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Maha·bhárata
Book Two
The Great Hall

Translated by
PAUL WILMOT

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“The Great Hall” is Book Two of the Maha·bhárata, "The Great Book of India.” This work is but a fraction of the expanse of the whole epic, yet it is a pivotal one: the various changes in fortune set the scene for further conflict between the cousins.
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MAHA-BHÁRATA II – THE GREAT HALL

SÁKUNIR UVÁCA:

56.1 «YÁM TVAM ETÁM śríyaṁ dṛṣṭvā Páṇḍuputre Yudhiṣṭhíre tapyase, táṁ hariṣyámi dyútena jayatáṁ vara! āhúyatáṁ paraṁ, rájan, Kuntíputro Yudhiṣṭhiráh! ágarvá samáyam, aham ajuuddháva ca camútmukhe, aksáñ kṣipann aksátaṁ saṁ, vid vá ajuuduso jaye! glahán dhanúṁśi me viddhi, śarán aksámś ca, Bhárata, aksáñāṁ hṛdayáṁ me jyáṁ, ratham viddhi mamś āspuram!»

DURYODHANA UVÁCA:

56.5 «ayam utsahate, rājáṁ, śríyaṁ áhartum aksávit dyútena Páṇḍuputre bhávyas. tad anujñátaṁ arhasi!»

DHRTARÁŚTRA UVÁCA:

«sthitó ‘smi śásane bhárátur Vidurasya mahá’ātmánaḥ; tena saṁgaṁya vetsyāṁi káryasyā śasya viniścayam.»

DURYODHANA UVÁCA:

«vyapanes.yati te buddhiṁ Viduro muktasamáyáḥ, Páṇḍavánáṁ híte yuktó, na tathá mama, Káurava. n’ árabhet’ áyá/sámarthyáḥ purúṣāḥ káryam átmánaḥ; matiśámyaṁ dvayor n’ ásti káryeśu, Kuruñandana. bháyaṁ pariharan manda, átmánaṁ parípálayan, varśáśu klinnákaṣávat’ tiṣṭháno ev’ ávasidáti.»

56.10 na vyádhayo, n’ ápi yamaṁ śreyah/prápiṁ pratikṣate. yávad eva bhavet kalpas, tāvac chreyaṁ saṁácare!»

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SHÁKUNI said:

“That fortune you saw at Yudhiṣṭhira’s sacrifice and so yearn for—I shall win it for you at dice, great victor! Summon Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Kunti! I shall court no risk fighting before any army. With my skill in throwing dice, I shall defeat the fools! Think of the bet as my bow, the dice as my arrows, the heart of the dice my bowstring, and the dice board my chariot!”

DURYÓDHANA said:

“This expert dice player stands ready, O king, to seize the Pândavas’ fortune in a game! You should give him your approval!”

DHṚITA-RASHTRA said:

“As I said before, I always follow the counsel of my great-souled brother; I shall consult Vídura and then tell you how we shall proceed.”

DURYÓDHANA said:

“Vídura will destroy your resolve, without doubt, Káura-vá! He is more concerned with the Pândavas’ welfare than with mine. No man should undertake a matter guided by someone else’s views—and no two men are of the same mind in any affair, noble Kuru! The weakling who shuns any risk and seeks only to shield himself shrivels like a wet mat in the rains. Neither sickness nor death wait on one’s fortunes. You have to improve our lot while you can!”
MAHA-BHÁRATA II – THE GREAT HALL

DHRTARĀṢTRA uvāca:

«sarvathā, putra, balibhir vigrahaṃ me na rocate.
vairāṃ viṅkāraṃ srjati, tad vai śastraṃ anāyasam.»
«anartham arthaṃ manyase, rājaṇputra,
saṃgranthanaṃ kalahasyatiātyāti.
tad vai pravṛttaṃ tu yathā katham cīt,
sṛjed asin, niśitām sāyakāṃśa!»

DURYODHANA uvāca:
«dyūte puruṣaṁ vyavahāraḥ praṣītasa;
tat’ ātyayo n’āsti, na saṃprahāraḥ.
tad rocatāṃ Śakuner vākyam adya
sabhāṃ kṣipraṃ tvam iḥ ājñāpayasva!
vargādvāraṃ diyaṭāṃ no viśiṣṭaṃ,
tadvartināṃ c’ āpi tath’ āiva yuktam.
bhaved evaṃ hy ātmanā tulyam eva
durodaraṃ Pāṇḍavais tvam kuruṣva!»

DHRTARĀṢTRA uvāca:

56.15 «vākyāṃ na me rocate yat tvay” oktaṃ;
yat te priyaṃ, tat kriyātāṃ, na’śeṇdra!
paścāt taptaya tad upākramya vākyāṃ;
na h’ iḍraṃ bhāvi vaco hi dharmyam.
dṛṣṭam hy etad Viduren’ āva sarvaṃ
vipaścīta buddhividyā”januṣena—
tad ev’ ātad avaśasy’ ābhyupaiti
mahad bhayam ksatriyaḥbijaḥghāti.»

