Mahamaya [176] replied to all of them. Devi said, 'O Shaktis! O Devis! Following my command, your task is to create pralaya. [177] There is no need to think about this. O friends! Use your force to devour devas, rishis, yakshas and rakshasas, irrespective of whether they belong to our side or the other side.' Hearing her words, all the Shaktis were filled with rage. They got ready to destroy the devas and others. Just as a fire consumes grass, the Shaktis prepared to destroy everyone-leaders of ganas, Vishnu, Brahma, Shankara, Indra, the king of the yakshas,[178] Skanda, Surya and everyone else.

[175] The text says Shiva but should probably read Shivaa.

[176] The great maya, Devi.

[177] Dissolution, destruction.

[178] Kubera.

All of them were incessantly destroyed, wherever they happened to be. The Shaktis were everywhere-Karali, Kubjaka, Khanja and Lambashirsha[179] There were many such. They seized devas with their hands and flung them into their mouths. Hara, Brahma, Hari, Indra and all the other devas, ganas and rishis saw this. "What will Devi do now? The destruction is occurring at the wrong time.' In this way, they were filled with doubt and lost hopes of remaining alive. All of them got together and wondered about what should be done. They reflected in this way and quickly spoke to each other. 'We will be safe only when Devi Girija is pleased, not otherwise, even if we make one crore attempts. Following the usual practices of the world, Shiva was also miserable, though he is the one who is accomplished in many kinds of pastimes and deludes everyone. The hips of all the devas were broken. When Shivaa herself was enraged, no one was interested in standing before her. O sage! No one was capable of standing before Girija-those on her side, those on the side of others, devas, danavas, ganas, guardians of the worlds, yakshas, kinnaras, Vishnu, Brahma, even the lord Shankara. Her blazing energy consumed everything, in every direction. Seeing this, all of them were terrified, and maintained their distance from her.""

"O sage! At this time, Narada, divine in insight, arrived there, to ensure the happiness of devas and ganas. He prostrated himself before me, Brahma, Bhava Shankara and Vishnu and said, 'We should collectively think about what needs to be done.' All the devas consulted with you, the great-souled one. They asked you, 'How can our grief be pacified?' You replied, 'As long as Devi Girija does not show her compassion, there can be no happiness. There is no need to think about this.' With you, the rishis went to Shivaa's presence. All of them sought to placate her and pacify Shivaa's rage. They repeatedly prostrated themselves and praised her with many hymns. Urged by devas and ganas, all of them sought to cheerfully placate her. The divine rishis said, 'O Jagadamba! I prostrate myself before you. O Shivaa! I prostrate myself before you. O Chandika! I prostrate myself before you. O Kalyani![180] I prostrate myself before you. You alone are the primordial Shakti. You are always the cause behind creation. You alone are the one who protects. Indeed, you are the Shakti who brings about dissolution. O Deveshi! Be pleased. Please bring about peace. I prostrate myself before you. O Devi! As a result of your rage, the three worlds are suffering.' Devi was thus supremely praised by you and the rishis. Shivaa cast an angry glance towards them and did not say anything in reply. All the rishis prostrated themselves before her lotus feet. Cupping their hands in salutation, devotedly and slowly, they spoke to Shivaa again. The rishis said, 'O Devi! You should forgive. A destruction is imminent. O Ambika! [181] Look. Your husband is standing there. See. Who are we, Vishnu, Brahma and the other devas? We are your subjects. We are standing before you, hands cupped in salutation. O Parameshvari! You should pardon all our crimes. All of us are distressed. O Shivaa! Please ensure our peace now.' Extremely miserable and agitated, all the rishis said this. Cupping their hands in salutation, they stood before Chandika.""

"Hearing their words, Chandika was pleased. Her mind deluged with compassion, she replied to the rishis. Devi said, 'There will be no destruction if my son comes back to life. He must be revered in your midst.

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[179] Respectively, cruel, hump-backed, lame and tall-headed.

[180] One who brings good fortune.

[181] Mother

If you arrange it so that he becomes the controller of everything, there will be peace in the worlds. There will be no happiness otherwise.' Hearing what she said, you and all the rishis went to the devas and told them everything that had transpired. Hearing this, all of them reported it to Shankara. Distressed, Shakra and the other gods joined their hands in salutation and bent down. Shiva heard what the gods had said and replied, 'It is necessary to ensure the welfare of all the worlds. Proceed in the northern direction. Bring the head of the first being you meet and fix it to this body. Following Shiva's commands, all of them did exactly that. They brought the headless torso and washed it in the proper way. Having worshipped it, they proceeded in a northern direction. They first met an elephant with a single tusk. Determinedly, they brought this and fixed it. All the devas prostrated themselves before Shiva, Vishnu and Vidhatri and spoke the following words. 'We have done what you asked us to. One should next finish whatever else remains to be done.' The attendants were radiant. The gods were happy. Having spoken, they waited to hear what Shiva had to say. Brahma, Vishnu and the gods prostrated themselves before the divinity Isha Shiva, their lord, devoid of gunas. 'O great-souled one! All of us have been born from your energy. With the chanting of mantras from the Vedas, let that energy enter into him.' They chanted the mantras. Also chanting the mantras over some excellent water, all of them remembered Shiva and sprinkled the water over the body. As soon as he was touched by the water, as a result of Shiva's will, the child quickly got up, as if he had been asleep. He was extremely fortunate and handsome. His face was red, with the head of an elephant. He was extremely radiant and had a pleasant face. His form was enchanting. O lord among sages! Seeing that the child, Shiva's son, was alive again, everyone present there was delighted. Their miseries were gone. Full of delight, all of them showed him to Devi. Seeing that her son was alive, Devi became very happy."

Chapter 168-3.4(18) (Ganesha Obtains the Title of Ganadhipa)

"Narada said, "O lord of subjects! Seeing that Girija's son was alive, Devi was happy. What happened after that? Out of compassion, please tell me that now.""

"Brahma replied, "O lord among sages! Seeing that Girija's son was alive, Devi was happy. Listen to what occurred thereafter. I will now tell you about those great festivities. O sage! Shivaa's son came back to life. He was without agitation, and he was not malformed. The devas performed Gajanana's[182] abhisheka as the lord of ganas. Beholding her son, Devi Shivaa was filled with joy. Delighted, she clasped the child with both her hands and embraced him. Full of joy, Ambika happily gave her own son, Ganesha, many kinds of garments and diverse types of ornaments. Devi honoured him by bestowing many kinds of siddhis on him. She touched him with a hand that removes every kind of distress. Having honoured her son, Devi Shankari [183] kissed his face. She granted him boons and cheerfully said, 'Since birth, you have faced miseries. From now on, you will be blessed and become successful in everything. From now on, you will be worshipped before all the other immortals.

[182] Gajanana, one with the head of an elephant, became Ganesha's name.

[183] Shankari is Devi's name, interpreted as Shankara's wife, or independently as the one who bestows welfare.

You will never suffer from any unhappiness.Sindura [184] can be seen on your face now. Therefore, men will always worship you with sindura. If a person follows the norms and worships you with flowers, sandalwood, auspicious fragrances, excellent naivedya,[185] proper nirajana, betel leaves, donations, circumambulation and proper namaskara, [186] there is no doubt that he will be successful in all his objectives . There is no doubt that many kinds of impediments will be destroyed for him.' Devi Maheshvari spoke to her own son in this way. She honoured him again with many kinds of objects. O brahmana! Through Girija's compassion, at that every instant, all became well with devas, and especially with the ganas. At that time, Vasava and the other devas happily and devotedly praised Shiva. They placated him and brought him before Shivaa. After bringing Girisha, for the welfare of the three worlds, they placed the child on Maheshani's lap. Shiva also placed his lotus hand on his head and told the devas, 'This is another of my sons.' Ganesha got up and prostrated himself before Shiva. He also prostrated himself before Parvati, me and Vishnu. Standing before Narada and all the other rishis, he said, 'My crime should be pardoned. Such pride only characterizes humans. The three divinities, I, Shankara and Vishnu, spoke simultaneously. Happily, we bestowed excellent boons on him. 'O best among gods! Just as the three worlds worship us, Gananatha [187] will be worshipped by everyone. We have originated from Prakriti. He too has been born from Prakriti and should be worshipped. Ganesha will remove impediments and bestow all the fruits that are desired. Men will worship him first and worship us subsequently. If he is not worshipped, all of us will remain without worship. O devas! If others are worshipped without he being worshipped, the fruits will be destroyed. There is no need to reflect on this.' After saying this, we lovingly gave Ganesha many articles. Shiva honoured him first. Vishnu honoured him after that. I, Brahma, honoured him. Parvati honoured him. Full of great joy, all the devas and ganas worshipped him. To satisfy Shiva, everyone got together, Brahma, Vishnu, Hara and the others, and declared that Ganesha would control everyone.""

'O Ganeshvara! You have been born on chaturthi in krishna paksha in the month of Bhadra, at the auspicious time when the moon rises. [189] Your form manifested itself from Girija's excellent mind at the time of the first yama. [190] Therefore, your excellent vow will cheerfully be observed when that day commences, on that specific tithi. If that vow is specifically observed, that will be excellent and will ensure every kind of success. That vow must again be observed on the chaturthi that comes at the end of the year, [191]

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[184] Vermilion.

[185] Offering of food.

[186] The act of bowing down.

[187] Leader of ganas, Ganesha.

[188] Remover of obstacles.

[189] Chaturthi is the fourth lunar day (tithi), krishna paksha is the dark lunar fortnight, during which the moon wanes, and Bhadra/Bhadrapada is August/September.

[190] Yama is a period of three hours, and a period of 24 hours is divided into eight yamas. Day consists of four yamas from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. and night consists of four yamas from 6.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. As a refinement, the first yama is often counted from the time of sunrise. However, in the text, the first yama is counted from the time of moonrise.

[191] The end of the year needs clarification. This probably means chaturthi in the month of Magha (January/February).

That is my command and yours. If a person desires unmatched happiness in this world, he must follow the norms and devotedly worship you in many kinds of ways on chaturthi. On the beautiful chaturthi in the month of Margashirsha, [192] one must bathe in the morning and entrust the task of observing the vow to brahmanas. Worship will be carried out with durva grass, and the rules of fasting must be observed. When it is the first prahara[193] of the night, a man must bathe and worship. Using metal, coral, white arka [194] flowers or clay, an image must be constructed. A man must instate it and controlling himself, worship this, using many kinds of fragrances, divine sandalwood paste and flowers. The durva that is used must be one vitasti long. [195] The blades must not be broken and must be without roots. One hundred and one such blades will be used. The instated image must be worshipped with twenty-one blades. The leader of ganas will be worshipped with incense, lamps and different kinds of naivedya. After worshipping with betel-leaves and other articles of arghya, [196] one must prostrate oneself and praise. The young moon must be worshipped next. After this, the devotee must worship brahmanas and cheerfully feed them sweetmeats. What he himself eats must not be sweet and must not have salt. After this, controlling himself in every possible way, he must perform visarjana. [197] He must then remember Ganesha. This is the way the auspicious vow is completed. A man must observe the vow for the duration of a year. For the sake of completing the vow, he will then perform the concluding rites. Following my command, twelve brahmanas must be fed. A pot must be placed, and your image worshipped. Following the norms of the Vedas, a lotus with eight petals will be drawn on the ground. Without any deceit, those who possess wealth must offer oblations there. In front of the image, following the norms, two women and two young brahmanas [198] must be affectionately worshipped and fed. One should stay awake during the night and worship again in the morning. Visarjana will be performed, with a desire for return, [199] Benedictions and pronouncements of peace should be accepted from a child. To complete the vow, a handful of flowers will be offered. After completing namaskara, the other tasks will be carried out. If a person observes the vow in this way, he obtains the desired fruits. O Ganesha! According to capacity, if a person constantly worships you with devotion, he obtains all the fruits that he desires. Ganeshvara must be worshipped with sindura, sandalwood paste, paddy, ketaki flowers [200] and many kinds of upachara. [201] If a man worships devotedly, with many kinds of upachara, he will always obtain success and obstacles in this world will be removed. These vows must be practiced by everyone,

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[192] November/December.

[193] Prahara and yama have the same meaning.

[194] The sun plant.

[195] A vitasti is equal to 12 finger lengths and is taken to be the distance between an extended thumb and an extended little finger.

[196] Arghya means gift.

[197] Avahana is the act of invoking the deity. Visarjana is the opposite act of releasing the deity.

[198] Those in the stage of brahmacharya (stage of being a student).

[199] A desire that Ganesha should return again.

[200] Pandarnus odoratissimus.

[201] It is recommended that 16 objects (shodasha upachara) should be used in any worship. The list varies but will typically include some combination of five amritas (ghee, milk, curd, molasses honey), five objects from a cow, five jewels, five kinds of leaves, seven kinds of clay, seven kinds of grain, seven types of minerals, eight types of gifts (padya, achamaniya, seat, garments, flowers and so on), five upacharas (fragrances, flowers, incense, lamp, naivedya) and so on. In some specific instances, 64 kinds of upachara are mentioned.

especially women and kings who desire to ensure their ascendance. Such a person will certainly obtain what he wishes for. Therefore, you will be served by anyone who wishes for anything. Shiva said this to the great-souled Ganesha."" "O sage! All devas, excellent rishis and all Shambhu's favourite ganas agreed to this. Ganadhisha [202] was worshipped in many supreme ways. All the ganas prostrated themselves before Ganeshvara. Affectionately, they honoured and worshipped with many kinds of objects. O lord among sages! Even if I use all my four mouths, how can I possibly describe the joy Girija felt? The drums of devas were sounded and large numbers of apsaras danced. The foremost gandharvas sang and flowers were showered down. When Ganadhisha was instated, the world became safe. There were great festivities, and every kind of misery was destroyed. O Narada! In particular, Shiva and Shivaa rejoiced. Everything was extremely auspicious, and this brought happiness. Large numbers of devas, rishis and ganas had assembled there, following Shiva's command. They repeatedly praised Shivaa and Ganesha. They also praised Shiva, exclaiming, 'What a battle!' After Devi Girija lost her rage, Shiva and Girija conducted themselves as they had earlier. To ensure the welfare of the worlds, they indulged in many acts of joy. Though he finds delight within his own atman, he always does this for the devotees. Devotedly serving Shiva and Shivaa, Vishnu and I, Brahma, took Shiva's leave and returned to our own respective abodes. O lord among sages! You, Narada, sang about the fame of Shiva and Shivaa. Taking your leave of Shiva and Shivaa, you returned to your own residence. I have thus told you everything about the fame of Shiva and Shivaa and about the fame of Vighnesha, [203] You had lovingly asked me about this. This is an auspicious account. If a person controls himself properly and listens to this, he obtains everything auspicious, and his abode becomes auspicious. A person without a son, obtains a son. A person without riches, obtains riches. A person seeking a wife, obtains a wife. A person seeking offspring, obtains offspring. A diseased person is healed. An unfortunate person obtains good fortune. A wife who has lost her son and riches will get her husband back. A person overwhelmed by grief will no longer be miserable. There is no doubt about this. If this account about Ganesha is kept in a house, auspiciousness will always be present there. There is no doubt about this. If a person controls himself and listens to this at the time of travelling, or on a sacred day, through the favours of Shri Ganesha, he obtains everything that he wishes for.""

Chapter 169-3.4(19) (Prelude to Ganesha's Marriage)

“Narada said, "O father! I have properly heard the excellent account about Ganesha's divine conduct, adorned with his great valour. O father! O lord of gods! What happened after that? Please tell me. Shiva and Shivaa's pervasive fame brings great joy.""

'Brahma replied, "O best among sages! Full of compassion, you have asked a good question. O supreme among rishis! I will tell you. Lend me your ears and listen. O Indra among brahmanas! Shiva and Shivaa had two supreme sons. They kept looking at their pastimes and their love was great. The father and the mother nurtured them, and their happiness increased. They were happy and delighted with everything that the two sons did.

[202] Lord of ganas, Ganesha.

[203] Lord of obstacles, Ganesha.

O lord among sages! Full of devotion, the two sons served their mother and father. The love of the parents towards the one with the six faces and Ganesha constantly increased, just as the moon waxes during shukla paksha.

"O divine rishi! On one occasion, full of love, Shiva and Shivaa conversed in private and discussed matters properly. Shiva and Shivaa said, 'Both our sons are ready for marriage. How do we arrange that auspicious marriages take place for both our sons? We love the one with the six faces and we love Ganesha too. In their joy, they anxiously pondered this. O sage! On getting to know about the command of their father and mother, the two sons were also eager and wished to get married. 'I will marry. I will.' Repeatedly saying this, the two of them constantly quarrelled with each other. The couple, the rulers of the worlds, heard their words. Following the customary practices of the world, they were filled with great wonder. 'What should be done? How will marriages be organized for these two?' Having reasoned this out, they arrived at a wonderful decision. On one occasion, they summoned the two sons. The mother and the father spoke to the two sons. Shiva and Shivaa said, 'We have already decided on a rule, and it will bring happiness to both of you. O sons! Listen attentively. We will tell you what has been decided. For us, both of you are equal. There are no sons who are as special and virtuous as you. Therefore, we have decided on a pledge that will bring welfare to both of you. Whoever circles around the earth and returns first is the one whose auspicious marriage will be celebrated first.' Hearing their words, the extremely powerful one who had been born from the reeds quickly left the house, so that he might circle around the earth. Supreme in his intelligence, the leader of the ganas remained there. Using his excellent intelligence, he repeatedly thought about the matter in his mind. 'What shall I do? Where will I go? I am incapable of travelling around the earth. At best, I will only be able to travel a distance of two kroshas. Even if I travel around the earth, what happiness will I earn for myself?' Ganesha thought in this way. Listen to what he did next. He bathed properly and returned to his own home. He spoke to his father and mother. Ganesha said, 'To worship you, I have placed two seats here. O father and mother! Please be seated here and fulfil my desire.' Hearing his words, Parvati and Parameshvara sat down on those seats and accepted the worship. He worshipped and repeatedly circumambulated them. He did this seven times and prostrated himself before them seven times. O son! Ganesha, an ocean of intelligence, joined his hands in salutation and praised his parents several times, overwhelmed by love. Ganesha said, 'O father! O mother! Listen to my supreme words. You must quickly arrange for my beautiful marriage now.' Hearing the words of the great-souled Ganesha, an ocean of great intelligence, his parents spoke to him. Shiva and Shivaa said, 'You must properly circle around the earth, with its forests. Kumara has left. You must also leave and return first.' Hearing the words of his parents, Shiva and Shivaa, Ganapati instantly replied. Though he was angered, he restrained his speech. Ganesha said, 'O mother! O father! You are wise and you are held to be forms of dharma. O excellent ones! Listen to my words, which are laced with the right dharma. I have repeatedly circled around the earth, and I have done this seven times. Why are my parents speaking to me in this way then?" His parents were following the customary practices of the world. They are the ones who engage in great pastimes. Hearing his words, his parents replied. The parents said, 'When have you circled the extensive earth, with its seven dvipas[204] and extremely large forests, extending up to the limits of the ocean?'

[204] The earth is divided into seven dvipas or continents.

O sage! Hearing the words of Shivaa and Shankara, their son Ganesha, the abode of great intelligence, replied to them in these words. Ganesha said, 'I have worshipped you, Shivaa and Shankara. According to my intelligence, I have circled the earth, with its limits set by the oceans. Aren't these the words of the Vedas and the sacred texts, which are stores of dharma? Isn't that the truth? Or is there some other truth? "If a person worships his parents and circumambulates them, he certainly obtains the fruits of circling around the earth. If a person leaves his parents at home and goes on a visit to the tirthas, it is said that he incurs a sin that is equal to the sin of killing them. The great tirtha for a son is the lotus feet of his parents. Other tirthas are far away, even if one visits them and returns. This tirtha is nearby and is easy to reach. It is a means of achieving dharma. For a son and a wife, the extremely beautiful tirtha is at home." These are words constantly stated in the Vedas and sacred texts. Are you going to act so that those words are falsified? In that event, you will become the forms of falsehood. There is no doubt that the words of the Vedas will also be rendered false. Therefore, you must quickly arrange for my auspicious marriage. Otherwise, please state that the words of the Vedas and the sacred texts are false. Out of the two options, please reflect and decide on the best course of action. O father and mother! You are the forms of dharma, and you must make efforts to decide.' Parvati's son, Ganesha, who possessed excellent intelligence, said this and stopped. He possessed great jnana and was supreme among intelligent ones. The couple, the lords of the world, Parvati and Shankara, heard his words and was greatly amazed. Shiva and Shivaa praised their son, who possessed discriminating intelligence, a lot. They spoke affectionately to the one who had stated the truth. Shiva and Shivaa said, 'O son! Your intelligence is sparkling. You are great-souled, and you have spoken the truth. It cannot but be otherwise. When a hardship presents itself, if a person possesses special intelligence, his hardships are destroyed, just as darkness is destroyed when it sees the sun. A person who possesses intelligence possesses strength. How can there be strength in a person who lacks intelligence? This is just like an insolent lion being brought down in a well by a hare. [205] The Vedas, the sacred texts and the Puranas speak about what a child must do. You have done all that and have observed dharma. You have acted properly and everyone in the world will follow this. We honour this and will not act against it now.' They said this and comforted Ganesha, the ocean of intelligence. They made up their minds to make excellent arrangements for his marriage.""

Chapter 170-3.4(20) (Ganesha's Marriage)

"Brahma said' “Meanwhile, getting to know about their preparations, Prajapati Vishvarupa reflected about this. His mind was pleased, and he was happy. Vishvarupa, lord of subjects, had two daughters who were divine in form. They were known as Siddhi and Buddhi.[206] They were auspicious and beautiful in all their limbs. Happy, the lord Shankara and Girija arranged for their marriages with Ganesha and there were great festivities.

[205] This is a famous aphorism (subhashitam)-buddhiryasya balam tasya nirbuddhestu kuto balam. The story is from Panchatantra and concerns an intelligent hare, trying to protect its life, and a proud lion. The hare pointed out the lion's reflection in the water in a well and persuaded the lion that this was another lion it ought to fight with. The lion jumped into the well and killed itself.

[206] Respectively, personified forms of success and intelligence.

All the devas were satisfied and arrived for the marriage, since this was the wish of Shiva and Girija. Vishvakarma made arrangements gements for the marriage.The rishis and devas were filled with great happiness. O sage! Along with the two of them, Ganesha obtained unthinkable happiness. One is incapable of describing it. After some time, the great-souled Ganesha had two divine sons through his two wives. Siddhi. Ganesha's wife, had a son named Kshema, [207] Buddhi had an extremely handsome son, Labha,[208] In this way, Ganeshvara enjoyed unthinkable happiness."" "Meanwhile, the second son returned after circling the earth. Narada went and met the great-souled one in his house. He said, 'I am telling you the truth. This is not a falsehood and is not driven by deceit or jealousy. What your parents, Shivaa and Shankara, have done to you, is not something that any other person in the world would have done. I am telling you the truth. They wished to make efforts so that you would leave on this wicked task of circumambulating. Meanwhile, they arranged for the supreme and extremely beautiful marriage of Ganesha. Ganesha got married and is happy, having obtained two wives. They are great and excellent, jewels among maidens, the daughters of Vishvarupa, lord of subjects. Through his wives, who are auspicious in their limbs, he has obtained two sons. Siddhi gave birth to Kshema and Buddhi gave birth to Labha. Everything has brought him happiness. Through his two wives, Ganesha has obtained two auspicious sons. This was the view of your mother and father, that he should enjoy incessant happiness. You have circled the earth, with its oceans and forests. O son! This is the consequence of your not knowing about their deception. O son! Think about this. If parents start to deceive, specifically, if one's own lords start to deceive, what will others do? What your parents have done towards you is an improper deed. Think about it. To my mind, this has not been a beneficial act. If a mother feeds poison to her son, if a father sells his son, if a king steals all possessions, what can one say and to whom? O son! An intelligent person who desires peace should not look at the face of a person who has committed such a greatly harmful act. This has been stated in all the sacred texts, those on good policy, smriti texts and shruti texts. I have reported this to you now. Do what you wish.' Following the wishes in Maheshvara's mind, you, Narada, addressed Kumara in these words and were silent.""

"With the fire of anger raging, Skanda bowed down before his father. Despite being restrained by his parents, he went to Mount Krouncha. 'Why are you leaving when you are being restrained by us?' Despite being restrained in this way, he refused and left. He replied, 'O father and mother! Since I have been deceived and since you have not acted affectionately towards me, I will not remain here even for an instant. O sage! Saying this, he went there. He is there even now. As soon as people see him, he destroys all their sins. O devarshi! Ever since that day, Shiva's son has been established as a bachelor.[209] Under that name, he is famous in the three worlds and brings auspiciousness to the worlds. He is sacred and destroys all sins, bestowing the supreme state of brahmacharya.

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[207] Meaning welfare, happiness, prosperity.

[208] Meaning gain, advantage.

[209] The word Kumara means unmarried/virgin.

In the month of Kartika, [210] devas, rishis, lords among sages and the tirthas go there to see Kumara. In the month of Kartika, at the time of conjunction of Krittika nakshatra, if a person sees the lord, all his sins are burnt down, and he obtains the desired fruits. As a result of separation from Skanda, Uma was overwhelmed by grief. Distressed, she told her husband, 'O lord! Along with me, go there.' For her pleasure, in one of his portions, Shambhu went to that mountain. He became the jyotirlingam known as Mallikarjuna, which brings happiness,[211] Even today, along with Shivaa, Shiva is seen there. He satisfies all the wishes of his devotees and is the destination of the virtuous. On getting to know that Shiva and Shivaa had arrived there, Kumara lost all interest and was eager to go elsewhere. However, devas and sages prayed to him. Therefore, Kartika moved three yojanas[212] away and remains there. O Narada! On every parva day, [213] overwhelmed by love for their son, Shiva and Shivaa go there, to see Kumara. On the day of amavasya, Shambhu himself goes there. On the day of purnima, Parvati certainly goes there. O lord among sages! I have told you whatever you had asked me about. I have described the supreme accounts of Kartika and Ganesha. If an intelligent man listens to this, he is freed from all sins. He always obtains all the beautiful objects that he desires. If a person reads this, has it read, hears it, or has it heard, he obtains everything that he desires. There is no need to think about this. A brahmana obtains the radiance of the brahman, a kshatriya is victorious, a vaishya obtains wealth and prosperity and a shudra is treated like a virtuous person. A diseased person is freed from disease and a person who is afraid is freed from fear. A man is no longer oppressed by obstructions created by bhutas and pretas. This account is without blemish and enhances fame and happiness. It leads to a long lifespan, heaven, sons and grandsons and other unmatched things. It grants emancipation and bestows supreme jnana about Shiva. It causes pleasure to Shiva and Shivaa and increases devotion towards Shiva. It should always be heard by devotees who desire emancipation. It bestows a destination of identification with Shiva. It is auspicious and is permeated by Sadashiva.""

This ends Kumara Khanda.

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[210] October/November.

[211] A Jyotirlingam is a natural lingam that blazes in energy and radiance. Every Jyotirlingam is a Svayambhu lingam, but every Svayambhu lingam is not a Jyotirlingam. There are twelve Jyotirlingams and the standard list is Somanatha, Mallikarjuna, Mahakaleshvara, Omkareshvara, Kedaranatha, Bhimshankara, Vishveshvara, Vaidyanatha, Rameshvara, Tryambakeshvara, Nageshvara and Ghrishneshvara. According to a shloka that occurs later in the Shiva Purana, Mallikarjuna is in Shrishaila/Srisailam, in Andhra Pradesh. Since Shiva is worshipped with mallika (flowers), he is known as Mallikarjuna here. Alternatively, Mallika stands for Parvati and Arjuna for Shiva.

[212] A yojana is a measure of distance, between eight and nine miles.

[213] An especially auspicious day, such as the day of the new moon (amavasya) or the day of the full moon (purnima).

Yuddha Khanda

Chapter 171-3.5(1) (Description of Tripura)

“Narada said, "I have heard an excellent account that bestows bliss, about Shambhu becoming a householder and about Ganesha and Skanda. Full of affection, please tell me now another excellent account, about how Shankara Rudra sported and killed the ones who were crooked. How did Bhagavan burn down the cities of the enemies of the gods? How did the valiant one use a single arrow to bring down all three simultaneously? Please tell me all this about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crescent. The lord sports in eternal maya and brings pleasure to devas and rishis.""

'Brahma replied, "When asked by Vyasa in ancient times, this is exactly what the excellent rishi, Sanatkumara, told him. I will tell you about this.""

"Sanatkumara said, 'O Vyasa! O immensely wise one! Hear about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his head and about how the destroyer of the universe burnt down Tripura with a single arrow. Shiva's son, Skanda, killed Tarakasura. O lord among sages! His three sons, the daityas, were tormented. The eldest was Tarakaksha. [214] The one in the middle was Vidyunmali, Kamalaksha was the youngest. All of them were always equal in strength. They were in control of their senses, well-prepared, restrained, truthful in speech, firm in resolution and immensely valiant. But they hated devas, They went to a cave in Mount Meru and performed great and wonderful austerities. All three gave up the extremely agreeable objects of enjoyment. They no longer resided amidst all kinds of desire. They gave up the sounds of singing and the playing of musical instruments. They gave up festivities. Taraka's three sons tormented themselves. In the summer, they conquered the sun's radiance. Instead, they lit fires in all the directions and stood in the middle. To accomplish their objective, they lovingly offered oblations into the fire. As a result of the great heat, all of them lost their senses and fell down. They were not scared during the monsoon. Instead, they bore the showers on their heads. Food originates during the autumn, and they were hungry. But they conquered their hunger and thirst and were steadfast. They gave the beautiful, delicate, wholesome and excellent roots and fruits and superior and inferior drinks to those who were hungry. They were like immoveable rocks. Those great-souled ones remained thus, without any support in the four directions. [215] In late autumn, they resorted to great fortitude and remained on the mountain. [216] When their bodies were covered in ice, they wore wet garments. In the winter, they covered their bodies with thin silk garments and remained submerged in water.

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[214] There is a typo in the text, which reads Tarakakhya, which actually means Taraka. We have corrected it.

[215] Without walls and roofs to cover them.

[216] We have translated hemanta as late autumn and shishira as winter. The cold season is hemanta, between autumn and winter. Winter proper is shishira. Hemanta is the months of Margashirsha (also known as Agrahayana) and Pousha. Margashirsha is roughly mid-November to mid-December, while Pousha is mid-December to mid-January. Shishira is the months of Magha (mid-January to mid-February) and Phalguna (mid-February to mid-March).

None of them were distressed and they gradually increased the intensity of their austerities. Directed towards Vidhatri, those three excellent sons performed such austerities. They observed fierce austerities and remained supremely fixed to niyamas. As a result of those austerities, those excellent danavas made their bodies suffer. For one hundred years, they stood on the ground on one foot. After this, they tormented themselves through even stronger austerities. For one thousand years, they subsisted only on air. It was extremely terrible. Those evil-souled ones were filled with great heat. Nevertheless, they continued to torment themselves. They stood on their heads for one thousand years. They stood for one hundred years, with their arms raised upwards. In this way, seized by an evil wish, they went through such extreme miseries. With their attention not wavering, the daityas remained in this way, day and night. O sage! As they tormented themselves greatly, a long period of time elapsed. It is my view that the minds of the sons of Taraka had turned towards dharma and that their atmans were immersed in the brahman."""

""Brahma, the great guru of gods and asuras, manifested himself before them. The immensely illustrious one was satisfied with their austerities and wished to bestow boons on them. Accompanied by sages, devas and asuras, he addressed them in words of assurance. The grandfather of all beings spoke to them. O sage! Brahma said, "O great daityas! I am satisfied with your austerities. I will grant you everything. Tell me about the boon you desire. O enemies of gods! Why have you tormented yourselves severely? Please tell me. I am the creator of everything. Therefore, I always bestow the fruits of austerities on everyone." Hearing his words, all of them joined their hands in salutation and prostrated themselves before the grandfather. Slowly, they told him what was in their minds. The daityas said, "O lord of devas! If you are pleased with us and if we are to be given boons, let it be such that we cannot be killed by all embodied beings. O lord of the universe! Make our positions firm. Those who oppose us shouldn't be able to bring us down. Let us not suffer death on account of old age, disease and similar things. Let all of us be free from old age and death. That is our view. In the three worlds, let us bring about death for everyone else. What is the point of extensive prosperity? What do we have to do with excellent cities? What is the point of other extensive objects of pleasure? What will we do with positions and prosperity? O Brahma! If one is going to be devoured by death on the fifth day, all this is futile. That is what we have determined." Hearing the words of the ascetic daityas, Vidhatri remembered his own lord, Girisha, and replied. Brahma replied, "O asuras! No one can be immortal. Do not ask for this. Ask for some other boon that appeals to you. O asuras! A being who is born dies and is born again. There is no one on earth who does not suffer from old age and is immortal. The only exceptions are Khandaparashu, the destroyer of Kala, and the supreme one. [217] Those two are beyond dharma and adharma. They are not manifest but have manifest forms. If austerities are performed to oppress the universe, know that those fruits will go away. That is the reason austerities must be performed properly. Therefore, use your own intelligence to reflect on this. O unblemished ones! It is impossible for gods and asuras to deceive death. That is impossible to obtain and is something that cannot be accomplished. However, resort to sattva and ask for some means of death. You can then separately guard yourselves against that means of death." Hearing Vidhatri's words, they thought for a muhurta. Having thought, they replied to the grandfather of the worlds. The daityas said, "O illustrious one! Despite our valour, we do not possess a residence.

[217] Khandaparashu is Shiva's name, and he is the destroyer of Yama (Kala). The supreme one means Vishnu.

There is no place where we can dwell happily, unassailable to our enemies. Please grant us three wonderful cities constructed through maya.[218] Let these possess every kind of prosperity and let residents of heaven be unable to attack them. O lord of the worlds! O guru of the universe! On these three cities, we will roam around the earth." Tarakaksha said, "Let Vishvakarma construct a golden city for me, one that cannot be penetrated even by the gods." Kamalaksha asked for an extremely large silver city. Vidyunmali happily asked for a large city that would be made out of iron and would be as firm as the vajra. "O Brahma! We will reside in these three separate cities. They will come together only when it is midday; when it is time for Abhijit muhurta; [219] when the one with the cool beams [220] is in Pushya nakshatra, and when the clouds of destruction, named Pushkara and Avarta, [221] sport in the sky and repeatedly shower down from the firmament, without being seen. Hence, they will come together at the end of one thousand years and not otherwise. All the devas are in him, and he deludes all the devas and us. Let him be astride an impossible chariot, with all the necessary equipment. When the three cities come together, let him destroy them with an impossible arrow with a single joint. Krittivasa [222] has never had enmity with us. He deserves to be honoured and worshipped. How can he burn us down? This is what we have decided, since this kind of a situation is extremely rare in the world." Hearing their words, Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, remembered Shiva. The creator told them that it would be this way."" "He instructed Maya, [223] "O Maya! Create the three cities, made out of gold, silver and iron." Having instructed Maya in this way, while the three sons of Taraka watched, Brahma returned to his own residence in heaven. Using austerities, the patient Maya created those cities a golden one for Tarakaksha, a silver one for Kamalaksha and an iron one for Vidyunmali. These three were excellent and fortified. They were respectively in heaven, in the firmament and on earth, but their movements could not be discerned. Interested in their welfare, Maya gave the asuras these three cities and returned to his own residence. Having obtained these three cities, Taraka's sons entered them. They were immensely strong and valiant and enjoyed many objects of pleasure there. They were strewn with kalpadrumas[224] and full of elephants and horses. They were full of mansions, adorned with nets made out jewels. There were many vimanas in every direction, as radiant as the sun's disc. They were beautiful, decorated with rubies, and resembled the moon. There were divine palaces and turrets, resembling the peaks of Kailasa. The cities were full of celestial women, gandharvas, siddhas and charanas. In every house, there was a temple to Rudra and the fire for agnihotra sacrifices was established. There were excellent brahmanas who knew the sacred texts, always devoted to Shiva. There were extremely beautiful ponds, wells, lakes and tanks.

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[218] Pura means city and Tripura stands for these three cities, when they are together.

[219] There are thirty muhurtas in a 24-hour period, 15 during the day and 15 during the night. Some muhurtas are auspicious, others not. Abhijit muhurta is an auspicious muhurta that signifies victory. While the precise time depends on the time of sunrise, Abhijit muhurta is the period from 24 minutes before midday to 24 minutes past midday. There is no direct link between Abhijit muhurta and Abhijit nakshatra. However, if Abhijit nakshatra happens to be in ascendance at the time of Abhijit muhurta, that makes the muhurta even more auspicious.

[220] The moon.

[221] Samvartaka, Avarta, Pushkara and Drona are the four great clouds that rise at the time of dissolution/destruction.

[222] One dressed in hide, Shiva's name.

[223] The architect of the asuras. Maya, not Vishvakarma, built the ities.

[224] The tree (druma) that yields all the wishes thought of (kalpa). Also known as kalpavriksha.

There were gardens and groves, excellent in qualities, with trees that seemed to have descended from heaven. There were major and minor rivers, always decorated with the best of lotuses. There were many enchanting trees that yielded every desired fruit. There were herds of crazy elephants and extremely beautiful horses. There were many kinds of chariots and ornamented palanquins. There were contrivances to indicate the time and separate places for sporting. There were many separate halls for studying the Vedas. Men who were constant sinners could not see these, in thoughts or words. There were great-souled ones, auspicious in conduct. Those who increased sanctity could be seen. Everywhere, women who were devoted to their husbands purified those excellent places. They were good in conduct and served their husbands, turning their faces away from adharma. There were brave and immensely fortunate daityas, accompanied by their wives and sons and by brahmanas who knew the true meaning of the shruti and smriti texts. All of them constantly followed their own dharma. The men had broad chests and shoulders like bulls. Some were serene and believed in conciliation, not fighting. There were others who were angry. Some were hunchbacks, others were dwarfs. Some possessed eyes resembling the petals of blue lotuses. Some possessed blue and curly hair. They were protected by Maya, who had instructed all those who were eager to fight. The place was full of those who had fought in supreme battles. Having worshipped Aja [225] and Shiva, they were pure in valour. The place was full of sturdy asuras who resembled Surya, the Maruts and the great Indra. Dharma stated in the sacred texts, Vedas and Puranas, was practiced and the dharma loved by Shiva was always followed. Taraka's son, the daityas, resided in such excellent places constructed by Maya and sought refuge in Shiva. They left all the other places in the three worlds and entered these cities. Always following the path indicated by Shiva, they ruled over the great kingdom. O sage! They lived there for a long time, performing auspicious deeds. As befitted their energies, they ruled over the kingdom happily.""

Chapter 172-3.5(2) (Praise by Devas)

"Vyasa Tyasa said, 'O Brahma's son! O immensely wise one! O supreme among eloquent ones! Please tell me what transpired after that. How did devas become happy?""

"Brahma continued, 'Hearing the words of the infinitely intelligent Vyasa, Sanatkumara remembered Shiva's lotus feet and replied.""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'Devas, Indra and others, were scorched by their radiance. Miserable, all of them consulted among themselves and went and sought refuge with Brahma. They lovingly prostrated themselves before him. Watching out for an opportunity, they unhappily told him how asuras had evicted them from everything. Devas said, "O Vidhatri! As a result of Maya and as a result of the lords of Tripura, sons of Taraka, all the residents of heaven are being scorched. O Vidhatri! Therefore, miserable, we have come and sought refuge with you. Please think of a means for them to be killed, so that we are happy." When devas told him this, Vidhatri laughed. Their minds were terrified on account of Maya, and he replied to them. Brahma replied, "O gods! You should not be scared, especially of those danavas. Shiva Sharva will think of a means to get them killed.

[225] Brahma's name, the one without birth.

The daityas have prospered because of me. Therefore, their death should not come through me. In any event, meritorious deeds are increasing in the city of Tripura. All of you devas, Vasava included, should pray to Shiva. He is the lord of everything. If his mind is pleased, he will carry out your task." All the devas, along with Vasava, heard his words. Miserable, they left that spot and went to where Vrishadhvaja [226] was.'",

"Devotedly, all of them joined their hands in salutation and prostrated themselves before the lord of devas. Humbly, with their shoulders lowered, they praised Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds. The devas said, "I prostrate myself before Hiranyagarbha, [227] who arranges for all creation. For the sake of preservation, I prostrate myself before you as Vishnu, who enters everything. I prostrate myself before your form as Hara when you destroy all beings. I prostrate myself before the nirguna Shiva. Your energy is infinite. You are devoid of any state. You are resplendent in your indifference. You are the atman of the great elements. You are the great-souled one who is not attached. I prostrate myself before the lord of beings, the one who can bear a great burden. You are the one who takes away thirst. Your form has no enmity. Your energy is infinite. Like a forest conflagration, you burn down the great forest consisting of great daityas. You are the axe that cuts down the tree of daityas. I prostrate myself before the one who holds the trident in his hand. You are the one who destroys great danavas. I prostrate myself before Parameshvara. I prostrate myself before Ambika's husband, who wields every kind of weapon. I prostrate myself before Parvati's lord Maheshvara, the paramatman. I prostrate myself before Nilakantha Rudra. Rudra is his form. I prostrate myself before the one who is known through Vedanta. I prostrate myself before the one who is beyond all paths. I prostrate myself before the one whose form the gunas are. You possess gunas, but you are devoid of gunas. O Mahadeva! I prostrate myself before the one who brings bliss to the three worlds. I prostrate myself before Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Vasudeva and Samkarshana. [228] I prostrate myself before the one who destroyed Kamsa. You are the one who crushed Chanura. You are Damodara, the one who swallowed poison. You are Hrishikesha Achyuta. O lord! You are Mridha [229] Shankara. I prostrate myself before you. You are Adhokshaja, [230] You are the enemy of the elephant. [231] You are Kama's enemy. You are the one who devoured the poison. You are the divinity, Narayana. You are beyond Narayana. Narayana is your own form. You emerged from Narayana's body. I prostrate myself before the one who has every kind of form. You are the one who destroys great hells. You are the one who destroys sins. I prostrate myself before the one whose mount is a bull. You are the measurements of time, kshana[232] and the others. You give strength to your own devotees. You have many kinds of forms. You crush circles of daityas.

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[226] With the bull on the banner, Shiva's name.

[227] Hiranyagarbha is Brahma's name.

[228] These four are manifestations of Krishna. Subsequent sentences (Kamsa, Chanura) refer to incidents in Krishna's life.

[229] Shiva's name.

[230] Vishnu's name.

[231] Shiva killed an asura known as Gajasura, in the form of an elephant.

[232] A measure of time.

I prostrate myself before the one who regards brahmanas and cows as divinities, who has the welfare of brahmanas in mind.[233] You possess one thousand forms. You possess one thousand bodies. O Hara! Dharma is your form.You are sattva. I prostrate myself before the one whose atman is sattva. Your form can be known through the Vedas. I prostrate myself before the one loved by the Vedas. I prostrate myself before the one whose form is the Vedas. The Vedas issue from your mouth. I prostrate myself before you. I bow down. You can be approached through worship and good conduct. Those who follow worship and good conduct go to you. Fame is your seat. [234] I prostrate myself before the one who is full of truth. You love truth. You are truth. You can be approached through truth. I prostrate myself before you. I prostrate myself before the one who possesses maya. I prostrate myself before the one who is the lord of maya. I prostrate myself before the one who can be reached as the brahman. You are the brahman. You have been born from Brahma. You are austerities. I prostrate myself before the lord of austerities, the one who bestows the fruits. You are the one who is praised. You are praise. You are the one whose mind is pleased through praise. You are pleased with the good conduct mentioned in the shruti texts. You are pleased with praise and good conduct. The four kinds are your own forms. [235] Water and land are your forms. O lord! All the devas and others are best examples of your potency. Among devas, your form is that of Indra. Among planets, you are held to be the sun. Among the worlds, you are Satyaloka. [236] Among rivers, you are the one who flows from heaven. [237] Among colours, you are the colour white. Among lakes, you are Lake Manasa. Among mountains, you are Girija's father. [238] Among cows, you are kamadhenu. [239] Among oceans, you are the ocean of milk, Among metals, you are gold. Among varnas, you are the brahmana, O Shankara! Among men, you are the king. Among kshetras that bestow emancipation, you are Kashi. Among tirthas, you are the king of tirthas, [240] O Maheshvaral Amongst all kinds of stones, you are crystal. Among flowers, you are the lotus. Among mountains, you are Himalaya. Among all types of action, you are speech. Among those who are wise, you are Bhargava,[241] Among those with wings, you are sharabha, [242] Among those who are violent, you are the lion. O Vrishadhvaja! Among stones, you are the shalagrama stone, [243] Among all the forms that are worshipped,

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[233] An expression used for Krishna Govinda.

[234] The word used in the text is Vishtarashravas, Vishnu/Krishna's name.

[235] Probably meaning four kinds of living entities-born from wombs, born from eggs, born from sweat (worms and insects) and plants and trees.

[236] There are 14 worlds (lokas), seven superior and seven inferior. The seven upper regions are Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Svarloka, Maharloka, Satyaloka, Tapoloka and Janaloka. The seven nether regions are Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala and Patala.

[237] That is, Ganga.

[238] Himalaya.

[239] A cow (dhenu) that yields all the desired (kama) fruits.

[240] Probably meaning Prayaga.

[241] Meaning Shukracharya.

[242] Sharabha is a mythical creature with eight legs that feeds on lions. Clearly, that does not fit in this context. Speculatively, those with wings might mean insects, not birds, and a locust (one of the meanings of sharabha) is intended.

[243] Stone sacred to Vishnu, found in the beds of rivers.

you are the lingam from the Narmada river. [244] O Parameshvara! Among animals, you are the bull, Nandishvara. Among things used to worship, you take the form of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Among those that are cool, you are the moon. Among things that heat, you are the fire. Among those devoted to Shiva, you are Achyuta. Among Puranas, you are Bharata. [245] Among aksharas, you are 'ma'. [246] Among bija mantras, you are Pranava. [247] Among things that are virulent, you are poison. Among things that pervade, you are the firmament. Among atmans, you are the paramatman. You are mind among the senses. Among objects donated, you are the bestowing of freedom from fear. Among things that sanctify, you are water. Among everything that confers life, you are amrita. Among all gains, you are the gain of a son. Among those with speed, you are the wind. Among all rites of nitya karma, you are held to be the worship at the time of sandhya. [248] Among sacrifices, you are the horse sacrifice. Among yugas, you are the first yuga. [249] Among all the nakshatras, you are Pushya. [250] Among tithis, you are amavasya. Among all the seasons, you are spring. Among all the parva days, you are sankranti. [251] Among all kinds of grass, you are kusha grass. Among all strong trees, you are the vata tree. [252] Among all kinds of conjunctions, you are vyatipata. [253] Among all kinds of creepers, you are the soma creeper. Among all kinds of intelligence, you are intelligence about dharma. Among all kinds of friends, you are the wife. O Maheshvara! Among things that purify a sadhaka, you are pranayama. [254] Among all the jyotirlingams, it is held that you are Vishveshvara, [255] Among friends, you are dharma. Among ashramas, you are the last one, [256] Among all objectives, you are emancipation. Among the Rudras, you are Nilalohita. Among Adityas, you are Vasudeva.[257]

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[244] Bana lingams are natural stones found in riverbeds and those from River Narmada are famous. The text seems to refer to that.

[245] Among all accounts, you are the Mahabharata.

[246] Akshara is a syllable, not a letter of the alphabet. It has a single vowel sound. Why is 'ma' the most important? This might be the influence of tantra, where articles beginning with 'ma' (madya, mamsa, matysa, mudra and maithuna) are specially revered.

[247] Bija means seed and bija mantra is a mystic akshara from a mantra. Pranava means 'OUM'.

[248] Nitya karma means rites that have to be performed every day. Sandhya means the period that joins night and day, that is dawn and dusk, with midday sometimes added.

[249] Satya yugalkrita yuga.

[250] Pushya/Tishya is not the first nakshatra. It might be regarded as the foremost because the nakshatra's former name was Brihaspati. The word also means the one who nourishes.

[251] Sankranti is the movement of the sun from one sign of the zodiac (rashi) to another. Thus, there are 12 of these. The entry of Surya into Capricorn, with the movement from dakshinayana to uttarayana, is known as makara sankranti or mriga sankranti, while its entry into Cancer, with the movement from uttarayana to dakshinayana, is known as karka sankranti. The entry into Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius and Pisces are known as shadashiti. The entry into Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius are known as vishnupada. The entry into Aries and Libra is known as vishuva sankranti.

[252] The Indian fig tree.

[253] Vyatipata is an inauspicious period that lasts for almost 24 hours during every lunar month.

[254] Sadhya is the attainable objective, sadhana is the means. Sadhaka is the person who is using the means to attain the objective. Yoga has eight elements-yama (restraint), niyama (rituals), asana (posture), pranayama (breathing), pratyahara (withdrawal), dharana (retention), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (liberation or deep meditation). That's the reason the expression ashtanga (eight-formed) yoga is used.

[255] The one in Kashi/Varanasi.

[256] That is, sannyasa.

[257] There are 12 Adityas, sons of Aditi and Kashyapa. Vishnu is one of these.

Among monkeys, you are Hanuman. Among all kinds of sacrifices, you are japa-yajna,[258] Among those who wield weapons, you are Rama. Among gandharvas, you are Chitraratha.[259] Among Vasus, you are certainly Pavaka.[260] Among months, you are adhimasa,[261] Among vows, you are chaturdashi [262] Among lordly elephants, you are Airavata. [263] Among siddhas, you are held to be Kapila. Among the nagas, you are Ananta. Among the ancestors, you are Aryama. Among all calculations, you are time. Among daityas, you are Bali. O lord of devas! What is the need to speak a lot? You rule over the entire universe. One of your portions is located inside and one of your portions is located outside." All the gods praised Mahadeva Vrishadhvaja in this way, using many kinds of divine hymns to laud Parameshvara, the wielder of the trident."""

“They were distressed and driven by their own selfish motives. They were discriminating about their own gains. O sage! Vasava and the others lowered their shoulders and cupped their hands in salutation. Duly prepared, they spoke again. The devas said, "O Mahadeva! O Bhagavan! The brothers born from Taraka have defeated all the devas, along with Vasava. They have brought the three worlds under their subjugation. The excellent sages and all the siddhas have been devastated. They have made the entire universe suffer. Those terrible ones have appropriated the shares in sacrifices. They have restrained the rishis and established adharma. It has been decided that the sons of Taraka cannot be killed by any being. O Shankara! Therefore, they do whatever they will. Let a good policy be determined so that the universe can be saved and so that the terrible daityas, the residents of Tripura, are killed." Hearing the words of Indra and the other residents of heaven, Shiva replied to them in the following words."""

Chapter 173-3.5(3) (The Dharma of Tripura)

"Shiva said, "The lords of Tripura are performing meritorious deeds now. As long as a person performs virtuous deeds, learned people should never kill them. I know about the hardships of the devas. All the gods are suffering greatly. Those daityas are strong and gods and asuras are incapable of killing them. All the sons of Taraka and Maya are virtuous in their deeds. Therefore, it is impossible for anyone to kill the residents of that city. Though I am harsh in battle, how can I go against those who are my friends? Svayambhu [264] has earlier said that it is a great sin to harm a well-wisher. The virtuous have indicated means whereby the slayer of a brahmana, a drunkard, a thief and a person who has violated a vow can cleanse himself. But there is no atonement for an ingrate. O gods! The daityas are my devotees.

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[258] Japa is meditation, with silent chanting.

[259] King of gandharvas.

[260] There are eight Vasus, Agni/Pavaka being one of these.

[261] Intercalary month (masa) used to match a solar year with a lunar year. Adhi actually stands for adhika, meaning 'extra'.

[262] The vow (vrata) observed on the fourteenth lunar day.

[263] Indra's elephant.

[264] Brahma.

How can they be killed by me? All of you know about dharma. Use dharma to reflect on this. As long as they are devoted to me, they cannot be killed. O devas! Nevertheless, go and tell Vishnu about this reason." O sage! Hearing his words, the devas, with Shakra at the forefront, immediately left and first reported this to Brahma. Thereafter, placing Vidhatri at the forefront, all the devas, including Vasava, quickly left for Vaikuntha, which was beautiful in every possible way. Having gone there, they saw Hari and respectfully prostrated themselves. Cupping their hands in salutation, the gods praised him with a great deal of devotion. They reported everything about the reasons for their misery, the former one, as well as the subsequent one. [265] They quickly reported this to the powerful Vishnu, who enters everywhere. Vishnu heard about the misery of the devas, caused by the residents of Tripura, and about the vows followed by them. Knowing this, Vishnu addressed them in the following words. Vishnu said, "These are true words. Where there is eternal dharma, there can be no miseries there, just as darkness does not exist when it sees the sun." Hearing his words, the devas were filled with grief. With faces resembling faded lotuses, they spoke to Vishnu again. The devas said, "What can then be done to dispel our sorrows? How can we be happy? How can we be established? As long as those in Tripura are alive, how can there be dharma? All the residents of Tripura certainly cause grief to devas. You must make arrangements for the destruction of Tripura. Otherwise, within a short period of time, devas will certainly be destroyed." In their misery, devas repeatedly said this. Having spoken to the supreme divinity, they could neither leave, nor stay. The prosperous Narayana saw them in this state, humbled and distressed. He thought about this in his mind. "I will help the devas. What can I do to accomplish the task of devas? The daityas, the sons of Taraka, are devoted to Shiva." At that time, the powerful Vishnu, who enters everywhere, thought this."""

""To accomplish the eternal task of devas, he remembered the sacrifices. As soon as Vishnu remembered them, at that very instant, the sacrifices quickly arrived at the place where Purushottama, Shri's[266] lord, was. Vishnu is the lord of sacrifices. Hari is the eternal being. They cupped their hands in salutation, prostrated themselves and praised him. While Indra and the devas looked on, the eternal Bhagavan Achyuta spoke to the eternal sacrifices. Vishnu said, "O devas! To ensure the destruction of Tripura and the prosperity of the three worlds, along with these sacrifices, constantly worship Parameshvara." Hearing the words of Achyuta, the intelligent lord of devas, the gods lovingly prostrated themselves before the lord of sacrifices and praised him. Praising him, the devas performed a sacrifice to the lord of sacrifices. O sage! The sacrifice was performed in accordance with the rules and completed in accordance with the rules. Thousands of bhutas emerged from the sacrificial pit. They were gigantic in size and had tridents, spears and clubs as weapons. The gods saw those thousands of bhutas. They held weapons like tridents, javelins, clubs, staffs and boulders in their hands. They wielded many kinds of weapons. They were attired in many kinds of garments. They were as fierce as the fire of destruction. They resembled the sun that rises at the time of destruction. As they prostrated themselves and stood in front of him, Vishnu saw them. The bhutas were ready to follow the commands of the prosperous lord of sacrifices Vishnu said, "O bhutas! You have arisen to perform a task for the devas. Listen to my words. All of you are extremely strong. Go to Tripura. Having gone there, burn, shatter and destroy the three cities of the daityas.

[265] The former one was because of the daityas, the subsequent one was because Shiva refused to intervene.

[266] Lakshmi's.

O bhutas! Having returned here, you will deserve to be prosperous." Having heard Bhagavan's words, the large number of bhutas prostrated themselves before the lord of devas and left for the three cities of the daityas."

***Going there, they entered. But like moths before a fire, they were instantly reduced to ashes by the energy of the lords of Tripura. Those that remained concentrated on running away. They escaped and agitated, arrived in Hari's presence. Hari saw them and heard everything that had happened. Bhagavan Purushottama thought about this in his mind. Since all the immortals, along with Vasava, who had followed his command, were tormented, he was also tormented in his mind. "What will I do now? How can force be used to destroy the three cities of the daityas and accomplish the task of the devas?" Agitated, he thought in this way. "There is no doubt that they follow dharma. Therefore, abhichara[267] cannot be used to destroy them." Saying this, the lord himself cited the proof about good conduct stated in the shruti texts. "All the daityas who reside in Tripura follow dharma. O bulls among gods! Hence, they cannot be killed. and this principle is inviolate. Having committed great sins, they have worshipped Rudra. Therefore, they have been freed from all their sins, just as the leaf of a lotus is freed from water. O devas! Because they have worshipped Rudra, all their desires have been met. All the objects of pleasure on earth and prosperity have come under their control. Hence, the daityas enjoy objects of pleasure and are devoted to worshipping the lingam. They enjoy a lot of prosperity. In the world hereafter, they will obtain emancipation. Therefore, I will use my own maya to create impediments in their pursuit of dharma. To accomplish the task of the devas, I will instantly destroy Tripura of the daityas." Bhagavan Purushottama thought about them in this way. After that, he set about creating impediments in the pursuit of dharma by the enemies of the gods. As long as they followed the dharma of the Vedas, as long as they worshipped Shankara and as long as they engaged in pure rites, they could not be destroyed. Therefore, one should certainly act so at to make the daityas forsake the dharma of the Vedas and the worship of the lingam. Having decided this, Vishnu set about creating impediments and devising means so that the daityas might violate the dharma of the shruti texts. Accordingly, the divinity Vishnu, wishing to help the devas, spoke to the devas, following Shiva's command. Following Shiva's command, he sought to protect the three worlds. Vishnu said, "O all you devas! You should certainly return to your own respective abodes. I will use my intelligence to carry out the task of the devas. There is no doubt about this. I will make excellent efforts to make them turn away from Rudra. When he knows that they are no longer devoted to him, he will reduce them to ashes." O sages! The immortals were assured and accepted his command on their heads. Comforted, they returned to their own respective abodes. Happy, Brahma also left. After this, to accomplish excellent welfare for the devas, Vishnu acted. Listen to everything properly. This destroys all sins."""

[267] Abhichara is a magical mantra used for malevolent purposes.

Chapter 174-3.5(4) (Initiation of Residents of Tripura)

"Sanatkumara said, 'To create an impediment in their pursuit of dharma, Achyuta created an immensely energetic being from within himself. He was full of maya. His head was shaved, and his clothes were dirty. He held a woven wicker vessel and a roll of cotton in his hands, and he shook these at every step, [268] His hands, which held his garment, were weak and his face was always faded. The sage spoke in a weak and faltering voice, "Follow dharma." He prostrated himself before Vishnu and stood in front of him. Joining his hands in salutation, he addressed Hari in the following words. "O slayer of enemies! O Achyuta! Please instruct me about the kind of worship I should follow. O divinity! What will be my names and where will I stay?" Bhagavan Vishnu heard his auspicious words. His mind was pleased, and he addressed him in the following words. Vishnu said, "Listen to the reason why you have been created. I will tell you. O immensely wise one! You have been born from my body. There is no doubt that you are my form. Since you have originated from my limbs, you must carry out my task. Since you are mine, there is no doubt that you will always be worshipped. Your name will be Arihat. [269] You will possess many other auspicious names. I will tell you about your residence later. Listen affectionately to the preparations. O one who knows maya! O one who is full of maya! You must create a sacred text with sixteen thousand verses.[270] This must be against shruti and smriti texts and must avoid mention of varnas and ashramas. This text must be in apabhramsha.[271] It must only emphasize karma. Make efforts to compose and extend it. I will give you the capacity to create this. Many different kinds of maya will quickly come under your control." Hearing the words of Hari, the paramatman, he prostrated himself. The possessor of maya replied to Janardana. The one with the shaven head replied, "O divinity! O lord! Please instruct me quickly about what I must do. All the tasks that you command will be successful." Saying this, he read the sacred text, which was full of maya. "Heaven and hell are both in this world. This is evident. It is not otherwise." Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, Vishnu spoke to him again. "Delude all the daityas who are residents of Tripura. You must make efforts to teach them this text and make them take diksha.[272] O immensely intelligent one! Since this is because of my command, no sin will attach to you. There is no doubt that the dharma of shruti and smriti texts is evidently followed there. But there is no doubt that this knowledge will make all those erupt. O one with the shaven head! For the destruction of the residents of Tripura, you must go. Reveal the dharma of tamas and destroy Tripura. O lord! After that, you will go to the desert regions. O child! Remain there and follow your own dharma until kali yuga arrives. When that yuga arrives, your own dharma will be revealed. You will have disciples and those disciples will have disciples. As a result of my command, your dharma will certainly be extended. Following my command, you will attain an eternal destination with me."

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[268] There is the obvious identification with Jain monks.

[269] Literally, the slayer of enemies. But there is an obvious resemblance with Arhat, the revered one, used both in Buddhism and Jainism.

[270] The Matsya Purana says sixteen hundred thousand.

[271] Apabhramsha means something that has fallen down and is corrupted. In this context, it means a language that does not follow the rules of grammar. Even more specifically, the language is not Sanskrit.

[272] A process of consecration/initiation for a ceremony, or for a process of instruction.

Vishnu, whose power enters everywhere, instructed him in this way. Hari, lord of devas, made this command enter his heart and vanished."""

"""The one with the shaven head followed Hari's command. He created four disciples who were just like him in form and himself made them study the texts that were full of maya. Just like him, those four had shaven heads and were auspicious in appearance. They stood there and prostrated themselves before Hari, the paramatman, [273] O sage! Extremely happy and following Shiva's instructions, Hari himself spoke to those four. "Following my command, you will be blessed, just like your guru is. There is no doubt that you will obtain a virtuous destination." Those four, with shaven heads, followed the dharma resorted to by pashandas.[274] They held vessels in their hands and covered their mouths with cloth. They wore dirty clothing and did not speak. Extremely happily, they said, "Dharma is the greatest gain" and other such words. They held brooms that were made out of pieces of cloth. They walked slowly because they were scared of causing injury to living beings. O sage! Full of joy, they again stood before the divinity, Bhagavan, and prostrated themselves in front of him. Hari held them by the hands and handed them over to the guru. Specifically, he affectionately told them about their names. "There is no doubt that these belong to me, just as you[275] do. Since they deserve to be worshipped, the word 'pujya [276] will be used before their names. They will be known under the names of Rishi, Yati, Acharya[277] and Upadhyaya. You, and they, will be famous. You will also accept my auspicious names. Among those, the name Arihat will destroy sins. You will carry out all the tasks that bring happiness to the worlds. Those who act favourably towards the worlds obtain an excellent end." Along with his disciples, the possessor of maya prostrated himself. Wishing to carry out Shiva's instruction, he immediately went to Tripura. Urged by Vishnu and in control of himself, he entered the city. Along with his disciples, he remained in a grove outside the city. Possessing great maya, the rishi exhibited his maya. He engaged in this maya. Possessing maya, he sought to create delusion. O sagel As a result of the power of worshipping Shiva, that maya could not make Tripura budge and he lost interest. He remembered Vishnu in his heart and praised him in many kinds of ways. He had lost his enthusiasm and his heart was distressed and dejected. As soon as he was thought of, Vishnu immediately remembered Shankara in his heart. Having mentally obtained his command, he immediately remembered Narada."""

As soon as he was remembered by Vishnu, Narada presented himself. He bent down before him and joined his hands in salutation. He stood there, his hands joined in salutation. Vishnu, supreme among intelligent ones, spoke to Narada. "You are always devoted to ensuring the welfare of the worlds. You are always engaged in accomplishing the tasks of the devas. O son! Following Shiva's command, quickly go to Tripura. To delude the residents, the rishi has already gone there, along with his disciples." Hearing his words, Narada, the excellent sage, swiftly went to the place where the rishi, the supreme possessor of maya, was. Narada knew maya and he was engaged by the lord who himself used maya.

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[273] Vishnu obviously reappeared before them.

[274] Heretics.

[275] The guru.

[276] Revered, one who deserves to be worshipped.

[277] There is a typo in the text, and we have corrected Kirya to Acharya.

He entered the city and took diksha from the possessor of maya. After this, Narada went to the lord of Tripura. [278] Having asked questions about the king's welfare, he reported everything. Narada said, "A mendicant has arrived. He is devoted to dharma. He possesses the best kind of knowledge. He possesses great learning about the Vedas. I have witnessed many kinds of dharma, but there is nothing that is like this. Having witnessed this eternal dharma, I have taken diksha. O supreme among daityas! If you so wish, you should also follow that dharma. O great king! You should take diksha in accordance with that dharma." His words were full of deep import. Hearing them, the heart of the lord of the daityas was amazed. Deluded, he said, "Since Narada has taken diksha, we will also take diksha." Deciding this, he himself went there. Witnessing his[279] form, he was deluded by his maya. He prostrated himself before the great-souled one and addressed him in the following words. The lord of Tripura said, "O rishi! O reservoir of everything sparkling! Please give me diksha. I will become your disciple. This is the truth. There is no doubt that this is the truth." Hearing the sparkling words of the king of daityas, the eternal rishi controlled himself and replied, "O supreme among daityas! If you act according to what I instruct you, only then will I give you diksha. Otherwise, you will not receive it, even if you try one crore times." Hearing the words of the one who was full of maya, the king joined his hands in salutation and answered the mendicant instantly. The daitya answered, "I will act in accordance with your command and not otherwise. I will not transgress your order. This is the truth. There is no doubt that this is the truth." Hearing the words of the lord of Tripura, the excellent rishi removed the covering of cloth from his mouth and replied. "O Indra among daityas! Accept diksha into the best of dharmas. When this diksha is given according to the norms, you will be successful in your objective." Having said this, the possessor of maya quickly gave the king of daityas diksha, following the norms stated in his own dharma. O sage! When the king of daityas took diksha, it was natural for all the residents of Tripura to also take diksha. O sage! The disciples and sub-disciples of the sage who possessed great maya filled all of Tripura.""

Chapter 175-3.5(5) (Delusion of Tripura)

“Vyasa asked, 'Deluded by maya, the king of daityas took diksha. After that, what did the possessor of maya say and what did the lord of daityas do?

"Sanatkumara replied, 'The lotus feet of the mendicant Arihat were served by Narada and the other disciples. After giving diksha, he spoke to the king of daityas."

Arihat said, "O lord of daityas! Listen to my words. They are pregnant with true jnana. This represents the essence of all of Vedanta. It is excellent and supreme and is a secret. Samsara is complete, without having had a beginning. There is no karma and there is no one who is the doer. It manifested itself on its own and it will be dissolved on its own. From Brahma to a blade of grass, there are those who are bound to bodies. They are their own lords. There is no second lord. Names like Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are used, but they are names of embodied beings. These are just appellations, just as I am known under the name of Arihat. When the due time arrives, our bodies are dissolved. From Brahma to a gnat,

[278] This must mean the eldest brother, Tarakaksha.

[279] The sage's.

everything dissolves when its time comes. When one thinks about it, none of these bodies are superior to any other. Eating, sexual intercourse, sleep and fear are the same for everyone, everywhere. When one hasn't had food, all those with bodies are equally satisfied after eating. No one is satisfied more or less. When we drink a drink, we are happy and lose our thirst. Others also slake their thirst in that way, not more, nor less. There can be one thousand women who possess beauty and charm. But at the time of intercourse, one unites with only one of them. There can be hundreds of horses, with many different kinds of spirit. But one rides only one. One cannot be seated on a second. When one is overwhelmed by sleep, the happiness one obtains from sleeping on a couch is the same as the happiness obtained from sleeping on the bare ground. All of us, with bodies, are scared of death. Like that, beginning with Brahma and ending with an insect, everyone is scared of death. If one uses one's intelligence to reflect, all those with bodies are equal. Having determined this, one should never act violently towards anyone, anywhere. On the surface of the earth, there is no dharma that is equal to compassion towards beings. Therefore, men must make every kind of effort to be compassionate towards beings. If a single living being is protected, that is like the three worlds being protected. If it is killed, the three worlds are killed. Therefore, we must protect and not kill. Non-violence is supreme dharma,[280] A person who oppresses is a sinner. Not being dependent on others is emancipation and heaven. It is like desired food. Our ancestors have said this, and it is certain that there is firm proof for this. Therefore, men who are scared of hell should not commit violence. In the three worlds, with its mobile and immobile objects, there is no sin that is equal to violence. A person who injures goes to hell. A person who does not injure goes to heaven. There are many kinds of gifts. But since these yield limited fruits, what will one do with these? There is no gift equal to the gift of granting freedom from fear. The supreme rishis have spoken about four kinds of gifts in this world and in the next one, after reflecting on the meanings of many sacred texts. These are granting fearlessness to those who are scared, medication for the diseased, learning for those who seek knowledge and food for those who are suffering from hunger. There are many kinds of donations that are mentioned. However, these do not amount to even one-sixteenth of the fruits obtained from granting fearlessness to beings. The power and strength of jewels, mantras and herbs are unimaginable. But one makes efforts to obtain these only for earning a name and earning wealth. The earning of a lot of wealth is only for the sake of worshipping the twelve senses. Why should anything else be worshipped in this world? There are five senses of action and five senses of perception, 281 With mind and intelligence added, these are said to be the twelve auspicious senses. For living beings, heaven and hell are in this world and not anywhere else. Happiness is said to be heaven and unhappiness is said to be hell. Those who have thought about the truth know that giving up the body while enjoying happiness is supreme emancipation. Those who have thought about the truth know that if hardships and desire are eradicated and if there is no ignorance, this is supreme emancipation. Those who speak about the Vedas say that this is proved in the shruti texts. One should not injure any living being. One should not engage in violence. Those who slaughter animals say that this is required for agnishtoma sacrifices. However, these are the views of the wicked. Those who know say that there is no such proof. It is amazing that one should desire heaven by cutting down trees, killing animals and creating a mire of blood, and burning sesamum seeds and ghee in a fire."""""

[280] Ahimsa paramo dharma.

[281] The five organs of action are hands, feet, anus, genital organs and the mouth. The five organs of perception are ears, eyes, nose, skin and tongue.

"Sanatkumara continued, 'In this way, he spoke about his own view to the lord of Tripura. Lovingly, he then made all the residents of the city listen. He mentioned things that could be directly seen and those that were a means to ensure physical happiness. He cited examples of this supreme dharma from Buddhist agama texts[282] and from the Vedas. "It is stated in the shruti texts that bliss is a form of the brahman. This should be considered to be the truth. Any other conceptions are false. As long as the body is well and the senses are nor impaired and as long as old age is far away, one should strive for happiness. If the body is not well, if the senses are impaired and if there is old age, how can there be happiness? Those who desire happiness should be ready to even give up the body. The earth is burdened by people who do not please and do not give to those who seek. It is not burdened by oceans, mountains and trees. The body is quickly destroyed, and accumulations are also destroyed. Knowing this, a person who knows must endeavour to ensure physical happiness. One can read the truth in the Vedas-the body will be breakfast for dogs, crows and worms, or the body will be reduced to ashes. [283] In vain does one seek to classify humans into different jatis, [284] Everyone is human. Who is superior and who is inferior? Aged people say that the original creation flowed from Brahma. He had sons. Daksha and Marichi are famous. Following the path indicated by dharma, Kashyapa, Marichi's son, married thirteen of Daksha's daughters, who possessed beautiful eyes. These days, mortals are limited in intelligence and valour. In vain, they debate about whether he had intercourse with someone he should not have had intercourse with.[285] Earlier, people thought about this and imagined that the four varnas were simultaneously born from the mouth, arms, thighs and so on. [286] How can four sons born simultaneously from the same body have different varnas? Hence, the division into varnas and sub-varnas is not convincing. One should never accept differences among humans." O sage! In this way, the mendicant spoke to the lord of the daityas and the citizens. Along with his disciples, he attentively destroyed the dharma of the Vedas. He destroyed the dharma of women and even more seriously, the great dharma of being faithful to their husbands. He destroyed the dharma of men conquering their senses, the specific dharma of worshipping devas, the dharma of shraddha ceremonies, [287] the dharma and mantras associated with sacrifices and in particular, shraddha ceremonies in tirthas. He specifically destroyed the worship of Shiva, beginning with the worship of lingam; the worship of Vishnu, Surya, Ganesha and others, following the proper rules; bathing and donations; and everything especially done on parva days. The mendicant possessed maya and was supreme among those who knew maya. He destroyed all these. O Indra among brahmanas! What is the need to speak a lot? The possessor of maya moved every aspect of dharma connected with the Vedas far away. All the women who resided in Tripura were deluded and gave up the dharma of serving their husbands. Earlier, they had possessed the excellent inclination of serving their husbands. They were subjugated and were eager to follow this learning.

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[282] Agamas are texts other than the Vedas, such as the tantra texts. Nigama texts are associated with the Vedas.

[283] Respectively, burial and cremation.

[284] A jati is the class one has been born into and is different from a varna.

[285] Since Kashyapa and Daksha's daughters were related by blood.

[286] Brahmanas from Brahma's mouth, kshatriyas from his arms, vaishyas from his thighs and shudras from his feet.

[287] Funeral rites.

The men were deluded and regarded themselves as successful only when they enticed the wives of others. Everyone was deluded-the women in the inner quarters, the princes and the men and women who dwelt in the city. In this way, all the residents of the city gave up their own dharma. They turned away and were delighted at what they thought was a better dharma. O lord! All this happened because of Vishnu's command. It was the maya of the lord of devas. Engaged by him, Alakshmi [288] went to Tripura. By lovingly worshipping the lord of devas and because of their austerities, they had obtained Lakshmi. Engaged by the lord Brahma, she went out and abandoned them. As a result of the maya devised by Vishnu their intelligence was confounded in this way. This having been instantly accomplished, Narada thought that he was successful. But despite their forms, Narada and the possessor of maya did not themselves become deviants. This was because of the favours of Paramesha. O sage! As a result of Shiva's will, the capacity of the king of the daityas, his brothers and Maya was restrained in this way.""'

Chapter 176-3.5(6) (Praise of Shiva)

"Vyasa said, 'The lord of daityas, his brothers and V the citizens were deluded. O Sanatkumara! O lord! What happened thereafter? Please tell me everything.""""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'In Tripura, the daityas gave up the worship of Shiva. The entire dharma of women was destroyed. Evil conduct was established. Lakshmi's lord was successful. Along with the devas, Hari went to Kailasa and told Umapati[289] what had happened. Along with the devas, Rama's consort and Brahma approached and stood there. They meditated on the supreme one. In their minds, Brahma and Hari used eloquent words to praise the omniscient Shankara Purushottama. Vishnu said, "I prostrate myself before the divinity Maheshvara, the paramatman. You are the brahman and assume the forms of Narayana, Rudra and Brahma." Saying this, like a rod, he prostrated himself before Mahadeva. He performed japa with the mantra to Dakshinamurti Rudra. [290] The lord stood in the water and with an attentive mind, did this one crore and a half times. In his mind, he remembered his own lord, Shambhu Parameshvara.""""

All the devas also fixed their minds on Maheshvara. The devas said, "I prostrate myself before Shankara, who is in all atmans. He is the remover of afflictions. He is Nilakantha Rudra. He is Prachetas, with a form as consciousness. For all of us, you are the destination. You are the one who counters every calamity. O slayer of the enemies of devas! You are the one who should be always worshipped by us. You are primordial. You are the one without an origin. You find bliss within yourself. You are the lord who does not decay. You created Purusha and Prakriti. You are the lord who directly created the entire universe. You alone are the creator, preserver and destroyer. Using the gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas, you become Brahma, Vishnu and Hara. You are the lord without decay. In this world, you are the one who enables everyone to cross over. You are the one who bestows boons. Using speech, you are spoken about. But you are not linked to the speech or speaker.

[288] Alakshmi is the opposite of Lakshmi and means adversity and penury.

[289] Uma's husband, Shiva.

[290] Dakshinamurti is Shiva's form as a teacher and there are different mantras addressed to Dakshinamurti.

O Ishana! For the sake of emancipation, yogis who are excellent in yoga entreat you. You are established in the cavity of the lotus hearts of yogis. The Vedas and virtuous ones speak about you, saying that the supreme brahman is your own form. In truth, you are a mass of energy. You are greater than the greatest. O lord! In this world, you are spoken of as the paramatman. O Sharva! You are indeed in all atmans. O Bhava! You are the lord of the three worlds. O guru of the universe! You are everything seen, heard, praised and known. You are spoken of as smaller than a molecule[291] and as greater than the greatest. Your hands and feet are everywhere. Your eyes, heads and mouths are in every direction. Your ears and noses are everywhere. In every direction, I prostrate myself before you. You are omniscient. You pervade everything.You are the unveiled Sarveshvara. The universe is your form. O Virupaksha[292] In every direction, I prostrate myself before you. You are Sarveshvara. You are the controller. You are truth. You are the supreme Shiva. Your radiance is like that of one crore suns. In every direction, I prostrate myself before you. You are the divinity of the universe, without a beginning and without an end. You are Ishvara, with thirty-six principles,[293] You are the one who activates everything. In every direction, I prostrate myself before you . You are the one who activates Prakriti. You are the great grandfather for everyone. You are the lord in everybody. In every direction, I prostrate myself before you. The shruti texts, those who know the essence of the shruti texts, and even those who do not know the essence of the shruti texts, speak of you as Svayambhu, the refuge of everything. You are the one who bestows boons. In this world, the many beings created by you, and those that will be created by you, cannot be seen by us. Devas, asuras, brahmanas and mobile and immobile entities are nothing but you. O Shambhu! O one loved by devas! Please save us. The gods have no other refuge. We have almost been destroyed by Tripura. Please kill the asuras immediately. O Parameshvara! They have been deluded by your maya now. O lord! As a result of what Vishnu told them, they have deviated from dharma. O one affectionate towards devotees! As a result of our good fortune, the daityas have given up all kinds of dharma. They went and sought refuge with those who follow Buddha and have come under their subjugation. O one who grants refuge! You have always been the one who carries out the tasks of devas. We have sought refuge with you. Please do what you wish." Praising Mahesha in this way, devas stood in front of him. They lowered their bodies and joined their hands in salutation, distressed. Ishvara was thus praised by Indra and the other gods. Vishnu had performed japa. Delighted, astride his bull, Sarvesha arrived there. Pleased in his mind, he got down from Nandi and embraced Vishnu. He saw all of them. With a hand resting on Nandi, he cast a glance of compassion towards the devas. Pleased, Hara, Parvati's consort, spoke to Hari in a deep voice.""

Shiva said, "O lord of gods! I now know the task meant for the devas. O supreme among devas! Consequent to the strength of the maya used by Vishnu and the intelligent Narada, the daityas have started to follow adharma. There is no doubt that I will act so as to destroy Tripura. However, the great daityas are steadfast in their minds and are devoted to me.

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[291] We have translated anu as molecule.

[292] One with malformed eyes, Shiva's name.

[293] Samkhya often has 26 principles (tattvas)-five gross elements, five subtle elements (tanmatras), five organs of action, five senses of perception, mind, intelligence, ahamkara, jivatman, Prakriti and paramatman. The 24th, 25th and 26th are not uniform though. Shaiva texts add another ten-Kaala (time), Niyati (destiny), Kalaa (power), Vidya (knowledge), Raga (attachment), Shuddha Vidya (with an equilibrium), Ishvara, Sadashiva, Shakti and Shiva

Nevertheless, I should kill them, since as a result of deception, they have abandoned excellent dharma. Since they have abandoned dharma, perhaps Vishnu or someone else can kill them. All the daityas who reside in Tripura have also given up their devotion to me." All the residents of heaven heard Shambhu's words. O lord among sages! They, even Hari, were dejected. Seeing that Vishnu and the devas were in this state, Vidhatri, the creator of the worlds, joined his hands in salutation in front of Shambhu. Brahma addressed him in the following words. Brahma said, "O supreme one who knows yoga! There is not the least bit of sin in this. Paramesha is the supreme brahman and always protects devas and rishis. It was because of your command that they were sent to delude them. They have given up their own dharma and no longer worship you. But they cannot be killed by anyone else. O Mahadeva! Therefore, you must save the lives of gods and rishis. For the protection of the virtuous, those who belong to mlecchа jatis must be killed, [294] A king will do that. Your dharma will not suffer from any sin. Hence, the virtuous and brahmanas must be saved. The thorns must be uprooted. In this world, any other king who desires to protect his kingdom will also do this. You are the lord of all the worlds. Therefore, without any delay, save them. O lord of devas! O divinity! Indras among sages, sacrifices, the Vedas, the sacred texts and everyone else, including Vishnu and I, are certainly your subjects. O lord! You are Sarveshvara. Over all devas, you are the universal emperor. Hari and the entire universe surround you. O one without origin! Hari is your heir apparent. [295] I, Brahma, am your priest. Perform the task of a king. Shakra will carry out your commands. O Sarvesha! All the other devas are like machines, subject to your control. They are always engaged in their own respective tasks. This is the truth. There is no doubt that this is the truth." Parameshvara heard the words spoken by Brahma. Pleased in his mind, Shankara, the lord of the gods, spoke to Vidhatri. Shiva said, "O Brahma! O lord! If I am being described as the emperor and king of devas, nothing that I have accepted indicates this. I do not possess an extremely divine chariot and a corresponding charioteer. Nor do I possess a bow and arrows, required to ensure victory in a battle. If I possessed a bow and arrows and mount, in a battle, I could have killed the daityas, despite their being strong." Hearing the lord's words, Brahma, Upendra and Indra and devas rejoiced. They bent down and spoke to Maheshvara. The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Maheshvara! We will arrange for all the equipment, a chariot and other things. O lord! We have armoured ourselves for the battle." Following Shiva's will, all of them said this and readied themselves. Pleased, the gods joined their hands in salutation and spoke to him individually."

Chapter 177-3.5(7) (Praise by Devas)

“Sanatkumara said, 'Hara is the refuge. He i He is affectionate towards his devotees. Hearing the words of devas and others, he happily agreed to the proposal. O sage! Meanwhile, with her two sons, Devi Shivaa arrived at the spot where Hara and the devas were. Seeing that Shivaa had arrived, Vishnu and the others quickly lowered their heads and prostrated themselves. They were surprised, but not alarmed. O sage! All of them uttered auspicious words of "Victory". However, not knowing about the reason why she had come, they remained silent. Devi was praised by all the devas. Full of extraordinary enthusiasm and pleased, she spoke to her husband, who was accomplished in many kinds of pastimes.

[294] Mlecchа can loosely be translated as barbarian but means someone who does not speak Sanskrit.

[295] Yuvaraja.

Devi said, "O lord! Look at the one with six faces. He resembles the sun. He is our son, and he is the best among sons. He is adorned with the best of ornaments." Shiva was thus addressed by the mother of the worlds in eloquent words. Ishana was not satisfied but drunk in the amrita of Skanda's face. He remembered the daityas who had come and had been crushed by Skanda's own energy. Maheshvara embraced him. He inhaled the fragrance of his head and was delighted. Jagadamba remained there and had consultations with the lord. Thereafter, accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, she stood up. Shambhu, who engages in excellent pastimes, was honoured by all the gods. Along with Nandi, the one with the six faces and the daughter of the king of mountains, the intelligent one entered his residence. All the devas remained near the door of the lord of devas. O sage! All their minds were distracted, and they were extremely anxious. "What will he do? Where will we go? What will bring us happiness? What exactly happened? We are doomed." Shakra and the others were extremely agitated. They looked at each other and spoke in this way. Their words faltered and they cursed their ill fortune. "We are sinners." Others said, "We are extremely unfortunate." Other gods said, "The Indras among daityas are fortunate." Hearing the many kinds of noise being created, the immensely energetic Kumbhodara[296] drove the gods away with a staff. Scared, the gods ran away, uttering words of lamentation. The sages and others were agitated. Indra was filled with lassitude and sank down on his knees on the ground. Other devas and rishis were also filled with great lassitude and fell down on the ground. All the sages and gods were agitated. They got together and approached Vidhatri and Hari, who were friendly towards them. Kashyapa and all the other sages spoke to Hari, who dispels the fear of the worlds. "Alas! Destiny is powerful." The brahmanas said, "Because of our ill fortune, the task has been left incomplete." Others were amazed and exclaimed, "What has caused this impediment?" O sage! Hearing the words spoken by Kashyapa and the others, Hari comforted the sages and devas in the following words. Vishnu said, "O devas! O sages! All of you listen attentively to my words. Why are you miserable? Cast aside all this unhappiness. O devas! The worship of the great is not a task that is easily accomplished. It has been heard that when one worships the great, initially, there is misery. O devas! When he knows how firm you are, he will certainly be pleased. All of you think about this in your minds. How can Parameshvara Shiva, the lord of all the ganas, be quickly brought under your control? Utter Pranava first. Utter 'Namah' at the end. Say 'Shivaaya' and after that, 'shubham' twice. Utter 'kuru' twice and 'Shivaaya' again. Then utter 'Namah' and Pranava. The learned always used this mantra. 297 If you follow this and recite it one crore times, performing japa to Shambhu, Shiva will accomplish your task." The powerful Hari, who enters everywhere, said this."""

""O sage! At this, the devas worshipped Hara again. To accomplish the task of the devas, and specifically that of the sages, Hari and Vidhatri also fixed their minds on Shiva and performed japa. O supreme among sages! The devas stood there, resorted to their fortitude, and repeatedly uttered the word "Shiva" one crore times. Meanwhile, Shiva himself appeared before them in the form that is described and spoke the following words. Shri Shiva said, "O Hari! O Vidhatri! O devas! O sages who are auspicious in your vows! I am pleased. You have conquered me through this. Please ask for the desired boon."

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[296] One of Shiva's attendants.

[297] Following the instructions, the mantra is OUM namah Shivaaya shubham shubham kuru kuru Shivaaya namah OUM. 'OUM. Obeisance to Shiva. Do what is auspicious. Do what is auspicious. Obeisance to Shiva. OUM.'

The devas replied, "O lord of devas! O lord of the universe! O Shankara! Know that the gods have been incapacitated. If you are pleased, let Tripura be destroyed. O Paramesha! O friend of the distressed! O one who shows compassion! Please save us. Whenever devas have faced a calamity, you have repeatedly saved them." O brahmana! Hearing their words and those of Hari and Vidhatri, Mahesha smiled and spoke to them again. Mahesha said, "O Hari! O Vidhatri! O devas! O sages! Listen to all my words. In my view, Tripura has already been destroyed. Without any delay, give me the chariot, the charioteer, the divine bow and excellent arrows and everything else that you have pledged to give me earlier. O Vishnu! O Vidhatri! You are certainly the lords of the three worlds. Therefore, you should make efforts to make me the emperor in every possible way. The destruction of Tripura is held to be a task that will help devas. Hence, since you have the rights over creation and preservation, you should make all the efforts. This mantra is extremely sacred and auspicious. It generates delight in me. It bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation. For those who are Shiva's devotees, it brings everything wished for. It is blessed and bestows fame, a long lifespan, heaven and everything else that men desire. It bestows freedom from desire, in this world and the next for those who are emancipated. It bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation. If a man purifies himself and always chants this mantra, and if he hears it or makes it heard, he obtains everything that he desires." Hearing the words of Shiva, the paramatman, all the devas were delighted, even more than Hari and Brahma were. Following the command and for the sake of the universe, Vishvakarma built a divine and extremely beautiful chariot, that had all the devas in it.""

Chapter 178-3.5(8) (Description of the Chariot)

“Vyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! "Vyasa O supreme among Shiva's devotees! O one with virtuous inclinations! O father! You have made me hear a wonderful account about Paramesha. Now please tell me about the construction of the supreme chariot, which had all the devas in it. The intelligent Vishvakarma constructed this divine chariot for Shiva.""

"Suta continued, "The lord among sages heard the words spoken by Vyasa. Sanatkumara remembered Shiva's lotus feet and replied.""

"Sanatkumara answered, 'O Vyasa! O immensely wise one! Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, according to my intelligence, I will tell you about the construction of the chariot, built by Vishvakarma for the divinity Rudra. Lovingly and attentively, he constructed a divine chariot that had all the worlds in it. It was revered by everyone. It was made of gold and had all the elements in it. The right wheel was the sun, and the left wheel was the moon. O Indra among brahmanas! The right wheel had twelve spokes and the twelve Adityas presided over them.[298] O one excellent in vows! The left wheel had sixteen spokes, and these were presided over by the sixteen digits of the moon. The nakshatras decorated the left. O bull among brahmanas! The six seasons were the rims.

[298] Here, the twelve Adityas mean the 12 manifestations of Surya for the 12 months-Dhatri, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Vivasvat, Tvashtri, Vishnu, Amshumat, Bhaga, Pusha and Parjanya.

The sky constituted the joints and Mandara formed the inside of the chariot. [299] It is said that the Udaya and Asta mountains were the two poles. The great Meru was the base, supported by the Keshara mountains. The year was the speed and the two ayanas fixed the wheels. Muhurtas were joints for the wheels, while kalas are described as pins for the yoke. Kashthas are said to have been the nose, while kshanas were the shafts. Nimeshas are said to have been the floor, while anulavas were the poles. The firmament was the chariot's bumper, and heaven and emancipation were the standards. Bhramaka and Kamadudha were said to be the extremities of the yoke. [300] Manifest intelligence was the shaft of the chariot and unmanifest intelligence constituted the reeds, The corners were abamkara and the elements were said to be its strength. The senses were the ornaments on all sides. O supreme among sages! Faith was the chariot's movement. O one excellent in vows. The six Vedangas [301] were the ornaments, Puranas and texts on nyaya, mimamsa and dharma were the minor ornaments. There are strong and excellent mantras, possessing all the auspicious signs. Along with their letters, quatrains and effort made to recite them, they are said to have become the covering. Ananta, adorned with one thousand hoods, was the fastening. The directions and the sub-directions were the support for the chariot. Pushkara and the others[302] were the flags, golden and adorned with jewels. The oceans are said to have been the four bulls that dragged the chariot. Ganga and other best among rivers were adorned with every kind of ornament. All of them assumed the form of women and held whisks in their hands. They took up positions in different places and made the chariot beautiful. The seven, Avaha and the others, were the excellent golden steps. [303] In every direction, Mount Lokaloka [304] constituted the minor steps. Manasa and other lakes were the beautiful transverse steps on the outside. The Varshachalas [305] are said to have been the bonds in every direction. The residents of the nether regions constituted the bottom of the chariot. It is said that the divinity Bhagavan Brahma was the charioteer and held the reins. Pranava, the divinity associated with the brahman, became the whip. The letter "A" was the great umbrella. On the side, Mandara held a staff. The Indra among mountains was his bow and the lord of serpents himself became the bowstring. Devi Sarasvati, who has a form as the shruti texts, became the bells on the bow.

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[299] We have translated pushkara as joint and nida as inside. Kubara has been translated as the pole for attaching the yoke to the chariot. The sun rises from behind Mount Udaya and sets behind Mount Asta. Bandhura has been translated as a joint for the wheel, while shami has been translated as a pin for the yoke. Kala, kashtha, kshana, nimesha and anulavas are measurements of time. Ghona is the nose of a chariot, while danda is the shaft (for the axle). Anukarsha is the floor, while isha is one of the poles connecting to the yoke.

[300] The meaning of this sentence is unclear. Bhramaka must mean confusion, while Kamadudha is the milking of desire.

[301] Vedanga means a branch of the Vedas, and these were six kinds of learning that were essential to understand the Vedas-shiksha (phonetics), kalpa (rituals), vyakarana (grammar), nirukta (etymology), chhanda (metre) and jyotisha (astronomy). The six schools of darshana or philosophy are nyaya, vaisheshika, samkhya, yoga, mimamsa and Vedanta. Vedanta means the end of the Vedas and refers to the Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad texts.

[302] The clouds Samvartaka, Avarta, Pushkara and Drona.

[303] Seven winds blow between earth and heaven. They are Avaha, Pravaha, Samvaha, Uddhvaha, Vivaha, Parivaha and Paravaha.

[304] Mountains that form the frontier between the region that is illuminated and the region that is full of darkness.

[305] Each of the seven dvipas (continents) is divided into nine varshas. Varshachalas are mountains that form boundaries between the varshas.

The immensely energetic Vishnu became the arrows and Agni is said to have been the spear. O sage! The nigama texts are said to have been the four horses. The supreme stellar bodies became the remaining ornaments. The army originated from poison. The winds were said to be mounts. Vyasa and other rishis were the ones who drove these mounts. O lord among sages! What is the need to speak a lot? I have described it in a few words. Everything that exists in the universe is said to have found a place in the chariot. In this way, following the auspicious command of Brahma and Vishnu, the intelligent Vishvakarma created the chariot and its accompaniments perfectly."""

Chapter 179-3.5(9) (Shiva's Advance)

"Sanatkumara said, 'Such was the divine chariot, full of many wonders. After yoking the nigama texts as horses, Brahma handed the reins over to Shiva. Vishnu and other gods honoured the lord of devas and in many ways, requested Shambhu, the wielder of the trident, to mount. That divine chariot was fortified on every side and all the devas were in it. The great lord. Shambhu, mounted. He was praised by rishis, devas, gandharvas, pannagas, Vishnu, Brahma and the guardians of the worlds. He was surrounded by large numbers of apsaras, accomplished in singing. Shambhu, the one who bestows boons, was radiant and he glanced towards the charioteer. The chariot had been constructed with everything in the worlds. The horses had originated from the Vedas. When he mounted, they could not bear the load and fell down on the ground. The earth quaked and all the mountains trembled. Shesha couldn't bear the sudden burden and trembled, suffering. Bhagavan, who holds up the earth,ष्ण् assumed the form of an Indra among bulls and from below, supported the chariot for an instant. But in an instant, the Indra among bulls sank down on its knees on the ground. Mahesha was astride the chariot, and it was impossible to bear his great energy. Bhagavan [307] himself took up the reins in his own hand and steadied the horses. The divinity stabilized the excellent chariot. The horses were permeated by the Vedas and were as swift as the wind and thought. Brahma urged them and steadied the excellent chariot, driving it again towards the three cities. Mahesha was astride the chariot and the spirited danavas were there. Glancing towards the devas, Bhagavan Rudra Shankara spoke. "O excellent gods! The asuras can be killed only if the devas assume the forms of different animals and become Pashupatis, not otherwise. [308] To kill the supreme daityas, do this. They cannot be slain otherwise." Hearing the words of the intelligent lord of devas, all of them were dejected. They were suspicious of becoming animals. Ascertaining their sentiments, the lord of devas, Ambika's husband, laughed. Out of compassion, Shambhu addressed the devas in these words. Shambu said, "O excellent gods! Even if you assume animal inclinations, you will not fall down. Hear about the rite that must be performed for a person to be freed from the state of being an animal. Anyone who follows the divine rite of Pashupata will be freed. I pledge to you that this is the truth. Control yourselves and assume the state of being animals.

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[306] That is, Vishnu.

[307] Shiva.

[308] Shiva is Pashupati, the lord of animals. To destroy Tripura, Shiva and the devas had to assume the state of being animals. The Pashupata vow (vrata) is practiced for twelve years, six years, three years, one year, one month or twelve days.

O excellent gods! If a person practices my vow of Pashupata, he will be freed from the state of being an animal. There is no doubt about this. If a person observes this and faithfully serves for twelve years, and three years after that, he is freed from the state of being an animal. O supreme among gods! Therefore, you should observe this divine rite. There is no doubt that you will then be freed from the state of being animals." Hearing the words of Mahesha, the paramatman, the devas, Hari, Brahma and the others, agreed. Hence, all the excellent devas and asuras became the lord's animals. Rudra is Pashupati. He is the one who frees from the state of being an animal. That is the reason Mahesha is famous in the worlds as Pashupati. He is the one who bestows welfare. Hearing the words of the lord of devas, devas, Brahma, Vishnu and others, rejoiced. They uttered exclamations of "Victory". At that time, the great-souled one assumed a form that is impossible to describe even in one hundred years."""

"'In this way, Mahesha, Maheshani's lord and the lord of everything, left, to destroy Tripura and bring happiness to everyone. When the lord of devas left to destroy Tripura, the foremost among the kings of immortals also left with him. All of them were as resplendent as the sun. They were astride the best of elephants, horses, lions, bulls and chariots. They were like gigantic mountains and had the complexions of mountains. Their weapons were ploughs, shala trees, bludgeons and bhushundis, [309] The lords among gods left happily, with many kinds of weapons in their hands. With many weapons, they were supremely radiant and excellent. There were great festivities, with chants about Shambhu's victory. Indra, the one who originated from the lotus[310] and Vishnu were foremost among the ones who proceeded ahead of Maheshvara. All the sages, with matted hair, advanced cheerfully. They held staffs in their hands. Siddhas and charanas who roamed around in the sky showered down flowers. O Indra among brahmanas! All the lords among ganas also proceeded towards Tripura. Who is capable of enumerating their number? I will mention a few. The noble Bhringi, Indra among all the ganas, was surrounded by leaders of ganas, devas and ganas. Astride a vimana, as he left to engage with Tripura and destroy it, he resembled the great Indra. There were Kesha, Vigatavasa, Mahakesha, Mahajvara, Somavallisavarna, Somada, Sanaka, Somadhrik, Suryavarcha, Suryapreshanaka, Suryaksha, Surinama, Surasundara, Praskanda, Kundara, Chanda, Kampana, Atikampana, Indra, Indrajava, Yantri, Himakara, Shataksha, Panchaksha, Sahasraksha, Mahodara, Satijahu, Shatasya, Ranka, Karpuraputana, Dvishikha, Trishikha, Ahamkarakaraka, Ajavakra, Ashtavakra, Hayavakra and Arddhavakraka. These and others were the valiant leaders of ganas. They were many and innumerable. Surrounding Isha, they proceeded. There were hundreds of thousands who were devoid of any specific characteristics. Surrounding Mahadeva, the wielder of Pinaka, they proceeded. In an instant, through their mere thoughts, they were capable of burning down everything, mobile and immobile. The wielder of Pinaka is capable of burning down the entire universe. What need be said about the burning down of Tripura? Shambhu did not need a chariot, arrows, ganas or devas. O Vyasa! With the Pinaka in his hand, he left to burn down Tripura and the ones who hated devas. When he had himself gone, his taking gods and his own ganas with him was surprising. O supreme among rishis! What was the reason for this? I will tell you.

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[309] Some kind of catapult or sling.

[310] Brahma.

This was to establish his fame, which destroys great impurities, in the worlds. There was yet another reason of persuading the wicked. Among all devas, there is no one who is as distinguished as him."""

Chapter 180-3.5(10) (Burning of Tripura)

“Sanatkumara said, 'In this way, Mahadeva Shambhu was astride a chariot that was equipped in every possible way. He got ready to burn down everything in Tripura and the enemies of the gods. He stood in an elevated spot and affixed the excellent arrow. He fixed it to the bow and assumed the immensely wonderful posture of pratyalidha. [311] His hands were firm, and his eyes were focused. He remained in that immobile posture for a hundred thousand years. Ganesha was stationed on his thumb. During this time, Tripura and the daityas did not come within the range of vision of the wielder of the trident. Munjakesha[312] Virupaksha Hara stood there, holding the bow and arrow. An extremely beautiful voice was then heard from the firmament. "O Bhagavan! O lord of the universe! Until Vinayaka [313] is worshipped, you will not be able to destroy Tripura." Hearing these words, the slayer of Andhaka,[314] summoned Bhadrakali and worshipped the one with the face of an elephant. Having worshipped Vinayaka, he was happy and content. In front of him, Bhagavan Hara saw Tripura, inhabited by the great-souled daityas who were sons of Taraka, in the sky. They had come together, as they were meant to. Maheshvara, the lord of devas, is the paramatman and is worshipped by everyone. He does not become successful in a task because of someone else's favour. He rules himself and is the supreme brahman. He is saguna and nirguna. Without being discerned, he is the lord of everyone. He is the unsullied paramatman. His atman is in the five divinities, [315] He is worshipped by the five divinities. He is the supreme lord. There is no one who deserves to be worshipped by him. He is the refuge who is worshipped. O sage! That being the case, everything occurred because of his pastimes. Such is the conduct of the lord of devas, Mahesha, who bestows boons. That is the reason Mahadeva worshipped Ganadhipa."""

"""At that time, the three cities quickly came together. O sage! The three cities became like one. There was tumultuous rejoicing among the great-souled devas and others. All the devas, ganas, siddhas and supreme rishis uttered words of "Victory" and praised the one with eight forms. [316] Brahma and Vishnu, the lord of the universe, said, "O Maheshvara!

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[311] Alidha is a posture in shooting where the right knee is bent in front and the left leg is drawn back. Pratyalidha is the opposite, with the left knee bent in front and the right leg drawn back. Pratyalidha is the natural posture for any right-handed person.

[312] Shiva's name.

[313] Ganesha

[314] Shiva killed an asura named Andhaka.

[315] The five are interpreted in different ways. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Skanda and Indra is one possibility. Skanda, Ganesha, Durga, Rudra and Vishnu is another.

[316] The eight forms of Shiva can be interpreted in different ways. He often has eight names-Bhava, Sharva, Rudra, Pashupati, Ugra, Mahadeva, Bhima and Ishana. (The list of eight names does vary though.) His eight forms are also identified with the five elements, the sun, the moon and the sacrifice. There is thus no unique way to interpret the number eight.

The time has arrived for slaying the daityas, Taraka's sons who reside in Tripura. O lord! Please perform the task for devas. They have come together. O lord of devas! Please do it before the cities are separated again. Please release the arrow and reduce Tripura to ashes." Sharva drew the bowstring back and fixed the arrow, the revered pashupata weapon. He thought of Tripura. The divinity Mahadeva is supremely skilled in pastimes. For some reason, he glanced at it with contempt. In an instant, Virupaksha was capable of reducing Tripura to ashes. However, Paramesha, the destination of the virtuous, waited for the right time. With his glance, the lord of devas is capable of burning down the three worlds. "So as to extend our fame, you should now release the arrow." Vishnu, Brahma and everyone else praised him in this way. Maheshvara desired to burn down Tripura with that arrow. At the muhurta known as abhila, [317] he drew the wonderful bow back. The bowstring slapped against his palms and the loud roar was impossible to bear. He addressed the great asuras and made them hear his own name. He released that fierce arrow, with a radiance like that of one crore suns. It was swift in speed and pervaded by Vishnu. It blazed greatly and Vahni was on the tip. It burnt down Tripura and the daityas in the three cities, destroying their impurities. Having come together, the three cities were burnt down and reduced to ashes. Burnt, they fell down on earth, girdled by the four oceans. [318] Hundreds of daityas were burnt down by the fire in the arrow, uttering loud sounds of lamentation. After all, they had deviated from the worship of Shiva. Along with his brothers, Tarakaksha was burnt down. He remembered his own lord and divinity, Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees. Full of great devotion, he lamented, using many types of words. In his mind, he glanced towards Mahadeva and spoke to him. Tarakaksha said, "O Bhava! You know that you have been satisfied by me and my relatives. This is true. You have burnt us down. But burning down at your hands is difficult for even the gods and asuras to obtain. That being the case, in every birth, let our intelligence and sentiments be devoted to you." O sage! As they were saying this, following Shiva's command, Vahni burnt down the danavas and reduced them to ashes. There were other danavas who were children and aged. O Vyasa! Following Shiva's command, they were also swiftly burnt down and reduced to ashes. Like the world at the end of a kalpa, the fire burnt down everyone-men, women and mounts who were there. Some excellent women let go of the necks of their husbands and were burnt down. Some were asleep and not attentive. Some women were exhausted from sexual intercourse. Some were burnt partially. Realizing this, they were confused and lost their senses. There wasn't even the most subtle of objects, mobile or immobile, in Tripura that escaped being burnt down by the terrible fire. The only one left was Maya, the undecaying Vishvakarma of the daityas. Those who did not oppose devas were saved by Shambhu's energy. When there is a calamity, a virtuous devotee seeks refuge with Mahesha. There were daityas and other beings who, in thoughts and deeds, had not created any impediments. They were not destroyed. Therefore, it is the task of the virtuous to avoid deeds that are condemned in the worlds. These lead to decay and must not be followed. There should not be a situation like that faced by the residents of Tripura. This is everyone's view. Of course, there is always destiny. Through the strength of worshipping Shiva, daityas and all their relatives who worshipped Rudra became Ganapatis."""

[317] There is no muhurta known as abhilalabhilasha. This simply means the desired muhurta.

[318] There are actually seven oceans. Hence, four probably means the four oceans around Bharatavarsha.

Chapter 181-3.5(11) (Praise by Devas)

“Vyasa asked, 'O Brahma's son! O immensely wise one! O supreme among Shiva's devotees! You are blessed. Once all of Tripura was burnt down, what did devas do? Where did Maya go? Where did the other lords who had been burnt go? If it is an account about Shambhu, please tell me everything."""

"Suta said, "Hearing Vyasa's words, Sanatkumara, the creator's illustrious son, remembered Shiva's feet and replied.""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O Vyasa! O immensely intelligent one! O son of Parashara! [319] Listen to Mahesha's conduct. This destroys all sins. In his pastimes, he was following the ways of the world. Maheshvara burnt down everything in Tripura, full of daityas. The gods were especially surprised. Devas, along with Indra and Upendra, did not say anything. All of them glanced at the immensely energetic Rudra with fear. He was fierce and generated great fear. He blazed in the ten directions. He resembled one crore suns. He resembled the fire at the time of dissolution. All the gods stood there, with their faces lowered. Devi, Himalaya's daughter, also looked at the divinity with fear. Seeing that the army of devas was terrified, the bulls among rishis did not say anything. They stood there, in every direction, prostrating themselves. On seeing Shankara's form, Brahma was also scared. With a satisfied heart, he controlled himself and along with the devas, praised him. Though Maheshvara is subservient towards his devotees, Vishnu was also scared of the lord of devas, Bhava Hara, the destroyer of Tripura, who was with Girija. Brahma said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! You show favours towards your devotees. O Paramesha! O one who brings welfare to all the devas! Be pleased. O protector of the world! Be pleased. O one who grants bliss! Be pleased. O Shankara! Be pleased. O lord! O Parameshvara! Be pleased. O one whose form is OUM! I prostrate myself before you. You are the one who enables a person to cross over. O lord of all devas! O destroyer of Tripura! O Maheshvara! Be pleased. O divinity! Many kinds of words are used to speak of you. O Shankara! O one who is lovingly worshipped! You are without gunas. I prostrate myself before you. You are beyond Purusha and Prakriti. You are without transformations. You are eternal. You are always content. You are radiant. You are without blemish. You are divine. You possess the three gunas. I prostrate myself before you. You possess gunas. I prostrate myself before you. You are the lord of heaven. I prostrate myself before you. You are Sadashiva. You are serene. You are Mahesha. You wield the Pinaka. You know everything. You are the refuge. O Sadyojata! [320] I prostrate myself before you. O Vamadeva! O Rudra! O Tatpurusha! O Aghora! O one who is served properly! O one who is subservient to devotees! I prostrate myself before you. O Ishana! O one who should be worshipped! O one who confers bliss on devotees! Please save us. Please protect us. O Mahadeva! All the immortals are scared. Now that Tripura has been burnt, all the immortals have become successful in their objectives."

[319] Vyasa was the son of the sage Parashara.

[320] One of Shiva's names. Stated very simply, Sadyojata is the form that bestows happiness and unhappiness and faces the west. Shiva has multiple forms. There are five forms that correspond to the directions. Vama/Vamadeva is the form that represents the turiya state of consciousness and faces the north. Aghora is the form that represents jnana and faces the south. Tatpurusha stands for bliss and faces the east. Ishana represents space and faces upwards.

All the devas separately praised him and prostrated themselves before Sadashiva. Brahma and the others were extremely happy."""

""Brahma himself lowered his shoulders. He joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself before the divinity Maheshvara Tripurari. [321] Brahma said, "O Bhagavan! O divinity! O lord of devas! O destroyer of Tripura! O Mahadeva! May my great devotion towards you never waver. O lord of devas! O Shankara! Let me always be your charioteer. O lord! O Parameshvara! May you always be favourably disposed towards me." In this way, Vidhatri extolled Shambhu, who is affectionate towards his devotees. Pervasive in intelligence, his shoulders were lowered, and his hands were joined in salutation. He stopped. Bhagavan Vishnu also prostrated himself before Maheshvara. He joined his hands in salutation and lauded Maheshvara. Vishnu said, "O lord of devas! O Mahesha! O friend of the distressed! O one who shows compassion! O Paramesha! Be pleased. Show your compassion towards those who are lovingly prostrating themselves. O nirguna! I prostrate myself before you. Then again, you are saguna. Prakriti is your form. Then again, Purusha is your form. The gunas are your form. I bow down before you. O one whose atman is in the universe! I prostrate myself before you. O one who loves devotion! O serene one! O Shiva! O paramatman! O Sadashiva! O Rudra! O lord of the universe! I prostrate myself before you. From now on, may my devotion towards you be steady and increase." The supreme among Shiva's excellent devotees said this and stopped. All the devas prostrated themselves and spoke to Parameshvara. The devas said, "O protector of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who shows compassion! O Shankara! O lord of the universe! Be pleased. O Parameshvara! Be pleased. O universal creator! Be pleased. We happily prostrate ourselves before you. May our devotion towards you be steady and let its flow increase." In this way, the lord of devas was extolled by Brahma, Hari and the immortals. Pleased in his mind, Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds, replied. Shankara said, "O Vidhatri! O Hari! O devas! 1 am especially pleased with you. All of you think and ask for the desired boon that is there in your minds." O supreme among sages! Hearing Hara's words, all the devas were pleased in the inner recesses of their hearts and replied. All the devas said, "O divinity! O lord of devas! O Bhagavan! Know that we, gods, are your servants. O supreme divinity! If you are pleased with us, please grant us the boon that you will manifest yourself whenever devas face a misery and that you will always destroy that misery." Simultaneously addressed by Brahma, Hari and the immortals in this way, Bhagavan Rudra was pleased in his mind and agreed to this. "This will always be the case. I am pleased with this hymn. O gods! If people read this, or hear it, I will certainly always grant them whatever they wish for." Having said this, the delighted Shankara gave them everything that was liked by all the devas. Hara always removes the miseries of devas."""

Chapter 182-3.5(12) (Devas Return)

"Sanatkumara said, 'Meanwhile, danava Maya saw that Shambu was pleased. As a result of the strength of his compassion, he had not been burnt. Extremely happy, he approached. Rejoicing, he prostrated himself before Hara and the other gods. He lowered his shoulders, joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself before Shiva again. After this, he got up and glanced at Shiva with eyes of love. His voice faltered in joy.

[321] Tripurari means Tripura's enemy and is one of Shiva's names.

His atman was full of devotion and Maya, supreme among danavas, praised him. Maya said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who is affectionate towards his devotees! O Shankara! Your form is like that of a kalpavriksha. You do not favour any particular side. Radiance is your form. I prostrate myself before you. The universe is your form. I prostrate myself before you. O one with the pure atman! 1 prostrate myself before you. O one who purifies! I prostrate myself before you. O one with wonderful forms! O eternal one! O one who is beyond forms! I prostrate myself before you. O one with a divine form! O divine one! O one who bestows divinity! I prostrate myself before you. O one who destroys the afflictions of all those who prostrate themselves! O one with welfare in your atman! I prostrate myself before you. O creator, preserver and destroyer of the three worlds! 1 prostrate myself before you. I bow down. O one who can be approached by devotees through devotion! O ocean of compassion! I prostrate myself before you. O one who ensures success in obtaining fruits of austerities! O Shivaa's beloved! O Shivaa's lord! O supreme lord! O one who loves to be praised! I do not know how to praise. O Sarvesha! Be pleased. I have sought refuge with you. Save me." O best among brahmanas! Hearing the words of praise spoken by Maya, Parameshvara was pleased. He replied to Maya affectionately. Shiva said, "I am pleased with you. O Maya! O supreme among danavas! Ask for a boon. There is no doubt that I will grant you what you wish for." Maya, bull among danavas, heard what Shiva Shambhu said. He lowered his shoulders, joined his hands in salutation, bent down and replied to the lord. Maya answered, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! If you are pleased with me and if I am worthy of a boon, please grant me eternal devotion towards you. Let me always be friendly towards your devotees. Let me always possess compassion towards the distressed. O Parameshvara! Let me ignore other beings who are crooked. O Maheshvara! May I never possess the sentiments of an asura. O protector! Let me always be fearless. Let me always be immersed in your auspicious chants." Shankara Parameshvara, affectionate towards his devotees, was asked in this way. Pleased, he replied to Maya. Maheshvara said, "O bull among danavas! You are blessed. You are devoted to me, and you are without aberrations. I will now grant you all the boons that you have asked for. Go to the world known as Vitala, as beautiful as heaven. Following my command, go there, with your own family. You will remain there, fearless. You will always be happy and possess devotion. As a result of my instruction, you will never possess the sentiments of an asura." Thus addressed, he lowered his head before the great-souled Shankara. He prostrated himself before the gods and went to Vitala."

""Meanwhile, those with the shaven heads arrived there. They prostrated themselves before Vishnu, Brahma and the other gods and asked, "O devas! Where will we go? What task will we undertake? Please instruct us quickly. We will carry out your commands. O Hari! O Vidhatri! O gods! We have committed a wicked deed. The daityas were devotees of Shiva and we destroyed their devotion towards Shiva. We will reside in hell for one crore kalpas. Since we have opposed devotion towards Shiva, there is no doubt that there is no salvation for us. However, we performed this wicked deed because of your wish. Therefore, show us your compassion and tell us a means of pacification. We have sought refuge with you." Those with shaven heads stood in front of them, hands joined in salutation. Hearing their words, Vishnu, Brahma and the other gods replied to them. Vishnu and the others said, "O ones with shaven heads! Under no circumstances should you be scared. All of these wonderful events occurred because of Shiva's command. You will not have a wicked destination that brings you misery. You reside with Shiva and have done a good deed for devas and rishis. Shambhu acts to bring welfare to devas and rishis. Those who bring

welfare to devas and rishis are loved by him. Men who ensure the welfare of devas and rishis never have a wicked destination. But from now on, when kali yuga has entered, men who follow this view will have a wicked destination. There is no doubt that we have spoken the truth. O ones with shaven heads! O patient ones! You will follow our command and until kali yuga has actually arrived. you will reside in the desert regions, hidden. Go there. When kali yuga arrives, you will establish your own views. People will be deluded by kali yuga, and those foolish ones will accept your views." O lord among sages! The lords among gods instructed those with shaven heads in this way. They bowed down and left for their designated hermitages."',

“Bhagavan Rudra burnt down the residents of Tripura and accomplished his objective. The great yogi was worshipped by Brahma and the others. Having accomplished this great deed for the immortals, along with all his own ganas, Devi Shivaa and his sons, the lord vanished from the spot. When the divinity vanished, along with Shivaa and his family, the bow, the arrows and the other equipment also vanished from the place. Brahma, Hari, devas, sages, gandharvas, kinnaras, nagas, sarpas, apsaras and humans were happy. Rejoicing, they left for their own respective abodes, praising and chanting about Shankara's fame. They reached their destinations and were full of joy. I have thus told you everything about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest, about the destruction of Tripura and about his supreme pastimes. This blessed account bestows fame and a long lifespan and increases grain and wealth. It confers objects of pleasure and emancipation. What else do you wish to hear? If a person constantly reads, or hears, this supreme account, he enjoys everything that he desires in this world. At the end, he obtains emancipation.""'

