The story of Ekalavya in the Mahabharata narrates the politicization of knowledge and how it interacts with the categorization of social classes through a contestation between blood descent and individual merit. Here, while acknowledging its literary nature, I am assuming the nature of the Mahabharata as a socio-historical text of ancient India representing shifts in social attitudes over the approximately five-hundred year period of its composition. Ekalavya, a prince from the peripheral polity of Nishada, came to the Aryan kingdom of Hastina to pursue the knowledge of warriorhood. Yet, in spite of his phenomenal devotion, he was denied disciplehood and forcibly incapacitated by the removal of his thumb. The education of warrior-kings, which is the privileged mode of learning in the epic world, intersects with the strategic interests of political leaders and thus gradually creates the exclusivization of knowledge and the rigid occupational determination of dominated polities.