

MAHABHARATA FOR CHILDREN





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6997

CLASS NO.

Date

19.8.97

Published by :

GANESH PUBLICATIONS

No. 9, 2nd Floor, 4th Cross

J.M. Lane, Balepet

BANAGALORE - 560 053.



© Publishers
Edition : 2004

Published by
GANESH PUBLICATIONS

No. 9, 2nd Floor, 4th Cross
J.M. Lane, Balepet
BANAGALORE - 560 053.
KARNATAKA
INDIA.

Phone : 080-2254219.

Price Rs. 20.00

D.T.P. by :
Ganesh Graphics
Bangalore-53

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Mahabharata

Mahabharata is the story of Kauravas and Pandavas narrated by Vaishampayana, a disciple of the great sage Vedavyasa to king Janamijaya, son of king Parikshit.

‘Mahabharata’ is an epic written by Vedavyas and is called ‘Jaya’ also. It is the story of the Kuru dynasty. The events of Mahabharat happened thousands of years ago. Vedavyasa lived at that time and had seen the events. Each and every Indian should be proud of this epic. It is an invaluable heritage of India.

The book Mahabharata originally written in Devanagari script has been translated into almost all the languages of India and many foreign languages. It has been serialised on television screen and filmed also.

Ramayana and Mahabharata are the two immortal epics of Bharatvarsha.

Devavrata became Bheeshma

Shantanu was the king of Hastinapura. He was a brave king. He was looking after his subjects very well. He was one of the kings of Chandra dynasty. He was a good archer.

Once he met a beautiful woman. Her name was Ganga. Her beauty enchanted him. He wished to marry her. Ganga agreed but on a condition.

Shantanu asked - "May I know what it is?"

"I may become your wife. But I should be given freedom. I behave as I please. You should not question. If you break the rule. I shall quit you" Ganga replied.

The king assured.

Ganga and Shantanu got married and lived happily. Years passed. Ganga had seven children. But she would throw each infant in the river Ganges as soon as it born. Shantanu got desperated, but he had to keep quiet. However, when the eight child was born. Shantanu could not keep quiet any longer. When Ganga set out to throw the child, Shantanu said,

“Ganga ! Stop it. Are you a devil ? Your heart is hard like stone. I don’t allow you to throw my child into the river.”



Ganga did n’t throw the child. Instead she said :

“I shall keep your wish. But I don’t stay with you further. You’ve broken the promise. I am Ganga, the river of heavens. Once the sage Vasishta cursed and as such the eight Vasus took birth from my womb. Now the last child is with me. I’ll look after the child while

he is young. I shall get him back to you after he grows up.”

This said, Ganga disappeared.

Shantanu was helpless. He devoted his time for the welfare of his subjects.

Days passed. One day he found a boy holding few arrows by the side of the river. Ganga there appeared and said - “O king ! This is your eighth son. I have brought him up. He has studied Vedas from the sage Vasishta. Parashurama has taught him archery. He is warrior. Take him.”

Then Ganga disappeared. Shantanu was so happy to see his son. He returned to the palace with him. He named him as Devavrata.

Once Shantanu was wandering along the river side. He smelt a peculiar fragrance which he had not felt before. He went in search of the place from where the smell was coming. After he got the place he found a beautiful fisher woman. She was the daughter of a fisherman Dasraja. Her name was Satyavati. Her body earlier smelled of fish. She was being called ‘Matsya Gandhi’ because of that. No



body dared to go near her. But Parashara, a Sage who was pleased with her eliminated the evil smell from her body and made her fragrant. From then onwards people used to call her 'Yojana-Gandhi'. Satyavati gave birth to a son of Parashar. The boy was dark and also he was born in an island in the river. He was called 'KrishnadvaiPAYANA.' Later he became famous as Vedavyas. He edited the four Vedas and classified them systematically.

Shantanu fell in love with Satyawati and wished to marry her. He asked her also. But she told that his father should accept. Shantanu called on Dasraja to seek his daughter's hand. Dasraja agreed on one condition. He said - "O king ! You've already a son. If you promise that Satyawati's son shall be the king after you. I shall marry my daughter to you."

Shantanu was in a fix. He returned to palace in gloom. He was depressed. He became thinner day by day. Devavrata observed his father becoming weak. He came to know the cause of his father's sorrow. He went to Dasraj and told him that he would sacrifice the throne for the sake of his father's happiness.

But Dasraja put again one question - "Devavrata, you're great. But tomorrow after you marry you would give birth to a son. He may fight for the throne."

Devavrata replied - "Dasraja, I vow that I shall remain unmarried. I observe celibacy throughout my life. This is true. Gods are witness. You believe me. You may marry your daughter to my father. The issues born to your

daughter are my brothers. I shall protect them and their children. This is my oath”.

Devavrata was firm. Dasraja was happy. He agreed to give away his daughter to Shantanu.

Shantanu got the news. Pleased with his son, he granted a boon to him stating that Devavrata shall possess the capacity to pause death, and die at will. Due to the oath he took Devavrata became known as ‘Bheeshma’.

Kuru Family

Shantanu married Satyawati. They lived happily. Satyawati gave birth two sons Chitrangada and Vichitraveerya. Bheeshma looked after his younger brothers. He gave them proper education. Shantanu died while his sons were young.

Bheeshma made Chitrangada, the eldest, the king of Hastinavati. Chitrangada after he became the king expanded the Kuru empire by conquering many kingdoms. He was unfortunate. While fighting with Gandharvas, he died in a battle.

Bheeshma didn't delay. He made Vichitraveerya the king. But he was young and was unable to rule. He was not efficient also. Bheeshama, with the permission from Satyawati, ruled the kingdom but in the name of Vichitraveerya.

Vichitraveerya reached marriageable age. At that time Kashiraja, arranged the Svayamvar (bride choosing her own groom) of his three daughters Amba, Ambika and Ambalika.

Bheeshma took Vichitraveerya there. The kings assembled there laughed at Bheeshma. They felt that Bheeshma in his old age has come to marry. Bheeshma got enraged took the three princesses by force in his chariot. He fought with the kings who challenged. All were defeated by Bheeshma. Then Bheeshma brought the three daughters of Kashiraj to Hastinapur.

Of the three Amba said that she would marry Salva and she would go. Bheeshma allowed her to go. Then the other two princesses Ambika and Ambalika were married to Vichitraveerya.

Few days passed. But Vichitraveerya fell sick and was unable to recover. He died. Satyawati had lost both her sons. She was sorrowful. She summoned Bhishma.

“Bheeshma, the family tree has not yielded any fruit. My daughters-in-law have no issues. I wish that I would invite my son Vedavyasa. He is my son born from the sage Parashara” Satyawati said.

Bheeshma was unaware of this. He opined

that it is advisable to take his help in the present crisis.

Satyavati remembered Vyasa. In a few seconds Vyasa appeared and asked his mother why he was called.

“Vyasa, I’ve lost both my sons. Kuru dynasty will come to an end if Ambika and Ambalika do not have any issues. I wish that the ‘Niyog’ method of reproduction shall be adopted to resolve this issue. I need your help” Satyavati replied.

Vyasa agreed. Ambika and Ambalika bore Dhritharashtra and Pandu from Vyasa. Dhritarashtra was born blind as Ambika closed her eyes when Vyas appeared before her. Ambalika also feared of Vyasa. Pandu was born sick. Then a maid servant was sent to Vyasa by Ambika. She gave birth to a healthy and a wise son. He was named Vidura.

Bheeshma brought up Dhrithrashtra and Pandu with great love and affection. He got them well educated.

Dhritarashtra was married to Gandhari, the princess of Gandhara country and Pandu was

married to Kunti, daughter of the king Kuntibhoja.

Gandhari tied shut her own eyes with a cloth throughout her life time with deep devotion because her husband was blind.

Once Kunti before her marriage treated the sage Durvasa hospitably. during his visit to Hastinapura. She was blessed by him with a boon. By chanting a hymn, a particular deity would appear and bless her with a son. Like that five hymns were advised. The son so obtained will have the characteristic of that deity. Kunti, with eagerness had chanted a hymn inviting the Sun god Surya. Kunti got a son. Kunti feared as she would be censured by the public. So Kunti placed the baby in a basket and made it to float in a river. The baby was received by a servant in the stables of Hastinapura.

Pandu had one more wife Madree, the princess of the Madra country. Kunti got three sons with the three hymns she chanted. They were Yudhishtira, Bheema and Arjuna. Kunti gave away. One more hymn she had to Madree.

With the blessing of deities she bore two sons - Nakul and Sahadev, All the five sons of Pandu were brave and Virtuous and they were famous as Pandavas.

Dhritharashtra and Gandhari had one hundred sons and one daughter. The eldest among them was Duryodhana. They were called Kauravas after the name of the dynasty Kuru.

Pandu died while he was living in the forest. Madree wished to die on the funeral pyre of Pandu. She handed over her two sons to Kunti and joined her husband. Satyawati, Ambika and Ambalika went to forest and spent rest of their lives in meditation and spiritual duties.

Pandavas and Kauravas were brought up by Bheeshma. They all played together. Among them Bheema was strong. Duryodhana used to be always angry with Bheema. Dhushshasana, his brother joined his hands with Duryodhana. Both hatched a plot to finish Bheema off. Once all of them went to play on the banks of Ganga. Bheema swam for quite a long time. They were all tired. Food was arranged. Each and everyone ate merrily. Duryodhana himself served Bheema. Bheema ate

that also. Soon after meals Bheema found himself drowsier. Duryodhana had poisoned his food. Bheema went to the bank of the river and slept. Duryodhana was waiting for chance. As every body had eaten well, all went to sleep. Duryodhana took this chance and pushed him in the stream of Ganges with the help of creepers.

After the picnic both Kauravas and Pandavas returned to Hastinapur. But Bheema



was not found there. Kunti feared. Yudhishtira and others were much worried. Duryodhana was quite happy that he has finished Bheema.

Bheema, after he was rolled over in the river by Duryodhana he was taken to Nagloka being ruled by Vasuki. He welcomed Bheema and offered him vats of a special juice. Each vat was providing power of thousand Nagas. Bheema drank eight such vats of juice.

Next day Vasuki bade farewell to Bheema. Bheema returned to Hastinapur and told his mother Kunti about his visit to Nagloka. Bheema shouted and said that he would go and teach a lesson to Duryodhana. Vidura avoided him to do so. Yudhistira advised his brother to be patient. "A brave man is one who'll wait for the right time" he said.

Bheema didn't go.

Duryodhana got the information that Bheema is alive. He was jealous of Bheema. He waited for another chance to finish off not only Bheema. But also the entire five Pandavas.

Dronacharya - The teacher

Once Kauravas and Pandavas were playing with a ball. It was a cloth ball. Suddenly the ball fell in a well. It was a deep well. It was late in the evening the incident happened. The boys were unable to lift the ball from the well. They were all simply standing around the well. At that time there came a Brahmin sage. He asked the boys why are they standing in search of something.

The boys told the sage that they have lost their ball in the well and they don't know how to lift it up. The sage also came to know they all belong to the Kuru dynasty.

“Boys, you are all princes ! Yet you were all not able to recover the ball. I shall do it for you” he said.

