

Characters of Firdowsi's *Shahname*

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Abtin

Abtin is the father of King Fereydun and the husband of Faranak. He is captured by Zakhak and, when he attempted to escape, is killed. Abtin's murder, once known, prompts his son, Fereydun, to seek vengeance. Helped by Kaveh the Blacksmith, Fereydun captures Zakhak and imprisons him in a cave on Mount Alborz (see Fereydun for details).

Afrasiyab

Afrasiyab, son of Pashang and grandson of Tur, is one of the most important and warlike kings of Turan. He kills King Nowzar and rules Iran for twelve years. As the situation in Iran under Afrasiyab goes from bad to worse, Iranian champions, especially Qaran and Kishwad, place Zav, son of Tahmasp, on the throne. Zav signs a treaty with Afrasiyab whereby the Oxus is established as the boundary between the two countries. An arrow shot from Mt. Damavand is the deciding factor (see Arash-e Kamangar for details).

Afrasiyab's most prominent role is that of the ruler of Turan. During his rule, Siyavosh, son of Kayka'us, becomes enmeshed in Turanian affairs (see Siyavosh). This history of this involvement is long. When Afrasiyab invades Iran, Siyavosh volunteers to fight Afrasiyab. Two factors prompt Afrasiyab to sue for peace. First, Afrasiyab's army receives its first defeat at the hand of Siyavosh. Then Afrasiyab has a dream in which he is killed by Siyavosh. To prevent his dream from becoming a reality, he sues for peace. Piran, his commander-in-chief and Prime Minister, signs the treaty.

Kayka'us does not approve of the treaty. He replaces Siyavosh with Tus. Siyavosh defects to Turan, marries Afrasiyab's daughter, Farangis, and builds a small kingdom for himself, his wife, and future child. The kingdom is called Siyavoshgord. Fearful of Siyavosh's *farr* and prompted by false reports filed by Garsivaz, Afrasiyab kills Siyavosh.

To avenge the death of Siyavosh, Kaykhusrau sends a number of expeditions to Turan to capture or kill Afrasiyab. None succeeds. Finally, he himself enters the war and kills both Afrasiyab and Garsivaz (see the Iran-Turan Wars for details).

Aghriras

Aghriras is one of the two sons of Pashang; the other brother is Afrasiyab, the ruler of Turan. Unlike Afrasiyab, Aghriras is kind and gentle. During the wars between Nowzar and Turan, Aghriras tried his best to persuade his father, Pashang, to cease hostilities against Iran. He does not succeed. Instead, he is ordered to accompany his brother, Afrasiyab, and serve as his consultant. When Nowzar falls into Turanian hands, Afrasiyab puts Aghriras in charge. He colludes with Zal. Aghriras is cut in half by his brother, Afrasiyab, on charges of treason.

Aingushasp

Aingushasp, son of Chosres I, is one of the champions of the Sassanian monarch Hurmuzd IV (AD 579-590). Hurmuzd dispatched Aingushasp to quell a rebellion led by Bahram Chubineh. He was murdered on the way by a prisoner whom he had released earlier, before his departure to face Bahram Chubineh. Aingushasp's head is presented to his enemy.

Arash-e Kamangar

At the end of his rule, the war between the Pishdadiyan monarch Manuchehr and the Turanian Afrasiyab reached a dead end. The stronger Afrasiyab, who held Manuchehr in Mazandaran, allowed Manuchehr to rule as much of Iranshahr as an Iranian arrow can fly. Using a magical bow, Arash volunteers to throw the fateful arrow. He stands on Mount Damavand and lets go of the arrow. A long time later, the arrow lands on the shore of the Oxus (present-day Amu Dariya) River. For a long time thereafter, the Oxus served as the boundary between Iran and Turan. It should be added that the difficult throw saps Arash of his strength. He dies soon after the feat.

Arjasp

After Afrasiyab is killed by Kaykhusrau, Arjasp ascends the throne of Turan. He not only refused to send tribute to the court of Gushtasp, the monarch ruling the Iranian lands, but he states that Gushtasp should send tribute to him. And for a while he does.

After the advent of the Prophet Zoroaster, Gushtasp refuses to follow tradition and send tribute to Arjasp. Arjasp advises Gushtasp to return to comply with his wishes, but Gushtasp refuses. Consequently, Arjasp invades Iran. He kills Gushtasp's brother, Zarir, and three of Gushtasp's sons, Ardashir, Shidsab and Nivaz. At the end, thanks to the valor of Bastur, Zarir's son, and the strength of armorclad Isfandiyar, the Turanians are defeated.

In later years, Arjasp sends an army headed by his son, Kahram, against Gushtasp. Kahram captures Balkh, kills Luhrasp, Gushtasp's father, and sets fire to the temples of fire. He even burns the *Avesta*. As the war grows, Gushtasp and Arjasp face each other in the battle field. Gushtasp is defeated and thirty-eight of his sons are killed. Gushtasp himself, however, escapes.

Arjasp and his sons, Kahram and Andariman, are killed by Isfandiyar (see Isfandiyar for details).

Arzhang

- 1) The name of the *div* (demon) who took Kayka'us to Mazandaran and imprisoned him.
- 2) Son of Zereh, a Turanian champion.
- 3) Name of the well in Turan in which Bizhan was imprisoned.
- 4) Prophet Mani's book, which is supposed to have been ingeniously illustrated.

Ashkabus

One of the famous Kashani (cf., Kushan) champions who aids Afrasiyab's army, headed by Piran, during the Hamavan War. He defeats Ruhham, Gudarz's son. When Ruhham flees the battle field, Tus moves to face the Kashani champion. But Rustam asks his permission to face the Kashani instead.

The Iranian champion enters the battlefield on foot. Without his Rakhsh, Ashkabus does not recognize Rustam. He speeds his horse to run Rustam down but is struck down by Rustam's arrow.

Bahman

Bahman, Isfandiyar's son, is sent as a messenger to Rustam to bring him to his father. Fearing that the Iranian champion might kill his father, Bahman tries to kill Rustam by rolling a boulder into his camp. Rustam dodges the boulder. Bahman then approaches

Rustam formally and relays his father's message. Rustam and Isfandiyar fight. Isfandiyar is killed. At his death, Isfandiyar entrusts Bahman to Rustam (see Isfandiyar for details).

Rustam takes Bahman to Zabulistan and educates him in the manners of the kings. Some time later, Gushtasp asks Rustam to send his grandson to him. Gushtasp renames his grandson Ardashir and bestows the throne and crown of Iran on him.

Upon Rustam's death, Bahman invades Sistan, destroys Zabul, and imprisons Zal. He sends Rustam's son, Faramarz, to the gallows. Eventually, after listening to his uncle, Pashutan, he repents his actions and allows Zal to return to Iran.

Bahman has a son, called Sassan, and a daughter, called Humay. He married Humay and, at his death, passes Iran's kingship to her (see Humay Chihrzad for details).

Bivar Asp

See, Zahhak

Bizhan

Bizhan is the son of Giv from Banu Gashasp Savar, daughter of Rustam, and grandson of Gudarz. He lives during the kingship of Kaykhusrau. When Giv departs Iran for Turan to find Kaykhusrau and bring him to Iran, he leaves his son Bizhan with his father to be educated in the manner of the champions. Banu Gashasp, Bizhan's mother and Rustam's daughter go to Zabul to live with Rustam.

Bizhan participates in a number of events including the killing of Farud, Siyavosh's son from Jarireh, Piran's daughter; Ru'in, Piran's son, and Human, Piran's brother.

The most important event in the life of Bizhan is his love for Manizheh, the other daughter of Afrasiyab. Afrasiyab is not happy at his daughter's living with Bizhan; he sent Garsivaz to bring Bizhan to him. Once Bizhan is at his court, Afrasiyab decides to send him to the gallows, but Piran intervenes. Bizhan then is imprisoned in a deep well.

Kaykhusrau sees Bizhan in his "crystal ball" and sends Rustam to rescue him. Rustam saves Bizhan and, along with Manizheh, brings him to Iran.

After Kaykhusrau abdicates and walks to his destiny, Bizhan returns with the other champions who had accompanied their king on the last leg of his journey. Like others, he is caught in the snow storm and perished.

Dara

According to Firdowsi, Dara is the son of Darab, the son of Bahman. He embodies the period of Iranian history that begins with the rulership of Yazdagird III and ends with the conquest of Iran by Alexander the Great.

Darab

Dara is the son of Bahman. In the *Shahname*, he embodies Iranian history from the death of Bahman to the time of Dara (cf., Yazdagird III), the Iranian monarch who was defeated by Alexander the Great.

Darafsh-e Kaviyan

The word "darafsh" refers to a triangular piece of cloth that ancient warriors tied around their head or their helmet. It is decorated in gold writing and loose on one end so that it flutters in the wind.

In the *Shahname*, Darafsh-e Kaviyan refers to the banner that Kaveh the Blacksmith fashions out of his apron as the flag of liberation against the oppression of Zahhak. In latter times, it becomes the banner identifying kings and champions. It is decorated with gems and kept close to the person of the king.

Div

Usually translated as demon, in the *Shahname*, they are a race of demons that populate Mazandaran. For instance, they captured and imprisoned Kayka'us and his champions. An intermediary between the human being and the animal kingdom, divs often appear as giants. In this situation, these actions and decisions are the opposite of those of humans. For instance, when the White Demon lifts Rostam and intends to throw him down, it gives him an option of falling into the sea or onto land. Rostam chooses land and, thereby, is thrown into the sea.

Div-e Sepid

Div-e Sepid or White Demon is the title of the commander-in-chief of the army of Mazandaran. When Kayka'us invades Mazandaran and confronts the White Demon, he is defeated, blind and, along with his champions, is imprisoned. Rostam goes to Mazandaran, passes seven hurdles, the last of which is killing the White Demon and rescues Kayka'us and his champions. He uses a few drops of the blood of the White Demon to restore the prisoners' sight (see Haft Khan for details.)

Faramarz

Faramarz is the son of Rostam. We see Faramarz for the first time when Rostam invades Turan to avenge the death of Siyavush. In that war, he kills Varazad, ruler of Sepijab, and captures Surkheh, son of Afrasiyab. For a while he is appointed by Kaykhusrau as the ruler of Zabul City on the border of Turan. When Rostam captures India, Faramarz is given the rulership of India. When Rostam goes to Turan to rescue Bizhan, he entrusts the rulership of Zabul to Faramarz.

During the battles of Rostam and Isfandiyar, Faramarz kills Mehrnush, son of Isfandiyar. After Rostam and Zavareh are killed, he takes their bodies to Zabul and places them in a crypt. Then, he invades Kabul, puts the King of Kabul in chains and throws him in the same well where Rostam died. He also burns Shaghad and the tree to which he was pinned. Bahman, son of Isfandiyar, invades Sistan to avenge his father's murder, put Zal in chains, and sends Faramarz to the gallows.

Farangis

Farangis is the daughter of Afrasiyab and wife of Siyavosh. After Siyavosh takes refuge in Turan, he marries Jarireh, the daughter of Piran and later, Farangis, the daughter of Afrasiyab. For a while, Farangis and Siyavosh live a tranquil life in Siyavoshgord, but soon, due to Garsivaz's plot, Siyavosh is killed. At the time, Farangis is pregnant. Afrasiyab orders her to be flogged so that she would drop the child (see Siyavosh for details). Piran rescues Farangis. Kaykhusrau, Siyavosh's son is born in the house of Piran. Piran entrusts the boy to a shepherd to raise (see Kaykhusrau for details).

Giv travels to Turan and brings both the mother and her son, Kaykhusrau, back to Iran. Fariburz, Kayka'us's son and Kaykhusrau's uncle, asks Farangis to marry him. Farangis refused at first, but persuaded by Rostam, she accepts.

Fariburz

Fariburz is the son of Kayka'us. He accompanies Kayka'us to Mazandaran. He is also one of the Iranian champions sent by Kayka'us to confront Suhrab. When Giv brings Kaykhusrau from Turan to be installed as the successor to Kayka'us, Tus opposes the rulership of Kaykhusrau and supports Fariburz. Eventually, they decide that of the two, the one who captures the Bahman Fortress will become the ruler. Fariburz and Tus storm the fortress but both fail. Kaykhusrau and Gudarz storm the Fortress and capture it. Kaykhusrau thus becomes the king of Iran. Thereafter, Fariburz obeys Kaykhusrau and participates in the wars between Iran and Turan. After Tus is defeated by the Turanians, Fariburz is sent to replace him. Helped by Rostam, Fariburz married Farangis, Kaykhusrau's mother.

