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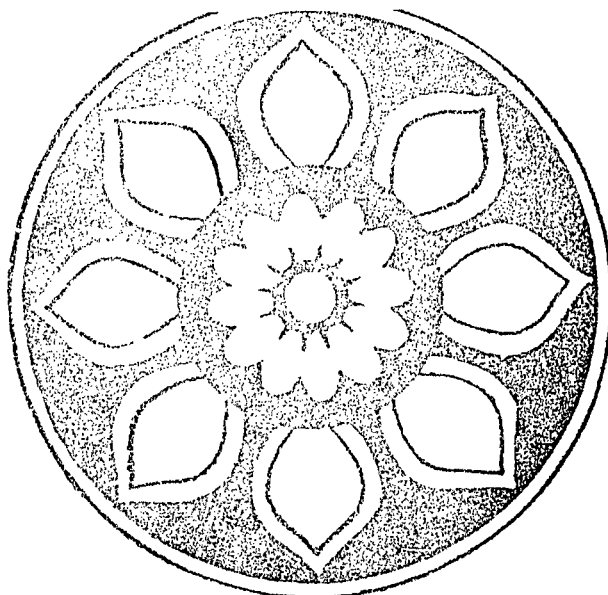
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ABSTRACT

The past and the present interweave in contemporary India. To understand India, one must know of the traditional stories. Two short pocket books make them accessible and acceptable to students: 1) The Dance of Shiva and Other Tales from India by Oron Ghosh, published by the New American Library in New York; and, 2) Gods, Demons, and Others by R. K. Narayan, published by the Viking Press in New York. In the first book, the stories are compiled in short, summary fashion. The second book is for secondary school students, and introduces them to the two great Hindu epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It is suggested that these epics be studied with special attention to the Bhagavad Gita, a book in the Mahabharata. Both poems provide the subject matter for understanding the culture, basic values, and attitudes of Hinduism; the Mahabharata is the repository of India's national tradition, a great encyclopedia of ethics and religion, and of political and moral duties. Students should also learn the story of Krishna and his early life with the Gopis. If possible, they should also dip into the Panchatantra: five books written for the instruction of three princes in niti, the right conduct of life, using animal stories as the vehicle. SO 001 619 through SO 001 623 and SO 001 810 are related documents. (Author)

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**INDIA THROUGH LITERATURE**  
**AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TEACHING INDIA**  
**PART I - INDIA THROUGH THE ANCIENT CLASSICS**  
**BY DONALD & JEAN JOHNSON**



*The Educational Resources Center*

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
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## INDIA THROUGH LITERATURE

The past and the present interweave in contemporary India. What has been is and will be again; what is now was and will reappear. Thus, the heroes and heroines from the "ancient sagas" live with the villagers now, manifest in various forms. To understand India, one must know of the traditional stories; they are the contemporary stories as well. They have always made up smriti scriptures - that which has been remembered - from generation to generation.

Don't shy away from these classical stories because you "only have four weeks to cover India." You can't "cover India" without them. Far from deterring you from important topics, they'll illuminate the present issues and provide insights into why life in India is as it is.

Don't shy away from these classical stories because you "can't read Sanskrit." President Fairbanks assured the annual meeting of the American Historical Association that it was respectable and responsible to teach Aristotle even when you didn't know ancient Greek. Why then should we have any embarrassment in teaching about Rama even when we don't know Sanskrit or Hindi?

Don't shy away from these classical stories because "they are so long and hard to get." Two short pocketbooks, available in New York City bookstores, make them both accessible and acceptable to students. These books are: Oron Ghosh, The Dance of Shiva and other Tales from India, New York: New American Library, 75¢ and R.K. Narayan, Gods, Demons and Others, New York: Viking Press, \$ 1.45. In the first book, the traditional stories are compiled in short, summary fashion. They provide students with an

outline of the story and, considering the length, a respectable amount of flavor of the original. The second book, Narayan's collection, is a gem for high school level students. Here they can become more than friends with the characters from the two great Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Joseph Campbell says of this collection: "The reader familiar with Indian lore will find here all his old friends; the uninitiated will be initiated when he has read the series through."

What, then, should be included from the ancient stories? It is our suggestion that your study should include a consideration of the two epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana, with special attention to the Bhagavad Gita which is included as a book in the Mahabharata but deserves consideration on its own. The students should also learn the story of Krishna and his early life with the Gopis (milkmaids). If possible, you should also dip into the Panchatantra. A few suggestions on what from these works might be selected follows.

