CURSE AS A MOTIF FOR THE GLORIFICATION OF TĪRTHAS

In the Purāṇas many curse episodes are narrated in which persons cursed have been advised to go to Tīrthas for taking ablution and worshipping deities and in most cases Śiva Līrīga to get rid of the evil effects of curse like severe diseases, deformities, metamorphosis and degradation in status etc. The son of Vedanidhi and five celestial nymphs cursed each other to be pīśācas and got back their previous forms by bathing in the river Revā1 and attained Viṣṇuloka. Dharmagupta, who was cursed to be mad was recovered from his insanity by an ablution in Dhanuśkoṭi Tīrtha.2 A brāhmaṇa named Durācāra who had been cursed to be a vetala got released by bathing in Jābāli Tīrtha.3 Camatkāra, the king of Ānarta country was cursed by a deer to suffer from leprosy. He was delivered from the disease by propitiating lord Saṅkara at Saṅkha tīrtha in Hāṭakeśvara kṣetra.4 The great serpent Karkoṭa was cursed by his

1. Pāmp. 3.22.23
2. Ksp. 3.1.32
3. Ibid. 2.1.25
4. Ibid. 6.1.11
mother Kadru to get perished in the Snake sacrifice of king Janamejaya. He propitiated lord Śiva with Pārvatī in Mahākāla forest and got freed from the mother’s curse. \(^5\) Śiva is worshipped there by his name karkotēśvara. One thing is given emphasis in the scriptures regarding the manner of ablution and worship. Who ever he may be, who bathes in a tīrtha must have deep devotional sentiment, bereft of which there is no meaning in the sacred bath. It is stated that god does not reside either in a log of wood or in stone or on the tops of mountains or in Śiva temple. He is consciousness and Bliss incarnate and is seen in the heart only when there is proper bhāva.

\[
\text{“na kāṣṭhe vidyate devo na śilāyāṁ kadācana/}
\text{bhāve hi vidyate devastasmād bhāvamī samāśrayet//}
\text{na devaḥ Parvatāgreṣu na devaḥ Śiva sadmani/}
\text{devascidānanda maya ṭṛdi bhāvena dṛśyate//”}\(^6\)
\]

Innumerable curse accounts are linked with tīrthas only to explain their greatness. Various tīrthas and the merits of sacred bath there are also narrated in the purāṇas. As our study relates to the tīrthas in relation to curse some episodes will be taken in to consideration in this chapter.

11.1. : BRAHMĀ CURSED ŚIVA : GLORIFICATION OF AVIMUKTA TĪRTHA :

Curse having inseparable connection with the holy place Avimukta tīrtha is related in the Mtp.\(^7\) Pārvatī asks Mahādeva to tell

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5. ibid. 5.2.10.
7. Mtp. 183.
her the secret for which he never leaves the place named Avimukta situated in the confluence of the rivers Varuṇā, Asi and Ganges. Mahādeva narrates thus:

In the days of yore Brahmā had five heads and the fifth one was shining like gold. Once Brahmā boastfully told Śiva that he knew his (Śiva’s) origin. Śiva became terribly annoyed and severed the fifth head with his nail. Brahmā told, “Since you have beheaded me without any fault, through my curse you will bear a skull as a badge of the sin inflicting injury on me. You will roam about in the sacred places.”

Hearing the curse of Brahmā, Mahādeva went to the Himalaya mountain and begged Nārāyaṇa to give alms. He (Nārāyaṇa) on his side dug His fingernail and a volume of blood rushed out and it spread itself to the length of fifty yojanas, but the skull was not filled. The stream of blood flowed for a thousand divine years. Lord Viṣṇu asked how such a skull was brought into existence? Śiva narrated about the fifth head of Brahmā that had grown out of thousand years asceticism and the reason for which he cut off the head of Brahmā. Hearing this Nārāyaṇa advised Śiva to go back to please Brahmā by whose glorious power the head would be fixed in his abode. Śiva went to all sacred places, but the skull did not get separated from him anywhere. Finally when he came to settle at his abode Avimukta - tīrtha, the effects of the curse instantly disappeared and through the favour of Viṣṇu the skull fell down there and was

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8. Ibid. 183.84: “yadā niraparādhasya Śirascchinamī tvayā mama/
tasmācchāpasamāyukta kapāli tvāṁ bhaviṣyasi/
brahmahatyaḥ kulo bhūtvā cara tīrthāni bhūtale/”
divided in to thousands of pieces. It disappeared like the riches, a man obtains in his dream. This place was made the dispeller of sin of brahmahatyā and it is the cremation ground of all gods and Śiva.

This episode has been narrated in many purāṇas, but central point of all the purāṇas is to explain how Śiva became kapāli and how he got released from the skull by entering vāraṇāsī.

_Mtp._ narrates the glory of Avimukta Kṣetra. It is a sacred place situated on the confluence of rivers Varuṇā, Asi and Gaṅga. Gifts offered and pious deeds performed in this place yield merits of highest order. Sinner of all kinds are purified in this tīrtha is the belief. Pārvatī when asked Śiva as to why he had made this place his permanent abode, Śiva narrated the episode of his being a skull bearer (kapāli) due to the curse of Brahmā. He said her that after wandering from shrine to shrine and holy places to holy places on the earth when he could not be freed from the curse of Brahmā (i.e. the skull should not leave him), He came to this Avimukta kṣetra at the behest of Viṣṇu and got released from the curse of Brahmanahatyā (Brāhminicide) and the skull. Hence this place was dearest to Him and He never leaves this for which this place got the epithet Avimukta.

