

Title

**THE
VISHNÚ
PURÁÑA**

The Fourth Book

*A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition
Translated from the original Sanscrit
and
illustrated by Notes derived chiefly from other Puranas*

*by
H. H. Wilson*

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The Fourth Book

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Chapter I

Dynasties of kings. Origin of the solar dynasty from Brahmá. Sons of the Manu Vaivaswata. Transformations of Ilá or Sudyumna. Descendants of the sons of Vaivaswat; those of Nedishtha. Greatness of Marutta. Kings of Vaiśáli. Descendants of Śaryāti. Legend of Raivata; his daughter Revatí married to Balaráma.

MAITREYA. - Venerable preceptor, you have explained to me the perpetual and occasional ceremonies which are to be performed by those righteous individuals who are diligent in their devotions; and you have also described to me the duties which devolve upon the several castes, and on the different orders of the human race. I have now to request you will relate to me the dynasties of the kings who have ruled over the earth¹.

PARÁŚARA. - I will repeat to you, Maitreya, an account of the family of Manu, commencing with Brahma, and graced by a number of religious, magnanimous, and heroic princes. Of which it is said, "The lineage of him shall never be extinct, who daily calls to mind the race of Manu, originating with Brahma²." Listen therefore, Maitreya, to the entire series of the princes of this family, by which all sin shall be effaced.

Before the evolution of the mundane egg, existed Brahma, who was Hiranyagarbha, the form of that supreme Brahma which consists of Vishnu as identical with the Rig, Yajur, and Sama Vedas; the primeval, uncreated cause of all worlds. From the right thumb of Brahma was born the patriarch Daksha³; his daughter was Aditi, who was the mother of the sun. The Manu Vaivaswata was the son of the celestial luminary; and his sons were Ikshwaku, Nriga, Dhrishtha, Śaryāti, Narishyanta, Prans'u, Nabhaga, Nedishta, Karusha, and Prishadhra⁴. Before their birth, the Manu being desirous of sons, offered a sacrifice for that purpose to Mitra and Varuna; but the rite being deranged, through an irregularity of the ministering priest, a

¹ The complete series of the different dynasties is found elsewhere only in the Váyu, the Brahmánda (which is the same), the Matsya, and the Bhágavata Puráñas. The Bráhma P. and the Hari Vanśa, the Agni, Linga, Kúrma, and Garúda Puráñas have lists of various extent, but none beyond the families of Páñdu and Krishná. The Márkañdeya contains an account of a few of the kings of the solar dynasty alone; and the Padma, of a part of the solar and lunar princes only, besides accounts of individuals. In the Rámáyána, Mahábhárata, and in the other Puráñas, occasional short genealogies and notices of individual princes occur. In general there is a tolerable conformity, but this is not invariably the case, as we shall have occasion to observe.

² In the historical passages of all the Puráñas in which such occur, and especially in the Vishnú and Váyu, verses, apparently the fragments of a more ancient narrative, are frequently cited. It may also be noticed, as a peculiarity of this part of the Purána, that the narration is in prose.

³ Daksha is elsewhere said to have been one of the mind-born sons of Brahmá, or to have been the son of the Prachetasas:

⁴ According to the nomenclature sometimes followed, and as we shall have reason to conclude intended in this place, there are ten sons of Manu. The commentator regards them, however, as but nine, considering Nabháganedishta but one name, or Nedishtha the father of Nábhága. The number is generally stated to be nine, although there is some variety in the names, particularly in this name, which occurs Nábhágadishtha, Nábhágarishtha; and also separated, as Nábhága, Nabhaga, or Nabhága; Nedishtha, Dishtha, and Arishtha: the latter, as in the Kúrma, distinctly stated. Again, Bráhma P. The commentator on the Hari Vanśa quotes the Vedas for Nábhágadishtha: but the name occurs as Nábhánedishta in the Aitareya Bráhmaña of the Rigveda, where a story is told of his being excluded from all share of his inheritance, on the plea of his being wholly devoted to a religious life. See also As. Res. VIII. 384. The name as ordinarily written, Na-bhága, 'no-share,' has nevertheless an obvious connexion with the legend. The name of Nriga is found only in our text, the Padma, and the Bhágavata: the Váyu has Najava. Pránśu is also the reading of the Váyu and Agni, but not of the rest, which have Veña, Vanya, Dañda, Kuśanábha or Kavi, in its place. The Mahábhárata, Adi P., p. 113, has Veña, Dhrishnú, Narishyanta, Nábhága, Ikshwáku, Kárúsha, Śaryāti, Ilá, Prishadhra, and Nábhágárishta. The Padma P., in the Pátála Khañda, says there were 'ten,' and names them Ikshwáku, Nriga, Dishtha, Dhrishtha, Karúsha, Śaryāti, Narishyanta, Prishadhra, Nábhága, and Kavi.

