

Crispian Reading From the Mahabharata

Kula Shaker

Once, the sage Durvasas came to the capital of Kuntibhoja. He was famed throughout the world for his penchants and meditations. He wanted to spend a few days with the king. The princess Kunti had been appointed by her father to attend to the wants of the sage.

Indeed, the sage was so pleased with her that he wanted to grant her a boon. He summoned her to his presence and told her that he would teach her a certain incantation. If she recited it, any Deva whom she thought of would come to her. She received the gift with the humility becoming the daughter of a king, and Durvasas went away.

The child - she was hardly a girl - did not understand what Durvasas meant when he said that the heavenly being whom she invoked would come to her. She was as excited as a child with a new toy.

It was early in the morning. Through the Eastern window she could see the Sun just rising. The East was drenched in the colour of liquid gold. The waters of the river were lapping against the walls of the palace. It was an unforgettable scene. The Sun and his soft beams - beams which had the coolness of the dawn - and the beautiful river with her path glowing with the red and gold of the rising Sun. The scene touched the heart of the young girl. She lost herself in the beauty of that majestic vision. Kunti thought how wonderful it would be if the Sun could be there by her side. In a flash she remembered the mantra which the great Durvasas had taught her. Why, if she recited it the Sun would come to her. Yes, that was the way he said. He would come to her.

The poor child, in blissful ignorance, held her palms together, palms that looked like a lotus bud, and invoked the Sun with the incantation she had learnt.

She opened her eyes - a miracle was happening. Along the watery path of the river, the Sun's rays travelled fast. She was blinded by a sudden brilliance. And then Surya, the Sun God