

## MAHABHARATA – Part 6 (Draupadi Swayamvaram)



After Bheema killed the cruel rakshasa, Bakasura, the people in Ekachakrapura where they were living felt much more peace. The Pandavas continued to live there disguised as brahmanas – people of the priest class. After some time, they heard from a traveler the news of the swayamvaram of Draupadi, the daughter of Drupada, King of Panchala. In those days, a swayamvaram was a royal competition among princes. The winner gets the hand of the King's daughter, the princess. Many brahmanas of Ekachakrapura planned to go to Panchala in the hope of receiving the customary gifts and to see the festivities and the pageant of a royal wedding. The Pandavas decided to attend the swayamvaram ceremony. The brahmanas went in groups to witness the swayamvaram, and the Pandavas mingled with them in the disguised as brahmanas.

Drupada arranged the swayamvaram for Draupadi's marriage in the Panchala court. At the centre of the court a pole was erected over which there was a revolving wheel. On the wheel was a wooden fish. At the bottom of the pole there was a pan of water. The one, who could shoot an arrow at the eye of revolving fish while looking at its reflection in the water below, would marry Princess Draupadi. This was the condition for the swayamvaram. Draupadi was well known for her stunning beauty, and many princes aspired to win her hand. Many valiant princes had gathered there from all parts of the country for the swayamvaram. The sons of Dhritarashtra were there as well as Karna, Sri Krishna, Sisupala, Jarasandha, Salya, and many others. The Pandavas were present in the Brahmana group. As the Swayamvara began, many brave princes rose one after another and tried in vain the difficult task of shooting the fish's eye. Sisupala, Jarasandha, Salya, and Duryodhana were among these unsuccessful aspirants. When Karna came forward to show his skill, Draupadi stopped him and said, "I will not marry a charioteer's son." Insulted, Karna left the court.

When all the princes were unsuccessful in performing the feat, Drupada became worried about the marriage of his daughter. Suddenly, Arjuna dressed as a Brahmin rose to try the feat. Nobody was able to recognize him. All the princes objected to the participation of a Brahmin in a competition that was meant for them. But no one dared to stop him by looking at his body build and confidence. Then Arjuna meditated on Narayana, the Supreme God, and took the bow in his hand and strung it with ease. Staying calm and composed, Arjuna placed an arrow on the string. Then without pause or hesitation he shot the arrow. In a flash, the arrow darted with a twang and pierced the eye of the fish. Draupadi was very happy and she put the wedding garland around Arjuna's neck.

All the princes felt humiliated, and were jealous of Arjuna. They attacked together to kill him. Bhima and the other Pandavas came to Arjuna's rescue. The mighty Pandavas easily defeated all the princes, and hurriedly took Draupadi with them. Drishtadyumna, Draupadi's brother, followed them to find out who the Brahmin was. When they reached their hut, the Pandavas called out to their mother, Kunti, "Look, Mother, what we have brought for you today!" Kunti was inside and did not see what Pandavas were talking about. So, she casually said without looking to them "Share it among you equally," thinking that they had brought some food. When she saw the bride and was told that she was Arjuna's wife, Kunti was very unhappy at what she had said. As a custom, the Pandavas would have to obey every word that she had said - Draupadi would have to become the wife of all five brothers. Just then Krishna came to their hut, and introduced himself. He told Kunti, "In her previous life Draupadi had worshipped Shiva to get a good husband. When she saw Shiva, she was so excited she said "I want a husband!" over and over again, five times in all. So Shiva told her she would get five husbands in this life.

Dhrishtadyumna who had followed them, heard all this. Happily he returned palace, and informed his father "I have good news for you. The brave Brahmin who married Draupadi was none other than the great Arjuna." Drupada was delighted to hear this, but was surprised and disgusted when he heard that Pandavas jointly marry Draupadi. Drupada opposed this and said "How unrighteous! How did this idea get into Kunti's head, this immoral idea that goes against the traditional usage?" At that time, Sage Vyasa came there. He told Drupada, "Though such a marriage is not permitted in the Holy Scriptures, this particular marriage is a result of a boon by Lord Shiva himself, so it is not against the law." Satisfied, Drupada arranged for a wedding at the palace. The Pandavas were invited and the wedding between the Pandavas and Draupadi was performed with great splendor.

