

Section Sixty-One

Jambukhanda-Vinirmana Parva

This parva has 378 shlokas and eleven chapters.

*Chapter 861(1): 34 shlokas
Chapter 862(2): 33 shlokas
Chapter 863(3): 46 shlokas
Chapter 864(4): 35 shlokas
Chapter 865(5): 21 shlokas
Chapter 866(6): 16 shlokas
Chapter 867(7): 53 shlokas
Chapter 868(8): 31 shlokas
Chapter 869(9): 21 shlokas
Chapter 870(10): 74 shlokas
Chapter 871(11): 14 shlokas*

Vinirmana means creation, as well as measuring out, the latter meaning being relevant here. Jambukhanda or Jambudvipa is one of the continents on earth. It is the central one. This section is about geography and is so named because it gives the measure of Jambukhanda.

CHAPTER 861(1)

Janamejaya asked, ‘How did those brave ones, the Kurus, the Pandavas, the Somakas and the extremely fortunate kings who had assembled from many countries, fight?’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O lord of the earth! Listen to how those brave ones, the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Somakas, fought in Kurukshetra, the region where austerities were performed. Arriving in Kurukshetra, the extremely powerful Pandavas, together with the Somakas, were desirous of victory and advanced against the Kouravas. All of them were accomplished in the study of the Vedas and rejoiced at the prospect of battle. They wished to be victorious in the fight and were ready to be

slain in the field of battle. They advanced towards the invincible army of Dhritarashtra's son and, together with their soldiers, set up camp on the western side, facing the east. In the prescribed fashion, Kunti's son, Yudhishtira, instructed that thousands of camps should be set up in the region beyond Samantapanchaka.¹ The entire earth seemed to be devoid of horses, men, chariots and elephants, with only children and the aged remaining. O supreme among kings! That large army was as large as the entire spread of Jambudvipa,² over which the sun radiates heat. All the varnas were together and the expanse covered many yojanas, encompassing in due course, all the regions, rivers, mountains and forests. King Yudhishtira, bull among all men, instructed that the best of food, and every object of enjoyment, should be supplied to them and their mounts. Yudhishtira assigned diverse kinds of signs to them, so that in this fashion, they would know that they belonged to the Pandaveya side.³ With the time for battle having arrived, Kouravya⁴ instructed that all of them should have signs and emblems, so that they might be recognized. When Dhritarashtra's great-minded son saw the tops of the standards of the Parthas, he and all the kings arrayed themselves against the Pandavas. He was in the midst of one thousand elephants and was surrounded by his brothers, with a white umbrella held aloft his head. On seeing Duryodhana thus, all the Pandava soldiers were delighted. All of them blew on giant conch shells and sounded thousands of kettledrums. The Pandavas and the valiant Vasudeva were delighted to see that their soldiers were rejoicing. To delight their warriors, Vasudeva and Dhananjaya, tigers among men who were stationed on their chariot, blew their divine conch shells. Both Panchajanya and Devadatta resounded.⁵ At this, like deer on hearing the sound of a roaring lion, the warriors and the mounts released urine and excrement. At that time, Dhritarashtra's army was frightened on hearing this. A terrible dust arose and nothing could be seen. Enveloped in the dust raised by the soldiers, the sun disappeared. Clouds rained down showers of flesh and blood and this covered all the soldiers. It was extraordinary. Then, near the ground, a wind arose, carrying small

stones. The troops were afflicted with this, but the dust was dispelled. O king! The two armies stood ready and stationed in Kurukshetra, delighted at the prospect of battle, like two turbulent oceans. The encounter between those two armies was extraordinary, like two oceans when the end of a yuga has arrived. When the Kouravas⁶ assembled their armies, the entire earth became empty, with the exception of the aged and children.

‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then the Kurus, Pandavas and Somakas had an agreement and established rules of dharma that would be followed in the war. When hostilities ceased, there would be friendliness towards each other, as was the appropriate behaviour earlier. There would be no resort to deceit again. Those engaged in a war of words would be countered with words. Those who had withdrawn from the midst of battle should not be killed under any circumstances. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A ratha should only fight with a ratha, one on an elephant with another on an elephant, one on a horse with another on a horse and a foot soldier with a foot soldier. Any striking should be in accordance with appropriateness, valour, energy and age and after a challenge had been issued. It should not be against one who was unsuspecting or distressed, or was engaged in fighting with another, or was distracted or retreating. One who was without a weapon or without armour should never be killed. One should never strike charioteers, those carrying burdens,⁷ those carrying weapons and those who sound kettledrums or conch shells. Having concluded this agreement, the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Somakas looked at each other in supreme wonder. Those great-souled bulls among men stationed themselves and together with their soldiers, were extremely delighted in their minds.’

CHAPTER 862(2)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the terrible war was imminent, the illustrious rishi Vyasa, best among all those who knew all the Vedas and Satyavati’s son, the grandfather of the Bharatas, watched, in the morning

and the evening.⁸ The illustrious one could see the past, the present and the future. He met the king, Vichitravirya's son,⁹ in private, in distress and in sorrow over the evil conduct of his sons and spoke these words.

'Vyasa said, "O king! The time has arrived for you, your sons and the lords of the earth. They have assembled in battle and will kill each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their time is over and they will be destroyed. Remember that all this is due to destiny and do not sorrow in your mind. O lord of the earth! If you wish to witness the battle, I will give you sight, so that you can see the war."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "O supreme among brahmarshis! I do not wish to see my relatives being killed. Through your energy, I wish to hear about the smallest details in this war."

Vaishampayana said, 'Since he did not wish to see the war, but wished to hear about it, the lord of all boons granted a boon to Sanjaya.¹⁰

'Vyasa said, "O king! This Sanjaya will describe the war to you. Nothing in this entire battle will remain unseen to him. O king! Having obtained this divine eyesight, Sanjaya will know everything about the battle and will recount it to you. Whether it is evident or hidden, whether it is night or day, Sanjaya will know everything, even if it is thought of in the mind. Weapons will not pierce him. Nor will he be constrained by exhaustion. Gavalgana's son will emerge alive from the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will spread the deeds of the Kurus and all the Pandavas. Do not sorrow. This was destined a long time ago. Therefore, you should not sorrow. It could not have been averted. Where dharma exists, victory is there."

Vaishampayana said, 'Having spoken in this way, the illustrious great-grandfather¹¹ again spoke to the mighty-armed Dhritarashtra. "O great king!¹² There will be a great destruction in this battle. Many fearful portents can be seen. Hawks, vultures, crows, herons and wild crows are assembling in great numbers at the ends of the forests. These birds are extremely agitated at seeing the prospects of a war. These predators will feed on the flesh of elephants and horses. With the terrible sound of 'khatakhata', signifying a calamity, the herons are flying in the centre,

towards the southern direction.¹³ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have always been observing, both at dawn and dusk. When it rises, the sun is covered by headless torsos.¹⁴ They have three colours. They are white and red at the edges and are black in the neck. They are tinged with lightning. They look like clubs and envelope the sun. Irrespective of what time of the day it is, during the day and at night, I have seen the sun, the moon and the stars blazing. This signifies destruction. Even when it is the full moon night in Kartika, the moon is so bereft of radiance that it cannot be seen. It has the complexion of fire and the sky has the same complexion. Heroes, kings and brave princes, with arms like clubs, will be killed. Those brave kings will cover the earth. At night, I always hear a terrible sound in the sky, that of a boar and a cat fighting. The idols of the gods sometimes tremble and sometimes laugh. They vomit blood from their mouths, sweat and fall down. O lord of the earth! Kettledrums sound without being struck. The great chariots of the kshatriyas move, without being yoked. Cuckoos, woodpeckers, blue jays, watercocks, parrots, herons and peacocks utter terrible sounds. When the sun rises, hundreds of locusts can be seen. They are like ornamented warriors wielding arms, armoured and riding on horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At both dawn and dusk, the directions blaze, as if on fire. There are showers of blood and bone. O king! Arundhati is famous and revered by virtuous ones in the three worlds. She moves Vasishtha to the back.¹⁵ O king! Shanaishchara is based in Rohini and is oppressing it. The mark on the moon has disappeared, signifying a great danger.¹⁶ Even when there are no clouds, a great and terrible roar can continuously be heard. The mounts weep and shed drops of tears.”

