

Devayani and Yayati

Retold by

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Devayani was the daughter of Sage Shukra who was the guru of all Asuras and Oorjaswathi. She was cursed by Kacha (see Kacha-Devayani) that she would not marry another Deva. At that time the Asura king was Vrushaparva and Sage Shukra was also living in his palace. The king had a daughter called Sarmishta. Sarmishta and Devayani were very close friends. One day they went to the forest for playing along with several slaves. While they were bathing in the river Indra happened to see them and wanted to play a prank with them. He transformed himself to wind and swept away the cloths of Sarmishta and Devayani. Seeing this, both of them rushed out of the river and tried to get back their cloths. Sarmishta only got a dress of Devayani and was trying to wear it. Devayani caught hold of that dress and tried to pull it out. Sarmishta got very angry and shouted that Devayani's father was a vagabond and was living at the charity of her father. She and her slaves snatched the dress from Devayani's hand and pushed her in to a well and left for their homes. At that time a king called Yayati came to the forest for hunting. He felt thirsty and came near the well to drink some water. There he saw Devayani and rescued her. The king left to his kingdom but Devayani did not return home.

Shukra and his wife Oorjaswathi got very worried to see that Devayani has not returned. They send a friend of Devayani called Goornika to search and bring her back. Goornika easily found out Devayani but Devayani refused to come back to her father. She said she did not want to live with her father who was living in the charity of Vrushaparva. Goornika went and told about all this to Shukra and his wife. Both of them came to the forest to meet and take back, Devayani. Then Devayani told Shukra and about the happenings in the forest. Shukra became infuriated and informed Vrushaparva that he and his family are leaving his kingdom. Vrushaparva realizing fully well that Shukra was the power behind the Asuras, sought his pardon. Then Devayani told the king that if he sends 100 slaves to serve her including the princess Sarmishta, they would come back.

Some time later Devayani met Yayati in a forest where he had come for hunting. She told him that ever since He saved her from the well, she has chosen him as her husband. But realizing that Sage Shukra was the father of Devayani, Yayati told her that he was willing to marry her but only with the permission of her father. Devayani send word to her parents, who came to the forest. They willingly gave in marriage Devayani to Yayati. While Devayani went to Yayati's kingdom, Sarmishta also accompanied her as her slave. Sage Shukra called his son in law and warned him not even to touch Sarmishta.

After some time a son was born to Yayati and Devayani and they named him as Yadu. It was at this time that Sarmishta met Yayati secretly and requested for a son by him. He was scared and refused. But using her wits she made the king Yayati for agreeing for her proposal and son called Druhyu was born to them. Devayani came to know about the birth of a child to Sarmishta but did not know that Yayati was the child's father. Years rolled by Devayani begot another child called Thurvasu and Sarmishta begot two sons called Anudruhyu and Pooru.

Once when Devayani and the king came to the palace garden, Sarmishta's three sons had also come there. Devayani could see striking similarity of the children of Sarmishta

with King Yayati. She called them and asked them, the name of their father. They told without hesitation that it was king Yayati.

Angered very much, Devayani returned back to sage Shukra's and told him about all the happenings. Shukra got infuriated and cursed that Yayati should become an old man. By this time Yayati reached there and craved for his pardon. Shukra then told him that Yayati can exchange his old man status for 100 years, if any one willingly exchanges it for his youth. Yayati came back and called each of his sons and requested them to exchange their youth with him. Only Pooru agreed. Yayati then lived for 100 years as king. After him Pooru became the king.