_Lirīga Purāṇa_ (Lg.P) explains the etymology of the term Avimukta.

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10. _Lg.P._ 1.92.43. "avi śabdena pāpastu vedoktaḥ kathya devījaḥ/ tena muktaṁ mayā yuṣṭam avimuktam tatocayate//

‘Avi’ means ‘sin’ in the Veda and is told by the Brāhmaṇas. Because it is free from sin and attached with my presence, so is called ‘Avimukta’.

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This holy place is too pious to redeem one from Brahmahatya which is regarded as a great sin (mahāpātaka). When the great God Śiva was released from a great sin by coming to this tīrtha what to speak of others. Here the motif of the curse is to glorify the greatness of Avimukta kṣetra. Dharmasāstras prescribe various means of expiation for sinners to rectify themselves through remorse and to come back to the main stream again. Ablution in holy places is one of them.

11.2. : EXTRICATION FROM GOBLIN (PIŚĀCA) FORM BY ABLUTION IN RIVER NARMADĀ :

Holy bath in river Narmadā extricates one from piśācahood is found narrated in the Pdmp. It is stated that five nymph like pramohini, susīlā, susvarā, sutārā and candrikā were one day plucking flowers inorder to worship Gaurī. Arriving at Acchoda lake they built a Liṅga in the sand and worshipped it by singing and dancing around. In the meantime there came the eldest son of sage Vedanidhi for bathing in the lake. The hermit boy was very handsome and with stick in hand he was looking like the cupid. He was a brahmacāri. Seeing the hermit boy, the nymphs desirous of amorous enjoyment, talked among themselves that the handsome youth was brought to them by Gaurī. Hearing the words of the nymphs the boy who had completed his daily religious rites, thought that the foremost yogins like Viśvāmitra, parāśara and Devala etc. could not escape from the clutches of the nymphs. Hence he decided to leave the place before

11. Pdmp. 3.22 & 23
the nymphs had arrived there. The nymphs not beholding the hermit boy became tormented by the pangs of cupid and became unable to discharge their duties. On another day they met the young boy at the same spot and expressed their desire to marry him. He told them that he was in the first stage of āśrama life when he had to learn and should not think of marriage. When after many efforts they failed to convince him, they held his feet and hands and embraced and kissed him forcibly. The hermit boy became very much angry and cursed them saying, “you have clung to me as piśācī and hence you all become piśācīs (goblins). The nymphs retaliated by recursing him to be a piśāca. All of them being transformed in to piśācas remained in the lake lamenting painfully. After a lapse of long period sage Lomaśa happened to come there. The piśācās ran to the sage to eat him as they were hungry since long. But by the burning lusture of the sage they did not dare to touch him. The hermit boy could see in the sage a redeemer of them and fell at his feet and told him the curse for which they were suffering the miseries of goblins. He also expressed that association with great holy men shows the rise of good fortune and the company of holy men is greater than bathing in the Ganges. He requested the sage to release them. Lomaśa said, “you all bathe with me in the river Revā according to the prescription of the scriptures and Revā will no doubt release you. There is no way out.” Ablution in Revā washes all sins. Sins done in seven births and in this birth perish like a heap of cotton in the fire. Sins which have no expiation can only get destroyed by a bath in the Revā. Ablution in Revā assures heaven. It fulfills all desires and gives ———————————— [246] ————————————
liberation. A dip in yamuna gives abode of Sun, a dip in Sarasvati destroys sins and ensures Brahmaloka, Vişālā gives ample merits, but Narmadā (Revā) guarantees viṣṇuloka and salvation. It is he who has earned merit in his past life can only get the association of Revā. The creator placed all the Vratas, gifts, sacrifice and penance on one side and Revā on the other side of a balance. Revā became more heavy. The Piśāca and the piśācis having come in contact with Revā’s water assumed their previous form and eulogized Revā.

Here the motif of curse element is to glorify the river Narmadā (Revā). The religious importance of Narmadā has been well expressed in the words of Lomaśā. Measuring the importance of Revā in comparison to other holy places in a balance by the creator reminds of his measuring of the Mbh. and other scriptures in a balance to prove the greatness of Mbh. Pronouncement of imprecation on each other by the young hermit and the nymphs and extrication from the effects of curse by an ablution in the sacred river Narmadā explains the glory of the sacred river.

11.3. : RELEASE OF DHARMAGUPTA FROM MADNESS AND GLORY OF DHANUṢKOTI TĪRTHA :

Skp.\textsuperscript{12} narrates an episode where Dharmagupta is released from his madness by bathing in Dhanuṣkotī tīrtha. It is stated that there was a famous king named Nanda in the lunar race. Having entrusted the kingdom to his son Dharmagupta, Nanda repaired to the forest for performing penance. Dharmagupta was ruling the

