

**Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya**  
- Introduction by Prof.K.T.Pandurangi

**Chapter XXVI**

**Drona takes charge as Commander-in-chief**

On the eleventh day Drona was made the Commander in chief. Karna also joined him. Duryodhana asked Drona to arrest Yudhishtira. Drona initiated a bitter fighting and tried to arrest Yudhishtira. However, Arjuna made a counter attack and failed the effort of Drona arresting Yudhishtira. Bhima also gave a tough fight. On that night Duryodhana expressed his displeasure to Drona for not arresting Yudhishtira. Drona suggested, "If Arjuna was diverted from the main field of the battle Yudhishtira could be arrested".

On the twelfth day Susharma and Samsatakas were asked to take away Arjuna to some other area of the battlefield. Satyaratha, Satyavarma, Satyavrata, Satyeshu and Satyakarma were called Samsaptakas as these had taken an oath to kill Arjuna in the presence of a ritual fire. They took Arjuna in the presence of a ritual fire. They took Arjuna aside and started fighting. In the meanwhile, Duryodhana asked Bhagadatta to confront Bhima. Bhima hit the elephant Supratika of Bhagadatta. Sri Krishna saw this confrontation between Bhima and Bhagadatta. He thought Bhagadatta might employ vaisnavastra which he alone could pacify. Therefore, he started to come to this area with Arjuna. He Samsaptakas tried to prevent Arjuna. He employed Sammohana astra and moved towards Bhagadatta. Arjuna and Bhagadatta started fighting. Bhagadatta employed vaisnavastra. Sri Krishna received it and it became Vijayanthi mala. Arjuna hit Bhagadatta and his elephant Supratika. Both died, Arjuna killed Achala and Vrishika the two younger brothers of Shakuni. Shakuni employed certain magical weapons. Arjuna destroyed them. Shakuni ran away. Ashvatthama killed Nila. Bhima destroyed the horses of Ashvatthama. That night Duryodhana again met Drona pulled him up for not arresting Yudhishtira. Drona said "when Arjuna is away I will arrest Yudhishtira or at least I will kill a person who is equal to him.

**Abhimanyu enters into Chakravyuha**

On 13<sup>th</sup> day Drona prepared Padmavyuha in which nobody could enter without reciting Vishnu mantra. Arjuna was diverted to the other area of battle field by Samsaptakas. Bhima did not want to recite Vishnumantra for a Kamyaphala. The other Pandavas did not know, Abhimanyu only knew. Therefore Yudhishtira asked him to enter. Accordingly Abhimanyu entered. The others followed but were prevented by Jayadratha. When these were fighting with Jayadratha, Abhimanyu entered deep into Padmavyuha. Drona, Duryodhana, Karna, Shalya, Ashvatthama and Krtavarma surrounded him. They destroyed his bow, arrows and even horses, they hit him from behind. Ultimately they killed him. Sri Vedavyasa consoled Yudhishtira and others. Arjuna returned defeating Samsaptakas. He was greatly distressed by the news of the death of his son. He took an oath that he would kill Jayadratha before the sunset the next day. If he was not able to kill him within the stipulated time he would offer himself to fire. At that night he had a dream.

During that dream he was taken by Sri Krishna to Lord Shiva who strengthened Pashupatastra mantra already given to him. Though Sri Krishna could have fully protected him he wanted that the bestower of this astra should protect him.

The next day Drona arranged Saktabja Chakravyuha to protect Jayadratha. He himself stood at the entrance. Karna, Ashvatthama, Kripa, Shalya also were ready to protect Jayadratha. Arjuna arrived on his best chariot. First he defeated Durmarshana and Dushyasana. Then he pushed aside Krtavarma. He killed Vinda and Anuvinda. These were the kings Avanti country. They were different from the brothers Duryodhana of the same name. Arjuna killed Sudakshina and Ambastha. Srutayudha attacked him. Arjuna cut his arms. Srutayudha's mace fell on the shoulders of Sri Krishna. It hit back the head of Srutayudha and his head was cut into pieces. Varuna had given this mace to him with the condition that if he employs it on a person who is not fighting, his head will be cut into pieces. Drona gave a special armor to Duryodhana. Arjuna cut his palm as it was not covered by the armor. Arjuna fought with Karna and Ashvatthama also who were protecting Jayadratha. Drona entered into Pandavas army and confronted Yudhishtira, He tried to arrest him. Satyajit, the son of Drupada prevented him. Drona killed him. Sahadeva took away Yudhishtira on his chariot. Dhrishtaketu, Saibya, Brihatkshatra etc. attacked Drona. He killed all of them. Alambusa attacked Bhima's followers. Bhima employed tvastra weapon. Invisible arrows come out of it and pierced Alambusa. He ran away. Ghatothkacha pursued him. He fought with him in the sky. He pushed him to the ground and killed. Krtavarma attacked Pandavas army. He defeated Panchala army. Nakula and Sahadeva. Bhima threw Shakti weapon at Krtavarma. Satyaki killed the horses of Krtavarma. He ran away. Bhurisrava attacked Satyaki. He fell on the ground. Bhurisrava raised his sword to kill Satyaki. Arjuna cut his arms. Satyaki killed him. Arjuna's horses were tired. He created water by employing Varunastra. Sri Krishna made them to drink water. Yudhishtira became anxious about Arjuna on not hearing the sound of Gandiva and hearing only the sound of Panchajanya. He asked Bhima to proceed to protect Arjuna. Bhima asked Dhristadyumna and Satyaki to take care of Yudhishtira and proceeded. Drona prevented him. Since, Bhima considered Drona like his father he was dealing with him leniently. Now that he was preventing him to go near Arjuna, he destroyed his chariot. Drona went away to make an effort again to arrest Yudhishtira.

