

CHAPTER V

LIFE OF BHĪṢMA AS DEPICTED IN THE EPIC *BHĪṢMACARITAM*

V.I Introduction

Bhīṣma is the hero of the present epic *Bhīṣmacaritam*. He is known for his supreme devotion towards the Lord and affection for his father and others. Bhīṣma is born as Devavrata and is the grandsire of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. He gave up marriage and throne for the sake of his father. To the people of India he is the symbol of mature wisdom. Śrīrāma obeyed his father's words only for fourteen years but Bhīṣma stuck to his father's words for the rest of his entire life. By his great determination and strict observance of his vows, he got his name Bhīṣma.

V.II Birth

Gaṅgā gave birth to a bright son like Vasu who was named as Devavrata. Then she handed over that child in the hands of the king Śāntanu, as she was not able to live any longer then.

प्रसूय पुत्रं वसुतेजसं शुभा

चुचुम्ब सा स्नेहयुता हि तं चिरम् ।

समर्प्य तं शान्तनुहस्तयोस्ततो

जगाद खिन्ना विनयेन भूपतिम् ॥ *Bhīṣmacaritam*, I.35

He was strong in body and mind. His extraordinary powers and intellect were manifested even in his childhood. He was also called Śāntanava after his father and Gāṅgeya.

V.III Early life

Bhīṣma was born as the bright son of the illustrious king Śāntanu and Gaṅgā. On the passing away of Gaṅgā, the king Śāntanu anyhow became steady by accepting the death of his beloved wife as the mere fact and fate. He himself was caring for the physical growth of the child and was giving milk of a young cow in order to keep the trust of his wife of saving the family tree. The king appointed selected females belonging to a Brahmin family who were expert in caring and bringing up his child and always working for the welfare of the royal family. And he was also keeping an eye on the activities of those females with the intrinsic desire of the welfare of his son. The king Śāntanu was showing his son to the doctor in front of his eyes only and getting the news of the welfare of his son directly from him.

V.IV Education

Understanding the time to begin with the education of a son, the king Śāntanu called with honour many scholars from the different parts of India. On the auspicious day with the auspicious constellation, having worshipped all the gods traditionally, the king Śāntanu while giving the responsibility of his son Devavrata in the hands of different teachers humbly said thus:

गुरुकृपामधिगम्य जडो जनो

भजति पण्डिततां नहि संशयः ।

इति विचार्य भवत्सु निजं सुतं

सकलपाठनकामनया ददे ॥ *Ibid*, II.24

By hearing such words of the king, all the teachers became happy. They expressed their agreement to the king by assuring success desired by the king of training his son completely.

अथ जहाहि नरेन्द्र ! विचिन्तनं

सुतसुशिक्षणसिद्धिरसंशया ।

वयमशेषजनास्तव कामनां

सपदि पूरयितुं प्रयतामहे ॥ *Ibid*, II.35

All the teachers, having understood prince Devavrata as endowed with all learning and fulfilled with all specialities, thought of organising attractive convocation ceremony on the completion of his training. The king Śāntanu, having heard this auspicious and pleasant thought of teachers, having understood own cherished desires being successful and bathing in the unparalleled sea of happiness, himself made the arrangement for this function.

V.V Convocation Ceremony

There began the convocation ceremony of the prince Devavrata in the extremely large auditorium which has been well decorated. In that function the prominent personalities of different classes and different castes were invited. Devavrata, of tranquil mind, compassionate towards the poors, intelligent, having worn clothes of silk and sitting on the seat, was shining. The king Śāntanu started giving his speech and thanked all the teachers.

उत्तमर्णा इमे सन्ति

पाठयित्वा ममात्मजम् ।

समेषां विदुषामेषाम्

आधमर्ण्यं वहाम्यहम् ॥ *Ibid*, III.15

Then, Sarvācārya – the chief-teacher of Devavrata stood up from his seat and started giving blessings through his speech.

देवव्रत ! चिरञ्जीविन् !

स्वस्ति ते स्यात्सदानघ ।

अद्य श्रृणुपदेशं त्वं

दीक्षान्ते वदतो मम ॥ *Ibid*, III.30

At last Devavrata stood up from his seat and vowed to follow the instructions of his teacher.

V.VI Special Training of Archery

The sage Devala once came to the king Śāntanu and said to him, “I know that your son, having learnt the art of archery, has become a popular archer on the earth now-a-days. It is indeed true that no archer can defeat him in the war of archery. Still O king! I understand that he has not mastered this art of archery completely. Therefore the way is still left for his special training. Sage Paraśurāma has indeed the entire knowledge of archery. In my opinion there is no other successful teacher of the art of archery like him in this world. If he with his grace teaches all the specialities of this art of archery to your son Devavrata, then your son will indeed become the best archer by being a great danger for his enemies.” This way he advised the king to send Devavrata to the sage Paraśurāma for the special training in the art of archery.

The king told the same thing to his son Devavrata the next day. Devavrata agreed to it. And hence he started his journey towards the South with the aim to learn the art of archery from the sage Paraśurāma.

श्रद्धामदृष्टेऽपि गुरौ वितन्वन्

सर्वात्मना तं च सिषेविषुः सः ।

तद्बाणविद्यां प्रति साभिलाशष्-

चकार यात्रां प्रति दक्षिणणाशाम् ॥ *Ibid*, IV.28

The sage became happy and started imparting on him the usage of different divine weapons. The whole fifth canto is dedicated to this training. Then with the due permission from his teacher, he arrived to his city Hastināpura where he was warmly welcomed by all the citizens, all the ministers and his father Śāntanu. The king Śāntanu thanked sage Paraśurāma. The king Śāntanu traditionally consecrated his son on throne by pouring on him the mixture of sacred water collected from all the sacred places, rivers, great rivers and oceans.

सकलतीर्थ-नदी-नद-सागरो-

द्धृतजलैर्निखिलैरमृतद्रवैः ।

निजसुतं विधिना स्वभिषिक्तवान्

स युवराजपदे वसुधापतिः ॥ *Ibid*, VII.3

V.VII Bhīṣma's Vow

That festival lasted for many days. All the subjects have gathered happiness. But on this occasion of happiness the king Śāntanu also recalled his beloved wife who had passed away. The king Śāntanu, experiencing solitude in the palace due to his mind fixed in the recollection of his beloved one and being allured by the fragrance of a spring season, thought of wandering in the forest to entertain his mind.

बहुदिनान्यचलत्स महोत्सवो

जनपदीयजना मुदमाप्नुवन् ।

परमपुत्र समभ्युदये नृपः

स्वदयितास्मृतिमप्यकरोदलम् ॥

सुरभिमाससुगन्धसमाहृतो

भवनखिन्नमना दयितामनाः ।

वनविहारमतिं विदधे नृपो

विमनसां शरणं वनमुच्यते ॥ *Ibid*, VII.8 & 11

After this the king Śāntanu, walking absent-mindedly and thinking of his wife, luckily reached to the bank of the river Yamunā of unsullied water. He started walking on the bank of the river Yamunā in search of a source of that fragrance thinking ‘From where does this fragrance emanate?’ Going ahead he saw an extremely beautiful lady, sitting on a mat of the bank’s way, having the face so beautiful like that of moon, holding the flower of a lotus and pleasing his mind.

अथ चलन्वसुधापतिरुन्मनाः

सहचरीविषये च विचिन्तयन् ।

विधिवशात्समवाप कलिन्दजां

विमलनीलजलां यमुनानदीम् ॥

समवलोक्य स तां नखन्दितां

सुरनदीभगिनीमिव मानिताम् ।

मुदमवाप निजात्मनि कामपि

प्रकटयन्ति निजागमनण श्रियः ॥ *Ibid*, VII.26 & 27

Then he introduced himself to her. He, thinking that lady (Satyavatī) as his wife in his mind, told her lovingly, O auspicious one! Be my wife. She replied, “O king! I express my gratefulness to you that you are talking about making me your woman who is devoid of virtues. I am not free in giving my consent on this proposal even though I wish. Therefore, you talk to my father in this matter.”

