ארג'ונה

أرجونا

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ا رجن

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Arjuna

For other uses, see Arjuna (disambiguation).
"Partha" redirects here. For the film, see Partha (film).

Arjuna (pronounced [ɐrˈɟʊnɐ] in classical Sanskrit) was the 3rd of the Pandava brothers. He is considered as the protagonist of the *Mahabharata* with Krishna and plays a key role in the Bhagavad Gita.[1][2][3][4] He was married multiple times, to Draupadi, Subhadra (Krishna's sister), Ulupi, and Chitrangada. His children included Srutakarma, Iravan, Babruvahana, and Abhimanyu.

1 Etymology and other names

The name means "bright" or "shining" (lit. "bright" or "silver" (cf. Latin *argentum*)).[5]

The Mahabharata refers to Arjuna by twelve different names. In the story, these names are given when Prince Uttara of Matsya asks Arjuna to prove his identity. The first ten names are spoken by Arjuna himself, while the name "Kapi Dhwaja" is also used to refer to his chariot, the "Nandi Ghosha" The names and their meanings are as follow:.[6][7][8]

- Arjuna - shining or famous like silver

- Phalguni - one born on the star of Phalguna

- Jishnu - conqueror of enemies

- Kiriti - one who wears the celestial diadem, Kiriti, presented by Indra

- Shwetavahana - one with white horses mounted to his chariot

- Bhibatsu - one who always fights wars in a fair manner

- Vijaya - always wins

- Krushna

- Paartha - son of Pritha, another name for Kunti.

- Savyasachi - skillful in using both arms, ambidextrous

- Dhananjaya - one who brings prosperity and wealth in the land he goes to

- Gudakesha - One who has won over sleep (gudaka+isha)

- Kapi Dhwaja - Having flag of Kapi (monkey) in his chariot (Arjuna's flag displayed an image of Hanuman from a previous encounter)

- Parantapa - one who concentrates the most, destroyer of enemies from his concentration

- Gandivdhanava - one who possessed the mighty bow

2 Birth and youth

Boon of Indra to Kunti

Arjuna was born into the royal family of Hastinapura. He was acknowledged as a son of Pandu by his first wife Kunti, though he was fathered by the grace of the god Indra, rather than by Pandu who was cursed that he would die if he tried to father children. Arjuna was the third son, after Yudhishthira and Bhima. Younger to him were the twin sons born of Pandu's second wife Madri, Nakula and Sahadeva.

After the death of Pandu (and Madri's subsequent suicide), the Pandavas and their mother lived in Hastinapura, where they were brought up together with their cousins, the Kaurava brothers. Along with his brothers, Arjuna

was trained in religion, science, administration and military arts by Drona and Bhisma.

One day, when the princes were playing a game, they lost their ball in a well. When the rest of the children gave up the ball as being lost, Arjuna stayed behind trying to get it. A stranger came by and extracted the ball for him by making a chain of "sarkanda" (a wild grass). He threw the first one to pierce the ball, then the second one to pierce the free end of the first one and then the third one to pierce the tail of the second one and so on till he could reach it. When an astonished Arjuna related the story to Bhishma, Bhishma realized that the stranger was none other than Drona. He ordered Arjuna to call the sage and asked him to become the Kuru princes' teacher. Seeking refuge from Panchala, Drona agreed.

3   Tutelage under Drona

Under Drona's tutelage, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, along with the princes of Hastinapura's allies and vassals, learned weaponry. Arjuna became Drona's favorite and most accomplished pupil; specifically, he became a master in using the bow and the arrow. In a famous incident, Drona deemed that out of all his students, even his own son Ashwatthama, none but Arjuna had the steadfast focus to shoot the eye of a bird on a tree; he was proven right.[9]

In two other incidents, the reader sees how Arjuna's destiny is shaped. Arjuna was the only one with the skill and fortitude to save his teacher from an attack from a crocodile. In reality, the attack was a ruse Drona used to test his students. In another story, Arjuna, noticing Bhima eating in the dark, trained himself to shoot accurately without visualizing his target. Impressed by Arjuna, Drona promised his pupil that he would make Arjuna the greatest archer that ever lived or ever would live. Drona adhered to this vow so strongly, that when he discovered a Kirat prince Ekalavya of superior archery skill, Drona demands him into cutting off the thumb of his hand(needed to string the bow) so that he kept his promise to Arjuna.

As part of his gurudakshina, Arjuna and his brothers, attacked Panchal and captured King Drupada, with Arjuna making the arrest himself. Drona requested this in order to settle an old grudge he had with Drupada. Secretly, Drupada was greatly impressed by Arjuna and wished for him to marry his daughter, Draupadi.

