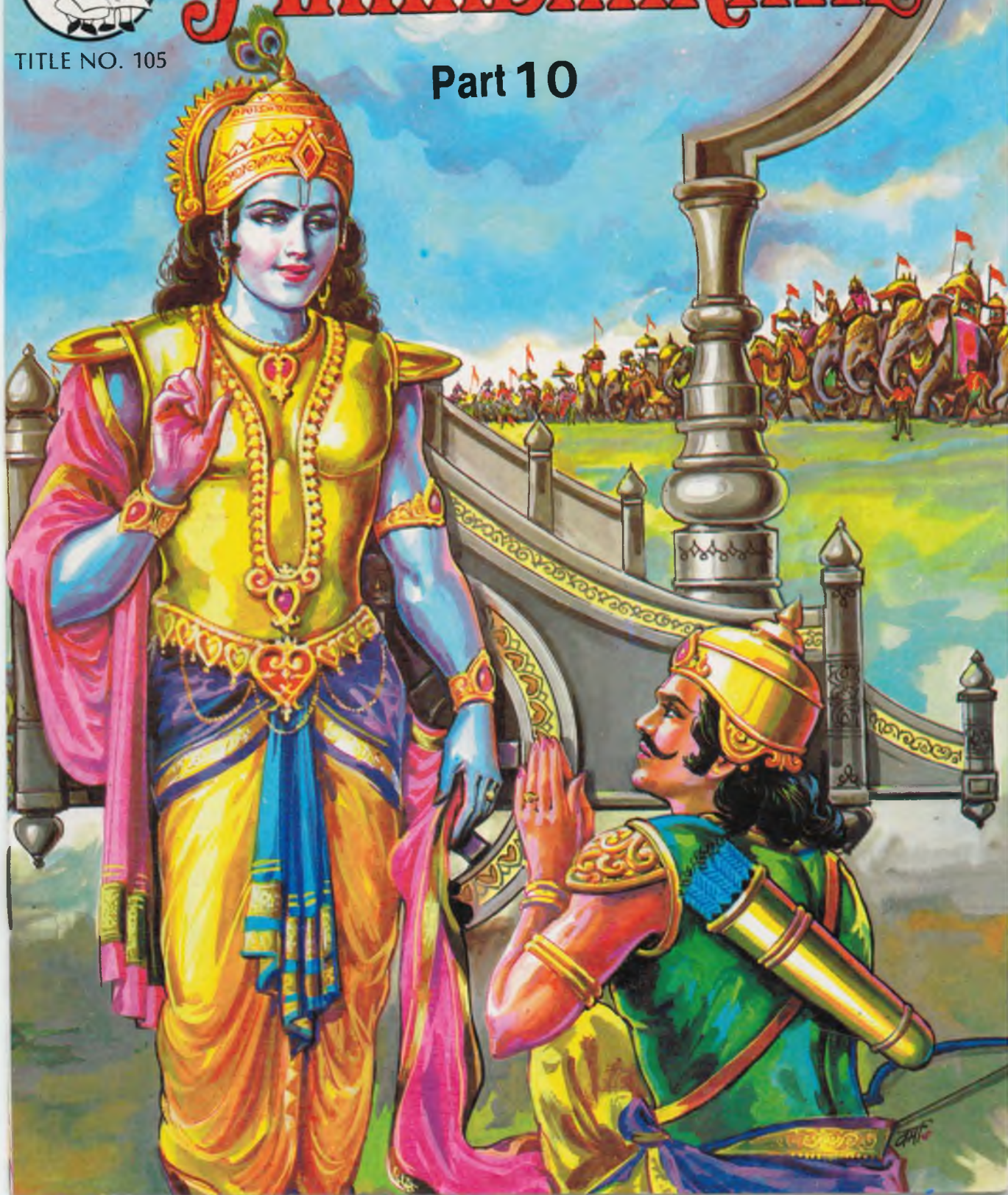




TITLE NO. 105

MAHABHARATA

Part 10



MAHABHARATA



PUBLISHED BY
DREAMLAND PUBLICATIONS
4425, NAI SARA, DELHI-110006 (INDIA)
PHONE : 291 5831, 292 9770, FAX : 011-5 14 1327

Art Work by :
K.L. VERMA

Rs. 20.00

Retold & Edited by :
T.R. BHANOT

Processing - BEST PHOTO LITHO GRAPHERS

MAHABHARAT

PART 10



PUBLISHED BY
DREAMLAND PUBLICATIONS
4425, NAI SARAK, DELHI-110006 (INDIA)
PHONE : 291 5831, 292 9770, FAX : 011-544 1327



We have read on the last page of the foregoing book that Draupadi's brother, Dhrishtadyumna, had been appointed the general of the Pandava army. As for the Kaurava army, Bhishma was the unquestioned general as he was the seniormost and best warrior of the Kaurava court. So, Duryodhana went to him and informed him of the developments in the Pandava camp. At the same time, he requested the old warrior to assume the command of the Kaurava army against the Pandavas. Bhishma was bound to fight in favour of the Kauravas by his own pledge. So, he placed two conditions before Duryodhana.

