

CHAPTER THREE

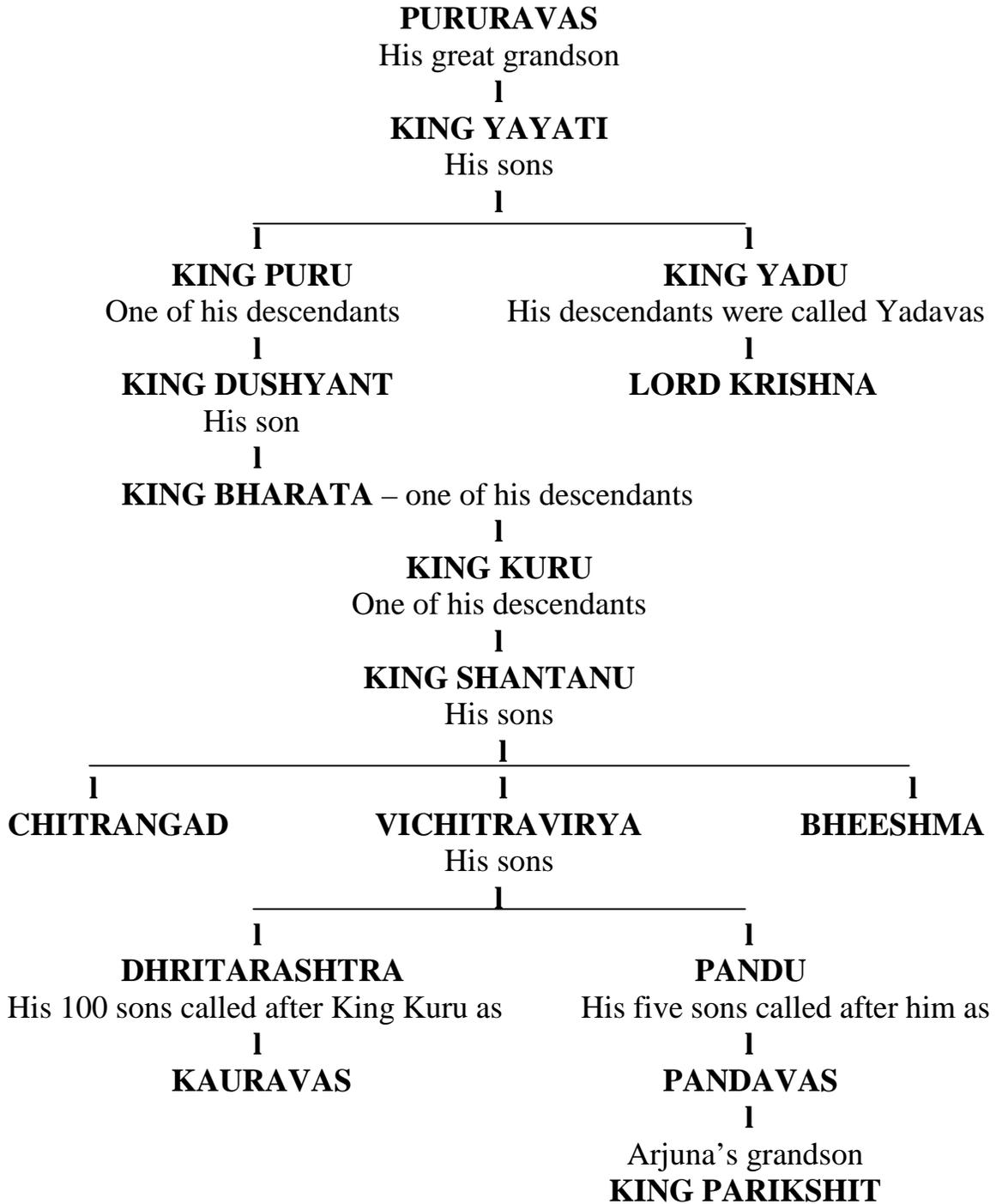


Pandavas in

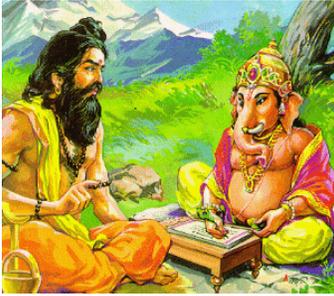
MAHABHARATA

CHANDRA VAMSA

The first king of the race of the Moon was



MAHABHARATA



Mahabharata is the longest epic poem in the world, originally written in Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. It was composed by Sage Veda Vyasa several thousand years ago. Vyasa dictated the entire epic at a stretch while Lord Ganesha wrote it down for him.

The epic has been divided into the following:

- **ADI PARVA**
- **SABHA PARVA**
- **VANA PARVA**
- **VIRATA PARVA**
- **UDYOGA PARVA**
- **BHEESHMA PARVA**
- **DRONA PARVA**
- **KARNA PARVA**
- **SALYA PARVA / AFTER THE WAR**

ADI PARVA

The story of Mahabharata starts with King Dushyant, a powerful ruler of ancient India. Dushyanta married Shakuntala, the foster-daughter of sage Kanva. Shakuntala was born to Menaka, an *apsara* (nymph) of Indra's court, and sage Vishwamitra. Shakuntala gave birth to a worthy son Bharata, who grew up to be fearless and strong. It was after his name India came to be known as Bharatavarsha. Bharata ruled for many years and was the founder of the Kuru dynasty. Unfortunately, things did not go well after the death of Bharata and his large empire was reduced to a kingdom of medium size with its capital Hastinapur.

Mahabharata means '**the story of the descendants of Bharata**'. The regular *saga* (story) of the epic of the Mahabharata, however, starts with king Shantanu. Shantanu lived in Hastinapur and was known for his valor and wisdom.

One day he went out hunting to a nearby forest. Reaching the bank of the river Ganges (Ganga), he was startled to see an indescribably charming damsel appearing out of the water and then walking on its surface. Her grace and divine beauty struck Shantanu at the very first sight and he was completely spellbound.

When the king inquired who she was, the maiden curtly asked, "Why are you asking me that?"

King Shantanu admitted, "Having been captivated by your exquisiteness, I, Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur, have decided to marry you."

"I can accept your proposal provided that you are ready to abide by my two conditions", argued the maiden.

"What are they?" anxiously asked the king.

"Firstly, you will never ask anything about my personal life, like whom I am or where do I come from? Secondly, you will never stop me from doing anything or ask the reason of anything I do."

Shantanu was totally gripped by the maiden's beauty, now known as Ganga, and immediately accepted her conditions. They instantly married (*Gandharva vivah*) each other and returned home.

Things went on quite smoothly for sometime and then queen Ganga gave birth to a lovely boy. As soon as king Shantanu heard of this good news, he was overjoyed and rushed to the palace to congratulate the queen. But he was astonished to see that the queen took the newborn into her arms, went to the river, and drowned him. The king was shocked and felt miserable, yet he could not ask the queen about her action. He was bound by his pledge, not to question or interfere with her actions.

Hardly had Shantanu recovered from the shock of the death of his first son at the hands of the queen when she became expectant again. The king felt happy and thought that the queen would not repeat her dreadful action again. But the queen again took the newborn into her arms, and drowned him in the river.

After seeing the ghastly action of the queen, the king was in immense grief again, but his pledge barred him to say anything.

This continued on until queen Ganga bore the eighth son and marched to the river as before. Shantanu lost his patience and as soon as the queen was about to drown the newborn, Shantanu stopped her. "I have lost seven sons like this and am left with no heir. I can no longer stand to see my flesh and blood decimated before my eyes."



Queen Ganga turned around and said, "Oh King, you have violated your pledge. I will not stay with you any longer. I am Ganga, the goddess of heaven. However before leaving you, I will open the secret that led to the death of your seven sons. Once it so happened that the saint Vasishtha got offended with eight gods known as Vasus. He cursed them to be born as human beings on the earth and undergo the mental torture of being a human. Hearing this, seven of the Vasus implored the saint to be excused but the eighth one, who was the most mischievous, kept standing rudely. "

Vasishtha was appeased and modified his curse, "Seven of you will die and come back to heaven as soon as you are born, but the eighth one will have to live on the earth for a long period and face the tribulations as a human."

Ganga continued, "Upon the request from the Vasus, I assumed the human form and married you. My job is now over and I must now go back to my heavenly abode. I am taking your eighth son with me and will bring him back to you after he is amply grown up."

After saying this, Ganga flew away into the sky along with the newborn. King Shantanu felt very disappointed and returned to his palace with a broken heart.



Many years later, one day Shantanu saw a young and handsome boy who possessed the divine looks of Lord Indra; he was playing by shooting arrows into the river Ganges as if he wanted to stop the flow of its waters. While Shantanu was amazed to see such an unparalleled performance of archery Goddess Ganga appeared before him.

Ganga spoke, "Oh King! Here is your eighth son, Deva Vrata. He has mastered all the Vedas from Sage Vasishtha and Brihaspati (*Guru of devas*), the Shastras from Sukracharya (*Guru of asuras*) and the art of weaponry and archery from Lord Parashurama. I have brought him up in order that he may be able to cope up with what is to befall on him in his life on this earth." Saying this, Ganga blessed her son Deva Vrata and disappeared.

The king happily brought the prince to the palace and celebrated his arrival by declaring him the crown prince of his kingdom. Deva Vrata was brave and looked highly promising.

King Shantanu was getting old and announced his retirement. He was lonely and always missed Ganga. It was one day while he was taking a stroll on the bank of the river Yamuna; he was attracted towards a charming maiden, Satyavati. She

was the daughter of Daashraj, the chief of the fishermen tribe. She used to take the sages across the river on her boat. She had a divine aroma coming out of her body.

Shantanu did not know the secret that circled around Satyavati during her maiden days. Satyavati once had a bad fishy smell on her body. Sage Parashar, one of the sages who she took across the river blessed her with a sweet aroma along with the boon of a son who was named Vyasa. Immediately after birth, Vyasa grew up quickly through his divine powers and left for the forest. Vyasa, however, promised his mother Satyavati that he will come back whenever he was called for. Vyasa, later known as Veda Vyasa, had mastery of the Vedas but was extremely ugly looking and had a horrible smell. Veda Vyasa authored the story of the Mahabharata. In addition, Vyasa played a central role in his story appearing and disappearing on the scene whenever his mother or her family members sought his help. He had rare magical qualities to resolve their problems.

Shantanu, unaware of the secrets of Satyavati's maiden life, was charmed by her beauty. He went to her father, the chief fisherman, and asked him for the hand of his daughter. The chief fisherman placed the condition that the son born of Satyavati will be the successor of the Kaurava (*Kuru*) throne and not Deva Vrata. Shantanu was shocked to hear the condition and returned home disappointed and unhappy. Deva Vrata later discovered the cause of his father's unhappiness and went to Satyavati's father, to advocate his father's position on marrying Satyavati. In return he promised to give up his right to the throne for Satyavati's son.

The chief fisherman thought for a while and showed his further concern by saying, "What about your children? They may not honor your promise?"

Hearing this, Deva Vrata took the terrible vow that he will never marry in his life, for he would remain as a *brahamachari*. From then on he was known as Bheeshma-one who took the terrible vow and firm in it. Bheeshma brought Satyavati on his chariot to the palace and presented her to his father. Shantanu felt shocked when he heard of all that happened. He blessed Bheeshma with the power to choose his day of death.



In due course of time, queen Satyavati became the mother of two princes - Chitrangad and Vichitravirya. After Shantanu's death, Chitrangad succeeded the throne but was killed in a war. Vichitravirya, was then a minor, and was enthroned by Bheeshma as the king of Hastinapur. When Vichitravirya came of age, Bheeshma and queen Satyavati got him married to two princesses of Kashi, Ambika and Ambalika. Unfortunately, Vichitravirya died without a successor.

Bheeshma and Satyawati conferred and decided to call Veda Vyasa. Vyasa arrived in no time. Satyawati explained to him the grave situation that the Kaurava family was facing without an heir. He requested Vyasa to bless Ambika, the elder of the two widows of Vichitravirya, to bless with a son who can succeed the deceased king. Vyasa agreed.

When Vyasa approached Ambika, she was frightened by his ugly face and shut her eyes while the saint uttered the boon. As a result, the son born to Ambika was blind. He was named Dhritarashtra. The queen was disappointed and asked Vyasa to offer the boon to Ambalika, the younger widow. Ambalika could not stand his smell and turned pale out of fear while the saint was uttering the boon. As a result, the child born of Ambalika was pale and was called Pandu, meaning pale.

Queen Satyawati was puzzled, what can be done now? Requesting the saint for another chance, she sent for the elder widow Ambika once more to receive the boon from the saint. Ambika was so scared of the saint that she could not dare to go before him. Instead, without telling her mother-in-law, Ambika sent her maid to the saint. The maid remained fearless and greeted the saint, Veda Vyasa, with great devotion. Feeling happy, the saint gave her a boon and she bore a perfect child called Vidur.

In course of time, Pandu ascended the throne as his elder brother Dhritarashtra was blind and Vidur became the prime minister due to his sagacity and distinguished talent. Dhritarashtra married Gandhari, the princess of Gandhar in Beluchistan, (*today's Pakistan*). When Gandhari came to know that her husband is blind, she, as a true wife, sharing the emotions of her husband, bandaged her eyes permanently with a cloth.

During the time of Pandu, the kingdom of the Kurus expanded far and wide. Pandu was married twice, first to Kunti (*the paternal aunt of Lord Krishna*) and then to Madri, the princess of Madra.

Later one day, when Pandu was hunting in the forest, he shot an arrow at a pair of sporting deers who were actually a sage and his wife in disguise. Before dying, the sage cursed Pandu that he will die instantly when he will touch any of his wives. Pandu was shocked. He decided to retire to the forest leaving the kingdom in the hands of Dhritarashtra and grandfather Bheeshma. There was no heir to the throne since none of the brothers had any children.

Pandu and his two wives went to the forest to lead the life of an ascetic.

In Hastinapur, Gandhari called Veda Vyasa and requested him the boon to bear one hundred sons and a daughter. Veda Vyasa very kindly agreed but informed

Gandhari that it will take some time before they arrive. Gandhari was in no rush since she knew that Pandu could not have any children because of the sage's curse. However, things turned out differently.

One day in the forest, Kunti said to Pandu, "When I was a young maid, sage Durvasa came to my father's house. I served the sage devotionally and, as a result, the sage blessed me with a *mantra* through which I could invoke any god I desire to get a son. The *mantra*, however, can be used only five times."

Pandu was very happy. Kunti, however, did not disclose to Pandu that she has already used the *mantra* once. This happened when, after receiving the *mantra*, she became impatient to use it without comprehending the consequences. She called the sun god and was blessed with a son who was naturally bedecked with a *kavacha* (armor) and *kundals* (earrings). Now she realized that she had become an unwed mother. For fear of infamy, she put the newborn into a basket and set it afloat the river Ganga. A charioteer, who was childless, luckily discovered the basket. He brought up the abandoned child who was later called Karna.



Pandu requested Kunti to call for Dharma, the god of righteousness. Kunti was blessed with Pandu's first son Yudhishtira. The news of the birth of first child reached Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. Gandhari was disturbed that she cannot be the mother of the future king. She immediately called Vyasa and requested him to force the birth of her hundred sons. Through his magical powers Vyasa shortened the waiting period and hundred sons of Dhritarashtra emerged along with a daughter Dushala. Duryodhan was the eldest son while Dushasana was the second. Gandhari was not happy that, in spite of her best efforts, Pandu's first son Yudhishtira would be the true heir to the throne and not her eldest son, Duryodhana.

In order to strengthen the Kuru dynasty, Pandu requested Kunti for getting more children. Kunti called the wind god Pavan and Bhima, the second son was born. Indra, the king of gods blessed Kunti with the third son, Arjuna. Madri was still childless. Pandu requested Kunti to pass on the *mantra* to Madri so that she can have a child. Madri called the twin- gods, Ashwins and was blessed with two sons, Nakula and Sahadeva.

Thus Pandu had five sons, Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. These five worthy children of Pandu were called Pandavas. They grew up strong and well behaved. The sages in the forest taught them the teachings of the Vedas.

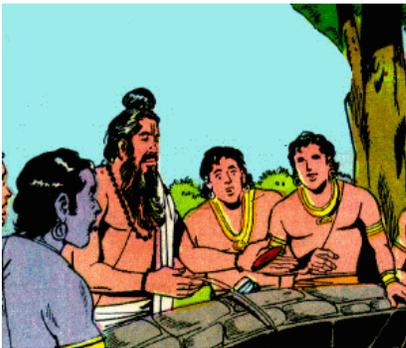
On one spring morning, Pandu was strolling on the riverside along with Madri. He forgot all about the sage's curse and unknowingly touched Madri when he died instantly. Madri died too. The sages in the forest took Kunti and the Pandavas to Hastinapur and entrusted the children to Bheeshma. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, was only sixteen years old at the time. The Pandavas, the sons of Pandu, now joined their cousins, Kauravas, the sons of Dhritarashtra.

All the cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas grew up together under the affectionate care of their grandfather Bheeshma. Although equal attention was paid to both the Kaurava and the Pandava princes, the Pandava brothers excelled their cousins in many ways, and this sowed the seeds of jealousy in the mind of the Kaurava brothers. The relations between the Kauravas and the Pandavas were not amicable. Especially, Duryodhan, the eldest of the Kauravas hated the Pandava – Bhima, in particular, who had the strength of one thousand elephants. Duryodhan tried many methods to kill Bhima but in vain.

As the Pandavas and the Kauravas grew they were entrusted to Kripacharya for their education and training in war games. Kripacharya in his childhood days, known as Kripa, came to King Shantanu - Bheeshma's father, along with his sister Kripi, as orphans from a Brahmin family. Shantanu was a kind-hearted person. He raised Kripa and Kripi with best care. Kripa, through his best effort became a master in martial art and was then known as Kripacharya. His sister Kripi was married to Drona, the son of sage Bharadwaj.

Sage Bharadwaj was the best archer of his time. He personally trained his son Drona. He also ran a school to teach martial arts to the princes. Prince Drupada of Panchala was a student of Sage Bharadwaja. In *gurukula*, Drona became a close friend of prince Drupada who promised Drona that he would share his kingdom with him when he became king of Panchala. But when Drupada became king, he forgot all about his childhood promises to Drona.

After the death of Bharadwaj, Drona took over his father's responsibilities and was known as Dronacharya. In those days, an ideal teacher provided free education to all of his students and was satisfied with the honor showered by his students and the community. As a result, he stayed poor in meeting his daily needs unless some royalty provided financial support. Drona was no exception. He had a son named Ashwatthama whom he loved dearly. One day Dronacharya witnessed that his playmates mocked his son because he was poor. He decided to go to his former schoolmate Drupada for financial help. Drupada, drowned in his royalty,



ignored his childhood promises to Drona. He insulted Drona in his open court. Drona took the vow in his mind that one day he will get even with Drupada and left the court in rage. He then visited Hastinapur.