CHAPTER 863(3)

‘Vyasa said, “Cows give birth to asses. Sons have intercourse with their mothers. When it is not the season, trees in the forest can be seen to produce flowers and fruit. Princes are pregnant and are giving birth to monsters. Predatory birds are feeding on other birds and jackals on other animals. Inauspicious animals with terrible teeth are born, with three

horns, four eyes, five legs, two penises, two heads and two tails. They have wide open jaws and are emitting inauspicious sounds. There are horses with three feet, crests, four eyes and horns. In your city, the wives of those who are learned about the brahman are seen to give birth to birds and peacocks. O lord of the earth! Mares give birth to calves and she-dogs to jackals. Cocks, mynahs¹⁷ and parrots are uttering inauspicious sounds. Women are giving birth to four and five daughters at the same time. As soon as they are born, they are dancing, singing and laughing. In their houses, inferior ones can be seen to be playing, suckling, dancing and singing. These are signs of a great calamity. Driven by destiny, other children are seen to paint armed men who are running around, with staffs in their hands. Desirous of fighting, they are laying siege to cities. Lotuses, blue lotuses and night-lotuses¹⁸ are growing on trees. Strong winds are blowing and the dust is not abating. The earth is trembling and the sun seems to have been swallowed by Rahu.¹⁹ The white planet has passed beyond Chitra and is established there.²⁰ In particular, all this shows harm for the Kurus. There is an extremely terrible comet and it is based in Pushya and is oppressing it.²¹ This great planet will be inauspicious for the armies. Angaraka is retrograde and is in Magha, while Brihaspati is in Shravana.²² The son of the sun is in Bhaga nakshatra and is oppressing it.²³ O lord of the earth! Shukra is rising towards Purva Proshthapada. Having crossed it, it is glancing towards Uttara.²⁴ The dark planet is blazing, with smoke and fire. It is based in, and is attacking, Indra's energetic nakshatra, Jyeshtha.²⁵ Dhruva is flaming and is circling towards the left in a terrible way.²⁶ The harsh planet is established between Chitra and Svati.²⁷ The one with radiance like the fire is retrograde, having completed its regular course.²⁸ It is full of the energy of the brahman and is red in its body. It is established in Shravana. The earth that produces fruit is full of every kind of grain.²⁹ Every stalk of barley has five ears and every stalk of paddy a hundred ears. Cattle are the

foremost in all the worlds and they sustain the entire universe. When they are milked after calving, they only yield blood.

“The bows radiate rays of light. The swords are flaming terribly. The weapons are seen to be unsheathed. A battle is at hand. The weapons, the water, the armour and the standards are shining with the complexion of the fire, foretelling great destruction. In every direction, animals and birds can be seen, emitting harsh noises and their mouths blazing. This signifies a great calamity. A bird with one wing, one eye and one leg is flying in the sky at night. It is screaming terribly, repeatedly vomiting blood. The blazing planets are stationed, with copper-red crests. But the radiance of saptarshi³⁰ has been dimmed. The two blazing planets, Brihaspati and Shani, are near Vishakha³¹ and have become stationary for a year. The terrible planet is established like a comet and has robbed Krittika, the first among nakshatras in brilliance, of its radiance.³² O lord of the earth! The nakshatras were earlier classified into three groups.³³ Budha’s³⁴ glances are descending on them and this engenders great fear. Earlier, the night of the new moon used to be on the fourteenth, fifteenth or sixteenth lunar day. But like now, I do not know of it occurring on the thirteenth. On the thirteenth lunar day and in the same month, eclipses of the sun and the moon took place. These eclipses occurred at the wrong times, signifying a destruction of living beings. All the directions are covered in dust and dust is showering everywhere. There are terrible and ill portents in the clouds. Blood showers down in the night. There are also terrible showers of flesh on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight. The rakshasas are not satiated and utter terrible roars in the middle of the night. The great rivers are flowing in the opposite direction and water has turned into blood. The wells are foaming and roaring like bulls. Meteors are descending with roars, inter-mingled with dry thunder.³⁵ It is now night and the impaired sun will arise at dawn. Giant and fiery meteors have covered everything in the four directions. Maharshis have said that when the sun is thus afflicted, the earth will drink the blood of thousands of kings. From Kailasa and Mandara and also from the Himalaya

mountains, thousands of sounds are heard, as the summits fall down. There are giant tremors in the ground and because of this, the four oceans are repeatedly overflowing their shores. Fierce winds that are full of pebbles are blowing, crushing the trees. In villages, towns and sanctuaries, trees are falling down. When brahmanas pour oblations into the fire, it becomes yellow, red or blue. The flames bend to the left and have a bad smell. They are generally full of smoke and make harsh sounds. O lord of the earth! Touch, smell and taste have become contrary. The standards of kings tremble repeatedly and emit smoke. Kettledrums and war drums release showers of coal dust. From the tops of palaces and the gates of cities, vultures form circles and fly to the left, uttering terrible cries. They are uttering terrible cries of ‘paka, paka’³⁶ and so are the crows. They are perching on the tops of standards and this forebodes the destruction of the kings. Distressed and weeping horses and thousands of elephants are trembling and are running here and there, releasing urine and dung. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard this and the time having arrived, do what is necessary, so that the world does not head towards destruction.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard the words of his father, Dhritarashtra said, “I think that all of this has been ordained earlier and there is no doubt that it will happen. If there is a battle and kshatriyas kill, in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas, they will attain the world of heroes and only obtain happiness. These tigers among men will give up their lives in this great battle and will obtain fame in this world and great happiness for a long time in the other world.”’

CHAPTER 864(4)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O supreme among kings! Having been thus addressed by his son Dhritarashtra, the sage who is an Indra among wise ones, engaged in supreme meditation. The greatly ascetic one, who knew about time, then again spoke these words. ‘O Indra among kings! There is no doubt that time destroys the universe. It again creates the worlds. There is nothing that is eternal. Show the path of dharma to your

relatives, the Kurus, your kin and your well-wishers. You are capable of restraining them. It has been said that the slaughter of relatives is inferior. Do what brings me pleasure. O lord of the earth! Death himself has been born in the form of your son. Slaughter has not been praised in the Vedas. It can never be beneficial. He who kills, kills the dharma of his lineage, and it is like killing one's own body. Destiny has brought you to this path, though you are capable of following the path of virtue. In the form of the kingdom, calamity looms and makes you give up what brings happiness, for the destruction of the lineage and the earth. Your wisdom has suffered greatly. Show your sons dharma. O unassailable one! What is there in a kingdom, if one obtains sin with it? Preserve your fame, dharma and deeds and go to heaven. Let the Pandavas obtain their kingdom and the Kouravas obtain peace." Thus, the Indra among brahmanas sorrowfully spoke these words to Ambika's son, Dhritarashtra, and the one who was skilled in speech again spoke these words.

