

ESSENCE OF VIRAT PARVA OF MAHA BHARATA

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Essence of Puranas:

Maha Bhagavata, Vishnu, Matsya, Kurma, Varah, Vamana, Narada, Padma, Shiva, Skanda, Markandeya, Devi Bhagavata, Brahma, Brahma Vaivarta, Brahmanda, Agni, Bhavishya, Nilamata, and Shri Kamakshi Vilasa. Index of main subjects covered in Essence of Puranas too.

Dwadasha Divya Sahasra Naama:

Charurvidha Devi Sahasra Naama: Lakshmi, Lalitha, Saraswati, Gayatri

Chaturvidha Shiva Sahasra Naama: Shiva- Linga-Brahma Puranas and Maha Bharata

Chaturvidha Vishnu Sahasra Naama: Padma-Skanda-Narada Puranas and Maha Bharata

Stotra Kavacha- A Shield of Prayers

Purana Saaramsha

Select Stories from Puranas

Essence of Dharma Sindhu

Essence of Paraashara Smriti

Essence of Pradhana Tirthas

Essence of Amarnath Yatra

Essence of Dharma Bindu

Essence of Upanishads

Rig Veda Base: Kausheetaki, Atreyi

Yajur Veda Base: Brihadaraanyaka, Katha, Taittiriya, Isha, and Shvetaashvatara

Saama Veda Base: Chhandogya, Kena

Atharva Base: Mundaka, Maandukya and Prashna

Quintessence of Dwaadasha Upanishads

Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata*

[Note: All the above works already released vide kamakoti.org/news and google except that with* being processed]

PREFACE

The Maha Peetha of Yoga Sphatika Linga of Chandramouleswara along with Tripura Sundari as descended from Adi Shankara and venerated for generations at Shankara Mutt of Kanchi blessed the Chennai Citizens from March 19-April 25, 2015 at the premises of Shri Kamakshi Nilaya at Chavali Gardens, at the Greenways Road Extension, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai-28 when both HH Jayendra Saraswati and HH Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati had graced. During that stay, there not only were daily Gopujas and Trikaala Pujaabhishekas, but also crowded programs of Vasanta Navaratra Pujabhishekas and Sri Vidya Homas, Telugu and Tamil New Year Celebrations, Mooka Panchashati and Ekadashi Upanyasas, Surya Namaskaras, Gayatri Japa Paaraayanas, 62nd Celebrations of HH Jayendra Saraswati's Peethaarohana, week long Rig Veda Sabhas, Shankara Jayanti Celebrations with daily parikramas climaxed with an approx six km long route upto Siddhi-Buddhi Vinayaka Temple at R.A.Puram to and fro, a day long 500 strong Suvasini Puja and Lalitha Sahasra naama Parayana, and daily tirtha prasadas. Each of the daily chores of the five week long stay of the HH Swamis was dotted with interviews of VIP's and commoners alike while their blessings were provided to several hundreds of devotees daily seeking solace from them. In short, the devotees of Chennai had a *spiritual dream run* soaked with prayers, puja-abhishekas, Upanyasas, besides surfiet of vocal and insrumental religious musicals with strong undercurrents of high devotion.

It was in this context that HH Vijayendra Saraswati instructed me to translate and abridge in the form of an Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata and make available to the public on their network vide [kamakoti.org / news](http://kamakoti.org/news) highlighting the Agjnata Vaasa of the virtuous Pandavas, subsequent to a twelve year Forest Life as stipulated further the dice game; this indeed was a tribute to Pandavas for their moral resilience under most trying times of their glorious life of Dharma and Nyaya or Virtue and Justice. There is a strong belief that reading of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata would not only entail enrichment of one's thought and action but toughen one's psyche to face life in the framework of fortitude and challenge without slipping into demerit and immorality. An allied faith is that daily recitation of 'Durga Stuti' -vide the sixth chapter of this Booklet- before Pandavas entered the Virat Kingdom- would usher in supreme faith and courage of conviction. In fact at the daily congregations of the five week long stay at the premises of Shri Lakshmi Kamakshi Nilaya mentioned above, HH Vijayendra Saraswati encouraged the open recitals of the Durga Stuti. Recital of this Stuti along with Rishyashringa Shlokas had indeed made it possible the typically Chennai weather of scorching heat to yield relieving but highly unseasonal rain pours as though Lord Indra Deva was happy at these daily recitals!

This abridged translation of the Essence of Virat Parva is offered as a flower of the Chavali Gardens around the Lakshmi Kamakshi Nilaya at Chennai at the lotus feet of Paramacharya popularly called the Walking God of Kanchi Mutt.

VDN Rao and family

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Virat King mistakes that Prince won the battle and even hurts Kankbhatt by hitting him on face without knowing the Truth, but latter accepts the King’s apology and even prevails Arjun to let his son Abhimanyu wed Princess Uttara at a befitting and auspicious function of glory!

ESSENCE OF VIRAT PARVA OF MAHA BHARATA

Naraayanam namaskrutya naram chaiva natottamam, Deveem Saraswateem Vyaasam tato jayamudeerayet/

(Our prostrations to Antaryaami Narayana, Bhagavan Shri Krishna, and his dear companion Arjuna the Narasreshtha or of ideal human form, besides Devi Bhagavati Saraswati the manifestation of 'Vidya'/ Knowledge as also to Maharshi Veda Vyaasa who is never tired of conveying Krishna Leelas by narrating the Matchless Maha Bharata the Unique Epic)

Introduction:

Virat Parva comprises five Parvas titled Pandava Pravesha Parva or Entry of Pandavas in disguise at the Court of King Virat with twelve Chapters; Samaya Paalana Parva or 'Ajnaata Pandavas' spending one year of Time Passing at the Kingdom of Virat with Chapter Thirteen; Keechaka Vadha Parva or the killing of demon-like Keechaka the power centre of Kingdom of Virat the brother of the Queen from Chapter Fourteen to twenty four; Go-harana Parva or the attack of Virat Kingdom's cow herd by Kouravas of Kuru Kingdom comprising chapters twenty five to sixty nine and finally of Vaivahika Parva (totally comprising seventy two chapters).

PANDAVA PRAVESH PARVA

Prathamodhyaaya(Chapter I)-Yudhishtar plans Pandava's 'Agjnaata Vaasa' in Virat Kingdom

In the dialogue between King Janamejaya of the subsequent generation of Pandavas and Sage Vaishampaayana, the former asked: *Katham Virata nagare mama purvapitaamahaah, Ajnaata vaasamushitaa Duryodhana bhayaardhitaah/ Pativrataa maha bhaagaa satatam Brahma vaadinee, Draupadicha katham brahmanajnaataa duhkhitavasat/* (As Pandavas out of sheer fear of Duryodhan's knowledge of finding them out during the year long 'Agjnaata vaasa' or unknown status of their existence, how did indeed Devi Draupadi save her own presence hidden in the Virat Kingdom! Janamejaya replied that Yudhishtar addressed his brothers and Draupadi: *Dwadashemaani varshaani rajyaviproshitaa vayam, Trayodashoyam samp्राप्तah krucchaat parama durvasah/* (Today the twelve years of extremely tough Forest Life is concluded and the far tougher Unknown Existence for a full year is ahead us, lest there might not be a recurrence of another spell of twelve year forest life followed by a year's Unknown Existence as per the Agreement in pursuance of Losing the Game of Dice). In reply Arjun replied: *Tasyaiva varadaanena Dharmasya Manujhaadhipa, Agjnaataa vichrishaamo naraanaam naatra shamshayah/ Tatra vaasaaya raashtraani keertayishyaami kaanichit, ramaneeyaani guptaani tesham kinchit sma rochaya//* (King Dharma Raja! Rest assured that by the grace of Lord Krishna, there need to be no apprehension at all as Dharma the Unique Fund of Justice and Virtue should sail through these troubled waters of destiny in a manner that none should be able to recognize Pandavas and as such we all of the Five Pandavas accompanied by Devi Draupadi might choose one's own hobby and interest and plunge into the waters with pluck and good luck.) Arjun further advised that around the Empire of Kuru Desha there were free regions of repute like Panchala, Chedi, Matsya, Shurasena, Patanchara, Dashaarna, Nava Rashtra, Malla, Shaalva, Yugandhara, Kinturashtra, Saurashtra and Ananti. Dharma Raja, do select any one of these Independent Kingdoms of your choice so that we would all follow suit.

Dharma Raja replied that indeed we should all follow Dharma and respect unanimity; it might appear suitable to select such a place where we should live peacefully while pursue one's own interest too; he then stated: *Matsyo Viraato balavaan abhiroktata Pandavaan, Dharma sheelo vadaanyascha vriddhascha satatam priyah/* (Matsya King Virat is not only a powerful King but of soft corner for Pandavas with a broad mind and heart in general) Arjuna was no doubt agreeable to the proposal as well as other Pandavas too but voiced the concern that considering the mild and soft nature of Dharma Raja, as to what kind of task could be assumed by him in the court of Virat King! Yudhishtar smilingly replied: *Sabhaastaaro bhavishyaami tasya Raagjno mahaatmanah, KANKO NAAMA dwijo bhutwaa mataakshah priya devanah/ Vaiduryaan Kaanchanaan daantaan phalairjjyoti rasaih saha, krishnaanllohita varnaschha nirvatsaryaami manoramaan// Virata raajam ramayan saamaatyam, saha bandhavam, Na cha maam vetasyate kaschit toshaishye cha tam Nripam// Aasam Yudhishtarasyaaham puraa praanasamah sakhaa iti vashyaami Raajaanam yadi maam sunuyokshyate// Ityetad vo mayaakhyaatam vihirashaamyamaham tathaa//* (Dharma Raja stated that he was an adept in the art of dice play and by assuming the name of Kank Bhat [Indeed 'Kank' is an alternate name of Yama Dharma Raja and Yudhishtar was too of the 'amsha' or of the near-nativity of Yama Dharma Raja too and the saying is *atmaa vai jaayate putrah/* or sons are born after the fathers] and become a member of King Virat's close circle of confidants; eventually he would become like a 'Nava Ratna' or like nine gems of the Royal Court as also like green Vaidurya, yellow like gold, white like Ivory and so on. Yadhishthar further stated that in case the Virat King asked for his introduction, then he would introduce himself as a close adviser to King Yudhishtar before the latter had to leave the throne due to unfortunate circumstances. And that would be how he would enter the Virat Sabha! Then Sage Vaishampaayana told Emperor Janamejaya that Dharma Raja looked up Bhimasena and said: 'Bhima! What type of task that you could perform in Matsya Desha! We have the memorable experience of reddening your eyes and killing Krodhavash Yaksha and scores of valiant Rakshasas who surrounded the Saravar or Lake just to ornament Devi Draupadi's hair with the lotuses of the lake! Bhima! You also had the role of assuming the status of a Brahmana while Kauravas cunningly planned to burn up all Pandavas in a lac made mansion and were saved by Lord Krishna through a tunnel as the latter assumed 'Brahmanatwa' or the habits of Brahmanas entering Ekachakra nagari and saved Brahmanas and others in the township by killing Bakasura who demanded to kill one each of the Nagari every day! Maha baahu Bhima! You are also reputed to have killed Hidimba and Kirmeera Rakshasas in a dense jungle and saved the lives of Sages performing Sacrifices and subsequently married Hidimbi to save from 'Vaidhavya' or widowhood . Bhima! the ever playful Draupadi was harassed by Jataasura and saved her from molestation by Jataasura at the nick of time! With such herioc background, Bhima: *Vrikodara!Virate twam ramasyase kena hetunaa!* How indeed would you manage and conduct yourself!

Dwiteeyodhyaaya (Chapter Two)-Bhima and Arjun decide to enter Virat Kingdom as Vallabha the cook and Brihannala the dance teacher

Bhimasena replied to Dharma Raja that keeping in view his dear hobby and pastime of cooking and his great culinary interest , he would assume the name of Ballava and become 'Paorogava' or the Head Cook on the Virat Kingdom. He assured that even the initial test of lifting heavy wooden pieces for cooking - not an easy task that normal humans could- would impress the authorities that be, and very soon, the Virat King would be overwhelmed with his art of cooking. *Raajnastasya pare preshyaa mamsyante maam yathaa nripam, Bhakshyaanna rasa paaneenaam bhavishyaami tathesvarah/* Bhima assured Yudhishtara that the bhakshya-bhojya-lehya- choshya- rasa-paaneeyas or fried, cereal-non cereal based cookies, tongue

tingling tastes, liquids, and drinks would readily appeal to the King and his subjects and through the art of cooking would be very soon attract alround admiration. Moreover, *Dwipaa vaa Balino Rajan, Vrishabhaa -vaa maha balaah, vinigraahyaa yadi maya nigraheeshyaami taanapi// Ye cha kechinniyotyasyanti samaajeshu niyodhakaah, taanahamhi niyotyasyaami ratim tasya vivardhayan/ Aaraaliko govikartaa supa kartaa niyodhakah aasam yudhishtirasyaahamiti vakshyaami prucchatah/* (Dharma Raja! I shall control and subdue any animal of strength including elephants and heavy bulls, shall participate in ‘Malla Yuddha’ or Control of Super strong duels, one-to-one physical bouts and fights in a manner that the challenging groups are suppressed and overcome but not killed. At the command of the King, I shall control groups of elephants, oxen and bulls even over open competitions quite apart from culinary challenges!) Bhima further stated: *Atmaanamaatmanaa rakshamscharyaami vishaampate, Ityetat pratijaanaami viharishyamaham yathaa/* (Rajan, in this manner, not only I shall defend myself but even defend the Kingdom of Virat nagar!) Having been convinced of Bheema’s comfortable stay in the Kingdom of Virat, Yudhishtar addressed Arjun: *Maha balam maha baahum ajitam kurunandanam, soyam kim karma kounteyah karishyati Dhananjayah!* (You Arjuna! You are ever victorious and inseperable companion of Bhagavan Shri Krishna, well popular as the pair of Nara Narayana, who even prevented Agni Deva in the form of a Brahmana bent on burning off entire Khandava Forests, how could indeed you be stooped to and marginalised in the insignificant Kingdom of Virat!’ Then Yudhishtar looked at Vrikodara Bheema and said: *Suryah pratpataam shreshtho dwipadaam brahmano varah, Aashee vishascha sarpaanaamagnistejasvinaam varah/ Aayudhaanaam varam vajram kakudbheecha gavaam varah, hladaanamudadhih shreshthah parjanya varshataam varah, Dhritaraashtrasha naanaagaam hastishvairavano varah/ Putrah priyaanamadhiko bharyaa cha suhrudaam varaa , Gireenaam pravaro merurdevaanaam Madhusudana, Grahaanaam pravarschandrah sarasaam Maanasamvaram/ Yathitaani vishishtaani jaatyaaam VRIKODARAM evam yuvaa Gudaakeshah shreshthah sarva dhanushmataam/* (Just as Surya is among the most resplendent among the illuminated objects, Brahmanas are among the humans, Aasheevisha among the serpents, the brightest is Agni among the fires, vajra among the ayudhas or weapons, cows among those with heightened hump, the largest of water bodies are the oceans, parjanya is the best among the rain yielding clouds, Dhritarashtra is the noblest and most powerful of Serpents, Iravata is the outstanding among elephants, sons are the best of one’s progeny, Dharmapatni is the leading among one’s own feminine companions, like Meru among the Mountains, Madhusudana among the Devas, Chandrama among the Nava grahas or the leading planets, and Manasa sarovar among the best of lakes. Bhina sena! In the same manner as the outstanding ones happen to be among the various entities, Gudakesha or the Conquerer of Sleep Arjuna is indeed the unique among the human beings!) Indeed, just as Indra is the King of Devas and Bhagavan Shri Krishna is outstanding in all respects, Arjuna the carrier of of the famed Gaandeeva Bow and numberless Arrows riding white and spotless horses ; he who like the twelfth of Eleven Rudras, thirteenth of the Twelve Adityas, ninth of the Eight Vasu Devas and the tenth of the Nine Grahas or Planets; he who is like the Himalayas of Mountains, the Great Ocean of all the waterbodies, Indra among Devas, Havya vaahana Agni among the Vasus, the Lion of the Animal Kingdom, and Garud Pakshi among the Kingdom of Sky Birds and the bravest on Earth, what indeed would Arjun do at Virat Desha! When Yudhishtar was totally lost in deep thoughts as what could such famed Arjun do in this petty Virat kingdom! Arjun then replied: *Pratikshaam shandakosmeeti karishyaami Maheepate, Jyaaghaatau hi mahaantau me samvartyum Nripa dushkarou/ Balayaishcheaadayishmaami bahoo kinakritaavimou/ Karnayoh pratimuchyaaham kundale jwalaanprabhe, pinadvakambuh paanibhyaam triteeyaam prakritim gatah, vanneekrita shiraa Raajan naamnaa chiva BRIHANNALA/Pathannakhyaayikaaschaiva stree bhavena*

punah punah, Ramayishye maheepaalamanyaams chahy antahpure janaan/ Geetam nrityam vichitram cha vaaditram vividham tathaa, Shikshayishyaamyaham Rajan Viraatasya puristriyah/ Prajaanaam samidaachaaram bahu karma kritam vadan, Chhadapishyaami Kounteya maaya yaatman maatmanaa/ Yudhishtarasya gehai vai Draupadyaah paricharika, Ushitaasmeeti vakshyaami prushtho raajnaa cha pandava/ Etena vidhinaa chhatarah kritakena yathaanalah viharishyaami Rajendra Virat bhavane sukham/ (Maha Raja! I should be perfectly able to act as a ‘Napumsaka’ or Sexless Being or of neutral gender and befittingly enough would be able to hide the rough marks of my hardened shoulders and arms due to dense scratches due to carrying the ‘Gaandiva’ the Dhanush or the Bow and the Arrows by wearing heavy bangles on the wrist upward the hands and shoulders. Both of my ears would camouflage or disguise the very bright and fiery shine of ‘kundalas’ or earrings by way of donning typical hair style and assuming perfect looks of an eunuch and of tertiary way of behavior of a neutral being. By this way, I shall enter the Virat sabha by convincing everybody as from Draupadi’s ‘Antapura’ or as of the Confidant named as Brihannala the dance and music teacher and thus succeed as the Ladies Interior Quarters!

Triteeyodhyaaya (Chapter Three)-Decisions of Nakula as horse trainer, Sahadeva as Cow keeper and Draupadi as servant maid

Yudhishtar asked NAKULA to describe as to which role could he assume in the Virat Kingdom as Nakula was no doubt a ‘ShuraVeera’ or a valiant warrior yet of mild demeanour and Nakula replied politely: *GRANTHIKO NAAMA naamnaaham karmaitat supriyam mama, Kushalo Ashwashikshaayaam tathaivaashva chikitsane, priyaamshca satatam meshvaah Kuru Raja yathaa tava/* (I shall assume the name of GRANDHIKA as my interest is to train royal horses and look after the stable, as I enjoy the company of horses, cure them as needed and administer medicines when they fall sick.) Nakula further said that he would introduce himself as the stable manager of Kuru Kingdom and once inducted into the Royal Service would be able to move about freely in the Virat Rajya. Then Yudhishtar asked SAHADEVA as to how would be able to conduct himself in the Royalty of Virat. Sahadeva replied: *Go sankhyaataa bhavishyaami Viratsya mahipateh, pratishedwaa cha dogdhaacha sankhyaane kushalo gavaam/TANTIPALA iti khyatonaamaaham viditasvatha, Nipunim cha charishyaami vyetu te manaso jwarah/* (Sahadeva assured DharmaRaja that he would assume the name of TANTIPAALA and enter the Kingdom of Virat as the cow keeper as his great interest is anything and everything to do with cows.) He assured that apart from the Saatana Dharma of Go Rakshana, he would ensure the health of cows, their longevity, progeny and alround well being as a ideal symbol of the Kingdom. Then Yudhishtar addressed to Devi Draupadi: *Iyam hi nah priya bharyaa pranebhopi gareeyasi, Maateva paripaalya cha pujaay jeshtheva cha swasaa/ Kena sya Draupadi krishnaa karmanaa vicharishyati, na hi kinchidvijaaneeti karma kartrum yathaa striyah/ Sukumari cha baalaa cha rajaputri yashaswini, Pativrataa mahaabhaga katham nu vicharishyati/ Maalyagandhanalankaaraan vastraani vividhaani cha, Etaanyevaabhi jaanaati yato jaataa hi bhamini/* (Draupadi Krishna is not only the wife of Pandavas but also the respect and fame of all of us to be safeguarded as the very life and existence of Pandavas. Unlike the general mill of womanhood, she is too fragile to take up household tasks and our main concern would indeed be as to how she would be able to carry on for the whole year of Agjnaata vaasa! Bhimasen has been looking after her well by providing aromatic flower garlands, wonderful scents and clothes and most importantly her personal well being and safety, and she might not be exposed to public gaze as she is too sensitive and innocent indeed!) Draupadi replied: *Sairandhyo rakshitaa loke bhujishyaah santi Bharata, Naiva maanyaah striyo yaanti iti lokasya nischayah/ Saaham bruvaana Sairandhi kushalaa keshakarmani,*

Yudhishtarasya gehe vai Draupadyaah paricharikaah, Ushitaasmeeti vahshyaami prushtaa Raahaa cha bharata/ Atmaguptaa charishyaami yanmaam twam pariprucchasi, Sudeshnaam pratyupastaasye Raja bharyaam yashasvineem, Saa rakshisyati maam praanaam maa bhut te duhkameedrasham// (Bharata! In this world there would be several woman who send their lives in other's homes as their daughters-in-law and are safe and happy due to their own conduct and behaviour and all such women are generally called Sairandhris. That is how I shall introduce myself as SAIRANDHRI the Personal Helper to Devi Draupadi. I shall indeed look after myself well and be the Personal Companion of Sudeshna the 'Patta Mahishi' or the Prime Queen of the Kingdom. None need to worry for me as I am confident of Self Help primarily!) Yudhishtar heaved a sigh of great relief as he was primarily concerned of Draupadi's well-being and her reply of assurance provided immense relief to him and the rest of Pandavas!

Chaturthodhyaaya (Fourth Chapter)- Dhaumya teaches how Pandavas ought to conduct themselves at the Virat Kingdom

Yudhishtar addressed the rest of Pandavas then to assume their new duties as decided and that he too would perform as per his volition. He requested Purohita Dhaumya to shift to Drupada Kingdom and look after their domestic Agnihotras and Indrasena and other faithful servants to shift to Dwaraka by the chariots of Pandavas while the women in waiting for Draupadi would shift to Panchala Desha along with the paakashaala or kitchen and household materials. All the persons close to Pandavas are forbidden to disclose the top secret of whither Pandavas have disappeared. Vaishampayana Muni explained to King Janamejaya the further proceedings of what Dhaumya explained to Pandavas as follows: You are indeed well aware of Brahmanas, Sahridayas or well wishers, basic knowledge of 'Astra-Sastras' or of the ground rules of archery and weapons and such duties are well familiar to you. Yet, these regulations ought to be respected and enforced in critical timings as of now. Arjuna! A special word of advise for you would be ever vigilant in respect of Draupadi as you would have ready access to the Queen's quarters and as such would be able to collect information if any on the goings-on there. Generally speaking, you Pandavas! You are only aware of how to conduct as Pandavas only, but would not be aware as to how to behave as the servants of a King: ! *Atohamapi vakshyaami hetumatra nibhodata, hantemaam rajavasatim Rajaputraa braveemyaham// Yathaa raja kulam praapya sarvaan doshaamstarishyatha, durvaasam chaiva Kouravya jaanataa raajaveshmani/Amaanitair maanitairvaa agjnaanaih parivatsaram, tataschaturdasho varshe charipyatha yathaasukham/ Ishtadwaaro labhed drushtam Raagasveshu na vishvaset, tadevaasanamanvicched tatra naabhipatet parah/* (Pandavas! Be it well known as to how an intelligent person should look at from an objective perception by placing oneself in the respective positions and statuses always. Indeed such attitude of behaving is very easily said than actually practised. You have to necessarily be ever alert as servants but not as masters. Somehow this one excruciating long duration of a full year has to be steered clear and be free again for the rest of your life of royalty. You have to learn the process of meeting the kingships only by giving advance permissions. Never indeed believe blindly the whims and fancies of royalties as granted and vigilance is the watch word with the King's men. Never assume that you are a person of Royalty and be seated on the chariot or elephant or horse of theirs be cautious of where to be seated in the Royal homes. Never ever try to give suggestions and advices to the King or King's men and women unless asked for. Never carry tales in royal homes lest they might boomerang to harm the self. Intelligent males should keep distance from the Ladies of Royalty, much less extend advices and suggestions. Insignifiacant events and happenings need not be conveyed to Royal houses. Never be seated on high chairs and is always advised to stand and wait. Consider that Kings or their close companions are like fire or double edged weapons and as such keep

great restraint in one's actions is called for. Those who seek to provide exaggerated and pretended services to Kings are certain to rebound sooner or later. Perform only the duties expected of Kings or Officials and avoid negligence, arrogance and selfishness at any cost. Duty or non duty should be followed properly and treading on what other's are not expected be steered clear with caution. *Anukulo bhavecchhaasya sarvartheshu kathaasucha, Apriyam chaahitam yat syaat tadasmai naanuvarnayet/* (Be always in agreement with the views of Kingship and never discuss even by mistake any topic that is disagreeable to the King; moreover do not repeat a topic of disinterest to the high command). Intelligent persons should generate a feeling of faithfulness and confidence of dependability to royalties and really refrain from the activities not in line with the King's views, much less mingle with his opponents. Vidwans should always be seated to the right side or left side, since his personal security officials or staff are right behind him with their arms and weaponry. Never be seated on a higher level to that of the King. In the event of a Prize Giving or Honouring Session, one should not be over enthusiastic and keep restraint unless duly announced for. Never raise a rumor even remotely involved with the King, much less while not checking its veracity. When a person tends to lie habitually, royalties dislike him, so do the learned persons and become unworthy of belief even they do talk the truth. When person boasts of his nearness to the kingship or of his own trumpet even otherwise, is never liked by the king and remains bereft of opportunities and fortunes. Once the King bestows fortunes to a person who gradually neglects duties is doomed suddenly and hence maintenance of duties is the prerequisite of sincerity. *Yasya kopo mahabaadhah prasaadascha mahaaphalah, kastasya manasaapeecchedanrtham praagjnasammatah/* (One's own anger is his own doom, and his calmness even in provocative situations proves as his own security; indeed it takes dutifulness with ease takes steps forward surely.) In the Royal Court Chamber, do not shake one's hands and legs, much less the tongue with wasteful talk; if spitting is necessary do it silently and so do leave 'vaatam' or gas without any one's notice and least of sound. In case any funny view or scene is seen, do not laugh loud but need not suppress the reaction either but enjoy mildly and smile. Whenever an experience of great fulfillment is accomplished or a terrible loss of defeat is encountered, do keep equanimity and poise. Only then as a Minister or Prince or King is deservedly praised, the servant could survive well in a Royal Court. In an unfotunate event of any high ranking senior scolds or punishes, then one should not argue at the spur of the moment but keep cool at that time and take an appropriate time vindicate one's position subsequently even while justifying the circumstance of how the senior might have been misled. Only those active enthusiasts of wisdom and commonsense yet truthful and trustworthy officials could get on nicely in Royal Service. In case an official is commanded to be present himself before the King or Royalty, then the concerned official should present himself within reasonable time and politely. Only such persons who are able to face difficult situations especially in matters of defending women or outside duties even while facing enemies without fear and selflessness would be able to perform in the royalties well for long. Only those who could even sacrifice comforts of the Self and leaving families behind and spend spells of time outside of one's land could tick well for long in Palaces. Never imitate Royalties by adorning the dresses and jewellery that they wear, nor never dilulge the confidential information that the Royalties provided to you and then only the former would confide and trust in you! In case one is appointed in sensitive positions, never ever accept bribes lest in the long run there would be some occasions when mischances of getting caught in dismissals entailing loss of jobs and public face, besides punishments of imprisonments and even of deaths. As and when the King or royalties are pleased with one's services, then do use the gifts like clothes or ornaments, as a mark of gratitude. *Evam samyamy chittaani yatnatah Pandunandanaah, Samvatsarabhimam taatha tathayaashilaa vibhushita, Atha swavishayam praapya yathaakaamam karishyatha/* (Purohita Dhoumya

thus exhorted Yudhishtar and the rest of Pandavas prescribed the do's and don't's of demeanor in the Virat Palace.) Yudhishtar profusely thanked Dhomya for the excellent teachings which no doubt are simple but profound and extremely difficult to follow and abide by! Then Dhomya performed appropriate Agni Homa and blessed Pandavas with abundant patience during the tough year ahead and Rajya prapti or regaining their Royal Life soon thereafter.

Panchamodhyaaya (Fifth Chapter)-Pandavas keep their Astra-Shastras up on Shami Tree at 'Smashana'

Sage Vaishampaayana resumed his narration to King Janamejaya that Pandavas folded their swords, removed their arrows and armoury from their shoulders and being bare footed approached the banks of River Yamuna. They consoled themselves that just after a year's hardship, the sweet days of relief and a joy would resume as they would regain their great Empire as for twelve years of forest and mountain life killing frightful animals and poisonous reptiles, as also devilish evil forces, their adversity and destitution would terminate, after all! Their fateful and prolonged twelve years of exile started from up northern sided Darshna Desha through Panchala Desha- Shurasena Desha, with unshaven and tired visages and bodies carrying heavy arms and armoury entered the out skirting villages of Matsya Desha. Devi Draupadi looked up at Yudhishtar and said that since the region appeared to be hilly, she might not be able to proceed further when Dharma Raja asked Dhananjaya Arjuna to carry Draupadi on his shoulders instantly and the latter did so easily and brought her down almost near the Capital City. Arjun asked Dharma Raja to keep the 'astra-shastras' of Pandavas safe. The latter replied: *Gaandeevam cha mahad gaaddham lokecha viditam nrinaam/* Indeed Arjuna's 'Gaandeeva' or his bow is famed all over especially among the Kings of entire 'Bharata desha' and the Pandavas armoury ought to be kept at such an odd place like the Burial Grounds of the Capital City of Matsya. *Na chaapi vidyate kaschin manushya iti me matih yosmaan nidadhato drashtaa bhavacchastraani Pandavaah/ Utpathe hi vane jaataa srugavyaala nishevite sameepecha shmashaanasya gahanasya visheshatah/ Samaayaayudham shayyaam gacchhamo nagaram prati, Evameva yathaa yogam vihirashaama Bharata/(* Pandavaas! None should witness the act of our keeping the 'Astra shastras' safe. Near by the burial ground deep in the inaccessible jungle there is a 'Shami' Tree inhabited by poisonous snakes and is frightful where the heap of the weaponry duly tied be placed at a dusk time or early night). Accordingly were tied up safe and neat viz. Yudhishtar's dhanush with which the entire security of Kuru kshetra was depended on; Bheem a's dhanush which frightened Jayadratha into submission and mountain ranges where hundreds of Asuras made their abodes were destroyed to disperse or kill; the famed Gaandiva of Arjuna with which he rode to several victory series not only of Kings far and near but of Rakshas as well; the bow and arrows were tied up of 'Maha baahu Mahee nandana' Nakul who was no less reputed as his victories on the western parts of Bharata desha enabled the high flying flag of Kuru Desha and accorded the fame of a great warrior; the 'shasraastras' of Sahadeva who had the tenacity of defeating the rows of Dakshina / Southern Kingships that were subdued too were tied up in the unique bundle of Pandavas. Besides the glittering khadgas or swords, invaluable 'tuneeras' or arrows and their respective cases were bundled too. It was decided that Nakul would keep the bundle up at the strong hold of the huge tree as he was blessed with the vision of such a hiding place on the tree top corners where even incessant rains would ensure dryness of that gigantic 'Shami Vriksha'. As a further safe guard, Pandavas arranged a tightly rope tied dead body hung on the tree so that even the very rare visitors would be frightened of the spectacle of the tree. Moreover, Pandavas explained that among the Yadavas and Cowkeepers the belief was that Shami Vrikshas of eighty years be considered like their own mother and were reassured of the safety of their arms!

Then Yudhishtar gave the secret names of Pandavas : *Jayo Jayanto Vijayo Jayatsneno Jayaduulah, Iti guhyaani naamaani chakre tesham Yudhishtarah/ Tato yathaa pratigjnaabhih praavishan nagaram mahat, Agjnaatacharyaam vasyanto Raashtre varsham trayodasham/* (The secret names were Jaya, Jayanta, Vijaya, Jagatsena and Jayaduula. Thereafter, the Pandavas as per their own decisions proceeded to spend the arduous thirteenth year of the ‘Agjnaata vaasa’ followed by twelve years of ‘Vana Vaasa’!

Shashthodhyaaya (The Sixth Chapter)-Yudhishtar prays to Durga Devi most earnestly!

