

Epilogue of Mahabharata

By

M. R. Yardi



Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan
Pune Kendra

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

2001

There are, however, a few peculiar facts about the conduct of the Pandavas, which require closer examination, for instance their polyandrous marriage with Draupadi, their breaches of the rules of war and the two barbarous acts of Bhima in drinking the blood of Dushyasina after killing him and striking Duryodhana below the navel. Suta has tried to justify the marriage by recourse to two myths, the myth of the old maid who asked for the boon of a husband five times and the myth of the five Indras (1.189).

The conduct of the Pandavas is susceptible of simple explanations, if we take into account their background and upbringing in a forest tribe. Their marriage with Draupadi is a case of fraternal polyandry, which was prevalent among certain tribes in Tibet, the Himalayas and their foothills. Yudhishthira himself admitted it, when Drupada objected to it on the ground that it was contrary to law and custom and asked how a righteous person like him could think of such a marriage. Yudhishtira first demurred and said that he was merely carrying out the wishes of his mother, who wanted them to share everything they got, but later he conceded that in this marriage he was merely following their traditional custom. However, after they spent a few years in Indraprastha, their

subsequent marriages were polygenous in character. Because of their tribal upbringing, the Pandavas were also less inhibited by the traditional rules of the conduct in war that were current in those times in Aryavarta. Further there is a common belief among more ancient tribes that a warrior could appropriate to himself the valour of his slain enemy by drinking his blood and Bhima might have acted on this belief in drinking Dushyasana's blood after killing him.

In this adhyaya we are mainly concerned to see how the additions came to be made by the redactors to the Vaishampayana text. As the epic came to be known as the Mahabharata after the additions made by Suta and Sauti, father and son, their contributions to the different parvas will be considered together.

Suta describes in graphic detail the incidents of Mbh. briefly mentioned by Vaishampayana. These relate to Jatugrihadaha, Hidimbavadha, Bhima's marriage with Hidimbaa, Bakavadha and the Svayamvara of Draupadi (all in Adi), Pandavas' acquisition of half the kingdom and their defeat in the dice game (Sabha), Pandavas' sojourn in the forest and the story of the birth of Karna (Aranyaka), and Pandava's stay in the palace of Virata in the guise of palace servants and the defeat by Bhima and Arjuna of the Trigarta and Kaurava forces who had gone there to lift the famous cattle of Virata kingdom (Virata). Some of the important stories added by him do not find even a cursory mention in the introductory chapters of the Vaishampayana text. These are the story of Draupadi's being dragged to the assembly hall after Yudhishtira staked her and lost in the dice game (Sabha), the ghoshayatra and Draupadi's abduction by Jayadratha (Aranyaka) and the infatuation of Virata's general Kicaka for Draupadi, his death at the hands of Bhima (Virata) and Draupadi's lamentation over the massacre of her brothers and sons and Krishna's curse on Ashvatthama (Sauptika). Suta has not made any additions to the war books, namely Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and Shalya

parvas. But he has made additions to the Stri, Ashvamedhika, the Ashramavasika, the Mausala, the Mahaprasthanika and the Svargarohana parvas. He has described Gandhari's lamentation over the death of her sons and other war heroes (Stri) and the performance by the Pandavas of the Ashvamedha sacrifice (Ashvamedhika). In the ashramavasika he recounts the retirement of king Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti along with Vidura, to the forest and their tragic end in a forest conflagration. In the last three parvas, he relates the civil war which took place between the Yadava tribes, the deaths of Krishna and Balarama, the decision of the Pandavas to end their earthly career and their long trek to the Himalayas, the abode of the gods.

Sauti starts the Mbh. story with the snake-sacrifice of king Janamejaya and the story of Astika, and after giving the legends of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, and Yayati and Devayani, he traces the origin of the Kurus to Bharata, the son of Dushyanta and that of the Yadavas to Yadu, the son of Yayati. Some of the important additions made by him include the sojourn of Arjuna in the forest and his abduction of Subhadra, sister of Krishna, the burning of the Khandava forest (Adi), the Rajasuya sacrifice (Sabha), a graphic account of Krishna's visit to Hastinapura in connection with his peace mission and the welcome given to him by the Kauravas (Udyoga).

But the majority of the episodes added by the Suta and Sauti relate to the members of the Bhargava clan. Of the Bhargava episodes, only Vishvamitropakhyana (13.4) belongs to the Vaisampayana text. It explains how as a result of the exchange of charms (magic potions) Vishvamitra became a brahmin and Bhargava Rama became a mighty warrior. Suta has added the Aurvopakhyana (1.169-173), Kartaviryopakhyana (3.115-117) and the Sukanyopakhyana (3.122-125), which deal with the birth of Aurva, the birth of Bhargava Rama and the marriage of Cyavana with king Sharyati's beautiful daughter Sukanya. Sauti gives in adhyaya 60 of the Adiparva the genealogy of the Bhargavas, and it will be noted

that almost all of them, Cyavana, Aurva, Ruchika, Jamadagni, Bhargava Rama, Ruru etc. find a prominent mention in these episodes. In particular, the birth of Bhargava Rama and his martial exploits seem to have had a peculiar fascination for the bards.

According to the statistical study, the author of the Harivamsha which forms a supplement to the Mbh. has the C-style, which is entirely different from the styles of Vaishampayana, Suta and Sauti. This style occurs in verses in the Aranyaka, Shalya and Shanti parvas and so they too have been added by this author. The Harivamshakara has made the largest additions in the Aranyaka by contributing as many as 158 adhyayas out of 299 adhyayas. The adhyayas 13-90 recount Arjuna's encounter with Lord Shiva and his acquisition of the pashupata astra from him. The adhyayas 141-178 contain the encounter of Bhima with the Ramayana hero Hanuman, Pandava's visit to the royal sage Arshtisena and their fights with Yakshas. Harivamshakara has further added the adhyayas 33-54 to the Shalyaparva, which describes the pilgrimage undertaken by Balarama during the period of the Bharata war.

According to the statistical study, as stated before, the adhyayas 308 and 309 which belong to the Beta group have been added by the author of the Parvasangraha. Adhyaya 308 contains the Sulabha-janaka-samvada in which Sulabha expounds to Jananka the doctrine of thirty entities called kalaas, which belong to the embodied being. In adhyayas 309, Yudhishtira asks Bhishma how Vyasa's son Shuka became completely indifferent to the world. Bhishma recounts to him the discourse of Vyasa to Shuka, in which he told Shuka that everything in this world is transitory and advised him to take to the life of renunciation.

The first three adhyayas of the Adiparva give a brief history of the growth of the heroic poem into an encyclopaedia of myths and legends and a religious and philosophical tract.

But the most important contribution made by the author of the Parvasangraha is the enumeration of the adhyayas and stanzas in the different parvas. It was found that the adhyaya total 1995 of the critically constituted text exceeded the Parvasangraha count of 1948 adhyayas. This is in spite of the fact that the total count of verses in the critical text falls short of the Parvasangraha total by about 8 per cent. The author of the Parvasangraha has obviously rearranged the adhyayas perhaps by merging the adhyayas with very few verses in the adjoining adhyayas and breaking up the bigger adhyayas.

Now the question arises, how do we account for the discrepancy between the Parvasangraha figures and the verse counts of the critically constituted text. Further the Mbh. text contains in addition to the Anushtubh shlokas long metre stanzas such as tristubhs and also prose passages in some adhyayas. It has been suggested by M.M. Haraprasada Shastri that the discrepancy between the number of verses in the Critical Edition and the Parvasangraha counts is probably due to the fact that the author of the Parvasangraha had taken the shloka in its restricted meaning of 32 syllabic units and counted everything in the text down to the numerals in terms of this unit. Firstly it presupposes that the author of the Parvasangraha had before him the critical text, which is unlikely as the latter had been reconstructed on the basis of the available Mbh. manuscripts. Most probably the author of the Parvasangraha had before him a Vulgate (Dn) version of the Mbh. Secondly it is doubtful whether this unit of measurement was ever adopted by the Brahmanical and epic writers. The Bhagavadgita is said to contain invariably 700 stanzas, which means that each tristubh is counted as one stanza and that the adhyaya colophones and the uvaca entries are ignored.

