

RAJA YUDHISTHIRA KINGSHIP IN EPIC MAHABHARATA 1ST EDITION Pdf Free Download



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Madri dies on his funeral pyre out of remorse. Kunti raises the five brothers, who are from then on usually referred to as the Pandava brothers. Dhritarashtra has a hundred sons through Gandhari, all born after the birth of Yudhishtira. These are the Kaurava brothers, the eldest being Duryodhana, and the second Dushasana. Other Kaurava brothers were Vikarna and Sukarna. The rivalry and enmity between them and the Pandava brothers, from their youth and into manhood, leads to the Kurukshetra war. After the deaths of their mother Madri and father Pandu, the Pandavas and their mother Kunti return to the palace of Hastinapur. Yudhishtira is made Crown Prince by Dhritarashtra, under considerable

pressure from his kingdom

Dhritarashtra wanted his own son Duryodhana to become king and lets his ambition get in the way of preserving justice. Shakuni, Duryodhana and Dussasana plot to get rid of the Pandavas. Shakuni calls the architect Purochana to build a palace out of flammable materials like lac and ghee. He then arranges for the Pandavas and the Queen Mother Kunti to stay there, with the intention of setting it alight. However, the Pandavas are warned by their wise uncle, Vidura, who sends them a miner to dig a tunnel. They are able to escape to safety and go into hiding. Back at Hastinapur, the Pandavas and Kunti are presumed dead. The Pandavas enter the competition in disguise as Brahmins.

The task is to string a mighty steel bow and shoot a target on the ceiling, which is the eye of a moving artificial fish, while looking at its reflection in oil below. Most of the princes fail, many being unable to lift the bow. Arjuna succeeds however. The Pandavas return home and inform their mother that Arjuna has won a competition and to look at what they have brought back.

Without looking, Kunti asks them to share whatever it is Arjuna has won among themselves. On explaining the previous life of Draupadi, she ends up being the wife of all five brothers. After the wedding, the Pandava brothers are invited back to Hastinapura. The Kuru family elders and relatives negotiate and broker a split of the kingdom, with the Pandavas obtaining a new territory. Yudhishthira has a new capital built for this territory at Indraprastha. Neither the Pandava nor Kaurava sides are happy with the arrangement however. Shortly after this, Arjuna elopes with and then marries Krishna's sister, Subhadra. Yudhishthira wishes to establish his position as king; he seeks Krishna's advice. The Pandavas have a new palace built for them, by Maya the Danava. Duryodhana walks round the palace, and mistakes a glossy floor for water, and will not step in.

After being told of his error, he then sees a pond, and assumes it is not water and falls in. Draupadi laughs at him and ridicules him by saying that this is because of his blind father Dhritashtra. He then decides to avenge his humiliation. Shakuni, Duryodhana's uncle, now arranges a dice game, playing against Yudhishthira with loaded dice. Yudhishthira loses all his wealth, then his kingdom. He then even gambles his brothers, himself, and finally his wife into servitude.

The jubilant Kauravas insult the Pandavas in their helpless state and even try to disrobe Draupadi in front of the entire court, but her honour is saved by Krishna who miraculously creates lengths of cloth to replace the ones being removed. Dhritashtra, Bhishma, and the other elders are aghast at the situation, but Duryodhana is adamant that there is no place for two crown princes in Hastinapura. Against his wishes Dhritashtra orders for another dice game. The Pandavas are required to go into exile for 12 years, and in the 13th year must remain hidden. If discovered by the Kauravas, they will be forced into exile for another 12 years. The Pandavas spend thirteen years in exile; many adventures occur during this time.

They also prepare alliances for a possible future conflict. They spend their final year in disguise in the court of Virata, and are discovered just after the end of the year. At the end of their exile, they try to negotiate a return to Indraprastha. However, this fails, as Duryodhana objects that they were discovered while in hiding, and that no return of their kingdom was agreed. War becomes inevitable. The two sides summon vast armies to their help and line up at Kurukshetra for a war. Before war being declared, Balarama had expressed his unhappiness at the developing conflict and left to go on pilgrimage; thus he does not take part in the battle itself. Krishna takes part in a non-combatant role, as charioteer for Arjuna.

