

arrows with which Droṇa fought with Dhṛṣṭadyumna had the lustre of Brahma-daṇḍa (*śarāṁś ca brahmadāṇḍābhān*) 7. 164. 122; the arrows of Rāma that killed Rāvaṇa looked like a raised Brahma-daṇḍa 3. 274. 27; (3) the *gadā* of Bhīma compared with a raised Brahma-daṇḍa 5. 50. 8; (4) Rāvaṇa hurled a *śūla* at Rāma which looked like a raised Brahma-daṇḍa 3. 274. 19; (5) Garuḍa, flying in the sky, appeared to Kaśyapa, his father, like a raised Brahma-daṇḍa 1. 26. 7; (6) enraged Sudhanvan, the son of Aṅgiras, looked like the burning Brahma-daṇḍa 2. 61. 62; (7) the fear of the sacrificial fire which the snake Vāsuki entertained due to his mother's curse compared with Brahma-daṇḍa 1. 49. 22-24; (1. 52. 22 ?); [Brahma-daṇḍa also means 'punishment inflicted by the curse of a Brāhmaṇa' 1. 2. 220; 16. 4. 38].

Brahmaśiras¹ nt. : Name of a missile (once called *brahmāstra* 10. 15. 21).

A. History : Supposed to have arisen from Brahman's lustre (*brahmatejohava* 10. 15. 7); Droṇa, after practising severe austerities, received the missile Brahmaśiras from Agastya 10. 12. 14; later it was taught by Droṇa to Arjuna when he was satisfied (*pritiṁān, prīyamāṇaḥ*) with him (Arjuna) 1. 123. 72; 10. 12. 5 and, not with great delight (*nātiḥṣṭamanāḥ*), to Aśvatthāman whom he had apparently first refused to teach 10. 12. 6.

B. Description : powerful missile (*paramāstra*) 1. 123. 78; 10. 15. 3, 6; famous as 'uncomparable' in the worlds (*asāmānyam idam tāta lokeṣu astraṁ nigadyate*) 1. 123. 76; divine (*divya*) 10. 15. 16; outstanding (*viśiṣṭa*) 1. 123. 74; highly irresistible (*atidurdhara*) 1. 123. 74; fiery (*mahārciṣmat*) 10. 14. 7; difficult to obtain (*duravāpa*) 10. 15. 9; worshipped by gods and Gandharvas

(*devagandharvapūjita*) 10. 12. 14; capable of burning the whole earth (*dahed yad pṛthivīm api*) 10. 12. 4. **C. Restrictions on its use** : (1) while giving the *astra* to Arjuna, Droṇa told him not to use it against men, but to use it only if he was attacked in a battle by a superhuman enemy (*amānuṣaḥ śatruḥ*); if released against an enemy of lesser mettle (*alpatejas*), the missile would burn the world 1. 123. 75, 77; (2) while teaching it to Aśvatthāman, who was known to be rash by nature, Droṇa warned him not to use it even under dire circumstances in battle, especially not against men (*paramāpadgatenāpi na sma tāta tvayā raṇe | idam astraṁ prayoktavyaṁ mānuṣeṣu viśeṣataḥ*) 10. 12. 7-8. **D. Taught by Droṇa only to Arjuna and Aśvatthāman** : (1) It was given to Arjuna since Droṇa considered him to be distinguished among his pupils (*viśiṣṭaṁ sarvaśiṣyebhyaḥ*) 1. 123. 72; 10. 15. 21; when taught to Arjuna, he would be an unrivalled archer (*bhavitā tvatsamo nānyaḥ pumāḥ loke dhanurdharaḥ*) 1. 123. 78; Droṇa taught to Arjuna, both its use and withdrawal (*saprayoganivartanam*) 1. 123. 74; its withdrawal very difficult; once released, no one except Arjuna, not even Indra, was capable of withdrawing it 10. 15. 5, 6; it could not be withdrawn by one who had not observed celibacy; if a non-qualified person tried to withdraw it, it would cut his head and destroy his belongings 10. 15. 7-8; Arjuna could withdraw it as he was truthful, brave, had practised celibacy, and was obedient to his teacher 10. 15. 10, 20, 24; although fully qualified to withdraw it, Arjuna never used it in the epic war nor outside it, even under stress (*brahmacārī vrati cāpi duravāpam avāpya tat | paramavyasanārto 'pi nārjuno 'straṁ*