Then he took his bow from his shoulder and shot an arrow. The arrow went straight to the ball at the bottom. The sage sent another arrow. The arrow hit the tail of the first arrow. Like that he shot six arrows. The tail of the last arrow came upto the rim of the well. Now the



sage pulled out all the arrows. Along with them the ball also came out.

The boys were all happy and all of them ran away to tell the incident to their grand father Bheeshma.

Bheeshma went upto the sage and told him that all the boys are his grand children.

The sage was Dronacharya. Bheeshma wanted him to teach archery, horse riding, chariot driving, mace fighting, fencing and other related war techniques to his grand children.

Dronacharya agreed but he demanded Gurudakshina.

“Please tell me. What do you wish to have ?” Bheeshma asked.

“I don’t need any cash, gold or other valuables. All that I need is the defeat of Drupada, the king of Panchala country. He should be defeated by my disciples” Drona replied.

“But why do you want to defeat him ?” asked Bheeshma.

“There is reason. I am hurt by him. We were pupils at my father’s Gurukul. We were intimate friends. Drupada was a prince. He used to tell me always - “Drona, my kingdom is your’s.” But soon after he was made the king he went and sat on the throne. I continued my education and as well as I took teaching. My son is Ashwathama. We were in poverty. I was so poor even I was unable to provide my son a cup of milk. My wife used to prepare milk by mixing flour in water. Ashwathama used to drink the same. But one day he tasted the cows milk. He blamed his mother for having cheated him all these days. Then I thought of meeting Drupada and ask him a cow. I went to his palace and called him friend.

Drupada was a power drunk. He laughed at me. "How can a street beggar have friendship with a king like me" he said, even before I spoke. He had forgotten me. He asked his soldiers to drive me out. So, Bheeshma, I want to teach him a lesson to the mitradrohi" Drona replied.

Bheeshma appointed Drona as a teacher in Hastinapura.

Dronacharya taught both Kouravas and Pandavas archery, Sword play, chariot driving and other related arts. Bheema and Duryodhana learnt mace fighting very well. They were equal. Arjuna was made a famous archer. Nakula and Sahadeva were good in Sword play.

The abandoned infant who was born to Kunti before her marriage was brought up by a Soota or a chariot driver. He was named Karna. He was also called Rádheya as he was the foster son of Radha. Karna had learnt archery very well from Parashurama. He was as proficient as Arjuna.

Drona had taught Kauravas and Pandavas all that were to be taught. So he arranged a

test for all. There was a good gathering on the day of demonstration. There was a demonstration of the weapons mastery of Kaurav and Pandavas in the presence of citizens of Hastinapura. Arjuna excelled in almost all the skills. Everybody was praising him. Karna had come there. Suddenly he entered into the arena and told Arjuna that he can perform all the war arts shown by him. Duryodhana who heard it encouraged him. Karna challenged Arjuna for a competition. But Bheema intervened and said to Karna.

“Arjuna is a prince. All the participants are princes. We all hail from Kuru family. Who are you ? What’s your background. Are you a prince ? Where do you come from.”

Karna was disappointed. He bowed his head.

He was introduced there. People came to know that he is the son of a Soota. After all the son of a charioteer ! It was a great insult to Karna. That too he is reared by a Soota ! He doesn’t know to which family he belongs. There is no right to a son of Soota to compete. People spoke.

At this juncture Duryodhana saw the plight of Karna and said, "Karna, right from this moment is the king of Angadesh ! I'll put the crown of the Anga country on his head. Now he has every right to compete with Arjuna."

Bheema laughed - "Duryodhana ! You may make him the king with you courtesy. But he is only a son of Soota ! That cannot go" he said.

Karna became desperated. He wanted to exhibit his proficiency. By that time, there was complete darkness. Drona put an end to the deliberations. The tournament was concluded. But the enmity developed. Karna joined the group of Kauravas.

Now the training given to princes by Drona was complete. It was the time for the disciples of Drona to pay their master Guru dakshina. The princess agreed. Drona took the army of Kurus to the Panchala country. There was a fight between Drupada and the Kuru army. Bheema and Arjuna fought well and captured Drupada. They brought him to Drona and said,

"Sir, Here is Guru dakshina. Kindly receive."

Drupada had bowed his head in shame. Drona asked him, "Drupada, I hope you remember me, the street beggar. Now your kingdom is mine. I am the king of Panchala. You are a prisoner. Is it not so?"

"Drona, sitting on the throne, I ill treated you. Now I am your servant. You may do whatever you like" Drupada replied. He was humble. He had repented and accepted his mistake.

"Drupada, we are ever friends. Do not forget. You are not my servant. I always wish to be called a friend of yours. Let the friendship be regained" Drona said.

Drupada was happy. Both Drupada and Drona became closer. Drona returned half of kingdom to Drupada. He retained the other half himself.

Arjuna relieved Drupada as his master told him to do so. Drupada embraced Drona and then returned to his capital.

Droupadi Swayamvar

In the fight between Drupada and Kuru princes, Pandavas excelled and had exhibited their talent very well. Drupada had routed out Kauravas. Pandavas victory was a severe shock to Kauravas in general and to Duryodhana and Dushasana in particular. They started feeling jealous. Moreover Bheeshma declared Yudhishtira as the crown prince. This was an insult to Kauravas. Dhritarashtra himself felt miserable. He wanted that his sons should succeed him on the throne. He summoned Kanik, a minister who was conversant in making evil plots.

A fair was to took place at Varanavat. Kanik suggested Dhritarashtra to tell Pandavas to go to Varanavat along with their mother Kunti and stay there in the palace built for them. Kanik had planned to build a 'Laksha Bhavana' so that it can. Easily be burnt while Pandavas stay there. Duryodhana readily approved the plot. Vidura a religious and pious person was shocked when he learnt that the palace is being

built using Lac which is easily inflammable. He was always much inclined towards Pandavas.

Dhritarashtra did accordingly. Vidura in the mean while arranged artisans to construct an underground tunnel from Laksha Bhavana to enable Pandavas to escape.

Pandavas didn't say no to Dhritarashtra. They reached Varanavat. But Yudhishtira was hinted by Vidura the motive behind in sending them to Varanavat. Vidura also told him to escape through the tunnel at the appropriate time. Duryodhana had planned to put fire to Laksha Bhavan so that Pandavas are burnt alive.

The servants of Dhritarashtra took Pandavas to the Laksha Bhavan. The palace was artistically built. There was no room for doubting. But Pandavas were given hint by Vidura. So Bheema found out the route to the tunnel. Then at nightfall he told his brothers and mother to walk down the tunnel - As they moved he lit up the Laksha Bhavan and escaped. In no time the palace was burnt and

there left the ashes. Duryodhana was under the impression that the Pandavas and Kunti are burnt alive. He was happy that he will sit on the throne.

Pandavas along with their mother escaped from Varanarat and entered into a forest. They had camp here and there till some place is found to live in.

Once they had camped at a place where the demon Hidimba was dwelling. Bheema was guarding the brothers and mother who were asleep. Hidimba who learnt that some humans have come there sent his sister Hidimbe to kill them.

Hidimbe approached the camp and saw Bheema who was handsome and brave. She was fascinated by Bheema's physique didn't kill him. Instead told him to escape early otherwise her brother would come and eat all of them. By that time the giant Hidimba appeared there. Bheema attacked him bravely. He lifted the giant very easily and threw him to ground repeatedly. Hidimba died on the spot. Hidimbe persued Bheema to marry her.

Bheema married her and Ghatotkacha was born to them.

Pandavas reached during their journey a town called Ekachakrapura. All of them stayed in a brahmin's house. They lived on begging alms daily. One day Kunti found the brahmin's wife weeping. She asked the reason. There lived in the outskirts of the city a demon called Bakasura on a rock hill. He was to be provided daily a cart full of food and a man on rotation basis. That day was the turn of the brahmin family. They had only an young son. That's why the brahmin's wife was weeping. Kunti



consoled her and said that her second son would go instead. Then she told Bheema to finish Bakasura.

Bheema was expecting such a task. He rode on the cart of food and went to Bakasura. On the way he ate all the food. By the time he reached the demon's place there was nothing in the cart. Bheema was licking his lips. Bakasura got enraged with hunger fell on Bheema. But Bheema threw him down and sat on his chest. He hit him. Bakasura died soon. The people of Ekachakrapura were happy and praised Bheema. Pandavas stayed for some more days at Ekachakrapura.

One day Vedavyasa arrived there and told them to go to the Panchala country where Droupadi is getting married in a Swayamvar. He also suggested them to take part in it. Droupadi was the daughter of Drupada Maharaj.

Pandavas disguised as brahmins set out with their mother towards Panchala country. By the time they reached the capital, all the preparations for the Swayamvar were over.

Lord Krishna, Balaram and the Yadavas were present. The participant had to face a 'pana' or condition. A pillar was erected. On the top of the pillar was fitted a revolving fish. At the foot of the pillar a large vessel full of oil was kept. It was reflecting the revolving fish. The participant in the Swayamvar had to shoot an arrow looking only at the reflection, but hit the fish.

'Whoever hits the fish would become the husband of Droupadi' Drupada announced. Droupadi was a beautiful princess. Many kings wished to marry her. But none of them was successful in achieving the feat. Even Duryodhana, Shakuni tried and failed. Karna, who was present there rose and set his bow. But Droupadi said that she would not marry a Sootaputra. This was again insult to Karna. He had to keep quiet.

Arjuna came forth. He set his bow and looking into the vessel he hit the revolving fish easily. The gathering were surprised to see a brahmin hitting the fish very easily. They felt that the brahmin must be a good archer. But



all of them came to know that he was none other than Arjuna, the middle Pandava. Droupadi garlanded him.

“What ! Pandavas are alive !” Duryodhana was very much disappointed. Then who were burnt in Laksha Bhavan ? He was in confusion. He returned to Hastinapura.

Pandavas along with Droupadi returned to their residence. Yudishtira called his mother and said: “Mother ! We have brought an invaluable gem.”

Kunti sitting inside the residence said as usual thinking that they have brought alms -



“Good, you all five brothers share it”. After she came out, she realized that Yudhishtira was referring to Droupadi. According to their mother’s wish Droupadi became wife of five Pandavas.

Rajasooya

Pandavas are alive !

Droupadi is married to them !

Duryodhana's evil mind started working. He was restless. Dhritarashtra worried about his sons. Bheeshma learnt that Duryodhana will not leave Pandavas to run their life safely. So along with Vidura he went to Dhritarashtra and told him - "Dhritarashtra, It appears Kouravas and Pandavas are not living in harmony. You call the Pandavas to Hastinapura and give them half the kingdom. It's wise also. Pandavas are strong enough. It's very difficult to defeat them. Moreover Krishna is their friend. It is better you divide the kingdom. Let Pandavas rule their kingdom.

Dhritarashtra was not at all willing to grant half kingdom to the Pandavas. He was aware that they are real heroes and expand the kingdom and his son would become a slave to them one or the other day. "But the elderly person Bheeshma is telling. I should accept" thus thought Dhritarashtra and accepted the

proposal. Duryodhana didn't like this plan.

Dhritarashtra sent Vidura to the place where Pandavas were living to bring them back to Hastinapura. Vidura came to Pandavas and told Yudhishtira the purpose of his visit. Yudhishtira was not ready to go. He knew that Duryodhana will do harm. He consulted Krishna, mother Kunti and Drupada. They told Yudhistira to accept the offer and it is his right also.

