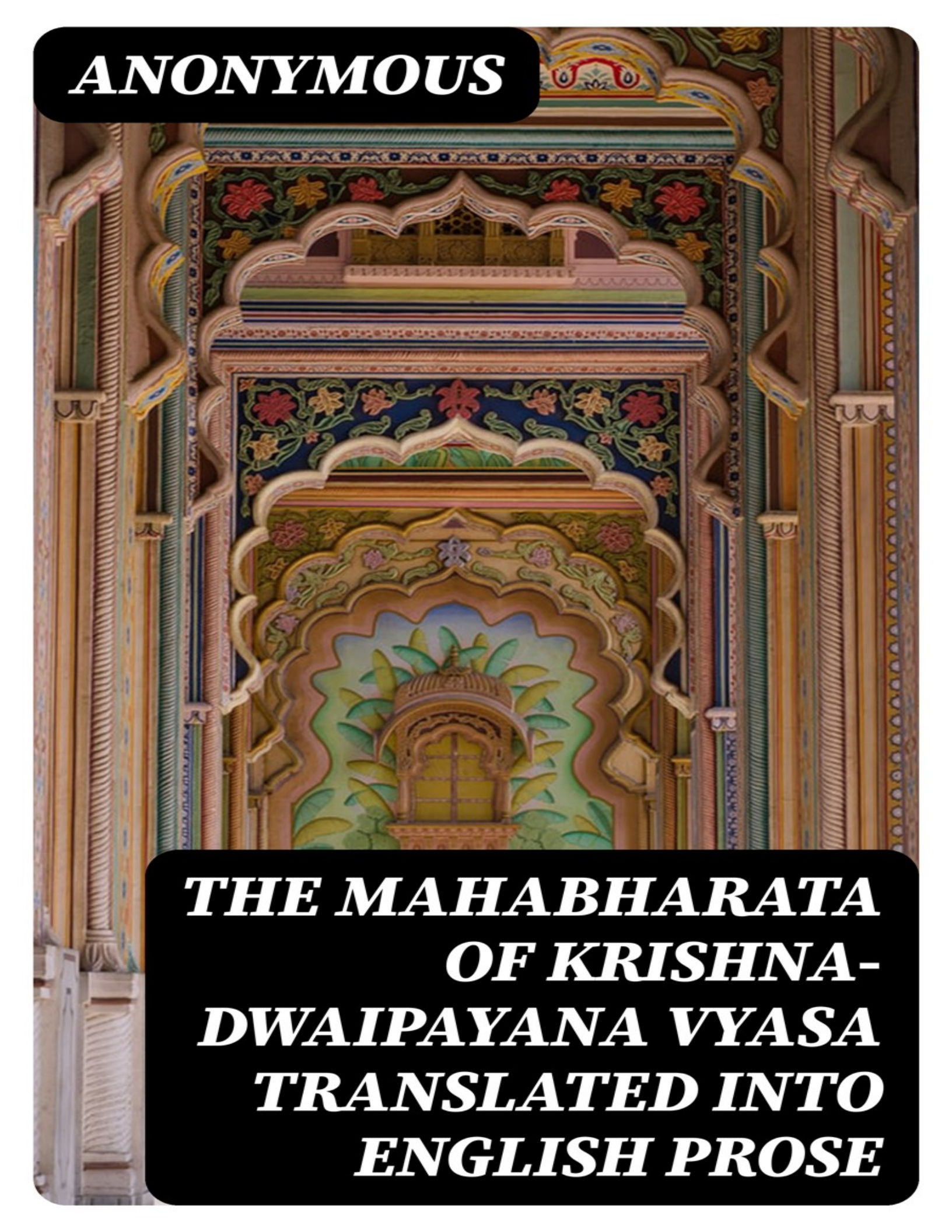




ANONYMOUS

***THE MAHABHARATA
OF KRISHNA-
DWAIPAYANA VYASA
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH PROSE***

Anonymous

The Mahabharata of Krishna- Dwaipayana Vyasa Translated into English Prose

Virata Parva

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THE MAHABHARATA

VIRATA PARVA

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(*Pandava-Pravesa Parva*)

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OM! Having bowed down to Narayana, and Nara, the most exalted of male beings, and also to the goddess Saraswati, must the word *Jaya* be uttered.