मनसि तां सुविचार्य निजोचितां

सहचरीं सुखदां सहधर्मिणीम् ।

प्रणयपूर्वमवोचदमूं नृपो

भव शुभे ! मम जीवनसङ्गिनी ॥

प्रकटयामि नरेन्द्र ! कृतज्ञतां

यद्गुणामपि मां वृणुषे स्त्रियम् ।

परमहं प्रभवामि न चात्मनो

मम पिता विषयेऽत्र निवेद्यताम् ॥ *Ibid*, VII.48 & 51

The king Śāntanu reached to the chieftain of the fishermen as per the advice of Satyavatī. After receiving the welcome by him, he modestly asked him for the hand of his daughter in marriage to make her wife. (But) He said to the king, “If the son begotten through my daughter will be undoubtedly enthroned as prince, then just now I am giving you my daughter in marriage. If you do not keep my condition, then you cannot have my daughter. Thereupon, the king said to the fisherman that your condition is not lawful. My intellect does not allow me to disregard justice for the sake of my personal happiness.”

तदनुसारमसौ स विशाम्पतिः

तरिधनप्रमुखं समुपागतः .

समुपलभ्य तदर्पितसत्क्रियां

विनयपूर्वमयाचत तत्सुताम् ॥

नृप उवाच निषादममुं तदा

न पण एष तवास्ति नयोचितः ।

निजसुखाय सुनीतिमुपेक्षितुं

मम मतिर्नहि मामनुमन्यते ॥ *Ibid*, VII.53 & 56

This way the king Śāntanu rejected his proposal and returned to the palace. But he could not stay any longer without Satyavatī. After passing many days as well as getting engaged in the state-affairs also, the king Śāntanu did not

forget beautiful eyed Satyavatī.

The mind of the king Śāntanu, being attached to the daughter of fisherman, gradually became detached from the activities of state-affairs; and his body, being scorched in the fire of unsuccessful sexual cravings, started becoming weak day by day. Seeing this condition decreasing day by day, prince Devavrata, his all ministers and servants tried very much to know the cause of Śāntanu's grief day by day. Then, prince Devavrata, seeing all his people sad after trying very much, wished to know the cause of his father's affliction through secret means. Therefore, he immediately sent his spy on the same way on which the king Śāntanu has gone for wandering in the forest.

तस्मिन्काले विहितयतनान्स्वन्निराशान्चिलोक्य

गूढोपायैर्जनकविरतिं ज्ञातुमैच्छत्कुमारः ।

तस्माद्राजा वनविहृतये येन मार्गेण यातः

तेनैवैकं निजमनुचरं प्रेषयामास शीघ्रम् ॥ VIII.25

That intelligent spy, assuming his journey to be successful in his mind and knowing all the things to be known about the king, immediately returned to the prince; and he informed him the entire course of a king as told by that man. Prince, hearing an unsuccessful love story of the king as told by a spy, thought for a while. Then going in solitude, he magnanimously, seriously and patiently estimated the happiness of himself and that of his father through his intellectual balance.

श्रुत्वा वार्तां प्रणिधिकथितां राजसम्बन्धिनीं ताम्

ईषत्कालं मनसि विदधे चिन्तनं राजसूनुः ।

पश्चाद् गत्वा रहसि सुमनाः स्वीयबुद्धेस्तुलायां

धीरो धृत्या स्वजनकसुखे तोलयामास तूष्णीम् ॥ VIII.30

Thus, thinking and determining patiently, Devavrata, the son of Gaṅgā, with

a wish of sacrificing his right to the throne as a prince for the sake of his father's happiness, immediately went off with his spy and some ministers to ask for the hand of his father's beloved lady Satyavatī, the daughter of fisherman, for his father as his wife. For the sake of his father, that devoted son, with a wish of making him happy by the acquirement of wife for him, was moving towards this path happily and with satisfaction; at that time, alas, he was not aware of the movement of a cycle of fate. God secretly makes an assault on some vital spots of a human-being, but does not make any kind of sound.

जायाप्राप्तिसुखेन यः सुखयितुं तातं स्वकीयं सुतः

वाञ्छंस्तुष्टियुतश्चाल मुदितः प्रीत्यै पितुर्भक्तिमान् ।

नाजानान्निजभाग्यचक्रचलनं तस्मिन्क्षणे हन्त सः

गूढं मर्मणि हन्ति किन्तु न मनाक् शब्दं विधत्ते विधिः ॥ VIII.42

The fisherman tried to convince his daughter Satyavatī not to get mad after the king Śāntanu, but she did not agree to his statements and expressed her deep love for the king. By listening to the firm determination of his daughter, the wrinkles of the forehead of fisherman were contracted. At that time only, prince Devavrata, like fulfilling the wish of almighty God and like completing the dispute between father and his daughter, arrived there to renounce his own happiness for the happiness of his father. The prince told to the fisherman saying so that he has come for the happiness of his father. He duly wishes to make your daughter, who is endowed with virtues and charming due to jewels, his wife as per the tradition and rituals. I am happily renouncing my right to the throne as a prince along with all my happiness and wishes to fulfil your condition. Therefore, O venerable one! Now you happily offer your daughter in marriage to make her my father's wife.

पणस्य पूत्र्यै भवतस्त्यजाम्यहं

स्वयौवराज्यं ससुखं निजेच्छया ।

सुखेन तत्तात ! निजामिमां सुतां

प्रयच्छ पत्नी भवितुं च मत्पितुः ॥ *Ibid*, IX. 47

That evil-minded fisherman deceitfully and impudently spoke, “O Prince! Pardon me; still my mind has not become free from the doubts. I do not doubt on your statement, as you will surely keep your statement. But when your son will think of his right to throne, then becoming royal mother of the state, my daughter will be a subject of great dispute. At that time, your statement will also turn in vain and there will surely be strife in your family. My wishes too will vanish. Therefore, I shall not approve such marriage.”

समाचरन्कूटमसौ झषाशनो

जगाद निर्लज्ज इवासिताननः ।

क्षमस्व हे राजकुमार ! मामकं

मनोऽधुनाप्यस्ति न नष्टसंशयम् ॥

तदा वचस्तेऽपि मुधा भविष्यति

कुले च नूनं कलहो भविष्यति ।

ममाभिलाषोऽपि विनाशमेष्यति

ततो न संस्तौमि विवाहमीदृशम् ॥ *Ibid*, IX.51 & 54

The face of prince Devavrata became stern on hearing such statements of that fisherman. “In the presence of all these and in my complete consciousness, today I take a terrible pledge that, I shall always remain celibate by becoming ascetic in this birth. I shall ever stay without woman, I completely renounce marriage and coition in every way, I shall never desire to have any lustful woman, and there will be no progeny through my semen.”

अहं निवत्स्यामि सदा विना स्त्रियं

रतिं विवाहं च जहामि सर्वथा ।

न कामयिष्ये च कदापि कामुकी

न रेतसा मे च कुलं चलिष्यति ॥ *Ibid*, IX.63

Hence, Devavrata became famous as Bhīṣma (*He of a terrible oath*) after this incident. Then Satyavatī went away to the palace along with Devavrata Bhīṣma in his charoit.

V.VIII Obtainment of step-mother

The king Śāntanu, knowing the entire account serially from the mouths of different ministers, remained silent for a long. The tears rolled down from the eyes of the king Śāntanu while thinking of unprecedented sacrifice made by his son for the sake of his father, and because of it, his cheeks became wet. He called his son Devavrata; and embraced him to his heart for a long. He then bestows upon his son the boon of longevity at own will.

यावत्त्वमेषिष्यसि जीवनार्थं

तावद्धि जीविष्यसि वत्स ! लोके ।

एतत्कृते स्वीयमशेषपुण्यं

समर्पयाम्यद्य मुदा त्वदर्थम् ॥ *Ibid*, X. 23

V.IX Obtainment of two-brothers

After few days, queen Satyavatī got pregnant. After entering into the tenth month of her pregnancy, queen Satyavatī gave birth to a bright son in the royal palace at auspicious time. The king Śāntanu experienced quick happiness. The king Śāntanu, under the control of God's will, enthusiastically kept his name 'Citrāngada' only on seeing the brilliance of the body of that newly born baby.

During the twilight queen Satyavatī happily gave birth to a second lustrous son in the same manner as the bright fifteenth night of a month gives birth to

a complete moon. The king Śāntanu, having worshipped Lord Gaṇeśa and Goddess Gaurī, happily named the prince as ‘Vicitravīrya’ on auspicious time given by an astrologer.

Bhīṣma looked after their training and early education. The mental inclinations of the king Śāntanu gradually left running after their subjects. Now he was not experiencing happiness in any other activities than serving the feet of Lord. And one day the king Śāntanu’s wish of living life got completely finished.

