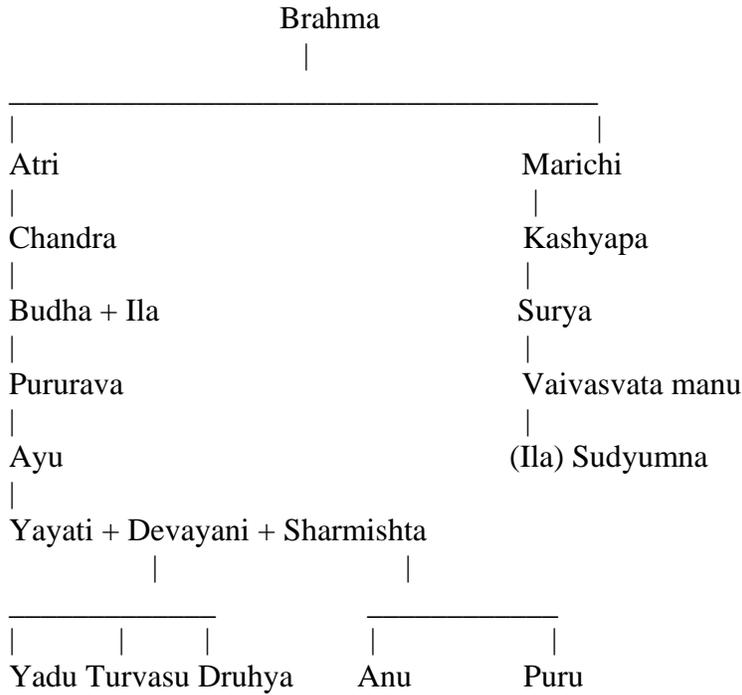


**Mahabaratha Tatparya Nirnaya**  
- Introduction by Prof.K.T.Pandurangi

**Chapter XI**

**Amshavatarana**

As a preliminary to the story of Sri Krishna and the Pandavas, the origin of Chandravamsha is described. The early persons of chandravamsha and suryavamsha are as follows:



From this chart, it is clear that both chandravamsha and suryavamsha had originated from Brahma. An interesting point in the development of these two families is that Sudyumna, the fifth descendant on the suryavamsha side, used to be male for one month, and on the chandravamsha side, female for one month. He used to be called Sudyumna and Ila respectively during these months. When he functioned as a female, he begot a son (Pururava) through Budha of chandravamsha. Thus he established a link between the two families.

**The Origin of Yadu and Kuru families**

In the family of Yadu, the yadavas were born. In the family of Puru, the fifth son of Yayati, the fifth son of Yayati, Bharata, the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, was born. Kuru was also born in this family, so the Kauravas and Pandavas were known as Bharatas. The fifth descendant of Kuru was Pratipa. He got three sons: Devapi, Bahlika, and Shantanu. Devapi did not become the king though he was the eldest as he suffered from a skin disease. Bahlika was named king of the Bahlika region, and Shantanu succeeded Pratipa as king.

Bahlika was Prahlada in his earlier birth. He got a son named Somadatta, who was one of the Rudras, Patratapa. His three sons (Bhuri, Bhurishrava, and Sala) were also Rudras (Ajaikapat, Ahirbudni, and Virupaksha). Among these, the last one had the avasha of the other ten Rudras (Raivata, Aja, Bhava, Bheema, Vama, Vrishakapi, Ajaikapat, Ahirbudhni, Bahurupa, and Mahan).

### **The background of the birth of Shantanu and Bhishma**

The birth of king Shantanu has a background chaturmukha Brahma once visited the sea on a full moon day. On that occasion, the sea (Varuna) was sporting with the river Ganga and threw a few water drops at Brahma. Brahma became upset and cursed him to be born on the earth twice.