'Dhritarashtra said, "My knowledge of what exists and what does not exist is like yours. I know the exact truth. O father! But people are deluded because of selfishness. Know me to be such an ordinary person. O one whose power is unmatched! Through your favours, show me the firm direction. O maharshi! They are not under my control. I do not desire to commit a sin. You represent sacred dharma, fame, deeds, fortitude and learning. You are the revered grandfather of the Kurus and the Pandavas."

'Vyasa replied, "O Vichitravirya's son! O king! Openly tell me what is in your mind. As you wish, I will dispel your doubts."

'Dhritarashtra said, "There are signs that portent victory in a battle. O illustrious one! I wish to hear exactly about these."

'Vyasa replied, "The fire³⁷ has a cheerful radiance and its flames rise up straight. It circles to the right and the crest is devoid of smoke. The oblations offered have a sacred fragrance. These are said to be the signs of victory. When the conch shells and drums are sounded, there is a great and deep sound. The sun and the moon have pure rays. These are said to be the signs of victory. Whether they are seated or flying, the

crows utter beneficial cries. O king! Those who are at the back urge an advance, while those at the front urge restraint.³⁸ When vultures, swans, parrots, cranes and woodpeckers utter beneficial cries and circle to the right, the brahmanas say that victory in a battle is certain. When the ornaments, armour and flags are golden in complexion and radiant, incapable of being looked at, such men obtain the favours of happiness and defeat the soldiers of the enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When spirited warriors utter happy shouts and when their garlands do not fade, they overcome their enemies in battle. Those who utter kind words before penetrating enemy formations and those who warn before striking are victorious. When hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell are undistorted and auspicious and the warriors are always happy, victory is certain. Winds that blow, clouds, crows become favourable and so are the showers from clouds and rainbows. O lord of the earth! These are the signs of victory. O lord of men! But if these are contrary, that is a sign of death. Whether the army is small or large, the cheerfulness of the masses of warriors is said to be a certain sign of victory. If a single warrior is frightened, he can cause an extremely large army to be alarmed and flee, even those who are brave warriors. If a large army is broken up, it is incapable of being rallied. It is like a herd of deer frightened by the mighty force of the water. Once a great army is routed, it is incapable of being rallied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing it shattered, even brave warriors become dejected. On seeing the fright and the flight, the fear increases in every direction. O king! The army is suddenly scattered and is destroyed by the enemy. O lord of the earth! Even a brave one, a leader of many soldiers of the four types,³⁹ is incapable of rallying such a giant army. An intelligent person always endeavours and always looks for ways. It is said that success through negotiations is the best, and that through dissension⁴⁰ is medium. O lord of the earth! Victory obtained through battle is the worst. There are many great evils associated with fighting and slaughter is said to be the first. Even fifty brave ones who know each other, are cheerful, are not bound by family ties and are firm in their resolution, can crush a large

army. Even five, six or seven can ensure victory, as long as they do not retreat. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vinata's son, Garuda, does not seek a large number of followers for assistance, when he sees a large number of birds.⁴¹ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The number of soldiers does not ensure victory. Victory is uncertain. That depends on destiny. Even those who are victorious in battle, have to suffer losses.”

CHAPTER 865(5)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O intelligent one! Having spoken these words to Dhritarashtra, Vyasa departed. On hearing these words, Dhritarashtra meditated on them. Having thought about them for some time, he sighed repeatedly. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He asked Sanjaya, the one whose soul was controlled. “O Sanjaya! Those brave lords of the earth are delighted at the prospect of battle. They wish to strike each other with different kinds of weapons. For the sake of the earth, those lords of the earth are prepared to give up their lives. They will not be pacified. They will strike each other to increase the numbers in Yama's abode. Desiring earthly prosperity, they will not tolerate each other. O Sanjaya! Therefore, I think that the earth must possess many qualities. Tell me about them. Many thousands, millions, tens of millions and hundreds of millions of brave people have gathered in Kurujangala.⁴² O Sanjaya! I wish to hear the exact details of the expanse of the countries and cities from which they have come. Through the favours of the brahmana rishi Vyasa, whose energy is infinite, you possess the lamp of divine intelligence and the eyesight of knowledge.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O immensely wise one! According to my wisdom, I will tell you about the qualities of the earth. Behold them with the eyesight of the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I bow down before you. There are two kinds of beings in this world, mobile and immobile. Depending on birth, mobile beings are of three kinds—those born from eggs, those from sweat⁴³ and those from wombs. O king! Out of all mobile beings, those born from wombs are the best. Of those born from wombs, humans and animals are supreme. O king!

They⁴⁴ have diverse forms and are divided into fourteen groups. Seven dwell in the forest and seven live in villages.⁴⁵ O king! Lions, tigers, boars, buffaloes, elephants, bears and monkeys—these seven are said to be forest dwellers. Cattle, goats, men, sheep, horses, mules and donkeys—these seven are considered to be village dwellers by righteous ones. O king! These are the fourteen kinds of animals, domestic and wild. O lord of the earth! These have been mentioned in the Vedas and sacrifices are established on them. Out of domestic ones, men are the best and lions among wild ones. All beings sustain their lives by living on each other. Those that are immobile are said to be *udbhijas* and these have five species—trees, shrubs, creepers, plants and those without stems, of the species of grass.⁴⁶ There are thus nineteen kinds.⁴⁷ They have five universal constituents.⁴⁸ There are twenty-four all together. These are described as *gayatri* and this is known to the world.⁴⁹ He who truly knows all these to be the sacred *gayatri*, possesses all the qualities. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He will not be destroyed. Everything is born from the earth. When destroyed, everything goes into the earth. All beings are established in the earth. The earth is eternal. He who possesses the earth, possesses all the mobile and immobile objects in the universe. That is why the kings desire it and are prepared to kill each other.”