Vaishampaayana narrated to King Janamejaya as follows: *Virata nagaram ramyam gacchamaano Yudhishtarah, Astuvanmanasaa Deveem Durgaa tribhuvaneshwareem/ Yashodaa garbha sambhuta Naraayana varapriyaamanda gopaala kuley jaataam mangalyaam kulavardhineem/ Kamsavidraavana kareemasuraganaam kshayamkareem, shilaatata vinikshitaamaakaasham pratigaamineem/ Vaasudeva - sya bhagineem divya maalya vibhushitaam, Divyaambaradharaam Devim khadagakhetadhaarineem/* (King Yudhishtar at the time of Pandavas entering ‘Virat Sabha’ had within his own heart prayed to Tribhuvaneshwari Durga Devi and further to Vaasudeva Shri Krishna the Avataara Purusha or the Singular Deity of Dwapara Yuga! Durga Devi’s ‘amsha’ was also born to Nanda gopaala even as the babies were interchanged as Maya flew away to high skies warning Kamsa for having imprisoned his own sister and brother in law viz. Vasudeva and Devaki and that Lord Krishna would eventually terminate the devilish Kamsa) Dharma Raja further prayed to Durga Devi: *Bhaaraava tarane punye ye smaranti Sadaashivam, Taan vai taarayase paapaat panke kaamiva durbalam/* (Devi! You are the One who had descended down to Earth to bless all those born and pray to you earnestly are surely uplifted from their difficulties, just as those drawn deep into the slush of worldly attractions and the consequences are pulled out and provided salvation.) He continued the Prayers as follows:

Yashoda garbha sambhutaam Naaraayana varapriyaam, Nanda gopaala kule jaataam mangalyaam kulavardhineem/

Kamsavidraavana kareemasuranaam kshayamkareem, shilaatatavinikshaptam aakaasham prati gaamineem/

Vaasudevasya bhagineem divyamaalya vibhushitaam, Divyaambara dharaam Deveem khadgakheta dhaarineem/

Bhaaraavatarane Punye ye smaranti Sadaa Shivaam, taan vai taarayase paapaat panke gaamiva durlabham/

Stotum prachakrame bhuyo vividhah stotra sambhavaih, Aamantrya darshanaaakaanghream Raja Devim sahaanujah/

Namastestu varade Krishne Kumaari Brahmacharini, baalaarka sadrushaakaare purnachandraa nibhaanane/

Chaturbhuj Chaturvaktre peenashroni payodhare, Mayurapicchavalaye keyuraangada dhaarini, Bhaasi Devi yathaa Padmaa Naaraayana parigraha/

Swarupam brahmacharyanacha vishadam Gaganeshwari, Krishnaacchavi samaa Krishnaa Sankarshana samaanaa/

*Vibhrati viphulau baahu Shakra dhwaja samucchruyoau, Paatreecha pankajee ghantee,
streevishuddhaa cha yaa bhuvi/*

*Paashaam Dhanurmahaa chakram vividhaanyaayudhaani cha, Kundalaabhyaam supurnabhyaam
karnaabhyaancha vibhushitaa/*

*Chandra vispadwinaa Devi mukhena twam viraajase, Mukutena vichitrena kesha baandhena shobhinaa/
Bhujangaabhogavaasena shroni sutrena raajataa, Vibhraajase chaa vadvena bhogeneveha mandaraha/
Dhvajena shikhi pinchaanaammucchritena viraajase, Kaumaaram vratamaasyaaya tridivam pavitram
twayaa/*

*Tena twam stuyase Devi tradashouh puujasepicha, Trilokya rakshanaarthaaya Mahishaasura naashani/
Prasannaame Surashreshthe dayaam kuru shivaa bhava/*

*Jayaa twam vijayaachaiva sangraamecha jayapradaa, Mammaapi vijayam dehi varadaa twam cha
saampratam/*

*Vindhychaiva naga shreshthe tava sthaanam hi shaswatam, Kaali Kaali Mahaa Kaali khadga
khatvaanga dhaarini/*

*Kritaanu yaatraa bhutaistwam varadaa kaama chaarini, Bhaaraavataare ye cha twaam samshma –
rishyanti maanavaah/*

*Pranaanti cha ye twaam hi prabhaate tu naraa bhuvi, nateshaam durlabham kinchit putrato
dhanatopivaa/*

*Durgaat taarayase Durge tat twam Durgaa smritaa jhanaih, Kaatareshvavasatraanaam magnaanaam
cha mahaarnave/*

*Dasyur bhirvaa niruvaanaam twam gatih paramaa nrinaam, Jalpratarane chaiva kaantareshvataveeshu
cham/*

*Ye smaranti Maha Devi na cha seedanti te naraah, Twam keertim shridhritih siddhi hreem vidyaa
santatirmatih/*

*Sandhyaa raatrim Prabhaa nidraajyotisnaa kanih kshamaa dayaa/ Nrinaamcha bandhanam moham
putra naasham dhanakshyam/*

*Vyaadhi mrityum bhayam chaiva pujitaa naashayishyai, Soham raajyaat paribhrashthah sharanam
twaam prapannavaan/*

*Pranatacujha yataa murthaa tava Devi Sureshwari, Traahi maam Padmapatraakshi satye satyaa
bhavasva nah/*

*Sharanam bava me Durgey sharanye bhaktavatsale, eshaam stutaahi saa Devi darashanaamaasa
Pandavam, Upagamya tu raajaanmidam vachanamabraveet/*

(May I pray and cogitate Durga Devi who was born from the womb of Yashoda Devi, whom Lord Narayana is fond of his brotherly affection, who descended into the family background of Nandagopa, who provides and promotes auspiciousness all around, yet creates horror to the villainous Kamsa and destroys Asuras, who flew away to the Skies even as the wicked Kamsa tried to hit a stone, whose divinely physique is scented with splendid aromas and also ornamented with brilliant jewellery with magnificent clothing, carrying sharp sword and defensive sheath and finally the celestial sister of Vaasudeva Shri Krishna. Punyamayi Durga Devi! You have descended to Earth to lighten its sinful weight and usher in auspiciousness all over. Mother! You have the reputation of lifting from the depths of hurdles and difficulties to whosoever prays and meditates with earnestness and of blessing such persons with fruits of material and spiritual nature. On these lines, as Yudhishtar prayed with utmost sincerity the original Form of Durga Devi and prostratingly commended her to as follows:

Durga Devi! Once pleased with prayers, you are indeed the symbol of compassion! Our prostrations to you, Sacchidaanandamayi Krishne! You are indeed Kumari, Brahmacharini! Your brightness surpasses morning Surya's red illumination and your visage overcomes that of Chandra's coolness. Your four arms are like those of Vishnu and Four Faces remind us as of Brahma's; your chest swells of milk of kindness; your bangles are of peacock feather like softness and 'keyuras' are of outstanding brightness and coolness; your artistic looks overtake those of Lakshmi Devi and is resplendent with glow of celibacy; you are named as Shyama Sundari like that of the brilliance of Lord Krishna Himself. Your 'abhaya mudra' of raised palms of both of two hands with shoulders too of elevation provides security and of protection, while the third hand carries a vessel to provide boons of fulfillment, the fourth symbolising a lotus, the fifth hand a bell to warn the malevolent, the sixth a paasha or noose, the seventh a dhanush and the eighth a unique chakra to terminate evil forces. Indeed, you are the symbol of Purity and manifestation of most ideal womanhood on earth with scintillating earrings doubling the splendour of your visage like serpents circling the Mandara mountains! The 'dhwaja' or flagship with the signage of peacock feathers waves sky high doubling your magnificence and being symbolic of Brahmacharya or celibacy of high order purifies the three lokas. Devi! No wonder all the Devas raise you in high esteem, shower praises and worship you in admiration and with extreme devotion. It is to save and safeguard the Three Worlds from Mahishasura the symbol of Evil and Cruelty that we all anchor our faiths unto you the high icon of mercy and auspiciousness! Indeed, you are the pictogram of victory and triumph, bestowing success in all our mortal endeavors; do at this very moment be gracious for boon granting to us all. Your traditional place of stay and rest happens to be Vindhya-chala! Kaali, Kaali, Maha Kaali, may your weaponry of sword and long studded trident protect us always! To all those beings who worship you with heart and soul reap ready gains and fruits of life. Your movements are improptu, instant and as per your sweet will in innumerable forms and permutations to save each and every devotee praying with sincerity. No hurdle is inaccessible and no depths or heights are reachable to those who are needy or at your very sincere thought! To those regular devotees who early in the mornings worship you should indeed have no needs of life unfulfilled be it prosperity, progeny, fame and total contentment. Durga Devi! You are renowned to lead the helpless to cross over the mountains of hurdles, be one is lost in thick jungles, or drowning fast and deep in huge oceans, or suddenly surrounded by the mighty wicked and immoral. Indeed you are the ultimate refuge! You are the manifestation of Keerti or Fame, Shri or Wealth, Dhriti or of Patience to let humans follow the path of virtue, Siddhi or of Fulfillment, Lajja or Modesty, Vidya of Knowledge, Santati or Progeny, Mati or Broad Mindedness, besides the materialisation of Sandhya-Raatri-Prabha-Nidra-Jyotsna-Kaanti-Kshama! Total surrender to Durga Devi would certainly assure

bondage, poverty, disease, fear psychosis and untimely and painful death!) As Dhara Raja begged desperately and surrendered ultimately with tears in his eyes stating *Sharanam bhavame Durge sharanye Bhaktavatsale*, Durga Devi granted her vision and assured: Yudhishtara! Not very late since now, you will surely regain your Empire in a battle and clean sweep your enemies. Meanwhile, my blessings to you and Pandavas to overcome all types of problems and hardships as you all should be exemplary to the posterity owing to your patience, tact and endurance)

Then Devi responded to Yudhishtara as follows:

Shrunu Rajan Maha Baaho madeevam vachanam Prabho, Bhavishyatyachiraa deva sangrame vijayatstava/Mama prasaadaan vijayasya hatvaa Kouravavaahineem/ Raajyam nishkashtakam kritvaa bhokshyase medineem punah, Bhtaatrubhinsahito Rajan preetim praapyasi pushkalaam/ (Durga Devi was pleased to bless Yudhishtara! Be assured that soon enough you will be surely victorious in the battle and resume the kingship with redoubled vigour and fame along with your brothers and families) Matprasaadaacha te soukhamaarogyam cha bhavisyati, ye cha sankeeriyishyanti loke vigatakalmashaah/ Tessaam tushthaa pradaasyaami raajyamaayurvapuh sutam, Pravase nagare chaapi sangraame shatru sankate/ Atavyaam durga kaantaare saagare gahane girou, ye saaradhyanti maam Rajan yatthaham bhavataa smrutaa/ Na tessaam durlabham kinchid asminmalloke bhavishyati, idam storta varam bhaktyaa shrunuyaad vaa pathet vaa/ Tasya sarvaani kaaryaani siddhim yasyanti Pandavah, matprasaadaaccha vah sarvaan Virata nagare sthitaan/ Na pragnyaasyant Kuravo naraa vaa tannivaasinah, Ityuktvaa varadaa Devi Yudhishtiramiradam, Rakshaam kritvaa cha Paanunaam tattraivaanataradheeyat/ (Devi replied: ‘ It shall be due to my blessings that you will all be safe and healthy. As and when any body meditates and pleases me with veneration, I shall certainly lessen the burden of their blemishes and depending on the intensity of their faith they could be granted longevity, prosperity, health, and even Kingship. Raja Yudhishtar, rest assured that as and when you remember me, I would be with you , be it in another kingdom, battles, enemies, forests, mountains, and seas. Pandavas! As and when you pray to me with conviction, even now as you are about to enter Virat Nagar, do go with confidence as you would face problem of any dimension!)

Saptamodhyaaya (Seventh Chapter)- Yudhishtar enters Virat Kingdom

Dhoomya continued his narration to King Janamejaya as to how Pandavas had a clean bath in Ganga and performed ‘tarpana’ to Deva-Rishi-Pitrus followed by oblations to Agni, Japa- Mangala paatha. Later on Yudhishtar recalled as to how his father Prajapati Dharma gave the boon to him; he recalled the incident when he asked Pandavas to fetch water out of thirst but one by one could not do so and were lying almost dead; then Yudhishtara wondered that none of the brothers returned he himself left and on seeing the scene tried to save himself from thirst and approached the water body. Dharma Deva in the form of one Yaksha prevented and asked questions and demanded proper replies to questions. [**Yaksha Prashna samvada:** 1) Who makes Sun rise and ascend to the skies, circles around, sets on the horizons, the true nature of Sun and where is Sun established; reply is : Brahma makes Sun to rise and ascend to horizons, Devas perform the encircling, Dharm Deva sets the Sun the True nature is Sun is Himself and finally Sun is established in Truth itself; 2) What instills divinity and virtuosity of a Brahmana, what sustains and upkeeps that virtuosity, what is the human like quality of a Brahmana, what is the conduct akin to a vicious Brahmana; the replies are ‘ Swadhyaaa’ or Self Study, Penance is the sustainer; death is the natural quality of a Brahmana and criticising others is the vicious conduct of a Brahmana! 3) What is the

divinity or virtuosity of a Kshatriya, the sustaining power to him, natural quality of a his class and the most vicious act of a kshatriyas! The respective replies are constant practice of archery, conducting Yajna karyas and performing oblations, fear is the natural quality and the heinous misconduct is not to save and run from the battles! 4) What is like the Mantra in the context of Yagnas and oblations, who is the performer of these oblations, who is the acceptor of the oblations in yagnas, and what is that which yagnas surpass! The replies respectively are breath, mind, Veda shlokas called ‘richas’ or stanzas and what surpasses yagnas are Richas indeed! 5) What is heavier than Earth, higher than heavens, faster than wind, far more numerous than straws; the replies respectively are mother, father, mind, and human worries. 6) who is the friend of a traveller, who is the friend of the sick, who is the friend of the dying man. The replies respectively are a companion, a physician and charity. 7)What is that which when renounced makes one lovable and endearing, what is that once when renounced after becoming rich, and what is on attaining very rich one needs to renounce! The replies respectively should be to renounce pride to make one lovable, to renounce desire on becoming rich and to renounce avarice for attaining happiness.8) Which enemy is invincible; what constitutes an incurable disease; and what kind of human being is of nobility or otherwise. The answers should be one’s own anger, greed is an incurable disease and noble are they who pardon others mistakes and ignoble are those who are retaliatory and unkind. 9) Who is truly happy, what is the great wonder, what should be the ideal path and what is the great news? The replies should be: a person without debts is truly happy; the greatest wonder is that death is certain sooner or later but one wishes to live further; the ideal path is elusive as even Shritis and Rishis are of varied views and therefore one’s own Inner Conscience is what ideal path determines about since Truth about Dharma and Duty are thus hidden in the cave of the individual hearts. Finally, the greatest news is that the world is full of ignorance like a pan while Sun is the Fire, days and nights are like fuel, ‘kaala pravaah’ or the cycle of Time comprising months, seasons and years are like the ladle, and indeed the Greatest Master is the cook *par excellence!* That is the Greatest News from all directions of North-East-West-and South!]

The question-answer session over sucessfully, Yudhishtar visioned the outstanding Prajapati Dharma as ‘Tridanda dhaari Brahmana’ of young age with turban, maunji coloured red robes and kamandalu and blessed him. *Tathaiva teshamapi dharmacharinaam yathepsitaaa hyaabhyaabharaamambarastrajah, kshanena raajannabhavanmahaarmaanam prashasta dharmagraya phalaabhikaankshinam/* (Indeed this is the way that the followers of Dharma as in the case of Pandavas appeared instantly with appropriate dresses and ‘aabharanaas’. Then Yudhishtar with his new appearance as Kanku Bhat entered the ‘Virat Sabha’ and the King’s instant reaction was truly arresting and attracted. Virat King asked his close persons as to who was it who had just entered the Court foremost and gave an impression of High Royalty! ‘He does not appear like a Brahmana and no fanfare of a King around as typical of royalty is present too, and even so he looks like Indra himself!’, wondered King Virat; he said: *Shareeralingairupa suchito hyaayam murdhaabhisikta iti me manogatam, sameepamaayati cha me gatavyatho yathaa gajstaamaraseem madotkatah/* (The indications of his body traits and movements are of a ‘Murthaabhi - shikta Saamrat’ or of Superior Emperor, and he is approaching me like a huge elephant king to a lotus flower!) Kank bhat approached the King and stated: ‘Maha Raja, as you see me I am of a Brahmana Swarupa; as I am totally lost and hence seek your patronage! King Virat replied: Brahmana! You are most welcome. After the Brahmana had been duly seated, Virat asked the stranger Brahmana endearingly: Sir, from which Kingdom have you arrived. Yudhishtar replied: *Yudhishtarasyaamaham puraa sakhaa Vaiyaaghra padyah punasami viprah, akshaan prayoktam kushalosmi devinaam Kankoti naamnaasmi viraat vishrutah/* (Maha Raja Virat! I am of Vaitaaghrapada gotra known as Kank Bhat and had been in the past with Emperor Yudhishtar who always considered me as his own very close companion. I happen

to be an expert chess player) Virat King was so impressed that he gave the boon even to rule Matsya Desha and that he would be at his beck and call! You are also an expert in the art of dice game as an added advantage and I have such illustrious persons in my Court indeed! Kank Bhat replied that he would prove himself worthy of Virat's appreciation and that he would always feel obliged for the hospitality, besides assuring that he would never enter into controversies. Then the King made an announcement in the Court that let it be known by all that Kank Bhat would be as much the King of Matsya Desha as of Virat himself. Then King Virat addressed Kank that from now onward, you are my closest companion; you would secure the same king of privilege of chariot, bhojan or meals, access to 'rajya kosha' or treasury, Raja Udyan or royal garden, personal soldiership equivalent to the King and free entry to Raj Mahal or Royal Palace! Vaishampayan thus told King Janamejaya that Yudhishtar in the very first encounter with Virat was something like Lord Vishnu's meeting with Indra)

Ashtamodhyaaya (Eighth Chapter)-entry of Bhimasena

The second Pandava of fame and popularity viz. Bhima sena with a lion like movement and demeanor entered the Virat Durbar with his inherent radiance of might and courage along with his typical attire of a cook carrying his typical apparatus of kitchen equipment; his stature was like that of Meru Mountain even as King Virat was taken aback with his stature, raised shoulders and powerful figure arresting the instant attention of King Virat and of the members of royalty and of onlookers. They all felt that this type of rare human being was never seen everbefore and the Sabha fell silent suddenly. Many of them surmised that he might be a Gandharva Raja or could even be Indra himself who descended to Matsya Desha! On approaching the King, Bhima Sena said: Narendra, I am a professional cook named Vallava and can cook very well. Do very kindly employ me in your service. The King said: Vallava, I am unable to believe that you are a cook; you are so bright and energetic even like Indra and possess the appearance and bearing certainly not of a cook! Indeed you ought to be a warrior or a brave soldier of top ranking! Bheema alias Vallava replied with modesty: Maharaj! I am your servant and a renowned cook capable of proven excellence in culinary art and experience of long standing service in the kitchens of Emperor Yudhishtar who has always appreciated me in variety cooking of excellent tastes!*Balena tulyascha na vidyate mayaa niyuddhvasheelascha sadaiva Pathiva, Gajaischa simhaischa samenivaanaham sadaa kaari ishyaami taananagha priyam/* (Also, there perhaps is rare in reference to bodily strength and courage besides being a professional wrestler of ability who is, with all modesty, is never defeated! I am an expert in subduing even lions and elephants and should be able to exhibit my strength and grit in the public bringing laurels to your kingdom! King Virat was instantly impressed and readily appointed Bheema as the Head Cook. Indeed nobody could ever recognise Bhima in the Royal Kitchens ever what with his excellence in cooking and in house wrestling matches, assured Vaishampaayana to the King Janamejaya!

Navamodhyaaya (Chapter Nine)-Draupadi as Sairandhri

Vaishampaayana continued his narration to Janamejaya about the illustrious and purified woman of excellence who was not only of broad and scintillating eyes but also of grace of ideal womanhood of beauty and amiability with dark and dazzling eyes, dressed in rather sub-ordinary dress which covered up her rare youth and bearing. As she entered the Virat Sabha with a sobre and even confused looks, the onlooker womanhood literally rushed towards her and were curious to know about her and what and where abouts even as men of substantial background were staring in awe and surprise. As she approached

the King, she addressed him as follows: *Saa taanuvaacha Rajendra Sairandhyahamihagataa, karma checchhaami vai karthru tasya yo maam yuyukshati/ Tasyaa rupena veshena lakshanyaa cha tathaa giraa, na shraddhadhat taam daasee maatrahetorupashitaam/* (Rajendra, I am Sairandhri or she helper in Raani vaasa or Queen's Quarters and have come in search of employment in your august Royal Premises. One indeed could ever imagine that a female of such outstanding conduct and deportment would arrive here for employment in search of food and clothes!) Meanwhile, Virat's 'Patta Mahishi' or Principal Wife named Sudeshna the Princess of Kekaya Kingdom was standing near a window of Queen's Palace and noticed a woman looking like the famed Draupadi passing on the approach lane of the the King's Court. That lady was wearing 'ekavastra' or a single cloth which only servant maids wear normally. The Queen called her up and asked the woman as to what would she want and the latter replied that she would like to be servant maid. The Queen was overcome by wonder as the woman was hardly appearing like a maid! The Queen described about the woman within her own mind and felt that her figure especially the slenderness of body and waist, the attractiveness of her eyes, chiselled nose and mouth, conchshell like neck and a readily arresting voice, besides an over all face like the full moon glow. The Queen said to herself: *Shaaradotpala patraakshyaa Shaaradotpala gandhayaa, Shaaradotpala savinyaa rupena sadrusha Shriyaa/* (Your beautiful form is akin to that of Lakshmi Devi herself; your eyes are like the nicely opened up lotus flower in Sharat Ritu, your body figure has the widely spread our intense aroma of Sharad Kaala and you appear to taste the buds of lotus again of Sharad Season!) She then asked Sairandhri to please tell the Truth as to whether she was a servant woman, or Yakshini or Gandharva or Apsarasa or Deva Kanya or Naga Kanya or Vidyaadhari or Kinnari or Rohini Devi the wife of Chandra Deva herself! Hope you are not Alamvrisha-Mishrakeshi-Pundareeka-or Malini among Apsaras; or Indraani, Vaaruni, Tvastardhatu the wife of Vishwakarma, or Prajapati Brahma's Shakti Savitri herself! Who are you indeed! Draupadi replied extremely modestly : Respected Queen, I am neither a Devi, nor Apsarasa, and not a Rakshasi either; I am plain Sairandhri, a servant maid really. I know the art of Kesha Shringar or the art of female hair dressing well and an expert designer of aromatic flowers like Mallika or Jasmine, Kamal or Lotus and champa and so on. In the past, I served illustrious queens like Satyabhama and Draupadi spent my time with self respect and of well being. At the Place of Draupadi I was known as Malini with very great respect and now, I have come here for service at your place. Queen Sudeshna said that she would be greatly delighted to have her in her 'Rani Vaasa' and the King too would be too happy to retain you in my service; further be assured that you would not be subjected to the ogle and staring observance of men folk in and around and would be totally secure from outside. Having said that the Virat King should most certainly select you with one look at you as formality, the Queen got Sairandhri's reply: *Naasmi labhyaa viratena na chaanenyena kadaachana, Gandharvaah patayyo mahaam yuvaanaah panchabhamini/* (Rani Devi! At this Place no other male could ever reach me as I happen to be the wife of five illustrious and energetic Gandharvas and always keep constant vigil of my safety and welfare; only I happen to be the one passing through this phase of hard luck for some time. I cannot accept food remains or secondary meals as preferred to no food at all since my gandharva husbands never appreciate such meals. *Yo hi maam purusho gruddhacched yatthyaanyah prakrutaah striyah, taameva nivased raatrim pravishy cha paraam tanum/ Na chaapyaham chaalayitum shakyaa kenavichingnane dukkhasheelaa hi gandharvaaste cha balinah priyaah, Pacchaanyaaschaapi rakshani te maam nityam shuchismite/* (In the event of any male tries me to forcefully molest me, that person would indeed be murdered badly on the same night! Nothing indeed could ever tempt and tamper my womanhood and my husbands are always alert even of a mischievous fly seeks to hurt me and my getting rattled.) Then the

Queen doubly reassured Sairandhri to have a peaceful time as long as she would be pleased. She would either have a situation of consuming improper meals nor overwhelming situations of embarrassment!

Dashamodhyaaya (Chapter Ten)-Sahadeva enters as Cow-keeper

Vaishmpaayana continued the proceedings to King Janamejaya explaining that in the Kingdom of Virat there was a huge 'Go shaala' or Place of Cow Upkeep and Maintenance. As decided mutually among Pandavas, Sahadeva opted for service in the go-shaala, desired to visit the same and proceeded to it as he was asked by the King about his antecedents. He then replied that he was a Vaishya named Arishtanemi who in the past had looked after the cows of the Kuru Vamsha Pandavas and desired to get employed only with the Virat King of Matsya Desha. Virat replied that the new comer looked like a Kshatriya or a Brahmana and hardly seemed to be a Vaishya and a cow keeper. Then Sahadeva replied convincingly that indeed the eldest of Pandavas was Yudhishtara who possessed one type of cows in eight lakh jhund- each jhund comprising hundred cows, another type of one lakh jhund, and the third variety were of double of the second. As I was an expert in counting of eleven lakh cows, Pandavas endearingly called me the Tanthipaal. Indeed I possess such knowledge of the counting of so many cows and of the past-present-future history of the number of all the cows grazing in a huge and sprawling area of ten yojanas was fully known to me and thus gained the trust of Pandavas. Besides the awareness of such huge numbers of cows at the morning-noon-evening and nights was extensively known to me and hence that kind of trust by Pandavas in me. Maharaj Yudhishtar had great faith in me in the matters of not only of counting but also of the probable diseases of seasons, their preventive measures by way of anticipatory medicines and of treatments, besides administering management of curing and healing of diseases, the science of what kind of calf bearing cows or otherwise and providing special care of food along with proactive measures of stimulation of facile deliveries, and so on by feeding special varieties of grass or liquids and so on. King Virat was thoroughly impressed by the intricacies of cow rearing and said that he had a lakh of cows of varying colours and of characteristics. I am henceforth handing over the over all responsibility of heading the thousands of keepers and material to you henceforth! Thus Vaishampayan explained as to how the King Virat was overwhelmed with the intricacies of scientific upbringing and maintenance of cows and provided very special status in his court as the Chief Protector of Cows!

Ekaadashodhyaya (Chapter Eleven)- Arjuna's entry as Brihannala

Athaaparodrushyata rupa sampadaa streenaamalankaaradharo Brihatpumaan, Praakaaravapre pratimuchya kundale deerghecha kambuupari haatake shubhe/(King Janamejaya then describes the entry of Arjuna emerging from the high outskirts of the Virat Nagara a figure of neutral gender Brihannala wearing female ornaments like rows of bangles almost up to shoulders, big size ear rings and necklaces of glitter.) With loose hairs down to the hips this Great Warrior approached the King's Palace like an elephant with slow but steady steps and as he greeted the King, the latter was totally taken aback wondering as to what kind of a human being this could be! He then addressed the unparalleled stranger: 'Your courage and powerful presence in this Court with brilliance and youthfulness is like decorating an elephant with bangles, as your thick and loosened hair and shining ear rings typical of womanfolk with hardly any indication of tender womanhood but of a warrior freely moving about on a swift chariot despatching showers of arrows despatching opponents to death! I have become old and unable to train the next generation to teach archery and indeed you certainly not look like a 'napumsak'! Arjun replied: Maharaj! My speciality is in the art of hair designing and making excellent kundalas or ear rings; I am a

specialist in scientific way of darning in suprising variety of floral designs; am a proficient cleaner of mirrors of huge and miniature mirrors; am an expert in various kinds of ‘snaanas’ like nitya-naimittika, grahana, kaamya, pitru kaaya, and rare situation night snanas[refer to Snaana Prakarana in the Essence of Paraashara Smriti vide kamakoti.org/news]. Brihannala further stated: *Kleebeshu baaleshu janeshu nartane shikshaa pradaaneshu cha yogyataa mama, kiaromi veneeshu cha pushpa puranam na me striyah karmaani kaushalaadhikaah/* (I am an expert teacher to young maidens / boys including napumsak ones or common folk, and trainer in fine arts especially music and dance of a variety of schools, besides being a flower designer of distinction. Indeed women folk could not possibly excel me in all these arts known to me most scientifically) King Virat reacted stating that this unique personality of yours Brihannala! does not behove of being a ‘napumsaka’ and despite your ‘veshabhusa’ or unnatural veiled personality I am still not convinced as your strong body parts do betray your true self! Arjuna then replied: *Gaayaami nrityaamyatha vaadayaami bhadrosmi nritye kushalosmi geete,twamuttaraayai pradishasva maam swayam bhavaami devyaa naradeva nathakah/* (Maha Raja! I sing, dance and perform instrumental music. Those who dance are also proficient in other schools of allied arts as well. Do give me an opportunity to train your daughter Uttara in all these arts and I myself would like to train her well. What is the use of your repeating about my manly traits again and again; it only lands me in sorrow and my fate. Do accept me as I am that is as Brihannala and consider me as your own unfortunate daughter! Then King Virat finally accepted Brihannala as the teacher of the princesses, especially the teenaged Uttara. Then the King consulted about and even tested the capabilities of Brihannala and her of ‘napumsata’ status physically too and fnally accepted Brihannala’s entry in the ‘Antahpura’ or the Innermost Chambers of the Queen. In no time the female hearts were won over by Arjuna the napumsaka in the confidential area for his excellence in the fine arts, as explained by Vaishampayana to Janamejaya!

Dwadashodhyaya (Chapter Twelve) –Nakul’s entry as Horse-Keeper

Even as he was entering the vicinity of the King Virat’s Sabha, Panduputra Nakul started examining horses tied to chariots or otherwise. King Virat noticed this even from a distance seeking to examine his own horses tied to the Royal chariots and asked his ministers and officials to ascertain about that youth. He thought of the courage and initiative of such superior horses and felt that he must be brave enough to do so. The youth impressed the King even from a distance and as he was presented to him by the personal attendants , Nakula introduced himself with his greetings and reverence due to the King. He said that he was a renoued expert in training and looking after horses besides being an expert charioteer also. King Virat stated that he would no doubt consider the possibility of posting him as the Royal Stable Keeper but would first like to ascertain about his antecedents and experience details. Nakul replied: *Panchaanaam Panduputraanaam jyeshtho bhraata Yudhishtarah, Tenaahamashveshu puraa niyuktah shatrakashana/ Ashvaanaam prakritim vedyi vinayam chaapi sarvashah, dushtaanaam pratipanktim cha krutsnam chaiva chikitsitam/* Raja the famed in destroying the enemy folks! As you are kindly aware of all the Five Pandanva sons with Yudhishtara the eldest; the latter himself appointed me as the Royal Horse Keeper as he was convinced of my abilities to ascertain the nativity and proven quality of superior horses; moreover he was quite satisfied with the treatment that was provided to the diseased horses. Also the horses brought up by me could never be timid but brave and ever-fighting fit disregard of the risk of their lives. In the Pandava Palaces and house holds and even by Maha Raja Yudhishtar, I was called as GRANDHIK; just as Lord Indra’s charioteer was popular as Mathali, and King Dasharatha’s was Sumantu, may I assure you to adorn the seat of your chariot ably and train and upkeep the horses healthy, brave and faithful. Maharaj Yudhishtar commanded me to rear up and train as many as one sahasra koti

or thousand crores of horses in the Royal Stables! King Virat was totally impressed and confirmed his acceptance and also desired to train other animal carts as well. Vaishampayan thus narrated to King Janamejaya about the comfortable stay of Pandavas at the Virat Kingdom.

SAMAYA PAALANA PARVA

Trayodhashodhyaaya (Chapter Thirteen)-Bhimasena kills Jeemuta the wrestler

King Janamejaya asked Vaishampayana as to how the Gupta Pandavas were gradually acclimatised in the Virat Kingdom. Thanks to the boon given by the Mahatma Dharma, Yudhishtar and other Pandavas picked up their respective responsibilities most befittingly and endeared themselves with the authorities and general public in the Virat Kingdom; Yudhishtar kept the King busy with the game of dice and whatever earnings were made donated to the needy quietly. Bheemasena who made all types of bhakshya bhojyaas for the Royalties and officials had also taken special care of co-pandavas by protecting them especially Draupadi. Arjun was busy in the 'Antahpura' by teaching dance and music as also disposing off valuable clothes wonderfully dorned and artistic artefacts and his personal earnings used to distribute to co-Pandavas too as gifts. Sahadeva was quite busy in the 'Go-Shaalas' and often supply ample quantities of milk to co-Pandavas as well. Nakul too got very busy in the horse stables and as and when the King gave away large prize money shared it with co-Pandavas. Tapswini Sundari Draupadi too used to serve her husbands as per convenience of free time while taking ample precautions to ensure the secret of her identity. This was how Pandavas were of mutual and constant contact by observing all types of precautions of secrecy yet being closely knit. Indeed all the Pandavas have only singular concern that Duryodhana who would be too anxious to ascertain the movement of Pandavas! Meanwhile as the fourth month of their confidential stay arrived and in the Matsya Desha there was to be a Brahma Puja to be observed and the precautionary measures were tightened by Pandavas about their stay at there. The national hobby coinciding with the celebrations of Brahma Worship had been to organize nation wide 'Malla Yuddha Pradarshanas' or exhibitions of mutual bout sessions or one to one 'kushtis'! In the Capital City Virat Nagar, a huge convention is organised for days and nights together to signify Brahmotsava! A crowded calendar of number of such kushti pradarshanas was decided in advance and the winners at each of the pradarshanas was facilitated on nation wide recognition and prizes were given away on the day of finals by the King himself declaring, recognising and honouring the Malla Yuddha Praveena or the national hero *par excellence*. Well in advance the names and earlier laurels of the competitors are announced. Among the competitors who arrived was one Malla named Kaalakhajja/Jeemuta who was like an 'Asura' or a huge demon who was specially welcomed by King Virat. His neck, shoulders and face looked like that of a ferocious lion who in the past had earned laurels in several 'pradarshanas' or exhibitions in the past. He was challenging various other 'Mallas' to enter the arena of the mutual bouts. The Virat King then named Vallabha or Bheema in disguise to accept the challenge and the latter had to keep up the honour of Matsya Desha and thus entered the arena. The huge audience of thousands of public went in raptures as a local challenger of their own Kingdom much unlike in the past was in the arena. Both the Challengers commenced the bouts and the cheers went sky high reverberating the surrounding stands. They both were highly spirited and fought like elephants and resorted to powerful 'baahu yuddha' or battle of stretched hand assaults of aggression when big sounds of the attacks were clearly heard in the hushed silence of the crowd around. *Ubhou parama samdrushtau mattaaviva mahaa gajou, krita pratikritaischatrairbaahubhischa susankataih, sannipaataavadhutaischa pramaanthon - mathanaistathaa/* (Even as both of them are extremely enthusiastic providing the scene of a duel of two

arrogant elephants , their mutual body limbs are pressed tightly and instantly released too; their both the hands were coming into tight grips and hitting each other so strongly giving out echoing booms as their peculiar approaches and modes were witnessed by the encouraging crowds; the great opponents were sometimes hitting each other to the grounds and some other times rubbing each other to ground making thud sounds. Huge suspense prevailed among the audience who witnessed the excruciating scenery of ups and downs of the happening. Finally Vrikodar lifted up Jeemuta with his very strong arms and made him fall on the ground and instantly rolled his gigantic body from one end to another of the arena thus ultimately causing to death to Jeemuta. King Virat was so pleased that not only showered gifts and enormous sums of wealth even as the ladies of the Queen in special enclosures of the Stadium watched and Brihannala danced to glory to tunes and songs of victory with great and non stop gusto. At this fantastic victory coinciding with the Brahmotsava Celebrations, King Virat also announced special prizes to Saha Deva and Nakula while Devi Draupadi felt rather sad that the illustrious Pandavas had to undergo such petty encomiums quite disproportionate to their actual statuses!