Bhishma said to Duryodhana, "For me the sons of Pandu and of Dhritrashtra are one and the same. It is true I am bound to fight in your favour. But I will kill the Pandava soldiers only while the five Pandavas will remain safe. I will never kill any of them in any case. The second condition is that Karna will not enter the battle-field so long as I am in command of the Kaurava army. I know he is so dear to you but he has always shown disregard to me and my view-points."

When Karna came to know of the conditions placed by Bhishma, he said to Duryodhana, "I shall not fight as a warrior till the command of the Kaurava army is in Bhishma's hand." Though Duryodhana was at a loss to understand what to do, yet he accepted the conditions of his grand-father and the Kaurava army set out towards the battle-field of Kaurakshetra.



Abhimanyu's marriage with princess Uttara of Viratnagar having been performed, the invitees returned to their respective places. Shri Krishna also came back to his capital Dwarika. Preparations for the war were in full swing. Alliances were being made and different kings were proceeding with their armies to join the Pandavas or the Kauravas each according to his allegiance.

The Yadavas of Dwarika were a power to reckon with in those days. Both the Kauravas and the Pandavas wanted them to join their side. We know that Krishna, the Yadava ruler, was very friendly to the Pandavas. His love for Arjuna was really so deep. But Duryodhana was bent upon enlisting the assistance of the Yadavas for himself. So, he made for Dwarika in order to see Krishna. When he reached the royal palace, Krishna was enjoying his mid-day nap.

Incidentally Arjuna too reached Dwarika for the same purpose just the same day and about the same time. When he reached the royal palace, he found Duryodhana already sitting beside Krishna's head who was sleeping. So, he stood near Krishna's feet waiting for his friend to wake up. After some time Krishna woke up and his eyes fell on Arjuna. As Duryodhana was sitting on the other side, Krishna could not see him instantly.



Both Arjuna and Duryodhana greeted Krishna who entertained them in a befitting manner. Then he asked them both to relate the purposes of their visits. Both of them told him that they wanted his help in the war. Krishna knew that Arjuna and Duryodhana belonged to opposite camps, though both were related to him. So, he thought of consulting Balrama, his elder brother, over the matter.

Shri Krishna sent a message to Balrama who lost no time to reach the place where Krishna was talking to Arjuna and Duryodhana. Krishna placed the entire matter before him and asked for his opinion. Balrama too found himself in a fix as to whom they should promise help and whom to deny it. The Yadavas were closely related to the Kaurava dynasty and both Arjuna and Duryodhana belonged to this dynasty. He knew that Krishna was bound to help the Pandavas because of his immense love for Arjuna and profound respect for Kunti.

But personally Balrama wanted to keep neutral. He did not want to earn the displeasure of either of them. So, he suggested to Krishna to adopt neutrality. But Krishna did not see eye to eye with him. Finding no way-out, Balrama chalked out a plan for himself. Leaving the decision to be made by Krishna, he himself set out on a pilgrimage of the holy places so that he might keep himself away from the tangle.



Balrama having left, Duryodhana said to Krishna, "Brother dear!" you know that a war is shortly going to break out between us and the Pandavas. So, I have come to you to ask for your military help for myself. I know about your untold love for Arjuna. But at the same time, I am sure that I too have a right to get something from you. I reached here earlier than Arjuna did. So, I have had my say first."

Krishna replied, "You are right, O Kaurava Prince. You did reach earlier than Arjuna. But when I woke up, I saw Arjuna standing near my feet first because he was before by face. It was a bit later that I could know of your presence on a high seat towards my head. I admit that both of you are equally dear to me. So, I will help both of you lest either of you should go back disappointed."

Duryodhana was very pleased to hear Krishna's words hoping that he was not going to have a flat refusal in regard to help from him. Krishna said, "Hear both of you carefully. It is a convention that the younger has the right to get what he wants before the elder one. So, I would like to know from Arjuna what he wants." Then Krishna explained his position to both the cousins—Duryodhana and Arjuna—regarding his military strength, i.e. his army that was called **Narayan Sena**.



