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| Abhimanyu was born to Arjuna and Subhadra. He married Princess Uttara, daughter of King Virata of the Matsya Kingdom. He died an unjust death after being attacked by the Kaurava army when he was trapped in the Padma Vyuha formation. He was an unborn child in his mother's womb he listened to his father's explanation of how to enter the Padma Vyuha (lotus formation) which was a challenging formation to break into. However Subhadra fell asleep when Arjuna explained how to exit the formation and, as a result, Abhimanyu was unable to hear the remaining portion of the explanation. Hence he was trapped and killed unjustly by the Kauravas. His wife gave birth to Parikshit, their son. |
| Known as Veda Vyasa (the compiler of the sacred texts or Vedas). He was formerly known as Krishna Dwaipanya and was born to Satyavati and sage Parasara. |
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| Known as Hanuman in Ramayana, his name means "broken chin". He is believed to have broken his chin as he tried to "eat" the Sun as he mistook it for a fruit. He is the son of Vayu (Lord of the Wind) and the foster son of Kesari, who served under the monkey King Sugriva's army force. His mother's name is Anjana. |
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| The wife of Barata in India is called Sunanda. |
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| Known as Hidimbi, an ogress who disguised herself as a charming princess to search for potential humans to feed on. This was in accordance to her brother Hidimba's plan. However she ended up falling in love with Bhima and he married her. |
| Known as Partha, Phalguna and Vijaya. He is the son of Lord Indra and Kunti and foster son of King Pandu. |
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| In the Indian version Vasudeva is believed to have two wives, Devaki and Rohini. |
| His name has a striking resemblance to Brihaspati, the preceptor of the Devas (Celestial beings). But his role in the Javanese stories is very different. |
| Not found in the Indian Mahabharata |
| Known as Balarama, he is the elder brother of Krishna. He is also believed to be the reincarnation of Adisesha (the Snake who functions as a bed for Lord Vishnu to rest on). He is known to have taught Bhima and Duryodhana the art of fighting with the mace. He is often depicted carrying a plough. |
| Known as Banumathi, wife of Duryodhana. In the Indian Mahabharata she is depicted as a chaste wife. There is a story where Karna and Banumathi play chess and Banumathi leaves halfway through the game. While Karna tries to reach out his hand to make her continue the game, he accidentally pulls her waist chain and the pearls scatter on the floor. Duryodhana appears at this scene and Karna and Banumati feel embarrassed. Duryodhana, instead of suspecting his friend and wife trusts them and this trust is depicted through his act of picking up the pearls of Banumati's waist chain. |
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| Son of King Dasharata and Queen Kaikeyi. His brothers are Rama, Lakshmana and Shatrughuna. |
| Vasudeva is the biological father of Lord Krishna. His wife is Devaki, sister of the evil King Kamsa. |
| Vayudeva, the god of the winds. Father of Bhima and Hanuman. |
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| Known as Grandsire Bhishma, he is the elder son of Shantanu and step son of Satyavati. |
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| King Bhishmaka ruled the kingdom of Vidarbha. He was was against the marriage of his daughter Rukmini to Lord Krishna. |
| Known as Narakasura. He was born to Vishnu and Bhoomidevi (Goddess of Earth). He was born during the time where Vishnu took the form of Varaha (Boar) to save Bhoomidevi, who was held captive by the demon Hiranyayaksha. Narakasura was vanquished by Lord Krishna and his consort Satyabhama |
| Brahma is the son of Vishnu. He emerges out of his navel seated on a lotus. His consort is Saraswati, goddess of education. |
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| Renuka Devi admired a gandharva who passed by while she was fetching water from the river. As a result she lost the powers she had gained by being a chaste wife. |
| Chitrasena is a gandharva who is cursed by Lord Krishna when he accidentally desecrates the oblations that a sage was making to the Sun God. He saved by Arjuna in the end. |
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| Dasamukha is another name for Ravana in the Ramayana. It means "10 faces." |
