Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library translation of Volume One (of two) of ‘Karna,’ Book Eight of the Maha·bhárata.

‘Karna’ relates the events of the two dramatic days after the defeat of the great generals Bhishma and Drona, in which Karna—by birth the eldest Pándava—leads the Káurava army into combat. This first volume of ‘Karna’ depicts mighty battles in gory detail, sets the scene for Karna’s tragic death, and includes a remarkable verbal duel between Karna and his reluctant charioteer Shalya, the king of the Madras, as they hurl abuse at each other before entering the fray.

On the fifteenth day of battle, Karna, the cursed son of the mother of the Pándavas and the Sun god, but fostered by low-born parents, becomes commander and chief. On the losing side, Karna is nevertheless a hero with a heart, whose struggles to overcome the class status to which he was abandoned have a popular resonance in India to this day.

‘Karna’ opens as it ends, with Karna’s death. Yet it will take the entire book to describe the tragic unfolding of a destiny which Karna himself predicted will converge in his brutal and callous demise, translated in the second volume.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit alphabetical order</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSL conventions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAHA-BHÁRATA VIII – KARNA I</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–9 Dhrita-rashtra's Lament</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–30 Karna the General, Day One</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–36 Shalya Becomes Karna's Charioteer</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37–45 The Wrangling of Karna and Shalya</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46–54 Karna the General, Day Two</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes</strong></td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proper Names and Epithets</strong></td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Index</strong></td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhi grid</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
37–45
THE WRANGLING OF
KARNA AND SHALYA
SAṂJAYA uvāca:

37.1 Dṛṣṭvā Karṇaṁ mahā-pravāhāṁ
yuyutsuṁ samavasthitam,
cukruṣuḥ Kuravaḥ sarve
hrṣṭārūpāṁ samantataḥ.
tato dundubhī-nirghoṣaṁ, bheriṇāṁ ninadena ca,
bānaśabdaśi ca vividhaṁ, garjitaśi ca tarasvināṁ,
niryayus tavaka yuddhe, mṛtyuṁ kṛtvā nivartanam.

prayāte tu tataḥ Karṇe, yodheṣu muditeṣu ca,
cacāla prthiṁi, rājan, vavāśa ca suvistaram.
niḥṣaranto vyadṛśyanta sūryāt sapta mahāgrāhaḥ.

37.5 ulkāpātāś ca saṃjaiṇuḥ, diśāṁ dāhāṁ tathāṁ āvā ca.
śuṣkāśānyāś ca saṃpetuḥ, vavu rāgāḥ ca bhairavāḥ.

mrghapakṣapuṣiṣe c’ āvā prṛtanāṁ bahuśas tava
apasyāṁ tada cakruṁ, vedayanto mahābhayam.

prathitasya ca Karṇasya nipetuṁ turagā bhuvi,
asthīvṛasaṁ ca patitam antarikṣaṁ bhayānakam!

jayavāśi c’ āvā śaṭrūṇi, dhwajaśi c’ āvā cakampire,

aśrūṇi ca vayamucanta vāhanāṁ, viśaṁ pate.

ete c’ ānye ca bahava utpātās tatra, māraṁ,
samupetuṁ vināśāya Kauravaṁnāṁ suḍaṇuṇāḥ.

37.10 na ca tāṁ gaṇaṁayām āsuh, sarve daivena mohitāḥ,

prasthitam sūtāputram ca, «jāy! ēty» ocur nav’ādhipāḥ.

nirjirnān Pāṇḍavāṁśi c’ āvā menire tatra Kauravaḥ!

368
SÁNJAYA said:

SEEING THE MIGHTY archer Karna standing on that chariot eager for battle, all the Kurus were ecstatic and shouted from everywhere. To the rattling of dîndubhi drums, the rumble of kettle-drums, the various sounds of arrows and the cries of bold heroes, your troops went forth into battle, determined to flee only in death.

And then as Karna advanced and the warriors rejoiced, king, the earth shook and rumbled at length. The seven great planets became visible surging forward from the sun. Meteors plunged down and regions burnt as well. Thunderbolts fell, despite it being dry, and terrible winds blew. Herds of animals and flocks of birds then continually circled your army from right to left, heralding great peril. And while Karna was being celebrated his horses stumbled to the ground, and a terrifying shower of bones fell from the sky! Weapons shone brightly, banners flapped and draught animals shed tears, lord of people. These and many other dreadful portents, dear friend, appeared there foretelling the destruction of the Káuravas.