Addressing Arjuna, Krishna said, "Listen, O Pandava! we the Yadavas are known for our bravery. The Yadava warriors of my army are matchless fighters who have won great battles. This army of mine will be on one side while I alone will be on the other. Moreover, I have taken a pledge not to fight as a warrior in the war to be fought at Kurukshetra between you and the Kauravas. Let me know after a cool and thorough thinking whether you want me or my powerful army."

Arjuna at once retorted, "I want you only and not your army at all. Whether you fight or not makes no difference to me. I simply want you to be with me in the war and I have nothing to say more." Krishna smiled and promised Arjuna to be on his side. As for Duryodhana, he was beside himself with joy to hear Arjuna's demand. He was very astonished indeed why Arjuna did not ask for the powerful Yadava army. He smiled at his short-sightedness. Duryodhana returned to Hastinapur and told everything to Karna and Shakuni. They also felt over-joyed at the winning over the Yadava army by Duryodhana.

When Duryodhana had gone, Krishna said to Arjuna, "Brother dear! why did you ask for me alone leaving aside my army for Duryodhana?"

Arjuna replied, "Krishna! I had a long-cherished desire to beat the Kauravas in the war and force them to lick dust. They have perpetrated untold cruelty on us. I cannot be successful in my mission without your help. So, I demanded you!"



Shalya, the ruler of Madra Kingdom, was queen Madri's brother. So, he was a maternal uncle to the Pandavas. When he got the news that the Pandavas had decided to measure arms with the Kauravas in order to win their kingdom back, he raised a powerful army and marched to join the Pandava camp. Before long, Duryodhana also came to know of Shalya's movement towards the Pandava camp. Encouraged at getting the Yadava army, he decided to win over the Madra ruler to his side by hook or by crook.

Duryodhana had consultations with Karna and Shakuni and sent his men to provide every possible facility to the marching soldiers of Shalya. The Madra ruler mistook these men to have been sent by Yudhishtir and decided to reward them for their services. Duryodhana disclosed that all the arrangements were made by him and not by Yudhishtir.

Shalya was astonished and found himself between the devil and the deep sea. He knew that wicked Duryodhana had taken him in. He said to Duryodhana, "What can I do for you?" Duryodhana replied, "Join me along with your army."

Shalya was stunned to hear Duryodhana's words but he had no other choice but to join the Kauravas. He went to see Yudhishtir who gladly asked him to help Duryodhana and fulfil his promise. Pleased at this, Shalya promised him not to harm any of the five brothers in any way.



The Pandava army had marched towards the battle-field of Kurukshetra after full preparations. The sound of shells, the neighing of war-horses, the trumpeting of war-elephants and the war-cries raised by the soldiers had caused the directions to resound. The Pandava army had pitched their tents and the Pandava brothers and Krishna kept drawing up the plans of war till late hours of the night.

The Kaurava army also left Hastinapur for the battle-field of Kurukshetra. This army included a full regiment each of chariots, war-elephants, cavalry and lakhs of soldiers on foot. Reaching Kurukshetra, the Kaurava army pitched its tents just opposite to those of the Pandavas leaving a vast no-man's land between the two. In order to make his presence felt, Duryodhana sent Ulook, son of Shakuni, to Yudhishtir with a message that the Kaurava army had reached to face them under the command of Bhishma.

After thorough consultations with Krishna, his brothers and other warriors of his army, Yudhishtir declared war against the Kaurvas. He warned his soldiers and lieutenants to be aware that as they were to face the old warrior Bhishma on the very first day, they must be well prepared for that. Arjun was deputed to face Bhishma while Krishna was to act as his charioteer. Both the sides began to array their soldiers for the ensuing battle.



In an earlier book we have read about forcible abduction of Rukmini by Krishna and the defeat of her brother Rukmi at Krishna's hands. Rukmi had not returned to his father's capital out of shame and had founded a new town named Bhojkat. Hearing the news of the impending war at Kurukshetra, Rukmi marched with his army to join the Pandavas so that he could win the friendship of Krishna, his brother-in-law.

Reaching the Pandava camp, Rukmi said to Arjuna, "I see that Duryodhana's army is larger than yours. So, I have come for your help. I am ready to attack the wing of the Kaurava army which you want me to do. I am capable of defeating Drona, Bhishma and Kripacharya." Arjuna smiled and retorted, "Rukmi! we are not afraid of the Kaurava army. If you are ready to join us unconditionally, you are welcome, otherwise you may have your own way."

