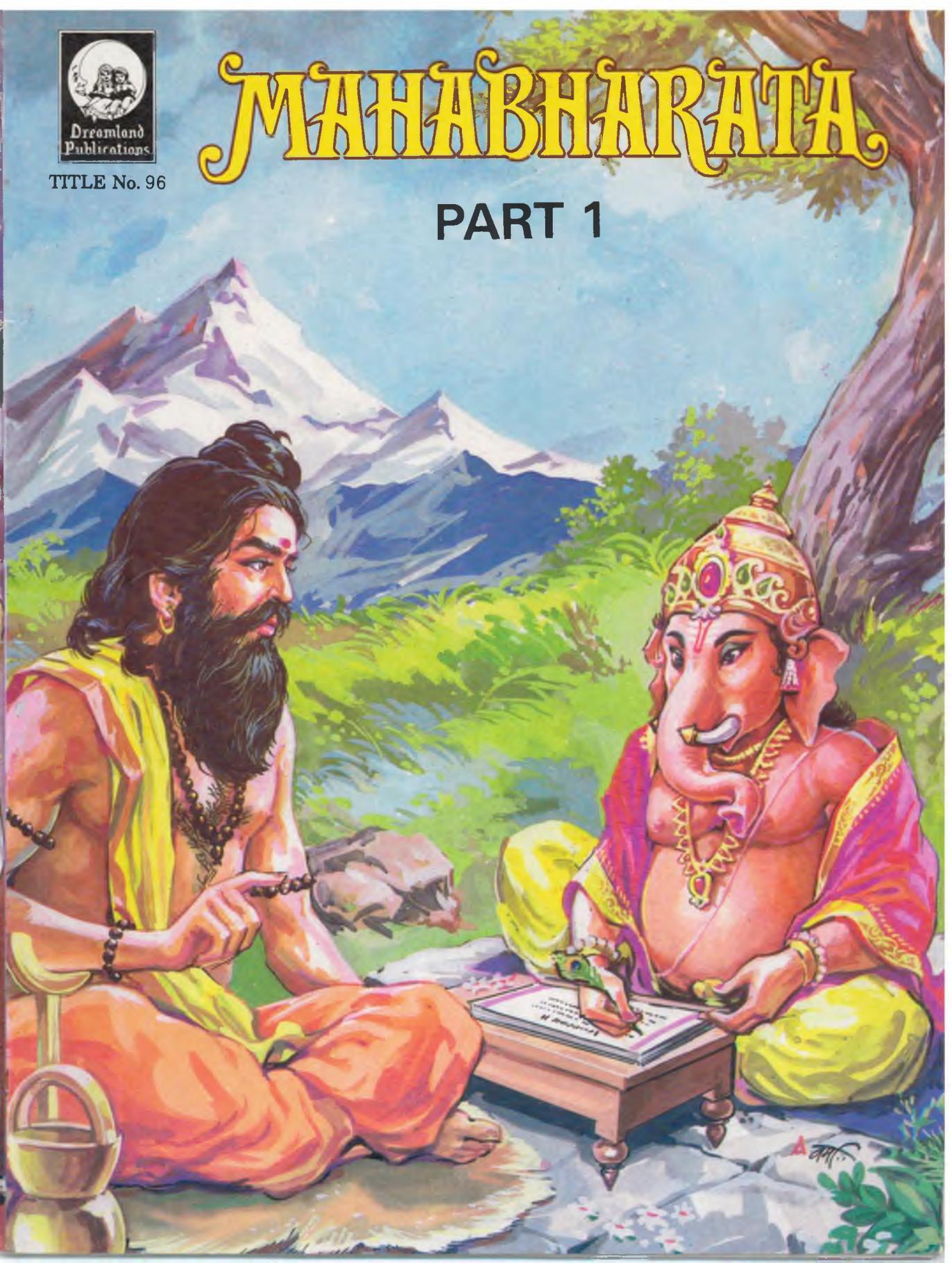




TITLE No. 96

# MAHABHARATA

## PART 1



# MAHABHARATA



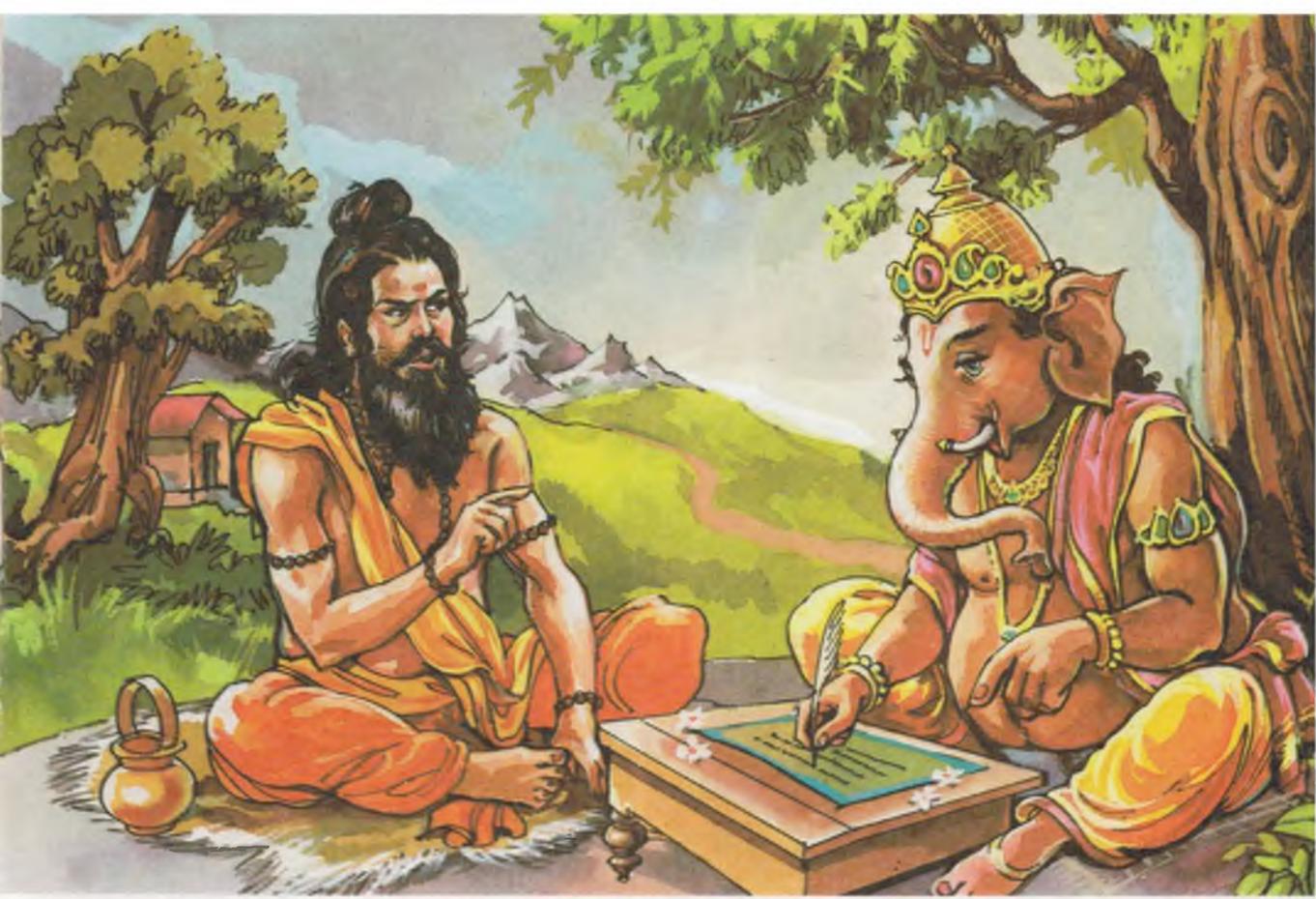
PUBLISHED BY  
**DREAMLAND PUBLICATIONS**  
4425, NAI SARA, DELHI-110006 (INDIA)  
PHONE : 291 5831, 292 9770, FAX : 011-5 14 1327

