

Chapter 1220(1)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! In the battle, Karna was brought down by Savyasachi. What did the few Kurus who were left do then? The army of the Pandavas was swelling. On seeing this, what did Kourava, King Duryodhana, do? O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear all this in detail. I am not satisfied with listening to the great deeds of my ancestors.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! When Karna was slain, Dhritarashtra’s son, Suyodhana, was immersed in an ocean of great grief. In every possible way, he lost all hope. He repeatedly grieved, “Alas! Karna! Alas! Karna!” With a great deal of difficulty, he went to his own camp, together with the remaining kings. Remembering the death of the son of a suta, the king could find no peace of mind and was comforted by them, with citations from reasons given in the sacred texts. The king eventually decided that destiny was supremely powerful. He made up his mind to fight and again emerged for the battle. The bull among kings made Shalya the commander, in accordance with the decreed rites. With the kings who had not been slain, the king emerged to do battle. An extremely tumultuous battle commenced between the soldiers of the Kurus and the Pandavas. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was like that between the gods and the asuras. O great king! In the battle, Shalya created carnage among the Pandu soldiers and was slain by Dharmaraja at midday. In the field of battle, all of King Duryodhana’s relatives were slain. Terrified of his enemies, he fled and entered into a terrible lake. During the later part of the afternoon, he was surrounded by maharathas. He was summoned from the lake and brought down by Bhimasena, who used yoga.

When that great archer was killed, three rathas remained alive.¹ O Indra among kings! Overcome by rage, they slaughtered the Panchala soldiers in the night. Next morning, Sanjaya left the camp and entered the city,² distressed and overcome with grief. He swiftly entered the city, raising his hands in sorrow. Trembling, he entered the king’s abode. O tiger among men! In sorrow, he wept and said, “O king! Alas! The great-souled one has been killed and all of us are agitated. Although it was not yet time, the extremely powerful one has attained the supreme objective. All the kings on our side were like Shakra in strength and they have been killed.” O king! On seeing Sanjaya in the city, all the people were extremely anxious and wept in loud voices, saying, “O king! Alas!” O tiger among men! On hearing that the king had been killed, even the children surrounded the city from all sides and lamented loudly. We saw three bulls among men running around there.³ They were deprived of their senses. They were mad with grief. They were severely afflicted.

‘Entering, the distracted suta saw the king, who was without decay. He saw the lord, best among kings, who had wisdom as his sight.⁴ He saw that the unblemished one, foremost among the Bharata lineage, was seated, surrounded by his daughters-in-law, Gandhari, Vidura and other well-wishers, relatives and friends. He was thinking about Karna’s death. O Janamejaya! In a voice that was choking with tears, and distressed in his mind, the suta spoke these words to the king, weeping amidst the words. “O tiger among men! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am Sanjaya. Shalya, the lord of Madra, and Shakuni Soubala have been slain. O tiger among men! So has Uluka, firm in his valour and the son of the one who played with dice.⁵ All the samshaptakas have been slain, together with the Kambojas and the Shakas. The mlecchas, the ones from the mountainous regions and the Yavanas have been brought down. O great king! All those from the east and the south have been slain. O lord of men! All those from the north and the west have been killed. O king! All the kings and the princes have been killed. O king! Pandava has killed Duryodhana, as he had said he would. O great king! With his thigh broken, he is lying down in the dust, covered with blood. O king! Dhrishtadyumna has been killed and also the unvanquished Shikhandi, Uttamouja and Yudhamanyu. O king! The Prabhadrakas, the Panchalas and the Chedis, tigers among men, are dead. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your sons, all of Droupadi’s sons, have been slain. The immensely strong and

brave Vrishasena, Karna's son, has been killed. All the men have been killed and the elephants have been brought down. O tiger among men! Rathas and horses have been slain in the battle. O lord! There are only a few who remain in your camp. Those brave ones and the Pandavas clashed against each other. They were confounded by destiny and only women are left in this world. There are seven left on the side of the Pandavas and three on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra. There are the five brothers and Vasudeva and Satyaki. And there are Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona's son, supreme among victorious ones. O great king! O supreme among kings! Those are the only rathas who are left. O lord of men! O great king! Out of the akshouhinis that assembled, these are the only ones who are left. Everyone else has been killed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The entire world has been slain by destiny. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Duryodhana at the forefront, this was the result of the enmity."

'O great king! Having heard these cruel words, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, lost his senses and fell down on the ground. O great king! When he fell down on the ground, the immensely illustrious Vidura was touched by the king's grief and also fell down. O best of kings! On hearing those cruel words, Gandhari and all the Kuru women also suddenly fell down on the ground. All the servant-maids in the king's circle also lost their senses and fell down on the ground. They were overcome by a great delirium, as if they were figures on a painting. King Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, was overcome by a great hardship. He was afflicted by hardship on account of his sons and slowly regained his senses. Having regained his senses, the king trembled in great grief. He glanced in all the directions and spoke these words to Kshatta.⁶ "O learned Kshatta! O immensely wise one! O bull among the Bharata lineage!⁷ You are the refuge. I am in a grievous state, without a protector. I am without all my sons." Having said this, he lost his senses again and fell down. On seeing him fall down in this way, his relatives sprinkled cold water on him. They fanned him with fans. After a long time, the lord of the earth was comforted. Oppressed by grief on account of his sons, the lord of the earth remained silent. O lord of the earth! He sighed, like a snake that has been flung into a pot. On seeing that the king was so distressed, Sanjaya also wept. For a long time, so did all the women and the illustrious Gandhari. After repeatedly losing his senses, Dhritarashtra, tiger among men, spoke these words to Vidura. "Let all the women, and the illustrious Gandhari, depart, and all these well-wishers. My mind is greatly distracted." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words, Vidura trembled repeatedly and gently asked the women to leave. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king was distressed, all the women and all the well-wishers departed. O scorcher of enemies! The king regained his senses and wept in great grief. The distressed Sanjaya looked at him. The lord of men was sighing repeatedly. Kshatta joined his hands in salutation and comforted him with gentle words.'

Chapter 1221(2)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! When the women had been sent away, Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, lamented again, plunged into an even greater grief. His sighs seemed to be mixed with smoke and he repeatedly waved his arms around. O great king! Having reflected, he spoke these words. “O suta! Alas! What I have heard from you is a reason for great unhappiness. In the battle, the Pandavas are safe and have not suffered. It is certain that my heart is extremely firm, with an essence that is as tough as a diamond. Despite hearing that my sons have been killed, it has not shattered into a thousand fragments. O Sanjaya! I am thinking about their words and the sports they indulged in when they were children. Today, having heard that they have been killed, my mind is severely shattered. Because I was blind, I was never able to see their beauty. However, because of affection towards one’s sons, I have always borne great love towards them. O unblemished one! They passed from childhood to youth and then attained middle age. On hearing this, I was delighted. Today, I have heard that they have been killed, deprived of their prosperity and robbed of their energy. Because of the calamity that has overtaken my sons, I cannot find any peace. O son! O Indra among kings!⁸ Come to me. I am without a protector now. O mighty-armed one! Without you, what will be my state now? O great king! You were the refuge of your relatives and your well-wishers. O brave one! I am old and blind. Abandoning me, where have you gone? O king! Where is your compassion, your affection and your honour? You were invincible in a battle. How could the Parthas have killed you? O son! Why have you abandoned all the assembled kings? Slain, you are now lying down on the ground, like an ordinary person, or a wicked king. When I arose at the appointed time, you always addressed me in such respectful words. ‘O father! O father! O protector of the world!’ You clasped my neck with moistened eyes and affectionately said, ‘O Kouravya! Instruct me.’ Address me in those excellent words. O son! I have heard these wonderful words from you. ‘This extensive earth is mine, as much as it is of Partha. O supreme among kings! O lord! Bhagadatta, Kripa, Shalya, the two from Avanti,⁹ Jayadratha, Bhurishrava, Somadatta, the great king Bahlika, Ashvatthama, Bhoja, the immensely strong Magadha, Brihadbala, the lord of Kashi, Shakuni Soubala, the many thousands of mlecchas, Shakas and Yavanas, Sudakshina of Kamboja, the lord of Trigarta,¹⁰ grandfather Bhishma, Bharadvaja’s son, Goutama, Shrutayu, Achyutayu, the valourous Shatayu, Jalasandha, Rishyashringa’s son,¹¹ the rakshasa Alayudha, the mighty-armed Alambusa, maharatha Subahu—these and many other kings have taken up weapons for my sake. All of them are ready to give up their lives in the battle. I will be stationed amidst them in the battle, surrounded by my brothers. O tiger among kings! I will fight against all the Parthas, Panchalas, Chedis and Droupadi’s sons in the battle and with Satyaki, Kuntibhoja and rakshasa Ghatotkacha. O great king! In the battle, even a single one amongst these is capable of angrily countering the rush of the advancing Pandaveyas. Need one say anything about these brave ones when they are united, firm in their enmity against the Pandavas? O Indra among kings! All of them will fight with the Pandavas and their followers in the battle and slay them. With me, Karna will single-handedly kill the Pandavas. All these brave kings will then be under my subjugation. Their adviser is the immensely strong Vasudeva. O king! But he has given me word that he will not don armour for their sake.’ O suta! Thus did he often speak in my presence and believing this, I thought that the Pandavas would be killed in the battle. However, though they were stationed in their midst and strove in the battle, my sons have been killed. What can this be, other than destiny? The powerful Bhishma was the protector of the world and having clashed against Shikhandi, was slain, like a king of deer¹² by a jackal. The brahmana Drona was skilled in the use of all weapons.¹³ He has been slain by the Pandavas in the battle. What can this be, other than destiny? Bhurishrava has been killed in the battle, and so have Somadatta and the great king, Bahlika. What can this be, other than destiny? Sudakshina has been killed, and Kourava Jalasandha and Shrutayu and Achyutayu. What can this be, oth-

er than destiny? Brihadbala has been slain and the immensely strong Magadha. The two from Avanti have been killed, the lord of Trigarta and many samshaptakas. What can this be, other than destiny? O king!¹⁴ Alambusa, the rakshasa Alayudha and Rishyashringa's son have been killed. What can this be, other than destiny? The narayanas, the gopals, invincible in battle, and many thousands of mlecchas have been killed. What can this be, other than destiny? The brave and immensely strong Shakuni Soubala, skilled with the dice, has been slain, along with his soldiers. What can this be, other than destiny? Many brave kings and princes, with arms like clubs, have been slain. What can this be, other than destiny? O Sanjaya! Kshatriyas assembled there from many countries. All of them have been killed in the battle. What can this be, other than destiny? My sons have been killed and my immensely strong grandsons. So have my friends and brothers. What can this be, other than destiny? There is no doubt that a man is born with his destiny. The man who has a good destiny is fortunate. O Sanjaya! I do not have a good destiny. Hence, I have been deprived of my sons. Therefore, in my aged state, I have now come under the subjugation of my enemies. O lord! I think that the best thing for me now is to resort to the forest. I am without relatives and my kin have been destroyed. I will go to the forest. O Sanjaya! For a person like me, who has been reduced to this state and whose wings have been clipped, there is nothing superior to retiring to the forest. Duryodhana has been slain. Shalya has been killed in the battle. So have Duhshasana, Vishasta and the immensely strong Vikarna. How can I bear to hear Bhimasena's supreme roars? In the battle, he has single-handedly killed one hundred of my sons. He will repeatedly speak about Duryodhana's death in my presence and tormented by grief and sorrow, I will not be able to bear those harsh words." The king's relatives had been slain and he was tormented by grief. He repeatedly lost his senses, overcome by sorrow on account of his sons.

'Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, lamented for a long time. His sighs were warm and long and he thought about the defeat. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The king was tormented by great misery. Then he again asked the suta, Gavgana's son,¹⁵ to tell him exactly what had transpired. "After Bhishma and Drona had been killed, and on hearing that the son of a suta had also been brought down, who did those on my side appoint as a commander? In the battle, whoever is appointed as a commander by those on my side, is slain in a short while by the Pandavas. In the forefront of the battle, while all of you looked on, Bhishma was killed by Kiriti. Drona was also killed in that way, while all of you looked on. In that fashion, Karna, the powerful son of a suta, was also killed by Kiriti, while all of you, and all the kings, looked on. This is exactly what the great-souled Vidura had told me earlier. Because of Duryodhana's crimes, the subjects would be annihilated. There are some who see well. But there are others who are so stupid that they cannot see what is in front of them. I was stupid and treated those words accordingly. The far-sighted Vidura has dharma in his soul and spoke to me. He spoke the truth and his words have now come to pass. Deluded by destiny, I paid no attention to them earlier. The fruits have now manifested themselves. O Gavgana's son! Tell me again. When Karna was brought down, who became the leader of our soldiers? Which ratha advanced against Arjuna and Vasudeva? In the battle, who guarded the right wheel of the king of Madra? When he wished to fight, who was on his left? Who protected the brave one's rear? O Sanjaya! When all of you were assembled, how were the immensely strong king of Madra and my son killed by the Pandavas in the encounter? Tell me everything about the great destruction of the Bharatas in detail. How was my son, Duryodhana, slain in the battle? How were all the Panchalas, along with all their followers, Dhritadyumna, Shikhandi and Droupadi's five sons killed? How did the Pandavas, the two Satvata warriors,¹⁶ Kripa, Kritavarma and the son of Bharadvaja's son¹⁷ escape? I wish to hear about the battle exactly as it occurred. O Sanjaya! I wish to hear everything. You are skilled in recounting."

Chapter 1222(3)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Listen to the great destruction of the Kurus and the Pandavas that ensued when they clashed against each other. The son of a suta was slain by the great-souled Pandava. Your soldiers were repeatedly rallied and routed. The senses of your son were overcome by great sorrow and he retreated. On witnessing Partha’s valour, the soldiers were extremely anxious. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Confronted by that misery, the soldiers reflected about what should be done next. The troops were being crushed. Loud wails could be heard. In the battle, the kings were in disarray. The great-souled ones had fallen down from their seats on the chariots and from the chariots. O venerable one! In the battle, the elephants and the foot soldiers were being destroyed. An extremely terrible battle was going on, as if Rudra was sporting. Hundreds and thousands of kings confronted an inglorious death.

‘ “O king! On discerning all this, Kripa, aged and virtuous in conduct, was overcome with compassion. The energetic one approached King Duryodhana. Overcome with anger, the eloquent one spoke these words. ‘O Duryodhana! O Kourava! Listen to the words that I am speaking to you. O great king! O unblemished one! Having heard me, act in accordance with those words, if you find them acceptable. O Indra among kings! There is no path that is superior to the dharma of fighting. O bull among kshatriyas! That is the reason kshatriyas resort to fighting. One who lives the life of a kshatriya fights with sons, brothers, fathers, sister’s sons, maternal uncles, matrimonial allies and relatives. There is supreme dharma in being killed and adharma in retreat. That is the reason, if one wishes to remain alive, this kind of livelihood is terrible. However, I wish to tell you some beneficial words. O unblemished one! After the deaths of Bhishma, Drona, maharatha Karna and Jayadratha, and the death of your brothers and your son, Lakshmana, what is there left for us to do? They were the ones on whom we resolved to impose the burden of the kingdom. Those brave ones have given up their bodies and gone to the destination reserved for those who know about the brahman. Those maharathas possessed many qualities and we are deprived of them now. We have brought down many kings and are reduced to a miserable state. Even when all of them were alive, Bibhatsu remained unvanquished. Krishna is his eyes and the mighty-armed is extremely difficult to defeat, even by the gods. The ape sits astride his standard, which is like Indra’s standard and Indra’s bow, with the resplendence of the vajra. The large army trembles at this. Bhima’s leonine roars, Panchajanya’s blare and Gandiva’s twang bring distress to our hearts. Gandiva’s brilliance dazzles our eyes. As it is brandished, it is like a circle of fire and is seen to move around, like a giant flash of lightning. Colourful and decorated with gold, that giant bow is brandished around. It is seen in all the directions, like a mass of clouds tinged with lightning. O king! Arjuna is supreme among those who are skilled in weapons. Wielded by Krishna,¹⁸ your troops are driven away, like clouds dispelled by the wind. He is like the great Indra in his radiance and is scorching your soldiers, like a fire that has arisen to burn down the dead wood in a forest during the winter. We have beheld Dhananjaya agitate your soldiers and terrify the kings, like an elephant with four tusks. We have beheld Dhananjaya, like an elephant amidst lotuses. The warriors have been terrified by the twang of Pandava’s bow. We have repeatedly seen him, like a lion amidst herds of deer. Those two Krishnas are great archers in all the worlds. They are bulls among all archers. Clad in their armour, they are resplendent amidst all the people. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the seventeenth day of the battle and warriors have been slaughtered in this extremely terrible battle. Your soldiers have been routed and scattered in all the directions, like the wind dispelling masses of clouds during the autumn. O great king! Your troops are trembling because of Savyasachi. They are like an overturned boat, being whirled around on the giant ocean. When we saw that Jayadratha was within the range of his arrows,¹⁹ where were the ones on your side—the son of a suta, Drona and his followers, I, you, Hardikya, your brother Duhshasana, and his brothers? O king! While all the worlds looked on, he used his valour to cross all your relatives, brothers, aides and maternal uncles and

placing his feet on their heads,²⁰ slew Jayadratha. What is left for us to do? Where is the man who can defeat Pandava? The great-souled one possesses many divine weapons. He robs our valour with the twang of Gandiva. With their leaders slain, the soldiers are like the night without the moon, or like a dried up river, with the trees along the banks destroyed by elephants. The mighty-armed one on the white horses is roaming around amidst the soldiers at will, consuming them like fire amidst dead wood. Both Satyaki and Bhimasena have a force that can shatter mountains and dry up all the oceans. O lord of the earth! Bhima uttered words in the midst of the assembly hall. He has accomplished them and will accomplish them again.²¹ When Karna was fighting in the forefront, the army of the Pandavas, protected by the wielder of Gandiva, was so strongly protected that it was difficult to assail. You have performed many evil acts against those virtuous ones. Those deeds were unwarranted and the fruits have arrived. For your own sake, you carefully assembled all these people. O son!²² O bull among the Bharata lineage! Both they and you face a danger. O Duryodhana! Protect your own self, because your own self is the reservoir of everything. O son! If that reservoir is destroyed, everything in it is scattered in different directions. A weakened person should try to obtain peace through conciliation. War is meant for someone who is prospering. That is Brihaspati's²³ policy. In terms of the strength of our forces, we are now inferior to the sons of Pandu. O lord! Pardon me, but I think that peace with the Pandavas is indicated now. He who does not know what is beneficial for him, or disregards the beneficial, is quickly dislodged from his kingdom and does not obtain anything superior. O king! If you are able to obtain the kingdom by bowing down before the king,²⁴ that would be superior to heading towards the folly of defeat. Yudhishtira is compassionate. On the instructions of Vichitravirya's son²⁵ and on Govinda's words, he will allow you to retain the kingdom. There is no doubt that the unvanquished king, Arjuna, Bhimasena and all of them will do what Hrishikesha asks them to. I think that Krishna will not be able to ignore the words of Kourava Dhritarashtra and the Pandavas will not cross Krishna. I think that a cessation of hostilities with the Parthas is for your own good. I am not saying this out of weakness, or because I wish to save my own life. O king! I am offering you medication and you will remember this later.²⁶ The aged Kripa Sharadvata lamented in these words. His sighs were deep and warm and, in sorrow, he lost his senses.” ’

Chapter 1223(4)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed by the illustrious Goutama, the king let out deep and warm sighs and was silent. Dhritarashtra’s great-minded son thought for an instant. The scorcher of enemies then spoke these words to Kripa Sharadvata. ‘You have spoken like a well-wisher and I have heard all those words. In the course of fighting, you were ready to give up your life and did everything. You have immersed yourself in the immensely energetic array of Pandava maharathas and fought with them. The worlds have seen this. Like a well-wisher, you have made me listen to your words. But they do not appeal to me, like medicine to a person who is about to die. Those supreme words are beneficial and full of reason. O mighty-armed one! O foremost among brahmanas! However, they do not appeal to me. Having been deprived of his kingdom earlier, why will he²⁷ trust us now? The king was defeated by us in the great contest of gambling with the dice earlier. Why will he repose any trust in my words now? Engaged in the welfare of the Parthas, Krishna arrived as a messenger.²⁸ Because of our greed, we acted contrary to Hrishikesha’s intent. O brahmana! Why will he pay heed to my words now? When Krishna²⁹ was summoned to the assembly hall, she lamented. Krishna will not forgive that, or the deprivation of the kingdom. O lord! We had earlier heard that the two Krishnas were united with each other and we have also seen it now. On hearing of the death of his sister’s son,³⁰ Keshava slept in sorrow. We have injured him. Why will he forgive us now? When Abhimanyu died, Arjuna could obtain no peace. Even if he is requested, why will he endeavour for my good? The immensely strong Bhimasena, the second Pandava, is fierce. He has taken a terrible pledge. He will break, rather than bow down. The brave twins are like Yama. They have girded their swords and are clad in armour. They are firm in their enmity. Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi are firm in their enmity towards me. O supreme among brahmanas! Why will they endeavour for my good? Krishna³¹ was in her season and was clad in a single garment. While all the worlds looked on, she was oppressed by Duhshasana in the midst of the assembly hall. The Pandavas remember the distress of the naked one. No one is capable of restraining those scorchers of enemies from fighting. To accomplish the objective of her husbands and ensure my destruction, the miserable Droupadi Krishna has tormented herself through severe austerities. Until the hostilities are over, Krishna always sleeps on the bare ground. Vasudeva’s sister has cast aside her pride and her honour and always serves Krishna.³² Thus, everything has flared up and can never be quenched. Because of Abhimanyu’s death, how can there be peace with me? I have enjoyed the earth, right up to the frontiers on the ocean. How can I be satisfied with the pleasures of a small kingdom, obtained through the favours of the Pandavas? Like a sun, I have blazed above all the kings. How can I follow Yudhishtira, like a servant? I have myself enjoyed all the pleasures and have donated generously. How can I lead a miserable life, together with other miserable people? The words that you have spoken are gentle and beneficial and I do not hate them. But I do not think that the time has arrived for peace. O scorcher of enemies! I see good policy as one that involves fighting well. This is not the time to be a eunuch. This is the time to fight. I have performed many rites and sacrifices. I have given a lot of donations to brahmanas. In due order, I have listened to all the Vedas. I have placed myself on the heads of my enemies. O father!³³ I have nurtured my servants well and also distressed ones who have resorted to me. I have gone to the kingdoms of enemies. I have ruled my own kingdom. I have enjoyed many kinds of objects of pleasure. Large numbers of women have served me. I have paid my debts to my ancestors and to the dharma of kshatriyas. It is certain that there is no happiness on earth. What is the kingdom? What is fame? Fame can only be obtained through battle and there is no other way. If a kshatriya dies at home, that is reprehensible. Death in one’s home is great adharma. If a man gives up his body in a forest, or in a battle, he performs a great sacrifice and attains great glory. There are those who lament in distress and misery, overcome by age. They die among their weeping relatives and are not men. I will

abandon various objects of pleasure and attain the supreme objective. I will engage in a good battle and go to the worlds of the virtuous. Brave ones, noble in conduct, do not retreat from the field of battle. They are wise and unwavering in their aim. All of them perform sacrifices that involve rites with weapons. It is certain that they reside in heaven. It is certain that large numbers of pure apsaras glance delightedly at them. It is certain that the ancestors see them honoured in Shakra's assembly. They find joy in heaven, surrounded by apsaras. That is the path followed by the immortals and by brave ones who do not retreat. We will now ascend along that virtuous path, followed by the aged grandfather, the intelligent preceptor, Jayadratha, Karna and Duhshasana. There are brave kings who strove for my sake and have been killed. They were mangled by arrows and lay down on the ground, their limbs covered with blood. They were brave and supreme in the knowledge of weapons. They performed the decreed sacrifices. They gave up their lives for another and now reside in Indra's home. They have constructed the path. It will be difficult to travel along, because there are large numbers who are travelling along it with great speed, advancing towards the virtuous end. I remember the brave ones who have been killed in my cause. I wish to repay my debt to them. I am not interested in the kingdom. When my friends, brothers and grandfathers have been brought down, it is certain that the worlds will censure me if I protect my life. In the absence of my relatives, friends and well-wishers, and bowing down to Pandava, what kind of a kingdom will I have? Someone like me has brought the entire earth under his subjugation. I will now attain heaven through a good fight. There is no other way.' When Duryodhana spoke in this way, everyone applauded these words. The kshatriyas praised the king.

‘ “They ceased to grieve over their defeat and set their minds on bravery. All of them made up their minds to place fighting at the forefront of their hearts. All of them were delighted at the prospect of battle and comforted their mounts. The Kouravas went to a spot that was two yojanas away. This was a sacred and auspicious spot on the slopes of the Himalayas, without any trees. The waters of the Sarasvati were red there and they bathed in it and drank it. Inspired by your son, they rallied. O king! Having again reassured themselves and each other, all the kshatriyas were driven by destiny and waited.” ’

Chapter 1224(5)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! All those warriors were delighted at the prospect of battle and gathered together on the slopes of the Himalayas. Shalya, Chitrasena, maharatha Shakuni, Ashvatthama, Kripa, Satvata Kritavarma, Sushena, Arishtasena, the valiant Dhritasena, Jayatsena and the kings spent the night there. When the brave Karna was killed in the battle, though your sons desired victory, they were terrified and could find no peace, other than on the slopes of the Himalayas. O king! Having resolved to make every effort in the battle, in the presence of the soldiers, they honoured the king³⁴ in the prescribed way and, united, said, ‘You should fight with the enemy after having decided on a commander. All the well-wishers will then be protected by him and obtain victory.’ Stationed on his chariot, Duryodhana went to the supreme among rathas,³⁵ who knew about all the kinds of warfare and was unmatched in a battle. He was pleasant in speech and his neck was like that of a conch shell. He possessed a sword and his head was covered. His face was like a blooming lotus. His mouth was like that of a tiger and he had the majesty of Meru. His shoulders, eyes, gait and voice was like that of Sthanu’s³⁶ bull. His arms were thick and long, with excellent joints. His chest was extremely broad and well formed. In his speed and strength, he was like Aruna’s younger brother.³⁷ He was like the sun in his splendour and like Ushanas³⁸ in his intelligence. He was like the moon in three respects—the beauty of his form, his face and his prosperity. The joints on his body seemed to be made out of golden lotuses. His thighs, waist and feet were formed well, and so were his fingers and nails. He was created by the creator with great care, after remembering all the qualities that should be remembered. He possessed all the auspicious marks. He was skilled and an ocean of learning. He was capable of winning speedily, but was incapable of being defeated by the forces of the enemy. He possessed knowledge about the science of fighting, with its four parts and ten divisions.³⁹ He knew the four Vedas and their *angas*, with accounts as the fifth.⁴⁰ Drona was not born in a womb. The immensely energetic one observed fierce and careful austerities, worshipping Tryambaka and obtained him through someone who was also not born in a womb.⁴¹ His deeds and beauty were unmatched on earth. He was accomplished in all the forms of learning. He was unblemished and an ocean of qualities. He was immeasurable in his soul. Having approached this Ashvatthama, he said, ‘O preceptor’s son! For all of us, you are the supreme refuge. Whom should I appoint as a commander now? You should tell me. With him at the forefront, we will fight with the Pandavas and defeat them.’

‘“Drona’s son replied, ‘Let Shalya be the commander of our army. He possesses lineage, bravery, energy, fame, prosperity and all the qualities. He has abandoned his sister’s sons⁴² and has gratefully come to our side. He possesses a large army and is mighty-armed. He is like Mahasena⁴³ to the enemy. O supreme among kings! Make that king the commander. We will then be able to obtain victory, like the triumphant gods after appointing Skanda.’

‘“When Drona’s son said this, all the lords of the earth surrounded Shalya and stationed themselves around him, proclaiming his victory.⁴⁴ They set their minds on fighting and were filled with supreme delight. From his chariot, Duryodhana alighted on the ground. He joined his hands in salutation and told Shalya, who was like Rama⁴⁵ and Bhishma in battle, ‘O one who is devoted to friends! The time has come for friendship. At such times, learned ones can differentiate between a friend and an enemy. You are brave. Station yourself at the forefront of our army. When you advance in the battle, the evil-minded Pandavas, with their advisers and the Panchalas, will lose enterprise.’ Shalya replied, ‘O king! O king of the Kurus! I will accomplish the task you have thought for me. Everything that I possess, my life, my kingdom and my riches, is for your pleasure.’ Duryodhana said, ‘O unmatched maternal uncle!⁴⁶ I instate you as the commander. O foremost among warriors! Save us in this encounter, like Skanda saved

the gods in battle. O Indra among kings! I consecrate you, like the gods did to Pavaki.⁴⁷ O brave one! Slay the enemies in the battle, like the great Indra against the danavas.”’

Chapter 1225(6)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! On hearing the king’s words, the powerful king of Madra spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘O Duryodhana! O mighty-armed one! O supreme among eloquent ones! Listen to my words. You think that the two Krishnas, stationed on their chariot, are supreme among rathas. However, though united, they are not my equal in strength of arms. Even if the entire earth were to arise, with gods, asuras and men, I will angrily fight with them in the forefront of the battle, not to speak of the Pandavas. In the battle, I will vanquish the assembled Parthas and Somakas. There is no doubt that I will protect your soldiers. I will construct a vyuha that the enemy will not be able to cross. O Duryodhana! I am telling you this truthfully. Entertain no doubt on this score.’ O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! The king was thus addressed by the lord of Madra and delightedly, in the midst of the soldiers, sanctified him with water, in accordance with the rites laid down in the sacred texts. When he was consecrated, a loud noise arose among the soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They roared like lions and musical instruments were sounded. The maharatha Madraka warriors were delighted. All the kings praised Shalya, the ornament of a battle. ‘O king! May you be victorious. May you live for a long time. Slay the assembled enemy. The immensely strong son of Dhritarashtra has obtained the strength of your arms. Let him slaughter the enemy and rule over the entire earth. You are capable of defeating the gods, the asuras and humans in a battle, not to speak of the Somakas and the Srinjayas, who must follow the dharma of mortals.’ The powerful lord of the Madras was praised in this way. The brave one was filled with great joy, the likes of which cannot be obtained by those who have not controlled their souls. Shalya said, ‘O Indra among kings! In the battle today, I will slay all the Panchalas and the Pandavas, or be slain and go to heaven. The worlds will see me roam around fearlessly today. Let all the sons of Pandu, Vasudeva, Satyaki, the Panchalas, the Chedis, all the sons of Droupadi, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and all the Prabhadrakas behold my valour and the great strength of my bow, in addition to the dexterity and valour of my weapons and the strength of my arms in the encounter. Let the Parthas, the siddhas and the charanas behold me today, with the strength of my arms and the wealth of my weapons. The maharatha Pandavas will witness my valour today. Let the enemy try out different means of countering me. Today, I will drive away the Pandu soldiers in every direction. O Kourava! For the sake of bringing you pleasure, I will roam around and fight in the battle today, surpassing Drona, Bhishma and the son of a suta.’ O one who grants honours! Amidst your soldiers, Shalya was thus consecrated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No one felt any sorrow on account of Karna. The soldiers were happy and cheerful in their minds. They thought that the Parthas had already been killed and had come under the subjugation of the king of Madra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your soldiers were filled with great joy. They were assured and slept happily during the night.

“On hearing the sounds made by your soldiers, while all the kshatriyas heard, King Yudhishtira spoke these words to Varshneya. ‘O Madhava! Honoured by all the soldiers, Dhritarashtra’s son has made the great archer, Shalya, the king of Madra, the commander. O Madhava! Having heard this, do what is beneficial. You are our leader and our protector. Do what must be done next.’ O great king! Vasudeva told the king, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I know everything about Artayani.⁴⁸ He is brave and immensely energetic. In particular, he is great-souled. He is accomplished and colourful in fighting. He also possesses dexterity. In an encounter, he is like Bhishma, Drona and Karna. The king of Madra may even be superior to them. That is my view. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of men! On thinking about it, I cannot find a warrior on your side who is his equal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, he possesses a strength that is superior to Shikhandi, Arjuna, Bhishma, Satvata⁴⁹ and Dhrishtadyumna. O great king! The king of Madra is like a lion and an elephant in valour. He will roam around fearlessly, like a wrathful Destroyer among beings, when the time for destruction has arrived. O tiger among men! In the battle today, with the exception of you, I do not see any warrior who can fight against him.

He is like a tiger in his bravery. Barring you, there is no other man in all of heaven or earth. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In a battle, there is no one else who can kill the angry king of Madra. He has fought from one day to another, agitating your troops. Therefore, kill Shalya in the battle, like Maghavan against Shambara. The brave one is revered by Dhritarashtra's son. When the lord of Madra is killed in the battle, thereafter, victory will be certain. When he is slain, the large army of the son of Dhritarashtra will also be completely destroyed. O great king! O Partha! In the battle, having heard my words, advance against the large army of the king of Madra. O mighty-armed one! Slay him, like Vasava against Namuchi.⁵⁰ You should not think of him as your maternal uncle and show any compassion. With the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront, kill the lord of Madra. The ocean of Bhishma and Drona and the nether region of Karna have been crossed. Having encountered the trifle⁵¹ of Shalya, do not get submerged, with your followers. You possess austerities and valour and the strength of kshatriyas. Exhibit all of those in the battle. Kill the maharatha.' Having spoken these words, Keshava, the slayer of enemy heroes, was honoured by the Pandavas. In the evening, he went to his own camp. When Keshava had left, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira dismissed all his brothers and the Panchalas and the Somakas. He slept happily in the night, like an elephant from which stakes have been removed. All the Panchalas and the Pandavas, great archers, were delighted that Karna had been killed, and slept well during the night. The great archers were cured of their fever. The maharathas had reached a bank.⁵² The Pandaveya soldiers rejoiced during the night. O venerable one! With the son of a suta slain, they had obtained victory." '

Chapter 1226(7)

‘Sanjaya said, “When night was over, King Duryodhana asked all the maharathas on your side to arm themselves. On hearing the king’s command, the army armoured itself. Some quickly yoked the chariots. Others rushed here and there. The elephants were prepared. The foot soldiers were armoured. Thousands of others spread out coverlets on the horses. O lord of the earth! Musical instruments were sounded and a large roar arose. This was meant to enthuse the warriors and the soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the soldiers were seen to be properly arrayed in the army. They made up their minds to die, rather than retreat. The maharathas made Shalya, the king of Madra, their commander. They divided the army into divisions and stationed themselves. The time having arrived, all the soldiers, with Kripa, Kritavarma, Drona’s son, Shalya and Soubala, approached your son, together with the kings who were still alive. They resolved, ‘One who fights alone with the Pandavas, or one who abandons a co-warrior who is fighting single-handedly with the Pandaveyas, will commit a sin equal to the five great sins and all the minor sins.’⁵³ We will protect each other and fight in a united way.’ The time having arrived, all the maharathas adopted such a resolution. With the king of Madra at the forefront, they quickly advanced against the enemy. O king! In that fashion, in the great battle, the Pandavas also arranged their soldiers in a vyuha. Wishing to fight, all of them advanced against the Kouravas from every side. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! That army⁵⁴ made a sound like that of the agitated ocean. With the chariots and the elephants, it assumed a form like that of turbulent waves on an ocean.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “I have heard about the downfall of Drona, Bhishma and Radheya. Tell me now about the downfall of Shalya and my son. O Sanjaya! How was Shalya slain by Dharmaraja in the battle? And how was my mighty-armed son, Duryodhana, brought down by Bhima?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “There was a destruction of the bodies of men, horses, elephants and chariots. O king! Be patient and listen. I will describe the battle that ensued to you. O king! At that time, hope became powerful among your sons. O venerable one! This was despite Bhishma, Drona and the son of a suta having been brought down. They thought that Shalya would kill all the Parthas in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Resorting to this hope in their hearts, they were comforted. In the battle, they sought refuge with the maharatha king of Madra. Your son thought that he had found himself a protector. O king! When Karna was slain, the Parthas roared like lions. At that time, a great fear had overtaken the sons of Dhritarashtra. However, they now sought refuge with the powerful king of Madra. O great king! Having constructed a vyuha that was auspicious in every way,⁵⁵ the powerful king of Madra attacked the Parthas in the battle. He brandished his colourful bow, which was extremely forceful and capable of withstanding a great burden. The maharatha was on an excellent chariot, yoked to horses from the Sindhu region. O great king! The furrows created by the ratha’s chariot were beautiful to behold. The brave one, afflicter of enemies, was surrounded by brave rathas. O great king! The valiant one dispelled the fears of your sons. Armoured and stationed at the head of the vyuha, the king of Madra advanced. He was accompanied by the brave Madrakas and Karna’s invincible sons. Kritavarma, surrounded by the Trigartas, was on the left flank. With the Shakas and the Yavanas, Goutama⁵⁶ was on the right flank. Surrounded by the Kambojas, Ashvatthama was at the rear. Protected by the bulls among the Kurus, Duryodhana was in the middle. Soubala was surrounded by a large army of horses. The gambler’s maharatha son advanced with all the soldiers.⁵⁷ The Pandavas, great archers and scorcher of enemies, also arranged their soldiers into a vyuha. O great king! They divided themselves into three⁵⁸ and attacked your soldiers. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and maharatha Satyaki quickly rushed against Shalya’s army. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Wishing to kill, King Yudhishtira surrounded himself by his own troops and attacked Shalya. The great archer Arjuna, the slayer of enemy hordes, powerfully

rushed against Hardikya and large numbers of samshaptakas. O Indra among kings! Wishing to kill the enemy in the battle, Bhimasena and the maharatha Somakas attacked Goutama. In the battle, maharatha Shakuni and Uluka were stationed with their forces, and Madri's two sons attacked them, with their soldiers. In that way, tens of thousands of your warriors angrily attacked the Pandavas in the battle, with many different kinds of weapons in their hands."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! The great archers and maharathas, Bhishma, Drona and Karna, were killed. In the battle, among the Kurus and the Pandavas, there were only a few left. The powerful Parthas again became enraged in the battle. What were the remaining forces on my side, and on the side of the enemy?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! The remaining forces on our side, and on that of the enemy, were stationed for battle again. Listen to who were left in the encounter. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your side had eleven thousand rathas, ten thousand and seven hundred elephants and a complete complement of two hundred thousand horses. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were also three crores of men. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The forces of the Pandavas consisted of six thousand rathas, six thousand elephants, ten thousand horses and one crore of foot soldiers.⁵⁹ This is what was left to them in the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! These were the ones who attacked each other. O Indra among kings! We followed the instructions of the king of Madra and divided ourselves. Desiring victory, we advanced against the Pandavas. In that way, the brave Pandavas also wished for victory in the battle. With the illustrious Panchalas, those tigers among men attacked. O lord! When it was dawn, thus did those tigers among men rush against each other, wishing to kill each other and rushing forward in strong waves. A fierce battle commenced and it was terrible in form. Those on your side, and the enemy, wished to kill each other."

Chapter 1227(8)

‘Sanjaya said, “O Indra among kings! The terrible battle between the Kurus and the Srinjayas commenced. It was like that between the gods and the asuras and increased one’s fear. Men, chariots, crowds of elephants, thousands of riders and horses powerfully clashed against each other. Elephants that were terrible in form rushed forward, and a great noise was heard, like clouds roaring in the sky during the rains. Some rathas were struck by the elephants and fell down from their chariots. In the battle, those brave ones were routed and driven away by those crazy ones.⁶⁰ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Large numbers of well-trained horses were stationed there, to guard the feet of the rathas. Because of the arrows, they were dispatched to the world of the hereafter. O king! Trained horse riders surrounded the maharathas and, roaming around in the battle, slew them with spears, javelins and swords. Some men used bows to repulse the maharathas. Many attacked one and dispatched him to Yama’s eternal abode. Maharathas surrounded elephants and the best of chariots. They severed the heads of the warriors and drove them away, with a great roar. The rathas were enraged and shot many arrows. O great king! In every direction, they surrounded and slew the elephants. In the battle, elephants attacked elephants and rathas attacked rathas. Using spears, javelins and iron arrows, they killed each other. In the field of battle, foot soldiers, chariots, elephants and horses were seen to be driven away, creating a great tumult. Horses adorned with whisks were routed and drank up the earth⁶¹ and were like swans on the slopes of the Himalayas. O lord of the earth! The earth was marked with the hooves of the horses and was as beautiful as a woman with the marks of nails on her body.⁶² There were sounds from the hooves of the horses and the wheels of chariots. There were the sounds of foot soldiers and the trumpeting of elephants. Musical instruments were sounded and conch shells blared. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth resounded, as if it had been struck by a storm. There was the twang of bows. Swords blazed and the armour was radiant. Nothing could be seen. Many arms were severed and were like the trunks of kings of elephants. They writhed fearfully with great force, or were immobile. O great king! Heads fell down on the surface of the earth and a sound was heard, like that when ripe palm fruit falls down. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of the heads that fell down, the earth was red with blood and looked beautiful, as if adorned with golden lotuses in the right season. O great king! With lives lost, the eyes were dilated. With all those wounds, it looked beautiful, as if covered with lotuses. O Indra among kings! Severed hands fell down on the ground, smeared with sandalwood paste and adorned with extremely expensive armlets. They were as dazzling as Shakra’s standard. In the great battle, the thighs of the kings were severed. They adorned the field of battle, like the trunks of elephants. Hundreds of headless torsos were strewn around, and umbrellas and fans. That forest of soldiers was as beautiful as a blooming forest. O great king! The warriors roamed around fearlessly. With blood flowing from their limbs, they were seen to be like flowering kimshukas. Elephants were seen there, afflicted by arrows and spears. They fell down in the battle, like dispersed clouds. O great king! The great-souled ones slaughtered divisions of elephants. They drove them away in all the directions, like clouds dispelled by the wind. Those elephants were like clouds. In every direction, they shrieked and fell down. They were like mountains shattered by thunder, at the time of the destruction of a yuga. Horses fell down on the ground, together with their riders. With their harnesses, those heaps were seen to be like mountains. A river was created on the field of battle and it flowed towards the world hereafter. The water was made out of blood and the chariots were the eddies. The standards were like trees and the bones were the rocks. The arms were the crocodiles. The bows were the current. The elephants were the boulders. The horses were the stones. Fat and marrow constituted the mire. The umbrellas were the swans. The clubs were rafts. Armour and headdresses were scattered around. The flags were like beautiful trees. There were a large number of wheels, trivenus and poles. This delighted brave ones and generated terror

among cowards. That terrible river, full of Kurus and Srinjayas, flowed along. That extremely horrible river flowed along to the world of the ancestors. Those brave ones possessed arms like clubs and used their mounts as boats to cross it. O lord of the earth! That cruel battle raged on. It was fierce and led to the destruction of the four kinds of forces,⁶³ like that in earlier times between the gods and the asuras. O scorcher of enemies! Relatives called out to each other. Other terrified ones returned, after being summoned by their relatives. That battle was cruel and fierce.

“Arjuna and Bhimasena confounded the enemy. O lord of men! They slaughtered your large army. Your soldiers were confounded by Bhimasena and Dhananjaya. They lost their senses, like a woman under the influence of alcohol. They⁶⁴ blew on their conch shells and roared like lions. On hearing that loud noise, with Dharmaraja at the forefront, Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi attacked the king of Madra. O lord of the earth! It was terrible in form and we witnessed something that was extraordinary. Those brave ones, who were fighting in different segments, united and attacked Shalya. Madri’s sons were proud, skilled in the use of weapons and invincible in battle. Wishing to slay your soldiers, they attacked spiritedly. O bull among the Bharata lineage! At this, your forces retreated. The Pandavas, desiring victory, used arrows to mangle them in many ways. While your sons looked on, the army was slaughtered. O great king! Afflicted by the ones who wielded firm bows, they were routed in different directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great sound of lamentation arose among your warriors. There were some other great-souled kshatriyas who still desired victory in the battle,⁶⁵ and they asked them to wait. However, your soldiers were shattered and routed by the Pandavas. In the battle, they abandoned their beloved sons, brothers, grandfathers, maternal uncles, sisters’ sons, kin and relatives. Urging the horses and elephants to speed up, the warriors fled in different directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were only interested in saving themselves.”

Chapter 1228(9)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that the army was shattered, the powerful king of Madra urged his charioteer, ‘Quickly drive these extremely swift horses towards the spot where King Yudhishtira, Pandu’s son, is stationed. He is resplendent, with a white umbrella held aloft his head. O charioteer! Take me there swiftly and behold my might. The Parthas are incapable of remaining stationed before me in the battle today.’ Having been thus addressed, the charioteer of the king of Madra departed for the spot where Dharmaraja King Yudhishtira, unwavering in his aim, was. In the battle, Shalya violently descended on the large army of the Pandavas, like the shoreline holding back the rolling waves of the ocean. O venerable one! The Pandava troops clashed against Shalya and stationed themselves in that battle, like a mountain against a flood of water. On seeing that the king of Madra was stationed in the battle, the Kurus returned, preferring death over retreat. O king! They returned and positioned themselves in different arrays. An extremely terrible battle commenced and blood flowed like water.

‘ “Nakula, invincible in battle, clashed against Chitrasena.⁶⁶ Wielding colourful bows, those two clashed against each other. They were like two clouds that had arisen to the south and the north, and showered down. In the battle, they rained down arrows on each other. I could not differentiate between Pandava and his adversary. Both of them were strong and skilled in the use of weapons. They were knowledgeable about the conduct of rathas. They endeavoured to kill each other and tried to seek out each other’s weaknesses. O great king! Using a yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow, Chitrasena severed Nakula’s bow in his hand. Having severed his bow, he then used three gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone to fearlessly strike him on the forehead. He used sharp arrows to dispatch his horses to the land of the dead and then brought down his standard and charioteer with three arrows each. O king! The three arrows released from his enemy’s arm were affixed to his forehead and Nakula looked as beautiful as a mountain with three peaks. His bow was severed and he was without a chariot. The brave one grasped a sword and a shield and jumped down from his chariot, like a lion from the summit of a mountain. As he advanced on foot, arrows were showered down on him. However, Nakula was fierce in his spirit and dexterous in his valour. He received them on his shield. He was colourful in fighting and conquered his exhaustion. While all the soldiers looked on, the mighty-armed one approached Chitrasena’s chariot and climbed up. Pandava severed Chitrasena’s head, with its earrings and crown, excellent nose and large eyes, from his head. Resplendent as the sun, he fell down from his chariot. On seeing that Chitrasena had been killed, all the maharathas there roared loudly like lions and uttered words of praise.

‘ “On seeing that their brother had been killed, Karna’s maharatha sons, Sushena and Satyasena, released sharp arrows.⁶⁷ They swiftly attacked Pandava, supreme among rathas. O king! They wished to kill him, like two tigers against an elephant in the large forest. Both of them attacked the maharatha with sharp arrows. They flooded him with arrows, like clouds showering down rain. Though he was pierced with arrows all over, Pandava was cheerful. The valiant one grasped another bow and ascended his chariot. The brave one was stationed in the battle, like an enraged Yama. O king! O lord of the earth! Those two brothers used straight-tufted arrows to shatter his chariot. However, in the battle, Nakula laughed. He used four sharp and pointed arrows to slay Satyasena’s four horses. O Indra among kings! Pandava affixed a gold-tufted iron arrow that had been sharpened on stone to sever Satyasena’s bow. Satyasena grasped another bow and ascended another chariot. He and Sushena attacked Pandava. O great king! In the forefront of the battle, without any fear, Madri’s powerful son pierced each of them with two arrows. Maharatha Sushena became enraged. He laughed in the battle and used a kshurapra arrow to sever Pandava’s large bow. Nakula became senseless with rage and picked up another bow. He pierced Sushena with five arrows and severed his standard with another one. O venerable one! In the encounter, he spiritedly severed Satyasena’s bow and arm-guard. At this, the people roared. He grasped another bow that was forceful and capable of bearing a great

load. From every direction, he enveloped Pandu's descendant with arrows. Nakula, the slayer of enemy heroes, repulsed those arrows and pierced both Satyasena and Sushena with two arrows each. O Indra among kings! Each of them separately pierced him back with arrows. They next pierced his charioteer with sharp arrows. The powerful Satyasena displayed the dexterity of his hands. Using separate arrows, he severed Nakula's chariot and bow. However, the atiratha⁶⁸ remained stationed on his chariot. He picked up a spear⁶⁹ that possessed a golden handle and was sharp at the tip. It was washed in oil and was extremely bright. It was as radiant as the flickering tongue of an immensely poisonous serpent maiden. In the battle, having grasped it, he hurled it towards Satyasena. O king! In the encounter, it pierced his heart and shattered it into one hundred fragments. Deprived of his life and bereft of his senses, he fell down from the chariot onto the ground. On seeing that his brother had been slain, Sushena became senseless with rage. He swiftly showered down arrows on Pandu's descendant, who was fighting on foot. On seeing that Nakula was without a chariot, Droupadi's immensely strong son, Sutasoma, wished to save his father⁷⁰ in the battle and attacked. Nakula climbed onto Sutasoma's chariot. The foremost among the Bharata lineage looked as beautiful as a lion on a mountain. He picked up another bow and started to fight with Sushena. They showered down arrows on each other and looked dazzling. Those two supreme maharathas made great efforts to slay each other. Sushena angrily struck Pandava with three arrows and pierced Sutasoma in the arms and the chest with twenty arrows. O great king! Nakula, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became angry at this. The valiant one covered all the directions with his arrows. In the battle, he grasped an extremely energetic arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon and was pointed at the tip. With great force, he shot it towards Karna's son. O supreme among kings! While all the soldiers looked on, it severed his head from his body and it was extraordinary. O king! He was slain by the great-souled Nakula and fell down, like a large tree on a bank that is destroyed by the force of a river. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Karna's son had been killed and on beholding Nakula's valour, your soldiers were frightened and fled.