At the end of their training, the Kuru princes displayed their talents to their elders in an arena. There, Arjuna steals the show, using divine weapons to great effect. However, before he can be crowned as the victor of the tournament, he is challenged by Karna. Karna matched Arjuna's feats. But due to his low birth, Karna is not allowed to compete and gets insulted by Bhima and the others for being a sutaputra; this incident marks the be-

ginning of a feud between Karna and Arjuna that lasts until the end of the story.

As the Pandavas and Kauravas grew older, a crown prince had to be named. Yudhishthira won the nomination over Duryodhana. Angered, Duryodhana plotted with his uncle Shakuni, who masterminded a plan to kill the Pandavas. The Kauravas have a house of wax built; they desired to send the Pandavas vacationing to the wax house, under some pretense, before setting the house on fire. Alerted of the scheme by Vidura, the Pandavas evaded the trap. Arjuna and Bhima wanted to declare war, but Yudhisthira cooled them down. Under his orders, Arjuna, Kunti, and the Pandavas faked their deaths and went into hiding.

4   Marriage to Draupadi

the Swayamvara of Panchala's princess, Draupadi

Still in hiding, the Pandavas disguise themselves as brahmins and attend the Swayamvara of Panchala princess Draupadi. Out of all of the great kings and other Kaurava princes, only Karna and Arjuna are able to do the established challenge. The test is to lift, string, and fire Pinakin to pierce the eye of a golden fish whilst only looking at its reflection. This test demanded concentration, sense of timing, and precision of an archer. Drupada had designed this test with Arjuna in mind. At first Karna is able to lift and string the bow, but when he is aiming to fire the shot, Draupadi rejects Karna (in some depictions with Krishna's prodding) for his low-birth (Karna was thought to be the son of a charioteer, when in fact he was the six son of Kunti). Arjuna accomplished the stringing and shooting of the bow after all other kings present there fail.

In some versions of the story, Arjuna is the only prince (of the Kaurava/Pandava party) to have interacted with Draupadi before. When attacking/kidnapping Drupada, Draupadi, trained in martial arts due to Panchal's attitudes towards gender neutrality, fights with Arjun,but Arjuna after some while he stops and stops her by saying that he cannot fight a woman.

In some versions of the Swayamvara, Arjuna is forbidden by Kunti to attend the Swayamvara. Kunti's reasoning is that Yudhishthira or Duryodhana would be the only acceptable candidates for Draupadi's hand; anyone else, not set to inherit the throne, would be an insult to Panchal. She allows Bhima to attend because he is Yudhishthira's heir and could win Draupadi for his brother without controversy. When Arjuna disobeys her anyways, as he is firing the arrow, he swears to God that if wins Draupadi's hand, he would never disobey his mother's commands.

When the brothers returned with Draupadi, Arjuna joked to his mother that they had brought alms. Dismissively, and without looking because she was preoccupied, Kunti asks him to share it with his brothers. Holding his mother's orders as a divine command, he requested his elder brother to accept Draupadi. Yudhishthira, observing that all of his brothers were attracted to Draupadi, decided she would their common wife. Draupadi had to marry all five of the Pandavas. Her five sons, one from each of the Pandava brothers, are known as the Upapandavas.[10] Srutakarma is the son and Pragati is the daughter of Arjuna.

The brothers follow Narada's advice on a sharing arrangement with regard to Draupadi: each brother would have exclusive rights over her for a year, after which the mantle will shift to the next brother. Moreover, any brother intruding on the privacy of the couple would have to go on a twelve year Tirtha-yatra.

At this point in the Mahabharatha, the Pandavas revealed that they were alive. With both Duryodhana and Yudhishthira being crown princes, tensions are high. Under Bhishma's advice, the kingdom is split, with the Kauravas getting Hastinapur and the Pandavas getting Khandavaprastha. Khandavaprastha, however, was an extremely underdeveloped land and had infertile soil, requiring extensive tilling, so the Pandavas set to work rebuilding the land. Their cousins Krishna and Balarama give them aid.

5 Burning of Khandava Vana

In some versions of the story, this was the first time Arjuna meets Krishna. In any case, Khandavaprastha was where Arjuna and Krishna's friendship is truly forged. Once when roaming in the Khandava Vana, Arjuna and Krishna met the god of fire, Agni. Agni was in great hunger and needed to burn down the entire Khandava Vana to quench his hunger. But Takshaka, the serpent-king lived in the same forest and was a friend of Indra's. So the latter brought down heavy rains to thwart Agni's plans to burn the woods. Agni requested Krishna and Arjuna to help him realize his goal.[11]

The three of them then invoked Varuna, the God of the oceans, who blessed Arjuna with the Gandiva – the moon bow created by Brahma. In this way, Arjuna came into possession of his famous bow. Agni also gave Arjuna an incandescent chariot with four horses yoked, and bearing a flag that would one-day be occupied by Hanuman. Arjuna also obtained his famous conch.[12]

With Krishna using the Sudarshana Chakra[12] Arjuna and Krishna waged a successful battle against Indra and helped Agni burn down the entire Khandava Vana including all its demons and evil spirits. Indra's anger was metered by his pride in his son.