One day when the princes of Hastinapur were playing with a ball, the ball as well as the ring of Yudhishtira fell into a well. The princes were puzzled as to how to get them out of the well. Drona who was passing by came forward. After chanting some *mantras*, he threw a blade of grass into the well. Like an arrow, the blade



pierced the ball. He then threw another blade, which got stuck to the first one. In this way, Drona threw many blades of grass, one after another, and made a long chain. When the uppermost end of the chain reached the edge of the well, he pulled that end and took out the ball from the well. Drona then retrieved Yudhishtira's ring with a bow and arrow. Seeing this miracle, the princes stood there

speechless. They then reported this incident to their grandfather Bheeshma. Hearing the princes, Bheeshma called Dronacharya. He knew that Dronacharya had acquired all the divine knowledge of weapons from Lord Parashurama. He immediately appointed Drona as the teacher of archery and of weaponry for the princes. Drona was very pleased with his position that considerably improved the economic condition of his family. He began to instruct the princes with great care and love. He was confident that his royal disciples will one day help him to defeat Drupada, and he will be able to fulfill his vow of getting even with him.

Of all the disciples, Drona loved Arjuna the most. He was most skillful. One day Dronacharya organized a test for his disciples. All the disciples were asked to cast an arrow in the eye of a wooden bird hung on a tree. No one was able to do it except Arjuna. When Dronacharya asked Arjuna, "Arjuna, what do you see?" "I see the eye of the bird," replied Arjuna. "Any thing else," asked the *guru* again. "Only the eye and nothing else," said Arjuna and at the order of his *guru* he cast the arrow from his bow which struck the pupil of the bird's eye. Drona was very pleased and promised Arjuna that he would make him the best archer in the world. The already



jealous Duryodhan and his brothers despised the Pandavas more. Duryodhan made a resolution to do away with the Pandavas to pave his way to the kingship of Hastinapur.



One day a young boy named Ekalavya, who lives in the forest, came to Drona and requested Drona to take him as his disciple. Drona was committed only to the royal princes of Kuru dynasty. Thus, Drona refused to take Ekalavya as his disciple. Ekalavya was disappointed but he did not lose his hope. He made a statue of Drona and considering him as his *guru*, practiced archery daily. Through his devotion and constant practice, Ekalavya excelled in the game of archery.

One day the Kuru princes went hunting into the jungle where Ekalavya lived. Their hunting dog strayed from the party and saw Ekalavya. It began to bark while Ekalavya was busy with his practice of archery. Ekalavya shot a volley of arrows at the dog such that it corked its open mouth. The dog ran back to the royal party and the princes were amazed to see its plight. They all came to Ekalavya, along with Drona, in order to identify the person who has surpassed them in the art of archery.

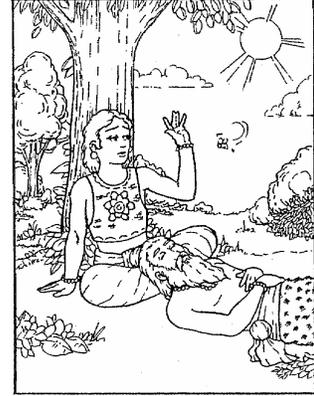
Seeing Drona, Ekalavya fell at the feet of his *guru*. Drona was highly pleased by his devotion and diligence. Drona asked Ekalavya for his right thumb as *guru dakshina*. Readily Ekalavya cut the right thumb with a knife and placed it at his *guru*'s feet. Drona was very impressed and blessed Ekalavya. At the same time, he kept his promise to Arjuna.

The princes completed their education and training in arms and warfare. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, who believed in ideals of justice, truth and righteousness is said to be a reincarnation of Dharma; he became well-versed in wielding spear. Bhima who was huge and strong became skillful in wielding club. Arjuna became a great warrior and a master in archery. Nakula became an expert in training horses and Sahadeva, who was proficient in astrology but never predicted anything unless he was asked to, became well-known in swordsmanship.

When the princes had completed their training, grandsire Bheeshma arranged for a tournament in order to demonstrate their sportsmanship. Various dignitaries were present to witness the grand event. Each prince came into the arena and displayed his skills in the use of arms. After the individual display of skills in arms, mimic combats between princes took place. Finally, Arjuna surprised everyone by his feats of archery. His magical arrows caused fire, water, wind and much more and at the end he made them to disappear.

When the tournament was about to complete, Karna arrived on the scene. No one knew that he was the illegitimate child of Kunti raised by a charioteer. Karna had learnt archery from Lord Parashurama.

(Lord Parashurama hated warriors since his father and Sage Jamadagni was killed by kshatriyas. So he taught only Brahmins. Karna approached Lord Parashurama, made a false declaration and introduced himself as a Brahmin, and learnt archery from him. Parashurama was impressed by Karna's sharp intelligence and skills and also taught him how to use the Brahmastra. One day, Parashurama fell asleep with his head in Karna's lap. Suddenly, a wasp stung Karna on his thigh and the wound started bleeding. But he did not move. He did not want to disturb his guru's peaceful sleep. As soon as the blood touched Parashurama's head, he woke up. He now knew that a man with such a great power of endurance could not be a Brahmin. Furious Parashurama interrogated Karna who revealed his identity and also apologized to his guru. But, Parasurama was not pacified. He cursed Karna: "You lied to me in order to learn archery. At the time, when you need it most, you will forget how to use the astras." This curse took effect during his last moments in Kurukshetra war.)



Karna said that he could perform all the feats and even more than what Arjuna did. Duryodhan was delighted, ran and embraced Karna. Duryodhan was happy that he had found a match for his rival Arjuna. Kunti who was witnessing the event recognized Karna with his *kavacha* and *kundals*. She was stunned and did not know what to do. Without knowing that Arjuna was his own brother, Karna challenged Arjuna.

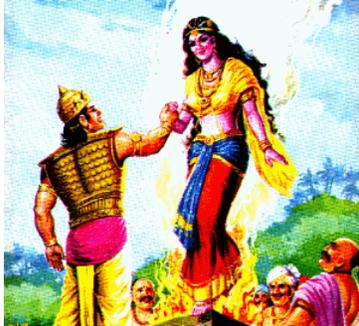
But Kripacharya objected: "The competition is meant for royal princes only and is not open to ordinary people."

Hearing the objection, Duryodhan offered Karna the state of Anga, making him a prince. At this moment, Karna saw his father Adhiratha, the charioteer, on the scene. He ran, knelt down and touched his father's feet. Adhiratha was happy to see his son as honored. Seeing this, the puzzled and amused Pandavas murmured: "the son of a charioteer seeks combat with a descendant of Great Bharata". The enraged Karna kept quiet. The day was over and the tournament ended. Karna made up his mind to teach Arjuna a lesson one day, to prove that he was a better archer. Duryodhan was extremely happy that he had found a friend against the Pandavas.

All were satisfied that the Kauravas and the Pandavas had attained the high proficiency in arms and war craft. The royal princes came to Drona to pay respect and pay *guru dakshina* (teacher's reward). Drona asked them to capture Drupada, the king of Panchal, and bring him as a prisoner. First of all, the Kauravas

marched against Panchala but they returned defeated by the enemy forces. Then the Pandavas turn came and they successfully brought Drupada to Drona as a captive.

Drona reminded Drupada of the insults he inflicted on him and said, "Drupada, now that I have conquered your kingdom, I am the king. But I still seek your friendship and to be friends we have to be equals, right? So, as a friend I am giving you half the kingdom, have it".



Drupada was embarrassed and infuriated by Dronacharya's insults. He performed a *Yagna* (fire worship) so devotedly and asked the gods to bless him with a son who could kill Dronacharya and a daughter who would marry Arjuna. The gods granted him the boon that a boy and a girl sprung out of the fire. The boy was named Dhrishtadyumna and the girl, Draupadi.

The Conspiracy

The Pandavas were superior to the Kauravas in every respect, both in strength and intelligence. They were greatly appreciated for their innate noble qualities. Bheeshma advised Dhritarashtra to declare Yudhishtira as the crown prince of Hastinapur since he was the eldest and was endowed with fine qualities of a king.

Duryodhan's jealousy and hatred for the Pandavas increased after hearing that Yudhishtira would be declared the crown prince. One day he approached his father Dhritarashtra and said, "Father, if Yudhishtira is crowned the King of Hastinapur, what will happen to us and our children? How can we, the sons of the king, be dependant on the hated Pandavas? I am the son of the king, I must be king too."

Dhritarashtra said, "My child, do not grieve. Though I am the monarch, this land was conquered for me by my brother Pandu who won the heart of everyone by his gentleness and charm. His son Yudhishtira is just like him. If anything should happen to him, we will be blamed."

Duryodhan said, "Father, I agree that Yudhishtira is loved by the people. However, if you send the Pandavas to the annual Pashupati fair (*a celebration in honor of Lord Shiva*) in Varanavata (*a place far away from Hastinapur*) and let them stay there for sometime, I will try and win the love of the people. After all, in a year's time, people will forget Yudhishtira. They will learn to love me."

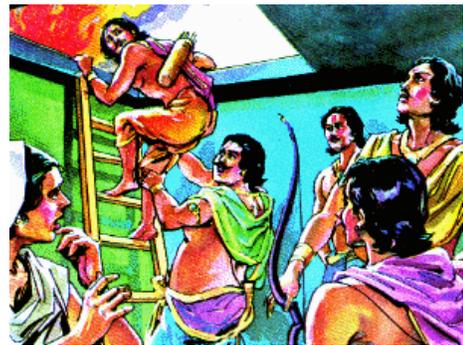
Dhritarashtra loved his eldest son, Duryodhan very much. He agreed to his son's idea and asked the Pandavas to attend the fair. They conceded to their uncle's wish and made preparation for their journey to Varanavata. Kunti, their mother also wished to accompany them.

On the other hand, Duryodhan along with his maternal uncle Shakuni, planned to kill the Pandavas during their stay at Varanavata so that he can ascend the throne of Hastinapur. He secretly ordered his trusted partner Purochana, to make a special palace, with highly inflammable materials, for the Pandavas. His heinous plan was to burn the Pandavas alive while sleeping. According to the plan, Purochana would guard the palace and would put it on fire on a dark night.

However, when the Pandavas and Kunti bade farewell to all the elders, Vidur, uncle of the Pandavas, and their well wisher, came to know of Duryodhan's heinous plan and secretly alerted Yudhishtira. Vidur said to Yudhishtira in *Mlecha Bhasha*, a dialect known to very few people, "The one who knows beforehand the plot of a clever enemy can alone escape the danger of death." "The fire which can reduce the whole forest to ashes, cannot even touch the mouse hiding in its hole under the ground," he added. Yudhishtira understood what Vidur said.

On their way to Varanavata, Yudhishtira told his brothers and mother Kunti about the evil designs of Duryodhan. Purochana had got a palace built at Varanavata for the Pandavas and Kunti to stay. As soon as they arrived at the palace, the Pandava brothers closely examined the house. They found it was built of inflammable materials like wax, ghee etc. They pretended as if they knew nothing and waited for the right opportunity to escape. Meanwhile, Vidur sent a miner to Varanavata to secretly dig an escape tunnel from the palace. The tunnel would lead into a nearby dense forest, an area easy enough for the Pandavas to hide.

One day a secret agent of Vidur came and told the Pandavas that the following dark night was planned by Purochana to burn the palace. The Pandavas decided to escape the night before that. Bhima set the house on fire, and then the Pandavas and Kunti escaped through the tunnel into the forest. At the site of the massive conflagration, the people of Varanavata came rushing to extinguish the fire. However, the highly flammable palace burnt to ashes quickly. Everyone thought that the Pandavas were burnt in the fire. Soon, the news reached Hastinapur. Dhritarashtra and Bheeshma were shocked to hear the news.



Duryodhan was elated to hear it, but outwardly acted to be sad.

After many miles of walk through the forest, the Pandava brothers and mother Kunti laid down under a banyan tree, hungry and thirsty. Bhima went to get the water but when he came back, he saw everyone in deep sleep. Bhima stayed awake to guard them.

The forest was a hunting reserve of a fearful demon called Hidimb. He lived with his sister Hidimba on a huge tree, near the place where the Pandavas were resting. As soon as Hidimb smelled the presence of humans, he asked his sister Hidimba to kill them for their dinner. Hidimba reached the place and saw Bhima guarding the Pandavas. Seeing Bhima, she instantly fell in love with him. So she transformed herself into a beautiful maiden and approached Bhima. On Hidimba's inquiry Bhima explained the reason for his family to hide in the forest. Hidimba sympathized and promised to help them. In the meantime, Hidimb got impatient and came down from the tree in search of his sister. When he saw his sister in the form of a woman talking to Bhima, he became furious. He attacked Hidimba and Bhima instantly. Bhima pulled him away to a distance so that his family could rest. A terrible fight ensued. Finally Hidimb was killed by Bhima.

When the family of Pandavas got up, Kunti noticed a beautiful maiden standing near Bhima. She inquired and Hidimba explained what had just happened. She further requested Kunti to permit if her son Bhima would like to marry her. Hidimba promised to return Bhima to the Pandavas after the birth of a child. Kunti and her four sons were impressed by Hidimba and agreed to accept her as Bhima's wife. Bhima agreed too.

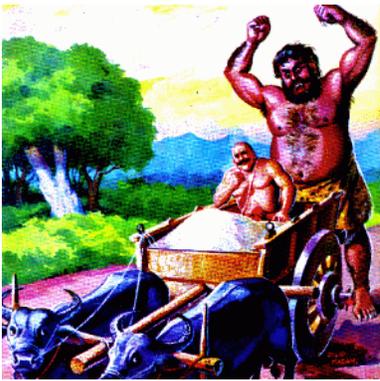
Hidimba and Bhima got married. In course of time, a child was born to them. The child was named Ghatotkacha. Sooner or later, Bhima returned to his family.

After some time of hiding in the forest, the Pandavas began to plan to leave the forest when Veda Vyasa arrived. He consoled the Pandavas and assured them that justice will finally avail. He advised them to have patience and to endure their current hardship. On the advice of Veda Vyasa, Kunti and her five sons went to a nearby town, called Ekachakra. They stayed with a Brahmin family, disguised as Brahmins. The Pandavas lived on begging alms and chanting prayers. Whatever they would get as alms was divided into two equal halves. One half was given to Bhima and the other half was shared by Kunti and other four brothers.

One day, while Kunti was resting at noon, she heard wailings inside the Brahmin's house where they were staying. Considering it to be a part of their duty to stand beside their host at the time of adversity, Kunti went to inquire of their misery.

The Brahmin told the horror story that this village was bothered by a demon called Bakasur who was living in the nearby forest. When he came into the town of Ekachakra, he was killing people at random and destroying the village. Finally the citizens of the town made a deal with Bakasur that every day they will send to him a cartload of food drawn by two buffaloes, driven by a person drawn by lot. Bakasur will eat the food, the buffaloes and the driver. Kunti immediately guessed that it must be the turn of the host-family that day to send a driver. To the surprise of all, Kunti offered her help.

With Bhima in her mind, she said to the Brahmin-host, "I have five children and I will send one of them to meet the demon. He is strong enough to kill the demon and free the town from his clutch forever. The only request that I will make is to keep it a secret and not to reveal our identity."



Bhima set out in a bullock-cart filled with food for Bakasur and soon reached the cave where he lived. Being very hungry, Bhima sat there and started eating Bakasur's food. Bakasur came out and saw Bhima eating his food. He got furious and attacked Bhima. Bhima was not at all affected by this attack. After finishing all the food that he had brought, Bhima got up and confronted the demon. A fearful fight soon ensued and finally Bakasur was killed. Bhima dragged his body to the entrance of the town and left it there for the people to witness.

The citizens of Ekachakra saw the dead body of Bakasur and rejoiced to their heart's content.

Later on, while at Ekachakra, the Pandavas heard that Drupad, the king of Panchal, was holding a swayamvara for the wedding of his daughter Draupadi. A large number of Brahmins were going to Panchala to see the swayamvara and receive gifts. The five brothers also decided to go to Panchala and win Draupadi. They already had heard of the heavenly beauty of her. They and Kunti, mingling with the group of Panchala-going brahmins, reached and stayed there in the house of a potter as ordinary brahmins.

Pandavas marry Draupadi and return to Hastinapur

On the day of swayamvara the Pandavas reached the royal court disguised as brahmins. At the swayamvara assembly, the Pandavas were next to other Brahmins, away from the royal dignitaries. No one in the assembly recognized the Pandavas except Krishna and Balarama. Kings, princes and ministers from all over

the country and abroad had come to take part in the swayamvara. Duryodhan, Dusshasan and Karna had also come from Hastinapur. Krishna and Balarama came from Dwaraka.

At the appropriate time, king Drupad greeted and honored all the participants and announced that his daughter Draupadi was going to enter the venue. Amidst the sounds of bugles, drums and melodious music, princess Draupadi, accompanied by her brother Dhrishtadyumna, entered the swayamvara hall. As soon she entered, all eyes turned to her. She looked like a heavenly nymph.

Within a short while, Dhrishtadyumna addressing the gathering said, "Honorable princes, you can see a golden fish fixed on a revolving wheel on the top of a pole in the middle of the pool. The competitor, who hits the eye of the fish while looking at its reflection in the water below, shall win the hands of my sister Draupadi."

A bow with five arrows had been placed on the stage for the feat.

The event began and a number of princes came forward and tried their luck one after another. But none of them were successful. One by one, they returned to their seats with a fallen face.

When Karna's turn came Draupadi spoke out. She refused to marry Karna for lack of royal lineage. Karna was the son of a charioteer. Karna returned to his seat dejectedly.

Drupad and Dhrishtadyumna were getting worried since all of the princes present at the function had failed. Finally, Arjuna, in the disguise of a Brahmin got up and advanced towards the stage. People were amazed to see a Brahmin challenging the valiant princes.

"He must have gone crazy!" remarked one of the Brahmins.

Staying calm and composed, Arjuna picked up the bow and arrow. He looked down at the reflection of the fish in the pool and drew the cord of the bow and shot the arrow. In a flash, the arrow darted with a twang and pierced the eye of the fish. Draupadi gladly put the garland she was holding in her hands round Arjuna's neck.

People could not believe that a Brahmin could master the



skill of archery better than any prince could.

The princes felt insulted and came forward to fight with Arjuna. Bheema uprooted a nearby pillar and stood firmly next to Arjuna. Finally, Krishna stepped in and asked the frustrated princes to take their failure gracefully and the fighting stopped.

The Pandavas returned home with Draupadi as Arjuna's wife. Kunti was waiting for them thinking that her five sons will return home soon with their daily collection of alms.

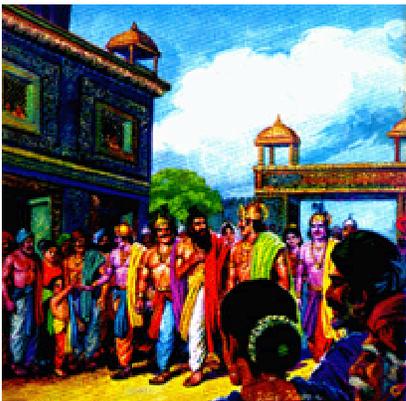
One of the Pandavas spoke after reaching home, "Look mother what have we brought for you today!"

Kunti was inside and did not see what her son was talking about. So she casually said without looking to them, "Divide it equally among you." But soon she noticed Draupadi and felt highly embarrassed at what she had said. She repented, "My sons, I was under an impression that you had brought something special by way of alms from some charitable wealthy person. That is why I directed you to share it equally."

Once spoken, Kunti's words could not be taken back and her dedicated five sons took Draupadi as their common wife. Draupadi accepted. She soon knew that the five brothers were the Pandavas.

