GLOSSARY

Abhayā, "she who assures that no harm will be done"; epithet of Durgā.

\textit{abhaya}, the negative of the word "fear" (\textit{bhaya}); by extension, "assurance that no harm will be done."

Abhimanyu, "fearless and wrathful"; name of the warrior son of the Pāṇḍava Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa's sister Subhadra. A major figure in the great Bhārata war, Abhimanyu knew how to penetrate the best of (i.e., the virtually impenetrable) military formations but did not know how to exit from the hostile forces so arrayed. (Two explanations account for this great warrior's vulnerability. While still in his mother's womb, Abhimanyu had heard his father discussing with the other Pāṇḍavas military strategy, learning from him how to breach formidable enemy alignments; Abhimanyu failed, however, to gain knowledge of the means by which to exit from those opposing ranks, for his mother fell asleep before Arjuna had finished speaking to his brothers. According to another tale, the moon, for failing to pay due deference to the sage Garga, was cursed to be incarnated in the world of humans as Abhimanyu; though a sage's curse once uttered cannot be retracted, Garga out of pity lessened its severity by declaring that Abhimanyu, at the end of his sixteenth year, could be slain in battle and would then return to heaven.) Abhimanyu is slain at the completion of his sixteenth year by seven opposing Kaurava warriors. In Kāśīrāmadāśa's Mahābhārata, the fight of the seven against the one is referred to as an unfair battle (\textit{anyāya śamara}), exactly the way weaponless Meghanāda characterizes his fight to the death with a heavily armed Laksmana supported by Meghanāda's own uncle in the sixth canto of \textit{The Slaying of Meghānada}. In the Mahābhārata, Abhimanyu fights valiantly but futilely, ripping off parts of chariots and hurling them at his attackers, similar again to what Meghanāda, in \textit{The Slaying of Meghānada}, does in the temple with the various paraphernalia required for \textit{pūjā} as he attempts in vain to save his life. (Cf. Kāśidāsi Mahābhārata, "Droṇa Parva.")

Āditeya, "son of Aditi"; epithet of Indra; matronymic from Aditi, mother of the gods.

Aditi, mother of the gods; the antithesis of Diti, progenitress of the Daityas (also known as Asuras, Dānavas, Karbuṣa, Rākṣasas, i.e., the anti-gods by whatever name).

Āditya, the sun god, who daily ascends the "rising-hill" in the east, rides across the sky in his one-wheeled chariot, and descends the "setting-hill" in the evening.

Āgama, a class of Hindu texts, often including esoteric lore and framed as a conversation between Śiva and his wife Pārvatī, with the former instructing the latter.

Agni, fire or the god of fire; Meghanāda's chosen deity. Fire and wind support each other, hence the epithet of "wind's companion" for Agni.

Airāvata, "produced from the ocean"; name of Indra's elephant mount, one of the many objects produced from the primordial ocean when churned by the Suras (gods) and the Asuras (anti-gods).

Aja, a patriarch within Rāma's lineage; grandfather of Rāma; see Dilipa.

Akampana, "non-trembling"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Ākhaṇḍala, "breaker"; epithet of Indra; "Indra's bow/Ākhaṇḍala's bow" is the rainbow.

Alakā, city ruled by Kubera, the god of riches, located in the Himalaya mountains.
Ambikā, "mother"; epithet of Durgā.

*amṛta*, the negative of the word "dead" (*mṛta*); by extension, "ambrosia, an immortality-producing elixir, the nectar of the gods." One of the many products that came out of the primordial ocean when churned by the Suras (gods) and the Asuras (anti-gods), the *amṛta* was initially appropriated by the Asuras. In order to obtain the *amṛta* from the Asuras, Viṣṇu assumed the guise of Mohiṇī, an enchantingly beautiful woman, and thereby distracted the Asuras. Viṣṇu's mount Garuḍa, also known as Vainateya, stole away the *amṛta* from the preoccupied Asuras, depriving them of that powerful elixir.

Anāṅga, "he who is without a body"; epithet of the god of love, Kāma, who at the behest of the other gods aroused Śiva sexually, breaking the great sage's yogic meditative trance. Angry, Śiva with fire from his third eye incinerated Kāma, who thereafter was devoid of bodily form, though he continued to exist incorporeally.

Ananta, "the one without end"; epithet of Śeṣa and of Vāsuki, both Nāga monarchs and mythological cobras; Vāsuki (Ananta) supports the entire world on his many heads; see Śeṣa.

Aṅgada, nephew of Sugrīva and crown prince of the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhyā, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.

Aṅjanā, mother of Hanumān.

Annadā, "she who is a giver of food"; epithet of Durgā.

Antaryāmi, "he who resides within"; the god who knows one's inner thoughts.

Antaryāmīni, "she who resides within"; the goddess who knows one's inner thoughts.

Apsarā, a class of celestial demi-goddesses or nymphs, known for their exceptional beauty and their dancing ability.

Asilom, "he whose body hairs are swords"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Aśoka, "non-sorrow"; name of the grove on the island kingdom of Laṅkā wherein Sītā is held captive.

*aśoka*, a variety of flowering tree.

Asura, a class of enemies of the gods; the negative of Sura (god); often considered synonymous with Daitya, Dānava, Karbūra, and Rākṣasa.

Āśutoṣa, "he who is satisfied readily"; epithet of Śiva.

Aśvatthāmā, son of Droṇa, ally of the Kauravas against the Pāṇḍavas in the war narrated in the Mahābhārata. After the one hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra had been slain or lay dying, Aśvatthāmā, whose father fought and died on the side of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, vowed to avenge the Kauravas' defeat by slaying the Pāṇḍavas. He with two accomplices set out for the Pāṇḍavas' camp. As night set in, they rested, but Aśvatthāmā noted that an owl stayed alert at night to catch its prey while other birds slept, which led him to propose a night attack. When the three conspirators reached the encampment, they found its entryway guarded by Śiva, who refused to give them passage. Aśvatthāmā then emptied his quiver on Śiva, but the god proceeded to swallow those arrows without being wounded. Unsuccessful through brute force, Aśvatthāmā performed a pūjā to Śiva and ultimately threatened to offer himself up as a human sacrifice unless the god grant him a boon, thereby allowing his vow of vengeance be fulfilled. He also requested and received Śiva's falchion with which to do his dirty work. Śiva
acceded to these requests and stepped away from the gate. Aśvatthāma then entered, slew Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Śikhaṇḍi, both brothers of Draupadi (common wife of the five Pāṇḍavas), and decapitated the five Pāṇḍavas' five sleeping sons, thinking them to be the senior Pāṇḍava warriors. Aśvatthāma presented the five severed heads to dying Duryodhana, eldest of the one hundred Kauravas, who realized that his cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, yet lived but that their offspring were now dead. With that knowledge, Duryodhana succumbed. (Cf. Kāśīdāsī Mahābhārata, "Saññita Parva.")

Aśvinī, mother of the Aśvins, twin divine warriors. By one account, Saṃjñā, wife of the sun, finding the heat of her husband intolerable, assumed the appearance of a horse (aśva) and went wandering off in the land of Uttarakuru. Sūrya, the sun, came to know of her whereabouts, went there, and impregnated his Aśvinī ("she who has the appearance of a horse"). Aśvinī, also known as Vaḍabā (see Vaḍabā), gave birth to twin sons, charioteers both, who were known not only for their handsome appearance but also for their skill as medical practitioners to the gods. Aśvinī, by another account, is considered one of the twenty-seven (later increased to twenty-eight) stars (nakṣatras: constellations or lunar "houses" through which the moon passes), all twenty-seven of which are beautiful wives of Candra, the moon.

Atikāya, "whose body is huge"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Ayodhyā, the kingdom and capital city of Daśaratha, to be inherited by Rāma, located in northern India, on the Sarayū river.

Bali, a Daitya humbled by Viṣṇu in his fifth of ten avatāras or incarnations. Bali prided himself on his dominion over the three worlds: heaven, earth, and the nether region called Pātāla. Viṣṇu, appearing before him in the form of Vāmana or "the dwarf," asked Bali for as much territory as he, Vāmana, could traverse in three strides. Haughty Bali acceded to the request of this dwarfish being whereupon Vāmana increased in size and strode through heaven and earth in two paces, but left the humbled Bali sovereignty over the lower regions.

Bhagavatī, name of Durgā, emphasizing her role as supreme goddess; feminine of Bhagavān (supreme lord).

Bhairava, name of Śiva, emphasizing his violent, terrible, formidable aspect.

Bhairavī, name of Durgā, emphasizing her aspect as the spouse of the formidable Śiva; also an epithet of the goddess as Kāli.

Bharata, (1) one of the three half brothers of Rāma, the other two being Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna. When, due to a boon granted his mother, Bharata was to assume the throne of the deceased Dasa Rath, he demurred and placed Rāma's sandals on the throne instead; see Kaikeyī. Also, (2) progenitor of the Bhāratas, the lineage engaged in the internecine war recounted in the Mahābhārata; see Bhārata (2).

Bhārata, (1) name for India and for the "continent" (varṣa) that is premodern India (canto 4); also, (2) descendants of Bharata (canto 8).

Bhārati, name of Sarasvatī, goddess of speech, the arts, and learning; her complexion is white. Bhārtrhari, name of a famed Sanskrit poet, author of Bhaṭṭikāvyā (Bhaṭṭī's Verse Narrative), a work illustrating grammar and poetic conceits while at the same time narrating the tale of Rāma; Bhaṭṭī is considered the Prakrit form of Bhārtr.
Meghanādavadha Kāvyā--Glossary

Michael Madhusudan Datta

Bhava, "essence, existence"; epithet of Śiva.

Bhavabhūti, name of a famed Sanskrit poet, author of the drama Uttarārāmacarita (The Later History of Rāma).

Bhavānī, name of Durgā.

Bhaveśa, "lord of existence"; epithet of Śiva.

Bhaveśvari, "goddess of existence"; epithet of Durgā.

bheri, a kettledrum.

bhindipāla, a weapon whose nature is uncertain--either a short javelin thrown by hand or shot through a tube, or a stone fastened to a cord, a sling.

Bhīma, "ferocious (masculine)"; (1) epithet of Śiva, emphasizing his more violent aspect; also, (2) a shortened form of Bhīmasena, second eldest of the five Pāṇḍava brothers.

Bhimā, "ferocious (feminine)"; epithet of Durgā in her more violent aspect.

Bhīmasena, second eldest of the five Pāṇḍava brothers; see Bhīma (2).

Bhīṣana, "monstrous, terrible"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

bhomara, a spear whose shaft is twisted like an auger.

Bhūṛgurāma, another name for Parasūrāma or "Rāma with the ax," who is the sixth of the ten avaṭāras of Viṣṇu and also an extremely formidable fighter. A Brāhmaṇ by caste, Bhūṛgurāma/Parasūrāma is said to have slain with his ax all of the Kṣatriyas (the warrior caste). The word bhṛgu itself suggests strength, having as it does as one of its literal meanings "sheer cliff or mountain plateau."

Bhūta, "ghost, spirit"; Śiva is the lord of the Bhūtas.

Bīḍālākṣa, "cat-eyes"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

bimba, a red fruit.

Brāhmillā, "big reed"; pseudonym of Arjuna. After the eldest Pāṇḍava had lost (been cheated) at dice, the five brothers and their common wife, Draupadī, went into forest exile for twelve years, according to the terms of the wager. The thirteenth year they were to dwell incognito. If identified, they would have to live another twelve years exiled. The thirteenth year was spent in the domain of Virāṭa, king of the Matsyas. Arjuna chose to disguise himself as a eunuch and dress in women's clothes, hiding with conch shell bangles the calluses on both arms (he was ambidextrous) produced by the bowstring. He took the name Brāhmillā and passed himself off as a song and dance instructor for the girls of the palace. As the thirteenth year ended, the Kauravas, in league with another king and not knowing the Pāṇḍavas' whereabouts, invaded the Matsya kingdom where they rustled king Virāṭa's cattle. The king and all the Pāṇḍavas save Arjuna were out fighting the invaders when news of the stolen cows reached prince Uttara, who was still in the palace. Virāṭa's son accepted the eunuch as his chariot driver, then set off to engage the enemy. But, intimidated by the mighty Kauravas, Uttara could not bring himself to fight. The two retreated to a particular samī tree in which the Pāṇḍavas had stashed their weapons and regalia when donning disguises for the thirteenth year. Arjuna changed back into his martial attire. Now fully accoutered, Arjuna, this time with Uttara as his chariot driver, retrieved the cow herd then routed Karna, Duryodhana, and the supporting Kaurava forces. (Cf. Kāśīdāśi Mahābhārata, "Virāṭa Parva.")

cakra, a discus weapon; a chariot wheel.

cakravākā, a particular bird, female; used as a poetic conceit, the couples, cakravāka and
carkavāki, are said to be separated at day's end and to mourn for each other the whole night long.