ततो व्यतीतेषु दिनेषु केषुचित्

स एकदा नष्टजिजीविषो नृपः ।

विहाय सर्वान् रुदतः कुटुम्बिनो

बभूव सद्यः परमात्ममिश्रितः ॥ *Ibid*, XII.14

V.X Citrāṅgada’s death

Queen Satyavatī insisted Bhīṣma to be the king of Hastināpura after the king Śāntanu. But he rejected this proposal and made his younger brother Citrāṅgada the king. As a result, the popularity of Bhīṣma along with the splendour of Citrāṅgada amongst the mass of people also got adorned. During Citrāṅgada’s ruling, the arrogance grown because of his strength gradually destroyed his popularity. After few days, one very powerful Gandharvarāja of his name only i.e. Citrāṅgada by name came into the city of Hastināpura and spoke to him (i.e. the king Citrāṅgada), the son of the king Śāntanu, that you cannot have my name without conquering me. Thereafter, there was a constant combat amongst both of them who got angry, in which Gandharvarāja treacherously killed Kuru king Citrāṅgada in the first *prahara* of the night.

ततस्तयोर्द्वन्द्वरणं निरन्तरं

बभूव कोपान्वितयोः परस्परम् ।

निशामुखान्तेच्छलमाचरन्नसौ

जघान गन्धर्वपतिः कुरुत्तमम् ॥ *Ibid*, XII. 30

Bhīṣma, seeing this and having got angry, challenged that Gandharvarāja to fight a war with him. But he did not get ready to fight with him; and he immediately went to his *Yakṣaloka*. Bhīṣma became very much sad on an accidental death of his younger brother; and he made the cremation of his dead body by understanding the will of an almighty God to be unavoidable.

V.XI Vicitravīrya's marriage

Thereafter, he, discussing with his mother Satyavatī, made his second younger brother Vicitravīrya to be the king; and he started helping him at every step (everywhere) by thinking of his young age. After sometime, Bhīṣma, having seen the attractive state of youth of his younger brother king Vicitravīrya, thought of his marriage for the growth of their race. After this, great soul Bhīṣma received an invitation from the King of Kāśī about *Svayamvara* (an ancient custom wherein a bride chose her husband of her own accord) of his three daughters Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā by name. As a result, Bhīṣma thought of arranging marriage of Vicitravīrya with these brides. He discussed with mother Satyavatī in this matter and with her permission left for Kāśī alone in his chariot; and he entered into a canopied along with his chariot as that *Svayamvara* was to begin. As long as the sounds like 'Who is this archer? Where does he come from? Does he not count us even as a bit of the stalk of grass also?' came out at that time, till then that great archer Bhīṣma abducted the three daughters of the king of Kāśī. Having made those three daughters of Kāśīnareśa seated in his chariot, Bhīṣma told to the princes present in that canopied of *Svayamvara* thus – O princes! I am Bhīṣma, the protector of Kuru race. You must have heard my

name. The king Vicitravīrya is my younger brother. He is young and presently celibate. Therefore, having abducted these princesses, I am taking away them in front of you people for their marriage. Having got angry, some self-esteemed kings could not tolerate such insult of them. Therefore, they took their weapons in their hands and forcefully started attacking with the arrows on Bhīṣma in order to take revenge of their insult. But, Bhīṣma, the destroyer of his enemies, conquered all of them immediately in the battle-field on the strength of his divine weapons; and in few days he entered into the apartment of his mother Satyavatī along with those three daughters of Kāśīnareśa tactfully. He bowed down to mother Satyavatī with bent head; and handed over the three daughters of Kāśīnareśa to her. Therefore, they decided to arrange the marriage ceremony of Vicitravīrya with these three daughters on some auspicious day. On knowing this thought of Bhīṣma, princess Ambā, the eldest daughter of Kāśīnareśa, spoke to Bhīṣma, “O Bhīṣma! I have heard that even great scholars also give validity to your opinion while making the decision of what is right and what is wrong i.e. the *sat* and *asat*”. My love towards the king Śālva is firm; and I wish to make him my husband. In this situation you only tell me, is it appropriate for a lady belonging to a good family should be the wife of a person whom she does not know and by leaving a person whom she loves? King Śālva also wishes to make me his wife for the growth of his race. In this situation, O Bhīṣma! You only make the decision from your intelligent mind and tell me, what should I do now being abducted by you?” Learned Bhīṣma, listening to the talk of princess Ambā, made a decision (that), O princess! Listen (to me); if you and Śālva are attached with each other from the very beginning, then your marriage with Vicitravīrya is not proper. Thereafter, Bhīṣma respectfully bid farewell to that princess by making her to sit in the chariot for sending her to King Śālva. This fantastic contemplative character of him set an example in the society. After this, he graciously arranged the marriage function of the rest two sisters, who were not attached to anyone, with

Vicitravīrya on some auspicious day.

ततस्ततोऽसाववशिष्टयोर्द्वयोः

सुकन्ययोः काममनन्यभावयोः ।

अकारयच्चारु च पाणिपीडनं

विचित्रवीर्येण समं शुभे दिने ॥ *Ibid*, XII.54

V.XII Vicitravīrya's death

The king Vicitravīrya, who was too much involved in sexual pleasure, became the victim of the last stage of tuberculosis. As a result, all the efforts made by doctors became futile; and he left for heaven making all cry after him. In the royal family, there suddenly spread the darkness on getting quenched the lamp of Kuru-race by the storm of tuberculosis.

V.XIII The birth of Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas

Satyavatī, thinking so for a long time in her mind, called Bhīṣma; and insisted him again and again to get married. Bhīṣma, who was very firm in his resolution, did not accept this suggestion of Satyavatī. Thereafter, she, for the protection and growth of the race of her husband, recalled her son Vedavyāsa, who was begotten by her when she was unmarried. She, asking the great soul and righteous Bhīṣma; and with his permission, called her son Vedavyāsa Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana. Vedavyāsa accepted the responsibility of continuing the race of the husband of his mother. As a result, he begot two sons (to the wives of Vicitravīrya) through *Niyogavidhi*. Blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born to the wife Ambikā of Vicitravīrya. Pāṇḍu was born to the wife Ambālikā respectively; and Vidura was born in the same manner to the maid-servant of Ambikā.

अन्धोऽम्बिकायामभवत्

धृतराष्ट्रोऽम्बालिकायां च पाण्डुः ।

अम्बिकासेविकायां

विदुरो जन्माप्तवान् क्रमेण ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.18

Blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra though being the eldest could not get the price-hood. Therefore, Pāṇḍu attained the royal throne of Kuru race. Bhīṣma arranged the marriage of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with Gāndhārī, that of Pāṇḍu with Kunti and Mādrī with an intension of protecting the family. Kunti gave birth to Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna; Mādrī gave birth to Nakula and Sahadeva; and Gāndhārī to hundred sons by name Duryodhana etc. Gāndhārī also gave birth to a daughter Duḥśalā by name. And the wife of Vidura, happy in every way, also gave birth to many sons.

कुलरक्षार्थी भीष्मो

गान्धार्या सह धृतराष्ट्रविवाहम् ।

पाण्डुपरिणयं कुन्ती-

माद्रीभ्यां च सहाकारयत् ॥

युधिष्ठिरभीमार्जुनान्

कुन्ती, नकुलसहदेववौ च माद्री ।

दुर्योधनादीन् शतं

तनयांश्चावाप गान्धारी ॥

दुःशलाख्या च सुतापि

गान्धारीदेहात् समवाप जन्म ।

विदुरः स्वभार्यायां च

सुखी लेभे बहूनात्मजान् ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.20 to 22

V.XIV Broil between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas

The king Pāṇḍu died immediately when just got involved in the activity of sensual pleasure with the great queen Mādrī dut to the curse of sage

Kindama. Then, the great queen Mādrī also left this world after him giving his two sons in the hands of the great queen Kunti. Thereafter, blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra only became the king of Kuru race. His sons were jealous of the sons of Pāṇḍu. Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Pāṇḍu, being the eldest among all the princes and because of being more virtuous, was made the prince. He immediately became the swan of the minds of wise persons like that of *Mānasarovara*. But, Duryodhana could not bear Yudhiṣṭhira as the future king of the Kuru race. Therefore, he made his father Dhṛtarāṣṭra's mind away from the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana treacherously tried to burn the Pāṇḍavas alive in the (lac palace) fort of the city Vārṇāvata by name after discussing with Karṇa, Śakuni and Duḥśāsana. These Pāṇḍavas, protected by Vidura from that conflagration, started passing their time in forests and cities in the disguise form. Here Duryodhana and others became happy on knowing them burnt into the fire.