\textsuperscript{12} Skp. 3.1.32.
country extended upto sea in righteous way. One day mounting his horse he entered the deep forest for hunting. While wandering in the forest chasing beasts evening approached. Dharmagupta performed the evening rites muttering Gāyatrī hymn. He then climbed on a tree out of fear of the wild beasts. In the mean time a bear followed by a lion came there and climbed the same tree. Seeing the king seated before the bear told, “Don’t get scared O king! we will pass the night here. For the first half I am watching and the rest of the night you be watchful.” When Dharmagupta slept, the lion sitting under the tree told the bear to drop the king down. The bear refused to do that for it would be an act of violation of dharma and faith. He said that the traitors suffer endless miseries. There is expiation of sins like brahminicide, but there is no extrication from the sin of treachery towards a friend. The sin of betrayal never gets mitigated in several births also. In the second half of the night Dharmagupta wake and the bear slept. The lion again told Dharmagupta to drop the bear down. He dropped the sleeping bear who was taking rest in his lap. The bear clung to the branches by big nails and did not fall from the tree. The bear became terribly angry and told the king, “I am sage Dhyānakāṣṭha who has assumed the form of a bear. You betrayed me who is innocent and sleeping. Hence you will wander on the earth being mad.” Thus cursing the bear reminded the lion that he was none but the great yakṣa Bhadra the minister of Kubera. While he was enjoying the company of his wife almost naked, sage Gautama cursed him to be a lion for his free sex and nakedness. The followers of Kubera are very pious and hence he should not kill him

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(Dhyanakāṣṭha) who is faultless. When the lion heared of his past life, immediately he assumed his previous form and went to Alakāpurī ascending an ariel car. He remembered Gautama’s words that at the sight of sage Dhyanakāṣṭha he would be released from his lion form. Dharmagupta being mad entered his kingdom. His ministers seeing him in this condition took him to his father Nanda at the bank of river Revā. Nanda took him to sage Jaimini and informed about his manliness. He requested the sage to do the needful. Jaimini by meditation could know that the plight of the king was due to the curse of the sage Dhyanakāṣṭha. He told that if Dharmagupta would be taken to Dhanuṣkotī tīrtha situated on the bank of the southern sea and would have a bath there, he would be released from his madness. Dharmagupta was taken to Dhanuṣkotī and was given a bath there. Being released of his madness he returned to his kingdom.

The same legend is repeated in the Sk.p. 2.1.13. too where it is said that the king was taken to Swāmīpuṣkarinī tīrtha on the Veṅkaṭa mountain on the bank of Suvārṇamukhārī river.

The Yakṣa is transformed in to a lion due to a curse and the sage Dhyanakāṣṭha is metamorphosed in to a bear. The metamorphosis is done willingly but not by curse. The sage had become a bear of his own as he says ‘kāmarūpadharam’. The curse motif is present in the legend. Firstly the yakṣa is cursed to be a lion and secondly the king is cursed to be mad. It is a kind of punishment in both the cases. But the main motif here is the motif of holy bath connected with curse. The mad king baths in Dhanuṣkotī
or Swāmī Puṣkariṇī to get rid of the curse and its effects. For freedom from various sins holy bath is prescribed in the purāṇas. Curse averting role of Dhanuṣkotī tīrtha is the main point in this episode.

11.4.: GREATNESS OF JĀVĀLI TĪRTHA:

_{Skp.}^{13} narrates the glory of Jāvāli tīrtha and the curse episode connected with it. It is stated that sages in the Naimiśā forest wanted to hear the glory of Jāvāli tīrtha in Veṅkaṭādri from sūta. Sūta narrated thus: there was a brahmin named Durācāra in the bank of river kāverī. On account of his association with great sinners he became a wicked sinner and his brāhmaṇa hood was lost. For his complete loss of brahmin hood he was once seized by a wicked Vetāla. He wandered from place to place afflicted by the vetāla and finally came to the holyplace of Veṅkaṭādri propelled by the merits of his previous birth. There in the Jāvāli tīrtha he bathed and got freed from the Vetāla. Being amazed at the wonder caused by bathing, he went to the sage Jāvāli; saluted him and asked him how he could come there being a resident o Kāverī bank. Jāvāli meditated for a while and told, ‘you are Durācāra. Due to the long associations of great sinners you being deprived of your brahminhood, got overpowered by a vetāla and brought to this place. And now you are free from the vetāla and the great sin of remaining in contact of the sinners, due to the ablution in the holy water of this place.’"

Then the sage narrated the story of the Vetāla. The vetāla was previously a brāhmin. He did not perform śrāddha rite for his deceased

13. _Skp._ 2.1.25.
parents and hence was cursed to be a vetāla by his forefathers. Bathing in the holy water of Jāvāli tīrtha he was freed from Vetālahood and attained Viṣṇuloka. Then sūta explained the greatness of this tīrtha. He said that the importance of this tīrtha is such that the sin for which there is no expiation prescribed in the scriptures, are removed by bathing in this tīrtha.

The episode seems to have given importance on the holy bath in Jāvāli tīrtha. The tīrtha is glorified for its curse removing character. Performance of śrāddha rite for the deceased forefathers is emphasised for they being dissatisfied inflict curse. Vetāla is a variety of demi god like piśāca and preta. He is known as the leader of the Bhūtas. More often Vetāla occupies the body of a man when real spirit is absent. But in this episode he is said to posses the body of a living one who is a sinner and exercise complete control over him. People who don't observe the obsequial rites properly for the dead, it is believed that he remains in the preta form till some one liberates him by doing his pretakarmas.