CHAPTER 866(6)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! O one who knows about the measure of different things! Tell me about the names and the measures of rivers, mountains, places inhabited by people, everything else on earth and forests. O Sanjaya! Tell me everything.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! Because everything in the earth is based on the five universal constituents, the learned regard all of them as equal. These are *bhumi*, *apa*, *vayu*, *agni* and *akasha*. Each of them does not possess a quality from the preceding one. Therefore, *bhumi* is the foremost, as has been said by the rishis who know the truth about

the qualities. These are sound, touch, sight and taste, with smell as the fifth.⁵⁰ O king! There are four qualities in *apa*, it does not possess smell. There are three qualities in *tejas*—sound, touch and sight. *Vayu* has sound and touch, while *akasha* has only sound. O king! These five qualities exist in the five constituents of matter, and beings in all the worlds are established on them. When there is homogeneity, they exist separately and independently.⁵¹ When they do not exist in their natural state, they depend on each other and embodied beings are created. There is no exception to this. They are destroyed, with the one that succeeds merging into the one that precedes it. They are created in that way too, with each resulting from the one that precedes it.⁵² All of them cannot be measured. Their forms are those of the lord himself.⁵³ Beings consisting of the five *bhutas* are seen in the universe. Men use reason to try and identify their measure.⁵⁴ But these are things that cannot be thought of. They cannot be fathomed through reason. They are beyond nature and this is a sign that they are inconceivable. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I will now tell you about the island named *Sudarshana*.⁵⁵ O great king! This island is circular and in the form of a wheel. It is full of rivers and other waterbodies. It has mountains that look like masses of clouds. It has cities of different types and beautiful countries. It has trees laden with flowers and fruits and is prosperous, with riches and crops. It is surrounded in every direction by the salty ocean. Just as a man can see his own face in a mirror, the island *Sudarshana* can be seen in the disc of the moon. Two of its parts look like the *pippala*⁵⁶ and two others look like a large hare. It is surrounded on all sides with every kind of medicinal plants. Besides this, everything else is water, and listen as I briefly describe this to you.”

CHAPTER 867(7)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have briefly described that island. Now tell me about it in detail. Tell me about that part of the land that

looks like a hare. Then tell me about the measure of the part that looks like a pippala.”

Vaishampayana said, “Thus addressed by the king, Sanjaya spoke these words.

“O great king!⁵⁷ From the east to the west, there are six mountains that are full of jewels. In both directions, they are immersed in the eastern and western ocean. They are named Himavan; Hemakuta; Nishadha, supreme among mountains; Nila, full of lapis lazuli; Shveta, with the complexion of silver; and the mountains known as Shringavan, made up of every kind of mineral. O king! These are mountains frequented by siddhas and charanas. The distance from one to the other is one thousand yojanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are many sacred countries or *varshas*. In all of these, dwell many different kinds of beings. This is the varsha known as Bharata and the one known as Himavat comes after that. The region known as Harivarsha is beyond Hemakuta. O great king! To the south of Nila and to the north of Nishadha, is a mountain named Malyavan that stretches from the east to the west. Beyond Malyavan is the mountain known as Gandhamadana. Between these two,⁵⁸ there is the circular and golden mountain of Meru. It is as radiant as the rising sun, or a fire without smoke. O lord of the earth! It is said to be 84,000 yojanas high and 84,000 yojanas deep.⁵⁹ The worlds are established on it, above and diagonally. O lord! There are four islands along its sides. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are Bhadrashva, Ketumala, Jambudvipa and Uttara Kuru, the abode of those who have performed virtuous deeds. The bird Sumukha, Suparna’s⁶⁰ son, saw that all the birds on Meru had golden feathers and thought that there was no difference there between superior, average and inferior birds. He therefore decided to leave the place. The supreme among stellar bodies, the sun, always revolves around it.⁶¹ So do the moon, all the nakshatras and Vayu.⁶² O great king! That mountain is full of divine flowers and fruit. It is full of mansions that are made out of polished gold. O king! The masses of gods, gandharvas, asuras, rakshasas

and masses of apsaras always go to that mountain to sport there. Brahma, Rudra and Shakra, the lord of the gods, assemble there, to perform different kinds of sacrifices, with a lot of donations. Tumburu, Narada, Vishvavasu, Haha and Huhu⁶³ went there and satisfied the foremost among immortals with different kinds of hymns. O fortunate one! The seven sages, and the great-souled Kashyapa Prajapati, always go there on the day of the new moon and the full moon. O lord of the earth! Kavya Ushanas⁶⁴ also goes to the summit, with the *daityas*. The jewels that exist in all the mountains come from the jewels there. A fourth part of those is enjoyed by the illustrious Kubera. He gives only a sixteenth part of those riches to men.

“On its northern side is the divine, auspicious and beautiful forest of Karnikara. It is full of flowers everywhere and extends across several mountains. The illustrious Pashupati⁶⁵ himself, the creator of beings, sports there, surrounded by divine beings and accompanied by Uma. He wears a radiant garland of *karnikara* flowers⁶⁶ that extends down to his feet. His three eyes blaze, like three rising suns. The Siddhas are extremely terrible in their austerities. They are excellent in their vows and truthful and can see him. Those who are evil in conduct are incapable of seeing Maheshvara. O lord of men! A stream of milk issues from the summit of that mountain. This is the sacred and auspicious Ganga, the beautiful Bhagirathi. She has three flows⁶⁷ and is worshipped by the virtuous. She flows with a terrible roar. With great force, she descends into the beautiful lake Chandramas. That sacred lake is like an ocean and has been created from her. Even the mountains are incapable of bearing her. But in earlier times, Maheshvara bore her on his head for a hundred thousand years.

“O lord of the earth! Ketumala is on the western side of Meru. Jambukhanda is also there and is extremely large.⁶⁸ It is like Nandana.⁶⁹ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The lifespan there is ten thousand years. The men have golden complexions and the women are like apsaras. Everyone is without disease and devoid of sorrow. They

are always delighted in their minds. Humans born there have the complexion of molten gold. On the summit of Gandhamadana, Kubera, lord of the guhyakas, spends his time in delight, with the rakshasas and surrounded by masses of apsaras. There are smaller mountains and hills at the feet of Gandhamadana. The maximum lifespan there is eleven thousand years. O king! The men there are dark, energetic and extremely strong. All the women have the complexion of lotuses and are extremely beautiful to look at. Shveta is beyond Nila and Hiranyaka is beyond Nila.⁷⁰ The varsha named Airavata is bounded by Shringavat.⁷¹ O great king! The two varshas to the south and the north are in the form of a bow. Ilavrita is in the middle of the five varshas.⁷² A varsha that is towards the north surpasses one to its south in qualities like lifespan, stature, health, dharma, kama and artha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Beings live together in these varshas. O great king! The earth is thus covered with mountains. The large mountain Hemakuta also has the name of Kailasa. O king! Vaishravana⁷³ sports there with the guhyakas. To the north of Kailasa and near Mount Mainaka, there is the large and divine Mount Manimaya, with a golden peak.⁷⁴ To its side,⁷⁴ there is the large, divine, auspicious and beautiful Vindusara,⁷⁵ with golden sand. After having seen Ganga Bhagirathi, King Bhagiratha lived there for many years. There are many sacrificial stakes made out of gems there and sanctuaries made out of gold. The immensely famous one with a thousand eyes⁷⁶ attained salvation there. The creator Bhutapati,⁷⁷ the eternal lord of all beings, supreme in his energy, is worshipped there, surrounded by his followers. Nara, Narayana, Brahma, Manu and Sthanu,⁷⁸ as the fifth, are always present there. The goddess with the three flows⁷⁹ first showed herself there. She emerged from Brahma's world and divided herself into seven streams—Vasvokasara, Nalini, the sin-cleansing Sarasvati, Jambunadi,⁸⁰ Sita, Ganga and Sindhu as the seventh. She is inconceivable and divine and the lord himself⁸¹ thought of ways of dividing her. At the end of a yuga, it is there that sacrifices have been performed on a thousand occasions. The Sarasvati can be seen

sometimes and sometimes she is invisible. Ganga, with the seven flows, is thus famous in the three worlds.

