

MAHABHARATA – Part 14

(End of Keechaka;
The War with Virata – Pandavas' Exile Completed)



End of Keechaka

The Pandavas were living in disguise in Virata's kingdom during their thirteenth year of exile. Draupadi took no time in winning the heart of the queen through her sweet nature and skill in use of the articles of adornment. Things were going well until the entry of Keechaka, the queen's evil brother. Keechaka was a renowned warrior and the commander-in-chief of King Virata's army. He had been away for almost a year on a war on behalf of Virata. King Virata was a virtual stooge in the hands of Keechaka. He did whatever Keechaka wanted.

One day, Draupadi was sitting in the private garden of the queen Sudeshna, and Keechaka happened to see her. He was wonder struck to behold such a beautiful woman in the garden of his sister. He approached and enquired about her. Draupadi replied that she was Sairandhri, the flower maid of the queen. Keechaka professed his love for her and promised her many things, and even offered to make her his queen. This put Sairandhri in great anger. She lashed out at Keechaka that she was married to five Gandharvas and they would definitely kill anyone who tried to molest her. But her beauty smote Keechaka, and he was always trying to find some opportunity to declare his love for Sairandhri. One day, Sairandhri told the queen about Keechaka's ill intentions, and warned her that her Gandharva husbands would kill her brother.

The Queen tried to reason with her brother, but Keechaka pleaded with the queen to send Sairandhri to his palace on some pretext. The queen tried to resist her brother's unreasonable demand, but finally she gave away. One day, she called Sairandhri and told her to go to Keechaka's palace to bring some wine. All pleadings of Sairandhri went in vain. The Queen was adamant that she should go to Keechaka's palace to bring the wine. As soon as Draupadi entered Keechaka's palace, he pleaded with her to marry him. Draupadi ran away, and Keechaka pursued her. Draupadi reached the king's court for help.

At that time, Yudhisthira was playing a game of dice with the king. Bhima was also there for some work. Seeing Draupadi being chased by Keechaka, Bhima's anger knew no bounds. Yudhisthira sent a secret signal to Bhima to control himself. Draupadi told the king about Keechaka's advances, to seek his help. The King was afraid of Keechaka, and he did nothing to help her. Draupadi left the king's court completely disappointed. Bhima went to Draupadi, and tried to console her. She told Bhima about Keechaka's evil attempts to molest her, and pleaded with him to do something. Bhima was very angry too, but he knew that only fifteen days remained for their exile in disguise. If he killed Keechaka who was a warrior of awesome repute, the identity of the Pandavas might be disclosed, and they would have to suffer twelve more years exile in the forest again. But Draupadi was inconsolable. Finally, Bhima suggested a plan of action. He told Draupadi to ask Keechaka to meet her at night in the hall where Arjuna teaches dance to the princess. The hall was in an isolated corner of the palace.

Draupadi, taking heart of Bhima's assurances, went back to perform her normal duties. Since the king did not take any action against Keechaka, he again approached Draupadi, and repeated his evil demand to marry her. This time Draupadi asked him to meet her alone during the night at the dancing hall for a discussion. Keechaka's joy knew no bounds. He went that night to the dancing hall, and saw a blurred figure lying over a bed in the corner of that hall, and assumed it was Draupadi. Actually, it was Bhima, who had been waiting for Keechaka. Bhima pounced upon him, but Keechaka was also no ordinary man. A great fight ensued, and finally Bhima finished the evil Keechaka.

Bhima left the hall quietly, but many palace guards were alarmed by all the noise that came from the hall. They found Draupadi and Keechaka's mutilated body. The news spread like wild fire in the palace. Queen Sudeshna also arrived there, crying about her brother's fate. Draupadi told her that as Keechaka tried to molest her, her enraged Gandharva husbands killed him. When the queen asked Draupadi to leave the palace, Draupadi requested the queen to allow her for thirteen more days. After that, she told the queen that her husbands would come to take her. They were living under a curse, so they would not be able to come earlier. The Queen, fearful of her husbands, allowed her to stay.

