

Jettam Mani Purāṇic Encyclopaedia

A

A (अ). The first letter (Vowel) of all Indian languages. According to the Nānārtharatnamālā this letter has the following meanings:—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, tortoise, courtyard, battle, harem, jewellery, sea, Pārvatī and bow-string.

ABALA is one of the fifteen devas who were the sons of Pāṇcajanya. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 22, Verse 11).

ABHAYA was one of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He was killed by Bhīmasena. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 67, Verse 104; Droṇa Parva, Chapter 127, Verse 62).

ABHAYAM. King Idhmajihva divided his kingdom Plakṣadvīpa into seven parts and gave them to his seven sons. Abhayam is one of the parts. The other six parts are:—Śivam, Yamasam, Subhadram, Śāntam, Kṣemam and Amṛtam. See "Idhmajihva". (Bhāgavata, 5th Skandha, Chapter 20, Verse 2). It is seen (from M.B. Sabhā Parva, Chapter 30, Verse 9) that the territory known as Abhayam was conquered by Bhīmasena. (See Foot-note)

ABHIBHU. He was a King, the son of the King of Kāśī and a relative of the Pāṇḍavas. He was killed by the son of King Vasudāna. He had a most wonderful horse. (M.B. Udyoga Parva, Chapter 151, Verse 63; Karṇa Parva, Chapter 6, Verses 23-24; Droṇa Parva, Verses 26-27).

ABHIMANYU I. He was the heroic son of Arjuna the central figure of the Mahābhārata, by his wife Subhadrā.

1) *Genealogy*. He was descended from Viṣṇu in this order: Brahmā-Atri-Candra-Budha-Purūravas - Āyus - Nahuṣa-Yayāti-Puru-Janamejaya - Prācinvā - Pravira - Namasyu-Vitabhaya-Suṇḍu-Bahuvīdha-Saṁyāti-Rahovādi - Raudrāśvā-Matināra-Santurodha-Duṣyanta - Bharata - Brhat-kṣatra-Hasti - Ajamidha-Rkṣa-Saṁvaraṇa - Kuru-Jahnu-Suratha - Vidūratha-Sārvabhauma - Jayatsena - Raviya - Bhāvuka-Cakroddhata-Devātithi - Rkṣa-Bhīma - Pratiya-Santanu-Vyāsa-Pāṇḍu-Arjuna-Abhimanyu.

2) *Pūrvajanma (Previous Birth)*. There is a story about Abhimanyu's Pūrvajanma in the Mahābhārata. It was Varcas, son of Candra, who incarnated as Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna. A conference took place between the Devas and Candra about the incarnation of the Devas in the world for the destruction of the wicked people. Candra told the Devas: "I do not like to send Varcas, whom I love more than my life, to the earth. Still, I think it is not right to stand in the way of the plans of the gods. You must agree to one condition if I am to send my son. Let him be born as the son of Arjuna. I am unable to be separated from him for more than sixteen years. My son will enter into the Cakra Vyūha of the enemies to be killed by them and return to me in the sixteenth year." The devas (gods) accepted this condition. That is why Abhimanyu was killed in his sixteenth year. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 67).

3) *Military Training and War*. Abhimanyu received his training in arms from his father Arjuna. Later, he went with his mother Subhadrā to Dvārakā and lived for some time with his uncle Śrī Kṛṣṇa. There he is said to have received training in arms from Pradyumna, son of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After the incognito life of the

Pāṇḍavas, Abhimanyu married Uttarā, daughter of the King of Virāṭa. War broke out between Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. On the first day itself Abhimanyu entered into a duel with Brhatbala, King of Kosala. In the terrible conflict with Bhīṣma, Abhimanyu broke Bhīṣma's flagstaff. After that he assisted his father Arjuna to fight against Bhīṣma. Verses 8-13 of Chapter 55 of Bhīṣma Parva of the Mahābhārata describe Abhimanyu's fight with Lakṣmaṇa in the second day's battle. Then he took his place in the Ardha Candra Vyūha (semi-circular phalanx) formed by Arjuna. He fought fiercely with the Gandhāras. He attacked Śalya and killed Jayatsena, King of Magadha, along with his elephant. We find Abhimanyu assisting Bhīmasena in M.B. Bhīṣma Parva, Chapters 63, 64, 69 and 94. After that Abhimanyu defeated Lakṣmaṇa in battle. Then he defeated Vikarṇa, Citrasena and others also. Later he took his position in the Śrīngāṭaka Vyūha created by Dhṛṣṭadyumna. He started fighting with Bhagadatta. He defeated Ambaṣṭha and Alanbuṣa. Next he fought a duel with Sudīṣṇa. After that he encountered Duryodhana, Brhatbala and others. M.B. Droṇa Parva, Chapter 10, Verses 47-52 are a description of Abhimanyu's heroism by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He snatched Paurava's weapon and threw it on the ground. Next he fought with Jayadratha and Śalya. Then he was caught in the Cakra Vyūha (circular phalanx) of the enemies. There he inflicted great losses upon the enemy forces. Śalya was stunned and his brother was killed by Abhimanyu. M.B. Droṇa Parva, Chapter 38, Verses 23 and 24 describe the flight of the Kauravas in fear. At this stage, even Droṇācārya praised Abhimanyu's valour. Duśśāsana fainted during his fight with Abhimanyu. Karṇa was defeated. Vṛṣasena, Satyaśravas and Śalya's son, Rugmaratha were slain. Duryodhana fled. Lakṣmaṇa was killed. Vṛndāraka, Aśvatthāmā, Karṇa and others were amazed by this terrible valour of Abhimanyu. Six ministers of Karṇa were slain. Next, Aśvaketu, son of the King of Magadha was killed. King Bhoja was also killed. Śalya was again defeated. Śatruñjaya, Candraketu, Meghavega, Suvarcas, Sūryabhāsa—who were all kings—were beheaded by Abhimanyu. Śakuni was wounded by Abhimanyu's arrow. Kālakeya, son of Subala was slain. M.B. Droṇa Parva, Chapter 40, Verses 13 and 14 say that at this stage, Prince Duśśāsana beat Abhimanyu to death with his mace.

4) *After Death*. M.B. Droṇa Parva, Chapter 71, Verses 12-16 say that after death Abhimanyu attained the immortal world of the Munis (Saints). King Parikṣit was the son of Abhimanyu. In M.B. Svargārohaṇa Parva, Chapter 5, Verses 18-20, we find that after his death, Abhimanyu entered the moon in his former form of Varcas.

5) *Other names of Abhimanyu*. In the Mahābhārata Abhimanyu has been referred to by several other names, such as ĀRJUNI, Saubhadra, Kārṣṇī, Arjunātmaja, Śukrātmajātmaja, Arjunāpara and Phālguni.

6) *Other details*. King Parikṣit was the son of Abhimanyu. Janamejaya was born as his son. It was Janame-

There seems to be some difference of opinion regarding the number of parts into which King Idhmajihva divided Plakṣadvīpa. In the Bhāgavata the number mentioned is seven; but in the Malayalam version of the Bhāgavata (By Ramanujan Eluttacchan) the number is eight. The original Bhāgavata says: "Śivam Yamasam, Subhadram, Śāntam, Kṣemam, Amṛtam Abhayam iti Varṣāni teṣu girayo nadyaśca saptaivabhijñātāḥ". In the Malayalam Bhāgavata an eighth division called Śivadam is seen.