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**Rs. 20.00**

Processing : BEST PHOTO LITHO GRAPHERS



## THE MAHABHARATA

(ॐ गणेशाय नमः)

### With Salutation To Lord Ganesha

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् ।  
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥

Bowing in devotion to the *Most High*,  
To *Common* and *Ideal Beings* as well;  
To *Goddess of Learning*, so great and high,  
The epic named **Jaya**, would I tell.

—*St. Vyasa*

The story of the Mahabharata starts with the most famous and powerful Kaurava ruler named Dushyant. Who does not know that Dushyant married Shakuntala, the foster-daughter of Saint Kanva? Shakuntala was born to Menaka, a nymph of Indra's court, from Saint Vishwamitra who had fallen in love with her at the very first sight.

Shakuntala, due to a curse uttered on her by Saint Durwasa, had to remain deserted by her husband after a brief honey-moon in the forest where a son was born to her. Having grown up among the fierce animals of the forest, Shakuntala's son was unbelievably brave and courageous. As the blood of a great king like Dushyant flowed in his veins, he possessed enviable dignity, charm and captivating manners as well. This son of Shakuntala was Bharata.

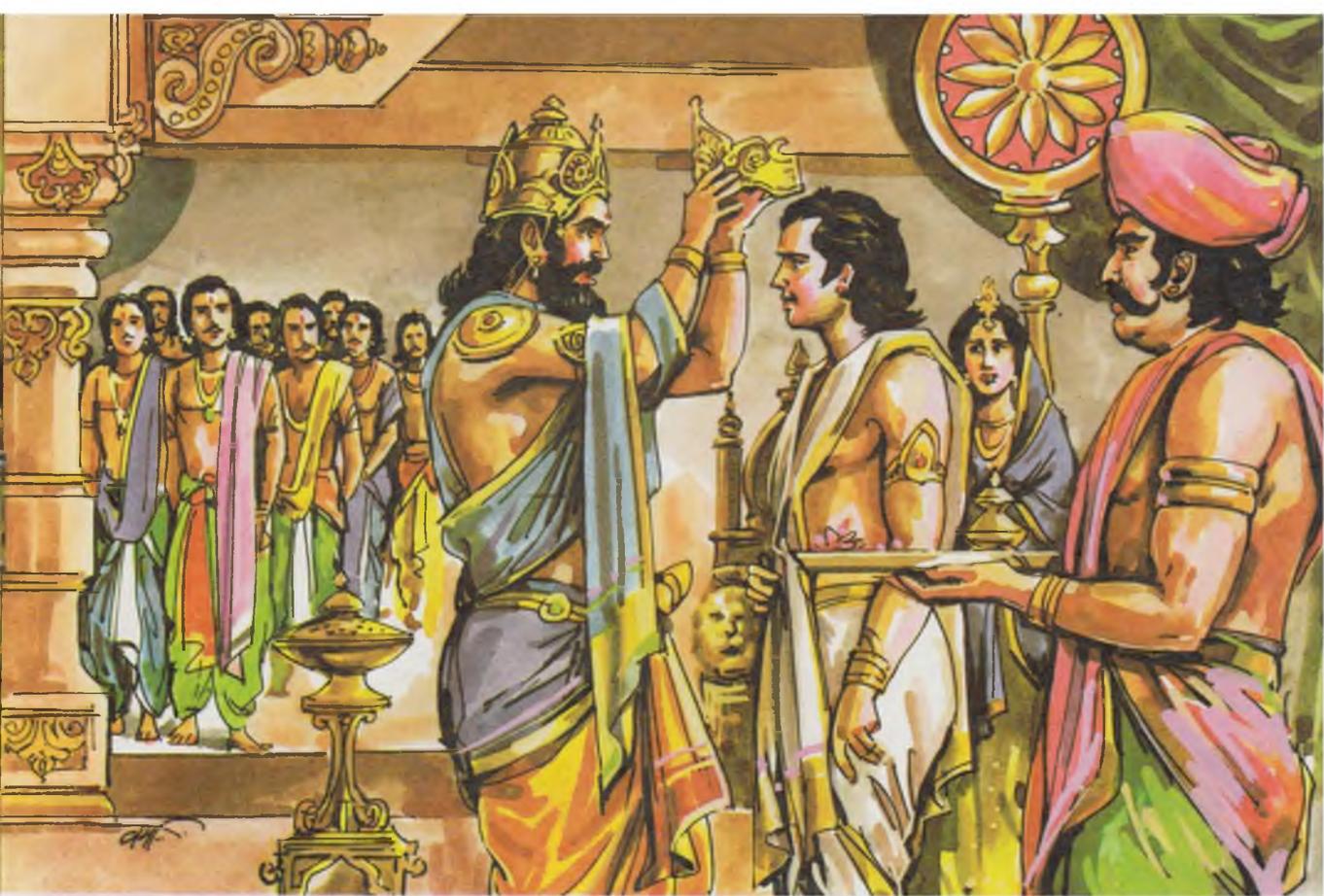


*Coming events, they say, cast their shadows before* Even as a small child of five or six, Bharata used to play with lions, tigers, leopards and elephants. Not only this, he used to open their mouths and count their teeth and sometimes to tie them with a tree using some improvised rope. Shakuntala, whenever she saw her son doing such things, could not help believing that he was bound to be a very great ruler one day.

The effect of Durvasa's curse having been over, Dushyant brought Shakuntala and his son to his palace and in due course of time Bharata succeeded to the throne of his father. He emerged as a very powerful ruler who made large conquests and, as a result, his fame spread far and wide. He assumed the title of **Chakravarti Samrat** (a universal emperor) and so our country came to be called **Bharatvarsha** after his name.

Of all the rulers that the Kuru dynasty had produced so far, Bharata was matchless from every angle. He excelled all his ancestors in bravery, fortitude, religiousness and care of his subjects.

Emperor Bharata is credited with another landmark that went a long way to make our country unique. He was the first ruler to initiate the institution of democracy in those immemorial times.



Bharata was a highly far-sighted ruler who could think much ahead of his times. He wanted that his dynasty could have the ablest possible rulers only if every new king came to be elected or selected on the basis of his merits. He believed that it was not necessary that the son of an able and powerful ruler should be like him. He can be a weakling and incapable of being a good ruler.

The story goes that none of Bharata's sons was worthy of succeeding to his powerful throne. They all lacked the qualities that are essential to make a successful and popular ruler. So, he decided to violate the old practice regarding the succession to the throne. In other words, he chose to go against the dynastic tradition in the interest of his dynasty itself and of the empire that he held under his sway.

After consultations with his nobles and under the guidance of the royal priest, Bharata decided to deprive his sons of the throne. He started searching for a suitable candidate who could prove a successful heir to his throne. His search ended when he found that the eldest son of Saint Bhardwaj was quite fit for being his successor. He made an unusually surprising announcement in his court, "I, Bharata the universal emperor, set aside the claim of my sons to my throne because of their incapability and appoint the eldest son of Saint Bhardwaj as my regent so that he may succeed me as the next ruler of my empire."



Hardly had Shantanu recovered from the shock of the death of his first son at the hands of his queen when she became expectant again. The king came to know of it and felt happy expecting that the queen would not repeat her dreadful action this time. But that was not to be. As soon as the second son saw the light, the queen took it into her arms, marched to the river-bank and let it off to be drowned. The king, who had followed the queen at her heels, was struck by immense grief but his pledge barred him to say or do anything.