Yudhishtira came to Hastinapura along with his brothers, Droupadi and Kunti.

Dhritarashtra though not willing offered Yudhishtira half the kingdom and told him to rule from Khandavprastha. Actually Khandavprastha was a forest area with full of wild animals. But Yudhishtira accepted it.

Pandavas decided to build a city there. They levelled the land after destroying sufficient forest. Vedavyas and other sages located the land to build palace. Krishna helped Pandavas to create a beautiful city. With the help of artisans, architects and sculptors Yudhishtira built a city with all amenities there in. The city was well protected. The new city looked like

Amaravati of Lord Indra. Yudhishtira named the new city 'Indraprastha'. He ruled his kingdom from Indraprastha. He looked after his subjects well.

Droupadi had to live with all Pandavas according to Kunti. So they made a rule as suggested by the great sage Narada that no Pandava shall enter the room where any other brother was meeting Droupadi alone. Incase if the rule is not followed. The Pandava doing so had to go away an exile for one year. This was agreed by all the Pandavas.

Once Yudhishtira and Droupadi were resting in their room. Arjuna had to protect few cows of a brahmin. Few thieves were taking away the cows. As the brahmin approached, Arjuna assured him that he would get back his cows. So he needed some arms and weapons to fight with the thieves. They were preserved in a room. In order to get them Arjuna had to pass through the room where Yudhishtira was resting with Draupadi. Arjuna had to disturb them. He took away few arms and fought with the thieves. The cows were

given back to the brahmin. But Arjuna as he broke the rule, he wished to be in exile.

Arjuna went deep in the forest and met many Rishis. He discussed with them about the higher knowledge. He visited religious places. During his journey he went to Nagloka. There he found Uloopi, the daughter of the Naga king. She fell in love with Arjuna. Both got married. Then Arjuna reach Manipur where he met Chitrangada, daughter of Chitravahana. She was the princess. Arjuna loved her and he married her. They got a son Babruvahana.

During the course of his journey Arjuna visited Prabhasa teertha. There he met Srikrishna, his relative and friend. Krishna heard Arjuna's story, then he took him to Dwaraka. Arjuna met there Subhadra, Krishna's sister. They fell in love with each other. But Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna had decided to marry Subhadra to king Duryodhana. Krishna planned in such a way that Arjuna came to Dwaraka as a hermit and Subhadra was placed to look after him. Balarama also agreed to this set up. He didn't

know who the hermit is. One fine day Arjuna married Subhadra secretly and elope with her. Krishna supported this marriage and then it was regularised. Subhadra gave birth to a heroic son from Arjuna and he was Abhimanyu. He was given training in the art of weaponry.

In the mean while Droupadi gave birth to five sons from the five Pandavas.

Arjuna returned from exile after one year. The other Pandavas were happy on his return.

Once Krishna had come to Indraprastha. He was talking to Arjuna. At that moment a poor brahmin appeared there and requested them to offer Khandava forest to him. He was the Lord Agni. He had come in disguise. Arjuna satisfied him by giving him the forest Agni desired. In return Agni gave Arjuna the famous bow Gandeeva with a quiver of arrows and a chariot with Hanuman as flag. Krishna was given Sudarshana Chakra by Agni.

Yudhishtira followed the path of Dharma. He never earned anything out of the way. He was also called Dharmaraja. With the help of

his mighty brothers he had expanded the kingdom. He treated his subjects as his family members. The subjects were also happy.

Twelve years have been completed after establishing Indraprastha. So Yudhishtira decided to perform a Yaga known as the 'Rajasooya'. He consulted Srikrishna about the pros and cons of the big task. Krishna told Yudhishtira that unless the Magadha king Jarasandha is taken care of, Yaga cannot be completed successfully. Also Krishna gave out a plan how to end Jarasandha.

Accordingly, Krishna, Bheema and Arjuna approached Jarasandha in disguised dressed up as brahmins. The king Jarasandha a mighty wrestler doubted them seeing their physique. However the trio called him for a bout of wrestling. Bheema fought with Jarasanda and killed him. Then Krishna, Arjuna and Bheema returned to Indraprastha.

Yudhishtira needed plenty of funds to conduct the Yaga. He sent his brothers in all four directions to meet different kings and acquire wealth. The brothers brought good lot



of wealth. The Yaga preparations were made. Invitations were sent to all the kings of Bharatavarsha.

The Kauravas took part in the Yaga. They were given responsibilities like catering in the Pandal, safe keeping the funds, supervising the arrangements clearing the meals plates, reception and such other duties. Bheeshma and

Drona, the elders did their work whole heartedly. Duryodhana was also pleased to work.

The Rajasooya Yaga was completed successfully. Now it was the time to offer Agra Pooja or the first honour to a deserving person. Yudhishtira consulted Bheeshma, the eldest of the Kurudynasty. Bheeshma said - "Dharmaraja, we need search the deserving person. Krishna is the right person. He deserves it. Let him be given the Agra Pooja". No body disagreed. The kings assembled in the Yagna, Pandavas and Yudhishtira were all happy about the decision. Krishna was asked to sit on the Agra peeta.

But, Shishupala, king of Chedi, was angry about the decision taken by Bheeshma. He took objection. He blamed both Bheeshma and Yudhishtira. Then he started censuring Krishna using abusive words. He called him a cowherd and a robber. Like that he used one hundred evil words. He was so adamant that he never allowed Yudhishtira to perform the Pooja. Krishna was calm till Shishupala completed

one hundred abuse words pointing him. Then he got up and said - "Shishupala, I had promised my aunt, your mother that I would tolerate one hundred evil deed committed by Shishupala. Now you have crossed the limit and blamed Yadavas. It is the time to punish you". Then Krishna let out his Sudarashana chakra towards him. The Chakra beheaded him. Except this incident, the Yaga was a grand success. Vedavyasa told Yudhishtira not to deviate anytime from truth.

The kings who attend the Rajasooya Yaga carried Pandavas name to all four directions.

Yudhishtira was in high esteems.

At the time of destroying Khandava forest, the great architect Maya who was there had feared of his life. Arjuna had saved him. Maya, in gratitude for this, constructed a special hall at Indraprastha. The hall was called Mayasabha. Duryodhana and others were still there at Indraprastha even after the Yaga completed. Shakuni, Duryodhana's maternal uncle was also there.

One day Duryodhana desired to visit

Mayasabha. Yudhishtira, Droupadi and other Pandavas were taking Duryodhana round the hall. The hall was so built that the crystal floor was looking like a water lake and if any body thought that there is water, they were finding only hard floor. Similarly when a hard ground is seen, thinking it is hard floor if any kept their foot they would have drowned as water was found there.

It so happened at one place, Duryodhana thinking that there is water ahead lifted up his garments. But a hard ground was found. He has to walk with difficulty. Bheëma simply laughed at him. Duryodhana didn't took it seriously. But in the next step he went ahead without care. There was water and he fell into water. He had presumed that it is hard ground. Droupadi laughed at him. Further, he walked straight thinking there is a door ahead, but there was wall and he had to hit his head. Bheema laughed and said : "Duryodhana is a blind son of a blind father. What can he do more ?" Droupadi again laughed at him.

Duryodhana was hurt. Droupadi's laughter

and Bheema's insulting words he didn't forget. After his visit to Mayasabha he returned to Hastinapura with his Parivar.

Game of Dice

Duryodhana was quite depressed after he returned to Hastinapura. He felt humiliated. Bheema had insulted him by calling him blind son of a blind father. He summoned Shakuni. Shakuni arrived.

“Uncle, Pandavas are leading a glorious life. People are praising them. I cannot tolerate. I have to stop their development. They are strong enough. How to Vanquish them ?”

Shakuni was good at playing game of dice. He was skilled in the art of cheating at dice. He suggested Duryodhana to invite Yudhishtira who is fond of game of dice to Hastinapur for a tournament of dice through his father and rest he will take care of.

Duryodhana went to Dhritarashtra. “Father ! Call the Pandavas for a game of dice” he insisted. Dhritarashtra was waiting for a chance

to see the downfall of Pandavas. He was jealous of their prosperity. But at once he didn't accept. He asked Vidura. Vidura opposed such plans as it would lead to a worst situation. He advised the king not to accept.

“Vidura, the game is only for fun. Do not see any evil in it” Dhritarashtra said. Then he sent words to Indraprastha stating that a game of dice is arranged. Yudhishtira had been asked to participate in it.

Pandavas suspected the motive behind it. Bheema, Arjuna and Draupadi told Yudhishtira not to go. But Yudhishtira had to go as the invitation had come from Dhritarashtra, the elderly person. To honour his words Yudhishtira left for Hastinapur with his brothers.

There was no doubt. The game of dice was arranged just to defeat Pandavas and grab their kingdom. Shakuni played in favour of Kauravas.

Shakuni played all sorts of false tricks and made Yudhishtira to lose the game. He was losing all his wealth one after the other in each game. He lost his kingdom, courtiers, brothers

and at last himself. But still the game was continued. He put Droupadi at stake and that too he lost. He became a slave to Duryodhana.

Duryodhana laughed loud and ordered Dusshasana to bring Droupadi to his court and



disrobe her.' Dusshasana, the wicked went immediately and dragged her out by pulling her hair. Droupadi was brought to court. Her husbands were sitting idle. They were incapable of protecting her. Droupadi approached the elders like Bhishma, Drona and Dhritarashtra. They were helpless. Duryodhana

asked Droupadi to come and sit on his lap. Bheema could not control his anger. But Yudhishtira stopped him from doing anything.

Dusshasana started pulling Droupadi's saree. She prayed Lord Krishna to protect her. Lord Krishna kept on providing Droupadi sarees in huge number. He was invisible to any of them. Dusshasana was unable to pull all of them and fell on the ground unconscious. Droupadi was saved.

Gandhari told her husband to put an end to it. Dhritarashtra told his son Duryodhana to leave Pandavas. Duryodhana obeyed his father at that juncture.

Droupadi was ferocious. She took an oath : "Dusshasana has pulled my hairs. Hear ! From today I do not tie my hairs. I shall only comb it after applying a coating of blood. This is true."

Bheema who was sitting quiet till such time said : "Droupadi, I shall fulfill your vow. I shall suck Dusshasana's blood in the ensuing war. The wicked Duryodhana's thigh shall be broken with my mace."

The words of Droupadi and Bheema were enough to shake Duryodhana. He was angry at his parents as they spoiled his plan.

Pandavas returned to Indraprastha.

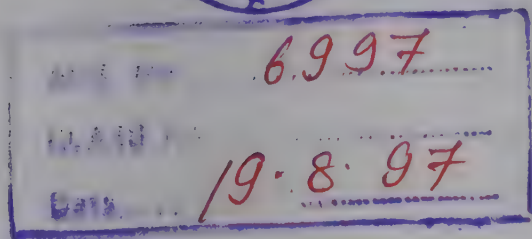
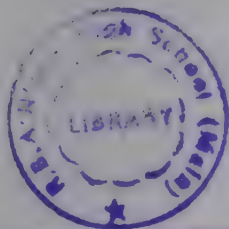
Duryodhana stopped taking food. He had been disappointed. He became leaner which made Dhritarashtra to think over again to keep his son cheerful.