daughter, Ila, was produced⁵. Through the favour of the two divinities, however, her sex was changed, and she became a man, named Sudyumna. At a subsequent period, in consequence of becoming subject to the effects of a malediction once pronounced by Ś'iva, Sudyumna was again transformed to a woman in the vicinity of the hermitage of Budha, the son of the deity of the moon. Budha saw and espoused her, and had by her a son named Pururavas. After his birth, the illustrious Rishis, desirous of restoring Sudyumna to his sex, prayed to the mighty Vishnu, who is the essence of the four Vedas, of mind, of everything, and of nothing; and who is in the form of the sacrificial male; and through his favour Ila once more became Sudyumna, in which character he had three sons, Utkala, Gaya, and Vinata⁶.

In consequence of his having been formerly a female, Sudyumna was excluded from any share in his paternal dominions; but his father, at the suggestion of Vasishtha, bestowed upon him the city Pratishtana⁷, and he gave it to Pururavas.

⁵ That sacrifice being wrongly offered, through the improper invocations of the Hotri.' It is also read 'frustrated.' This is rather a brief and obscure allusion to what appears to be an ancient legend, and one that has undergone various modifications. According to the Matsya, no change of sex took place in the first instance. The eldest son of Manu was Ida or Ila, whom his father appointed sovereign of the seven Dwípas. In his progress round his dominions, Ila came to the forest of Śambhu or Śiva; entering into which, he was changed to a female, Ilá, agreeably to a promise made formerly by Śiva to Párvatí, who had been once unseasonably broken in upon by some sages, that such a transformation should be inflicted on every male who trespassed upon the sacred grove. After a season, the brothers of Ila sought for him, and finding him thus metamorphosed, applied to Vaśishtha, their father's priest, to know the cause. He explained it to them, and directed them to worship Śiva and his bride. They did so, accordingly; and it was announced by the deities, that, upon the performance of an Aśwamedha by Ikshwáku, Ila should become a Kimpurusha, named Sudyumna, and that he should be a male one month, and a female another month, alternately. The Váyú, which is followed by most of the other authorities, states, that upon Manu's offering their share of the sacrifice to Mitra and Varuńa, instead of a boy, a girl was born: according to the Vedas. Manu desired her to follow him; whence her name Ilá (from ila or ida, 'come'. There, however, Manu propitiates Mitra and Varuńa, and the girl Ilá is changed into the boy Ila or Sudyumna by their favour: as the Márkańdeya. Sudyumna's subsequent change to a female again, is told much as in the Matsya; but his being alternately male and female is not mentioned in the Váyú any more than it is in our text. The Bhágavata agrees in that respect with the Matsya, but it has evidently embellished the earlier part of the legend by the introduction of another character, Śraddhá, the wife of the Manu. It is said that it was by her instigation, as she was desirous of having a girl, that the ministering Brahmans altered the purpose of the rite, in consequence of which a girl, instead of a boy, was born. The similarity of the name has induced the learned author of the Origin of Pagan Idolatry to conceive that he has found the Ila of the Hindus in the Il or Ilus of the Phœnicians. "The Phœnician Il is the masculine Ila of the Hindus and Indo-Scythæ, and Ila was a title of Manu or Buddha, who was preserved in the ark at the time of the deluge:" I. 156: and he thence concludes that Ila must be Noah; whilst other circumstances in his Phœnician history identify him with Abraham. I. 159. Again; "Ilus or Il is a regular Cuthic name of Buddha, which the Phœnicians, I have no doubt, brought with them; for Buddha or Manu, in the character of Ina, is said to have married his own daughter, who is described as the offspring of an ancient personage that was preserved in an ark at the time of the deluge." I. 223. Now whatever connexion there may be between the names of Ila, Il, Ilus, Ilium, Ilá 'the earth,' and Ilos 'slime,' there is no very obvious resemblance between the Pauráńik legends of Ilá and the Mosaic record; nor do the former authorize the particulars of Ina stated by Mr. Faber, on the authority probably of Col. Wilford. The Manu Satyavrata, who was preserved in the ark, is never called Ila, nor is he the father of Ilá. Buddha was not so preserved, nor is Ila ever a title of Buddha. Budha (not Buddha), the husband of Ilá, never appears as her father, nor is he a Manu, nor is she the daughter of any ancient personage preserved in an ark. There is not therefore, as far as I am aware, any circumstance in the history of Ila or Ilá which can identify either with Abraham or Noah.

