

by having too many inhabitants, its ruler—for it has a ruler, and his all-embracing care is apparent in every single particle of it—sends it a messenger for the purpose of reducing the too great number and of cutting away all that is evil.

A messenger of this kind is, according to the belief of the Hindus, Vāsudeva, who was sent the last time in human shape, being called Vāsudeva. It was a time when the giants were numerous on earth and the earth was full of their oppression; it tottered, being hardly able to bear the whole number of them, and it trembled from the vehemence of their treading. Then there was born a child in the city of Mathurâ to Vāsudeva by the sister of Kamsa, at that time ruler of the town. They were a Jatt family, cattle-owners, low Śūdra people. Kamsa had learned, by a voice which he heard at the wedding of his sister, that he would perish at the hands of her child; therefore he appointed people who were to bring him every child of hers as soon as she gave birth to it, and he killed all her children, both male and female. Finally, she gave birth to Balabhadra, and Yaśodâ, the wife of the herdsman Nanda, took the child to herself, and managed to keep it concealed from the spies of Kamsa. Thereupon she became pregnant an eighth time, and gave birth to *Vāsudeva* in a rainy night of the eighth day of the black half of the month Bhâdrapada, whilst the moon was ascending in the station Rohiṇî. As the guards had fallen into deep sleep and neglected the watch, the father stole the child and brought it to *Nandakula*, *i.e.* the stable of the cows of Nanda, the husband of Yaśodâ, near Mathurâ, but separated from this place by the river Yamunâ. Vāsudeva exchanged the child for a daughter of Nanda, which happened to be born at the moment when Vāsudeva arrived with the boy. He brought this female child to the guards instead of his son. Kamsa, the

Story of the  
birth of  
Vāsudeva.