Cāmara, "yak-tail fly-whisk"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Cāmunḍā, epithet of Durgā in her more frightful aspect. The name is derived from Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, two gigantic demons whom Durgā slew.

Caṇḍāla, one of the lowest castes in the Hindu hierarchy, metonymic for the lowest of the low in society, an untouchable.

Caṇḍī, name for the goddess Durgā in her more ferocious aspect; the incarnation of the goddess desired by the gods--and created from their combined powers--for the purpose of defeating the buffalo Asura (see Mahiṣāsura), the iconic reenactment of the slaying of which is central to the annual Durgā Pūjā festival in Bengal; she who vanquished the Asura Raktabija and the Asura brothers Śumbha and Niśumbha. (Cf. Devimāhātmya.)

Candracūḍa, "he who wears the moon as a crown"; epithet of Śiva.

Caturbhuja, "he who has four arms"; epithet of Viṣṇu.

Cikṣura (also spelled Cikkura), "loud, like the crack of lightning"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Cintāmaṇi, "gem of thought; mythic wishing gem"; epithet of Viṣṇu (canto 7). Since Rāma is, from one perspective, an avatāra of Viṣṇu, the epithet can also apply to Rāma (canto 6). Moreover, since cintā means not only "thought" but also "worry" in Bangla, the suggestive meaning of the epithet could be "gem of worries," an apt rendering in both occurrences in The Slaying of Meghanāḍa.

Citralekhā, name of one of the members of the class of celestial demi-goddesses called Apsarā, known for their exceptional beauty and their dancing ability.

Citrāngadā, one of Rāvana's queens, mother of Virabāhu, and daughter of Citrasena, a heavenly Gandharva. (Cf. Kṛttivāsi Rāmāyaṇa, "Laṅkā Kāṇḍa.") Though unrelated to this character, there is in the Mahābhārata a Citrāngadā, who resides in Manipura and has a son by Arjuna. (Cf. Kāśīdāsi Mahābhārata, "Ādi Parva" and "Āśvamedha Parva.")

Citraratha, "he whose chariot is bright or of many colors"; name of the leader of the class of celestial demi-gods called Gandharva, known for their musical skills but also for their expertise in warfare.

Daitya, a class of enemies of the gods; matronymic from Diti; often considered synonymous with Asura, Dānava, Karbūra, and Rākṣasa.

Dākini, a class of female goblin-like demi-goddesses who attend upon Śiva and Durgā.

Dakṣa, (1) father of the twenty-seven stars (nakṣatras: constellations or lunar "houses" through which the moon passes), all twenty-seven of which are considered beautiful wives of Candra, the moon (canto 1). Also, (2) father of the goddess in her first anthropomorphized incarnation when she is known as Sātī. He plans to perform a grand sacrifice but, intentionally and foolishly, excludes his son-in-law, Śiva, from the guest list. Sātī, the epitome of the faithful wife, sides with her husband and is mortified to death, literally, by her father's rudeness towards Śiva. Hearing of his wife's demise, an enraged Śiva trashes Dakṣa's sacrifice, killing the host sacrificer, his father-in-law. Beside himself with grief, he stays near his wife's lifeless body constantly. Concerned that Śiva will be preoccupied with mourning, unmindful of his responsibilities as supreme lord of the universe as long as his wife's corpse is present, the other gods send
Cakrapāṇi (Viṣṇu, with discus in hand) to dismember Sati with his discus into fifty-one parts, to be scattered across the South Asian subcontinent. Where those parts landed became the fifty-one mahāpūthas or sacred places of pilgrimage for worshipers of the goddess. Śiva, still despondent, goes off into the mountains to meditate. Once again the gods fear that a meditating Śiva will leave the universe devoid of a supreme lord. They prevail upon the goddess to incarnate again, this time as Pārvati, daughter of the Himālayas, also known as Himādri. Kāma is thereupon enlisted to break Śiva's trance so that he might become attracted to Pārvatī and thus resume an active role in governing the world (canto 2).

dāmāmā, a large war drum.
damaru, a small, hourglass-shaped drum with heads on either end; played by Śiva and by present-day snake charmers.

Dānava, a class of enemies of the gods; matronymic from Danu; often considered synonymous with Asura, Daiṭya, Karbūra, and Rākṣasa.

Danḍadharma, "staff-holder"; epithet of Yama, who wields the staff (danḍa) of punishment (danḍa also means "punishment").

Danḍaka, a forest in southern India in which are not only the smaller Pañcavaṭi forest (where Śītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa were residing when Śītā was abducted by Raṉa) but also Kīśkindhāya, kingdom of Sugrīva and "the southerners."

Danu, mother of the Dānavas.

Daśānana, "he who has ten heads"; epithet of Raṉa, who has ten heads and twenty arms.

Daśaratha, "he who has ten chariots"; father of Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, and Śatrughna.

Kauśalyā (mother of Rāma), Kaśikeyi (mother of Bharata), and Sumitrī (mother of Lakṣmaṇa and Satrughna) are the three wives of Daśaratha.

Daśarathi, epithet of Rāma, primarily; can be used for his three half-brothers (refers to Lakṣmaṇa, canto 6); patronymic from Daśaratha.

Devadatta, "given by the gods"; (1) name of Arjuna's (Pārtha's) conch shell battle horn; also, (2) name of the bow given Lakṣmaṇa by the gods.

Devendra, "Indra (lord, foremost) of the gods"; epithet of Indra.

dhāka, a large barrel-shaped drum.

Dhanada, "giver of wealth"; epithet of Kubera, god of riches. He is also lord of the class of demi-gods known as Yaḵas; and he is a half brother (same father, different mother) of Raṉa, though Kubera himself is aligned with the gods, not with the Rākṣasas.

Dharma, a god who embodies, so to speak, moral duty, just law, and the best of what is meant by religion. Dharma, in Bangla Hinduism, is a somewhat minor folk deity; Dharma is also a name by which Yama, the god of death, is known. Datta's Dharma, however, is a more generalized, all-encompassing, moral deity.

dharma, translated variously as Duty, the Law, and Religion; it is that which one ought to do, that to which one should be steadfast.

dhola, a drum held horizontally and played on both ends with two hands.

Dhūmaketu, "comet, falling star"; literally, "banner of vapor or smoke"; a comet augurs ill, bringing with it disaster; a name for fire and the sun.

Dhūmrākṣa, "he whose eyes are smoke"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Dhūraṭi, name of Śiva.
dhuti, the dhoti or lower cloth worn by men.
dhuturā, a particular plant, its fruit and its flowers, associated with Śiva. Śiva indulges in a narcotic made from dhuturā.

Digambara, "he who is clad only by the sky"; name of Śiva, naked and lying prostate with Kāli standing or dancing upon his chest.

Digambarī, "she who is clad only by the sky"; name of goddess Kāli, when naked and standing or dancing upon the chest of her spouse Śiva.

Dilipa, a patriarch within Rāma's lineage (Dilipa begat Raghu, who begat Aja, who begat Daśaratha, who begat Dāśarathī, the patronymic name for both Rāma and his half brothers).

Diti, mother of the Daityas; the antithesis of Aditi, progenitress of the gods.

dola, "swing"; the name of the swing festival when child Kṛṣṇa is swung. It is one of the most joyous and festive times in the Hindu calendar, a time when red powder is thrown--or dissolved in water and sprinkled--upon one another, imitating the sportive play between Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs or cowherd women in Vṛndāvana.

This same festival also goes by the name of Holi.

Drona, an expert in weaponry; he taught his skills to the Kauravas, fought on their side, and died in the great Bhārata war.

dundubhi, a large war drum.

Durgā, the goddess, consort of Śiva. Her annual, autumnal pūjā is the major Hindu festival in Bengal. (1) On the sixth day of the waxing moon during the appropriate autumn month, Durgā (in this context called Gaurī, Haimavatī, Pārvatī, Umā, among a myriad other names) arrives home in Bengal, having come from her husband's in the Himalayas. From then on through the ninth day of the waxing moon, she is visiting her parents, and her pūjā is joyously performed all over Bengal. On the tenth day of the waxing moon, called Vijayā or Vijayā Daśāmi, "the victorious tenth," she must leave her father's home and return to the proper place for a married woman, beside her husband, in this case, Śiva, who resides on Mount Kailāsa. On that day the Durgā icons are immersed in the Ganges, and the vital force of the goddess leaves the clay and straw image, traveling upstream to her husband's abode where she stays until the next year when again she will pay a visit to her parents and her childhood home, much to everyone's delight. (2) Durgā in her iconography for the Durgā Pūjā does not appear as the young Bengali married daughter arriving home for the annual visit but instead as the supreme ten-armed goddess, slayer of the buffalo demon (see Mahiṣāsura). In that powerful aspect, she has for her vāhana or conveyance the lion, hence the epithet "she who rides a lion" (canto 5). Note that Vijayā, besides being the "victorious" tenth day of the waxing moon, is the name of one of Durgā's two heavenly attendants, Jayā being the other. Furthermore, in the Durgā Pūjā iconography, Durgā, along with her husband Śiva, has four children, Lakṣmi, Sarasvatī, Kārttikeya, and Ganesa (see Gaṇendra).

Duryodhana, eldest of the one hundred Kauravas, all of whom are slain in the great Bhārata war.

Dūṣaṇa, "defiling, violating"; name of a Rākṣasa general who, along with a Rākṣasa named Khara, is slain by Rāma and Lakṣmana in the Pañcavaṭī forest well before the battle on Lankā. Both Dūṣaṇa and Khara were sent against Rāma and
Lakṣmaṇa by Sūrpanākhā to avenge her humiliation at the hands of Lakṣmaṇa; see Sūrpanākhā.

Ekāghni, "single-slayer"; epithet of the Śakti missile obtained from Indra by which Karna, allied with the Kauravas, slew Ghatotkaca, who was fighting for the Pāṇḍavas; the powerful missile could be used by Karna to slay but a single enemy; see Ghatotkaca and Karna.

Fate, a translation throughout *The Slaying of Meghanāda* of the word Vidhi; see Vidhi.

Gandhamādana, the mountain on the Indian mainland (as opposed to Laṅkā) whereon grows the restorative herb, Vişalyakarana, by which Lakṣmaṇa is revived.

Gandharva, a class of celestial demi-gods who are the heavenly musicians and also knowledgeable about warfare.

Gaṅendra, "Indra (lord, foremost) of the Gaṅgas, a class of demi-gods"; epithet of Ganeśa, who, along with Kārttikeya, is a son of Śiva and Durgā.

Ganges, a most holy river in northern India flowing from the Himālayas (out of the cave named Gomukhī, "cow-mouthed") to the Bay of Bengal. Because she (goddess Gaṅgā, the Ganges) was caught first in Śiva's matted hair, thus protecting the earth from the impact of her descent from heaven to the mortal world, she is said to be Śiva's second wife. Auspicious Ganges water is used in purification rituals and pūjās of all sorts.

Garuḍa, a gigantic warrior bird and eternal enemy of snakes; the vehicle or transport for Viṣṇu. Garuḍa is referred to in *The Slaying of Meghanāda* as the father of Jaṭāyu; by other accounts he is Jaṭāyu's uncle; see Vinata.

Gauḍa (also spelled Gaur in English), archaic name for the land of Bengal.

Gaurī, "she who has a fair complexion"; epithet of Durgā.

Gavākṣa, "he whose eyes are like those of a bull"; name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kiśkindhyā, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.

Ghaṭotkaca, an enormous warrior born from the union of Bhāmasena and the Rākṣasi Hiḍimbā. After Ghaṭotkaca's birth, Bhīma returned to the company of his Pāṇḍava brothers; his son, raised by Hiḍimbā, promised to come to his father's side when called to mind. In the midst of the internecine Bhāratas war, Ghaṭotkaca reappeared to fight for his father's cause on the side of the Pāṇḍavas and, after decimating the Kaurava ranks, was slain by Karna with the Śakti missile designated "single-slayer" (see Ekāghni) discharged from the bow "black-back" (see Kālaprṣṭha). (Cf. Kaśīdāsi Mahābhārata, "Droṇa Parva.")

Giriśa, "lord of the mountain"; epithet of Śiva.

Godāvari, name of a river in southern India.

Gokula, "cow herd"; name of the village where Krṣṇa was raised, somewhat distant from the city of Mathurā wherein he was born; also called Vrāja and encompasses Vṛndāvana where Krṣṇa sported with Rādhā and the other Gopīs; situated beside the Yamunā river.

