

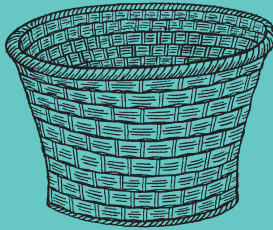
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Maha·bhárata

Book Seven

Drona

Volume One



Edited & Translated by
VAUGHAN PILIKIAN

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS & JJC FOUNDATION

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BOOK SEVEN

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VOLUME ONE

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16–32

THE DEATH OF THE BEHOLDEN

16.1 **T**AD BALAM su|mahad dīrṇam
 tvadīyaṃ prekṣya vīryavān
 dadhār' âiko raṇe Pāṇḍūn
 Vṛṣaseno 'stra|māyayā.
 śarā daśa diśo muktā Vṛṣasenena māriṣa
 vicerus te vinirbhīdya nara|vāji|ratha|dvīpān.
 tasya dīptā mahā|bāṇā viniśceruḥ sahasraśaḥ
 bhānor iva mahā|bāho grīṣma|kāle marīcayāḥ.
 ten' ârditā mahā|rāja rathinaḥ sādinas tathā
 nipetur urvyāṃ sahasā vāta|nunnā iva drumāḥ.

16.5 hay' |âughhāmś ca rath' |âughhāmś ca
 gaj' |âughhāmś ca samantataḥ
 apātayad raṇe, rājañ,
 śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ.

dṛṣṭvā tam evaṃ samare vicarantam a|bhītavat
 sahitāḥ sarva|rājānaḥ parivavruḥ samantataḥ.
 Nākulis tu Śātāniko Vṛṣasenaṃ samabhyayāt
 vivyādha c' âinaṃ daśabhir nārācair marma|bhedibhiḥ.
 tasya Karṇ' |ātma|jaś cāpaṃ chittvā ketum apātayāt
 taṃ bhrātaraṃ parīpsanto Draupadeyāḥ samabhyayuh.
 Karṇ' |ātma|jaṃ śara|vrātaiś cakruś c' â|dṛśyam añjasā
 tān nadanto 'bhyadhāvanta Droṇa|putra|mukhā rathāḥ
 16.10 chādayanto mahā|rāja Draupadeyān mahā|rathān
 śarair nānā|vidhais tūrṇaṃ parvatāñ jala|dā iva.
 tān Pāṇḍavāḥ pratyagrḥṇaṃs tvaritāḥ putra|grddhinaḥ
 Pāñcālāḥ Kekayā Matsyāḥ Sṛñjayās c' ôdyat' |āyudhāḥ.
 tad yuddham abhavad ghoraṃ tumulaṃ loma|harṣaṇam
 tvadīyaiḥ Pāṇḍu|putrāṇāṃ devānām iva dānavaiḥ.
 evam uttama|saṃrambhā yuyudhuḥ Kuru|Pāṇḍavāḥ

SÁNJAYA spoke.

GREAT VRISHA·SENA watched the broad army of your 16.1
sons rent open and began all alone to check the Pán-
davas with his enchanted bow. Arrows flew over the Pándava
horde in ten directions and tore through men, chariots,
horses and elephants. Like the sun's rays in the hot season
thousands of those burning and heavy shafts from the great
man's hand cut through riders and drivers. And pierced
through o great king they fell to their knees, trees buckled 16.5
in the wind. O majesty there were throngs of chariots and
horses and elephants in numbers too large to count which
he crushed beneath his might.

When the other kings saw Vrisha·sena careering fearlessly
through the fray they came in around him in a circle. Ná-
kula's boy Shatánika moved in first and struck him with ten
razorsharp wroughtiron shafts. But Karna's son splintered
his bow and severed the pole of his standard as the children
of Dráupadi closed keenly in around their brother. Soon
Vrisha·sena disappeared beneath a thick screen of arrows
but then came the warriors under Ashvattháman's com- 16.10
mand roaring and wheeling and darkening the skies above
the mighty Draupadéyas with darts beyond number. They
engulfed them as clouds engulf a mountain ridge. Thirsty
for Ashvattháman's blood the Pándavas were upon him in
a moment and behind them with weapons held high rode
Panchálas, Kékayas, Matsyas, Srinjayas. Loud and bloody
and full of horror was the fighting that came next as Pandu's
sons met your own like gods meeting demons. Their wrath
was now at its height. Eye to eye the Kurus and Pándavas
stood, and sin for sin they fought. Such was their passion

paras|param udikṣantaḥ paras|para|kṛt'āgasah.
teṣāṃ dadṛṣire kopād vapūṃsy a|mita|tejasāṃ
yuyutsūnām iv' ākāśe patatri|vara|bhoginām.