Krishna wakes him up to his call of duty in the famous Bhagavad Gita section of the epic. Though initially sticking to chivalrous notions of warfare, both sides soon adopt dishonourable tactics. After "seeing" the carnage, Gandhari who had lost all her sons, curses Krishna to be a witness to a similar annihilation of his family, for though divine and capable of stopping the war, he had not done so. Krishna accepts the curse, which bears fruit 36 years later. The Pandavas who had ruled their kingdom meanwhile, decide to renounce everything.

Clad in skins and rags they retire to the Himalaya and climb towards heaven in their bodily form. A stray dog travels with them. One by one the brothers and Draupadi fall on their way. As each one stumbles, Yudhishthira gives the rest the reason for their fall Draupadi was partial to Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were vain and proud of their looks, Bhima and Arjuna were proud of their strength and archery skills, respectively. Only the virtuous Yudhishthira, who had tried everything to prevent the carnage, and the dog remain.

The dog reveals himself to be the god Yama also known as Yama Dharmaraja, and then takes him to the underworld where he sees his siblings and wife. After explaining the nature of the test, Yama takes Yudhishthira back to heaven and explains that it was necessary to expose him to the underworld because Rajyante narakam dhruvam any ruler has to visit the underworld at least once. Yama then assures him that his siblings and wife would join him in heaven after they had been exposed to the underworld for measures of time according to their vices. Arjuna's grandson Parikshit rules after them and dies bitten by a snake. His furious son, Janamejaya, decides to perform a snake sacrifice sarpasattra in order to destroy the snakes.

It is at this sacrifice that the tale of his ancestors is narrated to him. The Mahabharata mentions that Karna, the Pandavas, and Dhritashtra's sons eventually ascended to svarga and "attained the state of the gods" and banded together — "serene and free from anger. The Mahabharata offers one of the first instances of theorizing about "just war", illustrating many of the standards that would be debated later across the world. In the story, one of five brothers asks if the suffering caused by war can ever be justified. A long discussion ensues between the siblings, establishing criteria like proportionality: chariots cannot attack cavalry, only other chariots, no attacking people in distress, just means no poisoned or barbed arrows, just cause no attacking out of rage, and fair treatment of captives and the wounded. Many regional versions of the work developed over time, mostly differing only in minor details, or with verses or subsidiary stories being added.

These include the Tamil street theatre, terukkuttu and kattaikkuttu, the plays of which use themes from the Tamil language versions of Mahabharata, focusing on Draupadi. It has become the fertile source for Javanese literature, dance drama wayang wong, and wayang shadow puppet performances. This Javanese version differs slightly from the original Indian version. For example Draupadi is only wed to Yudhishthira, not to the entire Pandavas brothers, this might demonstrate ancient Javanese opposition of polyandry practice. The author later added some female characters to be wed to the Pandavas. Arjuna for example is described as having many wives and consorts next to Subhadra. Another difference

is Shikhandi did not undergo sex change and remains as a woman, to be wed to Arjuna, and took the role as a warrior princess during the war.

Another twist is Gandhari was described as antagonist character that hates Pandava so much. Her hate was out of jealousy, because during svayambara for the hand of Gandhari, she was actually in love with Pandu, but later being wed to his blind elder brother instead, whom she does not love, as a protest she then blindfold herself. Another notable difference is the inclusion of Punakawans, the clown servants of the main characters in the storyline, which is not found in Indian version. This character includes Semar, Petruk, Gareng and Bagong, they are much-loved by Indonesian audiences. There are some spin-off episodes developed in ancient Java, such as Arjunawiwaha composed in 11th century. Between and, scholars at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, compared the various manuscripts of the epic from India and abroad and produced the Critical Edition of the Mahabharata, on 13, pages in 19 volumes, followed by the Harivamsha in another two volumes and six index volumes.

This is the text that is usually used in current Mahabharata studies for reference. In Indian cinema, several film versions of the epic exist, dating back to In Telugu many movies made on Mahabharata which had shown detailed story. Rama Rao shows Karna a lead character and described his good qualities. In the late s, the Mahabharat TV series, directed by Ravi Chopra, [48] was televised and shown on India's national television Doordarshan.

In the Western world, a well-known presentation of the epic is Peter Brook's nine-hour play, which premiered in Avignon in, and its five-hour movie version The Mahabharata Mahabharata was also reinterpreted by Shyam Benegal in Kalyug. Kalyug is a modern-day replaying of the Mahabharata. Adaptations of the Mahabharata are often the most expensive films in Indian cinema. The unmade adaptation Mahabharat by director Rajkumar Santoshi was estimated at 22 million U. Amar Chitra Katha published a 1, page comic book version of the Mahabharata. The first complete English translation was the Victorian prose version by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, [57] published between and Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers and by M. Dutt Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. Most critics consider the translation by Ganguli to be faithful to the original text. The complete text of Ganguli's translation is in the public domain and is available online. Gitomer of DePaul University book 6, J.