#### The Epics - Mahabharata and Ramayana

These two epic poems have had a vast influence in India and Asia. They provide the subject matter for dance, drama and story. Their heroes are reproduced in art throughout the country. Basham says of them: "The non-Hindu who wishes to understand the culture of Hindu India and the basic values and attitudes of Hinduism cannot do better than read these poems." A very helpful introduction to both epics and to their importance in art, literature and drama throughout Asia, is the December, 1967, issue of the UNESCO "Courier."

### Ramayana

Students will enjoy the story of Lord Rama, his faithful wife Sita, their fourteen years of banishment, Sita's abduction by Ravana, the evil King of Lanka (Ceylon), and Rama's defeat of Ravana and re-establishment on the throne. Ghosh covers the story pp. 124-141. The Ramayana is especially useful for teaching the concept of Dharma - living life according to your duty. Rama always did his duty, first as a dutiful son, then as a loving husband and finally as a wise ruler. In every case he put the right performance of duty before his own personal desires. A very good and dramatic example of this comes at the end of the story. Rama banishes his beloved Sita because living with her, after she has lived in the house of another man (even though against her will), violates the King's dharma. This episode is in Ghosh pp. 138-9 and in Narayan's book, pp. 137-142.

The Ramayana often came to the villages in the form of a shadow puppet show. A script (with illustrations and commentary and instruction) of the Ramayana for shadow puppets is available from the Center for International Programs and Comparative Studies, State Education Department, Albany, New York. It could also be used for a dramatic presentation by students and is a short, painless way to introduce the story. A good translation for the teacher or student who wants to study the epic is by Rajagopalachari (Ramayana, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965). One section of the famous Tamil rendering of the epic by Kampan is available in the UNESCO publications of representative works. This is very beautiful and the gifted student might enjoy reading it. (The Ayodhya Canto of the Ramayana as told by Kampan, translated by Rajagopalachari, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1961). A very brief outline follows.

King Dasharatha	- - - - -	- - - - -	Sumitra
			(self-efacing
			wife)
			:
			:
			:
			:
			:
			:
			:
			:
Janak & Earth	- - - - -	Kaushalya	:
		(1st wife)	:
			:
			:
'SITA	- - - - -	'RAM	'BHARATA
			LAKSHMAN
			and
			Satrughna

- Ayodhya - City where King Dasharatha rules
- Manthara - Kaikeyi's maid
- King Ravana - wicked Ruler of Lanka
- Hanuman - Monkey Chief who serves Rama

In the kingdom of Ayodhya there lived a king called Dasharatha. His eldest son was Rama. All the people loved him and wanted him to be king after his father. But he had a step-mother, Kaikeyi. She was jealous of Rama, because she wanted the throne for her own son Bharata. So she made the king send Rama away to the forest for fourteen years. Rama willingly left the palace to obey his father's command. With him went his loving wife, Sita, and his brother, Lakshmana. Their going upset Dasharatha so much that he died of grief. Bharata too loved Rama so much that he refused to sit on the throne his mother had got for him.

In the forest, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana had to lead a very hard life. They could not have any of the comforts of the palace. But none of them felt sorry. They enjoyed living close to trees, rivers and animals. Rama and Lakshmana fought many rakshasas or demons in the forest.

Surpanakha, sister of the demon-king Ravana of Lanka, saw Lakshmana and liked him so much that she wanted him to marry her. Lakshmana refused. She would not leave him. Lakshmana was so angry that he cut off her nose. Ravana was

mad with rage on hearing this, and thought of a plan to take revenge. He sent his uncle, Mareecha, to Rama's hut, disguised as a golden deer. Sita was so charmed by the deer that she asked Rama to capture it for her. Rama went after the deer, telling Lakshmana to stay and guard Sita. Then by some magic, Lakshmana heard Rama calling for help. He did not know whether he should go to help his brother or stay and guard Sita as he had been ordered to do. At last he went. Mareecha had tricked Lakshmana by imitating Rama's voice. This was the chance Ravana had been waiting for. He disguised himself as a sannyasi and came to Sita's hut. He seized her and carried her off to the Island of Lanka.

Rama returned to the hut empty-handed because there had been no real deer. When he found Sita gone, he was heart-broken. He set out at once in search of her. And, as before, his devoted brother Lakshmana went with him.