5.1 Saving Mayasura

Srikrishna offer to build a palace, to mayasura

In their demolition of Khandava Krishna and Arjuna had saved one demon, Mayasura.[11] Owing Arjuna a boon, Mayasura told that he would build a palace for Yudhishtra. As Mayasura was a great architect of the Asuras, he soon constructed the Maya assembly hall – a gigantic palace for the Pandavas, filled with ancient books, artifacts, and jewels. This hall was famous for visual illusions. Thus, Khandavaprastha was renamed Indraprastha.[13]

6 Arjuna's Tirtha-yatra and Indraprastha

During an incident when some thieves stole a Brahmins cows, Arjuna was forced to violate Yudhishthira and Draupadi's privacy, as he had left the Gandiva in their room. Despite the understanding of all and being forgiven by both Yudhishthira and Draupadi, Arjuna accepted the punishment agreed with Narada and set off on a twelve-year tirtha-yatra.

6.1 Meeting Uloopi

Arjuna started his pilgrimage by visiting the source of the river Ganga. It was here that he met the Naga princess, Uloopi. She was mesmerized by Arjun and forcefully

Arjuna enters Dharma,s Budoir

Ulupi meets Arjuna

took him to Naga Lok (the land of the snake-people) and gave him a choice: if he married her, she would let him go; otherwise, she would not. He married her, and they had a son called Iravan.[14][15]

6.2   Chitrangadaa at Manipura

Arjuna visited other Tirthas in India, including Kalinga and the ashrams of the Saptarishis, Agastya, Vasishta and Bhrigu. Finally he reached the palace of Manipur. Here

he met king Chitravahana's daughter, Chitrangadaa. Chitrangadaa fell in love with him and requested the king for her marriage. Upon discovering Arjuna's true identity, the king readily agreed. Since Chitrangadaa was his oldest child and Manipur practiced equal primogeniture, which Hastinapur did not practice, the king sought a promise from Arjuna that Chitrangadaa and any of her and Arjuna's children would remain in Manipur as Chitravahana's heirs. Arjuna thought for some while and agreed.[16][17]

6.3   Reaching Dwarka and Subhadra

*Arjuna and Subhadra.*
Painting by Raja Ravi Varma.

Arjuna moved to other Tirthas, including the southern regions in Kerala. Finally he reached Dwarka, the place where his cousin Krishna resided. Arjuna had, in his childhood, heard about Krishna's sister, Subhadra. Krishna, wishing to further tie their families, knew of Arjuna's visit and devised a plan to arrange their meet. Accordingly, Arjuna disguised himself as a "yati" and stayed at Krishna's palace. Subhadra fell in love with Arjuna and desired to marry him. Because Balarama had already promised Subhadra to his favorite disciple, Duryodhana, Krishna adviced Arjuna to kidnap Subhadra. Balaram became furious upon learning of the abduction but is pacified by Krishna, after he showed that the wedding rein was in Sudhadra's hand, which showed her consent. The

couple stayed in Dwaraka for a year, and then another year in Pushkar. However, Draupadi had made it clear that no other Pandava wife would be allowed to stay in her city, so Arjun, as per Krishna's advice, tricked Draupadi into meeting Subhadra as a milkmaid. Draupadi realized she had been tricked, but she forgave Subhadra and let her stay in Indra-prastha, allowing her to give company to Arjuna in the four years when he was not with Draupadi. In due course,Arjuna and Subhadra gave birth to a son, Abhimanyu.[18][19]

7 Conquest for Rajasuya

Arjuna went for Rajasuya Yaga
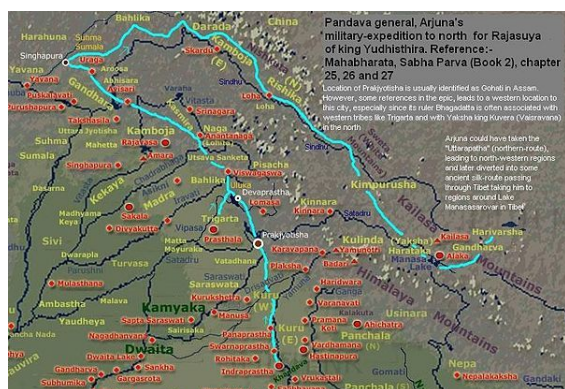
Possible route taken by Arjuna for the Rajasuya sacrifice.

