

dead. It then took the form of a demon and rising up in the air said "Svāmin ! I was once a demon called Daṁśa. Once I carried away by force the wife of the sage Bhṛgu and the angered sage cursed me and made me a beetle. When I craved for pardon he said that I would be given my original form by Paraśurāma."

When the demon disappeared saying so much Paraśurāma turned to Karṇa who stood with respect, his dress all covered with blood. Paraśurāma said : "No brahmin can bear so much pain with such patience. Surely, you are not a brahmin. Let me know the truth." Trembling with fear Karṇa revealed his identity and then Paraśurāma cursed him saying "You will forget the secret of the Brahmā missile at the time when you want to use it against your enemy." (Chapters 2 and 3, Śānti Parva).

5) *How Karṇa became the King of Aṅga.* The Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas were studying archery under Droṇācārya together and Karṇa also was among them. When their education was complete a day was fixed to exhibit the skill of the students. The public also was invited to see the skill of the princes. Everybody showed his best and Arjuna displayed super-human skill so that the vast assemblage was lost in wonder and admiration. Then strode Karṇa to the scene and not only did he duplicate with ease Arjuna's feats but he did show something more. The assemblage was dumbfounded. Arjuna turned pale. At this moment Kṛpa stood up and questioned the right of Karṇa to compete with those with royal blood in them. Then rose Duryodhana and said : "If the combat is not in order simply because Karṇa is not a prince it is easily remedied. I crown Karṇa as the King of Aṅga". Then there came to the scene the aged Adhiratha, the foster-father of Karṇa, and as Karṇa saw him coming he went and bowed before him and Adhiratha embraced him with tears in his eyes. (Chapters 134 to 136, Ādi Parva, M.B.).

6) *Karṇa's armour and ear-rings.* Karṇa was born with an armour on his body and rings in his ears. Chapter 99 of Ādi Parva says thus : "To Kuntī was born of Sūrya the mighty Karṇa. Even at his birth he was adorned with an armour over his body and rings in his ears." Sūrya had ordained that as long as Karṇa wore the armour and ear-rings he would be unconquerable. Indra knew this and wanted to get Karṇa rid of these so that Arjuna, his son, might gain a victory over Karṇa. Karṇa was reputed for his charity and Indra under the garb of a brahmin went to Karṇa and begged of him his ear-rings and armour. The Sun god had already warned him in a dream that Indra would thus try to deceive him. Still Karṇa could not bring himself to refuse any gift that was asked of him and so he cut off the ear-rings and armour with which he was born and gave them to the Brāhmaṇa. The only request that the noble Karṇa did make was that in separating the ornaments from his body no wound should be made. Indra did it with great skill neither hurting him nor making even a scratch on his body. Indra bade Karṇa ask for any boon he wanted. The Sun god had also advised him to ask for a good weapon in return in case he gave away his assets and so he requested Indra the best of the weapons he possessed. Indra gave him his weapon, the Śakti, called Vaijayantī also. Karṇa had to use that

weapon to kill the great Ghaṭotkaca in the Mahābhārata battle.

7) *Other details.*

(i) Karṇa was present at the Svayamvara of Draupadī. (Śloka 4, Chapter 185, Ādi Parva).

(ii) Bhīma defeated Karṇa once in a single combat. (Śloka 20, Chapter 34, Sabhā Parva).

(iii) Karṇa took part in the Rājasūya of Yudhiṣṭhira. (Śloka 7, Chapter 34, Śānti Parva).

(iv) Karṇa defeated Jarāsandha once in a single combat. Chapter 44, Sabhā Parva).

(v) Karṇa defeated in his victory march many kings like Drupada, Bhagadatta and Kerala. (Chapter 254, Aranya Parva).

(vi) Karṇa conquered the cities of Mālinī and Campā and annexed them to the country of Aṅga. (Chapter 5, Karṇa Parva).

(vii) Karṇa prompted Duryodhana to tease the Pāṇḍavas living in the forest. (Chapter 7, Vana Parva).

(viii) Karṇa swore that he would kill Arjuna. (Chapter 257, Vana Parva).

(ix) Karṇa lost his clothes during a fight against the king of Virāṭa. (Chapter 65, Virāṭa Parva).

(x) Kāṇḍaprṣṭham is the name of Karṇa's bow.

8) *Karṇa and the Kurukṣetra battle.* The great battle of Mahābhārata lasted for eighteen days and some of the incidents touching Karṇa during that period are given below :

(i) Before the great war started Kuntī went alone to the shores of Gaṅgā and met Karṇa. She then confessed to him that she was his mother and that the Pāṇḍavas were his brothers. She advised Karṇa to join sides with the Pāṇḍavas and the Sun god approved of it. But Karṇa refused to do so. He said he would never forsake Duryodhana who had brought him up from his childhood at a time when he was in peril. But he promised his mother that he would never kill any of her other four sons but would kill Arjuna in the battle-field. (Chapter 146 Udyoga Parva).

(ii) Karṇa started his fight against the Pāṇḍavas after taking blessings from Bhīṣma. (Chapter 3, Droṇa Parva).

(iii) Karṇa fought against the princes of Kekaya, Arjuna, Bhīma, Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Śātyaki in single combat. (Chapter 32, Droṇa Parva).

(iv) Abhimanyu defeated Karṇa in a single combat. (Chapter 40, Droṇa Parva).

(v) Karṇa made Bhīma unconscious. (Chapter 139, Droṇa Parva).

(vi) Karṇa once withdrew a bit when hit by the arrow of Arjuna. (Chapter 139, Droṇa Parva).

(vii) Karṇa insulted Kṛpācārya at one time. (Chapter 158, Droṇa Parva).

(viii) Karṇa killed Ghaṭotkaca with the weapon Śakti which Indra had given him in exchange for the armour and ear-rings which he had given Indra. (Chapter 180, Droṇa Parva).

(ix) Karṇa ran away from the battlefield when he heard that Droṇa was dead. (Chapter 193, Karṇa Parva).

(x) Karṇa was made the Generalissimo of the Kaurava army when Droṇa died. (Chapter 10, Karṇa Parva).

(xi) Śalya became the charioteer of Karṇa (Chapter 86, Karṇa Parva).

(xii) The beautiful headwear of Arjuna fell down to