Chapter 183-3.5(13) (Shakra Gets His Life Back)

"Vyasa said, 'O brahmana! O illustrious one! O Brahma's son! I I have earlier heard that lord Shankara killed the great daitya, Jalandhara. O immensely wise one! Please tell me in detail about that conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest. After hearing about his unblemished fame, who can be content?"'"

"Suta said, "The great sage, Brahma's son, was asked this by Vyasa. Accomplished in the use of words, he calmly spoke words that were full of meaning.""

"Sanatkumara said, 'O sage! On one occasion, Jiva [322] and Shakra were filled with great devotion. Greatly desiring to see Isha, they went to Kailasa. The lord Shankara got to know that the guru and Indra had arrived. So as to test their jnana, the destination of the virtuous wished to show himself in a certain way. Completely naked, he obstructed their path. The matted hair on his head was knotted and his face beamed. The guru and Shakra were proceeding happily. They saw this terrible being in the middle of the road. His appearance was extraordinary. He was greatly energetic, but serene. The matted hair on his head was knotted. His arms were long, and his chest was broad. He was fair, but he was terrible to behold. Purandara was extremely insolent because of his entitlement. He did not know that the person blocking his path was Shankara and questioned him. Purandara asked, "Who are you? Where have you come from? What is your name? Speak the truth.

[322] Brihaspati's name.

Is Shambhu in his place? Or has the lord gone somewhere else?" Asked by Shakra, the ascetic did not say anything in reply. Though Shakra asked again, the naked one did not reply. Purandara, the lord and king of the worlds, asked again. However, the lord engages in pastimes. The great yogi had assumed this form and was silent. Though asked repeatedly by Shakra, the naked one did not say anything in reply. Bhagavan wished to test Shakra's jnana. Insolent because of the prosperity of the three worlds, the lord of devas was angered. He addressed the one with the matted hair in words of censure. Indra said, "Though I asked, I will slay you with the vajra. Who will save you?" Saying you did not give me an answer. O evil-minded one! Therefore, this, the wielder of the vajra glanced angrily at him. So as to kill the naked one, he raised the vajra. The divinity Sadashiva saw that Purandara had raised the vajra in his hand. Before he could hurl the vajra, Shankara paralyzed him. Rudra was overwhelmed by rage. His eyes turned fierce and terrible. He swiftly blazed in energy, as if he was going to burn him down. Such was Rudra's rage and valour, that Shachi's husband could not move his arm. He was like a serpent, burnt down by a mantra."""

As he blazed in his own energy, Brihaspati used his intelligence to immediately fathom that this was the lord Hara. He prostrated himself. Pervasive in his intelligence, the guru joined his hands in salutation. He lay down on the ground, like a rod, and used a hymn to praise the lord. The guru said, "O divinity who is supreme above the devas! O Mahadeva! O paramatman! I prostrate myself before you. O lord! O Maheshvara! O Tryambaka![323] O Kapardin! [324] O protector of the distressed! O potent one! O slayer of Andhaka! I prostrate myself before you. O destroyer of Tripura! O Sharva! O brahman! O Parameshthi! O Virupaksha! O Rudra! O one with many forms! O Shambhu! O malformed one! O one with extreme forms! O one who is beyond forms! I prostrate myself before you. O one who arranged for the destruction of the sacrifice! [325] O one who bestows the fruits of sacrifices! O one whose form is the sacrifice! O one who initiates supreme karma! I prostrate myself before you. O destroyer of Kala! [326] O Kala! O one who wears terrible serpents! O Paramesha! I prostrate myself before you. O one who pervades everything! I prostrate myself before you. O one who severed Brahma's head! I prostrate myself before you. O one lauded by Brahma and Chandra! O one who loves brahmanas! I prostrate myself before you. O paramatman! I prostrate myself before you. You are fire. You are wind. You are space. You are water. You are the earth. You are the radiance in the sun and the moon and the circle of stellar bodies. You are Vishnu. You are Brahma. O supreme lord! You are praised by them, Sanaka and the other sages and Narada, store of austerities. You are the lord of all the worlds. Your atman is in the universe. You are everything, but you are distinct from everything. You are beyond Prakriti. With rajas, you assume the name of Vidhatri and create the worlds. With sattva, you assume the form of Hari and protect the entire universe. O Mahadeva! With tamas, you assume the form of Hara. In your pastimes, you reduce the entire universe to the five elements. O creator of the universe! With a strength derived from you, the sun heats. The moon showers down amrita on the world. The wind blows. O Shankara! With a strength derived from you, the clouds shower down water. With a strength derived from you, Shakra protects the three worlds, as if they are sons.

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[323] Three-eyed one.

[324] One with matted hair.

[325] Daksha's sacrifice.

[326] Yama.

With a strength derived from you, the clouds, all devas and lords among sages implement their own respective rights. They are scared of you. Men on earth serve your lotus feet. O Rudra! They thereby enjoy a prosperity in the worlds that even gods cannot obtain. Intent on serving your lotus feet, people obtain a destination that is extremely rare for anyone to get, one that even those who are rich in yoga cannot reach." In this way, Brihaspati praised Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds."""

""He made Purandara fall down at Isha's feet. With his head lowered, Indra, lord of devas, fell down at his feet. Bent down in humility, Brihaspati addressed these words to Shiva. Brihaspati said, "O protector of the distressed! O Mahadeva! He has fallen down at your feet. Please save him. Pacify the rage in your eyes. O Mahadeva! Be pleased. Save Indra, who has sought refuge with you. Please pacify the fire that has arisen from the eye in your forehead." Maheshvara, the lord of devas, heard the words spoken by the guru. The ocean of compassion replied in words that rumbled like the clouds. Maheshvara replied, "O Brihaspati! The fire has already originated from my eye. How can I restrain it? A snake cannot don the skin it has cast off again." Hearing Shankara's words, Brihaspati was dejected, and his mind was agitated by fear. Brihaspati said, "O divinity! O Bhagavan! Compassion must always be shown towards devotees. You are known as one who is affectionate towards his devotees. O Shankara! Please make that come true. O lord of devas! You should fling your own fierce energy somewhere else. You save all your devotees. Please save Purandara." The guru addressed Rudra, who is known as someone who is affectionate towards his devotees, in this way. He destroys the afflictions of those who prostrate themselves before him. Pleased, he replied to the priest of the gods. Shiva said, "O son! I am pleased with your praise and am bestowing an excellent boon. Since you have granted Indra his life, from now on, you will be famous as Jiva. [327] This fire that arose from the eye in my forehead was meant to destroy the king of gods. I will fling it far away, so that Indra does not suffer." Saying this, he held the wonderful fire that had arisen from his own energy in his hand. Emerging from the eye in his forehead, it was flung into the waters of the salty ocean. The lord Rudra, who engages in great pastimes, vanished from the spot. Freed from their fear, the guru and Shakra were extremely happy. They had seen the person they had gone to meet. Successful in their objective, the guru and Shakra happily returned to their respective abodes.

Chapter 184-3.5(14) (Jalandhara's Birth and Marriage)

"Vyasa Tyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! O Brahma's son! I bow down before you. I have now heard this wonderful account about the great-souled Shambhu. O brahmana! He flung the energy that had emerged from the eye in his forehead into the salty ocean. O father! Quickly tell me what happened after that.'"""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O son! O immensely wise one! Hear about Shiva's extremely wonderful pastimes. If a devotee listens to this faithfully, he obtains the destination obtained by yogis. The energy that emerged from Shiva's eye in the forehead was flung into the salty ocean and instantly assumed the form of a child.

[327] The root of the word Jiva means life, the principle of life.

This is the confluence of the Sindhuganga [328] with the ocean. The child cried loudly. All the worlds thought he was terrible. As a result of the sound of his crying, the earth trembled repeatedly. Svarloka and Satyaloka were deafened by the sound. As a result of the child's crying, all the worlds were terrified. The minds of all the guardians of the worlds were agitated. O Indra among brahmanas! What is the need to speak a lot? All mobile and immobile entities trembled. O son! As a result of that crying, everything in the world turned inauspicious. All the devas and sages were agitated. They quickly went and sought refuge with Brahma, the grandfather and guru of the worlds. Having gone there, devas, along with Vasava, and sages prostrated themselves and praised Parameshthi. They spoke to him. The devas said, "O lord of the worlds! O lord of the gods! A fear has presented itself. This extraordinary sound has originated. O great yogi! Please destroy it." Hearing their words, Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, desired to go there. Amazed, he wondered, "What is this?" O son! Along with the gods, he descended from Satyaloka to earth. Wishing to find out, he went to the ocean. When Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, arrived, he saw the child in the ocean's lap. Seeing that Vidhatri had arrived, the ocean assumed the form of a deva. Lowering his head and prostrating himself, he placed the child in his lap. Amazed, Brahma addressed the ocean in the following words. "O store of waters! Please tell me quickly. From whom has this child been born?" Hearing Brahma's words, the ocean rejoiced. He bent down and praised the lord of subjects. Joining his hands in salutation, he replied. The ocean said, "O Brahma! O lord of all the worlds! I obtained this child at the confluence of Sindhuganga. I do not know where he has come from. O guru of the universe! Please perform jatakarma and the other samskaras for him. O Vidhatri! You should state everything about the fruits that will be reaped by this infant."[329] As the ocean of water said this, the child, the ocean's son, seized Brahma by the throat and shook him repeatedly. Shaken in this way, Vidhatri, the creator of all the worlds, suffered. At the time, tears flowed from his eyes. In some fashion, he freed his throat from the hands of the immensely energetic son who had been born from the ocean. Brahma affectionately said, "O ocean! Listen. I will tell you everything about the fruits that will be reaped by this infant. Listen attentively. He made water flow from the eyes of Vidhatri, that is, me. Therefore, he will be famous under the name of Jalandhara, [330] He will instantly turn into a youth and become accomplished in the meanings of all the sacred texts. He will be immensely valiant and a persevering fighter. He will be invincible in battles. He will be as deep as you. In battles, he will be like Guha. He will conquer everyone in battles. He will be ornamented with every kind of prosperity. This child will become the lord of all the daityas. He will defeat even Vishnu and will not be defeated by anyone. Barring Rudra, no other being will be able to kill him. He will then return to the ocean, from where, he has originated now. He will have a wife who will be devoted to her husband. She will increase his good fortune. She will be charming and beautiful in all her limbs. She will be pleasant in speech. She will be an ocean of good conduct." Saying this, he summoned Shukra and had his abhisheka in the kingdom performed. [331] Taking his leave from the lord of rivers, Brahma vanished."""

[328] This should be taken as the river Sindhu (Indus).

[329] Essentially, foretell his future.

[330] Jala is water. Literally, Jalandhara means bearing/holding water.

[331] Since Shukra is the preceptor of asuras.

""The ocean looked at him with eyes that dilated in joy. Rejoicing, he took his son and returned to his own residence. Delighted in his mind, he nurtured his son in many kinds of ways. He was charming and beautiful in all his limbs. He was extremely wonderful and energetic. The ocean invited the great asura, Kalanemi. He sought his daughter, named Vrinda, as a wife. The brave asura, Kalanemi, was intelligent and supreme among asuras, accomplished in his own tasks. O sage! He thought what the ocean had asked for, was a good idea. Following the norms of a brahma marriage, [332] he bestowed his daughter, whom he loved more than his own life, on the brave Jalandhara, who had emerged from the ocean. On the occasion of their marriage, there were great festivities. O sage! The major and minor rivers and all the asuras rejoiced. On seeing his son with a wife, the ocean was also extremely happy. Following the norms, he donated to brahmanas and others. Having been defeated by devas earlier, daityas had sought refuge in Patala. Having lost their sense of fear, they now returned to earth and sought refuge with him. After having bestowed the daughter on the ocean's son, the asuras, Kalanemi being the foremost, were immensely happy. To defeat devas, they sought refuge with him. The brave son of the ocean, known as Jalandhara, was the bravest among all valiant asuras. He obtained an extremely beautiful wife. With Kavi's powers, [333] he brought the kingdom under his subjugation."""

Chapter 185-3.5(15) (Battle between Devas and Jalandhara)

“Sanatkumara said, 'The ocean's son, Vrinda's husband, was extensive in his intelligence. On one occasion, the brave one was seated with his wife and was surrounded by all the asuras. Extremely happy, the extremely radiant Bhargava[334] arrived there. He was like the personified form of a mass of energy and illuminated all the directions. On seeing that their guru was arriving, all the asuras were delighted in their minds and quickly prostrated themselves before him. Lovingly, the ocean's son also did this. Bhargava was a reservoir of energy. Having pronounced his benedictions over them, he sat down on a beautiful seat. They also sat down, as they had been hall seated earlier. The brave son of the ocean, Jalandhara, was his excellent rule was unimpeded. He saw the king of daityas, Rahu, there, with his head severed. The son of the ocean quickly questioned Bhargava. Jalandhara asked, "O lord! Who has done this? Who has severed Rahu's head? O guru! Please tell me everything, exactly as it happened." Hearing the words of the son of the ocean, Bhargava remembered Shiva's lotus feet and replied accurately. Shukra replied, "O Jalandhara! O greatly valiant one! O aide of all the asuras! Listen. I will describe everything accurately to you. In earlier times, there was the brave Bali. He was the powerful son of Virochana and the grandson of Hiranyakashipu. He was supreme among those who knew about dharma. Defeated by him, the gods went and sought refuge with Rama's lord. In pursuit of their own selfish objectives, along with Vasava, they told him what had happened to them. Following his instructions, the gods contracted an alliance with asuras.

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[332] There are eight forms of marriage-brahma, daiva, arsha, prajapatya, asura, gandharva, rakshasa and paishacha. In the brahma form of marriage, the bride's father bestows his daughter, suitably attired and ornamented, on a worthy groom.

[333] Kavi is Shukracharya/Shukra.

[334] Shukracharya.

O son! They were discriminating in acts of deception and did this to further their own selfish ends. For the sake of amrita, they churned the ocean. With Vishnu helping them, all the gods and asuras did this. The enemies of daityas seized all kinds of jewels. Using deception, devas attentively drank the amrita. Consequently, the asuras suffered defeat. Vishnu helped the gods. Moreover, having drunk amrita, they had become strong. In the midst of devas, as Rahu was drinking amrita, Hari severed his head. [335] Hari is always partial." Kavi thus told him about the severing of Rahu's head; the churning of the ocean that devas had done for amrita; the seizing of jewels; the defeat of daityas; and the drinking of amrita by devas. He told him everything in detail. Hearing this, the immensely valiant and powerful son of the ocean was enraged. Hearing how his own father had been churned, his eyes turned red with rage."""

"He summoned Ghasmara, an excellent messenger. He told him everything that his guru had told him. He sent this messenger of his to Shakra. Accomplished, he lovingly honoured him in many kinds of ways and granted him freedom from fear. He then sent this messenger to heaven. Sent by the ocean's son, Ghasmara, sparkling in his intelligence, went to the place where all the devas were. Having gone there, the messenger quickly reached Sudharma. [336] He proudly held his head up high and addressed Indra of the devas in the following words. Ghasmara said, "Jalandhara is the son of the ocean and is the lord of all those who are daityas. He is extremely brave and powerful. Kavi himself is his aide. I am the brave one's messenger. I am known as Ghasmara, but I am not one who devours. [337] I have been sent by that brave one and have come to your presence. I will tell you everything about the command of Jalandhara, who is pervasive in his intelligence. He has conquered all the enemies of the daityas. Listen to what he has said. Jalandhara has said, 'Why did you use a mountain to churn my father, the ocean?[338] O worst among devas! You took away all the jewels from my father. That was not proper. Quickly return all those to me now. Think about this. Along with the devas, come and seek refuge with me. O worst among gods! Otherwise, you will suffer a lot of fear. I will destroy your kingdom. I am speaking the truth." Hearing the words of the messenger, the lord of the gods was amazed. Remembering the past, Indra was filled with both fear and rage. "When the mountains were terrified of me, he[339] gave them shelter inside himself. Earlier, he has protected my enemies, the sons of Diti. That is the reason I took away all the jewels that were found in him. Those who hate me cannot find happiness. I am telling you the truth. Earlier, the daitya known as Shankha, born from the ocean, hated me. He was foolish in intelligence. However, since he associated with virtuous people, I ignored this. But he was evil in intelligence and caused injury to large numbers of virtuous people. Hence, my younger brother, Hari, killed the sinner inside the stomach of the ocean.[340]

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[335] Devas and asuras sat down in different rows to have amrita. Vishnu deprived asuras of a share in amrita, but Rahu disguised himself as a deva and drank it. When Surya and Chandra pointed this out, Vishnu used his chakra to sever Rahu's head. At the time of eclipses, Rahu has his revenge by swallowing the sun and the moon.

[336] Indra's assembly hall.

[337] The word 'Ghasmara' means someone who devours or destroys.

[338] At the time of the churning of the ocean, Mount Mandara was used as a churning rod.

[339] The ocean.

[340] In his Matsya (fish) avatara, Vishnu killed Shankhasura.

O messenger! Therefore, quickly go to him and tell him the truth. Tell the son of the ocean everything about why the ocean was churned." The messenger known as Ghasmara was intelligent. When he was dismissed, he quickly left Indra's place and went to the spot where the brave Jalandhara was. The intelligent messenger told the king of daityas everything that Shakra had said."""

""When he heard this, the daitya's lips quivered in rage. He immediately made arrangements to defeat all the devas. In that effort of the Indra among asuras, all the sons of Diti, from various directions and from Patala, took part, arriving in crores and crores. There were crores of leaders of forces, Shumbha, Nishumbha and others. With these, the powerful and immensely valiant son of the ocean departed. Surrounded by all these soldiers, he quickly reached heaven. He blew his conch shell, which had originated from the water. In every direction, so did all the brave ones. Having reached heaven, the daitya stationed himself in Nandana. [341] Surrounded by all the soldiers, he roared like a lion. The devas saw that a large army of soldiers had surrounded the city of Amaravati from every side and was stationed there. They armoured themselves and emerged, to fight. A battle commenced between deva and danava soldiers. They rushed against each other and struck each other with clubs, bludgeons, arrows, maces, battle axes and spears. In a short space of time, the soldiers on both sides were covered in torrents of blood. Elephants, horses, chariots and infantry fell down, or were being brought down. The field of battle was as resplendent as the pale red clouds of evening. The daityas who died in the battle were brought back to life by Bhargava. He possessed knowledge about mritasanjivani and infused drops of water with this mantra. [342] In the battle, the son of Angiras [343] also repeatedly brought devas back to life, using divine herbs brought from Mount Drona. On seeing that they were being repeatedly revived in the battle, Jalandhara was filled with rage and addressed Bhargava in these words. Jalandhara said, "How is it that devas I have killed in the battle rise up again? We have not heard that knowledge about mritasanjivani exists elsewhere." Bhargava heard the words spoken by the son of the ocean. Pleased in his mind, the guru Shukra spoke to Jalandhara. Shukra answered, "For devas, the son of Angiras is bringing divine herbs from Mount Drona. O son! He is using these to revive them. Know that my words are true. O son! If you desire to be victorious, listen to my auspicious words. Use your arms to uproot Mount Drona. Fling it into the ocean." The Indra among daityas was addressed by his guru, Bhargava, in this way. He quickly went to the place where the king among mountains was located. The daitya used his arms to quickly fetch Drona. He hurled this into the ocean. Since he was this. The immensely valiant one, the son of the ocean, then returned to the great battle. He used many kinds of weapons to slaughter the large army of the gods. Seeing that devas were being killed, their guru went to the place where Mount Drona used to be. He did not see the Indra among mountains, worshipped by gods, there. Learning that the daitya had taken Drona away, Dhishana[344] was filled with fear. Anxious in his mind, Jiva returned and spoke to devas. The guru said, "All of you gods should run away. The great mountain Drona no longer exists. It is certain that the daitya, the son of the ocean, has destroyed it.

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[341] Indra's pleasure garden. Amaravati is Indra's capital.

[342] Shukracharya knew the mritasanjivani mantra, one that brings the dead (mrita) back to life (sanjivan).

[343] Brihaspati's father was Angiras.

[344] Dhishana is Brihaspati's name.

Jalandara is a great daitya and no one is capable of defeating him. Since he has been born from Rudra's portion, he will crush all the immortals. O gods! Since he has been responsible for his own manifestation, I have got to know his powers. Remember everything about how Shakra had insulted Shiva." The devas heard the words spoken by the acharya of the gods. They gave up all hopes of victory and were agitated by fear. In every direction, the king of daityas slaughtered them. Abandoning their perseverance, along with Vasava, they fled in the ten directions. Seeing that the devas had been routed, the daitya, the son of the ocean, entered Amaravati. There were the sounds of conch shells and drums and roars of "Victory". When the daitya entered the city, devas, with Shakra at the forefront, entered a cave in the golden mountain.[345] Tormented by daityas, they resided there. The asura duly gave separate excellent daityas, Shumbha and others, the separate rights enjoyed by Indra and others. He himself went to the cave in the golden mountain.""

Chapter 186-3.5(16) (Devas Fight Back)

“Sanatkumara said, 'On seeing that the daityas were arriving again, all the devas, along with Vasava, trembled in fear. Collectively, they fled. With Prajapati leading the way, all of them went to Vaikuntha. Along with Prajapati, all the gods bent down and uttered words of praise. The devas said, "O Hrishikesha! O mighty-armed one! O Bhagavan! O Madhusudana! O divinity! O lord of devas! O destroyer of all the daityas! I prostrate myself before you. O Vishnu! In the form of Matsya, you brought back the Vedas and saved the virtuous King Satyavrata from the deluge of dissolution.[346] I prostrate myself before you. When gods made that great effort to churn, you assumed the form of Kurma and supported Mount Mandara.[347] I prostrate myself before you. O Bhagavan! O protector! O Kratu![348] O support of people! You assumed the form of Sukara and raised up the earth. [349] I prostrate myself before you. O Vamana! I prostrate myself before you. O Vishnu! You are known as Upendra. O lord! In the form of a brahmana, you deceived Bali, Indra among daityas. [350] I prostrate myself before Parashurama. You were enraged and for the sake of your mother, [351] exterminated the kshatriyas. You harm those who are wicked. You are Rama, the one whobrought delight to the worlds. You set the norms for good conduct, [352] You quickly brought an end to Ravana. You were Sita's lord. I prostrate myself before you. I prostrate myself before Krishna, the paramatman, whose jnana was mysterious.

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[345] That is, Meru.

[346] King Satyavrata is more familiarly known as Vaivasvata Manu. Vishnu's Matsya avatara saved Manu and mankind from the great flood. The Vedas were stolen by a demon named Hayagriva. After the flood subsided, Matsya avatara killed Hayagriva and rescued the Vedas.

[347] Mandara was the churning road and Kurma (tortoise/turtle) avatara provided a base for Mandara.

[348] Vishnu's name.

[349] Vishnu's Varaha (avatara), sukara means pig. The demon Hiranyaksha stole the earth and hid it in the water. Varaha avatara killed Hiranyaksha and used his tusks to raise the earth up from the water.

[350] Vamana (dwarf) avatara took advantage of Bali's generosity and restored the three worlds to Indra.

[351] Since the sons of Kartavirya Arjuna killed Jamadagni, Parashurama's father.

[352] That is, Rama was Maryada Purusha, the expression used in the text.

You were the one who sported with Radha. [353] You engaged in many kinds of pastimes. I prostrate myself before the one who criticized the Vedas, the one with the mysterious body. You were the acharya who taught yoga to Jainas. O Uma's lord! You assumed the form of Buddha. I prostrate myself before you. I prostrate myself before the one who will bring an end to mlecchas in the form of Kalki. You are the one who is infinite in powers. You are the one who establishes virtuous dharma. I prostrate myself before the great-souled one who assumed the form of Kapila and spoke about samkhya yoga to Devahuti, [354] O lord! You were the acharya of samkhya. I prostrate myself before the Paramahamsa[355] who spoke about supreme jnana. In the form of jnana, which brings delight to the atman, you are the creator. You were the Vedavyasa who undertook the collation of the Vedas. I prostrate myself before you. For the welfare of the worlds, you composed the Puranas. Thus, engaged in tasks for devotees, you assumed Matysa and other forms. I prostrate myself before the lord who is the brahman. You are the cause behind creation, preservation and destruction. You bestow happiness and welfare. O Hari! You are attired in a are the one who dispels the afflictions of your servants. You yellow garment. Your mount is Tarkshya. [356] I prostrate myself before you. You are the one who undertakes every kind of rite. You are the refuge. I prostrate myself before you. I bow down. When the immortals are tormented by the daityas, you are like a vajra that destroys miseries. You lie down, using Shesha as a couch.[357] The sun and the moon are your eyes. I prostrate myself before you. O ocean of compassion! O Rama's husband! We have sought refuge with you. Jalandhara has expelled all the devas from heaven. Surya has been dislodged from his spot and so have Chandra and Vahni. The king of nagas has been expelled from Patala and so has Dharmaraja. [358] As they roam around on earth, the gods are no longer resplendent. We have sought refuge with you. Please think about killing him." Madhusudana heard the distressed words of devas. The ocean of compassion replied in words that rumbled like clouds. Vishnu said, "O devas! Cast aside your fear. I will leave for the field of battle and show the daitya Jalandhara my valour." Saying this, with a distressed mind, the enemy of daityas stood up. Affectionate towards his devotees, he was full of pity. He quickly mounted Garuda. Lakshmi, who had originated from the ocean, [359] saw that her beloved was leaving, with the devas. She joined her hands in salutation and with her eyes wet with tears, she spoke. Lakshmi said, "O lord! I am loved by you. O ocean of compassion! If I have always been devoted towards you, how can you kill my brother in a battle?" Vishnu replied, "I will display my valour against the daitya Jalandhara. Lauded by them, I am leaving quickly to fight against him. He has been born from Rudra's portion. Jalandhara cannot be killed by me. Brahma has also said so. Besides, you also love him." Saying this, the wielder of the conch shell, chakra and mace mounted Garuda. Along with the devas, Shakra and the others, Vishnu swiftly left, to fight."""

""He quickly reached the place where the daitya Jalandhara was. Along with the devas, Vishnu blazed in energy. He roared like a lion.

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[353] One of the rare instances of Radha being mentioned in Puranas other than Brahma Vaivarta Purana.

[354] Kapila's mother, to whom, he taught samkhya yoga.

[355] Supreme Hamsa, a term used for a great sadhaka.

[356] Garuda.

[357] Vishnu sleeps on Shesha naga.

[358] Lord of dharma, Yama.

[399] As a result of the churning of the ocean.

When Aruna's younger brother[360] beat his wings powerfully, the daityas suffered from the gusts of wind that were created. Like clouds in the sky, they were blown away. Jalandhara daitya saw that the daityas were suffering from these gusts of wind. Uttering words of rage, he advanced towards Vishnu. Meanwhile, the delighted devas started to fight. Nourished by Hari's energy, they were filled with great strength. Seeing that the deva soldiers had presented themselves and were ready to fight, extremely indomitable in battle, he commanded the daityas. Jalandhara said, "O supreme daityas! We will give them such a fight that they will find it difficult to handle. Shakra and the immortals may possess an army, but they are always cowards. Follow my command and let one hundred thousand Mouryas, one hundred Dhoumras, one crore asuras, one crore Kalakeyas, Kalakas, Dourhridas and one hundred thousand Kankas advance. Let others join in with their own respective armies. All of you prepare yourselves and advance, along with many soldiers. Employ many kinds of astras and shastras. Be without fear and have no doubts. O Shumbha! O Nishumbha! When it comes to fighting, devas are cowards. The two of you are immensely valiant. In an instant, you will destroy these insignificant ones." Thus commanded by daitya Jalandhara and accomplished in fighting, all the asuras fought, armed with the four kinds of forces. [361] They used clubs, sharp arrows, tridents, spears and javelins. Some struck and killed the enemy with tridents and battle axes. Powerful. they slaughtered the enemy with many kinds of weapons. The devas were also exceedingly valiant and were strengthened by Hrishikesha. Roaring like lions, they shot sharp arrows and fought with these. Some used sharp arrows. Others used clubs and javelins. Some used battle axes and spears to slaughter the enemy. Thus, a great battle between gods and asuras commenced. It was extremely fierce and caused fright to sages and siddhas."""

Chapter 187-3.5(17) (Vishnu and Jalandhara Fight)

“Sanatkumara said, 'The immensely valiant daityas Sslaughtered all the devas with battle axes, tridents and spears. The bodies of devas, including Vasava, were pierced by the daitya weapons and their minds were agitated by fear. Terrified and agitated in their minds, all of them fled from the field of battle. Hrishikesha saw that the gods were running away. Vishnu mounted Garuda and quickly advanced to fight. The rays from Sudarshana chakra blazed in every direction. There was a shining lotus in his radiant hand, the one that grants devotees freedom from fear. He held a conch shell, sword, mace and the Sharnga bow, and he was full of anger. The immensely valiant one was harsh in his use of weapons. He was accomplished in fighting. He twanged the Sharnga bow and roared. O sage! That great sound filled the three worlds. Enraged, Bhagavan Vishnu used arrows released from the Sharnga bow to sever the heads of crores of Diti's sons. Aruna's younger brother made them suffer by beating his wings. Those gusts of wind dispelled the daityas, like clouds from the sky. Jalandhara saw that the daityas were suffering from these gusts of wind. The great daitya was enraged and terrified large numbers of devas. Seeing that the daityas were being crushed, his lips quivered. The brave one advanced rapidly, so as to fight with Hari. He uttered a loud roar, terrifying both devas and asuras. The roar of the lord of daityas was such that it shattered the ears. The daitya's terrible roar filled everything. The mighty Jalandhara made the entire world tremble."""

[360] Garuda.

[361] Chaturanga-horses, elephants, chariots and infantry.

A great battle commenced between Vishnu and the Indra among daityas. As a result of their arrows, there was no space left in the sky. O sage! The battle between them amazed and frightened devas, asuras, rishis and siddhas. With a shower of arrows, Vishnu severed the daitya's standard, umbrella, bow and arrows. Then, with a single arrow, he pierced him in the heart. The daitya immediately got up and seized a club in his hand. He struck Garuda on the head and brought him down on the ground. With his lips quivering in rage, the daitya angrily struck Vishnu in the heart with a spear that radiated sparks. As he severed that club with his sword, Vishnu seemed to smile. The slayer of daityas pierced him with sparkling arrows shot from the Sharnga bow. Full of rage, Vishnu, the slayer of enemies of the gods, then quickly struck Jalandhara daitya with an extremely sharp and terrifying arrow. The immensely strong daitya saw that the arrow was flying towards him. He severed the arrow and swiftly struck Vishnu in the chest. The mighty-armed asura shot the arrow. However, the brave Keshava reduced the arrow to fragments as small as sesamum seeds and roared. Trembling in rage, the immensely strong one[362] again fixed an arrow to his bow and severed the arrow that had a head whetted on stone. Enraged, to destroy the enemy of the gods, Vasudeva again fixed an arrow to his bow and roared like a lion. The powerful Jalandhara, Indra among daityas, bit his lips in rage. Using an arrow, he severed Vishnu's bow, known as Sharnga. He next used an extremely sharp arrow to pierce Madhusudana. The immensely brave one was fierce in his prowess and caused terror among devas. Bhagavan Keshava is the protector of the worlds. But his bow was severed. To destroy Jalandhara, he hurled his own supreme mace. The mace hurled by Hari blazed like a flaming fire. Its force was unstoppable, and it crashed against his body. However, though struck by it, the great daitya did not tremble even slightly. Jalandhara was crazy and intoxicated and it was as if he had been struck by a garland of flowers. Invincible in battle, Jalandhara was filled with rage. The one who caused terror among devas hurled a trident, that resembled the fire, towards Hari. However, Vishnu remembered Shiva's lotus feet. Using the sword known as Nandaka, he quickly severed the trident. When the trident was severed, the Indra among daityas suddenly leapt down. 363 He advanced and struck Vishnu firmly in the chest with his fists. The immensely valiant Vishnu ignored the pain. Using his firm fists, he struck Jalandhara in the chest. Those two extremely strong ones then wrestled and fought using their arms, fists and thighs, making the earth suffer. O best among sages! Having fought with the asura for a very long time in this way, he[364] was amazed and his heart was dejected."""

""However, Bhagavan possesses maya and is supreme among those who know maya. Pleased, he spoke to the king of daityas in a voice that rumbled like the clouds. Vishnu said, "O supreme among the best of daityas! You are blessed. You are invincible in battle. Since you are a great lord, you are not scared of the best and greatest of weapons. Many fierce daityas have been killed by these weapons. They were immensely energetic and indomitable. The bodies of those brave ones were mangled, and they have died. O great daitya! After fighting with you, I am pleased. You are great. I have not seen anyone as brave as you in the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile entities. O Indra among daityas! I am pleased at your valour. Ask for a boon. Tell me what is in your mind. I will give you even what should not be given."

[362] Jalandhara.

[363] From his mount.

[364] Vishnu.

Jalandhara heard the words of Vishnu Hari, who possessed maya. The immensely intelligent king of the daityas replied. Jalandhara answered, "O brother-in-law![365] If you are pleased with me, grant me the following boon. Along with your companions and my sister, reside in my house with me." Hearing the words of the great daitya, Hari, lord of devas, wasn't happy. However, Bhagavan agreed. Along with his companions and all the devas, Vishnu went to the city named Jalandhara [366] with Rama and resided there. Since Vishnu and his sister arrived and resided with him in his house, the daitya Jalandhara was delighted in his mind. Jalandhara instated danavas in rights meant for devas and rejoicing, returned to earth again. The ocean's son appropriated whatever had been accumulated by devas, gandharvas and siddhas and remained there. He established the extremely strong daitya, Nishumbha, in Patala. The powerful one brought Shesha and others to earth. He made large numbers of devas, gandharvas, siddhas, sarpas, rakshasas and humans residents of his own city and ruled over the three worlds. In this way, Jalandhara brought devas under his subjugation. Following dharma, he ruled over the subjects, as they were his own sons. No one suffered from disease. No one was miserable. No one was emaciated. No one was seen to be distressed. Following dharma, he ruled over the kingdom. "

Chapter 188-3.5(18) (Conversation between Narada and Jalandhara)

‘‘‘Sanatkumara said, 'In this way, the great asura followed dharma and ruled over the earth. O lord among sages! Though he treated them like brothers, devas were miserable. In their minds, all the miserable gods went and sought refuge with Shiva Shankara, lord of devas and lord over all lords. They used eloquent words to praise Bhagavan Maheshvara. He is always affectionate towards his devotees, and they reported their own sorrows. Mahadeva grants everything desired to his devotees. Wishing to accomplish a task for devas, he summoned Narada and sent him. The divine sage possessed jnana and was devoted to Shambhu, the destination of the virtuous. Following Shiva's command, he went to the devas, who were in the city of the daitya. All the gods, Vasava and others, were agitated. They saw that Narada was arriving and stood up. Full of affection, they bent down and offered the sage Narada a seat. The faces of the gods, Shakra being the foremost, were anxious. When the supreme sage was comfortably seated on his seat, they prostrated themselves before him. Distressed, the gods, Vasava and others, spoke to the lord among sages. The devas said, "O best among sages! O one who shows compassion! Listen to the reason for our grief. O lord! You are loved by Shankara. Having heard, swiftly destroy the grief. Jalandhara daitya has routed the gods badly. He has become a lord in our respective positions. We are miserable and anxious. The one with the hot rays[367] and Chandra have been dislodged from their respective positions, So have Vahni, Dharmaraja, the guardians of the worlds and others. The extremely strong one has made all the devas suffer. We are unhappy and have come together to seek refuge with you.

[367] Since Vishnu was married to Lakshmi, born from the ocean. The text uses the word bhavuka. This specifically means sister's husband.

[366] In Punjab.

[367] Surya.

In a battle, the powerful one brought Hrishikesha under his subjugation. Jalandhara, the great daitya, has crushed all the immortals. Having granted him a boon, Hari has come under his subjugation and resides in his house, along with Lakshmi. This has happened to Vishnu, who has always accomplished every task for us. O immensely intelligent one! Please make efforts to ensure Jalandhara's destruction. You always accomplish every task, and it is destiny that has brought you to us." O tiger among sages! Narada, who shows compassion, heard the words spoken by the immortals and reassured them. Narada said, "O gods! I know that you have been defeated by the king of the daityas. You have been oppressed and have suffered miseries. You have been expelled from your positions. According to my capacity, there is no doubt that I will accomplish your objective. O immortals! Since you are facing miseries, I will be favourably disposed towards you." O best among sages! He said this and comforted all the devas."""

"""He then went to Jalandhara's assembly hall, to see the one loved by the danavas. Jalandhara saw that the divine and supreme sage was arriving. Full of great devotion, he stood up and offered him a supreme and excellent seat. Extremely surprised, the Indra among danavas honoured him in the proper way. He smiled and addressed the excellent sage in the following words. Jalandhara asked, "O brahmana! Where have you come from? Is there anything you wish to see here? O sage! Instruct me about the reason why you have come." Hearing the words of the Indra among daityas, the great sage was pleased in his mind. Narada replied to Jalandhara. Narada said, "O Indra over all danavas and daityas! O Jalandhara! O immensely intelligent one! O lord of all the worlds! You are the one who enjoys jewels. You are blessed. O supreme Indra among daityas! Listen to the reason why I have come. I will tell you everything about the reason why I have come. O Indra among daityas! Travelling as I willed, I went to Kailasa. It extends for ten thousand yojanas and there is a great forest full of kalpadrumas. There are hundreds of kamadhenus. It is illuminated by chintamani jewels. [368] There is every kind of gold there. It is divine, beautiful and wonderful everywhere. I saw Shankara seated there, along with Uma. He was beautiful in all his limbs, fair, with three eyes and the moon on his crest. Having seen his great prosperity, I wished to know something. Does any place in the three worlds possess a prosperity like his? O Indra among daityas! I then remembered your prosperity. Wanting to see it, I have come to your presence." Hearing Narada's words, Jalandhara, Indra among daityas, affectionately showed him all the signs of his own prosperity. Narada possessed jnana and sought to accomplish the task of devas. In addition, urged by the lord, he spoke to Jalandhara, Indra among daityas. Narada said, "O supreme among brave ones! Indeed, you possess everything that ensures great prosperity. You are the lord of the three worlds. Therefore, it isn't surprising that all this should be here. There are piles of gems and jewels, elephants and all other signs of prosperity. All these are resplendent in your home now and you have other jewels too. You have brought Shakra's Airavata, a jewel among elephants. O extremely brave one! You have brought Surya's horse, Ucchaihshrava, jewel among horses.[369] You have brought the kalpavriksha that is Dhanada's nidhi,[370] You have brought Vidhatri's vimana, yoked to swans.

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[368] A chintamani jewel bestows everything that is thought of. 369 Airavata and Ucchaihshrava emerged from the churning of the ocean. Usually, Ucchaihshrava is described as Indra's horse.

[370] Dhanada, the granter of wealth, is Kubera. Kubera possesses nine nidhis or treasures. The names of Kubera's nine nidhis are Mahapadma, Padma, Shankha, Makara, Kacchapa, Mukunda, Kunda, Nila and Kharva. A kalpavriksha is a treasure no doubt but is not named in the standard list of nine.

There are many supreme jewels in heaven, on earth and in the nether regions. O Indra among daityas! All these shine in your home. I can see that your prosperity is varied and complete. You have adorned yourself with elephants, horses and other things. O immensely valiant one! I am pleased with you. O Jalandhara! However, your home does not have the best and the greatest, a jewel among women. You should specifically bring that, a jewel among women. O Jalandhara! Your home possesses every kind of excellent jewel. But a jewel among women does not radiate here. Therefore, all this is futile," Hearing the words of the great-souled Narada, the mind of the king of daityas was agitated by desire."""

""Jalandhara said, "O Narada! O devarshi! O great lord! I bow down before you. Where can I find a jewel among women? Please tell me that now. O brahmana! I will bring her, wherever she may be in the universe. This is the truth. There is no doubt that this is the truth." Narada replied, "Kailasa is extremely beautiful, and it possesses everything that ensures prosperity. Shambhu is there, in the form of a naked yogi. His wife is extremely beautiful. She possesses all the auspicious signs. She is beautiful in all her limbs. Parvati is enchanting and is known to be beautiful. Such beauty has not been seen in anyone else. It is excellent and excites curiosity. She is wonderful and deludes even excellent yogis. She is supreme to behold and enhances great prosperity. Hence, the thought in my mind is that there is no one as prosperous as Shiva. O brave one! O Jalandhara! No one else possesses such a jewel among women. The stream of her charm made the one with the four faces fall down. [371] He lost his steadiness earlier. There is no one who is her equal. In his own pastimes, Madana's enemy[372] got attracted to her. Though he rules himself, she brought him under her control. He is prosperous because he enjoys a jewel among women. O Indra among daityas! You are not like him. You are not the lord of every kind of jewel." Devarshi Narada is famous in the worlds. Intent on accomplishing a task for devas, he said this and left through the sky."""""

Chapter 189-3.5(19) (Jalandhara Sends a Messenger)

“Vyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! The omniscient Narada went to heaven. After this, what did the king of daityas do? Please tell me that in great detail."""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'Taking leave of the king of daityas, Narada went to heaven. Hearing about her beauty, the daitya suffered from the fever of desire. Having come under the subjugation of destiny, the intelligence of Jalandhara daitya was destroyed. Deluded, he summoned the messenger, Simhika's son. [373] He came and saw that the mind of the ocean's son was overcome with desire. Jalandhara spoke to him in articulate words. Jalandhara said, "O best among messengers! Y. u are the one who ensures every task. O Simhika's son! O immensely wise one! Go to Mount Kailasa. The yogi known as Shambhu resides there. He has matted hair and is an ascetic. All his limbs are smeared with ashes. He is unattached and has conquered his senses. Go there as a messenger and speak to Shankara, the yogi. He has matted hair and is not attached.

[371] Brahma possessed five faces. But on seeing Uma, he was overtaken by desire. That is how he lost one of his faces and was left with four faces. The story has been recounted in Volume I.

[372] That is, Shiva.

[373] Rahu's mother was Simhika and his father was Viprachitti.

Therefore, you need have no fear in your heart. O yogi! O ocean of compassion! What will you do with a jewel among women? You reside in the forest and are served by bhutas, pretas and pishachas. When I am the lord of the world, such conduct is not becoming of a yogi. Give me that jewel among women. I am the enjoyer of jewels. I possess all the excellent jewels from the three worlds. Know that everything in the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects, is under my control. I possess Indra's jewel among elephants and Ucchaihshrava, the excellent jewel. I have used force to seize the parijata tree.[374] Vidhatri's excellent vimana, yoked to swans, is studded with jewels. It is great, divine and excellent. But it is now in my courtyard. Svada's[375] Mahapadma and other divine nidhis are with me. Varuna's umbrella, which showers gold, is in my house. There is the great garland known as Kinjalkini, belonging to my father. It is made out of lotuses that never fade and belongs to me now.[376] I have Kapati's noose. [377] Using force, I brought Mrityu's excellent and famous spear. The one who purifies [378] gave me two divine garments that have been purified in the fire. O Indra among yogis! In this way, all the jewels shine in my possession. O one who wears matted hair! Therefore, give me the jewel among women that you possess." Hearing these words, Rahu's eyes dilated in wonder. He went to the Ugra's[379] assembly hall and Nandi allowed him to enter."""

""Having gone there, he saw the great lord, the lord of devas, himself. His radiance destroyed the darkness. He dazzled, with ashes smeared all over his body. He bore all the signs of a great king. He was resplendent and extremely wonderful. Hara was beautiful in all his limbs. He was adorned in divine ornaments. The radiance of his body took away all pride from the messenger, known as Rahu, about his own energy. He prostrated himself and approached Shambhu: Desiring to speak, Simhika's son stood in front of him. When Tryambaka indicated his consent through a gesture, he spoke the following words. Rahu said, "I am a messenger and have been sent to your presence by the lord of the three worlds, who is served by daityas and pannagas. Accordingly, I have come here. Jalandhara, son of the ocean, is the lord of all the daityas. He is the lord of the three worlds and has become everyone's leader. For devas, the powerful king of the daityas is like the Destroyer. Listen to the words he has addressed to you, the yogi. O lord! The lord of daityas possesses great and divine powers. He is the lord of all jewels. O Vrishadhvaja! Hear his command. 'You reside in cremation grounds, and you always wear a garland of bones. You are naked. How can the auspicious daughter of Himalaya be your wife? I am the possessor of all jewels, and she is described as a jewel among women. Therefore, she does not deserve a person like you, who survives on alms. The three worlds are under my subjugation. I enjoy shares in sacrifices. All the jewels of the three worlds are in my house. We are the ones who enjoy jewels. You are a yogi and a naked one at that. Give me the jewel among women. Subjects must make their king happy." When Rahu said this, a terrible being emerged from between the eyebrows of the wielder of the trident, along with a fierce sound that resembled the roar of thunder.

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[374] India's divine tree, the coral tree.

[375] Svada means someone who gives on his own. A somewhat rare name for Kubera.

[376] Jalandhara's father means Shiva. We have treated Kinjalkini as a proper name, not as an adjective. As an adjective, this would mean made out of the filaments of lotuses.

[377] The word kah means water and Kapati (lord of waters) is a rare name for Varuna.

[378] Agni.

[379] That is, Shiva's. Ugra means the fierce one.

His face was like a lion's and a tongue moved inside it. His large eyes blazed. His hair stood up and his body was dry. He was like another Nrisimha, [380] His body was gigantic. He was mighty-armed and fearsome. His thighs were like palm trees. The being swiftly rushed forward towards Rahu. On seeing that he was rushing forward to devour him, Rahu was afflicted by fear. He quickly fled outside but was seized. Rahu said, "O lord of devas! O Mahesha! Please save me. I have sought refuge with you. You are worshipped by gods and asuras. You are the lord who possesses supreme prosperity. O Mahadeva! He is rushing forward to devour me, a brahmana. [381] O Ishana! This being who serves you is extremely terrible. O lord of devas! You are affectionate towards those who seek refuge with you. Please save me from him. Let him not devour me. I prostrate myself before you repeatedly." O sage! Mahadeva heard the brahmana's words. The lord is loved by those who are distressed. He spoke to his own gana. Mahadeva said, "A brahmana is a lord. The messenger known as Rahu has sought refuge. O supreme among ganas! A person who has sought refuge must be protected. He must not be punished." Filled with compassion, Girija's lord said this. Having heard those words, the gana immediately let go of Rahu, the brahmana. Having let go off Rahu in the sky, the being approached Shiva. He addressed Mahadeva in dejected words. The being said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who shows compassion! O Shankara! O one who is affectionate towards those who seek refuge! I have let go off my food. O lord! However, I am suffering from hunger and cannot bear it. O lord of devas! O lord! What will be my food? Please command me." The great lord heard the words uttered by that being. Wishing to sport and intent on ensuring those who are his own, he replied. Maheshvara said, "If you are hungry and if that hunger is making you suffer, immediately eat the flesh from your hands and feet." Hearing Shiva's command, the being ate the flesh from his hands and feet until only the head was left. Seeing that only the head was left, Sadashiva was extremely pleased. Somewhat surprised, he spoke to the being, who was terrible in form. Shiva said, "O great gana! Since you have carried out my command, you are blessed. O excellent one! I am extremely pleased with what you have done. You will be known as Kirtimukha and will guard my door. You will be a great gana. You will be extremely brave and will cause fear among all those who are wicked. You will be loved by me. When my people worship me, they will always worship you. A person who does not worship you will not do what pleases me." Having obtained this boon from Shambhu, the being was delighted. Since then, Kirtimukha has stood at the door of the lord of devas. When Shiva is worshipped, that gana is specially worshipped. If he is not worshipped first, the worship is futile.""

Chapter 190-3.5(20) (Ordinary Ganas and Asuras Fight)

"Vyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! You have made me hear a wonderful account of the purifying pastimes of the great lord, Shankara. Please show your compassion towards me. O great sage! Affectionately, please tell me where Rahu went, after he had been released by that being."

'Suta said, "Hearing the words of the infinitely intelligent Vyasa, pleased in his mind, the great sage, who was Brahma's son, replied.""

[380] Nrisimha/Narasimha is Vishnu's half-man half-lion avatara. In this form, Vishnu killed Hiranyakashipu.

[381] Since Rahu was the son of Viprachitti, this is odd. However, Viprachitti was the son of Kashyapa, a brahmana.

"Sanatkumara said, 'He released Rahu in the domain of Varvaras. [382] Having gone there, he also came to be known as a Varvara. Regarding this as a second birth, he became humble. With his pride gone, he gradually went to Jalandhara's city. O Vyasa! He approached Jalandhara and told him everything that Isha had done. He was scared of Isha. He was also scared of the lord of daityas. Hearing this, Jalandhara was overwhelmed by rage. The excellent Indra among daityas, the son of the ocean, was powerful. The excellent daitya's mind came under the control of ire. He instructed all the soldiers of the daityas to make preparations. Jalandhara said, "Let all the daityas, led by Kalanemi, emerge. Let Shumbha, Nishumbha and the other brave ones advance with their forces. Let there be those who have born in the lineage of Kotivira, those born in the lineage of Kambu, Dourhridas, Kalakas, Kalakeyas, Mouryas and Dhoumras." The powerful lord of asuras, the ocean's son, commanded this. The daityas quickly advanced, surrounded by crores and crores. Shukra advanced in front. Rahu was also there, with his head severed. As he stepped on the ground, as result of the force of that movement, his crown kept getting dislodged from this head. The sky was covered with clouds, as is the case during the monsoon. There were many ill portents, signifying a time of great sleep.'"""

""The gods, along with Vasava, witnessed these preparations. Unnoticed, they went to Kailasa, Shankara's abode. Having gone there, they saw Shiva. All the devas, along with Vasava, prostrated themselves before him. They lowered their shoulders, clasped their hands and praised him. The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who shows compassion! O Shankara! O Mahesha! I prostrate myself before you. Please save those who have sought refuge. O lord! Because of what the fierce Jalandhara has done, we are agitated. As a result of his depredations, Indra and the devas have been dislodged from their positions and are now on earth. O lord! O master! It is not possible that you do not know the calamity facing devas. Therefore, to save us, slay the son of the ocean. O lord! For our protection, you have earlier engaged the one who has Garuda on his banner. But he is unable to protect us now. He is also under his control and resides in his house, along with Rama. We reside there too. We are under the asura's control and obey his commands. O Shambhu! Unnoticed, we have come to your presence. The powerful son of the ocean is coming here, to fight with you. O lord! O omniscient one! You should kill him in the battle and save those who have sought refuge with you." Having said this, all the gods, along with Vasava, bent down before him. They stood there humbly, looking at Mahesha's feet.'""

"""Hearing the words of the devas, Vrishadhvaja laughed. He quickly summoned Vishnu and addressed him in these words. Ishvara said, "O Hrishikesha! O great Vishnu! The devas have come here. They are suffering as a result of what Jalandhara has done. Greatly agitated, they have sought refuge. O Vishnu! Why did you not kill Jalandhara in the battle? Instead, you have abandoned your Vaikuntha and have gone to his house. I engaged you for the task of protecting the virtuous and chastising the crooked. Ruling yourself, you could sport around." Hearing Mahesha's words, the one who has Garuda on his banner replied. Hari humbly bent down and joined his hands in salutation. Vishnu said, "He was born from your portion, and he is Shri's brother. [383] Besides, you will slay the danava.

[382] Barbarians.

[383] Shri is Lakshmi.

That is the reason I did not kill him in the battle. He is immensely strong and immensely valiant. He has defeated all the other residents of heaven. O lord of devas! I am speaking the truth. With the devas, I fought against him for a long time. But my methods did not succeed against this bull among danavas. Satisfied by his valour, I told him to ask for a boon. Hearing my words, he asked for an excellent boon. 'O great Vishnu! Remain under my control. With my sister and with the gods, reside in my house.' That is the reason I went to his house." Hearing Vishnu's words, Shankara Maheshvara laughed. He is always affectionate towards his devotees and was extremely pleased. Maheshvara said, "O Vishnu! O noble god! Listen lovingly to my words. There is no doubt that I will kill the great daitya, Jalandhara. Return to your own abode, without any fear. O devas! Without any fear, you should also return. Do not harbour any doubts. Think that the lord of asuras has already been killed." Hearing Mahesha's words, Rama's husband and the immortals immediately returned to their respective abodes, their doubts dispelled.""

""O Vyasa! The Indra among daityas was exceedingly valiant. Armoured and prepared, along with the asuras, the powerful one reached the extremities of the mountain. With that large army, he laid siege to Kailasa. He stationed himself there, resembling the Destroyer. He roared loudly, like a lion. Hearing the tumultuous sound created by the daityas, Mahesha, who engages in great pastimes and destroys those who are deceitful, was enraged. He instructed his own extremely strong ganas to fight. Mahadeva Hara engages in great pastimes and instructed Nandi and others. Nandi and all the other foremost among soldiers followed Shiva's command. The ganas quickly armoured themselves for the battle. Wrathful and indomitable, all the ganas descended from Kailasa. As they got ready to fight, those immensely valiant ones uttered war cries. The valleys around Kailasa were wonderful to behold. There were the lords of pramathas and daityas, with terrible astras and shastras. There were the sounds of war drums, mridangas and conch shells, causing delight to heroes. There were the sounds of elephants, horses and chariots. The roar made the earth tremble. As they were released, spears, spikes, arrows, clubs, nooses and swords sparkled and filled the sky, as if with pearls. The earth shone with elephants, horses and foot-soldiers who had been killed. They covered the earth, like giant mountains shattered by the vajra. Pramathas killed daityas. Daityas killed ganas. A mire was created by the fat, blood and flesh and the ground was impossible to traverse. Bhargava revived the daityas killed by pramathas. Though they were killed in the battle, he repeatedly revived them through the power of mritasanjivani. Seeing this, all the ganas were agitated and filled with fear. All of them went and told the lord of devas what Shukra was doing. Hearing this, Bhagavan Rudra was filled with rage. He was fearful and extremely fierce, blazing the directions. O supreme among sages! An extremely terrible Kritya[384] emerged from Rudra's mouth. Her thighs were like the trunks of palm trees and her stomach protruded. She bent down as a result of her heavy breasts. Her hair stood up. The extremely terrible one swiftly reached the field of battle and wandered around, devouring the great asuras. She rapidly reached the centre of the battle, where Bhargava was stationed, surrounded by the Indras among the best of daityas. O sage! Her energy enveloped the sky and the ground. She inserted Bhargava into her vagina and vanished into the sky. Seeing that Bhargava had gone away, the large number of daitya soldiers left the field of battle. Though they were indomitable in battle,

[384] A demoness.

their faces turned pale. Scared of the ganas, the daitya soldiers fled. It was as if the ground had been covered with grass earlier, which had now been blown away by the force of the wind. On seeing that the daitya soldiers had been routed and were scared of the ganas, the commanders, Shumbha, Nishumbha and Kalanemi, were filled with wrath. Those three extremely strong ones countered the gana soldiers. Like clouds during the monsoon, they showered down arrows. The volleys of arrows shot by those daityas were like locusts. They covered all the directions and made the gana soldiers tremble. Hundreds of ganas were mangled by those arrows and shed streams of blood. They assumed the hue of kimshuka flowers [385] and did not know what to do. Nandi, Lambodara [386] and Kartikeya saw that their own army was being shattered. Unable to tolerate this, they quickly arrived, so as to repulse the intolerant asuras."""

Chapter 191-3.5(21) (Special Fights)

“Sanatkumara said, 'The danavas saw the Ganapatis, Nandi, Bhamukha and Shanmukha and intolerantly rushed forward to fight against them in duels. [387] Kalanemi fought against Nandi and Shumbha against Lambodara. With some hesitation, Nishumbha rushed against the divinity Shanmukha. Nishumbha used five arrows to pierce Kartikeya's peacock in the heart and it fell down on the ground, senseless. At this, the enraged wielder of the spear used five arrows to pierce his chariot and the horses in the inner organs.[388] The brave one quickly struck Nishumbha, the enemy of devas, with another sharp arrow. Indomitable in battle, he roared. The asura known as Nishumbha was extremely brave and immensely valiant. He struck Kartikeya with his own arrow and roared in the battle. Full of anger, Kartikeya was about to seize his spear. However, before he could do this, Nishumbha powerfully struck him with his own spear and made his spear fall down on the ground. O Vyasa! In the battle, such was the duel that took place between Nishumbha and Kartikeya. They roared like heroes. Nandishvara used seven arrows to pierce Kalanemi, his horses, his standard, his chariot and his charioteer. [389] Kalanemi was enraged and severed Nandi's bow. He shot great and sharp arrows, sharpened on stone, from his own bow. Ignoring this, the brave Nandishvara firmly struck Kalanemi, the great asura, in the chest with a trident. The trident shattered his heart and killed his horses and charioteer. At this, he uprooted the summit of a mountain and struck Nandi with this. Shumbha and Ganesha fought, respectively mounted on a chariot and a mouse. As they fought, they shot volleys of arrows and pierced each other. Ganesha pierced Shambhu in the heart with an arrow. He used three arrows to bring his charioteer down on the ground. At this, Shumbha became extremely angry and showered down arrows on Ganadhipa.

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[385] Kimshuka is a tree with orange-red flowers, flame of the forest, Butea frondosa.

[386] One with an elongated stomach, Ganesha.

[387] Shanmukha is the one with six faces, that is, Kartikeya. The etymology of Bhamukha is unclear. This has clearly been used for Ganesha and probably means the one with a radiant face.

[388] One arrow for each of the four horses and one for the chariot.

[389] With Kalanemi counted separately, seven arrows for four horses, standard, chariot and charioteer.

He pierced the mouse with three arrows and roared like a cloud. Mangled in its limbs, the mouse suffered a great deal of pain and trembled. Lambodara fell down and fought like a foot soldier. Lambodara struck Shumbha in the chest with a battle axe. He brought him down on the ground and mounted the mouse again. The lord with the face of an elephant got ready to fight again. Like a giant elephant being struck with a goad, he laughed and angrily struck him. Both Kalanemi and Shumbha simultaneously struck Lambodara with arrows, full of rage, like poisonous snakes."""

""The immensely strong Virabhadra saw that he was suffering. With one crore bhutas, he powerfully attacked them. Kushmandas, bhairavas, vetalas, groups of yoginis, pishachas, dakinis and groups of ganas also arrived. [390] There were chattering sounds, roars like lions and harsh sounds. Damarus [391] were sounded and the earth trembled. The bhutas rushed forward and devoured the danavas. They jumped up and down and danced in the field of battle. O Vyasa! Meanwhile, Nandi and Guha regained their senses and got up. They roared in the battle again. Nandi and Kartikeya swiftly arrived. With volleys of arrows, they incessantly killed daityas in the battle. Daityas were severed, mangled and killed. They fell down and were devoured. The army became anxious. Their faces turned pale. When Nandi and Kartikeya displayed their fierce valour, Virabhadra and the other ganas roared even more loudly. The two great commanders of the son of the ocean, Shumbha and Nishumbha, the great daitya Kalanemi and other asuras were defeated. The son of the ocean saw that his soldiers had been routed. In a chariot that had many flags, the powerful one advanced against the ganas. Hence, the defeated daityas were filled with great enthusiasm. O Vyasa! They roared and got ready for the battle. All of Rudra's ganas also roared, desiring victory. O sage! They were led by Nandi, Kartika, the tusked one, [392] Virabhadra and others. There was the sound of elephants, horses and chariots. Conch shells and kettledrums were sounded. Facing each other, the armies roared like lions. Jalandhara's torrents of arrows covered the area between heaven and earth, as if by a brown mist. He pierced Shailadi [393] with five arrows and Ganesha with another five arrows. He pierced Virabhadra with twenty arrows and roared like a cloud filled with rain. The immensely valiant Kartikeya, Rudra's son, immediately pierced Jalandhara daitya with his spear and roared. With his body mangled by the spear, the daitya's eyes rolled around and he fell down on the ground. However, the immensely strong one immediately stood up. Full of rage, Jalandhara, bull among daityas, struck Kartikeya in the chest with a club. Since that supreme club had been given by Vidhatri, Shankara's son wished to show that the power of the club was successful. O Vyasa! Therefore, he immediately fell down on the ground. Similarly, Nandi was also struck by the club and fell down on the ground. The immensely valiant one was a slayer of enemies. Nevertheless, his mind was slightly agitated. Enraged, Ganeshvara remembered Shiva's lotus feet. Having thus obtained greater strength, he severed the daitya's club with a battle axe. Using three arrows, Virabhadra pierced the danava in the chest. Using seven arrows, he severed his horses, standard, bow and umbrella. Becoming greatly enraged, the Indra among daityas seized a terrible spear. Using this, he brought Ganesha down and mounted another chariot.

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[390] Allied to bhutas and pishachas, yoginis and dakinis are female.

[391] Damaru is a small drum, shaped like an hourglass.

[392] Ganesha.

[393] Shailadi is one of Nandi's names.

The immensely strong Indra among daityas rushed forward with great force. He ignored the others and angrily rushed at Virabhadra. The immensely valiant king of the daityas, Jalandhara, quickly struck Virabhadra with a sharp and poisonous arrow and roared. The angry Virabhadra used an extremely sharp arrow to slice down that arrow and pierced him with a large arrow. Both of them resembled the sun and used many kinds of astras and shastras. Those two supreme among brave ones fought against each other for a long period of time. Virabhadra used arrows to bring down his horses. He struck powerfully and severed his bow, chariot and flags. At this, holding a club in his hand, the king of daityas leapt down on the ground. The immensely strong one swiftly approached Virabhadra. The son of the ocean roared and powerfully struck Virabhadra on the head with the club. The head of the leader of ganas was shattered as a result of the strong blow from the club. Virabhadra fell down on the ground and shed copious quantities of blood. On seeing that Virabhadra had fallen down, Rudra's ganas were filled with fear and gave up the battle. Shrieking, they rushed to Maheshvara. Chandrashekhara heard the tumult created by the ganas. He asked the brave and excellent ganas who were by his side. Shankara asked, "Why are my ganas creating this great tumult? O immensely valiant ones! Ascertain the cause. I must certainly establish peace." While the lord of devas was affectionately asking these ganas, other ganas arrived before the lord. On seeing that they were dejected, the lord Rudra asked them if all was well. The ganas then told him in detail about what had occurred. Bhagavan Rudra is a lord who engages in many kinds of pastimes. Hearing this, he granted them freedom from fear and greatly increased their enthusiasm.'",

Chapter 192-3.5(22) (Description of Jalandhara's Fighting)

"Sanatkumara said, 'The great lord, Rudra, assumed a S terrible form. With the brave ganas and astride the excellent bull, he advanced to fight. He seemed to be smiling, On seeing that Rudra was advancing, the ganas roared like lions again. Those of Rudra's ganas who had retreated from the battle returned again. Other ganas of Shankara also uttered war cries. They celebrated a festival with weapons. They showered down arrows and slaughtered daityas. All the daityas saw how terrible Rudra was and fled, like a man who is a sinner being scared at the sight of Shankara. Seeing that the daityas were retreating from the battle, Jalandhara advanced against Chandi's lord, showering thousands of arrows. Thousands of Indras among the daityas, Shumbha and Nishumbha being the foremost, forcefully advanced against Shiva, biting their lips in rage. The brave Kalanemi, Khadgaroma, Balahaka, Ghasmara, Prachanda and others advanced against Shiva. They swiftly enveloped Rudra's ganas with arrows. O sage! Shumbha and other brave ones sliced all their limbs. Hara saw that his force of ganas was enveloped in a darkness created by the arrows. He severed that net of arrows with his own arrows and covered the sky. The daityas suffered from this storm of arrows. He used that fierce net of arrows to make them fall down on the ground. He used his battle axe to separate Khadgaroma's head from his body. He used his khatvanga [394] to shatter Balahaka's head into two pieces. He tied Ghasmara daitya with his noose and brought him down on the ground. With his trident, he sliced the immensely brave Prachanda. Some were killed by the bull. Others were brought down by arrows. Like elephants afflicted by a lion, the asuras were incapable of remaining there.

[394] A khatvanga is a staff with a skull on top.

The great daitya was overwhelmed by rage. In the battle, he shamed the daityas. The persevering one laughed at Shumbha and the others. Jalandhara said, "Why do you boast about who your mother is? Like cowards, you are being struck on your backs. For those who pride themselves on being brave and desire heaven, this is not to be praised. If you have faith in fight, or if you possess the slightest bit of substance in your hearts, stand in front of me. Otherwise, it is clear you only desire carnal pleasures. To die in a battle is supreme. It bestows all the fruits that one desires. In particular, it brings fame. It is also said to lead to emancipation. A person who faces a battle and dies goes to the supreme destination in the solar disc, one obtained by a person who wanders around and is in possession of supreme jnana. Learned people must never be scared of death, anywhere. Despite every attempt made, it is inevitable. O brave ones! If one possesses a body, death comes along with birth. It is certain that a living being will die, today or after one hundred years. Therefore, cast aside this fear of death and happily fight in the battle. There is no doubt that this yields great bliss in every possible way, in this world and in the next one." In this way, he tried many kinds of ways to make the brave ones on his side understand. However, they were scared and could not get their perseverance back. They swiftly fled from the field of battle. On seeing that his own soldiers were running away, the immensely brave Jalandhara, the ocean's son, became angry."""

"""Filled with rage and angry at Rudra, in a fierce voice that was like the crash of thunder, he challenged him to fight. Jalandhara said, "Fight with me now. Why are you killing them? O one with the matted hair! Show me what limited strength you possess." Saying this, the great daitya, Jalandhara, struck Shambhu, unblemished in his deeds, with seventy arrows. Even before Jalandhara's arrows could reach him, Mahadeva used his own sharp and wonderful arrows to slice them down. He seemed to be laughing. O sage! He used seven arrows to sever the horses, standard, umbrella and bow that belonged to Jalandhara daitya. For Hara, this wasn't a surprising act. The asura who was the ocean's son was deprived of his chariot and his bow was severed. Angry, he raised a club and rushed forward powerfully towards Shiva. He suddenly flung the club. But Maheshvara is great and supremely wonderful in his pastimes. He used his arrows to quickly shatter the club into two fragments. At this, the great asura became angrier still. Wishing to kill him, he raised his fist and rushed forward with great force. However, the lord of devas is unblemished in his deeds. Using a volley of arrows, he flung Jalandhara one krosha away."""

“Jalandhara daitya decided that Rudra was stronger than him. He created the wonderful maya of gandharvas, capable of deluding even Rudra. As a result of the powers of that maya, so as to confound Rudra, many gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras arrived. The many gandharvas and apsaras sang and danced. Others played on flutes made out of palm leaves and mridangas. On witnessing the great wonder unleashed by these hordes, Rudra was confounded. He didn't even realize that the weapons had fallen down from his hands. Jalandhara daitya saw that Rudra was intently watching. Full of desire, he went to the place where Gouri was. He entrusted the conduct of the war to the immensely strong Shumbha and Nishumbha. O Vyasa! Through the use of the maya of asuras, Jalandhara assumed a form that was just like that of Rudra. He possessed ten powerful arms, five faces and three eyes. His hair was matted. He was astride a giant bull. Bhava's beloved saw that Rudra was arriving. Leaving her friends, she came into his range of vision. The lord of danavas saw Parvati, beautiful in her limbs. He released some semen, and his limbs became numb. Realizing that this was the danava, Gouri was filled with fear. She vanished

and went to the northern shore of Lake Manasa. When she vanished like a flash of lightning, the daitya could no longer see her. He swiftly returned to the place where the divinity Maheshvara was, waiting to fight. In her mind, Parvati remembered the great Vishnu. Immediately, she saw the divinity seated near her. Parvati, loved by Shiva, saw that Vishnu was in front of her, prostrating himself and hands joined in salutation. Pleased in her mind, the mother of the universe spoke. Parvati said, "O Vishnu! Jalandhara daitya has performed an extremely wonderful act. Do you not know what the evil-minded one has done?" Hearing the words of the mother of the universe, the one with Garuda on his banner lowered his shoulders and joined his hands in salutation. He replied to Shivaa. Shri Bhagavan said, "O Devil Through your favours, I know what has happened. O mother! Please command me. I will act according to your instructions," Hearing Vishnu's words, Parvati spoke again. The mother of the universe wished to properly instruct Hrishikesha about dharma and good policy. Parvati said, "You should understand that he has himself shown the path. Follow my command and destroy his wife's dharma of faithfulness to her husband. O Rama's lord! There is no other way. The great daitya cannot be killed by you. On earth, there is no dharma that is equal to that of devotion to one's husband." Hari heard her command. Lowering his head, he accepted it. To commit that act of deception, he quickly went to Jalandhara's city."

Chapter 193-3.5(23) (Violation of Vrinda's Faithfulness)

"Vyasa Tyasa asked, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! O supreme among eloquent ones! What did Hari do there? How did she give up her dharma?"""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'Having gone to Jalandhara's city, Vishnu made up his mind to destroy Vrinda's faithfulness to her husband and shatter the daitya's splendour. Supreme among those who possess maya, he showed himself to Vrinda in a dream. With an extraordinary body, he was in a grove in the city. Queen Vrinda was excellent in her vows. As a result of the powers of Hari's maya, in the night, the wife had this nightmare. As a result of Vishnu's maya, in her dream, she saw her husband astride a buffalo, naked and smeared with oil. [395] He was decorated with black flowers and a large number of predatory beasts were serving him. With his head shaved, he was proceeding in a southern direction. He was covered with darkness. Along with her, her entire city was suddenly submerged in the ocean. Towards the end of the night, she had many such bad dreams. When she woke up, the lady thought about the dream. She saw that the rising sun had a hole in the middle and repeatedly lost its radiance. She understood that these were evil portents. Full of fear, she wept. She could not find any peace in the turrets, mansions or grounds of the palace. With her friends, she went to the grove in the city. But despite having gone there, the lady could not find any happiness there. Jalandhara's wife was depressed and anxious in her mind. She wandered from one forest to another forest but could not find any peace. As she wandered around, the lady saw two extremely terrible rakshasas. Their faces were like lions and their fangs were cruel. Seeing them, she was agitated and started to run away. She then saw a serene ascetic, along with his disciple. He was observing a vow of silence. Her arms were like creepers.

[395] These are evil portents, signifying imminent death.

As a result of her fear, she clasped his neck with her hands and said, "O sage! Please save me. I have sought refuge with you." The sage saw that she was agitated and that she was followed by the rakshasas. He uttered a terrible sound of humkara[396] and quickly made them turn away. Those two were scared by the sound of humkara and turned away."""

""O sage! The mind of the wife of the Indra among the daityas was extremely amazed at this. Freed from fear, she joined her hands in salutation before the sage who had been her protector. Like a rod, Vrinda prostrated herself on the ground in front of him and spoke these words. Vrinda said, "O sage! O protector! O ocean of compassion! O one who counters the sufferings of others! You have saved me from the terrible fear that arose on account of those crooked ones. You are capable in every possible way. You know everything. O ocean of compassion! I desire to tell you something. Please show me your compassion and listen. Jalandhara is my husband, and the lord has gone to fight against Rudra. O one who is excellent in vows! Please tell me how the battle is faring." The sage heard her words and maintained the deception of observing a vow of silence. He knew the means to further his own selfish objective, With compassionate eyes, he looked upwards. At that time, two lords among monkeys arrived there. They prostrated themselves before him and stood there. At a gesture from his eyebrows, they rose up into the sky. O lord among sages! They returned in a short while and stood in front of him again. They had brought the head, the headless torso and the hands. She recognized the head, the headless torso and the hands as those belonging to the ocean's son. Miserable on account of her husband, she fell down on the ground, senseless. Vrinda said, "O lord! Earlier, you used to amuse me with pleasant conversations. How is it that you are not speaking now to the innocent one you love? You are the one who conquered the three worlds. You defeated devas and gandharvas, accompanied by Vishnu. How is it that an ascetic has now killed you? You did not know about Rudra's tattva. Hence, you paid no heed to my words. O supreme among daityas! I told you that Shiva is the supreme brahman. Through the powers of serving you, I got to know that this wasn't because of your pride but because you associated with wicked people." In this way, following her own dharma, his beloved lamented a lot in different ways. Her heart was shattered. Resorting to her fortitude, she sighed in grief. Joining her hands in salutation, she prostrated herself before the noble sage and spoke again. Vrinda said, "O ocean of compassion! O best among sages! O one who is engaged in the welfare of others! O virtuous one! Please show me your compassion and revive my lord. It is my view that you are capable of bringing him back to life again. O lord among sages! Therefore, please revive my beloved lord." Devoted to the vow of faithfulness to her husband, the wife of the daitya said this. She fell down at his feet and emitted sighs of grief. The sage replied, "I am incapable of bringing him back to life. He has been killed by Rudra in the battle. A person who has been killed by Rudra in a battle can never be brought back to life. Nevertheless, because of my compassion, I will bring him back to life again. I know that it is eternal dharma to save those who have sought refuge." O sage! Saying this, the sage revived her husband. After this, Vishnu, who is supreme among those who possess maya, vanished.[397] The ocean's son was instantly revived and got up. Pleased in his mind, he embraced Vrinda and kissed her face. Seeing her husband, Vrinda's mind was also filled with joy. She cast aside her sorrow, thinking that everything had been a dream.

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[396] Humkara means to utter the sound 'hum', a sound believed to possess special powers.

[397] The sage was actually Vishnu.

Her mind was pleased, and desire arose in her heart. In the middle of the forest, she sported with him for many days. On one occasion, at the end of intercourse, she saw that it was Vishnu. Full of anger, Vrinda rebuked him in the following words. Vrinda said, "O Hari! Shame on you for this kind of conduct. You have had intercourse with another person's wife. I have now got to know everything correctly. You used your maya to manifest yourself as an ascetic." Saying this, full of rage, she displayed her own energy. O Vyasa! The one who was faithful to her husband cursed Keshava. "O enemy of daityas! O worst among wicked ones! You have defiled the dharma of others. O deceitful one! Accept this great curse from me, more severe than the most virulent of poisons. Using your famed maya, you created two beings and showed them to me. They will become rakshasas and will abduct your wife.[398] Miserable on account of your wife, in the forest, you will obtain monkeys as aides, You will roam around with the lord of snakes, who arrived here as your disciple.[399] Saying this, Vrinda entered the fire. With his mind attracted to her, Vishnu did try to restrain her. O sage! Meanwhile, all the devas, Brahma and others, arrived with their wives to witness the good destination she was headed towards. While all the devas witnessed this extraordinary event, the great and supreme radiance that was Vrinda's energy merged into Shivaa's body. The immortals arrayed in the sky exclaimed words of "Victory". O sage! In this way, the great queen Vrinda, Kalanemi's excellent daughter, obtained supreme emancipation as a result of the power of devotion towards her husband. As the ashes and dust from Vrinda's funeral pyre covered his face, Hari repeatedly thought of Vrinda. Though the large number of gods and siddhas stationed there tried to make him understand, he could not find any peace.""

Chapter 194-3.5(24) (Description of Jalandhara)

"Vyasa said, 'O best among Vidhatri's sons! O wise one! You have narrated a wonderful account. What happened in the battle after that? How was the daitya killed? Please tell me.""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'Unable to see Girija, the Indra among daityas returned to the battle. When the gandharvas vanished, Vrishadhvaja regained his senses. When they disappeared, Shankara realized that what he had seen was the result of maya. Following the customary practices of the world, the destroyer became very angry. Shiva was surprised in his mind. Full of rage, he again approached Jalandhara, so as to fight with him. Seeing that Shiva had returned to the battle, the daitya enveloped him with a shower of arrows. Jalandhara was extremely strong. But the lord Hara used his own arrows to sever the fierce net of arrows shot by him. For one who is the destroyer of the three worlds, this wasn't surprising. Jalandhara witnessed Rudra's extraordinary valour. To confound Tryambaka, he used his maya to create Gouri. Shiva saw Parvati tied to the top of the chariot, weeping. He saw that she was about to be killed by Shumbha, Nishumbha and other daityas. Seeing Gouri in that state, he displayed the customary practices of the world. Behaving like an ordinary person, Shiva's mind was agitated. Accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, he cast his face downwards and was silent. His limbs turned lax, and he was dejected.

[398] The reference is to the two monkeys who were shown. They would become the rakshasas Maricha and Ravana and abduct Sita.

[399] The lord of snakes is Shesha and Lakshmana was an incarnation of Shesha.

He forgot about his own valour. Forcefully, Jalandhara pierced him with three arrows. They sank into Rudra's head, chest and stomach, right up to the feathered tufts. The lord engages in great pastimes, and he is the essence of jnana. In an instant, Rudra assumed a fierce form. He blazed in a garland of flames and was exceedingly terrible. The great asuras saw his extremely fierce form. They were incapable of remaining in front of him and fled in the ten directions. O lord among sages! Nishumbha and Shumbha were supreme among brave ones and were famous. But even they were incapable of remaining in the battle. In a trice, the maya created by Jalandhara vanished. In every direction, great sounds of lamentation arose in that battle. Seeing that Shumbha and Nishumbha were fleeing, full of rage, Rudra rebuked them and cursed them. Rudra said, "You are wicked and have committed all the crimes against me. You are the ones who chastised Parvati. But you are now running away from the field of battle. Those who are fleeing should not be killed. Therefore, you should not be killed by me. When this battle with me is over, you will be killed by Gouri. "400 While Gouri's lord was saying this, Jalandhara, the ocean's son, became extremely angry with Rudra, blazing like a flaming fire."""

*""In the battle, he showered Rudra with extremely swift and sharp arrows. Because of these arrows, the surface of the ground was covered and became dark. When Rudra quickly severed these innumerable arrows, the powerful one swiftly struck the bull with a club. As a result of that blow, the bull retreated from the field of battle. Though Rudra tried to drag it back, it did not remain on the battlefield. At this, the great Rudra displayed his own energy, and it was impossible to tolerate. O lord among sages! He exhibited this to everyone. This is true. Extremely wrathful, Rudra assumed a fierce form. The lord suddenly blazed in this terrible form, like the fire of dissolution. He saw the daitya standing before him, resembling a cloud, or the summit of a mountain. He prepared himself, having heard that he could not be killed by anyone else. The lord who protects the universe wished to ensure that Brahma's words came true. Having shown him401 great compassion in his heart, he made up his mind to kill him. The wielder of the trident was filled with great rage. Marvellous and fierce, in the great waters, using his big toe, 402 he quickly drew the wheel of a chariot. Having drawn this sharp-edged wheel in the waters of the ocean, Bhagavan remembered the enemies of the three worlds he had destroyed earlier-Daksha, Andhaka, Tripura and Daksha's sacrifice. The one who destroys the three worlds laughed and spoke. The great Rudra said, "O Jalandhara! Using my foot, I have drawn this wheel in the great waters. If you are strong enough to raise it up, remain here and fight with me, not otherwise." Hearing his words, Jalandhara's eyes blazed in rage. He looked at Shankara, as if he was going to burn him down with his eyes and spoke. Jalandhara said, "O Shankara! After raising the line up, I will kill you and your ganas. Like Garuda seizing his own share,[403] I will destroy the world, along with the devas. I am capable of destroying all mobile and immobile entities, along with Vasava. O Maheshvara! Is there anyone in the three worlds who cannot be pierced by my arrows?

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[400] The story of Shumbha and Nishumbha's death is narrated in Markandeya Purana.

[401] Jalandhara.

[402] In the great waters of the oceans. Rathanga can mean any part (anga) of a chariot (ratha), but usually means the wheel.

[403] Of serpents.

Even when I was a child, I conquered Bhagavan Brahma through my austerities. Along with sages and bulls among gods, he is now in my excellent place. In an instant, I can burn down the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile entities. O Rudra! What are your austerities? I have defeated even Bhagavan. Indra, Agni, Yama, the lord of riches, Vayu, the lord of water and others were unable to tolerate me, just as nagas cannot bear the scent of the king of birds. [404] O Shankara! There is no place on heaven or earth that my vehicle has not reached. I have crossed all the mountains and made the lords among ganas suffer. To scratch the itching in my arms, I have struck Mandara, Indra among mountains, the handsome Nila and the extremely beautiful Meru and made them suffer. For the sake of sporting, on Mount Himalaya, I used my arms to obstruct Ganga. Even my servants were victorious over my enemies, the residents of heaven. I seized the Vadava fire [405] and covered its mouth with my hand, thus reducing all the oceans to a single entity. I hurled Airavata and other elephants into the waters of the ocean. Along with his chariot, I flung lord Indra one hundred yojanas away. Along with Garuda, I bound up Vishnu in a noose of serpents. Urvashi[406] and other women have been imprisoned by me inside my house. O Rudra! You do not know me. I am the conqueror of the three worlds. I am Jalandhara, the great daitya. I am the extremely strong son of the ocean." Having told Mahadeva this, the son of the ocean did not move. Nor did he remember the danavas who had been killed in the battle. [407] He was insolent, with no sign of humility. Showing his strength, he slapped his arms. Mahadeva was rebuked by him in words that were harshly articulated. He heard the daitya's words, which were uttered in an exceedingly inauspicious way."""

""Mahadeva laughed and was filled with great rage. He used his big toe to fashion the chakra known as Sudarshana. Rudra seized it in his hand and got ready to kill him. Bhagavan Hara hurled the chakra known as Sudarshana. It resembled one crore suns and was like the fire of dissolution. It burnt down the region between heaven and earth and quickly reached Jalandhara. With great force, it severed his head, distinguished by the two large and dilated eyes. His body fell down from the chariot and made the earth resound. The head of the ocean's son also fell down and there were great sounds of lamentation. His body was sliced into two, like a mountain of collyrium shattered by the vajra. It was like a supreme mountain shattered into two and flung into the waters of the ocean. The entire universe was covered with his horrible blood. O lord among sages! As a result of this, the entire earth became disfigured. On the instructions of Rudra, his entire body, along with the blood and flesh, was conveyed to the hell known as Maharourava. It became a pit full of blood there. When his body was destroyed, an energy issued from it and merged into Bhava, just as the energy from Vrinda's destroyed body had merged into Gouri. Seeing that Jalandhara had been killed, devas, gandharvas and pannagas were extremely happy. The devas uttered words of praise. All the devas, siddhas and lords among sages were pleased. They showered down flowers and loudly praised Isha. The divine women were agitated by their love and danced in great happiness. Along with the kinnaras, they sang beautiful verses in melodious tones. O sage! When Vrinda's husband was killed, all the directions were pacified.

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[404] That is, Garuda.

[405] Vadavamukha fire is the subterranean fire, in the shape of a mare's (vadava) head (mukha).

[406] A famous apsara.

[407] Had he done so, he would have been scared.

The three kinds of wind408 blew and were pleasant and auspicious to the touch. The moon regained its coolness, and the sun regained its great energy. The fire blazed serenely, and the sky was no longer disfigured. O sage! In this way, all the three worlds and the waters obtained a more beneficial state. This occurred when Hara, infinite in his forms, killed the son of the ocean."""

Chapter 195-3.5(25) (Praise by Devas)

“Sanatkumara said, 'After this, Brahma and the other devas and all the sages bent down and used eloquent words to praise the divinity, the lord of devas."""

""The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! You are affectionate towards those who seek refuge with you. You always bestow happiness on the virtuous. You dispel the miseries of your devotees. Your great and wonderful pastimes are impossible to understand, other than through devotion. O protector! The wicked find it impossible to reach you. Please remain favourably disposed towards us. Even the Vedas do not know about your true greatness. All the great-souled ones chant about you, to the extent that their intelligence comprehends it. The one with one thousand faces [409] and others always chant about it with great happiness. They are thus purified by their own words. O lord of devas! Through your favours, even a dumb person obtains jnana about the brahman. The Vedas say that you can always be obtained through devotion. You are compassionate towards the distressed. You always pervade everything. Through virtuous devotion, you manifest yourself. You are without transformation and are the destination of the virtuous. O Mahesha! Your devotees have obtained many kinds of success. They have enjoyed all kinds of happiness and have been indifferent towards miseries. In earlier times, the lord of the Yadus, Dasharha, obtained success. O lord! His wife, Kalavati, was also supremely devoted to you.[410] O lord of devas! King Mitrasaha and his beloved, Madayanti, were devoted to you and obtained the supreme goal of kaivalya.[411] The daughter of the elder brother of Kekaya was named Soumini. Through devotion towards you, she obtained supreme happiness, one that is difficult for even virtuous yogis to obtain. [412] O lord! As a result of devotion towards you, Vimarshana, supreme among kings, enjoyed many kinds of objects of pleasure for seven births and obtained a virtuous destination. [413] Through devotion towards you, Chandrasena, supreme among kings, enjoyed every object of pleasure. Freed from miseries, he obtained happiness in this world and in the next one. [414] Shrikara, the son of a gopi and Mahavira's disciple, was devoted to you.

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[408] Probably meaning the ones that blow upwards, downwards and diagonally.

[409] This obviously means Indra, though he is usually described as one with one thousand eyes.

[410] Dasharha was the king of Mathura, and his wife was Kalavati. Both of them were Shiva's devotees. The story is narrated in Skanda Purana.

[411] Kaivalya means emancipation. King Mitrasaha is more familiarly known as Kalmashapada. Having been cursed, he became a rakshasa and was freed from his sins after he prayed to Shiva in Gokarna.

[412] This is difficult to pin down. There will be a reference to a different Soumini in Volume III.

[413] Vimarshana was a king of the Kirata kingdom. Inadvertently, in the form of a dog, he died in front of a Shiva lingam and was rewarded in successive births.

[414] Chandrasena was the king of Ujjayini (Ujjain), and the worship of Shiva saved him from his enemies.

Therefore, he enjoyed the destination of the virtuous in this world and in the next world, obtained supreme happiness. [415] You dispelled the miseries of King Satyaratha and bestowed a virtuous end on him. [416] You made Prince Dharmagupta cross over this world and obtain happiness. [417] O great lord! O one who shows compassion! The brahmana Shuchivrata was devoted to you. You bestowed jnana on him and his mother and removed his poverty. [418] As a result of devotion towards you, Chitravarma, the supreme king, obtained a virtuous destination. In this world, he enjoyed objects of pleasure that are difficult for even the immortals to obtain. [419] Along with his wife, Simantini, Prince Chandrangada was freed from every kind of grief. He obtained happiness and the great destination. The brahmana Mandara was worst among wicked ones. He had intercourse with a courtesan, [420] But he became Shiva's devotee and worshipping you, along with her, obtained a good destination. O lord! Because of the compassion you show towards your devotees, along with his mother, Prince Bhadrayu obtained happiness and achieved the supreme destination. O Maheshvara! There are wicked people who enjoy themselves with every kind of woman and always eat what should not be eaten. By serving you, even they are liberated. O Shankara! Shambara's mind was devoted to you, and he always wore bhasma. [421] By following the norms about bhasma, accompanied by his wife, he went to your city. O lord! Bhadrasena's son, Sudharma, and the son of the minister were the performers of auspicious deeds and always wore rudrakshas. [422] Through your favours, they enjoyed happiness in this world and were emancipated. In earlier lives, they were a monkey and a cock and were ornamented with rudraksha beads. Pingala and Mahananda were courtesans. However, because of devotion towards you, they obtained virtuous destinations. O protector! You are engaged in uplifting your devotees. Sharada was a brahmana's daughter who became a widow at a young age. Through the power of devotion towards you, she obtained sons and good fortune. Binduga was a brahmana only in name, enjoying himself with a courtesan. As a result of hearing about your fame, he and his beloved, Chanchula, obtained a supreme destination. [423] O lord! In this way, many living beings have obtained success through sentiments of devotion towards you. O Mahesha! O friend of the distressed! O abode of compassion! You are beyond Prakriti. You are the brahman. You are beyond Purusha. You are Parameshvara. You are nirguna but support the three gunas. Your atman is in Brahma, Vishnu and Hara. You always engage in many kinds of deeds. You are eternal. You are without transformations.

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[415] Gopi is the feminine of cowherd. Since Shrikara was devoted to Shiva, Krishna was born in his lineage.

[416] The king of Vidarbha. The story will be told later, in Shata Rudra Samhita of this volume.

[417] The story will be told later, in Shata Rudra Samhita of this volume.

[418] This account is linked to the Dharmagupta story and will be recounted later.

[419] King Chitravarma and his wife prayed to Shiva and obtained a daughter, Simantini. The daughter was widowed, but her husband was revived because of Shiva's favours.

[420] This story is narrated in Skanda Purana, about Mandara and a courtesan named Pingala. Mandara was reborn as Bhadrayu.

[421] Ashes.

[422] Bhadrasena was the king of Kashmir, and his son was named Sudharma. The son of the king's minister was named Taraka. In earlier lives, Taraka was a cock and Sudharma was a monkey. Both belonged to a prostitute named Mahananda, who was devoted to Shiva. She made the cock and the monkey wear necklaces made out of rudrakshas. Because of Mahananda's devotion, the cock and the monkey were born as Taraka and Sudharma.

[423] Binduga and Chanchula's story has been narrated in Volume I. The text says Vanchuka. This is a typo and we have corrected it.

You are the lord of everything. O Maheshvara! We, Brahma and all the others, are your servants. O lord of devas! Be pleased. O Shiva! Always protect us. O protector! We are your subjects. We always seek refuge with you."""""

"Sanatkumara continued, 'In this way, Brahma and the other devas and lords among sages praised him. With their minds fixed on Shiva's two feet, they were silent. Shambhu Mahesha heard the auspicious words of praised uttered by the devas. The lord bestowed excellent boons on them and instantly vanished from the spot. With their enemies slain, Brahma and all the other devas were delighted. Pleased, and chanting about Shiva's fame, they returned to their own respective abodes. This is the supreme account about the crushing of Jalandhara and Mahesha's sacred conduct. It destroys great floods of sins. This hymn by devas is sacred and destroys every kind of sin. It always bestows great happiness and causes pleasure to Mahesha. If one reads, or has read, these two accounts completely, one enjoys great happiness and obtains the status of being a Ganapati.'

Chapter 196-3.5(26) (Dispelling of Vishnu's Delusion)

“Vyasa said, 'O Brahma's son! I prostrate myself before you. O supreme among Shiva's devotees! You are blessed. You have made me hear an auspicious and extremely divine account about Shankara. O sage! Now, please tell me affectionately about Vishnu's conduct. Having deluded Vrinda, what did he do? Where did he go?"""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O Vyasa! O immensely wise one! O supreme among Shiva's excellent devotees! Along with Shambhu's excellent conduct, hear about Vishnu's sparkling conduct. Shambhu is affectionate towards those who seek refuge. When Brahma and the other devas were silent, Maheshvara was extremely pleased and spoke. Shambhu said, "O Brahma and all the other devas! Though Jalandhara was born from my portion, for your sake, I have killed him. This is the truth. I am telling you the truth. O sons! O immortals! Have you not got back your happiness again? Tell me the truth. Though I am indifferent, it is for your sake that I always engage in pastimes." The eyes of Brahma and the other devas dilated in joy. They lowered their heads and prostrating themselves before Rudra, told him what Vishnu had done. The devas said, "O Mahadeva! You have saved devas from fear the enemy caused. However, there is something else that has happened. What will we do about that? O protector! Vrinda was deluded by Vishnu. She immediately reduced herself to ashes in a fire and has obtained a supreme destination. However, Vishnu is still confounded and fascinated by Vrinda's charm. Deluded by your maya, he wears the ashes from her funeral pyre. Siddhas, large numbers of sages and we have affectionately tried to make him understand. But deluded by your maya, Hari does not understand. O Mahesha! Please take pity and make Vishnu understand what needs to be understood. Everything that results from Prakriti, mobile and immobile, is under your control." Mahesha heard the words spoken by the residents of heaven. As they stood there, hands joined in salutation, he replied, comfortably engaged in great pastimes. Mahesha said, "O Brahma! O all you gods! Listen attentively to my words. My maya is impossible to transgress and deludes all the worlds. The entire universe, along with devas, asuras and humans, is under its subjugation.

[424] Jalandhara's death and praise of Shiva.

Vishnu was deluded by that. Hence, Hari was subjugated by desire. That maya is known as Uma, Mahadevi, the supreme mother of the three divinities, the primordial Prakriti and the beautiful Girija. O devas! To dispel Vishnu's delusion, go and seek refuge with her. Mohini Maya is the refuge. She is known as Shivaa, the one who bestows everything desired. Laud my Shakti, so that she is satisfied. If she is pleased, she will carry out all the tasks." Shambhu, the five-faced Bhagavan Hara, spoke to the gods in this way. O Vyasa! Along with all his ganas, he then disappeared."""

""Brahma and the other devas, along with Vasava, followed Shambhu's instruction. In their minds, they praised the primordial Prakriti, who is affectionate towards her devotees. The devas said, "Sattva, rajas and tamas gunas originate from you. You arrange for them to lead to creation, preservation and destruction. The existence and non-existence of the entire universe is through your will. O primordial Prakriti! We prostrate ourselves before you. Please save us from the twenty-three principles, [425] In the entire universe, they announce your supreme existence. The three worlds do not know your forms and deeds. O primordial Prakriti! We prostrate ourselves before you. Men full of constant devotion towards you do not suffer from poverty and delusion. You are affectionate towards your devotees, and they never face these. O primordial Prakriti! We prostrate ourselves before you. O Mahadevi! O Pareshvari! [426] Please perform a task for us, the devas. O Shivaa! O Durgal O Devi! We prostrate ourselves before you. Please dispel Vishnu's delusion. O Shivaa! O Devi! When the battle between Shambhu, who resides in Kailasa, and Jalandhara was going on, following Gouri's instruction and in order to ensure his death, Vishnu made efforts to delude Vrinda. Having been forced to give up her own dharma, she reduced herself to ashes in a fire and has obtained an excellent destination. Since Jalandhara has been killed in the battle, we have been freed from any fear on account of him. Girisha, who shows favours towards his devotees, did this in compassion. It is because of his command that all of us have come here, to seek refuge with you. O Devi! You and Shambhu are always engaged in saving your devotees. Enticed by Vrinda's charm, Vishnu still resides there. He wears the ashes from her funeral pyre. He is deluded and has been dislodged from his jnana. O Maheshvari! The large number of siddhas and gods tried to make him understand. However, deluded by your maya, Hari has not understood. Please make Hari understand. O Mahadevi! Please show your compassion. Make him understand. Let him return to his own world and with an excellent mind, carry out the tasks of the gods." When devas praised her in this way, they saw a circle of energy in the sky. That blaze pervaded the directions. O Vyasa! From its midst, Brahma, Vasava and all the others heard a voice from the sky, one that would grant their wishes. The voice from the sky said, "I am divided into three and am established according to the three gunas. Gouri, Lakshmi and Sarasvati represent the gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas.[427] All of you go and lovingly approach them. Follow my command and please them. They will arrange for what you desire." O sage! Hearing what the invisible voice said, the eyes of the devas widened in wonder.""

[425] Five gross elements, five subtle elements (tanmatras), five organs of action, five senses of perception, mind, intelligence and ahamkara.

[426] The same as Parameshvari.

[427] We have corrected a typo in the text, which reads Surajyoti instead of Sarasvati.

"All the devas attentively heard the words. As urged, the gods prostrated themselves before Gouri, Lakshmi and Sarasvati. With a great deal of devotion, the gods praised all the Devis. Brahma and the others lowered their hands and used many kinds of eloquent words. O Vyasa! After this, the Devis appeared in front of them. This was exceedingly marvellous. Their own radiance illuminated the directions. On seeing them, the minds of the immortals were pleased. Devotedly, they prostrated themselves. Praising them, they reported their own task. They were affectionate towards their devotees. Seeing that the gods were prostrated in front of them, the Devis gave them seeds and spoke to them lovingly. The Devis said, "Sow these seeds in the place where Vishnu is. If you do this, your task will be accomplished." O sage! Saying this, the Devis vanished from the spot. These were the three Shaktis of Rudra, Vishnu and Vidhatri, representing the three gunas. Brahma and all the other gods, including Vasava, were satisfied. They collected those seeds and went to the place where Hari was. The gods sprinkled the seeds on the ground where Vrinda's funeral pyre had been lit. O sage! They remained there, thinking that these were portions of Shiva and Shakti. Three trees resulted from the seeds that had been sprinkled. O lord among sages! They were dhatri, malati and tulasi, [428] Dhatri is said to have emerged from Vidhatri's Shakti, malati is from Rama and tulasi from Gouri. They represent the sattva, rajas and tamas gunas. O sage! Vishnu saw the trees, which were in the forms of the three women. On seeing them, he stood up, enticed by attachment towards them. On seeing them, his mind was overwhelmed by desire, and he wanted them. Tulasi and dhatri also looked at him with eyes of attachment. However, on seeing the woman who had been created from the seed based on Lakshmi's maya, Lakshmi was filled with jealousy. Therefore, it came to be known as varvari and is extremely condemned. [429] He loves dhatri and tulasi and they always bring him pleasure. Vishnu forgot all his miseries. Along with them, he went to Vaikuntha. All the devas were satisfied and prostrated themselves before him. O Indra among brahmanas! In the month of Kartika, [430] dhatri and tulasi are known to be loved by all devas, especially Vishnu. O great sage! Among those two, tulasi is best and is blessed. With the exception of Ganesha, it pleases everyone and bestows everything that is desired. Seeing that Hari was instated in Vaikuntha, Brahma, Indra and the other immortals bent down and praised the great Vishnu. They returned to their own respective abodes. O best among sages! Understanding was kindled in him. His delusion was dispelled and remembering Shiva, he was happy. He was established in his own world, as he had been earlier. This account destroys all sins and yields everything desired by men. It destroys every deviation caused by desire. It extends every kind of vijnana, [431] If one reads this devotedly every day, or has it read, if one hears it or makes it heard, one goes to the supreme destination. If an intelligent and brave person reads this account and then goes forth to do battle, there is no doubt that he is victorious. It bestows knowledge about the brahman on brahmanas, victory on kshatriyas, every kind of wealth on vaishyas and every kind of happiness on shudras. O Vyasa! It bestows devotion towards Shambhu and destroys all sins. In this world and in the next one, it always confers a virtuous destination."""

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[428] Dhatri is amalaka (a kind of myrobalan), malati is a type of jasmine and tulasi is the holy basil.

[429] Malati was changed to varvari (barbari). This is a kind of wild basil that is not used in Vishnu's worship.

[430] October-November.

[431] The words jnana and vijnana are often used synonymously and both words mean knowledge. When distinct meanings are intended, jnana signifies knowledge obtained from texts and gurus, while vijnana signifies knowledge obtained through inward contemplation and self-realization.

Chapter 197-3.5(27) (Shankhachuda's Origin)

“Sanatkumara said, 'O sage! Listen lovingly to another account about Shambhu's conduct. As soon as one hears it, devotion towards Shiva becomes firm. There was a brave danava known as Shankhachuda and he was a thorn for devas. In the field of battle, Shiva used his trident to kill him. Shambhu's conduct is divine and sacred. It destroys sins. O Vyasa! Listen lovingly. Out of my affection towards you, I will tell you. The sage Kashyapa was the son of Marichi, Vidhatri's son. He was devoted to dharma. Engaged in the task of creation, he was described as a Prajapati. Pleased with him, Daksha bestowed thirteen of his daughters on him. Their offspring extended in many directions, and it is impossible to describe them. Devas and all mobile and immobile entities in the universe extended from them. In the three worlds, who is capable of narrating this? But hear about that bit of the account which concerns Shambhu's pastimes. I will tell you about that now. Listen. It enhances devotion.'"'

“One of Kashyapa's wives was the beautiful Danu. She was extremely beautiful and virtuous and extended her husband's good fortune. Danu had many sons who were exceedingly strong. O sage! Out of fear, their names are not spoken about in detail. She had an immensely valiant son, Viprachitti. His son was Dambha, who was devoted to dharma and Vishnu and had conquered his senses. He did not have a son and the valiant one thought about this. He went to his guru, Shukracharya, and learnt a mantra to Krishna. With this, he performed supreme austerities in Pushkara for one hundred thousand years. For a long period of time, he seated himself in a firm and fixed posture and performed japa, using the mantra to Krishna. When he performed these austerities, a blaze issued from his head. That energy spread everywhere and was impossible to tolerate. All the gods, sages and humans were scorched by this. Placing Sunasira [432] at their head, they sent and sought refuge with Brahma. They prostrated themselves before Vidhatri, who bestows every kind of prosperity. Agitated, they praised him and spoke to him, especially telling him what had happened to them. Hearing this, accompanied by them, Vidhatri went to Vaikuntha, so that Vishnu might be told everything. Vishnu is the supreme preserver and the lord of the three worlds. Having gone there, all of them lowered their heads and clasping their hands, prostrated themselves. The devas said, "O lord of devas! We do not know the reason for this. Whose energy has led all of us to be tormented? Please tell us. We are being scorched. You are a friend to the distressed. Our subsistence depends on you. Please save us. O Rama's lord! Please protect us. You are the refuge and we have sought refuge with you." Vishnu heard the words spoken by Brahma and the other residents of heaven. Affectionate towards those who seek refuge, he smiled affectionately and spoke. Vishnu said, "O immortals! Do not be anxious. You will be well. You should not be scared. No deluge will occur. The time for dissolution has not yet arrived. There is a danava named Dambha. He is my devotee, and he is performing austerities for the sake of a son. I will pacify him by granting him a boon." O sage! Having been thus addressed, all the gods resorted to their fortitude. Assured, along with Brahma, they returned to their own respective abodes.'"'

[432] One of Indra's rarer names.

""To bestow the boon, Achyuta went to Pushkara. The danava named Dambha was performing austerities there. Having gone there, he assured his devotee, who was performing japa, clearly stating Hari's name. He said, "Ask for a boon." Hearing this, he saw Vishnu standing in front of him. Full of great devotion, he prostrated himself and repeatedly praised him. Dambha said, "O lord of devas! I prostrate myself before one! O one with eyes like lotuses! O Rama's consort! O lord of the three worlds! Please show me your compassion. I am your devotee. Please grant me an extremely strong and valiant son. Let him be brave. Let him conquer the three worlds and the residents of heaven." When the Indra among danavas said this, Hari granted him a boon, so as to restrain him from the austerities. O sage! Having done this, he vanished. When Hari departed, the Indra among danavas prostrated himself in the direction in which he had gone. Successful and with his wishes satisfied, he returned to his own home. Within a short period of time, his fortunate wife conceived. She blazed in her energy and made the inside of the house beautiful. There was a gopa named Sudama who was foremost among Krishna's companions. O sage! Cursed by Radha, he entered her womb. [433] When the time for delivery arrived, the virtuous lady gave birth to an extremely radiant son. To perform the jatakarma rites, his father invited many sages. O supreme among brahmanas! When he was born, many great festivities were organized. On an auspicious day, his father named him Shankhachuda. Like the moon during shukla paksha, he grew up in his father's house. As a child, the extremely radiant one received various kinds of learning. He engaged in childish sports and constantly brought delight to his father and mother. He was especially loved by all those who belonged to the family.""

Chapter 198-3.5(28) (Shankhachuda's Austerities and Marriage)

“Sanatkumara said, 'Shankhachuda was instructed by Jaigishavya.[434] For a long time, he happily remained in Brahma's Pushkara. Controlling his senses and using the knowledge of the brahman given to him by his guru, he performed japa. Single-minded in attention, he controlled his organs of action. The danava Shankhachuda tormented himself in Pushkara. Brahma, the lord who is the guru of the worlds, quickly arrived, to bestow a boon on him. Vidhatri told the Indra among danavas, "Ask for a boon." On seeing him, he humbly bent down and praised him with virtuous words. He asked Brahma for the boon that he might not be vanquished by the residents of heaven. Pleased in his mind, Vidhatri agreed to this. He gave Shankhachuda Sri Krishna's divine kavacha,[435] most auspicious among all the auspicious things in the universe. This bestows victory everywhere. "Go to Badari and marry Tulasi. As she wills, she is performing austerities there.

[433] A gopa is a cowherd. Since Krishna dallied with others, Radha abused him. At this, Sudama became angry with Radha and used harsh words against her. Consequently, Sudama was cursed by Radha that he would be born as a demon.

[434] A famous sage. In the Mahabharata, Jaigishavya described Shiva's greatness to Yudhishthira. He was obviously Shankhachuda's guru.

[435] In general, kavacha means armour. More specifically, it is an amulet, over which, mantras have been pronounced.

She is the daughter of Dharmadhvaja." Vidhatri instructed him in this way. While he was still looking on, he instantly vanished."""

“Shankhachuda's austerities in Pushkara had been successful. He tied the kavacha, most auspicious among all the auspicious things in the universe, around his neck. His wishes had been satisfied and he had become successful in his austerities. As instructed by Brahma, rejoicing, he quickly went to the hermitage of Badarika. Wandering around as he willed, the danava Shankhachuda went to the place where Tulasi, Dharmadhvaja's daughter, was performing austerities. She was beautiful, with a smiling face. She was slender and adorned in sparkling ornaments. She cast sidelong glances at the great man. He saw that charming, beautiful and virtuous lady. She was lovely and possessed good conduct. He remained near her and addressed her in sweet words. Shankhachuda said, "Who are you? Whose daughter are you? What are you doing here? Why are you silent? You should think of me as your servant." Hearing his words, she was filled with desire and replied to him. Tulasi said, "I am Dharmadhvaja's daughter. I am an ascetic and am performing austerities. I remain in this hermitage. What are you? As you will, you can go wherever you want. As a class, women cause delusion, even to Brahma and others. They are like poison. Since they commit sins, they are condemned. They are bonds of maya and can lead to repentance." In this way, Tulasi spoke to him in jest and stopped. As he started to speak to her, he saw that she was smiling. Shankhachuda said, "O beautiful lady! What you have said is not completely false. But it is my view that it is partly false too. Listen to me. You are foremost among women who are devoted to their husbands. I am not a sinner, or a lascivious person. I do not think that your inclinations are like that either. Following Brahma's command, I have now come to your presence. sence. O beautiful one! I will marry you through the gandharva rites. [436] I am Shankhachuda, who has driven devas away. O fortunate one! Do you not know me? Have you never heard about me? I am from Danu's lineage. In particular, I am a danava who is Dambha's son. [437] Earlier, I used to be a gopa named Sudama, Hari's companion. As a result of Radhika's[438] curse, I have now become an Indra among danavas. I am a jatismara[439] and know this. All this is because of Krishna's favours." Shankhachuda said this and stopped. The Indra among danavas was in front of her and lovingly and truthfully, told her this. Satisfied at this, Tulasi smiled and started to speak. Tulasi said, "I have now been defeated by one whose reflections are full of sattva. In this world, that man is blessed who is not defeated by a woman. Even if a man observes virtuous rites, if he is defeated by a woman, he always remains impure. The ancestors, devas and all humans censure him. After a birth or a death,[440] a brahmana is purified after ten days, a kshatriya after twelve days, a vaishya after fifteen days and a shudra after a month. These are the injunctions in the Vedas. But a man who is defeated by a woman is not purified until he is burnt on a funeral pyre. His ancestors do not wish to accept his pindas[441] or oblations of water.

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[436] One of the eight forms of marriage. In this form, the groom and bride fall in love with each other and marry, without any other rites.

[437] The text says Manda's son, an obvious typo.

[438] Radhika is the same as Radha.

[439] An individual who remembers the past life.

[440] In the immediate family, within the house.

[441] Funeral cakes offered to ancestors.

The gods do not accept flowers, fruits and other things offered by him. For such a person, what objective do jnana, excellent austerities, japa and oblations achieve? If his mind has been stolen by a woman, of what avail are learning and donations? I wished to test and know the extent of your learning and power. Before a woman accepts a groom, she must test her beloved." When Tulasi was saying this, Vidhatri arrived at that spot at that very instant. The creator spoke these words. Brahma said, "O Shankhachuda! Why are you having this conversation with her? Following the gandharva rites of marriage, accept her. You are a jewel amongst men and this virtuous one is a jewel amongst women. The union between a learned man and a learned woman possesses good qualities. O king! Unmitigated happiness is rare. Who wishes to give it up? There is no doubt that a person who gives up unmitigated happiness is an animal. O virtuous lady! He possesses qualities. Why are you testing a person like him? He is one who has crushed devas, asuras and danavas. O beautiful lady! You can always pleasure with him for a long period of time, in whatever place you will and in all the worlds. In the end, he will again obtain Goloka and Shri Krishna. When you die, you will obtain the four-armed one in Vaikuntha." Having given them his blessings in this way, Vidhatri returned to his own abode. Following the gandharva rites of marriage, the danava accepted her. After marrying Tulasi, he returned to his father's residence. In a beautiful residence, he amused himself with her."""

Chapter 199-3.5(29) (Shankhachuda's Rule and Earlier Birth)

“Sanatkumara said, 'Having married, Shankhachudra returned to his own house. Since he had performed austerities and obtained a boon, danavas and others rejoiced, Instructed by their own guru, all the asuras[442] quickly emerged from their own world. They assembled and went to his presence, They humbly prostrated themselves and using the proper norms, lovingly praised him. Taking him to be an extremely energetic lord, they happily remained there. Dambha's son saw that the guru of his lineage had arrived. Full of great devotion and extremely lovingly, he did sashtanga pranama. [443] Shukra, the acharya of the lineage, saw his excellent disciple. He told him the account of devas and danavas, the natural enmity between the two, defeat of the asuras, victory of the immortals and the help rendered by Jiva. With the consent of the asuras, the guru made him the lord of all the danavas and asuras and there were festivities. The asuras were delighted at these festivities. Extremely happy, they gave him various gifts. The brave and powerful Shankhachuda, Dambha's son, was instated in the kingdom. As the king of the asuras, he dazzled."""

""He gathered a large army of daityas, danavas and rakshasas. He advanced spiritedly on his chariot, to conquer Shakra's city. As the Indra among danavas advanced amidst those who served him, he was as radiant as the moon among the shining bodies, [444] or the lord of planets [445] among the planets.

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[442] In several places in this chapter, there are typos, with the text saying suras (gods) instead of asuras. These have been corrected.

[443] This means lying completely prostrate on the ground, ashta meaning eight and anga meaning limb. Eight of one's limbs must touch the ground. Though the number eight is sometimes interpreted metaphorically, literally, it means two feet, two knees, two hands, the chest and the forehead. These must touch the ground.

[444] That is, stars.

[445] That is, the sun.

Hearing that Shankhachuda had come, Akhandala,[446] the king of heaven, emerged with all the immortals, ready to fight. A tumultuous battle between gods and asuras followed. It made the body hair stand up, causing delight to heroes and scaring cowards. As the brave ones roared in the battle, there was a tumultuous sound. Musical instruments were sounded there, enhancing bravery. The angry devas were stronger and defeated the asuras, who started to run away in their fear. The lord Shankhachuda saw that they were fleeing. Roaring like a lion, he fought with the immortals. He quickly caused great carnage among the residents of heaven. Unable to tolerate his energy, all the gods ran away. Dejected, they sought refuge in caves in mountains. They lost their independence and came under his subjugation, like the ocean when it is faded. The brave and powerful Indra among the danavas, Dambha's son, conquered all the worlds and appropriated the rights of the gods. He brought the three worlds under his control and seized all the shares in sacrifices. He himself became Indra and ruled over the entire world. According to his capacity, he carried out the tasks of Kubera, Indu,[447] Surya, Agni, Yama and Vayu. Shankhachuda, extremely brave and extremely strong, became the lord of devas, asuras, danavas, rakshasas, gandharvas, nagas, kinnaras, residents of the nether region and everyone in the three worlds. In this way, Shankhachuda became the emperor over all the worlds and enjoyed the kingdom for a long time. There was no famine or epidemic in his kingdom. The planets were never inauspicious. There were no physical or mental ailments. The subjects were always happy. Without being tilled, the earth yielded many crops and grain. The different kinds of herbs grew successfully and were always full of juices. The oceans, stores of jewels, incessantly yielded many kinds of gems. The trees were always full of flowers and the rivers carried water. With the exception of devas, all living beings were happy and suffered from no disturbances. All the varnas and ashramas were established in their respective dharmas. When he ruled over the three worlds in this way, no one suffered from grief. Though they were brothers,[448] it was only the immortals who were miserable and resorted to enmity. The powerful Shankhachuda was a great friend of Krishna, who resides in Goloka. He was always virtuous and always devoted to Krishna. It was because of the powers of a former curse that he had been born as a danava. O sage! Though he was a danava, his inclinations were not like those of a danava."ı "The large number of gods were defeated and lost their kingdom. O son! They consulted the rishis and went to Brahma's assembly hall. Seeing Vidhatri there, they bent down and specially praised him. Agitated, they told Brahma everything that had happened. At this, Brahma comforted all the gods and sages. With them, he went to the world of Vaikuntha, which bestows happiness to the virtuous. Along with the large number of devas, Brahma saw Lakshmi's lord there. He wore a diadem and earrings and was adorned with a garland of wildflowers. The divinity was four-armed and held a conch shell, a chakra, a mace and a lotus. He was attired in yellow garments and was served by Sanandana and other siddhas. On seeing the lord Vishnu, Brahma and all the gods and the lords among sages prostrated themselves. They clasped their hands and devotedly praised him. The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Jagannatha! O lord of Vaikuntha! O lord! O Shri Hari! O guru of the three worlds! O Achyuta! O lord! You are the protector of the universe. You are the lord of the three worlds. You are the abode of Lakshmi. O Govinda! You are devoted to your devotees. I prostrate myself before you."

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[446] Akhandala is one of Indra's names.

[447] The moon.

[448] Their respective mothers were married to the sage Kashyapa.

