

child with the radiance of innumerable suns came out. This wonderful child was helpless. After his birth he cried for a while, because of hunger and thirst. He got no help. There was nobody to feed it. So this wonderful child looked up and lay there. This helpless child was called 'Virāṭpuruṣa' (the next emanation from Brahmā) by those versed in the Purāṇas. The boy was so called because he was the most material of materiality. But he was an atom of atoms and the first figuration of God. From each pore of the skin of the great virāṭ, who was the base of all the worlds a universe came into being. Thus all the countless universes were born. Each universe has its own trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and devas (the bright ones), the protectors of the eight zones. One universe comprises fourteen worlds or realms, from Pātāla to the Brahma-loka (from the nether world to the upper world or the realm of Brahmā). Countless such universes exist. Over and above all these universes there is Vaikuṅṭha, and above Vaikuṅṭha there is another world with an area of fifty crore yojanas (leagues), called 'Goloka' (the world of cow). Only the two worlds Vaikuṅṭha and the Goloka are eternal. Bhūloka (the earth) consists of seven islands and sixty-four peninsulas. There are seven worlds above and seven worlds below. The seven upper worlds are Bhūloka, Bhūvarloka, Svarloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka, Satyaloka and Brahmaloaka. Thus a universe consists of fourteen worlds. This is the idea given by the Purāṇas about Brahmāṇḍa. (Devī Bhāgavata, Skandhas 9).

Mention is made, in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Amśa 2, Chapter 7, about the construction of Brahmāṇḍa.

This Brahmāṇḍa, like the seed of the Kapittha tree (Vitar—the wood-apple), is covered under, above and all around by aṇḍakaṭāha (egg-shell). The aṇḍa (egg) is covered by water ten times the egg in volume. This water-shell is covered by a shell of fire. Around the shell of fire there is the shell of air and the air-shell is covered with ether. Around the shell of ether there is the shell of Egoism of darkness. Over the shell of Egoism there is the shell of glory and the shell of glory is covered by Prakṛti, the Divine Nature. It is immeasurable. Prakṛti contains numberless Brahmāṇḍas. As oil exists in sesame, God pervades the whole universe. This is the connection between Prakṛti and Puruṣa. (The Nature and the Supreme Spirit).

BRAHMĀṆḌAPURĀṆA. One of the eighteen purāṇas. This purāṇa contains a talk by Brahmā about the glory of Brahmāṇḍa. There are twelve thousand verses in this purāṇa. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 272).

BRĀHMAṆIPPĀṬTU. (Pāṭtu=song). A performance connected with the temples of Kerala.

BRAHMĀṆJALI. When a disciple stands before his teacher he should have both his arms folded. Folding both arms in this way is called Brahmāṅjali. (Manu-smṛti, Chapter 2).

BRAHMAPRALAYA. See Manvantara.

BRAHMAPURĀṆA, (BRĀHMAPURĀṆA). This is a great book of twenty-five thousand verses taught to the great hermit-sage Marici by Brahmā. It is mentioned in Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 271, that if a copy of this book is taken and offered to a Brahmin on the full moon day of the month of Vaiśākha with cow and water, the giver will attain heaven.

BRAHMAPURĪ. The abode of Brahmā. Brahmapurī is on the summit of Mahāmeru, with an area of fourteen thousand yojanas (leagues). Around this city, at the four sides, (East etc.) and at the four corners (South-East etc.) there are eight towns, very big and beautiful, kept by eight protectors such as Indra and others. The river Gaṅgā which springs from the feet of Mahāviṣṇu wets the whole of Candramaṇḍala (Lunar region), falls down on the Brahmapurī, and dividing itself into four rivers called Sitā, Alakanandā, Cakṣus and Bhadrā flows in four directions. The river Sitā flows through the top of the mountains and passing through the mountain in the east called Bhadrāśva, falls in the Eastern Ocean. The river Alakanandā flows to the south and reaches Bhārata. Then it divides into seven rivers which unite in the ocean. The river Cakṣus passes through the mountains in the west and enters the country called Ketumālarvaṣa and then flows into the ocean. The river Bhadrā passes through all the mountains in the north and flows through the north country of the Kurūṣa and falls in the North Ocean. The mountain of Mālyavān in the west and the mountain of Gandhamādāna in the east are as long as the mountain of Nilagiri in the north and the mountain of Niśadha in the south. Mount Meru shaped like an earring stands in the middle of these four mountains. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Amśa 2, Chapter 21).

BRAHMAŚĀLĀ. A holy place. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 87, Stanza 23, that the moment one visits this holy Bath in the river Gaṅges, one would attain heaven.

BRAHMASARAS. A holy place in Dharmāraṇya. If a man fasts in this holy place for one night, he would reach the world of Brahmā. In this holy place there is a peg driven down by Brahmā himself. One who walks round this peg will attain the fruits of performing a Vājapeya yajña (a drinking sacrifice). There is another holy bath of the name Brahmasaras in Gayā. (M. B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 25, Stanza 89).

BRAHMAŚĀVARṆĪ. Tenth Manu. (See Manvantara).

BRAHMAŚIRAS. See Brahmāstra.

BRAHMASTHĀNA. A holy place. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 84, Stanza 103, that a person who visits this holy place will get the fruits of performing Aśvamedha yāga. (Horse sacrifice).

BRAHMĀSTRA. This is known by another name Brahmaśirāstra also. This weapon was given to Agastya by Śiva. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 138, Stanza 9, that Agastya gave this weapon to Agniveśa, who gave it to Droṇa and Droṇa gave it to Arjuna and instructed him about the use of it as follows :

“You should never shoot this arrow at man. If it is used against mean people the three worlds would be destroyed. It is said that this weapon has no parallel in the world. Keep this pure, and give ear to what I say. If an enemy, other than human being attacks you, this weapon may be used to kill him in battle.”

BRAHMATĪRTHA. A holy place in Kurukṣetra. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 83, Stanza 113, that a non-brāhmaṇa who bathes in this holy place will attain Brāhmaṇatva. (the state of being a brāhmaṇa).