(A). Special features of the Assamese Mahâbhârata in contrast with those of other provincial languages and also with the original in Sanskrit:

The Assamese Mahâbhârata differs in certain respects from the original Sanskrit Mahâbhârata as well as from other provincial versions. Assamese Vana Parva has its sources in the akhyanas of the rûptrânas, Samhitâs and other scriptures. Certainly, Assamese Vana Parva is not a translation of the Sanskrit original. But, some upaparvas have been added to it which have enlarged its volume. Otherwise, the curtailment of most of the Vana Parva and Sanskrit akhyanas would naturally have made this parva insignificant.

Occasionally, Assamese poets discarded some verses of the original as they knew that those would not be helpful or suggestive to the people of ordinary calibre. The highly philosophical topics were put aside very carefully without disturbing the vitality of the main subject-matter. Occasionally, they introduced some doctrines and messages of gods at appropriate places and time for the upliftment of the mind of the masses. These benedictions were mostly extracted from the Bhagavata and incorporated in the Mahâbhârata. In fact, this Mahâbhârata was made more akin to the Bhagavata in spirit.

The poets of the Assamese Mahâbhârata carefully avoided certain episodes in all parvas. Even the upakhyanas were not taken into consideration which did not contain material for a vaisnava. The original Mahâbhârata recognises equal rights to the views of other religions though the vaisnavite spirit dominates the main theme.

It may be pointed out that the Gîtâ portion of the Assamese Mahâbhârata contains only 58 verses though the original is of voluminous size and contains more verses. Nevertheless, the Gîtâ portion in the Assamese has the fragrance of all philosophical doctrines expounded from the mouth of Lord Krsna to his friend Arjuna.

Other provincial versions are also to be found. The Southern recensions of the Mahâbhârata show 24 parvas instead of 18 parvas.
The version of Bengali is in prose and poetry form. The prose translation was done Kāli Prasanna Simha in the 19th century. It is just a literal translation of Sanskrit Mahābhārata in toto. The more popular poet Kāsirām Das composed a Bengali Mahābhārata in simple verse. He included some upa-parvas from Sanskrit Jaimini’s Bhārata. But, Kāsirām depended mostly on the popular legendary tales of the common folk. His work is much appreciated as his Mahābhārata magnifies their views and convictions through the characters of the epic.

There are other Mahābhārata poets in Bengali. They produce concise editions. It is found that Rāja Sekhara Vasu produced a Bharata in prose, a concise form of the original Sanskrit in Bengali.

The Hindi translation of the Sanskrit Mahābhārata was done jointly by Gokulnāth, Gopināth and Manideva in the 19th century. The lack of popularity of this Mahābhārata was due to the low standard of translation. Recently, Shri Subal Simha has edited and published one Mahābhārata in Hindi of smaller size. The Gita press of Gorakhpur has also printed a Hindi translation of the original Sanskrit Mahābhārata.

Some of the discrepancies of the Assamese Mahābhārata will show how far it differs exactly in certain episodes apart from the shortcomings. The following are the important contrasts so far as Bengali, Assamese and Sanskrit Mahābhāratas are concerned.

I. In the ‘Jayadratha Vadha’ of the Drona Parva, the Sanskrit version shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa covered the sun and darkness prevailed in the battle-field by his magic power of ‘Yoga’ and thus enabled Arjuna to kill Jayadratha in this confused state. Arjuna, obviously, snatched away the right opportunity to defeat all the Kauravas within a very short time. It is stated in Sanskrit origin as such –

"Tatohasrjattamah Kṛṣṇah Suryasyāvaranaman prati.  
Yogī Yogena samyukto Yogināmīśavare Hariḥ."

-JI 18, Sanskrit Mahābhārata- Saptavimśatādha-kasatamatmo-
harīyayaḥ -Drona Parva (2) post-Kṛṣṇa Swāpīyaya.
The purpose of Krsna was to fool all the Kauravas for a short while and he gave them a chance to believe that Arjuna would definitely burn himself if he would fail to kill Jayadratha within stipulated time i.e., before sunset. The trick adopted by Krsna worked psychologically and the victim fellunsupportedly.

But so far as the Assamese version is concerned, there was no such kind of confusion or pretension on the part of Krsna. The valiant hero Arjuna killed Jayadratha and kept his promise after toiling hard and subduing the whole army consisting of great generals like Karna, Sva-tthama, Salya and Duryodhana. All efforts to protect Jayadratha were foiled by the arrows of Arjuna. Of course, some kind of foul play by Krsna was hinted at, in Assamese 'Stri Parva' where Gandhari, the queen mother of Duryodhana accused and reprimanded Krsna and disclosed Krsna as the originator of all evils which ultimately destroyed all the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Krsna, it is apparent, was in favour of the virtuous Pandavas. The words of Gandhari are given in 'Stri Parva' of Assamese version:

"Tomara mayate divasate san'hya bhaila
Dekhi Kauravara mane ananda milila.
Arjunara manata bikala ātisaya,
Agni jāli karilanta maribe niscaya.
Sehi samayata raṅga sahībaka prati
Asilanta Duryodhana Sainihava sahiti.
Hena chala pāi Indrasuta mahāvīra,
Eke šare chedilanta Saindhavara sīra."

V.V. 409-410, Strī Parva, Assamese Mahābhārata.

(When the evening peeped in during broad daylight due to your 'maya', all the Kauravas rejoiced and Arjuna became disconsolate and he lit fire to enter into it. Duryodhana with Sainihava (Jayadratha) came out to enjoy the fun when Arjuna, the son of Indra, got a chance and severed the head of Jayadratha with one arrow.)
Again, the sun became visible as soon as the killing of Jayadratha was completed.

Kāśirām īśa in his 'Biswa Mahābhārata' narrated that Kṛṣṇa covered the sun by his discus (sudarsana cakra) and Arjuna encircled the fire with his bow and arrows. When Kṛṣṇa removed his discus, Arjuna instantaneously killed Jayadratha in the state of unpreparedness. Durvāśana objected against Arjuna having bow and arrows when he was due to burn himself into the fire. It was Kṛṣṇa who insisted Arjuna having those weapons as a true warrior and at last his mission was fulfilled.

2. In Drona Parva of Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Śri Kṛṣṇa let Arjuna know about Karna's supremacy over other warriors just after the killing of Ghatotkacch, the son of Bhima, at the hands of Karna who was compelled to shoot a particular arrow of Indra kept concealed for Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa expressed his views that nobody would be able to kill Karna alone. Even, Kṛṣṇa with discus, Arjuna with Gandhiva; Indra, Kuvera, Baruna, Yama were powerless and feeling insecure before Karna so long he possessed his inherent coat of mail and armour. It was given in page 1523 of Sanskrit original, the verses being 15, 16 and 17.

\[
\text{Yadi hi syāt sakavacastathāhva, sa Kāmiḷalapah}
\]
\[
\text{Sāmarāṇapi lokāṇstrīnekah Kāraṇa Jayedvali.}
\]
\[
\text{Bāsavo va Kubero va Baruno va Jaleswarah}
\]
\[
\text{Yamo va nyot sahet Kāraṇa rāne pratisamīsītu}
\]

Gāndhivamudaya bhāṣeacankṛcchāh marascchēbham, sūdāntaṁ

Na saktai svādu rāne jātum tathāyuktam marāyabham

V.V. 15–17, Ghatotkacch Parva, Pancapancasāstraśāhikasatatachāhavya

( Sāmskrit Mahābhārata ).

But, this kind of information of Karna's prowess was given in 'Karna Parva' of the Assamese Mahābhārata. Kṛṣṇa disclosed and praised Karna indirectly. Arjuna killed Karna with the help of five more enemies of Karna, their attacks synchronised with that of Arjuna. It would be clear from the following verses
The mahanta utters a lie which is unthinkable. My friend is not capable to kill Karna alone. Six persons manage to kill Karna in the battle and now let us listen about the six persons. Parasurama, Indra, Kunti, Vasumati, You and I are the six who somehow came out successful in killing recently. If you are not convinced, 0th, friend, I shall advance arguments. Listen Dhananjaya. Formerly, Parasurama implored Karna; Indra took away the unpervaded coat-mail; Kunti did not admit Karna as her son; Vasumati caught hold of his horses; I shortened his life period and you shoot your arrows at the right moment as I signalled. You are unable to kill him alone; only the combined forces of six had succeeded in killing Karna with great difficulty.

In Bhishma Parva (pp 37) of Assamese Mahabharata, Parasurama interrupted the war with one powerful arrow and the soldiers including elephants, charioteers
were made to stand-still. Even Krsna and Arjuna stared with awe. At the suggestion of Krsna, Arjuna ignoring the insult, propitiated Parasurama with three arrows and praised him. Even Bhisma showed his due reverence to Parasurama who, at last, pleased all in the battlefield with another arrow.

This kind of interruption is not found either in Renwali or in Sanskrit.

4. On the tenth day of the battle, it is found in Assamese Bhisma Parva, pp 80, that Bhisma, once, was so furious that he took out the arrow of Narayana to kill Arjuna. Spotting this deadly weapon of Bhisma, VyHis-thira entreated Krsna to save Arjuna and at the same time threatened to commit suicide in case of Arjuna's death. Krsna embraced that weapon of Bhisma by facing it. This is not traceable in Sanskrit original.

5. Sudhanva episode of Jaimini's Bhrarata was also translated by Rama Saraswatī. In the present edition, we refer to the translation by Kun Gaggaiās, the son of Svastivara.

Sudhanva and Surath were the two brothers and sons of the king Hamsadhvāja of Champa kingdom. In the gruelling fight, Arjuna managed to kill the two sons with great difficulty. As Sudhanva was a great devotee of Krsna, he cut three arrows of Arjuna as promised, though the half portion of the last arrow cut Sudhanva's head. This episode is found from page 45 to page 67 of Aswamedha Parva. Sudhanva's brother came to take revenge on Arjuna and charioted him as promised before. But, his head was also chopped off by Arjuna's arrow.

This episode is not found in the Asvamedha Parva of the Sanskrit Mahābhārata in which commentaries are given by Jīlakantha. Only, it is traced out in Jaimini's Bhrarata.

Soon after the death of two sons, king Hamsadhvāja did not fight and was consoled by Krsna in Assamese Mahābhārata. But, Hamsadhvāja of Sanskrit Mahābhārata threatened to kill everyone.

This action compelled Krsna to come down from his chariot
6. Čitrāṅgada and Vichitravirjya were the two sons of Sāntanu by his second wife Satyavatī. So they became cousins of Bhīma, the eldest son of the king Sāntanu by Gāgā. According to the Assamese Mahābhārata, both Čitrāṅgada and Vichitravirjya died as a result of rough massaging by the elephant 'Airāvata' when they rang the hidden bell placed in Bhīma's room. The ringing of the bell was to summon the elephant Airāvata. It was a signal and the elephant was asked to massage Bhīma's body at his tiredness after the hard battles. Bhīma received the bell as a token of gratitude from Indra for the rescue of the elephant from the clutches of the wind-god.

But, it was not so fair as the Sanskrit Mahābhārata is concerned. Čitrāṅgada accepted a challenge of Čitrāṅgada, the Gandharva-god who somehow succeeded in killing the brother of Bhīma after long seven months continuous fight. His brother Vichitravirjya died of tuberculosis as a result of heavy intercourse with his two beautiful wives Ambikā and Ambālikā.

7. The ferocious sage Durbāṣa was pleased to grant boon to Kuntī, daughter of Kuntibhoj, for her sacrifice and devotion to the former. Even she attended him at dead of night without slightest dissatisfaction. This pleased the sage of great magic power and Durbāṣa taught her 'mantras' to call anyone of her wish. Not only that, the person would oblige her and she would enjoy his service. This is the story of Sanskrit Mahābhārata.

In the Assamese Mahābhārata, it is described that both Kuntī and Gāndhārī attended the sage Durbāṣa. At the end of the fourth month, the sage Durbāṣa was pleased at the service of Kuntī and he wanted to grant boon to her. But, Gāndhārī snatched away that opportunity to get the boon. She received the boon from Durbāṣa to have hundred sons. The irony of fate was so that the sage could not recognise Gāndhārī as she looked identical with Kuntī in age and beauty. When Kuntī appeared afterwards, Durbāṣa could realise his mistake. Now, he not only agreed to
grant Kunti a boon but also to teach her a secret mantra to call a deity. The name of Gandhari and her receipt of a boon from Durvasa was nowhere found in Sanskrit Mahabharata. The boon she received came from Vyasa, the great sage and the author of the Mahabharata. Vyasa gave that boon for hundred sons to Gandhari as a token of his satisfaction when Gandhari showed great devotion to him in his great fatigue.

8. Yudhisthira became disinterested in the kingdom in which his peace of mind was constantly perturbed by the thought of the killing of his kinsmen. The news of the satyagraha of Lord Krishna accelerated his decision to renounce the world and search for Krishna. So, the Pandavas, accompanied by their common wife, Draupadi, proceeded to the Himalayas. They climbed the mountains and with great difficulty reached Meru Parvata. Everyone fell unconscious at the hands of 'Viyati' except Yudhisthira. Actually, it was a trick played by God Indra and Yama together to ascertain the righteousness of Yudhisthira. Strange enough, a dog followed them and Yudhisthira declined to leave him in spite of the threatening of Indra. Then, Yudhisthira was taken in to the Heaven by Indra and Yama. The dog in fact was Yama himself in disguise.

After regaining their senses, the Pandavas found Yudhisthira missing from their midst. Soon, the bereaved party was consoled by none other than Yudhisthira who returned from Heaven with the garments of gods, meant for the Pandavas. In the meantime, the love between Draupadi and Arjuna became more and more prominent. The reason for this affinity of Arjuna and Draupadi was expressed that Draupadi sprang up from goddess Parvati and Arjuna from Krishna. It was nothing but a desire of goddess Parvati, the wife of Siva, to have Krishna as her husband when the latter visited Siva's place. Siva understood the gesture of Parvati and he readily agreed that the chastity of Parvati would remain untouched in the acceptance of Krishna as her husband. Afterwards, it was shown in therama that the other four Pandavas were none but four Paras (Siva). Arjuna was Krishna and soon Draupadi merged into the body of Parvati.
In this connection, the Sanskrit presents a different episode.

Yudhishthira went to Heaven with a flag (Yama) after the fall of his brothers and Draupadi in the snowy mountain. Yudhishthira, at last, arrived at the gate of heaven. He was allowed entry after his forced holy deep in the Ganges to purify his body in order to acquire a heavenly body. At length, he saw his brothers in the heaven. Draupadi was also seen in her usual dazzling form of the goddess of prosperity. Yudhishthira went to Heaven with a flag (Yama), after the fall of his brothers and Draupadi in the snowy mountain. Yudhishthira, at last, arrived at the gate of heaven. He was allowed entry after his forced holy deep in the Ganges to purify his body in order to acquire a heavenly body. At length, he saw his brothers in the heaven. Draupadi was also seen in her usual dazzling form of the goddess of prosperity.

9. In Assamese Kāvamāṇa Parva, the great Pakalatā muni was seen under the water who gave the direction of the Pāṇḍavas' sacrificial horse. This episode was a part of Bāmadevī Bhārata. Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, Vahruvāhana, Hamsadhvaja, Vīkhyāna were the strong persons who were able to cross the big ocean to get the news of the horse. In the original Sanskrit, Hamsadhvaja, Vahruvāhana, Machakotu and Pradyumna entered through the water to get the news of the horse and they met Pakalatā muni.

10. Karna was made the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army at the fall of Drona. Actually, Karna was also a son of Vāṇa. But he was destined to fight against his brothers for this concealment of fact. Of course, Kṛṣṇa first disclosed Karna's proper identity and requested him to join hands with the Pāṇḍavas. Karna flatly declined to accept the proposal on legitimate grounds.

In the meantime, the great battle began. Karna fought hard and baffled the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas and they ran hither-thither. They showed the white feather at the sight of Karna. Even Kārṇa Vṛṣṭiḥśīrṣa had to suffer defeat at the hands of Karna. Once, Karna chased Vṛṣṭiḥśīrṣa to capture. But, the word given by Karna to his mother Vāṇa was however kept and Karna spared his brothers except Arjuna. Karna insulted Yudhishthira with harsh words. Yudhishthira rebuked Arjuna as he failed to kill Karna. Arjuna was so enraged that he attempted to kill Yudhishthira. The prompt action of Kṛṣṇa averted the hot situation and both were pacified.

Arjuna vowed to kill Karna on that very day and he kept his promise.
The killing of Karna was reported to Yudhisthira by Arjuna himself. Krishna interrupted Arjuna on his reporting. Krishna explained the causes which led to the victory of Arjuna and at the same time, he disclosed the identity of Karna being the son of Kunti. It is found in the Assamese Mahabharata that Yudhisthira paid little attention and just not make any comment. This seems to be quite unnatural. It is rather strange that he lamented bitterly and cursed all women not to be able to keep any secret when he received the shock due to the killing of Karna who was his older brother. It was found in Aisikarpava. This is in conformity with the original Sanskrit version.

From a hearsay, it is known that Kunti has another son named Sindhuра through the moon-god 'Ganira'. He was a powerful king. It was proved beyond doubt that he was more powerful than Arjuna in archery. A reference about Sinduhra is found in a manuscript 'vyasaram' composed by Rama Saraswati.

One day, Krishna in the disguise of a Brahmin approached Sindhuра at the latter's residence. Sinduhra offered all kinds of honour to the Brahmin and asked politely what the king could do for the service of the Brahmin? Krishna simply asked Sinduhra to take an oath to part with anything the Brahmin might demand from Sinduhra. Sinduhra agreed. The Brahmin asked for Sinduhra's head. Sinduhra hesitated to act on the plea that this would deprive him of being a witness of the battle of Kurukshetra. Krishna assured Sinduhra that Krishna would be the needful for Sinduhra's witnessing the battle. Soon, Krishna assumed his own form and asked Sinduhra to show his skill of archery. In the twinkling of an eye, the arrow shoot by Sinduhra gave a red spot on the foreheads of all the thirty-three crores of gods. Krishna was amazed to see the red spot even in the little finger of his foot. So, Krishna reasoned that the presence of Sinduhra in Pandyas' side would surely spoil the lustre of the war and he would wipe out the whole army of the Kauravas in no time. This would deprive them of fun. However, Krishna promised life to Sinduhra's head which was attached to the chariot of Arjuna during the battle. The head produced shoutings when the Kauravas were pushed back and would grind his teeth at the defeat of the Pandavas in the
According to the legend, one more son of Kunti was discovered by the name of Sindhura who sprang out of Candra (moon). But, from our Assamese Mahabharata (printed), the son of the moon through Kunti was Sindhu of Sinh who gave a tough fight with the Pandavas in the Sindhu Yatra parva.

12. Kālakunja-Sōsaka Vadha; Vana Parva Story Not in Sanskrit Origin

The Pandavas had to roam about in the danger zone always. Their lives were full of thrilling adventure. They often met demons, suffered losses and ultimately succeeded in killing them. Thus they achieved their goal of indirectly helping the gods to restore peace and order in this world.

Once, in a forest, the Pandavas spotted out some demons. These were the soldiers of a demon king Kālakunja who had an ingenious device to kill his enemy by sucking from a distance his blood without the slightest knowledge of the victim as to the cause of his doom. So, it happened to the Pandavas too. They fell flat on the ground as a result of sucking by the demon. They hardly got time to protect themselves. All attempts made by them became ineffective. The Pandavas became all unconscious. Draupadī, however, was spared by the demon because of her enamoured beauty. Kālakunja, the demon king, became almost mad with her beauty. He ordered his men including his brother Sōsaka to capture her without inflicting any wound in her person. Kālakunja’s intention was to marry Draupadī.

The king’s searching party failed to locate Draupadī who ran helter-skelter for her safety. Before long, Draupadī became dead-tired and slept under a tree. The gods were watching everything. When she woke, a celestial voice inspired her to kill the demons by herself to avenge Kālakunja. To her surprise, a helmet fell down over her head and a coat of arm was seen nearby. The voice directed her to use the Gandhī-īva bow of Arjuna. Thus, being encouraged and inspired, she made up
her mind to fight tooth and nail with her enemy. With her new dress, she appeared to be a valiant warrior. The demons saw this mighty warrior instead of woman. Her loud voice even frightened and perplexed the enemy. Although she was quite ignorant about archery, she managed to shoot at them indiscriminately with great power by keeping her firm faith in Madhwa. The sudden appearance of this great warrior was reported immediately to the king Kalakunja who took a serious notice of it and ordered the soldiers either to capture or kill the enemy. A powerful army of Sosaka marched towards Draupadi.

Draupadi killed demons as such as she could with the bow. At this disastrous result, the general Sosaka of Mleccha king, showed determination to kill Draupadi. He threatened her with dire consequences. In the course of the battle, Sosaka's powerful javelin was made abortive by Draupadi. This action seized him with fear and he apprehended death at the hands of a woman warrior for the curse of goddess. This time, he sent 'Parigha', a powerful weapon to kill Draupadi. Everybody was sure of Draupadi's death. She, too, lost courage and gave her hope though she sent a powerful 'brahmamana' which not only cut the 'Parigha' into pieces but at the same time severed the head of the demon.

The death-news of Sosaka was soon sent to the king who lamented much over his brother's death by describing his qualities. However, he got annoyed at this turning point and at once ordered his men to retaliate. He himself appeared before Draupadi and demanded her identity. Draupadi disclosed the plain truth about herself and reprimanded him. So, again, a fierce battle between Draupadi and Kalakunja became unavoidable resulting in the defeat of Kalakunja. This insult was beyond toleration for the king but he returned back to his capital. His most favourite wife Meghi consoled him. She volunteered her service and wished to take revenge on Draupadi. Accordingly, Meghi came to the battle field to face Draupadi. In the meantime, Kalakunja informed Meghi about the
curse of a goddess who asked them to avoid woman warrior if they actually wished to escape death.

Meghī came with her soldiers of suckers and man-eaters. She, too, indulged herself in sucking blood of her relatives. Slowly and cautiously, she approached Draupadī. Draupadī, observing her contingent of cruel nature, waited patiently. She realised that she would have to fight Meghī from all possible angles by avoiding Meghī's black magic tricks.

Actually, the first battle lasted for a while. As soon as the female demon came nearer, Draupadī firmly gave her a blow with the bow which made Meghī unconscious. But, at once, the demon regained her senses and assumed the size of a small fly, entered the intestine of Draupadī and started sucking blood and eating flesh from inside. The pain was so severe and unbearable that Draupadī fell unconscious and cried for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, in order to rescue Draupadī, entered her womb with his discus. The female demon had to fly away for fear of dissection by the discus. Regaining her senses, Draupadī, this time, fought the demon with firm determination. The demon was unable to do more harm. At last, she was about to swallow Draupadī by opening her mouth big mouth, lips of which touched both the sky and earth. Draupadī shot 'Kālawe' arrow and bisected Meghī's body.

