PURAṆA

( Half-yearly Bulletin of the Purāṇa-Department )

Published with the financial assistance from the Ministry of Education, Government of India and Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi

VASANTAPAṄCAMI NUMBER

�त्मा पुराण बेदानाम्

ALL-INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST
FORT RAMNAGAR, VARANASI

Annual Sub.—Inland Rs. 50/-
Foreign £ 5
REASON FOR THE IRREGULAR USE OF THE WORDS DAIITYA AND DĀNAVA IN THE PURĀNAS

By

RAM SHANKAR BHATTACHARYA

The Purāṇas expressly declare that they contain detailed genealogies of devas, dānavas, daiyās, gandharvas, uragas, rakṣasas, sarpaṣ, bhūtas, piṇacaks etc. According to the Purāṇas these are distinct races born of the daughters of Pracetāsa Dakṣa, namely Aditi, Diti, Danu and others (All of these are married to Kaśyapa). The Purāṇas speak of the distinctive characteristics of these races also.

Here we are not going to say anything either about the historical character of these races or about the identity of these races. We are concerned here with a problem relating to the use of the two names, namely daiitya and dānava.

It is found that the authors of the Purāṇas were too much careful in mentioning the names of the races to which the offspring of these daughters of Dakṣa belonged. A being belonging to any one of the races, namely deva, rakṣas, yakṣa, apsaras, etc. has

1. दानवानो दानवानां च कपोलवर्धकासानां सर्वपूर्वप्रतिविपक्षानां पर्यन्त पवित्रविरुद्धाः। उत्तम्य नित्यान श्रीव वितरात्रुः कपोलवर्धनः॥ (Vāyu-p. 67.48; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 2.5.1-2 with the reading. कपोलायुक्ताः for कपोलवर्धकासानां च)। देवानां दानवानां च कपोलवर्धकासानां। उत्तम्य नित्यान श्रीव वितरात्रुः॥ (Viṣṇu-p. 1.15.85, Padma-p 5.6.1 with the reading वित्तरात्रुम् पुरुषो दुःख्ययातिपि; Brahma-p. 3.1 with the reading वित्तरात्रुः कपोलवर्धकासानां प्रकृतम् कृत्तम्; Śiva-p. Umā. 31.1 with the reading दुःख्ययाति पुरुषो दुःख्ययाति प्रकृतम् कृत्तम्।) See also Kūrma-p. I. 15.1, Matsya-p. 3.1.

2. Vāyu-p. 69.92-96, Brahmāṇḍa-p. 2.7.465-469. (The statement मन्त्रस्य विदितश्रव्य मायासीता द्वृ: स्मृत्ताः read in these passages is noteworthy).
been always described as a deva, rakṣas etc. There are however figurative uses of these words. A manusya is sometimes said to be a deva or rakṣas on account of some of his chief characteristics which are peculiar to deva or rakṣas.

It is interesting to note that in the Purāṇas a dānava is sometimes said to be a dānava and vice versa. This irregular use is found in a considerable number of cases especially in persons like Prahlāda, Virocana, Bali, Bāna, Tāraka (all belong to the Dānava race), Vṛṣaśarvan, Puloman, Vipraciti, Namuci and Maya (all belong to the Dānava race). This irregular use was so conspicuous that Rājaskekhara refers to it as an example of kanisamaya. He means to say that such irregular use is not a real fault in the field of poetical works. It should be noted that these irregular uses are not based on the figurative senses of the words. As for example when Prahlāda is said to be a Dānava, it does not follow that he possessed the peculiar qualities of the dānava race. As a dāitya cannot be described as a dānava and vice versa at the

3. The names nāga and sarpa (of two distinct races) are sometimes found to have been used indiscriminately. It seems that since these two words are read in the lexicons as synonymous, nāga in later times came to be used for sarpa and vice versa.

4. It is not necessary to refer to those Purānic passages in which such irregular uses occur. Suffice it to say that Prahlāda, a dāitya (being the son of Hiranyakashipu, the son of Diti) has been described as a dānava (an offspring of Danu) in Vāmanop. 7.22 (वर्णकाव्यानि राज्ये प्रहलादो नाम दानव:); see also verses 47 and 61, the word देववेश is however used in verses 44 and 52.