“The rakshasas live on Himavat, the guhyakas on Hemakuta. The *sarpas*, the *nagas*,⁸² the *nishadas* and those rich in austerities live on Gokarna. Shveta mountain is said to be the abode of gods and asuras. O king! The gandharvas live on Mount Nishadha and brahmarshis on Nila. O great king! Shringavat is where the ancestors wander around. O great king! These are the divisions into seven varshas. Diverse types of mobile and immobile beings are placed in them. Different types of prosperity, divine and human, can be seen in them. This is incapable of being described. But those who desire their own welfare, have faith in them. O king! You asked me about the divine region that is in the form of a hare and I have told you. On two sides of the hare, to the north and to the south, there are two varshas. The ears⁸³ are Nagadvipa and Kashyapadvipa. O king! The head is the beautiful Mount Malaya, with the hue of copper. This is the second part of the dvipa that has the shape of a hare.”

CHAPTER 868(8)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! What is to the north and on the eastern side of Meru? O immensely intelligent one! Tell me everything about Mount Malyavan.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! To the south of Nila and on the northern side of Meru is Uttara Kuru, inhabited by the siddhas. The trees there yield sweet fruit and are always full of flowers and fruit. The flowers have excellent fragrance and the fruits are succulent. O lord of men! Some of the trees there yield fruit that satisfy every desire. O lord of men! Other trees there are known as those that yield milk. They yield milk that is like amrita, with the six different kinds of taste.⁸⁴ They also yield garments⁸⁵ and the fruits are also ornaments. The entire ground is strewn with jewels and fine golden sand. O lord of men! Everything is pleasant to the touch and there is no mud. The men who are born there are those who have been dislodged from the world of the gods. Whether

on plain or uneven terrain, everyone is similar in beauty and qualities. Twins are born there and the women are the equals of apsaras. They drink the milk there and the milk is like amrita. When the twins are born, they grow up equally. They are similar in beauty and qualities and wear similar garments. O lord! Like *chakravakas*,⁸⁶ they are devoted to each other. They are without disease, devoid of sorrow and always delighted in their minds. O great king! They live for eleven thousand years and never abandon each other. There is a bird named Bharunda. It has sharp beaks and is extremely strong. When they die, this picks up the dead and hurls them into mountainous caverns. O king! I have briefly described Uttara Kuru to you.

“I will now describe the eastern side of Meru to you exactly. O lord of the earth! Bhadrashva is the first. There is a forest of *bhadrasala*⁸⁷ there and a large tree named Kalamra. O great king! Kalamra is beautiful and always has flowers and fruit. This dvipa is one yojana in expanse and is frequented by siddhas and charanas. The men there are white and possess energy and great strength. The women there are lovely. They are beautiful to look at and have the complexion of the moon. They have the radiance of the moon. They have the complexion of the moon. Their faces are like the full moon. Their bodies are as cool as the moon and they are skilled in dancing and singing. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The lifespan there is ten thousand years. They always remain young by drinking the juice of Kalamra. To the south of Nila and to the north of Nishadha, there is a large and eternal jambu tree by the name of Sudarshana. It has fruits that provide every object of desire. It is sacred and is worshipped by the siddhas and charanas. The eternal Jambudvipa owes its naming to this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That king of trees rises up to heaven. O lord of men! It is one thousand and one hundred yojanas tall. When measured by hand, the fruit of that is two thousand and five hundred cubits in circumference. When ripe, it bursts and falls down on the ground with a loud noise. O king! It releases a juice that is silvery in colour. O lord of men! The juice of the jambu fruit becomes a river. Having circled Meru, this goes to Uttara Kuru. O lord of

men! People are always delighted at having drunk this juice. Having drunk the juice of this fruit, they do not suffer from old age. There is a gold named Jambunada there and it is used for divine ornaments. Men who are born there have the complexion of the rising sun. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The fire known as Samvartaka blazes on the summit of Malyavan. This is the fire of destruction. On the summit of Malyavan, towards the east, are smaller mountains. Malyavan extends for one thousand and fifty yojanas. Men who are born there have the complexion of gold.⁸⁸ They have all been dislodged from Brahma's world and are knowledgeable about the brahman. They torment themselves through austerities and hold up their semen. For the sake of protecting beings, they enter the sun. There are sixty-six thousand of them.⁸⁹ They surround the sun and travel ahead of the sun. Having been heated by the sun for sixty-six thousand years, they enter the lunar circle.”

CHAPTER 869(9)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Tell me the names of the varshas and the mountains. And tell me accurately about those who dwell in the mountains.”

‘Sanjaya said, “To the south of Shveta and to the north of Nila, is the varsha named Ramanaka.⁹⁰ Men who are born there are white in complexion. All of them are extremely handsome to look at. The people born there are fond of sexual pleasures. O great king! Happy in their minds, they live for eleven thousand and five hundred years. To the south and to the north of Mount Shveta, is the varsha named Hairanyavat⁹¹ and the river Hairanvati. O great king! Everyone there is rich, handsome and a follower of the yakshas. O king! They are extremely strong and are always delighted in their minds. O lord of men! The lifespan there is eleven thousand and five hundred years. O lord of men! Shringavat has three peaks. One is made of jewels and another is extraordinary and is made of gold. Another has jewels everywhere and is adorned with beautiful mansions. The goddess Shandili,⁹² who

illuminates herself, always resides there. O lord of men! To the north of that peak and on the frontiers of the ocean, is the varsha named Airavata,⁹³ which is supreme because of Shringavan. The sun does not heat there. Men do not decay there. The moon and the nakshatras cover⁹⁴ and are the only source of illumination there. Humans who are born there have the radiance of lotuses, the complexion of lotuses, eyes that are like the petals of lotuses and fragrance like the petals of lotuses. They do not blink their eyes. Extremely fragrant, they do not partake of food and are in control of their senses. O king! All of them have been dislodged from the world of the gods and are without sin. O lord of men! O supreme among Bharatas! Men have a lifespan of thirteen thousand years there. The lord Hari dwells to the north of the milky ocean, in Vaikuntha. His chariot is made out of gold and has eight wheels. It is yoked to beings and has the speed of the mind. It has the complexion of fire and is extremely swift. It is embellished with gold. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He is the lord of all beings and all prosperity. He is finite and infinite. He is the one who acts. He is the one who makes everyone act. O king! He is earth, water, sky, wind and energy. He is the sacrifice for all beings. The fire is his mouth.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by Sanjaya, the high-minded king, Dhritarashtra, meditated about his sons. O great king! Having thought, he again spoke these words. “O son of a suta! There is no doubt that time destroys the universe and creates everything again. There is nothing that is eternal. Nara and Narayana know everything and hold up all beings. The gods call him Vaikuntha and he is known as Lord Vishnu.⁹⁵”

CHAPTER 870(10)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Tell me about Bharatavarsha, where this senseless army has gathered, and for which, my son Duryodhana is so avaricious. The sons of Pandu desire it and my mind is immersed in it. O Sanjaya! I am asking you, because you are skilled.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Listen to my words. The Pandavas are not covetous about this. It is Duryodhana who covets it, and so does Shakuni Soubala. There are other kshatriyas, who are the kings of many countries, who are greedy about Bharatavarsha and cannot tolerate each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now describe to you the land that is named after Bharata.⁹⁶ O king! This is loved by the god Indra, Vaivasvata Manu,⁹⁷ Prithu Vainya >, ⁹⁸ the great-souled Ikshvaku,⁹⁹ Yayati,¹⁰⁰ Ambarisha,¹⁰¹ Mandhata,¹⁰² Nahusha,¹⁰³ Muchukunda,¹⁰⁴ Shibi Oushinara,¹⁰⁵ Rishabha,¹⁰⁶ Aila,¹⁰⁷ King Nriga¹⁰⁸ and other powerful kshatriyas. O great king! O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O scorcher of enemies! All of them loved Bharata and I will describe this varsha as I have heard it.