16.15 Bhīma|Karna|Kṛpa|Droṇa|Drauṇi|Pārṣata|Sātyakaiḥ
babhāse sa raṇ'ōddeśaḥ kāla|sūryair iv' ōditaiḥ.
tad" āsīt tumulaṃ yuddhaṃ nighnatām itar'ētaram
mahā|balānāṃ balibhir dānavānāṃ yathā suraiḥ.
tato Yudhiṣṭhir'|ānīkam uddhūt'|ārṇava|nisvanam
tvadīyam avadhīt sainyaṃ sampradruta|mahā|ratham.

tat prabhagnaṃ balaṃ drṣṭvā śatrubhir bhṛśam arditam,
«alaṃ drutena vaḥ sūrā» iti Droṇo 'bhyabhāṣata.

tataḥ śoṇa|hayaḥ kruddhaś catur|danta iva dvi|paḥ
praviśya Pāṇḍav'|ānīkaṃ Yudhiṣṭhiram upādravat.

16.20 tam avidhyac chitair bāṇaiḥ kaṅka|patrair Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
tasya Droṇo dhanuś chittvā taṃ drutaṃ samupādravat.

cakra|rakṣaḥ Kumāras tu Pāñcālānāṃ yaśas|karaḥ
dadhāra Droṇam āyāntaṃ vel" ēva saritāṃ patim.

Droṇaṃ nivāritaṃ drṣṭvā Kumāreṇa dvi|ja'|rṣabham
siṃha|nāda|ravo hy āsīt sādhu sādhv iti bhāṣatām.

Kumāras tu tato Droṇaṃ sāyakena mah"āhave
vivyādh' ōrasi saṃkruddhaḥ siṃhavac c' ānadan muhuḥ.

saṃvārya tu raṇe Droṇaḥ Kumāraṃ vai mahā|balaḥ
śarair an|eka|śāhasraiḥ kṛta|hasto jita|klamaḥ

16.25 taṃ sūram ārya|vratinam astr'ārtha|kṛta|nīśramam
cakra|rakṣam apāmṛdnāt Kumāraṃ dvi|ja|sattamaḥ.

and so unbound their splendor that it seemed like the warriors' wounded bodies were themselves hungrily plucking the feathered arrows from the sky. Bhima, Karna, Kripa, Drona, Drauni, Dhrishta-dyumna and Sátyaki: the battle-field shone with them as with suns risen at the end of time. In the crash of battle the killing went on between the great demonic legions and a host divine, before roaring like a stormy sea Yudhi-shthira's army battered the front line of Duryódhana's force. Its champions turned to run. 16.15

Drona saw his army gashed by its foe and breaking apart and he called out to his soldiers.

"Heroes! Halt your flight!"

On a horse drenched in blood Drona rode like the four-tusked Airávata into the army of the Pándavas until he reached Yudhi-shthira. As the king's sharp arrows fletched in vulture feathers slammed into him Drona drove on, then broke Yudhi-shthira's bow in two and put him to flight. And then as the coast holds back the tide it was Yudhi-shthira's wheelguard* Kumára who to the glory of the Panchálas managed briefly to block Drona's progress. A great roar of excitement swelled around him as Kumára braved the brahmin bull and crying out like an enraged beast sent an arrow across the fray and into Drona's chest. But mighty Drona breathed deep, and with a dense flurry of arrows from his dextrous hand the great twiceborn forced Kumára back. Then despite the wheelguard's heroism and high vows and brilliance with the bow, the mighty priest crushed him beneath his attack. 16.20 16.25

sa madhyam̄ prāpya senāyāḥ sarvāḥ paricaran diśaḥ
 tava sainyasya gopt̄” āsīd Bhāradvājo ratha|r̄ṣabhaḥ.
 Śikhaṇḍinaṃ dvā|daśabhir viṃśatyā c' Ôttamaujasam
 Nakulaṃ pañcabhir viddhvā Sahadevaṃ ca saptabhiḥ
 Yudhiṣṭhiraṃ dvā|daśabhir Draupadeyāṃs tribhis tribhiḥ
 Sātyakiṃ pañcabhir viddhvā Matsyaṃ ca daśabhiḥ śaraiḥ
 vyakṣobhayad raṇe yodhān yathā|mukhyān abhidravan
 abhyavartata samprepsuḥ Kuntī|putraṃ Yudhiṣṭhiraṃ.