But, deluded by divine fate, all those rulers of men paid no heed to them and shouted out “Victory!” to the charioteer’s son as he departed. The Káuravas then thought the Pándavas defeated already!
maha-bhárata viii — karna i

tato rathāsthaḥ paraśvīrāhantā
   Bhīṣma Dronāv ativiryaau samiśya,
samujjivalaṁ bhāskaraśvāvakābho
   Vaikartano 'su rathākuñjaro, nṛpa,
   sa Śālyam ābhāṣya jagāda vākyāṁ,
   Pārthasya karmātiśayaṁ vīcintya,
mānena, darpeṇa vidahyamānaḥ,
   kroḍhena dīpyann iva, niḥvāsamanś ca:
   «n' āhaṁ Mahendrād api vajraśāṇeḥ
   kruddhād bibhemy āyudhavāṁ, rathāsthaḥ!
dṛṣṭvā hi Bhīṣmapramukhāṁ śayānāṁ,
   arāva māṁ hy aśthirāta jaḥati.
Mahendra Viśṇupratimāv aninditau
   rathāśva/nāga/praravapramāthināu;
a/vadhyākalaṁ nihatau yadā parais;
   tato na me 'py asti raṇe 'dya sādhaśvasam.

37.15 samiśya saṁkhyē 'tibalān nār'ādhipān
   sa/suta/mātaṅgajāthān parair hatān,
kathaṁ na sarvāṁ aḥitān raṇe 'vadhāṁ
   mahā/āstraśīd brāhmaṇaśaṁgavo gurūḥ.
sa saṃsmaṇe Dronām ahaṁ mahā/āhave,
braviṁ satyaṁ; Kuravo nibodhata!
na vā madāṇyāḥ prasahed raṇe 'rjunaṁ
   saṁgataṁ Mrtyum īv 'ōgraṛūpiṇam.
THE WRANGLING OF KARNA AND SHALYA

Standing in his chariot, Vaikártana, that killer of enemy-heroes, then reflected on Bhishma and Drona whose courage was tremendous. Blazing like the fire of the sun, king, that superb warrior reflected on the excellence of Prítha's son's deeds and, consumed by arrogance and pride and snorting as if burning with fury, shouted out to Shalya and spoke this speech:

“Standing in this chariot with my weapons I have no fear even of mighty Indra wielding his thunderbolt in rage! For seeing those who were led by Bhishma lying prone, doubt has completely left me. Like great Indra and Vishnu those two could not be faulted as they lay waste to the finest chariots, horses and elephants. They had seemed invincible when their enemies killed them. Yet still I have no fear of battle today.

After seeing those extremely powerful rulers of men with their charioteers, elephants and chariots struck down in battle by their enemies, how was it that the guru, the brahmin-hero,* expert in the great weapons, didn't kill all those enemies in battle? I remember Drona in the great battle and I speak the truth! Listen Kurus! No one other than me can match Árjuna in battle once he's attacked like Death in wrathful form.

371
śileṣa, prasādaḥ ca, balaṃ, dhṛtiṣ ca
Drone, maḥaśtriṇi ca, saṃnatiṣ ca,
sa ced agān mṛtyujvaśaṃ maḥaśatmā,
sarvān anyān āturān adya manye!
n`ēha dhruvaṃ kiṃ cid api pracintayān
vidyām loke kar mano daivāyogāt.
śūrya`ādaye ko hi vimuktaśaṃsāyo
bhāvaṃ kurvīr ādyā gurau nipātiṃ?
na nūnam astraṇi, balaṃ, parākramaḥ,
kiṃvad, suṣiṇitaṃ, param`āyudhāni va
alaṃ manusyasya sukhaśya vartitum;
tathā hi yuddhe nihataḥ parair guruh.