VAIŚAMPĀYANA uvāca:

evam uktva Dhītarāṣṭro maniṣi
daivaṃ matva paramaṃ, dustaram ca,
śaśā’ occaiḥ puṟuṣān putra-vācyec,

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DHRTITA-RASHTRA said:
“I see no attraction in fighting those who are stronger, dear son. Hostility creates turmoil—it is indeed a weapon, though not made of iron.
You regard this wicked weaving and plotting of feuds as advantageous, dear prince. Once unleashed, whatever the means, it can only lead to swords and arrows!”

DURYÖDHANA said:
“Men of ancient times taught us the rules of this game. There is no wickedness or war in it. Accept Shákuni’s offer today and order a hall to be built, without delay! We shall ascend to heaven’s door if we play, as is the privilege of gamblers. The Pândavas will become our equals—you should approve of our game!”

DHRTITA-RASHTRA said:
“I do not like what you are proposing—but do as you wish, king of men! You will suffer afterward, however, for such words are not suitable or righteous, as Vidura foresaw with insight, wisdom and learning. A great catastrophe now hangs over us, which will destroy the seed of all kshatriyas. In its shadow man is powerless.”

VAISHAMPÁYANA said:
Wise Dhritarashtra, regarding Fate as supreme and insurmountable, ordered his servants to follow his son’s orders. Disoriented by Fate, he said, “Build, straightaway, a vast and
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sthito rājā daivaṣaṃmudhācetāḥ:
«sahasraṣṭambhām, hemāvaiḍuryacitrām,
śatādvārām, toraṇasphatīkākhyām
sabhām agryāṃ kroṣāmātrāyām me
tadvistārām ātu kurvantu yuktāḥ!»
śrutvā tasya tvaritā, nirviśāṅkāḥ,
prājñā, daksās tamāṃ tathā cakur āṣu.
sarvadrayāyā upajahruḥ sabhāyām
sahasraśah śilpinaś c’ āiva yuktāḥ.

56.20
kālen’ alpen’ ātha niṣṭham gatāṃ tāṃ
sabhāṃ ramyāṇa, bahujratnāṃ, vicitraṃ
citraīr haimair āsanair abhyupetām
ācakhyaus ṭasya rājaṃ pratiṭaḥ.
tato vidvān Viduraṃ mantrīmukhyam
uvāc’ ēdaṃ Dṝtarāṣṭro nar’ēndraḥ:
«Yudhiṣṭhirāṃ rājaṃputram ca gatvā
daivāṅkayaena kṣipram ih’ ānayasaṃ.
sabh’ ēyaṃ me bahu敏锐tā vicitrā,
śavya’ āsanair upapannā mah’ārhaḥ,
sā dṝṣyatāṃ bhrātrāḥbhiḥ sārdham etya,
suvṛṇḍyutaṃ vartatāṃ atra c’ ēti.»

57.1
matam ājiśayā putrasya Dṝtarāṣṭro nar’ādhipaḥ,
matvā ca duṣṭarāṃ daivam, etad rājā cakāra ha.
āṇyaṇyena tathā ēktas tu Vidiuro viduṣaṃ varaḥ
ṇ’ ābhyanandad vaco bhrātur; vacamaḥ c’ ēdam abravit:
«ṇ’ ābhinaṃdāmi, nrpaṃ, praiṣam etam,
ma’ āvaṃ kṛthaḥ! kulaṇaḥśad bibhemi!
putrāri bhīnnāḥ, kalahas te dhruvaṃ syād—
etac chanke dyūtaṃte, nar’ēndra.»

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splendid hall one krosha long by one krosha wide,* adorned with a thousand tall pillars gleaming with gold and jewels and a hundred great gates sparkling with crystal arches!”

So instructed, thousands of artisans of intelligence, industry and fearlessness set to work and the palace was soon built, filled with every object imaginable. Very little time had passed before the palace craftsmen happily informed the king that his ravishing jewel-studded hall was complete, and furnished with brilliant thrones of gold. Whereupon Dhrita-rashtra, learned king of men, addressed his chief minister Vidura:

“Go to Yudhi·shthira and beg him to come immediately. Tell him that he and his brothers must see this splendid gem-encrusted hall, richly furnished with costly seats and couches, and that we shall all join in a friendly game of dice.”