Praising him in this way, all the gods wept in front of Hari. Hearing this, Bhagavan Vishnu spoke to Brahma. Vishnu said, "Why have you come to Vaikuntha, difficult for even yogis to reach? What is the misery that has arisen? In my presence, please state it." Hearing Hari's words, he prostrated himself repeatedly. He clasped his hands and lowered his shoulders humbly. He told him everything that Shankhachuda had done. In front of Vishnu, the paramatman, he described the miseries of devas. Hari knew everything and every kind of sentiment. Hearing his words, Bhagavan laughed and told Vidhatri about the secret. Shri Bhagavan said, "O one born from the lotus! I know everything about Shankhachuda's conduct. Earlier, he used to be an extremely energetic gopa who was devoted to me. Hear the entire account. This is ancient history. There is no need to doubt. Shankara will ensure what is auspicious. Shiva's world is greater than the greatest and is above everything. Shambhu Parameshvara, the supreme brahman, is resplendent there. He is the one who has established Purusha and Prakriti. He is the one who holds up the three Shaktis. He is nirguna but possesses gunas. His own form is that of supreme refulgence. The three, Brahma, who undertakes creation, and the others, have been born from his body. With the gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas, he is known as Brahma, Vishnu and Hara. He is the paramatman and he sports there with Uma. He is free of maya. He is the one who thinks of the eternal and the transient. Goloka is near that and Shankara's pen of cattle is there. Because of his command, my form of Krishna resides there. Obeying his command and to protect his cattle, he is always happy there. Delighted at having obtained him, he sports and finds pleasure there. There is a woman known as Radha there. She is the mother of the universe. Her form is the fifth one,[449] She is beyond Prakriti and finds excellent pleasures there. There are many gopas and gopis there, born from her body. They are always engaged in great sports and follow Radha and Krishna. This one was deluded by the pastimes of Shambhu and others. As a result of Radha's curse, he has faced these miseries and has been born as a danava. Krishna has ordained earlier that his death will come about through Rudra's trident. He will then give up his body and become his attendant again. O lord of devas! Knowing this, you should not be scared. Let us seek refuge with Shankara. He will ensure what is beneficial, I, you, and all the immortals can remain here, [450] without any fear." Having said this, along with Vidhatri, Vishnu went to Shiva's world. In his mind, he remembered Shambhu Sarvesha, who is affectionate towards his devotees."""

Chapter 200-3.5(30) (Prayer to the Lord of Devas)

“Sanatkumara said, 'O Vyasa! Rama's lord went, along with Vidhatri and the devas to Shiva's world. It was great and divine. It needed no support and was not made out of the elements. With a beaming face, Vishnu happily entered inside. Many kinds of jewels were strewn around. It dazzled and was exceedingly resplendent. He reached the first gate, which was served by excellent ganas. The place was radiant, with great prosperity. It was lofty and extremely beautiful. He saw the doorkeepers, seated on bejewelled thrones. They sparkled in their white garments and were adorned with bejewelled ornaments. Their bodies were beautiful and fair, with five faces and three eyes. Those brave ones held tridents and were adorned with bhasma and rudrakshas. Along with Brahma, Rama's lord humbly prostrated himself before them.

[449] Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva being the first three and the nirguna form of Shiva being the fourth.

[450] Since they went to Shiva mentally.

He told them the reason, that they wanted to see the lord and sought their permission. Having obtained permission, they entered and saw another door that was large, supremely radiant, wonderful and extremely beautiful. They told the doorkeepers that they wanted to approach the lord. Having obtained permission, they entered through this door. In this way, the one born from the lotus passed through fifteen doors. He reached a large gate and saw Nandi there. As was the case earlier, he bent down properly and praised Nandi. Allowed, he rejoiced and slowly entered inside, along with Vishnu. Having gone there, they saw Shambhu's lofty and radiant assembly hall. He was surrounded by his attendants, whose handsome bodies were adorned with ornaments. Their auspicious forms were just like those of Maheshvara, with five faces, three eyes and blue necks. They were handsome and radiant and illuminated the directions. They were adorned with bhasma and rudrakshas encrusted with gems. The assembly hall was in the shape of a square and as beautiful as the disc of the crescent moon. Constructed with gems, necklaces and the essence of diamonds, it was charming. It was crafted with invaluable jewels and decorated with lotus petals. There were colourful pictures, with nets and necklaces of gems. Because of Shankara's wish, it had been constructed with the choicest rubies. There were hundreds of steps, fashioned with syamantaka jewels. The joints were made out of golden threads and decorated with beautiful sandalwood shoots. Everywhere around, there were blue sapphires. It had been designed in a beautiful away. The breeze bore fragrant scents everywhere. It extended for one thousand yojanas and was filled with many servants. Vishnu, lord of gods, saw Shankara seated in the middle, along with Amba. He resembled the moon, surrounded by stars. He was seated on a colourful throne, crafted with priceless jewels. He wore a diadem, earrings and a necklace made out of gems. All his limbs were smeared with the dust of bhasma and he was toying with a lotus. Dancing and singing was going on in front of him. Smiling, he was happily watching this. His mind was serene and pleased. Uma's beloved was extremely radiant. He was chewing on fragrant betel leaves given by Devi. Full of great devotion, the ganas served him with white whisks. He was praised by siddhas, who lowered their shoulders in devotion. Paresha was beyond gunas. The lord was the one who had given birth to the three divinities. He was without a second. Shiva was without a form. Out of his own wishes, he assumed a form. He was free of maya. He was without origin. He was the primordial being. He was the lord of maya and greater than the greatest. He was beyond Prakriti and Purusha and always ruled himself. They saw his distinguished features, complete in every possible way. Vishnu and Brahma prostrated themselves. Joining their hands in salutation, they praised him."""

""Vishnu and Vidhatri said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O supreme brahman! O lord of everything! You are beyond the three gunas and without anxiety. You are the lord who created the three divinities. We have sought refuge with you. O lord! We are distressed. Please save us. O protector! O Parameshvara! We have been afflicted by Shankhachuda and are suffering. The world that is next to this place is known as Goloka. The lord Krishna is established as the divinity there. Sudama used to be his foremost companion. Controlled by destiny, he was cursed by Radha and has become danava Shankhachuda. O Shambhu! Exiled by him, we are suffering in every direction. The gods have been deprived of their rights and are roaming around on earth. Other than you, none of the residents of heaven can kill him. To ensure the happiness of the worlds, please kill him. You are nirguna. You are truth. You are infinite. You are infinite in your valour. But you are present in the gunas. You are beyond Purusha and Prakriti. O lord! At the time of creation, you are rajas in Brahma, the creator. O creator of the three worlds! As sattva, you preserve through Vishnu. To ensure

the destruction of the worlds, at the time of dissolution, you are tamas in Rudra. You are known as Shiva, who is without the three gunas. You are the fourth, 451 with illumination as your own form. Initiated by you, the protector of cows is in Goloka. Day and night, Krishna sports in the middle of your cattle pen. O lord! You are the cause behind everything. You are beyond Vidhatri, Vishnu and Ishvara. You are without transformation. You are the constant witness. You are Pareshvara, the paramatman. You are the aide and protector of the distressed. You are the one who preserves the distressed. You are the friend of the distressed. You are the lord of the three worlds. You are affectionate towards those who seek refuge. O Gouri's lord! Please save us. O Parameshvara! Please show us your favours. O lord! We are under your subjugation. Please do what you wish." O Vyasa! The two gods, Hari and Brahma, said this and stopped. They clasped their hands and humbly bent down before Shiva.""

Chapter 201-3.5(31) (Shiva's Advice)

“Sanatkumara said, 'Hearing the words of the extremely dejected Hari and Vidhatri, Shambhu smiled and spoke in a voice that rumbled like that of clouds. Shiva said, "O Hari! O child! O Brahma! Cast aside every kind of fear. There is no doubt that something fortunate will result from Shankhachuda's emergence. I know the truth about everything concerning Shankhachuda. O lord! In earlier times, there was a gopa who was devoted to Krishna. He was Sudama. Following my command, Hrishikesha assumed the form of Krishna. He is in the beautiful cow pen in Goloka, established by me. In earlier times, overcome by delusion, he formed the view that he was independent. Deluded and shameless, he indulged in many kinds of sports. On seeing that they were excessively deluded, to generate good intelligence in their hearts, I used my own maya to invoke curses on them. Having done this in my own pastimes, I withdrew the maya. They obtained jnana and good intelligence and were freed from delusion. Dejected, they approached and prostrated themselves before me. They clasped their hands and bending down, devotedly praised me. With their minds overwhelmed by shame, they told me everything. Depressed, they came before me and spoke these words. 'Save us. Please save us.' Satisfied, I addressed them in these words. 'O Krishna! Cast aside your fear. All of you follow my commands. I am always your protector. I am pleased with you, and you will be extremely fortunate. There is no doubt that all of this has occurred as a result of my wishes. Indeed, at the right time, I will ensure that you are freed from the curse." When I said this, along with Radha, Shri Krishna accepted my instruction. Extremely happy, the intelligent one returned to his abode. Supremely devoted to worshipping me, they gave up their fear. He realized that everything was subject to my control and that he was not independent. As a result of the curse imposed by Radha, Sudama became a lord of danavas. He is known as Shankhachuda. Though discriminating about dharma, he hates devas. Because of this great strength, the evil-minded one always makes the large number of devas suffer. He has been deluded by my maya and extremely wicked ministers are his aides. But get rid of your fear. I am the one who will chastise." While Shiva was stating this, in front of Hari and Brahma, something else happened. O sage! Listen.'"

[451] Beyond the three gunas.

""At that time, along with Radha, his attendants and virtuous gopas, Krishna arrived there, wishing to make the lord Shambhu favourably inclined towards him. Devotedly, he prostrated himself before the lord. He lovingly met Hari and honoured by Vidhatri, stood there, waiting for Shiva's instructions. He prostrated himself before Shambhu again and praised him in the proper way, joining his hands in salutation. Having got to know about Shiva's tattva, Shri Krishna had been freed from his delusion. Shri Krishna said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O supreme brahman! O destination of the virtuous! O Parameshvara! Please show me your favours and pardon my crimes. O Sharva! Everything originates in you. Everything is in you. O Maheshvara! You are everything. You are in everything, and you are the lord of everything. O Parameshvara! Be pleased. You are the supreme radiance. You directly pervade everything. You are eternal. O Gouri's lord! With you as a protector, all of us are protected. Thinking that I was above everyone, I was deluded and sported. I have received the fruits of that. My own person has been cursed. He is a gopa named Sudama and he is foremost among my companions. O lord! As a result of Radha's curse, he has been born as a danava. O Durga's lord! Please save us. O Parameshvara! Be pleased. Please save us now from the curse. We have sought refuge with you." Along with Radha, Shri Krishna said this and stopped. Shiva is affectionate towards those who seek refuge and was pleased. Shri Shiva said, "O Krishna! O lord of gopikas! [452] Cast aside your fear and be happy. O son! All this has happened as a result of my favours. Everything will be well with you. Return to your own excellent place. Taking due care, remain established in your own entitlement. Knowing that I am greater than the greatest, as you will, engage in sporting. Along with Radha and the companions, without any anxiety, carry out your own task. In the excellent Varaha kalpa, along with a young Radha, you will be freed from the curse and return to your own abode. O Krishna! You love your companion, Sudama, more than anyone else. He has now been born as a danava and is making the entire universe suffer. The devas, along with Indra, have been expelled and are constantly made to suffer. All of them have been deprived of their entitlements and have fled in the ten directions. That is the reason Brahma and Achyuta have come to me, to seek refuge. There is no doubt that I will free them from their hardships." Shankara told Krishna this.""

"""Then, lovingly, he addressed Hari and Vidhatri in words that dispelled grief. Shiva said, "O Hari! O Vidhatri! Listen lovingly to my words. O sons! To bestow happiness on devas and to free them of their fear, quickly go to Rudra, who resides in Kailasa. He is my own excellent and complete form. He has assumed this wonderful and distinct form to accomplish the task of devas. That is the reason the lord possesses my supreme and complete form. Hara remains on Mount Kailasa, under the subjugation of his devotees. There is no difference between him and me and the two of you should always serve him, as should the gods and everyone else, all mobile and immobile entities. A man who finds a difference between us goes to hell. In this world, he faces hardships and does not have sons or grandsons." When Durga's lord said this, along with Radha and his companions, Krishna repeatedly prostrated himself before him and returned to his own residence. O Vyasa! Hari and Brahma were also happy and lost their fear. They repeatedly prostrated themselves before Isha and quickly returned to Vaikuntha. Having gone there, they told the devas everything that had happened. Taking them, Brahma and Vishnu went to Mount Kailasa. There, they saw the lord Mahesha, Parvati's beloved.

[452] Gopika is the same as gopi.

To protect the distressed, the leader of devas had assumed a saguna body. As was the case earlier, all of them devotedly praised him, their voices choking. They clasped their hands, lowered their shoulders and were full of humility. The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O Girija's consort! O Shankara! We have sought refuge with you. Please save the devas, who are afflicted by fear. Please kill Shankhachuda, Indra among danavas. He has slain devas. Incapacitated by him, devas have been defeated in a battle. With their entitlements taken away, they are roaming around in an inferior region, like men. As a result of their fear, they find it impossible to look at the world of the devas. O ocean of compassion! Please save the distressed. Please save devas from this difficulty. O Mahesha! Kill the lord of danavas and save Shakra from his fear." Affectionate towards his devotees, Shambhu heard the words spoken by devas. He laughed and addressed them in words that rumbled like clouds. Shri Shankara said, "O Hari! O Vidhatri! O devas! You should certainly return to your own abodes. There is no doubt that I will kill Shankhachuda and his followers." Mahesha's words were like nectar. Hearing them, all of them were delighted and formed the view that the danava was as good as destroyed. Hari went to Vaikuntha and Vidhatri went to Satyaloka. Prostrating themselves before Mahesha, the other gods returned to their own respective places."""

Chapter 202-3.5(32) (The Messenger Is Sent)

"Sanatkumara said, 'The great Rudra, Ishana, is the Sakumar said the great disha is the virtuous. To satisfy the wishes of the gods, he made up his mind to kill Shankhachuda. He wished to make Chitraratha, the lord of gandharvas, the messenger. Therefore, he quickly sent him to Shankhachuda's presence. Obeying the command of Sarveshvara, the messenger went to that city, which was superior to the great Indra's city and surpassed Kubera's residence. Having gone there, he saw Shankhachudra's excellent residence in the middle. It was radiant, with twelve gates, with a doorkeeper before each one. Pushpadanta[453] saw an excellent door. Displaying no fear, he told the doorkeeper about the account. Happy, he crossed that door and entered inside. It was extremely charming, beautiful, extensive and ornamented. He went and saw Shankhachuda, lord of the sons of Danu. He was seated on a bejewelled throne, surrounded by a circle of heroes. He was surrounded by three crores of lords among danavas. There were hundreds of crores of others who were roaming around, with weapons in their hands. Seeing him in this position, Pushpadanta was amazed. He told him about the message of war, as spoken by Shankara. Pushpadanta said, "O Indra among kings! O lord! I am Shiva's messenger, and I am known as Pushpadanta. I will tell you what Shankara said. Listen. Shiva said, 'Return the kingdom and rights to devas now. If you don't do that, fight with me, supreme among all virtuous ones. The devas have sought refuge with me. I am the lord of devas. I am Shankara to the virtuous. [454] I am the great Rudra. If I am enraged, there is no doubt that I will kill you. I am Hara, the one who bestows freedom from fear to all devas. I wield the rod of chastisement against the crooked and am affectionate towards my devotees. Will you give the kingdom, or will you fight? O Indra among danavas! Think about it and choose one of the two. This is what Mahesha said, and I have reported it to you. O lord of danavas! Shambhu's words are never rendered false. I desire to quickly return to Hara, my lord.

[453] Pushpadanta, a gandharva, is one of Shiva's famous devotees. Usually, Chitraratha, king of the gandharvas, is not equated with Pushpadanta.

[454] Since Shankara means someone who bestows welfare.

Having returned, what will I tell Shambhu? Please tell me that." Shiva's messenger, the virtuous lord Pushpadanta, said this. Hearing his words, the king laughed and replied. Shankhachuda answered, "I will not give the devas the kingdom. The earth is enjoyed by those who are brave. O Rudra! You have shown partiality towards the devas, and I will fight with you. In this world, if a brave person allows someone else to step on him, he is inferior. O Rudra! That being the case, there is no doubt that I will march against you. When it is morning, I will think about what kind of advance a hero should undertake. Go to Rudra and tell him these words of mine." Hearing the words of Shankhachuda, Indra among danavas, Shambhu's proud messenger replied. "O Indra among kings! You will have to search among Shankara's ganas to determine against whom you are worthy enough to stand. There is no question of facing him. Return all the rights to devas. Having given those to the immortals, if you wish to remain alive, go to Patala. O supreme among danavas! Know that he is not an ordinary immortal. Shankara is the paramatman. He is the lord over all lords. Indra and all the other devas always carry out his orders. So do the Prajapatis, siddhas, sages and other lords. He is the lord of Hari and Vidhatri. He is both saguna and nirguna. If he furrows his eyebrows, there is dissolution everywhere. Shiva is complete in his form, and he is the one who brings about the destruction of the worlds. He is the destination of the virtuous. He kills those who are wicked. He is without transformation. He is greater than the greatest. For both Brahma and Hari, Maheshvara is the lord. O bull among danavas! Do not be disrespectful towards his command. O Indra among kings! What is the need to speak a lot? Think about this in your mind. Know that Rudra Mahesha is the supreme brahman. His atman is pure consciousness. Return the kingdom and all the rights to devas. O son! This will ensure your welfare. Otherwise, there will be fear." The powerful Shankhachuda, Indra among danavas, heard these words. Deluded by destiny, he replied to Shiva's messenger. Shankhachuda said, “Without a battle with Mahesha, I have decided that I will not give up the kingdom or the rights. Those are mine. I am speaking the truth. It should be known that everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is under the control of destiny. Everything flows from time, and everything is destroyed by time. Therefore, go to Shankara Rudra and tell him the truth about the words I have spoken. Let him do what he thinks proper. There is no need to talk a lot." Thus addressed, Shiva's messenger returned to his own lord. O sage! Pushpadanta reported everything accurately.'"

Chapter 203-3.5(33) (Mahadeva's Advance)

“Sanatkumara said, 'Hearing his words, Girisha, the king of the gods, became enraged and spoke to Virabhadra and the other ganas. Rudra said, "O Virabhadra! O Nandi! O Kshetrapalas! O eight Bhairavas![455] O all the ganas! O strong ones! Armour yourselves and seize your weapons. Follow my command and along with the two Kumaras, [456] advance today. With her own soldiers, let Bhadrakali advance for the battle. To kill Shankhachuda, we must swiftly advance today." Instructing this, Mahesha emerged with his own soldiers. Extremely happy, all the brave ganas followed him.

[455] There are eight Bhairavas, in charge of the eight directions. Usually, their names are given as Ruru, Chanda, Krodha, Unmatta, Kapala, Bhishana, Samhara and Kala. Kshetrapalas are lords of kshetras and sometimes, Kshetrapalas and Bhairavas are equated.

[456] The dual is used, meaning Kartikeya and Ganesha.

Meanwhile, Skanda, Ganesha and all the other leaders of soldiers armoured themselves. With their weapons, they cheerfully arrived in Shiva's presence. The leaders of ganas and the supreme leaders of soldiers were Virabhadra, Nandi, Mahakala, Subhadraka, Vishalaksha, Bana, Pingalaksha, Vikampana, Virupa, Vikriti, Manibhadra, Bashkala, Kapila, Dirghadamshtra, Vikara, Tamralochana, Kalankara, Balibhadra, Kalajihva, Kutichara, Balonmatta, Ranashlaghya, Durjaya, Durgama and others. I will tell you about the ganas that were with them. Listen attentively. Shankhakarna, the crusher of enemies, was with one crore ganas. Kekaraksha had ten crores and Vikrita had eight. Vishakha had sixty-four crores, while Pariyatrika had nine. Both Sarvantaka and the prosperous Vikritanana had six crores. Jalaka, bull among ganas, had twelve crores. Samada had seven crores and the prosperous Dundubha had eight. Karalaksha had five crores, while the supreme Sandaraka had six. Both Kanduka and Kundaka had crores of ganas each. The excellent Vishtambha, leader of all ganas, had eight crores. Both Pippla and Sannada had one thousand crores each. Aveshana and Chandratapana had eight each. Mahakesha, leader of ganas, was surrounded by one thousand crores. The brave Kundi and the auspicious Parvataka had twelve crores each. Kala, Kalaka and Mahakala had one hundred crores each. Agnika had one hundred crores, while Agnimukha had one crore. Aditya and Ghanavaha had half a crore each. Sanaha and Kumuda each had one hundred crores. Amogha, Kokila and Sumantraka also had one hundred crores each. Kakapada and Santanaka each had sixty crores. Mahabala had nine crores, while Madhupingala had five. Nila, Devesha and Purnabhadra each had ninety crores. The immensely strong Chaturvakra had seven crores. With crores, thousands of crores, hundreds of crores and twenty crores, all the brave ones arrived for the festivities that was the battle. Virabhadra arrived with one thousand crore bhutas, three crore pramathas and three crore lomajas, [457] Kashtharudha, Sukesha and Vrishabha arrived with sixty-four crores each. The illustrious Virupaksha and Sanatana arrived with sixty crores each. Talaketu, Shadasya, the powerful Panchasya, Samvartaka, Chaitra, Lakulisha, Svayamprabhu, Lokantaka, Diptatma, the lord Daityantaka, the divine Bhringiriti, the prosperous Devadevapriya, Ashani, Bhanuka, Kankala, Kalaka, Kala. Nandi and Sarvantaka arrived with sixty-four crores each. There were other leaders of ganas. They were extremely strong and innumerable. To fight against Shankhachuda, fearless and happy, they advanced. All of them possessed one thousand hands. They had matted hair and wore diadems. They were adorned with the crescent moon. They were three-eyed and blue in the throat. All of them wore rudrakshas as ornaments. They were smeared with ashes. They were decorated with necklaces, earrings, bracelets, diadems and other ornaments. They resembled Brahma, Indra and Vishnu and possessed anima and other qualities. They dazzled like one crore suns. They were experienced in acts connected with fighting. Some roamed around on earth, others roamed around in Patala. Some roamed around in the sky. O sage! Some roamed around in the seven heavens. [458] O devarshi! What is the need to speak a lot? They roamed around in all the worlds. To fight against danavas, all these ganas of Shiva advanced. The eight Bhairavas and the eleven fierce Rudras also advanced swiftly. The eight Vasus and the twelve Adityas also advanced fast. There were Hutashana, Chandra, Vishvakarma, the two Ashvins, Kubera, Yama, Nirriti, Nalakubara, Vayu, Varuna, Budha, Mangala, other planets and the valiant Kamadeva.

[457] Those born from body hair.

[458] The expression sapta svarga (seven heavens) is unusual and probably means the seven superior worlds.

They marched with Mahesha. There were Ugradamshtra, Ugradanda, Korata and Kotabha."""

""Possessing one hundred arms, Devi Bhadrakali Maheshvari also advanced. She was astride a vimana that had been constructed with the essence of jewels. She was attired in red garments. She wore a red garland and was smeared with red unguents. She laughed and danced, singing in a melodious voice. To those on her side, she offered freedom from fear. She caused fear among enemies. She was radiant, but fierce to look at. Her lolling tongue extended for one yojana. She held a conch shell, a chakra, mace, lotus, sword, shield, bow and arrows, a round and large skull that extended for one yojana, a trident that stretched up into the sky, a spear that was one yojana long, a club, a bludgeon, a vajra, another sharp-edged sword, a noose made out of nagas, the divine weapons of Vishnu, Varuna, Vayu, Narayana, gandharvas, Brahma, Garuda, Parjanya, Pashupata, Parvata, Surya, Maheshvara and Yama, the weapon that causes yawning, [459] the weapons known as Mahavira, Kalakala and Mahanala, the divine weapon known as Samartha, the staff that causes senseless and hundreds of other divine weapons. All these supreme weapons blazed in her hands. She arrived and stationed herself there, along with three crore yoginis and three crore fierce dakinis. Surrounded by bhutas, pretas, pishachas, kushmandas, brahma-rakshasas,[460] vetalas, rakshasas, yakshas and kinnaras, Skanda arrived and prostrated himself before Chandrashekhara. Following his father's command, he remained near him. Shambhu summoned all his soldiers and fearlessly advanced, to fight against Shankhachuda."""

Chapter 204-3.5(34) (Shankhachuda's Advance)

"Vyas said, 'O Vidhatri's son! O immensely wise one! O sage! May you live for many years. You have narrated the extremely wonderful account of the one who wears the moon on his crest. When Shiva's messenger departed, what did the powerful danava Shankhachuda do? Please tell me that in great detail."""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'When the messenger departed, the powerful Shankhachuda went inside and told Tulasi everything that had happened. Shankhachuda said, "O queen! Because of what I heard from Shambhu's messenger, I have prepared myself for war. I will leave to fight, and you must certainly act according to my instructions." He possessed jnana. Saying this, he made his beloved understand in many kinds of ways. Ignoring Shankara, they happily sported in many kinds of ways. The couple sported and submerged itself in an ocean of joy. Accomplished in one hundred different acts of love, they spent the night in diverse pursuits. He got up at brahma muhurta[461] and performed the indicated morning ablutions. Having completed the daily rites, he donated an infinite number of gifts. He made his son the king over all the danavas. He entrusted his wife, his kingdom and all his riches to his son.

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[499] Jrimbhanastra.

[460] A brahmana who is born as a rakshasa.

[461] Brahma muhurta is named after Brahma and is an auspicious time just before dawn, regarded as the last muhurta of the night. The precise hour depends on the time when the sun rises.

When his beloved started to weep and tried to restrain him from leaving,the king used many kinds of words to comfort her."""

""He summoned his brave commander. Honouring him, he instructed that preparations be made for the battle. Shankhachuda said, "O commander! Let all the brave ones, accomplished in battle, armour themselves and do everything else required to go out and fight. Let eighty-six divisions of daityas, brave danavas and powerful Kankas get their weapons ready. Let the soldiers fearlessly advance to fight. Let fifty families of asuras and crores of brave ones advance to fight against Shambhu, who has taken the side of devas. Let one hundred families of Dhoumras quickly armour themselves. Let them follow my instructions and advance to fight against Shambhu. Let Kalakeyas, Mouryas, Douhridas and Kalakas prepare themselves. Let them follow my instructions and advance to fight against Rudra." The immensely strong lord of asuras and Indra among danavas issued these instructions. With a large army consisting of thousands of soldiers, he emerged. His commander was skilled in the art of fighting. He was an immensely brave maharatha and in any battle, was supreme among rathas.[462] He arranged three hundred thousand akshouhinis[463] in circular formation. When he emerged outside the camp, all the brave ones saw that he was terrible in any battle. He[464] mounted a vimana constructed with the essence of best among jewels. Honouring the large number of his seniors, he left for the battle. On the banks of the river Pushpabhadra, there is an auspicious and eternal vata tree, in siddhashrama of the siddhas. [465] This is a kshetra for siddhi and is known to bestow excellent siddhi. This is Kapila's sacred kshetra in Bharata. It is to the east of the western ocean and to the west of Malaya. It is to the north of Shrishaila and to the south of Gandhamadana. It is five yojanas wide and the length is one hundred times that. In Bharata, the river Pushpabhadra is as beautiful as Sarasvati. It is extremely sacred and is full of water that sparkles like crystal. Emerging from the Himalayas, it merges with Sarasvati. It bestows eternal good fortune and is the beloved wife of the salty ocean. With Gomanta[466] on the left, it enters the western ocean. Shankhachuda went to that spot and saw Shiva's soldiers."""

Chapter 205-3.5(35) (Conversation between Shiva and the Messenger)

"Sanatkumara said, 'The Indra among danavas remained there. The immensely wise one made a great lord of danavas a messenger and sent him to Shankara. Having gone there, the messenger saw the one with the moon on his crest. He was seated under a vata tree and was as resplendent as one crore suns. He saw him smilingly seated in an asana of yoga, exhibiting various mudras. [467]

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[462] There was a hierarchy of warriors. A ratha was an ordinary charioteer. A maharatha was superior to a ratha and was capable of fighting with ten thousand warriors simultaneously. An atiratha was superior to a maharatha.

[463] An akshouhini is an army and consists of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses and 1,09,350 infantry men.

[464] Shankhachuda.

[465] Siddhashrama is a hermitage that bestows siddhi. Vata is the Indian holy fig tree. The river Pushpabhadra is also known as Pushpavaha and is on the slopes of the Himalayas.

[466] Gomanta/Gomantaka is usually identified with Goa.

[467] Asana is a posture and mudras are positions of the hand.

He blazed in the energy of the brahman and resembled sparkling crystal. He held a trident and a spear and was covered in a garment made out of tiger skin. He was the one who took death away from his devotees. Gouri's beloved was serene and three-eyed. He was the one who bestowed the fruits of all austerities. He was the agent behind every kind of prosperity. Ashutosha's[468] face was pleasing. He was the one who showed compassion towards his devotees. Vishvanatha[469] was the seed of the universe. The universe was his form. The universe originated from him. He was the one who created the universe. He was the one who preserved the universe. He was the cause behind the destruction of the universe. He was the cause behind all causes. He was the one who enabled one to cross over the ocean that was hell. He bestowed jnana. He was the seed of jnana. He was the eternal bliss that was jnana."""

"The messenger, Indra among danavas, got down from his chariot and saw him. He lowered his head and prostrated himself before Shankara and Kumara. Bhadrakali stood to the left and Skanda stood in front. Kali, Skanda and Shankara gave him the customary benedictions. Shankhachuda's messenger was supremely accomplished in the sacred texts. He bent down, clasped his hands and addressed Shankara in these auspicious words. The messenger said, "I am Shankhachuda's messenger and have come here, to your presence. What do you wish to happen? O Maheshvara! Please tell me the truth about that." Hearing Shankhachuda's words, [470] Bhagavan Mahadeva was pleased in his mind and spoke. Mahadeva said, "O messenger! O immensely wise one! Listen to my words. They will bring happiness. This should be told to him. Without disputing it, he should reflect on it. Brahma is the creator of the universe, and he is the father of Dharma, who knows about dharma. His son is Marichi, and Kashyapa is said to be his son. Out of affection towards him, Daksha bestowed thirteen of his daughters on him. One of them is the virtuous Danu, who enhanced his good fortune. Danu had four sons. They were danavas and were fierce in their energy. One of them was Viprachitti, who was immensely strong and valiant. His son was Dambha, the immensely intelligent Indra among danavas who followed dharma. You are his best son. You have dharma in your atman and are the lord of danavas. Earlier, you were a gopa and an attendant. Among all the gopas, you were the one who followed dharma. As a consequence of Radhika's curse, you have now been born as an Indra among danavas. Though you have been born from a danava lady's womb, you are not really a danava. Knowing about your past conduct, you should now cast aside this enmity towards devas. Do not hate them. Be affectionate towards them and along with them, enjoy your own position. Rule over the kingdom without exceeding your rights. Think about this. O danava! Protect my affection towards you and return devas their kingdom. Remain happily in your own kingdom and let devas remain in their dominion, Even of this opposition towards beings, not to speak of hatred towards devas. All those descended from Kashyapa's lineage are noble and perform pure deeds. There are many sins killing of a brahmana and others. Those do not amount to one-sixteenth of the sin associated with hatred towards kin." To instil excellent jnana in him, Shankara said this and many other things to him, supreme and auspicious words from the shruti and smriti texts."""

[468] Ashutosha is Shiva's name, one who is quickly pleased.

[469] Lord of the universe, Shiva.

[470] Delivered through the messenger.

""The messenger was immensely wise and had been instructed by Shankhachuda. Deluded by destiny, he spoke these humble words. The messenger replied, "O divinity! What you have said is true. It cannot but be otherwise. But let me also present what I have heard as the truth. You have told me now that hatred towards kin is a great sin. O lord! Please tell me. Is that only for the asuras and not for the gods? It should apply to everyone. Please reflect on what I will tell you. Please make a determination about that now and dispel my doubt. O Maheshvara! In the ocean of dissolution, why did the wielder of the chakra [471] sever the heads of those two excellent daityas, Madhu and Kaitabha? Why did you fight against the residents of Tripura and reduce them to ashes? O Girisha! You acted in that way, and you are known as one who takes the side of the gods. Why did the wielder of the mace[472] go to the gate of Bali, take away all his possessions, uproot him and banish him to Sutala? Why did devas injure Hiranyaksha and his brother?

Why did devas bring down Shumbha and other asuras?[473] Earlier, in the course of the churning of the ocean, the gods ate the nectar. We participated in the efforts, but they are the ones who enjoyed all the fruits. The entire universe is a vessel that the paramatman, in the form of time, toys with. Whoever he bestows prosperity on, is the one who enjoys it. The enmity between devas and danavas is eternal, though some reason triggers it. Their progressive defeat or victory is subservient to time. Your intention to interfere in the conflict between the two is futile. You are Ishvara and the notion of impartiality towards both kin should appeal to you. You are the great atman, Ishvara for both gods and asuras. Your current challenge to us is a matter of shame. Even if you are superior, that won't enhance your glory. If you are defeated, it will be no different. Think about this in your mind." Hearing these words, the three-eyed one laughed. As is appropriate, he replied in sweet words to the lord of danavas. Mahesha said, "We are subservient towards our devotees and are never independent. We act according to their wishes and never take any particular side. Earlier, in the ocean of dissolution, Hari fought against those two supreme daityas, Madhu and Kaitabha, because Vidhatri beseeched him. For the sake of Prahlada and because devas entreated him, to ensure the welfare of his devotees, on an earlier occasion, he killed Hiranyakashipu. Earlier, because devas prayed to me, I fought against Tripura and reduced it to ashes. This is known. Earlier, devas prayed to Sarveshvari, the universal mother. That is the reason she fought against Shumbha and the others and killed them. Even now, all the residents of heaven have sought refuge with Brahma. Along with devas, he and Hari have come and have sought refuge with me. I am subservient to the prayers of Hari, Brahma and others. I am Ishvara for the gods. O messenger! That is the reason I have come to fight. You are foremost among the great-souled Krishna's attendants, None of the other daityas who were killed were your equal. O king! What is the great shame in my fighting with you? As Isha, I have been humbly sent to accomplish the task of devas. Go to Shankhachuda and tell him my words. Let him do what he thinks is right. I will perform the task of the gods." Maheshvara Shankara said this and stopped. The mes messenger stood up and returned to Shankhachuda's presence.""

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[471] Vishnu, who severed the heads of Madhu and Kaitabha.

[472] Vishnu in his vamana (dwarf) avatara.

[473] Killed by Devi.

Chapter 206-3.5(36) (The Mutual Fight)

“Sanatkumara said, 'The messenger went there and told him about Shiva's words in detail. He told him the truth about what had been decided. Hearing this, the powerful danava, Shankhachuda, Indra among danavas, happily accepted the pledge of fighting. Along with his advisers, he quickly mounted his vehicle. He instructed his own soldiers to advance and fight against Shankara. Shiva quickly dispatched his own soldiers and devas. In his pastimes, everyone's lord also armoured himself. Since the battle was about to commence, many musical instruments were immediately sounded. There was a tumultuous sound, mixed with that of heroes roaring. O sage! A mutual battle between devas and danavas ensued. The large number of devas and danavas fought according to the norms of dharma. The great Indra himself fought against Vrishaparva. Bhaskara[474] followed dharma and fought against Viprachitti. Vishnu had a great duel with Dambha, Kala fought against Kalasura and Hutashana fought against Gokarna. Kubera fought against Kalakeya and Vishvakarma against Maya. Mrityu fought against Bhayankara and Yama against Samhara. Varuna fought against Kalambika and the wind god against Chanchala. Budha fought against Ghataprishtha and Shanaihshchara against Raktaksha. Jayanta fought against Ratnasara and the Vasus against large number of Varchasas. The two Ashvins fought against the two Diptimats and Nalakubara against Dhumra. Dharma fought against Dhurandhara and Mangala against Ganakaksha. Vaishvana fought against Shobhakara and Manmatha against Pipita. Following supreme dharma, the twelve Arkas[475] fought against Gokamukha, Churna, the asura named Khadga, Dhumra, [476] Samhala, the powerful Vishva and Palasha. To help Shiva, the accomplished immortals fought against asuras. The eleven great Rudras fought against eleven terrible asuras who were immensely valiant and strong. Mahamani fought against Ugrachanda and others. Chandra fought against Chanda. Jiva followed dharma and fought against Shukra. Nandishvara and others fought against all the supreme danavas. In that great battle, there is no need to state everything separately. O sage! While all those great soldiers fought against each other, along with Kali and his son, Shambhu remained under a vata tree. Shankhachuda was seated on a bejewelled and beautiful throne studded with gems, served by one crore danavas. There was a great battle and it crushed devas and asuras. In that great clash, many divine weapons were unleashed. Clubs, double-edged swords, swords, chakras, bhushundis, spikes, bludgeons, sharp swords, iron arrows, maces, spears, sharp battle axes, arrows, javelins, broad swords, thousands of shataghnis[477] and slings shone in the hands of heroes. In that great festival, brave ones used these to sever heads. In the battle, brave ones roared on both sides. Many elephants, horses, chariots, foot soldiers and riders and mounts were sliced down there. Arms, thighs, hands, waists, heads and legs were severed. Standards, arrows, swords, body armour and excellent ornaments were also cut off. The earth was strewn with heads that wore earrings, but no longer possessed crowns. Arms and thighs were flung around, and pride destroyed.

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[474] Surya.

[475] That is, the 12 Adityas.

[476] Clearly, a different Dhumra from the one mentioned earlier.

[477] A shataghni is a weapon capable of killing one hundred at once.

Large ornaments that still held weapons were strewn around. There were other limbs too, covered with marrow. As soldiers fled from the battle, they saw headless torsos jumping around, seeming to rise up, while still holding weapons in their hands. The brave ones roared and fought against each other. Extremely strong and valiant, they used many kinds of shastras and astras. In the battle, some soldiers were killed with arrows that had golden tips. The heroes roared, like clouds filled with rain. Everywhere, one hero enveloped another hero, his chariot and his charioteer, with arrows, like clouds covering the sun. Warriors rushed against each other, fighting duels, challenging, striking from the front and piercing the inner organs. In every direction, large numbers of heroes were seen, with many weapons and standards in their hands. In that great battle, they roared like lions. Creating a loud blare, they blew on their own respective conch shells. Delighted, those extremely brave ones roared. In this way, that fierce battle between devas and danavas continued for a very long time. It was cruel and caused joy to heroes. Such were the pastimes of the great lord, Shankara, the paramatman. He deluded all devas, asuras and humans.""

Chapter 207-3.5(37) (Shankhachuda Fights)

"Sanatkumara said, 'After this, the large number of S devas were defeated by danavas. Terrified, they fled. Their bodies were mangled by shastras and astras. They fled and sought refuge with Shankara, the lord of the universe. In agitated voices, they told Sarvesha, "Save us. Please protect us." Shankara saw that devas and others had been defeated. Hearing their words, which were full of fear, he was filled with rage. He looked at devas with eyes of compassion and granted them freedom from fear. Using his energy, he increased the strength of his own ganas. Commanded by Shiva, Skanda, Hara's immensely valiant son, fearlessly fought in the battle against large numbers of danavas. Full of anger, the divinity who was the destroyer of Taraka roared like a hero. In that battle, he killed one hundred akshouhinis. The lotus-eyed Kali violently severed their heads, drinking their blood and devouring them. In every direction, she drank the blood of the danavas. She fought in many kinds of ways, scaring both gods and danavas. In her pastimes, she seized a hundred thousand gigantic elephants and a hundred thousand men in her hand and flung them into her mouth. Many thousands of headless torsos were seen to dance around in the battle. There was a great tumult, terrifying for those who were impotent. Skanda was enraged yet again and showered down arrows. He brought down and destroyed crores of asura leaders. Skanda's nets of arrows mangled the bodies of danavas. All of them were frightened and fled. Those who remained were killed. One by one, Vrishaparva, Viprachitti, Danda and Vikampana fought against Skanda. Mahamari [478] also fought, not retreating. Struck by Skanda's spear, their bodies were mangled. O sage! Mahamari and Skanda were victorious. Drums were sounded in heaven and flowers were showered down. Skanda was wonderful and extremely fierce in the battle. Danavas were destroyed, as if through a natural calamity. The calamity wrought by Mahamari was also a reason for destruction.'

""On seeing this, the extremely brave Shankhachuda was filled with violent rage. He armoured himself and mounted an excellent vimana, stocked with many kinds of shastras and astras. His garments were studded with many kinds of jewels.

[478] The great slayer, referring to Kali.

Asking the heroes on his side not to be afraid, he drove his chariot into the middle. He drew the string of his bow all the way up to the end of his ear and showered down arrows. His shower of arrows was terrible and impossible to counter. A large and terrible shroud of darkness spread over the field of slaughter. All the devas and Nandishvara and others fled. Kartikeya alone remained in the field of battle. The king created a terrible shower of mountains, snakes, serpents and trees that was impossible to counter. Skanda, Shiva's son, was struck by this in the battle and resembled the sun, covered by mist. He used many kinds of maya, taught to him by Maya. O supreme among sages! Among the gods and ganas, no one could understand this. Shankhachuda possessed great maya and was immensely strong. Using a single divine arrow, he shattered his[479] bow. He splintered his divine chariot and severed the mounts attached to the chariot. With another divine weapon, he mangled the peacock. He hurled a spear that was as radiant as the sun towards his chest. Struck by that violent blow, he instantly lost his senses. Having regained his senses, Kartika, the destroyer of enemy heroes, mounted his vehicle, which was constructed with the essence of jewels. The one with six faces remembered Mahesha and Ambika's feet. Seizing shastras and astras, he fought fiercely in the battle. In his rage, using a divine weapon, Shiva's son severed all the snakes, mountains, trees and boulders. He countered the fire with a parjanya arrow. [480] As if playing, he severed Shankhachuda's chariot and bow. He severed his entire armour, mounts and the blazing crown on his head. Having done this, he repeatedly roared like a hero. He next hurled a spear that was as radiant as the sun towards the chest of the Indra among danavas, Struck by this, he lost his senses for a length of time. But after a muhurta, the immensely strong one conquered his hardship. He stood up, regaining his senses, and roared like a lion. Using a spear, he struck the immensely strong Kartikeya. Since this had been given by Vidhatri and he did not wish to make it futile, he fell down on the ground. Kali took him on her lap and conveyed him to Shiva's presence. In his pastimes, using his jnana, Shiva brought him back to life. He bestowed infinite strength on him and the powerful one arose. Shiva's son made up his mind to leave for the battle again. Meanwhile, in the battle, the brave and immensely strong Virabhadra fought against the strong and skilled Shankhachuda. In the clash, the danava showered down weapons. As if he was playing, the brave one sliced them down with his own arrows. The lord among danavas released hundreds of divine weapons. However, using his arrows, the powerful Virabhadra severed them. At this, the powerful Shankhachuda became angry. He struck him in the chest with a spear. He trembled and fell down. However, the leader of ganas regained his senses instantly and got up. Virabhadra, the leader of ganas, seized his bow again. At this time, Kali returned to the battle again. As desired by Kartika, she wished to protect those on her own side and devoured danavas. Nandishvara and other brave ones, all the devas, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas and pannagas, followed her. There were many hundreds of those who bore musical instruments and carried liquor. On both sides, all the brave ones got ready again."""

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[479] Skanda's.

[480] The fire of agneyastra was countered by the shower of parjanyastra.

Chapter 208-3.5(38) (Kali Fights)

"Sanatkumara said, 'Having gone to the field of battle, she roared like a lion. As a result of Devi's roar, danavas fainted. She repeatedly laughed out loudly, in inauspicious tones. She drank the madhvika[481] and danced in the field of battle. Her teeth were fierce, and she was fierce in chastising. She was naked and drank the liquor. There were other Devis there too. They also drank liquor and danced. There was a great uproar on the side of devas and ganas. All the large number of gods, ganas and others were delighted and roared. Seeing Kali, Shankhachuda quickly advanced in front of her. The danavas were scared, but their king granted them freedom from fear. Kali hurled a fire that resembled the flames of the fire of dissolution. Toying with this, the king used a vaishnava weapon to immediately counter this. Devi hurled narayanastra[482] at him. On seeing the wicked danava, the weapon increased in strength. Shankhachuda looked at it and it resembled the flames of the fire of dissolution. Therefore, he fell down on the ground like a rod and repeatedly prostrated himself. On seeing the danava bent down in humility, the weapon withdrew itself. Invoking mantras, Devi hurled brahmastra. On seeing it blaze, he prostrated himself on the ground in front of it. In this way, the Indra among danavas countered brahmastra. The Indra among danavas became angry and drew his bow back forcefully. Invoking mantras, he discharged divine weapons towards Devi. In the battle, she laughed out loudly. She roared and extended her mouth, swallowing these weapons and scaring the danavas. He hurled a spear that was one hundred yojanas long towards Kali. However, Devi used her net of divine weapons to shatter this into one hundred fragments. He then hurled vaishnavastra towards Chandika. But Kali countered this with a maheshvara weapon. In this way, they fought against each other for a long period of time. All the devas and danavas were spectators. Mahadevi Kali was like the Destroyer in the battle and became full of rage. In her anger, she seized a pashupata arrow, sanctified with mantras. However, to prevent her from releasing it, an invisible voice was heard from the sky. "O Devi! In your anger, do not hurl this weapon at Shankhachuda. O Chandika! Though the pashupata weapon is infallible, his death will not occur through this. Reflect on some other means to be used against the brave Shankhachuda." Hearing this, Bhadrakali did not release that weapon. As if toying, in her hunger, she devoured one crore danavas. So as to bring about his end, the terrible one rushed forward towards Shankhachuda. The danava countered her with the divine roudra weapon. Angered, the Indra among danavas quickly hurled a sword. It possessed sharp edges and was exceedingly fearful, resembling the sun during summer. Kali saw that it was descending, blazing. While he looked on, in her rage, she extended her mouth and swallowed it. The lord among danavas hurled many other divine weapons towards her. However, before they could reach her, she shattered them into hundreds of fragments. Mahadevi swiftly rushed towards him, so as to devour him. But the prosperous one was the lord of every kind of siddhi and vanished. Unable to see the danava, Kali used her fist to powerfully strike his chariot and shatter it.

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[481] A kind of liquor, distilled from the flowers of the madhuka tree. Also known as madhvi.

[482] Divine weapons are named after specific deities, narayanastra after Narayana, brahmastra after Brahma and vaishnavastra after Vishnu. Pashupatastra is named after Pashupati and roudrastra after Rudra.

She also slew the charioteer. Having returned, Shankhachudra, who knew maya, hurled a swift chakra towards Bhadrakali. It resembled the flames of the fire of dissolution. Toying with it, Devi seized the chakra in her left hand and instantly flung it into her own mouth. She was angered. In great rage, Devi struck him powerfully with her fist. The Indra among danavas was whirled around and immediately lost his senses. But the powerful one instantly regained his consciousness and stood up. Taking her to be a mother, he did not use his arms to wrestle with her. However, Devi seized the danava and repeatedly whirled him around above with force. She was full of great rage. She then powerfully flung the strong Shankhachuda down. As he was raised up and flung down, he prostrated himself before Bhadrakali. He was not confused in the great battle and was pleased in his mind. He mounted the extremely charming vimana, constructed with the essence of jewels. Meanwhile, in her hunger, Kalika[483] drank the blood that oozed from the wounds of the danavas. At this time, an invisible voice was heard from the sky. "One hundred thousand leaders of danavas are still left in the battle. They are insolent and are roaring. O Ishvari! Devour them. In this battle, do not make up your mind to kill the Indra among danavas. O Devi! It is certain that Shankhachuda cannot be killed by you." Hearing these words from the firmament, Devi devoured the flesh and drank the blood of many danavas. Having eaten and having drunk, Bhadrakali went to Shankara's presence. She narrated to him what had progressively occurred in the course of the battle."""

Chapter 209-3.5(39) (Shankhachuda's Soldiers Are Killed)

“Vyasa asked, 'Hearing what Kali said, what did Ishana say? What did he do? O immensely wise one! Please tell me the truth about this. I have great curiosity."""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'Hearing the words spoken by Kali, Parameshvara Shankara, who engages in great pastimes, laughed. Shambhu reassured her. He was skilled in true jnana. Hearing the voice from the sky, Shankara himself left to fight, along with his own ganas. He was astride a giant bull and was with Virabhadra and the others. There were Bhairavas and Kshetrapalas, as revered as he himself was. Having reached the field of battle, Mahesha assumed the form of a hero. As the embodied form of the Destroyer, Rudra became even more resplendent there. Seeing Shiva, Shankhachuda descended from his vimana. He lowered his head in great devotion and prostrated himself on the ground, like a rod. After prostrating himself, so as to engage, he mounted the vimana again. He quickly readied himself and seized his bow and arrows. The battle between Shiva and the danava went on for one hundred years. They showered down fierce arrows on each other, like clouds pouring down rain. Shankhachuda was immensely brave and shot terrible arrows. As if toying, Shankara severed them with his own arrows. The great Rudra, Virupaksha, is the destination of the virtuous and is the one who chastises the wicked. In his rage, he struck his limbs with floods of weapons. The danava swiftly seized a sharp sword and a shield. He struck Shiva's excellent mount, the bull, on the head with this.

[483] That is, Kali.

When his mount was struck, Rudra playfully used a kshurapra arrow [484] to quickly sever his sword and his shining shield. When his shield was severed, the asura hurled a spear. As it arrived before him, Hara severed it into two bits with his own arrow. The angry danava hurled a chakra. Hara used his fists to powerfully reduce it to fragments. With force, he picked up a club and hurled it towards Hara. Shambhu instantly shattered it and reduced it to ashes. At this, the lord of danavas seized a battle axe in his hand. Full of rage, with great speed, Shankhachuda rushed towards Hara. Ignoring this, in his pastimes, Shankara quickly used his flood of arrows to bring him down. With the battle axe in his hand, the asura fell down on the ground. He regained his senses within a short period of time and mounted a chariot. Holding divine weapons and arrows, he covered the entire sky. Seeing that he was coming, Hara lovingly played on his damaru and twanged on his bowstring. The sound was impossible to tolerate. The lord blew on his horn and the sound filled the directions. Girisha himself roared and terrified the asuras. When the lord of bulls roared loudly, the gigantic elephants lost their pride. The sky, the earth and the eight directions were suddenly filled with that sound. When Mahakala did this, the earth seemed to rise up and merge into the sky. The sound of his clapping surpassed all the earlier sounds. The Kshetrapalas laughed loudly, and it was an inauspicious sound. 485 In that great battle, the Bhairavas emitted loud roars too. In the midst of the battle, there was a fearful and tumultuous sound. In every direction, amidst the ganas, there were the sounds made by heroes. At those harsh and fearful sounds, all the danavas were terrified."""

"""Hearing all this, the immensely strong Indra among danavas was greatly enraged. Hara addressed him, "Remain. O evil-souled one! Stay." Devas and ganas quickly exclaimed, "Victory. Victory." Dambha's extremely powerful son approached close. He hurled an extremely terrible spear towards Rudra, and it was like a garland of flames. It resembled a deep and raging fire. However, as it approached, Kshetrapala+% produced a flaming torch from his mouth and countered it. The great battle between Shiva and the danava commenced again. Heaven and earth, with its mountains, oceans and waterbodies, trembled. Shambhu used his arrows to counter the arrows shot by Dambha's son. Thousands of fierce arrows were severed with hundreds of arrows. Shambhu struck him angrily with his trident. As a result of that blow, he immediately lost his senses and fell down. However, in a short while, the asura regained his senses. He used arrows shot from his bow to strike Rudra everywhere. The powerful Shankhachuda suddenly assumed ten thousand hands and covered Shankara with chakras. However, Durga's husband is the one who destroys every kind of hardship. Hara angrily severed these chakras with his own arrows, and it was extraordinary. With great speed, the danava suddenly seized a club. Surrounded by a large army, he rushed forward to kill Hara. Hara is the one who dispels the pride of the wicked. As he descended, he used an extremely sharp sword to slice the club down. When his club was severed, the danava was filled with great rage. The spirited one seized a blazing spear that was impossible for the enemy to bear. The lord of danavas advanced with that beautiful spear in his hand. With great force, Hara struck him in the chest with his own trident.

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[484] Kshurapras (kshuras) are arrows with sharp edges.

[485] For the asuras.

[486] The singular is used.

As the brave Shankhachuda's heart was shattered by the trident, another being emerged, screaming, "Wait. Stand by." As he emerged, he[487] laughed loudly and used his terrible sword to quickly sever his head, so that he fell down on the ground. Kali used her sharp teeth to tear off the heads of many asuras. She extended her mouth and devoured them. Full of rage, the Kshetrapalas devoured many daityas. Some were killed by the weapons of Bhairavas. Others were mangled. In his rage, the intelligent Virabhadra destroyed many enemies. Nandishvara killed and crushed many others. The brave ganas were ready. In this way, they angrily destroyed many daityas and asuras who had crushed devas. Thus, many of his [488] soldiers were destroyed there. Many other brave ones fled, afflicted by fear."""

Chapter 210-3.5(40) (Shankhachuda Is Killed)

“Sanatkumara said, "The danava saw that large and major parts of his army had been destroyed and that brave ones, whom he loved like his own life, had been killed. He became extremely angry. He addressed Shambhu in the following words. "Be steady. I am standing here. Why are they being killed? In the battle, I am standing in front of you now. Fight with me." O sage! Saying this, the Indra among danavas prepared himself for the clash. Determined, he advanced in Shankara's direction. The danava hurled divine weapons towards the great Rudra. He showered down arrows, like rain pouring down from clouds. He used many kinds of maya. He showed many terrible things. But all the excellent devas and ganas did not believe any of this. On seeing this, Shankara playfully released the maheshvara weapon. It was great and divine and destroyed all kinds of maya. The energy of the maya was quickly destroyed. Though those were divine weapons, they lost all their energy. So as to kill him in the battle, the immensely strong Mahesha suddenly seized his trident. It was extremely energetic and impossible to counter. However, an invisible voice from the sky restrained him. "O Shankara! Please listen to this prayer and do not hurl the trident now. In every possible way, you are capable of destroying the universe in an instant. How can there be any doubt about a single danava, Shankhachuda, now? O lord! But you should not violate the ordinances of the Vedas. O Mahadeva! Listen to these words and make them come true. O Shankara! As long as he wears Hari's supreme and powerful kavacha on his hand and as long as his wife remains faithful to her husband, it is true that Shankhachuda will not suffer from old age or death. O lord! These are the words ordained by Brahma and they should not be falsified." Hearing the words spoken from the sky, Hara agreed to this."""

“Following the wishes and instructions of Hara, the destination of the virtuous, Vishnu went there. Vishnu, supreme among those who knew about maya, assumed the garb of an aged brahmana. He approached Shankhachuda and addressed him in these words. The aged brahmana said, "O Indra among danavas! I have come before you. Grant me alms. I will not reveal what I wish for right now. You are affectionate towards the distressed. I will tell you only after you have promised." With pleasure evident in his face and his eyes, the Indra among kings agreed to this. Deceiving him, he said, "I want the kavacha." The lord, Indra among danavas, loved brahmanas and was true to his pledges.

[487] Shiva.

[488] Shankhachuda's.

He handed over the divine kavacha, which was like his own breath of life, to the brahmana. In this way, Hari used maya to take away the kavacha. He assumed Shankhachuda's form and went to Tulasi. Having gone there, Hari, accomplished in the use of maya, quickly deposited his semen in her vagina. The lord thus accomplished the task of devas."""

"""The lord Shambhu thus kept his own word. To kill Shankhachuda, he seized his blazing trident. The trident that belonged to Shankara, the paramatman, was named Vijaya. It blazed in the directions and illuminated the region between heaven and earth. It resembled one crore midday suns. It resembled the flames of the fire of dissolution. It was impossible to counter and invincible. It was infallible and destroyed the enemy. There was a fierce circle of energy around it and all the shastras, astras and arrows were in it. It was terrible and impossible for gods and asuras to tolerate. When he wished to destroy the entire universe in his pastimes, all the energy came together in that blazing and supreme weapon. It was one thousand bow-lengths long and one hundred hand-lengths wide. It was the form of the jivatman and the brahman. It was eternal in form and had not been constructed. For a while, the trident whirled around in the sky, above Shankhachuda's head. Following Shiva's command, it descended rapidly and reduced him to ashes. O brahmana! Having accomplished its task, Mahesha's trident sped through the sky with the speed of thought and quickly returned to Shankara. Drums were sounded in heaven and gandharvas and kinnaras sang. Sages and devas praised him and large numbers of apsaras danced. From every direction, flowers were showered down on Shiva.

Hari, Brahma, Shakra and the others and sages praised him. As a result of Shiva's compassion, Shankhachuda, Indra among danavas, was freed from his curse and regained his former form. Conch shells were generated from Shankhachuda's bones. With the exception of Shankara, water from a conch shell is pleasant to everyone. The water from a conch shell is especially loved by Hari and Lakshmi and by those connected with them. O great sage! But this is not the case with Hara. Having killed him, astride his bull, Shankara happily returned to Shiva's world, surrounded by Uma, Skanda and the ganas. Hari returned to Vaikuntha and Krishna became well again. Having regained their dominions, the gods were filled with great joy. With all the impediments removed, the world regained its normal state. The firmament was clear, and the earth was auspicious in every possible way. I have thus spoken about Mahesha's conduct.

It brings happiness and takes away every kind of misery. It bestows prosperity and satisfies every kind of desire. It is blessed and bestows fame and a long lifespan. It counters all impediments. It bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation and confers every kind of desire as fruits. An intelligent man constantly hears this account of the one who wears the moon on his crest. He makes it heard, reads it and gets it read. In this way, there is no doubt that he obtains wealth, grain, sons and happiness. He obtains every kind of wish. In particular, he becomes devoted to Shiva. This account is unmatched and destroys all calamities. It generates supreme jnana and enhances devotion towards Shiva. A brahmana obtains the radiance excellent wealth and a shudra, who listens to it, becomes an of the brahman, a kshatriya is victorious, a vaishya obtains excellent person.'",

Chapter 211-3.5(41) (Tulasi's Curse)

"Vyasa asked, 'How did Bhagavan Narayana deposit his semen in Tulasi's vagina? You should tell me about this.'"""

“Sanatkumara replied, 'Narayana is the destination of the virtuous and accomplishes the tasks of devas. In Shankhachuda's form, he pleasured himself with his wife. Hear about Vishnu's conduct. It brings pleasure. Hari followed the instructions of Shiva and the mother of the universe. In the midst of the battle, the divinity heard the voice from the sky. Also sent by Shambhu, Hari took away Shankhachuda's excellent kavacha, quickly using his own maya to assume the form of a brahmana. Assuming Shankhachuda's form, he then went to Tulasi's home. Having approached Tulasi's door, he arranged for drums to be sounded and sounds of "Victory" to be made, so that the beautiful lady might wake up. Hearing this, the virtuous lady was filled with great joy. Full of great love, through the window, she looked towards the royal road. She donated riches to brahmanas and had the auspicious rites carried out. Knowing that her husband was returning, she beautified herself. Descending from the chariot, Vishnu went to the queen's house. To accomplish the task of devas, the one who possessed maya had assumed Shankhachuda's form. Seeing that her beloved had arrived in front of her, she was Overjoyed. She washed his feet, bowed down and wept. She made him sit on an auspicious and beautiful bejewelled throne. She gave him betel leaves, fragrant with camphor. "My birth and my life have been rendered successful today. My beloved, whom I love more than my own life, went to the battle. I now see him in the house again." Saying this, she smiled and cast delighted sidelong glances at him. In sweet words, she asked her beloved about what had transpired in the course of the battle. Tulasi said, "The lord is supreme among divinities and has destroyed innumerable universes. Vishnu, Brahma and all the other devas always follow his commands. He is the progenitor of the three divinities. He is nirguna, but his atman possesses the three gunas. He assumes gunas because of the wishes of his devotees. He is behind the acts of Hari and Brahma. As a result of Kubera's request, Hara assumed a form with gunas and resides in Kailasa as the lord of ganas. He is the supreme brahman, the destination of the virtuous. In a single instant, he can destroy crores of universes. In one of his moments, many Vishnus, Brahmas and others pass away. O lord! You went to fight with such a person. What was the nature of the fight with a person who helped devas? You have returned safely, after having defeated Parameshvara. How were you victorious? Please tell me." Hearing Tulasi's words, Rama's consort laughed. In Shankhachuda's form, he replied in words that were like amrita. Bhagavan replied, "I love fighting and I went to the field of battle. There was a great tumult and a great battle ensued. Wishing to triumph, devas and danavas fought. Daityas were defeated by the immortals, who were proud of their strength. I then fought with devas, who were insolent because of their strength. Having been defeated, devas sought refuge with Shankara. To help them, Rudra came to fight. Proud of my strength, I fought with him for a long period of time. O beloved! The clash between us raged for one entire year. O beautiful one! All the asuras were destroyed. To ensure pleasantness between us, Brahma himself arrived. As a result of Brahma's instructions, devas got back their rights. I returned to my own home and Shiva returned to Shiva's world. Everything was reduced to its natural state and all the hardships went far away. Saying this, the lord of the universe lay down on his bed. Happily, Rama's husband pleasured himself with that beautiful lady.'"""

The virtuous lady noticed that the happiness caused to her deviated from the normal and her affection wasn't the same. Debating all this, she asked, "Who are you?" Tulasi said, *Who are you? Quickly tell me. You have used maya to enjoy me. You have violated my chastity and I am going to curse you." Hearing Tulasi's words, Hari was scared of the curse. O brahmana! In his pastimes, he assumed his own beautiful form. Seeing the form and noticing the signs, Tulasi got to know that this was Vishnu. Since she had been made to give up her faithfulness towards her husband, she became angry and spoke. Tulasi said, "O Vishnu! You have no compassion, and your mind is like a stone. Since my dharma of faithfulness towards my husband has been violated, my husband will certainly be killed. You are like a stone. You are deceitful and lack compassion. Therefore, because of my curse, from now on, you will become stone. There is no doubt that those who call you an ocean of compassion are confused. For the sake of someone else, how was a devotee killed, though he had committed no crime?" Tulasi, Shankhachuda's beloved and faithful wife, said this. Afflicted by grief, she wept a lot and lamented repeatedly."""

""Vishnu Parameshvara saw that she was weeping. He remembered the divinity Shankara, who deludes the world. Affectionate towards his devotees, Shankara manifested himself. Hari humbly bent down and prostrated himself. He saw that Hari was afflicted by grief and that the beloved lady was lamenting. Affectionate and full of compassion, he used the right policy to make them understand. Shankara said, "O Tulasi! Do not weep. Like everyone else, you have reaped the fruits of your karma. Samsara is an ocean of karma and no one else confers happiness or misery. Hear about what must be done to get rid of your misery. With a pleasant mind, let Hari also listen. I am telling both of you about what will bring you joy. This will be a cause for happiness. O fortunate one! You performed austerities and this is the consequence of your austerities. How can it be otherwise for you? Give up this body and assume a divine body. Always pleasure yourself with Hari Be like Rama. The body you cast off will assume the form of a river in this world. It will be sacred in form and will be famous in Bharata as Gandaki. O Tulasi! O great queen! As a result of my boon, within a short period of time, you will become the most important ingredient used to worship devas. O beautiful one! You will become the supreme flower of the tulasi tree, and you will be in Hari's presence in heaven, earth and the nether regions. As the deity of the tree, you will have a divine form in Vaikuntha. In private, you will always sport with Hari. You will be the presiding deity of the extremely sacred river in Bharata. You will be Hari's portion and will be the wife of the salty ocean. As a result of your curse, Hari will assume the form of a stone on the banks of the Gandaki river in Bharata and remain there. Crores of terrible worms, with sharp fangs, will bite him there, penetrate him and make marks on him. This will be the shalagrama stone[489] and will bestow great auspiciousness. Depending on the rings, they will be known as Lakshmi-Narayana. O Tulasi! The shalagrama stone will represent your intercourse with Vishnu. It will always be like him in appearance and will enhance great merit. O fortunate onel If a person severs a tulasi leaf lying on a shalagrama, in his next life, he will be separated from his wife.

[489] Sacred to Vishnu. The ones found in Gandaki are famous. The shell of ammonite leaves marks on the shalagrama stone. Depending on shape, size, colour, dvaras (openings) and chakras (natural marks) there is a taxonomy of 25 different types of shalagrama. A Lakshmi Narayana shalagrama is light dark in colour and has one dvara and four chakras.

Without using a conch shell, if a person severs a tulasi leaf, for seven lives, he will be separated from his wife and will be diseased. If a person keeps a shalagrama, a tulasi leaf and a conch shell together, he will possess great jnana and be loved by Hari. For an entire manvantara, you have been Shankhachuda's beloved. Therefore, your separation from a conch shell will only give rise to misery." Saying this, Shankara told them about the greatness of the shalagrama stone and tulasi, both of which bring many good merits. Delighting her and Hari, he vanished. Shambhu, who always confers peace on the virtuous, returned to his own abode. Hearing Shambhu's words, Tulasi was pleased. She gave up her body and assumed a divine form. Along with her, Kamala's husband went to Vaikuntha. The body that she had just cast off became River Gandaki. Achyuta became a stone on the banks of the river, and this brings auspiciousness to men. O sage! Worms create many kinds of holes in them. The stones that fall into the river are extremely sacred. The ones that remain on land are known as pingalas and are harmful. In the order in which you have asked, I have thus described everything to you, Shambhu's sacred account that bestows everything desired on men. I have described this account and this account is mixed with that of Vishnu's greatness. It bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation and is sacred. What do you wish to hear next?"""

Chapter 212-3.5(42) (Killing of Hiranyaksha)

“Narada Tarada said, "I have heard about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest and about the slaying of Shankhachuda. But like a person who has drunk amrita, I am still not satisfied. O Brahma! Mahesha, the great-souled one, uses maya to engage in pastimes and generate delight amongst his devotees. Please tell me more about his conduct,"

'Brahma replied, "Hearing about the slaying of Jalandhara,[490] Vyasa, Satyavati's son, asked Brahma's son, lord among sages, the same question. Sanatkumara replied to Vyasa, Satyavati's son, describing Mahesha's praiseworthy conduct, which brings auspiciousness.""

"Sanatkumara said, 'O Vyasa! Hear about Mahesha's conduct, which brings auspiciousness, and about how Shambhu, the paramatman, made Andhaka a ganapati. O lord among sages! Before that, he fought a great battle. He obtained Mahesha's favours and also obtained sentiments of sattva. Shambhu's greatness is wonderful. He protects those who seek refuge with him. He is extremely affectionate towards his devotees and amuses himself through many kinds of pastimes. The sage who was Gandhavati's[491] son heard about Vrishadhvaja's greatness. He prostrated himself devotedly before Brahma's son, Indra among sages, and spoke words that were full of deep meaning. Vyasa asked, "O illustrious lord among sages! Who was Andhaka? Which brave family on earth was this powerful and great-souled one born in? Why was he important? Whose son was Andhaka? O Brahma's son! Please show me your favours and tell me about this great secret now. Mahesha's son, Skanda, is infinite in intelligence and he has told me about this properly. [492]

[490] Logically, this should be Shankhachuda, not Jalandhara.

[491] Gandhavati is another name for Satyavati.

[492] This doesn't sound logical. Why should Vyasa hear about this from Skanda?

Through the immensely energetic Shambhu, how did he obtain the status of being a ganapati? Since he became a leader of ganas, Andhaka was blessed." Brahma said, "Hearing Vyasa's words, Brahma's son spoke to
him. Shuka's father desired to hear about Maheshvara's deeds and this bestows great prosperity on the listener "",

"Sanatkumara said, 'Earlier, showing affection towards his devotees, the emperor of the immortals left his own mountain, Kailasa, and went to Kashika. [493] He desired to sport there and the daughter of the mountain and the excellent ganas were with him. He constructed a capital there and it brought great happiness. He appointed the brave Bhairava as an external guard and sported with the mountain's daughter. On one occasion, he went to the mountain known as Mandara, to behold its supreme and excellent powers.

Along with Shivaa and the foremost among the brave ganas, he sported a lot there. While they were on the eastern slopes of Mandara, in her playful pastimes, Parvati covered the eyes of Kapardin, who was terrible in his valour. Her hands had the complexion of coral and golden lotuses and she used these to cover his eyes. When Hara's eyes were covered, a great darkness was immediately generated. When she touched Maheshvara with her hands, copious drops of intoxicating water oozed out from them and were instantly heated by the fire on Shambhu's forehead. [494] This resulted in a terrible conception. The being had a cruel face. He was an ingrate and full of rage. He was blind and disfigured. He was dark and had matted hair. His body hair was malformed, and this was a different kind of man. He sang, laughed, wept and danced. His tongue flickered, like that of a snake. His croaking voice thundered. As soon as this extraordinary being was born, Bhava smiled and spoke to Gouri. Shri Mahesha said, "O beloved! You performed the act of covering my eyes. Why are you scared now?" Hearing Hara's words, Gouri smiled and uncovered the lord's eyes. When there was illumination, the blind being, who had been born from darkness, appeared even more terrible in form. On seeing the nature of the man who had been born, Gouri asked Mahesha. Gouri asked, "O Bhagavan! Who is this disfigured being who has been born? He is standing in front of us, terrible and fearful. Please tell me the truth. Why has he been created? Who has created him? Whose son is he?" Hara heard the words of his beloved. In her pastimes, the mother of the three worlds had herself created this blind being. Engaged in his own pastimes, Bhagavan smiled and replied. Mahesha said, "O Ambika! Listen. You perform extraordinary deeds. This being is wonderful and terrible in valour. When you closed my eyes, he was born from my sweat. His name is Andhaka. [495] You are his creator, though not in the normal way. You, your friends and the ganas should protect him. There is nothing to think about. O noble one! Use your intelligence to do this." Hearing her husband's words, she was filled with sentiments of compassion. Along with her friends and using many kinds of ways, she protected him, as if he was her own son.""

[493] That is, Kashi/Varanasi.

[494] Parvati had covered Shiva's third eye.

[495] Andha means blind. Darkness has the same root.

"""At that time, during winter, Hiranyanetra [496] left, desiring a son. He saw that his elder brother[497] had sons and he was urged by his beloved. Desiring sons, the asura who was Kashyapa's son resorted to the forest and performed austerities. Wishing to see Mahesha, like a piece of wood, he conquered rage and taints. O Indra among brahmanas! The wielder of Pinaka was satisfied at these austerities and went there, to grant him a proper boon. Vrishadhvaja Mahesha went to that spot and spoke to the supreme daitya. Mahesha said, "O lord of daityas! Do not make your senses suffer in this way. Why have you resorted to this vow? Please tell me what you desire. I am the one who bestows boons. I will give you everything that you wish for." Hearing the pleasant words spoken by Mahesha, the daitya with the golden eyes was extremely happy. He joined his hands in salutation and lowered his head. He bent down and praised Girisha in many kinds of ways. Hiranyaksha said, "O one with the moon on the forehead! I do not possess a brave son, one appropriate for a lineage of daityas. That is the reason I have observed his vow. O lord of devas! Please grant me a son who is exceedingly brave. My brother has five sons who are infinite in prowess. Prahlada is the eldest. I do not have anyone to follow me. After me, who will adorn my kingdom? A son is said to be someone who enjoys the kingdom left to him by his own father, or someone who takes away the kingdom of another through his own strength. A person who possesses such a son is a true father. Supremely learned ones who uphold dharma state that a person has an upward destination [498] only if he possesses such a son. Among all beings, that is the reason why even animals use their energy to ensure this. People who do not have sons cannot aspire for the worlds of the gods. Desiring a son, people always use lotuses to worship the three divinities." Full of compassion, he was content at these words of the king of the daityas. He said, "O lord of daityas! You will not have a son who is born from your semen. But I will give you a son. My son is named Andhaka. He is your equal in valour and has not been defeated. Abandon all your grief and choose him as your son. Accept this son." Saying this, he happily gave Hiranyanetra the son. Along with Gouri, the great-souled Hara, the original lord of beings and the destroyer of Tripura, departed. Having obtained a son, in the due order, the daitya bent down and performed pradakshina[499] of Hars Using many kinds of hymns, he worshipped Rudra. Satisfied, the great-souled one returned to his own kingdom."

"Having obtained a son from Girisha, the daitya, terrible in valour, conquered all the residents of heaven. He took the earth down to his own dominion in Rasatala. Devas, sages and siddhas worshipped Vishnu, infinite in valour, who assumed the form of a large and cruel varaba. He is in all atmans and all the sacrifices are in him. Using his snout, he struck and shattered the earth, penetrating and entering Patala. With his snout and fierce fangs, he crushed and shattered hundreds of daityas. The blows from his legs were like flashes of lightning and the soldiers of those who roam around in the night were crushed. His wonderful Sudarshana chakra was terrible in energy, resembling one crore suns. He used this to sever Hiranyanetra's dazzling head and burnt down the wicked daityas. Delighted, he then instated Andhaka, the son of the Indra among daityas.

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[496] Another name for Hiranyaksha. Hiranyaksha/Hiranyanetra means the golden-eyed one.

[497] That is, Hiranyakashipu. Their parents were Kashyapa and Diti.

[498] Goes to heaven.

[499] Pradakshina is more specific than a mere act of circumambulating. This circling or circumambulation has to be done in a specific way, so that the right side (dakshina) always faces what is being circled.

The great-souled one next used his tusks to raise the earth up from Patala and restored it to where it had been before. After this, he returned to his own abode. All the delighted devas and sages and the one who originated from the lotus praised him.
Having assumed the fierce form of varaha and having performed that excellent deed, Hari returned to his own abode. Hiranyanetra, the lord of asuras, was killed by the lord of the gods, who assumed the form of a boar. All the devas, sages and other living beings became happy.""'

Chapter 213-3.5(43) (Killing of Hiranyakashipu)

“Vyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! When that hated asura was killed, what did his elder brother, the great asura, do? O lord among sages! I have great curiosity to hear about that. O Brahma's son! I bow down before you. Please show me your compassion and make me listen to that.""'

'Brahma said, "Hearing Vyasa's words, Sanatkumara, lord among sages, remembered Shiva's lotus feet and replied.""

"Sanatkumara answered, 'O Vyasa! Hearing that his brother had been killed by Hari, in the form of a boar, Hiranyakashipu was simultaneously sad and angry. He loved carnage and created havoc among the subjects. He was fond of his enmity towards Hari and instructed the brave asuras accordingly. Bowing their heads, the asuras accepted the command of their master. They loved carnage and created havoc among the subjects who were devas. The world was agitated by the evil-minded asuras. Devas were seen to abandon heaven and roam around on earth. On account of his brother, Hiranyakashipu was extremely miserable. He performed the water rites and comforted his wife and others. The Indra among the daityas wished to make himself invincible, immune to old age and death, so that he might rule over the kingdom unchallenged, without any impediments. Therefore, he performed extremely terrible austerities in the valleys of Mandara. He raised his arms up and fixed his eyes on the sky. Using only his big toes, he stood on the ground. While he was tormenting himself through austerities, all the deva forces defeated all the daityas and got back their respective positions. As a result of his austerities, a fire mixed with smoke arose from his head. It spread in all the worlds, above, below and sideways, and scorched them. Scorched by this, the gods abandoned heaven and went to Brahma's world. Their faces deformed because of the austerities, they informed Vidhatri about what had happened. O Vyasa! When told this by the devas, surrounded by them, Bhrigu, Daksha and others, Vidhatri went to the hermitage of the lord among daityas. He had scorched all the worlds and saw that the one born from the lotus had arrived. So as to bestow a boon on him, Vidhatri, the grandfather said, "Please ask for a boon." Hearing Vidhatri's sweet words, extremely foolish in intelligence, he replied. Hiranyakashipu said, "O Bhagavan! O lord of subjects! O grandfather! O divinity! May I never suffer fear of death from shastras, astras, nooses, vajras, anything dry, trees, large mountains, water, fire, blows of enemies, devas, daityas, sages, siddhas or any living being that has been created. What is the need to speak a lot? O lord of subjects! Let me not be killed in heaven or earth, during night or day, from above or from below." Hearing such words spoken by the Indra among daityas, the one born from the lotus mentally prostrated himself before Vishnu. Full of compassion, he answered, "I am pleased with you. You will obtain everything. Since your wishes have been met, enough of

austerities. They have gone on for ninety-six thousand years. Arise and rule over the kingdom of the danavas." On hearing this, his face beamed, and the great grandfather instated him in the kingdom.""

""However, he made up his mind to destroy the three worlds. Intoxicated, he uprooted every kind of dharma. He defeated all the gods in a battle. Devas fled in fear. They suffered because of the excellent daitya. Taking the grandfather's permission, all of them went to the ocean of milk, where Hari lies down. They worshipped him a lot and used many kinds of words to praise Vishnu. When they were of the view that he was pleased, they told him everything about their miseries and the reason for their grief. Rama's lord was content. Hearing about all their sorrows, he bestowed boons on them. Upendra got up from his bed. Using many kinds of words that were worthy of him, he comforted all the devas and sages. Like the fire in his energy, he spoke to them. "O lord among gods! I will use my force to kill the daitya. Satisfied, return to your own abodes." Hearing the words of Rama's lord, all the gods, Shakra and the others, were greatly satisfied. O lord among sages! They were of the view that Hiranyanetra's younger brother [500] had already been killed. The great-souled one assumed a complicated and cruel form, with fangs as his weapons. His nails were sharp, and his nose was excellent. He possessed a mane, and his gaping mouth was extremely wide. He was as terrible as one crore suns. His power was like that of the fire of destruction that comes at the end of a yuga. What is the need to speak a lot? He pervaded the universe. When the sun was about to set, the lord went to the city of the asuras. He fought against the terrible daityas and killed them. He seized large numbers of daityas and whirled them around. Wonderful in his valour, Nrisimha crushed many asuras. Unmatched in his strength, he seemed to toy with all the daityas. The son of the Indra among daityas, Prahlada, saw that the lion was everywhere. He spoke to the king. Prahlada said, "Who is this lion who has come here? He pervades the universe. It is Bhagavan Ananta who has come to your city in the form of Nrisimha. I can see the lion's cruel form. Withdraw from the battle and seek refuge with him. There is no warrior in the three worlds who can face him. Therefore, prostrate yourself before the lion and rule over the kingdom." Hearing his son's words, the evil-souled one replied, "O son! Why are you scared?" Having told his son this, the king, the lord of the sons of Diti, instructed the best and the brave among the daityas. "O brave ones! This malformed lion has terrible eyebrows and eyes. Seize him and bring him to me." Following his command, the best among daityas approached the lion, so as to seize him. Though they wished to seize him, like moths before a fire, they were instantly burnt. When the daityas were burnt, the king of daityas started to fight with the king of deer. He used all his shastras, all his astras, spears, sticks, goads, fire and other things to fight. O Vyasa! With weapons in their hands, they fought for the duration of one of Brahma's days. They were brave and experienced in fighting. Full of rage in their minds, they roared angrily at each other. Suddenly, the daitya assumed many hands, each holding weapons. He glanced towards Nrisimha and rushed towards him. However, the lion also fought with great force. The clash between them was impossible to tolerate and every kind of shastra and every kind of astra was used.

[500] We have earlier been told that Hiranyakashipu was the elder brother, not the younger one. They were actually twins. There is no inconsistency, because, for twins, there are two notions of who is older the one who is born first, or the one who is conceived first (and born later).

When all these were exhausted, the great and excellent daitya seized a spear and rushed towards Nrisimha. But with arms that seemed to be made out of the essence of mountains, the lion seized him. He placed him on his knees and tore him apart with the nails on the ends of his arms. The inner organs of the danava were pierced. Using his nails as weapons, he tore out the lotus of his heart and blood flowed out. Within a short while, he lost his life. When life left his body, he was like a piece of wood and all his limbs were then reduced to powder."""

""When the enemy of the devas was killed, Vishnu was pleased. He invited Prahlada, who prostrated himself before him. Extraordinary in his valour, he instated him in the kingdom and left along a path that could not be discerned. O brahmana! All the gods were delighted and prostrated themselves in the direction in which Vishnu had left. The lord, Bhagvan, having performed their task, they were successful. The grandfather and the others left for their own respective abodes. Andhaka's birth through Rudra, the death of Hiranyanetra through varaha, the slaying of his brother through Nrisimha and the obtaining of the kingdom by Prahlada have been described. O noble brahmana! Now hear about the power Andhaka obtained from Bhava, about his battle with Hara and his subsequent status of ganapati, obtained from Girisha."

Chapter 214-3.5(44) (Andhaka's Austerities)[501]

“Sanatkumara said, 'On one occasion, while they were amusing themselves, Hiranyanetra's son heard his evil-minded brothers speak to him in jest. "You are blind. What will you do with a kingdom? Hiranyanetra was foolish. After performing terrible austerities and worshipping Girisha, he obtained you. You are disfigured and malformed. You love quarrels and do not have eyes. You certainly cannot have a share in the kingdom. How can a person born through someone else obtain the kingdom? Think about it yourself. But we may give you a share. This is the truth." Hearing their words, he used his own intelligence to reflect on them and was dejected. Using many kinds of words, he reassured them. Then, in the night, he left for the desolate forest. He observed austerities there for ten thousand years. He stood on one leg and performed japa. He observed the rules and raised his arms up. He took no food. No other god or asura was capable of performing this. He lit a fire and offered flesh from his own body, along with the blood, sharp as oblations. He did this for an entire year. He used a weapon to slice off parts from his body and every day, using mantras, offered these as oblations. He was like a dead body, with only nerves and bones. All the blood had drained away. When there was no flesh left, he wanted to offer his body into the fire. Those who resided in heaven saw him in this state. All of them were amazed and filled with fear. All the immortals quickly entreated Vidhatri, bowing down, applauding him and pleasing him. Therefore, the grandfather restrained him and said, "O danava! Please ask for a boon now. Even if you ask for something that is impossible for the three worlds to obtain, accept it." Hearing the words of the one who originated from the lotus, the miserable daitya prostrated himself.

[501] The composition of these Andhaka chapters is quite different. The sentence constructions make comprehension difficult. Sometimes, the sentences are incomplete. This makes it difficult to understand and translate and some liberties have been taken.

"Those cruel ones, Prahlada as the foremost, took away my kingdom. Let them become my servants. I am blind. Let me have divine sight. Let Indra and the others pay me taxes. Let me not suffer death

from devas, daityas, gandharvas, yakshas, uragas or humans. Nor should it come through Narayana, enemy of Indras among daityas, or Sharva, who pervades everything and is in all beings." Hearing his extremely terrible words, the one born from the lotus was scared and spoke to him. Brahma said, "O Indra among daityas! Everyone born must be destroyed. No one who has been born, is being born or will be born, can escape the mouth of death. Therefore, accept some means of death. Men like you should give up the idea of living for an infinitely long period of time." Hearing the grandfather's plea, the daitya spoke again. Andhaka said, "In the three periods of time, [502] there are women who are old, middle aged and young. Among them, there is one who is the real jewel. Let her always be like a mother to me. In thoughts, words and deeds, this woman must be unapproachable in this world. They will find it impossible to obtain her. O Bhagavan Svayambhu! If I ever desire her, let me be destroyed. Let me no longer be Indra among the daityas." Hearing his words, the one who was born from the lotus was amazed. He remembered Shankara's lotus feet. After having obtained Shambhu's instructions, he spoke again. Brahma said, "O supreme daitya! Everything that you want will happen, according to your wishes. O Indra among the daityas! Arise and satisfy your wishes. Always fight with those who are brave." O lord among sages! Hearing Vidhatri's words, he immediately prostrated himself devotedly. Since Hiranyanetra's son had been reduced to nerves and bones, he spoke to the divinity who was the lord of the worlds. Andhaka said, "O lord! The enemies are strong. With this body, how can I enter and fight against them? I am only nerves and bones. Please touch me with your auspicious hand now and nourish me with flesh." Hearing his words, the one who was born from the lotus touched his body with his hand. Worshipped by large numbers of sages and siddhas and accompanied by lords among gods, he503 then returned to his own abode."""

""As soon as he was touched, the body of the king of the daityas became complete and strong. Eyes originated. Fortunate and healthy, he entered his own city. He made Prahlada and all the other foremost Indras among danavas give up the kingdom. Since he had arrived after obtaining a boon, they thought they should come under his control and become his servants. Along with his soldiers and a retinue of servants, Andhaka went to heaven, so as to conquer it. He defeated all the foremost gods and made the wielder of vajra pay taxes. Nagas, birds, the best among rakshasas, gandharvas, yakshas, humans, kings of mountains, trees and all the quadrupeds, lions being the foremost, were defeated by him in battle. He brought all mobile and immobile entities in the three worlds under his subjugation and engaged them. Many thousands of beautiful women, of noble birth, went to him. Extremely beautiful women from Rasatala, earth and heaven were with him, and he sported with them in mountains, the beautiful banks of rivers and other places. As he sported among them, the Indra among danavas was filled with joy. He drank inferior liquor, divine liquor and that drunk by humans. He enjoyed divine juices, fruits and fragrant roots. He obtained excellent mounts and vehicles and supreme houses created by Maya. Andhaka sported amidst flowers, incenses and unguents.

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[502] Past, present and future.

[503] Brahma.

They were wonderful and extraordinary to behold. Ten thousand years passed. He did not know what was auspicious and what would bring him happiness in the next world. Andhaka, supreme among daityas, was foolish and wicked in intelligence. He associated with the wicked. Deluded, he used evil arguments to defeat the best among learned people. Along with the daityas, he wandered around as a great-souled person and destroyed all the dharma of the Vedas. Intoxicated because of his wealth, he dishonoured the Vedas, brahmanas, immortals and gurus. Because of destiny, he had obtained a lifespan. However, because of his own acts of pleasure, he diminished this."""

""Crores, and an innumerable number of years passed. On one occasion, with many soldiers, he went to earth. He happily went to Mount Mandara. Proud, along with his soldiers, he saw its beautiful and golden splendour. Out of delusion, he approached that Indra among mountains, to sport and reside there. Delighted by his power, the lord of daityas created an auspicious and firm city there. Having created that wonderful place on Mount Mandara, he gradually ensured it was inhabited. The excellent danava had two ministers, known as Duryodhana and Vaidhasahasti. On one occasion, in an excellent spot on the mountain, the three of them [504] saw an extremely beautiful lady. Full of joy, those excellent daityas quickly went to the great lord of daityas. Full of great delight, they told Andhaka, supreme among brave ones, everything they had seen. The ministers said, "O Indra among daityas! We saw a sage inside a cave. His eyes were closed in dhyana.

He is handsome and the crescent moon is on his head. The hide of a gigantic elephant is tied around his waist. Indras among nagas are coiled everywhere around his body. His ornament is a garland of skulls, and he has matted hair. He holds a trident in his hand and possesses arrows and a quiver. He holds a great bow and a string of rudrakshas can be seen. He holds a sword, a trident and a staff. He has matted hair and is four-armed. His body is exceedingly fair. He is smeared with ashes. The ascetic dazzles in his great energy and his appearance and garb are extraordinary. We saw a monkey, not very far from this being. His face is terrible and cruel. With every kind of weapon, he is a guard who is protecting. There is an aged bull who is fair. Seated near that ascetic, there is a charming and young woman who is exceedingly beautiful. This auspicious lady can be seen next to him, and she is a jewel on earth. She is adorned with coral, pearls, jewels, gold and gems. Her garments and garlands are auspicious and fine. A person who sees her is a person who has really seen. Having seen her, what is the need to see anyone else? This divine lady should be the wife of a respected and great lord. However, she is the beloved of a sage who is auspicious in his vows. O Indra among daityas! You are the one who enjoys excellent jewels. She is worthy of being seen by you. Therefore, bring her here." Hearing their words, he was overwhelmed by desire and his entire body was in a whirl."""

""The daitya immediately sent Duryodhana and the others to the sage. The ministers were aged and excellent and they approached the immeasurable sage. They were accomplished in the principles of good royal policy. They prostrated themselves and told him about the daitya's instruction. The

[504] There is an inconsistency. Having earlier used the dual, the text now mentions three ministers. With three, the names are Duryodhana, Vaidhasa and Hasti.

ministers said, "Hiranyanetra's great-souled son is the emperor of the daityas. He is known by the name of Andhaka. He is the lord of the three worlds. As a result of the command of the creator, [505] he has instated himself in this region now and is engaged in pleasures. We are his brave ministers and have come to your presence. O ascetic! We have been sent to you by him. Listen attentively to what he has said. O intelligent and noble sage! Whose son are you? Why are you seated cheerfully here? Who does such a young and beautiful lady belong to? O Indra among sages! This auspicious one should be given to the lord of the daityas. Your body is smeared with ashes. Your ornament is a garland of skulls. You are malformed. Why do you have a quiver, bow, arrows, swords, bhushundi, trident, vajra and club? The sacred Jahnavi[506] is on top of your matted hair. Your body has the moon, but it also has bits of bones from corpses. There is poison in your breath and your mouth is long. What is this snake? How can you have intercourse with a woman who has heavy breasts? Riding on a bull is not praised and must be pardoned. No one has seen such a thing. Where is your dharma of prostrating yourself at the time of sandhya? What is this food that is against the practices of the world? With these peaceful words, give the lady to me. O foolish one! Accompanied by a woman, why are you performing austerities? This is not appropriate and is not worthy of you. In the three worlds, I am the lord of jewels. Follow my words and lay aside your weapons now. You will be pure only after you do that. If you challenge and violate my command, you will be freed of everything, including this body." Maheshvara was following customary worldly practices and formed the view that Andhaka was the most important among all those evil in intelligence. Hearing everything that the messengers had said, he smiled and replied to the daitya. Shiva said, "Since I am Rudra, what do you have to do with me? You have uttered false words. O lord of the daityas! Hear about my powers. You should not have spoken to me like this. I do not remember my father. Inside this cave, I am observing the terrible pashupata vow, which no one else has observed. I do not know my mother. I am ignorant and malformed. It is known that I have no root. It is impossible for me to give up all this. This wife of mine is young and exceedingly beautiful. She tolerates everything. She represents all the success one aspires for. O rakshasat [507] That being the case, you can take whatever seems to be appropriate to you." Having said this, Shambhu, who was in the garb of an ascetic, stopped and remained there, in front of them. Hearing his deep words, the danavas lowered their heads and prostrated themselves before him. They returned to the supreme daitya, who had taken a pledge to destroy the three worlds. They bowed down and told him. Their king was the intoxicated lord of daityas, indomitable in spirit. All of them first uttered "Victory" and prostrated themselves. They then reported what Rudra had smilingly told them. The ministers said, [508] "O roamer in the night! Where is there a danava whose valour and perseverance are fickle, one who is miserable and devoid of spirit? Where is there a danava who is always cruel and ungrateful, a sinner who is scared of Surya's son? O lord of the daityas! You have enjoyed the entire kingdom, but an ascetic and a sage is laughing at you. You are indeed supreme among brave ones and extremely energetic. Using your own intelligence, you regard the three worlds like a blade of grass. Where do I possess terrible weapons? What is this battle that will terrify death?

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505 That is, Brahma.

506 Jahnu's daughter, Ganga.

507 The use of the word rakshasa is unusual, since rakshasas are different from daityas/danavas.

508 Reporting Shiva's words. The words are full of sarcasm. Surya's son is Yama.

O roamer in the night! Who is this Viraka? 5[09] His face resembles that of a monkey. He is aged and his limbs suffer from old age. My form is ugly. I am unfortunate. Against your strength, I am like a creeper. If you are capable, you should make efforts to fight. You should do something. We possess terrible weapons that are the equal of the vajra. They can destroy the likes of you. Is your body as delicate as that of a lotus? Think about it and do what appeals to you." The ministers said, [510] "O fortunate one! O lord of danavas! The ascetic spoke such words. O king! He laughed at you and said this. Isn't it appropriate that you should fight with him? Please understand that he spoke a lot, but those words are empty and devoid of meaning. He is an ascetic engaged in austerities. When you consider the words of the sage, you should remember that." Hearing their words, the evil-minded one blazed in rage, though those words were true, beneficial, crooked[511] and extremely piercing. It was as if ghee had been sprinkled into a fire. Intoxicated because the boon had been bestowed on him, he seized a sword and assumed a terrible form. Urged by perverse destiny and pierced by the arrow of desire, he prepared to go."""

Chapter 215-3.5(45) (The Battle Commences)

"Sanatkumara said, 'The daitya went there. He had S drunk liquor and his eyes rolled around. His stride was like that of a large and intoxicated elephant. He was great in sentiments and terrible in valour and there were many soldiers with him. He strode like the best of heroes. Pierced by the arrows of desire, he saw the cave, where Viraka obstructed his path. He looked at him, like a moth looking at a flame, and took him to be gentle. He descended like an insect. On seeing him there, Viraka repeatedly struck him. However, since he had been scorched by the fire of passion, Andhaka, the foolish and great king of the daityas, did not feel these. He was struck by terrible rocks, trees, vajras, water, fire, snakes and other weapons. Though these were terrifying, he did not strike back. Striking him again, he[512] asked, "Who are you? Why have you come here?" Hearing these words, he told him who he was and started to fight with Viraka. The wonderful and unfathomable happened. In a short while, the daitya was defeated by someone who was stronger than him. At this, he left the field of battle. He was hungry and thirsty, and his throat was parched. His excellent sword had been shattered. He was dejected. Extremely surprised, he fled. The most important daityas, Prahlada at the forefront, fought against Viraka. Though they were terrible and possessed hundreds of weapons, their minds were struck by the goad of shame.[513] Virochana, Bali, Bana, Sahasrabahu, Bhaji, Kujambha, Shambara, Vritra and other valiant ones were those who fought. Though they fought, they were defeated. In every direction, the gana Viraka sliced them into two. At the end, many danavas were killed. Large numbers of siddhas exclaimed, "Victory". Amidst the fat, marrow, flesh and pus, many jackals started to dance. The place was full of predatory creatures and the blood formed a horrible mire. The daityas were routed."""

""Bhagavan, the wielder of Pinaka, spoke to Dakshayanis [514] and reassured her.

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[509] Viraka was a leader of Shiva's ganas.

[510] Earlier, the ministers reported Shiva's words. These are their own words.

[511] Meaning difficult to understand, since they were sarcastic.

[512] Viraka.

[513] They were defeated.

[514] Daksha's daughter, Sati.

Shiva said, "O beloved! Earlier, I had performed the great and extremely terrible vow of pashupata. As a result of this clash between mortals and immortals, that strength has been exhausted. O Devil In connection with you, night and day, there are planets that make good merits decay. There are supreme, wonderful and divine portents, but those have turned terrible again. Therefore, I will observe a vow that is even more terrible. O beautiful one! Do not grieve. You will be safe." In a slow and deep tone, the great-souled one spoke these words. He went to an extremely sacred and extremely terrible forest to observe this fierce and radiant vow. He performed these austerities for a thousand years. No other god or asura was capable of undertaking them. Parvati remained on Mount Mandara, waiting for Bhava's return. She was devoted to her husband and possessed the qualities of good conduct. She was alone and constantly scared inside the cave. She was miserable and was protected by her son, Viraka."""

"""The daitya was intoxicated because of the grant of the boon. With the best of warriors, he arrived at the cave. His patience had been exhausted and he again arrived before the mouth of that stone cave. Having arrived there, enraged, he forgot about eating, drinking and sleep and fought with Viraka day and night, along with his soldiers, for five hundred and five years. The large number of daityas used swords, lances, catapults, maces, bhushundis, chariots, trunks, arrows with iron heads, fierce arrows with heads like the half-moon, arrows as long as a vitasti, arrows with heads like tortoises, the best of iron arrows, sharp spears, battle axes, javelins, clubs, swords, bludgeons, mountains, trees and divine weapons. Struck by weapons released from the arms of the daityas, he[515] lost his senses and fell down at the mouth of the cave. His body was mangled, and he fell down at the entrance to the cave, covering the entrance such that no light could enter. Viraka and the mass of weapons covered the entrance. However, in a short while, all those daityas were capable of uncovering it. Devi looked at the extremely terrible sons of Diti. In her fear, Devi and her friends remembered the grandfather and Vishnu. Inside the cave, she remembered all the soldiers, supreme among brave ones."

“As soon as they were remembered, Brahma and Bhagavan Vishnu arrived there, assuming feminine forms. Indra arrived, along with all the soldiers, all assuming feminine forms. Large numbers of Indras among sages, immensely powerful siddhas, nagas and guhyakas immediately entered the cave where the daughter of the king of mountains was, all assuming feminine forms. In the kingdom of the gods, it was against the norms for men to enter inner quarters. Therefore, they assumed thousands of heavy-hipped forms, indeed an infinite number. Assuming extremely wonderful, brave and divine bodies and forms, they entered Gouri's cave. These women were seen to enter the cave of the daughter of the king of mountains. Thousands and hundreds and innumerable numbers of women entered the cave of the daughter of the king of mountains. The noise they made was like the thunder of clouds at the end of a kalpa. Those women, possessing excellent hips, sounded drums that signified victory in the battle. They blew on their supreme conch shells. Having regained his senses, Viraka, terrible in valour, stationed himself in front of them. With a staff in her hand, Brahmi opposed them.[516] Gouri was filled with rage. Narayani held a conch shell, a mace, a chakra and a strung bow in her hands.

[515] Viraka.

[516] Brahmi is the Shakti associated with Brahma, Narayani with Narayana.

Bidoujasis [517] emerged with the rod of a plough and the vajra in her hands. Her hair spread out in the sky and her complexion was like that of gold. Because of her fierce speed, thousands of showers flowed. The one with one thousand eyes was impossible to defeat and fought steadily in the battle, attacking hundreds of daityas. The Shakti Vaishyanari didn't possess a pleasant face and the fierce Yamya held up raised staff in her hands, [518] With a terrible bow and an extremely sharp sword held in her hand, Nairritis[519] advanced,Toyalika[520] emerged, wishing to fight, holding Varuna's noose in her hands. The Devi who was the power behind a terrible storm [521] assumed the form of hunger and held a goad in her hand. The one who originated from Dhanada [522] seized a club in her hand and her form was that of the fire of destruction at the end of a kalpa. Yaksheshvari possessed a sharp mouth and was malformed. She used her nails as weapons and was as fearsome as a naga. Many hundreds of other Devis emerged and filled up the field of battle. On suddenly seeing that infinite number of soldiers, Devi was amazed, and her face turned pale. She was scared and her spirit were dejected. However, the mind of the divine wife, the mountain's daughter, was comforted by the Shaktis, Vidhatri's as the foremost, and by the brave commander, Viraka, who was extremely terrible in his valour. The foremost among the daityas turned their minds to the thought of the impending great battle. They thought that retreat before women was like death. Others were spirited because boons had been bestowed on them. Viraka was terrible in valour and wonderful in intelligence and prowess. Making him the commander, Gouri and her friends fought an extraordinary battle. The king who was Hiranyanetra's son remembered Vishnu and glanced towards the southern direction. He then devised a large, excellent and terrible vyuha and placed Gila in the front. Since he had served Vidhatri, he could make its mouth fierce. Meanwhile, Bhagavan[523] arrived there, resembling the hue of one thousand terrible suns that rise at the time of the end of a kalpa. He was angry and was clad in hides. He had returned after one thousand years. On seeing Maheshvara, the women rejoiced. Along with Viraka, they fought an extremely great battle. Gouri lowered her head and prostrated herself before Girisha and showed her husband her great valour. On seeing that Gouri was fighting, Hara embraced the daughter of the king of mountains. Taking her with him, he entered inside the cave, asking those thousands of women to leave. Gouri honoured and worshipped Viraka in hundreds of ways and placed him at the mouth of the cave."

"The lord of the asuras, accomplished in good policy, could see neither Gouri nor Girisha, there. As a token of friendship, he decided to send his own messenger to Shiva's presence. In the battle, his[524] body had been greatly mangled by the blows of devas and ganas. Therefore, though he entered and prostrated his head before Shambhu, his words were haughty. The messenger said, "I have entered this cave because I have been sent by Andhaka.

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[517] Bidoujasa is Indra's name. Bidoujasi is Indra's Shakti.

[518] Respective Shaktis of Agni (Vaishvanara) and Yama.

[519] Nairrita's Shakti.

[520] Toyalaya is Varuna's name and Toyalika is Varuna's Shakti.

[521] That is, Vayu's Shakti.

[522] Kubera's Shakti, known as Yaksheshvari.

[323] Shiva.

[524] The messenger's.

He has addressed you in the following words. 'You have nothing to do with a woman. Therefore, release this young and beautiful lady. You are generally an ascetic. Thinking that, my delicate mind pardoned you. I thought that one shouldn't oppose a sage. But you are not a sage and ascetic. You are an enemy. You are a great adversary of the daityas. Show me your force and crush me in the battle. O cunning ascetic! I will send you to Patala, or to its equivalent, Yama's eternal abode." Hearing these words from the mouth of the messenger, the one with a garland of skulls spoke in rage. He is the one who strikes the insolent progress of the wicked and his large third eye blazed in sorrow. Shiva said, "The words that you have spoken are truly fierce. Therefore, if you are capable of withstanding and if you possess the capacity and strength, advance and fight with me. On earth, what do the incapable have to do with beautiful wives and wealth? Let the intoxicated and strong daityas advance. I have already thought about this. An incapable person is unable to hold up his body. Let them do what is ordained for them. There is no doubt that I will do what I have to do." Hearing the lord's words, he happily left Hara's presence. Roaring and boasting, he returned before the lord of the daityas."""

Chapter 216-3.5(46) (Andhaka's Fight)

“Sanatkumara said, 'The king of the daityas could understand signs. He seized his club and took his soldiers with him. The one named Gila, who was extremely terrible and whom the best among devas found impossible to assail, was placed at the front. Having reached the mount of Maheshvara's cave, he sought to shatter it with many weapons that were like the vajra. There were others who attacked Viraka. Still others enveloped the daughter of the mountain with weapons. Some shattered the beautiful gate. Others destroyed the flowers and leaves. Some shattered the fruits, roots, water, delightful gardens and roads. Delighted, some tried to agitate the golden peaks of the mountain. Enraged, Hara, the wielder of the trident, remembered his own soldiers. As soon as they were remembered, many extremely terrible beings arrived. So did the soldiers of devas, with Vishnu at the forefront. All the devas and large numbers of beings arrived, joined their hands in salutation and prostrated themselves-ganas and their soldiers; chariots, elephants, horses, bulls, cows, camels, mules, supreme birds, lions, tigers, pigs, cranes; large fish and small fish, with dolphins leading the way; large numbers of many other kinds of beings with broken teeth, frequenting cremation grounds; snakes, hundreds of pretas and pishachas: divine vimanas; lakes filled with lotuses, large rivers and small rivers; and mountains and mounts. Kapardin made Viraka, who was lofty in spirit, the general. When devas and the mounts had rested, the wielder of Pinaka sent them to fight.'".

Maheshvara sent the best among them to fight, those who would steadfastly pursue victory. Without following the standard rules of war, [525] all of them fought against Gila, as if the end of the yuga had come. The soldiers of the Indra among the daityas were always terrible. In the battle, they angrily devoured the residents of heaven. In an instant, Vighasa devoured all the soldiers who were fighting-Brahma, Indra, Vishnu, the sun and the moon as the foremost. Only Viraka was left. Abandoning the field of battle, he entered the cave, lowering his head and prostrating himself before Sharva. Viraka was extremely eloquent in the use of words.

[525] Standard rules were followed in any fight-like not attacking the injured, those without weapons and those who were running away.

Full of sorrow, he told Smara's enemy[526] everything that had happened. "O Bhagavan! The daitya Vighasa has devoured the soldiers. Vishnu, the guru of the three worlds and the crusher of daityas, has been devoured. The moon, the sun and Druhina and Maghavan, the ones who bestow boons, have been devoured. [527] So have Yama, Varuna, Vayu and Dhanada. Humiliated, I am the only one who has been left. The Indra among the daityas is delighted in his mind. Accompanied by the daityas, he is invincible. What will I do now? The divinity Vishnu himself possesses the speed of the wind and causes fear. When he tore apart Hiranyakashipu with his nails, his sons[528] devotedly beseeched him. Nevertheless, Bhagavan was subjugated by wickedness, He opened his mouth wide and started to blow away all the impurities in the three worlds. The seven sages, Vasishtha and the others, cursed him at the time. 'For a very long period of time, you will be subjugated by daityas.' Desiring his own welfare, he asked them in affectionate words. 'When will I be freed from this terrible curse?' The supreme sages replied in rage, 'When it is time to fight, you will be pierced by terrible arrows and struck with fists. Vighasa will open his mouth wide and devour you. You will then reside in Hara's sacred cave, in the forest known as Badari. When you have been cleansed of your sins, you will move on.' Following their words, since that day, he is afflicted by grief and roams around in battlefields. When he devours daityas, he has been again filled with great delight. Even more terrible than him is said to be Shukra, the great enemy of the sun and the moon. When daityas are killed by devas, he utters verses from hymns and uses his knowledge of mritasanjivani to bring them back to life, happy and full of vigour, cured of hundreds of wounds. It is better to give up our lives. At the time of battle, you have only remained as a witness and have not done the least bit to accomplish the task." Hearing this from his virtuous son, the lord of pramathas was enraged. However, he then thought for a very long time and first, chanted hymns from the Sama Veda. Inside himself, he laughed and assumed a form that resembled the sun, using this to destroy the darkness."""

""O sage! When there was light in the world again, Viraka, with the malformed face, fought a great battle with the daityas again. Earlier, he had devoured powdered stones given to him by the best of sages and had even conquered cities in battles. However, though he was extremely terrible, the daitya instantly swallowed him. Nandi sought to aid him, wielding sharp arrows, a spear and a sword. But he too was swallowed. The daitya also swallowed foremost warriors and hundreds of excellent sages, who were great abodes of learning and who possessed tranquility, self-control and great fortitude. Beholding this, Bhagavan Kapardin mounted his bull and advanced against daitya Vighasa, wishing to fight against him. He performed japa with a divine mantra that disgorges anything that has been swallowed and stood there, with his bow strung and with arrows that were like the vajra. All those who had been swallowed were disgorged from Vighasa's mouth-Viraka, the sages, all the unmatched forces, Vishnu, the one from the lotus, Bala's enemy, [529] the sun and the moon and the soldiers. Delighted, they fought again in that great encounter. They were victorious. However, using the strength of his knowledge, Shukra revived the daityas who had been killed in the battle.

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[526] Shiva. Shiva burnt down Smara or Kama, the god of love.

[527] Druhina is one of Brahma's names, Maghavan one of Indra's.

[528] Hiranyakashipu's son, Prahlada.

[529] That is, Indra.

Thereafter, the guru of the danavas was bound by the ganas and brought before Bhutapati.[530] Tripura's enemy swallowed him. When the one known as Shukra was destroyed in this way, the gods defeated all the enemies of the gods. They crushed, shattered and destroyed their residence. The place was full of many bhutas, who devoured the corpses of the daityas. Headless torsos danced around, holding sharp arrows and spears in their hands. The place was full of intoxicated vetalas, birds with extremely sturdy talons and beaks and wolves, with their gaping mouths stuffed with corpses. Hiranyakashipu's descendant fought for a very long time, but was defeated by Hari, Hara and the great Indra. The exhausted remains of the army entered Patala, mountains, the water and wherever there was refuge. The supreme Andhaka was a bull among daityas. The one who had crushed the universe created great carnage among the devas. But Hari crushed his pride with a blow from his terrible mace. But since he had received a boon, even though his body as a result of the blow inflicted by the lord of gods, he did not give up the fight. He used torrents of shastras, astras, trees, mountains and flows of water to quickly defeat the gods. Roaring loudly, he challenged the lord of pramathas to a duel."""""

“They remained in that battle and used many kinds of weapons. When these were exhausted, he attacked Girija and Rudra with trees, snakes, thunder, dark and malformed weapons devised by maya and hundreds of deceitful weapons fashioned by Shambara.[531] To defeat the lord of the mountains, he created another illusory entity who was great in spirits and as powerful and brave as the enemy of Tripura. Because of the many shastras and astras, the daitya's body was mangled.

However, though he was incapacitated, because of the hundreds of boons, he could not be killed by devas. From the blood that flowed, many other terrible Andhakas were created, just like him in appearance. They were terrible and with malformed faces. They covered the earth. Bhutapati, Tripura's enemy, struck him with a trident that was like the scorching fire at the end of a kalpa and pierced him terribly. But when Pashupati killed some soldiers, other soldiers sprouted from the wounds and the flesh and from the blood that flowed. At this, Vishnu called Pashupati back. The intelligent one used his yoga to create a fierce feminine form with a malformed face. She was cruel, harsh and angry, possessing many arms. As soon as she emerged, she stood in front of Bhagavan Shambhu's ganas. This Devi stood in the field of battle and her two feet straddled the entire earth. She was praised by all the devas. Bhagavan made up his mind to urge her and she was afflicted by hunger. Therefore, she devoured the soldiers and drank the warm blood that flowed out from the daityas. As she stood in the field of battle, it became full of mire. Only that single daitya was left. Though his blood was now dry, he remembered the eternal kshatriya dharma followed by those born in his lineage. Therefore, he used blows from his palms, which were as terrible as the vajra, and his knees, legs, nails, as firm as the vajra, and his mouth, arms and head to fight against Girisha. However, the lord of pramathas pacified him in the battle and pierced his heart with his trident. Like a pillar, he was extended up into the sky. The lower half of the body was dried up by the rays of the sun. The upper half of the body decayed because of rain from the clouds, accompanied by the wind. Every part of his body was devastated, like flakes of snow by the fierce rays of the sun.

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[530] Lord of bhutas, Shiva.

[531] The asura.

However, despite this, the bull among daityas did not give up his life. Shambhu was pleased at this. Happily, the ocean of supreme compassion bestowed on him the position of ganapati. Now that the battle was over, the lords of the worlds rejoiced and worshipped the lord of pramathas in many kinds of appropriate ways. Hari, Brahma and the others lowered down their shoulders and greatly praised him. Delighted and happy, they uttered words of "Victory". Rejoicing, Hara spent some time with them inside the cave in the mountain. Following the proper way, he honoured his many powerful portions and their followers and released them. Having got the supreme daughter of the mountain back and also got back an unblemished son who had been released from the mouth of a terrible death, he instructed that there should be festivities."""

Chapter 217-3.5(47) (Swallowing of Shukra)

"Vyasa said, "That great battle was terrible and made the body hair stand up. Shukra, the learned lord of the daityas, was swallowed by Tripura's enemy. I have heard about this briefly. Please tell me about it again, in detail. Inside the stomach of the wielder of Pinaka, what did the great yogi do? How was Bhargava Shukra not burnt down by Shambhu's digestive fire, which blazes in energy like the fire at the end of a kalpa? How did the intelligent one emerge from the cage inside Shambhu's stomach? How did Bhargava worship him and for what period of time? How did he obtain the supreme knowledge that pacifies death? O father! What is the knowledge that can counter death? After being released from the trident, how did Andhaka become a ganapati? O sage! Shambhu, lord of devas, sports in his pastimes. O greatly intelligent one! Please show me your compassion and tell me everything about this. O father! When I listen to Shiva's pastimes, they are like amrita. Please describe them to me."""

'Brahma said, "Hearing the words of the infinitely energetic Vyasa, Sanatkumara remembered Shiva's lotus feet and replied.""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O Vyasa! O immensely intelligent one! Hear about Shiva's supreme pastimes, which are like amrita. You are foremost among Shiva's devotees and are blessed. You bring me pleasure. The battle was going on between Shiva and Andhaka. The respective commanders fashioned an impenetrable vyuha and a vyuha that was a mountain.[532] O sage! Initially, the powerful daityas were victorious. Thereafter, because of Shiva's powers, the pramathas triumphed. On hearing this, the great daitya, the asura Andhaka, was dejected. "How can I obtain victory?" He was supremely immersed in these thoughts. Extremely intelligent, Andhaka withdrew from the field of battle. Alone, the valiant one quickly went to Shukra's presence. Descending from his chariot, he prostrated himself before his own guru, Kavya, [533] Accomplished in good policy, he joined his hands in salutation and submitted his reflections. Andhaka said, "O illustrious one! As a guru, we seek refuge with you and are never defeated. We are always victorious. Because of your powers, we show scant regard to all devas and their followers, thinking that even lords like Hara and Upendra are insignificant.

[532] Thought not explicitly stated, Shiva's vyuha was in the form of a mountain.

[533] Kavya is one of Shukracharya's names.

Because of your powers, the gods have always been scared of us, like elephants before a lion, or serpents before Tarkshya. Daityas and danavas devised an impenetrable vyuha and through your favours, drove away all the pramathas. O Bhargava! Having sought refuge with you, we have never been dislodged and always roam around without fear, like goats on earth. O brahmana! Please save us. Please protect us. We have come and sought refuge with you. The asuras are suffering on account of a brave enemy and are also being killed. We have been attacked by brave and terrible pramathas. These pramathas can also attack death. Behold. Hunda and other supreme leaders have been brought down or have been killed. Earlier, you drank kanadhuma[534] for one thousand autumns. Consequently, you obtained excellent learning, and the time has arrived to apply it. O Bhargava! Let all the pramathas witness the fruits of your knowledge. Please show your compassion and revive all the asuras." Hearing Andhaka's words, the patient Bhargava reflected. His mind suffered. "What will I do now? What will be beneficial for me? The downfall of a being is decided by destiny, and it is not proper for me to interfere in this. The knowledge has been obtained from Shankara and I am going to apply it to leaders who have been crushed in the battle by brave pramathas, who are Shankara's followers. But it is always supreme dharma to protect those who seek refuge." "Thinking about this in his mind, Shukra agreed to his words. Smiling a little, Bhargava thought of Shiva's lotus feet and steadied himself. He spoke to the lord of danavas. Shukra said, "O son! What you have told me is completely true. I have obtained this knowledge for the sake of danavas. It is extremely difficult to drink kanadhuma for one thousand years. I obtained this learning from Ishvara, and it must always bring happiness to my relatives. In the battle, daityas have been crushed by pramathas. I must use this knowledge to make them rise up again, like water reviving faded crops. They will lose their wounds and their pain and will rise up healthy, as if after sleeping. Within a muhurta, you will see that your own daityas have got up." Telling Andhaka this, Shukra lovingly thought of the lord of learning and applied the knowledge. As soon as he used the knowledge, all the daityas and danavas woke up simultaneously, as if they had gone to sleep with weapons in their hands. There are those who offer water to the thirsty during a battle and those who donate faithfully to brahmanas at the time of a calamity. They were revived, like the good merits of such people."""

