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Ashvatthama's Massacre Plan

Sauptika Parva
Chapters 1-5

Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center

सञ्जय उवाच
Sanjaya said,
sañjaya uvāca

तस्मिन्नात्रिमुखे घोरे
On that terrible night,
tasmin rātri-mukhe ghore

दुःखशोकसमन्विताः |
immersed in pain and grief,
duḥkha-śoka-samanvitāḥ

कृतवर्मा कृपो द्रौणिर्
Kritavarma, Kripa, and Ashvatthama
kṛtavarmā kṛpo drauṇir

उपोपविविशुः समम् ||
sat down together.
upopaviviśuḥ samam (1.28)

ततो निद्रावशं प्राप्तौ
Then, overcome by sleep,
tato nidrāvaśam prāptau

कृपभोजौ महारथौ |
the generals Kripa and Kritavarma
kṛpa-bhojau mahārathau

सुखोचितावदुःखाहौ
who deserved happiness, not grief,
sukhocitāv aduḥkhārhau

निषण्णौ धरणीतले ||
laid down to sleep on the ground.
niṣaṇṇau dharaṇī-tale (1.31)

क्रोधामर्षवशं प्राप्तो

Overcome by anger and impatience,
krodhāmarṣa-vaśaṁ prāpto

द्रोणपुत्रस्तु भारत |

the son of Drona, O Dhritarashtra,
droṇa-putras tu bhārata

न लेभे स तु निद्रां वै

could not fall asleep,
na lebhe sa tu nidrāṁ vai

दह्यमानोऽतिमन्युना ||

burning with great anger.
dahyamāno 'timanyunā (1.32,33)

संनिपत्य तु शाखायां

Alighting on the branch
saṁnipatya tu śākhāyāṁ

न्यग्रोधस्य विहङ्गमः |

of a banyan tree, the owl
nyagrodhasya vihaṅgamaḥ

सुप्ताञ्जघान सुबहून्

killed many sleeping
suptāñ jaghāna subahūn

वायसान्वायसान्तकः ||

crows - thus did crow-killer.
vāyasān vāyasāntakaḥ (1.39)

सुप्तेषु तेषु काकेषु

While many crows were sleeping
supteṣu teṣu kākeṣu

विस्रब्धेषु समन्ततः |

soundly all around,
visrabdheṣu samantataḥ

सोऽपश्यत्सहसायान्तम्

he suddenly saw the arrival
so 'paśyat sahasāyāntam

उलूकं घोरदर्शनम् ||

of a fearsome owl.
ulūkaṁ ghora-darśanam (1.36)

तद्दृष्ट्वा सोपधं कर्म

Seeing that deceitful act
tad dṛṣṭvā sopadhaṁ karma

कौशिकेन कृतं निशि |

done by the owl at night,
kauśikena kṛtaṁ niśi

तद्भावकृतसङ्कल्पो

his mind influenced by that act,
tad-bhāva-kṛta-saṅkalpo

द्रौणिरेको व्यचिन्तयत् ||

Ashvatthama, alone, thought about this.
drauṇir eko vyacintayat (1.43)

इत्येवं निश्चयं चक्रे

He decided upon
ityevaṁ niścayaṁ cakre

सुप्तानां युधि मारणे |

the killing of the sleeping
suptānāṁ yudhi māraṇe

पाण्डूनां सह पाञ्चालैर्

Pandavas, along with the Panchalas -
pāṇḍūnāṁ saha pāñcālair

द्रोणपुत्रः प्रतापवान् ||

the mighty son of Drona decided.
droṇa-putraḥ pratāpavān (1.53)

कृप उवाच

Kripa said,
kṛpa uvāca

स क्रूरां मतिमास्थाय

Having made this evil resolution,
sa krūrāṁ matim āsthāya

विनिश्चित्य मुहुर्मुहुः |

he thought about it again and again.
viniścitya muhur muhuḥ

सुप्तौ प्राबोधयत्तौ तु

Then, he told the two who were sleeping -
suptau prābodhayat tau tu

मातुलं भोजमेव च ||

Kripa and Kritavarma.
mātulaṁ bhojam eva ca (1.54)

श्रुतं ते वचनं सर्वं

I have heard all you have said,
śrutaṁ te vacanaṁ sarvaṁ

हेतुयुक्तं मया विभो |

along with your reasons, O Ashvatthama.
hetu-yuktaṁ mayā vibho

ममापि तु वचः किञ्चित्

But, some of my words
mamāpi tu vacaḥ kiñcit

शृणुष्वद्य महाभुज ||

you should hear now, O mighty one.
śṛṇuṣvādy mahābhujā (2.1)

दक्षो दाक्षिण्यसम्पन्नो

A intelligent person, endowed with cleverness,
dakṣo dākṣiṇya-sampanno

न स मोघं विहन्यते |

will never fall into failure
na sa moghaṁ vihanyate

आपृच्छति च यच्छ्रेयः

when asks what is best
āpṛcchati ca yac chreyaḥ

करोति च हितं वचः ||

and acts on that good advice.
karoti ca hitaṁ vacaḥ (2.20,21)

ते वयं धृतराष्ट्रं च

With Dhritarashtra
te vayaṁ dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ ca

