CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Seven Continents

The sages said:

1-9. A wonderfully great narrative has been related by you. The stories of Bharata kings, of Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Nāgas, Rākṣasas, Daityas, Siddhas, and Guhyakas have been narrated; their wonderful exploits, activities and holy rites have been recounted. Different divine stories and excellent nativities have been mentioned. O highly intelligent one, the creation of Brahmā, Prajāpati, Guhyakas and celestial nymphs has also been narrated by you. How the mobile and immobile beings were born, how the manifold universe originated has been told by you, O highly blessed one. This beautiful narration has been heard by us. The ancient tradition that yields meritorious benefits has been mentioned in sweet and smooth flowing words. It delights our mind as well as our ear. It is on a par with nectar. Now we wish to hear about the entire zone of the earth. O omniscient one, it behoves you speak it out. We are very eager to hear. How many are the oceans, continents sub-continents, mountains, forests, sacred rivers and holy spots of Devas etc. O highly intelligent one, what is the magnitude of each, what is their support? Of what nature are they? It behoves you to narrate the stance of this universe precisely.

1. Seven Continents : (1) Jambū (2) Śāka, (3) Kuśa, (4) Plakṣa, (5) Puṣkara, (6) Śālmali (7) Krauṇca. A short description of these continents is as follows: (1) Jambū—It is the central one of the seven continents surrounding the mountain Meru, so called either from the Jambū trees abounding in it or from an enormous Jambū tree on Mount Meru visible like a standard to the whole continent. See S. M. Ali, Op. cit., chapters V-VII on Jambūdvīpa.

(2) Śāka can be identified with Malaya, Siam, Indo-China and Southern China or the South-Eastern corner of the land mass of which Jambūdvīpa occupied the centre.

(3) Kuśa included Iran, Iraq, the south-western corner of the land mass round Meru.

(4) Plakṣa identified with the basin of Mediterranean since Plakṣa or Pākhara tree is the characteristic of warm temperate or Mediterranean lands identifiable with Greece and adjoining lands.

(5) Puṣkara covered the whole of Japan, Manchuria and the south-eastern Siberia.
Lomaharṣaṇa said:

10. O sages, please hear as I succinctly relate it to you. A full detailed description of it is impossible even in the course of a hundred years.

11-12. O brahmins, there are seven continents viz—Jambū, Plakṣa, Śālmala, Kuśa, Krauṇḍa, Śāka and Puṣkara. These are encircled by seven oceans, the briny ocean, sea of the sugar-cane juice, wine, ghee, curds, milk and sweet water.

13. The Jambūdvīpa is situated in the middle. In its centre, O leading brahmins, is the Meru the mountain of gold.

14-15. Its over-all height is eightyfour thousand Yojanas. Sixteen thousand Yojanas of it constitute the portion beneath the ground. The peak portion extends to thirtytwo thousand Yojanas. At its root the extent all-round is sixteen thousand Yojanas. This mountain stands as the pericarp of the lotus of the earth.

16. The Himavān, Hemakūṭa and Niṣadhā are the Varṣa mountains to its South. The Nila, Śveta and Śrīṅgīn are the Varṣa mountains in the north.

17. The two in the middle extend to a hundred thousand (Yojanas) and others are ten (thousand Yojanas) less. They are two thousand Yojanas in height and girth.

18-24. Bhārata is the first sub continent, then is the Kimpuruṣa Varṣa O brahmins, these and another varṣa viz. Hari-

(6) Śālmala—the tropical part of Africa bordering the Indian Ocean on the West. It included Madagascar—the Zenj of the Arab and Persian geographers, the Hariṇa of the Purāṇas and the Śaṅkhadvīpa of some other writers.

(7) Krauṇḍa is represented by the basin of the Black Sea.

(8) Upadvīpas (sub-continents): (1) Bhārata (2) Kimpuruṣa (3) Hari-varṣa (4) Ramyaka (5) Hiraṇmaya (6) Uttarakuru (7) Ilāvṛta (8) Bhadrāśva and (9) Ketumāla. According to P.E. (p. 342) there are eight long mountain ranges which divide the island Jambu into 9 countries which look like nine petals of the lotus flower. The two countries of the north and south extremities (Bhadra and Ketumāla) are bow-shaped. Four of the remaining seven are longer than the rest. The central country is known as Ilāvṛta.
varṣa are to the South of Meru. Ramyaka is a northern subcontinent. Next to it, is Hiraṇmaya. The northern Kurus are like Bhārata. O excellent brahmins, each of these extends to nine thousand Yojanas. There is the Ilāvṛta Varṣa. In its centre stands the lofty golden Meru. O highly blessed ones, the Ilāvṛta Varṣa extends to nine thousand Yojanas in all directions from Meru. There are four mountains here which stand as the extensive supporting pillars of Meru. They extend to ten thousand Yojanas. The mountain Mandara lies in the east, Gandhamādana is to the south. Vipula is to the west and the Supārśva is to the north. There stand the following trees—Kadamba, Jambū Pippala and Vaṭa as the flag staff of mountains. They extend to eleven hundred Yojanas. O excellent brahmins, the Jambū tree gives the name Jambūdvīpa to this continent.

25. Each of the fruits of this Jambū tree is of the size of a huge elephant. These fruits fall all over the top of the mountain and get shattered and scattered.

26. By the juice of these, the famous Jambū river flows and it is being drunk by the people staying there.

27. The people there are hale and hearty and sound in mind because they drink it. They never even perspire. No bad odour comes out of their bodies. They do not experience old age or debility of sense-organs.

28. The clay on the banks gets soaked in the juice. When it gets dry by the gentle wind that blows there it becomes gold. It is called Jāmbūnāda. The ornaments for Siddhas are made thereof.

29. The Bhadrāśva subcontinent is to the east of Meru, Ketumāla is to the west. O excellent sages, between these two Varṣas lies the Ilāvṛta Varṣa.

30. The park of Caitraratha is in the east; the Gandhamādana is in the south; the Vaibhrāja is in the west and the Nandana is in the north.

31. There are four lakes frequented and enjoyed by Devas—the Arupoda, Mahābhadra, Asitoda and Mānasā.

32. The Kesara mountains to the east of Meru are—Śāntavān, Cakrakumbha, Kuraṇ, Mālyavān, Vaikanaka and others.
33. Trikūṭa, Śīśira, Pataṅga, Rucaka, Niśadha and others are the Kesara mountains to the south of Meru.

34. Śikhiväsa, Vaidūrya, Kāpila, Gandhamādana, Jānudhi etc. are the Kesara mountains to the west.

35-39. They are very proximate to the Meru and are stationed in its belly. Śaṅkhakūta, Rṣabha, Harisva, Nāga, Kālaṅjara etc. are the Kesara mountains to the north.

O leading brahmins, at a height of fourteen thousand Yojanas on the Meru is the great city of Brahmā. All round it in the eight quarters are the excellent and famous cities of Indra and other guardians of the quarters.

Originating from the foot of Viṣṇu and flooding the disc of the moon Gaṅgā falls down from Heaven to the city of Brahmā and flows all round. Having fallen there it flows into four streams in the four directions.

40-46. They are Sītā, Alakanandā, Cakṣu and Bhadrā in order.

The Sītā flows along the firmament to the East from mountain to mountain. Then through Bhadrāśva, the Varṣa in the east, it flows into the ocean.

Similarly, O excellent brahmins the Alakanandā flows to the south, approaches Bhārata and splitting itself into seven streams it flows into the ocean.

The Cakṣu crosses the western mountains and reaches Ketumāla the western Varṣa and then flows into the sea.

O excellent brahmins, the Bhadra crosses the northern mountains and the northern Kurus and then flows into the northern ocean.

The mountains Mālyavān and Gandhamādana extend upto Nila and Niśadha mountains. The Meru is in the centre of these two. It is stationed in the form of pericarp.

The Bhāratas, Ketumālas, Bhadrāśvas and Kurus are the petals of Loka mountain outside the mountains of boundary.

The Jaṭhara and Devakūṭa are the two mountains of boundary. They extend from south to north between Nila and Niśadha mountains.

47-51. The Gandhamādana and the Kailāsa extend from west to east, to eighty thousand Yojanas. They are stationed in the ocean. Niśadha and Pāriyātra—the two mountains of boun-
dary—extend from south to north between Nila and Niṣadha. They are stationed to the east and west of Meru.

The Triśṛṅga and the Jarudhi are the northern Varṣa mountains. They extend from east to west and are stationed within the ocean; they extend from one ocean to another.

Thus, O brahmins, the boundary mountains have been mentioned by me. They are stationed in pairs within the belly of Meru in all the four quarters.

52-53. Around the Meru the Kesara mountains are situated. They have already been mentioned along with Śitânta and others. O brahmins, the water troughs amongst those mountains are very charming. They are frequented by Siddhas and Cāraṇas. The forests and the cities in them are very beautiful.

54. There are excellent shrines of Lakṣmî, Viṣṇu, Agni, Sūrya and Indra in them, O excellent sages. They are frequented by men and Kinnaras.

55. Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Daityas and Dānavas sport about in those charming water troughs day and night.

56. O brahmins, these places are heavens on earth. They are abodes of the righteous. Those who commit sins never go there even after hundreds of births.

57. O brahmins, in the Bhadrāśva sub-continent lord Viṣṇu stays as Hayaśiras with the head of a horse; in the Ketumāla he stays in the form of a boar and in the Bhârata he assumes the form of a tortoise.

58. Eternal Govinda stays in the Kurus in the form of a fish. Hari, the lord of all, stays everywhere in his Viśvarūpa (Universal form).

59-62. O brahmins, he is the support of all and identical with all.

O excellent brahmins, in the eight Varṣas, Kimpuruṣa etc. there is neither misery, nor fatigue, neither strain nor fear of hunger.

The subjects are healthy and sound, free from agony and devoid of distress. They live upto ten or twelve thousand years. No earthly worries such as hunger or thirst assail them, O brahmins. In these sports there is no such division of time: Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali.
In each of these Varṣas there are seven mountains called Kulācalas. O excellent sages, hundreds of rivers flow there.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Jambūdvipa

Lomaharṣaṇa said:

1. To the north of ocean and to the South of Himālayas is the sub-continent Bhārata. The subjects are called Bhāratis.

2. O leading sages, its extent is nine thousand Yojanas. This is the land of holy rites to those who opt for heavenly pleasure and absolution.

3. The seven Kulaparvatas are Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Śuktimān, Rkṣa, Vindhya and Pāriyātra

4. It is from here, O brahmins, that the heaven is attained; one attains absolution too from here, men attain the state of different species of animals or fall in hell from here alone.

5. It is from here alone that men go to heaven or realize absolution at the end of their series of birth. Nowhere else on the earth are holy rites prescribed for men.

6-8. Listen to the nine divisions of this sub-continent. The are Indradvipa, Kaserumāṇ, Tāmraparṇa, Gabhastimāṇ, Nāgadvipa, Saumya, Gandharva and Vāruṇa.

