

SUBHĀṄGADA. A king. This king had attended Draupadi's Svayamvara. (Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 185, Verse 22).

SUBHĀṄGĪ. A virgin born in the Dāśārha tribe. Kuru, King of the Lunar dynasty married her. They had a son named Vidūra. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 95, Verse 39).

SUBHĀṢANA. A king of Solar line son of Yuyudhāna and father of Śruta. (Bhāgavata, 9th Skandha).

SUBHAVAKTRĀ. A female attendant of Subrahmanya. (M.B. Śalya Parva, Chapter 46, Verse 7).

SUBHĪMA. A son of Pāñcājanyāgni called Tapa. This Agni is one of the fifteen Agnis which cause hindrances in Yajñas. Subhīma, Atibhīma, Bhīma, Bhīmabala, Bala, Sumitra, Mitravān, Mitrajña, Mitravardhana, Mitradharman, Surapavira, Vira, Suvarcas, Veśa and Surahantā are the fifteen Agnis which cause hindrances in Yajñas. (Vana Parva, Chapter 220, Verse 11).

SUBHRĀJA. One of the two attendants given to Subrahmanya by Sūrya, the other one being Bhāsvara. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Verse 31).

SUBHRŪ. A female attendant of Subrahmanya. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 46, Verse 8).

SUBHŪMIKA. A holy place of ancient days in the plains of river Sarasvatī where Apsarās used to come daily and bathe. Deva-Gandharvas visit this place every month. Śrī Kṛṣṇa bathed there once and distributed money to brahmins. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 37).

SUBRAHMANYĀ. Son of Śiva.

1) *Reason for birth.* A son named Vajrāṅga was born to Kaśyapaprajāpati by his wife Danu and he married a girl called Varāṅgī. Vajrāṅga performed penance to Brahmā so that he might shed his āsuric aspect. When he came out of his penance, Varāṅgī was missing and he wandered about the forest in search of her. Finally he saw Varāṅgī crying under a tree. When he asked her the reason for her weeping, she told him about harassments by Brahmā during the thousand years when Vajrāṅga was immersed in trance. Indra one day threw about the vessels used by her in worship, appearing before her in the guise of a monkey; on another occasion he threatened her in the form of a lion and on a third occasion he came disguised as a snake and bit on her legs. Very much grieved over the story Vajrāṅga again took to penance with the grim determination to punish Indra and when Brahmā appeared before him he prayed for the boon of a son who would surpass the Devas including Indra in prowess. Brahmā granted him the boon. Varāṅgī delivered a son twelve months after the boon. The child was christened Tārakāsura.

Tārakāsura, as a child, began practising penance and Brahmā duly appeared before him and granted him the boon that if he were to die, he would die at the hands of a child only seven days old. Haughty over the boon Tārakāsura very soon conquered the three worlds. The devas found no means to suppress the asura. Children would not be born to them and there was a reason for it. Once Śiva and Pārvatī started the marital act and it did not come to a close even after a hundred divya - years, with the result that the world shook like anything. Frightened at this the Devas requested Śiva to stop the act and he obliged them. Then he asked them who would bear the semen which had been discharged and they replied, "Let earth itself bear the

semen." Accordingly it was discharged on the earth. It filled and over-flowed forests and mountains. What next was the problem. Ultimately the Devas asked Agni (fire) to consume it. When Agni consumed and burnt it down absolutely, the ashes thereof formed into a white hill and it became a forest.

Pārvatī did not at all relish the action of the devas and spoke to them thus: "You prevented my sexual intercourse entered into with the desire to have a son. Therefore, in future you will not have children by your wives." Pārvatī cursed the earth also as follows: "You will become one of various forms and also a wife to many people. You, who prevented me from having a son, will not enjoy happiness from children." (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa, Canto 36).

Tārakāsura could be killed only by a child not more than seven days old and the Devas realised that such a child could be begot only by Śiva. It was the occasion when Śiva was lamenting over the death of Satī and Pārvatī was doing penance to secure Śiva as husband. None could stir Śiva immersed in deep meditation and the Devas entrusted the responsibility for it to Kāmadeva. Not only did Kāma not succeed in the endeavour but also he got reduced to ashes by the fire from Śiva's eyes. When Pārvatī's penance reached its climax Śiva appeared before her and wedded her.

2). *Birth of Subrahmanya.* Because of the power of Śiva's semen consumed by Agni, his glow began getting diminished. Agni complained of it to the Devas who sent him over to Brahmā. On his way to Brahmā Agni met Gaṅgādevī whom he told thus: "I can in no way bear this semen of Śiva and if I get rid of it, it will burn the entire world. So, you please take charge of it so that you will have a noble son. Gaṅgā's reply to this was simply to ask Agni to throw the semen into her waters and Agni did so. As the semen had remained with Agni for nearly 5000 years, his flesh, blood hair, eye etc. had become golden in colour and hence Agni came to be called from that day onwards Hiraṇyaretas.

Time passed by and the semen of Śiva became a burden to Gaṅgā. She complained about that to Brahmā. Brahmā asked her from whom she had received the semen. Gaṅgā detailed her story to him and concluded by saying that though it was 5000 years since Śiva's semen was put into her, she did not deliver yet. Then Brahmā told her as follows: "You go to the Udaya mountain (where the sun rises). There is a forest there, a forest hundred crores of yojanas in extent, where Śara, a particular variety of grass (Saccharam munja Roxb) grows. You deposit the semen there and a male child will be born after 10,000 years.

As directed by Brahmā Gaṅgā went to the Udaya mountain and deposited the foetus there through her mouth.

By the power of Śiva's semen all the trees and animals and birds in the forest became golden in colour. When 10,000 years were completed a child, as effulgent as the rising sun, was born and Subrahmanya was the child. The child cried in a thunderous voice and six divine Kṛttikās who came that way saw the child and taking pity on it vied with one another to breast-feed it. Since the child looked at the six Kṛttikās one after the other it developed six faces and since it was breast-fed by Kṛttikās it came to be named Kārttikeya as well.