In his paper, the Parvasangraha of the Mahabharata. Prof. D.D. Kosambi points out that 32 syllabic unit of measurement

is traditionally adopted in prose counts of the Jain and Buddhist works. Kosambi has examined the question as to which of these two methods gives a close fit to the (observed) counts of the stanzas in the Critical Text to the Parvasangraha counts, by using statistical methods. He found that by taking the stanza as a unit, the observed number came to be far below that of the Parvasangraha count. On the other hand, the application of the chi-square test disclosed that the 32 syllabic unit brought the observed number of the shlokas in the Critical Text extraordinarily close to the Parvasangraha count. He, however, added that the chi-square test gave a significant discrepancy only for the Aranyaka. This significant discrepancy cannot be ignored on the ground suggested by Kosambi that the Critical Editors after Sukthankar did not follow his method meticulously, as the Aranyakapava was critically edited by Sukthankar himself. The discrepancies between the critical Edition counts and the Parvasangraha figures are satisfactorily explained by what Sukthankar calls. ' the spurious passages and repetitions, which have been excluded by him from the main texts and shown in the Critical Notes and Appendices. This also confirms Sukthankar's theory of ' the fluid text in which the fluidity applies not only to the wavy lines but also to the stanzas.

Sauti starts the Mahabharata with the history of the most illustrious family of the Bhrigus which, he says, is respected even by the celestials such as Indra. Agni and the Maruts (1.5.5). The occasion is as follows: Sauti Ugrasravas had gone to the hermitage of Kulapati Shaunaka to recite the Mahabharata at the twelve-year sacrificial session held by that sage in the Naimisha forest. Since Shaunaka was busy with his daily round of religious duties, the assembled sages asked him to wait until they were joined by the Kulapati. When Shaunaka arrived, he did not ask Sauti to narrate the Bharata story, but said that he

would like him to relate the history of the Bhargavas.

Accordingly, the eight adhyayas 1. 5-12 constituting the Paulomaparva are entirely devoted to an account of one branch of the Bhrigu clan as represented by Bhrigu-Cyavana-Pramati-Ruru-Shunaka. Here we are concerned with the story of Ruru, as it has some relevance to the Mahabharata story. Ruru was betrothed to be married to Pramadvaraa, daughter of nymph Menaka. But before they could get married, she was bitten by a venomous snake and died leaving Ruru desolate. By his magical power, however, he could revive her by giving up half of his life to her and then married her. He then took the vow to destroy all the snakes in the world. One day he came across a harmless old snake as a result of a curse pronounced upon him in his former life. The sage told Ruru how Janamejaya's sarpasatra was stopped by Astika, but did not tarry to tell him the story. Ruru subsequently heard this story from his father Pramati (1.12). In the Anushasana, however, we get a different genealogy of Ruru. There we are told that Bhrigu's son was Gritsamada, who according to tradition, was the author of the second mandala of the Rigveda and that the eleventh descendant of Gritsamada was Pramati, father of Ruru, whose son was Shaunaka.

The Astikaparva (1.13-53) tells us that Janamejaya had started a campaign against the Naga king Takshaka to avenge himself of the death of his father Parikshita, who was treacherously killed by the Naga king Takshaka. In this episode we are told how Astika, son of Takshaka's sister, approached king Janamejaya and persuaded him to stop the carnage of the nagas. While the story of the snake-sacrifice is relevant to the epic story, the story of the snake-sacrifice is not even remotely connected with the events or characters of the epic. It is, therefore, obvious that the latter story has been introduced by Sauti to flatter Kulapati Shaunaka. This is also admitted by Shaunaka who says, " I am well-pleased with thee, O Sauti, for

narrating this story starting with the Bhrigu race. Pray, tell me now the story as composed by Vyasa. As the name of Shaunaka indicates, he was a descendant of Shunaka, who belonged to a branch of the Bhrigu clan.

In the Sambhavaparva, Sauti has added Arjuna's sojourn in the forest, his abduction of Subhadra, Krishna's sister, and the burning of the Khandava forest, as a joint exploit of Arjuna and Krishna. The epic nowhere mentions the reasons as to why Balarama was opposed to the marriage of his sister to Arjuna, who was a well-known warrior and friend of Krishna. Sauti states that Krishna himself advised Arjuna to abduct her, as one could not depend upon a woman to make the right choice in a svayamvara. The opposition of Balarama is, however, understandable as Subhadra was the daughter of Arjuna's maternal uncle, and the marriages between such cousins were not looked upon with favour in the North. The Pandavas also had to clear the Khandavaprastha region for settlement, as the kingdom which was given to them by king Dhritarashtra was a thick forest area.

The adhyayas 1-45 in the Sabha consisting of the sub-parvas, Sabha, Mantra, Jarasandhavadha, Digvijaya, Rajasuya, Arghabhiharana and Shishupalavadha, have been added by Sauti. When the Pandavas established their rule at Indraprastha, the supporters of Yudhishthira urged him to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice. When Yudhishthira sought the advice of Krishna, the latter said that it was an excellent idea, but he could not hope to be a sovereign, as long as Jarasandha, the mighty king of Magadha, was alive. Accordingly Bhima, Arjuna and Krishna went in disguise to Magadha and obtained admission in the palace of Jarasandha. When Jarasandha met them as was his custom to receive noble guests who had taken religious vows, they disclosed their identity and challenged him to a duel. Jarasandha chose to fight with Bhima, whom he regarded as his equal in valour, and was finally killed by him. Then the four brothers of Yudhishthira set out in four different directions to conquer the world and returned victorious with a

lot of wealth received as tribute from the friendly as well as conquered kings. As was the custom Pandavas invited these kings to the Rajasuya ceremony. When the time came for honouring a royal guest, Yudhishthira after consulting grandsire Bhishma, decided that this honour should go to Krishna, Shishupala, the king of Cedi, did not like this and raised a loud and vehement protest. Although he was related to the Yadavas, he had always sided with their enemies, Kamsa and Jarasandha and was hostile to them. When he became too abusive and vituperative, Krishna cut off his head with his discus.

Suta has elaborated the simple dice game in a graphic tale in the Dyuta and Anudyuta sections of the Sabhaparva. In the Dyutaparva (adhyayas 56 and 57) he tells us how Yudhishthira, after forfeiting his wealth and kingdom in the game, staked himself, his brothers and his wife Draupadi. Karna then suggested that since the Pandavas had lost all their property, even the clothes that they were wearing now belonged to Duryodhana and asked Dushyasana to seize the garments of the Pandavas. As soon as Karna uttered these words, the Pandavas flung off their upper garments. Duryodhana then commanded Dushyasana to bring Draupadi to the court. Dushyasana brought Draupadi to the assembly hall who was in her menses and so was scantily attired. When he tried to disrobe her, Bhima swore to slay him in the battle and drink his blood. When Duryodhana bared his thigh and showed it to Draupadi with a leer, he also vowed to crush the latter's thigh. Partly due to Draupadi's spirited speech in the assembly and partly due to bad omens, the blind king realised that the matter had gone too far and tried to make amends by granting freedom to the Pandavas and restoring their kingdom to them. These incidents, if true, are very serious indictments against the Kauravas and have evoked universal sympathy for the Pandavas. But they do not find even a cursory mention in Vaishampayana text. It is also revealing that Bhima does not accuse Dushyasana of this outrage after he had wounded the latter fatally and was about to drink his blood. The statistical study shows that the three

verses (II. 43-45) were added by Sauti later.