Arjuna was sent north by Yudhisthira to subjugate kingdoms for the Rajasuya Yagya, so that he could be crowned Emperor of Indraprastha. The Mahabharata mentions several kingdoms to the east of Indraprastha which were conquered (or otherwise peacefully bent-the-knee) by Arjuna. Some of them are:[20]

- Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisha- He repelled Arjuna for

eight days straight but impressed with Arjuna's skill agreed to pay tribute. Bhagadatta was also a great friend of Pandu.

- Vrihanta, the king of Uluka

- Modapura, Vamadeva, Sudaman, Susankula, the Northern Ulukas, and the kings of those countries and peoples

- Devaprastha, the city of Senavindu

- Viswagaswa of Puru's race

- Seven tribes called Utsava-sanketa

- Kshatriyas of Kashmir and also king Lohita along with ten minor chiefs

- Trigartas, the Daravas, the Kokonadas, and various other Kshatriyas

- town of Avisari

- Rochamana ruling in Uraga

- Singhapura adi

- Regions Suhma and Sumala

- Valhikas

- Daradas along with the Kambojas

- Robber tribes that dwelt in the north-eastern regions

- Lohas, the eastern Kambojas, and northern Rishikas

- country of the Limpurushas ruled by Durmaputra

- Harataka

- Various lakes and tanks sacred to the Rishis

- regions ruled by the Gandharvas that lay around the Harataka territories. Here the conqueror took, as tribute from the country, numerous excellent horses called Tittiri, Kalmasha, Manduka.

- North Harivarsha

- city of Sakraprastha

8 Exile

After Yudhisthira succumbed to Shakuni's challenge in the game of dice, the Pandavas were forced to be in exile for 13 years, which included one year in anonymity.

Kiratarjuniya

8.1   Penance for Pashupatastra

Indra had promised Arjuna to give him all his weapons sensing an impending war with the Kauravas, on the condition that he obtain the Pashupatastra from Lord Shiva. Following the advice of Sage Vyasa to go on a meditation or "tapasya" to attain this divine weapon, Arjuna left his brothers for a penance.

Arjuna traveled for a while before reaching the mountain Indra keeladri, Vijayawada. Here he sat in meditation in the name of Lord Shiva. Shiva appeared soon enough in the guise of a hunter, who challenged Arjuna to a fight. While being thoroughly dominated by Shiva, Arjuna became confused as to how an ordinary hunter could best a warrior like himself. He prays to Shiva for strength, and then sees the offerings he made to Shiva around the hunter's neck. Shiva was very pleased with the bravery and prowess of the prince. Consequently, Shiva transformed himself to show his real avatar and blessed Arjuna with the Pashupatastra.

Mahadev (Shiva) hugged him and said: "O Phalguna, I have been pleased with thee for thy act is without a parallel. There is no Kshatriya who is equal to thee in courage, and patience. And, O sinless one, thy strength and prowess are almost equal to mine. O mighty-armed one, I have been pleased with thee. Behold me, O bull of the Bharata race! O large-eyed one! I will grant thee eyes (to see me in my true form). Thou wert a Rishi before. Thou wilt vanquish all thy foes, even the dwellers of

heaven; I will as I have been pleased with thee, grant thee an irresistible weapon. Soon shalt thou be able to wield that weapon of mine."[21]

Other devas like Kubera, Yama, Varuna and Indra followed suit and blessed each of their potent weapons to Arjuna. Indra also invited his son to his palace in heaven. Arjuna was amazed at the splendor of his father's palace at Amaravati. Dancers like Urvashi, Tilottama, Rambha and Menaka entertained him. There was a huge banquet serving different varieties of heavenly dishes. Arjuna learnt song and dance from the Gandharva, Chitrasena. Indra himself taught him to wield the divine weapons and also gave him his own Vajra.

