In the RV. Varuna by the side of Indra is said to be the greatest of the gods. Independently he is celebrated with a dozen hymns. He is invoked along with Mitra in two dozen hymns.

However, in the Mbh. he is the subject of about 73 legends.

In the RV. being a supreme god he is given epithets such as Rājā, Samrāj, Ksatra, Ksatriya, Asurā, Ārya, Māyin, Ṛta, Ṛtasyagopā, Ṛtāvan, Svarāj, Rīṣādas, Dhrtravrata, Tuvijāta and Uruksaya.

Whereas in the Mbh. Varuna as a god of water is given epithets Apāmpati, Nīci Aṃbasām, Udāke Devam, Jalāśvara, Udakapati, Salileśvara, Salileśa, Salilarāja, Jalādhipa, Nādiapati, Yādasām bhartr, Yādasāṃpati, Lokapāla and Vāripa.

In comparison to RV., the birth of Varuna is clearly depicted in the Mbh.

He is said to be the son of Aditi and Prajāpati Kaśyapa. He is one of the twelve Ādityas. Varuna's origin
from Visnu and in the west is also mentioned in the Mbh.

In the RV. waters are said to be Varuna's wives. However, in the Mbh. Varuna, Devi and Gauri are the wives of Varuna. Offsprings of Varuna are also mentioned in the Mbh. Surâ is his daughter. Bala, Muni Vasistha, Muni Agastya, Vandin and Srûtâyudha are the sons of Varuna.

In the RV. fetter (pāśaḥ) is Varuna's weapon, which he uses to punish the sinners.

In the Mbh. besides noose (pāsa) he has missile, Dharmapāsa and mace as his weapons. He grants weapons to his worshippers. He controls the Dânava and Daityas with his noose in the netherland.

In the RV. Varuna has his golden abode in the heaven. Whereas in the Mbh. his abode is in the Ocean which is also called Varunaloka. He lives there with his family and is surrounded by aquatic creatures.

In the ŚB. universal sovereignty is vested in Varuna with the result, he has a high position among the Vedic gods. In the ŚB. Varuna has lordly power. Rājasūya Sacrifice is connected with Varuna. He is said to be a king of gods (Rājā). He is a creator. He is such a great god as can bless, cure, reward and at the same time curse.
and punish. In the ṚV. Varuṇa has supernatural power, so he is called Māyin.

However, in the Mbh. Varuṇa's power, glory, status and function are eclipsed by the rising of other gods such as Prajāpati, Viṣṇu and Kṛśna etc. So his position in the Mbh. is suddenly deteriorated.

In the Mbh. with the rise of Prajāpati to an important position, Varuṇa has lost his asura's māyā which is shared by the gods and the demons. Prajāpati, later Viṣṇu, is identified with sacrifice or in other words sole properiter of āsuṛī māyā. In the Mbh. Varuṇa himself performed sacrifices in prayāga. Supernatural powers, overlordship and glory depart from Varuṇa and are lost to other gods. He becomes different in his exploits. He is still considered to be a powerful god, but as a member of the powerful team such as Prajāpati and Viṣṇu.

In the Mbh. he is even defeated by human beings. In the Khāṇḍava-Vana-Dahāna episode he along with other deities is defeated by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In the Mbh. the nature and functions of Varuṇa undergo a major change. He becomes the lord of waters and one of the ten dikpālas.
It is said that Śiva and Indra7 bestowed the sovereignty over the water. In the beginning he was not the lord of the waters, but he was made so by the gods. With the result his ancient status and functions are separated and are discharged by other rising gods. Therefore, in the Mbh., Varuna is invested with power merely over the waters. As he is given lordship over the water, so naturally he is associated with aquatic creatures such as snakes etc. and is surrounded by the Nāgas. This is another proof of humiliation of Varuna.\textsuperscript{7} in the Mbh.