“O great king! The powerful king of Madra saw that the soldiers were running away in the battle. The brave one, the commander who was a scorcher of enemies, sought to restrain the terrified troops. O great king! He roared loudly like a lion and fiercely twanged his bow. O king! The one with the firm bow protected those on your side in the battle. The ones who were running around in different directions returned. From every direction, they surrounded the king of Madra, the great archer. O king! The large army was stationed there, wishing to fight on every side. Satyaki, Bhimasena and the Pandavas who were Madri's sons placed the modest Yudhishtira, the scorcher of enemies, at their head. Those brave ones surrounded him in the battle and roared like lions. There was the fierce sound of arrows whizzing. They let out many kinds of roars. In that way, all those on your side angrily surrounded the lord of Madra, desiring to fight again. A battle commenced and it increased the terror of cowards. Those on your side, and that of the enemy, preferred death to retreat and were without fear. O lord of the earth! It was like that between the gods and the asuras in earlier times. It extended Yama's kingdom.

“O king! Having killed the samshaptakas in the battle, the descendant of the Pandu lineage, with the ape on his banner, attacked the Kourava soldiers. The remaining Pandavas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, attacked those soldiers and shot sharp arrows. They⁷¹ were overwhelmed and confused by the Pandavas and could not distinguish the directions and the sub-directions. The Pandavas covered them with sharp arrows. In every direction, the foremost ones among the Kourava army were slaughtered and they were routed by the maharatha sons of Pandu. O king! In that way, in the battle, hundreds and thousands of Pandava soldiers were killed by your sons, who shot arrows from every direction. Those two armies slaughtered each other and were tormented. They were anxious and agitated, like rivers during the monsoon. O Indra among kings! In the great battle, those on your side were overcome by a sharp and great fear and so were the Pandavas.”

Chapter 1229(10)

‘Sanjaya said, “The soldiers slaughtered each other and were agitated. The warriors were driven away and the tuskiers shrieked. In the great battle, the foot soldiers lamented loudly. O great king! The horses ran away in many directions. For all living beings, there was terrible destruction and carnage. Many weapons descended and chariots and elephants were mangled. Those who found joy in battle were delighted. The fear of cowards increased. Wishing to kill each other, the warriors immersed themselves in this. They gave up their lives in that extremely terrible gambling match. The fierce battle extended Yama’s kingdom. The Pandavas slaughtered your soldiers with sharp arrows. In that way, your warriors killed the Pandava soldiers. The battle continued and terrified cowards. It was the morning, after the sun had arisen. Unwavering in their aim, the great-souled Pandavas protected the king⁷² and killed the enemy. They were powerful and proud strikers and did not miss their objective. They fought against your soldiers, preferring death to retreat. O Kouravya! Your forces weakened, like deer when there is a fire.

‘ “The army was weakened, like a cow submerged in mud. On seeing this, Shalya wished to rescue it and advanced towards the Pandu army. The king of Madra was angry and picked up a supreme bow. In the battle, he rushed against the Pandava assassins. O great king! The Pandavas desired victory in the encounter. They attacked the king of Madra and pierced him with sharp arrows. While Dharmaraja looked on, the immensely strong king of Madra afflicted those soldiers with hundreds of sharp arrows. O king! At that time, many different kinds of portents manifested themselves. The earth, with its mountains, moved and made a noise. From the solar disc in the firmament, meteors descended on the earth in every direction. They were fierce at the tip, like spears with handles. O lord of the earth! O king! Many deer, buffaloes and birds kept your soldiers to the right.⁷³ O lord of men! As large numbers descended on each other and attacked with all their divisions, there was a fierce encounter. The Kouravas attacked the Pandava divisions.

‘ “Spirited in his soul, Shalya attacked Yudhishtira, Kunti’s son, showering down arrows, like the one with one thousand eyes⁷⁴ pouring down rain. The immensely strong one used gold-tufted arrows that were sharpened on stone to pierce Bhimasena, all of Droupadi’s sons, the two Pandavas who were Madri’s sons, Dhrishtadyumna, Shini’s descendant and Shikhandi, striking each of them with ten arrows. He rained down arrows, like Maghavan showering rain at the end of summer. O king! Because of Shalya’s arrows, thousands of Prabhadrakas and Somakas were seen to fall down, or falling down. They were like flights of bees or locusts, driven by the wind. Shalya’s arrows descended, like lightning from clouds. Elephants, horses, foot soldiers and rathas were distressed. Because of Shalya’s arrows, they fell down, or wandered around, shrieking. They were afflicted by the lord of Madra’s anger and manliness. In the battle, he enveloped the enemy, like Yama bestirred by destiny. The immensely strong lord of Madra roared, like lightning in the clouds. The Pandava soldiers were slaughtered by Shalya, with his dexterity and his sharp arrows, and ran towards Kounteya, Ajatashatru Yudhishtira. In the battle, they were oppressed by that great shower of arrows and sought refuge with Yudhishtira. On seeing that he⁷⁵ was angrily descending with foot soldiers and horses, King Yudhishtira countered him with sharp arrows, like a crazy elephant checked with a goad. Shalya released a terrible arrow that was like a venomous serpent. It pierced the great-souled one with force and fell down on the ground. At this, Vrikodara wrathfully pierced him with seven arrows, Sahadeva with five and Nakula with ten arrows. Droupadi’s sons showered down arrows on Artayani, the immensely fortunate slayer of enemies, like clouds pouring down on a mountain. On seeing that Shalya was assailed from every side by the Parthas, Kritavarma and Kripa attacked angrily. Uluka attacked like a bird⁷⁶ and so did Shakuni Soubala. Maharatha Ashvatthama smiled gently. All your sons protected Shalya in the battle.

‘ “Kritavarma used three arrows with iron heads to pierce Bhimasena. Assuming an angry form, he repulsed him with a great shower of arrows. Kripa angrily afflicted Dhrishtadyumna with a shower of arrows. Shakuni attacked Droupadi’s son and Drona’s son attacked the twins. Duryodhana, best of warriors, was fierce in his energy and strong. In the battle, he advanced against Keshava and Arjuna and attacked them with arrows. There were hundreds of duels between those on your side and the enemy at various spots. O lord of the earth! It was fierce in form and wonderful. In the battle, Bhoja slew Bhima’s brown horses. When the horses were slain, Pandu’s descendant descended from his chariot and fought with a club in his hand, like Yama with an upraised staff. In his sight, the king of Madra slew Sahadeva’s horses. At this, Sahadeva killed Shalya’s son with his sword. The preceptor, Goutama, again fought with Dhrishtadyumna. Both of them were fearless and made efforts against each other. The preceptor’s son⁷⁷ wasn’t very angry. He smiled and pierced each of Droupadi’s brave sons with ten arrows. O king! Shalya angrily slaughtered the Somakas and the Pandavas. He again afflicted Yudhishtira with sharp arrows.

‘ “The valiant Bhima was angry in the battle and bit his lower lips in rage. To destroy him,⁷⁸ he hurled a club. It was like Yama’s staff and was raised, like the night of destruction. It was capable of destroying the lives of elephants, horses and men. It was bound in golden cloth and blazed like a meteor. It was like the vajra to the touch and was completely made out of iron. It was as fierce as a she-serpent and was slung in a noose. It was smeared with sandalwood paste and unguents, like a desired woman. It was smeared with fat and marrow and it was like Yama’s tongue. There were bells attached to it and it was like Vasava’s vajra. It was smeared with the fat of elephants and it was like a snake that had cast off its skin. It frightened the enemy soldiers and delighted the soldiers on one’s own side. It was famous in the world of men and was capable of shattering the summit of a mountain. It was one with which powerful Kounteya had challenged the lord of Alaka, Maheshvara’s friend, in his abode in Kailasa.⁷⁹ For the sake of the *mandara* flower, the immensely strong one had proudly killed many guhyakas, who used their powers of maya, in the abode of the lord of the riches. To ensure Droupadi’s pleasure, he had countered many. It⁸⁰ was famous as the vajra and possessing eight sides, it was embellished with diamonds, gems and jewels. Raising it, the mighty-armed one attacked Shalya in the battle. He was skilled in fighting and grasped that fearful club. He brought down Shalya’s four horses, which were extremely fast. At this, Shalya became angry in the battle. He hurled a javelin towards his broad chest and roared. It pierced the brave one’s armour and penetrated. However, Vrikodara wasn’t frightened. He plucked the javelin out and pierced the king of Madra’s charioteer in the heart with it. With the armour penetrated, he was distressed in his mind and began to vomit blood. He fell downwards and the king of Madra looked on, in sorrow. On seeing that his own deed had been countered, Shalya wondered in his mind. Serene in his soul, he grasped a club and glanced towards his opponent. On beholding his deed in the battle, the Parthas were delighted in their minds and honoured Bhimasena, the performer of terrible and unblemished deeds.” ’

Chapter 1230(11)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Shalya saw that his charioteer had been killed. He quickly picked up a club that was completely made out of iron and stood immobile, like a mountain. He was like the blazing fire of destruction, or like Yama with a noose in his hand. He was like the summit of Kailasa, or Vasava with the vajra. He was like the tawny-eyed one⁸¹ with a trident, or like a crazy elephant in the forest. Bhima grasped a mighty club and swiftly dashed towards him. At that time, thousands of conch shells and trumpets blared. The brave ones roared like lions and this increased one’s delight. All the warriors saw them fight against each other, like giant elephants. Those on your side, and on the side of the enemy, uttered words of praise. With the exception of the lord of Madra, Rama⁸² and the descendant of the Yadu lineage, who else was capable of withstanding Bhimasena’s force in an encounter? With the exception of the great-souled lord of Madra and the force of his club, which other warrior was capable of fighting against Vrikodara? They roared like bulls and circled each other. With clubs in their hands, the king of Madra and Vrikodara wheeled around each other. In the circles that they executed, or in the way they roamed around with the clubs, there was nothing to differentiate those two lions among men in the encounter. Shalya’s club was made of gold. It was radiant and sparkling and increased one’s terror. It was tied in cloth that looked like a net of fire. The great-souled Bhima roamed around in circles with a radiant club that looked like clouds tinged with lightning. O king! The king of Madra struck Bhima’s club with his club and this generated blazing sparks of fire. In that way, Bhima struck Shalya’s club with his club and this released a shower of flames. It was extraordinary. They were like giant elephants with tusks, or gigantic bulls with horns. They struck each other with the tips of their clubs, wishing to kill each other. Struck by the clubs, in a short while, blood began to flow from their bodies. They were beautiful to behold, like two flowering kimshukas. Bhimsena was struck on the right and the left by the king of Madra’s club. However, the mighty-armed one was immobile, like a mountain. O king! In that fashion, Shalya was repeatedly struck by the force of Bhima’s club. But he did not waver, like a mountain struck by a tusk. The sounds generated by those two lions among men could be heard in all the directions. The clubs descended and struck, with a sound like that of the vajra. Those two immensely valorous ones stopped for a while and then again attacked with their clubs. They again roamed around, executing circular motions. Raising those iron staffs, they advanced eight steps forward and struck each other, performing a superhuman deed. They roamed around, executing circular motions and seeking to strike each other. Those accomplished ones exhibited great deeds. They raised those terrible clubs, which were like the summits of mountains. They struck each other, like mountains at the time of an earthquake. They were severely struck from the force of each other’s clubs. Both of those brave ones simultaneously fell down, like Indra’s standards. Sounds of lamenation arose from the brave ones in both armies. They were severely struck in their inner organs and lost their senses. Shalya, bull among the Madras, was severely struck by the club and Kripa used his chariot to swiftly bear him away from the field of battle. Bhimasena was also weakened and senseless. However, he raised himself in an instant. With the club in his hand, he challenged the king of Madra.

‘ “The brave ones on your side raised many kinds of weapons. To the sound of diverse kinds of musical instruments, they fought with the Pandu soldiers. They held weapons in their hands and made a great noise. O great king! With Duryodhana at the forefront, they attacked. On seeing those soldiers, the sons of Pandu roared like lions and advanced, wishing to kill Duryodhana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that they were swiftly descending, your son severely pierced Chekitana⁸³ in the heart with a javelin. Struck thus by your son, he fell down from his chariot. With blood flowing from his body, he was submerged in great darkness. On seeing that Chekitana had been killed, the maharatha Pandavas engaged and showered down arrows on the different divisions.

O great king! The Pandavas could be seen to roam around and attacked your soldiers from every direction, desiring victory. With the king of Madra at the forefront, Kripa, Kritavarma and the immensely strong Soubala fought with Dharmaraja. O great king! Duryodhana fought with Dhrishtadyumna, who was the slayer of Bharadvaja's son and great in his valour and bravery. O king! Goaded by your son, with Drona's son at their head, three thousand rathas on your side fought Vijaya.

“O king! Setting their minds on victory and ready to give up their lives, those on your side penetrated, like swans into a large lake. As they sought to kill each other, an extremely terrible battle raged on. They wished to kill each other and were delighted at being able to strike each other. O king! The battle that led to the destruction of the best among brave ones continued. The earth was covered with a terrible dust that arose in the air. We could ascertain who the Pandavas were, only when they called out to each other. We fought fearlessly. O tiger among men! That dust was pacified by the blood. When the dust was pacified, the directions could clearly be seen. The fearful battle, terrible in form, continued between those on your side and the enemy. No one wished to retreat. With Brahma's world as the supreme objective, they wished for victory in the battle. Wishing to go to heaven, those brave men fought an excellent war. Setting their minds on the tasks of their masters, they wished to repay the debts of their masters. With their minds set on heaven, they fought and clashed against each other. The maharathas released many different kinds of weapons. They roared at each other and struck each other. ‘Strike. Pierce. Seize. Hit. Sever.’ These were the words that were heard amongst the armies on your side and that of the enemy.

“O great king! Wishing to kill maharatha Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, Shalya pierced him with sharp arrows. O great king! However, Partha knew about the inner organs. He smiled and struck him in the inner organs with fourteen iron arrows. The immensely illustrious one wished to kill Pandava and repulsed him with arrows. In the battle, he angrily pierced him with many arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. O great king! While all the soldiers looked on, he again struck Yudhishtira with an arrow with a drooping tuft. Dharmaraja became extremely angry. The immensely illustrious one pierced the king of Madra with sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. The maharatha then struck Chandrasena with seventy arrows, his charioteer with nine and Drumasena with sixty-four.⁸⁴ O king! When the protectors of his chariot wheels were slain by the great-minded Pandava, Shalya killed twenty-five Chedis. He pierced Satyaki with twenty-five sharp arrows, Bhimasena with five and Madri's two sons with one hundred. O supreme among kings! While he was thus roaming around in the battle, Partha shot sharp arrows at him and these were like venomous serpents. In the battle, with a broad-headed arrow, Yudhishtira, Kunti's son, brought down the tip of his adversary's standard from his chariot, while he looked on. Severed by the great-souled son of Pandu, the standard was seen to fall down, like the summit of a mountain. On seeing that his standard had been brought down and on seeing Pandava stationed, the king of Madra angrily showered down arrows. Shalya showered down arrows, like Parjanya pouring down rain. The bull among the kshatriya lineage, immeasurable in his soul, showered down arrows on the kshatriyas—Satyaki, Bhimasena and the two Pandavas who were the sons of Madri. He pierced each of them with five arrows and afflicted Yudhishtira. O great king! We saw a net of arrows spread over Pandava's chest, like a mass of clouds that had risen. In the battle, maharatha Shalya angrily used straight-tufted arrows to envelop the directions and the sub-directions. King Yudhishtira was afflicted by that net of arrows. He seemed to have been deprived of his valour, like Jambha by the slayer of Vritra.”⁸⁵

Chapter 1231(12)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! When Dharmaraja was thus afflicted by the king of Madra, Satyaki, Bhimasena and the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons surrounded Shalya with chariots and oppressed him in the battle. On seeing that the single-handed one was afflicted by the maharathas, great sounds of praise arose from the delighted siddhas.⁸⁶ The assembled sages also said that it was extraordinary. Shalya was like a dart in his valour⁸⁷ and in the battle, Bhimsena pierced him with an arrow. He then pierced him again with seven. Satyaki wished to rescue Dharma’s son. He covered the lord of Madra with hundreds of arrows and roared like a lion. Nakula pierced him with five arrows. Sahadeva pierced him with seven and then swiftly pierced him again with another seven. While he endeavoured in the battle, the brave one was afflicted by those maharathas. He brandished his terrible bow, which was extremely forceful and capable of bearing a great load. O venerable one! Shalya pierced Satyaki with twenty-five arrows, Bhimasena with seventy-three and Nakula with seven. In the battle, he used broad-headed arrows to sever the archer Sahadeva’s bow, with an arrow affixed to it, and pierced him with seventy-three arrows. Sahadeva strung another bow. In the encounter, he struck his greatly radiant maternal uncle with five arrows that were like virulent serpents and blazed like the fire. In the battle, extremely enraged, he struck his charioteer with arrows with drooping tufts and pierced him⁸⁸ again with three arrows. Bhimasena struck Shalya in his body with seventy-three arrows, Satyaki with nine and Dharmaraja with sixty. O great king! Shalya was pierced by those maharathas. Blood began to flow from his body, like red chalk from a mountain. O king! He spiritedly struck those great archers with five arrows each and it was wonderful. O venerable one! He then used another broad-headed arrow to sever the bow of Dharma’s son in the battle. At this, Dharma’s maharatha son picked up and strung another bow and shrouded Shalya, his horses, his charioteer, his standard and his chariot with arrows. He was thus enveloped in the encounter by the arrows of Dharma’s son. He pierced Yudhishtira with ten sharp arrows. Satyaki was angry that Dharma’s son was thus afflicted by arrows. He enveloped the brave lord of Madra with torrents of arrows. In Bhimasena’s presence, he then used a kshurapra arrow to slice down Satyaki’s large bow and struck him with three arrows. O great king! Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, became wrathful. He hurled an extremely expensive spear with a golden handle. Bhimasena shot an iron arrow that was like a flaming serpent. In the battle, Nakula hurled a javelin and Sahadeva a sparkling club. Dharmaraja used a shataghni. All of them wished to kill Shalya in the battle.

‘ “They were swiftly released from the arms of those five.⁸⁹ Shalya severed the spear Satyaki had hurled with a broad-headed arrow. Bhima had shot an arrow decorated with gold. In the battle, the powerful one displayed the dexterity of his hands and severed it into two fragments. Nakula had hurled a fearful javelin with a golden handle and Sahadeva a club. He countered these with torrents of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While the sons of Pandu looked on, he used a couple of arrows to sever the king’s shataghni and roared like a lion. Shini’s descendant could not tolerate that the enemy should be victorious in the battle. Senseless with rage, Satyaki picked up another bow. With two arrows, he pierced the lord of Madra and used another three to pierce his charioteer. O great king! Shalya became extremely angry. He severely pierced each of them with ten arrows, like a giant elephant being struck with a goad. In the encounter, those maharathas were repulsed by the king of Madra. Those slayers of enemies were incapable of remaining before him. King Duryodhana witnessed Shalya’s valour and thought that the Pandavas, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas had been killed. O king! The mighty-armed and powerful Bhimasena made up his mind to give up his life and fought with the lord of Madra. Nakula, Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki surrounded Shalya and showered down arrows on him. The powerful king of Madra was surrounded by those four Pandava maharathas and great archers. However, he fought with them. O king! In the great battle,

Dharmaraja used a kshurapra arrow to swiftly slay the one who was guarding the chariot wheel of the king of Madra.⁹⁰ The king of Madra was extremely strong and enveloped the soldiers with arrows. O king! On seeing that the soldiers were enveloped in that battle, Dharmaraja Yudhisthira began to think. 'The great words that were spoken by Madhava have really come true. I hope that the king will not angrily destroy my army in the battle.' O Pandu's elder brother! With their chariots, elephants and horses, the Pandavas approached the lord of Madra and afflicted him from every direction. They used many diverse kinds of weapons. A shower of arrows arose. O king! In the battle, he drove these away, like clouds dispelled by the wind. Shalya poured down gold-tufted arrows. We beheld that shower of arrows, like locusts descending. The king of Madra released those arrows in the field of battle. We saw them descend, like a flight of locusts. Gold-decorated arrows were shot from the king of Madra's bow. O lord of men! They did not leave a single bit of space in the sky. Nothing could be discerned there, the Pandavas, nor those on our side. He created a great darkness because of those arrows and there was great fear. The powerful king of Madra used his dexterity to shower down arrows. The Pandava army was seen to be agitated there, like the ocean. The gods, the gandharvas and the danavas were overcome by great wonder. O venerable one! Everyone who strove against him was afflicted by those arrows. He enveloped Dharmaraja and roared repeatedly, like a lion. The Pandava maharathas were shrouded by him in that battle. In the encounter, no one was capable of standing up to the maharatha and fighting against him. But those that had Dharmaraja at their head or the rathas who had Bhimasena at the forefront, did not retreat in the battle before the brave Shalya, the ornament of a battle." '

Chapter 1232(13)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the battle, Drona’s son pierced Arjuna with many iron arrows and so did his followers, the brave maharathas from Trigarta. In the encounter, he pierced Drona’s son with three arrows sharpened on stone. Dhananjaya pierced the other great archers with two arrows each. The mighty-armed one showered down arrows again. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were impaled with arrows, like thorns. But though they were slaughtered by those sharp arrows, they did not abandon Partha in that battle. With Drona’s son at the forefront, in the battle, the maharathas surrounded Arjuna with an array of chariots and fought against him. O king! They shot arrows decorated with gold. They swiftly covered the seat of Arjuna’s chariot. The two Krishnas were bulls among all archers. They were great archers. On seeing that their limbs were covered with arrows, the ones who found delight in battle rejoiced.⁹¹ O lord! The pole, wheels, staff, harnesses and yoke of the chariot were completely covered with arrows and looked beautiful. O king! The likes of what those on your side did to Partha had not been seen earlier, nor heard of. Covered by those sharp arrows with colourful tufts, the chariot was dazzling. It was as if a celestial vehicle had come down on earth and was blazing because of a hundred torches. O great king! Arjuna used arrows with straight tufts to repel those soldiers, like a cloud pouring down rain on a mountain. In the battle, they were slaughtered by Partha’s arrows, which were marked with his name. They thought that the entire field was full of many Parthas. Partha was like a fire. The arrows were flames. The great twang of the bow was the wind that fanned it. The soldiers on your side were the kindling. It was extraordinary. Wheels and yokes fell down on the ground, together with quivers, flags, standards and chariots. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were arrows, housings, trivenus, wheels, yokes and goads in every direction. Heads fell down, wearing earrings and headdresses. O great king! Arms and shoulders were strewn around everywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Along the path of Partha’s chariot, umbrellas, whisks, crowns and reins could be seen. Because of the mire created by flesh and blood, the earth became impassable. O best of the Bharata lineage! It looked like Rudra’s sporting ground. This generated fear among cowards and increased the delight of brave ones. O scorcher of enemies! Partha destroyed two thousand chariots in that encounter, together with their bumpers. He was like a flame without smoke. O king! Maharatha Partha was seen there, like the smokeless and illustrious Agni, consuming all mobile and immobile objects.

‘ “On witnessing Pandava’s valour in the battle, Drona’s son countered Pandava, on a chariot with many flags. Those two tigers among men were the best of archers and were borne on white horses. They swiftly clashed against each other, wishing to kill each other. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The extremely terrible shower of arrows was like rain pouring down from clouds. They rivalled each other with their straight-tufted arrows. Like two bulls with horns, they mangled each other in that encounter. O great king! The battle between them lasted for a long time. There was a great and terrible clash of weapons there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s son pierced Arjuna with twelve gold-tufted arrows that were extremely energetic and Vasudeva with ten. In the great battle, Bibhatsu showed respect towards his preceptor’s son for a short while. Then he laughed and stretched his Gandiva bow. Maharatha Savyasachi deprived him of his horses, charioteer and chariot and gently pierced him with three arrows. Though his horses had been slain, Drona’s son remained stationed on that chariot. He smiled and hurled a club that was like a bludgeon towards Pandu’s son. It was bound in golden cloth and descended with great violence. But the brave Partha, the destroyer of enemies, shattered it into seven fragments. On seeing that the club had been shattered, Drona’s son became supremely angry. He picked up a terrible bludgeon that was like the summit of a king of mountains. Drona’s son was skilled in fighting and hurled this towards Partha. Pandava saw that the bludgeon had been angrily flung towards him. Arjuna used five supreme arrows to swiftly slice it down. In the great battle, shattered by Partha’s arrows, it fell down on the ground. O descendant of

the Bharata lineage! That sound shattered the minds of the kings. Pandava then pierced Drona's son with three supreme weapons. The extremely strong one was severely and powerfully struck by Partha. However, Drona's son resorted to his manliness and wasn't frightened.

‘ “O king! While all the kshatriyas looked on, Bharadvaja's maharatha son covered Sudharma with a storm of arrows. At this, the Panchala maharatha Suratha attacked Drona's son on his chariot, making a sound like the roaring of clouds. He brandished his supreme bow, which was firm and was capable of bearing all loads. He shot flaming arrows that were like venomous serpents. In the battle, when maharatha Suratha angrily descended, Drona's son became wrathful, like a snake that has been struck with a staff. His brows furrowed into three lines and he licked the corners of his mouth. He glanced at Suratha in rage and rubbed his bowstring. He shot a sharp iron arrow that was like Yama's staff. It powerfully pierced and shattered his heart and then penetrated the ground, like Shakra's unleashed vajra. Slain by the iron arrow, he fell down on the ground. It was as if an extremely large mountain top had been shattered by thunder. When that brave one was killed, Drona's powerful son, supreme among rathas, swiftly climbed onto his chariot.⁹² O great king! Drona's son was invincible in battle. Equipped and supported by the samshaptakas in the encounter, he fought with Arjuna. There was a great battle between Arjuna and the enemy. It extended Yama's kingdom. The sun reached midday. The valour that they exhibited was wonderful to see. Arjuna single-handedly fought with many enemies at the same time. The great clash between Arjuna and the enemy was like that in earlier times, between Shatakratu and the daitya soldiers.” ’

Chapter 1233(14)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Duryodhana and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna fought a great battle, with innumerable arrows and javelins. O great king! They shot thousands of torrents of arrows. It was like rain pouring down from clouds during the monsoon. The king pierced Parshata with five arrows that were made out of iron. He then again pierced the fierce one who had killed Drona with seven arrows. In the encounter, Dhrishtadyumna was powerful and firm in his valour. He struck Duryodhana with seventy arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king was afflicted, his brothers surrounded Parshata with a large army. O king! Severely surrounded by those brave atirathas from all sides, he roamed around in the battle, exhibiting the dexterity of his hands. Shikhandi, supported by the Prabhadrakas, fought with the maharatha archers, Kritavarma and Goutama. O lord of the earth! There was a great battle there, fierce in form. They were ready to give up their lives in the battle and offered their lives as stakes in the gambling match.

‘ “Shalya showered down arrows in every direction. He afflicted the Pandavas, including Satyaki and Vrikodara. O Indra among kings! Using his valour and strength, he also fought in that encounter with the twins, who were like Yama in their prowess. When the Pandavas were afflicted by Shalya’s arrows in the great battle, those maharathas could not find a protector. On seeing that Dharmaraja was oppressed, the brave Nakula, Madri’s son, powerfully attacked his maternal uncle. Nakula, the destroyer of enemy heroes, enveloped Shalya in that battle. He smiled and struck him between the breasts with ten arrows. These arrows were completely made out of iron and had been polished by artisans. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. They were propelled from the implement of the bow. Shalya was struck by his sister’s great-souled son and pierced Nakula with straight-flying arrows. At this, King Yudhishtira, Bhimasena, Satyaki and Madri’s son, Sahadeva, attacked the king of Madra. They descended swiftly and the directions and the sub-directions resounded with the roar of their chariots. The earth trembled. The conqueror of enemies, the commander, received them in the battle. He pierced Yudhishtira with three arrows, Bhimasena with seven, Satyaki with one hundred and Sahadeva with three arrows. O venerable one! The lord of Madra used a kshurapra arrow to slice down the great-souled Nakula’s bow, with an arrow affixed to it. When his bow was shattered and destroyed by Shalya’s arrows, Madri’s maharatha son quickly picked up another bow and covered the king of Madra’s chariot with arrows. O venerable one! Both Yudhishtira and Sahadeva pierced the lord of Madra in the chest with ten arrows each. Bhimasena attacked the king of Madra and struck him with sixty arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. Satyaki did the same with nine arrows. The king of Madra angrily struck Satyaki with nine arrows and pierced him again with seventy arrows with drooping tufts. O venerable one! He struck down the bow in his⁹³ hand, with an arrow affixed to it and, in the battle, dispatched his four horses to the land of the dead. Satyaki was deprived of his chariot by the immensely strong king of Madra, who struck him with one hundred arrows from every direction. O Kouravya! He then pierced Madri’s angry sons, Pandava Bhimasena and Yudhishtira with ten arrows each. We witnessed the king of Madra’s extraordinary manliness. Even though they were together, the Parthas could not counter him in the battle.

‘ “Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, climbed onto another chariot. He saw that the Pandavas were afflicted and had come under the king of Madra’s subjugation. The powerful one attacked the lord of Madra with force. On seeing that he was descending on his chariot, Shalya, the ornament of an assembly, countered him on his chariot, like a crazy elephant against another crazy elephant. The clash that ensued was tumultuous and wonderful to behold. The brave Satyaki and the lord of Madra fought, like the ancient battle between Shambara and the kind of the immortals. On seeing that the king of Madra was stationed in the battle, Satyaki asked him to wait and pierced him with ten arrows. The king of Madra was grievously pierced by the great-souled one. He pierced Satyaki back with sharp arrows that were colourfully tufted. The Parthas, great archers, saw that the king was assailed by Satvata.

Wishing to kill their maternal uncle, they quickly attacked him on their chariots. In that supreme and tumultuous encounter, blood flowed like water. The brave ones fought and roared like lions. O great king! They mangled each other. In the encounter, they shot arrows and roared like lions. The earth was covered with thousands of torrents of arrows. The firmament was also suddenly covered with arrows. In every direction, those arrows created a great darkness. The arrows shot by the great-souled ones created a shadow, like that of clouds. O king! The arrows released there were like snakes that had cast off their skins. They were gold-tufted and made the directions blaze. Shalya, the destroyer of enemies, was supreme and wonderful. In the battle, he single-handedly fought against many brave ones. Arrows, shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks, were released from the king of Madra's arms. That terrible torrent of arrows descended and covered the earth. O king! Shalya's chariot roamed around in the great battle there. We saw him, like Shakra in earlier times, when the asuras were being destroyed.” ’

Chapter 1234(15)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord! Your soldiers placed the king of Madra at their head. In that great battle, they again powerfully attacked the Parthas. Though they were afflicted, all those on your side were intoxicated at the prospect of war. In a short while, they agitated the Parthas in many ways. While Krishna and Partha looked on, the Pandavas were slaughtered by the Kurus and were incapable of remaining stationed there, though they were restrained by Bhima. Dhananjaya became angry at this. He covered Kripa and his followers and Kritavarma with a storm of arrows. Sahadeva countered Shakuni and his soldiers. Stationed on a flank, Nakula glanced at the king of Madra. Droupadi’s sons repeatedly repulsed many kings. Panchala Shikhandi countered Drona’s son. With the club in his hand, Bhimasena held back the kings. Kunti’s son, Yudhishtira, countered Shalya and his soldiers. As those on your side and the enemy engaged, refusing to retreat from the battle, duels commenced here and there.

‘ “In the great battle, we witnessed Shalya’s supreme deed. He single-handedly fought against all the soldiers on the Pandava side. We saw Shalya stationed near Yudhishtira in the battle, like the planet Saturn near the moon. He afflicted the king with arrows that were like venomous serpents. He again attacked Bhima and covered him with showers of arrows. On witnessing the lightness of his hands and his skill in the use of weapons, the soldiers on your side and those on the side of the enemy, applauded him. The Pandavas were severely oppressed and wounded by Shalya. Ignoring Yudhishtira’s cries, they abandoned the field of battle. The Pandava soldiers were slaughtered by the king of Madra. Dharmaraja Yudhishtira was overcome with intolerance. He resorted to his manliness and oppressed the king of Madra. The maharatha made up his mind to win or be killed. He summoned all his brothers and Krishna Madhava and said, ‘Bhishma, Drona, Karna and all the other brave kings fought in the battle for the sake of the Kouravas and went to their death. All of you have resorted to your manliness and used your enterprise to take care of your shares.⁹⁴ There is a single share that is left. Maharatha Shalya is mine. I wish to fight against the lord of Madra and defeat him today. I will tell all of you what is in my mind now. Madravati’s⁹⁵ brave sons will guard my chariot wheels. They are revered as brave ones in battle and cannot be vanquished by Vasava. They will place the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront and virtuously fight against their maternal uncle. They deserve honour and are devoted to the truth. They will fight back, for my sake. O fortunate ones! Either Shalya will be killed by me in the battle, or I will be killed by him. O brave ones in the world! Listen to my words. I am telling you truthfully. O kings! I will resort to the dharma of kshatriyas and fight against my maternal uncle today. I have determined that I will be victorious, or be defeated. Therefore, equip me with a larger store of weapons and all the implements. Let the chariot be quickly equipped for the battle, in accordance with the decrees of the sacred texts. Let Shini’s descendant guard my right wheel and Dhrishtadyumna the left. Let Partha Dhananjaya protect my rear today. Let Bhima, supreme among wielders of weapons, advance in front of me today. In the great battle, I will then be superior to Shalya and will drive him away.’ Having been thus addressed by the king, all the well-wishers did as they had been asked to. O king! The soldiers were again filled with delight. This was especially true of the Panchalas, the Somakas and the Matsyas. Having taken the pledge, Dharmaraja set out to accomplish it in the battle.

‘ “Hundreds of conch shells, trumpets and drums were sounded by the Panchalas and they roared like lions. Spiritedly and angrily, they rushed towards the king of Madra. The bulls among the Kurus were also filled with great delight and roared. There was the noise of bells on elephants and the blare of conch shells. The earth resounded with the great sounds of trumpets. Your son and the valiant king of Madra received them. They were like large mountains, receiving rain pouring down from giant clouds. Shalya prided himself in battle and showered down arrows on Dharmaraja, the scorcher of enemies, like Maghavan pouring down rain. The great-minded king of the Kurus also grasped a beautiful bow and displayed the diverse kinds of learning that he had been taught by

Drona. He showered down arrows, colourful, dexterous and skilled. As he roamed around in the battle, no weakness could be discerned in him. They wounded each other with many kinds of arrows. In the battle, those valorous ones were like tigers fighting over a piece of meat. Bhima clashed against your son, who found delight in a battle. In every direction, Shakuni and the other brave ones received Panchala,⁹⁶ Satyaki and the Pandavas who were the sons of Madri. They desired victory and fought tumultuously again. O king! The enemy and those on your side fought because of your evil policy.

‘ “In the battle, Duryodhana used an arrow with a drooping tuft to sever Bhima’s gold-decorated standard. It was large and beautiful to see, adorned with nets of bells. Having brought Bhimasena’s standard down, he roared like a lion. With a razor-sharp arrow, pointed at the tip, the lord of men then severed his⁹⁷ colourful bow, which was like the trunk of a king of elephants. When his bow was severed, the spirited one resorted to his prowess and hurled a javelin⁹⁸ towards your son. It pierced his chest and made him sink down on his chariot. When he was bereft of his senses, Vrikodara again used a kshurapra arrow to sever his charioteer’s head from his body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When the charioteer was slain, the horses dragged the chariot away in different directions and loud sounds of lamentation arose. For the sake of rescuing your son, Drona’s maharatha son, Kripa and Kri-tavarma followed. The soldiers were agitated and the followers were terrified. The wielder of Gandiva used his bow and arrows to slaughter them.

‘ “Yudhishtira intolerantly attacked the lord of Madra. He himself controlled his horses, which were as swift as thought and as white as ivory. When we saw Kunti’s son, Yudhishtira, it was extraordinary. He was mild and controlled earlier, but assumed a fearful form. Kounteya dilated his eyes in rage and trembled in anger. He mangled hundreds and thousands of warriors with his arrows. Wherever the soldiers fought back, the eldest Pandava was there. O king! He brought them down with his arrows, like the best of mountains shattered by thunder. Many horses, charioteers, standards, chariots and rathas were brought down. He sported with them, like a violent wind toying with clouds. In the battle, he angrily brought down thousands of horse riders, horses and foot soldiers, like an enraged Rudra among animals. With showers of arrows shot in every direction, he emptied the field of battle of warriors. He attacked Shalya, the lord of Madra, and asked him to wait. On witnessing him roam around in the battle, terrible in his deeds, all those on your side were terrified. However, Shalya countered him. Extremely enraged, those two blew on their conch shells. They challenged each other and censured each other. Shalya countered Yudhishtira with a shower of arrows. Kounteya also countered the king of Madra with a shower of arrows. O king! In that battle, those two brave ones, the king of Madra and Yudhishtira, were seen to be covered with blood, because of the arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. They were as beautiful as flowering shalmali or kimshuka trees in the forest. Those great-souled ones blazed. They were ready to give up their lives and were unassailable in battle. On seeing them, none of the soldiers knew which one would be victorious, whether Partha would kill the lord of Madra and enjoy the earth today, or whether Shalya would kill Pandava and give the earth to Duryodhana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The warriors there could not make up their minds on this. As he fought, Dharma-raja kept all of them to his right.⁹⁹ Shalya swiftly shot one hundred arrows towards Yudhishtira. He severed his bow with an arrow that was sharp at the tip. He picked up another bow and piercing Shalya with three hundred arrows, severed his bow with a razor-sharp arrow. He then slew his four horses with arrows with drooping tufts. With two arrows that were sharp at the tips, he killed the two parshni charioteers. Stationed in front of him, he used a blazing, yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever his standard. O scorcher of enemies! At this, that army of Duryodhana’s scattered. Drona’s son rushed towards the king of Madra and picking him up on his chariot, swiftly fled. After they had travelled a short distance, they heard Yudhishtira roar. The lord of Madra stopped and ascended another chariot. It sparkled and had been duly prepared. It roared like the clouds. It had been equipped with all the implements and made the body hair of enemies stand up.” ’

Chapter 1235(16)

‘Sanjaya said, “The lord of Madra picked up another bow that was more powerful and capable of bearing a greater load. He pierced Yudhishtira and roared like a lion. He showered down arrows, like Parjanya pouring down rain. The bull among the kshatriyas, immeasurable in his soul, showered arrows on the kshatriyas. He pierced Satyaki with ten arrows and Bhimasena with three. He pierced Sahadeva with three and afflicted Yudhishtira. He afflicted all the other great archers, with their horses, chariots and elephants. The supreme among rathas destroyed elephants and elephant riders, horses and horse riders and chariots and rathas. He severed arms, weapons and flags. He scattered the earth with warriors, like a sacrificial altar strewn with *kusha* grass. He slaughtered the soldiers, like Death, the Destroyer. The Pandus, Panchalas and Somakas angrily surrounded him. Bhimasena, Shini’s grandson and Madri’s sons, foremost among men, challenged him and clashed against him in turn, while he was fighting with the king, terrible in his strength. Those brave Indras among men, supreme among warriors, reached the lord of Madra. In the battle, those brave ones among men struck him with arrows that were fierce and powerful. The king was protected by Bhimasena, Madri’s sons and Madhava. Dharma’s son struck the lord of Madra between the breasts with fierce and powerful arrows. Those on your side saw that the lord of Madra was afflicted by arrows in the battle. On the instructions of Duryodhana, those supreme ones surrounded him with an array of chariots from all sides. In the encounter, the lord of Madra speedily pierced Yudhishtira with seven arrows. O king! In the tumultuous battle, the great-souled Partha pierced him with nine arrows. Those two maharathas, the lord of Madra and Yudhishtira, drew their bows back up to their ears and covered each other with arrows that had been washed in oil. The two maharathas swiftly glanced towards each other in the battle. Those two supreme among kings were immensely strong. They attacked the enemy and severely pierced each other. A great sound arose because of the twanging of bows and the slapping of palms. It was like the roar of the great Indra’s vajra. Those two brave and great-souled ones, the lord of Madra and Pandu, showered down large numbers of arrows on each other. They circled around, like young tigers in a great forest in search of meat. They insolently gored each other, like the best of elephants using their tusks. The great-souled lord of Madra struck the brave Yudhishtira, whose valour was terrible, in the chest with a powerful arrow that was like the sun or the fire in its splendour. O king! Yudhishtira, the bull among the Kuru lineage, was grievously struck by that well-aimed arrow. He struck the great-souled lord of Madra back and was delighted. In a short instant, the Indra among kings regained his senses. His eyes were red with rage. He was like the one with one thousand eyes¹⁰⁰ in his prowess. He swiftly struck Partha with one hundred arrows. Dharma’s great-souled son wrathfully struck Shalya with nine arrows. These pierced his golden armour and he struck him again with another six arrows. The lord of Madra was delighted at this. He stretched his bow and released two razor-sharp arrows towards the king, severing the bow of the bull among the Kuru lineage. The great-souled king picked up another bow in that encounter, one that was more terrible. From every direction, he pierced Shalya with sharp arrows that were pointed at the tip, like the great Indra against Namuchi. Shalya used nine arrows to sever the golden armour of Bhima and King Yudhishtira and then struck the great-souled ones in their arms. He then used another razor-sharp and flaming arrow, as resplendent as the sun, to sever the king’s bow.

‘ “At this, Kripa used six arrows to slay his¹⁰¹ charioteer, who fell down in front of him. The lord of Madra used his arrows to slay Yudhishtira’s four horses. Having slain the horses, the great-souled one began to destroy the warriors who were on the side of the king, Dharma’s son. When the king was reduced to this state, the great-souled Bhimasena quickly attacked the king of Madra and severed his bow with a powerful arrow. He then severely pierced that Indra among men with two arrows. With another arrow, he severed the head of his charioteer from his armoured body. Extremely enraged, Bhimasena swiftly killed his four horses. The foremost among all

archers¹⁰² was single-handedly roaming around in that field of battle, with great force. Bhima enveloped him with one hundred arrows and so did Madri's son, Sahadeva. On seeing that he was confounded by these arrows, Bhima severed Shalya's armour with his arrows. When his armour was severed by Bhimasena, the lord of Madra picked up a shield that was marked with the signs of one thousand stars. The great-souled one jumped down from his chariot. Grasping a sword, he dashed towards Kunti's son. Terrible in his strength, he destroyed Nakula's chariot and advanced towards Yudhishtira. He angrily descended on the king, like an advancing Yama. Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's sons, Shikhandi and Shini's descendant swiftly advanced to the rescue. The great-souled Bhima used ten arrows to sever his unmatched shield. He used a broad-headed arrow to sever the sword in his hand and roared in the midst of the soldiers. On witnessing Bhima's deed, the foremost of the rathas on the Pandava side were delighted. They roared in applause and blew on conch shells that were as white as the moon. At that terrible sound, the soldiers on your side were tormented and distressed. They were covered in sweat and their limbs were covered in blood. They were miserable and lost all sense of enterprise.

‘“However, the lord of Madra violently attacked the foremost of Pandava warriors, with Bhima at their head. He swiftly advanced against Yudhishtira, like a lion advancing in search of deer. Dharmaraja's horses and charioteer had been slain. He blazed in anger, like the fire. On seeing the lord of Madra advance swiftly, he also rushed forward with great force. He swiftly thought of Govinda's words and made up his mind to destroy Shalya. Though his horses and charioteer had been slain, Dharmaraja remained stationed on his chariot and wished to pick up a javelin. The great-souled one thought about Shalya's deeds and the remaining share that had been allotted to him.

Remembering this, he set his heart on killing Shalya, just as Indra's younger brother¹⁰³ had asked him to.

‘“Dharmaraja picked up a javelin that was golden in complexion. It was jewelled and possessed a golden handle. His eyes blazed and were dilated. With an angry heart, he glanced towards the lord of Madra. The king was a god among men. He was pure in his soul and all his sins had been cleansed. O king! Though he glanced at the lord of Madra, he was not reduced to ashes.¹⁰⁴ This was extraordinary. That javelin possessed a beautiful tip and handle. With coral and gems, it flamed and dazzled. The great-souled one flung it with great force towards the lord of Madra, foremost among the Kurus. It blazed as it was flung with great force. It descended violently, emitting sparks. While all the assembled Kurus looked on, it was like a giant meteor at the time of the destruction of a yuga. It was like the night of destruction and like Yama with a noose in his hand. It was fierce in form, like the midwife of destruction. It was like Brahma's staff and was invincible. Dharmaraja had preserved it carefully for the battle. The sons of Pandu had taken great care to worship it with the best of fragrances, garlands and seats, food and drink. It flamed like the fire of destruction. It was as fierce as rites performed by Atharvan and Angirasa. Tvashtra had created it for Ishana's use.¹⁰⁵ It was capable of consuming the lives and bodies of enemies. Through it,

Isha¹⁰⁶ was capable of destroying all beings on earth, the firmament and bodies of water. It was adorned with bells, flags, jewels and diamonds. It was decorated with lapis lazuli and had a golden handle. Tvashtra had constructed it with great care, after controlling himself and observing rites. It was invincible and could destroy all those who hated brahmanas. He¹⁰⁷ hurled it with great force, strength and care, after having chanted terrible mantras over it. For the sake of destroying the lord of Madra, he dispatched it towards the enemy along the best of paths. Dharmaraja seemed to be dancing around in anger. He extended his firm arm, with the excellent hand. He loudly exclaimed, ‘O wretched one! You are dead.’ It was like Rudra shooting an arrow. That javelin was hurled by Yudhishtira with force. Shalya roared loudly and used all his strength to try to seize and repulse it. It was as if a fire was leaping up to catch clarified butter over it. It pierced through his inner organs, his broad chest and his sparkling armour. It then penetrated the earth, as if it was slicing through water. The king's¹⁰⁸ great fame was taken away. Blood began to flow from his wounds and covered his nose, eyes, ears and mouth. His limbs were covered with blood. He was like the giant mountain Krouncha, when it had been shattered by Skanda.¹⁰⁹ He stretched out his arms and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. His armour was shattered by the descendant of the Kuru lineage. The great-souled one was like the great Indra's mount. But he was like the summit of a mountain that had been shattered by thunder. The king of Madra extended his arms in Dharmaraja's direction. He then fell down on the ground, like Indra's standard. All his limbs were mangled and covered with blood. The bull among men fell down affectionately on the ground, like a beloved wife who falls down on the chest of her dear husband.

The lord had enjoyed the earth for a long time, like a beloved wife. He seemed to go to sleep now, clasping her with all his limbs. The one with dharma in his soul had fought in accordance with dharma and was killed by Dharma's son. He was like a fire that had been pacified on a sacrificial altar. The javelin shattered his heart and he was deprived of his weapons and standard. Though he had been pacified, prosperity¹¹⁰ did not desert the lord of Madra.

“Yudhishtira picked up his bow, which was as dazzling as Indra's bow. In the battle, he began to slaughter the enemy, like the king of birds against serpents. In a short instant, he used sharp and broad-headed arrows to deprive the bodies of the enemies of their lives. Your soldiers were completely covered by Partha's arrows. With their eyes closed and distressed, they began to strike each other in fear. The armour was displaced from their bodies and they lost their weapons and their lives. The younger brother of the king of Madra was youthful. He was his brother's equal in all the qualities. When Shalya was brought down, the ratha attacked Pandava. He swiftly pierced that best of men with many iron arrows. He was invincible in battle and wished to observe the last rites of his brother. Dharma-rajā quickly pierced him back with six swift arrows. With a couple of razor-sharp arrows, he severed his bow and his standard. While he was stationed in front of him, he used a blazing, extremely firm, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever his head. With the earrings, the head was seen to fall down from the chariot. This was like a resident of heaven falling down, after the store of good deeds has been exhausted. With the head severed, the torso fell down from the chariot. The limbs were covered with blood. On seeing this, the soldiers¹¹¹ ran away. The younger brother of the king of Madra was clad in colourful armour. On seeing that he had been slain, sounds of lamentation arose among the Kurus and they fled swiftly. On seeing that Shalya's younger brother had been killed, those on your side gave up all hope of remaining alive. They were terrified because of their fear of the Pandavas and, covered with dust, ran away.

“O bull among the Bharata lineage! While the terrified Kouravas were running away, Satyaki, Shini's grandson, pursued them and shot arrows. He was a great archer and extremely difficult to withstand. O king! However, Hardikya received him fearlessly and spiritedly. Those two great-souled and unvanquished ones from the Vrishni lineage,¹¹² Hardikya and Satyaki, clashed against each other. They were like maddened lions. They showered down sparkling arrows, which were like the rays of the sun, on each other. Both of them were like the sun in their radiance. Those lions among the Vrishni lineage shot powerful arrows from the circles of their bows and they seemed to be like swift insects in the sky. Hardikya used ten arrows with drooping tufts to pierce Satyaki and struck his horses with three. He then severed his bow with a single arrow. The bull among the Shini lineage cast aside the best of bows that had been severed. He picked up another powerful weapon¹¹³ that was even more forceful. Picking up the best of bows, the supreme among all archers pierced Hardikya back between the breasts with ten arrows. He used well-aimed broad-headed arrows to shatter his chariot and his yoke. He then swiftly slew his horses and his two parshni charioteers. O king! When the king of Madra was slain and Kritavarma deprived of his chariot, all of Duryodhana's soldiers again retreated from the battle. Because they were covered in dust, the soldiers could no longer distinguish the enemy. The troops who were still alive retreated from the battle. A dust had arisen from the earth. O bull among men! But in a short while, it was seen that this was pacified because of the several streams of blood that flowed.