Consequently, Varuna was born as King Mahabhisak and again as Shantanu. He also cursed Ganga to meet her husband with the human body. "Shantanu" means "be calm." Since Brahma ordered him to become calm, Varuna got the name Shantanu when he was born on the earth. There is another explanation for Shantanu's name. By the touch of Shantanu, elderly people used to regain their youth and be happy. "Sham" means "happiness," and "tanu" means "giver." Therefore, he was given the name Shantanu. Shantanu begot the son Devavrata, later known as Bhishma. The birth of Bhishma also had a background.. Among eight Vasus, the eighth one was known as Dyu. He was also known as Prabhasa and Vibhasu. His wife was named Varangi. She had a friend of the same name . Varangi asked Dyu to get the divine cow Nandini for her friend so that, with the milk, she could get a long life and retain her youth permanently. Dyu went to Sage Vashishtha's ashrama along with seven other Vasus and tied Nandini up. This upset Vashishtha, and he cursed them to be born as men. He particularly cursed Dyu to live as a man (Bhishma) as long as the duration of the eight men's lives. He cursed Varangi, who instigated the unholy act, to be born as Amba, become a male (Shikhandi), and be responsible for the Dyu's death. The curse was actually given by Brahma, who was present in Vashishtha.

The Vasus let off the cow Nandini and appealed to Brahma to help them not to be born from the womb of a human being. Brahma agreed. The Vasus came to know that Ganga was going to be the wife of Shantanu without assuming the human body. They went to her and told her that they would be born as her children. Ganga told them that they would be killed as soon as they were born, and she should not get any sin for this. However, one of them would live long.

### **Ganga's Condition to marry Shantanu**

Ganga went to King Pratipa and sat on his right thigh. Only a daughter and daughter-in-law have the right to do this. (The wife has to sit on the left thigh.) Pratipa asked her to be his daughter-in-law. Ganga agreed to marry his son Shantanu on three conditions: "i) your son should not ask me as to who I was, ii) he should not prevent her from doing something wrong, iii) and he should not question her when she does something wrong." If he broke any one of these conditions, Ganga would leave him. King Pratipa agreed and informed Shantanu in due course.

Ganga begot eight children. She killed seven of them one after the other. When she proceeded to kill the eighth child, Shantanu asked her who she was and why she was killing the children. He prevented her from killing this child. Thus he violated the three conditions laid down by her. Therefore, she left him, took her eighth child, and gave him

to Brihaspati. The boy learned the Vedas and the other sacred literature from Brihaspati for fifty years. Then Ganga sent him to Parashuram. He continued his study of spiritual literature for another fifty years and studied the use of weapons for twenty-five years. Ganga took him back and allowed him to roam on her bank. At this time, Shantanu arrived at the place. He found that the flow of water was prevented by arrows and wondered at this. Ganga arrived, told him that the boy was his son, and asked him to take him. She also told him that the other seven children drowned in the water had regained their original form. Shantanu took him and made him Yuvaraja. Devavrata again went to Brihaspati and learned Vedas for fifty years. From Parashurama, he learned weapons for another fifty years and listened to spiritual discourses for three hundred years. Finally, he returned to his father.

#### **Kripa and Kripa**

At that time, when Ganga gave birth to the eighth child, Shantanu found twin children left in the forest by someone. These were the children of Sharadvan. Vishkambha, a Rudra, and Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, were born as these twin children. Shantanu took them and named them Kripa and Kripa. Kripa became a friend of Devavrata. He learned all Shastras from Vishwamitra and philosophical doctrines from Vedavyasa.

#### **Birth of Drona**

At about the same time Kripa was born, Bharadvaja, the son of Brihaspati, begot Drona through Ghritachi. He was called Drona because he was born in a type of vessel known as Drona. He was Brihaspati himself, and Brahma was also present in him. Bharadvaja himself taught him the Vedas and the weapons.

At about this time Prishata, the king of Panchala, begot the son Drupada. He was the divine singer Hoo-hoo. Avaha Marut was also present in him. He studied the weapons from Bharadvaja along with Drona. He told Drona "Let us Enjoy kingdom together" Drona married Kripa. He lived near Hastinapur. The King Virata was the same age as Drona and Kripa. He was the divine singer Haha, and Marut Vivaha was present in him.

#### **Shantanu marries Satyawati**

Once, Shantanu proceeded to go hunting and saw a beautiful girl, Satyawati. Earlier, she was Acchoda, the daughter of Agnishvat belonging to the amurta pitrgana group. Lord Vishnu had blessed her saying that He would be born as her son. She was now born as the daughter of King Vasu and was brought up at the residence of a fisherman. Shantanu was attracted to her and asked the fisherman for her hand in marriage. However, the fisherman set the condition that her son should be made the successor to the throne. When Devavrata learned of this, he assured the fisherman that he would relinquish the throne. He took the oath that he would remain a bachelor so that the question of his progeny claiming the throne would not arise. Because of such a strong oath, his name became Bhishma. Shantanu gave him the boon that he would die only when he desired to die and that he would be invincible in war.