It was five times again that the queen repeated this ghastly action. Thus the king lost his seven sons one after the other. The reader can well imagine how broken hearted the king would have felt because of his dual suffering. Firstly the loss of his sons was a back-breaking shock in itself. Secondly, the inability forced on him to avert the shock or even to express it was even tougher a thing to tolerate. But his patience was totally lost now. He had made up his mind to violate his pledge.

When queen Ganga bore the eighth son and marched to the river as before, the king chased her hotly. As soon as the queen projected her arms to drown the child, the king thundered from behind her, "Stop it. Do you know that you are going to offer your eighth son to the river? What do you want after all? Do you intend that I should die without a heir and that my line should come to an end as soon as I disappear from the scene? I won't let you do it now at all. After all, I am a father. How can I see my own flesh and blood being decimated before my eyes?"



Hearing what king Shantanu had said, the queen remarked "You have violated your pledge, O King. Now I won't stay with you at all. But before leaving you, I deem it my duty to open the entire secret before you. I am Ganga—the heavenly river. Once it so happened that Saint Vasistha got offended with eight gods known as *Vasus*. He uttered a curse on them to be born as human-beings on the earth and undergo mental embarrassment. Hearing the curse, seven of the *Vasus* implored the saint to be excused but the eighth, who was the most mischievous, kept standing rudely.

The Saint remarked, "All the seven of you will die and come back to Heaven as soon as you are born. But the eighth rude fellow will live a very long life on the earth to suffer untold mental as well as physical tribulations. In order to salvage the seven *Vasus*, I had to assume the human form and marry you. My job has finished and so I must go back to my heavenly abode. I am taking your eighth son with me to bring him up so that he becomes potent enough to bear the afflictions supposed to befall him because of the curse. When he is amply grown up, I shall come back and hand him over to you." Saying so, the queen flew away into the sky along with the new-born.

King Shantanu felt very disappointed and returned to his palace weeping over his bad luck in his heart of hearts.



Days went by followed by months and years. But king Shantanu could never sleep in peace or walk but in sorrow. He was always in grief because of the loss of his eight sons and his dear queen. He often used to go to the bank of the Ganga and sit there watching the waves with a heavy heart. But one day it so happened that when the king reached the river-bank, he saw a young boy with a bow in his hand and a quiver of arrows hanging from his shoulder. The king felt unconsciously drawn towards the boy and kept gazing at him.

Just at that moment, queen Ganga emerged out of the river and came to the king. She said, "Here is your eighth son, O King. I have brought him up in order that he should be able to cope with what is to befall him in his life on this earth. Educated by Saint Vasishtha himself in morality, religious education, state-craft, archery and many other arts, he equals Parshurama. Be you blessed to have your son which I have named Dev Vrat. Then blessing the boy, Ganga disappeared.

How happy the king must have felt to have his son back can be well imagined by the readers themselves. Returning to the palace, the king celebrated the advent of the prince and declared him to be his regent. Dev Vrat was immensely brave. One day, while training a new horse, he chanced to get to a distance from the capital. Suddenly he saw an enemy king coming with a large force to invade Hastinapur. It was the prince of Shalva kingdom. Dev Vrat challenged him and put his army to rout. Not only this, he captured the enemy prince and presented him before his father.



