

|| OM namo bhagavate vasudevaya OM ||

1) In this way, when the best amongst men, Lord Krishna, was taking care of the world, Bhima and Arjuna, along with Sahadeva, after having stayed with Him for three years, took his permission and returned to their city bringing along them the son of Krishna by name Vishoka.

2) He was the son of Krishna born through the sairandhri called Trivakra; He was the student of Sage Narada; He became the charioteer for Bhima; In the previous janma, Trivakra was a person by name Pingala; She had meditated upon Lord Krishna as her husband and had (therefore) taken birth as Trivakra.

3) Bhima became very pleased having obtained a charioteer like him who knew the Pancharatra; Bhima then obtained the excellent tattvajnana through Sage Vyasa, the very embodiment of Lord Hari; Bhima, one with the fame of having won over all, then taught the same excellent-knowledge to Arjuna and all the other devatas.

4) Bhimasena destroyed all the non-vaishnava shastras and preached the pure vaishnava-marga; Just for fun, Bhima, the one who had unlimited knowledge, strength and other qualities, defeated Balarama in the duel fights involving physical strength and oratory skills.

5) Although Bhima was endowed with capability that was ever-apparent, full and pure, he listened to the teachings of Sage Vyasa again and again and increased his knowledge. Since even Mahalakshmi too is always dependent upon Lord Hari, who can stay without relying upon Lord Vishnu?

6) Even Yudhisthira, the son of Yama, and the one who always took refuge in bhagavanta, obtained the excellent knowledge of the paramatma from Sri Veda Vyasa. All the five Pandavas, being the best practitioners of dharma, felt elated after having received the teachings of shastra from Lord Hari.

7) Drona, the son of Sage Bharadhwaja, used to lead his life following the main dharma of brahmanas. He never used to save wealth for himself. Nor did he accept daana from others. Under such circumstances, his son Ashwathama used to join the Kauravas and come home after playing.

8) His mother used to mix flour with water and feed it to him. He used to drink it and return to play with the Kauravas, who drank milk, and always used to say "I too drank milk today"

9) Once the Kauravas gave the playful Ashwathama real milk to drink. He realized its sweetness. When his mother gave him flour mixed water on another occasion, he started crying loudly saying "This is not milk".

10) Seeing his son cry a lot, Drona was hurt inside and left his home desirous of obtaining a cow. His deep attachment to his son, the sankalpa of Lord Janardana and the repeated encouragement of his wife Kripi were the reasons for his departure.

11) He, who had given up receiving daana completely, went to Lord Parashurama. Receiving daana from Vishnu, who is the father, lord, Guru and foremost God of all, cannot be a violation, can it?

12) As soon as Parashurama saw Drona, he thought of making him a reason in the Bhu-Bhara-Harana work envisaged. He thought thus – “Drona, along with this son, must destroy the devatas who have taken birth as humans”

13) All these who get killed for the sake of Pandavas will get increased bliss even in Mukti. It is not appropriate for them to have progeny in Kali Yuga. Because those who are born in Kali Yuga are normally sinners.

14) Normally, up to a hundred generations of those born in a devata’s lineage are not capable of sinning. On the other hand, them not having progeny in spite of possessing excellent ‘retas’ is also not good.

15) If the progeny of all devatas continues without a break, then Kali Yuga can never arrive. Therefore, all those born with the amsha of devatas and supporting Pandavas must be killed by him (Drona) and his son.

16) Having thought so, Parashurama, the one with infinite strength, the Lord of all, the one without peers, said thus – “I have given away everything. I do not have any wealth”

17) “Myself, my knowledge and my weapons – these are the only things left with me. Among them, you can take what you choose”. When he said thus, Drona thought deeply and said – “Who is capable of taking you?”

18) “O Lord! You are the master of all. You are beyond everyone and independent of all. Who is even equal to you? If anyone even desires equality with you, he shall reach the never-returnable hell”

19) “O Lord! What shall we do with your weapons when we are already weakened by them? Therefore O birthless one! Please grant me knowledge that is pure and can illuminate everything in this world”

20) When he requested thus, Parashurama taught him all the weapons along with spiritual knowledge and other skills. Having completed the studies in 12 years, he proceeded towards his friend Drupada.

21) Drupada, with great ego, said thus to him who had come there recalling his earlier vow that he would share half his kingdom (with Drona).