In the RV. some epithets are given to Varuna which are characterised by his functions. He is called "Rājā", King, "Samrāj universal monarch; "Ksatriya", attribute of sovereignty; "Ksatra", Ruler. Epithet Asurā is connected with Varuna. He is called "Asurā Ārya", noble lords; "Ṛtasya gopā", Guardians of order; "Ṛtāvan", observer of order. He is called "Svarāj", Independent Ruler; "Ṛśādās", destroyer of the enemies.\textsuperscript{8} Varuna is given other epithets which are Dhrtavrata, Tuvijāta and Uruksaya "mighty\textsuperscript{9}\). However, in the Mbh. some epithets are also given to Varuna. Most of them are ascribed to him being god of water. Varuna is called "Apāmpati", lord of waters\textsuperscript{10}, "Nīchī Aṁbasām"
ocean. He is called "Udake Devam," "Jalesvara," "Udakapati," "Salileśvara," "Jalādhipa," which means Lord of water. He is given epithet "Nādi pāti" or "Sarvāsām sritāpatī," Lord of all rivers.

He is called "yādasām Bhātr", "yādasām Pati" "Lekapāla" and "yāripa".

In the RV, little is mentioned regarding the birth of Varuna.

Whereas in the MBH, different accounts are given about the birth of Varuna.

Varunais begot from Aditi, the daughter of Prajāpati Dakṣa. In the "Description of Aditi's Race", it is said that twelve Ādityas are sprung from Aditi who are the lords of the universe. They are Dhatr, Mitra, Aryaman, Śakra, Varuna, Añsa, Bhaga, Vivasvat, Pūsan, Savitṛ, Tvāstr and Visṇu. Varuna is the fifth of the twelve Ādityas. Kaśyapa is said to be the father of the Ādityas.

It is said in the MBH, that the lord of the waters had his origin in the west.

Visṇu is said to be the Creator of Varuna, the lord of Waters and governor of all aquatic animals.
In the RV, his physical appearance is described as he has arms, hands, feet. Eye of Varuna is identified with the Sun. He is thousand-eyed. He wears a golden mantle and a shining robe. Waters are said to be his wives.

In the MBh, a few accounts are given about the physical appearance of Varuna. Varuna puts on a celestial robe decked in celestial ornaments and jewels. Varuna sits with his queen Varunī in his assembly house. Devī was Varuna's wife. In the legend of "Mahārsis and Kaśyapa wives", it is said that the daughter of Śukra, named Devī, became the eldest wife of Varuna. Varuna is also said to be the husband of Gaurī.

Varuna is handsome and is endued with the splendour of lapis lazuli. He is accompanied by all kinds of aquatic creatures.

In the legend of "Arrival of Lokapālas to Arjuna", when the wielder of the Pināka Mahādeva disappeared, Arjuna wondered much at this. Arjuna said, "I have seen the great god of gods". While Arjuna was thinking thus, there came to that place Varuna the lord of waters, handsome and of the splendour of the lapis lazuli, accompanied by all kinds of aquatic creatures.
In the RV. it is said that Varuna punishes the sinners. He uses feiter (pāśa) as weapon to bind the sinners.

In the MBh. it is described that Varuna uses noose (pāśa), missile (Aśani) Dharmapāśa and mace as his weapons.

Varuna is armed with nooses (pāśa) and Aśani among the gods who fought with Arjuna and Krishna. In the legend of "Encounter between the gods and Arjuna-Krṣna in Khāṇḍava-Yana", while Agni was consuming the Khāṇḍava forest, Śakra rushed at Arjuna and Krṣna to resist them who were helping Agni to consume the forest. The Indra and other gods took up their weapons such as Yama his death-dealing mace, Kubera his spiked club and Varuna his noose and beautiful missile.

Varuna has his Varunapāsa or nooses and Dharmapāsa. He controls the Daityas and Dānavas binding them with his nooses in the Ocean.

Varuna has a mace which he gave to Śrutāyudha and instructed its nature. Varuna had Gāndīva as his weapon for a hundred years. Finally, he gave it Pārtha.

In the RV. Varuna's prominent conveyance is his car, which shines like Sun. His car has thongs for a pole, a
seat and a whip and is drawn by well-yoked steeds.

In the Mbh. Varuna has a chariot, which Krsna used as conveyance in the battle. In the legend of "Battle between Bhīmasena and Drona" that car which formerly bore Brahman and Isāṇa and Indra and Varuna (to battle) was used by Krsna and Arjuna in the battle.

Some other offsprings of Varuna are also described in the Mbh. Muni Vasistha is Varuna's son. In the legend of "Maharsi Vasistha and Vasus", it is said that Vasistha is said to be the son of Varuna. The Muni Vasistha afterwards is known Āpava.