Dhrita-rashtra, king of men, accepting his son’s wish, felt that Fate could not be avoided and acted as I have described. Vidura, however, wisest of the wise, did not at all approve of his brother’s words and said, “I do not welcome, noble king, this command of yours. Do not go ahead! Our line will face ruin! When brothers no longer work together, a quarrel is sure to follow—and it is this which troubles me about this game of dice.”
MAHA-BHÁRATA II — THE GREAT HALL

DHRTARÁṢṬRA uvāca:

«n’ ēha, kṣattaḥ, kalahas tapyate māṃ,
na ced daivaṁ pratilomaṁ bhaviṣyat.

dhātra tu diṣṭasya vaśe kil’ ēdaṁ
sarvaṁ jagac ceṣṭati, na svatantram.

57.5 tad adya, Vidura, prāpya rājānaṁ mama śāsanāt,

kṣipram ānaya durdhaśaṁ Kuntiṇaṁputraṁ Yudhiṣṭhiram.»

VAIŚAMPĀYANA uvāca:

98.1 tataḥ prāvād Viduro śvair udāraṁ,

mahājavair, baliḥiḥ, sādhuḍdantaiḥ,

balāṁ niyukto Dhṛtarāṣṭreṇa rājāṁ

manīṣināṁ Paṇḍavānāṁ sakāsām.

so ’bhupatya tad adhvānām, āsādyā nzpateḥ puram,

praviveśa mahābudhibhiḥ pūjyamāno dvijāṭibhiḥ,

sa rājaigṛham āsādyā Kuberaḥbhovan’opamam,

abhayaṅcchata dharman’atmā Dharmaṁputraṁ Yudhiṣṭhiram.

taṁ vai rāja satyaṛdhṛir mah’atmā

Ajātasatruṁ Viduraṁ yathāvat

puṇātpuṭvam pratīghhyā Ājamīraḥ

tato ’pṛcchad Dhṛtarāṣṭram saṁputram.

YUDHIṢṬHIRA uvāca:

58.5 «vijñāyate te manaso’praharaṁ.

cac cit, kṣattaḥ, kuśalen ‘āgato ‘ṣi?

kac cit putrāḥ sthaviryāḥ ‘anulomā?

vaś’āṅugāś c ‘āpi viśo ‘pi kac cit?

VIDURA uvāca:

«rājā mah’atmā kuśali saṁputraḥ,

āste vṛtto jñāṭibhir Indrajkalpaḥ.

prito, rājaṁ, putragaṇaṁvīnitaṁ’

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DHRRITA-RASHTRA said:

“I do not fear any quarrel, steward, or otherwise Fate would not have ordained this game. The world yields to the Creator’s design; it is not independent of his will. So go today as I command to the invincible Yudhiśthira, child of Kunti, without delay, and invite him here.”

VAISHAMPAYANA said:

Vidura yielded to Dhrita-rashtra’s orders against his will, departing for the Pândavas’ dwelling in a chariot drawn by magnificent, swift horses, obedient and strong. He flew along the road and soon reached the son of Dharma’s city, where he was honored by brahmins.

The dutiful envoy entered the king’s palace, a match for Kubéra’s abode, and approached Yudhiśthira. That great-souled king, Ajáta-shatru, steadfast in the truth, duly welcomed Vidura with reverence and inquired after Dhrita-rashtra and his sons.

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:

“I see no joy in your heart. Steward, I trust that you come in good health? I trust that Dhrita-rashtra’s sons are obedient to their aging father, and the people to his rule?”

Vidura said:

“The great-souled king and his sons are well; surrounded by his relatives he reigns like Indra himself. He rejoices in his sons’ good conduct and enjoys happiness without a care. He wished me to inquire after your health and prosperity,
viśoka ev’ atmāratir mah”ətmā.
idda tu tvāṁ Kuruṇajō ’bhuyvācā,
pṛṣuṣaṇa pṛṣṭvā kūsālmaṇ ca ’āvyayaṁ ca,
īyaṁ sabhā tvāṁ sabhāhūtulyaiṣurūpā
bhrātṛṇāṁ te dṛśyaṁ etya, putra.
saṃśāgamyābhṛṭrāḥ, Pārtha, tasyāṁ,
suhṛḍdyutāṣaṇa kriyaṇaṁ, ramaṇaṁ ca,
priyamahe bhavaṁ samgamaṇa
saṃśāgataḥ Kuravaś c’ āpi sarve.
durodara vihitā ye tu tatra
mah”ətmanā Dhṛtarāṣṭrena rājña
tān drakṣyase kitavān saṁśīvistaṁ.
ity āgato ’ham, nṛpate. taj juśasva!”

YUDHIṢṬHIRA uvāca:

8.10
«dyute, kṣattaḥ, kalaha vidyate naḥ!
ko vai dyutaṁ rucayet budhyamānaḥ?
kiṇ ṣ vahvān manyate yuktārūpeṣaḥ?
bhavadvāyake sarva eva sṛhitāḥ sma.”