| Dhirtirashtra is the biological son of Veda Vyasa and Ambika. When Ambika saw Veda Vyasa, she was afraid of his appearance and she closed her eyes, causing Dhirtirashtra to be born blind. He ruled as the King of Hastinapur as Pandu gave up his crown and retired to the forest with his wives. |
| Known as Devaki, the princess of Mathura. After her marriage with Vasudeva, the aakashavani (divine prophecy from the skies) announced that Kamsa (her brother) would die at the hands of her eight child. Upon hearing this, Kamsa imprisoned both Devaki and Vasudewa and killed every child born to them. He was unsuccessful in killing the 7th and 8th child of the couple. |
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| Known as Draupadi. She is also known as Panchali. She is considered an ayonija (she who is not born out of a mother) as she emerged out of the /yagna/ fire. She is therefore considered powerful and pure. She is married to all five Pandhava in the Indian version. |
| Sage Durvasa a renowned sage who is also known for his short temper. He is said to have been impressed by Kunti's hospitality when he came to Kuntibhoja's palace. He taught her a mantra that would enable her to give her son the qualities of the deity she evoked with it. |
| Known as the goddess who killed Mahishasura, a buffalo headed demon for his atrocities against rishis and deva. She is also the wife of Lord Shiva. |
| Drona is the guru of both the Pandavas and Kauravas. One of his reasons for teaching the Pandavas and Kauravas was to create a strong force to defeat his enemy, King Drupada. |
| He is oldest son of the Dhirtirashtra and Gandhari. He learned the art of mace fighting from Balarama and is believed to have been his favorite. |
| Irawati is the daughter of Prince Uttar (Uttaraa's brother) and the wife of Janmajeya, son of King Parikshit. Balarama is known to have one wife by the name of Revathi. |
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| Garuda is known as the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. He is known as the son of sage Kashyapa and Vinata. |
| Gatotkacha is born to the ogress Hidimbi and prince Bhima. He is often depicted as a giant. He was raised by his mother and helped the Pandavas during the Mahabharata war. He was killed in the end. Even at the point of his death, he fell down in a way such that his body crushed the Kaurava soldiers, hence helping the Pandavas even when he was about to die. |
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| Gandhari is the princess of Gandhar and the daughter of King Subala. Sakuni is her brother. She is the wife of Dhirtirashtra and mother of the Kauravas. Her act of blindfolding her eyes in response to her husband's blindness is regarded as the sign of her chasteness and love towards her husband. |
| The story of Krishna and the false Vasudeva is mentioned the /Amar Chitra Katha/ series. He is Paundraka Vasudeva, the King of Pundara. He sees Krishna as his enemy and also imitates Krishna's attire. |
| Known as Sage Agastya, one of the 18 siddhars (sages) who are considered to be ardent devotees of Lord Shiva. Sage Agastya (who is said to be of Aryan origin) is said to have learnt Tamil from Murugan, the son of Lord Shiva and is said to have mastered the language so well that he even had several disciples under him. He is said to have also vanquished the rakshasas Vatapi and his brother Ilvala who used to devour up innocent sages by disguising themselves as humans and serving sages who passed by their hut and kill them for a meal. Agastya, being aware of this, protects the others from harm by tricking the two rakshasas into killing themselves. |
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| Known as Indra or Devendra, the King of Devas (celestial beings). His wife is known as Indrani. Indra is also mentioned the /Krishna Leela/ (the divine acts of Krishna) whereby the the fellow villagers of Lord Krishna used to perform prayers to ask Lord Indra for rain. However at one point when Krishna told them not to do so, the villagers stopped and this enraged Indra. He punished the villages by causing stormy rains. However Krishna protected the villagers in the end. He is the son of Maharesi Kasyapa and Devi Aditi. |
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| She is known as Jambavati, the daughter of Jambavan. Jambavan was one of the most competent warriors in Rama's army during the war with Ravana in the Ramayana. He is known as the King of bears. Jambavan is also found in the Mahabharata where Krishna asks for the /Syamantaka/ gem of Prasena to be returned back to him. Jambavan refuses to do so and in the end is defeated by Krishna in a combat. He gives his daughter, Jambavati's hand in marriage to Krishna. She changed her shape from a bear to a woman the moment she married Krishna. She is one of the Ashtabharya (eight principle wives) of Lord Krishna. |