KEECHAKA VADHA PARVA

Chaturdashodhyaaya (Chapter Fourteen)- Keechaka fancies Sairandhri

Vaishampaayan then explained to King Janamejaya that some how Pandavas had suffered their agonising and concealed stay in the Kingdom of Virat for ten long months only out of the fright of Kauravas especially of Duryodhana since the stipulated agreement after Yudhishtara's defeat of the blatantly evil game of dice by Shakuni viz. of twelve years of jungle life and one year of stay 'in cognito' or of a concealed place, with a further painful clause of having to undergo another phase of 'Aranya and Agjnaata vaasas' if found in the latter phase! The male members were some how managing the condemning curse but Devi Draupadi dragged on and on all these ten months with gazing threat of her chastity and self respect by serving the Queen Sudeshna in typically odd situations even as her most excruciating moment of life of 'Maana bhanga' of dragging her and attempt to disrobe her in open court of the blind Emperor Dhritarashtra! It was against such terrible state of her psyche, one day the devil minded Senapati or Commander-in- Chief of Matsya Kingdom named Keechaka who also was the Queen's own brother, the power center of the Kingdom and the dominating spirit of King Virat. One fateful day, Keechaka glanced Sairandhri and took instant fancy for her. As though he was shocked with a lightning, he approached his sister Sudeshna and said: *Neyam mayaa jaatu purehu drishtaa Raagjno Viraatasya niveshano shubha, Rupena chonmadanayateeva maam bhrisham gandhena jaataa madireva bhamini/* (Sudeshna! This woman looks so attractive and intoxicating whom I never ever saw in these Queen's Quarters is like sweet wine to my body and heart!) Who is she like angel who has at once sent shock waves deep into my heart!) *Chittam hi nirmatthya karoti maam vashe nachaanyadatroushadha mastimematam/* (She has churned my heart that is beyond my control; my mental disease is curable only by herself and indeed none else!) What a great surprise and shame that this extraordinary beauty is serving here as a servant maid! She is certainly not of this role, but most certainly I have decided to fulfill my desire to have her as my Queen! In my estate there are innumerable elephants, horses and chariots as also an entire army under my control besides a household replete with servants and let my huge mansion be her exclusive delight! Having thus stated to Queen Sudeshna, and taking her consent, Keechaka

approached Druapadi; he asked her : Kalyani, who are you actually, and why had you arrived at the King of Virat; do indicate to me please. *Rupam priyam, tathaa kaantih soukumaaryamanuttamam, kaantya vibhaati vaktram te shashaanka ivanirmalam/* (Devi! This wonderful figure besides your body glitter and tenderness are unparalleled in the world while your countenance is so brilliant and sparkling just as the Full Moon!) Your eyes are like lotuses and voice is that of a cuckoo. I have so far never seen of female of your charm on the earth. You ought to be like Devi Lakshmi with the abode of Lotuses! *Hreeh Shreeh keertiryatho kaanti raasaam kaa twam varaanane/* (You should be the manifestation of modesty, prosperity, fame, radiance; indeed Devi, who are you!) Are you Kaamadeva Manmatha's wife Rati Devi! *Kritsne jagati ko neha kaamasya vashago bhavet!* One look at you, which kind of manhood would not be overcome ever!) Thus Keechaka truly got intoxicated with Draupadi and offers all kinds of 'Bhoga bhaagyas' or riches and fortunes and also is prepared to discard all the erstwhile wives of his for the sake of her kind consent! Then Devi Draupadi replies as follows: You desire me a servant maid and place me on top of the world! Fie on you! *Sveshu daareshu medhaavi kurute yagjnamuttamam, swadaara nirato hyaashu nara bhadrani pashyati/* Buddhimaan Purusha or intelligent and matured males normally perform 'Uttama Yagnas' or Sacrifices of Excellence so that appropriate women become as their life partners! Men should never ever be subdued by sinful thoughts and deeds! A woman of one's own caste as the life partner provides peace in this as well as the lokaas and births next. She performs 'antyeshti samskaar' or 'preta kaarya' to departed menfolk to provide solace to their souls! Marriage into a family of one's own race establishes the right of becoming a 'Dharma Patni' or the wife approved by 'Varna Dharma' and a superior kshatriya could and should never stoop to the indignity of a servant maid! That deed is neither as per Dharma nor of social value! All the human beings in the world are expected to mutually respect their spouses as they are of 'Saha dharma chaaras' or of equal status in the matter of performing activities of virtue and sacrifices as ladders to Swarga and as such never consider other women with toys of sensuality. Moreover, I am a much married woman and it does not behove of you to speak of other women improperly. *Midhyaabhignohi bharah paapaatmaa mohamasthitah, ayashah praapnuyaad ghoram mahad vaa paanpuyaad bhayam/* (Those sinners soaked in matters of cupidity are bound to meet their hopeless death quite in the offing!) Despite her exhortations as above, Keechaka could not overcome his extreme and lustful passion and bragged that on earth there could not be a super power that could kill him. He blindly got into the whirlpool of self-praise as he was unsurpassed in terms of excellent figure, youth, fortune and prosperity and could provide her his entire kingdom at her feet! Sairandhri then found that Keechaka was madly desperate and warned him that there indeed were five fearful Gandharvas guarding her every moment and that she would be impossible of his achievement. *Yathaa nishchetano baalah kuulasthah kuulamuttaram tartumicchati mandaatmaa tathaa twam kartumicchhasi/* (Arre stupid! You want to follow that kind of path which should sink you in muddy and deep waters just as a mad child would attempt to swim across an ocean from one bank to another!) Once you develop desire for me, then you could never be safe even when you enter 'paataala' or fly up to 'aakaasha', or swim across all the oceans in the worlds since my husbands being celestial figures could pull you up and kill mercilessly! As you are insulting me thus, your entire progeny would get too exterminated! Keechaka, your evil dream of attaining me is like balancing a mountain in a sensitive balance and like your fiercely entering ferocious flames of fire when hot summer Sun is at midday. I try my best to keep aloof and away from evils like you, but do mark my words that once am hurt to the core wilfully then none in the Deva- Gandharva-Naaga lokas could be saved nor even by Asura- Rakshasas! Even at this unfortunately late opportunity, I can still grant you pardon but you still if you persist on one track mindedness, You will be doomed to your fate!)

Panchadashodhyaaya (Chapter Fifteenth)- Qween Sudeshna sends Sairandhri on excuse to Keechaka

In this chapter, Queen Sudeshna prevails on sending Draupadi to embarrass the latter and somewhat humiliate her, as explained by Sage Vaishanpaayana to King Janamejaya. Keechaka approached Sudeshna to some how on a pretext send Sairandhri to his quarters. The Queen then explained in detail about Sairandhri's entry to the Virat Kingdom and sought refuge of her in the 'Rani Vaasa' on the express condition of no other male should dare touch as she was constantly protected by her five gandharva husbands but unfortunately she herself was destined due to her own fate of having to Agjnaata Vaasa for a limited spell of time. Even King Virat at one stage displayed some interest in her, but the Queen warned him of Gandharvas and hence got overawed. As you know dear brother, Gandharvas possess the speed and thrust of Vayu or Garuda Devas; in the event of provoking either of these dieties; more over their anger would be such as of pralaya times. Sairandhri herself approached the Queen and explained about these facts quite initially itself but out of brotherly affection did not convey these facts even earlier to Keechaka. Therefore she sincerely suggested him to leave her. But Keechaka said with bravado that he was so strong that if need be he could decimate even thousands of Gandharvas and after all why worry about a paltry five of them! Sudeshna then within herself felt deeply depressed that alas! the rush of events was so severe that her brother was talking big not realising consequences and was preparing himself to throw his own face into depths of pataala or into extreme 'badabagni' or of severely fierce flames of passionate fire! Indeed the age old saying of great wisdom had been that one most inexcusable sin of acute intensity might wipe off the generation and her own brother was about to perpetrate the most severe act of his family's doom! *Etat tu me duhkhataram enaaham bhraatrusou - hridaat viditaartham karishyaami tushto bhava kulakshayaat/* (My greatest worry , the Queen said within herself, is that due to my initiative and simply out of the most dominant brotherly affection, I am performing the initial act of my brother's 'kulakshaya' or his destruction of himself and of his generation!) Keechaka then asked his sister to organise and prepare several sweet items besides various other dishes and send to his chamber; further please send Sairandhri on some pretext. Sudeshna then agreed to despatch Sairandhri with a jar of wine followed by food preparations. Keechak was then like a rogue animal with a black 'kaalapaasha' or death like neck lace, having anticipated the arrival of Sairandhri and expected her to invite her to join him in the feast. Then Sudeshna asked Sairandhri rather sweetly and as a matter of routine duty said that she was too thirsty and hence to please go to the house of Keechaka to bring some cool drink to quench her thirst. Sairandhri replied that she was not prepared to visit that place as Keechaka was too shameless in his behavior. Pardon me madam, I do have high regard for you but I cannot be appearing like a 'swechcharini' and a 'vyabhicharini' or a free and characterless woman in the looks of my husbands! Devi, kindly recall my clear decision and condition at the very entry at this place and even so I am being asked to go there even as several other maids are at your command! Sudeshna still insisted stating that she should not kindly mind such frivolous and imagined risks and thrust the golden vessel in Draupadi's hands rather forcefully. The latter was almost crying at her cruel fate and had to proceed to Keechaka's house while intensely praying in desperate surrender to Surya Deva! She implored to Surya Deva that if only she never imagined of being unfaithful to her lawful husbands, she should be saved from this hard test of fate! Sage Vaishampayan told King Janamejaya that for a while she took to intense meditation to the Surya Deva to protect her from this ordeal and entered Keechaka Bhavan as a frightened deer even as the latter was thrilled with extraordinary excitement!

Shodashodhyaaya (Chapter Sixteen)-Keechaka welcomes Sairandhri excitedly but when refused insults her brutally

Swaagatam te sukeshaante suvyushthaa Rajani mama Swamini twamanupraasaa prakurupya mama priyam/ (Keechaka got rapturous and had heartily welcomed Sairandhri as his heart throb and said that let this most eventful night be auspicious when she should be memorable in his lifetime when she would oblige him with his life's singular ambition!) He then commanded all other servants to clear off and said that he had already readied golden neck laces, conchshell bangles, golden and diamond flowery ear rings from various reputed Jewellers abroad, most astonishing and priceless jewellery of the nine gems, pure silk sarees and ready made clothes, extraordinary deer and other skins of fine variety, besides a very wide variety of tongue tingling sweets , savouries and fruits. In reply, Draupadi put up an extremely fuming gnaash of teeth and violent looks of repugnance and extreme anger and said: *Naaham shakyaaya swayaya sprushtam nishaadevena brahmani maa gamishyasi durbuddhe gatim durgaantaraantaraam/ Yatra gacchhanti bahavah paradaaraabhimarshakaah naraah sambhinnamaryadaah keetavaccha guhaashayaah/ Apraisheed rajaputri maam suraahaareem tavaantikam, paanamaahara me kshipram pipaasaameti chaabraveet/* (Durbuddhi / the most evil minded one! Just as a hunter by profession could ever dare to touch a Brahmani, you too could ever try to touch me. If you ever trasngress your limits then you ought to pay a very heavy price into deep distress! Don't you ever enter into dangerous zones and beware that those who dare to do so would have the similar experience of rats getting hooked into traps of no returns! The Queen has asked me to bring a drink as she felt thirsty and thus have arrived here and no further!) Keechak said that don't you worry that the drink which my sister asked for would be despatched by another servant maid and held Draupadi's right hand! Instantly she shouted : *Yathaiivaaham naabhichare kadaachit pateen maryaad vai nanasaapi jeetu, tenaiva satyena vesheekritam twaam drashtaasmi paapam parkrushyamaanam/* (Oh, 'Paapi' the great sinner! As till date I have never ever kept up my self- respect and never crossed my thoughts excepting of my husbands, I shall most determindly assure you to have you grounded to death!) Vaishampayan described that as Keechaka caught her hand, she stepped back suddenly and tried to keep her balance even while giving a great and mighty push to him in a manner that a massive tree was felled down instantly as though Bhagavan Surya himself came to her rescue. She then ran to the King's court and sought Yudhishtar's refuge! Keechak who lost his balance at the violent push of Draupadi got up and followed her as she already entered the Royal Court screaming and fell down as blood gushed out of her face. The open Royal Court was in full session with the King, Ministers and Officials as also Brahmanas and Kshatriyas of reputation were present. There was 'hahakar' or utter confusion in the Court and all of them who were shaken up started shouting : Keechaka! This shameful act is distressful; some others shouted that this was a great blunder being done to a helpless maid unbehoving a Senapati so blatantly and in open court of Law and Justice! Both Yudhishtar and Bheemasena were also present clearly witnessing the atrocious act of of shame perpetrated so blatantly. Bheema went in mad fury and fume making sounds of biting teeth while his high eyebrows were raised high, profuse sweat on his fore head was dripping down his chin and was just about to stand up almost instantly. Yudhishtar who noted Bheema's violent reaction showed his ring finger biting and thus conveyed his warning to keep composure. As Bheema diverted his view to a tree as Yudhishtar addressed: Vallabh, have you noticed thar tree you are looking keenly at! Is that good for your wood for cooking!' This exclamation of Dharmaraja sounded as saying: *Yasya chandrasya vrikshasya sheetama -acchhaayaam samaashratet, na tasya parnam druhot purvavritthasmanusmaran/* (Let this lively and very helpful tree provides cool shade to those who seek shelter and protection and

indeed even its leaves too should be not disturbed and keeping in mind its helpfulness so far should not be betrayed!) As the elder brother's hint was quickly understood, Bheema refrained from taking any precipitate action of retaliation. On noticing the warning and the previous provocation, Draupadi felt terribly offended and her red eyes looking daggers had caused helplessness at her discomfiture kept crying incessantly time and again. She then addressed the Virat King: *Prajaa rakshanasheelaanaam Rajaam hyamitatejasaam, Kaaryam hi paalanam nityam dharme satyecha tishthataam, Swaprajaayaam prajaayaam cha vishesham naadhigacchataam/ Priyashvyapi cha dvesheshu samatvam ye samaashritaah, Vivaadeshu pravrittishu samam kaaryaanu darshanaa, Raagjnaa dharmasasthena jitau lokaavubhaavapi/ Rajan dharmasasthapi rakshamaam twamanaagamaseem, Aham twanaparaadhyanti Keechakena duraatmanaa, pashyataste Maha Raaja hataa paadena daasavat/ Matsyaadhipa prajaa raksha pitaa putraanivourasaan, yastwadharmena karyaani mohaatmaa kurute Nripah, Achiraat tam duraatmaanam vasho kurvanti shaatravah/* (Raja! By the very definition of being a King, one is expected to look after his family members and general public of his kingdom alike in equally the same and just manner, more so to save the subjects recruited especially in his own service. As and when there appear differences and problems arising among his close relatives and those among the persons in Royal service, then the skill and justice of King's judgment would be at test and that has been how the name and fame of the King concerned acquires popularity of idealism. Here is the case of a helpless and unfortunate incident of a Senapati seeking to molest a servant maid the scene of which has been witnessed by everybody in the Royal court right in your own sight and presence. Keechaka has just proved himself as a ruffian and thrown me to ground and hurt me heinously to the extent of physical torture and mental persecution. Raja, I selected Matsya desha for service as your kingdom has had the reputation for dharma and nyaaya or virtue and justice. Do very kindly save me from this villainous Keechaka the proven example of insanity!) Devi Draupadi further stated: Those Kings worthy of Kingship if administer as per 'dharma' and 'nyaaya' would indeed accomplish swarga loka and those who do not follow the principles go to 'adholokaas' of naraka, as is our belief. Indeed, Kings are expected to execute Yagjnas / Sacrifices dutifully, besides 'daana'- 'guru sevana', 'dharma-nyaayaa -acharana'. Do recall Raja! In the days or yore, Paramatma Brahma exhorted his creations of Deva-Daanava-Manushyas that one ought to sensitively balance matters of Dharma-Adharma and then resort to 'karmaacharana' or one's own actions and deeds and accordingly one's future both before and after death be decided. *Kalyaana kaari kalyaanam paapakaari cha paapakam, Tena gacchati samsarge swargeeya narakaayavaa/ Sukritam dushkritam vaapi kritwaa mohena maanavah, Pashchaattaapena tapyeta swabuddhyaa maranam mama/* (Persons of auspicious deeds shall reap auspiciousness and others who follow the paths of inauspiciousness would indeed reap likewise since as one sows so they reap. Often persons having performed a mix of deeds of virtue and vice do ponder and regret after death as to why they failed to improve their balances of Accounts!) That was how Lord Brahma briefed Indra Deva before the latter assumed his position of Indratwa!' Vaishampayana Rishi continued his narration to King Janamejaya that as Paanchala Rajakumari desperately cried out hoarse, Maharaj Virat was unable to control Keechaka in any manner as per the regulations of the his kingdom and put his head down. Draupadi then addressed the Court and said: It has been unfotunate that my five husbands are aware of the tragic happenings here and am having to live here and thus I do not have peaceful sleep here eversince; the outcome is that a respectable woman of standing is thus subjected here with tragedies including now of physical assault and insults by a villainish rogue . My glorious background is such that I had always been a giver to others but never a recipient but for the twist of my fate! The type of punishment meted out to me, alas! is to be hurt physically that too to a benefactor always and a character of truthfulness and

sincerity . Believe me that my husbands could conquer the entire world and protect any body and everybody who seek their refuge just to display their honour. But where indeed now is the grandeur and majesty being displayed to rescue a hapless woman of standing and sacrifice when I am disgraced and rubbed my body under the feet of a hooligan! *Sharanam ye prapannaa – naam bhavanti sharanaarathi - naam, charanti loke pracchannaah ka nu tedya Mahaarathaah/* (Where are those great persons left now to those who seek refuge and protection especially in reference to ‘Maha Rathi’ of outstanding name and fame!) They are non-respondent like sex-less non-entities when the worst times are being passed through by an unfortunate woman of erstwhile glory being trampled under the feet of a scoundrel!) *Mayatra shakyam kim kartum Virato dharmadushake, yah pashyan maam marshayati vandhya- maanaanaagasam/* (The King Virat here is painting Dharma as black even as an innocent and helpless woman of dignity is being harrassed and shamed physically!) What is it that I can do and where could I go to for justice! As Draupadi thus broke down with incessant tears down her cheeks, King Virat finally broke his silence and asked Sairandhri as what was the background of the quarrel between her and Keechaka and then only one could possibly state my ability to declare justice. In reply the Elders of the Sabha replied by turns: A woman of youth with attractive eyes and physique but much married as the Dharma Patni or a Noble Wife does indeed not deserve of humiliation and physical assault and rampling under the feet of a ruffian! More so to a lady of ‘Padmini Jaati’ or of outstanding nativity signs on her finger tips possessive of ‘*Padmam Chakram Dhawaja shankha praakaaro makarastayaa/* or lotus-disc-chariot flag-conchshell-and temple front which certainly are the signs of outstanding womanhood, such inginity and cruelty are most certainly condemnable! *Na heedrashee manushyashu sulabhaa varavarnini, naari sarvaanavadyaangi deveem manyaamahe vayam/* (Of human race, Sairandhri is a very rare exception of an exemplary womanhood appropriately named as a Devi of divinity but not of humanity!! Vaishampaayana thus explained to King Janamejaya of the Pandava generation further. As the elders of the Virat Sabha eulogized Sairandhri, Kanku Bhat in the garb of Yudhishtar felt so intensely that he developed flow of sweat on his forehead ; he addressed Draupadi consolingly and asked her to go back to Queen Sudeshna’s Chamber; he then exhorted her as follows: Those exemplary ladies of divine origin ought to possess the grit and mental resilience while facing vassitudes and challenges of life, especially facing the helplessness of husbands even rarely. I surely share and experience your own grief, but the Gandharva husbands would not be able to instantly appear here and meanwhile ‘Veera Patnis’ or Noble Wives of fortitude ought to face this most trying crisis and indeed the wheels of justice grind slowly but most certainly vindicate themselves even within a few days and nights! He further said: *Naasti kaschit striyaa yagjno na shraaddham naapuyuposhanam, yaa cha bhartari shushrushaa saaswargaabhijaayate/ Pitaa rakshati kaumaare bhartaa rakshati youvane, putrastu sthavire bhava na stree swaantrayamarhati//* (To all the married women, there is no yajna, no shraaddha kaarya, and upavaasa or fasting; sincere service to husbands in mortal life should open the gates of heavens after their lives. Till the wedding of theirs, women are surely under the care of their fathers, after weddings the are mainatened and secured, thereafter in old ages the sons bear the responsibility and thus they are amply taken care of all through their lives and never neglected!) Devi! The singular feature of ‘Pativrata’ is to face any hardship even while passing through the most difficult times as created by opponents but never get agitated nor yield to trying circumstances. If ever there were an understanding or condition with the husband, then do reall it and act with Kshama or patience and maturity. *Kshamaa satyam kshamaa daanam kshamaa dharmam kshamaa tapah, kshamaavataamaryam lokaah paralokaah kshamaavataam/*(Patience and restraint constitute Truth, Charity, Virtue, and deep Meditation. Once Patience is truly observed, this earth is like the higher lokas itself) In the Kaala Chakra or the cycle of time are the Uttaarayanas and Dakshinaayanas

or the North bound and South bound half yearlies of Sun's up and down revolutions, twelve months, twenty four fortnights, three sixty days are all well set; now in this cycle there might be just one month that closes a year; then indeed, why not await one month to close a full year which is worth the while to complete a full year!) Such was the secret message that Yudhishtar sought to convey to Draupadi. As Sairandhri still persisted in standing in the Sabha, Kanku bhat said rather sternly: Why are you still not leaving the Sabha! Don't you realise that game of dice is now being disturbed! Sairandhri, please go for now and surely your Gandharva husbands should do the needful! Draupadi then had the last word and stressed: 'I do indeed await soon the retribution of justice by those illustrious Gandharva brothers and that 'duratma' keechaka must soon be killed at once, even as Kankubhat finally declared assuring the quick arrival of the Gandharvas! Then Sairandhri left for the Queen's palace in a huff with swollen and crying eyes, as though thick clouds surrounded the brightness of full moon and as a terribly hurt she-elephant moulded its muddy trunk had obeyed her master. As she returned to the Queen, Sudeshna enquired of Sairandhri as to who tried to molest her and even beaten! The latter replied to the Queen taking a long sigh and said that knowing everything madam, you are asking me the question even as this incident is notoriously known all over by now! Anyway, I shall narrate for your enlightenment: as you more or less forced me to go to Keechaka to fetch wine to quench your thirst, he tried to molest me and as I ran to the Royal Court for help and Keechaka followed me and even in the very presence of the King and all who were present there he punched me so that I fell on the ground and badly hurt myself physically and psychologically more so, just like a helpless woman was thumped in a lonely forest. Sudeshna feigned ignorance of the episode and stated: If only you agree, I shall most certainly beat and hammer him as he ought not have done so. Sairandhri replied: Maharani! You do not have to beat him but some others would soon despatch him to Yama loka! Respected Queen, do kindly initiate the action of 'Jeeva shraddha' or the obsequies even while alive! Then you may fully witness the Scene of his termination of life soon enough. She explained: *Teshaam hi mama bhartrunaam Panchaanaam dharmachaarinam, Ekodurdharshnotyartham bale chaapratimo bhuvi/ Nirmanushyamimam lokam kutyaat kruddho nishaamimaam, Na cha samkrudhyate taavad gandharvah kaamarupadhdrut/* (Devi! My five gandharva husbands as already conveyed to you in the past are outstanding persons of Dharma and of unparalleled strength who once provoked could finish off such ruffians over night; yet alas! Why are they not yet getting ready to do so and take revengeful deed as yet!) Vaishampayana then conveyed to King Janamejaya that Queen Sudeshna understood that Sairandhri had by then resolved of her emphatic resolve to terminate Keechaka and since then the Queen literally hibernated herself without bath, food and sleep and kept herself totally aloof! While she was in such state of awaiting an impending tragedy, other women in the Queen's palace in their own minds were feeling great sighs of relief of Keechaka's impending death. King Janamejaya recalled that once in the past, King of Sindhu Jayadratha kidnapped Draupadi and Devi Dusshala the only sister of hundred Kauravas married to Jayadratha, begged of mercy for her husband and Bhima only shaved Jayadrath's head and pardoned; even at that time Dusshala never gave a curse to Jayadratha. Similarly Queen Sudeshana was having tough time without cursing her brother Keechaka who was incidentally called and openly addressed with hatred as 'Sutaputra' by Draupadi for the reason that Keechaka was born to a Kshatriya charioteer father and Brahmana mother. The common belief was that while a Dwija or twice born Brahmana cum Kshatriya the Suta Putra was normally engaged as charioteer being a step down to a Brahmana and a Kshatriya! Also, Virat's Principal wife was Suratha the princess of Koshala desha and the secondary queen was Sudeshna the princess of Kaikeya kingdom. The latter was very attractive and hence King Virat's special preference! Keechak was all the time with Sudeshna and her young daughter Uttara looking after the affairs of King Virat. The

strength and bravery of Keechaka was basically owing to a Daitya named Kaaleya and Keechaka occupied several lesser known principalities like Mekhala, Trigarta, Darshana, Kasheruka, Maalava, Yavaa, Pulinda, Kaashi, Kosala, Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Tangana, Paratrana, Malada, Nishadha, Tundikera, Konana, Karada, Nishiddha, Shiva, Duschhilallaka and so on and thus King Virat made Keechaka his Senapati! Hence the evil reputation of Keechaka. Now Vaishampayana Maharshi thus addressed further: Since extreme anger spoils 'tapasya' and hence Draupadi only stressed about the valour of her Gandharva husbands, but never cursed Keechak from her heart; she indeed knew of the great significance of Kshama or Pardon; *Kshama Dharmah Kshamaa daanam Kshama yajgnah Kshama yashah Kshama Satyam Kshamaa sheelam Kshama keertim Kshama param/ Kshamna punyam, Kshama Tirtham, Kshama srarvamiti shrutih/ Kshamaavatamayam lokam paraschaiva Kshamaavataam, etat sarvam vijaananti saa Kshamaa manvapadyata/* (Patience and extreme restraint denote virtue, charity, sacrifices, forbearance, fame, truth, character and conduct, rewards, kshetras, and everything that Vedas prescribe. This human existence leads to happiness and contentment in the Lokas after life! Thus Devi Draupadi was fully aware of the unique significance of Patience and Restraint! However, Bheemasena who was totally upset and was almost instantly fired up to kill Kaachaka, Yudhishtar readily warned him on time like the seashore would hold and control up the great speed of fierce waves of the rough Seas!

Saptamashodhyaaya (Chapter Seventeen)- Sairandhri 's plan to avenge

Eversince she was hurt and mishandled by Keechaka, Devi Draupdi had been seriously thinking only of revenge and justice and nothing else: she had deeply cogitated while crying incessantly saying *:kim karomi ka gacchhaami katham kaarye bhavenmana, ityevam chintayitva saa Bheemam vai manasaa - gatam/* (She ruminated deeply and said to herself: what do I do now and to whom should I approach; then finally decided to advance to Bheema for solace and protection. Then even while visiting his chamber, she broke out helplessly and cried ceaselessly saying as to how could she think that she would ever be normal as the atrocities were perpetrated right before Bhima's own presence! She said: Aryaputra! How are you able to sleep even as you saw whatever had happened! Bhimasena! Wake up, wake up! You are sleeping as though you are unaware of the happenings and unconcerned as a corpse! Indeed when a glorious hero of your stature has molested his wife and the culprit is having the last laugh still alive and rejoicing! Bhima then got up suddenly and literally jumped out of the bed and reacted saying that her arrival at by bed with lack-luster and swollen face was enough to guess and assess the entire situation. Krishna! I am terribly hurt and alarmed to witness you in thus situation. Tell me what exactly you have in mind very quickly and try to disappear as soon as possible even without others might notice of you coming to me.!

Ashtaadashodhyaaya (Chapter Eighteen)- Draupadi approaches Bhimasena

Vaishampaayana then described that while her eyes were gushing in a stream Draupadi was overwhelmed without being able to utter a word, and Bhima then cajoled her who appeared always to move about as a confident and carefree self, with the gait like of a she-elephant with measured but firm steps! Bhima then asked her to reveal whatever she had planned to proceed in the act of retribution. Devi Draupadi replied that since her respected husband Yudhishtar himself had no qualms about whatever had happened then even realising about the insult to me, why are you asking me again as to what to do! What had you done even as Dusshaasan as the representative of prime villain Duryodhana addressed me in the open court of Kauravas as 'daasi' or their servant maid and forcibly brought me and tried to disrobe me!

Kshatrayastatra karnaayaidrushtaa Duryodhanena cha, Shvashuraabhaam cha Bhishmena Vidurena cha dheemataa, Dronena cha Mahaatraaho Kryupena cha parantapa/ (Bhima the Mahabaahu! At that tragic time not only you, but apart from Duryodhana were seated as respectful Bhishma, Vidura, Dronaacharya, and Kripacharya) At that tragic time you too were quite active but like fire covered in ash as I was dragged by my hair and since then in retrospect had been alive and as bad as dead. In the entire Dwapara Yuga, there could never be as unfortunate as me viz. Sairandhri barring perhaps like Draupadi! During the distressful forest life of twelve long years of Pandavas, Draupadi suffered the ignominy at the hands of the villianous Jayadratha who dared to touch and held her and still what had happened excepting her fate! Now after twelve long and respite less ‘Vana Vaasa’ I have been serving as a servant maid to another woman just to keep up the flag of Satya Dharma or of The Truthful Virtue! Panduputra Bhima! I have arrived to this menial life now of having to prepare Chandana by mixing up ingredients like Gosheersha, Padmakaashtha, and Harishyaama. I have been thus undergoing all types of sacrifices just for the prestige of Pandava Brothers! Now on top of these insults has now come over the latest one of totally involving my personal honour which is intertwined with that of yours! Now please to advise me as to what is the utility of continuing my life without a possible goal of recovery. Keechaka pesters me daily duressing me to become his wife. I do understand and appreciate your position , notwithstanding your bravery and energy; and that indeed is the reason why I have arrived here rather desperately to you to give vent to my feelings of helplessness! *Tathaiva cha shirastasya nipaatyaa dharanitale, Vaamena purushvyaaghra marda paatena Pandava/ Sa chedudhyantamaadityam praatarutthaaya pashyati, Keechakah sharvareem drushtaa naaham jeevitu- mutsahe/* (Purusha Simha Pandu Putra! Just as a sixty year old ferocious male elephant smothers a ‘bel’ fruit or wooden apple lying on earth, you should smash the head of Keechaka. In case on this night Keechaka were not destroyed by the next morning, than be rest assured I would not be alive for sure!) She said further: ‘Is there a woman of respect who having been subjected to insufferable humiliation as her husband lost his entire Empire along with unimaginable authority, wealth, pomp and fame simply on the basis of a frivolous game of chess and an equally ‘light hearted’/ ridiculous condition attached thereto viz. that the loser in the game would agree to twelve years of Forest Life plus a year’s Life Incognito along with brothers and wife! One could understand that the game of chess one might lose a thousand gold sovereigns or even considerable gold, silver, expensive clothing, chariots, horses and so on and that in no way lessen the magnificence of the Empire. Those Kings of high repute like those of Suta, Magadha, Madhura and such had been in the regular ritual of showering praises day in and day out on the Emperor Yudhishtar! It is beyond comprehension now that Rishi Maharshis and MahaPandita Brahmanas were daily exhorting the Unique Principles of Dharma from the Central Hall of the Empire all over Bharata and beyond! What a sordid twist of fate that the Unparalleled Emperor Yudhishtar had now become as the servant of an ordinary King of Matsya Desha! From Indraprastha Emperor Yudhishtar had all along given away invaluable gifts to all is now accepting paltry throw aways from King Virat; now such an illustrious personality of unchallenged status is having to gratefully accept a trivial sum for his sustenance! He whose mere word was law and all the subordinate Kings would simply lift down on their heads and hands in veneration and awe; now the situation is reversed as huge ships have got turned as miserable boats and once the Emperor of Bharata has since turned as a negligible member of the Royal Court of insignificance! *Atadarham Maha Praagjnam jeevitaartebhi samsthitam, drushtwaa kasya na dukkham syaad dharmaatmaanam Yudhishtaram/* (Such a person of unmatched supremacy and embodiment of Dharma the virtue like Yudhishtara being imagined is indeed like a horrible dream! *Evam bahu vidhaih dukkhaih peedyamaanaa manaayavat, Shoka saagara madhyasthaam kim maam Bhima na pashyasi/* (Bhimasena! I am now thus drifting in the deep and unending ocean of

sorrow and redoubled shame and torture; why do not you show some concern and act firmly and swiftly at my condition as you always do with grit and speed!)

Ekonvimshodhyaaya (Chapter Nineteen)- Draupadi's sorrow continues

Draupadi further stated not to misunderstand her intentions nor find fault with her as she had been all along suffering with this climactic episode of Keechaka. Even about himself, her heart bleeds to witness a personality of his grand fame and command had slipped to that of a cook as of Vallabha profession; who indeed would believe the play of fate! As you are summoned to serve delicious food to King Virat, the latter would be pleased and gift away the art of fighting elephants and amuse the ladies of the Queen Palace and Queen Sudeshna along with her friends who deem you with fun each time especially while you fight with tigers and lions, such scenes no doubt create huge laughters and claps but as and when witnessed by me doom destiny and create tears gushing out mistakenly as hysteric laughter. Sudeshna noticed Sairandhri 'rejoicing' - feeling actually sorry- and explained and justified her actions to other ladies of renown that since Sairandhri being in the Yudhishtar's Court earlier would thus possess camaraderie to her former colleague Vallabha and was thus used to enjoy his bravery tricks! She further said: *Streenaam chittamcha dushreham yuktarupam cha mey matou, Saidandhri priyasamvaasaanityam karunavaadini/* (Indeed it is rather difficult to understand the mind of women in general and due to her being together in the same Palace of Yudhishtar and of Draupadi would thus naturally appreciated Vallabha's culinary finesse and physical fitness as the latter exhibited fights with ferocious animals and attacks with strongmen! Afterall both Vallabha and Sairandhri were in the same court!

Having thus explained by Sudeshna, Sairandhri resumed her conversation further complementing Arjuna too and cited several instances of his invincible experience of archery like the incident of Khanadava Vana when he satisfied Agni deva Himself now most unfortunately confined as sexless teaching dance, music, and paintings at the Virat's Ladies Palace! Indeed Arjuna has had the magnificence of winning over wars against all humans and even some Devas and thus accomplished the appreciation of Indra Himself! But now he had been rotting as a 'napumsaka' teaching fine arts and wearing bangles! Similar is the fate of Saha Deva as the cow keeper and Nakula as the stable in charge!

Vimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty) –Daupadi laments her glorious past

Devi Draupadi lamented to Bhima that it was purely due to the mischief played by Kauravas at the game of dice that she a Princess and later on a Grand Queen has had for long during forest life of twelve years of youthful life and keep wondering whether this kind of hardship would ever be over! Sustaining hopes still, and reconciling to the truth of life that ups and downs would be over one day, she had been looking forward to a glorious morning when her husbands would be liberated! *Chakravatparivratante hyarthaascha vyanasanaanicha, itikritwaa prateekshaami bhartrunaa mudayam punah/* (She being convinced that the cycle of Dhana and Vyanasa or Sampatti / Prosperity and Vipatti/ hardship form the two wheels of Fate had been anxiously awaiting the turn around.) She continued to say that she heard human beings giving away charity do also have to graciously accept charity in the same wavelength; some rejoice in killing others or defeating them but the cycle of time would act differently to reverse the situations again. To Devas nothing indeed would be impossible and could tilt situations and hence Draupadi endeavoured always to humbly follow 'Shastra Vachanas' or the Principles of Shastras! The flow of water would never be stagnant ever and that was how she had been awaiting the flow to pick up its course and gather momentum again! Having thus described thus, she asked Bhima to understand how

she had lost her health, normal brightness, and profile of herself into a sorrowful and pathetic feminine being! Sage Vaishampayan then described her personal state of affairs of defeat, hardship, and discomfiture yet with an indomitable spirit of a sunny tomorrow! As she fell down at the feet of Bhimasena with desperation and sheer helplessness, Bhima was moved too and having slowly moved her up cajoled and held her in his arms!

Ekavimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty One)- Bhimasena and Draupadi's plan to kill Keechaka

Bheemasena stated: Fie to Arjuna's 'gaandeeva' the symbol his glory and invincibility! Fie again his own mace with which thousands of heads, hands and feet of enemies rolled out at his feet. He ought to have broken this head and thighs right at the Virat Sabha but for Yudhishtar's stern warning. Krishna, Keechak had committed the most heinous act of throwing Sairandhi down and rubbed her head and feet which by any standard of simple justice was truly repulsive and monstrous! How I had wished at that time to totally exterminate of the entire population of Matsya Desha and pull down the Kingdom as a whole. Indeed, when Kauravas like Duryodhan, Karna, Shakuni and Dushshasan were spared I ought to have treaded the path of Adharma fully being the aware of the implications, but for again the devotion and love for Yudhishtar aptly called Dharmaraja! In the days of yore, Maharshi Chyavan the son of Sage Bhrigu continued his tapasya for several years without food and water and not even sleep and his wife Sukanya continued her service unfailingly! Narayani Indrasena known for her beauty and charm the world over served her very aged Mudgal Maharshi likewise for long. Janaka nandini Vaidehi Sita underwent indescribable hardships and followed Lord Shri Rama like the latter's shadow till the Ravana's abduction of her and the Epic War of Ramayana ! Devi Lopamudra never ever left the shadow of Agastya Maharshi. Devi Savitri even defied Lord Yama Dharma Raja at the killing of her husband Satyavaan and followed mortally to Yamaloka when the Lord admired her grit and persistence out of service to husband! Devi Draupadi, do recall those illustrious examples of Devis! We just have to spend half of month of Agjnaata Vaasa or Living Incognito. *Satyena te shapechaaham bhavita naanyayeti ha, Sarvaasaam Parastreenaam praamaanyam kartumarhasi/* (Devi! I take pledge in the name of Truth; indeed this should be so. Be yourself be an Ideal and historic and exemplary woman of fame as cited above! As Bheema exhorted as above, Draupadi having heard Bhima patiently replied: *Kimuttena vyateetena Bhimasena mahabala, prastupasthita kaalasya kaaryaantaro bhava!* Maha Bali Bheemasena! What is the use of these platitudes at this very juncture; you ought to now get ready for action! She said that the fact was that Sudeshna herself should not get ideas about me by King Virat and hence had been seeking to divert attention to Keechaka . 'Even now Keechaka has been head over heels for me! He would once again shamelessly approach me. I would again remind him of my five Gandharva husbands and he would nonchalantly reply that he could kick off the Gandharvas, not five but even far more. She would then say that since she would not truly realise the strength of her husbands if only accept her. In reply she would explain of Pativrata dharma, kulasheela maryada and so on and Keechaka should laugh off loudly. Once this conversation is over, at the insistence of Keechaka Sudeshna would again insist of carrying wine for her and despatch Sairandhi to Keechaka'. As per plan and considerable conversation mutually Sairandhi would then ask the villain to 'Nritya shala'. Even thus explaining to Bhima, Devi Draupadi broke out and fell on the broad chest of Bhima and kept on crying at her great misfortune that her own plan was so terrible and untruthful typical of a woman of questionable character! Bhima consoled her in thousand words of assurances and finally she wiped out her tears with the only resolve that Keechaka should be despatched to hell some how, even by sheer grit of her doggedness and tenacity!

Dwavimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty two)- Keechaka vadha

Tathaa Bhadre karishyaami yathaa twam bheeru bhaashase, adya tam sudayishyaami Keechakam saha bandhavam/ Asyaah pradoshe sharvaryaah kurushvaanena sangatam, Duhkham shokam cha nirdhuya yaakshaseni shuchismate/ Yaishaa nathanashaaleh Matsyaraajena kaaritaa, Divaatra kanyaa nrityanti raatrou yaanti yathaagriham/ Tatraasti shayanam divyam drudhaangam supratishthitam, tatraasya darshayishyaami purvapretaan pitaamahaan/ Yathaacha twaam na pashyeyuh kurvaanaam tena samvidam, kuryaastathaa twam kalyaani yathaa sannihito bhavet/ (Bhimasena addressed Devi Draupadi and assured her that he would precisely follow her instructions and tonight Keechaka's entire family would get exterminated along with him for sure! Devi, do revive your characteristic and virtuous smile! Shed off your crying and pathetic visage now, and ask Keechaka to visit Nritya shala or the Dance Hall which is normally engaged with dance classes during the day timings while in the evenings and nights would be absolutely free, and there a strong double bed cot would be prearranged and there Keechaka would most certainly be despatched to his father and forefathers! You may have to only make one favour to me of enticing him to the bed and even as he would blabber out his amorous feelings and actions, I shall await your indicative signage and then witness the grand spectacle of his hopeless wriggle out to extinction preceded by his remarks of self bravado ending up in silence and total quiet! Vaishampayana then explained to King Janamejaya that Devi Draupadi managed to spend the rest of the night with the dense thoughts as to how the following day would be, how would be the meeting with Keechaka and what would be the ultimate relief and suppressed joy! Next morning itself she got confronted by Keechaka who initiated the conversation to her: 'Sairandhri! Do recall that even as King Virat as well as all the rest witnessed, I had brought you down to ground forcibly and even punched you! Indeed I am the Real King and Virat is only the namesake king! Once having decided to have you even by force, no power on earth could save you! Stupid woman! Even now do change your attitude, and I shall most certainly I would become your servant at your beck and call! I shall offer you hundred 'mohars' for your daily expence and eventually make you the Queen of the Kingdom! Even now I shall arrange hundred servant maids and let you lead a royal life, if only you allow me to meet you with love! Devi Draupadi replied: *Evam me samayam twadya pratipadyasva Keechak, na twaam sakhaa vaa bhrataa vaa jaaneeyaata angatam maya/ Anupravaadaad bheetasmi gandharvaanaam yashasvinaam, evam me pratijaaneeh tatoham vashagaa tava/* (Keechaka! In case what you assure me then do agree to my condition. In case you want me to meet you then nobody like your friend or relative like a brother ought to know about this and moreso because my gandharva husbands should never ever get a scent of this meeting; do swear me of this as am mortally afraid of my gandharva husbands! As I am desperate in meeting you closely, be assured that it would be a very top secret and your gandharva husbands never ever realise of this totally confidential meeting! The Devi Draupadi indicated to meet her at the 'Nartana shala' or the School of Dance! As Keechaka swore that none else excepting him would very anxiously await for the evening to fall with great hope even as Draupadi was equally awaiting that most auspicious 'muhurta' of getting rid of the scoundrel once for all! In their own individual ways, both of them were very anxiously awaiting the day fall, while one with the optimism and another with anxious anticipation. Indeed, both were busy spending their time, while one with 'shringar' and another with sweetest expectation of revenge. Then Devi Draupadi proceeded quietly to the Royal Kitchen to reassure Bhima of the arrival of Keechaka all alone and said: *Ashru dukkhaabhibhutaayaa mama maarjaswa Bharata, Atmanashchaiva bhadram te Kuru maanam kulasyacha/* (Bharata! May you be blessed with the most auspicious time ever. You have to most certainly wipe off my tears of both the eyes that had become deeply hurt and keep up the flag of Kuru Vamsha to new heights!) Bhimasena replied : *Swaagatam te Varaarohe yanmaam vedayase priyam, na hyaanyam kanchedicchaami sahaayam varavarnini/ Satyam bhraatrumsha dharmam cha puraskritya braveemi te, Keechakam nihanishyaami vritram deva - patiryathaa/* (Most welcome to you for your great wishes of luck; you have indeed given me the best news of the year; be rest assured that I need anybody else's help in this playful task ever! This deed is indeed quite in accordance of Bhraatru Dharma or of elder brother's way of merit and quality value and as per the established convention of Virtue and Justice! Even in the event of a battle by Senapati

Keechaka then too I shall face him if need be! Believe me this ‘Pratigjna’ or guaranteed declaration that to day I shall uproot Keechaka and his clan! Having said this Bhimasena waited for the dusk to arrive and disappeared like a lion waiting for its prey and waited on his bed comfortably. Keechaka who was most infatuated with desire and disquiet too proceeded to Nartanashaala! He then addressed the so called Draupadi and said endearingly : Devi! I have acquired considerable money, gold and jewellery; thousands of servant maids; palaces for fun and frolic; and here I am as your servant. Bhima replied: It is my great fortune that you are so alluring to look at and are engaged only in your own self-adulation and acquisition. But I could never in the past had the luck of touching your well formed body and embrace! You are well versed with the art of caressing women and of very sweet conversation. Is there a brave and clever male on whom women would not voluntarily surrender. Now Sage Vaishampayana described that as soon as Draupadi’s indication was received, Mahabaahu Bhimasena suddenly attacked Keechaka who was totally caught unaware and said tauntingly: Arre you, possessive of mountain like body! Your fate is sealed now as a ferocious lion jumps and holds an elephant and kicks down to earth, you mad fellow so that you dear sister shall cry hoarse beating her head on earth where you dead body would soon be lying! Indeed after your annihilation, Sairandhri would be heaving a sigh of freedom from your harrassment! So shouting Bhima attacked the flower garlanded Keechaka even as the latter too attacked as forcefully as Bhima and both of them got terribly engaged in dwandwa yuddha or mutual wrestle and tussle by shoulder to shoulder and grip to grip. *Keechakaanaam tu mukhyasya naraanaamuttamasyacha, Baali Sugreevayo bhraatroh pureva kapisimhayoh, Anyonyamapi samrabdhhou parasparajayaishani/* (among the mutual bouts of wrestling, once Keechaka dominated and another Bhimasena, just as in the days of yore both Vaali and Sugriva grappled mutually, both so incensed up and expecting a victory. Both were fighting like fivehooded cobras with five strong fingers on either of hands, as both were tearing each other with sharp nails and teeth bites! The fight was akin to two powerful bulls with kicks of strong feet and sharp horns. Thus the fight remained inconclusive for long while alarming sounds of thuds and thumps were heard without however luckily heard far. Finally the climax arrived: *Athainamaakshipya balaad grihamadhye vrikodarah, dhunayaamaasa vegena vaayushchhanda iva drumam/* Just as a huge tree is hit by a very powerful windstorm, Bhimasena started revolving the body of Keechaka in and around the Hall of Dance and Music and dropped the latter’s body with bumpy bang. Then finally as Keechaka made desperate effort to stand up from the fall, Bhima pulled him fast and swift and pounded Keechaka’s chest so strongly that the latter succumbed and Bhima tied the victim with a strong rope as to a fighting bull. Bhima then to convince Devi Draupadi, Bhima kept on pounding Keechaka’s chest. Later still as Keechaka was still not killed, Bhima held Keechak’s hair and pulled it fast besides pressed his neck forcefully till he was dead. The appearance of fury and revenge that Bhima was; he had a face of red hot looks even as the blood was smeared on his powerful hands still fresh from the victim’s limbs and veins. He made a pulp of the victim’s flesh and offered to Devi Draupadi as a gift! Then as Bhimasena quietly left the Nartana shaala after washing his body and hands, Sairandhri shouted midnight announcing : *Keechakoyam hatah shete gandharvah pratibhirmama, parastree kaamasammattatraagacchat pashyata/* (Come fast and see for yourself, ‘Kaamonmatta’ - maddened with sex- Keechaka is now lying dead to pulp and flesh, as one of my five Gandharva husbands have killed mercilessly and left Nartana shala the place of retribution and of justice!)Thousands of on lookers thronged in the night and the day after to see for themselves the horrible scene; the general talk of the crowd was : *Amaanusham kritam karma tam drushtaa vinipaatigam, kaasya greevaa ka charanou ka paanee ka shirastathaa, iti sma tam pareekshante gandharvena hatam tadaa/* (This act of hopeless death could not have been perpetrated by human hands, but indeed by Gandharvaas only. Look at the neck, hands, feet, head and all other body parts are totally disfigured!)

Trayovimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty three)- Bhima kills Upakeechakas

Sage Vaishampayana continued his narration to King Janamejaya that as soon as the news of Keechaka’s violent end was announced, the close relatives of Keechaka arrived and cried loudly. All his body parts were smashed helter skelter and what ever was possible tried to put them together. The scene was akin to

Indra's killing of Vritraasura as one heard in the past. The relatives then took up the task of taking the body remains to the cemetery for performing the last rites. At that time Sairandhri stood near a distant pillar and noticed the proceedings of the state of Keechaka! As the onlookers saw her, they threatened to harm and even demanded to burn the body of Keechak along with that of Sairandhri's saying that she indeed was primarily responsible to Keechak's this sordid end. King Virat agreed to the proposal to simultaneously burn her up also and the soldiers tied her up with ropes and carried her too to the cemetery in a funeral procession. Sairandhri then shouted desperately: *Jayo Jayanto Vijayo Jayatseno Jayadulah, Te me vaacham vijaanantu supaputraa nayanti maam/* (My husbands Jaya, Jayanta, Vijaya, Jayasena and Jayadula! Do hear my voice wherever you are; this is indeed a desperate cry as I am also being taken to 'smashaan bhumi' for simultaneous burning along with that of Keechak's dead body!) Bhimasena who heard this shout in desperation and even mentally reassured Draupadi not to worry at all! He then literally broke the gates of the Royal Kitchen and after a desperate run reached well before the funeral procession could, and climbed at a vantage point atop a huge tree at the scheduled place of funeral. The procession passed through the same route and all the Upa Keechakas were too sighted by Bhimasena! He broke the heavy branches of the tree and like Yamaraja ran to the Upakeechakas assembly even as their heart beats almost stopped and shouted that somebody was approaching us almost flying towards us like fierce storm; for heaven's sake leave Sairandhri free from her ropes at once! As soon as she was freed, the man-mountain like Bhima hurled the heavy branches of the huge tree and smashed the five Upakeechaks to miserable termination. Sairandhri meanwhile ran to the city from its boundaries of the burial ground! Meanwhile, Bhima ran to Draupadi who was totally shaken up trembling and soothened her spirits and by a short cut path took her to the Royal Kitchen safe! Eventually hundred more Upakeechakas thus totalling hundred six relatives of the Keechaka clan were terminated as per the promise and action executed by Bhimasena! *Tad drushtaa mahadaascharyam naraa naaryascha sangataah, vismayam paramam gatwaa nochuh kaschin Bharata!* (Thus concluded the narration of the swift happenings at 'Shmashaana Vaatika' which indeed was a true vindication of retribution and justice)

Chaturvimshodhaaya (Chapter Twenty Four)- Draupadi and Brihannala exchange views

Several significant citizens of the Virat Kingdom sought audience of the King and requested him to some how send Sairandhri away from the Kingdom as common citizens were rattled by the sudden and quick proceedings arising from the merciless killing of Senapati Keechaka by Gandharva husbands of Sairandhri apart from the serial murders of as many as hundred six Upa Keechakas and their relatives. This total annihilation was after all caused by one person viz. Sairandhri and therefore she ought to be somehow sent away from the Kingdom to ensure peace lest outside Kings might chance invasions of Virat Kingdom in the general atmosphere of uncertainty and instability. After all, the youth of this Kingdom might easily become preys of Sairandhri's extraordinary beauty and figure and eventually get killed by her Gandharva husbands. This situation of constant flux be not allowed to be continued for long knowing well that the root cause was Sairandhri indeed. King Virat gave a serious thought to the appeal of the Senior Citizens and replied that the ongoing obsequies of the departed Keechaka and his entire clan were right then in progress and soon thereafter, the needful would be followed up. The King then asked Queen Sudeshna and on giving the gist of the appeal of the Forum of Citizens and of his reply, Sudeshna might as well get rid of the central cause of despatching Sairandhri as soon as possible! Meanwhile Draupadi first calling on Bhimasena at the Royal Kitchen and thanking him proceeded to 'Nartana Shaala' where she saw Maha baahu Arjuna who was engaged in teaching dance to Royal Maidens. On seeing Sairandhri, the Maidens swarmed around her admiringly and defended her position since Keechaka had indeed crossed the limits and infringed the status of a Senapati to assure safety to women first and foremost! Then Brihannala asked Sairandhri as to what precisely happened to provoke her and how the sequence of events raced up till the end of Keechaka! Then Sairandhri replied to Brihannala as to why was the latter asking for details of what happened unless these were to extract humor out of the sordid situations and her tragic experiences! Brihannala replied most defensively: Kalyaani! Do you have an idea of being born as a 'napumsaka' and how Brihannala had been going through the arduous life which could

never be described but experienced! I am not asking for the details not as a joke but to ascertain the factual position! Sushroni Sairandhri! We are both sailing in similat boats and hence my inquisitiveness but certainly nor for a joke! Brihannala further said: *Na tu kenachidyantam kasyachiddhrudayam kachit, veditum shakyate nuunam tena maam naavabuddhyase/* (Surely none indeed one can appreciate and understand other's feelings adequately and hence you are unable to realise the torture that I have been underaking during these months and days!) Then Sairandhri reached the Queen Palace and stood near by the Queen. Sudeshna had exactly repeated the words of the King that due to Sairandhri's presence in the Kingdom and due to her matchless beauty and grace , men tend to get attracted to her and your Gandharva husbands were unable to toletate the same! Soon Sairandhri realised that the next statement of the Queen would to leave the Virat Kingdom. So Sairandhri replied: Devi Sudeshna, kindly let the King Virat bear with me just for another thirteen days; meanwhile my Gandharva husbands would have fulfilled their duties too and then I shall on my own leave you and later on you would all in the Kingdom rejoice your complete fulfillment and comfortable living thereafter for sure! Meanwhile do kindly bear with me and may prosperity be shovered on you and the Kingdom thereafter. Sudeshna replied to say: *Vasa bhadre yatheshitam twam swaamaham sharanam gataa, traayasya mama bhartaaram putraameshaiva vishashatah/* (Bhadre Sairandhri, you may be pleased to stay here as long as you desire; but do kindly safeguard the interests of my husband, family and relatives. And for this may I seek your cooperation!)

GO-HARANA PARVA

Panchavimshodhaaya (Chapter Twenty five)- Duryodhana enquires of Pandava's whereabouts

In the aftermath of Keechaka's ghastly murder by Gandharvas, the citizens of neighbouring Kingdoms expressed their own reactions, stated Vaishampaayana to King Janamejaya. Some felt that Keechaka was a great warrior who annexed several Kingdoms under the umbrella of Matsya desha whose King had been Virat and whose brother in law Keechaka the Senapati of that Kingdom was the power centre. Others felt that his great expertise in wars notwithstanding, Keechaka was a womaniser and as he was attracted to a servant woman - one Sairandhri, she refused as she was already married to five Gandharvas; still he was stubborn and chased her even into the King's Court and finally one of her Gandharava husbands murdered most mercilessly! While this was the situation among the neighbouring Kingdoms, the Great Pandavas headed by Yudhishtar lost their huge Empire in a frivolous game of dice and were banished to twelve years of severe forest life and conclusive one year's 'Agjnaat vaasa' or of Unknown Destination in cognito!

The villianous Kuru Prince Duryodhana who enforced the decisions of the much questioned game of dice had been on the prowl all across Bharata Desha just to find out as to where Pandavas had been hiding during the one year's Agjnaata Vaasa! Then entered goodhacharis or secret agents into the court of the truly invincible Empire of Bharata Desha viz. the Kurus as headed by the blind King Dhritarashtra and very ably administered by epic personalities like Bheeshma, Drona, Kripacharya and Karna, apart from the Prince of Kauravas Duryodhana the villianous, who was deeply jealous of the blind King's erstwhile brother's progeny called Pandavas now being harrassed with the decisions of Vana Vaasa and Agjnata Vaasa pursuant to a fake game of dice! The Secret Agents of Royalty conveyed that their efforts during almost a year of Pandavas existence incognito did not meet any success, despite their massive and country wide efforts! The secret agents averred and declared that their country-wide searches from deep forests, mountain tops, caves , evergreen and fertile lands, river beds, and so on, did not produce any

tangible result in the search of the footsteps of Pandavas! They enquired from the defence and police posts of various kingdoms, chariotmen, passers by and all the huge efforts produced no clue at all! Do advise us by the Powers of this court that be, as to what further efforts all the year long barring a few more days of Pandavas year long Agjnaata Vaasa , be possibly made! However here might be news from Matsya desha reaching us just now that the Senapati of that Kingdom called Keechaka was brutally murdered by five Gandharvas and here might be an opportunity to attack them due to the calamity of that kingdom. Kuru Maharaja, you may therefore like to advise us to take any offensive action if deemed appropriate!

Shadvimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty six)- Duryodhana's plan

Vaishampaayana continued his narration further that Duryodhana's mind reacted to the news of the happenings of Matsya Desha. He was indeed aware now of the reports of the secret agents too. Out of the best part of the Agjnaata vaasa of Pandavas, only a few days were left. In case that period was over, Pandavas would only be like hungry lions and might resort even to extreme steps including waging a full fledged battle. All the mastery of the game of dice and the manner in which the very skillful plan had been executed should not be squandered and somehow a repeat Vana Vaasa and Agjnaata Vaasa ought to be our primary concern! Indeed everybody would be aware of the time limits fixed for the two types of Pandavas sacrifice periods. So pondering, Duryodhana ordered for a crash quick re-survey within extremely limited number of hours and perhaps of a day or two! The secret agent party held their hands high and said: *Vividhaistatparaih samyak tatjnairnipuna samvritaih, anveshthavyaah sunnipunaih pandavaaschhatra vaasinah/ Nadee kunjeshu teertheshu graameshu nagareshucha, Ashrameshu charmyeshu parvateshu guhaasucha/* (Sir, Pandavas must have been hiding safe all these days and months! It might not be otherwise difficult to search for them keeping in view their multiple abilities with finesse. We have engaged a big number of efficient persons to search banks of rivers and water bodies, gardens, tirthaas, villages, townships and cities, Ashramas of Sadhus, mountains and caves; indeed we have performed our very best, and even crash searches might not be useful further!) Then Duryodhana exclaimed that by a twist of fate , one would wonder and trust that Pandavas might not have been lost forever! Maha Raja Dhritarashtra! You may have to face such a situation with bravery and resolute strength of mind!)

Saptavimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty Seven) –Dronacharya reacts to Duryodhana's plan

The great warrior teacher Dronacharya at once reacted to Duryodhana's wishful thinking and affirmed that a person of Dharmajna Yudhishtar's standing would not be properly understood to evil minds and only persons of virtue would appreciate the resolute manner of Pandava's performing deeds to perfection! Sage Vaishampaayana told Janamejaya: Pandavas were not only great warriors but men of unique wisdom, worldlywise, talented, self controlled, virtuous, ever grateful, and great devotees of the instructions of the elder brothers especially of Yudhishtar; such personalities would never indeed slip in the pages of human history so easily and flippantly mentioned by Duryodhana! Of them, Yudhishtar indeed was the symbol of morality, virtue, and the rightful explanation and use of prosperity. His brothers were unique followers of great sacrifice and selflessness. *Tasmaad yatraat pratikshante kaalasyodaya – maagamam, na hi te naashamrichheyuriti pashyaamyaham dhiyaa/* (Viewed from the past experience and mind set of Pandavas, they would not brook any delay in announcing by themselves) *Sampraaptam chaiva yat kaaryam tatra kshipramakaalikam kriyataam saadhu sanchintya vaasaschaishaam prachintya*

-taam/ Yathaavat paanduputraanaam sarvaartheshu ghritaatamanaam, durjjaiyaah khalusuraastapasaa vritaah/ (Whatever would need to be executed at this stage, ought to be done very soon but with cool and mature thinking yet without hesitation and indecision. No doubt, it might be an insurmountable riddle to discover them and to discover them might be infructuous even). As regards, Yudhishtar who had the reputation of being ‘suddhaatma, gunavaan, satyavaan, neetimaan shuchih’, seeking to discover him might be merely impossible! That precisely why one would have to be tactful to approach him by engaging Brahmana guptacharas, Siddha Purushas and such distinguished personalities only!

Ashtavimshodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty Eight)- Bhishma praises Yudhishtar

Pitamaha Bhishmacharya straight way supported the view of Dronacharya. He said further that the persons of Pandava’s standing would most certainly follow the regulations of ‘Agjnaata Vaasa’ and take all precautions as per Dharma and Nyaaya or Principles of Virtue and Justice! He continued to state: *Kshatra dharmastaa nityam Keshavaanugaah sadaa, Pravirapurushase vai Mahatmano Mahabalaah, naavaseeditumarhanti uddhahantah sataam dhuram/* (Pandavaas do sincerely observe Kshatriya Dharma and truly signify what Lord Krishna would commend by that Dharma. They indeed are the exemplary Purushas of that clan meticulously following the Veera Dharma or of the Principles of the bravery and magnanimity) Pandavas would ever be safe by virtue of their Dharma and gallantry and could never ever be demolished despite the ups and downs and present chapter of hard luck would soon be concluded. Maha Raja, the type of patience and decisiveness is typical of the virtuous but never be of the vicious minded and the evil spirited! As regards Pandavas, their intelligent demeanour totally camouflages their passing times of misfortune and their fortitude and strength of will power should be their true shield of heckles and interruptions! *Yat tu shakyamihaasmaabhistaana vai sanchayitya Paandavaan, buddhyaa prayuktam na drohaat pravikshyaami nibodhatat/* (Whatever had been said in defence of Pandavas, Oh King, should be taken in the true spirit of your own benefit but not to unduly lift them up in false praise!) Maharaj, the morality of high standard typical of Yudhishtar would be such that an impartial person of my type would not behave an elderly person like me to criticise since that kind of mental binding would need to be defined as truly ideal! ‘Raja, I happen to the clan of elders and would like to vouchsafe and defend only the truth! *V ridhyanushaasane taatha! Tishhataa satyasheelinaa, avashyam tviha dheerena sataam madhye vivakshataa/ Yathaarhamiha vaktavyam sarvathaa dharmalipsayaa/* (Those who would abide by the ruling of elders are stated be the sustainers of virtue, and those brave beings who distinguish the untruth and truth ought no to mislead the practitioners of dharma even by error of judgment!) ‘I would not share the opinion of those that Pandavas erred in their judgment of thirteen years of banishment. Be also at the same time, rest assured that in a place of his choice , the concerned Kingdom where Dharmaraja stayed would prevail peace and prosperity. *Priyavaadi sadaa daanto bhavyah satyaparojanah, Ishtah pushtah shuchrdaksho yatra raajaa yudhishtarah/ Naasuyako na chaapeershurnaabhimaani na maatsari, bhavishyati janastatra swayam dharmamanurvatah/ Brahma - ghoshaascha bhuyaamsah purnaahutyastathaivacha, Kratavascha bhavishyanti bhuyaamso bhuri dakshinaah/* (Where ever Yudhishtar would reside, there ordinary persons included would be truthful speaking soft, being self controlled, enjoying auspiciousness, well maintained and healthy, pure minded and hard working. None ever in the place of his stay, persons suffer from illwill or envy of each other, or of hatred ,but of mutual goodwill and dealings of justice! In such a place of Yudhishtar’s residence, there would by constant sounds of ‘Vedaadhyayanah’ or recitals of Vedas; purnaahutis in Yagnas and daana-dakshinas!) At the place of his choice, there would be timely rains and excellent crops and the residents enjoy fearlessness and joy. *Vaayuscha sukhasamparsho nishprateepam cha darshanam na*

bhayam twaavishet tatra yatra raajaa yudhishtharah/ (At the place of Yudhishtar’s residence, the sweep of wind would be comfortable being neither cold nor dull; fruitful discussions about ‘Dharma vichaara’ and of ‘Brahma Jnaana’ would prevail all over and those without such discussions would be far and few between.) In those villages/ townships, there would be plentiful presence of cow-wealth of well fed and high yielding milk of healthy and sweet milk; and ample availability of bhakshya-bhojya-rasa padardhas; ready presence of rasa-sparsha-gandha-shabda actions and reactions. Moreover, the place that Yudhishtara would have chosen to stay would be the place of residence of highly ‘dharmic varna-ashrayas’, especially ‘dwijas’ or the twice born Brahmana- Kshatriya-Vaishyas. Maharaja, at the place inhabited by Dharmaraja the embodiment of virtue and justice, would prevail peace, happiness, piety and contentment! Devas and Atithis-Gods and guests- seek to enter and charity and social values dominate! Wherever, Dharmaraja would choose to sojourn, there would be auspiciousness all around and Yajna karyas, anushthaana-swadhyaaya-daana dharmas and Deva Vrata-Pujas predominate! Indeed Kuntiputra Yudhishtara the Dharmatma would usher in satya-dhairya- daana-kshama, lazza, Shri, keerti, teja, dayaluta and saralata or truth, courage, charity, fortitude, modesty, prosperity, fame, radiance, kindness and softness respectively! Bheeshma finally cautioned Emperor Dhritarashtra to therefore execute such actions of appropriateness to the call and demand of the prevailing situation as quickly as possible! The true intent of the Grandfather Bheeshmaacharya to Dhritarashtra was to ascertain the whereabouts of Pandavas no doubt but with a view to bury the hatchet or sink mutual differences of Kaurav a- Pandavas!

Ekonatrishodhyaaya (Chapter Twenty nine)-King Susharma’s plan of Gograhana

Sage Vaishampayana continued his narration of Go-harana Parva as follows: Following the exhortation of Bheeshmacharya addressed to Dhritarashtra, Kripacharya the son of Maharshi Sharadwaan of Kuru Empire commended the message of the Grandfather. He said: *Dharmaartha sahitam shalakashanam tatwatascha sahetukam, tatraanurupam Bheeshmena mamaapyatra giram shrunu/* (Bhismaacharya’s moral preaching was the essence of both Dharma and Artha, atonce logical, erudite and profound! His advise to locate and bring over Pandavas with honour and affection would conclude a sordid chapter and usher auspiciousness to all concerned. *Navaksheyo ripustaata praakritopi vibhushataa, kim punah Paandavaastaat sarvastrakushale raney/* (Raja Dhritarashtra! As once there were an ambition to become a great Emperor, one should desist from degrading enemies as circumstances might not be suitable to them but their ability to wage battles might not be underestimated!) Once the period of Agjnaata vaasa was concluded, they might surely get rejuvenated and announce themselves on their own! Bharata! Do make an honest assesment of your own top-medium-low value levels of your own army and should initiate steps towards truce without being vainglorious, overestimated and being blinded of the opponent’s virtuosity taken as timidness! Kripacharya now resorts to brasstacks and basic nitty gritty of War Tactics! He states: *Saama danena bhedena dandena balikarmanaa, Nyaayena kramya cha paraan balaacchaan-mya durbalaan/ Saanwaitvaa tu mitraani balam chaabhyaashyataam sukham, sukoshabala samriddhah samyak siddhimavaapyasi/* (Saama or resort to counselling, Daana or offering money and gifts, Bheda or dividing the forces out of their unity by cleverness, and Danda or finally resort to offensive attacks constitute the cardinal principles of waging Wars. With the help of these Principles, a King of ability would win wars by occupying the weak, uniting the friendly forces with sweetness and encouragements by way of enhancements of wages and allowances and foster good will and comaraderie.) Kripacharya thus counselled Dhritarashtra: *Evam sarvam vinischitya vyavasaayam svadharmatah, Yathaa kaalam Manushyendra chiram sukhamavaapyasi/* (Narendra! In this fashion, one should conduct and

succeed in own's actions, albeit well within the peripheries of Virtue and accomplish lasting mental peace and practical wisdom and abundant common sense!)

Against this back ground of what all Bhishmacharya and Kripacharya explained convincingly, Prince Duryodhana addressed the Ministers of the Royal Court: *Shrutam hyotnamanmayaa purvam karhaasu janasamsadi, veeraanaam shastravidushaam praag -jnaanaam matinischaye, kritinaam saara phalgutwam jaanaami nayachakshushaa/* (Dear Ministers, in the olden days of normal discussions we used to speak about Shastras, vidwans, jnaanis, Veera and Paramatma persons and their exortations of Dharma and Adharma.) But now, we tend to discuss about the significant characteristics of daityas, humans and rakshasaas. Among human beings, we readily tend to short list Baladeva, Bheemasena, Shalya and Keechak. It is in this context, that I would like to mention of Bhimasena. This would be why I would like to make a special reference to Bhimasena. and of Keechaka. When in this short list, both are included, then the colollary could be drawn that Sairandhri might be the cause of friction as well. *Tatraaham Keechakam manye Bhimasenena maaritam, airandhri Draupadim manye naatra kaaryaa vichaarina/* (Therefore, it occurs to me that in Matsya desha, in the capital city Virat nagar, Bhimasena might have killed Keechaka and most possibly Sairandhri should have been Draupadi) Duryodhana surmised that Bhimasena ought to have killed Keechaka overnight by misleading the public that the latter was a Gandharva being one of the five Gandharva husbands of Saidandhri! Duryodhana further referring to the address of Pitamah Bheeshma said: *Pitaamahena ye choktaa veshasya cha janasya cha, Gunaaste Matsya raashtrasya bahushopi mayaa shrutaah, Virata nagare manye paandavaatrachaarinah, nivasanti pure ramye tatra yaatraa vidheeyataam/* (Whatever Grandfather Bheeshma had described about the characeristics of Matsya Desha, as reported by our secret agents, would be in confirmity thereof! Thus, Pandavas ought to have stayed in Virat Nagar in perfect disguise!) *Matsyaraashtram hanishyaamo griheeshyaamascha godhanam, Griheete godhane nunam tepi yotsyanti Pandavaah/ Apurne samaye chaapi yadi pashyema Paandavaan, Dwaadashaanyaani varshaani pravekshanti punarvanam/* (We must therefore frighten and seize the enormous wealth of cows of Matsya desha, and most certainly Pandava warriors would endeavour to defend the cow wealth and get surfaced so that even during their Agjnaata vaasa we should be able to expose them to a repeat twelve years of hard forest life followed by Agjnaata vaasa once again!) Kauravas would thus have nothing to lose except perhaps a few losses of men and war material but the advantage would be too enormous to describe! Therefore the final decision should be to attack Matsya desha at this most opportune time, declared Duryodhana!

