

The Origin of the Agarwals

A Close English Translation of Bhartendu Harishchandra's Hindi Text

Prepared for the LifeLoveMe Agarwal Community Network

Compiled by Sudhir Agarwal, San Diego, California, June 2026

Translator's Note

This document is intended as the English-language companion to the Hindi text of Bhartendu Babu Harishchandra's Agarwalon Ki Utpatti. It is a close English translation, keeping the order, details, names, and narrative structure of the Hindi text as far as possible. It is not the broader LifeLoveMe interpretive essay on Agarwal heritage and modern vision; that is a separate document.

The source text is a short community-history text. It records lineage traditions, Puranic references, customs, names, places, gotras, and narratives associated with Maharaja Agrasen and the Agarwal community. The claims are translated as they appear in the text and should be read as community tradition, cultural memory, and literary-historical record unless independently verified by other historical sources.

Where the Hindi source contains older place names, gotra spellings, or uncertain readings, the translation preserves them with light clarification. A few Sanskrit/Hindi words such as gotra, yajna, kuldevi, and dharma are retained where an exact English equivalent would weaken the meaning.

Source Information

Field	Information
Original title	अग्रवालों की उत्पत्ति / Agarwalon Ki Utpatti
Attributed author	Bharatbhusan Bhartendu Babu Harishchandra
Hindi text note	With the opinion/approval of Babu Radhakrishnadas of Kashi
Edition note	December 2004, Samvat 2061; printed/published by Khemraj Shrikrishnadas, Shri Venkateshwar Press, Mumbai
Original composition note	The prefatory notice states that the work was prepared by Bhartendu Babu Harishchandra in Samvat 1928.
Public reference	Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/agarwalon-ki-utpatti-bhartendu-harischandra

Shree:

Agarwalon Ki Utpatti

अग्रवालों की उत्पत्ति

Dedication

Dear Agra brothers,

I offer repeated thanks to Babu Radhakrishnaji, resident of Kashi, who, in order to fulfill my wish, kindly arranged for this book to be printed. Now, O brothers, this book, beneficial to our own lineage, is being presented before you as something precious. Please accept it. Wherever any error is noticed, please inform us immediately, so that in a future reprint this book may be freed from those defects.

Prefatory Notice

This work called "Origin" was prepared by the revered Bhartendu Babu Harishchandra in Samvat 1928. Since then, several editions have been printed and have become known in this region. But seeing that its circulation in the country was limited, Vaidyaratnabhushan Gangavishnu Shrikrishnadasji expressed to me his desire to remove this deficiency. With happiness and gratitude, and with the permission of my friend Babu Ramdinsingh, I gave him the right to print this text.

It is hoped that, through its circulation, our brothers will come to know the history of their ancestors and will become eager to follow the dharma and dignity of their family line.

Kashi, Ashadh Krishna 9, Samvat 1950

Submitted by - Radhakrishnadas

Introduction

This genealogy has been gathered from traditional oral accounts and ancient writings. However, a major part of it has been taken from the later section of the Bhavishya Purana, from the narrative of Shri Mahalakshmi. From this, the origin of the Agarwals, who are chief among the Vaishyas, is written. In the time of Maharaja Jaisingh it was decided that among the Vaishyas the chief are the Agarwals. A brief account of these Agarwals is written here.

Their principal country is the northwestern region, and their speech is generally Khari Boli, that is, Urdu/Hindustani. Their priests are Gaud Brahmins. Their conduct is straightforward and generally truthful. One special feature of this community is that among them there is no high and low distinction, nor does anyone possess a separate title of superiority.

In Banaras and Mirzapur, even the term Purabiya is heard. If someone asks in those regions whether a person is Purabiya or Pachhahe, people become greatly surprised and ask what the word Purabiya means. Among the Pachhahe people of Banaras also, the customs of the Agarwals are not found in the exact form, nor is their speech the same. Only in houses belonging to people from Delhi are those practices found.

Among these people, just as there is celebration at marriage and similar occasions, so also, even at death, ceremonies may continue for years. When a large death-feast is held, they sometimes perform it with even more display than a wedding.