16.30 Yugam̄dharas tato, rājan, Bhāradvājaṃ mahā|ratham
 vārayām āsa saṃkruddhaṃ vāt'|ôddhūtam iv' āṇavam.
 Yudhiṣṭhiraṃ sa viddhvā tu śaraiḥ saṃnata|parvabhiḥ
 Yugam̄dharaṃ ca bhallena ratha|nīḍād apāharat.

tato Virāṭa|Drupadau Kaikeyāḥ Sātyakiḥ Śibiḥ
 Vyāghradattaś ca Pāñcālyāḥ Siṃhasenaś ca vīryavān
 ete c' ānye ca bahavaḥ parīpsanto Yudhiṣṭhiraṃ
 āvavrus tasya panthānaṃ kirantaḥ sāyakān bahūn.
 Vyāghradattaś ca Pāñcālyo Droṇaṃ vivyādha mārgaṇaiḥ
 pañcāśadbhiḥ śitai, rājaṃs, tata uccukruśur janāḥ.

16.35 tvaritaṃ Siṃhasenas tu Droṇaṃ viddhvā mahā|ratham
 prāhasat sahasā hr̄ṣṭas trāsayan vai yata|vratam.
 tato visphārya nayane dhanur|jyām avam̄jya ca
 tala|śabdaṃ mahat kṛtvā Droṇas taṃ samupādravat.
 tatas tu Siṃhasenasya śiraḥ kāyāt sa|kuṇḍalam
 Vyāghradattasya c' ākramya bhallābhyām aharad balī.
 tān pram̄dya śara|vrātaiḥ Pāñḍavānāṃ mahā|rathān
 Yudhiṣṭhira|samabhyāśe tasthau mṛtyur iv' āntakaḥ.

Bharad-vaja's taurine son was proving your army's savior. Reaching the center of foe's troops, he aimed by turns in every direction. Shikhándin he struck with twelve of his arrows then Uttamáujas with twenty then Nákula with five and Sa-ha-deva with seven. Twelve more pierced Yudhi-shthira as three hit each of the Draupadéyas and five reached Sátyaki and he struck Matsya with ten. He threw the warriors about him into turmoil, all the while making urgently for their leader the son of Kuntí. Great Drona was like a tempest-driven sea, and next it was Yugan-dhara who stepped into his furious path. Sending his truedworked arrows straight at Yudhi-shthira, Drona knocked Yugan-dhara from the seat of his car with a single spearheaded shaft. 16.30

Yudhi-shthira was in danger. Together with their comrades Viráta, Drúpada and the Kaikéyas, Sátyaki, Shibi, the Panchála Vyaghra-datta and hero Sinha-sena scattered Drona's course with their many missiles and arrows to protect their king from harm. O majesty the Panchála went at Drona with fifty of his biting shafts while his friends spirited Yudhi-shthira away. Sinha-sena found his mark with a speedy shot and burst into excited laughter to have grazed the great ascetic. But mighty Drona plucked the string of his own bow and as it sang in the air his spearlike shafts sheared the bejewelled heads of Vyaghra-datta and Sinha-sena away from their necks. Unceasing he ravaged the paladins of the Pándavas with his volleys and now he stood near Yudhi-shthira's chariot like Death come to bear him off. O majesty, cries of alarm went up from Yudhi-shthira's troops. With sternvowed Drona so close to him the warriors all thought their king dead. As he reared up to Yudhi-shthira they said 16.35 16.40

tato 'bhavan mahā|śabdo rājan Yaudhiṣṭhire bale
hr̥to rāj' ēti yodhānāṃ samīpa|sthe yata|vrate.

- 16.40 abruvan sainikās tatra dṛṣṭvā Droṇasya vikramam,
adya rājā Dhārtarāṣṭraḥ kṛt' |ārtho vai bhaviṣyati
āgamīṣyati no nūnaṃ Dhārtarāṣṭrasya saṃyuge.

evaṃ saṃjalpatāṃ teṣāṃ tāvakānāṃ mahā|rathaḥ
āyāj javena Kaunteyo ratha|ghoṣeṇa nādayan
śoṇit' |ôdām rath' |āvartāṃ kṛtvā vīśasane nadīm
śūr' |āsthi|caya|saṃkīrṇāṃ preta|kūl' |āpahāriṇīm
tām śar' |āugha|mahā|phenāṃ prāsa|matsya|samākulām
nadīm uttīrya vegena Kurūn vidrāvya Pāṇḍavaḥ
tataḥ Kirīṭī sahasā Droṇ' |ānīkam upādravat
chādayann iṣu|jalena mahatā mohayann iva.

- 16.45 śīghram abhyasyato bāṇān saṃdadhānasya c' ānīśam
n' āntaram dadṛśe kaś cit Kaunteyasya yaśasvinaḥ.
na dīśo n' āntar|ikṣaṃ ca na dyaur n' āiva ca medinī
adrīṣyata, mahā|rāja, bāṇa|bhūtam iv' ābhavat.
n' ādrīṣyata tadā rājams tatra kiṃ cana saṃyuge
bāṇ' |āndha|kāre mahati kṛte Gāṇḍīva|dhanvanā.
sūrye c' āstam anuprāpte rajasā c' ābhisaṃvṛte
n' ājñāyata tadā śatrur na su|hr̥n na ca kiṃ cana.