Hearing Arjuna's words, Rukmi was beside himself with rage and led his army to the Kaurava camp. Reaching there he said to Duryodhana, "The Pandavas have refused to accept my help. So, I have come to join you in the war."

Duryodhana said, "You have come to me after your offer of help was rejected by the Pandavas. How can I accept your help, then?" So, Rukmi returned to his capital after suffering disgrace at the hands of the Pandavas as well as the Kauravas.



Just a day before the outbreak of the war, Bhishma began to narrate the qualities of the Kaurava warriors and his plans of warfare with a view to encouraging Duryodhana. Duryodhana was indeed very pleased to hear all this. But all of a sudden Duryodhana mentioned the name of Karna which Bhishma did not relish. He said, "I don't reckon Karna among notable warriors though you have great confidence in him. He, along with Shakuni, is responsible for inciting you for this war. Moreover, he has the bad habit of indulging in self-praise and tall talk. He lacks common sense and is given to back-biting. He has incurred a curse from Saint Parshurama. So, I doubt whether he can be of any help to you. Truly speaking, he is not able to face Arjuna now." Drona strongly supported the contention of Bhishma regarding Karna.

Suddenly Karna came there and his rage knew no bounds to hear the words of both the old warriors. He said, "Grandpa! it is now clear that you want to help the Pandavas by pushing a wedge between me and Duryodhana. You are not aware, perhaps, that old age has overtaken you." Then Karna turned to Duryodhana and advised him not to depend on Bhishma as he had grown too old to act as the chief of the Kaurava army. Also he expressed his inability to fight under Bishma. So, he left the battle-field promising to return after Bhishma's death.



Both the armies stood face to face in the battle-field of Kurukshetra. A code for the war was finalised and warriors from both the camps took their pledges to abide by the code. The chief rules of the code were to stop fighting at sunset, to indulge in a fair and just fight, not to attack a person who is bare-handed or who has accepted his defeat, not to harm those who carry weapons, provisions or other war-material to the battle-field and not to attack the camp where the wounded soldiers were under treatment.

Bhishma, the Kaurava general, encouraged his soldiers saying that they should fight whole-heartedly caring little for their lives. He explained to them that a true soldier fights to the last and never shows his back on the field of battle. Either he is crowned with a victory or falls fighting bravely. The warriors who lay down their lives in a battle are accorded a rousing welcome in heaven. Hearing Bhishma's words, the Kaurava soldiers raised loud war-cries in excitement.

Having watched the Kaurava army standing in perfect array, Yudhishtir said to Arjun, 'Brother dear; the strength of the enemy looks to be larger than ours. So, it is better to array our army in the needle-point shape so that fewer soldiers should be able to stem the attack of the enemy'. Arjuna obeyed his brother and was going to buck up his soldiers when suddenly he happened to cast a glance on the Kaurava army. A bundle of doubts gripped his mind.



When Arjuna saw Bhishma, Drona, Ashwathama and other near and dear ones standing in the opposite camp, he trembled to think that he would have to kill them in order to gain a victory in the war. He said to himself, "Is it proper to attack and kill those whom we have always held in high esteem and almost worshipped out of profound devotion? Isn't it a sin to kill those who are our blood-relations and whom we have always loved so much? Even if we are able to kill them and gain a victory, what shall be the charm of such a victory? Certainly, it is against the norms of society and the religion as well. I must not do it at all."

Thinking so, Arjuna placed his bow and arrows down and expressed his doubts to Krishna, his true friend and guide. Seeing Arjuna in damped spirits, Krishna was highly amazed. But he lost no time to understand what ailed the Pandava general.

So, Krishna delivered the sermon of **Karamyoga** which holds that man's duty lies in performing the action while its rewards should be left to God. It also holds that to oppress others is a sin but to tolerate oppression is far bigger a sin. This sermon came to be known as **Bhagwad Geeta**. It forms the gist of the Indian philosophy and is regarded as one of the best books on philosophy.



The sermon of **Karmayoga** delivered by Krishna set Arjuna's all doubts to rest and he was in spirits once again. He addressed his warriors in an encouraging tone to fall upon the enemy with such a force as would do away with them. Hearing the words of the Pandava general, the soldiers raised loud war-cries which rent the skies. The war was just going to break out when there was a commotion in the Pandava ranks. Everybody was surprised at it.