Gomukhī, "whose mouth (or face) looks like that of a cow's"; name of a sacred cave in the Himālayas from which emanates the holy Ganges river.

Haimavati, "of the Himālayas"; epithet of Durgā/Gaurī, "mother" of Kārttikeya; see Kārttikeya. halāhala, a particular poison, also known as kālakīṭa. Along with amṛta or the elixir of immorality, the poison halāhala (kālakīṭa) was one of the many products that came out of the primordial ocean when churned by the Suras (gods) and the...
Asuras (anti-gods). The poison would have destroyed the world had not that virulent substance been swallowed by Śiva, thus turning that god's neck blue, which accounts for one of Śiva's epithets, Nilakanṭha ("he whose throat is blue").

Hanumān (also spelled Hanūmān), "having a pronounced mandible"; name of a powerful warrior from the southern kingdom of Kiśkindhyā, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas. Hanumān is "the son of the wind," the son of Prabhañjana, and able to traverse vast distances quickly.

Hara, "destroyer"; epithet of Śiva.

Hari, a name of Viṣṇu.

Hastinā (also Hastināpura and Hāstinapura), city of the Kauravas and their patriarch, the blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra; following the Bhārata war, the Pāṇḍavas' capital city; located on a bank of the Ganges.

Hemakūṭa, "gold-peaked"; name of a mythical mountain located in the northern reaches of the Himalayas; identified with Mount Meru.

Hiḍimbā, a Rākṣasī enamored of Bhīmasena with whom she conceived a son, Ghaṭotkaca.

Himādri, "the mountain of snow"; another name for Himālaya ("abode of snow"), the mountain range who is considered the father of Pārvati, also known as Durgā.

Hiranyakaśīpī, name of a Daitya king, slain by Viṣṇu in his Narasimha avatāra, or the fourth of Viṣṇu's ten avatāra forms. Hiranyakaśīpī had obtained a boon from Brahmā by which he, Hiranyakaśīpī, could not be killed by god, man, or beast. He then established an oppressive sovereignty over all the three worlds--heaven, earth, and Pāṭāla. At the request of Hiranyakaśīpī's son Prahlāda, who was a devotee of Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu assumed the form of neither god nor man nor beast but of a half man (nara), half beast (simha, the lion), and slew Hiranyakaśīpī.

Hotrī, a Brahmin priest who performs Vedic sacrifices, some of which consist of offerings of ghee (drawn butter) into the sacrificial fire.

Hṛṣikeśa, "he who is master of the senses"; epithet of Viṣṇu.

Hutāśana, "who eats the offering of ghee"; epithet of Agni, the god of fire or fire itself.

Ikṣvāku, founder of the "solar" dynasty in Ayodhyā, from which Rāma is descended; term used to designate any descendant from within that lineage.

Indirā, name of Lākṣmī.

Indra, lord of the gods; lord of the skies; also, a superlative suffix, e.g., "Indra among sons" means "best of sons." Indra wields the thunderbolt. The rainbow is said to be Indra's bow (in modern Bangla, it is called Rāma's bow). In post-Vedic Hinduism, Indra is less powerful and could be defeated; see Indrajit ("victor over Indra") and Tāraka.

Indrajit, "victor over Indra"; epithet of Meghanāda, who by the power of rudra overcame Indra in battle.

Indrāṇi, wife of Indra; analogous to the superlative use of "Indra" meaning "best of . . . (feminine)."

Indraprastha, a city given to the Pāṇḍavas by the Kuru patriarch, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and located on a bank of the Yamunā river.

Indumati, paternal grandmother of Rāma.

Īśāna, name of Śīva and associated with him as lord of the north-east direction.
Ísānī, name of Durgā.
Ísvari, goddess, feminine of Ísvara (god, lord); indicates Durgā in The Slaying of Meghanāda. Jagadambā, "mother of the world"; epithet of various forms of the goddess. It designates Durgā (cantos 2 and 5) and Lakṣmī (cantos 6 and 7).
Jāhnāvi, epithet of Gangā, the Ganges; patronymic from the rishi Jahn; see Ganges. Jāmbuvāna (also spelled Jāmbuvat), name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhāya and allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.
Janaka, king of Videha/Mithilā and father of Sātā.
Jānaki, epithet of Sātā; patronymic from Janaka, king of Videha/Mithilā.
Jatādhara, "he who holds upon his head the jata (a pile of matted hair)"; epithet of Śiva.
Jatāyu, a warrior who perishes while attempting to prevent Rāvana from transporting the kidnapped Sātā back to Laṅkā. Referred to in The Slaying of Meghanāda as the son of Garuḍa, he is by other accounts Garuḍa's nephew; see Vināṭā.
jāti, a weapon of some sort.
jāti (also spelled jātī), a white flower associated with the spices mace and nutmeg.
Jayā, one of the two female attendants of Durgā, Vijayā being the other.
Jiṣṇu, "victorious"; epithet of a number of gods and also Arjuna but designates Indra in The Slaying of Meghanāda.
Kabandha, name of a headless Rākṣasa. By a strike from one of Indra's thunderbolts, Kabandha's skull and thighs were pushed into his body, leaving him with no visible head, a large barrel-shaped torso, a mouth in the middle of his belly, and exceedingly long arms.
kadamba, a variety of tree with fragrant orange blossoms beneath which Kṛṣṇa dallies with the cowherd maids.
kādambū, the female of a variety of waterfowl, similar to the teal, whose call is soft and melodious.
Kaikeyī, Daśaratha's second of three wives, Kauśalyā (Rāma's mother) and Sumitrā (Lakṣmaṇa and Satrughna's mother) being the other two. On the advice of Mantharā, her personal serving woman, Kaikeyī took advantage of her position as her husband's favorite wife and asked him for two boons, which he, consumed by passion for her, granted. One was that when he vacated the throne, his eldest son, Rāma, should be exiled from Ayodhyā for fourteen years; the other was that her own son, Bharata, should be installed as crown prince, in line to succeed his father. Later, when reminded of this by Kaikeyī, Daśaratha agonized over what he had earlier promised. Rāma, that most righteous of sons, kept his father honest by willingly and most dutifully choosing on his own to go into exile. Daśaratha, out of grief for his departed son, died soon thereafter.
Kailāsa, the mountain in the Himālayas on the peak of which Śiva and Durgā reside; also, the city there in which live Śiva and Durgā.
kālakūṭa, a particular poison, also known as halāhala (see halāhala), and used in The Slaying of Meghanāda to designate snake venom specifically.
Kālanemi, name of a Rākṣasa warrior. In the Bangla Rāmāyaṇa by Kṛṣṭivāsa, he becomes identified as a maternal uncle of Rāvaṇa to whom Rāvaṇa promises half of the kingdom of Laṅkā if he, Kālanemi, will slay Hanumān before the latter can secure the life-restoring herb by which fallen Lakṣmaṇa is to be revived from

C.B. Seelu

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Meghnañadavadhā Kāvya--Glossary

Michael Madhusudan Datta

(near) death. While on this fool's errand, Kālanemi fantasizes about his presumed half of the kingdom, including, in this fantasy, his half of Rāvana's many wives, Mandodari, his nephew's chief wife among them. Hanumān defeats Kālanemi, and so the fulsome daydream goes unrealized. The expression "Kālanemi's half of Lankā (Kālanemir Lankābhāga)" in Bangla is comparable to "counting one's chickens before they are hatched; building castles in the air." The term "Uncle Kālanemi (Kālanemī māmā)" refers to an esteemed person who aids and abets in nefarious activities. Datta makes this very recognizable Rākṣasa into the father of Pramāla, a female character whom Datta has created, drawing selectively from several sources. In other Hindu mythology the name Kālanemi is associated with Kaṃsa, the wicked king of Mathurā and slain by Kṛṣṇa.

Kālapṛṣṭha, "black-back"; name of Kamā's bow. Kali, a personification of wickedness; the one spot on a pair of dice (the losing mark); and the name of the fourth and most degenerate era (see yuga). Kali coveted Damayantī, the gorgeous princess, who had chosen Nala as her husband (see Nala [2]). Angered, and concluding that Nala had reneged on his promise to the gods, which the gods assured him Nala had not, Kali vindictively sought and gained the opportunity to enter Nala's body and, through his evil influence, to cause Nala to engage in dice gaming and to lose everything, his kingdom and all his possession, except for his faithful wife Damayantī. (Cf. Kāśīdāsi Mahābhārata, "Vana Parva.")

Kāli, the goddess in her most horrific aspect. The iconography of Kāli shows her as of black complexion, essentially naked though wearing a garland of human heads and a belt of human hands, and often holding in one of her four hands a bloody human head and in another a sword of some sort. She frequents execution and cremation grounds and battlefields wherein slaughter occurs; she is also, however, seen standing naked upon the chest of her supine husband, Śiva.

Kālidāsa, classical Sanskrit's most famous poet. Best known as the author of the poem entitled Meghadūta (The Cloud Messenger) and the eponymously titled drama Sakuntalā, Kālidāsa also composed the celebrated verse narrative by the name of Raghuvaṃśa (The Raghu Lineage). It is as author of Raghuvaṃśa that Datta claims Kālidāsa as one of his ancestors in a long and illustrious line of poets who have over the centuries composed literature on the theme of Rāma and the Rāmāyaṇa.

Kāma, "passion, love, carnal desire"; the disembodied god of love; husband of Rati ("passion, coitus"). When Indra had been defeated by the Asura Tāraka and the enemies of the gods had occupied heaven, Indra with his divines went to Brahmā seeking help. Brahmā told them that a son born of Śiva's seed would in time vanquish Tāraka. But Śiva was meditating, unconcerned with the world and oblivious to women--one of whom, Gaurī (Durgā, Haimavatī), waited on him and was destined to be his bride. In order to rouse Śiva from his trance and put him in the right frame of mind for the task at hand, Indra engaged the services of Kāma. Accompanied by his followers--the spring breezes--and serenaded by the cuckoo and honeybees, Kāma, armed with his flower-bow and five blossom-arrows, went to Śiva. As Kāma drew back the bowstring fitted with
his arrow called *sammohana* ("beguilement"); the other four arrows, all
pertaining to mental or physical states associated with being in love, are
*unmādana* [stupefaction], *śoṣaṇa* [desiccation], *tāpana* [burning], and
*stambhana* [paralysis]), Śiva became slightly restless, then stirred from his
meditation. When he looked about, he saw before him Kāma, bow in hand.
Śiva was incensed by this intrusion upon his yogic exercise. The third eye,
located in Śiva's forehead, opened and fire poured out, reducing Kāma on
the spot to ashes. Kāma's wife Rati continues to accompany her husband, who is
now without a body. Śiva, his trance broken by Kāma, eventually marries
Haimavati and spills his seed in excitement while with her. From that seed is
born Kārttikeya, the future slayer of Tāraka; see Kārttikeya and Tāraka.

Kamalā, "lotus-lady"; epithet of Lakṣmī.

*kamāṇḍalu*, a gourd or vessel made of wood or earth in which to hold water, carried
by ascetics and religious students.

Kandarpa, one of the names for Kāma, god of love. The etymology of the name is in doubt but
could have meant originally "inflamer of a god."

Kapardi, "he who has a mass of matted hair"; epithet of Śiva.

*kārā*, a relatively small, single-headed drum.

Karbūra (also spelled Karbura), another name for Rākṣasa; often considered synonymous with
Asura, Daitya, and Dānava.

Karṇa, a half brother of the Pāṇḍavas (fathered by the sun on Kunti before her marriage to
Pāṇḍu) but one who fought on the side of the Kauravas. Karṇa, born wearing
earrings and impregnable armor, relinquished them to Indra in exchange for that
god's *sakti* missile with which he planned to slay Arjuna. Indra had stipulated
that the missile could be used by Karṇa to kill but one enemy. As Ghaṭotkaca, seemingly invincible, set about laying waste the Kaurava forces, Karṇa was
prevailed upon to expend his "single-slayer" (see Ekāghni) weapon. This
Karṇa did, killing Ghaṭotkaca, though knowing full well that he, Karṇa, would
be leaving himself vulnerable to Arjuna--by whom he was subsequently slain.
(Cf. Kāśidāśi Mahābhārata, "Droṇa Parva.")