"""Seeing that Hunda and the other great asuras had been revived, all the asuras roared, like clouds filled with rain. Emitting terrible roars, they were again ready to fight against the pramathas in the battle, fearless and immensely brave and strong. Nandi and the others were indomitable in the battle. However, on seeing that Shukra had revived the daityas and danavas, the pramathas were amazed. Those intelligent ones thought about this and told each other, "We must inform Shankara, lord of devas, everything about this deed." While the sacrifice of the battle was going on, the leader of pramathas, Shilada's son,[535] was amazed at witnessing Bhargava's deed. Intolerant, he approached Mahesha. Uttering "Victory", the golden-complexioned Nandi spoke to the fierce one who was the source of victory. "O divinity! What the leaders of ganas have achieved in the battle is impossible for even devas like Indra to accomplish. But that has been rendered futile by Bhargava. O lord! He has used the learning of bringing the dead back to life to easily revive everyone who has died on the side of the enemy.

[534] Kana is small quantities of grain. One subsists on the smoke (dhuma) from burning this.

[535] The sage Shilada prayed to Shiva and obtained Nandi as a son.

Tuhunda, Hunda, Kumbha, Jambha, Vipaka and other Indras among the great asuras have returned from Yama's abode and are roaming around, driving the pramathas away. O Mahesha! If the supreme daityas are revived as soon as they have been killed, how can we possibly be victorious? How can the leaders of ganas find peace?" Thus addressed by Nandi, the leader of pramathas, the divinity, the lord of pramathas, laughed and spoke to the foremost leader of all the ganas. Shiva said, "O Nandi! Leave quickly. Go amidst the sons of Diti and seize that noble Indra among brahmanas, like a hawk grasping a quail born in the water. Swiftly bring him here." Thus addressed by Vrishadhvaja, Nandi bellowed like a bull and roared like a lion. He quickly smote through the soldiers and reached the spot where the lamp of the Bhargava lineage was. With nooses, swords, trees, boulders and mountains in their hands, all the daityas were engaged in protecting him. But like a sharabha seizing an elephant, Nandi agitated the powerful daityas and seized Kavya. As he was seized by that powerful one, his garments were loosened, his ornaments fell off and his hair was dishevelled. Like lions, the enemies of the gods followed him and released weapons at him-deceit, thunder, spears, battle axes, staffs and chakras. The Indras among danavas showered these fierce weapons down on Nandishvara, like rain from clouds, and they made the flesh tremble. However, using fire that issued out of his mouth, the foremost leader of the ganas burnt down these hundreds of weapons. Though the battle between asuras and devas was heightened, distressing the enemy, he seized Bhargava and returned to Bhava's side. "O him to Bhava. The lord of devas grasped Shukra, as if he was an Bhagavan! Here is Shukra." Saying this, he quickly presented the protector of bhutas flung Kavya into his mouth, like a fruit. offering rendered by someone pure. Without saying anything, All the asuras repeatedly uttered sounds of, "Alas! Alas! We are doomed."""""

Chapter 218-3.5(48) (Swallowing of Shukra Continued)

“Vyasa asked, 'When Rudra swallowed Shukra, what did the exceedingly brave danavas, with Andhaka as their leader, do? O great sage! Please tell me.""

"Sanatkumara said, 'When Girija's lord swallowed Kavya, the daityas gave up all hopes of victory. They were like Indras among elephants devoid of trunks, or bulls devoid of horns. There were like a group of devas without a head, or brahmanas devoid of studying. There were like living beings devoid of enterprise, or an enterprise that is not favoured by fortune. There were like women without husbands, or floods of arrows that did not possess feathered tufts. They were like life spans devoid of good deeds or learning devoid of vows. They were like many rites not supported by the capacity of wealth, rendering their fruits futile. They were like kshatriyas without bravery, or a large number of those who follow dharma, but do not possess truth. When Shukra was seized by Nandi and swallowed by the one who devoured poison,[536] the daityas were filled with depression and all their festivities connected with the battle stopped. On seeing that the daityas, Tuhunda, Hunda and the others, had lost their enthusiasm, the immensely persevering and brave Andhaka spoke to them. Andhaka said, "By using his force to take Kavya away, Nandi has deceived us. All of us are like bodies without life. With Bhargava taken away, all of us have simultaneously lost our perseverance, valour, direction, deeds, sprit, energy and bravery.

[536] Shiva drank the poison at the time of the churning of the ocean.

Shame on us. He was worshipped by the lineage. He was the best of the lineage. He was the guru for all of us. He was capable and our saviour. But at a time of calamity, we could not save him. Therefore, without any delay, remembering our guru's lotus feet, we must fight with the brave enemies and the brave pramathas. I will remember the two lotus feet of our guru Kavya, which brought us happiness. Along with Nandi, I will destroy all the pramathas. Today, I will render devas, along with Vasava, incapable and kill them. Like a yogi releasing the jivatman from karma, I will free Bhargava. He is himself a yogi. If the lord uses yoga to free himself and emerge from the body, he will protect those of us who are left." Hearing Andhaka's words, which rumbled like clouds, they made up their minds to fight against the pramathas and said, "If we are truly meant to live, the strength of the pramathas is incapable of harming us. If we are truly not meant to live, after abandoning our master in this battle, where will we go? If people abandon their master and leave, even if they acquire respect and riches, they go to the abode known as andha-tamisra.[537] All their extensive fame is sullied by the ill fame of darkness. Those who run away do not obtain happiness, in this world or in the next one. If one submerges and bathes in the field of battle, which takes away the impurity of rebirth, what is the need for donations, austerities, tirthas and cleansing oneself in the water of tirthas?" After saying this, the daityas and sons of Danu acted in accordance with these words. They sounded war drums and crushed the pramathas.""

“The used arrows, swords, vajras, hard boulders, bhushundis, catapults, spears, javelins, battle axes, khatvangas, spikes, tridents, sticks and bludgeons to kill each other and created great carnage. Arrows were shot from bows and descended like birds. Catapults and bhushundis caused agitation. There was a great roar. War drums and trumpets were sounded. Elephants trumpeted a lot. The horses neighed and there was a great and tumultuous sound. That sound rose up and filled the space between heaven and earth. Irrespective of whether one was brave or a coward, the body hair stood up. A great sound created by horses and elephants erupted. Flags and standards were brought down, and weapons were exhausted. There were many who vomited blood and horses, elephants and chariots were scattered around. On both sides, thirsty soldiers lost consciousness. O sage! The brave pramathas, Nandi and the others, used their strength to defeat all the asuras and claim victory. On seeing that his soldiers were routed by the pramathas, astride his chariot, Andhaka himself rushed forward against the ganas. Like mountains brought down by the vajra, the pramathas were destroyed by his weapons and floods of arrows. They were like clouds without rain in them. Andhaka glanced at those who were far and those who were near, those who were arriving and those who were leaving. He pierced them with as many arrows as there were pores on their bodies. On seeing that the soldiers were routed by the powerful Andhaka, Skanda, Vinayaka, Nandi, Somanandi, other strong pramathas, Viraka, Shankara's own ganas and other immensely strong ones fought a wonderful battle. Vinayaka, Skanda, Nandi, Somanandi, Viraka, Naigama, the powerful Vishakha and other fierce ganas countered Andhaka. They brought down torrents of tridents, spears and arrows in a continuous flow. There was a great tumult amidst the pramatha and asura soldiers."""

[537] The name of a specific hell that is full of blinding darkness.

"Inside Shambhu's stomach, Shukra heard that great sound. He roamed around, searching for an opening to exit, like the wind that has no fixed abode. Inside his body, he saw the seven superior worlds and the seven nether regions, Patala and the others. He witnessed the worlds of Brahma, Narayana, Indra, Adityas and apsaras and also saw the wonderful battle between pramathas and asuras going on. He roamed around inside Bhava's body for one hundred years. But he could not see any opening, just as a crooked person does not find a weakness in a pure person. Bhargava then used Shambhu's yoga to assume the form of semen.[538] Inside the cage that was Shambhu's stomach, he managed to do this by performing japa with that supreme mantra. Prostrating himself before Shiva, he then emerged, using the penis as a path. Gouri, the one who removes obstacles, accepted him as a son. Bhargava Kavya thus emerged, using the path followed by semen. On seeing this, Mahesha, the ocean of compassion, laughed and spoke. Maheshvara said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! In the form of semen, you have emerged through my penis. Because of this deed, you will be known as Shukra, and you will be accepted as my son." Thus addressed by the divinity, Shukra, whose radiance resembled that of the sun's, prostrated himself before Shiva once again. In the proper way, he joined his hands in salutation and praised him. Shukra said, "O one with an infinite number of feet! O one with an infinite number of forms! O one with an infinite number of heads! You are auspicious and you are the destroyer. O one with an infinite number of arms! How can someone like me praise you? With head lowered, one should prostrate oneself before you. You are the one with eight forms. You are the one with an infinite number of forms. You are the one who bestows everything desired on gods and asuras. You can cause harm and you are the one who cannot be seen. You are the one who crushes, How can someone like me praise you?" After praising Shiva again, Shukra bowed down again and took Shiva's permission. Like the moon entering a garland of clouds, he entered the danava army. I have told you how, in the course of the battle, Shankara swallowed Kavya. Now listen to the mantra Kavya used to perform japa inside Shambhu's stomach.""

Chapter 219-3.5(49) (Andhaka Becomes a Gana)

"Sanatkumara said,[539] 'OUM! I prostrate myself before the lord of devas. Gods and asuras prostrate themselves before you. You are the great lord of the past and the future. Your eyes are green and tawny. You are strength. Intelligence is your form. You cover yourself with a garment made of tiger hide. You are the one who is generated through arani. [540] Your potency exists in the three worlds. O Ishvara! O Hara! O one with the tawny eyes! You bring about the end of a yuga. You are the fire. You are the lord of ganas! O protector of the worlds! O mighty-armed one! O one with the large hands! O wielder of a trident! O one with large fangs! O Kala! O Maheshvara! O one without decay! O one whose form is time! O one with the blue throat! O one with the large stomach! O controller of ganas! O one present in all atmans! You are the one who creates everything. O one who goes everywhere! O destroyer of death! O one who observes vows on Mount Pariyatra! O brahmachari O one known through Vedanta!

[538] The word shukra also means semen.

[539] This entire paragraph constitutes the mantra.

[540] Arani stands for the two churning sticks used to kindle a fire, by rubbing them against each other.

O one who is the ultimate in austerities! O Pashupati! O one without a body! O one with the Pinaka in your hand! O one with the bull on your banner! O Hari! O one with the matted hair! O one with a tuft of hair! O one who holds a staff! O one who is immense in fame! O lord of bhutas! O one who dwells in a cave! O one who follows the tala of a veena and a panava![541] O immortal one! O one who is worthy of being seen! O one with a complexion like that of the rising sun! O one who resides in cremation grounds! O Bhagavan! O Uma's lord! O scorcher of enemies! O one who brought down Bhaga's eyes! O destroyer of Pushan's teeth! You sever cruel ones! You hold the noose in your hand. At the time of dissolution, you are time. You are foremost among flames. You have Agni on your banner. You are the sage. You are the blazing one. O lord of the universe! You are the one who uplifts. You are the father. You are the fourth. [542] In the worlds, you are supreme. O Vamadeva! O one who is eloquent in speech! O mendicant who follows the left path! [543] O one who has the form of a mendicant! O one with the matted hair! O one who is himself mysterious! O one who countered and paralyzed Shakra's hand! O one who stupefied the Vasus! You are the sacrifice. You are the one who performs the sacrifice. You are time. You are the intelligent one. You are the one who creates honey. You are the one who moves. You are in the trees. All the ashramas worship you as Vajasana. [544] You are the creator of the universe. You are the preserver of the universe. You are Purusha. You are eternal. You are fixed. You are the one who controls dharma. O one with the three paths[545] O three-eyed one! O one with many forms! O one with the resplendence of ten thousand suns! O divinity! O one who sounds all the trumpets! O one who frees from every kind of impediment! O one who binds! You are the one who upholds everything. You are supreme dharma. You are Pushpadanta. You are the share. You are the mouth. You are the one who destroys everything. O one with the golden ears! You are the gatekeeper. You are the terrible one. O one who is terrible in valour! OUM! I prostrate myself before you. I bow down before you."""

"Sanatkumara continued, 'Inside the cage that was the stomach, Shukra performed japa with this excellent mantra. Like powerful semen, he emerged through the path of Shambhu's penis. Gouri accepted him as a son. The lord of the universe, Shankara made him immortal and free from old age, like his own prosperous second self. After three thousand years had passed on earth, Shukra, the sage who was the store of the Vedas, was born again through Maheshvara. He saw Andhaka, the lord of danavas, dried up on the trident. He was performing austerities and meditating on Parameshvara. He meditated on one hundred and eight forms of the paramatman (1) Mahadeva;[546] (2) Virupaksha:[547] (3) Chandrarddha-kritashekhara; [548] (4) Amrita; [549] (5)Shashvata; [550]

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[541] Panava is a kind of musical instrument.

[542] Beyond the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra.

[543] An expression typically used for those who practice tantra.

[544] Vajasana is one of Shiva's names

[545] Probably meaning those followed by Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra.

[546] The great divinity. Naturally, the text doesn't have any numbering. We have added that for convenience. As stated, the names amount to 100, not 108. But that's because a few names are repeated, and we have avoided the double counting.

[547] One with malformed eyes.

[548] With the half-moon on the crest.

[549] Immortality.

[550] Eternal.

(6) Sthanu;[551] (7) Nilakantha,[552] (8) Pinaki;[553] (9) Vrishabhaksha; [554] (10) Mahajneya; [555] (11) Purusha; (12) Sarva-kamada;[556] (13) Kamari; [557] (14) Kamadahana;[558] (15) Kamarupa; [539] (16) Kapardin; [560] (17) Virupa; [561] (18) Girisha;[562] (19) Bhima;[563] (20) Sragvin;[564] (21) Raktavasa;[565] (22) Yogi; (23) Kaladahana;[566] (24) Gudavrata: [567] (25) Gudamantra;[568] (26) Gambhira;[569] (27) Bhavagochara;[570] (28) Animadi-gunadhara;[571] (29) Trilokyaishvarya-dayaka; [572] (30) Vira; [573] (31) Virahana; [574] (32) Ghora; [575] (33) Virupa; [576] (34) Mamsala; [577] (35) Patu;[578] (36) Mahamamsada: [579] (37) Unmatta: [580] (38) Bhairava; [581] (39) Maheshvara; [582] (40) Trailokyadravana[583] (41) Lubdha; [584] (42) Lubdhaka; [585] (43) Yajnasudana; [586] (44) Krittikanam-sutairyukta;[587]

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[551] Fixed, immobile.

[552] With a blue throat.

[553] Wielder of Pinaka.

[554] With eyes like those of a bull.

[555] The great one who cannot be known.

[556] One who grants all desires.

[557] Kama's enemy.

[558] One who burnt down Kama.

[559] One who can assume any form at will.

[560] With matted hair.

[561] With a terrible form.

[562] Lord of mountains.

[563] Terrible one.

[564] One who wears a garland.

[565] With red garments.

[566] One who burnt down Kala.

[567] One whose vows are mysterious.

[568] One whose mantra is secret.

[569] The deep one.

[570] One who can be reached through sentiments.

[571] Reservoir of anima and other qualities.

[572] One who bestows prosperity on the three worlds.

[573] Brave one.

[574] Slayer of brave ones.

[575] Terrible one.

[576] With a distorted form.

[577] Fleshy one.

[578] Skilled one.

[579] Devourer of great flesh.

[580] Mad one.

[581] Terrible one.

[582] The great lord.

[583] One who drives away the three worlds.

[584] Greedy one.

[585] Hunter.

[586] Destroyer of the sacrifice.

[587] Associated with the son of the Krittikas.

(45) Krittivasa;[588] (46) Gajakritti paridhana:[589] (47) Kshubda; [590] (48) Bhujaga-bhushana;[591] (49) Dadyalamba: [592] (50) Vetala: [593] (51) Ghora-shakini-pujita;[594] (52) Aghora; [595] (53) Ghoradaityaghna;[596] (54) Ghoraghosha;[597] (55) Vanaspati;[598] (56) Bhasmanga; [599] (57) Jatila; [600] (58) Shuddha,[601](59) Bherunda-shata-sevita,[602] (60) Bhuteshvara[603] (61) Bhutanatha: [604] (62) Pancha-bhutashrita: [605] (63) Khaga; [606] (64) Krodhita: [607] (65) Nishthura; [608] (66) Chanda; [609] (67)Chandisha; [610] (68) Chandikapriya; [611] (69) Tunga; [612] (70) Garutman; [613] (71) Nityamasava-bhojana;[614] (72) Lelihana; [615] (73) Maharudra; [616] (74) Mrityu; [617] (75) Mrityoragochara;[618] (76) Mrityormrityu;[619] (77) Mahasena; [620] (78) Smashanaranya-vasi;[621] (79) Raga; [622] (80) Viraga; [623] (81) Ragandha; [624]

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[588] One who wears a hide.

[589] One who wears the hide of an elephant.

[590] One who is agitated.

[591] One whose ornaments are serpents.

[592] One who gives support.

[593] One who is a spirit.

[594] One who is worshipped by terrible shakinis, shakini is a kind of demoness.

[595] One who is not terrible.

[596] One who kills terrible daityas.

[597] One whose roar is terrible.

[598] Lord of the forest.

[599] One with ashes on the limbs.

[600] The complicated one. Or one with matted hair.

[601] Pure one.

[602] Served by hundreds of bherundas, a bherunda is an awful bird.

[603] Lord of bhutas.

[604] Master of bhutas.

[605] Refuge of the five elements.

[606] One who travels through the sky.

[607] Angry one.

[608] Cruel one.

[609] Fierce one.

[610] Chandi's lord.

[611] Chandika's beloved.

[612] Lofty one.

[613] One with wings.

[614] One who always drinks liquor (asava).

[615] Lelihana is one of Shiva's names, like a serpent.

[616] The immensely terrible one.

[617] Death.

[618] One who cannot be approached by death.

[419] One who is death to Death.

[620] The great army.

[621] One who resides in cremation grounds and forests.

[622] Attachment.

[623] Non-attachment.

[624] One who becomes blind with attachment

(82)Vitaraga-shatachita: [625] (83) Sattva-rajas-tamas; (84) Dharma;(85) Adharma; (86) Vasavanuja; [626] (87) Satya; [627] (88) Asatya; [628] (89) Sadrupa; [629] (90) Asadrupa; [630] (91) Ahetuka; [631] (92)Arddhanarishvara: [632] (93) Bhanu;[633] (94) Bhanu-kotishata. prabha; [634] (95) Yajna: [635] (96) Yajnapati; [636] (97) Rudra; [637] (98)Ishana;[638] (99) Varada [639] and (100) Shiva.[640] When the danava meditated on Shiva, he was freed from the great fear. Kapardin sprinkled him with a shower of divine amrita. He was satisfied and freed from the top of the trident, where he had been impaled."""

"""Mahesha spoke to the great daitya, Andhaka. The great-souled one assured the asura about everything that he had done earlier. Ishvara said, "O Indra among daityas! I am pleased with your self-control, niyama, valour and perseverance. O one who is excellent in vows! Ask for a boon. Since you have constantly worshipped me, all your sins have been cleansed. O Indra among the daityas! O supremely great one! I am the one who bestows boons, and you deserve to be given a boon. As a result of your good deeds, you will remain alive for three thousand years. After that, you will be emancipated." Hearing this, Andhaka trembled. He joined his hands in salutation and sank down on the ground on his two knees. He then spoke to Bhagavan, Uma's husband. Andhaka said, "O Bhagavan! You are greater than the greatest. Though I am inferior, you have addressed me as one who is not inferior. In the field of battle, I spoke to you earlier, in delighted and faltering words. I foolishly committed a deed that is condemned in the worlds. O lord! I did all that because I did not know about you. Please do not bear that in mind. As a result of the taint of desire. I have committed a wicked deed towards Parvati. O Mahadeva! Please pardon that. I am miserable and am suffering greatly. One should show compassion towards those who are unhappy, in particular, towards those who are miserable. I am miserable but am always full of devotion towards you. I am miserable but am full of devotion. I have also come and sought refuge with you. It is ordained that you will save me. My hands are cupped in salutation. This Devi is the mother of the universe. Let her be satisfied with me. Let her cast aside all her rage and look at me with a pleasant glance. Who will she be angry with? O Chandrashekhara! I am only a miserable daitya. O one with the moon on your crest! O Shambhu! O Maheshvara!

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[625] Worshipped by hundreds who are devoid of attachment.

[626] Vasava's younger brother.

[627] Truth.

[528] Falsehood.

[629] One whose form is existence.

[630] One whose form is non-existence.

[631] One without a cause.

[632] Lord who is half male and half female.

[633] The sun.

[634] With the resplendence of hundreds of crores of suns.

[635] Sacrifice.

[636] Lord of sacrifices.

[637] Terrible one.

[638] The lord.

[639] One who bestows boons.

[640] The auspicious one.

I won't be able to bear it. You are extensive in your generosity, and I am wretched, overwhelmed by the taints of desire and anger and suffering from old age and death. This son of yours, Viraka, is extremely strong and terrible in battle. Let him see that I am miserable. Let him not be filled with rage towards me. Let me always look at Parvati as a mother, treating her with the honour due to a senior. You are as fair as a necklace of ice, or the cool beams of the moon, with a complexion like that of a conch shell or the kunda flower. Let me always be devoted towards the two of you. Let me not have any enmity towards devas. Let me reside along with the ganas, with a tranquil atman, thinking about yoga. When I am born again, let me not remember the adverse sentiments, due to my having been born as a danava. O Mahesha! Through your favours, please grant me this excellent boon." Having spoken these words, the Indra among daityas was silent. He meditated on the three-eyed one and looked at Parvati as one does towards a mother. Pleased, Rudra looked at him with a pleasant glance. It was extraordinary. He immediately remembered the account of his former birth. [641] When he remembered that account, all his wishes were fulfilled. Successful in his objective, he prostrated himself before his mother and his father. Parvati and the intelligent Shankara inhaled the fragrance of his head. The one with the crescent moon on the forehead was satisfied and he obtained everything that he wished for. I have thus told you everything about Andhaka's former account and about he became a ganapati through Mahadeva's favours, thus obtaining supreme happiness. I have told you about the mrityunjaya mantra, which destroys death. One should make efforts to read this. As fruits, it bestows everything that is desired."""

Chapter 220-3.5(50) (Shukra Obtains Knowledge about Mritasanjivani)

"Sanatkumara said, 'O Vyasa! Hear about how the sage Skavya obtained the supreme knowledge that pacifie death from Shiva, who is known as the one who conquered death. In earlier times, Bhrigu's descendant went to the city of Varanasi. He spent a long time there, tormenting himself through austerities and meditating on Lord Vishveshvara. He established a lingam of Shambhu, the paramatman, there. O Vedavyasa! In front of this, he constructed a beautiful well. He bathed the lord of devas one hundred thousand times, using many fragrant unguents and one drona of panchamrita on each occasion. [642] He offered sandalwood paste and yakshakardama[643] to the lord of devas one thousand times. With a great deal of love, he smeared the lingam with excellent fragrances. With a great deal of love, he attentively worshipped Shankara with raja-champaka, dhattura, karavira, kusheshaya, malati, karnikara, kadamba, bakula, utpala, mallika, shatapatri, sindhuvara, kimshuka, bandhuka flowers, punnaga, nagakeshara, keshara, navamalli, chibilika, kunda, muchukunda, mandara, bilva leaves, drona, muruvaka, vrika, granthiparna, damanaka, beautiful shoots of chuta, tulasi, devagandhari leaves, brihatpatri leaves, tender kusha,

[641] That he was the son of Shiva and Parvati, before being given to Hiranyaksha.

[642] Panchamrita has five kinds of amrita-milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar. Drona is a measure of capacity.

[643] A perfumed paste, consisting of equal portions of camphor, agallochum, musk and kakkola (a berry).

nandyavarta, agastya, shala, devadaru, kanchanara, kurubaka, durva grass and kuruntaka.[644] He used flowers and shoots and many beautiful and auspicious leaves and lotuses. With singing and dancing, he presented offerings, praising him with many kinds of hymns. He praised Shankara with hymns and chanted one thousand of his names. In this kind of way, Shukra worshipped Mahesha Maheshvara for five thousand years. However, he did not see the divinity, ready to bestow the boon that was in his mind. Therefore, he started to follow even more terrible niyamas, extremely difficult to undertake. He cleansed the great dirt, known as fickleness, from his mind, using excellent sentiments and rites, doing that for his senses too. When he had purified his mind, he offered that jewel to the wielder of Pinaka. For one thousand autumns, Kavya observed the vow of kanadhuma. In this way, firm in his mind, Kavya undertook these terrible austerities. Beholding this, Maheshvara was pleased with Bhargava and emerged from the lingam, with a radiance that was like that of one thousand suns."""

""Virupaksha, Dakshayani's husband, showed himself directly and spoke. Maheshvara said, "O store of austerities! O immensely fortunate one! O Bhrigu's son! O great sage! I am pleased with your austerities, especially because they have been continuous. O Bhargava! As a boon, ask for everything that is in your mind. I am pleased with you and will give with whatever you wish for. There is nothing that cannot be given to you." He heard Shambhu's supreme words, and they brought him great joy. Kavya was content and immersed in an ocean of happiness. As a result of the rising tide of joy, the body hair in his body stood up. With eyes like blossoming lotuses, the brahmana prostrated himself before Shambhu. Uttering words of "Victory", he raised his hands in salutation above his head. Bhargava said, "O lord of the universe! I prostrate myself before you. For the benefit of the worlds, you shine in the sky as the jewel that brings day. [645] Your radiance drives away all darkness. Like that, you ensure benefit to all the roamers in the night. O eye of all the worlds! You shine delusion. You drive away all the darkness. You are the one with in the sky with your excessive radiance and drive away great the cool beams, [646] filling everything with nectar. I prostrate myself before you. You purify along the path. Those with a virtuous destination worship you. Without you, there is no living being in the world who can sustain life. You are the one who paralyses storms. You ensure the nourishment of all beings. You satisfy the lineage of serpents. You go everywhere. I prostrate myself before you. You are the only one who purifies the universe.

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[644] Champaka is a tree with yellow and fragrant flowers, rajachampaka is a larger variety of this; dhattura is the white thorn apple; karavira is oleander (nerium odorum); kusheshaya is water lily; malati is a kind of jasmine with white flowers; karnikara is Pterospermum acerifolium, often known as bayur; kadamba is a flower that blossoms at the time of the rains; bakula is a flowering tree; utpala is blue lotus (or water lily); mallika is a kind of jasmine; shatapatri is a lotus with a hundred petals; sindhuvara (sindhuvaraka) is the shrub Vitex negundo; kimshuka is a tree with orange-red flowers, flame of the forest, Butea frondosa; bandhuka is a shrub (Pentapetes phoenicia) with red flowers, also known as bandhujiva; punnaga is white lotus; keshara (also known as nagakeshara) is a flowering tree; navamalli (navamallika) is jasmine; chibilika is probably the red hibiscus; kunda is a kind of jasmine; muchukunda is a kind of karnikara; mandara is the coral tree; bilva is a tree sacred to Shiva; drona is a tree with white flowers; murubaka is almost certainly a typo for kurubaka, a kind of amaranth; vrika is the bakavriksha tree; granthiparna is a fragrant tree; damanaka is Artemisia indica; chuta is mango; devagandhari is a medicinal herb; brihatpatri is the Indian fig tree; kusha and durva are sacred grass; nandyavarta is a medicinal herb; agastya is Sesbania grandiflora; shala is a tall tree (Shorea robusta); devadaru is a kind of pine; kanchanara (kovidara) is the Indian coral tree; and kuruntaka is the red amaranth.

645 The sun.

[646] The moon.

You purify all those who worship you. You are divine in your deeds. Other than you, who is capable of making the dead immortal? You consume beings and the universe. You are inside the universe. You are the fire at every step. You are the one who bestows peace. I prostrate myself before you. O Paramesha! You exist in the form of water and purify the world. You are wonderful and extraordinary, excellent in conduct. O lord of the universe! You purify the entire universe by immersing in the water. Therefore, I bow down before you. O Ishvara! In the form of space, you exist inside and outside. The universe expands and contracts because of the space. It breathes naturally because you are kind towards it, and it is into you that it retreats. Therefore, I bow down before you. You are in the earth and your radiance supports the universe. O lord of the universe! Other than you, darkness has no other enemy. Please destroy the darkness. You wear ornaments of serpents. You are beyond everyone who is worshipped. You are greater than the greatest. Therefore, I prostrate myself before you. O Hara! All mobile and immobile entities are your atman. They are progressively your forms. You have a residence inside all atmans. O one with the eight forms! All forms are always your forms. O one who is the paramatman! I bow down before you. In your eight forms, you are a friend to those who do not possess friends. In your forms, you create the universe and engage it. You enhance those who prostrate themselves before you. For every objective, one should prostrate oneself before you. You are the supreme objective. Therefore, I bow down before you." Bhargava lauded the one who has eight forms in eight verses, [647] Bhargava repeatedly touched the ground with his head and prostrated himself. In this way, Mahadeva was praised by the infinitely energetic Bhargava. Full of love, he held the brahmana in his hands and raised him up from the ground. Extremely pleased, he spoke in slow words that rumbled like clouds, the moonlight from his teeth illuminating the directions. Mahadeva said, "O noble brahmana! O Kavya! O son! You are my pure devotee. Because of your fierce austerities, your good conduct, your establishment of the lingam, your worship of the lingam, your attentive rendering of offerings, your unwavering purity and your pure deeds in this great kshetra of Avimukta, [648] I look upon you as my two other sons. There is nothing that cannot be given to you. As a result of my boon, you will enter my stomach in this body and emerge through my sense organ. Therefore, you will be born like my son. I will now bestow a boon on you that is difficult for even my attendants to obtain. In general, it has been kept a secret from Hari and Hiranyagarbha. This sparkling knowledge of mine is known as mritasanjivani. I have devised it, using my great strength of austerities. O extremely pure one! I will now give it to you in the form of a mantra. You are pure and a store of austerities. Therefore, you are worthy of receiving this learning. This knowledge is supreme and is greater than all other kinds of learning. If you follow the niyamas and utter it in anyone's direction, he will certainly get back his life. That is the truth. As a stellar body in the sky, your radiance will surpass that of the sun and the fire. In your radiance, you will become supreme among the planets. [649] If a man or a woman begins a journey after looking at you, because of your glance, all their efforts will amount to nothing. O one excellent in vows! When you rise, marriages and all the rites of dharma that men undertake in this world, will yield fruit. Among all tithis that bring delight, your conjunctions will be the most auspicious. Those who are your devotees will have a lot of semen and many offspring.

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[647] If one counts, there are 10 verses in the prayer. So, the eight probably means-as the sun, as the moon, as wind, as fire, as water, as space, as earth and as the atman.

[648] Varanasi is known as Avimukta.

[649] That is, Venus.

The lingam established by you will be known as Shukresha, [650] Men who worship it will obtain success. If the vrata is worshipped every night for one year, if all the water rites are performed in Shukra's well on your day[651] and if Shukresha is worshipped, listen to the fruits obtained. Mortals who are impotent because of lack of semen will have a lot of semen and obtain sons. There is no doubt that they will possess the good fortune of virility. All such people will have learning and enjoy happiness." Having granted him such boons, the divinity merged into the lingam again. Satisfied in his mind, Bhargava returned to his own abode. O Vyasa! I have thus told you how he used the strength of his austerities to obtain the learning known as mrtitasanjivani. What else do you wish to hear?"""

Chapter 221-3.5(51) (Usha's Story)

"Vyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! You have made me hear a wonderful and excellent account about the favours shown by Shambhu. As a result of your favours, I am pleased to have heard it. I now wish to hear about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest and about how he was pleased and bestowed the status of ganapati on Banasura.'"

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O Vyasa! Listen lovingly to the conduct of Shambhu, the paramatman, and about how he was pleased and bestowed the status of ganapati on Banasura. This is an excellent account about the great lord, Shankara. To show a favour to Bana, Shambhu fought against Krishna. Hear from me about Shiva's supreme pastimes. This is extremely sacred Itihasa and brings happiness to the mind and to the ears. Brahma's son was the immensely intelligent sage, Marichi. He was eldest among all the sons born through mental powers. He was also an excellent Prajapati. His son was the great-souled Kashyapa, the excellent sage. He extended creation and was devoted to his father and to Vidhatri. Daksha had thirteen daughters who were excellent in conduct. O Vyasa! They were the sage Kashyapa's wives and were devoted to their husband. The eldest among then was Diti and her sons were known as daityas. The sons of the others were devas and other mobile and immobile entities. The first two sons of Diti, the eldest, were immensely strong. Hiranyakashipu was older and Hiranyaksha was younger. Hiranyakashipu had four sons and they were supreme among daityas. In due order, they were Hrada, Anuhrada, Samhrada and Prahrada. [652] Prahrada conquered his senses and was one of Vishnu's great devotees. None of the daityas were capable of destroying him. [653] His son was Virochana, who was great and supreme, as one who gave donations. In the form of a brahmana, when Shakra asked him for his own head, he immediately gave it to him. [654] His son was the extremely generous Bali, loved by Shiva. He gave the earth to Hari when he assumed the form of a vamana. His son was Bana, who was devoted to Shiva. He was intelligent, revered and generous. He donated thousands and was devoted to the truth. In ancient times, he ruled over his kingdom from the city known as Shonitapura. He used his strength to conquer the three worlds and the lord of the gods no longer had a protector.

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[650] The Shukreshvara temple (lingam) is in Varanasi and the well also exists.

[651] That is, Friday.

[652] Prahrada is also written as Prahlada.

[653] When Hiranyakashipu instructed them to do this.

[654] The story is narrated in Skanda Purana.

As a result of Shankara's favours, the immortals became like servants of Banasura, Shiva's devotee. The immortals and their wives were miserable and abandoned his kingdom. However, since he practiced supreme dharma, the subjects weren't unhappy. On one occasion, the great asura played on musical instruments with his one thousand arms and performed the tandava dance, [655] thus satisfying Maheshvara. Shankara was extremely happy and pleased with this dance. Affectionate towards his devotees, he cast a favourable glance of compassion towards him. Bhagavan is the lord of all the worlds. He is the refuge and grants what devotees desire. He requested the great asura, Bali's son, to ask for a boon. Shankara said, "O son of Bali! O intelligent and great daitya! O Bana! O supreme among devotees! Ask for a boon." Banasura replied, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who is affectionate towards those who seek refuge! O Mahesha! O lord! If you are pleased with me, be my protector always. O lord! With your sons and ganas, grant me this pleasure and always remain as the lord of my city." Bana, Bali's son, was deluded by Shiva's maya. Mahesha is difficult to worship, but he certainly bestows emancipation. [656] Shambhu is affectionate towards his devotees and granted him those boons. Along with his sons and ganas, the lord cheerfully resided there."""

"On one occasion, in Bana's beautiful city, known as Shonitapura, Hara sported with devas and asuras along the banks of a river. Gandharvas and apsaras sang and danced there. The sages prostrated themselves before him and worshipped and praised him. The rishis spoke first and offered oblations. To witness Shankara's amusements, large numbers of siddhas arrived. Mlecchas, those who followed perverse paths and those who indulged in false debates were destroyed. The Matrikas sat facing him. [657] The terrifying ones were destroyed. Those who were full of sentiments of devotion towards Rudra prospered, their worldly taints removed. On seeing him, all the subjects were filled with great joy. The sages and siddhas saw the beautiful movements made by the women. The seasons exhibited their powers and nourished the place. A gentle breeze blew, carrying grey pollen grain. Eager for the honey, large numbers of birds chirped on the branches. The branches were heavy with the burden of flowers. Cuckoos called sweetly in forests and groves, igniting desire."""

"""The one who wears the crescent moon on his crest was intoxicated with the sporting and amusements, since Kama had not been defeated. He spoke to Nandi. Chandrashekhara said, "After she has ornamented herself, fetch the beautiful Gouri from Kailasa. Leave this forest quickly. Go and tell the dark-complexioned one that I have asked you to bring her here." Shankara's private messenger agreed to this. He pledged to go there and bring Parvati. He went there, joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself. Nandishvara said, "O Devi! Maheshvara, lord of devas, wishes to see you. He wishes to see his beloved in a beautiful form. I have been asked to tell you this." O best among sages! Gouri was devoted to her husband. Having been addressed in this way, she got ready to lovingly adorn herself. "Go and tell the lord that I am coming.

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[655] A vigorous form of dance, performed by Shiva, but also performed by other divinities.

[656] Bana could have asked for emancipation instead.

[657] Matrikas are divine mothers. The usual list of Matrikas has eight, Brahmi, Maheshvari, Chandi, Varahi, Vaishnavi, Koumari, Chamunda and Roudri. But this list is not standardized.

Follow my instructions and tell him this." With the speed of thought, Nandi reached Rudra, Rudra was greatly agitated and spoke to Nandi again. "O son! Go again and quickly bring Parvati." He agreed and went again to Gouri, with the beautiful eyes, and spoke to her. "Your husband wishes to see you, dressed in beautiful garments. O Devil Shankara is waiting, eager to engage in many pleasures with you. O daughter of the mountain! Your husband is afflicted by desire, and you should go." All the apsaras consulted each other. "His sentiments are such that he wishes to see Parvati right now. The wielder of Pinaka is Kama's enemy. However, from among all the divine women, whichever heavy-hipped one he chooses, will certainly be a queen. Aided by Manmatha's companions, he will sport with anyone whomhe sees in Gouri's form. Kama has defeated Kama's enemy." Full of love, they spoke to each other in this way. "Other than Dakshayani, if any other woman is capable of deluding Parvati's husband, let her speak and go there fearlessly." Kumbhanda's daughter, Chitralekha, [658] was interested in approaching Shankara. Chitralekha said, "In Gouri's form, I will go. To accomplish a supreme objective, earlier, Vishnu used his yoga. With a desire to delude, Keshava assumed the form of Mohini. I will act like that." Seeing her, Urvashi also changed her form. Ghritachi assumed the form of Kali and Vishvachi assumed Chandika's form. Rambha assumed Savitri's form and Menaka that of Gayatri. Sahajanya assumed Jaya's form and Punjikasthali that of Vijaya. Other excellent apsaras assumed the forms of Matrikas. Those are not being mentioned. But they used their own respective learnings, to assume their jewels and forms. On seeing their forms, Kumbhanda's daughter also displayed her own disguise, using Vishnu's yoga and her own. Usha, Banasura's daughter, was accomplished in divine yoga, She assumed the divine, wonderful and auspicious form of Parvati. Her excellent and radiant feet resembled large and red lotuses. She possessed all the divine signs, capable of granting everything the mind wished for.'"

"Girija got to know what they had resolved about intercourse. Shivaa possesses every kind of vijnana and is inside everyone. Girija said, "O Usha! O friend! O beautiful one! Out of desire, you have assumed my form. Therefore, when the time arrives, in the months of Kartika and Madhava, you will follow the dharma of having your monthly period. [659] On dvadashi[660] in shukla paksha, when the terrible night arrives and you have fasted, while you are asleep, a man will enjoy you in the inner quarters. Destiny has made him your husband and you will pleasure yourself with him. Since your childhood, you have been attentively devoted to Vishnu. That is why this will occur." With shame in her mind and written on her face, she agreed to this. After this, Devi Parvati eagerly adorned herself. She went to Rudra and sported with Shambhu. O sage! When the period of pleasure was over, along with his wife, his ganas and devas, Bhagavan vanished from the spot.'"

[658] All these are the names of different apsaras. Here, the text says Kushmanda's daughter. Subsequently, it says Kumbhanda's daughter. For the sake of consistency, we have made it Kumbhanda's daughter.

[659] Kartika is October/November and Magha (also known as Madhava) is January/February.

[660] The twelfth lunar day.

Chapter 222-3.5(52) (Usha's Story Continued)

"Sanatkumara said, 'Hear another account about the conduct of Shiva, the paramatman. It yields supreme pleasure and concerns the affection he shows towards his devotees. In earlier times, the asura known as Bana performed the tandava dance and satisfied Shankara. However, as a result of the taint of destiny, he became proud. He got to know that Shiva, Parvati's beloved, was pleased in his mind. Therefore, Banasura joined his hands in salutation, lowered his shoulders, and spoke. Bana said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O crest jewel of all devas! I am strong as a result of your favours. Please listen to my supreme words. You have bestowed me with one thousand hands. But they are a great burden. With the exception of you, I have not been able to find anyone in the three worlds who is an equal for me to fight with. O Vrishadhvaja! My arms are like mountains. O divinity! However, without someone to fight against, what will I do with these one thousand hands? When my hands itch, I wish to fight against the diggajas. [661] I crushed cities and mountains. But they were scared and have fled. I have fought against Yama and against the great Vahni. I have reduced Varuna to the status of a cowherd, and he looks after my cows. Kubera is the superintendent of elephants and Nirriti looks after the women. I have conquered Akhandala's world, and he always pays me tribute. Please tell me about a battle where my arms will be mangled with shastras and astras released from the hands of the enemy. Let me fall down at the hands of an enemy or let me bring down the enemy into a thousand fragments. O Maheshvara! Please satisfy this wish of mine." Hearing this, Rudra became angry. He laughed out aloud. It was extremely wonderful. The one who removes the impediments of his devotees became extremely angry and spoke. Rudra said, "Shame on you in every possible way. O worst among those of the daitya lineage! You are proud in every possible way. Such words are not worthy of a devotee who is Bali's son. Your insolence will soon be pacified in a terrible fight. You will find a great battle against a powerful person who is my equal. Your hands, which are like mountains, will be severed by shastras and astras and will fall down on the ground, like plantain trees, or wood consumed by the fire. Your standard has the mark of a peacock with a human head and right now, it is kept in your storehouse of weapons. When it falls down, without that being caused by the wind, this will be a reason for fear and will signify the downfall of an evil-souled person like you. You will then know that a great and terrible battle is imminent. With all your soldiers, you will advance towards that terrible fight. Now return to your house, where Shiva is present. O evil-minded one! You will see great and evil portents there." Having said this, the one who is affectionate, but is also the one who takes away pride, stopped. Hearing Rudra's words, Bana cupped his hands in the form of divine flower buds and worshipped Mahadeva. He prostrated himself and returned to his own house. When Kumbhanda [662] asked, he cheerfully told him what had happened. Banasura eagerly waited for that conjunction of circumstances to take place.""

""On one occasion, by chance, he himself saw that the standard had broken. On seeing this, Banasura was delighted and emerged, to fight. He summoned his soldiers and divided them into eight divisions.

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[661] There are four elephants that dwell in the four directions. These are known as diggajas, the elephant (gaja) for a direction (dik).

[662] Banasura's minister.

He performed a sacrifice for the battle. He checked to see that liquor was ready for the battle. When he saw that all the directions were auspicious, he departed. Bali's maharatha son was extremely valiant and was filled with great enthusiasm. He thought in his heart, “Who will come and from where? Will that warrior love to fight and be accomplished in the use of many kinds of shastras and astras? Will he sever my hands, like fire consuming wood? Or will I use great and sharp weapons to sever him into one hundred fragments?"""""

“Meanwhile, the auspicious time arrived. Bana's excellent daughter performed all the auspicious acts. During that great might, in the month of Madhava or Magha, she worshipped. After her monthly course was over, she slept in the protected grandson was conveyed there, [663] She wept like one without a inner quarters. As a result of Gouri's divine maya, Krishna's protector. However, he used force to enjoy her. Using divine yoga, Parvati's friends again conveyed him back to Dvaraka in an instant. Having been bruised in this way, she woke up and lamented in many voices. She told her friends about this and decided it was time to give up her body. O Vyasa! But a friend [664] reminded her about the sin she had committed earlier. She then realized that everything had occurred according to the former account. O sage! In a sweet voice, Usha, Bana's daughter, spoke to Chitralekha, Kumbhanda's daughter. Usha said, "O friend! If he is my husband, as Parvati ordained earlier, through what legitimate, but secret, means can I get him now? He has stolen my mind. But in what lineage has he been born?" Hearing Usha's words, her friend replied to her. Chitralekha said, "O queen! You saw the man in your dream. How can I bring him before you? I do not know." Hearing these words, the daitya's daughter, blind with love, was eager to die. But on that first day, her friend saved her. O supreme among sages! The immensely intelligent Chitralekha, Kumbhanda's daughter, spoke again to Usha, Bana's daughter. Chitralekha said, "I will remove your hardship. The man has stolen your mind. If such a man exists in the three worlds, I will bring him before you. Tell me about him." When he was described, on a piece of cloth, she etched pictures of devas, daityas, danavas, gandharvas, siddhas, nagas, yakshas and others. She etched pictures of men-Vrishnis, the brave Anankadundubhi,[665] Rama, Krishna and Pradyumna, supreme among men. When she saw the picture of Aniruddha, Pradyumna's son, she was ashamed. Usha's heart was filled with joy, and she cast her face downwards. Usha said, "O friend! This is the thief who came to me in the night. This is the man who quickly stole my jewel. As soon as he touched me, it was as if I was deluded. I wish to know about him. O beautiful one! Please tell me everything. In what family has he been born? What is his name?" Thus addressed, the yogini told her his name and his family. O supreme among sages! Hearing everything about his lineage, Bana's beautiful daughter was eager and spoke again. Usha said, "O friend! Out of love for me, devise a means whereby I am able to instantly obtain my beloved, the one whom I love more than my own life. O friend! Without him, I am not interested in remaining alive even for an instant. O friend! Bring him her immediately and make me happy." O best among sages! Hearing the words of Bana's daughter, the minister's daughter was amazed and thought a lot about it."""

[663] Krishna's son was Pradyumna and Pradyumna's son was Aniruddha.

[664] Chitralekha. Chitralekha and Usha had been reborn, and Chitralekha remembered her past life.

[665] Krishna's father.

""Chitralekha, who could travel as fast as thought, spoke to her friend. She knew that this was Krishna's grandson and got ready to go to Dvaraka. On the tritiya that followed chaturdashi in krishna paksha in the month of Jyeshtha, a muhurta before day would dawn, she reached the city of Dvaraka. [666] Since she possessed knowledge of divine yoga, she travelled through the sky in an instant. She saw Pradyumna's son in a grove in the inner quarters. He was sporting with women and drinking madhvi liquor. He was dark and pleasant in all his limbs. He had a smiling face and had just attained youth. Under the cover of darkness, she made him climb onto a cot. Using her tamas yoga, she enveloped Madhava,[667] She then placed that cot on her head and vanished instantly. She reached Shonitapura, where Bana's daughter was. She was afflicted by desire and sought to deceive her intoxicated mind in diverse ways. As soon as she saw that he had been brought, she was scared. She hid him well in the inner quarters and their intercourse started afresh. However, as soon as they started their pleasures, within a short while, it became known. The doorkeepers for the inner quarters were aged, with canes in their hands. Through signs and inferences, they got to know about the maiden's wicked conduct. They saw the man there, with a divine body. He was young, handsome and brave and loved to fight. On seeing him, the immensely brave men who guarded the daughter's inner quarters went and told Bana, Bali's son, everything. The doorkeepers said, "O lord! Someone has forcibly entered the inner quarters, in secret and unknown to anyone. He has himself seized your daughter and outraged her. O Indra among danavas! O immensely strong one! Go and look. Go and see and decide on an appropriate course of action. We are not to be blamed." O best among sages! Hearing their words, the immensely strong Indra among danavas was amazed to hear about his daughter being defiled.""

Chapter 223-3.5(53) (Aniruddha and Usha Amuse Themselves)

“Sanatkumara said, 'Banasura was enraged and went and saw him. He was in the first bloom of youth and his form seemed to be made for divine pastimes. On seeing him. Bana was amazed and wondered, "What is the reason for this?" He was overwhelmed by anger and wished to show his valour in battle. He seemed to laugh as he said, "He has a man's form. No doubt he is brave and persevering. Who is this unfortunate person who has arrived at this time? He is deluded in his intelligence. He has sullied the character of my lineage and has defiled my daughter. He must be killed. O angry ones! Quickly seize extremely terrible weapons. Bind the one who is evil in conduct and fling him into a terrible prison. O brave ones! In particular, guard him in that horrible place for a long period of time." After this, the immensely intelligent asura thought about it and was circumspect. "No one knows who this fearless person is. Nor does one know about his fierce valour." Therefore, the evil-minded daitya instructed ten thousand brave soldiers to kill him. Thus instructed, those brave ones swiftly surrounded the inner quarters from all sides. Those fierce asuras encircled him and shouted, "Slice. Pierce." Yadava 668 saw the enemy soldiers and roared. From the door to the inner quarters, he seized an unmatched club. He emerged from the residence, resembling the Destroyer armed with a vajra.

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[666] Tritiya is the third lunar day and chaturdashi is the fourteenth.

[667] Madhu's descendant, that is, Aniruddha.

[668] That is, Aniruddha.

He slew those servants and went inside the inner quarters again. O supreme among sages! His eyes were red with rage and Shiva enhanced his energy. He thus killed ten thousand soldiers and killed another one hundred thousand warriors."

""Banasura was filled with anger. Taking Kumbhanda with him, the valiant one challenged the immensely intelligent Aniruddha to a great battle in the form of a duel. Pradyumna's son was protected by Shiva's energy and his body blazed. Ten thousand horses and excellent chariots belonging to the Indra among daityas reached the field of battle. But he slew them with a sword. Aniruddha next seized a spear that blazed like the fire of destruction and flung it towards him, so as to kill him. Seated on the chariot, Bana was firmly struck by the spear. Along with his horse, the brave one immediately vanished from the spot. He disappeared and Pradyumna's son remained undefeated. Like an immobile mountain, he glanced around in all the directions. Remaining invisible, the danava fought in mysterious ways. He struck him repeatedly with thousands of different kinds of weapons. Using deceit, the immensely strong one bound him up in coils of nagas. This is what Bali's immensely brave son, the asura who was devoted to Shiva, did. Having bound him and imprisoned him in a cage, he stopped the battle."""

""The immensely strong Bana then spoke angrily to the son of his charioteer. Banasura said, "O charioteer's son! With a light hand, slice off this man's head. Using force, this wicked one has sullied my pure and virtuous lineage. After slicing off all his limbs, offer them to the rakshasas. Alternatively, let predatory creatures feed on his flesh and blood. Kill the sinner. Or hurl him into a bottomless pit that is covered by grass. O charioteer's son! What is the need to speak a lot? In every possible way, he must be killed." Bana's excellent minister, Kumbhanda, was a roamer of the night who possessed the intelligence of dharma. Hearing his words, he spoke. Kumbhanda said, "O lord! Please think about it. This is not the right course of action. If we kill him we will end up killing ourselves. That is my view. O lord! H can be seen to be as valiant as Vishnu. His excellent energ can be seen to have been enhanced by the one who wears th moon on his crest. He is an equal of the one who wears th moon on his crest in bravery. Despite having been reduced this state, he has not lost his manliness. It is through Shiva favours that Krishna's immensely strong grandson [669] regar us as blades of grass. Even though he has been bitten by serpents, he remains strong." Accomplished in royal policy, the danava spoke these words to Bana and then addressed Aniruddha. Kumbhanda asked, "O brave one! Who are you and whose son are you? In front of me, please speak the truth. O one evil in conduct! O worst among men! Who has brought you here? Praise the brave Indra among daityas. Join your hands in salutation and prostrate yourself before him. Repeatedly utter the words, 'I am miserable and have been vanquished.' If you do this, you will be freed. Otherwise, you will continue to be bound." Hearing his words, he answered back. Aniruddha replied, "O friend of the worst among daityas! O one who lives on leftovers of tribute in your hands! O roamer in the night! O one wicked in conduct! You do not know the dharma to be followed against enemies. It is my view that for a brave person, being miserable and running away are worse than death. These are contrary and are like stakes. It is always best for a kshatriya to die in a face-to-face battle. A person who is proud of being brave will not sink down miserably on the ground, hands joined in salutation."

[669] Kumbhanda already knew that he was Krishna's grandson.

He spoke many such brave words. Hearing them, Bana was both amazed and angry.

""At that time, an invisible voice was heard from the sky, reassuring Bana. All the brave ones, Aniruddha, and the ministers, heard this. The voice from the sky said, "O Bana! O immensely brave one! You should not be angry. O Bali's son! O extremely intelligent one! O Shiva's devotee! Think about it. Shiva is the lord of everyone. Parameshvara is the witness to all karma. Everything in the universe, all mobile and immobile entities, are under his control. He is always the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. In the form of Vidhatri, Vishnu and Hara, his atman supports sattva, rajas and tamas. He is the lord who is inside everything. He is the one who induces, and he is superior to everything. He is without transformations and without decay. He is eternal and nirguna. He is the lord of maya. O Bali's excellent son! Know that as a result of his will, even a weak person becomes strong. O immensely intelligent one! Knowing this, get back to your natural mental state. Bhagavan takes away all pride and engages in many kinds of pastimes. Affectionate towards his devotees, he will destroy your pride now." O great sage! Saying this, the voice from the sky stopped. Banasura did not go against those words and did not kill Aniruddha. He went inside his inner quarters and drank some excellent liquor. He forgot those words and acted contrary to his intelligence. Aniruddha was bound in the coils of serpents that were full of virulent poison. Since he was still not satisfied and wanted his beloved, he immediately remembered Durga. Aniruddha said, "O Devi! O refuge! I am bound and am being scorched by the pannagas. O one who grants fame! O one who is fierce in rage! Please come and save me. O Mahadevi! O one who is devoted to Shiva! O cause behind creation, preservation and destruction! Other than you, there is no other protector. O Shivaa! Please save me." He satisfied Kali. With a complexion like that of broken collyrium, she arrived there on the great night of chaturdashi in krishna paksha in Jyeshtha. With blows from her heavy fists, she broke the cage. She reduced the arrows, which were in the form of terrible serpents, to ashes. She freed Aniruddha. Once he entered the inner quarters, Durga vanished from the spot. O lord among sages! As a result of the favours of Devi, Shiva's Shakti, Aniruddha was freed from his hardships and obtained happiness. As a result of Shiva's Shakti, Aniruddha obtained victory. Pradyumna's son obtained his beloved, Bana's daughter, and was happy. O brahmana! Along with his beloved, he was happy and amused himself, as he had earlier. With Bana's daughter, he drank liquor and his eyes turned red."""

Chapter 224-3.5(54) (Banasura, Rudra, Krishna and Others Fight)

“Vyasa asked, 'O supreme among sages! When Kumbhanda's daughter, what did Krishna do? Please tell me.

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O supreme among sages! When Aniruddha was abducted, hearing the sound of the women weeping, Krishna was distressed. Four months of the rainy season passed in this way. Hari and his relatives could not see Aniruddha and grieved. Learning from Narada about the act of his being imprisoned, all the Vrishnis and the divinity Krishna, were extremely miserable. Having heard everything attentively, Krishna immediately summoned Tarkshya and left for Shonitapura, to fight. Pradyumna, Yuyudhana, [670] Samba, Sarana, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and the others followed Rama[671] and Krishna. With

twelve akshouhinis, the bulls among Satvatas [672] laid siege to Bana's city from every direction. When he[673] saw that the city's groves, walls, mansions and turrets had been shattered, he became wrathful and ventured out with an equal number of soldiers. For Bana's sake, along with his son and surrounded by the pramathas, Bhagavan Rudra ascended the bull Nandi and advanced to fight. There was a wonderful and tumultuous battle between Krishna and the others on one side and Rudra and Bana's protectors on the other side. It made the body hair stand up. Krishna fought against Shankara, Pradyumna fought against Guha, Bala fought against Kumbhanda[674] and Kupakarna, Samba fought against Rana's son and Satyaki fought against Bana. Nandi fought against Garuda. One side fought against the other side. Brahma and other lords among gods, siddhas, charanas, gandharvas and apsaras arrived on their vehicles and vimanas to witness this. O Indra among brahmanas! There was an extremely clash between the descendants of the Yadu lineage and many kinds of pramathas, including those known as Revatis. Along with his brother, Rama, and the intelligent Pradyumna, Krishna fought a tumultuous battle with the pramathas. Agni, Yama, Varuna, Vimukha, Tripada, Jvara and many types of pramathas fought an extremely terrible and frightful battle against those of the Vrishni lineage and it made the body hair stand up. Not very far away, along with terrible flames, there were the powerful and shameless women, the Kotaris. [675] With fierce arrows shot from the Sharnga bow, [676] Achyuta drove away Shankara's brave followers, bhutas, pramathas and guhyakas. In this way, other brave ones, Pradyumna being the foremost, fought in the great festival that was an extremely terrible battle and destroyed enemy soldiers.""

"""Seeing that his own forces were being destroyed, Rudra was filled with rage. Full of great energy, he roared loudly in anger. Hearing this, Shankara's ganas also roared in that battle. With their own energy increased by Shambhu's energy, they crushed the enemy warriors. Without being surprised in any kind of way, the wielder of Pinaka, holding a trident in his hand, separately quietened each weapon released from Sharnga bow. He countered brahmastra with brahmastra, vayavastra with parvatastra, agneyastra with parjanyastra and narayanastra with his own weapon. [677] The enemy heroes defeated Krishna's soldiers and drove them away. O Vyasa! With Rudra's complete energy present, they could not remain in that battle. O sage! See that his own soldiers had been driven away, Shri Krishna, scorcher of enemies, unleashed his own terrible jvara, [678] known as Shitala. O sage! When Krishna's soldiers had been driven away, Krishna's Shitala juara rushed towards Rudra, burning down the ten directions. Seeing that it was advancing, Maheshvara released his own juara. The two juaras, Maheshvara and Vaishnava, fought against each other. Suffering from the strength of Maheshvara juara, Vaishnava juara was scared and praised Vrishadhvaja.

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[670] Satyaki's name.

[671] Balarama.

[672] That is, Yadavas.

[673] Bana.

[674] Corrected from Kushmanda.

[675] Kotaris, also known as Kotavis, are naked manifestations of feminine divinities.

[676] The name of Vishnu's/Krishna's bow. and Narayana, His own weapon probably means pashupatastra.

[677] Divine weapons named after Brahma, Vayu, Agni, Parjanya

[678] Juara means fever, being used as a weapon.

Hara is affectionate towards his devotees. Entreated by Vishnu's juara, Bhagavan spoke to Vishnu's Shitala juara. Maheshvara said, "O Shitala juara! I am pleased with you. Do not be scared of my juara. Anyone who remembers this conversation will never be frightened of any jvara." When Rudra said this, Narayana's juara bowed down and went away. Witnessing its conduct, Krishna was surprised and filled with fear."""

""When he was struck by floods of arrows shot by Pradyumna, Skanda, the intolerant slayer of a large number of daityas, became angry and struck him with a spear. Though Pradyumna was strong, when he was struck in this way by Skanda, blood flowed from his limbs, and he swiftly fled from the battle. Kumbhanda and Kupakarna struck Balabhadra[679] with many weapons. Though he was strong, he did not remain in the battle either. Garuda assumed one thousand different bodies and drank up water from the great ocean, to destroy the enemy by showering down from avarta clouds. Mahesha's mount, the powerful bull, became angry at this. With great force, he struck him with his two horns. With limbs mangled by the horns, Garuda was extremely surprised. He abandoned Janardana and quickly fled from the field of battle. When this happened, Bhagavan, Devaki's son, was greatly surprised at Rudra's energy and spoke to his charioteer. Shri Krishna said, O charioteer! Listen to my words. Quickly drive my chariot to Mahadeva's presence. I have to tell him something." Thus addressed by Hari, the charioteer Daruka, supreme among those who possess virtuous qualities, quickly drove the chariot to Rudra's presence.""

"Realizing this, Shri Krishna bowed down and joined his hands in salutation. Devotedly, he sought refuge with the one who is affectionate towards his devotees. Shri Krishna said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who is affectionate towards his devotees! O one who is infinite in powers! O one who is in all atmans! O Pareshvara! I prostrate myself before you. You are the cause behind the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. You are true jnana. You are a sign of the brahman. You are supreme and serene. You alone are Parameshvara. O lord of the universe! Time, destiny, karma, living beings, nature, objects, the body, the breath of life, the jivatman, all the different kinds of transformations, seeds and their growth-all this is your maya. O Parameshvara! You are the cause and I seek refuge with you. You have many kinds of sentiments and create your own pastimes. O lord of the worlds! You make immortals and others shine and cause harm to those who deviate from the natural path. You are the supreme brahman. Your radiance is hidden in words that speak about the brahman. Like the sky, you can only be seen within sparkling atmans. You are the original Purusha, without a second. Your atman can be seen in the state of turiya. [680] You are the cause behind all causes. You are Isha, seen through transformations. O Bhagavan! O lord! In your own maya, you are known through all the gunas. O Maheshvara! You are inside everything and cannot be divided. Everything is you. O lord! Even when Surya is hidden, its form can be realized through a shadow. O supreme witness! Like that, your radiance can be detected in your own shadow. O lord! You do not possess gunas. You cannot be known through gunas, but it is through gunas that you are described. You are the lord, Girisha Shankara, illuminated through your own lamp.

679 Balarama.

680 A living being has four states-waking, dreaming, sleeping and turiya. Turiya is the fourth state, when one perceives union between the human soul, jivatman, and the brahman.

With their intelligence deluded by your maya, people submerge themselves in sons, wives, homes and other things. They are attached and immersed in an ocean of sin. After having obtained this body through destiny, if a person does not conquer his senses and does not love your lotus feet, he should be grieved about. He deceives his own atman. O Bhagavan! Following your command, I arrived here to slice off Bana's hands. You are the one who takes away insolence and you cursed the haughty Bana. Withdraw from this battle. Otherwise, your curse will fail. O lord! Please command me to cut off Bana's arms." O lord among sages! Hearing Shri Krishna's words, Shambhu was pleased. Praised by Krishna, Maheshvara replied to him. Maheshvara said, "O son! You have spoken the truth. I did curse the king of daityas. It is a result of my command that you came here, to sever Bana's arms. O Rama's lord! O Hari! What will I do? I am always subservient to my devotees. O brave one! How can I possibly witness the slicing of Bana's arms? Therefore, follow my command. Use jrimbhanastra[681] to cause yawning in me. Use that opportunity to do what you wish. Be happy." Addressed by Shankara in this way, holding Sharnga bow in his hand, he was amazed. O lord among sages! He happily returned to the place where he was fighting. He quickly fixed jrimbhanastra to his bow. Hari, accomplished in the use of many weapons, released it towards the one who holds Pinaka in his hand. Deluded by jrimbhanastra, Girisha yawned. Shouri [682] slaughtered Bana's forces with swords, clubs and smaller swords."""

Chapter 225-3.5(55) (Slicing of Bana's Hands)

"Vyasa said, 'O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! O Brahma's son! I bow down before you. O father! O sage! You have made me hear a wonderful account. In the battle, Hari used the jrimbhanastra to make Hara yawn. After he destroyed Bana's forces, what did Bana do? Please tell me."""

"Suta said, "Hearing the words of the infinitely energetic Vyasa, pleased in his mind, Brahma's son, the lord among sages, replied.""

"Sanatkumara replied, 'O Vyasa! O immensely wise one! O son! Hear this extremely wonderful account about Krishna and Shankara, about how they followed the ordinary customary practices of the world. In his pastimes, along with his son and his ganas, Rudra lay down on the ground. Bana, the king of daityas, emerged to fight against Krishna. Kumbhanda gathered the horses together and held many shastras and astras. Bali's immensely strong son engaged in an unmatched battle. Seeing that his own forces had been destroyed, the Indra among daityas was filled with intolerance. Bali's immensely strong son fought an unmatched battle. Shri Krishna was immensely valiant and had obtained great strength from Girisha. He roared loudly, regarding Bana as no more than a blade of grass. He twanged his own wonderful bow, known as Sharnga. O lord among sages! He terrified Bana's remaining soldiers. The loud sound from the twang of that bow filled the entire space between heaven and earth.

[681] A weapon that causes jrimbhana (yawning) and puts a person to sleep.

[682] Krishna.

Enraged, Hari drew the bow all the way back up to his ear and shot many kinds of arrows, sharp and with virulent poison, towards Bana. Bana, Bali's son, saw that these arrows were arriving. Before they could reach, he used arrows shot from his own bow to slice them down. King Bana, the one who made enemy soldiers suffer, roared again. All the Vrishnis thought of Krishna in their minds and were terrified. Immensely proud, Bali's son remembered Shiva's lotus feet and shot his own arrows towards the immensely brave Krishna. However, before they could reach him, Krishna, the immensely strong slayer of enemies of the immortals, remembered Shiva's lotus feet and swiftly sliced them down with his own arrows. In that battle, Rama and all the other Vrishnis were filled with great rage and slew their own respective adversaries. In this way, the tumultuous battle between those two strong sides went on for a long time and those who hear about it are amazed. Meanwhile, the great king of birds was filled with wrath. He struck all the asuras in Bana's army with his wings and crushed them. Seeing that his own forces had been crushed and were being crushed, Bali's powerful son, lord of daityas and Shiva's great devotee, was filled with rage. He remembered Shiva's lotus feet and using his own thousand hands, performed great acts of valour that the enemies found impossible to withstand. The slayer of enemy heroes simultaneously struck Krishna and all the others and Garuda separately. O sage! He struck Garuda with one arrow, Krishna with another arrow and Bala[683] with a third. The powerful one struck others too."

"""In the form of Vishnu, the immensely valiant Krishna destroys asuras. The great lord became extremely angry and roared in the battle. He remembered Shankara and with strong arrows shot from Sharnga bow, simultaneously struck Bana and his terrible forces. Using his arrows, the implacable Hari swiftly severed his bow and umbrella and killed and brought down his horses. Enraged, the immensely valiant Bana roared.

He struck Krishna with a club and brought him down on the ground. O devarshi! Following the practices of the world, Krishna got up and fought against the enemy who was Shiva's devotee. In that way, those two fought a great duel for a long period of time. On one side, there was Hari Krishna, Shiva's form. On the other side, there was the strong one who was Shiva's excellent devotee. Krishna fought for a long time with the valiant Bana. O lord among sages! After that, as a result of Shiva's command, he obtained strength and became angry. Following Shambhu's instructions, Bhagavan Krishna, the slayer of enemy heroes, used Sudarshana chakra to quickly slice off many of Bana's arms. Only four handsome hands were left. However, because of Shankara's favours, his pain immediately went away. Krishna, full of brave sentiments, forgot himself and prepared to cut off Bana's head."""

"""But Rudra got up. O brahmana! Rudra said, "O Bhagavan! O Devaki's son! You always follow my instructions and you have done what I asked you to do earlier. You should not cut off Bana's head. Withdraw Sudarshana chakra. As a result of my command, this chakra will always be ineffective against my people. O Govinda! It is I who gave you this chakra earlier and also ensured that you would be victorious in battle. Withdraw the chakra from the battle now.

[683] Balarama.

O Lakshmi's lord! Without my command, on earlier occasions, you have not used this chakra[684] against Dadhichi, [685] the brave Ravana,Taraka, Tripura and others. O Janardana! You are the lord directly the paramatman. You are engaged of yoga! You are in the welfare of all beings. Think about this in your own mind. I have granted him a boon that he need not be scared of death. My words should always be true. I am pleased with you. O Hari! Earlier, he was proud and intoxicated and told me, 'Give me a battle. He forgot himself and said, 'My hands itch. Thereupon, I cursed him and said, 'Within a short period of time, your arms will be severed, and you will lose your insolence." "It is because of my command that Hari severed your arms. [686] Withdraw from the battle." "With the bride and the groom, return to your own residence. "[687] Having said this, Maheshvara brought about friendship between them. Instructing them in this way, with his son and his ganas, he returned to his own home. Hearing Shambhu's words, the victorious Krishna withdrew Sudarshana chakra. With his limbs unharmed, he went to the inner quarters. He comforted Aniruddha and his wife and accepted the large number of jewels Bana gave him. He took the friend Chitralekha, the supreme yogini, with him. As a result of Shiva's command, Krishna was successful in his objective and was pleased. In his heart, he prostrated himself before Girisha and took his leave from Bali's son. With all his companions, Hari returned to his own city. Along the way, he defeated Varuna, who had opposed him in diverse ways. When he reached the city of Dvaraka, there were festivities. He released Garuda and on seeing his friends in Dvaraka, he smiled. He was seen to roam around, as he willed."""

Chapter 226-3.5(56) (Banasura Becomes a Ganapati)

"Narada asked, 'With Aniruddha and his wife, Krishna went to Dvaraka. What did Bana do then? O great sage! Please tell me."[688]

"Sanatkumara replied, 'With Aniruddha and his wife, Krishna went to Dvaraka. Recollecting his former ignorance, Bana's heart was distressed. The daitya's limbs were covered with blood and he was tormented by repentance. Nandi, one of Shiva's ganas, spoke to the miserable Bana. Nandishvara said, "O Bana! O Shankara's devotee! You should not lament. Shambhu is known as one who is affectionate towards his devotees. He shows pity on his devotees. Everything happens because of his wishes. This has also occurred because of his will. O tiger among devotees! Repeatedly remember Shiva. Always fix your mind on the original being and repeatedly engage in great festivities. Shankara shows compassion towards his devotees." Bana had hitherto only thought of hatred in his head. Hearing Nandi's words, the great-minded one resorted to his fortitude and quickly went to Shiva's spot. Having gone there, he bowed down before the lord. Agitated, he wept a lot. Bana had lost his haughtiness and his mind was filled with love. He praised him with many kinds of hymns and prostrated himself before him.

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[684] The text uses the word rathanga, part of a chariot. Here, that means a wheel and is a term used for a chakra.

[685] A story narrated in Volume I.

[686] Shiva is telling Banasura this.

[687] This is said to Krishna.

[688] This is an inconsistency. Since the expression 'great sage' has been used, it should be Vyasa asking Sanatkumara and not Narada asking Brahma.

He flung his legs around in the proper way and performed the tandava dance. He assumed different kinds of postures-pratyalidha, alidha and sthanaka being the most important.[689] He made thousands of gestures with his mouth and his eyebrows. He shook his head in one thousand different ways and thousands of his soldiers also reached that spot. In due order, he gradually exhibited many such movements. The blood that flowed sprinkled the ground. In his attempt to please Rudra Chandrashekhara, the wielder of the trident, Banasura, the great devotee, forgot himself. He performed this great dance. Hara, affectionate towards his devotees, loves singing and dancing. Delighted, he spoke to Bana. Rudra said, "O Bana! O son! O Bali's son! I am pleased with your dance. O Indra among daityas! Please accept the boon your mind wishes for." O sage! Hearing Shambhu's words, the Indra among daityas, asked for the desired boons-the healing of wounds, supremacy in wrestling, an eternal status of ganapati, the instatement of Usha's son in the kingdom of Shonitapura, lack of enmity with the gods and with Vishnu in particular, not being reborn as a daitya tainted with rajas and tamas, special devotion towards Shambhu, constant lack of aberrations, affection towards Shiva's devotees and compassion towards all beings."

"""After asking for these boons from Shambhu, Bali's son, the great asura, joined his hands in salutation and praised Rudra. Tears of love flowed from his eyes. Bana said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one affectionate towards those who seek refuge! O Mahesha! O friend of the distressed! O ocean of compassion! I prostrate myself before you. O Shankara! O ocean of pity! Please show your great compassion towards me. O lord! Pleased with me, you have taken away all my pride. You are the brahman. You are the paramatman. You pervade everything. You are the lord of everything. The entire universe is your body. O fierce lord! You are gigantic. Everything follows you. You are supreme. O lord! The sky is your navel, the fire is your mouth, the water is your semen, the directions are your ears, heaven is your head, the earth is your feet and the moon is your mind. The sun is your eyes, the ocean is your stomach, Indra is your arms and Vidhatri is your intelligence. The Prajapatis are what you exude, and Dharma is your heart. O lord! The herbs are your body hair, the clouds are your hair and the three gunas are your three eyes. You are the Purusha who is in all atmans. Brahmanas are said to be your mouth, kshatriyas are your arms, vaishyas are said to be your thighs and shudras are your feet. O Maheshvara! You should always be worshipped by every being. If a man worships you, he certainly obtains supreme emancipation. O Ishvara! You are the beloved atman. If a mortal forsakes you for the sake of the objects of the senses, he drinks poison instead of amrita and brings hardships on himself. O Shankara! Vishnu, Brahma, the gods and the sparkling sages seek refuge in you, with all their atmans. You are the beloved Ishvara." Having said this, the asura, Bali's son, stopped. His limbs blossomed with love, and he prostrated himself before Maheshvara. Hearing what Bana, his devotee, had said, Bhagavan Bhava told him, "You will get everything." He then vanished from the spot. Through Shambhu's favours, Bana lived for a very long period of time. Becoming Rudra's follower, he was immensely happy. Shankara is the guru for everyone. He is the guru for those who are gurus of people. He is the wielder of the trident. I have told you about his great account. These words are beautiful and pleasing to the ears. He always sports amidst all the worlds."""

[689] Alidha is a posture where the right knee is bent in front and the left leg is drawn back. Pratyalidha is the opposite, with the left knee bent in front and the right leg drawn back. Sthanaka means to stand vertically in one place.

Chapter 227-3.5(57) (Slaying of Gajasura)

'Sanatkumara said, "O Vyasa! Hear with great love about the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest and about how the wielder of the trident killed Gajasura, Indra among danavas. In ancient times, for the welfare of devas, Devi killed the danava Mahishasura in a battle. The devas were filled with joy. O lord among sages! His son wat the immensely brave Gajasura. He remembered how Devi had killed his father, for the sake of the gods. Remembering that enmity, he went to the forest to perform austerities. To please Vidhatri, he tormented himself through supreme austerities, " will not be killed by any man or woman who is conquered by Kama." Thinking this in his mind, he fixed his mind on the austerities. He tormented himself through these supremely terrible austerities in a valley in the Himalayas. He raised his arms up and fixed his eyes on the sky. He stood on the ground on the big toes of his feet. His matted hair was radiant, resembling the rays of the sun of dissolution. Mahishasura's son, Gajasura, was extensive in intelligence. As a result of his austerities, smoke and fire rose up from his head. These spread in the worlds, above, below and in a transverse direction, and the poison that arose caused torment. The rivers and the oceans were scorched by the fire that rose from his eyebrows, from between his eyes. Planets and stars fell down and the ten directions blazed. All the gods were scorched by this. Along with Vasava, they left heaven. They went to Brahma's world to tell him about this. The earth quaked. The devas said, "O Vidhatril We are agitated and scorched by Gajasura's austerities. We are incapable of remaining in heaven. Therefore, we have sought refuge with you. O Vidhatri! Please show your compassion and pacify this. Grant life to the others. Otherwise, the worlds will be destroyed. We are telling you the truth. This is the truth." Devas, Vasava and others, told the self-creating one this."

“Along with Bhrigu, Daksha and others, Brahma went to the excellent daitya's hermitage. He was scorching the worlds through his austerities and all the clouds had disappeared from the sky. On seeing this, the creator was amazed. He smiled and spoke. Brahma said, "O Indra among daityas! Get up. Arise. O Mahisha's son! You have been successful in your austerities. I am the one who bestows boons. I have come here. Ask for the boon that you desire." On seeing the lord, the Indra among daityas got up. Standing up, he looked at the lord. Pleased, Mahisha's son praised the divinity with faltering words. Gajasura said, "O divinity! O lord of devas! I prostrate myself before you. If you wish to grant me a boon, let it be such that I cannot be killed by any man or woman who has been conquered by Kama. Let me be immensely strong and immensely valiant. Let devas, all the guardians of the world and everyone else be unable to defeat me. Let me enjoy every kind of prosperity." The danava sought this from Shatadhriti.[690] Pleased with his austerities, he granted him this extremely rare boon. Having obtained this boon, Gajasura, Mahisha's son, was extremely pleased in his mind. He returned to his own residence."""

""'The great asura conquered all the directions and the three worlds, devas, asuras, Indras among men, gandharvas, Garuda and uragas. In this way, the conqueror of the universe conquered everything and brought everything under his control. He robbed the guardians of the worlds of their positions and their energy.

[690] Shatadhriti, the performer of one hundred sacrifices, is one of Brahma's names.

He obtained the prosperity of heaven and the divine garden that was in the centre. He obtained the great Indra's residence, constructed by Vishvakarma himself. Having conquered the worlds, the immensely strong and great-minded one became the single emperor. He amused himself in the great Indra's residence. Gods and others were defeated by his power and worshipped his feet. He was stern in his rule. In this way, he conquered all the directions and became the single emperor, enjoying desired objects of pleasure. However, since he had not conquered his senses, despite enjoying them, he was not satisfied. He was intoxicated because of his prosperity. In his insolence, he did not follow the sacred texts. After a long period of time passed, his intelligence became wicked. Mahishasura's son caused hardships to excellent brahmanas. The danava, one who had crushed the gods, constantly harassed ascetics on earth. The evil-minded one oppressed gods, men, pramathas and all the others. Remembering his former enmity, he especially made those who followed dharma suffer."""

""On one occasion, the immensely strong danava, Gajasura, went to Shankara's capital. O sage! When the Indra among asuras reached the place, a great tumult arose. The residents of Anandavana [691] screamed, "Please protect us. Please save us." When Mahishasura's son reached the city and used his valour and power to suppress all the pramathas, devas, Shakra and others who had been defeated by him, went to Shiva and sought refuge with him. They bent down and lovingly praised him. They told him about the danava's arrival in Kashi. They told him about the great hardships faced by those who were there, particularly because there was no protector. The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! The asura has gone to your city. He is oppressing your people. O ocean of compassion! Please kill him. Wherever he places his foot on the ground, as a result of his own weight, he makes the earth tremble. The force of his thighs makes trees fall down, along with their tops. The blows from his arms are shattering the peaks of mountains. Crashing against his head, the clouds have left the sky. But they have not given up their blue complexion, since they have touched his hair. When he breathes, there are turbulent waves in the large oceans. Along with whales, there are gentle billows in the rivers too. His height is nine thousand yojanas. The breadth of the one who possesses maya is also the same. As a result of his tawny and liquid eyes, the lightning does not flash any more. He has speedily arrived. Any direction approached by the danava becomes intolerable. 'I cannot be killed by any man or woman who has been conquered by Kama.' As he moves, this is what the danava shouts. O one intent on protecting Kashi! O lord of devas! Please save your devotees." This is what devas sought from the one who is intent on protecting his devotees."""

"Desiring to kill him, Hara went there. Gajasura saw that Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees, had arrived and was roaring, with a trident in his hand. He also roared. A great battle ensued between the two of them. It was terrible and wonderful. As the brave ones roared, they showered down many shastras and astras. Gajasura was infinitely energetic and immensely strong and valiant. He pierced Girisha, the slayer of danavas, with sharp arrows. O sage! Rudra assumed a terrible form. With his own extremely terrible arrows, he quickly severed those arrows before they could reach him and reduced them to fragments as small as sesamum seeds.

[691] That is, Kashi.

As a result, Gajasura became angry. With a sword in his hand, he rushed towards Maheshvara, exclaiming, "You have already been killed by me." The wielder of the trident thought that the advancing danava could not be killed by anything other than the trident. He pierced daitya Gajasura with his trident. He thought of himself as an umbrella that had been raised up and praised Hara. Gajasura said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! In every possible way, I am your devotee. O lord of the residents of heaven! I know of you as the wielder of the trident and as the one who destroyed Kama. It is my view that death at your hands is the best thing that can happen to me. O Mahesha! O Andhaka's enemy! O destroyer of Tripura! You go everywhere. There is something I wish to say. O one who shows compassion! Please listen, I am telling you the truth. This is not false. O conqueror of death! Please think about it. You alone are the only one in the universe who deserves to be worshipped. You are established above the universe. Everyone should regard such a death from the hands of death's enemy as the best." Hearing his words, Shankara, ocean of compassion, smiled. Isha replied to Gajasura, Mahisha's son. Ishvara said, "O abode of great valour! O supreme danava! O one with virtuous intelligence! I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon that will favour you." Mahesha is the one who grants boons. Hearing his words, Gajasura, Indra among danavas, was pleased in his mind and replied. Gajasura replied, "O one who is naked! If you are pleased with me, wear my hide as a garment. O Mahesha! It has been purified by the fire of your trident. Its size is right for you. It is pleasant to the touch and has been like a pledge in this battlefield. It is worthy of being seen and is exceedingly divine. It will bring happiness in every possible way. Let it always have a desired fragrance. Let it always be extremely soft. Let it always be free from dirt and let it always be your ornament. O lord! It has gone through the blazing fire of great austerities for a very long period of time. But the hide has not been burnt. It is a store of sacred fragrances. O naked one! If my hide is not sacred, how did it touch your limbs in the battlefield? O Shankara! If you are pleased with me, grant me another boon. From today, please let your name be Krittivasa.[692] Hearing his words, Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees, was immensely pleased and told Mahishasura's son that it would be this way. Pleased in his mind, he spoke to the danava Gajasura again. Mahesha loves his devotees and his mind had been purified because of his devotion. Ishvara said, "In this kshetra, as a means to attain liberation, your sacred body will become my lingam and will bestow emancipation on everyone. It will be known as Krittivaseshvara and will destroy great sins. It will be foremost among all lingams and will bestow emancipation." After saying this, the lord of devas accepted the hide and wore it. The naked one covered himself with Gajasura's large hide", lord among sages! There were great festivities on that day. All the residents of Kashi and the pramathas were delighted. The minds of Hari, Brahma and the other devas were delighted. They bent down, joined their hands in salutation and praised Mahesha. When Gajasura, Mahisha's son and the lord of danavas, was slain, devas got back their own places and the world was restored to its natural state. I have told you about Shambhu's conduct, indicative of his affection towards his devotees. This bestows heaven, fame and a long lifespan and increases grain and wealth. A person who lovingly hears it, or having purified himself through vows, makes others listen to it, obtains great happiness. After death, he enjoys great bliss."""

[692] One whose garment is a hide.

Chapter 228-3.5(58) (Slaying of Dundubhi-Nirhrada)

“Sanatkumara said, 'O Vyasa! Listen. I will tell you about San the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest and about how he killed the daitya Dundubhi-nirhrada. The immensely strong Hiranyaksha, Diti's son, was killed by Vishnu. For some time, Diti was filled with great misery. The wicked daitya, Dundubhi-nirhrada, was Prahlada's maternal uncle. Eloquent in words, the one who caused misery to devas, comforted the grieving one. The daitya knew how to use maya. The king of daityas assured Diti. He then thought of means whereby devas could be defeated. “The brave and great asura, Hiranyaksha, has been killed by devas, the enemies of daityas, using Vishnu's deception. So has his brother,[693] What is their strength? What constitutes their food? What is the support of the immortals? What are the means whereby they can be easily defeated by me?" Having thought about this in many kinds of ways, the daitya arrived at a determination. Having reflected on it, he decided that the ones revered as the best[694] must be the cause for this. The daitya Dundubhi-nirhrada was exceedingly crooked and hated devas. So as to kill brahmanas, he rushed after them. "Brahmanas are the reservoir of all the Vedas. Devas, along with Vasava, depend on those words. Therefore, brahmanas are their strength. There is no need to reflect on this. If brahmanas are destroyed, the Vedas will be destroyed on their own. Thus, when they are destroyed, the gods will be perpetually destroyed. When sacrifices are destroyed, the gods will no longer get their food. They will become weak and will be easily defeated. When the gods are defeated, I will become the revered lord of the three worlds. I will seize all the inexhaustible wealth of devas. I will look at happiness in my kingdom, with all the thorns having been destroyed." Having decided this, the crooked one, evil in intelligence, thought again. "Where are there a lot of brahmanas? Where are they strengthened by the energy of the brahman? Where are the learned ones who study? Where do they possess the strength of austerities? The place where there are a lot of brahmanas is indeed Varanasi. I will destroy them and then move on to other tirthas. Wherever those revered as the foremost exist, in tirthas and in hermitages, they will suffer at my hands from now on. As befits his lineage, Dundubhi-nirhrada made up his mind in this way. Wicked in conduct and possessing maya, he reached Kashi and killed brahmanas. When the supreme brahmanas went to the forest to gather kusha grass and kindling, the evil-minded one devoured all of them. After that, he hid himself, so that no one could detect him. In the forest, he pretended to be a resident of the forest. In the water, he assumed the form of an aquatic creature. Using his maya, he remained invisible, so that he could not be discerned by even devas. During the day, when sages were engaged in meditation, he remained amidst the sages, keeping an eye on who entered and left the huts. In the night, in the form of a tiger, he ate many brahmanas. He fearlessly devoured them, not even leaving bones behind. In this way, the evil one destroyed many brahmanas."

"On one occasion, on Shiva Ratri, in his own cottage, a devotee tendered offerings to the lord of devas and was immersed in dhyana. Dundubhi-nirhrada, Indra among the daityas, was proud of his strength.

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693 Hiranyakashipu.

694 That is, brahmanas.

He approached in the form of a tiger, having made up his mind to devour him. The devotee was immersed in dhyana. His mind was steady, and his eyes were fixed on Shiva. Since he had spread astra-mantra[695] around, he was incapable of attacking him. Shambhu got to know everything. Hara appeared, having made up his mind to kill the daitya, wicked in form. The three-eyed one, who is the crest who protects the universe, had made up his mind to protect his devotee. As the tiger advanced to seize him, Hara appeared. On seeing Rudra advance from inside the lingam that had been worshipped by the devotee, the daitya increased his size, until he became as large as a mountain. The danava looked at the omniscient one, regarding him as insignificant. However, he seized him and placing him under his armpit, crushed him. The one with five faces struck him on the head with five of his fists. Affectionate towards his devotees, his blows were as tough as the vajra. As a result of the blows with the fists and as a result of being crushed under the armpit, the tiger was severely afflicted. His shrieks filled the space between heaven and earth, and he died. That great roar made the minds of the stores of austerities tremble. Following the sound in the night, the sages arrived there. They saw Ishvara there, with the lord of deer[696] under his armpit. All of them prostrated themselves before Sharva and praised him, with words of "Victory". The brahmanas said, "O saviour! We have been saved from the terrible hardship that arose. O guru of the universe! Please show us your favours and remain established here in your own form, under the name of Vyagresha.[697] Mahadeva! Please protect us and let this be the best of places, Please protect the residents of this tirtha from all other evil portents. O Gouri's lord! Please destroy the wicked and grant freedom from fear to your devotees." Hearing the words of the devotees, Chandrashekhara agreed to this. Affectionate towards his devotees, he spoke again. Maheshvara said, "Full of devotion, if anyone sees my form here, there is no doubt that I will destroy all his evil portents and hardships. After hearing about this account of mine and remembering my lingam in his heart, if a mortal person enters a battle, there is no doubt that he will obtain victory."""""

""At this time, along with Vasava, devas arrived there. They shouted "Victory" and arranged for great festivities. Full of love, all of them joined their hands in salutation and prostrated themselves before Shankara. They lowered their shoulders and with eloquent words, praising the one who is affectionate towards his devotees. The devas said, "Victory to Shankara. O lord of devas! O lord! O remover of afflictions! By killing Dundubhi-nirhrada, you have saved us, the gods. O one affectionate towards his devotees! Your task is to always save your devotees. O lord of devas! O lord! O Sarveshvara! You must always kill the wicked." Hearing the words of the gods, Parameshvara agreed. Pleased in his mind, he merged into the lingam. Amazed, devas happily returned to their own respective abodes. The brahmanas were also filled with great delight and again returned to wherever they had come from. This is the supreme account of how Vyaghreshvara originated. If a man hears it, makes it heard, reads it or has it read, he obtains everything that he desires, every wish that is in his mind. In the next world, he is freed from all miseries and obtains emancipation. This unmatched account is about Shiva's pastimes and the aksharas are like amrita. This account leads to heaven, fame and a long lifespan. It increases sons and grandsons.

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[495] A weapon in the form of mantras.

[696] The tiger.

[697] Literally, lord of the tiger. There is a Vyaghreshvara temple in Andhra Pradesh, East Godavari district.

It is supreme and bestows devotion. It is blessed and auspicious and brings pleasure to Shiva. It confers supreme jnana and is beautiful. It is supreme and takes away every kind of aberration.'",

Chapter 229-3.5(59) (Slaying of Vidala and Utpala)

"Sanatkumara said, 'O Vyasa! Listen with great delight "San to Paramesha's conduct. To convey a sign, he had daityas killed through his beloved. Earlier, there were two great daityas, known as Vidala and Utpala. Those two brave ones obtained a boon from Vidhatri that they could not be killed by a man and became extremely proud. As a result of their own weakness, they regarded all men in the three worlds as blades of grass. O brahmana! In a battle, those two daityas defeated all the gods. Having been defeated by them, devas sought refuge with Vidhatri. They bowed down and lovingly told Vidhatri everything. Brahma told them, "Those two will certainly be killed by Devi. Affectionately remember Shiva and Shivaa and be patient. Shiva and Shivaa, are affectionate towards their devotees. Shankara will ensure the auspicious. After some period of time, Parameshvara will ensure what is best." Saying this, Brahma remembered Shiva and was silent. Happy, the devas returned to their own respective abodes, "Devarshi Narada was urged by Shiva. He went to their house [698] and spoke about Shivaa's beauty. Hearing his words, the daityas were deluded by maya. Suffering greatly from desire, they wished to abduct Devi. They constantly kept thinking about when destiny would be kind to them and about when and where they would find Shivaa. At this time, Shambhu decided to engage in his pastimes. Along with her friends, in her pastimes, Shivaa started to play with a ball. In Shiva's presence, she happily engaged in this sport. Sometimes, she looked up. Sometimes, she displayed the dexterity of her limbs. When she took deep breaths, bees with agitated eyes gathered around that fragrance. Flowers dislodged from the garland in her hair fell down in front of her. There was sweat on her cheeks and drops, bright with the paint on her cheeks, fell down. As her clothes moved, the radiance of her limbs was evident through the partings. As she delightedly played with the ball, her palms became as red as a red lotus. As the ball bounced, her eyes followed it and her eyebrows seemed to dance. The mother of the universe was playing in this way. As the daityas were travelling through the sky, they glanced at her. It was as if Death had arrived and had made them sit on his lap. Because of the boon obtained from Vidhatri, Vidala and Utpala were insolent. Because of their own weakness, they regarded all men in the three worlds as no more than blades of grass. Suffering from desire, they wished to abduct Devi. Using Shambara's maya,[699] they swiftly descended from the sky. Using their maya, they deceitfully approached Ambika in the guise of attendants. They were evil in conduct and their minds were fickle. As a result of their flickering eyes, in an instant, Shiva, who easily slays wicked ones, got to know who they were. Through a glance of his eyes, the divinity indicated to Durga, the destroyer of hardships, that these were daityas who could assume all kinds of forms and not ganas. O son! Shankara Paresha engages in great pastimes. From the signs in her husband's eyes, the one who is half the body of the omniscient one, understood. She simultaneously struck them with the ball. Mahadevi struck those two extremely strong ones with the ball.

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[698] Of the daityas.

[699] Shambara was an asura famous for his knowledge of maya.

Those two wicked ones were whirled round and round and fell down. They fell down like ripe palm fruit shaken by the wind, or like two peaks of a large mountain when struck by a violent storm. Since they sought to do what should not be done, those two great daityas were brought down. The ball assumed the form of a lingam. That lingam came to be known as Kandukeshvara. [700] It is near Jyeshtheshvara and destroys everything wicked."""

""Meanwhile, Hari, Brahma and the other gods and the rishis got to know about Shiva's manifestation. They arrived there. As a result of Shambhu's command, all the gods obtained boons. Delighted, they returned to their own respective abodes. The residents of Kashi also obtained boons. On seeing Shankara with Ambika, they joined their hands in salutation. They prostrated themselves and devotedly and lovingly, praised them with eloquent words. O Vyasa! Affectionate towards his devotees, Shiva happily returned to his own abode with his ganas, where the one who is excellent in pastimes sported with Ambika. In Kashi, Kandukeshvara lingam destroys the wicked. For the virtuous, it always bestows everything that is desired, objects of pleasure and emancipation. This account is unmatched. If a person hears it happily, makes it heard or reads it, how can there be any misery for him? Such a person enjoys all kinds of excellent joy in this world. In the next world, he obtains a divine destination that is difficult for even devas to get. O son! I have thus described to you a supremely wonderful account. It indicates the affection shown by Shiva and Shivaa towards their devotees and brings auspiciousness to the virtuous."""

"Brahma continued, "After narrating the account of the one who wears the moon on his crest, my excellent son took his leave of Vyasa. Through the air, he left for Kashi. O supreme among sages! I have thus spoken to you about Yuddha Khanda. It is in Rudra Samhita and yields everything desired as fruits. I have also completely described Rudra Samhita. This is greatly loved by Sadashiva and bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation as fruits. If a person constantly reads it, all impediments created by enemies are thwarted. He obtains everything that he desires. Eventually, he also obtains emancipation.""

Suta concluded, 'Thus, Brahma's son heard about Shiva's supreme fame from his father. Having heard of Shambhu's one hundred names, he was successful in his objective and became Shiva's follower. I have completely narrated the conversation between Brahma and Narada. Shiva is the most important. What do you wish to hear next?'

This ends Yuddha Khanda and also ends Rudra Samhita.

[700] Kanduka means ball. The Kandukeshvara temple is in Varanasi. However, the famous Jyeshtheshvara temple is in Srinagar.

Shata Rudra Samhita [701]

Chapter 230-4(1) (Shiva's Five Avataras)

"I bow down to Maheshvara, the great bliss who is infinite in This pastimes. He is the great lord who is in everything. He is Gouri's beloved and Kartika and Vighnaraja[702] originated from him. Shankara is the original divinity.'

Shounaka said, 'O Vyasa's disciple! O immensely fortunate one! O Suta! O ocean of inana and compassion! Please tell us about Shambhu's avataras, which attract one towards the auspicious.'

Suta replied, 'O sage! O Shounaka! Immersing my mind in him and conquering my senses, with virtuous devotion, I will tell you about Shiva's avataras. O sages! Listen. Shiva's forms are the destination of the virtuous. In earlier times, the sage Sanatkumara asked Nandi about them. Remembering Shiva, he replied.'

"Nandishvara said, "In different kalpas, the avataras of the Lord Sarveshvara are said to be innumerable. According to my intelligence, I will describe them. The nineteenth kalpa is known as Shveta-Lohita.[703] The first avatara is described as Sadyojata. When Brahma meditated on the supreme brahman, the young boy, Shveta-Lohita, was born, with a tuft of hair on his head. Brahma saw that being, who was the brahman in the form of Ishvara. Realizing this, he joined his hands in salutation. Worshipping him, he meditated on him within his heart. Knowing that Sadyojata[704] was Shiva, the lord of the universe was delighted. With virtuous intelligence, he repeatedly thought about the supreme one. As he performed dhyana, illustrious sons were born. They were white in complexion and possessed supreme vijnana. They were forms of the supreme brahman. They were Sunanda, Nandana, Vishvananda and Upanandana.

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[701] Rudra has more than one manifestation. This samhita is so named because it speaks of one hundred (shata) different manifestations of Rudra. As one goes down the list in this samhita, ignoring names that occur more than once, one has a list of 94 (1) Sadyojata; (2) Vamadeva; (3) Tatpurusha; (4) Aghora; (5) Ishana; (6) Sharva; (7) Bhava; (8) Rudra; (9) Ugra; (10) Bhima; (11) Mahadeva; (12) Arddha Nari-Nara; (13) One each for the 28 dvapara yugas; (41) Nandi; (42) Bhairava; (43) Virabhadra; (44) Sharabha; (45) Sharabha; (46) Grihapati; (47) Yaksheshvara; (48) Mahakala; (49) Tara; (50) Bala; (51) Shri Vidyesha Shodasha; (52) Chinnamastaka; (53) Dhumavat; (54) Bagalamukha; (55) Matanga; (56) Kamala; (57) Kapalin; (58) Pingala; (59) Virupaksha; (60) Vilohita; (61) Shastri; (62) Ajapada; (63) Ahirbudhya; (64) Shambhu; (65) Chanda; (66) Durvasa; (67) Hanuman; (68) Mahesha; (69) Vrisha; (70) Pippalda; (71) Vaishyanatha; (72) Dvijeshvara; (73) Yatinatha Brahma-Hamsa; (74) Krishna-darshana; (75) Avadhuteshvara; (76) Bhikshuvarya; (77) Sureshvara; (78) Brahmachari/Jatila; (79) Sunartaka-nata; (80) Virtuous brahmana; (81) Ashvatthama; (82) Kirateshvara and twelve jyotirlingams. While this total is 94, if one counts names that occur more than once, one does reach 100. There are accounts in this samhita that repeat incidents already mentioned in earlier parts of Shiva Purana.

[702] Ganesha.

[703] White-Red.

[704] Literally, instantly born or newly born.

They became disciples of the great-souled one,[705] who was enveloped by the brahman. Sadyojata Shambhu gave Vidhatri jnana. Pleased, Parameshvara lovingly gave him the power to create,[706]

"The twentieth kalpa is known by the name of Rakta.[707] In this, the immensely energetic Brahma assumed a red complexion. Desiring a son, he meditated, and Vidhatri's son manifested himself. He was adorned in red garlands and red garments. His eyes were red, and his ornaments were red. On seeing that great-souled son, he immersed himself in meditation again. Getting to know that this was Vamadeva Shiva, he joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself. He[708] had four sons who were attired in red garments- Viraja, Vivaha, Vishoka and Vishvabhavana. Vamadeva Shambhu bestowed imana on Vidhatri. Pleased, Parameshvara lovingly gave him the power to create." "[709]

"The twenty-first kalpa is known as Pitavasa. [710] In this, the immensely fortunate Brahma was attired in yellow garments. When he meditated, desiring a son, a son was born to Vidhatri. He wore yellow garments and was mature. He was immensely energetic and mighty-armed. On seeing him, he immersed himself in dhyana and understood that this was Tatpurusha Shiva. Understanding this, Vidhatri prostrated himself and performed japa with Shankara gayatri.[711] This mantra is the great goddess, revered by all the worlds. Seeing that he was immersed in dhyana, Mahadeva was pleased. Divine sons manifested themselves from his[712] sides. All of them were attired in yellow garments and all of them propounded paths of yoga, [713]

"The kalpa when Svayambhu was attired in yellow passed. Another kalpa commenced and it was named Shiva. Everything was a single ocean of water and more than one thousand divine years passed. Desiring to create subjects, Brahma miserably immensely energetic son manifest thought. He then saw an himself. He was immensely valiant and dark in complexion. As a result of his own energy, he was radiant. He was attired in black garments and wore a black headdress. His sacrificial thread was black. He wore a black diadem, and he was smeared with black unguents. He saw the great-souled Aghora, terrible in valour. He worshipped the lord of devas, who had that extraordinary dark and tawny complexion. Brahma thought of Aghora as a form of the brahman. He meditated on the undecaying one who is affectionate towards his devotees and praised him with eloquent words. From his sides, four great-souled sons manifested themselves.

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705 Sadyojata.

706 This is Sadyojata avatara.

707 Red.

708 Brahma.

709 This is Vamadeva avatara.

710 With yellow garments.

711 There are variations of the gayatri mantra, addressed to specific devas. The one mentioned here is Rudra-Mahadeva gayatri or Shankara gayatri. As cited in Mahanaryana Upanishad, it is 'tatpurushaya vidmahe mahadevaya dhimahi tanno rudra prachodoyat'. 'May we comprehend that Purusha. For that, we meditate on Mahadeva. May Rudra urge us towards that objective.

712 Brahma's.

713 This is Tatpurusha avatara.

They were dark and smeared in black unguents. They were Krishna, Krishnashikha, Krishnasya and Krishnakanthadhrik. These were extremely energetic forms of Shiva, who is known to be not manifest.To ensure Brahma's task of creation, these great-souled ones started the great and wonderful yoga known as Ghora.[714]

"O lords among sages! Another of Brahma's kalpas started. This was supremely wonderful and is known under the name of Vishvarupa. Desiring a son, in his mind, Brahma meditated on Shiva. With a great sound, Sarasvati manifested herself and the universe was her form. In that way, Bhagavan Ishana Parameshvara also manifested himself. He sparkled like crystal, and he was adorned in every kind of ornament. On seeing him, Brahma prostrated himself before the Lord Ishana, who is without origin. He goes everywhere and is in everything. He is everything. He is beautiful in form, but also lacks any forms. Lord Ishana instructed Brahma about the virtuous path. Along with Shakti, he arranged for four auspicious sons. Jati, Mundi, Shikhandi and Arddhamunda were born. They instructed about the virtuous dharma of yoga and attained the destination pursued by yoga, "[715]

"O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! I have thus briefly told you about the origin of Sadyojata and the others, for the sake of the welfare of the worlds. O immensely wise one! Their conduct is also in accordance with this, for the welfare of the three worlds and for everything that is established in this universe. The five forms of Mahesha are famous as Ishana, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva and Sadyojata. Ishana is said to be Shiva's first and most important form. He is the one who enjoys Prakriti and is directly established in kshetrajna.[716] Tatpurusha is said to be Shiva's second form. O one who knows everything! The third form of the wielder of Pinaka is established within and is known as Aghora. For the sake of dharma, it exists in intelligence. The fourth form of Shankara is known as Vamadeva. It is always based in ahamkara and undertakes many kinds of tasks. Shankara's form as Ishana is present in space. Through this form, Ishvara exists in the ears and in speech. Intelligent ones reflect and speak of Tatpurusha as Ishvara's form that presides over skin, hands, touch and wind. Learned ones say that the form of Aghora is established in the body Shankara's form, is said to preside over the tongue, the anus as taste, form and fire. In that way, Vamadeva, and water. The learned know that Shankara's form as Sadyojata presides over smell, the genital organs and the earth. Those who desire their benefit must always make efforts to worship these forms of Shambhu. That becomes a cause for welfare. If a person reads, or hears, about the origin of Sadyojata and the others, he enjoys everything that he wishes for and proceeds to the supreme destination.""

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[714] This is Aghora avatara.

[715] This is Ishana avatara.

[716] The jivatman. Ishana is established in the jivatman, Tatpurusha in nature, Aghora in intelligence, Vamadeva in ahamkara and Sadyojata in the mind. For senses of perception (jnanedriyas), Ishana presides over the ears, Tatpurusha over the skin, Aghora over the eyes, Vamadeva over the tongue and Sadyojata over the nose. They are thus respectively associated with sound, touch, form, taste and smell. For organs of action (karmendriyas), they are respectively associated with the mouth, hands, feet, the anus and the genital organs. There is also an identification with the five gross elements-Ishana with space, Tatpurusha with wind, Aghora with fire, Vamadeva with water and Sadyojata with earth. In a five-faced lingam, Sadyojata will face the west, Tatpurusha will face the east, Vamadeva will face the north, Ishana will face upwards and Aghora will face the south.

Chapter 231-4(2) (Shiva's Eight Forms)

“Nandishvara said, "O son! Hear about the lord Mahesha's supreme avataras. O sage! They perform every kind of act in the world and ensure happiness for everyone. In the world, Shambhu Paresha has eight forms. They are established, pervading the universe, which is stretched out like jewels on a string. These eight forms are known as Sharva, Bhava, Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Pashupati, Ishana and Mahadeva. [717] These eight forms of Shiva, Sharva and the others, are established in earth, water, fire, wind, space, kshetrajna, the sun and the one who brings about the night. There is a form that holds up the universe, with its mobile and immobile entities. The earth depends on this. The sacred texts have determined this form of Shankara Mahesha to be Sharva. Bhava is spoken of as paramatman's form with water in its atman. It fills the world and provides life to the entire universe. The lord's form throbs inside existence and shines inside and outside the universe. The virtuous speak of this as Ugra. There is a terrible form that pervades everything and provides space to everything, with the sky as its atman. It segregates the elements and is spoken of as Bhima. There is a form that is in all jivatmans and resides in all bodies. It severs the bonds that bind animals and is known as Pashupati. In the form of the sun, there is a form that illuminates the entire world. This form of Mahesha's moves along the firmament and is known as Ishana. The maker of the night covers the world with beams that are like amrita. This form of the great divinity is known as Mahadeva. The atman is paramatman Shiva's eighth form.[719] Shiva's atman envelopes the other forms and pervades the universe. When the root of a tree is sprinkled with water, the tree's branches are nourished. In that way, when Shiva is worshipped, the body of the entire universe is nourished. In this world, the father is pleased when the sons and grandsons are pleased. In that way, when the universe is pleased, Shankara is pleased. If anything with a body is cut down or bound, there is no doubt that this causes harms to the eight forms. In these eight forms, Shiva is established in the universe. In every possible way, worship Rudra. He is the supreme cause. O Vidhatri's son! I have spoken about his eight famous forms. Men who desire benefit for themselves serve them and are engaged in bringing benefit to everyone.""

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[717] Sharva presides over earth, Bhava over water, Rudra over fire, Ugra over wind, Bhima over space, Pashupati over the jivatman, Ishana over the sun and Mahadeva over the moon.

[718] The word pashu indicating all living beings.

[719] Eight forms have been mentioned and the adjective 'eighth' doesn't belong here. This form transcends the preceding eight forms.

Chapter 232-4(3) (Arddha-Nari-Nara Avatara

“Nandishvara said, "O son! O immensely wise one! Nan Listen. Shiva's excellent form, known as arddha-nari-nara, accomplished Vidhatri's wishes. The subjects created by Vidhatri did not flourish. Overcome by thoughts and grief, he was miserable. At that time, a voice was heard from the sky. 'Carry out creation through couples.' Hearing this, Brahma wanted to carry out another creation [720] through couples. Earlier, no women had emerged from Ishana's lineage. Therefore, the one born from the lotus was unable to carry out creation through couples. 'Without Shambhu's powers, such subjects will not be born.' Thinking this, Brahma started to perform austerities. In his heart, he lovingly thought of Parameshvara, united with supreme Shivaa Shakti, and performed those supreme austerities. Svayambhu engaged in those terrible austerities. Within a short period of time, Shiva was quickly satisfied. Isha, who is complete consciousness, entered a form, so as to satisfy wishes. Hara assumed this arddha-nari-nara[721] form and approached Brahma. On seeing the divinity Shankara united with Shakti, like a rod, Brahma prostrated himself on the ground. He joined his hands in salutation and praised him. The divinity Mahadeva addressed him in words that rumbled like the clouds. Extremely pleased, Maheshvara, the creator of the universe, had manifested himself. Ishvara said, 'O son! O immensely fortune one! O child! O grandfather who is my son! I know the truth about every wish in your mind, You are now engaged in performing these austerities so that subjects increase. I am pleased with your austerities and will grant you what you desire.' He addressed him in these naturally sweet and extremely generous words. Having said this, Shiva separated Devi Shivaa from his body. On seeing supreme Shakti separated from Shiva, Vidhatri humbly prostrated himself before her and entreated her. Brahma said, 'O Shivaa! Your husband, lord of devas, asked me to create. Shambhu, the paramatman, engaged me in this task of creating all the subjects. O Shivaa! I created all of them, devas and others, through my mind. But they did not increase, and I have to create them again and again. Therefore, I now wish to create through the powers of couples. That is how I wish to increase all my subjects. Earlier, an undecaying lineage of women did not emerge from you. Therefore, I did not possess the capacity to create a supreme lineage of women. Indeed, in truth, all the Shaktis originate from you. O Ishvari of everything! Therefore, I am entreating you, the supreme Shakti. O Shivaa! I prostrate myself before you. Please give me the capacity to create a lineage of women. O one loved by Shiva! This is for the increase of mobile and immobile entities in the universe. O Ishvari who bestows boons! There is another boon I seek from you. O mother of the universe! I bow down before you. Please show me your compassion and give it to me. O Ambika! For the welfare of mobile and immobile entities, which can only occur through Isha, become the daughter of my son, Daksha.' Brahma sought this from Devi Parameshvari. She spoke words of assent and gave Vidhatri that capacity. Devi Shivaa is Shiva's Shakti and pervades the universe. From the middle of her eyebrows, she created another Shakti, equal to her own self in radiance. Mahesha is an ocean of compassion and engages in pastimes. The great divinity, Hara, saw this Shakti. Bhava smiled and spoke to Ambika. Shiva said, 'O Devi! Through austerities, Parameshthi Brahma has worshipped you.

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[720] Brahma's earlier creations were through his mental powers.

[721] Half-woman and half-man.

Be pleased and be affectionate towards him. Please do everything that he wishes She lowered her head and accepted Paramesha's command Following Brahma's words, Devi became Daksha's daughter. O sage! Shivaa bestowed unmatched powers on Brahma and entered Shambhu's body again. The lord Shambhu vanished from the spot. Since then, the category of women has been created in the world. Vidhatri was delighted and creation took place through intercourse. O son! I have thus spoken to you about Shiva's great and excellent form. This is arddha-nari-nara and this account brings great auspiciousness to the virtuous. If an unblemished person reads or hears it, he enjoys all the objects of pleasure and proceeds to the supreme destination."

Chapter 233-4(4) (Story of Rishabha)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O one who knows 'Neverything! Shankara's conduct ensures happho knows of love and to bring him joy, Rudra told Brahma about it.""

"Shiva said, 'In the seventh kalpa, known as Varaha kalpa, in Vaivasvata manvantara, Bhagavan Kalpeshvara, who illuminates all the worlds, will become your great grandson, Vaivasvata Manu.[722] O Vidhatri! From that manvantara, the system of four yugas will start. O Vidhatri! O Brahma! I can see what will happen at the end of the yuga known as dvapara, for the benefit of the worlds and for the welfare of brahmanas. O Brahma! When the system of yugas starts, in that first cycle of yugas, in the first dvapara yuga, the Vyasa will be Svayamprabhu.[723] For the welfare of brahmanas, at the end of kali yuga, I will be born as a great sage named Shveta and Shivaa will be with me. I will be on the summit of the Himalayas, on the beautiful and supreme mountain of Chagala. O Vidhatri! I will have four disciples, Shveta, Shvetashikha, Shvetashva and Shvetalohita, and they will have tufts of hair. They will immerse themselves in dhyana and yoga and go to my city. Knowing the truth about my undecaying nature, they will become my devotees. Freed from birth, death and old age, they will fix their minds on the supreme brahman. O grandfather! Other than through dhyana, men are incapable of seeing me. O child! The dharma of donations and other means that cause karma do not suffice. In the second dvapara yuga, the Vyasa will be the Prajapati named Satya. In kali yuga, I will become Sutara. My disciples will be brahmanas who know the Vedas, Dundubhi, Shatarupa, Hrishika and Ketuman. These four will immerse themselves in dhyana and yoga and go to my city. Knowing the truth about my undecaying nature, they will be emancipated there. In the third dvapara yuga, Bhargava will be Vyasa. I will be born as Damana and will live on the outskirts of the city. I will have four sons, Vishoka, Vishesha, Vipapa and Papanashana. O one with the four faces! During kali yuga, along with my disciples, I will help Vyasa firmly establish the path of nivritti. In the fourth dvapara yuga, Angiras will be known as Vyasa. I will be born and will be known under the name of Suhotra. At that time too, I will have four sons who will follow the path of yoga. O Vidhatri! I will tell you the names of those great-souled ones-Sumukha, Durmukha, Dudarbha and Duratikrama. O Vidhatri! With these disciples, I will help Vyasa. In the fifth duapara yuga, Savitar will be known as Vyasa.

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[722] Brahma's son Daksha, Daksha's daughter Aditi, Aditi's son Vivasvat (Surya) and Vivasvat's son Vaivasvata Manu.

[723] In every dvapara yuga, there is a different Vyasa.

I will be the great yogi and ascetic, named Kanka. I will have four great-souled sons who will follow Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanatkumara. They will be without the path of yoga. Listen to the names of these lords-Sanaka, blemish and without ahamkara. O Vidhatri! Along with them, under the name of Kanka, I will help Vyasa Savitar enhance the path of nivritti. O creator of the worlds! The sixth duapara yuga will follow. The Vyasa will be Mrityu, who will collate and classify the Vedas. I will then be born under the name of Lokakshi. I will help Vyasa enhance the path of nivritti. I will have four disciples who will be firm in their vows-Sudhama, Viraja, Sanjaya and Vijaya. In the seventh duapara yuga, Shatakaru will be Vyasa. O Vidhatri! I will be born as the lord Jaigishavya. I will be a discriminating and great yogi and will make the path of yoga steady. I will be seated on mat of kusha grass, in a divine spot inside a cave, in the region of Kashi. I will help Vyasa Shatakratu. O Vidhatri! I will save devotees from the fear of samsara. When it is the eighth dvapara yuga, the excellent sage, Vasishtha, will be Vedavyasa and will classify the Vedas. I will be born under the name Dadhivahana. O one excellent in yoga! I will help Vyasa. I will have four yogis as sons and they will be my equals-Kapila, Asura, Panchashikha and Shalvala. O Vidhatri! When it is the ninth duapara yuga, Sarasvata, best among sages, will be Vyasa. Vyasa will meditate, so as to enhance the path of nivritti. I will be born and will be known under the name of Rishabha. I will have four disciples, Parashara, Garga, Bhargava and Girisha, and they will be excellent yogis. O Prajapati! Along with them, I will make the path of yoga steady. I will help Vedavyasa, the virtuous sage. O Vidhatri! Full of compassion, in that form, I will save many miserable devotees. O Vidhatri! That avatara of mine will be known under the name of Rishabha and will be excellent in yoga. Undertaking many deeds, I will help Sarasvata Vyasa. Prince Bhadrayu will be abandoned by his father because he will be poisoned. However, though he will die, in that avatara, I will bring him back to life. When he attains the age of sixteen years and is proud because he is a king. as Rishabha, I will suddenly go to his house. He will worship the sage, whose form will be that of an ocean of compassion. O Prajapati! I will instruct him about the appropriate dharma for ruling over a kingdom. Pleased in my mind, I will give him a divine kavacha, conch shell and a radiant sword, which will destroy all enemies. Compassionate and affectionate towards the dejected, I will smear his body with ashes, so that he gets the strength of twelve thousand elephants. After this, properly worshipped by Bhadrayu and his mother, the Lord Rishabha will go away, as he wills. Rajarshi Bhadrayu will defeat many enemies in battle. He will follow dharma in ruling over the kingdom and will marry Kirtimalini. Such will be the powers of Rishabha, Shankara's avatara. My ninth avatara will be spoken of as the destination of the virtuous and the friend of the miserable. Rishabha's conduct will be great and supremely purifying. If a person makes efforts to listen to it, he will obtain heaven, fame and a long lifespan."""