The two brave brothers were helped by Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, and his minister Hanuman. The army of monkeys hurled rocks and mountains into the sea to build a bridge so that Rama could cross over into Lanka. There Rama fought Ravana and killed him. Sita was rescued. The fourteen years of Rama's banishment were now over. He returned to Ayodhya with Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. The people of Ayodhya were overjoyed to see their beloved Rama again. Bharata had kept the throne for him during all the fourteen years. Rama was now crowned king. His reign was so just and good that people even today speak of Ramarajya as the ideal of Government.

### Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is "the repository of India's national tradition, a great encyclopedia of ethics and religion and of political and moral duties." W. Norman Brown agrees with the thought that if all but one book from India's tradition were to be lost, the one book that should be retained should be the Mahabharata. Seven times as long as the Iliad and Odyssey, it deserves the reputation "If it's not in the Mahabharata, it doesn't exist."



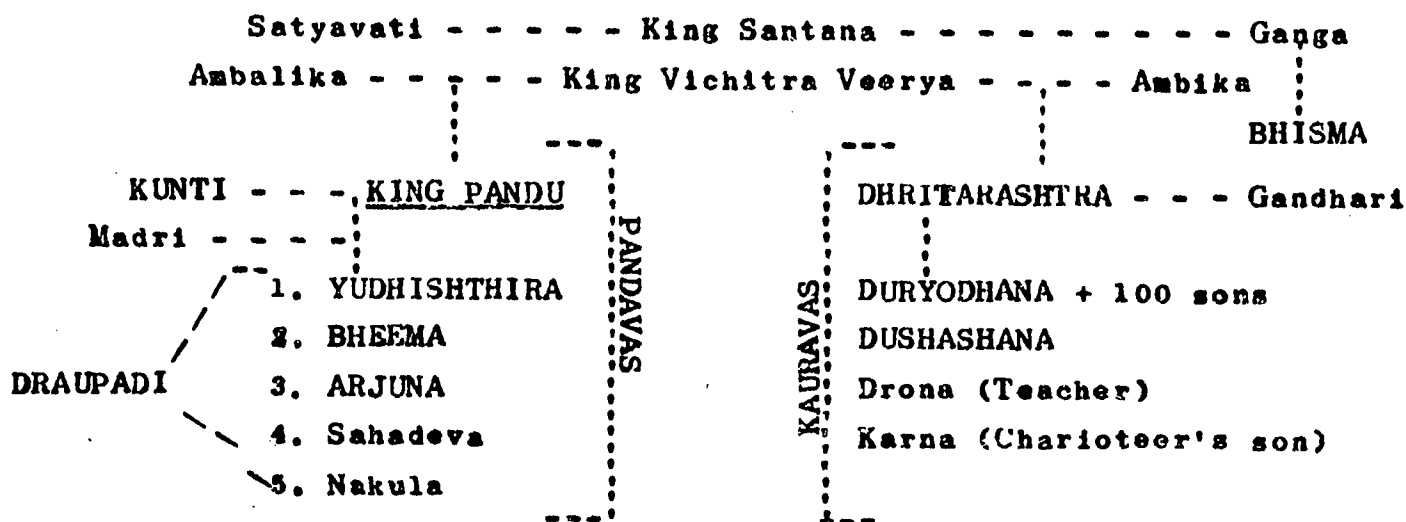
The Mahabharata is not a story, although there is a story in it: the great war between rivalling princes. Students probably will be interested to know this story but do not hold them responsible for the details. Ghosh "covers it" pp. 142-156. On the next page there is a diagram of the principle characters and then a summary of the story of the war. Narayan's story "Draupadi" in Gods, Demons and Others gives the heart of the story in a very interesting way.

Perhaps more interesting than the rivalry between the princes is an acquaintance with some of the characters whose stories are told in the Mahabharata. For this Narayan's book is superb. Have different students read about Draupadi (already mentioned), Nala who outwits the gods and wins the husband she loves, Shakuntala who proves she is the King's wife even though a curse has made him forget her (this story is the basis for one of the most famous plays in Sanskrit, Kalidasa's "Shakuntala"), Sibi - the king who does his duty without regard for his own person, and Savitri - the wife who saves her husband from Yama, the god of death. (She and Sita make up the picture of the ideal wife; brides today are told "May you be a Savitri (or a Sita) to your husband").