विदुरेण रक्षितास्ते

गुप्तं व्यचरन् वनेषु नगरेषु च ।

ज्ञात्वानलदग्धांस्तान्

मुमुदिरे दुर्योधनादयः ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.29

V.XV The marriage of Pāṇḍavas with Draupadī

Vidura, seeing Bhīṣma sad because of the news that Pāṇḍavas were burnt alive in that arson, told him everything in solitude. The destiny is very powerful, for this reason only Kunti, who has given birth to the brave sons like Bhīma and Arjuna, is also experiencing the pain created by enemies, this thought came together in the minds of Bhīṣma and Vidura. Those Pāṇḍavas, wandering here and there, reached to the Pāñcāla country. There Arjuna won Draupadī, the princess of Pāñcāla in the *Svayamvara*. On this occasion there was a great war of Arjuna with Kauravas and many other kings. But, Bhīma and Arjuna immediately defeated them. Draupadī became

the common wife of all the five Pāṇḍava brothers by chance. As a result, those Pāṇḍavas set a marvellous example in the history of marriage-life. On this occasion only, Pāṇḍavas were introduced to Balarāma and Śrīkr̥ṣṇa. The king Drupada became extremely happy on knowing the fact that a person who fulfilled the condition of shooting the fish in the *Svayamvara* was not any Brāhmin but Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu, only; and he welcomed all the Pāṇḍavas in his royal court and honoured them very well. Thereupon, the five Pāṇḍavas were duly married to Draupadī in the presence of Balarāma and Śrīkr̥ṣṇa. But, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra got afflicted by such progress of Pāṇḍavas.

रामकृष्णोपस्थितौ

द्रौपदीपाण्डवविवाहो बभूव ।

पाण्डुसुताभ्युदयोऽयं

व्यथयामास धृतराष्ट्रसुतान् ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.35

This news speedily spread amongst people in the same manner a drop of oil spreads in the water. The wise persons like Droṇa, Bhīṣma and Vidura became extremely happy through this news. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, being made to understand by Bhīṣma and others, even though he was not wishing, getting happy sent Vidura to the capital of Pāṅcālanareśa in order to call the Pāṇḍavas back. As a result, the five Pāṇḍavas with the permission of Pāṅcālarāja, Drupada, entered into the city Hastināpura along with Balarāma, Śrīkr̥ṣṇa, mother Kunti and the wife Draupadī. It is a matter of great distress that Duryodhana, being scorched by the fire of aversion, could not bear the arrival of Pāṇḍavas in Hastināpura and their marriage with Draupadī. At this situation, not only Dhṛtarāṣṭra, but his wife Gāndhārī was also tensed. Therefore, the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra distributed the kingdom for the welfare of his sons. He gave the deserted forest *Khāṇḍavaprastha* by name to the Pāṇḍavas as a share; and the consecrated ceremony of Yudhiṣṭhira

was performed there. Pāṇḍavas with the help of Lord Kṛṣṇa established a grand, divine and mind-pleasing city *Indraprastha* by name. Righteous king Yudhiṣṭhira was always keeping his subjects happy while staying in the city. After sometime he with the help and support of younger brothers organised a *Rājasūya* sacrifice.

धर्मात्मा युधिष्ठिरः

सुखयामास प्रजा निजा अनिशम् ।

कालेन राजसूयं

यज्ञं चकार सानुजोऽसौ ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.45

V.XVI Insult of Draupadī

Duryodhana, who has come there on the invitation, was pained very much by seeing the prosperity of Pāṇḍavas. At that time, his maternal uncle Śakuni, the king of Gāndhāra, convinced him very much; but his fire of jealous did not get extinguished. Thereafter, the chief of all, crooked Śakuni, to make him happy, mentioned his strength of abducting the entire property of Pāṇḍavas through the game of dice. Duryodhana became happy through this thought of Śakuni; but Dhṛtarāṣṭra, being aware of the strength of Pāṇḍavas, did not consider it proper. After this, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, though being stopped by Vidura, because of an obstinacy of Duryodhana, arranged the game of dice by allowing Duryodhana to walk on the curved path. Śakuni, playing on behalf of Duryodhana won the entire property of Yudhiṣṭhira in the game of dice. Then, he put his younger brothers, consequently himself and being conquered at last great queen Draupadī on the stake. Śakuni, with the help of guile, won everything that of Pāṇḍavas in the game of dice; seeing and hearing this, the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra became happy within heart, plunged into the illusion because of partiality towards his sons. The younger brother of Duṣṣāsana, with his permission, brought the great queen Draupadī in the royal assembly by dragging her hair and understanding her to be a

common woman won in the game of dice. By the inspiration of Karṇa, he started removing the *sārī* of that great queen Draupadī.

कर्णसम्प्रेरितोऽसौ

तद्-वस्त्रमप्याहर्तुमारिभे ।

तदा द्रौपदी दीना

भगवन्तं कृष्णं प्राह्वयत् ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.53

Then Draupadī being poor called out Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa, hearing the pathetic call of the great queen Draupadī, immediately came there; and without appearing there he made her *sārī* long. Duḥśāsana got tired by pulling the *sārī* of the great queen Draupadī; but he could not pull even the border of that *sārī*. In that assembly, arrogant Duryodhana showed his thigh to Draupadī for sitting on it. Bhīmasena could not tolerate the above mentioned insults of the great queen Draupadī. At that time, his eyes became red because of anger. He took the terrible oaths of drinking Duḥśāsana's blood and breaking the thighs of Duryodhana.

दुःशासनस्य रुधिरं

पातुं, भङ्क्तुं दुर्योधनजङ्घे ।

भीमश्चक्रे भीमां

कोपारुणनयनः प्रतिज्ञाम् ॥ *Ibid*, XIII.58

At that time only, the crows started making unpleasant sound in the houses of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; and inauspicious jackals also started making unpleasant sound loudly; by hearing which the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra was frightened. Therefore, Dhṛtarāṣṭra solicited Draupadī, being scorched in the flames of fire of insult, to ask for a boon to give her consolation quickly. Extremely intelligent Draupadī made her five husbands free from the servility of Duryodhana in the form of a boon. Dhṛtarāṣṭra returned the entire property to the Pāṇḍavas, which they have lost in the game of dice, with an

intension to make them satisfied. And, he immediately sent the Pāṇḍavas off for Indraprastha by persuading them all. Duryodhana became unhappy by seeing this all.

V.XVII Infamous game of dice (Again)

Blunt Duryodhana, having discussed with Śakuni and Karṇa etc., made his father King Dhṛtarāṣṭra agree to win the Pāṇḍavas again treacherously. At that time, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, though being stopped by Grandsire Bhīṣma, Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, Vidura and many persons, again invited Pāṇḍavas for playing the game of dice. This time Śakuni on the behalf of Duryodhana kept this condition of the game of dice that, “The defeated party will surely stay in the forest for twelve years. Thereafter, that will stay in any city in the disguise form for a year. If that party becomes successful in fulfilling this condition, then he will become able to acquire its kingdom back. Otherwise it has to follow the same condition in order to acquire own kingdom. As long as this condition of twelve years in forest and a year incognito stay, does not get over, till then the victorious party will rule the kingdom of a defeated one.” Śakuni, having put this condition from the side of Duryodhana, threw the dice; and in this way that crooked one made the Pāṇḍavas destitute within a moment. The five Pāṇḍavas, declared defeated with the permission of elders and by taking their wife Draupadī with them; with the determination of walking on the path of righteousness, started moving towards the forest. The king Yudhiṣṭhira along with his wife Draupadī and younger brothers sent back all the folks of the town coming after them by persuading them; and then entered into a dense forest. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Vedavyāsa timely gave consolation to the Pāṇḍavas who were worshipping the Lord, righteousness, patience and valour in the forest. Those all Pāṇḍavas, believing righteousness alone as their property, having spent their twelve years in the forest, passed the thirteenth year in the house of King

Virāṭa in the disguise form. Duryodhana could not find out the Pāṇḍavas even though trying very much during the period of incognito. As a result, that sinful one started remaining always pained and worried. At last, on hearing the news of the slaughter of Kīcaka, his hope was raised of finding Pāṇḍavas. Therefore, by taking Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, Karṇa and Suśarmā together and by dividing his army in two groups, he besieged the cows of the king Virāṭa. In that battle, Arjuna, protecting the cows of King Virāṭa, alone defeated them all. But that chief of knaves, Duryodhana did not feel shame. He accused the Pāṇḍavas breaching the incognito; and being under the influence of greed, he denied them to return their kingdom which was their right. Duryodhana was spoilt by caressing of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Therefore, he did not respect the opinion of even Grandsire Bhīṣma, which was proving the completion of incognito period that of Pāṇḍavas. A seed does not grow on a stone. The king Virāṭa respectfully worshipped the Pāṇḍavas who have come out after completing their state of incognito. He also arranged the marriage of his daughter Uttarā with Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna. In this marriage, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Pāṇḍavas, Balarāma, king Drupada etc. gathered in it. All of them got assembled in the court of the king Virāṭa on the completion of marriage ceremony. In that meeting, the sufficient discussion was made on the topic of gaining back the abducted state of Pāṇḍavas from Duryodhana. At last, Lord Kṛṣṇa made a resolution that a messenger should be sent to the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra in this matter. But, Duryodhana, plunged in the arrogance of greed, aversion and heroism (strength), rejected the message of Pāṇḍavas which was sent through a messenger. Grandsire Bhīṣma etc. convinced him very much to return the Pāṇḍavas their righteous kingdom. But he did not respect to his talk also. As a result, both the parties (Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas) called the kings of their respective parties for helping in an impending war. There the number of troops of kings assembled in both the parties became

eighteen *Akṣauhiṇī* (an ancient division of armies).