Dhritarashtra once again invited Yudhishtira for another game of dice. Yudhishtira, having faced lot of injustice accepted just to fulfill the elders wish. He didn't refuse.

Shakuni said - "Yudhishtira, this time there shall be only one game that too on one condition. If you lose the game, you Pandavas have to go on twelve year exile and then for one year all of you have to remain incognito. Suppose you are identified by the Kauravas during incognito all of you have to undergo another twelve years of Vanavas."

Yudhishtira was aware of the difficulties they have to face during Vanavasa. But still he agreed to play. Expectedly, he lost the game. All the Pandavas left the glorious kingdom.

They wore garments made of Valkala, that is of tree bark. They entrusted Vidura the job of taking care of their mother Kunti. Droupadi and Pandavas set out for Vanavas. The subjects of Indraprastha persuaded Dharmaraja to remain with them. But Yudhishtir said no. Many people left their homes and joined Pandavas. But Yudhistira sent them back. Duryodhana, Dusshasana, Karna and other Kauravas rejoiced. It was the fate of pandavas to go on twelve year exile. They took it sportively. Dhrishtadyumna, brother of Droupai took with him the sons of Droupadi to the Panchala city. Srikrishna managed to take Subhadra and Abhimanya to Dwaraka. Droupadi said that she would remain with her husbands.



Vanavas

Pandavas entered a forest called Dvaitavana. They built a hut and lived in it. They had to live on fruits, roots and tubers. Few days passed.

Droupadi had not forgotten her vow. One day she said : “One or the other day we have to fight with the Kauravas. Then we’ve to take revenge against the injustice done to us by them.”

But Yudhishtira didn’t agree. He said that one has to excuse even enemies. How can Bheema tolerate ? He lifted his mace and exhibited his anger. The great sage Vedavyasa appeared there and resolved the issue.

“Yudhishtira, Let Arjuna obtain the divine weapons by virtue of penance. These weapons help you to defeat the Kauravas. There are weapons with Indra. Allow Arjuna to proceed.”

Yudhishtira saluted Maharshi and followed his advice.

Arjuna went to the mount Indraneel and sat there performing penance. Arjuna didn’t stop

it any moment. The penance was rigorous. The flames of his Tapas went up high and Indra, the king of suras came to know it. Arjuna was his son. He came down and asked him the reason for his penance.

“Deva, Kouravas have made us to suffer in the forest. They have insulted Droupadi in the court. I wish I would take revenge against them. For that I need weapons” Arjuna replied.

Indra advised him to pray Lord Shiva. Arjuna accordingly began penance in the Himalayas. He was performing pooja daily praying Shankar. It so happened on one day Arjuna saw a wild boar coming towards him. Without making any delay Arjuna shot an arrow at it. But at the same moment a hunter also shot an arrow at the boar. Arjuna told the hunter that he has killed it and it belongs to him. The hunter argued that he has killed it and he would take it. Both fought each other. Arjuna was unable to defeat the hunter. He performed Shivapooja with flowers. But he found the same flowers being showered on the hunters body. Then he realised that the hunter

is none other than Shankar. He saluted him. Lord Shankar was pleased to see Arjuna's devotion and bravery. He blessed him with the missile 'Pashupat-astra'. After Arjuna obtained the important weapon of Shankara he went to Amaravati and lived with Lord Indra for few day. He learnt there music and dancing from Chitrasen, a Gandharva. Indra gave Arjuna few missiles. Arjuna returned and joined his brothers.

In the mean while, Bheema had been to the land of Kubera to fetch a special flower called Sougandhika for Droupadi. On the way he met his brother Hanuman and had a talk with him. Maruti showed Bheema the path to the Land of Kubera.

According to Bheemas wish, Hanuman agreed to remain on the flag of Arjuna's chariot. Bheema was offered the flowers by Kubera. Pandavas visited many temples under the guidance of Maharshi Lomasha.

Even though the Pandavas were in exile, Duryodhana wanted to harass them. Some how he wanted to enter Dvaitavana and trouble

Pandavas. He insisted Shakuni to do something. Shakuni suggested that the inspection of the cattle stables at the Dvaitavana could be useful in this context.

Duryodhana sought permission from Dhritarashtra. He agreed the proposal but for him. Kauravas along with their wives entered Dvaitavana. Their chief interest was to see that the Pandavas suffer more. But it so happened that Chitrasena, a Gandharva also had come there with wives and friends to play in a lake. All for fun and merry making. They had already started before Duryodhana arrived. Naturally Chitrasena didn't allow Kauravas to enter the lake. Duryodhana got enraged and attacked him. But Chitrasena with his 'Gandarvastra', managed to tie up the entire Kuru army including Duryodhana. The Kaurava warriors were in a pitiable state. There were few kauravas who managed to escape ran for life in the forest. Fortunately they saw Pandavas there. One of them prayed Yudhishtira to help them and free Duryodhana and others from Chitrasena. The Gandharva had tied up even

the wives of Kaurava warriors. Bheema laughed and said that he is glad that the Kauravas have faced the right situation.

Then Yudhishtira said - "Bheema, Kauravas may behave like enemies. But they are our brothers. It is a pity that a person coming from heaven has tied up them like cattle. It is an insult not only to them but to us also. If we do not help them what would the world talk about us ? Bheema, show your valour to Gandharva and free your brothers."

Bheema, according to his elder brother's order went to fight with the Gandharva. Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeva were also with him. Chitrasena surrendered after a tight fight. Duryodhana, Dusshasana and others were released. Duryodhana didn't lift his head. He was ashamed. All Kauravas ran away.

Duryodhana was unhappy. He had to return to Hastinapura in disgrace. The purpose was not achieved. He waited for an opportunity to humiliate the Pandavas.

Once the sage Durvasa with his innumerable disciples visited Hastinapura.

Duryodhana welcomed him and arranged a feast for them. All were fed by him. Durvasa was so pleased granted a boon to Duryodhana.

Durvasa was very much known for his short temper. Duryodhana wanted to use this feature. So he said : “O Sage ! I am indeed happy to day that you have given me a boon. I wish that you should go to the Pandavas who are in Dwaitvana along with your disciples and tell them to arrange meals for you all. Thereby test their virtue.”

Durvasa agreed and went to forest along with his disciples. Yudhishtira welcomed him. Actually the Pandavas and Droupadi had finished their meals. They had with them an inexhaustible vessel which was giving them food daily once. Durvasa said - “Yudhishtira, we shall go to the river and take bath. By the time we return prepare our meals”.

Durvasa didn't stay there to hear reply from Yudhishtira. He proceeded to the river. The house wife Droupadi was worried. She prayed to Lord Srikrishna. Krishna appeared and he too demanded food.

“Krishna, you are also testing us. See, there is nothing left in the house. Mean while the sage Durvasa has come and asked us to prepare meals for them” Droupadi replied.

Krishna said - “Sister, see whether something is there in the vessel.”

Droupadi went inside the kitchen and picked up the vessel. There was only one rice grain sticking to the inside of the vessel. She showed it to Krishna. Krishna just ate it and belched in satisfaction.

Here, at the river bank, Durvasa and his disciples had just finished their bath started belching as if they had a full meal. Even they were unable to walk upto the ashram of the Pandavas. They returned to their place. Krishna had protected the Pandavas.

Again this was a great insult to Duryodhana. His wicked mind did not stop working. The Pandavas Vanavasa coming to end.

The Pandavas had suffered in the forest. They were consoled by the sages like Dhowmya and Lomasha. Yudhishtira heard stories of Nala, the Nishadha king, and Savitri from them.

After hearing the stories Yudhishtira felt that the difficulties they were facing was not that big. As Vanavasa was coming to end they had to plan for living incognito.

Duryodhana was worried. "The Pandavas have completed almost all of their twelve years of Vanavasa and they will finish the one year period of anonymity also. Then they shall come forth to claim their share of the kingdom. What to do?" He thought over the matter. He was not interested in handing over the kingdom to the Pandavas. At that time, Jayadratha, his brother-in-law and wife his Dusshala visited him. Duryodhana revealed him about the Pandavas.

Jayadratha, son of Vridhakshatra was a mighty person. He told Duryodhana not to worry and he would go to the forest and hunt for the Pandavas. Duryodhana was quite happy.

Jayadratha went to Dwaitavana and approached the ashram of Pandavas. The Pandavas were not there. They had gone in the deep woods for hunting. Droupadi was alone. Jayadratha's wicked mind worked fast. He told

Droupadi to come with him and she would be made the queen.

“Are you not ashamed to talk like this ? I am the wife of five Pandavas. What is your position ? Do not forget. Get lost” Droupadi replied.

Jayadratha simply grabbed her like Ravana grabbed Seeta in Tretayug and dumped her in his chariot. He drove the chariot fast. Droupadi shouted for help. She cried “Help Help”. Bheema and Arjuna who were returning to their ashram heard Droupadi’s voice and ran towards the chariot. Jayadratha was a coward. As soon as he saw the mighty brothers he let Droupadi down and tried to escape. But Bheema caught him and brought before his elder brother.

“Dear, this fellow dared to catch my hair and dragged me into his chariot. You cut off his hands” said Droupadi.

“Droupadi, of course Jayadratha has done a great mistake. He has to be punished. But he is our relation. He is my sister’s husband. Let us excuse him. Leave him” Yudhishtira said.

Bheema was helpless. He wanted to hit

Jayadratha and send him to the next world. But he was helpless. He released Jayadratha.

Jayadratha felt miserable. His hatred towards the Pandavas grew more. He went to the Himalayas and did penance chanting Lord Shankara's name. His intention was that he should defeat the Pandavas.

Lord Shankara pleased with his penance appeared and granted him a boon.

“Jayadratha, you shall succeed in defeating all Pandavas except Arjuna” Shankara said.

Jayadratha was happy. He returned to Hastinapura. But Duryodhana was not benefited by Jayadratha's visit to Dwaitavana.

Pandavas faced difficulties in their forest life. Bheema killed demons like Kimmeera and Jatasura. They performed Yagna. Vedavyasa visited the forest while Pandavas were there.

Once while Pandavas were wandering through the forests, Yudhishtir felt thirsty. There was no source of water nearby. He sent Sahadeva to fetch water and bring. Sahadeva went in search of water and reached a lake. By the time he came there, he himself was

thirsty. So he took a handful of water to drink. Soon a voice called him and told him not to drink water. Sahadeva found no body there. He asked, "Who are you ? Why are you telling me not to drink water ?"

"Look, I am Yaksha. The lake belongs to me. You can touch water after you answer my questions" the voice replied.

Sahadeva didn't care. As he didn't see anybody he took water in his hands and drank. Immediately he fell unconscious. Yudhishtira waited for Sahadeva for quite a long time. As Sahadeva didn't return he sent Nakula to check what happened. Nakula reached the lake. He also met with the same situation.

Yudhishtira then sent Arjuna. Arjuna also ignored Yaksha's order and faced the consequence. Then Bheema was sent. He also fell unconscious after he drank water.

Yudhishtira was confused. He had sent all his brave brothers just to fetch water. None of them had returned. Yudhishtira himself went in search of them. He came near the lake and saw his brothers lying unconscious. He was

shocked. He was very much thirsty. To save life he bent down to take little water. The voice questioned him also.