Kārttikeya (also known as Kārṇika), god of war; general of the gods and known for his good
looks; matronymic from Krṣṭiṅkā, who is technically not his mother but his six-
fold wet nurse. He was born of the seed spilled from Śiva, who had been
excited by Gaurī (Durgā, Haimavati, Pārvatī). The myth is common
knowledge, but details of his birth vary among texts. In one most popular
Bangla narrative, Śiva ejaculates while dallying with Gaurī. Gaurī, unable to
hold his semen, casts it into the fire who, in turn, immerses it in the Jāhnavī
(Ganges) who deposits it among the reeds upon the shore where the six
Krṣṭiṅkās (the Pleiades personified) found and nursed the child, who has six
heads from having six wet nurses. (Cf. Mukundarāma Cakravarti, *Caṇḍī
Maṅgalā.* The birth of Kārttikeya and his slaying of Tāraka are celebrated in the famous Sanskrit artful "great narrative poem" (mahākāvyas) by Kālidāsa,
*Kumārasyaṃbhava* (The Birth of Kumāra [a name for the war-god]); see Kāma
and Tāraka.

Kātyāyani, epithet of Durgā. The name is derived from the fact that the rishi Kātyāyana, one of
the authors of the *dharma śāstras*, worshipped Durgā.
kaunta, a lance-like weapon.
Kaurava, refers to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's one hundred sons, who fought and were slain in the great Bhārata war; patronymic from Kuru, famed king in the "lunar" dynasty. Pāṇḍu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra are brothers and descendants of Bharata within that same "lunar" lineage. Kaurava, technically, can refer to an ancestor of either Pāṇḍu or Dhṛtarāṣṭra; the epithet, however, has come to designate Dhṛtarāṣṭra's one hundred sons exclusively, in contradistinction to their cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, and is used in this way in The Slaying of Meghanāda.
Kauśalyā, mother of Rāma; Daśaratha's first of three wives, Kaikeyī and Sumitṛā being the other two.
Kaustubha, a wondrous mythical gem, produced from the churning of the ocean and worn suspended from a cord around Viṣṇu's neck.
Keśari, "he who has the mane of a lion or of a stallion"; name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kiśkindhyā, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.
Keśava, "having much hair"; epithet of Viṣṇu.
Khara, "sharp, keen"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior and considered to be a half-brother to Rāvana. Along with a Rākṣasa named Dūṣaṇa, Khara is slain by Rāma and Lakṣmana in the Pañcavaṭi forest well before the battle on Laṅkā. Both Khara and Dūṣaṇa were sent against Rāma and Lakṣmana by Sūrpanakha to avenge the humiliation to her from Lakṣmana; see Sūrpanakha.
Kicaka, an army general in the kingdom of Virāta where the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī spent the thirteenth and final year of their exile, incognito. Kicaka took a liking to the beautiful Draupadī, was publicly abusive to her and kicked her, but also wanted to make love to her. Yudhiṣṭhira had placed his brothers under strict orders not to break with their disguises, and thus the public insults of their collective wife had to be tolerated. It was a mere thirty days before the thirteen long years were to be concluded, but Kicaka had been strongly importuning Draupadī. In desperation, she went to Bhimasena. Bhima devised a plan whereby she would seemingly agree to meet Kicaka in the dance practice hall, after dark when it was empty. But there in place of Draupadī that night sat Bhima, unrecognizable by Kicaka in the darkness. Following a bit of foreplay, Kicaka, to assuage her wounded pride that seemed to be lingering due to the previous public abuse and to get her more in the mood for loving making, invited "Draupadī" to kick him in the head, which he bowed down before her. Bhima then proceeded to give Kicaka three solid kicks to the head. Kicaka, stunned momentarily, eventually got to his feet, and a horrendous fight ensued--including, specifically, biting and scratching and rolling about on the floor and punching and more kicking--ending in the death of Kicaka. (Cf. Kāśidāśi Mahābhārata, "Virāta Parva.")
kimśuka, a tree bearing beautiful blood-red flowers.
Kinnara, a class of celestial demi-gods with a head like a horse and a body like that of a human's, known for their exceptional singing voices.
Kinnari, a class of celestial demi-goddesses with a head like a horse and a body like that of a human's, known for their exceptional singing voices.
Kirāta, a particular community of forest dwellers who lived by hunting.
Kiriṭi, "he who wears a diadem"; epithet of Arjuna.
Kiśkindhyā, name of a kingdom, and of its capital city, in the southern part of the South Asian
subcontinent. When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa arrived there, searching for Sītā, Kiśkindha's ruler was Vāli; following the death of Vāli, brought about by Rāma himself, Sugrīva became king in his elder brother's stead and formed an alliance with Rāma.

**kośā**, a small, shallow, elongated copper vessel for holding Ganges water for use during a puṣṭa.

**koṣī**, a small copper ladle for spooning water out of a kośā.

Krṣṇa, an *avatāra* form of Viṣṇu and the most popular form of Viṣṇu among Bengali Vaiṣṇavas. He is known best to Bengalis as the lover of Rādhā and the other Gopās with whom he sports in Vṛndāvana, a forested grove in the district of Vraja. He wears a yellow dhuti, plays the flute, and is of blue-black complexion. So attractive is he that he charms even the god of love, Madana himself; in turn, Krṣṇa/Viṣṇu can be charmed by his own (Viṣṇu's own) lovely consort, Lakṣmī. As an *avatāra*—the function of all *avatāras* is to rid the world of some great threat to mankind and the gods—Krṣṇa slays the oppressive king Kaṃsa of Mathurā. Warned that a son of his cousin Devakā and her husband Vasudeva would bring about his death, Kaṃsa had the couple imprisoned and slew their first six children. The seventh, Balarāma, was transferred into the womb of Vasudeva's other wife, Rohiṇi, prior to birth. Vasudeva spirited away in the dead of night his eighth child, Krṣṇa, to the village of Gokula in Vraja across the Yamunā river and left him in the care of a cowherd named Nanda and his wife Yaśodā, there to be raised out of harm's way. It is from Vraja that the adult Krṣṇa is summoned to Madhupura by another of his uncles, Akrūra, to carry out the task of removing from this world the wicked Kamsa.

Kṛtānta, "he who terminates, he who brings about an end"; epithet of Yama, god of death.

Kṛttikā, one of the twenty-seven stars (*nakṣatras*: constellations or lunar "houses" through which the moon passes), all twenty-seven of which are considered beautiful wives of Candra, the moon; the Pleiades constellation (the six visible stars) deified. She/They served as six wet nurses for Kārttikeya, who therefore has six heads with which to nurse the six-fold Kṛttikā.

Kṛttivāsa, author of the most well-known Rāmāyana in Bangla.

Kṣatriya, the warrior class; the second social class in Hindu society's *varṇa* hierarchy, consisting of, in presumed order of rank, Brāhmaṇ, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra.

Kṣemaṅkarī, "she who bestows auspiciousness"; epithet of various goddesses but referring in *The Slaying of Meghanāda* to Durgā (cantos 2 and 9) and to Datta's own creation, goddess Māyā (canto 8).

Kuliṣī, "he who has the thunderbolt"; epithet of Indra.

Kumāra, name for Kārttikeya; see Kārttikeya.

Kumbhakarṇa, "he who has jug-ears"; one of Rāvana's three brothers, along with Vibhiṣaṇa and elder half-brother Kubera. Rāvana, Kumbhakarṇa, and Vibhiṣaṇa all practiced austerities for which Brahmā was obliged to grant the brothers individually a boon. Each expected to ask for immortality, but only Vibhiṣaṇa's request would be honored. In the case of Rāvana, Brahmā allowed instead that he need not fear Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, gods, or Gandharvas. Since Rāvana considered men and animals of no threat, he was pleased to accept Brahmā's
offer of virtual immortality, unaware that the god Viṣṇu would incarnate as the human being Rāma and be his undoing. The gods, frightened that Kumbhakaṇṭha might become indestructible, implored Sarasvatī, goddess of speech, to go and sit upon Kumbhakaṇṭha's tongue. When Brahmā asked Kumbhakaṇṭha what boon he wished, his tongue spoke, requesting perpetual sleep. Brahmā declared it so. Rāvana, realizing what had happened, weeping, begged Brahmā to alter his edict. Obligingly, Brahmā modified the boon to be that Kumbhakaṇṭha would sleep for six months at a stretch and then awake for a day at which time he would eat gluttonously. If, however, Kumbhakaṇṭha were awakened before the completion of the full six months, he would be slain that very day. (Cf. Kṛttivāsi Rāmāyana, "Laṅka Kāṇḍa.")

Kumbhipāka, name of one of the numerous hell holes or punishment pits in Naraka, "hell." (Naraka is not the same as Pātāla, "the netherworld"; see Pātāla.)

Kumuda, "red lotus blossom"; name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kiśkindhyā and allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.

Kuru, famed king in the "lunar" dynasty. Kuru--like the patronymic made from it, Kaurava--is used to refer to the descendants of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, as opposed to the Pāṇḍavas.

Kurukṣetra, "Kuru-field"; the field on which was waged the major battle between the Pāṇḍavas and their cousins, the Kauravas, the central event related in the Mahābhārata.

kuśa, a particular grass, used as an auspicious seat, not exclusively but particularly at the time of performing a religious ritual.

Kusumesu, "he whose arrows are flowers"; epithet of Kāma, god of love.

Lakṣmana, one of Rāma's three younger half brothers, Bharata and Śatrughna being the other two.

Lakṣmī, goddess of luck or good fortune as well as of beauty (also called Śrī) and identified as the wife of Viṣṇu. She was produced from the ocean at the time of the churning--along with the elixir of immortality, Viṣṇu's Kaustubha gem, etc.--and thus can be thought of as the daughter of the ocean. The Bangla Mahābhārata explains her presence in the ocean (instead of seated at Viṣṇu's side or with head resting on Viṣṇu's chest) as the result of a curse by the irascible sage Dārvāsā; cf. Kāśīdāsi Mahābhārata, "Ādi Parva." She is said to have appeared from a lotus or on a lotus from within the sea, or with a lotus in her hand-- thus the association with lotuses; see Kamalā. She, as good fortune, is associated with wealth; anyone who possesses wealth and fortune possesses her--until and unless he loses such, at which time Lakṣmī is said to desert him. As a king's fortune or majesty, she is often called Rājalakṣmī. Since Rāma is considered an avatāra or incarnation of Viṣṇu, Sītā becomes associated with his wife Lakṣmī. And, in the Bangla Hindu mythology related to the annual Durgā Pūjā festival, Lakṣmī along with goddess Sarasvatī join Ganeśa and Kārttikeya as the four children of Śiva and Durgā.

Laṅka, Rāvana's island kingdom; refers both to the island and to the walled city on the island; associated with modern Śrī Laṅkā.

lāṭhi, a stick or staff, a common weapon for law-enforcement personnel.

līlā, "sport, godly diversion"; what transpires on earth is all divine play, inexplicable and incomprehensible to man.

Madana, "the maddener"; epithet of Kāma, the god of love whose wife is Rati; see Rati. Kāma
is sexual desire and thereby maddens or inflames; on the other hand, he was driven to distraction by Viṣṇu, in his Kṛṣṇa incarnation, hence the epithet of Kṛṣṇa as Madanamohana or "maddener of Madana" and "he who inflames Madana" in cantos 1 and 6, respectively.

Mādhava, another name for Viṣṇu, but also for Kṛṣṇa. Of course, the two are one, and the same appellation for both tends to emphasize this unity. In The Slaying of Meghaṇāda, Mādhava refers to Kṛṣṇa in cantos 2 and 5, and to Viṣṇu, husband of Lakṣmi, elsewhere.

Madhupura, a city kingdom, also known as Mathurā, ruled by the wicked Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa's uncle (Kṛṣṇa's mother, Devaki, and Kaṁsa are cousins) whom Kṛṣṇa slays. Madhupura lies on one side of the Yamunā river; on the other side of that river is Vraja (containing the village of Gokula and the forested area known as Vṛndāvana) wherein Kṛṣṇa grows up and dallies with the cowherd womenfolk, the Gopīs, Rādhā prominent among them. Another uncle, Akṛtā, summons Kṛṣṇa to Madhupura in order to rid that city-kingdom of its horrid tyrant Kaṁsa. Kṛṣṇa obliges and goes off to Madhupura, leaving Vraja never to return; see Kṛṣṇa.

Mahābhārata, "the great Bhārata [war]"; one of the two major Hindu Indian epics, the Rāmāyaṇa being the other. In eighteen parvas or books, the Mahābhārata recounts the events leading up to the war; the war itself between the descendants of Bharata, specifically the five sons of Pāṇḍu (the Pāṇḍavas--Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Sahadeva and Nakula) and the one hundred sons of Pāṇḍu's brother, the blind Dhrarāṣṭra, known collectively as the Kauravas, Duryodhana chief among them; and the aftermath of the war.