In the Aranyaka Suta describes the sojourn of the Pandavas in the forest. It does not contain any adhyayas of the Vaishampayana text. In all Suta has added 99 adhyayas in this parva. The adhyayas 91-140 describe the visits of the Pandavas to places of pilgrimage and also contain some legends. The Ghoshayatra section (225-245) describes the visit of the Kauravas to the Pandavas undertaken with the sole purpose of humiliating them by the vulgar display of their wealth. This, however, ended in their extreme humiliation, as they were held captive by the gandharvas whose territory they had crossed and were released by Arjuna on the advice of Yudhisthira. The adhyayas 248-259 narrate the abduction of Draupadi by the Sindhu King Jayadratha and her rescue by Arjuna. This incident has been elaborated further by Sauti and Harivamshakara in the Dronaparva. In the Kundalaharana Suta recounts the virgin birth of Karna by the sun from Kunti and the generous gifts of inborn coat of mail (kavaca) and ear-rings (kundala) by Indra to Karna, although Indra knew that thereby he was making Arjuna vulnerable to him (111.295.299). Sauti has not added any war stories to the Aranyakaparva. Harivamshakara had added the adhyayas 13-90 to Aranyakaparva in which he describes Arjuna's encounter with Lord Shiva in the disguise of Kirata and his acquisition of the pashupata astra and Arjuna's visit to Indraloka to secure divine weapons. The adhyayas 141-178 contain the encounter of Bhima with the Ramyana hero Hanuman, Pandava's visit to the royal sage Arshishtena and their fight with the Yakshas.

The whole of the Virataparva has been added by Suta and Sauti, the latter contributing the adhyayas 30-62. The first 29 adhyayas recount the stay of the Pandavas in the disguise of palace servants of king Virata, the death of the Virata general Kichaka who made advances to Draupadi at the hands of Bhima, and the Trigarta king's plan to invade the capital of

Virata and lift his valuable cattle with the help of the Kauravas. In adhyayas 63-77, we read about the invasion of the capital of Virata by the Trigarta and Kaurava armies. When Virata returned after defeating the Trigarta king with the help of Bhima, he came to know that his son Uttara had also gone to fight with the Kauravas with Brihannada (Arjuna) as his charioteer. The Pandavas then disclosed themselves. Uttara too returned victorious and told that the victory was won only by Arjuna. In gratitude king Virata offered the hand of his daughter to Arjuna, who accepted her more befittingly as his daughter-in-law.

Of the 104 adhyayas added by the Suta to the Udyogaparva, the first 21 adhyayas describe the celebration of the wedding of the Virata princess Uttaraa with Abhimanyu. The relations and friends of Pandavas who had gathered for the wedding conferred as to the best way of regaining the kingdom for the Pandavas. All except Satyaki agreed that the possibilities of a peaceful settlement should be first explored by sending an envoy to the court of Dhritarastra. Accordingly a trusted brahmin in the court of Drupada was sent to plead the case of the Pandavas for the restoration of their kingdom. Dhritarashtra, however, sent him back with the message that he would send Sanjaya for negotiations. Sanjaya's and Lord Krishna's peace missions figure in the Vaishampayana text.

After the failure of negotiations, preparations for the war began in right earnest. Arjuna and Duryodhana made a special trip to Dvaraka to enlist the support of Balarama and Krishna in their cause. Krishna told Duryodhana that he was not going to fight in the war and asked him to choose between him and his large army. Duryodhana was content to have the army on the assurance from Krishna that he would not take an active part in the war. Arjuna, on the other hand, was happy to have his friend and guide by his side in the war. Balarama chose to remain neutral on account of Krishna's partiality for the Pandavas.

The first sub-parva now closed with an account of the visit of Shalya, king of Madra, to the Pandavas. On the way he was royally entertained by Duryodhana, who succeeded in enlisting his support in the war. Surprisingly when Yudhishthira came to know about it from the horse's mouth, he did not remonstrate with him for going over to the side of the Kauravas. Instead, he merely extracted a promise from him that when he would act as a charioteer to Karna, he would disparage him at the time of the latter's fight with Arjuna. Since Yudhishthira could not have foreseen that Duryodhana would beg Shalya to be the charioteer to Karna, this is clearly an attempt on the part of Suta to give some plausible explanation as to why Shalya, the maternal uncle of Nakula and Sahadeva, went over to their enemy's camp.

In the Sanjayaparva, Vaishampayana tells briefly that Dhritarashtra sent Sanjaya on a peace mission to the Pandavas and that on return he reported to him the outcome of his talks with the Pandavas (adhyayas 48-50, 54). Suta has added the adhyayas 35-46 to fill up the intervening period between Sanjaya's departure and return. After Sanjaya left for Upaplavya, Dhritarashtra was filled with anxiety and so sent for Vidura for advice. These adhyayas contain the advice given by Vidura known as Viduraniti and also the philosophical discourse of Sanatsujata. Vidura told Dhritarashtra to treat the Pandavas and his own sons with equal affection and give the former their share of the kingdom. The adhyayas 51-69 (excluding adhyaya 54) recounts the discussion which took place in the Kaurava court on Sanjaya's report and Duryodhana's final rejection of the peace terms. Janamejaya then asked as to why Duryodhana refused to heed the advice given by Bhishma and Drona. The answer given is that sound counsel is of no avail against obduracy and the story is told how Galava had to suffer great hardship because of his obduracy (V.104-121).

Vaishampayana text. However, on further examination, it was found to belong to the group 71-103 added by Sauti. Yudhisthira said to Krishna that from Sanjaya's talk, he could gather that Dhritarashtra, blinded by affection for his sons, desired peace without ceding any territory to them. He, therefore, sought the advice of Krishna as to how they could secure their kingdom without losing merit. Krishna, in reply volunteered to go to Dhritarashtra's court and make a final effort to secure their interests without recourse to war. Yudhisthira advised him not to undertake the risk, as the wicked Duryodhana would stop at nothing. Krishna, however, felt that they should explore all avenues for peaceful settlement of the dispute, so that they should not incur blame later for not taking all the steps to avert the war.

The adhyayas 70-103 give a graphic account of Krishna's visit to Hastinapur, the elaborate preparations made by the Kauravas to receive him, his refusal to accept their hospitality and his stay with Vidura. The next day, after visiting Kunti, he went to the Kaurava court and made a stirring appeal to the Kauravas assembled there to maintain peace by restoring half of the kingdom to the Pandavas, which was rightfully theirs. In the adhyayas 122-129, Sauti describes the efforts made by Bhishma, Drona and others to persuade Duryodhana to accept Krishna's advice. He also mentions that at this time Bhargava Rama, Kanva and Narada happened to visit the Kaurava court, and they too advised Duryodhana to forsake vanity and wrath and make peace with the Pandavas. Although Dhritarashtra agreed with them, he said that he had no influence over his son and so was helpless. Then Dhritarashtra asked Vidura to bring his mother, but she too could not bring her son to see reason. As a last resort Krishna suggested to the assembly to place Duryodhana under restraint and settle with the Pandavas in

order to preserve the Kuru race. At the same time Duryodhana was plotting with Karna and Shakuni to seize Krishna and keep him in confinement in order to force the Pandavas to make peace on his terms. When Lord Krishna came to know about this, he disclosed his divine form and dazzled the Kurus assembled there. Lord Krishna then left the court with Satyaki and Vidura.

After taking leave of his aunt Kunti, Krishna made an attempt (V.138-41) to win over Karna to the side of the Pandavas, by revealing to him the secret of his birth. Lord Krishna told him that by siding with the Pandavas, he would, as the eldest Pandava, become the king of Hastinapura and also the husband of Draupadi, but Karna declined to forsake his fosterparents and his friend Duryodhana. Kunti also tried to persuade Karna, but all that she could obtain from him was a promise that he would fight with Arjuna to the last, so that whichever of them survived she would still have her five sons (V.142-44).