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| He is known as Kamadeva, God of love. He is the son of Lakshmi and Vishnu. He gets burned to ashes by Lord Shiva as he distracts him for a moment by striking him with the cupid arrow to reunite him with his consort Parvati. He reincarnates as Pradyumna, son of Lord Krishna and Rukmini. |
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| Kamsa is a brother of Devaki. After Devaki marries Vasudeva, the /aakashavani/ (divine prophecy from the skies) announces that Kamsa will die at the hands of her eight child. Upon hearing this, Kamsa imprisons both Devaki and Vasudewa and kills every child born to them. He is, however unsuccessful in killing the 7th and 8th child of the couple, Krishna, who kills Kamsa, proving the prophecy correct. |
| He is known as the son of Kunti and Surya, the sun God. He is said to have been born with /kavacha kundala/ (an armor and a pair of earrings) that were attached to his body since birth. These were considered to make him unbeatable. Due to this, Indra, the father of Arjuna, worried for his son's safety as Arjuna was Karna's greatest enemy. Knowing Karna's greatly charitable nature, Lord Indra took the form of an elderly man and asked Karna to give him his /kavacha kundalas/ as a donation. Karna immediately obliged and this left Indra shocked and amazed upon his great generosity. He blessed Karna with a weapon in return. |
| In India he is not a Kaurava. |
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| Known as the 9th incarnation of Lord Vishnu, he is the 8th son of Devaki and Vasudeva. |
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| Son of rishi Vishwavasu and rakshasi Kaikesi. He is said to have made a mistake when asking for a boon whereby he asked for /Nidrasana/ (a bed to sleep) instead of /Indrasana/ (the throne of Indra). As a result he went into cycles where we would sleep for six months and stay awake for six months. If this cycle were perturbed he he could die. During the war against Rama, Ravana asked his troops to wake him up before the 6 months were complete. |
| She is known as the adopted daughter of Kuntibhoja. Her biological father is Surasena. She is known as the mother of the Pandavas and of Karna, whom she had with the Sun God before she married Pandhu. |
| King Kuntibhoja is known as the foster father of Kunti. |
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| Lakshmana Kumara is known as the son of Duryodhana. In one of the Indian retellings, he is said to have been the groom that Balarama's daughter Vatsala was supposed to marry. However, in the end Vatsala married Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna and Subhadra. |
| Known as Lakshmana, the third son King of Dasharata and Queen Sumitra. He married Princess Urmila, another daughter of King Janaka. Lakshmana is supposed to have guarded the hut of his brother and sister in law day and night without resting. His wife received a boon from Nidra Devi, the goddess of sleep, to sleep until her husband returned from exile. At that point, she asked the goddess to give her all the tiredness Lakshmana had accrued while guarding the hut. |
| Madri is known as the second wife of Pandu. Due to the curse of a sage, Pandu would die if he were to have intimate contact with any of his wives. Once, in the spur of the moment, Pandu and Madri forgot this and as a result Pandu died. Seeing herself as responsible for his death, Madri also gave up her life, entrusting her sons Nakula and Sahadeva to Kunti. |
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| King Virata was the ruler of the Matsya Kingdom. The Pandavas served him during their final year of exile as they needed to spend that year in disguise. His daughter Uttara married Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu. |
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| He is the originally the son of the Ashwini twins and Kunti. He is believed to be the most handsome amongst the Pandavas. |
| Narada in Hindu mythology is known as a sage who is a /trilokasanjaari/ (the traveler of the three worlds: Heaven, Earth and the Underworld) as he is able to go to any of these three places at will. He is known as the son of Brahma. He said to have been cursed by Daksha his brother, to create conflict amongst people wherever he goes. However, the conflicts that he causes will be a blessing in disguise and lead to the greater good for the people. He is also considered to be a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. |
