

love, sent her messenger Citrasena to Indra. Being told about Urvaśī's love Arjuna closed both his ears with hands, and reminded the messenger of Urvaśī's maternal position with reference to him. Urvaśī cursed and turned Arjuna into an eunuch. Indra consoled Arjuna by assuring him that Urvaśī's curse will turn out to be of great benefit to him. Afterwards Arjuna stayed in Devaloka for a few days with Citrasena, and during the period he killed Nivātakavaca and Kālakeya.

Arjuna became a friend of Maharṣi Lomaśa, who had gone to Devaloka to see Indra. Promising Arjuna that he would protect Dharmaputra Lomaśa returned to the earth. Arjuna left the Kāmyaka forest and returned to his brothers after an absence for five years. He met the brothers at Mount Gandhamādana. (M.B., Vana Parva, Chapters 42-47).

22) *Procession.* At last a witty and humorous brahmin went to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and dilated upon the hardships being suffered by the Pāṇḍavas, and Duryodhana and others were extremely pleased and happy to hear it. Yet, they shed crocodile tears. But, Duryodhana was in a mighty hurry to see with his own eyes the pitiable plight of the Pāṇḍavas. On the pretext of going out for hunting Duryodhana and others with the permission of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, started for the forest with a number of attendants. 8,000 chariots, 30,000 elephants, thousands of infantry soldiers, 9,000 horses, merchants, ornaments, courtesans and thousands of hunters formed this procession into the forest. Just like roaring winds during the rainy season the procession caused thunderous noise. Duryodhana approached the pool in the Dvaita forest and waited at a distance. (M.B., Araṇya Parva, Chapter 239, Verses 25-29).

Duryodhana and attendants put up tents in the forest. The Gandharvas obstructed Duryodhana, and he and the Gandharva called Citrasena clashed with each other. Duryodhana was made a prisoner. Arjuna came on the scene and released him. And, thus humiliated Duryodhana returned to Hastināpura with the attendants. (M.B., Araṇya Parva, Chapters 239-253).

23) *Arjuna lost consciousness.* While once Pāñcālī was alone King Jayadratha forcibly took her away. Within seconds the Pāṇḍavas confronted Jayadratha and regained Pāñcālī. Jayadratha and his men were killed. The Pāṇḍavas, who were very weary and tired walking in the forest felt extremely thirsty. Nakula, at the instance of Dharmaputra climbed a tree and looked around and sighted a pool of clear water. When Nakula went to the pool and began to draw water a voice from above was heard saying as follows : "Do not be so very daring. This is my ancestral wealth. If you answer my questions you may not only drink the water but also take some with you". Without paying any heed to this warning Nakula drank water from the pool, and lo ! he fell down unconscious immediately. Sahadeva who went to the pool in search of Nakula and drank water from the pool also met with the same fate as Nakula. Arjuna and Bhīma also had the same fate at the pool. Lastly Dharmaputra went to the pool and understanding what happened to his brothers requested permission to drink water. At once a Yakṣa appeared and brought the brothers of Dharmaputra back to consciousness. In fact, the Yakṣa was none other than Yamadharmadeva. (For questions and answers of the Yakṣa see Dharmaputra.) (M.B., Araṇya Parva, Chapters 312-315).

24) *Life incognito.* Now the twelve years of forest life being over the Pāṇḍavas decided to spend the one year of life incognito in the Virāṭa palace. Arjuna disguised himself and deposited his clothes and weapons in the hollow of a Śami tree in the forest. And the Pāṇḍavas in various disguises reached the Virāṭa palace. They assumed false names : Dharmaputra as Kaṅka, Bhīma as Valāla, Arjuna as Bṛhannala, Nakula as Granthika and Sahadeva as Ariṣṭanemi and Draupadī as Mālinī. When the life incognito of the Pāṇḍavas for one year was about to expire a rumour reached the Kauravas that the Pāṇḍavas were at the Virāṭa capital, and the Kauravas thought that the Pāṇḍavas will appear on the scene if a war was fought against King Virāṭa. The Kauravas, with this object in view, lifted the cows of Virāṭa and that led to war. Uttara, the prince of Virāṭa boasted that he would fight provided he had a good charioteer. Bṛhannala (Arjuna) agreed to act as such and they started for the warfield. At the sight of the massive army of the Kauravas Uttara got frightened and tried to run away from the field. But Bṛhannala tightly bound Uttara to the chariot, drove it very fast to the forest, took back from the hollow of the Śami tree his weapons and returned to the battle-field. The Kauravas were absolutely defeated in the war and they took to their heels. They understood that the very clever and terrible warrior in disguise was Arjuna himself. But, by the time the period of the Pāṇḍavas life incognito was over. The king of Virāṭa, greatly pleased over this victory in war gave his daughter, Uttarā in marriage to Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna. (M.B., Virāṭa Parva).

25) *Preparations for war.* After the forest life and life incognito the Pāṇḍavas returned. The Kauravas refused to give them half the Kingdom. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas, implored that half the kingdom or five districts or five houses or at least one house be given to them. But the Kauravas took the stand that not even an iota of land would be given to the Pāṇḍavas. And, war was perforce decided upon. Duryodhana went to Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā to request for support in war. Kṛṣṇa, who favoured the Pāṇḍavas lay in false sleep as he did not want to fight against them. Duryodhana sat at the head of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna, who came after some time sat at the feet of Kṛṣṇa and remained there standing. Awakening from sleep, it was Arjuna whom Kṛṣṇa saw first. After the greetings were over with Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa saw Duryodhana also. Between Kṛṣṇa without any arms and the armed forces of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna chose Kṛṣṇa and Duryodhana his armed forces to help each side in the impending war. (Udyoga Parva).

26) *War.* Both the Parties were encamped in Kurukṣetra ready for war. Śrī Kṛṣṇa acted as Charioteer to Arjuna. He stopped the chariot in between the opposing armies. Arjuna felt deep anguish to find his own people arrayed on the opposite side for war. Reluctant to kill relations, elders, friends and preceptors Arjuna laid down his arms in the chariot. Then did Kṛṣṇa instruct him in Karmayoga (the philosophy of action). That instruction and advice of Kṛṣṇa is the world-famous Bhagavad Gītā. The Gītā cleared off Arjuna's illusions and he praised the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who revealed his all comprehensive form (Viśvarūpa) to Arjuna. On the first day of the war Arjuna fought a duel with Bhīṣma, and the second day he fought the Kaurava forces with exceptional prowess. And then Arjuna pre-