VIDURA uvāca:

«jānāmy ahaṁ dyutaṁ anarthaṁūlaṁ;
kṛtaḥ ca yatno ’ya mayā nivāraṇe.
rājā tu māṁ prahinot tvāṣaṁkāṣaṁ
śrūtvā vidvaṁ śreyas iḥ’ ācaraṁva!”

YUDHIṢṬHIRA uvāca:

«ke tatra’ ānye kitavā divyamāna
vinā rājño Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putraiḥ?
pṛcchāṁi tvāṁ, Vidura, brūhi nas tāṁ
yair divyamāḥ śataśaḥ saṁnipatya!”

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and invite you and your brothers to see their new assembly hall, much like your own.

He hopes that you will repair to their palace, Partha, and enjoy a friendly game of dice; they would all be pleased if you would join them. All the Kurus are already assembled there. You will also meet the gamblers and gamesters whom the great-souled Dhrita-rashta has summoned to the hall. It is with this message that I have come; approve of it!"

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:

“If we play a game of dice, steward, we shall surely quarrel! Bearing this in mind, who would consent to a game? What do you think is right? We shall follow your advice.”

VIDURA said:

“I know the game is a source of wickedness and have tried to dissuade the king from it—however, he sent me to you. You must do what you think is best, learned one!”

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:

“Who else will be gambling there besides the sons of King Dhrita-rashta? Tell us, Vidura, what dice players we shall be up against?”
MAHA-BHÄRATA II — THE GREAT HALL

VIDURA uvāca:

«Gândhāra-rājaḥ Śakunir, viśāmpate,
rāj’ ātidevīkṛtaḥ-hasto mat’ākṣah;
Vivimśatiḥ, Citrasenaḥ ca rājā,
Śatya-vrataḥ, Purumitraḥ, Jayaś ca.»

YUDHIŚTHIRA uvāca:

«mahā-bhayāḥ kitavāḥ samniviṣṭā
māy’ āpādha devitāra-tra saṃti.
dhārā tu diśṭasya vaśe kil’ ēdamaṃ
sarvam jagat tisṭhati, na svatantram.

§8.15 n’ āhama rājino Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya sāsanān
na gantum icchāmi, kave, durodaram.
iṣṭo hi putrasya pitā sad” āva;
tad asmi kartā, Vidur,’ ārtha māṃ yathā.
na c’ ākāmāḥ Śakuninā devit” āhamaṃ,
na cen māṃ dhiṣṇur āhvayitā sabhāyāṃ.
āhūto ’ham na nivarte kātā cait
nad’āhitaṃ śāsvataṃ vai vratatāṃ me.»

VAISAMPĀYANA uvāca:

evam uktvā Viduram dharmarājaḥ,
prāyātikam sarvam ājñāpya tūrṇam
prāyaḥ chvo bhūte sāgaṇaḥ c’ānuyātraḥ
saha stribhir Draupadim adikṛtva.

«daiṇvaḥ prajñāṃ tu muṣpāti, tejaś cakṣur iv’ āpatat.
dhātuṣ ca vaśam anveti pāsair iva naraḥ sitāḥ.»
itvā uktvā prayaunrau rāja saha kṣattra Yudhiśthiraḥ,
āṃcyamānaḥ tasy' ārha saṃbhavānam arinḍuṃmahāḥ.

§8.20 Bāhlikena ratham yattam āsthaya paraśviraḥ
parichchanno yayaḥ Pārtho bhṛtrāḥḥiḥ saha Pāṇḍavaḥ.

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Vidura said:

“Shakuni, the King of Gandhara, will be there, skillful and dexterous—even more than the gods—at dice, as well as Vivinshati, Chitra-sena, Satya-vrata, Puru-mitra and Jaya.”

Yudhi-shthira said:

“It sounds like the most dangerous dice players will be there, those sure to resort to tricks and deceit. This world, however, yields to the Creator’s design; it is not independent of his will. Thus, O poet, I shall not refuse to play dice at Dhrita-rashtra’s command; a son must respect his father. I shall come as you bid. I am not unwilling to play Shakuni, who is sure to challenge me to dice in that hall. Once challenged, I shall not be able to refuse; that is my eternal vow.”

Vaishampayana said:

The Dharma King, having told Vidura how he felt, ordered preparations for an immediate journey. He departed the following day, surrounded by his relatives, attendants and the women of the household, led by Draupadi. “As a brilliant light blinds the eye, Fate robs us of our reason, and, as if bound with ropes, man obeys the Creator’s will,” quoted King Yudhi-shthira, unable to resist the challenge, as he set out with the steward.