1. Kulaparvatas—Kulaparvata is a chief mountain range. Kulaparvatas are seven in number. Any one of these is supposed to exist in each Varṣa or division of a continent. The principal seven ranges of Bhārata Varṣa include (1) Mahendra (2) Malaya (3) Sahya (4) Śuktimān (5) Rkṣa (6) Vindhya and (7) Pāriyātra. (See 17.3)

2. Bhārata itself is a group of nine islands each separated from the other by oceans and not made easily accessible between each other. They are (1) Indradvipa (2) Kaserumāṇ (3) Tāmraparṇa (4) Gabhast (5) Saumya (6) Gandharva (7) Vāruṇa (8) Nāga (9) Bhārata. In some of the Purānas, Saumya is replaced by Sīhala; in others Sīhala is substituted for Gandharva.

S. M. Ali identifies the nine islands as follows:

(1) Ainḍra—the Trans-Brahmaputra region.

(2) Kāṣṭumāṭ—the coastal plain between the deltas of Godāvari and Mahānadi.
Bhrārata, the ninth among them, is an island encircled by the ocean. This island extends from South to North a thousand Yojanas.

Kirātas stay in the East, Yavanas stay in the West.

9. Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas stay in the centre. Śūdras stay everywhere. These people have their means of subsistence in sacrifice, battle, trade and service.

10. O sage, the Śatadrū, Candrabhāgā and other rivers have their source at the foot of the Himavān. The Vedasmrī and other rivers originate from the Pāriyātra.

11-14. The Narmadā, Surasā and other rivers flow from the Vindhya. The Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, Nirvindhya, Kāverī and other rivers flow from the foot of the Rkṣa mountain and as it is well known they dispel sin.

The Godāvari, Bhīmarathi, Kṛṣṇaṇeṇī and other rivers originate from the foot of Sahya. As it is said they dispel the fear of sins. The Kṛtamālā, Tāmrarpāṇī and other rivers start from Malaya. The Trisandhyā, Rṣikulyā and other rivers have their source in Malendra. The Rṣikulyā, Kumāra and other rivers flow from the foot of Śūktimān.

15-19. There are thousands of tributaries and branches of these rivers. The people of this land bathe in and drink their waters. They are the Kurus, Pañcālas, the people of middle land, eastern lands, residents of Kāmarūpa; people of southern territories such as Paundras, Kaliṅgas and others. The Parāntyas westerners) Saurāṭras, Śūdras, Ābhīras, Arbudas, Murukas, Mālavas, residents of Pāriyātra, Sauviras, Saindhavapannas, Śālvas, residents of Śākala territory, Madrārāmas, Ambaśṭhas, Pārasīkas and others. They drink waters of these rivers and stay on their banks. They are highly blessed, hale and hearty.

(3) Tāmrarpāṇī or Tāmrarpāṇī (associated with the river Tāmrarpāṇī)—the sector of the Indian peninsula south of Kāverī river.

(4) Gabhastimān—the hilly belt between Narmadā and Godāvari rivers.

(5) Nāga—colonies and kingdoms extended all over the mountainous belt between Narmadā ranges upto Chhota Nagpur.

(6) Kṣāṭhe—Kathiawad region.

(7) Šīṁhala—Ceylon, not mentioned in this Purāṇa.

(8) Vāruṇa—the western coast of India. The Arabian Sea has long been known as the abode of Varuṇa.

(9) Bhrārata is the ninth division.

According to Cunningham Greater India was divided into nine Khaḍgas.
20. O great sage, the four Yugas, viz. Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali are reckoned only in Bhārata and nowhere else.

21. The ascetics perform penance here; the Yajvins perform sacrifices; people give charitable gifts with devotion to obtain heaven.

22. Here, in the Jambūdvīpa the Supreme Being is worshipped through sacrifices. It is Viṣṇu who is identified with sacrifice that is worshipped. In other Dwīpas he is worshipped otherwise.

23. O great sage, in the Jambūdvīpa, it is the subcontinent Bhārata which is most excellent since it is the land of holy rites and activities. Others are the regions of enjoyment.

24. Here, O excellent one, after thousands and thousands of birth alone does a creature attain human birth sometimes through the accumulation of merits.

25-29. It is said that Devas sing (its praise thus):—“Blessed are they who are born (again and again) as men in Bhārata which is the source of heavenly pleasures as well as liberation.

Holy rites should be performed in utter disregard of their benefits. They must be dedicated to Viṣṇu identical with the Ātman. Those who are pure attain birth in the land of holy rites (i.e. Bhārata) and get merged into that infinite Being (after death)’. We do know that when the merit that had originally yielded heavenly pleasures subsides, those who are blessed will be re-born in the land of Bhārata and not those who are devoid of intelligence.

O brahmins, this Jambūdvīpa, which consists of nine subcontinents and which extends to a hundred thousand Yojanas has been mentioned by me.

O brahmins, the briny sea that extends to a hundred thousand Yojanas and that is like a bangle in shape encircles the Jambūdvīpa externally.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Magnitude of Oceans and Continents

Lomaharṣaṇa said:

1. Just as the Jambūdvīpa is encircled by the briny sea so also the briny sea is encircled by the Plakṣa dvīpa.

2. The extent of Jambūdvīpa is one hundred thousand Yojanas. O brahmins, twice that is cited as the extent of Plakṣa-dvīpa.

3-4. Medhātithi, the overlord of the Plakṣadvīpa, had seven sons. The eldest was Śántabhaya by name. Śiśira was the next one. Others were Sukhodaya, Ānanda, Śiva, Kṣemaka and Dhruva. All of them were kings in Plakṣa Dwīpa.

5. The sub-continents are Śántabhaya, Śiśira, Sukhada, Ānanda, Śiva, Kṣemaka and Dhruva.

6. There are Varṣaparvatas, the mountains demarcating the boundary. They are only seven, O excellent sages. Listen to their names.

7. They are Gomeda, Candra, Nārada, Dundubhi, Somaka, Sumanas and Vaibhrāja.

8. O sinless ones, accompanied by Devas and Gandharvas the subjects live in the charming Varṣa mountains and lands.

9. The countries and territories therein are holy. People are born after long periods (of gestation). Neither mental agony nor ailments afflict them. They feel happy throughout the year.

10. There are seven rivers in these Varṣas which flow into the oceans. I shall name them. Their mention dispels sins altogether.

11. They are Anutaptā, Śikhī, Vipāśā, Tridivā, Kramu, Amṛtā and Sukṛtā. These are seven rivers there.

12. O brahmins, the mountains and rivers mentioned here are the main ones. Small rivers and mountains are in thousands there.

13. The people of the region drink waters thereof and feel delighted. Every river, O brahmins, flows downwards and no river flows up.

14. O excellent brahmins, the different Yugas are not reckoned in these seven climes. The time is perpetually like that of the Tretā-yuga.
15. O Brahmins, in all these continents beginning with Plakṣa and ending with Śaka the people live for five thousand years without any ailment.

16-17. Dharma is of four types among them in accordance with the divisions of Varṇas (castes) and Āśramas (stages of life). The Varṇas are four.

O learned men, I shall mention them to you, O excellent sages, they are Āryakas, Kuruś, Vivasvats and Bhāvins. They are brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.

18. In the centre, there is a big tree of the size of Jambū tree. It is the Plakṣa tree from which O excellent brahmins, the continent derives its name.

19. Hari identical with all, lord of all, creator of the universe is worshipped in the form of Soma (Moon) by those Varṇas, Āryakas and others.

20. The Plakṣa is encircled by the ocean of Sugarcane juice. It is of the same size as the continent Plakṣa and it emulates a halo around it.

21. Thus, O excellent sages, the Plakṣa continent has been recounted to you briefly. Now I shall tell you the history of Śālmaladvīpa.

22-23. O brahmins, the overlord of Śālmaladvīpa is the heroic Vapuṣmān. O excellent brahmins, his sons are Śveta, Harita, Jīmūta, Rohita (Harita?) Vaidyuta, Mānasa and Suprabha. There are seven Varṇas named after them.

24. The ocean of Sugarcane juice is encircled by Śālmaladvīpa twice its size in extent.

25. It should be known that there are seven mountains there, the source of jewels. They signify the different Varṇas. There are seven main rivers too.

26-27. The mountains are: Kumuda, Unnata, Balāhaka, Droṇa that abounds in great medicinal herbs, Kaṅka the fifth mountain, Mahiṣa the sixth and Kakudmān the seventh. Now, O brahmins I shall mention names of the rivers.

28. They are Śroṇi, Toyā, Vitṛṇā, Cakrā, Śukrā, Vimočani and Nivṛtti. Merely on being remembered they quell sins immediately.

29-32. The seven Varṇas are Śveta, Lohita, Jīmūta, Harita,
Vaidyuta, Mānasa and Suprabha. These Varṣas contain the four Varṇas.

O excellent brahmins, in the Varṇas of Sālmala Dvīpa the Varṇas stay. They are Kapilas (tawny), Aruṇas (pink), Pītas (yellow) and Kṛṣṇas (black). They are brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. They worship lord Viṣṇu, the lord of all, the unchanging Ātman, in the form of wind. They worship by performing sacrifices. They worship the lord stationed in Yojanas.

33. In this charming place there live Devas. Śālmalī is the tree which gives the continent its name.

34. This is encircled by the ocean of wine which in extent is equal to Śālmaladvīpa itself.

35. The ocean of wine is encircled by Kuśadvīpa twice the size of Śālmalī in extent.

36-38. Jyotiśmān is the overlord of Kuśadvīpa and has seven sons. They are Udbhida, Venuman, Svairatha, Randhana, Dhṛti, Prabhākara and Kapila. The Varṣa mountains are named after them. Human beings stay there along with the Daityas and Dānavas. So also stay Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Kimpuruṣas and others. There also live four Varṇas interested in carrying out their duties.

39. O excellent brahmins, they are Damins, Śuṣmins, Snehas and Mandehas. They are to be cited in order as brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras here.

40-42. Since their authority declines by the performance of holy rites the people in Kuśadvīpa worship Janārdana as Brahman and dispel Ūgra, the fierce deity, the bestower of the benefit of Adhikāra.

O excellent brahmins, the following are the seven Varṣa mountains in that Dvīpa:—Vidruma, Hemaśaila, Dyutimān, Puṣṭimān, Kuśeṣaya, Hari and Mandāra mountain.

43-44. The rivers are seven. Listen to their names in order. They are Dhūtapāpā, Śivā, Pavitrā, Sammati, Vidyudambhas, Mahi and unnamed river. All these dispel sins of the worshipper. There are thousands of other small rivers and mountains.

45. There is a stump of Kuṣa grass in the Kuṣa Dvīpa and this gives the continent its name. This Dvīpa is encircled by an ocean of ghee of an equal size.
46. The ocean of ghee is encircled by Krauñca Dvīpa. O excellent sages, Krauñcadvīpa is another great continent. May the account of the same be heard attentively.