There is no indication about the size of the armies in the Vaishampayana text. Although the stanza 149 is Included in the group 145-149 shown to belong to Bharata, its mean square is 4018.4 and so seems to have been added much later. It gives fantastic figures for the Pandava army, which it says consisted of forty thousands chariots, sixty thousand elephants, two hundred thousand horse-men and four hundred thousand foot-soldiers.

The Amarakosha (1623) takes vahini, pritana, camu and anikini as synonyms meaning a division of the army. The epic also supports this usage. The whole army is referred to in the Dronaparva as camu (19.3) , pritana (100.27), anikini (137.8) and vahini (139.9). The etymology of the compound Word akshauhini (akshavahini) would give a clue to the size of the two armies. Aksha has two meanings, the axle of the chariot or a die. The latter meaning seems to be more appropriate as

gambling was a popular game among the elderly persons in the time of the Bharata war. The die has an elongated form with four faces, one pair of opposite faces having the markings one and four, and the other pair having the markings two and five. These markings on one side were known as krita and treta and on the other side dvapara and kali. According to Suta, the smallest division of the army in his time was a patti, consisting of one chariot, one elephant, three horse-men and five foot-soldiers. As for senamukha, gulma, gana and vahini each is said to be three times its preceding division. Thus a vahini would consist of 81 chariots, as many elephants, 243 horse-men and 405 foot-men. Then an akshauhini consisting of four vahinis, would have 324 chariots, as many elephants, 972 horse-men and 1620 foot-soldiers i.e. in all 3240 troops. Then the Pandava army would consist of 2268 cars, as many elephants, 6804 horse-men and 11340 foot-soldiers i.e. in all 22680 troops of all kinds; the Kaurava army would then have 35640 troops.

The size of the Pandava army as given by Suta compares well with the army of Porus, who gave a hard fight to Alexander. According to Diodorus, who has given an account of Alexander's conquests. (MGG. p.115), the army of Porus consisted of 1000 cars, 1500 elephants, 30,000 horse-men and 50,000 foot soldiers i.e. in all 82,500 troops. In Udyogaparva (49.61), Sauti gives a still more fantastic figure. The redactors of Mbh. seem to have inflated the sizes of the armies, which took part in the Bharata war to give it a global character. The author of the Parvasangraha has also further inflated the sizes of the armies by taking the terms vahini, pritana, camu and anikini three times of its preceding division, so that the size of the army is inflated twenty-seven times what was given by Suta.

Suta has made no additions to the war books; only Sauti and Harivamshakara have made additions to them. In adhyayas 61-70 of Bhishmaparva Dhritarashtra expresses his anxiety to Bhishma over the successive victories won by the Pandavas.

He said that he failed to understand why the Kauravas had to suffer defeats so often, when such military stalwarts, as Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Shalya fought on their side. Bhishma replied that he had said more than once that the Pandavas were invincible as they were under the projection of Lord Krishna, the wielder of the horn (shringa). He told Dhritarashtra that the Lord of the universe had appeared in the human form and it was he who gave the Pandavas strength in the battle and protected them from danger. He, therefore, tried to impress upon the king that Duryodhana should be persuaded to make peace with his cousins by sharing the kingdom with them. This conversation shows very clearly that Krishna had come to be regarded as God in the time of Sauti.

In adhyayas 153-160, Suta tells us that after Duryodhana appointed Bhishma in over-all command of the army, he sent Uluka as an envoy to the Pandavas to give them the gratuitous advice to fight manfully. Duryodhana then requested Bhishma (161-169) to give his assessment of the heroic qualities of the chief warriors on both sides. When Karna came to know that Bhishma had rated him as ardharatha because of the loss of his kundalas and the curse of Bhargava Rama, he too told Duryodhana that he would keep out of the war so long as Bhishma was in command. Bhishma further told Duryodhana that he would also not fight Shikhandi, who had been born a girl and then changed her sex.

Sauti has added 63 adhyayas to the Dronaparva. In adhyayas 1-10, Sauti relates the investiture of Drona as a second general of the Kaurava army after Bhishma. The adhyayas 26-49 relate to the fight between Arjuna and Bhagadatta and the exploits of Abhimanyu before his death at the hands of the Kaurava warriors. Now in these adhyayas, the death of Abhimanyu came to be announced to Arjuna on his return from the battle with the Samshaptakas with a more telling and dramatic effect. The Pratijna section (52-63) in which Arjuna vowed to kill Jayadratha does not add any

significant events to the war. The only significant parts of adhyayas relating to the death of Ghototkaca are the felicitations offered by Krishna to Arjuna and Yudhishthira's panegyric of Krishna. Sauti has not added any adhyayas to Karna and Shalya parvas.

The adhyayas 26-49 of Dronaparva relate to the fight between Arjuna and Bhagadatta and the exploiter of Abhimanyu before his death at the hands of the Kaurava warriors, which was facilitated by Jayadratha, who prevented the Pandava warriors from following him and giving him necessary protection. When Arjuna returned after defeating the Samshaptakas, he came to know the death of Abhimanyu at the hands of the Kaurava warriors and the part played by Jayadratha in it. He swore to kill Jayadratha, as stated in the pratijnyaparva (adhyayas 52-63). When Duryodhana came to know the oath of Arjuna to kill Jayadratha, he told Karna to defend him. Karna replied that though he had been wounded by Bhima and become tired, he would do his best to guard him against the attack. There was a furious battle at the end of which Arjuna killed Jayadratha to the jubilation in the Pandava camp and deep gloom and sorrow in the Kaurava army. In adhyayas (VII. 103-111) Sauti has tried to boost the exploits of Bhima in his fight with Karna. They are, however, inconsistent with his ignominious defeat later at hands of Karna.

Balarama does not receive much attention from Vaishampayana, as he did not take part in the war. Suta gives no indication about Balarama's going on the pilgrimage thereafter. It is Harivamshakara who has incorporated in the Shalyaparva an account of Balarama's pilgrimage, which Sukthankar rightly calls 'an obvious digression.' Rama visited all the places sacred to the Bhargavas such as the Ramatirtha, Syamantapanca etc. When he arrived at the latter place, he met Narada who told him that most of the Kaurava warriors had been killed, and that if he made haste, he could witness the mace

fight between Bhima and Duryodhana, which was to take place shortly.

Bhargava Rama then went to the battle-field and saw that both Bhima and Duryodhana were ready for battle. To the people assembled there he said, " Two and forty days have passed since I left home. I had set out under the asterism Pushya and have returned under the asterism Shravana " (IX.33.5). From this G.V. Kavishvara' has deduced that the battles were fought on alternate days with one day's rest after each battle. There is absolutely no basis for this in the Vaishampayana text, which gives a contrary statement on the last day of the war. The verse (IX.3.27) clearly states that seventeen days had gone by until that day, since this terrible war began. The fact seems to be that the so-called riddles of the epic have arisen from statements made by different redactors without taking care that they did not conflict with the statements of previous redactors.