King Shantanu was indeed very happy with his promising son—Dev Vrat. But he missed Ganga very much. He sometimes felt love-lorn also. Years rolled by and one day a strange thing happened that was destined to yield far reaching consequences as far as the history of Kuru dynasty was concerned.

The king was having a stroll on the bank of the Ganga when he saw an extremely charming maiden. Love-sick as he was, the king felt highly fascinated by her beauty. She was Satyawati, daughter of the chief of local fishermen. When the king asked him for the hand of his daughter, he put forward a condition that the son born to Satyawati should be the successor to the Kaurva throne.

How could the king accept this condition? Disappointed and unhappy, he returned to his palace. Dev Vrat discovered the cause of his father's melancholy and going to Satyawati's father, he said, "I promise to give up my right to the throne. Be kind to agree to what my father wishes."

Satyawati's father retorted, "All right! but if your sons assert their claim to the throne, my daughter and his son will be in trouble." Dev Vrat thought for a while and then said, "I swear not to marry all my life." Satyawati's father became answerless and Dev Vrat, seating Satyawati in his chariot, brought her to the palace.



King Shantanu, when he saw Satyawati coming to the palace in Dev Vrat's chariot, was beside himself with joy. He thanked his stars to have his lady-love in his palace. He was all praises for his son as he had gone out of the way to fulfil his desire. He hugged him out of affection and showered his heart-felt blessings on him. Then holding Satyawati by the arm, he took her inside the palace.

Before long, Satyawati disclosed all what had happened between Dev Vrat and her father. Hearing of the horrible pledge taken by Dev Vrat in order to please him (his dear father), the king felt shocked. Unconsciously the words—*EK Bhisma Pratigya* (A most horrible pledge)—escaped his lips and he was plunged in profound grief. From that day on, Dev Vrat came to be known as **Bhisma**. As for Satyawati, she had now come to realise the seriousness of the situation that came to overtake the royal palace.

Anyhow, time is a great healer and the new-weds reconciled themselves to what had happened. In due course of time, Satyawati became the mother of two princes—**Chitrangad** and **Vichitravirya**. After Shantanu's death, Chitrangad came to the throne but soon fell fighting in an action. So, Vichitravirya, though a minor, was enthroned as king of Hastinapur.

When the new king came of age, Bhisma and queen Satyawati decided to get him married. Hearing the news that the ruler of Kashi was holding the swayamvara of his three daughters, Bhisma went there and forcibly brought all the three princesses to Hastinapur.



Reaching Hastinapur, Bhishma ordered the preparations for the marriage of his brother with the three princesses. But the eldest princess, named Amba, requested Bhishma and Satyawati, "I have already vowed to marry Shalva prince. So, I implore you to let me go to him." Advised by Satyawati, sagacious Bhishma made arrangements to send Amba to her suitor's capital. As for the other two princesses, Ambika and Ambalika, they were duly married to Vichitravirya with royal pomp and show.

Seven years had passed but Vichitravirya could not be blessed with a child. Suddenly, he fell ill and breathed his last leaving the throne of Hastinapur without a natural heir. Satyawati was lost in worry and tried her level best to persuade Bhishma to ascend the Kaurva throne as he had taken a pledge to preserve its integrity at all costs. How could Bhishma agree to it? To violate his vows was no less than a moral death for him. So, Satyawati racked her brains pensively and at last hit upon a plan.

The queen had borne a son before her marriage with the king, as a result of a boon given to her by Saint Parashara. That son was named Saint Vyasa—the saint who authored the present epic, the Mahabharata. Finding no alternative, Satyawati called Saint Vyasa whom she had given birth as an unwed mother. It must be remembered that saint Vyasa was extremely ugly to look at. As soon as he received the message of the queen, he lost no time to reach the Kaurva capital.



Getting to the royal palace, saint Vyasa went to queen Satyawati's apartment. Seeing him, Satyawati broke down weeping bitterly. The saint consoled her saying, "What is the matter, mother? What makes you weep? Let me know what ails thee and I shall redress it in no time. Speak, Mother; I am here to obey every word that comes out of your lips."

The queen, wiping her tears, said, "My son! you possess great miraculous powers like your father. The Kaurva line has ended just as a blind lane and the throne is empty. Bhishma is bound by his pledges not to marry and not to come to the throne. So, I need your help at this time. I hope that you, like a worthy son, will not let me down."

"Say Mother, what you want me to do. Rest assured; every word of yours will be carried out to the letter," replied Saint Vyasa assuringly.

"Ambika and Ambalika are wives of Vichitravirya, your half-brother. Confer boons on them to be blessed with sons so that the Kaurva throne gets a rightful heir to succeed the deceased king," retorted the queen.

Saint Vyasa agreed to do the needful at once.



When Ambika was sent to Saint Vyasa to have a boon, she was so frightened to see his ugly face that she closed her eyes while the saint uttered the boon. So, the saint told queen Satyawati that the son born to Ambika would be blind of both his eyes though he would be a man of great physical strength. The queen was very disappointed to hear these words. Then she sent Ambalika to the saint for a boon. When she saw his dreadfully ugly face, she turned extremely pale out of fear while the saint was uttering the boon. So, Vyasa told his mother that the son born to Ambalika would be pale in complexion though he would be very brave. The queen felt awfully hurt at heart.

What could be done now? Queen Satyawati was at a loss to understand how to solve the difficult situation that she was in. Requesting the saint for another chance, she sent Ambika once more to the saint for a boon. But Ambika was so scared of him that she could not dare to go before him. So, without telling her mother-in-law, Ambika sent her maid to the saint after disguising her with stately garments.