Rajagopalachari had translated the Mahabharata (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) and the teacher might want to look at this work. P. Lal is working on a translation which promises to be excellent. The slower reader might find one of the translations for Indian children interesting. (For example: Mahabharata retold by Bani Roy Choudhury, New Delhi: Hemkunt Press, 1967).

For most high school purposes, however, Ghosh and Narayan are probably the best introduction into this work.

Principal characters in the Mahabharata



Battlefield - Kurukshetra

In the town of Hastinapur on the banks of the Ganga ruled a blind old king named Dhritarashtra. He had a hundred sons, who were called the Kauravas. He also had five nephews, the Pandavas, whom he loved like his own children. Yudhishtira was the eldest of the Pandavas. Bheema, the second Pandava, was so strong that he could uproot trees and use them in battle. There was no limit to the food he could eat. It is said that he once ate up seven cart loads of rice! He was also a great cook. The next brother was the brave Arjuna, whose skill in archery was famed throughout the land. Nakula and Sahadeva were the youngest. The eldest Kaurava, Duryodhana, was jealous of his five cousins. He made many attempts to kill them. So the Pandavas left home to make their own fortunes.

During their wanderings, the Pandavas came to the kingdom of Panchala. Here, the lovely princess Draupadi was to marry the man who proved himself the best shot with a bow and arrow. The Pandavas attended the archery contest along with hundreds of other kings and princes. No one could match the skill of

Arjuna and he won the hand of Draupadi. When the Pandavas brought her home, they called out to their mother Kunti, "Arjuna has won a wonderful prize!" "Share it like good brothers," replied Kunti, not knowing what the prize was. And so Draupadi became the wife of all the five brothers.

The Pandavas returned home to Hastinapur. Their uncle felt sorry that they had wandered homeless so long. He gave them half his kingdom. Duryodhana had never liked the Pandavas and was unhappy that his father had given them a share of the kingdom. He thought of a plan to ruin the Pandavas. He invited Yudhishtira to a game of dice. Yudhishtira lost everything. When he had lost even his kingdom he staked himself and his brothers. Luck was against him, and he lost once again. Now all he had left was Draupadi. He staked her and lost her as well. The Kauravas were very pleased. One of them dragged her by her hair into the court. Poor Draupadi could do nothing but pray. The Lord Krishna heard her prayers, and saved her from disgrace.

Duryodhana's father, Dhritarashtra, was sorry for what had happened to the Pandavas, and gave them back their kingdom. But Duryodhana called Yudhishtira to yet another game of dice. The stake this time was that the losers should go away to the forest for twelve years and spend one more year in hiding without being found out. The Pandavas lost the game. They kept their word and went away to the forest with Draupadi.

At the end of the thirteen years, Duryodhana refused to give the kingdom back to them. Instead, he collected a huge army from the farthest corners of the land and declared war on the Pandavas. It is here, just before the fighting starts, that the conversation which makes up the Bhagavad-Gita

takes place. Krishna, who is serving as Arjuna's Charioteer, tells the reluctant Arjuna why he must fight. A large part of the Mahabharata describes this great battle which took place at Kurukshetra and raged for eighteen days. Many great heroes fought on each side. Although the army of the Pandavas was much smaller than that of the Kauravas, they won the great battle. This was mainly because they had the blessing of Krishna and their cause was just. In the end all the Kauravas were killed and Yudhishtira became king of Hastinapur.

After many years of rule the five Pandavas gave up their kingdom and set out in search of heaven. Draupadi was with them, as she had always been. Yudhishtira also took with him a faithful dog. His brothers and Draupadi fell on the way and Yudhishtira reached the gates of heaven alone, except for the dog. There he was told that he would have to leave his dog behind if he wanted to enter heaven. Yudhishtira refused. The gods were impressed by his devotion, and gladly let them both enter heaven.

#### The Bhagavad-Gita

Although this is a part of the Mahabharata, it deserves special attention. The author Raja Rao says: "No one may understand the Hindu mind who has not absorbed the Gita." Have concern with the deed, not with the result, the Gita teaches, for it is better to do your own duty well. The setting will be interesting to students. The great war between those rivaling princes of the Mahabharata is about to take place. One of the warriors pauses a moment and sees all his friends and teachers that are on the opposing side and he gets grief-stricken at the thought of killing those who he has loved. Students might first want to decide how they would advise the warrior; then let them see how Lord Krishna advises him.