Chapter 234-4(5) (Nineteen of Shiva's Avataras)

“Shiva said, 'In the tenth dvapara yuga, the sage Tridhama will be Vyasa. In the summits of the Himalayas, he will remain in the beautiful mountain of Bhrigutunga. My sons will be learned and will be Bhrigu and others-Balabandhu, Naramitra and Ketushringa, store of austerities. In the eleventh dvapara, Trivrita will be Vyasa. I will be born in Gangadvara under the name of Kali and will perform austerities. I will have four sons who will be firm in their vows-Lambodara, Lambaksha, Keshalamba and Pralambaka. In the twelfth dvapara, Shatateja will be the one who classifies the Vedas. When dvapara is over and it is kali yuga,

I will be born. I will wear a golden bodice and will have the name of Atri. I will engage myself in helping Vyasa establish the path of nivritti, O great sage![724] I will have four sons, Sarvajna, Samabuddhi Sadhya and Sharva and they will be excellent yogis. In the thirteenth duapara, Narayana will be Vyasa and he will always follow dharma. I will be a great sage, under the name of Bali and will be in the hermitage of the valakhilyas [725] in the supreme mountain of Gandhamadana. My auspicious sons will be Sudhama, Kashyapa, Vasishtha and Viraja. In the fourteenth dvapara, Raksha will be known as Vyasa. I will be born as Goutama, in the lineage of Angiras. In that kali yuga, my sons will be Atri, Devashada, Shravana and Shravishkata. In the fifteenth dvapara, Trayaruni will be Vyasa. I will be Vedashira, fount of the Vedas, and will be immensely valiant because of that weapon. On the slopes of the Himalayas, on the northern bank of Sarasvati, I will be in the mountain known as Vedashirsha. I will have four steadfast sons-Kuni, Kunibahu, Kusharira and Kunetraka. In the sixteenth dvapara, Deva will be Vyasa. To impart yoga to him, I will be born as Gokarna, in the extremely sacred forest that is known as Gokarna. I will have four yogis as sons, and they will be revered by the waters there. They will be Kashyapa, Ushanas, Chyavana and Brihaspati. They will follow that path and go to Shiva's abode. In the seventeenth dvapara, Devakritanjaya will be Vyasa. On the auspicious peaks of the Himalayas, I will be born under the name of Guhavasin. There is a great temple on the lofty summit on the Himalayas there and it is Shiva's kshetra. My sons will be Utathya, Vamadeva, Mahayoga and Mahabala. In the eighteenth dvapara, Ritanjaya will be Vyasa. On thatauspicious summit, I will be born under the name of Shikhandin. In that extremely sacred siddha kshetra, there is a mountain named Shikhandin. There is also a forest named Shikhandin, frequented by siddhas. My sons, stores of austerities, will be Vachahshrava, Ruchika, Syavasya and Yatishvara. In the nineteenth dvapara, Bharadvaja, the great sage, will be Vyasa. I will be born under the name of Jatimali. On the peaks of the Himalayas, I will have sons who will be revered by the waters there. They will be Hiranyanama, Koushalya, Lokakshi and Pradhimi. In the twentieth dvapara, Goutama will be Vyasa. I will be born under the name of Attahasa and the men there will laugh loudly. [726] On the slopes of the Himalayas, there is a great mountain known as Attahasa, frequented by devas, humans, yakshas, Indra, siddhas and charanas. My sons will be excellent yogis and they will be Sumantu, the learned Barbari, Kabandha and Kushikandhara. In the twenty-first dvapara, Vachahshrava will be Vyasa. In the auspicious forest of Daruvana, I will be born under the name of Daruka. I will have sons who will be excellent yogis-Plaksha, Darbhayani, Ketuman and Goutama. In the twenty-second dvapara, Shushmayana will be Vyasa. I will be born as a great sage in Varanasi. My name will be Languli Bhima. Devas, including Vasava, will see me in that kali yuga as Bhava and Halayudha. My sons will be extremely devoted to dharma. They will be Bhallavi, Madhupinga, Shveta and Ketu. In the twenty-third dvapara, the sage Trinabindu will be Vyasa. In the auspicious mountain of Kalanjara, I will be born under the name of Shveta.

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[724] Since Shiva is speaking to Brahma, this is an inconsistency.

[725] Sixty thousand sages who are the sizes of thumbs. They precede the sun's chariot.

[726] The word atthasa means loud laughter.

My sons will be ascetics-Ushika, Brihadashva, Devala and Kavi. In the twenty-fourth dvapara, Vibhu will be Vyasa. In that yuga, I will be born in Naimisha as a great yogi, named Shuli. My disciples will be ascetics-Shalihotra, Agnivesha, Yuvanashva and Sharadvasu. In the twenty-fifth dvapara, the one named Shakti will be Vyasa. I will be a great yogi who will hold a staff, the lord Mundishvara. At that time too, my and Pravahaka. In the twenty-sixth dvapara, Parashara will be disciples will be ascetics-Chagala, Kundakarna, Kumbhanda Vyasa. I will be born under the name of Sahishnu and will reach the city of Bhadravata. My disciples there will be ascetics-Uluka, Vidyuta, Shambuka and Ashvalayana. In the twenty-seventh dvapara, Jatukarnya will be Vyasa. I will be born as Somasharma and will base myself in the tirtha of Prabhasa. At that time too, my disciples will be ascetics-Akshapada, Kumara, Uluka and Vatsa."""

"In the twenty-eighth dvapara,[727] Parashara's son will be Vyasa and the lord will have the name of Dvaipayana. With one-sixth of his portion, Hari Purushottama will be born as Krishna. He will be the best among Vasudeva's sons and will be known as Vaasudeva. With yoga in my atman and possessing the maya of yoga, I will be born. My body will be that of a brahmachari. I will see a body that has been abandoned in the cremation ground. For the welfare of brahmanas, I will use the maya of yoga to enter it and make the body free of ailments, thus causing amazement among people. Along with you and Vishnu, I will then enter a divine and sacred cave in Meru. O Brahma! At that time, I will be born under the name of Lakuli. The place where the avatara assumes a physical body will be a supreme siddha kshetra.[728] As long as the earth lasts, that place will be extremely famous. There too, I will have ascetic disciples-Kushika, Garga, Mitra and Kourushya. Yogis, brahmanas, those who are accomplished in the Vedas and those who hold up their seed obtain Maheshvara yoga and go to Shiva's city. In Vaivasvata manvantara, the paramatman's avataras as lords of yoga have been properly described to you. All these avataras will be excellent in their vows. O lord! With one in every duapara yuga, there will be twenty-eight Vyasas. The avataras as lords of yoga will occur when every kali yuga starts. These avataras as lords of yoga will enhance the path of yoga. On each occasion, there will be four undecaying disciples who will be great devotees of Shiva. These disciples, known as Pashupatas, will smear ashes and dust over their bodies. As ornaments, they will wear strings of rudraksha beads. Their heads will bear the Tripundraka mark. [729] All these disciples will be devoted to dharma and will be accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. Inside and outside, they will always base themselves on worship of the lingam. They will conquer their senses and be full of devotion towards me. They will concentrate on yoga and dhyana. The learned reckon their number to be one hundred and twelve. [730] I have thus told you about the signs of the avataras, starting with Manu and ending with Krishna, [731] progressively amounting to twenty-eight. O Brahma!

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[727] In this manvantara, there have been 28 cycles of the four yugas and 28 dvapara yugas, with a Vedavyasa born in each dvapara yuga.

[728] The text uses the expression kayavatara, where the avatara assumes a physical body. A slight modification is kayavarohana, descent in the form of a physical body. Kayavarohan or Karvan is in Vadodara district in Gujarat and is believed to be the place where Lakulisha (literally, the lord with a staff) was born. The Lakulisha lingam and temple exist in Karvan.

729 The three horizontal lines on the forehead, indicative on devotion to Shiva, explained in detail in Volume I.

[730] 4 x 28 112, four for each dvapara yuga.

[731] Meaning Krishna Dvaipayana.

As with Krishna Dvaipayana, in every kalpa, the ordinances of the shruti texts are classified.""""

'Nandhishvara concluded, "After showing his favours and telling Brahma this, Maheshvara, lord of devas, glanced at him again and vanished from the spot.""

Chapter 235-4(6) (The Nandikeshvara avatara

“Sanatkumara asked, "How were you born as an auspicious portion of Mahadeva? I wish to hear everything about this. O lord! You should tell me.""

'Nandishvara replied, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Listen attentively. O sage! I will tell you how I was born as a portion of Mahadeva and how I obtained Shiva. Desiring offspring, the ancestors affectionately spoke to Shilada. With devotion in his mind, he wished to raise them up.[732] With dharma in his soul, the valiant Shilada cast his glance downwards. Following the conduct of a sage, he went to Shiva's world. Directed towards Shakra, the sage tormented himself through extremely difficult austerities. His mind did not waver. For a long period of time, the one known as Shilada was firm in his vows. He tormented himself through such austerities and Shatakratu [733] was satisfied. The lord of all devas arrived there, to grant him a boon. Shakra spoke lovingly to Shilada. 'O unblemished one! I am pleased with you. O tiger among sages! Choose a boon.' Shilada prostrated himself before the lord of devas and lovingly praised him with hymns. Joining his hands properly in salutation, the tiger among sages spoke. Shilada said, 'O Shatakratu! O lord of gods! O lord! I desire a son who will be excellent in his vows. He will not be born from a womb and will not suffer death.' Shakra replied, 'O great sage! For someone who desires a son, I can only grant a son who will be born from a womb and will suffer death. I cannot give you a son who is not born from a womb and who will not suffer death. Since there is no one who does not suffer death,

I cannot grant you that. Hari and Vidhatri also face an end. There is no need to speak of others. Those two originated from Tripura's enemy. However, they also die. The nigama texts have separately spoken about the lengths of their lifespans. Therefore, give up your attempts to obtain a son who is not born from a womb and one who will not suffer death. O Indra among brahmanas! Give up that hope and accept a son who will be like you. However, if Rudra Maheshvara, lord of devas, is pleased, you may get a son who is not born from a womb and who will not die, even though that is extremely difficult to obtain. O great sage! I, Vishnu and Bhagavan Druhina are incapable of granting you a son who is not born from a womb and who does not suffer death. If you desire such a son, worship Mahadeva. The immensely powerful Sarveshvara is capable of granting you such a son.' Having spoken to the Indra among brahmanas in this way and displaying favours and compassion, the lord of gods returned to his own world, surrounded by devas.""

[732] Without descendants, the ancestors would descend downwards, into hell.

[733] Performer of one hundred sacrifices, Indra's name.

"When the one with one thousand eyes, the granter of boons, went away, Shilada started to worship Mahadeva, seeking to satisfy Bhava with his austerities. Day and night, the brahmana intently performed this. One thousand divine years passed, like an instant. The sage's body was covered with termites, hundreds of thousands and crores of them. Some of them were as tough as the vajra, others with mouths like needles. In every direction, they sucked his blood. He remained in that pit, devoid of flesh and blood. Shilada, supreme among sages, was reduced to bare bones. The lord was satisfied with him and showed him his own form. It was divine, with all the divine qualities. Those who are crooked in intelligence cannot reach him. He tormented himself for one thousand divine years. The wielder of the trident, the lord of all devas, told him, 'I am here to grant you a boon.' Shilada, the great sage, was immersed in a great samadhi. Shambhu is subservient to his devotees. But he did not hear his words. It was only when Tripura's enemy touched the sage with his hand that the tiger among sages gave up his observance of austerities. The sage opened his eyes and saw Shambhu, along with Uma. O sage! Delighted, he quickly prostrated himself at his feet. He lowered his shoulders and joined his hands in salutation. As a result of his joy, his voice choked. Pleased in his mind, Shilada praised Parameshvara. Bhagavan, the three-eyed lord of devas, was pleased. He told Shilada, bull among sages, 'I am the one who bestows boons. O immensely wise one! What do you have to do with such austerities? I will grant you a son who knows everything. He will be accomplished in the purport of all the sacred texts. Hearing this, Shilada prostrated himself before the lord of devas. In words that choked because of his joy, he addressed the one who wears the moon as an ornament. Shilada said, 'O Mahesha! If you are satisfied with me and if you wish to grant me a boon, I desire a son who will be your equal. He will not be born from a womb, and he will not suffer death.' Addressed in this way, the three-eyed divinity, Shankara, was pleased in his mind. He replied to Shilada, supreme among sages. Shiva said, 'O brahmana! O store of austerities! Brahma, sages and best among gods have worshipped me through austerities earlier, for the sake of my taking an avatara. I will become your son Nandi and will not be born through a womb. O sage! I am the father of the universe, and you will become my father. The compassionate one glanced at the sage, who was in that position of prostrating himself. Having instructed him, along with Uma, Hara immediately vanished from the spot.""

"When Mahadeva departed, Shilada, the great sage, returned to his own hermitage and told the rishis about this. After some time, my father, who knew about performing sacrifices, had a sacrificial arena built, so that a sacrifice could be performed. At that time, following what Shambhu had commanded earlier, I was born from his body, with a radiance like that of the fire at the end of a yuga. Pushkara, Avarta and other clouds showered down. When I was born as Shilada's son, those that travel through the sky, kinnaras, siddhas and sadhyas sang. From every direction, Indras among rishis showered down flowers. Delighted, Brahma and the other devas arrived there, along with wives of devas. Hari arrived and so did Shiva, with Ambika. There were great festivities and large numbers of apsaras danced. Delighted, they welcomed me as the lingam and worshipped me. Using hymns, they praised Shilada and also praised Shiva and Shivaa. All of them returned to their own abodes and so did Shiva and Shivaa, the lords of everything. Shilada saw me, as radiant as the sun or the fire at the time of destruction. I was a boy with three eyes and four arms, wearing matted hair and a diadem. I blazed and held a trident as a weapon. In every possible way, I was Rudra's form. Filled with great bliss, he lovingly prostrated himself before me.

Shilada said, O lord of gods! Since you have delighted me, your name will be Nandi. [734] Therefore, I prostrate myself before the lord of the universe, who is bliss.' After prostrating himself properly before Maheshvara, along with me, my father returned happily to his own cottage, like a poor person who had obtained a nidhi. O great sage! When I reached Shilada's cottage, I cast off that divine form and assumed a human one. Seeing me resort to a human form, my father, revered by the worlds, lamented miserably, surrounded by his own people. Shilada, Shalankayana's son, was affectionate towards his son and performed jatakarma and all the other rites. By the time I was five years old, my father taught me the Vedas, along with the Vedangas and subsidiary parts, and the other sacred texts. When I attained seven years of age, following the lord's command, the sages known as Mitra-Varuna[735] came to the hermitage to see me. Honoured by the sage,[736] the two great sages seated themselves comfortably. The two great-souled ones looked at me repeatedly and spoke. Mitra-Varuna said, 'O son! Though he knows the purport of all the sacred texts, Nandi will have a short lifespan. We do not see his lifespan as being more than one year from now! When the two brahmanas said this, Shilada, who loved his son, embraced me. Afflicted by grief, he lamented loudly. I saw that my father and grandfather[737] had fallen down, as if they were dead. Cheerful in my mind, I remembered Shiva's lotus feet and spoke. 'O father! Why are you miserable and trembling? Why are you weeping? What is the source of this grief? I wish to know the truth.' My father replied, 'O son! I am miserable and grieving because of your premature death. Who can remove my sorrow? I will go and seek refuge with him.' The son replied, 'Even if devas, danavas, Yama, Kala or anyone else is angry with me, I will not have a short lifespan. Do not grieve. O father! I am telling you the truth and will take a pledge.' The father asked, 'What are your austerities? What is your supreme jnana? What is your yoga? Who is your lord? O son! How can you sweep away this terrible grief?' The son replied, 'O father! Death cannot be deceived through austerities or learning. Death can be defeated by worshipping Mahadeva, not in any other way.' O sage! Saying this, I lowered my head and prostrated myself at my father's feet. Performing pradakshina around him, I left for an excellent forest.""

Chapter 236-4(7) (Nandikeshvara's Abhisheka and Marriage)

“Nandikeshvara said, "O sage! Having gone there, with an excellent mind, I I remained in a single spot. I tormented myself through fierce austerities that are difficult for even virtuous sages to perform. In the lotus that is the cavity of my heart, I performed dhyana on the three-eyed divinity, in his three-eyed, ten-armed, five-faced and serene Sadashiva form. Resorting to supreme dhyana, I performed japa with Rudra's name. I was controlled on the northern bank of that sacred river. Shiva was pleased with that japa. Pleased, Mahadeva, with the half-moon as his ornament and with Uma, spoke. Shiva said, 'O Shilada's son! I am satisfied with your austerities. I am the one who bestows boons. O intelligent one! You have performed the austerities virtuously. Tell me what is in your mind. Addressed by the divinity in this way, I bowed my head down at his feet. I, Nandi, was filled with great devotion towards Shambhu. My eyes were full of tears, and I completely lowered my head on his feet.

[734] From nandati, to cause delight. Nandi is one who brings delight.

[735] Meaning the sages Vasishtha and Agastya, who were bom through Mitra and Varuna.

[736] That is, Shilada.

[737] Shalankayana and Shilada.

Paramesha raised me up. He touched me with hands that remove the greatest of afflictions. Having gathered me up, Vrishadhvaja stood in front of me. The lord of the universe glanced at the leaders of the ganas and at Devi, Himalaya's daughter. He cast a look of compassion towards me and spoke. 'O Nandi! O immensely wise one! How can you be afraid of death? I sent those two brahmanas. There is no doubt that you are my equal. You will be free from old age and death. You will not be miserable. You will always be a anapati. You will be without transformations and with your father and your well-wishers, your efforts will be inexhaustible. You will always be my attendant and my strength. You will always be loved by me. Through my favours, you will never suffer from birth, old age or death.' Saying this, the ocean of compassion took off the garland of lotuses that was around his head and quickly hung it around my neck. O brahmanal As soon as that auspicious garland was hung around my neck, I became three-eyed and ten-armed, like a second Shankara. Parameshvara then took me by the hand and asked, "Tell me. What excellent boon will I bestow on you now?' He took the sparkling water that was wound around his matted hair like a necklace and said, 'Be Nandi.' When Vrishadhvaja released the water, five rivers with auspicious streams started to flow These rivers had excellent water and were very swift. They were handsome and divine in form. They were Jatodaka, Trisrota, Vrishadhvani, Svarnodaka and Jambunadi. These are spoken of as the five rivers. O sage! In this region of Panchanada,[738] there is Shiva's auspicious spot. It is near Japeshvara and is supremely sacred.[739] If a person goes to Panchanada, bathes there, performs japa to Ishvara and worships, there is no doubt that he proceeds to sayujya with Shiva. [740]

"After this, Shambhu spoke to Uma and said, 'I wish to perform abhisheka of Nandi and proclaim him as an Indra among ganas. O undecaying one! What do you think?' Uma replied, 'O lord of devas! O Parameshvara! You should bestow that on Nandi. O lord! Shilada's son is extremely loved by me.' Parameshvara rules himself and is always affectionate towards his devotees. Shankara remembered all his excellent leaders of ganas. As soon as Rudra remembered them, all the lords among ganas arrived. There were innumerable extremely delighted ones and all of them had the same form as Shankara. All the lords of ganas prostrated themselves before Shiva and Devi and uttered these auspicious words. Those immensely strong ones lowered their shoulders, clasped their hands together and prostrated themselves. The lords of ganas said, O great lord! Why have you remembered us? Please command us. O destroyer of Tripura! O one who bestows wishes! We are your servants and have come here. Will we dry up the oceans? Will we kill Yama and his servants? Will we convey Death to a great death? In particular, will we kill the aged one born from a lotus? Will we bind Indra and devas, or Vishnu and his attendants? Will we angrily bring the daityas, along with the danavas? Following your command, to whom will we now cause terrible hardships? O divinity! Is there someone now who needs to be made festive, with every kind of desire and prosperity?'

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[738] Usually, the land of the five rivers, Panchanada, is identified as the Punjab. In this particular case, that identification is not obvious. There is also the Pancheshvara temple to Shiva, along the border between India and Nepal.

[739] There is a Japeshvara temple in Japadakatte, in Kodagu district of Karnataka.

[740] Salokya is the ability to reside with the Lord, samipya is proximity to the Lord, sarupya is to be like the Lord in form and sayujya is identification with the Lord. These are different grades of emancipation.

Hearing the words spoken by the ganas, who are brave in speech, Parameshvara praised them and spoke to the lords among ganas. Shiva said, 'This Nandishvara is my son. He is Ishvara of all the lords. He is loved by me. All of you act in accordance with my words and make him the foremost among the ganas. All of you lovingly perform his abhisheka, as my refuge and as the lord of the ganas. From today, Nandishvara will be the lord for all of you.' Thus addressed by Shankara, all the leaders of ganas nas uttered words of assent and brought the necessary materials. The devas and Indra, with Narayana as the foremost, and sages from all the worlds arrived, with delight in their faces. Engaged by Bhagavan Shankara, the grandfather controlled himself and performed everything for Nandi's abhisheka. Vishnu, Shakra, the guardians of the worlds and the rishis, led by the grandfather, praised me with hymns. While they were doing this, Vishnu, the lord of the entire universe, controlled himself, joined his hands in salutation above his head and praised me. He joined his hands in salutation, prostrated himself and exclaimed, 'Victory'. Once Brahma and devas had consecrated and praised me, all the lords of ganas, devas and asuras also did that.""

"O Indra among brahmanas! Instructed by Paramesha, who engaged Parameshthi, my marriage ceremony was also conducted. Vishnu, Brahma and others affectionately arranged for great festivities. The beautiful lady Suyasha was the daughter of the Maruts. She became my divine wife, bringing delight to my mind. She was adorned with an umbrella that had the complexion of the moon. Women who possessed qualities held whisks[741] in their hands and fanned her. She and I sat down on an excellent throne. The great Lakshmi decorated me with a crown and other excellent ornaments. Devi gave me an excellent necklace that she used to wear around her neck. I received an Indra among bulls, a white elephant, a lion, another lion on my standard, a chariot and a golden necklace that resembled the lunar disc. O sage! I received many other objects too. O great sage! With the marriage having been concluded, along with my wife, I worshipped at the feet of Shambhu, Shivaa, Brahma and Hari. Full of great affection, the lord of the three worlds, Shiva, my lord, affectionate towards his devotees, spoke these words to me and my wife. Ishvara said, 'O son! O virtuous son! Along with your beloved Suyasha, listen. Out of affection, as a boon, I have given you whatever your mind wished for. O ganeshvara! I and Devi will always be pleased with you. O child! Listen to my supreme words. You will always be special and be desired by me. You will possess supreme prosperity. Along with your father and your grandfather, you will be a great yogi and a great archer. You will never be vanquished, and you will defeat everyone. You will be immensely strong and will always be worshipped. You will be wherever I am, and I will be wherever you are. O son! Your father will possess supreme prosperity. He will become a leader of ganas. He will be immensely strong

and will be my devotee. O child! Your grandfather will also be like that. I have a rule that anyone who comes to my presence will receive excellent boons.' The immensely fortunate Devi, the one who bestows boons, next spoke to Nandi. 'O son! Ask for a boon, any object of desire you wish for.' Hearing Devi's words, I joined my hands in salutation and replied, 'O Devi! May my devotion always be firm at your feet. Let that be the boon.' Hearing my words, Devi uttered words of assent. Shivaa spoke affectionately to Suyasha, Nandi's beloved.

[741] Chamaras, made of yak hair.

Devi said, 'O child! I grant you the boon that you will have three eyes and will never be born again. You will have sons and grandsons and your devotion towards me will be like that of your husband's.' Following Shiva's command, Brahma, Vishnu and all the large number of devas, cheerfully and affectionately, bestowed boons on her. Isha comforted my relatives and kin. Taking me with him, Ishana mounted the bull, and along with Devi, returned to his own residence. Delighted, Vishnu and all the other gods praised Shiva and Shivaa and left for their own respective abodes. O child! O great sage! I have thus told you about my own avatara.

This account constantly delights men and increases devotion towards Shiva. If a person, full of faith and devotion, reads or hears, or makes it read and heard, this account about Nandi's birth, his obtaining boons and his abhisheka and marriage, he enjoys all the objects of happiness in this world. In the next world, he obtains the desired objective.""

Chapter 237-4(8) (Bhairava Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Listen to Bhairava's account. As soon as one hears this, devotion towards Shiva becomes firm. Bhairava is a complete form of Shankara, the paramatman. Because they are deluded by Shiva's maya, fools do not know this. O Sanatkumara! The four-armed Vishnu and the four-faced Vidhatri do not know about Mahesha's greatness. There is nothing wonderful in this, since what Shambhu does, is impossible to fathom. Since everyone is deluded by this, there are some who do not even worship the supreme one. It is only Parameshvara himself who knows about his atman. Out of their own free wills, no one is capable of knowing about him. Mahesha is everywhere. But those who are foolish in intelligence cannot see him. Though he is beyond thoughts and words, people take him to be a mere deva.""

"O supreme rishi! In this connection, I will tell you about a supreme account. O son! Listen faithfully. This is the cause of supreme jnana. The lord Brahma was on the beautiful and wonderful summit of Meru. O son! All the devarshis went there, wishing to know about the truth. Having gone there, they bowed down before Vidhatri and asked him with a great deal of affection. All the lords among sages lowered their shoulders and joined their hands in salutation. The devarshis said, 'O lord of devas! O lord of subjects! O leader behind the creation of the worlds! Please tell us about the truth. What is the truth about the single one who does not decay?' The one born from the lotus was deluded by Mahesha's maya. Not knowing about the supreme sentiment, he replied with an ordinary sentiment. Brahma said, 'O gods! O rishis! All of you listen lovingly to my excellent view. I will tell you about the supreme truth and about the one who does not truly decay. I am the creator who is the womb of the universe. I am Svayambhu and Aja.[742] I am Ishvara. I am the primordial being. I alone am the brahman. I am the unsullied atman. I am the one who created the universe. I am the one who preserves it, and I am also the one who destroys it. O supreme gods! Other than me, there is no one else. O sage! While Vidhatri was saying this, Vishnu was also present there. Deluded by Aja,[743] he laughed at these words and retorted angrily.

[742] Svayambhu is the one who created himself. Aja is one without origin.

[743] Meaning Shiva.

'O Brahma! These words are not worthy of you. This is foolishness on the part of someone who practices yoga. You do not about the supreme truth and have spoken in vain. I am the creator of all the worlds. I am the paramatman. I am the supreme being. I am the sacrifice. I am Narayana. I am the divinity who is the lord of maya. I am the supreme destination. O Brahma! You carry out creation because of my command. I have ordained it. Without me, there can be no life in the universe. I am Ishvara.' In their delusion, they sought to triumph over each other.""

"Since the nigama texts are regarded as the proof, they asked those three.[744] When they were specifically asked, they remained there, in embodied forms. Since the learned always speak of them as proof, they asked those four.[745] Vidhatri and Vishnu said, 'O Vedas! It is the supreme view that every kind of truth is established in you. Therefore, speak the truth without any fear. Who alone is the one who does not decay?' Hearing their words, Rig and all the others remembered the supreme lord and spoke the truth. 'O divinities! You are the lords of creation and destruction. If you have honoured us, we will tell you about the proof that will dispel your doubts.' Duly hearing what the shruti texts said, the two divinities told the shruti texts, 'We will accept what you cite as proof. Please tell us about the right truth.' Rig Veda said, 'The entity inside which all bhutas exist and from which all of them flow out, is spoken of as the truth. Rudra alone is that. Yajur Veda said, "The proof is that Isha is worshipped through all sacrifices and yoga. There is only one entity who witnesses everything and that is Shiva. Sama Veda said, "There is only one person around whom the universe revolves. He is the one yogis think about. He is the one who illuminates the universe. That supreme being is Tryambaka alone. Atharva Veda said, 'People who are favoured by devotion see him as the lord of devas. He alone is spoken of as Shankara, the one who is beyond misery.' Vidhatri and Hari heard the words spoken by the shruti texts. However, they were still deluded by maya. They smiled, and still lacking in consciousness, replied to the nigama texts. Vidhatri and Hari replied, 'O Vedas! Why are you speaking like this, as if you lack in consciousness? What has happened to all of you now? Why has your great learning been destroyed? The lord of pramathas is constantly engaged in amusing himself with Shivaa. He is naked and is yellow in complexion because he covers himself with dust. His garments are ugly, and he has matted hair. He rides a bull, and his ornaments are serpents. How can he be the supreme brahman? How is he devoid of attachment?" Pranava, who goes everywhere, heard their words. Though disembodied, it assumed a pervasive and embodied form and spoke lovingly to them. Pranava said, 'Bhagavan Isha amuses himself with Shakti, but she is not different from his own atman. Sometimes, Hara Rudra does amuse himself, but that is because, in his pastimes, he assumes many different kinds of forms. He is the eternal Paramesha, who illuminates himself. Shivaa Shakti is not a chance phenomenon. She is his form as bliss.' Even after hearing this, Vidhatri and Vishnu's ignorance wasn't destroyed. This was because of the maya of the one with the beautiful throat.""

"A great radiance manifested itself between them. Its resplendence filled the space between heaven and earth. The form of a being could be seen in the centre of that circle of refulgence.

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[744] The three Vedas, Rig, Sama and Yajur.

[745] With Atharva Veda added.

O sagel Vidhatri and Kratu[746] saw that great form Brahma's fifth head blazed in rage. 'Who has manifested himself between us in the form of this being? Before Vidhatri could think about this, in an instant, that great being was seen to be the three-eyed Nilalohita. He held a trident in his hand and there was a third eye on his forehead. His ornaments were serpents and the moon. Deluded, Hiranyagarbha saw him and laughed and spoke. Brahma said, 'O Nilalohita! O Chandrashekhara! I know you. Do not be scared. Earlier, Rudra manifested himself from my forehead. Since you cried, earlier, I gave you the name of Rudra.[747] O son! Seek refuge with me. I will save you.' O sage! The words of the one who was born from the lotus were laced with insolence. Hearing them, Ishvara became extremely angry, as if he was going to bring about dissolution. When he became angry, he created the being known as Bhairava. After this, Parameshvara spoke affectionately to that blaze of great radiance. Ishvara said, 'O Kalabhairava! You must first chastise the one born from the lotus. Since you blazed like Kala, you are yourself Kalaraja. You are capable of supporting the universe and will be known as the terrible Bhairava. Since you terrify Kala, you will be Kalabhairava.[748] When you are enraged, you will crush the ones who are evil-souled. You will be famous everywhere as the one who crushes. In an instant, you will devour the sins of devotees. Therefore, your name will also be Papabhakshana.[749] O Kalaraja! My city of Kashi, which bestows emancipation, is the greatest of all cities. You will always possess lordship there. You are the only one who will chastise wicked men there. The tally of their auspicious and inauspicious deeds will be maintained by Chitragupta."[750]

"Having received these boons, using the tips of the nails on his left hand, Kalabhairava immediately tore off Vidhatri's head.[751] The limb that caused the offence is the one that must be chastised. Hence, the fifth head, which was responsible for the criticism, was severed. Seeing that Vidhatri's head had been severed, Hari became even more scared. Using the Shatarudriya mantra,[752] he praised Shankara. Terrified, Hiranyagarbha also performed japa with the Shatarudriya mantra. O sage! Both of them instantly lost their pride. Shiva is directly the supreme brahman. His characteristics are truth, consciousness and bliss.[753] He is the paramatman who is beyond the gunas. The two of them acquired this jnana. O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Listen to these supreme and auspicious words. As long as there is insolence, jnana is specially hidden. When a man gives up haughtiness, he knows Parameshvara. The lord of the universe destroys pride. He is the one who dispels insolence. With their insolence gone, Vishnu and Vidhatri got to know Parameshvara. The lord Mahadeva was pleased and granted them freedom from fear. Affectionate towards those who prostrate themselves, Mahadeva comforted them. He spoke to Bhairava Kapardin, his own form. Mahadeva said, 'Vishnu will be honoured by you and by Shatadhriti himself. O Nilalohita! You must hold this skull as atonement.

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[746] Kratu is one of Vishnu's names.

[747] From the root word rud, meaning to cry or weep.

[748] From the root word bhesh, meaning to cause dread.

[749] One who devours sins.

[750] Yama's companion, who maintains this tally.

[751] There are different accounts about how Brahma's fifth head was severed.

[752] Literally, Shatarudriya means one hundred Rudras and is a mantra to Rudra, from the Yajur Veda.

[753] Sacchidananda-The supreme brahman or paramatman, truth (alternatively existence), consciousness and bliss.

Display to the world what must be done to destroy the sin of killing a brahmana. You will constantly beg for alms, restoring to kapalavrata.[754] He gazed at the mass of energy that was Shiva, who said this and generated the maiden famous as brahma-hatya.[755] "Until you go to the divine city of Varanasi, for that terrible period of time, she will follow you in this fierce form. She will go to all kinds of places, with the exception of the city of Varanasi. When she goes to Varanasi, you will instantly be freed.' Having engaged brahma-hatya in this way and performed this great wonder, Lord Shiva instantly vanished from the spot.""

Chapter 238-4(9) (Bhairava Avatara's Pastimes)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Hear about Bhairava's subsequent account. Listen lovingly. This destroys great sins and enhances devotion. Because of her presence the terrible Kalabhairava waited for the right time. Following the words of the lord of devas, he practiced kapalika vrata. The atman of the universe wandered around the three worlds with a skull in his hand. The terrible brahma-hatya did not leave the lord. He roamed around in all the tirthas, but he was not freed from brahma-hatya. The greatness of Kama's enemy is not understood by everyone.""

"On one occasion, served by pramathas, Hara, in his form of kapalika, wandered around as he chose and went to Narayana's abode. Bhairava Mahakala had three eyes and serpents constituted his earrings. He was Mahadeva's complete form, born from his portion. On seeing him, the one with Garuda on his standard prostrated himself on the ground, like a rod. All around him, so did devas, sages and wives of devas. After prostrating himself, Vishnu, Kamala's husband, raised his hands in salutation above his head and praised him with many kinds of hymns. O great sage! Hari was pleased in his mind and happily spoke to Padma, who is cheerfully seated on a lotus and originated from the churning of the ocean of milk. Vishnu said, 'O beloved! O extremely fortunate one! O unblemished one! Behold. You are blessed. O Devi! O one with the beautiful hips! Since we have seen the lord of the universe, we are blessed. He is Ishvara, the lord of the worlds, the creator and the preserver. He is the one without a beginning. He is the serene refuge. He is beyond the twenty-six.[756] He is omniscient. He is the lord of all yogis. He is the lord of all bhutas. He is always inside the atmans of all beings. He is always the one who bestows every kind of boon. There are those who are immersed in dhyana, without sleep and without breathing. With their intelligence, they perceive him within their hearts. He is the one. O Padma! Look at him. Yogis who know the truth about the Vedas are controlled in their minds and know him. He is without a form but has assumed a form. He goes everywhere and is coming here. The divinity Parameshthi's activities are wonderful. An embodied being who constantly chants his name, no longer has to bear a body. On earth, men who see him no longer have to be born again. Bhagavan Tryambaka, with the moon as his ornament, is coming here. My eyes are like the petals of a lotus, and they have been blessed today.

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[754] Literally, the vow (vrata) of the skull (kapala). There are variants of this, including some that are specific to tantra. The left hand holds a skull, used as a begging bowl for alms. The right hand holds a staff, with a skull at the top. In this case, Brahma's fifth head stuck to Bhairava's hand. Also known as the kapalika vrata.

[755] Literally, killing of a brahmana and the personified form of the resultant sin.

[756] The 26 tattvas of samkhya.

O Lakshmi! They have been able to see Mahadeva Maheshvara. If they are unable to see the supreme Shankara, shame on the positions of devas. Nirvana[757] is obtained through him. He is the one who ends every kind of misery. There is nothing as inauspicious as the position of being a deva in the world of devas. Despite seeing the lord of all devas, we do not obtain emancipation.' Having said this, with his body hair standing up in delight, Hrishikesha prostrated himself and spoke to Mahadeva Vrishadhvaja. Vishnu said, 'O omniscient one! O lord! O lord of devas! What is this that you are doing? You create all the worlds. You are the undecaying one who takes away all sins. O lord of devas! O three-eyed one! O immensely intelligent one! This must be your pastime. O Virupaksha! O destroyer of Smara! What is the reason for you to act in this way? O Shakti's lord! Why is Bhagavan Shambhu roaming around like a beggar? O Jagannatha! You are the one who bestows the kingdom of the three worlds. I have a doubt about this.' Thus addressed by Vishnu, Shambhu Bhairava Hara, who had done what was beyond the ordinary, smiled. The lord smiled and replied to Vishnu. Bhairava said, 'I sliced off Brahma's head with the tips of the nails on my fingers. I am following this auspicious vow to ward off the sin.' Mahesha Bhairava spoke in this way to Rama's husband.""

"However, remembering something, he[758] lowered his head and spoke again. Vishnu said, 'O one who takes away every kind of impediment! You sport as you will. O Mahadeva! You should not envelope me in your maya. In many kalpas that have passed, crores of those seated on lotuses have emerged from the filaments in the lotuses in my navels. O lord! But that has truly happened only because of the strength of your yoga. O divinity! Give up this maya. For those who have not cleansed their atmans, it is impossible to handle. O Mahadeva! Brahma and the others are deluded by your maya. O Shivaa's lord! O Shambhu! O Sarveshvara! O destination of the virtuous! It is only because of your favours that I am able to follow your activities. O Hara! When the time of destruction arrives, you take away all devas, sages and people of different varnas and ashramas. O Mahadeva! At that time, the sin of killing a brahmana and others does not affect you. O Shambhu! You are not dependent on something else. You are your own ruler and sport as you wish. The garland of Brahma's bones is radiant around your neck then. O Shambhu! O unblemished one! Like that, brahma-hatya follows you now. O Isha! You are the support of the entire universe. Whenever humans commit great sins and remember you, those sins melt away. In the presence of the one with the rays, there is no darkness. In that way, for a devotee, a sin is not eternal but goes away. If a person who is pure in his atman thinks of your two lotus feet, for him, a sin like the killing of a brahmana is not permanent but goes away. O lord of the universe! If a man is devoted to chanting your name, a sin that is as heavy as the summit of a mountain does not constrain him. O paramatman! O supreme abode! You assume a form only because of your will. O Ishvara! Like an inferior person, you are not dependent. O Isha! Therefore, I am curious about this. O lord of devas! O one whose form is the universe! O Parameshvara! O one without decay! Since I have been able to see the one whom even yogis do not see, I am blessed today. I have received a supreme gain today. Today, I have obtained something supremely auspicious. Compared to the satisfaction of seeing the one who is like amrita, heaven and emancipation are as insignificant as a blade of grass.' When Govinda said this, Vimala Padma poured the desired alms into his begging bowl.

[757] The stage of emancipation when everything is extinguished.

[758] Vishnu.

The divinity, Mahadeva who had assumed Bhairava's form and was roaming around and begging, was filled with supreme delight and went away somewhere else.""

"Seeing that brahma-hatya was following him, Janardana summoned her and asked her to release the wielder of the trident. Brahma-hatya replied, 'This is the means whereby I serve Vrishadhvaja. I purify myself, so that I do not have to be born again. She ignored Murari and did not leave his side. Instead, with a smiling face, Shambhu addressed Hari through Bhairava's words. Bhairava said, 'O one who bestows a lot of honours! I am satisfied with the nectar of your words. O Rama's lord! What you have said is natural for those who are virtuous. O Govinda! O unblemished one! I am the one who bestows boons. Please ask for a boon. O Hari! You do not suffer from aberrations, and you are foremost among my devotees. Roaming mendicants suffer from fever. When mendicants drink the nectar of words that show them honour, they are much more intoxicated than they are when shown a great deal of honour by giving them alms.' Hearing the words of Shambhu Bhairava, the paramatman, he was pleased even more and replied to Maheshvara. Vishnu replied, 'This itself is a boon to be proud about. I have seen the lord of devas, the lord of devas who is beyond the paths of thoughts and words. This is like great festivities that result from a shower of nectar, without any clouds. O Hara! When the virtuous see you, this is like a nidhi obtained without making efforts. O divinity! May I never be detached from your two lotus feet. O Shambhu! Let this be the boon. There is no other boon that I wish for.' Shri Bhairava replied, 'O son! O immensely intelligent one! It shall be that way, exactly as you have said. You will be the one who bestows boons on all devas.' He showed his favours to the enemy of the daityas, who roams around in the central mountain of the world. "[759]

"He then went to the city of Varanasi, which also goes by the name of Vimukta city, [760] As soon as Bhairava, terrible in form, entered the kshetra, brahma-hatya uttered great lamentations and entered Patala. Brahma's skull immediately fell down from Bhairava's lotus hand onto the ground. That became kapalamochana tirtha.[761] While everyone looked on, when Brahma's skull was dislodged from his hand and fell down on the ground, Rudra saw this and danced in great joy. Vidhatri's skull was very difficult to tolerate and did not leave him as long as he roamed around anywhere else. However, as soon as he entered Kashi, it fell down. Brahma-hatya did not leave the wielder of the trident anywhere else. But in Kashi, she was destroyed instantly. Therefore, one must serve Kashika. If a person remembers the supreme kapalamochana tirtha in Kashi, any sins committed in this world are instantly destroyed. If a person goes to that supreme tirtha, follows the norms and bathes, offering oblations to ancestors and devas, he is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. Bhairava remains in front of kapalamochana tirtha, devouring the series of sins committed by devotees. In his pastimes, Parameshvara, loved by the virtuous, manifested himself in the form of Bhairava on ashtami[762] in krishna paksha in the month of Margashirsha. On ashtami in krishna paksha in the month of Margashirsha, in Kalabhairava's presence, if a person fasts and remains awake in the night, he is freed from all great sins he has committed.

[759] That is, Mount Meru.

[760] Varanasi is known as Avimukta, the city that grants emancipation.

[761] The Kapala Bhairava (Laat Bhairava) temple is on the outskirts of Varanasi (to the north-east) and the pond there is identified as kapalamochana tirtha.

[762] The eighth lunar day.

If a man devotedly observes this vrata somewhere else and remains awake, he is freed from great sins and goes to the destination of the virtuous. If a living being sees Kalabhairava, the sins committed across many millions of births are dissolved. If a foolish person commits crimes against Kalabhairava's devotees, he suffers misery and repeatedly faces grief. If a devotee of Vishveshvara's is not Kalabhairava's devotee, he suffers from great sorrows, especially in Kashi. If a man resides in Varanasi and does not worship Bhairava, his sins increase, like the moon during shukla paksha. On every bhuta ashtami[763] in Kashi, if a person does not worship Kalaraja, his good merits decline, like the moon during krishna paksha. If a person hears this extremely sacred account about Bhairava's origin, he is freed from all sins, even that of killing a brahmana. If a person is bound inside a prison, or if he suffers from any other calamity, if he hears about Bhairava's manifestation, he is freed from hardships.""

Chapter 239-4(10) (Nrisimha's Conduct)

andishvara said, "The one who destroyed Daksha's known as an avatara of Shiva, the paramatman. I have told you everything about his conduct when I spoke of Sati's conduct. Since you have heard it many times, I will not speak about in great detail. Out of affection towards you, I will next tell you about Lord Shankara's avatara known as Shardula.[764] Listen. For the welfare of devas, Sadashiva assumed the extraordinary and divine form of Sharabha. He blazed, with a resplendence that was like that of the fire. For the benefit of virtuous devotees, Shiva has assumed innumerable avataras. O supreme among sages! One is incapable of enumerating them. The number of stars in the sky, the number of grains of sand on earth and the number of drops in rain-across many births and across many kalpas, an extremely wise person is capable of enumerating their number. However, that cannot be done for Shiva's avataras. Know that my words are true. Nevertheless, according to my intelligence, I will describe to you what I have heard. Sharabha's divine conduct signifies supreme prosperity.""

"O sage! When you cursed Jaya and Vijaya, those two became the sons of Kashyapa and Diti.[765] The elder was Hiranyakashipu and the younger was the powerful Hiranyaksha. O devarshi! Those two attendants were born as Diti's sons. Earlier, Vidhatri requested the lord Vishnu to save the earth. He did this in the form of varaha and killed Hiranyaksha. O sage! Hiranyakashipu loved his brother more than his own life. On hearing that the brave one had been killed, he became extremely angry at Hari. He tormented himself with austerities for ten thousand years and obtained a boon from Brahma, after pleasing him. 'No one you have created will be able to kill me.' He went to the city known as Shonitapura and challenged all the devas. He brought the three worlds under his control and enjoyed the kingdom, bereft of any thorns. He caused carnage among devas and rishis and destroyed every kind of dharma. O sage! The evil Hiranyakashipu oppressed brahmanas.

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[763] The ashtami on which Kalabhairava was manifested.

[764] Shardula is usually translated as tiger. From what follows, it will be apparent that this translation is avoidable here. What is meant is Sharabha.

[765] Considering that Vishnu's attendants, Jaya and Vijaya, were insolent, Sanatkumara cursed them that they would be born as daityas.

The son of the king of the daityas, Prahlada, was devoted to Hari. When he showed special enmity towards him, Hari became his enemy. O sage! Vishnu manifested himself from a pillar in the assembly hall. It was evening and he angrily assumed the form of Nrisimha. O tiger among sages! In this half-lion and half-man form, he was fierce in every possible way. He blazed and caused great fear, terrifying the excellent daityas. Killing the daityas at that time, Nrisimha fought an extremely terrible battle with Hiranyakashipu. O excellent sages! As that great clash between them raged, a muhurta passed. It was fierce and terrified everyone, making the body hair stand up. When it was evening and while devas watched from the firmament, Nrisimha, Rama's lord, lord of devas, dragged the bull among daityas to the threshold. He placed him on his own lap and tore his stomach apart with his talons. It was extraordinary. While the residents of heaven watched, he tore him apart and killed him. When Hiranyakashipu was killed by Vishnu as Nrisimha, the universe, and especially devas, regained their natural state. The drums of devas were sounded. Seeing Hari's wonderful form, Prahlada was amazed. Lakshmi was also amazed.""

"Though the Indra among daityas was killed, devas did not find great happiness. The blazing Nrisimha did not withdraw. The entire universe was again agitated because of him. The miserable devas wondered, 'What will happen now?' Scared, they spoke in this way to each other and remained far away. With the one who originated from the lotus as the foremost, they were agitated by Nrisimha's blazing rage. To pacify Hari, they sent Prahlada near him. When all of them beseeched him, Prahlada approached him and Nrisimha, ocean of compassion, clasped him to his breast. Though his heart became cool, the blaze of rage did not retreat. When the blaze of rage from the half-man and half-lion did not subside, the miserable devas went and sought refuge with Shankara. All the gods, Brahma and the others and the sages went there and praised Shankara, for the cause of happiness in the worlds. The devas said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who is affectionate towards those who seek refuge! Please save us. We have sought refuge with you. All the devas are praising you. O Sadashiva! I prostrate myself before you. I bow down before you. I prostrate myself before you. Earlier, whenever there has been a hardship, you have saved us. When the ocean was churned and devas divided the jewels amongst themselves, you, Shambhu, accepted the poison. O protector! You saved us then and came to be known by the name of Nilakantha. If you had not drunk the poison then, everything would have been reduced to ashes. O lord! It is known that whenever there is a misery and your name is taken, all sorrows melt away. O Sadashiva! We are now suffering as a result of the half-man and half-lion's blaze. O divinity! We are certain that you possess the capacity to pacify it.' In this way, devas praised Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees. Pleased in his mind, the supreme lord granted them freedom from fear and replied. Shankara said, 'O Brahma and all the other gods! Return to your own abodes. I am granting you freedom from fear. I calm every kind of misery. That is my vow. If anyone seeks refuge with me, all his sorrows are destroyed. There is no doubt that I love someone who seeks refuge with me more than my own life.' Hearing this, devas were filled with great joy. Happily remembering Shankara, they returned to wherever they had come from.""

Chapter 240-4(11) (Prelude to Sharabha Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "In this way, entreated by devas, Parameshvara, abode of compassion, made up his mind to destroy the great energy known as Nrisimha. Thereafter, Rudra remembered the immensely strong Virabhadra. The cause of dissolution also spoke to his own Bhairava form. The foremost leader of ganas[766] immediately arrived, laughing loudly. He was accompanied by other excellent ganas, who also laughed loudly and jumped around, here and there. He was instantly surrounded by crores of others, who assumed Nrisimha's fierce form. Those crazy and brave ones danced happily. Those extremely brave ones played with Brahma and the others, as if they were balls. Worshipped by brave ones, he was also surrounded by many others, the likes of whom had never been seen before. He blazed like the fire at the end of a kalpa. His three eyes were radiant. He had matted hair, but there were no weapons on him. A dazzling crescent moon ornamented his forehead. His cruel and sharp fangs were like the discs of the crescent moon. His eyebrows were like fragments from Akhandala's bow.[767] His fierce and loud roars echoed in the directions. He was dark, like blue clouds or collyrium. He was terrible, with a fully-grown beard. He whirled his trident around repeatedly, as if it was a piece from a musical instrument. Extending his strength, the illustrious Virabhadra arrived. Naming who he was, he asked, 'Why have you called me here? O lord of the universe! Please show me your favours. Command me and tell me what is to be done.' Hearing Virabhadra's words, Mahesha looked at him affectionately. The one who chastises the wicked lovingly addressed him. Shankara said, 'An untimely and terrible fear has arisen for devas. The blazing Nriimsha is impossible to tolerate. You must pacify him. Try conciliation and make him understand. If he is not pacified through this, display my supreme Bhairava form. O Virabhadra! Follow my command. Use your energy, the subtle against the subtle and the gross against the gross. Bring me his head and hide.' Thus addressed, the leader o ganas assumed a peaceful form.""

"He hurried to the place where Nrisimha was. Virabhadra Hara tried to make Hari understand. Ishana addressed him in words that were like those of a father speaking to his son. Virabhadra said, 'O Bhagavan Madhava! You have taken an avatara for the happiness of the universe. Paresha Parameshthi has engaged you for the task of preservation. Earlier, you assumed the form of Matsya.[768] O Bhagavan! As you moved around, you agitated the ocean with your tail and split the creatures who were there. You supported the earth in the form of Kurma and raised it up in the form of Varaha.[769] Hiranyakashipu has been killed in this form as a lion. As Vamana,[770] you also used your valour to bind Bali. You are the undecaying lord and all beings originate from you. Whenever any kind of misery is generated in the world, you assume the form of an avatara and render it hale. O Hari! No one is more devoted to Shiva than you are. You have established the Vedas and dharma along an auspicious path. You assumed this avatara for a reason.

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[766] Virabhadra.

[767] Akhandala is Indra's name and Akhandala's bow means the rainbow.

[768] Vishnu's fish avatara.

[769] Respectively, Vishnu's tortoise and boar avataras.

[770] Vishnu's dwarf avatara.

Hiranyakashipu has been killed and Prahlada has been protected. O Bhagavan! Your form as Narasimha is extremely terrible. O one whose atman is the universe! In my presence, please withdraw it.' In this way, Virabhadra addressed Nrisimha in peaceful words.""

"But this made the greatly intoxicated one angry and he assumed a form that was even more terrible. He spoke in words that were extremely terrible and harsh. O sage! He displayed his terrifying fangs to the immensely brave Virabhadra. Nrisimha said, 'Return to wherever you have come from. Do not seek to tell me what is beneficial. I will now destroy the entire universe, with its mobile and immobile entities. For my sake, or for that of others, I will not refrain from this destruction. I rule everything. Other than me, there is no other ruler. It is through my favours that everything is free from fear. I am the one who initiates, and also withdraws, every kind of power. O leader of ganas! Know that every kind of potency, every kind of prosperity and every kind of power is extended by my energy. Those who are greatly learned know the truth, that I am beyond devas. Brahma, Shakra and the other gods obtain their strength as my portions. Earlier, Brahma, the creator of the universe, originated from the lotus in my navel. I am self-ruling and greater than anyone else. I am the creator and the destroyer. I am the lord of everything. This is my supreme energy. What else do you wish to hear? Take refuge with me and return, bereft of any anxiety. O lord of ganas! Know that everything is covered by my supremacy. The entire universe, with its devas, asuras and humans, belongs to me. I am Kala, responsible for the destruction of the worlds. I am the one who is engaged in the task of destruction. O Virabhadra! Know that I cause death to Death. The devas are alive through my favours.' Hearing Hari's words, which were full of ahamkara, the infinitely valiant one laughed and replied, his lips quivering as he slighted him.""

"Virabhadra replied, 'Do you not know of the lord of the universe, the wielder of Pinaka, the destroyer? This wicked argument will only lead to your destruction. Do any of your other avataras have any remnants left now? Whatever you may have done, there is nothing of those that is left. Tell me about the taint that has led to your present plight. He is accomplished in destruction, and he will give you the remaining dakshina. You are Prakriti. Rudra is Purusha and has placed the semen inside you. It is thus that the five-faced grandfather was born from the lotus in your navel. To create the three worlds, he engaged in fierce austerities and meditated on Shankara Nilalohita in the centre of his forehead. For the sake of creation, Shambhu emerged from his forehead. I am an ornament of the lord of devas. I am his Bhairava form. I have been engaged, by Rudra, lord of devas, to destroy you, through humility, or through strength. O Hari! He is the lord of everything. You possess only one-sixteenth of his power. Having shattered a single rakshasa, you have been smeared with ahamkara and are roaring like a distracted person. A good turn done to the virtuous is revered because it contributes to happiness. A good turn done to the wicked only contributes to harm. O Nrisimha! Since you regard Mahesha as someone who is subject to birth, you do not possess true jnana. You are immensely haughty and suffer from aberrations in every possible way. O Nrisimha! You are not the creator, the preserver or the destroyer. You are subservient to another but are foolish in your mind. You are not self-ruling in any way. You have been engaged by the wielder of Pinaka, like the power behind a potter's wheel. O Hari! You are subservient to him, and he engages you in many avataras. When you assumed the form of Kurma, your skull was flung away and even today,

hangs in Hara's necklace.[771] A person who has been burnt cannot bind anyone. In your portion, you assumed the form of Varaha. Have you forgotten the hand of the one who removes impediments? Your fangs were uprooted and flung more than one krosha away. O Vishvaksena![772] Because you are deceitful, you will see yourself burnt by the fire from the trident. At the time of Daksha's sacrifice, my energetic form severed your head. Your son, Brahma's, fifth head was sliced off and has still not been healed. O Hari! You have forgotten that too. In a battle, you and the large number of Maruts, were defeated by Dadhichi,[773] Scratch your head. Have you forgotten that? O one with the chakra in your hand! You love the valour of your chakra. Have you forgotten who created it and where you got it from?[774] I accepted all the worlds. You lie down on Shesha, in the abode of waters.[775] How can you be full of sattva? From you up to a blade of grass, everything is extended because of Rudra's powers. If you think of yourself as powerful, that is only because of the fire that is in you. A man is incapable of beholding the greatness of his energy. Only those who are gross in vision regard Vishnu as the supreme objective. Parameshvara is the origin of the space between heaven and earth, Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuna, darkness and the light of the moon. If you are Kala, he is Mahakala. Maheshvara is the destroyer of Kala. If you become the death of Death, that is only because of one of his fierce digits. He is the steadfast one. He is the one who does not decay. He is the valiant one. He is the brave lord who protects the universe. He is the one who destroys the terrible fear. He is the golden animal and the golden fever. You and the four-faced one are not the ones who chastise this entire world. There is no doubt that only Shambhu is the one who chastises everyone. Considering all this, withdraw your own self. O Nrisimha! O ignorant one! Otherwise, you will destroy yourself. Otherwise, Sthanu's rage will descend on you now, like the vajra and in the form of the great Bhairava. It will make you descend into death.""

'Nandhishvara concluded, "Saying this, Virabhadra, who was not afraid of anyone, stopped. Shiva's form, as rage, watched, to discern Nrisimha's intentions.""

Chapter 241-4(12) (Prelude to Sharabha Avatara)

“Santkumara said, "O Nandishvara! O immensely wise one! Please show me your compassion. Out of affection towards me, now please tell me what happened next.""

Nandishvara replied, "When Virabhadra said, this, Nrisimha was overwhelmed with rage. He roared and with great speed, tried to seize him. Meanwhile, Shiva's extremely terrible energy arose. Invincible, it enveloped the sky and became the direct reason for fear. Virabhadra's form could only be seen for an instant. Maheshvara's energy was neither golden, nor amiable. It did not originate in the sun, or in the fire. It did not resemble lightning, or the moon. It was unmatched. All those energies merged into Shankara's energy.

[771] This sentence and the next are difficult to understand and liberties have been taken.

[772] Vishnu's name.

[773] The story has been narrated in Volume I.

[774] It was crafted by Vishvakarma, the architect of the gods.

[775] Which are part of the worlds.

That great energy did not belong to the sky. Eventually, it manifested itself in the form of the general Rudra, marked by a malformed figure. Parameshvara became directly manifest in the form of the destroyer. Seeing this, all the devas uttered auspicious sounds of 'Victory'. He possessed one thousand hands and had matted hair. The crescent moon was on his head. O brahmana! His entire body was large, and he possessed wings and a beak. His large fangs were extremely sharp. As weapons, his talons resembled the vajra. His throat was dark, and he possessed mighty arms and legs. His complexion was like that of the fire. His deep and fearful voice rumbled like the clouds that arise at the end of a yuga. He was extremely angry and the fire that covered his dilated eyes was like a demoness. His fangs and lips could be seen. Hara uttered the sound of humkara. He manifested himself in such a fierce form. As soon as he saw this enemy, his[776] strength and valour were destroyed. He was confounded and his dazzle resembled that of a firefly, under the one with the one thousand rays. [777] He used his wings to batter and shatter his navel and legs. He bound his legs with his tail and encircled his hands with his hands. Beating him in the chest, Hara used his arms to seize Hari. He suddenly rose up into the sky with Vishnu, where devas and maharshis were, like a hawk seizing a snake. Repeatedly, he hurled him up and flung him down. As they flew and flew, he was confounded by the beating from Bhagavan's wings. The powerful Hari was incapacitated by Ishvara Hara. All the gods followed him and praised him with words of, 'I bow down'. Brahma and the others and lords among sages lovingly and affectionately prostrated themselves before him. As he was being conveyed in this fashion, under someone else's control, Hari's face was dejected. He joined his hands in salutation and with beautiful words, praised Paramesha. He used one hundred and eight names to praise Mridha. Nrisimha repeatedly beseeched Sharabheshvara.[778] 'O Parameshvara! Whenever my mind is tainted by pride and I show you disrespect, I will be conveyed in this way by you.' Nrisimha lovingly told Shankara this. Incapacitated, he bent down. Vishnu was defeated and his life came to an end.[779] In an instant, the powerful Virabhadra destroyed his limbs, his face, whatever remained of his body and his entire form.""

"The divinity was in the form of Sharabha and Brahma and the others praised the divinity Shankara, who brings welfare to all the worlds. The devas said, 'O Maheshvara! Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, Chandra, all the gods, the maharshis and all the daityas have originated from you. O lord of everything. You are the one who creates and protects Brahma, Vishnu, the great Indra, Surya and the other gods and asuras. Since you take away samsara, the learned speak of you as Hara.[780] Since you seized Hari and carried him away, the learned also speak of you as Hara. Dividing your body into eight parts, you hold everything up. O Bhagavan! The gods and others desire that you should protect us. You are the great Purusha, Shambhu. You are Sarvesha. You are the leader of the gods. You are the atman of those who possess nothing. You are the atman, without any aberrations. You are the supreme brahman, the destination of the virtuous. You are the friend of the distressed and are an ocean of compassion. You are seen to be the wonderful paramatman. You are wise. You are the great lord.

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[776] Nrisimha's.

[777] The sun.

[778] Sharabha's lord, this incarnation is known as Sharabha.

[779] In the form of Nrisimha.

[780] From the root that means to take away or remove. It also means to seize or carry away.

Your sign is sacchidananda. Hearing the words of devas, Shambhu Parameshvara spoke to those gods and divine and ancient maharshis. 'Like water poured into water, milk poured into milk and ghee poured into ghee, Vishnu merges into Shiva and not into anyone else. It was Vishnu's atman that became the immensely strong Nrisimha and was suffused with haughtiness. Thereafter, Nrisimha embarked on the task of destroying the universe. Those of my devotees who desire success, will pray to him and show him obeisance. He is the foremost among my devotees. Among my devotees, he is the one who bestows boons.' Saying this, while all the devas looked on, Bhagavan, the immensely strong king of birds, vanished from the spot. The illustrious and immensely strong Virabhadra, leader of ganas, stripped the hide from Nrisimha and taking it with him, went to the mountain. Since then, Shankara has worn Nrisimha's hide as a garment. His face became the most important in his garland of skulls. The devas lost their fear and chanted about this account. Their eyes dilating in wonder, they returned to wherever they had come from. This sacred account has the essence of the Vedas. If a person reads it, or listens to it, he obtains everything that he desires. It increases wealth, fame, the lifespan, freedom from disease and nourishment. It eliminates every kind of impediment and destroys every kind of ailment. It pacifies misery, accomplishes wishes and is an abode of auspiciousness. It dispels untimely death, bestows intelligence and destroys enemies. This supreme form of the wielder of Pinaka is the form of Sharabha and it should be revealed only to those who are Shiva's devotees. It will be read and heard only by those whose atmans are in Shiva. It bestows the nine kinds of devotion.[781] It is divine and develops internal intelligence. This must be read at the time of Shiva's festivals, on chaturdashi and ashtami and at the time of instating Shiva's image. It brings one closer to Shiva. A learned person should control himself and read it when there is fear from thieves, tigers, Nrisimhas,[782] his own king or other kings, dust-storms, earthquakes, bandits, excessive rain, descent of meteors, great storms and drought. When this is done, his devotion to Shiva will become firm. Without any desire, if a person reads it, or hears it, observing Ishvara's vrata, he goes to Rudra's world and becomes Rudra's follower. Having obtained Rudra's world, he enjoys himself with Rudra. O sage! As a result of Shiva's compassion, he obtains sayujya with him.""

Chapter 242-4(13) (Prelude to Grihapati Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O Brahma's son! Listen lovingly to the conduct of the one who wears the moon on his crest. Shiva happily took an avatara in Vishvanara's house. O sage! His name was Grihapati and he became the lord of Agni's world. The supreme lord is in all atmans and his energy was like that of Agni. On the banks of the Narmada, there is the beautiful city of Narmapura.[783] Earlier, the sage Vishvanara used to live there. He was pure in his atman and was a devotee of Tripura's enemy. He followed the ashrama of brahmacharya and was always engaged in sacrifices to the brahman.

[781] Shravanam, kirtanam, smaranam, sevanam, dasyam, archanam, vandanam, sakhyam and atmarpanam. Respectively, constant hearing, chanting, remembering, tending, serving, worshipping, prostrating, friendly conduct and surrender.

[782] Probably meaning lions here.

[783] There is a Narmadapuram district in Madhya Pradesh, which used to be named after the Narmada before it was renamed Hoshangabad.

His gotra[784] was Shandilya. He was pure, in control of his mind and with the energy of the brahman. He knew the meanings of all the sacred texts and always followed good conduct. He was accomplished in rites connected with Shiva. He was supreme among those who knew about customary practices. Having thought about the auspicious qualities required in a wife, Vishvanara followed the norms and married Kala's daughter, who was appropriate for him. He tended to the sacrificial fire and performed the five yajnas.[785] He constantly engaged in the six tasks[786] and loved devas, ancestors and guests. In this way, a long period of time passed for the brahmana. His wife was named Shuchishmati and she was excellent in her vows. She spoke to her husband. 'O lord! Through your favours, I have enjoyed every kind of object of pleasure. I have obtained every kind of happiness required by a woman. O lord! However, I am asking you for something that has been in my heart for a long time. It is appropriate for householders, and you should grant it to me.' Vishvanara replied, 'O one with the beautiful hips! I am always engaged in ensuring your pleasure and there is nothing that cannot be granted to you. O immensely fortunate one! Therefore, ask and I will give it to you without any delay. O fortunate one! Through the favours of Mahesha, who causes everything that is beneficial, there is nothing that cannot be obtained by me, in this world, or in the next one.' She heard the words of her husband, whom she regarded like a divinity. With a delighted face, she clasped her hands together and spoke humbly. Shuchishmati said, 'O lord! If I am worthy of being given a boon and if a boon is to be conferred on me, please give me a son who is Mahesha's equal. There is no other boon I wish for.' Hearing her words, the brahmana, pure in vows, immersed himself in samadhi for a while and thought about it in his mind. 'This slender-limbed one has asked for something that is extremely difficult to obtain. This desire is a long distance away, unless ensured by the one who does everything. Perhaps Shambhu was stationed in her mouth in the form of speech. Other than him, who else is capable of doing such a thing?' Thinking this, the sage Vishvanara, extensive in intelligence, spoke to his wife. He adhered to the principle of having a single wife. Comforting his wife, the sage left for austerities.""

"He quickly reached Varanasi, where the lord of Kashi himself resides. He saw Manikarnika, where he got rid of the three kinds of hardship accumulated across hundreds of births.[787] He saw all the lingams, Vishveshvara being the most important. He bathed in all the ponds, wells, tanks and lakes. He bent down and prostrated himself before all the Vinayakas, Gouri and Sharva. He worshipped Kalaraja Bhairava, who devours sins. He carefully praised the ganas, Dandanayaka being the foremost. He satisfied Keshava, Adikeshava being the foremost. He repeatedly prostrated himself before the various Suryas, Lokarka being the foremost. Attentively, he offered pindas at all the tirthas. He offered food and other things to thousands of sages and brahmanas.

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[784] The lineage one is born into.

[785] A householder is meant to observe five great yajnas ever day-brahma-yajna (worship of learning), pitri-yajna (worship of ancestors), deva-yajna (worship of devas), nri-yajna (worship of humans) and bhuta-yajna (worship of other beings).

[786] Approved for a brahmana-studying, teaching, performing sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices of others, donating and receiving gifts.

[787] The three kinds of hardship relate to adhidaivika (destiny), nature). adhibhoutika (nature) and adhyatmika (one's own Manikarnika is a famous ghat, along the river Ganga in Varanasi. Vishveshvara lingam means the one in Kashi Viswanath (Vishvanatha) temple. There is an Adi Keshava temple in Varanasi and of course, the Kalabhairava temple.

Devotedly, he performed a great worship of the lingams, with upachara. He wondered, 'Which lingam will bring success quickly? Desiring a son, where should one steadfastly pursue austerities?' The sage Vishvanara, excellent in intelligence, thought about this for some time and praised the Viresha lingam, as one that would quickly grant a son. There are thousands and an innumerable number of siddhas who have obtained siddhi there. Vireshvara[788] is therefore famous as a siddha-lingam. If anyone devotedly performs worship at the great lingam of Vireshvara, he obtains a long lifespan, everything that he desires and innumerable sons and other things. 'I will also worship Viresha thrice a day. I will quickly obtain a son, as desired by my wife.' The intelligent and patient brahmana, Vishvanara, made up his mind in this way. He bathed in Chandrakupa[789] and followed the vrata and niyamas. For a month, he ate only once a day. For another month, he only ate in the night. For another month, he only ate what he had not asked for.[790] For another month, he gave up all food. For another month, he subsisted only on milk. For another month, he ate only fruits and vegetables. For another month, he subsisted only on a fistful of sesamum. For another month, he subsisted on a liquid diet. For another month, he lived on panchagavya,[791] For another month, he observed chandrayana vrata.[792] For another month, he drank water obtained through the tip of a blade of kusha grass. For another month, he subsisted on air. In this way, he tormented himself through these wonderful austerities for a year. Thrice a day, he devotedly worshipped Viresha's excellent lingam.""

"In the thirteenth month, in the morning, the brahmana bathed in the waters of the one with three flows. [793] When he went to Viresha, in the centre of the lingam, the store of austerities saw a child who was eight years old. The boy wore ashes as an ornament. His eyes extended all the way up to his ears. His lips were red. The beautiful, matted hair on his head was tawny. He had a smile on his face. Though his features and garb were appropriate to those of a child, he was clearly intelligent. Laughing in his own pastimes, he was chanting suktas [794] from the shruti texts. When the sage saw him, he was delighted, and his body hair stood up. In his mind, he repeatedly said, 'I bow down before you.' The successful Vishvanara praised Shambhu, the great bliss, who had assumed the form of the child. He used eight verses that yield everything desired. Vishvanara said, 'The brahman is one, without a second. That is the truth and there is no other truth. Rudra is one, without a second. Therefore, I seek refuge with Mahesha alone. O Shambhu! You are the creator and the destroyer of everything. You have one form but manifest yourself in many forms. You are without a form. Dharma is one, though it appears in many forms. O Isha! Therefore, I do not seek refuge in anyone else.

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[788] The same as Viresha.

[789] Literally, the well of the moon. Located in the Siddheshvari temple.

[790] Offered as alms, without his actually begging for it.

[791] Five products obtained from a cow-milk, ghee, curd, cow's urine and cow dung.

[792] Chandrayana is a kind of fasting that follows the progress (ayana) of the moon (chandra). On the full moon night, one only eats fifteen mouthfuls of food. For the fifteen lunar days following the full moon, this is decreased by one mouthful per day. For the fifteen lunar days following the new moon, this is increased by one mouthful per day.

[793] Ganga flows in heaven, earth and the nether regions.

[794] Sukta is a hymn. Literally, the word means 'spoken well'.

A rope can seem to be a snake. An oyster can seem to be silver. A mirage can seem to be water. But these aren't real. When he is known, truth remains and prapancha melts away. Therefore, I seek refuge with Mahesha. There is coolness in water, heat in fire, scorching in the sun, pleasantness in the moon, fragrance in flowers and ghee in milk. O Shambhu! Like that, you are in everything. Therefore, I seek refuge with you. You are the receptivity of sound in the ears, smell in the nose, capacity to arrive from a distance in the feet, the capability of the eyes to see and of the tongue to taste. Who knows you properly? Therefore, I seek refuge with you. O Isha! No one knows you directly, not Vishnu, not Vidhatri who created everything, not Indras among yogis, not Indra and not the foremost among devas. Only a devotee knows. Therefore, I seek refuge with you. You have no gotra. You have no birth. You have no destruction.

You have no form. You have no notion of good conduct. You have no country. O Ishvara! Despite that, you are the lord of the three worlds and satisfy our desires. Therefore, I worship you. Everything flows from you. You are everything. O Smara's enemy! You are Gouri's lord. You are naked and extremely serene. You are old. You are young. You are a child. There is nothing other than you. I bow down before you.' Praising him, the brahmana fell down on the ground, joining his hands in salutation. The child became more aged than the aged and spoke in an extremely gentle voice to the brahmana. The child said, 'O Vishvanara! O best among sages! O brahmana! I am satisfied and extremely pleased with you. Ask for an excellent boon.' Delighted in his mind and successful in his objective, the sage Vishvanara got up. The best among sages replied to Shankara, who had assumed the form of a child.""

"Vishvanara said, 'O Maheshvara! O lord! You are omniscient and nothing is not known to you. O Bhagavan! You are inside all atmans. O Sharva! You are the one who grants everything. That being the case, why are you telling me to behave in a miserable way and ask for something? O Mahesha! Knowing this, do what you wish to do.' Hearing the words of Vishvanara, who was pure and had observed a pure vow, the divinity, who was in the pure form of a child, smiled. 'O pure one! Shuchishmati has a desire in her heart. There is no doubt that it will be satisfied within a short period of time. O immensely intelligent one! Through Shuchishmati, I will become your son. I will be famous under the name of Grihapati and will be pure, loved by all the immortals. The eight verses you uttered will be the sacred abhilashashtaka.[795] In Shiva's presence, if this is chanted thrice a day, for a year, all desires will be satisfied. The reading of this stotram[796] will bestow sons, grandsons and wealth. It will bestow every kind of peace and destroy every kind of hardship. There is no doubt that it will grant heaven, emancipation and prosperity. It will be equal to all other stotrams and will always bestow everything desired. If a person gets up in the morning, bathes, worships Shambhu's lingam and performs japa with this stotram, doing this for a year, he will have a son. Abhilashashtaka must not be revealed to anyone. It must be preserved in secret. Through this, the most barren among women will have a son. If a man or a woman follows the rules, and in the presence of a lingam, performs japa with this stotram for a year, there is no doubt that the person will have a son.'

[795] Desire-eight, that is, the desired eight, or the eight chanted to satisfy a wish. A stotram with eight (ashtakam) verses from Kashi Khanda of Skanda Purana.

[796] Hymn of praise.

Having said this, Shambhu, the destination of the virtuous, who had assumed the form of a child, vanished. The brahmana, Vishvanara, left for his own house, delighted.""

Chapter 243-4(14) (Grihapati Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "Full of great eat joy, the brahmana Na returned home. He told his beloved everything that had occurred. Hearing this, Shuchishmati, the brahmana's wife, was filled with joy. Full of great love, she praised her own good fortune. After some time, she became pregnant. The rite known as garbhalambhana was carried out in the proper way. Thereafter, as the foetus grew, the learned husband followed the rules of the grihya sutras[797] and had the rite of pumsavana carried out. So that the foetus might grow properly and so that there might be an easy delivery, accomplished in learning, he had simantonnayana carried out in the eighth month. An auspicious stellar moment arrived. Guru[798] was at the centre and the lagna[799] was auspicious. The conjunction of the planets was excellent. Shuchishmati's son was born, with a face that resembled the lord of the stars. [800] When the destroyer of all misfortunes was born, the lamps in the delivery chamber faded as a result of his brilliance. Sharva, who brings happiness to all the residents of earth, heaven and the intervening region, was born. The smoke that arose upwards from the house became a fragrant breeze that spread in the directions. The dense clouds rained down showers of flowers with fragrant scents. The drums of devas were sounded, and the directions turned radiant. In every direction, rivers and the minds of beings became sparkling. Tamas withdrew from darkness and rajas withdrew from dust,[801] The purity of sattva was everywhere, and nectar showered down. Everywhere, speech turned pleasant and living beings spoke pleasantly. Apsaras, with Rambha leading the way, arrived, holding auspicious articles in their hands. Thousands of vidyadhara and kinnara women arrived there, as did women from among uragas and yakshas. They honoured him, singing many kinds of auspicious songs in sweet voices. For the pacification rite, the sages who came to Vishvanara's house were Marichi, Atri, Pulaha, Pulastya, Kratu, Angiras, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Agastya, Mandavi's son Vibhanda, Lomasha, Romacharana, Bharadvaja, Goutama, Bhrigu, Galava, Garga, Jatukarna, Parashara, Apastamba, Yajnavalkya, Daksha, Valmiki, Mudgala, Shatatapa, Likhita, Shilada, Shankha, Uncchabhuk, Jamadagni, Samvarta, Matanga, Bharata, Amshuman, Vyasa, Katyayana, Kutsa, Shounaka, Sushruta, Shuka, Rishyashringa, Durvasa, Shuchi, Narada, Tumburu, Uttanka, Vamadeva, Pavana, Asit-Devala,[802] Salankayana, Harita, Vishvamitra, Bhargava, Mrikandu and his son, Parvata, Daruka, Dhoumya, Upamanyu and others. The daughters of the sages also arrived. Brahma arrived with Brihaspati. The divinity who rides on Garuda arrived. Vrishadhvaja arrived with Nandi, Bhringi and Gouri. The gods arrived, with the great Indra leading them. Nagas, residents of Patala, came. Many rivers and large oceans arrived, bearing jewels.

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[797] Texts that set out rules and rituals for householders.

[798] Brihaspati (Jupiter)

[799] Lagna is the specific rashi (zodiacal sign) which is on the horizon at that time.

[800] The moon.

[801] Since tamas means darkness and rajas means dust, this is a pun.

[802] Asita and Devala were two famous rishis. Sometimes, they are referred to as two distinct individuals. Sometimes, they are referred to as one individual.

Thousands of immobile entities came, assuming mobile forms. There were great festivities, as if there was moonlight at the wrong time.""

"Vidhatri himself performed the jatakarma rites. Reflecting on the shruti texts and on his form, he gave him the name of Grihapati. This name was given to him on the eleventh day. The rites of namakarana were observed, to the utterance of chants from the shruti texts. Uttering mantras from the four nigama texts and pronouncing benedictions, the grandfather took his leave from everyone and left, astride his swan. Following the customary practices of the world, Hara and Hari performed the appropriate rites of protection for the child. Astride their mounts, they left for their own abodes. 'How wonderful is his great energy. How wonderful. He bears all the auspicious signs on his limbs. How wonderful is Shuchishmati's good fortune. Hara himself has been born through her. There is nothing wonderful in this. Sharva has incarnated himself through his own devotee. Rudra has himself arrived because Rudra has been worshipped.' In this way, full of joy and with their body hair standing up in delight, they spoke to each other. They then took their leave from Vishvanara and returned to wherever they had come from.""

"A person in grahasthya ashrama desires a son. The eternal shruti texts say that one conquers the world through a son. Without a son, the house is empty. The earning of wealth is futile. Without a son, austerities are destroyed. A person without a son is not sanctified. There is no gain greater than that of obtaining a son. There is no happiness greater than that of obtaining a son. In this world and in the next world, there is no friend greater than that of a son. In the fourth month, the father performed the samskara of nishkramana and took him out of the house. [803] Annaprashana was performed after six months and at the end of a year, chudakarma was carried out. Accomplished in rites, when it was the conjunction of Shravana nakshatra, he had karnavedha [804] carried out. So as to increase his energy as a brahmana, he made him observe a vrata in his fifth year. Thereafter, following upanayana, [805] the intelligent one taught him the Vedas. For one year, following the norms and the due order, he studied the Vedas and the Vedangas. Strong in capacity, he achieved all this learning on his own. The guru's mouth was more like a mere witness. He possessed humility and the other qualities. In the ninth year, Narada arrived in Vishvanara's house to see Grihapati and found him serving his parents. Having reached Vishvanara's cottage, the devarshi was curious. Having duly taken his seat, he asked about their welfare. He remembered Shiva's lotus feet and told Vishvanara about his son's destiny and dharma. He told Vishvanara's son, 'Come and sit on my lap. I will examine the signs. Show me your right hand. Thus addressed by the sage, the child took his father's permission. The handsome child prostrated himself before Narada and devotedly sat down. Narada examined everything, his palate and his tongue. Then, urged by Shiva, the intelligent one spoke to Vishvanara. Narada said, 'O Vishvanara! O sage! Listen. I will lovingly tell you about the signs on your son. Your son possesses excellent marks on all his limbs. He has extremely auspicious signs. He possesses all the qualities and is marked by all the auspicious signs. All his digits are sparklingly pure. However, it is destiny alone that can protect him.

[803] Nishkramana means to take out and the father makes the son go out and look at the sun.

[804] The samskara of piercing the ear, done between the first and the fifth year.

[805] Upanayana is a sacred thread ceremony. The text actually uses the word upakarma. This samskara marks the beginning of studies of the Vedas.

Therefore, every effort must be made to protect the child. When destiny turns adverse, even good qualities can turn into taints. In the twelfth month from now, I fear danger to him from fire and lightning.' Saying this, Narada returned to the world of devas, where he had come from.""

Chapter 244-4(15) (Grihapati Avatara Continued)

“Nandishvara said, "Hearing what Narada had said, Vishvanara and his wife thought that this was like an extremely terrible bolt of lightning. 'Alas!' He beat his chest with these words. Suffering from great grief on account of his son, he lost his senses. Shuchishmati also found this impossible to bear. Suffering from grief, she wept loudly. Her senses were agitated, and she lamented loudly. Hearing her loud shrieks, Vishvanara regained his senses and cried out loudly, 'What is this? Where is Grihapati? He is like my breath of life, located outside my body. What is this? He is the lord of all my senses.' The child, Grihapati, Shankara's portion, saw that his parents were shrouded in great grief. He smiled and spoke to them. Grihapati asked, 'O mother! O father! What is the reason for this now? Why are you crying? Where has this fright come from? The dust from your feet provides armour for my body. What strength do fickle and insignificant aspects of time and destiny have against me? O parents! Listen to my pledge. If I am truly your son, I will do that which will terrify death. I will worship Mrityunjaya, the omniscient one who grants everything to the virtuous. I will perform japa for Mahakala. O parents! I am telling you the truth.' Hearing his words, the aged brahmana couple forgot the torment, as if a shower of nectar had been poured over the prospect of untimely death. The brahmana couple said, 'Please say it again. What was that? Please say it again. What was that? Please state it once more. What will fickle and insignificant time and destiny do to you? You have spoken about a great means of remedying our torment, that of worshipping the divinity Mrityunjaya. There is nothing more beneficial than seeking refuge in Shambhu. He does what is beyond anything contemplated by wishes. He is the one who destroys sins. O son! Haven't you heard the earlier account about Shvetaketu? He was bound in Kala's noose, but the destroyer of Tripura saved him. When he was only eight years old, Shilada's son was seized by death. However, Shiva made him one of his own people, Nandi, who delights the universe. When the ocean of milk was churned, the terrible poison known as halahala arose, as terrible as the fire of dissolution. But he drank it and saved the three worlds. Jalandhara was extremely insolent and stole the prosperity of the three worlds. With his beautiful toe, he [806] created a chakra and slew him. Earlier, the residents of Tripura were confounded because they owned the prosperity of the three worlds. He brought them down with a single blazing arrow, drying them up like the sun. Kama managed to defeat the three worlds. While Aja[807] and the others looked on, he cast a glance at him and defeated him, giving him the title of Ananga. [808] He is the creator of Brahma, Meghavahana, [809] Achyuta and the others. O son! Go and seek refuge with Shiva, the crest and protector of the universe." Having obtained permission, he prostrated himself at their feet. Having performed their pradakshina, he went out.""

[806] Shiva.

[807] Brahma.

[808] Burnt down by Shiva, Kama became Ananga, the one without a body.

[809] Indra, the one who rides a cloud.

"He reached Kashi, difficult for Brahma, Narayana and others to reach. The place is protected by Vishvesha and destroys great whirlpools of torment. The divine river ornaments it, like a necklace around its neck. Hara's radiant wife, the possessor of wonderful qualities, is also present there. The lord among brahmanas first went to Manikarnika. Following the norms, he bathed there and saw Lord Vishveshvara. The intelligent one joined his hands in salutation above his head and was filled with great joy. He prostrated himself before the one who instils life into the three worlds and saves them. Seeing that lingam, his heart was repeatedly satisfied. There is no doubt that excellent and supreme bliss has manifested itself now. In the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile entities, there is no one more blessed than me. Today, I have been able to see the handsome Lord Vishveshvara. Earlier, maharshi Narada came and said all that so that my good fortune would rise. I am now successful in my objective.' In this amrita of bliss, he performed all the required rites. On an auspicious day, he established a lingam that would be beneficial in every possible way.[810] He accepted terrible niyamas that are difficult for even those with cleansed atmans to undertake. He filled one hundred and eight pots with auspicious water from Ganga, straining them with a pure piece of cloth. Pure in his atman, he did this every day for Shiva. He offered him a garland made out of blue lotuses. He offered garlands made out of one thousand and eight flowers. Once every paksha, or once every month, he ate tubers, roots and fruits. For six months, he patiently survived only on dried leaves. He subsisted on air for another six months. For six months, he only drank drops of water. O Narada! In this way, the great-souled one spent a year. [811] The brahmana tormented himself, with his mind fixed on Shiva alone.""

"In his twelfth year, as if to make the words spoken by Narada true, the one who wields the vajra as a weapon, appeared before him and said, 'O brahmana! I am Shatakratu. I am pleased with your auspicious vows. Ask for the boon that is in your mind. I will give it to you.' Hearing the words of the great Indra, the son of the sage praised him in sweet aksharas, but also spoke the following patient and sweet words. Grihapati said, 'O Maghavan! O Vritra's enemy! I know you. You are the one with the vajra in your hand. I do not desire a boon from you. Shankara is the one who will grant me a boon.' Indra replied, 'O child! Shankara is not distinct from me. I am lord of the devas. Give up this folly. Without any delay, ask for a boon from me.' Grihapati said, 'O Ahalya's husband![812] O wicked one! O enemy of gotras! O chastiser of Paka! It is evident that I will not seek anything from any deva other than Pashupati.' Hearing these words, the eyes of the wielder of vajra turned red in rage. He raised the terrible vajra and threatened the child. Seeing the vajra, which blazed like lightning, he remembered Narada's words and overwhelmed by fear, lost his senses. However, Shambhu, Gouri's husband, appeared in front of him. Touching him, it was as if he revived him. He said, 'Arise! Get up. May this end in something that is fortunate for you.' He opened his eyes, which were like lotuses that had gone to sleep at the end of the day. Getting up, in front of him, he saw Shambhu, with a radiance more than that of one hundred suns. He saw the eye on Vrishadhvaja's forehead and the dark throat.

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[810] Grihapati instated his own lingam.

[811] What has been described actually amounts to more than a year.

[812] This is said in sarcasm, since in the disguise of Goutama, Indra seduced Ahalya and was cursed by Goutama.

The mountain's daughter was on Chandrashekhara's left. His matted hair was radiant, and his weapons were the trident and the Ajagava bow. His clear complexion was as white as camphor. He wore an elephant's hide. From his guru's words from the agama texts, he recognized Mahadeva. His voice choked in tears of joy and his body hair stood up. He covered his face with the hem of his garment. For a while, the son stood there, immobile, like Mount Chitrakuta. It was as if a person has suddenly become wealthy and has forgotten himself. He was unable to praise, show obeisance, or say anything at all.",

"When he was unable, Shankara smiled and spoke. Ishvara said, 'O child! O Grihapati! Shakra has raised the vajra in his hand. I know that you are frightened. Do not be scared. I only wanted to test you. Shakra, the vajra, or the Destroyer cannot do anything to my devotee. I used my powers to assume Indra's form and scare you. O fortunate one! I will bestow a boon on you. You will obtain the status of Agni.[813] You will be able to bestow boons on all devas. You will be Agni in all beings, the Ishvara inside them. You will obtain a kingdom that is in the direction between those of Dharmaraja and Indra.[814] The lingam that you have established will be known by your name. It will be known as Agnishvara and will extend every kind of energy.[815] Devotees of Agnishvara will have no fear from fire or lightning. They will never suffer from digestive problems[816] or face untimely death. Agnishvara bestows every kind of prosperity. Even if a devotee happens to die in a place other than Kashi, he obtains greatness in Vahni's world.' Saying this, he summoned his relatives and while they watched, he instated him as a guardian of a direction. Shiva then entered that lingam. O Janardana! [817] I have thus described Agni avatara to you. O son! This avatara of Shankara, the paramatman, is also named after Grihapati. There is the beautiful, radiant and supreme city of Chitrahotrapuri. It bestows happiness. Jataveda's [818] devotees reside there. If a person is firm in spirit, conquers his senses and enters the fire, even if this happens to be a woman who is firm in spirit, such a person obtains all of Agni's energy. Brahmanas who offer oblations to the ancestors through agnihotra and those who are brahmacharis and observe the five fires,[819] become radiant in Agni's world. During winter, if a person donates bundles of kindling to those who are suffering from the cold, or if he makes firebricks, he resides in Agni's presence. If a person lights the funeral pyre for those who have no protector,[820] or if he persuades others to do so, because he himself is incapable, he obtains greatness in Agni's world. For brahmanas, the fire is the supreme means for obtaining benefit. Agni is certainly the guru, the deva, the vrata and the tirtha. Anything impure is instantly purified as soon as it comes into contact with fire. Since it purifies, it is known as Pavaka. [821] It is directly there in the inner atman. As digestive fire, it digests pieces of flesh in the stomach. But it does not digest the pieces of flesh in the muscles of women.[822]

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[813] This is the garhapatya fire that burns in households.

[814] Indra rules over the east and Dharmaraja (Yama) over the south. Thus, Agni's direction is the south-east.

[815] This still exists in Varanasi but is not that well known any more. Agnishvara ghat is better known.

[816] Since the digestive fire exists within every being.

[817] An unusual way to refer to Narada.

[818] Jataveda is Agni's name.

[819] Performing austerities with four fires on four sides and the sun overhead.

[820] Such a person has no relative who can perform the funeral rites.

[821] The one who purifies, one of Agni's names.

[822] It is difficult to make sense of this sentence, which might refer to a pregnant woman.

This energetic form of Shambhu's is evident, with the power to burn down. Other than this, what can one see that is the creator, preserver and destroyer? Chitrabhanu[823] is directly the eye of the lord of the three worlds. In this world that is full of blind darkness, what else can provide illumination? Incense, lamps, naivedya,[824] milk, curd, ghee and sugarcane juice are all offered into the fire and then reach devas in heaven.""

Chapter 245-4(16) (Yaksheshvara Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O lord among sages! Hear about Shambhu's Yaksheshvara avatara. It destroys the pride of the insolent and increases devotion among the virtuous. In earlier times, in pursuit of their own selfish motives, the immensely strong devas and daityas churned the ocean of milk, so that they might obtain the nectar. Gods and danavas churned the ocean of milk earlier, so that amrita might be obtained. At that time, the fire of poison arose, as radiant as the fire of destruction. On seeing this, all the devas and daityas were agitated by fear. O son! They swiftly fled and sought refuge with Shambhu. All of them saw Shankara, the crest among all the devas. Along with Achyuta, they lowered their heads, praised him devotedly and prostrated themselves. Bhagavan Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees, was pleased at this. He drank that extremely terrible poison, which had made large numbers of gods and asuras suffer. When he drank it, that fierce and terrible poison remained stuck in his neck. Therefore, the lord dazzled as Nilakantha. [825] The large number of gods and asuras started to churn again. As a result of Shiva's favours, all of them had been freed from the prospect of being burnt down by the poison. O son! O sage! Many jewels emerged. O sage! But the gods and danavas really sought amrita. As a result of Hari's favour, only devas drank it, not the asuras. Many great jewels also arose. O sage! There was a great duel between devas and danavas, Afflicted by fear on account of Rahu, Chandra fled. He went to Shambhu's abode and agitated, sought refuge with him. He praised him and prostrated himself, exclaiming, 'Please save me. Protect me.' Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees, granted him freedom from fear. Chandra had sought refuge with the lord, and he wore him on his head. Rahu also arrived there. He too lovingly praised Shankara, the lord of everything, in eloquent words and prostrated himself. Shambhu discerned what he wanted and fixed the head, severed earlier by Achyuta, on the neck. That came to be known as Ketu.[826] In the battle, all the asuras were defeated by devas. Having drunk amrita, all the gods had become extremely strong and were victorious.""

"Vishnu all the others became extremely proud. Their strength had sprouted, and they were deluded by Shiva's maya. The divinity Shankara, the lord of everyone, is the one who takes away pride. O sage! He assumed the form of Yaksha and quickly went to where devas were. Yakshapati[827] saw that all of them, with Achyuta in the forefront, were full of great arrogance in their minds. Mahesha, the one who takes away pride, spoke. Yaksheshvara asked,

[823] Agni's name.

[824] Offerings of food.

[825] Blue in the throat.

[826] The reverse belief is also held, including in astrology, with Rahu as the head and Ketu as the body. Here, Ketu is the head and Rahu is the body.

[827] Yakshapati, the lord of yakshas, the same meaning as Yaksheshvara and Yakshanatha.

'O gods! Why are all of you stationed here, as if all of you are pieces of wood? I am asking you. Tell me the reason.' The devas replied, 'O divinity! An extremely terrible battle took place. All the asuras were destroyed. The remaining ones fled. All of us are extremely brave. We have become stronger and are the slayers of daityas. How can daityas, inferior in strength, stand in front of us?' He heard the words of the gods, haughty and proud. Mahadeva, the destroyer of insolence, spoke in the form of Yaksha. Yaksheshvara replied, 'O all you gods! Listen lovingly to my words. I am speaking the truth. This is not false. It will destroy all your pride. You should not be proud in this way. You have forgotten the great Lord Mahesha, who is the creator and the destroyer. You should not boast about your strength in vain. You are insolent and are boasting about your strength, as if your own strength is great. I have placed this blade of grass here. O gods! Use your weapons to sever it.' Saying this, so as to destroy every kind of insolence, Ishvara, the destination of the virtuous, hurled a blade of grass in front of them. All the gods, Vishnu at the forefront, prided themselves on being brave. They exhibited their own manliness and hurled their own respective weapons. All of those weapons of the residents of heaven were quickly rendered futile because of the powers of Shiva, the one who takes away the pride of the foolish.""

"At that time, a voice was heard from the sky, dispelling the surprise of devas. 'O devas! This Yaksha is Shankara, the one who takes away everyone's pride. He is Parameshvara, the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. Living beings are strong because of his strength, not because of any other reason. Because of the powers of maya of your own lord, Shiva, you were deluded. O gods! You were intoxicated and did not recognize the lord even now.' Hearing the words from the sky, the gods were no longer surprised. They prostrated themselves before Yaksheshvara and praised Isha. The devas said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who takes away every kind of pride! O Yaksheshvara! O lord! Your pastimes are great and your maya is wonderful. In the form of Yaksha, we have been deluded by your maya even now. Though you were in front of us, separated from you, we spoke to you in words that were full of insolence. O lord! Through your favours, we have regained jnana now. O Shankara! You are the creator, the preserver and the destroyer, not anyone else. You are the one who activates every kind of power and withdraws it. O Sarvesha! You are the undecaying paramatman, without a second. In the form of Yaksheshvara, you have taken away all our pride. In truth, we think that you have shown us your favours and compassion. Yakshanatha then showed his favours on all the gods. Using many kinds of words, he made them understand. Thereafter, he vanished from the spot. Shambhu's avatara, which brings happiness, has thus been described. This is known as Yaksheshvara. It bestows joy and satisfaction and grants freedom from fear. This account is unsullied and takes away every kind of pride. It always bestows supreme serenity on the virtuous and grants objects of pleasure and emancipation to men. If an intelligent man devotedly hears this, or makes it heard, he obtains everything that he desires and attains the desired end.""

Chapter 246-4(17) (Ten Avataras of Shiva)

“Nandishvara said, "Hear about Girisha's first ten avataras, the most important being Mahakala. Devotees worship them in accordance with the methods described in texts on worship. The first of these is Mahakala, bestowing objects of pleasure and emancipation on the virtuous. The Shakti there is Mahakali, granting devotees the desired fruits. The second is named Tara and the Shakti is Taraa. Both of them bestow objects of pleasure, emancipation and happiness on those who serve them. The third avatara of Bhuvanesha[828] is described as Bala. The Bhuvaneshi Shakti there is known as Balaa, bestowing happiness on the virtuous. The fourth is known as Shrividyesha Shodasha and Shivaa there is Shrividya Shodashi. As fruits, they bestow happiness, objects of pleasure and emancipation on devotees. The fifth is known as Bhairava, always granting devotees whatever is desired. There, Girija is Bhairavi, always granting virtuous worshippers whatever they wish for. Shiva's sixth avatara is famous under the name of Chinnamastaka. As Chinnamastakaa, Girija bestows on devotees whatever they desire. Shambhu's seventh avatara is Dhumavat, granting every kind of wish as fruit. Shivaa there is Dhumavati, granting virtuous worshippers whatever they wish for. Shiva's eighth avatara is Bagalamukha, the source of happiness. The Shakti there is famous as Bagalamukhi and she is the source of great bliss. Shiva's ninth avatara is described as Matanga. In the form of Matangi, Sharvani grants as fruits everything desired. Shambhu's tenth avatara is Kamala, the one who grants objects of pleasure and emancipation as fruits. Girija is Kamalaa there and protects her own devotees. These ten avataras of Shiva bestow happiness. They always grant virtuous devotees objects of pleasure and emancipation. These ten avataras of the great-souled Shankara bestow diverse kinds of happiness on those who constantly serve them, without any aberrations. O sage! I have described the greatness of the ten avataras. Know that, as described in sacred texts of tantra and in other places, they yield everything wished for. O sage! The greatness of the Shaktis is also wonderful. Know that, as described in sacred texts of tantra and in other places, they yield everything wished for. It is held that these Shaktis are supreme in slaying the enemy and other tasks. They always punish the crooked and increase the energy of the brahman. O brahmana! Starting with Mahakala, I have thus described to you the ten auspicious avataras of Mahesha, along with their Shaktis. Full of great devotion, if a person studies this auspicious and unblemished account at the time of all Shiva's festivals, he is extremely loved by Shambhu. Brahmanas obtain the energy of the brahman, kshatriyas are victorious, vaishyas obtain wealth and shudras obtain happiness. Those who follow Shankara's dharma listen to this account and become happy and especially devoted to Shiva.""

[828] Lord of the worlds. The feminine is Bhuvaneshi.

Chapter 247-4(18) (Eleven Avataras)

N Tandishvara said, "Hear about Shankara's eleven supreme avataras. If one hears about them, nothing that is generated from the false [829] can create impediments. Earlier, all the gods, with Shakra as the leader, were defeated by the daityas. Terrified, they fled from their own city of Amaravati. Oppressed by daityas, devas went to Kashyapa's presence. They lowered their shoulders and clasped their hands. Very agitated, they prostrated themselves. After bending down, all the gods affectionately told him everything. They quickly informed him about their misery, resulting from the defeat. O son! They told their father, Kashyapa, this and his mind was attached to Shiva. Hearing about the grief of the immortals, he was exceedingly unhappy. The sage comforted them. Serene in his intelligence, he resorted to his patience. O sage! Extremely cheerful, he went to Vishveshvara's city of Kashi. Following the norms, he lovingly bathed in the waters of Ganga. He worshipped the lord, Sarveshvara Vishveshvara, along with Uma. He established Shiva's lingam properly and performed extensive austerities directed towards Shambhu. He did this cheerfully, with the welfare of devas in mind. O sage! While he engaged in these austerities, a long period of time elapsed. He resorted to his patience and fixed his mind on Shiva's lotus feet. After this, to bestow a boon on the rishi, Shambhu manifested himself. He is attached to those whose minds are devoted to him and he is a friend of the distressed and the objective of the virtuous.""

"Seeing Mahesha, he joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself. O son! Extensive in his intelligence, Kashyapa delightedly praised the divinity. Kashyapa said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who is affectionate towards those who seek refuge! You are Sarveshvara. You are the paramatman. You can be reached through dhyana. You are without decay. O Maheshvara! You are the one who chastises strong ones. You are the destination of the virtuous. You are a friend to the distressed. You are an ocean of compassion. Your accomplished intelligence is intent on protecting your devotees. These gods are your own. In particular, they are your devotees. lord! They have now been defeated by the daityas. Please give those miserable ones. Even Rama's lord is incapable of countering this repeated misery. Therefore, the grieving gods sought refuge with me and told me this. O divinity! O lord of devas! You are the one who destroys the misery of devas. That is the reason I faithfully completed these austerities, to please you and seek refuge with you. O Maheshvara! In every possible way, I have sought refuge with you. O lord! Please fulfil my wishes and destroy the misery of devas. O lord of devas! I am particularly miserable because my sons are suffering. O lord! Make me happy and help the residents of heaven. O lord! Devas and yakshas were born as my sons and they have been defeated. O Shambhu! The daityas are extremely strong. Please grant joy to devas. O Mahesha! Please help the gods in every possible way. O lord! Let gods not be constrained by impediments created by the daityas.' Hearing this, Sarvesha Shankara uttered words of assent. While he looked on, Bhagavan Hara vanished from the spot.""

[829] Meaning, anything material in nature. Hence, false and impermanent.

"Extremely joyous, Kashyapa swiftly returned to his own abode and lovingly told the lords among gods everything that had occurred. So as to make his own words come true, Shankara Sharva was born through Surabhi and Kashyapa in eleven different forms. [830] All of them were full of Shiva and there were great festivities. The gods happily arrived in the sage Kashyapa's house to see them. They were (1) Kapalin; (2) Pingala; (3) Bhima; (4) Virupaksha; (5) Vilohita; (6) Shastri; (7) Ajapada; (8) Ahirbudhnya; (9) Shambhu; (10) Chanda and (11) Bhava. These are said to be the eleven Rudras who were the sons of Surabhi. They were forms of Shiva and were born to accomplish the task of devas and ensure happiness. These brave sons of Kashyapa, the Rudras, were extremely strong and valiant. They helped devas in the battle and slew daityas. It is because of the favours of the Rudras that devas were fearless and defeated the daityas. All of them, Shakra and the others, got their own kingdoms back and their minds went back to their natural states. Even today, all the great Rudras are Shiva's own forms. To protect devas, they are always radiant in the firmament. They reside in Ishana's city[831] and are affectionate towards their devotees. Accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, they always amuse themselves there. One crore Rudras are described as their followers. Dividing themselves, they reside everywhere in the three worlds. O son! I have thus described Shankara's eleven avataras to you. They are the Rudras and bring happiness to all the worlds. This unblemished account destroys all sins. It bestows wealth, fame and a long lifespan and grants everything that is desired. O son! If a person controls himself and hears, or makes heard, this account, he enjoys every kind of happiness and obtains emancipation subsequently.""

Chapter 248-4(19) (Story of Durvasa)

“Nandishvara said, "O great sage! Hear about another account of Shambhu's conduct. For the sake of dharma, Shankara was born as Durvasa. Brahma's son was a great ascetic. [832] The lord knew about the brahman. The intelligent one was Anasuya's husband and he followed Brahma's commands. Instructed by Brahma and desiring a son, along with his wife, he went to the mountain named Rikshakula [833] to perform austerities. Along the banks of the Nirvindhya river, he performed pranayama in the proper way. Without the opposite pairs of sentiments, the sage immersed himself in deep austerities for one hundred years. "The single Ishvara is the great lord who is free from aberrations. Let him firmly make up his mind that he will grant me a son as a boon.'[834] A long period of time passed. He tormented himself through these excellent austerities. A great and pure blaze emerged from his head. O lord among sages! It almost burnt down all the worlds. All the gods and rishis, Vasava and the others, suffered. O sage! Suffering excessively from those flames, all the gods, Vasava and the others, and the sages quickly left for Brahma's abode. They bent down in the proper way. Praising him, they reported their own miseries. O son! Along with the gods, Brahma went to Vishnu's excellent world.

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[830] Surabhi was Kashyapa's wife. Though it is often stated that there are eleven Rudras, the names of these eleven Rudras varies from place to place. The numbering is given in the text.

[831] Ishana's direction is the north-east.

[832] As will become evident, this means Atri.

[833] The text says Traikshakula, but Rikshakula is the more standard name. River Nirvindhya is speculatively identified as a tributary of Warda.

[834] Atri's prayer does not identify a specific divinity.

Having gone there, the gods and Vidhatri bent down before Rama's lord in the proper way and praised him. O sage! They told Vishnu, who was lying down on Ananta, [835] about their own miseries. Along with Vidhatri and the gods, Vishnu quickly went to Rudra's abode. There, he prostrated himself before Hara and praised Parameshvara. Praising him in many kinds of ways, Vishnu reported his own misery. He told Sharva about the blaze that had arisen on account of Atri's supreme austerities. O sage! Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara gathered together and consulted each other about the welfare of the universe. The three divinities, Brahma and the others, bulls among those who grant boons, quickly went to the rishi's hermitage, to grant him a boon.""

"Atri, supreme among sages, saw them, marked by their own distinctive signs. He prostrated himself and lovingly praised them, using eloquent words. The brahmana, Brahma's son, was surprised. He humbly joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Brahma, Vishnu and Hara. Atri said, 'O Brahma! O Hari! O Rudra! It is the view that you should be worshipped by the three worlds. You are powerful Ishvaras, those who cause creation, preservation and destruction. For the sake of a son, along with my wife, I performed dhyana on only one Ishvara, whoever may be the Ishvara who is famous in the universe. O bulls among those who bestow boons! Why have you three divinities come? Please dispel my doubt about this and then grant me the desired boon.' Hearing his words, the three divinities replied, 'O lord among sages! It will happen according to your resolution. The three of us are equals as Isha and as bulls among those who grant boons. Therefore, from our portions, you will have three sons. All of them will be famous in the world and will extend their father's fame.' Saying this, the three divinities cheerfully returned to their own abodes. Having obtained the boon, the sage happily returned to his own hermitage. O sage! Along with Anasuya, he was delighted and enjoyed the bliss of the brahman. As sons of his wife, Brahma, Hari and Shambhu took their avataras. The three of them were pleased and displayed many kinds of pastimes. Through the lord among sages and Anasuya, Vidhatri's portion was born as Chandra. As soon as he was born, devas hurled him into the ocean. Through Atri and his wife, Vishnu's portion was born as Datta. [836] That supreme sage extended the path of sannyasa. Through Atri and his wife, Shiva's portion was born as Durvasa, tiger among sages. That excellent sage propounded the path of supreme dharma.""

"Rudra was born as Durvasa, who extended the brahman's energy. Full of compassion, he tested the dharma of many. There was a king named Ambarisha, born in the solar dynasty. He tested him. O lord among sages! Hear about it. Ambarisha, supreme among kings, was lord of the seven dvipas. He was steady in observing the rules of the ekadashi vow. [837] The king was firm in his resolve that he would observe ekadashi vrata and break his fast on dvadashi. Getting to know about this niyama, Durvasa, supreme among sages and born of Shankara's portion, went to him with many disciples. At that time, there was very little of dvadashi left. Knowing this, the king was about to eat and invited the sage too. However, along with his disciples, Durvasa went to have a bath. In order to test the king,

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[835] Vishnu sleeps on the naga Ananta.

[836] That is, Dattatreya.

[837] A vrata observed on ekadashi, the eleventh lunar day, involving fasting. Dvadashi is the twelfth lunar day. The fast has to be broken on dvadashi.

the sage spent a lot of time there and tarried. The king knew that there would be a violation of dharma, as enjoined in the sacred texts. Wishing to wait for him to return, the king had a little bit of water. Meanwhile, the sage Durvasa returned. Knowing that the king had already eaten, he made up his mind to test him. To test the king, the rishi became angry. The sage, born from Shankara's portion, addressed him in harsh words. Durvasa said, 'O king! You are wicked. You invited us but have had water without waiting for us. I will demonstrate the fruits of this. I am the one who chastises the wicked.' His eyes coppery-red in rage, he got ready to burn down the king. To protect him, Ishvara's chakra swiftly arrived. The blazing Sudarshana chakra was about to burn down the sage. It did not know that he was Shiva's form. It was also deluded by Shiva's maya. Meanwhile, an invisible voice from the sky spoke to the great-souled Ambarisha, Brahma and Vishnu's devotee. The voice from the sky said, 'This Sudarshana chakra was given to Hari by Shambhu. It is blazing against Durvasa. O king! Pacify it now. Durvasa is a direct portion of Shiva, who is the one who gave the chakra to Hari. O supreme king! You do not know that he is not an ordinary sage. The lord among sages wished to test your observance of dharma. Quickly seek refuge with him. Otherwise, there will be dissolution.' O lord among sages! Saying this, the voice from the sky stopped. Ambarisha lovingly praised Hara's portion. Ambarisha said, 'If I have made the desired donations, if I have observed my own dharma and if my lineage regards brahmanas as divinities, let this weapon be pacified. Bhagavan [838] is affectionate towards his devotees. If I have been devoted to him, let him specially pacify the Sudarshana weapon.' Thus praised in front of Rudra, Shiva's Sudarshana chakra [839] was pacified in every way. King Ambarisha obtained intelligence and got to know that he was Shiva's portion. Therefore, he prostrated himself before the sage, realizing that Shiva's avatara had come there to test him. The sage who was Shankara's portion was greatly pleased. He ate, gave him the desired boon and left for his own abode.""

"O sage! I have spoken to you about Durvasa's conduct in testing Ambarisha. O lord among sages! Now hear about another account. He again wanted to test the rules followed by Dasharatha's son. O sage! Kala set a rule in the form of a sage. [840] The sage [841] rashly sent Soumitri in. O sage! Following the pledge he had made, Rama instantly gave up his relative. That account is famous in the world and many sages have spoken about it. Since they have spoken about it, all learned persons know about it. The sage was delighted to see that there was firmness in following the rule. Durvasa was pleased in his mind and bestowed boons on him."? "The sage tested Shri Krishna's observance of rules too. O best among sages! I will tell you about that. Listen. Because of Brahma's prayer, Vishnu was born as Vasudeva's son, so as to reduce the earth's burden and protect the virtuous. He killed great and wicked sinners, those deceitful ones who caused harm to brahmanas. Under the name of Krishna, he protected brahmanas and the virtuous. Krishna, Vasudeva's son, was devoted to brahmanas. Every day, he fed many brahmanas succulent food.

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[838] That is, Vishnu.

[839] Since it originally belonged to Shiva.

[840] Kala appeared in the form of a sage before Rama, to tell Rama that it was time for him to leave the earth. While Kala and Rama were conversing in private, the rule was set that no one would interrupt, under the pain of death. When Lakshmana (Soumitri) interrupted, instead of killing him, Rama banished him.

[841] Durvasa.

The news that Krishna was particularly devoted to brahmanas became known. O sage! To see this for himself, the sage arrived in Krishna's presence. He tied Rukmini and Krishna himself to the chariot and yoked them. He[842] happily bore the chariot. Seeing that he was supremely firm, the sage descended from the chariot. Pleased at him, he granted him the boon that his body would be as tough as the vajra.""

"Once, Durvasa, best among sages, was bathing in the divine river.[843] O sage! He was naked and became the subject of curiosity. He was ashamed. Getting to know this, Droupadi, who was also bathing there, lovingly tore off a piece from the end of her garment and gave it to him to hide his shame. It was borne along by the current and reached near the sage. He used that to cover his genital organs and was satisfied with her. He granted Droupadi the boon that her garments would multiply. Having obtained this boon, Droupadi made the Pandavas happy.""

"The two crooked kings, Hamsa and Dimbhaka, showed him disrespect. He instructed Hari and the lord destroyed them.[844] In particular, using his energy ene of the brahman, he followed the ordinances of the sacred texts and established the mode of sannyasa on earth. Through his instructions, he enlightened many and raised them up. In particular, he bestowed jnana and was responsible for the emancipation of many. Such was the wonderful and varied conduct of Durvasa. If a person hears this, he obtains wealth, fame, a long lifespan and everything that he desires. If a person listens to Durvasa's account devotedly and happily, or makes it heard, he obtains great happiness in this world and in the next one.""

Chapter 249-4(20) (Hanuman Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O sage! After this, listen lovingly to Hanuman's conduct. In this form, Hara performed many excellent deeds. Out of love, Parameshvara brought great benefit to Rama. O brahmana! Hear about all this. It brings every kind of happiness. There was an occasion when Lord Shambhu, the performer of wonderful deeds, saw Vishnu in the form of Mohini. All the qualities resided in her. As if struck by Kama's arrows, Shambhu was agitated. To accomplish Rama's task, Ishvara made his semen fall down. The saptarshis placed this semen on a leaf. Affectionately, he urged them mentally that they should accomplish Rama's task. To accomplish a beneficial act for Rama, those maharshis poured that semen into the ears of Anjani, Goutama's daughter. At the right time, Shambhu was born through this, under the name of Hanuman. He was an immensely strong and valiant monkey. Hanuman, lord among monkeys, was immensely strong, even as a child. In the morning, taking the solar disc to be a small fruit, he tried to quickly eat it.

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[842] Krishna.

[843] Ganga.

[844] Hamsa and Dimbhaka (also called Dibhaka) were Jarasandha's generals. They were indirectly killed by Krishna. Directly, they separately committed suicide in the Yamuna, after hearing the false news that the other one had died. The Mahabharata narrates this but does not say anything about these two having insulted Durvasa.

Because devas beseeched him, he abandoned it. Knowing that he was Shiva's immensely strong avatara, devas and rishis bestowed boons on him. Extremely happy, Hanuman went to his mother and told her everything, all that had occurred. Following her command, the patient one made efforts to acquire every kind of learning. Every day, the monkey went to Surya and studied under him. As a result of Surya's command, the excellent monkey, Rudra's portion, took his mother's permission and went to Sugriva, who was Surya's portion. His elder brother, Vali, had enjoyed his wife and had exiled him. Therefore, along with Hanuman, he resided on Mount Rishyamuka.[845] The supreme and intelligent monkey became Sukantha's minister.[846] Hara's portion always did what would be beneficial for Sugriva. Rama arrived there with his brother, miserable that his wife had been abducted. He arranged for a friendly alliance between Rama and Sugriva and that brought joy. Rama killed Vali, elephant among monkeys. Though he prided himself on being brave, having enjoyed his brother's wife, he was a sinner. O son! Following Rama's command, Hanuman, lord of vanaras, went out to search for Sita, along with many other intelligent vanaras."[847]

"Knowing that Sita had been taken to Lanka, the lord among monkeys went there. He swiftly leapt across the ocean, not crossed by anyone else before. He performed wonderful feats, full of valour, there. He affectionately handed over to Sita the token his excellent lord had given. The brave leader of monkeys made her hear about Rama's account, thus making Sita's sorrow go away and ensuring her life would be protected. He took a token from her and returned to Rama's presence. He destroyed Ravana's pleasure garden and killed many rakshasas. In that way, he killed Ravana's son, along with many other rakshasas. Great in his deeds, he fearlessly created great damage. O sage! The extremely powerful Ravana had him firmly bound and covered in cloth soaked in oil. When this was set on fire, the monkey, Mahadeva's portion, jumped around and cunningly burnt down all of Lanka. He burnt all of Lanka, with the exception of Vibhishana's house. The brave elephant among monkeys then leapt into the ocean. He extinguished the fire on his tail there and reached the other shore. Not exhausted at all, Girisha's portion went to Rama's presence. Using great speed, Hanuman, supreme among monkeys, reached Rama and gave him the crest jewel Sita had given him. Following his command, the brave one summoned many strong vanaras and had them collect many mountains, so that a bridge could be built across the ocean. Rama wanted to go there, [848] But before that, desiring victory, he established Shiva's lingam and worshipped it. Having obtained the boon of victory, he crossed the ocean and reached Lanka. Along with the monkeys, he[849] fought a battle against the rakshasas. The brave one[850] protected Rama's soldiers and killed many asuras. When Lakshmana was wounded by the spear, he brought sanjivani[851] and revived him. He made Rama and Lakshmana happy in every possible way.