Agastya Muni is the son of Varuna or Mitravaruna. In the legend of "Samidrapāṇa by Agastya", once Agastya, the son of Varuna, desired to drink the Ocean for the good of the world. Offspring of Mitra and Varuna, full of wrath, began to drink up the sea.

Vandin is a son of Varuna. Vandin, the son of Varuna, defeated the Brāhmaṇas in controversies and caused them to be thrown into water so that they might come to the sacrifice of Varuna and officiate there.

Śrutāyudha is a son of Varuna and begot from rivers Parnāśa.
In the AV. it is said that golden abode of Varuna is situated in heaven. He sits in his mansions. The Sun rises from his abode and reports the deeds of men. However, in the MBH. Ocean is said to be the living place of Varuna. In the churning of ocean by the gods and Asuras it is said that the world of Varuna is killed. So it is depicted that living place of Varuna is ocean (Varunālayam).

In the world of Varuṇa (ocean) live many different kinds of creatures. In the legend of "Discourse between Aurva and his Pitrās" Aurva threw the fire of his wrath into the abode of Varuna. That fire, which consumes, the waters of the great ocean, became like a large horse's head.

Varuṇa always lives in the water. Varuṇa has his own Varunaloka which is situated under the nether regions. In the "Description of Varuna Sabha", it is said in the MBH. by Nārada to Yudhishthira that the celestial sabhā of Varuṇa is built by Viśvakarman. It is surrounded by celestial trees made of gems and jewels and yielding excellent fruit and flowers. Delightful atmosphere is there. Assembly house
consists of many rooms and is furnished with many seats. Varuna sits in that Assembly house with his family and aquatic creatures. Varunaloka is made of gold and full of the wine called Varuna.

The West direction is presided over by the god Varuna. In the legend of "victory of Nakula on west Direction", Nakula, the son of Pāṇḍu conquered the countries of the west direction that was presided over by the god Varuna.

It is said in the Mbh. that Varuna offerings shall be made in the west because he is the lord of the west. Water drops from his umbrella. Varuna's abode is adorned with six hundred thousand lakes. It is adorned with many palaces and by the presence of diverse tribes of Apsaras and of diverse excellent articles of enjoyment.

In the Rv. Varuna is considered to be a supreme deity. He is called king (rājā) for all gods and men of whole world. He is universal monarch. He is great lord of the nature. He has established heaven and earth. He seeks over whole world. He regulates the seasons. In the Rv. Varuna has his connection with waters of the Ocean, into
which flow the seven rivers. He sheds rain waters. He is said to be the lord and leader of waters.

In the Mbh. Varuna is said to be one of the fifth Lokapalas. He is the lord of water. He lives in the water. He rules the waters. He is the controller and lord of all the aquatic creatures. Mahādeva bestowed the sovereignty of the waters and the Asuras on Varuna.

Indra also bestowed the sovereignty over the waters on Varuna. In the legend of "Description of West Direction", the west is the favourite one of King Varuna, the ruler of the Ocean. The lord of the waters had his origin here and sovereignty lies here. For ruling over all aquatic creatures and for the protection of the water, Kaśyapa installed Varuna here. In the west region, rivers feed the ocean and have their sources. In the abode of Varuna here are the waters of the three worlds.

In the another legend, it is said that in the Krta age, all the gods, according to the rites in the scriptures, besides Varuna is the lord of all aquatic creatures, he is also bestowed the lordship of all rivers having his abode in the ocean. Then Varuna began his duty to protect seas, lakes, rivers and other respects of water.
Varuna in the first repaired to the nether regions and attained to all his prosperity.

In the RV. it is described that Varuna removes sins of his worshippers and even those committed by their fathers. He drives away death as well as releases from sin. He can prolong the life of his worshippers. He is the guardian of Immortality. He is invoked to bestow the rain. He is a merciful god.

However, in the MBh. he grants different kinds of boons which are described in several legends.

Varuna grants garlands of celestial fragrance. In the legend of "Nala and Damayanti", when the daughter of Bhima, Damayanti had chosen Naṣāda (Nala) as her husband, the Lokapālas with pleased hearts bestowed on Nala the boon that he should be able to behold his godship in sacrifices. Varuna granted Nala his own presence whenever he desired and also garlands of celestial fragrance.