11.5. : GLORY OF ŚAṆKHA TĪRTHA :

_Skp._14 narrates an episode where curse is connected with the glorification of Śaṅkaratīrtha. It is stated that king Camatkāra while hunting in the forest killed a deer who was suckling her young under a tree. The deer in the dying state cursed the king to suffer from leprosy for his cruelty. The king said hunting being a duty of the king, he should not be cursed. The deer replied that she knew

14. _Skp._ 6.10.11
that the creator had created them to be killed by the kings, but
certain exceptional conditions like copulation, suckling the child
and drinking water are also prescribed in which they should not be
killed. As the king violated the rule, So he was to be cursed. The king
suffering from leprosy decided to worship Śaṅkara till he is released
from the disease. He observed severe penance and wandered from
sacred places to sacred places. One day he came across a group of
great brahmins going to tīrthas and asked them how he could be
free from this dreaded disease. The brahmins advised him to go to
Śaṅkha tīrtha in Hāṭakeśvara kṣetra and to bathe there. The king
went there and having bathed there got released of the disease and
shone with previous lustre.

Śaṅkha tīrtha is a famous sacred place. It is named after the
sage Śaṅkha.\textsuperscript{15} He was the grand son of sage Sāṇḍilya and brother
of sage Likhita. Seeing none present in the hermitage he ate sweet
fruits thinking it his own. In the meanwhile sage Likhita came back
and saw Śaṅkha eating the fruits. He became angry for he ate the
fruits without his permission and cut his hands as punishment though
prevented by other hermits. Śaṅkha came to his hermitage and
performed severe penance and worshipped Śaṅkara with his hands
cut off. Śaṅkara being pleased with his tapasyā appeared before him
and blessed him to recover his hands as before. Śiva told him to ask
boon from him. Śaṅkha begged that this place should be named
after him and people suffering from deformity, incurable diseases

\textsuperscript{15}Śaṅkha and Likhita are after mentioned as author of law books. Likhita is
mentioned as the brother of Śaṅkha in the \textit{Mbh.} xii.668.
should be cured by an ablution in the water of this holy place and they should also be free from all sins. Lord Śiva conferred the boon and told that on the 14th of white fort night in the month of Caitra, those who suffer from the above mentioned inconveniences, would be released by an ablution in the water of this holy place. Śrāddha and libations offered to the pitṛs in this tīrtha on Brahma Caturdāsī give great satisfaction to them. Fasting observed in the afternoon when the moon is in conjunction with citrā Nakṣatra, one is endowed with handsome hands of golden hue. Such are the merits obtained by an ablution in Śaṅkhātīrtha.

In this episode the king who was cursed to suffer from leprosy got released from the same by bathing in Śaṅkha tīrtha. The greatness of this tīrtha lies in its curse removing character.

11.6. : GREATNESS OF KARKOṬEŚVARA :

The episode of karkoṭa’s release from his mother’s curse and the greatness of Karkoṭeśvara Liṅga occurs in the Skp.¹⁶ Here Śiva narrates to pārvatī the greatness of that Liṅga while describing the importance of 84 Liṅgas. He narrated that the serpents were cursed by their mother to be burnt in the fire at the snake sacrifice of Janamejaya, as they did not obey her order. The serpents got frightened hearing the curse and went in different directions to save their lives. Śeṣa went to Himalaya to perform tapas, Karībala went to the place of pitāmaha, Śaṅkhaṭacūḍa the serpent chief went to Manipura, kāliya took shelter in the water of Yamunā. Dhṛtarāṣṭra went to

¹⁶ Skp. 5.2.10.
prayāga and Elāpatra karkoṭa went to Brahmaloka. He asked Brahmā why he did not prevent his mother from cursing them. Brahmā told him that his mother was not prevented for the curse of his mother is destined to take effect in future Snake sacrifice of Janamejaya.

He advised karkoṭa to go to Mahākāla forest to worship Lord Śiva who remains there with Pārvatī for the peace and happiness of all the Nāgas. Lord Śiva being propitiated by the unflinching devotion of karkoṭa gave him the boon that the serpents who are wicked and venomous would be destroyed and not the virtuous ones. He again told, “I am very much pleased with your devotion and hence get absorbed in me.” Then Mahādeva became famous there in the Mahākāla forest as karkoṭeśvara, whose mere sight frees one from all diseases. By worshipping the lord here with devotion one becomes endowed with all prosperity and redeems his hundred generations. Those who see the karkoṭeśvara according to prescribed injunctions get all their desires fulfilled. Those who visit the lord there on fifth, fourteenth and sunday of every month, snakes do not torment in their family. An unfortunate woman becomes fortunate, pregnant gets son free from all diseases who adorns the family. All the Bālagrahās perish and fear of untimely death disappears. Kadru’s curse to the serpents to be destroyed in Janamejaya’s sacrifice has link with the curse of Śrīṅgī to king Parikṣit. Mbh. refers to the curse of Śrīṅgī where after the death of Parikṣit his son Janamejaya instituted snake sacrifice for the complete destruction of the snakes. Kadru’s curse to the serpents can be treated as a precursor to Śrīṅgī’s curse. Skp. 3.1.3.8. treats in detail the reason of Kadru’s imprecation.
Here karkoṭa serpent out of fear of own destruction approached Brahmā for rescue. He was advised to go to Mahākāla forest, where he could be released from the fear of curse by worshipping Śiva. Karkoṭa did accordingly and got sāyujya (identification) with the Lord. Brahmā’s advice to karkoṭa to go to Mahākāla forest is to explain the greatness of the worship of Śiva there.

11.7. : GLORIFICATION OF PRATĪHĀREŚVARA:

Another account of curse related with Pratiharesvara in Mahākāla forest is narrated in the Skp.17 where śiva is worshipped by Nandī.

This episode has link with the episode of interruption in love making by Śiva and pārvatī. When Śiva and Pārvatī were engaged in sexual intercourse the gods apprehended that the son born of the intercourse would destroy the creation. After deliberation with Brahmā and Viṣṇu they decided to interrupt their union. God Agni was sent as the representative of the gods who entered the inner chamber of Śiva and pārvatī, assuming the form of a swan deceiving Nandī the sentry posted at the door. The intercourse being interrupted Pārvatī cursed the gods to be childless and Agni to be all-eater. But Śiva cursed Nandī to take birth on the earth for his negligence as he could not check Agni from entering the inner apartment at the prevented hour. Nandī being dispelled from Śivaloka became overwhelmed with sorrow and rolled on the ground lamenting over the deception of Agni. At this hour when the guardians of quarters arrived there and were informed about the matter from Nandī, they

17. Skp. 5.2.20.
advised him to go to Mahākāla forest to worship Lord Śiva. Nandi then repaired to Mahākāla forest, instituted a Līṅga named Pratīhāreśvara as he was himself the door keeper (pratīhāra) of the Lord. Nandi observed kāpālika vow and worshipped Pratīhāreśvara with great devotion. Then a voice was heared from the Līṅga, "O door keeper! you have been relieved of the curse." Then Śiva explained the greatness of Pratīhāreśvara. Those who devotedly worship Pratīhāreśvar Śiva, they don't fall from their position even if in dream. Sins incurred more or less in seven births are destroyed by the worship of this Līṅga. Those who remember the lord always, attain heaven.

In this episode no holy waterplace is mentioned. Worship of Pratīhāreśvara Śiva placed in the Mahākāla forest is eulogised here as it removes the curse of Nandi, a pratīhāra (door keeper) of śiva. Nandi who was cursed to lose his position, got back the same by the boon of Pratīhāreśvara Śiva stationed at Mahākāla forest. The greatness of worshipping pratīhāreśvara lies in the fact that the devotee does not suffer loss of position.

11.8.: GLORIFICATION OF AKRREŚVARA:

The episode illustrating the greatness of Akṛreśvara by whose grace Bhṛṅgiriti was released from the curse of pārvatī occurs in the Skp. The episode runs thus:

Mahādeva tells Pārvatī that in the beginning of one of the kalpas she had created the universe with Siddhas, Gandharvas, great serpents

and all. They all prayed and circumambulated her. One of the gaṇas named Bhṛṅgirīti did not come to her and paid no obeisance. When asked he told that he was not her son but the son of Śaṅkara. Pārvatī told, I am your mother. The flesh, blood and skin in you is of your mother and the bone, teeth, head nail, semen and speech are of the father." So why don’t you pay me respect?" Bhṛṅgirīti was very much annoyed with the statement of Pārvatī. He immediately got rid of the flesh, blood and skin from his body and with the skeleton form approached Mahādeva. Pārvatī thus being illtreated, cursed Bhṛṅgirīti to fall in to the human world as he ill behaved her with wicked mind and made distinction between Śiva and herself. Bhṛṅgirīti lost the position of gaṇa and went to the earth after the end of his merits. There he performed severe penance standing on one foot and with lifted arms in Puṣkara dvīpa. The entire world started burning by his severe penance. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and all the gods went to him. Śiva told him to refrain from this destructive penance and ask boon from pārvatī by which he would be delivered from the curse. Pārvatī being satisfied with his prayer told him to go to Mahākāla forest where he would be free from wickedness and bad intelligence. Then he should go to kailāsa to worship Liṅga present there since seven kalpas and obtain good intelligence. Those who are atheists, wickeds, traitors, great sinners and cursed, they all go to heaven being freed from all sins. Bhṛṅgirīti repaired to Mahākāla forest and worshipped the Liṅga from which Śiva and Pārvatī appeared in hermaphrodite form. He was surprised to see this wonder and was convinced that
Siva and Pārvatī are inseparable from each other. Seeing right wisdom arisen in him Pārvatī told him to ask for boon. He told if the mother is pleased, the Liṅga from that day should be known as Akṛreśvara and those who propitiate it should be liberated from all kinds of mental sins and attain heaven. Worship of Akṛreśvara after bathing in Mandākinī kuṇḍa should ensure one to attain heaven climbing divine car attended by the Gandharvas and should be free one from great sins. Worship of Akṛreśvara ensures desired fruits and the merit of giving away thousand cows is obtained by mere touch of the holy water of this Kuṇḍa.

The motif of the curse element here is to glorify the greatness of Liṅga worship in Mahākāla forest as worship of Akṛreśvara bestows right knowledge on its devotee and frees him from bad intelligence. Bhṛṅgiriti a Sivagaṇa was freed from his wickedness by propitiating Akṛreśvara. The etymology of the term Akṛreśvara is worth seeing. ‘Kṛra’ means wickedness and ‘Akṛra’ means ‘not wicked’ and Akṛreśvara there by means the ‘Lord of those who are not wicked.’ Another point to be noted is the unity of Śiva and Pārvatī. They are not to be seen separately. Water is conceived as having purifying quality. Mandākinī Kuṇḍa is built19 by lord Mahādeva in Mahākālavana in Ujjainī for the benefit of all. Akṛreśvara is glorified as he removes the effects of curse of Bhṛṅgiriti and bestows right knowledge discarding wicked intelligence.

11.9. : GREATNESS OF LUMPEŚVRA LINGA :

The Skp.\(^{20}\) narrates the greatness of Lumpeśvara Liṅga stationed in Mahākāla forest. There was a powerful king in the land inhabited by the Mlecchas (aborigines). He was famous as Lumpādhīpa (chief of the lumpas). His wife was Viśālā. One day being desirous of fighting he asked the best brahmins. One of them told that there was a Sāmaga priest in a hermitage with whom he should fight. The king marched with thousands of Mlecchas, Varvaras and Lumpas to the hermitage where the Sāmaga priest lived. There he was received with great honour and treated cordially. The king seeing a sacrificial cow with its calf wanted to take it from the brahmin. When the brahmin denied to part with the cow, the king destroyed the hermitage and killed the brahmin and took away forcibly the cow. The hermit’s son when came back to the āśrama and found his father killed hit by many arrows and the hermitage destroyed, he bewailed loudly and performed the obsequeal rites of his father. Then in utter sorrow pronounced a curse on the culprit to suffer from Leprosy. The Lumpa chief then suffered from leprosy. He took many medicines to recover from the dreaded disease, but the disease increased instead of decreasing. Not being able to move, he decided to commit suicide in fire. While preparing the Fire for self immolation the wandering sage Nārada arrived there. He received the sage with due honour and told him his misery. When he came to know from Nārada that what had happened was due to the curse of the brāhmin, he asked

\[20. \text{Skp. 5.2.41.}\]
Nārada to suggest the way of release from the curse. Nārada advised both the king and the queen to go to Mahākāla forest and to worship the Liṅga which removes Leprosy and sins. Both of them went there, bathed in the river Śīprā, and by the mere sight of that Liṅga the king was freed from leprosy and brahminicide. The king then stayed there for one night with his wife and served the sages. As he worshipped the Liṅga that removed his leprosy it was known by Lumpēśvara. It is the greatness of Lumpēśvara that a killer of cow, a traitor, a killer of mother or brother, father and even if the user of the bed of preceptor gets release from the sin here by worshshipping him.

This episode seems to have been fabricated on the pattern of Visvāmitra’s abduction of Viśiṣṭha’s sacrificial cow with a little twist. Like vaśiṣṭha the sāmaga sage received the Lumpa King. The Lumpa chief forcibly abducted the sacrificial cow as Viśvāmitra had taken Vaśiṣṭhas cow by force. But the remaining episode has other descriptions like killing the Sāmaga brahmin, the curse of the brahmin’s son, the king suffering from leprosy, his preparing fire for immolation, Nārada’s arrival and his advice to the king to repair to Mahākāla forest to worship Liṅga that cures leprosy and the naming of the Liṅga as Lumpēśvara. The episode seems to be woven particularly to sing the greatness of Lumpēśvara Liṅga in Mahākāla forest for it alleviates the dreadful effects of curse.
11.10. : GLORIFICATION OF UTTAREŚVARA LIŅGA :

The glorification of Uttareśvara Liṅga is narrated by Śiva to Pārvatī while explaining the greatness of 84 Liṅgas in the Skp.²¹ The episode runs thus :

King Parīkṣīt of Ikṣvāku dynasty went to the forest for hunting. Following a deer he entered the deep forest. Tormented by thirst he arrived at a lake where he saw a beautiful damsel singing. Being attracted by the melody of her song and by her beautiful form the king went near her and expressed his desire to marry. The girl told him that she would marry him on one condition that she should not be shown water. The king accepted the condition took the girl to the palace and got deeply engrossed in the enjoyment of her company. The king forgot all his duties towards his subjects. The chief minister enquired of the ladies appointed in service of the girl, if anything was there required to be fulfilled. When the minister heared about the water taboo, he built an artificial forest devoid of water and told the king to sport there happily. The king while enjoying with her saw a well filled with nectar like water. The well was filled with frogs. The king stayed near the well and told the girl, ‘The water of the well is very clear and calm.’ Hearing the words of the king the maiden entered the well and never came out. The king searched the maiden in the well, but did not find her. He ordered his people to kill the frogs so that they would return back the maiden. Seeing the slaughter of the frogs an old frog came there and requested the king not to kill

²¹ Skp. 5.2.84.
the innocent frogs for this act would destroy his dharma. The king replied that there is no sin in killing the wicked frogs who have eaten up my wife. Then the old frog told the king, “I am king Āyu, the maiden is my daughter and she has gone to Nāgaloka. Here is the Nāga king Nāga Cūḍa. She will come here if remembered.” The maiden when rembered came there and was offered to the king. Then the old frog told the king that she had once offended the great sage Gālava who had been emaciated through penance and she had also tormented a frog named Kṣemeśvara out of Childishness. The sage therefore cursed her saying, “you have offended me and tormented the frog in childshness. So you will be a frog.” The sage when propitiated told,“ In the next birth being the king of frogs and giving your daughter in the hand of a virtuous king born in Ikṣvāku race, when you will see Uttareśvara Liṅga in the north of Mahākāla forest, you will be freed from the curse.” The frog did accordingly and got freed from the frogbirth. Narrating the story Śiva told about the merits of worshiping Uttareśvara Liṅga. One of his gaṇas the invincible frog which was appointed to guard the place also attained the state of identification with the lord.

This episode is found to have been narrated in the *Mbh.*\(^{22}\) The tales like ‘old girl’ (Vṛddhakanyā), ‘frog princes’ (the story of Bheki) are generally known as ‘Swan maiden’ type. These tales are connected with certain taboo. Here in the story of Frog maiden we came across the water taboo. The frog maiden is for bidden to see

\(^{22}\) *Mbh.* Crit. Ed. 111-190.
or touch water, because by seeing or touching she assumes her previous form. The motif of metamorphosis is also current in these type of tales. The old frog had been transformed into a frog by the curse of sage Gālava. We are not concerned with the pattern of the episodes rather the motif of curse element is prominent. The frog Āyu got back her previous form by worshipping Uttareśvara Liṅga in Mahākāla forest. Worship of Uttareśvara Liṅga is glorified for it removes the effects of curse and endows the curse with the previous status. Hence the motif of curse here is to glorify the Liṅga worship of Uttareśvara.