“I am the Yaksha. I am the owner of the lake. Your brothers didn’t reply to my questions. Those who answer my questions can touch the lake water. Otherwise who ever he is he has to face the same fate” the voice said.

Yudhishtira replied - “O Yaksha ! You may ask questions. I shall answer to the best of my ability.” The Yaksha went on asking questions. Yudhishtira replied.



“Who is greater than the earth ?”

“The mother”

“Which is faster than the wind ?”

“Mind”

“Who is taller than the skies ?”

“The father”

“Which is the best wealth ?”

“Knowledge”

“Which is the strangest thing ?”

“Acquiring property even though death is certain.”

“What gain is the best gain ?”

“Health”

“Which is the greatest religion ?”

“Compassion”

“Who is a real saint ?”

“One who works for the welfare of all, always”

“By leaving what does man win popularity with all ?”

“Pride”

“Which pleasure is the best among all pleasures ?”

“Contentment”

Yudhishtira answered all questions properly. The Yaksha was satisfied. He was pleased. He was none other than Lord Yama.

The Yaksha appeared and granted Yudhishtira boon.

Yudhishtira asked Yaksha to restore his brothers to consciousness. The brothers woke up.

Yudhishtira asked Yama one more boon.

“O Yaksha ! We have completed twelve years of exile successfully. Now we have one year period of anonymity. I request that the period should also pass without any difficulty.”

Yama-Dharma granted the boon and disappeared.

Yudhishtira and others drank water. Now they had to plan to remain incognito for a period of one year.

Keechaka was killed

Yudhishtira and his brothers, Droupadi had completed twelve years of exile. Now the Pandavas had to spend one year period of anonymity very carefully. The Kauravas were planning to make every effort to identify them so that Pandavas remain another twelve years in exile. So the Pandavas discussed about their stay. Mahatma Vidura had suggested them to spend the year in the Matsya country ruled by the king Viraata. All Pandavas were in the deep forest. They managed to reach the boundary of the capital city of king Viraata at night. From next morning they were to remain incognito. They had weapons and missiles with them. They wrapped them in a cloth. They kept the bundle in a hollow on a tall Shami tree in the grave yard. They hung a corpse on that Shamitree so that nobody should touch the weapons.

Next day, early in the morning, each of them turned into a different person's dress and entered the king Viraata's palace separately.

Yudhishtira had become a brahmin priest by the name 'Kanka'. He introduced himself to Viraata and told him that he is conversant in the game of dice and state craft. The king Viraata was happy as he got a company to play the game of dice. He deployed him in his court. After a while, Bheema arrived and introduced himself as a cook called Valala. He also told Viraata that he has worked earlier with Kanka. Viraata employed him and sent him to kitchen.

Arjuna calling himself 'Brihannala' dressed like- wise and entered Viraata court. He was looking like a woman. He had learnt dance and music during his visit to Amaravati which came to use at the appropriate time. Viraata had one daughter by name Uttare. So he employed Arjuna and asked him to teach dancing and singing to his daughter. Nakula joined as a horse expert and Sahadev as a Veterinarian. They were known as Granthika and Tantipala respectively.

Now it was the turn of Droupadi. She entered the Queen's apartment. Sudeshna, the queen took her as her companion. She was

called 'Sairandhri'. She told the queen that five Gandharvas were her husbands and they are in an invisible form. Sudeshna kept Sairandhri with her. She was not allowed to wash anybody's feet and she was not given the polluted food or left over food according to her desire.

The Pandavas with Droupadi could stay in a same place in the country of Viraata without making any one to doubt them. They were all talented and they managed well. They were performing their roles very well. Brihannala taught Uttare dancing and music. Uttarakumara was Viraatas' only son. He became familiar to Arjuna. Valala's cooking attracted Viraata. Kanka was giving timely suggestion to Viraata.

The Pandavas spent ten months of the anonymity year without any difficulty. One day Keechaka, a mighty warrior and brother of Sudheshna paid a visit to Sudeshna's house. There he saw Sairandhri who was extremely beautiful. Keechaka was surprised to see such a beauty in his sister's palace. At first sight

Keechaka desired to have Sairandhri with him. So he pleaded his sister Sudeshna to send Sairandhri for his service. Keechaka was a wicked person. His request had to be obeyed. Sudeshna thought several times. She was loving Sairandhri for her noble qualities. "Moreover if I send her to Keechaka, he would definitely pollute her" she felt. She was in a dilemma. Altogether, the survival of Viraata's kingdom mainly depended upon Keechaka's presence. Nobody from outside kingdoms was entering Viraata's country fearing Keechaka. Sairandhri had told Sudeshna when she joined for duty that she would not serve any alien male. So Sudeshna was not in a position to send Sairandhri to serve him. She said : "brother Keechaka, you may call her. If she comes win her heart and be served."

Keechaka was a lustful person. While he was talking to his sister, Sairandhri came there to serve him wine. Keechaka tried without any hesitation to grab her. Sairandhri feared and somehow escaped. She went running. Keechak didn't leave her. He followed Sairandhri.

Sairandhri entered Viraata's court where the courtiers were present. In spite of it Keechaka tried to pull Sairandhri. Kanka became angry. But he was unable to do anything. The situation did not permit Keechaka to grab Sairandhri.

In the night, Sairandhri went to kitchen and met Valala. She told him her plight.

Bheema assured Droupadi that he would kill him. He said - "You need not have any fear. You ask him to come to Nartana shala tomorrow night to meet you. Rest you leave it to me. I shall teach him a lesson."

Sairandhri, next day, when Keechaka visited her told him accordingly. Keechaka was very much pleased seeing this sudden turn.

Keechaka was waiting for the night's arrival. At the prescribed time Keechaka went to Nartana shala. The whole city was in night peace.

In Nartana shala, Bheema was sitting wrapped in a saree. It was already late in the night. So he pretended to be asleep. Keechaka was drunk. In his drunken state he mistook sleeping Bheema for Sairandhri.

“Sairandhri, I am really surprised to know that you are in love with me. I never dreamt. Perhaps you have loved me because of my valour.”

Bheema didn't speak.

“Sairandhri, Are you shy ? Oh ! How sweet is your face ? Come on let me see” said Keechaka.

Bheema turned his face and grabbed him by his hair. He hit his head. He picked him up and revolved his body. Then threw him on the ground. He sat on this chest and killed him.

Bheema had saved Droupadis honour. The news was wide spread. People of Matsya desha spoke to each other that the five invisible Gandharva husbands of Sairandhri killed Keechaka as their wife was hurt by him. Viraata, the king was surprised. He was little worried as his army chief Keechaka is dead. He was afraid that kings of nearby countries would attack him and he would lose the kingdom. Sudeshna, Keechaka's sister suspected Sairandhri. But there was no evidence for the attack of her husbands on Keechaka.

Keechaka, Bheema, Duryodhana and Shalya were the four warriors who were equal in fighting with mace. No other could fight with these four warrior's. Duryodhana and Shalya were not there. Bheema was in Agnatavasa after Vanavasa. Then who has hit Keechaka ? It was a big question.

Abhimanyu married

Keechaka's death news spread like wild fire everywhere. Trigarta was the nearby country. It was ruled by Susharma. He got the news early. Viraata was his enemy. He wanted to attack him and aquire his kingdom. But till this time there was Keechaka. So he could not enter Matsyadesha. But the path is made easy. Keechaka had gone. It was nice time for Susharma. He desired to take revenge on Viraata.

Susharma approached Duryodhana and said - "the eldest of the Kauravas, Keechaka is dead. It is our privilege to attack Viraata. He has a good cattle stock. His kingdom is flourished with wealth. Kindly join me. Let me take revenge on Viraata. We shall capture all the cows."

Both Karna and Duryodhana appreciated Susharma. They planned to keep ready their army. Viraata came to know from spies that Kauravas are attacking him keeping Susharma in front. He consulted Kanka and readied his

army. Bheema was a great wrestler. Yudhishtir, Bheema, Nakula and Sahadeva decided to participate in the battle.

The war ensued, the battle took place in both northern and southern side.

It became very difficult to Viraata to face the opponents as the Kaurava army was helping Susharma. Moreover at one stage of the battle Viraata was captured by the enemy. Bheema was told by Yudhishtir to drive out the enemies. The great wrestler Bheema attacked the army and made the army of Susharma to run away. Viraata was released.

Bheeshma, Drona, Karna, Duryodhana and other warriors were fighting on other side. They captured many cattles as planned. Uttara son of Viraata under the guidance of Arjuna fought with them. Uttara was almost a coward. He used to boast always at home telling that he would finish the Kauravas if he gets a good charioteer. Arjuna came to his help. Actually, Uttara when he saw the opponents he ran away from the battle



field. Ultimately, Arjuna asked him to just to hold on to the reins of the chariot. Earlier to that Arjuna had gone to the graveyard and had collected his Gandeeva and other weapons kept on the Shamitree. He was wearing woman's clothes only.

Arjuna fought with Kauravas bravely. Karna, Dussahasana and other warriors failed to fight with Arjuna. Even Ashwathama's plight was also miserable. Seeing this mastery Bheeshma understood that he is none other

than Arjuna. He revealed it to Duryodhana. But he fought with him. At one point he was also defeated.

Duryodhana believed Bheeshma. Bheeshma said "Duryodhana, The brave warrior in woman's robe is Arjuna. The one year period of Pandava's anonymity is over."

Duryodhana was defeated. So he left Viraata's capital and went back to Hastinapur. His mission to identify Pandavas while they were in Agnatavasa also had failed. He accepted his defeat against Arjuna.

Arjuna had won the battle. He entered the capital in merriment. He was given warm welcome by the people of Matsya-desh.

King Viraata was under the impression that Uttara had won the battle even though he was aware that Uttar does not know how to hold a sword. The whole city celebrated the victory. There were sounds of trumpets and drums. Yudhishtira said - "O king ! Brihannala brought us Victory."

Viraata became angry. He didn't like Kanka's report. Short tempered, he threw a

piece of the dice at Yudhishtira's forehead. Bleeding started, just then Sairandhri came there. Yudhishtira was a king. The blood of a king should not be split on the ground. Sairandhri was aware of the fact and she held a cup under the dozing blood and prevented spilling of blood. Viraata was surprised. By that time, Uttara came to the court along with Brihannala.

“My dear father, Brihannala brought us victory. Otherwise it was impossible for me to face Kauravas.”

Viraata was ashamed. He asked Kanka to excuse him. The Pandava's Agnatavasa was over. They revealed their true identity to Viraata.

The king Viraata came to know that Kanka is Yudhishtira, Valala is Bheema, Brihannala is Arjuna and the twin brothers are Nakul and Sahadeva. He said, “O king Yudhishtira, kindly excuse me. I have misbehaved with you. It is my fortune that you were all with me.”

“Viraata, you need not apologize. You had given all of us and Sairandhri who is Droupadi

shelter for one year. We should be grateful to you. We were to be in anonymity for one year. You have helped us” Yudhishtira said.

Viraata was immensely happy.

“Yudhishtira, I wish that we should develop our relationship. I intend to give my daughter Uttare to Arjuna” he said.

Arjuna suddenly intervened : “O king ! I have looked Uttare as my daughter all these days. It is unfair to marry her.”

Yudhishtira wished to fulfil Viraata's request.