| There is a story of a snake that entraps Bhima, but the context and ending of the story are very different. The snake is actually Nahusha, Bhima's ancestor who was turned into a snake by sage Agasthya. In the end Bhima helps him redeem himself and return to his previous shape. |
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| Pancawala does not exist in the Indian Mahabarata, where Draupadi is married to all of the Pandavas and bears sons from all of them. Prathivindhya is known as the son of Yudhishtra and Draupadi. He is also known as one of the /upapandavas/ (sons born to each of the Pandavas and Draupadi). |
| Pandu is the son of Veda Vyasa and Ambalika. He was born with a pale color, as his mother's face turned pale when she saw Veda Vyasa's frightening appearance. He was the successor of King Vichitraveerya of the Kuru house but went to the forest after a curse from a sage, handing over the throne to his brother Dhirtirashtra. |
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| Known as sage Parasara, he is the father of Veda Vyasa. Satyavati gives birth to Veda Vyasa before her marriage as second wife to King Shantanu. |
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| Known as Vijaya, the maternal cousin of Sahadeva. Not much is mentioned about Sahadeva's wife apart from Draupadi. |
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| In India, Satyavati corresponds to the Javanese [Durgandini]. In the Sanskrit version, Satyavati is a fisherman's daughter. She was initially known as Matsyagandha ("she who smells of fish"). Shantanu, Bhishma's father, married her as his second wife, after his former wife Ganga (a river goddess) left him for breaking one of the conditions set for the marriage. She then gave birth to Vichitraveerya. |
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| Yudhistra, alias Dharmaraja (the King of righteousness) is the eldest of the Pandava brothers. He is the son of Yama, the god of death and justice (therefore also known as Yamadharmaraja). |
| Rama is known as the King of Ayodhya. He is of the Solar lineage (Suryavamsa) which means he is a descendant of the Sun God. The kingdom is ruled by King Dilipa followed by his son Rahu, Rahu's son Aja, Aja's son Dasharatha and Dasharatha's son Rama. This why he is sometimes addressed as Raghurama or Raghu Kula Rama (hence alluding his Raghu lineage). He was born to Dasharatha and Kausalya, the first wife of Dasharatha. |
| Parashurama is known as the 7th incarnation Lord Vishnu. He is often depicted with an ax. When his father, Jamadagni was killed by Kartaveerya Arjuna (not to be confused with Arjuna of the Pandava brothers), Parashurama went on a mission to kill Kartaveerya and the unjust kshatriyas. He also refused to teach martial arts to any one who was born to the kshatriya caste. He taught Karna but in the end cursed him when he suspected him of being a kshatriya. Although Karna was born into the warrior clan he was unaware of this at that point of time; Karna in fact saw himself as a sudra (lower caste) as he was brought up by charioteer Adiratha and lied to Parashurama about being a brahmin instead; Parashurama himself was born to a brahmin father and kshatriya mother. |
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| Subhadra, sister of Krishna and Balarama, and second wife of Arjuna. |
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| Known as Rukmi, the elder brother of Rukmini. He wanted Shishupala, on of the nephews of Lord Krishna to marry Rukmini and he did not like Krishna. He was strongly opposed to the wedding between Krishna and Rukmini. In his battle with Krishna, he was defeated and had half of his hair and mustache shaved as a form of punishment and public shaming. |
| Rukmini is the first wife of Lord Krishna. She is known as one of his principle wives of Lord Krishna. In the Indian version, their first-born, Pradyumna, became the crowned Prince of Dwaraka. |
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| Sahadeva is known to be the most knowledgeable one amongst the Pandavas. Born to Pandu and Madri, he is said to be well versed in astrology and could understand the language of animals. |
| Salya is the maternal uncle of Madri's sons, Nakul and Sahadeva. He accidentally ended up siding with the Kauravas as Duryodhana tricked him into thinking that his accommodation at the war camp was being provided by him when in fact it had been provided by the Pandavas. As a result, Salya was obliged to help the Kauravas. He still expressed his support for the Pandavas by discouraging Karna when he became his charioteer. |