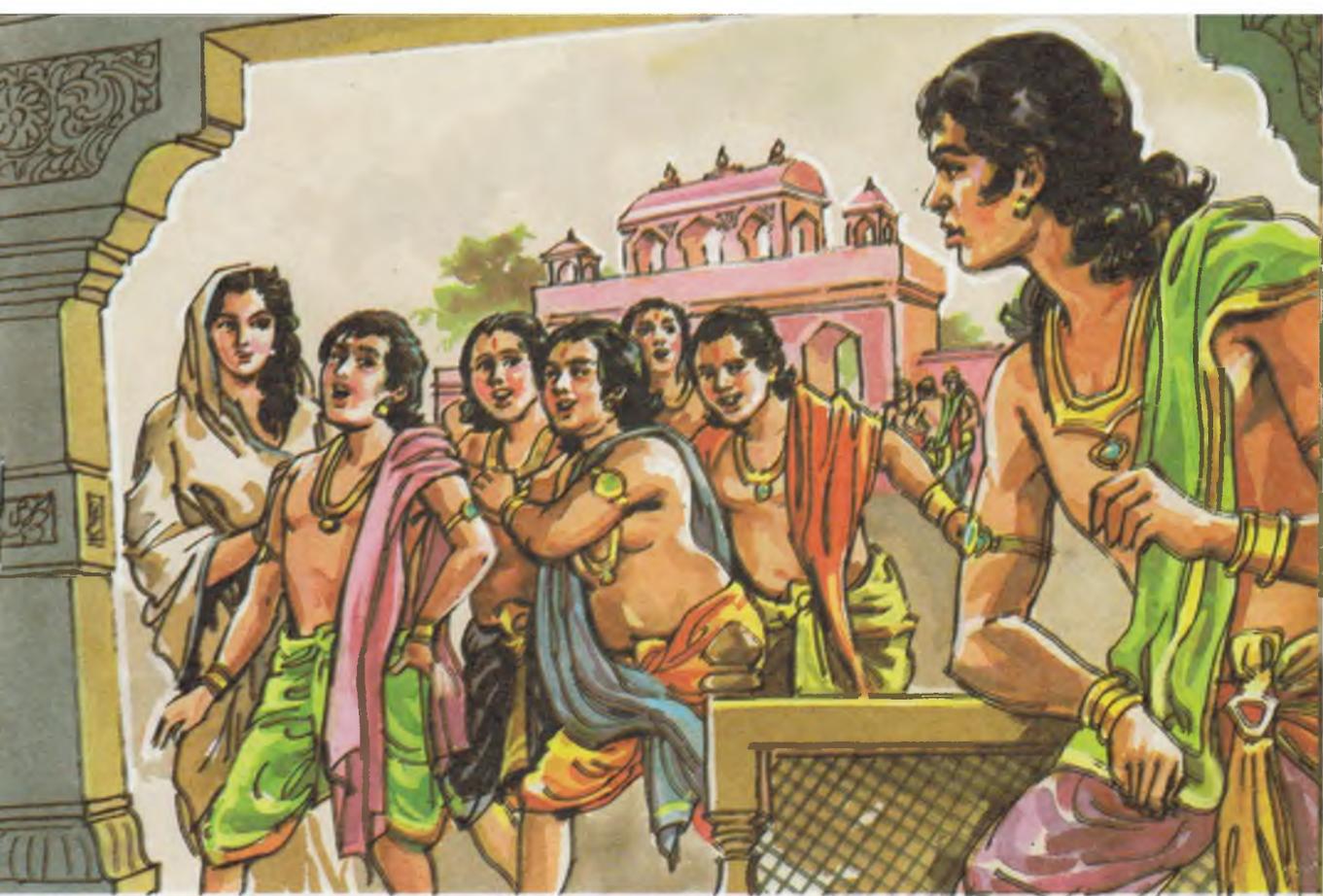
The maid remained fearless and greeted Saint Vyasa with great devotion. Feeling happy, the saint gave her a boon, "your son will be very talented and worldly-wise so much so that he will emancipate you from the state of being a maid.



In course of time, all the three ladies gave birth to their respective sons. Ambika's blind son was named Dhritrashtra while the pale son of Ambalika was named Pandu. The third lady, Ambika's maid, bore a son who was named Vidur. All the three infants were brought up in the lap of royal luxury. When they came of age, Pandu, though younger, was made to ascend the Kaurva throne because Dhritrashtra was blind. As for Vidur, he was appointed prime minister because of his sagacity and distinguished talent.

Dhritrashtra was married to Gandhari, the princess of Gandhar. She, as a true wife, bandaged her eyes with a cloth as soon as she heard that her husband was blind. Gandhari gave birth to a hundred sons and a daughter named Dushala who was married to Jaidrath, ruler of Sindhu. Duryodhana was the eldest of Dhritrashtra's sons.

As for Pandu, he came to be engaged to Pritha, daughter of king Shur Sen. Because of her lovely locks (kesha), she was popularly called Kunti. She was very simple and pious. Once Saint Durvasa happened to come to his father's palace. Kunti served the saint with such a devotion that he gave her a *mantra* through which she could invoke any god. Under-ripe as Kunti was so far, she could not help invoking the Sun-god through the above-stated mantra. The Sun-god appeared and gave her a boon to be blessed with a son. But she was unwed so far. So, when the baby was born, she placed it in a basket and set it afloat the water of the Ganga for fear of infamy. Luckily, the basket was caught and taken out of the river by a charioteer who brought the baby up.



As the male child borne by Kunti as an unwed mother was the result of a boon from the Sun-god, his ears had ear-rings on them right at the time of his birth. Not only this, the skin of his body was abnormally hard as if it were an armour. The charioteer had, therefore, named the boy **Karna**.

When Kunti got married to Pandu, she gave birth to three sons—Yudhishtir, Bhima and Arjuna—from the boons of Dharam Raj, the Wind-god and Indra respectively. Subsequently, Pandu married Madri, the princess of Madra kingdom. She gave birth to two twins—Nakula and Sahadeva. As a make-shift arrangement, Dhritrashtra was made to sit on the throne as a nominal king after Pandu's death. This arrangement was to last till Yudhishtir, the eldest son of Pandu, came of age to take the reins of government in his own hands. Remember that sons of Dhritrashtra came to be known as **Kauravas** while those of Pandu were called **Pandavas**.