After the swayamvara, Dhrishtadyumna, Draupadi's brother, stealthily followed the five Brahmin brothers and found out their identities. Happily he returned home and informed his father Drupada that they were none but the Pandavas. The royal family immediately decided to throw a party in celebration. During the celebration, the identities of the Pandavas were revealed and King Drupad became their close allies.

News reached Hastinapur. Bheeshma advised Dhritarashtra to give half of the kingdom to the Pandavas. Duryodhana did not like this idea but kept quiet and waited for the next opportunity to wipe off the Pandavas.



Dhritarashtra sent Vidur, the Prime Minister, to king Drupada for the return of the Pandavas to Hastinapur. Pandavas agreed and they proudly returned to Hastinapur along with Kunti and Draupadi. Upon their arrival, a grand welcome was accorded to the princes whom people believed to

have died in the fair. They were delighted to see them and joined the celebration.

The Pandavas touched the feet of all the elders, Bheeshma, Dhritarashtra, Vidur, Dronacharya and others, and were happy to be back. Dhritarashtra, in consultation with other members of the cabinet, decided to divide the kingdom. Dhritarashtra gave Hastinapur to his own sons and an area known as Khandavprastha to the Pandavas to settle. Yudhishtira, modest and accommodating as he was, accepted the offer and proceeded to Khandavprastha, with his brothers. Khandavprastha was once the capital city of their ancestors. It was later abandoned and had become barren land and forest. With the help of Krishna, Balarama and their own skills, Pandavas cleared the forest, built a strong fort and called the new city as Indraprastha (*present day New Delhi, the capital of India*).

Indraprastha took the shape of a beautiful township with an impressive palace. People were happy and loved their king, Yudhishtira.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, Sage Narada advised the Pandavas to draw up a code of conduct whereby each brother was to live with Draupadi in complete privacy. If this was interrupted, the violator was to go into exile for a period of twelve years.

Everything was going smooth until one day, a Brahmin came wailing bitterly to Arjuna. Thieves had stolen his cows. Arjuna consoled and promised to go after the thieves. But he suddenly realized that his weapons were left in Draupadi's bedchamber and Yudhishtira was there at that time. Arjuna was in a dilemma. But he chose to violate the code and go for the exile instead of falling short in his promises to the Brahmin. He knocked the door, begged excuse, picked up his bow and arrow, and went after the thieves.

Arjuna returned after restoring the cows to the Brahmin. Then he came straight to his elder brother Yudhishtira and apologized for breaking the code.

Arjuna said, "I am guilty of violating our mutually agreed arrangement and now I seek your permission to go into exile for twelve years."

Yudhishtira tried to persuade Arjuna to change his mind by arguing that he entered the private room in order to protect his subject and not for any personal reason. But Arjuna insisted to obey the rules laid down by Sage Narada without making any exception and soon left for the forest.

Arjuna's exile for twelve years

From Indraprastha, Arjuna first went to the Himalayas and passed his time in the company of sages, attending their discourses and performing the religious rituals.

One day Ulupi, daughter of the Naga king, who was the ruler of the serpent world under water, saw Arjuna engaged in his religious pursuits. Arjuna's handsome personality always attracted the damsels. Ulupi was no exception. She immediately fell in love and decided to abduct Arjuna and marry him. So, when Arjuna went for a bath in the river, she grabbed him and took him to her father's under water palace. Arjuna was puzzled by the abduction and asked Ulupi about her intentions.

Ulupi explained, "I am the princess of the Naga kingdom. I am sorry for the inconvenience caused to you. I have brought you here to make you my husband. You have no way to escape."

Arjuna had no choice. He accepted the proposal offered by Ulupi and stayed with her for a while. Then one day Arjuna appealed to Ulupi the reason for his inability to continue staying with her when he was expected to travel during his period of exile. Ulupi agreed and returned Arjuna to the surface. Before bidding him farewell, she gave Arjuna a boon of protection from the bite of any water creature.

Arjuna then went on a long journey towards the east and finally reached Manipur. Chitravahana was then the king of Manipur. He accorded him a warm welcome and Arjuna decided to stay with him for a while. Chitravahana had a beautiful daughter, Chitrangada. Arjuna decided to marry her. So he asked Chitravahana for Chitrangada's hand in marriage. Chitravahana was happy, but he put a condition for the marriage.

"Chitrangada is my only child and I do not have an heir to continue my dynasty. So, I have decided to adopt her son. If you plan to marry Chitrangada, you must give me her son who will be the crown prince of my kingdom."

Arjuna accepted the condition and married Chitrangada. Finally, a son was born after three years whom Chitravahana adopted. Then Arjuna continued his journey, as expected, leaving Chitrangada in Manipur.

After leaving Manipur, Arjuna moved southward reaching the seashore close to the present pilgrimage center of Puri in state of Orissa. There he was once again in the company of sages and saints.

One day, the sages complained to Arjuna that the nearby waters were infested with ferocious crocodiles. They had to go a long way to other back waters in order to take a bath. Arjuna promised to do away with the crocodiles. Mindful of Ulupi's boon, Arjuna jumped into the waters to kill the crocodiles. Soon a huge crocodile caught his leg and Arjuna promptly dragged the crocodile out of the water. To his utter surprise, the crocodile was instantaneously transformed into a heavenly nymph.



Arjuna asked, "Who are you?"

The nymph answered, "Long ago, my four friends and I were playing in water and offended a sage. The sage cursed us to become crocodiles and stay in water forever. We apologized and begged for mercy. The sage took pity on us and toned the curse down by saying that we would be rescued many years later when a virtuous warrior would pull us out of the water. We would then be transformed into our true self. So, please be kind to rescue my other four friends also."

Arjuna agreed and one by one pulled out the remaining four crocodiles. Like the previous one, they also got back into their real form of heavenly maidens. They all thanked Arjuna heartily for liberating them; they then departed to their heavenly abode.

After a while, Arjuna headed towards Prabhasa, to spend time in meditation. Prabhasa is a place of pilgrimage located on the west coast of India, near Dwaraka (*Gujarat state*). Then he decided to move to Dwaraka and stay with Krishna, his best friend and cousin. Krishna's elder brother Balarama gave a warm welcome to Arjuna and Arjuna stayed in Dwaraka for few days.

One day Arjuna caught sight of Subhadra, Krishna's sister, and fell in love with her. Balarama, however, had chosen Duryodhana (*who was his disciple and learned clubmanship*) as Subhadra's future husband. When Krishna foresaw the situation, he indirectly suggested Arjuna to elope with Subhadra, saying, "A Kshatriya like you never begs to win his lady-love. He wins her hand by force."



Arjuna got the clue. He borrowed Krishna's chariot and took Subhadra away when she was returning from the temple. Balarama flew into a

rage and burst out at Krishna. "It is disgraceful to tolerate the misdoing of Arjuna, your best friend. I could never imagine that a royal guest like him will return our favor by this mean act." Balarama was even ready to go after Arjuna and give a fight against him.

Krishna heard the allegations carefully and spoke in a pacifying mood.

"Brother Balarama, isn't it a pride for us to be related to the Pandavas? They will be our strong allies. Arjuna is invincible, and if we are defeated, it will be more disgraceful. I will suggest that we honorably call Arjuna back and arrange for a royal marriage between Subhadra and Arjuna."

Balarama comprehended the gravity of the situation and realized the odds of winning a fight against Arjuna. Thus, he soon arranged for their royal marriage. Later Arjuna moved to Pushkar, near modern Ajmer (*state of Rajasthan*). Here he spent the rest of his period of exile.

After the completion of the exile period, Arjuna returned to Indraprastha with Subhadra. As Arjuna went to see Yudhishtira to pay his respect, Subhadra went to see Kunti and touched her feet with great reverence. Draupadi was quite upset in the beginning but Subhadra's humility won her heart in no time.



Balarama and Krishna came to Indraprastha to join the celebration of Arjuna's return and strengthening their ties with the Pandavas as their in-laws. After few days Balarama returned to Dwaraka and Krishna chose to stay behind.

In due course of time, Subhadra gave birth to a lovely son who was named Abhimanyu. Draupadi gave birth to five sons - one from each of her husband. Gradually the princes of the Pandavas grew up to their manhood as strong as their parents and uncles and everyone was proud of them.

SABHA PARVA

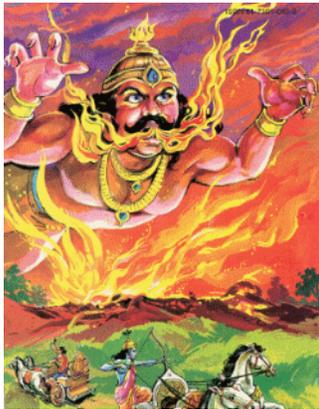
Rajasuya Yajna of Yudhishtira

One day, while Krishna and Arjuna were talking under a tree in the thick Khandava forest near Indraprastha, a Brahmin approached and requested for their help.

"How can we help you?" asked Krishna.

The Brahmin replied, "I am Agni, the fire-god. I wish to consume the Khandava forest. I tried to accomplish this task by myself several times, but Indra, the god of weather, protects the Khandava forest. As soon as I try to burn the forest, Indra pours rain and I am extinguished. I need your help to stall Indra until I am done consuming the Khandava forest."

Krishna and Arjuna agreed to help Agni. However, they did not have any celestial weapon to fight Indra. They told Agni of their limitations. Then Agni, through his divine powers, produced the celestial weapons that Krishna and Arjuna needed.



When everything was ready, Agni ignited the forest and in no time the entire forest was in flame. Indra was promptly informed and he rushed with his army to protect the Khandava forest. Krishna and Arjuna successfully kept Indra's army at bay. Suddenly Krishna saw a demon running out of the forest and Agni was chasing him. The demon sought Arjuna's asylum. The fire-god turned back and left him with Arjuna. Finally, Agni was satisfied. He thanked Krishna and Arjuna and returned to heaven.

When Agni left, the demon introduced himself to Krishna and Arjuna. "I am Maya (=illusion), the architect of demons. I possess a miraculous skill in architecture. Allow me to do something for you in return for saving my life", he said.

Krishna asked Maya to build a palace for King Yudhishtira, which would be the best on the earth. Maya gladly agreed. He constructed a unique palace with extraordinary optical illusions that it was very difficult to differentiate between a pond of water and the crystal floor. The Pandavas were thrilled to see the magnificent palace and thanked Maya for his efforts. At an auspicious time, the Pandavas entered the palace and began to live there.

One day Sage Narada visited Pandavas and advised Yudhishtira to perform Rajasuya Yajna. The Pandavas, in consultation with Krishna, decided to perform the Yajna. One of the conditions of the Rajasuya Yajna is that the neighboring kingdoms must accept the supremacy of the performer, the Pandavas. The only one who objected to this was Jarasandha, the ruler of Magadh.

Jarasandha had imprisoned many kings and occupied their kingdoms by defeating them on a duel. He was blessed by Lord Shiva and was practically invincible.

The story says that Jarasandha's father had no child for a long time. One day, a sage gave him a fruit and said, "Ask your wife to eat the fruit and she will soon

have a child." But Jarasandha's father had two wives. He had to be fair to both and so he split the fruit, giving one half to each wife. As a result, his wives gave birth to a son, each with half the body. The king ordered to throw the babies in a heap of garbage. A demoness named Jara who was looking for some flesh to eat picked up the babies; the moment she touched them, the two halves were joined together and there was one complete baby. She went to the king and gave him the baby. This baby came to be known as Jarasandha – the one who was joined by Jara, the demoness.

So the only way Jarasandha could be killed was to tear him apart and no one was strong enough to do that. However, Krishna knew the secret of killing Jarasandha.

Krishna, Arjuna and Bhima disguised themselves as Brahmins and went to see Jarasandha. Jarasandha received them cordially and with respect; and asked the Brahmins what they would like to have as alms from him. But, later, he got his own suspicion and it was confirmed when they asked a duel with one of them as alms. The three disclosed their identities. On being challenged, Jarasandha chose to fight with Bhima, whom he considered his equal in strength.



The fight between Bhima and Jarasandha continued for many days and finally when Jarasandha was getting tired, Krishna gestured to Bhima to tear Jarasandha's body apart into two pieces. Bhima hurled Jarasandha on the ground, caught him by his leg and tore him apart into two pieces. Bhima thought that Jarasandha was dead. But the two pieces joined together and Jarasandha continued his fight with Bhima. Bhima was puzzled and looked at Krishna for help. Krishna took a piece of grass in hand, split it vertically and threw the two pieces in opposite directions. Bhima understood Krishna's hint. Once again, he tore Jarasandha's body apart and threw the two pieces in opposite directions. Thus, Jarasandha was dead. All the kings were released from prison. They thanked Krishna and Bhima for saving their lives. They became friends of the Pandavas and accepted their supremacy. Jarasandha's son, Sahadev succeeded the throne of Magadh and became one of the strong allies of the Pandavas.

Later, Yudhishtira sent his brothers to the four directions of Bharatavarsha to conquer the kingdoms there. Almost all the kings accepted the supremacy of Yudhishtira. Those kings who opposed them were defeated. Thereafter, preparations for Rajasuya Yajna were made.

All kings, including the Kauravas and the royal family from Hastinapur came to attend the Rajasuya Yajna. The fire worship was completed with great enthusiasm. As a part of the completion of the yajna one of the guests should be honored first. Krishna was chosen as the first guest of honor by Bheeshma and all the dignitaries agreed. As per Yudhishtira's instruction Sahadeva washed Krishna's feet, worshipped him and honored him with gifts. The only one who was not happy of Krishna's presence was Sishupal, Krishna's cousin and king of Chedi. He was jealous of Krishna. Sishupal's mother knew of her son's shortcomings and Krishna's power. So, she made Krishna promise that he will not take any action against her son until Sishupal insulted Krishna more than one hundred times. Sishupal publicly insulted Krishna at the ceremony in spite of Bheeshma's request to stop. Krishna stayed calm until the insults exceeded one hundred times. Then Krishna cut his head off with his Sudarshana chakra (disc).

Following the great ceremony, all the guests left with a great appreciation of the Pandavas. But Duryodhana and his maternal uncle Shakuni extended their stay as special royal guests in order to enjoy the grandeur of the beautiful palace of Yudhishtira. The palace was full of illusionary things. One day as Duryodhan was walking round the palace, he mistook the crystal-clear pavement for water and



pulled up his clothes. On his way, he mistook a wall made of transparent glass for the doorway and got hit against it when tried to walk through it. As he went a little further, he mistook the pond for the pavement floor and fell into the water. Seeing this, Draupadi laughed at him. Duryodhana was greatly ashamed and embarrassed. It further fanned the smoldering fire of jealousy in Duryodhan's heart. His jealousy and hatred became boundless. He said to Shakuni, "Uncle, I cannot bear the prosperity of the Pandavas. I feel like attacking them and take away all their wealth."

"I know a way they can be ripped off and sent to exile without any war," replied Shakuni in his cunning voice.

Duryodhana was getting impatient to know of Shakuni's trick. Shakuni however asked him to wait until they got out of the charming palace. "Who knows, the walls may have ears," Shakuni said with agitation.

Indraprastha Lost

On the way to Hastinapur, Shakuni revealed his evil plan to Duryodhana. He said, "I know Yudhishtira is fond of the game of dice but he doesn't know how to play well. I am extremely clever at throwing the dice and no one can beat me in this game. Your job is to persuade your father, Dhritarashtra, to invite Yudhishtira to

play dice with me in the presence of all the dignitaries in the court. I can win all his wealth and kingdom for you." Duryodhana is very happy.

When Duryodhana reached Hastinapur, he went straight to Dhritarashtra and told him all that happened at Indraprastha. He told him about the envy burning in his heart.

Finding an appropriate moment, Duryodhana asked, "Father, let us have a special celebration to exemplify our friendliness with the Pandavas by inviting them to Hastinapur. We will also invite other dignitaries to this occasion where the top attraction and excitement will be the dice game between Yudhishtira and our maternal uncle Shakuni. We will win their kingdom by defeating them in the game of dice. I cannot be happy till this is achieved."

Duryodhan persuaded his father to agree to this plan of winning Pandavas with no war. Dhritarashtra was blind and had been indulgent towards his eldest son, Duryodhana. So, the weak-willed king permitted Duryodhana to have his way in spite of Vidura's counsel not to do so.

With the heavy heart, Vidura left for Indraprastha as the king's messenger inviting Yudhishtira for the dice game. Yudhishtira was aware of the evil consequences of wagering games, but he could not refuse to accept the invitation. The Pandavas reached Hastinapur on the previous day along with Draupadi leaving behind their mother Kunti and their children with Subhadra. The Pandavas rested for the night in their well-arranged apartments and reached the gambling hall on the following day, the day of the royal dice game. Other royal dignitaries also arrived and Dhritarashtra and his courtiers welcomed them.

The arrangements for the gambling match were made. Shakuni invited Yudhishtira to play the game of dice. Yudhishtira remarked, "Uncle, let us keep the game fair."

Shakuni was a professional gambler and he knew the weakness of his challenger. He retorted, "Yudhishtira, let the dice decide our luck. Play fearlessly if you have the courage and accept whatever comes out of it. If you are afraid, you can refuse and quit now."

Yudhishtira's pride was hurt. He said, "I am not afraid. You know very well that I cannot refuse to play, once I am challenged. I will certainly play. I want to know who is to be my opponent."

Duryodhana was waiting for the opportunity. He spoke at once, "I shall put the stakes and uncle Shakuni shall throw the dice for me."

“How can a proxy play for a person who is staking? That is not the rule at all,” said Yudhishtira.

Shakuni said, “It is evident that you want to avoid playing giving some excuse or the other. If you do not want to play, tell us frankly.” Yudhishtira could say nothing after that. He agreed to play and the game started.

Yudhishtira was no match for Shakuni. Using his charmed dice Shakuni was winning every game. Yudhishtira staked and lost all his riches and his kingdom. Vidura intervened and told the king to stop the game but in vain. Eventually, Yudhishtira lost his brothers and finally himself. No brother could interfere as the eldest of them was playing who they were obedient to. Later, Shakuni said to Yudhishtira, “You still have Draupadi. You have not lost her yet.” Bhima was angry when Draupadi’s name was suggested by Shakuni but Arjuna made him control it. Last of all, Yudhishtira staked his wife Draupadi and lost her too. Bheeshma and the other elders were overcome with consternation. The Pandavas had lost everything in the game of dice.



Duryodhana was jubilant and exhilarated. Having won the kingdom of the Pandavas, Duryodhana was intoxicated with the pride of his victory. He ordered Prime Minister Vidura, “Go at once and bring Draupadi here. Since we have won her in the game of dice, she will work as a maid in our palace.” Vidura admonished him and said, “Fear the wrath of the Pandavas. I am sure that Yudhishtira had no right to stake his wife when he had lost himself. Draupadi is not your slave. Do not humiliate her.” Looking at Vidura disgustingly, then, Duryodhan ordered his attendants to fetch Draupadi. Draupadi was shocked to hear about what had happened during the game of dice. She turned away the attendants by saying, “Go and ask everyone in the hall if Yudhishtira lost himself first or his wife before losing him.”

The defiant reply of Draupadi enraged Duryodhana. He ordered his brother Dushasana to bring Draupadi to the court right away at any cost. Dushasana entered Draupadi’s room and rudely ordered her to come to the gambling hall. Draupadi refused to do so. She said, “I am the daughter-in-law of this family. Your mutual hatred and jealousy should not cost me my self-respect and dignity.” Enraged Dushasana tried to grab her when Draupadi hurried towards Gandhari’s apartments. Dushasana, in the pretext of carrying out the orders of his elder brother overtook her and dragged her into the court by her hair.

Draupadi appealed to all the elders, “If King Yudhishtira had already lost his own self in the game of dice, how could he stake and lose me”, but no one could save her from being thus disgraced except hung their head in shame. As all the elders remained silent, Draupadi’s question was answered by Vikarna, one of Duryodhan’s brothers. He said, “Yudhishtira had no right to use Draupadi as the wager since she was the wife of all the Pandavas and not just his wife. He staked her without the consent of his brothers. Also, her name was suggested to be staked only by Yudhishtir’s opponent, which is against the rule of the game. So Draupadi has not been lost, she is free.”

Vikarna’s words created a sensation. People were surprised by his clear and precise thinking. All of them were convinced now that Draupadi was not a slave. But Karna was furious with Vikarna. He scolded Vikarna and got this chance to humiliate the Pandavas in public. He said that the Pandavas had lost everything in the game and become slaves; so they had no right to wear the clothes they were wearing. He ordered Dushasana to remove off the royal garments of the Pandavas and also that of their wife Draupadi and surrender them to their lawful owner, the prince Duryodhan. Hearing him, the Pandavas removed their upper clothes and laid them all in a heap. Dushasana could not find a better way to insult Draupadi in public. He started to unrobe her.



The helpless Draupadi finally called for Krishna to save her honor. She completely surrendered her to the Lord. She forgot everything. She gave up all the attempts to protect herself from the danger. With her palms folded together and with her eyes closed she prayed to Him. As Dushasana pulled her saree to disgrace her, a miracle happened; the length of Draupadi’s garments grew and became endless. Krishna invisibly supplied the sarees one after another and Draupadi could not be undressed. The tired Dushasana fell on the ground.

When Dushasana got tired of pulling the saree, Duryodhana ordered Draupadi, "You are now my maid, sit on my thigh."

Bhima could not tolerate the insults any longer and shouted, "I would have killed all of you long ago but my hands are tied down by the shackles of Dharma, by my respect for my brother Yudhishtira and the restraint placed on me by Arjuna. I am taking this vow that one day I will drink blood from Dushasana's heart and break the thigh of Duryodhana for insulting a chaste woman in public."

Arjuna took a vow that he would kill Karna and all his followers, in war. Sahadeva swore that he would kill Shakuni and all his kinsmen. Nakula took an oath that he would kill Shakuni's son Uluka in war which is certain in the near future.

Draupadi charged the elders with anger, "It is a shame for the race of Kshatriyas, the descendants of Bharata, to allow a chaste woman of their own family to be disgraced before their very eyes. I condemn the elders, the so called warriors, sitting here and watching me disgraced."

Dhritarashtra was shaken up. He asked his sons to stop and he apologized to Draupadi for fear of the curse that may befall on the Kauravas. He asked her to seek boons. Draupadi asked for the release of her husbands from the bondage and to return their weapons to them. Dhritarashtra granted them and also returned to Yudhishtira all of what he had lost in the game of dice. He asked Yudhishtira to return to Indraprastha and rule the kingdom happily. The Pandavas bowed to him and returned to Indraprastha along with Draupadi.

Duryodhana and his caucus were unhappy as the King Dhritarashtra had undone all that they had achieved with great effort.

Duryodhana again persuaded his father to invite the Pandavas for a second gambling match. This time, the condition for the game would be: "The defeated one will go into exile for a period of twelve years and spend one more year incognito. If their identity is disclosed on the thirteenth year, they would have to go for an exile of another twelve years." Gandhari heard him and said: "My son, I wish we had taken the advice of Vidura and destroyed you as soon as you were born. You are the root cause of this terrible injustice. Even now it is not too late. If you repent and desist from further sin, the Pandavas may even forget their oaths and spare you your life. Do not coax your father. He is so easily led." But Duryodhan was adamant. Bheeshma and other elders did not like this idea at all.

The righteousness of the weak-willed Dhritarashtra stood nowhere against his paternal affection, and he sent a messenger again to invite the Pandavas for a second gambling match.

Yudhishtira accepted the invitation. He reached the same hall, played with the same dice, with the same opponent and with the same result-he lost again. Yudhishtira was told beforehand of the wager.

The Pandavas prepared for the exile. They changed their clothes, made arrangements for their mother to stay with their uncle, Vidur; and Subhadra, Arjuna's wife, with her brother, Krishna, along with their child Abhimanyu; Draupadi's children were taken care of by her brother Dhrishtadyumna. The

Pandavas then departed with Draupadi. But before Draupadi joined them she untied her hair and took a vow in the presence of all in the gambling hall, “Hereafter my hair will fall loose until the day Bhima shall have slain Dushasana, drunk his blood, and tied up my tress with hands wet with Dushasana’s blood.”

The people of Hastinapur also began to follow them. They condemned and denounced Duryodhana and Dhritarashtra. However, Yudhishtira, with great difficulty, consoled them and convinced them to return to Hastinapur. But their priest Dhaumya accompanied the Pandavas into exile.



VANA PARVA

The Pandava brothers, along with Draupadi, first settled in the Kamyaka forest on the banks of the river Sarasvati. The Pandavas faced hard times as they started their exile. It was difficult for the Pandava brothers to get enough food to satisfy their hunger. As per Dhaumya’s advice, Yudhishtira prayed to sun-god, Surya, with his utmost sincerity. The Sun-god was pleased and appeared before him. He gave Yudhishtira a vessel which would always remain full of food. Every morning, the vessel would give as much food as was required. It went on giving food till it was cleaned and washed. Draupadi fed the Pandavas and the sages who visit them from that vessel every day. In the end, she would have her share and then wash the vessel clean.

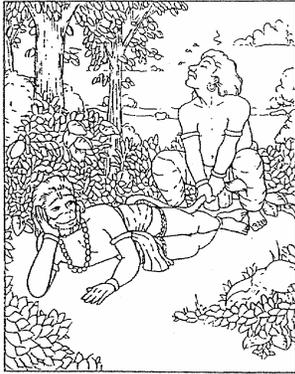
One day, Sage Markandeya, a great and ever-young devotee of Lord Shiva, visited the Pandavas in the forest. Seeing Yudhushtira, he was reminded of Lord Rama who was also sent to the forest for fourteen years, who followed Dharma and who ruled the world after the trials were over. The sage blessed Yudhishtira the same and took leave of them.

The sages who visited them told many stories like the story of another famous king Nala who lost his kingdom in a game of dice and who gained back his glory. They blessed the Pandavas that their hardship would soon be over and would be happy. The company of the sages and their words of encouragement gave Pandavas enough strength to lead their life during exile.

Bhima meeting Hanuman

One day when the Pandavas were wandering in the forest they could smell a wonderful perfume of flowers. Draupadi requested Bhima to look for those flowers and bring some for her. He set out immediately and went on and on,

pursuing the teasing smell. Suddenly he found something blocking his way. He



He saw a monkey resting with its tail blocking the way. Bhima requested the monkey to give way for him. The monkey said it was too old to move and that Bhima can push its tail aside and proceed further. Bhima with one hand tried to brush the tail aside. He could not do. The tail refused to move. Surprised at this, he used both his hands to push it aside. He could not. He frowned at this unexpected failure. He tried again and again. But the tail remained as it was. The monkey was sitting still, watching him with a faint smile of amusement in his eyes. Bhima had to admit defeat. He prostrated before the monkey and said, "You are not an ordinary monkey. Please tell me who you are. I want to know you."

The monkey smiled at him and said, "I am the son of Vayu. My name is Hanuman." The moment these words left his lips, they were clasped in each other's arms. Tears ran down the faces of both. Bhima was thrilled beyond words at the thought that he had met his brother. They spent a long time talking to each other. Hanuman granted a boon: "I will sit on the flag-staff of Arjuna's chariot when the war begins. With my shouts of encouragement I will put new life into your army and frighten the enemies. I will always be with you." The brothers embraced each other once again and parted.

Arjuna's Quest for Weapons

One day, Krishna visited Pandavas in the Kamyaka forest and consoled them. He said that he would have averted this evil game of dice but he had to fight with Salva who had attacked Dwaraka in revenge because Salva's friend Sishupal was killed by him at the Rajasuya Yajna of Yudhishtira. Krishna predicted, "After thirteen years, following your period of exile, there will be a terrible war between you and the Kauravas. It will be wise if you start preparing yourself for the oncoming battle. Hence start to acquire as many divine weapons as you can from the gods during your exile. It is advisable if Arjuna worship Indra and get the divine weapons from him. Without these weapons, you will not be able to fight the war against great warriors like Bheeshma, Dronacharya, Ashwatthama and Karna." Later, Krishna took their leave of the Pandavas.

Following Krishna's advice Arjuna did penance worshipping Indra. Lord Indra appeared before him and said that Arjuna should worship Lord Shiva and acquire the *Pashupatastra* first before he could get all the divine weapons from him. So Arjuna started for Mount Kailash. Reaching Indrakeel, a site inhabited by sages on Mount Kailash, he chose a spot to meditate. He soon went into deep meditation to invoke Shiva. After a long time, Shiva was pleased and decided to fulfill his

wishes. Lord Shiva knew what Arjuna will ask but he did not want to give away his divine weapon, Pashupat, without testing Arjuna's readiness to receive it. So Lord Shiva disguised himself as a hunter and started for Indrakeel.

When he reached the spot where Arjuna was meditating, he saw a wild boar attacking Arjuna. Arjuna was alerted and aimed at the boar with his bow and arrow. Lord Shiva simultaneously aimed at the wild boar. Soon the arrows, from Lord Shiva and Arjuna, struck the boar and it instantly died.

Arjuna was disturbed by seeing that his prey was shot at by another person. Both of them claimed that it was their own arrow hit the boar first. Arjuna challenged the hunter without knowing his identity. This resulted in a big fight between the hunter and Arjuna. None of the weapons of Arjuna could hurt the hunter. Finally Arjuna was exhausted and lost all his weapons. He realized that the hunter was no one else but Lord Shiva. He fell at Lord Shiva's feet and offered his sincere reverence.



Having been highly pleased at Arjuna's devotion, Lord Shiva asked him to demand whatever he wanted as a boon. Arjuna requested for the Pashupat weapon from Shiva to be used during the war against the Kauravas. Lord Shiva handed over the Pashupat weapon to Arjuna with the blessing to acquire the capacity to use it at will. Advising Arjuna to visit Lord Indra at *Indraloka*, the heaven, he disappeared

After Lord Shiva had disappeared, Matali, the charioteer of Lord Indra came with Indra's divine chariot and Arjuna left for Indralok.

Arjuna arrived at Indra's palace at Amaravati in no time and was amazed by its matchless beauty. He was received with due honor as he was the son of Indra.

While at Indra's court, Arjuna learned music and dance from Chitrasena, the chief of Gandharvas.

When Arjuna met Urvashi, he addressed her as "Mother." Urvashi was a heavenly nymph and Indra's court dancer. She was exquisitely beautiful and young for ever. Urvashi tried to make love with Arjuna but Arjuna insisted that he stays as her son. Urvashi was hurt and cursed Arjuna to become a eunuch among charming ladies during his last year of exile. Urvashi was charmed by Arjuna's self control and blessed him by saying, "My curse will prove to be a boon during the last year of your exile in order to conceal your identity."

At the conclusion of his stay in Amaravati, the capital city of Indralok, Arjuna prepared to return to his brothers. Indra gave him all the divine weapons and taught him how to use it. Arjuna came back to his family on Indra's chariot and all Pandava brothers were happy to see him back.

Meanwhile, Duryodhana was trying everything possible to trouble Pandavas in the forest. He planned to send the sage Durvasa, to the Pandavas, who would curse people if he was not attended well. Duryodhana assuming Pandavas could not get enough food to feed the sages, he sent the sage Durvasa telling him that Yudhishtira was living in the forest who would feed him and his disciples very well. Durvasa went to Pandavas' ashrama where he was well received by them. The sage said that he would come and eat food with his disciples after taking bath in the nearby pond. After he left, the Pandavas went inside the hermitage to let Draupadi know that Durvasa would be there shortly for food. Unfortunately, Draupadi had just finished her share of the meal and washed the vessel clean for the day. They did not know what to do. Just then Krishna visited them. Krishna was hungry and asked Draupadi if he could have something to eat. Draupadi brought the washed vessel to Krishna. Krishna took a deep look at it and found one single grain of food sticking to the vessel. He smiled and said that he could eat that grain to get rid of his hunger. Draupadi prayed to him to have that grain not only to feed him but to feed all the beings that were hungry then. Krishna ate that little grain and his hunger was satisfied. Not only Krishna, but sage Durvasa and all his disciples who were about to come to Pandavas' ashrama felt their stomach was full. Feeling full, Durvasa decided not to go to them and left the place along with his disciples. By Krishna's grace Pandavas got rid of the sage's curse about to fall on them.

Duryodhana Humbled

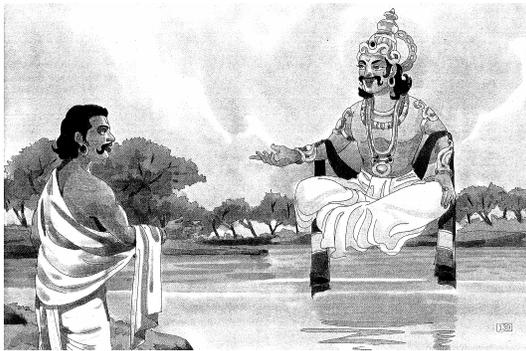
Through a messenger Duryodhana learnt that the Pandavas, during their twelfth year of their exile, were staying in the Dwaitavana forest. They decided to go there for a hunting game along with Shakuni and Karna. The idea was to hurt the Pandavas who were going through hardship by showing all their riches and glory.

Indra heard about this and sent the chief of the Gandharvas, Chitrasena in order to give a lesson to Duryodhana so that he stayed humble in the future and stopped bothering the Pandavas. The Gandharvas were good not only in music but also in war games.

Chitrasena came to Dwaitavana along with his army and confronted Duryodhana. In the following skirmish, Duryodhana and his party were taken captive. Duryodhana was brought before Yudhishtira. Yudhishtira asked Chitrasena to free his cousin brother. Chitrasena let him go and returned to his realm. With his

face cast down because of extreme humiliation, Duryodhana left the presence of Yudhishtira and the Kauravas returned to Hastinapur.

Dhritarashtra and Bheeshma heard about the encounter with the Pandavas, and they too asked Duryodhana to make peace with the Pandavas and share the kingdom with them. Duryodhana refused.



As for the Pandavas, they continued their exile in Dwaitavana. At one point, Yama, the god of dharma, appeared as a yaksha to test his son Yudhishtira for his steadfast faith in truth. Yudhishtira surpassed his evaluation. Yama was pleased and gave him a boon that he would protect them through the thirteenth year of exile to stay undetected according to the condition of the exile. He blessed Yudhishtira and

disappeared. Later, the Pandavas decided to go to Virata, the city in Matsya, and stay there during the thirteenth year. Their priest Dhaumya who accompanied them so far took leave of them and left for Drupada's kingdom.

VIRATA PARVA

Pandava's thirteenth year of exile incognito

The Pandavas were worried about the successful ending of their thirteenth year of exile, the period which they had to pass unrecognized. Duryodhana has mandated that if the Pandavas were recognized during the thirteenth year of their exile, they would have to remain in exile for another twelve years.

In the mean time, Duryodhana sent his spies to discover Pandavas' hideout.

Hiding their weapons, the Pandavas entered the kingdom of Virata. They were not recognized by king Virata and he welcomed them. The Pandava brothers and princess Draupadi requested King Virata to give them some jobs. Virata willingly agreed.

Yudhishtira, disguised as a Brahmin, became one of king's trusted advisors. Bhima became the chief cook. Arjuna, who had learnt the art of dance and music from Chitransen at Indraloka, was cursed by Urvashi, a beautiful dancer of heaven, to remain a eunuch for a year. So Arjuna found it convenient to become a dance and music teacher for princess Uttara. Nakula became the royal horse-trainer and

Sahadeva, the royal cowherd. As for Draupadi, she became Queen Sudeshana's maid.

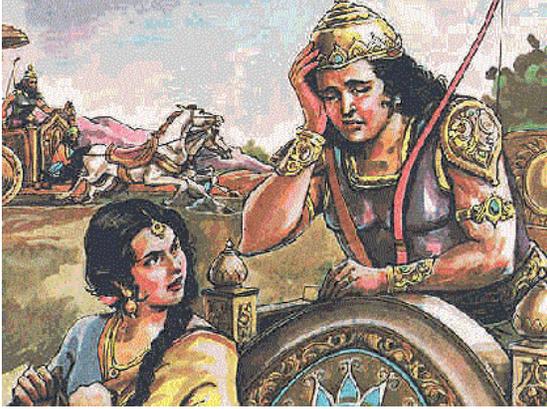
Things were going well until the queen's evil brother, Keechak, the commander of Virata's armies, became interested in Draupadi. Keechak asked for Draupadi's hand in marriage. Draupadi, being happily married to the Pandava brothers, refused. Keechak, thinking her to be only a maid, felt insulted to have been turned down. He decided to force himself into Draupadi's chamber one night. When Draupadi came to know about this, she secretly met Bhima. They came up with a plot. Bhima, disguised as Draupadi, lay on the bed that night. When Keechak stealthily entered Draupadi's room, Bhima sprung out of the bed, wrestled with him and killed him.



The next day Keechak's corpse was discovered in Draupadi's room, with no clue as to who was the assailant. To save Bhima from the queen's wrath, Draupadi told her that Keechak had entered her room, without her permission. When she had screamed, someone had come in and killed Keechak and she had no idea of his identity. The queen apologized for her brother's misdeeds, but never learnt the truth about Bhima's action.

In the mean time, Duryodhana had sent his men to every corner of the earth to discover the Pandavas' hideout. He knew that if he could locate the Pandavas, who were men of honor, they would never go back on their words and would start their exile all over. He was happy to hear of Keechak's death, as he had been a great threat to his kingdom. But he knew no ordinary man could kill the mighty Keechak and so he suspected that Bhima could be the assailant. He decided to invade the kingdom of Virata. In no time Duryodhana's army attacked Virata while Duryodhana planned to personally attack Virata's palace from the rear.

As the war approached, Yudhishtira offered the services of himself and his family to Virata. This was an expression of his gratitude towards Virata for providing them shelter. All his brothers, except Arjuna, joined the army and in no time captured Susharma who fought for Duryodhana. Duryodhana, unaware of Susharma's captivity, attacked Virata's palace from the rear. The young prince Uttar was the only man left in the palace as all the others had already left for the war. When the women teased Uttar for hiding in the palace, he came up with the plea that he did not have a charioteer and hence could not go war.



When Arjuna heard of this, he promptly offered his services. He first took the chariot to the tree where he had hid his weapons almost a year ago. Uttara was puzzled but kept quiet, as he was afraid to face the Kaurava army. Arjuna guessed the situation and asked Uttara to take his place as a charioteer while he does the fighting. Uttara agreed.

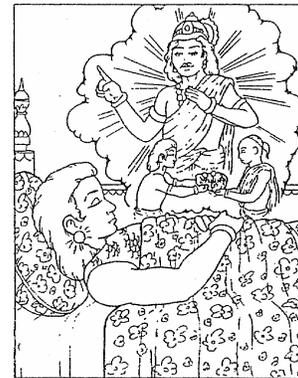
When Arjuna blew his conch the Kaurava army immediately recognized Arjuna. Duryodhana was happy to locate the Pandavas. But to his utter disappointment Duryodhana soon learned that the thirteenth year had just been completed. Arjuna single handedly defeated the army and Duryodhana fled from the battlefield.

During the victory celebration Yudhishtira explained to Virata the details of their thirteenth year of exile under his protection. All the Pandavas expressed their gratitude to Virata. Virata was overwhelmingly happy and agreed to give his daughter Uttara in marriage to Arjuna's son Abimanyu.

Subhadra and Abhimanyu were called and they came with Krishna and Balarama. The marriage celebration went on for several days uniting the Pandavas with their friends and relatives.

Karna's Fame

One night, the sun-god, Surya visited Radheya (Karna) in his dream. He said: "Listen to me Radheya. I will tell you something for your good. You have taken a vow that whoever comes to you during the middle of the day when you are worshipping me and ask anything will never go back empty-handed. Taking advantage of this, Indra, the well-wisher of the Pandavas will come to you in the guise of a brahmin and will ask you for your kavacha and your kundalas. Do not give them to him. You are invincible with these. Try to offer other things instead. If the kavacha and the kundalas are severed from your body you will be easily defeated and killed. If you hold your life dear, you must protect these two things."



But Radheya said: "My lord, I have to adhere to the vow I have taken: not to refuse anyone anything. I am not worried if I am asked to give up my life. I have got to grant the boon which Indra will ask me tomorrow. Please bless me."

The sun blessed Karna and said: “When you give away your kavacha and your kundalas, if Indra wants you to ask a boon of him, ask him to give his SHAKTI weapon. That will, to a certain extent, make up for the loss of your armor.” The sun disappeared from the dream of Radheya.

The next day as the sun-god said in his dream, Lord Indra disguised as a brahmin came to Karna and asked for his kavacha and kundalas. Radheya laughed and said: “My lord, I know who you are. You are Indra, the lord of gods. You know that by giving you these things, I am giving away my life. But that does not affect me. I am pleased and honored that the great Indra is accepting a gift from me.”

Karna cut away the armor from his body and severed the earrings from his ears. The kavacha and the kundalas were placed at the feet of the Brahmin. He was extremely happy to do this sacrifice for the sake of his principle. Indra said: “You are the noblest person I have ever met. You had been told about my coming by Surya. You knew what would happen if you gave these things to me. And yet, you have given me what I wanted. Ask me a boon. I will give you.”

Karna asked Indra to give his Shakti weapon to him. Indra granted Karna his SHAKTI and said: “You can use it only against one enemy and only once. After that, it will return to me.” Indra then blessed Karna that as long as the world lives, his name will be remembered by posterity as the greatest giver and disappeared.

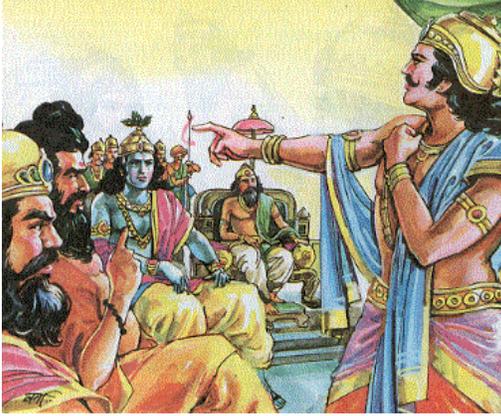
UDYOGA PARVA

War Declared

When Abhimanyu and Uttara’s wedding was over, Krishna requested Virata and Drupada to approach Dhritarashtra with the request to return the kingdom of the Pandavas. The Pandavas had, after all, gone through the penalties imposed on them by Duryodhana. Everyone agreed and the royal priest of king Drupad was sent as a messenger to visit Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra called Bheeshma, Vidur, and the other elders, to a meeting with Duryodhana, and his supporters.

Duryodhana flatly refused to give even a pinch of land to the Pandavas. His close friends, like Karna overwhelmingly supported him. They declared that they would be willing to go to war against the Pandavas in order to keep the kingdom. Grandfather Bheeshma was sorry to witness such hatred between the cousins, his grandchildren. He could sense the oncoming peril for the Kauravas. Dhritarashtra could not help. Duryodhana was adamant to be the sole ruler of the Kaurava Empire and did not want to share the kingdom with the Pandavas.

The royal priest of King Drupad witnessed the arguments in the court of Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra finally gave in and regretfully informed Yudhishtir's ambassador that his son Duryodhan was unwilling to share the kingdom with the Pandavas.



Yudhishtira was a righteous person. He wished to avoid a war, especially against his own relatives. He was willing to give up some of the kingdom that originally belonged to him. Krishna said he would go to Hastinapur as the last resort to make peace. Krishna knew that war was inevitable yet he went to Duryodhana to persuade.

Reaching Hastinapur, Krishna stayed with Vidur. Kunti, mother of the Pandavas, then staying with Vidur, expressed her concern that the war may kill the Pandavas, Krishna consoled her.

“Mother Kunti, your sons are invincible. Whatever may be the strength of the Kauravas, the Pandavas will finally come out victorious. I am here to make every attempt to avoid the blood shed which will destroy the entire Kaurava dynasty.”

Next day Krishna was given a rousing welcome in the court of Dhritarashtra. All the elders were on Krishna's side and requested Duryodhana to reconsider his decision and share the kingdom with the Pandavas in a peaceful manner. He requested Duryodhan to give atleast five villages for the Pandavas. Duryodhana was unwilling to listen to logic. He sternly replied, “Krishna! You are unduly partial to the Pandavas. Be it known once and for all that the only way for the Pandavas to win back their kingdom is through war. Not even a grain of land will be given to them.” Duryodhana even ordered his soldiers to capture Krishna who had come as a messenger. Such was his arrogance Krishna took his magnificent form (*Vishwaroop*) and no soldier dared to come near him.

People present in the court were gravely concerned about the consequences.

Krishna returned from Hastinapur disappointed and delivered the message of war to Yudhishtira and Kunti's blessing for the Pandavas. All hopes for a peaceful settlement were over and the Pandavas had no other resort than to declare war against the Kauravas.

When Kunti saw that war was imminent, one day she approached Karna when he finished worshipping the sun god after his bath. Karna was the son of the sun god,

Surya, born of Kunti, out of wed lock. This happened when Kunti tried out the mantra given by Durvasa before she was married to Pandu. As Kunti was unmarried, she had no choice but to discard Karna in the river. A charioteer, by name Atiratha, picked him up and raised him to adulthood. This was a well kept secret. Karna was truly one of the Pandavas. Kunti finally told Karna the true story of his life.



Kunti requested Karna to come with her and be united with his brothers. But Karna denied. He said he had promised Duryodhana that he would do anything for him to show his gratitude for making him as the king of Anga. So Karna decided to stay with Duryodhana and fight for him. At the same time, he did not want his mother to go empty-handed after asking him the boon to come with her. So he granted a boon of his own accord. He promised his

mother that he would not kill any of the Pandava brothers except Arjuna; so even if Arjuna or he would die in the war she would still have five sons.

Kunti blessed Karna and left with fear and grief.

War Begins

The Kauravas and the Pandavas began to prepare for the battle. Drishtadyumna was chosen as the chief of the Pandava army. No one could match the valor of Bheeshma who was rightfully chosen to be the commander of the Kaurava army. But for Bheeshma, there was no difference between the Kauravas and Pandavas. It was not the righteous war and yet he was bound by duty to serve the king of Hastinapur.

As Duryodhana approached grandfather Bheeshma to take over the command, Bheeshma laid down two conditions, “Firstly, I will not personally hurt the Pandavas but will kill only their soldiers. Secondly, I would not like Karna to come to the battlefield as long as I am the commander.” Karna and Bheeshma held each other in contempt.



Duryodhana and Arjuna both approached Krishna to join their side, Krishna gave them the choice. He would offer his army to the one and himself to the other side. Arjuna

was younger and Krishna gave him the first chance to choose. Arjuna chose Krishna while the army went to Duryodhana. Duryodhana was happy to have Krishna's huge army of brave Yadavas on his side.

When Krishna asked Arjuna, why he chose him over his army, Arjuna explained: "Your presence is more valuable to me than an entire army and I want you to be my charioteer." Krishna was pleased, as he loved Arjuna so dearly. He agreed to be Arjuna's charioteer.

Kurukshetra was chosen as the battleground. Both armies marched towards Kurukshetra. Undoubtedly the Kaurava army was a lot larger than the Pandavas.

The codes for the war were finalized and warriors from both the camps took their pledges to abide by the code.

Duryodhana sent Shakuni's son Uluka to the Pandava camp the day before the war began. He sent arrogant message to the Pandavas that the day had come when the Pandavas would have to fulfill their oaths. Uluka gave the message of Kaurava monarch. Pandavas in turn gave their reply that Duryodhana would see all the great heroes on his side fall one by one. Uluka returned to his king.



The previous night Sage Vyasa came to King Dhritarashtra. He said the days had come for the Pandavas to win Kauravas in war. He granted Sanjaya, the charioteer of the blind king, inner sight, to give true report of the entire war for him.

BHEESHMA PARVA



On the chosen day, the Kaurava and Pandava armies stood face to face. Karna stayed away from the battlefield as mandated by Bheeshma. Yudhishtira, the representative of the Pandava army, came forward and paid respect to his elders, Bheeshma, Dronacharya, Kripacharya and the other great warriors. Having returned from the presence of his elders, Yudhishtira announced to both the armies that anyone who wanted to change sides could do so. Hearing this, Yuyutsu, the step-brother of Duryodhana came to Pandavas' side. Yudhishtira welcomed him. All the warriors on both sides blew their conches.

On Arjuna's request, Krishna took his chariot to the front line for an overview. Seeing all his beloved relatives, including his grandfather, and his teacher Drona on the other side, Arjuna was overwhelmed with grief. He could not justify killing them in order to win the war. He dropped his weapons and refused to fight.

Krishna said, "Arjuna, may it be known to you that man's duty lies in performing the duty while the results should be left to God. All those, whom you claim to be your relatives, are none but individual souls, unrelated to you, on way to their ultimate destination of uniting with the supreme Lord, the Brahman. Pick up your weapon and fight that is what is ordained to you. Do not think of the consequences."

This part of the dialogue that took place in the battlefield between Krishna and Arjuna later came to be known as 'Bhagavad Gita'. It has been divided into eighteen chapters with the total of 700 verses.

Krishna took his magnificent form (*Vishwaroop*) and gave Arjuna the divine vision to see it. After a while, he abandoned his Vishwaroopa and became the charioteer of Arjuna once again.



Arjuna's delusion was all gone. He happily picked up his weapon and got ready to fight. Amidst the sound of the conch, the neighing of war-horses, the trumpeting of war elephants, and the war cries raised by the soldiers, Arjuna stepped forward to in the name of Justice.

The war began. Bheeshma moved with tremendous force killing the Pandava soldiers by the thousands. In spite of all their efforts, the day ended with heavy losses for the Pandavas. This was eye opening for the Pandavas. At night Yudhishtira called a meeting of the army commander Dhrishtadyumna along with his brothers. They planned a new strategy and on the following day Bheeshma could not make as much progress. Duryodhana expected Bheeshma to win the war within a few days. Instead the Kaurava army was losing ground, as Bheeshma was totally engaged with Arjuna. It went on like this for several days and, finally, Duryodhana lost his patience. He taunted Bheeshma as being too old to fight a war. Bheeshma admitted that the Pandavas were blessed with divine powers and that, under the circumstances, he was doing his best. He promised to conclude the war in the next few days or to leave the battlefield. On the tenth day of battle there seemed no end in sight.

The Pandavas were worried. At the rate that they were losing soldiers, they would not be able to hold out too long against Bheeshma. Bheeshma was blessed with the

power to choose his time of death. So, he was practically invincible. When the Pandavas were about to give up, Krishna came up with a plan. Krishna knew that Bheeshma would not fight the eunuch, Shikhandi.

(Shikhandi was nothing but Amba, the princess of Kashi, in previous birth. Amba was a sister of Ambika and Ambalika who married Vichitravirya, the king of Hastinapur, and became the mothers of Dhritarashtra and Pandu.

When Vichitravirya grew, Bheeshma took away three daughters of the king of Kashi on the appointed day of their Swayamvara defeating all the kings and princes assembled there in the swayamvara hall. Salva, the King of Saubala followed Bheeshma, stopped him, fought with him but got defeated by Bheeshma in battle. On reaching Hastinapur, Bheeshma began preparations for the marriage of Vichitravirya. The eldest daughter of Kashi King, Amba requested Bheeshma to set her free as she wanted to marry the Saubala King, Salva. Bheeshma set her free and the two other sisters, Ambika and Ambalika were married to Vichitravirya. Bheeshma sent Amba back to Salva. Being abducted by someone else who defeated him in the battle Salva rejected her. Amba returned to Hastinapur. Bheeshma then requested Vichitravirya to marry Amba. But Vichitravirya refused to do so since she was in love with another man. Now Amba requested Bheeshma to marry her since he was the one who was responsible for all of these. Bheeshma told her vow of celibacy and declined to marry. Amba was once again sent to Salva who refused to accept her. Amba was very angry with Bheeshma and hated him for being the sole cause of all her miseries. She sought the help of warriors to punish Bheeshma for his deeds, but none came to her help. They were all frightened of Bheeshma. At last, Amba performed penance and pleased Lord Subrahmanya who gave her a garland and said, "Whoever wears this garland will be able to fight and win a battle against Bheeshma." Amba took the garland and met many kings, but none of them was ready to wear it. Disappointed and defeated, Amba hung the garland on the door of the palace of King Drupada and left for the forest. The sages in the forest advised Amba to seek the help of Parashurama. She approached Parashurama and narrated her tragic tale to him. Sympathizing with her, Lord Parashurama fought a battle against Bheeshma but, was defeated. Dejected, Amba went to the Himalayas and performed harsh penance to please Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva blessed her and said that in her next birth she would slay Bheeshma. Amba reached heaven. Meanwhile, the garland which no one dared to touch still hung on the door of the palace of King Drupada. So, Amba, in her next birth, was born as Drupada's daughter. After few years, she took that garland on her own and wore it around her neck. When King Drupad came to know of this, fearing for Bheeshma's anger and to protect himself, he banished her daughter to the forest. Drupada's daughter performed very harsh penance in the forest. She was transformed into a man who trained himself in the art of warfare. Later, he came to be known as 'Shikhandi'.)

To Bheeshma, a noble warrior like him would consider it a disgrace to fight with a eunuch. At one point he had even proudly promised to drop his arms if such a situation ever arose. Krishna knew Bheeshma's weakness and wanted to take advantage of this. So he asked Arjuna to keep Shikhandi, a eunuch, in front of the chariot while fighting with Bheeshma. This would stop Bheeshma, and Arjuna could take this opportunity to immobilize him with a volley of arrows.

The plan worked and Bheeshma fell down on a bed of arrows. That was the tenth day of war. The fighting stopped so that all could pay respects to a hero of all times.

As he fell to the ground, Bheeshma requested Arjuna to raise his head. Arjuna shot an arrow to give him the headrest. When Bheeshma asked for water to drink, Arjuna shot an arrow into the ground and water gushed out to quench Bheeshma's thirst. Even Karna came to pay respect to the hero of heroes,



grandfather Bheeshma, and sought his blessing. Bheeshma declared his time of death to be when the sun returns towards north or the advent of summer in the Northern Hemisphere. This falls in the middle of January.

DRONA PARVA

After visiting Bheeshma, Duryodhana returned to his camp and was anxious to appoint the next commander-in-chief. Karna suggested the name of Drona and all agreed. Drona had a soft corner for the Pandavas. He knew that the war was due to the ill advice that Duryodhana got from his maternal uncle Shakuni and friend Karna. But he was committed to serve the crown. After taking the command, Drona changed Bheeshma's tactic and made a special war formation with the intention of capturing Yudhishtira. Drona underestimated the strength and cleverness of Krishna. He failed to capture Yudhishtira. During the scuffle, however, he killed Drupada, the father of Dhrishtadyumna, the commander in chief. Dhrishtadyumna vowed to kill Drona.

The following day, Drona began to kill the Pandava soldiers with a vengeance and yet victory was not in sight. Upon his return at the end of the day, Duryodhana charged Drona as failing in his duties to capture Yudhishtira. Drona was infuriated and promised to kill one of the great Pandava warriors on the following day or else he would give up his life.

With the day break, he called for a special meeting asking his best commanders to keep Arjuna busy as he was the only one who knew how to break through his special circular array, called Chakra Vyuha. Jaidratha, the king of Sindhu was given the task of organizing the movement of the Vyuha. Drona was confident of his victory as no one knew how to break through the Chakra Vyuha, except Arjuna. Hence Drona asked all his commanders to prevent Arjuna from coming near the Vyuha. It seemed the perfect plan. The king of Trigartas came and challenged Arjuna. He had to proceed towards the other side of the battlefield.

After Arjuna had left, the Kaurava army began to march across the Pandava army with the advance of the circular array. It was like a giant wall advancing and crushing the Pandava soldiers. Yudhishtira finally asked his brothers and Abhimanyu for advice. Abhimanyu said, “I only know how to enter the Vyuha but I do not know how to get out.” Yudhishtira asked his brothers, Bhima, Nakul and Sahadeva to follow Abhimanyu and fight their way out.



When Abhimanyu started to break through the Chakra Vyuha, Jaidratha ordered to quickly close the Vyuha entrapping Abhimanyu solitarily inside. His uncles could not get into the Vyuha. Abhimanyu single-handedly fought all the warriors on the Kaurava side but was mercilessly killed in the end. Abhimanyu’s death sent a current of joy in the Kaurava camp.

When Yudhishtira got the news, he felt responsible for the death of Abhimanyu.. Arjuna had not heard as yet of his valiant son’s death until the end of the day. He immediately broke down and fell senseless on the ground. It was an unjust fight. The code of the war called for a fair fight between two soldiers and not a ganging up against a single soldier. Arjuna vowed to kill Jaidratha, the person who had blocked the entry of other Pandava soldiers into the Chakra Vyuha. He swore he would either kill Jaidratha the next day before the sunset, or else, he would kill himself.

When Jaidratha heard of Arjuna’s vow, he wanted to run away from the battlefield. Drona assured him that he would make such a Vyuha next day, keeping him in the center of the Vyuha that Arjuna would not able to get to him. All the warriors of the Kauravas were also alerted that the following day might prove to be the decisive battle. If Arjuna could not kill Jaidratha, he would kill himself and thus the Kauravas would be able to get rid of one of the most powerful warriors of the Pandavas.

The fighting resumed the next day. Arjuna penetrated into the Vyuha but was unable to reach Jaidratha until close to sunset. Krishna was alarmed.

“Arjuna it seems that you will not be able to get to Jaidratha before sunset.” Krishna said, “Let us work jointly and when I will give you the cue, you will get your last chance to kill Jaidratha.”

Soon Krishna created an illusion by which the sun set on the west and the Kaurava army began to rejoice, relaxed in their effort to resist Arjuna any longer. Krishna asked Arjuna not to lose his only opportunity to kill Jaidratha. Arjuna lost no time and Jaidratha was beheaded. Soon Krishna removed his illusion and the Kaurava army was surprised to see that the sun was still up. They realized that Krishna had tricked them and the Pandava army rejoiced.

Duryodhana was furious and blamed Drona for not being able to keep his promise and, therefore, he should now step down. Drona promised to end the war the next day by killing Arjuna. Krishna was alerted. He conferred with the Pandavas and revealed a secret that would allow Arjuna to win against Drona.

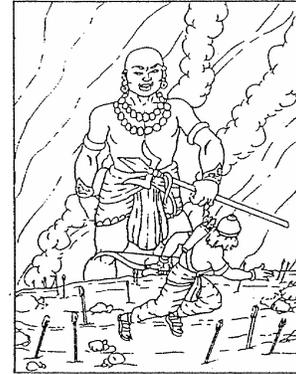
“Drona once promised to himself that he would stop fighting if his only son Ashwatthama was killed in the battle field. As Ashwatthama was practically invincible, Krishna would have to trick him in to believing this. Yudhishtira would have to tell a lie that Ashwatthama was dead. As Yudhishtira never told a lie, Drona would believe him. Drona would stop fighting and Dhrishtadyumna would get the chance to behead Drona.”

On the following day which is the fifteenth day of war, Drona attacked Arjuna, his former student. Arjuna successfully defied his attack and fought with equal strength. When the time came to act on Krishna’s plan Yudhishtira was hesitant to lie to Drona. Bhima acted promptly. He killed an elephant with the same name Ashwatthama and informed Drona that Ashwatthama is dead. Drona turned his eyes on Yudhishtira. He was sure that Yudhishtira would never speak an untruth. He asked him, “My child, I want you to tell me if it is true that my son is dead.” Yudhishtira said: “Ashwatthama is dead.” Softly he added, “the elephant called Ashwatthama.” Hearing this, the great Drona lost all interest in fighting. As soon as Drona dropped his arms, Dhrishtadyumna beheaded him and Drona was dead. Both the armies withdrew at the end of the day.

KARNA PARVA

On the sixteenth day of war, Karna was chosen as the next commander in chief of the Kaurava army and he took over the command with great zeal. His superior fighting skills completely baffled the Pandava army and this ended with great

losses for the Pandavas. Bhima called his son Ghatotkacha to fight for the Pandavas. Ghatotkacha attacked the Kauravas at night creating an illusionary air. Duryodhana asked his army to put on the light and continue to fight through the night. The code of war, as agreed upon, was broken. The weapons from Ghatotkacha were coming from the sky but no one could locate Gototkacha. The army fled in panic and Karna could not get them back to fight. Finally, Karna used up his most powerful weapon, Shakti, which he was holding to kill Arjuna.



When Bhima heard of his son's valiant death, he broke down. Krishna said in consolation, "Bhima, you should be proud of your son's valiant death. Single handedly, he pushed back the Kaurava army. He has also sacrificed his life to save Arjuna otherwise Shakti weapon would surely have killed him."

The army mourned the death of Ghatotkacha and prepared themselves to fight again on the following day. Karna decided to have his final battle with Arjuna the next day. Arjuna was also ready for him. The armies of the Kaurava and Pandava were skeptical of the outcome as both were equally powerful.

That night, Karna was thinking about his past. He remembered his guru Bhargava's (Parashurama's) curse that he would forget the divine incantations when he needed them most. He also remembered the curse of another brahmin who said that his chariot wheel would get sunk in the mire and that he would be killed when he was not prepared for it. This curse happened when he was returning from Parashurama's ashram after his guru's curse. He saw an animal flash past on his way. Thinking it was a deer he shot an arrow at it which fell down dead. He went near and found to his horror that it was not a deer but a cow. It belonged to a brahmin. Karna went to him and told him that he did this in ignorance and tried to pacify him. But the brahmin was very angry and cursed that just as he killed the innocent cow when she was unaware of the danger that threatened her, he would also be killed by the opponent when he was least prepared for it. All these thoughts came to his mind but he was not worried.

The seventeenth day of the great war dawned. The two armies began a terrible fight. On the other side of the battlefield Bhima killed Dushasana to fulfill his vow for insulting Draupadi.

When Karna proceeded towards Arjuna on the battlefield, Yudhishtira came in between and Karna cut his weapons in pieces. He spared Yudhishtira's life as he had promised to Kunti. Karna soon stood face to face with Arjuna. A fierce fight broke out between the two. Karna sent an arrow called *Nagastra* against Arjuna.

Krishna pressed the chariot down so the astra just took off Arjuna's crown and saved him. After sometime, Karna's one of the chariot's wheels broke down. Karna requested Arjuna to stop fighting while his wheel was fixed. He got down from his chariot and tried to lift the wheel up. He was unarmed and it was unethical for Arjuna to attack Karna in that situation. But Krishna spoke otherwise, "Karna, this war itself is unethical. It will be foolish of Arjuna not to take this opportunity to kill you." Karna tried to remember the mantra to use a powerful astra. But because of Parashurama's curse he could not recall the mantra.



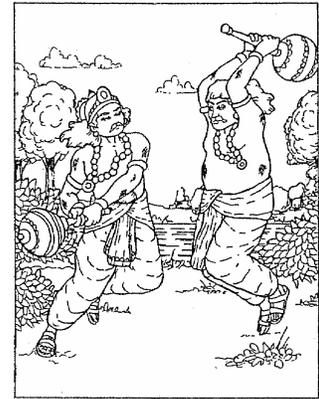
Krishna encouraged Arjuna to kill Karna instantly. Thus Karna was killed by Arjuna. The Kaurava army began to flee away from the battlefield.

Duryodhana was shocked to hear of Karna's death. He felt helpless. His vanity did not prompt him to accept defeat. The battlefield was nothing but heaps of corpses.

SALYA PARVA

On the eighteenth day of the Mahabharata war, Salya was made the supreme commander of the Kaurava army. But he died of mortal wound caused by Yudhishtir's javelin in the battle. Sahadeva killed Shakuni and Nakul slew Shakuni's son Uluka. The surviving brothers of Duryodhana were all killed by Bhima.

Duryodhana was missing. Duryodhana was finally located inside a lake from where he was pulled out. Bhima challenged Duryodhana to a mace fight. Duryodhana was noted for his mace fights. Everyone witnessed the great fight between Bhima and Duryodhana, which went on for many hours until Krishna convinced Bhima to hit Duryodhana on his thigh in order to win. Because of his mother's boon Duryodhan's body became an iron except below his navel till thigh. Hitting an enemy below the navel was not allowed in a fair mace fight. But Bhima took Krishna's advice and hit Duryodhana on his thigh. Duryodhana fell down with broken thigh. Thus Bhima kept his vow of breaking Duryodhana's thigh to punish him for insulting Draupadi by asking her to sit on his lap after that ill-fated dice game.



The Pandavas then left Duryodhana in the battlefield and on Krishna's advice they slept in the enemy's camp that night.

Although the war was over on the eighteenth day, Ashwatthama desired revenge. He planned to wipe out the Pandava family. Ashwatthama stealthily entered the Pandava camp at night, killed the guard and then killed all of Draupadi's sons and also killed her brother Dhrishtadyumna, one by one, in cold blood. Then he came to Duryodhana before the daybreak where he was lying in pain. He described the heinous crime that he had just committed. Duryodhana breathed his last breath and Ashwatthama fled into the forest. It is said that, the moment Duryodhana died, Sanjaya, the charioteer of Dhritarashtra who was giving report to the king about the war so far, lost the power of seeing all that happened to everyone. The power was withdrawn from him.

When the Pandavas returned to camp, they witnessed the crime incurred by Ashwatthama. Draupadi was lost in grief and bewailed loudly.

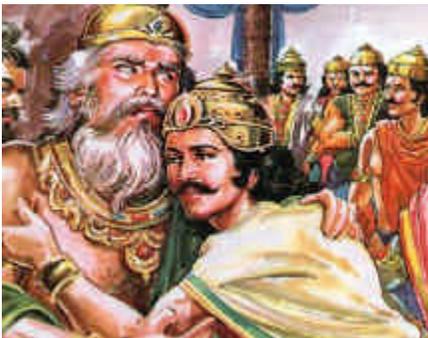
Thus at the end of the war, there was no one left to claim the throne of Hastinapur after the Pandavas, except the unborn baby of Uttara, the son of Abhimanyu.

AFTER THE WAR

Pandavas then started for Hastinapur to meet Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra was fully aware of the happenings of the war through Sanjaya, his charioteer. Gandhari and Dhritarashtra were mad at Bhima for killing all their sons.

Krishna accompanied the Pandavas to meet Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. Vidur joined them to help console his brother, Dhritarashtra.

Krishna spoke, "King Dhritarashtra, the war was inevitable. The war has hurt everyone. The Pandavas lost their sons too. The heat of the war forced both the parties, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, to perform many inhuman acts. Now is the time to open your heart and accept Yudhishtira as your son and bless the Pandavas."



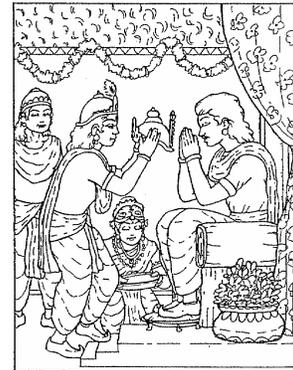
Krishna's words touched Dhritarashtra. Yudhishtira touched the feet of Dhritarashtra, he blessed him. But Dhritarashtra's heart was full of hatred for Bhima. He held out his arms to embrace Bhima. Bhima was proceeding towards him. Krishna stopped him with signs and quickly brought the iron image of Bhima which Duryodhana had been using for his daily practice.

Krishna placed it in front of Dhritarashtra. The old king embraced it. He suddenly remembered that he had the killer of his sons in his arms. His arms now tightened about the iron figure. It went on getting tighter and tighter and the iron image was crushed to powder because of the powerful arms of the king. The king realized what he had done, was sorry and began to wail that he had killed Bhima. Krishna realized that all his anger and fury had abated. He came to the king and said: “Bhima is safe. I knew your anger and strength. It is the iron image of Bhima I placed in front of you. Now that your hatred is all spent on this image, please comfort the Pandavas and be a father to them at least now”. The king got rid of all anger and embraced all the Pandavas warmly.

The great Gandhari controlled her anger and forgave the Pandavas. Gandhari, however, was unable to excuse Krishna whom she blamed to be the root of exterminating her children. She cursed Krishna, “Let your family face the same as the Kauravas and be wiped out from the face of the earth.” Krishna knew that this was going to come sooner or later.

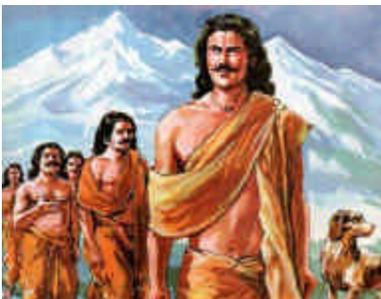
Yudhishtira was crowned as the king of Hastinapur.

The party then arrived to the place where Bheeshma was still resting, waiting for his departure from the earth. Bheeshma blessed the Pandavas and his soul left for the heaven. After many years living with the Pandavas, Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, and Kunti left for the forest to pass their time in meditation and prayers. Unfortunately they all died in a forest fire.



Yudhishtira declared to perform the Aswamedha Yajna to establish the supremacy of the Pandavas over other rulers of the area. The people were pleased to see justice coming back and peace prevailed.

In few years Gandhari’s curse on Krishna began to work. The Yadava clan began to fight among themselves. Krishna and Balarama also died leaving none to succeed the throne.



When Pandavas heard the news of destruction of the Yadavas and Krishna’s demise, they decided to crown the young prince Parikshit, the son of Abhimanyu and retire to Himalayas. They threw their weapons into the river and started for their endless journey to the top of the Himalayas along with Draupadi. To their surprise, a dog accompanied them.

As they climbed up the mountain, four Pandavas brothers and Draupadi fell dead. The only ones survived were Yudhishtira and the dog that was following at the heels of the party. When they reached the top of the Himalaya Mountain, Indra came on his chariot to get pious and truthful Yudhishtira to heaven. Yudhishtira paid his respect to Lord Indra and asked his companion dog to get into the chariot. Indra was shocked, “A dog to heaven?” When Yudhishtira refused to go to heaven without the dog, the God of Death, Dharmaraj Yama emerged out of the dog and blessed Yudhishtira. Yama was testing the steadfastness of Yudhishtira. He was pleased to hear Yudhishtira’s reply.



Yudhishtira reached heaven and joined his family there. ■

Activity 1**(Mahabharata – Adi Parva)**

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Drupada Karna Kuru Vyasa Kunti Drona Indraprastha jealous
kavacha Bheeshma Ekalavya Surya Vidura svayamvara

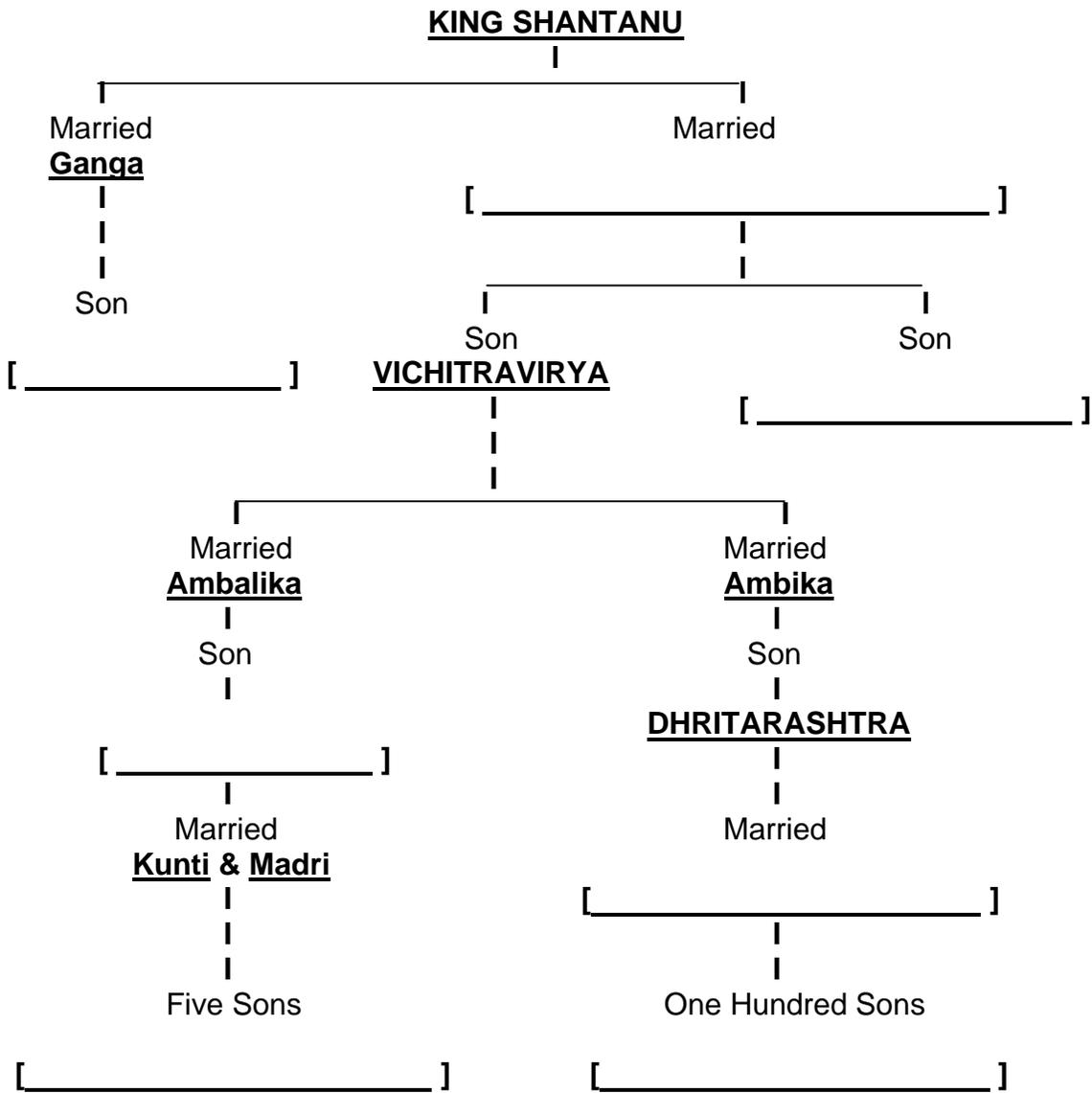
1. The Mahabharata was written by sage _____ .
2. The Pandavas and Kauravas belong to the _____ family.
3. _____ was the wise brother of Pandu and Dhritarashtra.
4. Karna was the son of Kunti and Lord _____ .
5. Karna was born with a _____ and kundala.
6. _____ was the great archery teacher of the Kuru princes.
7. _____ gave his right thumb as gurudakshina to his teacher
8. Duryodhana was _____ of his cousins, the Pandavas, and tried to kill them.
9. Arjuna won Draupadi in a _____ .
10. Draupadi was the daughter of King _____ .
11. Yudhishtira became the king of _____ .
12. King Shantanu gave _____ a boon so that he could choose the time of his death.
13. Sage Durvasa gave _____ a boon that she could invoke any god to have a child.
14. The great archer Bhargava cursed _____ that his memory would fail him at the critical moment when he needed to use an astra.

Activity 2 (Mahabharata – Adi Parva)

Kuru Family Tree

Fill in the blanks with the right names from the word list.

Satyavati Pandu Pandavas Gandhari
 Bheeshma Kauravas Chitrangada



Activity 3 (Mahabharata – Adi Parva)

Story Time

Match the person to the story that best describes him by placing the number of the name in the blank in front of the matching story.

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. | Drona | _____ | Story of cunning |
| 2. | Ekalavya | _____ | Story of loyalty |
| 3. | Duryodhana | _____ | Story of revenge |
| 4. | Pandavas | _____ | Story of devotion |
| 5. | Karna | _____ | Story of love |
| 6. | Shakuni | _____ | Story of jealousy |
| 7. | King Shantanu | _____ | Story of dharma |

Activity 4 (Mahabharata – Adi Parva)

Unscramble each word and complete each phrase about Bhima.

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | N R S G O T | He was _____ | like an elephant. |
| 2. | E L V O B A L | Bhima was a _____ | giant. |
| 3. | N S O I P O | Duryodhana tries to _____ | him. |
| 4. | I H I B D M I | His rakshasi wife was named _____ | |
| 5. | N S O | Ghatotkacha was his _____ | . |
| 6. | A K B A | He killed the rakshasa named _____ | . |

Activity 5

(Mahabharata – Adi Parva)

The Pandavas

Matching

Kunti had a boon to invoke any god to have a child. Each child carried a special quality that was attributed to the God. Match the son in Column A with the god in Column B and the special quality in Column C.