37.20
hutāśan`ādityasamāna`tejasam, 
parākrame Viṣṇu`Purāndara`opamam, 
naye Bṛhaspati`Uśānoḥ` sadā samaṃ, 
na c`ā inaṃ astraṇaḥ tad upāśta duḥsaham.
samprākr魆e ruditaśriṣṭiṃkumāre 
parābhute pauroṣe Dhārārāṣṭre, 
mayā kṛtyam iti jānāmi, Śalya! 
prayāhi tasmāt dviṣatām ānikam!
yatra rājā Pāṇḍavaḥ satyasaṃdhī 
vyaavasthiṭo, Bhīmasen`Ārjunau ca, 
Vāsudevaḥ, Śatyakiḥ, Śrījayaḥ ca, 
yamau ca, kaś tān viṣāhen maḍānyah?
tasmāt kṣipraṃ, Madraipate,prayāhi 
rane Paṇḍalāṅ,Paṇḍavān,Śrījayaṃś ca! 
tān va hanśyāmi sametya saṁkhya, 
śāyāmi va Dronepathā Yāmāya. 
nanv ev`āhaṃ na gamisyaṃi madhye 
teṣāṃ śūrāṇāṃ iti mā, Śalya, viddhi!
Learning, kindness, strength, tenacity, the great weapons and humility were found in Drona. If this great man could fall under the sway of death, then I reckon all others shall suffer today!

Thinking it over, I can’t find a thing that is certain in this world because of the divine workings of past acts. With the guru felled, could anyone, free of doubt, now look forward to sunrise? Assuredly not missiles, strength, courage, ritual acts, prudent conduct nor the most excellent weapons are enough to ensure the happiness of a man, for still the guru was felled in battle by his enemies. In fiery energy he was the equal of the sun or fire, in courage he was the equal of Vishnu and the Sacker of cities, in prudent conduct he was always equal to Brihas-pati and Ushanas, but his irresistible missile did not serve him well.

With the courage of the Dhartarāśtras humbled and their women and children weeping and wailing, Shalya, I know what I must do! So attack our enemies’ army! Other than me, who’s a match for those among whom stands Bhima-sena, Ārjuna, Vasudēva, Sātyaki, the Sřinjayas, the twins and the Pāndava king who is true to his promises? So quickly, lord of Madra, attack the Panchālas, Pāndavas and Sṛnjayas in the battle! Once I’ve met with them in battle either I’ll kill them or I’ll go by Drona’s path to Yama.

Shalya, certainly don’t think that I will not go into the midst of those heroes! Such a betrayal of a friend I could
mitrajdroho marśaṇīyo na me 'yaṃ;
tyaktvā prāṇān anuyāṣyāmi Droṇam.

prājñasya mūḍhasya ca jīvitaṃ
tā satām dhruvāṃ vyātiṣṭhitum vai!
kalyāṇaśrīrata satataṃ hi, rāja,
Vaicitravīryasya suto mam' aṣīt.
tasya' arthaśiddhyartham ahaṃ tyajami
prīyān bhogān dusṭyajam jīvitaṃ ca.
vaiyāghra-carmān, aṅkūjan'ākṣaṃ,
haimāṃ, trikośaṃ, rajataṭirīveṇum
ratha-prabhaṃ turaga-prabarhaṃ
yuktaṃ prādān mahyam idaṃ hi Rāmaḥ,
dhanūṣaṃ citrāṇi nirikṣya, Śalya,
dhvaṇān, gadaḥ, sāyakaṁś c' ōgra/rūpān, 
asiṃ ca diprāṃ param'āyuḍham ca,
śaṅkhaṃ ca śubhraṃ svanavantam ugraṃ,
pataśkuṃ, vaja'nipataśnivamaṃ, 
sit'āśvayuktam, śubhaṭṭaṇaśobhitam, 
imāṃ samābhaya rathaṃ, ratha'ṛṣabham 
rāne hanisāmy aham Arjunaṃ balāt.
not pardon; giving up my life, I'll follow Drona. At the end of life, there's no escape for a man, wise or stupid, who's been honored by Death. Therefore, wise man, I will attack Pritha's sons. Destiny can't be avoided!