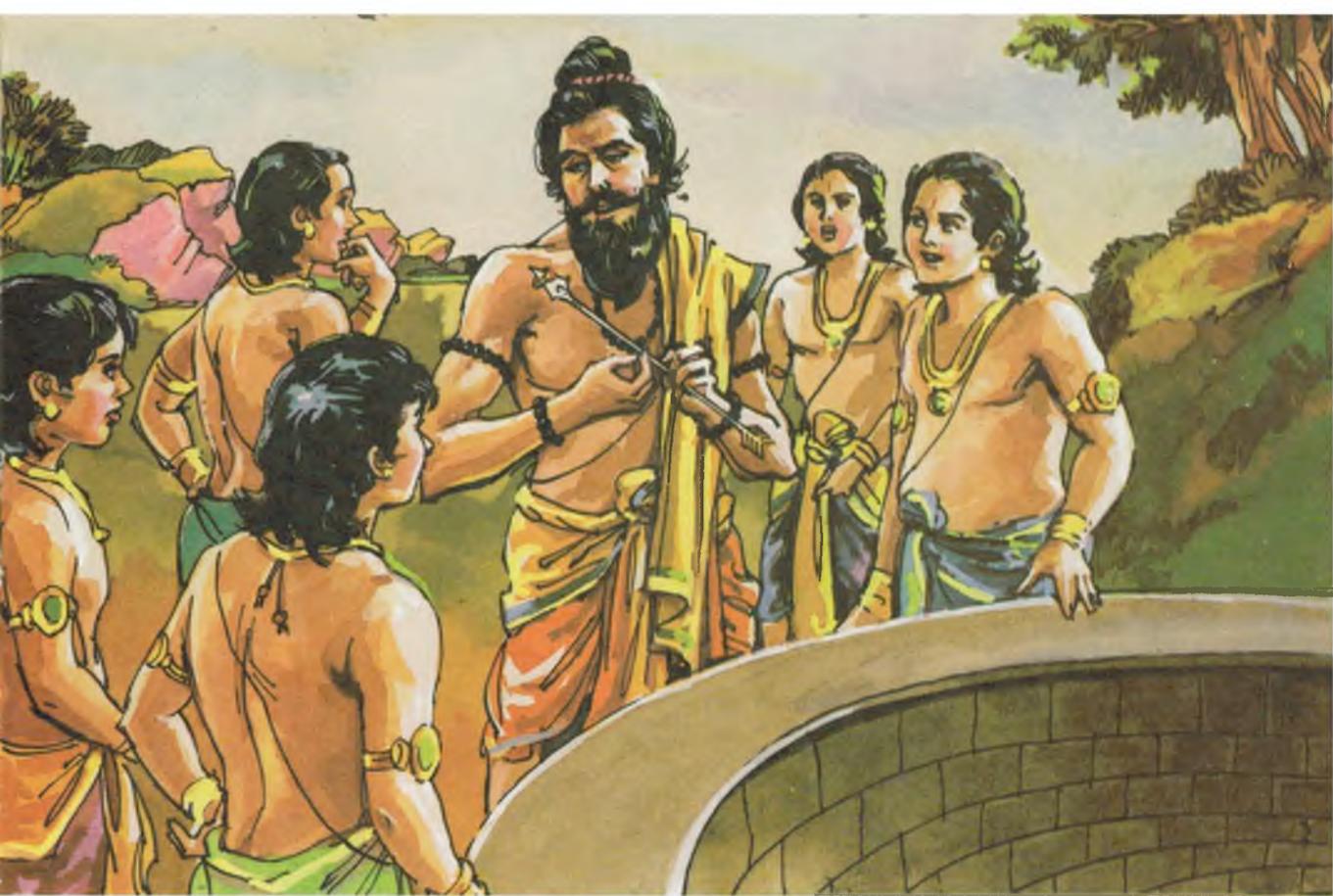
Pandu went to a forest for a game one day. There he happened to shoot an arrow at a saint by mistake. The saint was revelling with his wife at that time. Hearing his cry, Pandu ran to him and asked for his pardon. But the saint uttered a curse on him, "O cruel king! you too will die like me when you go near your queen." So, one day when Pandu, bewitched by her younger queen Madri, went near her, he fell down dead. Madri burnt herself with her husband's dead body leaving the burden of Pandu's five sons on Kunti to bring them up.



Though Dhritrashtra had got the throne on temporary basis, he and his eldest son Duryodhana developed a longing to retain it by hook or by crook. The mind working behind this illegal desire was that of Shakuni, Gandhari's brother. He was constantly poisoning the mind of his nephew Duryodhana against the Pandavas. Duryodhana did not like the Pandavas at all and was always planning to get rid of them. He despised Bhima in special because of his physical might which he feared the most.

One day Duryodhana chalked out a plan to do away with his arch rival Bheema. He invited the Pandavas to have a picnic on the river-bank. He manoeuvred to get the food of Bheema's share to be poisoned somehow. As soon as Bheema ate the food, he fell senseless while playing in the water. Nobody noticed him and the party returned home after the picnic was over.

As for Bheema, while drifting with the strong current of the river, he chanced to be bitten by some poisonous snakes. *Diamond cuts diamond*, we know. In like manner, the bites of the poisonous snakes nullified the effect of the poison mixed with food and thus acted as an antidote. As a result, Bheema gained consciousness, swam to the bank and returned home much to the relief of his mother Kunti and his four brothers. When Bheema narrated the entire incident to them, they all condemned Duryodhana's action.