This news reached Hastinapura. Bhishma was very happy when he heard that the Pandavas were still alive and well as guests of King Drupada of Panchala. He advised Dhritarashtra to invite the Pandavas, and give half of the kingdom to them. Duryodhana did not like this idea but had to obey the grandsire and his father's decision. Dhritarashtra sent Vidura to the kingdom of Panchala to fetch the Pandavas and Draupadi. The Pandavas agreed the invitation and they proudly returned to Hastinapura along with mother Kunti and Draupadi. Upon their arrival, a grand welcome was accorded to the princes whom people believed to have died in the fair.

As a sign of respect, the Pandavas touched the feet of all the elders, Bhishma, Dhritarashtra, Vidura, Dronacharya, and others.

As had been already decided, half of the kingdom was made over to the Pandavas and Yudhishtira was duly crowned king. Dhritarashtra offered Khandavaprashtha to the Pandavas as their capital. Yudhishtira, modest and accommodative as he was, accepted the offer and proceed to Khandavaprashtha. The Pandavas renovated that ruined city, built palaces and forts and renamed it Indraprastha. The Pandavas ruled there happily with their mother and Draupadi, never straying from the path of dharma. The people of Indraprastha were very happy and loved King Yudhishtira. Because he never strayed from dharma, or right action, they called him "Dharma Raj".

### **Questions:**

What is a swayavarnam?

Why did the Pandavas go dressed as Brahmins?

What did the princes have to do to win Draupadi's hand in marriage?

Did Karna attend? What happened?

Would Karna have been a good husband, do you think?

Who won the competition?

What happened when the Pandavas took Draupadi home?

Why?

Was everyone happy when it was found out the Pandavas did not die in the fire?

Who was happy and who was unhappy?

When invited back to Hastinapura, what did the Pandavas do as a sign of respect?

What did King Dhristharashtara offer them?

Was this a good offer, or should have Yudhishtira gotten the whole kingdom?

What did he name his capitol?

What did the people call him? Why?

What is the meaning of Dharma?

**Stotras for this week:  
MahaLakshmi Ashtakam**

**Mahalakshmyashtakam stotram yah pathetbaktimannaraha  
Sarvasidhi mavapnoti rajyam prapnoti sarvada (9)**

*Whoever recites this Mahalakshmi Ashtakam Stotram with Devotion,  
Will attain all Success and Prosperity, always.*

**Ekakale pathennityam mahapapa vinashanam  
Dwikalam yah pathennityam dhanadhanya samanvitah (10)**

*Reciting this Once Every Day will Destroy Great Sins,  
Reciting this Twice Every Day will bestow one with Wealth and Food grains.*

**Trikalam yah pathennityam mahasatru vinashanam  
mahalakshmibhavennityam prasanna varada subha (11)**

*Reciting this Thrice Everyday will Destroy Great Enemies,  
And Devi Mahalakshmi will be Pleased with him and extend Her Boon-Giving Grace and  
Auspicious presence.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5Pg1RoMJP4>

**Bedtime Prayer (before going to sleep):**

**Kara Charana Kritham Vaa Kaayajam Karmajam Vaa  
Sravana Nayanajam Vaa Maanasam Vaa Aparadham  
Vihitham Avihitham Vaa Sarvameat Kshamasva  
Jaya Jaya Karunaabdhe Sri Maha Deva Shambho**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e443gUCrUU>

**Meaning:**

*Oh Lord! Kindly forgive my wrong actions done knowingly or unknowingly  
either through my organs of action (hand, feet, speech)  
or through my organs of perception (eyes, ears)  
or by my mind.  
Glory unto Thee O Lord, who is the ocean of kindness.*

## Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

T H F C E  

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E Y B O  

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L O R Y A  

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E H R S A  

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O H T S  

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I N S R T G  

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G M E L N I  

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L D G R N A A  

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I L S L K  

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E H E W L  

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Coloring exercise: Forest