He suggested a way out.

“Viraata, let me fulfil your request. Let Uttare marry Arjuna's brave son Abhimanyu. By this, she would become Arjuna's daughter-in-law. It is definitely proper and our relationship thereby develops.”

The marriage was settled. Preparations for the marriage were made. Yudhishtira invited all his relations except Kauravas.

The marriage ceremony was held on a grand scale. Both Balarama and Krishna were present. Drupada also had come. Subhadra, Arjuna's

wife welcomed her daughter-in-law Uttare who was also called Shashirekha.

The marriage was over. The relations returned to their places. Srikrishna remained there to decide the future of the Pandavas.

Sri krishna - the emissary

Abhimanyu's marriage was over. Now it was the question : Where Pandavas should reside ?

Krishna said : "After Pandavas were defeated in the game of dice, according to the condition of the game they have successfully completed twelve years of exile and one year period of anonymity. Naturally the Kauravas should return to Pandavas half of kingdom. That is justice. Hitherto Duryodhana envied Pandavas. Atleast now let the enmity be vanished. Let both live happily."

"Suppose Duryodhana refuses to give half of the kingdom to Pandavas, what would be the consequence ? Then Pandavas should fight for the kingdom. War is the result" Satyaki said

But Krishna didn't agree. He said :

“War is not the solution. That's only the last resort. We've to go legitimately. Drupada is the elderly person among us. Let Drupada be sent as an emissary to the Kaurava's Court. Let him negotiate with them. Moreover, Bheeshma and Kripa respect Drupada. Things will move easily” Krishna suggested.

The Pandavas agreed. They requested Drupada to go to Hastinapura and put their demands before Duryodhana.

Krishna returned to Dwaraka.

Drupad Raj had more responsibility. He sent his court priest to Hastinapura for negotiations. In the meanwhile, the elders suggested Yudhistira to seek the help of Krishna in the ensuing war. Arjuna decided to go to Dwaraka and sought the help of Krishna. He didn't delay. At the same time, Duryodhana, who needed the Yadava army, also proceeded to Dwaraka.

Krishna was in a dilemma, to whom he should help or to which side he should belong. He anticipated that both Arjuna and

Duryodhana may come at same time and he felt that it would be difficult to satisfy both. So he made a trick. Naturally he wanted to be on the side of Pandavas as there was truth and justice. He was telling 'Mama Pranahi Pandava' means Pandavas are my life. But Duryodhana also had come forward seeking his help. He slept on his cot. It was afternoon. Duryodhana came there and he chose the head side of the bed and it was suitable for him as his status was that of a king. Arjuna, a friend and disciple of Krishna sat humbly by Krishna's feet. Lord Krishna had decided whoever he sees first after opening his eyes, he would join him. Duryodhana had felt that soon after Krishna opens his eyes he would see him first as he is by the side of him.

Krishna after a while opened his eyes as if he was asleep. He gazed at Arjuna who was visible for him first.

"Arjuna, you're here. When did you come?" he asked.

Duryodhana was sitting at the head of the cot. Krishna saw him next. According to

Krishna's decision Arjuna got Krishna's help.

The wicked Duryodhana never knew who Krishna is. He said - "Krishna, I don't need you. But I need your army."

"Arjuna, How about you ?" Krishna asked.

"My Lord, I need you only."

"But Arjuna, I don't participate in the war" said Krishna.

Duryodhana remarked : "then what's the use ? That's why please spare your army."

Krishna agreed. Arjunaa was aware that victory would be their's as Krishna would be with them.

Duryodhana returned to Hastinapura. He had decided to wage a war.

The court priest of Drupada reached Hastinapura. He was present in the court where Bheeshma, Drona, Kripa and other elders were also present. He requested all of them, "Pandavas have completed exile and the anonymity period. No body has identified them during their stay in Matsya desha. I request that Pandavas shall be given half of the

kingdom as they have fulfilled the condition put at the time of playing the game of dice. Let there not be any conflict.”

Bheeshma, Drona, Vidura and other elders accepted the proposal.

But Duryodhana resented. Even Karna was in favour of him. Bheeshma convinced him. “Duryodhana, they are your brothers. It is their right to have their portion of kingdom. Invite them and hand over their share.”

Duryodhana opposed - “Oh ! You have become aged. We have already defeated Pandavas. Their kingdom is ours. There is no need to return it to them. If at all they want it, let them face us in the war.”

The court priest returned without any fruit. Yudhishtira approached Srikrishna and requested him to put an effort to avoid the battle.

“Krishna, war means bloodshed. It hurts both sides. Many people die. We can’t say what will happen” said Yudhishtira.

Srikrishna went to Hastinapura as an emissary. Before he met Duryodhana in his court he stayed in Vidura’s house where Kunti

was also present. Vidura was not a rich man. He was humble. He was a man of truth and justice. He had helped Pandavas many times. Krishna was offered in his house little milk and cooked rice. Krishna tasted it.

Next day Krishna entered the Kauravas court. Everyone in the court got up and saluted the Lord. But Duryodhana did not. He was adamant and a egoist.

Krishna took his seat. Duryodhana said : “Krishna, I had arranged a warm welcome for you. Sweets and dishes were prepared to serve you. But you didn’t come to the palace. You stayed in Vidura’s hut. After all a maid servant’s son !”

Vidura was present in the court. He was hurt in front of many people. He got up and told Duryodhana : “Duryodhana, I have one powerful missile. I had kept the missile to safeguard you in the ensuing war. But you have insulted me. There is no point in helping a man like you. I don’t participate in the war” so saying Vidura broke the bow then and there itself.

Srikrishna spoke : “Suyodhana, war

between brothers is no good. Internal struggle will lead into lot of complications. I ask you to hand over half of the kingdom to the Pandavas according to law.”

Duryodhana said no. Krishna told Dhritarashtra to advise his son.

“Krishna, what can I do ? They are grown up. You may convince him and stop war” Dhritarashtra replied.

Bheeshma, Kripa and Drona persuaded Duryodhana at least to give five villages so that war can be avoided.

Duryodhana was strict. “Krishna, I am not willing to give the Pandavas even a piece of earth that can remain on a needle point. Then how can I give them five villages. If they so need any kingdom let them fight with us. If they win naturally they acquire it. That’s never possible to them. We are hundred in all. They are only five” he said.

Krishna didn’t stop his attempt.

“Duryodhana, Pandavas are truthful. Yudhishtira has followed the path of Dharma. It is always truth that prevails. Their claim is

also legitimate. Don't be ignorant. The world will appreciate and honour you if you give Pandavas their due. If you intend to go on a war, your end is certain" Krishna warned him.

Krishna's words were an insult to Duryodhana and others which they felt. Duryodhana, Dusshasana, Karna, Shakuni and their group left the court. They were all shouting very badly. Krishna suggested that it would be better to arrest them to avoid the complete destruction of Kurus. But Duryodhana ordered to imprison Krishna. How could it be possible. He was god. He had divine powers. Few courtiers attempted to tie Krishna with a rope. Lord Krishna exhibited his Virataroopa (Vishwaroopa) Nobody was able to tie him up. Bheeshma, Drona and others saw Krishna's Viraata swaroop and became satisfied. Dhritarashtra also liked to see the Lord Vishnu. Krishna granted him eye sight for few seconds see the Viraataroopa.

Duryodhana and his group were unfortunate. Their wicked mind worked in a different way.

Krishna decided to leave Hastinapura.

Before which he called on Karna and revealed him the secret of his birth.

“Karna, you are not an ordinary person. You are the first born son of Kunti. You are the eldest of the Pandavas. Just if you tell Duryodhana, the war could be stopped” Krishna said.

Karna felt that Krishna killed him by telling the truth behind his birth.

“Krishna, I would not have believed this strange truth if some other person would have told. But you have told me. I may be the son of Kunti. Is it possible for me to regard her as my mother after a very long period. Just for the sake of people, she threw me into the river. Actually Adiratha and Radha whom I call parents really brought me up. When many people were insulting me as Soota’s son it is Duryodhana who honoured me and made me the Anga king and gave me equal status. He believes me. If I leave him and join Pandavas, can he sustain ? Tell me Krishna. If I do like that, I would be deceiving a friend. Why did you tell the truth ? I was safe. Pandavas are

my own brothers you're telling. Will it be possible for me to fight against them ? Krishna, you would not have revealed the truth."

Krishna didn't reply. He wished him and left Hastinapura. Earlier to that he had told Kunti to meet Karna.

One fine day Karna was offering 'Arghya' to the Sun after his bath. Kunti arrived there. She wanted Karna to be convinced for peace and war should not be held. War means destruction.

"Karna, my son ! Are you doing well ?" Kunti called her son for the first time.

"Who called me ? Who is it ?" asked Karna.

"It is your mother Kunti"

"Mother ! Yes. You gave me birth. By that way you are my mother. Actually my mother is Radha. I am Radheya."

"Karna, past is past. Now I want you to be with me. Let there not be any war."

"How can it be ? A sudden change !"

"Karna, would you like to fight with your own brothers ? You are the eldest."

"That's today. When I was insulted by one and all, who showed affection ? Duryodhana !

Is it not. He is my brother. Mother ! Don't pull me."

"Karna, you are mistaking. If your brothers win, naturally you will be the king."

"Mother, I am not interested in any kingdom. I work for my friend Duryodhana. Now he is my brother also."

Kunti was unable to convince Karna.

"Son ! Do you fulfil my one request ?"

"Tell me mother. I am pleased to do it. What do you desire ?"

"Karna, for heaven's sake. Do not kill any of the Pandavas. In the battle field do not use the arrow shot once again."



Karna could not understand why Kunti is telling about an arrow. He said : “Mother, I don’t kill Yudhishtira, Bheema, Nakula and Sahadeva. But I wish to fight with Arjuna. It is my ambition. Longback I have decided. Even if one of us die in the battle you shall have five sons.”

Kunti went home worried.

Divine song

Krishna returned. He told the Pandavas that Duryodhana refused to hand over kingdom and even he is not ready to grant atleast five villages. There was no other course except to fight.

The Pandavas decided to fight against the Kauravas to get back their kingdom. Now they had to gather their army forces. Drupada came to help. Dhrishtadyumna, son of Drupada, was made the chief of the Pandava army.

In the Kauravas side Bheeshma was requested to lead the army. But for Bheeshma, both Kauravas and Pandavas were equal. How can he fight ? As a courtier in the Kauravas court he accepted. But he told Duryodhana that he would kill only ten thousand warriors of the enemy per day and then he put forth one more condition stating that Karna should not enter the battle field when he is fighting. Duryodhana agreed.

Both the armies had foot soldiers, elephant riders, horsemen and charioteers. They had to

follow the rules of the war.

The battleground was Kurukshetra. The Pandava army was seven akshouhinis in number and the Kauravas eleven akshouhinis.

Lord Krishna himself was driving the chariot of Arjuna. He was Parthasarathi. He brought the chariot to the middle of the battleground between the two armies.

Arjuna gazed at the opponent's army. He saw Bheeshma, Drona, Kripa and others who were all relation and elderly persons. Drona was his teacher. Because of war he had to use weapons against them. He felt that it is not good to fight against his own relations just to have kingdom.

