

5) *Duryodhana invited the Pāṇḍavas back to Hastināpura.* Duryodhana and his brothers were living very happily under the impression that the Pāṇḍavas had been burnt to ashes along with the 'Ic Palace'. Then it was that the Pāṇḍavas, disguised as brahmins and in the presence of all the Kings, won Pāñcālī, the daughter of King Drupada, in svayarīvara, for their wife. After the marriage the Pāṇḍavas stayed in Drupada's palace and the Kauravas returned to Hastināpura. Duryodhana and others felt all the more jealous at the Pāṇḍavas' becoming more powerful as a result of their marriage. Again it was decided that the Pāṇḍavas should be destroyed anyhow and at any cost. But, how to effect the destruction? Duryodhana wanted to attract the Pāṇḍavas to destruction through women and to create differences and divisions among them. But, Karṇa attacked the plan as impracticable, and instead he wanted to defeat Drupada and render the Pāṇḍavas impotent. At this stage Bhīṣma and Droṇa argued that it was most preferable to give half the Kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas and receive them with grace. Dhṛtarāṣṭra supported the proposal as a result of which the Kauravas went to Pāñcāla and escorted the Pāṇḍavas back to Hastināpura. Dhṛtarāṣṭra partitioned the country between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas and the latter shifted their residence to their part of the country with Khāṇḍavaprastha (Indraprastha) as its capital. When the Pāṇḍavas went to Indraprastha Maya built for them an exceptionally beautiful palace where King Dharmaputra performed *rājasūya*. Duryodhana and others earnestly participated in it. After the *rājasūya* the Kauravas wanted to have a look at the palace and in the course of surveying it they placed themselves in ridiculous situations due to visual illusions. Taking the bright floors of glass for watery tanks they pulled up their clothings and measured with caution every foot of theirs. Then they mistook actual pools for floor and fell into them and got wet. At the consequent discomfiture of the Kauravas Bhīma clapped his hands and roared with laughter. Draupadī hid her face with hands and smiled. Altogether the Kauravas cut a very ridiculous figure, and they returned to Hastināpura. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapter 202, Sabhā Parva, Chapters 35, 85).

6) *Dharmaputra's first defeat in the game of dice.* The sight of the great wealth including costly stones and gems presented by various kings to Dharmaputra at the *Rājasūya* and the humiliation experienced while surveying the palace made Duryodhana all the more mad with anger and hatred towards the Pāṇḍavas. He now came to the decision either to defeat the Pāṇḍavas once for all or to commit suicide by taking poison. He held secret consultations on the topic with Śakuni whose efforts at first to pacify him (Duryodhana) failed. Ultimately Śakuni, an expert in the game of dice, advised Duryodhana to invite Dharmaputra to a game, assuring him that the rest he would take care of. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Vidura advised Duryodhana against the move, but he did not yield. Finally Dhṛtarāṣṭra, saying to himself that nobody would change fate, agreed to Duryodhana's proposal, and deputed Vidura to Dharmaputra to invite him for the game.

Dharmaputra, in fact, did not like the game, but he succumbed to the eloquence and persuasive powers of Śakuni and at last agreed to play. Kings lined up the

royal hall to witness the game. First gems were staked, and Duryodhana won the game. Then 1000 golden niṣkas¹ and treasuries were offered to the winner. Duryodhana won that game also. Next chariot with horses and next to that 1000 maid-servants were staked and Duryodhana won those games too. 1000 horses, 1000 golden chariots with their horses, the horse decorated with gold presented by Citraratha to Arjuna, 6000 soldiers with their arms and armaments—these formed the next successive bets, and each game Dharmaputra lost. The next bet was 400 copper vessels each filled with pure gold, and Duryodhana won that game also. And, now Vidura tried to dissuade Yudhiṣṭhira from playing the game; but neither he nor Duryodhana heeded the advice. And, Duryodhana by foul play snatched from Dharmaputra all his wealth, his kingdom and his brothers. Now, Pāñcālī alone remained, and Dharmaputra bet her too and played the last game and lost..

Duryodhana deputed his Sūta, Prātikāmi, to Indraprastha, to fetch Draupadī but she sent him back. Next Duśśāsana was deputed and he brought Pāñcālī to the sabhā dragging her by the hair. She was proclaimed to be the maid-servant of the Kauravas. At last Dhṛtarāṣṭra intervened and sent back the Pāṇḍavas along with Draupadī to Indraprastha.

7) *Second game and exile in the forest.* Duryodhana and others did not appreciate the intervention of their father. He again conspired with Śakuni and it was decided to challenge Dharmaputra to one more game. The conditions to be stipulated were that the vanquished in the game should stay in exile for twelve years in the forest and live incognito during the thirteenth year, and if found out and recognised during this period the whole process of exile and life incognito would have to be repeated. Duryodhana and Śakuni approached Dhṛtarāṣṭra and said to him thus: "Dear father, the desire for revenge at their defeat in the game of dice gnaws at the Pāṇḍavas' heart like poison. Also, they will never forget our having dragged Draupadī by her hair. When a suitable occasion arises they will take revenge on the whole lot of us. Therefore, we want to challenge Dharmaputra to a final game of dice, the condition being that he who gets defeated should go in exile into the forest for twelve years and then to live incognito for one year. If we get defeated we will simply carry out the condition on our part.

This request of Duryodhana appealed to his father, who invited Dharmaputra once again for a game of dice. Dharmaputra accepted the invitation, in fact, in spite of himself. This time too Duryodhana won the stake and the Pāṇḍavas set out to the forest. Even at the time of parting Duśśāsana insulted Bhīma who retorted thus: "You, mean fellows, you cheated my brother by foul play. If I fail to tear your heart open in fight and drink blood I do not want heaven. Moreover I will kill Duryodhana, and Arjuna will kill Karṇa. Śakuni, the expert in foul play in dice will be killed by Sahadeva. We will meet in the 14th year from today at the battlefield. Adieu."

Thus did the Pāṇḍavas depart for the forest. Kuntī being too old Vidura took her to his house, and he consoled her, lamenting over the separation from her children. (M.B. Sabhā Parva).

1. 108 suvarṇa weight, an ornament worn on the chest.