Janamejaya said, "How did my great-grandfathers, afflicted with the fear of Duryodhana, pass their days undiscovered in the city of Virata? And, O Brahman, how did the highly blessed Draupadi, stricken with woe, devoted to her lords, and ever adoring the Deity¹, spend her days unrecognised?"

Vaisampayana said, "Listen, O lord of men, how thy great grandfathers passed the period of unrecognition in the city of Virata. Having in this way obtained boons from the god of Justice, that best of virtuous men, Yudhishthira, returned to the asylum and related unto the Brahmanas all that had happened. And having related everything unto them, Yudhishthira restored to that regenerate Brahmana who had followed him the churning staff and the fire-sticks he had lost. And, O Bharata, the son of the god of Justice, the royal Yudhishthira of high soul then called together all his younger brothers and addressed them, saying, 'Exiled from our kingdom, we have passed twelve years. The thirteenth year, hard to spend, hath now come. Do thou therefore, O Arjuna, the son of Kunti, select some spot where we may pass our days undiscovered by our enemies.'

"Arjuna replied, "Even by virtue of Dharma's boon, we shall, O lord of men, range about undiscovered by men. Still, for purposes of residence, I shall mention some spots that are both delightful and secluded. Do thou select some one of them. Surrounding the kingdom of the Kurus, are, many countries beautiful and abounding in corn, such as Panchala, Chedi, Matsya, Surasena, Pattachchara, Dasarna, Navarashtra, Malla, Salva, Yugandhara, Saurashtra, Avanti, and the spacious Kuntirashtra. Which of these, O king, wouldst thou choose, and where, O foremost of monarchs, shall we spend this year?"

"Yudhishtira said 'O thou of mighty arms, it is even so. What that adorable Lord of all creatures hath said must become true. Surely, after consulting together, we must select some delightful, auspicious, and agreeable region for our abode, where we may live free from fear. The aged Virata, king of the Matsyas, is virtuous and powerful and charitable, and is liked by all. And he is also attached to the Pandavas. Even in the city of Virata, O child, we shall, O Bharata, spend this year, entering his service. Tell me, ye sons of the Kuru race, in what capacities ye will severally present yourselves before the king of the Matsyas!'

"Arjuna said, 'O god among men, what service wilt thou take in Virata's kingdom? O righteous one, in what capacity wilt thou reside in the city of Virata? Thou art mild, and charitable, and modest, and virtuous, and firm in promise. What wilt thou, O king, afflicted as thou art with calamity, do? A king is qualified to bear trouble like an ordinary person. How wilt thou overcome this great calamity that has overtaken thee?'

"Yudhishtira replied, 'Ye sons of the Kuru race, ye bulls among men, hear what I shall do on appearing before king Virata. Presenting myself as a Brahmana, Kanka by name, skilled in dice and fond of play, I shall become a courtier of that high-souled king. And moving upon chess-boards beautiful pawns made of ivory, of blue and yellow and red and white hue, by throws of black and red dice, I shall entertain the king with his courtiers and friends. And while I shall continue to thus delight the king, nobody will succeed in discovering me. And should the monarch ask me, I shall say, *Formerly I was the bosom friend of Yudhishtira*. I tell you that it is thus that I shall pass my days (in the city of Virata). What office wilt thou, O Vrikodara, fill in the city of Virata?'"

