

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 2: Background-2

(May9 –May 15, 2018)

Special Announcement: Palm Beach Hindu Mandir Deeply Mourns The Loss of Pandit Ramu Ji. He Was a Great Soul, a Role Model Religious Leader, the Passionate Preserver and Defender of the Hindu Dharma, and an Unparalleled Inspiration to All of Us! The Funeral Was held In New York on Monday, May 7th. Memorial Service Will be Held Here at a Later Date. PBHM Members Offer Deep Condolences to The Family of Pandit Ramu Ji.



Last week, we ended our description with a question mark as to whether Maharishi Veda Vyasa is related, biologically or otherwise, to any of the characters mentioned in the Bhagavadgita or in the great epic Mahabharat, which the Bhagavadgita is derived from. **The short answer to the question is “Yes”: Veda Vyasa is the biological father of both Dhritarashtra and Pandu, and hence the grandfather of Kauravas as well as Pandavas!** Here is one of the many legends that exist on this account:

Veda Vyasa was the son of Satyavati, a fisherman’s daughter and Sage Parashara, the grandson of Brahmarshi Vasishta. During her youth, Satyavati used to ferry people across the Yamuna river on her boat. One day the sage Parashara was in a hurry to attend a Yajna. Satyavati helped him cross the river borders. While crossing the river, the Sage had a divine



Figure 1: Sage Parashara was ferried by Satyavati across the Yamuna River

vision that an auspicious moment had just come for the arrival of a Brahmarshi with profound knowledge and wisdom in the rank of the Great Sage Vasishta. So, Sage Parashara offered young Satyavati a divine mantra which would result in begetting a son who would be a future Brahmarshi. Satyavati immediately recited the mantra, and thus Veda Vyasa was born.

Sage Parashara also offered an eternal musky fragrance to the entire body of Satyavati since her body was emanating an unpleasant fishy odor (hence her original name *Matsyagandha*). With her new fragrant body, Satyavati henceforth came to be known as “*Yojanagandha*” (meaning the fragrance would be felt as far as a Yojana—8 miles) or “*Gandhavati*” (the fragrant one).

Later King Shantanu, captivated by her fragrance and beauty, fell in love with Satyavati. She married Shantanu on condition that their children inherit the throne, denying the birthright of Shantanu's eldest son (and crown prince) Bhisma. Satyavati bore Shantanu two children, Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. After Shantanu's death, she and her prince sons with the help of Bhisma ruled the kingdom. But both her sons died childless, so she arranged for her first son, Vyasa, to father the children of the two widows of Vichitravirya, Amba and Ambalika, through a religious process called Niyoga. The children, Dhritarashtra and Pandu, became the fathers of the Kauravas and Pandavas respectively. After Pandu's death, Satyavati went to the forest for penance and breathed her last before witnessing the Kurukshetra War.

In Summary, Maharishi Veda Vyasa is indeed the biological grand father of both Kauravas and Pandavas. The following is the family tree of the characters involved in Bhagavadgita, including its author Veda Vyasa, and in Mahabharat:

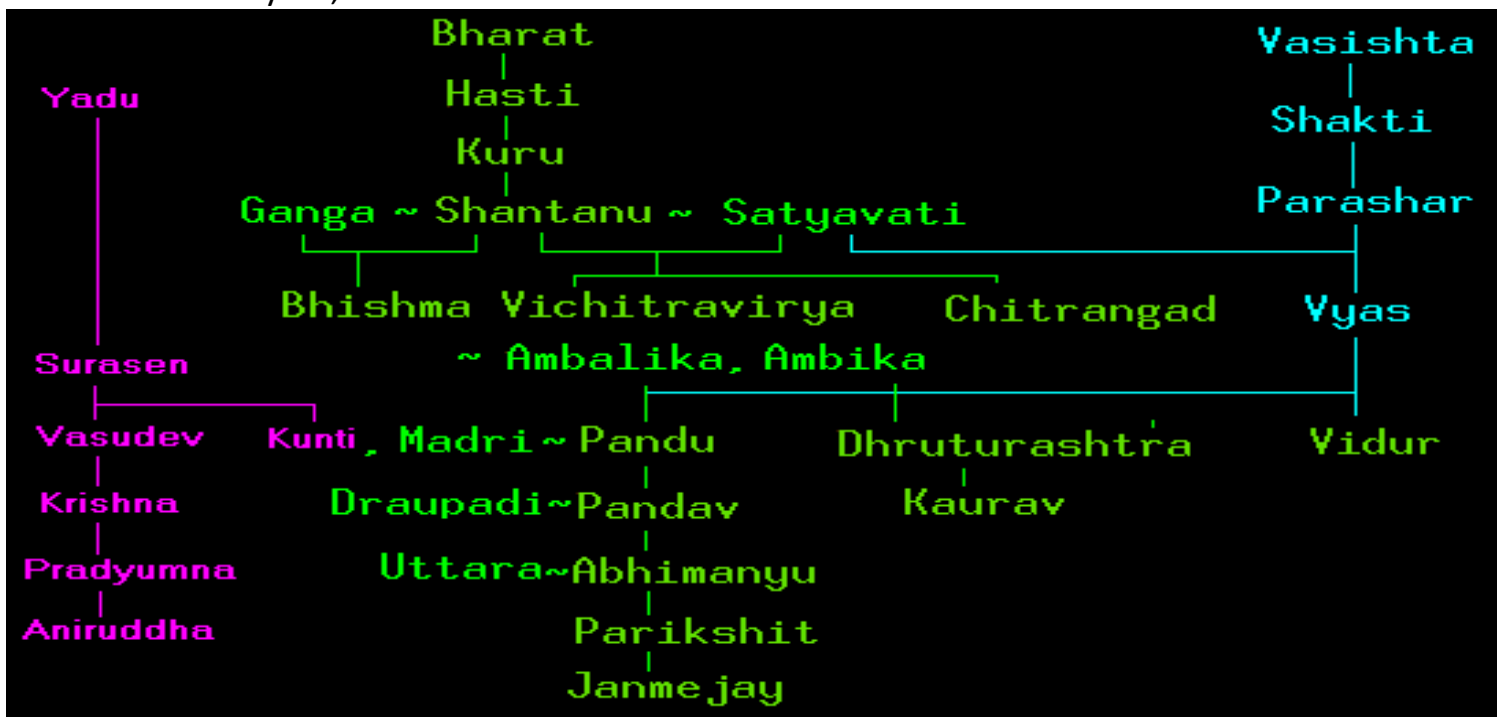


Figure 2: Family Tree of the Characters Involved in Bhagavadgita and Mahabharat

Read Here for a 2nd Version (There Are Many!) of The Story of The Birth of Brahmarshi Vyasa (<https://nabayanroy.wordpress.com/2012/09/26/the-story-of-matsyagandha-and-rishi-parashar-and-the-birth-of-krsna-dwaipayana/>)