An early poetry translation by Romesh Chunder Dutt and published in condenses the main themes of the Mahabharata into English verse. Lal is complete, and in began being published by Writers Workshop, Calcutta. The P. Lal translation is a non-rhyming verse-by-verse rendering, and is the only edition in any language to include all slokas in all recensions of the work not just those in the Critical Edition.

The completion of the publishing project is scheduled for Sixteen of the eighteen volumes are now available. A project to translate the full epic into English prose, translated by various hands, began to appear in from the Clay Sanskrit Library, published by New York University Press. Currently available are 15 volumes of the projected volume edition. Indian economist Bibek Debroy has also begun an unabridged English translation in ten volumes. Volume 1: Adi Parva was published in March Many condensed versions, abridgements and novelistic prose retellings of the complete epic have been published in English, including works by Ramesh Menon, William Buck, R. Narayan, C. Rajagopalachari, K. Munshi, Krishna Dharma, Romesh C. Dutt, Bharadvaja Sarma, John D. Smith and Sharon Maas. A Kawi version is found on the Indonesian island of Bali and was translated by Dr. Gusti Putu Phalgunadi. Of the eighteen parvas, only eight Kawi manuscripts remain. The first important play of 20th century was Andha Yug The Blind Epoch, by Dharamvir Bharati, which came in, found in Mahabharat, both an ideal source and expression of modern predicaments and discontent.

Starting with Ebrahim Alkazi it was staged by numerous directors. Jain version of Mahabharata can be found in the various Jain texts like Harivamsapurana the story of Harivamsa Trisastisalakapurusa Caritra Hagiography of 63 Illustrious persons, Pandavacaritra lives of Pandavas and Pandavapurana stories of Pandavas. Instead they serve as names of two distinct class of mighty brothers, who appear nine times in each half of time cycles of the Jain cosmology and rule the half the earth as half-chakravartins. Jaini traces the origin of this list of brothers to the Jinacharitra by Bhadrabahu swami 4th—3rd century BCE. Ultimately, the Pandavas and Balarama take renunciation as Jain monks and are reborn in heavens, while on the other hand Krishna and Jarasandha are reborn in hell.

Jaini admits a possibility that perhaps because of his popularity, the Jain authors were keen to rehabilitate Krishna. The Jain texts predict that after his karmic term in hell is over sometime during the next half time-cycle, Krishna will be reborn as a Jain Tirthankara and attain liberation. This shows the line of royal and family succession, not necessarily the parentage. See the notes below for detail. The birth order of siblings is correctly shown in the family tree from left to right, except for Vyasa and Bhishma whose birth order is not described, and Vichitravirya who was born after them. The epic is traditionally ascribed to the sage Vyasa, who is also a major character in the epic. This may be true to a great extent because the lineage described in the book can be traced to its modern day descendants.

He also describes the Guru-Shishya parampara, which traces all great teachers and their students of the Vedic times. The first section of the Mahabharata states that it was Ganesha who wrote down the text to Vyasa's dictation. Ganesha is said to have agreed to write it only if Vyasa never paused in his recitation. Vyasa agrees on condition that Ganesha takes the time to understand what was said before writing it down. The epic employs the story within a story structure, otherwise known as *frametales*, popular in many Indian religious and non-religious works. It is recited by the sage Vaisampayana, a disciple of Vyasa, to the King Janamejaya who is the great-grandson of the Pandava prince Arjuna.

The story is then recited again by a professional storyteller named Ugrasrava Sauti, many years later, to an assemblage of sages performing the year sacrifice for King Saunaka Kulapati in the Nainisha Forest. Accretion and redaction Research on the Mahabharata has put an enormous effort into recognizing and dating layers within the text. Some elements of the present Mahabharata can be traced back to Vedic times. What then is possible? Our objective can only be to reconstruct the oldest form of the text which it is possible to reach on the basis of the manuscript material available.