After Kaykhusrau abdicated and walked to his destiny, Fariburz is among the champions who accompany him until he disappears. Like the other champions who accompany Kaykhusrau all the way, he perishes in the snow storm.

Farshidvard

- 1) Farshidvard is the son of Gushtasp and brother of Isfandiyar. He is the ruler of Khorasan.
- 2) Son of Viseh and brother of Piran, commander-in-chief of the Iranian army.

Farud

Farud is the son of Siyavosh from Jarireh, the daughter of Piran. Farud and his mother live at the border fortress of Kalat on Sepid Kuh. Kaykhusrau commissions Tus to invade Turan and avenge the murder of his father, Siyavosh. When Tus prepares his army to leave for Turan, Kaykhusrau orders him to stay clear of Kalat where his (Kaykhusrau's) step-brother lives. Tus, as if on purpose, moves the army to Kalat. Farud and Takhar appear on the crest of the mountain, surveying the Iranian army. Farud intends to join the army that intends to avenge his father's death. Tus, on the other hand, sends his warriors to capture Farud and Takhar and bring them to him.

In the initial stages of the hostilities, Tus's son-in-law, Rivniz, and Tus's son, Zarasp, are killed by Farud. Following that Tus himself is humiliated. Finally, Bizhan, son of Giv, enters the field and forces a wounded Farud to retreat to his fortress. Subsequently, Farud dies of his wound. But before he dies, he orders all his maids to throw themselves off the walls of the fortress.

Without Farud, Jarireh has no more reason or desire to live. She kills all their horses, sets fire to the fortress, and commits suicide. The next day, when Tus storms the fortress, there is no one there to oppose his entrance. All that is left for him, of course, is the burdensome pain of reporting his misdeed to Kaykhusrau and reaping the consequences of his unwise move (see Tus for the reasons for his actions against Farud).

Fereydun

Fereydun is the son of Abtin and Faranak. Forty years before the end of his rulership, Zakhak has a dream. He asks his *mu'bad*s and astrologers for an interpretation. They foresee that a child not yet born will kill Zakhak and ascend the throne of Iran. Fearing that that child will become king, Zakhak sends his henchmen throughout the world to find and eliminate that child. In spite of all the difficulties created in the realm for pregnant mothers, Fereydun is born. Zakhak's henchmen find Fereydun's father, Abtin, and kill him. But they cannot find the child.

Faranak takes her son to the meadows and asks a guard to raise him on Barmayeh's milk. The guard raises Fereydun for three years on milk from Barmayeh. Barmayeh is a cow that had been born at the same time as Fereydun. She had been foretold to nurse the young child. Finally, Zakhak discovers Fereydun's hiding place and goes there to kill him. But, Faranak, inspired by her *farr*, reaches Fereydun before Zakhak; she takes Fereydun to Mt. Alborz and entrusts him to an upright man there. Frustrated, Zakhak kills Barmayeh and the rest of the animals in the pasture. Fereydun stays on the mountain until he is sixteen. At that time he asked his mother about his ancestry, especially about the identity of his father.

Once he learns who he really is and what has happened to his family, he decides to avenge his father. At the same time, Kaveh the Blacksmith also rises against Zakhak. He has had eighteen sons, seventeen of his sons had been killed and their brains had been fed to

Zahhak's snakes. He intends to deprive Zahhak of the brain of his last child. He therefore, gathers his followers and together they approached Fereydun and make him their king.

Fereydun then orders a heavy mace to be made for him. It is a heavy mace that looks like the head of a cow. Equipped with that mace, Fereydun heads in the direction of Zahhak's court to stop his aggression. In the battle that follows, Fereydun captures Zahhak and imprisons him in Mt. Damavand. He then crowns himself king and rescues Arnavaz and Shahrnaz, the daughters of Jamshid, who had been held in prison by Zahhak, their husband. Once Zahhak's legacy is destroyed, Fereydun marries his Arnavaz and Shahrnaz.

At age 50, Fereydun has a son from Arnavaz, named Iraj, and two sons, Salm and Tur, from Shahrnaz. Fereydun divides his kingdom among his sons. Dissatisfied with their portions, Salm and Tur conspire and kill Iraj. Fereydun raises Manuchehr, Iraj's grandson through Iraj's daughter. Manuchehr kills Salm and Tur. At the age of 500, with a broken heart over the death of his three sons, Fereydun steps down in favor of Manuchehr.

Fereydun's division of his kingdom creates three major cycles in the epic. First, there is vengeance for the murder of innocent Iraj, second is vengeance for the death of Siyavosh, and the third and last is a series of wars of religion waged by Gushtasp and his House to promote the religion of Zoroaster.

Garshasp

- 1) Garshasp is the tenth and last king of the Pishdadiyan dynasty, Garshasp succeeds Zav, his father, who steps down in his favor before he dies. Pashang, the king of Turan, learning about the death of Zav, invades Iran with an army headed by his son Afrasiyab. It is the ninth and last year of Garshasp's rule. He is defeated by Afrasiyab.
- 2) Garshasp is one of the warriors of the House of Manuchehr and Nowzar who participates in the early wars between Iran and Turan.

Garsivaz

Garsivaz is the son of Pashang and brother of Afrasiyab. Upon Manuchehr's death, with Garsivaz's support, Pashang invaded Iran. Their brother Aghriras served as Afrasiyab's consultant.

Garsivaz's granddaughter marries Kayka'us and bears Siyavosh (see Siyavosh for details). When Afrasiyab invades Iran, Garsivaz is the commander of the Turanian forces. He is defeated by Siyavosh. When Siyavosh builds Siyavoshgord in Turan, Garsivaz is Afrasiyab's envoy and spy at the court of Siyavosh. Garsivaz's plot against Siyavosh ends in the death of the innocent prince. At the end of the Great War, both Garsivaz and Afrasiyab are killed by Kaykhusrau.

Garu-ye Zereh

Garu-ye Zereh is one of Garsivaz's henchmen. During the first days of his stay in Turan, Siyavosh defeats Garu-ye Zereh in a game of polo. Thereafter, he dislikes Siyavosh. When Garsivaz looks for men who would kill Siyavosh, he chooses Garu-ye Zereh. He beheads Siyavosh at Siyavoshgord. In the battle of the Twelve Rooks, Garu-ye Zereh is defeated by Giv and brought to Kaykhusrau in shackles. Kaykhusrau orders him to be dismembered.

Giv

Giv is the most prominent son of Gudarz, and the father of Bizhan. He accompanies Kayka'us to Mazandaran and Hamavaran, where they are imprisoned; they are rescued by Rostam. Giv is commissioned by his father to search Turan for Kaykhusrau and bring him to Iran. After a seven-year search, Giv finally finds Kaykhusrau. He accompanies Kaykhusrau to Siyavoshgord, picks up Farangis, and brings both back to Iran. Piran, upon learning about the flight of Kaykhusrau to Iran, ends his brothers Kulbad and Nastahan along with 300 warriors in pursuit. Giv fights that army single-handedly and puts them to flight. After that, Piran appears with a thousand champions to capture Giv and his companions. Giv succeeds in separating Piran from his army and capturing him. Farangis and Kaykhusrau intervene and Piran is released. Giv then he continues his way to Iran. Giv remains one of the most celebrated champions in the wars of Kaykhusrau and Afrasiyab. In the battle of the Twelve Rooks, Giv captures Garu-ye Zereh, the Turanian who had beheaded Siyavosh. He brings Garu-ye Zereh to Kaykhusrau (see Garu-ye Zereh, Siyavosh, for further detail).

After Kaykhusrau abdicates and walks to his destiny, Giv is among the champions who accompany him until he disappears. Like others, he is caught in the snow storm and perishes.

Gordafarid

Gordafarid is the daughter of Gazhdaham who is in charge of the Sepid Fortress. She is a very bold woman, usually clad in armor like a man. When Hazhir, who is also in charge of the Sepid Fortress is defeated by Suhrab, and taken captive, Gordafarid disguises herself as a young warrior and faces Suhrab. In the struggle that follows, Gordafarid is unmasked. She flees towards the fortress. Suhrab puts her in chains as well. Gordafarid argues that as a champion, Suhrab should not appear to have fought a woman. Suhrab, who had fallen in love with her, is deceived and accompanies her to the fortress. As soon as she enters the fortress, Gordafarid orders the gate shut. That night, Gordafarid, her father, and his supporters leave the fortress. The next day, when Suhrab storms the fortress and enters, it is empty.

Gudarz

Gudarz is the son of Kishwad who lived during the time of Fereydun, and the father of Giv. He is the founder of the House of Kishwad (also known as the House of Gudarz). After the House of Saam, his is the most important circle of champions. He serves both Kayka'us and Kaykhusrau. His 78 sons and grandsons form the circle of champions of the Kayanian Dynasty. They are the holders of the Kayanian banner.

Gudarz accompanies Kayka'us to Mazandaran and Hamavaran, where they are imprisoned and, later, rescued by Rustam of Zabul. In the altercations between Rustam and Kayka'us on the question of Suhrab, Gudarz mediates and persuades Rustam to accept the command of the army that was sent against Suhrab. After the death of Siyavosh, Gudarz becomes the governor of Sughd. When the rulership of Iran, under Kayka'us, becomes chaotic, he and the other champions return to the capital to resolve the question of rulership.

During these chaotic times, one night, Surush visits Gudarz and informs him that Iran's problems can be solved by Kaykhusrau, son of Siyavosh, who at the time resides in Turan. Gudarz sends his son, Giv, to Turan to bring Kaykhusrau. When Kaykhusrau arrives in Iran, the question of legitimacy pits Fariburz, Kayka'us's son, supported by Tus and his champions, against Kaykhusrau, supported by Gudarz and his champions.

After Tus's defeat in Turan, the command of the army passed to Fariburz. Gudarz and 70 of his sons accompany Fariburz to Turan. Due to the weakness of Fariburz, the Iranian army is defeated and many Iranians are killed. Of the House of Gudarz, only 8 remain. Gudarz participates in the Great War of Kaykhusrau. He plans the battle of the Twelve Rooks. At the end, he personally fights Piran and defeats him. He drinks Piran's blood and smears Piran's blood on his own face; but he cannot make himself behead the old Turanian warrior.

When Kaykhusrau abdicates, from the 78 sons and grandsons of Gudarz, whose House had served Iran since the time of Manuchehr, only 8 remain. Kaykhusrau appoints Gudarz to the rulership of Ispahan and Qum.

Gudarz accompanies Kaykhusrau on his journey to the clear light. Unlike the champions who perish in a snow storm after Kaykhusrau disappears, Gudarz listens to Zal and Rustam and returns half way through the journey.

Gurgin

Gurgin is the son of Milad and one of Kayka'us' champions. He traveled with him to Mazandaran and Hamavaran. He is present during the mortal combat between Rustam and Suhrab. Later, he is one of the champions of Kaykhusrau. In fact, he is the champion who takes Kaykhusrau's message to Afrasiyab. When Tus storms Farud's Fortress, he is present there as well. Gurgin incites Bizhan to enter Afrasiyab's harem where he falls in love with Afrasiyab's daughter, Manizheh. To punish him, Afrasiyab imprisons Bizhan in

a well from which he is rescued by Rustam. When Kaykhusrau is informed of Gurgin's treachery, he imprisons him. However, Rustam, before leaving for Turan, intercedes on behalf of Gurgin, and Kaykhusrau forgives him. Gurgin then accompanies Rustam to Turan to help with the rescue of Bizhan. Bizhan, too, on Rustam's insistence, forgives Gurgin. In the battle of the Twelve Rooks, he is the ninth Iranian champion to fight. He fights Andariman and defeats him. He is present during Kaykhusrau's Great War and remains one of the major champions at his court. After Kaykhusrau's disappearance, we do not hear any more about Gurgin.

Gushtasp

Gushtasp is the son of Luhrasp of the Kayanian Dynasty. Luhrasp has two sons, Gushtasp and Zarir. Gushtasp is wayward from the time that he is a young champion. He wants his father to abdicate in his favor so that he can use his youthful days to organize the affairs of the kingdom. But Luhrasp does not agree with him. Gushtasp, therefore, leaves Iran for India. Luhrasp sends Zarir, Gushtasp's brother, in search of him to India. Zarir finds his brother and brings him back to Iran.