“O king! Listen as I tell you what you have asked. Mahendra, Malaya, Shuktiman, Rikshavan, Vindhya, Pariyatra—these are the seven noble mountains.¹⁰⁹ O king! Near them, there are thousands of other mountains that are unknown. They are full of substance and large, with beautiful foothills. There are other unknown and inferior mountains, inhabited by those who have inferior means of subsistence. O Kouravya! O lord! There are aryas and *mlecchas*¹¹⁰ and men from mixed lineage. O lord of men! O Kourava! They drink water from the rivers—the great Ganga, Sindhu, Sarasvati, Godavari, Narmada, the great river Bahuda,¹¹¹ Shatadru,¹¹² Chandrabhaga,¹¹³ the great river Yamuna, Drishadvati,¹¹⁴ Vipasha,¹¹⁵ Vipapa, Sthulavaluka, the river Vetravati,¹¹⁶ the downward-flowing Krishnavena,¹¹⁷ Iravati,¹¹⁸ Vitasta,¹¹⁹ Payoshni,¹²⁰ Devika,¹²¹ Vedasmriti, Vetasini, Trideva, Ikshumalini, Karishini, Chitravaha, the downward-flowing Chitrasena, Gomati, Dhutapapa, the great river Vandana, Koushiki,¹²² Trideva,¹²³ Kritya, Vichitra, Lohatarini, Rathastha, Shatakumbha, Sarayu,¹²⁴ Charmanvati,¹²⁵ Vetravati,¹²⁶ Hastisoma, Disha, Shatavari, Payoshni,¹²⁷ Bhaimarathi, Kaveri, Chuluka, Vapi, Shatabala, Nichira,

Mahita, Suproyaga, Pavitra, Kundala, Sindhu,¹²⁸ Vajini, Puramalini, Purvabhirama, Vira, Bhima,¹²⁹ Oghavati,¹³⁰ Palashini, Papahara, Mahendra, Pippalavati, Parishena, Asikni,¹³¹ Sarala, Bharamardini, Puruhi, Pravara, Mena, Mogha, Ghritavati, Dhumatyamati, Krishna, Suchi, Chhavi, Sadanira, Adhrishya, the great river Kushadhara, Shashikanta, Shiva, Viravati, Vastu, Suvastu, Gouri, Kampana, Hiranvati, Hiranvati,¹³² Chitravati, the downward-flowing Chitrasena,¹³³ Rathachitra, Jyotiratha, Vishvamitra, Kapinjala, Upendra, Bahula, Kuchara, Ambuvahini, Vainandi, Pinjala, Venna,¹³⁴ the great river Tungavena, Vidisha, Krishnavenna,¹³⁵ Tamra, Kapila, Shalu, Suvama, Vedashva, the great river Harisrava, Shighra, Picchila, the downward-flowing Bharadvaji, the downward-flowing Koushiki,¹³⁶ Shona,¹³⁷ Bahuda,¹³⁸ Chandana,¹³⁹ Durgamanta, Shila, Brahmamedhya, Brihadvati, Charaksha, Mahirohi, Jambunadi, Sunasa, Tamasa,¹⁴⁰ Dasi, Trasamanya, Varanasi,¹⁴¹ Lola, Adhritakara, the great river Purnasha, Manavi and the great river Purnasha. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are others—Sadaniramaya, Vriitya, Mandaga, Mandavahini, Brahmani, Mahagouri, Durga, Chitropala, Chitrabarha, Manju, Makaravahini, Mandakini,¹⁴² Vaitarani,¹⁴³ the great river Koka, Shuktimati, Maranya, Pushpaveni, Utpalavati, Lohitya,¹⁴⁴ Karatoya,¹⁴⁵ Vrishabhangini, Kumari, Rishikulya, Brahmakulya, Sarasvati, Supunya, Sarva and the revered Ganga. O lord of men! All of these are mothers of the universe. All of them are extremely strong.¹⁴⁶ Other than these, there are hundreds and thousands of other rivers. O king! To the extent I remember, I have described these rivers to you.

“After this, listen to me as I recount the names of countries. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are Kuru, Panchala, Shalva, Madreya, Jangala, Shurasena, Kalinga, Bodha, Mouka, Matsya, Sukuta, Soubala, Kuntala, Kashi, Koshala, Chedi, Vatsa, Karusha, Bhoja, Sindhu, Pulinda, Uttamouja, Dasharna, Mekala, Utkala, Panchala, Koushija,

Ekaprishtha, Yugandhara, Soudha, Madra, Bhujinga, Kashi,¹⁴⁷
Parakashi, Jathara, Kukkusha, Sudasharna, Kunti, Avanti, Parakunti,
Govinda, Mandaka, Shanda, Vidarbha, Upavasika, Ashmaka,
Pamsurashtra, Goparashtra, Panitaka, Adirashtra, Sukutta, Balirashtra,
Kerala,¹⁴⁸ Vanarasya, Pravaha, Vakra, Vakrabhaya, Shaka, Videha,
Magadha, Suhma, Vijaya, Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Yakrillomana, Malla,
Sudeshna, Prahuta, Mahisha, Karshika, Vahika, Vatadhana, Abhira,
Kalatoya, Aparandhra, Shudra, Pahlava, Charmakhandika, Atavi,
Shabara, Marubhouma, Marisha, Upavrisha, Anupavrisha, Surashtra,
Kekaya, Kuttaparanta, Dvaidheya, Kaksha, Samudranishkuta and
Andhra. O king! O lord of men! There are other mountainous regions
and regions on the outside of the mountains—Angamalada, Magadha,
Manavarjaka, Mahyuttara, Pravrisheya, Bhargama, Pundra, Bharga,
Kirata, Sudoshna, Pramuda, Shaka, Nishada, Nishadha, Anarta, Nairrita,
Dugula, Pratimatsya, Kushala, Kunata, Tiragraha, Taratoya, Rajika,
Ramyakagana, Tilaka, Parasika, Madhumanta, Prakutsaka, Kashmira,
Sindhu, Souvira, Gandhara, Darshaka, Abhisara, Kuluta, Shaibala,
Bahlika, Darvika, Sakacha, Darva, Vataja, Amaratha, Uraga, Bahuvadya,
Kouravya, Sudamana, Sumallika, Vaghra, Karisha, Kashi,¹⁴⁹ Kulinda,
Upatyaka, Vanayu, Dashaparshva, Romana, Kushabindu, Kaccha,
Gopalakaccha, Langala, Paravallaka, Kirata, Barbara, Siddha, Videha,¹⁵⁰
Tamralingaka, Oushtra, Pundra, Sairandhra, Parvatiya and Marisha. O
bull among the Bharata lineage! There are other countries to the south—
Dravida, Kerala,¹⁵¹ Prachya, Bhushika, Vanavasina, Unnatyaka,
Mahishaka, Vikalpa, Bhushaka, Karnika, Kuntika, Soudrida, Nalakalaka,
Koukuttaka, Chola, Konkana, Malavana, Samanga, Kopana, Kukura,
Angadamarisha, Dhvajini, Utsava, Sanketa, Trigarta, Sarvaseni, Tryanga,
Kekaraka, Proshtha, Parasancharaka, Vindhya, Pulaka, Pulinda, Kalkala,
Malaka, Mallaka, Paravartaka, Kulinda, Kulika, Karantha, Kuraka,
Mushaka, Stanavala, Satiya, Pattipanajaka, Adidaya, Sirala, Stuvaka,
Stanapa, Hrishividharbha, Kantika, Tangana and Paratangana. O
supreme among the Bharata lineage! There are other mleccha people to
the north—Yavana, Kamboja, Daruna, other mleccha people,

