

**VEDASMRTĀ.** A river. (Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 17).

**VEDASPARŚA.** A teacher-priest who was a disciple of the hermit Kabandha. This teacher divided Atharva-veda into four parts and gave each of his four disciples, a part. (Vāyu Purāṇa 61 : 50).

**VEDĀŚRUTI.** A river famous in the Purāṇas. It is mentioned in Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa, Sarga 49, that Śrī Rāma crossed this river and entered the hermitage of Agastya.

**VEDĀŚVĀ.** An ancient river. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 28, that the people of Bhārata drank the water of this river.

**VEDAVATĪ (DEVAVATĪ).** A previous birth of Sitā. (See under Sitā).

**VEDAVYĀSA.** See under Vyāsa.

**VEDĪ.** Wife of Brahṁā. (M.B. Udyoga Parva, Chapter 117, Verse 10).

**VEDĪTĪRTHA I.** A holy bath impossible to reach. This tīrtha is at the origin of river Indus. He who visits this holy place will attain the fruits of horse sacrifice and will enter heaven. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 84, Stanza 47).

**VEDĪTĪRTHA II.** A holy place situated on the border of Kurukṣetra. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 83, Stanza 59, that those who bathe in this tīrtha will obtain the fruits of giving thousand cows as alms.

**VEGAVĀN I.** A nāga (serpent) born in the family of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 57, Stanza 17, that this serpent fell in the sacrificial fire of Janamejaya and died.

**VEGAVĀN II.** An asura. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 65, Stanza 24, that this asura was the son born to Prajāpati Kaśyapa by his wife Danu. It was this Vegavān who took rebirth as the prince of Kekaya later. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 67, Stanza 10).

**VEGAVĀN III.** A daitya (asura). A follower of the King of Śālva. Mention is made in Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 16, Stanza 17, that this daitya was killed in a fight with Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa.

**VEGAVĀHINĪ.** An ancient river in India. This river stays in the palace of Varuṇa and exalts him. (M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 18).

**VEHATA.** A medicine which helps to fatten the body. (Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 117, Stanza 17).

**VEKĀ.** A woman of the race of Rākṣasas (giants). This woman was the sister of Puṣpotkaṭā and Kaikasī. (See under Akampana).

**VENA I.** An ancient King who was notorious for his bad rule.

1) *Genealogy.* Descended from Viṣṇu in the following order : Brahmā - Svāyambhuva Manu - Uttānapāda - Dhruva-Śiṣṭi-Ripu-Cākṣuṣa Manu-Kuru-Aṅga-Vena.

2) *Birth.* Ten sons including Kuru, were born to Manu Cākṣuṣa by his wife Naḍvalā. Āgneyī, the wife of Kuru gave birth to six sons Aṅga and others. Aṅga married Sunīthā. The son Vena was born by Sunīthā. It is mentioned in Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Arṁśa 1, Chapter 13, that Sunīthā, the mother of Vena was the eldest daughter of Yama, and in Vāmana Purāṇa Chapter 47, that this Sunīthā was the daughter born to Kāla

and Mṛtyu. Vena who was born as the son of the daughter of Yama was born a wicked man because of the badness of his grandfather.

Vena grew up as a great sinner. A story occurs in Padma Purāṇa about an incident which caused Vena to become a great sinner.

The story says that Sunīthā was the mother of Vena. In her play she used to imitate her father's job which was hurting others. One day when she went to the forest for play with her maids she saw Suśāṅkha the son of a Gandharva named Gītakolāhala. That youth who was handsome in every part of his body, was doing penance meditating on the goddess Sarasvatī for the attainment of the art of music. Sunīthā began to annoy him daily. Suśāṅkha bore this annoyance patiently. He said only this - "Go away, go away." But she did not pay heed to his appeals. Once she became angry and struck him. Getting angry at this, Suśāṅkha called out, "You wicked girl ! Why do you annoy me ? You have beaten me, who am engaged in penance, for no cause." That righteous Gandharva youth curbed his anger considering that she was a woman.

She told him "My father will beat everybody in the three worlds. He will harm the wicked, and will not do any harm to the good. So he rules the country righteously." Sunīthā told all about the story to her father. Though Yama, the incarnation of righteousness, heard all that his daughter said he did not give any reply.

She again went to the forest and struck him with a whip. Suśāṅka rose up, shivering with pain and cursed her thus :

"You wicked girl ! When you become a house-holder and join your husband you will get a son who will be a scoffer of Devas and Brahmins and an all-round sinner." Thus cursing her he continued his penance. Vena was born according to this curse.

3) *The wicked rule of Vena.* The hermits anointed Vena as the King. He became lord of the whole earth. He made a proclamation thus:—"Sacrifice is prohibited. Giving alms, is prohibited. Offerings of no kind should be made. Who else, other than I, can be the Yajña-puruṣa ? (the deity who eats the food of sacrifice) ? I am the only lord and consumer of sacrifices".

Hearing this proclamation, the hermits approached him and told him that the Vedas were the basis of righteousness, that sacrifices were ordained in them, and that if no sacrifice was performed the Devas would not be pleased and so on. But this did not make any change in his behaviour.

The hermits became angry. They all gathered together and recited spells and struck him with Darbha (poa) grass and killed him. As there was no King the world fell into darkness. Because of the troubles caused by plunderers, people gathered round the hermits. Hermits joined together and churned the left hand of Vena, from which a man of short stature came out, to whom the hermits said, 'Niṣīda' (sit). Because the hermits said Niṣīda, Niṣāda came into existence from that dwarf born of the sins of Vena. Then the hermits churned the right hand of Vena. At this churning a person as big as a mountain with divine signs came out. He had bow and arrows and in his palm there were marks of a wheel and flag. Seeing this the Devas