Mahāśakti, "the great Śakti"; śakti means "power" but also is the name by which the mother goddess is known, "power" deified. All Hindu goddesses are, in some sense, an aspect of the one "mother goddess" or Śakti or goddess Durgā.

Mahendra, "the great Indra"; epithet of Indra.

Mahēśa, "the great Īśvara or god"; epithet of Śiva.

Mahēśi, "the great goddess"; feminine form of Mahēśa; epithet of Durgā.

Mahēśvarī, "the great goddess"; feminine form of Mahēśvara ("the great god"); epithet of Durgā.

Mahiṣāsura, the buffalo Asura, slain by Durgā. The iconic representation of Durgā slaying Mahiṣāsura is found in every public display of the goddess during the autumnal Durgā Pūjā, the major annual Hindu festival in Bengal--an event in mythic time that corresponds with Rāma's slaying of Rāvana.

Maināka, a mythical mountain with wings. All mountains used to be able to fly, but some abused the privilege by falling on cities and villages. So, Indra, with his thunderbolt, clipped their wings. Only Maināka escaped--Indra in hot pursuit--and received sanctuary in the ocean. When Hanumān was leaping/flying across the ocean to search for Sītā on Laṅkā, the ocean requested Maināka to elevate half of his body out of the water in order to provide Hanumān with an intermediate resting spot. Maināka obeyed; Hanumān thanked him; and Indra, pleased with this mountain's good behavior, gave him abhaya--assurances that he need not fear, i.e., he could keep his wings.

Maithili, epithet of Sītā, derived from the place name Mithilā, the capital of Sītā's home
kingdom, Videha.  
mākāla, a lovely reddish golden fruit with an inedible and foul-smelling pulp (used figuratively in Bangla for a very handsome but worthless person).

makara, a mythical sea creature, sometimes translated as dolphin, crocodile, seal, or fish. In the Zodiac, the makara corresponds to the equally mythical beast Capricorn. The god-of-love's banner bears the makara insignia.

Makarākṣa, "makara-eyed"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.

Mānasa, "mind"; name of a mythical lake located in the Himālayas, near Mount Kailāsa, home of Śiva.

Manasija, "he who is born of the mind or heart"; epithet of Kāma, god of love.

Mandākini, name for the Ganges river as it flows in the heavens.

Mandara, name of a mythological mountain. All mountains in mythic times had wings and were able to fly--and were thus in motion--until Indra, with his thunderbolt, clipped their wings and made them stationary. The mountain called Mandara, moreover, was turned upside down and used by the Suras (gods) and Asuras (anti-gods) as a rod to churn the cosmic ocean; the serpent Vāsuki, also known as Ananta, served as the cord wrapped around Mandara by which that "mountain peak cum churning rod" was spun in a back-and-forth motion. The poetic conceit of a woman's breasts putting to shame a mountain is a fairly common one.

Māndhātā, a king of the "solar" dynasty. The expression "during the reign of Māndhātā" conveys the sense of "in very ancient times."

Mandodari, Rāvana's chief queen, mother of Meghanāda, and daughter of the Dānava architect Maya.

Manmatha, "he who churns the mind or heart"; epithet of Kāma, god of love.

Manthārā, Kaikeyī's personal serving woman. Manthārā advised her mistress to get Daśarakha to promise that Kaikeyī's son Bharata be installed as the crown prince and that Rāma be sent into exile for fourteen years.

mantra, formulaic speech, ritualistic speech, meant to effect something.

Mārica, a Rākṣasa requested by Rāvana to assume the guise of a golden stag in order to tempt Sītā and thereby lead Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa away from her so that Rāvana could approach and abduct her. (The word for "mirage" is marīcikā and, though not cognate with Mārica, it is suggestive of this elusive Rākṣasa.)

Mātali, Indra's charioteer.

Maya, a notable Dānava, father of Rāvana's chief queen Mandodari and a master builder. He escaped the burning Khāṇḍava forest and was protected by Arjuna. In gratitude, Maya constructed for the Pāndavas an exquisite assembly hall at Indraprastha on the bank of the Yamunā river, one which rivaled the Kauravas' court in Hāstinapura (also Hastinā/Hastināpura) on the bank of the Ganges. (Cf. Kāśidāsī Mahābhārata, "Sabhā Parva.")

Māyā, a goddess of Datta's invention, though all goddesses are in a sense an aspect of one and the same mother goddess. Māyā is referred to at times as Mahāmāyā (the great or grand Māyā), a name that can apply to any number of goddesses. (Cf. Bhāratācandra's Annāda Maṅgala, probably the best known and most popular Bangla text at the time when Datta was writing The Slaying of Meghanāda--therein goddesses Lakṣmi, Sarasvatī, and the eponym Annapurṇā/Annadā are
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all called Mahāmāyā.)
māyā, "illusion"; theologically speaking, māyā is what humans think to be the real world but what is in fact all illusion. The material world is a manifestation of a god's/goddess' power of māyā.

Meghanāda, "cloud-noise" or "thunder"; epithet of Rāvaṇa's most illustrious son, also known as Indrajit.

Mehghavāhana, "whose transport is the clouds"; epithet of Indra, lord of the skies.

Menakā, name of one of the class of celestial demi-goddesses called Apsarā, known for their exceptional beauty and their dancing ability.

Meru, name of a mythical mountain located in the northern reaches of the Himālayas, considered to be the North Pole; also called Sumeru.

Minadhvaja, "he whose banner displays a fish"; epithet of Kāma, god of love.

Mīśrakesī, name of one of the class of celestial demi-goddesses called Apsarā, known for their exceptional beauty and their dancing ability.

Mohana, "he who enchants"; epithet of Śiva.

Mohinī, "she who enchants"; the persona, that of an exceedingly beautiful woman, assumed by Viṣṇu to enchant the Asuras and thereby steal away from them the amṛta that had been churned from the primordial ocean.

mṛdaṅga, a percussive musical instrument.

Mṛtyuṇjaya, "he who is victorious over death"; epithet of Śiva.

mudgara, a cudgel or short club.

Mura, a Daitya slain by Kṛṣṇa.

muraṇa, a percussive musical instrument.

Muralā, attendant of Vāruṇi, who is the wife of the god of the oceans; name of a river in southern India which empties into the Bay of Bengal.

Murāri, "he who is the enemy of Mura (a Daitya slain by Kṛṣṇa)"; (1) epithet of Kṛṣṇa, and of Viṣṇu; also, (2) name of a famed Sanskrit poet, author of Anaragharaṅghava (The Priceless Rāghava), a drama centered on Rāma.

musala, a pestle-like bludgeon.

Nāga, snake; demi-gods who occupy the nether realm of Pātāla.

nāgapāśa, a noose resembling a snake; a weapon used to immobilize the opponent.

Nagendra, "the Indra (lord, foremost) of mountains"; epithet of Himālaya, father of Pārvatī/Durgā.

Nahuṣa, a king in ancient times. Once, when Indra after slaying Vṛtra went off to do purifying penance, all the sages got together and persuaded Nahuṣa to occupy the throne of the king of the gods vacated by Indra.

Naikaseya, epithet of Rāvaṇa (also applies to two of his brothers, Kumbhakarna and Vibhīṣaṇa); matronymic from Nikaṣa.

Nala, (1) name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kiṣkindhyā, allied with Rāma against the Rāksasas (cantos 6, 7, and 8). Also, (2) name of a king, both handsome and good, whom the beautiful princess Damayanti chose for her husband at the svayamvara (see svayamvara) attended by a number of the gods (canto 6). Previously, those gods, having learned of her good qualities, had asked Nala to intercede on their behalf to ask Damayanti to marry one of them, not Nala. Nala, ever obliging, relayed the proposal to Damayanti, who, however, affirmed her love for only Nala. She suggested a svayamvara at
which she would choose Nala, thereby absolving Nala of any responsibility for advancing his own suit personally over that of the gods. Being told of Damayanti's intentions by Nala, the gods decided to come disguised as Nala. Only after she begged them to evince godly attributes (no perspiration, casting no shadow, feet not touching the ground, eyes not blinking) could she determine who was the real Nala, whom she then chose to be her husband. (Cf. Kasidasi Mahabhara, "Vana Parva."

Namuci, "he who lets no one escape": name of an Asura slain by Indra.

Nandana, "gladdening": Indra's paradisiacal garden.

Nandi, Siva's main attendant.

narahca, a kind of missile made of iron, shot from a bow.

Narantaka, "he who destroys men": one of Ravana's sons.

Nikasa, mother of Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhisana.

Nikumbhil, (1) a temple on Lankâ or (2) the name of a ritual performed at a particular place. According to some, it is a grove at Lankâ city's western gate for the performance of sacrificial rites (Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, s.v. nikumbhil); according to others, it is a cave located in the western part of Lankâ (Haricaran Bandyopadhyay, Vangya Sabdako, s.v. nikumbhil); according to one editor of the Bangla Ramayana, it--whatever it is--is located "twenty kro[ one kro equals approximately two miles] from Sri Lanka's Colombo" (Nayanacandra Mukhopadhyay, Sacitra Rammayana, app. I, s.v. nikumbhil).

Nila, name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kiskindhaya, allied with Rama against the Rakshasas.

Nilakantha, "he whose throat is blue": epithet of Siva, who drank the poison produced at the time of the churning of the cosmic ocean in order to save creation. The poison darkened his throat, but Siva survived.

Nišācara, "he who moves at night": another name for a Rakshasa.

Niśācari, "she who moves at night": another name for a Rakşasi.

Niśāda, a hunter; the name of a particular caste of low status. The first occurrence of this word, in canto 4, in a simile describing Sita succumbing to grief as she relates, in essence, a portion of the Ramayana, is evocative of the manner in which Valmiki is said to have discovered the metre, śloka, used to compose the Sanskrit Ramayana; see Valmiki.

Nistārini, "she who saves": epithet of Durgā.

Niśumbha, younger brother of the Asura Sumbha, both slain by Durgā.

Nṛmudamalini, "she who wears a necklace of human heads": epithet of the goddess Kali but also the name of Pramilā's maid servant.

pā, the cuckoo's call. A wonderful songbird and so recognized as such in South Asia, the cuckoo is said to sing the fifth note of the scale as its very own, "quintessential" song. The names of the tones--"do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti," of a Western diatonic scale--are in the classical Indian musical system "sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dhá, ni," with "pā" being the fifth interval. A gloss for the word "fifth" in premodern Bangla is "fine, charming." Writes Sukumar Sen, "The peculiar meaning comes from the popular idea of the fifth note (the cuckoo's cry) being the sweetest of

Padmayoni, "he who originates from a lotus"; epithet of Brahmā.

Pañcamukha, "he who has five faces"; epithet of Śiva, whose iconographic representation sometimes, but not always, shows him with five faces facing in five directions; see Sahasrākṣa for a tale of how Śiva got his five faces.

Pañcaśara, "he who has five arrows"; epithet of Kāma, god of love, whose five arrows are made of the blossoms of the mango, āśoka, jasmine, bakula, and myrtle and induce rapture, excitement, absorption, paralysis, and stupefaction.

Pañcatantra, "the five lessons"; a Sanskrit text of moral tales teaching princes how to behave.

Pañcavaṭṭī, a tract of forest through which flows the Godāvari river and located within the larger Daṇḍaka forest in southern India; the locale where Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmana were spending some of their days in exile.

Pāṇḍava, patronymic from Pāṇḍu, who had five sons, Yudhiṣṭhīra, Bhīma, Arjuna, Sahadeva and Nakula. Pāṇḍu's sons and those of Pāṇḍu's brother, the blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, fought against each other in the great war narrated in the Mahābhārata.

pārijāta, a mythical heavenly flowering tree and its blossom, extracted from the cosmic ocean when churned by the Sūtras (gods) and Asuras (anti-gods).

Pārtha, epithet of Arjuna; matronymic from Prthū (also known as Kunti), mother of Yudhiṣṭhīra, Bhīma, and Arjuna. Although the name could apply to all three of Kunti's children, it designates Arjuna most commonly.

Pārvatī, "daughter of the mountain"; epithet of Durgā; patronymic from Parvata (literally, "mountain"), also known as Himālaya.

Pāśi, "possessing a noose"; epithet of Varuṇa, god of the sea.

Pāśupata, "related to Paśupati"; a wondrous weapon bestowed upon Arjuna by Paśupati (Śiva, in the guise of a Kīrtā hunter); it is the missile that will be discharged by Śiva (Paśupati) at the time of the destruction of the universe. (Cf. Kāśidāsī Mahābhārata, "Vana Parva.")