“From a close distance, Duryodhana saw that his troops had been shattered. He advanced with great speed and single-handedly countered all the Parthas. He saw the Pandavas on their chariots and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and the invincible one from Anarta.¹¹⁴ He countered them with his sharp arrows. At that time, the enemy did not attack him, like mortal beings avoiding death. Hardikya ascended another chariot and returned. Maharatha King Yudhishtira swiftly slew Kritavarma's four horses with four arrows. He pierced Goutama with six broad-headed arrows that were extremely energetic. Ashvatthama saw that Hardikya had been deprived of his chariot by the king and that his horses had been slain. He bore him away on his own chariot, away from Yudhishtira. Sharadvata pierced Yudhishtira back with eight arrows and also pierced his horses with eight other sharp arrows that had been sharpened on stone. O great king! At this time, the remnants of the battle raged on. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All this happened because of your evil policy, together with that of your sons. When Shalya, supreme among great archers, was slain in the midst of the battle by the bull among the Kuru lineage, all the as-

sembled Parthas saw this and were greatly delighted. In a short while, they blew on their conch shells. They praised Yudhishthira, just as in ancient times, the gods had praised Indra after Vritra had been killed. They roared and sounded many kinds of musical instruments. This resounded, from every side of the earth.” ’



SECTION SEVENTY-FIVE

HRADA-PRAVESHĀ PARVA

This parva has 664 shlokas and twelve chapters.

Chapter 1236(17): 39 shlokas

Chapter 1237(18): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1238(19): 26 shlokas

Chapter 1239(20): 36 shlokas

Chapter 1240(21): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1241(22): 88 shlokas

Chapter 1242(23): 64 shlokas

Chapter 1243(24): 56 shlokas

Chapter 1244(25): 37 shlokas

Chapter 1245(26): 54 shlokas

Chapter 1246(27): 63 shlokas

Chapter 1247(28): 92 shlokas

Satyaki kills Shalva, the king of the mlechhas, and Kshemadhurti. Bhima kills Duryodhana's remaining brothers. Arjuna kills warriors from Trigarta, including Susharma, the king of Trigarta. Sahadeva kills Shakuni and his son, Uluka. Duryodhana enters (pravesha) a lake (hrada) and hides there, the section being named after this. The survivors, including the women, flee to Hastinapura.

Chapter 1236(17)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! When Shalya was killed, seven hundred brave rathas, followers of the king of Madra, advanced in a large army. Duryodhana was astride an elephant that was like a mountain. An umbrella was held aloft his head and he was fanned with whisks. He restrained the ones from Madra, ‘Do not go. Do not advance.’ Duryodhana repeatedly tried to restrain those brave ones. However, wishing to kill Yudhishtira, they penetrated the Pandu army. O great king! Those brave warriors had made up their minds to fight. They loudly twanged their bows and fought with the Pandavas. On hearing that Shalya had been killed, they afflicted Dharma’s son. Those maharathas from Madra were devoted to ensuring the welfare of the king of Madra. Partha advanced there, stretching the bow Gandiva. The maharatha again filled the directions with the clatter of his chariot. Arjuna, Bhima, the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons, Satyaki, tiger among men, all of Droupadi’s sons, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the Panchalas and the Somakas desired to protect Yudhishtira and surrounded him from every direction. Surrounding him, the bulls among the Pandavas agitated that army, like makaras in an ocean. It was as if the great river Ganga was agitated by a mighty wind. O king! But those maharathas were ready to give up their lives and again agitated the great army of the Pandus and their standards. Those on your side made it tremble, like trees by a giant storm. They loudly exclaimed, ‘Where is King Yudhishtira? Why are his brave brothers not seen? Where are the immensely valorous Panchalas, maharatha Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Shini’s descendant and all the sons of Droupadi?’ While they were roaring in this way, Droupadi’s brave and maharatha sons and Yuyudhana attacked the followers of the king of Madra. Some of them were crushed by the wheels. Others were mangled and the giant standards destroyed. In the battle, those on your side were seen to be slain by the enemy. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though they were restrained by your son, on seeing the Pandavas in the battle, those warriors powerfully rushed against them from every side. Duryodhana tried to restrain and calm those brave ones. But not a single one of those maharathas would listen to him.

‘“O great king! Shakuni, the son of the king of Gandhara, capable of speaking eloquently, spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘The army of the Madras is being slaughtered. Why are we looking on? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While you are stationed in the battle, this is not proper. At that time, we took a decision that we would fight together. O king! The enemy is slaughtering us. Why are you tolerating this?’ Duryodhana replied, ‘I tried to restrain them earlier. But they did not listen to my words. Having penetrated the Pandu army, this is the reason they are being killed.’ Shakuni said, ‘When they are enraged in a battle, valiant ones do not listen to their master. You should not be angry with them. This is not the time to ignore this. All of us should advance with our horses, chariots and elephants and rescue the great archers who are the followers of the king of Madra. O king! We will take great care and protect each other. Let all of us think along those lines and ask the soldiers to advance.’ Having been thus addressed, the king surrounded himself with a large army. He roared like a lion, made the earth tremble and advanced. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among your soldiers, there were tumultuous sounds like, ‘Slay. Pierce. Seize. Strike. Sever.’ In the battle, the Pandavas beheld the followers of the king of Madra. They advanced, uniting in a moderate formation.¹ O lord of the earth! In a short instant, those brave ones engaged in hand-to-hand combat in the battle and the followers of the king of Madra were seen to be killed. While we were advancing, we saw that the enemy had spiritedly killed their foes and were cheerfully uttering roars of delight. In every direction, headless torsos were seen to rise up and fall down, like giant meteors from the solar disc at midday. The chariots and yokes were shattered. The maharathas were slain. Horses fell down. The earth was strewn with these. O great king! Steeds that were as fleet as the wind were still yoked. In the battle, they were seen to drag the warriors around. In the encounter, some horses dragged around chariots with shattered wheels. Some others fled in the ten directions, dragging along halves of chariots. Here and there, yokes were seen to be attached to the horses. O

supreme among men! Rathas were seen to fall down. They were like siddhas dislodged from the sky, after their store of good deeds had been exhausted. The brave followers of the king of Madra were slaughtered.

‘ “The maharatha Parthas saw that we were advancing towards them.² Wielding weapons and desiring victory, they attacked powerfully. They created a whizzing sound with their arrows and this mixed with the blare of conch shells. Unwavering in their aim, those strikers again clashed against us. They brandished their bows and arrows and roared like lions. On seeing that the large army of the king of Madra had been slain and that the brave king of Madra had been brought down in the battle, all of Duryodhana’s soldiers again retreated. O great king! They were slaughtered by the Pandavas, firm archers, who desired victory. Frightened and terrified, they fled in different directions.” ’

Chapter 1237(18)

‘Sanjaya said, “The unassailable maharatha, the king of Madra, was brought down in the battle. Those on your side, and your sons, generally retreated. They were like merchants whose boats had been shattered, so that they were without a raft on the fathomless ocean. O great king! When the brave king of Madra was slain by the great-souled one,³ they wished to find a shore, but could not reach one. They were frightened and mangled by arrows. They desired a protector, but were without a protector. They were like deer afflicted by a lion. They were like bulls with broken horns, or elephants with shattered tusks. They were defeated by Dharma’s son and tormented at mid-day. O king! There was no one who could rally the soldiers, nor any valour among them. When Shalya was killed, there was no warrior who could resort to his own intelligence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! When Bhishma, Drona and the son of a suta were killed, the warriors on your side suffered from sorrow and fear. That grief and terror manifested itself again. When maharatha Shalya was killed, all hope of victory was given up. The foremost of brave ones were slain and destroyed, mangled by sharp arrows. O king! When the king of Madra was slain, the warriors fled. Some of the maharathas resorted to horses, others to elephants, and still others to chariots. They speedily ascended on these, or fled on foot. There were two thousand elephants, accomplished in striking. They were like mountains. When Shalya was killed, goaded by goads and toes, they ran away. O best among the Bharata lineage! In the encounter, those on your side fled in different directions. They were seen to run away. They sighed and were afflicted by the arrows. On seeing that they were shattered and running away, vanquished and bereft of enthusiasm, the Panchalas and Pandavas attacked them, desiring victory. They created a whizzing sound with their arrows and roared loudly, like lions. The brave ones blew fiercely on their conch shells.

‘“On seeing that the Kourava soldiers were terrified and were running away, the Panchalas and the Pandavas spoke to each other. ‘King Yudhishtira is firm in his devotion to the truth and has vanquished the enemy today. King Duryodhana has been destroyed today and has lost his glory and prosperity. On hearing that his sons have been killed, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, will fall down senseless on the ground and grieve. He will realize today, how capable Kounteya is, among all archers. The evil-minded one will today censure his evil deeds. Today, he will remember the truthful and beneficial words that were spoken by Kshatta earlier. Let him serve the Parthas today, with different kinds of objects. Let the king know the sorrow that the sons of Pandu had felt. Let the lord of the earth learn about Krishna’s greatness today. Today, let him realize how terrible the twang of Arjuna’s bow is in battle. Today, let him know the terrible strength of the great-souled Bhima, who possesses the strength of all weapons and the strength of his arms in battle. Duryodhana will be slain in the battle, like the asura Maya by Shakra.⁴ There is no one else in the world who could have performed the task that the immensely strong Bhima has. Bhimasena slew Duhshasana. Today, on hearing about the death of the king of Madra, who was extremely difficult for even the gods to withstand, let him know about the eldest Pandava’s valour. In the encounter today, he will know about the great strength of the two sons of Madri, when the brave Soubala and all those from Gandara are killed. Why should victory not be on the side of those who have a warrior like Dhananjaya, or Satyaki, Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi’s five sons, the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons, the great archer, Shikhandi, and King Yudhishtira? Why should victory not be on the side of those who have Krishna Janardana, the protector of the universe, as their protector, and who have resorted to dharma? There were Bhishma, Drona, Karna, the king of Madra and hundreds and thousands of other brave kings. Who other than Partha Yudhishtira was capable of vanquishing them in battle? Hrishiksha, the store of dharma and fame, has always been his protector.’ In great delight, these were the words they spoke to each other. O king! Those on your side were routed and

the Srinjayas followed them from the rear. The brave Dhananjaya attacked the army of chariots⁵ and Madri's sons and maharatha Satyaki attacked Shakuni.

‘“On seeing that all of them were running away, afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena, Duryodhana smiled and spoke to his charioteer. ‘Partha, stationed with the bow in his hand, will not be able to cross me. He is slaying all the soldiers. Take my horses to him. I will fight and kill Kounteya, or Dhananjaya will kill me. He will not be able to cross me, like the great ocean against the shoreline. O charioteer! Behold that large army, attacked by the Pandavas. Behold. In every direction, a dust has arisen because of the soldiers. Listen to the many leonine roars. They are terrible and fearful. O charioteer! Advance slowly there and protect the rear. If I station myself in battle and counter the Pandus, my energetic army will swiftly return again.’ On hearing the words of your son, spoken like the best of brave ones, the charioteer gently goaded the horses, tied to golden harnesses. There were twenty-one thousand foot soldiers who were ready to lay down their lives, though they were without elephants, horses and charioteers. They stationed themselves for the battle. They had come from diverse countries and were attired in garments of many colours. Desiring great fame, those warriors stationed themselves there. In great delight, they clashed against each other. There was an extremely great encounter. It was fierce in form and terrible. O king! Those four kinds of troops, who had come from many countries, countered Bhimasena and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna.⁶ In the battle, other foot soldiers attacked Bhima. Desiring to ascend to the world of the brave, they roared cheerfully and slapped their armpits. Invincible in the battle, they angrily attacked Bhimasena. Those on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra did not speak to each other. But they roared. They surrounded Bhima in the battle and struck him from all sides. O great king! When he was surrounded by that large number of foot soldiers in the battle, maharatha Pandava did not waver. He remained immobile on his chariot, like Mount Mainaka. He slaughtered them and they angrily attacked him, countering the other warriors who tried to repulse them. Thus attacked, Bhima became enraged in that battle. He quickly descended from his chariot and stood on the ground. He grasped a giant club that was decorated with gold. With this, like Yama with a staff in his hand, he began to slay those warriors. With his club, the powerful Bhima brought down twenty-one thousand foot soldiers, who were without chariots, horses or elephants. Bhima, for whom truth was his valour, slew that army of men. He was soon seen, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. The slain foot soldiers lay down on the ground, their bodies covered with blood. They were like flowering karnikara trees shattered by a storm. They were adorned with garlands made out of different kinds of flowers. They wore many kinds of earrings. They were of different races and had assembled from different countries. That large army of foot soldiers was killed there. Flags and standards were scattered around. They were destroyed and it was beautiful, but fearful and terrible in form.

‘“With Yudhishtira at the forefront, all the soldiers and maharathas attacked your great-souled son, Duryodhana. All the great archers on your side retreated. On seeing this, they attacked. But they could not cross your son, like the abode of makaras against the shoreline. We witnessed your son's extraordinary manliness. Though he was single-handed, all the united Parthas were incapable of withstanding him. Duryodhana spoke to his own soldiers, who were mangled with arrows. Though they had made up their minds to run away, they had not gone far. ‘I do not see a country or mountain on earth, where the Pandavas will not follow and kill you. What is the point of running away? They have only a little bit of their army left and the two Krishnas have been severely wounded. If all of us take a stand, it is certain that there will be victory. If you run away, the Pandavas will destroy all of us. They will pursue and kill us. It is better to be stationed in battle. O kshatriyas! All of you listen to me, those who are still assembled here. Yama slays both cowards and brave ones. Which man calls himself a kshatriya and is stupid enough not to fight? It is better to be stationed before the angry Bhimasena. If we resort to the dharma of kshatriyas and fight, there will be happiness, even if there is death in the battle. If we win, we will obtain happiness. If we are slain, we will obtain great fruits in the world hereafter. O Kouravas! There is no greater path towards heaven than by resorting to the dharma of fighting. If we are killed in battle, we will soon obtain all those revered worlds.’ On hearing these words, the kings applauded them. They returned and attacked the Pandava assassins. On seeing that they were swiftly attacking, the Parthas, who were strikers, arrayed themselves in battle formation. Desiring victory, those strikers counter-attacked. The valiant Partha attacked on his chariot. He brandished Gandiva bow, famous in the three worlds. Madri's sons and the immensely strong Satyaki attacked Shakuni. Cheerfully and quickly, they endeavoured to attack your army.”’

Chapter 1238(19)

‘Sanjaya said, “When that large army had returned, Shalva, the lord of large numbers of mlecchas, became extremely angry and attacked the large army of the Pandus. He was astride an extremely large elephant. It possessed shattered temples and was like a mountain. It was as proud as Airavata⁷ and was capable of crushing large numbers of the enemy. It had been born in an extremely noble lineage and had always been worshipped, extremely well, by Dhritarashtra’s son. O king! It was equipped well and had been well trained for fighting, by those who knew about war. The supreme among kings was resplendent astride it. He was like a rising sun, at the end of summer. O king! On that supreme elephant, he advanced against the sons of Pandu. From every direction, he enveloped them with sharp arrows that were extremely terrible, like the great Indra’s vajra. O king! In the great battle, he shot arrows and conveyed warriors to Yama. No one, on his side or that of the enemy, could discern any weakness in him, like the daityas in ancient times, against the wielder of the vajra. The Pandavas, Somakas and Srinjayas seemed to see that elephant in every direction, as if the single elephant was roaming around and was actually one thousand. It was like the great Indra’s elephant. The enemy’s army was driven away. Failing to find protection, they ran away in different directions. They were incapable of remaining in the battle. Severely afflicted by fear, they crushed each other. That large army of the Pandavas was violently routed by that lord of men. Unable to withstand the force of that king of elephants, they swiftly fled in the four directions. On seeing that they were powerfully routed, all the warriors and supreme fighters on your side honoured that lord of men. They blew on conch shells that were as white as the moon. The delighted roars emitted by the Kouravas mingled with the blare of conch shells. On hearing this, the commander of the Pandavas and the Srinjayas⁸ could not tolerate this and became angry. Desiring to obtain a quick victory, the great-souled one advanced against the elephant. He was like Jambha advancing against Airavata, the king of elephants and Indra’s mount, during the clash with Shakra. O king! On seeing that the king of Panchala, Drupada’s son, was violently attacking, the lion among men goaded the elephant, so as to kill him. The elephant attacked powerfully. He pierced it with three sharp iron arrows that were like the fire to the touch. They had been washed by artisans and were fierce and powerful. The great-souled one then used five other sharp and iron arrows to strike it on its frontal lobe. Having been severely pierced in the battle, that supreme elephant retreated and fled. While that king among elephants was speedily running away, Shalva restrained it. He swiftly used his goad to propel it towards the chariot of the king of Panchala. On seeing that the elephant was violently advancing, the brave Dhrishtadyumna quickly descended from his chariot. He swiftly grasped a club and stood on the ground, his limbs benumbed with fear. That giant elephant used its trunk to pick up his gold-decorated chariot, with the horses and the charioteer, and violently crushed it down on the ground. The charioteer of the king of Panchala was thus destroyed by that supreme elephant. On seeing this, Bhima, Shikhandi and Shini’s grandson hastily rushed towards it. While they advanced against the elephant, he⁹ afflicted them with powerful and forceful arrows. In the battle, those rathas restrained the elephant and it began to waver. The king continued to shower down arrows from every direction, like the sun with its net of rays. Struck by those arrows, a large number of rathas fled in every direction. O king! On beholding Shalva’s deed in the battle, loud sounds of lamentation arose among all the Panchalas, Matsyas and Srinjayas. But those best of archers surrounded the elephant from all sides. The brave king of Panchala spiritedly grasped a club that was like a mountain top. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without any fear and with great speed, that brave slayer of enemies struck the elephant. The elephant was like a cloud and it was exuding musth. It fell down on the ground. The spirited son of the Panchala king struck it severely with the club. Its temples were violently shattered and it began to vomit blood from its mouth. The elephant fell down on the ground, like a mountain dislodged during an earthquake. When that king of ele-

phants fell down, lamentations arose among your son's soldiers. The foremost among the Shini lineage then used a sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever King Shalva's head. The head was severed by Satvata in the battle and fell down on the ground, together with the king of elephants. It was as if a giant mountain peak had been shattered by the vajra, unleashed by the lord of the gods." '

Chapter 1239(20)

‘Sanjaya said, “When the brave Shalva, the ornament of an assembly, was killed, that army was agitated, like a giant tree struck by a forceful storm. On seeing that the army was routed, the immensely strong and valiant maharatha Kritavarma resisted the soldiers of the enemy in the battle. O king! The descendant of the Satvata lineage¹⁰ was stationed in the battle and was enveloped with arrows. On seeing this, the brave ones¹¹ returned and a battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas commenced. O great king! They did not retreat and preferred death over retreat. There was a wonderful battle between Satvata and the enemy. Single-handedly, he countered the Pandu soldiers, who were difficult to resist. On witnessing this, other well-wishers performed extremely difficult deeds. They cheerfully roared like lions and that great sound rose up to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Panchalas were frightened by that noise. However, Shini’s grandson, the mighty-armed Satyaki, attacked. He advanced against the immensely strong Kshemadhurti, and using seven sharp arrows, conveyed him to Yama’s abode. The mighty-armed descendant of the Shini lineage tormented with sharp arrows. As he attacked, Hardikya rushed against him, terrible and fierce. Those two archers, best among rathas, roared like lions. They rushed against each other, wielding the best of weapons. The Pandavas, the Panchalas, other warriors and the best of kings became spectators to that clash between those two lions among men. The maharathas from the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages used vatsadantas and iron arrows. Like cheerful elephants, they tried to kill each other. Hardikya and the bull among the Shini lineage roamed around in diverse motions. They repeatedly struck each other with showers of arrows. Those lions from the Vrishni lineage stretched their bows with force and strength and shot arrows. We saw these in the sky, travelling fast, like insects. Hridika’s son approached the one who was the performer of truthful deeds¹² and used four sharp arrows to pierce his four horses. The long-armed one became angry, like an elephant struck with a goad. He used eight supreme arrows to pierce Kritavarma. Kritavarma stretched his bow back all the way up to his ears. Piercing Satyaki with three arrows, he severed his bow with another one. When that best of bows was severed, the bull among the Shini lineage picked up another bow with an arrow affixed to it. Shini’s descendant, best among all archers, picked up that best of bows with great speed. The immensely valorous, immensely intelligent and immensely strong one was unable to tolerate the fact that his bow had been severed by Kritavarma. Enraged, the atiratha speedily attacked Kritavarma. Using ten extremely sharp arrows, the bull among the Shini lineage struck Kritavarma’s charioteer, horses and standard. His gold-decorated chariot, horses and charioteer were destroyed. O king! O venerable one! On seeing this, the great archer, maharatha Kritavarma, was overcome by great rage and picked up a javelin. With the force of his arms, he hurled this towards the bull among the Shini lineage, wishing to kill him. But Satvata shattered the javelin with his sharp arrows. Shattered, it fell down, and Madhava¹³ was confused. His horses had been slain. His charioteer had been killed. In the encounter, Yuyudhana,¹⁴ skilled in the use of weapons, used a broad-headed arrow to strike him in the chest. Kritavarma fell down on the ground. In the duel, the brave one was deprived of his chariot by Satyaki. At this, all the soldiers¹⁵ were overcome by great fear and your sons were miserable, because Kritavarma had been deprived of his chariot and his horses and charioteer had been slain. The horses of that scorcher of enemies had been killed. His charioteer had been slain. O king! On seeing this, Kripa attacked the bull among the Shini lineage, wishing to kill him. While all the archers looked on, the mighty-armed one swiftly picked him up on his own chariot and bore him away from the field of battle. O king! Kritavarma had been deprived of his chariot and Shini’s descendant remained stationed there. All of Duryodhana’s soldiers again became reluctant to fight. Because they were covered in dust, the soldiers could no longer discern the enemy. O king! With the exception of King Duryodhana, those on your side ran away. Duryodhana was nearby and saw that his own army had been routed. O venerable one! Angered, he quickly at-

tacked all the Pandus, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Droupadi's sons, the large numbers of Panchalas, the Kekayas, the Somakas and the Panchalas¹⁶ and countered them. He was fearless and unassailable and repulsed them with sharp weapons. Your immensely strong son endeavoured and remained stationed in the battle. He was as resplendent as the great fire on a sacrificial altar, invoked with mantras. In the battle, the enemy was incapable of approaching him, like mortal beings against Death. Hardikya ascended another chariot and attacked.” ’

Chapter 1240(21)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Your son, supreme among rathas, was stationed on his chariot in the battle. He was resplendent and difficult to resist, like the powerful Rudra. The earth was covered with thousands of his arrows. He showered the enemy with arrows, like rain pouring down on a mountain. In the great battle, there wasn’t a man among the Pandavas, or a horse, elephant or a ratha, who was not wounded by his arrows. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whichever warrior I saw in the encounter was struck by your son with his arrows. The soldiers in the army¹⁷ were covered by dust and were seen to be mangled by the great-souled one’s arrows. O lord of the earth! The earth seemed to be made out of arrows that were released by the archer Duryodhana, swift in the use of his hands. Among the thousands of warriors on your side, or that of the enemy, it seemed to me that Duryodhana was the only man. We beheld your son’s wonderful valour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was single-handed. But the united Parthas could not advance against him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He pierced Yudhishtira with one hundred arrows, Bhimasena with seventy, Sahadeva with seven, Nakula with sixty-four, Dhrishtadyumna with five, Droupadi’s sons with seven each and pierced Satyaki with three. O venerable one! He severed Sahadeva’s bow with a broad-headed arrow. Casting aside the severed bow, Madri’s powerful son picked up another great bow and attacked the king. In the battle, he pierced Duryodhana with ten arrows. The brave and great archer, Nakula, pierced the king with nine arrows and roared, assuming a terrible form. Satyaki struck the king with an arrow with drooping tufts. Droupadi’s sons struck him with seventy-three and Dharmaraja with seven. Bhimasena struck the king with eighty arrows. He was afflicted from every direction by storms of arrows shot by those great-souled ones. O great king! However, while all the soldiers looked on, he did not waver. All the beings and all the men witnessed the dexterity, skill and prowess of the great-souled one. O Indra among kings! Some sons of Dhritarashtra had only fled a short distance away. On seeing the king, those armoured ones surrounded him. When they attacked, they created a tumultuous sound. It was like a turbulent ocean on a monsoon night. In the battle, those great archers approached the unvanquished king and counter-attacked the Pandava assassins.

‘ “In the encounter, Drona’s son repulsed the enraged Bhimasena. O great king! Arrows were released in all the directions. The brave ones could not be distinguished in the battle, nor the directions or the sub-directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Both of those resplendent ones¹⁸ were the performers of cruel deeds and were extremely difficult to resist. They assumed fearful forms and fought, acting and neutralizing each other. The entire universe was terrified because of the twangs of their bows and their words. In the battle, the brave Shakuni attacked Yudhishtira. Subala’s powerful son slew the four horses that belonged to the lord and roared. This made all the soldiers tremble. At that time, the powerful Sahadeva bore the brave and unvanquished king¹⁹ away from the field of battle on his chariot. Dharmaraja Yudhishtira ascended another chariot. He pierced Shakuni with nine arrows and pierced him again with five. The best among all archers then roared loudly. O venerable one! The battle was wonderful and fearful in form. It generated delight among the spectators and was applauded by the siddhas and the charanas. Uluka, immeasurable in his soul, attacked the great archer, Nakula, invincible in battle, and showered him with arrows from every direction. In that way, the brave Nakula repulsed Subala’s son in the encounter and repulsed him with a great shower of arrows. They were brave maharathas, born in noble lineages. They were seen to fight with each other, enraged with each other. O king! In that way, Kritavarma fought against Shini’s descendant, the tormentor of enemies, and was resplendent, like Shakra in an encounter against Bala. In the battle, Duryodhana severed Dhrishtadyumna’s bow. When his bow had been severed, he pierced him with sharp arrows. While all the archers looked on, in that encounter, Dhrishtadyumna grasped a supreme weapon and fought

against the king. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The clash between those two was exceedingly great. They were like two supreme and crazy elephants, with shattered temples, exuding musth. In the battle, the brave Goutama became angry and pierced Droupadi's immensely strong sons with many arrows with drooping tufts. That clash between them and him was like that between a being and the senses.²⁰ It assumed a fierce and terrible form and neither side was inclined to show mercy. They afflicted him, like senses oppressing a stupid person. He angrily fought against them in that battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus the colourful battle between them and him raged on. O lord! It was like the one that always takes place between a being and the senses.

“Men fought with men. Tuskers fought with tuskers. Horses clashed against horses and rathas against rathas. O lord of the earth! The battle became tumultuous and fearful in form. O lord! It was wonderful in one spot and terrible and fierce in another. O great king! There were many terrible clashes. Those scorchers of enemies clashed against each other in the encounter. They pierced, struck and killed each other in the great encounter. Because of the weapons, a terrible dust was seen to rise. O king! As they ran away, it was also created by the horses and the horse riders and was fanned by the wind. The dust was created by the chariots and the breaths of the tuskers. It was like a tawny cloud in the evening and obstructed the path of the sun. The sun was covered by the dust and lost its brilliance. The earth and the brave maharathas were shrouded. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! But in a short while, the earth was sprinkled with the blood of the brave ones and, in every direction, became free of the dust. That terrible dust, fierce in form, was pacified. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those extremely fearful duels could again be seen, as the best and the eldest fought against each other at midday. O Indra among kings! The armour was seen to blaze in resplendent brilliance. As arrows descended in that battle, a tumultuous sound was raised. It was as if a large forest of bamboos was being burnt in every direction.” ’

Chapter 1241(22)

‘Sanjaya said, “That fierce battle continued, terrible in form. The army of your sons was shattered by the Pandavas. The maharathas made great efforts to restrain them and your sons fought against the Pandava soldiers. Wishing to ensure your son’s pleasure, the warriors on your side suddenly returned. When they returned, the battle again assumed a fearful form. Those on your side and the enemy fought against each other in the battle, like the gods and the asuras. The soldiers on your side, and that of the enemy, were unwilling to retreat. They fought against each other through guessing and by means of signs.²¹ As they fought against each other, there was a great destruction.

‘ “King Yudhishtira was overcome by great rage. In the battle, he wished to vanquish the sons of Dhritarashtra and the kings. He pierced Sharadvata with three arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. He slew Kritavarma’s four horses with injurious arrows. Ashvatthama bore the illustrious Hardikya away. Sharadvata pierced Yudhishtira back with eight arrows. In the battle, King Duryodhana dispatched seven hundred chariots towards the spot where King Yudhishtira, Dharma’s son, was. Those chariots possessed the speed of thought or the wind and rathas rode them. In the encounter, they rushed against Kounteya’s chariot. O great king! They surrounded Yudhishtira from all sides. With their arrows, they made him disappear, like clouds against the sun. Rathas, with Shikhandi at the forefront, were unwilling to tolerate this and became angry. They attacked with the best of swift chariots, decorated with nets of bells. They advanced to protect Yudhishtira, Kunti’s sons. A terrible battle ensued between the Pandavas and the Kurus. Blood flowed like water and it extended Yama’s kingdom. Having slain the seven hundred rathas that belonged to the Kuru assassins, the Pandavas and the Panchalas again countered them. A great battle was fought between your son and the Pandavas. Nothing like this had been seen earlier, nor heard of. That merciless battle continued in every direction. Warriors, on your side and that of the others, were slain. The warriors roared and blew on their conch shells. The archers roared like lions and shouted. O venerable one! As that battle extended, the inner organs were mangled. In search of victory, the warriors dashed in every direction. Every species on earth seemed to be destroyed and this generated sorrow. As the battle extended, the best of women were deprived of their partings in the encounter.²² That merciless and extremely fearful battle continued. There was a sound, like that of the earth, with all its mountains and forests, during an earthquake. O king! Torches with handles fell down in every direction. From the solar disc, meteors descended from the firmament onto the ground. Harsh winds blew from every side and showered down stones underneath. The elephants shed tears and trembled severely. Disregarding these ominous portents, the extremely fearful battle raged on. Consulting each other, the kshatriyas weren’t distressed and fought again on that beautiful and sacred region of Kurukshetra, desiring to go to heaven.

‘ “Shakuni, the son of the king of Gandhara, said, ‘Station yourselves in the forefront of the battle. I will slay the Pandavas from the rear.’ At this, the spirited warriors from Madra cheerfully advanced, uttering many sounds of delight and so did the enemy. Those invincible ones, unwavering in their aim, attacked us again. They brandished their bows and arrows and showered down arrows. The soldiers of the king of Madra were slain by the army there. On seeing this, Duryodhana’s soldiers again retreated. The powerful king of Gandhara again spoke these words. ‘O wicked ones! O ones who are ignoring dharma! Return and fight. Why are you running away?’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! The king of Gandhara possessed an army of ten thousand horses, with warriors with sparkling lances. He used this army and his valour and there was a destruction of men. He attacked the Pandava soldiers from the rear and killed them with his sharp arrows. O great king! In every direction, the extremely large army of the Pandus was destroyed and driven away, like clouds by the wind. From a close distance, Yudhishtira saw that his own army was being routed. The immensely strong Sahadeva was in front of him and he urged him. ‘Subala’s

armoured son is afflicting our rear. O Pandava! Behold. The evil-minded one is slaying our soldiers. Advance with the sons of Droupadi and kill Shakuni Soubala. O unblemished one! Protect yourself with an army of Panchala chariots. Let all the elephants and horses go with you, and three thousand foot soldiers. Kill Shakuni Soubala.' At this, seven hundred elephants, with bows in the hands of the riders, five thousand horses, the valiant Sahadeva, three thousand foot soldiers and the sons of Droupadi combined and attacked Shakuni, invincible in a battle, in the encounter. O king! However, the powerful Soubala, desiring victory, overcame the Pandavas and slaughtered the soldiers from the rear. The spirited Pandava horse riders were angry. They penetrated Soubala's army and overcame his rathas. Those brave riders stationed themselves amidst elephants and enveloped Soubala's large army with showers of arrows. The brave men used clubs and javelins. O king! Because of your evil counsel, a great battle raged. As the rathas watched, the twang of bowstrings was no longer heard, because one could not distinguish those on one's own side from that of the enemy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Javelins were hurled from the arms of the brave ones among the Kurus and the Pandavas and one could see them descend like stellar bodies. O lord of the earth! Sparkling swords were seen to descend there and covered the sky, rendering it exceedingly beautiful. O king! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Beautiful javelins descended in every direction and were like locusts in the sky. The limbs of horses were covered with blood and because they were wounded, fell down in hundreds and thousands. They fell against each other and crowded together. Wounded, they were seen to vomit blood from their mouths. There was a terrible darkness and the soldiers were covered in dust. With wet eyes, those scorched of enemies retreated from the spot. O king! Horses and men were covered with dust. Some fell down on the ground. Others vomited copious quantities of blood. The hair of some men got entangled with the hair of others and they could not move. The immensely strong ones dragged each other from the backs of their horses and, clashing like wrestlers, slew each other. Many lost their lives and were dragged away by the horses. There were many others who fell down on the ground, desiring victory. Those men, proud of their prowess, were seen here and there. Blood flowed from their wounds. Their arms were severed. Their hair was shorn. The earth was seen to be strewn with hundreds and thousands of them. Those who tried to use their horses could not travel a great distance away. Horse riders were slain and the earth was covered with horses. Armour was smeared with blood. And there were those who were armed with many terrible kinds of weapons, seeking to kill each other. They clashed against each other in the battle and many soldiers were killed. O lord of the earth! Soubala fought in that battle for a short while. He then retreated with the six thousand horses that still remained.

“The horse riders on the Pandu side were also covered with blood. They engaged well in that battle, ready to give up their lives. They also retreated with the six thousand horses that still remained. They said, 'One can no longer use chariots or mighty elephants to fight here. Let chariots advance against chariots and elephants against elephants. Shakuni has now retreated and has stationed himself inside his formation. King Soubala will not advance in the battle again.' Droupadi's sons and those crazy elephants then went to the spot where maharatha Panchala Dhrishtadyumna was. O Kouravya! When that mighty cloud of dust arose, Sahadeva alone went to the spot where King Yudhishtira was. When they had departed, Shakuni Soubala again became enraged and attacked Dhrishtadyumna's army from the side. There was a dreadful battle again and they were ready to give up their lives. Those on your side, and that of the enemy, attacked each other, wishing to kill each other. O king! In that clash of brave warriors, they first glanced at each other, and then attacked, in hundreds and thousands. In that destruction of men, heads were severed with swords and fell down with a great noise, like palm fruit. Devoid of armour, bodies were mangled and fell down on the ground. O lord of the earth! Arms and thighs were severed with weapons. There were loud noises and the body hair stood up. With sharp weapons, brothers, sons and friends were killed. The warriors descended, like birds in search of meat. Extremely enraged, they attacked each other. 'I will be the first. I am the first.' Saying this, thousands were killed. Because of that clash, horse riders lost their lives and were dislodged from their seats. Horses fell down in hundreds and thousands. O lord of the earth! There was the neighing of swift horses. There were the roars of armoured men. A tumultuous sound was created by javelins and swords. O king! Because of your evil policy, they pierced each other's inner organs. The wrathful ones were overcome by exhaustion. The mounts were exhausted and thirsty. Wounded by sharp weapons, those on your side retreated. Many became crazy because of the scent of blood and lost their senses. They killed whomever they could approach, regardless of whether it was friend or foe. Many kshatriyas, desiring victory, lost their lives. O king!

They were covered with showers of arrows and fell down on the ground. Wolves, vultures and jackals emitted fierce sounds of delight. While your son looked on, your army met with a terrible destruction. O lord of the earth! The earth was covered with the bodies of men and horses. It was colourful with flow of blood and increased the fear of cowards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those on your side, as well as that of the Pandavas, were repeatedly struck by swords, javelins and spears and stopped attacking. As long as they had lives, they struck to the best of their capacity. The warriors then fell down, vomiting blood from their wounds. Headless torsos could be seen, grasping the hair²³ and raising sharp swords smeared with blood. O lord of men! Many such headless torsos rose up. Because of that scent of blood, the warriors were overcome by weakness.

‘ “When the sound became less, Soubala attacked the large army of the Pandavas with the few remaining horses. The Pandavas desired victory and spiritedly attacked back. The foot soldiers, elephant riders and horse riders raised their weapons. They protected themselves in every direction, by arranging themselves into an array. They struck him with many kinds of weapons, wishing to bring an end to the hostilities. On seeing this attack, those on your side rushed against the Pandavas, with horses, infantry, elephants and chariots. There were some foot soldiers who no longer possessed weapons. In the battle, those brave ones attacked and brought down each other with feet and fists. Rathas fell down from their chariots and elephant riders from their elephants. They were like siddhas falling down from celestial vehicles, after their store of good deeds has been exhausted. In the great battle, thus did the warriors kill each other, fathers, brothers, friends, sons and others. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Thus did that fearful battle continue. It was extremely terrible and spears, swords and arrows were used.” ’

Chapter 1242(23)

‘Sanjaya said, “When the sound became less and the Pandavas had slain some of that army, Soubala advanced with seven hundred well-trained horses that still remained. He swiftly approached the army²⁴ and said, ‘O warriors! Make haste. Fight cheerfully.’ The scorcher of enemies repeatedly said this. He asked the kshatriyas there, ‘Where is the maharatha king?’²⁵ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Hearing Shakuni’s words, they replied, ‘The maharatha Kouravya is stationed in the midst of the battle. He is at the spot where the great umbrella is, as radiant as the full moon. That is where the armoured rathas are, with their arm-guards. A tumultuous sound can be heard there, like the roar of clouds. O king! Go there swiftly and you will be able to see Kouravya.’ O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by those brave ones, Shakuni Soubala went to the spot where your son was. He was surrounded on all sides by valiant ones who were unwilling to retreat from the battle. Duryodhana was stationed there, in the midst of an array of chariots. O lord of the earth! Having seen him, Shakuni cheerfully spoke these words to Duryodhana, gladdening all the rathas on your side. He spoke to the king, as if he thought that his objective had already been achieved. ‘O king! Slay this array of rathas.’²⁶ All their horses have already been defeated by me. Yudhishtira is incapable of being defeated in the battle, unless one is prepared to give up one’s own life. Slay this array of rathas, protected by Pandava. We will then kill these elephants, foot soldiers and horses.’ On hearing these words, those on your side were cheered. Wishing for victory, they swiftly attacked the Pandava soldiers. They fixed their quivers and grasped their bows. They brandished their bows and roared like lions. O lord of the earth! The noise of twang of bowstrings and the slapping of palms was again heard. They shot extremely terrible arrows.

‘“On seeing that they were joyfully and swiftly advancing, with upraised bows, Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, spoke these words to Devaki’s son. ‘Goad these horses without any fear and penetrate this ocean of soldiers. Using sharp arrows, I will bring an end to these enemies. O Janardana! This is the eighteenth day of the battle and we have engaged against each other in this great clash. The standard-bearers, the great-souled ones, were almost infinite. Behold. They have been destroyed in the battle, by destiny. O Madhava! The army of Dhritarashtra’s son was like an ocean. O Achyuta! Having clashed against us, it has now become like a trifle.’²⁷ O Madhava! It would have been well had there been peace after Bhishma was killed. But Dhritarashtra’s stupid and extremely foolish son did not act accordingly. O Madhava! Bhishma spoke beneficial words that were like medicine. However, Suyodhana was beyond reason and did not listen to it. After Bhishma was dislodged and brought down on the surface of the ground, I do not know the reason why the battle had to continue. I think that, in every way, Dhritarashtra’s son is stupid and extremely foolish. They continued to fight even after Shantanu’s son was brought down. After that, Drona, supreme among those who know about the brahman, was killed, and so were Radheya and Vikarna. But even then, there was no peace. When only a few of the soldiers were left and the son of a suta, tiger among men, was brought down with his sons, even then, there was no peace. When the brave Shrutayusha was killed, and Pourava Jalasandha, and King Shrutayudha, even then, there was no peace. O Janardana! Bhurishrava, Shalya, Shalva and the brave ones from Avanti²⁸ were killed. Even then, there was no peace. Jayadratha, the rakshasa Alayudha, Bahlika and Somadatta were slain. Even then, there was no peace. The brave Bhagadatta, Sudakshina from Kamboja and Duhshasana were killed. Even then, there was no peace. O Krishna! There were many brave kings, lords of their separate dominions. Even when those powerful ones were killed in the battle, there was no peace. Even when he²⁹ saw that an entire akshouhini was brought down by Bhimasena, either because of his delusion or because of his avarice, there still was no peace. Other than Kourava Suyodhana, who else would have been born in a noble lineage and generated this large and pointless enmity? Knowing that we were superior in qualities,

strength and valour, which sensible person would attempt to fight, other than a foolish one unable to differentiate good from evil? He could not make up his mind that he should listen to your beneficial words and make peace with the Pandavas. Instead, he listened to the advice of another. Shantanu's son, Bhishma, Drona and Vidura spoke in favour of peace, but were disregarded. What medicine will he resort to today? O Janardana! Because of his stupidity, he rejected his aged father and mother's beneficial words, when they spoke about what was good for him. How can he accept good advice? O Janardana! It is evident that he was born to bring an end to his lineage. O lord of the earth! That is the direction his policy has followed. O Achyuta! It is my view that he will still not give us the kingdom. O father!³⁰ On several occasions, the great-souled Vidura has told me that Dhritarashtra's son, as long as he is alive, will never give us a share. O venerable one! He also said, "As long as Dhritarashtra's son is alive, that wicked one will continue to act in evil ways towards you. You will not be able to defeat him, without engaging with him in battle." O Madhava! Vidura, who sees the truth, always spoke to me in this way. I now see that the evil-souled one's deeds have been exactly in accordance with the words of the great-souled Vidura. He also heard the beneficial and appropriate words spoken by Jamadagni's son.³¹ But the evil-minded one disregarded them and set himself along a path of certain destruction. As soon as Suyodhana was born, many siddhas had said that this evil-souled one would bring about the destruction of kshatriyas. O Janardana! Those words have now been realized. Because of Duryodhana's deeds, the kings are headed towards fearful destruction. O Madhava! I will kill all the warriors in the battle today. When the kshatriyas have been speedily killed and their camps emptied, for the sake of his own destruction, Duryodhana will desire to fight with us. O Madhava! I think that will bring an end to the enmity. O Varshneya! Using my intelligence, on due reflection, I think this will be the end, borne out by Vidura's words and the evil-souled one's efforts. O brave one! Take me to the Bharata army, so that I can use my sharp arrows to slay the evil-souled Duryodhana's soldiers in the battle. O Madhava! Today, I will accomplish what Dharmaraja wants. While Dhritarashtra's son looks on, I will destroy this weakened army.' Thus addressed by Savyasachi, Krishna, with the reins in his hand, fearlessly penetrated the large army of the enemy in the battle.

' "The spot was terrible with the best of bows and arrows, and the javelins were like thorns.³² Clubs and maces were the paths and chariots and elephants were the large trees. The immensely illustrious ones immersed themselves in horses and foot soldiers. Govinda roamed around there, on a chariot with several flags. O king! Those white horses bore Arjuna in the battle. Controlled by Dasharha, they were seen in every direction. Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, advanced on his chariot. He showered down hundreds of sharp arrows, like torrents of rain pouring down on a mountain. In the battle, Savyasachi shot and enveloped everything with arrows with drooping tufts, which made a loud noise. Torrents of arrows penetrated armour and fell down on the ground. Shot from Gandiva, those arrows were like Indra's vajra to the touch. O lord of the earth! Men, elephants and horses were struck. The arrows whizzed like insects and brought them down in the battle. Everything was covered by arrows shot from Gandiva. In the encounter, the directions and the sub-directions could not be distinguished. Everything was covered by arrows marked with Partha's name. They were gold-tufted, washed in oil and polished by artisans. They were consumed by Partha, like elephants by a fire. The Kouravas were afflicted and slaughtered by those sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wielding the bow and arrows, Partha blazed. In the battle, he consumed the warriors, like a flaming fire among dead wood. He was like a fire with black trails kindled on the outskirts of a forest by the residents of the forest, roaring loudly and consuming dead wood. Many trees and heaps of dry creepers seemed to be burnt by the blazing and powerful one. The innumerable iron arrows of the powerful one were like extremely energetic flames. The spirited one burnt all the soldiers of your son, swiftly and intolerantly. His gold-tufted arrows were shot well and could not be countered by armour. They robbed lives. He did not have to shoot a second arrow at a man, a horse, or a supreme elephant. The arrows were of many different kinds of forms and penetrated the arrays of the maharathas. He single-handedly killed the soldiers of your son, like the wielder of the vajra against the daityas.' "

Chapter 1243(24)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those brave ones were unwilling to retreat and made efforts. Their resolution was firm. But Dhananjaya’s Gandiva was invincible. The touch of the immensely energetic one’s arrows was like that of Indra’s vajra. They were seen to be shot, like a torrent of rain released on a mountain. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Those soldiers were slaughtered by Kiriti. While your son looked on, they fled from the battle. Some lost the yokes of their chariots. For others, the charioteers were slain. O lord of the earth! For some others, the poles and wheels of the chariots were shattered. Some no longer possessed any arrows. Others were afflicted by arrows. Some were not unwounded. Nevertheless, they collectively fled, afflicted by fear. With their mounts slain, some tried to rescue their sons. Others loudly called out to their fathers, or to others, for help. O tiger among men! O lord of the earth! Here and there, some fled, abandoning their relatives, brothers and allies. Many maharathas were severely wounded and benumbed. Men were seen to be immobile, struck by Partha’s arrows. Others ascended their chariots and assured themselves for a short while. Having rested and quenched their thirst, they advanced towards the fight again. Some were invincible in battle. Acting in accordance with your son’s instructions, they abandoned the wounded and set out to fight again. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Others drank water and tended to their mounts. Having donned armour, they battled again. Others comforted their brothers, sons and fathers and conveyed them to the camps. Having done this, they desired to fight again. The brave ones were resplendent, decorated with nets of gold. They were like the daityas and the danavas, in pursuit of the conquest of the three worlds. Some violently advanced on chariots that were decorated with gold. They fought with the Pandava soldiers and with Dhrishtadyumna. Panchala Dhrishtadyumna, maharatha Shikhandi and Nakula’s son, Shatanika, fought against that division of rathas.

‘ “The angry Panchala was surrounded by a large army. He wrathfully rushed against those on your side, wishing to kill them. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he attacked, your son affixed and shot many arrows at him. O king! Dhrishtadyumna swiftly struck your archer son in the arms and the chest with many iron arrows. Severely pierced, the great archer was like an elephant struck by a goad. He used arrows to convey his³³ four horses to the land of the dead. With a broad-headed arrow, he severed his charioteer’s head from his body. Having been deprived of his chariot, King Duryodhana ascended onto the back of a horse. The scorcher of enemies retreated a short distance away. O great king! On seeing that his immensely strong and valiant army had been destroyed, your son went to where Soubala was.

‘ “When the rathas were routed, three thousand giant elephants surrounded and attacked the five Pandava rathas³⁴ from all directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, those five were surrounded by an army of elephants. Those tigers among men looked radiant, like planets surrounded by clouds. O great king! Arjuna was unwavering in his aim and mighty-armed. With Krishna as his charioteer, he advanced on a chariot drawn by white horses. Surrounded by elephants that were like mountains, he used sharp, sparkling and iron arrows to bring down that army of elephants. We saw each of those giant elephants killed by a single arrow. Mangled by Savyasachi, they fell down, or were falling down. On seeing those elephants, Bhimasena became like a crazy elephant. The powerful one grasped a giant club in his hand and swiftly descended from his chariot onto the ground, like Yama with a staff in his hand. On seeing the Pandava maharatha attack with his club, the soldiers on your side were frightened and excreted urine and excrement. On seeing Vrikodara with the club, the entire army was agitated. The elephants were as large as mountains and we saw them run away. Their frontal lobes were shattered by Bhimasena with the club, and blood began to flow. Struck by Bhimasena’s club, the elephants fled, uttering shrieks of pain, like mountains with their wings lopped off.³⁵ There were many elephants that fled, with their frontal lobes

shattered. On seeing that they were falling down, your soldiers were terrified. Yudhishtira and the Pandavas who were Madri's sons were enraged. They used sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of vultures to kill the warriors on elephants.

“When the king, your son, had been defeated by Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, he retreated on the back of a horse. O great king! On seeing that all the Pandavas had been surrounded by elephants, Dhrishtadyumna, accompanied by all the Prabhadrakas, attacked. Your son climbed onto another elephant, wishing to kill the king of Panchala. On not seeing Duryodhana, scorcher of enemies, in the midst of that array of chariots, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma asked the kshatriyas there, ‘Where has Duryodhana gone?’ On not seeing the king in that destruction of men, the maharathas thought that your son had been killed. Therefore, with distress written on their faces, they asked about your son. Some people told them that your son had gone to the spot where Soubala was. Other kshatriyas, who were severely wounded, said, ‘What is the need to ask about Duryodhana and see if he is still alive? Fight unitedly. What can the king do?’ Those kshatriyas were wounded in their limbs. Many of their mounts had been slain and they were afflicted with arrows. They softly said, ‘Let us kill the army with which we have been surrounded. After having slain all the elephants, the Pandavas are advancing here.’ On hearing their words, the immensely strong Ashvatthama penetrated that irresistible army of the king of Panchala. With Kripa and Kritavarma, they went to the spot where Soubala was. Those brave ones, firm archers, abandoned that array of chariots.³⁶

“O king! When they had left, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Pandavas attacked and slaughtered those on your side. The maharathas descended cheerfully, powerful and brave. On seeing this, the faces of those in your army turned pale and they gave up all hope of remaining alive. They had few weapons left and they saw that they were surrounded. O king! Surrounded by those two kinds of forces, I abandoned all hope of remaining alive. With the five on our side, I fought with the Panchala soldiers. I stationed myself at the spot where Sharadvata was.³⁷ The five on our side were severely afflicted by Kiriti's arrows. However, we fought a great battle with Dhrishtadyumna's large army. When all of us were defeated, we retreated from the field of battle. We saw maharatha Satyaki advancing against us. With four hundred chariots, the brave one pursued me in the battle. With difficulty, I freed myself from Dhrishtadyumna, whose mounts were exhausted. But I now found myself in the midst of Madhava's army, like an evildoer who has descended into hell. For a short while, there was a fierce and extremely terrible battle. The mighty-armed Satyaki sliced off my armour. He seized me alive and I fell down on the ground, senseless. In a short instant, that army of elephants was slaughtered by Arjuna's iron arrows and Bhimasena's club. In every direction, those mangled and giant elephants fell down, like mountains. Consequently, the Pandavas found that their path was obstructed. O great king! The immensely strong Bhimasena dragged away those giant elephants and created a path for the Pandava chariots. On not seeing Duryodhana, the scorcher of enemies, in that army of chariots, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma tried to search for the king, your maharatha son. They abandoned Panchala and went to the spot where Soubala was. In that destruction of men, they were anxious to see the king.”

Chapter 1244(25)

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When that army of elephants was slain by Pandu’s son³⁸ and when that army was slaughtered in the battle by Bhimasena, Bhimasena, the scorcher of enemies, was seen to be wandering around there. He was enraged as Yama with a staff in his hand, destroying all beings. O king! In the encounter, he clashed against and killed your remaining sons, while your son, Kouravya Duryodhana, could not be seen. Those and other brothers united and attacked Bhimasena. O great king! They were Durmarshana, Jaitra, Bhuribala and Ravi. These sons of yours united and attacked from every direction. They obstructed Bhimasena from all the directions. O great king! At this, Bhima again ascended his chariot. He shot sharp arrows towards the inner organs of your sons. In the great battle, your sons were afflicted by Bhima and tried to drag Bhimasena away, like an unwilling elephant. In the encounter, the wrathful Bhimsena swiftly used a kshurapra arrow to sever Durmarshana’s head and it fell down on the ground. With another broad-headed arrow that was capable of penetrating all armour, Bhima slew your maharatha son, Shrutanta. The scorcher of enemies seemed to smile. He pierced Kouravya Jayatsena with an iron arrow and brought him down from his seat on the chariot. O king! He was quickly killed and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. O venerable one! At this, Shrutarva angrily pierced Bhima with one hundred arrows with drooping tufts that were shafted with feathers of vultures. In the encounter, Bhima angrily pierced Jaitra, Bhuribala and Ravi. Those three were struck with three arrows that were like the poison or the fire. Having been slain, those maharathas fell down from their chariots onto the ground. They were like blossoming kimshuka trees during the spring that had been struck down. With another sharp and iron arrow, the scorcher of enemies struck Durvimochana and sent him to the world of the dead. Having been slain, that supreme of rathas fell down from his chariot onto the ground. He was like a tree on a mountain top that had been struck down by a storm. In that battle, in the forefront of that army, he then struck two of your sons, Dushpradharsha and Sujata, with two arrows each. Those arrows had stone heads. Their limbs were struck by these and the supreme of rathas fell down. Bhima saw that Durvisaha, another of your sons, was impetuously advancing in the battle. He pierced him with a broad-headed arrow. While all the archers looked on, he was slain and fell down from his mount. On seeing that many of his brothers had been single-handedly killed in the battle, Shrutarva became intolerant and attacked Bhima. He brandished his giant bow, decorated with gold. He shot many arrows that were like poison and the fire. O king! In the battle, he severed Pandava’s bow and when the bow was severed, struck him with twenty arrows. However, maharatha Bhimasena picked up another bow. Enveloping your son with arrows, he asked him to wait. The great duel that took place between the two of them was wonderful and fearful. Such a duel had earlier occurred between Jambha and Vasava. They shot sparkling arrows that were like Yama’s staff and shrouded the entire earth, the sky and all the directions. O king! In the battle, Shrutarva angrily picked up his bow and struck Bhimasena in the arms and the chest with arrows. O great king! Thus severely pierced by your archer son, Bhima was angry and agitated, like the ocean during the new or the full moon. O venerable one! Overcome by anger, Bhima used his arrows to convey your son’s charioteer and his four horses to Yama’s eternal abode. On seeing that he was without a chariot, the one with an immeasurable soul showed the dexterity of his hands and covered him with tufted arrows. O king! Devoid of his chariot, Shrutarva picked up a sword and a shield. The sword was as radiant as the sun and was marked with the signs of one hundred moons. However, Pandava used a kshurapra arrow to sever his head from his body. The great-souled one severed his head with a kshurapra arrow and the headless torso fell down from the chariot onto the ground, making a loud noise.

‘ “When that brave one fell down, those on your side were overcome by fear. Despite this, they advanced against Bhimasena in the battle, wishing to fight with him. Those were the only ones left from the army that was like an ocean. When they speedily attacked, the armoured and powerful Bhimasena received them. They attacked

him, surrounding him from all sides. Bhima enveloped those on your side with sharp arrows. He afflicted all of them, like the one with the one thousand eyes³⁹ against the asuras. He destroyed five hundred maharathas and destroyed the bumpers of their chariots. In the battle, he again slaughtered an army of seven hundred elephants. With supreme arrows, he slew ten thousand foot soldiers and eight hundred horses. Pandava was radiant. O lord! Having slain your sons in the battle, Bhimasena Kounteya thought that his task and the purpose of his birth had been accomplished. He slew all those on your side who battled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No one among your soldiers was capable of glancing towards him. All the Kurus were driven away and their followers slain. He then made a loud noise by slapping his armpits and terrified the giant elephants. O lord of the earth! There were many warriors in your army who were killed. O great king! The few who were left were overcome by distress.” ’

Chapter 1245(26)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! In the battle, there were only two of your sons who had not been killed, Duryodhana and Sudarsha. They were stationed in the midst of the horses. On seeing that Duryodhana was stationed in the midst of the horses, Devaki’s son spoke to Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son. ‘Many enemies, and relatives protected by them, have been killed. The bull among the Shini lineage is returning, having captured Sanjaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having fought in the battle against the wicked sons of Dhritarashtra and their followers, Nakula and Sahadeva are exhausted. Those three, Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona’s maharatha son, have abandoned Suyodhana and stationed themselves elsewhere. Having slain Duryodhana’s soldiers, the Panchalas, together with all the Prabhadrakas, are stationed here, supreme in their prosperity. O Partha! Duryodhana is stationed there, in the midst of the horses. The umbrella is held aloft his head and he is repeatedly glancing here and there. He has arrayed his entire army in the form of a counter-vyuha and is stationed in the midst of the battle. If you kill him with your sharp arrows, you will be successful in your objective. O scorcher of enemies! Having seen that the army of elephants has been killed, they are not approaching you. While they are still running away, kill Suyodhana. Let someone else go to Panchala and ask him to quickly come here. O son!’⁴⁰ The army is exhausted and the wicked one will not be able to escape. Having destroyed a large army in the battle, Dhritarashtra’s son thinks that the sons of Pandu have been defeated and has assumed an insolent form. Having seen that his own army has been destroyed by the Pandavas, he is distressed. It is certain that the king will advance in the battle and ensure his own destruction.’ Having been thus addressed, Phalguna spoke these words to Krishna. ‘O one who grants honours! O Krishna! All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed by Bhima and the two who are alive will also be killed today. Bhishma has been killed. Drona has been killed. Karna Vaikartana has been killed. Shalya, the king of Madra, has been killed. O Krishna! Jayadratha has been killed. O Janardana! Only five hundred horses remain from Shakuni Soubala’s army and two hundred chariots. There are one hundred fierce tuskers and three thousand foot soldiers. O Madhava! Ashvatthama, Kripa, the lord of Trigarta, Uluka, Shakuni and Satvata Kritavarma—these are the ones who are left in Dhritarashtra’s army. It is certain that no one on earth can ever escape from death. Behold. Though the soldiers have been killed, Duryodhana is still stationed there. However, all the enemies of the king⁴¹ will be slain today. I think that no one amongst the enemy will be able to escape. O Krishna! Even if they are crazy in the battle and are superhuman, as long as they do not run away, I will slay all of them in the battle today. I will angrily bring down Gandhara with sharp arrows in the battle today. The king has not slept for a long time. I will win back the riches the evil-acting Soubala deceitfully won from us, when he again challenged us to a gambling match in the assembly hall. On hearing that their husbands and sons have been killed in the battle by the Pandavas, all the women of Nagapura⁴² will weep today. O Krishna! All our tasks will be completed today. Today, Duryodhana will abandon his blazing prosperity and his life. O Krishna! O Varshneya! You can regard Dhritarashtra’s stupid son as having been killed by me in the battle today, as long as he does not flee because of fear. O scorcher of enemies! Those horses cannot endure the twang of my bow and the slapping of my palms. Take me there.’ O king! Thus addressed by the illustrious Pandava, Dasharha drove the horses towards Duryodhana’s army.

‘“O venerable one! On seeing that army, three maharathas—Bhimasena, Arjuna and Sahadeva—prepared themselves. They roared like lions and advanced, wishing to kill Duryodhana. All three united and raised their bows. In the battle, on seeing this, Soubala advanced against the Pandava assassins. Your son, Sudarshana, advanced against Bhimasena.⁴³ Susharma and Shakuni fought against Kiriti. Your son⁴⁴ was on the back of a horse and attacked Sahadeva. O lord of men! With care and speed, your son severely struck Sahadeva’s head with a javelin. Struck by your son, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. His limbs were covered with blood and he sighed like a ven-

omous serpent. O lord of the earth! Having regained his senses, Sahadeva angrily countered Duryodhana with sharp arrows. Partha Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, fought valiantly and severed the heads of many warriors who were seated on horses. Partha slaughtered that army with many arrows. Having brought down all the horses, he advanced against the chariots of the Trigartas. The maharathas from Trigarta united and covered Arjuna and Vasudeva with showers of arrows. Pandu's immensely illustrious son struck Satyakarma with a kshurapra arrow and shattered the yoke of his chariot. O lord! With a kshurapra arrow that had been sharpened on stone, the immensely illustrious one then laughingly severed his adversary's head, adorned with earrings made out of molten gold. O king! While all the warriors looked on, he then attacked Satyeshu, like a hungry lion in the forest going after deer. Having killed him, Partha pierced Susharma with three arrows and destroyed all the chariots that were decorated with gold. Partha then forcefully advanced against the lord of Prasthala,⁴⁵ harbouring an enmity nurtured over many years and angrily shooting arrows that were like poison. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Arjuna first enveloped him with one hundred arrows and then slew all the horses that belonged to that archer. Partha then affixed a sharp arrow that was like Yama's staff and smilingly, shot it towards Susharma. That arrow was shot by an archer who flamed with rage. In the battle, it struck and pierced Susharma's heart. O great king! Having lost his life, he fell down on the ground. All the Pandavas roared and those on your side were distressed. When Susharma had been killed in the battle, he used sharp arrows to dispatch forty-three of his⁴⁶ maharatha sons to Yama's eternal abode. He then used sharp arrows to kill all his followers. The maharatha then attacked the remaining soldiers in the Bharata army.

‘ “O lord of men! In the battle, Bhima was wrathful. He laughed and made your son, Sudarshana, invisible with arrows. Angry, but smiling, he severed his head from his body with an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow. Slain, he fell down on the ground. When that brave one was killed, his followers surrounded Bhima in the battle and covered him with sharp arrows. However, Vrikodara used sharp arrows that were like Indra's vajra to the touch to envelop that army in every direction. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In a short while, they were slaughtered by Bhima. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they were thus being slaughtered by that immensely strong one, many of those soldiers advanced against Bhimasena and fought with him. However, Pandava countered all of them with fierce arrows. O king! In that fashion, those on your side brought down a great shower of arrows on the Pandaveya maharathas from every side. All the Pandavas, and the enemy, became anxious. Those on your side, and that of the Pandaveyas, fought in that battle. The warriors struck each other and fell down. O king! Both armies sorrowed over their relatives.” ’

Chapter 1246(27)

‘Sanjaya said, “That battle, destructive of men, horses and elephants, continued. O king! Shakuni Soubala attacked Sahadeva. As he swiftly attacked, the powerful Sahadeva shot a torrent of arrows that were like swift insects. In the encounter, Uluka pierced Bhima with ten arrows. O great king! Shakuni pierced Bhima with three arrows and enveloped Sahadeva with ninety. O king! In the battle, those brave ones clashed against each other and pierced each other with sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. O lord of the earth! Those showers of arrows were released from the bows in their hands. They covered the ten directions, like rain pouring down from clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, the enraged and extremely powerful Bhima and Sahadeva roamed around in the encounter and created great carnage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those two shrouded your army with hundreds of arrows. Here and there, the sky became covered with darkness. O lord of the earth! Mangled by the arrows, the horses fled in a reverse direction and dragged around many slain ones in their paths. Horses and horse riders were killed. O venerable one! Armour was shattered and javelins were destroyed. The earth seemed to be strewn with coloured flowers. O great king! The warriors there clashed against each other. They angrily roamed around in the battle, slaying each other. The earth was strewn with beautiful heads that had the complexion of lotus filaments. The eyes were turned up and the lower lips were bit in anger. They were adorned with earrings. O great king! Arms that were like the trunks of kings of elephants were severed. They were adorned with armlets and arm-guards and still wielded swords, javelins and battleaxes. Other bleeding and headless torsos seemed to rise up and dance around on the field of battle. O lord! The earth was frequented by a large number of carnivorous beasts and it was terrible. In the great battle, only a few of the Kouraveya soldiers were left. Having conveyed them to Yama’s abode, the Pandavas were delighted.

‘ “At that time, the brave and powerful Soubala severely struck Sahadeva on the head with a javelin. O great king! Losing his senses, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Sahadeva in that state, the powerful Bhimasena angrily restrained all the soldiers. He pierced hundreds and thousands with his iron arrows. Having pierced them, the scorcher of enemies roared like a lion. At that sound, all of Shakuni’s followers were terrified and quickly fled in fear, together with their horses and elephants. On seeing that they had been routed, King Duryodhana said, ‘O wicked ones! O those who do not know about dharma! Why are you running away from the battle? Deeds performed in this world by brave ones who give up their lives in the battle and do not show their backs, earn worlds in the hereafter.’ Having been thus addressed, King Soubala’s followers attacked the Pandavas, preferring death over retreat. O Indra among kings! As they advanced, they created an extremely terrible noise. All of them were agitated, like a turbulent ocean. O great king! On seeing that Soubala’s followers were attacking, in their pursuit of victory, the Pandavas counter-attacked.

‘ “O lord of the earth! Having regained his assurance, the invincible Sahadeva pierced Shakuni with ten arrows and his horses with three. He seemed to smile as he severed Soubala’s bow with his arrows. Shakuni, unassailable in battle, picked up another bow. He pierced Nakula with sixty arrows and Bhimasena with seven. O great king! Uluka also pierced Bhima with seven arrows. Wishing to save his father in the battle, he pierced Sahadeva with seventy. In the encounter, Bhimasena pierced Shakuni with sixty-four sharp arrows and those who were along the flanks with three arrows each. In the battle, having been struck by Bhima with arrows washed in oil, he⁴⁷ angrily covered Sahadeva with a shower of arrows. It was like clouds tinged with lightning pouring down rain on a mountain. O great king! The brave and powerful Sahadeva used a broad-headed arrow to sever and bring down Uluka’s head. He was slain by Sahadeva and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. His limbs were covered with blood and the Pandava warriors were delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that his son had

been killed there, Shakuni's voice choked with tears. He remembered Kshatta's words and sighed. Having thought for some time, with his eyes full of tears, he sighed and, approaching Sahadeva, he pierced him with three arrows. O great king! Countering the large number of arrows with his own arrows, the powerful Sahadeva severed his bow in the battle. O Indra among kings! When his bow was severed, Shakuni Soubala grasped a large sword and hurled it towards Sahadeva. O lord of the earth! It descended violently, terrible in form. But smilingly, he⁴⁸ severed Soubala's sword into two fragments in the encounter. When the sword was shattered into two fragments, he grasped a mighty club and hurled it towards Sahadeva. Though invincible, it too fell down on the ground. The angry Soubala then hurled an extremely terrible javelin towards Pandava. It was like the night of destruction. It descended violently in the encounter. However, Sahadeva seemed to smile. He used gold-decorated arrows to slice it into three fragments. Shattered into three fragments and decorated with gold, it fell down on the ground. It was as if blazing thunder had fallen from the sky, with flashes of lightning. On seeing that the javelin had been destroyed, Soubala was overcome with fear. Because of their fright, all those on your side fled, and this included Soubala. The Pandavas, hoping for victory, roared loudly in delight. Almost all those on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra retreated. On seeing that they were distressed, Madri's powerful son⁴⁹ restrained them with thousands of arrows in the battle.

“Sahadeva approached Soubala from the rear. He was still hoping for victory, though he was running away from the battle and was protected by those from Gandhara. O king! He remembered that Shakuni, his share, was still left.⁵⁰ Sahadeva pursued him on a chariot that was decorated with gold. He strung his large bow and repeatedly twanged it. He pursued Soubala and struck him with arrows that had been sharpened on stone and shafted with feathers of vultures. In rage, he struck him severely, like a mighty elephant being struck with a goad. Having struck him, the intelligent one addressed him, as if reminding him. ‘Resort to the dharma of kshatriyas. Be a man and fight. O stupid one! You rejoiced a lot in the assembly hall. O evil-minded one! You will receive the fruits of that action now. All the evil-souled ones who disrespected us in earlier times have been killed. Duryodhana, who brings ill fame to his lineage, is the only one that is left, and his maternal uncle.⁵¹ I will slay you and slice off your head with a razor-sharp arrow today. It will be like plucking fruit from a tree with a stick.’ O great king! O tiger among men! Having said this, the immensely strong Sahadeva attacked him with great force. The invincible Sahadeva, the lord of warriors, attacked him. He seemed to be smiling, as he stretched his bow with great force and rage. He pierced Shakuni with ten arrows and his horses with four. He severed his umbrella, standard and bow and roared like a lion. Soubala's standard, bow and umbrella were severed by Sahadeva and he was pierced in all his inner organs by many arrows. O great king! Then, the powerful Sahadeva again shot a shower of invincible arrows towards Shakuni. Angrily, Subala's son rushed towards Madri's son, Sahadeva. He wished to kill him with a javelin that was decorated with gold. In the forefront of that battle, as he rushed swiftly ahead, Madri's son severed the upraised javelin and the two well-rounded arms with three broad-headed arrows. Having spiritedly severed them, he roared. Acting swiftly, he then used a broad-headed arrow that was gold-tufted and was capable of penetrating all armour. It was firm and was made out of iron. Aiming this well and with force, he severed his head from his body. That arrow was decorated with gold. It was extremely sharp and was as radiant as the sun. In the battle, Pandava used that to sever the head of Subala's son and he fell down on the ground. The arrow was gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone and Pandu's enraged son powerfully severed the head with this. He⁵² was the root of all the bad conduct of the Kurus. With the head severed, Shakuni was seen to lie down on the ground. His body was wet with blood.

“The warriors on your side were dispirited and terrified. Still wielding weapons, they fled in different directions. Their mouths were dry and they ran away, bereft of their senses. They were afflicted by the twang of Gandiva. They were oppressed by fear. Together with the son of Dhritarashtra, the chariots, horses and elephants were routed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Shakuni was brought down, the Pandaveyas were delighted. In the battle, they cheerfully blew on their conch shells. Together with Keshava, the soldiers rejoiced. All of them honoured the energetic Sahadeva and joyfully said, ‘O brave one! It is through good fortune that the evil-souled gambler and his son have been killed by you in the battle.’”

Chapter 1247(28)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Soubala’s followers were enraged. Ready to give up their lives, they repulsed the Pandavas. Wishing to support Sahadeva in his victory, Arjuna and the spirited Bhimasena, who looked like an angry and virulent serpent, received them. They wished to kill Sahadeva, with javelins, swords and spears in their hands. But with Gandiva, Dhananjaya rendered their resolution unsuccessful. With weapons in their hands, those warriors attacked. However, with broad-headed arrows, Bibhatsu severed their heads and their horses. They were slain and lay down on the ground, deprived of their lives. Spiritedly, Savyasachi struck those brave men of the world. King Duryodhana saw that his own army was being destroyed. O lord! He angrily rallied the one hundred chariots that still remained. O scorcher of enemies! He spoke these words to all the assembled army of the son of Dhritarashtra, the elephants, the horses and the foot soldiers. ‘In the battle, attack all the Pandavas and their well-wishers, with Panchala and his army. Return after swiftly slaying them.’ Unassailable in battle, they accepted those instructions. On your son’s command, they attacked the Parthas back in that encounter. In the great battle, those who were left attacked swiftly. But the Pandavas countered them with arrows that were like venomous serpents. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! In a short instant, those great-souled ones slaughtered those soldiers in the battle and they could not find a protector. Though armoured and stationed, they were full of fear. The horses fled in a reverse direction and the soldiers were covered in dust. In the battle, the directions and the sub-directions could not be distinguished. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a short while, in that battle, many men emerged from the army of the Pandavas and slaughtered those on your side. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your soldiers were annihilated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord! Eleven akshouhinis had been mustered by your son and they were slaughtered in the battle by the Pandus and the Srinjayas. O king! Among the thousands of great-souled kings on your side, only Duryodhana remained and he was seen to be severely wounded. He glanced in all the directions and saw that the earth had been emptied. He was bereft of all warriors and glanced at the Pandavas in the battle, who were delighted that all their objectives had been accomplished. They roared in every direction. O great king! Hearing the whizzing of arrows shot by those great-souled ones, Duryodhana was overcome by depression. Devoid of soldiers and men, he resolved to retreat.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O suta! When my soldiers and my camps were annihilated, what was the army that still remained with the Pandavas? I am asking you. O Sanjaya! You are skilled in recounting. Tell me. What did my unfortunate son, Duryodhana, the lord of the earth, do, when he saw that his army had been destroyed and he was the only one left?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Two thousand chariots, seven hundred elephants, five thousand horses and ten thousand foot soldiers—this is what was left from the large army of the Pandavas. Dhrishtadyumna gathered them and remained stationed in the battle. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! King Duryodhana was alone. In the battle, he could not see any supreme ratha as his aide. He saw that his own army had been destroyed and that the enemy was roaring. He abandoned his horse, which had been slain. Out of fear, he retreated and fled in an eastern direction. Your son, Duryodhana, had been the lord of eleven hundred army divisions. With a club in his hand, the spirited one advanced on foot towards a lake. He had advanced on foot only for a short distance, when the lord of men remembered the words that the intelligent Kshatta, devoted to dharma, had spoken. ‘The immensely wise Vidura had certainly foreseen all of this earlier. Our great destruction and that of the kshatriyas would occur in the battle.’ Thinking in this way, the king entered the lake. O king! Having seen the destruction of his army, his heart was consumed with grief. O great king! With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Pandavas angrily attacked your soldiers. O king! They⁵³ wielded javelins, swords and spears in their hands and roared powerfully. With Gandiva, Dhananjaya rendered their resolutions unsuccessful. He slaughtered them with his sharp arrows, with their advisers and

their relatives. Stationed on a chariot drawn by white horses, Arjuna was extremely radiant. Subala and his son were killed, with their horses, chariots and elephants. Your army was like a large forest that had been destroyed. There had been hundreds and thousands in Duryodhana's army. O king! But not a single maharatha was seen to remain alive. O king! The only exceptions were Drona's son, the brave Kritavarma, Goutama Kripa and the king, your son.

“On seeing me, Dhrishtadyumna laughed. He spoke to Satyaki. ‘What is the point of capturing this one? Nothing will be gained by keeping him alive.’ On hearing Dhrishtadyumna's words, Shini's maharatha grandson raised his sharp sword, so as to kill me then. At that time, the immensely wise Krishna Dvaipayana arrived and said, ‘Free Sanjaya alive. Under no circumstances should he be killed.’ Hearing Dvaipayana's words, Shini's grandson joined his hands in salutation. Freeing me, he said, ‘O Sanjaya! Depart in peace.’ Obtaining his permission, I cast aside my armour. I was without weapons. In the evening, I set out for the city,⁵⁴ my limbs covered in blood. O king! When I had travelled one krosha,⁵⁵ I saw the solitary Duryodhana, with the club in his hand. He was severely wounded. His eyes were full of tears and he did not see me. Miserable, I stood before him. Though he saw me, he ignored me. On seeing him alone thus, alone after the battle, I was overcome with great grief and could not speak for a while. Then I told him everything about my capture in the battle and my release, alive, through the favours of Dvaipayana. Having thought for some time, he regained his senses. He asked me about his brothers and all the soldiers. I told him everything that I had directly witnessed, that all his brothers had been killed and the soldiers brought down. ‘O lord of men! Only three rathas remain among those on your side. This is what Krishna Dvaipayana told me when I was about to leave.’⁵⁶ He sighed and glanced repeatedly at me. Then, touching me with his hands, your son replied, ‘O Sanjaya! With your exception, no one else has been left alive in this battle. I do not see a second one, though the Pandavas have their aides. O Sanjaya! Tell the lord, the king, who has wisdom for his sight.⁵⁷ Tell him, your son, Duryodhana, has entered the lake. He is without well-wishers, without direction and without sons and brothers. When the Pandavas have obtained the kingdom, what is the point of someone like me remaining alive? Tell him everything and tell him that I have escaped from the great battle. I am alive, but am severely wounded. I will rest in this lake.’ O great king! Having said this, the king entered the lake. Through his maya, that lord of men created a passage in the water.

“When he had entered that lake, I was alone and saw that the three rathas arrived at the spot, with their exhausted mounts. They were Sharadvata Kripa, Drona's son, supreme among rathas, and Kritavarma, from the Bhoma lineage. They were wounded with arrows. All of them glanced towards me and swiftly urged their horses. Having approached me, they said, ‘O Sanjaya! It is through good fortune that you are alive.’ All of them asked me about your son, the lord of men. ‘O Sanjaya! Where is King Duryodhana? Is he alive?’ I told them that the king was well. I told them everything that Duryodhana had told me. I also showed them the lake that the king had entered. O king! Having heard my words, Ashvatthama glanced towards the large lake. He lamented in grief and said, ‘Alas! The king does not know that we are still alive. With him, we are sufficient to fight with the enemy.’ For a long time, those maharathas lamented there. Then, on seeing the sons of Pandu in the battle, those best of rathas fled.⁵⁸ Kripa took me up on his well-prepared chariot. Those three rathas, all that was left of our army, departed for the camp. The sun had set. On hearing that all your sons had been killed, those who guarded the outposts lamented.

“O great king! They were aged men who had been employed to take care of the women. With the wives of the king, they set out for the city. All of them lamented and wept loudly. On hearing about the destruction of your army, great sounds of woe arose. O king! The women wept repeatedly. They made the earth resound with that noise, like female ospreys. They scratched their bodies with their nails. They struck their heads with their hands. They tore out their hair. They wept loudly. They beat on their breasts with loud sounds of lamentation. O lord of the earth! With those sounds of lamentation, they wept loudly. Duryodhana's advisers were extremely miserable and their voices choked with tears. Taking the king's wives with them, they left for the city. O lord of the earth! With staffs in their hands, those who were in charge of the gates and those who guarded the gates also swiftly fled towards the city. They took with them beautiful beds that were spread with expensive covers. Other men placed their wives on carts that were drawn by mules and left towards the city. O great king! Those noble women had earlier

lived in palaces and were not seen, even by the sun. As they departed for the city, they were seen by ordinary men. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Those women were delicate and noble. With their kin and relatives slain, they swiftly departed for the city. The cowherds and other herdsmen also fled towards the city. The men were terrified, afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena. They were overcome by an extremely terrible fear of the Parthas too. As they fled towards the city, they glanced at each other. There was an extremely terrible exodus that took place.

‘“At that time, Yuyutsu was senseless because of his grief. Nevertheless, he thought about what should be done at the time. ‘Duryodhana has been defeated in the battle by the terrible valour of the Pandavas. He was the lord of eleven army divisions. His brothers have been slain. All the Kurus, with Bhishma and Drona as the foremost, have been killed. Through the wishes of destiny, I am the only one who has been spared. In every direction, all of them are running away from the camps. There are only a few who are left from among Duryodhana’s advisers. Taking the king’s wives with them, they have run away towards the city. O lord!⁵⁹ I think that the time has come for me to also enter with them, after having taken Yudhishtira and Bhima’s permission.’⁶⁰ For this purpose, the mighty-armed one presented himself before them. The king, who was always compassionate, was pleased. The mighty-armed one⁶¹ embraced the son of a vaishya⁶² and granted him leave. Ascending his chariot, he swiftly urged the horses and also tended to the task of conveying the wives of the king to the city. With them, he entered Hastinapura, his voice choking with tears and his eyes full of tears. The sun was swiftly setting. He saw the immensely wise Vidura, who also had tears in his eyes. His senses overcome with grief, he had come away from the king.⁶³ He bowed down before him and stood before him. The one who upheld the truth spoke to him.⁶⁴ ‘O son! It is through good fortune that you are alive amidst this destruction of the Kurus. Why have you entered and come here without the king?’⁶⁵ Tell me, in detail, the reason for this.’ Yuyutsu replied, ‘O father!⁶⁶ Shakuni has been slain, with his kin and his relatives. When his relatives had been killed, King Duryodhana abandoned his horse. He retreated and fled in an eastern direction. When the king had run away, all those in the camps and abodes were terrified and anxious and fled towards the city. The guards in charge also fled, having placed the wives of the king and his brothers on the mounts. At this, I took the permission of the king and Keshava⁶⁷ and entered Hastinapura, wishing to protect the people who were running away.’ Having heard the words spoken by the son of a vaishya, Vidura, knowledgeable about all forms of dharma, thought that the right decision had been taken at the time. The one who was eloquent with words, immeasurable in his soul, applauded Yuyutsu. ‘When all those of the Bharata lineage were being destroyed, you acted in accordance with what should have been done at the time. You should rest now. Tomorrow, you can return to Yudhishtira.’ Having heard the words of Vidura, knowledgeable about all forms of dharma, Yuyutsu took his permission and entered, after the destruction of the king had taken place. Yuyutsu spent the night in his own house.” ’



SECTION SEVENTY-SIX

TIRTHA YATRA PARVA

This parva has 1261 shlokas and twenty-five chapters.

Chapter 1248(29): 66 shlokas

Chapter 1249(30): 68 shlokas

Chapter 1250(31): 60 shlokas

Chapter 1251(32): 52 shlokas

Chapter 1252(33): 18 shlokas

Chapter 1253(34): 81 shlokas

Chapter 1254(35): 53 shlokas

Chapter 1255(36): 63 shlokas

Chapter 1256(37): 50 shlokas

Chapter 1257(38): 33 shlokas

Chapter 1258(39): 32 shlokas

Chapter 1259(40): 35 shlokas

Chapter 1260(41): 39 shlokas

Chapter 1261(42): 41 shlokas

Chapter 1262(43): 52 shlokas

Chapter 1263(44): 110 shlokas

Chapter 1264(45): 95 shlokas

Chapter 1265(46): 29 shlokas

Chapter 1266(47): 61 shlokas

Chapter 1267(48): 23 shlokas

Chapter 1268(49): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1269(50): 51 shlokas

Chapter 1270(51): 26 shlokas

Chapter 1271(52): 21 shlokas

Chapter 1272(53): 37 shlokas

It is discovered that Duryodhana is hiding in Lake Dvaipayana. Bhima and Duryodhana prepare to fight. Balarama returns from his pilgrimage to witness the encounter. This parva has a description of places of pilgrimage (tirtha). Yatra means travel or journey and this section is accordingly named after a journey to places of pilgrimage.

Chapter 1248(29)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When all the soldiers had been killed by the sons of Pandu in the field of battle, what did my remaining soldiers do? What about Kritavarma, Kripa and Drona’s valiant son? What did evil-souled King Duryodhana do then?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When the wives of those great-souled kshatriyas had fled and the camp was empty, those three rathas were extremely anxious. They heard the sounds made by the victorious Pandavas. In the evening, they saw that the camp was empty. They no longer wished to stay there and wishing to save the king, went towards the lake. O king! Yudhishtira, with dharma in his soul, and his brothers were delighted in the battle. They roamed around, wishing to kill Duryodhana. Desiring victory, they angrily sought to follow him. But though they endeavoured to search for him, they could not see that king of men. With the club in his hand, he had run away with great speed and with his maya, had entered the lake and had made the waters solid.¹ The mounts of all the Pandavas became extremely tired. They returned to their camp and with their soldiers, rested there.

‘ “After the Parthas had left, Kripa, Drona’s son and Satvata Kritavarma slowly went to the lake. They approached the lake where the lord of men was lying down. They addressed the invincible king who was sleeping in the waters. ‘O king! Arise! With us, fight against Yudhishtira. Triumph and enjoy the earth, or be slain and enjoy heaven. O Duryodhana! All their soldiers have also been slain by you. O lord of the earth! The soldiers who are left will also not be able to withstand your impetuosity. You will also be protected by us. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, arise.’ Duryodhana replied, ‘O bulls among men! This clash between the Pandus and the Kouravas has been destructive for men. It is through good fortune that I see that you have escaped with your lives. We will defeat all of them, but after we have got rid of our tiredness and our exhaustion. You are also exhausted and we are severely wounded. Their army is prospering. Therefore, I do not think we should fight now. O brave ones! Since your hearts are large, the words that you have spoken are not surprising. You are also supremely devoted to us. However, this is not the time for valour. I will rest for one night. Then, in the battle tomorrow, I will fight with you against the enemy. There can be no doubt about that.’ Having been thus addressed, Drona’s son spoke to the king, who was unassailable in battle. ‘O king! O fortunate one! Arise. We will defeat the enemy in the battle. O king! I swear on my religious rites, my donations, my truthfulness and my meditation that I will slay the Somakas today. Virtuous people obtain delight from performing sacrifices. If I do not slay the enemy in the battle before the night is over, let me not obtain that delight. O lord! Without slaying all the Panchalas, I will not take off my armour. I am telling you this truthfully. O lord of men! Listen to me.’ While they were conversing in this way, some hunters came to the spot.

‘ “They were exhausted from carrying their burden of meat and wished to drink some water. O great king! O lord! Every day, with supreme devotion, those hunters used to carry a load of meat to Bhimasena. While they were concealed there, they heard all the words that were exchanged between them and Duryodhana. On finding that Kourava was unwilling to fight, those great archers, who wished to fight, made great efforts to persuade him.

They² saw the Kourava maharathas there. Situated in the water, the king was unwilling to fight. O Indra among kings! On hearing the conversation between them and the king, who was in the waters, the concealed hunters realized that it was Suyodhana who was inside the water. Some time earlier, while searching for the king, Pandu’s son³ had arrived there and had asked them about your son. O king! On remembering the words of Pandu’s son, those hunters of deer softly spoke to each other. ‘If we tell Pandava about Duryodhana, he will give us riches. It is evident that King Duryodhana is inside this lake. Therefore, let all of us go to the spot where King Yudhishtira is. We will tell him that the intolerant Duryodhana is sleeping in the waters. Let us tell the intelligent Bhimasena, the

wielder of the bow, everything about Dhritarashtra's son sleeping in the waters. He will be extremely pleased with us and will give us a lot of riches. Why should we exhaust ourselves with this dried out meat?' Having said this, the hunters were delighted. Desiring wealth, they abandoned that burden of meat and headed towards the camp.

'O great king! The Pandavas, strikers, had accomplished their objectives. But they did not see Duryodhana in the battle. Desiring to ascertain the final destination of that wicked and deceitful one, they had dispatched spies in every direction of the field of the battle. But all those soldiers had returned and told Dharmaraja that King Duryodhana could not be found. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of the messengers, the king was anxious and breathed heavily. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Pandus were thus distressed. O lord! At that time, the hunters swiftly arrived at the camp, delighted because they had seen King Duryodhana. Though they were restrained,⁴ while Bhimasena looked on, they entered. They approached the immensely strong Pandava Bhimasena and told him everything that they had seen and heard. O king! At this, Vrikodara gave them a lot of riches. The scorcher of enemies went and told Dharmaraja everything. 'O king! Duryodhana has been discovered by my hunters. You have been tormented because of him. He is sleeping in the waters and has turned them into stone.' O lord of the earth! On hearing Bhimasena's pleasant words, Kounteya Ajatashatrua, together with his brothers, was delighted. On hearing that the great archer had entered the waters of a lake, with Janardana at the forefront, he⁵ swiftly went there. O lord of the earth! Loud sounds of joy arose among all the Pandavas and the Panchalas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They roared loudly, like lions. O king! All the kshatriyas swiftly rushed towards Lake Dvaipayana. In every direction, the cheerful Somakas roared, 'Dhritarashtra's wicked son withdrew from the battle and has been found out.' O lord of the earth! Speedily and swiftly, the chariots proceeded there and the tumultuous sound that they made reached heaven. Yudhishtira wished to seek out Duryodhana and wherever he went, the kings spiritedly followed him, although their mounts were exhausted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Arjuna, Bhimasena, the two Pandavas who were Madri's sons, Panchala Dhristadyumna, the unvanquished Shikhandi, Uttamouja, Yudhamanyu, the unvanquished Satyaki, the remaining Panchalas and Droupadi's sons. There were all the horses and elephants and hundreds of foot soldiers. O great king! All of them went with Dharma's son.

'Yudhishtira reached the lake known as Dvaipayana, where Duryodhana was. The waters were clear, cool and pleasant to the heart and it was as large as the ocean. Through his maya, your son had solidified the waters and was inside them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This was a wonderful act and could only be performed with divine powers. The lord of men was lying down inside the waters and was extremely difficult to see. O Indra among men! The lord of men still held the club in his hand. King Duryodhana was residing inside the water and heard a tumultuous sound, like the roar of a cloud. O Indra among kings! O great king! It was made by Yudhishtira and his brothers, when they arrived to kill Duryodhana. There was the great roar of conch shells and the wheels of chariots. A great cloud of dust arose and the earth trembled. O hearing the noise made by Yudhishtira's soldiers, maharathas Kritavarma, Kripa and Drona's son rushed towards the king and said, 'Desiring victory, the cheerful Pandavas are advancing here on their horses. Therefore, you should know that we are withdrawing ourselves from this spot.' On hearing the words of those illustrious ones, the lord agreed, from inside the waters that he had turned solid with his maya. O great king! Having obtained the king's permission, Kripa and the other rathas, severely oppressed by grief, went some distance away. O venerable one! Having travelled some distance, they saw a banyan tree. They were extremely tired and rested under it, thinking about the king. 'Dhritarashtra's immensely strong son is sleeping inside the waters, having solidified them. Desiring to fight, the Pandavas will reach that spot. How will the fight take place? What will happen to the king? How will the Pandavas discover the Kourava king?' Thinking about these and other things, they unyoked their horses from their chariots. O king! Kripa and the other rathas prepared to rest there.' '

Chapter 1249(30)

‘Sanjaya said, “When those three rathas had withdrawn, the Pandavas arrived at the lake where Duryodhana was. O best of the Kuru lineage! They reached Lake Dvaipayana. They saw that the abode of the waters had been turned to stone by Dhritarashtra’s son. The descendant of the Kuru lineage⁶ spoke these words to Vasudeva. ‘Behold. Dhritarashtra’s son has used his powers of maya on the water. He has turned the waters to stone and is lying down, without any fear from humans. He has used divine powers of maya and is inside the water now. He is skilful in deceit and has used deceit. However, he will not escape from me with his life. O Madhava! Even if the wielder of the vajra himself helps him in the fight, the worlds will see that he is slain in the battle today.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘He is skilled in the use of maya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Slay his maya with maya. O Yudhishtira! Maya must be destroyed with maya. That is the truth. Use many different deeds and means to apply maya to these waters. O best among the Kuru lineage! Slay Suyodhana, who is evil in his soul. It is through different deeds and means that Indra slew the daityas and the danavas. It is through many different deeds and means that Bali was bound down by the great-souled one.’⁷ It is through deeds and means that the great asura Hiranyaksha was slain in earlier times and deeds were also used to slay Hiranyakashipu.’⁸ O king! There is no doubt that Vritra was slain through deeds. O king! Poulastya’s son, the rakshasa named Ravana, was slain by Rama, together with his relatives and followers.’⁹ Resort to deeds and yoga and show your valour. O king! In ancient times, I used deeds and means to slay the great daityas Taraka and the valiant Viprachitti.’¹⁰ O lord! It is through deeds that Vatapi, Ilvala, Trishira and the asuras Sunda and Upasunda were killed.’¹¹ O lord! Indra enjoys the three worlds through deeds and means. O King Yudhishtira! Deeds are powerful. There is nothing else. Daityas, danavas, rakshasas and kings have been killed through deeds and means. Therefore, resort to deeds.’ Pandava, rigid in his vows, was thus addressed by Vasudeva.

‘ “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kounteya laughed and addressed your immensely strong son, who was inside the water. ‘O Suyodhana! O lord of the earth! After having caused the destruction of all the kshatriyas and your own lineage, why have you entered the water? Today, you have entered the water, wishing to save your own life. O king! O Suyodhana! Arise and fight with us. O best of men! O king! Where have your insolence and your sense of pride gone now, since you are terrified and are inside the waters, having turned them to stone? In assemblies, everyone has spoken of you as a hero. I think all of that is in vain, since your prowess is now lying down inside the water. O king! Arise and fight. You have been born in a kshatriya lineage. In particular, remember that you have been born in the lineage of Kouraveyas. How can you praise your birth in the lineage of Kouravas? You have run away from the battle and have entered and stationed yourself inside these waters. Stationing oneself away from a battle is not eternal dharma. O king! It is not like an arya to run away from a battle. That does not lead to heaven. How is it that you wish to remain alive, without having seen the end of this war? You have seen your sons, brothers, fathers, matrimonial allies, friends, maternal uncles and relatives brought down. O son!’¹² Having caused their destruction, how can you station yourself inside this lake? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though you have spoken of yourself as brave, you are not brave. O evil-minded one! In everyone’s hearing, you have said that you are brave. On seeing enemies, brave ones do not run away. O brave one! Tell us about the fortitude that has led you to run away from the encounter. Arise and fight and abandon the fear in you. O Suyodhana! You have caused the destruction of all the soldiers and your brothers. You should not turn your mind to the dharma of remaining alive now. O Suyodhana! This is not indicated for someone who has resorted to the dharma of kshatriyas. You depended on Karna and Shakuni Soubala and in your delusion, thought yourself to be immortal. You were not intelligent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having performed that extremely evil deed, fight back now. In your confusion,

how can something like flight appeal to someone like you? O Suyodhana! Where have your manliness and your pride gone now? Where have your valour and your extremely swollen insolence gone now? Where has your skill with weapons gone? Why have you resorted to this store of water? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Following the dharma of kshatriyas, arise and fight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Defeat us and rule over the entire earth, or be killed by us and lie down on the ground. That is the foremost dharma, ordained by the great-souled creator. O maharatha! Act in accordance with that and be a king.'

' "Duryodhana replied, 'O great king! It is not surprising that fear should enter all living beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But I have not retreated because I am frightened for my life. I was without a chariot and without quivers. The parshni charioteers were killed. I was without a single follower in the battle and wished to retreat. O lord of the earth! I did not enter these waters because I was frightened of being killed or because I was grieving, but because I was exhausted. O Kounteya! With those that follow you, rest for some time. I will arise and fight with all of you in this battle.'

' "Yudhishtira said, 'All of us are sufficiently rested. We have been looking for you for a long time. O Suyodhana! Arise and fight with us now. Kill the Parthas in the battle and obtain this prosperous kingdom, or be killed in the battle and obtain the worlds of heroes.'

' "Duryodhana replied, 'O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O lord of men! Those among the Kurus for whose sake I desired the kingdom, all my brothers, are dead. Those bulls among kshatriyas have been killed and the earth is devoid of her jewels. I am not interested in enjoying her. She is like a widowed lady. O Yudhishtira! O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, I still wish to defeat and subjugate you and am interested in breaking the Panchalas and the Pandus. But I do not think there is any need for battle when Drona and Karna have been pacified and the grandfather has been slain. O king! This bare earth is now only for you. Which king wishes to rule over a kingdom without any aides? Well-wishers have been killed by me and so have sons, brothers and fathers. When the kingdom has been robbed, who like me would wish to remain alive? I will clad myself in deerskin and leave for the forest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With those on my side slain, I have no desire for the kingdom. Many relatives have been killed. Horses have been killed. Elephants have been killed. O king! Devoid of fever, enjoy this kingdom. I will clad myself in deerskin and go to the forest. O lord! Now that I have been vanquished, I have no desire to remain alive any more. O Indra among kings! Go and enjoy the earth, which is devoid of kings, destitute of warriors, robbed of riches and bereft of fortifications, as you please.'

' "Yudhishtira said, 'O son! Do not utter such woes of lamentation from inside the water. O king! In my mind, there is no desire like that of a bird.¹³ O Suyodhana! You may be capable of giving it to me, but I do not wish to rule over something that has been given by you. If you give this earth to me, its acceptance will be adharma. O king! The learned texts say that it is not dharma for a kshatriya to receive gifts. I do not desire this entire earth, when it has been given by you. I will enjoy this earth after having defeated you in battle. Why do you want to give an earth that has no kings? O king! Why do you want to give an earth that is not yours to give? We asked for it in accordance with dharma, for the sake of peace and for the sake of our lineage. O king! You first refused the immensely strong Varshneya. Why do you want to give it now? What is this delusion in your mind? When he is accused, which king wishes to give away the earth? O descendant of the Kourava lineage! You are not the lord of this earth that you can give it away. O king! Why do you wish to give something that you have no powers over? Defeat me in the battle and rule over the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, you were not prepared to give me even that much which could be held up on the point of a needle. O lord of the earth! Why do you then wish to gift me the entire earth? If you were earlier not prepared to give up that much which could be held up on the point of a needle, why do you want to give up the earth now? This earth is prosperous and you have ruled over it. Which foolish person will be prepared to give this earth to enemies? You are not only stupid and foolish, you possess no intelligence. Though you wish to give up the earth, you will not escape with your life. Defeat us and rule over the earth, or be killed by us and roam in the supreme worlds. O king! If, between the two of us, both of us remain alive, all beings will be uncertain about who has emerged victorious. You are of limited intelligence and your life now depends on me. If I wish, I can grant you life. But you are not capable of remaining alive. In particular, you had made efforts to burn us. You tried to kill us by drowning us and making us consume virulent poi-

son.¹⁴ Deceived by you, we were deprived of the kingdom. Because of these and other evil deeds, you should not remain alive. Arise. Arise. Fight. That will be beneficial for you.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of men! Those brave and victorious ones spoke these and many other words there.” ’

Chapter 1250(31)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “Thus, my son, the lord of the earth, was censured. The scorcher of enemies is naturally intolerant. What did he do? He has never heard reprimands like these earlier. He has been revered by all the worlds with the respect that is due to a king. O Sanjaya! You have seen how the entire earth, with mlecchas and those who live in mountainous regions, depended on him for favours. Such a person was censured, especially by the sons of Pandu. He was alone and without servants, in a secluded spot. On hearing the words repeatedly spoken by the victorious ones, what did he tell the Pandaveyas? O Sanjaya! Tell me everything about that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! O Indra among kings! Your son was thus censured by Yudhishtira and his brothers. The lord of men heard those words, which were like poison. Inside the water, he repeatedly let out long and hot sighs. Inside the water, the king repeatedly wrung his hands. Then, having made up his mind to fight, he replied to the king.¹⁵ ‘O Parthas! All of you are served by well-wishers. You possess chariots and mounts. I am alone and miserable. I have been deprived of a chariot. My mounts have been slain. I am without weapons and am surrounded by many rathas. Without weapons, even if I wish to fight, how can I single-handedly fight on foot? O Yudhishtira! Fight with me one at a time. It is not appropriate that one should single-handedly fight with many warriors simultaneously, especially when one is without armour, exhausted and miserable. I am severely wounded in my limbs. My soldiers and mounts are exhausted. O king! I am not frightened of you, or Partha Vrikodara, or Phalgunya, or Vasudeva, or the Panchalas, or the twins, or Yuyudhana, or of any of the other soldiers. Single-handedly and wrathfully, I am interested in fighting against all of you. O lord! The deeds of all virtuous men have a source in dharma. Fame follows dharma and I will observe this. I am telling you that I will arise and fight against all of you in the battle. Like a year encounters all the seasons, I will encounter all of you in due course. This is despite you possessing chariots and weapons and me not possessing weapons and a chariot. When night is over, the sun destroys the radiance of all the nakshatras. O Pandavas! Wait. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Today, I will free myself of the debt I owe to the illustrious kshatriyas¹⁶ — Bahlika, Drona, Bhishma, the great-souled Karna, the brave Jayadratha and Bhagadatta, Shalya, the king of Madra, Bhurishrava, my sons, Shakuni Soubala, my friends, well-wishers and kin. I will kill you and your brothers and free myself of that debt today.’ Having said this, the lord of men stopped.

‘“Yudhishtira said, ‘O Suyodhana! It is through good fortune that you have learnt about the dharma of kshatriyas. O great-armed one! It is through good fortune that your mind has turned towards fighting. O Kouravya! It is good fortune that you are brave and it is good fortune that you know about fighting, since you have single-handedly decided to engage all of us in an encounter. Fight with us one at a time, with whatever weapon you wish. While you fight thus, all the others will remain as spectators. O brave one! I am also granting your desire. If you kill any one of us, the kingdom will be yours. Otherwise, be slain and obtain heaven.’

‘“Duryodhana replied, ‘If you are granting me the boon of fighting one at a time, as a weapon, I am choosing the club that I am wielding. Let any one of the brothers come forward, whoever thinks he is capable of fighting me with a club on foot. Let him fight with me. There are many wonderful battles that are fought through circular motions of chariots. This wonderful and great duel on foot, with clubs, will be the only one of its kind. As a fight progresses, men often wish to change weapons. But with your permission, let that not be the case.¹⁷ O mighty-armed one! With a club, I will defeat you and your younger brothers, the Panchalas, the Srinjayas and your other soldiers.’

‘“Yudhishtira said, ‘O Gandhari’s son! O Suyodhana! Arise! Arise and fight with me. O powerful one! With the club, fight with us one at a time. O Gandhari’s son! Be a man and fight well. Even if you are as fast as thought, you

will not remain alive today.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Your son, tiger among men, could not tolerate this. From inside the waters, he sighed like an immense serpent. He was repeatedly urged by the goad of the words. He could not tolerate those words, like an intelligent horse cannot bear a whip. The valiant one agitated the waters and forcefully grasped the club, which was heavy, with the essence of stone and decorated with gold. He arose from inside the waters, like an Indra of serpents that was sighing. He penetrated the waters that had been converted to stone, with the iron club on his shoulder. Your son arose, like the sun scorching with its rays. The club was heavy and made out of iron. It was decorated with molten gold. Dhritarashtra’s immensely strong son grasped it. With the club in his hand, he looked like a mountain with a peak. He was like the enraged wielder of the trident,¹⁸ stationed among subjects. With the club in his hand, the descendant of the Bharata lineage was as resplendent as the scorching sun. The mighty-armed scorcher of enemies arose, with the club in his hand. All the beings thought that he was Yama, with a staff in his hand. He was like Shakra with the vajra in his hand, or like Hara with the trident in his hand. O lord of men! All the Panchalas saw your son. When they saw him arise, all the Panchalas and Pandaveyas were delighted and grasped each other’s palms. Your son, Duryodhana, thought that this was a mark of disrespect. He dilated his eyes in rage and glanced towards the Pandavas. There were three lines on his forehead and he bit his lower lip. He addressed the Pandavas and Keshava. ‘O Pandavas! I will reply to your taunts today. With the Panchalas, I will soon slay you and convey you to Yama’s eternal abode.’ Having arisen from the water, your son, Duryodhana, stood there, with the club in his hand and with blood flowing from his body. He was drenched in blood and water and his body was as beautiful as an exuding mountain.¹⁹ When the brave one arose with the club, the Pandavas thought that he was an enraged Vaivasvata, with Kimkara in his hand.²⁰ His voice thundered like the clouds, or like the bellows of a delighted bull. With the club, the valiant one challenged the Parthas to battle.

‘“Duryodhana said, ‘O Yudhishtira! You will fight with me one at a time. O brave one! It is not appropriate that one should single-handedly fight with many warriors, especially when one is devoid of armour, exhausted, covered with water, severely wounded in the limbs and without mounts and soldiers.’

‘“Yudhishtira replied, ‘O Suyodhana! Where did this wisdom of yours disappear, when many maharathas united and slew Abhimanyu in the battle? O brave one! Don armour and tie your hair. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Take everything else that you need. O brave one! I will grant you another of your wishes. If you can kill any of the five Pandavas with whom you wish to fight, you will be king. Otherwise, be slain and obtain heaven. O brave one! With the exception of your life in battle, what else do you desire?’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Your son then picked up golden armour and a colourful helmet that was decorated with gold. He fastened the helmet and the sparkling and golden armour. O king! Your son dazzled like a golden mountain. O king! In the field of battle, he was armoured and wielded the club. Your son, Duryodhana, spoke to all the Pandavas. ‘Among all the brothers, let anyone fight with me with a club. O bull among the Bharata lineage!²¹ I am willing to fight with Sahadeva, Bhima, Nakula, Phalgun, or with you. Having obtained an opportunity to fight, I will be victorious in the field of battle. Today, I will accomplish the extremely difficult task of bringing an end to the hostilities. O tiger among men! I will use my club, tied in golden cloth. I think that there is no one who is equal to me in fighting with a club. With the club, I will kill all those who advance against me. Let the one who wishes to fight against me, pick up a club.’” ’

Chapter 1251(32)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Duryodhana roared repeatedly. Vasudeva angrily spoke these words to Yudhishtira. ‘O Yudhishtira! In this encounter, if he had named you, Arjuna, Nakula or Sahadeva, what would have happened? O king! How could you show rashness like this? “If you can kill any one of us, you will be king!” O king! With the desire of killing Bhimasena, for thirteen years he has practised against a man made out of iron.²² O bull among the Bharata lineage! How will our task be accomplished? O supreme among kings! Because of compassion, you have committed an act of rashness. With the exception of Vrikodara, I do not see anyone who can fight against him in the encounter and Partha has not made a great deal of effort.²³ O lord of the earth! It is almost as if the ancient and unequal gambling match between you and Shakuni is being enacted again. Bhima is powerful and capable, but King Suyodhana is accomplished. O king! When there is a contest between strength and skill, skill is always superior. O king! You have placed such an enemy on an even path. You have also placed us in an extremely difficult and hazardous state. Having vanquished all the enemies and with only a single foe remaining, who desires to give that up in a single act of gambling? I do not see the man in this world who can fight, with a club in his hand in an encounter, against Duryodhana, supreme among men, especially because he is skilled. With a club in the hand in a battle, I do not think Phalguna, Madri’s sons or you are capable. How did you tell the enemy to fight with a club? “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you kill any one of us, you will be the king!” Even if Vrikodara fights against him, our victory is not certain, especially not in a fair encounter. He is extremely strong and skilled.’ Bhima said, ‘O Madhusudana! O descendant of the Yadu lineage! Do not grieve. Even if it is extremely difficult, I will bring an end to this enmity today. There is no doubt that I will kill Suyodhana in the battle. O Krishna! It is evident that Dharmaraja’s victory is certain. In qualities, this club of mine is one-and-a-half times heavier than that of Dhritarashtra’s son. O Madhava! Do not be distressed. I can cheerfully fight with the three worlds, including the immortals, even if they are armed with many weapons, not to speak of Suyodhana.’ When Vrikodara spoke these words, Vasudeva joyfully honoured him and spoke these words. ‘O mighty-armed one! Depending on you, there is no doubt that Dharmaraja Yudhishtira will slay his enemies and obtain his blazing prosperity. All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed by you in the battle. You have brought down kings, princes and elephants. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Kalingas, Magadhas, those from the east, Gandharas and Kurus have clashed against you in the great battle and have been slain. O Kounteya! Having also slain Duryodhana, bestow the earth, with all its oceans, to Dharmaraja, like Vishnu to Shachi’s lord.²⁴ Having obtained you in the battle, Dhritarashtra’s wicked son will be destroyed. Having shattered the bones of his thigh, you will accomplish your pledge.²⁵ O Partha! However, you must always fight carefully with Dhritarashtra’s son. He is skilled and strong and always revels in a fight.’ O king! At this, Satyaki honoured Pandava. The eloquent Madhava²⁶ honoured him in various ways. With Dharmaraja at the forefront, all the Panchalas and the Pandaveyas applauded Bhimasena’s words.

‘ “Bhima, terrible in his strength, spoke these words to Yudhishtira, who was stationed amidst the Srinjayas, like the scorching sun. ‘I am interested in establishing you and fighting this one in the battle. This worst of men is not capable of defeating me in the encounter. Today, I will free myself of the terrible anger that is lodged in my heart against Suyodhana, Dhritarashtra’s son. I will be like Arjuna, offering Khandava to Agni. O Pandava! Today, I will uproot the stake that is lodged in your heart. O king! Today, I will kill this wicked one with my club. Be happy. O unblemished one! Today, I will regain your garland of fame. Today, Suyodhana will be freed of his life, his prosperity and his kingdom. Today, King Dhritarashtra will hear that his son has been killed by me and remember all the evil deeds he did because of Shakuni’s advice.’ Having spoken thus, the valiant and best of the Bharata lineage raised his club up and stationed himself for battle, like Shakra challenging Vritra. Dhritarashtra’s immensely

strong son advanced alone to the clash, like an elephant that has been separated from the herd. At this, the Pandavas were delighted. They saw him raise his club, like the summit of Kailasa.

‘ “O king! Bhimasena spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘Remember all the evil deeds that King Dhritarashtra and you have done towards us and what happened in Varanavata.²⁷ Droupadi was in her season and was oppressed in the midst of the assembly hall. Through Shakuni’s advice, the king was vanquished in the gambling match. O evil-souled one! You have performed many other wicked deeds towards the innocent Parthas. Behold the grave consequences of that. It is because of your deeds that Gangeya, best of the Bharata lineage and a grandfather to all of us, has been brought down and is lying down on a bed of arrows. Drona has been slain. Karna has been slain, and so has the powerful Shalya. Shakuni, the creator of the enmity, has also been killed in the battle. Your brave brothers and sons have been killed, together with the soldiers. Brave kings, who did not retreat from the battle, have been slain. Many other bulls among kshatriyas have been killed. The wicked Pratikami, who seized Droupadi by the hair, has been slain.²⁸ You alone are left, destroyer of your lineage and worst among men. There is no doubt that I will slay you with the club today. O king! I will destroy all your insolence in the encounter today and your hopes of the kingdom. O king! I will repay the grave misdeeds towards the Pandavas.’ Duryodhana replied, ‘What is the need to speak a lot? Fight with me now. O Vrikodara! I will today destroy your love for fighting. O wicked one! Do you not see me, stationed for the encounter with a club? I have grasped a gigantic club that is like a summit of the Himalayas. O wicked one! When I wield the club today, where is the enemy who wishes to slay me? If it is a fair fight, not even the god Purandara can do that. O Kounteya! Do not roar in vain, like a cloud without water, during the autumn. Show me your strength in the battle today, everything that you possess.’ On hearing his words, all the Panchalas and the Srinjayas honoured his words, desiring victory. O king! The men were like crazy elephants and clapped their hands repeatedly, delighting King Duryodhana. The elephants there trumpeted and the horses neighed. Desiring victory, the weapons of the Pandavas seemed to blaze.” ’

Chapter 1252(33)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! That extremely terrible battle was about to commence. All the great-souled Pandavas were seated. O king! On hearing about the clash between his disciples, Rama,²⁹ with the mark of the palm tree on his banner and with the plough as his weapon, arrived at the spot where the encounter was to take place.³⁰ On seeing him, the lords among men were extremely delighted and honoured him. They said, ‘O Rama! Behold the skill of your disciples in the encounter.’ On beholding Krishna and Pandava³¹ and Kouravya Duryodhana, stationed with the club in his hand, Rama said, ‘Since I departed, forty-two days have elapsed. I left at the time of Pushya and have returned at the time of Shravana.³² O Madhava!³³ I wish to witness this duel with the clubs between my two disciples.’ King Yudhishtira embraced the one who has a plough as his weapon, welcomed him and in proper fashion, asked about his welfare. The illustrious and great archers, the two Krishnas, were delighted. They joyfully honoured and embraced him. O king! Madri’s sons and Droupadi’s five brave sons also honoured Rohini’s immensely strong son³⁴ and stood there. O lord of men! The powerful Bhimasena and your son raised their clubs and honoured the powerful one. The kings repeatedly welcomed and worshipped Rohini’s great-souled son and told Rama, ‘O mighty-armed one! Witness this encounter.’ The infinitely energetic Rama embraced the Pandavas and the Srinjayas and asked all the Pandavas about their welfare. He also greeted and asked all the others about their welfare. The great-minded one, who wields the plough, honoured all the kshatriyas back. In accordance with age, he asked each of them about their welfare. He affectionately embraced Janardana and Satyaki. Inhaling the fragrance of their heads, he asked about their welfare. O king! In accordance with the prescribed rites, those two honoured their superior. They were delighted, like Indra, lord of the gods, and Upendra, honouring Brahma.

‘ “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharma’s son spoke to Rohini’s son, the scorcher of enemies. ‘O Rama! Witness this great battle between the two brothers.’ Keshava’s mighty-armed elder brother was resplendent. Honoured by the maharathas, he was supremely delighted and seated himself among them. Amidst those kings, he was clad in blue garments and, with a fair complexion, looked dazzling. He was like the moon in the firmament, surrounded by a large number of stars. O king! That tumultuous battle between your two sons commenced and it made the body hair stand up. It would bring an end to the enmity.” ’

Chapter 1253(34)

‘Janamejaya said, ‘Before the war started, with Keshava’s permission, the lord Rama had left with the Vrishnis, saying, “O Keshava! I will not help the sons of Dhritarashtra, or the sons of Pandu. I will go where I wish.” Having spoken those words, Rama, the destroyer of enemies, had departed. O brahmana! You should again tell me everything about his return. Tell me in detail about Rama’s arrival. How did he witness the battle? You are a supremely skilled narrator.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O mighty-armed one! The great-souled Pandavas set themselves up in Upaplavya and sent Madhusudana to Dhritarashtra, for the sake of peace and for the welfare of all beings.³⁵ He went to Hastinapura and met Dhritarashtra. In particular, he spoke truthful and beneficial words to him. As you have already been told, the king did not pay any attention to these words. O lord of men! Unable to obtain peace, the mighty-armed Krishna Purushottama returned to Upaplavya. O tiger among men! Dismissed by Dhritarashtra’s son, Krishna returned unsuccessful and spoke to the Pandavas. “Goaded by destiny, the Kurus have not acted in accordance with my words. O Pandaveyas! With me, set out under the nakshatra Pushya.” Armies were being arrayed on both sides. Rohini’s great-minded son, supreme among strong ones, spoke to his brother, Krishna. “O mighty-armed one! O Madhusudana! Let us help them.”³⁶ However, Krishna did not act in accordance with these words. At this, the immensely illustrious descendant of the Yadu lineage, the wielder of the plough, was overcome by supreme rage and set out on a pilgrimage towards the Sarasvati. With all the Yadavas, he set out when the conjunction of nakshatras known as Maitra³⁷ occurred. Bhoja, scorcher of enemies,³⁸ was on Duryodhana’s side. With Yuyudhana, Vasudeva was on the side of the Pandavas. When Rohini’s brave son set out under Pushya, Madhusudana placed the Pandaveyas at the forefront and advanced towards the Kurus.

‘While setting out on his route, Rama instructed his servants, “Bring all the objects and equipment that will be needed for a pilgrimage. Bring the fire from Dvaraka³⁹ and the priests. Bring gold, silver, cows, garments, horses, elephants, chariots, mules, camels and carts. Swiftly bring all the garments that are required for a pilgrimage. Let us quickly go towards the flow of the Sarasvati. Bring officiating priests and hundreds of bulls among brahmanas.” O king! Having given these instructions to his servants, the immensely strong Baladeva set out on a pilgrimage at a time when the Kurus confronted a calamity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Along the flows of the Sarasvati, he proceeded towards the ocean, with officiating priests, well-wishers, supreme among brahmanas, chariots, elephants, horses and servants. He was surrounded by many carts that were drawn by cattle, mules and camels. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In many countries along the path, large donations were given to the weary, tired of limb, children, the hungry and those who were distressed and waited for alms in different ways. O king! In all those places, brahmanas were instantly given food and whatever objects they desired. O king! On the instructions of Rohini’s son, men were stationed, with large quantities of food and drink. To brahmanas who desired happiness, extremely expensive garments, beds, covers and objects of worship were given. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whenever a brahmana or a kshatriya wanted anything, it was seen that the object was unhesitatingly given. All those who advanced, or stayed, were happy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Vehicles were given to those who wished to travel, drinks to those who were thirsty and tasty food to those who were hungry. The men there obtained garments and ornaments. O king! The path along which they advanced was happy in every possible way. O brave one! The men who travelled seemed to be in heaven. They were always happy and tasty and good food was always available. There were shops and stalls with merchandise, frequented by hundreds of men. There were many kinds of trees and beings, decorated with many kinds of jewels. The great-souled one was unwavering in his soul and observed rites. O king! The foremost among the Yadu lineage, the wielder of the plough, gave riches and sacri-

ficial donations to brahmanas at sacred places of pilgrimage. He also gave away one thousand cows that yielded milk. They were covered in excellent garments and their horns were encased in gold. There were diverse horses that had been born in many countries. These, and servant-maids, were given to the brahmanas. There were gems, pearls, jewels, diamonds and the best of sparkling gold and silver. Rama gave the best of brahmanas iron and copper vessels. In this way, in the best of tirthas along the Sarasvati, the great-souled one gave away a large quantity of riches. His deeds and power were unlimited. Eventually, he cheerfully returned to Kurukshetra.'

Janamejaya asked, 'O best among men! Tell me about the qualities and origins of tirthas along the Sarasvati, their fruits and the deeds that must be done when one is there. O illustrious one! Tell me about these tirthas in due order. O brahmana! O supreme among those who know about the brahman! My curiosity is great.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! The qualities and origins of all the tirthas will be extensive. O Indra among kings! However, I will tell you about these sacred spots in entirety. Listen. O great king! With the officiating priests, well-wishers and large numbers of brahmanas, the foremost among the Yadu lineage first went to the sacred Prabhasa. O Indra among men! The lord of the stars⁴⁰ was afflicted by tuberculosis and was freed of his curse there. Having regained his energy, he lights up the entire universe. This is the foremost tirtha on earth. Because he obtained his radiance there, it is known as Prabhasa.'⁴¹

Janamejaya asked, 'Why was the illustrious Soma afflicted by tuberculosis? How did Chandra⁴² bathe in that supreme of tirthas? Having bathed there, how did Shashi regain his energy? O great sage! Tell me everything about this in detail.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O lord of the earth! Daksha had twenty-seven maidens as daughters and Daksha gave them to Soma.⁴³ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are always united with the nakshatras and are used for computing time. O Indra among kings! Those auspicious ones became the wives of Soma. All of them were large-eyed and were unmatched on earth in terms of their beauty. But in the richness of her beauty, Rohini was superior.⁴⁴ Therefore, the illustrious moon god was especially affectionate towards her. She was in his heart and he always enjoyed her alone. O Indra among kings! In those ancient times, Soma dwelt with Rohini for a long time. At this, the other nakshatras became angry with the great-souled one. They quickly went to their father, Prajapati,⁴⁵ and said, "Soma does not dwell with us. He always resides with Rohini. O lord of beings! Therefore, all of us will live with you. We will live here, be restrained in our diet and perform supreme austerities." On hearing their words, Daksha told Soma, "Treat all your wives equally, so that a great adharma does not touch you." Daksha told all of them, "Go to Soma. On my instructions, Chandra will treat all of you equally." Dismissed by him, all of them went to Shitamsu's abode.⁴⁶ O lord of the earth! However, as earlier, the illustrious Soma repeatedly dwelt only with Rohini and pleased her alone. The others united and again went and told their father, "We will serve you and dwell under your refuge. Soma does not dwell with us and has not acted in accordance with your words." On hearing their words, Daksha told Soma, "O Virochana!⁴⁷ Treat all your wives equally, so that I do not have to curse you." However, the illustrious Shashi paid no attention to Daksha's words. He continued to live with Rohini. The others were enraged and went to their father. They lowered their heads in salutation and said, "Soma does not dwell with us. Grant us refuge. The illustrious Chandra always dwells with Rohini. Therefore, save us, so that Soma accepts all of us." O lord of the earth! On hearing these words, the illustrious one became angry. In his rage, he inflicted tuberculosis on Soma and the lord of the stars became afflicted. Overcome by tuberculosis, Shashi decayed from one day to another. O king! He made many efforts to free himself from the tuberculosis. O great king! The moon performed many different kinds of sacrifices. However, he could not free himself of the curse and was immersed in decay. As Soma began to decay, herbs ceased to grow. All of them were tasteless and without juices. All of them lost their energy. When the herbs decayed, the destruction of beings started. When the moon decayed, all the subjects became emaciated. O lord of the earth! At this, all the gods assembled and went to Soma. They asked, "Why is your form like this, without any radiance? Tell us everything about the reason behind this great fear. Having heard your words, we will think of a means." Having been thus addressed, the one with the mark of a hare⁴⁸ replied to all of them. He told them about the reason behind the curse and about his own tuberculosis. Having heard his words, the gods went to Daksha and said, "O illustrious one! Be pacified. Take away your curse from

Soma. Chandra has decayed and only a little bit of him can be seen. O lord of the gods! Because of his decay, all the subjects have been overcome by decay. Many different kinds of creepers, herbs and seeds are wasting. O preceptor of the worlds! You should be pacified.” Having been thus addressed, Prajapati thought and spoke these words. “My words cannot be transgressed. It cannot be otherwise. O immensely fortunate ones! However, there is a means whereby this can be withdrawn. Let Shashi always treat all of his wives equally. Let the one with the mark of the hare bathe in the supreme tirtha along the Sarasvati. The god will then wax again. These words of mine are true. For one half of the month, Soma will always wane. But for another half of the month, Soma will always wax. These words of mine are true.” On the instructions of the rishi,⁴⁹ Soma went to the Sarasvati. Along the Sarasvati, he went to the supreme tirtha of Prabhasa. The immensely energetic and immensely radiant one bathed there on the day of the new moon. He obtained his cool rays back and radiated the world again. O Indra among kings! All the gods also went to Prabhasa. With Soma, they presented themselves before Daksha. Prajapati gave all the gods permission to leave. Pleased with Soma, the illustrious one again spoke these words to him. “O son! Never disregard women. Never disregard brahmanas. Depart and always follow my instructions.” O great king! Having taken his leave, he again returned to his own abode.⁵⁰ All the subjects were delighted and lived as they had earlier. This is the entire account about how the moon was cursed. This is how the tirtha of Prabhasa came to be the foremost among all tirthas. O great king! The one with the mark of the hare always bathes there on the day of the new moon. Having bathed in the supreme tirtha of Prabhasa, he obtains his handsomeness back. O lord of the earth! That spot is known as Prabhasa, because bathing there, Chandra obtained his supreme radiance back.

‘After this, the undecaying and powerful one⁵¹ went to Chamasodbheda. People know that spot as Chamasodbheda. The one with the plough as his weapon gave away many precious donations there. He spent a night there and bathed in accordance with the prescribed rituals. Keshava’s elder brother then quickly went to Udupana. Great fruits are obtained from observing rites there. O Janamejaya! The herbs and the earth are cool there. O Indra among kings! Though the Sarasvati has been destroyed there,⁵² the siddhas know this.’

Chapter 1254(35)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! The one with the plough as his weapon then went to Udapana, associated with the illustrious Trita. He gave away a lot of objects and honoured the brahmanas. The one with the club as his weapon bathed there and was delighted. The extremely great ascetic Trita, devoted to supreme dharma, had lived there. The great-souled one had dwelt in a pit and had drunk *soma* juice. His two brothers had abandoned him there and had returned home. At this, Trita, supreme among brahmanas, had cursed them.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! How did the extremely great ascetic fall down in Udapana? Why did his brothers abandon that supreme among brahmanas? Why did the brothers leave him in the pit and return home? O brahmana! If you think that this can be heard, please tell me all this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! In an earlier yuga, there were three brothers who were sages. They were Ekata, Dvita and Trita⁵³ and they were as radiant as the sun. All of them were like Prajapati and they had offspring. All of them were ascetics who knew about the brahman and they had attained Brahma’s world. Their father, Goutama, was always devoted to dharma. Because of their austerities, rituals and self-control, they always pleased him. After having been pleased by them for a long time, the illustrious one went to the regions that were appropriate for him.⁵⁴ There were kings for whom the great-souled one had been an officiating priest. After he had gone to heaven, all of them continued to honour his sons. Trita was the best among them and was just like his father. All the immensely fortunate and auspicious sages worshipped the immensely fortunate one, as they had the learned one⁵⁵ before him. O king! Once, the brothers Ekata and Dvita thought of performing a sacrifice and in particular, were concerned about the wealth required for this. O scorcher of enemies! They thought that they would take Trita and go to the houses of those who performed sacrifices.⁵⁶ They would collect the required animals. They would cheerfully drink soma juice and obtain the great merits of a sacrifice. O king! The three brothers did as they had decided. They visited all the *yajamanas* to collect the animals. From the yajamanas, they received a large number of animals for the sacrifice. For performing the act of sacrifice, they also obtained all the decreed gifts. The great-souled maharshis then went towards an eastern direction. O great king! Trita was cheerfully walking in front and Ekata and Dvita were following him from the rear, herding the animals. On seeing that large number of animals, they began to think about how they could appropriate all the cattle, without giving a share to Trita. O lord of men! Listen to what the cunning and wicked Ekata and Dvita said to each other, as they conversed. “Trita is skilled in performing sacrifices. Trita is established in the Vedas. Trita is capable of obtaining many other cattle. Let us go away, taking these cattle with us. Let Trita go wherever he wishes. We do not have to be with him.” As they proceeded along the path, it became night and they saw a wolf before them. Not very far from the spot, there was a pit along the banks of the great Sarasvati. Trita was in the front. On seeing the wolf along the path, he ran in fear and fell down into the pit. It was extremely deep and extremely terrible and was the cause of great fright to all beings. The immensely fortunate Trita, supreme among sages, began to scream from inside the pit. From this, the brothers realized that the sage had fallen into the pit, but they were frightened of the wolf. They were frightened of the wolf and also driven by avarice. They abandoned him and went on. O great king! The brothers were greedy for the animals and abandoned the great ascetic in Udapana,⁵⁷ in a spot that was full of dust and without any water. Trita found that he was inside a pit, covered with creepers and herbs. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He thought that he was submerged, like a wicked person in hell. However, the wise one was scared of dying, since he had not yet drunk soma juice. He began to think about how he might be able to drink soma juice there. That is what the immensely ascetic one thought about in the pit. He then saw that a creeper was hanging down there. Though the pit was covered with dust, the sage imagined that there was water there. He also thought of a fire there and thought of

himself as the officiating priest. The immensely ascetic one thought of the creeper as soma. In his mind, the sage thought of the mantras of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas. O king! He imagined the pebbles to be grains of sugar. He thought the water to be clarified butter and allotted shares to the residents of heaven. Having drunk the soma,⁵⁸ he created a tumultuous noise. O king! Those sounds created by Trita rose up into heaven. The sacrifice had been performed in accordance with the norms laid down by those who know about the brahman. While the extremely great-souled Trita performed the sacrifice, heaven was agitated. But no one knew the reason. Brihaspati heard the tumultuous sound. On hearing this, the priest of the gods spoke to all the gods. “O gods! Trita is performing a sacrifice and all of us must go there. If he is enraged, the great ascetic is capable of creating other gods.”⁵⁹ Hearing his words, all the gods were frightened. Together, they went to the spot where Trita was performing his sacrifice. The gods went to the pit where Trita was. They saw the great-souled one, consecrated in the task of performing the sacrifice. They saw the great-souled one, supreme in his resplendence. They told the immensely fortunate one, “We have come for our shares.” On seeing the gods, the rishi replied, “O residents of heaven! Look at me. I am submerged in this fearful pit and am devoid of my senses.” O great king! However, Trita gave them their shares, in accordance with the decreed rites, uttering the mantras. They accepted these and were delighted. The residents of heaven obtained their shares, in accordance with the decreed rites. Pleased with him, they gave him the boons that he desired. He asked the gods for the boon that he should be freed from his distressful state. He also said, “Let a person who bathes in this pit obtain the same end as one who drinks soma.” With her waves, Sarasvati then descended into the pit. Trita was raised up by the waters and worshipped by the thirty gods. O kings! The gods agreed to what he had said and returned to where they had come from. Trita cheerfully returned to his own house. He met his brothers, the rishis, and angrily spoke harsh words to them. The immensely ascetic one cursed them. “Because of your greed for the animals, you abandoned me and ran away. You will therefore adopt their forms⁶⁰ and roam around, with sharp teeth. Because of your wicked deeds, this is how you will be cursed by me. The offspring that you have will be leopards, bears and apes.” O lord of the earth! As soon as he spoke these words, because his words were always truthful, they were seen to assume these forms. The one with the plough as his weapon touched the waters there. He gave away many kinds of donations and honoured the brahmanas. Having seen Udapana, he praised it repeatedly. The one whose soul was never distressed then went to Vinashana, which was also on the river.’

Chapter 1255(36)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The one with the plough as his weapon then went to Vinashana. The Sarasvati became invisible there, because of her hatred for the shudras and the *abhiras*.⁶¹ O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Because the Sarasvati disappeared there, as a consequence of her hatred, the rishis speak of that place as Vinashana. Having touched the waters of the Sarasvati there, the immensely strong Bala⁶² went to Subhumika, also located on the supreme banks of the Sarasvati. Pure apsaras are always engaged in sporting there. Their faces are fair and the innocent ones sport there. O lord of men! Every month, the gods and the gandharvas go there. That sacred tirtha is frequented by the brahmanas. Gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras can be seen there. O king! They unite happily in that spot. Amidst the creepers there, the gods and the ancestors find delight. Divine and sacred flowers repeatedly shower down there. O king! That is the sporting ground of the beautiful apsaras. Along the supreme banks of the Sarasvati, Subhumika is famous. Madhava⁶³ bathed there and donated riches to the brahmanas. He heard the songs and the sounds of celestial musical instruments. He saw a large number of shadows of gods, gandharvas and rakshasas. Rohini’s son then went to the tirtha of the gandharvas. With Vishvavasu at their head, the gandharvas are engaged in austerities there. They are engaged in beautiful dancing, singing and the playing of musical instruments. The wielder of the plough gave away many riches to brahmanas there and also goats, cattle, mules, camels, gold and silver. He fed the brahmanas and satisfied them with extremely expensive gifts that they desired. Praised by the brahmanas, Madhava then departed with them. The mighty-armed one, the scorcher of enemies, adorned with a single earring, left the tirtha of the gandharvas. He went to the extremely great tirtha of Gargasrota. The aged Garga, cleansed in his soul, performed austerities there. O Janamejaya! He got to know about the reckoning of time, the movements of stellar bodies and about favourable and unfavourable portents.⁶⁴ The auspicious tirtha along the Sarasvati is known by the name of the great-souled one. That is the reason that tirtha is known by the name of Gargasrota. O king! Wishing to know about the reckoning of time, the immensely fortunate rishis, rigid in their vows, always worshipped the lord Garga there. O great king! Bala, smeared with white sandalwood paste, went there and, in accordance with the rites, gave away riches to the sages who were cleansed in their souls. He gave away many kinds of rich foodstuff to the brahmanas who were there. Attired in blue garments, the immensely illustrious one then went to the tirtha known as Shankha. He saw Mahashanka⁶⁵ there. It was as large as Meru and was like a white mountain. It was frequented by large numbers of rishis. The powerful one, with the palm tree on his banner, saw it rise on the banks of the Sarasvati. Yakshas, *vidyadharas*, immensely strong pishachas, thousands of siddhas—all of them were seen there, giving up the fruits of that tree. They only enjoyed those at the right time, observing vows and rituals. They obtained those after following rules and wandered around separately. O bull among men! They roamed around, invisible to men. O lord of men! That tree is famous in this world. It is the source of the sacred tirtha of the Sarasvati, renowned in the world. The illustrious tiger of the Yadu lineage donated copper and iron vessels and many garments at that tirtha. He worshipped the brahmanas and was honoured back by those stores of austerities. O king! The one with the plough as his weapon then went to the sacred Dvaitavana. Having gone there, Bala saw sages attired in many different kinds of garments. He worshipped the brahmanas and bathed in those waters. He donated all the objects of pleasure to the brahmanas. O king! Bala then went to the region south of the Sarasvati. The mighty-armed and greatly illustrious one, with dharma in his soul, went only a short distance away. The one without decay went to the tirtha of Nagadhanva. That was the abode of Vasuki, king of the serpents. O great king! There, the immensely radiant one⁶⁶ was surrounded by many serpents. There were fourteen thousand rishis and siddhas there. The gods went there and instated Vasuki, supreme among serpents, as the king of all the serpents, in accordance with the proper rites. O Kourava! There is

no fear from serpents there. According to the decrees, he gave away many stores of jewels to the brahmanas there. O king! Radiant in his own energy, he then set out in an eastern direction. Joyfully, the one with the plough bathed in many tirthas. He donated riches to the brahmanas and met the ascetics. The one with the plough as his weapon honoured large numbers of rishis there. Rama then went to the tirtha that was frequented by a large number of rishis, at the spot where the Sarasvati returns in an eastern direction. The great-souled one wished to see Naimisharanya of the rishis. The one with the plough saw the great river retrace course there. O king! Bala, smeared with white sandalwood paste, was astounded.'

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! Why did Sarasvati retrace course in an eastern direction? O supreme among all officiating priests! I wish to hear this recounted. For what reason was the descendant of the Yadu lineage astounded? O supreme among brahmanas! Why did the best of rivers retrace course?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! In an earlier era, in *krita yuga*, the large number of ascetics in Naimisha performed an extremely large sacrifice that went on for twelve years. O king! Many rishis came to that sacrifice. The immensely fortunate ones performed that sacrifice, in accordance with the prescribed rites. After the sacrifice had been performed for twelve years, they returned. The rishis went to visit the large number of tirthas that were there. O lord of the earth! Because of the large number of rishis, the tirthas along the southern banks of the Sarasvati seemed to look like cities. O tiger among men! Because of their love for tirthas, the supreme among brahmanas resided along the banks of the river, all the way up to Samantapanchaka. The sages, cleansed in their souls, offered oblations there and the loud sounds of incantations filled the directions. The great-souled ones offered oblations in *agnihotra* sacrifices there. In every direction, the best of rivers was beautiful and radiant. O great king!

Valakhilyas, Ashmakutta ascetics, Dantolukhalinas and others, Samprakshalas⁶⁷ and others, those who lived on air, those who lived on water, those who lived on leaves, many others who observed diverse kinds of rituals and those who used the bare earth as their beds—all these sages came there, near the Sarasvati. The best of rivers was radiant, like Ganga frequented by the residents of heaven.⁶⁸ After this, the rishis, wishing to perform sacrifices and rigid in their vows, could not find a bare spot in Kurukshetra. They measured out small tirthas with their sacrificial threads and offered oblations to agnihotras and other kinds of sacrifices. O Indra among kings! Sarasvati saw that the large number of rishis was finding the situation hopeless and began to think about a means for their sake. O Janamejaya! The supreme of rivers retraced her course and created many abodes for herself, for the sake of the rishis and the pious ascetics. The supreme of rivers again flowed in a western direction. "I must go there, so that their⁶⁹ arrival is not rendered futile." O king! The great river performed this great and wonderful deed there. O Indra among kings! Those abodes of hers are famous as Naimisha. O best of the Kuru lineage! You must perform great rites in Kurukshetra. When the river retraced her course, she created many abodes for herself. On seeing these there, the great-souled Rama was overcome by great wonder. In accordance with the rites, the descendant of the Yadu lineage bathed there. He gave away gifts and diverse vessels to the brahmanas. He also gave the brahmanas many kinds of food and drink. O king! Worshipped by the brahmanas, Bala then went to the supreme of tirthas on the Sarasvati, frequented by tens of thousands of many kinds of birds. There are *badari*, *inguda*, *kashmarya*, *plaksha*, *ashvattha*, *vibhitaka*, *panasa*, *palasha*, *karira*, *pilu* and other kinds of trees there.⁷⁰ They bind down the banks of the Sarasvati and make it look like a chariot. It is adorned with groves of *parushas*, *bilvas*, *amaratakas*, *atimuktas*, *kashandas* and *parijatas*.⁷¹ There are also beautiful groves of plantains, beautiful and charming. There were those who lived on air, those who lived on water, those who lived on fruit and those who lived on leaves. The Dantolukhalinas were there too, as were the Ashmakuttas, Vaneyas⁷² and many other kinds of sages. There were the sounds of chanting and the place teemed with herds of animals. It was a place frequented by those who were without malice and devoted to dharma. The one with the plough as his weapon went to the tirtha of Sapta-Sarasvata. The great sage, Mankanaka, had performed austerities there and attained success.'

Chapter 1256(37)

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why is it called Sapta-Sarasvata? Who was the sage Mankanaka? How did that illustrious one observe rituals and become successful? O supreme among brahmanas! What lineage was he born in and what did he study? O supreme among brahmanas! In accordance with the proper way, I wish to hear all this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! The seven Sarasvatis cover this entire universe. Wherever she was powerfully summoned, Sarasvati manifested herself there—Suprabha, Kanchanakshi, Vishala, Manashrada, Sarasvati, Oghavati, Suvenu and Vimalodaka.⁷³ The grandfather⁷⁴ performed a great sacrifice on the surface of the earth and all the brahmanas assembled there. Sacred incantations from the unblemished Vedas resounded there. At that great sacrifice, performed in accordance with the indicated rites, the gods were also agitated.⁷⁵ O great king! The great grandfather consecrated himself at that sacrifice. That sacrifice yielded every object of desire, everything that one could mentally think of. It yielded the objectives of dharma and artha. O Indra among kings! All of these manifested themselves before the brahmanas who were there. The gandharvas went there and large numbers of apsaras danced. Divine musical instruments were played upon. At the richness of the sacrifice, even the gods were satisfied, not to speak of the supreme wonder that arose among those who were human. In the grandfather’s presence, the sacrifice was held in Pushkara. O king! However, the rishis said, “This sacrifice will not lead to great fruits. The best of rivers, Sarasvati, cannot be seen here.” On hearing this, the illustrious one cheerfully summoned Sarasvati. O Indra among kings! Summoned by the grandfather to the sacrifice in Pushkara, Sarasvati came there as Suprabha. On seeing the swift flows of the Sarasvati, the sages were satisfied and showed a great deal of respect to the grandfather’s sacrifice. Thus, for the sake of the grandfather and to satisfy the learned ones, Sarasvati, supreme among rivers, manifested herself in Pushkara.

‘O king! The sages assembled in Naimisha. O lord of men! They conversed colourfully amongst themselves. In diverse ways, the sages there talked about the study of the Vedas. The sages who were assembled there remembered Sarasvati. O great king! The rishis, who wanted to perform a sacrifice, thought of her. O Indra among kings! To aid the assembled great-souled ones, the immensely fortunate and sacred Sarasvati arrived there in Naimisha, as Kanchanakshi, for the sake of the sages who wished to perform a sacrifice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The best of rivers arrived there and was worshipped.

‘Gaya performed a great sacrifice in Gaya. Sarasvati, the best of rivers, was summoned to Gaya’s sacrifice. In Gaya, the rishis, rigid in their vows, named her Vishala.

‘The river originates from the flanks of the Himalayas and is swift in flow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Ouddalaka performed a sacrifice there. From every direction, a large number of sages assembled there. O king! This was a sacred spot towards the north of the region of Kosala. Before the great-souled Ouddalaka had performed his sacrifice there, he had thought of Sarasvati. For the sake of that rishi, the best of rivers had arrived at that spot. She was honoured by the large number of sages, clad in bark and deerskin. Because she had been summoned mentally, she came to be known as Manashrada.⁷⁶

‘There is a sacred region known as Suvenirishabha, frequented by rajarshis. There, the great-souled Kuru performed a sacrifice in Kurukshetra. The immensely fortunate Sarasvati, best among rivers, arrived there. O Indra among kings! Sarasvati, with divine waters, was summoned to Kurukshetra as Oghavati by the great-souled Vasishtha.

‘Daksha performed a sacrifice in Gangadvara.⁷⁷

‘Brahma again performed a sacrifice on the sacred slopes of the Himalaya mountains. The illustrious one was summoned there as Vimaloda.⁷⁸

‘All of these come together as one flow at the tirtha of Sapta-Sarasvata. That tirtha is famous on earth. These are the seven names of Sarasvati that are recounted. The tirtha of Sapta-Sarasvata is sacred and famous. Now hear about the young Mankanaka, who observed *brahmacharya*. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While he was bathing, he saw a woman sporting a lot in the waters, as she pleased. She was also bathing and was beautiful in her limbs. She was unblemished and was naked. O great king! At this, his semen fell into the waters of the Sarasvati. The great ascetic picked it up and placed it in a pot. Collected in the pot, it became divided into seven parts. Seven rishis were born from these and gave birth to the large number of Maruts.⁷⁹ Vayuvega, Vayubala, Vayuha, Vayumandala, Vayujvala, Vayureta and the valiant Vayuchakra—these were the ones who gave birth to the Maruts.

‘O Indra among kings! Other than this, listen to another wonderful account on earth. This is about the conduct of the maharshi, famous in the three worlds. O king! It has been heard that, in earlier times, after Mankanaka obtained success, his hand was wounded by a blade of kusha grass. The juice of vegetables began to flow from this. On seeing the flow of vegetable juice, he was delighted and began to dance around. O brave one! He was overwhelmed by his own energy and began to dance. On seeing him dance, all mobile and immobile objects also began to dance. O king! Brahma and the other gods and the rishis, rich in their austerities, went to Mahadeva and told him about the rishi. O lord of men! They said, “O god! You should do something to prevent him from dancing.” On seeing that the sage was extremely delighted, for the sake of the welfare of the gods, the god Mahadeva spoke to him. “O brahmana! You know about dharma. Why are you dancing around in this way? O supreme among sages! What is the reason for your delight? Tell me. O supreme among brahmanas! You are an ascetic and should be stationed on the path of dharma.” The rishi replied, “O brahmana!⁸⁰ Can you not see that vegetable juice is flowing from this wound in my hand? O lord! On seeing this, I am overcome with great delight and am dancing.” The god laughed at the sage who was overcome by such emotion and said, “O brahmana! I am not astounded at all. Look at me.” O Indra among kings! Having spoken thus to the best of sages, the intelligent Mahadeva pierced his thumb with one of his fingernails. O king! Ashes, white as snow, began to flow from that wound. O king! On seeing this, the sage was ashamed and fell down at his feet. The rishi said, “I think that you are no other than the god Rudra, great and supreme. O wielder of the trident! You are the refuge of the universe, the gods and the asuras. The learned ones say that the universe has been created by you. At the time of the destruction of a yuga, everything enters into you again. Even the gods are incapable of comprehending you. How can I? O unblemished one! Everything, Brahma and the other gods, are seen in you. You are all the gods. You are the actor and the one who causes action. It is through your favours that the gods enjoy happiness, free from fear.” Thus did the rishi prostrate himself and worship Mahadeva. He said, “O illustrious one! Through your favours, let there be no decline in my store of austerities.” The god was pleased and spoke again to the rishi. “O brahmana! Through my favours, your austerities will multiply a thousandfold. I will always dwell with you in this hermitage. If a man worships me in Sapta-Sarasvata, there is nothing that cannot be attained by him, in this world or in the next. There is no doubt that he will go to the world known as Sarasvata.”⁸¹ Such was the infinitely energetic conduct of Mankanaka. He was the son of Sanyana, born from the wind god.’

Chapter 1257(38)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Rama spent a night there and was worshipped by the residents of the hermitage. The pious one, with the plough as his weapon, showed his affection for Manakanka. He gave gifts to the brahmanas and spent a night there. The one with the plough was worshipped by a large number of sages and arose in the morning. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He touched the waters and took his leave of all the sages. For the sake of tirthas, the immensely strong Rama departed quickly. The one with the plough as his weapon went to the tirtha known as Oushanasa. O king! This is also known as Kapalamochana, where the great sage, Mahodara, was freed from the large head that stuck to his thigh. O great king! In earlier times, Rama hurled a rakshasa’s head a great distance. Before this, the extremely great-souled Kavya⁸² had tormented himself through austerities there. It was there that the great-souled one thought about all kinds of policies. It was there that he thought about the conflict of the daityas and the danavas.⁸³ O king! Bala reached that supreme of tirthas. In due form, he donated riches to the great-souled brahmanas.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! Why is it known as Kapalamochana? How was the great sage freed from the head? Why did it stick to him?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O tiger among kings! Earlier, the great-souled Raghava dwelt in Dandakaranya, to bring an end to the rakshasas who lived there. In Janasthana, with a razor-sharp arrow that was sharp at the edges, he severed the head of an evil-souled rakshasa. This fell down in a great forest. O king! Mahodara was roaming around in the forest at will. It fell down, pierced his bones and stuck to his thigh. Because it was stuck to his thigh, the immensely wise brahmana could not go to any of the other tirthas. The great sage was in pain and pus exuded from the wound. It has been heard that he went to all the tirthas on earth. The immensely ascetic one went to all the rivers and the oceans. He spoke to all the rishis who had cleansed their souls. He bathed in all the tirthas, but was not freed. The Indra among brahmanas then heard the great words of the sages about the famous and supreme tirtha on the Sarasvati. It could free from all sins and was the supreme spot for obtaining success. The brahmana went to that tirtha of Oushanasa. He touched the waters of Oushanasa tirtha. The head was freed from his leg and fell down into the water there. O king! The one with the pure soul was freed from the taint. Having been successful, Mahodara delightedly went to his hermitage. The great ascetic brahmana became pure and was freed from his exhaustion. He told all the rishis, who had cleansed their souls, about this. O one who grants honours! On hearing his words, all the assembled ones named that tirtha Kapalamochana.⁸⁴ Madhava honoured the brahmanas there and gave them many gifts.

‘The foremost among the Vrishni lineage then went to the hermitage of Rishangu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arishtishena had tormented himself through terrible austerities there. The great sage Vishvamitra was able to become a brahmana there.⁸⁵ O Indra among kings! The handsome wielder of the plough was surrounded by brahmanas there and departed from the spot known as Rishangu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rishangu was an aged brahmana who was always engaged in austerities. Having made up his mind to cast aside his body, he thought a lot. Rishangu summoned all his immensely ascetic sons and told them to take him to a spot where there was a lot of water. Knowing about Rishangu’s age, those great ascetics took that store of austerities to a tirtha on the Sarasvati. Those intelligent sons took him to the Sarasvati, where there were hundreds of tirthas, frequented by large numbers of brahmanas. O king! The immensely ascetic one bathed there, in accordance with the prescribed rites. O tiger among men! The supreme among rishis knew about the qualities of tirthas and delightedly told all his sons, who were worshipping him, “The northern bank of the Sarasvati has a lot of water. He who makes up his mind to cast aside his body there and engages in meditation and austerities, will never suffer from death.” The one

with the plough as his weapon, with dharma in his soul, touched the water there and bathed. He was devoted to brahmanas and gave a lot of gifts to brahmanas.

‘O Kouravya! He then went to Lokaloka, created by the illustrious grandfather. Arshtishena, rigid in his vows and supreme among rishis, had performed great austerities there and become a brahmana. O king! Rajarshi Sindhudvipa, the great ascetic Devapi and the great sage Vishvamitra had also become brahmanas there. They were illustrious and great ascetics. They were fierce in their energy and great in their austerities. The strong and powerful Balabhadra⁸⁶ went there.’

Chapter 1258(39)

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why did the illustrious Arshtishena torment himself through great austerities? How did Sindhudvipa become a brahmana? How did Devapi and the supreme Vishvamitra become brahmanas? O illustrious one! Tell me all this. I am supremely curious.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! Earlier, in krita yuga, there was a supreme among brahmanas, known as Arshtishena. He always resided in the house of his preceptor and was always engaged in studying. O king! He always lived in the house of his preceptor. O lord of the earth! But his learning of the Vedas never became complete. O king! Depressed, the great ascetic tormented himself through austerities. Because of his austerities, he obtained the supreme Vedas.⁸⁷ The supreme among rishis obtained learning of the Vedas and attained success. The immensely great ascetic granted three boons to that tirtha. “From today, a man who bathes in the tirtha on this great river,⁸⁸ will obtain all the fruits of a horse sacrifice. From today, there will be no fear here from predatory beasts.⁸⁹ From a little bit of effort, all the fruits will be obtained.” Having spoken thus, the immensely energetic sage went to heaven. Thus did the illustrious and powerful Arshtishena attain success. O great king! In that tirtha, the powerful Sindhudvipa and Devapi obtained the exalted status of being a brahmana.

‘O son!⁹⁰ In that way, Koushika controlled his senses and always engaged in austerities. Severely tormenting himself through austerities, he attained the status of a brahmana. There was a great kshatriya, famous everywhere on earth by the name of Gadhi. O king! His son was the powerful Vishvamitra. O son! King Koushika performed a great sacrifice⁹¹ and obtained the immensely ascetic Vishvamitra as his son. Having decided to cast aside his body, he decided to instate his son. The subjects bowed down and said, “O immensely wise one! Do not go. Save us from a great fear.” Having been thus addressed, Gadhi replied to the subjects, “My son will be the protector of the entire universe.” O king! Saying this and instating Vishvamitra, Gadhi went to heaven. Vishvamitra became the king. However, despite making efforts, he could not protect the earth. The king heard that there was a great fear from the rakshasas. With four kinds of forces, he went out of the city. Having gone a long distance, he reached Vasishtha’s hermitage. O king! His soldiers created a lot of nuisance there. When the illustrious brahmana Vasishtha returned to his hermitage, he saw that the entire large forest was being destroyed. O great king! Vasishtha, supreme among sages, became angry at this. He instructed his cow to create a large number of terrible mountainous hunters. Thus instructed, the cow created men who were terrible in form. From every direction, they clashed against those soldiers and caused carnage. On seeing that the soldiers were driven away, Gadhi’s son, Vishvamitra, made up his mind that austerities were supreme. O king! He meditated in that supreme tirtha along the Sarasvati. He observed vows and fasted. He emaciated his own body. He lived on water. He lived on air. He lived on leaves. He slept on the bare ground and observed many other separate rules. The gods made many attempts to dislodge him from his vows. But the great-souled one’s mind never deviated from those rules. He made supreme efforts and tormented himself through many kinds of austerities. In his energy, Gadhi’s son became as radiant as the sun. When Vishvamitra was thus engaged in austerities, the grandfather, the granter of boons, thought that he would grant the immensely ascetic one a boon. O king! He asked for the boon that he might become a brahmana. Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, agreed. The immensely illustrious one thus became a brahmana through his fierce austerities. Successful in his objective, he roamed around the entire earth, like a god. O king! In that supreme tirtha, Rama cheerfully gave away many riches, milk-yielding cows, carts, beds, garments, ornaments and the best of food and drink to the best of brahmanas, after having worshipped them. O king! Rama then went to the hermitage of Baka, which was not that far away. It has been heard that Dalbhya Baka tormented himself through fierce austerities there.’

Chapter 1259(40)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The descendant of the Yadu lineage then went to see the spot where Dalbhya Baka, the extremely great ascetic, offered the kingdom of Dhritarashtra, Vichitravirya’s son, as an oblation. The place was full of brahmanas. Deciding to torment his body, he performed austerities that were extremely terrible in form. The powerful one, with dharma in his soul, was overcome by great rage. In earlier times, those who lived in Naimisha performed a sacrifice for twelve years. When the sacrifice named Vishvajita was completed, the rishis set out for Panchala. The learned ones asked for a *dakshina*⁹² from the lord there.⁹³ They wanted twenty-one strong and healthy calves. The aged Baka told them, “Divide these animals among you.”⁹⁴ I am giving up these animals and will ask for some more from the best of kings.” O king! Having told all the rishis this, the powerful one, supreme among brahmanas, went to Dhritarashtra’s abode. Having approached King Dhritarashtra, Dalbhya begged him for some animals. The best of kings saw that some of his cattle had died and angrily told him, “O one who is united with the brahman! If you want, take these animals.” The rishi knew about dharma and hearing these words, he thought, “The words that have been spoken to me in this assembly are cruel. Having thought for an instant, the best of brahmanas was overcome with rage. He made up his mind to ensure King Dhritarashtra’s destruction. The best of brahmanas sliced off flesh from the dead animals. He went to the tirtha on the banks of the Sarasvati and lit a fire there. Into that, in those ancient times, he offered King Dhritarashtra’s kingdom as an oblation.”⁹⁵ O great king! Dalbhya Baka was supremely devoted to rituals. The immensely ascetic one used the flesh to offer the kingdom as an oblation. In accordance with the rituals, that extremely terrible sacrifice started. At this, King Dhritarashtra’s kingdom began to decay. O lord! It was as if a large forest was being sliced down with an axe. On seeing that the kingdom was thus afflicted, losing its vitality and afflicted by a hardship, the lord of men was distressed. O king! The lord began to think. In those earlier times, to free himself, the king made endeavours with brahmanas. O king! The king asked those brahmanas. O king! However, he was incapable of freeing his kingdom. O Janamejaya! He asked his advisers and those advisers said, “A wicked deed has been committed by you concerning those animals. In the form of flesh, the sage Baka is offering your kingdom as an oblation. It is because of those oblations that the kingdom is facing this great decay. It is because of his austere deeds that this great calamity has come about. O king! There is a grove with water along the Sarasvati. Go and seek his favours there.” The king went to the Sarasvati and spoke to Baka. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He lowered his head down on the ground and joined his hands in salutation. “O illustrious one. Grant me your favours. Pardon my offence. I am distressed and greedy. I am stupid and devoid of intelligence. You are my refuge. You are my protector. You should show me your favours.” He lamented in this way, senseless with grief. On seeing this, the rishi felt compassion and freed his kingdom. He was pleased and abandoned his wrath. To free the kingdom, he again offered oblations into the fire. Having freed the kingdom, he received many animals in return. Delighted, he again went to Naimisharanya. The great-minded Dhritarashtra, with dharma in his soul, was also relieved. The king returned to his greatly prosperous city.

‘O great king! In that tirtha, the immensely intelligent Brihaspati offered oblations of flesh for the decay of the asuras and the prosperity of the denizens of heaven. At this, the asuras began to decay. The gods desired victory and shattered them in a battle. In accordance with the prescribed rites, the immensely illustrious one⁹⁶ gave brahmanas horses, elephants, vehicles with horses and mules yoked to them, extremely expensive jewels, riches and grain. O lord of the earth! The mighty-armed one then went to the tirtha known as Yayata. O great king! The great-souled Yayati, Nahusha’s son, performed a sacrifice there and Sarasvati produced milk and clarified butter.⁹⁷ Having performed the sacrifice, King Yayati, tiger among men, cheerfully ascended upwards and obtained all the

worlds. O king! Because Yayati performed the sacrifice there, Sarasvati flowed and gave all the objects of desire to the great-souled brahmanas. In whatever spot the brahmanas desired whichever object of desire, in those spots, the best of rivers flowed and gave those in abundance. The gods and the gandharvas were pleased at this prosperous sacrifice. On beholding the prosperity at the sacrifice, men were astounded. The great-souled one, cleansed in his soul,⁹⁸ always gave away a lot of gifts. He possessed a palm tree on his banner and was the source of great dharma. He had fortitude and had conquered his soul. He then went to Vasishthapavaha, which had a great and terrible current.'

Chapter 1260(41)

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why does Vasishthapavaha have a great and terrible current? Why did the best of rivers bear the rishi away?’⁹⁹ O lord! What was the reason for the enmity between them?¹⁰⁰ O immensely wise one! I am asking you. Please tell me. I am not satisfied from hearing these stories.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was an extremely terrible enmity between the rishis Vishvamitra and Vasishtha. This was because they greatly rivalled each other in austerities. Vasishtha’s great hermitage was in the tirtha known as Sthanu. This was on the east and the intelligent Vishvamitra’s was on the west.¹⁰¹ O great king! Sthanu had performed great austerities there.¹⁰² Learned ones speak about the terrible deeds he performed there. O lord! Having performed a sacrifice there and having worshipped Sarasvati, the illustrious Sthanu established a tirtha there, known as Sthanu-tirtha. O lord of men! All the gods had instated Skanda, the destroyer of the enemies of the gods, as the great general of their army there. Through his fierce austerities, the great sage, Vishvamitra, brought Vasishtha to that tirtha on the Sarasvati. Listen to that account. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vishvamitra and Vasishtha, rich in austerities, rivalled and challenged each other through the fierce austerities that they performed. Vishvamitra, the great sage, saw that Vasishtha was superior to him in energy. He was tormented by this and began to think. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sage formed a resolution. “This Sarasvati will swiftly and forcefully bring Vasishtha, store of austerities and supreme among those who meditate, to my presence. Once he is here, there is no doubt that I will kill that foremost of brahmanas.” Having decided this, Vishvamitra, the great sage, remembered the best of rivers, his eyes red with rage. When she was thus thought of, the beautiful one anxiously went to the sage, who was great in energy and great in wrath. Sarasvati trembled and was pale. She joined her hands in salutation and presented herself before Vishvamitra, supreme among sages. She was extremely miserable and was like a lady whose husband had been killed. She asked that supreme of sages, “What do I have to do? Tell me.” The sage angrily replied, “Quickly bring Vasishtha here, so that I can kill him today.” On hearing this, the river was distressed. The one with eyes like a lotus joined her hands in salutation. She trembled, like a climbing creeper shaken by the wind. Vishvamitra saw that she had arrived and that she was trembling, joining her hands in salutation. Extremely angry, he said, “Quickly bring Vasishtha here.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Terrified, the best of rivers began to think. She was frightened that either one would curse her and did not know what to do.

‘Realizing the purport of the words, the best of rivers went to Vasishtha and told him what the intelligent Vishvamitra had said. She was scared that either one would curse her and trembled repeatedly. She was grievously frightened that the rishis would impose a grave curse on her. O king! Vasishtha was supreme among men and had dharma in his soul. He saw that she was wan and pale and was worried. He said, “O best of rivers! Save yourself. O fast-flowing one! Bear me there. Otherwise, Vishvamitra will curse you. Do not think unnecessarily.” The river heard the words of the compassionate one. O Kouravya! She began to think about the best course of action for herself. She thought and arrived at the conclusion, “Vasishtha has always shown compassion for me. What he has asked me to do will be beneficial for me.” O king! She saw that the supreme of rishis was meditating along her banks. She saw that Koushika¹⁰³ was also offering oblations. Sarasvati, supreme among rivers, decided that this was her opportunity. With great force, the river washed away one of her banks. When the bank was broken, Maitra Varuni’s son was also borne away.¹⁰⁴ O king! As he was borne away, he was satisfied and praised Sarasvati. “O Sarasvati! You are a river that has arisen from the grandfather.¹⁰⁵ This entire universe is pervaded by your wonderful waters. O goddess! You flow through the sky and pass on your waters to the clouds. All the waters are yours and it is through you that we obtain our learning.¹⁰⁶ You are nourishment, radiance, fame, success, expansion and

splendour.¹⁰⁷ You are speech and *svaha* .¹⁰⁸ You pervade the entire universe. It is through you that the four kinds of beings find life.”¹⁰⁹ O king! Sarasvati was praised thus by the maharshi. With great force, she bore the brahmana along towards Vishvamitra’s hermitage and told the sage Vishvamitra that he had been brought. On seeing that Vasishtha had been brought by Sarasvati, he¹¹⁰ was overcome by rage and looked for a weapon so that he might be slain. On seeing that he was angry, the river was scared that a brahmana might be killed. Without any delay, she swiftly bore Vasishtha away to the eastern bank again. She acted in accordance with both their words, but deceived Gadhi’s son. On seeing that Vasishtha, supreme among rishis, had been borne away, Vishvamitra was overcome by intolerance and wrathfully told her, “O supreme among rivers! You have gone away again and have deceived me. O fortunate one! Your waters will change to blood, acceptable only to the foremost among rakshasas.” Sarasvati was thus cursed by the intelligent Vishvamitra. For an entire year, Sarasvati flowed, with blood instead of water. The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras were extremely miserable to see the Sarasvati in that state. O lord of men! That is the reason that spot is famous in this world as Vasishthapavaha. However, the supreme among rivers again returned to her original course.’

Chapter 1261(42)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The intelligent and enraged Vishvamitra cursed her. In that supreme tirtha, the auspicious one’s flows were made out of blood. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rakshasas went there. In delight, all of them drank that blood. They were extremely satisfied, delighted and devoid of anxiety. They danced and laughed, as if they had won heaven for themselves. O lord of the earth! After some time had passed, rishis, rich in austerities, went on a visit of tirthas to the Sarasvati. Those bulls among sages went and bathed in all the tirthas. Those accomplished ones were supremely delighted and wished to obtain greater austerities. O king! They went to the other tirthas. Those immensely fortunate ones went to the terrible tirtha.¹¹¹ O supreme among kings! They saw that the waters of the Sarasvati were covered in blood and that these were being drunk by a large number of rakshasas. O king! On seeing this, the sages, rigid in their vows, made supreme efforts to save Sarasvati from the rakshasas. Those immensely fortunate ones, great in their vows, assembled and jointly summoned the river with these best of words. “O fortunate one! Tell us the reason why this lake of yours has been reduced to this plight.¹¹² We have heard the reason behind your state of hardship. We will try to rescue you.” Having been addressed, she looked at them. Trembling and miserable, she told them what had transpired. Those stores of austerities said, “O unblemished one! We have heard about the reason. We know why you have been cursed. All of us, rich in austerities, will make the best of efforts.” Having thus spoken to the best of rivers, they consulted among themselves. “All of us will free Sarasvati from the curse.” O king! They gave their word that Sarasvati would be returned to her natural state and indeed, the waters became clean, as they had been earlier. Freed, the best of rivers became as resplendent as she had been earlier.

‘O king! Seeing what the sages had done to the waters of the Sarasvati, the rakshasas were overcome by hunger. They joined their hands in salutation and repeatedly requested all the sages for compassion. “All of us are hungry. We have been dislodged from our eternal dharma.¹¹³ It is not of our own desire that we are the performers of wicked deeds. It is because you do not show us favours that we perform these wicked deeds. Those among us who are especially bad become brahma-rakshasas.¹¹⁴ In a similar way, those among vaishyas, shudras and kshatriyas, who hate brahmanas, also become rakshasas. Those beings who disrespect preceptors, officiating priests, elders and the aged, also become rakshasas. Wickedness increases through the sexual transgressions of women.¹¹⁵ O supreme among brahmanas! You should therefore act so as to show us compassion. You are capable of saving all the worlds.” On hearing these words, the sages praised the great river. They controlled their minds. To save the rakshasas, they said, “Food in which there are insects and worms, food that has been mixed with leftovers, food that is mixed with hair, food that is mixed with grain that has not been broken and food that has been touched by dogs—these will constitute the share of rakshasas. Knowing this, the learned will always avoid such kinds of food. Those who partake of such food will eat food that is meant for rakshasas.” Thus did those stores of austerities purify that tirtha. They instructed the river to save those rakshasas. O bull among men! Knowing the views of the maharshis, that supreme of rivers thought of a new form in her body, known as Aruna. Bathing there, the rakshasas gave up their bodies and went to heaven. O great king! He who bathes in Aruna is saved from the crime of killing a brahmana. Knowing the purport of all this, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, bathed in that best of tirthas and was freed from a great sin.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘How did the illustrious Shakra commit the offence of killing a brahmana? How was he freed from his sin by bathing in that tirtha?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O lord of men! Listen to that account, exactly as it happened. In ancient times, Vasava broke his treaty of peace with Namuchi. Because of his fear of Vasava, Namuchi hid inside one of the sun’s rays.

Indra entered into a pledge of friendship with him and told him, “O best of asuras! O friend! I will not kill you with anything that is wet, or with anything that is dry, nor during the day or during the night. I swear this to you truthfully.” Having thus entered into an agreement, the lord created a mist. O king! Vasava severed his head with the foam of water.¹¹⁶ Namuchi’s severed head pursued Shakra from the rear and said, “O friend! You have committed a crime.” He was repeatedly spoken to by the head. In torment, he went to the grandfather and told him what had happened. The preceptor of the worlds said, “O Indra of the gods! You have committed the crime of killing a brahmana.¹¹⁷ Perform a sacrifice in accordance with the decreed rites and bathe in Aruna.” O Janamejaya! Having been thus addressed, the slayer of Bala performed a sacrifice in the grove of Sarasvati and bathed in Aruna. He was freed from the crime of killing a brahmana. Cheerfully, the lord of the thirty gods returned to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O supreme among kings! Namuchi’s head was submerged in those waters and he¹¹⁸ obtained many eternal worlds that grant every object of desire.

‘The great-souled Bala bathed there and gave away many different kinds of gifts. Devoted to dharma and the performer of supreme and noble deeds, he then went to the great tirtha of Soma. O Indra among kings! In earlier times, in accordance with the prescribed rites, Soma had himself performed a royal sacrifice there. In that best of sacrifices, the intelligent and great-souled Atri was chief among the officiating priests. When it was over, there was a great clash between the danavas, daityas and rakshasas on one side and the gods on the other. That extremely terrible battle is known as Taraka and in this, Skanda killed Taraka. Mahasena,¹¹⁹ the destroyer of the daityas, became the commander of the gods there. Kartikeya himself lives at that spot. Kumara always dwells there and there is a king of plaksha trees there.’

Chapter 1262(43)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! You have told me about the powers of Sarasvati. O brahmana! You should tell me about Kumara’s consecration. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me about the time and the place where it happened. O illustrious one! How was the lord consecrated according to the proper rites? How did Skanda create great carnage among the daityas? Tell me everything about this. I have great curiosity.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Your curiosity is characteristic of someone belonging to the Kuru lineage. O Janamejaya! My words will generate delight in you. O lord of men! I will tell you about that wonderful account, about the great-souled Kumara’s consecration and powers. Listen. In earlier times, Maheshvara’s seed fell down into fire.¹²⁰

The illustrious one who devours everything¹²¹ was incapable of destroying that eternal seed. Instead, because he was bearing that energetic seed, the one who bears oblations became energetic and radiant. On Lord Brahma’s instructions, he went to the Ganga and flung that divine seed, as energetic as the sun, there. However, Ganga was also not capable of bearing that seed and flung it on the beautiful slopes of the Himalayas, worshipped by the immortals. Agni’s son¹²² began to grow there, pervading the worlds. The Krittikas saw the blazing womb there.¹²³ The lord, the great-souled son of the fire god, was lying down in a clump of reeds. Desiring a son, all of them exclaimed, “This is mine.” Discerning the sentiments of the mothers, the illustrious lord assumed six mouths and drank milk from all their breasts. Seeing the powers of the child, the divine goddesses, the Krittikas, celestial in their forms, were filled with great wonder. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Since Ganga had cast the illustrious one on the peak of the mountain, that mountain is beautiful and golden everywhere. The child began to grow and made the earth beautiful. It is because of this that all the mountains began to yield gold. The immensely valorous Kumara is known by the name of Kartikeya.¹²⁴ Before this, with his great powers of yoga, he had been known by the name of Gangeya. The god possessed prowess and austerities. O Indra among kings! He began to grow and was as handsome as the moon. Surrounded by prosperity, he lay down on that divine and golden clump of reeds. As he lay down there, he was praised by the gandharvas and the sages. Thousands of celestial maidens danced around him. They were beautiful and skilled in dancing. They played on divine musical instruments and praised him. The celestial river Ganga, supreme among rivers, also worshipped him. The earth, assuming the most beautiful of forms, bore him. Brihaspati performed the rites, including those connected with birth. The four Vedas presented themselves before him, hands joined in salutation. The four branches of dhanurveda and collections of weapons, not just arrows, presented themselves before him.

‘The immensely valorous one saw that Uma’s consort, the lord of the gods, was seated, surrounded by a large number of *bhutas*.¹²⁵ The daughter of the mountains was with him.¹²⁶ Those large numbers of *bhutas* were without bodies and were extremely wonderful to behold. They were hideous, with distorted bodies. Their ornaments and standards were ugly. Their faces were like tigers, lions and bears. Some of them had faces like cats and makaras. There were those with faces like cats.¹²⁷ There were others with faces like elephants and camels. Some had faces like owls. Others looked like vultures and jackals. Others had faces like curlews, pigeons and herons. Others had bodies like those of dogs, porcupines, lizards and mules. They assumed all these kinds of forms. Some were like mountains, others were like oceans. Some held chakras, maces and other weapons. Some looked like large masses of collyrium. Others possessed the complexion of white mountains. O lord of the earth! The seven *matrikas* and their followers were also there.¹²⁸ So were the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Maruts, the Vasus and the ancestors. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Siddhas, the serpents, the danavas, the birds, the illustrious and self-creating Brahma and his sons,¹²⁹ Vishnu and Shakra went there, desiring to see the supreme and undecaying Ku-

mara. There were the best of gods and gandharvas, with Narada at their head. There were the devarshis and the Siddhas, with Brihaspati at their head. There were the lords of creation, supreme among the gods. Aryama¹³⁰ and all the worlds went there. Though he was yet a child, the illustrious one possessed great powers of yoga. He advanced towards the lord of the gods,¹³¹ who wielded the trident and pinaka in his hands. On seeing him advance, Shiva, the daughter of the mountain, Ganga and Agni simultaneously wondered, “Whom will the child approach and show honours to first? He will come to me.”¹³² All of them thought in this way. Discerning their thoughts, he simultaneously divided himself into four bodies. The illustrious lord assumed these four bodies in an instant—Skanda, Shakha, Vishakha and Naigamesha as the last. Thus did the illustrious lord divide himself into four parts. Skanda, extraordinary in form, went to where Rudra was. Vishakha went to the goddess who was the daughter of the mountain. Shakha, the illustrious one’s form as the wind, went to Vibhavasus.¹³³ Naigamesha, Kumara’s form that was as radiant as the fire, went to Ganga. All the four blazing bodies were similar in appearance. They advanced forward and it was wonderful. On beholding this great and wonderful sight, which made the body hair stand up, great sounds of lamentation arose among the gods, the danavas and the rakshasas. Rudra, the goddess,¹³⁴ Agni and Ganga—all of them bowed down before the grandfather, the lord of the worlds. O bull among kings! O king! Having bowed down in different ways and to ensure Kartikeya’s welfare, they said, “O illustrious one! O lord of the gods! For the sake of our pleasure, grant this child some kind of sovereignty that is appropriate for him.” The illustrious and wise one, grandfather of all the worlds, thought about this. What could be given to him? All the riches had already been given away to the gods, the gandharvas, the rakshasas, the bhutas, the yakshas, the birds, the serpents and great-souled ones without any bodies. The immensely intelligent one thought about what prosperity might be bestowed on him. With the welfare of the gods in mind, he thought for an instant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He then made him the general of all the beings. The grandfather of all the beings instructed all the gods, and the lords among them, to serve him. Together with Kumara, all the gods, led by Brahma, went to the king of the mountains, so as to consecrate him there. That sacred spot was on the slopes of the Himalayas, where the goddess Sarasvati, best among rivers, flowed. It is famous in the three worlds by the name of Samantapanchaka. That sacred bank of the Sarasvati possesses all the qualities. Cheerful in their minds, all the gods and the gandharvas seated themselves there.’

Chapter 1263(44)

Vaishampayana said, ‘In accordance with the sacred texts, they collected everything that was required for a consecration. In accordance with the decreed rites, Brihaspati kindled a fire and offered oblations. The Himalayas provided a celestial, golden and supreme seat, decorated with the best of jewels and divine gems. All the auspicious objects were brought by the masses of gods, objects required for the consecration. The required mantras were chanted. The immensely valorous Indra, Vishnu, the sun god, the moon god, Dhata, Vidhata, the wind god, the fire god, Pusha, Bhaga, Aryama, Amsha, Vivasvat,¹³⁵ the immensely wise Rudra, Mitra, Varuna, the Rudras, the Vasus and the Adityas surrounded the handsome lord. With the ancestors, there were the Vishvadevas, the Maruts and the Sadhyas. There were gandharvas, apsaras, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents and large numbers of devarshis and brahmarshis. There were Vaikhanasas,¹³⁶ Valakhilyas, those that lived on air and those that lived on the rays of the sun. There were great-souled sages descended from Bhrigu and Angiras. There were all the Vidyadharas,¹³⁷ surrounded by Siddhas with sacred powers of yoga. O lord of the earth! The grandfather was there and Pulastya, the immensely ascetic Pulaha, Angiras, Kashyapa, Atri, Marichi, Bhrigu, Kratu, Hara, Prachetas, Manu, Daksha, the seasons, the planets and the stellar bodies. O lord of men! In personified form, the rivers were there and the eternal Vedas, the oceans, the lakes, the many kinds of tirthas, the earth, the firmament, the directions and all the trees. Aditi, the mother of the gods, Hri, Shri, Svaha, Sarasvati, Uma, Shachi, Sinivali, Anumati, Kuhu, Raka, Dhishana and all the wives of the residents of heaven were there.¹³⁸ The Himalayas, the Vindhya, Meru and many other mountains were there. O king! Airavata and his followers were there and Kala, Kashtha,¹³⁹ the fortnights, the months, the seasons, night and day. Uccaihsrava, best among horses, was there and Vamana, king among elephants. They were with Aruna, Garuda, the trees and the herbs. The illustrious god Dharma came there, with Destiny, Yama, Death and Yama’s followers. There were many others from the large numbers of gods that I have not named. They arrived there, for the purpose of Kumara’s consecration. O king! All the residents of heaven came there. They carried many auspicious vessels for the consecration. O king! There were golden pots filled with divine objects. They came to the divine and sacred waters of the Sarasvati. The residents of heaven were delighted that the great-souled Kumara, a terror to the asuras, would be consecrated as the general. O great king! In that ancient age, the illustrious Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, consecrated him by pouring Varuna, the lord of the waters, over him. So did the immensely ascetic Kashyapa and the others who have been named.

‘The lord Brahma was delighted and gave him great companions who were powerful and as swift as the wind. They were successful and possessed valour that could be increased at will. They were Nandisena, Lohitaksha and Ghantakarna. The fourth companion was known by the name of Kumudamali. Sthanu gave him a great companion by the name of Kratu. He was immensely forceful and could summon a hundred different kinds of maya at will. He possessed valour and strength that could be increased at will. O Indra among kings! He was the destroyer of the enemies of the gods and he gave him to Skanda. In the battle between the gods and the asuras, he¹⁴⁰ angrily killed fourteen million terrible daityas with his bare hands alone. The god also gave him soldiers that were full of demons.¹⁴¹ They destroyed and defeated the enemies of the gods and possessed all kinds of earthy forms. With Vasava, all the gods uttered roars of victory. So did the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the sages and the ancestors. Yama gave him two companions who were like Death and Destiny. They were Unmatha and Pramatha. They were immensely valorous and greatly radiant. Surya cheerfully gave the powerful Kartikeya two companions who were Surya’s followers. They were Subhaja and Bhaskara. Soma gave him companions named Mani and Sumani. They were like peaks of Kailasa. They wore white garlands and were smeared with white unguents.

Hutashana¹⁴² gave him two brave companions named Jvalajihva and Jyoti. They were ones who crushed enemy soldiers. Amsha gave the intelligent Skanda five companions—Parigha, Vata, the immensely strong Bhima, Dahati and Dahana. They were fearsome and full of valour. Vasava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, gave Agni's son two companions named Utkrosha and Pankaja. They were armed with the vajra and a staff. In battle, they had killed many enemies of the great Indra. The immensely famous Vishnu gave Skanda three companions named Chakra, Vikrama and Samkrama. They were immensely strong. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Ashvins cheerfully gave Skanda companions named Vardhana and Nandana. They were skilled in all the arts. The immensely illustrious Dhata gave the great-souled one companions named Kundana, Kusuma, Kumuda, Dambara and Adambara. Tvastha gave Skanda supreme companions named Vakra and Anuvakra. They were strong, proud of their valour and had mouths like those of sheep. They had great powers of maya. The lord Mitra gave the great-souled Kumara two great-souled companions, Suvrata and Satyasandha. They possessed austerities and learning. Vidhata gave Kartikeya two handsome companions who were famous in the three worlds. They were Suprabha and the great-souled Shubhakarma. They were the granters of boons and the performers of auspicious deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Pusha gave Kartikeya two companions, Palitaka and Kalika. They possessed great powers of maya. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Vayu gave Kartikeya Bala and Atibala. They were immensely powerful and possessed large mouths. Varuna, devoted to the truth, gave Kartikeya Ghasa and Atighasa. They had faces like whales and were immensely strong. O king! The Himalayas gave Hutashana's son the great-souled Suvarchasa and Ativarchasa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Meru gave Agni's son two companions—the great-souled Kanchana and Meghamali. Meru also gave Agni's great-souled son two others—Sthira and Atisthira. They were immensely strong and powerful. The Vindhya gave Agni's son two companions named Uchchrita and Atishringa. They fought with large boulders. The ocean gave Agni's son two great companions, Samgraha and Vighraha. They were the wielders of clubs. The beautiful Parvati gave Agni's son Unmada, Pushpadanta and Shankukarna. O tiger among men! Vasuki, the lord of serpents, gave the son of the fire two serpents named Jaya and Mahajaya.

'In that way, the Sadhyas, the Rudras, the Vasus, the ancestors, the oceans, the rivers and the immensely strong mountains gave him the leaders of soldiers, armed with spears and battleaxes. They wielded divine weapons and were attired in many kinds of garments. Listen to the names of the other soldiers that Skanda obtained. They were armed with many kinds of weapons and attired in colourful ornaments and armour. O king! O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were¹⁴³ Shankukarna, Nikumbha, Padma, Kumuda, Ananta, Dvadashabhuja, Krishna, Upakrishna, Dronashrava, Kapskandha, Kanchanaksha, Jalamdhama, Akshasamtarjana, Kunadika, Tamobhrakrit, Ekaksha, Dvadashaksha, the lord Ekajata, Sahasrabahu, Vikata, Vyaghraksha, Kshitikampana, Punyanama, Sunama, Suvaktra, Priyadarshana, Parishruta, Kokanada, Priyamalyanulepana, Ajodira, Gajashira, Skandhaksha, Shatalochana, Jvalajihva, Karala, Sitakesha, Jati, Hari, Chaturdamshtra, Ashtajihva, Meghanada, Prithushrava, Vidyutaksha, Dhanurvakra, Jathara, Marutashana, Udaraksha, Jhashaksha, Vajranama, Vasuprabha, Samudravega, Shailakampi, Putramesha, Pravaha, Nanda, Upanandaka, Dhumra, Shveta, Kalinga, Siddhartha, Varada, Priyaka, Nanda, the powerful Gonanda, Ananda, Pramoda, Svastika, Dhruvaka, Kshemavapa, Sujata, Siddha, Govraja, Kanakapida, the lord of great companions, Gayana, Hasana, Bana, the valiant Khadga, Vaitali, Atitali, Katika, Vatika, Hamsaja, Pankadigdhanga, Samudronmada, Ranotkata, Prahasa, Shvetashirsha, Nandaka, Kalakantha, Prabhasa, Kumbhabhandaka, Kalakaksha, Sita, Bhutalonmatha, Yajnavaha, Pravaha, Devayaji, Somapa, Sajala, Mahateja, Krathakratha, Tuhana, Tuhana,¹⁴⁴ the valiant Chitradeva, Madhura, Suprasada, the immensely strong Kiriti, Vasana, Madhuvarna, Kalashodara, Ghamanta, Manmathakara, the valiant Suchivakrta, Shvetavaktra, Suvaktra, Charuvaktra, Pandura, Dandabahu, Subahu, Raja, Kokila, Achala, Kanakaksha, the lord Balanamayika, Samcharaka, Kokanada, Gridhravakra, Jambuka, Lohashvavakra, Jathara, Kumbhavaktra, Kundaka, Madgugriva, Krishnouja, Hamsavaktra, Chandrabha, Panikurma, Shambuka, Shakavaktra and Kundaka. There were other great-souled ones who possessed powers of yoga and were always devoted to brahmanas. O Janamejaya! These great companions were given to him by the great-souled grandfather and they were children, youths and the aged. Thousands of companions presented themselves before Kumara.

'O Janamejaya! They had many different kinds of faces. Listen to this. Some had faces like tortoises and cocks, others mouths like hares and owls. Some had faces like asses and camels, others faces like boars. Some had

mouths like men and sheep, others faces like jackals. Some had terrible faces like makaras, others mouths like alligators.¹⁴⁵ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some had faces like cats and rabbits, others had long faces. Some had faces like mongooses and owls, others faces like dogs. Some had mouths like rats, others faces like peacocks. Others had faces like fish and sheep, while still others had faces like goats and buffaloes. Some had faces like bears and tigers, others faces like leopards and tigers. Some had terrible faces like elephants, others mouths like crocodiles. Some had faces like Garuda, others mouths like rhinoceros, wolves and crows. Others had mouths like cows and mules, still others mouths like cats.¹⁴⁶ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some had large stomachs and feet, with eyes like stars. Others had mouths like pigeons, and still others mouths like bulls. There were those with faces like cuckoos and others with faces like hawks and partridges. Some had mouths like partridges,¹⁴⁷ others were dressed in white garments. Some had faces like serpents, others mouths like porcupines. Some had terrible mouths, others one hundred faces. Some were attired in snakeskin. Others wore snakes as garments. There were large stomachs and thin bodies, as there were thin stomachs and large bodies. There were short necks and large ears, dressed in many kinds of snakeskin. Some wore garments made out of elephant skin, others were attired in black deerskin. O great king! Some had mouths on their shoulders, others had mouths on their stomachs. Some had mouths on their backs. Some had mouths on their cheeks. Some had mouths on their thighs. Many had faces on their flanks and others had mouths all over the body. There were other lords of *ganas*¹⁴⁸ who looked like worms and insects. There were those with mouths like carnivorous beasts. They had many arms and many heads. Some had arms like trees. Others had heads around their waists. Some had faces like the bodies of snakes, others dwelt on many creepers. Some covered their bodies with deerskin, others attired themselves in bark. There were many different kinds of garments, including those made of hides. There were headdresses and crowns. They had necks like conch shells and were extremely radiant. Some were diademed. Some had five tufts of hair on their heads. Some had stiff hair. There were those with three, two or seven tufts of hair on their heads. Some had tufts, others wore crowns. Some were shaved, others had matted hair. Some were adorned in colourful garments. Some others had hair on their faces. Some donned divine garlands and garments and always loved the prospect of fighting. Some were dark, with no flesh on their faces. Some had long backs, without stomachs. Some had long backs, others had short backs. Some had elongated stomachs. Some were long-armed, others were short-armed. Some were short in stature and were dwarfs. Some were hunchbacked. There were those with long thighs and ears and heads like those of elephants. There were noses like elephants and noses like tortoises. Others had noses like wolves. Some had long lips and long tongues. Others had terrible visages and their faces looked downwards. There were long teeth and short teeth. Some only had four teeth. O king! There were thousands who were as terrible as the kings of elephants. Some had proportionate bodies that blazed and were ornamented. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were those with tawny eyes, with conical ears and bent noses. There were broad teeth, large teeth, stout lips and tawny hair. There were many kinds of feet, lips and teeth. There were many kinds of hands and heads. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were many kinds of armour and many kinds of speech. Those lords were skilled in the languages of different countries and spoke to each other. Those great companions were seen to cheerfully descend there. They were long in the neck, long in the nails and long in the feet, heads and arms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were tawny-eyed, blue in the throat and long in the ear. Some had stomachs like wolves. Others were like masses of collyrium. Others had white limbs, red necks and tawny eyes. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many were dappled in colourful hues. There were ornaments that were like whiskers, white, red and silver. These were of many different colours. Some were golden, or had the complexion of peacocks.

‘Let me recount the weapons that were grasped and wielded by the companions who came last. Listen. Some wielded nooses in their hands. Others had faces like asses, with gaping mouths. Some had large eyes, blue throats and arms like clubs. They had shataghni and chakras in their hands. Others had clubs in their hands. There were bludgeons and catapults in their hands. Some had spears in their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While some had spears and swords in their hands, others held staffs in their hands. Those great-souled ones possessed many kinds of terrible weapons. They were swift in speed. They were immensely strong and immensely forceful. Such were the great companions who were seen at Kumara’s consecration. They were cheerful and loved

to fight. Nets of bells were fastened to their bodies and they were immensely energetic. O king! There were many other great companions like these. They presented themselves before the great-souled and illustrious Kartikeya. They were from heaven, the firmament and earth and some were like the wind. Instructed by the gods, those brave ones became the companions of Skanda. There were many others like them, in thousands, millions and tens of millions. They surrounded the great-souled one at his consecration.'

Chapter 1264(45)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Listen to the large number of matrikas who became Kumara’s followers. O brave one! I will recount the names of the ones who slay large numbers of the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the names of those illustrious matrikas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! O king! O Kouravya! Those fortunate ones pervade the three worlds and everything that is mobile and immobile¹⁴⁹ —Prabhavati, Vishalakshi, Palita, Gonasi, Shrimati, Bahula, Bahuputrika, Apsujata, Gopali, Brihadambalika, Jayavati, Malatika, Dhruvaratna, Bhayankari, Vasudama, Sudama, Vishoka, Nandini, Ekachuda, Mahachuda, Chakranemi, Uttejani, Jayatsena, Kamalakshya, Shobhana, Shatrunjaya, Krodhana, Shalabhi, Khari, Madhavi, Shubhravaktra, Tirthanemi, Gitapriya, Kalyani, Kadrula, Amitashana, Meghasvana, Bhogavati, Subhru, Kanakavati, Alatakshi, Viryavati, Vidyutjihva, Padmavati, Sunakshatra, Kandara, Bahuyojana, Santanika, Bahudama, Suprabha, Yashasvini, Nrityapriya, Shatolukhalamekhala, Shataghanta, Shatananda, Bhagananda, Bhamini, Vapushmati, Chandrashita, Bhadrakali, Samkarika, Nishkutika, Bhrama, Chatvaravasini, Sumangala, Svastimati, Vriddhikama, Jayapriya, Dhanada, Suprasada, Bhavada, Jaleshvari, Edi, Bhedi, Samedi, VetalaJanani, Kanduti, Kalika, Devamitra, Lambasi, Ketaki, Chitrasena, Bala, Kukkutika, Shankhanika, Jarjarika, Kundarika, Kokalika, Kandara, Shatodari, Utkrathini, Jarena, Mahavega, Kankana, Manojava, Kantakini, Praghosa, Putana, Khashaya, Churvyutirvama, Kroshanatha, Taditprabha, Mandodari, Tunda, Kotara, Meghavasini, Subhaga, Lambini, Lamba, Vasuchuda, Vikatthini, Urdhvhavenidhara, Pingakshi, Lohamekhala, Prithuvaktra, Madhurika, Madhukumbha, Pakshalika, Manthanika, Jarayu, Jarjaranana, Khyata, Dahadaha, Dhamadhama, Khandakhanda, Pushana, Manikundala, Amocha, Lambopayodhara, Venuvinadhara, Pingakshi, Lohamekhala, Shasholukamukhi, Krishna, Kharajhangha, Mahajava, Shishumaramukhi, Shveta, Lohitakshi, Vibhishana, Jatalika, Kamachari, Dirghajihva, Balotkata, Kaledika, Vamanika, Mukuta, Lohitakshi, Mahakaya, Haripindi, Ekakshara, Sukusuma, Krishnakarni, Kshurakarni, Chatushkarni, Karnapravarana, Chatuspathaniketa, Gokarni, Mahishanana, Kharakarni, Mahakarni, Bherisvanamahasvana, Shankhakumbhasvana, Bhangada, Mahabala, Gana, Sugana, Bhiti, Kamada, Chatuspatharata, Bhutitirtha, Anyagochara, Pashuda, Vittada, Sukhada, Mahayasha, Poyada, Gomahishada, Suvishana, Pratishtha, Supratishtha, Rochamana, Surochana, Gokarni, Sukarni, Sasira, Stherika, Ekachakra, Megharava, Meghamala, Virochana. O king! O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were these and many other matrikas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thousands of them followed Kartikeya, in many different forms. They had long nails and long teeth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their mouths were long. They were simple, sweet, youthful and ornamented. They were full of greatness and could assume any form at will. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some didn’t have any flesh on their bodies. Some were fair. Others possessed the complexion of gold. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Some were like dark clouds. Others were like smoke. Some immensely fortunate ones were red in hue, long in the hair and dressed in white garments. Some were in braids that were held up. Others were tawny-eyed and were attired in long girdles. Some had long stomachs and long ears. Others possessed drooping breasts. There were others who were copper-eyed and green-eyed, with complexions like copper. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were the ones who granted boons. They could travel anywhere at will and were always cheerful. O scorcher of enemies! O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some assumed the traits of Yama, Rudra, Soma, the immensely strong Kubera, Varuna, the great Indra, Agni, Vayu, Kumara and Brahma. They were like apsaras in their beauty and like the wind in speed. They were like cuckoos in their voice and like the lord of riches in prosperity. They were like Shakra in their valour and like the fire in their resplendence. They lived on trees and open plains. Others made their abodes at crossroads. Some lived in caves and cremation grounds. Others made their abodes in mountains and springs. They wore many kinds of ornaments. They were attired in diverse kinds of garlands and

garments. They were dressed in many kinds of clothing. They spoke many different kinds of languages. There were large numbers of others, terrifying to enemies. On the instructions of Indra of the gods, they followed the great-souled one.

‘O tiger among kings! The illustrious chastiser of Paka¹⁵⁰ gave Guha¹⁵¹ a javelin, for the destruction of the enemies of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It possessed large bells and made a loud noise. It blazed and was sparkling in complexion. He also gave him a flag, with the complexion of the rising sun. Pashupati gave him a large army consisting of all kinds of beings who were fierce and wielded many kinds of weapons. They possessed austerities, valour and strength. Vishnu gave him a garland that ensured victory and increased one’s powers. Uma gave him two garments that were as resplendent as the sun. Ganga gave him a supreme and celestial water pot that was created from amrita. In delight, Brihaspati gave Kumara a staff. Garuda gave him his beloved son, a peacock with colourful feathers. Aruna gave him a red-crested cock, which used its feet as weapons. King Varuna gave him a noose that possessed strength and valour. The lord Brahma gave him, devoted as he was to brahmanas, a black antelope skin. The creator of the worlds also granted him victory in battles. Having become the general of the large numbers of gods, Skanda blazed in radiance. He was like the rays of a second fire god. He was accompanied by the companions and the matrikas and the terrible army of the nairrtas.¹⁵² The flags were decorated with bells. There were penants and weapons. There were drums, conch shells and larger drums. The army looked like the autumn sky, decorated with stars. That army of the gods and army of the bhutas advanced. They fiercely played on their musical instruments, the drums and the conch shells. A large sound was created by the tambourines, *jharjharas*,¹⁵³ *krakachas*,¹⁵⁴ trumpets made of cow horn, trumpets,¹⁵⁵ *gomukhas*¹⁵⁶ and smaller drums.¹⁵⁷ All the gods, together with Vasava, praised Kumara. The gods and gandharvas sang and large numbers of apsaras danced.

‘Delighted, Mahasena¹⁵⁸ granted a boon to the gods. “In the battle, I will kill the enemies who desire to slay you.” Having obtained this boon from that god, all the gods were delighted. The great-souled ones thought that their enemies had already been killed. All the large numbers of bhutas raised a roar of delight. Once they had been granted this boon by the great-souled one, this roar filled the three worlds. Mahasena advanced, surrounded by a large army, for the sake of the protection of the gods and the destruction of the daityas. O lord of men! Resolution, Victory, dharma, Success, Prosperity, Fortitude and Learning¹⁵⁹ advanced ahead of Mahasena’s terrible army, who were armed with spears, clubs, maces, bludgeons, iron arrows, javelins and spikes in their hands. They roared like proud lions. The god Guha advanced.

‘On seeing him, all the daityas, rakshasas and danavas became anxious and frightened. They fled in all the directions. With diverse weapons in their hands, the gods pursued them. On seeing this, Skanda, energetic and powerful, became enraged. The illustrious one repeatedly used the javelin as a weapon.¹⁶⁰ He displayed his energy, like a fire into which oblations have been poured. The infinitely energetic Skanda repeatedly used the javelin as a weapon. O great king! Like a blazing meteor, it fell down on the ground. Lightning and thunder also descended on the earth. O king! Everything was terrible, like at the time of destruction. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Whenever, Agni’s son hurled the extremely terrible javelin, crores of javelins issued from it. The Indra among the daityas was named Taraka. He was extremely strong and brave. The illustrious lord used the weapon of the javelin to slay him¹⁶¹ in the battle and also another ten thousand brave and powerful daityas who were around him. In the battle, he slew Mahisha and eight *padmas* who surrounded him.¹⁶² He slew Tripada and ten million who surrounded him. The lord then killed Hradodara and ten billion who surrounded him. He also slew his followers, who had diverse weapons in their hands. O king! As they slaughtered the enemy, Kumara’s followers roared loudly and filled the ten directions. O Indra among kings! The weapon of the javelin generated flames in every direction and consumed thousands of daityas. Others were killed because of Skanda’s roars. Some enemies of the gods were killed by the flags. Some were frightened by the bells and fell down on the ground. Some were mangled by the weapons and fell down, deprived of their lives. There were many such who hated the gods, powerful assassins. The immensely strong and valiant Kartikeya slaughtered them in the encounter.

‘Bali’s son was the immensely strong daitya named Bana. He resorted to Mount Krouncha and fought against the large numbers of the gods. The intelligent Mahasena advanced against that enemy of the gods. Terrified of Kar-

tikeya, he hid inside Krouncha. The illustrious Kartikeya was overcome by great rage. He shattered Krouncha with the javelin that had been given to him by Agni and because of the shriek, it was called Krouncha.¹⁶³ The mountain had shala and *sarala*¹⁶⁴ trees and the apes and elephants that lived on it were terrified. The birds rose up in terror and the serpents fell down. Large numbers of monkeys¹⁶⁵ and bears shrieked in fear and fled. The place echoed with the sounds of antelopes running away. When the mountain was shattered and fell down, *sharabhas*¹⁶⁶ and lions were overtaken by a calamity and suddenly ran away. But it was very beautiful. Vidyadharas who dwelt on the peak rose up into the air. The kinnaras were anxious, because they were struck by the descent of the javelin. Hundreds and thousands of daityas were crushed. They emerged from that blazing mountain, attired in excellent and colourful ornaments and garlands. Kumara's followers proved to be superior and killed them in the battle. Pavaka's son,¹⁶⁷ the destroyer of enemy heroes, shattered Krouncha with the javelin. The great-souled one divided himself into one, and also many forms. In the encounter, he repeatedly hurled the javelin from his hands. Thus, did Pavaka's son repeatedly show his powers. He shattered Krouncha and killed hundreds of daityas.

'Thus did the illustrious god slaughter the enemies of the gods. The gods were supremely delighted. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They sounded drums and blew on conch shells. The wives of the gods showered down excellent flowers. An auspicious breeze, mixed with celestial fragrances, began to blow. Some describe the lord as the eldest of all of Brahma's sons, Sanatkumara.¹⁶⁸ Some describe him as the son of Maheshvara, others as the son of Vibhvasu. Others speak of him as the son of Uma, the Kritikas or Ganga. The immensely strong one is in one form, or two forms, or four forms. The god, who is the lord of yoga, is in hundreds and thousands of forms.

'O king! I have thus told you about Kartikeya's consecration. Now listen to the most sacred of tirthas along the Sarasvati. O great king! After the enemies of the gods had been killed by Kumara, it became foremost among the tirthas and was like heaven itself. Pavaka's son gave the foremost of nairrtas separate dominions and riches in different parts of the three worlds. O great king! The illustrious destroyer of the lineage of the daityas was consecrated by the gods as the general of the celestials in that tirtha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Earlier, large number of gods had consecrated Varuna as the lord of the waters in that tirtha and it had been known by the name of Oujasa. Having bathed in that tirtha and having worshipped Skanda, the wielder of the plough donated gold, garments and ornaments to the brahmanas. Madhava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, spent a night there. The wielder of the plough worshipped that supreme of tirthas and touched the waters there. The best of the Madhava lineage was cheerful and delighted. I have told you everything that you had asked me, about how the illustrious Skanda was consecrated by the assembled gods.'

Chapter 1265(46)

Janamejaya said, ‘O brahmana! What I have heard from you is exceedingly wonderful. You have told me in detail about how Kumara was duly consecrated. O one rich in austerities! After hearing this, I know that I have been purified. My body hair has stood up and my mind is delighted. After hearing about Kumara’s consecration and the slaughter of the daityas, I am supremely happy. However, I am still curious. How was the lord of the waters consecrated by the gods and the asuras? O immensely wise one! O supreme one! You are skilled in narrating. Tell me about this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! Listen to this wonderful account, exactly as it happened in another kalpa.¹⁶⁹ During that original krita yuga, all the gods assembled, went to Varuna in the proper fashion and said, “Just as Shakra, lord of the gods, always protects us from fear, in that way, you become the lord of all the rivers. O god! Always dwell in the ocean, the abode of makaras. May the ocean, the lord of the rivers, be under your control. Together with Soma,¹⁷⁰ you will also wax and wane.” Varuna spoke to the gods, signifying his acceptance. All of them assembled and made Varuna, whose abode was the ocean, the lord of the waters, in accordance with the decreed rites. Having consecrated Varuna as the lord of the waters, the gods worshipped the lord of the waters and returned to their respective abodes. The immensely illustrious Varuna was thus consecrated by the gods. In accordance with what was required, he protected flowing water, oceans, rivers and lakes, like Shatakratu protects the gods. The immensely wise destroyer of Pralamba¹⁷¹ touched the waters there and gave away many riches. He then went to Agnitirtha. The fire god was destroyed there and became invisible inside shami. O unblemished one! When the lord and light-giver of the worlds disappeared in this way, the great-souled gods presented themselves before the grandfather of all the worlds and said, “The illustrious Agni has disappeared and we do not know the reason. Let all the worlds not be destroyed. Please create fire again.” ’

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why was the illustrious Agni, the creator of all the worlds, destroyed? How did the gods discover him again? Please tell me everything about this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘The powerful fire god was extremely frightened because of Bhrigu’s curse.¹⁷² The illustrious one sought refuge inside a shami tree and could no longer be seen. When the fire god disappeared, all the gods, together with Vasava, were extremely unhappy. They searched for the fire that had vanished. Having reached Agnitirtha, they found Agni inside a shami tree. They found the fire god dwelling there. O tiger among men! With Brihaspati at the forefront, and with Vasava, all the gods were delighted at having found the fire god. They returned to the places that they had come from and he became the devourer of everything. O lord of the earth! Bhrigu was knowledgeable about the brahman and this happened because of his curse. Having bathed there, the intelligent one¹⁷³ went to Brahmayoni. In earlier times, the illustrious lord Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, had bathed there, with the gods, in accordance with the rites that are laid down for the gods. Having bathed there, he¹⁷⁴ gave away many riches. He then went to the tirtha named Koubera. O king! The lord Ailabila tormented himself through great austerities there and became the lord of riches. O king! O best of men! At that spot, many stores of riches manifested themselves before him.¹⁷⁵ The one with the plough presented himself at that tirtha. Having gone and bathed there, in the prescribed way, he gave away riches to the brahmanas. He saw the place known as Koubera, with the best of groves. In earlier times, the extremely great-souled King Kubera tormented himself through great austerities there and obtained a large number of boons. He became the lord of riches and became a friend of the infinitely energetic Rudra. He became a god and a guardian of the world there. He also obtained a son named Nalakubara. O mighty-armed one! The lord of riches swiftly obtained all these things there. Large numbers of Maruts assembled there and consecrated him. He also obtained a vehicle there, yoked to beauti-

ful horses. This was the celestial vimana Pushpaka. He also got the riches of the gods. O king! Having bathed there, Bala gave away many kinds of gifts. Smearing himself with white sandalwood paste, Rama quickly went to the tirtha known as Badarapachana. It was inhabited by all kinds of living beings. Auspicious flowers and fruit are always found in the groves there.'