Ascending the chariot attended to by Bahlika, the son of Pandu, that slayer of hostile heroes, set out with Pritha and all his brothers, decked in full regalia. Compelled by the
rājaśriyā dīpyamāno yayau brahmāpurāḥsaraḥ,
Dhṛtarāṣṭreṇa c’ āhūtaḥ, kālasya samayena ca.
sa Hāstinaṇpuram gatvā Dhṛtarāṣṭrāṅgraḥaṃ yayau.
samīyāya ca dharm’ātmā Dhṛtarāṣṭreṇa Pāṇḍavaḥ,
tathā Bhīṣmena, Dronena, Karna ca, Kṛṣṇa ca
samīyāya yathāyayam, Draupinā ca vibhūṣaḥ.
sameta ca mahābhāhuḥ Somaḍatrenas c’ āiva ha,
Duryodhanena, Śalyena, Saubalena ca viṟyavān.

§8.25 ye c’ ānye tatra rājaṇaḥ pūrvaṃ eva samāgataḥ,
Duhṣasānena vireṇa, sarvair bhrāṭṛbhīr eva ca,
Jayadrathena ca tathā, Kurubhiḥ c’ āpi sarvaśaḥ.
tataḥ sarvair mahābhāhuḥ bhrāṭṛbhīḥ parivāraitāḥ
praviveśa grhaṃ rājño Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya dhīmataḥ.
dadarśa tatra Gāndhārīṃ deviṃ putim anuvratām,
snuṣabhīḥ samvṛtam śaśvat, tāriḥbhīr iva Rohiṇīṃ.
abhivādyā sa Gāndhārīṃ, tayā ca pratīṇanditaḥ
dadarśa pitarṇaṃ vṛddhaṃ prajñācaksuṣam īśvaram.

§8.30 rājaṇā mūrdhany upāgrhātās te ca Kauravaṇāṇandanaḥ—
catvāraḥ Pāṇḍavaḥ, rājan, Bhīmaśenaśuṣūgamāḥ,
tato harṣaḥ samabhavat Kauravaṇāṃ, viśaṃpyate,
tān śṛṣṭvā puruṣaśvāyghrāṃ Pāṇḍavān priyadarśanan.
viviśus te ’bhyanujiṣṭātā ratnavanti grhaṃ atha;
dadṛṣṭaḥ c’ āpayatas tān Draupadiṇḍramukhaḥ striyaḥ.
Yāñasaṇyāḥ parāṃ rddhiṃ śṛṣṭvā prajvalitām iva,
snuṣās s tā Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya n’ āṭipramanaso ’bhavaṃ.
tatas te puruṣaśvāyghrā gatvā śrībhis tus samvidam,
kiṃvā vyāyamāṇpūrvāṃ kṣṛyāṇi pratikarma ca,

§8.35 tataḥ kiṃvāḥ kṛṣṇikāḥ sarve divyaśaṃdānaḥbhūṣitaḥ
kalyāṇāmanasaḥ c’ āiva, brāhmaṇān svastiṃvācy ca,

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challenge and the fated time, he set out in a blaze of royal majesty, with brahmins leading the way. He proceeded to Hástina-pura and headed straight for Dhrita-rashtra’s residence, where the illustrious Pândava met Dhrita-rashtra.

He embraced Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Kripa and Drona’s son with due courtesy, as well as Soma-datta, Duryódhana, Shalya, mighty Sáubala, and the numerous kings who had arrived before him. He proceeded to meet heroic Duhshá-sana and his brothers, Jayad-ratha, and all the remaining Kurus one after another.

The mighty-armed hero and his brothers then entered Dhrita-rashtra’s inner apartments, where he saw Queen Gandhári, famous for her devotion to her husband and surrounded by her sisters-in-law like Róhini by the stars.* Having greeted Gandhári and received her blessings, he beheld his aged uncle, the lord whose eyesight was his insight.

King Dhrita-rashtra kissed the noble Káuravas on the head—the four Pándavas, beginning with Bhima-sena. Elation took hold of all Káuravas at the sight of the splendid countenance of the Pándavas, those tigers among men. Dismissed by the king, they entered their jewel-studded apartments, where Dráupadi and her women, who had arrived separately, saw them. Seeing the immense fortune of Ya-jna-sena’s daughter, which seemed ablaze, Dhrita-rashtra’s daughters-in-law looked none too cheerful.

Those tigers among men informed the women of their intentions and then left their quarters to set about their daily physical exercises and rituals. When they had completed these, the virtuous-minded Pándavas, adorned with celestial
MANOJÑANAM ASANAṄ BHUKTVA VIVISTUṄ ŠARANANY ATHA.
UPAGIYAMĀṆA NĀRĪBHIR ASVAPAN KURUṆNANDANAṆH
JAGĀṆA TEṢĀṆ SĀ RĀṬHIṆI PUNYĀ RATIVIṆHARĪṆĀM.
ŚŪYAMĀṆĀŚA VIŚRĀṬṬĀṆH KĀLE NIDRĀṆI ATH'ĀṬYAJAN.
SUHKH'JṆĪṬĀṆ TĀṆṆ RAJANĪṆH PRĀCAṆI SARVE KṚṬJĀḤNIṆĀṆH
SABHAṆṆ RAMYĀṆI PRAVIṆIṆUṆI KITAVAIR ABHISĀṆMVṚṬĀM.