This sad news brought Kālakunji again to the battlefield. He enquired about Draupadī just to be feared at by Draupadī for the safety of Kālakunji's brother and wife. All the arrows and weapons of Kālakunji were cut into pieces by Draupadī. So, the king turned over her and attempted to strangle her to death. Draupadī was very cautious and she took prompt action and gave severe blows over his head twice and killed the demon. At the end of the battle, Draupadī found no use of living any more in the absence of her husband's and wanted to put an end to her life. But, just then, the pāṇḍavas were restored to life by the gods at the command of Indra and she refrained herself from her former decision.
Assamese Mahābhārata and its Deviations from Sanskrit Mahābhārata other than Vana Parva: Actually, the Sanskrit Mahābhārata begins from the twelve years sacrifice of the king Sannaka in Naimisāranya and Prāneṣuga Ṣaṭṭi narrated the Mahābhārata to the assembled reis. But, the Assamese Mahābhārata tells the story of the king Janamejaya and Latā Apsara. The episodes relating to the Kurukṣetra war were flashbacked by either Jaimind or Vaisampāyana.

Sanskrit Mahābhārata gives a detailed account of the devtas along with the mystery of the universe and the functions of the gods. These are conspicuously missing from Assamese. Perhaps, our poets purposely avoided such heavy matters to be replaced by abundant other light and interesting matters suitable to the common people in their Mahābhārata. The skeleton of 18 parvas in the Ādi Parva of the Sanskrit Mahābhārata is also not to be found in the Assamese version.

The following are the deviations.

Ādi Parva.

(i). The king Uparichara married Girikā, a girl begotten by the mountain 'Kolāhala' in the womb of 'Suktimatī', a river. This union was a forced one. So, the king allowed the confined river Suktimatī to flow freely and her two issues were handed over to the king by the river as a token of gratitude.

After some time, the king had to go for hunting at the command of his fore-fathers leaving behind his new wife Girikā. The king’s plan to life as intended was upset by the ideal exciting climate in the forest which produced in him an urge for sexual intercourse. Semen from his body ejaculated involuntarily out of amorous mental excitement. The king sent his semen through a bird. But the interruption from another bird spoilt the purpose. Two birds quarreled over it and it fell in the river below. An 8 apsara 'by the name 'Adrikā' swallowed it and had given birth to one male and one female twin human children. The girl later became famous as Nātyagandha.
In the Assamese version, the king saw two apsarás: Adrika and Rājesā who were ordered to come down from heaven to serve yānakṣākara performance. Adrika entered into king’s mind and Rājesā married the king. The king’s forefathers did not like the idea of any union with Rājesā. They sent the king to the forest bhūnakṣākara with some protest. The ideal atmosphere of the forest brought down semen of the king and the king sent it to his wife Rājesā through a bird. In the meantime, Rājesā entered into the water in the guise of a fish being deprived of sexual intercourse, and now she swallowed the semen that fell from the claw of the bird as a result of fighting with another bird. Rājesā conceived and the slave king, one day, got that fish from which he discovered a boy and a girl. That girl was none other than Satyavati herself, the great-grandmother of the Pāṇḍavas.

The same apsarā ' Rājesā' assumed the body of the fish in Assamese version whereas ' Adrisā ' of Sanskrit Mahābhārata appeared suddenly. The married wife ' Girikā ' in Sanskrit, did not come out to receive any kind of semen of the king.

(ii). The king Dvussanta of Sanskrit Mahābhārata met 'Śakuntalā' in the hermitage when the sage Kanva was absent. In course of conversation, the king came to know the truth that Śakuntalā was the daughter of an apsarā named Menokā, Śakuntalā's exquisite beauty ignited king's desire and he asked for her hand. Śakuntalā, too, felt the same. Of course, Śakuntalā at first, declined on the plea that she being a girl had not the freedom to act independently. The king clarified that point. Then, she asked the king if he was agreeable to give the throne to the son that would be born as the result of their happy union. The king at once promised. Thereupon, Śakuntalā agreed to the king's proposal and the king after full satisfaction in her company left the place.

Assamese Mahābhārata gives a different picture. Just before Śakuntalā's surrendering to the king, the sage Kanva appeared in the scene and made the king promise that he would give his throne to the son of Śakuntalā.
Śakuntalā should such a union bless them with a son.

Śakuntalā conceived for ten months according to Assamese version but three years were shown in Sanskrit Mahābhārata. Śakuntalā went to the palace of Dusmanta with her Sarvadamanā alone by leaving her escort on the road. The king flatly refused to accept them for the fear of society. There were altercations, arguments, counter-arguments between the king and Śakuntalā who failed to convince him and that his courtiers. At length, the king accepted them at the command of the celestial voice and he asked mercy from Śakuntalā for his harsh behaviour.

Assamese Śakuntalā went to the king with Kama and his disciples. Kama pleaded in vain for Śakuntalā and the king remained unmoved. At last, the king saw Śakra of Nārāyaṇa and hundred lotuses on the body and feet of the boy. These symptoms reminded the king about the prediction and he accepted them and embraced his son.

(iii). The king 'Ailin' was the father of Dusmanta. He was a prince king of the lunar dynasty and ruled with his mighty hands. Once, he did penance at Kālanjana before the god Śiva who granted him a boon to get a mighty son. Accordingly, his wife conceived for one thousand years. Disgusted with this kind of conception of his wife, the king stealthily left the palace and chanced to meet the god 'Varuṇa' in Puspana. Both of them quarrelled over the occupancy of this world. It took a serious turn and they fought afterwards. Varuṇa tried to tie down the king with 'nāgāśa' wrongfully and moved towards the heaven. In the meantime, the sage Nārada informed this matter to the queen and asked her to give birth to her son. The son, thus begotten, got annoyed as he could not see his father. He inquired about the reason and ran after Varuṇa to fight with the god barehanded. He was, however, helped by Citrasena Gandharva who provided him bow and arrows. Varuṇa was soon punished for his unlawful confinement of the king and the king was made free. So, the boy was re-named as Dusmanta.

This story is not traceable in the original Sanskrit except the name of the king 'Ailin'.
(iv). The sage Vāsiṣṭha cursed Āstāvāsa (eight Vasus) as they insulted him. According to this curse, they were required to take re-birth in this world in the womb of Gāṅgā, the wife of Śāntanu. Āstāvāsa narrated their plight to Gāṅgā in 96 adhyāya. At the same time, Gāṅgā was also cursed by Brahmā when the famous king ‘Mahāvīra’ glanced at the half-naked body of Gāṅgā during a dance performance. Both were cursed accordingly.

Again, the sage Vāsiṣṭha possessed a cow named ‘Pandini’ who could yield anything as desired by the owner. The eight Vasus tried to get the cow from the sage who refused to part with it. At the insistence of the wife of Dauk, a Vasu, all joined hands and stole away the cow without the knowledge of Vāsiṣṭha. Vāsiṣṭha soon came to know about the mischief through concentration and cursed them all. The Vasus came back and entreated the sage who asked them to take re-birth in the womb of Gāṅgā and return to the heaven except Dauk who should remain there for his fault.

The Assamese version shows the king Mahāvīra as a gandharva who behaved shamelessly as he stared at naked Gāṅgā when the others bent down their heads.

(v). Bhima was the most powerful amongst the Pāṇḍavas. In order to wipe out the Pāṇḍavas, the first measure of Duryodhana was to get rid of Bhima at any cost. Accordingly, the Kauravas chalked out a plan to murder Bhima by administering poison in the food during the feast arranged by the Kauravas. Bhima’s greed for food offered them a grand chance to execute their plan. The ‘Kālakuta’ poison was administered secretly in Bhima’s food and he swallowed all unknowingly. After the meal, the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas engaged themselves in the game of water-polo. During the course of the game the Kauravas took the opportunity to tie down unconscious Bhima with a strong rope and threw him into the river. The Pāṇḍavas were quite unaware of this and they enquired about Bhima. They consoled themselves with the idea that Bhima might have left earlier. But to their utter dismay, they could not trace Bhima anywhere. In the meantime, the poisonous effect in Bhima’s person got neutralised by the venom of the
snakes which had bitten Bhīma in the water. He awoke from his slumber and fought with the serpents. His grandfather Arānā introduced Bhīma to the serpent king Vāsuki and Bhīma was sent back home after eight days. He was also lucky to taste the 'nectar' art. This is the story so far as the Sanskrit Mahābhārata is concerned.

The Assamese version is somewhat deviated from the original.

The Kauravas invited the Pandavas for 'water-polo'. Bhīma was made senseless, tied down with a rope and thrown into the river. The venom due to snake bites made Bhīma's body swollen enormously. The sage Ananta rushed to his rescue. He gave him a stick and Vāsuki gave a mace. Bhīma killed many serpents. Vāsuki reported it at the insistence of Ananta Īśvara to the king who sent Bhīma home after showing proper hospitality. The king got the report that Bhīma was the son of Pāṇḍu (vi). Duryodhana ventured to kill the Pandavas. This time, he devised a new method and ordered his minister Purochana to build a house of lac for the Pandavas. This house was full of inflammable substances and special care was taken to keep them concealed from the sight of the Pandavas. Even Dhritarāstra persuaded the Pandavas to dwell in Bāranavāta city as suggested by Duryodhana. Dhritarāstra tried to keep them aloof from the wicked Kauravas for the fear of conflict.

Before their departure from Hastinapura, Yudhiṣṭhira was cautioned by Vidura in 'mleccha' language about the possibility of the danger of an inflammable house and suggested counter-measure.

Vidura engaged Saumya, a digger, to dig a tunnel for the escape of the Pandavas from that lac house. That tunnel which was used by the Pandavas had its opening in the forest. Bhīma himself took the initiative to burn the house on the day of feast. A woman with five children happened to be their guest on that very night. Purochana was burnt to ashes along with that family inside the house that was set ablaze by Bhīma. The Pandavas escaped through the tunnel and with the help of a boatman sent by Vidura crossed the river that lay across in the path of their journey.
through the forest.

The Assamese version does not show any kind of indication of warning by Vidura. Vidura unearthed the conspiracy of the Kauravas. At once he sent a man named Bhima to dig a tunnel up to the house in which the Pāṇḍavas were tempted to stay in Bāruni city. A woman of low caste with her five children slept there having starved themselves after three days of starvation. Bhima was so enraged at the disclosure of the Kauravas' plan that he strangled Puruṣapāna to death and set fire to the house. The Pāṇḍavas safely came out through the tunnel and met Thaluk Kāmāra of Vidura's party who instructed them about the roads. Vidura, too, met them to wish good-bye. The man, in the meantime, filled up with the tunnel and thus the evidence of their escape was tempered with.

The fire god 'Agni' was enraged much and frustrated when he failed to ignite the Khandava forest thrice for the prompt intervention of Indra who brought the fire under control. Agni reported his failure to Brahmā who directed Agni to take the help of Nara and Narayana i.e. Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. Accordingly, Agni came down to meet them at the water-polo ground. Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa gave their consent to help him and the purpose of Agni was served and Agni left with greatest satisfaction.

In Assamese version, Agni suffered from dyspepsia as the god consumed much ghee in the sacrifice of the king 'Śvetakī'. Agni was instructed to burn the 'Khandava' forest to remedy his disease. Agni consulted Kṛṣṇa at Dwārakā in the court meeting of king Ugrasena. He persuaded Kṛṣṇa's path to Indraprastha of Yudhīśthira and took the consent of the king for the requisition of the service of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

SANDHYA-PARVA.

(1). It became a problem for Yudhīśthira to perform 'Rajasūya' sacrifice for the upliftment of his father Pāṇḍu. Kṛṣṇa was informed about the practical difficulties who suggested first to kill Jarāsandha, the powerful Magadha king, as an anti-measure of troubles. Jarāsandha's death would lead to the completion of Yudhīśthira's sacrifice.
The fight between Bhima and Jarasandha was arranged at Jarasandha's palace. People assembled to witness the duel. Even the gods showed themselves up in the sky. Non-stop fighting continued for thirteen days and nights. Jarasandha felt tired and Krishna instigated Bhima that it would be unwise to kill a tired enemy. This infuriated Bhima and he split Jarasandha's body into two equal halves as he knew the birth history of Jarasandha. The king got this shape of a man in Jarasandha's handling of two human halves.

Assamese version shows that Jarasandha fought with maze. Afterwards, both Bhima and Jarasandha engaged in wrestling. Here, Bhima, instead of Jarasandha, grew tired. So, Krishna reminded Bhima of the secret of Jarasandha's strength and weakness by splitting two a blade of long grass. Bhima understood and lost no time to split Jarasandha's body into two halves by firmly holding one of his legs upwards by both hands while pressing the other to the ground with one of his legs and stressing them ruthlessly apart.

(ii). In the dice-play, Duryodhana made Yudhisthira a captive as he had lost everything including himself in the bet. Naturally, he bet Draupadi at the insistence of Sakuni, the dice-gambler and uncle of Duryodhana. Vikarna, one of the brothers of Duryodhana protested against Draupadi's slavery and argued in favour of Draupadi that she could not be a slave as Yudhisthira had forfeited his right over anything after his slavery. Vikarna got the support of Vidura, the learned brother of king Dhritarashtra.

The name Vikarna is mentioned in Assamese Mahabharata without special reference to his argument in favour of Draupadi.

(iii). The king Dhritarashtra was frightened when he was informed of the ominous symptoms just after the dice-play in which the Pandavas as well as Draupadi were humiliated in the court. Apprehending great danger of the Kauravas, Dhritarashtra granted two boons to Draupadi as a token of good behaviour. The first boon was prayed for the release of Yudhisthira and his son Prativindya from slavery. The second boon was for the release of
Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva with their chariots and treasures.
Draupādi politely refused to accept the third boon as she was not entitled
to receive it. According to convention, a kshatriya woman could receive only two boons.
She said that a king deserved three and a brāhmin deserved four boons accor-
ding to the social conventions of the day.

We find in the Assamese Mahābhārata that Draupādi accepted
three boons. The first boon, she prayed for, was the release of her five
husbands from slavery. The second was the restoration of the kingdom
with men and money. The third was for her own release from the slavery. Draupādi
did not refuse any boon as found in Sanskrit.

(iv). In the replayed game of dice, the bet was fixed earlier by Sakuni
that in case of defeat, the either party would forfeit their legitimate
rights in the kingdom with all men and money. And the defeated party would
go to exile for thirteen years including one year incognito. The violation
of these terms would enhance the period. Yudhiṣṭhira, despite resist-
tance, was drawn to the game once again and lost everything.

In Assamese version, Yudhiṣṭhira himself played dice-game. So,
he remained there undefeated for some time. At last, Sakuni turned the
table of the game by applying foul tricks undetected. Yudhiṣṭhira was
defeated. Both the times, Dhritarastra threw down the gauntlet to Yudhi-
ṣṭhira.

VIRĀṬA PĀNṆA.

(i). The influence of Śaṅkara religion is found in the original Sanskrit. The
king Yudhiṣṭhira received boons from the goddess to conquer wars as prayed
for. Again, the people failed to recognise Yudhiṣṭhira as he became a
gamester in the court of the king Virāṭa due to such boon.

The Assamese version shows the influence of Vaishnavism throu-
ghout the epic and the Pāṇḍavas have been regarded as Vaishnavas.

(ii). Bhīma had to fight duels with wrestlers as well as with lions and
tigers as he had promised to show such skills in wrestling and fighting
should situation so demanded. Bhīma could subdue them and won the games.
This plight of Bhīma made Draupadī lament which was marked by Sudesṇā, the queen of Virāṭa. Sudesṇā tried to pull Draupadī’s leg by pointing to her illicit connection with Bhīma. This added fuel to the fire of injury in which Draupadī had already been burning. Besides, she feared that such slighting remarks might pollute the whole atmosphere of the kingdom and result in the destruction of all.

In Sanskrit origin, it is found that Draupadī informed Bhīma everything by lamenting long after the game when she was forced to take the help of Bhīma to take revenge on Kīckaka, the brother of Sudesṇā.

**Udyoga Parva.**

(1), When it was known through the sources of the spies that Kṛṣṇa had accepted to be a messenger, Dhṛitarāstra wanted to utilise his diplomacy over Kṛṣṇa also. He planned to bribe him by offering money, servants and beautiful maidens. Even, Duhṣāsana’s most decorated room was allotted to Kṛṣṇa. It was a gesture of bribe, Vidura at once understood the hint and said openly that this trick would not work at all. It was quite unnatural for Kṛṣṇa to leave Arjuna under any circumstances. Dhṛitarāstra of Assamese version seemed to be very proud. He was optimistic of his views and declared to give more to Kṛṣṇa than what the Pāṇḍavas had given. He said :

"Nārīr lovat moḥ huyā Banamalī  
Pāṇḍavaka pāsarīva tāsamhak pāli ".

V. 279, Udyoga Parva, Asamiyā Mahābhārata.  
(The prospect of getting beautiful maidens will enamour Banamalī; and he will forget the Pāṇḍavas if he actually gets them.)

Vidura emphasised that nothing would make Kṛṣṇa betray the Pāṇḍavas (ii). Kṛṣṇa, on his way to Hastinapur, met some mighty sages. He stopped his chariot and asked what he could do? Jagadgna embraced Kṛṣṇa and informed him about his companions who were sages of devtas, kings, brāhmaṇas, forest respectively. They showed their eagerness to hear discourses of the various courtiers, kings and Kṛṣṇa.
In Assamese verse, the sages were seven pairs. Krishna met the batch of sages i.e., sons of Brahmā near Hastinapura before he entered the city. He started his journey from Yrkastraha. The son of Brahmā interrupted in his path and Krishna touched their feet. They prayed for a boon of devotion of love to god. Again, they showed their eagerness to witness the sabha of human beings at Hastinapura where Bhīma and Viśvāmitra would take part in the discussion.

(iii). Duryodhana left the courtroom angrily. The advice of Krishna, Bhīma, Dhritarāstra, Gāndhari, and Viśvāmitra was the cause of irritation. He did not reply there. All the Kauravas conspired inside to arrest Krishna by surrounding him. Soon, the plan was unearthed through Śatya who informed Krishna. He threw a challenge to Duryodhana in regard to the execution of the plan and showed his powers. Arjuna, Pālocana appeared at once from His right and left hands respectively and all eleven Sudras sprang up immediately. Apprehending great danger to the Kauravas, the Kauravas ran helter-skelter. Krishna left the place with Caru and Śatya. Bhīma, Arjuna, Vidura and Sanjaya witnessed the plight of the Kauravas and His form.

Assamese version shows two actions of Krishna in the courtroom of the Kauravas. He frustrated the hope of Duryodhana in his first attempt for the captivity of Krishna. Every person in the room assumed the shape of Krishna with four hands due to Krishna's magic power. Duryodhana could not recognise Him. It lasted for few moments. Then, Krishna appeared again as before and challenged Duryodhana in taunting words. These words of Krishna were too much to bear for Duryodhana who ordered his men to capture Krishna. This time, the men did not approach Him for His 'Vishvakumār' which showed all powers in Him. They threatened the Kauravas who ran away for their lives. Krishna left the place peacefully and Karna approached Krishna and apologised for the mistake.

Duryodhana attempted twice for His captivity as far as the Assamese Mahābhārata is concerned.
(iv). In the origin, Yudhisthira himself took the initiative to select seven commanders for seven contingent 'akshauhinis'. They were respectively Drupada, Virata, Dhrishtiyumna, Chekitan, Satyaki, Bhimasena and Sikhanji. Few names were suggested by others. Bhima suggested Sikhanji, Virata voted for Virata, Nakula was in favour of Drupada and Arjuna pointed out to Dhrishtiyumna, the final selection was done by Krishna after proper scrutiny and he, however, at the recommendation of Yudhisthira appointed Dhrishtiyumna as the head of all soldiers. The Pandavas with their forces marched to the battlefield of Kuruksetra without special ceremony.

The Assamese Mahabharata points out to a slightly different arrangement. Only one name was suggested for the post of commander-in-chief. Sahadeva suggested the name of Virata, Nakula for Drupada, Yudhisthira for Dhrishtiyumna, Bhima for Sikhanji. But, the importance was stressed upon the suggestion of Krishna who advanced his opinion for the appointment of seven commanders for seven 'akshauhinis'. They were Drupada, Virata, Satyaki, Bhima, Dhrishtiyumna, Sahadeva of Magadha and Sikhanji. Dhrishtiyumna became the highest authority of the soldiers. Apart from this, Arjuna would look after the army as the supreme commander-in-chief. Arjuna was given felicitations at a function by Yudhisthira who embraced him.

(v). Bhima hated to fight with Sikhanji, a brother of Drupada, Pajiev's wife. Different stories were connected with the birth of Sikhanji who was a girl originally and turned to a boy by the boon of a yogini. However, these variations were found and Bhima gave his explanation of withdrawing nature in Bhima in Adi Parva of Assamese version.

In the origin of Udyoga Parva, Bhima had to show his prowess before Duryodhana just before the war after his appointment as commander-in-chief of the Kauravas' army. Bhima narrated his own account of conquering all the kings assembled in the swayambhara of three daughters of king Kashi. Nobody could stand on his way. Bhima left the place with three girls. The eldest daughter of the king, Amba, already surrendered
her heart to Sālyā, another powerful king. So, it might be said a betrothed affair. But, Sālyā refused to accept Ambā afterwards on the plea that her hand was touched by Bhīṣma. The pitiable thing was that Ambā was also not accepted as a bride even for Vichitravirya or Citrāngadaśaṇk for her unwillingness. The arguments and entreaties of Ambā could not produce any effect on Sālyā who stuck to his view. Then, there was no alternative but to return to Bhīṣma. Again, Bhīṣma could not take Ambā as his wife as he made a vow not to marry in his life-time. Frustrated from every corner, Ambā left Bhīṣma’s place and happened to meet her maternal grandfather who was a great friend of Parasūrāma. At his suggestion, Ambā awaited patiently on Parasūrāma’s return. Parasūrāma gave a patient hearing and was very much moved and at the same time, annoyed at Bhīṣma’s conduct. He determined to amends of this irreparable loss of Ambā. Either, Bhīṣma would accept Ambā or face death. The order of Parasūrāma could not make any effect on Bhīṣma. The fight was inevitable though Bhīṣma politely refused to fight with Parasūrāma, his guru. Parasūrāma paid little heed to Bhīṣma’s suggestion and came forward to avenge fight with Bhīṣma. The battle continued for many days without any result. Bhīṣma’s efforts to avoid this unusual battle had gone in vain as Parasūrāma was adamant in his resolve. Bhīṣma was, at last, helped by his associates ‘Vasu’ from heaven who supplied the name of a fatal arrow unknown to this world. Parasūrāma surrendered at the very sight of that arrow.

Bhīṣma’s fight with Parasūrāma was narrated by Vaisampayana before Janmejaya in Assamese Ādi Parva. This fight continued for seven days and seven nights without concrete result.

Ambā’s marriage was marred by Bhīṣma who forcibly took the daughters of king Kashi. The King considered it an insult and went out to take revenge on Bhīṣma. Sālyā also fought Bhīṣma for his prestige but could not do anything. Even, his life was saved by Ambā who embraced the feet of Bhīṣma as he was about to kill Sālyā with a dagger. Later on, Bhīṣma refused to accept Ambā for this reason as expressed by Ambā.
Bhisma Parva

In Assamese Bhisma Parva, Bhisma himself narrates the episode of Amba and its reaction at the end of ninth day war of Bhisma. The Parvās lamented bitterly and showed their hopeless condition as they failed to kill the soldiers in Bhisma's presence. Bhisma suggested to the Parvās to fight again by placing Sikhandi in the front of Arjuna's chariot. Bhisma would never fight with a woman as Sikhandi was none other than Ambā who committed suicide by keeping in mind the revenge on Bhisma.

In this connection, it can be mentioned again that the king Satānik came forward to fight with Bhisma at the place of swayambhūna of Ambā, Ambalika and Ambikā.