When Bhima proceeded twelve sons of Dhritarashtra viz. Vinda-Anuvinda and others confronted him. He cut their heads. The other sons Chitrasena, Vivimsati etc ran away. Krtavarma also came in the way. Bhima hit him hard. Finally Bhima reached Arjuna and Sri Krishna, and he was very happy to meet them. On finding that of Bhima arrived Karna and Vikarna and others came. Bhima killed Vikarna and Chitrasena, and destroyed Karna's chariot. Karna fought twenty one times and was defeated. On twenty second time Karna came with his special bow Vijaya given by Parashurama. Bhima cut the new Kavacha and Kundala of Karna. Parashurama had told Karna that you would defeat all those with whom you do not fight with a spirit of competition. Out of respect for these words of Parashurama Bhima slackened his attack. Karna abused him saying that he was only good for eating, he better go to dining hall rather than the battle field. "Bhima did not take away the Shakti ayudha of Karna as he knew the divine plan that Ghatothkacha is to be killed by it.

## **Arjuna kills Jayadratha**

Karna moved towards Arjuna. Sri Krishna asked Satyaki to fight with him. Karna went away to protect Jayadratha, Ashvatthama also protected him. It became difficult for Arjuna to move towards Jayadratha pushing aside Ashvatthama. Sri Krishna brought about darkness to veil the sun. Seeing the darkness Drona and others thought that sun had set. Jayadratha though Arjuna was not able to fulfill his oath and came out. Arjuna pretended to enter into the fire and cut the head of Jayadratha. Sri Krishna asked him not to drop it on the ground and drop it in the hands of Jayadratha's father who was engaged in the evening prayer. The father dropped it on the ground. Consequently his head was shattered into thousand pieces. Sri Krishna himself had given a boon to his son that the head of the person who drops the head of Jayadratha would be broken into thousand pieces. Now, it recoiled on him only then Sri Krishna withdrew the darkness and blew Panchajanya conch. Ashvatthama and Karna tried to attack Bhima and Arjuna. They were defeated. Duryodhana also confronted the Pandavas army. They were all defeated. Duryodhana again complained to Drona that he was not keeping his promises. Drona promised that he would fight. By this time seven akshauhini army were killed in two armies. Out of this Bhima had killed three akshauhini and Arjuna two. During the night a terrible fight between Karna and Bhima took place. A bitter fight between Ashvatthama and Ghatotkacha also took place. In the meanwhile Karna came. Ghatotkacha started fighting with him. The demon Alambusa and Alayudha also came. Ghatotkacha killed them also. Karna employed Shakti ayudha against Ghatotkacha and killed him. Yudhishtira Was unhappy at the death of Bhima's son. Sri Vedavyasa arrived and consoled him. As the night advanced the army felt sleepy. They slept on horses, elephants and wherever they were with weapons in their hands. Arjuna permitted them to sleep until moonlight spread. When moonlight spread they again started fighting. Satyaki killed Bhurisrava and Somadatta. Bahlika employed Shatagni weapon against Bhima. Bhima killed him by his mace. Bahlika had requested Bhima to kill him to enable him to attain higher world.

## **Drona collapses on the ground on hearing the death of Ashvatthama Dhristadyumna kills Drona.**

On fifteenth day Drona entered into Panchala's army and started fighting fiercely. He killed Virata and Drupada. Bhima protected Dhristadyumna. Drona employed Brahmastra and killed Purujit, Kuntibhoja and others. Bhima, Arjuna and Satyaki kept away Ashvatthama, Karna, Duryodhana, Shalya Krtavarma and Kripa from Drona. Bhima killed an elephant of name Ashvatthama of Malva king. Yudhishtira loudly announced that Ashvatthama was killed. He added in a whispering way that it was an elephant. Drona was extremely unhappy. He sat down. Vasishta and other sages asked him to stop earning his livelihood by destructive activity. Dhristadyumna rushed towards him and cut his head. Drona left the mortal world. Ashvatthama arrived. He employed Narayana Astra. Sri Krishna asked Pandavas to offer Pranamas to this astra and escape. All others followed Sri Krishna and escaped. However, Bhima did not follow. The astra fell on the head of Bhima, a fire erupted around. Arjuna covered Bhima by Varuna astra. Sri Krishna and Arjuna entered into the chariot of Bhima and brought him out of chariot.

The fire of Narayanastra did not burn this three. Narayana Astra has to be respected by all. However, when an enemy employs it a Kshatriya has to fight it. Therefore Bhima did not offer pranama to it. Moreover Vayu is abhimani of the Astra and hence the fire did not hurt him. Then Ashvatthama employed Agnyastra which destroyed one akshauhini and Pandavas army. Arjuna escaped with the help of Shri Krishna. Ashwatthama became disgusted by this and threw away his bow. Sri Vedavyasa consoled him and asked him to continue to fight.