In the country, people wear jama and turban and eat dal and rice together; but here this practice is not followed, and they unite with the community only in eating puri. Another good feature of this community is that among Agarwals the use of meat and liquor is not customary anywhere. However, their priests and teachers smoke the hookah. Those who follow strict discipline may not smoke, but it is a community practice. Their great expenditure at the time of marriage is famous among all, and due to this misfortune many households have been ruined, yet they do not abandon this custom.

Some among them are Jains. In the country, all wear the sacred thread; but here in the east, some do not wear it. The men's dress is turban, pyjama or dhoti, and anga. The women's dress is odhna and ghaghra, or in childhood, suthna. The practice of the ten samskaras is still found among them.

Apart from the Purabiya Agarwals, there are also Marwari Agarwals; but their exact origin, when and from where, is not clearly known. Just as the customs of the Pachhahe Agarwals resemble those of the Khattris, so the customs of the Marwaris resemble those of the Maheshwaris. But the customs of the Purabiyas are distinct from both.

In the introduction to the origin of the Agarwals, it will also be pleasing to write that Shri Nand Rai, in whose house Shri Krishnachandra himself appeared, was a Vaishya. This is considered certain from the Shrimad Bhagavata and other texts. Whatever the case may be, in former times Vaishya people had long been wealthy and generous. In recent days those qualities had declined, but since the time of the Mughals their intelligence again turned in that direction and continues to do so.

I have written their origin briefly in this small text. It is certain that by reading it, people will know their family tradition and will also remember me among their humble and younger brothers.

Vaishakh Shuddha 9, Samvat 1928, Kashi. Shri Harishchandra.

The Origin of the Agarwals

Shri: Salutations to Bhagavan Shri Krishnachandra, ornament of the Vaishya lineage.

Doha

I bow for the welfare of Brahmins and Vaishyas, and for the destruction of the wicked. Victory, victory to the cowherd of Gokul, the protector of cows, the lord of the gopis, Nandananda.

God created the Brahmin from the mouth, the Kshatriya from the arms, the Vaishya from the thighs, and the Shudra from the feet. To the Vaishya he gave authority over four occupations: first, agriculture; second, protection of cows; third, trade; and fourth, lending money on interest. Just as the Brahmin is master of the Vedas and yajnas, and the Kshatriya is master of kingdom and war, so the Vaishya is master of wealth. Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya - these three are called twice-born, and all three varnas have authority in Vedic rites.

The first man born among the Vaishyas was named Dhanpal. The Brahmins seated him on the throne at Pratapanagar and made him the lord of wealth. He had eight sons and one daughter. The daughter's name was Sukuta, and she was married to the sage Yajnavalkya. The names of the eight sons were Shiva, Nala, Anila, Nanda, Kunda, Brihad, and Shekhar, with one name unclear in the source. Vishal Raja, the teacher of Shalihotra in the science of horses, married his eight daughters to these sons. The daughters were named Padmavati, Malati, Kanti, Shubha, Bhavya, Bhavya, Sarja, and Sundari. Their marriages took place in the order of the names.

Among these eight sons, the son named Bal became a yogi and Digambar and went to the forest. The seven sons obtained authority over the seven islands, and their lineage spread over the earth. In Jambudvipa there was a king named Vijay, who belonged to the lineage of Shiva among those eight sons. In that lineage was born a king named Sudarshan, who had two wives, Sevati and Nalini. His son was Dhurandhar. The great-grandson of this Dhurandhar was a Vaishya named Samadhi.

In the lineage of this Samadhi, Mohandas became very famous. He built many temples of Shri Ranganathji on the bank of the Kaveri. His great-grandson was Neminath, who founded Taishal, a place whose reading is uncertain. His son was Vrind, who performed a yajna in Shri Vrindavan and installed the image of Vrinda Devi.

In this lineage, a king named Sher became very famous, and a country was settled in his name. In the same lineage, there was a king named Hir, who had one hundred sons including Rang. Rang obtained the kingdom, and the others, because of evil deeds, became Shudras. From that time, these people carried drums. The people were Vaishyas, but their deeds were like those of Shudras. Rang's son was Vishok. Vishok's son was named Bandhu, and his son was Mahidhar. Mahidhar pleased Shri Mahadevji and received many boons. In his lineage, all people became skillful in conduct and happy with wealth and sons.