⁶ The Matsya calls the name of the third Haritáśwa; the Váyú &c., Vinatáśwa; the Márkańdeya, Vinaya; and the Bhágavata, Vimala. All but the last agree in stating that Utkala (Orissa) and Gaya in Behar are named after the two first. The Matsya calls the third the sovereign of the east, along with the Kauravas; the Váyú makes him king of the west. The Bhágavata calls them all three rulers of the south.

⁷ The authorities agree in this location of Sudyumna. Pratishtána was situated on the eastern side of the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna; the country between which rivers was the territory of the direct male descendants of Vaivaswata. In the Hari Vaasa it is said that he reigned in Pratishtána, having killed Dhrishfaka, Ambarísha, and Dańda. M. Langlois had no doubt 79-4: in his copy, as he renders it, 'Il donna naissance à trois enfans;' though, as he observes, Hamilton had called these the sons of Ikshwáku. The Bráhma P. has not this

Of the other sons of the Manu, Prishadhra, in consequence of the crime of killing a cow, was degraded to the condition of a Śúdra⁸. From Karusha descended the mighty warriors termed Karushas (the sovereigns of the north⁹). The son of Nedishtha, named Nabhaga, became a Vaiśya¹⁰: his son was Bhalandana¹¹; whose son was the celebrated Vatsapri¹²: his son was Pransu; whose son was Prajani¹³; whose son was Khanitra¹⁴; whose son was the very valiant Chakshupa¹⁵; whose son was Vinśa¹⁶; whose son was Vivinśati¹⁷; whose son was Khaninetra; whose son was the powerful, wealthy, and valiant Karandhama¹⁸; whose son was Avikshi (or Avikshit¹⁹); whose son was the mighty Marutta, of whom this well known verse is recited;

passage, nor does the commentator on the Hari Vanśa give any explanation; neither does anything of the kind occur elsewhere. We have however, subsequently in the text, Dańda named as a son of Ikshwáku; and in the Padma P., Srishńi Khańda, and in the Uttara Khańda of the Rámáyána, we have a detailed narrative of Dańda, the son of Ikshwáku, whose country was laid waste by an imprecation of Bhárgava, whose daughter that prince had violated. His kingdom became in consequence the Dańdaka forest. The Mahábhárata, Dána Dharma, alludes to the same story. If therefore the preferable reading of the Hari Vanśa be Suta, 'son,' it is at variance with all other authorities. At the same time it must be admitted, that the same work is singular in asserting any collision between Dańda and his brothers and Sudyumna, and the passage seems to have grown out of that careless and ignorant compilation which the Hari Vanśa so perpetually presents. It is not improbably a gratuitous perversion of this passage in the Matsya; 'Ambarísha was the son of Nábhága; and Dhrishńa had three sons.'

⁸ This story has been modified apparently at different periods, according to a progressive horror of the crime. Our text simply states the fact. The Váyu says he was hungry, and not only killed, but ate the cow of his spiritual preceptor, Chyavana. In the Márkańdeya he is described as being out a hunting, and killing the cow of the father of Bábhavya, mistaking it for a Gavaya or Gayal. The Bhágvata, as usual, improves upon the story, and says that Prishadhra was appointed by his Guru Vaśishńha to protect his cattle. In the night a tiger made his way into the fold, and the prince in his haste, and in the dark, killed the cow upon which he had fastened, instead of the tiger. In all the authorities the effect is the same, and the imprecation of the offended sage degraded Prishadhra to the caste of a Śúdra. According to the Bhágvata, the prince led a life of devotion, and perishing in the flame of a forest, obtained final liberation. The obvious purport of this legend, and of some that follow, is to account for the origin of the different castes from one common ancestor.