Varuna grants steeds to his worshippers. In the legend of "Rṣiṇī Kavi's marriage", once Rṣiṇī, the son of Bhṛgu wanted to marry a daughter of Gādhi. Then Gādhi demanded from Rṣiṇī as family custom, a thousand fleet steeds. Whose colour must be brown and every one must possess a single sable
ear. Ṛcīka to fulfil his word given to Gādhi; he went to Varuṇa and demanded one thousand steeds of required specification. Varuṇa gave a thousand steeds to Ṛsi Ṛcīka.\(^1\)

Varuṇa, the lord of water; is worshipped to get protection from the waters. In the legend of "Birth of Karna"\(^2\) although Kunti knew that it was improper to bear offspring for an unmarried girl, yet from parental affection, she wept and prayed for the protection of the child after leaving the box containing the child, in the River Aśvā. May that lord of waters Varuṇa protect you in water.\(^3\)

In the Mahabharata, Varuṇa grants weapons to his worshippers. Varuṇa gave Gāndīva to Arjuna.\(^4\) Varuṇa gave Gāndīva along with car to Arjuna which is best of all bows by the recommendations of Agni. In the legend of "Agni, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa"\(^5\), Agni desirous of an interview with Varuṇa, remembered him. Varuṇa, knowing this that he was thought of by Agni, appeared before him. Agni after giving proper regards to Varuṇa, asked him to give bow (Gāndīva), quiver and car to me.\(^6\) Agni then gave the weapons to Arjuna to help him in burning Khandava forest.

Varuṇa granted noose to Arjuna.\(^7\) In the legend of "Grant of celestial weapons to Arjuna",\(^8\) after the sight
of Mahādeva to Arjuna all the lokapālas came there to Arjuna and gave him different kinds of weapons. Varuṇa, the lord of all aquatic creatures gave his noose to Arjuna which was incapable of being resisted.

Arjuna also got celestial weapons of Varuṇa along with other deities and learnt their use in the abode of Indra.  

Varuṇa grants boons to his son. In the legend of "conflict, between Arjuna and Śrutāyudha," Śrutāyudha was the son of Varuṇa. His mother for the sake of her son, begged boons from Varuṇa. Varuṇa gave boon highly beneficial to his son. He gave celestial weapons by which his son would become unslayable on earth and invincible by foes in battle through the celestial weapon. Varuṇa gave him mace with Mantras.

Being a merciful god, he gave to Skanda two companions. Ghosa and Atighosa of great might and possessed of mouth like that of the Timi. He also gave him a snake of great energy and might. Varuṇa gave many other auspicious and excellent products of the ocean with some beautiful and celestial elephants of Varuṇaloka.
In the RV. it is said Varuna is a dispeller, hater and punisher of false-hood. He punishes with diseases those who ignore his worship.

However, in the Mbh. Varuna is said to be a slaughter and controller of the Daityas and the Dānavas.

In the legend of "Importance of Rājadanda," it is said by Arjuna that without slaughter, no man has been able to achieve fame in this world or acquire wealth. Among the slaughterers are Indra, Rudra, Skanda, Agni, Varuṇa etc.

Varuṇa with his noose seizes and ties thousands of Daityas and the Dānavas and controls them.

It is mentioned in the Mbh. that once the gods and Asuras arrayed for battle. The population of the worlds was divided into two parties and was about to be slaughtered. Brahman, knowing that all dwellers other than heaven would be slaughtered, commanded Dharma that handed over the Daityas and the Dānavas to Varuna. Varuṇa after binding the Daityas and the Dānavas with Dharma's and with his own noose keeps them within the depth of the ocean and guards them carefully.
In the RV, it is said that Varuna sits on the strew grass at the sacrifice and drinks Soma along with other gods.\(^{112}\)

Whereas in the MBh, it is described that he himself performs the sacrifices and practises ascetic austerities. In the MBh, Āstīka said to Parīksit that Soma, Varuna and Prajāpati performed sacrifices of old in Preyāga.\(^{113}\)

Varuna performed austerities at Viśākhayūpa.\(^{114}\) In the legend of "Description of Tīrthas of North Direction"\(^{115}\), there are famous Muni Nara and Mārīyana in the North. There also is Viśākhayūpa, where in days of yore, the gods came with Varuna and Indra and practised ascetic austerities. Therefore, it is a sacred spot.\(^{116}\)

In the RV, Mitra is the closet associate of Varuna. Mitra and Varuna have close relation with the Sun and the Moon respectively.