- tato 'vahāraṃ cakrus te Droṇa|Duryodhan' |ādayaḥ.
16.50 tān viditvā bhṛṣaṃ trastān a|yuddha|manasaḥ parān
svāny anīkāni Bībhatsuḥ śanakair avahārayat.
tato 'bhituṣṭuvuḥ Pārtham prahr̥ṣṭāḥ Pāṇḍu|Śrīñjayāḥ
Pāñcālās ca mano|jñābhir vāgbhiḥ sūryam iva' rṣayaḥ
evaṃ sva|śibiram prāyāj jītvā śatrūn Dhanamjayaḥ
pṛṣṭhataḥ sarva|sainyānāṃ mudito vai sa|Keśavaḥ.

to themselves, Now Duryódhana's wish will come to pass and then, as Drona promised Dhrita-rashtra's son, he will come for us.

But even as such words were on their lips, with the wheels of his chariot grinding, the mighty warrior and son of Kunti was quickly among your own, rising suddenly out of the river rife with shoals of arrows foaming to its surface and all crowded with ghosts and thick with the trunks and bones of dead heroes, the river that fountained from the havoc Drona had brought. The Diademed Warrior scattered Kurus before him and made straight for Drona's guard and cast across them a wide and bewildering net of arrows as he went. Quick and unrelenting flew his missiles as over and over he notched another onto his string. Soon the very shape of the fabled son of Kunti vanished before our eyes. O king the horizon itself could no more been seen, nor could the space near or far above our heads, nor the earth beneath our feet. The last moments of sunset were invisible through the dust and under that wooden darkness spread upon us by the bow Gandíva the battlefield too had disappeared. There were only arrows. 16.45

We could make out neither friend nor enemy. Drona, Duryódhana and the other Kuru generals signaled the retreat. When he realized that the terror he had whipped up among them had forced them to cease battle, slowly and contemptuously Árjuna drew back his own men. The Pandus, the Srínjayas and the Panchálas were overjoyed. They poured their praise on Partha in beautiful words like sages in thrall to the sun. With his foes defeated and Késhava at his side, Dhanan-jaya son of Pandu made his way back in high 16.50

masāra|galv|arka|suvarṇa|rūpyair
 vajra|pravāla|sphaṭikaiś ca mukhyaiḥ
 citre rathe Pāṇḍu|suto babhāse
 nakṣatra|citre viyat' īva candraḥ.

SAMJAYA uvāca.

- 17.1 TE SENE ŚIBIRAM gatvā nyaviśetām, viśām pate,
 yathā|bhāgaṃ yathā|nyāyaṃ yathā|gulmaṃ ca sarvaśaḥ.
 kṛtv' āvahāraṃ sainyānām Droṇaḥ parama|durmanāḥ
 Duryodhanam abhipreksya sa|vrīḍam idam abravīt.
 «uktam etan mayā pūrvaṃ: na tiṣṭhati Dhanamjaye
 śakyo grahituṃ saṃgrāme devair api Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ.
 iti tad vaḥ prayatatām kṛtaṃ Pārthena saṃyuge.
 mā viśaṅkīr vaco mahyam a|jeyau Kṛṣṇa|Pāṇḍavau.
- 17.5 apanīte tu yogena kena cic chveta|vāhane
 tata eṣyati te, rājan, vaśam adya Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ.
 kaś cid āhvayatām saṃkhye deśam anyam prakarṣatu
 tam a|jītvā na Kaunteyo nivarteta katham cana.
 etasminn antare śūnye Dharmā|rājam aham nṛ|pa
 grahīṣyāmi camuṃ bhittvā Dhṛṣṭadyumnasya paśyataḥ.
 Arjunena vihīnas tu yadi n' ṅtsṛjate raṇam
 mām upāyāntam ālokya grhītam viddhi Pāṇḍavam.
 evaṃ te 'ham, mahā|rāja, dharmā|putraṃ Yudhiṣṭhiram
 samāneṣyāmi sa|gaṇam vaśam adya na saṃśayaḥ.
- 17.10 yadi tiṣṭhati saṃgrāme muhūrtam api Pāṇḍavaḥ
 ath' āpayāti saṃgrāmād vijayāt tad viśiṣyate.»

spirits to his tent at the rear of the camp. Atop his chariot spangled in the finest quartz and coral and diamonds interwrought with gold, crystals and sapphires, he shone like the moon among a million stars.

SÁNJAYA spoke.