Paśupati, "lord of the animals"; epithet of Śiva.

Pātāla, one of the three worlds comprising the universe--the other two being the earth (martya) and the heavens (svarga). Pātāla is quite separate from, and should not be confused with, Nāraka or "hell" where punishment is meted out to those who have transgressed dharma.

patṭīśa, a large, double-edged battle-ax mounted on a shaft as long as a man is tall.

Paulastya, epithet of Rāvana; patronymic from the rishi Pulastya, ancestor of Kubera, Rāvana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhiṣana, but designates Rāvana only in *The Slaying of Meghānāda*.

Paulomi, epithet of Śaci, wife of Indra; patronymic from the Dānava Puloma, who cursed Indra for violating his daughter and then was slain by Indra.

Paurava, epithet of the Pāṇḍavas; patronymic from Puru, distant ancestor of the Pāṇḍavas (and Kauravas). Indraprastha is the capital city of the Pāṇḍavas.

Pavana, god of the winds; the wind deified. Pavana is the father of Hanumān, ally of Rāma. In *The Slaying of Meghānāda*, the wind is cast in the role of one hostile to the sea, a characterization that comes from Datta's reading of the Homeric epics, not from the Indic epic tradition.
phingā, a rather common black colored songbird.
Phuladhanu, "he whose bow is made of flowers"; epithet of Kāma, god of love.
Pināka, name of Śiva's bow. It was the bow used as a test at Sītā's svayamvara (see svayamvara); only the suitor who had the strength to string Pināka would be considered a fit spouse. Rāma's strength was such that he not merely bent the bow enough to string it but in fact broke that most powerful of bows.
Pināki, "he who wields the bow named Pināka"; epithet of Śiva.
Pitāmbara, "he who wears the yellow garment"; epithet of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, referring to the latter in The Slaying of Meghanāda.
Prabhā, "radiance"; name of the wife of Śurya, god of the sun and the sun deified.
Prabhañjana, "breaker"; epithet of Pavana, god of the winds and the wind itself deified; father of Hanumān.
Prabhāśā. "well-spoken lady"; Meghanāda's wet nurse.
Pracetas, name of Varuṇa, god of the sea.
pūrahanā, a lāṭhi or stave or club of some sort.
prakṣvedana, a spear made of iron.
Pralaya, the time of and the act of the destruction of the universe, following the fourth and most degenerate yuga, the Kali yuga, after which the universe will be created anew; see yuga. It is Śiva who destroys the world. At this time of universal dissolution, fires and storms rage, and the world is inundated.
Pramatta, "besotted"; name of a Rāksasā warrior.
Pramālī, the one and only wife of Meghanāda and daughter of a Dānava by the name of Kālanemi. Meghanāda has no wife in Vālmiki's Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa nor any named spouse in Kṛttivāśi's Bangla version—though the number of his wives is given in that latter text as 9,000; cf. Kṛttivāśi Rāmāyaṇa, "Laṅkā Kāṇḍa."

Pramoda, "gladness"; name of a pleasant retreat on the isle of Laṅkā but some distance from the walled city.
Providence, a translation throughout The Slaying of Meghanāda of the word Vidhātā; see Vidhātā.
pūjā, an act of ritual worship.
Puloma, father of Indra's wife Śacī. The Dānava Puloma was slain by his son-in-law, Indra, whom Puloma had cursed for violating his daughter.
Puṇḍarikākṣa, "he who has lotus-blossom-like eyes"; epithet of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, referring to the latter in The Slaying of Meghanāda.
Purāṇa, "old"; the texts containing ancient lore, the Puranas.
Purandara, "destroyer of cities"; epithet of Indra.
purohit, a Hindu priest.
Puspaka, name of Kubera's wondrous flying chariot, the original commandeered by his half-brother Rāvaṇa and used by the latter for, among other things, transporting the kidnapped Sītā from the Pañcavaṭi forest on the mainland of India to his island kingdom on Laṅkā.
rabāb, a stringed musical instrument, cognate with the European rebec or rebeck.
rāga, principal mode or scale in Indian classical music, of which there are six.
Rāghava, epithet of Rāma; patronymic from Raghū, great grandfather of Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmana, and Śatrughna, but designates Rāma only in The Slaying of
Meghanāda.

Rāghavacandra, epithet of Rāma; see Rāghava. Though "candra" literally means moon, Rāma is of the "solar" dynasty of kings, not of the other major royal line, the "lunar" lineage, which includes the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas.

Rāghavānuja, "the one born after Rāghava (Rāma)"; can apply to Bharata, Lakṣmana, and Śatrughna, the three younger brothers of Rāma, but designates Lakṣmana only in The Slaying of Meghanāda.

Rāghavendra, "an Indra (lord, foremost) among Rāghavas"; epithet of Rāma.

Raghu, a patriarch within Rāma's lineage; great grandfather of Rāma; see Dilēpa.

rāginī, secondary mode or scale in Indian classical music, of which there are thirty-six.

Rāhu, an Asura identified with the eclipse. An eclipse of the moon, which is made of ambrosia (called amṛta, also soma), occurs when the moon is swallowed by Rāhu. During the churning of the primordial ocean by the Suras (gods) and Asuras (anti-gods), the Asuras initially captured the amṛta extracted from the ocean. At one point Rāhu tried to make himself immortal by drinking that amṛta, but Viṣṇu decapitated him. Since the amṛta touched his mouth and started down his gullet only, it is only that part of him, the head and upper throat, became immortal and continued to exist as a separate entity. Rāhu still lusted after the amṛta of immortality and manages to swallow the moon from time to time. Since Rāhu has no body, the moon passes through his mouth and reappears out of his gullet, never to be consumed and digested by that Asura.

Rājalakṣmī, "Lakṣmī of the king"; epithet of goddess Lakṣmī; as Rājalakṣmī, she is royal fortune personified, present when the raja and the rajadom are prosperous, absent when their fortunes are reversed.

Rākṣasa, an anti-god or opposer of the gods; the name, ironically, derives from rakṣ, "to protect," and is interpreted to mean something to be protected from (Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, s.v. "rakṣhas"); often considered synonymous with Asura, Daitya, Dānava, and Karbūra.

Rākṣasī, the feminine of Rākṣasa, a female Rākṣasa.

Raktabīja, "drop(s) of blood"; name of a particular Asura who served as general in the army of the two Asura brothers Sūmbha and Nīśumbha. He was a particularly difficult adversary for Durgā to overcome, for whenever a drop of his blood would fall to the ground, another Raktabīja would spring forth to continue the fight. (Cf. Devimāhātmya.)

Raktākṣa, "he whose eyes are blood red"; name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhāya, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.

Ramā, "pleasing lady"; epithet of Lakṣmī.

Rāma, name of the warrior prince, eldest son of Daśaratha, husband of Sītā; immortalized in the epic tale, Rāmāyaṇa. In later Hinduism Rāma was elevated from mortal to god, becoming known as an avatāra or incarnation of Viṣṇu.

Rāmabhadrā, name of Rāma. The "bhadra" is an honorific suffix meaning blessed or fortunate. Rāmabhadrā is also a name for Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Balarāma, though not used in this sense in The Slaying of Meghanāda.

Rāmacandra, name of Rāma. Though "candra" literally means moon, Rāma is of the "solar" dynasty of kings, not of the other major royal line, the "lunar" lineage, which includes the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas.
Rāmānuja, "the one born after Rāma"; can apply to Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, and Śatrughna, the three younger brothers of Rāma, but designates Lakṣmaṇa only in *The Slaying of Meghanāda*.

Rāmāyaṇa, "the wanderings of Rāma"; one of the two major Hindu Indian epics, the Mahābhārata being the other. In seven *kāṇḍas* or books, the Rāmāyaṇa tells of the self-imposed exile of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā; Sītā's abduction by the Rākṣasas, Rāvaṇa; the war on Lankā between the Rākṣasas forces and Rāma's, with his southern allies including Hanumān; and the rescue of Sītā.

Rambhā, name of one of the members of the class of celestial demi-goddesses called Apsarās, known for their exceptional beauty and their dancing ability.

*rasa*, "juice"; the quintessence of something; the prevailing sentiment or emotion in a work of literature. This pregnant and salient term of Indian aesthetics stands for, on one level, the eight (or sometimes nine or ten) dominant sentiments present in literature: śṛṅgāra (erotic love) (also called ādirasa, "the original rasa"), vīra (heroism, virility), karuṇa (pathos), ādṛta (wonder), hāsa (mirth), bhayānaka (terror), bibhatsa (disgust), and raudra (fury) -- and sometimes śānta (contentment) and vātsalya (parental affection). An individual piece of literature is to have one of these rasas dominant, though others may be present. On another level, *rasa* has been interpreted by aestheticians to mean an almost metaphysical quality of good literature that is produced by the work of literature and experienced or tasted by the literary connoisseur; such a *rasa* is transitory, lasting only as long as the literature is being experienced.

Rasātala, lowest level of the seven-tiered netherworld called Pātāla; often metonymically used for Pātāla collectively.

Rati, "passion, coitus"; wife of Kāma, god of love.

Ratnākara, "gem quarry" or "ocean"; the name of the poet Vālmīki when he was still a murderous thief; see Vālmīki.

Raurava, name of one of the many hell holes or pits of punishment in Naraka, "hell." (Naraka is not the same as Pātāla, "the netherworld"; see Pātāla.)

Rāvaṇa, lord of the Rākṣasas and ruler of Lankā.

Rāvaṇānuja, "the one born after Rāvaṇa"; can apply to Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa, younger brothers of Rāvaṇa, but designates Vibhīṣaṇa only in *The Slaying of Meghanāda*.

Rāvanī, epithet of Meghanāda; patronymic from Rāvaṇa.

Rohini, one of the twenty-seven stars (*nakṣatras*: constellations or lunar "houses" through which the moon passes), all twenty-seven of which are considered beautiful wives of Candra, the moon. Rohini, among those 27, is most often named as the moon's favorite wife. (Rohini is also the name of Vasudeva's second wife, mother of Balarāma; see Kṛṣṇa.)

Rudra, "furious"; epithet of Śiva. Also, the Rudras, plural and collectively, are considered the progeny of Rudra and are associated with the (furious) winds.

*rudra*, Śiva's power or fury objectified.

Śaci, wife of Indra, lord of the gods.

Sadānanda, "he who is always pleased"; epithet of Śiva.

Sahasrākṣa, "he who has 1,000 eyes"; epithet of Indra. Indra became infatuated with the sage Gautama's wife, Ahalyā. In Gautama's absence, Indra disguised himself as
Gautama and had sex with Ahalyā. Gautama happened upon the cuckold Indra and cursed him to have 1,000 vaginas all over his body, vaginas which in time metamorphosed into eyes. Ahalyā, for her part, was cursed to become a stone for 1,000 years, only to be released from that curse by the touch of Rāma's foot, which occurred soon after Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā wandered off into exile. A different tale is told in the Bangla Mahābhārata to account for this epithet of Indra. In order to defeat the two Asura brothers, Sunda and Upasanda, who had been given a boon by Brāhma that each could be killed by no one except his own brother, Viśvakarman, the gods' architect and master builder, fashioned an exceedingly gorgeous woman from the most handsome bits of the supremely beautiful beings in all the three worlds, thereby creating Tilottamā ("she of the best [uttamā] of bits [tila]"). Tilottamā incited jealousy between the two brothers, who fell to fighting and eventually killed each other; see Sunda. Prior to appearing before those brothers, however, Tilottamā stood in front of the gods. Her glamour so riveted Siva that his face(s) became five, pointing in all directions so that wherever his face looked, she was there. Those four (new, directional) faces, plus the one he had before Tilottamā appeared, account for the five faces of Siva and also for his epithet, Pañcamukha, "he who has five faces." Indra, also, reacted somatically to Tilottamā's stunning beauty. When Indra saw Tilottamā, more eyes developed in and of themselves all over his body, the better for Indra to gaze at pretty Tilottamā. (Cf. Kāśīdāsi Mahābhārata, "Ādi Parva.")