When Balrama saw that Bhima struck Duryodhana foully on his thighs, he lost his temper and raising his plough rushed towards Bhima. Lord Krishna, however, held the rushing Balrama tightly in his massive and well-rounded arms and addressed him thus : " There are six kinds of advancement that of one's own friends, the advancement of one's friends' friends, decay of one's enemy, the decay of one's enemys' friends and the decay of one's enemys' friends' friends. The Pandavas are our natural friends, being the children of our aunt. We have ties with Pandavas both by birth and interest and so in their prosperity lies our prosperity. Moreover Bhima had made the vow in the assembly that he would break the thigh of Duryodhana with his mace. Duryodhana was also cursed by Maitreya that his thighs would be crushed by Bhima. " When he found that Balrama was still not satisfied, he added, " Pray calm down and do not give way to wrath. Know that Kaliyuga

is at hand and remember the vow made by the son of Pandu. You must grant that Bhima has only discharged his obligations due to his hostility and vow. " Balrama was not, however, convinced and felt that all this talk about duty was a sham (dharmacchala). He said finally that Duryodhana was a fair warrior, who having sacrificed his life on the altar of battle, had attained to glory. With these words he mounted his chariot and set out for Dvaraka, leaving the Pandavas and Krishna cheerless.

Suta has added the adhyayas 11-18 of the Aishikaparva and all the adhyayas of the Striparva. The Aishikaparva adhyayas describe the inconsolable grief of Draupadi when she came to know the massacre of her sons and brothers by Ashvatthama. Draupadi implored her husbands to avenge their deaths and get for her the shining jewel which Ashvatthama bore on his forehead. The Pandavas went immediately in search of Ashvatthama and found him hiding himself on the banks of the Ganga. In the fight that ensued, Ashvatthama acknowledged defeat and surrendered his jewel to Bhima. Before, however, doing so, he took a blade of grass (ishika) and charging it with a mantra of destruction, said, " May it destroy the race of the Pandavas. " It went straight to the womb of Uttaraa who was then expecting and would have destroyed the embryo but for the intervention of Lord Krishna, who saved the child's life. This child was Parikshit who became the king of Hastinapura after Yudhisthira.

In the twenty-seven adhyayas added by Suta in the Striparva, we find Dhritarashtra and Gandhari mourning over the deaths of their sons and warriors. When Dhritarashtra came to know of the death of Duryodhana at the hands of Bhima, he was beside himself with grief. Sanjaya, Vidura and Vyasa tried to console him. Vyasa said that no one can change what has been ordained by the gods. Sanjaya then advised that they should perform the obsequies of the dead warriors. Dhritarashtra then set out followed by Gandhari and thousands

of wailing ladies and proceeded towards the field of battle. When Yudhisthira heard about this, he too set out to meet his uncle and aunt, followed by Krishna, Satyaki, Draupadi and other bereaved ladies. Passing the Kaurava ladies mourning the deaths of their husbands and sons, he went to his uncle and touched his feet. Dhritarashtra embraced him and speaking a few words of comfort sought for Bhima. Sensing his evil intentions, Krishna pushed Bhima aside and presented an iron statue before him. Dhritarashtra, endowed with the strength of thousand elephants, crushed it in embrace. When he calmed down and felt contrite for what he had done, Krishna told him to calm down and that Bhima was safe. Eventually Dhritarashtra regained his calm, embraced Bhima and other Pandavas and resigned himself to the inevitable.

Thereafter the Pandavas went to see Gandhari. Sensing her mood, Vyasa, who happened to be with her, told her to bear her grief with fortitude and forgive the Pandavas. Gandhari said that what rankled most in her mind was that Bhima had killed Duryodhana treacherously by hitting him below the navel, and it was this that she found it difficult to forgive. When Bhima heard this, he went to her and said, " Mother, whatever wrong I did, I did for self-preservation. I could not have conquered your son in a straight fight. If I wronged him, did he also not wrong us in many ways? Was it not he who had blameless Draupadi brought to the assembly hall and showed her his left thigh ? At that every moment I had vowed to avenge myself for his outrageous conduct by breaking his thigh. As a kshatryia I was by honour bound to keep this vow. Kindly forgive me. " nearing this Gandhari was somewhat mollified and said, " Son, you could have at least spared one of my hundred sons, who could have become our staff in our old age. Where is the king? Call him. " When Yudhisthira heard this, he approached her with folded hands and said, " Queen, this cruel Yudhisthira, who has killed your sons, stands before you. I am indeed a great sinner, and care

neither for life nor for kingdom. Curse me, I deserve it. " " So saying he fell prostrate before her and touched her feet. Gandhari heaved a great sigh and turned her face away. But as she did so, the corner of her eye fell on the toes of Yudhisthira and instantly the nails of his toes became charred black.

When they went to the field of battle, Gandhari saw the dead bodies of her sons, kinsmen and other warriors and became disconsolate with grief. Filled with wrath and sorrow at the senseless destruction that had taken place, she became agitated and ascribed all blame to Krishna. She accused him that he was powerful enough to have prevented the carnage, had he wished to do so. In a violent fit of anguish she cursed Krishna that in the thirty-sixth year from now on, he would see his sons, kinsmen and friends slaughtered in a civil war and he himself would perish in wilderness. She further said that the ladies of Yadava race too would lament over them, as the ladies of the Kuru race were doing then. The king then gave orders for performing the cremation rites of the dead warriors. Kunti then disclosed to her sons the secret of Karna's birth and asked them to offer sesamum and water as libation to their dead brother.

In the first few adhyayas of Rajadharma added by Sauti to the Shantiparva, we find Yudhisthira disconsolate with grief. He said that to him this victory was no better than defeat (xro) and refused to be crowned in spite of the entreaties of his brothers and wife. On being requested by Arjuna to intercede on their behalf, Lord Krishna narrated the well-known stories of sixteen kings of the past, who earned great merit by discharging the duties of the king. Vyasa then raised the discussion to a philosophical level and spoke at some length on man's responsibility for his actions. After all the Kauravas had committed many sins and had to suffer their consequences. If he too, in opposing them, had to commit some unseemly acts, he could atone for them later. Vyasa quoted the instance of Indra, who by way of atonement performed hundred sacrifices after the great war between the devas and the asuras and earned

the appellation of Shatakratu. Yudhisthira then desired to know in detail the duties of a king in normal and abnormal times. Vyasa said that the fittest person to give advice in the matter was Bhishma, who was lying on his death-bed. But Yudhisthira could seek his advice only after his coronation, as then it would be proper for him to ask questions concerning the duties of a king.

On the day fixed for the coronation, Yudhisthira set out in a grand procession, followed by queen mother Kunti, Draupadi, Subhadra and other ladies. When the procession entered the capital, they received a rousing welcome from all the citizens with one dissenting voice. One brahmin from among the crowd said that Yudhisthira, who had caused the death of so many kinsmen, was not fit to be a king. The assembled brahmins, however, recognised him to be Charvaka, the friend of Duryodhana and cursed him. As a result of this curse Charvaka fell down like a tree blasted by the thunderbolt of god Indra.

The adhyayas (XII.40) added by Sauti describes the coronation of Yudhisthira in which Dhaumya, the family priest of Pandavas and other assembled brahmins sprinkled holy water on his head and on the head of his queen Draupadi. After the coronation ceremony was over. Yudhisthira offered grateful thanks to Lord Krishna, praising him by the recitation of his hundred and one names. The next day they went to see their grandsire Bhishma. Lord Krishna told the dying grand old man the purpose of their visit and gave him the necessary strength to play effectively the role of a tutor. The advice tendered by Bhishma is contained in the Shanti and Anushasana parvas and will be described in adhyaya on Epic Polity.

The whole of the Ashvamedhikaparva, excepting the Uttanka episode (adhyayas 51-61) have been added by Suta. After the funeral rites of Bhishma were over, Yudhisthira was again overwhelmed by grief. Vyasa then advised him to perform the ashvamedha sacrifice to atone for the destruction.

After securing the treasure left behind by Marutta in the Himalaya mountain as advised by Vyasa, Yudhishtira after due ceremony let lose the sacrificial horse and nominated Arjuna as the guardian of the horse. All the digvijaya accounts of battles undertaken by Arjuna are of a legendary character. The horse went as far as Manipura to the east and then travelled through Vanga, Pundra and Kalinga countries on the eastern seaboard and Dravida, Andhra, Raudra, Mahishika and Kollagiri territories to the South. They, however, show that Suta knew some countries in the south and the east which were not known to Vaisnampayana.

