

Raudreya, Nārada, Vāmadeva, Saubhari, Aṣṭāvakra, Śuka, Bhr̥gu, Lomaśa, Maudgalya and others with their disciples came from the west and Kaśyapa, Vasiṣṭha, Atri, Gautama, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Sanaka and party, Śarabhaṅga, Durvāsas, Mātāṅga, Vibhāṅḍaka, Tumburu, the Saptarṣis and others with their party of disciples arrived from the north, according to Uttara Rāmāyaṇa. There are three classes of R̥ṣis—Brahmarṣi, Rājārṣi and Devarṣi. Vasiṣṭha was a Brahmarṣi, Viśvāmitra, a Rājārṣi and Kaśyapa, a Devarṣi.

**R̥ṢIGIRI.** A mountain situated near Girivraja, the capital of Magadha kingdom. This mountain is also known as “Mātāṅga” (M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 21, Verses 2 and 3).

**R̥ṢIKA I.** A Rājārṣi. Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 67, Verses 32 and 33 state that he was the rebirth of Arka, the Asura leader.

**R̥ṢIKA II.** A town in North India. A terrible battle took place here between Arjuna and R̥ṣika, the Rājārṣi. (M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 27, Verse 25).

**R̥ṢIKULYĀ.** A sacred river in ancient India. Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Verse 47 mentions that those who bathe in this river will attain Mokṣa (salvation).

**R̥ṢYAMŪKA.** A mountain. Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 25, Verse 9 states that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa visited the sage Mārkaṇḍeya on the top of this mountain. It was here that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa met Sugrīva. Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 279, Verse 44 states that the river Pampā runs round the R̥ṣyamūka mountain.

**R̥ṢYAŚR̥ṄGA.** Son of the sage Vibhāṅḍaka.

1) *Birth.* Vibhāṅḍaka, son of Kaśyapa was the father of R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga. There is a strange story about him in the Mahābhārata.

Once sage Vibhāṅḍaka happened to see Urvaśi at Mahāhrada. At the very sight of her, the sage had an involuntary emission of semen. The semen fell in the water and just then a female deer came there to drink water. It swallowed the semen with water and in due course became pregnant and gave birth to a human child. But the child had the horns of a deer. Consequently Vibhāṅḍaka named the boy “R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga”. Vibhāṅḍaka and R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga lived together in the āśrama. R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga grew up into a youth, but he had never seen anyone except his father Vibhāṅḍaka.

2) *Rainfall in the kingdom of Aṅga.* At that time, the kingdom of Aṅga was ruled by Lomapāda, a friend of Daśaratha. Once he cheated a Brāhmaṇa. Consequently all the Brāhmaṇas in that country left the place and emigrated to other lands. From that time there was no rain in the land of Aṅga. A severe drought and famine followed. Lomapāda invited devout Brāhmaṇas and consulted them how they could bring rain to the land. They told him that if he could get a Muni (sage) who had never seen women to perform a yāga, there would be rainfall in the land. The King sent his men far and wide to find a Muni who had never set eyes on a woman. At last he got news that R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga, son of Vibhāṅḍaka was the sage who had never seen women. He then began to plan how R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga could be brought over to Aṅga.

Lomapāda called together some prostitutes and asked them whether they could bring R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga to his country. All except one of them said it was quite

impossible. One of them, however, agreed to try. As desired by her, the King sent her with several other damsels.

The young women went to the forest and made a floating āśrama in a boat in which they sailed in the river by the side of Vibhāṅḍaka’s āśrama. They stopped the boat close to the āśrama and one of the girls entered the āśrama when Vibhāṅḍaka was not there. She had a talk with R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga in the course of which she used all the amorous enchantments of her sex to captivate the young Muni. She told him that she was the daughter of a Muni, living in an āśrama, three yojanas away. R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga felt a peculiar fascination for her and tried to please her by offering fruits etc. When she left him, he felt deeply distressed and unhappy. He was in that depressed and gloomy state of mind when Vibhāṅḍaka returned to the āśrama. Finding him unusually restless and dejected, the father asked him whether anyone had come there. R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga who was an entire stranger to the feminine world told his father that a handsome youth of irresistible charm had visited him during Vibhāṅḍaka’s absence. But from R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga’s description of the “youth” Vibhāṅḍaka understood that the visitor must have been a woman. But he could not guess who it was.

On another occasion, the same woman came again to the āśrama in the absence of Vibhāṅḍaka. At her sight R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga was enraptured and before his father’s return, they left the āśrama. They entered the floating āśrama in the boat and the woman set the boat sailing in the river. It glided slowly down the river and at last reached near the palace of Lomapāda. They landed there and the King married his daughter Sāntā to R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga.

To appease Vibhāṅḍaka, Lomapāda sent him rich presents and much wealth. When Vibhāṅḍaka returned to his āśrama he was met by the King’s servants who had brought the presents and wealth. Ignoring them and their rich presents, the furious Maharṣi set out to the city of Campā, the capital of the Aṅga Kingdom. At the royal command, Vibhāṅḍaka was welcomed by the people with honour. When the sage found that the whole kingdom belonged to his son, his anger was allayed. After ordering his son to return to his āśrama after the birth of a son, Vibhāṅḍaka left the palace. As a result of R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga’s yāga there was rainfall in Aṅga and famine ended. After the birth of his child he returned to the forest as ordered by his father. (M.B. Araṇya Parva, Chapters 110-112).

3) *R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga in Ayodhyā.* King Daśaratha of Ayodhyā had no children for a long time. His Minister Sumantra advised him to invite R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga to perform a yāga for the purpose. Lomapāda sent R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga to Ayodhyā at the invitation of Daśaratha. He arrived at Ayodhyā and performed a yāga called Putrakāmeṣṭi. From the sacrificial fire there arose a dark monstrous figure, with a pot of pudding in his hand. Daśaratha received it from him and gave one half of it to Kausalyā and the other half to Kaikeyī. Both of them gave half of their shares to Sumitrā. Thus Sumitrā got two shares while the other two wives of Daśaratha got only one share each. As a result Kausalyā and Kaikeyī gave birth to a son each, while Sumitrā had two sons. Kausalyā’s son was named Rāma, Kaikeyī’s son was