



The Humiliation in the Sabha



Mahabharatha Collection

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Description: The catastrophic dice game and Draupadi's divine surrender - a pivotal moment that exposed moral decay and demonstrated unwavering devotion

Tags: mahabharata, draupadi, krishna, dice-game, dharma, bhakti

The topic of "The Humiliation in the Sabha" refers to the catastrophic events that unfolded in the assembly (Sabha) of Hastinapura following the rigged game of dice, culminating in the public attempted disrobing of Draupadi.

This event is described as the pivotal scene that underscores the moral decay of the elders and highlights Draupadi's unparalleled devotion to Krishna.



The Setup of the Dice Game

The Invitation: Duryodhana, following the advice and manipulation of Shakuni, invited Yudhishthira to a game of dice (gambling). As Yudhishthira was a Kshatriya, he was mandated to accept the challenge, regardless of his skill.

Draupadi's Condition: Upon arriving in Hastinapura, Draupadi had begun her menstruation cycle, making her an Ekavastra Rajaswala (draped in a single piece of cloth while menstruating). Due to this condition, she was secluded in her inner apartment and did not attend the Sabha.

Disregard for Warnings: Before the game started, Bhishma advised against playing, but his voice was disregarded. Vidura's advice was also ignored, and Drona remained silent. Dhritarashtra, the caretaker king, allowed the game to proceed.

The Game: Shakuni played on behalf of Duryodhana. Yudhishthira proceeded to lose massive amounts of wealth, including jars of gold coins, chariots, jewelry, specialized servants, thousands of elephants and horses, and eventually, the entire kingdom of Indraprastha.

The Pawning and Loss of Draupadi

Loss of Brothers and Self: After losing all material possessions, Yudhishthira pawned and lost his four younger brothers sequentially (Nakula, Sahadeva, Arjuna, and Bhima). Finally, he pawned and lost himself, becoming a slave.

Duryodhana's Demand: Despite all these losses, Shakuni urged Yudhishthira to pawn his wife, Draupadi, the Ekavastra Rajaswala. Yudhishthira paused, deliberated, and then pawned and lost her.

The Command for Humiliation: To solidify his victory, Duryodhana demanded that Draupadi, whom he referred to as a "maid," be dragged before him.



Draupadi's Legal Challenge

When the messenger Pratikraman came to summon her, Draupadi, still in her inner chambers, refused. She raised a crucial legal and shastric challenge to the entire assembly:

- She argued that Yudhishthira, having already lost himself and become a slave, no longer possessed the agency to own or pawn her.
- She further questioned the assembly: On what shastric basis can a lady be legally pawned?

Upon hearing her challenge, Duryodhana became furious and ordered Dushasana to pull her to the Sabha forcibly. Dushasana barged in, grabbed her by the hair, and dragged her across the floor and down the stairs, leaving her bruised and bleeding.



The Silence of the Elders

When Draupadi was pushed into the middle of the assembly, she appealed directly to the senior figures for justice:

Dhritarashtra: She asked her father-in-law if he was deaf to her cries, but he remained silent.

Bhishma: She appealed to the great warrior and asked for help. Bhishma confessed that he was doubtful about the legal interpretation (shastric basis) of whether a husband could pawn his wife.

Drona and Kripa: She implored Drona, recalling that he and her father (Drupada) had studied together, asking him to stand for justice. Both Drona and Kripa (the brother of Drona's wife, Kripa) lowered their heads and remained quiet.

Vidura: Vidura stated that he had fought her case but lamented that his word carried no respect.

Vikarna's Protest: Only Vikarna, one of Gandhari's sons, protested the act, stating that insulting the daughter-in-law of the house was wrong, but his objection was also ignored.



The Ultimate Insult and Divine Surrender

Karna's Statement: When the Pandavas and elders stayed quiet, Karna openly stated that it did not matter if Draupadi was "draped in one cloth or she's stripped out of it". Duryodhana, taking this as confirmation, ordered Dushasana to strip her of her single garment.

The Surrender: Feeling completely abandoned and helpless, Draupadi recalled the advice of Vasishta: smartavyo bhagavan harihi—in times of great distress, one must remember Narayana. She surrendered completely (Sharanagatam).

The Cry: Though Krishna was physically far away in Dwarka, Draupadi cried out to him, using specific names: - **Govinda:** She asked Krishna to protect her, treating her like a protected cow. The lecturer notes that Krishna later told Uddhava that he remained indebted (Rinam pravrittam) to Draupadi for the use of this one name, feeling he had not done enough for his friend. - **Achyuta:** The one who never abandons. - **Pundarikaksha:** The lotus-eyed, filled with mercy.

Divine Intervention: In response to her deep surrender, Krishna protected her. Although Krishna (the Nami, the person) was far away, the sources suggest that the protection came via his Name (Nama), which acted like "waves of compassion". He provided an endless supply of cloth, thus saving her from being stripped naked.

The Reasoning for Calling Krishna: An Acharya provides an insight into why Draupadi called Krishna instead of her five husbands: Just as a wife who stumbles on a stone cries out "Amma" (mother) rather than her husband's name, Draupadi called Krishna because she viewed him as her Mother (Bhakta jana vatsale), the one who gives relief.



Reference

This blog post is based on notes taken from the following video : **Video Source:** [Watch on YouTube](#) For a more detailed explanation, I highly recommend watching the original video.



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).