

CHAPTER TEN¹*Birth Of Skanda*

(Dynasties of Pitṛs : Propitiation of Pitṛs by performing Śrāddha.

Bṛhaspati said :

1. These seven groups of Pitṛs² are considered as the most excellent among victorious ones. Four of them have forms and three of them are *Amūrtis* (formless ones).

2. Listen attentively. I shall tell their worlds as well as creation. I shall recount those who are their daughters and those who are regarded as their grandsons (daughters' sons).

3. In those worlds named Santānakas the formless yet brilliant groups of Pitṛs abide. They are the sons of Prajāpati.

4. They are the sons of Viraja the Prajāpati. Hence they are well known as Vairājas. They are excellent Brāhmaṇas. These are the Pitṛs, O dear one, who increase the yogic power of the yogins.

5-6a. They perpetually develop the Yogic powers (of others) by means of their own Yogic power. Strengthened and developed by means of Śrāddhas, they develop the Soma (the moon god). Soma who is thus strengthened and developed strengthens and develops the worlds.

6b-8. The mental daughter of these is Menā by name. She was the wife of the great mountain Himavān. Maināka is said to be her son. The excellent mountain Krauñca is also the son of this mountain. The king of mountain begot three daughters of Menā viz.—Aparṇā, Ekaparṇā and the third one Ekapāṭalā.

9. Two of them had places of shelter viz.—Ekaparṇā took shelter under a Nyagrodha tree and Ekapāṭalā under a Pāṭalā (trumpet-flower tree). Aparṇā was without any abode. They performed penance.

1. This chapter is textually similar to Vā. P. 72.

2. Cf. Pd. P. V. 9.2-3, Vā. P. 72.1,73,.60 for similar seven divisions of Pitṛs into those having forms and formless ones.

10-11 They performed for a hundred thousand years a severe penance that could not be performed by even the Devas and the Dānavas. Ekaparṇā took only a single leaf as her food. Ekapāṭalā had her food with a single Pāṭala (? flower). They took in this food only once in a thousand years.

12. One of them (had performed penance) without taking food. Her mother who was pained on account of her motherly love forbade her (from performing penance) saying 'U mā' (O daughter do not).¹

13. The gentle lady Aparṇā who performed a penance very difficult to be performed (by others) on being addressed in that manner, became well known in the three worlds as Umā: She was extremely fortunate.

14. She became well known by that name on account of her activity expressed in the words of such a derivation. This world with its mobile and immobile living beings had such (splendid) triad of virgins.

15. What had been created by the power of penance of these three virgins will hold good as long as the earth exists. All those three (virgins) were equipped with Yogic power. Penance sustained their physical bodies.

16. All of them had excellent and great fortune. All of them possessed permanent youth. All of them were expounders of the Brahman. All of them had sublimated their sexual urge and potentiality.

17-19. Umā was the greatest (eldest) and the most excellent among them. She had an excellent complexion and was endowed with great yogic power. She approached (and dedicated herself) to Mahādeva. Uśanas the son of Bṛṅgu became her adopted son.

Ekaparṇā the chaste lady of good conduct became the wife of Asita. She was given in marriage to that intelligent preceptor of the Yogic cult. Endowed with the perfect knowledge she gave birth to Devala who was Brahmiṣṭha (one who was engrossed in meditation on Brahman).

1. Kālidāsa echoes this in Kur: āra-Sambhava I.26 *Umeti mātṛā tapaso niṣiddhā paścād Umākhyāṁ sumukhī jagāma |*

20. Ekapāṭalā who was the third among those virgins approached (and dedicated herself) to Jaigīṣavya the son of Śata-śālāka.

21. Śaṅkha and Likhita are remembered as his sons but not born of a womb. These were the greatly fortunate splendid daughters of the Himavān.

22-24. That eldest girl was Rudrāṇī (wife of Rudra). She excelled others on account of her good qualities.

Umā and Śaṅkara were pleased with each other in their minds. They were closely united to each other. On coming to know of this, the slayer of Vṛtra (i.e. Indra) became afraid of the birth of a child of those two (deities) engaged in sexual intercourse.

The fire-god was sent near them by Indra. The firegod was instructed thus—"O Hutāśana (swallower of the holy offerings), create an interruption in the sexual inter-course of these two.

25. You go everywhere. (You are free to go anywhere). Hence, there can't be any blame on you." On being instructed thus, the instruction was duly carried out by the firegod.

26. The lord left Umā and discharged the semen on the ground. Instantly, the firegod was cursed by the annoyed and infuriated Umā.