However, in the MBh, Varuna is identified with other deities.

Krṣṇa is identified with Varuna.\(^{117}\) In the legend of "Description of Viśvarūpa"\(^{118}\) while Krṣṇa, lord of mystic power revealed his supreme sovereign form to Arjuna, in the
body of that God the entire universe divided and subdivided into many parts, all collected together. Arjuna identified Him, "He is Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Moon, Prajapati and Grand sire." 119

Śiva is identified with Varuna. 120 In the legend of "Importance of Śiva", 121 once the arm of Indra was paralysed by Śiva, then Indra along with other deities went to Brahman. Knowing all, Brahman along with Indra and other deities went near Śiva. Brahman eulogised him for Indra's sake. 122 Brahman identified with Śiva, saying, 'He is Indra, Wind, twin Aśvins, Bhava, Moon, Sūrya and he is Varuna." 123

Varuna is identified with the supreme lord Viṣṇu. 124 In the legend of "Sanatkumāra and Vṛtrasura", 125 Sanatkumāra said to Vṛtra the importance of Viṣṇu, "he is Mitra, he is Varuna, he is Yama, he is Kubera the lord of treasures.

In the RV. Varuna is an important deity, where he is said to be a universal monarch. He is accorded the attribute of sovereignty (Kṣattra). Gods follow Varuna's ordinances. 126

However, in the MBh. Varuna's position has deteriorated sharply. He is only assigned the lordship over waters and
aquatic creatures by the rising deities in the Mbh. He is even defeated by the human beings. His weak character is also mentioned. He worships other deities.

Varuna has been awarded sovereignty over the waters and aquatic creatures by Indra, Prajāpati and Śiva.

In the legend of "Description of the Western Region" for ruling over all aquatic creatures and for the protection of the waters themselves, Kasyapa installed Varuna in the west as the king of this region.

Varuna came to Indra with other deities and Indra bestowed the sovereignty over the water on Varuna. In the legend of "Discourse between Indra and Brhaspati along with the Lokapālas" once the deities helped Indra to regain his position from king Nahusa. Indra, the giver of boons, bestowed the sovereignty upon Kubera over the Yakṣas and all the wealth of the worlds; upon Yama the sovereignty over the Pitrs and upon Varuna over the waters.

Varuna waits upon Brahma in his assembly. Varuna with other gods praises Visnu. In the legend of "Ṛsi Uttanka", once beholding Visnu, the Ṛsi Uttanka began to gratify him with many hymns. He said, "Indeed all the gods
Indra, Soma, Agni and Varuna wait upon and worship you (Visnu) with various hymns.  

Varuna worships Siva on Munjavat. It is described in the Mbh. that Lord of Uma (Mahādeva) on Himalayan mountains is constantly engaged in austere devotional exercise. There the Rudras, the Sādhyas, Viśvedevas, the Vasus, Yama, Varuna, Kubera with all his attendants worship Siva.

In the Mbh. it is said that Mahādeva is superior to all deities. Because he destroys Indra, Varuna, Yama and Kubera ultimately, he is for that reason called Hara.

As regards Varuna's weak character, he once robbed Bhadrā, the daughter of Soma and the wife of Utathya, but he was forced to give her back. Rṣi Utathya possessed of wealth of penances solidified the waters and drank them off. The region of Varuna made dry by the Rṣi Utathya.

In the RV. Varuna is the supreme deity. He is said to be a King (rājā) and universal monarch.

However, in the Mbh. status and glory of Varuna departed with the rise of other gods such as Visnu-Kṛśna, Rūtra (sectarian gods) and Brahman (as a Father God). His Asura Maya is shared by...
other gods. Supernatural powers and overlordship are departed from Varuna. At the same time his cosmic activities are less required by the people in the Mbh. Major change has come in his nature and functions. He has become the lord of water. Sovereignty over waters is bestowed by other deities such as Indra and Śiva. He is the lord over the aquatic creatures such as snakes etc. and controls the Daityas and the Dānavas. So in the Mbh. he is given power merely over the waters and association with aquatic creatures. All the chief powers whatever he was holding in the Vedic period are discharged in the Mbh.