The Mahabharata itself 1. At least three redactions of the text are commonly recognized: Jaya Victory with 8, verses attributed to Vyasa, Bharata with 24, verses as recited by Vaisampayana, and finally the Mahabharata as recited by Ugrasrava Sauti with over, verses. Mahabharata 3 The addition of the latest parts may be dated by the absence of the Anushasana-parva and the Virata parva from the "Spitzer manuscript". The division

into sub-parvas mentioned in Mbh. The Harivamsa consists of the final two of the sub-parvas, and was considered an appendix khila to the Mahabharata proper by the redactors of the 18 parvas. These versions would correspond to the addition of one and then another 'frame' settings of dialogues. The Vasu version would omit the frame settings and begin with the account of the birth of Vyasa.

The astika version would add the sarpasattra and ashvamedha material from Brahmanical literature, introduce the name Mahabharata, and identify Vyasa as the work's author. The redactors of these additions were probably Pancharatrin scholars who according to Oberlies likely retained control over the text until its final redaction. Mention of the Huna in the Bhishma-parva however appears to imply that this parva may have been edited around the 4th century [citation needed]. The snake sacrifice of Janamejaya The Adi-parva includes the snake sacrifice sarpasattra of Janamejaya, explaining its motivation, detailing why all snakes in existence were intended to be destroyed, and why in spite of this, there are still snakes in existence. This sarpasattra material was often considered an independent tale added to a version of the Mahabharata by "thematic attraction" Minkowski, and considered to have a particularly close connection to Vedic Brahmana literature.

The Panchavimsha Brahmana at Hermann Oldenberg supposed that the original poem must once have carried an immense "tragic force" but dismissed the full text as a "horrible chaos. Moritz Winternitz *Geschichte der indischen Literatur* considered that "only unpoetical theologians and clumsy scribes" could have lumped the parts of disparate origin into an unordered whole.

Historical references The earliest known references to the Mahabharata and its core Bharata date to the Ashtadhyayi sutra 6. This may suggest that the core 24, verses, known as the Bharata, as well as an early version of the extended Mahabharata, were composed by the 4th century BCE. A report by the Greek writer Dio Chrysostom c. However, scholars have, in general, taken this as evidence for the existence of a Mahabharata at this date, whose episodes Dio or his sources identify with the story of the Iliad. Mahabharata 4 Several stories within the Mahabharata took on separate identities of their own in Classical Sanskrit literature. The copper-plate inscription of the Maharaja Sharvanatha — CE from Khoh Satna District, Madhya Pradesh describes the Mahabharata as a "collection of, verses" shatasahasri samhita.

The history and genealogy of the Bharata and Bhriгу races is recalled, as is the birth and early life of the Kuru princes adi means first. Life at the court, Yudhishtira's Rajasuya Yajna, the game of dice, and the eventual exile of the Pandavas. Includes the Bhagavad Gita in chapters 25 [21] This is the major book of the war. Most of the great warriors on both sides are dead by the end of this book. Also told in detail is the pilgrimage of Balarama to the fords of the river Saraswati and the mace fight between Bhima and Duryodhana which ends the war, since Bhima kills Duryodhana by smashing him on the thighs with a mace. Only 7 warriors remain on the Pandava side and 3 on the Kaurava side.

This is the longest book of the Mahabharata shanti means peace. The world conquest by Arjuna. The Anugita is told by Krishna to Arjuna. Mahabharata 5 Ashramavasika Parva The Book of the Hermitage 93—95 The eventual deaths of Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti in a forest fire when they are living in a hermitage in the Himalayas. Vidura predeceases them and Sanjaya on Dhritarashtra's bidding goes to live in the higher Himalayas. Historical context The historicity of the Kurukshetra War is unclear. Puranic literature presents genealogical lists associated with the Mahabharata narrative. The evidence of the Puranas is of two kinds. Of the first kind, there is the direct statement that there were or years between the birth of Parikshit Arjuna's grandson and the accession of Mahapadma Nanda, commonly dated to BCE, which would yield an estimate of about BCE for the Bharata battle.

Pargiter accordingly estimated 26 generations by averaging 10 different dynastic lists and, assuming 18 years for the average duration of a reign, arrived at an estimate of BCE for Adhisimakrishna, and thus approximately BCE for the Bharata battle. Lal used the same approach with a more conservative assumption of the average reign to estimate a date of BCE, and correlated this with archaeological evidence from Painted Grey Ware sites, the association being strong between PGW artifacts and places mentioned in the epic. Mahabharata 6 Synopsis Ganesha writing the Mahabharata The core story of the work is that of a dynastic struggle for the throne of Hastinapura, the kingdom ruled by the Kuru clan.