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[845] In the Valmiki Ramayana, Rishyamukha is to the north of the Vindhyas. The region has also been identified as the region around the Tungabhadra.

[846] By Sukantha, the text means Sugriva.

[847] The text has earlier used the word kapi, meaning monkey. We have translated kapi as monkey. Though vanara also means monkey, we will leave the word untranslated, to indicate that the translation of kapilvanara as monkey, is misleading in this context.

[848] To Lanka.

[849] Rama.

[850] Hanuman.

[851] The medicinal herb on Gandhamadana.

The lord, Mahadeva's portion, protected all the soldiers. Without any exhaustion, he destroyed Ravana and his extensive family. A store of great strength, the monkey made devas happy. He brought Rama and Lakshmana from the place of the one known as Mahiravana. [852] He protected them and returned them to their own place. In every possible way, the bull among monkeys swiftly performed Rama's tasks. He engaged in many pastimes and made the asuras bow down. The lord among monkeys established devotion towards Rama on earth. He was himself supreme among devotees and brought pleasure to Rama and Sita. He gave life back to Lakshmana and destroyed any kind of insolence. Bhagavan Rudra's avatara saved devotees. Hanuman was immensely brave and always carried out Rama's tasks. In the world, he is known as Rama's messenger and the slayer of daityas. He is affectionate towards his devotees. O son! I have thus described to you Hanuman's excellent account. This bestows wealth, fame, a long lifespan and everything desired as fruits. If a person controls himself and listens to this devotedly, or makes it heard, he enjoys everything that he wishes for in this world. In the next world, he obtains emancipation,"

Chapter 250-4(21) (Mahesha Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O sage! O son of the one who created N himself! After this, listen lovingly to another one of the great lord Shankara's avataras. A person who listens to this, obtains everything that he wishes for. O tiger among sages! On one occasion, Girija and Shankara wished to engage in pleasures. Out of her own will, Parameshvari created Bhairava as a doorkeeper. Then they went inside. Following the behaviour of humans, they were lovingly served by a large number of friends. Those two self-ruling ones, Parameshvara and Parameshvari, enjoyed themselves for a long period of time. O sage! Engaging in many kinds of pastimes, they were pleased. In her own pastimes, the self-ruling Devi Shivaa assumed the form of a mad woman. Taking the lord's permission, she arrived in that form at the door. Bhairava looked at Devi, as he would look at a beautiful woman. Deluded by that form, he prohibited her from going out. O sage! Looking at her as if she was a beautiful woman, this is what Bhairava did then. Devi Shivaa became angry. Ambika cursed him. Devi said, 'O worst among men! You have looked at me as you would towards a woman.

O Bhairava! Therefore, be born as a human being on earth.' O sage! Bhairava was cursed by Shivaa in this way. There were great lamentations. As a result of that pastime, he was reduced to this state of grief. O lord among sages! Shankara quickly arrived there. Accomplished in many kinds of consolation, he comforted Bhairava. O sage! As a result of that curse, Bhairava took an avatara on earth. As a result of Shankara's wish, he was born in a human womb and was known as Vaitala. As a result of affection towards him, the lord Shiva also took an avatara on earth, along with Shivaa. They indulged in many kinds of worldly pastimes. O sage! Shiva was known as Mahesha and Girija was known as Sharada. Accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, they lovingly engaged in sports. O son! I have thus told you about Mahesha's excellent account.

[852] Mahiravana was a rakshasa who abducted Rama and Lakshmana to the nether regions. Hanuman killed him and rescued the brothers. This is not a story that figures in Valmiki Ramayana, though it features in other versions of the Ramayana.

It bestows wealth, fame, a long lifespan and everything wished for as fruits. If a person controls himself and devotedly listens to this, or makes it heard, he enjoys all the objects of pleasure in this world. At the end, he obtains emancipation.""

Chapter 251-4(22) (Prelude to Vrisha Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O Brahma's wise son! O lord among N sages! Hear about the one known as Vrisha. This supreme avatara of Shiva's engaged in pastimes and took away Hari's pride. In ancient times, all devas and asuras were afflicted by fear on account of old age and death. They made an agreement with each other to obtain jewels and other things from the ocean. O son of a sage! [853] All the gods and asuras got ready to churn the excellent ocean of milk. O brahmana! 'What will we churn it with?? All the gods and asuras were unsure about this and wondered about success in their objective. At that time, a deep voice that rumbled like the clouds was heard from the sky. On Ishvara's command, it assured devas and daityas. The voice from the sky said, 'O devas! O asuras! Churn the ocean of milk. There is no doubt that you will obtain strength and intelligence. Make Mandara the churning rod and Vasuki the rope for churning. All of you unite and devotedly, carry out the churning.' The gods and asuras heard the voice from the sky. O supreme among ages! Accordingly, all of them made efforts to do that. All of them went to the excellent Mount Mandara. It stood up straight, golden in complexion, decorated with many kinds of splendour. After propitiating Girisha and obtaining its permission. ission, the gods and asuras used their strength to uproot it, wishing to take it to the water in the ocean. O sage! All of them used their arms to uproot it. They tried to take it to the ocean of milk. However, they were incapable of conveying it there and their energy failed. Dislodged from their hands, Mount Mandara fell down on devas and daityas, becoming extremely heavy. The gods and asuras were scattered and lost their enterprise. When they regained their senses, they praised the lord of the universe. As a result of his wish, all of them raised the mountain up again. They took it to the northern shore of the ocean of milk and hurled it into the water. After this, the large number of gods and asuras made Vasuki the rope for churning. Desiring to obtain jewels and other things, they started to churn the ocean of milk.""

"When the ocean of milk was churned, Maheshvari arose from the ocean as Shri, the goddess of heaven. She was Bhrigu's daughter and Hari's beloved.[854] Dhanvantari,[855] Shashanka, [856] the great tree of Parijata, the horse Ucchaihshrava, the elephant Airavata, liquor, Hari's bow, the conch shell, the kamadhenu cow, the jewel known as Koustubha and nectar also arose. When the churning continued, the great poison kalakuta originated. It was like the fire that comes at the end of a yuga and caused fear to gods and asuras. When nectar was born, there were drops that fell outside. From these were born many beautiful women, wonderful to behold. Their faces resembled the autumn moon. Their complexions were like lightning, the sun or the fire. They wore necklaces, bracelets and bangles and were ornamented in divine jewels.

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[853] An unusual way to refer to Sanatkumara.

[854] In one of her manifestations, Shri (Lakshmi) was born as the daughter of the sage Bhrigu and his wife, Khyati.

[855] Physician of the gods.

[856] The moon.

Their charm was like the water of amrita, sprinkling the ten directions. Their eyebrows were long and arched and with their glances, they seemed to madden the universe. Crores of them originated from the drops of amrita. After this, amrita originated, countering old age and death. Keshava accepted Lakshmi, the conch shell, Koustubha and the sword. [857] Arka [858] affectionately accepted the divine horse, Ucchaihshrava. With great love, Shachi's consort, the lord of the gods, accepted the excellent Parijata tree and Airavata, lord among elephants. Shambhu is affectionate towards his devotees. To save devas, Shankara voluntarily retained kalakuta in his throat and wore the moon. Deluded by Ishvara in his beautiful form, [859] daityas accepted the liquor known as sura. O Vyasa! All the other people accepted Dhanvantari. O lord among sages! All the sages accepted kamadhenu. The women who arose were there, confounding everyone. They were accepted by everyone in general.""

"The minds of gods and asuras were agitated. For the sake of amrita, wishing to defeat each other, a great battle followed between them. O Vyasa! [860] The daityas, Bali and the others, were strong. They defeated devas and took away the amrita, as radiant as the sun at the time of the end of a yuga. Distracted by Shiva's maya, devas went and sought refuge with Shankara. O son! All of them, Shakra and the others, were afflicted by the strength of daityas. O sage! On Shiva's command, Rama's lord used his maya. In the form of a woman, he made efforts to take the amrita away from the daityas. Assuming the feminine form of Mohini, he took it away from the asuras. All the gods were also deluded by Hari's excellent maya. The bulls among daityas went near her and said, 'Make us drink the nectar. Let there be no difference between the rows,[861] Saying this, they handed it over to Vishnu, who had assumed a form of deception. All the daityas and danavas were confounded by Shiva's maya. Meanwhile, the bulls among danavas saw the women who had originated from amrita. They cheerfully took them away to their own abodes. Maya built divine cities for them, exceeding heaven in qualities. They were protected well, with terrible machines. Protecting them in every possible way, the daityas touched their chests and took a pledge, emerging to fight. 'If we are defeated by devas, we will not touch these women.' Saying this, all the immensely valiant daityas wished to fight. They roared like lions and blew on their separate conch shells. The sound filled the sky and satisfied the clouds. There was a terrifying battle between devas and asuras. This is known as the unmatched battle between devas and asuras and is famous in the three worlds. Protected by Vishnu, all the gods were victorious. Slaughtered by Vishnu and the immortals, the daityas fled from the spot. The daityas were confounded by devas and by the great-souled Vishnu. The ones that escaped being killed entered holes in Patala. With the chakra in his hand, the powerful Vishnu pursued them and went to the ultimate region of Patala, where they were stationed, terrified.""

"Meanwhile, Vishnu saw those beautiful women, who had originated from amrita. Their faces were like the full moon, and they were proud because of their divine charm.

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[857] Vishnu's sword, Nandaka, also emerged from the churning of the ocean.

[858] Surya.

[859] In his form as Mohini, Vishnu deluded the asuras.

[860] Since Nandi is speaking to Sanatkumara, this is an inconsistency.

[861] Devas and asuras sat down in two different rows to drink amrita. Asuras handed the amrita over to Vishnu, in the form of Mohini, to distribute it.

Deluded by Kama's arrows, he found a break from his pursuits here. He pleasured himself with those supreme women. From them, Vishnu had sons who were supreme in valour. All of them were accomplished in many kinds of fighting and made The earth tremble. Those sons of Hari were immensely strong and valiant. They caused great hardships in heaven and on earth, giving rise to miseries. The immortals and sages noticed the hardship being caused to the worlds. They went to Brahma, prostrated themselves, and told him this. Hearing this, Brahma ook them with him and went to Mount Kailasa. Seeing Shiva here, devas repeatedly prostrated themselves before him. They lowered their shoulders, joined their hands in salutation and praised him with many kinds of hymns. They told him everything. 'O divinity! Victory to you. O Mahadeva!' Brahma said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O lord! Protect all the worlds. There are hardships caused by the transgressions of Vishnu's sons in Patala. O lord! Hari's atman is now attached to the women who originated from amrita. He is in Patala and mas transgressed by pleasuring himself. Thus, Brahma, the rishis and the gods praised Shambhu in many kinds of ways, for the protection of the worlds and for bringing Vishnu back. Maheshvara is an ocean of compassion. Understanding the havoc that had been caused, Bhagavan Shambhu assumed the form of Vrisha.""

Chapter 252-4(23) (Vrisha Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "The wielder of Pinaka roared in the form of Vrishabha. [862] He entered the hole and roared a terrible voice. As a result of his roars, cities and towns fell down. All the residents of the cities trembled, Vrisha rushed against Hari's sons, who were ready with their bows. Those immensely strong and valiant ones were confounded by Shiva's maya. O supreme among sages! Hence, Hari's sons were enraged. Those brave ones roared and rushed towards Shankara. Seeing that Hari's sons were advancing, in the form of Vrishabha, he became angry. He shattered Vishnu's sons with his horns and hooves. The limbs of all of Hari's sons were mangled by Rudra. He swiftly destroyed them. They lost their senses and lost their lives. When his sons were killed, the revered Vishnu, supreme among those who are strong, emerged and quickly rushed towards Hara. He saw Rudra wandering around in the form of the bull, after having killed Vishnu's sons. Keshava struck him with divine arrows and weapons. In the form of Vrisha, Mahadeva was angered. He was proud because of his strength and, immobile like a mountain, received Vishnu's weapons. Maheshvara, in the form of a bull, was filled with great wrath. O sage! He emitted a loud and terrible roar and made the three worlds tremble. With his horns and hooves, he struck Vishnu powerfully. Vishnu was overwhelmed by rage too. In his folly, Hari did not know himself. However, he became lax, and his limbs pained. Hari was unable to tolerate those blows and was confounded. Hari lost his pride and got back the senses he had lost. He got to know that Paramesha was wandering around in the form of Vrisha.""

"Realizing that it was Gourisha in the form of Vrisha, he was pacified. He lowered his shoulders, joined his hands in salutation, and spoke to him in a deep voice. Hari said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O lord! O ocean of compassion! O Mahesha! I am foolish in intelligence and have been deluded by your maya. O lord! O Isha! I have fought against you, my own lord. O lord! Please show me your pity.

[862] Vrishabha or Vrisha, a bull.

Please tolerate this offence. O sage! Bhagavan is affectionate towards his devotees. Hearing Hari's miserable words, Shankara spoke to Rama's lord. 'O Vishnu! O immensely intelligent one! How did you not know me? You forgot all your jnana and fought against me now. Do you not know your own self and that your valour depends on me? You should not have engaged in intercourse. Refrain from this wicked conduct. How can a person with jnana come under the subjugation of Kama and become addicted to pleasures with women? O lord of devas! This is not worthy of you. Remember that you are the one who saves the universe.' He lovingly heard Shambhu's words, which bestowed vijnana. Ashamed in his mind, Vishnu addressed Maheshvara in the following words. Vishnu said, 'O Hara! I will lovingly accept your words. I am one who carries out your commands. My chakra is here. Taking it with me, I will return to my own world.' Mahesha Hara heard Vishnu's words. In the form of the bull, Vrisha, the protector, spoke to Hari again. 'You should not delay. You should go quickly. O Hari! Following my command, let your chakra remain in this world. I will give you a chakra that you will think is even more terrible, greater than the sun at the time of destruction, or even Shiva's words.' Saying this, Hara created a divine and supreme chakra. It blazed and was as radiant as the fire of destruction. It could destroy all those who were wicked. He gave Vishnu this chakra, as terrible and radiant as ten thousand suns. The great-souled protector of all the immortals and Indras among sages obtained another Sudarshana chakra that was supremely radiant. Vishnu, supreme among intelligent ones, spoke to the gods who were there. 'O all you supreme devas! Listen attentively to my words. You should quickly act in accordance with them because they will be beneficial for you. There are divine and beautiful women in Patala, and they are young. Whoever wants can go and engage in great pastimes with them.' Hearing Keshava's words, brave residents of heaven wished to enter Patala, along with Vishnu.""

"Knowing what they were thinking about, Bhagavan Hara went there. Angry, he imposed a terrible curse on eight species of devas.[863] Hara said, 'Except for a tranquil sage and danavas born as my portion, anyone who enters this place will be instantly destroyed.' Hearing these terrible words, which enhanced the welfare of humans, and repulsed by Rudra, devas returned to their own abodes. Vishnu, who became excessively addicted to women, was chastised by Shiva. He returned to his own world and the universe regained its natural state. Shankara is affectionate towards his devotees. In the form of Vrisheshvara, Bhagavan accomplished the task of devas and returned to his own excellent mountain. Vrisheshvara avatara has been described. Sharva took away Vishnu's delusion and brought happiness to the three worlds. This is a sacred account and takes away great impediments caused by enemies. For the virtuous, it confers heaven, fame, a long lifespan, objects of pleasure and emancipation. If a person controls himself and listens to it devotedly, or makes it heard, he enjoys everything that he wishes for. At the end, he obtains emancipation. This is also what happens to an intelligent man who reads it.""

[863] The devas are sometimes listed as 33-8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, 12 Adityas and 2 Ashvins. The text doesn't tell us which eight were singled out for the curse. But, given the number eight, it might mean the Vasus.

Chapter 253-4(24) (Pippalada Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "Mahesha's supreme avatara is known as Pippalada. O wise one! With great affection, hear about it. It is excellent and enhances devotion. O brahmana! In earlier times, there was an excellent sage named Dadhichi. He was extremely powerful and a great devotee of Shiva's. He was the son of Chyavana, born in Bhrigu's lineage. [864] In the fight that involved Kshuva, Vishnu and the immortals were defeated. Maheshvara helped him and cursed them. [865] His wife was the immensely fortunate Suvarcha. She was virtuous and extremely devoted to her husband, and she cursed the residents of heaven. Mahadeva, accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, was born as her son. He manifested himself in this energetic form, under the name of Pippalada.""

Suta said, 'O best among sages! Hearing Nandishvara's wonderful words, Sanatkumar lowered his shoulders, joined his hands in salutation, and spoke.'

'Sanatkumara said, "O Nandishvara! O immensely wise one! O one who is directly Rudra's form! You are blessed. O father! You are my virtuous guru. You have made me hear a wonderful account. O father! From Brahma, I have already heard the account of Kshuva and Vishnu's defeat and about that curse. O Shilada's son! I now wish to hear about the curse imposed on the devas by Suvarcha. After that, I wish to hear about Pippalada's auspicious account.""

Suta continued, 'Hearing the auspicious words of Vidhatri's son, Shilada's son was pleased in his mind. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he replied.'

'Nandishvara replied, "O lord among sages! On one occasion, Vasava and all the other immortals were defeated by the daityas, who were aided by Vritrasura. Earlier, they had kept all their excellent weapons in Dadhichi's hermitage. Therefore, the devas were instantly defeated. [866] As a result of what the rishi had done, Indra and all the gods were slaughtered. They quickly went to Brahma's world and told him about their hardships. Hearing the words of the devas, Brahma, grandfather of the worlds, told them the truth about Tvashtri wanted to do. 'O gods! To slay you, Tvashtri has used his austerities to create the immensely energetic one named Vritra. He is the great lord of all the daityas. You must therefore make efforts to kill him. O wise one! [867] For the sake of dharma, I will tell you about a means. The great sage, Dadhichi, is an ascetic who has conquered his senses. Earlier, having worshipped Shiva, he obtained bones that are as tough as the vajra. If you ask him for his bones, there is no doubt that he will give them to you. Make a staff, the vajra, with those.

[864] Chyavana was Bhrigu's son.

[865] King Kshuva was Vishnu's devotee and Kshuva, aided by Vishnu and the gods, fought against Dadhichi, who had obtained boons from Shiva. The story has been narrated in Volume I.

[866] The gods had asked Dadhichi to keep and protect their weapons, since they were scared the asuras would take them away.When the gods did not return for a very long time, Dadhichi got tired of looking after the weapons. He dissolved them in water and drank it. Thus, the weapons became part of Dadhichi's bones.

[867] In the singular, addressed to Indra.

There is no doubt that you will be able to kill Vritra.' Hearing Brahma's words, along with his guru and the immortals, Shakra immediately went to Dadhichi's excellent hermitage. Shakra saw the sage there, along with Suvarcha. Lovingly, with his guru and the immortals, he lovingly bowed down, joined his hands in salutation, and prostrated himself. The excellent and intelligent sage understood his intention. Therefore, he sent his wife, Suvarcha, inside the hermitage. The king of devas, along with the immortals, was concerned with accomplishing his own selfish objective. Skilled in the sacred texts of good policy and objectives, he addressed the lord among sages in the following words. Shakra said, 'Tvashtri has incapacitated all of us, devas and rishis. O Shiva's great devotee! You are the refuge. O great donor! We have come to seek refuge with you. O brahmana! Give us your bones, full of the great strength of the vajra. Using those bones, I will fashion my weapon and kill the one who causes harm to the gods.' The sage, who was engaged in the welfare of others, was addressed in this way. He performed dhyana on his lord, Shiva, and gave up his body. Severed of all bonds, the sage immediately ascended upwards, to Brahma's world. There was a shower of flowers, and everyone was greatly surprised. Shakra summoned the cow, Surabhi, and asked her to lick up the remains. He instructed Tvashtri to fashion a weapon with the bones. Thus instructed, Vishvakarma constructed all the weapons with the bones. They were as firm as the vajra and possessed Shiva's radiance. Using the backbone, he fashioned the vajra and the arrow known as brahmashira. With the other bones, he fashioned many other weapons. O sage! Indra raised the vajra, enhanced with Shiva's radiance, and angrily rushed against Vritra, like Rudra, the destroyer. The energetic Shakra was armoured properly. Using the vajra, he swiftly severed Vritra's head, which was like the summit of a mountain. O son! There were great festivities among the residents of heaven. The immortals praised Shakra and showered down flowers on him.""

"O son! I told you this in connection with the account I started of Shambhu's avatara as Pippalada. Listen lovingly. O sage! Suvarcha was the wife of the great-souled Dadhichi. Devoted to her husband, she listened to his instructions and went inside her own hermitage. Following her husband's instruction, she finished all the household tasks. Returning, the ascetic lady could not see her husband. When she returned, the extremely beautiful Suvarcha could not see him. O best among sages! She was surprised and asked the devas. Hearing everything that the gods had done, the virtuous lady was furious. Enraged, Suvarcha, the wife of the noble rishi, cursed them. Suvarcha said, 'O gods! You are extremely wicked. All of you are very skilled in accomplishing your own selfish objectives. You are avaricious and do not behave like gods. Therefore, from today, all of you, including Indra, will become animals.' This is what she said. In this way, the ascetic lady Suvarcha, loved by the sage, cursed all the gods, including Shakra. Devoted to her husband, she wished to go to the world where her husband had gone. Extremely pure and spirited, she collected kindling and built a pyre. However, a voice from the sky spoke to Suvarcha, the sage's beloved. It had been sent by Girisha. It assured her and brought happiness. The voice from the sky said, 'O wise one! Do not be rash. Listen to these supreme words. The sage's energy is in your womb. Make efforts to give birth to it. O lady! After that, you can do whatever you wish. Brahma's instruction is that a pregnant woman must not burn herself.' O lord among sages! Saying this, the voice from the sky stopped. Hearing this, the sage's wife was surprised for some time. The immensely chaste Suvarcha wished to go to the world where her husband had gone. She sat down and used a stone to slice open her stomach.""

"An excellent sage emerged from her womb. His great and blazing body was divine. He illuminated the ten directions. Born from the supreme energy of Dadhichi, he was directly Rudra's avatara. O son! He manifested himself, in a form capable of undertaking his own pastimes. Seeing the son, who was divine in form, Suvarcha, the sage's beloved, got to know in her mind that this was directly Rudra's avatara. The immensely virtuous one rejoiced. She bent down and prostrated herself. O lord among sages! She instated that form in her heart. The chaste Suvarcha, pure in vision, wished to go to her husband's world. Extremely happy, the mother spoke to her son. Suvarcha said, 'O son! O Paramesha! O immensely fortunate one! Always remain near this ashvattha tree. [868] Bring happiness to everyone. Please happily grant me leave now, to go to my husband's world. With my husband there, I will meditate on you in the form of Rudra.' This is what Suvarcha told her son. Immersing herself in supreme samadhi, the virtuous lady followed her husband. O sage! Thus, Dadhichi's wife united with her husband. Reaching Shiva's world, she served Shankara happily. O son! Meanwhile, the delighted devas, with Indra, and the sages immediately arrived there, as if they had been summoned. Hari and Brahma were extremely happy that Shankara had assumed an avatara on earth, through Suvarcha and Dadhichi. They went there, with their own companions. They went there and saw the sage's son, Rudra's avatara. They clasped their hands, praised him and prostrated themselves. O supreme among sages! There were great festivities among devas. Drums were sounded and dancers happily danced. The sons of gandharvas sang. Kinnaras and others played on musical instruments. To the sounds of musical instruments, immortals showered down flowers. The pippala tree was Sharva's father and the radiant son was honoured by Vidhatri. Vishnu and the others praised him again. Pleased in his mind, Brahma gave him the name of Pippalada. Hari and the other gods said, 'O lord of devas! Be pleased.' Saying this, Brahma, Vishnu and all the other gods took their leave of him and returned to their own respective abodes, where they organized great festivities. Desiring the welfare of the worlds, the great lord, Rudra Pippalada performed austerities for a very long time, under the ashvattha tree. Following the customary practices of the worlds, Pippalada performed great austerities. A long period of time elapsed.""

Chapter 254-4(25) (Pippalada Avatara Continued)

“Nandisvara said, “O virtuous sage! He wished to establish dharma in the world and engaged in great pastimes. Listen. On one occasion, the lord among sages went to Pushpabhadra to have a bath. There, he saw the extremely beautiful and young Padma, born as Shivaa's portion. He was knowledgeable about the customary practices of the world. Desiring her, he followed those worldly practices and went to the resident of King Anaranya, her father. On seeing him, the king of men was filled with fear and prostrated himself. He offered him madhuparka [869] and devotedly worshipped him. The sage accepted all this affectionately and asked for his daughter. Unable to say anything, the king was silent. The sage told the king, 'Devotedly, give your daughter to me. Otherwise, along with you, I will burn everything down.' O great sage! All the king's people were enveloped in the radiance of Pippalada, Dadhichi's son.

[868] Suvarcha delivered here the ashvattha tree, the holy fig tree. Pippala is another name for the holy fig tree. Pippalada means someone who eats the fruit of the pippala tree.

[869] Madhuparka is a mixture of honey and water, customarily offered to a guest.

The king was greatly terrified and lamented repeatedly. He bestowed his ornamented daughter, Padma, on the aged sage. The sage married Padma, the king's daughter, born as Shivaa's portion. Happy, Pippalada accepted her and went to his own hermitage. The supreme sage was old and suffered from excessive old age. Having gone there, he told the woman, 'I am an ascetic and not lascivious.' At this, Anaranya's daughter devotedly served the sage in thoughts, words and deeds, like Lakshmi serving Narayana. The supreme sage, Pippalada, was born as Shiva's portion. In his own pastimes, he became a young man and amused himself with the young lady. Ten great-souled sons were born to the great ascetic, the sage. They were equal to their father and increased Padma's happiness. In his avataras, the great lord, Shankara, engages in such pastimes. The lord Pippalada, supreme among sages, engaged in many pastimes. He saw that all the people were suffering from Shani.[870] Full of compassion, he happily bestowed a boon on people to counter this. 'For humans, this will no longer happen between birth and the attainment of sixteen years of age. Nor will it happen to devotees to Shiva. These words of mine are true. If Shani does not heed my words and continues to make such humans suffer, there is no doubt that I will reduce him to ashes.' O son! As a result of this fear, Shanaishchara, supreme among planets, does not cause such harm, even when it is adverse. O sage! Such were the human pastimes of Pippalada and I have described his account to you. As fruits, this bestows everything wished for. It is said that there are three who destroys hardships caused by Shanaishachara-Gadhi, Koushika and the great sage, Pippalada. Pippalada's conduct is linked with Padma's conduct. If a human on earth devotedly reads or hears this excellent account, all hardships caused by Shani are destroyed. If a person reads or hears it, he obtains everything he desires. The supreme sage was blessed. He possessed jnana and was loved by the virtuous. He was a great devotee of Shiva's. The one known as Pippalada was the son of Mahesha himself. This unblemished account bestows heaven and takes the adverse effects of evil planets. O son! It grants everything desired and enhances devotion towards Shiva.""

Chapter 255-4(26) (Vaishyanatha Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O son! O sage! I will tell you about N the avatara of Shiva, the paramatman, known as Vaishyanatha. It yields great bliss. Listen. In earlier times, in Nandigrama, there used to be a courtesan named Mahananda. She was extremely beautiful and was devoted to Shiva. She was extremely prosperous, wealthy and extremely radiant. She adorned herself in many kinds of ornaments and was adept in shringara rasa. 871 She was very charming and was conversant with all the knowledge connected with singing. Kings and queens were delighted by her songs. Happily, the courtesan always worshipped Shankara, along with Amba. She was addicted to performing japa with Shiva's name. Her ornaments were bhasma and rudraksha. She constantly worshipped Shiva and served the lord of the universe. Full of supreme devotion, she sang and danced about Shiva's glory.

[870] Saturn. There is a story that Pippalada learnt he lost his parents because of Shani. He performed austerities and using the strength of austerities, brought Shani to the pippala tree, breaking his legs. Since then, Shani has been scared of Pippalada and Shani is pacified by taking Pippalada's name or worshipping a pippala tree.

[871] Rasa means the emotional flavour, or state of mind. Eight (or nine) rasas are described-shringara (romance), hasya (laughter), roudra (fury), karuna (compassion), bibhatsa (disgusting), bhayanaka (terrible), vira (heroic), adbhuta (extraordinary) and shanta (peace). Shringara is the one connected with love and sensual pleasures. The word also means beautification.

She possessed a monkey and a cock, and she decorated these with rudrakshas.She sang, clapped her hands and always made them dance. Full of devotion towards Shiva, when the courtesan saw those two dance, along with all her friends, she was filled with love and laughed. The monkey was trained by her and wore rudrakshas on its bracelets and earrings, as ornaments. Like a child, it danced in front of her. Along with the monkey, the cock was also trained and decorated with rudrakshas. Skilled in dancing, it constantly danced too, generating happiness in those who saw. Full of great enthusiasm and affection, this is what the courtesan did. Mahananda was always full of devotion towards Shiva. O supreme among sages! In this way, for a long period of time, the courtesan displayed this kind of devotion towards Shiva, full of great happiness.""

"On one occasion, Shiva himself wished to test her and arrived in her house in the form of a vaishya. He displayed the auspicious signs of someone observing a vow. The Tripundraka mark was on his forehead, and he wore ornaments made out of rudrakshas. He had matted hair and was performing japa with Shiva's name. His garb was that of Shiva's devotee. He was radiant with the marks of bhasma. There was an excellent and dazzling bangle around his wrist, made out of great jewels, and this excited curiosity. When he arrived, the courtesan was filled with great joy and worshipped him. The beautiful lady lovingly made him sit on her own seat. Seeing that excellent and beautiful bangle around his wrist, she was surprised and desiring it, spoke. Mahananda said, 'You have a bangle made out of great jewels around your wrist. This instantly captivates my mind. It deserves to be an ornament for a divine woman.' Generous in mind, the vaishya could see that she coveted the bangle around his wrist, made out of nine jewels. He smiled and spoke to her. Vaishyanatha said, 'If your mind desires this divine and excellent jewel, you can happily have it. But what price will you pay me in return?' The courtesan replied, 'I am a courtesan who does what she wills. I am not one of those who is devoted to a husband. There is no doubt that the dharma appropriate for my lineage is that of being a courtesan. That being the case, if I take this ornament from your wrist, I will be your wife for three days and three nights and my mind will only be on you.' The vaishya said, 'O one who will love a husband! If what you have said is true, I will agree. Be my wife for three nights and I will give you this bejewelled bangle. The sun and the moon will be witnesses and proof of this pledge. O beloved! Utter the words "true" thrice [872] and touch my heart. The courtesan replied, 'O lord! I will be your wife for three days and three nights. I will follow dharma with you.

This is true. There is no doubt that this is true.' Mahananda happily uttered these words thrice, with the sun and the moon as witnesses and proof of the pledge. She also touched his heart. At this, the vaishya gave her the bejewelled bangle. He placed that bejewelled lingam in her hand and spoke to her. Vaishyanatha said, 'I love this bejewelled lingam of Shiva more than my own life. O beloved! You must guard it and make efforts to keep it a secret.' Agreeing to this, she accepted the bejewelled lingam. Hiding it inside the platform used for dancing, she entered the house. In the night, following the dharma of a paramour, the vaishya had intercourse with her. He then happily went to sleep on a couch covered with soft cushions.""

[872] In the case of a pledge, this is meant to signify truth in thoughts, words and deeds.

"O sage! In the night, as a result of Vaishyanatha's wishes, a fire[873] suddenly arose in the centre of the platform used for dancing. The great fire blazed and a strong wind helped it. O son! It suddenly enveloped the platform used for dancing. When the pavilion was being burnt, the courtesan suddenly woke up in great fear. She set the monkey free of its bonds. Once the monkey was freed, she also freed the cock. Those two fled far away, scattering many sparks of fire. The pillar and the lingam were burnt and reduced to fragments. On seeing this, the courtesan and the vaishya felt intolerable distress. The lingam that he had loved like his own life had been burnt. Vaishyanatha wished to know her mental thoughts. Therefore, he made up his mind to give up his own life. Mahesha assumes the bodies of men and indulges in many kinds of curious pastimes. Therefore, filled with great grief, the vaishya told her this. Vaishyanatha said, 'Shiva's lingam has been burnt and shattered. I loved it more than my own life. I am speaking the truth. There is no doubt that I am not interested in remaining alive anymore. O fortunate one! Summon your superior and inferior servants and ask them to construct a pyre. Immersing my mind in Shiva, I will enter the fire. O fortunate one! Even if Brahma, Indra, Vishnu and the others come here and try to restrain me, even then, at this instant, I will enter the fire and give up my own life.' Realizing that he was firm in this decision, she was miserable. She summoned her servants and had the pyre built outside her house. In his pastimes, Shiva had assumed the form of a man so as to test her inclinations. In the form of the vaishya, he alone performed pradakshina of the kindled fire and patiently entered, while she looked on. O supreme among sages! On seeing what he had done, the courtesan, Mahananda, was extremely surprised. The young woman was filled with great torment. In that miserable state, the courtesan remembered sparkling dharma. In piteous words, she glanced at her relatives and own people and spoke to them. Mahananda said, 'When I accepted the bejewelled bangle, I took a pledge that I would spend three days and nights as the vaishya's wife. Because of what I did, the vaishya, devoted to Shiva, is now dead. Therefore, with him, I will also enter the fire. Preceptors who have spoken about the truth have said that this is what I must do to follow my own dharma. If I do this, I will be happy, and the truth of my pledge will not be destroyed. Adherence to truth is supreme dharma. Adherence to truth is the supreme objective. It is through truth that one obtains heaven and emancipation. Everything is established in truth.' Though her relatives tried to restrain her, she was firm in her decision. The woman was intent on attaining Satyaloka and had made up her mind to give up her life. She donated all her possessions to foremost brahmanas and meditated on Sadashiva. Circumambulating the fire thrice, she got ready to enter it.""

"With her mind fixed on the atman of the universe, she was about to enter the kindled fire. But Shiva appeared and restrained her. She saw the lord of all devas, the three-eyed divinity, with the crescent moon as his ornament. He was as radiant as crores of moons, suns and fires. Stupefied and terrified, she stood there. She was agitated and terrified, trembling and benumbed, with tears choking her throat. He comforted her, held her hands and spoke these words. Shiva said, 'To test your truthfulness, dharma, patience and unwavering devotion to me, I came to you in the form of a vaishya. I used my maya to ignite a fire and burn down the pavilion used for dancing.

[873] The text says vani, meaning speech. We have corrected it to vahni, fire.

I burnt down the bejewelled lingam and entered the fire. You remembered the pledge you had taken and were about to enter the fire with me. Therefore, I will grant you objects of pleasure that even the gods find difficult to obtain. O one with the beautiful hips! I will give you whatever you want. I am pleased with your devotion and there is nothing that cannot be given to you.' Gourisha Shankara is affectionate towards his devotees, and this is what he said. The courtesan, Mahananda, replied to Shankara. The courtesan replied, 'I do not desire objects of pleasure in heaven, on earth, or in the nether regions. Other than the touch of your lotus feet, there is nothing I wish for. My servants, servant maids and all the other relatives wish to see you. Their minds are devoted to you. With me, take them to your supreme destination. Please free us from the terrible fear of rebirth. I prostrate myself before you.' Maheshvara honoured her words. Along with them, he conveyed her to his own supreme destination. I have described to you the supreme Vaishyanatha avatara. This brings great joy[874] and happiness. It always bestows joy on devotees. This account is supreme and sacred and swiftly bestows everything divine on the virtuous. This account of Shiva's avatara as Vaishyanatha is wonderful and brings great joy and happiness. If a person controls himself and devotedly hears it, or makes it heard, he does not deviate from his own dharma and in the world hereafter, obtains the desired destination.""

Chapter 256-4(27) (Dvijeshvara Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O son! Listen. I will tell you about Shivaa and about Shiva, the paramatman's Dvijeshvara avatara. It brings happiness to the virtuous. O son! I have already described to you Bhadrayu, supreme among kings. In the form of Vrishabha, Shiva showed him his favours. To test his adherence to dharma, he again appeared in the form of Dvijeshvara. I will tell you about that. Because of the powers of Vrishabha, the lord defeated enemies in battle. O son! Bhadrayu obtained the throne. He married the auspicious daughter of Chitrangada and Simantini. O brahmana! His wife was Kirtimalini, who was extremely virtuous.""

"On one occasion, with his beloved, Bhadrayu entered a dense forest for sporting. It was the time of spring. In that beautiful forest, the lord of the earth sported with his beloved, who protected those who sought refuge. Parameshvara wished to test his firmness towards dharma. With Shivaa, Shankara engaged in pastimes. Shiva and Shivaa assumed the form of a brahmana couple. In their own pastimes, they used their maya to create a tiger. Not far from the king, they fled, overwhelmed by fear. Pursued by the tiger, they wept. O son! Bhadrayu, the lord of the earth, saw them afflicted in this fashion. The bull among kshatriyas, worthy of being a refuge, saw them weeping. O tiger among sages! The brahmana couple used their maya to pretend they were overwhelmed by fear and spoke to the great king. The brahmana couple said, 'O great king! O one who is supreme in knowledge about dharma! Please save the two of us. O great lord! The tiger is advancing to devour us. It is fierce, resembling the Destroyer. It is terrifying to all living beings. O one who knows about dharma! Before it reaches us and devours us, please save us.' The lord among kings heard them shrieking in this way. Extremely quickly, the immensely valiant one seized his bow.

[874] The name Mahananda means great joy. So, this can also be construed as bringing happiness to Mahananda.

But the tiger, devised out of great maya, quickly seized the noble brahmana's wife in their midst. Seized by the terrible tiger, she lamented, 'Alas, lord! Alas, protector! Alas, beloved! Alas, Shambhu! Alas, guru of the universe!' The king struck the tiger with fierce iron arrows. However, it was not distressed at all by this, like an Indra among mountains, unaffected by the rain. The tiger was great in spirit and was not distressed by the king's arrows. With great valour and force, it quickly seized the woman and dashed away. On seeing the woman taken away by the tiger, the brahmana was astounded. Following the customary practices of the world, he wept repeatedly. The brahmana, lord of maya, cried for a long time.""

"The one who takes away pride then spoke to Bhadrayu, lord of the earth. Dvijeshvara said, 'O king! Where are your great weapons? Where is the great bow that protects? Where is your strength of twelve thousand elephants? Where is your sword? Where is your conch shell? Where is your knowledge of invoking weapons with mantras? Where is the strength of your great weapons? Where are your great powers? All of those have been rendered futile. They do not really exist in you. You have been unable to counter the onslaught of a forest dweller. The supreme dharma of a kshatriya is to protect against injury. That dharma, worthy of your lineage, has been destroyed. What is the point of your remaining alive? Kings must save those who are afflicted and those who seek refuge, even with their lives and their wealth. Those who do not know about this dharma are as good as dead. It is better to die than to remain alive and be unable to save those who are afflicted. A mendicant is better than a householder who possesses wealth but does not donate. The wise say that if one is unable to protect those who are afflicted and those who are distressed and without a protector, it is better to consume poison or enter the fire. The king heard the censure of his valour in those lamentations. Full of sorrow, he thought to himself. 'Alas! Because of an adverse destiny, my valour has been destroyed today. My deeds have been destroyed and I have acquired a horrible sin. The dharma of my lineage has been destroyed. I am evil-minded and unfortunate. There is no doubt that my prosperity, kingdom and long lifespan will be destroyed. This pure brahmana is afflicted by grief. His wife has been seized. By giving up my life, which I love a lot, I will dispel his sorrow.' Bhadrayu, supreme among kings, made up his mind in this way. He fell down at his feet and addressed him in words of assurance. Bhadrayu said, 'O' brahmana! Show me your pity. I am a kshatra-bandu,[875] with my energy destroyed. O immensely wise one! Cast aside your sorrow. I will now give you what you desire. This kingdom, the queen and my body are all under your control. What do you desire the most?' The brahmana replied, 'What will a blind man do with a mirror? What will a mendicant, who survives on alms, do with a house? What will a foolish person do with a book? What will a man without a wife do with wealth? I am not yet satisfied with enjoying objects of pleasure, but my wife has been killed. Therefore, I desire your chief queen. Give her to me.' Bhadrayu said, 'I can give you my riches that extend to the end of the earth, my kingdom, my elephants and my horses. I can give up my body too. But I can never give up my wife. Sin is accumulated if one enjoys another person's wife. Even one hundred rites of prayashchitta[876] are incapable of cleansing those.' The brahmana replied, 'With my austerities, I can counter the terrible sin of killing a brahmana or drinking liquor. The sin of enjoying another person's wife is a trifle. Therefore, as a husband, give me your wife.

[875] An inferior kshatriya.

[876] Prayashchitta is a rite of atonement.

There is nothing else I wish for. Otherwise, unable to protect those who are afflicted, you will certainly go to hell. The king was scared at the brahmana's words and thought. 'There is a great sin that results from being unable to protect. It is better to give away my wife. I will give my wife to this foremost brahmana and free myself of the sin. After that, I will enter the fire. My fame will then be known.' Having made up his mind in this way, he lit a fire. He invited the brahmana and with water, gave his wife away. He bathed and purified himself and prostrated himself before the lords among the gods. He circumambulated the fire thrice. He controlled his mind and fixed it on Shiva.""

"Just as he was about to descend into the fire, with his mind fixed on Shiva's feet, Dvijeshvara manifested himself in the form of Vishvesha and restrained him. Ishvara had five faces and three eyes. He held the Pinaka and was ornamented with the crescent moon. His long, matted and tawny hair dazzled. His energy was like that of one crore midday suns. He was as fair as a lotus stalk and his garment was made out of the hide of an elephant. The area around his head was drenched with the waves of Ganga. A necklace made out of large serpents was the ornament around his throat. He dazzled in his diadem, girdle, armlets and bangles. The eight hands of the one who wielded Pinaka held a trident, a sword, khatvanga, a battle axe, a shield and a deer. Another hand was in abhaya mudra.[877] He was astride a bull and there were ornaments around his dark throat. The king saw him manifest himself in front of him. Divine flowers were showered down from the sky. The trumpets of devas were sounded, and divine women danced. Hari, Brahma and the other gods arrived there and praised him. Indra, Narada and the other sages also did that. There were great festivities there, enhancing devotion. When the lord of the earth saw him, he joined his hands in salutation and bent down in devotion. On seeing him his bliss became pervasive. There were tears of joy in his eyes, and they made his limbs wet. His body hair stood up. He joined his hands in salutation and in eloquent words that choked, he lauded him. Bhagavan Parameshvara was praised in this way.""

"Along with Parvati, the ocean of compassion was pleased and spoke. 'O king! Even more than your dharma, I am pleased with your devotion. Along with your wife, ask for a boon. There is no doubt that I will give it to you. To test your sentiments, I arrived here in the form of a brahmana. The one who was seized by the tiger was none other than Devi Shivaa herself. The tiger was fashioned out of maya. That is the reason its body was not harmed by your arrows. I wished to test your patience. That is the reason I asked for your wife.' Hearing the lord's words, Bhadrayu, lord of the earth, bent down again and prostrated himself before the lord. Bending down, he spoke. Bhadrayu said, 'O lord! O Parameshvara! I was scorched by the torments of the earth. This itself is a boon that you have directly shown yourself to me. O lord! However, in your compassion, if you wish to grant me another boon, why should I ask for anything other than a supreme boon from the bull among granters of boons? O lord! O Maheshvara! Let my father, Vajrabahu, his wife and I and my wife always be servants at your feet.

[877] The mudra signifying freedom from fear. The last hand held Pinaka.

Let this also be true of the vaishya named Padmakara and his son, named Sanaya, 878 O Mahesha! Please let all of us always remain by your side. His beautiful wife and queen, Kirtimalini, devotedly pleased Girisha and asked for an excellent boon. The queen said, 'O Mahadeva! My father, Chandrangada, my mother, Simantini, and I, always desire to remain happily by your side.' Pleased, and affectionate towards his devotees, Gourisha agreed to this. He bestowed the desired boons on them and instantly vanished. Having been able to please the wielder of the trident, Bhadrayu was extremely happy. Along with Kirtimalini, he enjoyed many objects of pleasure. His valour unimpeded, he ruled over the kingdom for ten thousand years. He then bestowed the kingdom on his son and went to Shiva's presence. Chandrangada, Indra among kings, and Queen Simantini devotedly worshipped Girisha and obtained Shambhu's feet. I have described the supreme account about the lord Maheshvara's Dvijeshvara avatara. This gave great bliss to Bhadrayu. This account about Shiva's avatara is supremely sacred and is about his sacred deeds. If one hears or reads this extremely wonderful account named after Dvijeshvara, one obtains a destination with Shambhu. If a person controls himself and constantly reads this, or has it read, he does not deviate from his own dharma. In the world hereafter, he obtains the desired destination.""

Chapter 257-4(28) (Yatinatha Brahma-Hamsa Avatara)

“Nandhishvara said, "O wise one! O sage! I will tell you about the avatara of Shiva, the paramatman, known as Yatinatha. It yields great joy. O lord among sages! On the mountain that is known as Arbuda, Ahuka, born as a bhilla, used to reside. [879] His wife was named Ahukaa and she was excellent in her vows. Both of them were great devotees of Shiva and used to worship Shiva. O sage! On one occasion, the bhilla who was always devoted to Shiva, went far away, to bring food for his wife. Meanwhile, so as to test him, in the evening, Shankara went to the bhilla's house in the form of a yati. [880] The master of the house returned home at that precise moment. Full of love, the intelligent person worshipped Yatisha. [881] To test his sentiments, Shankara had arrived in the form of a yati. He engages in great pastimes. Lovingly, but in a voice that was scared and distressed, he spoke. Yatinatha said, 'Until morning, please give me a place to stay. O bhilla! May you be well. I will certainly leave then.' The bhilla replied, 'O lord! What you have said is true. Please listen to my words. I have limited space. Where will you reside?' Addressed in this way, the yati made up his mind to go. But thinking about what her husband said, the bhilli spoke the following words. The bhilli said, 'O husband! Give the yati space. Do not refuse a guest. Think about the dharma of a householder. Otherwise, there will be destruction of dharma. Happily, remain inside the house with the yati. I will find a place outside, along with your large weapons.' The bhilla heard her words, which were auspicious and full of dharma. But in his mind, he thought about what his wife had said. 'After sending my wife out, how can I remain inside the house? If the yati goes somewhere else, that will be against dharma. For a householder, neither of these is desirable. Whatever happens, will happen. I will remain outside the house.'

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[878] Padmakara has not been mentioned earlier. This probably refers to the Taraka and Sudharma story, mentioned earlier.

[879] Bhilla is a mountain-dwelling tribe. Bhilli is the feminine.

[880] Yati is an ascetic.

[881] Lord who is a yati, or lord of yatis, with the same meaning as Yatinatha.

Deciding this, he happily kept them inside the house. The bhilla remained outside the house, where his weapons were kept.""

"In the night, cruel and harmful animals made him suffer. According to his capacity, he made great efforts to repel them. The bhilla was strong and made many efforts. But because of his prarabdha karma, [882] he was devoured by the violent beasts, who were stronger. In the morning, the yati got up and saw that the bhilla, who used to roam around in the forest, had been devoured by the violent beasts. He was extremely unhappy. The bhilli was also distressed but saw that the yati was miserable. Using her fortitude to restrain her own grief, she spoke these words. The bhilli said, 'O yati! Why are you grieving now? He has met a fortunate end. He is blessed and has accomplished his objective, having come by his death in this way. O yati! I will also reduce myself to ashes in a fire and follow him. Please build a pyre and I will happily follow the eternal dharma of women.' Hearing her words, the yati himself thought that they were beneficial. When the pyre was built, she followed her own dharma and entered it.""

"Meanwhile, Shiva directly manifested himself before her. Hara happily praised her and said, 'You are blessed. You are blessed.' Hara said, 'O unblemished one! I am pleased at your conduct. Ask for a boon. There is nothing that cannot be given to you, especially because I am under your control. She heard Shambhu's words, which granted great bliss. Having become happy in this way, she could not think of anything in particular. Noticing her state, Hara was extremely pleased. Lord Shambhu again requested her to ask for a boon. Shiva said, 'This yati was my form. In the next life, in the form of a hamsa, [883] he will unite you with your beloved. The bhilla will be born in the supreme city of Naishadha, as Virasena's great son. His name will be Nala. There is no doubt about this. O unblemished one! You will be born in the city of Vaidarbha, as the daughter of King Bhima. [884] You will be famous under the name of Damayanti, and you will possess all the qualities. When both of you unite, you will enjoy an extremely extensive kingdom. After enjoyment, you will certainly attain emancipation, something that even Indras among yogis find extremely difficult to get.' Having said this, Shambhu assumed the form of a lingam and did not move from the spot. Therefore, because of this nature, he is known as Achalesha. [885] The bhilla Ahuka became the son of Virasena in the city of Naishadha. O son! He was the great king known as Nala. Ahukaa, the great bhilli, became Bhima's daughter in the city in the kingdom of Vaidarbha. She was famous under the name of Damayanti. Shiva, known as Yatinatha, assumed the form of a swan and arranged for the marriage between Damayanti and Nala. [886] As a result of their former hospitality, they had acquired great merits. In the form of a swan, the lord Shankara ensured that they would be happy. Shiva's hamsa avatara was skilled in conveying many kinds of messages and brought great bliss to Nala and Damayanti.

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[842] That bit of accumulated karma that has come to fruition in the present life.

[883] A swan.

[884] Nishadhas were hunters and fishermen. There were different nishadha kingdoms. This particular Nishadha or Naishadha kingdom had a capital in Nalapura (Nala's city), identified with Narwar in Madhya Pradesh. The Vidarbha/Vaidarbha kingdom had a capital in Kundinapuri, identified with Kaundinyapur in Maharashtra.

[885] Achala means someone who does not move. The Achaleshvara (Achalesha) temple is near Mount Abu, confirming the identification of Arbuda with Mount Abu.

[886] The swan acted as a messenger between the two.

This supreme and sacred account about Shiva's avatara is about his sacred deeds in the forms known as Yatisha and Hamsa. They are extremely wonderful and bestow emancipation. The auspicious accounts of the avataras known as Yatisha and Brahma-hamsa ensure the supreme destination for those who hear them or make them heard. O unblemished one! As fruits, this account yields everything desired. It grants heaven, fame and a long lifespan. It is supreme and enhances devotion. If a person hears this account about Shambhu in the form of a yati and a hamsa, in this world, he enjoys every kind of happiness. At the end, he goes to Shiva's city.""

Chapter 258-4(29) (Krishna-Darshana Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! Hear about Shambhu's supreme avatara. This excellent one is known as Krishna-darshana and bestowed jnana on Nabhaga. Shraddhadeva had many sons and Ikshvaku was the foremost. Nabhaga was his ninth son and Nabhaga's son was known as Naabhaga. Naabhaga's son was Ambarisha, and he was devoted to Vishnu. Durvasa was pleased with him because of his devotion towards brahmanas. Ambarisha's grandfather was known as Nabhaga. Shiva bestowed jnana on him. O sage! Hear about his conduct. For the sake of studying, Nabhaga, the extremely intelligent son of Manu, [887] remained in his guru's household for a long period of time. He conquered his senses. Meanwhile, the other foremost sons of Ikshvaku duly divided up their shares, without keeping aside any share for him. They accepted and enjoyed their shares of the excellent kingdom. Following their father's command, those extremely intelligent and immensely fortunate ones happily did this. After this, the brahmachari Nabhaga returned from his guru's house, having progressively studied all the shruti texts and the Vedangas. Nabhaga saw that all his brothers had taken their own shares. O sage! Seeking his share of the ancestral kingdom, he affectionately spoke to them, Ikshvaku and the others. Nabhaga said, 'O brothers! You have divided it up. Please give me my appropriate share. You have happily divided it up. I have come from my own share.' They replied, 'We forgot about you then. When we divide it again now, there is no doubt that our father is our share. Please take him.' Hearing what his brothers said, Nabhaga was greatly surprised. He approached his father and spoke to him. Nabhaga said, 'O father! As a brahmachari, I went to the guru's house to study. Ignoring me, my brothers have divided everything up. When I returned, I affectionately asked them for my share. They told me that you are my share. That is the reason I have come here. O sage! Hearing his words, his father, Shraddhadeva, was surprised. But he spoke to the one who adhered to true dharma and comforted him. Manu said, 'O son! You should ignore what they said. They have deceived you. I can never be an excellent ancestral share that can be used for the purpose of enjoyment. Nevertheless, they have deceived you and given me to you as your share. Hence, I will truly tell you what you can do to ensure a means of subsistence. Listen. The intelligent Angiras brahmanas are performing a sacrifice now. However, their rites are suffering on every sixth day. O Nabhaga! O extremely wise one! Go there and praise them. Recite the two suktas to the Vishvadevas there and the sacrifice will be purified.[888]

[887] Shraddhadeva Manu.

[888] The Rig Veda has several suktas addressed to the Vishvadevas and it is difficult to pinpoint which two are meant.

When the rites are over, those brahmanas will be satisfied that the sacrifice has been completed. Before they leave for heaven, they will give you wealth.' Hearing his father's words, Nabhaga, who believed in the truth, happily went to the place where the excellent sacrifice was taking place. At the time of the rites on that specific day, the extremely intelligent one clearly articulated those two suktas, which were similar in nature, to the Vishvadevas. When the rites were completed, the Angiras brahmanas went to heaven. But they gave him everything that was left from the sacrifice as his share.""

"He was about to accept whatever was left over from the sacrifice. Realizing this, Girisha instantly appeared before him. As the handsome being, Krishna-darshana, he was beautiful in all his limbs. He wished to test his sentiments and give him supreme jnana as his share. Shankara Shambhu Ishvara wished to test Nabhaga, Manu's son, and spoke to him. Ishvara said, What kind of being are you? You are taking away the wealth that belongs to me. Who has sent you here? In front of me, please speak the entire truth.' O son! Hearing his words, the wise Nabhaga, Manu's son, replied humbly to the being who was Krishna-darshana. Nabhaga replied to the being who was Krishna-darshana, 'The rishis gave me the wealth that was left from the sacrifice. Why are you preventing me from taking it?" Hearing Nabhaga's words, which were the truth, the being known as Krishna-darshana was pleased in his mind. Krishna-darshana said, 'O son! In this dispute between us, your father will decide on the proof. Go to him and ask. Whatever he says will be accepted as the true proof. O sage! Hearing his words, Nabhaga, Manu's wise son, lovingly went to his father and asked him what he had been told. Shraddhadeva Manu heard what his son said. He remembered Shiva's lotus feet and spoke after remembering. Manu said, 'O son! Listen to my words. That divine Purusha is Shiva. Every object belongs to him, especially what is obtained from a sacrifice. Anything left over from a sacrifice is spoken of as Rudra's share. It is because of his will that wise people still debate about this. He is Ishvara, the divinity, and there is no doubt that he deserves every object. What need be said about what is left over from a sacrifice? Everything depends on the lord's wishes. Using maya, the lord came in that form to you to show you his favours. O Nabhaga! Go there and truly please him. Ask his forgiveness for your crime. Prostrate yourself and praise him. He is Isha, everyone's lord. He is the lord of the sacrifice. He is the lord of everything. O son! It is because of his favours that Vishnu, Brahma, devas, siddhas and all the rishis possess the capacity to carry out their own tasks. O best among my sons! What is the need to speak a lot? Without any delay, swiftly go there. Please Mahadeva, the lord of everything.' Saying this, Shraddhadeva Manu swiftly sent his son to Shambhu's presence.""

"Reaching there quickly, Nabhaga lowered his head, joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself. Pleased in his mind, the extremely intelligent one spoke with humility. Nabhaga said, 'O Isha! All objects in the three worlds, not to speak of what is left over from a sacrifice, belong to you. That is what my father has said. O lord! I uttered those words in my confusion and my ignorance. Please pardon my crime and shower your favours over my head.' Saying this, with an extremely distressed mind, he joined his hands in salutation and praised Mahesha, in his form as Krishna-darshana. The intelligent Shraddhadeva, pure in his atman, also bent down and joined his hands in salutation. He bent down, praised the lord and asked him to pardon the offence he had committed. Meanwhile, Vishnu, Brahma, Vasava and other intelligent ones, siddhas and sages, arrived there. All of them joined their hands in salutation and engaged in great festivities. Separately, each of them lowered his head and devotedly prostrated himself. Rudra was pleased and looked at them with a glance

of compassion. Krishna-darshana smiled and spoke to Nabhaga affectionately. Krishna-darshana said, 'Your father's words were true and in conformity with dharma. What you stated was also the truth. Therefore, there is no doubt that you are a virtuous person. I am pleased in every possible way with your excellent vows. As a favour, I am bestowing on you jnana about the eternal brahman. Along with brahmanas, quickly become extremely learned. Through my favours, accept everything now. O immensely intelligent one! Without any aberrations, enjoy every kind of happiness in this world. As a result of my favours, along with the brahmanas, you will obtain an excellent destination.' O son! After saying this, while everyone looked on, Bhagavan Rudra Hara, affectionate towards the truthful, vanished from the spot. O supreme among sages! Happily bowing down in the direction in which he had left, Vishnu, Brahma and all the other devas returned to their own respective abodes. With his son, Nabhaga, Shraddhadeva, joyously returned to his own spot. He[889] enjoyed extensive objects of pleasure and at the end, went to Shiva's city. O brahmana! I have thus described Shiva's avatara known as Krishna-darshana, the one who bestowed bliss on Nabhaga. This account is unblemished and bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation on the virtuous. If a person reads it, or hears it, he obtains everything desired as fruits. If an intelligent person remembers it in the morning and in the evening, he becomes wise and also becomes a person who knows about mantras. He obtains the ultimate destination.""

Chapter 259-4(30) (Avadhuteshvara Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O Brahma's son! Hear about Paramesha's original avatara. Known as Avadhuteshvara, he took away Shakra's pride. O sage! In earlier times, along with his guru[890] and all the devas, Shakra went to Kailasha to see Isha. Shankara got to know that Indra and his guru had come. They had come to see him, and he wished to test their sentiments. The lord engages in many kinds of pastimes, and he assumed the form of an avadhuta.[891] He was naked and extremely terrible, as resplendent as a blazing fire. The destination of the virtuous obstructed their path in the form of an avadhuta. Shambhu stood there in this radiant form, with his mass of matted hair hanging down. As they passed, the guru and Shakra approached Shiva. They saw this terrible being, extraordinary in form, in front of them, in the middle of the path. O sage! Because of his own entitlement, Shakra was extremely insolent. Without knowing that this was Shankara, he asked the person who was in his way. Shakra asked, 'O naked avadhuta! Who are you? Where have you come from? What name are you known by? Without any delay, tell me the truth. Is Shambhu in his residence, or has he gone somewhere else now? Along with the guru of the gods, I am going there to meet him.' Asked by Shakra in this way, the being did not say anything in reply. To take away insolence, the lord Shankara had assumed this form in his pastimes. Shakra asked again, but the naked person did not say anything in reply. Shambhu engages in great pastimes and his ways are impossible to discern. Purandara, the lord of the three worlds and the king of heaven, asked again. However, engaging in his great pastimes, the great yogi was silent. In this way, Shakra repeatedly asked the naked person.

[889] This probably means Nabhaga, not Shraddhadeva.

[890] Brihaspati.

[891] An avadhuta is an ascetic who has renounced all worldly attachments. However, it also has the nuance of someone who has been cast off from society and has been excluded by it.

Wishing to destroy Shakra's insolence, Bhagavan said nothing. Insolent because of his prosperity, the lord of devas and lord of the three worlds became angry. He reprimanded the one with the matted hair and addressed him in words of rage. Indra said, 'O foolish one! Though I asked, you did not reply. Therefore, I will slay you with the vajra now. O evil-minded one! Who will save you?' Saying this, the wielder of the vajra looked at him in rage. He raised his vajra and got ready to kill the naked person. Sadashiva quickly looked at Shakra, with the vajra in his hand. Before he could bring down the vajra, Shankara paralyzed him. The being became angry, with cruel eyes and terrible. He swiftly blazed in his energy, as if he would burn them down. When his hand was paralyzed, internally, Shachi's consort burnt with rage. He seemed to burn, like a valiant serpent countered by a mantra.""

"Seeing the being blaze in his energy, Brihaspati used his intelligence to understand that this was Hara and quickly prostrated himself. The guru, pervasive in his intelligence, joined his hands in salutation. He again prostrated himself like a rod and devotedly praised the lord. The guru said, 'O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one who is affectionate towards those who seek refuge! O Gourisha! O Sarveshvara! I prostrate myself before you. Be pleased. Everyone is deluded by your maya, Brahma, Vishnu and the others too. They do not know your true nature. If they know, that is because of your favours.' After praising the lord Shankara, Brihaspati made Purandara fall down at Isha's feet. O son! The preceptor of the gods, pervasive in his intelligence, joined his hands in salutation. The intelligent Brihaspati addressed him in these humble words. Brihaspati said, 'O lord of those who are distressed! O Mahadeva! I have prostrated myself at your feet. Please save me from your rage and be affectionate towards me. O Mahadeva! Be pleased and save Indra. He has sought refuge with you. A fire is issuing out of the eye in your forehead.' The lord is an ocean of compassion and engages in pastimes. Hearing the guru's words, in the form of an avadhuta, he smiled and spoke. The avadhuta asked, 'How can I withdraw the energy that is issuing out of my eye as a result of rage? How can a snake again don the skin that it has cast off?' Hearing Shankara's words, Brihaspati joined his hands in salutation. He spoke, with his mind overwhelmed by fear. Brihaspati said, O divinity! O Bhagavan! Compassion must always be shown towards devotees. O Shankara! You are affectionate towards your devotees. Please make that come true. O lord of devas! You should fling that energy somewhere else. You save all your devotees. Please save Purandara.' Guru spoke to Rudra, who is known to be affectionate towards his devotees, in this way. Pleased in his mind, he replied to the preceptor of the gods, who had prostrated himself in his grief. Rudra replied, 'O preceptor of the gods! I am pleased with you and will bestow an excellent boon on you. Since you have granted Indra his life, you will be famous under the name of Jiva. [892] The fire that arose from the eye in my forehead is impossible for the gods to tolerate. Therefore, I will fling it far away, so that Indra does not suffer from it.' Saying this, he held his energy, which arose from the fire in the eye in his forehead, in his hand and flung it into the waters of the salty ocean.""

"Shiva's energy arose from the eye in his forehead. Flung into the salty ocean, it immediately became a boy. He was named Jalandhara, the son of the ocean. He became lord of the asuras. Entreated by the gods, the lord Mahesha slew him. Such was the conduct of Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds. In the form of avadhuta, he then vanished. All the devas were happy and freed from their fear.

[892] From the root jiv, meaning to revive, or come to life.

Guru and Shakra were freed from their fear and obtain supreme happiness. I have spoken to you about the avatara known as Avadhuteshvara. Paramesha provides supreme bliss and also punishes those who are crooked. This unsullied account yields fame, heaven, objects of pleasure and emancipation. It is divine and as fruits, yields everything desired. If a person controls himself and constantly listens to this, he enjoys every kind of happiness in this world. At the end, he obtains a destination with Shiva.""

Chapter 260-4(31) (Bhikshuvarya Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O best among sages! I will now tell you about another one of Shambhu's avataras. Listen. In this form, he displayed affection towards his devotee and dispelled the doubt of a brahmana woman. In the kingdom of Vidarbha, there was a king named Satyaratha. He had dharma in his atman and was truthful in his conduct. He was loved by the great devotees of Shiva. O sage! The king ruled over the kingdom in accordance with dharma. A long period of time passed, and he followed Shiva's dharma. On one occasion, the king of the Shalvas laid siege to the city, with a large army consisting of many soldiers. There was a great battle. The king of Vidarbha fought a terrible battle against them. However, such was destiny that his forces were destroyed, and he was killed by the Shalvas. When the king was killed in the battle against the Shalvas, overwhelmed by fear, the remaining soldiers fled, along with the ministers. O sage! The great queen was expecting, and she was imprisoned by the enemy. However, she escaped in the night and went outside the city. Tormented by grief, the royal queen slowly emerged. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, she went far away, in the eastern direction. When she had travelled a long distance away, in the morning, because of Shankara's compassion, the queen saw a sparkling lake. The delicate lady went there and grieved over the beloved king. She remained on the shore of that lake, seeking refuge under the shadow of a tree. At the time of an auspicious muhurta, because of destiny, the queen gave birth to a divine son, who possessed all the virtuous qualities. He was marked by all the auspicious signs. As a result of destiny, the king's wife, the mother, felt thirsty. In search of a drink, she descended into the lake and was devoured by a crocodile. The infant, who had just been born, suffered severely from hunger and thirst. With the father and the mother dead, he wept on the shore of that lake.""

"O sage! In that forest, the son began to cry as soon as he was born. Mahesha, who is inside everyone, took pity and became his protector. A woman who depended on alms for subsistence was wandering around. Urged in her mind by Isha, who takes away all fear, she suddenly arrived there. She was a widow and was carrying her own child, who was one year old. She saw the infant crying there, without a protector. O sage! She saw that infant in the forest, where there no other humans. The brahmana woman was surprised. In her mind, she thought about it in many ways. 'This is a great wonder that I have seen now. It is impossible to describe it in any possible way. It is impossible to use words in one's mind to describe it. The infant's umbilical cord has not yet been severed. He is lying on the ground without a mother and is crying. He is supremely energetic. Who are his parents? There is no one here to help him. What is the reason for this? Alas! The power of destiny is great. I do not know whose son he is. Nor is there anyone I can ask, so that I know about his birth. I feel great pity for him. I wish to rear him, like the child I have given birth to. But without asking about

his lineage and birth, I cannot do that.' The excellent brahmana woman thought about it in this way.""

"Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees, took great pity. Maheshvara, who engages in great pastimes, assumed the form of a bhikshu. [893] Though he is himself without a form, he always does this to ensure happiness for his devotees. In the form of the bhikshu, Parameshvara suddenly arrived at the spot where the brahmana woman was, desiring to know. The lord's progress cannot be discerned, and he assumed the form of Bhikshuvarya.[894] The ocean of compassion smiled and brahmana lady! Do not have a doubt in your mind and do not spoke to the brahmana woman. Bhikshuvarya said, 'O beautiful grieve. Lovingly protect this pure child, as you would your own son. Soon, you will obtain supreme benefit as a result of this child. In every possible way, nourish this extremely energetic child. The brahmana woman heard the words spoken by the ocean of compassion, who was in the form of a bhikshu. Full of love and affection, she asked. The brahmana woman said. Following your instruction, I will protect this child, like my own son. There need be no doubt about this. You have come here as a result of my good fortune. Nevertheless, I especially want to know the truth about him. Who is he? Whose son is he? Who are you, the one who has come here? O lord Bhikshuvarya! Repeatedly, the realization comes to me that you are Shiva, the ocean of compassion, and that this child used to be your devotee earlier. Because of some taint in his karma, he has been reduced to this state now. After enjoying this, through your favours, you will obtain supreme benefit. Because of your maya, I have been deluded and have deviated from my path. There is no doubt that I have been urged by you and have come here to protect him.' Because of her jnana, the brahmana woman obtained this insight. Desiring to know, she spoke to Shiva, in the body of a bhikshu. Bhikshuvarya replied, 'O brahmana's wife! Listen lovingly to what happened to this child earlier. O unblemished one! I will happily tell you the truth about everything else. He is the son of the intelligent Satyaratha, the king of Vidarbha and Shiva's devotee, who was devoted to his own dharma. Listen. In a battle, King Satyartha has been killed by his enemies, the Shalvas. In the night, his anxious queen swiftly emerged from her own house. She reached here in the morning and gave birth to this son. When she descended into the lake because she was thirsty, as a result of destiny, she was devoured by a crocodile.' He thus told her about his birth, his father's death in a battle and her mother's death through a crocodile. O lord among sages! The brahmani [895] was surprised. She again asked the bhikshu, who possessed jnana and was in the form of a siddha. The brahmani asked, 'O bhikshu! The king, his father, had still not completed enjoying excellent objects of pleasure. How was he killed by his enemies, the Shalvas, within a few days? Why was this child's mother devoured by a crocodile? Why has he been without a protector or a relative since birth? Why has my son been born very poor and a mendicant? O bhikshu! How will these two sons obtain happiness?' Hearing her words, in the form of the bhikshu, Parameshvara was pleased in his mind.""

"He smiled and replied to the brahmana's wife. Bhikshuvarya said, 'O brahmana's wife! I will specifically answer all your questions. Listen attentively to this wonderful account.

[893] A mendicant.

[894] The supreme bhikshu.

[895] Feminine of brahmana.

This child's father was the king of Vidarbha. In an earlier birth, he was Pandya, supreme among kings. The king was devoted to Shiva and following dharma, protected the entire earth. He delighted his subjects and destroyed every kind of hardship. On one occasion, on trayodashi, [896] he observed the vow of fasting during the day and the night and was worshipping Sarvesha in the evening. In the evening, he was engaged in worshipping Shambhu Girisha. Everywhere in the city, a great and terrible sound arose. Hearing the sound, the king gave up the task of worshipping Shiva. Suspecting that enemies might have arrived, he emerged outside his own residence. At that time, his extremely strong minister seized the enemy vassal[897] and brought him to the king's presence. On seeing the enemy vassal, he was overwhelmed by great rage. Without thinking about completing the worship of Vrisha, he had him beheaded. The king lost his intelligence and was impure because the worship had not been completed. However, despite the auspiciousness having been destroyed, he happily had his meal in the night. He was reborn as the king of Vidarbha and was devoted to Shiva. Since Shiva's worship had been left incomplete earlier, he was now killed while he was still in the midst of enjoying excellent objects of pleasure. The son from his earlier birth has been born as his son in this birth. Since there was a transgression in the worship of Shiva, I have taken away his prosperity. In her former birth, his mother deceitfully killed her co-wife. As a result of that sin, in this birth, she has been devoured by a crocodile. I have described the consequences of their conduct. People who do not devotedly worship Shiva are reduced to penury. In his earlier birth, your son was an excellent brahmana. Though he accepted objects, he did not perform sacrifices and other good rites. O beautiful brahmana lady! That is the reason your son has been reduced to this state of penury. To get rid of that taint, go and seek refuge with Shankara. Let these two children also worship Shiva in the proper way. When they have been invested with their sacred threads, Shiva will do what is best for them.' Shiva assumed the form of Bhikshuvarya to instruct her in this way. Extremely affectionate towards his devotees, he then showed her his own form. Thus, the brahmana woman got to know that this was the lord Shankara. Her voice choked because of her love. She prostrated herself and praised him. While the brahmana's wife looked on, in the form of the bhikshu, Bhagavan Shambhu vanished from the spot.""

"When the bhikshu left, the brahmani no longer doubted. She took the child, and along with her own son, went home. She made her home in the beautiful village known as Ekachakra.[898] She reared her son and the prince on excellent food. Brahmanas performed their samskaras and their upanayana. They grew up in their home and were devoted to worshipping Shiva. O son! Following the rules instructed by Shandilya, the sage, they observed auspicious vows and worshipped Shambhu in the evening. On one occasion, without the brahmana son, when the son of the king went to the river to have a bath, he found an excellent pot filled with wealth. In this way, the sons of the brahmana and the king worshipped Shambhu. They happily spent four months in this way. They worshipped Shambhu in this way, full of great joy, and one year passed, with their residing in that home. After one year passed, as a result of the lord Shiva's favours, the king's son went to the extremities of the forest, along with the brahmana. Suddenly, a gandharva arrived there and bestowed his daughter in marriage, and his kingdom. Bereft of thorns, he ruled there.

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[896] The thirteenth lunar day.

[897] The text uses the word samanta, which means a neighbouring king who pays tribute and is a vassal. This vassal king had become an enemy.

[898] Identified with the village known as Ekachakra, in Birbhum district of West Bengal.

He regarded the brahmana lady, who had reared him earlier, as his own mother and the brahmana's son as his brother. Thus, Dharmagupta [899] ruled over the kingdom known as Vidarbha. He enjoyed objects of pleasure with his queen and worshipped the lord of devas. I have now described to you Shiva's Bhikshuvarya avatara and the account of the king's son, known as Dharmagupta. This brings happiness. This unsullied account is sacred and supremely purifying. It is the means for obtaining everything desired and pursuing dharma, artha, kama and moksha. If a person controls himself and constantly hears it, or makes it heard, he enjoys everything that he wishes for. At the end, he goes to Shiva's city."'

Chapter 261-4(32) (Sureshvara Avatara)

"Nandishvara said, "O son! Listen. I will tell you about Shiva, the paramatman's Sureshvara avatara. In this form, he brought welfare to Dhoumya's elder brother. Vyaghrapada's son was the intelligent Upamanyu, loved by the virtuous. In another life, he became the son of a sage and obtained success. Because of destiny, Upamanyu, Vyaghrapada's son, was poor. As a child, along with his mother, he lived in his maternal uncle's house. On one occasion, in his maternal uncle's hermitage, he tasted a little bit of milk. Delighted, he hankered after a lot of milk and asked his mother. Hearing her son's words, the ascetic mother was miserable and thought of a good means to satisfy him. Resorting to unchavritti,[200] she collected some grain. She ground this, and mixing it with water, made a paste. Fondling her son, she gave him this artificial milk. The child drank the artificial milk his mother gave him. He told his mother, 'This isn't milk,' and started to weep again. Hearing her son cry, she wiped the tears from his eyes with hands that were like lotuses. She spoke miserably to her son. The mother said, 'We always reside in the forest. How can we get milk here? Without Shambhu's favours, we cannot obtain milk. O son! We can only obtain what we have offered Shiva in an earlier birth. Indeed, that is the only thing we can get. Therefore, there is no point thinking about this.' Vyaghrapada's son heard his mother's words. Affectionate towards his mother, he did not grieve anymore and replied to his mother. 'O mother! Enough of this weeping. If Shambhu is the one who gives, everything will be beneficial. O immensely fortunate one! Abandon this grief. All will be well. O mother! Listen to my words. If Mahadeva exists anywhere, sooner or later, I will obtain an ocean of milk.' Saying this, the child lovingly told her, 'Let everything be auspicious.' He prostrated himself before her, took his leave and prepared to undergo austerities. He went to the Himalayas. He controlled himself and survived on air. He fashioned a lingam made out of clay and placed it on a pedestal made out of eight bricks. Using the panchakshara mantra,[901] he devotedly invoked Shiva and Amba there. The child used leaves, flowers and other objects to worship them. He performed dhyana on Shiva and Amba and used the panchakshara mantra to perform japa. He spent a long period of time in such worship, engaging in supreme austerities. O sage! As a result of the austerities of the great-souled child, the world, with its mobile and immobile entities, was scorched.""

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[899] The prince's name.

[900] There are grains left after a crop has been harvested, or after grain has been milled. If one subsists on these leftovers, that is known as unchavritti.

[901] Namo Shivaya (na-mo-shi-va-ya). Mantra with five (pancha) aksharas.

"Meanwhile, requested by Vishnu and others, the lord Shambhu wished to test his devotion and assumed Shakra's form. Shivaa assumed Shachi's form and the ganas became all the gods. Nandi became the elephant Airavata and everyone else assumed such forms. Along with Amba, in the form of Shakra and along with the ganas, Shiva quickly went to Upamanyu's hermitage to show him his favours. O lord among sages! So as to test the child's devotion, in the form of Shakra, Hara addressed him in the following grave words. Sureshvara [902] said, 'O one excellent in vows! I am satisfied with your austerities. Ask for a boon. There is no doubt that I will give you whatever you desire.' When he was addressed by Shambhu, in Shakra's form, in this way, he joined his hands in salutation and replied, 'I choose devotion towards Shiva.' Hearing this, Hari [903] said, 'You do not know me. I am the lord of the gods. I am Shakra, the lord of the three worlds. All the devas bow down before me. O brahmana rishi! Become my devotee and always worship me. I will give you everything fortunate. Abandon Rudra, who does not possess any gunas. Enough of Rudra, who does not possess any qualities, What do you have to do with him? He is outside the pale of the deva species and has become a pishacha, Hearing his words, the son of the sage performed japa with the panchakshara mantra. He spoke to the one who he thought had come to create an impediment in his pursuit of dharma. Upamanyu said, 'You have said all this because you are fixed on criticizing Bhava. Incidentally, you have also said that the lord of the devas lacks gunas and is a pishacha. You do not know Rudra. He is the lord of all the lords among devas. He is the father of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha. He is greater than Prakriti. He is beyond existence and non-existence. He is not manifest. The ones who know about the brahman speak of him. He is eternal. He is one and many. As a boon, I choose him. He is free of debates about the cause. He is the supreme, in the meanings of samkhya and yoga. So say those who know about Isha's nature. As a boon, I choose him. There is no one who is greater than Shambhu. He is the cause behind all causes. He is the supreme lord, superior in qualities to Brahma, Vishnu and other devas. I do not wish for a boon from Brahma, Vishnu or from you. Nor do I want a boon from any of the other immortals. Shankara, the granter of boons, is the one I want. What is the need to speak a lot? I have told you the truth and my view. It is evident that I do not desire any deva other than Pashupati. O enemy of mountains! Listen to my sentiments. I deduce that in another life, I must have committed sins. That is the reason I have heard criticism of Bhava. Anyone who hears criticism of Bhava should instantly cast aside his own body. Having been killed, he will swiftly go to Shiva's world. O worst among gods! I did harbour a desire for milk. But I will now use Shiva's weapon to kill you and give up my body.' Having said this, Upamanyu made up his mind to die. He gave up his desire for milk and got ready to kill Shakra. He collected some bhasma from a receptacle and reciting mantras, created aghorastra.[904] Roaring, the sage released this in Shakra's direction. Remembering the two feet of his desired divinity, he got ready to burn himself. Upamanyu stood there, radiant, holding the blazing weapon. The brahmana yogi stood there, in that posture of dharana. In his form as Shakra, Bhagavan amiably countered him. When he hurled the aghorastra he had created in rage, he engaged Nandishvara. Nandi, loved by Shankara, seized it in the middle.""

[902] Lord of the gods.

[903] Hari is one of Indra's names.

[904] Weapon named after Aghora.

"Thereafter, Bhagavan Parameshvara showed his own form to the brahmana, with the crescent moon on his head. He showed him thousands of oceans of milk, the ocean of curd and the ocean of food items. The lord showed him all this. He also saw Shambhu, seated along with Devi on the bull. He was surrounded by the leaders of ganas and the trident and other divine weapons. Drums were sounded in heaven and flowers were showered down. Vishnu, Brahma, Indra and the foremost devas crowded the ten directions. Upamanyu was flooded by an ocean of bliss. His senses humbled with devotion, he fell down on the ground, like a rod. At that time, Bhagavan Bhava smiled at him, saying, 'Come. Come.' He summoned him and inhaling the fragrance of his head, granted him boons. Shiva said, 'O child! O Upamanyu! I am pleased at your excellent conduct. O brahmana rishi! I tested you now, but your devotion was firm. From now on, always enjoy food and other objects of pleasure with your relatives. Always be happy and always be free from misery. Remain devoted to me. O Upamanyu! O immensely fortunate one! Parvati is your mother. From now, I have made you my eternal son. O great sage! I am pleased with you. Accept these thousands of oceans of milk, curd, ghee, honey, other food items and everything else. I am bestowing them on you. Accept them. I am bestowing immortality on you and the eternal status of being a ganapati. Mahadeva is your father, and the mother of the universe is your mother. Cheerfully ask for any other boons that you may mentally wish for. You will be freed from old age and death. You will be devoid of sorrows. You will be famous and supremely energetic. You will possess divine jnana and be a great lord.' Shambhu was pleased in his mind. Remembering his great austerities, he again bestowed divine boons on the sage, Upamanyu-knowledge about the Pashupata vrata and true knowledge about vratas and yoga. He bestowed skill in speaking on him and gave him his own region. Having granted these, Mahadeva clasped him in his arms and inhaled the fragrance of his head. He presented him to Devi and said, 'This is your son.' Hearing this, the delighted Devi touched his head with her lotus hands. She bestowed on him the eternal status of being her son. She gave him the essence of the ocean of milk and curd, that were as tasty as milk. They would be eternal, and she gave those to him in the form of a pinda. [905] She bestowed on him the everlasting prosperity of yoga and satisfaction and the eternal knowledge of the brahman. Satisfied in her mind, she bestowed supreme prosperity on him. Having received these divine boons from Shiva and Shivaa and having obtained the eternal status of being their son, he rejoiced. With a delighted mien, he joined his hands in salutation and prostrated himself. Lovingly, he asked for a boon from Maheshvara, lord of devas. Upamanyu said, 'O divinity! O lord of devas! Be pleased with me. O Parameshvara! Be pleased with me. Please grant me supreme devotion towards you and let it be divine and unwavering. O Mahadeva! Please let me possess constant devotion towards those who are associated with you. Please grant me your supreme affection and your constant presence.' His voice choked in joy, and pleased in his mind, he said this in faltering words. The supreme brahmana, Upamanyu, praised Mahadeva. Addressed in this way, Lord Shiva, the lord of everyone, happily replied, while everyone present heard. Shiva said, 'O Upamanyu! O child! You are blessed. You are my special devotee. O unblemished one! I will grant you everything that you have asked for. You will not suffer from old age or death. You will always be free of miseries. You will be worshipped by everyone. You will be free of aberrations, and you will be my foremost devotee. O best among brahmanas! You will always have an inexhaustible number of relatives, family and gotra.

[905] That is, a cake.

Your devotion to me will be eternal. O sage! I will always remain near your hermitage. O child! Remain as you wish. Do not be anxious.' Having said this, Bhagavan bestowed those excellent boons on him. After this, along with his relatives and his ganas, the lord instantly vanished from the spot.""

"Having obtained those excellent boons from Shambhu, Upamanyu was pleased in his mind. He went to his mother's abode and told his mother everything that had happened. Hearing this, his mother was filled with great delight. He was worshipped by everyone and always obtained great happiness. O son! I have thus described to you Shiva, the paramatman's Sureshvara avatara. This always brings happiness to the virtuous. This unsullied account bestows everything desired as fruit. It grants heaven, fame, a long lifespan, objects of pleasure and emancipation to the virtuous. If a person controls himself and devotedly hears it, or makes it heard, he enjoys every kind of happiness in this world. Aft the end, he obtains a destination with Shiva.""

Chapter 262-4(33) (Brahmachari Avatara)

'Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! Hear lovingly about the lord Shiva paramatman's avatara known as Jatila. This is extremely purifying. Earlier, Sati, Daksha's daughter, gave up her body at her father's sacrifice, because her father dishonoured her. She was born as the daughter of Mount Himalaya and Mena. Shivaa went to a desolate forest, along with her two friends, and tormented herself through sparkling austerities there. She desired Shankara as her husband. To test her austerities, Shiva, accomplished in many kinds of pastimes, sent the saptarshis to the place where Parvati was performing austerities. Having gone there, the sages affectionately tested her. Her efforts were so firm that they were incapable of dissuading her. They returned to Shiva, bowed down and told him what had happened. Obtaining his permission, they lovingly returned to the world of heaven. When the sages left for their own abodes, Shiva himself, the one who bestows prosperity, wanted to test Shivaa's conduct. According to his will, Ishvara assumed the form of a pleasant and serene ascetic. The lord assumed the wonderful form of a brahmachari. He assumed the body of an extremely aged brahmana. He blazed in his own energy and was happy in his mind. He was extremely radiant and held a staff and an umbrella. Assuming this Jatila [906] form, he went to Girija's forest. Affectionate towards his devotees, Shambhu Shankara was pleased.

"He saw Devi stationed there, surrounded by her friends. Seated on the pavilion, Shivaa was pure, like one of the moon's digits. Shambhu, in the form of a brahmachari, looked at Devi. Affectionate towards his devotees and happy and eager, he approached her. She saw the brahmana arriving, extraordinary in energy. His limbs were covered in hair, and he was serene. He possessed a staff and hide. He was aged, with matted hair. He was a brahmachari, with a kamandalu. Full of supreme love, she honoured him and worshipped him with every kind of offering. Full of great joy, Devi Parvati worshipped him. She then affectionately asked the brahmachari about his welfare. 'O supreme among those who know about the Vedas! Who are you in the form of a brahmachari and where have you come from? Please tell me. You have illuminated this forest.'

[906] Meaning, a person with matted hair.

Thus asked by Parvati, the brahmachari brahmana replied quickly, happy, but wishing to test Shivaa's sentiments. The brahmachari said, 'I am a brahmachari brahmana, travelling wherever I want. There is no doubt that I am an ascetic who brings happiness to others and does them a good turn.' After saying this, Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees, remained near her, in the form of a brahmachari and concealing his real form. The brahmachari said, 'O great Devi! What will I say? There is nothing else to say. An occurrence that brings a great calamity can be seen. This is a great transgression. Young age is for enjoying objects of pleasure and seeking reasons for happiness. That is a time for seeking great objects that bring pleasure. You are performing austerities in vain. Who are you? Whose daughter are you? Why are you in this desolate forest? You are performing austerities that even sages, who have cleansed their atmans, find impossible to accomplish.' Hearing these words, Parameshvari laughed. She affectionately addressed the brahmachari in these affectionate words. Parvati replied, O brahmana brahmachari! O sage! Hear the entire account. I have now been born in Bharatavarsha, in Himalaya's house. In my last life, I was born as Sati in Daksha's home and was Shankara's beloved. When my father criticized my husband, I used yoga to give up my body. O brahmana! Because of my great good merits, I obtained Shiva in this life too. However, he reduced Manmatha to ashes, abandoned me and went away. When Shankara went away, I was tormented and ashamed. I returned to my father's house. Following my guru's words, I have now come here, to practice austerities. Through thoughts, words and direct deeds, I have chosen Shankara as my husband. I am telling you the truth. This is not false. I know that what I pursue is extremely difficult to get. How can it be obtained by me? Nevertheless, because of my mental determination, I am now engaged in these austerities. Ignoring Indra and the other foremost devas, Vishnu and Brahma, I wish to obtain the one who holds the Pinaka in his hand as my husband. This is the truth.' Hearing Parvati's words of determination, the sage, who was Jatila Rudra, laughed. He addressed her in these words. Jatila said, 'O daughter of the Himalayas! O Devi! What kind of intelligence do you have? Forgetting the other gods, you are performing extensive austerities for Rudra. I know about that Rudra. Listen. I will tell you. Rudra has a bull on his banner. He is malformed and has matted hair. He is always alone. In particular, he is always without attachment. Therefore, you should not fix your mind on Rudra. O Devi! Your form, and everything else, is contrary to that of Hara. The idea does not appeal to me. But do whatever you wish to.' Saying this, Rudra, in the form of the brahmachari, spoke again. In front of her, so as to test her, he criticized himself in many kinds of ways.""

"Devi Parvati heard the brahmana's words, which were impossible to tolerate. Extremely enraged at the criticism of Shiva, she replied. 'Until now, I took you to be someone else. But now, after realizing everything, I can see that you should be killed now. In the form of a brahmachari, a cunning person has arrived. You have foolishly criticized Shiva. I am extremely angry with you. You do not know Shiva. You have turned your face away from Shiva. Since I worshipped you, I am now tormented. If a man neglects the truth and criticizes Shiva, all his good merits, accumulated since birth, are reduced to ashes. If one touches a person who hates Shiva, one must perform prayashchitta. O wicked one! You said that you know Shiva. But it is certain that you do not know Shiva, the supreme lord. Here and there, using his maya, Rudra appears in many forms. He will ultimately give me what I wish for. He is without aberration and is loved by the virtuous.' Saying this, Devi Shivaa spoke about Shiva's tattva. It is said that Rudra is the brahman. He is nirguna and without decay.' Hearing Devi's words, the brahmachari brahmana was again about to say something. However, Girija

quickly spoke to her friend, Vijaya. Shivaa's mind was devoted to him, and she turned away from any criticism of Shiva. Girija said, 'O friend! One must make efforts to restrain this worst among brahmanas. If he speaks again, he will criticize Shiva. A person who criticizes Shiva is not the only one who commits a sin. In this world, a person who hears the criticism also obtains a share in the sin. In every case, those who criticize Shiva must be killed by Shiva's servants. But he is a brahmana. Therefore, he must be shunned. Let us leave this place and quickly go somewhere else. Otherwise, this wicked person will criticize Shiva again. Since he is a brahmana, he cannot be killed. But one must shun him and not look at him. Without any delay, let us swiftly leave this place and go somewhere else. Let us not have a conversation with this wicked person again.' O sage! Saying this, Uma raised her foot to leave.""

"But Shiva directly revealed himself and caught hold of her garment. He assumed his own divine form, the form that one uses to perform dhyana on Shiva. Shiva showed himself to Shivaa and as she stood face downwards, he spoke to her. Shiva said, 'Leaving me, where are you going? O Shivaa! You should not abandon me. O unblemished one! I wanted to test the firmness of your devotion. To test your sentiments, I assumed the form of a brahmachari and approached you, addressing you in many kinds of words. I am pleased with you, especially because of your firm devotion to Shiva. Ask for the boon desired by your mind. There is nothing that cannot be given to you. Because of your austerities, from now on, you have made me your servant, dependent on your love. Such is your beauty that even an instant seems to become a yuga. Give up your shame. You are my eternal wife. O beloved! Along with you, I will quickly go to my own mountain. When the lord of devas addressed her in this way, Shivaa rejoiced. She instantly cast aside all the hardships she had suffered on account of the austerities. Beholding Shiva's divine form, she was delighted. Shivaa cast her face downwards in shame and lovingly replied to the lord. Shivaa said, 'O lord of devas! If you are pleased, show your compassion towards me. O lord of devas! Become my husband. This is what Shivaa told Shiva. Accepting her hand in the proper way, he went with her to Kailasa. Having obtained him as a husband, Girija accomplished the task of devas. O son! I have thus spoken to you about the nature of Shiva's brahmachari avatara, whereby he tested Shivaa's sentiments. I have narrated this supreme and unsullied account to you. If a person listens to this lovingly, he obtains a happy destination.""

Chapter 263-4(34) (Sunartaka-Nata Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Hear about the lord Shiva paramatman's avatara that is known as Sunartaka-nata. So as to obtain Shiva, Devi Kalika Parvati, Himalaya's daughter, went to the forest to torment herself through extremely sparkling austerities. O sage! Shiva was pleased at her excellent austerities. He went and tested her and happily bestowed a boon on her. Extremely pleased in his mind, he showed her his own form. O sage! Shankara told Shivaa, 'Please ask for a boon.' Hearing Shambhu's words and beholding his excellent form, Shivaa was extremely happy. She prostrated herself and spoke to him. Parvati said, 'O lord of devas! O Isha! If you are pleased with me and if I am to be given a boon, please show me your compassion and become my husband. With your proper permission, I will go to my father's house. O protector! O lord! You should also go to my father's presence. As a mendicant, you should ask him for me and make him auspicious, famous and illustrious. Make my father happy and let his ashrama as

a householder become successful in every possible way. O Mahesha! To accomplish the task of devas, you should follow the norms and marry me. O lord! You are always indifferent. But please fulfil my wishes. You are known as someone who is affectionate towards his devotees, and I am always devoted to you.' Shambhu Mahesha, affectionate towards his devotees, was addressed in this way. He uttered words of assent, vanished and went to his own mountain. The young Parvati was pleased at this. With her friends, she returned to her father's house, rendering her beauty successful. Hearing that Parvati had come, along with Mena and his family, Himalaya happily went to see his daughter. Seeing her, they rejoiced and honouring her, took her into the house. Happy, they rejoiced greatly and arranged for great festivities. Mena and the supreme mountain donated riches to brahmanas. Lovingly, they had auspicious chants from the Vedas recited. Delighted, Mena remained in the courtyard with her daughter. Meanwhile, Mount Himalaya went to the Ganga to bathe.""

"Shambhu is affectionate towards his devotees and engages in pastimes. At this time, he assumed the form of Sunartaka-nata[907] and arrived before Menaka. He held a horn in his left hand and a damaru in his right. He had a red garment, made out of rags of patchwork, on his back and he was skilled in singing and dancing. In the form of that actor, in Menaka's courtyard, he happily danced and sang many enchanting songs. From his horn and his damaru, he sounded melodious notes. He lovingly did many great and charming things. To see him, all the citizens, men and women, quickly assembled there. The young and the old were also present. They heard his beautiful singing and saw his charming dancing. O sage! All of them were captivated and so was Mena. Delighted and happy in her mind at his skills, Mena quickly brought a golden vessel filled with jewels, to give it to him. He did not accept this and asked for Shivaa as alms. He danced and sang again and got ready to perform his enchanting acts. Hearing his words, Mena was both amazed and enraged. She reprimanded the mendicant and wished to throw him out. At that time, the king of the mountains returned from the Ganga. In front of him, he saw a mendicant in the courtyard, in the form of a man. Hearing everything that had happened from Mena's mouth, he became angry. He commanded his attendants to throw the mendicant out.""

"However, he blazed in his energy like a large fire and was impossible to touch. O supreme among sages! No one was capable of throwing him out. O son! The mendicant was accomplished in many kinds of pastimes. He displayed his own infinite powers to the mountain. The mountain saw him instantly assume the form of Vishnu. The next moment he was in Brahma's form. In an instant, he assumed Surya's form. He next saw him in Rudra's great and wonderful form, full of energy and laughing with the beautiful Parvati. He saw many such forms there. He was amazed and was immediately overwhelmed with supreme bliss. Having shown his powers, the noble mendicant then asked for Durga as alms and said that he would not accept anything else. In the form of the mendicant, Parameshvara then vanished. Urged by Durga's words, he swiftly returned to his own abode. True jnana dawned on Mena and the lord of mountains. 'We have been deceived by Shiva and the lord has returned to his own abode. We must bestow our daughter Parvati, who has performed these great austerities, on him.' Full of great devotion towards Shiva, this is what the two of them thought. In this way, Rudra brought great joy to his devotees. Following the norms, he happily married Parvati.

[907] Literally, an excellent dancer and actor.

O son! I have spoken to you about Shiva's avatara, known as Sunartaka-nata. In this form, he fulfilled the pledge made to Shivaa. I have narrated this supreme and unblemished account. If a person listens to this lovingly, he obtains a happy destination.""

Chapter 264-4(35) (Avatara as a Virtuous Brahmana)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Hear about the lord Shiva paramatman's avatara, known as that of the virtuous brahmana. All the gods got to know about the great and supreme devotion Mena and Himalaya had developed towards Shiva. They were full of thoughts and affectionately consulted each other. 'Full of single-minded devotion, if the lord of mountains bestows his daughter on Shambhu, he will certainly obtain nirvana. He will instantly obtain Shiva. He is the store of an infinite number of jewels and will obtain moksha. This earth is known as one whose womb is full of jewels. But that will become false and untrue. He will give up his present transient form and obtain a divine form. Bestowing his daughter on the one who wields the trident, he will go to Shiva's world. As a result of Shambhu's favours, he will obtain sarupya with Mahadeva. He will enjoy excellent objects of pleasure there and obtain emancipation.' O sage! Discussing this, all the gods went to their guru's house. Having gone there, intent on their selfish objectives, the gods told their guru this. The devas said, 'O guru! To accomplish our task, please go to Himalaya's house and criticize Mahesha, so that the mountain's devotion towards him is restrained. O guru! If the mountain bestows his daughter on Shiva, while filled with his devotion, he will instantly obtain emancipation. Let him remain on earth.' Hearing the words of devas, he reflected on it and replied. The guru said, 'O gods! One among you should go to the mountain to accomplish the task. I am incapable of doing this. O gods! Alternatively, along with Vasava, go to Brahma's world. Go and tell him this. He will accomplish your task.' Hearing this, the gods discussed the matter and went to Vidhatri's assembly hall. In front of Vidhatri, they reported everything that had happened. Hearing their words, Vidhatri thought a lot about this and addressed them in the following words. 'I cannot do this. Criticizing Hara always brings grief. O gods! Go to Kailasha and satisfy Shankara. Request the divinity to go to Himalaya's house. He will go to the lord of mountains and criticize himself. It is held that criticizing others leads to destruction but criticizing one's own self leads to fame.' Thereupon, all the gods quickly went to Kailasha. They devotedly prostrated themselves before Shiva and told him everything. Hearing the words of devas, Maheshvara agreed. Smiling, he comforted and assured the gods.""

"Bhagavan Shambhu Mahesha is affectionate towards his devotees. He is without aberrations and is the lord of maya. He wished to go the mountain. He held a staff and an umbrella and attired himself in divine garments. With a dazzling tilaka, he was radiant. He held a string of crystals in his hand and wore a shalagrama around his neck. He devotedly performed japa with the name of Hari. He wore the garb of a virtuous brahmana. Surrounded by his relatives, he quickly went to Himachala. Seeing him, along with his attendants, Himalaya stood up. Following the norms, he prostrated himself like a rod on the ground, in a sashtanga posture. The lord of mountains asked him, 'Who are you?' With the appropriate affection, the Indra among brahmanas replied immediately. The virtuous brahmana said, 'O mountain! I am known as Sadhudvija [908] and am also known as Vishnu's devotee.

[908] Virtuous brahmana.

I possess supreme insight. I know everything and always do good turns to others. Through the strength of my guru, I can go anywhere. O supreme among mountains! Through my own knowledge, while I was in my own abode, I got to know something. Listen lovingly to do this. I will tell you, without any pride in your presence. You wish to bestow your daughter on Shankara. She is as beautiful as Padma, but his lineage and conduct are unknown. O Indra among mountains! This decision of yours is not appropriate and will not lead to anything auspicious. Born in Narayana's lineage, [909] you are foremost among those who possess jnana and must understand this. Behold your kingdom over the mountains. He doesn't have a single relative. Make an effort to ask your own relatives and ask your own beloved. Make efforts to ask everyone, including Mena, but excluding Parvati. O mountain! A diseased person does not like medication, preferring a bad diet instead. In the matter of performing the rite of bestowing Parvati, he is not a worthy person. As soon as they hear about this, there will be smiles on the faces of great people. He is without a refuge and is always devoid of attachment. He is malformed. He does not change and possesses no gunas. He is hideous and resides in cremation grounds. He likes serpents and is naked. His ornaments are ashes and snakes are coiled around his head. He has been dislodged from all the ashramas and his movements can never be discerned.' Uttering these factual statements, which were full of criticisms of Shiva, Shiva, who engages in pastimes, returned to his own abode. Hearing the words of the brahmana, the two of them, took contrary meanings out of them and thought, 'What will we do?'[910] Thereafter, Rudra brought great joy to his devotees. He married Girija and accomplished the task of devas. O son! I have thus told you about Shiva's avatara known as Sadhudvija. The lord accomplished the task of devas. This unsullied account ensures heaven and a long and excellent lifespan. A person who reads or hears it, obtains a happy destination.""

Chapter 265-4(36) (Avatara as Ashvatthama)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Nandis Hear about the lord Shiva paramatman's supreme avatara, known as Ashvatthama. O sage! O devarshi! Drona was born in Bharadvaja's lineage, but not from a womb.[911] He was born as a portion of the immensely intelligent Brihaspati and was in control of himself. He was brave and supreme among those who wielded the bow. The brahmana rishi was accomplished in all kinds of weapons. He was immensely energetic and extensive in his deeds. He was supreme among those who knew about every kind of weapon. Learned ones know that he was accomplished in both the Vedas and dhanurveda. [912] Drona was great and wonderful in his deeds and extended his own lineage. O brahmana! As a result of his own strength, he became the acharya of the Kouravas.

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[909] Since he was descended from Brahma and Brahma originated from Vishnu.

[910] The two clearly means Himalaya and Menaka. Each statement has a double meaning, an obvious negative one and a deeper, positive one. Consequently, Himalaya bestowed his daughter reluctantly and wasn't emancipated.

[911] He was born from a pot.

[912] The knowledge of the bow, that is, the art of fighting.

Among the Kouravas, he was known as one of the six maharathas,[913] To help the Kouravas, he tormented himself through extensive austerities, directed towards Shiva. Dronacharya, the supreme brahmana, desired a son. Bhagavan Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees, was pleased at this. O supreme among sages! He arrived in front of Drona. Seeing him, the brahmana, Drona, was satisfied and immediately prostrated himself before him. His heart was greatly pleased, and he lowered his head and joined his hands in salutation. The lord Shankara was satisfied at his praise and austerities. Affectionate towards his devotees, he said, 'Ask for a boon.' Hearing Shambhu's words, Drona bowed down and spoke. 'Please grant me a son who is born as your portion, so that he is immensely strong and invincible before everyone.' Hearing Drona's words, Shambu replied in words of assent. O son! O sage! The lord who engages in pastimes and bestows happiness vanished. Extremely happy and with his doubts gone, Drona returned to his own residence. Delighted, he told his wife everything that had happened.

"After some time, Rudra, the lord who destroys everything, was born in his portion as an immensely strong son to Drona. O sage! He was famous on earth as Ashvatthama. He was brave, with eyes like the petals of lotuses. He was terrible, capable of destroying the side of the enemy. As a result of his father's command, in the battle of Bharata, the immensely strong one helped the Kouravas. By seeking refuge with the immensely brave one, Bhishma and the other Kouravas became exceedingly strong. Even the residents of heaven could not defeat them. All the Pandavas were accomplished and immensely valiant. However, fearing him and fearing their own destruction, they were incapable of defeating the Kouravas. Hence, instructed by Krishna, Arjuna undertook extremely terrible austerities dedicated to Shambhu. As a boon, he obtained a supreme weapon and defeated them. O sage! The immensely brave Ashvatthama was born as Mahadeva's portion. Nevertheless, because of his devotion,[914] he exhibited his own powers. The sons of the Pandavas were immensely valiant and were trained by Krishna and others. Nevertheless, he made efforts and destroyed them. It was impossible for the enemy to counter his strength. Arjuna was incapacitated by grief on account of his son. [915] On seeing Ashvatthama descending on him, Achyuta drove the chariot away. He discharged the weapon known as brahmashira. A terrible energy manifested itself in all directions. Seeing that his life was in danger, Arjuna was distressed. Exhausted, immensely terrified and with his energy destroyed, he spoke to Krishna. Arjuna said, 'O Krishna! What is this? Where has this come from? O Krishna! I do not know. The energy is advancing towards me from every direction, and it is impossible to tolerate.' Hearing Arjuna's words, Krishna, supreme among Shiva's devotees, meditated on Shiva and his wife and replied affectionately to Arjuna. Krishna replied, 'Know that this is the extremely energetic brahmastra of Drona's son. There is no other weapon that is capable of countering it. Quickly remember Shiva. The lord Shambhu protects his own devotees. He gave you his supreme weapon, which is capable of accomplishing every task. Destroy the energy of this weapon with the even greater energy of Shiva's weapon.'

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[913] Dronacharya was the acharya for both the Pandavas and the Kouravas. A maharatha was a great warrior, greater than a ratha (a warrior), one who could take on 10,000 warriors at one go. The six maharathas on the Kourava side means at the time of the Kurukshetra War. There is no such simple listing of six in the Mahabharata. But Bhishma, Drona, Ashvatthama, Karna, Bhagadatta and Kripacharya are probably meant/being referred to here.

[914] As a result of his devotion towards the Kouravas, he sided with them.

[915] Meaning, Abhimanyu.

Saying this, to accomplish the objective, Krishna himself meditated on Shiva. Hearing Krishna's words, Partha remembered Shiva in his heart. O sage! He prostrated himself, touched water and unleashed that weapon. The brahmashira weapon is invincible and cannot be countered. O great sage! Nevertheless, the energy of Shiva's weapon instantly pacified it. Do not regard this as wonderful. Everything wonderful exists in Shiva. He is without an origin. Using his powers, he creates and destroys the entire universe.""

"Ashvatthama was born from Shiva's portion and understood all this. O sage! He was not distressed at what Shiva had done. Since this was Shiva's wish, his mind wasn't dissatisfied. Drona's son decided that no Pandavas should be left on earth. He made up his mind to destroy the child in Uttara's womb. The brahmastra could not be countered by any other weapon. Therefore, the great lord hurled the great radiance of the weapon in the direction of Uttara's womb. Uttara, Jishnu's daughter-in-law was distressed in her mind. [916] Scorched by the weapon, she praised Krishna, Lakshmi's lord. At this, Krishna meditated on Shiva in his heart, bending down and prostrating himself. He understood that Drona's weapon had done this, designed to eliminate all Pandavas. He had been given the extremely radiant weapon, Sudarshana chakra, to protect himself. Following Shiva's command, he used this to protect her. Since he was himself born from Shiva's portion, he[917] understood that Krishna's conduct was due to his being Shiva's supreme devotee. Therefore, he gradually changed his mind. At this, Krishna was pleased in his mind and made all the Pandavas fall down at the feet of the king of all devotees of Shiva. Therefore, Drona's son was pleased at Krishna and the Pandavas. Ashvatthama showed them his favours and lovingly bestowed many boons on them. O son! In this way, the lord Maheshvara engages in many supreme pastimes. O supreme among sages! In the form of Drona's son, he assumed an avatara on earth. Ashvatthama, Shiva's avatara, was immensely strong and valiant. He brought happiness to the three worlds and is still there, along the banks of Jahnavi. [918] I have described the lord Shankara's avatara as Ashvatthama. This bestows every kind of success and grants devotees the desired fruits. If a person controls himself and devotedly reads or recites it, he obtains the desired success. At the end, he goes to Shiva's city.""

Chapter 266-4(37) (Prelude to Kirata Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "O wise one! Hear about the wielder N of Pinaka's avatara, known as Pinaka. He killed Muka and delighted, bestowed a boon on Arjuna. The supreme Pandavas were defeated by Suyodhana. [919] With the virtuous Droupadi, they went to the forest known as Dvaitavana. At that time, they resorted to the plate given by Surya. [920] In this way, the Pandavas happily spent their time. As an act of deception, Suyodhana sent Durvasa, bull among sages. Full of affection, the Indra among brahmanas came to the Pandavas,

[916] Jishnu is Arjuna's name, and his daughter-in-law was Uttara, Abhimanyu's wife.

[917] Ashvatthama.

[918] Ashvatthama is immortal.

[919] In the gambling match. Duryodhana is also known as Suyodhana.

[920] Surya gave a plate/vessel. As long as Droupadi had not eaten, this plate/vessel would be full of food and could be used to offer hospitality to guests. Durvasa arrived after Droupadi had eaten.

with ten thousand of his students. Having arrived, he asked for the desired food for them. O lord among sages! Since there was a lack of food, all the Pandavas were miserable. They made up their minds to give up their lives. Droupadi remembered Krishna and he arrived to protect them. He ate some vegetables, and they were satisfied.[921] Learning that his disciples were satisfied, Durvasa went away. Thanks to Krishna's compassion, the Pandavas were freed from their miseries then. The Pandavas asked Krishna, 'What will happen now? A powerful enemy has arisen. O lord! What should be done? Please tell us. O sage! Shri Krishna was asked this by the Pandavas. He remembered Shiva's lotus feet and spoke to the Pandavas. Shri Krishna said, 'O Pandavas! Listen to the best course of action. In particular, hear about my service to Shiva. Wishing to defeat the enemies, I went to Dvaraka. I thought about the instructions of the great-souled Upamanyu and worshipped Shambhu. Parameshvara was pleased. I served him well for seven months, in Batuka, best among mountains. Vishvesha is himself present there and gave me everything that I wished for. As a result of his powers, I obtained every kind of supreme capacity. You should also serve that divinity now. As fruits, he will bestow objects of pleasure and emancipation. You should serve Shambhu, the one who bestows every kind of happiness.' Saying this, Krishna comforted the Pandavas and vanished. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he quickly went to Dvaraka.""

"The Pandavas then sent a bhilla to test Duryodhana's energy and qualities. [922] He properly ascertained everything about the increase in Duryodhana's qualities and went and reported this to his masters. O lord among sages! Hearing what he said, all of them were miserable. Extremely unhappy, the Pandavas spoke to each other. 'What should be done? Where will we go now? We are capable of fighting. But at the moment, all of us are restrained because of the truth of the pledge we have taken.' At that time, Vyasa arrived there, with bhasma decorating his forehead. Rudrakshas constituted his ornaments, and his hair was matted. Overwhelmed with love for Shiva, he was performing japa with the panchakshara mantra. He blazed in his own radiance, like a second Dharma. They were happy to see him. They got up and stood in front of him. They gave him an excellent seat, made out of kusha grass spread over antelope skin. When Vyasa seated himself, they happily worshipped him. They praised him in many kinds of ways and said, 'We are blessed. O lord! On seeing you, all of us are content. The great austerities and many kinds of donations have all been rendered successful by this. O grandfather! [923] On seeing you, our miseries have gone far away. The wicked, cruel in deeds, inflicted great sorrows on us. But on seeing your prosperous form, all those hardships have gone away. Was there ever a time when they did not disappear in this fashion? That is a matter which should certainly be thought about. Having sought refuge in a great person who has capably completed all the tasks, if a person's grief does not go away, destiny alone can be the reason. Poverty, the reason behind grief, will also certainly go away. It is the view that the nature of a great person is like that of a kalpavriksha. O lord! Such are the qualities of a great person, that when a person merely seeks refuge with him, if he seeks anything, he is reckoned to have got it. The nature of the excellent is that they protect the distressed, without thinking about whether the person seeking refuge is superior or inferior.

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[921] There were remnants of some vegetables left on the plate/vessel and Krishna ate these. Since Krishna was satisfied, the entire world, including Durvasa's disciples, were satisfied.

[922] The Mahabharata doesn't mention this.

[923] Vyasa fathered both Dhritarashtra and Pandu.

Indeed, the view in the world is that the wretched should make supreme efforts to seek refuge with him and serve him. That is beneficial and is a sign of his fame. After that, it depends on destiny, and he cannot be blamed. O lord! That is the reasonwe are happy when we see you, because auspiciousness will follow. The mere act of your arrival has delighted us. Please instruct us, so that our miseries are quickly dispelled.' Hearing the words of the Pandavas, the great sage, Vyasa, was pleased in his mind. He spoke to them. 'O Pandavas! You should not be miserable. You are blessed because you have been successful in adhering to the truth. There is no need to lament. Even at the time of death, the nature of virtuous people remains excellent. They do not abandon dharma and make their adherence to the truth successful. So far as we are concerned, they and you are equally descended from us. However, it is the view of the learned that one should be partial towards those who follow dharma. Dhritarashtra was wicked right from the beginning. That is the reason he lacked sight. As a result of his avarice, he himself abandoned dharma and your kingdom was taken away. When your father died, there is no doubt that he became your father. Great-souled ones show compassion towards children. Thereafter, he never restrained his son. Had he not done that, this calamity would not have arisen. Whatever happened subsequently, was bound to occur. It cannot have been otherwise. He is wicked and you are truthful in speech, following dharma. Thereafter, it is certainly the case that, at the end, he will face the inauspicious. The sprout that germinates depends on the seed that has been sown. Therefore, under no circumstances should you succumb to grieving. The auspicious will occur. There is no need to think about this.' Vyasa spoke to the Pandavas in this way and cheered them up.""

"With Yudhishthira at the forefront, they again addressed him in the following words. The Pandavas said, 'O protector! You have spoken the truth. However, the wicked incessantly cause us hardships. They are evil-souled and repeatedly inflict these on us. O lord! Right now, how can those be destroyed? How can we obtain something auspicious? Earlier, Krishna told us to constantly worship Shankara. We have transgressed by being lax about that indicated path. Instruct us about how we can again resort to that divinity's path.' Hearing their words, Vyasa was filled with joy. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he spoke to the Pandavas affectionately. Vyasa replied, O Pandavas! O those with dharma in your intelligence! Listen to my words now. Krishna spoke the truth. I also serve Shiva. If you serve him happily, you will always obtain unmatched happiness. All the sorrows occur because one does not serve Shiva.' After reflecting on all five of them, Vyasa, supreme among sages, pronounced that Arjuna was the most worthy to worship Shiva. The supreme sage then thought about the best place to undertake austerities. He spoke again to the Pandavas, who were established in dharma. Vyasa said, 'O Pandavas! Listen. I will speak about what will always be beneficial. Shiva should be viewed as the supreme brahman, above everyone else. He is the destination of the virtuous. Brahma and every other visible object in the universe ends at the end of a parardha. [924] All this is Shiva's form. Therefore, one should worship him and meditate on him. Shankara takes away every kind of misery and he must always be served. If this is done with devotion, Shiva is pleased within a short period of time. When he is pleased, Mahesha bestows everything on his devotees.

[924] Brahma's lifespan consists of two parardhas. The text means that at the end of Brahma's lifespan, everything material is destroyed.

It is certain that one will receive objects of pleasure in this world and emancipation thereafter. Therefore, those who desire the fruits of objects of pleasure and emancipation, always serve Shambhu. Shankara is Purusha himself. He destroys the wicked and is the destination of the virtuous. However, with a steady mind, he must first control himself and use knowledge known to Shakra to perform japa. This is recommended for a supreme kshatriya. Therefore, let Arjuna first use knowledge known to Shakra to steadily undertake japa. Before being satisfied, he[925] will first test him. When he is satisfied, he always removes all impediments. Subsequently, he will give him Shiva's supreme mantra. Saying this, he summoned Arjuna and instructed him about the knowledge required to worship Indra. Sharp in intelligence, Arjuna bathed, sat down facing the east, and received it. The supreme sage then gave him the rites that were appropriate for a king. Extensive in intelligence, Vyasa spoke to Dhananjaya. [926] Vyasa said, 'O Partha! From here, go the beautiful Indrakila. [927] Near the Jahnavi, perform austerities properly. May the knowledge that is invisible always be beneficial for you.' Pronouncing his benedictions over him, the sage spoke to all of them. 'O supreme among kings! Always base yourselves on dharma. That always yields the best kind of success. There is no need to think about this. The lord among sages pronounced his benedictions over the remaining Pandavas. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he instantly vanished from the spot.""

Chapter 267-4(38) (Arjuna's Austerities)

“Nandishvara said, "As a result of the mantra, which was Shiva's form and brought unlimited energy, Arjuna was seen to become radiant. On seeing Arjuna, all the Pandavas were certain, 'Our victory is certain because of his extensive energy. This task can only be accomplished by you and not by anyone else. That is evident through Vyasa's words. Make your life successful. They spoke to Arjuna in this way, although they suffered a lot because of the imminent separation. Unwillingly, but affectionately, they sent him. Droupadi was miserable but checked the tears in her eyes. Devoted to her husband, she sent him on with these auspicious words. Droupadi said, 'O king! You must make efforts to stick to what Vyasa instructed you. May your path bring what is auspicious. May Shankara do what is beneficial. After lovingly taking their leave from Arjuna, all of them resided there. Full of great grief, all five [928] gathered together. O supreme sage! They spoke to each other. Listen. 'In times of grief, if one is with someone one loves, there is no misery. But if there is separation, the misery is doubled. Even a patient person finds it difficult to resort to his fortitude then.' O lord among sages! While the Pandavas were grieving in this way, Vyasa, the noble rishi who was an ocean of compassion, arrived.""

