

Indra missed her. So a search was made and they found out that she was in the palace of Purūravas. Indra asked the Gandharvas to bring that celestial woman to heaven somehow. Viśvāvasu and some others of the Gandharvas reached the palace of king Purūravas and waited for an opportunity. One midnight they stole the lambs and took them away through the sky. At that time the king was with Urvaśī in the harem. Urvaśī heard the cry of the lambs and she was flurried. She reviled the king who was not capable of taking care of two lambs. Hearing her harsh words the king took his bow and arrow and following the cry of the lambs he was about to chase the thieves. Taking this opportunity the Gandharvas caused a lightning to flash in the king's harem. In the light of the lightning Urvaśī saw the king standing nude. The Gandharvas having achieved their task had left the lambs and departed before the king had got out of the room. The king caught hold of the lambs and returned to the harem, within a short while. But Urvaśī had gone out of the palace and was on her way.

The king was full of grief. He wandered all over the country in search of Urvaśī. At last he reached Kurukṣetra and saw Urvaśī there. He bowed low before her and implored her to return to the palace. But Urvaśī replied thus:—

“Women are like wolves. Don't have alliance with them Oh King! Kings should not put faith in women and thieves.”

Saying thus, Urvaśī vanished. (Devī Bhāgavata, Skandha 1).

4) *The reason why Purūravas had to remain separate from Urvaśī.* Purūravas had once gone to heaven, in accordance with the invitation of Indra to help the Gods in the battle with the asuras. Indra had killed Māyādhara, a noble Asura, in that battle and had celebrated a festival. In that festival Rambhā was dancing before Tumburu, the sage-priest, and detecting some flaw in her dance Purūravas teased her. Rambhā retorted by asking the King what he knew about dance, and the king replied that he had learned from Urvaśī more dance than Tumburu the teacher of Rambhā. Tumburu got angry at this, and cursed the king Purūravas to suffer from the pangs of separation from Urvaśī. Stricken with grief, Purūravas returned to his palace. It was after this that the Gandharvas took away Urvaśī. Purūravas went to Badarikāśrama and performed penance, meditating on God Viṣṇu for the nullification of the curse. Urvaśī, aggrieved by separation from her husband, sat motionless as a picture, in the custody of the Gandharvas. Lord Viṣṇu was pleased with the penance of Purūravas. The Gandharvas brought her back to the King. Thus it became possible for the king to meet Urvaśī at least once a year. (Kathāsaritsāgara, Lāvāṇakalambaka, Taraṅga 1).

5) *The sons born to Purūravas by Urvaśī.* The king became very sad when Urvaśī was about to depart from him at Kurukṣetra. Seeing his grief Urvaśī told him. “Oh King, if you want so much to live with me, you have to worship the Gandharvas. They will be pleased and will give me to you. Don't be sorry. Now I am pregnant. Come to this place at the end of a year. We can spend that night together. Then we will get another son also that night.” Pleased at what Urvaśī had said, the king returned to his palace. On completion of a year Purūravas went to Kurukṣetra and spent a

night with Urvaśī. Urvaśī gave Purūravas a very beautiful child and then she vanished. The king sat there and praised the Gandharvas, who gave the king an Agnisthālī (a fire pot). Because of his derangement, thinking it to be Urvaśī the king took the sthālī (pot) and wandered about in the forest. At last placing the pot in the forest, the king returned to his palace. On that day Tretāyuga (one of the four ages of the world) commenced, and the Vedas dawned in his mind as three in number. He returned to the place where he had left the Sthālī in the forest and took it. After that he made two ‘araṇis’ (wood from which fire is kindled by attrition) out of a banyan tree and placed his body between them and made fire. That fire is called ‘Jātavedas’. Thus Jātavedas became the son of Purūravas.

Purūravas generated three fires from Jātavedas. The first of them is Praṇava. The second is called Nārāyaṇa and the third Agnivarṇa. (Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 9th Śkandha).

To Purūravas six sons were born from the womb of Urvaśī. They were Āyus, Śrutāyus, Satyāyus, Raya, Vijaya and Jaya. (A little difference is observed in these names in the Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 75, Stanzas 24 and 25).

6) To know how a Gandharva named Durmada and a Vidyādhari named Unmadā played a trick on Purūravas and Urvaśī, see under Unmadā.

7) *How Agastya and Vasiṣṭha were born to Mitrāvaruṇas because of Urvaśī.* In days of old there was a renowned king named Nimi in the family of Ikṣvāku. He decided to perform a sacrifice of a long duration. He began preparation and invited famous hermits such as Bhrgu, Aṅgiras, Vāmadeva, Pulastya, Pulaha, Ṛcika and others. Finally he invited Vasiṣṭha. At that time Indra had begun another sacrifice in heaven. So Vasiṣṭha went to heaven for that sacrifice, telling Nimi that he would conduct the sacrifice on his return. The emperor Nimi did not like it. Recognizing the hermit Gautama as the main priest, he began performing the sacrifice. The sacrifice of Indra lasted for 500 years. When Vasiṣṭha returned after that, the sacrifice of Nimi was over. Vasiṣṭha cursed Nimi. “You will become devoid of body.” Nimi cursed back. “Let Vasiṣṭha also become thus.”

The aggrieved Vasiṣṭha went to his father Brahmā and complained about the curse. Brahmā told Vasiṣṭha. “You penetrate the brightness of Mitrāvaruṇas and stay there. In due course you will get a birth which is not of a womb.” Hearing these words, Vasiṣṭha reached the hermitage of Mitrāvaruṇas. He left his body there and fused himself into their effulgence. During this period Urvaśī came to that hermitage. Seeing her, Mitrāvaruṇas had seminal flow. The semen fell in a pot. From the pot two bright and handsome sons were born. The first of them was Agastya and the second Vasiṣṭha. (Devī Bhāgavata, Skandha 8).

8) *Indra cursing Urvaśī.* Once Agastya went to the durbar of Indra. On the occasion Indra asked Urvaśī to dance. In the midst of the dance she saw Jayanta, the son of Indra, and became amorous and her steps went wrong. Nārada who was playing his famous lute called Mahatī could not play well. Agastya got angry and cursed Jayanta to become a bud. He cursed Nārada also. So his lute became the lute of the world. Urvaśī