| Samba is the son of Lord Krishna. He marries Lakshmani, the daughter of Duryodhana. Although Duryodhana was initially opposed to the marriage, he relented in the end. Samba was also seen as the main cause of the destruction of the Yadava clan (Krishna's clan). Many years before the Kurukshetra war, he once decided to test the power of the sages. He dressed up as a pregnant woman and went to the sages to ask whether the unborn child would be male or female. The sages, enraged by this sign of great disrespect, cast a curse saying that "she" was about to "give birth" to an iron material which would cause destruction the entire Yadava race. An iron mace was then ripped out of Samba's thigh. He pounded it and threw it into the sea. The iron dust however was tossed back to the shore of Prabasa and was turned into deadly reeds which the Yadavas used to fight and kill one another with during a heated argument on whose side should they take after witnessing the Kurukshetra war. |
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| Shatrughuna is born to Sumitra, third wife of Dasharatha. He is known as the twin of Lakshmana. |
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| Sakuni is the maternal uncle of the Kauravas. He is plays an important in helping the Kauravas plot against the Pandavas and finds ways to defeat them, including the game of dice where the Pandavas lose their kingdom to the Kauravas. In the Sanskrit version, he is the same as [Gendara]. |
| Satyabhama is known as the second wife and one of the main wives of Lord Krishna. She faced opposition in marrying Krishna from her brother and father. She is seen as the incarnation of the Earth goddess, Bhudevi and is known for her short temper. She was of a strong disposition and even accompanied Lord Krishna during his battle with Narakasura. |
| Known as Satyaki, he is a Yadava chieftain who helped the Pandavas in the Kurukshetra war. |
| Krishna is said to have a daughter by the name of Charumati; however she is born to Rukmini and Krishna. |
| Not much is mentioned about Sahadeva's marriage. He is usually known as one of the husbands of Draupadi. |
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| Known was the monkey king of Kishkinda and the son of the Sun god. He was the brother of Vali (Indra's son) and he helped Rama by lending the support of his Vanara army during Rama's mission to rescue his wife Sita. |
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| Known as Vrushali, she is the wife of Karna and the daughter of Shalya. |
| Surya is known as the son of Aditi (Daksha's daughter) and Sage Kashyapa. He forms a part of the /navagrahas/ (the nine planets). |
| There is a character with a similar name in some Sanskrit retellings, who marries Karenumati, Princess of Chedi. |
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| In most Indian retellings, Vasudeva is usually mentioned to have two wives Devaki and Rohini. There is no mentioning of him having children out of wedlock. |
| Ugrasena is known as the father of Kamsa and Devaki and grandson of Krishna and Balarama. He is imprisoned by Kamsa when he seizes his throne. |
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| Known as Bhima, Hanuman's younger brother and the second Pandava. |
| Vibisana is the younger brother of Ravana. In the Indian Ramayana, he is a giant, not a human. |
| Not mentioned in the Indian Mahabharata |
| Not mentioned in the Indian Mahabharata |
| Vishnu is known as The Preserver. He is the brother of Uma and brother-in-law of Lord Shiva. He is famous for his Dasavatar (10 incarnations). |
| Not mentioned in the Indian Mahabharata |
| Not mentioned in the Indian Mahabharata |
| Yama is the lord of death. |
| Vidura was the prime minister in the court of Hastinapura. He was born to Veda Vyasa and one of the maid-servants in the Kuru. He was viewed as a wise man who provided strong support to the Pandavas although he was often placed in a tough spot due to his royal allegiance to the Kuru house (where the Kauravas resided) and to his sense of consciousness when he witnessed many instances of unfair treatment towards the Pandavas. |
| Narada in Hindu mythology is not known to have a vehicle. He was known as trilokasanjaari (the traveler of the three worlds: Heaven, Earth and the Underworld) as he was able to go to any of these places at will. He was known as the son of Brahma and ardent devotee of Vishnu. |
| Not found in the Indian Mahabharata |