In this lineage there was a king named Bahul. In his house was born the highly glorious King Agra. He was also called Agranath and Agrasen. He was very powerful. He made Pratapanagar in the southern country

his capital. That city was full of wealth, jewels, and people. He was so powerful that even Indra became jealous of him.

At one time, from Nagalok, a king of the serpents named Kumud came to the earthly realm with his daughter Madhavi. Seeing that girl, Indra became enchanted and asked the serpent king for her. But the serpent king did not give her to Indra and instead married her to King Agrasen. This Madhavi became the mother of all Agarwals, and for this reason we still call snakes our maternal uncles.

Indra became very angry at this. Considering King Agra his enemy, he did not send rain upon his capital for many years and waged a great war against him. Then Lord Brahmadev stopped both of them from fighting. After this, the king returned to his capital and, entrusting the kingdom to his wife, set out on pilgrimage and worship.

He wandered through all the holy places and worshipped Mahalakshmi. Coming to Kashi, he performed a great yajna of Mahadevji at Kapildhara Tirtha and gave much charity. Then Shri Mahadevji appeared, pleased, and said, "Ask for a boon." The king said, "I ask only this boon: that Indra may come under my control." Mahadev, being pleased, gave many boons and said, "Worship Mahalakshmi; all your wishes will be fulfilled."

Having heard this, the king again set out to the holy places and, with the help of a Brahmin, reached Haridwar. From there, along with the source of the Ganga, he wandered through all the holy places. When he again came to Haridwar, he performed great worship of Mahalakshmi. The goddess, being pleased, gave the boon that Indra would come under his control and that none of his descendants would be unhappy. At the end, both men and women of his lineage would dwell near the Pole Star. She also told him to go to Kolhapur, where the swayamvara of the daughters of King Mahidhar, an incarnation of Mahalakshmi, was taking place, and to marry those girls and continue his lineage.

Having received this boon from the goddess, the king went to Kolhapur and married those girls with great ceremony. Then he came to the region near Indra's capital and established his rule from the edge of Punjab to Agra, and in those regions he spread his lineage. When Indra heard of the boon received by the king, he became afraid and wished to make friendship with him. For this purpose he sent Naradji and made peace by giving an apsara named Madhushalini.

After this, King Agrasen performed great penance of Shri Mahalakshmi on the bank of the Yamuna. Shri Lakshmi, being pleased, gave these boons: from that day onward, this vow would be known by his name; she would protect his family and would be the kuldevi of his lineage; and all people would celebrate her Diwali festival. Having given this boon, Shri Mahalakshmi departed.

Then the king came and established his kingdom. The northern boundary of that kingdom was the Himalaya mountain and the rivers of Punjab. The eastern and southern boundary was the Ganga, and the western boundary extended from the Yamuna toward the lands near Marwar. The people of his lineage always lived in these regions. Therefore, the chief Agarwals are those who lived from the Punjab region toward Meerut and Agra.

Principal Towns of the Agarwals

No.	Town	Description in the Text
1	Agar	Its pure name is Agrapur. This city was the capital of the southern region of King Agra before.
2	Delhi	Its pure name is Indraprastha.
3	Gurgaon	Its pure name is Gaudgram. This city was given to the Gaud Brahmins, priests of the Agarwals, and therefore Agarwals generally worship the mother there.
4	Meerut	Its pure name is Maharashtra.
5	Rohtak	Its pure name is Rohitashva.
6	Hisar	Its pure name is Hisari Desh.
7	Panipat	Its pure name is known as Punyapattan.
8	Karnal	Karnal.
9	Kot Kangra	Its pure name is Nagarkot. The temple of Mahamaya, goddess of the Agarwals, is there, and the temple of Jwalaji is also on the boundary of that city.
10	Lahore	Its pure name is Lavkot.
11	Mandi	Rewalsar Tirtha is within the boundary of this city.
12	Bilaspur	The temple of Naina Devi is established within the boundary of this city.
13	Garhwal	Garhwal.
14	Jind-Safidon	Jind-Safidon.
15	Nabha	Nabha.
16	Narnaul	Its pure name is Nashinival.