V.XVIII *Mahābhārata* War

Lord Kṛṣṇa made a resolution that a messenger should be sent to the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra in this matter. But, Duryodhana, plunged in the arrogance of greed, aversion and heroism (strength), rejected the message of Pāṇḍavas which was sent through a messenger. Grandsire Bhīṣma etc. convinced him very much to return the Pāṇḍavas their righteous kingdom. But he did not respect to his talk also. As a result, both the parties (Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas) called the kings of their respective parties for helping in an impending war. There the number of troops of kings assembled in both the parties became eighteen *Akṣauhiṇī* (an ancient division of armies). Lord Kṛṣṇa on the behalf of Pāṇḍavas went Himself to the court of the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra with the proposal of collaboration. But, He also could not succeed. The outcome of one's deed is indeed the strongest. After this, gallant Pāṇḍavas and rare Kauravas, desirers of war, mighty and introduced here in this verse gradually (in Dvandva compound) – As engaged in righteousness and unrighteousness, of auspicious and inauspicious conduct, protector of good deeds as well as bad deeds, following the path of truth and untruth, depositer of merits and demerits respectively, descended in the battle-field. Thereafter, there was a fierce battle between Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana made Grandsire Bhīṣmapitāmaha the commander-in-chief of his army.

ततोऽभवत्पाण्डवकौरवाणां

परस्परं युद्धमतीव भीमम् ।

सेनापतित्वे कुरुवाहिनीनां

दुर्योधनोऽसौ नियुयोज भीष्मम् ॥ *Ibid*, XIV.1

Bhīṣma Pitāmaha also showed his brilliant prowessness according to his popularity. Even though old in age, he annihilated the troops of the Pāṇḍava

army like a valiant youth. And this side Arjuna, even though made to understand by Lord Kṛṣṇa, could not hold the sense of strong enmity in his mind towards Bhīṣma Pitāmaha. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha also, understanding all this, was always giving his good blessings to Arjuna. In such situation, steady and valiant Lord Kṛṣṇa who has become the charioteer of Arjuna thought of crossing the boat of fate which was staggering in the sea of enemy troops (i.e. Kaurava troops). Even the king Yudhiṣṭhira was very worried by seeing the valour of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha; and he has believed that in the presence of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha in the battle-field, their victory was not possible. After discussing with Lord Kṛṣṇa in this matter, Yudhiṣṭhira, remembering the ‘statement’ of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, as per the rules of battle which were already established, went to meet him during the time of rest (i.e. at night) along with Lord Kṛṣṇa and his younger brother. And having bowed down respectfully, they asked for the means of winning in the battle. Then, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, with a wish of surrendering himself in the hands of death, affectionately spoke to Yudhiṣṭhira thus. O son! Since justice, righteousness, strength, intelligence, valour and patience are with you, I wish you that you only become victorious. There is no doubt in the fact that you all are dear to me. This Śrīkṛṣṇa is Himself Lord; the Lord of the entire Universe; and He always helps everyone. Therefore, you will only become victorious. You should not bother in this matter. By seeing the deceitful nature of Duryodhana, my wish of living life has got finished. Therefore, I, while following the *kṣatriyadharma*, wish to die by the arrows of Arjuna now in this battle. I have practised penance a lot; and have also acquired a lot of fame; I have also seen happiness and sorrow a lot. With the blessings of my father, the death is under my control. But now, nothing is left to do for me. Therefore, O son! Now I wish to end my body in this battle. There will be no better accomplishment than this, ‘my story ends in front of Lord Kṛṣṇa. My inner-self is with you people; but the body is with Duryodhana. Therefore, this body being fostered by his grain should be vanished for his

motive only. So, that there remains no obligation of him on me. Therefore, O son! Listen to my talk carefully; understand it; and act accordingly. As a result, you achieve your kingdom by killing me also like all your enemies in this battle-field. That Śikhaṇḍī, the son of the king Drupada, was his daughter first. Before this, he was born in the form of a daughter of Kāśīnareśa in his previous birth. That Ambā, the daughter of Kāśīnareśa, is indeed born as Śikhaṇḍī in this birth with a wish of taking revenge from me (assuming me as a culprit); I know this secret. Therefore, in my opinion Śikhaṇḍī is like a woman due to his history of his previous life. As a result, I do not feel it appropriate to attack on him even though if he attacks on me. This is the reason why I keep my bow down, whenever Śikhaṇḍī comes in front of me for fighting a war; and as long as he is in front of me in the battle-field, till then I stop fighting in the battle-field. At that time, if Arjuna attacks with the sharp arrows on me who has become slow and the valorous, then I shall surely fall from my chariot with a wish to have journey of the highest abode. This Arjuna remains soft while fighting a war too with me, it is not proper. He should give up this fault. *Kṣatriyadharmā* is indeed very stern; softness is not considered to be good in it. If any one becomes hindrance in the achievement of a goal, then he should be destroyed. A person, wishing victory, should not be compassionate towards the warrior of an opponent party in the battle-field. This (my) body is perishable; what lamentation should be done after it? And it has become old even in that case. Therefore, it is not proper to lament after it. And I also wish to hold a new form after giving it up. Therefore, O son! You do not bother about me in your mind. Son! The death is waiting for me since last so many days. Therefore, I shall become as happy after my death, as the soul of a human-being becomes happy by putting off old clothes and putting on new clothes. Tranquil minded Yudhiṣṭhira, taking the grace of his delighted Grandsire and his permission, returned to their tent along with his brothers silently.

V.XIX Bhīṣma's bed of arrows

Thereafter, on the tenth day of war, in the morning time, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, having worshipped the almighty God and meditating upon his parents, started thinking minutely thus. Thereafter, resolute and the chief of valiants, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, being strongly determined and by bringing his army for fighting his last battle, stood firm in the battle-field on its proper time. The armies of both Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas started making their efforts to achieve their desired goals. At that time, by looking them it was appearing like two cyclones coming from different directions forcefully were trying their best to make their own ways respectively. Meanwhile, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha started the shower of his arrows; as he was wishing to provoke Arjuna. Being scorched by the shower of his arrows, the condition of the groups of soldiers of Pāṇḍavas was like those of goats being perturbed by the heavy rain-fall. Archer Arjuna, seeing his own army being vanished by the shower of arrows of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, being motivated again and again by Lord Kṛṣṇa and understanding own duty as a warrior, came speedily in front of him by keeping Śikhaṇḍī in front of him. Śikhaṇḍī immediately started attacking the body of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha with his arrows; but Bhīṣma Pitāmaha was not pained even little by him. It happened surely that Bhīṣma Pitāmaha stopped on seeing him in front. In that situation, warriors like Duḥśāsana etc. of Kaurava army came in front to protect Bhīṣma Pitāmaha from Arjuna; and they all started wishing to kill Śikhaṇḍī and Arjuna alive. Looking at this sight, the warriors of Pāṇḍava army like Bhīmasena etc. also came there to protect Arjuna. Then there was a fierce battle amongst them for a long. At that time, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha injured the entire Pāṇḍava army through his arrows except Śikhaṇḍī. He pained archer Arjuna also very much who was protecting Śikhaṇḍī by an assault of his arrows together. Then, Arjuna also wounded him by the blow of his arrows on him; and also cut his bow. On the other hand, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha with the desire of passing

away by seeing Arjuna who has got angry on him; continued fighting in the war happily. Lord Kṛṣṇa, understanding the mental emotion of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, told to Arjuna displaying his valiance (that), O archer! Bhīṣma like sun wishes to move towards its setting (wishes to set); therefore it is not proper to delay now. By listening to the advice of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, diverting all his energy, started showering his sharp arrows fluently on every part of the body of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha. Bhīṣma, though being able to execute those arrows of Arjuna, did not execute them with a wish of passing away. As a result, being injured on some vital spots of the body because of those arrows, he fell on the earth. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, by tormenting all the warriors of Pāṇḍava army through his valiance the whole day, it is a matter of grief that, being pierced by the arrows of Arjuna in the evening, as a result being besmeared with the blood, fell on the battle-field in the same way as the sun by tormenting all people through his heat during a day, being joined with his rays in the evening time and being red in form, fell into the western sea. He could not touch the earth, since the arrows were noosed to each and every part of his body. As a result, he laid down on the bed of arrows only. He has won the longevity, therefore when he remembered that the son is presently on the Northern equator, even in that situation he controlled his life-breath from coming out.