In Iran, Gushtasp claims the rulership again and is disappointed a second time. He leaves Iran once again, this time for Rum. There, he marries Katayun, the daughter of the Caesar of Rum. Luhrasp eventually relents and agrees to abdicate in favor of Gushtasp. Gushtasp returns to Iran and ascends the throne.

The major event of the rulership of Gushtasp is the appearance of the Prophet Zoroaster. Gushtasp not only accepts Zoroaster's religion but promotes it. To bring the Turanians into the fold, he invades Turan and battles with Arjasp. In the first battle with Arjasp, however, he loses three of his sons (Ardashir, Shidsab, and Nivzad) and his brother Zarir. But he continues the war until the Turanians are defeated by his son Isfandiyar (see Isfandiyar for details).

Gushtasp, suspicious of Isfandiyar's loyalty, imprisons him. Then he travels to Sistan and stays with Zal, Rustam, and their champions for two years. During this time, he teaches them the Avesta and brings them into the Zoroastrian fold.

Meanwhile, Arjasp invades Balkh and kills Gushtasp's father, Luhrasp. Out of necessity, Gushtasp releases his son Isfandiyar from prison to encounter Arjasp. Isfandiyar defeats the Turanians and kills Arjasp. Although he had promised to abdicate the throne in Isfandiyar's favor after the defeat of Arjasp, Gushtasp reneges on his promise. Finally, he assigns Isfandiyar a task from which he knows he will not return victorious. He asks him to bring Rustam to his court in chains. The reason for his hostility against Rustam is, he says, that the House of Nariman has ignored its duty of paying homage to him. Isfandiyar is killed by Rustam (see Isfandiyar for details). At his death, Isfandiyar entrusts his son, Bahman, to Rustam.

Gushtasp rules for 120 years. At the end, he passes the rulership of Iran to Bahman, Isfandiyar's son.

Gustaham (son of Nowzar)

- 1) Gustaham is the son of Nowzar and brother of Tus. He participates in the war between Nowzar and Afrasiyab. Tus and Gustaham, on Nowzar's orders, take their families to Mount Alborz. After Nowzar's death, Zal and other Iranian champions choose Zav as Iran's future king. They feel that Tus and Gustaham are not endowed with the *farr* and, therefore, not worthy of kingship. Gustaham and Tus, thereafter, become members of the circle of champions. Gustaham is present during Kaykhusrau's Great War. After Kaykhusrau's victory, he becomes the governor of the Gang Fortress.
- 2) Gustaham is the son of Gazhdaham. He is a mere child when Rustam and Suhrab face each other in mortal combat. By the time of Kaykhusrau's assault on Turan, however, he is appointed the leader of the warriors of the House of Gazhdaham. After Kaykhusrau disappears in the bright light, he serves Luhrasp. Gustaham is commissioned by Luhrasp to go to Rum in search of Gushtasp. He accompanies Rustam to Turan to rescue Bizhan. After the death of Piran, he pursues Farshidvard and Lahhak. He kills Farshidvard. In this struggle, Gustaham is wounded and nearly dies. He is saved by Kaykhusrau who uses his magic beads, which he inherited from Hushang, Tahmuras, and Jamshid, to heal him.

When Kaykhusrau abdicates and walks to his destiny, Gustaham could have been among the champions who accompanied him until he disappears.

Haft Khan

Haft Khan or Seven Labors are tasks that a champion accomplishes to achieve a goal. In the *Shahname*, there are two Haft Khans, Rustam's and Isfandiyar's.

Rustam's Haft Khan

On his way to Mazandaran to rescue Kayka'us and his champions, Rustam passes seven hurdles. These include,

1. A battle between Rakhsh and a lion in which Rakhsh kills the lion.
2. Guided by Gharm, a spring of clear water appears before Rustam.
3. Rustam kills a dragon.
4. Rustam kills a witch.
5. Rustam rips the ears of the field patrol.
6. Rustam kills Arzhang, the demon.
7. Rustam kills the White Demon.

Isfandiyar's Haft Khan

- Isfandiyar kills two wolves.
- Isfandiyar kills several lions.
- Isfandiyar kills a dragon.
- Isfandiyar kills a witch.
- Isfandiyar kills a man-eating Simurgh.
- Isfandiyar crosses the land covered by snow.
- Isfandiyar crosses the river.

Humay Chehrzad

She is the daughter of Bahman, son of Isfandiyar and grandson of Gushtasp. Bahman married Humay but becomes ill when she is six-months pregnant. Realizing that his death is near, he summons the nobles and appoints Humay vice-regent until the birth of their child, be it a son or a daughter. After the death of Bahman, Humay ascends the throne. Then he gives birth to a son, Darab. She keeps Darab hidden for a long time. Eventually, after eight months, she placed Darab in a box and allows it to float on the Euphrates. A dyer retrieves the box and saves and raises Darab.

Darab becomes a strong young man trained in horse riding, polo and the arts of war. When an army from Rum invades the Western boundaries of Iran, Humay sends an army headed by Rashwad against the Rumi foe. Darab joins the service of Rashwad. Rashwad recognizes Darab and informs Humay about him. After victory over the army of Rum, Rashwad and Darab come to Humay. After 32 years of rule, Humay hands down the kingship to Darab.

Hushang

Hushang is one of the kings of the Pishdadiyan dynasty, son of Siyamak and grandson of Kayumars. Hushang contributes to the prosperity of the Creator's material world by discovering fire and metals, and by forging weaponry. He harnesses the rivers, promotes agriculture, domesticates animals, and teaches his people how to exploit the bounty that nature has placed at their reach.

Iraj

Iraj is the youngest son of Fereydun. When Fereydun divides his kingdom, he gives Iraj the *farr*, as well as the heartland of Iran (see Fereydun, Salm, Tur, for details). Salm and Tur conspire and kill Iraj. The revenge for the murder of the innocent king pits the clan of Iraj, supported by King Fereydun, against the clan of Tur. Subsequently, Manuchehr, Iraj's grandson from a slave maiden, kills both Salm and Tur. As for Fereydun, he abdicated in favor of his grandson, Manuchehr (see Manuchehr for details).

Isfandiyar

Armorclad Iranian champion, Isfandiyar, is the son of Gushtasp and Katayun, the daughter of the Caesar of Rum. After the advent of the Prophet Zoroaster, alongside his father, Gushtasp, and his uncle, Zarir, he accepts the religion of Zoroaster.

When faced with the wrath of Arjasp, especially after his brother Zarir is killed, Gushtasp takes an oath that he would marry his daughter, Humay, to whomever avenges the death of Zarir. When Isfandiyar volunteers to face Arjasp, Gushtasp goes as far as promising his son that he would add the throne and crown of Iran to the victor.

Isfandiyar, who desires ascending the throne more than anything else in the world, fights Arjasp and defeats him. He kills Bidarafsh who had killed Zarir, the object of his father's vow for abdication. Upon returning to his father's court, Gushtasp fulfills only the first part of his promise. He marries Isfandiyar to Humay, but he does not bestow the throne and the crown upon Isfandiyar. Rather, he sets his son a new task at the completion of which, he promises, he would abdicate in his favor. His assignment is to battle the infidels and bring all of them into the Zoroastrian fold. Isfandiyar conquers India, Rum, and Yemen and brings large populations within the Zoroastrian fold. But Gushtasp fails to carry out his promise. Conversely, fearing Isfandiyar's rising popularity, he imprisons the prince in the Gunbadan Fortress. Then he goes to Zabul for two years and stays with Zal and Rustam, and converts the people of Zabul and Sistan to the Zoroastrian faith.

While Gushtasp is in Zabul, he receives news that Arjasp had invaded Balkh, his capital, killed his father Luhrasp, and taken his daughters prisoner. Out of necessity, he releases Isfandiyar to battle Arjasp and rescue his sisters from Arjasp's prison. Once again Gushtasp promises Isfandiyar that upon his defeat of Arjasp and release of his daughters, Humay and Bihafarid, he will bestow the throne and crown upon him. Once again Isfandiyar defeats the Turanians. This time he even kills Arjasp and releases his sisters. Once again Gushtasp reneges on his promise. Instead, he promises to make Isfandiyar king after the latter brings Rustam, Iran's national champion, to his court in chains.

Isfandiyar takes the army of Iran, the army that had been under the command of Rustam for centuries, to Zabul to, if necessary, fight Rustam and put chains on him. In Zabul, he sends his son, Bahman, to Rustam with a stern message: Either allow me to put chains on you and take you to my father's court or be ready to fight against the army of Iran. Rustam comes to Isfandiyar's camp personally to discuss the situation and invite him to his court. Isfandiyar does not change his mind. He even refuses Rustam's suggestion that they go back together as two champions. There, Rustam says, he will apologize to his king for any shortcomings that might have angered him. Isfandiyar does not agree.

In the battle that ensues, Rustam is defeated. Both he and Rakhsh, his horse, are mortally wounded by Isfandiyar. Isfandiyar, however, remains unharmed as Rustam cannot penetrate his armor with his ordinary arrows. To help his son, Zal seeks the advice of Simurgh by burning one of the bird's feathers. Simurgh takes care of the wounds of Rustam and Rakhsh and advises Rustam to fashion an arrow from the wood of the *gaz* tree. By shooting that arrow into Isfandiyar's eye, the only part of his body that is not armorclad, he says, Rustam will be able to overcome him. He also foresees that Isfandiyar's killer will not live much longer after Isfandiyar's death.

Rustam follows Simurgh's advice and kills Isfandiyar. While passing his last hours, Isfandiyar entrusts his son, Bahman, to Rustam. Rustam promises to take care of him as he had taken care of Siyavosh.

Jamasp

Jamasp is the court minister of Gushtasp and the husband of Puruchista, the daughter of Zoroaster. In the religious war between Arjasp and Gushtasp, Jamasp's son and Gushtasp's brother are killed. Upon his return to Balkh, Gushtasp builds a fire temple and makes Jamasp its *mu'bad*. After the death of Zoroaster, Jamasp becomes the main source of inspiration for the faithful, displacing Gushtasp.

After Isfandiyar defeats the Arjasp, Gushtasp decides to step down in favor of his son. But Garzam speaks ill about Isfandiyar and makes Gushtasp reexamine his decision. Instead, Gushtasp sends Jamasp to Isfandiyar, brings him to his court, and imprisons him.

When the Turanians invade again, Jamasp is sent to prison to persuade Isfandiyar to come to his father's aid and fight the army of Arjasp.

After the defeat of Arjasp, Jamasp advises Gushtasp to send Isfandiyar to Zabul to capture Rustam and bring him back in chains. A good astrologer, Jamasp sees it in the stars that Isfandiyar will not return from Zabul (See Rustam, Isfandiyar, for details).

Jamshid

Jamshid is the fourth ruler of the Pishdadiyan dynasty. He lives for a thousand years and rules for 600 years over people, *divs*, birds, and genies. He teaches people to forge weapons, spin wool, weave silk and cotton, and extract gold, silver and precious stones. He builds palaces and discovers remedies for many diseases. Jamshid divides the people into four categories: priests; warriors; landowners; and merchants. When he is at the peak of his power, he makes a throne and orders the *divs* to take it up to the heavens. The day that he attempts to reach the abode of the Creator and is hurled down, is his last day of glory.

The throne that he had fashioned to be lifted to the heavens falls short of the abode of the Creator either because the *divs* or the vultures lifting it, lose their power. In any event, Jamshid loses his *farr* that had been bestowed on him by the Creator. His kingdom is invaded by the Semite Zahhak (see Zahhak for further details). While escaping, Jamshid is caught by Zahhak and cut in half.

An event during the reign of Jamshid is related to his building a "var" to protect couples of all species in the world so that they can survive in extremely cold winter. Another major cultural event in Iranian mythological history is Jamshid's establishment of the Now Ruz (New Year) celebration. A large population of the world, including Iranians, commemorates the Now Ruz on the 21st day of March, or on the day of the Vernal Equinox.