5. While dealing with the कवित्यम् (conventions in the field of poetry) Rājaskekhara observes: दैववेशालोकादीनाममयम् यथा—तत्र हिरण्यकाशिपु प्रहु-रिवृत्तव-तत्र नामप्रत्ययो देवोऽभि, भिन्नबिन्नम-सम्बम्भ-सम्बंप्रमणम-दानवः, वल-वृषब-रिवृत्त-रुपभावोपयुतः (व I. वि-रूपवत्तिः) (Kāvyamimāṃsā. Ch. 16, p. 88). Rājaskekhara is wrong to think that asura is also a name of a race like the dāitya or dānava. The exact name of the race of beings designated as asuras by Rājaskekhara was also known to the authors of the Purāṇas, as for example the Purāṇas often mention Vṛṣaśarvan as a dānava (see Viṣṇup. 1.21.4-5, Kalikā. p. 34.54. Vāyu-p. 68.8, Brahma-p. 3.38, Padma-p. 5.6.53).

6. The Purānic statement that Prahlāda was given lordship over both the dāityas and dānava (सदे विष्णु-पृ. 1.22.4, Brahma-p. 4.4, Śiva-p. Umā 33.22, Matsya-p. 8.5 Padma-p. 5.7.72) shows that both of these two races possess some inner similarity.
As time went on the authors of Puranic tradition did not take it necessary to use the proper name of the race at the time of describing a dāitya or dānava. Consequently they paid little attention in using the words dāitya and dānava, as a result of which a dāitya was often described as a dānava and vice versa.

It is remarkable to note that in the aforesaid Puranic passages mentioning the names of races (see footnote 1) there is no mention of asura, though dāitya and dānava are expressly stated. This evidently shows that in the praō̄sargā connected with Kaśyapa there was no race called asura.7

---

7. In the Purānic passages showing the creation of four ambhas by Brahmā Prajāpati from His body, asuras are mentioned along with devas, manusyas and pītras (Vide Vāyu-p. 9.2-3, Markandeya-p. 48.4, Garuḍa-p. 1.4;20, Viṣṇu-p. 1.5.28). As this creation is of a different kind the question whether this asura is the same as the aforesaid asura has no relevance.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ALL-INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST
July—December 1985
Garuḍa Purāṇa

Collation of two Bengali manuscripts from the Asiatic Society, Calcutta and another from the Dhaka University is in progress while that of an incomplete manuscript obtained from Germany has been completed. The subject concordance of the Garuḍa Purāṇa with the other Purāṇas, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata is under preparation. More manuscripts of the Ācārakāṇḍa, Pretakalpa and Brahmakāṇḍa are being examined. The different manuscripts of Purāṇa-sūcis are being consulted for the use in the testimonia.

Mānasakhaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa

Chapters 1 to 30 have so far been published in the previous issues of the Purāṇa. Chapters 31 to 40 are ready for publication. The text is being edited by Dr. Gangasagar Rai on the basis of three Devanāgarī manuscripts, one of which is in the Trust’s Library and the other two have been obtained from the National Archives, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Sivadharma and Śivadharmottara

Work on the critical editions of the Śivadharma and the Śivadharmottara Purāṇa-s is being carried out by Dr Giorgio Bonazzoli with the help of a computer in Italy.

Index of names in the Liṅga Purāṇa

‘Index of names in the Liṅga Purāṇa’ has been prepared by Dr N. Gangadharan of the Madras University. The first instalment of this is published in the present issue of the Purāṇa.

Veda Purāṇa and Purāṇa Pāṭha

In the month of Āṣāḍha, the Kaṇṭha Samhitā of the Śukla Yajurveda was recited in the Sivala temple of the Trust in Varanasi by Paṇḍita Śrīnivāsa Paurāṇika with Paṇḍita Lakṣmikānta Paurāṇika as the Śrotā. The reciter and the Śrotā were given the customary Dākṣinā.