King, the son of Vichitra-virya's son* has always acted well towards me. To fulfil his objectives I surrender my favorite pleasures and my treasured life. Rama gave me the finest chariot yoked to the finest horses, its three-piece bamboo struts silver and three scabbards gold, its axle silent and shield covered in tiger-skin. Looking over my beautiful bows, Shalya, my banners, clubs and formidable arrows, and my brilliant sword and superb weapon and my white conch reverberating threateningly, and mounting this flag-bearing chariot that is adorned with beautiful quivers, yoked to white horses and sounding like a falling thunderbolt, in battle I'll brutally kill Arjuna, a bull of a warrior.
37.30 tam cē Mṛtyuḥ sarvajharo 'bhiraṇeṣṭ
sad' āpramaññataḥ samare Pāṇḍuputram,
tam vā hanisyāmi sameyta yuddhe,
yāsyāmi vā Bhīṣmaṁukho Yamāya.
YamaḥVaruṇaKubēraVāsava vā
yadi yugapat saṅgaṇa mah”jāhave
jugupiṣava iva ādyā Pāṇḍavaṁ,
kim u bahunā saha tair jayāmi tam!

SAMJAYA said:
iti ranairabhhasasya katthatas
tad uta niṣamya vacaḥ sa Madraṇaḥ
avahasad avamanyā viśṛṇavaṅ
pratīśśidhe ca, jagād ca ‘ottaram.

ŚALYA uvāca:
«virama! virama, Karṇa, katthanād!
atirabhhaso ‘py avicam uktavāṅ.
kva ca hi narāvaḥ Dhanaṁjayaḥ,
 kva punar aho puruṣ’ādhamo bhavāṅ!
Yaduśadanam Upendraṁlitam
trij dåśaṁ iv ’amarāraṇāraṇaṁ
prasabham ativilodya, ko haret
puruṣaṁvaśāvarajām rte ’ṛjunāt?
37.35 trīṣbhuvanaṁvibhum iṣvaṁvēśarām
ka iva pumāṁ Bhavam ābhayeḥ yuddhi
mṛgaṁvadhaṁkalahe rte ’ṛjunāt
surāpatiṁvīraṁsamaṁprabhāvataḥ?

376
THE WRANGLING OF KARNA AND SHALYA

If all-destroying, ever-vigilant Death should protect Pāndu’s son in the war, after meeting him in battle either I’ll kill him or, preceded by Bhishma, I’ll go to Yama. Or if together with their attendants Yama, Vāruna, Kubéra and Vásava intend to protect the Pándava here today in this great battle—what more need be said?—I’ll kill him along with them!”

SĀNJAYA said:

Hearing Karna’s words as he boasted eager for war, laughing contemptuously the courageous king of Madra stopped him and spoke this response.

SHALYA said:

“Stop it Karna! Stop this boasting! You’re too impetuous and the words you spoke were over the top. For on the one hand we have Dhanan·jaya, a fine man, and on the other we have you, a vile man!

Who other than Árjuna could have destroyed the city of Yadus while it was protected by Indra’s younger brother like heaven guarded by the king of the immortals,* and carried off the younger sister of that excellent man? What man in this world other than Árjuna, whose power is equal to the strength of the lord of the gods, could challenge Bhava in battle, the lord of lords, the lord of the triple-world, in that quarrel over the killing of an animal?
asura\ṣura\ṣham"ōragān, narān,  
Garudapiśāca\sa\ya\kṣa\rākṣa\sān  
iṣubhir ajayad Agnīgauravāt  
sv\ābhila\ṣita\n ca havir dadau Jayāḥ.  
smarasi nanu yadā parair hṛtaḥ  
sa ca Dhrītarāṣṭra\uṣuto 'pi mokṣitaḥ  
dīna\kara\sadr\ṣaih śār'ottamaih§  
Kuruṣu bahūn vinihatya tān arin.  
prathamam api pālayite tvai,  
pi\ya\kakahā Dhrītarāṣṭra\uṣūnavaḥ  
smarasi nanu yadā pramocitaḥ  
khā\cara\ga\nān avajītya Pāṇḍavaïh.  
samudita\balav\hana\n̄ punaḥ  
puruṣavareṇa jītaḥ stha goīgrahe  
sa\guru\guru\usi\tā śa\bhīṣmaka\ḥ;  
kim u na jītaḥ sa tād tvay" Ārjunāḥ?