27-30. In words choked on account of anger she spoke (cursed) the fire-god thus—"O fire-god, even before we were satisfied, you brought about an interruption in our sexual intercourse. You have committed an act that should not have been committed. Hence, you are evil-minded. The extremely lustrous semen of Rudra that has come out thus, has become a foetus. You must carry the same within you. This is the punishment to you."¹

On account of the curse of Rudrāṇī due to his (firegod's) own guilt, O Brāhmaṇa, the fire-god held the foetus within

1. The story of Skanda's birth is given in Mbh. Anuśāsana Chs. 85 and 86.5-14. There is much variation in the accounts of Skanda's birth in Purāṇas which are a mixture of folk-lore and mythology. The credit of creating a consistent story in a superb epic out of this diverse material must be given to Kālidāsa.

him for many years. He approached Gaṅgā and said : "Let this be heard, O excellent one among the rivers.

31-34. Very great distress is caused to me as I have to carry the foetus within me. O river, hold this foetus for the sake of my relief and welfare. Due to my gracious favour, a son will be born to you. He will be a bestower of boons."

Saying "So be it", that great river became very delighted and carried that foetus (although) her mind was being burned. (There was a burning sensation within herself). Being distressed thus on account of a very great deal of stress and strain, that great river cast off that excellent foetus that dazzled like fire.

And then was born the son of Rudra, Agni and Gaṅgā. He had a pinky lustrous complexion.

35-36. He was as brilliant as a hundred suns. He had great splendour and valour. When the son of Jāhnavī (Gaṅgā) the boy of great fortune was born, the firmament was covered (crowded) with aerial chariots as though with a number of birds. The celestial drums of sweet sound were beaten (sounded) in the sky.

37. The Siddhas and Cāraṇas moving about in the sky discharged showers of flowers. The Gandharva chieftains began to sing here and there (everywhere).

38-39. Yakṣas, Vidyādharas, Siddhas, Kinnaras, thousands of great serpents and the excellent birds approached with great reverence the highly fortunate son of Śaṅkara born through the fire-god. Daityas, Vānaras (monkeys) and Rākṣasas were struck by that miraculous force.

40. That child born of the fire-god was seen at close quarters by the wives of the seven sages excluding Arundhatī. They had been on their way for their daily ablution.

41. That lordly son born of Rudra and resembling the rising sun was surrounded by them with great affection as though by his own real mothers.

42. The son of Jāhnavī was desirous of being simultaneously suckled by all those gentle ladies. Hence, the glorious child created six faces (mouths.) Therefore, he is remembered as Ṣaṅmukha (six-faced).¹

1. VV. 40-45 explain why Skanda got six faces. The Mbh. account differs.

43. When that great lord was born, the groups of Dānavas who could not bear the power of the Devas had a purge¹ (loose motion due to excessive fear). Hence that valorous lord came to be known as Skanda.

44. Since that ancient lord, the slayer of the Asuras, was (breast-fed and) nurtured by Kṛttikās he became well known as Kārttikeya.

45. When that enemy of the Daityas yawned, his (weapon) Śakti (Spear) (named) Aparājitā (unvanquished) came out of his mouth emitting brilliant flames of fire.

46-47. Two very gentle birds, a peacock and a cock were handed over through Garuḍa, for Skanda to play, by Viṣṇu the powerful one; a banner (with cock as the emblem) was given by Vāyu (wind-god) and a great Vīṇā of loud sound was presented by Sarasvatī.

48-50. A goat was given by the self-born lord (Brahmā) and a sheep was given by Śambhu. O Brāhmaṇa, the mountain Krauñca sporting about by means of illusive power was felled by him. Tāraka the excellent Asura was pierced through and thrown down by him. So the lordly son of the fire-god, the valorous enemy of the Daityas, was crowned as commander-in-chief by the Devas along with Indra and Upendra (i.e. Viṣṇu). This leader of the Suras is mentioned as Senāpati (lord of the army).

51-53a. Lord Skanda, the lord of all the worlds caused the purge of the enemies of the Devas. He was surrounded by the different kinds of Pramathas (semidivine followers of Śiva), groups of goblins, diverse kinds of Mātṛs (mothers) and groups of Vināyakas.

The worlds where Marīci's sons live are called Somapadas. Skanda and others stay there and the Devas worship them.

53b-54. It is heard that the Pitṛs named Barhiṣads are Somapās (imbibers of the Soma juice). The mental daughter

1. This is an indecent derivation. Due to the casting off of the Semen of Śiva by Agni and Gaṅgā, the child came to be called Skanda (*Skannatvāt skandatām prāptaḥ*—states Mbh. Anu. 86.14.