Yudhishtir took off his armour and placed his weapons on the ground. Then he walked towards the Kaurava army to where Bhishma was standing. Seeing it, Arjuna and Krishna ran after him. They were afraid that Yudhishtir might not postpone the war because of his peace-loving nature. Paying no heed to Arjuna and Krishna, Yudhishtir elbowed his way through the Kaurava ranks and got to where Bhishma was sitting on his chariot. Touching his feet he said, "Revered Grandpa! we have been forced to fight against you. I have come to ask for your permission as well as your benedictions for our victory."

Bhishma blessed Yudhishtir to be victorious and he then went to Dronacharya, Kripacharya and his maternal uncle Shalya. Having got their blessings for victory, Yudhishtir returned to his camp and the battle came to be started.



The vanguard of the Kaurava army was under the command of Dushasan while that of the Pandava army was under Bheemsen. Bhishma led such a fierce attack on the Pandava army that the Pandava soldiers trembled in fear. Seeing this, Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son from Subhadra, got enraged and advanced to face the old Kaurava general. He showered arrows at Bhishma, Shalya, Kritvarma and Durmukh. Seeing this, the Kaurava warriors came and surrounded Abhimanyu from all sides. But he did not budge even an inch and nullified all the arrows shot at him by Bhishma and other Kaurava warriors. He blew off the flag on the Bhishma's chariot with an arrow. By now, the Pandava warriors had come to Abhimanyu's help. They provided him with a cover and showered their weapons at Bhishma who was forced to defend himself.

Prince Uttar of Viratnagar mounted an elephant and attacked Shalya with such a force that all the four horses of the chariot of the Madra king were killed. Shalya shot a spear at Uttar which pierced his chest and he fell down dead. Strangely enough, Uttar's elephant attacked Shalya but it was also killed.

Seeing his brother dead, Uttar's elder brother Shwet came to face Bhishma. A long fierce battle went on between the two for several hours. At last Shwet fell fighting after massacring hundreds of Kaurava soldiers. Thus the Kauravas had an upper hand on the first day of the war.



Not to speak of Arjuna, Bheema's mace was doing away with the Kaurava soldiers who had come to face him in another wing of the army. He gave such a fierce blow to Duryodhana himself that he fell down senseless. His charioteer was forced to drive him out of the battle-field in order to save his life. On the other hand, Satyaki advanced to lend support to Arjuna and he killed the charioteer of Bhishma. Uncontrolled by anyone the horses of Bhishma's chariot ran out of the battle-field along with Bhishma sitting in it.

In a third wing of the battle-field, Dhrishtadyumna was facing Dronacharya. As he had taken a vow to kill Dróna, a fierce battle was going on between the two. Drona was trying his best to checkmate the Panchala prince, but Dhrishtadyumna attacked Drona first with a mace and then with a sword. Still Drona wounded him badly with his arrows. So, Bheema ran to his help and made such a violent attack on Dronacharya that he was out of his wits.