37.40  
īdam aparam upasṭhitam punas  
tava nidhanāya su\i\yuddham adya vai;  
yadi na ripūbhaya\t pālayase,  
samarāgato 'dya hato 'si, sūtajāī\।

SAMŚAYA uvāca:  
i\

378
THE WRANGLING OF KARNA AND SHALYA

Out of his respect for Agni, Jaya defeated demons, gods, great serpents, men, Gāruda, pishâchas, yakshas and râkshasas with his arrows and offered him his eagerly desired oblation.

No doubt you remember when, after he'd slaughtered many enemies for the Kurus with his superb arrows that resemble the sun, he freed Dhrita-rashtra's son who'd been captured by his enemies. No doubt you remember when, after you were the first to flee, Dhrita-rashtra's quarrelsome sons were released by the Pândavas after they'd conquered hordes of those that travel through the sky.* During the cattle raid,* the armies and their vehicles gathered with Bhishma—the guru and the guru's son among them—were again defeated by that excellent man. Why didn't you defeat Árjuna then? Now again another extraordinary battle is at hand for your destruction. If you do not flee out of fear of your enemy, son of a charioteer, you'll be killed once you engage in battle!"

sánjaya said:

While the cheerful lord of the Madras uttered this dev-astating rebuke and praised their enemy, the general of the Kuru army, a scorcher of enemies, became tremendously angry and spoke to the lord of the Madras.
MAHA-BHÁRATA VIII — KARNA I

KARNA UVÁCA:

«bhavatu! bhavatu! kim vikatthase?
nanu mama tasya ca yuddham udyatam;
yadi sa jayati māṁ iḥ āhaye,
tata idam astu sukaṁthitaṁ tava!»

SAMJAYA UVÁCA:

«evam astvā iti» Madrīśa uktevā n’ōttaram uktvān.
«yāhi, Śalyā! ēti c’ āpy enāṁ Karṇaḥ práha yuyutsayā.
sa rathaḥ prayaṇau śatrūṇ śvetāśvaḥ Śalyaśārathih,
nighnann amitrāṁ samare, tamo ghnan savitā yathā.
»

tataḥ prāyāt pūrtimān vai rathena
vaiyāgyeṇa śvetayuj” átha Karṇaḥ.
sa c’ aloka dhvajiniṁ Pāṇḍavaṁ,
Dhanamjayaṁ tvarayā paryapṛcchat.

SAMJAYA UVÁCA:

37.45 prayaṇe ca tataḥ Karṇo harṣayaṇāv vahiniṁ tava,
ek’āikaṁ samare dṛṣṭvā Pāṇḍavaṁ paryapṛcchatā.
«yo māṁ adya mah”ātmānaṁ dṛṣṭaye cḥetvāvahanaṁ,
tasmā dadyāṁ abhipreṇaṁ dhanaṁ yan manas” ecchati.
a na cet tad abhimanyeta, tasmā dadyāṁ ahaṁ punaḥ,
śaṅkataṁ ratnāśampanṁ, yo me brūyād Dhanamjyayaṁ.
a na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo “junaḍarśīvān,
śatam dadyāṁ gavaṁ tasmai naityakaṁ kāṁsyādohanaṁ.
38.1 śatam grāmāvarāṁ c’ āiva dadyāṁ Arjunadarsīne.
tathā tasmai punar dadyāṁ śvetam asvataṛiṛatham,
yuktam aṁjanaṁkeśibhir, yo me brūyād Dhanamjyayaṁ.

Clay Sanskrit Library mbh 8, vol. 1
Edited by Adam Bowles (csL-5.1)
10 Dec 2006 1:12 P.M.
THE WRANGLING OF KARNA AND SHALYA

KARNA said:

“Enough! Enough! Why do you taunt me? Without any
doubt the battle between him and me shall take place. If he
defeats me in this battle, then shall this boast of yours be
fair!”

SÁNJAYA said:

After saying, “Let it be so!” the lord of Madra said no
more. And then, with eagerness to fight, Karna said to him,
“Shalya, charge!”

With his white horses and Shalya as his chariot-driver,
that warrior attacked his enemies, destroying his adversaries
in battle just as the sun destroys the darkness.

Karna was then pleased and advanced with his chariot
covered in tiger-skin and drawn by white horses. When he
caught sight of the army of the Pándavas, he quickly asked
after Dhanan-jaña.

