

to look after Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who begot of her a son called Yuyutsu.¹ Thus with 100 sons and Duśśalā for daughter Dhṛtarāṣṭra became rich in the matter of children² (M. B. Adi Parva, Chapter 114).

(2) *Duryodhana harms Bhīmasena.* Now, Pāṇḍu was dead and Mādri also died in the funeral pyre of her husband. Forlorn and helpless Kuntī and her five sons came to Hastināpura, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra welcomed them to the palace. Thus arose the occasion for the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas to live together in the Hastināpura palace. And, naturally there used to be petty differences and quarrels between the Pāṇḍava and Kaurava princes. Bhīma being in every way a giant the Kauravas had often to suffer at his hands. To collect all the hundred Kaurava brothers together and throw them away in one lump to push them to the ground, to suffocate them by holding their heads under water etc—these were some of the childish pranks played by Bhīma on the Kauravas. The constant repetition of such pranks and mischiefs on the part of Bhīma rendered him an object of hatred for the Kauravas among whom the common conviction grew that it was essential to put an end to Bhīma's life for their safety, nay even their very existence.

One day, the Kauravas, with the object of doing away with Bhīma, escorted the Pāṇḍavas to Pramāṇakoṭi on the banks of the Gaṅgā for water sports. There all of them ate sumptuous meals and took various drinks. But, Duryodhana had secretly mixed Kālakūṭa poison in the food of Bhīma. After taking meals they began playing water-sports. After the sports were over they returned to their tents and slept. Owing to the effects of the poison and the overexertion during the day Bhīma slept stone dead. While all were asleep during the night Duryodhana bound the hands and legs of Bhīma with cords and threw him into the depths of the Gāṅgā. Bhīma who was still unconscious sank down to the very bottom of the river where the denizens of nāgaloka saw him and the nāgas bit him in anger. The poison of the nāgas neutralised the effects of Kālakūṭa poison in Bhīma, though their bite could not make even a scratch on his skin. Freed thus from the effects of poison Bhīma shook himself up from sleep and drove off the nāgas. Alarmed at these developments the nāgas called Vāsuki up to the scene, and he, recognising Bhīma held him in embrace and gave him much money and costly gems etc. Bhīma refused the gifts, but asked Vāsuki for nāgarasa, which would impart the strength of thousand nāgas to those who used it. Vāsuki gave Bhīma eight potfuls of nāgarasa, which the latter drank to the last dregs and thus gained immeasurable strength.

When next morning after the water-sports the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas awoke from sleep Bhīma was found missing. Duryodhana said that Bhīma had returned earlier to Hastināpura, but this did not satisfy the Pāṇḍavas. Kuntī lamented over the absence of Bhīma. Bhīma, who drank the nāga rasa lay on the veranda of Vāsuki for eight days in the manner of one who had lost consciousness. By the time he woke up on the eighth day the body had almost fully assimilated the rasa. Vāsuki told Bhīma that eight potfuls of nāgarasa

would impart the strength of 10,000 elephants. And then at the instance of Vāsuki Bhīma took his bath in holy waters and wore new clothes and fragrant garland. He ate the pudding offered by Vāsuki, and taking leave of him and followed by nāgas he came up from the water to the bank of the Gaṅgā. Bhīma gave a detailed description to his mother and brothers of all that had happened to him. Dharmaputra advised him to keep the secret. After the incident, once again was Kālakūṭa poison mixed in the food of Bhīma. But, Yuyutsu born of the vaiśya woman to Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave the Pāṇḍavas confidential report about it. Because of the powerful effect of nāga rasa, the Kālakūṭa consumed by Bhīma did no harm to him but it only got assimilated in his body. On another occasion Duryodhana killed the charioteer of Bhīma. (Bhāṣā Bhārata, Chapter 127 and 129).

3) *Karṇa crowned king of Aṅga.* The Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas learnt the use of weapons of war at the feet of Droṇācārya, and when the studies were over arrangements were made for a rehearsal, and at the rehearsal Bhīma and Duryodhana were the first to clash with each other. When the encounter reached its climax both of them pointed the club at each other. But, Aśvatthāmā intervened and pacified them. Next Karṇa entered the stage for a trial of strength with Arjuna, and at once arose from the Pāṇḍava side questions about Karṇa's nobility and aristocracy of birth etc. Karṇa stood there stunned, not knowing what to say or how to repel the attack. Then it was Duryodhana who rose up to announce that he was, that very moment, crowning Karṇa King of Aṅga. This ended the scene. (Bhārata (Malayālam), Ādi Parva, Chapters 134, 135 and 136).

4) *Pāṇḍavas trapped in palace built of lac.* The above incident confirmed and completed the cleavage of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas into two hostile camps. Meantime another event happened. Droṇācārya demanded of his pupils to bring before him King Drupada by way of gurudakṣiṇā (tuition fee), for the ācārya had to wreak vengeance upon Drupada (See under Droṇa). Though Duryodhana tried his best he could not capture Drupada. Not only that, Drupada defeated him also in fight. At this juncture it was Arjuna who presented Drupada as captive to Droṇa by way of gurudakṣiṇā. The incident proved to be another provocation for Duryodhana to hate the Pāṇḍavas.

Now, Duryodhana made up his mind to destroy the Pāṇḍavas somehow or other. With this end in view he went to his father, posing himself to be a great well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas, and obtained his permission to transfer their (Pāṇḍavas') residence to another palace. Accordingly Duryodhana deputed his minister Purocana to get built at Vāraṇāvata a palace of lac. Vidura came to know of the intended mischief and gave advance notice of it to the Pāṇḍavas through a messenger Kanaka. The architect built the 'lac palace' but built a tunnel also attached to it. A year after the Pāṇḍavas shifted the residence to the new 'palace' Duryodhana set fire to it, and the Pāṇḍavas escaped unscathed through this tunnel. (Bhārata (Malayālam) Ādi Parva, Chapters 141-151).

1. Vyāsa blessed Gāndhārī to have 100 sons. Then how was it that she got a daughter too? On being questioned thus by King Janamejaya Vaiśampāyana replied "when Vyāsa was dividing the mass of flesh a desire to have a daughter entered the heart of Gāndhārī and divining that desire Vyāsa cut the flesh in such a manner as to have one more piece, viz. 101.

2. Duryodhana was born as a part of Kali. (M.B. Āśrama-vāsika Parva, Chapter 1).