Kaveh

Kaveh is a blacksmith who, after a thousand years of Zahhak's unjust rule, rises against the tyrant and, with the help of Fereydun, ends the reign of terror in Iran. Two factors motivate Kaveh. One is his loyalty to the Pishdadiyan dynasty. The other is his loyalty to his family. Zahhak's henchmen had already killed seventeen of Kaveh's sons and fed their brains to Zahhak's snakes. Now they are taking Kaveh's last son (see Zahhak for details). He comes to Zahhak's palace to ask for mercy exactly at the same time that Zahhak is forcing the people to sign a document praising his sense of justice and fair play. Rather than listening to Kaveh's problem, he asks him to sign the statement. Zahhak refuses to sign. Instead, he tears the document into pieces and leaves the palace.

To help revive the Pishdadiyan dynasty, Kaveh seeks Fereydun, son of Abtin, who had been foreseen as Iran's only hope for getting rid of Zahhak. He gathers his followers and persuades Fereydun to overthrow the tyrant (see Fereydun for details).

Kayanian

The second and last dynasty of Iranian mythological monarchs. The Kayanian dynasty begins with Kayqubad and ends with Kaygarshasp. In the *Shahname*, Humay, Darab, Dara, and Iskandar (Alexander the Great) are also included in the dynasty.

With Garshasp, the last Pishdadiyan monarch dead and Tus and Gustaham deemed incapable of rule--they do not have the *farr*--the country is at the mercy of Afrasiyab. The Iranians seek and find a man who, like Fereydun, carries the *farr*. His name is Qubad and he resides on Mount Alborz. As Kayqubad, he confronts Afrasiyab and pushes his army beyond the Oxus. The Kayanian dynasty is thus established.

The Kayanian dynasty can be divided into three periods:

- 1) From Kayqubad to Kaykhusrau. This period includes the rulership of Kayqubad, Kayka'us, and Kaykhusrau. The best way of distinguishing this period is to relate it to the age of the champions. They are the ones who bring Kayqubad to Iran to rule and they are also the ones who leave the court after Kaykhusrau chooses Luhrasp to succeed him. The major event of this period is the unification of Iran and Turan.
- 2) From Kayluhrasp to Bahman. This is the period that ushers in the Prophet Zoroaster and the new order that he brings. The major event of this period is the wars of religion led by Gushtasp and his son, Isfandiyar.
- 3) This period begins with Bahman, recognized as a part of the Kayanian dynasty only by Firdowsi and ends with Dara. The kings that rule at this time (Bahman, Humay, Darab, and Dara) are historical figures, but their rules are reduced to the level of myth.

Kayka'us

Kayka'us is the second king of the Kayanian dynasty. He is known variously as son and grandson of Kayqubad. As his first act, when he ascends the throne, he invades the land of Mazandaran against the advise of Zal. He is captured by the *devs* and is imprisoned. He is rescued by Rustam. Aided by Rustam he kills the king of Mazandaran. He then includes Turan, Chin, Makran, and other lands all the way to the Zereh Sea into his kingdom. From there, he turns to the west and reduces the rulers of those lands and forces them to pay him tribute. He is a guest of Rustam for one month in Zabul. When Egypt and Syria rise against him, he invades their lands via the sea. He subjugates the king of Hamavaran and marries his daughter, Sudabeh. The king of Hamavaran, however, tricks him and puts him in prison. He is rescued again by Rustam.

Upon returning to Iran, Kayka'us defeats Afrasiyab who had extended his rule into Iran during his Kayka'us's absence. He then adjudicates a quarrel between two of his warriors, Tus and Giv, regarding a girl they had found in the woods. She is the grand daughter of the Turanian, Garsivaz. Rather than giving the girl to one or the other of the champions, he sends her to his own harem. The girl bears him a son, Siyavosh (see Siyavosh for details). Siyavosh is raised by Rustam in Sistan. When he returns to the palace, he is enmeshed in palace intrigue and is accused of rape by Sudabeh, the king's wife. The death of Siyavosh in Turan affects Kayka'us to the point that he loses his *farr*, but he continues to rule until his grandson, Kaykhusrau, takes over.

When Kaykhusrau arrives in Iran, Kayka'us gives him and his brother Fariburz the task of conquering the Bahman Fortress. Kayka'us chooses the victorious Kaykhusrau as his successor. Kaykhusrau becomes the ruler of Iran. When Afrasiyab is killed at the hands of Kaykhusrau, Kayka'us is over 150 years old. He dies soon thereafter.

Kaykhusrau

Kaykhusrau is the third king of the Kayanian Dynasty. He is the son of Siyavosh and Farangis, the daughter of Afrasiyab.

Having killed his son-in-law, Afrasiyab intends to kill his daughter--who is with child at the time--as well, but Piran intervenes. Kaykhusrau is born at the house of Piran and raised at the house of a shepherd until he is ten years old. Then Piran brings Kaykhusrau to Afrasiyab and tells him that Kaykhusrau is fine physically but is mentally unstable. Afrasiyab sends Kaykhusrau to Siyavoshgord, the city that his father had built, to live there.

While Kaykhusrau is still young and in Turan, the Iranians, led by Rustam, invade Turan. Afrasiyab flees before them with the intention of murdering young Kaykhusrau. Piran prevents the killing and persuades Afrasiyab to expel Kaykhusrau to the Sea of China. Meanwhile, Kayka'us has become old and the land is struck by famine.

One night Surush comes to Gudarz in a dream and tells him that Iran's problems can be solved by Kaykhusrau. Gudarz then sends his son Giv to Turan to find Kaykhusrau. After a seven-year search, Giv finds Kaykhusrau and brings him to Iran.

The arrival of Kaykhusrau creates struggle for legitimacy in Iran whereby Gudarz and his sons support Kaykhusrau and Tus and his champions support Kayka'us' son, Fariburz. Eventually, it is decided that the conqueror of the Bahman Fortress would become the king of the land. Kaykhusrau, endowed with the *farr*, captures the Fortress and becomes the King of Iran.

After Kaykhusrau ascends the throne, he invades Turan. In the course of a series of wars that end in the great war of Kaykhusrau, he defeats Afrasiyab. Afrasiyab flees to the Chichest Lake where he is captured and, along with his brother Garsivaz, is killed. Shortly thereafter, Kayka'us, too, passes away.

After sixty years of rulership, Kaykhusrau loses interest in worldly matters and goes into seclusion. After forty days of seclusion and prayer, he announces that he is stepping down as king. In his place, he appoints Luhrasp. According to him, Luhrasp is endowed with the *farr*. Additionally, he is the father of Gushtasp to whose court Kaykhusrau foresaw the Prophet Zoroaster would come and bring law and order to the kingdom.

After Kaykhusrau abdicates, he walks to his destiny. He is accompanied by his champions. When he disappears, the Iranian champions who had accompanied him are caught in a snow storm. They all perish.

Kayqubad

The first king of the Kayanian Dynasty from the seed of Fereydun, Kayqubad resided on Mount Alborz. After the death of Garshasp, son of Zav, there is no one on the Iranian throne to defend the country against the Turanians. Zal commissions Rostam to find Kayqubad in the Alborz Mountains and bring him to the capital. Tus and Gustaham, sons of Nowzar, although living, are not endowed with the *farr*. Therefore, they are not eligible to rule.

Rostam finds Kayqubad and brings him to the Iranian camp. Kayqubad, after he becomes king, confronts Afrasiyab and sets him to flight. Afrasiyab sues for peace which is accepted by Kayqubad. The Oxus River becomes the border between the two countries. Kayqubad then goes to Fars and builds the city of Istakhr. Kayqubad has four sons: Ka'us, Kiarsh, Kipashin, and Arash. He rules for a hundred years. His son, Ka'us, succeeds him.

Kayumars (also Gayomart)

Kayumars is the first mortal to receive the *farr* and rule over man and beast alike. He appears first as a cosmic creation of Mazda in the Creator's abstract Khshathra Variya. After he is killed by Aka Manah, his seed is deposited in the physical, material world and grows in the form of a rhubarb plant (see Iranian cosmology for details).

Endowed with the *farr*, Kayumars rules over the entire sentient world. Kayumars has a son called Siyamak, who is killed by Ahriman. Kayumars's kingship, therefore, goes to his grandson, Hushang, whom he had kept hidden from evil Ahriman.

Luhrasp

One of the kings of the Kayanian Dynasty, Luhrasp is the grandson of Kaypishin from the seed of Kayqubad. During the rulership of Kaykhusrau, he is appointed the governor of Alanon and overseer of the Ghuzz Fortress. When Kaykhusrau abdicates, he passes the rulership of Iran to Luhrasp. Since at the time Luhrasp is a relatively unknown warrior who had appeared on the Iranian scene relatively recently, his selection by Kaykhusrau is opposed by the Iranian champions, especially Zal. When Kaykhusrau reveals that Luhrasp is from the seed of Kayqubad, however, Zal repents and, along with the other champions, approves the selection. Luhrasp becomes the king of Iran.

Zal's approval, however, is superficial. The House of Nariman, stemming from the two royal houses of Jamshid and Zakhak, is slighted by Kaykhusrau's choice. After the ascension of Kayluhrasp to the throne, Zal, Rustam, and their champions leave the capital for their kingdom of Zabul and stay there. In other words, the love of king that existed between the House of Kayqubad and the House of Nariman evaporates.

Luhrasp has two sons: Zarir and Gushtasp. Although tradition dictates that after him the kingship should go to one of his sons, Luhrasp's inclination is that it should be passed on to one of the grandsons of Kayka'us. This inclination creates unhappiness on the part of Gushtasp, a valiant but headstrong prince, who expects to receive the rulership of Iran (see Gushtasp for further detail). At the end, however, Luhrasp passes the kingship to Gushtasp and becomes a recluse at the Nowbahar Firetemple. After the appearance of Zoroaster, he accepts the good religion. Luhrasp is killed during the second invasion of Arjasp.

Mahafarid

- 1) Mahafarid, a slave girl, is the wife of Iraj. Iraj is killed when she is pregnant. She bears Iraj a daughter whom Fereydun gives in marriage to Pashang. Manucehr is the result of this marriage.
- 2) Mahafarid, daughter of Tur, is mentioned by Kaykhusrau at the time of his abdication.

Manucehr

One of the Pishdadiyan kings. He is the son of Pashang and the daughter of Iraj from a slave girl. After Manucehr grows up and learns the manners of the kings, Fereydun equips him with an army with which to avenge the murder of Iraj. Salm and Tur, recognizing their situation, repent, but Fereydun does not accept their repentance. Consequently, the two gather a large army and head for Iran. Manucehr, too, with an army led by Qaran, son of Kaveh, along with Garshasp, Saam, and Qubad, hastens to

meet them. After several battles, Salm and Tur are killed at the hand of Manucehr and their heads are sent to Fereydun. Fereydun then passes the rulership of Iran to Manucehr.

One of the important episodes during the rulership of Manucehr is the birth of Zal, and Zal's subsequent request to marry Rudabeh, the daughter of Mihrab, the ruler of Kabul. Manucehr initially does not approve of the marriage; however, once Saam intervenes, he gives in. Rostam is born at the end of Manucehr's rule from this marriage of Zal and Rudabeh. Manucehr's rule lasts 120 years. The kingship then passes to his son, Nowzar.

Mihrab

Mihrab is the grandson of Zahhak and ruler of Kabul. During the rulership of Manucehr, he pays tribute to Saam. Zal and Mihrab's daughter, Rudabeh, fall in love. Mihrab opposes their marriage, but persuaded by his wife, Sindukht, he gives his approval. During the reign of Manucehr, when Mihrab is in Zabul, the Turanians invade Zabul. They are repulsed by Saam who, at the time, is mourning the death of his father, Nariman. Mihrab and his army participate in Kayqubad's battles with the Turanians.

Nowzar

Nowzar is one of the kings of the Pishdadiyan Dynasty. He is the son of Manucehr and succeeds him to the throne of Iran. His kingship begins with turmoil. He recalls Saam from Mazandaran to find a solution. When Saam arrives in Iran, the nobles request that he should ascend the throne. Saam does not agree. He is not of royal blood. Instead, he serves as Nowzar's advisor and calms the turmoil. He also persuades the champions and the nobles to soften their stance vis-à-vis Nowzar.

Pashang, the king of Turan, upon hearing of the death of Manucehr, sends his son, Afrasiyab, at the head of a large army to Iran. Nowzar is defeated, enslaved, and, soon after, killed. Tus and Gustaham, both sons of Nowzar, are not eligible, or so the nobles say, for the kingship. Instead, Zav, son of Tahmasp, is elected the king of Iran.

