

Gaṅgā and proceeds in different courses from Haridwar to  
Briandabān and from Aśvamedha to Kāśī, from where it  
enters Bengal.

# Names of the Rivers and the Mountains

## THE RIVERS

### 1. Gaṅgā (No. 1, L. 31, No. 13, L. 16) :

In Inscription No. 1 Samudragupta's fame has been compared with the pale yellow water of the river Gaṅgā, which travelling by many paths, purifies the three worlds, flowing quickly on being liberated from confinement in the thickets of the matted hair of (the) god Paśupati.<sup>1</sup> In the Mandasor inscription of Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana<sup>2</sup> it is stated that when the river Gaṅgā was about to descend from heaven to earth, in order to break the force of its fall, god Śiva (Paśupati) received it in the matted hair coiled above his forehead and projecting like a horn; its waters wandered there for a thousand years, before they eventually reached the earth.

In Inscription No. 13, we get a reference to Gaṅgā in the context of Skandagupta's fight with the Hūnas, the noise of which was heard like the roaring of (the river) Gaṅgā, making itself noticed in their ears.<sup>3</sup>

A. C. Woolner<sup>4</sup> remarked that the name Gaṅgā does not seem to have a convincing derivation on the Āryan side. But we do find the word in the Uṇādi affixes. The affix Gan comes after the root Gaṁ 'to go' and the word Gaṅgā is formed.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest mention of Gaṅgā is in the Ṛgveda.<sup>6</sup> The name also occurs in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa<sup>7</sup> and the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.<sup>8</sup> We find it also in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya,<sup>9</sup> and in Kālidāsa's Rāghuvarṇa.<sup>10</sup> It is mentioned many times in the Purāṇas<sup>11</sup> in which a good deal of religious importance is attached to it.<sup>12</sup>

The Gaṅgā emerges first in the Gangotri in the district of