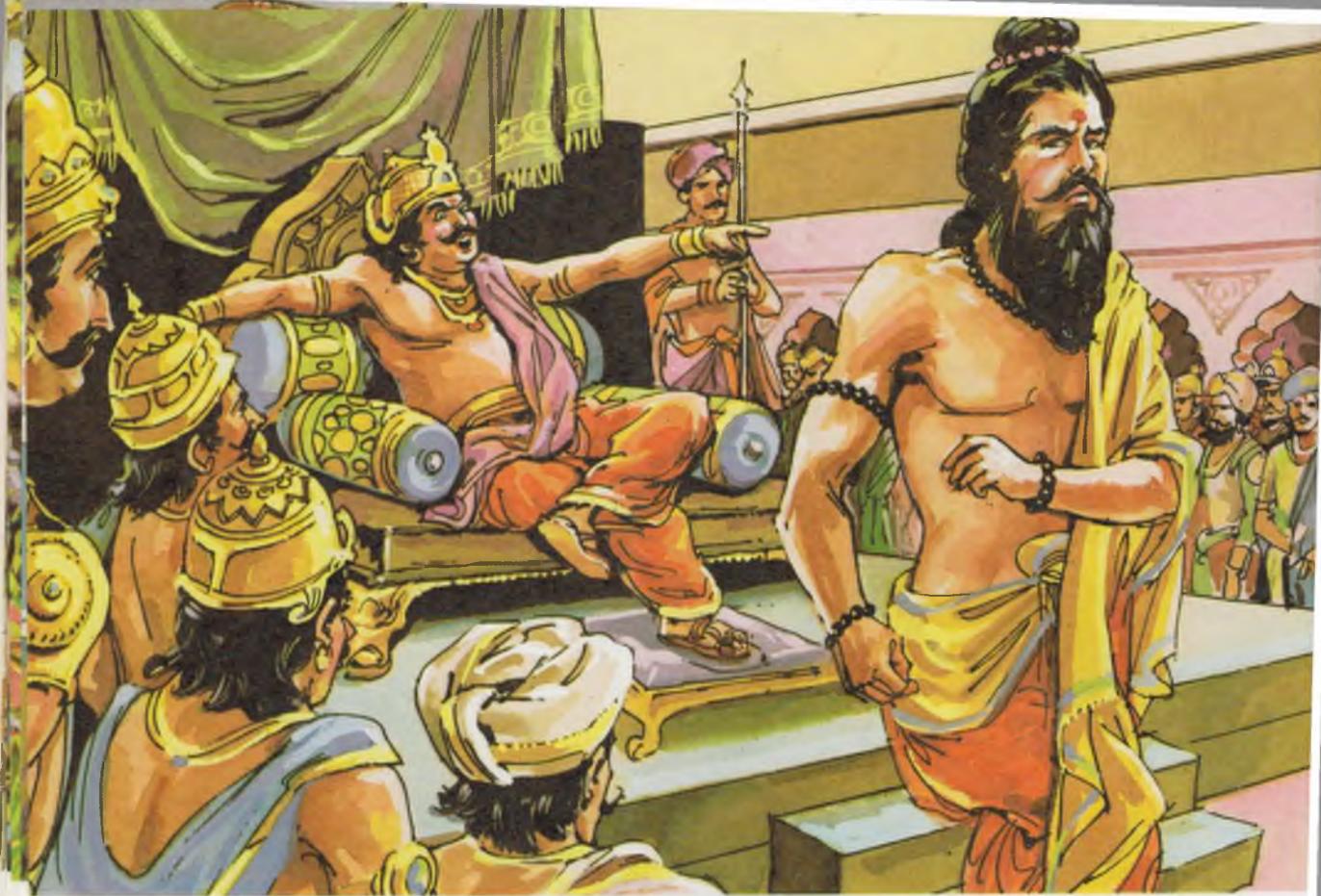


One day a strange thing happened when the young Kauravas and the Pandavas were playing with a ball in the open area near the outskirts of Hastinapur. Just near by, there was a well. Suddenly the ball bounced up and fell into the well. All of them peeped into the well to locate the ball that was floating on the surface of water. But that was not all. Suddenly Yudhishtir's ring slipped out of his finger and dropped into the well too. Everybody was puzzled not knowing what to.

Just then, a Brahmana happened to pass that way. He had very impressive looks and was carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver of arrows hanging from his shoulder. He asked the princes why they were sad. Yudhishtir bowed to him and told him what had happened. The Brahmana consoled the princes saying, "Don't worry at all; I will get the ball and the ring out for you."

The Brahmana asked the princes to get him some thin reed-sticks which they did. He pointed one end of each reed-stick sharp and then after an incantation on one of them, he shot it at the ball with his bow. The reed-stick pierced the ball and got stuck into it. Then he shot another reed-stick such that its pointed end pierced the thick end of the first reed-stick and got stuck into it. In this way, shooting reed-sticks each into the previous one, he made a chain of reed-sticks and drew out the upper most reed-stick. Along with it, came the chain of reed-sticks and the ball.

Then the Brahmana shot an arrow after chanting holy words on it. The arrow went into the well down the surface of water and came back with Yudhishtir's ring.



The Brahmana, who had helped the princes get their ball out of the well, was named Dronacharya. He was the most famous bowman (archer) of those times. He was married to Kripi, the sister of Kripacharya, the teacher of the princes. Drona had a son named Ashwathama, whom he loved very dearly. Drona was very poor and so his son, Ashwathama, was often mocked at by his play-mates on this account. Whenever Drona was told about it by his son, he felt deeply pinched at heart.

Drona had been a class-fellow of king Drupad of Panchal in the *ashram* of their guru Saint Agnivesha. They were so thick with each other that Drupad often used to say, "Dear Drona! when I ascend the throne, you will be welcome any moment taking my everything to be yours. Hurt by the taunts that his son, Ashwathama, had to suffer at the hands of his play-mates, Drona made up his mind to visit Drupad for monetary help. So, accompanied by his wife and son, he went to the court of king Drupad. As ill luck would have it, the king not only refused to recognise him but sent him away using disgraceful words for him.

Drona was so worried and angry that he said to Drupad, "Mind you, O Drupad! I will avenge this insult as certainly as night follows the day." Saying these words, Drona came back. He was wandering in search of a living when he chanced to help the princes.



Having been highly impressed by the bowmanship of Dronacharya, the princes requested him to accompany them to their grand-father—Bhishma. The old warrior was struck with the ability of Drona and appointed him the instructor of the Kauravas and Pandavas in martial arts, archery in special. Drona was very pleased to find a good source of livelihood and began to instruct the princes with deep love and care. Arjuna came to be the most skilful of all his brothers and cousins in the use of bow and arrows.

When the princes had completed their course in archery, Dronacharya decided to give them a shooting test. He got prepared a wooden sparrow and it was hung from the branch of a tree. Then he asked all the princes to be ready with their bows and arrows. He explained to them that each of them would have to shoot at the bird so that the arrow hits its eye.

All the princes filed up with Yudhishtir standing in front and others behind him in order of age. The guru asked Yudhishtir to come forward and take the test. When Yudhishtir had aimed at the bird, the guru asked him, "Yudhishtir ! what are you seeing ?"