Trimshodhyaya (Chapter Thirty)- Susharma's plan to attack Matsya Desha

Maharshi Vaishampaayana described to King Janamejaya that pursuant to the war declaration by Duryo - dhana by way of 'Go grahana' against Matsya Desha, King Susharma of Trigarta Desha, a subsidiary of Kuru Empire, immediately reacted most positively and addressed Karna of Kauravas- a close confidant of Duryodhana, and a notorious 'Dushta Chatushtaya' or Gang of Four. Susharma had in the past been harassed by Keechaka, the Matsya Senapati since deceased and plundered his region several times therebefore! He readily and revengefully agreed to play a leading role in the escapade of 'Go grahana' on the enthusiastic role of sharing the loot mostly to take revenge and also to share the fall out profits thereof, atleast to recover the prestige of his kingdom and most possibly to gain part of the wealth of cows and so on, on agreed principles. King Susharma suggested: *Praagjno vaa Kuru vriddheyam samveshaam nah pitaamahah, Acharyascha yathaa Dronam Kripah Shaaradvatastathaa, Manyanti te yathaa sarve tathaa yaatraa vidheeyataam/* (It is humbly submitted that the Stalwarts of Kuru Empire viz. Pitaamaha

Bhishma, Acharya Drona, and Sharadvan Putra Kripacharya might also kindly agree to lead the Go-grahana attack) Duryodhana readily agreed to the proposal of King Susharma and the recommendation of Karna and instructed his close follower and younger brother Dusshaashana to approach Bheeshma Drona Kripacharyaadi seniors to kindly partake in the venture. Duryodhana proclaimed: *Yathodyesham cha gacchhaamah sahitaatstatra Kauravaih, Susharmaacha yathodrishtam deshah yaatu Mahaarathah Trigartaih sahito Raajaa samagrabalavaahanah/ Praageva hi susamveeto Matyasya vishayam prati, Jaghanyato vayam tatra yaasyaamo divisaantare Vishayam Matyaraajasya susamridhim susamhitaah/ Te yaantu sahitaastatra Viraata nagaram prati, Kshipram gopaan samaasaadya guhyantu vipulam dhanam/ Gavaam shatasahasraani shrimanti gunavanticha, vayampanu gruheemo dvidhaa kritvaa varuthineem/*

(Right from the place of attack as decided, from there itself Kaurava sena would follow just behind King Susharma's full army and chariots. Let Susharma first make the initial attack against the Matsyadesha and just one day later the fullfledged Kaurava army would assault the enemy! Along with the Trigarta army which should occupy the cow herds, the fullfledged Kaurava army would wage the total aggression, as profoundly declared by the strategist Duryodhana! Now Maharshi Vaishampaayana vividly described to King Janamejaya : *Apare divase sarvem Rajan! Sambhuya Kauravaah, Ashtamyam te nyagrihyat gokulaani sahasrashah/* (Rajan! On the second day of Ashtami, from another side Kauravas attacked and taken custody of thousands of cows!)

Ekatrimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty One)- Virat King enlists help of Yudhishtar, Bhim, Nakula and Sahadeva

Bharata Janamejaya! said Maharshi Vaishampayana: As the stipulated thirteenth year was closeby, King Susharma made a fierce and surprise attack on the thousands of cows grazing peacefully in the vicinities of Virat Kingdom. After the unfortune murder of the rock like support of Keechaka, King Virat who was already shaken up became defensive of every action and started in confiding more and more of the company of Kank bhat! Now, the abrupt and most sudden news of King Susharma's attack of Matsya Desha's cows wealth on the border place had thus rattled the Virat King. As the sky high sounds of attacks and the news of defensive battle of retaliatory nature by Virat's army branches present at the borders neared the Capital, then one had most suprisingly realised that a battle was on at hand! As the desperate cries of cows and shouts of the cow herd keepers reached sky high, Virat King had to equip himself with 'abhedyakalpa' named 'Kavacha' or full body cover and proceeded to the battle field along with his full army! Chariots, elephants, horses, and footmen proceeded and 'dhwaja pataakaas' or sky high flyers and flags came to be unfurled with pomp. Virat's dear brothers Shataaneeka and Madiraaksha led the huge army with respective armoury exhibiting bravery and resolution. As King Virat moved forward, Kanku bhat told the King that he too learnt the four pronged 'Dhanur Vidya' or the Science of Archery from a Maharshi and would like to follow the Royal Elephant; he also suggested that Vallabh the cook cum wrestler, Tantapal the Chief of Cow Safety and Grandhik the Horse Trainer might also be allowed to accompany the Royal Entourage and Virat agreed and instructed Shataaneeka to let them all participate in the battle, even as they all occupied their seats in the accompanying chariot.

Dwatrimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty Two)- Go grahana as planned by Susharma

On reaching the battle field the scene was that of thousand cows kept in a heavily guarded enclosure and the army of Virat King designed a 'Vyuha' or Army Design to reach upto the enclosure of cows. With the

help of the Scheme designed there followed a day long offensive- defensive attacks and counter attacks by elephants, cavalry, charioteers and soldiers by foot. *Devaasura samo rajannaaseet Suryevalambvati, Padaati rathanaagendrahayaaroh baloughavaan/* (Janamejaya Raja, even while Sun was about to set in the west on the sky, the unusually day long battle by elephants, chariots, horses and by foot was perhaps similar to the battles of Devaasuras! The battle was so fierce that the dust raised was so intense as to cause several birds to fall on earth as these could not see properly. In the same scenario, the arrows flying across in various directions smashed the limbs of some and slashed the heads of some as though the wooden pieces arranged in the homa kunda emitted sparks of death helter-skelter. The elephant riders and horsemen using all kinds of weapons like swords, pattisas, praasas, shaktis, tomaras and Astras or ‘mantroka yukta baanas’ or arrows as per the powerful verses recited to suit specific enemies. In this Great Battle, several Kshatriya heroes with their arms and arrows kept aloft were trampled to death by the running streams of soldiers of varied rankings. On the following day, Kanku bhat (Yudhishtar) along with their artificial names the original Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva [hence forth named as such] crafted a ‘Vyuha’ or a ‘trap path’ to safeguard the Virat King. The Vyuha was of the design of a Bird while he himself was stationed at the position of the bird’s peak while Nakul and Sahadeva were at the positions of the wings of the bird and Bhimasena at the tail. As Yudhishtar killed some thousand opponents, Bhimasena who was incensed with mad fury against the attacks by enemy heroes by chariots, elephants, horses and so on despatched over two thousand souls to heavens . Nakul and Sahadeva were not lagging in the number of hundreds of killings. Shataanika the Commander in chief of Virat sena was on frontal attack killing hundreds of soldiers on both sides and so did Madiraksha of Virat’s sena against Trigarta’s of Sudarshana. There was a particular situation when both the Virat King and King Sudarshana encountered face to face. *Anyonyam chaapi samrabdhou vichara turamarshanou, kritaastrou nishitairbaanairasi shakti gadaa bhritao/ Tato raajaa Susharmaanaam vivyaadha dashabhih sharaih, Panchabhih panchabhischaascha vivyaadha chaturon hayaan/ Tathaiva Matsyaraajaanam Susharmaa yuddhadurmadah, Panchaashataa shitairbaanairvivyaadha paramaastravit/* As both were facing each other with red faces and seething anger, both being great warriors and extraordinary expertise of ‘Astra Vidya’ spewed fire at each other, attacking with swords, shaktis and maces and jumping at each other while targeting ‘mantrik’ arrows. King Virat at that time closetted Susharma with ten ‘astra-arrows’ while in retaliation, Susharma overpowered Virat with as many as five arrows each in very quick sequence and killed four of the horses of Virat’s chariot and totally disabled his movement ; then Susharma who was with frenzied fury hastened to tie up the Virat King with fifty quick arrows. *Tatah sainyam Maja Raja! Matsya raaja Sudarshanonh, naabhya jaanaat tadaanyonyam sainyena rajasaavritam/* Janamejaya! this scene of arresting King Virat was hardly seen in the haze of dust and dusk, and the sight was hardly seen to clearly visualize that of the arrest of Virat!

Trayastrimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty Three)- Virat King’s overnight arrest followed by his victory

As darkness prevailed and the lull descended, the happenings at the battle field were hardly visible but Trigarta King Susharma asked his brothers to pin down the hostage King Virat even as a number of Trigarta chariots surrounded that of Virat’s through out the night. As soon as dawn arrived, Sudarshana killed the horses and men of King Virat and having transferred the hostage to his own chariot took him away. The news of Virat King’s hostage status was spread like wild fire even as Yudhishtar alerted Bhimasena and the latter got to action at once; he looked at the tall and sturdy trees but Yudhishtar warned Bhima not to destroy trees but might as well utilize Astra shastras along with the supplementary

help of Nakula and Sahadeva! Bhima used his bow and arrows as sudden pours of huge rain and ran after Susharma who was actually keeping Virat as his hostage. He shouted at Susharma and said disparagingly : Arre Susharma! Wait! Wait as I command you! *Susharma chintayaamaasa kaalaanta yamopamam, tishthatishtheti bhaashantam prushthato Ratha pungavah, pashyataam sumahat karma mahad yuddham upasthitam/* (As Bhima shouted at Susharma as with a fearsome challenge, he looked back and felt that Lord Yama himself had called up and cautioned his followers to get ready for a decisive battle and be ever alert and brave!) While this situation obtained, the erstwhile disheartened Virat sena returned to redoubled verve and encouragement provided by the clarion call of courage from Vallabha! Now, Bhimasena instantly lifted his fearful mace and killed as many as a lakh of elephant and horse riders while Susharma realised that he was literally facing a fearful flood and even his brothers too might be facing a similar havoc at the other end of the battle field! Even while waging a desperate and defending fight, Susharma could not even spare a second to think about his own self defence as Vallabh's mace was creating lightning bombardments. *Tato yudhishtharo raaja twarmano mahaarathah, abhipatyta Susharmaanam sharairabhyaahanadbhrusham/* (As these events had been going on, Maharathi Yudhishtar surrounded Susharma and literally caged him with a blitz of arrows.) In return, Susharma killed Yudhishtar's horses but as though by a chain reaction, Bhimasena killed Susharma's horses, his charioteer, and 'Anga rakshakas' or body guards. Susharma thus got stranded chariotless and as a part of natural justice King Virat ran after Susharma. *Palaayanam Triagartam drustwaa Bheemobhya bhaashayat, Raajaputra nivartaswa na te yuktam palaaanam/* (At this most critical juncture, as Trigata King Susharma wanted to run from the war field and as though adding insult to injury Bhmasena asked the King to return back as it would not behove a great King to run back from the battle field!) Bhima further heckled Susharma that would with this kind of power and bravery that the King of Trigarta planned to forcibly take away the wealth of cows from Virat kingdom! Susharma was incensed at this jeer and tried to retalliate but Bhima gave a fitting hit back and Susharma again tried to run away once again crying loud even as Bhima beat him so much that Susharma fell and lost consciousness. The army of Susharma got totally demoralised and ran away as King Virat was relieved and recovered. On recovering senses, Susharma regretted the whole episode and fell at the feet of Bhima and of Yudhishtar but the latter asked Bhima to leave him away. Yet, Bhima demanded that in the Open Court of King Virat he should rather fall on Virat's feet and declare that the King of Trigarta was the servant of King Virat! If only he did so, the ever merciful Virat King might perhaps give his pardon!

Chatustrimshodhaaya (Chapter Thirty Four)- Virat King's victory declaration

Maharshi Vaishampayana then described to King Janamejaya that while Susharma returned totally humiliated and returned to Trigarta Desha, King Virat declared Matsya desha's glorious victory. *Tato Viratah Kounteyaantimaanusha vikramaan, archayaamaasa vitena maanena cha maharathaan/* (Thereafter, Kank bhat, Vallabh, Tantapal and Grandhik were highly honoured and gifted by the Virat King). Yudhishtar then expressed his gratitude to have provided refuge to him, Bhimasena, Nakula and Sahadeva who all fought the battle against King Susharma, the neighbouring King. As King Virat was overwhelmed with the victory entirely due to the bravery and magnificent fighting skills, Kank bhat replied: *Pratinandaama te vaakyam sarve chaiva vishaampate, etenaiva prateetaah sma yat twam muktodya shatrubhih/*(Maha Raja, we are beholden to whatever you have stated, but we are extremely contented that today you have been freed from the enemies!) King Virat then decided to perform 'abhisheka' to Kank bhat and declared that he would like to gift away the most precious items of his own collection of nine gems, cows, gold and jewels since they were indeed responsible of keeping his heads

high and facilitate our next generations too to do so in the comity of Bharata's Kingdoms! Then he instructed his men to go in advance that the King of Virat would soon be arriving at the Capital City being proudly victorious and that men and women should welcome him in their best dresses to witness the function!

Panchatrimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty Five)- Kaurava's seizure of cows of Virat Kingdom

Maharshi Vaishampayana addressed King Janamejaya that even as the news of King Susharma's defeat and King Virat's victory as his kingdom's enormous number of cows were recovered, Duryodhana along with his Ministers and Senior Members of the Court of Emperor Dhritarashtra attacked Matsya Desha and seized the cows of King Virat! *Bhishmo Dronascha Karnascha Kripascha paramastravit, Drounascha Soubalaschaiva tathaa Dushhaasanah prabho/ Vivimshati vikarnascha Chitrasenascha Veeyavaan Durmukho Duhsshalascha yevaanye Maharathaah/* (King Janamejaya! the galaxy of stalwarts attacking Matsya Desha included Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Kripacharya, Ashvattama, Shakuni, Dushhaasana, Vivimshati, Vikarana, the brave fighter Chitrasena, Durmukha, Dusshala and many other Maha Rathis!) All these illustrious personalities had suddenly confiscated the wealth of cows of that kingdom comprising some sixty thousand well fed cows. The voices of the seize of the cows were overshadowed by the noise of chariots and the shouts of the soldiers. The cow keepers ran away hither and thither towards the Capital city of the Virat Kingdom for their lives and met the Rajakumar Bhuminjaya alias Uttara Kumar as King Virat was scheduled to return victorious by another route to the Capital City! They said that in his absence for fighting another King Sudarshana, King Virat appointed Prince Uttar Kumar as the Chief Defender cum Administrator of the Virat Kingdom! In an open Royal Court, King Virat declared that after himself if needed, his son- a unique and brave warrior- would be able to assume the full responsibilities of the Kingdom extremely efficiently! King Virat once declared: My beloved son has a great experience and fame in releasing 'astras' of far reaching significance! Yuvaraj, what a great coincidence that you should now have the opportunity of displaying your great talent of Dhanu Vidya and the expertise in the Astra Mantras and truly vindicate the same to firmly establish the reputation! *Aavartaya kuruunjhitwaa pashun pashumataavara, nirdahaishaamaneekaani bheemena sharatejasaa/* (Prince! As you well realise the wealth of cows has been a strong point of our Kingdom, and since the fire like attack by Kauravas of this unique source of our Kingdom be turned into ash, do at once and save us all!) Uttara Kumara! Just as a powerful and uncontrollable elephant beats and rolls up the enemies with its huge trunk, kindly destroy the attacking enemies with the aid of your magical 'Astras' fortified by 'Mantras' as to be released by your magnificent arrows! Let the wired musical instrument named 'Veena' like your potent bow be played by you Yuva Raja, with tuneful and sonorous notes that should frighten the gang of enemies into surrender enabling the release of our bovine wealth! My Lord, do alight the silver like bright chariot drawn by the lightning horses of strength and roar as a lion to disperse the enemies like birds that should never to return! 'Indeed it is at this crucial juncture when King Virat too is away on another front and returning with flying colours, you are our solid and unfailing pillar of strength and support!) Vaishampayana Muni described that at this crucial juncture, Prince Uttar Kumar was seated in the 'Antahpura' or the Ladies Palace amid the Royal Women!

Shat trimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty Six)-Boastful Prince felt the absence of a competent Sarathi!

Having been informed by the chief representative of the wealth of Virat's cows that the herd was attacked even as the King was engaged at another border battle; Prince Uttar Kumara declared with

confidence and assurance: *Adhyaahamanugaccheyam dhriddha dhanvaa gavaam padam, Yadi me Saarathih kaschid bhavedashveshu kovidah/* (Gopa shreshtha! My bow of outstanding capability is ready and totally committed to destroy the enemy whosoever it may be; but alas! my handicap is the absence of a capable charioteer!) The moment that a somewhat able driver be available, I could certainly proceed to attach the enemy! Unfortunately my earlier charioteer who had served me when I was engaged in a fierce battle for nearly a twenty eight nights, or nearly of a month was killed. Now if only a second and capable replacement could be available, who could steer through the inaccessible path full of elephants, chariots, horses and men on the run as fodder to sharp arrows, I should be able to enter the death trap of the battle field. *Duryodhanam Shantanavam Karnam Kripam, Dronam cha saha putrena maheshvaasaan samagataan/ Vinnasayitvaa sangraame daanavaaniva vajrabhut, Anenaiva muhurtana punah pratyanye pashun/* (Just as Vajradhaari Indra frightens Danavas, I could too terrify and startle the so called experts of battles like Duryodhana, Bheeshma, Karna, Kripacharya and Ashwathama as also Dronacharya and get the wealth of our cows instantly but if only a capable driver of my chariot!) *Pashyeyuradhya me veerye kuravaste samaagataah, kim nu Paarthorjanah saakshaadayam aasmaan prabaadhate/* (As I myself enter the war field, the entire Kuarava strong fold would then wonder in disbelief that Arjuna the able son of Kunti himself has descended and thus admire me!) As Vaishampaayana had described the brag and boast of Uttara Kumara, Arjuna in the guise of Brihannala relished the conversation of Uttara Kumara. Having spotted Draupadi in the same gathering of women, he asked her to say shyly as follows: *Yosou Brihadwaaranaabho yuvaa supriyadarshanah, Brihannaleti vikhyaatah Parthasyaaseet sa saarathih/* (Raja Kumara! Are you aware that a dancer of great reputation named Brihannala was in the hey-days of Pandavas a great sarathi of Arjuna himself! Brihannala though being a ‘napumsaka’ was a great warrior himself with dominating personality, youthfulness and courage facing crores of strong enemies !) She further asserted that Brihannala was also very well versed in Dhunur Vidya and I had seen myself in the Draupadi Rani Vaasa as to what acclaim that Brihannala enjoyed! Moreover Arjuna engaged Brihannala at the historic ‘Khandava Vana Dahana’ or Agni Deva seeking to quench his thirst and devoured a mammoth and inaccessible forest! The conversation of Uttara Kumar and Sairandhri continued: Devi Sairandhri! How come that such illustrious capability could rest in a napumsaka and a dance teacher! She replied that he might as well consult Uttara Kumari, his dear princess sister! *Yadi saarathih sa syaat Kurun sarvaan na shamshyah, jitvaa gaascha samaadaaya dhruvamaaganam bhavet/* (If only such a person of Brihannala’s stature and reputation were to be your charioteer, rest assured that Kauravas should be harnessed and your cows wealth ought be saved!) When Sairandhri asserted likewise, Uttara Kumara was excited and asked Uttara Kumari as well as Brihannala to present themselves at once!

Saptatrimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty Seven)- Uttara Kumar approves Brihannala as Sarathi

Then UttaraKumari viz. the Princess of Virat Kingdom, approached Brihannala the dance teacher and addressed shyly: *Gaavo Rashtrasya Kurubih kaalyante no Brihannale, Taa vijentu mama bhraataa prayaasyani Dhanurdharah/* (Brihannala, our wealth of cows is being forcibly taken away by Kauravas and my brother is getting readied to leave for the battle grounds) He is trying to identify an ideal ‘Saarathi’ as his earlier one was killed already. Sairandhri suggested that you to be an able Saarathi as she confirmed that you had in the past helped Arjuna in the context of ‘Khandava dahana’ or blazing of Khandava forests. Brihannala! Kauravaas are rapidly taking away our cows by force, and if you do not give your consent soon then I shall even leave my life by force. Brihannala replied to Uttara that since she was requesting her so much then he would give his consent. Meanwhile Uttara Kumar too having seen from a distance made the same request. The Prince then exclaimed: *Samyaccha maamakaan ashvaam -*

stathaiva twam Brihannale, Kurubhiryotsyamaanasya godhanaani paripsatah/ Arjunasya kilaaseestwam saaradhir -dayitah puraa, twayaajayat sahaayena prithiveem Pandavarshabhah/ (Do please control my horses as you did to Arjuna, then I would fight like Arjuna and bring back our wealth of cows by fighting Kauravas in the same way as Pandavas acquired the whole earth!) Brihannala then joked with the Prince: Raja Kumara! If it is a matter of singing and dancing but how could I be like a charioteer! Then Uttara Kumari too said in a lighter mood: Brihannala! don't you worry, after the victory you can still return to singing and dancing! Then Brihaanala feigningly tried to wear the Kavacha or the body shield in a wrong way and jocularly again, Uttara Kumar set right the shield properly! This was how both the Prince and Arjuna as the warrior and Sarathi respectively drove off to the Battle Field! Just before they were so leaving, the Princess and her companion girls asked Brihannala innocently: *Brihannale! Aanayethaa vaasaams ruchiraani cha, paanchaali-kaartham chitraani sukshmaanicha mridunicha, vijitya sangraamagataan Bhishma drona mukhaan kuruun/* (Brihannale, do possibly fetch for us souvenirs of the head dresses of the defeated Kaurava stalwarts like Bhishma-Dronas for dressing the dolls!) Brihannala smiled back to Uttara and replied: Once the Kauravas get defeated, your dear desire to dress up the dolls with such souvenirs shall nodoubt be fulfilled! *Yadaarjunasyarshabha tuluugaaminah puraabhavat khandavadaahamangalam, Kuruun samaasaadya rane Brihannale sahoottarenaadya tadastu mangalam/* (Just as Arjuna of bull-like body-build at the time of 'Khandava vana daaha' had shone with radiance returned with success, now you Brihaanala and Prince Uttara Kumar too should similarly return soon with victory and huge success! This indeed is the wish and god speed by the entire lot of women in the Dance and Music classes bidding adieu to both the heros!)

Ashtatrimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty Eight)-On seeing Kourava Sena from a distance, the Price was bewildered and Brihannala's confidence-raising efforts made the former a Sarathi!

As both the Prince and Brihannala crossed the limits of the Capital, the former instructed the driver to take him straight to where the Kuarava Army could be visioned from a distance. Exuding tremendous confidence, Uttara Kumara boasted: 'As I am anxious to defeat the Kauravas as soon as possible, do drive our cows home soon and return with victory!' Then Arjun speeded up the horses as though the chariot was flying on the sky and from a far distance provided a glimpse of the ocean like Kaurava Army. As the massive dust raised by the elephants, horses, chariots etc covered one's vision, distant profiles of Karna, Duryodhana, Kripacharya, Bhishma, Ashvatthama and so on were somewhat noticed while Dronacharya was safeguarding the unparalleled warriors! The bewildered Uttara Kumara was almost swooned and on recovery of senses said: *Nothsah Kurubhiryodhham romaharsham hi pashya me, bahu praveeramatyu – gram Devairapi duraasadam/ Pratiyoddhum na shakyaami kurusainyamanantakam, Naashamse Bharateem senaam graveshtum bheemakaarmukaam/ Yatra Dronascha Bheshm,ascha Kripah Karno vivimshatih Ashvatthaamaa Vikarnascha Somadattascha Baahvikah/ Duryodhanastathaa veero raajaa cha rathinaam varah, Dyutimanto Maheshvaasaah sarvem yuddha vishaaradaah/* (Brihannale! I am sorry I could never ever fight with Kauravas since that very thought makes me so nervous that my hair roots stand erect out of shiver. Even the mere profile of the line of vision of such extraordinary warriors sends shudder in my veins of blood. Even Devas would not be able to fight with such herioc warriors. The Kaurava line of might includes Drona, Bhishma, Kripa, Karna, Vivimshati, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, Somadutta, Baahvika, Duryodhana, and such exemplary personalities of proven fame and name!) As these Kaurava warriors are ready with 'Vyuhas' or designs to enmesh and trap the victims and that very thought sends chills in my skin-pores!) Having said so Uttara Kumar cried out loud with shiver and begged of Brihannala to turn back the chariot shouting that he was made lonely even as his father and

strong men like Kanku bhatt, Vallabha, Tantpal and Grandhik were away! Brihannala mildly cajoled Uttara Kumar rather reproachfully: *Bhayena deenaruposi dwishataam Harshavardhanah, na cha taavat kritam karma paraih kinchid ranaajire/* (Raja kumara! As you are displaying fear before the enemies , you are only enhancing amusement to the enemies, as none on the war front has ever displayed before!) You have with unusual bravado hastened me to take you to the enemy front! Even if you had asked me to get deep into the pores of earth too, I could do so. You have assured one and all before leaving the Capital that you would most certainly return with the wealth of cows. You had specially made grand announce - ment among the women. If you return empty handed, would it behove of a warrior that too a Prince of massive responsibility to the Kingdom as a whole! Therefore fight as a warrior, as a Prince, as a soldier and as a man!Uttar Kumar replied: Brihannala! Let Kauravas plunder Virat Kingdom, take away men or women as they wish, make big fun of me, may the wealth of cows be freely pillaged, but I am not prepared to sacrifice my life! So saying, Uttara Kumar got rid of the bow and arrows and jumped out of the chariot and started running away. Brihannala then caught hold of the Prince tightly and warned him as though of an ultimatum : *Naisha shuraih smrito Dharmah Kshatrasya palaayanam, Shreyastu maranam yuddhe na bheetsya palaayanam/* (Cowardly Prince! A kshatriya is prohibited by Dharma to run away from the battle field but better get killed, but never ever run away out of fright) Even as this hilarious scene was being seen, some soldiers suspected Brihannala as having features like Arjun but not as a napumsak! They argued among themselves: *Ka yesha veshasancchanno bhasmanyeva hutaashanah, kimchidasya yathaa pumsam kinchidasya yatha striyah/ Saarupyamarjunasyeva kleeba rupam bibharticha, tadeva itacchiro greevam tou baahuu parighopamou, addevaasya vikraantam naayamanyo Dhananjayaat/ Amareshviva Devendro maanuyeshu Dhanjayah, Ekah kosmaanupaayaayaadanyo loke Dhananjaaat/* (Who indeed is this unique personality like fire covered by ash; some of his features are of a woman and others of a man! His figure and form are certainly similar to Arjuna; same as Arjun’s head, just like his neck, broad shoulders and girth and more so of his characteristics; indeed he is like Arjuna himself and none else! Among human beings, Dhananjaya occupies the same place as Indra is among Devas! Who else in the world indeed that has arrived to wage a war against us all of Kauravas almost alone, even as this Prince is desperate to run away!)

As such surmises from Kaurava soldiers were going on, Brihannala finally managed Uttara Kumar to be seated in the place of the charioteer so that he himself would fight all alone; he said: *Yantaa bhava narashreshtha yotsyeham kurubhih saha/* (Good man Uttara Kumara! You may just be my charioteer, and I shall fight alone!) Having thus cut-short the arguments, counsels, and words of duty to the Prince, Arjuna instructed the latter towards the burial ground to collect his ‘Gaandeeva’ the famed set of bow and arrows.

Ekonchatwaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Thirty nine)- Kauravas suspicion of Brihannala as Arjun

As a single chariot was moving about in the opposition camp, while a ‘napumsak’ was leading and a frightened and cajoled youth was at the driver’s seat of the chariot, the entire camp of Kauravas, especially Bhishma-Dronaas had some lurking feeling whether Arjuna was himself resorting to the offensive. Dronaacharya said: ‘The entire atmosphere appears as though such fierce winds as of stone-raining storm is approaching on the ash like coloured sky and darkness is enveloping the atmosphere gradually. The various directions appear ominous as jackals are shouting, owls and bats are flying up and

down across the sides while horses are rattled and chariots are shaking'. He said further: *Rakshadhvamapi chaatmaanam Vyuhadhvam vaahineemapi, Vaishaasam cha pratikshadhvam rakshadhvam chaapi godhanam/ Esha Veero maheshwaasah sarva shaastra bhritaam varah, Aahatah kleebaveshena paartho naastyanna shamshayah./* (All of you must get fully alerted to defend and prepare quickly a 'vyuha' or war design to trap the opponent. There could be a huge massacre of humans and those in charge of the cows be totally alerted. It appears more or less certain that in the garb of a napumsaka, Arjun himself is arriving as lone warrior!) Dronaacharya then addressed Bheeshmacharya to safe guard Duryodhana foremost, as Arjuna was such a personality who would not hesitate to fight with Devas or Asuras alike when challenged. He further advised Kauravas that as Arjuna himself would have to be fought, the latter was such that he would not hesitate to attack Indra himself! *Mahadevopi paarthena shruyate yudhi teshitah, Kiraata vesha pracchanno girou Himavati prabhuh/* (It is said that on Himalayas, Arjun fought Bhagavan Shiva Himself in the form of a hunter and in a mutual fight was pleased by the Bhagavan!) Karna then commented on the Acharya's eulogy of Arjuna and reacted that the Acharya always discounted Kaurava's merit and exaggerated that of Arjuna. Duryodhana commented analytically that if that person was Arjuna himself then his gameplan of 'Goharana' would indeed prove to be a success as the stipulated time was not yet over and once again the forest life and Life incognito for an additional year would be valid too. More over a single versus very many would throw up ready chance in case of the attacker not being Arjuna.

Chatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Forty)- Collection of Arjun's 'Gaandeeva' from Shami Tree

Vaishampaayana then described further to King Janamejaya that Arjuna instructed Uttara Kumar to climb fast the Shami Vriksha at the 'shamashana' and put down the various arms and armaments of Pandavas; *Asyaam hi Panduputraanaam dhanumshi nihitaanyut, Yudhishtharasya Bhimasya beebhatsoryamayotstathaa/ Dhwaajaah,sharaascha,shuranaam dvyaaani kavachaanicha, atra chaitan maha veeryam dhanuh Paarthasya gaandeevam/ Ekam shatasahasrena sammitam raashtra vardhanam, vyaayaamasahamatyar -tham trinaraajasam mahat/* (On the top of this tree, Pandavas viz. Yudhishthar, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva kept their 'ayudhas' like bows and arrows, maces,swords, body covers and so on. Among these, Arjuna's most potent Gaandeeva Dhanush would be there too, a like of which would be a lakh of such sets of bows and arrows, being of a huge size of a mini tree and of enormous weight.) All these arms and armaments are such as to destroy huge sized armies and were made of gold and of enormous weight and with farreaching capability and reach.

Eka chatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Fortyone)- Sudden untying of Gaandeeva proved astonishing

Uttara Kumar expressed a doubt which one had all heard in the past that a dead body was tied around the Astra-Shastras of Pandavas and left for 'Agjnaata vaasa'. If that were so, how could he touch the heap of Pandava's armaments and weapons. He said further that as a Kshatriya Prince of nobility it might not be proper to touch and bring down such arms. If he did so he would get impure and too might even turn to be dead body! Brihannala! Even in your own case, how indeed could you too fight a battle of this scale and that too all alone! Brihannala replied: Prince! Once these weapons are brought to use, then these would have got instantly purified. Don't you worry, these are only weapons that you have to touch and not the dead body! *Daayaadam Matsyarakasya kule jaatam manasvinaam, tvaam katham ninditam karme kaarayeyam Nripaatmaja/* (Prince! You have an illustrious background of Royalty, how could ever you be allowed by me to perform an act of immorality!) Then as Uttara Kumar having been concinded,

jumped up from the chariot top up to the thick branches of the tree, Brihannala forcefully instructed to the Prince to quickly put down the bows and arrows and also clean up of the dried leaves and grass with which they were covered therebefore. As Uttara Kumar put down the bows and arrows that were very heavy, he had specially noticed about Gaandeeva: *Teshaam vimuchyamaanaanaam dhanushaamatka varchasaam, vinishcheruh prabhaa divyaa grahaanamudayeshviva/ Sa teshaam rupamaalokya bhoginaamiva jrumbhataam, Drishtaromaa bhayodvignah kshanena samapadyata/* As soon as the cloth covering was untied, the dazzle of the bows and arrows got stretched out all over and looked as if the Nava Grahas or the Nine Planets got spread across! The astonishment and shock that electrified the psyche of the Prince was sudden and instantaneous!

Dwachatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Forty two) -Uttara enquires details of Pandava' s weaponry

Uttara Kumara asked as to whose unique set of bow and unending arrows, besides of the massive weaponry and of whose eminence that these were due to! Who indeed was that unparalleled personality wearing them with such an elephant like back of both sides being of the broadest possible dimensions partitioned with an extraordinarily strong backbone! Whose Gaandeeva is that which carries the signage of five lions along with its 'shara dhara' or ever shooting arrow container! Whose arrow container of ten divine arrows and further of seven hundred and odd mystic arrows that is carried just as a toy on his sturdy back! Indeed who is that mighty hero, the 'shaatravaana' or the container of swords carried on his back being so heavy but carried so lightly apparently! These cases of weapons are covered by tiger skins or cow hides or goat skins and these cover up the glory and prowess of the spirituality of the respective 'Ayudhas'! *Kasya hemamaye kosho sutaptase paavakaprabhe, nistrimshoyam guruuh peetah saayakah paranirvanah/ Kashyaayamasitah khadgo hemabindubhiraavrtah, aasheevishasamasparshah parakaaya prabhedanah, Gurubhaara saho divyah sampannaam bhayapradah/* (Whose sword indeed is this that which was made of gold, of extreme weight and enormous sharpness, being an instant killer of enemies by literally slicing their body parts and stinging like an offended poisonous snake!) ! Brihannala! I am indeed quite taken aback by these weapons of high divinity, plunging me into shocking surprise!

Trichatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Forty Three)- Brihannala introduces details of the armoury of Pandavas

Brihannala replied to the Prince about Gaandeeva that it belonged to Arjuna the supreme. This alone would be worth a lakh like other ones. This was truly the glorious dhanush with which Arjuna fought with even Devas, let alone Danava, Gandharvas not to mention of human beings! *Etad varsha sahasram tu Brahmaa purvam dhaarayata, tatonantaramevaatha Prajaapatir dharayat/ Treeni pancha shatam chaiva Shakroseeti cha pancha cha, Somah pancha shatam Rajaaa tathaiva Varunah shatam Paarthah pancha cha shashthim cha varshaan Svetavahanah/* (In the days of yore, Lord Brahma himself used for some thousand years and passed on to Prajapati who retained with him for five hundred and three years. Then Indra kept it for eighty five years and presented to Soma Deva and Varuna Deva respectively for five hundred and a hundred years respectively. Thereafter Shveta Vaahan Arjun took it over from Varuna Deva himself! *Pujitam Suramatyeshum bibharti paramam vapuh, supaarshvam Bheemasenasya jaatarupagraham dhanuh, yena paartho jayat kritsnaam disham praacheem parantapah/* (Bhimasena's dhanush is such as what manushyas and Devas worship with equal veneration and what the eastern parts of Bharata Desha conquered totally!) *Indragopaka chitram cha yadehacchaaru darshanam, Raajo Yudhishthaarasayaitad Vairaato dhanuruttamam/* (Uttara! This beautiful dhanush on which is imprinted

Indragopa emblem is that of Yudhishtar himself!) *Suryaa yasmimstu souvarnaah prakaashante prakaashinah, Tejasaa prajjalanto vai Nakulasyaitadaayudham/* (This dhanush is of the extreme radiance of Surya Deva itself is of Nakula) *Shalabhaa yatra souvarnaastapaneeya vichitrataah, Yetan Maadri sutasyaapi Sahadevasya kaarmukam/* (This dhanush with golden print of a shalabha or grasshopper is that of Maadri Devi's son Sahadeva!) Further these sharp edged arrows of enormous reach of extraordinary brightness and of the bite of serpent's poisonous fume are all of Arjuna himself! In any battle worth a title, these arrows are like lightnings falling right on the heads of enemies through their steel headgears and as their rainy speed and electrifying shocks bewilder them to smashes of death! These half moon shaped arrows of far reaching speed and reach are of Bhimasena which have the multi coloured rain bow like flashes literally showering stones and boulders on the enemy groups. With the radiant five lion insignia, this lethal weapon named 'Kalaap' of Nakula had herebefore brought the whole of western Bharat under duress and subjugation. The round shape headed arrows of Surya deva's glitter and heat are indeed famed for Saha deva's 'kriya shakti' or of practical energy and renoun! While Yudhishtar's typical arrows of three pronged fliers of birds, Arjuna's javeline throws resemble frog leaps, while Bhima's powerful sword hits are like instantaneous terminators. Interestingly, the thirty inch long swords of Yudhishtar have sheaths made of gold, those of Bhima are covered by tiger skin, Nakula's are of goat skin, and of Sahadeva's by cow hide!

Chatushchatwaadhaaya (Chapter Forty four)- Arjuna finally reveals the true identity of Pandavas

As Brihaannala described such intimate details of Pandavas, Prince Uttara Kumar wondered as to how Brihannala was familiar with the same and exclaimed: Brihannala! You have given of all the details of Pandavas; but do please tell me about the whereabouts of Pandavas, for the heaven's sake if you know! *Sarva eva mahaatmaanah sarvaamitra vinaashanaah, Raajyamakshaih paraakeerya na shrutyante kathamchana/* (Pandavas who had terminated all the enemies had most unfortunately lost the game of dice and had to pass through the ordeal of twelve years of extremely hard jungle life! There after during the stipulated Agjnaata Vaasa or Existence Incognito for a year, they had all disappeared most strangely! Then Arjuna replied: *Ahamasyamarjunah Paarthat Sabhaastaaro Yudhishtararah, Ballavo Bheemasenas -tu pituste rasapaachakah/ Ashvabandhotha Nakulah Sahadevastu Gokule, Sairandhrim Draupadim vidhvi yatkrute Keechakaa hataah/* (The over awed Uttara Kumara had fallen silent at the gradual revelation of Pandavas as Brihannala declared himself as Arjuna and gave further revelations of Yudhishtara as the respectful Kank Bhat, Ballava as Bhimasena the Head of Royal Kitchen, Grandhika or Nakula as the Stable Keeper, Tantiipaala or Sahadeva as the Royal Keeper of Cows and Sairandhri as Draupadi the one responsible for Keechaka's death)

Uttara replied in half- belief that if Brihannala were really Arjuna then he would believe so only if he could recite the ten names of his. Then Arjuna replied: *Arjunah Phalguno Jishnuh Kiriti Shvetavahanah, BibhatsurVijayah Krishnah Savyasaachi Dhanamjayah/* Uttara then asked as to why he was called as Vijaya or Shvetavahana or why as Kiriti, Arjuna, Phalgun, Jishnu, Krishna, Bibhatsa, Savyasaachi or Dhanamjaya! Then Arjuna explained: *Sarvaanjanapadaan -jitwaa vittamaadaaya kevalam, Madhye dhanasya tishthaami tenaahurmaam Dhananjayam/ Shvetaah kanchanasamnaahaa rathe yujjanti me hayaah, Sangraame yuddhamaanasya tenaaham Shvetavaahanah/ Uttaraabhyaam Phalguneebhyaam nakshatraabhyaamaham divaa, Jaato Himavatah pushthe tena maam Phaalgunah viduh/ Puraa shaakrena me dattam yuddhyato daanavarshabhaih, Kiritam murdhan Suryaabham tenaahurmaam Kiritinam/ Na kuryaam karma Bhibhatsam yiddhyamaanah kathamchana, Tena Deva manushyeshu*

bibhatsuriti vishrutah/ Ubhaume dakshinao paani Gaandivasya vikarshane, tena Deva manushyeshu Savyasaachiti maam viduh/ Prithivyaam chaturantayaam varno me durlabhah samah, Karomi karama shuklam cha tasmaanmaamarjunah viduh/ Aham duraapo durdharsho damanah paashaasanih, tena Devamunushyeshu Jishnurnaamaasmi vishrutah/ Krishna ityeva dashamam naama chakre pitaa mama, Krishnaavadaatasya tatah priyatvaad baalakasyavai/ (I had defeated most of the Kingdoms and earned considerable money even by of interest and since I was in and around money always I was called Dhanamjaya. As I was constantly engaged in several battles and as golden sheaths were decorated on the chariot wheels drawn by pure white horses, I became popular as Svetavaahana. Since I was born atop Himalayas in the Uttara phalguni Star time, I acquired the name of Phalgun. In the days of yore, Deva Raja Indra fought with several Danavas with my assistance and having won all the battles, he had out of sheer joy, placed a golden Kireeta or headgear on my head and eversince then came to be titled as Kiriti! While executing several battles I was never ever got disgusted much less exhausted and hence both human beings and Devatas named me Bhibhatsu. As I have marks of scars on both of my left and right shoulders due to constant use of my gandeeva bow indicating that I could release arrows from either sides of shoulders with ease I was called Savyasaachi! Also I have been called as Arjuna since I possess three characteristics of ‘Var na’ or brightness, ‘rujuta’ or equanimity, ‘shuklam’ or purity! Hence my name as a being named as Arjun! To be able to catch up with me or defy me is rather impossible as without boasting may I enlighten you that I had the privelege of subduing Indra and thus known to humanity as Jishnu. The word Krishna denotes the most alluringly brownish-fair complexion and as a child of mischievous pranks that readily attract attention by any on looker.)

As Arjuna convincingly explained about the root-meanings of his names, Uttara Kumara was so much obsessed and mesmerised with the outstanding personality before him and having fallen on Arjuna’s feet, and mumbled, ‘Sir! My name is also Bhumimjaya too! Kunthi nandana! It is my exceptional fortune to have seen you intimately and freely’. As he said so, he put his face down out of shame and prostratingly sought his pardon. He said that in his outstanding company, he now gained great confidence to face any situation in the worlds! Partha, may I now assume the glorious task of your charioteer and subordinate, as such an opportunity to serve you is memorable indeed!’

Panchachatvaarimshodhaaya (Chapter Forty Five)-Arjuna gets ready for attack refreshing Astras!

Uttara Kumar readies himself for the attack with enormous confidence and enthusiasm as Arjuna declared: *Aham vai Kurubhiryotyasyaamyaa vajeshyaami tem pashun/* (I have decided to attack Kuaravas and bring back Virat Kingdom’s mass of cows) . As the chariot proceeded deep into the battle field, Uttara expressed his doubt as to how Arjuna became a ‘napumshak’! Arjuna replied as follows: *Urvashi shaapa sambhutam klaibyam maam samupasthitam, Puraahamaagnayaa bhraatrur jyeshtha – asmi suraalayam/ Praaptavaanurvashi drushtaa Sudharmaayaam mayaa tadaa, Nrityanti paramam ruam bibhrati vajrisamnidhau/ Apashyamstaamanimisham kutasyaamanvasya me, raatrou samaagaraa maham shayanaamrantimicchayaa/ Aham taamabhivaadyaiva maatrusatkaaramaacharam, saa cha maamashapat krudhhaa shikhandi twam bhaveriti/ Shrutwaa taamindro maamaah maa bhaistwm paartha shandatah, Upakaaro bhavet tubhyamagjnaata vasantou puraa/ Iteendro maamamanugraahya tatah preshitavaan vrishaa, tatidam samanupraapyam vratah tirtham mayaanagha/* (It was due to the curse of Urvashi that he became a napumshaka; as per Yudhishtar’s instruction he went to Deva loka and saw Apsarasa Urvashi in a Sabha named Sudharma as she was dancing vajradhari Indra. She noticed Arjuna and in the night she made amorous approaches towards me in the night but I declined to consent

responding saying that she was a mother figure to me. Then she cursed me to become a napumsak. Indra overheard this and asked me not to worry as this curse would help him during the Agjnaata Vaasa at a later date! This was how Urvashi's curse had actually helped me not as a curse but as a boon!) Each of the revelations of Arjun increased the self confidence of Uttara Kumar as raised sky high and said exuding confidence that a 'Narapungava' like Arjun should bless him to become a 'sarathi' like Lord Krishna was Arjun's sarathi at Daru vana and as Maatali was the sarathi to Indra! Uttara Kumar further compared the four horses of the chariot be like the celestial species of Sugreeva, Megha pushpa, Shabya, and Balaahak and suggested that Arjun be driven as of such illustrious names and fame! Vaishampayana Muni then addressed King Janamejaya to describe that Arjun removed his massive bangles and shoulder- holderes of shining gold as also a peculiar body sheath and gradually recalled the mantras of Astras and sounded the 'Gandeeva' bow's reverberation as though the resonance of two mountains crashed into each other. This sound of sudden thud was followed by a hurricane like wind of unusual velocity as though a meteor was shot and hit deep into the earth as a land slide, even as pitch darkness enveloped and gave the impression that sky was dandling overhead. A frighened Uttara Kumar then asked as to how such massive army could be faced all alone! A smiling Arjun replied that he was indeed all alone at the time of Gandharva's ghosha yatra and Khaandava dahana [During Aranya vaasa of Pandavas, Duryodhana of the Four Villians comprising Dusshasana, Shakuni and Karna too planned a Ghosha Yatra or Royal tour for inspection of cow's wealth in the neiboughring Kingdoms, just to heckle Pandavas! Lord Indra got annoyed with the evil plan of Kauravas and asked Gandharva King Chitrasena to teach a lesson to Kouravas and accordingly Arjuna drove his chariot all alone even as the frightened and humiliated Kauravas got imprisoned by Gandharva. It was at Yudhishtar's intervention, Kauravas were released and the ghosha yatra was a flop and disgrace!]Similarly, Arjuna fought all alone with Mahabali Nivata Kavacha and Pouloma Daityas to assist Indra Deva. Further, at the time of Draupadi Swayamvara or her vountary wedding invitation, Arjuna fought single handed and subdued several Kings of repute after smashing the Matsya Yantra! Uttrara Kumara! Be advised that I have had training in Dhanur Vidya from such illustrious Masters like Dronaacharya, Indra, Kubera, Yamaraja, Varuna, Agni Deva, Lord Shri Krishna and Pinakapani Shankara Himself in the form of a Kiratha the Hunter! Do not therefore worry Kumara! about my skills in archery.

Shatchatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chpter Forty Six)-Arjun rings alarm bells and Kauravas face wrong premonitions!

Daiveem mayaam rathe yuktaam vihitaam Vishwakarmanaa kaanchanam smha laangoolam dhvajam vaanara lakshanam/ Manasaa chintayaamosa prasaadam paavakasyacha, sa cha tacchhintitam jnaatwaa dhwaje bhutaanyadeshayat/ (As Arjuna pondered over the 'Dwaja' or the ensigned banner with Lord Hanuman's Insignia as gifted by Agni Deva himself with lion like long tail and designed by Vishwa - karma as of Devi Maya got instantly unfurled on its own.) Then Arjuna performed 'parikrama' or circumambulation of the chariot drawn by the four white horses and having seated on his leather seat commenced his Vijaya Yatra or the Victory March by sounding his powerful conchshell, the frightening resound of Gandeeva and the alarming noise of the chariot wheels which created heart rending shrieks of fear across the opponent leaders and soldiers alike! Uttara Kumara got enormously excited and said: I had heard several conch shell sounds of horror and also of elephant screams, but Arjuna! The kind of your 'shankha naada' or unfurling of your dhwaja in so typical as tears into the enemy hearts. All the directions of this battle field are indeed heart rending especially by the horrific echos of Gaandeeva! Arjuna replied that Uttara Kumara should be seated firmly and hold the horses tightly then as he was once again

repeating the fearful hum of his bow and shankha too. Drona then reacted on hearing the sound of Arjuna's shankha he said that doubtless Arjuna was on the battle field. 'Moreover, our 'shastras' seem to have lost their luster and the horses seem obstinate and unmanageable; these are ominous signs of future occurrences! The cows are looking at Surya and crying, our dhvajyas are not flying properly, birds flying to their left side, owls are screeching sounds of alarm and so on. Duryodhana! These omens are rather discouraging. Now, get ready by creating and fortressing our 'vyuhas' war designs atonce!

Saptachatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Forty seven)-Duryodhana declares war, Karna heckles Acharyas and war design readied

Duryodhana then addressed Acharyas re-emphasising the past agreement with Pandavas: *Paraabhutair-him vastavyam taischa dwaadasha vatsaraan, Vane jana pade jnaatairesha eva pano hi nah/ Teshaam na taavannivriktaam vartate tu trayodasham, agjnaata vaaso beebhatsurathaasmaabhih samaagatah/ Anivritte tu nirvaase yadi Bibhatsuraagatah, Punardwaadasha varshaani vane vatshyanti Pandavaah/* (We had the understanding at the time of the play of dice game that whoever would have lost should have twelve years of forest life and one year of Living Incognito. Now the stipulated one year's Life Incognito is not over and still Arjuna is surprisingly readying for a battle with us!) Duryodhana further said that an illustrious personality like Bhishmaacharya only would clarify the position. Indeed what Arjuna is doing by intending to wage a battle, albeit on behalf of the Matsya Desha is an infringement of the mutual Understanding. We on our part have not declared war with Matsya Desha but only to assist our allies from Trigata as the Matsya Desha had perpetrated horrible crimes of Trigata public in the past by Keechaka. Our allies desired to attack Matsya Desha on Saptami and desired to attack on the following day. Thus there was neither a talk of our intention to attack Pandavas nor of Pandava's decision to defend Trigatas and even of Arjuna's blatant attack against Kauravas! When Duryodhana thus defended their own position so interestingly twisted and painted, Karna commented slyly that now that Duryodhana clarified the stand of Kauravas so frankly and transparently, the Kuru elders seem to have lifted Arjuna's prowess sky high and described ordinary occurrences as great and negative prognostics against Kauravas! Karna said : *Ishtaa hi Pandava nityamaachaaryasya viseshatah, aasayannaparaarthascha kathyate sma swayam tathaa/* (Acharyas like Bheeshma-Drona-and Kripa are always 'Pandava Pakshapaatis' or in favour of Pandavas always. It appears that Pandavas have left behind Drona and other Acharyas only to praise them and criticise Kauravas. As they themselves praise the opponents, it lends conviction too even among ourselves !) After all when our horses get afraid sometimes , they recover normalcy quite soon enough! Winds are harsh sometimes, Indra pours rains, and clouds do thunder and such nature's phenomena are funnily attributed to Arjuna's lone entry in the war field as its consequences! Pandits are comfortably seated in 'Sabhas', paint pictures of imagination and spin stories! Any way, leaving behind the odd descriptions and imaginative picturisations apart, let us now get practical and prepare appropriate war designs and action plans!

Ashtachatvaarimshodhyaaya (Chapter Forty Eight)-Karna's self-praise and ego

Karna addressed the Kuru Chieftains that indeed there was no reason at all to get alarmed by the entry into the battle by Matsya King or Arjuna or even the fierce onslaught of Maha Samudra itself! My arrows of enormous speed and thrust like shooting serpents of venomous bite of instant poison should never lose their target! As Arjun has lost touch with the art of archery for a full year of Agjnaata Vaasa as a virtuous Brahmana would only receive the 'daana' or charity of thousands of arrows! I am indeed popular in the

endless satellites on the Sky soon that glitter like lamps and those indeed would be from my arrow's sparkle! *Adyaahamrinamakshayyam puraa vaachaa pratishrutam, Dhaartaraashtraaya daasyaami nihatya samarejunam/* (Quite in accordance with my Pratijnaa or the Sacred Vow, I shall indeed destroy Arjuna and repay my indebtedness and gratitude to Duryodhana and of Kauravas! If one feels that Arjuna is like the radiance of Lord Indra, I should be able to balance the potency of Vajraadudha of Indra. I should be compared to a Garuda to a snake! I shall take to the combined form of all weaponry like 'Khadga-Shakti-Baana' as Maha Megha and burn the body tissues of Arjuna into ash. *Jaamadagnyaan - mayaa hyaamstra yat praaptam rishisattamaat, Tadyupaashritya veeryem cha yuddheyamati vaasavam/* (Muni shreshtha Parashuraama himself taught me the science of archery and by utilising the 'Astras' as taught by him I should be able to fight with Indra himself!)

Ekonapanchashattamodhyaaya (Chapter Forty nine)- Kripacharya condemns Karna and expresses his own views

Kripacharya addressed Karna as he was bragging too much that he was himself enough to fight with all alone! He said that there ought to be some regulations of discipline and self restraint of accepted principles and not of wreckless cruelty. Also certain principles of dharma and nyaaya do get adapted to varying times and societal situations. Do realise that war with Arjun is not called for simply to support another King's evil design. Arjun had the reputation of defying Agni Deva himself. He underwent a five year long celibacy during his prime youth. He also had the reputation of even winning away Subhadra alone despite Krishna's resistance in a duel. Arjun all by himself challenged Lord Shankara in the latter's form of a Kirata and secured the latter's blessings. Do recall Arjun's prowess in winning Draupadi's hand in a Swayamvara. *Ekascha pancha varshaani Shakraadastraanya shikshita, Ekah soyamarim jitwaakarunaamarod yashah/ EkoGandharva raajaanaam Chitrasenamarimdamah, vijinye tarasaa snakhye senaam praapya sudurjayaam/* (Arjuna had lived in SwargaLoka and and learnt Astra Shastras from Lord Indra Himself. Only recently the Ghosha Yatra by Kouravas was a flop as Gandharva King Chitrasena harassed and imprisoned all Kuaravas yet Arjuna saved them from the latter's imprisonment by fighting Chitrasena the Gandharva King!) Arjuna also destroyed all by himself various Danavas like Nivatakavacha and Kaalakhangjna who subdued even Devas!Karna! do tell me what indeed was your contribution as compared to that of Arjuna! Do realise that Pandavas had gone through incomparable hardships for thirteen long years under self discipline and now once released as lions under bondage would they not pounce the enemies with unusual roar and vengeance!*Atmaanaam kah samuddhya kanthe budhyaa mahashilaam, Samudram tarate dobhyou tatra kim naamja pourusham!* (Karna! How foolish would one be to carry heavy stones around one's neck and try to swim across the great ocean knowing fully well of the result of self-destruction!) Therefore do not have fancy ideas against Arjuna himself. 'We should all put our very best and try a united effort in a nice war design. *Drono Duryodhano Bheeshmo bhavaan Drounistathaa vayam, Sarvem yuddhaamahe paarthe Karna maa saahasam kruthaah/ Vayam vyavasirtam Paarthe Vajrapaanivedyutam, Shadrathaa pratiyuddhema hishthema yadi mamhitaah/* (Karna, therefore never venture to take up the endeavour of fighting Arjuna alone but to attack along with Drona, Duryodhana, Bhishma, Ashvattaama and others; if we all get united and put in our best efforts, then there might be a possible resistance!)

Kripacharya thus cautioned all the Maha Rathis to face Arjuna unitedly as per the battle plan to be finalised.

Panchashatamodhyaya (Chapter Fifty): Ashvatthama expresses concern at Arjuna's desperation

Ashvatthama then particularly cautioned Karna as he was overestimating his abilities and addressed him. 'Karna! We have already captured the cow wealth of Matsya Desha and are at the border of Hastinapura and now what avail is the wasted conversation and arguments now! Intelligent persons do aim at winning the battle, collect wealth from the defeated kingdoms and not necessarily indulge in hearsays and self glorifications! Lord Brahma created the institution of Chatur Varnas and defined their respective duties; *Adhhetya Brahmano Vedaan yaajayeta yajet vaa, Kshatriyo dhanuraashritya yajecchaiva na yaajayet/ Vaishyodhigamya vitaani Brahmakarmaani kaarayet, Shudrah shushruyanam kuryaat trishu varneshu nityashah, Vandanaayogavidhibhirvaitaseem vrittamaasthitah/* (Brahmanas do study Vedas and perform Yagjnas or have them performed; Vaishyas earning wealth from agriculture and trade facilitate Brahmanas to perform Yagjnas and Vaidika activities and educate and sensitize Shudras at servicing the other Varnas.) A few illustrious persons do observe the principles of Dharma, secure territories on their own merits, yet do some times follow the teachings and even participate in the activities and deeds of respected and virtuous elders who might be serving some authorities of questionable intentions! After all no Kshatriya worth the while who would have achieved a kingdom on the basis of dice game only and would not be normally contented with like Duryodhana who is a case in the point and is rather cruel and unkind. Then Ashvattaama addressed Duryodhana directly confronting him as follows: Duryodhana, did you not win over Dhananjaya and other Pandavas by dubious means of the game of dice but not actually on one to one fight! *Tathaiva katamad yuddham yasmin Krishna jita twaya, Ekavastra sabhaam neeta dushtakarman rajaswala/* (Evil minded Duryodhana, tell me in which battle did you win over Devi Draupadi to such an extent that you could forcibly and inhumanly coerce her away even while she was weak physically during her menstrual period wearing a single cloth!) Karna! Did you as a partner of the gang of four not participate in the ugly and vicious act of insulting and physically assaulting Draupadi even as Mahatma Vidura cautioned against doing so! *Yathaa shakti manushyaanaam shamamaala - khshayaa mahe, Anyeshaamapi satvaanaamapi keeta pipeelakaih, Draupadhyaah sampariklesham na kshantu Pandavorhati/* (One would indeed realise that a human being, or an animal or even a fly would reach a limit beyond which a sense of tolerance gets lost; understandably indeed Arjun a person of fortitude ought to cross the barrier!) While Arjun has thus openly declared to mercilessly plan and kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, do you still pursue your evil plans and boast big even now! Do you continue to fool yourself that Arjun would go all out to the end of the worlds to subdue Deva-Gandharva-Asura-Rakshasaas just to avenge his state of mind!)

Ekapanchaashattamodhaaya (Chapter Fifty one)-Bheeshma tries for truce and Drona aims at Duryodhana's safety

Bhishma addressed Duryodhana commending Ashwattaama's words of caution and also of Kripacharya's while Karna only talked of Kshaatra Dharma. At the same time, keeping into account the prevailing circumstances, Bhishma advised to opt for battle all the same. 'This is indeed not the time for arguments among ourselves, as Arjun is challenging us; respectable Drona and Kripacharya may kindly bear me out! Just as the radiance of Surya and the brightness of Chandra never get reduced, the power of Dhanur-Astra Vidya of the warriors of Kurus could never be belittled; among you, both Brahmanatva and Brahmastra are firmly established, since some are adept in the Four Vedas while others are steeped in Kshaatra Dharma. It is rare that both these assets of 'Brahma bala' and 'Kshaatra Bala' are glorified in Kripa and Drona Acharyas and I am sure that their combined strength would be such as to steer through

the situation ahead. Excepting Parashuraama, none else could exceed the excellence of Dronacharya in both these disciplines. Pardon me Acharyas! This situation is a crucial one when differences of opinions should not surface at this juncture!’ Ashvattaama justified Drona’s words of caution but not to create differences of opinions. Then Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma and Kripacharya had all begged of Dronacharya’s pardon. Then Dronacharya stated that he would no doubt agree with Pitamaha Bhishma but the only word of caution should be to ensure the safety of Duryodhana as Arjun would only be after the latter’s blood. Moreover, it would be essential to ascertain from Bhishma whether the Agnata Vaasa of Pandavas was actually over or not, as Duryodhana wondered earlier!

Dvipanchashattamodhyaaya (Chapter Fifty two)-Bhishma’s final approval

Bhishma stated that Kaala Chakra comprising Kala-Kaashta-Muhurta-Dina-Maasa-Paksha-Nakshatra-Graha-Ritu-and Samvatsara would keep circling. There would also be one Adhika Maasas or an extra months every five years. Thus, Pandavas have exceeded their limit of thirteen years of Vana Vaasa and Agjnata Vaasa.

[As per Chandramaana the Chaandra Varsha comprises 341 days while Soura Varsha comprises 365 days plus 15 ghadis and a few palas. On this basis, thirteen Soura Varshas exceed Chanddra Varshas by five months approx. During these years, adhika maasas occur six times counting from the day of Pandava’s Forest life. Thus the count exceeds five months and twelve days might be thus an additionality. In sum, on the basis of Surya Sankranti the excess over and above would be thirteen years and six days while by Chaadramaana the excess would be thirteen years five months and twelve days. Now, Kuarava Pandavas follow Soura maana]

Bhishma continued that what ever ‘pratigjnas’ or declarations of vows were made by Pandavas would be certainly known by Arjuna. Pandavas have had a record of Dharma or virtue as also of Artha or Opulence and surely would not be tempted to diminish Dharma at any cost. Kunti’s progeny would never ever compromise on Dharma. *Alubdhaschaiva Kouteyaah kritavantascha dushkaram, na chaapi kevalam raajya miccheyustenupaayatah*/(If somebody talked loosely that Pandavas were greedy and hungry for power, then they would have erred miserably, as they have had done sacrifices and posses resilience without regard to vice.) As Bhishma thus described about Pandavas, he said: Look, Arjun has now arrived! He then said: *Tasmaad yuddhochitam karma karma vaa jayaajayau, Avashyamekam sprushato drishtamatadasamshayam, kriyataamaashu Rajendra sampraaptascha dhanam jayah/ Ekopi samare Paarthah prithiveem nirdahecharaih, Bhraatrubhiih sahitastaat kim punah Kaoravaan rane, tasmaad sandhi Kurushreshtha kurushva yadi manyase/* (Rajendra! Whatever needs to be done, has to be done just at this moment! Either decide to go in for a truce or else decide to fight. The single Arjuna is capable of placing the world afire; he is also able to segregate only the Kaurava progeny and destroy too while sparing others. I sincerely advise you to go in for truce even now as Arjuna has arrived!) Duryodhana then replied: *Naaham raajyam pradasyaami Paandavaanaam Pitamaha, Yuddhoupacharikam yat tu gacchhaanghrim pravidheeyataam/* (Pitamaha! Rest assured that I am not prepared to give away the Kingdom to Pandavas any way; therefore what ever needs to be acted upon for going ahead with the battle be ensured here and now!). Bhishma who having reiterated that he could only suggest whatever would usher in all round auspiciousness, then got to action in divisioning the Kuru army move one fourth to secure Hastinapura and another or even two quarters to protece the cows already won over and the rest to attack the enemy. He then posted Drona in the center, Ashwatthaama at the left and Kripacharya at the

right wing of the attacking detachment while Karna be at the center forward as he himself would be situated at the rear. Then Bhishma designed a strong battle design / vyuha in a half moon shape and stood by himself fully armed and ready to face the singular onslaught by Arjuna as the huge Kaurava army was right in ever ready mode, as vividly described by Vaishampayana to King Janamejaya, as the entire spectacle looked splendidly memorable!

Tripanchaashattamodhyaaya (Chapter Fifty Three):Arjun occupies Kuru army and frees the cows

As Arjuna's chariot made the alarmingly noisy entry and the sky rending sound of his Gandiva, Drona at the Central position sighted the Dhruva from a distance as Arjuna's one arrow touched his feet and another slightly crossed his ears and passed; the apparent indication of Arjuna's arrows was to greet his feet and to solicit Drona's approval to initiate the battle! Vaishampayan at this juncture described to King Janamejaya that as the Kuru army saw him after a long gap of thirteen years, it was such a feast of eyes to their soldiers that their 'drishti' or constant gaze should not affect Arjuna's well being! Meanwhile Arjuna shouted at his Sarathi / chariot driver Uttara Kumara: *Ishupaate cha senaaya hayaan samyachha Saarathe, Yaavat sameekshe sainyaamin kaasou kurukulaadhamah/ Sarvaanetaananaadratya drishtaam tamatimaaninam, tasya moorthna patishyam tat ete paraajitaah/* (Sarathi! Do take me at such a distance of the opposition as near as possible so that I could locate Duryodhana. If only the latter is ever sighted I would only like to follow him after his head! Once he is defeated the entire Kuru army is drowned.)

Arjuna continued to address Uttara Kumara that he could see Acharya Drona, Ashwathama, Bhishma, Kripacharya, and Karna. But Duryodhana is not visible and it might be possible that he is hiding himself on the pretext of safeguarding the cows on the southern side. As such take me to the southern side first to release our cows first and then take care of others thereafter!) So shoutingly instructed the Prince and understanding Arjuna's intention Kripacharya said: ' As Arjuna's intention is clear to attack Duryodhana first, let us all run after him! He said: *Na hyonamatisamkrudhmeko yudhyet samyuge, Anyo Devaat sahasaakshaat Krishmaad vaa Devakisutaat, Acharyaaccha saputraad vaa Bhaarawaajaanmaharathaat/* (At this time, Arjuna is totally incensed up and Indra himself or Devaki nandana Krishna or atleast Dronacharya could possibly face Arjuna at this crucial stage) Meanwhile, Arjun had approached nearby Duryodhana and started raining his powerful arrows in such a manner that both earth and sky were not visible. Partha then sounded shankha so frighteningly that the entire Kuru army ran helter-skelter, even as Arjun sounded his gaandiva. *Tasya shankhasya shabdena rathanemiswanena cha, Gaandeevasya cha ghoshena Prithivi samakampata/ Amaanushaanaam bhutaanaam tessaam cha dhruwajavaasinaam, Urthve punchhaan vidhunvaanaa rebhamaanaah samantatah, Gaavah pratinyavartant dishamaavaaya Dakshinaam/*(Arjuna's conchshell's deafening reverberation, the chariot wheel's raucus noise, and the alarming sound of the Gandeeva had the combined impact on the flocks of cows that ran away southward out of sheer fright towards the Virat Kingdom!)

Chatushpanchashattamodhyaaya (Chapter Fifty four) – Attack on Karna, defeat of Vikarna, kills Shatrumtapa and Shangramajit, and chases Karna to run

Having thus successfully diverted the course of the cows back to Virat Kingdom, Arjun then commenced the search for Duryodhana and even by then, Kaurava warriors had reached there already. Enemy hunter Arjuna then addressed Uttara Kumara saying that he should first like to reach Duryodhana yet meanwhile Karna was seeking to challenge me now and therefore let me face him now as Duryodhana had been boasting of Karna being his major support! Then Arjuna was driven to the central place with the speed of

the wind where Karna was stationed even as his name was hardly announced. Karna was surrounded by Chitrasena, Sangraamajit and Shatrusaha by way of supporting Karna. The enraged Arjun then resorted to vehement attack on the Yoddhaas or warriors as his arrows as released had emitted flames and converted them into ash. Vikarna by using 'Vipath' named astra attacked on Arjun and the latter utilised 'Jambunada' astra to forestall the Vipath as Vikarna's chariot gave way and the latter ran for his life. The Kaurava Chieftains like Shatrumtapa and so on too met the same fate, as some got burnt alive, some having lost limbs, and some attained Veera Swarga! The enraged Karna could not hold his anger any longer and even as his followers trumpeted, sounded conchshells, and raised slogans of victory attacked Arjun with twelve arrows and hurt him badly and Uttara kumar was wounded too. As the further exchange of arrows between the two heros got intensified, the onlooker armies of both the sides stood stand still; the speed of exchange of the astras was like exchange of lightnings, the sounds of the conchshells were like 'Bhairava naada' of Arjun and 'Simha naada' of Karna. *Sa chaapi vaikartana-mardayitvaa saashwam sasutam saratham prushkai/ Tamaavarsha prasabham kireethi pitaamaham drona kripou cha drishtaa/* (Then Arjun started hitting Karna's chariot, horses, saarathi and dhwaja even as replying the sharp arrows of Bhishma, Drona, Kripacharya suitably). The wonderful scene of the mutual fight of the heros at that point of time was like that of Surya and Chandra glittering away on the Sky. As Karna drew his bow till the extreme and released the Astras, Kauravas clapped in a manner that there were thunders reverberating again and again while conch shells were sounded, trumpets went into instant action and clappings in praise were showered. The battle of one to one looked as though it was unending.

