

him and after massaging his feet and legs requested him to officiate in a Yāga aimed at getting for him a son to conquer Droṇa in a battle. He promised to give him ten crores of cattle for that and also anything else the sage wanted. These promises did not make the sage consent to conduct the Yāga and so the King stayed at the āśrama serving the sage. A year went by and one day the sage appeared cheerful and told Drupada thus: "Oh King, my brother who was walking one day in a storm saw a fruit lying on his way and ate it without first ascertaining whether the fruit was pure or not. Again, I have seen him taking food from others freely and eating it. I think he is wishful about wealth and, perhaps, if you approach him he may help you."

Drupada went to Yāja and after serving him to please him made his request promising him much wealth. Yāja was ready to perform the Yajña. Upayāja came to them at that time and Yāja consulted his brother before going to perform the Yajña. The Yāga was successfully conducted and at the end the priest Yāja called the wife of Drupada and gave her havya (clarified butter). Because the havya was prepared by Yāja and was offered by Upayāja the sages said that the queen would get two children. While Yāja was offering oblations to the sacrificial fire a boy with a crown on his head and bearing a sword and a bow in his hands rose from the fire. The ṛṣis present there then said that, that boy would kill Droṇa. He was named Dhṛṣṭadyumna. Then from the dais of the Yāga-fire emerged a beautiful lady of dazzling brilliance. Immediately a voice from heaven was heard to say thus: "This Sumadhyamā (a girl in her blossoming youth) would work on the side of God and will cause terror to the Kauravas."

Yāja blessed the wife of Drupada saying that the two children would thenceforth call her mother. Yāja himself named the boy Dhṛṣṭadyumna and the girl according to the ethereal voice, Kṛṣṇā. Kṛṣṇā was dark in complexion. Kṛṣṇā was called Pārsatī because she was the grand-daughter of Pṛṣata and Draupadī because she was the daughter of Drupada and Pāṇcālī because she was the daughter of the King of Pāṇcāla. Pāṇcālī grew up in the palace of Drupada. (Chapter 167, Ādi Parva).

3) *Marriage*. After escaping from the lac palace the Pāṇḍavas reached a village named Ekacakrā after walking a long time through the forests. There they stayed in a brahmin's house. Every morning they would go in disguise for begging and return with the alms in the evening. This was their daily routine and one day while they were in their daily round they saw a group of brahmins and they said they were going to the Svayamvara of the daughter of the King of Pāṇcāla. The brahmins invited them also to come along with them describing in detail the beauty of the girl and the elaborate and festive arrangements made for the marriage. The Pāṇḍavas went to Pāṇcāla along with the brahmins. On the way they met Vedavyāsa and receiving blessings from him they went to the capital city of Pāṇcāla and took their abode in the house of a potter. Nobody knew who they were.

Drupada had placed a mighty steel bow in the marriage hall. When all the distinguished guests were seated in the marriage hall, the King announced that his daughter would be given in marriage to him who bent the steel bow and with it shot a steel arrow,

through the central aperture of a revolving disc, at a target placed above. Many valiant princes from all parts of Bhārata including the Kauravas had gathered there. When it was time for the ceremonies to begin Pāṇcālī clad in beautiful robes with a bewitching charm which excited the royal assemblage entered the hall with a garland in her hands. Then Dhṛṣṭadyumna brother of Pāṇcālī said "Hear ye, oh princes, seated in state in this assembly, here is the bow and arrow. He who sends five arrows in succession through the hole in the wheel and unerringly hits the target shall win my sister."

Many noted princes rose one after another and tried in vain to string the bow. It was too heavy and stiff for them. Then Arjuna rose and meditating on Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme God, strung the bow with ease and hit at the target. Pāṇcālī then put the garland on Arjuna's neck and accepting him as her husband went with him and stayed that night at the house of the potter. Drupada that night went to the house of the potter to make enquiries about his daughter and son-in-law. His joy knew no bounds when he knew that his son-in-law was none other than the celebrated Arjuna. The Pāṇḍavas then took Pāṇcālī to their home in Ekacakrā and as soon as Kuntīdevī heard the footsteps of her sons outside she said from inside asking them to share that day's alms among themselves little knowing that it was a bride that had been brought by them. Thus Pāṇcālī became the common consort of the five Pāṇḍavas. Then the marriage of Pāṇcālī was ceremoniously conducted after inviting friends and relatives. The Pāṇḍavas then built a new palace at Indraprastha and lived there. (Chapters 190 to 220, Ādi Parva).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was present there along with the leading members of the clan of Vṛṣṇi. He could recognise the Pāṇḍavas in spite of their disguise. Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to the potter's house and visited them. He gave them valuable presents on the occasion of their marriage.

4) *Making Draupadī naked*. Once Duryodhana challenged Dharmaputra to a game of dice. Dharmaputra lost all and in the end in despair pledged Draupadī and lost her. Immediately Duryodhana asked Vidura to bring Draupadī to his palace and make her serve as a servant-maid. Vidura did not consent to that. Then Duryodhana asked Pratikāmi to bring her. While entering the palace of Draupadī, Pratikāmi was as timid as a dog about to enter the cage of a lion. He informed Draupadī of his mission. Draupadī sent him back and then Duryodhana sent another messenger. Draupadī went with him to the court of the Kauravas. As soon as Duśśāsana saw Draupadī he jumped at her and caught hold of her hair and dragged her to the centre of the assembly. When Duśśāsana dragged her thus she said in piteous tones "I am in my monthly period and I have only the upper garment on me. Please do not take me to the assembly." Duśśāsana was not moved by these pleadings and he dragged her still.

Bhīma could not hold himself calm against this atrocity any longer and in a roar of wrath he abused Dharmaputra for pledging Pāṇcālī thus and losing her. Arjuna however remonstrated gently with Bhīma. Then to the consternation of all, Duśśāsana started his