Bhisma Parva

(1) In Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Bhisma was made the commander-in-chief in Udyoga Parva. In the beginning of Bhisma Parva, Vyāsa gave good advice to Dhritarāstra and asked Sanjaya to narrate everything of the battle in detail with the help of the magic eye given by Vyāsa. Even, the news of Bhisma's fall was given to Dhritarāstra who fainted there and then asked Sanjaya to nurse him. As requested by Dhritarāstra, Sanjaya narrated in details that Yūhiśṭhira before the starting of the battle, came forward, saluted and received blessings from Bhisma, Yudha, Salya, Krpa for his victory. The secret of Bhisma's death was disclosed in due time. Yudha too disclosed his death-secret.

In the beginning of Assamese Bhisma Parva, Asvatṭhama was made the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas' for Asvatṭhama's everlasting life. The intention was to deprive Yūhiśṭhira a victory so long Asvatṭhama remained alive. This time also, Kṛṣṇa came to Pāṇḍavas' rescue. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna came to Pāṭala on the eve of the battle and Kṛṣṇa played a trick on Duryodhana by speaking something to the ears of Asvatṭhama. Asvatṭhama, even, could not follow what Kṛṣṇa spoke. Duryodhana smelt a rat.
on this matter and Asvatthama was relieved of his responsibility and Bhīṣma was made supreme commander.

Another episode might be worth-mentioning here. Bhima saw Draupadi as Devī in his dream and the Pāṇḍavas assembled in Draupadi’s temple and considered her a great power. Draupadī expressed her opinion that Kṛṣṇa is all in all in this world.

(ii). The name of Irabāṇa was found in Sanskrit Mahābhārata. He was the son of Arjuna by his wife ‘nāga kanyā’ and he knew ‘Kāmarūpi’ magic. Irābāṇa fought bravely and embraced death at the hands of demon Arīyasṛngā.

So far as ‘nāga kanyā’ is concerned, Assamese Mahābhārata supplies the name of Ulupī as the ‘nāga kanyā’ of Kāmarūpa who married Arjuna. But, nowhere her son’s name is found in the version. Still, it could be surmised that Irābāṇa might be a son of Ulupī as he was well-versed in magic art of Kāmarūpa.

(iii). Bhīṣma and Arjuna fought hard for their supremacy in the battle of Kurukṣetra. Bhīṣma, in one way, was more powerful than Arjuna. He fell because of his inaction due to the presence of Sikhandi. It was shown that Bhīṣma could have destroyed all the Pāṇḍavas if he wished at all. But, he spared them as they were his grandson.

Arjuna irritated Bhīṣma by piercing his body with powerful arrows. Bhīṣma, at first, ignored all this. Once he was so much irritated that he took out one powerful arrow as a retaliation of Arjuna’s arrow which Arjuna applied in killing Nivāta-Kavaca. The fearful arrow frightened all and Bhīṣma asked Arjuna to take his last breath. Yudhisthira entreated Kṛṣṇa to save the life of Arjuna. Otherwise, he would commit suicide. The powerful arrow came in Arjuna’s direction and Kṛṣṇa protected his devotee by embracing the arrow that turned to a mālā (garland). Bhīṣma’s attempt was thus foiled by Kṛṣṇa.

In Sanskrit Mahābhārata, this kind of intention of Bhīṣma is not found at all.
The king Bhagadatta of Pragjyotishpur fought bravely against the Pandavas and he created a panic by inflicting wounds on their persons. His mighty elephants also played havoc. Bhagadatta went to the extent of challenging Arjuna. Even Bhima had to retreat as his chariot was smashed by the elephant. Arjuna came to their rescue and protected the soldiers from rout. In the duel, Bhagadatta forced to throw out the 'kirtī' of Arjuna by one arrow. Not only that, he sent 'Vārāyani' arrow (vaishnavi) to kill Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa protected Arjuna from death by embracing the arrow. It was so powerful that it could destroy anybody.

In Assamese version, Bhagadatta was praised by all for his great skill of sending arms. He possessed long eyebrow for which he wrapped a cloth over it. At the instruction of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna unwrapped the cloth and Bhagadatta was compelled to withdraw from the battlefield as he could not see.

Bhagadatta was killed by Arjuna and Duryodhana lamented over his body and hardly could he speak anything. The fighting was stopped at the approach of the sunset. The Kauravas lamented much for the irreparable loss. According to Duryodhana, such bereavement came because of his fault of the previous year.

As soon as Bhagadatta was killed, the son of Gandhara came forward and gave stiff opposition to Arjuna. The fight continued for a few hours more in Sanskrit Mahābhārata.

(ii). The dream of Arjuna was shown in Assamese version as well as in Sanskrit Mahābhārata.

Arjuna wanted to take revenge on Jayairatha as he was at the root of the death of Abhimanyu. Others were only instrumental. Jayairatha did not allow anybody of Pāṇḍavas' side to enter inside the 'cakravehū' after Abhimanyu's entrance. So, Abhimanyu became a forlorn soldier surrounded by the Kauravas. It was natural for Arjuna to have vowed to kill Jayairatha the
next day, for non-fulfilment of his promise would lead to Arjuna’s suicide. Krishna appeared before Arjuna in his dream and directed him to gather ‘Pāsupat’ which would enable him to kill Jayadratha. Arjuna was also asked to propitiate ‘Hara’ to get that desired weapon. Arjuna passed a restless night.

In the Assamese version, Arjuna along with Krishna left for ‘Haras’ place during the period of dream. The beauty of ‘Kailāś’ is described in Assamese Mahābhārata which is absent in Sanskrit origin. They arrived there and prayed to Śiva for the arrow ‘Pāsupat’. Arjuna got it and awoke from slumber.

As instructed by Krishna, Arjuna meditated for ‘Haras’ by touching water on the ground. The Sanskrit version shows that Arjuna left with Krishna at dawn. Both of them arrived Haras’s place and prayed for that weapon. Hara recognised them as ‘Vāra’ and ‘Hārayana’ and instructed to collect the weapon from the river side. They saw two snakes only instead of the weapon and prayed before the snakes by invoking the name of Śiva. To their utter surprise, the two snakes got transformed into an arrow and a bow by the grace of Śiva. Soon, two brahmacharies sprang up from Śiva’s side right side and showed them the skill of shooting the arrow with mantras. Arjuna was in dreamland as he received the weapon. Arjuna narrate his experience of this expedition to Yughīthīra. The striking point is that Arjuna did receive his weapon ‘Pāsupat’ long before at the time of killing Nivāta-Kavaca. It was Kirītā Mahāīva who was pleased with Arjuna’s archery and gave the Pāsupat weapon.

(iii). In Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Karna retaliated the death of Jayadratha. The soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas were indiscriminately killed or injured by Karna. As a counter measure to this ruthless retaliation, Yughīthīra ordered Arjuna to take appropriate measure to check Karna. Arjuna volunteered to face Karna himself as it wounded his vanity. He was determined to kill Karna or kill himself. But, Krishna made a separate arrangement to cope with the new situation. Krishna expressed his opinion that both 


Arjuna and Ghatotkach would equally match Karna with appropriate measures. Still, it was not advisable to send Arjuna so long as Karna possessed that 'akāgni' weapon meant to kill. Furthermore, Ghatotkach, a rakṣasa and possessor of the weapons of Asura, devas and rakṣasas, would match Karna specially at night.

As Yudhishthira of Assamese Mahābhārata asked Arjuna to do something effective from complete massacre, Kṛṣṇa managed to send Ghatotkach with the explanation that Arjuna was too tired after his labour in killing Jayadratha. Kṛṣṇa instructed Ghatotkach to keep Pandavas' prestige intact. Kṛṣṇa also disclosed about the weapon of Karna at Ghatotkach's death which might be fatal for Arjuna at this hour. This weapon was given by Indra in exchange of Karna's mail-coat.

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(iv). Both Karna and Ghatotkach tried level best to subdue each other on the night. Generally, the rakṣasas were more powerful at night and the Kauravas became panicky and helpless for Ghatotkach's indiscriminate killing of the Kauravas soldiers.

In Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Ghatotkach invented all kinds of weapons and sent towards the Kauravas from the sky. Even the incessant rain created by him washed away everything in the battle-field. The soldiers ran hither and thither for their lives and rumours that Indra himself might be coming down to destroy the Kauravas. They entreated Karna to rescue them in the needful and bring the situation under control. They even suggested Karna to use 'ekāgni' weapon to kill Ghatotkach, the rakṣasa.

But, the sentiments expressed by the soldiers of the Kauravas at this panicky hour were appropriate as found in Assamese Assamese Mahābhārata. They shouted an used abusive language to Durvāśana who failed to protect his subjects from complete destruction. The people asked Karna to rescue them on the plea that their wives would turn prostitutes in case of their deaths. Durvāśana could not tolerate this humiliating act of his subjects. He forced his entry to the castle of arrows made by Karna with great difficulty and entreated Karna to use 'ekāgni' weapon as the only
remedy to save the situation. Duryodhana even expressed his sentiments that if he died, what benefit would Karna expect by keeping that mighty weapon? Karna became annoyed with his conduct and decided to kill Ghatotkaca. Karna had to repent and scold himself for his cowardice.

Asvatthama could not forget the unjust killing of his father Drona. He blazed out to take revenge on the Pandavas. He wished to wipe out the Pandavas from this world. Duryodhana instigated and exploited the situation. Accordingly, Asvatthama sent effective Narayana weapon towards the Pandavas. This weapon produced as many weapons as Asvatthama desired. The only way to get rid of this weapon was to show due respect and back after surrendering all weapons on ground. Everybody did as suggested by Krishna. Bhima considered it an act of cowardice. So, he defied the weapon and was busy in shooting its arrows. As a result of that, all the weapons from Narayana arrow surrounded Bhima and burnt his chariot, bow, arrows. Krishna and Arjuna failed to convince him who did not stop fighting. At last, Arjuna sent ‘Varuna’ weapon to lessen the power of fire. Then, Krishna and Arjuna dragged Bhima down from the chariot and compelled him to surrender his weapons. Thus, the fire was extinguished and the situation was brought under control by Krishna.

In Assamese version, Arjuna remained inert at the time of shooting of Narayana weapon by Asvatthama. He blamed all for the killing of his guru Drona in unjustified manner. Arjuna repented much and wanted to destroy himself in the fire of Narayana weapon in order to wash his sins. So, he did not instruct the soldiers to take any kind of protection against the weapon. Yudhishthira lost his patience in Arjuna’s wittim attitude and entreated Krishna to give anti-measure of Narayana weapon. Krishna ordered all to take ‘the name of Hari’ from the ground after surrendering their weapons. Bhima did not obey his orders. Bhima was dragged down by Arjuna in half-burnt state because he defied the weapon. Naturally, the weapon became severe on him and the horses of his chariot. Arjuna did not send
any kind of weapon at this crucial stage.

Drona Parva of Assamese version is completed with the end of Narayana weapon.

**Karna Parva.**

(i). In the battle-field of Kuruksetra, Karna was made the commander-in-chief after Drona. Duryodhana persuaded Salya, uncle of Nakula Sahadeva, to become the charioteer of Karna with pleasing words of flattery that Salya was superior even to Krishna. Otherwise, it was quite impossible to get the service of Salya in this matter. Salya reluctantly accepted it with some terms and conditions. One of the conditions was that Salya would get freedom to use any kind of words to Karna. Both Karna and Salya made altercations at the beginning.

However, Karna killed many soldiers of the Pandavas. Yudhisthira defended his army against the attack of Karna. Karna made Yudhisthira de-charioteered and the king had to flee away in the chariot of Nakula Sahadeva. Still, Karna pursued him like a bloodhound to capture the king alive. The king gestured to Salya to restrain Karna. Realising his position, Salya tried in vain to refrain Karna from this pursuing. When Karna was adamant to capture Yudhisthira, Salya angrily informed Karna about the danger of Duryodhana from Bhima who menacingly attacked him. This restrained the action of Karna. On the other hand, Yudhisthira was mortally wounded and he reached the camp with injuries and humiliation that he feigned there.

In the Sanskrit Mahabharata, Karna defeated Yudhisthira and destroyed all the weapons, chariots. Yudhisthira ran away and Karna was about to catch him when he remembered his words given to Kunti. Nevertheless, he reprimanded Yudhisthira and suggested the king to join ascetics. Salya also requests Karna to leave Yudhisthira who was running for his life. Yudhisthira again met Karna in duel fighting. In Catuhsastitam adhyaya 9, when Yudhisthira met Karna for the third time, Karna destroyed
the chariots of Yudhishthira and Nakula. Both took shelter in Sahadeva's chariot and they all ran for safety and Karna pursued. Salya argued that Yudhishthira should be spared because Duryodhana worshipped Karna and was able to kill Arjuna. So, what benefit would Karna get killing Yudhishthira or Nakula or Sahadeva. Again, Karna would be laughed at by Arjuna if he faced Arjuna with a limited number of arrows. Further, Karna's duty was to save Duryodhana from the hands of Bhima. Yudhishthira was thus spared.

The altercations between Karna and Salya and the flattery of Duryodhana for Salya's appointment as charioteer of Karna are not found in Assamese Mahabharata.

(ii). In the duel in which Karna and Arjuna engaged, the charioteers had a greater role. Karna and Arjuna asked their respective charioteers Salya and Krsna about later's line of action in case of either's death. Salya promised to kill Krishna and Arjuna in case of Karna's death. On the other hand, Krishna did not dream of Arjuna's death. These kind of discussion before the duel is absent in Assamese Mahabharata.

During the battle, the chariot of Karna got stuck in mud. It is found in Sanskrit Mahabharata that Karna tried his best to raise the wheels. Even Karna requested Arjuna in the name of virtue to allow him to raise the wheels. But Krishna reproached Karna that he forgot his virtue in torturing the Pandavas, killing Abhimanyu. Thus frustrated, Karna sent a powerful weapon which made Arjuna unconscious temporarily. Everybody trembled and cried in vain for Arjuna. Karna utilised this time in raising the wheels again but to no avail. In the meantime, Arjuna gained his sense. Krishna instructed Arjuna to kill Karna before he got in the chariot. Arjuna sent 'Anjalik' arrow to destroy Karna's chariot and flag. Then, the arrow 'Anjalik', a storehouse of Arjuna's virtue and devotion, removed the head of Karna.

The 'Anjalik' arrow is absent in Assamese Mahabharata. Arjuna used 'Brajakuta', an arrow made by Viswa Karm with the bone of sage Dadhishi, to severe Karna's head. Arjuna received this weapon from
Indra.

Again, it is rather strange that Yudhishthira inspected Karna's dead body. This thing is also absent in Assamese version.

(iii). Before the beginning of the duel between Karna and Arjuna, Asvattathama requested Duryodhana to stop this unnecessary bloodshed. Even, he assured to restrain Arjuna from this bloody killing and Karna would be removed from the battle-field. Duryodhana did not listen at all.

The Assamese Mahabharata does not give any kind of loose talk in this hour.

SALYA PARVA.

(1). There was a duel between Sahadeva and Sakuni. Before Sakuni's killing, Sahadeva killed Uluka, the son of Sakuni. Then, Sakuni lamented much over it by remembering good advice of Vidura. However, Sakuni sent 'Kharga', a mace, a javelin to Sahadeva to be dissected only by Sahadeva. Sakuni began to tremble and started running away from Sahadeva. But, soon, Sahadeva pierced his body with more arrows. Agonised, frustrated Sakuni sent 'pras' which was made abortive. At last, Sahadeva's three arrows severed his head.

Very little informations are found in Assamese Mahabharata and the details are not given at all. The name of Sakuni's son does not appear in Assamese version.

(ii). Just after the death of Sakuni, Brahma Purva is found and it is included in Salya Parva. But, Assamese Brahma Purva is generally deals with in Gadā Parva. Further, Gadā Parva is dealt with the killing of five sons of Draupadi by Asvatthama and the accession of Duryodhana to Heaven with satisfaction. The Sanskrit Gadā Parva ends in Salya Parva when Duryodhana made Asvatthama the general from his death-bed.

SAUMPNIKAKA PARVA.

(1). The killing of the five sons of the Pándavas as well as the Panchalas
in the tent by Aśvatthama was narrated very briefly in Assamese Mahābhārata. Duryodhana got satisfaction at this act of Aśvatthama.

In Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Aśvatthama was much disturbed, frightened and wounded in heart when he saw Duryodhana agonise in spasm of pain. He made a plan to take revenge on the Pāṇḍavas. Aśvatthama led Kṛṣṇa and Kṛttvāvaraṇa in this night expedition. They stayed in the jungle. But soon Aśvatthama became restless and he ventured to proceed alone when he saw a big owl eating young birds. That was the lesson he gathered from the owl. Kṛṣṇa failed to convince him anymore and Aśvatthama lost his patience, perseverance too. Aśvatthama met a tall stout person in front of the camp. He fought and emptied his stock of weapons without any effect and the person remained unmoved. Aśvatthama realised this time that he had faced god Śiva. He prayed to Śiva and was about to sacrifice his life for his failure in subduing him and indirectly deprived of materialising his expedition. Śiva intervened at this and gave an axe saying that the persons of the camp deserved death-sentence at this stage. Aśvatthama entered stealthily and dragged Bhīṣma from slumber and strangulated him to death. The five sons of Draupādi resisted the attack of Aśvatthama but at length, they were overpowered and killed. This sudden attack perplexed all and they embraced death before they could realise what had happened. Duryodhana was informed and he left this world to Heaven with satisfaction.

AŚIKA PARVA.

In Sanskrit, this Parva is included in Sauptika Parva.

(1) Bereaved Draupādi asked Bhīma either to kill Aśvatthama or take away a jewel from his head. In Sanskrit, Draupādi asked to make amends by capturing the jewel from the head of Aśvatthama. She hoped that it would lessen and compensate her grief as she would place it on the head of Yudhisṭhira.

Bhīma independently took the risk to punish Aśvatthama who was sitting in the hermitage of Vālmīki. The Sanskrit origin shows Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna
an Yudhishthira arrived on the bank of Vāgirathī. The 'brahmaśīrā' vāna was sent with the mantra on 'khāgari' by Asvatthāmā. Arjuna, at Kṛṣṇa's suggestion, sent 'divyāstra' to neutralize its effect. It was stated that Arjuna sent 'pāṣupāt' to kill Asvatthāmā and both were pacified by Nārada and Brahma. Asvatthāmā was weak. So, it was impossible on his part to call back his weapon. The result was—it entered the womb of Uttarā as desired by Asvatthāmā and Kṛṣṇa rescued the unborn child with His glance.

**ŚRĪ PARVA.**

(1) The king Dhūrtarastra had a grudge against Bhīma as Dhūrtarastra held him responsible for the killing of his hundred sons. So, he wished to crush Bhīma. With that intention, he enquired about Bhīma for embracing. Kṛṣṇa, at once, grasped the idea of Dhūrtarastra, pushed forward an image of iron Bhīma. Soon, Dhūrtarastra embraced and pressed so hard that it cracked. Then, Dhūrtarastra seemed to lament over Bhīma and painted there with bleeding injuries on heart.

In Assamese version, Dhūrtarastra pretended to lament over Bhīma after he smashed the idol Bhīma into pieces. Kṛṣṇa, then, consoled him smiling that Bhīma was hale and hearty.

(11) Gāṇḍhārī asked for the explanation of Bhīma regarding his crime in killing hundred brothers. Bhīma narrated all their tortures which led to the destruction of the Kaṃravas. Yudhīṣṭhīra too repeated it though he asked for curse. Gāṇḍhārī did not say anything so far as Assamote Mahābhārata is concerned.

Gāṇḍhārī, in Sanskrit Mahābhārata, enquired Yudhīṣṭhīra just after her meeting with Bhīma. As Yudhīṣṭhīra repented and made himself responsible for the killing of his kith and kin, he voluntarily asked her curse. Gāṇḍhārī did not say anything but glanced at his nails once with fire. The nails at once turned black and others including Arjuna seized...
with fear at this turn.

(iii). Kunti, the mother of the Pándavas, asked Yudhishthira to perform ritual rites for Karna, her eldest son begotten by Sun god in her maiden days. She disclosed and admitted her fault. The Pándavas wept bitterly for Karna's death. Yudhishthira cursed all women that they would not be able to conceal anything in future.

In origin, Yudhishthira condemned the act of Kunti and made her responsible for this unnecessary killing of the relatives. Had Karna been introduced earlier as their brother, this blood-shed could have been averted. Of course, Yudhishthira cursed women in Sánti Parva when he came to know about Karna from the sage Narada.

Sánti Parva.

(i). In Sanskrit Mahabh'arata, Narada had narrated the facts of Karna and his mother Kunti. Yudhishthira then added that he, too, saw the striking similarity of the feet of Karna with that of his mother Kunti. That was why he could check his anger by seeing the feet of Karna though he failed to speculate the reason and mystery.

Narada, then, said about the bravery of Karna. Karna's request to learn weapons from Drona was once turned down. Drona argued that only brāhmin or purified kshatriyas were eligible for his mundhīva. Karna learnt weapons from god Parasurāma in the guise of a brāhmin. One day, when Parasurāma was fast asleep on Karna's lap, a blood-sucker insect sucked blood from Karna's thigh. A stream of blood trickle down and awakened Parasurāma. He at once asked for Karna's explanation and charged him a liar as no brāhmin could withstand such pain. Parasurāma cursed Karna to forget his weapon at the time of need. The insect was none but a rāksasa by the name of Mahasura who ascended to the heaven at Parasurāma's touch.

This perseverance and endurance of Karna was described by Sanjaya to Dhritarastra in Karna Parva of Assamese Mahābhārata. The story narrated by Sanjaya was deviated like this: - Karna declared the fact
that he was the son of a charioteer and ultimately learnt all weapons of Parasurama. One day, a tree underneath pierced through Karna's thigh and was broken when Parasurama woke up from his slumber of Karna's lap. Parasurama became surprised at this unusual endurance of Karna. Perceiving into the matter, he cursed Karna. Once, it was also stated that Indra disguised himself as the tree in order to weaken Karna for the benefit of his son Arjuna.

(iii). The king Brahmadatta had a little son who used to play with young ones of a bird named 'chatak'. Both quarreled for a trifling matter one day and the bird was killed instantaneously by the prince by throwing it to the sky and left the place with his lady-caretaker.

The Assamese version shows that the son of the bird snatched away a fruit from the possession of the little prince and hurt him with pointed nails. The enraged prince killed the little bird. The 'chatak' came and plucked out the eyes of the prince as an act of retaliation after reprimanding the prince.