Śaiva, a devotee of Śiva.
Śakra, "he who supports; mighty"; epithet of Indra, lord of the skies.
Śākta, a devotee of Śakti, of the mother goddess, of goddesses Durgā and Kāli, in particular.
Śakti, "power, force, strength"; (1) a name by which the mother goddess is known. All Hindu goddesses are, in some sense, an aspect of the one "mother goddess" or Śakti or, in other words, goddess Durgā. Also, (2) name of the special missile by which Lakṣmaṇa is seemingly slain; see Ekāghnī.
Śaktidhara, "wielder of power"; epithet of Kārṭtikeya, god of war, general of the gods.
śāla, a variety of tree, particularly tall, the lumber from which is strong.
śālmali, a variety of tree, the seed pods of which produce a kapok-like substance.
Śamana, "he who calms or quells"; epithet of Yama, god of death.
Śambhara, name of an Asura in Vedic times associated with and slain by Indra, then later, in the times of the epics, associated with and slain by Kāma, god of love.
Śambhu, "helpful"; epithet of Śiva.
ṣāmi, a variety of tree. High up in such a tree the Pāṇḍavas deposited their battle gear before approaching, in disguise, king Virāṭa at the start of their thirteenth year in exile.
Samīra, the wind deified.
Saṅjaya, personal warrior manservant of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. It is he who tells the blind king of the results of the great Bhārata war including the deaths of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's one hundred sons. (Cf. Kāśīdāsi Mahābhārata, "Nāri Parva.")
Saṅjivanī, "life instilling, life restoring"; a name for the realm of Yama, the god of death.
Saṅkara, name of Śiva.
Saṅkari, name of Durgā.
sapharī, a variety of fish with silvery scales.
saptasvarā, a musical instrument consisting of seven vessels filled with water and played by striking the rims of those vessels.

Śarabha, "a mythological animal with eight legs, stronger than both the lion and the elephant"; name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhāya, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.

Saramā, wife of Rāvaṇa's brother Vibhiṣaṇa.

Śārāṇa, Rāvaṇa's prime minister.

Śaḍānana, "he who has six faces"; epithet of Kārttikeya, god of war, general of the gods.

Sarvasvati, goddess of speech, the arts, and learning.

Sarayū, a river in northern India on which was located Rāma's capital of Ayodhyā.

Sarvabhuk, "eater of everything"; epithet of Agni, god of fire and fire itself and Meghanāda's chosen deity.

Sarvasūci, "he who is all pure"; epithet of Agni, god of fire and fire itself and Meghanāda's chosen deity.

Śaśāṅkadhārini, "wife of him who holds the hare-marked moon [on his head]"; epithet of Durgā.

Sāti, "she who is true"; epithet of Durgā; see Dakṣa (2).

Śatrughna, the youngest of Rāma's three half-brothers, Bharata and Lakṣmāna being the others.

Satya, "truth"; name of the first of four eras (see yuga) in the Hindu cosmological cycle.

Saumitri, epithet of Lakṣmāna; matronymic from Sumitrā, youngest of Daśaratha's three wives.

Sauri (also spelled Sauri), "he who is heroic"; epithet of Viṣṇu.

Śeṣa, a sharp-pointed missile.

Senā, name of the wife of Kārttikeya. The word senā also means army, and Kārttikeya is the general of the gods.

Śeṣa, a mythological snake, also known as Ananta; sometimes identified as king of the Nāgas (the great snakes); represented at times as forming the canopy, with its hoods, over Viṣṇu and at other times as supporting the entire world on his many heads, given as a thousand, usually, but increased to 10,000 (ayuta) by Datta.

Śimula, another name for the sālmali tree; see sālmali.

Sikhidhvaja, "he whose banner displays a peacock"; epithet of Kārttikeya, whose vehicle is the peacock.

Śītā, wife of Rāma. She was found as a baby by King Janaka in a plowed furrow (sīta), hence the name.

Śiva, the great lord; the god who presides over the destruction of the universe at the end of the four-yuga cycle, concluding with the Kali yuga; husband of Durgā; chosen deity of Rāvaṇa. Śiva is also known as Rudra, "the furious one," whose abstracted power is called rudra and is at one point bestowed upon Rāvaṇa. Śiva is the greatest of yogis; he holds a trident, has on his head the ṛaṭa (a pile of matted hair), wears snakes upon his body, and has a third eye in the middle of his forehead which when open spews fire and once incinerated the god of love, Anaṅga; the Ganges river, also called Tripathagā, falls from heaven to earth landing in his hair (canto, 9).

Skanda, name of Kārttikeya.

Smara, "memory"; epithet of Kāma, god of love.

Śrī, (1) an honorific title for men, comparable to "Mr." or "the honorable"; also, (2) name of
Lakṣmi, goddess of beauty and good fortune, and spouse of Viṣṇu.
Śrīkanṭha, "he whose voice is that of Śrī, goddess of beauty"; epithet of the famed Sanskrit poet and scholar Bhavabhūti, who composed the drama Uttararāmacarita (The Latter History of Rāma).
Sthānu, "stationary, firm, immovable"; epithet of Śiva, alluding to his condition while deep within a yogic trance.
Subāhu, "he who has good (strong) arms"; name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhā, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.
Sudakṣinā, wife of Dilipa, one of Rāma's predecessors in the "solar" dynasty.
Sugrīva, king of the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhā and ally of Rāma. With Rāma's active help, Sugrīva slew his elder brother Vāli (Rāma did the actual killing), laid claim to the Kīśkindhā throne, and married his brother's wife Tārā; in exchange for Rāma's assistance, Sugrīva committed his troops to aid Rāma in recovering Sītā.
Śūlapāni, "he whose hand holds a trident"; epithet of Śiva.
Śūli, "he who has a trident"; epithet of Śiva.
Sūmāli, name of a warrior from the southern kingdom of Kīśkindhā, allied with Rāma against the Rākṣasas.
Śumbha, elder brother of the Asura Nīśumbha, both slain by Durgā.
Sumitrā, mother of Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna and the youngest of Daśaratha's three wives, Kausalyā and Sumitrā being the other two.
Sunāśira, name of Indra. The name itself may derive from the names of two "rural deities favorable to the growth of grain, probably personifications of 'share' [śunā] and 'plow' [śīra]." (Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English dictionary)
Sunda, an Asura and elder brother of Upasunda. The brothers were totally unified in thought and deed and decided to gain control of the three worlds by virtue of the power they would accumulate through performing austerities. For years they fasted, living on air alone. Brahmā, noting their austerities, summoned them and offered them a boon. They chose immortality. Brahmā balked, unwilling to accede to such a request. The brothers responded by saying they would continue their austerities (and thereby continue to accumulate power) until and unless they were bestowed the boon they sought. Brahmā explained to them that birth inevitably implied death. He asked them to make some provision for death. The brothers answered by proposing that they were not to be killed at the hands of another; only if and when they themselves were to turn on one another would they be slain by their own hands. Brahmā said "be it so," and the brothers proceeded to conquer and oppress all the three worlds. The gods and rishis, now displaced from their heavens, approached Brahmā, seeking a solution to the obvious problem. Brahmā called upon Viśvakarmā, the gods' builder, and directed him to fashion the most gorgeous of women in the entire three worlds. For this, Viśvakarmā collected the most handsome bits of the most stunningly beautiful beings in all the three worlds and created Tilottamā ("she of the best [uttama] of bits [tila]"). When the brothers, who had been dallying atop the Vindhya mountains with their numerous Asura wives and Vidyādharī demi-goddesses, saw Tilottamā, they were utterly infatuated. Sunda took hold of her right hand; Upasunda grasped her left. Sunda then told
Upasunda to let go of her hand, that he saw her first, that she was his wife, and that she should be respected as such by Upasunda. Upasunda claimed she married him and that Sunda ought not touch the wife of his younger brother. The two brothers insult each other and eventually come to blows, whereby each kills the other. (Cf. Kṣiṣāśī Mahābhārata, "Ādi Parva.")

Sūrpanakhā (also spelled Sūrpanakāḥ), sister of Rāvaṇa. Upon seeing Rāma in the Pañcavaṭī forest, this Rākṣasī was smitten with desire. By wizardry, she assumed the form of a beautiful woman, approached Rāma, and proposed marriage. Rāma, in jest but mock concern, told her that he did not want her to become a mere co-wife (to Sūtā), suggesting instead that she proposition Lakṣmanā who looked the bachelor, though he was actually already married; see Ûrnilā. This Sūrpanakhā did, but Lakṣmanā encouraged her, facetiously, to press her case with Rāma. And she readily did that also, by trying to eat her competition, Sūtā. Seeing his wife in danger, Rāma directed Lakṣmanā to protect Sūtā, which Lakṣmanā accomplished by discharging a missile that lopped off Sūrpanakhā's nose and ears. Defaced and humiliated, she retreated to the side of the Rākṣasas Khara and Dūṣāṇa. They and their legions attacked but were defeated by Rāma and Lakṣmanā. Sūrpanakhā then returned to Laṅkā where she incited Rāvaṇa to punish Rāma by kidnapping Sūtā, arguing that Rāma would die out of sorrow for his lost wife. Rāvaṇa, hearing the description of pretty Sūtā and being himself lustful by nature, agreed to do so. He enlisted the help of the Rākṣasa Mārīca, who first tried to talk Rāvaṇa out of this foolhardy venture but ended up assisting him by turning himself into a golden stag that Rāma and then Lakṣmanā followed into the forest--giving Rāvaṇa the chance to abduct the unprotected Sūtā, thereby touching off the great battle in Laṅkā and bringing about Rāvaṇa's eventual downfall. (Cf. Kṛttivāsī Rāmāyaṇa, "Aranyaka Kāṇḍa.")

Vālmiki's Sanskrit version of the Rāmāyaṇa had extended this scene somewhat by having first the sole surviving Rākṣasa return to tell Rāvaṇa of the deaths of Khara and Dūṣāṇa. Rāvaṇa approaches Mārīca with his scheme for kidnapping Sūtā only to have Mārīca talk him out of it--for Mārīca had previously met up with Rāma and been defeated. Then Sūrpanakhā returns, disfigured. She both titillates (with a description of Sūtā's beauty) and shames her brother into action. The results are the same. Rāvaṇa steals away Sūtā and by so doing sets in motion the course of events that lead to his own destruction.

Suvacanā, "she who is well spoken"; name of a goddess invoked by women in distress; a goddess whose words come to fruition.

Svātī, one of the twenty-seven stars (nākṣatras: constellations or lunar "houses" through which the moon passes), all twenty-seven of which are considered beautiful wives of Candra, the moon. Pearls are said to form when and only when it rains while the star Svātī is in the night sky; it is then that oysters suck in those particular raindrops, turning them into pearls. Also, Svātī is identified with the star Arcturus and as a wife of the sun.

svayamvara, a ceremony by which the bride-to-be chooses from prospective grooms the one whom she will marry. Along with such a ceremony, the prospective grooms may be put to a test to determine who is the fittest and proper husband; see Pīnāka and Nala (2).
Śyāma, "dark colored, dark blue or green or black"; epithet of Kṛṣṇa, the dark lord, whose complexion is usually depicted as dark blue or blue-black.

tāla, a variety of palm tree.
Tālajāṅghā, "having shanks like palm trees"; name of a Rākṣasa warrior.
tamas, "ignorance, darkness"; one of the three qualities that is constitutive of everything in differing portions, the other two being sattva (truth, goodness) and rajas (passion, spiritedness).
Tāpasendra, "Indra (lord, foremost) of the ascetics"; epithet of Śiva.
Tārā, wife of Vāli, king of Kīṣkindhyā. Following the death of Vāli, Tārā becomes the wife of Sugrīva, Vāli's younger brother. Tārā's name is homonymic with the word for "star, astral body."
Tāraka, an Asura who captured heaven and was eventually defeated by Kārttikeya. Indra, vanquished by Tāraka, had gone with the other gods to seek Brahmā's counsel. Brahmā declared that only a son (named Śaḍānana, "the six-headed," also called Kārttikeya) born of Śiva's seed could slay Tāraka. Śiva at that time was unmarried and deep in yogic meditation. He had to be aroused from his trance. For that purpose, Indra sought the services of Kāma, the god of love, who awakened Śiva but was burned to ashes by Śiva for his effort. Later Śiva spilled his semen while dallying with Gaurī (Durgā, Haimavatī), which resulted in the birth of Kārttikeya, who eventually led the gods against the Asuras and personally slew Tāraka; see Kāma and Kārttikeya.
Tārakārī, "enemy of Tāraka (name of an Asura)"; epithet of Kārttikeya.
Tārini, "she who rescues"; epithet of Durgā.
tomara, a lance of sorts.
Trijaṭā, "she who wears three piles of matted hair"; serving woman for Rāvana and Mandodarī, Rāvana's chief queen.
Tripathagā, "she who flows in three paths"; epithet of Gaṅgā, the Ganges river, who falls from the heavens onto Śiva's matted hair. The three paths refers to the Ganges as she flows in heaven, on the earth, and through Pātāla's netherworld.
Tripura, "three cities"; name of an Asura, defeated by Śiva. The three cities, collectively personified as an Asura, were built by Maya in the heavens (of gold), in the space between heaven and earth (of silver), and on earth (of iron). When the Asuras were about to destroy the three worlds, the gods importuned Śiva who responded by burning the three cities and putting to death all the Asuras who lived there.
Tripurārī, "foe of the Three Cities (Tripura)"; epithet of Śiva.
Trisūlī, "he who has a trident"; epithet of Śiva.
Tryambaka, "he who has three eyes"; epithet of Śiva.
tulasī, name of a holy tree, especially sacred to Vaiṣṇavas, i.e., devotees of Kṛṣṇa and of Rāma.
turī, a battle horn made of brass.
Tvisāmpati, "lord of a mass of brilliance"; epithet of Sūrya, the sun god.
Udagra, "haughty, monstrous"; name of a Rākṣasa.
Ugracaṇḍā, "she who is wrathful and violent"; epithet of Durgā in her more violent and wrathful aspect.
ululu, the sound "ululululululu . . . .," made by women at auspicious times or festive occasions; it is a sound of joy, as opposed to the howl or wail denoted by the Latinate
English word "ululation."

