

KUMĀRI V. A river in the Śāka island. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 11, Verse 32).

KUMĀRĪPŪJĀ. It is a special item in Navarātripūjā. According to the definition 'Kumārīkā tu sā proktā dvivarṣā yā bhavediḥa', Kumārī is a two-year old female child. To worship such a child is Kumaripūjā, and it should be conducted accompanied by sumptuous feasts and presentation of clothes etc. There are no hard and fast rules as to how many Kumārīs should be worshipped and as to the manner and method of the worship. The same Kumārī may be worshipped during all the days of the Pūjā, or every day one more girl may be worshipped like this:—one girl on the first day, two on the second day and so on. Or it may be in the order 4, 6, 8 etc or 4, 8, 12, 16 etc. Even if the daily number be nine it is in order. There is no rule that Kumārīs alone should be worshipped; any one of the navakanyakās would do. A girl two years old is called Kumārī, three years old Trimūrti; four years old Kalyāṇī; five years old Rohiṇī; six years old Kālī; Seven years old Caṇḍikā; eight years old Sāmbhavi; nine years old Durgā and ten years old Subhadrā. These girls are called Navakanyakās. But, a child less than two years of age should not be worshipped, because it will not be fully sensitive to taste, smell etc. Also, age alone does not render Kumārīs suitable for worship. They should be absolutely free from ulcers, leprosy, ugliness, squint-eyes, dwarfishness, lameness, bad odour, stigma of low birth etc. For the achievement of special objects a Brahmin child should be worshipped; for victory, a Kṣatriya child and for profit, a Vaiśya or a Śūdra child should be worshipped. The Brahmin may worship brahmin children; the Kṣatriya, Brahmin and Kṣatriya children; the Vaiśya, Brahmin, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya children; and the Śūdra, Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra children. (Devī Bhāgavata, 3rd Skandha).

KUMBHA I. One of the three sons of Prahlāda, the other two being Virocana and Nikumbha. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 65, Verse 19).

KUMBHA. II. Son of Kumbhakarṇa, whose wife Vajrajvālā bore him two sons called Kumbha and Nikumbha. Both of them were very powerful, and Kumbha, in the Rāma-Rāvaṇa war defeated the army of monkeys on various occasions. Many of the ministers of Sugrīva tried to defeat Kumbha. Aṅgada, son of Bāli also could not stand up to him. Then Sugrīva fought against Kumbha and flung him into the sea when the water in it rose up to the level of mount Vindhya. Kumbha came ashore from the sea roaring but was fisted to death by Sugrīva. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha Kāṇḍa, Canto 76).

KUMBHAKA I. A warrior of Skanda. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Verse 75).

KUMBHAKA II. (Nikumbhaka). A very reputed sage. If he visited any place at dusk he left it only after a thousand years. He visited Kāśī once when King Divodāsa was ruling the state after having killed the Rākṣasa called Kṣemaka, who had lived like a king there. Kumbhaka lived in a forest in Kāśī with his disciples. Prosperity reigned supreme within a radius of three Yojanas from where the sage lived. Neither wild beasts nor famine infested the area.

Once a fierce famine broke out in Kāśī, and the failure of rain caused great havoc. Finding it impossible to

feed the cows their keepers went with their live-stock every morning to Kumbhaka's place where summer had not yet even peeped in, and after feeding their cows there, they returned home in the evening. But, one evening they led back with them the cows used by the sage for his Pūjās. When the sun set, as usual the sage sat before the sacred fire for Pūjā. But, the cow had not come. With his divine vision he found out the reason for the absence of the cow. He cursed that the region where the keepers of the cows lived be turned into a desert, and the kingdom of Kāśī became a desert place, whereupon king Divodāsa went to the banks of the Gomatī and founded a new kingdom there. (Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa Chapter 2).

KUMBHAKARṆA.

1) *Genealogy.* Descended from Viṣṇu thus: Brahmā—Pulastya—Viśravas—Kumbhakarṇa.

2) *Birth.* Pulastya, one of the Prajāpatis married Havirbhū (Mānini) and a son called Viśravas was born to them.

Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa were born to Viśravas of Puṣpotkaṭā, and Vibhīṣaṇa was born to him of Rākā, and Khara and Śūrpaṇakhā were born to him of Mālini. The above version is based on verses—1 to 8 in Chapter 275 of the Vana Parva. But, according to Uttara Rāmāyaṇa, Rāvaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa were born to Viśravas of his wife called Kaikaśī. According to the Agni Purāṇa, Puṣpotkaṭā and Kaikaśī were one and the same.

3) *Former births of Kumbhakarṇa.* Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa were originally the two Devas called Jaya and Vijaya. Viṣṇu appointed them as gate-keepers at Vaikuṇṭha. Once they stopped sages like Sanaka and others at the gates, and the latter cursed Jaya and Vijaya into Rākṣasas. When they complained about the curse to Viṣṇu he promised to welcome them back to Vaikuṇṭha after they had lived three births as Rākṣasas. Accordingly Jaya was born as Hiranyākṣa and Vijaya as Hiranyakaśipu, both of them Asuras. Mahāviṣṇu incarnated himself as a Boar and killed Hiranyākṣa and as Narasiṃha he killed Hiranyakaśipu. Hiranyākṣa and Hiranyakaśipu were reborn as Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa respectively. Mahāviṣṇu, during his incarnation as Śrī Rāma killed both Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa. Rāvaṇa was reborn as Śiśupāla and Kumbhakarṇa as Dantavakra. Both of them were killed by Mahāviṣṇu during his incarnation as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus the Deva called Vijaya, on account of the curse of Sanaka and other sages, passed through three lives as Hiranyakaśipu, Kumbhakarṇa and Dantavakra and finally reached Vaikuṇṭha. (Bhāgavata, 7th Skandha).

4) *Kumbhakarṇa secured boons.* Kumbhakarṇa spent his childhood with his brothers at the āśrama of his father on mount Gandhamādana. Kubera was at the zenith of his glory at that time, having been crowned king of the Yakṣas, and also having got the Puṣpaka Vimāna. The reputation of Kubera kindled jealousy in Kumbhakarṇa and his brothers. They too performed penance in the forest on one foot for a thousand years. But, Brahmā did not appear. They continued the penance without eating any food. Khara and Śūrpaṇakhā stayed there serving their brothers. Even after the second thousand years Brahmā did not appear. Then Rāvaṇa cut off his ten heads and made offerings of them to Brahmā. Then Brahmā appeared. Brahmā restored his heads to Rāvaṇa