(iii). Yudhishthira enquired about the offenders of friends and Bhīṣma cleared his points by narrating a story. The story runs:

A brāhmaṇ by the name Gautama entered a village of dacoits in search of alms. The tired brāhmaṇ begged alms for one year from the wealthy dacoit who, not only provided food, but offered a beautiful lady servant at his disposal. The brāhmaṇ settled down there and led a life of the dacoit by killing animals. After some time, a friend of him arrived at his residence in search of shelter in a house of brāhmaṇ. As soon as the new comer recognised his old friend clad like one in dacoity profession, he refused to take anything and scolded him once for this wretched life. On the morning, both went outside and the brāhmaṇ-dacoit managed to avoid his friend and arrived on sea-shore. He finally entered a thick jungle on his way. He then could listen to pleasing music and met a bird 'Vaka' who became his host for the night. This bird Rājaharma suggested
the brāhmaṇa to go to his friend Birupākṣa ṛākṣasa if he actually
needed more money. The brāhmaṇa was tempted to have the flesh
of the bird. However, he went to Birupākṣa as suggested by Rājadharma.
Birupākṣa welcomed his new guest and was not much pleased with this un-
versed brāhmaṇa. Still, the brāhmaṇa was sent back with proper food and
money. The brāhmaṇa retraced his path and became the guest of the bird
again. On that night, the brāhmaṇa could not check his temptation and he
killed the bird who was sleeping. The brāhmaṇa left with the flesh of the
bird. On the other side, Birupākṣa was anxiously waiting for his friend
Rājadharma and worried over bird’s not turning up. Apprehending foul
play, the king sent his son to enquire into it. To his utter surprise, the
son of Birupākṣa could find only bones and feathers of the bird. He
pursued the brāhmaṇa and caught him with the flesh of Rājadharma. The king
mourned the bird’s death and made arrangement for funeral rite. The brā-
hmaṇa was punished and handed over to the ṛākṣasas who even refused to
eat. Next, the brāhmaṇa was cut into pieces and the flesh was given to da-
coit. They also rejected for his sins. In the meantime, the bird’s body
was placed on the pyre and the foams from the mouth of Dākhyāṇī Surabhi
fell on Rājadharma’s body. The bird woke up. Indra appeared in the scene and informed about the fault of Rājadharma that once he refused
to go to Brahmā’s place. He was cursed by Brahmā to remain in this world
At this, his intervention and entreaty, the brāhmaṇa was made alive with
the curse that he would produce sons on Suira’s wife to enter Naraka.

In Assamese version, the brāhmaṇa Gautama ‘li’ stay for
one year in the village of the dacoits. He was given a beautiful girl.
The brāhmaṇa did not think to kill Rājadharma on his first meeting. The
king Birupākṣa unwillingly paid money to the brāhmaṇa for the sake of his
friend Rājadharma. It was Nisācar-Nisācaranī who detected the crime of
the brāhmaṇa and tied him and informed Birupākṣa about the crime. The
mother of the bird Rājadharma glanced him with the eyes of nectar. Bra-
hmā cursed Vaka to die without work.
In Sanskrit Mahābhārata, Bhīma showed his hatred for Dhritarastra as he also desired wealth for the wealth of the Pāṇḍavas. Bhīma expressed his temper and sentiments loudly and repeated his charges against the tortures of the Kauravas. Dhritarastra failed to swallow these harsh words. Naturally, griefed Dhritarastra asked Yudhīṣṭhīra's permission to go to the forest for meditation. Yudhīṣṭhīra was much perturbed and he volunteered to accompany Dhritarastra by crowning the prince Yuyutsu. Sanjaya too advised Dhritarastra to go to the forest. Vyāsa supported the idea of Dhritarastra.

In Assamese version, Yudhīṣṭhīra wept as soon as he came to know the decision of Dhritarastra. He could not think of Dhritarastra's departure from the country. Dhritarastra was consoled by Gāṇḍhāri, Vidura, Sanjaya and they suggested to go for Arunaprastha. Yudhīṣṭhīra entreated him to to revise his decision and touched the feet of Dhritarastra along with his four brothers. Vyāsa knew all. Kuntī also expressed her decision to accompany Dhritarastra. Dhritarastra asked his wife Gāṇḍhāri to accompany and she readily agreed.

Yudhīṣṭhīra acquired the permission to visit Dhritarastra in exile. Yudhīṣṭhīra's suggestion was supported by all. Sahadeva said about this separation. Draupādi too spoke after Sahadeva that she would be deprived of her father-in-law. Then, what was the use of living in this world?

So far as Assamese version is concerned, Sahadeva expressed his views. Then, Uttara, instead of Draupādi, expressed her sentiments that her grand mother-in-law Kuntī endeared her. She was always consoled by her for irreparable loss of her husband. Often, she gave her company. Nakula, too, expressed his own views.

MUSAL PARVA.

Visvāmitra, Kanva and Nārada came to Dwārakā to enjoy life. The Yādavas pushed Śamba, Kṛṣṇa's son, in the guise of a pregnant woman and asked
then to ascertain the sex of the issue. The sages at once detected the fun and cursed them that they would be killed by the iron rod which was in Samba's belly.

In Assamese version, the sages Kāśyapa, Kapila, Manu, Kanva, Kātyāyana, Parāśara, Bharadvāj, Pulastī, Pulaha, Kratu, Visvāmitra, Aparajita came to the pilgrimage of pindārāka. The Jādavas also met them there and were cursed for the same reason.

(ii). The Jādavas went to the pilgrimage of pravāsa. They drank wine and began to quarrel. It started between Sātyaki and Kṛtavarmā. Sātyaki accused Kṛtavarmā for the killing of the pānchālas and Kṛtavarmā, in return, charged Sātyaki with the unlawful murdering of Bhurisravah. Sātyaki killed Kṛtavarmā and was killed by other Jādavas. They killed each other with ‘māduri' leaves turning into iron rods by the curse of the sages. The whole Jādava race was wiped out. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma left the world by meditation.

In Assamese, the two parties of the Jādavas fought among themselves and emptied their weapons. They started fighting with ‘māduri' for want of weapons. When Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa interrupted, others threatened them. So, they killed the Jādavas and thus wiped out the race.

(iii). Kṛṣṇa sent Babhru to inform about the destruction of Jādava race. But, Babhru got killed at the hands of the hunter as he advanced. This time, Kṛṣṇa entrusted Dāruka to intimate Arjuna at Indraprastha. Kṛṣṇa who came himself, comforted Vasudeva about the destruction and informed about Arjuna's arrival. On his way back to the scene of the battle-field, Kṛṣṇa's feet were hit by an arrow of a hunter.

The Assamese Māhābhārata gives a different picture. Here, Kṛṣṇa had never gone to Dvārakā to inform but stayed on the same spot. He meditated when an arrow from a hunter hit his feet which the hunter mistook for the mouth of a deer. The hunter got puzzled but Kṛṣṇa pacified him by saying that he was none other than Rāma who granted boon to the son of Bāli to take revenge on the murderer of his father. The hunter was sent to the heaven by Kṛṣṇa.
In the meantime, Arjuna, who was roaming, saw bad signs and dream in the hermitage of a brahmin Vidyapati. Krishna, before his departure from this, met Uddhava, Maitreya, and he consoled them including Narakasura.

(iv). Some dacoits of Pañcānanda village obstructed Arjuna who was moving with sixteen thousand wives of Krishna and others towards Hastinapur. In the battle, Arjuna was defeated easily and they snatched away the wives of Krishna. It was stated that some women voluntarily accompanied the dacoits. Arjuna with his former vanity, could produce little effect by his Gandhiva and emptied his weapons within a short time. He had to use Gandhiva bow.

Arjuna arrived Indraprastha with discontent minds and few persons.

The 'Nara' incarnation is shown in Assamese version. Nine bhaktas of Krishna gave stiff opposition to Arjuna who advanced towards Indraprastha. They tried to snatch away the sixteen thousand wives of Krishna. The nine keepers of the cows fought with sticks and made abortive the weapons of Arjuna. Infuriated Arjuna considered these impertinence and pierced them with powerful arrows. They survived painfully as they were a part of Krishna. Four of them went to heaven and only five faced Arjuna. All celestial weapons of Arjuna were asked to be returned to own region with the order of Krishna as conveyed by four bhaktis. Arjuna worried and enraged much as these weapons did not effect them or come back to him. He was angry and at the same time came to know the intention of Krishna. This time, he drew out 'Kālanala' weapon, at the sight of which, the universe trembled and Brahmā intervened with the reasoning that it was his (Arjuna) universe. Arjuna felt ashamed of it and decided to go to Meru to meet Krishna as suggested by Brahmā. Arjuna meditated for a moment for Krishna and the five opponent snatched this opportunity and threw the chariot of Arjuna to a distance. They tried to run away along with the sixteen thousand wives who in the meantime, meditated by the name of Krishna and committed suicide before Gopas could touch their hands. To his dismay, Arjuna could find only dead bodies and performed their last rites.
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MAHĀPRASṬHĀNIE PĀRVA

(1). Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers along with their common wife Draupadī fell on earth because of the trick played by Nidrādevī with Dharma who was disguised as a dog.

In origin, everybody fell. Even Yudhiṣṭhira had to go to Narakā and take a holy dip for purification. He came down to see his brothers.

SWARGĀRCHANA PĀRVA

(1). Swargārchna Parva begins from the action of Nidrādevī in Assamese version. It starts in Sanskrit origin from the temper of Yudhiṣṭhira in heaven in contravention of the rules of Heaven. He failed to see his brothers except Duryodhana and the Kauravas.

(ii). Yudhiṣṭhira desired to see Karna and his four brothers along with Draupadī when he could not see them in heaven. So, he was taken under pretension to the hell. He heard the voices of Karna, Bhīma, and others in hell. It was natural that he expressed his desire to stay there with his brothers. Dharma and Indra had to console him by saying that Yudhiṣṭhira was due to visit the hell once for faulty act resulting in the death of his guru Draupadī who confirmed the death news of his son Asvatthama from Yudhiṣṭhira. His brothers, too, were brought to hell for the same reason.

In Assamese, Dharma tried to please Yudhiṣṭhira by offering sweets during his short spell of halting in hell. He refused to accept anything until he met them. At Dharma's order, Mātali, the charioteer of Indra led him to Meru Parvat where his four brothers and Draupadī were anxiously waiting. He met them there. So, the Pāṇḍavas could not enter earlier to heaven.

The deviation from the Sanskrit original, is discussed here. But, it cannot be ascertained for the genuineness of the episodes of the Mahābhārata. Apart from these, many episodes are not included in Assamese. The purpose of the Assamese version is to show the inclusion of abundant materials already available in Assam in the Mahābhārata to make it a bigger volume.
CONTENTS OF SOME SUB-PARVAS OF THE VANA PARVA IN THE ASSAMESE VERSION:
The following sub-parvas of the Vana Parva are found absent either in Sanskrit or in other provincial versions. These sub-parvas typical to the Assamese Mahabharaata are: (i) Puspaharana Vana Parva, (ii) Manicandra Ghosa Parva (iii) Vijaya Parva (iv) Baghasura Vadha (v) Yajna Parva, (vi) Khatasura Vadha (vii) Aswakarna Vadha (viii) Kurmavati Vadha (ix) Janaghasura Vadha (x) Kulacala Vadha and (xi) Sinihuyattra Vana Parva.

Vyasasram Vana Parva, which is not included in the Assamese Mahabharata, is considered to be a separate book dealing with the great activities of the great warrior, Bhima.

These big stories are related mostly to the triumphs of the Pandavas during their exile. The importance of the inclusion of these in the Assamese Mahabharata has added colour and beauty to the main work making it more enjoyable for the reading public. The readers' minds are attracted towards religion through these nice episodes.

(i) Puspaharana Vana Parva: The story starts with the praises of Lord Krsna, Goddess Saraswati and the king Naranarayana to whom the poet had enough indebtedness for giving him direction to render the Mahabharata into Assamese verse.

The Pandavas left the Kamyaka forest in search of better facilities. While on their way, they passed through a field of mustard plants. Yudhishtira took his seat on a grassy spot due to fatigue. He also felt thirsty. Looking back, Yudhishtira painfully noticed that the mustard flowers were trampled over by Bhima. Yudhishtira ordered Bhima to compensate the loss so incurred to the owner of the field who was a Brahmin, named Karna.

Bhima managed somehow himself to get himself absorbed as a servant of the Brahmin. Though there was some hesitation at the beginning the Brahmin was delighted to have Bhima to help him in the cultivation of his land. Within a very short time period, Bhima cultivated the field in
large scale to procure more corns. This surprised the other servants of the Brähmin and Bhima was pressed to disclose his identity. Bhima dared not to divulge the secret. In the meantime, an elephant by the name Sankhathavala entered that forest and tried to kill Bhima and the Brähmin unprovokedly in the corn-field. The Brähmin fainted at the cries of the elephant screaming for Bhadrasena (Bhima). Bhima at once took position to deal with the situation. In the fight, Bhima killed that elephant by plucking its teeth and hammering the temple. Actually, a Gandharva named Puṣparatha assumed the shape of an elephant for the curse he received from the Goddess Pārvatī. The Brähmin praised Bhima once again for his incorrigible courage. Bhima, this time, disclosed his identity out of fear of imprecation from the Brähmin and left that place to join his brothers.

Yudhīsthira decided to move from that forest and approached 'Bhasma-Vana' where they heard the name of Rāma sounding continuously. Agniketu, one of the ministers of Rāvana, the king of Ceylon, was once flown by the arrow of Rāma and thrown to the 'Pālasa' forest with disected legs. The result was that Agniketu was hypnotised in such a manner that he started reciting the name of Rāma automatically. As a result of this recitation, his body and soul became pure. Fire came out from his mouth as he pronounced the name of Rāma. The pāṇḍavas were terrified by the devastating fire in the jungle and Arjuna angrily rushed to the spot of the origin of the fire as it spread out in all directions. Arjuna could not behead Agniketu with great difficulty. To the utter surprise of Arjuna, Agniketu at once assumed the form of an attendant of Kṛṣṇa and began to pray Arjuna and then left for heaven in a chariot. The pāṇḍavas proceeded further to 'Lauha Vana'. Again, an unexpected thing happened. A tiger approached them with tremendous speed and snatched away Draupadī from their midst. Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva tried in vain to rescue Draupadī from the clutches of the tiger. Arjuna failed to pierce the skin of the tiger. The powerful sharpened dagger used by Arjuna on tiger's head cracked. At length, the tiger was
strangled to death by Arjuna who forcibly twisted three heads of the tiger. This tiger, too, assumed the form of a god and saluted all including Draupadi and left for heaven.

Rāma Saraswatī wrote this episode at his tender age. Here, he often referred to his guru Mukundadeva. The origin of the story might be found in Yamāla Samhitā and Śiva Pahasya as declared by the poet.

The poet's reverence to Kṛṣṇa is evident from the following verse.

"Bhavārnavā vana pailā Rāma Saraswatī gailā
Kṛṣṇa pāve kari nevedana".

pp 96, V. 1415, Puspaharana Vana Parva.

(Rāma Saraswatī says by bowing down to Kṛṣṇa that the pāṇḍavas arrived the Bhavārnavā forest.)

The poet surrenders himself to the mercy of god as well as his guru Mukundadeva. He even entreats to accept him as guru's servant.

This parva can be summarised by the following quotation:

"Sūnā savāsai pada puspaharana,
Bhimar vijaye raṅga Kanva Brahmāṇa;
Sāṅkhaihavalar pada mukta vīḍyāhara
Kahe kavi Saraswatī Mukunda-kiṅkara".

-pp 71, V. 1046, Puspaharana Vana Parva.

(Listen, O' audience, the verses of Puspaharana declare the victory of Bhīma and the joy of Kanva Brahmin. The release of Vīḍyāhara in Sāṅkhaihavala's form is narrated by the poet Saraswatī, the servant of Mukunda.)

(ii). Manicandra Ghosa Parva: The pāṇḍavas settled down in the 'Bhavārnavā' forest and constructed a hut near a lake. The place was deserted and forlorn. After some days, a powerful snake 'Pundarika' saw four pāṇḍavas with Draupadī and killed them instantaneously because he considered the pāṇḍavas as encroachers in his territory. Bhīma returned home after long search of food only to find pindrop silence. With grievous heart, he was
about to enter the hut when a bird conveyed the sad death of the Pāṇḍavas at the handle of a snake pundarīka and asked Bhima to revive them with the help of a jewel 'Saṃjīvanī' available in 'Nagaloka'. The bird even suggested Bhima to seek assistance from another bird 'Nakula' in the Southern part in order to locate that jewel. Accordingly, Bhima went to meet the bird 'Nakula' lamenting for his brothers. He had to search for the bird and was lucky to meet the bird within a short time. Bhima narrated the mishap by disclosing his identity and the bird started talking. Bhima persuaded the bird to carry him to the place of the jewel. Both of them arrived at their destination within a short time. But, Nakula refused to oblige Bhima more. This behaviour of the bird was sufficient to rouse Bhima's anger who reacted at once. He strangled that bird to death by exerting great pressure. But, to his utter surprise, Bhima saw a beautiful form of a deity springing up from the bird. Bhima got puzzled. The new attendant of the god, advised Bhima to powder some powdery substance from Nakula's old body except on one spot. With a firm determination, Bhima approached the people of the nether land but was soon obstructed at the second gate and his all informations were sent inside. The king simply ordered a minister to drive Bhima out from the country. The insulting tone of Bhima enraged the minister who attacked him with his followers. The battle turned in favour of Bhima. Blazed by this type of setback, the king immediately sent the most powerful serpent Takṣaka. But, Bhima could drive away Takṣaka although with much pain. He survived from the venoms because of the yellow pigments of the bird. This news spread like wildfire. The next fighter who faced Bhima was a minister by the name of Kusaka. Even Kusaka could not harm Bhima as the whole body of Bhima was paste with powdier. Kusaka, at last, discovered the weak susceptible spot for biting. He, this time, changed his form to a microscopic size and had bitten Bhima by embracing and exerting pressure. The wind god lost his senses at the sudden unnatural death of his son Bhima, and thus everyone in the universe
was forced to suffer suffocation. All gods hurried to Brahma to take advice in this matter. Brahma sent them back to the wind-god. Then, the gods including the wind-god went to the king of Nether land to apprise him of the situation. The presence of all the gods in Dhritarashtra's place frightened him and he then realised his fault for this grave situation. He entreated to gods to forgive him for the wrong he did in the heat of the moment. At their command, Bhima was brought to life by the touch of the jewel and the king compensated him by giving his daughter in marriage to Bhima. Everyone rejoiced at this happy marriage. Bhima received the jewel from the king and made the Pandavas alive with its magic touch.

After their re-birth, Yudhishthira ordered Bhima to live for few days in the company of his newly-wedded wife in a new city specially built for Bhima's purpose. On their way to the capital, all the serpents who escorted Bhima with his new wife, faced a Yaksa named Kāladhumā. The fighting was grim, Bhima also suffered defeat and became unconscious. Chandraketu, the son of Dhritarashtra of Nether land, killed Kāladhumā Yaksa by piercing his body with 'nāgasepha' arrow in this encounter.

The character of the Pandavas would be summed up by the following stanzas as found in Manicandra Ghosha Parva:

"Mahanta Pāṇḍava tārā caritra uttama
Purāṇa Samhitā save ati nirupama
Majē māje āche ār rahasya Śivar
Hamśakāki dīlā Vyāsa mahā munibara";

V. 2500, Manicandra Ghosha Parva, Assamese Mahābhāra.

(The characters of the mahanta Pāṇḍavas are excellent. Purāṇa Samhitā are all good. The Śiva Rahasya are amalgamated in the fact occasionally. The great sage Vyāsa has supplied from Hamśakāki.)

(iii). Vījaya Parva: The poet Rāma Saraswati described this parva
under Vana Parva in order to show the triumph of the vaishnavas.

The king Dhritarastra of Hastinapur wished to conquer other countries and make himself an emperor. But, the main handicap was with his eyes. He was blind from his birth. At the advice of the great sages, the king did penance sincerely to god Narayana for his early recovery of eyesight temporarily as Narayana was the sole authority of this universe. Narayana granted the boon to Dhritarastra who asked his sight for only four months. However, the purpose was partially served and Vidura, the younger brother of the king, also accompanied him in his campaign. The king of the Karnata asked for his friendship and other powerful kings of India came forward and joined hands with Dhritarastra in his campaign. There was no cause for anxiety until they entered into the territory of the king Gajaketu.

The king Gajaketu possessed the head of an elephant and the gods were terribly afraid of him. Gajaketu defied all except God Siva. The news of the arrival of Dhritarastra as intruder enraged the king much that he sent his soldiers immediately to tackle them. In the tussle, the king of Gandharva was captured and the spirit of the Kauravas was lessened to a great extent. Even, there were setback of the Kauravas. The powerful monkey king Sarvagaja, a friend of Dhritarastra, fought with determination in order to rescue the king of Gandharva and actually he brought the situation under his control. One of the sons of Gajaketu was killed by Sarvagaja. The king Gajaketu then sent Indraketu to punish the Kauravas. Indraketu created troubles and harassed all the Kauravas and made them unconscious. He sent a powerful javelin to destroy Dhritarastra but Sarvagaja frustrated this attempt by the blow of his powerful axe. Indraketu and Dhritarastra then poised for wrestling in which Dhritarastra managed to kill Indraketu by twisting the head. This painful news had added fuel to injury to the king Gajaketu who lamented bitterly for his son. The fearful battle between Gajaketu and Vidura lasted for hours together resulting in former's death at the hands of Vidura who used 'Vajrakuta' arrow.
Gods rejoiced at Gajaketu's fall. A demon named Trisirā, the terror of all gods and human beings, appeared before them. Trisirā did not care for anybody because he received a boon from the pivot of the gods by pleasing Him through hard penance. He could roam about to any place as he pleased. So, Trisirā frightened all gods who sought help of Vidura. Vidura, also, had to do hard penance before facing this dangerous demon. He got advice from Ananta Narāyana regarding this problem.

The battle with Trisirā started and Vidura killed many demons with powerful arrows. All of the demons, then, capitalized in Aghanadanava's strength. Agha's assurance to make amends was nipped in the bud as he too ultimately perished at the hands of Vidura. Incidently, the king Trisirā came forward to take revenge on the Kauravas. Temporarily, Vidura was made unconscious by a powerful javelin of the demon. This time, also, the monkey king hurried to the rescue of Vidura by restraining the movement of the demon with fatal blows on three heads of Trisirā. The demon tried in vain to capture Sarvagaja and in the meantime, Vidura snatched away this opportunity to free himself out of the danger. With the fit of anger, the demon decided to destroy all. He actually began to swallow all the soldiers and the kings within a short time. Vidura tried his utmost to kill the demon with the arrow of Siva without any effect. At last, being inspired by the words of his charioteer, Vidura selected out the powerful arrow of Ananta to kill the demon. As soon as he fixed that arrow, everybody trembled and silence prevailed throughout the world. The shoted arrow dashed with great speed to sever the heads of the demon. The next attempt Vidura took was to release all the soldiers and the kings from the stomach of the demon by sending as many weapons as he could. Everybody rejoiced at Vidura's great service to mankind.

Vidura was a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He had succeeded in killing the demon by taking the name of Hari and Kṛṣṇa.
Baghāsura Vadhā: The longest episode so far in Assamese Mahābhārata has been come across here. The poet Rāma Saraswati dealt mostly with the Asura king Baghāsura's story though other stories were also incorporated herewith.