47. It extends to twice the size of Kuśadvīpa In Krauñcadvīpa, Dyutimān is the over-lord and the noble Dyutimān had seven sons.

48-54. The king named Varṣas after the names of his sons. They were—Kuṣaga, Mandaga, Uṣṇa, Pivara, Andhakāraka, Muni and Dundubhi. O brahmins, these were his seven sons.

O excellent sages, there are Varṣas, mountains very charming and frequented by Devas and Gandharvas. Now, I shall mention their names. They are Krauñca, Vāmana, Andhakāraka, Devavrata, Dama, Puṇḍarīkavana and the great mountain Dundubhi. The latter ones are twice in size of the previous ones. Just as one Dvīpa is twice another Dvīpa in size, the mountains also are twice in size. In these charming Varṣas and on these excellent Varṣa mountains the subjects live without agony along with the groups of Devas. O excellent brahmins, they are known as Puṣkalas and Puṣkaras. They are brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras cited in due order. O excellent sages, listen to the names of rivers which they drink from.

55-61. There are hundreds of local rivers but the following seven are chief:—Kumudvatī, Sandhyā, Rātri, Manojavā, Khyāti and Puṇḍarikā. These seven are Varṣa rivers.

The lord Janārdana, in the form of Yogirudra is also worshipped there by the Varṇas, Puṣkara and others at the holding of a sacrifice.

The Krauñca Dvīpa is encircled all round by the ocean of the skin of curds of equal magnitude. O excellent sages, the ocean of the skin of curds is encircled by Śākadvīpa, whose magnitude is twice as that of Krauñca dvīpa.

Bhavya the noble lord of Śākadvīpa had seven sons and he gave them seven Varṣas.

The sons were—Jalada, Kumāra, Sukumāra, Manīraka, Kusumoda, Mocaki and Mahādruma. The seven Varṣas, are named after their names in due order.

62-64. There are seven mountains in that continent which demarcate the boundary of Varṣas. The mountains are Udaya-
giri, Jaladhāra, Raivataka, Śyāma, Ambhogiri, Āstikeya and Kesarī the most excellent of all mountains.

Śāka is the great tree here. It is frequented by Siddhas and Gandharvas. On coming into contact with the wind blowing from its leaves, great delight is experienced.

65. Many realms are there consisting of four castes. Noble souls devoid of agony and calamity stay there.

66-67. There are highly meritorious rivers here. They dispel sins and fears thereof. They are:—Sukumārī, Kumārī, Nalinī, Reṇukā, Ikṣū, Dhenukā and Gabhasti. O excellent brahmins, there are ten thousands of other small rivers there.

68-70. There are hundreds and thousands of mountains also. Those who are stationed in clouds etc drink joyously the water of those rivers. The realms in the Varṣas are equipped with the fourth aim of life (i.e. liberation). The rivers too are holy and they descend to Earth from heaven. There is no loss of Dharma, no struggle, no sorrow. Nor is there any action repugnant to the limits of decency in those seven regions.

71-74. The four Varṣas are Magas, Māgadhas, Mānasas, and Mandagas. The Magas are brahmias; Magadhas are Kṣatriyas; Mānasas are Vaiśyas and Mandagas are Śūdras.

Viṣṇu, who has assumed the form of the sun is worshipped by the residents of Śakadvipa by performing appropriate holy rites in the manner they are laid down. The residents have perfect control of their souls and minds.

O brahmins, Śakadvipa is encircled by the ocean of milk of the size of Śakadvipa. It is as though encircled by a girdle.

O brahmins, the ocean of milk is encircled by Puṣkaradvipa.

75-76. Puṣkaradvipa is twice as much as the Śakadvipa in size.

In Puṣkaradvipa the over-lord is Savana and his sons are Mahāvīra and Dhātaki. The two Varṣas are named after them—Mahāvīra and Dhātakikhaṇḍa.

77. O highly blessed ones, there is only one Varśa mountain named Mānasottara. It is well renowned. It has the shape of a girdle. It is in the centre of Dvīpa.

78. It is fifty thousand Yojanas high and extends to many Yojanas. It is cylindrical in shape.

79. This mountain is so stationed that it appears to divide
the circular Dvīpa in the middle. Hence, the two Varṣas are separated.

80. Each of the two halves is circular in shape and the great mountain is between them. Men there live upto ten thousand years.

81-84. They are devoid of ailments and sorrow. They are free from passion and hatred. O brahmins, there is no distinction of the base and excellent, of the killer and the killed among them. They do not have malice, jealousy, fear, fury, defect or greed and similar base qualities.

The Mahāvīta Varṣa adorned by the Dhātaki-khaṇḍa is frequented by Devas, Daityas and others on the Mānasottara mountain.

In that Dvīpa called Puṣkara there is neither truth nor falsehood. There are neither rivers nor mountains. Men have similar dresses and features. They are similar in form to Devas.

85. The continent is devoid of Varṣas, Āśramas and the conduct of life as such. It is devoid of holy rites. There is neither the Vedic lore, nor the Science of polity, neither business manual nor the code of service.

86. Consisting of two Varṣas, O brahmins, it is called the terrestrial heaven. The time passes happily with everyone devoid of old age and sickness.

87. Such is the situation O brahmins, in the Puṣkara, Dhātakikhaṇḍa and Mahāvīta.

In the Puṣkaradvīpa the holy fig tree is the excellent abode of Brahmā.

88-89. Brahmā stays there, worshipped by Devas and Asuras.

Puṣkara is encircled by the ocean of meat, water equal in size and extent to it.

Thus the seven Dvīpas are surrounded by the seven oceans.

90. The Dvīpa and the ocean that surrounds it are equal. The latter one is twice in size as the earlier one.

The water in each of these oceans remains always the same in volume.

91-94. They do not become less or more in the manner that water in a pot becomes less when heated by fire.

When the moon waxes, the water in the ocean does not
increase. Waters move up or down in the same volume, neither more not less.

O excellent sages, during the moonrise and moonset in the two halves of the lunar month the waters of the ocean are seen moving up or down one thousand five hundred Āṅgulas.

The diet of the people in the Puṣkara Dvīpa comes to them by itself.

95-99. O brahmins, there the subjects enjoy foodstuffs of all the six tastes always.

All round the ocean of sweet water a world is seen station-ed. It is twice the size of the ocean. The ground is golden but devoid of all creatures.

Beyond that is the mountain Lokāloka extending to ten thousand Yojanas. That mountain is as many thousand Yojanas in height also.

Beyond that is darkness. It has encircled the mountain all round. That darkness is enveloped by the cauldron of the Egg (Aṇḍakaṭāha).

This universe extends to fifty crores of Yojanas along with the Aṇḍakaṭāha, Dvīpas, oceans and mountains.

O excellent brahmins, this earth is the support of all worlds. It is superior to all other creations, it is noble and excellent.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Magnitude of Netherworlds

Lomaharṣana said:

1. O excellent sages, the extent of the Earth has been related. Its height (above the lowermost of the nether worlds) is said to be seventy-thousand Yojanas.

2-8. O excellent sages, each one of the nether worlds is a thousand Yojanas above the lower one. The seven netherworlds are—Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Sutala, Talātala, Rasātala and Pātāla.
The grounds of these nether worlds are black, white, pink, yellow, gravelled, rocky and golden. O leading brahmins, excellent palaces adorn them.

In them the communities of Dānavas, Daityas and kins, men of Nāgas of huge bodies live, O excellent brahmins:

Nārada who entered the heavenly assembly coming straight to heaven from the nether regions said that the nether worlds were more charming than the heavenly world.

There are pure jewels of brilliant lustre which delight the onlookers. The ornaments of the Nāgas, the residents of the nether regions shine splendidly in heaven; there is nothing that is equal to it.

Who is not attracted and delighted by the right of nether regions which are rendered splendid by the lasses of Daityas and Dānavas? Even a liberated soul is drawn to it. During daytime, rays of the sun spread diffused light but not the glaring sunlight.

9-20. During the night the light of the moon is not utilised for its coolness but only for illumination.

Since that passes away is not taken notice of by the Nāgas who enjoy with gaiety the foodstuffs and the edibles they consume and the great beverages they drink. Nor are Danujas and others aware of it.

O brahmins, the forests, rivers, lakes, and lotus ponds, the cooing of the cuckoo and other sweet birds, the pleasing skies, the unguents and the continuous notes and sounds of musical instruments such as the lute, flute and Mrdaṅga drums, O brahmins—all these and other beautiful things are enjoyed by virtue of their good luck by Dānavas, Daityas and Nāgas residing in Pātāla. The Tāmasī form of Viṣṇu, named Śeṣa is beneath the lower regions.

Daityas and Dānavas are not capable of recounting his good qualities. He is honoured by Devas and celestial sages. He is spoken of as Ananta. He has a thousand hoods and he is clearly bedecked in Svastika ornaments devoid of impurities. He illuminates all quarters by thousand jewels on his hoods.

For the welfare of the universe he deprives the Asuras of their prowess. His eyes whirl and rove due to intoxication. He has only one earring at all times.
Wearing a crown and garlands he shines like a white mountain aflame with fire.

He is clad in blue garments. He is intoxicated with pride. He is resplendent with white garlands. He is lofty like the mountain of Kailása where the celestial Gaṅgā falls. He has placed his hand on the plough-share; he holds an excellent iron club. He is attended upon by the embodied splendour of Varuṇa.

At the end of the Kalpa, Rudra in the form of Saṅkarṣaṇa comes out of his mouth, blazing like the flame of poisonous fire and devours the three worlds.

He holds the entire sphere of the world rising above like a peak.

21-27. Worshipped by the entire hordes of Devas Śeṣa is stationed at the root of Pātāla. His prowess, power, form and features cannot be described or known even by the gods. The whole of the Earth is turned into pink by the flames of jewels on his hoods. It acts as a floral garland for Śeṣa. Who will be able to recount his prowess? When Śeṣa with his eyes rolling and roving due to intoxication, yawns and stretches himself, the whole of the Earth along with its rivers, forests and mountains, quakes and moves.

The Gandharvas, Apsaras, Siddhas, Kinnaras, Nāgas and Rākṣasas never reach the end of his good qualities. Hence, he is Ananta. He is unchanging. The Nāga lasses apply red sandal paste on him as unguent. Wafted by the wind of respiration it acts as the perfumed powder for the quarters. It was by propitiating him that the ancient sage Garga understood the luminaries factually and the predictive astrology based on omens.

The Earth is thus held on his head by the noble Nāga. He holds universe including Devas, Asuras and human beings.
CHAPTER TWENTY

_Hells in nether regions_

_Lomaharṣaṇa said:_

1. Thereafter, O brahmins, the hells are situated beneath the waters. The sinners are hurled down into them. Now, hear about them attentively, O excellent brahmins.

2-6. They are Raurava, Śaukara, Rodha, Tāna, Viśasana, Mahājāvāla, Taptakumbha, Mahālobha, Vimohana, Rudhir-andha, Vaitarani, Kṛmiśa, Kṛmibhojana, Asipatravana, Kṛṣṇa, Lālabhakṣa, Pūyavaha, Pāpa, Vahniṅvāla, Adhāśiras, Sad-arśa, Kṛṣṇasūtra, Tamas, Avici, Śvabhojana, Apratiṣṭha and a second Avici. There are other similar hells extremely terrible which fall under the jurisdiction of Yama. They terrify by means of weapons and fires. The persons who are engaged in sinful activities fall into them.

7. He who commits perjury, he who speaks with partiality and he who utters falsehood falls into Raurava hell.

8. O excellent sages, he who destroys a foetus, he who murders his preceptor, he who slays cows and he who suffocates others—all these fall into terrible Raurava hell.

9. He who drinks wine, he who slays a brahmin, he who steals gold and he who comes into contact with these—all these fall into Śūkara hell.

10. He who murders a king, a Vaiśya and a royal soldier, he who defiles the bed of his preceptor and he who indulges in sexual intercourse with his sister—all these fall into Taptakumbha hell.

11. He who sells his chaste wife, he who keeps wine for sale, he who sells saffron and he who discards a devoted friend or servant—all these fall into Taptaloha hell.

12-13. He who indulges in sexual intercourse with his daughter or daughter-in-law is hurled into Mahājāvāla hell. He who insults preceptors and elders, he who reviles at them, he who slanders the Vedas, he who sells the Vedas and he who cohabits with the forbidden women falls into Sabala hell, O brahmins.

14-17. A thief falls into Vimoha hell, so also the person who defiles the line of demarcation of boundary.
He who hates Devas, brahmins and Pitṛs, he who spoils jewels—falls into Kṛmibhakṣa hell.

He who performs an ill-conducted sacrifice falls into Kṛmīśa hell.

The base man who takes food prior to Pitṛs, Devas and guests falls into Lālābhakṣa hell. The maker of arrows falls into Vedhaka hell.

Those who make arrows with knots, those who make swords and other destructive weapons fall into the terrible hell Viśasana.

He who receives gifts from indecent men falls into Adho-mukha hell.

18. He who performs a sacrifice on behalf of a person not entitled to that privilege, he who foretells by studying stars and he who partakes of sweet cooked food all by himself falls into Kṛmipūya hell.

19. O brahmins, the brahmin who sells lac, gravy, gingelly seeds and salt falls into the same hell.

20. O excellent brahmins he who rears or eats poultry, goats, pigs and birds falls into the same hell.

21-22. He who subsists on the stage or the trade of fish, he who partakes of food from the hand of the bastard, he who administers poison, he who adopts the profession of a spy or a secret informer, he who rears buffaloes, or being a brahmin indulges in sexual intercourse on Parvan days, he who commits arson, he who hates friends, he who behaves as a deceptive and he who performs a sacrifice on behalf of all and sundry in the village and he who sells Soma juice falls into hell Rudhirandha.

23-24. He who destroys honey, he who commits multimurder of villagers falls into hell Vaitaraṇī.

Those who drink semen, those who break boundary lines or flout limits of decency, those who do not observe pollution (i.e. after birth of an infant or death of a kinsman) and those who maintain themselves on deception fall into Kṛcchra hell. He who cuts off a forest in vain falls into hell Asipatravana.

25. Those who hunt wild goats, sheep, or deer fall into hell Vahnijvāla. O brahmins, they too who burn things that should not be burnt, fall into hell.

26. He who commits omissions in the observance of holy
rites and he who errs while performing duties of his stage (āśrama) fall into Sandarśana hell and endure its tortures.

27. Those men and religious students who have vowed to celibacy but who discharge semen by day or during dreams, at night and those who are taught by their sons fall into Śvabhōjana hell.

28. These are the main hells, there are hundreds, and thousands of similar hells where the perpetrators of heinous crimes are cooked by day and night and tortured.

29. These sins and thousands of similar sins are atoned for by men who are brought to suffering to one or other of these hells.

30. Those who act contrary to the tenets of disciplined life of Varṇas and Āśramas mentally, physically or verbally, fall into these hells.

31. The gods in heaven are seen by the people of hells with their heads directed above. The gods see the residents of hells far below, their heads directed below.

32-33. The following beings attain absolution in that order:—the immobile beings, worms, aquatic animals, birds, animals, men, righteous persons and Devas. The latter ones of these constitute a thousandth part of the former ones among them. All these, O highly blessed ones, progress till they achieve salvation.

34. There are as many dwellers in hell as there are creatures in heaven. He who commits sins but is averse to expiate for them, falls into hell.

35. Holy rites of expiation have been mentioned by great sages in proportion to sins. They have mentioned them being fully aware which particular expiation is capable of quelling the particular sin.

36. O leading brahmins, Manu and other sages have mentioned rites of atonement—elaborate ones if the sin is elaborate and minor ones if the sin is minor.

37. The acts of expiations are in the nature of austerities or holy rites. Of all of them the remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most effective.

38. After committing a sin if a person repents for it, he should remember Viṣṇu—which is the sole rite of expiation for him. This is the greatest of all holy rites.
39. Remembering Vishnu at dawn, night, dusk or midday the man attains Vishnu because his sins are immediately quelled.

40. By remembering Vishnu his pains and strains perish immediately and they attain absolution. Attainment of heaven is an obstacle into him.

41. O leading brahmins, the benefits such as attaining the status of Indra as a result of Japa, Homa, worship etc are obstacles to a man whose mind is set on Vasudeva.

42. Where is the attainment of heaven characterised by a return once again to the Earth? Where is the Japa of Vasudeva which is the most excellent cause of absolution (where there is no return to this earth)?

43. Hence, no brahmin, no man, who remembers Vishnu day and night, falls into hell. If he has incurred sins they perish immediately.

44. That which delights the mind is heaven. That which is contrary in effect is hell. O excellent brahmins, good and evil are given the appellations of heaven and hell.

45. The one and the same object is conducive to misery as well as happiness. It produces malice and wrath. Hence there can never be an object solely of the nature of sorrow.

46. The same object generates pleasure at the outset, but later on, it yields misery. The same object causes pain, wrath but later on gives pleasure.

47. Hence, there is nothing which is solely of the nature of sorrow or solely of the nature of pleasure. It is the changed phase of mind that is characterised by happiness or sorrow.

48. Knowledge alone is the greatest Brahman; knowledge alone is effective for removing bondage. The universe is of the nature of knowledge. There is nothing greater than knowledge.

49-50. O brahmins let this be understood that knowledge alone is learning and ignorance.

Thus the sphere of Earth has been recounted to you by me. Similarly, O brahmins, I have recounted the nether regions, hells, oceans, mountains, continents subcontinents and rivers succinctly. Everything has been mentioned to you. What else do you desire to know?
CHAPTER TWENTYONE

Upper Regions

The sages said:

1-2. Everything has been mentioned to us by you. We wish to know further about the upper worlds Bhūr, Bhuvar, Svar etc. We also wish to know how the planets are stationed and what their magnitude is. O highly blessed Lomaharṣaṇa, mention these precisely.

Lomaharṣaṇa said:

3. That area which is illuminated by the rays of the sun and the moon is known as earth. It consists of oceans, rivers and mountains also.

4. The extent and magnitude of the sky is the same as those of the earth.

5. O brahmins, the disc of the sun is stationed a hundred thousand Yojanas away from the earth. The disc of the moon is stationed a hundred thousand Yojanas away from the sun.

6. Full hundred thousand Yojanas above the moon, the entire sphere of the stars shines.

7. O brahmins, mercury (Budha) is two hundred thousand Yojanas above the sphere of stars. Venus Uṣanas is stationed so many Yojanas above Mercury.

8. Mars (Aṅgāraka) is stationed so many Yojanas above Venus. The preceptor of Devas, Jupiter, is stationed two hundred thousand Yojanas above Mars.

9. Saturn (Sauri) is stationed two hundred thousand Yojanas above Jupiter. The sphere of seven sages (the Great Bear), O excellent brahmins, is stationed a hundred thousand Yojanas beyond it.

10. Polestar Dhruva that is the pivot of entire luminaries is stationed a hundred thousand Yojanas above seven sages.

11. O excellent sages, the three worlds have been succinctly mentioned. This is the ground for the benefit of sacrifice. The sacrifice is established here.

12. The Maharloka is a crore of Yojanas above Dhruva. It is here that the Kalpavāsin reside.

13. The Janaloka is two crores of Yojanas above Mahar-
loka. It is here that Sanandana and other sons of Brahmā live. O brahmins, they are pure-minded.

14. Four times that distance above Janaloka (i.e. eight crores of Yojanas) is the Tapas region. It is there that the gods called Vairājās are stationed. They are devoid of physical forms.

15. Six times that distance above the Tapas region (i.e. 48 crores of Yojanas) shines the Satyaloka. This region releases one from the bondage of death (that which does not kill again) and is known as the world of Brahmā.

16. Wherever there is earthly ground or object that can be traversed by foot, it is called Bhurloka. Its extent has been mentioned by me.

17. O excellent sages, the space between the earth and the sun, frequented by the sages, Siddhas and others, is called Bhuvarloka. It is the second of upper worlds.

18. The space between Dhruva and the sun which extends to one million four hundred thousand Yojanas is said to be Svarloka by those who are conversant with the geography of the worlds.

19. This set of three worlds is called Kṛtaka (artificial) by the brahmins. The three worlds Jana, Tapas and Satya are called Akṛtaka (Natural).

20. In between the two, Maharloka is known as Kṛtakā-kṛtaka. At the end of a Kalpa it becomes empty but is not annihilated entirely.

21. O brahmins, these seven upper worlds have been mentioned by me to you as also the seven nether worlds. This is the detailed description of the cosmic Egg.

22. This is enveloped by the cauldron of the Egg (Aṇḍaka-ṭāha) all round, at the sides above and below like the seeds of an apple fruit.

23. The Egg is enveloped by water ten times its size. The encircling volume of water is enveloped by fire.

24. O brahmins, the fire is enveloped by wind; and the wind is enveloped by Ether. O excellent sages, the Ether is enveloped by Mahat.

25. These seven are such that the outer one is ten times the size of the inner one. The Pradhāna stands enveloping the Mahat.
26. It is infinite and endless. It has no reckoning since it cannot be measured by any unit, nor calculated by any figure.

27. O brahmins, it is the cause of entire creation. It is the great Prakṛti. There are thousands and thousands of such cosmic Eggs.

28-30. There are eggs like these, crores and hundred crores in number.

   Just as there is fire in the wood, or oil in the ginjelly seed so also the Puruṣa is stationed in the Pradhāna which it provides. He is known as the conscious Ātman.

   O excellent brahmins, the Pradhāna and the Puruṣa are sustained by the Energy of Viṣṇu that is the soul of all living beings. They mix together in their activity. Thus the energy of Viṣṇu alone is the cause of separation and integration of Puruṣa and Pradhāna.

31-36. O excellent sages, at the creation of the universe it is the cause of agitation.

   Just as wind contains chillness of each and every drop of water so also the Energy of Viṣṇu contains both Pradhāna and Puruṣa together.

   A tree with its roots, stem and branches grows out of the first seed. Many seeds come out of that thereafter. From those seeds grow other trees. These have the same characteristics, causes and parts.

   In the same manner the Mahat etc are evolved, at the outset from the unevolved Pradhāna. From the Mahat to Viśeṣa this is the process of creation. Therefrom the gods and others are born. Their sons are born, their sons and grandsons. It goes on.

   Just as there is no deficiency or decline in the tree due to the growth of another tree from its seeds so also the elements do not dwindle by the creation of other elements.

37. Just as the Ether, time, etc. are as the cause of the tree by their mere presence, nearly so also Viṣṇu is the cause of universe without undergoing transformation.

38-40. In the seed of a grain all these are present in latent form—viz—the root, stalk, sprout, leaf, stem, ovary, flower, milk (soup), rice-grain, husks and the bits of grain. O excellent sages, when all the complements of causes for the growth are present, these parts, already present within manifest themselves.
In the same manner, the physical forms of gods and human beings are already present in the diverse activities. They grow up, by coming into contact with the energy of Viṣṇu.

41-44. That Viṣṇu is the great Brahman from whom this universe evolves, in whom it subsists and in whom it is dissolved.

That Brahman is the greatest abode; and the great region beyond Sat and Asat. The universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings is identical with him.

He alone is the Primordial Nature. He alone is the universe when his form becomes manifest. In him alone everything is evolved and dissolved.

He is the agent of rites; he is worshipped; he alone is the sacrifice and the benefit thereof; he alone is the means of sacrifice. There is nothing which is separate and different from him.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

Pole Star

Lomaharṣaṇa said:

1. Pole Star is situated at the tail end of the form of lord Viṣṇu in heaven which consists of constellations and which has the shape of Śiśumāra (the Gangetic porpoise).

2. He himself revolves and he makes the moon, sun and other planets too revolve. The constellations follow him in a circular orbit.

3. Along with the planets, the sun, moon, stars and constellations are tied to Dhruva by gaseous rows and lines.

4-5. Viṣṇu is the greatest abode. He is the support of that luminous form in heaven with the shape of Gangetic porpoise mentioned above.

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1. Śiśumāra (the Gangetic porpoise) is a constellation, so called because it is in the shape of a crocodile. It is said to be the starry form of Viṣṇu. At the tail end of it is Dhruva which automatically rotates and also makes planets like the sun and the moon to rotate. Stars follow the self-rotating Dhruva and rotate like a wheel.
(Meditating on the lord) in his heart, the son of Uttānapāda, Dhruva propitiated the Patriarch Brahmā and stationed himself at the tail end of the stellar Gangetic porpoise.

6. The support of Śīsumāra is Viṣṇu the presiding deity of all humanities. The Śīsumāra is the support of Dhruva and the sun is supported by Dhruva.

7. This entire universe including Devas, Asuras and human beings is supported by the sun. O brāhmins, now listen, by what method he supports the universe.

8. For eight months the sun absorbs water in the form of juice. Then he showers water in the form of rain. That gives rise to foodgrains. This entire universe rests on food.

9-10. After absorbing water from the universe by his hot rays, the sun nourishes the moon. By the water-essence passing through the gaseous nerves the moon is held aloft over the clouds having their forms evolved out of smoke, fire and wind. The clouds are called Abhras because they hold waters and do not let them fall off.

11. When nudged by the wind the waters in the clouds fall off. O brāhmins, they attain the impressions of previous actions activised by the opportune time, and become pure.

12. O brāhmins, the sun-god absorbs four types of waters, viz. those of rivers, oceans, earth and those present in the living beings.

13-14. The multi-rayed sun absorbs water from the celestial Gaṅgā and immediately discharges it on to the earth without allowing it to get entangled with the clouds.

O excellent brāhmins, the man who has washed the dirt of all sins due to his contact with it never falls into hell. Indeed, it is said to be a divine bath.

15. On seeing the sun, that water falls from heaven without the clouds acting as intermediary. That water from the celestial Gaṅgā is absorbed and cast off by the rays of the sun.

16. The water that falls from heaven on seeing the sun during Kṛttikā and other stars should be known as the water of Gaṅgā poured out by the elephants of quarters.

17. The water that falls down during the even numbered (i.e. Rohinī, Ādrā etc) from heaven after being absorbed by the sun is immediately scattered by the rays of the sun.
18. O brahmins, both of them are extremely meritorious to human beings. They dispel sins. O excellent brahmins, one can have divine absolution with the waters of celestial Gaṅgā.

19. O brahmins, the water that is showered by the clouds nourishes living beings and makes the medicinal herbs grow well. It is the nectar that enlivens all.

20. All kinds of medicinal plants increase thereby. Until they are mature and ripe they continue to be the means to the people.

21. Day by day men with the sacred scriptures as their guides perform sacrifices in the manner they have been laid down and thereby nourish the gods.

22-23. The entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings is supported by rain. Thus the sacrifices, Vedas, castes beginning with the brahmins, Devas, animals and the rest of living beings—everyone is supported by rain. O excellent sages that rain is generated by the sun.

24. O excellent sages the support of the sun is the Polar Star and that of the Polar Star is Śiśumāra and that support of Śiśumāra is Viṣṇu.

25-26. Viṣṇu is stationed in the heart of Śiśumāra. He maintains all living beings. He is the primordial cause and eternal.

Thus, O excellent sages, the cosmic egg has been cited by me along with the divisions of the earth, oceans etc. What else do you desire to know?

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

Holy Centres : Their Greatness

The sages said:

1. O Sūta conversent with piety, it behoves you to narrate the tale of holy shrines and centres over the earth. We are inclined to hear the same.
Lomaharṣaṇa said:

2. He whose hands and feet are clean, whose mind is fully restrained and who has learning, penance and fame, enjoys the benefit of visiting holy shrines.

3. The pure mind is the holy centre unto men. So also the control over speech and the restraint on the sense-organs. There are holy centres present in the physical body itself. They make the man understand the path of heaven.

4. The wicked mind situated within does not become purified by ablutions in the sacred water in the holy centres, like the unclean mudpot of stale liquor which cannot become pure even when washed with water a hundred times.

5. Neither holy centres, not charitable gifts nor holy rites, nor penance groves can purify the man whose mind is wicked, who takes delight in arrogance or who has not conquered his sense-organs.

6. Wherever a man stays after keeping his sense-organs fully under his control—the holy centres of Kurukṣetra, Prayāga and Puśkara are present there.

7. Hence listen. I shall mention holy centres and sacred shrines—whatever there are on the earth, O excellent sages.

8-9 They cannot be explained in detail even in the course of hundreds of years.

O excellent brahmans I shall mention holy centres of Puśkara, Naimiśa forest, Prayāga and Dharmāraṇya as the foremost among holy spots.

There are Dhenuka, Campaka and Saindhava forests.

10. The meritorious Sagarāraṇya forest, Daṇḍaka forest, Gaya, Prabhāsa, Śrītirtha, and the divine Kanakhala.¹

11. Bhrgutuṇga, Hiraṇyākṣa, Bhīmakanyā, Kuśasthali Lokārgala, Kedāra and Mandāra forest.

12. Mahālaya, Koṣitīrtha, that dispels sins, Rūpatīrtha, Śūkara and Cakrātīrtha of great benefit.

13. Vyāsatīrtha, Somatīrtha, Śākhoṭakatīrtha, Kokāmukha tīrtha and the holy Badari mountain.

¹ Kanakhala—A holy place of pilgrimage on the bank of Gaṅgā. Kālidāsa refers to this place in his Meghadūta. This is the place where Dakṣa Prājāpati performed the sacrifice.
14. Somatirtha, Tuṅgakūṭa, Skandāśramatīrtha, Sūryaprabha, Dhenuaras and the seventh āyūsmika.?

15. Koṭitīrtha at Dharmodbhava, the Sārva-kāmika-tīrtha, Sūryaprabha, Mahākunḍa and Somābhīṣecanatīrtha.


17. Śālagrāma, Cakratīrtha, the excellent Kadalihrada, Vidyutprabha, Devahradatīrtha, and Viṣṇuprabha.

18. Śaṅkhaprabha, Devakunḍa, Vajrayudhatīrtha, Vasṭrapada, Barhapada and Lokārohaṇa.


20. (?) Sollayāṅgopacāra, Cavarambana, Pūrṇavat (?) Snānakunḍa, Prayāga and Guhā Viṣṇupada.


22. Bhadravatī Koṭitīrtha, Mahākālavana, the great Narmadātīrtha, Tirthabīja and Arbuda.

23. The Pañcatīrtha including Vasīṣṭhatīrtha, Priyasaṁjñaka, Vārṣika and the splendid Pañjiraka.

24. Sutīrtha, Brahmarudra, Kanyākumārika, Śakrātīrtha, Pañcanada and Renukatīrtha.

25. The pure Paitāmahatīrtha, the excellent Raudrapāda, Maṇimanta, Kāmākhya, Kṛṣṇatīrtha and Kulīṅgaka.

26. Śrīśakrayajana, Brahmavālukā, the holy Vyāsatīrtha, Puṇḍarika and the excellent Maṇimanta.