In the mean time, Duryodhana had sent his men to every corner of the earth to discover the Pandavas' hideout. He knew that if he could locate the Pandavas, who were men of honor, they would never go back on their words and would start their exile all over again. He was happy to hear of Keechaka's death through one of his spies, as Keechaka had been a great threat to his kingdom. He knew no ordinary man could kill the mighty Keechaka in combat, and Bhima might be the cause of Keechaka's death. The story of a woman and her five Gandharva husbands also fit into the picture. Duryodhana guessed that woman must be Draupadi, and those five Gandharva husbands could only be the Pandavas. He planned an immediate attack on Matsya.

The king of Trigartas, Susarma was also there in Duryodhana's court. He had an old grievance against Matsya. He said that he would lead the attack on the Matsya, and settle his old scores. Karna supported Susarma's plans. It was decided that the Matsya kingdom would be attacked by Susarma from one side, and the Kaurava army from other side. The preparation for the attack began.

The War with Virata - Pandavas completed their Exile

When King Virata heard that Susarma was approaching Matsya for a war, he collected his huge army and was ready to march towards the enemy. Then Yudhishtira offered the services of himself and his brothers to Virata. This was an expression of his gratitude towards Virata for providing them shelter. All his brothers, except Arjuna, joined the army and in no time captured Susarma. King Virata, on the advice of Yudhishtira, released Susarma from captivity. Susarma had expected a very weak Virata army after the death of Keechaka. He met with very unexpected and unpleasant surprise when the Pandavas led Virata's army!

Duryodhana, unaware of Susarma's captivity, attacked Virata's palace from the rear. They took away all their cows, and were waiting outside of the city. The cowherds came running to the king's court. The young prince Uttara Kumar was the only man left in the palace as all the others had already left for the war with Susarma. The cowherds told him about the attack. The prince was young, and started boasting about himself with the women in the palace. He started telling all the women in the palace how great a warrior he was! All that was needed was a skilled charioteer. Then he would defeat all the Kauravas easily! Controlling her laughter, Draupadi told Uttara, the princess, that her dance teacher Brihannala was a charioteer of repute. He could rival Matali (Indra's charioteer) in his skill. The princess Uttara told her brother that Brihannala was the charioteer he needed.

The young prince set out for the battlefield. But after seeing the Kauravas huge army from far, he became very nervous, and ran away from the battlefield. Arjuna ran after him, caught him, and reminded the prince about the dharma of the Kshatriyas. Arjuna asked him to act as his charioteer. The perplexed prince did as he was told. Arjuna took the chariot to the tree where he had hid his weapons a year back. Uttara Kumar was puzzled but kept quiet, as he was afraid of the current situation.

After retrieving his Gandiva and other weapons, Arjuna went to face the Kauravas. When Arjuna blew his conch, the Kaurava army immediately recognized Arjuna. Duryodhana was happy to locate the Pandavas. But to his utter disappointment, Duryodhana soon learned that the thirteenth year of Pandavas exile was already completed. A fierce battle started. All the Kauravas together could not match Arjuna's bravery and skill, and they were routed in no time. Arjuna defeated them single-handedly. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, and Duryodhana all had to admit defeat and leave the battlefield.

After the battle, Arjuna came back to Virata's palace with Uttara Kumar. During the victory celebration, Yudhisthira explained to Virata the details of their thirteenth year of exile under his protection. All the Pandavas expressed their gratitude to Virata. Virata was overwhelmingly happy, and offered to give his daughter Uttara in marriage to Arjuna's son Abhimanyu. Soon Subhadra and Abhimanyu were called to Matsya, and they came with Lord Krishna and Balarama. The wedding took place in a grand way.

Questions:

Keechaka – was he strong?

Do you think his physical strength gave him a false sense of security?

Should he have listened to Draupadi when she said to stay away?