The foremost sage Agasti lived in the Taranga forest and the Pāndavas were eager to see him. On their way, they reached the place of Astika muni and Śrīphala forest and they took their holy dip in Bindu-Tīrtha. The eldest of the Pāndavas worshipped Kṛṣṇa and Gaurīnātha. Draupadī also followed her husbands in worshipping Gaurī, who, in return, gave Draupadī a dish to get anything she might desire and a boon to prevent her widowhood under any circumstances. They proceeded further through the forest and met the sage Ghāvava who gave the direction of Agasti's hermitage. The sun-god in the disguise of a Kirāta also helped them to arrive their destination. Bhīma and Arjuna had to come across two Asura guards in the Campāvati garden by the side of a mountain. Bhīma and Arjuna fought with the asuras and killed them. The people of the city were much pleased to see the death of the asuras and they accorded a rousing reception in honour of two heroes in the process of felicitation. The citizen also requested them to punish the oppressor demon Māyāvanta and the purpose was executed. The Pāndavas along with Draupadī safely passed through Śrī Ksetra, Nandaram Parvat and at length they reached the place of Agasti in the Malaya mountain. There, they were requested to kill the demon Baghāsura. This demon was very powerful and not to be subdued easily because he was born as a result of the union of a Brāhmaṇ father Birinahi and the demon mother Asirika. He cared nobody as he received a boon from the destruction god Siva. The sage Agasti, therefore, requested them to quell the demon and accordingly all the Pāndavas felt ardent to move towards Vaidurya mountain, the capital of the demon Baghāsura. The Pāndavas sought refuge in the kingdom of Sallan in the Vasanta mountain. They were attacked by a lion.
who lifted Draupadi suddenly. Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva got tired of shooting arrows continuously at the lion who remained ever untouched. The sharpened dagger was also proved abortive. Arjuna fought with the lion and twisted its neck by applying all his energy. Then, the lion assumed the form of a celestial being and left for heaven.

All gods came down with the request to kill the demon. The gods gave them storage energy to come out successful in the long run.

The soldiers of Baghāsura came out from their kingdom first to spoil the sacrifices of the sages and kill them brutally. The leader of the demons Suraketu, was exasperated at the sight of the four Pandavas. He ordered his subordinates to fight the Pandavas. But, the result proved to be unfavourable for Suraketu. This brought Suraketu to take the helm of the fight. He gave stiff opposition by riding on a big cat. This cat was capable even to defeat Indra, the king of Amāravati. Arjuna killed that big cat by sending the Nārāyana arrow. Again and again, Arjuna severed the two heads of Suraketu one after the another. But, the irony of fate was such that Suraketu got life again and began to fight. Suddenly, Arjuna heard a celestial voice with the direction to kill the demon permanently by dissecting the body of Suraketu in the middle. This time, Suraketu was killed. When Baghāsura received this information of the death of Suraketu, he wished to destroy the world with the exasperation he bore for the loss of his general.

At the command of Baghāsura, millions of demon soldiers under powerful generals came out batch by batch from the mountain to take revenge on the Pandavas for the loss of chief at Brahmaksetra. The four brothers killed as many soldiers as they could. Nanda-Vijaya, the ministers appeared before the Pandavas and disdained them for their deeds. In the terrific fight, Bhima killed Nandaka with his mace. Infuriated at the fall of minister, Vijaya fought bravely and succeeded in torturing Bhima and Arjuna. At last, Sahadeva killed him along with the goat that was fastened in his...
chariot. The four Pāndavas returned to Brahmaksetra to report their details of success to Yudhishthira.

But, the tough opposition came before the Pāndavas. They were forced to face the most terrorised demons. Nevertheless, the Pāndavas did not lose their faith and power of concentration under any circumstances. They could wipe out most of the enemies. The whole of the battle-field was filled with the accumulated dead bodies of the demons. Now, the actual difficulty had appeared before them. The king Baghāsura came out from his castle and penetrated the Pāndavas' bodies with mighty weapons. Not only that, it was also a tiresome and impossible job on their part to open and attack the demon inside his castle of high Vaidurya mountain. At the suggestion of gods, Bhima sought help from the serpent king Dhritaraśa, his father-in-law and persuaded him to part with four chariots of the serpents temporarily in order to kill the demon. These serpents along with the chariots could fly to any high altitude. Owing to the unaccessibility to the Vaidurya mountain, the Pāndavas had to depend on others from time to time. The son of the king Sūrtaan also came forward to their assistance. The four Pāndavas tried once to move the main door of the castle by applying enormous pressure and strength. In the meantime, Bhima used his mighty mace and managed to cause damage to a little portion of the gate. The guards of the gate rushed to prevent their forced entrance. But, the working of damage was in progress with tremendous speed and zeal. The soldiers were compelled to retreat to the new position. Soon, the report of the fresh attack was communicated to the king and it spread like wildfire. Even before any precaution could be taken up, the chief architect of the medicine and possessor of magic power was killed unceremoniously at night. The presence of Citrabaladha proved useful for Baghāsura as the person had the power of reviving a dead person. In fact, Baghāsura was also brought to life on three occasions after he was killed thrice by Arjuna. Just after revival, the demon gained more power than before and he created a havoc to
to the opposite party. The sudden attack at night, was, of course, unwarranted and illegal. Still, that was done. Baghāsura succeeded in killing the four Pāndavas. They were restored to life by the magic touch of the jewel which Draupadi received from the sage Agastī.

Another demon general Suraḷi, the father-in-law of Baghāsura, was in charge of the gates. He then took action against the Pāndavas. He was capable of performing many tricks of black magic. Actually, he subdued the Pāndavas to a great extent. The Pāndavas escaped death for the prompt action of the charioteers who managed to move their chariots quickly from the scene of the battle. Enraged Suraḷi tried his best to kill Arjuna by sending a javelin. Bhīma faced it with the intention of saving Arjuna from complete destruction and gave a hard blow on the javelin with his mace. But, it was proved ineffective. Arjuna survived because of the swift movement of the chariot in time. Contrary to his expectations, Suraḷi saw Arjuna alive. Arjuna used the powerful weapon of Agni and destroyed all the demons in the twinkle of the moment. Suraḷi felt tired of pouring rain incessantly from his shelter of higher altitude. The news of the battle reached the ears of Baghāsura who became restless. He at once sent his batches of generals to repulse the attacks of the Pāndavas. These demons possessed many heads and hands. They were mighty and soldiers. Gods were afraid of them. However, Arjuna and his brothers were able to wipe out almost all the demons in the battle-field.

In the terrible fight with Baghāsura, Arjuna was almost made half-burnt by the fire of powerful javelin of Baghāsura. This time, Baghāsura took a quick decision and acted simultaneously to lift the body of Arjuna as soon as Arjuna fell. His intention was that Arjuna should be swallowed before he gained sense this time. In that case, Arjuna would not come back to life. Bhīma, perceiving the plight of Arjuna, challenged Baghāsura with break-neck speed. Baghāsura hurriedly threw Arjuna to one side in order to face Bhīma with firm grip.
Bhim, now, received a great blow of Baghasura's plough but averted it. Both of them tried for their supremacy. They wanted to subdue each other by tricky movement. Bhima maintained his supremacy and superiority by showing different kinds of skill and with flashes of thinking. Both combated with big trees, stones without any effect. The demon, then, threw a series of big trees and stones to disperse Bhima. Baghasura's mind was relieved with the thinking and impression that he had succeeded in killing his opponent. But, after a moment, he heard the loud voice of Bhima which upset his speculation. In the wrestling, Bhima killed Baghasura by twisting his neck and hammering his head and skull. Sura, it was also killed by Arjuna when the demon came forward to take revenge on the Pandavas for the death of his son-in-law.

(v). *Yájña Parva*: This parva deals mainly with the sacrifices of the sages and their protection from the tyranny of the demons. The story runs-

Baghasura was the son of a Brahmin. Therefore, the mind of Yudhishthira was perturbed with the thought of committing a crime at the slain of Baghasura. Nothing was there to compensate this wrong. Yudhishthira took the advice of all and appealed to Lord Krsna to render all possible help in order to perform a sacrifice. The message was conveyed to Dwaraka through four messengers of Krsna who arrived there in search of the Pandavas. Everybody rejoiced at Krsna's arrival and Yudhishthira was relieved of his obsession problem. Krsna was fully aware of the actual shortcomings of the Pandavas. So, he asked Uddhava to get necessary things from the king Jadu of Ratna Padmavati-puri. He suggested them to hold sacrifice in Brahmaksetra. An account of their distress was given to Krsna who consoled them by telling the miseries and punishment of god Parasurama. This yajna sponsored by Krsna and Yudhishthira was duly performed and all worries of the Pandavas vanished into the air. After the completion, Krsna left that place for Dwaraka again inspite of their request to remain there for a few days more.
The Pandavas decided to go to some other place. They then entered the forest and saw the Vyanjana mountain at a distance. Yudhisthira wanted to avoid that mountain for the fear of a demon called Mahisa danava (the demon with the shape of a buffalo). This demon was born of Brahma father and a she-buffalo. Bhojakata, the demon, saw them from the top of the mountain and came down with great speed. The Pandavas ran helter-skelter. In spite of the showers of arrows sent by Arjuna, the movement of the demon could not be restrained due to his impenetrable thick skin. Three brothers engaged in shooting arrows to the demon. They failed to pierce the skin of the demon. Bhojakata, on the other hand, took hold of Bhima and threw him to a distance. During the fight, the demon decided to swallow all. Bhima attacked him again but soon he was overpowered and swallowed up by the demon. At that moment, Arjuna heard a celestial voice directing him to kill the demon with Brahmadeva. Arjuna carried out the order. Bhima came out of the stomach by rending one portion of the left hand of the demon.

The Pandavas roamed further and reached the place of Gālawava muni. Gālawava narrated to them the story of Parasurama and his adventures against kshatriyas for twenty-one times. At last, they arrived at the place of Gautama muni. This sage Gautama wanted to perform a sacrifice after five days. But he apprehended that the demon Kālajangha would be attracted by the smell of the offerings and he would destroy them. The Pandavas volunteered to help the sage in the completion of his sacrifice in a befitting manner.

Suracakra, a follower of the demon Kālajangha, happened to see the beauty of Draupadi and was much fascinated. He approached Draupadi and gathered the informations he required to report to the king Kalajangha. The king was much pleased to hear about the incomparable beauty of Draupadi and expressed his desire to have Draupadi as his wife.

By sending all the soldiers to attack the sages, Kālajangha and Suracakra assumed the forms of perfect Brahmins to cheat Draupadi...
They appeared before her and informed politely that Draupadi was called to the place of sacrifice. As soon as Draupadi put on clothes, some ominous signs were observed which gave some suspicion of foul play. Kalajangha, being unable to maintain the form of a Brahmin any longer, showed his true colour. He forcibly took the hands of Draupadi but could not move her. In the meantime, a violent fighting was in progress between the Pandavas and the demons. When Kalajangha failed in his attempt, he pretended to engage himself in battle and sent series of arrows towards the Pandavas. Within a short time, he produced five artificial heads of the Pandavas before Draupadi in order to get the consent of Draupadi. Draupadi screamed as soon as she saw these blood-stained heads which disappeared immediately. Kalajangha, then, dragged away Draupadi to his chariot and drove back to the capital with innumerable demon followers. Draupadi was made captive in his capital.

The Pandavas searched for Draupadi in vain and became perturbed. Yet, they resolved to kill the demons. Arjuna sent 'Brahmadanda' Vana to wipe out the remaining demons. The suggestion to use this particular weapon was advanced by the gods.

Bhima and Arjuna trekked to Kalajangha's palace. They were obstructed and questioned by the guards of the gate. Bhima uttered ill of the king as he took away other's wife from the possession of her legal guardian. Altercation followed resulting in actual fighting. The demons were either killed or subdued. Kalajangha had to come out from his fort to challenge this two warriors. He appeared in a chariot of a monkey. Bhima and Arjuna, at first, could not recognise him to be Kalajangha. Kalajangha fired a projectile towards them. Arjuna, at once, dissected it with 'Yamadanda' arrow and cut demon's hands and neck. Contrary to their expectation, Kalajangha survived and fought with fresh vigour and strength. He was still possessed of two hands more. Kalajangha, this time, tightly infolded Arjuna and fought for survival. Arjuna, too, had to try hard to loosen Kalajangha's grip. The demon wished to carry an
throw away Arjuna. He failed to dominate because all pressures and weights of this world accumulated in Arjuna. On the other hand, Arjuna even could not exploit this factor. The day slowly approached to darkness. Arjuna was advised to kill the demon by placing his legs on the curve-neck of the demon. Accordingly, Draupadini the demon was killed and Draupadi was freed from the captivity.

On way back to the place of the sages, they met a big bird in Mandar forest. All on a sudden, the bird lifted Draupadi and concealed her by his wings in a tree. The arrows sent by the Pandavas were easily driven off by the dwindle of one wing. Bhima and Arjuna became tired of shooting arrows continuously without result and they fainted. Narada, the sage and the son of Brahma, appeared silently and informed them about that bird who was an inhabitant of the heaven. Only, Yudhishthira would be able to kill the bird. Yudhishtira killed the bird at last and Bhima had broken the neck of the bird with his mace. The bird assumed celestial form and Yudhishtira embraced him. The Pandavas with Draupadi, then, reached the place of Gautama muni who was appeased to see them again.

(vi) Khatasura Vadhya: The Pandavas entered the 'Naimisaranya' forest and started to dwell there by constructing a hut of leaves. Frequently they discussed about the life and works of Sri Krishna. The Pandavas except Yudhishtira generally went outside to collect fruits and food. Yudhishtira, too, did not sit idle. Most of the time, he took part in discourses with twenty-eight thousand rishis. The hut was left under the care of Draupadi alone.

One day, a hideous demon named Khatasura happened to see Draupadi. The charming beauty of Draupadi routed his excitement and allured him to such an extent that he even dared propose to marry her. Seeing that ugly demon, Draupadi began to tremble with fear and she was about to collapse. The arguments of the demon were that Draupadi would live more happily with him than with her beggar husbands. He would give all kinds of things for her
comfort. But these temptations could not change her decision. Yet, he persisted. All entreaties of Draupadi did not soften the demon's heart and she had to shout for help to Yudhisthira. In the meantime, the demon approached to catch hold of her hands. Khatasura also smashed the hut.

Yudhisthira, who was discussing with nearby with the sages, rushed to help her. Seeing Yudhisthira's approach, the demon Khatasura quickly slipped behind a tree and hid himself from the sight of Yudhisthira. Infuriated by the insult, Yudhisthira challenged the demon to face him. Fighting ensued. Showering of arrows from Yudhisthira failed to hurt the demon. On the other hand, Yudhisthira became tired. The demon threw trees continuously and hit Yudhisthira in the chest. Yudhisthira was hurt fatally and the demon tied the unconscious Yudhisthira. Khatasura once again asked Draupadi for her consent, but she declined. She cried and lamented mentioning the qualities of Yudhisthira and called Bhima to rescue her from the clutches of the demon. Bhima came to rescue her. Despite Bhima's great power and strength, he fell prey to the demon in the same manner.

Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva came and met with the same fate and experience respectively. The demon made them senseless. Draupadi prayed to Krishna with heart and soul. Krishna advised her to use her bracelet to kill the demon. Khatasura consoled Draupadi for the plight of the Pandavas and entreated her with sweet words to get her consent. As he failed to persuade Draupadi, he wished to use force. Draupadi tried to escape but the demon caught hold of her clothes. She gave a jerking which made the demon fall flat on the ground. This setback at once reminded Khatasura of unpleasantness. He felt ashamed of this and lost his temper. He slapped hard on her face but failed to drag her. Draupadi, too, gave him a good kick. She was still in his grip. But, at once, was warned internally that it was likely that he might lose his life if he happened to fight a woman. With the intention of killing Draupadi, he hit her with his fist. She was startled a little though remained unmoved. Becoming pale and trembling, she,
ultimately, took the decision to kill the demon. She brought her bangle by taking the name of Viṣṇu. She struck him at his neck. The head of the Asura was instantly severed. But, Draupādi felt disgusted in life without her husbands. Abruptly, she took the decision to kill herself. God Kṛṣṇa, then, appeared to console her and assured her to bring them back to their lives. Kṛṣṇa brought them to senses and disappeared again. The Pāṇḍavas awoke from slumber and everything was narrated to the āsīs who bestowed their benedictions on the Pāṇḍavas and congratulated Draupādi for her courage.

The Pāṇḍavas, with the permission of the brāhmaṇas, left and arrived at Kalyāṇa forest. Bhīma went out in search of water for Yudhīṣṭhira. Soon, he became the victim of an Ajaṅga snake in a certain lake. The other Pāṇḍavas followed the same in the lake under same circumstances except Yudhīṣṭhira. Yudhīṣṭhira was shrewd and cautious in that respect and he did not walk into the trap of the snake. He became alert as soon as he saw that big snake whose belly spoke for itself about its fault. He avoided the snake. In the meantime, Yudhīṣṭhira, of course, was lucky to satisfy the snake with answers who asked five questions. This snake was formerly the celestial king Vahūṣa as he got back his form at the touch of Yudhīṣṭhira. Needless to mention that all Pāṇḍavas were brought to life again.

(vii) आसवकर्णा वायह : The story of Asvākarna Vaiha is related to Pāṭalī Kānda (portion of Nether Land).

Here, Arjuna was accepted as an incarnation of god. The qualities of the God of destruction, Rudra, were also discussed.

The Pāṇḍavas built a house near the river Godāvari. Bhīma and Arjuna were in-charge of killing deer for their food. One day when Bhīma and Arjuna were searching for water, they happened to come across a well in the forest. But, they found a beautiful maiden of exquisite beauty instead of drinking water. That lovely maiden entreated both to lift her
from the bottom of the well. She, even, proposed to marry anyone who would help her to come out. She disclosed her identity as an Apsara and she narrated her story that she was pushed inside the well by her companions. Neverthelesss, Bhima doubted her words because he could not find any evidence of her falling. Her purpose was fulfilled. Arjuna was moved by her fascinating beauty. Bhima, at last, agreed to rescue and tried to raise her up by lowering one side of his bow. Strangely enough, Bhima was dragged downwards and Arjuna hastened to his assistance. The girl succeeded in dragging both of them to the bottom of the well with the help of her magic power. Bhima threatened her as soon as he became aware of her nature and reprimanded her vehemently. He expressed that he had the power to kill her easily. So long she had been spared for the after-effect. In that case, they would face a problem to get out of the well. She realised their difficulties, repented much and narrated her misfortune. She was brought up by the demon Asvakarna who killed her father, king Usinara. She showed eagerness to know more of them. Bhima disclosed their identity. It was rather a pity to see her weep for them as she did wrong by bringing them down. Naturally it attracted their sympathy. She sobbed and disclosed her name as Hema. Being the adopted daughter of Asvakarna, she learnt this kind of black magic. But she was a devout worshipper of Mahadeva.

Hema supplied all kinds of information about Asvakarna. The problem before them was how to get weapons. Unless they managed weapons they must face the demon bare-handed. She led them to Asvakarna and entreated the demon not to harm them. Asvakarna got infuriated at this adverse conduct of Hema. Soon, Bhima and Asvakarna engaged themselves in a duel and became tired. In the meantime, Hema divulged the secret information of getting arms and took them to the place of the Boar-god. The Boar-god promised to help them. Hema attended the injured Bhima in spite of her personal danger from the demon. The demon was provoked. He threatened to kill all three of them. Actually, he pursued them. Bhima felt insecure, being solely dependent
on the help of the Boar-god. The Boar-god, however, kept his words strictly by offering the heavy mace to Bhima in time. In the strenuous struggle, Bhima managed to subdue the demon and his vertebral column was broken forcibly by hard-hitting of the heavy mace. Bhima gave his final fatal blow and killed the demon. Arjuna was there as a spectator.

Arjuna suggested Bhima to return to the earth as he became anxious to meet Yudhishthira who must have been worrying for them. In the meanwhile, they were informed about the location of god Faraka. This information altered their former decision. They started for Faraka's place.

On their way to the god of destruction, Sankara, they were chased by many demons. Bhima and Arjuna killed many in order to make their way to Siva's place. Soon, they reached their destination. They prayed to god Siva on their arrival. Siva became happy to see them and emphasised the necessity of wiping out the demons from the world. With Siva's blessings, they gave serious fight against the demons and ultimately became victorious. It was rather strange that some demons dared to start troubles even in Siva's place and expressed opinions to drive him out of the city because of this partiality. So, the soldiers of Siva became alert and had to shoot arrows in self-defence. Arjuna and Bhima, on the other hand, took active part in the fight. In the long run, the demons were all killed with Siva's assistance.

At the end of this battle, both Bhima and Arjuna visited Siva's place again and worshipped him. Siva was delighted at their success. Siva, once, had to save them by arresting a powerful weapon of Brahma sent by one demon with the help of his mighty form of Yoga. However, Arjuna married Rema at the order of Siva and they reached back the earth to meet Yudhishthira and narrated the cause of their delay.

(vii) Kurma-vadha. This story is nicely depicted by Sagara Khari, a poet of the eighteen century.

By driving the Pandavas out from their legitimately occupied
the Kauravas wished to show their prowess to the world. Duryodhana proposed to celebrate the horse-sacrifice ritual (Asvamedha) in a befitting manner. But, his enthusiasm needed endorsement by Dhritarastra. Dhritarastra readily yielded consent and ordered his men and generals to celebrate the horse-sacrifice ceremony in a grand and pompous manner. The Kauravas tried to give a new look to the country and showed generosity to the people by spending money lavishly on the pandals, houses, stalls, etc. The money had been acquired mostly from the pandavas' treasury. The inexhaustible treasure of the pandavas had been forfeited to the government of Duryodhana.

Four generals were sent to four directions in the campaign. Karna was sent to the East, Duhsasana to the North and Bhima to the South with the sacrificial horse and soldiers. They were instructed to conquer and subdue kings. Only that king would be punished who dared to capture the sacrificial horse. They faced no obstruction. They could collect money from other countries and many kings agreed to pay their glowing tributes to Duryodhana. Only Duhsasana suffered defeat at the hands of the soldiers of King Kur mavali. Kur mavali forcibly captured the sacrificial horse of the Kauravas. Duhsasana took all kinds of measures to release the horse but to no avail. Soon, he was also overpowered by the king and sent behind bars.

The news spread like wild fire and Duryodhana lost his senses. Other generals from all sides rushed to the kingdom of Kur mavali. They could reach that place only after twelve days.

The battle was extended. Kalabhadra, the great general of Kur mavali pushed back the generals of the Kauravas. In his next encounter with Karna, both fainted with serious injuries in their persons. This offered an opportunity to Duryodhana to capture the unconscious Kalabhadra by violating the war convention. It was an illegal offence in war. Thus, Duryodhana brought ignominy. Duryodhana had to pay in his own coins.
Kūrmavalī, being enraged at Duryodhana's conduct, forced Duryodhana fly to Hastinapur along with his chariot with a mighty arrow. Duryodhana thus stood defeated miserably and he fainted there. Bhishma, the foremost general of the Kauravas came forward to restrain the king from the killing of more soldiers. King Kūrmavalī considered himself fortunate for having the pleasure of fighting a powerful hero like Bhīṣma.

In the gruelling fight, the king applied every possible trick and skill to subdue and kill Bhīṣma. Contrary to king's expectations, his deadly weapons proved to be of no avail. Being infuriated, humiliated and frustrated, the king took drastic steps against Bhīṣma by sending 'Ưvara-vāna' of Rudra. This was made abortive by Bhīṣma. All efforts proved fruitless. So, this time, the king sent the javelin of Brahma which frightened everybody. With much concentration and perseverance, Bhīṣma did not lose patience and sent, in return, the 'vāna of Siva'. This weapon was so powerful and accurate that it, not only, destroyed the power of the javelin but also ignited the king's body. In the next moment, the king got puzzled to such an extent that he forgot to take anti-measure. As a result, he perished and his disastrous fall became known to everybody. Bhīṣma released Kalabhadrā from wrongful confinement and both announced Kūrmavalī's son as the new king. In the meantime, the queen committed 'sati' by ascending the funeral pyre of her husband.