27. Dirghamantha, Harṣapādatīrtha, Śayana, Daśāsvamedha, Kedāra and Tamasodbheda.

28. Rudrakūpa, Saṁyamanītīrtha, Saṁtrāvanāsika, Syamantapāñcaka, and Brahmatīrtha very pleasing to look.

29. Pṛthivītīrtha, Pāriplava, Pṛthūdaka, Daśāsvamedhika, Śākṣida and Vijaya.

30. The Koṭitīrtha at Pañcanada, Varāha, Yakṣinīhrada, Puṇḍarika, Somatīrtha, and the excellent Muṇjāvatāratha.

31. The Baburavanatīrtha situated in the forest Badarivanā, Svarlokadvāraka and Kapilatīrtha.

32. Sūryatīrtha, Varūsthāna, Bhavābhavana, Yakṣarākṣasatīrtha, and Brahmatīrtha the excellent holy centre.
33. Kāmeśvara, Mātrīrtha, Śatavana, the abode of the earthly Harśa (swan) and the Sārasatīrtha.
34. Daśāśvamedha, Kedāra, excellent Brahmajīta Saptarṣikunḍa and the well-delimited tīrtha of the goddess.
35. Ihāspada (the support here, on earth) Koṭikṛta, Kimvāna, Kimjaya, Kāraṇdava, Viśvatīrtha and another Triviṣṭapatīrtha.
36. Pānikhātatīrtha, Miśrakatīrtha, Madhukaṃṭatīrtha, Manomayatīrtha, the divine Kauśikītīrtha and the excellent Kanyātīrtha.
37. The Brahmaśīrtha, Manastīrtha, the sacred holy centre, Saugandhika the holy forest, Maṇītīrtha and Sarvatīrtha.
38. The most excellent holy centre Iśānatīrtha, the holy Pañcayajñaka, Triśūladhara, Mahendra, and the divine abode Mahālaya,
39. The divine holy centre Śākambharītīrtha, Suvarṇākhya, Kapimada, Kṣīreśvara, Viṛūpākṣa, Bhṛgutīrtha and Kuśodabhava.
40. Brahmāvarta, Brahmayoni, the mountain Nilaparvata, the eddy Bhadrakarna and the eddy Śakrakarna.
41. Saptasārasvata, the holy centre of Auśanasatīrtha, Kapālamocana, Avakīrṇa and Pañcakatīrtha.
42. Catussā mudrika, Satkāmcanasahasrika, Reṇuka, Pañcakataka and Ainasavimocanatīrtha.
43. Sthānuthīrtha, Tīrtha of Kuru, Svargadvāra, Kuṣadhvaja, Viśvesvara, Vāmakara and the hermitage of Nārāyaṇa.
44. Gaṅgāhrada, the holy Vaṭa and Badarī, Indramāgarāṅgaṅkṣetra and Jirikāvāsa.
45. O brahmins, Somatīrtha, the meritorious Koṭitīrtha, the holy spot of Koṭitīrthasthalī, an eddy by Bhadrakāli.
46. The holy forest of Arundhatīvana, the excellent Brahmāvarta, Āsvadevī, Kubjavana and Yamunāprabhava.
47. Vira-Pramokṣa, Siddhārtha, Māyāvidyodbhava, Mahāhrada, Vetasikārūpa and Sundarikāśrama.
48. Brahmānītīrtha, which is very great, Gaṅgodbhavasarṣṭa, Bāhukātīrtha and Vimalāśokatīrtha.
49. Gautamītīrtha, Airāvatītīrtha, Śatasahasrikātīrtha, Koṭitīrtha in the abode Bhartṛsthāna and the excellent Kāpīlītīrtha.
50. The Pañcanadatirtha of the intelligent Mārkaṇḍeya, Somatirtha, Śivoda and Matsyodaritirtha.

51. Sūryatirtha having the lustre of the sun, the holy forest Somakavana, Arunāspada, Vāmanaka and the Sūryatirtha abounding in sands.

52. The Tirtha called Avimukta, the Nīlakaṇṭhahrada, Piśācamocana, and Subhadhrāhrada.

53. Vimalakūṇḍa, Tirtha of Caṇḍīśvara, Śreṣṭhasthānahrada and Samudrakūpa.

54. The forest of Jaigīsavya, the forest of Hṛṣikeśa, Ajāmukaśara, and the whirlpool of Ghaṇṭākarṇa.

55. Puṇḍarikahrada, the tank of Kāśṭhaka, Śmaśānstambha, Kumbhatīrtha and the Vināyakahrada.

56. The well born of the Siddhas, the holy lake Brahmāsaras Bhadrāvāsa, Nāgatīrtha and Somatīrtha.

57. Bhaktahrada, the lake of milk, Pretādhāra, Kumārakatīrtha, Brahmāvarta Kuśāvarta and the holy centre Dadhi-kañnodaya.

58. The great holy centre of Śrṅgatīrtha, the excellent holy centre of Mahānadi, the divine lake Brahmāsaras, and the holy Akṣayavaṭa at Gayāsīrṣa.

59. Gomayatīrtha in the South, Hayaśāntika in the north, Kapilahrada, Grdhraṇūta and Śaṅtrīhrada.

60. The forest Gitāvana that destroys sins, Yonidvāra, Dhaimuka, Dhanvaka, Lohika and Mataṅghahrada.

61. Piṭṛkūpa, Rudrakūpa, Matītīrtha, Sumālin, Brahma-sthāna, Saptakūṇḍa, and Maṇiratnahrada.

62. The hermitage of Mudgala, the whirlpool of Mudgala, the holy centre Janakakūpa, and the holy Tīrtha Vinasana.

63. The holy centre Śoka, Bhāratatīrtha, Jyeṣṭhālika, Viśveśvara of hundredfold merits, and Kanyakāśīvedha.

64. Nidhitīrtha, Rāmabhavatīrtha, the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha, Devakūta, Devakūpa and the hermitage of Kauśika.

65. Kulakarpahrada, Kauśikidruma, Dharmatīrtha, Kāśi- canatīrtha and the holy centre Uddālaka.


67. Śoṇodbhava, Varṣagulma, the centre of Rāma Bhaṅ-
gilka, Puṇyāvartahrada, Śrīmatṛīrtha and the hermitage Badarīkāśrama.

68. Rāmatīrtha, Vitastā, Merujātiya, the Rohini and the lake of Indradyumna.

69. Avasarga, Mahendra, Śrītīrtha and the holy centre Iṣutīrtha, Vārṣika, and the abode of Kubera.

70. Kanyātīrtha, Gokarna, the abode, of Gopati Sāmvarta, Viśvāsa and the group of seven deep pools named Saptagodāvarihrada.

71. Another Badarīhrada, Brahmasthānavivardhana, Jātihrada, Devahrada, and Kuṣapratana.

72. Sarvadevavrata, Kanyāśramahrada, Mahārājahrada, the holy Śakratīrtha and Kundaka.

73. Āṅgāratīrtha, the forest Rudrāraṇyaka, Medhāvin, Devahrada and the holy centre Amaravartana.

74. The holy Mandākinīhrada, Kṣama, Māheśvara, Gaṅgātīrtha, Tripuruṣa, and Bhimatāṇḍavamukha.

75. Prthukūta, Śālvakūta, Šoṇa, Rohitaka, Kapilahrada, Mālya and Kapilāhrada belonging to Vasiṣṭha.

76-79. The eddies, the holy waterspots of Vālakhilyas, the seven sages, other great sages and the Akhaṅḍita-hrada.

The man who is endowed with faith who takes his bath duly in these sacred water spots and holy centres should observe fast and control his sense-organs. He should perform Tarpana rites for Devas, sages and Pitrṛ. After worshipping the deities he should stay there for three nights.

O brahmmins, benefits are derived severally from each of these holy centres. Undoubtedly, the man obtains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice by making journeys to these places.

He who listens to this narrative daily, or who narrates this greatness of holy centres is liberated from sins.
CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

A Dialogue between Brahmā and Sages

The sages said:

1. O Sūta the most excellent among the eloquent ones, tell us about the most excellent place on earth, that bestows virtue, love, wealth and salvation and that is the most excellent of all holy centres.

Lomaharṣana said:

2. O excellent brahmins formerly, the great sages asked my preceptor this very question that you ask me just now. I shall mention it.

3-8. My preceptor Vyāsa, the holy sage was seated in his hermitage in Kurukṣetra. The hermitage was rendered splendidly by different varieties of flowers. It abounded in different kinds of trees, creepers and herds of different animals. There were the following trees—Punnāga, Karṇikāra, Sarala, Devadāru, Śāla, Tāla, Tamāla Panasa, Khadira, Pāṭala, Asoka, Bakula, Karavīra, Campaka and other trees, all in full bloom. My preceptor was an expert in sacred scriptures. He had composed the great Mahābhārata. He was the foremost among intellectuals. He was omniscient and engaged in activities conducive to the welfare of all living beings. He was engrossed in spiritual quests. He had mastered the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. He had expounded the Purāṇas and Āgamas. He was the son of Parāśara. He was handsome with eyes as wide as the petals of the lotus.

The sages of holy rites came there to see the calm sage.

9-14. The following were the sages who came viz.—Kaśyapa, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Vasiṣṭha, Jaimini, Dhaumya, Mārkaṇḍeya, Vālmiki, Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda, Vātsya, Garga, Āsuri, Sumantu, Bhārgava, Kaṇva, Medhātithi, Guru Māṇḍavya, Cyavana, Dhūmra, Asita, Devala, Maudgalya, Tṛṇabāhu, Pippalāda, Akṛtavrāṇa, Sarhvarta, Kauśika, Raibhya, Maitreya, Hārīta, Śaṇḍilya, Agasty, Durvāsas, Lomaśa, Nārada, Parvata, Vaiśampāyana, Gālava, Bhāskari, Pūraṇi, Sūta, Pulastya, Ulūka, Pulaha, Vāyu, Devasthāna, Tumburu, Sanatkumāra, Paila, Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇānubhautika.
15. The intelligent sage, son of Satyavatī surrounded by these and other excellent sages shone like the moon surrounded by the stars.

16. The sage, the knower of the Vedas honoured those sages who came there. They too honoured him in return. Thereafter, they engaged themselves in conversation.

17. At the end of their preliminary talk the excellent sages, the residents of the penance-groves asked Kṛṣṇa (Dvaipāyana), the son of Satyavatī to clarify their doubts.

*The sages said:*

18. O sage, you know the entire range of sacred lore, viz. the Vedas, Purāṇas, Āgamas and Bhārata. You know the past, present and future.

19-21. O excellent sage, tell us. We ask you the highly pleased soul, the following things on seeing the universe submerging in the ocean of worldly existence without any support and (miserably) unconscious (of the same). This ocean of worldly existence is painful and utterly full of misery. It has no real substance. It is terrible with passions acting like crocodiles, the objects of sense-organs acting like flood waters, the sense-organs like a blended mass of whirlpool, the visible objects like hundreds of confused masses of waves, delusion making it turbid like mud. It is impassable, grave and difficult to be crossed due to covetousness.

22. What is it that is conducive to welfare in this terrible world that causes hairs to stand on end. It behoves you to uplift the worlds by offering advice.

23. It behoves you to recount that rare and extremely great holy centre which bestows liberation, We wish to hear about the land of holy rites on this earth.

24-25. It is only by perfectly performing the holy rites on this earth in the manner they have been laid down that a man attains the greatest perfection. By repugnant activities he falls into hell. The intelligent man attains absolution in the holy centre of salvation. Hence, O highly intelligent one, recount what you have been asked by the excellent brahmins.

26. On hearing the words of those sages of purified souls the intelligent Vyāsa, conversant with the past and future said:
Vyāsa said:

27-30. Listen O sages. I shall mention as you ask, the conversation that formerly took place between the sages and Brahmā on the summit of Meru that is spacious and bedecked with variety of jewels. It abounds in many trees and creepers rendered splendid by diverse kinds of flowers. There the atmosphere is full of chirping sounds of various birds. It is literally scattered with animals with a confusing mass of their offsprings. Many wonderful and mysterious things are present there. Rocks and pebbles of different colour lie scattered embellished with minerals and metals of all kinds. It contains several hermitages thronged with sages.