⁹ The Bhágvata also places the Kárúshas in the north; but the country of the Kárúshas is usually placed upon the Parípátra or Vindhya mountains.

¹⁰ The Váyu has Nábhága, the son of Arishńa; the Márkańdeya has, the son of Dishńa; the Bhágvata also calls him the son of Dishńa. According to that authority, he became a Vaiśya by his actions. The other Puráńas generally agree that the descendants of this person became Vaiśyas; but the Matsya and Váyu do not notice it. The Márkańdeya details a story of Nábhága's carrying off and marrying the daughter of a Vaiśya; in consequence of which he was degraded, it is said, to the same caste, and deprived of his share of the patrimonial sovereignty, which his son and successor recovered. The Bráhma P. and Hari Vanśa assert that two sons of Nábhágarishńa again became Brahmans; but the duties of royalty imply the Kshatriya caste of his posterity; and the commentator on our text observes that the son of Nábhága was born before his father's degradation, and consequently the race continued Kshatriya; an assertion unsupported by any authority, and it must therefore appear that a race of Vaiśya princes was recognised by early traditions.

¹¹ Bhanandana: Bhágvata.

¹² Vatsaprińi: Bhágvata. Vatsasrińi: Márkańdeya. The latter has a story of the destruction of the Daitya Kujámbha by Vidúratha, the father of Sunandá, the wife of Vatsasrińi. The Váyu has Sahasrári.

¹³ Pramati: Bhágvata.

¹⁴ According to the Márkańdeya, the priests of the royal family conspired against this prince, and were put to death by his ministers.

¹⁵ Chakshusha: Bhágvata.

¹⁶ Vira: Márkańdeya.

¹⁷ Rambha precedes Vivinśati: Bhágvata.

¹⁸ Baláśwa or Balakáśwa or Subaláśwa, according to the Márkańdeya, which explains his name Karandhama to denote his creation of an army, when besieged by his revolted tributaries, by breathing on his hands.

¹⁹ Both forms occur, as the commentator observes. The Márkańdeya has a long story of this prince's carrying off the daughter of Viśála, king of Vaidiśa. Being attacked and captured by his confederated rivals, he was rescued by his father, but was so much mortified by his disgrace, that he vowed never to marry nor reign. The princess, also becoming an ascetic, met with him in the woods, and they were finally espoused; but Avikshit kept his other

"There never was beheld on earth a sacrifice equal to the sacrifice of Marutta: all the implements and utensils were made of gold. Indra was intoxicated with the libations of Soma juice, and the Brahmans were enraptured with the magnificent donations they received. The winds of heaven encompassed the rite as guards, and the assembled gods attended to behold it²⁰." Marutta was a Chakravarti, or universal monarch: he had a son named Narishyanta²¹; his son was Dama²²; his son was Rajyavarddhana; his son was Sudhriti; his son was Nara; his son was Kevala; his son was Bandhumat; his son was Vegavat; his son was Budha²³; his son was Trinavindu, who had a daughter named Ilavila²⁴. The celestial nymph Alambusha becoming enamoured of Trinavindu, bore him a son named Vaiśálí, by whom the city Vaisali was founded²⁵.

The son of the first king of Vaiśálí was Hemachandra; his son was Suchandra; his son was Dhumras'wa; his son was Srinjaya²⁶; his son was Sahadeva²⁷; his son was Kris'as'wa; his son was Somadatta, who celebrated ten times the sacrifice of a horse; his son was Janamejaya; and his son was Sumati²⁸. These were the kings of Vaiśálí; of whom is said, "By the favour of Trinavindu all the monarchs of Vaiśálí were long lived, magnanimous, equitable, and valiant."

vow, and relinquished his succession in favour of his son, who succeeded to the kingdoms of both Karandhama and Viśála.