A – son	B – God	C – special quality
Yudhishtira	Indra	handsome and wise
Bhima	Ashwin twins	skilled archer
Arjuna	Dharma	strong
Nakula & Sahadeva	Vayu	righteous

Activity 6

(Mahabharata – Adi Parva)

Word Search

Find the five Pandavas. Look up, down, across, and diagonally.

O	M	V	I	D	Y	A	A
O	S	V	P	N	I	T	R
S	R	M	A	A	S	S	I
A	T	E	E	K	D	I	H
H	A	N	A	U	T	O	T
A	S	J	R	L	T	S	S
D	I	H	S	A	N	H	I
E	H	A	M	N	A	L	H
V	D	I	K	U	J	A	D
A	H	S	H	L	J	T	U
B	A	N	U	J	R	A	Y

Activity 7**(Mahabharata – Sabha Parva)****Game of Dice**

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Vidura	Duhsāsana	Ulūka	twelve
Duryodhana	thigh	heart	Lord Kṛṣṇa
a game of dice	one	Karna	Śakuni

1. _____ went to Indraprastha to invite the Pāṇḍavas to a game of dice.
2. Draupadī was dragged by her hair and insulted by _____.
3. Draupadī prayed to _____ to save her from disgrace.
4. Bhīma swore that he would rip Duhsāsana's _____ and break Duryodhana's _____.
5. Arjuna took an oath to kill _____ in the war.
6. Nakula promised to kill _____, the son of Śakuni.
7. Sahadeva swore to kill _____ in the war.
8. The Pāṇḍavas were banished for _____ years from their kingdom.
9. They had to be in disguise for _____ year before completing their exile.
10. Due to _____ many unjust actions took place.

Activity 9

(Mahabharata – Sabha Parva)

Word Search

Find the following words in the word search. Look up, down, across, and diagonally.

Jarāsandha
Nārada

Śisupāla
Subhadrā

Kṛṣṇa
Rukmiṇī

Dvārakā
Māyā Sabhā

J	I	L	O	Q	T	V	X	Z	S	A
D	A	R	U	K	M	I	N	Ī	M	L
V	N	R	A	J	Y	A	S	U	Y	Ā
Ā	A	B	Ā	O	P	Q	Ā	S	T	P
R	N	Q	X	S	Y	R	E	B	N	U
A	Ṣ	L	M	W	A	I	R	V	Ā	Ś
K	Ṛ	S	T	U	V	N	O	P	R	I
Ā	K	J	I	H	G	F	D	E	A	Ś
A	R	S	T	U	V	N	O	H	D	I
L	K	J	I	H	G	F	D	E	A	S
S	U	B	H	A	D	R	Ā	H	D	X
A	B	H	A	S	Ā	Y	Ā	M	A	W

Activity 10

(Mahabharata – Sabha Parva)

Matching

Match the kings with the kingdoms they ruled by placing the number of the king in the space by his kingdom.

Kings	Kingdoms
1 Yudhiṣṭhira	___ Cedi
2 Śiśupāla	___ Magadha
3 Jarāsandha	___ Hastināpura
4 Duryodhana	___ Matsya
5 Kaṃsa	___ Aṅga
6 Karṇa	___ Indraprastha
7 Virāṭa	___ Laṅkā
8 Vibhīṣaṇa	___ Mathurā

Activity 11**(Mahabharata – Vana Parva)**

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Yudhiṣṭhira Dhaumya pilgrimage Urvaśī Nala
Pāśupata Kāmyaka Hanumān Rāma

1. Among other places, the Pāṇḍavas stayed in the _____ forest during their exile.
2. Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira, Mārkaṇḍeya was reminded of Lord _____ who was sent to the forest for fourteen years.
3. The beautiful apsarā _____ cursed the great Arjuna that he would become a eunuch for one year.
4. _____ was another famous king who lost his kingdom in a game of dice.
5. Arjuna prayed to Lord Śiva to obtain the powerful weapon _____.
6. The Pāṇḍavas went on a _____ to all the holy places in India.
7. Bhīma met his brother _____ when he went in search of an exotic flower for Draupadī.
8. The Pāṇḍavas' guru was _____.
9. _____ was the only Pāṇḍava who did not disregard the Yakṣa and his questions.

Activity 12

(Mahabharata – Vana Parva)

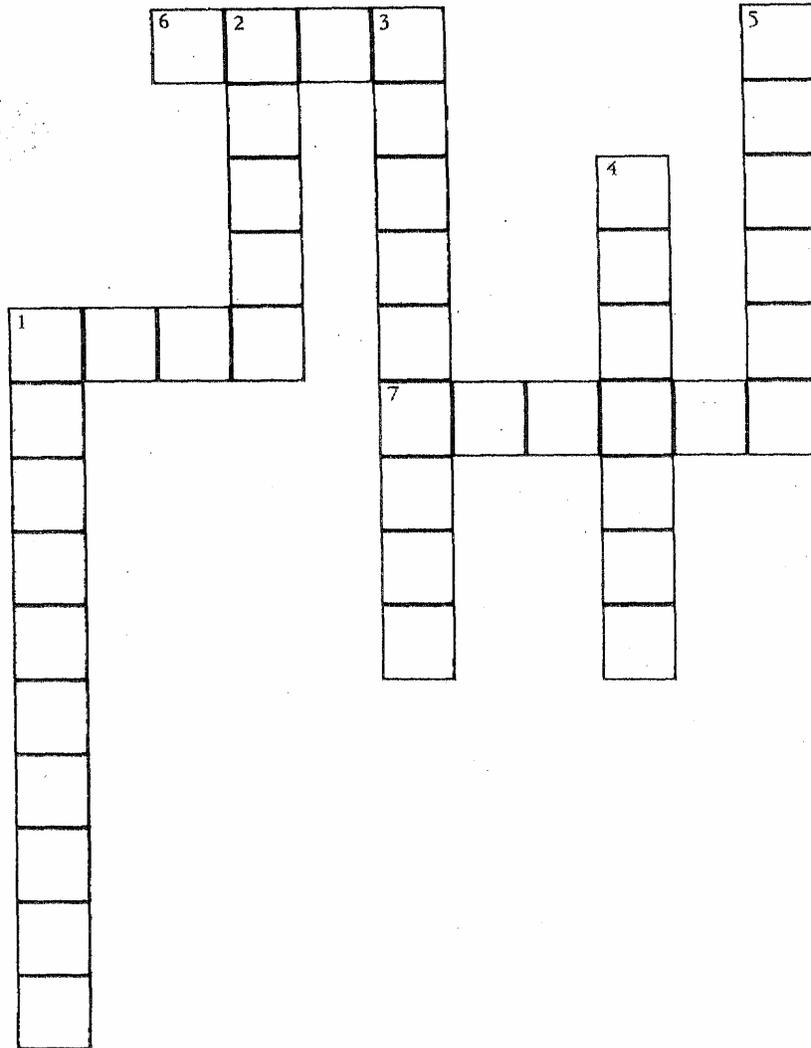
Crossword Puzzle

DOWN

1. The most righteous monarch.
2. Lord of the heavens.
3. City in India.
4. Found on Arjuna's flag staff.
5. Lord of wealth.

ACROSS

1. Lord of death.
6. Arjuna prayed to Lord _____ for the Pāsūpata astra.
7. Lord of the oceans.



Activity 13**(Mahabharata – Vana Parva)****Match the following**

Place the number of the name in the blank next to the best description of that person.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Urvaśī | ___ devotee of Lord Śiva |
| 2 Jayadratha | ___ brother of Draupadī |
| 3 Mārkaṇḍeya | ___ an apsara |
| 4 Śacī | ___ son of Satyavatī |
| 5 Dhṛṣṭadyumna | ___ king of Sindhu |
| 6 Vyāsa | ___ wife of Indra |
| 7 Satyabhāmā | ___ taught music to Arjuna |
| 8 Citrasena | ___ wife of Kṛṣṇa |

Activity 14**(Mahabharata – Vana Parva)**

Help Yudhishtira answer the Yaksha's questions.

1. What is the highest value in the world?
 _____ Money _____ Non-injury _____ Power
2. What do people seek in life?
 _____ Skills _____ Happiness _____ Friendship
3. What makes one learned?
 _____ Study of the Śāstra _____ Music _____ Politics
4. A warrior's duties are performed with the mastery of
 _____ Weapons _____ Books _____ Communication
5. By what virtue does one become a brāhmin?
 _____ Righteous living _____ Birth _____ Exercise
6. What is faster than the wind?
 _____ The mind _____ Cars _____ Leopard
7. What is more numerous than grass?
 _____ Thoughts _____ People _____ Stars
8. What is it that, when given up, leads to no regrets?
 _____ Wisdom _____ Anger _____ Happiness

Activity 15**(Mahabharata – Virata Parva)**

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Matsya tree kuṇḍala Kaurava Karṇa
 Arjuna Uttarā Kīcaka one kavaca

1. The Pāṇḍavas spent their year of exile in the kingdom called _____.
2. The Pāṇḍavas hid their weapons in a _____.
3. _____ was the brother of Queen Sudeṣṇā.
4. Uttarakumāra was frightened when he saw the huge _____ army.
5. Prince _____ saved the cows of King Virāṭa by uprooting the Kaurava army.
6. _____ married Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu.
7. _____ was known as the greatest giver.
8. Indra gave Karṇa his weapon which could be used only against _____ enemy.
9. Despite being warned in his dream, Karṇa gave away his _____ and _____ to Indra.

Activity 16**(Mahabharata – Virata Parva)****Father and son**

These fathers and sons were all great warriors. Match the father to the son by placing the number of the father in the space by his son.

Father	Son
1 Kṛṣṇa	___ Ghaṭotkaca
2 Arjuna	___ Aśvatthāman
3 Bhīma	___ Pradyumna
4 Droṇa	___ Abhimanyu
5 Virāṭa	___ Ulūka
6 Nakula	___ Vṛṣasena
7 Karṇa	___ Satānīka
8 Śakuni	___ Uttarakumāra

Activity 17**(Mahabharata – Virata Parva)****Unscramble the words**

The Pāṇḍavas lived in disguise for one year. Find the Pāṇḍavas in their disguises!

1. Disguised as Vallava, the chief cook, was ĪHBAM

2. Disguised as Tantripāla, the cowherd, was ASDHVAEA

3. Disguised as Damagranthi, the horsetrainer, was KUNALA

4. Disguised as Kaṅka, the companion of King Virāṭa, was
RAṬIHIṢYDUH

5. Disguised as Sairandhrī, the queen's maid, was PĪUADARD

6. Disguised as Bṛhannala, the teacher of fine and performing
arts, was JAARNU

Activity 18**(Mahabharata – Virata Parva)****Word game**

Select the right names from the word chart to answer the following.

Kṛṣṇa	Draupadī	Vidura	Śakuni
Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna	Karṇa	Duhśāsana	Yudhiṣṭhira
Karṇa	Śikhaṇḍī	Indra	Sūrya

1. Who were loyal to Duryodhana?

- Ś_____
- K_____
- D_____

2. Who were righteous people?

- Y_____
- K_____
- V_____

3. Who came in Karṇa's dream?

- K_____
- S_____
- I_____

4. King Drupada had three children.

- Ś_____
- D_____
- D_____

Activity 19**(Mahabharata – Udyoga Parva)**

Answer the following questions.

1. Who was Karṇa's real mother? _____
2. Was Karṇa a Kaunteya or a Kaurava? _____
3. Who did Duryodhana send to the Pāṇḍava camp just before the war? _____
4. Where was the great war of the Mahābhārata fought?

5. Who would not fight on the battlefield in the presence of Karṇa? _____
6. Who tried to be a peacemaker? _____
7. Who was the first commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army? _____
8. What was the name of Rukmiṇī's brother? _____
9. Who was the uncle of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas?

10. Was Karṇa won over to the Pāṇḍavas' side? _____

Activity 20**(Mahabharata – Udyoga Parva)****Right or Wrong**

Arjuna and Duryodhana went to Krishna for help in the war. Krishna gave them a choice between:

1. His army with great warriors who would fight in the war.
2. Kṛṣṇa himself, who would not fight in the war.

Duryodhana chose _____

Arjuna chose _____

Who made a better choice? _____

Activity 21**(Mahabharata – Udyoga Parva)**

Make the right choice in these situations.

1. If you tell a lie, you might trick your mother into giving you money for candies. What would you do?
2. Your mother wants you to share your favorite toy with your brother or sister. Do you have to?
3. While walking in the woods, you see a snail. You feel like stepping on it. What will you do?
4. Your classmate calls you names. How will you respond?
5. Your father cannot afford to buy you the same expensive toy that your friend has and you want. How will you fulfill your desire?

Activity 22**(Mahabharata – Udyoga Parva)****Word game**

Help Dhṛtarāṣṭra discover the qualities of a dharmic person. Check the correct answer.

1. A dharmic person aspires for
 honesty money presidency none of these
2. His strength lies in his
 muscles power wisdom none of these
3. His actions are based in
 anger jealousy pride none of these
4. He has a
 wavering mind distracted mind steady mind
 all of these
5. He acts
 differently from what he thinks as he thinks
 opposite to what he thinks none of these
6. He shows kindness to others
 by laughing at them by helping them
 by hurting them none of these
7. He has a value for not hurting others by
 action words thoughts all of these
8. If calamity overtakes him, he blames
 the Lord the world himself none of these
9. He makes friends in life so that he can
 hurt them gossip manipulate them
 share experiences with them
10. He has reverence for
 the scriptures nature all living beings
 all of these

Activity 23

(Mahabharata – Udyoga Parva)

Identify the allies of the Pandava and Kaurava armies.

Place the names from the list in the correct army.

Dhrishtadyumna Virata Shikhandi Karna Shakuni

Kripa Drupada Yuyutsu Bheeshma Drona

Pāṇḍavas

Kauravas

Activity 24**(Mahabharata – Udyoga Parva)****Word Search**

Find Lord Kṛṣṇa's qualities listed below in the word game. Look up, down, across, and diagonally.

righteous playful kind joyous helpful
giving loving respectful powerful honest

T	S	L	U	F	R	E	W	O
R	I	G	H	T	E	O	U	S
E	M	S	O	T	D	R	V	N
S	K	U	N	F	N	X	S	P
P	R	O	E	G	L	H	L	L
E	G	Y	S	K	E	P	O	R
C	T	O	T	L	O	K	V	E
T	N	J	P	S	D	N	I	K
F	O	F	Z	P	U	X	N	N
U	U	G	N	I	V	I	G	S
L	P	Q	R	K	N	H	P	D

Activity 25

(Mahabharata – Bheeshma Parva)

Fill in the blanks

Find out what happened before the war by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words.

Kurukṣetra Karṇa Vyāsa Yudhiṣṭhira Śikhaṇḍī

1. The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas met on the field of _____.
2. _____ granted Sañjaya a boon to see what happened on the battlefield through divine sight.
3. _____ agreed not to fight the war as long as Bhīṣma was commander-in-chief.
4. Before the war, _____ dropped all his weapons to seek the blessings of his elders who were in the Kaurava army.
5. _____, the warrior son of Drupada, was once a woman called Ambā.

Activity 26**(Mahabharata – Bheeshma Parva)****Mark the correct answer.**

1. Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to place the chariot in the middle of the two armies because
 - he wanted to clearly see his enemies.
 - he wanted to mark his first arrow.
 - he wanted to talk to Lord Kṛṣṇa privately.

2. Arjuna felt he could not fight his enemies because
 - he was afraid to lose.
 - he forgot how to fight.
 - they were his relatives

3. Lord Kṛṣṇa encouraged Arjuna to fight because
 - it was Arjuna's duty to fight.
 - he was already on the battlefield.
 - he wanted Duryodhana to lose.

4. Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to teach him
 - how to fight.
 - that which would give him total happiness.
 - how to gain courage.

5. Lord Kṛṣṇa unfolded the truth of oneself which
 - is identical with the Lord.
 - made Arjuna escape from his duty.
 - showed Arjuna that he didn't have to fight.

6. Arjuna discovered freedom and happiness in Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings
 - and decided to perform his duty as a prince and fight.
 - and decided to renounce the world.
 - and decided to get married.

Activity 27

(Mahabharata – Bheeshma Parva)

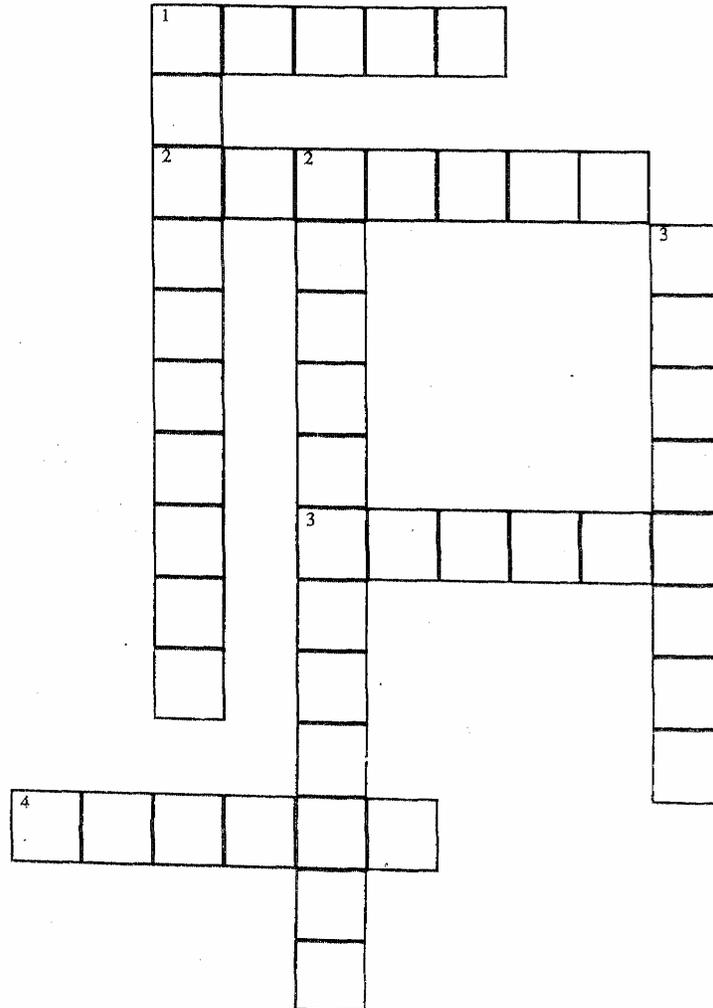
Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. The Lord as an avatāra.
2. He agreed not to fight in the presence of Bhīṣma.
3. He made a bed of arrows for Bhīṣma.
4. The invincible commander-in-chief of the Kauravas.

DOWN

1. The place of the battlefield.
2. He was born to kill Dṛoṇa.
3. She was born to kill Bhīṣma.



Activity 28**(Mahabharata – Bheeshma Parva)****Matching**

Match the following people with their correct descriptions by putting the number of the name in the correct blank.

1. Shikandhi _____ was an arch enemy of Drona.
2. Arjuna _____ was born to destroy Bheeshma.
3. Drupada _____ rested his head on a pillow of arrows.
4. Bheeshma _____ killed Bheeshma.

Activity 29**(Mahabharata – Bheeshma Parva)**

Use the codes to answer the questions.

