

Śiva and get the great weapon called Pāśupata from him. On the orders of Indra he will kill Nivātakavacas. Hearing the above prophecy the Devas played ecstatic music and flowers were showered from the sky. The Saptarṣis, Prajāpatis and other sages arrayed themselves in the sky. Thus, all animate and inanimate objects celebrated the birth of Arjuna.

5) *Naming*. Sages from the top of the Śataśṛṅga mountain came together to perform the christening ceremony of Arjuna. While enumerating the various names of Arjuna, it is said in the Virāṭa Parva that Kṛṣṇa was the name Pāṇḍu gave to his son. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 123, Verse 20).

6) *Childhood*. The Pāṇḍavas spent their childhood at Hastināpura with the Kauravas. Then Arjuna studied the art and science of using weapons, dance, music etc. along with the other boys. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 129, Verse 1). Kaśyapa, the high priest of Vasudeva did for Arjuna the usual Saṁskāras like Upanayana (wearing of the holy thread) etc. Arjuna was taught the first lessons in Dhanurveda (Science of archery) by Rājārṣi Śuka. Afterwards, Kṛpācārya became the preceptor of the Pāṇḍavas in Dhanurveda, and it was then that Droṇācārya came. There is a particular story about Droṇācārya becoming the guru. (See Droṇa).

7) *Special favour of Droṇa*. Arjuna showed very great interest in the science of the use of weapons. Droṇa, the master, wanted to teach Aśvatthāmā, his son, certain special things, and he began sending all his disciples to fetch water. Aśvatthāmā used to be the first to return with the water, and before the others returned Droṇa began teaching Aśvatthāmā the special lessons. Arjuna came to understand this programme and he began returning with water along with Aśvatthāmā. Then the guru began teaching the special things to both Aśvatthāmā and Arjuna. Droṇa instructed the cook not to serve Arjuna food in the darkness. While Arjuna was once taking his food, wind blew out the burning lamp, and Arjuna alone continued eating. Because of constant practice Arjuna was quite sure about the position of the hand and the mouth in the process of eating, and Arjuna surmised from this that archery also could be practised in darkness. He began practising them. The guru came to know of it, and witnessing Arjuna's performance praised Arjuna as a unique archer. (Bhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 132).

8) *Ekalavya's finger was cut*. Ekalavya, son of Hiraṇyadhana, King of the Niśādas (a tribe of hunters, forest-men) approached Droṇa to learn the science of the use of weapons. Droṇa, the Brahmin, refused the prayer of this prince of the forest tribe. Ekalavya, after prostrating at the feet of Droṇa returned to the woods, made an image of Droṇa with earth and meditating upon it as guru began practising the use of weapons. The Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas went hunting in the forest. Seeing there Ekalavya with his matted hair and clad in deer skin the hunting dogs began barking at him. Ekalavya shot into the mouth of the dog seven arrows at one and the same moment. With the arrows thrust in the mouth the dogs ran back to the Pāṇḍavas, and they found out the culprit, Ekalavya, who claimed himself to be a disciple of Droṇa. Grief-stricken at this claim Arjuna hurried up to Droṇa and said: "You had pronounced me to be your foremost disciple without an equal. But, today Ekalavya, another disciple of yours

has relegated me to the second place". Thereupon Droṇa went and saw Ekalavya in the forest. Ekalavya, in all devotion stood up and saluted the guru. And the guru said as follows: "Oh! Ekalavya if thou art my disciple give me the dakṣiṇā (fee) due to the guru, and I desire to get the thumb of your right hand as my fee". At once Ekalavya cut his thumb and gave it to Droṇa. Henceforth Arjuna became Droṇa's unequalled disciple. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 132).

9) *Arjuna got Brahmaśirāstra*. When once Droṇa and his disciples were bathing in the river Gaṅgā, a whale caught hold of the leg of the guru. The combined efforts of the disciples failed to extricate the leg from the grip of the whale. Ultimately Arjuna shot an arrow and released the guru's leg. Greatly pleased at this Droṇa imparted to Arjuna knowledge about Brahmaśirāstra, and Arjuna was enjoined not to use the astra against men, but to use it only when confronting higher beings than men. [Bhārata (Malayalam), Ādi Parva, Chapter 133].

10) *Competition in arms*. When the training of the princes was almost over Dhṛtarāṣṭra decided to have a rehearsal of their attainments, and the scene for it also was set. The princes with bows and arrows appeared on the scene. Yudhiṣṭhira and others first exhibited their skill in shooting arrows in the order of their seniority. Every scene was explained to Dhṛtarāṣṭra by Vidura and to Gāndhārī by Sañjaya. Duryodhana and Bhīma clashed with each other. Aśvatthāmā pacified them and kept them apart. And, then Arjuna and Karṇa appeared on the scene, and the onlookers declared them to be equal in skill in archery. When their shooting exhibition was over, Karṇa who got angry again rushed to the stage. Arjuna also got ready. Arjuna challenged Karṇa's eligibility on the ground that he was low-born and not a Kṣatriya. At once Duryodhana proclaimed him as the King of Aṅga. Though this pacified the scene, this competition in archery served much to make the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas the bitterest of enemies. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapters, 136, 137).

11) *Arjuna's gurudakṣiṇā (Offering of fee to the preceptor)*. At the starting of training the princes Droṇa told them: "I have one thing in mind, and you must do it for me when you have completed the course of training. All the disciples except Arjuna kept silent at this, but Arjuna promised to fulfil the guru's wish at the proper time

The training was over, and it was time for gurudakṣiṇā. Droṇa asked to be brought bound before him Drupada, King of Pāñcāla. (For Droṇa's enmity towards Drupada see Drupada). Thereupon the Pāṇḍavas marched to Pāñcāla, and in a fierce battle Arjuna defeated Drupada. Though Bhīma tried to kill Drupada Arjuna did not permit it, but took him bound to Droṇa. This ended Droṇa's hatred towards Drupada, who now gifted half his kingdom to Droṇa. Droṇa was very much pleased with Arjuna for the above act, and advised him to fight even him (Droṇa) if the latter opposed him (Arjuna). To this Arjuna replied 'Yes'. (M.B., Ādi Parva, Chapter 139, Verse 14). With this promise to fight even the guru in case the guru attacked him Arjuna became the most reputed archer in Bhārata.