Piran

Piran from the House of Viseh is the only Turanian commander who is sympathetic to the cause of Iran, Turan's enemy. His standing among the Turanians is the same as Gudarz's standing among the Iranians. Unlike Gudarz, who is a champion among champions, however, Piran stands next to Afrasiyab. He is Afrasiyab's Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister.

Piran's House, stationed in Khotan, provides Afrasiyab with almost all his needs. In fact, it is after Piran and his seven brothers and sons are killed that Afrasiyab becomes vulnerable. Otherwise, he could not penetrate the shield that Piran had created to protect his king.

The major episode in the life of Piran is tied to the story of Siyavosh. He is the Prime Minister of Turan who convinces Siyavosh to accept the peace treaty offered by Afrasiyab. And it is Piran who helps Siyavosh defect and reside in Turan. To solidify the bond between Turan and Iran, he marries his own daughter, Jarireh, to Siyavosh. He is also instrumental in Siyavosh's marrying Farangis, Afrasiyab's daughter.

He is away in Mazandaran when Siyavosh is killed. He helps Siyavosh's wife and child and protects the child Kaykhusrau from the wrath of his grandfather, Afrasiyab. In the wars with the Iranians, he does his best to prevent bloodshed. But, in the process, he loses his sons and his brothers. In the end, he engages in mortal combat with Gudarz and is killed (see Gudarz for details).

Pishdadiyan

The first dynasty of mythical Iranian kings. The Pishdadiyan dynasty consists of ten kings beginning with Kayumars and ending with Garshasp. Known as the "Law-givers," these kings can be divided into two main groups. The first four, i.e., Kayumars, Hushang, Tahmuras, and Jamshid are truly ancient cosmic monarchs. They come from the deepest level of Indo-Iranian, perhaps even Indo-European, mythological tradition. Their nemesis is Evil and the last of them loses his *farr*, symbol of his legitimacy and kingship to Evil. The other six include Semite Zahhak, who steals Jamshid's *farr*, and Fereydun who retrieves the *farr* and reestablishes the line of the Pishdadiyan. After Fereydun, the kingship goes to Manuchehr, who avenges Iraj. The significant event during the rule of Manuchehr, in addition to avenging the murder of Iraj, is the establishment of the boundary between Iran and Turan (See Arash-e Kamangar for details).

With the death of Tur, especially after the ascension of Manuchehr's son, Nowzar, Iran becomes the battle ground between Iran and Turan (see Fereydun, for explanation). After Nowzar, the aged Zav, from the House of Nowzar, rules for five years. In spite of the devastation that Afrasiyab inflicts on Iran, Zav administers his realm well and returns prosperity to the land. His rule, however, is too short to make a difference. The Pishdadiyan dynasty ends with the rule of Garshasp. During Garshasp's rule, which lasted nine years, Afrasiyab, and with him chaos, descends on Iran. Iranian champions search for a monarch like Fereydun, a monarch with *farr* who can return Iran to prosperity.

Qaran

- 1) Son of Kaveh the Blacksmith. He participates in Manuchehr's wars against Salm and Tur.
- 2) Son of Gashasp and one of the noble Iranians at the time of Yazdagerd.

Rakhsh

Rakhsh is Rostam's steed. When Zal grows old and wants to pass the championship to his young son, Rostam, he gives Rostam Saam's mace. Rostam asks for a horse that can carry him and the mace. Zal parades all his horses before Rostam so that he can pick one. He

breaks the back of every horse he sits on until a young, but large, horse called Rakhsh passes by him. Rakhsh carries Rustam without a problem and thus is chosen as Rustam's favorite horse. Thereafter, the rider and the horse are inseparable. Rakhsh is clever and sensitive to the ruses of the enemy. When Shaghad, Rustam's half-brother, digs a well for Rustam to fall into, Rakhsh refuses to go forward, and does so only after Rustam uses his whip. The rider and the horse fall in the well at the bottom of which the ruler of Kabul had placed sharp stakes, swords, and javelins (see Shaghad, Rustam, and Faramarz for detail).

Rivniz

- 1) Rivniz is the son-in-law of Tus. He is killed at the Kalat Fortress, when he is ordered by Tus to confront Farud.
- 2) Rivniz is the son of Kayka'us. He is killed in the battle between Iranians, under Fariburz, and the Turanians, commanded by Piran.

Rudabeh

Rudabeh is the daughter of Mihrab, the ruler of Kabul, and mother of Rustam. Mihrab, one of the grandson's of Zahhak, paid tribute to Saam who had been appointed by Manuchehr as the governor of Sistan. One day Zal, traveling with his champions to India, arrives in Kabul. Mihrab welcomes him and invites him to be a guest at his house. Meanwhile, one of Zal's companions, speaks well about Rudabeh, especially about her beauty, so much so that Zal falls in love with her. When Mihrab talks about Zal to his wife, Sindukht, his daughter Rudabeh overhears them. She, too, falls in love with Zal. Meanwhile Rudabeh sends a message to Zal and receives an answer. One night, Zal enters Rudabeh's bedchamber and the two become acquainted. Finally, the couple decides to marry.

Zal requests permission from his father, Saam, to marry Rudabeh. Saam agrees but goes to the court of Manuchehr for permission. In Kabul, Mihrab, hearing about what had transpired between Zal and Rudabeh, becomes very angry and wants to kill his daughter; his wife, Sindukht, intervenes.

When Zal comes to the court of Manuchehr, he is ordered to invade Kabul. Hearing this news, Mihrab becomes angry again, and again he wants to kill his wife and his daughter. Rudabeh calms her father down. Then, she herself goes to Saam and discusses the matter with him. Zal, too, goes to Saam and requests that rather than invade Kabul, he (Zal) should be killed. Consequently, Saam dispatches Zal with a letter to Manuchehr. After consulting with his astrologers, Manuchehr approves the marriage between Zal and Rudabeh. Rustam is born from this marriage. The birth is a difficult one (see Rustam, Simurgh, Zal, for further details).

After the death of Rustam, Rudabeh loses consciousness but soon after, with loving care, she returns to good health. After the death of Faramarz, Rudabeh curses the House of

Gushtasp. Pashutan, Gushtasp's son and the minister of Bahman, who had killed Faramarz, is filled with fear at Rudابه's curse. He requests from Bahman to forgive the family of Zal and allow Rustam's family to return to Zabulistan.

Ruhham

Ruhham is the son of Gudarz from the House of Kishwad. He accompanies Kayka'us to Mazandaran where he is blinded and imprisoned. They are rescued by Rustam. In the battle of the Kalat Fortress, he is instrumental in Bizhan's murder of Farud, son of Siyavosh from Jarireh, the daughter of Piran.

When Tus and Giv are imprisoned by the Turanian Puladvand, Ruhham and Bizhan try to save them but they, too, are imprisoned and remain so until Rustam rescues all of them. In the battle of the Hamavan Mountain, Ruhham is defeated by the Turanian champion, Ashkabus, and flees from the battlefield. During the rule of Kaykhusrau, in the battle of the Twelve Rooks, he faces Barman, son of Viseh and kills him.

Rustam

Rustam, Iran's national champion, is the son of Zal and Rudابه (the daughter of Mihrab, ruler of Kabul, and grandson of Zahhak). He is the grandson of Saam, son of Nairam from the House of Pashang. Rustam's birth, which was unusual, happened in Sistan. The baby was too big to deliver in the usual manner. Zal, therefore, sought the advice of Simurgh. Simurgh made it easy for the boy to be born through a caesarian section on the side of the mother. When Rustam was one day old, he looked like a boy of one-year; he drank the milk of two nurses. When he was switched to solid food, he ate five men's portions.

Rustam's exploits are legendary. In his early teens, he killed an unruly white elephant with one strike by his grandfather Saam's mace. In his early youth he captured the Sepand Fortress where Nariman had been killed. As an adult, he was so powerful and heavy that when he walked, his feet sunk into stone. When Afrasiyab invaded Iran for the first time, Rustam needed a horse to ride to the battlefield to confront the enemy. After examining all the horses, only one, Rakhsh, could endure his pressure on his back. The backs of all the other horses that he tried had broken. Once chosen as Rustam's steed, Rakhsh remained Rustam's horse until they both died. Rakhsh participated in Rustam's battles, communicated with Rustam, and warned him of impending danger.

Ordered by Zal, Rustam went to Mount Alborz, rescued Kayqubad, and returned him to the kingship of Iran. Soon after that, he participated in the war of Kayqubad against the Turanian Afrasiyab and humiliated him. For over 600 years, from the reign of Manuchehr until the time of Kaykhusrau, Rustam was Iran's national champion. He participated in almost all the wars during this time and defended Iran's integrity against the Turanians.

When Kayka'us was imprisoned in Mazandaran, Rustam passed seven hurdles (see Haft Khan for details), killed the white div, and rescued Kayka'us. He also rescued Kayka'us from imprisonment in Hamavaran and rescued Bizhan from the Arzhang Well in Turan.

Once, young Rustam. Looking for his horse that had been stolen, he enters the kingdom of Samangan. There he becomes a guest of the king of Samangan and marries his daughter, Tahmineh and sires Suhrab. When Suhrab comes of age, he faces his father in mortal combat and is killed by Rustam (See Suhrab for details). After the death of Suhrab, he invades Turan, defeats Afrasiyab and, for seven years, rules over the Turanians. Soon after he returns to Zabul, he is summoned by Kayka'us. The king entrusts his newborn son, Siyavosh, to raise and educate in the manner of kings (See Siyavosh for details).

One of the last battles in the life of Rustam is his encounter with Isfandiyar, son of Gushtasp. Isfandiyar is a strong, armored clad champion determined to take Rustam alive to the court of his father. Rustam fights him in his usual manner but nearly loses his life. Eventually helped by Zal, who seeks the advice of Simurgh (see Simurgh for details), he forges an arrow from the wood of the gaz tree and shoots Isfandiyar in the eye, the only part of his body that was not armor-clad.

Rustam, his horse Rakhsh, and his brother, Zavareh, fell victim to the ruse of his step-brother Shaghad and the king of Kabul. They fell on the stakes arranged at the bottom of a covered well dug by Shaghad. Before Rustam died, however, from the bottom of the well, he shot an arrow that pierced Shaghad and pinned him to the tree behind which he was hiding.

Rustam was strong, clever, resourceful, carefree, loyal and, above all eloquent. He was a master in intimidating the opponent and filling him with fear before he engaged him in single combat. His psychological warfare with Suhrab, Ashkabus, Khaqan of China, and Isfandiyar are unique pieces created by Firdowsi for showcasing the talents of Iran's national champion.

Saam

Saam is the son of Nariman, father of Zal and grandson of Garshasp. He is Iran's champion during the rule of Fereydun and Manuchehr. Fereydun appoints him Iran's overall champion. When Zal is born, because of his white hair, Saam takes him to the mountains and leaves him there. Simurgh finds the child and raises him until he is a strong young man. When Saam sees Zal in a dream and searches for him, Simurgh gives his son back to him. Thereafter, he is appointed by Manuchehr as the ruler of Zabulistan. A while after that he is dispatched by Manuchehr to Mazandaran. While he is there, he receives Zal's messenger who announces the love of Zal for the daughter of the king of Kabul, Rudabeh. Manuchehr, who does not wish a marriage between the House of Zakhak and the House of Saam to be realized, commissions Saam to attack Kabul. Not happy with the arrangement, Saam writes a letter and sends it with Zal to Manuchehr. At the end, Manuchehr agrees to the marriage of Rudabeh and Zal. Shortly thereafter, they get married. On his way back, Saam gives the rulership of Sistan to Zal and returns to

Gurgsaran. When Nowzar is restive and Iranian champions do not wish him to continue his rulership, they ask Saam to become king. Saam does not accept; rather he tries to bring Nowzar back to the fold. Soon after that, Saam passes away and Afrasiyab begins his incursions into Sistan.

Salm

Jamshid has two daughters, Shahrnaz and Arnavaz. They are both married to Fereydun. Salm (the oldest) and Tur are Fereydun's sons from his marriage to Shahrnaz. Fereydun's marriage to Arnavaz results in one son, Iraj. Fereydun divides his kingdom among his three sons. Rum and the west he gives to Salm, lands in the east, comprising what is known as Turkistan, he gives to Tur. The heartland of Iran, as well as the highly prized *farr*, he gives to his youngest son, Iraj. The division, needless to say, creates unhappiness in the family. Salm and Tur conspire and kill Iraj. Years later, Manucehr, a grandson of Iraj and successor to Fereydun, avenges Iraj's death by killing both Salm and Tur.