Arjuna defeated Suryavarma, king of Trigarta, king Vajradatta, son of Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisha, and king Sharabha, son of Shishupala of Cedi. The horse went to Magadha and Arjuna defeated Meghasandhi, son of Sahadeva. In Saindhava country Jayadratha's wife Dushala came with her grandson and implored Arjuna to take pity on him and stop the fight, which he did. In Dvaraka, Ugrasena persuaded the Yadavas to receive Arjuna as a friend. In Gandhara, Arjuna defeated Shakuni's son, who fought valiantly. The dowager queen mother came on the scene and at her request Arjuna stopped the fight. In Manipura, its king was Babhruvahana, who is said to be Arjuna's son from Citrangada, a Naga princess. Arjuna asked him to fight like a kshatriya and in the battle that ensues both the father and son lost their lives. They were, however, revived by Arjuna's second wife, Ulupi, a Naga princess. After Arjuna returned victorious with the sacrificial horse, Yudhishtira performed the ashvamedha sacrifice with great pomp and splendour. Suta has however, added the Nakula episode to say that in his view the ashvamedha sacrifice with its lavish expenditure did not equal in merit the gift of flour which a starving family made to a guest.

All the succeeding parvas have been added by Suta. In the Ashramavasikaparva, we are told that after living in Hastinapura for fifteen years, Dhritarashtra decided to lead the

life of a hermit in the forest. Although the other Pandavas treated him with proper respect, Bhima never missed an opportunity to give him pinpricks. Vyasa, however, assured Yudhisthira that the old king was not leaving because of any grievance, but because he wanted to enter the vanaprastha according to the royal custom. With Dhritarashtra went his wife Gandhari, his brother Vidura and his charioteer Sanjaya. With Gandhari went Kunti, mother of the Pandavas, in spite of her sons' entreaties to her to remain with them and enjoy the fruits of their victory. Kunti told them that while she had stood by them and encouraged them to win back their kingdom, she had now to think of her duty to the aged couple and also go through the discipline of the forest life before she joined their father. After passing through Kurukshetra and reaching the Ganga, they went to the hermitage of Vyasa and settled there.

A year after the departure of Dhritarashtra and others to the forest, Yudhisthira, along with his brothers and womenfolk, paid a visit to them to see how they were passing their days. The surviving widows and orphans also went with them. Yudhisthira met the old king and made enquiries about his health. The blind king too made kind and personal enquiries about all of them and gave the Pandava king useful advice about rajadharma (XV.33). Yudhisthira enquired about Vidura, who was nowhere to be seen and was told that he had gone to the forest. Yudhisthira went in search of him and, when he found Vidura and enquired about his health, the latter made no reply but merged his limbs, breath and senses into those of Yudhisthira, until he became lifeless. After some time Vyasa too came there and divining the thoughts uppermost in the minds of the ladies, gave them a special boon. He told them that if they were to take the bath in the Ganga after sunset, each one of them could see her husband, sons and other relations in their human form. As a special favour he also gave divine vision to the blind king and Gandhari, so that they too could see their sons, grandsons and other warriors. Vyasa further told the

widows that if they wanted to join their husbands in the other world, all that they had to do was to enter the Bhagirathi. It all came about as Vyasa had foretold and many ladies of noble birth and character were united with their respective husbands in the next world.

After passing a month in the company of the blind king, Yudhishthira returned to the capital. Two years thereafter Narada brought the news that all the three, Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti had perished in a forest conflagration. This news caused great commotion in the royal palace. Thereafter Yudhishthira went to the river Ganga with his family and gave funeral offerings in the name of the departed. Thus passed away the remaining members of the older generation of the Kuru race.

The Mausalarva added by Suta describes the inter-necine war which broke out between the Yadava clans thirty-six years after the Bharata war. The seeds of this civil strife had already been laid in that war, as Kritavarma, the chief of the Bhoja clan, fought on the side of the Kauravas, while Satyaki, the chief of the Vrishni and Andhaka clans, joined the side of the Pandavas. The Yadavas had gone for a picnic and had spent the whole day in drinking and merry-making. When liquor began to work, Satyaki taunted Kritavarma that he had attacked sleeping soldiers and thus brought disgrace to their tribe. Kritavarma retorted that this jibe ill-fitted one who had butchered Bhurishrava, whose right hand had been unjustly cut off by Arjuna, when he was sitting in a yogic position preparing for death. From words they came to blows and then a regular fight ensued. All the Yadavas joined the fight on one side or the other and the fight swiftly developed into a civil war.

When Krishna saw that his people were destroying themselves as predestined, he sent his charioteer Daruka to bring Arjuna from Hastinapura. Then he went in search of his elder brother and found him sitting alone on the coast and slowly breathing his last. " The time has come for me to go

too " he said to himself and sat in a yogic posture in a solitary place. A hunter, by name Jara, who was passing by, mistook his foot for a deer's face and shot an arrow at him, which went lean through his body and killed him. The hunter discovered is mistake too late and begged for his forgiveness. Krishna thus ended his earthly career and went to heaven where he was greeted and felicitated by the celestials.

When Arjuna went to Dvaraka after receiving this sad news from Daruka, he found it desolate and without a protector, ith only Vasudeva, father of Krishna, surviving. When he went to see Vasudeva, the old man complained bitterly that Krishna took no steps to prevent the tragedy. The day after this meeting, Vasudeva also died and Arjuna had to prolong his stay for performing the funeral rites of Vasudeva. After performing these rites for Vasudeva, Balarama and Krishna, he left with the forlorn Yadava ladies and Vajra, the sole surviving grandson of Krishna. After they left, the city itself, we are told, was washed away by strong tidal waves of the western sea. Their tribulations were not yet over: for on their way they were waylaid by Abhira tribes, whom Arjuna found himself powerless to check. Many of the ladies voluntarily chose to go with them. Some of them like Rukmini and Jambavati referred to enter the fire, while others like Satyabhama decided to join a hermitage. Arjuna took the remaining ladies and children to Kurukshetra and installed prince Vajra as a ruler at Indraprastha. Arjuna, thereafter, went to the hermitage of Vyasa to seek an explanation of these tragic events. Vyasa said that the times had changed and that they had to face the facts such as they were or else end their earthly career.

After taking stock of the dreadful events that had taken place, the death of Krishna and the failing powers of Arjuna, the Pandavas decided to end their earthly career. As a preliminary to this, they undertook the prithvi-pradakshina i.e. circumambulation of the known world. Before starting this pradakshina, Yudhishthira appointed Parikshit, the grandson of

Arjuna, as his successor with Yuyutsu as the regent. In the last lap of their journey, when they strode northwards to mount Meru, the renowned abode of the gods, Draupadi and the four Pandava brothers dropped down dead through sheer exhaustion. Yudhisthira ascribed the fall, of each one of them to some specific human foible, namely Draupadi's partiality for Arjuna, Sahadeva's affectation of wisdom, Nakula's pride in his prowess and Bhima's gluttony. Yudhisthira continued his solitary trek to heaven, accompanied by a dog, who had joined the party right from the beginning, as his sole companion.