But at the end finally: *Sa partha muktairishubhih pranuttro gaje gajeneva jitastarasvi, Vihaaya sangraamashirah prayato vaikartana panadava baana taptah/* The Astra released by Arjuna proved so mighty that Karna got utterly confused and ran away just as the victorious elephant chased away the defeated one!)

Panchapanchaashattamodhyaaya (Chapter Fifty Five)-Arjun massacres Enemies and faces Kripacharya

Then as Karna was put to shame, Kauravas headed by Duryodhana were incensed with revenge since Arjuna had not only recovered the wealth of cows but also put Karna to disgrace. In quick retaliation, Arjun sought to control the fury of an ocean as by the banks and gradually smashed the Vyuha or battle design. *Kaalaagnimiva bhihatsum sravahantamiva prajaah, Naarayah prokshintu shekurjvalantaamiva paavakam/* (He destroyed the opponents like the live fire that never allowed them to let even by an looker could lift the eyes). He destroyed the enemies, horses, chariots, elephants, and dhwajas in such a manner that the world had reached the end with Pralaya!*Tatah sarvaastra tejohirdhanusho nisvanena cha, shabdenaamaanushaanaan cha bhutaanaam dhvajavaasinaam/ Bhairavam shabdamatyartham vaanarasya cha kurvatah/ Devaaripaaccha bhihatstustasmin Dairyodhane vane, bhayamutpaada-yaamaasa balavaanarimardanah/* (Then Arjuna annihilated the opponents with his unique expertise of Astra- Shastra vidya, resonance of his dhanush, the unusual animation of the divine spirits around his chariot's dhwaja and the terrifying echo of his conchshell created indescribable terror among Duryo - dhana's army detachment.) The endless pouring of his arrows had massacred the Kuru's army and also created such a stir among the ravenous kites on the sky that landed on the battle ground to suck the fresh blood of the dead bodies of fallen soldiers. Moreover, the innumerable sprays of Arjuna's arrows painted black of many parts of the Sunrays on the sky. *Sa tad vikshobhayaamaasa hyaraati balamanja -saa,*

Anantabhogo bhujanga kreedanniva mahaarnave/ (It appeared that Arjuna’s arrows were like the the poisonous cobras slithering speedily among the groups of the soldiers of Kuru army creating such stirs very often and creating unusual scares) The resounding of Arjuna’s very gandeeva noise sounded the death warrant of the enemy, and even before realising that death his at his face. Thus the horror story of Arjuna’s attack was such that Lord Indra or Kaala Raja Yama had descended down to the battle ground. The further shock and repulsion of the greatest stalwarts of Kuaravas by Arjuna is decribed as follows: *Sa tu Dronam trisaptatya kshura praanaam samaarpayat, Dussaham dashabhirbaanau drounimashthaabhi revacha/ Dusshasanam dwaadashabhih Kripam shaaradwatam tribhih, Bheeshmam Shantanavam shashthya raajaanam cha shatena ha, Karnamcha Karninaa karne vikyaadha paraveerah/* (Arjuna had defeated Dronacharya with eighty three arrows, Dussah with twelve arrows, Ashvattaama with eight, Sharadvaan the son of Kripacharya with three, and Bheeshma with sixty arrows. Duryodhana was badly injured with hundred astras named ‘Kshurapra’. These were by way of general nature before inviting them to one to one battles. By confronting Karna once again, ‘Karna Baana’ was utilised to damage Veera Karna’s ears and totally subdued him) Arjun was not content with that but killed Karna’s sarathi and made Karna without a driver, as the Kourava army lost their morale and started fleeing. Then Arjuna directed Prince Uttara Kumara to specifically drive towards Kripacharya to resort to go in for a one-to-one duel with Kripa Charya whose army possessed red coloured horses and blue coloured flags. He instructed the Sarathi that the Yuddha Dharma or the Principle of Battle required that while requesting a senior teacher, one should perform a ‘pradakshina’ or circumambulation before challnging him for a one-to-one fight and both the ‘yoddhas’ be seated in their seats; this is the ‘sanatana dharma’ or the approved principle of battle!. He further introduced the Sarathi about Dronacharya, Kripacharya, Ashvatthama, Suyodhana, Karna, and Dusshasana and asked that Kripacharya be challenged then first for a one-to- one.

Shatpanchashattamodhyaya (Chapter Fifty six)- Arjuna’s duel with Kripa witnessed by Devas

Vaishampayana explained that as the Army , Cavalry and Elephantry came face to face, Devas arrived by their vimanas to witness the confrontation of Arjuna and Kripacharya. Vishvadevas, Ashvani Kumars, and Marut Devas were prominent, while Yaksha, Gandharva, Maha Nagas were not far behind to witness. More significantly as Vaishampayana explained: *Tatah Kaamagamam divyam sarvaratna vibhushitam, vimaanam Devarajasya shushubhe khecharam tathaa/* (At that specific time, the Viman of Indra Deva glittered most as it was bejewelled by precious materials carved in gold.) In that Viman, thirty three Devas were prominent, besides Gandharva, Rakshasa, Naaga, Pitru Deva, Maharshis, Raja Vasumana, Balaksha, Supratardana, Ashtaka, Shibi, Yayati, Nahusha, Gaya, Manu, Puru, Raghu, Bhanu, Kushashwa, Sagara, Nala, were prominent. Agni, Esha, Soma, Varuna, Prajapati, Dhata, Vidhata Kubera, Yama, Alambishu and Urgasenaadi Gandharvas, Tuburu etc. too were present. Those who were seated in the Vimanas were gloriously decorated with ratnas or most glittering precious stones, coloured umbrellas, superior clothes, necklaces and coloured fans and so on. As the sand and dust settled on earth, the sweet smell of scents, perfumes and fragrances was spread all around. Such was the unique spectacle of Arjuna-Kripacharya face to face at the formal battle!

Saptapanchashat tamodhyaaya (Chapter Fifty seven)- Kripacharya- Arjuna’s mutual battle but Acharya fails and Kuru army rescues him to safety!

Vaishampayana further explained to King Janmejaya that while a general and over all Vyuha or battle plan was in place, as designed by Kauravas and Bheeshma, a sectional design of Arjuna-Kripacharya

head-on was positioned. Uttara Kumara drove the chariot of Arjuna at such mighty speed as the white horses were running with madness. Arjun sounded his conchshell famed as Devadutta and circled Kripacharya's chariot. *Etasminnantare Veero balaveerya samanvitah, Arjunam prati samrabhdhah Kripah Parama durjayah, Amrishyamaanastam shabdham Kripah shaaradwatastadaa/ Arjunam prati samrabhdho yudhyarthi sa mahaarathah, mahodadhi jamaadaaya dadhmou vegena Veeryavaan/* The illustrious Kripacharya was a symbol of might and bravery and indeed he was stated to be invincible. As Arjun's conchshell's echo was heard, he as the great son of Sharadwaan became quite upset and gave a strong return reply with his own shankha and also gave a sound of his great bow. He had atonce released ten powerful arrows which hooked up Arjun's body with his girth and loin. In return, Arjun too released even one extremely potent arrow that bound the Acharya's manhood! Acharya released the binding strap to thousand smithereens. Arjun could not control his fury and adopted peculiar methodology of arrow shoots in such a manner that the entire sky suddenly got darkened and the directions too could not be possibly noticed. *Praacchhaadayadameyatmaa Parthah sharashataih Kripam, sa sharairadirtah kriddhhah shitairagnishikhomapamaih/* (Then the wrath and passion of Arjun never even realising the respect due to Acharya, had hit him so hard with arrows emitting flames and got him entangled with fire all around. As though Kripacharya was a manifestation of cruelty against Arjun, he rained ten thousand arrows in such speed and fury that the Celestial Beings watching the battle were overawed. In retaliation, Arjun tied up the horses of Acharya's chariot and the latter fell down suddenly as the chariot got tilted. *Chyutam tu Gautamam sthaanaat sameekshya Kurunandanah, navidhyat paraveeraghno raksha - maanesya gauravam/* (The situation of Kripacharya became so vulnerable with his disastrous fall off his balance, that Arjuna could have, yet did not, use that opportunity to have even killed him but spared the Acharya out of respect) But, Kripacharya did not have that consideration and after recovery of his position sought to tie up Arjun. Arjuna having wriggled out used a 'Bhalla' named arrow and destroyed the arrow case of the Acharya and his kavacha thus again ensuring the Acharya's dignity. Time and again however Acharya tried to hurt or even kill Arjuna but each time the latter placed the Acharya in compromising positions. Acharya hurled Vajra Shakti but Arjuna cut into pieces; he released a Maha-Shakti like thirteen arrows but Arjun wriggled out and killed Acharya's chariot keeper. Thus in turns, Arjuna destroyed Kripacharya's dhanush, ratha, horses, sarathi and so on. Finally, Kripacharya was so much worked up that he assaulted Arjun with his mace, but Arjun reversed, once again rescuing Kripacharya. *Tatah Kripamupaadaaya viratham te nararshabhaah, Apahurmahaa vegaa Kuntiputraad Dhanamjayaad/* (Finally, the Kuru army quickly took away Kripacharya back to safety so that Arjun might not harm the Acharya any further!)

Ashtapanchashattamodhyaaya (Chapter Fifty Eight)- Arjun's battle with Drona and the latter's defeat and run from the battle!

Arjuna asked the Sarathi to take him to Dronacharya the unparalleled Guru of all Kuru-Pandavas but fighting for Kurus. *Buddhayaa tulyo hyushansaa Brihaspati samo naye, Vedastathaiva chatvaaro Brahmacharye tathaiva cha/ Sasamhaaraani sarvaani divyaanyastraani maarisha, Dhanurvedascha kaatsynena yasmin nityam pratishthitah/ Kshama damascha Satyam cha aanrushamsya mayarjavam, yete chaanyecha bahavo yasminnityam dwije gunaah/* (Dronacharya in terms of intelligence could be like Shukracharya and in morality like Brihaspati. Of these great qualities, Dronacharya excelled in four Vedas, Brahmacharya or celibacy, complete mastery of Dhanurveda covering the entire gamut of Divya Astras or Celestial Methodology of Releasing Arrows with appropriate 'Mantras'. In this Vipra Shiromani or the Head Jewel of Brahmanas, there is a manifestation of Kshama or endurance, Indriya

samyama or control of body parts and senses, Satya or Truthfulness, Refinement of conduct and deed and such outstanding qualities.) Sarathi, I wish to enter into battle with such Unique Personality! As the Sarathi speeded up his chariot to confront Drona, both the opponents sounded conchshell echos, they confronted each other, and Arjuna had most respectfully addressed the Great Teacher that it would be his dream to subue a personality of his stature. Smilingly, Acharya forwarded twentyone arrows initially followed by a thousand ones and so did Arjuna with no less speed and expertise. *Taavubhou khyaata karmaanaavibhouh vaayusamou jave, Ubhou Divyaastra vidushaavibhaavuttama tejasou, Kshipantou sharajaalaani mohayaamaasantu nripaani/* (Both Drona and his disciple Arjuna are indeed outstanding warriors with the speed of wind and alacrity in delivery of Astras. The unique style of their torrential rain of arrows had always arrested awe and admiration of onlooking Kings.) As both the parties were flooding arrows at other, there was pin drop silence suddenly spurting periodical eruptions of applauses and squeaks! Then Dronacharya and Arjuna started demonstrating irritation and anger as the tempo quickened and got hardened, even as the Acharya started efforts to bind up Arjuna with puzzles and schemes of arrows and vice versa. The Acharya then built up clouds of arrows all around the chariot of Arjuna. The latter too retaliated by his Gandeeva and made interesting designs with his arrows and eventually created artificial darkness by way of arrows again covering the blue sky with intermittent ramifications of white clouds. *Tasyaa bhavat tadaa rupam samvritasya sharottamaih, Jaajwalyamaanasya tadaa parvatasyeva sarvatah/* (As the body profile of Dronacharya was covered up with Arjuna's arrow heaps of extraordinary brilliance, it gave an impression that the Acharya was like a burning mountain) Then Acharya drew his arrows upto his ears and destroyed Arjuna's arrow floods in different directions as Surya's brightness occupyes all the directions. *Yuddham samabhavat tatra susamrbdham mahatmanoh, Drona pandavayodghoram Vitra Vaasavayoriva/*(Drona and Arjuna fight was comparable to Indra-Vritraasura battle and was as fearsome and earth shaking). They both continued their battle with their strong teeth grinding and threatening to hurt each other. *Aindram Vaavyamaagneya mantramastrena Pandavah, Dronena muktamaatram tu graasti sma punah punah/* (Arjuna then released the Aindra, Vayavya, Agneya and other such potent Astras; the Astras released thus were like the 'vajras' making such deafening sounds while enveloping the sky with darkness) In the battle between the two war lords, innumerable muscular and robust captains were buched, as shoulders were torn apart, body sheaths were shattered, dhwas were destroyed, and the army of Kuaravas was massacred, so much so that the army was demoralised with terror. *Pramathinam Maha Veeryam drudha mushtim duraasadam, jetaaram deva daityaanaam sarveshaam cha maharatham/ Avibhramam cha shikshaam cha laaghavam durapaatitaam, Parthasya samare drishtaa Dronasyaabhuscha vismayah/* (As the battle was in climax, Devas looked to have created such stir that the sky was reverberating with awe and admiration for Dronacharya. At the same time the fantastic fearlessness of Arjuna and the unique training that he had, besides the energy and nerve in battling single handedly had drawn the great admiration of Dronacharya too. Commended by the war experts that he was a 'savyasaachi' or he who could release very energetic deliveries with both his hands, Arjuna then shovered arrows with admirable ease and speed, as the Acharya shouted 'sadhu sadhu' or an expression of marvel at Arjuna's capability and spontaneity. Now suddenly Dronacharya instructed his son Ashvattaama to mobilise a huge army. *Aavritya tu Mahaa baahuryato hayaan, antaram pradadou Paartho Dronasya vyapasarpitum/* (Arjun then turned the horses around and gave a chance to withdraw.) *Sa tu labdhwaantaram turnamapaayaajjvanairhayai, cchinnavarmaddhwaah shuro nivritah parameshubhih/* (Arjuna then smashed the solid kavacha of the Aharya brutally by his arrows, and the latter was badly hurt with wounds and jumped on speedy horses nearby and literally ran away from the battle field!)

Ekona shashtitamodhyaayah (Chapter Fifty nine)-Ashvatthama's encounter with Arjuna

Vaishampayana described to King Janamejaya that as Dronacharya fled away from the battle field, there followed the encounter between Arjuna and Ashvatthama as both were determined to win. The sound of arrows as released by both of them increased gradually, as they desired to secure an upper hand over each other. Arjuna startled the opponent's horses which were hurt and could not proceed any further. As he utilised a small yet severe arrow on the Drona Putra as a test case, Ashvatthama used a mighty astra that darkened the sky as Surya lost his heat and brightness and Devas on the sky readily complimented him and so did Bhishma, Karna and Kripacharya. *Tato Dronirdhanuh shreshtamapakrishya ratharshabham, Punarevaahanat Parthe hridaye kankapatribhih/*(Then Dronaputra extended his bow till his ears and used an arrow resembling the feathers of a Kanka bird and hit that of Arjuna's chest). A smiling Arjuna extended his Gaandiva from chest to shoulder and hit him hard; then onward both the heroes resorted to fierce battle wounding each other. *Akshayyaavishudhi divyau pandavasya mahatmanah, tena paartho rane shurastatthou giririvaachalah/* (As Arjuna was blessed with 'Akshaya Tuurena' or of an endless stock of arrows, he was shining bright like a huge mountain on the war front. But Ashvatthama who was not blessed likewise with unlimited stock of arrows received Arjuna's reprieve and therefore got rather relaxed much unlike of Dronacharya's comparison. Even as he was somewhat mildly fighting with Ashvatthama, Arjuna spotted Karna once again and got instantaneously enraged while the latter of both challenged Arjuna who made the 'tamkeera' sound of his bow. The Kuru sena behind Karna got alerted again while Arjuna too raised his eyes and slightly diverted his attention when Ashvatthama took advantage of even this minor diversion and sought to leave many arrows on Arjuna, who no doubt responded to the onslaught but having rather ignored Ashvatthama quickly faced Karna again with fiery looks and violent reactions.

Shashtitamopaadhyaya (Chapter Sixty): Arjuna- Karna argument & fight and latter's defeat and running away

Arjuna addressed Karna and heckled the latter having boasted at the Kourava Court that none could overreach his bravery and physical prowess and could sustain and resist him! Now, Karna! Do get ready to resist my onslaught! Karna! Do never devalue others and overestimate your self while ignoring and underestimating other's capabilities ever! Now at this fight with me, hopefully you should teach a lesson for yourself and resist the idea of oversmarming others. In the past you had never valued the principles of Dharma and made flippant remarks rather casually truly ignoring the implications but you have to prove your own merit for now. *Yat sabhaayaam sa paanchaaleem klishyamaanaam duratmabhih, drashtavaan - asi tasyadya phalamaapruhi kevalam/* (Arre, as Draupadi in the 'ekavastra' condition, the Kaurava rogues tormented her, you had the audacity of enjoying the scenery without any compunction of your conscience! Now, you ought to earn your retribution from my arrows!) *Dharma paashaani banddhena yanmayaa marshitam puraa, tasya Radheya kopasya vijayam pashyame mrudhye/ Vane dwadashaa varshaani yaani sodhaani Durmate, tasyadya pratikopasya phalam praapnuhi samprati/* (We had been tied tight in shackles of Virtue so far and underwent the situation with patience and silence; Radha putra! Now you better face my disgust and anger ending with my victory. Durmati! We have so far experienced the agony and shame of twelve years plus; now is the time of repayment and of vengeance when you should be prepared for the worst) Karna replied to say that whatever you Arjuna had said be better proved in action. 'What ever you have described as the garb of the so called Dharma is but a cover of your own incapability and futility of action! Your declaration of the shackles of Dharma would now be removed for

good as I should be able to alleviate you to the freedom of your very existence!’ Arjuna replied: ‘Radha putra! it is but a few minutes more that you should display your back! Afterall, your younger brother has just flown to high skies without return. Of what kind of masculinity are you to let your brother could not be saved from death’! At this juncture, Vaishampayana described that after the exchange of harsh words, Arjun initiated exchange of arrows, badly hurt the horses of Karna, dispersed the group of men and elephants of Kauravas, and rained arrows all around. But Karna succeeded in hurting Arjuna’s hands in a manner that blood oozed out. In retaliation, Arjuna activated his gandeeva bow and killed hundreds of the opponent soldiers and horses. *Athaaparena baanena jwalitena mahoujasaa, vivaadha Karne Kounteyah teekshnenorasi veeryavaan/ Tasya bhivvaa tanutraanam kaayamabhyagaccharah tatah sa tamasaa – vishto na sma kinchit prajakshivaan/* (Thereafter, Arjuna shot an arrow like Agni which went deep into Karna’s chest and he fell unconscious thereafter.) He struggled with pain and somehow holding himself ran to the northern side of the battle ground!

Ekashashthitamodhaaya (Chapter Sixty one)- The rattled Uttara Kumara refused to drive any further, Arjuna instills courage and Dusshaasana and Kauravas defeated

As Arjuna suggested Uttara Kumara to be driven to Bhishma as the latter was waiting for Arjuna and that the Kuru Grand Father was of high divinity, Uttara Kumara was totally shaken up and said that the battle ground was full of destroyed chariots, carcasses of horses and elephants, heaps of killed men of war, and so on and that he would not be able to keep the horses, the chariot and the self any further and that his very existence was at stake. He further said that his heart got pounded each time the arrows criss-crossed, the odour of the dead was intolerable; the sight of dead bones, peeled out skins, and heaps of hands, legs and heads was frightening; the deadly sounds of maces, conchshell blowings, zooms and criss crosses of arrows; the crash and thuds all over had all entered his marrows! Arjuna assuaged Uttara Kumar’s fears and appreciated the latter’s courage and extraordinary confidence thus far as he displayed heroic qualities! Raja Kumara! My hearty greetings at your unique intrepidity and heroism fully becoming of the proud Prince of Matsya Desha. Indeed the quality of excellence displayed by him thus far proved remarkable and as such he should conduct himself further as the battle should be terminated soon! This courage and fortitude should complement the warrior too and hence the charioteer ought to pull up confidence to end up the battle with success and historic victory! Having thus instilled confidence in the Prince, Arjuna reemphasised that the chariot be taken up to Bhishma’s army detachment of Kouravas. He then declared:*Asyantam divyamastram maam chitramadya nishaamaya, shata hrudaamivaayaanteem stanayitnorivaambare/ Suvarna prushtham gaandeevam drakshyanti kuravo mama, Dakshinenaatha vaamena katarena swidasyati/ Iti maam sangataah sarve tarkayishyanti shaatravah shonitodaam rathaavartaam naaganakraam duratyayaam, Nadeem praskandayishyaami paraloka pravaahineem/* (Today, Kumara! You should witness the usage of Divyastras or of Divine Arrows of distinction as though lightnings emerge from the clouds on the sky. The Kauravas should witness with wonder and fright such astras with golden sheets at the rear. The enemy should get startled as to by which hand Arjuna was releasing the arrows- would it by right hand or left hand! I shall soon demonstrate the flow of rivers wondering whether these would have been made of water or blood!) I shall devastate hands, feet, heads, backs and so on as the branches of fallen trees! Just as innumerable lanes of exit would open up as soon as ‘daavaanala’ or most sudden flames around approach a person, so would the Kourava army would discover lanes out of sheer desperation and of life! Uttara Kumara! You shall now soon witness the huge grind mill like base for release of arrows and educate the onlookers of the range and depth of such releases in all directions. Do get comfortably seated on the chariot moving almost on its own in various

directions and your task would be to hold and let the horses move as directed by me, thus displaying my expertise for your entertainment without any fear whatsoever. You will also witness ups above the ground and downs underneath the earth but you should merely hold the horses of the chariot. You must understand that under instructions of Lord Indra, I was responsible for killing mighty enemies of danavas, like Pouloma, Kaalakhanya and lakhs of such others. You should know that Lord Indra taught me to grip and hold strong while releasing the Astras, that Lord Brahma taught me as to how best and fast while releasing the astras, and Lord Prajapati taught me the outstanding science of reversing most crucial and critical crises! In the remote past, I had crossed the oceans and killed sixty thousand ghastly demons with extraordinary arrow releasing expertise! Having prefaced thus, Arjuna assured Kumara: *Dhvaja vriksham pattitrinam ratha simhaganaayutam, Vanamaadeepayishaami Kurunaamastratejasaa/* (Kaurava army is like a jungle, whose dwaja is a tree, foot soldiers are like grass on the ground, and a chariot like a lion. I shall indeed turn myself into Agni and burn up the Kaurava forest into ash!) I had learnt Roudrastra from Rudra himself, Vaarunaastra from Varuna Deva, Agneyastra from Agni Deva, Vaayavyaastra from Vayudeva and Vajra and allied Astras from Indra Deva Himself! As Savyasaachi Arjuna had thus reassured Uttara Kumara, the latter had thus emboldened himself and confronted Bhishmaacharya and soon enough Arjun rained his arrows and hit down the Bhishma dhwaja to the ground. Meanwhile, Dusshasana, Dussaha and Vivimshati surrounded Arjuna while Dusshaasana had deeply hurt Uttara Kumara and Arjuna on his chest with 'Bhalla' named astra. Arjuna then quickly swerved and hit Dusshaasana's golden bow and knocked five arrows at a time on the latter's inner chest as the latter got grievously wounded and had to run away from the battle. But Dussaha and Vivimshati jumped and ran towards Arjuna to avenge the fate of their brother Dusshasana and sought to rain their arrows on Arjuna, but the latter got annoyed and shot his powerful arrows on both the brothers as well as their horses who all fled away. *Sarvaa dishaschaabhya patad bhibhatsura paraajitah, Kireetamaali Kounteyo labdhalaksho Mahabalah/* (The ever invincible Kireeta- Maalaadhari Kuntiputra Arjuna proved so effective on the battle field that his aim would never ever fail as he had freely looked at the battle ground with satisfaction!)

Dwishashthitamodhyaaya (Chapter Sixty two)- Top Kaurava ranks surrender to Arjuna

Atha sangamya sarve te Kauravaanaam aharathaah, Arjunam sahita yattaah pratyayudhyanta Bharata/ Vaishampayana then described that all the Maharathis of Kuarava Sena collectively unified their total detachments and confronted all together against the single yet singular Arjuna. The totality of elephants, cavalry, infantry and the chariots were grouped together, some with shankah naada, others with war drums, and yet others with battle bands presented a picturesque vision of the united front , pitted all against Arjuna. The latter went into ready action by despatching lightning deliveries of arrows, some hitting horses and men, others blistering kavachas, yet others targetting chariots and charioteers, even as all the hells had landed on earth itself. The deafening sounds, the cries and shouts all across the battle, the desperate run backs for sheer survivals, the tossed up heads and limbs, the gush of blood from the dying bodies presented a veritable hell on earth! *Darshaitwaa tathaatmaanam roudram rudra paraakramah, avarudroucharat Paartha varshaani tridashaanicha, krodhaagnimritsrujan veero Dhaartaraashreshu Paandavah/*(The most ferocious faced Kunti putra Arjuna having spent thirteen long years of tortuous life now stood up incensed with revenge and confronting Kauravas at the battle field literally spewing fire) The totally rattled Kuarava Sena had gone blank and cold right before their Supreme Commander Duryodhana himself! Arjuna on the other hand was moving restless and ruthless all over the battle ground as though that was his play ground! The streams of blood flowing on the grounds with bones and body

parts looked the Kaala Deva Yama had descended down to the earth. *Medovasaasruk pravaahaam mahaa bhayavivardhineem, Roudra rupaam mahaabheemaam shvaapadairabhinaanditaam/* (Medha, maamsa, blood, etc was flowing as streams and that very sight was not only disgusting but horrifying. The blood drinking and meat devouring animals and birds had ushered in great enthusiasm and eagerness.)

Aadadaanasya hi sharaan sandhaaya cha vimunjatah, vikarshascha gaandeevam na kinchid sadrasho janah/ (Arjuna while carrying arrows and gaandeeva dhanush especially as releasing the arrows, none could indeed vision out of sheer fright and scare!)

Trishashthi tamodhyaaya (Chapter Sixty three)- Surrender, running away, disgrace of Kouravas

Tato Duryodhanah Karno Dusshaasanah Vivimshati, Dronascha saha putrena Kripaschaapi Maharathah/ Punaryuscha samrabhaa Dhanamjaya jighaamsavah, Visphaarayantaschaapaani balavanti dridhaanicha/ (Vaishampaayana addressed King Janamejaya that Duryodhana, Karna, Duhshaasana, Vimshati, Dronacharya and Kripaacharya had all got flustered and shocked that one single Arjuna had dominated and left them dried up as singletons in the one- to- one face-offs and therefore got worked up to confront him together to thrash him). These opponents to Arjuna flocked around him as though they were the thick clouds of rainy season covering Surya Deva. They utilised ‘Divyaastras’ against the singular Savyasaachi as though one would see that every bit of his body was covered. *Tatah prahasya bheebhatsur divyamaindrum maharathah, astramaaditya samkaasham gaandeeve samayojayat/* (Arjun laughed away and fixed ‘Aindraastra’ on his gaandeeva.) As though Surya Deva emerged out of the thick clouds, Kiriti manifested his luster with powerful and brilliant rays and moved forward in the battle field, even as the enemy stalwarts were suddenly taken aback on the defensive. *Yathaa balaahke vidyut paavako vaa shilonchaye, tathaa gaandeevam bhavad indraayudhamivaanatam/* (Just as lightnings emit brightness amid the clouds or intense flames on high mountain tops are visioned with awe and admiration, Arjuna’s gaandeeva dhanush looked magnificent, like the Indra Dhanush or the Rainbow on the high skies. *Yathaa varshati parjanya vidyud vibhraajate Divi, Dyotayanti dishah sarvaah prithiveem cha samantatah/Tathaa disha dishaah sarvaah patadgaandeevamaavrino, Naagaascha rathinah sarve mumuhutastra Bharata/* (Just like lightnings occur while sky would pour torrential rains brightening all the directions as viewed from earth, likewise the rain of arrows originating from Gaandeeva Dhanush was accelerated in ten directions) In this unprecedented situation, all the great warriors of Kuru, looked mesmerised, retreated from the battle and fled away. At this crucial juncture, the so called ‘Vyuha’ or the battle plan so ostensibly publicised by the Kouravas failed into bits and pieces while the opponent heroes turned into zeros and the entire army having lost all hopes dispersed hither and thither in all the directions!

Chatuhshashthitamodhyaaya (Chapter Sixty Four)-Bhishma’s duel with Arjuna, his defeat

Having witnessed the irrevocable and shameful spectacle of the defeated ‘Yoddhas’ of Kurusena, the most illustrious grand father of Kurus, the son of Shantana viz. Bhishmacharya could not be stopped from running after Dhanajaya. He always carried his a golden dhanush with divine arrows that break the opponents at their secret places with just one throw. Bhishma carried atop his chariot a white and silky umbrella as he shone like a rising Sun. Arjuna stood before the grandfather like a mountain seeking to resist the downfall of high water falls. Bhishma then despatched eight arrows of very high velocity aiming at the dhawaja of the symbol of ‘Hanuman’ even as Arjuna returned a mighty arrow which not only defended his dhawaja though partially but slashed the umbrella of Bhishma’s chariot too, besides badly

hurting the charioteer of Bhishma. The subsequent and mutual attack had then increased the tempo of exchange of 'astras': *Tayostadabhavat yuddham tumilam lohamarshanam, Bhishmasya saha Parthena Bali Vaasavayoriva/* (The battle of each other viz. of Bhishma and Partha was like that comparable to Bali and Indra) All the Kaurava Chiefs were looking at this unusual spectacle of Arjuna seeking to cover up thousands of arrows approaching Bhishma while the latter was rapidly cutting across even before reaching him. Bhishma then took to offensive yet Arjuna stood like a mountain among high water falls, and shot innumerable arrows and pacified the fury of the grandfather! The onlooker Kaurava chiefs admired Bhishma to be able to resist the onslaught of Arjuna. *Balavaan taruno dakshah kshiprakaari Dhannjayah, konyah samarthah Paarthasya vegam dhaaraytum rane/ Shrute Shaantanavaad Bhishmaat Krisnaad vaa Devaki sutaat, Acharyapravaraad vaapi Bhaaradvajaan mahabalaat/* (Arjun indeed could no doubt mobilise his skills of archery as he was herioc, youthfull, capable and quick releaser of arrows. Indeed who else could excel him as comparable such as Bhishma, Krishna, or Drona!) Both Arjuna and Bhishma could draw instant admiration and surprise in a manner that one would rain the 'astras' and another could demolish with equal ease. Their expertise in releasing and cooling down 'Mahasatras' was amazing and unparalleled, be it in the case of Pajapatya, Aindra, Agneya, the frightening Roudra, Kaubera, Vaaruna, Yaamyaa, Vaayavya and such others. Sage Vaishampayana continued his narration forward: *Arjunopi sharaam teekshnaan Bhishmaaya nishitaan bahun, chikshepa sumahaa tejestathaa Bhishmascha paandave/* (Thus MahaTejasvi Arjun threw at Bhishma countless astras and Arjuna reciprocated with ease and this is how , there might not be notable difference) Kiriti Arjuna and Shanatananandana Bhishma were both 'Atirathi Veeras' and the rains of their arrows invariably camouflage the sky and the ten directions. Some times Arjun overpowered Bhishma and other times Bhishma excelled. Meanwhile, Arjuna killed the inner ring of brave soldiers covering Bhishma and the further arrows released by him at the remainder army force looked like straight lines of swans flying on the lower skyline that refracted down piercing the forces on the ground! This type of peculiar arrow release feats drew ready applauses by Indra and various Devas up from the heaven! *Aadadaanasya hi sharaam sandhaaya cha vimunchatah, vikarshascha gaandeevam naantatam samadrushuyata/* (When would Arjuna pull up an arrow, get it set for release, actually release, whom he meant to be the target and all such acts were shrouded in mystery to the closest watchers and even to celestial forces who were blessed with distant vision!) Even in respect of Bhishma too, this mystery of releasing arrows was inexplicable equally! *Tatah Shaantanavo Bhishmo vaamam paarshvamataadyayat, Pashyatah prati sandhaaya vidhyatah Savyasaachinah/ Tatah prahasya bibhutsuh prithudharena kaarmukam, chicchheda gaardhapatrene Bhishmaaditya tejasah* (Suddenly and most unexpectedly Bhishma covered up Arjuna's left side of his entire body and engaged it as it were. But smilingly Arjuna reacted with least disturbance, destroyed Bhishma's dhanush even stopping the further onslaught by Bhishma) Then as a sign of vindicating final victory, he utilised ten arrows of far reaching impact had pierced rather deep in the chest of Bhishma. Then the 'Pitamaha' held the middle rod support of the chariot and sat still at this development rather bewildered for some time, while Arjuna arranged the Pitamah to be cleared from the battle ground to further safety!