He said - "Krishna, I shall not fight. You see there. They are all nearest and dearest. What benefit am I going to get by killing kith and kin. Is it kingdom? What is the use of having it losing the relations?"

Lord Krishna preached him the Gita and convinced him that one has to do his duty. He said - "Arjuna, don't imagine things. Don't be under any false delusions also. You have to

perform your duty. You feel that you are going to kill. Who are you ? Every thing is done by me. You are only a tool. Remain free from attachments. Arise, awake. Show your valour. Take your bow. Use your skill. Do not hesitate to do your duty. Whenever there is injustice, violence on the earth, I take birth and destroy the wicked and install Dharma. I shall safeguard the good.

“Paritranya Sadhoonam Vinashayacha
Dushkrutam

Dharma Samstapanaya Sambhavami Yuge
Yuge”

Lord Krishna showed Arjuna his Viraata Swaroop. Arjuna was surprised. He saluted Krishna and assured him that he would follow his advice.

The advice given to Arjuna by Lord Krishna is famous as the divine song or Shrimat Bhagawad Gita.

Battle field

Bheeshma was the chief of the army on Kauravas side. He was a great warrior. When Yudhishtira came to the battle field. But he got down from the chariot and went upto Bheeshma by walk and saluted him. This was indeed a surprise to Kauravas. They felt that Yudhishtira may surrender. Yudhishtira then saluted Drona, Kripa and other elders and received blessings from them.

Then the armies were ready for the battle. There was a tight fight between the soldiers of both the armies. Bheeshma and Arjuna, the two warriors had a terrible fight. Bheema was fighting with the Kalinga warriors. On the third day Bheema hit Duryodhana and made him to fall unconscious. The Kaurava army felt their leader is defeated. They started running. But Duryodhana gained consciousness and blamed Bheeshma allowing soldiers to run away from the battle field. Bheeshma thereafter intensified his struggle. It was so fierceful that one day Krishna himself took out his Sudarshana

Chakra and charged towards the Pitamaha. By doing this he had broken his oath. Arjuna stopped this action and Krishna took back his Chakra. Then Arjuna fought rigorously. But Bheeshma could not be defeated till eighth day. All these days the fight was between Arjuna and Bheeshma. It was a precarious problem for the Pandavas how to defeat Bheeshma. On the ninth day, the Pandavas brought Shikandi who was the princess Amba in the former birth. Bheeshma seeing shikandi didn't raise his bow against Shikandi treating him as woman. Arjuna shot arrows continuously from behind Shikandi till Bheeshma became



unconsciousness. Actually he fell on the ground but his body didn't touch the ground as there were large number of arrows on his body. It was the tenth day of the battle. Bheeshma had a boon from his father with which he was able to choose the time of his death.

Bheeshma rested on the arrow bed. He needed water. Arjuna sent down an arrow. A spring of water raised from the ground and straight away it flew to Bheeshma's mouth. His head was made to rest on another arrow. Bheeshma decided not to die till the Uttarayana began. The Pandavas left the battle field. Duryodhana had lost a great warrior's help.

Drona becomes army chief

Duryodhana made Drona the army commander. He promised him that he shall capture Yudhishtira alive. On the Pandavas side, Bheema was made the chief of army. Srikrishna took Arjuna to fight against Samshaptakas. Drona was a powerful archer. He arranged the army in a circular shape called Chakravyuha.

Chakravyuha was a peculiar design. Drona had planned to engage fourteen thousand warriors. Arjuna and Krishna were conversant about Chakravyuha. But they had gone to fight on the other side. Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna had little knowledge regarding Chakravyuha. He was capable of entering into the Vyuha, but he did not know how to get out of it. Bheema told Abhimanyu to enter the circular design and they would follow him. Yudhishtira was not interested in sending Abhimanyu. However, Abhimanyu told his uncle that he shall face the enemies. He entered the Chakravyuha leaving his uncles. Jayadratha avoided others to enter into it.

Abhimanyu, single person had to fight with the mighty warriors like Drona, Duryodhana, Ashvathama, Karna, Kripa, Shakuni and Dussasana. All of them together killed Abhimanyu. Jayadratha kicked him in the head.

It was in the evening Arjuna came to know it. He became angry. He vowed on the spot that he shall behead Jayadratha by next day's end or shall die himself.

Duryodhana was happy to hear Arjuna's vow so he made all arrangements to protect Jayadratha.

Next day battle started. Arjuna searched for Jayadratha throughout the day. He killed many warriors during the course of the day. Jayadratha was not found.

Krishna temporarily covered the sun by his Chakra. Then it was dark. Arjuna lit the fire and was about to enter the fire. Kouravas who were so happy gathered there to witness the end of Arjuna. Jayadratha also appeared there. Krishna removed the temporary cover to make Sun to appear. There and then Krishna told Arjuna to shot an arrow at Jayadratha. Without

delay Arjuna shot an arrow and Jayadratha was beheaded. He had fulfilled his vow before sun set by Krishna's grace.

Duryodhana became angry. He ordered his army to attack Pandavas at night also. Ashvathama on Kauravas side was capable of fighting in the night. On Pandavas side Bheema's son Ghatotkacha was there. He was a demon. He had magical powers. He was changing his shape often which confused the Kauravas. Many warriors were killed. There was no doubt that Ghatotkacha would have destroyed the entire army of Kauravas by morning. Duryodhana felt it. So he asked Karna to use 'Shakti' weapon on Ghatotkacha.

"Duryodhana, I have reserved it to finish Arjuna in the battle" replied Karna.

"Karna, do we survive till such time ? Better use it. Don't delay" said Duryodhana.

Karna had no choice. He had to satisfy his friend. So he threw the weapon on Ghatotkacha.

Ghatotkacha had no equal weapon to destroy it. 'Shakti' was coming fast. He decided to die and faced it.

Ghatotkacha fought bravely and killed innumerable enemies. But 'Shakti' didn't leave him. He died.

Within two days Pandavas had lost two brave warriors. Abhimanyu and Ghatotkacha. But Krishna had saved Arjuna as Karna had lost 'Shakti' weapon. Pandavas wept for the death of brave sons.

Next day morning Duryodhana asked Dronacharya to kill the Pandavas in the battle. Drona was smart. He intensified his struggle. He killed Drupada and Viraata.

Dhrushtadyumna had lost his father. But it was not the time for him to weep for his father's death. War means blood shed and deaths. He decided to take revenge. He fought with Drona. It was terrible. He showered Drona with arrows. Pandavas were fierce. They had lost their father-in-law.

It became very difficult to destroy Drona. Krishna felt that it is impossible to defeat him and some idea should be planned to make him weaponless.

At that time an elephant had died. Its name was Ashwathama. The elephant belonged to

the king of Malava. Krishna told Bheema to tell Drona that Ashwathama is killed. Bheema approached Dronacharya and told him "Gurudev ! Ashwathama is killed".

Drona could not believe. He was heart broken. He went near Yudhishtira. He knew that Yudhistira speaks nothing but truth. He asked Yudhishtira - "Dharmaraja, is it true that Ashwathama is killed ?"

"Acharya ! yes. It is true that Ashwathama is killed, but it is an elephant."

Drona heard only half of what Yudhishtira said. Because when Yudhishtira said that it is an elephant Krishna blew his conch loudly. So Drona did n't hear. Dronacharya felt that his son only is killed.

Drona could not continue his battle. Ashwathama was his soul. He simply sat in his chariot in yoga mudra. Taking this opportunity, Dhrustadyumna grabbed the silvery hair of Drona in one hand, and with the other hand he cut off Drona's head. It was a terrible killing.

Ashwathama got the news. He became



furious and he fired Narayana - astra on the Pandavas. Krishna asked each warrior to drop his weapon and stand with folded hands. Narayana - astra didn't kill anyone as everyone dropped the weapon in their hand. That was the characteristic of the astra. Ashwathama was disappointed. He decided to take revenge. He vowed that he shall end all the Pandava family.

Drona was killed. Acharya Drona was no more. Duryodhana was sorrowful.

“Ashwathama, you’ve lost your father. I have lost my teacher and a great warrior. To whom should I entrust the work of the commander of the army ?” Duryodhana said.

Ashwathama suggested the name Karna.

Duryodhana welcomed the suggestion. He called on Karna.

Karna became the commander of the Kaurava army. The honour of the Kauravas had to be protected by Karna. Shalya was asked to be the charioteer to Karna. Shalya became furious. It was Karna’s suggestion only.

“Duryodhana, I am a crowned king. How can you expect me to become a charioteer, that too the chariot of Suta’s son !” Shalya remarked.

But he agreed to it after Duryodhana pleaded him. However he put a condition that Karna should listen to whatever he is told.

Karna - Arjuna

Karna entered the battle field. He was concentrating on Arjuna. So he asked Shalya to take him to the place where Arjuna is.

Shalya insulted Karna telling that he had run away from the battle field to avoid Arjuna's arrows. He told him to stop boasting.

Karna attacked Yudhishtira's chariot and tore apart the flag. He damaged the chariot also. While Yudhishtira was trying to set right the chariot, Karna laughed and said - "Yudhishtira! Why have you come here? Better go home and preach somebody. I have left you alive. Go away."

Yudhishtira was hurt. Arjuna saw from distance Yudhishtira's chariot. Its flag was torn. Arjuna asked Krishna to take him there. Before that he told Bheema to keep an eye on the enemies.

Yudhishtira narrated Arjuna all that happened. Arjuna became enraged and took a vow to kill Karna in the battle.

On the other side, there was a tight fight

between Bheem and Dusshasana. Bheema had a mace in hand. He hit Dusshasana with it. He pulled his right hand. "Dusshasana, It is this hand that grabbed the hairs of Droupadi. Is it not ? You pulled her saree with this hand in the court where elders were sitting. Now it is my turn. Pay for the evil deeds you did" said Bheema and uprooted the right hand of Dusshasana. Then he drank the blood spurting from his heart.

"Dusshasana, I shall take your blood and give it to Droupadi. She will comb her hair with this blood" said Bheema.

He picked him up and threw him high in the sky. Dusshasana fell on the ground. Bheema sat on his chest and hit it.

Then Bheema took a sharp sword and cut off Dusshasana's head and threw it towards the Kaurava army.

Arjuna had not forgotten the way in which Abhimanyu was killed by Kouravas. Seven senior Kourava warriors together had killed Abhimanyu, the young. He saw Vrishasena, son of Karna in the battle field. He desired to kill



him which he told Karna also. He shot a mighty arrow which flew off, passing straight through the neck of Vrishasena.

Karna was angry. Shalya encouraged him. He provoked him to show his valour.

The two mighty warriors came forward. They started fighting each other. They were good archers. Karna had learnt archery from Parashurama. But he had told his Guru that he is a brahmin. Parashurama though taught him very well, after he came to know that he is not a brahmin, Parashurama cursed him.

According to the curse, Karna was unable to remember the powerful astras.

Arjuna and Karna, both had command on the art of weaponry. Karna took sarpastra and sent it towards Arjuna. Krishna pushed the earth by his foot. So the arrow took out Arjuna's crown only. The arrow returned and pressurised Karna to use again. But Karna refused. At this stage Karna didn't act according to Shalya's advice. So Shalya left the battle field. Karna himself had to run the chariot. While he was taking the chariot one of its wheels stuck in the mud and naturally the chariot didn't move. Karna suddenly jumped from the chariot and put efforts to lift up the wheel. His efforts were futile. He was unarmed. Arjuna tried to send an arrow upon him. Karna requested Arjuna to wait till the wheel is lifted up and also he said that it is not proper to attack the unarmed person.