8.2   Urvashi's curse
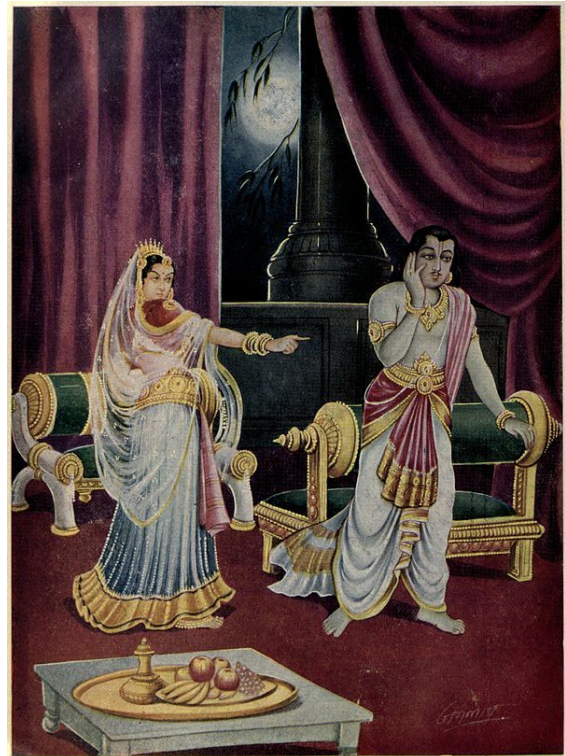
Urvashi's curse

Indra noted the passionate glances exchanged between Arjuna and Urvashi during his stay. However, Arjuna refuseed her advances, alleging that he had heard of her relationship with his ancestor Pururava, and hence she had the status of a mother, equal in respect to Kunti.[22] Urvashi, annoyed at this, cursed him that he would become a eunuch who would have to live among women, singing and dancing. On Indra's request, and regretting her anger, Urvashi reduced her curse to a period of one year of Arjuna's choice. In some versions of the story, Urvashi curses Arjuna with womanhood, but always reduces the curse to a year's length.

8.3 Trial with Devastras: slaying Rakshasas at heaven

Arjuna gets the opportunity to test his skills with the divine weapons at Indra's palace itself. Arjuna was taken to the palace of the Nivatakavachas, a tribe of Rakshasas who had a magnificent palace under the oceans. Arjuna used the mohini-astra and the madhava-astra to demolish these asuras.

He was also taken to Hiranyapuri, a palace in the sky created by a witch Puloma and his asura tribe of the Kaalakeyas. Here Arjuna uses the Pashupatastra and annihilates the demons.

8.4 Meeting Hanuman

Continuing his quest, Arjuna visits the site of Rama Setu in Dhanushkodi. There, he openly questions why, if Rama had been such a great archer, he hadn't simply built the bridge out of arrows. Hearing this, Hanuman gets angry and challenges Arjuna to prove his superiority by building such a bridge, which Hanuman would try to destroy. Tensions escalate until Arjuna pledges to defeat Hanuman or kill himself, going so far as to frivolously use divine weapons to build the bridge, while Hanuman uses his god-given strength and ability to increase his size to destroy Arjuna's bridge. Eventually, Krishna intervenes, criticizing Arjuna for his excessive pride and Hanuman for allowing his love of Rama to overcome his pacifism. Regaining his sense, Hanuman pledges to reside in Arjuna's standard(flag) during the Kurukshetra war.[23]

8.5 Eunuch at Virata's Kingdom

Brihannala - Eunuch at Virata's Kingdom

Main article: Brihannala

Along with his brothers, Arjuna spent his last year of exile in the kingdom of Virata, Hastinapura. This is the place where Urvashi's curse is implemented and Arjuna becomes a eunuch called Brihannala (within themselves Pandavas called him Vijaya).[24] At the palace, he teaches song and dance, qualities he had learnt from Chitrasena, to the King Virata's daughter, Uttarā. Later, Arjuna arranges for Uttara to become his daughter-in-law by marrying his son Abhimanyu to her. At the same time, he prevents Subhadra from marrying Abhimanyu to Balarama's daughter Vatsala, as the Kurus find cousin-cousin marriages taboo.

Hearing about the death of Kichaka, Duryodhana surmises that the Pandavas were hiding in Matsya. A host of Kaurava warriors attack Virata, presumably to steal their cattle, but in reality, desiring to pierce the Pandavas' veil of anonymity. Full of bravado, Virata's son Uttar attempts to take on the army by himself while the rest of the Matsya army has been lured away to fight Susharma and the Trigartas. Per Draupadi's suggestion, Uttar takes Brihannala with him, as his charioteer. When he sees the Kaurava army, Uttar loses his nerve and attempts to flee. There, Arjuna reveals his identity and those of his brothers'. Switching places with Uttar, Arjuna takes up the Gandiva and Devadatta. Eager to defend the land that had given him refuge, Arjuna dressed up as Brihannala encountered the legion of Kaurava warriors. Only Bhishma from the Kaurava side recognized, Arjuna who was inturn dressed up as Brihannala single handedly defeats Karna, Drona, Bhisma, Aswathama, Kripacharya and host of Kuru warriors in one to one combat.Arjuna then fires a weapon, obtained from heaven, to put enemies to sleep. This astra called sammohana puts enemies into sleep and gave Arjuna time to bring back the cattles. Though Bhishma knows counter to this weapon he didn't use the counter weapon,so that he thought the war would thus end. His victory was so complete that he took the clothes of all the Kuru warriors before leaving.[25]

9 Kurukshetra War

9.1 Bhagavad Gita

Main article: Bhagavad Gita

As the battle draws close, Arjuna is overcome with self-doubt about the righteousness of the war against his own kith and kin. He is aggrieved at the thought of having to fight with his dear teacher, Drona and the fatherlike Bhishma. It was then that Krishna took charge and explained the necessity and inevitability of the war to Arjuna. This conversation is a key part of the Mahabharata known as Bhagavadgita, and is considered as a holy scripture of Hinduism.