Umā, name of Durgā, wife of Śiva; often used to imply the goddess as the young wife of Śiva, as opposed to the goddess in her more powerful, warrior-like mien.

Upasunda, an Asura and younger brother of Sunda; see Sunda.

Upendra, "born subsequent to Indra"; epithet of Viṣṇu.

Ūrmilā, wife of Lakṣmaṇa, and also younger sister of Sītā.

Urvaśī, name of one member of the class of celestial demi-goddesses called Apsarās, known for their exceptional beauty and their dancing ability.

Vaḍabā, name of Pramīla's horse. Vaḍabā is also the name of a horse-headed goddess who resides within the ocean. The "fire of Vaḍabā," known too as Vaḍaba or "the mare's fire," spews from her mouth and burns forever underwater in the depths of the Indian Ocean; see Vaḍaba.

Vāḍaba, "the mare's fire." It burns beneath the sea, at the South Pole by some accounts. A couple of stories relate its coming into existence. One speaks of the rishi Aūrva, born of the Bhṛgu lineage. Kṣatriya forces were slaying the Brāhmaṇ Bhārgavas, even destroying children in the womb. One Bhārgava woman, to preserve her embryo, hid it in her thigh (ūru, hence the derivative name Aūrva). Aūrva burst forth from her thigh, blinded the enemy with his brilliance, and from his anger produced a flame that threatened to burn the three worlds. The Bhārgavas prevailed upon him to spare the world and cast his flaming rage into the ocean. (Cf. Kāśiḍāṣī Mahābhārata, "Ādi Parva.") The Sanskrit Mahābhārata attributed to Vyāsa, in J.A.B. van Buitenen's translation, ends this episode within the Ādi Parva as follows: "Thereupon, my son, Aūrva cast out the wrath-born fire into Varuṇa's domain, and it eats the waters of the ocean. Thus do the scholars of the Veda know that it became a huge horse head, which spits fire from its mouth and drinks the waters of the ocean."1 Another tale tells of the rishi Ĉūrvā (alternative name for Aūrva) who, desiring a son not born of woman's womb, churned fire in his own chest and brought forth a fiery son who then took his place in the southern seas and was known as Vaḍabā.

Vaidehi, epithet of Sītā; derived from Videha, name of a kingdom whose main city was Mithilā, ruled over by Sītā's father, Janaka.

Vaijayanta, name of Indra's palace in his heaven, which is called Amarāvatī or just Amarā.

Vaikunṭha, name of Viṣṇu's heavenly city.

Vainateya, the great bird Garuḍa, vehicle for and attendant of Viṣṇu; matronymic from Vinatā.

Vaisvānara, "belonging to all men"; epithet of Agni, the god of fire and fire itself; Meghanāda's chosen deity.

Vaitaraṇī, the river that separates Narakā, "hell," from the other three worlds of heaven (svarga), earth (martiya), and Pātāla.

Vajrapāṇi, "he whose hand holds a thunderbolt"; epithet of Indra.

Vajrī, "he who has a thunderbolt"; epithet of Indra.

Vālī, ruler of the southern kingdom of Kiṣkindhā but slain by Rāma; elder brother of Sugrīva.

Vālmiki, composer of the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa. Ratnākara, son of a sage, was during the first part of his life a dacoit, robbing and murdering for a living. God Brahmā and

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the sage Nārada approached him one day and successfully persuaded him to change his ways by suggesting the sinner ask his father, mother, wife and son whether they, who lived off his illicit earnings, would be willing to bear the burden of his sins. None of the ingrates was, which moved Ratnākara to reform. Brahmā directed him to repeat Rāma's name and thereby absolve himself of all his sins. Ratnākara, however, feeling unworthy, could not bring himself to utter Rāma's sacred name, so Brahmā had him pronounce the word which describes a man who has died. Death and a dead person being polluting, Ratnākara felt fit to utter such an unworthy word. The word "dead" is pronounced marā in Bangla. As Ratnākara chanted marā marā marā, he eventually, with the words running together (marā marā marā marāmarāmarā), was saying Rāma's name (ma/rāma/rāma/rāma rāma rāma rāma). Ratnākara then sat in one spot and chanted that holy name for 60,000 years during which time his body was devoured by ants. But still he continued to chant Rāma's name, from within the ant hill. After 60,000 years Brahmā returned, saw the ant hill, and heard the words "Rāma, Rāma, Rāma" coming from within. He had Indra cause rain to fall for seven days, washing away all of Ratnākara but his bones. Then Brahmā, the creator, summoned Ratnākara back to life, gave him the name Vālmīki, a patronymic from valmīka (ant hill), and instructed him to compose the Rāmāyaṇa. Vālmīki (alias Ratnākara) protested that he knew not poetry nor metre, to which Brahmā replied: "Sarasvatī shall dwell upon your tongue / Much poetry shall issue from your mouth." As the passage proceeds, we find Vālmīki seated beneath a tree, beside a lake, chanting Rāma's efficacious name. At such time, a hunter (Niśāda) happens by and fells with his arrow one of two herons perched upon a branch, above Vālmīki. Those herons were loving each other when the one was hit, falling into Vālmīki's lap. Horrified by this senseless violence against innocent birds, Vālmīki cursed the fowler. The curse itself, emanating from a profound sense of grief (śoka), came out as though spontaneously in a new metrical pattern called śoka: a Sanskrit couplet metre (unrhymed) of sixteen syllables per line divided into hemistiches of eight units each. And so, we have the origin (out of śoka) of śoka, the prevalent epic metre in Sanskrit literature. (Bangla relies predominantly upon payār in its epics.) Vālmīki then proceeded to compose the Rāmāyaṇa in his newly found śoka metre. (Cf. Kṛttivāsī Rāmāyaṇa, "Ādi Kāṇḍa.")
confidante to Meghanāda's wife Pramilā.
Vāsava, epithet of Indra as lord of the Vasus, "the good ones," i.e., the gods; "Indra's bow/Vāsava's bow" is the rainbow.
Vāsavajit, "victor over Vāsava"; epithet of Meghanāda.
Vāskala, name of a Rākṣasa warrior.
Vibhāvasu, "he whose wealth is brilliance"; epithet of Agni, god of fire and fire itself; Meghanāda's chosen deity.
Vibhīṣaṇa, younger brother of Rāvaṇa and husband of Saramā. He advises his brother to return Sītā, is kicked for his counsel, and defects to become one of Rāma's trusted allies.
Vidhi, "fate"; often identified with Brahmā. The term "Fate" in this translation of The Slaying of Meghanāda is always a rendering of the word vidhi.
Vidhātā, "providence"; often identified with Brahmā. The term "Providence" in this translation of The Slaying of Meghanāda is always a rendering of the word vidhātā.
Vidyādhara, a class of celestial demi-gods, known for their skills in the arts.
Vidyādhari, a class of celestial demi-goddesses, known for their skills in the arts and for their beauty.
Vijayā, one of the two female attendants of Durgā, Jayā being the other.
vīṇā, a stringed musical instrument.
Vinatā, mother of Garuḍa and five other sons, including her eldest son Aruṇa, who in turn had two sons, one of them being Jaṭāyū.
Vindhya, the mountain range in central India which, in a sense, divides northern from southern India.
Virabhāhu, "virile-armed"; a son of Rāvaṇa and Citrāṅgadā. He is a character created by Kṛttivāsa.
Virabhadrā, name of a warrior and factotum for Śiva.
Virāṭa, name of a king in whose realm the Pāṇḍavas lived in disguise during their thirteenth year of exile; also, name of the kingdom itself.
Virūpākṣa, "odd-eyed"; (1) name of a Rākṣasa warrior; also, (2) an epithet of Śiva, referring to the third eye in the middle of his forehead.
Viśālyakaraṇi, the restorative herb that grows upon Mount Gandhamādana on the Indian mainland and is needed to revive Lakṣmana. In more traditional Rāmāyaṇas, Hanumān leaps or flies to the mountain and, after some adventures, manages to bring the herb back to Laṅkā. In The Slaying of Meghanāda, where Hanumān is no flying monkey, the mountain, according to Rāvaṇa's prime minister, would appear to have come of its own accord.
Viśvanātha, "lord of the universe"; epithet of Śiva.
Vitihotra, "he by whom the soma offering is eaten"; epithet of Agni, god of fire and fire itself; Meghanāda's chosen deity.
Vraja, the land where Kṛṣṇa grew up and played with the Gopīs or cowherd wives, Rādhā in particular. Vraja, wherein is found the village of Gokula and the Vṛṣṇīvāna forest, is located on one bank of the Yamunā river; across that river and a ways away lies Madhupura to where the adult Kṛṣṇa goes to slay king Kaṁsa, never to return to Vraja; see Kṛṣṇa and Madhupura.
Vṛṣabhadhvaja, "he whose banner displays a bull"; epithet of Śiva.
Vṛṣadhvaja, "he whose banner displays a bull"; epithet of Śiva.
Vṛtra, name of an Asura whom Indra slew with his thunderbolt. An ancient malevolent force from Vedic times, Vṛtra was associated with darkness and drought and considered in perpetual conflict with Indra, lord of the skies.

Vyomakesa, "he whose hair is in the sky"; epithet of Śiva.

Yakṣa, a class of supernatural beings related to the Rākṣasas though usually not malevolent. Their lord, Kubera, is the elder half brother of Rāvaṇa and presides over riches; see Dhanada.

Yama, god of death. He carries a staff (daṇḍa) with which to punish (daṇḍa also means punishment); see Daṇḍadhara.

Yamunā, a major river in northern India; flows from the Himālayas past Hastinā (first the Kauravas’ and later the Pāṇḍavas’ capital), past Madhupura and Vraja (where Kṛṣṇa was born and where he grew up, respectively), and joins the Ganges river at Prayāga, now called Allahabad, on their collective way to the Bay of Bengal. Yamunā is considered to be the daughter of the sun, (canto 1); one of the many tales illustrating Kṛṣṇa’s powers tells of him subduing (actually dancing on the multiple heads of) the poisonous water serpent, Kāliya, who threatened those from Vraja bathing in the Yamunā river (canto 3).

Yogāsana, "a posture or sitting position for yogic meditation"; name of a plateau at the very top of Mount Kailāsa where Śiva meditates.

Yogindra, "Indra (lord, foremost) of yogis"; epithet of Śiva as well as, quite literally, "the greatest of yogis." In The Slaying of Meghanāda, Yogindra is said to possess a "mind-lake." Mānasa means "the mind, thought, desire, the heart" and is the name of a particular lake in the Himālayas to which swans (hansa) retreat with the advent of the monsoon season, according to a well-established poetic conceit. Moreover, a mānasa-putra is a son created from one’s mind or heart or desire, a "son of the mind or heart." Extending this to the image in canto 7, the mānasa-hansa is both a "swan of the mind" and a "swan upon lake Mānasa." Cintāmani (literally, "gem of thought," epithet of Viṣṇu) is likened here to the swans (thought personified) upon the lake-cum-mind of the greatest of yogis, Śiva, deep in meditation; see Cintāmani.

Yogini, a female yogi. Along with Dākinīs, who are female goblin-like demi-goddesses, Yoginis also attend upon Śiva and Durgā.

yuga, the four "ages" which, taken together, form a complete cycle (kalpa) in Hindu cosmological time. In descending order (temporally and morally), they are the Satya (also called Kṛta yuga), sometimes characterized as "the golden age," the Tretā yuga, the Dvāpara yuga, and the Kali yuga or the present era, known as the most degenerate of all. At the conclusion of the Kali yuga comes Pralaya or the destruction of the world, following which a new cycle will begin.