Now Yudhisthira had to pass the final test of loyalty to his companion who had accompanied him on the journey. The God of justice, Dharma, had followed him in the form of a dog, and when Yudhisthira refused to enter the heaven without his companion, Dharma himself appeared and told him that he had passed the final test and could enter heaven in his human form. But when Yudhisthira entered heaven, he saw Duryodhana enjoying facilities due to heroes who die on the field of battle. He was filled with rage and said that he thoroughly disliked the idea of having to spend his days in his company. When he enquired about his wife and brothers, he found that they were in hell and when he saw their torments in hell, he cursed Dharma (XVIII.3). Then both Indra and Dharma appeared before him and explained eschatology to him so that he could appreciate the operation of dharma. Lord Indra told him that as he had deceived Drona by pretending that his son was dead, he had to be brought to hell and shown the torments of his brothers and wife in hell by an act of illusion. He then saw his brothers and wife Draupadi enjoying themselves in heaven. Then as instructed, Yudhisthira took a bath in the celestial Ganga and shed his mortal frame. He became transfigured and free from every trace of anger and hatred. While the Pandavas went to their respective fathers, Yudhisthira entered Dharma, his father and found ultimately real peace and happiness (XVIII.4).

Many of the events described by the subsequent narrators in the elaboration of the Vaishampayana text belong to the domain of myths and folklore. Nevertheless a few of them may contain some historical truth. For instance, the retirement of Dhritarashtra along with Gandhari, Kunti and Vidura in the forest and their subsequent deaths in a forest conflagration may not be without some historical basis. The civil war between the Bhoja and Vrishni tribes could have also taken place during the life-time of Krishna, as the seeds of dissension had already been sown in the Bharata war. The submergence of Dvaraka is also attested by archeological excavations carried out by Sankalia in this regard, who, however; places the date of its submergence in the second century B. C. The submergence of Dvaraka, however, occurs in the Mausalarparva, which has been ascribed to Suta (5th century B. C.) on the basis of group variance. However, it is found that the adhyaya XVI.8, which describes this submergence, could have been composed by the author of the parvasangraha, who lived in the first century B. C.

Suta Lomaharshana has made two important changes in the story of the Mahabharata. Firstly, his composition shows a clear bias in favour of the Pandavas and against the Kauravas. For instance, in the Ghoshatraparva (III. 225-243) he describes the visit of the Kauravas to the Pandavas in their period of exile, undertaken with the express purpose of humiliating them by the vulgar display of their wealth. However, the result of this visit was exactly the opposite, as the Kauravas had to suffer intense humiliation themselves on account of their 'ignominious defeat at the hands of the gandharvas and their subsequent rescue by the Pandavas. Further Suta has incorporated two incidents in the Mbh. story to extenuate, if not condone, some of the palpably wrong actions of the Pandavas. The adhyayas 56 and 57 of the Sabhaparva, tell how Yudhishthira, after losing all his wealth and kingdom, staked himself, his brothers and wife and how,

when he lost this game too, Draupadi was brought to the audience hall of king Dhritarashtra by Dushyasana in a half-naked condition while she was in her menses. This incident has been included to justify the two barbaric acts of Bhima, namely drinking the blood of Dushyasana and striking Duryodhana below the navel against the rules of mace fight. If Jayadratha was killed by a stratagem, did he not try to abduct Draupadi and so deserve it? These two incidents have been responsible for evoking universal sympathy for the Pandavas. Secondly, this redactor speaks of the Pandavas as having performed the Ashvamedha sacrifice, of which there is no mention in the Vaishampayana text. It is further stated that Arjuna went to conquer the eastern parts of the country, which indicates that this author was familiar with those geographical regions. This second redaction seems to have come from the pen of a bard in the court of a great king in the line of Purus. Evidently this great king could not bear to think that his illustrious ancestors should go down in history without an ashvamedha sacrifice to their credit. In adhyaya IX, this king has been identified as king Prasenajit of Kosala.

We shall now see how Suta had tried to defend Pandava's marriage with Draupadi and their breaches of the rules of war. Vaishampayana has faithfully recorded the attempts made by Kauravas to poison Bhima, to burn the Pandavas in the house of lac at Varanavat and finally to send them into exile by deceitfully defeating them in a game of dice, in which they finally succeeded. On the other hand, he has also brought on record the polyandrous marriage of Pandavas with Draupadi, their breaches of the rules of war and the two barbarous acts of Bhima in drinking the blood of Dushyasana and stamping the head of Duryodhana with his foot. The polyandrous marriage of the Pandavas must have appeared loathsome to an agro-pastoral society which had adopted the patrilineal system. Likewise the breaches of the rules of war must have struck them, to say the least, as unbecoming of the victorious heroes of the Mbh. war. Suta has tried to minimise the personal responsibility of the Pandavas for their actions by the not so

convincing employment of the device of boons and curses and by adding some incidents which are not mentioned by Vaishampayana.

Suta has tried to defend the polyandrous marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas by recourse to two myths. Vyasa tells the Pandavas (1.157) and also Drupada (1.189) the story of the old maid, who practised severe penance to obtain a husband. When Lord Shiva appeared before her and asked her to choose a boon, she begged for a husband five times. Lord Shiva took her literally and said that she would have five husbands in the next birth in spite of her protests that she wanted only one husband. Vyasa also told Drupada the story of five Indras. Lord Shiva crushed the pride of Indra by asking him to join four other Indras, who were held captive in a mountain cave. He then told them that they would be born as Pandavas and then return to heaven. Shri, the goddess of wealth, was then asked to take birth as Draupadi, so that the five Pandavas could have a proper mate (1.189).

Among the aberrant actions of the Pandavas, the killing of grandsire Bhishma, who had brought up the Kauravas and Pandavas and showered equal affection on them, strikes one as an outrageous conduct on the part of the Pandavas. When Ambaa, the Kashi princess, found that neither Bhishma, who had carried her off from the syayamvara, nor her lover Shalva would accept her hand, she practised austerities and obtained a boon from Lord Shiva that she would slay Bhishma in her next birth. Thus it could be said that Bhishma was fated to die at the hands of Amba, who had been born as Shikhandi to wreak her vengeance on him. It was also necessary to offer some defence for killing the venerable Drona, their military tutor and their well-wisher. Drupada, who had slighted Drona and was deprived of half his kingdom by Arjuna acting on behalf of his tutor, had performed a great sacrifice for the birth of a daughter who could wed Aijuna and of a son who would slay Drona. His son Dhristadyumna, who became the commander of the army

of the Pandavas, was thus destined to slay Drona. Karna, who had obtained the knowledge of astras from Bhargava Rama under a false pretence, was cursed by the latter that this knowledge would not come to his aid at the crucial time (V111.29.6). He was also cursed by a brahmin whose cow he had unintentionally killed that the wheel of his chariot would sink in the earth (8.29.3). Sauti seems to have added that Duryodhana was also cursed by Maitreya that Bhima would break his thigh (111.11.34).

In order to defend the breaches of the rules of war by the Pandavas, Suta has further added three incidents of which there is not even a cursory mention in the introductory adhyayas (I.55-57) of the Vaishampayana text. The story of Draupadi's abduction by Jayadratha (248-257) in the same parva has been included in order to absolve Arjuna of any blame for killing him. But the most damaging incident added by Suta is the outrage alleged to have been perpetrated by Dushyasana in dragging Draupadi to the assembly hall like a common slave after Yudhishthira had staked her and lost in the dice game.

Suta has depicted two provocative scenes in the Dyutaparva to justify the barbarous acts of Bhima in his final combat with Dushyasana and Duryodhana. Karna suggested that since the Pandavas had lost all property, even the clothes that they were wearing now belonged to Duryodhana and so asked Dushyasana to seize the garments of the Pandavas and the robes of Draupadi. As soon as Karna uttered these terrible words, the Pandavas flung off their upper garments. But when Dushyasana started to disrobe Draupadi by force, Bhima loudly vowed to rend his breast and drink his blood (11.61.40.46). Later when Duryodhana bared his left thigh before Draupadi, smiling leeringly at her, Bhima became furious with rage and swore to smash his thigh in the battle (11.63.12-14). This is how Suta has tried to defend Bhima's actions, namely that Bhima as a kshatriya was bound to carry out his vows, which he had made under conditions of extreme provocation. Bhima too,

when accused by Gandhari of his foul play with Duryodhana, defended himself by saying that he was only acting in the interest of self-preservation and fulfilment of his vows.

