

charged with power by holy incantation). Some of those astras are named below:

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| 1. Daṇḍacakra | 2. Dharmacakra |
| 3. Kālacakra | 4. Viṣṇucakra |
| 5. Indracakra | 6. Vajrāstra |
| 7. Śaivaśūla | 8. Aiṣika |
| 9. Brahmaśirāstra | 10. Brahmāstra |
| 11. Modakīśikhari | 12. Dharmapāśa |
| 13. Kālapāśa | 14. Vāruṇāstra |
| 15. Vāruṇapāśa | 16. Paramāstra |
| 17. Pinākāstra | 18. Nārāyaṇāstra |
| 19. Āgneyāstra | 20. Śikharāstra |
| 21. Vāyavyāstra | 22. Prathanāstra |
| 23. Krauñcāstra | 24. Hayaśśirāstra |
| 25. Kaṅkālāstra | 26. Musalāstra |
| 27. Kapālāstra | 28. Kaṅkanāstra |
| 29. Mānavāstra | 30. Prasthāpanāstra |
| 31. Praśamanāstra | 32. Saurāstra |
| 33. Varṣaṇāstra | 34. Śoṣaṇāstra |
| 35. Santāpanāstra | 36. Vilāpanāstra |
| 37. Madanāstra | 38. Mohāstra |
| 39. Saumanāstra | 40. Saṁvartāstra |
| 41. Satyāstra | 42. Māyādhārāstra |
| 43. Tejaprabhāstra | 44. Saumyāstra |
| 45. Śiśirāstra | 46. Tvāṣṭāstra |
| 47. Sudāmanāstra | |

Śrī Rāma received all these astras standing facing east. (Sarga 27, Bālakāṇḍa, Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa)

ASURA. Those born to Kaśyapa of his wife Danu are called Dānavas and those born of his wife Diti are called Daityas. They belong to the demoniac dynasty (Refer under 'Asuravaṁśā' in the genealogy chart). Renowned among the asuras were the following:

Prahlāda, Samhlāda, Anuhlāda, Śibi, Bāskala, Virocana, Kumbha, Nikumbha, Bali, Bāṇa, Mahākāla, Vipracitti, Śambara, Namuci, Pulomā, Viśruta, Asilomā, Keśi, Durjaya, Ayaśśiras, Aśvaśśiras, Aśva, Śaṅku, Mahābala, Garga, Mūrdhā, Vegavān, Ketumān, Svarbhānu, Aśvapati, Vṛṣaparvā, Ajaka, Aśvagrīva, Sūkṣma, Tuhūṇḍa, Ekapād, Ekacakra, Virūpākṣa, Harāhara, Candra, Kupaṭa, Kapaṭa, Para, Śarabha, Śalabha, Sūrya and Candramas.

ASURĀ. One of the eight daughters born to Kaśyapa of his wife Pradhā. (Śloka 41, Chapter 65, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚURBANIPAL. (See under Gilgamis, Jalapralaya).

AŚURTARAJASA. A son born to King Kuśa of his wife Vaidarbhī. Kuśāmba, Kuśanābha, Aśurtarajasa and Vasu are the four sons of Kuśa. (Sarga 32, Bālakāṇḍa, Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa).

AŚVA I. A demon. This was the same demon who later on was born as Aśoka, King of Kaliṅga. (Chapter 67, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVA II. A maharṣi. The sage Vaśa is the son of this ṛṣi. (Sūkta 112 of Rgveda).

AŚVA (Horse). Horses and camels were born, in this world, of Tāmrā, wife of Kaśyapa, grandson of Brahmā. (Agni Purāna, Chapter 19).

AŚVAGHOṢA. A famous Sanskrit poet. He has written many Sanskrit books prominent among which are the two great poems, Buddhacarita and Saundarananda

and a drama called Śāriputraprakaraṇa. He lived in the 2nd Century A.D. His history of Buddha (Buddhacarita) was translated into Chinese during the period 414 to 421 A.D. He was known under the following names also: Ācārya, Bhadanta, Mahāvādī and Bhikṣu.

AŚVAGRIVA. Son born to the Sage, Kaśyapa by his wife, Danu. (Śloka 24, Chapter 65, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAHRDAYA. A mantra (sacred incantation) for controlling the horse. (See under 'Akṣahṛdaya').

AŚVAKETU. Son of King Gāndhāra. He fought on the side of the Kauravas and was killed in the battle by Abhimanyu. (Śloka 7, Chapter 48, Droṇa Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAKṚTA. A river. Once a sage called Ṛcika went to Gādhi and asked for the hand of his daughter, Satyavati, in marriage. He demanded as dowry a thousand horses black in colour and with only one ear for each. Ṛcika prayed to Varuṇa and he gave him the horses required. The river Aśvakṛta (created by horse) was made by the flow of urine from these horses. (Chapter 57, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa).

AŚVAMEDHA I. A country of ancient India which was ruled by a King named Rocamān. Bhīmasena conquered him during the world-wide conquering campaign. (Śloka 8, Chapter 29, Sabhā Parva).

AŚVAMEDHA II. A yāga. Kings used to conduct this in order to get absolved of all sins. Fixing a victory card on the head of a horse it is allowed to roam about freely. If anybody stops the horse and ties it, the King should go and defeat him in battle and bring back the horse. If you do a hundred such yāgas you can become Indra.*

AŚVAMEDHA. Son of King Sahasrānika (Refer under Sahasrānika).

AŚVAMEDHADATTA. Son born to Śātānika of the princess of Videha. (Śloka 86, Chapter 95, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAMEDHAPARVA. A parva of the Mahābhārta. See under Bharata.

AŚVANADĪ. A river in the country of Kuntibhoja. Aśvanadī joins Carmanvatī and the latter joins the Yamunā and the Yamunā joining Gaṅgā falls into the ocean. It was through this river that Kuntidevī floated in a box the infant Karṇa. At night accompanied by her maid, Kunti floated the box containing her illegitimate son and stood on the banks of Aśvanadī weeping bitterly. Then thinking that her father would notice her absence from the palace she returned home soon. The box floated and reached the country, Campāpurī, ruled by a charioteer. (Ślokas 22 to 26, Chapter 308, Aranya Parva, M.B.).

AŚVARATHĀ. A river in the Gandhamādana valley flowing near the Āsrama of the sage Ārṣṭiṣeṇa. Many kings of the Candra dynasty used to come and stay in this āsrama. (Śloka 10, Chapter 160, Vana Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAŚAṅKU. Son of Kaśyapa born of his wife Danu. (Śloka 21, Chapter 67, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAPATI I. Father of the most chaste woman, Sāvitrī. He was King of Madra. He was without children for a long period and for eighteen years he worshipped the goddess, Sāvitrī and got a maiden from Agnihotra whom

* Aśvamedha or horse sacrifice was performed by autocrats to establish their supreme sovereignty. For this the horse let out to roam about should go into all countries. Those who opposed the sovereignty of the King could stop the horse and tie it. Then the King had to defeat him before conducting the yāga. The vedas enjoin that the sacrificial horse should be followed by a hundred young men ready to fight those who opposed the King. Indra had conducted a hundred such yāgas.