59.1 PRAVĪŚYA TĀṆ SABHAṆṆ PĀRTHĀ YUDHIŚṆHĪṆAṆ PUROGAMAṆH
SAMETYA PĀRTHIVĀṆ SARVĀṆ, PŪṆIṆJĀṆH ABHIPŪṆYĀ CA,
YATHĀVAṆĀṆA SAMETYAṆA UPAVIŚṬA YATH'JĀḤHATAṆH
ĀŚANEṆU VICITREṆU SPARDETĀṆHĀṬAṆVATĀṆU CA.
TEṢŪ TAT'Ū ṌĀṆIṆUṆI SARVEṆU ATHA NṆṆṆUṆUṆ ĀṆ
ŚAṆUNIṆ SĀVĀLAL SYāTATA YUDHIŚṆHĪṆAṆ ABHĀŚAṆTA.

ŚAṆUNIṆ UVĀCA:
«UPASTĪṆṆA SABHAṆ, RĀṆAṆI SARVEṬṆI KṚṬAṆKṆAṆH.
AKSHAṆ UPTVĀ DEVANASYA SAMAYO 'STU, YUDHIŚṆHĪṆAṆ!»

YUDHIŚṆHĪṆAṆ UVĀCA:
59.5 «NIKṢṬIṆ DEVANEṆF PĀPĀṆ, NA KṢĀTRO 'TRA PĀRAṆAKRAMĀṆH;
NA CA NĪTĪṆ DHRUṆṆI, RĀṆAṆI KĪṆ TAVṆI DYUTĀṆ PRĀṢṆṆSASI?
NA HI MĀṆAṆ PRĀṢṆṆSANTI NIKRṬAU KITAVASYA HA.
ŚAṆUNE, MĪ ĀĪVA NO JAIṢĪṆ AMĀṆGENA PRĀṢṆṆSVAṆ.»

ŚAṆUNIṆ UVĀCA:
«YO VEṬTI ŚAṆKHYĀṆ, NIKRṬAU VIDHIṆĪṆAṆ,
ČEṢṬAṆ SV JĀḤNIṆH, KITAVO 'KṢAJĀṆUṆAṆ,
MAHĀṆMATĪṆ YĀṆ CA JĀṆṬI DYUTĀṆ,
SA VAI SARVĀṆI SAHARE PRAKRIṆYĀṆU.»

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THE DICE GAME

sandalwood, received the blessings of brahmins. Then those Kuru heroes enjoyed a pleasing meal and returned to their apartments, where, serenaded by women, they entered their beds and passed a lovely night savoring the delights of love play. At dawn those happy sleepers—conquerors of hostile cities by day—left their couches refreshed and flattered with attention, to attend to their rituals. They entered the great hall to the greetings of the dice players.

The Parthas, starting with Yudhi·shthira, worshipped all the kings present, honoring those to whom honor was due by virtue of age, and took their seats on splendid seats covered in costly carpets. Seeing all the kings seated, Shákuni, son of Subala, addressed Yudhi·shthira:

SHÁKUNI said:

“The hall is full, great king; we have all been waiting for you. Let the dice be cast, Yudhi·shthira—what is your wager?”

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:

“Deceitful play is wicked, devoid of all kshatriya valor. It is a poor way to behave. Why do you praise dice play? Who values a cheating gambler? Shákuni, do not try base trickery on us.”

SHÁKUNI said:

“The great-minded player who knows his numbers and has an eye out for the artful play, who never tires of throwing the dice and understands their subtleties, can achieve anything in a game. Gambling can defeat an enemy, Partha, which is why people say it is wicked. Let us play! Great
akṣaśīlahaḥ so 'bhībhaṅvet param nas;

ten 'āva doṣo bhavaḥ 'īha, Pārtha.
dīvyāmaḥel pārthiva, mā viśāṅkām.
kuruṣva pāṇaṁ ca, cīraṁ ca mā kṛṣṭāḥ!