31-33. The four-faced lord of the universe was seated there. He is the source of origin of the universe. Being the lord and support of worlds, he is worthy of being saluted by all. He was then surrounded by Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Vidyādhars, serpents, sages, Siddhas, Apsaras and other heaven-dwellers. Some of them were eulogising him. Some were playing on musical instruments and singing songs in his praise. Others were dancing.

34-35. Thus, when the time was joyous and the living beings had gathered together, when the gentle southern breeze served them wafting the sweet odour from different kinds of flowers, Bhṛgu and other sages bowed to lord Brahmā. O brahmins, those excellent sages asked the father this very same topic.

The sages said:

36-37. “O lord, we wish to hear about the land of holy rites on the surface of the earth. O lord of Devas, it behoves you to recount the most inaccessible centre of absolution”

Vyāsa said:

On hearing their words, Brahmā, the lord of Devas, said to them in reply to the questions they asked, O excellent sages.
CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

Bhārata Subcontinent

Brahmā said:

1. O sages, you listen to what I am going to say now. It is a splendid ancient traditional account connected with the Vedas. It grants worldly pleasures and salvation.

2. The Bhārata sub-continent is the land of holy rites in the whole of the earth. Heaven and hell are the lands for reaping the fruit of those holy rites.

3. O brahmins, by committing sins or performing holy rites in that subcontinent a man necessarily attains the fruit thereof whether auspicious or inauspicious.

4. There is no doubt that by performing their ordained duties in that sub-continent, the brahmins and others of perfect self-control attain the highest success.

5. O excellent brahmins, in that Varṣa, a person of self-control attains everything viz. virtue, wealth, love and liberation.

6. O excellent brahmins, Indra and other Devas have attained the status of a deity after performing splendid holy rites in that sub-continent.

7. Other men too had attained salvation in that Varṣa. They had control over their organs. They were devoid of passion and indecent rivalry.

8. Those persons who are devoid of ailments and who stay in heaven with aerial chariots had previously performed splendid holy rites in that land of Bharata and had attained heaven thereby.

9. Devas do always wish for a residence in Bhārata that yields the benefit of heavenly pleasures and liberation. They often spoke “O when shall we visit Bhārata”.

10-13. O most excellent one among Devas, it has just been stated by you that except in Bhārata, rites holy or unholy are not conducive to meritorious or sinful results. But it seems likely that holy rites are not enjoined on men elsewhere. Hence, O Brahmā, recount Bhārata to us in detail, if you are kind to us. O lord, mention everything, how this sub-continent is situated. What are the-continent mountains here? What are its divisions.
Brahma said:

14. Listen, O brahmins, the Bhārata sub-continent has nine sub-divisions which are separated by oceans. They are equal to one another.

15-16. They are Indrâdvîpa, Kaseru, Tāmravârṇâ (? Tāmrāparṇâ), Gabhastimān, Nâgadvîpa, Saumya, Gandharva and Varuṇa. Bhārata surrounded by the ocean is the ninth among them. The island extends from south to north and is one thousand Yojanas long.

17. In the east of it, the Kirātas stay. The Yavanas stay in the west. O brahmins, the Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras stay in the middle.

18-20. They are sanctified by holy rites and worldly pursuits as sacrifice, warfare, trading. Their general behaviour is intelligible through their activities, which cause heavenly pleasures and liberation. They incur merit and sin thereby.

There are seven Kula mountains viz., Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Śūktimān, Rkṣa, Vindhya and Pāriyātra. There are thousands of other mountains nearby.

21-24. They are vast, lofty and beautiful. They are immense. Their ridges are of wonderful and variegated nature. They are Kolāhala, Vaibhārāja, Mandara, Dardala, Vātādhvaga, Daivata, Maināka, Sūrasa, Tuṅgaprastha, Nāga, Godhana, Pāṇḍura, Puṣpa, Vaijayanta, Raivata, Arbuda, Rṣyamūka, Gomanta, Kṛtaśaila, Śri Cakora and hundreds of other mountains. The populated realms are interspersed with these mountains. The Mlecchas live in parts of this territory.

25-27. Excellent waters of these rivers are drunk by those people. O excellent brahmins, know these rivers.

The following rivers rise from the foot of the Himavān:—Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, Sindhu, Candrabhāgā, Yamunā, Śatadrū, Vipāśa, Vitastā, Airāvatī, Kuhū, Gomatī, Dhūtapāpā, Bāhudā, Dṛṣadvatī, Devikā, Cakṣu, Niśṭīvā, Gaṅgākī and Kauśiki.

28-29. The following rivers originate from the Pāriyātra mountain:—Devasmṛti, Devavatī, Vātaghni, (Kālī) Sindhu, Venya, Candana, Sadānirā, Mahī, Carmanvatī, Vṛṣī, Vidiśā, Vetravatī, Śiprā and Dravantī.

30-32. The following rivers originate from the foot of Rkṣa mountain:—
śopā, Mahānādi, Narmadā, Surathā, Kriyā, Mandā-
kinī, Daśārṇa, Citrakūṭa, Citrotpalā, Vetravatī, Karamodā,
Piṣācikā, Atilaghusroni, Vipāsā, Śaivalā, Samerujā, Śuktimatī,
Śakunī, Tridivā and Kramu.

33-34. The following rivers have their source in the foot-
hills of the Vindhyā mountain :—Śiprā, Payoṣṭī, Nirvin-
dhyā, Tāpī, Veṇā, Vaitaranī, Sinīvālī, Kumudvāti, Toyā,
Mahāgaurī, Durgā and Antahśilā. These rivers are splendid
and their waters are holy.

35-40. The following excellent rivers originate from the
foot of Sahya mountain :—Godāvari, Bhimarathi, Kṛṣṇa-
vānī, Tuṅgabhadra, Suprayogā, and Pāpanāśinī.

The holy rivers of cool waters rising from the Malaya moun-
tain are Kr̥tamālā, Tāmraparṇī, Puṣpavatī and Utpalavatī.

The following rivers originate from the Mahendra mountain:
Pitṛsomā, Rṣikulyā, Vaṁjulā, Tridivā, Lāṅgalinī and Varāsakara.

The following rivers take their source from the mountain
Śuktimān :—The Suvikālā, Kumārī, Mandagā, Mandagāminī,
Kṣayā and Payoṣṭī.

These rivers are holy. They are on a par with Sarasvatī and
Gaṅgā. They fall into the sea. They are the mothers of the univer-
ses. They may dispel sins. O excellent brahmins, there are
thousands of other small rivers too.

41-42. Some of them flow during the rainy season (with
plenty of water). Some of them are perennial rivers.

The Middle lands consist of the following climes :—
Matsyas, Kumudamālyas, Kratulas, Kāśi, Kośalas, Āndhras,
Kaliṅgas, Maśakas and Vṛkas. These are the main realms.

43. That spot of land to the north of Sahya where the
river Godāvari flows is the most charming in the entire earth.

44-50. The city of Govardhana, the residence of the noble
Bhārgava is, indeed, very beautiful.

The following lands contain Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śuḍras:—
Vāhikas,1 Rāṭadhānas, Sutīras, Kālatoyadas, Aparāntas, Śuḍras,

1. Vāhika-Bāhika. The term refers to the people of Punjab who were
shut out by the Sarasvatī, Kurukṣetra and other natural features from the central
-country which remained true to Brahmanism. The term is also applicable to
Bāhlīkas, Keralas, Gandhāras, Yavanas, Sindhus, Sauvītras, Madrakas, Śatadruhas, Kaliṅgas, Pāradas, Haribhūṣikas, Maṭharas, Kanakas, Kaikēyas, Dambhamālikas.

The following realms comprise the northern lands:

O brahmīns, they are Kāmbojas, Barbaras, Laukikas, Vīras, Tuṣāras, Pahlavas, Dhāyatas (?) Ātreyas, Bharadvājas, Puṣkalas, Daśerakas, Lampakas, Śuṣaṅgokas, Kulikas, Jāṅgalas, Oṣadhis, Calacandras, Kirātas, Tomaras, Harṣamārgas, Kāśmiras, Karuṇas, Śūlikas, Kuhakas, and Māgadhas—These are the northern climes. Now understand the eastern climes.

51-53. Andhas, Vāmāṅkurakas, Vallakas, Makhāntakas, Aṅgas, Vaṅgas, Maladas, Mālavartikas, Bhadratuṅgas, Pratijayas, Bhārayāṅgas, Apamardakas, Prājyotisās, Madras, Videhas Tāmraliptakas, Mallas, Magadhakas, and Nandas—these are the eastern realms.

54-57. There are other climes, those of the Southern region: The Pūrṇas, Kevalas, Golāṅgulas, Rṣikas, Mūṣikas, Kumāras, Rāmathas, Śakas, Mahāraṣṭras, Māhiṣakas, Kaliṅgas, Ābhiras, Vaiśikyas, Aṭavyas, Sarvas, Pulindas, Mauleyas, Vaidarbhīs, Daṅdakas, Paulikas, Maulikas, Aṣmakas, Bhojavardhanas, Kaulikas, Kuntalas, Dambhakas and Nilakālakas.

These are the Southern realms. Now understand the Western climes:

58-62. The Śūrpārakas, Kālidhanas, Lolas, Tālakaṭas etc are the residents of Western climes.

Listen to the residents of Vindhya mountains:—The Malajas, Karkaṭas, Melakas, Colakas, Uttamaraṇas, Daśāṇas, Bhojas, Kiṣkindhakas, Taṣalas, Kośalas, Traipuras, Vaidīṣas, Tumburas, Caras, Yavanas, Pavanas, Abhayas, Ruṇḍikeras, Carcaras, Hotravartis.—these are the realms and peoples residing on Vindhya mountains.

Henceforth, I shall mention the climes founded on mountains.

the people who were thought to be impure and contemptible for not observing the rules prescribed for the fourfold society of Aryan people.

1. Vāhlika—Bāhlika—Bāhlika. Balkh or ancient Bactrians. But there were two tribes of Vāhlikas—one settled in the plains of Punjab between Chenab and Sutlej rivers and the other among the lower slopes of the Himalayas between Chenab and Bias.
63-66. They are the Nīhāras, Tuṣamārgas, Kurus, Tuṅgaṇas, Khasas, Karṇaprāvaraṇas, Īrṇas, Darghas, Kucīcakas, Citramārgas, Mālavas, Kiratās and Tomaras.

The Yugas, Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali are followed here. The injunctions befitting the four Yugas are strictly adhered to:

Such is the Bhārata subcontinent situated with its subdivisions. There is a great ocean to its South West and East. The Himalaya mountain stands to its north like the string of a great bow.

O excellent brahmins this Bhārata is the seed of everything.

67-68. It is the cause of different states such as the state of Brahmat, the state of Amareṣa (Indra), the state of Devas, Maruts, animals, Yakṣas, Apsaras serpents, reptiles, and immobile beings. O brahmins, people attain these states as a result of their merits or demerits. O brahmins, there is no other holy place of rites in all these worlds.