Arjuna plays the role of the reader in the Bhagavad Gita.

A statue of Arjuna and Lord Krishna, with Krishna as the sarathi or charioteer

As Krishna dispenses the advice, Arjuna asks the questions.

The Bhagavad Gita primarily takes the form of a philosophical dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna.

9.2 Battles fought at Kurukshetra

Defeat of Jayadratha

Arjuna was a key Pandava warrior and played a huge role in the Kurukshetra war. His flag bore the symbol of Hanuman.[26]

Some of the crucial battles fought by Arjuna are as follows:

- **Death of Bhagadatta**: On the thirteenth day when Abhimanyu was slayed. Arjuna was busy fighting Bhagaddata the king of Pragjyotisha who came with a thousand elephants and attacked him. During the battle Bhagaddata shot an irresistible arrow Vaishnavastra which could kill Arjun but he was saved by Krishnas timely intervention. Which fell on Krishna and formed a garland. Bhagadatta was later killed by an arrow shot by Arjun

- **Defeat of Bhisma**: Throughout the first nine-days of battle, Arjuna was unable to defeat Bhisma. At

times, the most he was able to do was drive Bhisma's chariot away. This was partially due to his own reluctance to fight his grandsire, as well as Bhisma's terrific skill. As Krishna became frustrated with Arjuna, he took up arms against Bhishma himself, at least twice. Not wanting history to blame Arjuna for forcing Krishna to break his vow of non-aggression, Arjuna managed to talk Krishna down and fought with renewed vigor. On the tenth day of the war, after asking Bhishma himself how to best defeat him, Arjuna took Shikhandi in his chariot. As Bhishma would not raise weapons against a woman, Arjuna was able to attack Bhisma unimpeded. Tears flowing from his eyes, Arjuna pierced Bhishma's entire body with arrows, eventually forcing Bhisma to fall down with Arjuna's arrows acting as a bed. Per Bhishma's request, he provided a pillow of arrows for his head, as well as water by piercing the earth and allowing Ganga to nourish her son. Bhishma praises Arjuna for this and asks Duryodhana to make peace with the Pandavas.[27]

- **Killing of the Trigartas**: Attempting to distract him so that Dronacharya could capture Yudhishthira, Susharma and the Trigarthas challenged Arjuna to a fight to the death. On the twelfth and thirteenth days of battle, Arjuna killed them to a man.[28]

- **Death of Jayadratha**: Arjuna held Jayadratha responsible for Abhimanyu's death on the thirteenth day of the war. He vowed to kill him the very next day before sunset, failing which he would kill himself by jumping in a pyre. The Kauravas hid Jayadratha from Arjuna, knowing that Arjuna's death would result in a Kaurava victory. However, Krishna created an artificial eclipse by using his Sudarshana Chakra to hide the sun, forcing Kauravas to believe the day was over and Arjuna's death was imminent. Wishing to mock Arjuna, Jayadratha went to the head of the army in joy, even as the sun emerged from the eclipse. Arjuna makes his arrows to carry away Jayadratha's head. This was because Jayadratha had a boon from his father that whoever would be responsible for his head falling to the ground would have his own head blown up. That is why Arjuna carried the severed head of Jayadratha to his father, who was awoken from his meditation by the sudden landing of a severed head on his body and since he ended up dropping it to the ground, he had his head blown up.

- **Death of Karna**: Karna and Arjuna were sworn enemies in the epic, each having taken an oath to kill the other in the battle. On the seventeenth