Chapter 1266(47)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Rama then went to the supreme tirtha of Badarapachana. Many ascetics and Siddhas roamed around there. Bharadvaja’s daughter was unmatched on earth in beauty. The maiden was firm in her vows. O lord! Her name was Sruchavati and the maiden observed brahmacharya. O king! She performed severe austerities and observed many rules. The beautiful one had made up her mind to obtain the king of the gods as her husband. O extender of the Kuru lineage! A long period of time passed. She continued to observe those terrible rituals, which are extremely difficult for women to observe. O lord of the earth! The illustrious chastiser of Paka was supremely delighted because of her conduct, austerities and devotion. The lord, the king of the thirty gods, arrived at the hermitage, assuming the form of the great-souled brahmana rishi, Vasishtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Vasishtha, supreme among ascetics and the performer of fierce austerities, she worshipped him. The fortunate one, knowledgeable about rules and sweet in speech said, “O illustrious one! O tiger among sages! O lord! What is your command? O one who is excellent in vows! I will give you everything, in accordance with my capacity. However, because I am devoted to Shakra, I will not be able to give you my hand. O one who is rich in austerities! My vows, rules and austerities are an attempt to satisfy Shakra, the lord of the three worlds.” Having been thus addressed, the illustrious god smiled and glanced at her. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He assured the one who knew about rules and said, “O one good in vows! I know that you are performing fierce austerities. O fortunate one! O one with a beautiful face! All the objectives that you have in your heart will be obtained. Everything can be obtained through austerities. Everything is established in austerities. O one with an auspicious face! All the celestial states of the gods can be obtained through austerities. Austerities are the source of great happiness. Those men, who perform great austerities and cast aside their bodies on earth, obtain the status of gods. O fortunate one! Listen to these words of mine! O immensely fortunate one! O one who is auspicious in vows. Cook these berries.”¹⁷⁶ Having asked her to boil them, the illustrious slayer of Bala went away. Having asked the fortunate one, he went to an excellent spot that was not far from that hermitage, so as to chant and meditate there. O great king! This is famous in the three worlds as Indratirtha.

‘The illustrious chastiser of Paka wished to test her. Hence, the lord of the gods asked her to boil those berries. O king! Cleansed of sin, the humble one tried to do this. She purified herself and offered kindling into a fire. O tiger among kings! The one who was great in her vows began to boil those berries. O bull among men! As she boiled them, a long period of time passed. The berries were not boiled and the day was over. The wood that she had stored was consumed by the fire. On seeing that the fire no longer had any wood, she began to burn her body. At first, the beautiful one thrust her feet into the fire. As her feet were repeatedly burnt, the unblemished one paid no attention to this. The unblemished one did not think about her feet being burnt. So as to please the maharshi, the lotus-eyed one bore this misery. Her face was cheerful. On witnessing her deed, the lord of the three worlds was pleased. He displayed his own self to the maiden. The best of the gods spoke these words to the maiden, who was extremely firm in her vows. “O fortunate one! I am pleased with your devotion, austerities and rituals. O beautiful one! Everything that you wish for will be obtained. O immensely fortunate one! You will cast aside this body and live with me in heaven. This supreme tirtha will be established in this world. O one with the beautiful brows! It will clean all sins and be known by the name of Badarapachana. It will be famous in the three worlds and will be praised by brahmarshis. O immensely fortunate one! O beautiful one! In ancient times, in this supreme tirtha, the *saptarshis* had left Arundhati¹⁷⁷ and gone to the Himalayas. Those immensely fortunate ones, rigid in their vows, went there to collect fruits and roots for their sustenance. For the sake of their sustenance, they dwelt in the forests of the Himalayas and there was a drought that lasted for twelve years. Having constructed a hermitage for themselves, the ascetics dwelt there. The fortunate Arundhati always performed austerities. On seeing that Arundhati

was observing fierce rituals, the three-eyed one, the granter of boons, the immensely illustrious Mahadeva, was extremely pleased. Assuming the form of a brahmana, he arrived there. The god approached her and said, 'O fortunate one! I am looking for alms.' The beautiful one replied to the brahmana, 'O brahmana! Our store of food has been exhausted. Eat these berries.' Mahadeva said, 'O one who is good in vows! Cook these berries.' Having been thus addressed, wishing to please the brahmana, she began to cook those berries. The illustrious one offered kindling in the fire and placed the berries on that. She listened to divine, beautiful and sacred accounts.¹⁷⁸ Those twelve years of terrible drought passed. She was without food and was cooking, listening to those auspicious accounts. That extremely terrible period passed, as if it was a single day. Having obtained fruits, the sages returned from the mountain. The illustrious one¹⁷⁹ was pleased with Arundhati and spoke to her. 'O one who knows about dharma! Approach the rishis, as you used to do earlier. O one who knows about dharma! I am pleased with your austerities and your rituals.' The illustrious Hara then showed himself in his own form. He spoke to them¹⁸⁰ about the greatness of her conduct. 'You have earned merit from the austerities you have performed on the slopes of the Himalayas. O brahmanas! But it is my view that what she has earned through her austerities is equal to that. This ascetic has tormented herself through extremely difficult austerities. While fasting, she has spent twelve years in cooking.' The illustrious one then spoke to Arundhati again. 'O fortunate one! Ask for the boon that is in your heart.' In the presence of the saptarshis, the one with the large and coppery eyes addressed the god. 'O illustrious one! If you are pleased with me, let this spot become an excellent tirtha. Let it be loved by the siddhas and the devarshis and let it be known by the name of Badarapachana. O god! O lord of the gods! If a person purifies himself¹⁸¹ and fasts here for three days, let him obtain the fruits that are obtained from fasting for twelve years.' Hara agreed to this and returned to heaven. On seeing this, and on seeing the virtuous Arundhati, who was capable of withstanding hunger and thirst and was yet not exhausted or pale, the rishis were astounded. Thus did the pure Arundhati attain supreme success. O immensely fortunate one! O one who is good in vows! You have done the same for my sake. O fortunate one! Your vows have been dedicated to me. Therefore, pleased with your observance of rules, I will grant you this special boon today. O fortunate one! Ask for a special and supreme boon, which is superior to the boon granted to Arundhati by the great-souled one. Through his favours and because of your energy, in accordance with the prescribed rites, I will grant you another boon. Whoever controls himself¹⁸² and spends a night in this tirtha and bathes here, will, after casting aside his body, obtain worlds that are extremely difficult to get." Having spoken to Sruchavati, the thousand-eyed god, the illustrious and powerful one, returned again to heaven. O king! O foremost among the Bharata lineage! When the wielder of the vajra had left, celestial flowers, with divine fragrances, showered down there. In every direction, drums sounded with a loud roar. O lord of the earth! A breeze, laced with auspicious scents, began to blow. Having cast aside her body, the sacred one became Indra's wife. She obtained him through her fierce austerities and pleased with the undecaying one.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Who was the illustrious mother of that beautiful one? How was she reared? O brahmana! I wish to hear this. My curiosity is supreme.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'On seeing the large-eyed apsara Gritachi, the seed of the great-souled brahmana rishi, Bharadvaja, fell. The one who was supreme among those who meditate, picked that seed up in his hand. It was kept in a cup made of leaves and the beautiful one was born from this.¹⁸³ All her birth rites were performed by the one who was rich in austerities. The great sage, Bharadvaja, also named her. In the presence of a large number of rishis, the great-souled one gave her the name of Sruchavati. Leaving her in that hermitage, he returned to the slopes of the Himalayas. The immensely generous one¹⁸⁴ bathed there and gave away riches to the great brahmanas. Extremely controlled in his soul, the foremost of the Vrishni lineage then went to Shakra's tritha.'

Chapter 1267(48)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The strong and foremost one among the Yadu lineage then went to Indratirtha. In accordance with the prescribed rites, having given riches and jewels to the brahmanas, he bathed there. The king of the immortals had performed a hundred horse sacrifices there. The lord of the gods had also given a large quantity of riches to Brihaspati. As instructed by those who are learned about the Vedas, he had incessantly performed sacrifices there and given away all the indicated gifts. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The immensely radiant one had performed one hundred sacrifices. Having performed them in the prescribed way, he had become famous as Shatakratu.¹⁸⁵ That sacred, auspicious and eternal tirtha is named after him. It is famous as Indratirtha and cleanses from all sins. The one with the club as his weapon bathed there, in accordance with the prescribed rites. He honoured the brahmanas and gave them food, drink and garments.

‘He then went to the auspicious and supreme tirtha known as Ramatirtha. The immensely fortunate Bhargava Rama,¹⁸⁶ the extremely great ascetic, subjugated the earth, slaying all the bulls among the kshatriyas. With his preceptor Kashyapa, supreme among sages, at the forefront, he performed a *vajapeya*¹⁸⁷ and one hundred horse sacrifices there. As a gift, he gave him¹⁸⁸ the entire earth, with all its oceans. O Janamejaya! Rama¹⁸⁹ gave riches to the brahmanas there. He bathed there and duly honoured the brahmanas. In that sacred tirtha in that auspicious land, the fair-complexioned one gave away riches and honoured the sages.

‘He then went to Yamunatirtha. O lord of the earth! Fair in his complexion, the immensely fortunate Varuna, Aditi’s son, had performed a rajasuya sacrifice there. Varuna, the slayer of enemy heroes, had performed that supreme sacrifice there, after defeating men and the gods in a battle. While that supreme sacrifice was going on, a battle commenced between the gods and the danavas and this led to destruction in the three worlds. O Janamejaya! After that excellent rajasuya sacrifice was over, there was a great and terrible clash among the kshatriyas. Madhava Rama, with the plough as his weapon, bathed in that supreme tirtha and gave away riches to the brahmanas. The delighted brahmanas praised Vanamali.¹⁹⁰

‘The lotus-eyed one then went to Adityatirtha. O supreme among kings! The illustrious and radiant sun god performed a sacrifice there and obtained power and lordship over the stellar bodies. O lord of the earth! All the gods, together with Vasava, the Vishvadevas and the Maruts, the gandharvas and the apsaras, Dvaipayana, Shuka, Madhusudana Krishna, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the pishachas are always there, on the banks of that river. O scorcher of enemies! That apart, many thousands of others who are successful in yoga are always present, in the sacred and auspicious tirtha on the Sarasvati. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, having slain the asuras Madhu and Kaitabha, Vishnu had bathed in that supreme and excellent tirtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dvaipayana, with dharma in his soul, had also bathed there and had obtained supreme success in yoga, accomplishing the ultimate objective. The great ascetics, rishis powerful in yoga, Asita and Devala, had resorted to supreme yoga there.’

Chapter 1268(49)

Vaishampayana said, ‘In earlier times, Asita-Devala dwelt there.¹⁹¹ He was a store of austerities and had dharma in his souls. He resorted to the dharma of a householder. He was pure and controlled and always devoted to dharma. The great ascetic never punished anyone. He treated all beings equally, in his deeds, thoughts and speech. O great king! He never resorted to anger and treated the pleasant and the unpleasant as equal. The great ascetic treated gold and stones equally. He honoured gods, guests and brahmanas. He was always devoted to brahmacharya and always devoted to dharma. O great king! Once, while that intelligent sage was controlled and engaged in *yoga* in that tirtha, a mendicant named Jaigishavya came to him. O king! The immensely radiant one began to dwell in Devala’s hermitage. O great king! Always devoted to *yoga*, the great ascetic¹⁹² attained success there. While the great sage Jaigishavya dwelt there, Devala always looked towards his needs and never deviated from dharma. O great king! They spent a long period of time in this way. There was an occasion when Devala did not see the sage Jaigishavya. O Janamejaya! However, when it was time to take food, the intelligent mendicant, learned in dharma, presented himself before Devala. On seeing the great sage appear in the form of a mendicant, he honoured him greatly and was full of great delight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Devala honoured him to the best of his capacity, controlling himself in many ways and following the rites indicated by the rishis. O king! However, on one occasion, on seeing the immensely radiant sage, a grave thought arose in the mind of the great-souled Devala. “I have spent a long time, honouring him in many ways. However, this idle mendicant never speaks to me.” Having thought this, Devala travelled through the sky and went to the great ocean, carrying a handsome pot with him. The one with dharma in his soul went to the ocean, the lord of the rivers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having gone there, he found that Jaigishavya had reached before him. Seeing this, the lord Asita was supremely astounded. He thought, “How could the mendicant have arrived at the ocean and bathed here?”¹⁹³ Maharshi Asita thought in this way. Having bathed in the ocean in accordance with the rites and purifying himself, he chanted. O Janamejaya! The handsome one chanted, performed the daily rituals and returned to the hermitage, filling the pot with water. As the sage entered his hermitage, he saw Jaigishavya seated in the hermitage. Jaigishavya never spoke a word. The immensely ascetic one lived in that hermitage, as if he was a piece of wood. He was like an ocean. He¹⁹⁴ had seen him bathe in the waters of the ocean and now saw him enter the hermitage before him. O king! On seeing the powers of the ascetic Jaigishavya, immersed in *yoga*, the intelligent Asita-Devala began to think. O Indra among kings! The supreme among sages reflected. “How could I see him in the ocean and again in the hermitage?” O lord of the earth! The sage, learned in the use of mantras, thought in this way and then rose up into the sky from his hermitage. Devala wished to find out who the mendicant Jaigishavya was.

‘As he travelled through the sky, he saw many controlled siddhas. He saw that those siddhas were worshipping Jaigishavya. Asita made efforts to be firm in his vows and was enraged at this. Devala next saw Jaigishavya ascend to heaven. He next saw him roaming around in the world of the ancestors. From the world of the ancestors, he saw him travel to Yama’s world. From Yama’s world, he rose to Soma’s world. He saw the great sage Jaigishavya travel around in this way, ascending to the sacred worlds of those who perform special sacrifices. He next arose to the world of those who perform agnihotra sacrifices and worlds of ascetics who perform *darsha* and *pournamasa* sacrifices.¹⁹⁵ The intelligent one saw him in the worlds meant for those who sacrifice with animals and roaming around in the unblemished worlds revered by the gods. He went to the regions meant for ascetics who perform many *chaturmasya* sacrifices,¹⁹⁶ those who perform *agnishtoma* sacrifices and also ascetics who perform *agnish-tuta* sacrifices. Devala saw him reach all those regions. He saw him in the worlds meant for the immensely wise ones who perform vajapeya, the best of sacrifices, and give away a lot of gold. Devala also saw Jaigishavya in the

worlds meant for the performers of *pundarika* and *rajasuya* sacrifices. He saw him in the worlds meant for the best of men who perform the best of sacrifices, *ashvamedha* and *narmedha*.¹⁹⁷ Devala saw Jaigishavya in the worlds meant for those who sacrifice everything that is difficult to obtain and for those who perform *soutramani* sacrifices.¹⁹⁸ O king! There are those who perform *dvadashaha*¹⁹⁹ and diverse other sacrifices. Devala saw Jaigishavya in the worlds meant for them. Asita next saw him attain the worlds of Mitra, Varuna, Adityas, the Rudras, the Vasus and Brihaspati's region. Asita saw him transcend all these worlds and go to Goloka²⁰⁰ and the world meant for those who know about the brahman. Asita saw Jaigishavya go to all these worlds. Through his energy, he rose up, beyond the three worlds and was seen to travel to the worlds meant for those who are devoted to their husbands. O scorcher of enemies! However, then Asita could no longer see Jaigishavya, the supreme sage. Using his powers of yoga, he disappeared.

'The immensely fortunate Devala began to think about Jaigishavya's powers, the discipline of his vows and his unmatched success in the use of yoga. Asita controlled himself. He joined his hands in salutation and asked the supreme ones who were in the worlds of the siddhas and the revered ones who knew about the brahman. "I do not see Jaigishavya, the greatly energetic one. I wish to hear about him. My curiosity is great." The siddhas replied, "O Devala! O one who is firm in vows! Listen to the truth. Jaigishavya has gone to the eternal and undecaying world of the brahman. On hearing the words of the siddhas, who are knowledgeable about the brahman, Asita-Devala also tried to rise up, but swiftly fell down. At this, the siddhas again spoke to Devala. "O Devala! You cannot go where the one who is rich in austerities has gone. The brahmana Jaigishavya has attained the abode of the brahman." On hearing the words of the siddhas, Devala descended from those worlds, one after the other. Like an insect, he descended to his own sacred hermitage. As he entered, Devala saw Jaigishavya there. Devala, devoted to dharma, comprehended the powers of Jaigishavya, who was immersed in yoga.

'Having understood, Devala spoke to the great-souled Jaigishavya. O king! Bowing in humility, he approached the great sage. "O illustrious one! I wish to resort to the dharma that brings *moksha*."²⁰¹ On hearing these words, he²⁰² instructed him about the rites of supreme yoga and about what the sacred texts say about what should be done and what should not be done. On seeing that he²⁰³ had made up his mind about *sannyasa*,²⁰⁴ the great ascetic told him about all the rites and the ordained tasks. On seeing that he had made up his mind about *sannyasa*, all the beings and the ancestors started to lament. "Who will henceforth feed us?" Having made up his mind to seek *moksha*, Devala heard the piteous lamentations of the beings in the ten directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, the sacred fruits and roots and the flowers and the herbs began to lament, in their thousands. "The evil-minded and inferior Devala will sever us again. He has offered to save all the beings, but does not know what he is doing."²⁰⁵ The supreme among sages used his intelligence to reflect on this again. "Which is superior, *moksha* or the dharma of a householder?" O supreme among kings! Having thought about this, Devala made up his mind. He abandoned the dharma of a householder and adopted the dharma of *moksha*. Having thought in this way, Devala made up his mind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Resorting to supreme yoga, he obtained supreme success. With Brihaspati at the forefront, the gods approached Jaigishavya and praised the ascetic's austerities. Narada, supreme among rishis, addressed the gods then. "Since he has astounded Asita, there are no austerities left in Jaigishavya."²⁰⁶ The residents of heaven replied to the resolute one.²⁰⁷ "Do not speak about the great sage Jaigishavya in this way." The great-souled wielder of the plough bathed there and gave away riches to the brahmanas. Having performed that supreme act of dharma, he then went to Soma's great tirtha.'

Chapter 1269(50)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The lord of the stars performed a rajasuya sacrifice there. This was after the great Tarakamaya battle²⁰⁸ had been fought. Having bathed there, the controlled Bala gave away gifts. The one with dharma in his soul then went to the tirtha of the sage Sarasvata. In ancient times, when a drought had lasted for twelve years, the sage Sarasvata, had taught the Vedas to many supreme brahmanas.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘In ancient times, during the twelve years of drought, why did the sage Sarasvata, rich in austerities, teach the Vedas?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O great king! In earlier times, there was an intelligent sage who was a great ascetic. He was known by the name of Dadhicha. He was a *brahmachari* and had control over his senses. Because of his austerities, the lord Shakra was always frightened.²⁰⁹ But he could not tempt him by offering him many kinds of fruits.²¹⁰ To tempt him, the chastiser of Paka sent a celestial, sacred and beautiful apsara named Alambusa. O great king! The great-souled one was worshipping the gods on the banks of the Sarasvati and the beautiful one approached him there. Though the rishi was controlled in his senses, on seeing her beautiful form, his seed fell down into the Sarasvati and the river held it. O bull among men! On seeing the seed, the great river held it inside her, hoping that a son might be born in her womb. When it was time, the best of rivers gave birth to a son. O lord! With the son, she went to the rishi. The river saw that the supreme sage was in an assemblage of rishis. O Indra among kings! Handing over the son, she said, “O brahmarshi! This is your son. Out of my devotion towards you, I have borne him. When you saw Alambusa, your seed fell down into the water. O brahmarshi! Out of my devotion towards you, I bore it inside me. I had decided that your energy should not be destroyed. I am giving you this unblemished son. Accept him.” Having been thus addressed, he was supremely delighted and accepted him. Uttering mantras, the supreme among brahmanas inhaled the fragrance of his head. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! He embraced him for a long time. Delighted, the great sage granted Sarasvati a boon. “O immensely fortunate one! When your waters are offered as oblations, the Vishvadevas, the ancestors and large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras will be satisfied.” Having said this, he praised the great river in these words. He was happy and supremely delighted. O king! Listen to this. “O immensely fortunate one! In earlier times, you have arisen from Brahma’s lake. O best of rivers! Sages, rigid in their vows, know about you. O one who is beautiful to behold! You have always done that which brings me pleasure. O one with a beautiful complexion! This great son of yours will be known by the name of Sarasvata. This son of yours will be known by that name and will be the creator of worlds. He will be known by the name of Sarasvata and will be a great ascetic. O immensely fortunate one! When there is a drought for twelve years, he will teach the Vedas to bulls among the brahmanas. O beautiful one! Your waters will always be sacred. You will be the most sacred one. O immensely fortunate one! O Sarasvati! This is what you will obtain through my favours.” The great river was thus praised and obtained that boon. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Taking the son with her, she cheerfully went away.

‘At this time, there was a conflict between the gods and the danavas. In search of weapons, Shakra travelled around the three worlds. The illustrious Shakra could not find a weapon through which he could slay the enemies of the gods. Shakra told the gods, “I am incapable of slaying the great asuras who are the enemies of the thirty gods, without the bones of Dadhicha.” The supreme gods then went to the best of rishis and said, “O Dadhicha! Give us the bones in your body, so that we can slay our enemies.” Having been asked by the gods, the best of rishis did not hesitate. He carefully gave up his body and gave them the bones. Having performed an act that was beneficial to the gods, he obtained the eternal worlds. Shakra was delighted. He fashioned many celestial weapons with those bones—vajras, chakras, clubs and large staffs. Prajapati’s son was Bhrigu, the creator of worlds, and that

supreme rishi had obtained him²¹¹ through his fierce austerities. He was large and energetic and had been created with the essence of the worlds. The lord²¹² was famous and was as tall as the Himalayas, the greatest of mountains. The chastiser of Paka had always been anxious on account of his energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The vajra was fashioned from that illustrious one²¹³ and invoked with mantras. It was created with great anger and possessed the energy of the brahman. With this, he²¹⁴ slaughtered ninety-nine brave ones among the daityas and the danavas.

‘A long and fearful period passed since that time. O king! There was a drought that lasted for twelve years.²¹⁵ O king! Because of the twelve years of drought, the maharshis could not sustain themselves. Hungry, they fled in all the directions. On seeing that they were running away in different directions, the sage Sarasvata also made up his mind to leave. However, Sarasvati spoke to him. “O son! You need not go away. I will always give you food. I will always give you large fish. Stay here.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, he remained there and offered oblations to the ancestors and the gods. He always sustained himself through this food and sustained the Vedas. When the period of drought was over, the maharshis wished to study again and asked each other. When they were afflicted by hunger, the proper knowledge of the Vedas had been destroyed. O Indra among kings! There was not a single one among them who could understand them. Some of those rishis came upon Sarasvata, supreme among rishis, when he had controlled his soul and was engaged in studying. They went to the others and told them about the unmatched Sarasvata, who was like an immortal. Alone in a solitary spot, he was studying. O king! All the maharshis arrived at that spot. The assembled ones spoke to Sarasvata, best among sages. They said, “Teach us.” The sage replied, “Become my disciples in the ordained way.” At this, the large number of rishis said, “O son! You are only a child.” He replied to the sages, “I must act so that my dharma is not diminished. Those who teach without following dharma and those who learn without following dharma are quickly destroyed and come to hate each other. Rishis cannot claim to follow dharma on the basis of grey hair, riches or the number of relatives. One who can teach is alone great.” Having heard his words, the sages duly²¹⁶ learnt the Vedas from him and began to practise dharma again. Sixty thousand sages became his disciples. Those brahmana rishis desired to study under Sarasvata. Though he was yet a child, each of those brahmana rishis brought a fistful of *darbha* grass to him,²¹⁷ offered him a seat and obeyed him. Rohini’s immensely strong son, Keshava’s elder brother, gave away riches there. Joyfully, and in due order, he then went to another great and famous tirtha, where an aged maiden had once lived.’

Chapter 1270(51)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O illustrious one! In earlier times, why did the maiden dwell there, engaging in austerities? Why did she torment herself through austerities? What was her vow? O brahmana! I have heard supreme accounts of difficult deeds from you. Tell me everything. Why was she engaged in austerities?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘There was an immensely illustrious rishi. He was immensely energetic and his name was Kuni-Gargya. O king! His austerities were great and in austerities, he was supreme among ascetics. Through the powers of his mind, the lord generated a fair-browed daughter. On seeing her, the immensely illustrious Kuni-Gargya was extremely happy. O king! He gave up his body and went to heaven. The fortunate and fair-browed one had eyes like a lotus. The unblemished one undertook great hardships and performed fierce austerities. She fasted and worshipped and satisfied the ancestors and the gods. O king! While she was engaged in these terrible austerities, a long period of time elapsed. Her father had desired that she should be given away to a husband. However, she could not see a husband who was equal to her own self. She oppressed her mind and her body through those fierce austerities. In that deserted forest, she was devoted to worshipping the ancestors and the gods. O Indra among kings! Though she afflicted herself through austerities and was also overcome by old age, she did not regard herself to be exhausted. Finally, she was no longer capable of taking even a single step on her own. Therefore, she resolved to depart to the world hereafter.

‘On seeing that she wished to free herself of her body, Narada told her, “O unblemished one! Which worlds can a maiden who has not been married go to? O one who is great in vows! This is what we have heard in the world of the gods. Though you have performed supreme austerities, you have not obtained any worlds for yourself.” On hearing his words, she spoke in an assembly of rishis. “O supreme ones! I will give half of my austerities to anyone who accepts my hand.” Hearing this, a rishi named Sringavan, Galava’s son, accepted her hand. He proposed a pledge and told her, “O beautiful one! I will accept your hand with this pledge. You will live with me for only one night.” Accepting this pledge, she gave him her hand. Galava’s son accepted her hand and married her. O king! That night, she became young and as beautiful as a goddess. She was adorned in celestial ornaments and garments and adorned with divine garlands and unguents. On seeing her blazing beauty, Galava’s son was delighted. He spent a night with her. In the morning, she told him, “O brahmana! O supreme among ascetics! The pledge that I had taken with you is over. O fortunate one! Since that has been accomplished, may you be at peace. I will leave.” Obtaining his permission, she again said, “Anyone who controls himself and spends a night at this tirtha, offering oblations to the gods, will obtain the fruits that are obtained from observing brahmacharya for sixty-four years.” Having said this, the virtuous one gave up her body and went to heaven. The rishi was distressed and thought of her beauty. Because of the agreement, though he found it difficult, he accepted half of her austerities. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He was miserable because of the power of her beauty. He cast off his own body and followed her. This is the great account about the conduct of the aged maiden. While the one with the plough as his weapon was there, he heard about Shalya’s death. O scorcher of enemies! He gave away gifts to the brahmanas there. He sorrowed that Shalya had been killed by the Pandavas in the battle. Madhava Rama then emerged through the gates of Samantapanchaka and asked the large number of rishis about what had transpired in Kurukshetra. O lord! Asked by the lion among the Yadu lineage, those great-souled ones told him everything that had transpired in Kurukshetra, exactly as it had occurred.’

Chapter 1271(52)

‘The rishis said, “O Rama! Samantapanchaka has been spoken of as Prajapati’s eternal northern altar. In earlier times, the residents of heaven, the granters of great boons, performed a great sacrifice there. The intelligent and great-souled Kuru, best among royal sages and infinite in his energy, cheerfully cultivated this field. That is the reason this is known as Kurukshetra.”²¹⁸

‘Rama asked, “Why did the great-souled Kuru cultivate this field? O stores of austerities! I wish to hear this. Tell me.”

‘The rishis replied, “O Rama! In earlier times, Kuru was always engaged in tilling this. On seeing this, Shakra came from heaven and asked him the reason. ‘O king! Why are you making this supreme effort? O rajarshi! What is the reason for you to till this field?’ Kuru said, ‘O Shatakratu! Men who die in this field will go to the worlds reserved for those with meritorious deeds. They will be cleansed of their sins.’ Laughing at this, the lord Shakra returned to heaven. The rajarshi was not distressed and continued to plough the earth. Shatakratu repeatedly came to him and repeatedly received the same reply. Disgusted, he repeatedly went away. The king continued to till the earth with great perseverance. Shakra told the other gods what the rajarshi was up to. On hearing this, the gods spoke these words to the one with one thousand eyes. ‘O Shakra! If you can, grant the rajarshi a boon and stop him. If men can die here and go to heaven, without dutifully giving us a share in the sacrifices, we will have no existence left.’ Shakra came to the rajarshi and told him, ‘Do not make any more efforts. Listen to my words. O king! Men who fast here and give up their bodies, with all their senses intact, or those who are killed in battle, will certainly go to heaven. O Indra among kings! O immensely intelligent one! They will enjoy heaven.’ King Kuru agreed to the words that Shakra had spoken. Having taken his leave and delighted in his mind, the slayer of Bala swiftly returned to heaven. O best among the Yadu lineage! In ancient times, this was thus ploughed by the rajarshi. Shakra promised great merits to those who give up their lives here. Shakra, the lord of the gods, himself composed a song about Kurukshetra and sang it. O one with the plough as his weapon! Listen to this. ‘The dust of Kurukshetra, when blown away by the wind, will convey even those who perform wicked deeds to the supreme objective.’ Bulls among the gods, supreme among the brahmanas, Nriga²¹⁹ and the best among kings, lions among men, have performed extremely expensive sacrifices here. They have given up their bodies and attained excellent ends. The region between Tarantuka and Arantuka, between Rama’s lakes and Machakruka, is Kurukshetra Samantapanchaka.²²⁰ It is known as Prajapati’s northern altar. It is sacred, extremely auspicious and is revered by the residents of heaven. It possesses all the qualities of heaven. Therefore, all the lords of the earth who are slain here obtain the ends earmarked for great-souled ones.” ’

Chapter 1272(53)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Having seen Kurukshetra and having given away gifts, Satvata went to an extremely great and divine hermitage. It had groves of *madhuka* and mango trees and also plakshas and *nyagrodhas*. It had sacred *bilvas*, jackfruit and *arjuna*s.²²¹ On seeing that supreme place, marked with all the auspicious signs, the foremost among the Yadava lineage asked all the rishis whom that excellent hermitage belonged to. O king! All those great-souled ones told the one with the plough as his weapon, “O Rama! Listen to whom this hermitage belonged to in earlier times. In earlier times, the god Vishnu observed supreme austerities here. It is here that he performed all the eternal sacrifices, according to the prescribed rites. It was here that the brahmana lady observed brahmacharya from her youth and was immersed in yoga. Having attained success through her austerities, the ascetic lady went to heaven. O king! The great-souled Shandilya obtained a beautiful daughter. She was virtuous and firm in her vows. She always followed brahmacharya. Having achieved supreme yoga, she went to the excellent place of heaven. In this hermitage, the auspicious one obtained the fruits that can be got through the performance of a horse sacrifice. The immensely fortunate one was controlled in her soul. She was revered and went to heaven.” The bull among the Yadu lineage went to the sacred hermitage and saw it. Having greeted the rishis who dwelt along the slopes of the Himalayas, Achyuta began to climb that mountain.

‘The powerful one, with the palm tree on his banner, had only advanced a short distance along that mountain. He then saw a supreme and sacred tirtha and was overcome by great wonder. Bala saw the powers of the Sarasvati at Plakshaprasavana. He reached the supreme and excellent tirtha of Karapachana. The immensely strong wielder of the plough gave away gifts there. He bathed in the cool waters and, extremely happy, went to the hermitage of Mitra and Varuna. This was the region of Karapachana, along the Yamuna. It was the place where Indra, Agni and Aryama had obtained great happiness. The one with dharma in his soul went and bathed there. He obtained supreme satisfaction. The immensely strong bull among the Yadu lineage seated himself with the rishis and the siddhas and listened to their sacred accounts.

‘While Rama was seated among them at that spot, the illustrious rishi Narada arrived there. He had matted hair. The great ascetic was attired in garments with a golden complexion. O king! He had a golden staff and a water pot in his hands. The lute, the melodious veena that made a pleasant noise, was in his hands.²²² He was skilled in dancing and singing and was worshipped by the gods and the brahmanas. However, he was also one who provoked quarrels and always loved dissension.²²³ He came to the spot where the handsome Rama was. All of them stood up and honoured the one who was careful in his vows. He²²⁴ asked the devarshi about what had happened to the Kurus. O king! Narada knew about all forms of dharma and told him everything as it had occurred and about the destruction of the Kurus. Rohini’s son was distressed and asked Narada, “How are the kshatriyas? How are the kings? O one who is rich in austerities! I have heard everything about this earlier. But I wish to hear it in detail. I am curious.”

‘Narada replied, “Bhishma, Drona and the lord of Sindhu have been killed earlier. Vaikartana Karna and his maharatha sons have been slain. O Rohini’s son! So have Bhurishrava and the valiant king of Madra. So have many other extremely strong ones. For the sake of pleasing the Kouravas, they have given up their lives. The kings and princes refused to retreat in the battle. O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! Listen to the ones who have not been killed. Dhritarashtra’s powerful son, Kripa, the valiant Bhoja and the brave Ashvatthama are left. But with the soldiers routed, they have fled in different directions. When the soldiers were slain and Kripa and the others ran away, Duryodhana was overcome by great grief and has entered the lake Dvaipayana. Dhritarashtra’s son is lying down there, having turned the waters to stone. O Rama! The Pandavas and Krishna approached and, from every direc-

tion, have tormented the powerful one with harsh and eloquent words. The brave one has arisen and has grasped a mighty club. O Rama! The extremely terrible encounter with Bhima is about to commence and will take place today. O Madhava! If you are curious, go there without any delay. If you so desire, witness that extremely terrible encounter between your two disciples.” ’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing Narada’s words, he²²⁵ honoured the bulls among the brahmanas and took their leave. He asked all those who had come with him to leave. He requested his attendants to return to Dvaraka. He descended from the best of mountains and from the sacred Plakshaprasavana. Having heard about the great fruits that could be obtained from that tirtha, Rama was delighted. In the presence of the brahmanas, Achyuta also sang a shloka. “Where can one obtain delight like the one obtained from dwelling along the Sarasvati? Where can one obtain qualities like those obtained from dwelling along the Sarasvati? Having approached Sarasvati, people go to heaven. The river Sarasvati should always be remembered. Sarasvati is the most sacred of rivers. Sarasvati always bestows happiness on the worlds. Even those who have performed extremely wicked deeds approach Sarasvati and do not have to sorrow, in this world or in the next.” In delight, he repeatedly glanced towards Sarasvati. The scorcher of enemies then ascended an excellent chariot to which horses had been yoked. The bull among the Yadu lineage ascended the chariot that could travel fast. He wished to witness the encounter that was going to take place between his two disciples.’



SECTION SEVENTY-SEVEN

GADA YUDDHA PARVA

This parva has 546 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 1273(54): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1274(55): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1275(56): 67 shlokas

Chapter 1276(57): 59 shlokas

Chapter 1277(58): 24 shlokas

Chapter 1278(59): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1279(60): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1280(61): 40 shlokas

Chapter 1281(62): 73 shlokas

Chapter 1282(63): 43 shlokas

Chapter 1283(64): 43 shlokas

Gada means a club and yuddha means a fight or encounter. This section is named after Bhima and Duryodhana's encounter with the clubs, where, Bhima strikes Duryodhana unfairly and brings him down. Krishna goes to Hastinapura and pacifies Dhritarashtra and Gandhari.

Chapter 1273(54)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Thus did that terrible encounter take place. In misery, King Dhritarashtra spoke these words. “Rama¹ reached the spot where the duel with the clubs was to take place. O Sanjaya! On seeing this, how did my son fight back against Bhima?”

‘Sanjaya said, “Seeing that Rama was present, your son, the mighty-armed and valiant Duryodhana, who desired to fight, was delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the wielder of the plough, the king² stood up, filled with great delight. He³ told Yudhishtira, ‘O lord of the earth! I will swiftly go to Samantapanchaka. In the world of the gods, it is known as Prajapati’s northern sacrificial altar. It is eternal and the most sacred spot in the three worlds. It is certain that someone who is killed there will attain heaven.’⁴ O great king! Yudhishtira, Kunti’s son, agreed to these words. The brave lord⁵ advanced in the direction of Samantapanchaka. At this, King Duryodhana also picked up a gigantic club. The immensely radiant and intolerant one advanced on foot, with the Pandavas. As he advanced on foot, armoured and mailed, and with the club in his hand, the gods in the firmament uttered words of praise and honoured him. On seeing this, the men who were bards were also filled with joy. Surrounded by the Pandavas, the king of the Kurus, your son, advanced—adopting the gait of a crazy king of elephants. Conch shells sounded and there was the great roar of drums. The brave ones roared like lions and filled all the directions. With your son, they went to the western direction that had been appointed. Having gone there, they spread themselves out in all the directions. This was a supreme tirtha on the southern banks of the Sarasvati. At that spot, the ground was not sandy and they chose this for the encounter.

‘ “Bhima was armoured and grasped an extremely thick club. O great king! In that resplendent form, he looked like Garuda. O king! For the encounter, your son fixed a helmet and was clad in golden armour. He was as dazzling as a golden mountain. The brave Bhima and Duryodhana were both attired in armour. In that encounter, they were as resplendent as angry elephants. Those two brothers, bulls among men, were stationed in that field of battle. O great king! They were as beautiful as the rising moon and the sun. They glanced towards each other, like two angry and giant elephants. O king! Wishing to kill each other, they burnt each other down with their eyes. O king! Delighted, Kourava⁶ grasped the club. O king! His eyes were red with anger. He sighed and licked the corners of his mouth. The valiant King Duryodhana also grasped a club. He glanced towards Bhimasena, like an elephant towards another elephant. The valiant Bhima also picked up one⁷ that possessed the essence of stone and challenged the king, like a lion against another lion in the forest. Duryodhana and Vrikodara raised the clubs in their hands. In that encounter, they looked like mountains with peaks. Both of them were extremely angry and were terrible in their valour. In battling with clubs, both of them were the disciples of Rohini’s intelligent son. They were the equals of each other in their deeds, like Yama and Vasava. In their deeds, they were the equals of the immensely strong Varuna. O great king! As warriors, they were the equals of Madhu and Kaitabha.⁸ In their deeds in a battle, they were the equals of Sunda and Upansunda.⁹ Those scorchers of enemies were like Destiny and like Death. They rushed towards each other, like two crazy and giant elephants, as if they were proud and maddened in the autumn season, desiring to have intercourse.¹⁰ O bull among the Bharata lineage! They were like crazy elephants that wished to defeat each other. Like blazing serpents, they seemed to vomit out the poison of wrath towards each other. Those scorchers of enemies angrily glanced towards each other. Both those tigers of the Bharata lineage were full of valour. In fighting with clubs, those two destroyers of enemies were as unassailable as lions. Those two brave warriors were difficult to withstand, like tigers armed with claws and teeth. They were like two agitated oceans, impossible to cross, that were about to destroy beings. The angry maharathas scorched, like the one with

the red limbs and rays.¹¹ The great-souled and immensely strong ones blazed. The best ones among the Kuru lineage were like two suns that had arisen at the time of destruction. They were as angry as tigers and roared like monsoon clouds. The mighty-armed ones were as cheerful as lions with manes. They were as angry as elephants and flamed like the fire. The great-souled ones were seen to be like mountains with peaks. Their lips were swollen in rage and they glanced towards each other. With clubs in their hands, those best of men clashed against each other. Both of them were extremely delighted and also revered each other.¹² They seemed to neigh like well-trained horses and trumpet like elephants. Duryodhana and Vrikodara bellowed like bulls. Those two best of men were as strong as daityas.

‘“O king! Duryodhana spoke to Yudhishtira, who was stationed with the Srinjayas, like a scorching sun. ‘O best of kings! Be seated and witness this encounter that will take place between me and Bhima.’ At this, that large circle of kings sat down. They were seen to be as beautiful as a collection of gods in the firmament. O great king! Honoured by them from every direction, Keshava’s mighty-armed and handsome elder brother seated himself in their midst. The fair-complexioned one with the blue garments was beautiful in the midst of the kings, like the full moon in the night, surrounded by the stars. O great king! With clubs in their hands, they¹³ were unassailable. They were stationed there and censured each other with fierce words. Having spoken those unpleasant words towards each other, those two brave bulls of the Kuru lineage glanced towards each other, like Vritra and Shakra in a battle.”’

Chapter 1274(55)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! There was a terrible battle of words between them. Miserable, King Dhritarashtra spoke these words. “Shame on a man—since he is reduced to such a state. O lord! My son was the master of eleven armies.¹⁴ All the kings followed his commands and he enjoyed the earth. With a club and on foot, he now has to advance forcefully in an encounter. Having been the protector of the earth, my son is now without a protector. Since he has to advance with a club, what can this be, other than destiny? O Sanjaya! My son must have suffered from great misery.” Having said this, the grieving king stopped.

‘Sanjaya replied, “The valiant one¹⁵ was cheerful. He roared like a cloud and bellowed like a bull. The warrior challenged Partha in that battle. When the great-souled king of the Kurus challenged Bhima, many extremely terrible portents of different types manifested themselves. Fierce winds began to blow and showers of dust fell down. All the directions were enveloped in darkness. Tumultuous thunder descended with a loud roar and the body hair stood up. Hundreds of meteors fell down, roaring in the sky. O lord of the earth! Though it was not the right time, Rahu devoured the sun.¹⁶ The earth, with all its forests and trees, trembled, as if in a giant quake. Harsh winds began to blow, showering stones and dragging them along the ground. The summits of mountains fell down on the ground. Many kinds of animals were seen to run away in the ten directions. Extremely terrible jackals howled in fierce tones, their mouths blazing. Extremely fearful and strong sounds were heard and it made the body hair stand up. O Indra among kings! The directions blazed and animals uttered inauspicious noises. In every direction, the water in wells increased. O king! At that time, invisible and loud sounds were heard.

‘“On seeing these evil portents, Vrikodara spoke to his elder brother, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira. ‘The evil-souled Suyodhana is incapable of defeating me in this battle. Today, I will free myself of the anger that has been lodged deep in my heart for a long time. Suyodhana, Indra among Kouravas, will be like Khandava before the fire god. O Pandava! Today, I will uproot the stake that has been lodged in your heart. I will slay the wicked one, the worst of the Kuru lineage, with the club. Today, I will free you and place a garland of fame around you. In the field of battle, I will kill the performer of evil deeds with my club. With the club, I will shatter his body into a hundred fragments. He will not enter the city of Varanasahvya¹⁷ again. He released snakes while I was sleeping and mixed poison in my food in Pramanakoti. He tried to burn us down in the house of lac. He robbed us of everything and disrespected us in the assembly hall. O unblemished one! He exiled us in the forest, with one year of concealment. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I will bring an end to all those hardships today. I will kill him and, in a single day, free ourselves of those debts. O best among the Bharata lineage! Today, this evil-minded son of Dhritrashtra, whose soul is not clean, will come to an end. He will not see his mother and father again. This Kuru king is the worst of Shantanu’s lineage. He will abandon his life and his kingdom today and lie down on the ground. King Dhritrashtra will hear that his son has been slain by me and remember the wicked deeds that were performed because of Shakuni’s advice.’ O tiger among kings! Having said this, the valiant one grasped his club. He stationed himself in the battle, like Shakra challenging Vritra.

‘“Duryodhana also raised his club, like Kailasa with its summit. On seeing this, Bhimasena again angrily spoke to Duryodhana. ‘Remember the extremely wicked deeds and conduct that you and King Dhritrashtra exhibited towards us in Varanavata.¹⁸ Droupadi was in her season and was oppressed in the assembly hall. In the gambling match, the king was deceived by you and Soubala. Because of your deeds, we confronted a great hardship in the forest and also in the city of Virata, as if we had entered into another womb.¹⁹ I will pay back all that today. O evil-minded one! It is through good fortune that I have met you. It is because of your deeds that powerful Gangeya, best among rathas, was brought by Yajnasena’s son²⁰ and brought down, is lying down on a bed of ar-

rows. Drona, Karna and the powerful Shalya have been slain. Shakuni Soubala, the source of this fire of enmity, has been killed. The wicked Pratikami, who seized Droupadi by the hair, and all your brave brothers, valiant warriors, have been slain.²¹ There are many other kings who have been killed because of your deeds. There is no doubt that I will kill you with this club today.' O Indra among kings! Having been thus addressed by Vrikodara, your son was not frightened. O king! Truth was his valour and he replied, 'O Vrikodara! Why speak a lot? Fight. O worst of your lineage! Today, I will kill you and destroy your love for fighting. Know that Duryodhana is not inferior and is not like an ordinary man. He is incapable of being frightened by someone like you. For a long time, I have harboured a desire in my heart that I will engage in a duel with clubs with you. Through good fortune and the favours of the thirty gods, the opportunity has presented itself. O evil-minded one! What is the point of speaking a lot? Do what you have promised in your words. Do not delay.' On hearing these words, everyone applauded him, the kings, the Somakas and all the others who were assembled there. Having been thus honoured by all of them, his body hair stood up in joy. The steadfast descendant of the Kuru lineage made up his mind to fight. As if they were cheering a crazy elephant, the kings slapped their palms and delighted the intolerant Duryodhana. The great-souled Pandava raised his club and rushed at the great-souled one. Vrikodara forcefully attacked Dhritarashtra's son. The elephants present there trumpeted and the horses neighed. The Pandavas desired victory and their weapons blazed." '

Chapter 1275(56)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Bhimasena had approached, Duryodhana was not distressed in his soul. He roared loudly and attacked him with force. Like horned bulls, they clashed against each other. As they struck each other, there were great and thunderous sounds. That tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up.

Wishing to triumph, they fought each other in that battle, like Indra and Prahlada.²² The spirited ones fought with clubs and blood covered all their limbs. The great-souled ones looked like flowering kimshukas. That great and extremely terrible battle raged on. As they roamed around, the sky was beautiful, as if covered with swarms of fire-flies.²³ That fierce and tumultuous clash raged on for some time. As they fought, both scorchers of enemies were exhausted. Having rested for a short while, those scorchers of enemies again grasped their sparkling clubs and attacked each other. Those immensely valorous bulls among men looked like strong elephants, intolerant with pride and wishing to indulge in intercourse. With clubs in their hands, those infinitely valorous ones glanced towards each other. The gods, the gandharvas and the danavas were overcome by supreme wonder. On seeing Duryodhana and Vrikodara wield those clubs, all the beings were uncertain about who would be victorious. The brothers, supreme among strong ones, attacked each other again. They circled around each other, seeking to detect a weakness in each other. O king! The spectators saw that they raised those heavy and terrible clubs, which were like Yama’s staff or Indra’s vajra.

‘“In that encounter, when Bhimasena struck with his club, in an instant, it produced a terrible and fierce sound. Dhritarashtra’s son saw that Pandava was striking dexterously and powerfully with his club and was astounded. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the brave Vrikodara roamed around, executing many different kinds of motions, he looked resplendent. They protected themselves and attacked each other. They repeatedly wounded each other, like hungry cats over food. Bhimasena moved around in many different kinds of motions. He executed circular motions in different spots, wonderful zigzag movements, advancing and retreating. He countered strikes, struck, avoided and chased. He adopted positions that were meant for attack. He defended, restrained himself, leapt up and leapt down. Both of them were skilled in fighting with clubs and wielded them, high and low. The best among the Kuru lineage roamed around in this way, striking each other and avoiding each other. The extremely strong ones sported, executing circular motions. With clubs in their hands, those powerful ones whirled around. O king! Dhritarashtra’s son struck from the right side. Bhimasena struck from the left side. O great king! As Bhima strode around in that field of battle, Duryodhana struck him on his flank. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Bhima was thus struck by your son, he whirled his heavy club, thinking about how he should strike. O great king! Bhimasena’s upraised and terrible club was seen to be like Indra’s vajra or like Yama’s staff. On seeing that Bhimasena was whirling his club around, your son, the scorcher of enemies, raised his terrible club and struck him again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your son’s club descended with the violence of a storm. A tumultuous sound was raised and sparks were generated. Suyodhana was energetic and radiant. As he roamed around and executed many kinds of circular motions, he again got the better of Bhima. When Bhima used his gigantic club to strike with great force, smoke and sparks of fire were generated and there was also a loud and terrible sound. On seeing that Bhimasena was whirling his club, the radiant Suyodhana whirled his heavy club, which possessed the essence of stone. The great-souled one’s club had the violence of a storm. Beholding this, all the Pandus and the Somakas were terrified. They were seen in that encounter, as if they were sporting in the field of battle. Those two scorchers of enemies violently struck each other with their clubs. They were like elephants, goring each other with their tusks. O great king! With blood flowing down, they were beautiful. Thus did the battle, terrible in form, rage on. At the end of the day, it was cruel, like that between Vritra and Vasava.