Satyawati begot two sons, Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Shantanu died when these two children were still young. Chitrangada also died before marriage.

#### **Amba, Ambika and Ambalika**

Bhishma crowned Vichitravirya as king. He brought the three girls Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika for Vichitravirya, conquering King Salva. Ambika and Ambalika agreed to marry Vichitravirya, while Amba refused to marry. She had already made up her mind to

marry Salva. She returned to Salva, but Salva did not accept her. She then went to Parashurama, who fought with Bhishma. However, to bring fame to Bhishma, he pretended to have been defeated by him. Amba performed penance to become male in order to kill Bhishma. Shiva gave her the boon to become male and be an instrument to kill Bhishma. He also gave her a garland and told her that whoever accepted this garland would be able to kill Bhishma. She went around with this garland to give it to a king. Nobody accepted it out of fear of Bhishma. She kept it at the door of Drupada and died. Later, Drupada performed penance to get a male child. However, Shiva told him that he would get a female child who will become male. Amba was born as his daughter. She was named Shikhandini. Drupada performed upanayana, etc, for her as if she was male. Drupada arranged for her marriage with the daughter of Hiranyavarma, the king of Dasharna country. This wife of Shikhandini found that she was not a male. She reported to her father, who became angry. To avoid unpleasantness, Shikhandini went to sage Isika, who asked her to go to Tumburu. The Gandharvas used to change their sex. Tumburu exchanged his male body with the female body of Shikhandini. Consequently, Shikhandini became Shikhandi. A mere male body was not sufficient to get Purushatva

for Shikhandini. Therefore, Tumburu also entered into her partially. A woman would never become a man.

Vichitravirya lived for some time with his two wives, Ambika and Ambalika. Later, he died without having had children. His mother Satyavati remembered Sri Vedavyasa. He had promised her that whenever she remembered him, he would appear before her. Accordingly, he came. Satyavati requested her to get progeny through her two daughters-in-law. When Vyasa went near Ambika, she closed her eyes. Consequently, the son born was blind. He was named Dhrtarashtra . He was a Gandharva king of the same name. Vayu also partially entered him. Satyavati asked Vyasa to bless Ambalika with a son. When Vyasa went near her, she became pale. Therefore, a pale boy, Pandu, was born. Satyavati asked Ambika to meet Vyasa once again. Instead, Ambika sent her maid servant to Vyasa. Consequently, a Shudra boy, Vidura, was born. Vidura was Yama himself.

### **The background of Vidhura's Birth**

There is an interesting background for the birth of Yama as Vidhura. Earlier, Sage Animandavya was performing penance to attain the stature of Vasishtha. A group of thieves who had stolen royal property were being chased by the servants of the king. They left the property at the sashrama of Animandavya and ran away. The servants of the king arrested Animandavya and put him on the hanging pole. He continued his penance sitting in that position only. The king released him. He went to Yama and asked him why he was made a victim of such a punishment. Yama told him that he had pierced a fly when he was a boy, and this was the punishment for that. The real reason was that he was trying to attain the stature of Vasishtha, which was beyond his capacity. Animandavya was angry and cursed Yama to be born as a Shudra. Consequently, Yama was born as Vidura.

Bhishma arranged the performance of Jatakarama and other Samskaras for Dhrtarashtra , Pandu, and Vidura. They were educated in the sacred literature, political science, and the wielding of weapons. Dhrtarashtra was coronated as king. Pandu was made the army chief. Later, Dhrtarashtra gave the throne to Pandu. Vidura was made minister.

The Gandharva Tumburu was born as a son of Gavalgana, the charioteer of Vichitravirya, and was named Sanjaya. The Marut Vivaha was partially present in him.

### **Dhrtarashtra and Gandhari**

Dhrtarashtra married Gandhari, the daughter of Gandhara King Subala. As her husband was blind, Gandhari blindfolded her own eyes. Shakuni was her younger brother He was the demon Dvapara born as Shakuni. The word "Dvapara" means "a person who is always suspicious about truth and entertains contradictory ideas." Since men develop such a tendency during Dvapara age it is named as Dvapara.