Shaghad

Shaghad is the son of Zal from a slave musician. He lives in Kabul and is married to two of the daughters of the King of Kabul. After his birth, the astrologers foresee that the demise of the House of Saam will happen at the hand of Shaghad. He marries the daughter of the King of Kabul so the king does not have to pay tribute to Rostam, the ruler of Sistan. His plan, however, does not work as the Sistanis continue to demand and receive tribute from the King of Kabul. Shaghad is unhappy with Rostam's insistence that Kabul should pay tribute.

The King of Kabul and Shaghad conspire to eliminate Rostam. To do this, Shaghad goes to Sistan and pretends that he has been insulted by his father-in-law. Rostam decides to move a large army against the King, but Shaghad persuades him to bring a hundred warriors and their other brother, Zavareh. When they arrive in Kabul, the king welcomes them and invites them to a hunting expedition. Before the hunt begins, however, he orders many wells to be dug. At the bottom of each well, he places sharp stakes, swords, and javelins. The mouths of the wells are covered so well so that the ground appears undisturbed.

During the hunt, Rostam and Rakhsh approach one of the wells. Rakhsh smells the fresh dirt and refuses to move. Rostam forces Rakhsh to move on. Rakhsh jumps but his hind legs miss. They both fall in the well and are mortally wounded. Zavareh, too, falls into one of those wells.

Shaghad then appears behind a tree and looks at the fallen hero. Rostam asks for his bow and arrow. Shaghad brings him the bow and arrow and retires behind the tree. Rostam shoots an arrow that pierces the tree and pins Shaghad to it.

Faramarz, Rustam's son, invades Kabul, kills the King of Kabul, and places one of the champions of Zabul in his place. He then takes the bodies of Rustam and Zavareh to Zabul for burial. He burns Shaghad and the tree to which he is pinned.

Simurgh

- 1) Simurgh in the *Shahname* is a bird that lives on Mount Alborz. She helps Zal when he is abandoned on Mount Alborz as a baby. In fact, she raises Zal and returns him to Saam (see Saam, Zal, for further details). She also provides a solution for Rustam's difficult birth. She directs the doctor to cut a section in Rudabeh's side and take the baby out (see Rudabeh, Rustam, for further details). The third and last time that Simurgh appears in the *Shahname* is when Rustam and Rakhsh are both nearly mortally wounded by Isfandiyar. Simurgh points to Isfandiyar's vulnerability and shows Rustam how he can kill the young champion (see Isfandiyar, Rustam, for further details).
- 2) A man-eating bird. He confronts Isfandiyar when he is passing through his Seven Labors to rescue his sisters. The man-eating Simurgh is killed by Isfandiyar.

Sindukht

Sindukht is the wife of Mihrab, ruler of Kabul, and mother of Rudabeh. She is a determined and forceful woman, very instrumental in bringing Zal and Rudabeh together in spite of Mihrab's objection. When Saam, Zal's father, ordered by Manuchehr, invades Kabul, she is blamed. Sindukht, on her own, prepares gifts and goes to see Saam. She convinces Saam that he should not attack Kabul and should wait for the king's (Manuchehr) order. Soon after, Manuchehr gives his blessing and Zal and Rudabeh get married. After the marriage, Sindukht and Mihrab accompany Zal and Rudabeh to Sistan. Sometime later, Mihrab returns to Kabul but Sindukht remains with her daughter in Zabul.

Siyamak

Siyamak is the son of Kayumars. Firdowsi depicts him as a good-looking and young man. Ahriman, with the intention of destroying Kayumars's world, sends his son to fight both Kayumars and Siyamak. Siyamak confronts Ahriman's child and is killed (see Hushang, for details).

Siyavosh

Siyavosh is the son of Kayka'us from the grand daughter of Garsivaz. One day Giv, Gudarz, and Tus, traveling in the forest, find a beautiful maiden. Unable to decide to whom she should belong, they bring her to the court of Kayka'us and ask him for a ruling. Kayka'us likes the girl and orders her to join his harem. Later he marries her. Siyavosh is born of this marriage.

Soon after he is born, Siyavosh is sent to Zabulistan with Rostam to be educated in the manner of kings. He remains in Zabul until his education is complete. Then he returns to the court and stays there for another seven years before he is eligible to wear the crown of a prince. Eventually, he is given the rulership of Kuhistan. At about the same time his mother dies.

The death of Siyavosh's mother gives Sudabeh, the daughter of the king of Hamavaran and one of the wives of Kayka'us, who had loved Siyavosh for a while now, to make her move. She asks her husband to send Siyavosh to the women's quarters to become acquainted with his mothers and sisters. Upon the king's insistence, an unwilling Siyavosh visits the women's quarters three times. The first two times, he is accompanied by the *hirbad*. During his third visit, Sudabeh reveals her love for him and promises her daughter's hand in marriage. Siyavosh, just to be polite accepts. Later on Sudabeh expresses her own love for Siyavosh, more intensely than Siyavosh can tolerate. He does not reciprocate.

When the prince tries to leave Sudabeh's bed chamber in a hurry, Sudabeh pulls on his robe and tears a piece. Then she goes to her husband and accuses Siyavosh of rape. Siyavosh proves his innocence by undergoing trial by fire.

This episode proves at least three things. The first is that Rostam has been a good father and a good mentor for the prince. The second is that Siyavosh is a faithful son. And the third is that he recognizes the handiwork of evil when he sees it and destroys it.

The next major episode in the life of the prince involves the invasion of Iran by the Turanian Afrasiyab. Siyavosh volunteers to repulse Afrasiyab and, in fact, wins the first battle. Afrasiyab, fearing the realization of a dream in which he sees his own death at the hands of Siyavosh, sues for peace. Garsivaz, Afrasiyab's brother and envoy agrees to evacuate Iranian lands captured earlier, as well as send a hundred Turanian warriors, kinsmen of Afrasiyab, to Iran as hostages. Siyavosh signs a treaty with Afrasiyab. Then he writes his father and king of the results.

Upon receiving news about the agreement, Kayka'us becomes very angry. He chides Rostam for what he calls "lack of sage counsel," and orders Siyavosh to continue the war and bring Afrasiyab to his heels. When Siyavosh refuses to break his word, Kayka'us replaces him with Tus and orders him to return to the court. Rather than return to Iran, however, Siyavosh defects to Turan.

This episode tests Siyavosh's devotion to his Creator, who endowed him with foresight (*farr*). Indeed, it is this foresight that enables him to see the consequence of his decision which involves the intermixture of Turanian affairs with the affairs of Iran and unification of the two realms at the hands of his own future son from the daughter of his enemy, Afrasiyab.

Afrasiyab and his Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister, Piran, receive Siyavosh warmly. During his stay with Piran, he marries Piran's daughter, Jarireh and sires a son,

Farud. Later, he also marries Farangis, the daughter of Afrasiyab and builds Siyavoshgord, a small kingdom away from both Turan and Iran. Siyavosh and Farangis lead a happy life there. Farangis becomes pregnant and both look forward to the birth of their son (see Kaykhusrau).

Garsivaz, Afrasiyab's brother envies Siyavosh. At first, Siyavosh forces him to sign the treaty mentioned above. Then he humiliates both Garsivaz and his men at a game of Polo. Finally, a time comes when he can take his revenge.

Afrasiyab appoints Garsivaz as the sole contact between Siyavoshgord and his court. Garsivaz visits Siyavoshgord often and consistently returns with disturbing news about Siyavosh. In the end, he convinces Afrasiyab that Siyavosh intends to dethrone him, using the forces of China and Iran. Afrasiyab, at the head of a large army storms Siyavoshgord and captures Siyavosh, who refuses to fight his grandfather and benefactor. Garsivaz's henchmen, Damur and Garu-ye Zereh behead the innocent prince. When the news of Siyavosh's death reaches Iran, Rostam, Siyavosh's adopted "father," kills Sudabeh, the real instigator of Siyavosh's difficulties in life (see Farangis, Piran, for further detail).

Sudabeh

Sudabeh is the daughter of the king of Hamavaran (Yemen) and the wife of Kayka'us. When Kayka'us invades Hamavaran, he hears much about the beauty of Sudabeh. He, therefore, asks for her hand and marries her. The king of Hamavaran decides to eliminate Kayka'us but Sudabeh intervenes. When this does not work, she informs Kayka'us of her father's intentions. Kayka'us does not listen and is imprisoned by the king of Hamavaran. When Sudabeh hears about the imprisonment, she requests that she, too, be imprisoned in the same prison as her husband. She is taken there; she takes care of Kayka'us throughout the time that he is imprisoned. When Rostam rescues Kayka'us, Sudabeh accompanies Kayka'us to Iran and becomes his favorite wife.

When Siyavosh returns from Sistan, Sudabeh falls in love with him. Over a period of seven years, she makes various plans to attract the prince to herself. She even suggests a marriage between Siyavosh and one of her daughters. But none of her plans succeed. She then sets out to destroy Siyavosh. She accuses the prince of rape, but to no avail. Siyavosh passes the trial by fire without any problem and proves his innocence (see Siyavosh for further details).

At about the same time, the army of Turan, led by Afrasiyab, invades Iran. Siyavosh, frustrated with Sudabeh's accusations, seeks tranquility in exile. He is killed by Afrasiyab (see Siyavosh for details). When the news of Siyavosh's murder reaches Iran, Rostam avenges him by killing Sudabeh.

Suhrab

Suhrab is the son of Rustam and Tahmineh. One day, Rustam, Iran's national champion, goes hunting. He loses his way and comes to the land of Samangan in Turan. Feeling hungry, he kills a deer, makes a fire, and roasts the meat, eats and goes to sleep by a spring of clear water. Two Samangians capture Rakhsh and take him to Samangan.

Rustam awakens. When he cannot find Rakhsh, he goes to the city to look for him. There he is captured and brought to the king of Samangan. The king entertains Rustam and invites him to stay the night. That same night, Tahmineh, the king's daughter comes to Rustam and makes his acquaintance. Eventually they get married.

When Rustam leaves the next day, he gives Tahmineh some beads and says, "If our child is a girl, have her wear these in her hair. If our child is a boy, have him wear these on his arm." He then says good-bye to the king of Samangan and leaves for Iran.

Suhrab is born. He grows up and, by age twelve, becomes the champion of Samangan. He asks his mother about his father's identity. She tells him about Rustam, Iran's national champion. Suhrab decides to find his father so that together they can overthrow Kayka'us, the ruler of Iran. Rustam would then become king of Iran. When he asks Tahmineh how he could identify his father, she gives him the beads that are now made into an armband.

When Afrasiyab hears about the emergence of a champion in Samangan, he sends for Suhrab. When he comes to Chach, Afrasiyab's capital, Afrasiyab entertains him and places 12,000 warriors at his command. He then orders Suhrab to invade Iran. He then orders Human and Barman to accompany the young champion. Human receives strict orders from Afrasiyab not to identify Rustam for Suhrab. Furthermore, Afrasiyab orders Human, after the son kills the father, to put Suhrab in fetters and bring him back to Turan to him. Once the Turanian army is ready, Suhrab marches on Iran.

On his way to Iran, Suhrab fights Hazhir and captures him. He also defeats Gazhdaham's daughter, Gordafarid, who fights him disguised as a man. In fact, Suhrab is about to kill "him" when he finds that "he" is a woman. Rather than killing her, he falls in love with her. She does not reciprocate his love, because he is a Turanian. Using a ruse, Gordafarid enters her fortress without allowing Suhrab to enter. The next day when Suhrab storms the fort, nobody is there. The occupants have evacuated the fort. They go to Kayka'us and inform him about the coming of Suhrab.

At the court of Kayka'us, his ministers urge the king to summon Rustam from Zabul to confront the upstart Turanian. Giv is dispatched to inform Rustam and ask him to come to the capital. Once Rustam hears about the young Turanian champion, he thinks about Tahmineh and the possibility that the young man could be their son. But he dismisses the thought. The champion described by Giv, he thinks, is older than their son would be. Then, disregarding the king's urgent summons, he stays in Zabul for three more days before he leaves for the court of Kayka'us. When he arrives at court, Kayka'us is furious. He orders Tus to take both Rustam and Giv to the gallows. Rustam pushes Tus aside, reminds Kayka'us of the many times that he had rescued him from peril, and leaves the palace.