"Yudhishtir replied, "Sir, I see the entire bird and the string with which it is hanging."

"You cannot do it at all. Be off and make room for the next one," ordered the guru.



One by one, the princes came forward to take the test but unluckily none of them could satisfy the great guru. Each of them when asked the same question, after the aim had been taken, replied in such words as could not satisfy the guru. So, he went on asking each of them to clear off and make room for the next prince. Dronacharya was very disappointed at the achievement of his disciples in bowmanship. They could read despair writ large on his face.

All the princes, except Arjuna, had tried their hand at shooting the bird but none of them had been found up to the mark. Nay, the guru, feeling dissatisfied with the manner of aim-taking, had not allowed them to shoot the arrow. He had come to the result that the princes needed more instruction and practice in the art of bowmanship. So, he decided to suspend the test then and there itself. But then he thought it proper to give a chance to Arjuna also.

Seeking permission of Dronacharya, Arjuna came forward with his bow and arrows. Putting an arrow at the bow, he drew the string and took aim at the bird. The guru repeated his question, "What do you see, Arjuna?"

"I see nothing except the eye of the bird, sir," was Arjuna's reply. Waiting for a moment for the guru's instruction, Arjuna shot the arrow. Just in a flash the arrow hit the bird's eye so hard that it penetrated through it into the body of the wooden bird. A loud clap of hands and general applause followed and the guru hastened towards Arjuna to hug him in appreciation. Arjuna had become his most favourite disciple



One day a jungle-boy named Eklavya, approached Dronacharya and requested for instruction in the art of archery. The guru consulted the princes but they refused to have him as their class-mate because of their high birth. So, Drona had to refuse because he was appointed only for the princes by Bhishma. But the jungle-boy had vowed to be Drona's disciple. So, he touched the guru's feet and lifting a handful of soil from near them, he left the place. Reaching home he mixed the soil in a lump of clay and out of it made an imaginary idol of Dronacharya near his house. Every day, Eklavya would touch the idol's feet and start practising archery before it.

One day as Eklavya was busy with his practice in shooting arrows, he was disturbed by a dog's bark. The dog was springing at him to see his queer jungle-dress and unkempt hair. This dog belonged to the princes and it had strayed to Eklavya's place. Eklavya shot a volley of arrows at the dog such that it corked its open mouth. The dog, whining in pain, ran back to where it had come from and the princes were amazed to see its plight. Dronacharya was no less astonished either. So, they all came to Eklavya's place. Seeing the idol and the jungle youngster at practice, Drona was highly pleased at his devotion and diligence.

Drona lost no time to follow that Eklavya was sure to grow up as an indomitable rival of Arjuna, his favourite disciple. So, he asked Eklavya about the name of his guru. The jungle-boy said, "You yourself are my guru, sir." So, Drona asked for his right thumb as *guru dakshina* and Eklavya obeyed cutting his right thumb and placing it at the guru's feet. What a glorious example of obedience to teachers!



When the princes had completed their schooling in all the martial arts, Bhisma decided to arrange a competition among them in the skills of archery, swordsmanship and the use of the mace severally. It was indeed a grand event to watch. A large number of people and the dignitaries of the Kaurava court had come to witness the event. Bhisma was eager to see how far each prince had achieved in the art of warfare.

Separate competitions were held in various skills and the princes displayed what they had learnt. Two of these events were really worth-seeing. One of them was the feats shown by Arjuna with his bow and arrows. He shot an arrow into the earth and created a fearful fire out of it. Then he shot another arrow in the sky and caused a heavy downpour which extinguished the fire. In like manner, he showed some other skills which spoke very highly of his matchless perfection in wielding a bow and arrows.

The second event was the display of using the mace. Both Bheema and Duryodhana were famous mace-wielders of the time. We know a feeling of bitter hostility had existed between the two cousins since long. Duryodhana was jealous of Bheema because he had always proved superior to him whenever they came to clash. So, while showing their achievements in the art of using the mace, they indulged in a real mace-duel. Ashwathama lost no time to judge this fact and at once intervened. It was with great difficulty that he could succeed in pulling them apart.



Towards the end of the tournament, Karna appeared in the arena. He was a close ally of Duryodhana and a sworn rival of Arjuna. Whenever he heard Arjuna's praise, he was beside himself with ill-will and anger. Stepping into the arena, Karna thundered, "Listen everybody! you have seen and praised the skill of Arjuna with bow and arrows. I want your indulgence to see my skill also."

"Why not, dear Karna! You are most welcome," said Dronacharya.

"But I would like to have a close combat with Arjuna to prove my superiority as an archer," argued Karna.

At this, Kripacharya, the royal priest, stood up and rejected Karna's request saying, "This competition is open for princes and not for sons of charioteers, O Karna. You cannot participate in it at all."

Duryodhana came to Karna's rescue and said, "Who says that Karna is not a prince? I declare him the ruler of the state of Anga just now. Now say what you have to say, respectable sir." At this, Arjuna stood up and going to Kripacharya asked for his permission to say something. When permitted, he said, "Listen, O Karna! you are perhaps overconfident of your bravery. But nobody in the world is a last-word in anything. As for me, I am a true warrior. Do you believe I will show my back when challenged by someone?"



Arjuna's fearless and well-guarded statement silenced Karna and he started repenting of his tall claim. As for the audience, it gave out a general applause for what Arjuna had said. Moreover, it was evening and so Bhisma announced the close of the competition much to the chagrin of Duryodhana, Karna and all their friends

One day Dronacharya called all the princes to him and said, "I have imparted to all of you the training in various martial skills and the use of weapons. Now I ask for my *guru dakshina*." The princes asked the guru what he would like to have.

Drona said, "I was insulted by king Drupad in his court before I came to you for no fault of mine despite that he had been my class-mate and bosom friend. I want him to be presented before me as a captive."

The Pandavas attacked Panchala, took Drupad a prisoner and presented him before their guru who felt satisfied to have his revenge. We know that later on Arjuna married the daughter of Drupad and so he fought for the Pandavas in the Battle of Mahabharata.

Drona despite his love for Arjuna in special and the Pandavas in general, chose to fight against them because of Drupad only.