22) “How can a King befriend a destitute? O Brahmin! Go wherever else you want” – Drupada said thus, driven by divine will. Due to the same divine intent, the normally restrained Dronacharya became angry.

23) “Father’s student is also the student of the son. The property of such a student is also the son’s. Having thought so I gave up my vow of not accepting alms from anyone and came to him, considering that he is the student of my father”

24) “But this sinner and fool has insulted me with his cruel words. I will break his ego” – having decided thus, he went to the Kauravas to make them his students.

25) “The Kauravas will fulfill what I need, now that I have given up my vow of not accepting alms completely” – having considered thus he saw the sons of Dhritharashtra playing with the sons of Pandu on the outskirts of the city.

26) At that time, the ball with which they were playing fell into a well, along with the official seal of Yudhisthira. Even when all of the princes got together, they couldn’t lift it up. Bhima, the son of Vayu, then spoke to them.

27) Bhimasena, depending upon his ability, spoke thus – “I shall jump into this deep well and bring out the ball along with the royal seal. O princes! just watch!”

28) At that moment, Drona addressed the princes thus – “Fie on your conduct that is (contingent on) not having any astras. Having been born in the Bharata lineage, you do not have knowledge of divine astras”.

29) When he said thus, the princes realized that he was the grandson of the divine Guru (Brihaspati) and knowing that he had knowledge of astras, requested him to fetch them their ball and the official seal.

30) Using his knowledge of divine astras, he (Drona) threw down blades of grass one after the other and lifted the ball. When the princes asked him to lift the official seal also in the same manner, he said to them “Make arrangements for my food”.

31) Yudhisthira immediately gave him assurances regarding arrangements for wealth and food as much as required. As soon as he assured him thus, Drona lifted the royal seal and gave it to them.

32) All of them asked him together – “Who are you?”. He replied – “Your grandfather will let you know”. All of them immediately ran to their grandfather who told them – “He is Drona”.

33) He (Drona) had never visited their palace. So none of the princes had seen him earlier. Bhishma had undertaken spiritual engagements with him and knew about him having obtained divine weapons from Parashurama.

34) Getting to know that the person was an old man of dark hue, and that he was a great proponent of astras, Bhishma was convinced that he was Drona. He went to him and personally handed over the princes as students.

35) Thereafter Drona addressed the princes and said – “Whoever amongst you gives me the assurance first that he will fulfill my desire – I shall make him the greatest archer in the world”. Arjuna made such a vow.

36) Arjuna had earlier learnt special astras such as the Unmadastra from Sri Krishna. “These are to be used only during exigencies” – recalling these instructions of Sri Krishna he was always keen on obtaining astras that could be used (under much more normal circumstances).

37) “We are going to engage in battle with Bhishma and others in the future. At that time, I won’t engage with my Gurus and other elders. If Arjuna becomes an expert in archery and faces them, I will only earn more punya through it”.

38) It is not appropriate for one to seek a boon knowingly from anyone other than the consort of Indira Sri Hari. Thinking thus Bhima let Arjuna take the vow for his teacher and did not do so himself.

39) When Arjuna undertook that oath duly influenced by Bhima, Drona, the best amongst Brahmins, showed great affection for him thereon and gave him numerous excellent astras.

40) Drona became partial towards him. He used to appreciate him (publicly) very often. He taught him secret subjects and did not teach the others any of the same.

41) Bhima was naturally knowledgeable in all the vidyas. He ensured Drona develops special affection for his brother Partha. In order to ensure Arjuna learnt all the astra vidyas, he did not perform Guru seva with the same intensity.

42) “With the strength of my shoulders, and with the grace of Paramatma, I will destroy all enemies. What is this (training) needed for?” – thinking thus Bhima would not stare at the target with greater effort. Even in performing seva, he would prod Arjuna ahead of him.

43) Then, all the princes rushed there in order to learn all astras from Drona. He taught all of them the divine astras, which no one else knew, and which he had learnt from Parashurama himself.

44) These princes obtained a variety of divine astras, which the earlier Kings could not even imagine possessing, and became much more capable than anyone earlier.

45) In the knowledge of astras, in strength and in knowledge of all vidyas, almost no earlier King was equal to them. Only great kings of yore such as Bharata, the son of Dushyanta, Mandhatru and Marutta were equal to them (the princes).