The two collateral branches of the family that participate in the struggle are the Kaurava and the Pandava. Although the Kaurava is the senior branch of the family, Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, is younger than Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava. Both Duryodhana and Yudhishtira claim to be first in line to inherit the throne. The struggle culminates in the great battle of Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas are ultimately victorious. The battle produces complex conflicts of kinship and friendship, instances of family loyalty and duty taking precedence over what is right, as well as the converse. The Mahabharata itself ends with the death of Krishna, and the subsequent end of his dynasty and ascent of the Pandava brothers to heaven.

It also marks the beginning of the Hindu age of Kali Yuga, the fourth and final age of mankind, in which great values and noble ideas have crumbled, and man is heading towards the complete dissolution of right action, morality and virtue. Arshia Sattar states that the central theme of the Mahabharata, as well as the Ramayana, is respectively Krishna's and Rama's hidden divinity and its progressive revelation. Painting by Raja Ravi Varma. King Janamejaya's ancestor Shantanu, the king of Hastinapura, has a short-lived marriage with the goddess Ganga and has a son, Devavrata later to be called Bhishma, a great warrior, who becomes the heir apparent. Many years later, when King Shantanu goes hunting, he sees Satyawati, the daughter of the chief of fisherman, and asks her father for her hand. Her father refuses to consent to the marriage unless Shantanu promises to make any future son of Satyawati the king upon his death.

To resolve his father's dilemma, Devavrata agrees to relinquish his right to the throne. As the fisherman is not sure about the prince's children honouring the promise, Devavrata also takes a vow of lifelong celibacy to guarantee his father's promise. Upon Shantanu's death, Chitrangada becomes king. He lives a very short uneventful life and dies. Vichitravirya, the younger son, rules Hastinapura. In order to arrange the marriage of young Vichitravirya, Bhishma attends the swayamvara of the three princesses Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, uninvited, and proceeds to abduct them. Ambika and Ambalika consent to be married to Vichitravirya. The oldest princess Amba, however, informs Bhishma that she wishes to marry king of Shalva whom Bhishma defeated at their swayamvara.

Bhishma lets her leave to marry king of Shalva, but Shalva refuses to marry her, still 7. Mahabharata 7 smarting at his humiliation at the hands of Bhishma. Amba then returns to marry Bhishma but he refuses due to his vow of celibacy. Amba becomes enraged and becomes Bhishma's bitter

enemy, holding him responsible for her plight. Later she is reborn to King Drupada as Shikhandi or Shikhandini and causes Bhishma's fall, with the help of Arjuna, in the battle of Kurukshetra.

The Pandava and Kaurava princes Draupadi with her five husbands - the Pandavas. The central figure is Yudhishtira; the two on the bottom are Bhima and Arjuna. Nakula and Sahadeva, the twins, are standing. Painting by Raja Ravi Varma, c. 1880. When Vichitravirya dies young without any heirs, Satyawati asks her first son Vyasa to father children with the widows.

The eldest, Ambika, shuts her eyes when she sees him, and so her son Dhritarashtra is born blind. Ambalika turns pale and bloodless upon seeing him, and thus her son Pandu is born pale and unhealthy the term Pandu may also mean 'jaundiced' [34]. Due to the physical challenges of the first two children, Satyawati asks Vyasa to try once again. However, Ambika and Ambalika send their maid instead, to Vyasa's room. Vyasa fathers a third son, Vidura, by the maid. He is born healthy and grows up to be one of the wisest characters in the Mahabharata. When the princes grow up, Dhritarashtra is about to be crowned king by Bhishma when Vidura intervenes and uses his knowledge of politics to assert that a blind person cannot be king. This is because a blind man cannot control and protect his subjects. The throne is then given to Pandu because of Dhritarashtra's blindness. Pandu marries twice, to Kunti and Madri. Dhritarashtra marries Gandhari, a princess from Gandhara, who blindfolds herself so that she may feel the pain that her husband feels.

Her brother Shakuni is enraged by this and vows to take revenge on the Kuru family. One day, when Pandu is relaxing in the forest, he hears the sound of a wild animal. He shoots an arrow in the direction of the sound. However the arrow hits the sage Kindama, who curses him that if he engages in a sexual act, he will die. Pandu then retires to the forest along with his two wives, and his brother Dhritarashtra rules thereafter, despite his blindness.