This episode is concluded with the chanting of the glories of Kṛṣṇa and the queen—mother Gāndhari ordered to abandon that horse-sacrifice. The victory of a true vaisnavite is depicted in the story.

(ix) Janghāsura Vadha: The Pandavas arrived at a forest which was full of golden flowers. This 'Suvarna-Kusuma Vana' was maintained by a demigod king Janghāsura, a devout worshipper of god Siva.

Yudhiṣṭhira entrusted Bhīṣma, Arjuna and Nakula with the collection of food. Accordingly, they left the place and were loitering in the garden. There was a beautiful lake which Arjuna recognised as 'Hrudaihip'. 
In the meantime, Janghāṣura, the possessor of thousand hands came to visit that forest with his attendants. Observing three men inside his territory, he ordered his four messengers to capture them. But, in the altercations, Bhīma killed two demons on the spot with his bare hands. This setback was immediately reported to the king Janghāṣura who came forward to take appropriate measure. In the duel, Bhīma was overpowered and pressed hard by Janghāṣura with thousand hands. Bhīma was carried to his capital and thrown into the prison. As soon as Yudhisṭhira came to know this plight of Bhīma, he became restless. Arjuna and Nakula were not aware of this fight and captivity as they felt drowsy due to fatigue. They searched for Bhīma but failed to locate him.

Bhīma, unable to come out from the prison, prayed to Kṛṣṇa earnestly. Kṛṣṇa came to the rescue of his devotee and sent Garuḍa to release Bhīma. Bhīma, thus released, came back to meet his brother Yudhisṭhira with two chariots taken from the kingdom of Janghāṣura.

The pāṇḍavas except Yudhisṭhira made up their mind to teach Janghāṣura a good lesson. Specially, Bhīma wanted to take revenge on Janghāṣura for his captivity. The two generals of Janghāṣura, named Mrgāśura and Niḥsamśaya accepted the challenge of Bhīma and sent series of arrows to Arjuna. In this battle, Mrgāśura was killed first by Arjuna and Sahadeva killed Niḥsamśaya. The minister of Janghāṣura also embraced death at the hands of Nakula.

Janghāṣura was a very powerful hero. He made Bhīma unconscious for some time. As soon as the demon saw Bhīma alert, he sent his most powerful spear towards the pāṇḍavas. The weapon pierced through the bodies of the pāṇḍavas one by one. Of course, they regained their senses and Bhīma sent a big stone which crushed the chariot of Janghāṣura along with its driver. The king was supplied with another chariot consisting of goats of ferocious look. This time, Sahadeva had done great damages to Janghāṣura for which Sahadeva received praises even from the
demon. Janghasura, then, attempted to take them away. Bhima prevented that. Then, a voice was heard in this world that the demon would die only at the hands of a person who had not sipped his mother's milk. Sahadeva heard it distinctly and took the sun-ring from the possession of Draupadi. The shining of the ring decreased the demon's strength and Sahadeva struck his forehead with sun-ring to which Janghasura collapsed.

(x). Kulaśala Vaiśeṣika: The Pandavas sought permission of Galava muni to go elsewhere and the muni gave them permission but asked them to keep aloof from the demon Dhumrāksa in the north. Naturally, the name of Dhumrāksa increased their interest, eagerness and inquisitiveness. The sage told them everything about the demon.

According to the words of the muni, Dhumrāksa sprang out from the sacrificial fire accompanied by the smoke when a Vaiśāṇa king Karnadatta performed a sacrifice in order to get a son. Soon, fortune smiled on the king. But, Dhumrāksa turned into a naughty boy. In fact, the people lodged complaints against Dhumrāksa.

One day, Dhumrāksa by disobeying, went to 'Kairava vana'. The Madhuvana was also situated near the lake 'Bhadrasvā'. Some great sages were busy there in performing a sacrifice. In the meantime, the prince Dhumrāksa killed many deers to his heart's content. The ministers and the councillors then advised him to return to the kingdom but failed to persuade him. Suddenly, the prince felt hungry and thirsty. He, at once, sent some men to get food from the sages nearby. He represented the matter to the sages in a polite manner. But the sages refused to part with anything before the completion of the sacrificial ceremony. This refusal of the sages enraged the prince. He went there in an angry mood to settle the matter. The prince demanded explanation from Agastī, the foremost of all the sages. He advanced his arguments that there was none greater than the king. So, the prince deserved the first offering before they offered anything to Kṛṣṇa. The muni blazed in his eyes at the utterance of such blasphemous word from that wicked prince. Dhumrāksa came
back, humiliated. The ministers tried to console and pacify him in vain. Rather he passed death-sentence on his six ministers who spoke just and indirectly in favour of the Sages. The timely intervention of King Narasimha saved their lives but they were transported into exile.

The prince went again to the place of sacrifice in the guise of a male-goat and started to consume things that were kept for the purpose of offering to god Krishna. Observing the shortage of food, Agasti smelt rat and kept strict watches on food in the disguise of a cat. Soon, a quarrel started between the big goat and the small cat. The goat attacked the cat aggressively. The cat somehow repulsed its attack. Everybody, present began to tremble at this unusual fight. The cat expanded his body and challenged the goat. Agasti, the old sage, felt exhausted soon and abandoned the fight. He assumed his original form which frightened the prince. But, Dhumraksa was so cunning that he managed to bind up the sage with oaths. He acquired the boon from Agasti that he would not die at the hands of men, Yaksa and Rakshasas. Agasti, in return, cursed that wicked Dhumraksa to be a demon with the face of a goat and man's body. His associates would also turn to demons and Dhumraksa would be killed outside the jurisdiction of the ninth prahara.

The new appearance of the prince made his friends sad. The father of Dhumraksa rushed to the spot of occurrence of the fight to avenge it. He was accompanied by his wife, whole army and wives. He started talking in high pitch with the sage Agasti and insulted them all. Agasti failed to convince the king. Arguments were refuted. Even, King Karnadatta had gone to the extent of ordering his soldiers to punish all sages by dipping them into the river. This was considered an impertinence by Agasti who got irritated so much that he was compelled to curse Karnadatta to become stones along with his followers. Then, the king repented that he was playing with fire so long. At king's entreaties, Agasti was pleased to announce that all of them would get back their present forms by the touch of Hari.
The Pandavas came to know everything about that demon Kulacala from the sage Agastya. They desired to face the demon. Yudhishthira gladly gave his consent when he learnt about that lovely place. They arrived the place of Svetaketu muni in Kairavana within a short time. The sage Svetaketu also warned them about Kulacala.

After completing their usual religious rites at the bank of the lake, they ate fruits and marched westward. In the meantime, ten followers of Kulacala appeared there in search of food. The demons were killed by Bhima. Next day, four demons ran away from Nakula and Sahadeva when they came to know about the plights of the ten soldiers of Kulacala. They, of course, reported this matter to Kunjarat, the general of the Tahinga river. The demons discovered the Pandavas and began to crush their huts. Bhima, then, started killing them indiscriminately by uprooting a big tree. The demons under the direct supervision of the general, surrounded the compound of the Pandavas. Arjuna, too, killed as many soldiers as he could. The river turned red due to the stream of the blood of the demons. Kunjarat, though terrified, wished to take revenge on the Pandavas. There were heavy casualties on Kunjarat's side. After some altercations, two decided unequivocally to attack the Pandavas with more soldiers. Accordingly, their army was re-enforced soon. But, Bhima and Arjuna almost rout the soldiers of Kulacala. Bhima killed general Jambu. Nakula and Sahadeva with great difficulty, could kill Kunjarat. The report of the battle had added fuel to the injury to Kulacala. He, at once, ordered his four ministers to teach the Pandavas a good lesson for trespassing. Still, there was no sign of battle for ten days more.

Yudhishthira observed some ominous signs. So, he advised his brothers to abandon the battle and retreat. But they flatly refused on the ground that they would be under the fire of criticism for such act of cowardice. They thought it excellent to embrace death than to receive humiliation. This time, the first batch of the demons hurled harsh and
insulting words at the Pāndavas. Some of them categorically advised them to run away from that place. When the demons failed to persuade and convince the Pāndavas about their military strength, they started the battle.

The Pāndavas fought bravely and repulsed series of their attacks. They killed thousands of demons within a short time. At this juncture, Kulācala came forward to meet the Pāndavas in the encounter. He was ably supported by a great number of ferocious soldiers. The Pāndavas killed countless numbers of demons in Kulācala's presence. Most of the demons either left the battle-field or embraced death. Observing this heavy loss, Kulācala pondered over his death at their hands but not within his own jurisdiction as guaranteed by sage Agastī. So, he was optimistic about his victory. In the struggle, the Pāndavas gave stiff opposition to Kulācala. Particularly, Arjuna was severe on him. Enraged and irritated, Kulācala sent his powerful javelin which blazed into fire. Everybody was sure of Arjuna's tooth. On the other hand, Arjuna foiled Kulācala's attempt by using Brajakuta's arrow. This arrow was so powerful that it not only extinguished the fire of the javelin but at the same time pierced through several bodies and shaved the beard of Kulācala. Thus, Kulācala was humiliated and irritated beyond imagination. Then, Kulācala fought so firmly that he had, at last, succeeded in killing Arjuna, Bhīma, Nakula, and Sahadeva with powerful arrows.

In the meantime, Yudhīṣṭhīra was much perturbed to see some ominous signs. Shortly after that the news of the fall of his four brothers was conveyed from heaven. Unable to bear the shock, Yudhīṣṭhīra fainted there. Soon, he regained his sense and deeply meditated for Kṛṣṇa. The gods also sent messenger to Dwārakā to inform Kṛṣṇa about the death of the four Pāndavas. Kṛṣṇa appeared before Yudhīṣṭhīra and consoled him at his irreparable loss, but assured Yudhīṣṭhīra to bring them back to life again at any cost.

Kṛṣṇa, then, assumed his true form with four hands and marched with his own army to punish Kulācala. Kulācala, at first, did not believe
that the soldiers of Viṣṇu with four hands might appear in the battle-field.

Soon, most of his soldiers were killed by two generals of Kṛṣṇa. The mind of Kulācāla also changed and he decided to embrace death at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. So, he gave his throne to his son and came forward for fighting.

The great general Pañcāsura was also killed by Vijaya, the general of Kṛṣṇa. Actually, Pañcāsura created a havoc. All weapons were powerless and could not pierce his body. Only the ring of Kṛṣṇa's feet had given effect and Pañcāsura assumed a new form similar to that of the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Knowing the death of Pañcāsura, Kulācāla appealed to Kṛṣṇa to kill him instantly by sending his discus. Otherwise, he would teach Kṛṣṇa a good lesson for his interference and encroachment into his territory. The fight between Kulācāla and Kṛṣṇa began. Kṛṣṇa sent his powerful discus which cut Kulācāla's head. But, to the utter surprise of all, Kulācāla gained sense and fought more fearlessly and ferociously than before. For the second time Kṛṣṇa sent his discus. This time, it severed his neck and at the same time, killed many demons. But, again, Kulācāla awoke and wanted to pierce the body of Kṛṣṇa with sharpened horns. Kṛṣṇa cut his head for the third time. Still, Kulācāla survived and awoke from his slumber. It created much adverse effects on the soldiers of Kṛṣṇa. So, Kṛṣṇa compelled Kulācāla to retreat to his kingdom.

Kṛṣṇa gave his thought for the complete destruction of Kulācāla. At night, all gods, sages and pious persons came to meet and worship Him in His rest camp. Even Agastī explained the circumstances which led to the curse and boon to Kulācāla. Agastī gave a hint to kill the demon by using the 'dhūp' stick outside the 'ninth prahara'.

On that very night, Kulācāla met his two sons secretly. His sons appealed to his to surrender before Kṛṣṇa. But he refused to oblige them. Next day, he appeared in the battle-field by rejoicing with the hope to die at the hands of the supreme god and that he would be relieved of his cadaverous body.
In the battle-field, there were conflicts of minds amongst the soldiers of Kulācala. Some of them were so afraid that they felt themselves insecure. Kṛṣṇa, inspite of his best efforts, could not overpower Kulācala. Kulācala again asked question of Kṛṣṇa's intervention. Kṛṣṇa replied that He appeared in order to wipe out demons and noisy elements of the world.

Enraged Kulācala tried in vain to kill Kṛṣṇa and Garuḍa with a powerful javelin of Siva. Everybody in this world had to tremble at the sight of that weapon. Kṛṣṇa by assuming his most powerful and biggest form and with yoga, broke that javelin into three pieces and the world was saved somehow from the complete destruction.

Thousands and millions of the demons were killed by the discus of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa slowly retreated with a purpose to bring the demon out of his ninth prahāra. Kulācala forgot his curse on the eve of victory. He walked into the trap of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, then, possessing Kulācala's death-weapon from the sacrificial fire, sent it and severed his head.

After the death of Kulācala, Kṛṣṇa was praised by the sages. Even Brahmā and Siva paid their homage to the supreme god. Agastī also appealed to Kṛṣṇa to revive king Karnadatta by placing his foot Karnadatta with his followers awoke up and began to worship Kṛṣṇa. The four Pāṇḍavas were restored to life by gods. Karnadatta expressed to meet Yudhisthira, the great devotee of Kṛṣṇa (Vishnu). Karnadatta and Yudhisthira embraced each other and eulogised the qualities of Kṛṣṇa. The king Karnadatta showed a good gesture to Yudhisthira to help him to get back his kingdom. Yudhisthira politely declined the offer.

Except this parva, the Pāṇḍavas were victorious everywhere. When the Pāṇḍavas failed, Kṛṣṇa took the helm and changed the course of wind in favour of His devotees.

(xi) Sīndhuvaṭrā Vana Parva: The very name suggests that it has
been excluded from the Vadhakasvys. Again, the story does not connect itself to the terror of fame a demon who is killed afterwards.

The poet Rama Saraswati got the source of this episode from Ramsa-kākī. The story runs thus:

Yudhīṣṭhira apprehending more humiliation at the hands of Duryodhana, decided to move from their place. Other brothers welcomed his decision and they moved to "Sindhuwana" within the territory of Gandhārvavana where the sage Sīdhāṅka was reciting the name of Rāma continuously. They received a rousing reception in the hermitage of sage Sīdhāṅka. The sage could tell about the future and the past. The Dharmakṣetra and its surrounding had been allotted to the pāṇīvas and they spent their days peacefully.

There was a powerful king Suravinda who adopted a son named Sindhuā. In course of time, Sindhuā became a very powerful king. One day, the king wished to go to Dharmakṣetra. The prince, the brother of the king, accomplished everything to the wishes of Sindhuā. Sindhuā was very much pleased delighted at the sight of Dharmakṣetra and he asked his brother Sindhuwinda to make necessary arrangements for the grand success of a sacrifice there. The order was carried out immediately. The sages, beggars, brāhmaṇas and the devotees of Pārī recited hymns and songs and the whole atmosphere gave a new outlook. All the religious rites were performed smoothly. The people also rejoiced. But, the trainers of the elephants of the king roamed about from one place to another and reached the place where Yudhīṣṭhira with his four brothers were sitting. Nakula barred the elephants from entering that compound. This was considered to be an insult to the drivers of the elephants and they pushed in their elephants to smash everything of the hermitage. Whīma came to punish them by uprooting a tree. But, soon he was pacified by Yudhīṣṭhira. In the meantime, some ominous signs were seen which predicted of some danger to the Pāṇīvas. When the conductors of the elephants paid little heed to the warning of Nakula, Sahadeva and Nakula took incriminating weapons and killed more
than thirteen thousands & elephants of bigger size with spears. The killing of the in elephants were soon reported to the general & then to the prince Śiṇhuvindha. The 1st prince had apprised the king of the present situation.

The soldiers and some kings under Śiṇhūrā came forward to punish the Pāṇḍavas. But most of them were killed by Śiṃa alone. The prince hearing the detailed account of the battle reported everything to Śiṇhūrā. The king ordered them to bring the Pāṇḍavas alive or face death sentence. Yudhīsthitra became afraid when he heard the noises of the soldiers of Śiṇhūrā, he asked his brothers to quit the battle. But all his four brothers insisted on their stay on the plea that nobody was certain of his death. No one could predict about victory and it was rather shameful act on the part of a warrior to abandon the battle-field. It concerned prestige of the hero. Altercations started for transgressing into the hermitage and they started the shooting of arrows. The Pāṇḍavas killed the soldiers and kings of great prowess like Šeemadatta. The kings were forced to retreat and they reported this to the king prince, enraged at the adversity of the battle, the king empowered Kālaśatrā to deal seriously with the Pāṇḍavas in the battle-field. The kings along with their soldiers marched in a procession to the spot of the 1st battle.

Though Arjuna received strong opposition from some powerful kings, he killed them one by one and compelled others to retreat from the battle-field. His powerful 'Śanihavā' weapon killed nine thousand kings within a short time. The four brothers except Arjuna fought from the same place. Yudhīsthitra waited as he received serious wounds from the arrows. Śiṃa suffered a lot from the enemy. In spite of his inflations of wound, Śiṃa killed Śiṇhuvindha by giving a fatal blow of his mace on the head of the prince and crushed the skull, the chariot and the charioteer at the same time.

As he received the death-news of his brother, Śiṇhūrā got
a great shock. Also, it was considered as a humiliation for the king Sindhurat. Though he tried his utmost, Sindhurā failed to subdue them. So, he used his unfailing 'Kālakūta' arrow by dint of which he had succeeded in killing four pāṇḍavas. Draupādi came to know about the death of her four husbands and lamented bitterly for them. She took her decision to commit suicide. As soon as she was about to jump into the fire, she heard a celestial voice asking her to abandon that idea of suicide. Even, the voice assured her for their revival. The sage Śidhānku also interfered and consoled her. On the other hand, the gods helped Arjuna. Indra sent his chariot along with his charioteer to inform the deaths of his four brothers, Arjuna was advised to kill the mleĉhas with the help of Pasupat weapon. Kālacratu, the great general of the mleĉhas, fought and harassed Arjuna to a great extent. Arjuna was again surrounded by the soldiers of Kālacratu. In this hour of crisis, Mātali, the charioteer of Indra, lifted his chariot and thus saved the unconscious Arjuna. Regaining his senses, Arjuna killed the soldiers of Kālacratu with gandāharva weapon. Kālacratu then foiled all the weapons of Arjuna by swallowing one after another. At last, that magic trick of Kālacratu was removed by krmakūta weapon. The Pasupat weapon of Arjuna killed all the demons.

Sindhurat then decided to give fight after the fall of Kālacratu. He lamented much for his brother Sindhuvinā as it was an irreparable loss to him.

The fight ensued. There was tense situation and gloomy atmosphere throughout the battle-field. Some of the soldiers as well as kings threatened Arjuna to crush him in the battle. They were anxious to take revenge on Arjuna at any cost. The difference of opinions prevailed there regarding the fate of the future. Only could predict. Some were pessimist and the majority was in favour of good result. Though they fought firmly, they failed to give resistance to Arjuna. All were compelled to retreat. The most powerful kings had embraced death at Arjuna's hands.
Exchange of arrows from both sides were seen in the battlefield. Both Arjuna and Sindhu travelled themselves in serious fighting. At last, they emptied their treasure of arrows. The king tried to kill Arjuna by an axe and Arjuna saved himself by taking shelter behind a tree. Then, they started fighting by throwing pebbles and stones. They fought next in the wrestling style. Sindhu and Arjuna could not be distinguished from a distance as their bodies were smeared with dust and mud. The fight continued for eleven days more without break. The gods, Panjara, Inira and Narada came down to intervene because both Sindhu and Arjuna were sons of Kunti by the moon (Panjara) and Inira respectively. Everyone rejoiced at this happy turning point and they were persuaded to abandon the battle. Arjuna simply insisted on the revival of his brother and Inira was pleased to send Aswini Kumara to bring them back to life.

After reconciliation, the pandavas returned to the sage's hermitage. They embraced and tears came out at this happy meeting. Arjuna narrated the details of the war to the sage. The sage presented to the heaven at the sight of Nara (Arjuna) who was also considered to be an incarnation of god.
In this manuscript, the Mahabharata poet Hamsa Saraswati gives a vivid picture of the various activities of Bhismma, the great general of the Kauravas. Of course, it also gives some stories of the Phagavata in abridged form.

It starts like a purana with the descriptions of Brahma-nda purusa, Prakiti, Creation of the world, birth of Vigna, Brahma and Para, excelsior of Caruöa, secrets of Hari namä, repentance of Hara, God's present of Hari namä qala, Kurma avtar, churning of the ocean, birth and killing of Hiranyakasipu, Bear incarnation, incarnation of Hanion, incarnation of Dwarf, Parasurama, Rama and Krsna and of Putana, Kansa, killing of Jarasaniba, Yudhishthira's sacrifice, ascending the heaven by the Pandavas, vanishing of Krsna, loss of Jat race, Phavisya Purana, and advent of Kali.

The materials, all the more, are stated to have been collected from Vyasa's origin though this book is nowhere traceable either in Sanskrit or any other provincial languages. It is strictly Ascem matter relating to a purana or scripture, Yamsa-kaki etc which are attribute'd to the writings of Vyasa, the great, Yamala Samhitä and other sastras were also equally incorporated nicely. The poet stated -

"Samhitä Yämala āru aṣṭadasa
Mahāpurāṇar kathā ati mahārasya
Caste kathā birlaibo ekstre milane
Yena paṇcamipte svādiāti bale
Jai Naranarayana rājāmathye sēr
Yāhar aṣyat ami racile payār ".

-Vyasaśram, Verse 5-6.

(Samhitä, Yamala, Aṣṭadasa) and the facts of the Mahabharana are very sweet and attractive. I shall narrate all by unification to give good taste as in 'paṇcamipt'. Hail to Naranarayana, the foremost of the kings under whose command I compose the verses.)
The Vyāsāsram was a secret holy scripture. It was considered to be more valuable even than Mahābhārata or Purāṇa.

"Sakale śastrare mājhe ito kathāsār
purāṇa Bhārata loko sama nohe ār.
Savare sār kathā āni Dvaiāyana rsi
Mārkandeyā munt ya kahila harīai."

V. 54, Vyāsāsram.

( It is the most precious of the śāstras. The purāṇa and the Bhārata are not equal to it. The sage Dvaiāyana narrated this to sage Mārkandeyā by collecting the essence of all śāstras. )

The stories were told by Dvaiāyana muni to Mārkandeyā muni. According to Vyāsa, there were secrets about which no one knew before.

In the Sanskrit Mahābhārata of the eighteen Parvas, fourteen-sastra-tatvas and four vedas were not known to this world. Vyāsa divided them into five parts. Vyāsa taught Atharvaveda to Dharmya who was the foremost among men. The purāṇas were taught to Sūta Romaharsa. The purāṇas were explained to him in the assembly of the rṣis.

According to Vyāsāsram, Vyāsa taught seventy thousand slokas of the Mahābhārata of the eighteen Parvas to Vaiśampāyana by discussing thoroughly. Again, Vyāsa claimed that he taught nine thousand slokas with eighty-four thousand lakṣa slokas to Śuka from purāṇa, Samhitā, Vāmaśe etc. with slight modification.

The number of slokas of purāṇa were eighty lakṣa thousand slokas of Mahāpurāṇa. Vyāsa took out main eighteen thousand slokas. He taught 'Nāma Bhāgavata' to Śuka with those slokas.