11.11. : GREATNESS OF AHALYĀSAṅGAMATĪRTHA :

A curse episode glorifying Ahalyāsaṅgama tīrtha occurs in the Brahma.P. It is stated that Brahmā had many daughters of Matchless beauty. Ahalyā was one of them. He decided to give her in the hand of a virtuous and learned brāhmaṇa sage. Indra had special interest to marry Ahalyā for her extreme beauty. When all the gods, demons and sages desired to get her as their bride, Brahmā told that she would be given to him who could move around the earth first. Hearing this gods started moving around the earth. Sage Gautama was also a contender. He saw the divine cow Surabhi in a state of producing half of her calf. He had the knowledge that a cow in such a state is equal to the earth with seven island and hence circumambulated her. Then he moved around the Liṅga of Śiva. Thus completing two circumambulations he went to Brahmā and informed him about the

23. Brahman P. Gautami Māhātmya, 16.
completion of the due task of going round the earth. Brahmā meditated
and knew the act of the sage. Being pleased with his intelligence he
offered Ahalyā to Gautama. By the time the gods returned one after
another, the wedding ceremony of Gautama and Ahalyā had been
completed. Indra repaired to the heaven being jealous. Brahmā offered
the auspicious Brahmagiri for Gautama’s abode. One day Indra in
the guise of a Brāhmaṇa went to see Ahalyā. He waited there. When
the sage with his disciples went out of the hermitage, Indra maddened
with lust approached Ahalyā assuming the form of Gautama. Speaking
sweet words and smiling he started enjoying Ahalyā. She could not
recognise him. In the meanwhile the real Gautama returned with his
disciples. But seeing Ahalyā not coming to the door speaking sweet
words, he became astonished. Other people at work in the hermitage
seeing Gautama became surprised and told him that this is
undoubtedly the miracle of your penance, otherwise how could you
be present both inside and outside the cottage at the same time.
Thinking somebody must be present inside he entered the cottage
calling Ahalyā. When Ahalyā heared the voice of the real Gautama,
she suddenly got off from the bed in fear and asked the false Gautama,
“who are you ? In the garb of the sage you have outraged my
modesty.” Indra took the form of a cat in fear of the sage. Gautama
seeing her raped and disfigured asked her in anger as to how could
she dare to act like this. Ahalyā could speak nothing out of shame.
Gautama seeing the cat wanted to know him. Indra assumed his real
form and begged apology to the sage. The sage then being over
powered by anger cursed him to have thousand marks of (vulva)
female organs in his body for his attraction towards female sex and also cursed Ahalyā to be a dried river.

“bhaga prityā kṛtāṁ pāparī sahasrabhagavān bhava/
tāmapyāha mahāmunīḥ kopāttvāṁ ca śuśkā nadi/”

Ahalyā apologized telling that she had been attracted by his form. The sage in order to ascertain the truth drove into trance and realised the fact. He told Ahalyā that when she would be united with river Gautamī in her river form, she would get back her former appearance. Ahalyā did accordingly and got released from the curse. Indra with folded hand propitiated the sage and sought release from the curse. The sage advised him to take bath in Ahalyāsaṅgama tīrtha. Indra bathed there and his thousand vulva marks became thousand eyes and he was thus released from the effects of curse. From that day Ahalyā saṅgama became famous as Indratīrtha. Skp.²⁴ narrates Gautama’s curse to Ahalyā and Indra for the same reason as mentioned in the Brahma P. Ahalyā was cursed to be a stone, where as Indra was cursed to have thousand marks of female sex on his face; and to lose his scrotum. He was also prevented from worship on the earth. By the request of Brahmā the sage joined the scrotum of a ram in the place of Indra’s testicle. He transformed the thousand sex marks in to eyes by touching them in his own hand and made him known as Sahasrākṣa by the request of the gods. On being propitiated by Indra the sage allowed him Pañcarātra Pūjā on the

²⁴ Skp. 6.207.
earth. As to the release of curse Ahalyā was advised to go to sixty-eight holy places including Hāṭakeśvara tīrtha.

The episode narrated in the Brvp. is no different from that of the Skp. The earliest episode of curse to Ahalyā and Indra is found in the Rāmāyaṇa (Rām.) It is stated that Indra seduced Ahalyā to destroy the penance of the sage for the sake of the gods (deva kāryārtham). Here also Ahalyā was cursed to be a stone and Indra was cursed to lose his secretum. Release from the curse is same as mentioned in Skp. There are two versions of the episode in the Rām. In one Ahalyā expresses that she could not reecognise the guised Indra and in the other it is stated that Ahalyā was happy to be raped by Indra.

Adhyatma Rāmāyaṇa which is a part of Bmd.P also treats the account. The context is almost same as that of the Rām with the difference that Ahalyā is cursed to remain fixed on a stone slab in the āśrama waiting for the touch of the dust of Rāma's feet.

The latest version of the episode is found in the Rāmacaritamānasā of Tulsidas of 16th century A.D. which is same in context as that of the Rām. Emphasis on the dust of the feet of Rāma is given here.