In the Mbh. it is said that offerings to Varuna shall be made in the west direction, because he is the lord of the west. Varuna worships other deities such as Brahman, Viṣṇu and Śiva. In the RV. he sits on the strewn grass at the sacrifice and drinks Soma juice. Whereas in the Mbh. he himself performs the sacrifices and does austerities at Viśākhayūpa.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mbh. XII. 207/36; V. 110/1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>SB. 11,6,1.13</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>SB. 12,8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>SB. 5,4,3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>RV. 2,28.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mbh. XII. 122; V. 16/3.4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>RV. 1,2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>RV. 1,7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mbh. I. 18/10; III. 55/4; III. 57/38; V. 98/6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>XII. 207/36; XIII. 154/16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Mbh. IX. 46.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Mbh. III. 41/6,27.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Mbh.I. 65/14-16; I. 224/2; XIII. 150/14-16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mbh.V. 110/1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mbh.XII. 207/36.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>RV. 3, 34°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>RV. 1, 25°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ts. 5, 5°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mbh.II. 9/6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mbh.I. 66/52.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Mbh.I. 66.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mbh.V. 117/9; XII. 146/5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mbh.II. 40/5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Mbh.III. 40.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mbh.III. 40/5-6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mbh.I. 226/32; III. 231/38.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Mbh.I. 226/32.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mbh.V. 128/47.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Mbh.V. 128/47.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mbh.VII. 92/49-51.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Mbh.IV. 43/6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Mbh.I. 224.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>RV. 5, 62°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>RV. 5, 62°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Mbh.VII. 127/1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Mbh.VII. 127.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
52. Mbh. III. 105/1,3.
53. Mbh. III. 105.
54. Mbh. III. 105/1-3.
56. Mbh. VII. 92/44-45.
57. Mbh. I. 18/21; I. 21; I. 39/3; II. 107/24.
60. Mbh. I. 179.
63. Mbh. V. 98.
64. Mbh. II. 9.
65. Mbh. II. 9/2.
66. Mbh. II. 9/5.
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68. Mbh. II. 32/20; III. 168/14; V. 110/17; VIII. 45/32.
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77. Mbh. XII. 122/29.
78. Mbh. V. 16/34.
79. Mbh. V. 110.
80. Mbh. V. 110/1.
81. Mbh. V. 110/3.
82. Mbh. V. 110/17.
83. Mbh. IX. 47.
84. Mbh. V. 106/12.
85. RV. 1, 24\textsuperscript{h}.
86. Mbh. III. 57/38.
87. Mbh. III. 57.
88. Mbh. III. 57/38.
89. Mbh. III. 115/27; V. 119/5-6.
90. Mbh. III. 115; V. 119.
91. Mbh. III. 115/26-27; V. 119/5-6.
92. Mbh. III. 308.
93. Mbh. III. 308/12.
94. Mbh. I. 224/10; IV. 43/6-7; XII. 15/13-14; XVII. 1; XVIII. 5.
95. Mbh. I. 224.
98. Mbh. III. 40.
100. Mbh. VII. 92/46, 47.
101. Mbh. VII. 92.
102. Mbh. IX. 45.
103. Mbh. IX. 46.
104. Mbh. XIII. 86/25.
105. RV. 1, 152; 2, 605, 66.
106. Mbh. XII. 15.
107. Mbh. XIII. 15/16.
108. Mbh. III. 40/30; V. 126/47.
111. Mbh. V. 128/47.
112. RV. 1, 26: 5, 72; 4, 413 & c.
114. Mbh. III. 90/15.
115. Mbh. III. 90.
118. Mbh. VI. 35.
120. Mbh. VII. 262/XIII. 166.
123. Mbh.VII.202/103.
124. Mbh.VII.280/27.
125. Mbh.XII.260.
126. RV. 6,417.
127. Mbh.V.16/34.
128. Mbh.V.110.
129. Mbh.V.110/3.
130. Mbh.V.16/27,34.
131. Mbh.V.16.
132. Mbh.V.16/34.
134. Mbh.III.201/18.
135. Mbh.III.201.
139. Mbh.VII.202/137.
140. Mbh.XIII.154/13.
142. Mbh.XIII.154/23.