The Iranian champions ask Gudarz to mediate between the king and Rostam. Gudarz gives an account of Rostam's contributions to the crown and brings Kaykavus to his senses. Kaykavus apologizes to Rostam. Rostam then accepts the command of Kaykavus' army and moves east to face the army of Turan.

Disguised as a Turkish warrior, Rostam enters Suhrab's camp to assess the strength of the enemy. When a guard asks him for identification, he kills the guard. Similarly, Suhrab views the Iranian army from a high point and asks Hazhir to identify each champion. He identifies the seven-colored pavilion as belonging to Tus, son of Nowzar; the red pavilion as that of Gudarz, the most experienced warrior and the most patriotic champion of Iran; the green pavilion as belonging to a newly-arrived Chinese champion; the golden pavilion as belonging to Giv, son of Gudarz, the mainstay of the Iranian army; and finally, the white pavilion as belonging to Kaykavus' son, Fariburz. It should be noted that the Green pavilion belongs to Rostam, but Hazhir does not identify him correctly. He is afraid some harm might come to Rostam.

Eventually, father and son, without knowing each other, face each other in mortal combat. Rostam suggests that they should fight in a spot away from both camps. Suhrab accepts then, before the battle begins, he asked Rostam for his identity. Rostam refuses to identify himself. Disappointed, Suhrab begins to fight Rostam. They exchange spears, swords, maces, and arrows. But neither is victorious. Unable to harm each other, they invade each other's armies. Rostam is afraid that Suhrab might harm Kaykavus. He, therefore, arranges that they should face each other a second time the next day.

At night, Suhrab describes Rostam to Human and asks if the champion he fights can be Rostam, his father. Human assures him that that is not the case. He says that he had seen Rostam a number of times and none of those descriptions fit him. The next morning, Suhrab suggests that maybe they should allow others to engage in mortal combat instead of then. Rostam refuses.

The two champions begin to wrestle again. Suhrab throws Rostam to the ground, sits on his chest, draws his dagger and is about to cut his throat. Rostam thinks of a ruse: "In our culture," he says, "winning has always been two out of three." Inexperienced Suhrab accepts the ruling. Rostam prays to the Creator to return his strength to him--he had asked the Creator previous to this to decrease his strength so that he can live a normal life. His wish is accepted and his past strength is returned to him.

The two begin wrestling again. This time Rostam throws Suhrab to the ground and, without a moment's pause, plunges his poisoned dagger into his side. While dying, Suhrab assures his murderer that his father, Rostam, will avenge his death. Rostam, confused, asks for proof that Suhrab is his son. Suhrab shows him the armband with the beads that his mother had given him.

Realizing what he has done. Rostam sends Gudarz to Kaykavus to ask for the king's special antidote. Kaykavus procrastinates, allowing time to weaken and kill Suhrab. The union of the father and the son spells disaster for Kaykavus, or so he thinks. Eventually

Rustam himself comes for the antidote. But it is too late. News of Suhrab's death and Kayka'us's antidote reaches him at the same time.

Surush

Surush, one of the important Iranian gods, symbolizes command and obedience to Ahura Mazda. In rank, he is equivalent to Mithra and is responsible for measuring good and evil on Resurrection Day.

Surush's main responsibility is order in the world. He descends on humanity three times a night to assure security from the *divs* (demons). He accompanies the souls after they depart the body. When Kayumars is deeply affected by the death of his son, Siyamak, Ahura Mazda sends Surush to him to inspire patience in him. When Fereydun strikes Zahhak with his mace and is ready to kill him, Surush appears and prevents him from doing that. He appears a second time to Fereydun and tells him to imprison Zahhak on Mount Damavand.

Surush is instrumental in Gudarz's knowledge about Kaykhusrau, son of Siyavosh, in Turan. He aids Kaykhusrau in reaching a decision at the end of his rule. The last time that Surush appears is to Khusrau Parviz. When the latter is only a step away from death, Surush saves him.

Tahmineh

Tahmineh is the daughter of the king of Samangan, wife of Rustam, and mother of Suhrab. Seeking his horse Rakhsh, Rustam enters Samangan, one of the kingdoms within the realm of the Turanians. The king of Samangan invites him to dinner and asks him to stay the night. That night, Tahmineh comes to Rustam's bedchamber and stays with him. In the morning, when Rustam leaves, he asks Tahmineh to keep his future son's identity from Afrasiyab. He also leaves a few beads with Tahmineh to give to the child as a token of his remembrance.

In search of his father, Rustam, whom Suhrab intended to raise to the kingship of Iran, he heads the Turanian army against Iran. He is killed in mortal combat with Rustam (see Rustam, for further details). Soon after that, Tahmineh, too dies.

Tahmuras

Third king in the Pishdadiyan line, after Kayumars and Hushang. Tahmuras capitalizes on the success of Hushang and enhances the Creator's kingdom by domestication of animals, as well as by proper use of their wool and milk.

At this time, a major change happens in the rulership of Iran; Tahmuras allows the *divs*, agents of Ahriman, to become administrators at his court. With them, they bring sciences and languages alien to the Pishdadiyan kingdom.

The use of science enhances Iran's prosperity more than Tahmuras could have imagined. The price for the prosperity and knowledge gained as a result of a ruse by Ahriman is paid by Tahmuras's successor, Jamshid (see Jamshid for details).

Tur (also Turaj)

Tur is the middle son of Fereydun from Shahrnaz, the daughter of Jamshid. Fereydun has three sons who live in Yemen. When they return from Yemen, Fereydun appears to them in the form of a dragon. His middle son, Tur, shoots an arrow at him. For this he is called "Tur the Valiant". When he gets old, Fereydun divides his kingdom among his three sons. He gives Rum and the West to his eldest son, Salm; the lands to the north and East to his middle son, Tur; and the land in between, Iran, he gives to his youngest son, Iraj. Enraged at their father's unjust division, the brothers kill their step-brother Iraj. Iraj does not have a son, but he is avenged by Manuchehr, a descendant of Iraj's daughter. Helped by Qaran, son of Kaveh the Blacksmith, and others, Manuchehr kills both Tur and Salm, preparing the ground for further hostilities between Iran and Turan.

Tus

Tus is the son of Nowzar and brother of Gustaham. During the kingship of Nowzar, when Afrasiyab invades Iran, Nowzar sends his family with Tus and Gustaham to Mount Alborz to hide. After the death of Nowzar, Zal and other Iranian nobles do not recognize either Tus or Gustaham as carriers of the *farr*. Consequently, they choose Zav, son of Tahmasp, as the new king. Nevertheless, Tus remains a well-known figure among the Iranian champions. He goes with the army of Kayka'us to Mazandaran and Hamavaran and is taken captive with the king. They are rescued by Rostam. After Kayka'us returns from Mazandaran, he makes Tus the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian army.

When Rostam delays in responding to Kayka'us's behest--Kayka'us had requested Rostam's aid against the invasion of Suhrab--he orders Tus to send Rostam and Giv to the gallows. Tus proceeds without considering Rostam's status among the champions. He is rebuffed by Rostam. When Siyavosh signs a treaty with Afrasiyab, Kayka'us sends Tus to replace Siyavosh (see Siyavosh for details). When Kaykhusrau comes to Iran, Tus is the only one to rise against his kingship. He supports the kingship of Fariburz. In order to resolve the question of legitimacy, Kayka'us places the crown and throne to be occupied by the person who can capture the Bahman Fortress. Both Tus and Fariburz prove incapable of capturing the Bahman Fortress. Only then Tus agrees with the kingship of Kaykhusrau.

Upon Kaykhusrau's ascension to the throne, Tus repents and offers to resign his position as the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian army. But the young king returns Tus's command to him. Additionally, he gives him a mission to invade Turan and capture Afrasiyab. Kaykhusrau instructs Tus to bypass the fortress of Kalat, where Farud, Siyavosh's son, lives. Kaykhusrau did not wish anything untoward to happen to his step-brother. But Tus not only ignores the king's instructions, but causes the death of both Farud and his mother, Jarireh, the daughter of Piran.

Having been defeated by the Turanians, Tus is recalled from Turan. He is humiliated and put in prison. The command of the army is given to Fariburz. Upon Rostam's mediation, Tus is eventually freed and returned to his command of the army.

Tus is sent a second time against the Turanian army headed by Piran. Initially he is defeated, but eventually, with the help of Rostam, he routes a major coalition created by Afrasiyab. Before he abdicates, Kaykhusrau assigns Tus to the governorship of Khorasan.

When Kaykhusrau abdicates and walks to his destiny, Tus is among the champions who accompany him until he disappears. He perishes alongside the other champions in the snow storm that follows the disappearance of Kaykhusrau into the bright light.

Viseh

Viseh is one of the champions of Pashang, the king of Turan, and of his son, Afrasiyab. During the kingship of Nowzar, Viseh is ordered by Pashang, to invade Iran. Viseh's son, Karukhan, is killed by Kaveh's son, Qaran. Therefore, Afrasiyab sends Viseh to fight Qaran. Qaran is defeated by Viseh and flees. Viseh's sons: Piran, Human, Farshidvard, Lahhak, Kulbad, Nastihan, Pilsam, and Karukhan, play a major role in the later wars between Afrasiyab and Kaykhusrau.

The House of Viseh, like the House of Gudarz, its Iranian counterpart, forms a major protective shield around Afrasiyab. As long as that house stands, Afrasiyab can command from his hiding place in Chach. It is after the House of Viseh is totally destroyed that Afrasiyab enters the war and is killed.

Wars in the *Shahname*

After the cosmic battle between Good and Evil ends, during the rule of Fereydun of the Pishdadiyan dynasty, Iran is split into three domains. Two of these domains, Iran and Turan, become enmeshed in a series of what can be best termed as wars of legitimacy. These wars, which begin as skirmishes during the reign of Manuchehr, seriously jeopardize the integrity of Iran under Garshasp, the son of king Nowzar.

Kayqubad, whose early life, in many respects, resembles the life of Fereydun, puts an end to the destruction and the decline that these wars had inflicted on Iran. The wars themselves, however, rage on. Kayqubad contains Afrasiyab, the ruler of Turan, and forces his army beyond the Oxus, the traditional boundary between the two countries since the time of Manuchehr.

Under Kayka'us, the wars between Iran and Turan flare up once again. Afrasiyab sends a mighty army commanded by his brother Garsivaz to retrieve Turanian lands lost to the Iranians. Garsivaz crosses the Oxus and captures several small Iranian towns. In Iran, Kayka'us assigns Prince Siyavosh an army and, along with Rostam, dispatches him to push Afrasiyab's army back and capture as much Turanian territory as possible. Siyavosh defeats Garsivaz and forces him to withdraw to his side of the Oxus.

At this time Afrasiyab has a dream in which Siyavosh kills him and becomes the king of a united Iran. Persuaded by his *mu'bad*s, he sues for peace. He sends his Prime Minister, Piran, to set the terms. As a result of discussions, Siyavosh agrees to a peace treaty. Kayka'us does not approve the terms. As a result, Siyavosh is replaced by Tus. Siyavosh then defects to Turan, marries Afrasiyab's daughter, builds Siyavoshgord, and lives there, away both from Iran and Turan. His tranquil life, however, does not last long. On Garsivaz's prompting, he is killed by Afrasiyab (see Siyavosh, Kaykhusrau, for further details).

In time, Kaykhusrau, son of Siyavosh, becomes the king of Iran. He sends an expedition against Turan. The expedition is headed by Tus. Kaykhusrau instructs Tus to stay away from the Kalat Fortress, where his (Kaykhusrau's) step-brother, Farud, from Jarireh, the daughter of Piran, lives. Tus disobeys the king's order, goes to Kalat and kills Farud. He then continues his expedition into Turan and meets with Piran's army. In the battle that ensues, the battle of Hamavan, Tus is defeated and humiliated. Piran, his opponent, on the other hand, is promoted.

Kaykhusrau sends a second expedition to Turan to avenge the murder of his father. The command of this army, too, in spite of all his shortcomings, is given to Tus. Rostam and Gudarz accompany the Commander-in-Chief. As the war makes progress, two houses, the House of Gudarz and the House of Viseh clash. To resolve their differences, the two commanders decide on two sets of fights: a battle royal in which ten chosen champions from each side fight, and a single, mortal combat between the two aged warriors: Gudarz and Piran. At the end of this war, Piran is killed and his entire family in Khotan is wiped out.