YUDHIŚṬHIRA uvāca:
«evam āḥ āyam Asito Devalo muniṣattamaḥ,
imāni lokādvāraṇī yo vai bhṛmyati sarvadā:

59.10 irdaṁ vai devanāṁ pāpaṁ nīkṛṭyā kitavaiḥ saha;
dharmęṣa tu jayo yuddhe—tat paraṁ, na tu devanam.»

n ́āryā mlecchanti bhāṣābhīr, māyāyā na caṁty uta,
aśīhaṁ, aśaṭhaṁ yuddham—etat satpuruṣāṣrataṁ.
śaktito brāhmaṇaḥ 'ārthāya śikṣitum prayatāmahe.
tad vai vittaṁ m ātidevī ā mā jaiśi. Śākune, parān!
nīkṛṭyā kāmāye n ́āhaṁ sukhaṁ, uta dhanāṇi vā; 
kītavasya ‘eḥa kṛṣṭino vṛttam etan na pūjyate.»

ŚĀKUNIR uvāca:
«śrotriyaḥ śrotriyaṁ eti nīkṛṭy āvī. Yudhiśṭhira,
vidvān aヴィdūso ‘bhyeti. n ́āhus tāṁ nīkṛtīṁ janāḥ!

59.15 aṅkair hi śikṣito ‘bhyeti nīkṛṭy āvī. Yudhiśṭhira,
vidvān aヴィdūso ‘bhyeti. n ́āhus tāṁ nīkṛtīṁ janāḥ!
akoṅkaiṣaṅkṣaṁ kṛ̤ṣaṅkṣaṁ ca, durbalāṁ balavataraḥ—
evaṁ karmasu sarveṣu nīkṛṭy ‘āvī. Yudhiśṭhira,
vidvān aヴィdūso ‘bhyeti. n ́āhus tāṁ nīkṛtīṁ janāḥ!
evaṁ tvanāṁ mām iḥ ‘ābhīṣyeta nīkṛtīṁ yadi manyase,
devanād vinivartasa, yadi te vidyate bhayaṁ!»

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sovereign, do not dither. Let us set the stakes and stop dallying!"

**YUDHI-SHTHIRA** said:

“Asita Dévala, most eminent of hermits, who wanders the gates between the worlds, once said that it is wicked to cheat while gambling, and honorable to win by fighting righteously. Aryans do not use the language of barbarians or behave deceitfully; all wise men vow to engage in war with honesty and sincerity. To the best of our ability, we strive to help brahmins. Do not exceed the boundaries of decency! Do not cheat to win, Shákuni! I do not want any fortune or happiness gained dishonorably, and gambling, even when played by the rules, is not a praiseworthy game.”

**SHÁKUNI** said:

“A scholar may surpass another scholar with trickery, as may a wise man an ignorant one, Yudhi-shthira. Yet people do not give it that name! A dice player who knows how to throw may defeat one who does not by trickery, yet nobody gives it that name! Likewise, one skilled with weapons may defeat one who is not, and a stronger man the weak, Yudhi-shthira. In fact, in any endeavor the more knowledgeable will surpass the less with the tricks he has learned—yet nobody calls them that. You have come for a game, but if you think me dishonest—if you are afraid—you do not have to play!”
MAHA-BHÄRATA II – THE GREAT HALL

YUDHIŚTHIRA uvāca:

«āhūto na nivarteyam, iti me vrataṃ āhitam.
vidhiś ca balavān, rājan. diṣṭasy āsmi vaśe sthitah.
asmin samāgame kena devanām me bhaviṣyatī?
pratipāṇaś ca ko ’nyo ’sti? tato dyūtaṃ pravartatām!»

DURYODHANA uvāca:

59.20 «ahaṃ dāt” āsmi ratnānāṃ, dhanānāṃ ca, viśāṃ pate!
madjarthe devitā c’ āyaṃ Śakunir mātulo mama.»

YUDHIŚTHIRA uvāca:

«anyen’ ānyasya vai dyūtaṃ viśamaṃ pratibhāti me.
etad, vidvann, upādatsva! kāmam evaṃ, pravartatām!»

VAIŚAMPĀYANA uvāca:

60.1 UPOHYAMĀNE dyūte tu rājānaḥ sarva eva te
Dhṛtarāṣṭraṃ puraśkarṇya viviśus tāṃ sabhāṃ tataḥ.
Bhūṣmo, Dronāḥ, Kṛpaḥ c’ āiva, Viduraḥ ca mahāmatiḥ,
n’ atiprītena manasā te ’nvavartanta, Bhārata.
te dvāṃdvāsah, prthak c’ āiva śimhaṅgīvā, mah”ujasaḥ
śimhaḥ/āsanāṃ bhūṛtiṇī, vicitṛṇi ca bhejīre.
śūṣubhe sā sabhā, rājan, rājabhis taiḥ samāgataiḥ,
devair iva mahābhāgaiḥ samavetais trīviṣṭapam.

60.5 sarve Vedajīdaḥ śūraḥ, sarve bhāṣvaraṁūrtayaḥ,
pravartata, mahārāja, suḥteṣṭidvītaṃ anāntaram.