What happened to him?

Why did the Queen tell Draupadi to leave her court?

What did she say?

What was the name of Virata's son?

Was he a "proud peacock"?

What happened to him when he saw the big army of the kauravas?
What did Arjuna do?
How did the battle go?
How did the story end?

Lingashtakam

Brahma Murari surarchita Lingam; Nirmala bhasita sobhita Lingam
Janmaja dukha vinasaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (1)

Devamuni pravararchita Lingam; Kamadahana karunakara Lingam
Ravana darpa vinasaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (2)

Sarva sugandhi sulepita Lingam; Buddhi vivardhana karana Lingam
Siddha surasura vandita Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (3)

Kanaka maha mani bhushita Lingam; Paniphati veshtitha shobhita Lingam
Dakshasu yajna vinashana Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (4)

Kumkuma chandana lepita Lingam Pankaja hara sushobhita Lingam
Sanchita papa vinashana Lingam Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (5)

Devaganarchita sevita Lingam; Bhavair bhaktibhi revacha Lingam
Dinakarakoti prabhakara Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (6)

Ashtadalo pariveshtia Lingam; Sarva samudbhava karana Lingam

Ashtadaridra vinashana Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadashiva Lingam (7)

Suraguru suravara pujita Lingam; Suravana pushpa sadarchita Lingam
Paratparam paramatmaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadashiva Lingam (8)

**Lingashtakamidam punyam
Yat Pathet Shivasannidhau
Shivalokamavapnoti
Shivena saha modate (9)**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_z4oRinK3E

Sri Venkateswara Stotram

kamalAkucha choochuka kunkumatO — niyatAruNitAtula neelatanO
kamalAyata IOchana IOkapatE — vijayeebhava vEnkaTa SailapatE (1)

sachaturmukha shaNmukha panchamukha — pramukhAkhila daivata mouLimaNE
SaraNAGata vatsala sAranidhE — paripAlayamAm vRushaSailapatE (2)

ativElatayA tava durvishahai: — anuvElakRutai raparAdha Satai:
bharitam tvaritam vRushaSailapatE — parayA kRupayA paripAhi harE (3)

adhivEnkaTaSailamudAra matEr — janatAbhi matAdhi kadAnaratAt
paradEvatayA gaditAnnigamai: — kamalAdayitA nnaparam kalayE (4)

kalavENuravA vaSagOpa vadhoo — SatakOTi vRutAt smara kOTi samAt
prativalla vikAbhimatA tsukhadAt — vasudEvasutAnnaparam kalayE (5)

abhirAma guNAkara dASarathE — jagadEka dhanurdhara dheeramatE
raghunAyaka rAma ramESa vibhO — varadO bhava dEva dayA jaladhE (6)

avaneetanayA kamaneeyakaram — rajaneekara chAru mukhAmburuham
rajaneechara rAja tamO mihiram — mahaneeyamaham raghurAmamayE (7)

sumukham suhRudam sulabham sukhadam — swanujam cha sukAya mamOghaSaram
apahAya raghoodwaha manya maham — na kathanchana kanchana jAtu bhajE (8)

vinA vEnkaTESam nanAthO nanAtha: — sadA vEnkaTESam smarAmi smarAmi
harE vEnkaTESa praseeda praseeda — priyam vEnkaTESa prayacCa prayacCa (9)

**aham dooratastvE padAmbhOjayugma — praNAmEccayAagatya sEvAm karOmi
sakRutsEvayA nityasEvA phalam tvam — prayacCa prayacCa prabhO vEnkaTESa (10)**

**aj~nAninA mayA dOshA naSEshaan vihitan harE: — kshamasvatvam kshamasvatvam
SeshaSailasikhAmaNE (11)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7VhEfEud88>

Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

N A G D R

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D A M I

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L I L K S

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T R P E E U

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U C N P O E

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B T A C M O

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W N O R E N

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O T E S O G

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T C R U O

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N L S G I A

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Coloring exercise:

