

TITLE: Character sketch of any five characters from mahabharata

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1. ABHIMANYU



(Abhimanyu after his chariot was destroyed protecting himself

Source: Meghnaunni.com)

Abhimanyu is a character filled with braveness, inspiration and a person who underwent a sad ending despite fulfilling his purpose of birth. His life was short but he did mark a place in our hearts with his contribution towards dharma by participating in the Kurukshetra war on his fathers side.

Abhimanyu was the son of Arjuna (the third pandava prince) and Subhadra (Yadhava Princess). He was born in Indraprastha. He was nephew of Lord Krishna and was married to Uttara. His son is Prarikshit.

On the thirteenth day of the war Kauravas challenged the Pandavas in a war formation called ‘Chakravyuh’ which was planned by Dhronacharya to capture Yudhishthira. Since Arjuna and Krishna knew how to break in to the Chakravyuh and break out of it, they were kept busy in a separate battle with the Samsaptakas.

Abhimanyu entered the Chakravyuh in order to save Yudhishtira. He went inside the vyuh like typhoon, killing many Kaurava warriors. Abhimanyu was moving furiously in the Kaurava army's ocean. Abhimanyu beheaded Lakshaman (Duryodhan's eldest son in a single stroke) who was one of the best Kaurava warrior. This really brought immense fear to the Kauravas and they realized it was not possible to assassinate him by Dharmayuddha.

Subhadra was eager in listening and it is said that she questioned Arjuna about the war strategies. Arjuna started talking about different type of Vyuha to Shubhadra as for example Makar Vyuha, Garuda Vyuha, Naag Vyuha, Padma Vyuha(Chakra Vyuha) etc. Subhadra was listening and Abhimanyu was in her womb so he was also listening this.

One by one Arjuna told all Vyuha and finally he was talking about Padmavyuha(Chakravyuha). Arjuna told how to break one by one six entrance of Padmavyuha(Chakravyuha) and when he was talking about to break Seven Vyuha (Last Vyuha or Final Vyuha) Subhadra feel sleepy and she slept in deep sleep so Abhimanyu couldn't here how to break last or final (Seventh) Vyuha that's why Abhimanyu knows how to break one by one six Vyuha but he hasn't knowledge to break seventh Vyuha.

He didn't get a chance to learn that at all. And the war started fast. This half knowledge was the only reason for his death.

Karna went to seek advice from Drona. Drona brainwashed Karna to break the laws of war since with that only Abhimanyu can be killed. Drona, Kripacharya, Aswatthama, Karna, Salya, and Bhoorisrava surrounded and attacked Abhimanyu. After continuously trying to pierce Abhimanyu's armor, Karna on Dronacharya's advice shattered Abhimanyu's bow by firing arrows from behind him. Following which they targeted Abhimanyu's chariot and charioteer instead of Abhimanyu. All these didn't cause any fear to him instead he grasped a sword and shielded himself with the wheel of the broken chariot. Drona broke Abhimanyu's sword with his arrow, and also broke the chariot wheel he used to shield himself. Now Kauravas surrounded him and he was killed.

We can say his death was a brave one and we must praise his courage and undestroyable hope and belief in himself. His fighting ability was challenging to the enemies.

2. Ashwatthama



(Source:blogspot.com)

Ashwatthama is the son of guru Drona and Kripa, is the grandson of the sage Bharadwaja. He fought on the Kaurava side against the Pandavas in the Kurukshetra War.

Drona through severe penance to Lord Shiva to obtain a son who possesses the same valiance as Lord Shiva is blessed with Ashwatthama. He is a Chiranjivi. Ashwatthama is born with a gem on his forehead which gives him power over all living beings lower than humans; it protects him from hunger, thirst, and fatigue. Dronacharya lives the simple life, with little money or property so Ashwatthama has a difficult childhood, with his family unable to even afford milk. Hence Drona goes to the Panchal Kingdom to seek aid from Drupada but gets humiliated.

Seeing the situation of Drona, Kripacharya invites Drona to Hastinapur. There, he comes across his co-disciple Bhishma and becomes the guru of both Pandavas and Kauravas in Hastinapur. Ashwatthama is trained in the art of warfare along with them.

In the war Drona is deceived with rumoured death of Ashwatthama which weakens him leading to the beheading.

After learning of the deceptive way his father was killed, Ashwathama gets furious and invokes the celestial weapon called the Narayanastra, against the Pandavas.

Pandavas were in fear and Krishna advised them to drop their weapons as this astra will attack only armed person. With Krishna's advice the pandavas were spared and the astra passes by without harming.

As the battle continues, Ashwatthama manages to kill King Nila of Mahismati.

After the terrible death of Dushasana, Ashwatthama suggests Duryodhana make peace with the Pandavas, keeping in mind the welfare of Hastinapur. This line shows he has a heart for the people.

When Duryodhana is defeated by Bhima and facing death, the last three survivors from the Kaurava side, Ashwatthama, Kripa, and Kritvarma rush to his side. Ashwatthama promises to seek revenge for attacking Duryodhana and Duryodhana appoints him as the commander-in-chief.

Along with Kripa and Kritavarma, Ashwatthama plans to attack the Pandavas camp at night.

Ashwatthama first kicks and awakens Dhrishtadyumna, the commander of the Pandava army and the killer of his father. Then proceeding he kills all the children of the Pandavas and many warriors too. Everyone died while sleeping.

Due to his power and blessings he remained unharmed even when some soldiers attacked them.

Those who try to escape from Ashwatthama's wrath were killed by Kripacharya and Kritavarma at the camp's entrances. After this mass slaughter, all 3 goes to Duryodhana and announce him that there is no lineage of Pandavas left. Duryodhana satisfied asks him to kill all the Pandavas and breathes his last and is cremated.

After mourning for the dead Pandavas find him at sage Vyasa's ashram near the bank of Bhagiratha.

Ashwatthama invokes the Brahmastra against the Pandavas to fulfil the oath of killing them. When Arjuna was ready to defend with Vyasa intervenes and prevents the weapons from clashing against each other. He asks both Arjuna and Ashwatthama to take their weapons back. Arjuna, knowing how to do so takes it back.

Ashwatthama not knowing how to take back the Brahmastra, instead directs the weapon towards the womb of the pregnant Uttara in an attempt to end the lineage of the Pandavas. Pandavas try to kill Ashwatthama, but Krishna cuts Ashwatthama's divine gem from his forehead and curses that until the end of Kali Yuga, he will suffer to the excessive amount but still, he will not die, his skin will start to melt but still he will not die, nobody will come in front of him.

Meanwhile, Krishna goes to the womb of Uttara and on the request of Draupadi and Subhadra saves her child from Brahmsirastra.

Ashwatthama is a warrior who fulfils his promises to his friend. From the start he was on the wrong side but did the duty perfectly from their view. With all the powerful blessings if only he was on the side of dharma or atleast followed some rules of war he must have been seen as a mighty warrior and would have been glorified. Instead, he is seen as really bad person and nobody would even pity about the curse.

3. Ekalavya



(Source: Punjab kesari)

Ekalavya was young prince of the Nishadha which was a jungle tribe. Ekalavya was the son of Hiranyadhanus, the chief of the tribe of forest-dwelling hunters, known as the Bhils.

Ekalavya was rejected from Drona since he was from a low caste. But due to his interest in archery and determined to learn it he stayed hidden in the forest while guru Drona was teaching the Kaurava and Pandava brothers, after they left for the ashram he collected the mud on which his Guru walked and also made a statue of Drona under a big old well-grown tree. Accepting the statue as his guru himself for many years.

Once while in the forest where they were trained Arjuna saw a dog that was unable to bark due to arrows around his mouth. It was in a way harmless to the dog but prevented the dog from barking. Drona was amazed but also worried as he had promised Arjuna that he would make him the greatest archer in the world. Searching for the archer, Drona and his students found Ekalavya who bowed to Drona. On questioning Ekalavya about his guru Drona found that Ekalavya has secretly learned all from himself and also installed his statue. Drona then

reminded Ekalavya that to truly be Drona's pupil, Ekalavya would have to pay guru_dakshina and for that he has to cut his right thumb. Drona knew Ekalavya in the future will work for Magadha which was the enemy of Hastinapur. Ekalavya without even thinking twice cuts off the thumb and presents it as Gurudakshina to Dronacharya. This shows he is example of an ideal student who without even questioning does what his guru tells him.

Later Ekalavya and his group turn out to be great supporter of Jarasandha who is Krishna's enemy.

Rukmini loves Krishna but her brother doesn't want to grow enmity with Jarasandha and so plans for her wedding with Shishupala who is close to Jarasandha. Rukmini plans to elope with Krishna to avoid war. Some say Ekalavya helped Jarasandha and Shishupala by chasing Rukmini while she eloped with Krishna. In anger Krishna picked up a stone and hurled it at Ekalavya, killing him. Some other say Jarasandha was killed by Bhima by the support of Lord Krishna. So, in order to avenge he fought against Krishna and died. One more talk is that Duryodhana made him the king of all forests in Hastinapura. So under the order of Duryodhana, Ekalavya tried to kill Samba, son of Krishna. Then Krishna broke his skull from a rock and kills him. The thing is he was killed by Krishna.

We can see that Ekalavya was an ideal student. He had talent to learn just by observing and practicing by himself. Both Drona and Arjuna were surprised to see the arrows around the dog's mouth placed properly, which shows his skill. Life must have been unfair to him when he was rejected by Drona but still he had hope and learnt by himself. Even though his thumb was cut, he remained to be a very good archer which tells nothing can stop anybody from their interest. He had been a good friend to Jarasandha.

4. Gandhari



(source:gloriorhinduism)

Gandhari was born on to Subala, the king of Gandhara. She was sister of Shakuni.

Gandhari's marriage was arranged to Dhritarashtra, the eldest prince of the Kuru kingdom, When she found out that her husband was born blind, she decided to blindfold herself in order to be like her husband.

Once Veda Vyasa came to Gandhari's palace tired. She served him well. Impressed by her hospitality Vyasa gives her a boon which she desired that "she should have century of sons each equal unto her lord in strength and accomplishments. She becomes pregnant but carries the child for almost two years. Later, when she hears that Kunti has given birth to the eldest of the Pandavas, she stuck on her stomach in frustration and a mass of flesh came out instead of child. When she was going to throw away the mass of flesh, Veda Vyasa arrived knowing everything. Before Vyasa, she admits her jealousy and asks about the boon he gave. Veda Vyasa ordered for hundred pots full of clarified butter be brought instantly, and let them be placed at a concealed spot. In the meantime, let cool water be sprinkled over this ball of flesh. Gandhari wished for a younger daughter too. Then Vyasa" brought another pot full of clarified butter, and put the part intended for a daughter into it." These flash "sprinkled over with water" developed and divided into a hundred and one parts; from which after two years, her hundred sons and only daughter were born in a month.

For the war, she wanted her son to win. She poured all her power into her son's body in one glance, rendering Duryodhana's entire body except private part which was left because Krishna spoiled Gandhari's plan by asking Duryodhana to cover up his private part before meeting his mother.

All of Gandhari's sons were killed in the war. With the anger it is said that with a small gap in the blindfold, her gaze fell on Yudhishtira's toe and it turned black at once. Upon hearing the news, she curses Krishna who accepts it. After some 36 years due to this curse the Yadhava's fought within themselves and were deeply damaged. When she heard the news of the death of all the sons of Pandavas , she consoles Pandavas for their losses. She acts like their mother too. She was an ideal wife who stood beside her husband and accepted him even though he was blind and tied herself to make him feel better. She used all her power gained through blindfolding on her son Duryodhan.

5. Yuyutsu



(Source:storypick)

Yuyutsu was a son of Dhritarashtra with Gandhari's maid Sughada. Since Gandhari was pregnant for almost two years, fearing problems with Gandhari's pregnancy Dhritrashtra had a child from Sughada, a woman from Vaishya Varna, waiting lady of Gandhari.

Yuyutsu was born at the same time as Duryodhana and Bhima and was elder to Dushasana, other Kauravas and Dussala. Dhritarashtra had 102 children along with him.

Yuyutsu is celebrated as a moral warrior who chose the path of righteousness, in spite of being born in circumstances that predisposed him to evil. He forwent his family bonds in order to side with dharma.

Also, Yuyutsu saved the life of Bhima by informing the Pandavas about Duryodhana's cunning schemes, which included poisoning water. Both Yuyutsu and Vikarna were against Duryodhana's evil schemes; however, Vikarna stays loyal to the family and perishes in the war. Yuyutsu shifts from Kaurava camp to the Pandava camp. Yuyutsu fought the battle on the side of the Pandavas. He was one among the 11 Maharathis (capable of fighting 720,000 warriors simultaneously) among the Kauravas. Yuyutsu was one among the eleven warriors to have survived the war.

After the War, he was made the king of Indraprastha. When the Pandavas decided to retire from the world at the start of the Kali Yuga and departure of Krishna, Yudhishtira gave the charge of supervising the kingdom to Yuyutsu while Parikshit was made the king.

Learning outcomes

From Abhimanyu's character I learnt that it is important to seek full knowledge. Half knowledge is like no knowledge. He fought well till his last breath. It shows whatever happens we must never lose hope and should fight back for the victory. Age doesn't matter to be glorious, all that matters is the contribution we do with our whole strength.

From Ashwatthama we learn that it is in our hand what we become. Being the son of Drona he must have had some knowledge on dharma. But what he did was disobeying the rules of war and just kills thousands of innocents. With his boon, by going towards dharma he would have turned to a mightiest and well praised warrior. Instead he ended up getting cursed and lost everything.

Ekalavya proves to be an ideal student. Just by listening and without much assistance, it is possible to be an expert through continuous practice and determination. Even when we lose something very important like his thumb we can still win. He was a skilled archer even without his thumb.

Gandhari with her immense love for her children, she could have taught them what is right and helped them to be friends with the pandavas. As she didn't do her part she had to lose all her children. It is always safe and good to learn and teach the right thing from early stage.

Yuyutsu was clever enough to choose the side of dharma. Dharma always wins. Even though he fought against his brothers we must see for a larger scale like welfare of everybody around, it is to follow the right path and stand against adharama.

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