SÁNJAYA said:

Then Karna roused your army as he advanced and asked
each combatant who he saw in the battle about the Pándava.

“Whoever can point out to me today the great man with
the white horses, I shall give any precious reward that he
desires. If he doesn’t agree to that, I shall still give whoever
can tell me about Dhanan-jaña a wagon filled with jewels. If
he doesn’t want that, I shall give the man who’s seen Árjuna a
hundred cows along with the obligatory copper milk-pails.

To whoever’s seen Árjuna I shall give a hundred of the
best villages. And further, to whoever can tell me about
Dhanan-jaña I shall give a white cart pulled by black-maned
she-mules. If he doesn’t want that, I shall further give the
na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo 'ṛjunaṛdarśivān,
anyāṇā'v' asmai punar dadyāṁ sauvarṇaṁ hastiṣṭhadīgavam.
tathā'apy asmai punar dadyāṁ striṇāṁ śatam alanjkṛtam,
śyāmānāṁ, niśkākaṇṭhināṁ, gīta/vadyavipāścitāṁ.
na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo 'ṛjunaṛdarśivān,
tasmāi dadyāṁ śatam nāgāṁ, śatam grāmāṁ, śatam rathāṁ,
sauvarṇaṁya ca mukhyasya hai/aṅgṛāṇaṁ śatam śatāṁ.

38.10 rddhyā guṇaiḥ suṇāntaṁ ca, dhuryaṁvahān, suṣiśketām.
tathā suvarṇaṁśringaṁ godhenunāṁ catuḥśatam
dadyāṁ tasmāi saivatstāṁ, yo me brūyād Dhanamjayām.
na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo 'ṛjunaṛdarśivān,
anyad asmai varaṁ dadyāṁ svetāṁ paṁcaśatāṁ hayān.
hemuḥbhaṇḍaparicchānāṁ, sūrmṛṣṭa/maṇiḥbhūṣanāṁ,
suṇāntaṁ api c 'āiv' āhaṁ
dadyāṁ aṣṭādaśāparāṁ.
rathaṁ ca subhraṁ sauvarṇaṁ
dadyāṁ tasmāi svālanjkṛtam,
yuktāṁ paraṁ/Kāmbojāiro, yo me brūyād Dhanamjayām.
na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo 'ṛjunaṛdarśivān,

38.15 anyad asmai varaṁ dadyāṁ kuṇjarāṇaṁ śatāṁ śat,
kāścānair vividhair bhāṅḍair ācchānāṁ, hemajmālināṁ,
uppannaṁ apar'ānteṣu, viniṭān āṃṣṭikṣakaiḥ,
na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo 'ṛjunaṛdarśivān,
anyad asmai varaṁ dadyāṁ vaśyaigrāmāṁś caturḍaṣa,
suṣphīrāṁ, dhanaśamīyuktāṁ, pratyaśannav'ān/ādakāṁ;
aṅkuṭoharyāṁ suṣampannāṁ rājabhojyāṁś caturḍaṣa!

382
man who’s seen Árjuna another chariot made of gold and pulled by six oxen the size of elephants. And I’ll give him still more! A hundred women of dark complexion, covered in ornaments, wearing gold collars and skilled in songs and musical instruments. If he doesn’t want that, I shall give the man who’s seen Árjuna a hundred elephants, a hundred villages, a hundred chariots and ten thousand superb horses of the finest gold color that are in good health, have good qualities, are well tamed and trained and can be used as draught horses. To whoever can tell me about Dhanan-jaya I shall give four hundred golden-horned milk-cows along with their calves. If he doesn’t want that, I shall give the man who’s seen Árjuna another reward, five hundred white horses.

And I shall also give him eighteen other very placid horses with golden harnesses and blankets and decorated with highly polished jewels. And to whoever can tell me about Dhanan-jaya I shall give a beautiful chariot, brilliantly decorated and yoked to the finest Kambójan horses. If he doesn’t want that, I shall give the man who’s seen Árjuna another reward, six hundred elephants bred in the west, clothed with various gold trappings, wearing golden garlands and led by elephant trainers. If he doesn’t want that, I shall give the man who’s seen Árjuna another reward, fourteen flourishing villages of vaishyas that are filled with wealth and have forests and water nearby—fourteen danger free and well supplied villages fit to be enjoyed by kings!