²⁰ Most of our authorities quote the same words, with or without addition. The Váyu adds, that the sacrifice was conducted by Samvartta, whom the Bhágavata terms a Yogi, the son of Angiras; and that Vrihaspati was so jealous of the splendour of the rite, that a great quarrel ensued between him and Samvartta. How it involved the king is not told, but apparently in consequence, Marutta, with his kindred and friends, was taken by Samvartta to heaven. According to the Márkaṇḍeya, Marutta was so named from the paternal benediction, 'May the winds be thine,' or 'be propitious to thee.' He reigned, agreeably to that record, 85000 years.

²¹ Omitted in the Bhágavata.

²² A rather chivalric and curious story is told of Dama in the Márkaṇḍeya. His bride Sumaná, daughter of the king Daśárha, was rescued by him from his rivals. One of them, Bapushmat, afterwards killed Marutta, who had retired into the woods, after relinquishing his crown to his son. Dama in retaliation killed Bapushmat, and made the Pińda, or obsequial offering to his father, of his flesh: with the remainder he fed the Brahmans of Rákshasa origin: such were the kings of the solar race.

²³ The Bhágavata has Bandhavat, Oghavat, and Bandha.

²⁴ The Váyu and Bhágavata both add that she was the wife of Viśravas, and mother of Kuvera. In the Linga P. she is said to have been the wife of Pulastya, and mother of Viśravas. The weight of authority is in favour of the former statement.

²⁵ The Bhágavata names three sons, Viśála, Śúnyabandhu, and Dhúmaketu. Vaiśálí is a city of considerable renown in Indian tradition, but its site is a subject of some uncertainty. Part of the difficulty arises from confounding it with Viśálá, another name of Ujayin; Hemachandra. Also in the Megha Dúta; 'Having arrived at Avanti, proceed to the illustrious city before indicated, Viśálá.' 'To the city Ujjayiní, named Viśálá. Comment. Vaiśálí however appears to be very differently situated. According to the Buddhists, amongst whom it is celebrated as a chief seat of the labours of Śákya and his first disciples, it is the same as Prayága or Allahabad; but the Rámáyana (I. 45) places it much lower down, on the north bank of the Ganges, nearly opposite to the mouth of the Sone; and it was therefore in the modern district of Sáran, as Hamilton (Genealogies of the Hindus) conjectured. In the fourth century it was known to the Chinese traveller Fa-hian as Phi-she-li, on the right bank of the Gandak, not far from its confluence with the Ganges. Account of the Foe-küe-ki: Trans. R. As. Soc. no. IX. p. 128.

²⁶ Dhumráksha and Samyama: Bhágavata.

²⁷ The text is clear enough; but, as elsewhere noticed (Hindu Theatre, II. 296), the commentator on the Bhágavata interprets the parallel passage, very differently, or 'Kriśás'wa with Devaja,' or, as some copies read, Devaka or Daivata, as if there were two sons of Samyama.

²⁸ The Bhágavata changes the order of these two, making Janamejaya the son of Sumati; or Pramati, Váyu. Sumati, king of Vaiśálí, is made cotemporary with Ráma: Rámáyana, I.47. 17. The dynasty of Vaiśála kings is found only in our text, the Váyu, and Bhágavata. Hamilton places them from 1920 to 1240 B. C.; but the latter is incompatible with the date he assigns to Ráma, of 1700 B. C. The co-temporary existence of Sumati and Ráma, however, is rather unintelligible, as, according to our lists, the former is the thirty-fourth, and the latter the sixtieth, from Vaivaswata Manu.