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"Bhima said, 'I intend to present myself before the lord of Virata as a cook bearing the name of Vallava. I am skilled in culinary art, and I shall prepare curries for the king, and excelling all those skilful cooks that had hitherto dressed his food I shall gratify the monarch. And I shall carry mighty loads of wood. And witnessing that mighty feat, the monarch will be pleased. And, O Bharata, beholding such superhuman feats of mine, the servants of the royal household will honour me as a king. And I shall have entire control over all kinds of viands and drinks. And commanded to subdue powerful elephants and mighty bulls, I will do as bidden. And if any combatants will fight with me in the lists, then will I vanquish them, and thereby entertain the monarch. But I shall not take the life of any of them. I shall only bring them down in such way that they may not be killed. And on being asked as regards my antecedent I shall say that—*Formerly I was the wrestler and cook of Yudhishtira*. Thus shall I, O king, maintain myself.'

"Yudhishtira said, 'And what office will be performed by that mighty descendant of the Kurus, Dhananjaya, the son of Kunti, that foremost of men possessed of long arms, invincible in fight, and before whom, while he was staying with Krishna, the divine Agni himself desirous of consuming the forest of Khandava had formerly appeared in the guise of a Brahmana? What office will be performed by that best of warriors, Arjuna, who proceeded to that forest and gratified Agni, vanquishing on a single car and slaying huge

Nagas and *Rakshasas*, and who married the sister of Vasuki himself, the king of the *Nagas*? Even as the sun is the foremost of all heat-giving bodies, as the Brahmana is the best of all bipeds, as the cobra is the foremost of all serpents, as Fire is the first of all things possessed of energy, as the thunderbolt is the foremost of all weapons, as the humped bull is the foremost of all animals of the bovine breed, as the ocean is the foremost of all watery expanses, as clouds charged with rain are the foremost of all clouds, as Ananta is the first of all *Nagas*, as Airavata is the foremost of all elephants, as the son is the foremost of all beloved objects, and lastly, as the wife is the best of all friends, so, O Vrikodara, is the youthful Gudakesa, the foremost of all bowmen. And O Bharata, what office will be performed by Vibhatsu, the wielder of *Gandiva*, whose car is drawn by white horses, and who is not inferior to Indra or Vasudeva Himself? What office will be performed by Arjuna who, dwelling for five years in the abode of the thousand-eyed Deity (Indra) shining in celestial lustre, acquired by his own energy the science of superhuman arms with all celestial weapons, and whom I regard as the tenth *Rudra*, the thirteenth *Aditya*, the ninth *Vasu*, and the tenth *Graha*, whose arms, symmetrical and long, have the skin hardened by constant strokes of the bowstring and cicatrices which resemble those on the humps of bulls,—that foremost of warriors who is as Himavat among mountains, the ocean among expanses of water, Sakra among the celestial, Havyavaha (fire) among the Vasus, the tiger among beasts, and Garuda among feathery tribes!'

"Arjuna replied, 'O lord of the Earth, I will declare myself as one of the neuter sex. O monarch, it is, indeed difficult to hide the marks of the bowstring on my arms. I will, however, cover both my cicatrized arms with bangles. Wearing brilliant rings on my ears and conch-bangles on my wrists and causing a braid to hang down from my head, I shall, O king, appear as one of the third sex, Vrihannala by name. And living as a female I shall (always) entertain the king and the inmates of the inner apartments by reciting stories. And, O king, I shall also instruct the women of Virata's palace in singing and delightful modes of dancing and in musical instruments of diverse kinds. And I shall also recite the various excellent acts of men and thus conceal myself, O son of Kunti, by feigning disguise. And, O Bharata should the king enquire, I will say that, *I lived as a waiting maid of Draupadi in Yudhishtira's palace*. And, O foremost of kings, concealing myself by this means, as fire is concealed by ashes, I shall pass my days agreeably in the palace of Virata.'"

Vaisampayana continued, "Having said this, Arjuna, that best of men and foremost of virtuous persons, became silent. Then the king addressed another brother of his."²

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"Yudhishtira said, 'Tender, possessed of a graceful presence, and deserving of every luxury as thou art, what office wilt thou, O heroic Nakula, discharge while living in the dominions of that king? Tell me all about it!'