38.10

38.15

383
Maha-Bharata VIII – Karna I

dāsināṁ niśkkaṇṭhāṁ Māgadhīnāṁ śaṭaṁ tathā
pratyajāvayasāṁ dadyāṁ, yo me brūyād Dhanāṁjayam.
na cet tad abhimanyeta puruṣo ‘juna’daśīvāṁ,
anyaṁ tasmai varaṇa dadyāṁ, yam asau kāmayet svayam!

38.20 putrajārāṁ, vihārāṁī ca yad anyad vittam asti me,
tac ca tasmai punar dadyāṁ, yad yac ca manaś” ecchati.
hatvā ca sahitau Kṛṣṇau, tayor vittāṁ sarvasāṁ
tasmai dadyāṁ ahaṁ yo me prabṛtyat Keśava’Arjunau’
etā vācaḥ suḥbahuśaḥ Kṛṣṇa uccārayan yudhī
dadhmau sāgara/saṁbhūtaṁ suśvanaṁ śāṅkham uttamam.
tā vācaḥ sūtāputrasya tathā yuktā nīśamya tu,
Duryodhano, mahārāja, prahrśtaḥ s’ānugo ‘bhavat.
tato dundubhīnirghoṣo, mṛdaṅgānāṁ ca sarvasaḥ
śiśaḥnādaḥ saśvādītraḥ, kuśjarānāṁ ca nīsvaṇaḥ

38.25 prādūr āsīt tadā, rājan, sainyeṣu, puruṣa’ṛṣabha,
yodhānāṁ saṁprahrśṭānāṁ tathā samabhavat svanaḥ.
tathā prahrṣṭe sainye tu plavamānaṁ mahāratham,
vikatthamānaṁ ca tadā Rādheya arīkṣaṇaṁ,
Madrājāḥ prahasy’ ēdaṁ vacanaṁ pratyabhāṣāta.

Śalya uvāca:

39.1 “Mā, sūtāputra, dānena sauvarṇaṁ hastiṣaṇḍīgavam
prayaccha puruṣāy’; ādyā dakṣyasi tvam Dhanāṁjayam!
bāyād iha tvaṁ tyajasi vasu Vaśravāṇo yathā;
a’yatanaṁ āiva, Rādhya, draṭ” ādy ādyā Dhanāṁjayam.
parān śjasī yad vittam kiṁ cî tvam bahu mūḍhavat;
apātraścāṁ ye doṣas tān mohāṁ n’ āvabudhyase.
THE WRANGLING OF KARNA AND SHALYA

And whoever can tell me about Dhanan-jaya I shall give a hundred young Māgadhi slave girls wearing golden collars. And if he doesn’t want that, I shall give the man who’s seen Ārjuna another reward, whatever he would desire for himself! Sons, wives or pleasures, or whatever other possessions I have, and whatever he desires in his heart, I will give to him. Once I’ve killed the two Krishnas together, I will give everything they owned to whoever tells me about Kēshava and Ārjuna!"

Whilst uttering these many words in the battle, Karna blew his superb conch that came from the ocean and had a beautiful tone. And when they heard these fitting words of the charioteer’s son, great king, Duryōdhana and his attendants were thrilled.

Then, king, the sound of dāndubhi and mridānga drums, lion roars, musical instruments and elephants trumpeting became audible everywhere among the troops, bull of a man, as did the clamor of soldiers celebrating.

But as that mighty warrior Radha’s son, a tormenter of enemies, bragged as he sailed into that excited army, the king of the Madras responded with this speech.

SHALYA said:

“Son of a charioteer, don’t reward a man by offering a golden cart pulled by six elephant-like oxen. You will see Dhanan-jaya today! Foolishly you give away riches here as if you were Vāishravana. With no effort, son of Radha, you will see Dhanan-jaya today. Like a sucker you give away much wealth to others. In giving to the unworthy, stupidly you don’t recognise those who are wicked. With these vast
yat tvaṃ prerayase vittaṃ, bahu tena khalu tvaṃ
dvāraṃ bahuḥvidhair yajñaṃ yaṣṭum. sūta, yajasva taḥ!