Pandu's older queen Kunti, however, had been given a boon by Sage Durvasa that she could invoke any god using a special mantra. Kunti uses this boon to ask Dharma the god of justice, Vayu the god of the wind, and Indra the lord of the heavens for sons. She gives birth to three sons, Yudhishtira, Bhima, and Arjuna, through these gods. Kunti shares her mantra with the younger queen Madri, who bears the twins Nakula and Sahadeva through the Ashwini twins. However, Pandu and Madri indulge in sex, and Pandu dies. Madri dies on his funeral pyre out of remorse. Kunti raises the five brothers, who are from then on usually referred to as the Pandava brothers. Dhritarashtra has a hundred sons through Gandhari, all born after the birth of Yudhishtira. These are the Kaurava brothers, the eldest being Duryodhana, and the second Dushasana. Other Kaurava brothers were Vikarna and Sukarna. This sarvasatya material was often considered an independent tale added to a version of the Mahabharata by "thematic attraction" Minkowski, and considered to have a particularly close connection to Vedic Brahmana literature.

The Panchavimsha Brahmana at The state of the text has been described by some early 20th century Indologists as unstructured and chaotic. Hermann Oldenberg supposed that the original poem must once have carried an immense "tragic force" but dismissed the full text as a "horrible chaos. Moritz Winternitz *Geschichte der indischen Literatur* considered that "only unpoetical theologians and clumsy scribes" could have lumped the parts of disparate origin into an unordered whole. The earliest known references to the Mahabharata and its core Bharata date to the Ashtadhyayi sutra 6. This may suggest that the core 24, verses, known as the Bharata, as well as an early version of the extended Mahabharata, were composed by the 4th century BCE.

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Attempts to date the events using methods of archaeoastronomy have produced, depending on which passages are chosen and how they are interpreted, estimates ranging from the late 4th to the mid-2nd millennium BCE. The core story of the work is that of a dynastic struggle for the throne of Hastinapura, the kingdom ruled by the Kuru clan. The two collateral branches of the family that participate in the struggle are the Kaurava and the Pandava. Although the Kaurava is the senior branch of the family, Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, is younger than Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava. Both Duryodhana and Yudhishtira claim to be first in line to inherit the throne. The struggle culminates in the great battle of Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas are ultimately victorious. The battle produces complex conflicts of kinship and friendship, instances of family loyalty and duty taking precedence over what is right, as well as the converse. The Mahabharata itself ends with the death of Krishna, and the subsequent end of his dynasty and ascent of the Pandava brothers to heaven.

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Ambalika turns pale and bloodless upon seeing him, and thus her son Pandu is born pale and unhealthy the term Pandu may also mean 'jaundiced' [35]. Due to the physical challenges of the first two children, Satyawati asks Vyasa to try once again. However, Ambika and Ambalika send their maid instead, to Vyasa's room. Vyasa fathers a third son, Vidura, by the maid. He is born healthy and grows up to be one of the wisest characters in the Mahabharata. When the princes grow up, Dhritrashtra is about to be crowned king by Bhishma when Vidura intervenes and uses his knowledge of politics to assert that a blind person cannot be king. This is because a blind man cannot control and protect his subjects. The throne is then given to Pandu because of Dhritrashtra's blindness.

Pandu marries twice, to Kunti and Madri. Dhritrashtra marries Gandhari, a princess from Gandhara, who blindfolds herself so that she may feel the pain that her husband feels. Her brother Shakuni is enraged by this and vows to take revenge on the Kuru family. One day, when Pandu is relaxing in the forest, he hears the sound of a wild animal. He shoots an arrow in the direction of the sound.

However the arrow hits the sage Kindama, who curses him that if he engages in a sexual act, he will die. Pandu then retires to the forest along with his two wives, and his brother Dhritrashtra rules thereafter, despite his blindness. Pandu's older queen Kunti, however, had been given a boon by Sage Durvasa that she could invoke any god using a special mantra. Kunti uses this boon to ask Dharma the god of justice, Vayu the god of the wind, and Indra the lord of the heavens for sons. She gives birth to three sons, Yudhishthira, Bhima, and Arjuna, through these gods. Kunti shares her mantra with the younger queen Madri, who bears the twins Nakula and Sahadeva through the Ashwini twins.