Sakshadruha, Kuntala, Huna, Parataka, Maradha, China and Dashamalika. These are inhabited by others born from kshatriya, vaishya and shudra lineages. There are *shudra-abhiras*, Daradas, Kashmiras, Pashus, Svashikas, Tukharas, Pallavas, Girigahvaras, Atreyas, Bharadvajas, Stanayoshikas, Oupakas, Kalingas, different races of *kiratas*,¹⁵² Tamaras, Hamsamargas and Karabhanjakas.

“O lord! I have only given brief indications about these countries. If the earth and its qualities and strengths are properly used, it becomes like a milch cow that yields objects of desires and leads to the great fruit of the three objectives.¹⁵³ The brave kings who know about dharma and artha are covetous of these. Because of greed for these riches, they have readily agreed to give up their lives in battle. The earth is the refuge and is desired by those who have the bodies of gods and men. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The kings desire to enjoy the earth and have become like dogs that are trying to snatch meat from each other. Their desires will never be satisfied. O king! It is for this reason that the Kurus and the Pandavas have tried to obtain the possession of the earth through conciliation, gifts, dissension and chastisement.¹⁵⁴ O bull among men! If the earth is looked after well, she becomes the father, the mother, the son and heaven for all beings.”

871(11)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O suta! O Sanjaya! Tell me about the dimensions, the lifespan, the good and evil fruits and the past, present and future of Bharatavarsha, Haimavat and Harivarsha. Tell me in detail.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O extender of the Kuru lineage! There are four yugas in Bharatavarsha—*krita*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *pushya*.¹⁵⁵ O lord! The first is krita yuga and after that treta yuga follows. Dvapara comes after that and pushya follows thereafter. O supreme among Kurus! O supreme among kings! The measure of the lifespan in krita yuga is said to be four thousand years. O lord of men! That of treta is three thousand years. In the present one of dvapara, it is two thousand. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No fixed lifespan has

been prescribed for pushya. People will die in the womb, or once they are born. O king! Men are born in krita and have offspring who are immensely strong, great in spirit and possess all the qualities. There are sages and those rich in austerities. O king! They are great in their endeavour, great-souled, devoted to dharma and truthful. O king! Those born in krita yuga are rich and handsome, with long lifespans. Kshatriyas born in treta yuga are extremely brave warriors, supreme among those who wield bows. Those brave ones are emperors.¹⁵⁶ O great king! When dvapara begins, all the varnas have great endeavour and great valour. But they seek to kill each other. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are born in pushya are limited in their energy and men are wrathful. They are greedy and untruthful. They suffer from jealousy, vanity, anger, deception and malice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is wrath and greed on earth in pushya. O king! O lord of men! The part that remains of dvapara is very small.¹⁵⁷ Haimavat is superior to Harivarsha in all qualities and so on.”¹⁵⁸

Section Sixty-Two

Bhumi Parva

This parva has eighty-seven shlokas and two chapters.

Chapter 872(12): 37 shlokas

Chapter 873(13): 50 shlokas

Bhumi means land or the earth and this section is so named because it has a description of the earth.

CHAPTER 872(12)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have described Jambukhandas exactly to me. Now tell me exactly about its expanse and dimensions. O Sanjaya! Without leaving any gaps, also tell me exactly and accurately about the dimensions of the oceans, Shakadvipa, Kushadvipa, Shalmalidvipa and Krounchadvipa. O son of Gavalgana! Tell me everything about Rahu, the moon and the sun.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! There are many dvipas spread throughout the earth. But I will tell you about seven of them and about the moon, the sun and the planet.¹ O lord of the earth! The mountain of Jambu extends, in its entirety, over eighteen thousand and six hundred yojanas. It is said that the salty ocean is double this in expanse. It² has many countries and is decorated with jewels and coral. It is decorated with many beautiful mountains that have diverse kinds of minerals. Inhabited by siddhas and charanas, the ocean is circular. O king! I will tell you exactly about Shakadvipa. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Listen to me, as I describe it to you appropriately. O lord of men! In dimensions, it is double the size of Jambudvipa. O great king! The ocean is double this

in expanse. O foremost among Bharatas! It³ is surrounded on all sides by the milky ocean. There are many sacred countries there. People who are there, do not die. How can there be famine there? They⁴ are endowed with forgiveness and energy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have briefly and exactly told you about Shakadvipa. O great king! What else do you desire to hear?”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have, briefly and exactly, told me about Shakadvipa. O immensely wise one! Now accurately, tell me everything in detail.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! There are seven mountains there and they are adorned with gems. They are stores of jewels. Listen to the names of the rivers that are there. O lord of men! Everything there is supreme in qualities and sacred. The supreme one is known as Meru and is the abode of gods, rishis and gandharvas. O great king! The mountain named Malaya extends towards the east. The clouds are generated there and spread out in all the directions. O Kouravya! Next is the large mountain Jaladhara. Vasava always extracts supreme water from there. O lord of men! It is from this that we obtain showers during the monsoon. The tall mountain of Raivataka is always established there. The grandfather has decreed that Revati nakshatra should be above it in the sky.⁵ O Indra among kings! To the north, is the large mountain named Shyama. O lord of countries! All the people there are dark in complexion.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! A great doubt has arisen in my mind now, because of what you have said. O son of a suta! Why are the people there dark in complexion?”

‘Sanjaya said, “O immensely wise one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In all the dvipas, there are those who are fair and those who are dark in complexion. O king! There is also a mixture of the two complexions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But because it is full of such people, it is known as Shyama.⁶ O illustrious one! Because the people there are dark, this mountain is called Shyama. O Indra among Kouravas! Beyond this, there is the great mountain Durgashaila. Then

