

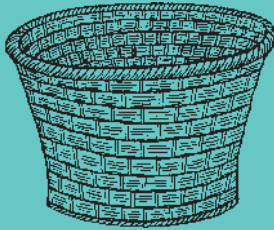
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# Maha·bhārata

Book Seven

Drona

Volume One



Edited & Translated by  
VAUGHAN PILIKIAN

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS & JJC FOUNDATION

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16–32

THE DEATH OF THE BEHOLDEN

16.1 TAD 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 maṛīcayāḥ.  
 ten' ârditā mahā|rāja rathinaḥ sādinas tathā  
 nipetur urvyāṃ sahasā vāta|nunnā iva drumāḥ.

16.5 hay'âughāmś ca rath'âughāmś ca  
 gaj'âughāmś 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.

**G**REAT 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 yuddham nighnatām itar'ētaram  
mahā|balānām balibhir dānavānām yathā suraiḥ.  
tato Yudhiṣṭhir'|ānīkam uddhūt'|ārṇava|nisvanam  
tvadīyam avadhīt sainyaṃ sampradruta|mahā|ratham.

tat prabhagnaṃ balaṃ drṣṭvā śatrubhir bhṛśam arditam,  
«alam 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 Pāñcālānām 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 gopt” āsīd Bhāradvājo ratha|r̥ṣabhah̄.  
 Śikhaṇḍinaṃ dvā|daśabhir viṃśatyā c’ Ōttamaujasam  
 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’|ōddhūtam 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 hr̥ṣṭas trāsayan vai yata|vratam.  
 tato visphārya nayane dhanur|jyām avamṛjya ca  
 tala|śabdaṃ mahat kṛtvā Droṇas taṃ samupādravat.  
 tatas tu Siṃhasenasya śiraḥ kāyāt sa|kuṇḍalam  
 Vyāghradattasya c’ ākramya bhallābhyām aharad balī.  
 tān pramṛdya 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 dadṛṣe 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|Śr̥ñjayāḥ  
Pāñcālās ca mano|jñābhīr vāgbhiḥ sūryam iva' rṣayaḥ  
evaṃ sva|śibiram prāyāj jītvā śatrūn Dhanam|jayaḥ  
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|suarṇa|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  
 śakyō 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 sūnye Dharma|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, dharma|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 Dha-  
nan-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'r̥ṣabha.  
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|tyajāḥ  
 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|hāriṇāś 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|puraṃ|jayah  
 Dharma|rājam idaṃ 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 āhvānaṃ, puruṣa'|rṣabha,  
 satyaṃ te pratijñāmi hatān viddhi parān yudhi.»

YUDHIṢṬHIRA uvāca.

śrutam te tattvatas, tāta, yad Droṇena cikīrṣitam  
 yathā tad an|ṛtaṃ tasya bhavet tat tvaṃ samācara.  
 Droṇo hi balavāñ sūraḥ kṛt'|āstraś ca jita|śramaḥ  
 pratijñātaṃ 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 sthātavyaṃ kathaṃ cana.

SAMJAYA uvāca.

anujñātas tato rājñā pariṣvaktas ca Phalgunah  
 premṇā drṣtas ca bahudhā hy āśiṣas c' āsya yojitaḥ  
 vihāy' āinaṃ tataḥ Pārthas Trigartān pratyayād balī  
 kṣudhitaḥ kṣud|vigāt'|ārthaṃ siṃho mṛga|gaṇān iva.  
 tato Dauryodhanaṃ sainyaṃ 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 Devakīmātar 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|parākramaḥ.  
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 Hrishī-kesha, 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|puṅkhair a|jihma|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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