There is reference to this story in the Mbh. Śānti.P. 342nd

   Ibid : “Kausika nimittam cendro muśkaviyogamī meṣavṛṣaṇatvarī cāvāpa.”
Chapter where Indra is cursed to have tawny beard. His loss of testicle and replacement of ram’s scrotum are also referred to there. The earliest reference to the Indra - Ahalyā myth is found in the SpBr. 3.4.4.18; TS 1.12.4; Ṣaḍ Br. 1.1. and Lat SS. 1.3.1. In the Sbr. Indra is given the epithet ‘Ahalyāyaijāraḥ’. While explaining the above epithet Ṣaḍ.Br. Clearly sage that Indra was the Paramour of Ahalyā. A similar reference is also found in the Jai.Br. 2.79. Besides these stray references we don’t come across the episode of Ahalyā in detail, the curse of Gautama and her deliverance by Rāma in the vedic literature. But AV 11.2.17 has a reference to Indra as ‘Sahasrākṣa and atipaṣya’ (Sahasrākṣamatipaṣyam Purastāt) which indicates that he was Ominicient (Krāntadarṣī or atipaṣya) being possesed of thousand eyes.

Besides the legendary part, the episode has been explained in other way also. Kumārilabhatta explains in his Tantravārttika29 as the daily course of the sun, moon and the night. The moon itself is Gotama30 and the night is moon’s wife. She is called Ahalyā (ahar- liyate yasyāṁ sā) for the day is absorbed in it. The sun as having the supreme splendour is Indra (ya eṣa suryastapati eṣa u eva Indraḥ)31 When the Sun rises, the night disappears (Jīrnayati). So the Sun is Jāra (perisher) of the night (Ahalyā).

30. Nirukta 2.2.2. “Utamā gāvo raṣmaya yasya saḥ gotamaḥ Suṣumnaḥ Surya raśmiscandumā gandharva ityapi nigamo bhavati so’pi gaurucyate. Sarve’pi raṣmayo gāva ucyante.”
31. Ibid. 304.10. “Kṣetram Śārire kedāre Siddhasthāna kalatrayoh.”
Another etymological meaning also can be derived from the word Ahalyā. ṽHal, means to till (hal-vilekhane, Amara.305.13) Halitum yogyā halyā i.e. fit to be tilled or ploughed. Thus Ahalyā comes to mean a land not fit to be tilled. Land in Sanskrit is called bhūmi or Kṣetra32 and wife is called kṣetra33 (kalatra). Thus Ahalyā is the kṣetra of Gautama and she is not to be tilled or enjoyed by others except Gautama. Now ‘Indra Ahalyāi Jārah’ i.e. Indra is the pāramour of Ahalyā. He unites with Ahalyā through rain (the fructifying fluid). If the twin concept of Dyāvā Prthivī (heaven and earth) is looked at, the concept of husband and wife is understood. Indra the third man (paramour) satisfies the earth with rain. Kālidāsa in his kumārasambhavani, Canto-5, describes the tilled land parched by drought intently desires Indra to rain on her (Vṛṣeva sītāṁ tadavagraha kṣatām). When this allegory is explained in human level, it may mean that untilled Ahalyā, i.e. sexually dissatisfied Ahalyā got united with her pāramour Indra and was gratified. Rāmāyaṇa alludes that Ahalyā was pleased for she had been enjoyed by the lord of the gods. She had advised Indra to escape before the sage’s arrival in the hermitage out of fear of his curse. It shows that Ahalyā supported the act of violation. But the secret being divulged and due to lack of public support to adultery, Indra and Ahalyā were cursed by the sage

As to the sin factor, some say the subject being of celestial nature the terrestrial principle of sin and virtue does not apply to the

32. Amarakośa. 304.10. ‘Kṣetram bhāratādau bhagāṅgayoḥ’
   Kedāre siddha bhupatnyoḥ - iti Haimah

33. Ibid. 304.10. "Kṣetram Šarire kedāre Siddasthāna Kalatrayoh."
celestial characters like Indra and Ahalyā. Ahalyā is said to be the mind born daughter of Brahmā and Indra is the Sun. Hence they are free from mundane principles and restrictions.

The Indra-Ahalyā episode is narrated in various levels. In the vedic literature there is no trace of the curse element. Only a natural phenomena is referred to there as pointed out by Kumārila Bhatta. viz. Indra Ahalyāyai jāraḥ i.e. the sun is the dispeller of night. For the first time in the Rāmāyana of Vālmīki the seduction of Ahalyā by Indra is narrated with a curse element in it. In the AV 11.2.17 Indra is designated as ‘Sahasrākṣa’. He is also addressed as ‘ati paśya’ which may mean who can see beyond or farsighted. Hence Indra was farsighted having thousand eyes. Rāma and the purāṇas allude Indra having thousand eyes by the boon of the sage, after his curse is redressed.

The version of Rāmacaritamānasā appears to be modified to suit the taste of the Viṣṇuites. Tulasidāsa has not narrated the fall of Ahalyā. To him the deliverance of the fallen lady by the dust of Rāma’s feet is of greater importance. Ahalyā was cursed to be petrified in order to explain the glory of the dust of Rāma’s feet.

The purpose of the curse episode of Indra-Ahalyā which is narrated particularly in the Brahma.P is to explain the greatness of the holy place of Ahalyāsāragama, where Indra is sent by Gautama to be freed from the effects of his curse. It is due to the curse to Indra that the holy place’s importance came to light.

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