### **Kunti Madri and Pandu**

King Shura gave his daughter Pritha as adopted daughter to King Kuntibhoja. Therefore, she came to be known as Kunti. She was the wife of Pandu in his original form of Pravaha Marut and went by the same name, Kunti. Kuntibhoja was Kurma Marut in his original form. Sage Durvasa came to his city and desired to observe chaturmaya in his place. King Kuntibhoja offered all facilities and asked his daughter, at that time thirteen years old, to serve him. She devotedly did so. Durvasa was pleased by her service and taught her a mantra by which she could call the deities. Out of curiosity, she called Surya. She was attracted by him and sported with him. Consequently, she got a male child. The child was Surya himself in another form, but the demons Sahasravarma and Narakasura were also present in him. Kunti, afraid of public ostracism, put the child in a box filled with valuable gems and floated it on the river Asvanadi. It reached the river Ganga through Charmanvati and Yamuna. A suta, i.e. Adhiratha, lifted it and adopted the child as his son. Adhiratha's wife Radha also bestowed all her affection on him. He studied the scriptures, weapons, etc. He was named Karna and Vasushena.

Pandu married Kunti and Madri. Vidura married Aruni, the daughter of Shura through his shudra wife.

Ritayana, the king of Madra, begot a son (Shalya) and a daughter (Madri). Shalya was Prahlada's brother Sahlada in an earlier birth. Vayu was partially present in him. Madri was Pandu's wife in the earlier birth also.

Dhrtarashtra asked Pandu to rule over the kingdom. Pandu ruled guided by Bhishma. Sri Vedavyasa took Satyavati, Ambika, and Ambalika to his ashrama. In due course, Satyavati and Ambalika attained Vaikuntha while Ambika attained sarupya, a kind of liberation.

After some time, Pandu retired to the forest and lived in Badarikashrama. Unfortunately, he killed an ascetic who was sporting with his wife assuming the form of a deer. The ascetic cursed him that he should also die when he was sporting with his wife. Pandu moved to Shatashringa mountain and lived in Pandukeshvara with Kunti and Madri.

## **II**

### **Brahma Indra appeal for Krishnavatara**

At this juncture, the deities Indra and others, led by Chaturmukhabrahma and accompanied by Bhudevi, approached Lord Vishnu. They described the fight between the deities and the demons that had taken place earlier, recalling the warding off of Sambara's maya, the destruction of Viprachitti's weapons, the killing of Kalanemi, and other great events of that battle. They further told Him that these demons were then born again. If these demons listen to discourses by sages and Brahmanas and obtain devotion to you it will affect the very setup described in Scripture. Therefore we appeal to you to take an

incarnation mislead the demon and destroy them.” They informed that Kamsa, Jarasandha, Hamsa and Dhibika were already born. Kamsa and Kalanemi were reborn. Jarasandha was Viprachitti. Hamsa and Dhibika were Madhu and Aitabha. Ravana

and Kumbakarna were reborn as Shishupala and Dantavakra. The demon Bali was born as Salva. The demon Bana was born as Kichaka. All these had to be destroyed. Hearing all of this, Lord Vishnu assured Brahma that He would take the necessary incarnation. He moved to Meru mountain with all the deities and made Brahma announce which deity should take which form to assist Him in the task of his incarnation.

Chaturmukha Brahma informed Lord Vishnu that he had cursed Kashyapa to be born as a Kshatriya but undertake a Vaishya's duty of rearing cows. This was because Kashyapa had refused to return Varuna's cows, which he had brought for his sacrifice. He was then born as a son of King Sura and was named Vasudeva. One of the Vasus, Drona, was born as Nanda. He was the son of King Sura through his Vaishya wife. Both Vasudeva and Devaki and Nanda and Yashoda had performed penance to beget the Lord as their son. Therefore, He revealed Himself as Vasudeva's son first and then moved to Nanda's place. God accepted Brahma's appeal and asked the deities to be born as men. Accordingly, the deities were born. Kubera was born as Bhagadatta. The demon Baskala was partially present in him. Yuyudhana was born as a son of Satyaka and was known as Satyaki. Garuda, Samvaha Marut, and Vishnu Chakra, i.e. Pradyumna, were partially present in him. Kritavarma, the son of Hridika, had the presence of Panchajanya, i.e. Aniruddha, and Pravaha Marut partially.

Similarly, the other deities and demons were also born. Those who supported the Pandavas were the deities and their followers. Those who opposed them were demons and men of unsteady mind.