

Kṣemaka alias Śunaka father of Pradyota was killed by Mlecchas (a barbarous tribe). To avenge the death of his father Pradyota under the advice of Nārada decided to conduct a Mleccha Yajña and for that purpose dug a Yajñakuṇḍa seventeen miles long and seventeen miles wide. The Yajña started and in that Yajña different kinds of Mlecchas were burnt to death. From then onwards Pradyumna got the name 'Mlecchahantā' (killer of Mlecchas). (Bhaviṣya Purāṇa).

PRADYUMNA.

1) *General information.* A son born to Śrī Kṛṣṇa of his wife Rukmiṇī, Pradyumna was the rebirth of Kāmadeva. (For genealogy see under Kṛṣṇa).

2) *Birth.* It was at the time when Kāmadeva and Ratidevī were living together that Pārvatī, daughter of Himavān, started her penance to get Śiva as her husband. It was a need of the devas to get a son of Śiva to kill the fierce demon Tārakāsura. The devas employed Kāmadeva to create feelings of love in the ascetic Śiva and make him marry Pārvatī. Taking instructions from Indra, Kāmadeva took aim at Śiva with his bow and arrow. Śiva was then in deep meditation and Kāmadeva broke his concentration and Śiva got angry. He opened his third eye and burnt Kāmadeva to death.

Griefstricken by the death of her husband Ratidevī performed penance near the Himālayas to propitiate Mahādevī. Mahādevī appeared before her and consoled her thus: "Little girl, Kāmadeva would be reborn as the son of Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Rukmiṇī. He would then be named Pradyumna. The devas have cursed Śambara the leader of the asuras, during the battle between the demons and the demi-gods that he (Śambara) would be killed by Pradyumna. So Śambara is now searching for the infant which is a rebirth of Kāmadeva. So you abandon your present body and be born again as Māyāvati to be the wife of Śambara. Pradyumna, the reborn Kāmadeva, would kill Śambara and accept you as his wife." Devī disappeared after saying this.

Obeying the instructions of Mahādevī, Rati abandoned her life and was born in the world of asuras. She grew up under the name Māyāvati and became the wife of Śambara.

While Śrī Kṛṣṇa was living as the chief of Dvārakā his first wife Rukmiṇī was yearning for a child. Kṛṣṇa was deeply moved by the grief of Rukmiṇī and he flew on the back of Garuḍa to Kailāsa to obtain a boon for the birth of a child for her. On the way he alighted in the āśrama of Naranārāyaṇas and after obtaining the blessings of the sages there, went to Kailāsa and bowed before Śiva and explained to him the purpose of his visit. Śiva blessed him and said that Kāmadeva who was burnt to death by the fire of his third eye would take birth again as the son of Rukmiṇī. Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā well-pleased. Rukmiṇī became pregnant and gave birth to Pradyumna, a rebirth of Kāmadeva. The demon Śambara knew of this birth and coming to Dvārakā in an invisible form carried away the infant when it was seven days old.

The demon threw the child into the ocean and a great fish swallowed it. The fishermen of the country of Śambara caught this fish and following the custom prevalent there presented the king with the fish. Śambara called his wife Māyāvati and asked her to take the fish

and get it cooked. When Māyāvati cut open the fish for cooking she found to her surprise a beautiful child inside it. Even from the first sight of the child Māyāvati had a great liking for it and so she took the child and brought it up as her own child.

When Pradyumna grew into a youth all the charm and beauty of Kāmadeva were found in him. Māyāvati was excited to find a resemblance in him of her lost husband Kāmadeva. One day the great sage Nārada came that way and calling Māyāvati to his side secretly revealed to her that Pradyumna was the incarnation of Kāmadeva and was thus her lost husband. From that day onwards Māyāvati's affection for him changed into one of love. She taught him all the magic and witchcraft of Śambara. When Pradyumna found that Māyāvati's affection for him was gradually changing into one of passionate love he questioned her about it. Māyāvati then told him everything that happened and Pradyumna decided to kill Śambara and take Māyāvati away.

3) *War with Śambara.* Pradyumna waited for an opportunity to kill Śambara. One day Pradyumna went under the flagstaff of Śambara which flew the royal flag of the king with an emblem of the figure of a lion embossed on it. He dropped it down by one stroke of his arrow. Hearing of this Śambara ordered his sons to kill Pradyumna. The eleven sons of Śambara, viz., Atisena, Citrasena, Viśvaksena, Śrutasena, Suśeṇa, Somasena, Ākkāla, Vikala, Kumbhaketu, Sudarṣṇa and Keśī, attacked Pradyumna. The devas came in their vimānas and joined sides with Pradyumna. The army of the demons teased him with various kinds of weapons like javelins, arrows, spears and battle axes. But Pradyumna cut them all by his arrows and cut to pieces all the sons of Śambara. Then Śambara sent an army against him. They were also made to flee by the arrows of Pradyumna. Then Śambara himself came on the scene. The fight became horrible. The continuous flow of arrows made it impossible for even Sun's rays to reach the earth. Then Śambara started his magical war. But Pradyumna faced that also. Śambara sent phantom lions; but Pradyumna made them immobile. Śambara then in turn created storms, rains, wild animals, serpents and vultures. All of them were killed by Pradyumna. Then with a well-aimed arrow Pradyumna killed Śambara. Then he rushed to Dvārakā carrying Māyāvati with him. The people of Dvārakā were astounded to see them. Pradyumna went to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī and told them the whole story. They were overjoyed to find them and blessed them.

Aniruddha who married Uṣā the daughter of Bāṇa was the son of Pradyumna. (Chapters 103 to 108, 10th Skandha, Bhāgavata).

4) *Prabhāvatīpariṇaya.* Marriage with Prabhāvatī. (See under Prabhāvatī).

5) *Other details.*

(i) Pradyumna was born of a part of Sanatkumāra. (Śloka 152, Chapter 67, Ādi Parva).

(ii) Pradyumna was one among those who came to Arjuna from Dvārakā with dowry for his marriage with Subhadrā. (Śloka 31, Chapter 220, Ādi Parva).

(iii) Pradyumna was present for the Rājasūya Yajña of Yudhiṣṭhira. (Śloka 16, Chapter 34, Sabhā Parva).

(iv) Pradyumna consoled and encouraged the Yādava