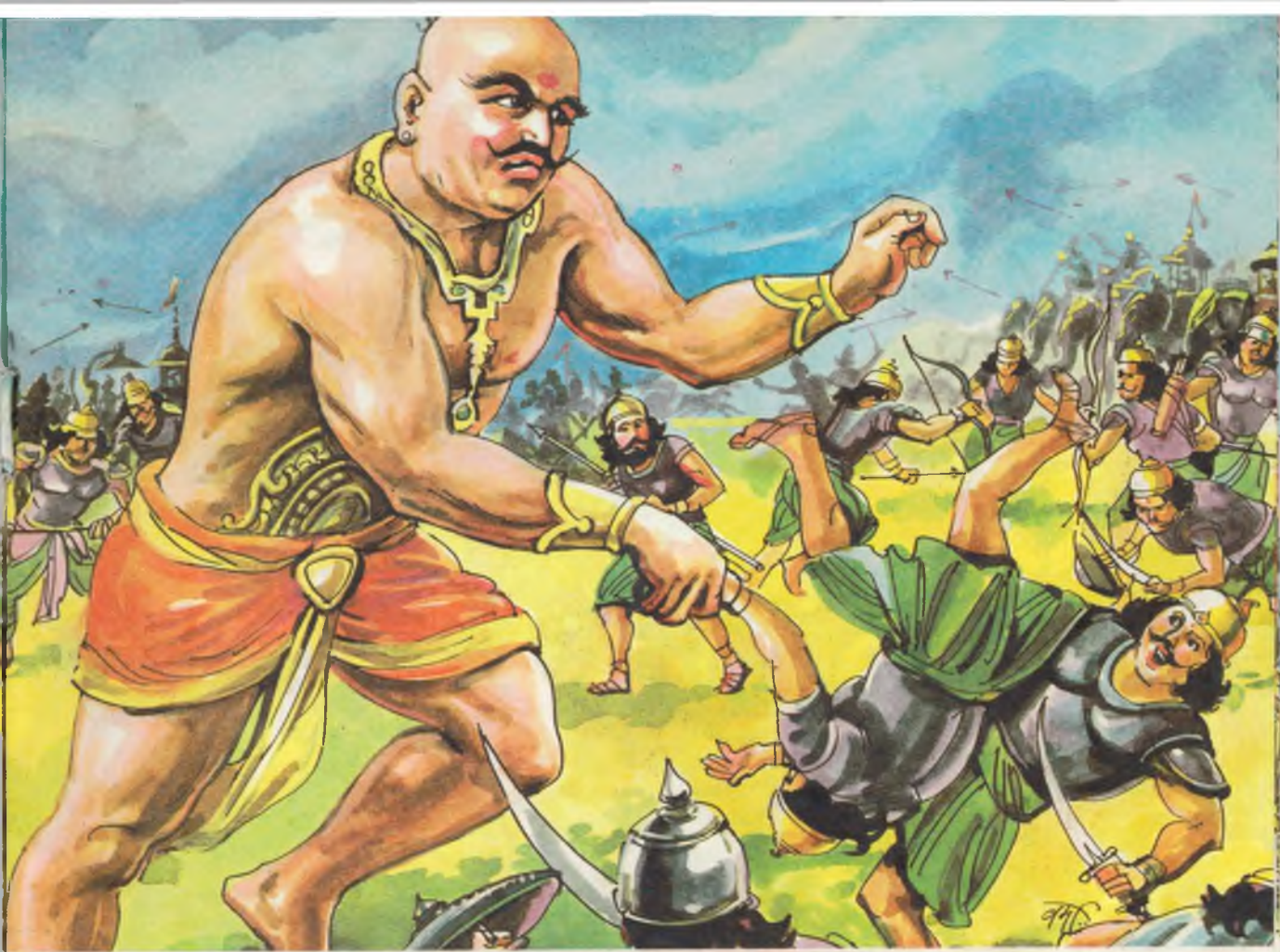
Seeing Bheema pitched against Drona, Duryodhana sent Karna's regiment to help the great guru. But Bheema routed this regiment and killed most of its soldiers. The sun was going to set and the Kaurava army had lost heart. Seeing this, Bhishma came to face Bheema with a new charioteer but Satyaki and Abhimanyu were there to set at naught every effort of Bhishma and Dronacharya. The sun had set by now and so the battle of the second day came to a close.



The set-back suffered by the Pandava army on the first day of the war was an eye-opener for Arjuna and Dhrishtadyumna. They encouraged their soldiers and organised them in a typical array. As for Duryodhana, he was in very high spirits because of the upper hand that his generals had got on the previous day. Roaring like a lion, he bucked up his soldiers saying, "Fight to the last with matchless bravery; victory must lick your feet."

Hearing Duryodhana's call, the Kaurava army, led by Bhishma, attacked the Pandava army so fiercely that the Pandava soldiers ran pell-mell out of fear. A large number of them fell fighting while others raised a hue and cry. Arjuna could not tolerate all this and asked Krishna to drive his chariot to where Bhishma was standing. Seeing Arjuna advancing towards himself, Bhishma welcomed him with a volley of arrows.

Nullifying the arrows shot by Bhishma, Arjuna penetrated through the Kaurava ranks and started butchering the Kaurava soldiers with a bitter vengeance. Seeing this, Duryodhana trembled from top to toe and said, "Grandpa! do something to check Arjuna's advance otherwise he will decimate our soldiers altogether". Krishna was driving Arjuna's chariot deftly and swiftly. Arjuna was indeed playing havoc with the Kaurava army and for a moment Duryodhana felt that Bhishma would not be able to check Arjuna's action however hard he might try.



On the third day of the battle, Bhishma organised his soldiers in a new array and its front was placed under Duryodhana's protection. Everybody was sure that the Pandavas would not be able to pierce the Kaurava ranks that day. The Pandavas organised their soldiers aiming at penetrating through the Kaurava lines. The Pandava army was standing in the shape of a half circle. Its ends were protected by Bheema and Arjuna respectively.

The battle started and it was so fierce that even the bravest warriors were seen outwitted. Neither party was able to break through the ranks of the other. All of a sudden, Shakuni reached with a reinforcement but Abhimanyu and Satyaki stemmed his advance and ultimately Shakuni suffered a crushing defeat. Bheema had remembered Ghatotkachh, his son from Hidimba, and he at once appeared on the scene. He played such a havoc with the Kaurava soldiers that even Bhishma and Drona were shaken to the back-bone.

