



The location of the battle, in which Arjuna does not want to fight, is the Kurukshetra district of India. The place is north of Delhi, and the city of Kurukshetra is considered to be holy.

The battle itself is described in the *Mahabharata*. It is a subject with which every Hindu child in India is familiar. Swami Krishnananda summarizes the relevant parts of the *Mahabharata*. The following excerpt, from his summary—which includes quotes from the epic—provides the context for this illustration:

War took place. Without going into detail of the further events, we can sum up by saying that Sri Krishna was even ready to break his promise of not taking up weapons in the war when he found that Arjuna had a subtle inner respect for Bhishma as his grandfather and would not actually face him with the strength that he could have exercised at that moment.

Arjuna was going a little slow, as if he was not eager to fight, and Bhishma was destroying everybody. Bhishma was raging like fire, and thousands and thousands of Pandava forces [Arjuna's side of the battle] were dying.

Sri Krishna jumped from the chariot and said, "You are not able to do anything! I shall myself do everything. I shall destroy Bhishma just now."

When Sri Krishna rushed forward with his Sudarshana Chakra, Arjuna ran after him and pulled him back. Weeping, he said, "Master, I shall do whatever you say. Don't break your promise. Come back."

Then Bhishma threw down his weapons and prayed, "Great Master, if you come and destroy me today, I shall be blessed. I shall have entry into your body, and attain moksha just now. Please come."

Finally the war ended. Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Duryodhana were all completely felled by various methods of warfare, and the Pandavas won victory. Yudhishtira was declared king, Draupadi was anointed queen, and all went well.

Arjuna—the mortal—tells Krishna (Bhagavan)—the Lord—he will not fight. The spiritual guide, Krishna, tells the mortal he has no choice. He must fight.

The Pandavas won because Krishna helped the reluctant Arjuna to do his duty.

This image specifically illustrates Bhagavad-gita 6.34 which states:

The mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate and very strong, O Krishna.

Each part of the illustration—depicting Arjuna (whose mind is "obstinate and very strong") and his encounter with Krishna—is a symbol for something else. Arjuna, who has not-yet seen Krishna's Universal Form, does not realize that:

- The chariot represents the human body.
- The five horses are the five senses—tasting, seeing, hearing, smelling and touching.
- The chariot's reins, which the charioteer uses to drive his vehicle, symbolize the human mind.
- The driver represents human intelligence while the passenger symbolizes a person's spirit/soul.

Even though Arjuna has not-yet witnessed Krishna's Universal Form—because Krishna has not-yet revealed it to Arjuna—the reluctant warrior follows the charioteer's advice.

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