गान्धारीं च समेत्य ह |

and Gandhari, we should meet
gāndhārīṁ ca sametya ha

उपपृच्छामहे गत्वा

and ask them, and also go to ask
upapṛcchāmahe gatvā

विदुरं च महामतिम् ||

the wise Vidura.
viduraṁ ca mahāmatim (2.31)

अश्वत्थामोवाच

Ashvatthama said,
aśvatthāmovāca

पुरुषे पुरुषे बुद्धिः

Each person has their own point of view,
puruṣe puruṣe buddhiḥ

सा सा भवति शोभना |

and each is as good as another.
sā sā bhavati śobhanā

तुष्यन्ति च पृथक्सर्वे

Everyone is pleased with
tuṣyanti ca pṛthak sarve

प्रज्ञया ते स्वया स्वया ||

their own individual opinions.
prajñayā te svayā svayā (3.3)

अद्य पाञ्चालपाण्डूनां

Now, the Panchalas and the Pandvas,
adya pāñcāla-pāṇḍūnām

शयितानात्मजान्निशि |

while they sleep at night,
śayitān ātmajān niśi

खड्गेन निशितेनाजौ

with my sharpened sword, in battle
khaḍgena niśitenājau

प्रमथिष्यामि गौतम ||

I will kill them, O Kripa.
pramathiṣyāmi gautama (3.34)

कृप उवाच

Kripa said,
kṛpa uvāca

अनुयास्यावहे त्वां तु

We will accompany you,
anuyāsyāvahe tvāṁ tu

प्रभाते सहितावुभौ |

both of us, in the morning.
prabhāte sahitāv ubhau

अद्य रात्रौ विश्रमस्व

Now, at night, you should rest
adya rātrau viśramasva

विमुक्तकवचध्वजः ||

setting aside your armor and flag.
vimukta-kavaca-dhvajaḥ (4.2)

विश्रान्तश्च विनिद्रश्च

When calm, rested,
viśrāntaś ca vinidraś ca

स्वस्थचित्तश्च मानद |

and mentally ready, O Ashvatthama,
svastha-cittaś ca mānada

समेत्य समरे शत्रून्

meeting the enemies on the battlefield,
sametya samare śatrūn

वधिष्यसि न संशयः ||

you will kill them, without doubt.
vadiṣyasi na saṁśayaḥ (4.6)

अश्वत्थामोवाच

Ashvatthama said,
aśvatthāmovāca

आतुरस्य कुतो निद्रा

Where is sleep for one who is tormented,
āturasya kuto nidrā

नरस्यामर्षितस्य च ।

a person who is angered?
narasyāmarṣitasya ca

न चास्मि शक्यः संयन्तुम्

I cannot restrain myself
na cāsmi śakyaḥ saṁyantum

अस्मात्कार्यात्कथञ्चन ॥

in any way from doing this deed.
asmāt kāryāt kathañcana (4.21,31)

अहं तु कदनं कृत्वा

After I slaughter
ahaṁ tu kadanam kṛtvā

शत्रूणामद्य सौप्तिके ।

my enemies in their sleep now,
śatrūṇām adya sauptike

ततो विश्रमिता चैव

then will there be calmness,
tato viśramitā caiva

स्वप्ता च विगतज्वरः ॥

sleep, and freedom from agitation.
svaptā ca vigata-jvaraḥ (4.33)

कृप उवाच

Kripa said,
kṛpa uvāca

कुरु मे वचनं तात

O Ashvatthama, follow my advice
kuru me vacanam̐ tāta

येन पश्चान्न तप्यसे ।

so that you will not regret it later.
yena paścān na tapyase

न वधः पूज्यते लोके

Killing is not praised in the world
na vadhaḥ pūjyate loka

सुप्तानामिह धर्मतः ॥

when they sleep, because it is adharmic.
suptānām iha dharmataḥ (5.8,9)

असम्भावितरूपं हि

Such an improper and
asambhāvita-rūpaḥ hi

त्वयि कर्म विगर्हितम् ।

detestable deed for you
tvayi karma vigarhitam

शुक्ले रक्तमिव न्यस्तं

is like a red blot on a white cloth -
śukle raktamiva nyastaḥ

भवेदिति मतिर्मम ॥

this is my opinion.
bhavediti matir mama (5.15)

अश्वत्थामोवाच

Ashvatthama said,
aśvatthāmovāca

पितृहन्तृनहं हत्वा

After killing those who killed my father,
pitṛ-hantṛn ahaḥ hatvā

पाञ्चालान्निशि सौप्तिके ।

those Panchalas, while they sleep at night,
pāñcālān niśi sauptike

कामं कीटः पतङ्गो वा

in any way, as a worm or insect
kāmaḥ kīṭaḥ pataṅgo vā

जन्म प्राप्य भवामि वै ॥

let me be born.
janma prāpya bhavāmi vai (5.25)

सञ्जय उवाच

Sanjaya said,
sañjaya uvāca

इत्युक्त्वा रथमास्थाय

Having spoken thus, he got on his chariot
ity uktvā ratham āsthāya

प्रायादभिमुखः परान् ।

and drove towards the enemy.
prāyād abhimukhaḥ parān

तमन्वगात्कृपो राजन्

O King, following him were Kripa
tam anvagāt kṛpo rājan

कृतवर्मा च सात्वतः ॥

and Kritavarma.

kṛtavarmā ca sātватаḥ (5.36)