

Chapter XXXI

Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti proceed to forest

31st chapter describes the rule of Pandavas, Dhritarashtra proceeding to forest and finally his departure from this world. When Pandavas were ruling the kingdom, a Brahmana approached Yudhishtira to have some help to perform the sacrifice. Yudhishtira asked him to next morning. As the Brahmana urgently needed the help he approached Bhimasena. He gave him his golden armband studded with gems. The Brahmana left. Bhima arranged drum beating pretending to express his joy. On hearing Drum beat at night Yudhishtira asked Bhima the reason for it. Bhima said "My brother believes that he is certain to be alive tomorrow, this made me to express my joy by drum beating". Yudhishtira realized his mistake and decided not to postpone his dharmakarya. Bhima found that Dhritarashtra was still attached to worldly things in spite of losing all his sons. He wanted to enable him to develop detachment. He asked his servants to be indifferent to him. He humiliated him in many other ways. Vidhura also humiliated him by saying "you must be ashamed to live on the food given by Bhima". Then Dhritarashtra decided to retire to forest. However, Yudhishtira was reluctant to allow him. Sri Vedavyasa persuaded him to ask Dhritarashtra to retire to forest. Dhritarashtra asked for some money to perform the final rites of his sons. Bhima refused to give. However, Yudhishtira sent some money from his personal money through Vidhura. Dhritarashtra performed the final rites of his son and went to forest. Gandhari, Kunti, Vidura and Sanjaya accompanied him. They went to Vyasashrama. Pandavas used to visit it now and then. Vidhura who was Yam dharma himself born as Vidhura entered into Dharma raja that was also Yam dharma by yogic power. Sri Vedavyasa asked Dhritarashtra, Kunti and Pandavas to ask whatever they desired. Kunti and Pandavas asked for greater devotion to him. Kunti asked to ward off the sin committed by her giving birth to Karna before marriage. Dhritarashtra requested to enable him to see his dead sons. Sri Vedavyasa made them come down Viraswargaloka and enabled Dhritarashtra to see them. Pandavas saw Karna. After three years Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti were burnt down by the forest fire