39.5 yac ca prārthayase hantuṃ Kṛṣṇau mohāda, vṝth” āiva tat!
na hi suṣrūma saṃmarde kroṣṭrā śiṃhau nipātitaub
aprārthitaṃ prārthayase; suḥḍo na hi santi te
ye tvaṃ nivārayanty āśu prapatatamḥ hūrśāANE.
kāryajākāryaṃ na jāniṣe; kulaipakvo ṣy ājaṃśayam!
bahu abaddham aṅkārṇyaṃ ko hi brūyāj jījiviṣuḥ?
samudraṭaṇaṃ dorbhyaṃ kāṇṭhe baddhva yathā śilām,
giriyaṅrād vā nipatanamḥ, tāḍrīk tava cikṛṣṭam.
sahitaḥ sarvayodhais tvaṃ vyuddhaṅṅikaḥ sūtraksitaḥ
Dhanamjayena yuddhasva, śreyāṣ cet prāptum icchasai.

39.10 hitārthaṃ Dhāṛtarāṣṭrasya bravīṃ tvāṃ, na hiṃṣayā.
śraddhasvā āivaṃ mayā proktam yadi te śti jījiviṣāi”

KARNA UVĀCA:
“svabhuvidvīryāṃ āśrtya, prārthayāmy Arjunaṃ raṇe.
tvaṃ tu mitraṃmukhaḥ śatrur māṃ bhiṣayitum icchasai!
nā māṃ asmād abhiprayāt kaś cid adya nivartayet,
ap’ Īndra vajram udyamya! kiṃ nu mṛtyaḥ kathāṃ caṇā?”

SAMJAYA UVĀCA:
iti Karṇasya vākyānte Śalyaḥ prāh’ ottaraṃ vacaḥ
cukopayiṣur atyarthaṃ Karṇaṃ Madṝeśvaraḥ punaḥ.

386
THE WRANGLING OF KARNA AND SHALYA

riches that you send away, truly you could offer many different sacrifices. And you must offer those sacrifices, suta!*

Stupidly, you long to kill the two Krishnas; this is pointless! For we’ve never heard of a pair of lions destroyed by a jackal! You long for what should not be longed for; there are no friends who can stop you tumbling directly into fire. You don’t understand what should and shouldn’t be done. Without doubt you’ve been cooked by time!* Who that wants to live would say so much that’s meaningless and not worth listening to? Your plan is like crossing the ocean by the arms after tying a rock around one’s neck. Or like leaping from the summit of a mountain. If you want to find success, you must fight with Dhanan-jaya together with all your warriors and well protected by your arrayed forces. Without malice I speak to you for the good of Dhrita-rashtra’s son. You must trust what I say if you want to live!”

KARNA said:

“Relying upon the strength of my own arms, I long for Ārjuna in battle. But you, an enemy with the face of a friend, want to intimidate me! No one could stop me from my objective today, not even Indra with his thunderbolt raised! How much less then could some mere mortal?”

SĀNJAYA said:

At the end of Karna’s speech, Shalya, the lord of the Madras, hoping to utterly infuriate Karna, again spoke these words in reply.

387
Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library translation of Volume One (of two) of ‘Karna,’ Book Eight of the Maha-bhárata.

‘Karna’ relates the events of the two dramatic days after the defeat of the great generals Bhishma and Drona, in which Karna—by birth the eldest Pándava—leads the Káurava army into combat. This first volume of ‘Karna’ depicts mighty battles in gory detail, sets the scene for Karna’s tragic death, and includes a remarkable verbal duel between Karna and his reluctant charioteer Shalya, the king of the Madras, as they hurl abuse at each other before entering the fray.

On the fifteenth day of battle, Karna, the cursed son of the mother of the Pándavas and the Sun god, but fostered by low-born parents, becomes commander and chief. On the losing side, Karna is nevertheless a hero with a heart, whose struggles to overcome the class status to which he was abandoned have a popular resonance in India to this day.

‘Karna’ opens as it ends, with Karna’s death. Yet it will take the entire book to describe the tragic unfolding of a destiny which Karna himself predicted will converge in his brutal and callous demise, translated in the second volume.