However, Pandu and Madri indulge in sex, and Pandu dies. Madri dies on his funeral pyre out of remorse. Kunti raises the five brothers, who are from then on usually referred to as the Pandava brothers. Dhritrashtra has a hundred sons through Gandhari, all born after the birth of Yudhishthira. These are the Kaurava brothers, the eldest being Duryodhana, and the second Dushasana.

Other Kaurava brothers were Vikarna and Sukarna. The rivalry and enmity between them and the Pandava brothers, from their youth and into manhood, leads to the Kurukshetra war. After the deaths of their mother Madri and father Pandu, the Pandavas and their mother Kunti return to the palace of Hastinapur. Yudhishthira is made Crown Prince by Dhritrashtra, under considerable pressure from his kingdom. Dhritrashtra wanted his own son Duryodhana to become king and lets his ambition get in the way of preserving justice. Shakuni, Duryodhana and Dushasana plot to get rid of the Pandavas. Shakuni calls the architect Purochana to build a palace out of flammable materials like lac and ghee. He then arranges for the Pandavas and the Queen Mother Kunti to stay there, with the intention of setting it alight.

However, the Pandavas are warned by their wise uncle, Vidura, who sends them a miner to dig a tunnel. They are able to escape to safety and go into hiding. Back at Hastinapur, the Pandavas and Kunti are presumed dead. The Pandavas enter the competition in disguise as Brahmins. The task is to string a mighty steel bow and shoot a target on the ceiling, which is the eye of a moving artificial fish, while looking at its reflection in oil below. Most of the princes fail, many being unable to lift the bow. Arjuna succeeds however.

The Pandavas return home and inform their mother that Arjuna has won a competition and to look at what they have brought back. Without looking, Kunti asks them to share whatever it is Arjuna has won among themselves. On explaining the previous life of Draupadi, she ends up being the wife of all five brothers. After the wedding, the Pandava brothers are invited back to Hastinapura. The Kuru family elders and relatives negotiate and broker a split of the kingdom, with the Pandavas obtaining a new territory. Yudhishthira has a new capital built for this territory at Indraprastha. Neither the Pandava nor Kaurava sides are happy with the arrangement however. Shortly after this, Arjuna elopes with and then marries Krishna's sister, Subhadra.

Yudhishthira wishes to establish his position as king; he seeks Krishna's advice. The Pandavas have a new palace built for them, by Maya the Danava. Duryodhana walks round the palace, and mistakes a glossy floor for water, and will not step in. After being told of his error, he then sees a pond, and assumes it is not water and falls in. Draupadi laughs at him and ridicules him by saying that this is because of his blind father Dhritrashtra. He then decides to avenge his humiliation. Shakuni, Duryodhana's uncle, now arranges a dice game, playing against Yudhishthira with loaded dice.

Yudhishthira loses all his wealth, then his kingdom. He then even gambles his brothers, himself, and finally his wife into servitude. The jubilant Kauravas insult the Pandavas in their helpless state and even try to disrobe Draupadi in front of the entire court, but her honour is saved by Krishna who miraculously creates lengths of cloth to replace the ones being removed. Dhritrashtra, Bhishma, and the other elders are aghast at the situation, but Duryodhana is adamant that there is no place for two crown princes in Hastinapura. Against his wishes Dhritrashtra orders for another dice game. The Pandavas are required to go into exile for 12 years, and in the 13th year must remain hidden. If discovered by the Kauravas, they will be forced into exile for another 12 years. The Pandavas spend thirteen years in exile; many adventures occur during this time.

They also prepare alliances for a possible future conflict. They spend their final year in disguise in the court of Virata, and are discovered just after

the end of the year. At the end of their exile, they try to negotiate a return to Indraprastha. However, this fails, as Duryodhana objects that they were discovered while in hiding, and that no return of their kingdom was agreed. War becomes inevitable. The two sides summon vast armies to their help and line up at Kurukshetra for a war. Before war being declared, Balarama had expressed his unhappiness at the developing conflict and left to go on pilgrimage ; thus he does not take part in the battle itself.

Krishna takes part in a non-combatant role, as charioteer for Arjuna. Krishna wakes him up to his call of duty in the famous Bhagavad Gita section of the epic. Though initially sticking to chivalrous notions of warfare, both sides soon adopt dishonourable tactics. After "seeing" the carnage, Gandhari who had lost all her sons, curses Krishna to be a witness to a similar annihilation of his family, for though divine and capable of stopping the war, he had not done so.

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