"Vyāsa kahe Mahāpurāṇar kathāsai
Aṭi purāṇat Hari Pārvatit kahai.

V. 94, Vyāsāsram.

( Vyāsa spoke on the facts of the Mahāpurāṇa which were discussed by Śiva to Pārvatī in the Aṭi Purāṇa.)
Again, according to Vyāsa, the mystery behind the Samhitās, Yāmala etc., were in the stories of Vaikuntha's Mahāpurāṇa.

The superiority of 'Nama dharma' which was based on the chanting of the names of Lord Krishna could not be denied and the surrender to the lotus feet of Hari would add happiness to the soul.

Vyāsa had composed and afterwards divided Vedas, Sāstras, Purāṇas, Bhārata, Bhāgavata and extracted the main doctrines from them. The main thing of Vyāsa'sram was the gist of all Sāstras. The Purāṇa of the eighteen skandas was completed in Bhārata. Whatever might be the contents of them, the name of Hari and His qualities were praised frequently. Thus, an appeal was made to convince everyone about the invincible purpose of God.

"Sunā muni Mrkandu tanai,
Āśī hāsēṃ śloka Mahāpurāṇar hai
Othara hāzār tār ānilo ujhārī".

V. 248, Vyāsa'sram.

Listen, O Muni, the son of Mrkandu. There are eighty thousand slokas in the Mahāpurāṇa. Out of these, eighteen thousand are taken out.

So, it was needless to say that the materials were gathered mostly from Mahāpurāṇa.

The character of Bhīṣma in Vyāsa'sram: The hero of the Vyāsa'sram was Bhīṣma, the greatest general of the Kauravas. He was born of the father king Śāntanu and other Gaṅgā. Bhīṣma learnt the use of weapons from Paraśūraama. He was a devout worshipper of Hari and was very kind-hearted.

Once he rescued the elephant Airāvat 8 of Indra in his distress. He went to heaven and met Indra who was very much pleased to give him a boon. On his return, Bhīṣma met Nara and Narayana at Badarikāsrama. Narayana assured him to meet Him again in Kali Yuga after fifty thousand years. Formerly, Bhīṣma was called Saradānanda.

Bhīṣma visited many places. Of course, he devoted most of the
time in taking the name of Hari. When he arrived Kuvera's place, he was given a rousy reception there. He humbly refused to accept the seat of Kuvera. He returned back all the offerings of jewels and apparels. This attitude of detachment of Bhīṣma was highly appreciated by Kuvera. Then, both Bhīṣma and Kuvera arrived at the place of Sankara in the same chariot. Bhīṣma offered his prayer to Śiva who was pleased to see him. The seat offered to him was refused humbly. Bhīṣma asked for that thing only which would give him a chance to contact Visnu. Sankara, then, gave thousand names to Bhīṣma with a garland —

"Abhed kavac ton Nārāyane dila, Mahāsār dhanurved Nareyo kahila".

V. 520, Xyagānasa Vyāsasram.

(Nārāyana gave the unrendable guard and container of arrows and Nara gave him instructions on the Dhanurveda.)

Bhīṣma was helped by gods for he was a helping hand to all. He desired to sacrifice his life for the sake of good of the society as well as good of the gods. Bhīṣma worshipped Hari and he went out for meditation in the Himalayan forest. He achieved his goal i.e., he could see Kṛṣṇa there by chanting and reciting the name of Hari after strenuous efforts.

One day, on his way, Bhīṣma happened to meet Viduratha, a minister of Rāja Sudharmā. This king was related with the king Sagarā, Bhīṣma's ancestor. The king welcomed Bhīṣma to his capital. Sudharmā was also a devout vaisnavite who persuaded Bhīṣma to accept his hospitality. The seat that made of jewels was offered to the guest who declined the offer as Bhīṣma considered that he had no right to sit on it after renunciation.

If Bhīṣma desired so, he could have occupied the seat of Indra of heaven. The king then gave him nectar to drink in the next morning. Bhīṣma agreed to occupy the simhāsana after due offerings to god.
The killing of the demons: Hirambu and Rabhavan: When Bhima was in the kingdom of Sudharmā as a guest of the king, he came to know about tyrants Hirambu and Rabhavan. As soon as he gave a thought over it, Bhima was directed by a celestial voice to vanquish the asuras by taking Sudharmā's help. Flowers fell from heaven over the head of Bhima in anticipation.

Bhima asked Sudharmā to request other kings to join in their campaign. Four big lions of great strength carried Sudharmā's big chariot. King Vaidurbha volunteered his service to become the charioteer of Bhima's chariot. They arrived at demon's place. The demons were so powerful that they defeated the kings nine times successively. Many kings succumbed to their injuries in the meantime. The demons restrained Bhima. At first, Bhima asked his associated kings to retreat to a safer place. Then, Bhima's charioteer Vaidurbha manoeuvred him to the sky. He approached the kingdom of the demon which was extended to a radius of miles together for two months walking. Bhima was spotted in the sky and his presence frightened the demons. The kingdom looked like second Amaravati. The main gate of the kingdom was decorated with precious jewels and stones. Lakhṣ of demons along with their own regiments were in alert and were guarding the demon king. Every species of animals could be found there. That kingdom was also famous for the jewels of the ocean.

When Bhima was about to enter that kingdom, the gate-keeper objected, obstructed and questioned his entry. Altercation was naturally unavoidable, as a result of which both sides went on fighting to fighting. The demon, the in-charge of the door, applied black magic tricks. Bhima, by the grace of god, killed the observers (demons) with 'chandrahas' axe. Again, the keeper of the door received the same fate at the hands of Bhima who sent an arrow towards him. The demons were of no mean power. Yet, thousands of them were killed indiscriminately. After two days' journey, a demon officer appeared at the gate. This demon named Surabhakhyā insulted
Bhīṣma and charged him for trespassing. He jeered at Bhīṣma that he would soon become a victim of the demons. Surabhaṭṭya, in order to keep his words, ordered his subordinates to tie up Bhīṣma by 'nāgpaś' (rope made of snake). At the sight of 'nāgpaś', Vaidumbara started trembling. Even, he screamed out. But, Bhīṣma was steady and did not lose his patience. He sent Garuda arrow immediately as anti-measure. This cut the snakes into pieces and thus frustrated the hopes of the demons. The 'agnivāna' which followed next from the bow of Bhīṣma, burnt the soldiers, chariots, houses, trees and destroyed three countries. This fire lasted for six days. The sad news was relayed and reported to the king. Hirambu got frightened and lamented much for the heavy loss incurred thus. The king himself launched a marching of soldiers to avenge the defeat. But, the very personality of Bhīṣma made him convinced in the heart of heart that he might fall prey to Bhīṣma at any time. The body of Hirambu became like a mountain. Maruta, the commander received order from the king to kill Bhīṣma. The charge against Bhīṣma was instituted that Bhīṣma killed the big elephants. Another charioteer Tanbunati guided Maruta in his manoeuvre. This demon belonged to Alakananda. The 'kālakuchi' arrow of Bhīṣma at once killed Hirambu along with his ten sons. Precisely, this upset brought Rābhavan, the brother of Hirambu. Some ominous signs were however seen by Rābhavan at the starting time. Ignoring all these factors, he rather preferred in shooting thousands of arrows at a time to Bhīṣma. The mother Gāṅgā came to Bhīṣma's rescue. So, he was not hit by arrows. This unexpected abortive nature of his most damaging and powerful weapons in case of Bhīṣma made Rābhavan afraid of his death. The thought of fall at Bhīṣma's hands was haunting Rābhavan for a considerable period. He ran away for his life and took shelter in the midst of soldiers. In the meantime, he emptied his weapons. Then, the fear of death seized him abruptly. Unless his enemy was well-supported, Bhīṣma would be the last person to attack an
unarmed enemy. But, this hesitation on the part of Bhismā was considered a serious negligence. Vaidurbha consistently encouraged Bhismā to kill the demon in no time. This time, Vaidurbha's zeal was so much that he ventured to accept any kind of sin in the case of unarmed Rābhavan's killing for the larger interest of mankind. Bhismā praised his magnanimity and came forward to fight again with Rābhavan in a spirited mood.

The soldiers attacked Bhismā with thousands of arrows from all angles and some of them had succeeded in piercing the body of Bhismā. This caused Bhismā furious and he sent 'Narayana' and 'Ganidhara' arrows which massacred the soldiers. Rābhavan, this time, was encouraged and irritated so much that he sent the 'Parigha' of Brahma with the intention of killing Bhismā. At once, Bhismā sent an arrow to neutralise the effects of the parigha but the arrow lost in itself in the parigha. It was quite natural that the gods became afraid of Bhismā's consequences. Bhismā was such a mighty hero that he did not lose his patience at this crucial stage. He jumped out of his chariot and received the weapon with bare hands and began to dance along with the weapon by dwindling it on either side. He, too, at the same time, condemned the act of Brahma who was in the habit of granting boons or weapons to the demons thus causing polluted atmosphere. He broke the weapon into pieces to the utter surprise of each and everyone including Brahma. Bhismā, thus, frustrated the hope of victory of the demon Rābhavan. The arrow of Bhismā, then, took months together to cut the head of the demon. This weapon was given by the mother Gangā. Showers of flowers fell on the head of Bhismā from the heaven. Brahma also showed same kind of gesture. At the advice of the minister, Rābhavan, two sons namely Balajit and Subalit, surrendered themselves to the mercy of Bhismā with many presentations. They even prostrated at the feet of Bhismā who advised them to follow the right path and the doctrines of vaisnavism. The king Sudharmā who arrived later, was asked to take possession of the presentation. Bhismā, was, of course,
highly praised by Brahmā and Purandara for his dauntless work.

"Dvaipayane kailā Markandeya sunilanta
Parama rahasya purve keve najananta."

V. 941, Vyāsasram.

(Dvaipayana said and Markandeya listened. Nobody knew about this greatest misery before.)

Bhisma after the rout of the demons returned to Sanjamanipur, the capital of king Sudharma.

Bhisma at the kingdom of Bhadrāsura: Bhisma also met Yama on his departure from Sanjamanipur. He came near the river Jāhnavī. He left weapons on the bank and began to offer puja to Kṛṣṇa with meditation. On that bank of the river Jāhnavī, there lived a king named Bhadrāsura. The king had eighty sons and a daughter named Sobhanvita. He heard about Bhisma. So, the king desired to give his daughter Sobhanvita in marriage to Bhisma for his prowess. The daughter also was aware of king’s desire and she surrendered herself to Bhisma without seeing him. The coincidence was so that when Bhisma was busy with puja, the princess Sobhanvita with her friends and caretaker Suresā, came to take bath. The shining beauty and mightiness of Bhisma conquered the heart of Sobhanvita at once. She felt a strong desire to have that young man as her husband. She then, took Suresā into her confidence and expressed her desire. So, a messenger was sent on behalf of her to Bhisma along with the proposal of the marriage of Sobhanvita with Bhisma. Bhisma declined the offer on the ground that he had led a life of brahmachari (celibate) which debarred him taking a wife. On the other hand, the young girls pressed hard that their princess’s marriage must be settled with Bhisma. Thus, his mind was tortured and he wanted to run away. In the meantime, reciprocally Sobhanvita expressed her sentiment that she would end her life if she would be deprived of having Bhisma as her husband. At the command of the caretaker and the princess, her friends pursued
Bhisma who smelt rat and he took to the heels. They could not catch him on the hip and became tired. The princess was frustrated so much that she decided to commit suicide. Before ending her life in the river of Jāhnavī, she prayed to Kṛṣṇa and made Bhisma responsible for her death. She took rebirth as Śikhandi for this kind of frustration.

Bhisma's first encounter with Parasurāma in the forest: Bhisma wanted to live peacefully in the Himalayas. He built a small hut and was busy in penance. One day, when he was absorbed in meditation, Parasurāma happened to pass that way. Parasurāma saw Bhisma absorbed in penance but observed bow and arrow by the side. The weapons made Parasurāma believe that Bhisma ignored his presence deliberately. Parasurāma, at once, demanded the identity of Bhisma and reprimanded him for putting a deaf ear to his words for the fear of death. Parasurāma was considered to be an incarnation of god and he wiped out the Khatriya race successively for twenty-one times. So, the mere presence of a khatriya had caused an irritation so much that indignant Parasurāma was about to kill unprepared Bhisma. According to him, Bhisma tried to fool him in the guise of a monk.

Bhisma was fully aware of Parasurāma and he tried to pacify him with pleasing words. And he showed his due reverence to Rāma. But, sweet words could not produce any change in Parasurāma and he tried to beat Bhisma with a stick. It was, at once, broken into pieces by Bhisma to the utter surprise of Parasurāma. Then, Parasurāma used axe, stick, kharga to kill Bhisma but failed miserably in his endeavour. At last, Parasurāma had to throw his kamalālau pot towards Bhisma. He escaped unhurt. Bhisma still insisted that there should be no quarrel between the teacher and the taught as Bhisma, once, learnt weapons from Parasurāma. Even, he suggested Parasurāma to go to Meru Mandar for penance. But, Rāma was adament. Again, he threw kamalālau pot to Bhisma. This time Bhisma received the bowl on his hands. Furious Parasurāma jumped over
Bhīṣma and tried to strangle him to death. Bhīṣma lost his endurance and
did not spare Parasurāma. He firmly took hold of Parasurāma's hands into
his grip and moved him hither and thither. A spasm of pain had passed through Parasurāma's body. Out of pain Parasurāma had to surrender to
the mercy of Bhīṣma and entreated him to release. Bhīṣma relaxed his pre-
ssure on Parasurāma and poured water over his head as he almost fainted. Parasurāma was sent back towards the south with his spears, bow, axe and
arrows.

God's encounter with Gandharva: battle developed out of jealousy:
Sindhu Gandharva was a wealthy and pious king who did not allow any kind
of crime inside his country. The gods, on the other hand, could not tolerate the prosperity of Sindhu Gandharva. They grew jealous of him and fal-
sely implicated that the Gandharva did not like to obey Brahma. Brahma
was quite aware of the nature of the Gandharva king. So, he remained indi-
oneerent. Even god Indra looked at Sindhu through his jaundiced eyes. He
began to think that one day he might lose his supremacy over others
due to the benevolent nature of the king.

The Gandharva king called upon his three sons named Hari
Chandra, Sindhu Chandra, and Mahīchandra to his chamber and instructed them
to behave properly after his departure from this world. The king had also
expressed his desire to leave them according to the wish of Madhava who
asked him to go to Vaikuntha. Accordingly, the king along with his thousand
attendants ascended to heaven by taking a holy deep in a lake. This strange
act of the king disheartened the gods.

Subhajita was the son of Sindhuchandra, Bhadrabhānu was the
son of Mahīchandra. The minister Manicitra took out a chariot secretly
and was on a pleasure trip to the sky. Suddenly, something happened to the
chariot and in the next moment he found himself in the company of the gods.
The minister, also, was glad to see the glamour of ' Ananta dhāma '. In the
meantime, the searching party could not trace out Manicitra. In course of
time, they came to know about his location. The gods were requested to surrender Manicitra within a stipulated time. As the gods did not comply with the request, the king indignantly ordered his soldiers to march to heaven and recover Manicitra from the hands of the gods. The gods, apprehending more dangers, assembled there and fought hard to keep their prestige. But, the gods could not restrain the incoming of the soldiers of the Gandharva king. God's attempt of retreat was also sealed off and they came under the grip of the enemy. Soon, they were thrown into dungeon by the Gandharva king. This disastrous fall of the gods was reported to Brahma and the news got itself circulated. The wives of the gods including Saci, the wife of Indra, came down to beg of their husbands' release before the king Bhadrabhanu. At the suggestion of his minister, Bhadrabhanu considered their cases specially and ordered the release of all gods. Bhadrabhanu declared that he retaliated upon them for the action of the gods as they did not handover his minister Manicitra.

In the meantime, Bhisma did his duty of penance as usual at an 'ashram' for hundred years and Brahma appeared and sought his help on behalf of the gods against the Gandharva king. But, Bhisma took just decision by turning down the request on the ground that the gods were jealous of wealth and prosperity of kings. Brahma disappeared as Bhisma did not comply with his request. Thus, hundred and twenty seven years had passed smoothly.

**Bhisma's fight with Ravana:** Bhisma went one day to the bank of the river Narmada. When he was doing penance deeply, Ravana, the grandson of Pulastimati, arrived there in a boat. Ravana possessed ten heads and twenty hands. Ravana saw bow and arrows of Bhisma near him. He grew suspicious and began to use ill words to Bhisma. Bhisma could hear nothing as he was absorbed in deep meditation. He saw Ravana as soon as he finished his duty.

Bhisma could have taken drastic action against Ravana who
gave annoyance to him. Yet, he considered the death of the Brahmin Rāvana- na. Actually, Rāvana was born of a Brahmāna father and a Rāksasi mother. The presence of an undesired person was a sheer nuisance. So, he decided to teach Rāvana a good lesson for this kind of interference. In their altercation, Bhīṣma humbly expressed that a fight between the powerful king Rāvana and an ordinary man like Bhīṣma was not desirable. These words of Bhīṣma were interpreted differently. Rāvana misunderstood it and began to think that Bhīṣma might run away giving bluff. So, Rāvana was not convinced with the identity of Bhīṣma. On the other hand, he demanded unconditional surrender of Bhīṣma. Bhīṣma disregarded it and the fight was inevitable. He had no weapon beside him for the fight. He earnestly prayed to Kṛṣṇa to help him. At first, he took shelter on a tree and used a branch of that Kadamba tree. In the meanwhile, his mother Gangā appeared and granted a boon to win that fight without the help of any weapon. Rāvana attempted on Bhīṣma’s life with four arrows, but Bhīṣma frustrated his hope. Enraged Rāvana, this time, fought with bows at a time and was about to shoot arrows. Suddenly, the gods rushed to the rescue of Bhīṣma. Heavy torrential rain with thunderstorm made complete darkness on earth. During this heavy down-pour, Bhīṣma snatched away an opportunity to get hold of his bow and arrows. As soon as the weather changed and the sky became clear, Bhīṣma sent two powerful arrows to Rāvana. The first arrow cut the bows and arrows of Rāvana and the second made him unconscious by inflicting heavy wounds. Then, Rāvana had to run away like anything and Bhīṣma spared Rāvana in this unarmed state.

Bhīṣma visited a Rājā who escorted him to the heaven as there was going to be a great festival on the eve of Hari’s inspection. The venue was fixed at Śveta Viṣṇu’s place and all gods assembled there in a procession. The gods as well as the visitors started singing the names of Hari with great devotion. Bhīṣma, too, followed them. Bhīṣma went round the campus. The elephants were saluting after every
interval of two * danda*° the Sravana month , Hari appeared before the public by sitting on His Garuda * bahan * and He, then , accepted the seat on ' Ratna Simhasana ' . Everyone bowed down to Hari . Bhismra prostrated before Hari for seven times in succession . Hari was pleased to grant him a boon . Bhismra asked for the devotion to Him.

There was a grand feast after the departure of Hari . Fáfa Hiranya gave clothes , apparels and Jewels to Bhismra . Fáfa came back to the capital * Suryaprabha " or Hiranya in the same chariot . Bhismra was given a hearty send-off by the king and he walked out alone again.

Bhismra's second encounter with Parasurama : Bhismra arrived on the bank of the ocean and settled down in the Naimisharanya forest for further penance .

This time , again , Archaeus happened to cross that way . He saw Bhismra in the dress of a monk . Archaeus shouted at the top of his voice . Though Bhismra was unaware of this , Archaeus jumped to the conclusion that Bhismra deliberately wanted to avoid him for the fear of death . He resolved to teach Bhismra a good lesson . As soon as his meditation was over , Bhismra saw angry Archaeus . Bhismra tried in vain to send Archaeus away with pleasing words . Archaeus indecently came to fight him . When Bhismra failed to persuade him , he reminded Archaeus of last battle where Bhismra threw his axe , bow , arrows and kamal'alu . He was none other than Bhismra , the son of Ganga . Archaeus did not listen to him and considered it to be a kind of tactics of Bhismra . As Archaeus raised his axe to deal a fatal blow on Bhismra , the latter abruptly took hold of the axe and threw it away . At once , he firmly grabbed Archaeus and submerged him in the water . Archaeus , then , entreated Bhismra to spare his life . Bhismra had no intention to kill the Brähmin . So , he raised Archaeus out of the water and gave back his axe.

The defeat of indecorous Archaeus at the hands of Bhismra did not make Archaeus ashamed of his action . Again , Archaeus
attacked Bhīśma for the third time. He shot arrows from behind the trees. Bhīśma returned the shooting. His arrows wounded Parasūrama's heart and dissected bow and arrows. Blood had trickled down from the wounds of Parasūrama. Bhīśma asked him to leave the place for good. But, the enraged Brāhmaṇa did not listen to it, attacked Bhīśma with a jump. He fell on the ground. Then, both warriors awaited impatiently for the loop-hole. Suddenly, Bhīśma caught hold of Parasūrama and tightened his grip over him. Parasūrama had to scream and used his teeth on the hand of Bhīśma. Bhīśma loosened his grip in pain when Parasūrama's sharpened teeth even took away some flesh. This action of Parasūrama was condemned by the gods from heaven. Suddenly, Parasūrama used his axe. Bhīśma, in the meantime, gave him a severe blow and Parasūrama fell flat on the ground and became unconscious. The fear of death seized Parasūrama at that moment as he saw his 'Parasu axe' at the hands of Bhīśma who was about to kill the brahmin. But, Bhīśma changed his decision and spared him. Then, Bhīśma retired to the forest. He even took a holy deep in a lake and remained absorbed in meditation of Hari. In the absence of Bhīśma, one day, Parasūrama collected all his weapons viz, axe, bow, arrows from the hut of Bhīśma. Later, Bhīśma searched for him.

The births of Rāma, Laksmana, Bharata, Sita and also the battle of Parasūrama and Rāma were brought in here.

Bhīśma, after a long time, returned to the capital Hastinapur. Nobody could recognise him. Some were of opinion that he might be Indra or any powerful god as he was so shining. Bhīśma soon disclosed his identity which pleased the king of Gandharva. The news spread from lip to lips. The Gandharva king prostrated before him. Bhīśma was surrounded by thousands of people and the royal princes, his relatives assembled at his new residence. Vidura came and prayed and thus showed due respect to him. Everybody rejoiced except Bhīśma.
Dhritarastra as he was deprived of sight since his birth.

Bhisma was a true vaisnava. He spent his time in prayer. After a few moments, he saw Drona in the dress of a khatriya. So, he asked for the reason of the change of dress. Bhisma became furious when Drona predicted that Bhisma would die at the hands of a son begotten by apsara Kunti (Sakuntalā). Vidura came and he too gave the same verdict which naturally caused him to lose his temper. Sanjaya, who was renowned as reputed fortune-teller, was called at his residences. Sanjaya avoided the question intelligently though ultimately confirmed their predictions. This time, Bhisma suppressed his anger.

A new thing had crept on here that Kunti would be the wife of king Pāndu and she would be none but apsara Sakuntalā. The future of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas was also predicted. The prediction of Sanjaya was accepted with cool temperament and Bhisma embraced Sanjaya in return. Also, Sanjaya was lucky to receive valuable presents from Bhisma. Drona and Vidura were also taken in latter and Bhisma rewarded them in the same manner. Bhisma waited patiently to witness the 'Lilā' of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Duryodhana troubled the Pāndavas during the period of exile. Yudhīsthira and his brothers were sent to the forest by Duryodhana with the help of foul dice-play. But, he was so jealous of the Pāndavas that Duryodhana tried to kill them. He purposely made friendship with a king named Brajadhvaja.