भङ्क्तुं समर्थोऽपि किरीटिबानान्

बभञ्ज भीष्मो नहि मर्त्तकामः ।

विद्धश्च तैर्मर्मसु देहग्नैः

पितामहो भूमितले पपात ॥

प्रतप्य पूर्णं दिवसं स लोकान्

अदीर्घरश्मिर्बत स्तदेहः ।

भास्वानिवासावपराम्बुराशौ

नाराचविद्धो निपपात युद्धे ॥

पस्पर्श भूमिं न स बाणविद्धः

तस्थौ च तस्मादधिबाणशय्यमम् ।

विचिन्त्य सूर्यस्य च दाक्षिणात्यां

गतिं जहौ कालजयी न सोऽसून् ॥ *Ibid*, XIV.52 to 54

At that time, those warriors of both the parties, forgetting enmity in front of him, making the arrangements of all kinds to protect his body and by bowing him down, immediately set out towards their respective habitants with their minds sad. The next day morning, a blithering idiot, vainglorious, Duryodhana, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, appointed Droṇācārya, the teacher of all the archers, as the commander-in-chief with a wish to vanish his enemies (Pāṇḍavas). In this great battle, a great warrior Droṇācārya could not achieve victory even though he showed his valour very much. As a result, he, showing his valour for five days in front of arrogant Kauravas only, submerged into the grief for his son and on his head being cut by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the son of the king Drupada of Pāñcāla country, gave up his last breathe. Thereafter, charioteer Karṇa, involved in many kinds of complexes, always staying in competition with Arjuna and increasing a mattock of injustice of Duryodhana, became the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army in that battle. Just at that time Bhīmasena, breaking the chest of Duḥśāsana in front of Kauravas like Karṇa, Duryodhana etc. only and killing him alive by drinking his blood, also over came his pledge. That mighty Karṇa, having knowledge of scriptures and weapons, strength and full of valour and having showed his brilliance in the battle-field for two days, went to the heaven on getting his head cut by the arrow of Arjuna. Thereafter, having discussed immediately with Aśvatthāmā, the son of late Droṇācārya, he appointed the king Śalya that of Madra country as the commander-in-chief; and once again he thought that Pāṇḍavas will be

defeated in the battle-field. And that eighteenth day also came which was said to be the last day of that great battle. That day they all together, setting their wish of victory on the gallantry of their commander-in-chief the king Śalya of Madra country, went out for a fight. At that time Yudhiṣṭhira became angry on the king Śalya of Madra country who was showing his valour in the battle-field; and he, acquiring motivation and courage from the utterance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, immediately killed him by fighting with him. That day Bhīmasena, who has become water for the Kaurava like fire, alone killed forcefully all the younger brothers of Duryodhana who were not killed in the battle-field yet, and who have over come with their valiance. A great warrior Śakuni, the king of Gāndhāra country, who has given birth to this great battle, the chief of knaves and the master in the game of dice, was also killed that day by the arrows of Sahadeva in the battle-field. Duryodhana, seeing this defeat of his and being afraid of Yamarāja like Bhīmasena concealed himself by running away from the battle-field and diving in the deep water of some reservoir in order to protect himself. Pāṇḍavas, having known the place of his hiding through their spies immediately reaching to the shore of that reservoir along with Śrīkṛṣṇa and by making him, who was hiding himself in the water, forced for fighting a war. Thereafter, there was a terrible mace-fight of him with Bhīmasena. In this battle, horrible Bhīmasena like God of death, with a wish of fulfilling his oath, broke his 'those' both the thighs of him by an attack of his mace. At that time, in the battle-field by the forceful attacks of mace like that of thunder-bolt made by horrible Bhīṣma. All the vital spots of the body of that Duryodhana of censured conduct completely became like lifeless. Thereafter, leaving that dying mean enemy Duryodhana in the battle-field for his death, Pāṇḍavas returned to their tents that have become happy by the achievement of their victory. Thereupon, it is a matter of great grief that Aśvatthāmā, the son of Droṇācārya, who was constantly and badly being charred by the fire of his strong desire of taking revenge of his father's death, getting inspiration and

permission from that dying man Kaurava Duryodhana, killed the sleeping valiants of the army of Pāṇḍavas during the night. Thereupon, the next day in morning resolute and valiant Pāṇḍava, punishing even sinful Aśvatthāmā who has killed their sleeping sons, being completely victorious, by taking Lord Kṛṣṇa together, got present politely in front of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Thereafter, the funeral pyres of the warriors of both the armies who have got heroic end in the battle were set to the fire. The atmosphere of that place at that time became extremely full of pathos by the lamentation of their respective ladies. Thereupon, the grief and illusion arising in the mind of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the chief of Pāṇḍavas, became patient by the advice of sages like Veda Vyāsa etc. and Lord Śrīkṛṣṇa etc. As a result, after the war, he wished for the prosperity and happiness of all the subjects by delivering the respective duties to his younger brothers for the better governance of that entire kingdom which was gained after the battle. Pāṇḍavas with the help of Lord Śrīkṛṣṇa won all their enemies. After acquiring the state, the Pāṇḍavas remembered the valour of the Grandsire Bhīṣma Pitāmaha; together they also remembered his gratefulness towards them. As a result, they even though being eager to see him, could not collect the strength of going in front of him, because of committing offence towards him. Then there is the description of regret and despair of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha. Then, there is the description of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha's advice on *Rājadharmā*, *Prajādharmā* and *Mokṣadharmā* to Pāṇḍavas.

V.XX Passing away of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha

Bhīṣma Pitāmaha speaks, O Śrīkṛṣṇa! The Sun has moved to the Northern equator. Therefore I wish to abandon my life breath now. O Mādhava! Please forgive me for my offences; and allow me to leave this world. Then after Devavrata Bhīṣma Pitāmaha mentally bowed down Lord Kṛṣṇa again and again; and assuming that time to be auspicious, he decided to give up his

body. The knower of the essence of *Yoga*, that Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, by controlling the mental-inclinations like a Yogī in front of Lord Kṛṣṇa only, lifted upside his vital-breath, which was controlled till then, serially from Mūlādhiṣṭhāna. At that time his vital breath as soon as lifted upside for the suture on the top of the skull (Brahmarandhra), the arrows of Arjuna and their wounds immediately disappeared from those parts. The five air viz., *Prāṇa*, *Apāna*, *Samāna*, *Vyāna* and *Udāna* i.e. vital-breath of his body when reached to his suture on the top of the skull crossing the six places viz., *Mūlādhāra*, *Adhiṣṭhāna*, *Maṇipūra*, *Anāhata*, *Viśuddha* and *Ājñā*, at that time his entire body became absolutely free from all the arrows and wounds. At that time, there was seen neither any arrow nor any wound. By seeing this, all assembled people started looking at him so seriously. At that time, the nine passages of his own body meaning mouth, a pair of ears, a pair of eyes, a pair of nostrils, the anus and the genitals; which were restrained by the vital-breath of Bhīṣma suddenly breaking his suture on the top of the skull and sparkling within a moment. Thus, he passed away.

द्वाराणि देहस्य निरुध्य वर्तिनः

क्षणेन भीष्मस्य च वायुपञ्चकम् ।

तद्-ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं सहसा विदारयत्

तेजायमानं च ततो विनिर्गतम् ॥ *Ibid*, XX.47

Thereafter, remembering the qualities of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha having become his devotee, having become patient; all the brothers, all the relatives and all the kinsmen along with the king Yudhiṣṭhira faithfully and traditionally performed his concluding ceremony in a royal pomp.