1=D 2=G 3=H 4=A 5=B 11=Ā 6=T 7=Ī 8=V 9=Ṣ 10=M

1. What did Lord Kṛṣṇa reveal to Arjuna on the battlefield?

5 3 4 2 4 8 4 1

2 7 6 11

2. Who was the grandfather of the Kuru family?

5 3 7 9 10 4

Activity 30**(Mahabharata – Bheeshma Parva)**

Unscramble the words to complete each sentence about Bheeshma.

1. H T A O To please his father, he took an _____.
2. R R O I W A R He was a great _____.
3. E L B O N He was very _____.
4. T R E C E P S He commanded great _____.
5. A N G Ā G He was the son of King Santanu and Mother _____.
6. Ā Y Ņ G A G E He was also called _____.

Activity 31**(Mahabharata – Drona Parva)**

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna Drona astra cakravyūha anger

mahārathika vyūha unhappy Pāṇḍavas eighteen

1. The Mahābhārata war lasted for _____ days.
2. The war was fought between the _____ and the Kauravas.
3. After Bhīṣma, _____ was the commander of the Kaurava army.
4. The commander of the Pāṇḍava army was _____.
5. Abhimanyu only knew how to get into the _____, but not how to get out of it.
6. Duryodhana was always _____, in spite of Drona's best efforts.
7. An _____ is a divine weapon presided over by a god.
8. A _____ is an army formation.
9. A _____ is the highest title given to a warrior.
10. _____ clouds one's judgment and brings sorrow.

Activity 32**(Mahabharata – Drona Parva)****Word Search**

Look for the words listed below up, down, across, and diagonally.

Droṇa Aśvatthāman Kṛpa archer
 anger revenge teacher

A	T	E	C	B	K	D	A	O	N	Q
U	N	F	D	I	R	E	R	H	R	R
L	A	G	B	T	P	T	N	W	E	S
U	G	F	E	L	A	E	I	T	H	T
N	R	A	A	R	I	A	M	A	C	U
F	E	R	H	S	V	C	H	N	R	V
A	S	V	A	T	T	H	A	M	A	N
I	H	T	N	R	E	E	R	S	R	Y
R	M	T	O	U	N	R	B	R	B	A
R	I	A	R	E	V	E	N	G	E	B
S	S	M	D	M	G	T	P	I	C	C

Activity 33**(Mahabharata – Drona Parva)****Rules of war**

Rules were followed even in war to ensure that the fight was fair. Read each statement and then mark "True" if the statement was a rule of war, and "False" if it was not.

1. Both armies stop fighting at sunset.
_____ True _____ False
2. A warrior can attack another warrior from behind.
_____ True _____ False
3. A warrior on a chariot cannot attack a warrior on the ground.
_____ True _____ False
4. Six warriors can attack one warrior at the same time.
_____ True _____ False
5. A warrior cannot misuse a divine weapon given by a god.
_____ True _____ False
6. A warrior who refuses a challenge to a duel is brave.
_____ True _____ False
7. Only a brave warrior runs away from the battlefield.
_____ True _____ False

Activity 34 (Mahabharata – Drona Parva)

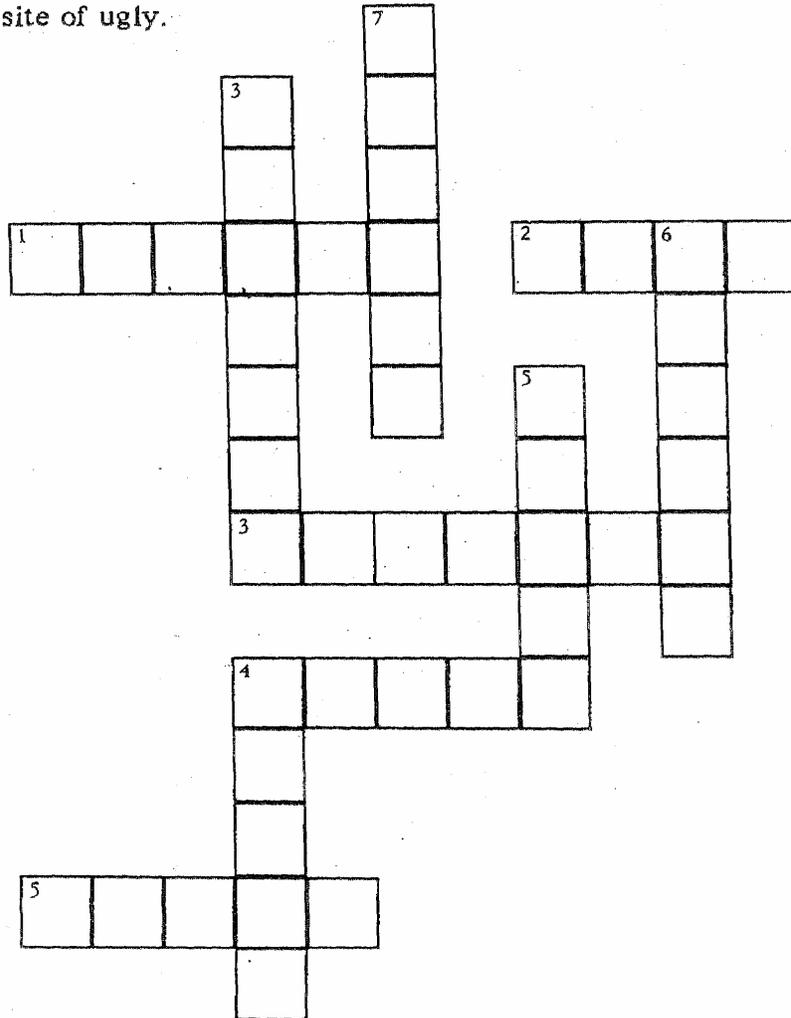
Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. The opposite of just.
2. Kṛṣṇa's color, which is like the sky.
3. Kṛṣṇa's nephew and Arjuna's student.
4. *As sharp as a k_____.
5. After Bhīṣma, the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army.

DOWN

3. The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas were related as _____.
4. Another name for Rādheya.
5. A synonym for courageous is (HINT: It rhymes with the word cave.)
_____.
6. The opposite of fair.
7. The opposite of ugly.



Activity 35**(Mahabharata – Karna Parva)****Quiz on Radheya**

Mark the best answer.

1.

Karna's special quality was that
_____ he loved animals
_____ he was a great giver
_____ he was respectful

2.

He was grateful to Duryodhana
_____ for saving his life
_____ for making him a king
_____ for finding his brothers

3.

Though Karna was dhārmic, he fought for the Kauravas because
_____ he hated the Pāṇḍavas
_____ he was loyal to Duryodhana
_____ he wanted to be the king

4.

He promised his mother Kuntī that
_____ he would kill all the Pāṇḍavas
_____ he would kill only Arjuna
_____ he would die

(Activity 35 continued...)

5.

Arjuna won because

- he had Lord Kṛṣṇa on his side
- he was more skillful than Karna
- Karna was unlucky

6.

His guru cursed him by saying that he would

- forget the divine mantra
- run away from the battlefield
- die fighting

7.

The **sage** cursed him by saying that

- he would die helplessly like a cow
- he would become a cow
- a cow would kill him

8.

Did all the curses on Karna come true?

- No
- Yes
- Not all, but some

9.

When Duryodhana learned Karna's real identity, he

- was surprised and shocked
- realized how noble Karna was
- was angry with Karna

Activity 36**(Mahabharata – Karna Parva)****Word Search**

Find the qualities that describe Karna in this word game. Look up, down, across, and diagonally.

generous

proud

good

sacrificer

sensitive

noble

loyal

unlucky

R	M	P	R	O	U	D	B	D
E	R	B	O	P	N	S	B	W
C	L	O	Y	A	L	E	A	R
I	N	B	D	E	U	N	C	P
F	P	L	O	R	C	S	I	E
I	A	E	O	N	K	I	C	X
R	G	E	G	S	Y	T	L	D
C	P	R	K	P	L	I	A	S
A	L	T	S	L	P	V	S	K
S	U	O	R	E	N	E	G	R

Activity 37**(Mahabharata – Karna Parva)**

Unscramble these words and complete each sentence.

U T N K Ī Karṇa's real mother was _____.

A R Y Ū S Karṇa's real father was _____.

A Y A V I J Karṇa's bow was called _____.

Ā N G D A I V Arjuna's bow was called _____.

A Y S L A Karṇa's charioteer was _____.

A Ḡ Ñ A Karṇa was king of _____.

S L K L I U F L He was a _____ archer.

Ā D H R Ā _____ was his adopted mother.

Activity 38

(Mahabharata – Karna Parva)

Word game

Mark the "odd one out," the item that does not fit in the group.

1. _____ Arjuna _____ Lakṣmaṇa _____ Bhīma
_____ Yudhiṣṭhira
2. _____ Bhīṣma _____ Droṇa _____ Karṇa _____ Abhimanyu
3. _____ Love _____ Hate _____ Jealousy _____ Greed
4. _____ Knowledge _____ Ignorance _____ Righteousness
_____ Wisdom
5. _____ Himālayas _____ Gaṅgā _____ Yamuna _____ Godāvarī
6. _____ Brahmā _____ Viṣṇu _____ Lakṣmī _____ Śiva
7. _____ Air _____ Water _____ Earth _____ Space _____ Food
8. _____ Sun _____ Moon _____ Earth _____ Mars _____ Sky
9. _____ Sudarśana-cakra _____ Nāga-astra
_____ Brahmā-astra _____ Pāśupata-astra

Activity 39 (Mahabharata – Karna Parva)

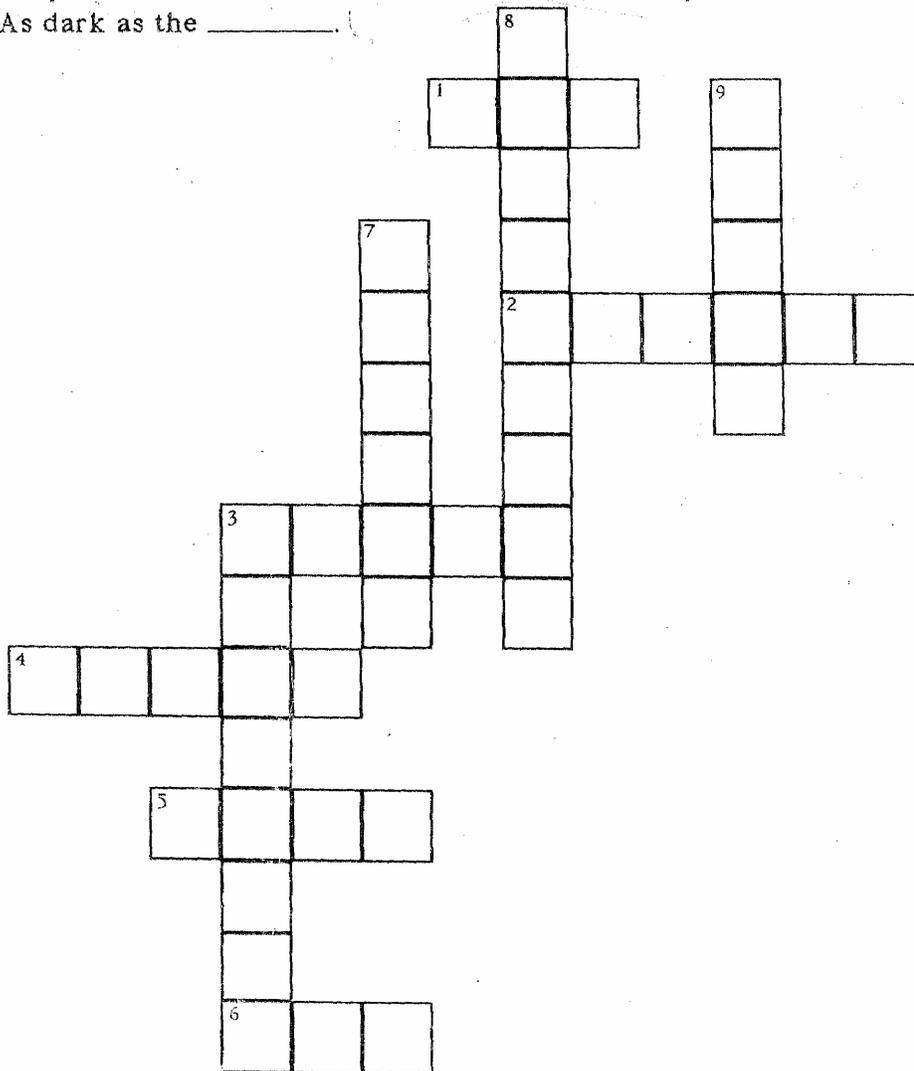
Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. Another word for "promise" that rhymes with "cow".
2. A person who is skilled at using a bow and arrow.
3. The opposite of war.
4. Arjuna's charioteer.
5. The sun rises in the _____.
6. As bright as the _____.

DOWN

3. Karna's real brothers.
7. The opposite of victory.
8. Karna was the third _____ of the Kaurava army.
9. As dark as the _____.



Activity 40**(Mahabharata – Salya Parva / After the War)**

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Pāṇḍavas	wins	eighteenth
Lord Kṛṣṇa	die	Hastināpura
Salya	mace	Balarāma

1. The Mahābhārata war ended on the _____ day.
2. The _____ won the war.
3. _____ helped the Pāṇḍavas win the war.
4. The last commander of the Kaurava army was _____.
5. Duryodhana wanted to _____ like a true kṣatriya.
6. Bhīma killed Duryodhana in a _____ fight.
7. _____ was Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.
8. Yudhiṣṭhira was crowned king of _____.
9. Truth always _____.

Activity 41**(Mahabharata – Salya Parva / After the War)****Quiz on Lord Krishna**

Mark true or false.

1. Lord Kṛṣṇa was an avatāra.
_____ True _____ False
2. Lord Kṛṣṇa helped the Pāṇḍavas because they were not righteous.
_____ True _____ False
3. The Lord takes an incarnation to uphold dharma.
_____ True _____ False
4. Lord Kṛṣṇa saved Arjuna several times from powerful astras.
_____ True _____ False
5. Lord Kṛṣṇa was Karṇa's charioteer.
_____ True _____ False
6. The Kauravas and Lord Kṛṣṇa were cousins.
_____ True _____ False
7. The Pāṇḍavas could have won the war without Lord Kṛṣṇa.
_____ True _____ False
8. Lord Kṛṣṇa fought for dharma.
_____ True _____ False

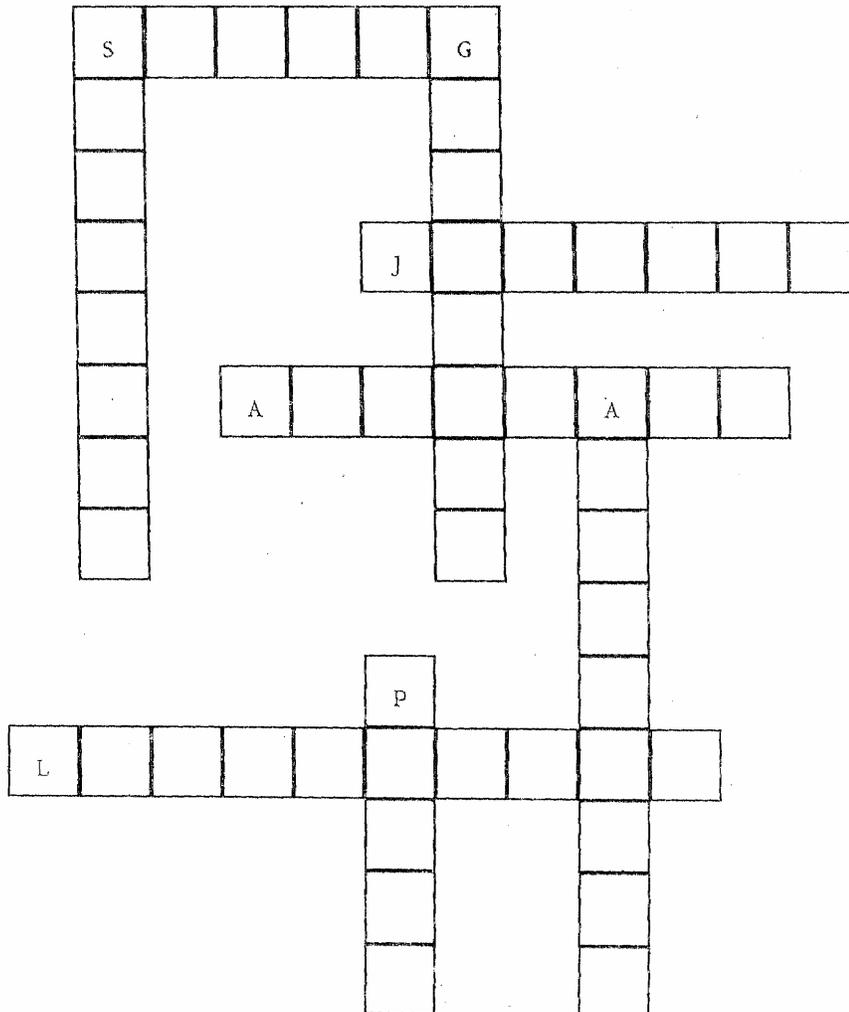
Activity 42

(Mahabharata – Salya Parva / After the War)

Crossword Puzzle

Did Duryodhana have positive qualities? _____
 Complete the puzzle with the words listed below:

- arrogant skillful jealous generous
 strong ambitious leadership proud



Activity 43

(Mahabharata – Salya Parva / After the War)

Word Search

Yudhiṣṭhira was the king of Hastināpura. Why was he the right choice for the throne? Find his qualities listed below in the word search. Look up, down, across, and diagonally.

compassion
noble
righteous

just
caring
generous

courageous
calm
sensitive

S	U	O	E	T	H	G	I	R	N	S
U	T	L	A	E	M	I	O	O	O	E
O	N	M	L	N	T	P	I	U	B	N
E	M	L	N	E	Q	S	S	R	L	S
G	B	A	G	E	S	M	A	L	E	I
A	E	C	J	A	J	U	S	T	P	T
R	L	U	P	S	T	L	M	N	R	I
U	P	M	R	K	A	R	G	N	I	V
O	O	G	E	N	E	R	O	U	S	E
C	N	G	N	I	R	A	C	S	N	R

Activity 44**(Mahabharata – Salya Parva / After the War)****Word game**

You have heard these words often. Mark their correct meaning.

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. RIGHTEOUS | ___ kind | ___ ethical | ___ courageous |
| 2. ARROGANT | ___ humble | ___ proud | ___ deceitful |
| 3. WISDOM | ___ action | ___ ignorance | ___ knowledge |
| 4. ASTRA | ___ missile | ___ bow | ___ chariot |
| 5. PṚTHVI | ___ earth | ___ water | ___ land |
| 6. KAVACA | ___ crown | ___ bow | ___ chest armor |
| 7. KUṆḌALA | ___ earrings | ___ conch | ___ bracelet |
| 8. AGNI | ___ land | ___ air | ___ fire |
| 9. INVINCIBLE | ___ invisible | ___ cowardly | ___ unbeatable |
| 10. BOON | ___ curse | ___ blessing | ___ drum |
| 11. KṢATRIYA | ___ priest | ___ warrior | ___ sannyāsī |
| 12. PRASĀD | ___ sweet | ___ name | ___ blessing |

Below is the map of India showing some of the important places in Ancient India.



Below is the present political map of India.