The demise of the House of Viseh forces Afrasiyab to enter the war personally. Kaykhusrau, too, assumes the command of the Iranian army. Unable to withstand the Iranian assault on his fortress, Afrasiyab flees. Kaykhusrau captures Afrasiyab's fortress, includes Afrasiyab's wives in his own harem, and pursues Afrasiyab around the world. He finds Garsivaz by the Chichest Lake. By torturing Garsivaz, he forces Afrasiyab out of the icy waters of Chichest Lake and kills him. He kills Garsivaz as well. Iran and Turan become united as they had been under the early days of the rule of Fereydun.

The next set of wars in the Shahname is best recognized as "wars of religion." They are fought by the House of Kayqubad, headed by Gushtasp, at the time of the appearance of the Prophet Zoroaster, and the opponents of the good religion. These opponents are Iranian as well as Turanian. In these wars the army of Gushtasp is led by the king's armorclad son, Isfandiyar. The army of the opponents of the new order is led by Arjasp. Although these wars can be considered concluded when Arjasp dies at the hands of Isfandiyar, they are not. A new element, the kingdom of the west, originally given to Salm appears and raises problems for Iran. Gradually, Iran moves its center of power from Central Asia to the region of the Persian Gulf. According to Firdowsi, the exploits of Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great, as well as the incompetence of Darius III, and the invasion of Alexander the Great are all parts and parcels of this very set of wars, the "wars of religion."

Zahhak

Zahhak is also known as Bivar Asp. At the time of Jamshid, in Arabia there is an upright Arab spear thrower called Mardas. He has a valiant but evil son called Zahhak. Satan deceives Zahhak and prompts him to kill his father. To assist Zahhak, Satan digs a well and covers the top. Mardas falls in the well and dies. Zahhak assumes the rulership of the Arabs. During those days, the Arabs did not eat meat but Satan, in the guise of a young cook, enters Zahhak's kitchen and gradually changes his habits so that Zahhak becomes accustomed to eating meat. In order to reward the cook, Zahhak asks the cook what he can do for him. The cook says that he would like to kiss Zahhak on both shoulders. After he kisses Zahhak on both shoulders, the cook disappears. Two snakes grow out of where Satan had kissed Zahhak. No matter what the doctors do to cut the snakes off, they keep reappearing. Then, in the guise of a doctor, Satan appears and tells Zahhak that, in order for the snakes to leave him alone, he must deed them two human brains each day.

In Iran, at the same time, Jamshid becomes headstrong and seeks to overthrow his Creator. He fails and, consequently, loses his *farr* and his public support (see Jamshid for details). Iranian champions, looking for a leader, hear about Zahhak and his rulership. They pay tribute to Zahhak and invite him to become their ruler. Once on the throne of Iran, after a hundred years, Zahhak seeks Jamshid and kills him.

During the six hundred years of the rule of Zahhak, every day two young men are killed and their brains are fed to Zahhak's snakes. Two men with royal blood, known as Armail and Karmail, think of a solution to the problem. They become employed as cooks. Rather than killing two young men every day, they kill one and substitute the brain of a sheep for the other one. In this way, thirty young men are saved every month. When the number of these young men reaches two hundred, they send them clandestinely to the pasture with the sheep.

Zahhak's oppression becomes unbearable and people begin to complain. Zahhak himself, too, becomes unhappy at his own lack of popularity. He, therefore, forms an assembly and asks people to sign a document stating that they are satisfied with his rule. Among those present is a smith named Kaveh. He has lost seventeen out of his eighteen children to Zahhak's snakes. He refuses to sign the document, especially that his last child has just been seized. He tears up the document. Kaveh then uses his smith's leather apron as a banner, seeks Fereydun, and helps him overthrow Zahhak (see Fereydun for details). When Fereydun moves in to kill Zahhak, Surush intervenes. He asks Fereydun to take Zahhak to Mount Damavand and there imprison him in a cave.

Zal

Also referred to as Zal-e Zar and Zal-e Dastan, he is the son of Saam and father of Rostam. Saam is the national champion of Iran during the reign of Manuchehr. Towards the end of his life, he is granted a son, Zal. Zal looked like the sun, but his hair, eyebrows, and eyelids are white. Disappointed at his son's appearance, Saam takes his son to Mount Alborz and leaves him there. Simurgh finds the child, takes him to the peak, and raises

him among her chicks. Instigated by a dream, Saam is promoted to look for his son. Simurgh returns Zal to him. When leaving, Simurgh gives Zal several of her feathers to set fire to whenever he needs her assistance.

Zal returns to Zabul with his father. When Saam, ordered by Manuchehr, goes to Gurgsaran, he appoints Zal to the kingship of Sistan. Soon after that, Zal on his way to India, visits Kabul and falls in love with Rudabeh, the daughter of Mihrab, the ruler of Kabul. King Manuchehr and Saam's approval are necessary before the two can get married (see Manuchehr, Saam, for details). They both approve.

The era of Zal's championship coincides with the death of Saam and the kingship of Nowzar. Taking advantage of Saam's death, Afrasiyab invades Iran and imprisons Nowzar. Then he sends an army, headed by Shamasas to Sistan. Zal defeats the Turanian army and kills Khazravan and Kulbad. Zal's championship spans the rule of Nowzar, Zav, Garshasp, and Kayqubad. He is overtaken by his son Rostam. Thereafter, he administers the affairs of Zabulistan. Meanwhile, he serves as one of the major consultants to Iranian kings until the kingship of Luhrasp. Zal is one of the most influential Iranian champions in the *Shahname*. It was at his prompting, for instance, that the Iranian nobles chose Zav and Kayqubad as kings.

When Kayka'us intends to travel to Mazandaran, Zal opposes his decision. Kayka'us ignores Zal's advice at his own peril. Similarly, when Kaykhusrau intends to appoint Luhrasp to the kingship after himself, he has to convince Zal of the correctness of his choice (see Luhrasp for further details).

Zal uses the feathers of the Simurgh two times. First, at the time of the birth of Rostam (see Rudabeh for details), and second to help his son, Rostam, defeat armorclad Isfandiyar (see Isfandiyar for details). He lives about a thousand years.

Zange-ye Shavaran

Originally from Baghdad, Zange-ye Shavaran serves at the court of both Kayka'us and Kaykhusrau. He has his own particular banner and army. He accompanies Kayka'us to Mazandaran as well as to Hamavaran and is imprisoned with him. On Siyavosh's expedition against Afrasiyab, Zange-ye Shavaran serves Siyavosh as his companion and consultant. He is one of the seven champions who accompany Rostam to Turan to save Bizhan from the Arzhang Well. He kills a major Turanian champion named Ukhasht in the battle of the Twelve Rooks.

Zange-ye Shavaran is present at the Great War of Kaykhusrau when Afrasiyab and Garsivaz are put to death.

Zarasp

- 1) Zarasp is the son of Tus, one of the major heroes at the court of Kaykhusrau. He is chosen by Kaykhusrau to fight Afrasiyab. He accompanies his father, Tus, to the Kalat Fortress. After Riv, son-in-law of Tus, is killed at the hand of Farud, son of Siyavosh, he faces Farud and is also killed.
- 2) Zarasp is the name of a hero who accompanies Kaykhusrau during his wars with Afrasiyab.
- 3) Zarasp is the name of the son of Manuchehr, brother of Nowzar.

Zarir

Zarir is the son of Luhrasp and brother of Gushtasp. When Gushtasp requests from his father Luhrasp to leave the kingship to him, Luhrasp does not agree. Gushtasp becomes unhappy and goes to India. Luhrasp sends Zarir to bring him back. Zarir finds Gushtasp near Kabul and together they return to the king. Gushtasp leaves the king a second time. This time he goes to Rum and marries the daughter of the Caesar of Rum. With the king's son at his side, the Caesar of Rum feels strong enough to ask Luhrasp for tribute. In response, Luhrasp dispatches Zarir with an army to Rum, but before there is a war, Zarir persuades Gushtasp to return to Iran. The two brothers return to their father together. After that, Luhrasp abdicated in favor of his son Gushtasp. Zarir becomes Gushtasp's Commander-in-Chief.

After the advent of Zoroaster, along side his brother, Zarir accepts Zoroastrianism and accompanies Gushtasp in his battle against the Turanian Arjasp. He is killed in an ambush prepared by the aged Turanian hero, Bidarafsh.

Zav

Zav is the son of Tahmasp. After the demise of Nowzar at the hand of Afrasiyab, the throne of Iran remains empty for a while. Zal and the Iranian champions refuse to recognize Tus and Gustaham as having the royal *farr*. They search the world and find a descendent of Fereydun. He is an 80-year-old man, called Zav. They place Zav on the throne. Zav is just and wise. He fights a five-month-long battle with Afrasiyab, but due to famine they stop the war and sign a treaty. According to that treaty, the Oxus becomes the border between Iran and Turan (Arash-e Kamangar for further details). After five years of rulership, Zav dies at the age of 86. His son, Garshasp, becomes king.

Zavareh

Zavareh is the son of Zal and brother of Rostam. He is one of the champions of Kayka'us and Kaykhusrau. He participates in many of the battles in which Rostam is involved. During the battle between Rostam and Suhrab, Zavareh is in charge of Rostam's army and when Suhrab is killed, Rostam commissions him to accompany Suhrab's army to the

border of Turan. In the battle of Rustam with Isfandiyar, thinking that Rustam had been killed, he rushes against Isfandiyar's army and kills Nushazar, Isfandiyar's son. After the death of Isfandiyar, he opposes Rustam's custody of Bahman, son of Isfandiyar. At the end of Rustam's life, when the champion goes to Kabul, he accompanies Rustam. Like Rustam, he falls into one of the wells devised by the King of Kabul and is killed (see Faramarz for details).

Zoroaster

The cosmological and mythological eras of Iran end with the house of Gushtasp and the appearance of the Prophet Zoroaster. Before Zoroaster, Mazdaism, a creed based on thought and its dual creatures, Vohu Manah and Aka Manah, prevail. The struggle of the two results in the formation of a kingdom called Khshathra Variya in which Good is prominent and Evil plays a minor part. Zoroaster's God, Ahura Mazda, reorganizes those contributors to the prosperity of the kingdom of Good and forms them into a pantheon usually known as the Spentas. Then around himself and the Spentas, he creates a hierarchy of lower gods. The souls of the believers become the intermediary between the lower echelon of the pantheon and the faithful. Known as the Ahuric Order, this hierarchy is then given to Zoroaster to use for introducing prosperity into the material world.

Zoroaster is an extraordinary man. When he comes to the world, unlike ordinary children who cry, he is smiling. When he is in his thirties, Ahura Mazda appears to him and inspires him with the Ahuric Order, i.e., he is asked to find a way by which Truth will become the dominant force in the lives of the individuals.

Zoroaster accepts his mission and begins to guide people away from the Lie. Those who feel Zoroaster's teachings against their religion and way of life threaten to eliminate him. Zoroaster leaves his home in the east and travels west, all the time preaching his doctrine of triumph of Good over Evil. In the west, a king called Gushtasp accepts Zoroaster's religion and helps him promote it among his people.

Zoroaster's message is simple. He states that the world is the battle ground for two opposing forces: Good and Evil. It is every individual's duty to assist Good triumph over Evil. In order for the individual's assistance to be realized, he or she must think good thoughts, utter good words, and perform good deeds. He or she must avoid lying, tyranny, oppression, and all that make other fellow human beings suffer. In this way, Zoroaster preached, the Ahuric Order will fill the world with joy.

In order to focus the thoughts, words, and deeds of the faithful on Truth, Zoroaster chooses the sun as the symbol of Truth and fire as the representative of the sun on earth. In the same way that the light of the sun permeates all existence, he advocates, goodness in man can permeate the material world. Where the light of the sun does not reach, the light of fire supplements.

In order to engage his followers in the propagation of Good, he builds many fire temples. He asks his followers to gather in these temples, sing the praises of Ahura Mazda, the Spentas, and the Yazatas that bring prosperity to the world.

The Zoroastrian scripture is known as the *Avesta*. It is, in reality, a collection of books dealing with aspects of the religion. One section of it, however, known as the Gathas, includes hymns that could have been composed by Zoroaster himself.