‘ “On seeing that Bhima was stationed, your immensely strong son executed wonderful and colourful motions and attacked Kounteya. Bhima became angry. With great force, he struck that gold-decorated club.²⁴ O great king! Sparks began to fly and there was a clap, as if lightning was mixed with thunder. O great king! Hurling powerfully by Bhimasena, the club descended and made the earth tremble. Kouravya could not tolerate that his club should be countered in the clash. He was like a crazy elephant, angered at the sight of another elephant. O king! Enraged and having made up his mind, from the left, he powerfully struck Kounteya on the head with the club. O great king! Struck in this way by your son, Pandava Bhima did not tremble and it was extraordinary. O king! It was wonderful and all the soldiers honoured him. Despite being struck by the club, Bhima did not waver and did not retreat a step. Bhima, terrible in his valour, picked up a flaming club, decorated with gold, which was heavier and hurled this towards Duryodhana.²⁵ However, displaying his dexterity, the immensely strong Duryodhana freed himself from that thrust and it was extremely wonderful. O king! The club hurled by Bhima was baffled and fell down with the loud noise of a storm and made the earth tremble. Repeatedly resorting to the *koushika*²⁶ technique of jumping up and circling, he²⁷ discerned when Bhimasena would strike down with the club and deceived him. Having thus deceived Bhima, the immensely strong one, supreme among the Kuru lineage, angrily struck him in the chest with the club. Struck by the club in that great encounter, Bhima was stupefied. Having been struck by your son, he did not know what he should do. O king! At that time, the Somakas and the Pandavas were severely distressed and miserable in their minds. Having been struck, he²⁸ became as enraged as an elephant and attacked your son, like an elephant against another elephant. The proud Bhima attacked your son with the club. He rushed forward with force, like a lion against a wild elephant. O king! He was skilled in releasing the club. Approaching the king, he used the club to strike in your son’s direction. Duryodhana was struck in the flank by Bhimasena. He was stupefied by this blow and sank down on his knees on the ground. O lord of the earth! At this, the Srinjayas let out a loud roar. O best of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the roar of the Srinjayas, your son, bull among men, became angry. The mighty-armed one raised himself, like an angry serpent that was sighing. He glanced towards Bhimasena and burnt him down with his sight. With the club in his hand, the great-souled one, best among the Bharata lineage, attacked and, in that clash, struck the great-souled Bhimasena on his head. Bhima was terrible in his valour. Though he was struck on his head, he did not waver, like a mountain. O king! Struck by the club in that encounter, blood began to flow from Partha and he was as beautiful as an elephant with a shattered temple.

‘ “Dhananjaya’s brave elder brother then picked up a club that was made out of iron and was capable of slaying heroes. It made a sound like that of the vajra. The destroyer of enemies struck powerfully with this. Struck in this way by Bhimasena, your son fell down, with his body trembling. He was like a blossoming shala tree in a large forest, whirled around by the force of a storm. On seeing that your son had fallen down on the ground, the Pandavas roared in delight. Your son recovered his senses and rose, like an elephant from a lake. The king was always intolerant. He skilfully circled around and struck Pandava, who was stationed before him, making him lose control over his limbs and fall down on the ground. In that encounter, on seeing that the infinitely energetic Bhima had fallen down on the ground, Kourava roared like a lion. Though he²⁹ was like the thunder in his energy, the descent of the club shattered his body armour. At this, a loud roar was heard in the firmament, made by the residents of heaven and the apsaras. The immortals showered down many kinds of excellent flowers. On seeing that the supreme among men had fallen down on the ground, great fear entered the hearts of the enemies. Because of the force of Kourava’s blow, the firm armour had been shattered. However, he³⁰ recovered his senses in a short while and wiped away the blood from his face. Resorting to his fortitude and recovering his strength, Vrikodara dilated his eyes and steadied himself.” ’

Chapter 1276(57)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing the clash between the two foremost ones of the Kuru lineage, Arjuna spoke to the illustrious Vasudeva. ‘Between those two brave ones who are fighting, who do you think is superior? O Janardana! Who possesses the greater qualities? Tell me.’

‘ “Vasudeva replied, ‘They are equal in what they have learnt, but Bhima is stronger. However, Dhritarashtra’s son is superior to Vrikodara because of the efforts that he has undertaken. Using dharma, Bhimasena will not be able to win this encounter. He will be able to kill Suyodhana only if he fights through unfair means. It has been heard that the gods defeated the asuras through the use of maya. The slayer of Bala robbed Vritra of his energy through maya. O Dhananjaya! At the time of gambling with the dice, Bhima took a pledge that in the encounter, he would shatter Suyodhana’s thighs with a club. This destroyer of enemies needs to accomplish that pledge. The king uses maya³¹ and has to be brought down through maya. If he uses his strength and fights through fair means, King Yudhishtira will face a hardship. O Pandava! I am saying this again. Listen to me. It is because of Dharmaraja’s transgression that this fear has again confronted us. Having performed the great deed of slaying the Kurus, with Bhishma as the leader, he had obtained victory and fame and an end to the enmity with the adversary. However, having obtained the victory, he has once again placed himself in a situation of uncertainty. O Pandava! This has been great stupidity on Dharmaraja’s part. He has staked the entire victory on the outcome of a single encounter. Suyodhana is accomplished and brave. He is firm in his resolution. There is an ancient song by Ushanas³² and we have heard it. I will recite the shloka, with its deep meaning. Listen. “Those who have been routed, wishing to protect their lives, but rally and return, must be feared. They will be single-minded in their resolution.” Suyodhana was routed. With his soldiers slain, he had immersed himself in a lake. He had been defeated. Hopeless about obtaining the kingdom, he had wished to go to the forest. Which wise one would challenge such a person to a duel again? Suyodhana may now obtain the kingdom that we had won. Having made up his mind, he has practised with the club for thirteen years. Wishing to kill Bhimasena, he leaps up and moves diagonally. If the mighty-armed one does not slay him through unfair means, Kourava, Dhritarashtra’s son, will be the king.’

‘ “Hearing Keshava’s words, the great-souled Dhananjaya glanced in Bhimasena’s direction and slapped his thigh with his hand.³³ Understanding the sign, Bhima roamed around with his club in the battle. He executed wonderful circular motions and doubled back. He circled to the right and the left and alternated between the two. O king! Pandava roamed around confounding the enemy. In that fashion, your son was also skilled in executing motions with the club. Wishing to kill Bhimasena, he roamed around, executing dexterous and wonderful motions. They whirled terrible clubs that had been smeared with sandalwood paste and unguents. They were like two angry Yamas, wishing to bring an end to the hostility. Those foremost ones, bulls among men, wished to kill each other. They fought like two Garudas who were after the same serpent. O king! Both of them executed wonderful circular motions. Because of the descent of the clubs, sparks of fire were generated there. In the encounter, those brave and powerful ones struck each other equally. O king! They were like two oceans agitated by storms. Like crazy elephants, they struck each other equally. Thunderous sounds were generated from the blows of the clubs. That fierce and terrible clash continued. As they fought, both scorchers of enemies were exhausted. Having rested for some time, those scorchers of enemies again angrily grasped their giant clubs and attacked. O Indra among kings! They fought a terrible battle with the descending clubs and severely wounded each other. With eyes like bulls, they spiritedly rushed towards each other. Those brave ones fiercely struck each other, like buffaloes stuck in mud. All their limbs were mangled and they were covered with blood. They looked like two flowering kimshukas on the Himalayas.

‘ “Partha showed Duryodhana a weakness and smiling, he suddenly extended himself forwards.³⁴ Vrikodara was learned about fighting. On seeing the advance, the strong one powerfully hurled the club. O lord of the earth! Seeing that the club had been hurled, your son moved from the spot and baffled, it fell down on the ground. Having respectfully warded off that blow, your son, supreme among the Kuru lineage, struck Bhimasena with the club. Struck severely by that blow and with blood flowing down, the infinitely energetic one was stupefied. However, in that encounter, Duryodhana did not realize that Pandava was afflicted. Though his body suffered great pain, Bhima bore himself. He³⁵ thought that he was still steady and ready to strike back in the encounter. That is the reason your son did not strike him again. O king! Having rested for a while, the powerful Bhimasena attacked Duryodhana, who was stationed before him, with force. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the angry and infinitely energetic one was attacking, he wished to save himself from the blow. Your great-minded son made up his mind to take a stand. O king! He leapt up, wishing to deceive Vrikodara. However, Bhimasena understood what the king wished to do. He dashed forward, roaring like a lion. O king! As the king leapt up to avoid the blow, Pandava powerfully struck him on the thighs with the club. He was terrible in his deeds and struck with a force like that of the vajra. Duryodhana’s handsome thighs were fractured. The tiger among men fell down, making the earth resound. O lord of the earth! Your son’s thighs were fractured by Bhimasena.

‘ “Fierce winds began to blow and showers of dust fell down. The earth, with its trees, shrubs and mountains, began to tremble. The brave one was the lord of all the kings on earth. When he fell down, a great sound was heard and there were blazing and fearful winds. When the lord of the earth fell down, giant meteors descended. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were showers of blood and showers of dust. When your son was brought down, Maghavan³⁶ showered these down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Large roars were heard in the firmament, made by the yakshas, the rakshasas and the pishachas. Because of that terrible roar, animals and birds emitted many more terrible sounds in all the directions. When your son was brought down, the remaining horses, elephants and men emitted loud roars. When your son was brought down, there were the loud sounds of drums, conch shells and cymbals and a sound seemed to emerge from inside the ground. O king! In all directions, headless torsos, fearful in form, with many feet and many legs, were seen to dance around, generating fear. O king! When your son was brought down, those who held standards, weapons and arms trembled. O supreme among kings! Lakes and wells vomited blood. Extremely swift-flowing rivers began to flow in a reverse direction. Men looked like women and women looked like men. O king! This is what happened when your son, Duryodhana, was brought down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing these evil portents, all the Panchalas and the Pandavas were anxious in their minds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras went away, wherever they wished to go, after that wonderful encounter between your sons was over. O Indra among kings! So did the siddhas, the bards and the charanas. Having praised those two lions among men, the brahmanas went away, to wherever they had come from.” ’

Chapter 1277(58)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that he had fallen down, like a giant shala tree uprooted by the wind, all the Pandavas present there were delighted. He was like a crazy elephant that had been brought down by a lion. On seeing this, the body hair of the Somakas stood up and they were joyful. Having struck and brought down Duryodhana, the powerful Bhimasena approached the Indra among the Kouravas and said, ‘O wicked one! In earlier times, when Droupadi was in a single garment, you addressed us as cattle.³⁷ O evil-minded one! When we were in the assembly hall, you laughed at us. Suffer the consequences of that disrespect now.’ Having said this, he kicked his head with his left foot. He struck the head of that lion among kings with his foot. Bhima was the destroyer of enemy forces and his eyes were red with rage. O lord of men! He again spoke these words. Listen to them. ‘In earlier times, there were those who danced around and repeatedly called us cattle. We will dance back at them now and repeatedly address them as cattle. There is no guile, no fire³⁸ and no deception in gambling with the dice in us. We resort to the strength of our own arms and counter our enemies.’ Having attained the other shore of the enmity, Vrikodara laughed and softly spoke these words to Yudhishtira, Keshava, the Srinjayas, Dhananjaya and Madri’s two sons. ‘Droupadi was in her season and they disrespected her. They deprived her of her garment there. Behold. Through Yajnaseni’s³⁹ austerities, in the battle, the sons of Dhritarashtra have been slain by the Pandavas. In earlier times, King Dhritarashtra’s wicked sons called us sterile sesamum seeds. They have been slain by us, with their followers and their relatives. We are indifferent as to whether we go to heaven or to hell.’ He again raised the club that was on his shoulder. Glancing towards the deceitful King Duryodhana, who had fallen down on the ground, he kicked his head with his left foot and spoke these words. The foremost among the Somakas had dharma in their souls. O king! On seeing that Bhimasena, inferior in his soul, was kicking the Kuru king on the head with his foot, they did not approve.

‘“Having brought down your son, Vrikodara was bragging. As he danced around in different ways, Dharmaraja spoke to him. ‘O Bhima! Do not crush his head with your foot. Do not greatly transgress dharma. He is a king and your relative. He has been brought down. O unblemished one! This conduct is not proper. He has been destroyed. His advisers have been slain. His brothers have been slain. His subjects have been slain. His funeral cakes have been destroyed.⁴⁰ He is our brother. This conduct of yours is inappropriate. In earlier times, people used to say that Bhimasena followed dharma. How can Bhimasena then disrespect the king in this way?’ Having spoken these words, the king who was Kunti’s son approached and saw Duryodhana. With his eyes full of tears, he spoke these words. ‘It is certain that destiny, ordained by the great-souled Creator, is powerful. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Otherwise, why should you harbour violence towards us and we towards you? It is because of your own misdeeds that you have faced this great calamity. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have reaped it because of your avarice, insolence and folly. You have slain your friends, your brothers and your fathers. The sons, grandsons and preceptors have also been slain. It is because of your crimes that your maharatha brothers and other relatives have been killed. I think that destiny is irresistible. Dhritarashtra’s daughters-in-law and grand-daughters-in-law are miserable. Oppressed by grief, those widows will certainly censure us.’ Having spoken in this way, the king was extremely miserable and sighed. Yudhishtira, Dharma’s son, lamented for a long time.”’

Chapter 1278(59)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O suta! On seeing that the king had been brought down through adharma, what did the immensely strong Baladeva, the best of the Madhava lineage, say? He knew about the rules of fighting with clubs. He was skilled in fighting with clubs. O Sanjaya! What did Rohini’s son do?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “On seeing that Bhimasena had kicked your son in the head, Rama, supreme among strikers and strongest among the strong, became angry. In the midst of those kings, the one with the plough as his weapon raised up his arms. In terrible words of lamentation, he spoke words of shame. ‘Shame that one should exhibit the valour of a shudra and strike below the navel. In a duel with clubs, the likes of what Vrikodara has done have never been seen. It is certain that the sacred texts have said that one should not strike below the navel. But he is stupid and ignorant of the sacred texts. He has easily done what he wanted.’ While speaking in this way, he was overcome by great rage. The powerful one raised his plough and advanced towards Bhima. As he raised his arms, the form of the great-souled one was like that of the great mountain Shveta, coloured with many minerals. However, as he descended, Keshava humbly seized him. The powerful one grasped the powerful one in his thick arms. The fair and the dark one,⁴¹ best among the Yadu lineage, looked even more radiant. O king! They were like the sun and the moon in the sky, at the end of the day. To pacify the angry one, Keshava said, ‘One can have six kinds of prosperity— one’s own prosperity, the prosperity of friends, the decay of enemies, the decay of the friends of enemies, the decay of the friends of friends of enemies and the prosperity of the enemies of enemies.⁴² When there are reversals to one’s own self or that of friends, the learned know that one should quickly strive for peace. The Pandavas are pure men and are our natural friends. They are the sons of our father’s sister.⁴³ They have been severely oppressed by the enemy. The accomplishment of a vow is the dharma of kshatriyas. Earlier, in the assembly hall, Bhima had taken the pledge that in a great battle, he would shatter Suyodhana’s thighs with a club. O scorcher of enemies! Earlier, maharshi Maitreya had cursed him that his thighs would be shattered by Bhima with a club.⁴⁴ O slayer of Pralamba!⁴⁵ Therefore, I do not see a transgression. Do not be angry. Our alliance with the Pandavas is based on birth and bonds of affection. Their prosperity is our prosperity. O bull among men! Therefore, do not be angry.’

‘“Rama said, ‘Dharma is followed by the virtuous. But dharma is also followed for two reasons— artha, for those who are addicted to artha, and kama, for those who are addicted to it. Those who obtain great happiness follow dharma, artha and kama, without oppressing dharma and artha, or dharma and kama, or kama and artha.⁴⁶ Bhimasena has not followed all of them and has oppressed dharma. O Govinda! This is despite what you have told me.’

‘“Vasudeva replied, ‘In this world, you have always been spoken of as one without rage, one with dharma in your soul and one who is devoted to dharma. Therefore, be pacified and do not yield to anger. Know that kali yuga has almost arrived and also remember Pandava’s pledge. Pandava has paid his debts to the enmity and accomplished his pledge.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! Hearing this deceptive exposition of dharma on Keshava’s part, Rama was not happy and spoke these words in the assembly. ‘King Suyodhana had dharma in his soul and was slain through adharma. Pandava will be known in this world as someone who fought deceitfully. Duryodhana, with dharma in his soul, will obtain the eternal end. Dhritarashtra’s son, king among men, fought fairly and has been slain. He consecrated himself for the encounter and entered the sacrifice that was the duel. He offered himself as an oblation into the fire and has obtained fame.’ Speaking these words, Rohini’s powerful son, who was like the crest of a

white cloud, ascended his chariot and left towards Dvaraka. O lord of the earth! When Rama left for Dvaravati, the Panchalas, the Varshneyas and the Pandavas were cheerless.

‘ “Yudhishtira was miserable and with his head hanging down, was immersed in thought. Immersed in grief, he thought about what should be done. Vasudeva told him, ‘O Dharmaraja! Why did you permit such an act of adharma? His relatives had been killed. He had been brought down, bereft of his senses. Yet, Bhima struck Duryodhana’s head with his foot. O one who knows about dharma! O lord of men! Why did you ignore this?’ Yudhishtira replied, ‘O Krishna! I did not like what Vrikodara did to the king. Because of anger, he kicked his head with his foot and I am not happy at this extermination of my lineage. Dhritarashtra’s sons have always deceived us and acted fraudulently. They have spoken many harsh words towards us and exiled us to the forest. That has led to great unhappiness in Bhimasena’s heart. O Varshneya! Thinking about all this, I ignored it. He slew the deceitful and avaricious one who was always overcome by his passion. Pandava has accomplished his desire. How does it matter whether it was dharma or adharma?’ Having been thus addressed by Dharmaraja, Vasudeva, the extender of the Yadu lineage, agreed with a considerable amount of difficulty. With Bhima’s welfare in mind, Vasudeva spoke, approving of everything Bhima had done in the battle.

‘ “The intolerant Bhimasena brought down your son. He stood there cheerfully, his hands joined in salutation. The immensely energetic one spoke to Dharmaraja Yudhishtira. O lord of the earth! He⁴⁷ had wished for victory and his eyes were dilated with joy. ‘O king! The pacified earth is now yours, without any thorns. O great king! Rule over it and follow your own dharma. O lord of the earth! He was the source of the enmity. He was fraudulent and loved deceit. He has been brought down and is lying down on the ground. All the enemies, Dushshasana, Radheya, Shakuni and the others, harsh in words, have been slain. The earth, with its many jewels, forests and mountains, is yours again now. O great king! The enemies have been killed.’ Yudhishtira replied, ‘With King Suyodhana brought down, the enmity is over. We have conquered the earth because of Krishna’s advice. It is through good fortune that you have paid off your debts to your mother and to your anger. O invincible one! It is through good fortune that you have triumphed. It is through good fortune that your enemy has been brought down.’ ” ’

Chapter 1279(60)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! On seeing that Duryodhana had been brought down by Bhimasena in the encounter what did the Pandavas and the Srinjayas do?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! On seeing that Duryodhana had been brought down by Bhimasena in the encounter, like a crazy and wild elephant brought down by a lion in the forest, Krishna and the Pandavas were delighted. When the descendant of the Kuru lineage was brought down, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas waved their upper garments around and roared like lions. It was as if the earth was no longer able to bear those cheerful ones. Some brandished their bows. Others drew on their bowstrings. Others blew on their giant conch shells and sounded drums. Some sported. Other enemies of yours laughed. The brave ones spoke these words to Bhimasena. ‘You have performed an extremely difficult and great task in the battle today. You have brought down the Indra among Kouravas in the encounter, one who had undertaken great exertions with the club. This is like Indra killing Vritra in a supreme encounter. These people think that your deed of slaying the enemy is like that. You have roamed around in different ways and have executed all the circular motions. Who other than Vrikodara could have brought down a brave one like Duryodhana? You have reached the end of the hostilities, something so difficult that no one but you could have achieved that. No one else could have done that. O brave one! In the field of battle, you were like a crazy elephant. It is through good fortune that you have kicked Duryodhana’s head with your foot. O unblemished one! It is through good fortune that you have performed the wonderful task of drinking Duhshasana’s blood, like a lion against a buffalo. It is through good fortune and your deeds that you have placed your foot on the heads of those who injured King Yudhishthira, one with dharma in his soul. O Bhima! It is through good fortune that you have triumphed over the enemies and brought down Suyodhana. Your great fame will spread throughout the earth. Bards praised Shakra’s slaying of Vritra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, we are praising your slaying of the enemy. Since Duryodhana has been brought down, our body hair is standing up and we are delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that our joy has not diminished.’⁴⁸ The assembled bards spoke in this way to Bhimasena.

‘ “The Panchalas and the Pandavas, tigers among men, were delighted and also spoke in a similar way. Madhusudana spoke to them. ‘O lords of men! It is not proper to again kill an enemy who has been brought down. This evil-minded one has already been killed. One should not address fierce words towards him. This wicked one has been slain by destiny. Destiny has afflicted the shameless one. He was avaricious and had wicked aides. He followed the advice of those well-wishers. Several times, Vidura, Drona, Kripa, Gangeya and the Srinjayas asked him to give the Pandus their paternal share. But he did not give it. The worst of men does not deserve to be called a friend or a foe now. One should not waste words on someone who has become a piece of wood. O lords of the earth! Ascend your chariots and let us leave swiftly. It is through good fortune that this evil-souled one has been brought down, with his advisers, kin and allies.’

‘ “O lord of the earth! Hearing Krishna’s censorious words, King Duryodhana was overcome by intolerance and tried to rise. He used his two arms to support himself on the ground. He frowned and glanced towards Vasudeva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his body half raised, the king’s form was like that of an angry and virulent serpent, with a severed tail. He paid no attention to the terrible pain that was about to take away his life. Duryodhana spoke these harsh words to Vasudeva. ‘You are the son of Kamsa’s slave and you have no shame.’⁴⁹ In this encounter with the clubs, I have been brought down through adharma. Bhima falsified the injunctions of the sacred texts and shattered my thighs. Do you think I do not know what you told Arjuna? You have slaughtered thousands of kings through unfair means. You have used many crooked means. But you suffer no shame or abhorrence on account of that. From one day to another, you have caused a great carnage of brave ones. Placing Shikhandi at the

forefront, you brought down the grandfather. O evil-minded one! You caused an elephant named Ashvatthama to be killed and made the preceptor lay down his weapons. Do you think that this is not known to me? When that valiant one was cruelly brought down by Dhrishtadyumna, you witnessed it. But you did not restrain him. A javelin was obtained⁵⁰ for the destruction of Pandu's son. You wasted it on Ghatotkacha. Is there anyone more wicked than you? The powerful Bhurishrava's arms were severed and he was ready to give up his life. When Shini's evil-souled descendant⁵¹ killed him, you were behind that act. Karna performed the excellent deed of triumphing over Partha. But you caused Ashvasena, the son of the king of the serpents, to be countered. In the battle, Karna's wheel was submerged in the ground. He was defeated and overtaken by a hardship. That foremost among men was trying to extricate it and you had him killed. Had you fought me, Karna, Bhishma and Drona through fair means, it is certain that you would not have been victorious. However, you adopted ignoble and deceitful methods. There were many kings who followed their own dharma. But you caused them to follow you and thus to be killed.'

' "Vasudeva replied, 'O Gandhari's son! You have been brought down, with your brothers, sons, relatives, followers and well-wishers. That is because you resorted to a wicked path. It is because of your evil deeds that the brave Bhishma and Drona have been brought down. It is because he followed your conduct that Karna has been slain in the battle. O stupid one! Though I asked you, you did not give the Pandavas half of your kingdom, their paternal share. This is because of your avarice and Shakuni's advice. You gave poison to Bhimasena. O evil-minded one! You tried to burn down all the Pandavas, and their mother, in the house of lac. Yajnaseni was in her season. Despite this, at the time of the gambling match, she was oppressed in the assembly hall. O shameless one! That is the reason someone like you should be killed. The one who follows dharma⁵² was unskilled and Soubala was knowledgeable about the heart of dice. He was defeated through deceit. For that reason, you should be slain in the battle. The wicked Jayadratha afflicted Krishna⁵³ in the forest, in Trinabindu's hermitage, when they⁵⁴ had gone out on a hunt. Abhimanyu was a child and though he was single-handed, many fought him in the battle. O evil one! He was killed because of your deeds. For that reason, you should be slain in this battle.'

' "Duryodhana said, 'I have studied and given the ordained gifts. I have ruled the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. I have placed my foot on the heads of enemies. Who is as fortunate as I am? It is through good fortune that I have seen my kshatriya relatives established in their own dharma. Even if I am slain, who can be more fortunate than I am? There are human objects of pleasure that gods deserve. These are difficult for kings to obtain. But I have obtained that supreme prosperity. Who can be more fortunate than I am? O unblemished one! I will go to heaven, with my well-wishers and my relatives. Your objectives are yet unaccomplished. You will sorrow here.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the king of the Kurus concluded these words, a large shower of flowers, with auspicious fragrances, rained down. Gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras played on musical instruments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Siddhas uttered words of praise. Fragrant, delicate and pleasant winds began to blow, mixed with sacred scents. The sky became beautiful and clear, with the complexion of lapis lazuli. On seeing these wonderful sights, they,⁵⁵ with Vasudeva at the forefront, were ashamed and honoured Duryodhana. On hearing that Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Bhurishrava had been slain through adharma, they grieved and wept in sorrow. The Pandavas were distressed and immersed in thought. On seeing this, Krishna spoke these words, in a voice that rumbled like clouds and drums. 'All of them were swift in the use of weapons and were maharathas. In a fair fight, even if we fought bravely, we were incapable of defeating them in the battle. That is the reason I thought of means to slay those lords of men. Otherwise, the Pandaveyas would never have obtained victory. Those four great-souled ones were atirathas on earth.⁵⁶ Following dharma, even the guardians of the world themselves would not have been able to kill them. Even when he is exhausted, Dhritarashtra's son, with the club in his hand, is incapable of being killed through the means of dharma, even by Yama with a staff in his hand. You should not sorrow that the king has been slain in this way. When enemies are many and numerous, they have to be killed through falsehood and other means. Earlier, this was the path followed by the gods, when they killed the asuras. That good route that they followed is one which everyone can follow. We have accomplished our objective. It is evening. We should go to our abodes. Let all the kings, the horses, the elephants and the chariots, rest.' On hearing Vasudeva's words, the Pandavas and the Panchalas became extremely cheerful and roared like a pride

of lions. They blew on their conch shells and Madhava blew on Panchajanya. On seeing that Duryodhana had been brought down, the bulls among men were delighted.” ’

Chapter 1280(61)

‘Sanjaya said, “All those kings left for their abodes. With arms that were like clubs, they cheerfully blew on their conch shells. O lord of the earth! The Pandavas proceeded towards our camp. The great archer, Yuyutsu Satyaki, followed them. Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, all of Droupadi’s sons and all the other great archers also proceeded towards our camp. The Parthas entered Duryodhana’s camp, bereft of its radiance and with its lord slain. It looked like an arena devoid of men. It looked like a city deprived of life and like a lake without elephants. There were only a large number of women, eunuchs and aged advisers. O king! Earlier, with clean garments dyed in ochre, Duryodhana and the others used to wait on them,⁵⁷ with hands joined in salutation. The Pandavas reached the camp of the king of the Kurus. O great king! Those supreme of rathas descended from their chariots.

‘ “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Keshava was always engaged in bringing pleasure to the wielder of Gandiva and spoke to him. ‘Take down Gandiva and the two great and inexhaustible quivers. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I will get down after you have dismounted. O unblemished one! Descend. It is for your own good.’ Dhananjaya, Pandu’s brave son, did as he had been asked. Thereafter, the intelligent Krishna discarded the reins of the horses and got down from the chariot that belonged to the wielder of Gandiva. The extremely great-souled one, the lord of all beings, descended. The celestial ape, stationed on the standard of the wielder of Gandiva, disappeared. Earlier, it⁵⁸ had been burnt by the divine weapons of the maharathas, Drona and Karna. O lord of the earth! It blazed amidst a fire and was swiftly burnt. The chariot of the wielder of Gandiva was burnt, with its yokes, its harnesses, its horses and its lovely joints. O lord! On seeing that it had been reduced to ashes, Pandu’s sons were astounded. O king! Arjuna joined his hands in salutation and bowing down affectionately, asked, ‘O Govinda! O illustrious one! Why has the chariot been burnt down by the fire? O descendant of the Yadu lineage! What is this extremely wonderful thing that has occurred? O mighty-armed one! If you think that I deserve to hear it, tell me.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘O Arjuna! This has earlier been burnt by many different kinds of weapons. O scorcher of enemies! It is because I was seated that it was not destroyed in the battle. It has now been destroyed, consumed by the energy of brahmastra. O Kounteya! Now that you have accomplished your objective, I have abandoned it.’ The illustrious Keshava, the destroyer of enemies, smiled a little, in pride.

‘ “He embraced King Yudhishtira and said, ‘O Kounteya! It is through good fortune that you have become victorious. It is through good fortune that you have defeated your enemies. O king! It is through good fortune that the wielder of Gandiva, Pandava Bhimasena, you and the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons are hale. You have slain your enemies and have escaped from a battle that has been destructive of heroes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Swiftly do the tasks that must be done next. When I earlier arrived in Upaplavya, with the wielder of Gandiva, you approached me and greeted me with *madhuparka*.⁵⁹ You spoke these words to me. “O Krishna! Dhananjaya is your brother and friend too. O mighty-armed one! O lord! You must therefore protect him from all dangers.” When you spoke those words to me, I replied in words of assent. O lord of men! Savyasachi has been protected and you have become victorious. O Indra among kings! He is brave and truth is his valour. With his brothers, he has escaped from this battle that led to the destruction of brave ones and made the body hair stand up.’ O great king! Having been thus addressed by Krishna, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira replied to Janardana, with his body hair standing up. ‘O crusher of enemies! Who other than you, and Purandara, the wielder of the vajra himself, could have escaped from the brahmastras of Drona and Karna? It is through your many favours that we have triumphed in this battle and Partha never had to retreat, even from the greatest of battles. O mighty-armed one! In that fashion, it is through your favours and instructions that I have performed many deeds and attained objectives with auspicious energy. In Upaplavya, maharshi Krishna Dvaipayana told me, “Where there is dharma, Krishna is

there. Where there is Krishna, victory is there.” ’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These were the words the brave ones spoke in your camp.

‘ “They then entered and obtained the treasure chests, with many kinds of riches and gems—silver, gold, jewels, pearls, the best of ornaments, blankets, hides—many female and male slaves and other objects required for kingship. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among men! Having obtained access to your inexhaustible riches, those great archers roared in delight, having defeated their enemies. Those brave ones approached their mounts and unyoked them. All the Pandavas, with Satyaki, remained there for some time. O great king! The immensely illustrious Vasudeva then said, ‘To ensure that everything is auspicious, we should dwell outside this camp.’ All the Pandavas and Satyaki agreed to this. For the sake of ensuring the auspicious, with Vasudeva, they went outside. O king! They approached the sacred river Oghavati.⁶⁰ Having slain their enemies, the Pandavas spent the night there. When the sun arose, they⁶¹ quickly sent the powerful Vasudeva to Nagasahvya. Daruka⁶² ascended the chariot. The king who was Ambika’s son⁶³ was there. When he was about to leave, with Sainya and Sugriva⁶⁴ yoked, they told him, ‘Comfort the illustrious Gandhari, whose sons have been slain.’ Thus spoken to by the Pandavas, the best of the Satvata lineage set out for that city. He quickly approached Gandhari, whose sons had been killed.” ’

Chapter 1281(62)

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why did Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, tiger among kings, send Vasudeva, the scorcher of enemies, to Gandhari? Krishna had earlier gone to the Kouravas, seeking peace. He was not successful and the battle followed. The warriors were slain and Duryodhana was also brought down. In the battle, the Pandaveyas eliminated their rivals from the earth. The camp⁶⁵ was emptied and everyone fled. They obtained supreme fame. O brahmana! Why did Krishna go again? O brahmana! It seems to me that the reason must have been a grave one, since Janardana, immeasurable in his soul, himself went. O supreme among officiating priests! Tell me everything about this. O brahmana! What was the reason behind deciding on such a course of action?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! The question that you have asked me is one that is deserving of you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you everything, exactly as it occurred. O king! Dhritarashtra’s immensely strong son was brought down in the battle by Bhimasena, in contravention of the rules. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the duel with the clubs, he was brought down by unfair means. O great king! On seeing this, Yudhishtira was overcome by a great fear. He thought of the immensely fortunate and ascetic Gandhari. Because of her terrible austerities, she was capable of burning down the three worlds. Thinking about this, he arrived at this conclusion. “The flame of Gandhari’s anger must first be pacified. Otherwise, on hearing about her son being killed by the enemies in this way, she can use the fire of her mind to angrily reduce us to ashes. How will Gandhari tolerate such fierce misery? She will hear that her son has been brought down through deceit and fraudulent means.” Thinking about this in many ways, he was overcome by fear and sorrow. Therefore, Dharmaraja spoke these words to Vasudeva. “O Govinda! Through your favours, the kingdom has been deprived of its thorns. O Achyuta! We have obtained that which our minds thought was unattainable. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Yadava lineage! In the battle that made the body hair stand up, I have witnessed the extremely great blows that you have had to bear. In earlier times, you rendered your help in slaying the enemies of the gods. O mighty-armed one! O Achyuta! You have aided us in that way. O Varshneya! By agreeing to be our charioteer, you have supported us. If you had not been Phalguna’s protector in the great battle, how would we have been capable of defeating this ocean of soldiers in the encounter? For the sake of our welfare, you have borne great blows with the club, strikes with bludgeons, spears, catapults, javelins, battleaxes and harsh words. O Achyuta! Now that Duryodhana has been brought down, all of that has become fruitful. O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! But you know about Gandhari’s anger. The immensely fortunate one has always tormented herself through fierce austerities. On hearing about the slaughter of her sons and grandsons, there is no doubt that she will consume us. She will be oppressed with grief on account of her sons and her eyes will blaze in anger. O brave one! I think the time has come to seek your favours. O Purushottama! Which man, other than you, is capable of glancing at her? O Madhava! I think it is a good idea for you to go there, so that you can pacify the anger of Gandhari’s wrath. O scorcher of enemies! You are the creator, the agent and the pervading power in the worlds. You will use words full of reason, appropriate for the occasion. O immensely wise one! Pacify Gandhari quickly. Krishna, the illustrious grandfather, will be there.⁶⁶ O mighty-armed one! O best of the Satvata lineage! For the sake of the welfare of the Pandavas, it is your duty to destroy Gandhari’s rage in every possible way.” On hearing Dharmaraja’s words, the extender of the Yadu lineage sent for Daruka and asked him to prepare the chariot in the proper way. Hearing Keshava’s words, Daruka quickly prepared the chariot and came and told the great-souled Keshava that it was ready. The scorcher of enemies, best of the Yadava lineage, ascended the chariot. The lord Keshava swiftly left for Hastinapura. O great king! The illustrious ratha, Madhava, departed. The valiant one approached and entered Nagasahvya.

‘The brave one’s chariot wheels clattered as he entered the city. Having sent word to Dhritarashtra, he alighted from that supreme chariot. Distressed in his mind, he entered Dhritarashtra’s abode. He saw that the supreme

among rishis⁶⁷ had arrived there before him. Janardana embraced Krishna's⁶⁸ feet and the king's. Keshava showed his honours to Gandhari, who was before him. Adhokshaja,⁶⁹ best among the Yadava lineage, held King Dhritarashtra by the hand and wept in a melodious voice. For some time, overcome by sorrow, he shed warm tears. Following the proper rites, he then washed his eyes with water. The scorcher of enemies then spoke these flowing words to Dhritarashtra. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nothing is unknown to you, about what has happened and what will happen. O lord! You know everything about the passage of time extremely well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because their hearts are devoted to you, all the Pandavas sought to prevent the destruction of the lineage and that of the kshatriyas. They are peaceful and devoted to dharma. Having contracted an agreement with their brothers, after being deceitfully defeated in the gambling match, they bore the hardship of dwelling in the forest. Attiring themselves in different garments, they spent the period of concealment. They always bore many other hardships, as if they were incapable. When the time for war presented itself, I myself arrived and in everyone's presence, asked for five villages.⁷⁰ Driven by destiny and because of your avarice, you did not accept this. O king! It is because of your crimes that all the kshatriyas have confronted destruction. Bhishma, Somadatta, Bahlika, Kripa, Drona and his son and the intelligent Vidura have always asked for peace. But you did not act accordingly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was as if everyone was confounded by destiny. In so far as this is concerned, you also acted foolishly. What can this be, other than the dictate of destiny? Destiny is supreme. O great king! Do not ascribe any fault to the Pandavas. O scorcher of enemies! The great-souled Pandavas did not commit a trifling transgression, in dharma, fairness and affection. You know everything about this and about the fruits of your own deeds. Therefore, you should not harbour any malice towards the sons of Pandu. For both you and Gandhari, the family, the lineage, funeral oblations and the fruits obtained from begetting sons now vest on the Pandavas. Think about all this and about your own transgressions. Think peacefully about the Pandavas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I salute you. O mighty-armed one! O tiger among the Bharata lineage! You know about Dharmaraja's natural devotion and affection towards you. Having caused this carnage amongst the enemy, even though they injured him, day and night, he is tormented and cannot find any peace. O best of the Bharata lineage! The tiger among men sorrows for you and the illustrious Gandhari and can find no peace. Knowing that you are tormented by sorrow on account of your sons and that your intelligence and senses are agitated, he is overcome by supreme shame and has not come before you." O great king! The supreme among the Yadu lineage spoke these words to Dhritarashtra.

'He then spoke these supreme words to Gandhari, who was afflicted by sorrow. "O Subala's daughter! O one who is excellent in vows! Listen to the words that I tell you. O beautiful one! There is no woman⁷¹ like you in this world now. O queen! You know the words that you spoke in the assembly hall in my presence. Those words, full of dharma and artha, were for the benefit of both sides. O fortunate one! You spoke those words, but your sons did not listen. Duryodhana desired victory and you spoke harsh words to him. 'O foolish one! Listen to my words. Victory exists where there is dharma.' O daughter of a king! Those words of yours have now come to pass. O fortunate one! Knowing all this, do not harbour any sorrow in your mind. Do not think about the destruction of the Pandavas. O immensely fortunate one! Through the blazing anger in your eyes and through the strength of your austerities, you are capable of burning down the earth, with everything that is mobile and immobile." On hearing Vasudeva's words, Gandhari spoke these words. "O mighty-armed one! O Keshava! It is exactly as you have described it. My heart is burning and my mind is agitated. O Janardana! But after hearing your words, I have steadied myself. O Keshava! The king is aged and blind and his sons have been slain. You are his refuge, with the brave Pandavas, best among men." Having spoken these words, Gandhari was tormented by sorrow on account of her sons. She covered her face with her garment and wept. The lord, the mighty-armed Keshava, comforted the one who was afflicted by sorrow, speaking words that were full of reason.

'Having comforted Gandhari and Dhritarashtra, Keshava got to know⁷² what Drona's son was planning. O Indra among kings! He swiftly arose. He bowed down before Dvaipayana and touched his feet with his head. He then told Kourava, "O best among the Kuru lineage! I must take your leave. Do not sorrow in your mind. Drona's son has a wicked intention. That is the reason I have suddenly got up. He has decided to kill the Pandavas in the night." On hearing these words, Dhritarashtra and Gandhari spoke to Keshava, the slayer of Keshi.⁷³ "O mighty-

armed one! Go quickly and protect the Pandavas. O Janardana! Let us meet again, soon.” With Daruka, Achyuta left swiftly. O king! When Vasudeva had departed, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, was comforted by Vyasa, revered by the world and immeasurable in his soul. O king! Having been successful, Vasudeva, with dharma in his soul, departed from Hastinapura, wishing to see the Pandavas in their camp. Having arrived in the camp in the night, he met the Pandavas and seated with them, told them everything that had happened.’

Chapter 1282(63)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! My son’s head was kicked with the foot and his thighs were shattered. He was lying down on the ground. He was extremely proud. What did he say? The king was extremely wrathful and firm in his enmity towards the Pandus. In that great battle, when that great calamity overtook him, what did he say?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Listen. O lord of men! I will tell you exactly what happened and what the king spoke, when he was shattered and he was overtaken by that calamity. O king! The king’s thighs were shattered and he was covered with dust. He gathered his flowing locks and glanced in the ten directions. Having carefully collected his locks, he sighed like a serpent. He was angry. With tears flowing from his eyes, he glanced towards me. For a short while, like a crazy elephant, he struck the earth with his hands. Then he shook his locks and gnashed his teeth. He censured the eldest Pandava and sighing, spoke these words.⁷⁴ ‘As my protector, I had Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, Karna, supreme among the wielders of weapons, Goutama, Shakuni, Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, Ashvatthama, the brave Shalya and Kritavarma. However, I have been reduced to this state. Destiny is difficult to cross. I was the lord of eleven armies.⁷⁵ But I have been reduced to this state. O mighty-armed one! When the time comes, no one can cross it. Those on my side who are still alive should be informed about how I have been brought down by Bhimasena, violating rules of fairness. The Pandavas have indeed performed many cruel deeds—Bhurishrava, Karna, Bhishma and the prosperous Drona. This is yet another infamous and cruel deed that the Pandavas have perpetrated. On this account, it is my view that they will be reprimanded by virtuous ones. If victory is obtained unfairly, what pleasure can virtuous men obtain from that? Which learned one will approve this violation of rules? Having obtained victory through adharma, learned ones do not rejoice in the way that the wicked Vrikodara, Pandu’s son, is delighted. My thighs have been shattered. What can be more extraordinary than the angry Bhimasena kicking my head with his foot? O Sanjaya! If a man acts in such a way towards a powerful and prosperous person who still has relatives, will he be honoured? My mother, my father and I are not ignorant about the dharma of kshatriyas. O Sanjaya! They will be miserable. Tell them my words. I have performed sacrifices. I have sustained servants. I have ruled the earth, up to the oceans. When my enemies were alive, I placed my feet on their heads. I have given gifts, to the best of my capacity. I have done pleasant deeds towards my friends. I have countered all my enemies. Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have advanced against the kingdoms of enemies and have subjugated those kings, like slaves. I have truly acted well towards virtuous ones. Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have honoured all my relatives and have been honoured and revered by men. I have served the three objectives.⁷⁶ Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have commanded the foremost among kings. I have obtained honour that is extremely difficult to get. I have gone to my place of birth. Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have studied and donated, in accordance with the prescribed rites. I have lived a long and healthy life. Based on my own dharma, I have conquered the worlds. Who can be more fortunate than I am? It is through good fortune that I have not been defeated in the battle and made to serve my enemies. It is through good fortune that my great prosperity goes to another one only after my death. Based on their own dharma, my kshatriya relatives attained their desired objective. That same death has been obtained by me. Who can be more fortunate than I am? An ordinary person is subjugated in the course of an enmity. It is through good fortune that I have not been subjugated by the enemy in that way. It is through good fortune that I have not been vanquished after performing a despicable act—like killing one who is asleep, one who is mad, or killing someone through the use of poison. I have been slain through adharma, through the contravention of fair rules. The immensely fortunate Ashvatthama, Satvata Kritavarma and Kripa Sharadvata should be told these words of mine. “The Pandavas have engaged in many acts of adharma. You should not trust them. They violate the rules.” ’

‘ “The king, your son, for whom truth was his valour, then addressed the bards. ‘In the encounter, I have been brought down by Bhimasena through the use of adharmā. I will now go to heaven, like Drona, Shalya, Karna, the immensely valorous Vrishasena, Shakuni Soubala, the immensely valorous Jalasandha, King Bhagadatta, the great archer who was Somadatta’s son,⁷⁷ Saindhava Jayadratha, my brothers who were my equal, with Duhshasana as the foremost, Duhshasana’s valiant son and my son, Lakshmana. There were many thousand of others on my side. They followed me from the rear. But I am now like a traveller without any riches. On hearing about the death of her brothers and her husband, how will my sister, Duhshala,⁷⁸ be? She will weep in sorrow. When they are overcome by sorrow, what will become of my father, the aged king, and Gandhari, and their daughters-in-law and granddaughters-in-law? There is no doubt that with her son and her husband slain, Lakshmana’s mother,⁷⁹ fortunate and large-eyed, will swiftly die. The immensely fortunate mendicant, Charvaka, is eloquent in the use of words. If he learns about this, he will certainly exact vengeance on my account.⁸⁰ The sacred Samantapanchaka is famous in the three worlds. By dying here today, I will obtain the eternal worlds.’ O venerable one! On hearing the lamentations of the king, thousands of men fled in the ten directions, their eyes full of tears. The earth, with its oceans and forests, and mobile and immobile objects, trembled violently and made a loud noise. The directions were clouded.

‘ “They⁸¹ went to Drona’s son and told him how the king had been brought down in the duel with the clubs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they had reported the account to Drona’s son, all of them remained immersed in thought for a long time. Then, sorrowfully, they⁸² went to wherever they had come from.” ’

Chapter 1283(64)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The remaining Kourava maharathas heard from the bards that Duryodhana had been brought down. They were mangled with sharp arrows, clubs, spears and javelins. Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma ascended swift steeds and quickly arrived at the field of the encounter. There, they saw Dhritarashtra’s great-souled son, who had been brought down. He was like a giant shala tree in the forest, shattered by the force of a storm. He was like a giant elephant in the forest, slain by a hunter. He was writhing and was covered by copious quantities of blood. It was as if the solar disc had been brought down. It was as if a giant tempest had arisen and had dried up the ocean. It was as if the disc of the full moon in the sky had been covered by mist. He was mighty-armed and like an elephant in valour, but was covered in dust. He was surrounded by a large number of fierce demons and predatory beasts in every direction, as if they were servants greedy for riches, surrounding the best of kings. There was a frown on his face and his eyes were dilated in rage. That tiger among men was like a tiger that had been brought down. They saw the great archer, the king, lying down on the ground. Kripa and the other rathas were extremely stupefied. They descended from their chariots and rushed towards the king. They saw Duryodhana and sat down on the ground, around him.

‘ “O great king! Drona’s son’s eyes were full of tears and he sighed. He spoke to the best of the Bharata lineage, the lord of all the kings on earth. ‘There is no doubt that there is nothing that is permanent in the world of men. O tiger among men! You are lying down thus, covered in dust. O king! You had earlier commanded the earth. O Indra among kings! How is it that you are alone in this deserted forest now? I do not see Duhshasana, or maharatha Karna. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All your well-wishers aren’t here either. It is a great sorrow that the ways of Yama can never be known. You possessed all the worlds. Yet you are lying down, covered in dust. This scorcher of enemies was foremost among those whose heads had been consecrated.⁸³ Behold the course of destiny. He is covered with grass and dust now. O king! Where is your sparkling umbrella and whisk now? O supreme among kings! Where has your large army gone? It is indeed impossible to fathom the course and cause and effect, since you, who were the preceptor of all the worlds, have now been reduced to this state. Everything on earth is temporary. It is seen that only prosperity and beauty are permanent.⁸⁴ You used to rival Shakra and we now see you reduced to this terrible state.’ O king! On hearing his words, which were especially full of sorrow, you son spoke these words, appropriate to the occasion. He shed tears of sorrow and wiped them away from his eyes with his hands. The lord of men spoke to those brave ones, Kripa and the others. ‘It has been said that the creator has ordained such a dharma for those who are mortal. In the course of time, death confronts all beings. In the presence of all of you, it now confronts me. I have ruled over the earth and have now been reduced to this state. It is through good fortune that I have not been defeated by the enemy in battle. It is through good fortune that I have been brought down, especially through wickedness and deception. It is through good fortune that, while engaged in fighting, I have always exhibited enterprise. After my relatives and allies have been slain in the battle, it is through good fortune that I have been brought down. It is through good fortune that I see that you have escaped from this destruction of men, and are well and hale. This is great delight for me. Because you are my well-wishers, do not torment yourself at my death. If the Vedas are proof, I have obtained eternal worlds. I know about the powers of the infinitely energetic Krishna. He has ensured that I did not deviate from following the dharma of kshatriyas. I have obtained him. Therefore, I have nothing to sorrow about. You have done what those like you should have done. You have always sought to ensure my victory. But destiny is impossible to cross.’ O Indra among kings! Having spoken these words, with tears in his eyes, the king became silent. He was severely agitated by agony.

‘ “Drona’s son blazed up in anger, like the fire at the time of the destruction of the universe. Overcome by rage, he pressed one hand with the other hand. His voice choking with tears, he spoke these words to the king. ‘My fa-