These incidents, if true, are very serious indictments, and they are the stock accusations which the Pandavas and more particularly Krishna make against the Kauravas whenever they are blamed for breaking the rules of war. But as stated before they do not find even a cursory mention in the adhyayas of the Vaishampayana text (1.55-57). It is also revealing that Bhima also does not accuse Dushyasana of this outrage against Draupadi after he had wounded the latter fatally and was about to drink his blood (8.61. 11-14). In this connection, the conversation between Krishna and Duryodhana, who was lying mortally wounded after his mace fight, is revealing. After the accusations and counter-accusations against each other were over. Duryodhana said that he had always given a fair fight and this reply was greeted by the gods (IX.60. 51-54). The gods would hardly have condoned the outrage against Draupadi and her abduction by Jayadratha and so it stands to reason that the two shlokas (IX.60.43,45) relating to these accusations were added later on. There is also clear statistical evidence that the Dyuta and Anudyuta Parvas (11.46-72) and the abduction of Draupadi (111.248-257) were added by Suta.

Sauti has brought about a still more fundamental transformation of the epic. To him the Bharata war was not a fratricidal war between the Kauravas and Pandavas but the struggle for supremacy between good and evil. It was because of this that J. Dahalman and A. Ludwig questioned the authenticity of the war and interpreted the epic as an allegory in which Pandavas and Kauravas respectively represented dharma and adharma or light and darkness. Perhaps he or his mentor Bhargava Shaunaka felt that the ordinary defence of self-preservation was not sufficient to justify the stratagems employed by the Pandavas in the war. He has, therefore, brought about an important change in the epic, which is to deify Krishna and to project Arjuna as the great war hero with Lord

Krishna as his divine guide. In the Gita (XV.33) Lord Krishna declared himself to be the supreme God, who had chosen Arjuna as his instrument for carrying out his will. He told Arjuna that as the Destroyer he had already decided that all the Kaurava warriors would meet their death in the war and it was left to him to carry out his will. Sauti goes a step further than Vaishampayana and Suta and says

" Where there is Krishna there is righteousness;
And where there is righteousness there is victory.11

Now as observed by Sidhanta (p. 25) whenever the Pandavas make a breach of the rules of war, it is sought to be condoned on the ground that the divine incarnation had counselled such conduct and surely ordinary human laws could not be applied while judging the actions of divine Krishna. As observed by Sidhanta, this does not seem to support a development in the standard of morals as suggested by Hopkins.

The question arises as to why Suta found it necessary to vindicate those actions of the Pandavas which did not accord with the moral code of the warriors. He has spared no efforts to show that the war took place because Duryodhana was actuated solely by greed and ambition and did not follow the dictates of dharma. That this was not due to the improvement of moral standards is seen from the fact that Suta only repeats the formula of Vaishampayana, " Where there is righteousness, there is victory. " The general view in those times was that the actions of Pandavas were covered by appaddharma, as they were necessitated for self-preservation. Perhaps Bhargava Shaunaka might have felt that the appaddharma did not afford sufficient justification for the breaches of the war code, which must have struck him, to say the least, as unbecoming of the victorious heroes of the Bharata war. At his instance, Suta may

have tried to mitigate, if not condone, the wrong actions of the Pandavas. The scene of disrobing Draupadi in the assembly hall by Dushyasana does not find even a cursory mention in the Vaishampayana text. This incident has been included to justify the two barbarous acts of Bhima, namely the drinking the blood of Dushyasana and striking Duryodhana below the belt. This incident invented by Suta has been responsible for evoking universal sympathy for the Pandavas. As we saw before, there is a natural explanation for the acts of the Pandavas (See pp. 78-79).

After repeating the apaddharma formula of Vaishampayana, Suta presents the following as the moral dictum (bharata-savitri) of the Mbh. :

With raised hands I am crying hoarse,
 But no one listens to me.
 From dharma proceed wealth and pleasure,
 Why doesn't one resort to it ?
 Not for pleasure, nor for fear, nor for greed
 Should one give up dharma even to save one's life;
 Perennial is dharma,
 But pleasure and pain are a passing phase.
 The Self is eternal,
 But the cause of its embodiment is transient.

It is possible that this cry of despair may have been occasioned by some contemporary events. A minister named Punika of the last Vitihotra king of Avanti is said to have killed his master and anointed his own son Pradyota as a king in the sight of the kshatriyas. Ajatashatru, the crown prince of Magadha, put his father Bimbisara to death and seized the throne of Magadha. When his patron king Prasenjit of Kosala

was temporarily absent from the capital, Digh Charayana, his commander-in-chief, installed prince Vidudabha on the throne of Kosala. The ex-king set out for Rajagriha in order to seek the help of Ajatashatru to recapture his throne, but he died of exposure outside the gate of the Magadha capital. This shows that the moral standards in those times had deteriorated and Shaunaka may have thought it proper to reiterate them with the help of Suta and Sauti.

Sukthankar mentions that the Bhargava influence is also responsible for the incorporation into the epic of large masses of didactic material, concentrated chiefly into the Shanti and the Anushasana, especially so far as it concerns the Dharma and Niti elements. He adds that Dharma and Niti elements are just the two topics in which the Bhrigus had specialised and with which their names are prominently associated. Almost all the passages on polity and philosophy have been added by Suta and Sauti, who must have gathered their material from their mentor Shaunaka. For instance, Suta has added the questions of Yaksha to Yudhishthira in Adi, the Vidura-niti, the discourses of Sanatsujata in Udyoga, the dialogue between Bhrigu and Bharadvaja. Shamyakagita. Mankigita, the dialogues between Vasishtha, Bhrigu, Yajnavalkya and Pancashikha with Janaka in Shanti and the Anugita in Ashvamedhika. Sauti has contributed the Bhagavadgita, many adhyayas of Rajadharma, Utatthyagita, Vamadevagita, Vicakhnugita, Haritagita, Vritragita, Parasharagita, and a number of interesting dialogues dealing with important philosophical questions.

The Mokshadharma in Shantiparva is philosophically the most important in the Mbh. next in importance only to the Bhagavadgita. In the Mokshadharma seventy-five adhyayas, namely adhyayas 168-185, 224-247, 291-307 and 338-353 have been contributed by Suta. The first two groups contain the life story of Shuka and the Vyasa-Shuka dialogue dealing with the categories of existence and the two ways of life, the way of

action and the way of knowledge. The adhyayas 291-307 contain the dialogues between Vasishtha and Karalajanaka, Bhrgu and Janaka, dealing with Sankhya and Yoga. The adhyayas 338-353 extol the way of life known as Unchhavritti in which a person lives on the grains gleaned after the reapers have left. As stated before, the Vaishampayana's Bharata does not contain any legends and folklore. Their object is to illustrate how the practice of dharma and niti leads to prosperity and morality, while its neglect conduces to misery and immorality.

The above additions made by Suta and Sauti have been referred to by Hopkins as 'unnatural additions' made to the epic. The epic now contains a number of discourses on dharma and Niti elements in which Sauti has made an attempt to show how an ideal society should function. This is how a number of discourses on dharma and Niti elements have found their way in the epic. Most of the political, religious and philosophical passages added by Sauti are to be found in the Bhagavadgita, the Rajadharma and Mokshadharma and the Dana and Dharma sections in the Anushasana. The myths, legends and folklore added by both Suta and Sauti, exemplify how great men, heroes and sages and great women observed truth and moral values in their life and achieved distinction in this world and went to heaven or earned salvation after death. The epic passages on philosophy and myths and legends will be dealt with adhyayas 15 and 18 in part II respectively.