Although written from an almost exclusively Vedantic point of view, the translation by Swami Prabhavananda and Isherwood (Mentor Religious Classic, New York: New American Library) has the merit of being easy enough for the students to read themselves. Have them try Book I and II, also Part of IV. A more beautiful and accurate translation is by Frank Edgerton (Harper Torch books), but don't start with this. His commentary and introduction are succinct and excellent for teacher use. Excerpts from the Gita that seem specially meaningful are given on the next pages as well as a summary of the main ideas as written by E.M. Forster. With a little help, his essay "Hymn before Action" could be useful to students.

Once students have gotten the main ideas of the Gita, they will begin to see them throughout Indian life. One student might like to trace the influence on Gandhi. The class might want to listen to the tape of the Swami (from Croton Humanities Project available from CIPCS) and see how much of his talk is "pure Gita."

#### From the BHAGAVAD-GITA

#### Notes from Bashas - The Wonder That Was India

⌈The hero Arjuna awaits in his chariot the beginning of the battle. In the ranks of the enemy are his old friends, relatives and teachers, men whom he has known and loved all his life. Though convinced of the justice of his cause his spirits begin to sink, and he feels that he cannot fight against those who are so dear to him. He turns to Krishna, who is acting as his charioteer, and asks his advice.⌋

Your words are wise, Arjuna, but your sorrow is for nothing. The truly wise mourn neither for the living nor for the dead.

There never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor any of these kings. Nor is there any future in which we shall cease to be.

Just as the dweller in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, so at death he merely passes into another kind of body. The wise are not deceived by that ....

A serene spirit accepts pleasure and pain with an even mind, and is unmoved by either. He alone is worthy of immortality.....

Bodies are said to die but That which posses the body is eternal. It cannot be limited or destroyed. Therefore you must fight.

He who thinks this (soul) is the slayer  
and he who thinks this is the slain do not understand.  
It neither slays nor is it slain.

It is never born and never dies,  
nor, once it exists, does it cease to be.  
Unborn, eternal, abiding and ancient,  
it is not slain when the body is slain....

As a man puts off his worn out clothes  
and puts on other new ones,  
so the embodied puts off worn out bodies  
and goes to others that are new.

Weapons do not cleave it,  
fire does not burn it,  
waters do not wet it,  
wind does not dry it.

It cannot be cleft or burnt,/or wetted or dried,  
It is everlasting, it dwells in all things,/firm,  
moving, eternal .....

To be born is certain death,  
to the dead, birth is certain.  
It is not right that you should sorrow  
for what cannot be avoided ....

Even if you consider this from the standpoint of your own caste-duty, you ought not to hesitate; for, to a warrior, there is nothing nobler than a righteous war. Happy are the warriors to whom a battle such as this comes: it opens a door to heaven ....

If you do not fight this just battle  
you will fail in your own law  
and in your honor,  
and you will incur sin.

Then Krishna develops his teaching on the topic of human activity. The right course is not the inactivity of the meditating sage, for this attempt to put works on one side is impossible and futile.

A man who renounces certain physical actions but still lets his mind dwell on the objects of his sensual desire, is deceiving himself. He can only be called a hypocrite. The truly admirable man controls his senses by the power of his will. All his actions are disinterested. All are directed along the path to union with Brahman.

God himself is continually active, and man also should act; but, as far as possible, he should act without attachment, without personal desires or ambition. He must fulfil his function in the society of which he is a member, doing all things for the glory of God.

Do your duty always but without attachment. This is how a man reaches the ultimate truth; by working without anxiety about results. In fact, Janaka and many others reached enlightenment simply because they did their duty in this spirit. Your motive in working should be to set others, by your example, on the path of duty.

There is nothing in the three worlds which I need,  
 nothing I do not own,  
 nothing which I must get -  
 and yet I labor forever.  
 If I did not always work unwearying ...  
 men would follow my ways.  
 The worlds would perish if I did not work -  
 I should bring back chaos, and all beings would suffer.

The ignorant work  
 For the fruit of their action:  
 The wise must work also  
 Without desire  
 Pointing man's feet  
 To the path of his duty.  
 So, as the unwise work with attachment,  
 the wise should work without attachment,  
 O son of Bharata  
 and seek to establish order in the world ....

Cast all your act upon me,  
 with your mind on the Highest Soul,  
 Have done with craving and selfhood.  
 Throw off your terror and fight ....

For there is more joy in doing one's own duty badly  
 than in doing another man's duty well.  
 It is joy to die in doing one's duty,  
 but doing another man's duty brings dread.