"The Pandavas lovingly bowed down and worshipped him. They gave him a seat and immersed in great misery, they clasped their hands and spoke these words. The Pandavas said, 'O best among excellent ones! O lord! We have been scorched by grief.

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[925] Indra.

[926] Arjuna.

[927] A mountain in the Himalayas, sometimes identified with Mandara, though not invariably so.

[928] Including Droupadi.

O sage! However, since we have seen you, we have again obtained happiness now. O lord! To dispel our misery, please reside with us for some time. O brahmana rishi! When one sees you, all grief dissolves away.' Addressed in this way, the best among rishis stayed there, for the sake of their happiness. So that there was no sorrow, they conversed about many things. O sage! Vyasa told them about many accounts. Humble in his atman, Dharmaraja prostrated himself properly and spoke to him. Dharmaraja said, 'O best among rishis! It is my view that having heard you, my sorrow has been pacified. O immensely wise one! O lord! I wish to ask you about what you have spoken. Earlier, was there anyone who went through similar miseries? I do not think anyone else could have gone through such sorrows, Vyasa replied, 'Earlier, there was a king named Nala and he was the lord of the nishadhas. The great-souled one suffered miseries greater than yours. King Harishchandra went through miseries greater than yours. They were particularly bad and cannot be described. They were such that they bring grief to others. O Pandava! Know that Rama went through grief. Men and women do not suffer from greater confusion than when they hear about those. Therefore, I am incapable of describing it. The body is a mass of grief. Realizing this, you should cast aside your sorrows now. There is no doubt that they pervade anyone who has life. In the first place, birth and the mother's womb is a reason for grief. In accordance with childish pastimes, there is great grief in childhood too. When a person attains youth, even when he enjoys objects of desire, those assume the form of miseries. As days come and days pass, there are many burdens of work. The lifespan is constantly diminished, but a person does not realize it. At the end, there is death and there are greater sorrows thereafter. Know that ignorant men always enjoy hardships in many kinds of hells. Therefore, everything that ends is false. Follow the truth. A man must do that which brings satisfaction to Shambhu.' In this way, all the brothers spent their time in talking about many kinds of things, whatever they wished to converse about.""

"Arjuna was firm in his vows and passed over impassable mountains. He obtained a yaksha and with him, slew many bandits. His mind filled with delight, he went to that excellent mountain. Having reached it, he went to a beautiful spot, near the Ganga. There was an excellent grove of ashoka trees there, resembling heaven. He remained there, bathing and bowing down to his excellent guru. He wore garments that he had been instructed to wear. He restrained his senses and fixed his mind. He created a beautiful parthiva lingam[929] that was symmetrical. He prostrated himself in front of that excellent mass of energy. He bathed thrice a day and following the norms, worshipped. He repeatedly worshipped Hara there. Energy issued out of his head and seeing this, the spie[930] were scared. 'Who is the one who has come here? We must tell Bidoujasa, so that he can reflect about this.' Saying this, they approached the energetic Indra. The spies said, 'O lord of devas! Someone is performing austerities in the forest, and we do not know who it is. Perhaps it is a deva, a rishi, Surya or Vibhavasu.[931] Scorched by his energy, we have come to your presence. We have told you what has happened. Please think about what must be done.' Told this by all the spies, he realized what his son, [932] who was from his own gotra, desired. He released them and made up his mind to go there.""

[929] Made out of clay.

[930] Indra's spies.

[931] Agni.

[932] Arjuna was Indra's son.

"Shachi's husband assumed the form of an old brahmana who was a brahmachari. O Indra among brahmanas! He went there to test him. On seeing him arrived, Pandava wished to worship him. He praised him and standing in front of him, asked, 'Where have you come from? Please tell me.' Addressed in this way, out of affection, the lord of devas wished to test his patience. Therefore, he addressed Pandava in proud words. The brahmana said, 'O son! You are still young. Why are you tormenting yourself through austerities now? Are these for emancipation or are they for victory? Are they for everything?' Thus addressed, he told him everything. Hearing this, the brahmana again addressed him in the following words. The brahmana said, 'O brave one! O supreme among Kurus! You are not doing what is right. Austerities cannot be undertaken easily. If you desire emancipation, you should follow the dharma of kshatriyas. Indra grants happiness. He is not one who bestows emancipation. Therefore, you should perform better austerities.' Hearing these words, Arjuna became angry. Excellent in vows, he ignored what was said and replied humbly. Arjuna replied, 'Why did you say that austerities have to be for a kingdom or for emancipation? I am performing these austerities because of Vyasa's words. O brahmachari! Leave this spot. You desire to bring about my downfall. O brahmachari! I have no use for you.' Hearing this, he was pleased and showed him his wonderful and handsome form. He displayed his own form, with all the paraphernalia. Seeing Shakra's form, Arjuna was ashamed. However, Indra comforted him and addressed him in the following words. Indra said, 'O son! O Dhananjaya! O immensely intelligent one! Ask for a boon. Ask for what your mind desires. There is nothing that cannot be given to you.' Hearing Shakra's words, Arjuna replied, 'O father! Please grant me victory. The enemies always cause suffering to me.' Shakra said, 'With Duryodhana at their head, your enemies are strong. Drona, Bhima and Karna are all invincible. Ashvatthama, Drona's son, has been born as Rudra's portion and he can also not be defeated. But with me as your aide, you will always be able to withstand them. Listen. O brave one! No one is capable of performing this japa now. Shiva is the noblest. Therefore, perform Shambhu's japa now. Shankara is the lord of all the lords of the world. He rules himself and is the lord of mobile and immobile entities. He is capable of doing everything, bestowing objects of pleasure and emancipation as fruits. I, Brahma, Vishnu and others who grant all kinds of boons, and others who desire victory, are all worshippers of Shiva. From now on, ignore that mantra and devotedly worship Shiva. Use the norms decreed for a parthiva lingam and meditate on Shiva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Use many offerings and every kind of sentiment. If you do this, your success will not waver. There is no need to think about this.' Saying this, he summoned all his spies and spoke to them. 'Remain here and always guard him carefully.' Indra instructed his own spies to ensure Arjuna's protection. With his heart full of affection due to one's son, he again spoke to the one who had the monkey on his standard. Indra said, 'You must never be distracted in matters connected with the kingdom. O fortunate one! O scorcher of enemies! You will obtain what is beneficial. Resort to your patience in your pursuit of sadhana. Shiva will protect you in every possible way. There is no doubt that he will grant you prosperity and unmatched fruits.' Saying this, the lord of gods bestowed a boon on the descendant of the Bharata lineage. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he left for his own residence. The immensely brave Arjuna prostrated himself before the lord of the gods. Controlling his atman, he tormented himself through such austerities, directed at Shiva.""

Chapter 268-4(39) (Slaying of Muka Daitya)

“Nandishvara said, "He bathed in the proper way and performed nyasa[933] in the proper way. Devotedly, he performed dhyana on Shiva. He did everything as Vyasa had told him to. Like a great sage, he stood on the sole of one foot. He fixed his eyes only on Surya and kept chanting the mantra. He happily remembered Shiva in his mind and tormented himself through these austerities. He performed japa with Shambhu's supreme panchakshara mantra. The devas were amazed at the energy of his austerities. They controlled themselves, went to Shiva and spoke to him again. The devas said, 'O Sarvesha! To satisfy you, a man is engaged in austerities. O lord! Why don't you grant the man what he wishes for?' Saying this, the gods praised him in many kinds of ways. Fixing their eyes and their intelligence on his two feet, they stood there. The great lord Shiva, extensive in intelligence, heard their words. Pleased in his mind, he smiled and replied to the gods in these words. Shiva said, 'O gods! Return to your own abodes. There is no doubt that I will do everything you have said. There is no doubt that this is the truth.' Hearing Shambhu's words, they were greatly assured. All the immortals returned to their own residences.""

"At that time, the daitya named Muka arrived there. O Indra among brahmanas! He had been sent by the evil-souled Duryodhana against Arjuna. Using his maya, he assumed the form of a boar. He arrived along the path where Arjuna was stationed. He shattered many trees and the summits of mountains. Infused with great speed, he made many kinds of sounds. Arjuna saw the asura named Muka. Remembering Shiva's lotus feet, he thought about what he should do next. Arjuna thought, 'Who is this and where has he come from? It can be seen that he is cruel in deeds. It is certain that he will cause he harm. That is no doubt the reason why he has come here. There is no doubt in my mind that he is an enemy. Earlier, I have killed many daityas and danavas. One of their relatives may have come, to ignite that former enmity. Or perhaps he is Duryodhana's friend, wishing to do him a good turn. On seeing a person, if the mind is pleased, that person will certainly ensure welfare. But on seeing a person, if the mind is agitated, he must surely be an enemy. Conduct reveals the lineage. Size reveals the food. Speech reveals learning. The eyes reveal affection. The hidden intentions of the mind are revealed through form, stride, efforts, words and indications in the eyes and the face. It is said that eyes can be of four types-bright, passionate, sidelong or red. The learned can use these to discern separate sentiments. Eyes are bright when friends meet, passionate when one sees a son, sidelong when one unites with a beloved and red when one sees an enemy. So far as he is concerned, all my senses are excited. He is an enemy and there is no doubt that he must be killed. I remember the words of my guru now. 'O king! If a person brings you misery, he must be killed through any means that are possible. There is no need to think about it." That is the reason I wield weapons. This is certain.' Thinking in this way, he stood up and affixed an arrow.""

[933] Anga-nyasa is the mental appropriation (nyasa) of different limbs of the body (anga) to different divinities. Kara-nyasa is similarly done to different parts of the hand (kara). This is an act of purification.

"Shankara is affectionate towards his devotees. Meanwhile to protect Arjuna and test his devotion, he arrived there. He arrived there in the extremely wonderful form of a bhilla, surrounded by his companions. He arrived there quickly, so as to slay the daitya. He girded the garment around his waist and folded up Ishana's standard. There were white marks on his body, and he held a bow and arrow. There was an inexhaustible quiver full of arrows on his back. With his companions, Shiva assumed the form of a bhilla king. The leader of that contingent emerged, making many kinds of sounds. The grunts of the boar also resounded in the directions and the sub-directions. The residents of the forest were agitated by this sound and so was Arjuna. All the mountains were also agitated by the sound. 'Is this Shiva, the one who brings welfare? I had heard this earlier, and Krishna repeated it again. Vyasa said it and devas also remembered him in that way. Shiva is spoken of as the one who ensures welfare. He is the one who grants happiness. He is spoken of as the one who bestows emancipation. There is no doubt that he bestows emancipation on those who are his own. It is certain that as soon as they remember him, men obtain what is beneficial. If one worships him with all the sentiments, even in one's dreams, one does not face hardships. If there is some misery, that originates because of karma. One should know that whatever is going to happen, large or small, will occur. One knows that this is certainly due to the taints of prarabdha karma. Or perhaps, after one has enjoyed it, large or small, Shankara will enable one to cross over. There is no doubt that he can dispel it if he so wishes. He can change amrita into poison and poison into amrita. If he wishes to do something, there is nothing that can counter it. Other ancient devotees have reflected on it in this way. In the future, devotees must also fix this in their minds. Whether there is prosperity or whether death has surfaced in front, whether there is censure or praise, misery is destroyed through this. Shankara always brings happiness, and this enables one to conquer both good deeds and wicked ones. Sometimes, to test, Shiva inflicts miseries. He is spoken of as someone who bestows happiness at the end. There is no doubt that he is compassionate. This is like gold being purified and becoming pure. [934] Earlier, this is what I have heard from the mouth of the sage. If one worships him, one obtains supreme happiness.' While he was thinking in this way, the boar came within the range of his arrow.""

"Shiva was closely following the boar from the rear, which rushed between them. Between them, the boar's wonderful, pointed tusks could be seen. [935] Shankara is affectionate towards his devotees. His greatness is spoken about, and Shiva arrived extremely quickly. At that time, both of them released their arrows. Shiva's arrow struck the boar on his tail and Arjuna's arrow struck him on his mouth. Shiva's arrow entered through the tail and quickly emerging through the mouth, merged into the ground. Arjuna's arrow emerged through the tail and fell down by the side. The boar, the daitya, instantly fell down on the ground, dead. The devas were filled with great delight and showered down flowers. They exclaimed 'Victory' and repeatedly uttering words of praise, prostrated themselves. Shiva was happy in his mind and Arjuna also rejoiced. Both of them looked at the daitya's cruel form. Arjuna was especially delighted in his mind and said, "This supreme daitya's form is extremely wonderful. He assumed this form and came here to kill me, but I have been protected by Shiva.

934 In a fire.

935 The text uses the word shringam, which should be translated as horn. But a boar does not have horns and shringam actually means something pointed. Therefore, we have translated this as tusk.

There is no doubt that Ishvara has bestowed me with this intelligence now.' Thinking this, Arjuna repeatedly uttered Shiva's name. He repeatedly prostrated himself before Shiva and praised him.""

Chapter 269-4(40) (Conversation between the Bhilla and Arjuna)

“Nandishvara said, "O Sanatkumara! O omniscient one! Hear about the paramatman's pastimes. He is full of affection towards his devotees but tests their steadfastness. Shiva quickly sent his servants to fetch the arrow and Arjuna also arrived there. To fetch the arrows, the attendants and Arjuna reached at the same time. Arjuna censured the others and removed his own arrow. The gana [936] said, 'O supreme rishi! Why are you extracting this arrow? This arrow belongs to us. Let it be. O supreme among sages! Addressed by the bhilla's attendant in this way, Arjuna remembered Shankara and spoke the following words. Arjuna replied, 'Without knowing the facts, why are you saying this? O roamer in the forest! You are foolish. I released the arrow. Why are you now saying that it belongs to you? The shaft and the tuft have my name marked in lines. How can it be yours? Give up this nature of yours." Hearing these words, the bhilla, the lord of those attendants, laughed and spoke to Arjuna, who was in the form of a rishi. O ascetic! Listen. You have not performed any austerities. You may be in the form of an ascetic, but you are a deceiver. How can a man who is an ascetic lie in this fashion? Do not take me to be alone. I am the leader of an army. My lord is there, with many bhillas from the forest. He is capable, in every possible way, of showing you his favours or chastising you. You are trying to take away his arrow now. This arrow will never remain by your side. O ascetic! Why do you wish to lose the fruits of your austerities? I have truly heard that austerities are destroyed by theft, use of deceit to cause suffering and the breaking of true pledges. O ascetic! Therefore, where will be the fruits of your austerities now? If you do not let go of this arrow, you will be an ingrate. It is certainly the case that my master released this arrow for your sake. He used the arrow to kill the enemy and protect you. You are extremely ungrateful and are causing harm to your austerities. If you do not speak the truth, what kind of success do you aspire for? If you do need this arrow, go and ask my master for it. He is himself capable of giving you many such arrows. My king is here now. Why don't you ask him? Forgetting the good deed he did for you, you desire to harm him. This is not worthy of you. Give up this fickleness.' Hearing these words, Partha Arjuna became angry. He remembered Shiva and uttered these few words. Arjuna said, 'O bhilla! Let me tell you that there is no truth in what you have said. O one who roams around in the forest! I know you, reflecting the status you have been born in. I am a king, and you are a thief. How can there be a battle between us? I should fight with those who are strong, never with those who are inferior. Your master is certain to be like you. We are the ones who give. You are spoken of as the ones who roam around in the forest and are thieves. That being the case, how can I ask from the king of bhillas now? O one who roams in the forest! Why don't you ask for this arrow from me? I will certainly give you many such arrows. A king must never give or receive in this way.

[936] Stated in the singular.

O roamer in the forest! If I do not wish to give you this arrow now, how can I give it to you? What is the need to converse? Go away. Let your master come and speak to me now. O bhilla! Let your master, the leader of an army, come here and defeat me in a battle, then taking away the arrow. Thereafter, let him joyously leave for his own residence. What is the need for delay?' Arjuna obtained his strength from Maheshvara. Hearing what he said, the bhilla addressed him in the following words. The bhilla said, 'You are ignorant, and you are not a rishi. Why do you desire your own death? Give me the arrow and remain happy. Otherwise, you will have to endure hardships.' The bhilla, who was a gana and obtained his wonderful strength from Shiva, spoke in this way. Pandava remembered Shankara and replied. Arjuna answered, 'O bhilla! O one who roams around in the forest! Listen attentively to my words. If your master does come here, I will show him the consequences. It is not appropriate that I should fight with you. But I will fight with your master. A clash between a lion and a jackal is known to be something to laugh at. Listen to my words and witness my great strength. O bhilla! Go to your master and do whatever you want. O sage! Thus addressed by Partha again, the bhilla went to the spot where Shiva's avatara as Kirata, 937 the leader of the army, was present.""

"The bhilla reported Arjuna's words in detail. He told everything to the paramatman, who was in the form of a bhilla. Hearing these words, Kirateshvara was filled with delight. In the form of the bhilla, Shankara arrived with all his soldiers. Pandava Arjuna saw the kirata's soldiers. Holding his bow and arrows, he advanced in front of them. Kirata again sent a spy and through his mouth, spoke the following words to the great-souled Bharata. Kirata said, 'O ascetic! Behold my soldiers. Let go of the arrow now and leave. Desiring something insignificant, why do you wish to give up your life now? Your brothers are afflicted by grief and so is your wife. It is my view that the earth will not slip out of your hands. To test Partha's firmness, Paramesha spoke in this way. Shambhu had assumed that form to protect Arjuna in every possible way. Through the gana who arrived, Shankara explained all this in great detail to Arjuna. Hearing this, he again requested the messenger who had come. 'Tell the lord of your army that the opposite will happen. If I now give you the arrow that belongs to me, there is no doubt that I will cause a taint to my lineage. It is also certain that my brothers will be afflicted by grief and all my learning will be futile. Therefore, you should certainly advance against me. I have not heard of a lion being terrified by a jackal. In that way, a king is never scared of someone who roams around in the forest. Thus addressed by Pandava, he went back to his master again and especially reported, what he had been told. Hearing this, Mahadeva Kirata summoned his soldiers. With his soldiers, he advanced against Arjuna.""

Chapter 270-4(41) (Kirateshvara Avatara)

“Nandishvara said, "Seeing him advance, Arjuna performed dhyana on Shiva and fought an extremely terrible battle with him. The ganas made him suffer with many kinds of sharp weapons. Afflicted by them, Partha remembered his lord, Shiva. As the clash continued, Arjuna severed the arrows shot by those powerful ones and also those hurled by Sharva, Paramesha. Suffering at his hands, the ganas fled in the ten directions.

[937] Kirata means hunter. Kirateshvara means lord of kiratas.

Though the lord of ganas tried to restrain them, they did not listen to their master. Using many kinds of weapons, the immensely strong and valiant Shiva and Arjuna then fought against each other. With a mind full of compassion, Shiva advanced against Arjuna. But Arjuna firmly struck him back. Shiva severed all of Arjuna's weapons and the entire armour on his body, so that only his bare body was left. At this, Arjuna remembered Shiva and started a wrestling match. Though he suffered from fear against the leader of the army, he resorted to his fortitude. As a result of that clash, the earth, with all its oceans, trembled. Full of misery, the devas wondered, What will happen now?' Meanwhile, the divinity Shiva rose up into the air and fought from there. So did Arjuna. The divinity and the king fought as if they were flying. Witnessing this wonderful fight, the devas were amazed. Arjuna descended and remembered Shiva's lotus feet. Obtaining strength as a result of this, he caught him by the feet. Catching him by the feet, Arjuna whirled him around. As he was raised up in this way, Mahadeva, affectionate towards his devotees, laughed. O sage! Since he is subservient to his devotees, he allowed this himself. This was because of Shiva's own conduct and could not but be otherwise.""

"Shankara is subservient to his devotees. After this, he laughed and suddenly showed him his wonderful and auspicious form. The ancient Purushottama's form was like the one described in the Vedas and the sacred texts, like the one instructed by Vyasa, like the one he had performed dhyana, on and like the one that grants every kind of success. He saw Shiva's wonderful form, the one that can only be obtained through dhyana. Arjuna was extremely surprised and ashamed of himself. 'How wonderful! This is Shiva. This is Shiva, surrounded by every kind of lordship. This is directly the lord of the three worlds himself. What have I done now? The lord's maya is powerful. It deludes even those who possess maya. What has the lord done to deceive me? He has hidden his own form.' Using his intelligence to reflect on this, he lowered his head and joined his hands in salutation. He lovingly prostrated himself before the lord and spoke to him, his mind distressed. Arjuna said, 'O lord of devast O Mahadeva! O one who shows compassion! O Shankara! O Sarvesha! You should pardon my crime. Why did you conceal your form? Why have you deceived me now? O lord! Since I fought against my lord, shame on me.' Pandava lamented in this way. He quickly fell down at the feet of Shankara, the great lord. Ishvara was pleased in his mind and replied to Arjuna. Mahesha is affectionate towards his devotees and comforted him in many ways. Shankara said, 'O Partha! Do not be dejected. You are my special devotee. I did this to test you. Now cast aside this sorrow.' Saying this, the lord raised Arjuna with his own hand. The lord of ganas eliminates the shame of his ganas. Shiva spoke to Arjuna again, honouring Pandava as a brave person. Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees, delighted him in every possible way. Shiva said, 'O Partha! O best among Pandavas! I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon. You have worshipped me by striking me and beating me. That is what I think. I did this of my own will. There is no offence that attaches to you now. There is nothing that cannot be given to you. Ask whatever you wish for. You have done what is auspicious, to establish your fame among the enemies and for the kingdom. You should not grieve over this. Give up all your lassitude.' Arjuna was addressed in this way by the lord Shankara.""

"Full of devotion, he stood there and replied to Shankara carefully. Arjuna said, 'O Shambhu! You are loved by your devotees. You are extremely radiant. How can I dare to describe you? O divinity! O Sadashiva! You are full of compassion.' Full of devotion and in conformity with the Vedas, Pandava praised Shankara, the great lord, in this way. Arjuna said, 'O lord of

devas! I prostrate myself before you. O one who resides in Kailasa! I prostrate myself before you. O Sadashiva! I bow down before you. O one who the five faces! I bow down before you. O Kapardin! I prostrate myself before you. O three-eyed onel I prostrate myself before you. You have a form that pleases the mind. You possess one thousand faces. O Nilakantha! I bow down before you. O Sadyojata! I bow down before you. O Vrishadhvaja! I prostrate myself before you. Girija forms the left part of your body. I prostrate myself before the one who removes the taints of hardships. I prostrate myself before the paramatman. O one who wears a garland of skulls! You hold a damaru and a skull in your hand. I bow down before you. You are as pure as crystal. Your path is as pure as that of camphor. You hold Pinaka in your hand. You hold the excellent trident in your hand. Your upper garment is the hide of a tiger. Your garment is made out of the hide of an elephant. I prostrate myself before the one who has nagas on his body. I prostrate myself before the one who holds Ganga. I prostrate myself before the one who possesses excellent feet. Your feet have a red tinge. You are served by Nandi and the other ganas. O lord of ganas! I bow down before you. I prostrate myself before the one who has the form of Gana, the one who follows Kartikeya. You bestow devotion on devotees. I prostrate myself before you. You bestow emancipation. I prostrate myself before you. O one without gunas! I bow down before you. O one with gunas! I bow down before you. O one without forms! O one with forms! O one with digits! O one without digits! I prostrate myself before the one who assumed the form of Kirata and showed me his favours. You love to fight against those who are brave. You engage in many kinds of pastimes. The energy in any form that one sees, is said to be yours. Your form is that of consciousness. To satisfy your own pleasures, you create differences in forms in the three worlds. No number can be attached to your infinite qualities. There are as numerous as the number of stars in the sky or the number of drops in rain. Even the Vedas are incapable of enumerating your qualities. O protector! I am inferior in intelligence. How can I describe them? You are whoever you are. I prostrate myself before you. Please show me your compassion. O Mahesha! O Maheshvara! I am your servant, and you are the master.' Hearing these words, Shankara was pleased even more and spoke to him again."

"The lord smiled and spoke to Arjuna. Shankara said, "What is the need to speak a lot? Listen to my words. O son! Ask for a boon quickly. I will give you everything.' Thus addressed, Arjuna was delighted and prostrated himself before Sadashiva. He bent down and joined his hands in salutation. He spoke in words that faltered because of his love. Arjuna said, 'What will I tell you? You are stationed inside everyone. Nevertheless, I will seek to describe it. O lord! Listen. As soon as I saw you, the danger from the enemies vanished. Please act so that I obtain siddhis in this world and in the next one.' Saying this, he bowed down before Shankara, who is affectionate towards his devotees. Lowering his shoulders, Arjuna stood there, his hands joined in salutation. Seeing Pandava Arjuna in that state, Shiva understood that he was one of his supreme devotees. The lord was extremely pleased. Mahesha's pashupata weapon cannot be vanquished by anyone, anywhere. He gave it to him and spoke to him in these words. Shiva said, 'I have given you my own great weapon and you will become invincible. Using this, you will be able to defeat all your enemies. I will ask Krishna to help you. My atman is in him. He is my devotee and carries out my tasks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As a result of my powers, you will remove all the thorns from your kingdom. Along with your brothers, always carry out many kinds of acts of dharma.' Saying this, he placed his hand over his head. Worshipped by Arjuna, Shankara instantly vanished.""

"Having obtained the weapon and the boon from the lord, Arjuna was pleased in his mind. He returned to his own hermitage, devotedly remembering his chief guru, Shiva. When he returned, all his brothers rejoiced and felt as if they had got back their lives. They were delighted to meet him and so was Droupadi, excellent in her vows. The Pandavas got to know that Shiva was greatly satisfied. They were filled with joy. They kept hearing about the entire account but were not satiated. As a result of what had happened with the boar, a shower of flowers, with the scent of sandalwood, rained down on those great-souled ones. They were blessed by Shankara and cheerfully prostrated themselves before him. They thus got to know that the time for their victory had arrived. Meanwhile, hearing that Arjuna had returned, Krishna also arrived. He was delighted to hear this and came to meet him. That is the reason I said that Shankara removes all miseries. I serve him always and you should also serve him. I have thus described to you Shankara's avatara, known as Kirata. A person who hears it, or makes it heard, obtains everything that he wishes for.'

Chapter 271-4(42) (Twelve Jyotirlingams)

“Nandishvara said, "O sage! Hear about the lord's N twelve supreme avataras in the form of jyotirlingams. He assumed these forms for his own pastimes. Shambhu, the paramatman's, twelve avataras are-Somanatha in Sourashtra; Mallikarjuna in Shrishaila; Mahakala in Ujjayini; Amareshvara in Omkara; Kedara on the slopes of the Himalayas; Bhimashankara in Dakini; Vishvesha in Varanasi; Tryambaka on the banks of Goutami; Vaidyanatha in a cremation ground, Nagesha in the forest of Daruka; Ramesha in Setubandha; and Ghushmesha in Shivalaya. [938] O sage! If men see them, or touch them, they obtain every kind of bliss.""

"Of these, Somanatha is the first. In this form, he destroyed Chandra's miseries. O sage! When he is worshipped there, diseases like consumption and leprosy are destroyed. Shiva's avatara, Somesha, is stationed there in the form of a lingam. This is in the auspicious region of Sourashtra, where the moon had worshipped him earlier. There is a Chandrakunda there and it destroys every kind of sin. If an intelligent man bathes there, he is freed from all diseases. If one sees Shiva, the paramatman's great lingam of Someshvara, one is free from sins and obtains emancipation.[939]

"O son! Mallikarjuna is known as Shankara's second avatara. It is in Shrigiri and bestows desired fruits on devotees. O sage! Leaving his own mountain, extremely happily, Shiva went there to see his son. He is praised there, in the form of the lingam. O sage! If this second jyotirlingam is seen and worshipped, one obtains great happiness. At the end, there is no doubt that one obtains emancipation.[940]

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[938] This is one variant of the famous shloka that lists the twelve jyotirlingams. Geographically, ten can unambiguously be identified. But the geographical identification of Bhimashankara (in the region of Dakini) and Nagesha (in the forest of Daruka) is not that robust.

[939] Soma is a name for Chandra, the moon. Somanatha and Somesha/Someshvara have the same meaning, the moon's lord. The lingam and temple are in Sourashtra, Gujarat. When cursed, the moon bathed in the Sarasvati river there and prayed to Shiva. Chandra was thereby cured. Chandrakunda still exists in the temple.

[940] Shrigiri is Shrishaila, in Andhra Pradesh. When his younger brother, Ganesha, got married, Kartikeya was angry. He left Kailasa and went away to Mount Krouncha. Shiva and Parvati went to visit him there and stayed on in Shrishaila, near Mount Krouncha.

"O son! To protect his own people, Shankara assumed the avatara known as Mahakala, in the city of Ujjayini. The asura known as Dushana suppressed the dharma of the Vedas. He went to Ujjayini, destroyed everything and caused harm to brahmanas. When the sons of brahmanas meditated on him, he assumed the form of the jyotirlingam Mahakala. He used his humkara to quickly reduce the asura, who resided in Ratnamala,[941] to ashes. Requested by devas, to protect his own devotees, he stayed on there. If one attentively sees and worships the lingam known as Mahakala, one obtains everything that one desires and also obtains the supreme destination.""

"Paramesha Shambhu, the paramatman, assumed the fourth avatara of Omkara. This bestows the desired fruits on devotees. Vidhatri established a parthiva lingam there. To satisfy the wishes of Vindhya, Mahadeva manifested himself from that. Requested by devas, he remains there in two forms, [942] Affectionate towards his devotees, in the form of a lingam, he bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation. The excellent lingam known as Omkara exists in the form of Pranava. O lord among sages! Parameshvara exists in that parthiva lingam. O sage! It is known that whenever it is seen, or worshipped, it bestows what devotees wish for. O great sage! I have described the extremely divine jyotirlingam to you.""

"Paramesha's fifth avatara is Kedaresha. In the form of a lingam, this is in Kedara. O sage! Hari had two avataras, known as Nara and Narayana. When they requested him, Shiva remained there in Kedara, in the Himalaya mountains. Known as Kedareshvara, he was constantly worshipped by the two of them. If Shambu is seen and worshipped, he bestows everything desired on devotees. In particular, Sarvesha is the lord of the field. O son! Therefore, this avatara of Shiva's grants everything that is desired. [943] The great lord, Shambhu's sixth avatara is known as Bhimashankara. In his great pastimes, he destroyed Bhimasura. He performed wonderful deeds and protected his devotee, King Sudakshina, the lord of Kamarupa. He also killed the asura who caused hardships to his devotee. Requested by him, Shankara is himself stationed in Dakini, under the name of Bhimashankara, in the form of a jyotirlingam."[944]

"O sage! The seventh avatara, Vishveshvara, originated in Kashi in the form of the cosmic egg and bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation. He is always worshipped devotedly by all devas, Vishnu and the others. He is also constantly worshipped by the lord of Kailasa[945] and Bhairava. Stationed in the form of a jyotirlingam, he bestows emancipation.

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[941] A mountain.

[942] Mount Vindhya worshipped Shiva. Shiva is present in two lingams there. Omkara or Omkareshvara is on the island of Mandhata, along the banks of Narmada, in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh. The second lingam is on the bank of the river and is known as Amareshvara (Mamaleshvara). As worshipped by Vindhya, the parthiva lingam was in the shape of OUM.

[943] Kedareshvara/Kedaranatha is in Kedarnath, on the shores of Mandakini river. Kedara means field and Kedaranatha is the lord of the field, implying that he bestows the crop of emancipation.

[944] There is a problem in unambiguously identifying the geographical region known as Dakini. The Bhimashankara lingam is usually identified as the one near Pune. However, the mention of the king of Kamarupa places this in Assam and there is a Bhimashankara temple near Guwahati. The destruction of Bhimasura is sometimes identified with the destruction of Tripura. But Shiva also killed Bhimasura, the son of Kumbhakarna, when requested by a king of Kamarupa, usually named Priyadharma (not Sudakshina).

[945] Meaning Kubera.

This is the lord's own city, and he is there in the form of a siddha. If a person devotedly performs japa with the name of Kashi-Vishvesha, he becomes indifferent towards karma and is always entitled to a share in the status of kaivalya.""

"The eighth avatara is on the banks of the Goutami[946] and is known as Tryambaka. Requested by Goutama, the one who wears the moon on his crest manifested himself. As a result of Goutama's prayer, he assumed the form of a jyotirlingam. Pleased with the sage and with a desire to make him happy, he remains stationary there. If one sees, or touches, Mahesha there, one is successful in everything one wishes for. He is emancipated from this worldly body. As a result of Shiva's favours, Goutami is known as Ganga there. To cause pleasure to Goutama, Shankara's beloved, the one who purifies, is established there.""

"The ninth avatara is described as Vaidyanatha. Engaging in many kinds of pastimes, the lord appeared for the sake of Ravana. When he was being brought in this form, Maheshvara engaged in deceit. In his own form of a jyotirlingam, he is established in a cremation ground. He is famous in the three worlds under the name of Vaidyanatheshvara. If a person devotedly sees him, or worships him, he bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation. O sage! If a man listens to the instructions and reads, or hears about, the greatness of Vaidyanatheshvara Shiva, he obtains objects of pleasure and emancipation."[947]

"The tenth avatara is said to be Nageshvara. He always punishes the wicked and arrived for the sake of his own devotees. He killed the rakshasa named Daruka, who was destroying dharma. He protected his own devotee Supriya, who was a king of vaishyas. For the welfare of the worlds, he assumed the form of a jyotirlingam. Engaging in many kinds of great pastimes, Shambhu remained there, along with Amba. O sage! If a person sees Shiva's lingam, known as Nageshvara, and worships it, his store of great sins is swiftly destroyed."[948]

"Shiva's eleventh avatara is said to be Rameshvara. O sage! It was loved by Ramachandra and was established by Rama. Shankara is affectionate towards his devotees. Satisfied by Rama, he manifested himself in the form of the lingam and happily bestowed the boon of victory on him. When Rama prayed to him, he assumed the form of the jyotirlingam. O sage! Served by Rama, he remained in Setubandha. Rameshvara's greatness is wonderful and is unmatched on earth. It grants objects of pleasure and emancipation and always gives devotees what they desire. If a man devotedly bathes the Rameshvara lingam with water from Ganga, he becomes a jivanmukta. He enjoys all the objects of pleasure in this world, difficult for even devas to obtain.

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[946] The Narmada river, known as the southern Ganga.

[947] Vaidyanatha (the lord as a vaidya) is in Deoghar district, Jharkhand. Ravana worshipped Shiva and one by one, offered each of his heads. The word vaidya means physician and when Ravana was hurt in this way, Shiva healed him. The word 'deceit' is probably explained by the anecdote of Ravana attempting to take the lingam back to Lanka. He was tricked into placing the lingam down on the ground (an act that was not permitted) and once placed on the ground, the lingam did not move from the spot.

[948] Nageshvara is usually identified as being in Dwaraka, but that identification is not proven. The crux is the location of Darukavana. There was a rakshasa named Daruka, who imprisoned Shiva's devotee, Supriya, and Darukavana means the forest of Daruka.

After this, he obtains supreme jnana, kaivalya and emancipation. "[949]

"Ghushmeshvara is Shankara's twelfth avatara. He is affectionate towards his devotees and engages in many pastimes. He bestowed bliss on Ghushma. O sage! This is in the southern direction, near Devashaila. To cause pleasure to Ghushma, the lord manifested himself in a lake there. O sage! Sudeha killed Ghushma's son, Sakalya. Shambhu is affectionate towards his devotees and satisfied by her devotion, protected her. Requested by her and granting her the wish, Shambhu remained in that lake. He assumed the form of a jyotirlingam there and is known as Ghushmeshvara. If a person sees Shiva's lingam and devotedly worships it, he enjoys every kind of happiness in this world. Thereafter, he obtains emancipation. "[950]

"I have thus described to you the aggregate of twelve jyotirlingams. They are unmatched and divine and bestow objects of pleasure and emancipation. If a person hears, or listens, to this account of the jyotirlingams, he is freed from all sins and enjoys objects of pleasure and emancipation. Along with this, I have described the one hundred Rudras. The recital of the one hundred avataras yields everything desired as fruits. If a person controls himself and constantly reads or hears it, he obtains everything that he desires. He certainly obtains emancipation.""

This ends Shata Rudra Samhita.

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[949] Setu means bridge and bandha means construction. Setubandha means construction of the bridge. Metaphorically, Setubandha can also be interpreted to mean as the bridge that frees one from bonds. Jivanmukta means a person emancipated (mukta) while he is still alive (jivan).

[950] Ghushma was Sudeha's sister. Out of jealousy, Sudeha killed her sister's son. Ghushmeshvara is usually identified as the lingam near Aurangabad. That identification is based on the identification of Devagiri or Devashaila, the mountain of the gods. Daulatabad's former name used to be Devagiri.

Koti Rudra Samhita[951]

Chapter 272-5(1) (Greatness of Jyotirlingams and Upalingams)

“In his own maya, he assumes the form of the world. He has conquered aberrations. The power of his compassionate glance is said to lead to heaven and emancipation. Yogis always see him in their hearts as the one who bestows understanding and happiness and as the one who is without a second. Half of his body has been made radiant by the daughter of the mountain. I prostrate myself before the eternal one's energy. His glance is full of compassion. His pleasant and smiling face is like a lotus, made resplendent because of the moon's digits. He pacifies the three terrible kinds of hardship. His body is full of supreme happiness, truth and consciousness and is encircled by the arms of the daughter of the mountain. Let him bestow everything immensely auspicious on me. [952]

The rishis said, 'O Suta! For the welfare of the worlds, you have stated everything about the greatness of Shiva's avataras, along with their many accounts, properly. O father! Please happily tell us again about Shiva's excellent greatness, in connection with lingams. As Shiva's excellent devotee, you are blessed. O lord! After having heard from your lotus mouth, we are not yet satisfied. Please speak to us again about the amrita of Shiva's beautiful fame, about all the lingams and auspicious tirthas, whether they are on earth or somewhere else, and about all the famous spots. O Vyasa's disciple! For the welfare of the worlds, please tell us about Paramesha's divine lingams.'

Suta replied, 'O rishis! For the welfare of the worlds, you have asked me a virtuous question. O brahmanas! Because of my affection, I will tell you about them briefly. O sages! The total number of all Shiva's lingams cannot be enumerated. Everything on earth is full of lingams. Everything in the universe is full of lingams. All the tirthas are full of lingams. Everything is established on lingams. Since they have no number, I will speak about a few. Everything that is seen, can be seen, described or remembered, is Shiva's form. Nothing exists without him. O best among rishis! Nevertheless, listen lovingly. I will tell you what I have heard about the lingams on earth. Shambhu is worshipped everywhere by devas, asuras and humans, in Patala, in heaven and on earth. O supreme ones! To show his favour to the worlds, in the form of lingams, Shambhu pervades everything in the three worlds, along with devas, asuras and humans. For the welfare of the worlds, Maheshvara assumes lingams in various tirthas and in other places. Wherever Shambhu's devotees remember him with devotion, he assumes an avatara there. Having performed the task, he remains established there. To do a good turn to the worlds, he devises his own lingams. If one worships those lingams, one attains siddhi. No number can be attached to the number of lingams on earth. O brahmanas! Hence, I will speak about the major ones. Even among the major ones, I will speak about those that are most important. Hearing about these, men are instantly freed from all sins. O excellent ones! I will now speak about the major jyotirlingams.

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[951] The samhita with one crore Rudras.

[952] Since Shata Rudra Samhita has ended and Koti Rudra Samhita is about to commence, it is almost as if the text starts afresh, with an invocation, before the dialogue between Suta and the rishis.

As soon as one hears about them, all sins are dispelled. The names of the twelve are Somanatha in Sourashtra, Mallikarjuna in Shrishaila, Mahakala in Ujjaini, Parameshvara in Omkara, Kedara on the slopes of the Himalayas, Bhimashankara in Dakini, Vishvesha in Varanasi, Tryambaka on the banks of Goutami, Vaidyanatha in the cremation ground, Nagesha in Darukavana, Ramesha in Setubandha and Ghushmesha in Shivalaya. [953] If a person wakes up in the morning and reads these, he is freed from all sins and obtains success in everything as a fruit. O lords among sages! Excellent men who read this obtain whatever they wish for. They obtain their desires in the world hereafter too. Those who read this without any desire are filled with auspiciousness and do not have to dwell in a mother's womb again. If they are worshipped, miseries are destroyed in this world, for all varnas. Emancipation in the world hereafter is certain. If one makes efforts to offer them naivedya and other offerings, as a result of that act, all sins are instantly reduced to ashes. O brahmanas! Even Brahma and others are incapable of speaking about all the special fruits of the jyotirlingams, not to speak of ordinary people. If a person constantly worships any one of these for six months, he does not have to suffer miseries by being born in a mother's womb. If a person has inferior birth and sees a jyotirlingam, he is reborn in a sparkling and virtuous lineage. If he is born in a virtuous lineage, he obtains excellent riches and becomes accomplished in the Vedas. Thereafter, he performs auspicious deeds and without any obstructions, obtains emancipation. O lords among sages! If a person is born as a mlecchа, an antyaja or a eunuch, if he sees a jyotirlingam, he is reborn as a brahmana and attains emancipation.[954] I have spoken about some of the fruits of jyotirlingams. O supreme among rishis! Now hear about the upalingamsss of these jyotirlingams. The upalingam of Someshvara is said to be Antakesha. That upalingam[955] is at the confluence of the Mahi with the ocean.[956] The upalingam of Mallikarjuna is said to be Rudreshvara. It is in Bhrigukaksha and brings happiness.[957] The upalingam of Mahakala is famous as Dugdhesha. It is famous in the region around the Narmada and is said to destroy all sins. The upalingam of Omkara is famous as Kardamesha. It is near Lake Bindusara and as fruits, yields everything desired. The upalingam of Kedareshvara is Bhutesha, on the banks of the Yamuna. If a person sees it, or worships it, that is said to destroy great sins. The upalingam of Bhimashankara is said to be Bhimeshvara. It is famous and is in the region of Mount Sahya. It enhances great strength. The upalingam of Nagheshvara is said to be Bhuteshvara. It is on the banks of Mallika-Sarasvati. Beholding it, destroys sins. The upalingam of Rameshvara is said to be Gupteshvara. The upalingam of Ghushmesha is said to be Vyaghreshvara. O brahmanas! I have spoken about the upalingams of the jyotirlingams. If one sees them, sins are destroyed, and they bestow everything desired. These are the foremost among the major ones. There are other major ones. O supreme rishis! Hear about them.'

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[953] This is a restatement of the shloka naming the twelve jyotirlingams, with minor variations in the words used.

[954] Antyaja can loosely be translated as outcaste. Literally, it means someone who is born in the extremities (of the main habitation). Mlecchа can loosely be translated as barbarian but means someone who does not speak Sanskrit.

[955] Subsidiary or minor lingams.

[956] This probably pins it down to Mahisagar district.

[957] Since Bhrigukaccha is clearly Bharuch, this causes a geographical problem. There are several Shiva temples (lingams) in Bharuch, but Mallikarjuna is far away.

Chapter 273-5(2) (Greatness of Shiva's Lingams)

“Suta said, 'Kashi is on the banks of the Ganga and is famous because it bestows emancipation. It is known to be full of lingams. It is said to be the place where Shiva resides. The major lingam there is said to be Avimuktaka.[958] Krittivasheshvara is simultaneously in the form of an aged man and a young boy. [959] Tilabhandeshvara is in Dashashvamedha. [960] Sangamesha is said to be at the confluence of Ganga with the ocean. [961] The one known as Bhuteshvara always bestows everything on devotees. The one known as Narishvara is near the Koushiki river. [962] Batukeshvara is on the banks of Gandaki. On the banks of the Phalgu river, Pureshvara is famous and bestows happiness. When men see Siddhanatheshvara, they obtain siddhi. The one known as Dureshvara is to the north of Pattana. The ones known as Shringeshvara and Vaidyanatha are also famous. The one known as Japyeshvara is at the place where Dadhichi fought. Gopeshvara, Rangeshvara, Vameshvara, Nagesha, Kamesha, Vimaleshvara, Vyaseshvara, Sukesha, Bhandeshvara, Humkaresha, Surochana, Bhuteshvara and Sangamesha are also said to be famous as the destroyers of great sins. Kumareshvara is on the banks of Taptaka. [963] Siddheshvara and Senesha are mentioned as being famous. Rameshvara, Kumbhesha, Nandishvara, Punjesha and Purnaka, in the region around the river Purna, are all famous. In ancient times, Brahmeshvara was instated by Brahma in Prayaga at the tirtha known as Dashashvamedha. As fruits, it bestows the four objectives of human existence.[964] In that way, Someshvara, which is also there, wards off all adversities. Bharadvajeshvara enhances the energy of the brahman. Shulatankeshvara directly grants whatever is desired. Madhavesha is also there and protects devotees. O brahmanas! The one as Nagesha is famous and is in the city of Saketa. [965] It specially bestows happiness on those born in surya vamsha. Bhuvanesha is extremely famous and is in the city of Purushottama. [966] The great lingam of Lokesha bestows happiness on everyone. Kameshvara is Shambhu's lingam and Gangesha brings great purity. Shakreshvara and Shukrasiddha are there to bring welfare to the worlds. Vateshvara is famous and as fruits, yields everything wished for. Kapalesha is on the shores of the ocean and Vakresha destroys all sins. Dhoutapapeshvara is directly Parameshvara's portion. Bhimeshvara and Suryeshvara are also mentioned. Nandeshvara is known to bestow jnana and is worshipped by the worlds. Nakeshvara is extremely sacred and Rameshvara is also said to be like that. Vimaleshvara is also named Kantakeshvara. Dhartukesha is at the confluence of the river Purna with the ocean. As a fruit, Chandreshvara is known to bestow a radiance like that of the moon. Siddheshvara is said to grant every kind of wish.

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[958] The Avimukteshvara lingam is inside the Kashi Vishvanatha temple.

[959] This is near the Kashi Vishvanatha temple.

[960] The present Tilabhandheshvara temple is in Bengali tola.

[961] Ocean should not be interpreted literally. It probably means the Varuna river, which is where the Sangameshvara temple is now, at the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Varuna.

[962] It is possible that this is a reference to the Arddha-Narishvara temple in Guptakashi.

[963] The river Tapi or Tapati.

[964] Dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

[965] That is, Ayodhya.

[966] That is, Puri.

Bilveshvara is famous. So is Andhakesha, the place where, in ancient times, Shankara killed the daitya Andhaka. Shambhu assumed his own portion and is famous as Saraneshvara, always bestowing happiness on the worlds, Kardamesha is spoken of as supreme. Kotisha is on Mount Arbuda. Achalesha is famous and always bestows happiness on people. [967] Nageshvara is always stationed on the banks of the Koushiki river. The one known as Ananteshvara is a store of welfare and auspiciousness. Yogeshvara and Vaidyanatheshvara are famous. Kotishvara and Sapteshvara are also spoken of as famous. Since the one named Bhadra is Hara himself, Bhadreshvara is famous. Chandishvara and Sangameshvara are also spoken about. I have spoken about the Shiva lingams that are in the eastern direction, the ones that are ordinary and the rest. O best among sages! I will now speak about the Shiva lingams that are in the southern direction.'

Chapter 274-5(3) (Anasuya and Atri's Austerities)

“Suta said, 'Mattagajendraka lingam is in Chitrakuta, in Brahmapuri.[968] Earlier, it was established by Brahma and grants everything desired and prosperity. To the east of this is the lingam of Kotisha, which grants every kind of boon. The lingam named Pashupati is to the west of Godavari. To bring welfare to the worlds and to bring happiness to Anasuya, the divinity manifested himself in the southern direction as Atrishvara. He revived those who were suffering from drought. He is Shankara's portion himself.'

The rishis asked, 'O Suta! O immensely fortunate one! O Suta! How did Hara originate as Atrishvara? O one excellent in vows! Please tell us about this supreme and divine account.'

Suta answered, 'O best among rishis! You have asked a virtuous question. I will tell you about that auspicious account. If one hears this constantly, one is certainly freed from sins. In the southern direction, there is the great forest named Kamada. [969] It is near Chitrakuta and brings welfare to the virtuous who are engaged in austerities. Along with Anasuya, [970] the rishi named Atri, Brahma's son, himself performed difficult austerities there. O sage[971] Earlier, on a certain occasion, there was a drought. It occurred by chance and lasted for one hundred years. It was terrible and brought misery to living beings. All the trees, sprouts and fruits dried up. O lord among sages! One couldn't see any place from which water might be brought. In the absence of moisture, harsh winds blew in the ten directions. This caused miseries and there were great lamentations on earth. Atri's beloved wife saw that living beings were being destroyed. The virtuous lady spoke to Atri. "I cannot tolerate this grief." At this, the supreme sage performed pranayama thrice and seated in an asana, immersed himself in samadhi. Atri, the supreme sage, possessed jnana. He meditated on the supreme refulgence that was within his atman, that is, Shankara, who is without aberrations. When their master immersed himself in dhyana, since there was no food, the disciples freed themselves from the sage, their guru, and went far away. Anasuya, devoted to her husband,

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[967] Achaleshvara is also on Mount Abu.

[968] There is a Brahmapuri in Maharashtra, but that's not in Chitrakuta.

[969] The Kamada Nathaji hill in Chitrakuta. Kamada means one who grants desires.

[970] Atri's wife.

[971] The text uses the singular.

was left alone. Cheerfully, she constantly served the supreme sage. She followed the norms and using mantras, crafted a beautiful clay image. Mentally rendering offerings, she worshipped Shankara. She devotedly served Shankara and praised him repeatedly. She clasped her hands in salutation and circumambulated her husband and Shiva. She prostrated herself like a rod and did a counter pradakshina too. [972] The conduct of Anasuya, the sage's beloved, was excellent. All the daityas and danavas saw that beautiful lady. They were agitated, but because of her energy, maintained their distance. This was like maintaining a distance from a fire. Anasuya remained near Atri, tending to him in the proper way, but her service to Shiva surpassed Atri's austerities. O Indras among brahmanas! As long as the supreme sage was engaged in pranayama, the lady especially distinguished herself in her service through thoughts, words and deeds. The couple was thus engaged in their own respective activities. As long as the tiger among sages was stationed in this way, there was no one else near him. Atri, supreme among rishis, did this and time passed. He was supremely immersed in dhyana and did not realize anything else. The virtuous lady, Anasuya, served her husband and Shiva. The virtuous lady did not know anyone else either.'

'As a result of his austerities and her service, devas, rishis and Ganga and other rivers were extremely pleased. All of them came there to see them. On seeing his austerities and her service, they were filled with great amazement. On witnessing their supreme and wonderful deeds, they spoke to one another. "Of the two, which is superior, austerities or service? Is it Atri's austerities or is it Anasuya's service?" Considering both of them, all of them spoke to each other again. "The service is superior. Earlier, other rishis have performed extremely difficult austerities, but no one has ever done anything like this." They also said, "The sage is blessed. But likewise, Anasuya is also blessed. Full of great love, both of them have performed excellent austerities. Such auspicious austerities are excellent and extremely difficult to undertake. We do not know of anyone else in the three worlds who has done anything like this so far." Praising them, they went away to wherever they had come from, with the exception of Ganga and Girisha, Ganga said, "I am delighted with the virtuous lady's devotion to service and charmed by her adherence to dharma. I will help her and only leave thereafter." O lords among sages! The sage Atri's dhyana also fixed Shiva to the spot. He remained there in his complete digits and did not go to Kailasa. O supreme rishis! Fifty-four years passed without any rain. As long as Atri was engaged in austerities and dhyana, Anasuya did not take any food. She did this as long as the sage performed those austerities. Hear about what happened as a result of Anasuya's service.'

Chapter 275-5(4) (The Greatness of Atrishvara)

“Suta said, "On one occasion, Atri, best among rishis and supreme among those who knew about the brahman, arose and told his beloved, "Please get me some water." Devoted to him, the virtuous lady took up her kamandalu and ventured into a desolate region. "From where can I get water? What will I do? Where will I go? Where will I get water from?" She was then surprised to see Ganga. When she tried to follow her, the goddess Ganga, supreme among rivers, assumed a beautiful form and spoke to her. Ganga said, "O lady! I am pleased with you. Where are you going? Please tell me now. O fortunate one! You are blessed. I will truly do what you ask me to."

[972] In the reverse, or counterclockwise direction.

O brahmanas! Hearing her words, the ascetic wife of the rishi was surprised and happy. She replied in the following words. Anasuya answered, "Who are you with eyes like the petals of lotuses? Where have you come from? Please tell me the truth. A virtuous lady always speaks properly." O lord among sages! The sage's wife said this. Ganga, the supreme river, divine in form, answered in the following words. Ganga said, "O virtuous lady! On witnessing your service to your husband and your following of dharma, Shiva, the paramatman, and I are stationed near you. O one with the beautiful smile! I am Ganga and I have come here to serve you. I am under your control now. Ask for whatever you want." When Ganga said this, the virtuous lady bowed down and stood in front of her. She said, "If you are pleased, give me some water now." Hearing these words, she replied, "Dig a pit." She[973] instantly dug a pit and stood there. In the form of water, she entered that pit. Anasuya was supremely surprised and took the water. For the welfare of the worlds, the sage's wife spoke to the excellent river, divine in form. Anasuya said, "If you are pleased with me, show me your compassion and stay here. Please remain here until my husband comes here." Anasuya's words were such that they brought happiness to the virtuous. Hearing them, Ganga was pleased and replied, "O unblemished one! Give my water to Atri." Hearing this, she acted accordingly and gave the divine water to her husband. She remained standing in front of him. Delighted, the rishi followed the norms and performed achamana.[974] He drank the divine water and having drunk, rejoiced. "How wonderful! This is not the water I normally drink." Thinking about this, he quickly looked around him. He saw the dried trees and that the directions were harsh. The supreme rishi said, "It cannot have rained." Hearing this, his beloved replied, "No. It has not." He again asked, "Where have you brought the water from?" Hearing this, she was greatly surprised. O lords among sages! She thought about this in her mind. "If I tell him, it will establish my excellence. However, if I don't tell him, my vow will be broken. I shall tell him such that neither of these happens." As she was repeatedly asked, she reflected on this. As a result of Shambhu's favours, the lady who was devoted to her husband had an intelligent thought. Anasuya said, "O husband! Listen. I will tell you what has happened. Because of Shankara's powers and your good deeds, Ganga has come here. This is her water." Hearing these words, the sage's mind was filled with wonder. Happily remembering Shankara in his mind, he spoke to his beloved. Atri said, "O beloved! O beautiful lady! Have you spoken the truth or is this a falsehood? I think that this is an extremely rare occurrence. Therefore, you have not spoken the truth. O auspicious. This is impossible for yogis who worship devas to achieve. That is the reason I am filled with this great surprise now. I will believe it only when I myself see it, not otherwise." Hearing these words, the beloved replied to her husband. Anasuya answered, "O lord! O great sage! If you wish to see Ganga, the supreme river, come there with me." Saying this, the lady who was devoted to her husband took her husband with her.'

'She remembered Shiva and quickly went to the spot where Ganga, the supreme river, was. Having gone there, devoted to her husband, she showed her husband Ganga. She was herself present there in the pit, in a divine form. The supreme rishi went there and saw that the pit was full of water. Seeing that the pit was filled right up to the top, he exclaimed, "I am blessed. Is this because of my austerities, or is this because of someone else?" Saying this, the tiger among sages devotedly praised her.[975]

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[973] Anasuya.

[974] In general, achamana means ablutions. More specifically, it means rinsing the mouth with water.

[975] That is, praised Ganga.

The sage bathed in that extremely fortunate water. He performed achamana again and repeatedly praised her. Anasuya also bathed in that beautiful water. The sage and Anasuya, excellent in vows, observed the daily rites. Ganga told her, "I am returning to my own abode." Thus addressed, the virtuous lady spoke to the excellent river again. Anasuya said, "O Deveshi! O goddess! If you are pleased and if you wish to show me your compassion, please remain in this hermitage permanently. The nature of those that are great is to adhere to a pledge." Saying this, she clasped her hands and repeatedly praised her. The rishi also said, "O supreme river! Please stay here. O goddess! Show us your favours and grant us protection." Hearing these words, the beautiful and excellent river, Ganga, was pleased in her mind. Ganga addressed Anasuya in the following words. Ganga said, "To help devas, I will remain here. But the condition is that you will have to give me one year's worth of good merits you have acquired by worshipping Shankara and serving your husband. I am not pleased as much by donations, bathing in tirthas, sacrifices and yoga, as I am by devotion to the husband. When I see a lady who is devoted to her husband, I am pleased. I am not pleased as much by anything else. I have spoken the truth. When I see a woman who is devoted to her husband, my sins are destroyed. I am especially purified and become like Gouri, devoted to her husband. Therefore, if you desire the welfare and benefit of the worlds, give me those good merits and I will permanently remain here." Hearing these words, Anasuya, devoted to her husband, gave Ganga all the good merits she had accumulated in the course of a year. It is the nature of the great to ensure the welfare of others. Gold, sandalwood and sugarcane juice are examples. Witnessing Anasuya's deed of great devotion to her husband, Mahadeva was pleased and immediately manifested himself from his parthiva lingam. Shambu said, "O one devoted to her husband! I am pleased at your virtuous act. You are dear to me. Ask for the boon you desire the most." The couple looked at Shambhu's handsome form. Greatly surprised, they gazed at Hara, with his five faces. Full of great devotion, they bent down, clasped their hands and praised him. Having worshipped Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds, they spoke. The couple said, "O Devesha! If you are pleased and if the mother of the universe is pleased[976], please remain in this hermitage and bring happiness to the worlds." Ganga was pleased and Shiva was also pleased. Both of them remained there, with the excellent rishi. Ishvara is named Atrishvara and removes the miseries of others. Using her maya, Ganga also stayed in that pit. Since that day, there has always been a perennial supply of water. In a pit that is only the length of a hand, Ganga Mandakini appeared. Along with their wives, the divine rishis arrived there. O brahmanas! All of them returned from the various tirthas they had left for. There was a supply of barley and rice. Along with the supreme rishis, people who were devoted to sacrifices performed them. Satisfied with these rites, the clouds showered down rain. O lords among sages! There was great happiness in the world. I have told you about the greatness of Atrishvara. It brings happiness, bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation, satisfies all desires and enhances devotion.'

[976] In this case, meaning Ganga.

Chapter 276-5(5) (Death of the Brahmani and Nandikeshvara)

“Suta said, 'Nilakantha Maheshvara is always present in the form of a lingam in the divine mountain of Kalanjara. He always bestows bliss on devotees. His divine greatness is described in the shruti and smriti texts. The tirtha there has the same name and if one bathes there, sins are destroyed. O ones excellent in vows! There are an innumerable number of Shiva lingams along the banks of the Reva. [977] They ensure every kind of happiness. If one sees the river, which is Rudra's own form, sins are destroyed. Pebbles and stones in it are Shiva's forms. O lords among sages! I will speak to you about other major Shiva lingams that bestow objects of pleasure and emancipation. There is the one with the excellent name of Arteshvara. It destroys sins. Parameshvara is famous and Simheshvara is mentioned. Sharmesha, Kumareshvara, Pundarikeshvara and Mandapeshvara are famous. As soon as one sees the one named Tikshnesha, sins are destroyed. The one named Dhundhureshvara is on the banks of the Narmada and destroys sins. Shuleshvara is famous and Kumbheshvara is mentioned. There is the one named Kubereshvara and Someshvara is cited. Nilakantha Mangalesha is a store of great auspiciousness. The divinity Mahakapishvara was instated by Hanuman. The divinity Nandika counters the sin of killing one crore people and is described as one that grants everything desired and emancipation. Full of great joy, if one worships Nandikesha, [978] there is no doubt that one always obtains all the siddhis. O supreme sages! If one bathes along the banks of Reva, all desires are realized, and all sins are destroyed.'

The rishis asked, 'O immensely intelligent one! What is the greatness of Nandikesha? Show us your compassion and please tell us about that now.'

Suta answered, 'You have asked a good question and I will tell you what I have heard. O Shounaka and the other sages! All of you listen lovingly. In earlier times, the excellent rishi[979] was asked this by Yudhishthira. Out of affection towards you, I will tell you what he replied. The city of Karniki was on the western bank of Reva. It was radiant, beautiful and excellent, populated by the four varnas. There was an excellent brahmana there, born in the lineage of Utta. Entrusting the care of his two sons to his wife, he went to Kashi. The brahmana died there. Hearing about this, the two sons performed the funeral rites. Desiring the welfare of her sons, his wife reared the two sons. Finally, she divided her wealth between the two sons and took her leave from them. She herself kept a little of the wealth, for the sake of her funeral expenses. After some time, the brahmana's wife was about to die. Therefore, she performed many good deeds. O brahmanas! However, such was the nature of destiny that the brahmana's wife did not actually die. The sons saw that as a result of destiny, the breath of life did not leave their mother, though she was suffering. They spoke to her. The sons said, "O mother! What is the reason for your suffering this great misery? Please tell us. We will lovingly carry out what needs to be done." Hearing this, she replied, "Indeed, there is a lot that has to be done. If you do that, I will die happily."

[977] Reva is often equated with Narmada but is actually a tributary of the Narmada.

[978] The same as Nandikeshvara.

[979] Probably meaning Vedavyasa.

The elder son said, "Please tell us. I will do what you tell us." At this, she told him. The brahmana's wife said, "O son! Listen affectionately to my words. There was a wish in my mind that I should go to Kashi. But that did not happen, and I am dying here. O son! Please take my asthi [980] and attentively fling it into the waters of the Ganga there. There is no doubt that this will ensure your welfare." The mother, excellent in her vows, was about to die. Addressed in this way by the mother, the elder son, who was devoted to his mother, replied. The son said, "O mother! There is no doubt that you can happily give up your life. I will undertake your task first and perform my tasks thereafter." Saying this, the son poured some water into her hand and went to his own house. Meanwhile, devotedly remembering Hara, she died.'

'He performed all the funeral rites and also completed the rites to be performed at the end of a month. He then got ready to leave. Of the two, the elder one was known by the name of Suvada. He collected the asthi and left, desiring to visit a tirtha. He took a servant with him. Desiring to do what would bring his mother pleasure, he comforted his wife and sons. He performed the shraddha ceremony and following excellent norms, fed people and offered donations. Remembering auspicious benedictions, the brahmana emerged from his house. He travelled for one yojana that day. When the sun set, he resided in the house of a brahmana in the auspicious village of Vimshati. Duly following the norms, the brahmana performed the virtuous sandhya rites. He chanted hymns to Shambhu, wonderful in his deeds. The brahmana had the servant with him. When two muhurtas of the night had passed, an extraordinary event occurred there. O sages! Listen attentively. I will tell you.'

Chapter 277-5(6) (The Brahmani Goes to Heaven)

“Suta said, 'An auspicious cow was tied in the courtyard. The brahmana[981] had gone out and returned when it was night. Seeing that the cow was standing there in the courtyard, he spoke to his beloved. O lords among sages! The cow had not been milked. He was distressed and dejected at this and wished to milk her. "O beloved! The cow has not been milked."Thus addressed, the wife quickly brought the calf, so that the milking could be done. O sages! The brahmana, the master of the house, wished to milk. So, he tried to tie the calf to a peg. O ones excellent in vows! As the calf was being dragged by its leg, it hit out with its leg and the brahmana was hurt. Struck by the leg, the brahmana became senseless with rage. He struck the calf firmly with the stake. As a result of the blow, the calf became exhausted. Because of the brahmana's rage, the calf was not untied, and the cow wasn't milked. Greatly desiring to be milked, the cow started to cry. Seeing her weep, the calf addressed her in these words. The calf asked, "O mother! Why are you weeping? What is the misery that has arisen?" Hearing this, the cow lovingly spoke to it. "O son! Listen to me, although I am incapable of expressing my grief. Since the wicked one has struck you, I am filled with sorrow." Hearing its mother's words, the calf understood that this was determined by prarabdha karma and replied to its mother. "What will we do? Where will we go? We are bound by karma. We are enjoying the consequences of whatever we did earlier.

[980] The ashes and bones left after cremation.

[981] The owner of the house.

One laughs when one undertakes karma. One weeps when one reaps the consequences. There is no one else who inflicts misery. There is no one else who grants joy. Those who are evil in intelligence think that someone else grants happiness or unhappiness. 'I am doing this.' That statement is based on false jnana. Misery results from one's own karma. Happiness is also the consequence of karma. Therefore, karma must be honoured. Everything is based on karma. All of us, you, I and all living beings are bound by karma. Therefore, you should not grieve." The cow heard the words of its son, which were full of jnana. But it was dejected on account of grief over its son, and it spoke. The cow said, "O child! I know that all beings are under the control of karma. Nevertheless, because I have been grasped by maya, I am grieving again. I have wept a lot, but my misery is not being pacified." Hearing these words, the calf spoke to it again. The calf said, "If you know this, what is the reason for crying? This is the fruition of what you did. Hence, cast aside this grief now." Hearing the words of its son, the mother was still overwhelmed by sorrow and sighed. The cow spoke to the calf in these words. The cow said, "My sorrow will go away only when the brahmana suffers from a similar kind of grief. I am speaking the truth. O son! In the morning, I will strike him with my horns. There is no doubt that when he is struck in this way, he will give up his life." The calf replied, "You are now enjoying the fruits of the karma you performed earlier. O mother! What are the fruits you will reap if you kill this brahmana? When good deeds and bad deeds are in balance, one takes birth in Bharata. O mother! When they are enjoyed and exhausted, one obtains emancipation. Sometimes, the accumulated karma is destroyed. Sometimes, it gives rise to enjoyment. O mother! That is the reason you are about to embark on fresh karma. How am I your son now? How are you my mother now? There is false pride in being a son or being a mother. Reflect on that. Who is a mother? Who is known to be a father? Who is a husband? Who is a wife? In this world, no one belongs to anyone else. Every individual enjoys what he has himself done. O mother! Knowing this, make great efforts to cast aside your sorrow. If you wish for happiness in the world hereafter, perform deeds that lead to fortune." The cow said, "O son! I know this, but maya does not let go of me. Because of the grief he has inflicted on you, I will inflict a similar misery on him. In addition, there is a place in this world where one can destroy the sin reaped from killing a brahmana. I have seen that spot. When I have killed him, I will go there." O excellent brahmanas! Hearing its mother's words, the calf resolved to remain silent. It did not say anything in reply.'

'The traveller brahmana heard the wonderful conversation between the two. Thinking about this in his mind, he was amazed. "In the morning, I will only leave after witnessing the wonderful events that follow. I will also go to that wonderful spot." The brahmana was very devoted to his mother and was greatly surprised. He thought about this in his mind and along with his servant, slept. In the morning, the master of the household got up. He woke up the traveller and addressed himin these words. The brahmana asked, "Why are you still asleep? It is already morning. You should start your journey to the region you desire to go to." Addressed in this way, he replied, "O brahmana! My servant is suffering from a pain in his body. We will remain here a little longer and leave as soon as the pain has gone." Uttering this falsehood, the man slept again. He wished to know everything about the wonderful incident that had amazed him. When the time for milking arrived, since the brahmana wished to go somewhere for some work, he spoke to his son. The father said, "O son! I have to go somewhere for some work. O child! Take care of yourself and milk the cow carefully." Saying this, the supreme brahmana went off somewhere else. The son came there and untied the calf. On its own, the mother arrived for the milking. The calf had

suffered as a result of being beaten. Desiring milk, the brahmana's son took it near the cow, intending to tether it there. However, the angry cow struck him with its horns. Pierced in his inner organs, he lost his senses and fell down. People who were like his father, and others, gathered together and spoke. "Water. The child has been injured by the cow. Water." Before they could do anything, the child died. When the child died, there were great lamentations. His miserable mother wept repeatedly. "What will I do? Where will I go? Who will dispel my grief?" As she wept, she struck the cow and released it. The cow was white in complexion but was seen to have turned dark. People who saw this told each other, "Behold this wonder." Beholding this extraordinary event, the traveller brahmana also emerged.'

'Wherever the cow went, the brahmana followed it. Raising its tail up, the cow quickly dashed towards the Narmada. Near the waters of Narmada, it arrived at Nandikesha. It immersed itself thrice in the water and got back its old white complexion. It then went away in the direction from which it had come. The brahmana was amazed. "How blessed is this tirtha. It counters the sin of killing a brahmana." The brahmana submerged himself there and so did the servant. Having bathed there, they praised the river and left. Along the path, they met a beautiful lady, adorned in ornaments. She asked, "O traveller! Why do you look so surprised and where are you going? O noble brahmana! Abandon all deceit. In front of me, speak the truth." Hearing what she said, the brahmana recounted everything, exactly as it had happened. The woman spoke to the brahmana again.

"You should stay here." Hearing what she said, the brahmana stood there. He humbly replied, "Please explain what you wish to say." She spoke again. "You saw a spot now. Fling your mother's asthi there now. Why do you have to go anywhere else? O noble traveller! Your mother will directly assume a supreme and divine form. Assuming that form, she will swiftly obtain a virtuous destination with Shambhu. O supreme among brahmanas! On the auspicious day of saptami [982] in shukla paksha, in the month of Vaishakha, [983] Ganga always arrives here. Today is saptami and Ganga is in the form of the river." O supreme among sages! Saying this, the goddess Ganga [984] vanished. When she left, the brahmana took out his mother's asthi, which had been wrapped in his own garment, and flung half of it into the tirtha. Immediately, a wonderful event occurred. His mother assumed a divine form and said, "You are blessed. You have accomplished your objective. You have purified your lineage. May your grain, wealth, lifespan and lineage increase." Pronouncing these benedictions on her son, in an instant, she went to heaven, where she enjoyed a lot of happiness for an extremely long period of time. After this, through Shankara's favours, she obtained an excellent destination. The brahmana's son flung the remaining part of her asthi. Pleased in his mind and purified in his atman, he returned to his own house.'

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[982] The seventh lunar day.

[983] April-May.

[984] Who had assumed the form of the beautiful lady.

Chapter 278-5(7) (Greatness of Nandikeshvara)

The rishis asked, 'O Suta! O lord! How does Ganga particularly come to Narmada on saptami in the month of Vaishakha? How did Ishvara originate under the name of Nandikesha? O immensely intelligent one! Please tell us about that account happily.'

Suta replied, 'O best among rishis! You have asked a virtuous question about Nandikesha. I will narrate that now. Good merits increase if one hears this. There was a brahmani named Rishika, the daughter of a certain brahmana. Following the norms, she married a certain brahmana. O Indras among brahmanas! Though she was excellent in her vows, as a result of the powers of her former karma, the brahmana's wife became a widow at an early age. Following the vow of brahmacharya, the brahmana's wife fashioned a parthiva lingam and tormented herself through extremely terrible austerities. Meanwhile, a wicked and strong asura, named Mudha, arrived there. He possessed great knowledge of maya and suffered from Kama's arrows. He saw the beautiful and extremely desirable woman performing austerities. He wished to enjoy her and showed her many inducements. But the woman was excellent in her vows and devoted to performing dhyana on Shiva. O lords among sages! She did not look at him with eyes of desire. The brahmani was engaged in austerities and did not pay any heed to him. She was extremely devoted to austerities and fixed in her dhyana on Shiva. Mudha, Indra among daityas, reprimanded the slender lady. After this, he showed her his terrible form. The evil-souled one addressed her in harsh words, causing fear. He terrified the brahmana's wife in many ways. The brahmana's slender wife was scared and terrified. Lovingly, she took Shiva's name several times and sought refuge with Shiva. Agitated, the lady recited Shiva's names. Adhering to her own dharma, she sought refuge with Shambhu. To protect those who seek refuge with him, to ensure the propagation of good conduct and to cause her pleasure, Shiva appeared. The Indra among daityas, named Mudha, was overwhelmed by desire. Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees, instantly reduced him to ashes. After this, Paramesha cast a compassionate glance towards her. Accomplished in intelligence and intent on protecting his devotees, he said, "Ask for a boon." Hearing Mahesha's words, the virtuous brahmani saw Shankara, in an auspicious form that generates bliss. She prostrated herself before Shambhu Paramesha, the bringer of joy. The virtuous lady, a store of auspiciousness, bent her shoulders, joined her hands in salutation and praised him. Rishika said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O one affectionate towards those who seek refuge! O friend of those who are distressed! O Ishana! You always protect your devotees. You have saved my dharma from the asura named Mudha. You have killed the wicked one and have saved the entire world. Please grant me eternal and supreme devotion towards your feet. O protector! This is the only boon I wish for, nothing else. O lord! O Maheshvara! But please listen to something else too. For the welfare of the worlds, please remain established here." Mahadeva heard what Rishika, auspicious in her vows, said. When she was silent, Girisha, the store of compassion, spoke. Girisha said, "O Rishika! You possess good conduct, and you are my special devotee. I will grant you all the boons you have asked for." Meanwhile, hearing about Shiva's manifestation, Hari, Brahma and the other gods arrived there, full of delight. All of them cheerfully prostrated themselves before Shiva and worshipped him. O brahmanas! They lowered their heads, clasped their hands and intelligently praised him. At that time, Ganga, the celestial river, was pleased in her mind and praised the virtuous lady, Rishika, and her conduct. Ganga said, "For my sake, you

must give me a pledge. On this day in the month of Vaishakha, you must remain near me." Hearing Ganga's words, the virtuous lady, excellent in her vows, uttered words of assent. She happily agreed, for the welfare of the worlds. To cause her bliss, Shiva Hara, who was delighted, merged into the parthiva lingam in all his portions. All the devas were extremely happy and praised Shiva and her. Vishnu, Brahma, the others and the celestial river returned to their own respective abodes. Since that day, that pure spot became an excellent tirtha. Shiva is famous as Nandikesha and destroys all sins. O brahmanas! Auspicious in her wishes, on that day, every year, Ganga goes there to cleanse the sins she has accepted from men. If a man bathes there and worships Nandikesha properly, he is cleansed of all sins, including those of killing a brahmana.

Chapter 279-5(8) (Greatness of Mahabala)

“Suta said, 'O brahmanas! Hear devotedly about Shiva's lingam that is in the western direction. It is famous on earth. In the city of Kapila, there are two extremely divine Shiva lingams, known as Kala and Rameshvara. Mahasiddheshvara is described as being on the shores of the western ocean and bestows dharma, artha, kama and moksha. The excellent kshetra of Gokarna is on the shores of the western ocean. [985] It destroys sins like the killing of a brahmana and as fruits, grants everything that is desired. There are crores and crores of Shiva lingams in Gokarna. At every step, there are innumerable tirthas. What is the need to speak a lot? Shiva's lingams are directly present everywhere in Gokarna and there are tirthas in all the waters. There are Shiva lingams and tirthas everywhere in Gokarna. O son[986] Maharshis have described them in the Puranas. It is white in krita yuga, deep red in treta, yellow in complexion in dvapara and dark in kali. [987] Mahabala has gone all the way down to the depths of the cavities in the seven nether regions. However, when the terrible kali yuga arrives, it will turn soft. When great sinners have worshipped Shiva's lingam of Mahabala in Gokarna, they have obtained a destination with Shankara. O sages! At the time of auspicious nakshatras, those who go to Gokarna and devoutly worship there, there is no doubt that they become like Rudra themselves. If a human worships Shiva's lingam in Gokarna on some occasion, he proceeds towards a destination with Brahma. Desiring the welfare of Brahma, Vishnu and other devas, the divinity Shankara is always present there and is known as Mahabala. The rakshasa named Ravana, leader of hordes, performed terrible austerities. Obtaining the lingam, he instated it in Gokarna. To cause the lingam pleasure, Vishnu, Brahma, the great Indra, the Vishvadevas, the large number of Maruts, the Adityas, the Vasus, the two Dasras, [988] the moon and the stars and other devas and their companions arrive in their vimanas and reside at the eastern gate. Yama, Mrityu himself, Chitragupta, Pavaka, the ancestors and the Rudras resort to the southern gate. Varuna, the lord of rivers, and Ganga and the large number of rivers resort to the western gate and serve Mahabala. Vayu, Kubera, Deveshi Bhadrakalika and Chandika and the other Matrikas resort to the northern gate. All the devas, gandharvas, ancestors, siddhas, charanas, vidyadharas,

[985] This is not quite consistent with Gokarna being in Karnataka, but the lingam in Gokarna is indeed Mahabaleshvara and the use of the word 'west' is relative.

[986] Stated in the singular.

[987] This refers to the complexion of the Mahabala lingam.

[988] The two Ashvins, who are named Nasatya and Dasra.

kimpurushas, kinnaras, guhyakas, birds, many kinds of pishachas, vetalas, extremely strong daityas, Shesha and all the other nagas, siddhas[989] and all the sages praise the divinity and prostrate themselves before Mahabala. They cheerfully bow down and obtain their desires. Many worship the lord and torment themselves through excellent austerities. They obtain supreme siddhi and happiness in this world and in the next one. Shiva's lingam in Gokarna is described as the gate to moksha. O brahmanas! The one known as Mahabala is worshipped and praised. In particular, if Mahabala is worshipped on chaturdashi in krishna paksha in the month of Magha, emancipation is obtained, even by those who are sinners. At the time of this great festival on the occasion of Shiva's tithi, great people from the four varnas arrive from all directions and from all regions. There are women, the aged and children, those from the four ashramas. Having seen the lord of devas there, they become successful in their objectives. As a result of the powers of Shiva's lingam of Mahabala, a chandali[990] who worshipped there, swiftly went to Shiva's world.'

Chapter 280-5(9) (The Chandali's Good Destination)

“The rishis said, 'O Suta! O immensely fortunate one! O Suta! You are Shiva's supreme devotee. You spoke about the chandali's account. Please tell us about it.'

Suta replied, "O brahmanas! Listen with virtuous devotion to that supreme and wonderful account. This is about Shiva's powers, and it enhances the devotion of those who listen. In her former life, the chandali was a brahmana's daughter. Her name was Soumini. Her face resembled the moon, and she possessed all the auspicious signs. O brahmanas! When his daughter attained the prime of youth, her father followed the norms and bestowed Soumini on a brahmana's son. O best among brahmanas! Having obtained a husband, since she was in the prime of youth, she followed worthy conduct for some time and pleasured herself with him. O brahmanas! But then, though he was young, the brahmana who was Soumini's husband suffered from a disease. As a consequence of destiny, he died. When her husband died, the woman was dejected and grieved a lot in her mind. For some, she followed auspicious conduct. Following good conduct, she remained in the house. But thereafter, though she was a widow, her heart was pierced by Manmatha. She was young and indulged in sexual transgressions. Those who belonged to her gotra got to know about her evil conduct, which defiled the lineage. They seized her by the hair, took her a long distance away and abandoned her. An excellent shudra was present there and he saw her roaming around, as she willed. Seeing her in the forest, he took her to his own house and made her his wife. She constantly ate flesh and drank varuni liquor. She loved intercourse and through that shudra, had a daughter. On one occasion, her husband had gone somewhere else. Soumini, who transgressed norms of conduct, desired to drink and eat flesh. In the pen outside, along with the cows, sheep were also tethered. It was the start of the night, with a blinding darkness. Taking a sword, she went out. Addicted to flesh and forgetting herself in her intoxication, she killed a calf, taking it to be a sheep.

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[989] Siddhas is repeated.

[990] One usually equates chandala with shudra, but there were eight different types of shudras, though the listing varies. For instance, vyadha (hunter), vyalagrahi (those who eat snakes), vagatita (one with whom one does not speak), chandala (brahmana mother, shudra father) and so on. Chandali is the feminine.

The unfortunate woman was such that she did not even think about it. Having killed it, the woman brought it home and realized it was a calf. Scared, because of some former good merits, she exclaimed, "Shiva! O Shiva!" For one muhurta, she performed dhyana on Shiva. However, there was the desire to eat flesh. She sliced up the calf and obtained her desired food. O brahmanas! A long period of time elapsed.'

'Coming under the subjugation of time, Soumini went to Yama's eternal abode. Yama considered dharma and the deeds she had performed earlier. He took her out of hell and made her take birth in a family of chandalas. She was dislodged from Yama's city and was born in a chandali's womb. She was born blind, and her complexion was like that of coal, when a fire has gone out. Not only was she born blind, while she was still a child, her father and mother died. She was not married to anyone. The wicked one also suffered greatly from the disease of leprosy. She was dejected and suffered from hunger. Blind, she wandered around with a staff in her hand. She satisfied her digestive fire by eating lumps left by chándalas as leftovers. In this way, she spent a major part of her life in great hardships. Old age seized all her limbs, and her miseries were impossible to tolerate. On one occasion, the chandali got to know that great people were going to Gokarna because Shiva's tithi was about to arrive. Desiring clothes, food and water, she slowly wandered around amidst those great people, begging. The chandali went there and sought from those great people. She wandered around here and there, uttering miserable words and extending her hands for alms. As the chandali stretched out her hands, a virtuous traveller flung a bunch of bilva leaves into them. When the leaves fell into her hands, she repeatedly felt them and decided that they weren't edible. Miserable, she flung them far away. Cast off from her hand in the night, that clump of bilva leaves descended on top of a Shiva lingam. It was the night of Shiva's chaturdashi. Though she repeatedly beseeched travellers, as a result of destiny, she did not get anything. In this way, she unknowingly observed the sparkling vrata of Shiva chaturdashi, which bestows great bliss, and remained awake during the night. In the morning, filled with great misery and dejected, the woman gradually returned to her own region. She was tired because of the long fast and fell down at every step. Somehow, she managed to cross that distance, but then fell down, unconsciousness. As a result of Shambhu's compassion, she obtained to a supreme destination. Astride an excellent vimana, she was quickly taken there by Shiva's ganas. In the beginning, involuntarily, the woman had uttered Shiva's name. O brahmanas! As a result of that good deed, she reached the divine spot of Mahabala. On Shiva's tithi, she fasted in Shri Gokarna and staying awake during the night, worshipped Shiva through offering bilva leaves on Shiva's head. Though she did this involuntarily, she obtained the fruits of that good deed and enjoyed them as a result of Mahabala's favours. Such is Shankara's great lingam of Mahabala. It destroys all sins and instantly bestows supreme bliss. O brahmanas! I have thus described to you the supreme greatness of Shiva's excellent lingam known as Mahabala. I will tell you some other things about its wonderful greatness. As soon as one hears about it, one quickly obtains devotion towards Shiva.'

Chapter 281-5(10) (The Greatness of Mahabala Shiva Lingam)

“Suta said, 'There was a king in the illustrious Ikshvaku lineage who was extremely devoted to dharma. His name was Mitrasaha and he was best among all archers. His beloved queen was the auspicious Madayanti, who was extremely devoted to dharma. She was known to be as devoted as Damayanti was to Nala. King Mitrasaha was fond of hunting. On one occasion, with a large army, he went to a dense forest. As he wandered around there, the king killed a roamer in the forest, known as Kamatha. He killed that extremely wicked and deceitful one, who oppressed virtuous people. His younger brother, a sinner, thought, "I will use deceit to defeat him." Thinking this, the deceitful one approached the king. He assumed a humble form and said he wished to be a servant. Seeing him, and not knowing about him, the lord of the earth made him the superintendent of the kitchen. The king spent some time in the forest. He stopped hunting and happily returned to his own city. On the day when his father had died, the king invited his own guru. He brought Vasishtha home and fed him devotedly. In the form of the cook, the rakshasa mixed some human flesh in the food. Seeing that vegetables and meat had been presented in front of him, the guru spoke. The guru said, "O king! Shame on you. Resorting to deceit, you have served me human flesh. Since you have been crooked towards me, you will become a rakshasa." However, the guru realized that this had been done by the rakshasa. Therefore, he mitigated the curse by limiting it to twelve years. Thinking that the curse was inappropriate, the king became senseless with rage. He took some water in the cup of his hands and got ready to curse his guru. However, his beloved Madayanti was extremely devoted to dharma. She fell down at his feet and begged him to refrain from cursing. Honouring her words, he refrained from cursing. He let the water fall on his own feet, which became stained. O lords among sages! As a result of the power of that water, since that day, the king came to be in the world as Kalmashanghri.[991] Because of the curse imposed by his guru, supreme among rishis, King Mitrasaha became a terrible rakshasa who caused violence, roaming around in the forest. He was radiant in his form as a rakshasa and resembled Yama, the Destroyer. Wandering around in the forest, he ate many kinds of creatures and humans.'

Resembling the Destroyer, on one occasion in the forest, he saw a young and newly married couple pleasuring themselves. This was a sage and his wife. Suffering from the curse, the rakshasa, who ate humans, seized the young son of a sage, the way a tiger seizes a fawn. Seeing that her husband was in his grasp, his beloved was terrified. She entreated him and addressed him in piteous words. Though she beseeched him in many kinds of ways, the contemptible cannibal tore off the head of the brahmana's son and devoured him. Extremely miserable, his virtuous wife lamented miserably. She collected her husband's bones and kindled a funeral pyre. Following her husband, she entered the fire. The brahmana lady cursed the king, who was in the form of a rakshasa. "From now on, whenever you have intercourse with a woman, you will die." Saying this, the virtuous lady entered the fire. The king knew that there was a time period for his guru's curse.

[991] Kalmashanghri is also known as Kalmashapada. Both anghri and pada mean feet. Usually, the king's name is given as Kalmashapada, which means the one with speckled feet. Here, is it given as Kalmashanghri, which means the one with stained/foul feet.

When this was over, he regained his own form and happily returned to his own residence. He loved intercourse. But Madayanti knew about the curse the virtuous brahmana lady had imposed. Therefore, scared of becoming a widow, she restrained her husband. Since he didn't have a son, the king was no longer interested in enjoying the kingdom. He gave up all his prosperity and left for the forest. He saw brahma-hatya, which causes terrible grief, following him at the rear. It was terrible in form and censured him repeatedly. As a result of this inauspicious entity, the king's mind was dejected. He tried many methods, japa, vrata, sacrifices and other things, to get rid of it. O brahmanas! Despite the methods tried by the king, including bathing at tirthas, brahma-hatya did not leave. He went to Mithila. Suffering greatly, he remained outside the city, deep in thought. The king then saw the sage Goutama approach. The Indra among kings advanced towards Goutama, a reservoir of purity. Calmed a bit on seeing him, he prostrated himself repeatedly. Asked about his welfare, he sighed long and deep. Happy as a result of his compassionate glance, the king spoke to him. The king said, "O sage! This brahma-hatya is intolerable and is constraining me. O father! It cannot be seen by others but is censuring me at every step. When I was scorched by the curse, I devoured the son of a brahmana. As a result of that sin, though I have tried thousands of kinds of prayashchitta, I cannot find peace. O sage! Though I have tried many means, peace eludes me. Brahma-hatya does not withdraw. Is that because I am evil-souled? But now, since I have met you, it is evident that my birth will be rendered successful. As a result of seeing you, I have been filled with bliss. O pure one! Today, I seek refuge at your lotus feet. O immensely fortunate one! Grant me peace, so that I can obtain happiness." The king told Goutama, the ocean of compassion, this.'

'He instructed him about a virtuous means of getting rid of terrible sins. Goutama said, "O virtuous Indra among kings! You are blessed. Abandon your fear of terrible sins. When Shiva rules, what fear do devotees who seek refuge with him have? O immensely fortunate king! Listen. There is a kshetra known as Gokarna, which is Shiva's abode. It destroys great sins. Since he is established there, even great sinners do not have to fear even major sins. Shiva is himself instated in the place known as Mahabala. Mahabala is the emperor of all Shiva lingams. It destroys all sins and assumes four hues in four yugas. Gokarna is an excellent tirtha on the shores of the western ocean. The Shiva lingam that is there destroys great sins. Many great sinners go there and bathe several times in the tirthas. Worshipping Mahabala, they proceed to a destination with Shankara. O Indra among kings! You should also go to Gokarna, Girisha's abode. Having gone there, worship the lingam and you will be successful in your objective. Bathe in all the tirthas and worship Mahabala. You will be freed from all sins and will obtain Shiva's world." This is what the great-souled sage, Goutama, instructed. Rejoicing in his mind, the king went to Gokarna. He bathed in the tirthas there and worshipped Mahabala. He was cleansed of all his flood of sins and obtained a supreme destination with Shambhu. If a person constantly hears this beloved account about Mahabala, along with twenty-one generations of his lineage, he goes to Shiva's world. I have spoken to you about the supreme and wonderful greatness of Mahabala, Girisha's lingam. It destroys all sins.'

Chapter 282-5(11) (The Greatness of Pashupatinatha Shiva Lingam)

“The rishis said, 'O Suta! O immensely fortunate one! O Suta! You are blessed. Your mind is fixed on Shiva. We have heard the wonderful account about Mahabala lingam. O unblemished one! Please tell us about the greatness of Shiva's lingams that exist in the northern direction and destroy sins.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! Listen lovingly. I will briefly tell you about the greatness of Shiva's lingams, especially those in the northern direction. There is another kshetra known as Gokarna and it destroys great sins. There is a large and extensive forest there that is sacred. There is Shiva's excellent lingam there, known as Chandrabhala. With great devotion, it was brought by Ravana and bestows every kind of success. [992] O lords among sages! Like Vaidyanatha, the ocean of compassion is stationed there, so as to ensure the welfare of all the worlds. If a person bathes in Gokarna and worships Chandrabhala, he reaches Shiva's world. This is the truth. There is no doubt that this is the truth. The greatness of Chandrabhala lingam is extremely wonderful. Despite being Vyasa's devotee and benefiting from his affection, I am incapable of describing it. But I have told you a little bit about the greatness of Mahadeva's great Chandrabhala lingam. Now hear about another lingam. This Shiva lingam is known as Dadhichi and is in the supreme tirtha of Mishrarshi. Dadhichi, supreme among sages, lovingly instated it. Having gone to that tirtha, one must follow the norms and bathe properly. Then, one must lovingly worship the Shiva lingam of Dadhicheshvara. Those who seek the fruits of visiting tirthas must follow the norms and worship the image of Dadhichi, thereby pleasing Shiva. O best among sages! If a man does this, he becomes successful in his objectives. Having enjoyed every kind of happiness in this world, he obtains the desired destination in the world hereafter. The Shiva lingam known as Rishishvara was instated by all the rishis in the tirtha of Naimisharanya. O lords among sages! If people see and worship it, they obtain objects of pleasure and emancipation in this world and in the next one, even if they happen to be sinners. A Shiva lingam that exists in the tirtha of Hatyaharana destroys sins. If one especially worships this, the sins resulting from one crore killings are dispelled. [993] In the tirtha of Devaprayaga, there is the Shiva lingam named Laliteshvara. Worshipped by men, it always destroys sins. The city of Nayapala[994] is famous on earth. The lingam known as Pashupati is there and as fruits, it bestows everything wished for. His crest is present in the form of the Shiva lingam. I will relate that account when I describe Kedareshvara. Near that, is the great and wonderful Shiva lingam known as Muktinatha.[995]

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[992] This might be Gokarneshvara, in Nepal.

[993] Hatya means killing/slaying and harana means the taking away (of the sin).

[994] That is, Nepal. The crest may refer to the story about Shiva assuming the form of an antelope. When he was in the form of an antelope, devas caught him by one of his horns. That horn broke and became the Shiva lingam. Later, the text says buffalo instead of antelope.

[995] There is a Bhairava temple inside the Vishnu temple of Muktinath in Nepal.

If one sees it and worships it, one obtains objects of pleasure and emancipation. O best among sages! I have thus described to you the supreme lingams in the four directions. What else do you wish to hear?'

Chapter 283-5(12) (The Nature of the Lingam)

“The rishis said, 'O Suta! Because of Vyasa's favours, you know everything. There is nothing that is not known to you. Therefore, we are asking you. In the world, the lingam is worshipped. You have said that. Is there any reason behind this? Parvati, Shiva's beloved, is famous in the world in the form of an arrow. What is the reason behind this? O Suta! Please tell us what you have heard.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! From Vyasa, I heard an account that belongs to another kalpa. O supreme among rishis! I will tell you about that now. Listen. O brahmanas! In ancient time, this is an incident that took place in Daruvana. [996] I will tell you properly what I heard. Listen. Daruvana is an excellent forest. Excellent rishis, Shiva's devotees, are always immersed in performing dhyana on Shiva there. They constantly worship Shiva thrice a day. O lords among sages! They use many kinds of divine hymns to praise him. On one occasion, the bulls among brahmanas, immersed in dhyana on Shiva and devoted to Shiva, went to the forest to collect kindling. At that time, Shankara Nilalohita himself arrived, in a disfigured form, so as to test them. He was extremely energetic and naked. He was decorated in ashes. He held his penis in his hand and performed wicked acts. In his mind, he wished to do what would be agreeable to the residents of the forest. Affectionate towards his devotees, that is the reason Hara himself went happily, to that forest. On seeing him, the wives of the rishis were filled with great fear. Some were agitated. But others were surprised and approached him. Some embraced him. Others held his hands. The women were engaged in fighting against each other. At this time, the noble rishis returned. Seeing these perverse activities, they grieved and became senseless with rage. Full of grief, they exclaimed, "Who is this? Who is this?" All the rishis were deluded by Shiva's maya. The naked avadhuta did not say anything. The supreme rishis then spoke to that terrible being. "You are acting in a perverse way and violating the path of the Vedas. That being the case, let your penis fall down on the ground." When they said this, the penis instantly fell down. The avadhuta was actually Shiva's extraordinary form. Blazing, the penis burnt everything that was in front of it. Wherever it went, it burnt everything there. It went to Patala. It also went to heaven. It moved everywhere on earth and did not remain stationary in any one place. The worlds were agitated, and the rishis were extremely miserable. The devas and rishis could not find any peace. All the gods and rishis did not realize that this was Shiva. Grieving, they gathered together and quickly went and sought refuge with Brahma. O brahmanas! Having gone there, all of them bent down and praised Vidhatri. They told Brahma, the creator, everything that had happened. Brahma heard their words and realized that they had been deluded by Shiva's maya. Bowing down before Shankara, he spoke to those excellent rishis. Brahma said, "O brahmanas! Though you know, you have performed a reprehensible act. When the ignorant do something, why do you speak against them? After acting against the divinity Shiva, who can hope for welfare?

[996] The same as Darukavana.

If a guest who arrives at midday it not welcomed, he takes away the person's good deeds and leaves his own bad deeds behind. Even a guest is honoured and instated. What need be said of Shiva? Until the penis becomes stationary, nothing in the three worlds will be auspicious. I have told you the truth. O rishis! Think about this in your mind. You must act so that Shiva's penis becomes stationary. That is the way to ensure welfare." Thus addressed, the rishis prostrated themselves before Brahma and spoke to him. "O Vidhatri! What must we do? Please instruct us about the task." The sages spoke in this way to the grandfather of all the worlds.'

'Brahma replied and instructed the sages. Brahma said, "O gods! Crave your welfare and worship Devi Girija. If she assumes the form of a vagina, the penis will become stationary. O excellent ones! All of you should listen. I will tell you about the procedure. If you lovingly follow this, she will be pleased. Draw an excellent lotus with eight petals and place a pot on it. Fill it with water from the tirthas and durva grass and barley sprouts. Using mantras from the Vedas, energize the pot. Following the norms of the shruti texts, remember Shiva and worship it. O supreme rishis! Then sprinkle the penis with that water. If the sprinkling is done with the Shatarudriya mantra, you will find peace. Place an auspicious arrow, representing Girija in the form of a vagina. Place the penis on it, pronouncing mantras again. Use fragrances, sandalwood, flowers, incense, naivedya and other things to worship and satisfy Parameshvara. Prostrate yourselves. Use hymns, sacred musical instruments and songs. Pronounce words of benediction and utter 'Victory'. State the following. 'O lord of devas! O bringer of pleasure to the universe! Be pleased. You are the creator and the reserver. You are also the destroyer. You are without decay. You are the beginning of the universe. You are the origin of the universe. You are inside the universe. O Mahesha! Be pacified and protect all the worlds.' If you do this, there is no doubt that all will be well. There will be no aberrations in the three worlds and there will be constant joy." Hearing this, devas and brahmanas prostrated themselves before the grandfather. Desiring the happiness of all the worlds, they sought refuge with Shiva. They worshipped him with great devotion and prayed to Shankara. Maheshvara was extremely pleased and spoke to them. Maheshvara said, "O devas! O rishis! All of you listen attentively to my words. In the form of a vagina, if she holds my penis, there will be happiness. Other than Parvati, no one else is capable of holding my penis. If she holds my penis, peace will be swiftly restored." O lords among sages! Hearing this, the rishis and devas were pleased. Taking Brahma with them, they prayed to Parvati. They pleased Girija and Vrishadhvaja. Having done this, they followed the procedure mentioned earlier and instated the lingam. The devas and rishis used those procedures and mantras. For the sake of dharma, they pleased Girija and Shiva. In particular, all the devas and rishis, Brahma, Vishnu and the others and all mobile and immobile entities in the three worlds worshipped Shiva. Shiva was pleased and so was Shivaa, the mother of the universe. In that form, she held the penis. The lingam was established for the welfare of the worlds. O brahmanas! That lingam became famous in the three worlds. It is known as Hatakesha and as Shiva-Shivaa. When people worship it, they always obtain happiness. There is every kind of prosperity in this world. It grants supreme happiness. In the world hereafter, it bestows emancipation. There is no need to reflect on this.'

Chapter 284-5(13) (Origin of Vatuka)

“Suta said, 'O brahmanas! I have told you how Shiva came to be worshipped in the three worlds in the form of a lingam. Out of your love, what else do you wish to hear?"

The rishis said, 'O lord! Please tell us about the greatness of Andhakeshvara lingam. You should affectionately speak to us about other Shiva lingams too.'

Suta said, 'Earlier, the daitya Andhakasura resided in a pit inside the ocean. He oppressed the gods and brought the three worlds under his subjugation. He also used to emerge from the pit and make the subjects suffer. After that, the extremely valiant daitya entered the pit again. All the devas were miserable and repeatedly prayed to Shiva. O lords among sages! They reported all their miseries to him. Hearing the words of devas, Parameshvara, who slays the wicked and is the destination of the virtuous, was pleased in his mind and replied to them. Shiva said, "I will slay the daitya Andhaka, the killer of gods. O devas! Advance with your soldiers. I will come with my ganas." Andhaka hated devas and rishis and terrified them. When he emerged from the pit, devas went and occupied the pit. There was an extremely terrible battle between devas and daityas. As a a result of Shiva's favours, devas became strong. Suffering at the hands of devas, he approached the pit. Shiva, the paramatman, impaled him with the trident. While stuck there, he meditated on Shambhu and prayed to him. "If one sees you at the time of death, one instantly becomes like you." Praised in this way, Shankara was pleased. He spoke the following words. "Ask for a boon. I will give it to you." Hearing these words, the daitya spoke again. Resorting to sentiments of sattva, he prostrated himself and praised Shiva. Andhaka said, “O lord of devas! If you are pleased with me, please grant me auspicious devotion towards you. In particular, show me your compassion and remain established here." Thus addressed by the daitya, Hara hurled him into the pit. Desiring the welfare of the worlds, he himself remained established there in the form of a lingam. If a man constantly worships the Andhakesha lingam, there is no doubt that he will obtain the desired success in six months. Desiring the welfare of the worlds, if a brahmana worships the lingam for six months, but actually wishes for his own means of subsistence, it is said that he becomes a devalaka.[997] He becomes a devalaka in this world. It is said that devalakas do not have the rights that brahmanas possess.' The rishis asked, 'Who is said to be a devalaka? What are his tasks? O immensely wise one! For the welfare of the worlds, please tell us about that.'

Suta replied, 'There was a brahmana named Dadhichi. He was accomplished in the Vedas and was devoted to dharma. He was always devoted to Shiva and was learned in sacred texts about Shiva. He had a son named Sudarshana, whose wife was named Dukula. She was born in a wicked lineage. The husband was always under her control. He had four sons. He always used to worship Shiva. At that time, Dadhichi had to go and live with his kin in another village and his kin did not allow him to return. He told his son, "Remain devoted to Shiva." Saying this, Dadhichi, supreme among Shiva's devotees, took his leave and left. His son, Sudarshana, worshipped Shiva.

[997] A devalaka is a brahmana who earns a living by being a purohita (priest).

O lords among sages! In this way, a long period of time passed. On one occasion, Shiva Ratri arrived. Along with the others, he and his wife fasted. However, it is said that having performed the worship, Sudarshana went and had intercourse with his wife. He returned again for Shiva Ratri and without having taken a bath, worshipped Shiva in the night. Because of this wicked deed, Shankara became angry and spoke to him. Maheshvara said, "O wicked one! On Shiva Ratri, you had intercourse with your wife. You have no sense of discrimination. Without having had a bath, you worshipped me. Since you knew what you were doing, become a dumb person. You are someone who cannot touch me. You can only see me from a distance." In this way, Mahesha cursed Sudarshana, Dadhichi's son. Deluded by Shiva's maya, ya, he became a dumb person. At this time, the brahmana Dadhichi, supreme among Shiva's devotees, returned from the other village and heard everything that had happened. He was also reprimanded by Shiva and became extremely miserable. Grieving because of what his son had done, he wept, "Alas! Woe is me." Dadhichi, revered by the virtuous, repeatedly said, "Because of this wicked son, my excellent lineage has been destroyed. This son has also been destroyed. This has happened because he took a pumshchali as his wife. "[998] Censured in this way by his father, he also repented.'

'His father followed excellent norms and worshipped Girija. For his son's happiness, he did this with great care and great devotion. Sudarshana worshipped Girija himself. He used auspicious hymns and with great devotion, followed the path of worshipping Chandi. Thus, both father and son devoutly used different kinds of methods. Devi Girija, affectionate towards her devotees, was pleased. As a result of the powers of their services, Chandika was pleased. O sage! Girija accepted Sudarshana as her son. For the sake of her son, Chandika herself placated Shiva. Though he had been angry, he ceased to be angry, and his mind was pleased towards Chandi's son. Understanding that Vrishadhvaja Mahesha was pleased, she herself bowed down before him and placed the son on his lap. Girija herself bathed her son in ghee and gave him the three sacred threads tied in a single knot. Having happily given her son, Sudarshana, this, Ambika instructed him in the sixteen aksharas of the Shiva gayatri mantra.[999] This was pre-fixed with the words "OUM namo Shivaya". Batu did this sixteen times, performing the worship with a sankalpa. [1000] He started the worship of Vrishadhvaja with bathing and ending with prostration. In the presence of rishis, he used mantras and other modes of worship. He chanted many names and mantras. Pleased in their minds, Chandika and Shiva said, "Anything offered to me, [1001] riches, grain and other things, can all be taken by you. There will be no sin attached to this. In any rite done for me, you will be the chief. This is especially true of any rite done for Devi. Anything offered to me, ghee, oil and other things, can all be accepted by you. When a Prajapatya ceremony is performed, only one of you should be present. [1002] Only then will it be complete. Otherwise, everything will be futile. The mark of tilaka that you make must be circular.

[998] Svairinis are loose women who have sex with anyone they want, but only with those from the same varna. Kaminis are loose women who have sex with anyone they want, irrespective of varna. Pumshchalis have no sense of discrimination and are almost like harlots.

[999] Mahadevaya dhimahi tanno rudra prachodoyat.

[1000] Batu (vatu) is a young boy, with the word sometimes used for a brahmana boy. Sankalpa is the resolution made for an act of worship.

[1001] This is being spoken by Shiva.

[1002] There should be only one priest at a Prajapatya rite.

You must always bathe. You must observe the sandhya rites for Shiva and chant the gayatri mantra. You must first serve me and then undertake the other rites required by the lineage. If you do all this, everything will be fortunate, and I will pardon all sins." Having said this, Shiva, the paramatman, instated his four sons as vatukas in the four directions. [1003] Chandi kept her son, Sudarshana, with her. She bestowed many boons on his sons and sent them away. Devi said, "Between the two of you, whoever becomes my vatuka will always be victorious,[1004] There is no need to think about this. The one who worships Bhava, also worships me. O son! Your responsibility is to always carry out my tasks." Out of compassion for the great-souled Sudarshana and for the sake of the world, Shiva and Shivaa bestowed boons on his sons. It is said that Shiva and Shivaa established the system of vatukas. It is said that those who deviate from austerities are known as Tapodhamas. As a result of the compassion of Shiva and Shivaa, all of them expanded in many kinds of ways,'

'In any great act of worship, the great-souled one must be worshipped first. Until Shankara has been worshipped, any other worship should not be performed. Otherwise, the outcome will not be auspicious. Whether auspicious or inauspicious, a vatuka must not be avoided. A Prajapatya ceremony where a single vatuka is fed, is particularly distinguished. Special differences are seen in rites performed for Shiva and Shivaa. O extremely wise one! [1005] O unblemished one! I will tell you. Listen. In the city that is near Andhakesha, when a Prajapatya ceremony was being observed, King Bhadra was engaged in the daily task of feeding. At that time, as a result of Shiva's favours, a wonderful incident occurred. Listen lovingly. I will tell you what I have heard. Satisfied with the king, Shambhu gave him a standard. Out of his compassion, the lord of devas spoke to the king. "O king! The standard will rise up in the morning and fall down in the night. This will continue as long as the Prajapatya rite has not been completed. Otherwise, my standard will remain stationary, even when it is night." Satisfied with the king, Shambhu, the ocean of compassion, said this and vanished. O great sage! The king followed these rules. He followed the norms, worshipped Shiva and performed the Prajapatya rite every day. On its own, the standard rose up in the morning and fell down in the evening. This continued to happen until the rite was completed. On one occasion, the rites were performed with a vatu at the head. Even without the brahmanas being fed, the standard fell down. Seeing this, the king asked the learned men. "Though the brahmanas are eating, the standard is not rising up. O brahmanas! Why has the standard fallen down? Please tell me the truth." Thus asked, the brahmanas, supreme among those who were learned, replied. "O great king! When the brahmanas were being fed, vatuka was fed first. He is Chandi's son and Shiva was satisfied. That is the reason the standard fell down." Hearing this, the king and all the other people were extremely surprised and uttered words of praise. In this way, because of Shankara, the greatness of vatukas was enhanced and they are described as the best among those who know the ancient accounts. Shiva's worship must first be done by those noble ones and not by anyone else. According to Shiva's words, others do not possess the right. They will conclude the rites with the words, "The worship is now complete." They alone possess this right, not anyone else. O lords among sages! I told you everything that you you asked me about. Hearing this, a man obtains the fruits obtained from worshipping Shiva.'

[1003] Sudarshana's four sons. Vatuka has the same meaning as batu, a young brahmana boy. Here, it seems to mean priest.

[1004] Since there were four sons, this should probably read four.

[1005] The text has the singular.

Chapter 285-5(14) (Origin of Somanatha Jyotirlingam)

The rishis said, 'Now please tell us about the greatness of the jyotirlingams. Please tell us everything about their origin, as you have heard it.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! Listen. I will tell you about their greatness and origin. According to my intelligence, I will briefly tell you, as I have heard from my virtuous guru. O best among sages! No one is capable of relating their greatness, even in one hundred years. Nevertheless, I will tell you. Among them, Somanatha is spoken of as the first. O sages! First, listen attentively to its greatness. The great-souled Daksha had rwenty-seven daughters. O lords among sages! He bestowed them on Chandra. The other daughters were bestowed on the twin Ashvins and others. Obtaining Chandra as their husband, they became especially radiant. Having obtained them, Chandra also shone all the time. Set in gold, a jewel shines even more. With a jewel, gold also dazzles more. Now hear about what happened in the course of time. Among all his wives, he loved the one known as Rohini the most. The others weren't loved that much. As a result, they were miserable and went and sought refuge with their father. They went to him and reported their miseries. Hearing this, Daksha also grieved. O brahmanas! He went to Chandra and addressed him in conciliatory words. Daksha said, "O store of digits! You have been born in a sparkling lineage. Among those who have sought refuge, how can there be a superior and an inferior? If you have done this, you should not do it again. It is said that such differentiation in conduct leads to hell." Daksha requested Chandra, his son-in-law, himself. Completely assured, he then returned to his own abode. Deluded, Chandra did not follow his words. This was because of the powers of Shiva's maya, which delude the entire universe. Auspiciousness is experienced by those for whom auspiciousness is ordained. If inauspiciousness is destined, how can there be auspiciousness? Incapacitated by that powerful destiny, Chandra did not pay heed to those words. Attached to Rohini, he did not pay attention to the others. Daksha knew about good policy. Hearing this, Daksha was himself filled with sorrow and went and requested Chandra again. Daksha said, "O Chandra! Listen. I have already asked you repeatedly. But since you did not pay any attention, you will suffer from consumption." As soon as he said this, Chandra suffered from consumption. When the moon started to decay, there were great sounds of lamentation. All the devas and rishis wondered, "What should be done now? What will happen?" O sage! They were agitated and filled with sorrow.'

'Chandra told Shakra and the other gods everything. With Vasishtha and the other rishis, they went and sought refuge with Brahma. O sage! Having gone there, they told him everything. Extremely agitated, the devas and rishis bowed down before Brahma and praised him. Hearing their words, Brahma was filled with great wonder. So that they could hear, he spoke words praising Shiva's maya. Brahma said, "Alas! A great misery has arisen for all the worlds. Chandra has always been wicked, and Daksha has cursed him now. Chandra is wicked in every possible way and has performed many such acts. O rishis and devas! Hear what Chandra did earlier. The wicked one went to Brihaspati's house and abducted Tara.[1006] For the sake of this wife, he then joined with the daityas.

[1006] Brihaspati's wife.

A battle between daityas and devas ensued. When Atri and I prohibited the act, the moon returned Tara. However, on seeing that she was pregnant, Jiva said that he would not accept her. When we prohibited him from doing that, he reluctantly accepted her. He said, 'I will accept her if she abandons the foetus. Since this is not my son, she should throw it away.' When the excellent sages asked her whose son it was, she replied that it was Soma's. At this, I removed the foetus[1007] and he accepted her. In this way, Chandra has engaged in many kinds of wicked conduct. But describing them afresh serves no purpose. Why does he keep doing such things? What has happened, has happened. It is certainly the case that it cannot be reversed. Therefore, listen attentively. I will tell you about a supreme method. Along with devas, let Chandra go to the auspicious kshetra of Prabhasa. Let him follow the norms and use the Mahamrityunjaya mantra[1008] to worship Shiva. In front of Isha, let Chandra constantly torment himself through austerities. If Shiva is pleased, he will remove his consumption." Hearing Brahma's words, the gods and rishis returned to the place where Daksha and the moon were. Assuring Daksha, all the immortals and rishis took Chandra and went to Prabhasa. They invoked the waters of all the noble tirthas, Sarasvati and the others. Following the norms, they instated a parthiva lingam and used Mahamrityunjaya mantra to worship it. All the devas and rishis, stores of purity, established Chandra in Prabhasa and happily returned to their own respective abodes.'

'For six months, Chandra constantly tormented himself through austerities. He used Mahamrityunjaya mantra to worship Vrishadhvaja. The moon chanted the mantra a million times. With an unwavering mind, he used the Mahamrityunjaya mantra to perform dhyana. Beholding this, the lord and divinity, Shankara, was pleased. He is affectionate towards his devotees. The lord manifested himself before his own devotee and spoke. Shankara said, "O fortunate one! Ask for a boon, whatever your mind desires. O moon! I am pleased with you. I will bestow every excellent boon on you." Chandra replied, "O lord of devas! If you are pleased, what can I not accomplish? O Shankara! Nonetheless, please counter the consumption in my body. Please pardon everything else I have done and please always do what is beneficial for me." Thus addressed, Shiva spoke the following words. Shiva said, "O Chandra! During one fortnight, every day, you will decline by one digit. In another fortnight, you will constantly increase by one digit," At this, the minds of devas were filled with joy. O brahmanas! All the rishis quickly assembled there. Having arrived there, all of them pronounced benedictions over Chandra. Clasping their hands, they lovingly bent down and prayed to Shiva. The devas said, "O lord of devas! O Mahadeva! O Paramesha! I prostrate myself before you. O lord! O Shambhu! Along with Uma, please remain immobile in this spot." In those ancient times, Chandra devoutly praised Shankara. He prayed again to the divinity with a form and to the divinity without a form. The lord was pleased with the devas. To increase the greatness of the kshetra and enhance Chandra's fame, Shankara remained in the place named after Chandra. It became famous in the three worlds under the name of Someshvara.[1009] O brahmanas! People who worship there can destroy diseases like consumption and leprosy.

[1007] Which became Budha.

[1008] 3.60 of Vajasaneyi Samhita. Tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pushtivardhanam.' 'We worship the fragrant Tryambaka, who enhances our nourishment.'

[1009] Literally, Soma's (Chandra's) lord. Somanatha has the same meaning.

Blessed is the one who was successful in his objective. Shankara, the lord of the universe, himself remained in a place that was named after him, so that he can purify the universe. There is a pond there, established by all the devas and subsequently divided among themselves by Shiva and Brahma. This destroys all sins and is famous on earth as Chandrakunda. If a man bathes there, he is freed from all sins. If one merely bathes there for six months, all incurable diseases, consumption and others, are destroyed. If one circumambulates Prabhasa, the fruits obtained are identical to those obtained from circumambulating the entire earth. A person's atman becomes pure and after death, he obtains greatness in heaven. If a man sees Somalingam,[1010] he is freed from all sins. He obtained the fruits desired by his mind. After death, he obtains greatness in heaven. It is said that one obtains fruits from visiting excellent tirthas. There is no doubt that all those fruits are obtained there. The rishis and devas witnessed such fruits. Delighted, they took Chandra, cured of consumption, and bowed down before Shiva. Praising and circumambulating that tirtha, they left. Chandra returned to his own former tasks. I have thus described everything about Somesha's origin. O lords among sages! This is how Someshvara lingam originated. If a man hears about this origin, or makes others hear it, he obtains everything that he desires and is freed from all sins.'