In a scuffle between Bheema and Duryodhana, Duryodhana again fell down senseless. In order to hide this fact from the Kaurava soldiers, his charioteer drove the chariot out of the battle-field. The Kaurava soldiers thought that Duryodhana had run away from the field and so they lost ground. As a result, the Pandava soldiers attacked and perished them mercilessly in large numbers.



When Duryodhana came to know that his army had been routed, he lost his temper and began to blame Bhishma and Drona saying that they were inwardly against him and wanted the Pandavas to be victorious. Bhishma smilingly retorted, "Duryodhana! I had already made it clear to you that the Pandavas are invincible. I again emphasize that you will never gain a victory because you are following a wrong path while the Pandavas are fighting for a just cause."

The Pandavas had gained an upper hand in the first half of the day. But Bhishma reorganised his soldiers and led such a terrible attack on the Pandavas that the Pandava soldiers ran pell-mell to save their lives. All efforts on the part of Arjuna, Bheema, Krishna and Shikhandi proved of no avail. So, Krishna said to Arjuna, "Arjuna! recall your vow to kill Bhishma, Drona and Karna and try to fulfil it." Instigated by Krishna's words, Arjuna requested him to take his chariot in front of Bhishma.

Reaching before the old warrior, Arjuna shot three arrows at Bhishma and broke his bow to pieces. Bhishma was going to take up another bow but Arjuna broke it too. Then a fierce battle followed between the two. Seeing Bhishma gaining an upper hand, Krishna could not remain quiet. Lifting the broken wheel of a chariot, he ran towards Bhishma but it was against the norms of the war. So, Arjuna ran after Krishna and brought him back to his seat.



On the fourth day, Bhishma again organised the Kaurava soldiers and ordered them to attack the Pandavas. Arjuna was quite alert and he also launched a counter-attack. In order to discourage Arjuna, Duryodhana made an evil plan and surrounded his son Abhimanyu with a view to killing him. But the young boy faced them like a lion-cub. Seeing Abhimanyu surrounded by Kaurava warriors, Dhrishtadyumna ran to help him and a fierce scuffle took place.

Now Bheema advanced to deal with the Kaurava warriors who were surrounding Abhimanyu. Seeing this, Duryodhana let loose a horde of war elephants at Bheema but the brave Pandava put them to route. Now Duryodhana advanced along with his brothers to face Bheema. But he was in such a rage that he killed eight Kaurava princes and wounded Duryodhana very seriously. Duryodhana shot a weapon at Bheema that made him senseless for some time. Seeing this, Ghatotkachh came forward and routed the Kaurava army. Even Bhishma and Drona failed to check his advance. So, they ordered to close the day's battle because the sun was just going to set.

Duryodhana went to Bhishma's tent and asked him the reason of the Pandavas superiority in the battle every day. Bhishma again advised him to make peace with the Pandavas or to face destruction at their hands.



On the fifth day, both the armies again stood against each other in the battle-field. Bhishma had organised his soldiers in a novel manner so that the Pandava soldiers should not be able to break through their lines. On the other hand, Yudhishtir also arrayed his soldiers with a view to putting the Kaurava army to rout. As usual, Bhêema was leading the army followed by Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna and Satyaki behind him. Yudhishtir, Nakul and Sahdev were guarding the army from the rear.

With the sounding of shells from both the sides, the soldiers attacked and counter-attacked. Bhishma was shooting volleys of arrows furiously but Arjuna was cutting them just in the way. Seeing this, Duryodhana was cut to the quick and swore at Dronacharya who retorted, "Duryodhana! we are sparing no pains to push the enemy back but you are disturbing us because you do not know the depth of the might of the Pandavas." Saying this, Drona fell upon the Pandava soldiers like a hungry lion but Satyaki and Bheema checked his advance. Now Bhishma and Shalya came to join the great guru.

Seeing this, Shikhandi came forward and Bhishma at once left the battle-field saying that it was beneath his dignity to fight against a eunuch. The battle went on fiercely and a large number of soldiers were killed by mid-day.



In the afternoon of the fifth day, Duryodhana sent Bhurishrava against Satyaki who was playing havoc with the Kaurava soldiers. Bhurishrava was a master swordsman and it was very difficult to defeat him. Satyaki was badly wounded and his ten sons ran to help him. But Bhurishrava was so furious that he killed all of them. Seeing this Bheema put Satyaki into his chariot and carried him away.