श्रद्धापूर्वं तदनु निखिला बान्धवाः शान्तचित्ताः

स्मारं स्मारं च मनसि गुणांस्तस्य भक्तायमानाः ।

सर्वे वंश्या अथ च सुहृदो धर्मराजेन युक्ताः

V.XXI SOME DEVIATIONS AND INNOVATIONS MADE BY THE POET:

We can observe some deviations made in the present epic by our poet. In the *Mahābhārata*, we find some incidents which are moulded in the present epic by the poet. The poet has used his poetic skill in describing and elevating the character of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha in this epic. I have tried to show the difference between both by comparing both the incidents as below:

1. The passing away of Gaṅgā *i.e.* the separation of Gaṅgā from the king Śāntanu:

As per the *Mahābhārata*, Śāntanu saw Gaṅgā on the banks of [river Gaṅgā](#) and enamoured by her beauty and asked her to marry him. She agreed but with the condition that Śāntanu would never question her, no matter what her actions - if he ever broke his promise, she would leave him, never to be a part of his life again.

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचो राज्ञः सस्मितं मृदु वल्गु च ।
वसूनां समयं स्मृत्वाऽथाभ्यगच्छदनिन्दिता ॥
उवाच चैव राज्ञः सा ह्लादयन्ती मनो गिरा ।
भविष्यामि महीपाल महिषी ते वशानुगा ॥
यत्तु कुर्यामहं राजन् शुभं वा यदि वाऽशुभम् ।
न तद्वारयितव्याऽस्मि न वक्तव्या तथाऽप्रियम् ॥
एवं हि वर्तमानेऽहं त्वयि वत्स्यामि पार्थिव ।

वारिता विप्रियं चोक्ता त्यजेयं त्वामसंशयम् ॥ *Mahābhārata, Ādiparva*, 98.1 to 4

Śāntanu readily agreed to this seemingly harmless condition and was thus

married to Gaṅgā. Eight children were born to this union, the eighth of which was Bhīṣma himself. The seven siblings born before him were drowned by their mother Gaṅgā in order to break their curse - as they were incarnations of the aforementioned Vasus, who do not like to live the life of Humans. Śāntanu silently bore the torture of watching his wife drown his offspring seven times. However, when Gaṅgā was about to drown Bhīṣma, Śāntanu could no longer contain his anguish and burst into protest. Gaṅgā, aware of the eighth child's destiny to live a long life on earth, did not drown the child. However, since Śāntanu had broken his promise given to her at marriage, she left Śāntanu promising to return the child to him once he is grown up. And in this way Goddess Gaṅgā disappeared with her child Devavrata. This is how Gaṅgā passed away.

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, we found that once Gaṅgā gave birth to a son who was bright like Vasu. For a long time with love and affection she kept on kissing him. After this he handed over that child into the hands of the king Śāntanu and very politely spoke to the king thus. O revered one! After this no longer your beloved wife, I am able to stay with you. That is why accept your dear son. Now the time has come to get separated from each other. A faithful and virtuous wife Gaṅgā, loving her husband and befall in comma because of death, could not come out of comma even though by merciful words coming from the tender heart of the king Śāntanu. This way Gaṅgā passes away due to the extreme pain of post pregnancy. This is how our poet has deviated the death of Gaṅgā.

प्रसूय पुत्रं वसुतेजसं शुभा
चुचुम्ब सा स्नेहयुता हि तं चिरम् ।
समर्प्य तं शान्तनुहस्तयोस्ततो
जगाद खिन्ना विनयेन भूपतिम् ॥
इतः परं नाथ ! भवाम्यनीश्वरी

सह त्वया वस्तुमहं तव प्रिया ।

अतो गृहाणात्मजमात्मवल्लभं

वियोगवेला समुपागताद्य नौ ॥

महामहीपस्य गतस्य दीनतां

विलापवाक्यैरपि मानसोद्भवैः ।

पतिव्रता प्रेमपरायणापि सा

प्रबोधमाप्नोन्नहि मृत्युमूर्च्छिता ॥ *Bhīṣmacaritam*, I.35, 36 & 49

2. The nurturing and bringing up of the child Devavrata:

As per the *Mahābhārata*, Śāntanu saw Gaṅgā on the banks of [river Gaṅgā](#) and enamoured by her beauty and asked her to marry him. She agreed but with the condition that Śāntanu would never question her, no matter what her actions - if he ever broke his promise, she would leave him, never to be a part of his life again. Śāntanu readily agreed to this seemingly harmless condition and was thus married to Gaṅgā. Eight children were born to this union, the eighth of which was Bhīṣma himself. The seven siblings born before him were drowned by their mother Gaṅgā in order to break their curse - as they were incarnations of the aforementioned Vasus, who do not like to live the life of Humans. Śāntanu silently bore the torture of watching his wife drown his offspring seven times. However, when Gaṅgā was about to drown Bhīṣma, Śāntanu could no longer contain his anguish and burst into protest. Gaṅgā, aware of the eighth child's destiny to live a long life on earth, did not drown the child. However, since Śāntanu had broken his promise given to her at marriage, she left Śāntanu promising to return the child to him once he is grown up. And goddess Gaṅgā disappeared. During his time with his mother, Bhīṣma learnt political science from [Brhaspati](#), the guru of the [Devas](#), Vedas and Vedāṅgas from the sage [Vaśista](#), and archery from [Paraśurāma](#), also known as Bhārgava, thus becoming an exceptionally skilled administrator. Hence, he was brought up and trained by his mother

Gaṅgā and not by his father Śāntanu.

अजमीढो वरस्तेषां तस्मिन्वंशः प्रतिष्ठितः ।
षट्पुत्रान्सोप्यजनयात्सृषु स्त्रीषु भारत ॥
ऋक्षं धूमिन्यथो नीली दुष्यन्तपरमेष्ठिनौ ।
केशिन्यजनयज्जह्वं सुतौ व्रजनरूपिणौ ॥
तथेमे सर्वपञ्चाला दुष्यन्तपरमेष्ठिनोः ।
अन्वयाः कुशिका राजञ्जहोरमिततेजसः ॥
व्रजनरूपिणयोर्येष्टमृक्षमाहुर्जनाधिपम् ।
ऋक्षात्संवरणो जज्ञे राजन्वंशकरः सुतः ॥
आर्क्षे संवरणे राजन्प्रशासति वसुंधराम् ।
संक्षयः सुमहानासीत्प्रजानामिति नः श्रुतम् ॥
व्यशीर्यत ततो राष्ट्रं क्षयैर्नानाविधैस्तदा ।

क्षुन्मृत्युभ्यामनावृष्ट्या व्याधिभिश्च समाहतम् ॥ *Ādiparva*, 94.31 to 36

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, we find how the king Śāntanu gets involved in nurturing the child Devavrata after the death of his beloved wife Gaṅgā in the second canto. For, He himself was caring for the physical growth of the child and was giving milk of a young cow in order to keep the trust of his wife of saving the family tree. The king appointed selected females belonging to a Brahmin family who were expert in caring and bringing up his child and always working for the welfare of the royal family. To diagnose the body of the child everyday paediatric was coming. The King Śāntanu was showing his son to that doctor in front of his eyes only and getting the news of the welfare of his son directly from him.

प्रियतमानिधिपालनलालसः

प्रतिदिनं समये स्वयमेव सः ।

सुतशरीरविवर्धनहेतवे
 नवलधेनुपयस्तमपाययत् ॥
 परिचिता द्विजवंशसमुद्भवाः
 नृपकुलस्य हिते सततं रताः ।
 कतिपया महिलाश्च नियोजिताः
 तनुजपोषणकर्मणि भूभृता ॥ *Bhīṣmacaritam*, II.7 & 8
 शिशुशरीरपरीक्षणहेतवे
 प्रतिदिनं शिशुरोगविदागमत् ।
 निजसमक्षमसौ तमदर्शयत्
 तनयवार्तमवेच्च तदाननात् ॥ *Ibid*, II.11

3. Sage Devala's advice to the king Śāntanu of sending Devavrata Bhīṣma to the sage Paraśurāma for his special training in archery:

In the *Mahābhārata*, we do not find such an incident as the child Devavrata is already trained in the arts of archery. During his time with his mother, Bhīṣma learnt political science from [Brhaspati](#), the guru of the [Devas](#), Vedas and Vedāngas from the sage [Vaśista](#), and archery from [Paraśurāma](#), also known as Bhārgava, thus becoming an exceptionally skilled administrator.