△ The teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita is summed up in the maxim "your business is with the deed, and not with the result." In an organized society each individual has his special part to play, and in every circumstance there are actions which are intrinsically right - from the point of view of the poet who wrote the Gita they are those laid down by the Sacred Law of the Aryans and the traditions of class and clan. The right course must be chosen



according to the circumstances, without any considerations of personal sentiment or interest. Thus man serves God, and is so far as he lives up to this ideal he draws near to god.<sup>7</sup>

### HYMN BEFORE ACTION

BY

E.M. Forster

Arjuna stayed his chariot between the two armies. He saw in either relatives, benefactors, and friends. He saw kindred civilizations opposed, and destruction certain for one of them, and perhaps for both. His limbs trembled, his purpose weakened, he addressed Krishna, who was his charioteer:

"I desire not victory nor kingdom nor pleasures; what is kingdom to us, O Krishna, what is enjoyment, or even life? Those for whose sake we desire such things - they stand opposite to us in the battle now. I desire not to kill them even if the kingship of the three worlds were my reward; how then for earth? Slaying these poor sinners, we shall fall ourselves into sin. They blinded by greed, see no guilt in the destruction of kindred, no crime in hostility to friends, but we, we who have seen, why should we not refrain? When kindred are destroyed, the immemorial traditions perish; when traditions perish, anarchy falls on us all. Were it not better for me to go unarmed, unresisting, into the battle and be slain by them instead?"

Krishna's reply to this question of Arjuna's at the opening of the Bhagavad-Gita - a question that has never been answered decisively by Christianity - is to be found in the subsequent cantos of the poem. Arjuna must fight; for three reasons.

The first reason can never appeal to the Westerner. It assumes death is negligible - not even a gate leading to a new

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Quoted in K. Natwar-Singh, E.M. Forster, A Tribute, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., N.Y.: 1964.

universe, but merely a passage leading back through birth to this. Why hesitate to traverse such a passage? Why hesitate to send others down it, since they must soon return? The body kills or dies; the "dweller in the body" does neither, being immortal, and to regret or to retard its occasional disappearances would be childish. "The dweller in the body slayeth not, nor is it slain when the body is slaughtered. Weapons cleave it not, nor fire burneth it, nor waters wet, nor wind drieth; it is perpetual, all-pervasive, immutable, and knowing it to be such, thou shouldst not grieve. And even when thinking of its constant entrances and constant exists - even then, O Arjuna, thou shouldst not grieve, for certain is death for the born, and certain is birth for the dead."

Now the Westerner will argue that though such a doctrine may inspire heroes, it is equally an excuse for cowards. All incentives to action, all rules for conduct, are made void by it. If nothing that is done in the body matters, then why need we do anything? If to slay and to be slain are the same, then to be fled from and to flee are also the same, and dishonour is as negligible as death. But, as if expecting this criticism, the divine charioteer proceeds at once to his second reason for bloodshed: - Duty. Whatever Arjuna has been or may be, in this present life he is a soldier, and as such it is his duty to fight. This duty has not been assigned to him by chance, though in his ignorance he may suppose so. It has been conditioned by his performances in past lives, just as its performance will condition his duty in lives to come. Action is indeed unimportant. But the impulses that produce action and could not exist apart from it - they are important, and their consequences eternal. The soldier must follow his soldierly impulses, and the

Brahman his priestly, neither envying the other's task. "Better one's own duty though destitute of merit than the duty of another, however well discharged; better death in the discharge of one's own duty than the perilous success that comes from discharging another's." It is Arjunas's duty not to save life but to destroy it; were he trivially to show mercy now, he might check the flow of his development and debar himself from showing perfect mercy in some existence to come.

Yet how shall the hero escape the inevitable stains of war - the insolence of victory, the venom of defeat? He remains unconvinced. The remainder of the poem is concerned with Krishna's third reason, which deals with the problem of renunciation, and attempts to harmonize the needs of this life with eternal truth. The saint may renounce action, but the soldier, the citizen, the practical man generally - they should renounce, not action, but its fruits. It is wrong for them to be idle; it is equally wrong to desire a reward for industry. It is wrong to shirk destroying civilization and one's kindred and friends, and equally wrong to hope for dominion afterwards. When all such hopes and desires are dead fear dies also, and freed from all attachments the "dweller in the body" will remain calm while the body performs its daily duty, and will be unstained by sin, as is the lotus leaf by the water of the tank. It will attain to the eternal peace that is offered to the practical man as well as to the devotee. It will have abjured the wages of action, which are spiritual death, and gained in their place a vision of the Divine. Towards the close of the poem Krishna reveals himself in full glory. "Destroyed is my delusion," Arjuna cries, "I have gained knowledge (literally, 'memory') through the grace, O immutable One. I am firm, my

doubts have fled away. I will do according to the word." He drives into the battle rejoicing, and wins a great victory. But it is necessarily and rightly followed by disillusionment and remorse. The fall of his enemies leads to his own, for the fortunes of men are all bound up together, and it is impossible to inflict damage without receiving it.

