

the daughters of Mṛtyu (Death). (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 20).

**VYĀGHRABHATA.** The minister of King Śrīdatta, described in Kathāsaritsāgara. Besides Vyāghrabhata, he had three more ministers named Mahābala, Upendrabala and Niṣṭhūra.

**VYĀGHRADATTA I.** A King who fought on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. This King who was a great fighter on the chariot, fought with the teacher Droṇa. It is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Droṇa Parva, Chapter 16, Stanza 32, that he was killed by Droṇa.

**VYĀGHRADATTA II.** A prince of the country of Magadha. He took the side of the Kauravas and was killed in the battle of Bhārata by Sātyaki. (M.B. Droṇa Parva, Chapter 107, Stanza 31).

**VYĀGHRAKETU.** A warrior of Pāṇḍava, who fought on the side of the Pāṇḍavas against the Kauravas. Karṇa wounded him in the battle of Bhārata. (M.B. Karṇa Parva, Chapter 56, Stanza 44).

**VYĀGHRĀKṢA.** A follower of Subrahmanya. (Mahābhārata, Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Stanza 59).

**VYĀGHRAPĀDA.** An ancient hermit. He was the father of Upamanyu. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 14, Stanza 45).

**VYĀLĪMUKHA.** An asura who fought against Subrahmanya. In the fight with Subrahmanya this asura was killed. (Skanda Purāṇa, Āsura Kāṇḍa)

**VYĀSA.** The sage Vyāsa who is the author of the Mahābhārata.

1) *Genealogy.* Descended from Viṣṇu in the following order: Brahmā-Vasiṣṭha-Śakti-Parāśara-Vyāsa.

2) *Birth.* Vyāsa was born to hermit Parāśara by a fisherwoman named Kālī. His name when he was a child was Kṛṣṇa. As his birth took place in an island (Dvīpa) he got the name Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana. After dividing the Vedas he got the name Vedavyāsa. He is the composer of Mahābhārata, one of the greatest books in world-literature. The births of great men, generally will be wonderful. Behind the birth of Vyāsa also there is a wonderful story.

As has already been mentioned, Kālī, a fisherwoman was the mother of Vyāsa. There is a story about this Kālī also. When king Vasu of Cedi went to the forest for hunting, he saw the coition of animals and he had seminal discharge. The king sent that semen to his queen. But on the way it fell in the river Kālindī and was eaten by a fish. This fish was a celestial maid named Adrikā transformed to fish by a curse. The fish conceived and got into the net of a fisherman, who lived on the banks of Kālindī. When this fish was cut open a male and a female infant were seen inside. The male child was given to the king himself. The fisherman brought up the girl naming her Kālī. As the girl had the gandha (smell) of matsya (fish), she got the name 'Matsya-gandhā', also. This fisherman was also a ferryman. Kālī used to help her father in ferrying people across the river Kālindī. She grew up and became a young woman.

Once the hermit Parāśara came by that way to go to the other side of the river. At that time, the fisherman who has been taking people across the river, was sitting on the bank of the river and having his meals. As soon as Parāśara came, the innocent fisherman—the foster-father of Matsyagandhā—called her, who was standing close by and asked her to take the hermit across the

river. The hermit got into the boat. Matsyagandhā began to row the boat. The beauty of the damsel sitting in front of him and the little waves of the river, combined together had the effect of arousing passion in the hermit. He became sexually excited and sat close to her. Discerning his intention she moved away from him and prayed to him humbly not to violate her chastity. She repeated her prayer. The hermit Parāśara created an artificial fog around the boat. The smell of fish was gone from her and the fragrance of Musk took its place. The hermit created an artificial island in the middle of the river. They got down on the island and acted a love drama. She became pregnant. Parāśara said to her. "Beautiful girl! Even after your confinement you shall remain a virgin. A son, who will be a portion of Viṣṇu, a man of purity, famous throughout the three worlds, highly learned, the teacher-priest of the whole world, shall be born to you. He will divide the Vedas and will be exalted by the people of the world."

After this the great hermit took his bath in Yamunā and went away. The pregnancy of Kālī was completed instantly and she gave birth to a very handsome boy in that island of Yamunā. As soon as he was born, he grew up and became a hermit radiant with devotion and assuming a vow of purity and abstinence he said to his mother. "Mother! You can go anywhere, as you please. You need have no worry on my account. I am about to go for penance. When anything unpleasant happens to you, just think of me. The moment you wish to see me, I will be there by you. I wish you a happy life. I am going." Saying thus the brave boy walked away. (Devī Bhāgavata, Skandha 2; Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapters 60 to 63).

3) *Spiritual life.*

i) *Introduction.* Two sides, the spiritual as well as the material, are seen in the life of Vyāsa. It was after the marriage of Śantanu, a king of the Lunar dynasty, with his mother Kālī, otherwise known as Satyawatī, that Vyāsa came into contact with Hastināpura. Participating in all the vicissitudes of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas was the worldly side of the life of Vyāsa. But the major part of his life was spent in living as a hermit in his hermitage in the forest with a large group of disciples; teaching them the Vedas. A small description of that spiritual life is given below :

ii) *In the forest.* We do not see Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, who had grown up to a youth at the time of his birth, for many years after his departure, bidding adieu to his mother. He might have been living with hermits in the forests, learning Vedas from them. After this he appears on the banks of river Sarasvatī as a teacher and Priest. As he was doing penance there, he saw two sparrows, legs and beaks red, without even down feathers, crying for food, and the parent birds, with the utmost care and tenderness feeding them. They flew about here and there and gathered food and came back quickly. Because of joy at the sight of their parents, the little ones opened their ruby-red mouths with cries and throbbing. They kissed the young ones and fed them. The young sparrows hid under the wings of their father and mother and enjoyed the surroundings by thrusting out their heads and looking on all sides.

iii) *Birth of son.* Seeing this, the paternity instinct in him was aroused. He understood that love of children was merely for the sake of love, that this love was pure