there is Kesara. The wind that blows there has the fragrance of saffron.⁷ Measured in yojanas, each⁸ is twice the height of the one that has preceded it. O Kouravya! The learned have said that there are seven varshas there. O great king! That of the great Meru is Mahakasha, that of Jalada is Kumudottara, that of Jaladhara is said to be Sukumara, that of Raivata is Koumara, that of Shyama is Manichaka and that of Kesara is Modaki.⁹ Beyond that, is Mahapuman,¹⁰ in the middle of Shakadvipa. O Kouravya! O great king! In length, breadth and circumference, this is as large as the famous and large tree that is in the midst of Jambudvipa. There are many sacred countries there, where Shankara¹¹ is worshipped. The siddhas, the charanas and the gods go there. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the people follow dharma there, and so do the four varnas. They are engaged in their own tasks and no instances of theft can be seen. O great king! They have long lives and are free from old age and death. The people there prosper, like rivers during the monsoon. The rivers there are full of pure water. O Kouravya! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Ganga divides herself into several flows—Sukumari, Kumari, Sita, Kaveraka, Mahanadi, the river Manijala and Ikshuvardhanika. O extender of the Kuru lineage! There are many other sacred rivers there, in hundreds and thousands, and Vasava draws water from them to shower down. It is impossible to enumerate the names, lengths and dimensions of these. All these rivers are holy. As the worlds know, there are four sacred countries there—Maga, Mashaka, Manasa and Mandaga. O king! Magas are usually brahmanas and are devoted to their own tasks. The kings of Mashaka are devoted to dharma and tend to every desire.¹² O great king! The vaishyas of Manasa earn their living through deeds. With all their desires gratified, they are brave and are firmly devoted to dharma and artha. The shudra men of Mandaga always follow the conduct of dharma. O Indra among kings! There is no king there, no punishment, and no one to be punished. They are devoted to their own dharma and protect dharma and each other. One is capable of saying this much about that dvipa. Only this much can be heard about the immensely energetic Shakadvipa.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O Kouravya! O great king! I will tell you about what is heard about the dvipa to the north. Listen to me. There is an ocean there, with waters made out of clarified butter.¹³ Beyond that, there is an ocean with waters made of curd.¹⁴ Next is an ocean with waters made out of liquor.¹⁵ And there is another ocean with water made out of sweat.¹⁶ O lord of men! Each of these dvipas is double the size of the one that has preceded it. O great king! They are surrounded by mountains on all sides. In the dvipa that is in the centre, there is a great mountain named Goura, made out of red arsenic. O king! To the west is a mountain named Krishna, which resembles Narayana. Keshava himself protects the divine jewels there. Prajapati is seated there and bestows happiness on beings. Other than the countries, *kusha* grass grows in the midst of Kushadvipa. O king! The *shalmali*¹⁷ tree is worshipped in Shalmalidvipa. There is the mountain of Mahakrouncha in Krounchadvipa. It is a store of gems. O great king! It is always worshipped by the four varnas. O king! There is the extremely large mountain of Gomanta, which is a store of every kind of mineral. The handsome and lotus-eyed lord, Narayana Hari, always resides there, praised by those who have obtained salvation. O Indra among kings! There is another mountain in Kushadvipa and it is marked with coral. There is a second golden and inaccessible mountain named Sudhama. O Kouravya! There is the third radiant mountain, Kumuda. The fourth has the name of Pushpavan and the fifth is Kushoshaya. The sixth has the name of Harigiri and these six are the foremost among mountains. As one progresses, the space between two mountains is double that between the preceding two.

“The first varsha is Oudbhida and the second is Venumandala. The third is Rathakara and the fourth is known as Palana. The fifth varsha is Dhritimat and the sixth varsha is Prabhakara. The seventh varsha is Kampila and this is the collection of seven varshas. O lord of the universe. Gods, gandharvas and other beings roam and sport there. People do not die there. O king! There are no bandits there and no

mleccha tribes. O king! Everyone there is usually fair and delicate. O lord of men! I will tell you about the remaining varshas, as it has been heard. O great king! Listen with an attentive mind. In Krounachadvipa, there is a large mountain named Krouncha. Beyond Krouncha is Vamanaka and after Vamanaka is Andhakaraka. O king! Beyond Andhakaraka¹⁸ is Mainaka, supreme among mountains. O king! Beyond Mainaka is Govinda, best among mountains. O king! Beyond Govinda is the mountain named Nibida. O extender of the lineage! The range between successive mountains is double.¹⁹ Listen. I will tell you about the countries that are located there. The country near Krouncha is Kushala, while that near Vamana²⁰ is Manonuga. O extender of the Kuru lineage! The country beyond Manonuga is Ushna. Pravara is beyond Ushna, Andhakaraka beyond Pravara.²¹ The country beyond Andhakaraka is said to be Munidesha. Dundubhisvana is said to be beyond Munidesha. O lord of men! This is frequented by siddhas and charanas and people are generally fair. O great king! These countries are frequented by gods and gandharvas. There is a mountain named Pushkara in Pushkara and it is full of gems and jewels. The god Prajapati himself, always resides there. O lord of men! All the gods, accompanied by the maharshis, always worship him with eloquent words and reverent homage. Different kinds of jewels from Jambudvipa are used in this. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In all these dvipas, people and brahmanas observe *brahmacharya*²² and self-control and are truthful. Health and life expectancy progressively becomes double.²³ O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The land in each of these dvipas constitutes a single country. In each of these countries, only a single dharma is seen. The lord Prajapati himself raises his staff of chastisement there. O great king! He always resides in those dvipas and protects them. O king! He is the king. He is the one who provides bliss.²⁴ He is the father. He is the grandfather. O foremost among men! He protects all the mobile and immobile beings. O Kouravya! O great king! Cooked food manifests itself before the beings there and they always eat it. Beyond

this is seen the world named Sama. O great king! This has four corners and thirty-three circles. O Kouravya! O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The four elephants, revered by the worlds, reside there.²⁵ O king! They are Vamana, Airavata, Supratika who has rent temples and mouth, and another one.²⁶ I cannot enumerate the dimensions of these elephants. That has always remained unknown—upwards, downwards and diagonally. O great king! The wind freely blows there from all the directions and the elephants seize it with trunks that are extremely radiant, designed to draw up, and with tips like lotuses. As soon as the elephants have seized the wind, they release it with their breath. O great king! It arrives here and sustains all beings.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have told me in detail about the first.²⁷ You have also described the dvipas. O Sanjaya! Now tell me what is left.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! O foremost among the Kouravas! I have spoken about the dvipas. Now listen as I exactly tell you about the planets and Svarbhanu²⁸ and about their dimensions. O great king! It has been heard that the planet Svarbhanu is spherical. Its diameter is twelve thousand yojanas. O unblemished one! Because it is large, its circumference is forty-two thousand yojanas.²⁹ That is what the ancient and learned ones have said. O king! The diameter of the moon is said to be eleven thousand yojanas. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! The circumference of this great-souled one, who provides cool rays, is thirty-eight thousand and nine hundred yojanas.³⁰ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O king! The diameter of the sun is ten thousand yojanas and its circumference is thirty-five thousand and eight hundred. O unblemished one! This is because it is so large. Thus it has been heard about the extremely benevolent and fast-moving giver of light. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are the dimensions indicated for the sun. O great king! Because of its large size, at the appropriate time, Rahu envelopes both the moon and the sun. I have briefly recounted this to you. O great king! With the sight of the sacred texts, I have told you everything that

you had asked, exactly. Be at peace. As instructed there,³¹ I have told you about the creation of the universe. O Kouravya! Therefore, pacify your son Duryodhana.³² O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Having heard the delightful account of Bhumi Parva, a king obtains prosperity and success and is honoured by virtuous ones. The life expectancy, strength, deeds and energy of such a lord of the earth increase, if he follows the vows and listens to it on the day of the new moon or the full moon. His ancestors and grandfathers are gratified. You have now heard everything about the merits that have earlier flowed from Bharata Varsha, where we now are.”