Panchashashthitamodhyaaya (Chapter Sixty five)-Arjun confronts Duryodhana as latter runs away

As Bhishma left the battle ground, Duryodhana confronted Arjuna having his flag hoisted, taken his dhanush into his hands while sounding 'simha naada'. That was the time when Arjuna was extremely busy facing the 'shatru sena'. Duryodhana then released bhalla named Astra on Arjuna and hit the latter's forehead making a deep cut emitting hot blood. The infuriated Arjun who was heretofore occupied with

several of Kaurava soldiers had then gone head-on with Duryodhana. Both the parties fought furiously with fast deliveries of arrows. Meanwhile Vikarna returned and attacked Arjuna again. He had the reputation of one among four Yoddhas riding elephants who were experts in safeguarding their feet of from arrows and weaponry. As Vikarna was about to attack Arjuna, the latter drew his gandeeva dhanush stretching till his ears and pierced a steel arrow right into the elephant's 'kumbhastala' on the head in such a manner that the arrow dressed in the feathers of colourful birds made such a deep dent as though Indra's vajrayudha broke open the kumbhasthala! The elephant had collapsed on the ground and the much frightened Vikarna jumped down and ran looking for a chariot nearby. Almost simultaneously, Arjuna then released such a mighty arrow of steel that the chest of Duryodhana received a very deep slash. Thus both the Gaja raja and Kuru Raja received such irrevocable wounds of depth. *Drishtaiva Parthena hatam cha naagam yoddhaamcha sarvaan dravato nishamya, Ratham samaavritya Kurupraveero ranaat pradu-draava yato na Paarthah/* By Arjuna's mighty hands the King of Elephants died and a matured yoddhas too of reputation were running away for life; thus calculated Duryodhana looked for a side where Arjuna was not noticing and changed the direction of his chariot quietly and decided to run for safety of life. Arjuna noticed that Duryodhana was trying to escape and shouted at the personification of timidity as follows: *Vihaaya keerti vipulam yashascha yuddhhaat paraavritya palaayase kim/ Na tедыa tooryaani samaahataani taddhhaiva raajyaadavaropitasya/ Yudhishtarasyaasmi nideshakaari Parthasriteeyo yudhi samsthitosmi, tadarthamaavritya mukham prapaccha Narendravrittam smara Dhaartaraashtra/ Mogham tavedam bhuvі naamadheyam Duryodhaneteeha kritam purastaat, na heeha Duryodhanataa tavaasti, palaayamaanasya ranam vihaaya/ Na te purastaadatha prishthatovaa pashyaami Duryodhana rakshitaaram, Apohi yuddhhat purushapravira praanaan priyaan pandavotodya raksha/(Hey, son of Dhritarashtra! Why are you shamelessly running away from the battle. Arre! By doing so, don't you realise that your name and fame get washed off from your hands! Your so called victory bells are nor jingling now! I am Arjuna the third of Pandavas who as per the instructions of Emperor Dhritarashtra was dethroned and standing before you. Are you ashamed of showing your disgraceful face to me. Do recall as to how a King should conduct himself with dignity and grace! It is a shame that your name has been described as Duryodhana and is certainly not worthy of that as you not a 'Yoddha' or a warrior albeit as a misnomer. Now, better watch out as you should take care of your life!)*

Shatshasthitamodhyaayah (Chapter sixty six)- Arjuna's glorious victory against Kouravas and on way to Virat Kingdom

The ever boastful schemer Duryodhana even after Bhishma's clearance from the battle field had the audacity and shamelessness to hoist the flag on his chariot and challenged Arjuna to fight, as he was badly hurt physically and psychologically too. Initially, Arjuna did not agree to fight but as was challenged again by Duryodhana conceded to do so. Duryodhana on his part jumped into his chariot as though a poisonous snake wished to take vengeance since it was hurt already. As Duryodhana was prepared for the battle, Karna even with his severe body injuries faced Arjuna again on Duryodhana's left side. Bhishma too veered back his chariot despite his earlier shame but with view to save Duryodhana. Then followed Drona, Kripa, Vivimshati, and Dusshasana too joined Duryodhana. All these personalities assembled once again as they all had an axe to grind. *Tatostramastrena nivaayam tashaam gaandiva dhanvaa Kurupungavaanaam, Sammohanam shatrusahonnadastram praadusha kaaraindirapaara - neeyam/* (Then having forestalled the initial onslaught of the combined strength of Kauravas by his heavy bombardment of multi dimensional arrows, Indraputra Arjuna then resorted to the release of **Sammohana astra**, which indeed had no reversal ever) This Unique Astra once released by the horrendous sound of

the Gaandiva Bow's string, the hearts of the Kourava Sena with the chieftains and heroes included got weakened and had gone to deep slumber as they all lost their consciousness and senses all together!! *Tatodishaschaanudisho vivritya sharaih sudhaarairnishitaih supurayaih, Gandeevaghoshena manaamsi tesaam Mahabalah pravyathayaanchakaara/*(Then MahaVeera Arjun released arrows with colourfully decked up feathers released from his Gandiva in ten directions to declare total victory even as the dreadful sound of the bow resounded the sky and earth) *Tatah punarbheeravam pragrihya dorbhyaam mahaa shankha mudaara ghosham, Vyanaadayat sa pradisho dishah kham bhuvam cha Partho dvishataam nihantaa/*(Then he sounded his powerful 'shankha' with both of his hands to reach the echo far and wide resonating the world as it were) *Tey shankhanaadena kurupraveeraah sammohitaah Paarthasameeritena, Utsrujya chaapaani duraasadaani sarvey tadaa shaantiparaa babhuvuh/*(The sound of the conchshell had totally lulled the Kuru Sena into unconsciousness and the sound and fury typical of the magnitude such a mammoth battle had suddenly disappeared) *Tathaa visamksheshu cha teshu Paarthah smritvaa cha vaakyaani tathottarraayaah, niyaarhi madhyaaditi Matsyaputramuvaacha yaavat Kouravo visangjnaah/ Acharyashaaradwatayoh sushukle Karnasya preetam ruchiram cha vastram, Dronascha Raagjnamscha tathava neele vastre samaadyatswa Narapraveera/* (As the entire Kourava Sena had thus fallen unconscious, Arjuna recalled Uttara Kumari's wish and the Prince Uttara addressed Arjuna as follows: 'Narashreshtha! Right now the Kaurava enemies have all fallen unconscious; why not before they return to consciousness that we should drive the chariot through the battle field and remove the attractive white robes of Drona and Kripacharya, the yellow clothes of Karna, and the blue robes of Duryodhana and Ashwatthama!) Having agreed to the proposal, Arjuna gave a word of caution to the Saarathi that Pitaamaha Bhishma was an exception as he would know the reversal mantra of Sammohanaastra! Accordingly, Uttara Kumara picked up the robes of the illustrious and universally famed epic heroes of Kouravas. Thereafter, Uttara Kumara directed the four white horses of the chariot to move out of the midway of the vast battle ground. Some time later, as the Kourava Sena regained consciousness. Duryodhana who knew that Bhishmacharya was immune from the impact of the Sammohana astra shouted at the latter: 'Pitaamaha! How and why have you allowed Arjuna to go way scot free! Don't you think that this action of yours was rather shameful!' Then Bhishmacharya smiled and replied: 'Duryodhana! What had happened to you when you had performed a suicidal act of 'Astra sanyasa' or discarding your bow and arrows as a gesture of surrender and sat peacefully right in the midst of the battle ground! What happened to your manhood and courage at that point of time! Does it behove of a Great Prince and the Commander-in-chief! This Arjun on the other hand never discarded the principles of Dharma and Nyaya but never ever resorted to sinful and shameful acts. He would never have left his principles even at the cost of Trailokya Rajya! That exactly why he had spared our lives and existences. Kuru Veera Duryodhana, you may now like to return to Kurudesh as Arjuna had since returned the Virat's cows successfully. Now you ought to go back with shame and dishonour leaving back your arrogance, and selfishness. This indeed my true message to one and all of Kouravas and their partners. My sincere blessings to you in such an endeavour!' Vaishanpaayana then narrated further: Duryodhana suppressed his fiery anger while Dhananjaya had finally rejoiced the fruits of his effort vindicating Truth, Virtue and Justice even as mentally conveying his regards to the Pitamaha and Gurus. Then finally Arjuna echoed his Devadatta shankha as though he was saying good bye to Kurus and declaring victory to Virat Kingdom. He then asked Uttara Kumara to soon return to Virat Kingdom as happily the cows had already had returned home. *Devaastu drushtvaa mahadadbhutam tad yuddham Kuruunaam saha Phalgunena/ Jagmuryathaasvam bhavanam prateetaah, Parthasya karmaani vichintayantah/* (Having visioned the proceedings of the fabulous battle of unique Arjuna and the Kauravas as also remembering the

memorable events, groups of Devas had left to their respective abodes of glory with contentment and joy!)

Saptashashthitamodhaaya (Chapter Sixty seven)- Arjun and Prince enter Virat Capital

Tato vijitya sangraame Kurun sa Vrishabhekshanah, Samaanayaamaasa tadaa Viratasya dhanam mahat/ Maharshi Vaishampaayana described further to King Janamejaya that Arjuna with broad eyes of a bull had thus accomplished victory against Kouravas and returned the wealth of cows to the Virat Kingdom. Kourava army got disintegrated and disgraced some hiding themselves in jungles, and some dispersed in different directions out of fear of Arjuna and out of hunger and thirst in a foreign land. They were all in a highly compromising situation with folded hands and those who crossed Arjun were craving for life and safety. Arjuna replied to such soldiers of the enemies that he would never harm the helpless, needy, supportless, elderly, defeated and begging of mercy. He bid them good bye to return safe to their respective homes and assured them of help and succour. In return, the soldiers expressed their sincere gratitude and blessed him of prosperity and fame for ever. As Arjuna was approaching the Capital city, he embraced Uttara Kumara out of affection and briefed him as follows: ‘even though you have by now known that he and other Pandavas had stayed a full year in the Virat Kingdom, you should not overly praise Pandavas and allow the Virat King and followers to get demoralised; as such you should claim victory by yourself being responsible for the safe return of Virat’s cows. Uttara Kumara replied: ‘Savyasaachi, you are surely aware of the truth and I certainly do not possess the bravery to wage a battle of such a magnitude; however till such time you do not give clearance, I shall not divulge the reality to my father!’ Meanwhile, the shami vriksha from where the weaponry took from was deposited back and the change of positions of Brihannala and Prince Uttara Kumara had taken place as the charioteer and the hero respectively. Vaishampaayana then described that even as the Kouravas entered the City of Hastinapura with defeat and disgrace, Arjuna and the Prince had gloriously entered into the Virat Kingdom. On the way, Arjun stated: ‘Raja Kumara! Look at this scene of the cow herds swarming here; let us freshen up ourselves and take a little rest before proceeding to the Virat Capital. He further asked Uttara to go and make the announcement: Victory to Virat King; Kourava enemies defeated, and Virat cows returned! This was how, Arjuna having had the supreme satisfaction of victory sought to take some rest from the tension and extreme dictates of the battle as posed by the Kourava heroes one by one initially and all of them together collectively; such rest was not only natural but extremely called for as the mind, body and soul would have to be in unison thereafter!

Ashta shashthitamodhyaaya (Chapter Sixty eight)-Virat Capital celebrates, Kankubhat’s negative reaction, Virat King’s apology and Uttara conveys battle details

Vaishampaayana describes that the double victory of the Virat’s Kingdom, one on Trigata’s defeat and another on Kourava’s humiliation, gave immense joy and contentment to the Virat King. As he secured congratulations from the representatives of all the sections of society at a Royal Congregation, the King retired on his interior chambers and enquired of Uttara Kumar who made him proud. The ladies of the ‘Antah pura’ or the Inner Chambers made several comments that the Prince faced Great Heroes like Bhishma, Dronacharya, Karna, Duryodhana, Kripacharya, and Ashwattama ; that Brihannala accompanied the Prince as the Sarathi and that the Prince was truly responsible to keep our prestige in the comity of Kingdoms, and that the Virat’s cows wealth of the Kingdom was thankfully got back due entirely to the single Prince of the Kingdom and so on. As the hearsays in the public and private conversations and

conjectures were at peak, Virat King ordered the Matsya Sena to ascertain of the whereabouts of the Prince as that Brihannala would have been dead anyway. On hearing this, Kankubhatt laughingly replied to the King: *Brihannala saarathischennarendra pare na neshyanti tavaadya gaastaah/ Sarvan Maheepaan sahitaan kurumshca tathaiva Devasaasurasiddha yakshaan/ Alam vijetum samare sutastate swannushthith saaarathinaa hi tena/* (Narendra, if Brihannala were the sarathi, then kindly believe me that your cows wealth would indeed be intact and your son would for sure return safe, defying anybody not only of Kauravas but even Devatas, Asuras, Siddhas, or Yakshas even! Even as Kankubhatt was saying so, the servant of the King gave the firm indication that the Kingdom of Virat achieved great victory and that the Prince would be shortly arriving there, that the cows too were back and Kouravas were defeated. The emboldened and confident Yudhishtar addressed the King again: ‘Maharaja, we are delighted that the cows have returned, Kouravas got defeated and run away and your son has brought great name and fame; there is now surprise in this as Brihannala was the sarathi and his victory was decided: *Devendra saaradhischaiva Maatalirlaghuvikramah, Krishnasya saaradhischaiva na Brihannalaya samou/*(Devaraja Indra’s sarathi is Maatali, and Krishna’s sarathi is Daaruka; indeed both these would not be equated to Brihannala) As the news of the victory of brave Uttara Kumara was heard, the King got ecstatic, gave valuable clothes and gifts to the informers, ordered that the Capital be chastefully decorated with colour flags and festoons, pujas be performed to Gods and Goddesses with aromatic flowers, perfumes, fruits and naivedya offerings, and dances and music be conducted all over the Capital with beautiful and young damsels and festivities be declared all over. The King in his top moment of exuberance and excitement instructed Sairandhri to fetch the needed material of the game of dice and addressed Kankubhatt to get ready for the game. Kankubhatt then tried to slow down on this game as this momentous time of joy should not be frittered away but various other diversions be chosen befitting this victory. King Virat replied as follows: *Striyo gaavo hiranyam cha yacchhaanyad Vasu kinchana, na me kinchit tvayaa rakshyamantarenaapi devitum/* (Neither women of extraordinary beauty, grace and charm, nor auspicious wealth of cows, nor even gold and jewellery could match my unsatiating love for the game of dice!) Kankubhatt replied: Rajendra! Why are you obsessed with this game which has several defects and blemishes and hence it would be worthwhile to discard it. You have certainly heard of Yudhishtar who had lost a glorious empire and illustrious brothers in a frivolous game of dice. Now this Yudhishtar ought to be regretting the evils of this game as in a moment of time mighty empires had been routed and destroyed. Even so if you so instruct you, we shall play the game despite the warning due to your excessive obsession! As the game had started and during the course of it, Virat King initiated the conversation and : ‘Look, my Prince had won the battle in which great heroes were put to shame!’ Kankubhatt replied that when Brihannala was the ‘sarathi’, then naturally the battle should have to be won! The irritated King replied: ‘You useless Bramana Kankubhatt, why are you comparing to Brihannala the eunuch to my son the Prince! Don’t you have this much of commonsense as to what should be said and what should not be to a King. Surely you wish to insult me! Do you understand that victory against battle of overlords like Bhishma and Drona would mean! I am excusing you for your foolishness and utter ignorance.’ To this rebuke, Yudhishtar replied: Maharaj! Is there any other human being who could subdue Maharathis like Dronacharya, Bhishmacharya, Kripacharya, Ashvatthama, Karna and Duryodhana except Brihannala, but not even by Devatas and Indra! *Yasya baahubale tulyo na bhuto na bhavishyati, Ateeva samaram drustwaa harsho yasyopajaayate/ Yo jatat sangataan sarvaan sasuraasuramaanaavaan, saadrushena sahaayen kasmaat sa na vijeshyate/*(Would there be one like Brihannala who gets great joy like him among Devas, Asuras and Manushyas when challenged and no wonder the Prince claims victory due to his help!) Virat King having lost his temper then shouted at Kankubhatt: I have been patient for long but still

you are unable to hold your tongue; indeed a King cannot be called one if law and order of Dharma is not enforced properly! So saying he took his dice piece and hit at the face of Yudhishtara hard while warning Kank :‘ don’t you dare again to repeat such utterances once again!’. As soon the dice was hit, Yudhishtar’s face was full of blood and Draupadi who happened to be nearby collected his nasal blood flow into a golden glass. It was precisely at that very moment that there was the tumult and uproar of Uttara Kumara approaching the King’s Court and even as beautiful girls were showering flowers and lighting lamps. A word reached inside that the Prince and Brihannala reached at the doorsteps. The King ordered them to be inside at once. Yudhishtar then secretly instructed in confidence to the Announcer/ Informant to ask that only the Prince might enter but ask Brihannala as of my own advice not to enter. If Arjuna entered too he would have seen Kank Bhat with blood flowing from his nose and then might even destroy the entire kingdom on knowing the reason. Accordingly, the discrete Announcer changed the text of the announcement that Brihannala would not like to accompany the Prince since he might not be presentable with blood and wounds before the Royal Court. Then the Prince alone entered and touched the feet of the King and bent his head down. Then he saw that Kank Bhat was badly injured lying on ground and Sairandhri was at Kank’s service and asked the King as to who had done so! Virat replied: ‘Dear son, I have hit him as he kept on insisting that your victory was due to Brihannala and not by you.’ Uttara Kumar replied: *Akaaryamtey kritham Rajan kshiprameva prasaadyataam, maa twaam Brahma-visham ghoram samuulamahi nirdahet/* (Raja, your such hasty action was certainly not appreciable in injuring a virtuous Brahmana; please do apologise to him, as his anger could uproot the Virat tree and convert the Kingdom into ash!’ As the Prince stated so, the King atonce apologised to Kank Bhat who almost looked like ash covered in fire! Yudhishtar replied in feeble smile: ‘ Raja! I have taken a vow that I should not get angry even at the worst provocation; more so, the person who offended and hurt me has said sorry and regretted his hasty action. Vaishampayana Muni then narrated further that as the flow of blood on Yudhishtar’s nose subsided, then Brihannala entered and prostrated before the King and Kank Bhatt. As the latter who had by now pardoned the King totally, Brihannala complimented the Prince for his valour and self confidence. The King then asked the son with great affection and admiration: I am very fortunate to have a son like you; how did you fight the the most renowned persons like Karna, Bheeshma, Dronacharya, Ashvatthaama, Kripacharya, Duryodhana and so on! All of them were individually memorable and and collectively as an army should been an impossibility to be subdued in one go. Dear son! This indeed is a historic win over the full force of Kauravas as they had cunningly driven away our cow’s wealth. It is wonderful that they learnt a lesson and the wonderful wind of fortune had helped us well. *Teshaam bhayaapipannaanaam sarveshaam balashaalinaam, Nuunam prakaalya taan sarvaamstavaya yudhi nararshibha, Aacchinnam godhanam sarvem shaardulenamisham yathaa/* (My son, you have indeed proved yourself as a Nara Shreshtha! How did you manage to have got such stalwarts humiliated and frightened, won the battle hands down and also ensured our cow’s wealth was returned intact)

Ekonasaptatitamodhyaya (Chapter Sixty nine)- Prince Uttara gives an account of the victory

Na maya nirjita gaavo na mayaa nirjitah pare, Kritam tat sakalam tena Deva putrena kenavit/ (Prince Uttara replied that neither he was responsible for the successful return of the cows of the Virat kingdom nor of the victory over the Kaurava heroes; it was a handiwork of a Deva Kumara!) I for one ran away out of fear but the Deva Kumara with tough body of vajra brought me back and instilled courage and confidence while cajoling me and made me sit on the seat of the charioteer. *Tena taa nirjita gaavah kuravascha paraajitaah, tasya tat karma veerasya na mayaa taat tat karmam/ Sa hi shaaradwatam*

Dronam Dronaputram cha Suta putram cha Bheeshmam cha chakaara vimukhanccharaih/Duryodhanam Vikarnam cha sanaagamiva yuthapam, Prabhagnamavabreed bheetam Rajaputram Mahabalah/ (It was that Deva Kumara who subdued Kripacharya, Dronacharya, Ashvatthama, Karna, Bhishma and Duryodhana with the might of his arms and forced them to flee from the battle. Just like a huge elephant with his tough trunk trounced Duryodhana, Vikarna and other famed yoddhas who ran away from the battle field!) But again like a vicious serpent once crushed before hissed back, Duryodhana returned back and became the target of that Devakumara's torrential rain of arrows. I lost hope of my life and was about to be thrown out as though from the precipice of a mountain but miraculously enough the Deva Kumara stunned the six heroic opponents singly and literally brought me back to life from the tough grip of death. The King Virat asked as to where and who indeed was that Devakumara The Prince's reply was that the glorious Deva Kumara disappeared but that his strong belief would be that at an appropriate time he would appear again. There after Princess Uttara went in raptures at the very beautiful and colourful head dresses of the Maha Rathis as brought by the Prince after the Deva Kumara's 'Sammohana -astra'!

VAIVAAHIKA PARVA

Saptatitmodhyaya (Chapter Seventy)-Arjuna details a fitting introduction about Yudhishtar

Vaishampayana then described that on the third day thereafter, the Pancha Pandavas entered with clean clothes fully ornamented and sat on the thrones reserved for Kings. Virat King then entered the Royal Sabha and was suddenly taken aback by utter surprise that Kank Bhat and four others were seated on the thrones meant normally for Fellow-Kings. Virat King addressed Kank Bhat and said: *Sa kilaakshati-vaapsatvam sabhaastaro mayaa vritah, Atha Rajaasane Kasmaadupavishtastwalankritah/* (Kanka! I treated you earlier as deserving to be hit by a dice piece, but now got emboldened by occupying a throne meant for co-Kings straight away. Arjuna replied teasingly and jokingly: *Indsrayaardhaasanam raajanaayamaarodu marhati, Brahmanayah shrutavaamstyaaagi yagjna sheelo dridhavratah/* (Raja! what is there of a co-king's throne, he would deserve half of Indra's half throne itself; he is a great Brahmana devotee, Shastra Vidwaan, Tyagi, Yagnasheela, and tough and steadfast in fulfilling his own faith and view point) Moreover, he is a personification of Dharma, Purusha shreshtha, an intellect 'par excellence', while meditation of high order is his inherent characteristic. He is a unique expert in Astra Vidya of the fame of Three Lokas. He is fully aware of the astras of Deva-Asura-Manushya-Rakshasa- Gandharva- Yaksha-Kinnara- Nagas! He is called a deergha darshi, maha tejasvi, Desha-loka priya, Maharshi and Rajarshi, world renowned, Kubera saman! King of Virat! *Ayamkurunaamrishabho Dharmarajao Yudhishtarah, Asya Keertih sthitha loka Suryasyevodyutah prabha!* (He indeed is Kuruvamsha shreshtha Dharma Raja Yudhisthata whose luminosity is like the uprising Sun spread all over the universe) Rajan! When Dharma Raja was the Emperor of Kurudesha, ten thousand elephants were behind him and thirty thousand chariots followed him normally. Just as Lord Indra was accompanied by Maharshis, as many as eight hundred well read Panditas with bright karna-kundalas well versed in Veda Vedangas accompany him. *Esha vriddhhan anaadhaamscha pangunandhaascha maanavaan, Putravat paalayaamaasa prajaa Dharmena vai Vibhuh/* (Yudhishtar used to very special care of elderly, forlorn, dumb, and blind persons and even in general was administering as per the principles of virtue and justice totally and impartially always. *Esha Dharme damechaiva krodhe chaapi jitavratah, Mahaprasado Brahmanyam satyavaadi cha paarthiva/* (Dharmaraja had wholly committed himself to Dharma and control of inner senses and would never ever become a victim even by default of anger, hatred and arrogance; he was a personification of kindness, devotion to Brahmanas and Satya vrata or committed

practitioner of Truthfulness.) As against his incomparable qualities of virtue and truthfulness besides of bravery and extraordinary courage , Kauravas especially Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni had always been envious of his steadfastness and discipline. Arjuna concluded his introduction about what Yudhishtar was all about to the Virat King, the latter felt ashamed of himself as the qualities of being a good King of a personality of Yudhishtara were such as to do his own soul-searching!

Ekasaptatitamohyaya (Chapter Seventy One)- Arjuna introduces Pandavas, Virat King dedicates his Kingdom to Pandavas as also seeks alliance with Arjuna

King Virat further asked Arjuna that if Kank Bhat were Yuddhishtar, then who indeed was Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula, Saha Deva and Yashaswini Draupadi! After all, there had been no information about those of Pandavas after Yudhishtara lost his empire. Arjuna replied that Ballava the Royal Cook was Bhimasena himself. It was he killed Krodhavasha Rakshasa on Gandhamadana mountain just to fulfill Devi Daupadi's fancy desire to gift Sougandhika lotus to Devi Draupadi. It was he who too murdered Duratma Keechaka in the guise of a Gandharva besides a number of tigers, bears, and such other beasts from your own Antahpura or th Interior Court of the King. *Hidimbancha Bakam chaiva Kimeerancha Jathaasuram, Hatvaa nishkantakam chakreanyam sarvatah sukham/* (It was Bhimasena who killed Asuras like Hidimba, Bakasura, Kirmeera, Jatasura and so on and brought considerable tranquility in the Society). Nakula who had the reputation of being a great thrasher of enemy armies had been the Ashwa shala prabhandhaka in the Virat Kingdom and Sahadeva the in-charge of Goshala, both being Maha Yoddhas in their own right. *Esha Pamapalaashakshi sumadhaa charuhasini, Sairandhri Draupadi Rajan yasyarthe Keechakaahataah/* (Raja! Sairandhri with extraordinary beauty and grace, the queen of Pandava brothers, is Devi Draupadi herself and she was the cause of the great villain Keechaka.) *Arjuneham Maha Raja vyaktim te stotramaagatah, Bhemaadavarajah Partho yamabyhaam chaapi purvajah/* (Maha Raja, I am Arjun and surely you must have heard about me as the middle son of Devi Kunti as the younger brother of Yudhishtar and the elder to Nakula and Sahadeva!) *Ushitaah smo Maharaja sukham tava niveshane, Agjnaatavaasamushitaa garbhavaaa iva Prajaah/* (Raja, we Pandavas have had comfortable stay in your Kingdom just as the embryos stayed in the womb of a mother.) Then Uttara Kumara performed parikrama or circumambulation to the Five Pandavas and introduced Yudhishtara as the fair and strongly built , broad shouldered Mahatma of Dharma and Nyaya the Emperor of Pandavas and of Kurukula!) *Ayam punarmattha gajendraagaami pratapta chaameekara shudda gourah, Pruthvaayataamso Gurudeerghabaahu vrikodarah pashyata pashyatainam/* (He then introduced Bhimasena of the hugely built, broad shouldered, enemy destroyer as he would be worthy of noticing as the truly unique hero of Pandavas.) *Yastaiva paarsheswa Mahadhanushmaan shyaamo yuvaa vaaranayuthapopamah, Simhonnataamso gajarajagaami padmaayataakshorjuna esha veerah/* (By his side, is seated the Greatest Dhanurdhara or the Outstanding ever Arrow Releaser of his own kind named Arjuna the lion tamer of enemies of divine fame with broad eyes and even of broader shoulders comparable with lotus eyes and elephant build like stature.) *Ragjnah! Sammepe purushottamou tu yamaavimou vishnumahendrakalpou, Manushyaloke sakale samosti yayorna rupe na balena sheele/* (Besides Yudhishtar are seated Narashreshthas like Indra and Upendra viz. Nakula and Saha Deava, the sons of Madri Devi, the twin brothers, who have few parallels in physical attraction, smatrnness, bravery and excellent conduct.) *Aabhyaamtu parshve kanakottamaani yashaa prabhaa murtimayeeva Gauri/ Nilotpalaa bhaa suradevateva Krishnaa syataa murtimateeva Lakshmih/* (Next to the twin boys, the unique woman of divinity standing like Gauri Devi whose physical tenderness , brightness and grace put the blue lotus to shame manifesting the traits of Lakshmi was indeed Devi Draupadi Maha Rani Krishna,

the cynosure of Pandavas. Having thus briefly introduced Pancha Pandavas, Uttara Kumara made a very special mention of Arjuna, identifying him as the Deva putra mentioned earlier in the context of Uttara Kumara's so called victory against Kouravas. *Ayam sa dvishataam hantaa mrigaanamiva kesari, acharad rathavrindeshu nirdhanamstaan varaan rathan/* (Father! This Arjuna indeed was the Deva Putra who destroyed the Kourava Yodhdhas as a lion would to lambs and frightened them leave the battle fields) He was the Deva Putra who frightened Kouravas to disperse and brought back our cows. It was his frighning conch shell sound that still resounds my ear drums into deafness. King Virat was ashamed that all the Pandava putras had been so magnanimous despite his behavior to them all was so shameful and thus a time had arrived when we should fall at their feet seeking pardon for the indignities done to them so far. One way perhaps would be to offer Kumari Uttara to Arjuna in wedding and establish lasting matrimonial relationship with Pandavas. Moreover it was Bhimasena who released me from bondage at the time of 'Gograhana' when the neighbours from Trigata attacked us. So let us all go and fall at the feet of Pandavas, especially Yudhishtara! Vaishampaana described further that King Virat along with the entire Cabinet Ministers and the Chiefs of the Court reached Pandavas headed by Yudhishtar and said that it indeed it was the great fortune of thiers to have had them in their midst for a year and did so much of help to the Kingdom. The King then said: *Dishthatyaa bhavantah samraptaah sarve kushalino vanaat, Dishthatyaa sampaalitam kricchhamagnaatam vai duraatmabhih/ Idamcha raajyam paarthaaya yacchhanyadapi kinchana, pratigrihyantu tat sarvam Pandavaa avishankayaa/ Uttaraam pratigrihyaat Savyasaachi Dhanamjayah, Ayam hyopayiko bhartaa tasyaah Purushattamah/* (It is my great fortune that all of you Pandavas returned safely from Aranya vaasa and Duratma Kauravas kept you in Agjnata Vaasa; it is our great fortune that you have been with us. This Kingdom is entirely yours and do kindly accept this as our high regard; our additional and humble request to you is to accept my daughter Uttara Kumari as Arjuna's bride) As Virat King made this submission, Yudhishtar looked at Arjuna and said rather indirectly that Virat King's daughter would be acceptable to the proposal that the alliance of Matsya and Bharat Vamshas would indeed be suitable and auspicious.

Dwisaptatitamodhyaya (Chapter Seventy Two) The Glorious Conclusion with auspicious wedding of Abhimayu amd Uttara Devi

King Virat asked Arjuna: *Kimartham Pandavashreshtha bharya duhitaram mama, pratigriheetum nemaam twam mayadattaamihecchasi/* (Pandava shreshtha Arjuna! I am myself offering my daughter to wed you and why don't you agree!) Arjuna replied that for long I lived in the Queen Palace of you Kingdom and spent considerable time alone with your daughter and always have had the relationship of a son or a daughter; she too has always reposed confidence in me as a father figure and definitely as her elderly teacher. Arjun continued further : I should not like any aspersion either on me or her retrospecti - vely or prospectively by any body in the Society. *Snushaayaam duhiturvaapi Putre chaatmaani vaa punah, atra shankaam na pashyati tena shuddhirbhavishyati/ Abhishaapaadaham bheeto midhya vaadaat parantapa, Snushaardhamuttaraam Rajan pratigrihyaami te sutaam/*(Between one's daughter-in-law or son, there is no difference and moreover none in the posterity should be able to raise a little finger against the family. Therefore Rajan, I am hereby accepting your dear daughter as my daughter-in- law !) My son named Abhimanyu too is equivalent to a Deva Kumara and the nephew of Lord Krishna himself as the latter's sister Subhadra my wife as also a great exponent of Astra Vidya himself! King Virat then declared: *Upapannam Kurushreshthe Kuntiputra Dhanamjaye, ya evam Dharmanityascha jaata jnaanas -cha Pandavah/ Yat krityam manyase Paartha kriyataam tadanantaram, Sarve kaamaah samrudhhaa me sambandhi yasya merjunah/* (Partha! You indeed are among the best of Kuru vamsha and the illustrious

son of Kunti Devi. It is expected of Dhananjaya to think and decide as per Dharma indeed! Only a person of his magnificence like Arjuna could think and act on such logical and virtuous manner in a cool and mature manner. Now, let us now go ahead with the auspicious duty on hand. Arjuna would be the ‘sambandhi’ or alliance partner to me and what else is more significant to me than this!) Vaishampayana Muni then described to King Janamejaya that Virat Raja formally approached Yudhishtar for the alliance, requested Pandavas to stay at Upalabdh Nagar with full honours, sent invitations to all the Kings and relatives; Kashi Raja and Shaibya being the dear friends of Yudhishtar arrived with an Akshohini army each at the Upalabdh nagar to stay there in advance; King Drupada too brought army of a akshohini of soldiers besides Devi Draupadi’s valiant sons, Shikhandi, and Dhrishthadyumna. Several other Co-Kings of Virat Raja too arrived besides those King who were prepared to give their lives to Pandavas. Virat King made elaborate arrangements to look after all the guests befitting their respective statuses. He was extremely elated that Abhimanyu was the bridegroom and had no bounds of joy. Meanwhile Bhagavan Shri Krishna, Balarama, Kritavarma, Satyaki, Saamba, the bride groom and his mother Subhadra arrived too with ten thousand elephants, twenty thousand horses, ten thousand chariots and ten lakh foot soldiers. *Tatah shankhaascha bhairyascha gomukhaa dambarastathayaa, Partheh samyujyamaanasya nedurmastasya veshmani, bhakshaayaanna bhojya paaneeni prabhutaanya bhyahaarathayan/* (Then Matsya Naresha’s parties advanced to that of Kuntiputras with auspicious conchshell sounds, and variety of musical accompaniments) Dance and musical parties, besides Brahmanas arrived too.) And the memorable wedding of Abhimanyu and Uttara Devi was scripted in golden letters with feasts of a wide variety of Bhaksya-bhojya -lehya-choshya- madhura paneeyas and mutual exchanges of valuable gifts with celestial atmosphere of outstanding affinity and mutual joy.

Shravana Mahima of Virat Parva

Shrutwaa tu charita punyam Pandavaanaam mahatmanaam, naadhivyaadhi bhayam tessaam jaayate punyakarmanaam/ (Those who listen to this Virat Parva Charitra are blessed to face toughest situations of life besides totally negating ‘Adhi- Vyadhis’ or physical ailments and mental stresses.) *Durgate - starane tessaamaayatam taranam bhavet, Durbhikshamkshemamaarogyam punyavridhiih prajaa yate/* (Even the toughest situations of one’s life could be overcome as Pandavas faced in critical crises in continuity without break. And at the end of such challenges, life gets smooth, auspicious, healthy and prosperous in a miraculous manner.) *Sarva paapaani nashyati jaayaste sarva sampadah, Ekaaki vijaye - cchatrun smritvaa phaalgunakarma cha/ Etayah sampranamashyanti na viyogah priye jane/* (Once the story of Arjuna is heard and cogitated about, the heaps of blemishes and sins are dissolved. Even being single handed pitted in tough situations as he did, Arjuna encountered tough opponents and handled them deftly with alacrity; this was how, reading about and digesting of the contents of this treatise would toughen and squarely face seemingly irrevocable situations to save the self and the loved ones too.) *Shrutwaa Vairaatakam parva vaasaamsi vividhaanicha, hiranyam dhaanyam gaavascha dadhyaad vittaanusaaratah/ Preetaye Devataanaam vai dadyaad vai dwija mukhyake, vaachake tu samtushte tushthaah syuh sarvadevataah/ Braahmanaan bhojayecchaaktyaa paayasaih sarpishaa sitaih, evam shrute cha Viraate samyad phalamavaapnuyaat/* (After learning the magnificence of Viratparva katha, one is advised to donate vastra-suvarna-dhanya-dhenu to ‘sad brahmanas’ to please Devatas, besides arrange food to Brahmanas to reap maximum returns).

OM TAT SAT