THE TWO ARMIES went back to their tents and everyone 17.1
retired to the different quarters of the camp. But having forced this stalemate with the enemy Drona was plunged into deep despair. He raised his eyes to Duryódhana and his words were tinged with shame.

“What I said before has been proven true. As long as Dhanan-jaya is by his side Yudhi-shthira can be taken only by the gods. And so all your struggles Partha rendered in vain. Be sure of what I say: Krishna and Árjuna are invincible. But if their white horses can be drawn off somehow, then in 17.5
a moment, my king, Yudhi-shthira will be yours. Someone must challenge Árjuna and lure him to somewhere far from the midst of the fray, since the heir born to Kunti will not weaken as long as Árjuna remains unbowed. If the good king were alone for just a brief time then my lord I could break his line and snatch him from Dhrishta-dyumna’s vigilant gaze. As long as he keeps to the field even when bereft of Árjuna, you can be assured that when you see me next I will have Yudhi-shthira in chains. Believe me great king. I will bring the child of righteousness and all his cohorts under your command, and I will do so soon. If the son of Pandu 17.10
stays on the plain for just a passing moment then he will leave the war and any hope of victory behind him.”

SAMJAYA uvāca.

Droṇasya tad vacaḥ śrutvā Trigart'ādhīpatis tataḥ
bhrātr̥bhiḥ sahito, rājann, idaṃ vacanam abravīt.

«vayaṃ vinikṛtā rājan sadā Gāṇḍīva|dhanvanā
an|āgaḥsv api c' āgas|kṛd asmāsu Bharata'rṣabha.
te vayaṃ smaramāṇās tān vinikārān pṛthag|vidhān
krodh'āgninā dahyamānā na śemahi sadā niśi.
sa no diṣṭy' āstra|sampannaś cakṣur|viṣayam āgataḥ
kartāraḥ sma vayaṃ karma yac cikīrṣāma hṛd|gatam.

17.15 bhavataś ca priyaṃ yat syād asmākaṃ ca yaśas|karam
vayaṃ enaṃ haniṣyāmo nikṛṣy' āyodhanād bahiḥ.
ady' āstv an|Arjunā bhūmir a|Trigart' ātha vā punaḥ
satyaṃ te pratijānīmo n' āitan mithyā bhaviṣyati.»

evaṃ Satyarathaś c' ōktvā Satyadharmā ca Bhārata
Satyavrataś ca Satyeṣuḥ Satyakarmā tath' āiva ca
sahitā bhrātaraḥ pañca rathānām ayutena ca
nyavartanta mahā|rāja kṛtvā śapatham āhave.

Mālavās Tuṇḍikerāś ca rathānām ayutais tribhiḥ
Suśarmā ca nara|vyāghras Traigartaḥ Prasthal'ādhīpaḥ
17.20 Māvellakair Lalitthaiś ca sahito Madrakair api
rathānām ayuten' āiva so 'gamad bhrātr̥bhiḥ saha
nānā|jana|padebhyaś ca rathānām ayutaṃ punaḥ
samutthitaṃ viśiṣṭānām śapath'ārtham upāgamat.
tato jvalanam ānāyya kṛtvā sarve pṛthak pṛthak
jagṛhuḥ kuśa|cīrāṇi citrāṇi kavacāni ca.

SÁNJAYA spoke.

O king, the lord of the Tri-gartas and his brothers heard what Drona said. Suśarman turned to address Duryódhana.*

“O king and bull of the Bharatas. Although we commit no sin, every day we suffer the abuse of that evildoer who bears the bow Gandíva. When we meditate on his many insults in the dead of night we burn in flames of anger that consume our hours of rest. If he raises his bow once more at us then we will surely be the authors of that deed for which we have hoped in the innermost chambers of our hearts. May our promise please you and may it bring us fame. We will kill him and drag his corpse off the plain. This will not be undone: the world will no longer hold both Árjuna and the brothers Tri-garta.” 17.15

And so it was o Bhárata that with these words a sacred vow was sworn between his five brothers Satya-ratha, Satya-dharman, Satya-vrata, Satyéshu and Satya-karman. They came forth with their thousand chariots. At the head of the Málavas and Tundikéras and his own massive armies the Tri-garta tiger Sushárman lord of Prasthala went in step with brothers. Then came the panoplies of the Mavéllakas, the Lalítthas and the Mádrakas, and a final great legion made up of folk tatterdemalion. The sealing of the vow in that mighty assembly began. A pyre was built high, and with bunches of sacred grass and bright chips of bark each performed his rite. Their armor was bound with ribbons and anointed with oil. They took bunches of grass in their hands and tied girdles of hemp around their waists. Those heroes of unreckonable gifts were sacrificers with heirs and 17.20