"Nakula said, 'Under the name of Granthika, I shall become the keeper of the horses of king Virata. I have a thorough knowledge (of this work) and am skilful in tending horses. Besides, the task is agreeable to me, and I possess great skill in training and treating horses; and horses are ever dear to me as they are to thee, O king of the Kurus. At my hands even colts and mares become docile; these never become vicious in bearing a rider or drawing a car.³ And those persons in the city of Virata that may enquire of me, I shall, O bull of the Bharata race, say,—*Formerly I was employed by Yudhishtira in the charge of his horses.* Thus disguised, O king, I shall spend my days delightfully in the city of Virata. No one will be able to discover me as I will gratify the monarch thus!'⁴

"Yudhishtira said, 'How wilt thou, O Sahadeva, bear thyself before that king? And what, O child, is that which thou wilt do in order to live in disguise.'

"Sahadeva replied, 'I will become a keeper of the king of Virata's kine. I am skilled in milking kine and taking their history as well as in taming their fierceness. Passing under the name of Tantripala, I shall perform my duties deftly. Let thy heart's fever be dispelled. Formerly I was frequently employed to look after thy kine, and, O Lord of earth, I have

a particular knowledge of that work. And, O monarch, I am well-acquainted with the nature of kine, as also with their auspicious marks and other matters relating to them. I can also discriminate bulls with auspicious marks, the scent of whose urine may make even the barren being forth child. Even thus will I live, and I always take delight in work of this kind. Indeed, no one will then be able to recognise me, and I will moreover gratify the monarch.'

"Yudhishtira said, 'This is our beloved wife dearer to us than our lives. Verily, she deserveth to be cherished by us like a mother, and regarded like an elder sister. Unacquainted as she is with any kind of womanly work, what office will Krishna, the daughter of Drupada, perform? Delicate and young, she is a princess of great repute. Devoted to her lords, and eminently virtuous, also, how will she live? Since her birth, she hath enjoyed only garlands and perfumes and ornaments and costly robes.'

"Draupadi replied, 'There is a class of persons called *Sairindhri*,⁵ who enter the services of other. Other females, however (that are respectable) do not do so. Of this class there are some. I shall give myself out as a *Sairindhri*, skilled in dressing hair. And, O Bharata, on being questioned by the king, I shall say that I served as a waiting woman of Draupadi in Yudhishtira's household. I shall thus pass my days in disguise. And I shall serve the famous Sudeshna, the wife of the king. Surely, obtaining me she will cherish me (duly). Do not grieve so, O king.'

"Yudhishtira said, 'O Krishna, thou speakest well. But O fair girl, thou wert born in a respectable family. Chaste as thou art, and always engaged in observing virtuous vows,

thou knowest not what is sin. Do thou, therefore, conduct thyself in such a way that sinful men of evil hearts may not be gladdened by gazing at thee."

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"Yudhishtira said, 'Ye have already said what offices ye will respectively perform. I also, according to the measure of my sense, have said what office I will perform. Let our priest, accompanied by charioteers and cooks, repair to the abode of Drupada, and there maintain our *Agnihotra* fires. And let Indrasena and the others, taking with them the empty cars, speedily proceeded to Dwaravati. Even this is my wish. And let all these maid-servants of Draupadi go to the Panchalas, with our charioteers and cooks. And let all of them say,—*We do not know where the Pandavas have gone leaving us at the lake of Dwaitavana.*'"

Vaisampayana said, "Having thus taken counsel of one another and told one another the offices they would discharge, the Pandavas sought Dhaumya's advice. And Dhaumya also gave them advice in the following words, saying, 'Ye sons of Pandu, the arrangements ye have made regarding the Brahmanas, your friends, cars, weapons, and the (sacred) fires, are excellent. But it behoveth thee, O Yudhishtira, and Arjuna specially, to make provision for the protection of Draupadi. Ye king, ye are well-acquainted with the characters of men. Yet whatever may be your knowledge, friends may from affection be permitted to repeat what is already known. Even this is subservient to the eternal interests of virtue, pleasure, and profit. I shall, therefore speak to you something. Mark ye. To dwell with a king is, alas, difficult. I shall tell you, ye princes, how ye may reside in the royal household, avoiding every fault. Ye

Kauravas, honourably or otherwise, ye will have to pass this year in the king's palace, undiscovered by those that know you. Then in the fourteenth year, ye will live happy. O son of Pandu, in this world, that cherisher and protector of all beings, the king, who is a deity in an embodied form, is as a great fire sanctified with all the *mantras*.⁶ One should present himself before the king, after having obtained his permission at the gate. No one should keep contact with royal secrets. Nor should one desire a seat which another may covet. He who doth not, regarding himself to be a favourite, occupy (the king's) car, or coach, or seat, or vehicle, or elephant, is alone worthy of dwelling in a royal household. He that sits not upon a seat the occupation of which is calculated raise alarm in the minds of malicious people, is alone worthy of dwelling in a royal household. No one should, unasked offer counsel (to a king). Paying homage in season unto the king, one should silently and respectfully sit beside the king, for kings take umbrage at babblers, and disgrace lying counsellors. A wise person should not contact friendship with the king's wife, nor with the inmates of the inner apartments, nor with those that are objects of royal displeasure. One about the king should do even the most unimportant acts and with the king's knowledge. Behaving thus with a sovereign, one doth not come by harm. Even if an individual attain the highest office, he should, as long as he is not asked or commanded, consider himself as born-blind, having regard to the king's dignity, for O repressors of foes, the rulers of men do not forgive even their sons and grandsons and brothers when they happen to tamper with their dignity. Kings should be

served with regardful care, even as Agni and other gods; and he that is disloyal to his sovereign, is certainly destroyed by him. Renouncing anger, and pride, and negligence, it behoveth a man to follow the course directed by the monarch. After carefully deliberating on all things, a person should set forth before the king those topics that are both profitable and pleasant; but should a subject be profitable without being pleasant, he should still communicate it, despite its disagreeableness. It behoveth a man to be well-disposed towards the king in all his interests, and not to indulge in speech that is alike unpleasant and profitless. Always thinking—*I am not liked by the king*—one should banish negligence, and be intent on bringing about what is agreeable and advantageous to him. He that swerveth not from his place, he that is not friendly to those that are hostile to the king, he that striveth not to do wrong to the king, is alone worthy to dwell in a royal household. A learned man should sit either on the king's right or the left; he should not sit behind him for that is the place appointed for armed guards, and to sit before him is always interdicted. Let none, when the king is engaged in doing anything (in respect of his servants) come forward pressing himself zealously before others, for even if the aggrieved be very poor, such conduct would still be inexcusable.⁷ It behoveth no man to reveal to others any lie the king may have told inasmuch as the king bears ill will to those that report his falsehoods. Kings also always disregard persons that regard themselves as learned. No man should be proud thinking—*I am brave, or, I am intelligent*, but a person obtains the good graces of a king and enjoys the good

things of life, by behaving agreeably to the wishes of the king. And, O Bharata, obtaining things agreeable, and wealth also which is so hard to acquire, a person should always do what is profitable as well as pleasant to the king. What man that is respected by the wise can even think of doing mischief to one whose ire is great impediment and whose favour is productive of mighty fruits? No one should move his lips, arms and thighs, before the king. A person should speak and spit before the king only mildly. In the presence of even laughable objects, a man should not break out into loud laughter, like a maniac; nor should one show (unreasonable) gravity by containing himself, to the utmost. One should smile modestly, to show his interest (in what is before him). He that is ever mindful of the king's welfare, and is neither exhilarated by reward nor depressed by disgrace, is alone worthy of dwelling in a royal household. That learned courtier who always pleaseth the king and his son with agreeable speeches, succeedeth in dwelling in a royal household as a favourite. The favourite courtier who, having lost the royal favour for just reason, does not speak evil of the king, regains prosperity. The man who serveth the king or liveth in his domains, if sagacious, should speak in praise of the king, both in his presence and absence. The courtier who attempts to obtain his end by employing force on the king, cannot keep his place long and incurs also the risk of death. None should, for the purpose of self-interest, open communications with the king's enemies.⁸ Nor should one distinguish himself above the king in matters requiring ability and talents. He that is always cheerful and strong, brave and truthful and mild, and of subdued senses, and

who followeth his master like his shadow, is alone worthy to dwell in a royal household. He that on being entrusted with a work, cometh forward, saying,—*I will do this*—is alone worthy of living in a royal household. He that on being entrusted with a task, either within the king's dominion or out of it, never feareth to undertake it, is alone fit to reside in a royal household. He that living away from his home, doth no remember his dear ones, and who undergoeth (present) misery in expectation of (future) happiness, is alone worthy of dwelling in a royal household. One should not dress like the king, nor should one indulge in laughter in the king's presence nor should one disclose royal secrets. By acting thus one may win royal favour. Commissioned to a task, one should not touch bribes for by such appropriation one becometh liable to fetters or death. The robes, ornaments, cars, and other things which the king may be pleased to bestow should always be used, for by this, one winneth the royal favour. Ye children, controlling your minds, do ye spend this year, ye sons of Pandu, behaving in this way. Regaining your own kingdom, ye may live as ye please.'

"Yudhishtira said, 'We have been well taught by thee. Blessed be thou. There is none that could say so to us, save our mother Kunti and Vidura of great wisdom. It behoveth thee to do all that is necessary now for our departure, and for enabling us to come safely through this woe, as well as for our victory over the foe.'"

Vaisampayana continued, "Thus addressed by Yudhishtira, Dhaumya, that best of Brahmanas, performed according to the ordinance the rites ordained in respect of

departure. And lighting up their fires, he offered, with *mantras*, oblations on them for the prosperity and success of the Pandavas, as for their reconquest of the whole world. And walking round those fires and round the Brahmanas of ascetic wealth, the six set out, placing Yajnaseni in their front. And when those heroes had departed, Dhaumya, that best of ascetics, taking their sacred fires, set out for the Panchalas. And Indrasena, and others already mentioned, went to the Yadavas, and looking after the horses and the cars of the Pandavas passed their time happily and in privacy."

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Vaisampayana said, "Girding their waists with swords, and equipped with finger-protectors made of iguana skins and with various weapons, those heroes proceeded in the direction of the river Yamuna. And those bowmen desirous of (speedily) recovering their kingdom, hitherto living in inaccessible hills and forest fastnesses, now terminated their forest-life and proceeded to the southern bank of that river. And those mighty warriors endued with great strength and hitherto leading the lives of hunters by killing the deer of the forest, passed through *Yakrilloma* and Surasena, leaving behind, on their right, the country of the Panchalas, and on their left, that of the Dasarnas. And those bowmen, looking wan and wearing beards and equipped with swords, entered Matsya's dominions leaving the forest, giving themselves out as hunters. And on arriving at that country, Krishna addressed Yudhishtira, saying, 'We see footpaths here, and various fields. From this it appears that Virata's metropolis is still at a distance. Pass we here what part of the night is still left, for great is my fatigue.'

"Yudhishtira answered, 'O Dhananjaya of Bharata's race, do thou take up Panchali and carry her. Just on emerging from this forest, we arrive at the city.'"

Vaisampayana continued, "Thereupon like the leader of a herd of elephants, Arjuna speedily took up Draupadi, and on coming to the vicinity of the city, let her down. And on reaching the city, Ruru's son (Yudhishtira), addressed Arjuna, saying, 'Where shall we deposit our weapons, before

entering the city? If, O child, we enter it with our weapons about us, we shall thereby surely excite the alarm of the citizens. Further, the tremendous bow, the *Gandiva*, is known to all men, so that people will, without doubt, recognise us soon. And if even one of us is discovered, we shall, according to promise, have to pass another twelve years in the forest.'

"Arjuna said, 'Hard by yon cemetery and near that inaccessible peak is a mighty *Sami* tree, throwing-about its gigantic branches and difficult to ascend. Nor is there any human being, who, I think, O Pandu's son, will espy us depositing our arms at that place. That tree is in the midst of an out-of-the way forest abounding in beasts and snakes, and is in the vicinity of a dreary cemetery. Stowing away our weapons on the *Sami* tree, let us, O Bharata, go to the city, and live there, free from anxiety!'"

Vaisampayana continued, "Having O bull of the Bharata race spoken thus to king Yudhishtira the just, Arjuna prepared to deposit the weapons (on the tree). And that bull among the Kurus, then loosened the string of the large and dreadful *Gandiva*, ever producing thundering twang and always destructive of hostile hosts, and with which he had conquered, on a single car, gods and men and *Nagas* and swelling provinces. And the warlike Yudhishtira, that represser of foes, unfastened the undecaying string of that bow with which he had defended the field of Kurukshetra. And the illustrious Bhimasena unstrung that bow by means of which that sinless one had vanquished in fight the Panchalas and the lord of Sindhu, and with which, during his career of conquest, he had, single-handed, opposed

innumerable foes, and hearing whose twang which was like unto the roar of the thunder or the splitting of a mountain, enemies always fly (in panic) from the field of battle. And that son of Pandu of coppery complexion and mild speech who is endued with great prowess in the field, and is called Nakula in consequence of his unexampled beauty in the family, then unfastened the string of that bow with which he had conquered all the regions of the west. And the heroic Sahadeva also, possessed of a mild disposition, then untied the string of that bow with which he had subjugated the countries of the south. And with their bows, they put together their long and flashing swords, their precious quivers, and their arrows sharp as razors. And Nakula ascended the tree, and deposited on it the bows and the other weapons. And he tied them fast on those parts of the tree which he thought would not break, and where the rain would not penetrate. And the Pandavas hung up a corpse (on the tree), knowing that people smelling the stench of the corpse would say—*here sure, is a dead body*, and avoid the tree from a distance. And on being asked by the shepherds and cowherds regarding the corpse, those repressers of foes said unto them, 'This is our mother, aged one hundred and eighty years. We have hung up her dead body, in accordance with the custom observed by our forefathers.' And then those resisters of foes approached the city. And for purposes of non-discovery Yudhishtira kept these (five) names for himself and his brothers respectively, viz., Jaya, Jayanta, Vijaya, Jayatsena, and Jayadvala. Then they entered the great city, with the view to passing the

thirteenth year undiscovered in that kingdom, agreeably to the promise (to Duryodhana)."

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Vaisampayana said, "And while Yudhishtira was on his way to the delightful city of Virata, he began to praise mentally the Divine Durga, the Supreme Goddess of the Universe, born on the womb of Yasoda, and fond of the boons bestowed on her by Narayana, sprung from the race of cowherd Nanda, and the giver of prosperity, the enhancer (of the glory) of (the worshipper's) family, the terrifier of Kansa, and the destroyer of *Asuras*,—and saluted the Goddess—her who ascended the skies when dashed (by Kansa) on a stony platform, who is the sister of Vasudeva, one who is always decked in celestial garlands and attired in celestial robes,—who is armed with scimitar and shield, and always rescues the worshipper sunk in sin, like a cow in the mire, who in the hours of distress calls upon that eternal giver of blessings for relieving him of their burdens. And the king, desirous with his brothers of obtaining a sight of the Goddess, invoked her and began to praise her by reciting various names derived from (approved) hymns. And Yudhishtira said, 'Salutations to thee, O giver of boons. O thou that art identical with Krishna, O maiden, O thou that hast observed the vow of *Brahmacharya*, O thou of body bright as the newly-risen Sun, O thou of face beautiful as the full moon. Salutations to thee, O thou of four hands and four faces, O thou of fair round hips and deep bosom, O thou that wearest bangles made of emeralds and sapphires, O thou that bearest excellent bracelets on thy upper arm. Thou shinest, O Goddess, as Padma, the consort of