46) Then, Karna and Ekalavya came to Drona in order to learn divine astras from him. The student of Parashurama (Drona) did not teach them the astras as they were Suta and Nishada respectively.

47) When his desire was not fulfilled, Karna, who was driven by ego, thought thus – “I will take refuge in Purushottama Sri Hari, who is born in the Bhrigu clan, and from whom this Brahmin (Drona) has obtained all his astras”. Thinking thus, he left for the ashrama of Parashurama.

48) Due to his desire of astras and due to fear, Karna declared thus to the all-knowing Prabhu Sri Parshurama – “I am a Brahmana”. Parashurama taught him divine weapons even though he knew (the truth about Karna being a Suta).

49) Sri Parashurama knowingly taught him the astras so that Duryodhana would gather courage from Karna's knowledge of weapons and would engage him to try and kill Arjuna, the greatest proponent of astras.

50) Karna, over a period of four years, learnt from Parashurama great many subjects related to the almighty. He also learnt many other subjects and obtained a bow called Vijaya and an excellent chariot. He could not leave Parshurama and stayed back with him.

51) Once Sri Parashurama, whose very nature is knowledge and one who is the best amongst the devatas, kept his head on his (Karna's) lap and appeared to be sleeping, although he is one without sleep. The main reason for this was to inflict appropriate punishment for having gotten Vali killed (Karna was Sugreeva in the Ramayana).

52) A Rakshasa by name Heti had been cursed to be born as an insect for not having served Mahendra on time. In order to help his son (Arjuna), Indra entered the insect so he could get Karna a curse.

53) Due to the presence of Heti and Indra, the thigh of Karna, starting from the lower end up till the skin at the top, was cut just as if an arrow had pierced. It led to profuse bleeding. Parashurama, who appeared like he was sleeping, got up and asked him.

54) "Why did you not wake me up even though the flow of blood had rendered impurity here?". Karna replied to him – "I ignored the insect since I did not want your sleep to be disturbed".

55) "Although I am a Suta by birth, I had told you that I was a Vipra from the Bhrgu clan, since I consider myself your son. O Lord! There is none other than you who is the world's mother, father and great teacher! Therefore what I said earlier is also true"

56) As soon as he said thus, the insect fell on to the gaze of Sri Parashurama. Due to the grace of the one with infinite auspicious attributes (Parashurama), the insect obtained its original form and climbed a divine vehicle and obtained Swarga.

57) Sri Parashurama then said thus – "Having spoken the untruth, you no longer qualify to stay with me. Even then, your devotion will not go a waste. You will win over all your enemies"

58) "When you are not competing against anyone, you will become invincible. But you will suffer defeat when you engage with competition in mind. There need not be any doubt about this. You will also suffer due to forgetfulness when engaged in warfare of astras".

59) "Leave forthwith" – having been instructed thus by him (Parashurama), Karna respectfully bowed to him and left. Similarly, Ekalavya, who had been rejected by Drona, made an idol of him in the forest and started worshiping (the same).

60) Thereafter, the Pandavas, along with the Kauravas once went to the forest for hunting. The dog of Yudhishthira, seeking a prey, started barking.

61) Being a *shabdavedi*, Ekalavya heard the dog barking and shot arrows filling its mouth. He did not injure the dog though. The dog, with its mouth full of arrows, rushed to the Pandavas.

62) Seeing that surprising scene, both the Kauravas and Pandavas started searching the one who did this in the forest. They then saw him (Ekalavya) who had created an idol of Drona using mud, and was practicing archery while worshipping the same.

63) Prior to this, he had learnt all the Pisacha related astra skills from Pishachas. In order to learn divine astras from Drona, he was worshipping him with devotion.

64) Noticing his special skills, Arjuna went to Drona and told him – “The promise that you gave me has been falsified”. When he said thus, Drona went to him (Ekalavya) and asked him his right thumb as *Guru-dakshina*.

65) Ekalavya, who had earned excellent skills with his grace, gave him his right thumb. From then on, his skill could never become equal to that of Arjuna since the strength of his right fist reduced.

66) After this, Drona became pleased with Ekalavya’s devotion and secretly taught him excellent astras in the Raivata mountain. He also ensured Arjuna became the best amongst archers.

|| End of chapter 15, known as ‘Pandavadinam Astravidyabhyasa’, from the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, composed by Srimadanandatirtha Bhagavatpada ||

|| Sri Krishnarpanamastu ||