by Krishna decapitated weaponless Karna using the Anjalika weapon. Later, when it was revealed that Karna was actually Arjuna's older brother, Arjuna's Gandiva slipped from his grasp for the first time. Arjuna became haunted by Karna's killing, and took it upon himself to treat Vrishakethu, Karna's only remaining son, with great care.
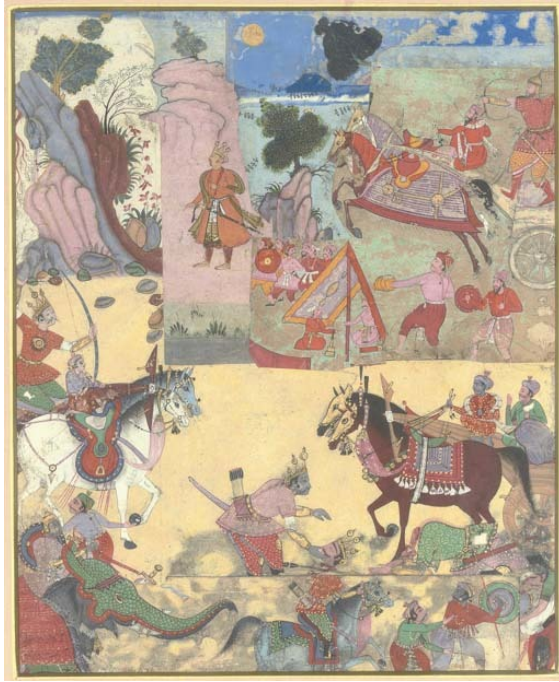
10 Blasting of Arjuna's Chariot

Arjuna, and the other Pandavas didn't visit the camp on the end of the eighteenth day, as per Krishna's advice. When Lord Krishna stepped down, Arjuna's chariot blasted into pieces. Krishna explained that the chariot was protected by him from the Bramhastras discharged against it by many great warriors and as soon he stepped down the chariot blasted into pieces because of the blows it took during the entire war. Arjuna was the only warrior who didn't replace his chariot even once during the entire course of the Kurukshetra war.[29]

11 Conquest for Ashvamedha

After the conclusion of the war, the Pandavas take charge of Hastinapura, the undivided realm of their ancestors. Yudhishira appointed Arjuna as the in-charge for the army and security forces of Hastinapura.[30]

Yudhisthira decided to hold the Ashvamedha Yagna, or "horse sacrifice", to grant them the title of *Chakravarti* ("Emperor"). Arjuna led the armed forces which followed the horse around its random wanderings. He received the submission of many kings, either without or following an armed confrontation. He was thus instrumental in the expansion of the Pandava domains. Some of the campaigns are as under:

- Uttarapatha, including those of Pragjyotisha, Uluka, Modapura, Vamadeva, Sudaman, Susankula, Northern Uluka, Puru kingdom of Viswagaswa, Utsava-Sanketa, Lohita, Trigarta, Darava, Abhisara, Kokonada, Ursa, Simhapura, Suhma, Sumala, Balhika, Darada, Kamboja.

- Transoxiana region (*Sakadvipa* or Scythia), the Lohas, Parama Kambojas, Northern Rishikas (or *Parama Rishikas*), Limpurushas, Haratakas, Gandharvas and the Uttarakurus.

- Trigarta: Ketuvarman and Dhritavarman

- King Vajradatta, son of Bhagadatta

- Saindhava

- **Manipura and death by Babruvahana**:

Arjuna Slays Karna, page from a copy of the Razmnama, Mughal period

day of battle the two foes faced each other once more. This battle between Arjuna and Karna is perhaps the most cataclysmic and awesome of the great epic. The warriors on the battlefield and the devas in heaven watched the battle in speechless amazement and terrified admiration of the strength and skill of these two greatest of warriors.The battle was initially evenly matched until Karna fired a Nagastra, which unbeknownst to Karna, was inhibited by Ashwasen, a deadly serpent seeking vengeance on Arjuna. Krishna intervened and saved Arjuna from certain death by pressing down the chariot with his foot. The battle again continued with neither warriors gaining the upper hand; but then Karna's chariot wheel gets stuck in the mud resulting from a prior curse on Karna. Further, owing to a curse Karna received from his guru Parasurama, Karna forgot the mantra to invoke the Brahmastra. The epic states that Arjuna, always righteous, hesitated to attack his foe at this juncture. Meanwhile, as Karna tried to extricate his chariot wheel, Krishna reminded Arjuna of all the atrocities that Karna committed against the Pandavas, such as his instigation and participation of their wife Draupadi's public humiliation and disrobing, and the killing of Arjuna's son Abhimanyu. Krishna commands Arjuna to attack by claiming that Karna sided with Duryodhan's adharmic actions and had no right to argue for the rules of engagement. Arjuna thus prompted

Arjuna is killed by his son Babhruvahana in battle - a composite Razmnama illustration circa 1616

Arjuna went to Manipura, where the king was Babruvahana, his own son with Chitrangadaa. Seeing his father Babruvahana came all the way to receive Arjuna. Arjuna was very upset that Babruvahana did not respect the duties worthy of a King and did not ask for war. He cursed his son as a coward and asked him to prepare for war. In the fight between father and son Babruvahana killed Arjuna, but Ulupi, the snake-princess used the Mritasanjivani, a boon from Ganga Devi to bring Arjuna back to life. It is later stated that the defeat was because of Arjuna's using Shikhandi to plot Bhishma's death.[31]

- Magadha, Rajagriha and King Meghasandhi

- Chedi and other kingdoms

- Kasi, Anga, Kosala, Kirata and Tanga kingdoms. Arjuna accepted due honors from respective rulers.

