

in two and threw away the two parts to two places. (M. B. Sabhā Parva, Southern Text, Chapter 24).

The main impediments and thorns in their way thus having been removed, Dharmaputra decided to perform Rājasūya. Bhīma was deputed to conquer all the kingdoms in the eastern part of India. Bhīma achieved the object and returned with great wealth to Indraprastha. Though Bhīma got ready to kill Śiśupāla, who alone refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of Yudhiṣṭhira, he also yielded on the tactful advice of Bhīṣma. The Rājasūya Yajña went off quite successfully. It was Bhīma, who, after the Yajña was over, took Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira to Hastināpura. Afterwards, in the contest in the game of dice played between Dharmaputra and Duryodhana, the Pāṇḍavas lost everything. The Kauravas brought Pāñcālī into the assembly hall and attempted to strip her naked in public. Bhīma who got enraged at this shouted that the hands of Yudhiṣṭhira who played dice should be burnt in fire. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 68, Verse 6). And, Bhīma took then and there the terrible pledge that he would, with his hands stained by blood from the chest of Duśśāsana, who tried to rip Pāñcālī naked, tie up Pāñcālī's hair which got untied in the scuffle. He also swore that he would break the thigh of Duryodhana. In uncontrollable rage Bhīma also shouted that he would turn into ashes all those who took part in the game of dice. Bhīma took also the vow that all the Kauravas would be killed.

According to the terms and conditions laid down with regard to the contest in the game of dice the Pāṇḍavas went into the Kāmyaka forest to live there for twelve years and then to live incognito for one year.

7) *Life in forest and life incognito.* There lived in Kāmyaka forest a Rākṣasa called Kirmīra, brother of Bala, whom Bhīma had killed on an earlier occasion. Kirmīra, who was awaiting an opportunity to avenge the murder of his brother, now clashed with Bhīma in the forest. Bhīma did very easily kill him. (For details see Kirmīra).

Thus the Pāṇḍavas spent their days once again in the Kāmyaka forest under the spiritual leadership of sage Dhaumya. They thought about their lost kingdom. Should they go to war against the Kauravas or should they spend the rest of their lives in the exercise of dhārmic injunctions? At one time Bhīma advised Yudhiṣṭhira against war; but on another occasion he pleaded vehemently in favour of war. It was during this time that Arjuna went to the Himālayas to please Śiva by penance and get from him the Pāśupatāstra. (Arrow called Pāśupata). The Pāṇḍavas naturally got nervous and upset at the rather long absence of Arjuna; Bhīma was more anxious and sorry than the others. Then the Pāṇḍavas set out in search of Arjuna, and travelled upto Mount Gandhamādana. Then the party got so tired that they could not proceed any further. Pāñcālī fell down fainting. Then Bhīma remembered Ghaṭotkaca, who appeared before his father (Bhīma) at once. As directed by Bhīma Ghaṭotkaca mounted the Pāṇḍavas on his shoulders and the journey continued. They reached the Āsrama of Naranārāyaṇas, and rested there for six days. One day the wind blowing from the north-

east dropped near Pāñcālī a Saugandhika flower. And, Bhīma set out in the north-east direction to fetch saugandhika flowers for Pāñcālī, who felt a special liking for them.

Walking and walking Bhīma entered Kadalivana. Hanūmān, his skin wrinkled and hair grey due to old age, was living in this forest. He obstructed the path of Bhīma. Hanūmān awoke from sleep and raised his tail with a terrific sound. Bhīma walked upto the place whence the sound was heard.¹ (Vanaparva, Chapter 146). In the clash that ensued between Hanūmān and Bhīma the former came out victorious. Hanūmān, however, congratulated Bhīma and directed him on the path to the saugandhika forest.

Bhīmasena reached the saugandhika forest, which was being guarded by the Rākṣasas called Krodhavaśas. Bhīma overcame them, collected the flowers and returning with them stayed in the Badarikāśrama with his brothers and Pāñcālī. Here it was that Bhīma killed Jaṭāsura. (For details see Jaṭāsura II).

Four years were thus spent; yet Arjuna had not returned. The Pāṇḍavas continued their journey northward. On the 17th day they came to the Āsrama of Vṛṣaparvā in the Himālayas. They were duly received by the maharṣi, who directed them in their onward journey. Continuing the journey they reached the Āsrama of Ārṣiṣeṇa whence, after crossing various mountain peaks and still walking they reached Kubera's Alakāpurī when a Yakṣa called Maṇimān obstructed their further progress. Bhīma killed Maṇimān and the other Yakṣas who rushed to his support. Finally Kubera himself saw Bhīma and blessed the Pāṇḍavas.

While they were returning from Kubera's palace Bhīma was caught by a python. But, it was really Nahuṣa transformed into a python on account of a curse. Bhīma killed it and it assumed its original form as Nahuṣa. (See Agastya, Para 8). By this time Arjuna had obtained Pāśupatāstra from Śiva and he duly returned to his brothers, and the Pāṇḍavas continued their journey in the forest.

Meantime, knowing that the Pāṇḍavas were put up in Dvaitavana, the Kauravas started for their dwelling place in a procession led by Duryodhana with the army and camped nearly two furlongs away from a pool in Dvaitavana. While thus camping Duryodhana clashed with a Gandharva called Citrasena, who with a number of his comrades came to the pool for water games, and in the encounter the latter made Duryodhana prisoner. Bhīmasena who witnessed the scene very much laughed at Duryodhana. But, Arjuna intervened and set free Duryodhana and others.

The Pāṇḍavas again entered the Kāmyaka forest, and it was at that time that Jayadratha abducted Pāñcālī. Bhīma killed Koṭikāśya who acted on behalf of Jayadratha. (See Koṭikāśya). Moreover Bhīma captured Jayadratha, got his head shaved clean and declared that he was a slave of Dharmaputra. It was here at Dvaitavana that Dharmadeva tested the Pāṇḍavas, who had gone to a nearby pool to fetch water; all the Pāṇḍavas except Yudhiṣṭhira died at the pool, but were brought back to life again. (See Dharmaputra, Para 7). The

1. When raised, Hanūmān's tail was as high in the sky as the flag of Indra, and produced a thunderous sound. As though the mountains were vomiting through their mouth, the sound produced by the raising of the tail shook the mountains. Drowning the trumpeting of excited elephants the sound reverberated all around the mountains. Hearing the sound Bhīma, his whole body horripilated entered the forest in the direction of the sound. In the middle of Kadalivana, on a mighty rock, Bhīma saw Hanūmān.