अजमीढो वरस्तेषां तस्मिन्वंशः प्रतिष्ठितः ।

षट्पुत्रान्सोप्यजनयात्सृषु स्त्रीषु भारत ॥

ऋक्षं धूमिन्यथो नीली दुष्यन्तपरमेष्ठिनौ ।

केशिन्यजनयज्जह्वं सुतौ व्रजनरूपिणौ ॥

तथेमे सर्वपञ्चाला दुष्यन्तपरमेष्ठिनोः ।

अन्वयाः कुशिका राजञ्जह्नोरमिततेजसः ॥

व्रजनरूपिणयोज्येष्ठमृक्षमाहुर्जनाधिपम् ।

ऋक्षात्संवरणो जज्ञे राजन्वंशकरः सुतः ॥

आर्क्षे संवरणे राजन्प्रशासति वसुधराम् ।

संक्षयः सुमहानासीत्प्रजानामिति नः श्रुतम् ॥

व्यशीर्यत ततो राष्ट्रं क्षयैर्नानाविधैस्तदा ।

क्षुन्मृत्युभ्यामनावृष्ट्या व्याधिभिश्च समाहतम् ॥ *Ādīparva*, 94.31 to 36

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, sage Devala says to the king Śāntanu, I know that your son, having learnt the art of archery, has become a popular archer on the earth now-a-days. It is indeed true that no archer can defeat him in the war of archery. Still O king! I understand that he has not mastered this art of archery completely. Therefore the way is still left for his special training. Sage Paraśurāma has indeed the entire knowledge of archery. In my opinion there is no any other successful teacher of the art of archery like him in this world. If he with his grace teaches all the specialities of this art of archery to your son Devavrata, then your son will indeed become the best archer by being a great danger for his enemies. O king! Therefore my suggestion is that you send your son to him; and let prince start serving him by going to him.

जानामि जातो भवतस्तनुजो

धनुर्धरो भूमितले प्रसिद्धः ।

न कोऽपि वीरः प्रभुरस्ति जेतुं

तं साम्प्रतं यद्यपि तथ्यमेतत् ॥

तथाप्यहं भूप ! विचारयामि

पारङ्गतो नास्ति स चापवेदे ।

तस्माद्विशिष्टाध्ययनाय तस्य

यत्नोऽवशिष्टः करणीय एव ॥

सर्वज्ञता चापकलाकलापे

वर्वति नूनं मुनिजामदग्न्ये ।

लोकेऽवलोके नहि तत्समानं

धनुर्गुरुं कञ्चिदमोघविद्यम् ॥
 स बोधयेच्चेत्कृपया कुमारं
 देवव्रतं नूनं मुनिजामदग्न्ये ।
 असंशयं श्रेष्ठधनुर्धरोऽयं
 भूत्वा भवेद्भीतिकरो रिपूणाम् ॥
 अतो मदीयं मतमस्ति राजन् !
 तदन्तिके प्रेषय राजसूनुम् ।
 सेवेत गत्वा स च जामदग्न्यं
 सेवा सतां सिद्धिकरी जगत्याम् ॥

Bhīṣmacaritam, IV.14 to 18

4. The departure of Devavrata Bhīṣma for his special training and the description of the mountain Mahendra:

In the *Mahābhārata*, we do not find such an incident as the child Devavrata is already trained in the arts of archery. During his time with his mother, Bhīṣma learnt political science from [Brhaspati](#), the guru of the [Devas](#), Vedas and Vedāngas from the sage [Vaśiṣṭa](#), and archery from [Paraśurāma](#), also known as Bhārgava, thus becoming an exceptionally skilled administrator.

अजमीढो वरस्तेषां तस्मिन्वंशः प्रतिष्ठितः ।

षट्पुत्रान्सोप्यजनयात्सृषु स्त्रीषु भारत ॥

ऋक्षं धूमिन्यथो नीली दुष्यन्तपरमेष्ठिनौ ।

केशिन्यजनयज्जह्वं सुतौ व्रजनरूपिणौ ॥

तथेमे सर्वपञ्चाला दुष्यन्तपरमेष्ठिनोः ।

अन्वयाः कुशिका राजञ्जह्नोरमिततेजसः ॥

व्रजनरूपिणयोर्येष्ठमृक्षमाहुर्जनाधिपम् ।

ऋक्षात्संवरणो जज्ञे राजन्वंशकरः सुतः ॥

आर्क्षे संवरणे राजन्प्रशासति वसुंधराम् ।

संक्षयः सुमहानासीत्प्रजानामिति नः श्रुतम् ॥

व्यशीर्यत ततो राष्ट्रं क्षयैर्नानाविधैस्तदा ।

क्षुन्मृत्युभ्यामनावृष्ट्या व्याधिभिश्च समाहतम् ॥ *Ādīparva*, 94.31 to 36

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, we find the description of Devavrata Bhīṣma's journey. Prince Devavrata, being sent by his father in auspicious time, having the desire of acquiring the knowledge, being extremely happy for this opportunity and having climbed on the chariot, left to reach near sage Paraśurāma. Without seeing his teacher Paraśurāma but with faith in his heart, having the desire to serve him fully and with the wish to learn the art of archery from him, prince started his journey towards south direction.

विद्याभिलाषी स शुभे मुहूर्ते
पित्रा विसृष्टो बहुधैर्यपूर्वम् ।
रथाधिरूढो मुदितां दधानः
चचाल पार्श्वं जमदग्निसूनोः ॥
श्रद्धामदृष्टेऽपि गुरौ वितन्वन्
सर्वात्मना तं च सिषेविषुः सः ।
तद्बाणविद्यां प्रति साभिलाषश्-
चकार यात्रां प्रति दक्षिणाशाम् ॥

Bhīṣmacaritam, IV.27 & 28

From the verse no. 29 to 42 of the fourth canto, we get the description of the mountain Mahendra.

5. Sage Paraśurāma's special training in the art of archery and giving of the divine weapons to the prince Devavrata Bhīṣma:

In the *Mahābhārata*, we do not find the description of how the prince Devavrata is trained specially in the arts of archery. There is only the mention of the name of his teacher in the arts of archery.

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, the whole fifth canto is dedicated to it.

6. Devavrata Bhīṣma's appointment of spy to know the secret of his father Śāntanu's love for Satyavatī:

In the *Mahābhārata*, Devavrata came to know the cause of his father's affliction through an old minister who was devoted to his father. From him he came to learn his father's secret. He said nothing to anybody.

अभ्यगच्छत्तदैवाशु वृद्धामात्यं पितुर्हितम् ।

तमपृच्छत्तदाऽभ्येत्य पितुस्तच्छोककारणम् ॥

तस्मै स कुरुमुख्याय यथावत्परिपृच्छते ।

वरं शशंस कन्यां तामुद्दिश्य भरतर्षभ ॥ *Ādiparva*, 100.73 & 74

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, prince Devavrata, seeing all his people sad after trying very much, wished to know the cause of his father's affliction through secret means. Therefore, he immediately sent his spy on the same way on which the king Śāntanu has gone for wandering in the forest.

तस्मिन्काले विहितयतनान्स्वान्निराशान्विलोक्य

गूढोपायैर्जनकविरतिं ज्ञातुमैच्छत्कुमारः ।

तस्मद्राजा वनविहृतये येन मार्गेण यातः

तेनैवैकं निजमनुचरं प्रेषयामास शीघ्रम् ॥ *Bhīṣmacaritam*, VIII.25

This incident glorifies the character of Bhīṣma. From it is clear that he has concerned for his father.

7. The description of the love-sporting between the king Śāntanu and Satyavatī:

In the *Mahābhārata*, there is not at all any description of the love-sporting between the king Śāntanu and Satyavatī is found. While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, we find the description of the love-sporting between the king Śāntanu and Satyavatī in the tenth canto from the verse numbers 27 to

47.

8. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha's advice on *Rājadharmā, Āpaddharma and Mokṣadharmā* to the Pāṇḍavas:

In the *Mahābhārata*, we find the description of the above said points from *Śāntiparva*, 56.12 to *Anuśāsanaparva*, 165.

While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, we find Bhīṣma Pitāmaha's advice on *Rājadharmā, Prajādharmā and Mokṣadharmā* to the Pāṇḍavas in modern context in the canto number seventeen, eighteen and nineteen respectively.

9. The main plot of the present epic is centered around the character of Bhīṣma:

In the *Mahābhārata*, the plot is not centered to the character of Bhīṣma or any of the characters. While in the *Bhīṣmacaritam*, the main plot of the present epic is centred to the character of Bhīṣma