Krishna intervened and said - "O Karna ! You're talking about rules. Why did you not oppose when Dusshasana tried to disrobe Droupadi ? How did you kill Abhimanyu who was unarmed ?"



Karna didn't answer. He felt that his end has come. So he chose powerful astras (missiles) given to him by Parashurama. But he couldn't remember the mode of sending them. This was the opportunity for Arjuna to send an arrow. Krishna provoked him. Arjuna sent out a powerful arrow using his Gandeeva. Karna's head was cut off.

End of Duryodhana

Duryodhana had lost his noble friend. Shalya, king of the Madra country was made the army chief. Shalya faced the Pandav army in the next day's battle. There were very few soldiers on Kauravas side.

Krishna hinted Yudhishtira to fight with Shalya. But Yudhishtira said that Shalya is his maternal uncle.

“Yudhishtira, This is war; battle field. You've come here to fight the enemy. You are



not supposed to think of your relations with the enemy. Come on, hit him” said Krishna.

Yudhishtira agreed and took up his bow. A tight fight was held between both the warriors. Yudhishtira didn't delay. He made Shalya's head to flew high in the air by using a mighty weapon Shakti. Shalya fell on the ground collapsed.

While Drishtadyumna killed Shalva, Sahadeva beheaded Shakuni, the great cheat.

Among Kauravas, Duryodhana, Kripacharya, Kritavarma and Ashwathama were the only warriors left. Duryodhana was very much depressed. He was desperated. He wanted to hide some where. He ran towards a lake to protect himself. Kripa, Kritavarm and Ashwathama approached him and told him to remain with them to continue the battle.

“Oh, Leave me alone. Let me have rest. We shall think of it tomorrow” said Duryodhana. He hid in the lake.

A hunter heard what Duryodhana said and he informed Bheema the same. The hunter was supplying meat to Bheema everyday.

The Pandavas who were actually looking for Duryodhana came to the lake.

Yudhishtira called him. Duryodhana didn't come up. He said that he is taking rest.

“Duryodhana, Is it worth to hide ? Come out and face the battle” he said. Duryodhana was silent. Yudhishtira repeated and finally said that hiding and taking rest is a blot on the Kuru name. Those words irritated Duryodhana. He came out with the mace in hand.

Bheema and Duryodhana fought each other. Duryodhana was strong like Bheema. He was hit by Bheem several times. But Duryodhana was regaining strength. Krishna and Arjuna were watching the fight closely. Krishna reminded Bheema of his vow through Arjuna. According to Krishna's guide lines Arjuna patted his own thighs. Bheema hit Duryodhana's thighs with his mace. Duryodhana collapsed.

The Pandavas returned to their camp.

Duryodhana was dying. Still he was alive. He made Ashvathama the army commander.

Duryodhana asked Ashwathama to show him Pandavas cut off heads before his death.

Ashwathama went inside the Pandava camp. It was late in the night. He found there Dhrushtadyumna and other warriors fast asleep. Ashwathama killed Dhrushtadyumna on the spot. Later, along with the other Pandava warriors he killed the five sons of Droupadi also. Duryodhana was given information that Pandavas are killed. After hearing of the complete destruction of the Pandava family tree, Duryodhana died.

In the morning Droupadi found her sons killed. Pandavas came to know it is Ashwathama's work. Droupadi's grief knew no bounds. She forced Bheema to pluck the gem that Ashwathama carries on his head since birth.

Bheema went to the ashram of Vedavyasa where Ashwathama had taken refuge. He cut off the gem from his head.

Yudhishtira's Coronation

Losing all sons and many relatives, Dhritarashtra and Gandhari were plunged in deep sorrow. The crying sounds of women in each house of Hastinapura reached the sky.

Dhritarashtra was fuming with rage. When the Pandavas, accompanied by Krishna came to see him and offered condolences, he got irritated. He was very much angry. He asked for Bheema. "I want to meet him" he said. He wanted to kill Bheema.

Krishna who had foresight put forth an iron



statue of Bheema before Dhritarashtra who was born blind. Thinking that Bheema is there, the king embraced the statue with such a force that even the iron statue broken to pieces !

Krishna said - "O king ! Pandavas never liked the war. The war was invited by your sons only. They were unjust, adamant and merciless. These qualities were enough to perish them."

Dhritarashtra accepted the mistake made by his sons. Krishna advised him to treat the Pandavas as your own children. Dhritarashtra realised and embraced Yudhishtira and others with affection. As per the advice of Vedavyasa.

Yudhishtira along with his brothers approached Bheeshma to have his blessings. Bheeshma explained Yudhishtira the qualities of a good king.

On an auspicious day Yudhishtira was made the king of Hastinapura. Kunti was proud of her sons. Yudhishtir ruled the kingdom well. He looked after his subjects very well by providing them amenities. As Uttarayana began, on the Sankranti day, the grand old man of the Kuru family, Bheeshma breathed his last.

Last days

Yudhishtira performed the last rites of Bheeshma. He felt that he is a sinner. Vedavyasa advised him to perform Ashvamedha yaga. Earlier while he was ruling from Indraprastha he had performed Rajasooya. Now he had to perform Ashvamedha yaga. Pandavas acquired huge wealth to perform the Yagna. Ashvamedha horse was sent from kingdom to kingdom.

Uttara who was pregnant delivered a male child after the war. He was the heir to the Pandava kingdom. He was named 'Parikshita'.

During the course of journey of the horse, Arjuna had to fight against Babruvahana as the yaga horse was stopped by him. Babruvahana was his own son from Chitrangada. However, though Arjuna was put to death in the war. Babruvahana got him alive.

The horse returned to Hastinapura.

Asnvamedha Yagna was celebrated on a grand scale.

After few days Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti left Hastinapura and went to the forest. Vidura was also with him.

Few days passed. Droupadi wanted to meet Kunti. So the Pandavas went to the forest. They met the elders. But Vidura was not there. Vedavyasa created the appearance of Karna and all the Kauravas one day. Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti saw their dear ones. After that, Pandavas returned to Hastinapur.

The Pandavas were ruling the state with care. One day the Sage Narada appeared in Yudhishtira's court and informed that Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti were burnt into ashes as they were caught in the wild fire after a bath in the Ganga river. The Pandavas wept hearing the news. But death is certain to anybody.

Yudhishtira ruled his kingdom for many years Sri Krishna ended his Avataar in a forest.

Learning of Sri Krishna's end, the Pandavas decided to begin their final journey. Parikshita was made the king of Hastinapura.

The Pandavas began their journey of no return. Droupadi breathed her last on the way. She had shown more love to Arjuna. Like wise Sahadev, Nakul, Arjuna and Bheema one by one died. They were all affected by Pride for one or other reason.

Yudhishtira reached the heaven. Lord Indra himself came to receive Yudhishtira. A dog had accompanied him. Indra offered a chariot to Yudhishtira. But he didn't allow the dog to enter the chariot. "Those who have merit are allowed inside the heaven" Indra said.

Yudhishtira offered half of his own merit to the dog to enable it to enter the heaven.

The dog was none other than Yamadharma. He had assumed the dog's form. He praised Yudhishtira.

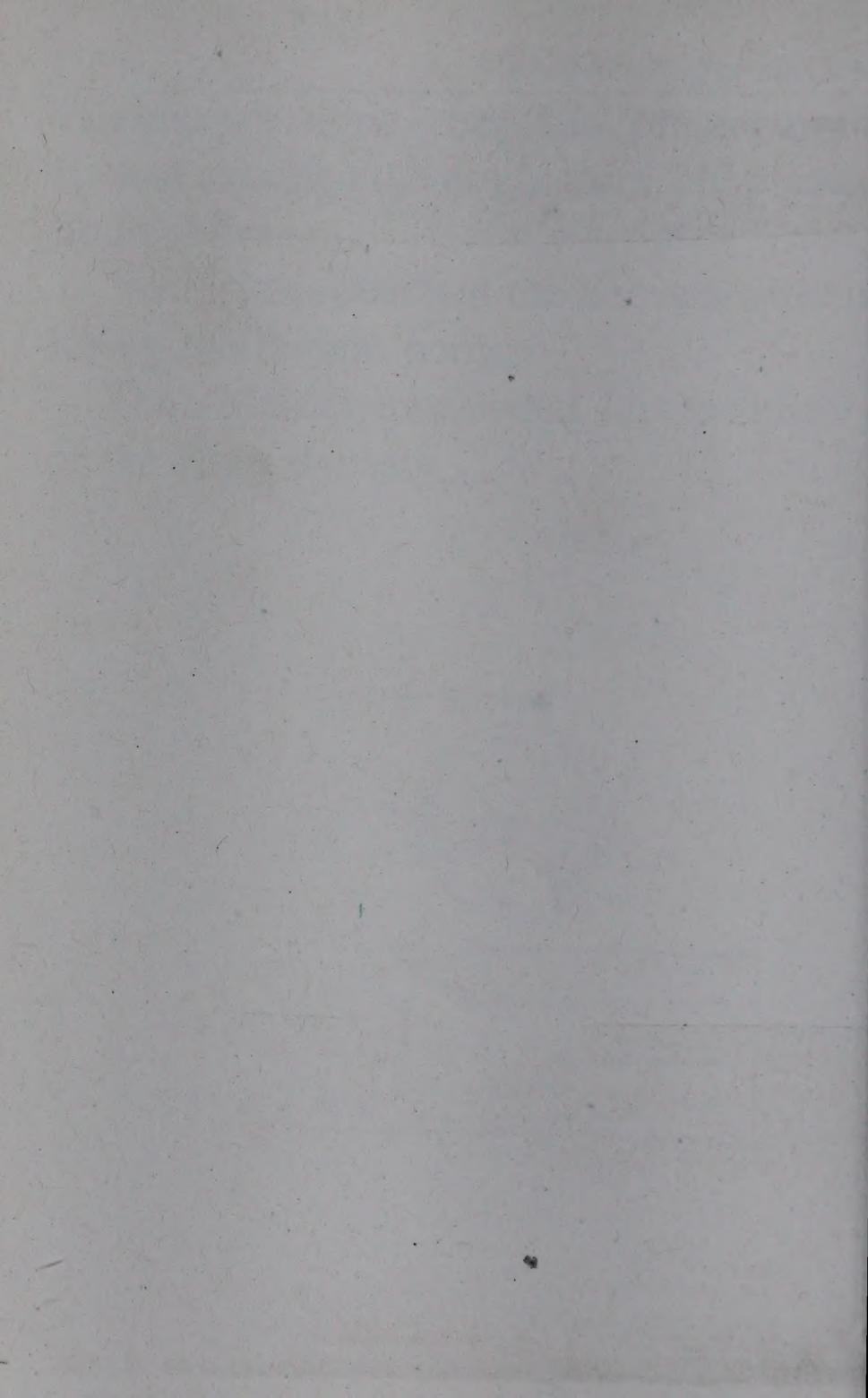
Yudhishtira reached the heaven without losing the human body.

Thus, Mahabharata ended. It is the history of the Kuru dynasty.



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