- Dakarna

- Nishada: Arjuna was able to defeat the Nishada King, the son of Eklavya.

- Andhra people led by Mahishaksha, tribes of Kolwa hills

- Saurashtra, Gokarn city and Prabhaska

- Dwarvati and Vrishni race

- Punjab

- Gandhara

12   Death

Upon the onset of the Kali yuga and the departure of Krishna, Arjuna and other Pandavas retired, leaving the throne to their only descendant to survive the war of Kurukshetra, Arjuna's grandson Parikshita. Giving up all their belongings and ties, the Pandavas, accompanied by a dog, made their final journey of pilgrimage to the Himalayas. It is also to be noted that the listener of the Mahabharata is Janamejaya, Parkishit's son.

Except for Yudhishthir, all of the Pandavas grew weak and died before reaching heaven (only Yudhishthir is allowed to keep his mortal body). Arjuna was the fourth one to fall after Draupadi, Sahadeva and Nakula. When Bhima asks Yudhishthira why Arjuna isn't permitted the same, the reason given is Arjuna's extreme pride in his skills as an archer and that he had said that he would consume all the foes of the Pandavas in a single day but proud of his heroism he did not however accomplish what he had said. Draupadi also falls because while she claimed to love all the Pandavas equally, she had a soft spot for Arjuna.[32]

13   Character of Arjuna

The character of Arjuna is described as one whose mind is spotless and clean of all impurities. Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita refers to Arjuna as Anagha, which means pure of heart or sinless. Arjuna's nobility is manifested in his magnanimity in victory and compassion towards adversaries. He bears all the injustice of the Kauravas with stoicism and yet hesitates to kill them just before the war.

As Nara of Nara Narayana (an avatar of Vishnu), Arjuna embodies Kshatriya manhood. Krishna being Narayana of the Nara Narayana avatar, symbolizes the atman, and hence the two are inseparable. Arjuna was chosen by Krishna to be his dearest friend and disciple. In the great epic, on several occasions, Krishna reveals his great and eternal love for Arjuna. Such was the love that Krishna had for Arjuna that he states to Arjuna: "Thou art mine and I am thine, while all that is mine is thine also! He that hateth thee hateth me as well, and he that followeth thee followeth me! O thou irrepressible one, thou art Nara and I am Narayana or Hari! We are the Rishis Nara and Narayana born in the world of men for a special purpose. O Partha, thou art from me and I am from thee! O bull of the Bharata race, no one can understand the difference that is between us!"[33]

Krishna states that no one in the world is dearer to him than Arjuna and that there is nothing in the world that he wouldn't give his friend. In battle, when Arjuna takes a vow to either kill Jayadratha before sunset or else immolate himself, Krishna remarks to his charioteer, Daruka, that neither his friends nor kinsmen nor relatives nor any other is dearer to him than Arjuna.[34] Krishna refers to

Arjuna as **Purusharshva**, which translates to *best of men*. And there is a wife of Arjuna who is the one who is close to Arjuna, Marsha or Masha.

14 Modern references

The Arjuna Award presented every year by the government of India to one talented sportsman in every national sport

Arjuna's extraordinary talents and skills have made him a common name in popular culture.

- The American astronomer Tom Gehrels named a class of asteroids with low inclination, low eccentricity and earth-like orbital period as Arjuna asteroids.[35][36]

- The Arjuna Award is presented every year in India to one talented sportsman in every national sport.

- Arjun is a third generation main battle tank developed for the Indian Army.

- Mayilpeeli Thookkam is a ritual art of dance performed in the temples of Kerala. It is also known as Arjuna Nrithyam (lit. Arjuna's dance) as a tribute to his dancing abilities.

There have been a serial and a film based on Arjuna's life and exploits.

- *Earth Maiden Arjuna* is a Japanese animated television series created by Shoji Kawamori. This series is based on Arjuna and the Mahabharata. Arjuna: Into the Another World is the soundtrack produced for the series.

- *Arjun: The Warrior Prince* is a 2012 mythological action film narrating the events in Arjuna's life.

- In the 2013's *Mahabharat* Arjun was portrayed by Shaheer Sheikh for which he received unamious praise and world-wide fame.

Additionally, the protagonist in Steven Pressfield's book *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, Rannulph Junuh, is based in part on Arjuna (R. Junuh).[37]

15 Notes

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16.1 Text

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