- te ca baddha|tanu|trāṇā ghr̥t'āktāḥ kuśa|cīriṇaḥ
 maurvī|mekhalino vīrāḥ sahasra|śata|dakṣiṇāḥ
 yajvānaḥ putriṇo lokyāḥ kṛta|kṛtyās tanu|tyajah
 yokṣyamāṇās tad" ātmānaṃ yaśasā vijayena ca
 17.25 brahma|carya|śruti|mukhaiḥ kratubhiś c' āpta|dakṣiṇaiḥ
 prāpya lokān su|yuddhena kṣipram eva yiyāsavaḥ
 brāhmaṇāṃs tarpayitvā ca niṣkān dattvā pṛthak pṛthak
 gās ca vāsāṃsi ca punaḥ samābhāṣya paras|param
 prajvālya kṛṣṇa|vartmānam upāgamyā raṇe vratam
 tasminn agnau tadā cakruḥ pratijñāṃ dṛḍha|niścayāḥ.
 śṛṇvatām sarva|bhūtānām uccair vāco babhāṣire
 dhṛtām Dhanamjaya|vadhe pratijñāṃ c' āpi cakrire.
 «ye vai lokās c' ān|ṛtināṃ ye ca vai brahma|ghātīnāṃ
 madya|pasya ca ye lokā guru|dāra|ratasya ca
 17.30 brahma|sva|hāriṇās c' āiva rāja|piṇḍ'āpahāriṇaḥ
 śaraṇ'āgatam ca tyajato yācamānaṃ tathā ghnataḥ
 agāra|dāhināṃ c' āiva ye ca gāṃ nighnatām api
 apakāriṇāṃ ca ye lokā ye ca brahma|dviṣām api
 sva|bhāryām ṛtu|kāleṣu mohād vai n' ābhigacchatām
 śrāddha|maithunikānāṃ ca ye c' āpy ātm'āpahāriṇām
 nyās'āpahāriṇāṃ ye ca śrutam nāśayatām ca ye
 klībena yudhyamānānāṃ ye ca nīc'ānusāriṇāṃ
 nāstikānāṃ ca ye lokā ye 'gni|mātr|pitṛ|tyajām
 tān āpnuyāmahe lokān ye ca pāpa|kṛtām api
 17.35 yady a|hatvā vayam sarve nivartema Dhanamjayaṃ
 tena c' ābhyarditās trāsād bhavema hi parān|mukhāḥ.
 yadi tv a|sul|karam loke karma kuryāma saṃyuge
 iṣṭāl lokān prāpnuyāmo vayam adya na saṃśayaḥ.»

domains, men of duty, warriors who had abandoned life and turned their hearts to glory and triumph. Through pious and solemn rites rich with largesse they prepared for the realms where battle would bring them, and now were eager to fight on. They rewarded their priests with gifts of coins, cows and cloth, and speaking once more among themselves agreed on their oath and set alight the fire that brings all to black. 17.25

With iron wills they forged their promise in those flames. To make even firmer their resolve to kill Dhanan-jaya they declaimed these words to all who could hear them.

“There are men who break the law. Who kill and cast out priests and plunder kings. Drunks who toy with their teachers’ wives. Men who turn away the needy, who kill beggars, who slaughter cows and burn down homes, who scorn the gods or lie with their wives when it is forbidden or fornicate at the funerals of their fathers. Men who skirmish with the weak, who hang on the words of idiots, infidels who walk away from their hearths and their elders. There are men who destroy themselves and the rules by which we live. May we share their fate if in fear we turn our backs to our task. But we say this: if in battle we achieve our arduous goal then we will ascend to the places where the blessed dwell.” 17.35

evam uktvā tato, rājams, te 'bhyavartanta saṃyuge
 āhvayanto 'rjunam vīrāḥ pitṛ|juṣṭām diśam prati
 āhūtas tair nara|vyāghraiḥ Pārthaḥ para|puram|jayah
 Dharma|rājam idam vākyam a|pad'|āntaram abravīt.

«āhūto na nivarteyam iti me vratam āhitam
 Saṃśaptakās ca mām rājann āhvayanti mahā|mṛdhe.

17.40 eṣa ca bhrātṛbhiḥ sārdham Suśarm" āhvayate raṇe,
 vadhāya sa|gaṇasy' āsya mām anujñātum arhasi.
 n' āitac chaknomi saṃsoḍhum āhvānam, puruṣa|rṣabha,
 satyam te pratijñāmi hatān viddhi parān yudhi.»

YUDHIṢṬHIRA uvāca.

śrutam te tattvatas, tāta, yad Droṇena cikīrṣitam
 yathā tad an|ṛtam tasya bhavet tat tvam samācara.
 Droṇo hi balavān sūraḥ kṛt'|āstraś ca jita|śramaḥ
 pratijñātam ca ten' āitad grahaṇam me, mahā|ratha.