Śaryāti, the fourth son of the Manu, had a daughter named Sukanya, who was married to the holy sage Chyavana²⁹: he had also a righteous son, called Anartta. The son of the latter was Revata³⁰, who ruled over the country called after his father Anartta, and dwelt at the capital denominated Kuśasthali³¹. The son of this prince was Raivata or Kakudmin, the eldest of a hundred brethren. He had a very lovely daughter, and not finding anyone worthy of her hand, he repaired with her to the region of Brahma to consult the god where a fit bridegroom was to be met with. When he arrived, the quiristers Haha, Huhu, and others, were singing before Brahma; and Raivata, waiting till they had finished, imagined the ages that elapsed during their performance to be but as a moment. At the end of their singing, Raivata prostrated himself before Brahma, and explained his errand. "Whom should you wish for a son-in-law?" demanded Brahma; and the king mentioned to him various persons with whom he could be well pleased. Nodding his head gently, and graciously smiling, Brahma said to him, "Of those whom you have named the third or fourth generation no longer survives, for many successions of ages have passed away whilst you were listening to our songsters: now upon earth the twenty-eighth great age of the present Manu is nearly finished, and the Kali period is at hand. You must therefore bestow this virgin gem upon some other husband, for you are now alone, and your friends, your ministers, servants, wife, kinsmen, armies, and treasures, have long since been swept away by the hand of time." Overcome with astonishment and alarm, the Raja then said to Brahma, "Since I am thus circumstanced, do thou, lord, tell me unto whom the maiden shall be given:" and the creator of the world, whose throne is the lotus, thus benignantly replied to the prince, as he stood bowed and humble before him: "The being of whose commencement, course, and termination, we are ignorant; the unborn and omnipresent essence of all things; he whose real and infinite nature and essence we do not know - is the supreme Vishnu. He is time, made up of moments and hours and years; whose influence is the source of perpetual change. He is the universal form of all things, from birth to death. He is eternal, without name or shape. Through the favour of that imperishable being am I the agent of his power in creation: through his anger is Rudra the destroyer of the world: and the cause of preservation, Purusha, proceeds also from him. The unborn having assumed my person creates the world; in his own essence he provides for its duration; in the form of Rudra he devours all things; and with the body of Ananta he upholds them. Impersonated as Indra and the other gods he is the guardian of mankind; and as the sun and moon he disperses darkness. Taking upon himself the nature of fire he bestows warmth and maturity; and in the condition of the earth nourishes all beings. As one with air he gives activity to existence; and as one with water he satisfies all wants: whilst in the state of ether, associated with universal aggregation, he furnishes space for all objects. He is at once the creator, and that which is created; the preserver, and that which is preserved; the destroyer, and, as one with all things, that which is destroyed; and, as the indestructible, he is distinct from these three vicissitudes. In him is the world; he is the world; and he, the primeval self-born, is again present in the world. That mighty Vishnu, who is paramount over all beings, is now in a portion of himself upon the earth. That city Kuśasthali which was formerly your capital, and rivalled the city of the immortals, is now known as Dwaraka³², and there reigns a portion of that divine being in the person of Baladeva; to him, who appears as a man, present her as a wife: he is a worthy

²⁹ The circumstances of their marriage, of Chyavana's appropriating a share of offerings to the Aswinī Kumāras, and of his quarrel with Indra in consequence, are old in detail in the Bhāgavata and Padma Purāṇas.

³⁰ In most of the other Purāṇas, Reva or Raiva. The Linga and Matsya insert Rochamāna before him; and the Bhāgavata adds to Anartta, Uttānavarhish and Bhūrisheṇa.

³¹ The Bhāgavata ascribes the foundation of Kuśasthali to Revata, who built it, it is said, within the sea. The subsequent legend shews that it was the same, or on the same spot, as Dwārakā; and Anartta was therefore part of Cutch or Guzerat.

³² So called from its many Dwāras or gateways: Vāyu.

bridegroom for this excellent damsel, and she is a suitable bride for him."

Being thus instructed by the lotus-born divinity, Raivata returned with his daughter to earth, where he found the race of men dwindled in stature, reduced in vigour, and enfeebled in intellect. Repairing to the city of Kuśasthalí, which he found much altered, the wise monarch bestowed his unequalled daughter on the wielder of the ploughshare, whose breast was as fair and radiant as crystal. Beholding the damsel of excessively lofty height, the chief, whose banner is a palm-tree, shortened her with the end of his ploughshare, and she became his wife. Balarama having espoused, agreeably to the ritual, Revati, the daughter of Raivata, the king retired to the mountain Himalaya, and ended his days in devout austerities³³.

³³ The object of this legend, which is told by most of the authorities, is obviously to account for the anachronism of making Balaráma cotemporary with Raivata; the one early in the Treta age, and the other at the close of the Dwápara.