### Krishna

Krishna, like Rama, came to earth to subdue evil. In Krishna's case, he was to kill the evil King Kansa. To protect the child Krishna from Kansa, he is secretly taken to a farming family and raised as their child. His early life as a mischievous boy who steals his mother's butter and later as a mischievous lad who steals the gopis (milkmaids) clothes while they are swimming will delight students. They will also enjoy the love poetry associated with his love of the Gopis, especially his favorite, Radha.

The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry (W.G. Archer, Grove Paperback) is excellent background reading for the teacher. Students might enjoy In Praise of Krishna (A Mentor Paperback 1968) (There is also a set of slides that illustrate the early story of Krishna taken from famous paintings available from CIPCS, State Education Department, Albany, New York.

### The Panchatantra

These "five books" were written for the education of three princes. The introduction boasts that he who learns these works "by sad defeat his life is never tainted." Through the use of animal stories, with animals discussing what happened in different situations and what they should do, the princes are given instruction in "niti" - the right conduct of life. Story after story illustrate the instruction. Echoes from these stories are in the fables of Aesop and the stories of La Fontaine, but no one seems sure whether there was direct contact or borrowing.

Students of any age or ability should enjoy these stories; they're delightful. Twenty of the stories are in Ghosh. But, if possible, try and introduce the real book to at least a few students for the stories are even more interesting to students when they see how they fit together. A Phoenix paperback, translated by Arthur Ryder, is available in NYC. (There are also several of the stories on the next page, just to give an idea of the flavor).

From the Panchatantra

In cases where brute force would fail,  
A shrewd device may still prevail:  
The crow-hen used a golden chain,  
And so the dreadful snake was slain.

"How was that?" asked Cheek. And Victor told him:

In a certain region grew a great banyan tree. In it lived a crow and his wife, occupying the nest which they had built. But a black snake crawled through the hollow trunk and ate their chicks as fast as they were born...

At last the crow-hen fell at her husband's feet and said, "My dear lord, a great many children of mine have been eaten by that awful snake. And grief for my loved and lost haunts me until I think of moving. Let us make our home in some other tree. For

With fields o'erhanging rivers,  
With wife on flirting bent,  
Or in a house with serpents,  
No man can be content.

We are living in deadly peril."

At this the crow was dreadfully depressed, but he said, "By some shrewd device I will bring death upon this villainous and mighty foe.

"But," said his wife, "this is a terrible venomous snake. How will you hurt him?" And he replied: "My dear, even if I have not the power to hurt him, still I have friends who possess learning, who have mastered the works on ethics. I will go and get from them some shrewd device of such nature that the villain, curse him! will soon meet his doom."

After this indignant speech he went at once to another tree, under which lived a dear friend, a jackal. He told the jackal his sorrow. "My friend," said the jackal, "I have thought the matter through. You need not put yourself out."

"My friend," said the crow, "Tell me how this villainous snake is to meet his doom." And the jackal answered, "Go to some spot frequented by a great monarch. There seize a golden chain or a necklace from some wealthy man who guards it carelessly. Deposit it in such a place that when it is recovered, the snake may be killed."

So the crow and his wife straightaway flew off at random, and the wife came upon a certain pond. As she looked about, she saw the women of a king's court playing in the water, and on the bank they had lain golden chains, pearl necklaces, garments and gems. One chain of gold the crow-hen seized and started for the tree where she lived.

But when the chamberlains and the eunuchs saw the theft, they picked up clubs and ran in pursuit. Meanwhile, the crow-hen dropped the golden chain in the snake's hole and waited at a safe distance.

Now when the king's men climbed the tree, they found a hole and in it a black snake with swelling hood. So they killed him with their clubs, recovered the golden chain, and went their way. Thereafter the crow and his wife lived in peace. And that is why I say:

In cases where brute force would fail,.. "and the rest of it

Another example is:\*

'''It is said:

He who takes a well-spoken knave  
to be a man of his own stamp  
is fooled by rogues, like the brahman  
who was robbed of his goat.'

