

he named as Sāvitrī. For more details see under Sāvitrī. (Chapter 293, Vana Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAPĀTI II. The son born to Kaśyapa of his wife Danu. (Śloka 24, Chapter 65, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVASENA. A serpent which lived in the forest of Khāṇḍava. This was the son of Takṣaka and he tried his best to escape from the fire that burnt the forest. (Śloka 5, Chapter 239, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

Once when Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa were sitting on the banks of the river Yamunā, Agni approached them and requested them to help him burn the forest of Khāṇḍava (see under Khāṇḍavadāha). They agreed to help him and Agni started burning the forest. Indra poured rains over the fire; Arjuna created a canopy of arrows and prevented the rains from falling down. Aśvasena, son of Takṣaka tried to escape from the fire but Arjuna obstructed his way by arrows. Then Aśvasena's mother swallowed him and kept him in her stomach. Arjuna cut off her head. Seeing this Indra sent a cyclone to smash the canopy of arrows and Arjuna fell fainting. Taking the opportunity Aśvasena escaped. When Arjuna woke up from his unconscious state he found Aśvasena missing. Then Arjuna cursed him thus : "Let not you get refuge anywhere." (Chapter 226, Ādi Parva, M.B.). Aśvasena kept his grudge against Arjuna till the end. In the great battle Arjuna and Karṇa met for a fight and when Karṇa sent his Nāgāstra (serpent missile) against Arjuna, Aśvasena hid himself in that missile and burnt the beautiful headwear of Arjuna. But Karṇa did not like this foul play and refused to accept him when he came back. Enraged at this the serpent attacked Arjuna directly and was killed. Before his death he got acquainted with Kṛṣṇa. (Chapter 96, Karṇa Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAŚIRAS I. A son born to Kaśyapa of Danu. (Śloka 23, Chapter 65, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAŚIRAS II. Bhagavān Hayagrīva who was teaching the Vedas at Vaiḥāyasaikuṇḍa near Naranārāyaṇāśrama. (Śloka 3, Chapter 127, Śānti Parva, M.B.).

AŚVAŚIRASTHĀNA(M). A sacred place in ancient India. Arjuna dreams of going to Śiva with Kṛṣṇa and in that dream they visit this place also. (Chapter 80, Droṇa Parva, M.B.).

AŚVĀTAKA. A country of ancient India. (Śloka 15, Chapter 51, Bhīṣma Parva, M.B.).

AŚVĀTARA. A serpent. A sacred pond built in Prayāga also carries this name. (Śloka 76, Chapter 55, Vana Parva and Śloka 10, Chapter 35, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

AŚVĀTĪRTHA. An ancient holy place on the banks of the river, Ganges, near Kanauj. It was at this place that the horses rose from the earth at the request of R̥cika R̥ṣi to Varuṇa (See under Aśvakṛta). (Śloka 17, Chapter 4, M.B.).

AŚVATTHĀMĀ.

1) *Birth and genealogy.* The semen of Bharadvāja R̥ṣi fell into the hollow of a bamboo and from there was born Droṇa. As per the instructions of his father Droṇa married Kṛpī, daughter of the sage, Śāradvata. The good-natured Kṛpī gave birth to Aśvatthāmā. (See under Droṇa for genealogy). (Chapter 130, Ādi Parva, M.B.)

2) *How he got his name.* The moment he was born he made a loud hoot like Uccaiśravas and the sound resembled the braying of a horse. Immediately a voice from heaven said that the boy should be named Aśvatthāmā.

The boy was, therefore, named so. (Ślokas 48 and 49, Chapter 130, M.B.).

3) *Training in archery.* Aśvatthāmā took his lesson in archery from his father Droṇa. At that time Droṇa got new lessons from Paraśurāma and they were also imparted to Droṇa's disciples. When Droṇa became the preceptor of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas Aśvatthāmā also went with him. (Ślokas 52 to 64, Chapter 130, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

4) *Droṇa's affection for his son.* Droṇa was very affectionate to his son and wanted to teach him something special in archery. So he used to instruct him during the time the other disciples went to fetch water for the āśrama. Arjuna came to know of this and he, thereafter, started bringing his quota of water quickly enough to join the special class of Droṇa. Thus Arjuna and Aśvatthāmā learned a lot more than the others in the military art. (Ślokas 17-19, Chapter 132, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

5) *The Mahābhārata Battle and Aśvatthāmā.* In Sabhā Parva we find Aśvatthāmā participating in the Rājāsūya of Yudhiṣṭhira. After that we meet him only at the Kurukṣetra war. Fighting on the side of the Kauravas he played a very important role in that war. He killed many veteran warriors and kings including the following : Nila, Añjanaparvā, Suratha, Śatruñjaya, Balānjka, Jayānika, Jayāśva, Srutāśva, Hemamāli, Vṛṣadhara, Candrasena, the ten sons of Kuntibhoja, Sudarśana, Vṛddhakṣetra, Cedirāja, Malayadhvaja and Suratha. He defeated many including Śikhaṇḍi, Abhimanyu, Virāṭa, Sātyaki and Vindhya. By using Āgneyāstra (the arrow of fire) he made Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna fall fainting in the battle-field. He commanded the Kaurava army once. He killed many Pāñcālas and Somakas while they were sleeping. In Chapter 139 of Droṇa Parva we read about Arjuna defeating Aśvatthāmā in a single combat one day.

6) *Aśvatthāmā sees a ghost.* Dhṛṣṭadyumna, son of King Pāñcāla, killed Droṇa. When Aśvatthāmā heard of his father's death his rage knew no bound. He immediately went to the heart of the military camp of the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛpa and Sātvata following him. There at the gate of the camp he beheld a ghostly apparition. It is described in the Bhāṣā Bhārata (Malayālam version of M.B.) as follows : He saw a huge figure standing at the door with a body blazing like the Sun and the Moon. Bathed in blood and wearing a tiger's skin in the loins the figure wore a snake as his sacred thread and covered his upper body with a deer-skin. There were innumerable hands for this ghost and in each hand adorned with snake-bangles he held a deadly weapon. With crooked teeth and a ghastly face the goblin gave a shiver to those who saw him. Flames bursting forth from his eyes, ears, nose and mouth he barred the way of Aśvatthāmā. Undaunted the son of Droṇa showered divine arrows on the figure. But the ghost by his supreme powers absorbed the arrows to his body the moment they touched him. In despair Aśvatthāmā meditated on Śiva and the latter appearing before him in person gave him a divine dagger. With that he entered the bed-chamber of Dhṛṣṭadyumna, woke him up by striking him with his foot, caught hold of him by the hair on his head and killed him.

7) *Aśvatthāmā and his jewel.* The anger of Aśvatthāmā did not abate even after killing Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the butcher