On the other front, Arjuna launched such a fierce attack that the Kaurava soldiers were killed in thousands. The Pandava soldiers raised loud cries of victory in joy. By now the sun had set and so Bhishma ordered the day's battle to be closed.

On the sixth day, Dhrishtadyumna arrayed the Pandava army in the form of a crocodile. As for the Kaurava army, it was organised in the form of a swan. The sixth day's battle was indeed extremely bitter. Right in the morning, Drona's charioteer was killed and he fell upon the Pandava army in immense rage. The Pandavas were no mean warriors either. so, they rushed at the Kaurava soldiers with the result that the battle arrays on both the sides were broken and complete disorder prevailed.

Disorganised armies never fight efficiently, though they cause more destruction and exactly this happened on the sixth day of the battle of Mahabharata. Both sides suffered heavy losses and most of the warriors were badly wounded by sunset.



Duryodhana had been badly wounded while fighting against Bheema on the evening of the sixth day. So, he went to Bhishma and expressed his bitter feelings before him. Bhishma consoled him saying that the Kaurava warriors were quite true to their salt. Then the old warrior organised the Kaurava army for the battle of the seventh day. The royal physician applied such an ointment on Duryodhana's wounds that he felt greatly relieved and got prepared to fight again. Bhishma had arrayed the Kaurava army in a marvellously novel manner.

Yudhishtir had organised his soldiers so that they might be able to strike in a far more effective manner. The seventh day's battle was to be fought on several fronts—Arjuna was facing Bhishma while Drona was fighting against Drupad. Bheema was facing Duryodhana and his brothers while Nakul and Sahdev were attacking Shalya, their real maternal uncle. Drupad was defeated by Drona and he lost his son named Shankh as well. Shikhandi was beaten by Ashwathama, Drona's son.

Bheema wounded and defeated Duryodhana and Satyaki forced Alumbush, a demon fighting for Duryodhana, to flee the battle-field. Ghatotkachh was defeated by the old warrior Bhagdutt. But Nakul and Sahdev defeated Shalya who fell into a swoon and his charioteer drove him out of the battle-field.



The battle of the seventh day was going on in full swing. Yudhishtir himself was fighting against Shrutayu. He killed his charioteer and forced him to flee for his life. A fierce battle was going on between king Chekitan and Kripacharya, the royal priest of the Kauravas. Dhrishtketu was facing Bhurishrava whom he wounded very seriously. But Bhurishrava was a matchless warrior indeed. Though seriously wounded, he defeated his opponent and forced him to retreat.

Abhimanyu advanced against Duryodhana's brothers and defeated them in no time. He was going to kill them when he was reminded of Bheema's pledge to kill Duryodhana and his brothers so that Draupadi could wash her hair with their blood. So, leaving them alive, he sprang at Bhishma. Seeing the young boy pitched against the seasoned old warrior, all the five Pandavas rushed to help him. But it was almost sunset and so the battle came to a close.

On the eighth day, Bhishma arrayed his soldiers in the form of a turtle. Seeing this, Dhristadyumna organised his soldiers in three fronts led by Bheema, Satyaki and Yudhishtir respectively. Bheema was badly after Duryodhana's brothers. He was successful in killing eight of them in the early hours of the battle. On the other front, Iravan, Arjuna's beloved son from the Naga princess Ulupi, was killed when he was facing Alumbush, the demon.



Seeing Iravan lying dead, Ghatotkachh roared like a lion and fell upon the Kaurava soldiers. Unable to face his onslaught, they ran pell-mell out of fear. Duryodhana was forced to come in person to check the advance of Bheema's son. But Ghatotkachh threw a fearful weapon—**Shakti**—at Duryodhana. Luckily it missed the aim and struck at Duryodhana's elephant that was killed then and there.

Soon Drona came to help Duryodhana with a fresh regiment. Several Kaurava warriors surrounded Ghatotkachh who gave out a loud roar. Hearing it Bheema rushed for his help and a large number of soldiers fell fighting. By now it was sunset and the battle was ordered to be closed.

Duryodhana was very perturbed at the losses and reverses that his army had been suffering every day. So he called his brother Dushashan and said, "Brother dear! we must fight against the enemy with all our might today. We must do something so that Shikhandi does not find any chance to come before Bhishma who has taken a pledge not to shoot any weapon upon a eunuch. We must not be negligent in any way lest we should be caught unawares. Remember that a negligent lion can be killed by a dog even". Soon both the armies came face to face and the battle started in right earnest.