All these towns belonged to that capital, and the name of the capital was Agranagar, which is now called Agroha. Agra and Agroha - both of these cities remain famous to this day in the name of King Agrasen. King Agrasen had built a great temple of Mahalakshmi in his capital.

King Agrasen performed seventeen and a half yajnas. The reason is this: when the king began the eighteenth yajna, and it was already half completed, he felt great sorrow at the violence involved in the yajna and said, "Although no one in our family eats meat anywhere, yet divine violence occurs. Therefore, from today, whoever belongs to my lineage shall obey my command that even divine violence shall not be performed; that is, animal sacrifice and bali shall not occur in my lineage." For this reason, the king did not complete that yajna.

The king had seventeen queens and one secondary queen. From each of them were born three sons and one daughter. From those seventeen and a half yajnas arose the seventeen and a half gotras. People also say that when a person's marriage took place within the same gotra, elders divided one gotra into two parts, and thus there came to be seventeen and a half gotras. But this explanation is not worthy of proof. The sons and grandsons of the seventy-two sons and daughters of King Agra came to be called Agarwals. The word Agarwal means the children of Agra.

The Seventeen and a Half Gotras

No.	Gotra Name
1	Garg
2	Goyal
3	Goyal/Gawal
4	Bansal/Batsal
5	Kasil/Kansal
6	Singhal
7	Mangal
8	Jindal/Dak
9	Tingal
10	Airan/Reran
11	Teran
12	Digal
13	Tital/Tichal
14	Mittal
15	Tundal
16	Tayal
17	Gobhila
18	Gaun/Gavan, that is, Gaudin - the half gotra

Some letters in these names have now become changed or transposed. King Agra made his first gotra in the name of his helper, the sage Garg, and the names of the other gotras were also kept according to the yajnas. King Agra made Gaud Brahmins his family priests. In that age all Agarwals studied the Vedas and performed worship three times daily.

When King Agra became old, he went away to perform penance, and his son Vibhu sat on the throne. For many generations after him, the kings remained devoted to their dharma and ruled. In this lineage there was a king named Divakar, who abandoned Vedic dharma and became a Jain, and he made many people Jain. From that time, Vedic dharma began to leave the Agarwals. But the Agarwals of Agroha and Delhi did not abandon their dharma.

In this lineage, from the time of King Ugrachandra, the kingdom began to decline. When Shahabuddin attacked, he destroyed Agroha in every way. In the battle with Shahabuddin many people were killed, and many of their women became sati. They are still honored and worshipped in our homes. This was the true period of destruction for the Agarwals. From this time, many among them abandoned dharma and broke their sacred thread. At that time, those Agarwals who fled settled in Marwar and in the east. Their descendants became Purabiya and Marwari Agarwals. The northern and southern groups also arose in this manner. But the chief Agarwals were those who remained in the Delhi region.

When the rule of the Mughals came, the Agarwals again increased. Akbar even made Agarwals his wazirs. From that period onward, the Agarwals especially grew. Akbar had two famous Agarwal wazirs, whose names were Maharaj Todarmal and Madhushah. The Madhushahi coin was issued in the name of the latter.

Source Note on Todarmal

In the final portion of the original book, there is a note that Maharaj Todarmal was a Khatri. It says that this fact became known to the revered Bhartenduji later from an inscription at Shivpur Draupadi Kund. That inscription was printed in Harishchandra Kala. The note is signed by Radhakrishnadas, dated 26/3/15.

Modern Reader's Notes

This translation preserves the narrative and claims of the source text. It does not attempt to settle historical questions independently.

Terms such as Vaishya, Kshatriya, gotra, yajna, kuldevi, dharma, and samskara have cultural meanings that are broader than simple English equivalents.

The genealogy, Puranic linkage, and old place-name explanations should be read as community tradition and cultural memory, unless supported by additional independent historical research.

The text is important because it records how a major nineteenth-century Hindi literary figure and later editors understood and transmitted Agarwal origin traditions.