'''How did that happen?' asked the King.

'''In the forest of Gautama,' said Meghavarna, 'there lived a brahman famous for his sacrifices. Once he went to a village and bought a goat for sacrifice, and as he was carrying it home on his shoulder he was seen by three rogues. "If we could find a way to get that goat," they said to themselves, "it would be a fine trick!" So they stationed themselves each under a tree about a Krosa apart. As the Brahman passed by, the first rogue said, "Why, brahman, that's a dog you're carrying on your back!" "It's not a dog," replied the brahman, "it is a goat for sacrifice!"

'''Then the next rogue addressed him with the same words. This time the brahman put the goat on the ground and looked at it hard, and again slung it over his shoulder and went on, his mind wavering like a swing; for

The words of rogues make even the mind of a good man waver.  
If he trusts them he dies like Pretty-ears.'

'''How did that happen?' asked the King.

'''In a forest land,' he said, 'there lived a lion named Madotkata, who had three servants, a crow, a tiger and a jackal. Once as the three were out walking they met a camel, and they asked him whence he came, and whether he had fallen out of a caravan. He told them his story, and they took him back and handed him over to the lion, who gave him his freedom and security; and he took the name of Pretty-ears.

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\*This example is taken from Basham, The Wonder That Was India

''Later the lion was taken ill, and there was heavy rain and they were very distressed for want of food. So they agreed so to arrange matters that their lord should kill Pretty-ears. "Of what other use," they said to themselves, "is that eater of thorns to us?" "But how can we manage it," said the tiger, "when our master has given him a pledge of security and has him in his favour?" "At a time like this," said the crew, "When the master is reduced to skin and bone, he won't scruple at a sin; for

A woman torn by hunger will abandon her child  
A snake torn by hunger will eat its own eggs.

What evil will a hungry man not do?  
Lean men are always pitiless!

And, what is more,

A drunkard, an imbecile, a lunatic,  
a man tired out, an angry man, a hungry man,  
a greedy man, a frightened man, a hasty man,  
or a man in love never do the right thing."

''After thus deliverating they all went to the loin. "Have you found anything to eat?" the lion asked. "We've done our best," they replied, "but we haven't found a thing!" "Well," said the lion, "how are we to keep alive now?" "Sire," said the crew, "if we don't get our natural food we'll all surely die." "And what," asked the lion, "is our natural food?" "Pretty-ears!" whispered the crew in the lion's ear.

''The lion touched the earth and covered his ears in horror. "We've given him a pledge of security," he said, "and we must stand by it. How can we eat him? For

Not gifts of land nor gifts of gold,  
nor gifts of cattle nor gifts of food  
are said to be the greatest gift  
of all gifts greatest is the gift of safety.



Moreover

The merit of the horse-sacrifice,  
 the fulfilment of all desires,  
 comes to the man who protects  
 those who take refuge with him."

"True!" said the crow. "Our lord must not kill him, But there's no reason why we shouldn't so arrange things that he offers his body voluntarily." At this the lion kept silence. So when a suitable occasion offered the crow found a pretext to bring them all into the lion's present. "Sire," he said, "however hard we try we can find no food. Your Majesty is weak from days of fasting. So now make a meal of my flesh, for All subjects are dependent on their lord.

Only well-rooted trees bear fruit,  
 and only when the king is strong  
 do men's works prosper."

"I'd rather die myself than do such a thing!" said the lion.

"Then the jackal made the same offer. "Never!" the lion replied.

"The tiger next spoke up. "Let my lord live on my own body!" he said. "Such a thing can never be right!" the lion replied.

"Finally Pretty-ears, full of confidence, offered himself in the same way. And, in accordance with his offer, the lion ripped his belly open and they all ate him up.

...And that is why I say:

The words of rogues make even the mind of  
 a good man waver.

If he trusts them he dies like Pretty-ears.

...Meanwhile the brahman met the third rogue, who spoke to him in the same way. This time he decided that his senses were defective. So he abandoned the goat, took a ritual

ablution, and went home, while the rogues took the goat  
away and ate it.

And so I say:

He who takes a well-spoken knave  
to be a man of his own stamp  
is fooled by rogues like the brahman  
who was robbed of his goat.'''

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