

and so she would become his son's wife in due course. In course of time, Pratīpa had a son, Śantanu, born to him. When Śantanu grew up into a young man, one day he went for a hunt to the Gaṅgā-valley and there he met Gaṅgādevī. He fell in love with her at first sight and courted her. Gaṅgādevī agreed to become his wife on condition that he should not say anything to displease her and if he violated that condition she would leave him. The king accepted the condition and they became man and wife.

At about that time, the wife of Dyo, one of the Aṣṭavasus, happened to see the sacrificial cow of the sage Vasiṣṭha and wished to have it. She expressed her desire to her husband, Dyo. Dyo, with the other seven vasus went and took away by force, Vasiṣṭha's cow. Vasiṣṭha in his anger cursed the Aṣṭavasus to be born as mortals. They repented and begged pardon from Vasiṣṭha. The sage told them that all of them would be born as the sons of Gaṅgādevī and all except Dyo, who actually stole the cow, would return to Heaven at the time of birth itself. As for Dyo, he would continue to live in the world for a long time, as an adventurous hero.

Gaṅgādevī became pregnant and gave birth to her first child. She carried the child to the river Gaṅgā and threw it into the river. Śantanu who followed her up to the river bank, did not say anything against her, remembering his promise.

Seven children were born to her and she threw all of them into the river in this way. When she gave birth to the eighth child, Śantanu insisted that he would not allow her to throw away that child into the river. As he had violated the condition, the angry Gaṅgādevī left the palace with her child. She named it Devavrata and brought him up in the forest. The sage Vasiṣṭha and Gaṅgādevī taught him all branches of knowledge. Thirtytwo years later, the king went to the same forest for hunting. He saw a handsome boy stopping the flow of the river Gaṅgā. Getting interested in the boy, the King approached him. But by that time he had disappeared. The King prayed to Gaṅgādevī to give back the child. She appeared with the child and after handing over the child to him vanished. The king returned to the palace with the child. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapters 95-100).

3) *The name Bhīṣma.* Devavrata was anointed, as heir-apparent. One day King Śantanu reached the forest near the Gaṅgā river valley, for hunting. As he was hunting, absorbed in the beauty of the forest scenery, he felt the perfume of musk filling the air in the forest. He wondered from where it could come. He went on and on trying to find out the source of this smell until he reached the cottage of a fisherman. The fisherman had a daughter named Satyavatī. It was from her that the fragrance of musk spread all around.<sup>1</sup> The king fell in love with her at first sight. He asked the fisherman to give the girl in marriage to him. But the brave fisher-

man did not yield to the king's demand immediately. He laid down several conditions, one of which was that Satyavatī's sons should succeed to the throne of Śantanu. The king was in a fix. Devavrata was the eldest son and heir-apparent. To deny kingship to his sons would be highly improper. Unable to find a solution to this difficult problem, the king returned to the palace, much depressed and gloomy. There he avoided all company and took to his bed, passing his time in sadness and solitude.

When Devavrata knew about his father's condition, he called the Ministers and asked them about it. They told him everything in details. At once, without informing even his father, Devavrata went to the fisherman's cottage on the bank of the river Gaṅgā and begged for Satyavatī on behalf of his father. The fisherman repeated his former condition. Devavrata agreed that Satyavatī's son shall be given the right of Kingship. The fisherman pointed out that disputes were likely to arise between Devavrata's sons and Satyavatī's children regarding the right of succession to the throne. At once Devavrata stood up and made a solemn pledge that he would remain a bachelor for life. The fisherman gave Satyavatī to Devavrata to be taken to the King. Devavrata took her to the palace and presented her to his father. The King, when he came to know of the part played by his son in the matter, rose from his bed and embraced Devavrata with tears of joy and gratitude. The gods showered flowers on the scene. Because he had taken such a solemn oath, it was declared that henceforth he would be known by the name "BHĪṢMA". The loving father Śantanu also gave him a boon that Bhīṣma would die only when he wished. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 100).

4) *Affairs of the Kingdom in crisis.* Two sons named Vicitravīrya and Citrāṅgada were born to Satyavatī by Śantanu, who died shortly afterwards. As desired by Satyavatī, Bhīṣma crowned the boy Citrāṅgada as king. Although Citrāṅgada's reign was a prosperous one, it could not last long. Once a Gandharva named Citrāṅgada attacked him at Kurukṣetra and after a battle which lasted for three years, the Gandharva Citrāṅgada killed the King Citrāṅgada. It was Bhīṣma who performed the funeral rites of the King Citrāṅgada. After that Vicitravīrya was crowned King.

It was at that time that the Svayamvara of the three daughters of the King of Kāśī, Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā, was held. Bhīṣma thought that it would be good if Vicitravīrya married them. So Bhīṣma attended that function. The presence of Bhīṣma who was an old man, at the Svayamvara, frightened the girls. The other kings who were present, stopped him from entering the place, since he had taken an oath to remain a life-long bachelor. The old Bhīṣma stood up and spoke at length about the eight different forms of marriage and after defeating several kings like Śālva, he seized the three daughters of the King of Kāśī and took them with

1. Satyavatī's original name was Kālī. The fisherman got her from the stomach of a fish. (See the word Adrikā). Since she had the smell of fish she got the name of "Matsyagandhī." She used to assist a fisherman in his work as a ferryman in the river Gaṅgā. Once the sage Parāśara happened to get into her boat and he fell deeply in love with her. The sage removed the smell of fish from her and gave her the perfume of musk instead. By this mystic power he created a mist at noon and under its cover, he had a sexual union with her. As a result of it the child Kṛṣṇa (Vyāsa) was born. The child immediately left the mother to perform tapas in the forest after promising to return to her whenever she wished for his presence. Although she gave birth to a child, Parāśara blessed that she would again remain a virgin. The whole episode remained a secret. As usual, Satyavatī returned to the fisherman's cottage in the evening and continued to live with him. It is at this stage that Śantanu was attracted by the perfume of musk and came to the cottage where he met Satyavatī.