ARJUNA uvāca.

ayaṃ vai Satyajid, rājann, adya tvā rakṣitā yudhi
 dhriyamāṇe tu Pāñcālye n' ācāryaḥ kāmam āpsyati.
 17.45 hate tu puruṣa|vyāghre raṇe Satyajiti, prabho,
 sarvair api sametair vā na sthātavyam katham cana.

SAMJAYA uvāca.

anujñātas tato rājñā pariṣvaktas ca Phalgunah
 premṇā drṣṭas ca bahudhā hy āśiṣas c' āsya yojitaḥ
 vihāy' āinaṃ tataḥ Pārthas Trigartān pratyayād balī
 kṣudhitaḥ kṣud|vigāt'|ārtham siṃho mṛga|gaṇān iva.
 tato Dauryodhanam sainyam mudā paramayā yutam
 ṛte 'rjunam bhīṣam kruddham Dharmarājasya nigrahe.

O majesty, with these words the mighty brothers went forth and called out *Árjuna's* name south across the land. When he heard their tiger's roars Partha the conqueror of cities spoke to the good king these urgent words.

“My king I have vowed never to refuse a challenge. Beholden* are summoning me. Sushárman and his brothers are calling me out to fight. You must grant me leave to crush them and their troops. Bull in the herd of men I cannot resist this challenge, but I can promise that a handful of your foes are as good as dead.” 17.40

YUDHI-SHTHIRA spoke.

Brother. You have heard exactly what it is that Drona intends: make sure that his aim remains a hollow one. You are a great warrior, but Drona is a mighty hero too, a master of the bow who suffers hardship unbending, and he it is who has vowed to capture me.

ÁRJUNA spoke.

You have a protector here before you, majesty, in *Sátyajit*. While this son of Pancháli lives our teacher's desire will remain unfulfilled. O king, the tiger *Sátyajit* will fall only when no warrior on earth still stands. 17.45

SÁNJAYA spoke.

The king granted the Red Star Fighter his leave and then embraced him with deep affection. Equipped with his blessing alone, brave Partha left the king and rode out for the *Tri-gartas* like a lion at a herd of deer ravening to quell its hunger. And *Duryódhana's* army swelled in frenzy, inflamed with the prospect of capturing the good king once *Árjuna* had been dispatched. The two armies crashed together like

tato 'nyonyena te sene samājagmatur ojasā
Gaṅgā|Sarayvau vegena prāvṛṣ' īv' ōlbaṇ' |ōdake.

SAMJAYA uvāca.

- 18.1 TATAḤ SAMŚAPTAKĀ, rājan, same deśe vyavasthitāḥ
vyūhy' ānikam rathair eva candr' |ākāram mudā yutāḥ.
te Kirīṭinam āyāntam dṛṣṭvā harṣeṇa māriṣa
udakrośan nara|vyāghrāḥ śabdena mahatā tadā.
sa śabdaḥ pradiśaḥ sarvā diśaḥ kham ca samāvṛṇot
āvṛtatvāc ca lokasya n' āsīt tatra pratisvanāḥ.
atīva samprahrṣtāms tān upalabhya Dhanamjayah
kiṃ cid abhyutsmayan Kṛṣṇam idaṃ vacanam abravīt.
- 18.5 «paśy' āitān Devakī|mātar mumūrṣūn adya samyuge
bhrātṛṃs Traigartakān eva roditavye praharṣitān.
atha vā harṣa|kālo 'yam Traigartānām a|samśayam
ku|narair dur|avāpān hi lokān prāpsyanty an|uttamān.»
evam ukṭvā mahā|bāhur Hṛṣīkeśam tato 'rjunah
āsasāda raṇe vyūdhām Trigartānām anīkinīm.
sa Devadattam ādāya śaṅkham hema|pariṣkṛtam
dadhmau vegena mahatā ghoṣeṇ' āpūrayan diśaḥ.
tena śabdena vitrastā Samśaptaka|varūthinī
nīś|ceṣṭ' āvasthitā samkhye hy aśma|sāra|mayī yathā.
- 18.10 vāhās teṣāṃ vivṛtt' |ākṣāḥ stabdha|karṇa|śīro|dharāḥ
viṣṭabdhā|caraṇā mūtram rudhiram ca prasusruvuḥ.
upalabhya tataḥ samjñām avasthāpya ca vāhinīm
yugapat Pāṇḍu|putrāya cikṣipuḥ kaṅka|patriṇaḥ.
tāny Arjunah sahasrāṇi daśa pañcabhir āsu|gaiḥ
an|āgatāny eva śaraiś cicched' āsu|parākramāḥ.
tato 'rjunam śitair bāṇair daśabhir daśabhiḥ punaḥ

the Ganges and Sárayu plunging their rainswollen waters into the immensity of the ocean.