69. O brahmins, this is the perpetual desire of all Devas—“If we are to fall off from the status of Devas onto the Earth may we attain Bhārata as the place of our birth”.

70. What men do cannot be done by Devas and Asuras. Men are engaged in holy rites while Devas and Asuras are eager to obviate their Karman.

71. O brahmins, in the whole of the Earth there is no other sub-continent equal to Bhārata where different Varṇas—Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and others attain their cherished goal.

72. Excellent men who are highly blessed are born in Bhārata. They derive the benefits of virtue, love, wealth and liberation.

73-78. O brahmins, who is competent to narrate the excellent qualities of Bhārata? It is there that the rare benefit of austerities is attained. The fruit of all charitable gifts, all sacrifices, pilgrimage to holy centres, service to the elders and preceptors, rites of propitiation of Deities, the benefit of life of a householder, different holy rites, different sacred scriptures, practice of the virtue of non violence, the benefit of all cherished desires, the fruit of a celibate life, the benefit of self-study of the Vedas, the fruits of residence in the forest, that of the life of a recluse, the benefit of digging wells, etc. and performing sacri-
fices and the benefit of other holy rites—these are attained only in Bhārata, nowhere else. O excellent brahmins, Devas are always delighted in wishing for a splendid life there.

79-80. Thus the excellent Bhārata sub-continent has been adequately recounted by me. It dispels all sins; it is holy and is conducive to the attainment of wealth. It enhances intellect and wisdom.

He who controls his sense-organs and listens to this account or repeats the same shall be liberated from sins and shall attain the world of Viśṇu.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

The Glory of Koṇāditya

Brahmā said:

1-9. There in the Bhārata subcontinent is a land that bestows heavenly pleasures and liberation. It is situated on the southern ocean and it is well known as Oṇḍadeśa. The region to the north of the ocean is the beautiful Viraja Maṇḍala. This is the land of those who are habituated to the attainment of good qualities. It is embellished with good attributes. The brahmins born in that land have perfect control over their sense-organs. They are always engaged in penance and study of the Vedas. They are worthy of being honoured and saluted. They are famous for their ability to officiate in the rites of Śrāddha, charitable gift, marriage rites and sacrifices. They are experts in sacred rites. They are of divine origin. The brahmins therein are regularly engaged in performing the six types of holy rites. They are masters of Vedic lore. They are conversant with mythology and Ancient Historical tradition. They are experts in all scriptures. They perform sacrifices regularly. They are devoid of indecent rivalry. Some are engaged in sacrificial rites and some are interested in maintaining holy fires ordained in the Smṛtis. The residents of that land are endowed with sons, wives and riches. They are truthful in speech.
They perform homas. They live in the holy land of Utkala rendered beautiful by sacrifices and festivals. The people belonging to the other three castes, Kṣatriyas and others are righteous. They control their sense-organs. They are calm. They are engaged in their respective duties. Sun-god known as 'Koṇāditya' is the lord in that land. Those who visit lord Bhāskara there are liberated from sins.

The sages said:

10. O excellent one among Devas, we wish to hear further. Tell us now about the holy shrine of the sun in that land where lord sun is stationed.

Brahma said:

11-17. The holy shrine of the sun is situated on the holy and beautiful shore of the briny sea. The land is endowed with all good qualities. It is full of sands. It abounds in varieties of trees such as Campaka, Aśoka, Bakula, Karavira, Pāṭala, Punnāga, Kārnikāra, Nāgakesara, Tagara, Dhava, Bāṇa, Atimukta, Kubjaka, Kadamba, Lakuca, Śala, Panasa, Devadāru, Sarala, Mucukunda, white and red sandal trees, Aśvattha, Saptaparna, Āmra, Āmrātaka, Tāla, Arka, coconut, wood apple and many other trees all round. There are flowering plants such as Mālatī, Kunda, Mallikā, Ketaki, etc. which shine with blossoms in all seasons. The shrine of lord sun is famous in the whole world. The region all round to the extent of a Yojana yields worldly pleasures and salvation.

18. The thousand-rayed lord sun is directly present there. He is well known, as Koṇāditya. He is the bestower of worldly pleasures and liberation.

19-27. On the seventh day in the bright half of the Māgha month the devotee should observe fast. After performing purificatory rites he shall take bath in the ocean in the presence of lord Sun. With a pure mind he shall remember him with concentration. After performing Tarpaṇa rites for Devas, sages, mortals and Pīṭṣa, he shall come out of the sea and wear a pair of cloths free from dirt. They should have been washed and kept dry—the previous day itself. With complete purity he shall perform Ācamana after sitting on the seashore. As the
Sun rises up in the morning he shall sit facing him. He shall draw the mystic diagram of a lotus with the red sandal paste. It should have eight petals, filaments and be circular with the pericarp moving upwards. The intelligent devotee shall put gingelly seeds, rice, grains, red flowers, Darbha grass, and red sandal into a copper vessel and pour water therein. If a copper vessel is not available he shall put gingelly seeds in a cup made of the leaf of Arka plant. O excellent sages, he should cover this vessel with another vessel and keep it down. He should then perform Nyāsa rites of hands and limbs. With the heart and other organs he should meditate on the sun as his own self with sincere faith. The intelligent devotee should worship the deity in the petals in the middle as well as in south-east, south-west, north-east and north-west. He shall then worship (once again) in the middle.

28-33. After propitiating the lord for attaining supreme happiness he should worship the mystic lotus. From the sky he should invoke lord Sun and establish him on the pericarp. He should show mystic gestures. After performing the rite of ablation he should meditate on Sun with concentration thus:—He is stationed in the resplendent disc, his eyes are tawny; he is red with two arms, wearing garments pink like the lotus; he is endowed with all characteristics and he is decked in all ornaments. He is calm bestowing boons, bedecked in a halo of great brilliance. After seeing the rising Sun resembling thick paste of saffron he should take that vessel and keep it on the head. Kneeling on the ground he should silently offer Arghya into the Sun. He should concentrate his mind on the lord and repeat the three-syllabled Mantra.

34. He who has not received proper initiation should merely repeat the name of the Sun god and make water offerings with faith and fervour since lord sun can be made favourable through devotion.

35. He should make water offering, in the south-east, south-west, north-east, middle and in the four directions beginning with the east. He shall repeat the following Mantras and make water offerings in the direction indicated:—Hrām, obeisance to the heart (south-east); Hrim, obeisance to the head (south-west); Hrim, obeisance to the tuft of hair
Hraim, obeisance to the coat of mail (north-east), Hraum, obeisance to the three eyes (in the middle); Hrah, obeisance to the missile. (in the four quarters).

36. After the water offering he should offer sweet scents, incense, light and food. After repeating prayers and holy names he should bow to the deity, show mystic gestures and discharge the deity ritualistically.

37-38. Whether Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, or Śūdras men or women whoever make water offerings to Sun with perfect control over their sense-organs and mind, with great devotional favour and pure conscience, enjoy the desired pleasures and attain the greatest goal.

39. Those who remember him as the illuminator of three worlds traversing firmament will obtain happiness.

40. The devotee should not worship Viṣṇu, Śiva or the lord of Devas (Indra) unless the water-offering has been made to the Sun-god in the manner prescribed in the Śāstras.

41-42. He who makes water offerings with great concentration to Sun-god on the seventh day after taking bath and remaining pure will obtain the desired benefit. Hence, one should strenuously endeavour to make water offering every day to Sun-god along with sweet scents and beautiful flowers. He shall remain pure too.

43. The ailing man is liberated from sickness, he who seeks wealth will attain wealth; he who seeks learning will obtain learning and he who seeks sons shall be blessed with sons.

44. Whatever desire he may cherish in his mind, the intelligent man shall fully obtain that desire and benefit by offering libation of water.

45. The devotee, whether a man or a woman shall take bath in the ocean, offer libation of water to Sun-god and bow down to the deity. He or she will obtain the desired benefit thereby.

45-A. The man who has taken bath in the waters of Gaṅgā, shall sprinkle water on the head of Sun-god by means of Kuśa grass. Thereby liberated from all sins he passes on to heaven.

46. Thereafter, the devotee shall proceed to the temple of Sun-god taking flowers with him. After entering the shrine he shall circumambulate thrice and worship Sun-god.
47. O excellent sages, on the day of Sun-god the devotee shall worship Kopārka reciting Vedic Mantras and Tāntrika texts, with great devotion. He shall offer scents, sweet and fragrant flowers, lights, incense and food-offerings.

48-52. He shall prostrate before the deity lying flat on the ground like a long pole. He shall eulogise the lord and shout cries of victory unto him. By worshipping thus the thousand-rayed lord of the universe, a man obtains the benefit of ten horse-sacrifices. He will be liberated from all sins and assume a youthful divine form. O brahmans, he will redeem seven ancestors and successors in his family. He will go to the world of Sun-god on an ariel chariot that has solar lustre and colour that is excessively refulgent and that can go wherever one likes it to go. He will be sung about by Gandharvas. After enjoying excellent pleasures there till the final dissolution of all living beings, when his merits have been exhausted, he will return to the Earth and be born in the excellent family of Yogins. He will become a pure brahmin learning all the four vedas and engaged in holy rites. After becoming united with the sun he will attain liberation.

53-55. In the bright half of the month of Caitra the devotee should make the holy pilgrimage to Damana-bhaṅjakā. He who makes pilgrimage to that place will obtain the benefit as mentioned before.

During the period of going to bed and rising up of the Sun i.e. during the tropical and equinoctial transits, O brahmans, persons of perfect control over their sense-organs shall perform holy pilgrimage on Sundays, the seventh day of the month or on Parvan days. They go to the world of Sun-god on the aerial chariot having solar lustre and colour.

56-59. Lord Mahādeva is also present on the shore of the ocean. He is known as Rāmētvāra. He is the bestower of desired benefits. The devotees should have a dip in the vast ocean and visit the lord, the enemy of lust (Kāma). They should propitiate the lord with sweet scents, fragrant flowers, incense, lights, excellent food-offerings, prostrations, eulogies, songs of prayer and sweet musical instruments. They will become noble souls and attain the benefit of Rājasūya and horse sacrifices. They will attain great success.
60. They will go to the world of Śiva on an aerial chariot that can travel as it pleases and that has clusters of tinkling bells suspended from it. Gandharvas will sing songs in their praise.

61. They will enjoy charming pleasures until the dissolution of all living beings and when their merits have been exhausted they will return to the Earth and be born as brahmans learning the four Vedas.

62-63. Being united with Brahman they will attain liberation.

He who passes away in the holy centre of the Sun will reach the world of Sun-god and rejoice in heaven together with Devas. Reborn as a man he will become a virtuous king.

64-65. Becoming united with the Sun-god he will attain salvation.

Thus, O excellent sages, the rare holy centre of Koṇārka on the shores of the ocean has been recounted by me. It yields worldly pleasures and salvation.