

sūya (imperial inauguration) and taken the avabhṛta-snāna (the bath at the end of the sacrifice).”

AVĀCĪNA. The son born to Jayatsena, a King of the Pūru dynasty, by his wife Śuśrāva the princess of Vidarbha. To him was born Ariha of Maryādā the princess of Vidarbha. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 95, Stanzas 17 and 18).

AVADHŪTESVARA. An incarnation of Śiva. Once Indra and Bṛhaspati went to Kailāsa to do homage to Śiva who clad in air only hindered their way. Indra requested that person to get out of the way. He requested repeatedly several times but in vain. Indra who got angry took his weapon of Vajra. But Śiva froze it. Moreover fire emanated from his eye on the forehead. At the request of Bṛhaspati Śiva turned the fire from his eye towards Lavaṇa Samudra (the sea of Salt). Jalandhara who was killed by Śiva had his origin in this fire. (Śiva Purāṇa).

AVAGĀHA. A warrior of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty. (Mahābhārata, Droṇa Parva, Chapter 11, Stanza 27).

AVAIŚĀKHA. (See Dhanaśarmā).

AVĀKĪRṆA(M). A holy place on the bank of the river Sarasvatī. (M.B., Śalya Parva, Chapter 41).

AVANTI. A country called Mālava in ancient India. The famous Ujjayinī was the capital of Avanti. This city is situated on the bank of Śiprā. The renowned poets such as Kālidāsa and others, lived in this city. This is one of the seven cities considered to be capable of giving Mokṣa (heavenly bliss). (M.B., Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Stanza 43).

AVANTI VAMŚA. (The Dynasty of Avanti). The dynasty of Avanti Kings had its origin in the Yadu dynasty. Candra was born to Atri the son of Brahmā. Budha was born to Candra, Purūravas to Budha, Āyus to Purūravas, Nahuṣa to Āyus, Yayāti to Nahuṣa and Yadu to Yayāti. Yadu had five sons, the eldest of whom was known by the name Sahasrajit. The rest of them were known as Nilāñjika, Raghu, Kroṣṭu and Śatajit.

Sahasrajit had three sons called Śatajit, Haihaya and Reṇuhaya. Dharmanetra was born to Haihaya, Sahana to Dharmanetra, Mahimān to Sahana, Bhadrāsena to Mahimān, Durgama to Bhadrāsena and Kanaka to Durgama. From Kanaka were born the four sons Kṛtavīrya, Kṛtāgni, Karavīra and Kṛtauja. Arjuna (Kārttavīryārjuna) was born as the son of Kṛtavīrya.

Arjuna renowned as Kārttavīrya became the supreme lord of the earth comprising the Saptadvīpa (Seven Islands) by the merits of his penance. He got invincibility and thousand hands in battles, as boons. He performed ten thousand sacrifices all in conformity with the rules and regulations. To escape from loss of wealth one had only to remember his name. It was ordered that Kings other than Kārttavīrya, however great the extent of their might and prowess, and the number of sacrifices, offering of alms and penance done be, would not stand on a par with him.

Kārttavīrya had a hundred sons, of whom the most famous were Śūrasena, Śūra, Dhṛṣṭa, Kṛṣṇa, and Jayadhva. Jayadhva the most renowned of these five ruled in Avanti as King. Tālajaṅgha who had several sons, was born from Jayadhva.

The family of the Haihayas was split into five. They were the Bhojas, the Avantī family, the Vītihoṭra family, the Svayamjātā family and the Śauṇḍikeya family. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 275)

AVARODHA. A King of the family of Bharata.

AVASĀNAM. An ancient Bath in Bhārata. One could attain the merits of Sahasragodāna (giving a thousand cows as alms) by bathing in this holy bath. (M.B., Vana Parva, Chapter 82, Stanza 128).

AVATĀRA. (Incarnation). The incarnations of Mahāviṣṇu:—

1) *General information.* God takes three kinds of incarnations such as avatāra, āveśa and aṁśa. That which has full power is avatāra; that which has power only for the time being is āveśa and partial incarnation in aṁśavatāra.* The incarnations of Viṣṇu are countless. Hermits, Manus, Devas (gods) and sons of Manus are incarnations in part (aṁśavatāras) of Viṣṇu. Complete avatāras are ten in numbers of which Balabhadra Rāma is not considered as an avatāra by some. Instead of him they place Buddha.

b) *Reason for the incarnations.* Mahāviṣṇu has taken so many incarnations in the world. In the Śrī Mahādevī Bhāgavata a story occurs to the effect that Mahāviṣṇu was forced to take so large a number of incarnations due to the curse of the great hermit Bhṛgu. The story is as follows: Kaśyapa had a son named Kaśipu. He was daring and brave and ruled the country as an enemy of the Gods. There arose a severe battle between the gods and the Asuras. Kaśipu was killed in that battle. After Kaśipu his son Prahlāda became King. He too was an enemy of the Gods. So there was a battle between Indra and Prahlāda. The battle continued for a hundred years. At last Prahlāda was defeated. He felt very sorry at the defeat. So he anointed Bali, son of Virocana, as King and leaving the Kingdom he went to the Gandhamādāna and began to do penance. The fight continued between Bali and Indra. In this fight Mahāviṣṇu helped Indra. The Asuras were completely destroyed. The defeated Asuras went to their teacher Śukra who promised to protect them by spells and incantations and herbs. The Gods knew that Śukra had undertaken to protect the asuras.

Leaving the asuras behind, Śukra went to Kailāsa to get more power of spells and incantations from Śiva. Before going to Kailāsa Śukra had asked the Asuras to wait for him with faith. After this the Asuras sent Prahlāda to the Gods for a truce. Prahlāda, though an Asura was in good favour with the Gods. He reached the court of Indra and said, “Gods, we have no desire at all for war. We have decided to spend the remaining period in penance wearing barks of trees and tufts of hair. How wicked a deed is battle and how delightful it is to become a devotee of God! So hereafter you will not be troubled by us. Likewise I hope you will not do us innocent people any harm.”

The gods believed Prahlāda. The Asuras, in the guise of hermits waited for Śukra in the hermitage of Kaśyapa. Śukra reached Kailāsa and bowed before Śiva and requested that he might be given the power of defeating the Gods by some means quite unknown to Bṛhaspati the teacher of the devas (Gods). Śiva was in

*See Aṁśavatāra.