Chapter 286-5(15) (Description of Mallikarjuna Jyotirlingam)

“Suta said, 'After this, I will speak about how Mallikarjuna originated. If a person hears about this, he becomes devoted and intelligent and is freed from all sins. I have already told you about Kumara's divine conduct, but I will describe it again. It destroys all sins. Kumara, Shivaa's son and Taraka's immensely strong enemy, circumambulated the earth and returned to Kailasa. The divine rishi[1011] came there and told him everything about Ganeshvara's marriage. His mind was in a whirl. Hearing this, Kumara prostrated himself before his parents. Though his parents tried to restrain him, he went to Mount Krouncha. Separated from Kumara, his mother, Girija, was miserable. However, Shambhu spoke to her and made her understand. "O beloved! O Parvati! Why are you grieving? O one with the excellent eyebrows! Your son will return. Give up this terrible sorrow." But suffering from great grief, Parvati did not pay any attention to this. Therefore, Shankara sent the gods and rishis. All the devas and rishis went cheerfully, along with their followers. Excellent in intelligence, they went there to bring back Kumara. All of them went there and prostrated themselves before Kumara. They lovingly prayed to him and tried many kinds of ways to make him understand. However, Kumara was overwhelmed by great ahamkara. He did not pay heed to the prayers of devas or to the command of Shiva, the guru of his lineage. At this, all of them returned to Shiva's presence. Having bowed down before Shankara and taken their leave from him, they returned to their own respective abodes. Devi Girija suffered from great grief on account of separation from her son, since he did not return, and so did Shambhu. Following the customary practices of the world, they were dejected and extremely miserable. As a result of their love, they went to the place where their son was. The son named Kumara disregarded the affection showed by his parents. Knowing that they had come and feeling no love for them, he left that mountain and went three yojanas away.

[1010] The lingam in Somanatha.

[1011] Narada.

Their son went far away from Mount Krouncha. But they remained there, in forms full of energy. Out of affection towards their son, Shiva and Shivaa go there on every parva day. They go there to see their own son, Kumara. Shiva himself goes there on amavasya and Parvati certainly goes there on the day of purnima. That is the day when Shiva's lingam of Mallikarjuna originated. It is famous in the three worlds. If a person sees that lingam, there is no doubt that all his sins are destroyed, and he obtains everything that he desires. His miseries go far away, and he obtains great happiness. He does not suffer the distress of a mother's womb again. He obtains wealth, grain, prosperity, fame and freedom from disease. There is no doubt that he is successful in obtaining his desired fruits. I have spoken about the second jyotirlingam, known as Mallikarjuna. For the sake of the worlds, it is said that if one sees it, one obtains every kind of happiness.'

Chapter 287-5(16) (Greatness of Mahakala Jyotirlingam)

"The rishis said, 'O Suta! As a result of Vyasa's favours, you know everything. Hearing about the jyotirlingams, we are not yet satisfied. O lord! Therefore, show us your unmatched and special compassion. Please tell us about the third jyotirlingam now.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! I am blessed that I am in the company of illustrious people like you. I have become successful in my objectives. A man who meets and associates with virtuous people is blessed and obtains a good destination. Taking this to be my good fortune, I will tell you about a purifying account that destroys sins. It is a divine account. Listen affectionately. The city of Avanti [1012] is beautiful and bestows emancipation on all living beings. It is extremely sacred and is loved by Shiva. It purifies the worlds. There was a foremost brahmana there, engaged in auspicious deeds. He always studied the Vedas and performed rites from the Vedas. He maintained the sacrificial fire and always worshipped Shiva. Every day, the brahmana worshipped a parthiva image. The brahmana, Vedapriya, obtained the fruits of all the rites. He became accomplished in proper jnana, the destination obtained by the virtuous. O supreme among sages! He had four sons who were just like him. They were constantly devoted to worshipping Shiva and were not inferior to their father. Devapriya was the eldest and the next was Priyamedha. The third was named Sukrita. The fourth was Dharmavahi, excellent in vows. As a consequence of the power of their good merits, happiness increased on earth, just as the moon constantly waxes during shukla paksha. Their good qualities flourished and brought happiness. The city became full of the energy of the brahman.'

'Meanwhile, a wonderful incident occurred. O best among brahmanas! Listen. I will describe it as I have heard it. On Mount Ratnamala, there was a great asura named Dushana. The king of daityas was powerful and he constantly harmed the cause of dharma. Thanks to a boon obtained from Brahma, he regarded the world as insignificant. He defeated devas and ousted them from their positions. Like a lion destroying hares, the wicked one shattered the dharma of the Vedas and the dharma of the smriti texts everywhere on earth. The dharma of the Vedas was followed in tirthas and in kshetras. But he destroyed this dharma wherever it was followed and flung it far away.

[1012] Another name for Ujjayini.

"However, it can still be seen in that solitary and beautiful city of Avanti." Thinking this, listen to what he did. Dushana, the great asura, surrounded himself with many soldiers. He went there, intending to destroy all the brahmanas who were there. Having reached, the Indra among the daityas summoned all the excellent daityas. The immensely crooked one, who hated brahmanas, addressed them in these words. The daitya said, "Why don't the wicked brahmanas act in accordance with my words? It is my view that all those who follow the dharma of the Vedas must be punished. I have defeated all the devas and kings in the world. O excellent daityas! Are we incapable of bring brahmanas under our control? If they wish to remain alive and obtain a share in happiness, let them give up Shiva's dharma and the supreme dharma of the Vedas. Otherwise, there will be a doubt about their remaining alive. I have spoken the truth. Without any hesitation, act accordingly." When this was decided, the four daityas surrounded the city from four directions, resembling fires that arise at the time of dissolution. The brahmanas heard about the attempts made by daityas. However, devoted to performing dhyana on Shiva, they were not saddened at all. The brahmanas resorted to their fortitude and did not deviate the least bit from their supreme dhyana. If Shiva is in front, who can suffer? Meanwhile, that auspicious city was overwhelmed. The suffering people went and sought refuge with the brahmanas. The people exclaimed, "O lords! What is to be done? The wicked ones have arrived. They have caused violence to many people and are approaching close." Hearing their words, the brahmanas who were the sons of Vedapriya and who always placed their trust in Shankara, replied. The brahmanas said, "Listen. We do not possess an army that can cause fear to the wicked. We do not have weapons we can use to drive them back. This general dishonour also reflects on the one who is our refuge. Who is capable of acting against Shiva? The lord Shiva will protect us from fear resulting as a result of the asuras. There is no other refuge in the world. Shiva is affectionate towards his devotees." Resorting to their fortitude, they worshipped the parthiva lingam. Having done this, the brahmanas properly immersed themselves in dhyana. 'The daitya and his soldiers saw the brahmanas. Dushana spoke these words. "Kill them. Bind them." However, the brahmanas who were the sons of Devapriya were devoted to the path of performing dhyana on Shambhu. They did not hear the words uttered by the daitya. The evil-souled one wished to kill the brahmanas. But before he could do so, the place where the parthiva lingam was placed sank into a pit, making a loud sound. Shiva arose from within that pit, assuming a hideous form. He became famous as Mahakala, the one who slays the wicked and is the destination of the virtuous. He said, "I am Mahakala, who rises against wicked ones like you. O crooked one! Leave. Go far away from these brahmanas." Saying this, Mahakala Shankara uttered the sound of humkara and instantly reduced Dushana and his army to ashes. Some soldiers were killed. Some other soldiers ran away. Dushana was killed by Shiva, the paramatman. Darkness is completely destroyed when it sees the sun. Like that, on seeing Shiva, the soldiers were destroyed. The drums of devas were sounded, and flowers were showered down. All the devas, Hari, Brahma and the others, assembled. They devotedly prostrated themselves before the divinity Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds. O brahmanas! They joined their hands in salutation and praised him with many kinds of hymns. Pleased, Shiva himself comforted the brahmanas. Mahakala Maheshvara said, "Ask for a boon." Hearing this, all the brahmanas joined their hands in salutation. Full of devotion towards Shiva, they prostrated themselves, lowered their heads and spoke. The brahmanas said, "O Mahakala! O Mahadeva! O chastiser of the wicked! O lord! O Shambhu! O Shiva! Please grant us liberation from this ocean of samsara. O Shiva! For the protection of the world, please remain established here. O lord! O Shambhu! Always save those who see you." Thus addressed, Shiva remained in that beautiful pit, so that he might save

devotees and grant them a virtuous destination. The brahmanas obtained emancipation. From his form as a lingam, Shiva's region extends for one krosha in each of the four directions. Under the name of Mahakaleshvara, Shiva is famous in the world. O brahmanas! A person who sees him does not suffer from miseries, not even in his dreams. If a person worships the lingam with a specific desire, he obtains that desire. In the world hereafter, he obtains emancipation. O ones excellent in vows! I have told you everything about Mahakala's origin and greatness. What else do you wish to hear?'

Chapter 288-5(17) (Greatness of Mahakala Jyotirlingam Continued)

“The rishis said, 'O immensely intelligent one! Please tell us again about the greatness of Mahakala jyotirlingam, the one who protects devotees.’ Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! Lovingly hear about the greatness of Mahakala jyotirlingam, the one who is there to protect devotees. This enhances devotion. There was a great king in Ujjayini, known by the name of Chandrasena. He knew the truth about all the sacred texts. He had conquered his senses and was Shiva's devotee. O brahmanas! The gana Manibhadra was the king's friend. He was foremost among Girisha's ganas and was revered by all the worlds. On one occasion, Manibhadra, Indra among ganas and generous in intelligence, was pleased with him and gave him the great jewel Chintamani. This jewel was as radiant as Koustubha and its resplendence was like that of the sun. If one meditated on it, saw it or heard about it, it was certain to bring auspiciousness. If brass, copper, tin, stone or other objects touched its shining surface, they immediately turned into gold. With Shiva as his refuge and the dazzling Chintamani around his neck, King Chandrasena was as resplendent as Bhanumat [1013] amidst devas. Hearing that Chandrasena, supreme among kings, had Chintamani around his neck, the hearts of all the kings on earth were agitated because of their greed. All the kings were jealous of Chandrasena and his jewel, obtained through a divine source. They used their intelligence to devise many means to get it from him. All the kings attempted to ask Chandrasena for it. However, firm in his devotion to Mahakala, he repulsed the kings. All those kings were repulsed by Chandrasena. The kings from all those countries became angry. All those kings assembled the four kinds of forces. They made attempts to defeat Chandrasena in a battle. All of them assembled and consulted with each other. With many soldiers, they laid siege to Ujjayini's four gates. The king saw that all the kings had laid siege to his own city. He went and sought refuge with Mahakaleshvara. The king didn't eat. He was firm in his determination that there was no other option. Single-mindedly, he worshipped Mahakala day and night. Bhagavan Mahakala Shambhu was pleased in his mind and devised a means to protect him. Listen lovingly.'

'At that time, there was a gopi in that excellent city. O brahmanas! Taking her child with her, she roamed around and approached Mahakala. With her husband dead, she was carrying the child, who was five years old. Full of love, she saw the worship the king did of Mahakala. She witnessed that extremely great and wonderful worship done of Shiva. Prostrating herself, she returned to her own tent.

[1013] Surya.

The ballavi's[1014] son witnessed everything, full of curiosity. He made up his mind to worship Shiva too. He brought a stone and placed it in a vacant spot near the tent. It was not far from his own tent and devotedly, he regarded this as his own Shiva lingam. He thought of artificial fragrances, ornaments, garments, incense, lamps, akshata[1015] and naivedya. He repeatedly performed the worship with beautiful flowers and leaves. He danced in different kinds of ways and repeatedly prostrated himself. At such a time, when the son's mind was fixed on Shiva, the gopi lovingly called him to have his food. Though the child was called many times, his mind was fixed on worshipping Shiva. He did not wish to eat. She went there and saw him seated in front of Shiva, with his eyes closed. She struck him angrily and dragged him by the hand. Though he was struck and dragged, the child did not leave. Therefore, she destroyed the worship and flung the lingam far away. When she did this, her son lamented and reprimanded her. Full of rage, the gopi entered her own house again. Seeing that his mother had destroyed the worship of the divinity who wields the trident, the child fell down on the ground and lamented, "O lord! O divinity!" Overcome by grief, he lost his senses. He regained his senses after a while and opened his eyes. The child saw that, as a result of Shiva's favours, the tent was transformed into Mahakala's beautiful temple. There were large doors made out of gold. There were broad and excellent gates. There was an extremely expensive and radiant altar, made out of sparkling blue diamonds. There were many wonderful pots, made out of molten gold. There were shining pillars, encrusted with gems. The floor was made out of slabs of crystal. Right in the middle, there was a bejewelled lingam of Shankara, the ocean of compassion. The gopi's son saw that the objects he had used for the worship were also there. Seeing this, the child's mind was amazed, and he instantly stood up. It was as if he was immersed in an ocean of supreme bliss. He repeatedly praised Girisha and prostrated himself before him. When the sun set, the child emerged from Shiva's temple. He saw that his own tent had come to resemble Purandara's city. It had suddenly been converted into one that was made out of gold. It was wonderful and immensely radiant. He entered inside his house, which was filled with everything that was beautiful. It was strewn with large numbers of jewels and gold. He rejoiced. Night was about to start. He saw his mother there, resembling a celestial woman, with all the divine signs. Her limbs were radiant, decorated with bejewelled ornaments. She seemed to be a celestial lady. O brahmanas! The son, the recipient of Shiva's favours, was full of joy and quickly woke his mother up. Waking up, she saw these wonders, the likes of which had not been seen before. Immersed in great joy, she embraced her son.'

'She heard everything from her son's mouth to the effect that all this was because of the favours of Girija's husband. She sent word to her master,[1016] who was constantly worshipping Shiva. After completing the rituals of the night, the king quickly arrived there. He saw the powers of the gopi's son, consequent to satisfying Shiva. The lord of the earth and all the advisers and the purohita saw this. They were immersed in an ocean of supreme bliss. King Chandrasena's eyes shed tears of love. Rejoicing, he chanted Shiva's names and embraced the child. O brahmanas! There were great and wonderful festivities. All of them were overwhelmed with joy and chanted about Mahesha.

[1014] Ballavi means gopi, cowherdess.

[1015] Unhusked grain.

[1016] That is, the king.

Witnessing Shiva's greatness and this wonderful incident, the citizens were filled with respect and the night passed, as if it was only an instant. In the morning, the kings who had laid siege to the city, so as to fight, heard through their spies what had happened. All those kings assembled and gathered together. Scared at what they had heard, they spoke to each other. The kings said, "This king, Chandrasena, is Shiva's devotee and is impossible to defeat. The lord Mahakala is favourably disposed towards the city of Ujjayini. He is Shiva's devotee and even the children of the city follow Shiva's vratas. King Chandrasena is Shankara's great devotee. It is clear that if we oppose him, Shiva will be angry. His rage will bring destruction to all of us. Therefore, we must have an alliance with the king. If we do this, Mahesha will show us his compassion." Having decided this, the kings gave up their wicked enmity. Delighted, all of them cast aside the astras and shastras in their hands. Taking King Chandrasena's permission, they entered the beautiful city, protected by Mahakala. They happily worshipped Mahakala. The kings also went to the gopi's house. All of them praised the advent of her divine good fortune. Chandrasena welcomed them and honoured them. He was seated on an expensive seat and amazed, they honoured him back. They saw the Shiva lingam and Shiva's temple, which had manifested because of the favours of the gopi's son. Their minds turned completely towards Shiva. All the kings were delighted with the gopi's son. Desiring Shiva's compassion, they gave him many objects. All the kings made him the king over all the gopas who resided in their respective kingdoms,' 'At this time, worshipped by all the residents of heaven, the energetic Hanuman, the lord of vanaras, manifested himself there. At his arrival, the kings were filled with reverence. They stood up and bent down, images of humility and devotion. Worshipped, the lord of monkeys sat down in their midst. He embraced the gopi's son. He glanced towards the kings and spoke. Hanuman said, "O fortunate kings and all those who have bodies! Listen. For those with bodies, there is no destination other than Shiva. It is good fortune that the gopr's son witnessed Shiva's worship. Even if one worships Shiva without mantras, Shiva can be reached. He is supreme among Shambhu's devotees and has enhanced the fame of the lineage of gopas. He will enjoy all the objects of pleasure in this world. After the period of enjoyment is over, he will obtain emancipation. In the eighth generation of his lineage, there will be an immensely illustrious one named Nanda. As his son, he will obtain Krishna, who will be Narayana himself. From now on, this son of a gopa will be famous in the worlds and will be addressed by the name of Shrikara." O brahmanas! Hanuman, Anjani's son, is the lord of monkeys and is Shiva's form. Saying this, he cast a glance of compassion towards Chandrasena and all the kings. Cheerfully, he instructed Shrikara, the gopi's intelligent son, loved by Shiva, in methods of worshipping Shiva. O brahmanas! Hanuman happily did this. As Chandrasena, Shrikara and everyone else looked on, he vanished from the spot. All the lords of the earth rejoiced. Honoured back by Chandrasena, they took their leave from him and returned to wherever they had come from. The immensely energetic Shrikara was instructed by Hanuman. Along with the brahmanas, who knew about dharma, he worshipped Shambhu. The great king, Chandrasena, and Shrikara, the son of a gopa, were both filled with great joy and served Mahakala. After some time spent in worshipping Mahakala, King Chandrasena and Shrikara obtained the supreme destination. This is the nature of the Mahakala Shiva lingam, the destination of the virtuous. Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees, destroys the wicked in every possible way. This is a supreme and sacred secret and always brings happiness. I have narrated an account that ensures heaven and increases devotion towards Shiva.'

Chapter 289-5(18) (Greatness of Omkareshvara Jyotirlingam)

“The rishis said, 'O Suta! O immensely fortunate one! You have made us hear a wonderful account about the lingam known as Mahakala, the protector of his own devotees. O excellent one! Please tell us about the fourth jyotirlingam, Paramesha's Omkara, the destroyer of all sins.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! I will tell you about Paramesha's lingam, in the place known as Omkara. I will happily tell you. O supreme rishis! Listen. On some occasion, the illustrious sage, Narada, went to Shiva in the place known as Gokarna. Full of great devotion, the supreme sage went to Vindhya, the lord of mountains. The mountain worshipped him with a great deal of respect. It stationed itself in front of Narada and said, "Everything exists in me. There is nothing that does not exist in me." Narada heard the words Vindhya spoke, which were full of sentiments of pride. The destroyer of pride sighed and remained there. Vindhya asked, "Why have you sighed? What do you seek lacking in me?" Hearing this, Narada, the great sage, spoke the following words. Narada replied, "Everything exists in you. But Meru is loftier than you. It is classified as a deva, but you never are." Saying this, Narada went away to wherever he had come from. Vindhya lamented, "Shame on my life. I will perform austerities and worship Vishveshvara Shambhu." Having made up its mind, it sought refuge with Shankara. It happily went to the place known as Omkara. It fashioned Shiva's parthiva image there. For six months, it constantly worshipped Shambhu. Devoted to dhyana on Shiva, it did not move from the place where it was performing austerities. Seeing that Vindhya had tormented itself in this way, Parvati's husband was pleased. He displayed his own form, difficult for even yogis to see. He said, "I am pleased. Tell me what is in your mind. I am pleased with your austerities. I grant devotees what they desire." Vindhya replied, "O lord of devas! If you are pleased with me, please grant me the intelligence so that I can be successful in my desired task. You are always affectionate towards your devotees." Hearing this, for some time, Bhagavan Shambhu thought about it in his mind. "Vindhya is foolish in intelligence and desires this boon so that it can oppress others. What will I do? I must bestow a boon that brings auspiciousness. The bestowal of a boon must not lead to great hardship for others." Nevertheless, Shambhu bestowed that excellent boon. "O Vindhya, king of mountains! Do whatever you wish." At that time, devas and rishis, stores of purity, worshipped Shankara and said, "Please remain in this spot." Hearing the words of devas, Parameshvara was pleased. Delighted, he wished to be the reason for happiness in the worlds. The single lingam of Omkara is divided into two. In Pranava,[1017] Sadashiva is known under the name of Omkara. Parameshvara also exists in parthiva form. O brahmanas! Both grant devotees what they desire. Both bestow objects of pleasure and emancipation. Devas and rishis worshipped him. Having satisfied Vrishadhvaja, they obtained many boons. After this, the devas returned to their own respective abodes. O brahmanas! Vindhya became happier at having accomplished its own task and gave up its lamentation. If a person worships Shambhu in this way, he does not have to reside in a mother's womb. There is no doubt that he obtains the desired fruits.

[1017] That is, in the place in the shape of Pranava.

I have thus described everything about Omkara's power and fruits. After this, I will speak about the excellent lingam of Kedara.'

Chapter 290-5(19) (Greatness of Kedareshvara Jyotirlingam)

“Suta said, 'O brahmanas! Nara and Narayana are spoken of as Hari's avataras. In the region known as Bharata, they performed austerities in the hermitage of Badari. Shiva is subservient to his devotees. Requested by them, Shambhu arrived there every day in the form of a parthiva lingam, so that the worship might take place. In this way, Vishnu's two avataras worshipped Shambhu. The two devotees of Shiva, who were like his sons under dharma, did this for a long period of time. On one occasion, Parameshvara was pleased and told them, "I am pleased. Ask for a boon from me." When he himself told them this, Nara and Narayana spoke words that would ensure the welfare of the worlds. Nara and Narayana said, "O lord of devas! If you are pleased and if a boon is to be given, please remain here in your own form, so that Shankara himself can be worshipped." Hearing their words, Maheshvara Shankara remained there in the form of a jyotirlingam, in Kedara in the Himalayas. So that miseries and fear might be dispelled for everyone, he was worshipped by them. He did this to do a good turn to the worlds and to show himself to his devotees. Shambhu is himself present there and is known as Kedareshvara. If one sees him or worships him, he always bestows what is desired on devotees. In ancient times, devas was and rishis worshipped him there. When Maheshvara was pleased, they obtained the fruits they desired. The residents of Badari ashrama constantly worship Bhava. He always bestows what devotees wish for. From that day, if anyone devotedly worships Kedareshvara, it is impossible for him to be miserable, even in his dreams. When he saw the Pandavas, he resorted to his maya. He assumed the form of a buffalo and started to run away. When he was caught by the Pandavas, he remained with his face facing downwards. They caught hold of the tail and prayed to him repeatedly. He is stationed there in that form and is known under the name of Bhaktavatsala,[1018] Part of the head went to Nayapala and is stationed there in that form. He instructed that he should be constantly worshipped in that incomplete form. When he was worshipped, Shambhu himself bestowed boons on them. Having worshipped him, the Pandavas left happily. They obtained everything that their minds desired. They were freed from all miseries. Hara is himself constantly present in that kshetra and is known as Kedara. The subjects of Bharata worship him. If anyone gives a valaya[1019] there, he is loved by Hara. He approaches Hara's form and attains Hara's form. If one sees that form, one is freed from all sins. If a person goes to the forest of Badari, he becomes a jivanmukta. If one sees the forms of Nara, Narayana and Kedareshvara Shambhu, there is no doubt that one obtains a share in emancipation. Those devotees who die on the road to Kedaresha are also emancipation. There is no need to reflect on this. If one goes there, happily worships Kedaresha and drinks the water there, one does not have to undergo rebirth.

[1018] Literally, affectionate towards his devotees. Bhaktavatsala is another name for Kedareshvara and explains why the lingam is in the form of a hump. The incident with the buffalo occurred when the Pandavas were on their final journey.

[1019] A bracelet or a ring.

O brahmanas! In this land of Bharata, all beings who devotedly worship Nara, Narayana and Kedaresha are emancipated. He is the lord of everything, but he is especially the lord of this region. There is no doubt that Shambhu, known as Kedara, bestows everything desired. O supreme among rishis! I have thus told you what you asked me about. If one hears about this, all sins are dispelled. There is no need to think about it.'

Chapter 291-5(20) (Greatness of Bhimeshvara Jyotirlingam)

“Suta said, 'After this, I will tell you about the greatness of Bhimashankara. As soon as a man hears about this, he obtains everything that he desires. In the region known as Kamarupa, to ensure the welfare of the words and make people the recipients of fortune and happiness, Shankara himself took an avatara. O lords among sages! I will tell you about the reason why Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds, took an avatara. Listen lovingly. O brahmanas! Earlier, there was an immensely valiant rakshasa named Bhima. He caused misery to all beings and always destroyed dharma. He was the extremely strong son of Kumbhakarna and Karkati. When Kumbhakarna, who caused terror to the worlds, was killed by Rama, along with his mother, he resided on Mount Sahya. Along with her son, the rakshasi[1020] also resided on Sahya. O brahmanas! Bhima was crooked and terrible in valour. He caused misery to the worlds. On one occasion, while still a child, he questioned his mother, Karkati. Bhima asked, "O mother! Who is my father? Where is he? Who are you alone here? I wish to know everything. Please tell me the truth now." Thus asked by her son, the wicked rakshasi replied to her son. I will tell you. Listen. Karkati replied, "Your father was Kumbhakarna, Ravana's younger brother. The immensely strong Rama killed him and his brother. On one occasion, the rakshasa Kumbhakarna came here. O son! In those earlier times, he forcibly enjoyed me. The immensely strong one left me here and went to Lanka. I have not seen Lanka. I have resided here. My father's name was Karkata, and my mother was known as Pushkashi. My husband was Viradha, killed by Rama earlier. When my beloved husband was killed, I remained with my parents. My parents are now dead. A rishi reduced them to ashes. The great-souled Sutikshna was Agastya's disciple. When they went there to devour him, he used his excellent austerities to destroy them. Since that earlier occasion, I resided on this mountain, miserable and alone. I lived here, afflicted by grief. I was without support and without a refuge. At that time, the rakshasa who was Ravana's younger brother arrived here. He had intercourse with me. Leaving me, he went away. After that, you, the immensely strong and valiant one, were born. Having obtained a support again, I spent my time." Hearing these words, Bhima, terrible in valour, was enraged. He thought, "What will I do against Hari? He has killed my father and my maternal grandfather.[1021] He killed Viradha also and has caused many kinds of miseries. If I am a true son, I will make Hari suffer." Having made up his mind, Bhima left, to torment himself through great austerities directed towards Brahma.'

'With his mind fixed on dhyana, he performed those great austerities for one thousand years. He raised his hands up and stood on one foot, fixing his eyes on the sun. Bhima, the son of a rakshasa, remained in that posture. An extremely terrible energy rose up from his head.

[1020] Feminine of rakshasa.

[1021] That is, Pushkasi's father.

Scorched by this, devas sought refuge with Brahma. They devotedly prostrated themselves before the creator and used many kinds of hymns to praise him. All of them, including Vasava, informed him about their miseries. The devas said, "O Brahma! Because of the rakshasa's energy, the worlds are about to suffer. O Vidhatri! In truth, please grant the wicked one the boon he desires. Otherwise, all of us will be burnt down by his fierce energy. Therefore, please grant him what he wishes for and save all of us from destruction." Hearing their words, Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, went there, so as to grant him a boon. He addressed him in these words. Brahma said, "I am pleased. Ask for the boon that is in your mind." Hearing Vidhatri's words, the rakshasa replied. Bhima said, "O lord of devas! O one who is seated on a lotus! If you are pleased and if you wish to grant me a boon, please grant me unmatched strength." Saying this, the rakshasa prostrated himself before Brahma. Brahma gave him the boon and returned home. Having obtained unmatched strength from Brahma, the rakshasa returned home.'

'Bhima prostrated himself before his mother and proudly said, "O mother! Behold my strength now. I will cause great carnage among devas, headed by Shakra, even if Hari helps them." Saying this, Bhima first defeated devas, along with Vasava. Terrible in his valour, he ousted them from their positions and occupied them. When the immortals requested Hari, he defeated him also in a battle. Delighted, the daitya then started to conquer the earth. He first went to defeat Sudakshina, the lord and king of Kamarupa. There was an extremely terrible battle between the two. As a result of Brahma's powers and the strength of the boon, the asura defeated the great and extremely valiant king, though his refuge was Shiva. Bhima, terrible in his valour, defeated the lord and king of Kamarupa. He then bound him and struck him. O brahmanas! He seized his entire kingdom, and everything allied to it. The king was Shiva's servant. He loved dharma and was loved by Hara. The king was extremely devoted to dharma. Nevertheless, the wicked Bhima seized him, bound him in chains and imprisoned him in solitary confinement. There, the king created an excellent parthiva image. Desiring welfare, he started to worship Shiva. In his mind, he invoked Ganga through many means to perform bathing and other rites required for Shankara's worship. Following the norms decreed for a parthiva image, the excellent king undertook dhyana and other rites. He prostrated himself, used the mudras and an asana and chanted hymns. He happily did everything required to worship Shankara. He used his knowledge to perform japa with the panchakshara mantra, pre-fixed with Pranava. He did not find the time to do anything else. His wife was a virtuous lady, known by the name of Dakshina. The king's beloved also happily worshipped a parthiva image. The couple was single-minded in this worship of Shankara, who ensures welfare to devotees. They were constantly engaged in worshipping Shiva.'

'The rakshasa was deluded because of the boon and his insolence. He destroyed sacrifices and rites and said, "Let everything be given to me." O excellent rishis! With many soldiers who were evil-souled rakshasas, he brought the entire earth under this control. He destroyed the dharma of the Vedas, the dharma of the sacred texts, the dharma of the smriti texts and the dharma of the Puranas. He conquered and enjoyed everything himself. The devas, along with Shakra, and rishis suffered. Extremely miserable, brahmanas were expelled from the world. Along with Vasava, all devas, and rishis, were incapacitated. With Brahma and Vishnu leading them, they went and sought refuge with Shankara. They praised Shankara, who brings welfare to the worlds, with many kinds of hymns. Along the auspicious banks of the river Mahakoshi, they pleased him. They created a parthiva image and following the norms,

worshipped it. In due order, they praised him with many kinds of hymns and prostrated themselves. In this way, devas used hymns to praise Shambhu. Pleased, he addressed the gods in these words. Shiva said, "O Hari! O Vidhatri! O devas! O all the rishis! I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon. What do I have to do for you?" O brahmanas! Shiva spoke to them in these words. The devas clasped their hands, prostrated themselves and spoke to Shiva. The devas said, "O lord of devas! You know everything. You are established in the mind of every person. You are inside everyone and there is nothing that is not known to you. O protector! Nevertheless, listen. Following your command, we will tell you about our miseries. O Mahadeva! Please cast a glance of compassion towards us. There is a powerful rakshasa, the son of Karkati and Kumbhakarna. As the result of a boon he has obtained from Brahma, he constantly oppresses devas. Please slay the rakshasa named Bhima, who is causing these miseries. O Mahesha! O lord! Please show us your compassion. Please do not delay." All the gods spoke in this way to Shambhu, who is affectionate towards his devotees. He told devas, "I will kill him." Shambhu continued, "The king who is the lord of Kamarupa is my supreme devotee. O devas! Go and tell him that this task will be accomplished soon. The great king Sudakshina is the lord and king of Kamarupa. In particular, he is my devotee. Let him continue to worship me. The wicked daitya, known as Bhima, has obtained a boon from Brahma. But there is no doubt that I will kill the one who has made you suffer." After this, all the delighted gods left that place. They went and told the great king what Shambhu had said. After informing him, devas were filled with great delight. They, and all the maharshis, quickly returned to their own abodes.'

Chapter 292-5(21) (Origin and Greatness of Bhimeshvara Jyotirlingam)

"Suta affectionately went near his own devotee, along with welfare, Shiva his ganas. But he remained hidden. Meanwhile, the lord of Kamarupa started to immerse himself in deep dhyana, in front of the parthiva lingam. Someone went and told the king, "The king has started some abhichara against you." Hearing this, the rakshasa became angry. He seized a sword and rushed towards the king, desiring to kill him. Seeing the parthiva lingam there, the rakshasa thought, "He must be doing something with this. Therefore, I will use force to kill the king and destroy all his ancillary stuff." Thinking this, the extremely angry rakshasa spoke to the king. Bhima said, "O evil-souled king! What are you doing now? Please tell me the truth. Otherwise, it is certain that I will kill you." Hearing these words, the lord of Kamarupa quickly thought about this in his mind, full of faith in Shiva. "What is going to happen, is certain to happen. No one can counter it. Everyone is subject to prarabdha and Shiva is said to be the one who determines prarabdha. The compassionate Shankara is certainly present in this parthiva lingam. He will act for my sake. Who is this rakshasa? Where has he come from? It is true that he always acts according to the pledge he has made. Bhagavan Shiva is truthful to his pledge. The shruti texts have said that. 'If anyone causes terrible hardship to my devotee, there is no doubt that I will kill the wicked person, so as to protect him. [1022] Hence, resorting to his patience, he continued to perform dhyana on Shankara, the divinity. With devotion in his mind, the lord of the earth prayed. "I am your great king. Do what you will. I will tell him the truth. Please ensure my welfare."

[1022] This is Shiva's pledge.

Bound by the bonds of truth, the king thought this in his mind and addressed the rakshasa in slighting words. The king said, "I am worshipping the divinity Shankara, who protects his own devotees. He is without aberrations and is the lord of everything, mobile and immobile." Hearing the words of the lord of Kamarupa, Bhima's body trembled in rage, and he spoke the following words. Bhima said, "I know about your Shankara. What will he do to me? My father's brother [1023] kept him as a servant. Is your desire to win based on his strength? In that case, you will conquer everything. There is no need to think about it. Until I have seen Shankara, your protector, you can think of him as your lord and serve him. O king! However, once I have seen him, everything will become clear in every possible way. Therefore, keep this image of Shiva far away. Otherwise, there is no doubt that you will face a reason for fear now. I am terrible in my valour, and I will lay my fierce hands on your lord." Hearing these words, the lord and king of Kamarupa, whose faith in Shankara was firm, quickly addressed him in these words. The king said, "O vile one! O wicked one! I will never let go of Shankara. My lord is the best of all, and he will never leave me." Hearing the words of the king, whose atman was in Shiva, Bhima laughed. The rakshasa quickly replied to the king. Bhima said, "He is mad. He constantly begs. Does he know what he looks like? How can yogis be intent on protecting their devotees? Reflect on this in your mind and always maintain a distance. Your lord and I will fight." The best among kings was firm in his devotion towards Shambhu. He replied fearlessly to Bhima, who constantly brought miseries to the world. The king replied, "O evil-souled rakshasa! Listen. I am incapable of doing this. You have transgressed. How can you possibly be strong?" Thus addressed, he gathered his soldiers together and reprimanded the king.'

'He hurled his terrible sword towards the parthiva lingam. "Now behold your lord's strength, which brings happiness to devotees." Saying this, the immensely strong rakshasa laughed out aloud. O brahmanas! As soon as the sword touched the parthiva lingam, Hara manifested himself from within the parthiva lingam. "Behold. I am Bhimeshvara. For the sake of protecting, I have manifested myself. I have formerly taken the pledge that I will always protect my devotees. Therefore, swiftly witness my strength, which brings happiness to devotees." Saying this, he used Pinaka to slice the sword into two fragments. At this, the rakshasa hurled a trident. But Shambhu shattered the wicked one's trident into fragments. O brahmanas! He next hurled a spear towards Shambhu. Shambhu used his arrows to instantly shatter this into a hundred thousand fragments. He hurled a jagged javelin towards Shambhu. But Shiva used his trident to immediately reduce it to bits as small as sesamum seeds. Thereafter, there was an extremely terrible battle between the rakshasas and Shiva's ganas, causing grief to those who witnessed it. At that moment, everyone on earth was agitated. The oceans and all the mountains trembled. The devas and all the rishis were anxious. They told each other, "Our prayers to Shiva have been in vain." Narada arrived before Shankara, the destroyer of miseries. He lowered his head, joined his hands in salutation and prayed. Narada said, "Please pardon me. O lord! Please forgive me. You are causing confusion. Why use an axe when a blade of grass will do? Please kill him quickly." Thus entreated, the lord Shambhu used the weapon of humkara to reduce the large number of rakshasas to ashes. O sage! [1024] Shankara burnt down all the rakshasas in an instant. While all the devas watched, Shiva's rage swiftly burnt down the army of rakshasas,

[1023] That is, Ravana.

[1024] Used in the singular.

just as the fire from a forest conflagration burns down a forest. No one could see Bhima's ashes. He was burnt down, along with his companions. No one ever heard of his name again. O lords among sages! As a result of Shiva's favours, peace was obtained. Shakra and all the other devas and the entire world went back to their natural states. The blaze that arose from Mahesha's rage spread from forest to forest. The ashes of the rakshasas were scattered in all the forests. Many kinds of useful herbs originated from this. Using these ashes, men can change their garb. Bhutas, pretas and pishachas maintain their distance. O brahmanas! Using these ashes, there is no task that cannot be performed. The devas and sages especially requested Shambhu. "O lord! For the happiness of the worlds, please remain established in this place. This is an awful region that has brought miseries that cannot be fought against to people. If they see you, there will be welfare here. You will have the name of Bhimashankara and will ensure every kind of success. This lingam must always be worshipped and will counter every kind of sin." Shambhu, who brings welfare to the worlds, was requested in this way. The self-ruling one, affectionate towards his devotees, happily remained established there.'

Chapter 293-5(22) (Rudra's Arrival in Kashi)

“Suta uta said, 'O supreme rishis! Listen. After this, I will tell you about the greatness of Vishveshvara, who destroys great sins. Everything that can be seen in the world is only a material object. His nature is consciousness and bliss.[1025] He is without transformation and eternal. He is kaivalya, but he desired a second. In this way, the saguna form, known as Shiva, originated. He divided himself into two, differentiated as masculine and feminine. The masculine form is known as Shiva and the feminine form is spoken of as Shakti. Both of them, Purusha and Prakriti, were created from the form whose nature was consciousness and bliss. O supreme among sages! O brahmanas! The form from which they originated could not be seen. Unable to see their mother and father, Prakriti and Purusha were filled with great doubt. A voice arose from the nirguna paramatman. "For the sake of excellent creation, you must undertake austerities." Prakriti and Purusha replied, "O lord! O Shiva! A place does not exist for austerities. Following your instruction, where will we base ourselves, so as to undertake austerities?" At this, an auspicious energy spread, extending for five kroshas. This became a beautiful city, equipped with every possible object. Nirguna Shiva created it and sent it. It remained in the firmament, near Purusha. Desiring to create, Hari established himself there. Resorting to dhyana, he tormented himself through austerities for a very long period of time. As a result of his efforts, many streams of water started to flow. They enveloped the void, and nothing could be seen. Vishnu saw this and thought, "What is this wonderful thing that can be seen?" Seeing this wonder, he shook his head. At this, an earring fell down in front of the lord. From this, the great tirtha of Manikarnika[1026] originated. That expanse of five kroshas was floating in the flood of water. At that time, nirguna Shiva quickly held it up on his trident. Vishnu slept there, along with his wife Prakriti. Following Shankara's command, Brahma originated from the lotus in his navel. As a result of Shiva's instruction, he started on a wonderful act of creation. He created the cosmic egg, with its fourteen worlds.

[1025] Chidananda.

[1026] Literally, the jewel from the ear.

Sages have said that the expanse of the cosmic egg extended for fifty crore yojanas. "In this cosmic egg, bound by karma, how will beings obtain me?" Thinking this, he released Panchakroshi.[1027] "It is my view that this brings auspiciousness in the world and destroys karma. It manifests emancipation. Kashi leads to the bestowal of jnana. It is extremely loved by me. The lingam of Avimukta has been established by the paramatman himself. O one who have been born as my portion. You should never abandon this kshetra." Saying this, Hara himself released Kashika from his trident and brought it down on earth, in the world of the mortals. When Brahma's day ends, it is certainly not destroyed. O sages! Shiva holds it up on his trident then. O brahmanas! When Brahma starts on his act of creation again, it is re-established. It is understood to be Kashi because it drags out karma.[1028] The lingam of Avimukteshvara is always established in Kashi. It bestows emancipation on people, even they have committed great sins. O lords among sages! Sarupya and other forms of emancipation can be obtained elsewhere. But it is only here that living beings obtain sayujya, the best form of emancipation. Those who cannot find a destination find it in the city of Varanasi. Panchakroshi is extremely sacred and destroys the sin of killing crores of people. All the immortals desire a death here. What need be said of others? It bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation. It is always loved by Shankara. Brahma always praises it and so do Vishnu, siddhas, yogis, sages and all the others in the three worlds.'

'Even if I speak for one hundred years, I am incapable of describing everything about Kashi's greatness. Nevertheless, I will speak according to my capacity. The lord of Kailasa has tamas on the outside and sattva inside. He is nirguna. But assuming gunas, he is famous under the name of Kalagni[1029] Prostrating himself several times, he spoke the following words. Rudra said, "O Vishveshvara! O Maheshat There is no doubt that I belong to you. O Mahadeva! Please show me your compassion. I am your son and that of Amba. For the welfare of the worlds, please remain established here always. O protector of the universe! O lord of the universe! I am praying to you to be a saviour." Avimukta,[1030] controlled in his atman, beseeched him repeatedly. With tears of joy flowing from his eyes, he spoke to Shankara. Avimukta said, "O lord of devast O Mahadeva! O excellent medication against the ailments of time! You are truly the lord of the three worlds. You are served by Brahma, Achyuta and others. O divinity! Please accept the city of Kashi as your capital. For this unthinkable pleasure, I will remain here, immersed in dhyana. Other than you, there is no one else who can bestow emancipation, no one else who can grant wishes. Therefore, for the sake of welfare, always remain here with Uma. O Sadashiva! Save all beings from this ocean of samsara. O Hara! Please accomplish the task of the devotees. I am praying to you repeatedly." Vishvanatha Shankara was entreated in this way. For the welfare of the worlds, the one who rules over anyone remained there. The day Hara arrived in Kashi is the time from which Kashi became the best place of all.'

[1027] The expanse consisting of five (pancha) kroshas.

[1028] That is, destroys karma. Based on karshana, drawing out or dragging.

[1029] The fire of destruction.

[1030] Used here for Rudra.

Chapter 294-5(23) (Greatness of Kashi-Vishveshvara Jyotirlingam)

“The rishis said, 'O Suta! If the great city of Varanasi is sacred, please tell us about its powers and those of Lord Avimukta."

Suta replied, 'O lords among sages! Briefly, but properly, I will tell you about the extremely beautiful city of Varanasi and Vishveshvara's greatness. Listen. On one occasion, Devi Parvati was filled with great delight. Desiring the welfare of the worlds, she asked Shankara about the greatness of the two Avimuktas,[1031] Parvati said, "Out of compassion towards me and desiring the welfare of the worlds, you should tell me about this kshetra's greatness." Hearing Devi's words, the lord of the universe and the lord of devas replied to Bhavani, to ensure pleasure to all beings.' 'Parameshvara said, "O fortunate one! You have asked a virtuous question. This will bring happiness and auspiciousness to the worlds. I will accurately describe to you the greatness of the two Avimuktas. Varanasi is my most secret kshetra. To grant emancipation to beings, I am always present here. In this kshetra, siddhas have always resorted to my vratas. They have many different kinds of forms and always desire my world. There are some who have resorted to the supreme and great yoga of Pashupata, which the shruti texts describe as bestowing objects of pleasure and emancipation as fruits. They have conquered their atmans and have conquered their senses. O Maheshvari! Residing in Varanasi always appeals to me, giving up everything else. Listen to the clear reason for that. There are two kinds of people who obtain emancipation-my devotees and those who possess jnana. They do not need tirthas and what should be done and what should not be done is the same to them. Wherever they might die, they are jivanmuktas. They will certainly obtain emancipation. These are my conclusive words. However, there is something special about this supreme and excellent tirtha, known as Avimukta. O Devi! O supreme Shakti! With an excellent mind, listen. All the varnas and ashramas; children, young people and the aged, as long as they die in this city, there is no doubt that they are liberated. O brahmanas! [1032] Pure or impure; a virgin or married; a widow or barren; whether there are menstrual defects or not, irrespective of whether she has delivered and irrespective of whether she has been through samskaras, if a woman dies in this kshetra, there is no doubt that she is liberated. Those born from sweat,[1033] those born from eggs, herbs and plants and those born from wombs, when they die, their prospect of emancipation here is like that in no other place. O Devi! One doesn't have to depend on jnana. One doesn't have to depend on devotion. One doesn't have to depend on karma. One doesn't have to depend on donations. One doesn't have to depend on samskaras. One doesn't have to depend on dhyana either. One doesn't have to depend on chanting names. One doesn't have to depend on worship or good birth. My kshetra bestows emancipation on any human who resides here. When he dies here, it is certain that he will obtain emancipation. O beloved! Such is my divine city.

[1031] By the two Avimuktas is meant the city of Kashi and the Vishveshvara lingam.

[1032] Since this is being spoken by Shiva, this doesn't belong.

[1033] Worms and insects.

It is most mysterious among everything that is mysterious. O Parvati! Brahma and the others do not know about its greatness. That is the reason this great kshetra is known as Avimukta.[1034] In bestowing emancipation, it is superior to Naimisha and everything else. Truth is the dharma of the Upanishads. Moksha is what Upanishads talk about. The learned know that the kshetra of Avimukta represents the essence of all tirthas and Upanishads. A being may enjoy many kinds of desire and engage in many activities for pleasure as long as life is given up in Avimukta, it is said that there is liberation. It is better for a man to commit one thousand sins and become a pishacha than perform one thousand sacrifices and go to heaven, without having been to the city of Kashi. Therefore, every effort must be made to visit the city of Kashika. There, the sages meditate on Sadashiva in his unmanifest lingam. O beloved! A man undertakes austerities for the sake of fruits. But it is actually I who bestows all those fruits on him. People who give up their bodies here do not suffer from the bonds of karma. Having obtained sayuyjya with the paramatman, they subsequently obtain the desired destination. Brahma, along with devas and rishis, Vishnu, Divakara [1035] and the great-souled ones worship me and no one else. A man may be addicted to material objects or may not be interested in dharma. However, if he dies in this kshetra, he does not have to enter samsara again. What need be said of those without a sense of ownership, patient, based on sattva and devoid of insolence, those who do not begin anything without offering everything to me? After thousands of births, a person is born as a yogi. If he desires supreme emancipation, he should wish to die here. There are many lingams here, established by devotees. O Parvati! All of them yield objects of desire in this world and emancipation thereafter. It is said that in four directions, this kshetra extends for five kroshas. When a being dies here, it bestows immortality. If a person who has not committed a sin dies here, he obtains emancipation instantly. If a person who has committed a sin dies here, he has to go through several bodies. He experiences those hardships and obtains emancipation subsequently. If a man commits a sin in the kshetra known as Avimukta, it is certain that he has to go through pain for ten thousand years. O beautiful one! It is only after he has enjoyed the consequences of the sin that he obtains emancipation. I have thus told you about those who are inclined towards wicked conduct. Knowing this, a man must properly serve Avimukta. Even in hundreds of crores of kalpas, the fruits of karma are not exhausted. The fruits of karma performed, good or bad, must be enjoyed. Exclusively wicked deeds in this world lead to hell. Exclusively good deeds lead to heaven. A mix of the two is said to lead to birth as a human. O Maheshvaril The sections on karmakanda [1036] speak of three kinds of bonds of karma-sanchita, kriyamana and prarabdha. [1037] Everything accumulated across previous births is said to be sanchita. What this body is about to enjoy is spoken of as prarabdha. O Deveshi! There are good and bad deeds that are being performed in this birth, now. The learned know this as kriyamana. Prarabdha karma must be exhausted by enjoying the consequences. There is no other way. However, the other two kinds of karma can be destroyed through worship and other things. Other than in Kashi, all the kinds of karma cannot be destroyed. All the other tirthas are easy to reach. But the city of Kashi is extremely difficult to reach. If a person lovingly saw Kashi in a former life, then he can reach Kashi and die there in the present birth, not otherwise.

[1034] A place that grants emancipation (mukti).

[1035] The maker of the day, Surya.

[1036] Karmakanda usually means rites and rituals, as opposed to jnanakanda, the pursuit of jnana.

[1037] Respectively, accumulated, ongoing and matured.

If a man reaches Kashi and bathes in Ganga, sanchita and kriyamana karma are destroyed. It is certain that prarabdha karma cannot be destroyed without enjoyment. One dies and is reborn. That is the way it is exhausted. If a person has visited Kashi in the past [1038] and has committed a sin thereafter, the seed is so strong that he is taken to Kashika again. All the sins are then reduced to ashes. Therefore, to destroy their roots, a man must certainly go to Kashi. O beloved! If residence is arranged for even a single brahmana in Kashi, that is like the benefactor himself dwelling in Kashi. Therefore, he obtains emancipation. If a person dies in Kashi, he does not have to undergo rebirth. If he dies in Prayaga, as fruits, he obtains everything that he desires. If both were to be available in Prayaga, there would be no gains from Kashi. If both were to be available in Kashi, there would be no gains from Tirtharaja.[1039] Following my instructions and according to whatever occurs in his mind, Vishnu certainly creates newer and newer methods for obtaining siddhi.""

Suta concluded, 'O supreme sages! In this way, there are many aspects to the greatness of Kashi and Vishveshvara. They bestow objects of pleasure and emancipation on the virtuous. After this, I will speak about the greatness of Tryambaka. Hearing this, a man is instantly freed from all sins.'

Chapter 295-5(24) (Greatness of Tryambakeshvara and Goutama)

“Suta said, 'O best among rishis! Hear about an account that destroys sins. I will tell you what I heard from my guru, Vyasa. In earlier times, there was a supreme rishi, famous under the name of Goutama. His wife was named Ahalya, and she was supremely devoted to dharma. In the southern direction, there is the mountain known as Brahmagiri. [1040] For ten thousand years, he tormented himself through austerities there. O ones excellent in vows! On one occasion, there was a terrible drought that lasted for one hundred years. It brought miseries to people. Not a single moist sprout could be seen anywhere on the surface of the earth. No water, required for living beings to sustain life, could be seen. Sages, humans, animals, birds and deer fled in the ten directions. O brahmanas! On seeing this, the rishis spent that extremely terrible time immersed in pranayama and dhyana. 'For the sake of Varuna, Goutama himself engaged in auspicious austerities. For six months, he was immersed in pranayama. To bestow a boon, Varuna appeared before him and spoke the following words. "I am pleased with you. I will grant you a boon." Goutama prayed for rain. O brahmanas! At this, Varuna replied to the sage. Varuna said, "How can I oppose the command of devas? You know everything. Please ask for something I can do for you." Hearing these words of the great-souled Varuna, Goutama, who wished to do a good turn to others, replied in the following words. Goutama replied, "O lord of devas! If you are pleased and if I am to be given a boon, then you should give me what I have asked for. Since you are the lord of waters, you should give me water.

[1038] This might mean a former life or the present life. The text doesn't make it clear.

[1039] King of tirthas, a name for Prayaga.

[1940] This has to be the one in Nashik district in Maharashtra.

O lord of all devas! It should be eternal and divine, such that it always yields fruits." Thus requested by Goutama, Varuna said, "Dig a pit here." Thus addressed, he dug a pit that was the length of a hand. Varuna filled this with divine water. After this, deva Varuna, the lord of waters, spoke to the sage Goutama, the tiger among sages who was devoted to doing a good turn to others. Varuna said, "O great sage! This water will be eternal, and this place will become a tirtha. It will be famous on earth under your name. Donations, oblations, austerities, sacrifices to gods and shraddhas for ancestors will all be inexhaustible, as long as they are performed here." Saying this and praised by the maharshi, the deva vanished. Having been successful in helping others, the sage Goutama was happy. Seeking refuge with great men leads to greatness. However, only great people can see this nature, not inauspicious ones. A man obtains fruits that correspond to the person he serves. Superiority is obtained by serving the great. Inferiority is obtained by serving the inferior. It said that serving in a lion's den can lead to obtaining pearls as fruits. But it is said that serving in a jackal's den only leads to bones. The nature of excellent people is that they cannot tolerate the miseries of others. They counter it for others, even if they have to go through hardship themselves. Trees, gold, sandalwood and sugarcane exist on earth only for the sake of others. The accomplished do not behave otherwise. The four sacred pillars that support the earth are a kindly person, a person not touched by insolence, a person who helps others and a person who has conquered his senses. Thus, Goutama obtained water, so very difficult to get. Following the norms, he performed nitya and naimittika karma.[1041] For the sake of oblations, the lord amo among sages sowed vrihi, barley, nivara and many other things.[1042] There were many kinds of grain and many kinds of trees. There were many flowers and fruits there. Hearing this, thousands of other rishis arrived there. Many animals, birds and other living beings also arrived. On the earth's globe, that forest became beautiful. Since the water was perennial, there was no hardship on account of lack of rain. In the forest there, the rishis engaged in auspicious rites. Along with their disciples, wives and sons, many of them resided there. In the course of time, they sowed grain. Because of Goutama's powers, that forest was filled with joy.'

Chapter 296-5(25) (Goutama's Arrangements)

“Suta said, 'O brahmanas! On one occasion, Goutama sent his own disciples to fetch water. They faithfully went there, with their water pots. There were many wives of the rishis who had gone there for water. When the disciples went and reached the water, they saw them and restrained them. "We are wives of rishis. We will take if first. Go far away. You can take the water later." They reprimanded them in this way. They returned and reported this to the rishi's wife. The ascetic lady comforted them. She took them with her and went there. Taking the water herself, she gave it to Goutama. Using this water, the supreme rishi performed the rites every day. The angry wives of the rishis reprimanded her. Crooked in their minds, they returned to their own cottages. In front of their husbands, they reported the opposite of what had happened. Those wicked wives reported this accordingly.

[1041] Nitya karma consists of rites performed every day. Naimittika karma consists of rites performed on a special occasion and kamya karma consists of rites undertaken for desired fruits.

[1042] Vrihi is paddy and nivara is wild rice.

Under the control of their own karma, hearing their words, the supreme rishis became angry with Goutama. Angry and wicked in intelligence, they worshipped Ganesha with many kinds of offerings, desiring to create impediments for Goutama. Ganeshvara was pleased and appeared before them. Subservient to devotees and desiring to grant them fruits, he addressed them in these words. Ganesha said, "I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon. What will I do for you?" Hearing his words, the rishis spoke to him. The rishis said, "If a boon is to be given by you, let Goutama be expelled out of the hermitage. Please arrange it so that the rishis censure him." When they asked for this, the one with the head of an elephant laughed. The destination of the virtuous spoke to them cheerfully, so as to make them understand. Ganesha said, "O rishis! All of you listen. It is not right to do this now. Anger when no offence has been committed leads to harm. It is not good to cause misery to those who have done a good turn in the past. If such misery is inflicted, it leads to destruction. One strives for austerities to obtain excellent fruits. Discarding those auspicious fruits, one should not, on one's own, strive for what is injurious." The intelligence of those excellent sages was deluded. Therefore, hearing those words, they spoke the following. The rishis said, "This is what you must do, nothing else." Thus addressed, the deva Ganesha spoke the following words. Ganesha said, "A wicked person never becomes virtuous. A virtuous person never becomes wicked.' Brahma spoke these decisive words. Earlier, as a result of loss of food, you confronted hardships. It is maharshi Goutama who gave you this happiness. You now wish to inflict miseries on him. In this world, this is not right and must be reflected on, in every possible way. Deluded by the power of your wives, you are not acting in accordance with my words. There is no doubt that all this will lead to his welfare. The supreme rishi will again grant you happiness. Crossing him is not right. Please ask for another boon." Hearing the words of the great-souled Ganesha, the rishis did not pay any heed to what he said. Under the control of his devotees, Shiva's son spoke, indifferent towards those rishis, who desired something wicked. Ganesha said, "I will indeed do what you have asked for. What is going to happen, will certainly happen thereafter." Saying this, he vanished.'

'Goutama did not know about the wickedness of the sages. With a happy mind, along with his wife, he performed the nitya karma. O lords among sages! Hear about what happened as a result of the powers of the wicked rishis and their being given the boon. There was vrihi and barley in Goutama's field. Ganesha assumed the form of a feeble cow and went there. O supreme among sages! As a result of the boon, he went there, with his body trembling, and started to eat the vrihi and barley. As a result of destiny, Goutama arrived there at the time. The compassionate one tried to restrain the cow with a blade of grass. Touched by the blade of grass, the cow fell down on the ground and died instantly, while the rishi looked on. The rishis and the inauspicious wives of the rishis were hiding themselves there. All of them shrieked, "What has Goutama done?" O brahmanas! Goutama was amazed and distressed in his mind. He summoned Ahalya and spoke to her miserably. Goutama said, "O lady! What is this and how has it happened? Maheshvara must be angry. What is to be done? Where will one go? The sin of slaughter has presented itself." Meanwhile, the brahmanas reprimanded Goutama. The wives of the brahmanas caused sorrow to Ahalya with their harsh words. The evil-minded disciples and sons also reprimanded Goutama, uttering words of "Shame!" The rishis said, "Your face cannot be seen. Go. Leave this place. If one sees the face of a person who has killed a cow, one must immediately bathe, wearing one's clothes. As long as you are in the middle of the hermitage, the fire and the ancestors will not accept anything that we offer. Therefore, along with your family, go somewhere else. Do not delay. You have committed the sin of killing a cow." Saying this, all of them threw stones at

him. They caused him pain and addressed Ahalya in harsh words. Struck and reprimanded by those evil ones, Goutama spoke the following words. "O sages! I will leave this place and go and reside somewhere else." Saying this, Goutama left that spot. He took their permission and went and made his hermitage at a place that was one krosha away. "You cannot perform any rite as long as this curse is on you. You do not have any rights to any rites from the Vedas, meant for devas and ancestors." Goutama, the noble sage, was extremely miserable. After spending a month there, he requested the sages. Goutama said, "You should have compassion towards me. Please tell me what I should do. Please tell me how my sin can go away." Thus addressed, those brahmanas did not say anything. Thus asked, all of them got together and remaining in one place, spoke to each other. Goutama remained some distance away, his head humbly bowed down. Full of humility, he asked those excellent rishis, "What will I do now?" The rishis replied, "Until you are freed from the sin, you will never be purified. Therefore, to purify your body, you must perform prayashchitta. Circumambulate the earth thrice, proclaiming your sin out aloud. After that, return here and observe a vrata for a month. It is also ordained that if you go around. Brahmagiri one hundred and one times, you will be purified, Or go to Ganga and bathe there. Create one crore parthiva lingams of the divinity and worship them. When you bathe in Ganga thereafter, you will be purified. You can also go around this mountain eleven times and bathe a parthiva lingam with water from one hundred pots. That way too, you will be purified." When the rishis addressed him in these words, he agreed. "O best among sages! I will go around the mountain and worship a parthiva lingam. O illustrious ones! Please grant me permission." Saying this, the noble rishi circumambulated the mountain. The supreme sage then constructed a parthiva lingam and worshipped it. The virtuous Ahalya also did all this, while the disciples and the disciples of the disciples served both of them.'

Chapter 297-5(26) (Greatness of Tryambakeshvara)

“Suta, 'O brahmanas! Along with his wife, the rishi worshipped Shiva. Shiva was pleased and manifested himself, along with his ganas. Shiva, the ocean of compassion, was pleased and said, "O great sage! I am pleased with your excellent devotion. Ask for a boon." He saw the great-souled Shambhu's beautiful form. Delighted, he prostrated himself before Shankara and praised him. He prostrated himself and uttered words of praise several times. He then joined his hands in salutation and stood there. Goutama said, "O divinity! Please cleanse me of sin." Hearing the words of the great-souled Goutama, Shiva was pleased even more and addressed him in these words. Shiva said, "O sage! You are blessed. You have accomplished your objective. You have always been cleansed of sin. All those evil-souled ones have deceived you. When people see you, they become cleansed of sin. Since you are constantly devoted to me, how can you be a sinner? O sage! Those evil-souled ones have harassed you. They are sinners and wicked in conduct. They are like killers. On seeing them, others are also becoming sinners. Those who are ungrateful can never be saved." Saying this, the lord Shankara, who bestows happiness on the virtuous and punishes the wicked, told him in detail about their wicked conduct. Hearing Sharva's words, the rishi's mind was amazed. He devoutly prostrated himself before Shiva, joined his hands in salutation and spoke again. Goutama said, "O Mahesha! Those rishis have done me an immense good turn. Had they not done that, how would I have been able to see you? Blessed are those rishis. They have done something even more auspicious for me. As a result of their wicked conduct, my great selfish objective has been achieved." Hearing his

words, Maheshvara was pleased. Casting a compassionate glance towards him, he quickly replied. Shiva said, "O rishi! You are blessed. O Indra among brahmanas! You are best among rishis. Since you know that I am pleased, ask for an excellent boon." Goutama thought, "This is how things spread in this world. It cannot but be otherwise. That being the case, I must act in a worthy way." Having made up his mind, Goutama, best among sages and devoted to Shiva, joined his hands in salutation. He bowed his head down and addressed Shankara in these words. Goutama said, "O lord! What you have said is true. When five people do something, that becomes fact and there is no violation of that. What is going to happen, is bound to happen. O lord of devas! If you are pleased with me, please give me Ganga. Please do a good turn to the worlds. I prostrate myself before you. I bow down before you." Saying this, he clasped his lotus feet. Desiring the welfare of the worlds, Goutama prostrated himself before the lord of devas. The divinity Shankara had earlier extracted and saved the essence of earth and heaven. Brahma had given him[1043] part of this at the time of his marriage. Shambhu, affectionate towards his devotees, now gave the sage the rest, The water of the Ganga assumed a supreme feminine form.'

'The best among rishis bent down and praised her. Goutama said, "You are blessed. You are successful in your objective. You have purified the world. O Ganga! Please purify me. Otherwise, I am certain to descend into hell." Shambhu said, "Listen. You always do what is beneficial to everyone. O Ganga! Follow my command and purify Goutama." Hearing the words of Shambhu and Goutama, the purifying Ganga, full of devotion towards Shiva, spoke to Shiva. Ganga said, "O lord! After purifying the rishi and his family, I will return to my own abode. I am speaking the truth." Thus addressed by Ganga, Mahesha, affectionate towards his devotees and intent on the welfare of the worlds, again addressed Ganga in these words. Shiva said, "O goddess! You will remain here, until the advent of kali yuga, when Vaivasvata becomes the twenty-eighth Manu." Hearing the words of her lord, Shankara, Ganga, the supreme river who purifies, replied again. Ganga answered, "O lord! O Maheshvara! O destroyer of Tripura! If my greatness becomes more than anyone else, I will remain here. O lord! Listen to something else. O lord! In your beautiful body and along with Amba and your ganas, you must also remain here, near me." Hearing her words, Shankara, affectionate towards his devotees and intent on the welfare of the worlds, spoke to Ganga again. Shiva said, "O Ganga! Listen. I am not separate from you. Nevertheless, I will remain here, and you must also stay here." Hearing the words of Paramesha, her lord, Ganga was pleased in her mind and worshipped him.'

'Meanwhile, devas, ancient rishis, many tirthas and diverse kshetras arrived there. They uttered words of "Victory". All of them lovingly worshipped Goutam, Ganga and Girisha. All the immortals, Hari, Brahma and the others, joined their hands in salutation, lowered their shoulders and happily praised them. Ganga and Girisha were pleased and spoke to them. "O best among gods! We wish to bring you pleasure. Ask for a boon." The devas said, "O lord of devas! O best among rivers! If you are pleased with us, as an act of compassion towards us and for the pleasure of humans, remain here." Ganga replied, "For everyone's pleasure, why don't you also stay here? After cleansing Goutama, I will return to wherever I have come from. O gods! How can I be known to be distinct from you? If you can establish that, there is no doubt that I shall remain here."

[1043] Goutama.

All of them responded, "Guru is the best well-wisher for everyone. When Guru is in Simha rashi, there is no doubt that all of us will come.[1044] O supreme river! After purifying and cleansing the worlds for eleven years, we will become polluted. O beloved! O great goddess! Therefore, we will come to you to cleanse ourselves. Out of affection towards you, we are speaking the truth. O best among rivers! To show us a favour and for the pleasure of the worlds, please remain here with Shankara. As long as Guru is in Simha, we will also remain here. We will bathe in you thrice a day and see Shankara. When we do this, there is no doubt that we will be cleansed of all our sins. Taking your permission, we will then return to our own regions." Thus requested by them and by maharshi Goutama, Shankara lovingly remained there and so did the best among rivers. Ganga is named Goutami[1045] and the lingam is known as Tryambaka. Both of them became famous under these names and destroy great sins. Since that day, whenever Brihaspati enters Simha, all the tirthas and kshetras, all devas, all rivers and lakes, Ganga and the other rivers and Vasudeva and other devas remain on the banks of Goutami. As long as they remain there, they cannot yield fruits in their own regions. They regain those fruits when they return. The jyotirlingam is famous under the name of Tryambaka. It is instated along the banks of Goutami and destroys great sins. Full of devotion, if a person sees the jyotirlingam named Tryambaka, worships it, prostrates himself and praises it, he is freed from all sins. Goutama worshipped the jyotirlingam known as Tryambaka. In this world, it bestows every object of pleasure. In the other world, it bestows supreme liberation. O lords among sages! I have thus told you what you asked me about. There is no doubt that I will tell you whatever else you want to hear.'

Chapter 298-5(27) (Greatness of Tryambakeshvara Continued)

“The rishis asked, 'O lord! In the form of water, where did Ganga originate? Please tell us. How did she obtain her special greatness? O lord! Please tell us. The evil-souled brahmanas caused hardships to Goutama. What happened to them? O one whose guru is Vyasa! Please tell us that.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! When Ganga was requested by Goutama himself, she swiftly descended from Brahmagiri. The flow issued from the branches of an udumbara tree.[1046] Goutama, the famous sage, bathed there and rejoiced. There were other maharshis who were Goutama's disciples. They too arrived there and having bathed, were filled with delight. That place became famous under the name of Gangadvara, [1047] O supreme among sages! It is beautiful and as soon as one sees it, all sins are destroyed. The rishis who challenged Goutama arrived there to bathe. However, as soon as she saw them, she instantly vanished. Goutama quickly went there. He praised Ganga repeatedly, joining his hands in salutation and lowering his head. He spoke to her. Goutama said, "They were blind because of their insolence and prosperity. They may be virtuous, or they may not be virtuous. However, because of your sacred powers, you should show yourself to them." At this, Ganga's voice arose from the circle that is the firmament. O best among rishis! Listen to Ganga's excellent words. "They are evil-souled and ungrateful.

[1044] Guru (Brihaspati) is the planet Jupiter. That is, when Jupiter is in the constellation (rashi) Leo (Simha).

[1045] Goutami Ganga is another name for Godavari.

[1046] The fig tree.

They have injured their own lord. They are rogues and heretics. Their sight must always be avoided." Goutama replied, "O mother! Please listen to the great words Bhagavan uttered. You must make them come true. 'If a person does a good turn to a person who has injured him, I am purified by that. These are the words Bhagavan spoke." Hearing the words spoken by the sage, the great-souled Goutama, Ganga's voice again arose from the circle that is the firmament. "O rishi Goutama! You have spoken the truth, and these are auspicious words. Nevertheless, for the sake of protection, they must perform prayashchitta. Following your command and under your control, they must go around the mountain one hundred and one times. It is only then that these evildoers will have a right, especially to see me. O sage! I have spoken the truth." Hearing her words, all of them did exactly what she had said. Dejected, they begged Goutama, "You should pardon our crime." When they did this, obeying her commands, Goutama created the place named Kushavarta, just below Gangadvara.[1048] For his pleasure, she emerged from there again. Kushavarta became famous as an excellent tirtha. If a man bathes there, he becomes worthy of emancipation. He casts aside all his sins and obtains vijnana, which is so very difficult to obtain. Goutama and the other rishis met with each other. They were ashamed because of their former ungratefulness.'

The rishis said, 'O Suta! We have heard you tell us about a different account, how the angry Goutama cursed the brahmanas.[1049] Please enlighten us about this.'

Suta replied, 'O brahmanas! That is also true. These differences occur because incidents have occurred in different kalpas. O ones excellent in vows! I will specifically tell you about that account too. The great-souled Goutama saw that the rishis were suffering on account of famine. He performed extremely difficult austerities, dedicated to Varuna. Varuna devised an inexhaustible supply of water for him. On the basis of this, he had a lot of vrihi and barley sown. O supreme among sages! In this way, Goutama did good turns to others. Through the strength of his austerities, he arranged for food for them. On one occasion, the wicked wives felt insulted over water. They angrily addressed their husbands in words that were full of envy towards Goutama. With their minds turning away from him in this way, the brahmanas created an artificial cow. Crooked in their minds, they made it feed on the grain. Seeing that the cow was eating up his own grain, Goutama gently struck it with a blade of grass, so as to restrain it. As soon as the cow was touched by the blade of grass, it fell down on the ground. O brahmanas! Because of the control of karma, it died instantly. All the crooked rishis gathered together and said, "Goutama has killed a cow." Goutama was scared since he had killed a cow. Along with the lady Ahalya and his disciples, who were devoted to Shiva, he wondered. When he got to know the truth about the cow, Goutama was filled with rage. Goutama, supreme among sages, cursed all those rishis. Goutama said, "All of you are evil-souled. In particular, you have caused me misery. I am always devoted to Shiva.

[1047] Gangadvara means door of the Ganga, or gate of the Ganga. Gangadvara is usually identified as Haridvara. But this Gangadvara is clearly different.

[1048] Kushavarta tirtha or Kushavarta kunda is adjacent to Tryambakeshvara. This is the place where Godavari re-emerges, after disappearing into Brahmagiri.

[1049] For example, in the Brahma Purana.

Therefore, you will always turn away from the Vedas. From now on, you will no longer have any faith in the virtuous path spoken about in the Vedas, especially the path of being Shiva's devotee, which leads to emancipation. From now, you will have faith in wicked paths. You will always be expelled from the path of emancipation and will always be outside the pale of the shruti texts. From now on, your foreheads will be smeared with mud. O brahmanas! With your foreheads smeared in mud, you will descend into hell. You will no longer have Shiva as your single divinity. Shiva is without a second, but you will treat him on par with other devas. You will no longer have any love for rites connected with Shiva's worship, for devotees immersed in Shiva, or for any of Shiva's parvas. Today, I have invoked a curse on you, one that will cause you misery. Let it always apply to your descendants too. O brahmanas! Your sons, grandsons and others will not be Shiva's devotees. Along with your sons, you will certainly reside in hell. After that, you will become chandalas and suffer from sorrow and poverty. All of you will be deceitful, indulging in criticizing. You will therefore be marked with hot coins.[1050] In this way, Goutama cursed all the sages and returned to his own hermitage. He was devoted to Shiva and became extremely pure. O brahmanas! All those rishis were distressed in their minds. Expelled from the dharma of being Shiva's devotees, they resided in Kanchi, [1051] All their sons were also expelled from the dharma of being Shiva's devotees. In the forthcoming kali yuga, many of them will be born as crooked people. O supreme among sages! I have thus spoken about the entire account. O wise ones! All of you have lovingly heard the earlier account too. I have spoken to you about the origin of the river Goutami and its excellent greatness. It is supreme and destroys all sins. I have described the greatness of Tryambaka jyotirlingam. When one hears about it, there is no doubt that one is freed from all sins. I will next speak to you about the greatness of Vaidyanatheshvara jyotirlingam. Hearing about it destroys sins.'

Chapter 299-5(28) (Greatness of Vaidyanatheshvara Jyotirlingam)

“Suta said, 'Ravana was the best among rakshasas and was respected. With respect and devotion, he worshipped Hara on Kailasa, supreme among mountains. Though the worship continued for a long time, Hara was not pleased. To please Shiva, he then embarked on other austerities. On the slope of Mount Himalaya, there is a spot known for bestowing siddhi. This is amidst a clump of trees towards the south. The prosperous Poulastya Ravana 1052 dug a pit in the ground there. O brahmanas! He established a sacrificial fire there. He instated Shiva near this and offered oblations into the fire. In the summer, he stationed himself in the middle of five fires. During the rains, he slept on the bare ground. In the winter, he remained in water. These are the three kinds of austerities he undertook. Despite his performing many austerities, Mahesha, the paramatman, was not pleased. Evil-souled ones find it difficult to worship him. The great-souled Ravana, the lord of the daityas, then started to slice off his heads and used these to worship Shankara. As he severed each head, he followed the norms and worshipped Shiva.

[1050] As punishment, on the forehead.

[1051] Kanchipuram.

[1051] Ravana was the son of Vishrava, who was the son of Pulastya.

In this way, in due order, he cut off nine heads. When only one head was left, Shankara was pleased. Affectionate towards his devotees, he was satisfied and manifested himself. The lord healed the heads that had been severed earlier. He granted his wish of supreme and unmatched strength. Ravana, the rakshasa, thus obtained his favours. He lowered his shoulders, joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Shiva Shambhu. Ravana said, "O lord of devas! If you are pleased with me, I will take you to Lanka. I have sought refuge with you. Please make my wish come true." When Shambhu was addressed by Ravana in this way, he faced a great difficulty. His mind wavering, he replied. Shiva said, "O best among rakshasas! Listen to the substance of my words. With great devotion, take my excellent lingam to your own house. However, if you place the lingam down on the ground, it will remain stationary in that spot. There is no doubt about this. Do what you will." Shambhu told Ravana, the lord of rakshasas, this. He agreed to this and taking the lingam with him, proceeded towards his own residence. As a result of Shiva's maya, he felt like passing urine along the way. Lord Ravana, born in the Poulastya lineage, was incapable of resisting this. He saw a gopa there and requested him to hold the lingam. When a muhurta passed, the gopa suffered. Oppressed by the weight, he placed it down on the ground. The lingam was made out of the essence of the vajra and remained stationary there. It yields everything desired. If one sees it, all sins are destroyed. O sage![1053] This lingam is named Vaidyanatheshvara. It is famous in the three worlds and bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation on the virtuous. This is the best among all the jyotirlingams. If one sees it, or worships it, all sins are destroyed. It is divine and excellent and enhances objects of pleasure. For the welfare of all the worlds, that lingam remained stationary there. Having obtained a great and excellent boon, Ravana returned to his own residence. Happy, the great asura told his beloved everything that had happened. Hearing this, all the devas, Shakra and the others, and the sages consulted each other. Their sparkling minds were devoted to Shiva. O sage! At that time, all the gods, Hari, Brahma and the others, arrived there. Extremely happy, they performed the worship. The gods saw that it was directly established there. They addressed it as Vaidyanatha, bowed down and returned to heaven.'

The rishis said, 'The lingam was established there, and Ravana went home. O father! What happened after that? Please tell us in detail.'

Suta replied, 'Having obtained the great and excellent boon, Ravana returned home. Delighted, the great asura told his beloved everything. O lords among sages! Hearing this, all the devas, Shakra and the others, and the sages became anxious and spoke to each other. The devas and others said, "The evil-souled Ravana hates devas. He is crooked and wicked in intelligence. Having obtained a boon from Shiva, he will inflict miseries on us. What will we do? Where will we go? What will happen next? If a wicked person obtains skills, what can he not accomplish?" In this way, the gods, Shakra and the others, and the sages were miserable. Dejected, they invited Narada and asked him. The devas said, "O supreme sage! You are capable of accomplishing every task. O devarshi! Devise a means to free devas of their misery. Ravana is extremely wicked. What will he not do? Where will we go now? We are suffering because of a wicked person." Narada replied, "O devas! Cast aside your sorrow. I will do what is needed. Through Shankara's favours,

[1053] In the singular.

I will accomplish the task of devas." Saying this, the devarshi went to Ravana's abode.' When he reached, he was honoured with every kind of welcome and spoke affectionately. Narada said, "O supreme among rakshasas! You are blessed. You are a noble devotee of Shiva's, intent on austerities. O Ravana! On seeing you, my mind is rejoicing now. Tell me everything about what you did and you worshipped Shiva." Thus asked, Ravana spoke these words. Ravana answered, "O great sage! I went to Kailasa to undertake austerities. There, I tormented myself through terrible austerities for a very long period of time. O sage! When Shankara was not pleased, I returned to a clump of trees and performed austerities again. In the summer, I was in the middle of five fires. During the monsoon, I slept on the bare ground. In the winter, I remained inside water. I performed these three kinds of austerities. O lord among sages! In this way, I performed these fierce austerities. But even then, Shankara was not pleased with me. As a result of this, I became angry and dug a pit in the ground. I instated a sacrificial fire there and fashioned a parthiva lingam. Following the norms, I worshipped Shambhu with fragrances, sandalwood, incense and many kinds of naivedya. To please Shankara, I prostrated myself and used sacred hymns, singing, dancing, the playing of musical instruments and the symbolic offering of my mouth and fingers. O sage! I used these and many other means sanctioned by the sacred texts to worship Bhagavan Hara. But even then, Bhagavan Hara was not satisfied and did not manifest himself in front of me. Since my austerities were unsuccessful, I was dejected, 'Shame on my body and strength. Shame on my efforts at austerities.' Saying this, I offered many oblations into the fire that had been instated. Then I thought, 'I will offer my own body into the fire.' I severed my heads and offered them into that purifying blaze. I severed them one by one and purified them in this way. I offered nine such heads to Shankara. O supreme among rishis! When I was about to sever the tenth head, Hara himself appeared before me, in the form of a mass of radiance. Affectionate towards his devotees and delighted, he immediately spoke to me. 'I am pleased. Tell me. I will give you the boon that your mind wishes for.' Maheshvara glanced towards me and said this. Full of great devotion, I clasped my hands, prostrated myself and praised him. I said, 'O lord of devas! If you are pleased, what cannot be achieved by me? If this is the case, please grant me unmatched strength.' When Shiva is satisfied, full of compassion, he bestows everything. He spoke words of assent, granting me what my mind wished for. His favourable glance is invincible and is superior to the best of vaidyas. When the paramatman looked at me, my heads were affixed again. In this way, my body became just what it had been earlier. Through his favours, I obtained all these fruits. Requested by me, Vrishadhvaja remained there. He is named Vaidyanatheshvara and is famous in the three worlds. Maheshvara is in the form of the jyotirlingam and if one sees him, or worships him, one obtains objects of pleasure and emancipation. He brings welfare to all the worlds. Specifically, I worshipped that jyotirlingam. Having prostrated myself, I returned, to conquer the three worlds." Hearing his words, devarshi was alarmed.'

'However, laughing in his mind, Narada spoke to Ravana. Narada said, "O best among rakshasas! Listen. I will tell you something that is beneficial for you. You should act in accordance with my words and not otherwise. You just told me that Shiva bestowed all this on you for your welfare. But you should never accept what he said to be true. When he is in one of his aberrations, there is nothing he does not say. It may not be true. You are dear to me. How will one know it is true? For your own welfare, you should again go there and do the following. You should make efforts to raise up Kailasa. If you are able to raise up Kailasa, then there is no doubt that you have been successful in every possible way. Set it

back where it was and happily return. When this has been certainly determined, do as you wish." Deluded by destiny, Ravana took these words to be beneficial for him. Taking the sage's words to be true, he went to Kailasa. Having gone there, he raised the mountain up. Everyone on the mountain suffered a catastrophe and fell over each other. Seeing this, Girisha asked, "What is this?" Girija laughed and replied to Shambhu. Girija said, "These are the fruits of having a good disciple. This is indeed a true disciple. Such unmatched strength has been bestowed on an excellent hero, possessing a serene atman." Maheshvara heard Girija's words, which were laced with sarcasm. He thought that Ravana was ungrateful and insolent because of his strength. Therefore, he cursed him. Mahadeva said, "O Ravana! You are an evil devotee. You are evil-minded. Give up the insolence you possess. Soon, there will be a person who will rob your hands of their insolence." Narada heard everything that happened there. However, Ravana was also pleased in his mind and returned to his residence, where he had come from. Deluded by his strength, he was now supremely confident about his strength. Therefore, Ravana, the destroyer of the insolence of others, brought the universe under his control. As a result of Shiva's command, he obtained great energy and divine weapons. There was no warrior who could counter Ravana in a clash. I have thus told you about the greatness of Vaidyanatheshvara. Hearing about this, the sins of men are reduced to ashes.'

Chapter 300-5(29) (Depredations of Rakshasas in Darukavana)

“Suta said, 'I will now tell you how the paramatman's supreme and excellent jyotirlingam, known as Nagesha, originated. There was a rakshasi named Darukaa, insolent because of a boon obtained from Parvati. Her husband, Daruka, was supreme in strength. Along with many other rakshasas, he created carnage among the virtuous. He destroyed sacrifices and dharma in the worlds. Along the shores of the western ocean, there was a forest that was prosperous in every possible way. In every direction, it extended for sixteen yojanas. Whenever Darukaa went to the forest for her own pleasures, the ground there was covered with trees and every other kind of accompaniment. Devi gave Darukaa that forest, to look after it. Therefore, as she willed, she went to that forest, along with her husband. They remained there and caused fear to all the others who were there. Because of Daruka rakshasa and his wife, Darukaa, all the people suffered. They went and sought refuge with Ourva. With special joy, they lowered their heads down and spoke. The people said, "O maharshi! Please grant us refuge. Otherwise, the wicked ones will kill us. You blaze in your energy and are capable of doing everything. Other than you, there is no one else on earth who can offer us refuge. When we are stationed near you, we are happy. On seeing you, all the rakshasas run a long distance away. Shiva's blazing energy always radiates in you." In this way, the people entreated Ourva, supreme among sages. They were grieving and said, "Please grant us refuge. Save us." Ourva replied, "The rakshasas may be supremely strong. But if they cause violence to other beings on earth, they will lose their own lives. When sacrifices are destroyed, all the rakshasas will lose their lives. I am speaking the truth." Having spoken these words, he reassured the subjects again. For the welfare of the worlds, Ourva performed many kinds of austerities. The devas got to know about the reason behind the curse. Therefore, they made efforts to fight against the enemies of devas. With many weapons, Shakra and all the other gods made many kinds of efforts and arrived to fight.’ Seeing this, the rakshasas resorted to great consultations. All of those wicked ones stationed themselves there and spoke to each other. The rakshasas said, "What should be

done? Where will we go? A difficulty has presented itself. We are fighting and are being killed. They are fighting and are not being killed. If we remain here, what will happen among ourselves? There are miseries in everything. How can this be countered?" Daruka and the others reflected in this way. Unable to think of a means, they were constantly miserable. Rakshasi Darukaa also got to know that a calamity had presented itself. Therefore, she spoke about the boon granted by Bhavani. Darukaa said, "When I worshipped her earlier, Bhava's wife bestowed a boon on me. If you so wish, you can come to the forest with me. I obtained a boon from her. How can we tolerate this misery? Let the rakshasas be taken to the forest that is in the water [1054] and remain there happily." Hearing the rakshasi's words, the rakshasas were filled with joy. They lost their fear and spoke to each other. "She is blessed. Our queen has been successful in saving our lives." All of them bowed down before her and spoke affectionately. "If we possess the strength to go, why are we discussing whether to go? O queen! We will go there and always reside happily in the water." There were people who had suffered many miseries on account of the rakshasas earlier. Meanwhile, they arrived there, to fight alongside the devas. Suffering from all these, they resorted to Bhavani's strength.'

"They took everything to the city that was land in the middle of water. The rakshasi praised Devi and uttered words of "Victory". She flew in the sky, like mountains with wings.[1055] Without any fear, all of them remained there, in the middle of the ocean. All the companions of Shivaa's follower rejoiced. They remained inside the city in the water and amused themselves. Having obtained happiness, the rakshasas gave up their fear. The rakshasas never came to earth. Scared of the sage's curse, they remained in the water. They seized people travelling in boats and took them to the city. They hurled some of them into prisons in the city and killed some of them. Because of the boon granted by Bhavani, the rakshasas were fearless. Remaining there, they started to cause sufferings again, wherever they could. Earlier, people constantly faced fear on land. O lords among sages! Now they constantly faced fear in the water. Sometimes, the rakshasi emerged from the city in the water. She obstructed the path. Standing there, she made people on land suffer. Meanwhile, many beautiful boats arrived there and all of them were full of people everywhere. Seeing these boats, the rakshasas were delighted. Those crooked ones quickly rushed there and seized them. Those immensely strong ones brought them to the city. They hurled them into prisons and bound them up in strong fetters. There were people who were fettered in bonds inside those prisons. They were extremely miserable and were repeatedly censured.'

'Among them, there was a vaishya named Supriya. He was auspicious in conduct and always devoted to Shiva. He was loved by Shiva. He never remained without worshipping Shiva. He followed Shiva's dharma in every possible way, wearing bhasma and rudraksha as ornaments. When he could not perform the worship, he did not eat. There too, the vaishya engaged in worshipping Shiva. O supreme among rishis! In that prison, he taught many people how to worship Shiva using a parthiva lingam. According to their own desires, all of them worshipped Shiva. They used many modes, depending on what they had seen and what they had heard. While they were there, some of them sat in excellent asanas and immersed themselves in dhyana. Some of them delightedly worshipped Shiva in their minds.

[1054] Clearly, there was an island.

[1055] Before Indra severed their wings, mountains possessed wings.

O lords among sages! Their leader created a parthiva lingam, followed the norms and directly worshipped Shiva. There were others who did not know about the methods. They remembered the supreme mantra "Namo Shivaya" and immersed themselves in meditating on Shankara. There was the noble vaishya named Supriya, loved by Shiva. In his mind, he performed dhyana and worshipped Shiva. In whatever form he was addressed, Shambhu directly accepted everything. He[1056] himself did not know that everything was accepted by Shiva. O lords among sages! In this way, as the vaishya worshipped Shiva, six months passed without any impediments. O best among rishis! With attentive minds, hear about what the one with the moon on his crest did next.'

Chapter 301-5(30) (Greatness of Nageshvara Jyotirlingam)

“Suta said, 'On one occasion, one of the evil-souled rakshasa's attendants saw Shankara's beautiful form in front of him. He went and informed the king of rakshasas the nature of what he had seen. He told him everything about that wonderful account. The king of rakshasas, Daruka, quickly arrived there. Though he was strong, he was agitated and asked about Shiva. Daruka asked, "O vaishya! Who are you meditating on? In front of me, speak the truth. If you do so, you will not be killed. There will be no violation of my words." He replied, "I do not know." Hearing this, the rakshasa became angry and sent rakshasas, asking them to kill him. Instructed by him, they swiftly went there to kill him, with many types of weapons. Seeing them arrive, the eyes of the tiger among vaishyas displayed his fear. But his mind was fixed on Shankara. He cheerfully remembered Shiva and repeatedly chanted his names. The lord of vaishyas said, "O Shankara! O lord of devas! O Shambhu! O Shiva! Please save me. O destroyer of the wicked! O lord of the three worlds! O slayer of the crooked! O one who is affectionate towards his devotees! You are everything I have now. You are my divinity. I am under your control. I belong to you. O lord! My life is always immersed in you." When he prayed in this way, Shambhu emerged from a cavity. He was inside an excellent residence with four doors. In the midst of this, Shiva's form was that of a mass of radiance. He was with his attendants. On seeing him, he[1057] worshipped him. Worshipped in this way, Shambhu was pleased. He gave him the weapon named Pashupata. He himself killed the bulls among rakshasas and all their followers and destroyed their equipment. It was wonderful. Shankara protected his own devotee and killed the wicked. Having killed all of them, he bestowed a boon on the forest. Shambhu is extremely wonderful in what he does and in his own pastimes, assumes bodies. "In this forest, the dharma of the varnas, brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras will always be observed. The best among sages will be here, never with tamas qualities. They will propound Shiva's dharma and practice Shiva's dharma." At this time, the rakshasi known as Darukaa, who was distressed in her mind, praised Devi Parvati. Pleased, Devi asked, "What will I do?" She replied, "Please save my lineage again." She [1058] said, "I will protect your lineage. I am speaking the truth." Saying this, she quarrelled with Shiva. Shiva saw that Devi was angry. However, the lord was bound by the boon he had conferred. Therefore, he cheerfully said, "Do what you wish to."

[1056] Supriya.

[1057] Supriya.

[1058] Parvati.

Parvati was extremely happy to hear the words spoken by her husband, Shankara. She smiled and spoke these words. Parvati said, "Your words will come true when it is the end of the yuga. Until then, it is my view that creation should possess the qualities of tamas, O Shival Otherwise, dissolution might take place right now. O lord! You should prove that the words spoken by me will come true. I belong to you, and you are my refuge. This rakshasi Darukaa is actually a devi and is my Shakti. She is strongest among all the rakshasis. Let her rule over a kingdom of rakshasas. These wives of rakshasas will give birth to sons. It is my view that all of them should reside in this forest together." The lord heard the words spoken by Parvati, his wife. Pleased in his mind, Shankara spoke the following words. Shankara said, "O beloved! If you say so, please listen to my words. To protect devotees, I will happily remain in this forest. Whoever is seen to cheerfully establish the dharma of varnas here, will become the emperor. Otherwise, when kali yuga is over and a new satya yuga starts, there will be a lord of men famous under the name of Virasena, Mahasena's son. He will be extremely valiant. He will be my devotee and will be able to see me. When he sees me, he will become an emperor." In this way, the couple laughed and spoke to each other. O brahmanas! They themselves remained in that place and brought greatness to it. In the form of the jyotirlingam, Shiva came to be named Nageshvara. Devi Shivaa became Nageshvari. Both are loved by virtuous people.'

The rishis asked, 'How will Virasena go to Darukavana? How will he worship Shiva? O immensely intelligent one! Please tell us that.'

Suta said, 'In the beautiful region of Nishadha, Virasena was born in a kshatriya lineage,[1059] He was the son of Mahasena and was loved by Shiva. With a parthiva lingam, he worshipped Isha. Virasena performed extremely difficult austerities for twelve years. The lord of devas was pleased at this. Shankara manifested himself and spoke. "Make a wooden boat that is in the shape of a fish and smear it with the metal, tin. O Virasena! I will create Yogamaya and give her to you. Accept her. With her and your men enter the boat. Use that to go and enter the cavity I created. Enter the place and worship Nageshvara. You will obtain Pashupata there. Use that to slay the rakshasi and others. When I have cast a favourable glance towards you, nothing untoward will happen to you. Parvati's strength will be complete. Others who are in the forest in the form of mlecchas will turn auspicious." Shankara, who takes away miseries, told Virasena this. Having shown great compassion, the lord vanished from the spot. In this way, Shiva, the paramatman, conferred a boon and there is no doubt that he [1060] became capable of doing everything. In this way, the divinity originated as Nageshvara, the lord of all the jyotirlingams. In the form of the jyotirlingam, he satisfies all the desires in the three worlds. If a person lovingly hears about Nagesha's origin all the time, he obtains everything that he wishes for. He becomes intelligent and his sins are destroyed.'

[1059] When Shiva spoke to Parvati, this was in the future tense. By the time Suta spoke to the sages, the incident belonged to the past tense.

[1060] Virasena.

Chapter 302-5(31) (Greatness of Rameshvara)

“Suta said, 'After this, I will speak about the lingam known as Rameshvara and about how it originated earlier. O rishis! Listen lovingly. Earlier, Vishnu, loved by the virtuous, assumed an avatara on earth. O brahmanas! Ravana, extensive in his use of maya, abducted Sita. He took Janaka's daughter to his own residence in Lanka. Searching for her, he arrived at the city known as Kishkindha. Becoming Sugriva's friend, he killed Vali. He remained there for some time, searching for her. He held consultations with Sugriva, Lakshmana and others. The son of the king sent the monkeys in the four directions. Hanuman was the foremost amongst the one who were sent to search her out. The supreme monkey went to Lanka. From his mouth, Raghava[1061] got to know that Sita had been taken to Lanka. He also received Sita's crest jewel and was delighted. O brahmanas! Along with the lord among monkeys,[1062] Lakshmana, the leader Sugriva and a sacred force of strong vanaras who numbered eighteen padmas,[1063] Rama went to the shores of the ocean. The salty ocean can be seen in the southern direction. Rama went there and stationed himself on the shore. Loved by Shiva, he was served by Lakshmana and the vanaras. "Alas! Where has Janaki gone? When will I go and meet her? This army of vanaras must be made to cross the fathomless ocean. The rakshasa who held up the mountain[1064] is extremely strong and valiant. His fortress, known as Lanka, is impossible to penetrate. Indrajit is his son." Remaining on the shore with Lakshmana, these were his thoughts. Angada and the other residents of the forest comforted him.'

'Meanwhile, Raghava, supreme among Shiva's devotees, wanted some water and lovingly spoke to his brother, known as Lakshmana. Rama said, "O brother! O Lakshmana! O lord of heroes! I am thirsty and wish for some water. Please ask a vanara to quickly fetch me some." Hearing this, vanaras dashed off in the ten directions. They brought water. Prostrating themselves, they stood in front of him and spoke. The vanaras said, "O lord! Please accept the water. Obeying your command, we have brought it. It is tasty and is the best. It is cool and revives life." He was extremely pleased and cast a glance of compassion towards them. Hearing this, Ramachandra accepted the water. He was about to drink the water that had been brought. But because of Shiva's wish, he remembered something. "I have not seen Shambhu yet. How can I drink water? He is Paresha, my lord who bestows every kind of bliss." Saying this, the supreme descendant of the Raghu lineage drank the water. After this, the descendant of the Raghu lineage worshipped a parthiva lingam. He performed avahana and other rituals and devised sixteen kinds of upachara. Following the norms, he lovingly worshipped the divinity, Shankara. He prostrated himself and made efforts to satisfy him with divine hymns. Full of joy and devotion, Rama prayed to Shankara. Rama said, "O lord! O Shambhu! O Mahadeva! You are always affectionate towards your devotees. Please save me.

[1061] Rama, Raghava because he was descended from Raghu's lineage.

[1062] Hanuman.

[1063] A padma is a very large number, specifically, a thousand billion.

[1064] That is, Kailasa.

I am your devotee and have sought refuge with you. My mind is distressed. O one who enables a person to cross over the ocean of samsara! This water is fathomless. The rakshasa known as Ravana is immensely strong. He is extremely valiant. In fighting a battle, this army of vanaras is fickle. How will my task be accomplished? How will I get my beloved back? O one excellent in vows! Therefore, your task is to help me. O lord! Without your help, my task is impossible to accomplish. Ravana is one of your own. Therefore, in every possible way, he is impossible to defeat. He is insolent because of the boons received from you. He is immensely brave and has conquered the three worlds. I am also your servant and am subservient to you in every possible way. O Sadashiva! Thinking about this, you should be partial towards me." In this way, he prayed and repeatedly prostrated himself. He said, "Victory to Shankara, the one who punishes the wicked. Victory." Thus, using mantras and dhyana, he praised Shiva. He again worshipped him and bent down before him. His heart was flooded with love and the voice choked in his throat.'

"The divinity Shankara was greatly pleased. Maheshvara appeared on the shores of the ocean, along with his companions. He was a mass of energy. He manifested himself in this sparkling and wonderful form. Maheshvara was satisfied at the devotion in Rama's heart. Shiva told Rama, "All will be well. Ask for a boon." Seeing that form, all of them were purified. Devoted to Shiva's dharma, Raghava worshipped him. Rejoicing, he praised him in many kinds of ways and prostrated himself. He prayed for his victory against Ravana. Maheshvara's mind was pleased at Rama's devotion. He spoke again, affectionately. "O great king! May you be victorious." He obtained the permission for victory, bestowed by Shiva. With his head lowered and his hands joined in salutation, he prayed again. "O lord! For purifying the worlds, please remain established here. O Shankara! If you are satisfied, please do this to help others." Thus addressed, Shiva assumed the form of a lingam there. On earth, he became famous under the name of Rameshvara. As a result of his powers, Rama crossed the ocean easily. He swiftly killed Ravana and the other rakshasas and got his beloved back. Rameshvara's greatness is wonderful and unmatched on earth. It bestows objects of pleasure and emancipation and always grants devotees what they wish for. If a person devoutly bathes Shiva in Rameshvara with divine water from the Ganga, he becomes a jivanmukta. He enjoys all the objects of pleasure in this world, difficult for even devas to obtain. At the end, he certainly obtains supreme inana and kaivalya. I have thus spoken to you about Shiva's divine jyotirlingam, known as Rameshvara. When one hears about it, sins are destroyed.'

Chapter 303-5(32) (Sudeha and Sudharma)

“Suta said, "The jyotirlingam known as Ghushmesha is spoken of next. O supreme rishis! Hear about its excellent greatness. In the southern direction, there is the supreme mountain known as Devagiri.[1065] It is always full of great beauty. It is radiant and wonderful to behold. A brahmana named Sudharma, born in the Bharadvaja lineage, lived close to it. He was supreme among those who knew about the brahman. His beloved, Sudeha, was devoted to following Shiva's dharma. She constantly served her husband and was accomplished in performing household tasks. Sudharma, best among brahmanas, worshipped devas and guests. He was devoted to the path of the Vedas and always served the sacrificial fire. He performed the sandhya rites at the three times and his radiance was like that of the sun. He was skilled in the Vedas and the sacred texts and taught his disciples. He was wealthy and

great in his donations. He possessed the qualities of good behaviour. He was always engaged in Shiva's rites. He was Shiva's devotee and loved those who were Shiva's devotees. A long period of his life passed, and he practiced this dharma. He did not have a son and his wife's menstrual cycles were futile. However, since he possessed jnana about the nature of material objects, he did not grieve over this. He was pure and knew that it is the atman that makes the atman cross over. Bearing this in his mind, he did not grieve. However, at not having had a son, Sudeha was miserable. Every day, she entreated her husband to make efforts so that they might have a son. After all, he was accomplished in every kind of learning. He reprimanded his wife. "What will a son do? Who is a mother? Who is a father? Who is a son? Who is a relative? Who is a beloved? O lady! There is no doubt that everyone in the three worlds is selfish. Use your intelligence to particularly understand this and do not sorrow. O lady! Therefore, it is certain that you should give up this sorrow. one auspicious in vows! You should not tell me about this every day." Devoted to Bhagavan's dharma, he restrained her in this way. Having cast aside miseries associated with the opposite kind of sentiments, he was supremely content.'

'On one occasion, Sudeha went to a neighbour's house. She had gone for a friendly conversation with a neighbour, but a dispute ensued there. Because of her feminine nature, that wife censured her. Sudeha, loved by the brahmana, was addressed in harsh words. The brahmana's wife[1066] said, "What are you proud about? You don't have a son. I have a son. My son will enjoy my wealth. Who will enjoy your wealth? There is no doubt that the king will seize your wealth. Shame on your wealth. Shame on you. Shame on your pride. You are barren." Censured in this way, she miserably returned home. Full of love, she told her husband everything that she had been told. The brahmana was extremely intelligent and did not grieve. He said, "Let her say whatever she wants to say. O beloved! What is destined to happen, will occur." Though she was repeatedly comforted in this way, she could not give up her grief. She entreated him anxiously. Sudeha said, "You are loved by me, and you must do whatever you can to have a son. O supreme among those who possess a body! Otherwise, I will give up my body." Sudharma, supreme among brahmanas, heard what she said. Suffering on account of what she had said, he remembered Shiva. The brahmana attentively flung two flowers into the fire that was in front of him. In his mind, he thought that the flower on the right would give him the desired son. Having taken this pledge, the brahmana spoke to his wife. "To obtain the fruit of getting a son, take one of the two flowers that are in front of you." She thought in her mind, "I will have a son. Let the flower my husband thought of, come to me." Saying this, she prostrated herself before Shiva. She bent down and prayed before the fire again. She then accepted one of the flowers. As a result of the delusion caused by Shiva's will, Sudeha did not pick up the flower her husband had thought of. Seeing this, the man sighed. He remembered Shiva's lotus feet and spoke to his beloved. Sudharma said, "This has been ordained by Ishvara. It cannot but be otherwise. O beloved! Cast aside your hopes. Serve the lord." Saying this, the brahmana gave up his own hopes. He devoted himself to rites of dharma and performing dhyana on Shankara.' 'However, Sudeha did not give up the desire of having a son. Full of love, she lowered her head, joined her hands in salutation and spoke to her husband.

[1065] Daulatabad.

[1066] The neighbour.

Sudeha said, "If I cannot have a son, please listen to my words. Take another wife. There is no doubt that you will have a son through her." The brahmana, supreme among Shiva's devotees, was requested by her in this way. Intent on dharma, he spoke to his beloved, Sudeha. Sudharma said, "All your miseries, and my miseries, have certainly gone away now. O beloved! Therefore, do not create any impediments in the path of dharma now." Though restrained in this way, she brought her mother's young daughter home. [1067] Having brought her home, she requested her husband to marry her. Sudharma said, "O beloved! You are telling me this now. But if she has a son, you will be jealous of her." The husband spoke to his beloved Sudeha in this way. O brahmanas! However, she clasped her hands and beseeched her husband, Sudharma, again. "O supreme among brahmanas! I will not be jealous of my sister. Please follow my request. For the sake of a son, please marry her." In this way, Sudharma's beloved requested him. Accordingly, following the norms of marriage, the brahmana married Ghushma. Having married her, the brahmana requested her, "O beloved! O unblemished one! This is your younger sister, and you must always take care of her." With dharma in his soul, Sudharma, supreme among Shiva's devotees, said this. He then quickly turned his mind to whatever was required for pursuing dharma. She served her mother's daughter like a servant. She gave up all opposition and nourished her day and night, with great love. Taking her sister's permission, the younger wife made one hundred and one parthiva lingams every day. In the proper way and with upachara, Ghushma worshipped them. Having done this, she flung them away into the nearby pond. In this way, following her own wish, she worshipped Shiva every day. Having cast them away, he followed the norms and performed avahana again. In this way, she worshipped Shankara every day. When one hundred thousand images were complete, all the desired fruits were obtained. Through Shankara's favours, she had a son. He was handsome and fortunate, possessing all the auspicious qualities. Seeing him, the brahmana, supreme among those who followed dharma, was delighted. Devoted to the dharma of jnana, he was happy, but not attached. However, Sudeha became fiercely jealous of her. At first, her heart only turned cool towards her. After that, she started to do wicked deeds that brought misery. O lords among sages! Listen with attentive minds.'

Chapter 304-5(33) (Origin and Greatness of Ghushmesha Jyotirlingam)

“Suta said, 'Seeing the son of the younger one, the elder one was filled with misery. She could not tolerate her happiness and immediately started to oppose her. Since she had given birth to a son, everyone constantly praised her. She was unable to tolerate the handsome child. The son possessed all the good qualities and was loved by his parents. On witnessing this, her heart blazed like a fire. Meanwhile, brahmanas arrived, offering to bestow their daughters. Along with Ghushma, Sudharma followed the rituals and arranged for the marriage, filled with great bliss. All the relatives showed a great deal of respect towards Ghushma. Seeing this, Sudheha's mind was inflamed with rage. Extremely miserable, she exclaimed, "Alas! Woe is me."

[1067] That is, Sudeha's younger sister.

When his son was married and brought the daughter-in-law home, Sudharma was enthused and displayed his joy to both his beloved wives. Ghushma was delighted, but Sudeha was full of misery. Unable to tolerate her happiness and full of misery herself, she fell down on the ground. Ghushma said, "These are your son and daughter-in-law, not mine." Indeed, the daughter-in-law regarded her as the mother-in-law and the son regarded her as his mother. The husband also loved the elder wife more, not the younger. Nevertheless, the elder had this impurity in her mind.' 'One day, the elder Sudeha, full of misery, thought in her mind, "How can my misery be pacified?" Sudeha said, "It is certain that the fire in my heart can only be pacified through Ghushma's tears of grief. There is nothing else that is the cause of my sorrow. Therefore, today, I will kill the son, who speaks so pleasantly. What is going to happen, is certain to occur. But this is my supreme decision." O brahmanas! The thoughts of co-wives are generally vile and harsh. Failing to distinguish between what should be done and what should not be done, they amount to destroying one's own self. One day, the son and his wife were sleeping in the night. The elder took out a knife and cut off his limbs. She was immensely strong and proud. In the night, she sliced off the limbs of Ghushma's son, took them to the pond and hurled them there. She flung them at the place where Ghushma flung the lingams every day. Happy, she returned and slept. In the morning, Ghushma woke up and performed her daily tasks. Sudharma also engaged in the great nitya karma. Meanwhile, the elder also happily went about the household tasks. The fire in her heart had been pacified. In the morning, the daughter-in-law woke up and saw that the bed was wet with blood, with a few pieces of the body left. She went and asked her mother-in-law, "Where has your son gone? The bed is wet with blood and a few pieces of the body can be seen. Alas! Woe is me. O one auspicious in vows! Who has done this wicked act?" In this way, she lamented in many ways about her beloved. The elder one's mind was filled with joy, but externally, she displayed her grief. Miserable, she also exclaimed, "Alas! Woe is me." Ghushma heard her daughter-in-law's miserable words. However, she did not deviate from her vow and did not give up the daily worship of the parthiva lingam. There was not the slightest bit of mental anxiety in her mind. Her husband also continued to observe the vrata in the proper way. When the worship was completed at noon, she saw that terrible bed. Even then, there wasn't the least bit of grief in Ghushma. "The one who has given, will protect him. He is famous as one who loves devotees. He is Yama's destroyer. He is the destination of the virtuous. Shambhu is the sole lord. He is our protector. He is like a garland maker. He separates those whom he brings together. What can I do by thinking about it now? She reflected on the truth in this way. She did not grieve. Resorting to her fortitude, she immersed herself in Shiva.' 'With her mind in the same state as it used to be earlier, she took the parthiva lingam and chanting Shambhu's name, went to the bank of the pond. She flung the parthiva lingam in. As she was returning, she saw her son standing on the bank of the lake. The son said, "I meet my mother. I was dead but have come back to life now. This is because of the power of your good deeds and Shankara's favours." O brahmanas! Seeing her son alive, Ghushma was not delighted, just as she had not been miserable earlier. At that time, Shiva himself appeared in front of her, in the form of a mass of light. Satisfied, Mahesha spoke, Shiva said, "I am pleased. Ask for a boon. The wicked one had killed him. O one with the beautiful face! I will kill her with the trident." Ghushma bowed down and prostrated herself before Shiva, asking for the boon. "O lord! Sudeha is my sister. She must be protected by you." Shiva replied, "She did you an injury. Why do you wish to do her a good turn? Because of her wicked deed, Sudeha deserves to be killed." Ghushma said, "As soon as you are seen, no sins remain. On seeing you now, her sins will be reduced to ashes. If a person does a good turn to someone who has done a harmful act, as soon as

one sees that person, sins go far away. O divinity! I have heard these wonderful words, spoken by Bhagavan. O Sadashiva! Therefore, one must act in accordance with those words." Hearing her words, Maheshvara was pleased even more. The ocean of compassion, affectionate towards his devotees, spoke again. Shiva said, "O Ghushma! Ask for another boon. I will grant what is beneficial for you. I am extremely pleased at your devotion and your nature that is free from aberrations." Hearing this, she said, "If a boon is to be given by you, for the protection of the worlds, please remain established here, under my name." Maheshvara Shiva was extremely pleased and replied. "I will remain here, under your name. I will be known as Ghushmesha, the one who bestows happiness. My auspicious and extremely famous lingam, known as Ghushmesha, will originate here. This pond will always be a store of lingams. This place will be famous in the three worlds under the name of Shivalaya. When it is seen, this pond will always bestow everything that is desired. O one excellent in vows! For one hundred and one generations in your family, such excellent sons will be born. There is no doubt about this. They will have good wives and will possess wealth. They will have long lifespans and will be accomplished. They will be learned and generous. They will obtain objects of pleasure and emancipation as fruits. One hundred and one generations will be superior in qualities. In this way, your extremely beautiful lineage will prosper." Saying this, Shiva assumed the form of the lingam named Ghushmesha. The pond became famous under the name of Shivalaya.'

"Sudharma, Ghushma and Sudeha immediately arrived there and performed pradakshina of Shiva one hundred and one times. They met each other and collectively worshipped Mahesha. They cast aside their mental impurities and obtained supreme happiness. Seeing that the son was alive, Sudeha was ashamed. O brahmanas! She asked for forgiveness and observed the vow required to cleanse her sins. O lords among sages! This is how the lingam known as Ghushmesha originated. If one sees it, and worships it, happiness is always enhanced. I have thus spoken to you about the twelve jyotirlingams. All of them grant everything desired and bestow objects of pleasure and emancipation. If a person reads, or hears about, these jyotirlingams, he is freed from all sins and obtains objects of pleasure and emancipation.'

This concludes Volume II.

Koti Rudra Samhita and Shiva Purana will continue in Volume III.

Acknowledgements

The corpus of the Puranas is huge-in scope and size. The TMa Mahabharata is believed to contain 100,000 shlokas. The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata, edited and published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (Pune), doesn't contain quite that many shlokas. But this still gives us some idea of the size of the epic. To comprehend what 100,000 shlokas mean in a standard word count, I'd like to point out that the 10-volume unabridged translation I did of the Mahabharata amounts to a staggering 2.5 million words. After composing the Mahabharata, Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa composed the eighteen Mahapuranas, or major Puranas. Or so it is believed. Collectively, these eighteen Puranas amount to 400,000 shlokas, meaning a disconcerting and daunting number of 10 million words.

After translating the Bhagavat Gita, the Mahabharata, the Harivamsha (160,000 words) and the Valmiki Ramayana (500,000 words), it was but natural to turn one's attention towards translating the Puranas. This is the daunting Purana Project, so to speak. (All these translations have been, and will be, published by Penguin India.) As the most popular and most read Purana, the Bhagavata Purana was the first to be translated (3 volumes, 500,000 words). The Markandeya Purana, another popular Purana (1 volume, 175,000 words), came next. This was followed by the Brahma Purana (2 volumes, 390,000 words) and the Vishnu Purana (1 volume, 175,000 words). That these translations were well-received was encouragement along the intimidating journey of translating the remaining Puranas and I am indebted to the reviewers of these various translations. There was some dislocation because of the Covid pandemic, but translation and publication has now resumed.

Which Purana should one choose to translate next? I have earlier remarked on coincidences that seemed to indicate the choice and guide the path. Most people have heard of Maha Shiva Ratri. Loosely, this translates as Shiva's great night. In determining auspicious days for worship, we follow the lunar calendar and lunar days (tithis). A lunar tithi does not exactly correspond to a solar day, which is why a tithi may change in the course of a single solar day. The lunar cycle is divided into shukla paksha (the bright lunar fortnight, when the moon waxes) and krishna paksha (the dark lunar fortnight, when the moon wanes). The former culminates in purnima or pournamasi, the night of the full moon. The latter culminates in amavasya, the night of the new moon. Chaturdashi (the fourteenth lunar tithi) in krishna paksha, the night preceding amavasya, is the night for worshipping Shiva, every month. Thus, there is a masika (monthly) Shiva Ratri, once every month. Of these twelve Shiva Ratris, one is special and is known as Maha Shiva Ratri. This falls in February or March of the Gregorian calendar. Depending on whether the lunar month is calculated as ending in amavasya or purnima, the month will be Magha or Phalguna. In 2019, the date happened to be 4 March. Covid had started its onslaught, but its virulence and vehemence had not been fully fathomed, in India or in the rest of the world. Sadguru (Jaggi Vasudev) invited us (me and my wife) to the Isha Foundation for the Maha Shiva Ratri celebrations. As the celebrations went on throughout the night, before Adiyogi, it was an amazing, ethereal and mystical experience. When we returned, it was as if we had been permeated by Shiva, I was still completing the translation of the Vishnu Purana. Covid's impact was still relatively muted

and wherever we travelled, we seemed to be drawn to places with Shiva lingams, including the jyotirlingams.

Which Purana are you going to do next?' asked my wife. Probably Matsya Purana', I remarked. She responded, 'Why don't you do one on Shiva? You have already done several associated with Vishnu and there is Devi in Markandeya Purana. Time for Shiva.' I was reluctant. Among the Puranas associated with Shiva, the Shiva Purana is the most important. It is also a difficult Purana to translate, as the reader will discover while reading the translation. Contrary to popular impression, generally fewer people are familiar with Shaivite philosophy, Shiva's tattvas being a case in point, than with Vaishnava philosophy. The liturgy of worship, in this text, had several mantras that needed to be tracked down. Stated briefly, this is the most difficult Purana I have translated so far. With almost 25,000 shlokas (3 volumes, 675,000 words), this is also a relatively long Purana, as the reader will also discover.

As I have traversed the route of the Purana Project, my wife, Suparna Banerjee Debroy, has been a constant source of support and encouragement, providing the conducive environment required for the translation work to continue unimpeded. तया विना स्म नो याति नास्थितो न स्म चेष्टते । तया विना क्षममपि शर्म लेभे ना **(3.2(21).27). Shiva Purana says this about Shiva's behaviour, vis-à-vis Sati. 'He didn't go anywhere without her. Without her, he didn't do anything. Without her, he did not obtain the least bit of peace.'** भार्या मूलं गृहस्थास्य भार्या मूलं सुखस्य च। भार्या धर्मफलावापत्यै भार्या सन्तानवृद्धये। **(3.3(54).64). Many texts have highlighted the role of a wife and the Shiva Purana also has a chapter on the dharma of a virtuous wife. 'For a householder, the wife is the foundation. The wife is the foundation for happiness. It is the wife who yields the fruits of dharma. The wife ensures that the offspring flourish.' Suparna has been that and much more.**

As I translated the Shiva Purana, through the second half of 2020 and 2021, Covid raged around us. We lost friends and acquaintances, near and dear ones. The entire family was affected by Covid, during the second phase. But it was as if Shiva's unseen hand guided and protected us. It was as if Shiva's unseen hand ensured the translation was completed.

The journey of translation hasn't been an intimidating one only for me. Penguin India must also have thought about it several times, before going ahead with the Purana translations. Most people have some idea about the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. But the Puranas are typically rendered in such dumbed down versions that the readership has to be created. However, Penguin India also believed in the Purana Project, which still stretches into some interminable horizon in the future, almost two decades down the line. For both author and publisher, this is a long-term commitment. But the Bhagavata Purana, Markandeya Purana, Brahma Purana, Vishnu Purana and Shiva Purana have been completed. Brahmanda Purana, in 2 volumes, comes next. I am indebted to Penguin India. In particular, Meru

Gokhale, Moutushi Mukherjee and Binita Roy have been exceptionally patient, persevering and encouraging. The exceptional editing has ensured the final product is superior to what I delivered. These Purana translations have been brought alive by the wonderful cover designs and illustrations and I thank the illustrators and the designers.

Who should these three volumes of Shiva Purana be dedicated to? Who else but Sadguru, Jaggi Vasudev, who has brought all of us closer to Shiva.

Bibek Debroy
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