"Brajadhvaja nāme rāja Śūryavamśe jāta
Dui bhāi mahābale parakrame khyāta ".

V. 1925, Vyāsāśram.

(The king Brajadhvaja was born of the Sun dynasty. The two brothers were famous for chivalry.)

Duryodhana sent his soldiers with king Brajadhvaja who assured him to kill the Pāndavas. Receiving that information, Yudhīsthira wanted
to run away from that place. But, his brothers did not support his idea and wished to shed their last drop of blood in the fight. Brajadhva was killed in the battle and soon Duryodhana was made a prisoner by the Pandavas. Bhima wished to kill him but Yudhisthira released him unconditionally. Duryodhana narrated his plight and insults before Karna at the hands of the Pandavas. Karna, at once, promised to kill Arjuna. Even, Karna left the capital with the purpose of learning archery through penance. On the other hand side, Arjuna was also sent to acquire the pāsūpat weapon from Lord Siva.

Bhūma stayed in the Hastinapur and absorbed himself in chanting the hymns of Lord Kṛśna. It seemed that hardly he took part in politics.

Before the battle of Kuruksetra, Bhīṛa, a brother of Duryodhana, was sent to Yudhisthira to get an idea of the Pandavas' strength. Yudhisthira told him frankly that Duryodhana would be killed in case of battle with them. Vikāra expressed his view that he was ready to embrace everything by taking the name of Kṛśna. Bukasthal village was the capital of Yudhisthira and Duryodhana wished to drive away the Pandavas from that village. He declared that the Pandavas would be dealt with severely if they indulged themselves in procuring men and money.

Yudhisthira did not like the idea of fighting with his kith and kin and expressed his views to return to the forest again. Bhīma reminded Yudhisthira about the wrong deeds of the Kauravas towards the Pandavas and specially to Draupadī. So, it would be wise on the part of khatriyas to take revenge on wrong-doers. Yudhisthira still advanced his arguments which expressed that after the killing of their relatives there would be only virtual gain because the widows would be left behind. Kṛśna rightly intervened and persuaded Yudhisthira to stick and stand for justice.

Fight ensued and Karna was made the commander-in-chief of
the Kauravas. Rukma, the brother of Rukmini, Krishna's wife, helped Duryodhana in all possible ways and became an intimate friend of him.

The 'agnidatta' chariot of Yudhisthira returned to him in time from the custody of Duryodhana. Even three big elephants, viz., Madan Manthara, Vijay Simha and Ripunjai came back straight to Yudhisthira by breaking the line of the soldiers of Duryodhana's side. The Pandavas rejoiced at this happy turn.

Yudhisthira, Virata and Drupada took three elephants each and began to crush the enemy. Krishna himself inspected the line of the soldiers of Pandavas and held the 'Saranga' bow in his hands.

Duryodhana used abusive language there in the battle-field and reminded Yudhisthira about the plight of the Pandavas. Duryodhana pretended that he showed mercy on the Pandavas as he did not kill them actually. Instead of killing, he virtually sent them to the exile. Bhima sent Nakula to intervene this kind of altercation of words and Nakula retorted Duryodhana with hot words. Nakula again accused Duryodhana as a shameless sinner and ungrateful as he forgot that his life was saved by the Pandavas in three critical states. Yudhisthira rescued him twice. Rukma, too, talked ill of Pandavas. Sahadeva, at once, retorted Rukma not to poke his nose into their matter.

Three kings started killing the soldiers with the help of three elephants. Rukma was then asked by Duryodhana to take necessary measure to check further killing of the Kauravas. Rukma was, however, afraid of elephants.

Rukma uttered abusive words to Krishna for his grudge. In the fight, three Yadavas including Sātyaki were made unconscious by Rukma. Rukma's body was like steel as he received a boon from goddess Bhagāvati. So, the weapons could not penetrate into his body. Of course, there was one delicate spot on his head. Both Krishna and Rukma became ready to fight. The arrows of Rukma were dissected by Krishna. Krishna's 'cakra' dissected Rukma's bear arrows, the chariot and the charioteer.
Rukma's nine chariots were cut into pieces by Krishna. Then, the enraged Rukma came speedily to kill Krishna with an axe. Krishna foiled his attempt by cutting the axe by an arrow. This time, Rukma jumped over Krishna with mace. Krishna accepted the challenge and rose to the same degree. The fight lasted for a while. Nothing had happened to Rukma. Suddenly, Krishna got a chance to give a fatal blow on the vital point of the head of Rukma, resulting instantaneous death of the latter. Rukma's son came rushing to take revenge on Krishna. Bhima, Sahadeva and Nakula tried to obstruct his approach. But, soon, Bhima was made unconscious by Rukma's son with a powerful arrow. He also received a boon from goddess Bhagavati in the same manner as his father. Sahadeva cut his bow once. Then, Sahadeva and Nakula were made unconscious in the fighting. Arrogant Rukma's son wanted to fight with his only enemy Krishna and he challenged with a mace. Bhima regained his senses and came forward to obstruct him with the mace. Krishna apprehended danger of Bhima. So, he massaged his body with his palm so as to make Bhima immortal. Krishna divulged the secret to hit Rukma's son on the head. The fight between Bhima and Rukma's son continued for a long time. Bloods trickled down from the body of Bhima but not from Rukma's son. Abrupt changing of skill of Bhima made Rukma's son slip from the initial position but Bhima did not wish to avail of that grand opportunity for the fear of unjust killing. So, Bhima had to wait patiently for a long time in order to get a chance to hit him on the delicate spot of the head of Rukma's son. But at last, Bhima was able to save his own skin. The later succumbed to his injuries. Then, the frightened Duryodhana retreated and lamently seriously for his friends.

During the battle, Ahirath Raja jumped over the chariot of Satyaki from his chariot to express his decision of withdrawal of his troops because he felt that it was no good fighting with the relatives (Pandavas). The king, of course, belonged to Rukma's side.

Nine pious kings expressed their earnest desire to
embrace death at the hands of Kṛṣṇa in order to go to heaven. Kṛṣṇa granted their prayer.

"Saranga tankari Hari jurilanta sar
Dekhi Vidyadhare save Gandharva Kinnar.
Ākāś dhākiya save biman kevale,
Indra adi kari deva samasta rahile ".

V-2678, Vyāsāśram.

(By making sound with his Saranga, Hari had fitted arrows. The gods, goddess, Gandharva, Kinnara and even Indra remained in the sky which was covered by their chariots.)

Then, Kṛṣṇa assumed His own form and killed them with four hands to the delight of the kings who faced Him.

In the meantime, Arjuna started killing the Kauravas. Duryodhana and king Bhagadatta of Kāmarūpa came together to fight with Arjuna. But, both of them were made unconscious by Arjuna and they were carried from the battle-field to Hastinapur in unconscious state. Karna was away for that period. He came to know about the defeat of Duryodhana and after-effect, Durmukh, one of the brothers of Duryodhana praised the Pāṇḍavas which was intolerable for Karna. He not only abused Durmukh but also wished to behead him. He controlled his temper with great difficulty. Karna then appeared in the scene of the battle-field. In the first encounter, Karna made Arjuna unconscious. Sahadeva, Nakula and Bhīma also had to suffer defeat at Karna's hands and remained unconscious for a considerable time period with grievous injuries in their persons. Karna could win them because he received a boon from the Sun-god to defeat the Pāṇḍavas at least for once. Arjuna along with his brothers were soon removed from the battle-field and 'Visalyakarani' medicine was administered to their wounds. Regaining his sense, Arjuna began a tough fight with Karna who was at that point, leaving the battle-field. This time, Karna fell unconscious. Soon, Karna was taken back to
Hastinapur. He did not die because he was the son of Sun-god.

The cunning Duryodhana applied another trick. He sent Krpa as a special messenger to Sindhuja, the king of Sindhu. He was a very powerful king. Duryodhana lowered his prestige and came down to such a degree of humiliation that he begged Sindhuja to help him. The official letter to Sindhuja was of surrendering nature. This action of Duryodhana was a shock and was considered as an insult to Dhritarastra, the father of Duryodhana. Duryodhana was scolded by his father. But, as soon as Duryodhana began to weep, his father's heart turned to a melting point. So to say, Dhritarastra was an imbecile so far as Duryodhana was concerned. The queen mother Gandhari advised them to take suggestion from Bhima. Bhima was so much irritated at this that he rushed to cut Duryodhana into pieces with an axe. Soon, he was pacified by Dhritarastra and Gandhari who begged for the life of Duryodhana. Other courtiers who advocated for Duryodhana had succeeded in coming to a peaceful solution. Bhima was given money, clothes, jewels by both Dhritarastra and Duryodhana. Duryodhana prayed to Bhima to become the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas. Of course, Bhima asked him to hand over half of the kingdom to the Pandavas who were the legitimate claimants. Bhima accepted the post as he could perceive the intention of Krishna to wipe out all the bad elements from this world through battles.

In the meanwhile, Krpa arrived at the kingdom of Sindhuja after a lapse of three months. Krpa was charmed by the beauty, wealth and gorgeousness of the kingdom. The atmosphere of the kingdom even frightened Krpa. He did not get any kind of obstruction until he came to the last gate which led to king's court. Krpa expressed his wish to the keeper of the gate to see the king in an urgent matter. Krpa explained his mission to Sindhuja. Sindhuja was not happy at all to hear the plight of the Pandavas who happened to be his brothers through his mother Kunti. Sindhuja sent back Krpa by giving money and clothes as Krpa looked like a
In the court of Yudhishthira, Krsna disclosed the identity of Sindhura as the son of Kunti through 'Canira' and Krsna asked the Pandavas to meet Sindhura and take help of him if necessary. Arjuna was afraid that Sindhura might not help them because they treated him as an enemy in one battle. But Krsna assured them of Sindhura's good gesture.

In order to expand the kingdom, all the four Pandavas went in different directions to conquer kingdoms. Bhima was entrusted with the work of conquering kings and to meet Sindhura.

On his way, Bhima met Dama Raksasa's kingdom. He saw three rāksasas who attacked him. So, he had to kill them. Soon, he was surrounded by thousands of demons. Bhima used his mace and killed many demons. Dama, then, asked his son to capture Bhima by snake-robe.

The son declared that though he was in a position to kill Bhima with a javelin yet he preferred to capture Bhima at the command of the king. Actually, Bhima was overpowered and captured by the son with the help of snake-robe. It was natural that Bhima realised the danger and repented then as he paid less interest in the warning of Krsna who asked him to avoid that path. The demon king sent chains Bhima to the temple of the goddess with guards and offered him delicious dish. Bhima hesitated to eat for the fear of prison. A voice from heaven assured and persuaded Bhima to accept the food. The demon king desired to offer Bhima as a prey to the goddess. Bhima waited patiently for an opportunity to make a break-through. In the night, however, Bhima snatched away one opportunity to come out from the prison and killed many demons with a stick.

He took to the heels and soon he saw mace, bow and axe. He heaved a sigh and laughed a while for the favour of god.

When Bhima ran away, he arrived on the sea shore where he happened to meet a monk. He gave the direction to go along that road.
to Sindhuśa's place. There was no difficulty in locating the kingdom of Sindhuśa and nobody interrupted in Bhima's movement. Some people rather stared at this gigantic figure who was carrying an axe on shoulder and a mace in his hand. Bhima, at last, arrived at the door-keeper's side of king's palace. Bhima narrated all their miseries and sought interview with the king Sindhuśa. Having heard the detailed account from the watchman, Sindhuśa, at once, sent his eldest son Sindhuvindu to fetch Bhima. Sindhuvindu obeyed and went out with some kings to receive Bhima at the gate and saluted Bhima by prostrating. The kings got puzzled to see this unexpected behaviour of the prince. Sindhuvindu then requested his uncle Bhima to accompany him and ushered in to Sindhuśa's court. Sindhuśa embraced Bhima with joy and tears. Bhima showed his respect by prostrating before Sindhuśa. At once, delicious dishes were supplied to Bhima and he became the royal guest. Bhima narrated their miseries to Sindhuśa which touched the soft corner of his heart. Bhima stayed there for a few days and expressed his intention to return to his kingdom. Sindhuśa wished to hear more of Kṛṣṇa's character and Bhima obliged him. Sindhuśa asked Bhima as Kṛṣṇa was the best friend of them. Sindhuśa was overwhelmed with joy when he learnt details of Kṛṣṇa from Bhima.

"Achī īeva Nārāyaṇe
bhar haribāk mane
sthit Daivakīr udarat ".

V. 3501, Vyāsāśram.

(Nārāyaṇa descended and occupied a place in the womb of Daivaki in order to relieve the burden of the earth.)

Sindhuśa was a devout worshipper of god Kṛṣṇa. He was absorbed in meditation after the departure of Bhima. Bhima received clothes and money from the king as a token of love. Sindhuśa assured Bhima to visit their place. During meditation, Sindhuśa had been advised by god to hand over his kingdom to his first son and make himself free to go to
The king did everything according to the suggestion of god and arrived in the campus of the Pandavas with his wives and courtiers. He showed his eagerness to see Krishna (Hari). The news of the arrival of Sindhura frightened the Kauravas. Duryodhana tried again in vain to persuade him but Sindhura refused to oblige anybody without the command of Krishna. Krishna asked Sindhura to be friendly with the Pandavas. So, Sindhura, as a token of love and friendship, gave nine lakh kings at Pandavas' disposal. Sindhura had no enemy. The enmity with him was out of the question.

At Krishna's command, Sindhura showed his skill of archery. He shot an arrow of vermilion which gave a red spot on everybody's cheek which included the Kauravas, the Pandavas, the elephants, horses, and other living animals. This enhanced the fear among the Kauravas and they stared at one another. Only Bhima could tell that the archer was no other than Sindhura who only could perform this feat in archery. Krishna jumped to the conclusion that Sindhura would be a heavy burden of the earth afterwards if he had been allowed to live for more days. He had the power to wipe out the whole army with one arrow. Therefore, Krishna simply asked his friendship. Sindhura already declared that he would not fight with anybody as he was known as 'afatra'. Sindhura went back to his kingdom at Krishna's advice after attending formalities. Of course, Yudhisthira insisted on Sindhura's inclusion in the army as it would be difficult to fight with the great Kauravas' army. On the other hand, Bhima was determined to fight tooth and nail in order to take revenge on them. He reminded Yudhisthira again about the misfortunes of the Pandavas in long fourteen years. Krishna placed his arguments that nobody was certain about one's victory.

In the meantime, Sindhura arrived and saluted all, including Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, the gods, Pandavas, Arjuna, who had come...
However, Brahma thought over the greatest burden of Sindhu-ra on earth. Narada was sent to convey that message to Krishna and Krishna assured him to solve it. Sahadeva and Nakula were sent to the kingdom of Sindhu-ra and Sindhu-ra too was happy to see them. Nakula expressed the desire of everybody that they wished to see again the cheek of everybody smeared with vermilion by Sindhu-ra's arrow. So, according to the wishes of Krishna and others, Sindhu-ra sent his three ministers to build a palace at a higher altitude near Ramalaka. It was decided to perform the feat on the third day of their arrival. The palace on a higher level frightened all the Kauravas. Bhishma knew for certain that Sindhu-ra would not fight. Every news was relayed to Krishna through a minister of Sindhu-ra named Mathan. Karna vainly showed eagerness to kill Sindhu-ra but Bhishma retorted that not to speak of Karna, Sindhu-ra could kill them all along with three lokas with one arrow.

In the morning, Sindhu-ra arrived and saluted all including Brahma, Visnu, Siva, the gods Gandharvas, Apsaras who had come to witness the performance from the sky. Sindhu-ra took out 'Nag Kaksa' bow and at once the earth went down to the depth of nine and sixty cubits and his horses forced entry to Patala as he was about to shoot. Everybody trembled at this sight including mother earth. Sindhu-ra prayed to Siva to help him in keeping the balance. The whole sky turned reddish and vermilion was given to all including gods. Brahma admitted that he had never seen such arrow in his life. Everybody witnessed the miracle with the palpitation of their hearts. The arrow returned to Sindhu-ra and then to Ananta and the bow also vanished soon. So, Sindhu-ra felt sorry and sad and began to realise that his death was approaching.

Again, Brahma came and reminded Krishna about the unbearable pain of Vasumati as she was bearing heavy burden of Sindhu-ra. Realising the pain of Vasumati, Krishna assumed the form of a Brahmin.
and went straight to the palace where Sindhura was living. There was something new in the appearance of that Brahmin which really frightened Sindhura. The Brahmin, at first, asked Sindhura to make promise to yield anything that the Brahmin might ask afterwards. This, at once, sparked Sindhura that the Brahmin would ask for his body. Sindhura hesitated for a moment. This attitude of Sindhura was resented at by the Brahmin. The Brahmin suggested that Sindhura's head should be severed by his eldest son. The son wept when he came to with the 'Canraham' axe. Again the Brahmin showed annoyance at their hesitation to fulfill Brahmin's desire. Krishna then assumed his real form with four hands. Sindhura's joy knew no bounds and tears came out. He prostrated before Krishna and at that moment, Sindhuvindu detached Sindhura's head with axe. As Sindhura desired to be an eye witness in the Kuruksetra battle, Krishna promised to keep the head of Sindhura alive and arranged to place it in the chariot of Arjuna to witness the battle.

The news of Sindhura reached the ears of the Pandavas. Yudhishthira lamented greatly for Sindhura but he was soon consoled by Krishna explaining that Sindhura was a heavy burden of the earth and needed elimination to relieve Vasumati of her painful ordeal.

The sons of Sindhura came to Yudhishthira and Yudhishthira along with his brothers went once more. After ten days, Sindhura ascended to Vaikuntha. Durvasa was glad at the death of Sindhura.

The character of Bhishma as depicted by Vyasa in Vyasaaram : Bhishma was the main architectural hero of this book. He devoted most of his time in the temple for worshipping Hari. After the expedition, he went to Visnudham. Then he returned to the Naimisharanya forest and engaged himself in singing Hari kirtan when Parasurama intervened. Parasurama was defeated thrice by Bhishma. Even 'five praised Bhishma."

" Bhishma samān.
Nāhika vaśyaya
Gaudhyābhuvane sār,\)
In the fourteen worlds, there is no equal to Bhīṣma amongst Vaiṣṇava.

Taking the dust of Pāri (Śiva), he gets prasād.)

"Gangā devī sut Bhīṣma vaisnavate sār
Yāhār samān sādhu nāhike ār ".

V. 943, Vyāsāśram.

(Bhīṣma, the son of Gangā, is the fairest of all the vaisnavas. There is none equal to him.)

Again, Bhīṣma was seen worshipping Pāri when Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his wife Gāndhārī and son Duryodhana went to see him in order to solve a vital problem. Bhīṣma asked them all to sing the glories of Pāri.

Discrepancies found in Vyāsāśram: (i) It was a known fact that Draupādī received clothes from Kṛṣṇa when she was compelled to face the court of the Kauravas in the state of humiliation. But, according to Vyāsāśram, it was Indra who sent clothes—

"Draupādīk vīvāstra karibe callā,
Jānī purandare bahu bastra pelai ilā ".

V. 1833, Vyāsāśram.

(They wanted to make Draupādī naked. Knowing this, Purandara sent down many clothes.)

(ii) Again, according to the Mahābhārata, Dhṛtarāṣṭra regained his eye sight for four months by the grace of God. But, the Vyāsāśram shows that Dhṛtarāṣṭra got his eye sight for eight months.

"Āstam mās lāgī nayan khujilā
Pāce tente andha vailā ".

V. 1683, Vyāsāśram.
(We asked for eye-sight for eight months. Then, he became blind.)

About Vyāsāśram: This manuscript is not yet published. These stories supposed to be written by Vyāsa are not found in Sanskrit original or any in any other provincial languages. The work was translated by one Bharata candra, another name of the poet Rāma Saraswati.

"Bada dh Bharata candra mayī bar nāmar
Bola Rāma Rīma yata savisa da nav".

V. 55, Vyāsāśram.

(Bharata candra says, "I am very impious. I entrust you, oh audience, take the name of Rāma!"

The book Vyāsāśram to have contained materials from Samhitā, Yāmala, Mahāpurāṇa, was narrated by Vyāsa to the son of Markendya (Markandeya).

"Vyāsa kahe rahasya Samhitā Yāmalar,
Vaikuntha kathā ito Mahāpurānar".

V. 141, Vyāsāśram.

(Vyāsa says the mystery of the Samhitās and Yāmalar etc. is a thing of Vaikuntha revealed through Mahāpurāṇa.)

Sometimes, matters from Hamsa-kāki were also incorporated in Vyāsāśram.

"Suna sabhasai Vyāsāśram kathā sār,
Ihare rahasya Hamsa-kāki sārolhar".

V. 669, Vyāsāśram.

(Listen, oh audience, the vital things of Vyāsāśram. Its mystery is the essence of Hamsa-kāki.)

Again, Bharata bhusana admitted that he could not follow the vast nature of the sastras.

"Māde māde Hamsa-kāki ače thēt thēt
Evke ihār tāta bujan nālā,
Kathāpito bhāsya cāt agyā samān
Kacilo prāśi ihāri Kṛṣṇa cintaya". (V. 1754, Vyāsāśram)
(In some places, Hamsa-kaki is introduced here and there. So, the problem is not understood. Even then, at the command (of the king) I compose the verses by consulting the bhāsyas and touching the feet of Kṛṣṇa.)

Rāma Saraswati composed this during his young stage. It revealed the merits and the de-merits of a vaishnavite. The poet Rāma Saraswati bowed down to Kṛṣṇa and prayed to get His blessings. He implored his addings or short-comings should be ignored as the faults of a child.

"Sabhaśād loke
Dāsar dosak
Khemi bcla Rāma Rāva.

V. 4093, Vyāsaśram.
(I entreat to the audience to excuse my short-comings and request to take the name of Rāma.)

The Vyāsaśram is an independent work—a purāṇa in itself and does not form a part of the Mahābhārata. But it abounds in the life and activities of Bhiṣma, the great Mahābhārata hero. The book while describing the expeditions of Bhiṣma to kill the demons to establish peace and religion in the world brings in the themes of the Mahābhārata and it forms almost a supplementary work to the Mahābhārata just as Hariyamsa forms a supplementary work to it. Bhiṣma is not only an ideal hero but also an ideal vaisnava. The Assamese poet Rāma Saraswati by his strong faith in vaisnavism and his extraordinary poetical genius have built up out of the works of Vyāsa. This beautiful kavya is revered as the Bhāgavata by the vaisnavas of Assam. The poet says that he takes up the work at the wish of king Naranārāyana and it appears he got the original Sanskrit works along with the original Mahābhārata from the king's court.

Thus, it is a counterpart of the Mahābhārata and as such
a discussion on it is worthwhile and will be helpful in pointing to the likelihood of there having been some sort of a Samhita or anthology in Assam out of which the episodes of the Vana Parva not found elsewhere, and the theme of the Vyāsaśram have been worked out.

The Vyāsaśram was written in the sixteenth century and was copied down much later. The manuscript I consulted was in possession of Professor Upendra Chandra Lekharu, and it was copied down in 1815 Saka.