YUDHIŚTHIRA uvāca:

«āyaṃ bahuḍhano, rājan, sāgar’āvartajambhavah
maṇīr hār’ōttaraḥ śrīmān, kanak’ōttamabhūṣanāḥ.
etad, rājan, mama dhanaṃ pratipāṇo ’sti. kasm tava,
yena māṃ tvam, mahārāja, dhanena pratidvīyase?»

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THE DICE GAME

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:
“Challenged, I shall not withdraw—so I have vowed. This rule is powerful, O king. I am in the hands of Fate. Whom am I to play in this gathering? Who can match my stakes? Let the game begin!”

DURYÓDHANA said:
“I shall stake my gems and treasures, sovereign of the world! And my uncle here, Shakuni, will throw for me.”

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:
“It does not seem right that one man should play for another—as you must know. However, if that is how you want it, let the play begin!”

VAISHAMPÁYANA said:
As the dice game was laid out, all the kings entered the hall, led by Dhritra-rashtra. Bhishma, Drona and Kripa, and the great-minded Vídura followed, none of them happy with the developments. Those mighty, lion-necked kings sat in pairs, or singly, upon a variety of splendid thrones. The great hall shone with the resplendence of those magnificent rulers as heaven shines with the glory of gods; everyone present was learned in the Vedas, valorous heroes whose bodies were resplendent. It was at this point, great king, that the friendly game began.

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:
“This sumptuous prize, O king, this string of pearls laced with pure gold, flung up from the depths of the ocean, is my stake. What is yours? With what wealth do you wish to play me?”
MAHA-BHÁRATA – THE GREAT HALL

DURYODHANA uvāca:
«santi me manaçaś c’āiva, dhanāni suṣṭhaṇī ca.
matsaraś ca na me ‘ṛtheṣu. jayasv’ āinan’ durodaram!»

VAIŚAMPĀYANA uvāca:
tato jagrāḥa Śākunis tān aksāṇ anāṣṭattvaṃvīt;
«jitam! ity» eva Śakunir Yudhiśhiram abhāṣata.

YUDHIŚTHIRA uvāca:
61.1 «Mattaḥ kaitavāken’ āiva, yaj jito ‘smi durodare!
Śakune, hanta! divyāmo glahamāṇāḥ parasparam!
santi niskajasahprasya bhāṇḍinyo bhāritāḥ śubhāḥ,
kośo, hiṇānyam, aksāyaṃ jātarūpam anēkāṣāḥ.
etad, rājan, mama dhanam. tena divyāmy ahaṃ tvayā!»

VAIŚAMPĀYANA uvāca:
Kauravāṇaṃ kulaṇāṃ jyeṣṭham Pañḍavam acyatam
ity uktaḥ, Śakuniḥ prāha, ‘jitam! ity’ eva tāṃ nṛpam.

YUDHIŚTHIRA uvāca:
«ayaṃ sahasraṣamito vaiyāghraḥ, suṇaṣṭhitāḥ,
suṣcitṛōpaskaraḥ, śrīmān, kīṁkīṁjālmaṇḍitāḥ,
61.5 saṃhṛtadana rājaratho ya il’ āṣmān upāvahat,
jaītro rathavaraḥ punyo, meghaṣṭharaḥśravyanah,
asṭau yaṃ kuraçaṇcchāyāḥ sadaśvā rāṣṭraṣaṃmatāḥ
vahanti, ni’ āṣaṃ muciṣta padad bhūmim upasṛṣan.
etad, rājan, dhanamaḥ mahyaṃ. tena divyāmy ahaṃ tvaryā!»
THE DICE GAME

DURYÓDHANA said:
"I have many jewels and a great fortune—but I am not worried about losing them. Win this stake!"

VAISHAMPÁYANA said:
Shákuni, expert in the subtleties of the game, took the dice, cast them, and cried, "Won!"

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:
"You have tricked me to win this stake! All right, Shákuni, let us toss and play again! My splendid coffers are full of thousands of coins; my treasury overflows with undecaying gold. This is my stake, O king. Let us play!"

VAISHAMPÁYANA said:
After Yudhi-shtihira, Pandu’s eldest son, the imperishable ancestor of the Kurus, had spoken, Shákuni threw and cried out, “Won!”

YUDHI-SHTHIRA said:
“This magnificent victory chariot, equal to a thousand lesser vehicles, thunderous like oceans and clouds, hung with tiger skins and tinkling bells, supported by splendid wheels and a mighty frame, furnished with fine fittings, yoked to eight world-famous osprey-hued horses from whose thunderous hoofs no creature can escape—the very same chariot that brought us here—is my next stake, O king. Let us play!”
Paul Wilmot translates and edits Sanskrit literature full time for the JJC Foundation, co-publishers (with NYU Press) of the Clay Sanskrit Library.

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