SÁNJAYA spoke.

O MAJESTY. The Beholden were drawn up together, their chariots arranged in the figure of the moon. They bristled with anticipation. When those tigers laid their eyes on the Diademed Warrior as he rode near they let out a delirious cry so loud that it filled every quarter of the sky and smothered its own echo. Dhanan-jaya observed their excitement. He smiled slightly, turned to Krishna and spoke. 18.1

“Look at them o son of Dévaki: the brothers Tri-garta, so soon to meet their end. Giddy with joy when they should be weeping. Or perhaps it is time for the Tri-gartas to rejoice, since they are bound for realms beyond the reach of fools.” 18.5

With these words to Hrishiksha, strongarmed Árjuna rode into battle against the serried ranks of the Tri-gartas. Raising the conch Deva-datta to his lips he blew deep and filled the air with its sound. Its note blared out above the army of the Beholden and fear stole across every one of them. For a moment they froze still on the battlefield as if cast in iron. Their horses rolled their eyes, necks and ears stiffening, motionless but for the bloodcolored piss running down their shanks. 18.10

Then the brothers Tri-garta gathered their wits. They rallied their troops and as one loosed their heronfeathered arrows at Pandu's son. But before they even reached him Árjuna nimbly split the hundredfold volley with swift shafts of his own. Ten whetted darts then ten again they let fly at Árjuna, and Partha knocked them all away. Back he shot

pratyavidhyaṃs tataḥ Pārthas tān avidhyat tribhis tribhiḥ.
 ek'āikas tu tataḥ Pārthaṃ rājan vivyādha pañcabhiḥ
 sa ca tān prativivyādha dvābhyāṃ dvābhyāṃ parākramī.

18.15 bhūya eva tu saṃkruddhās te 'rjunam saha|Keśavaṃ
 āpūrayan śarais tūrṇaṃ taṭākam iva vṛṣṭibhiḥ.
 tataḥ śara|sahasrāṇi prāpatann Arjunaṃ prati
 bhramarāṇām iva vrātāḥ phullaṃ drumalgaṇaṃ vane.
 tataḥ Subāhus triṃśadbhir adri|sāra|mayair dṛḍhaiḥ
 avidhyad iṣubhir gāḍhaṃ Kirīṭe Savyasācinam.
 taiḥ Kirīṭi kirīṭa|sthair hema|puñkhair aljihma|gaiḥ
 śāta|kumbha|may'āpīḍo babhau yūpa iv' ūchritaḥ.

hast'āvāpaṃ Subāhos tu bhallena yudhi Pāṇḍavaḥ
 ciccheda taṃ c' āiva punaḥ śara|varṣair avākirat.

18.20 tataḥ Suśarmā daśabhiḥ Surathaś ca Kirīṭinam
 Sudharmā Sudhanuś c' āiva Subāhuś ca samārpayan.
 tāṃs tu sarvān pṛthag bāṇair
 vānara|pravara|dhvajāḥ
 pratyavidhyad dhvajāṃś c' āiṣāṃ
 bhallaiś ciccheda kāñcanān.

Sudhanvano dhanuś chittvā hayāṃś c' āsy' āvadhīc charaiḥ
 ath' āsya sa|śiras|trāṇaṃ śiraḥ kāyād apāharat.

three and three again. O majesty, each Tri-garta struck Partha with five of his arrows but with twin shafts he struck back at each. In a tumult of anger they poured their missiles 18.15 unrelentingly on Árjuna and on Késhava, rain upon a pool, and hundreds of them plummeted down as when swarms of bees in a forest descend on swaths of openpetalled flowers. Subáhu sent thirty arrows of solid iron into the crown Árjuna wore, and with his head studded in those goldfeathered and trueflying shafts Kirítin stood tall like a sacrificial stake capped in ingots of river gold.

The son of Pandu fought back. With a barbed missile he cracked apart the very guard protecting Subáhu's hand and then let fly a downpour of darts upon his head. Ten arrows 18.20 flew back at the Diademed Warrior from the five bows of Sushárman, Súratha, Sudhárman, Subáhu and Súdhanus. Yet while the flag of the monkey fluttered over his head one by one with his barbed arrows Árjuna pierced and tattered each of their golden oriflammes, and then he split Súdhanus' bow in two, transfixing his horse and at last tore the warrior's still-helmeted head from his neck.



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“Drona,” Book Seven of the MAHA-BHÁRATA, is named for the master of the warrior arts whom Duryódhana selects as the latest leader of his forces. The savage poetry and tragic lyricism of volume one culminates with Nárada’s teaching on the origin of Death, following the slaying of Árjuna’s son, Abhimányu.

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