

in Aśokavanikā. In due course, Devayānī gave birth to a son. The sight of the child roused the motherly instincts of Śarmiṣṭhā who spent a thousand years in heart-burning. One day, while she was brooding alone in her garden, Yayāti happened to come there. As they met, their hearts were moved by tender feelings. Śarmiṣṭhā approached Yayāti and begged for a son. But he tried to evade her by pleading that it was not proper to do anything in violation of Dharma. But in the end, he had to yield to her earnest supplications and philosophical arguments. Thus Śarmiṣṭhā conceived a son in secret. When the child was born and it grew up, Devayānī's mind was constantly vexed with the thought as to who was the father. Once in an angry mood she questioned Śarmiṣṭhā herself about it. She answered that the child's father was a sage whose identity she could not ascertain in the excitement of her union with him. Any way, this answer satisfied Devayānī.

Soon after, another son was born to Devayānī. The first boy was named Yadu and the second son, Turvasu. As a result of the secret relations between Yayāti and Śarmiṣṭhā, three boys were born to her and they were named Druhyu, Anudruhyu and Pūru, respectively. These boys also grew up in Aśokavanikā.

Once Devayānī was in her garden with her husband and children. Just then, Śarmiṣṭhā's children also happened to come there. Devayānī who somehow had her own suspicions, enquired of them their parentage and the innocent children replied that their mother was Śarmiṣṭhā and their father was Yayāti. Devayānī who became furious, immediately went to Asuraloka and informed her father Śukra about it. On hearing it, the sage who was beside himself with anger owing to his paternal affection, cursed Yayāti so that he fell a victim to the infirmities of old age. Yayāti entreated Śukra to withdraw the curse since he had not enjoyed his youth to the full.

Śukra lifted the curse by assuring him that one of Yayāti's sons would accept his father's old age in exchange for his youth and the son would be crowned King after Yayāti. (M.B. Ādi Parva, Chapters 82 and 83).

4) *Rejuvenation.* Yayāti asked his eldest son Yadu for his youthfulness. But the latter was not prepared to exchange it for his father's old age. Next the father approached his younger sons, Turvasu, Druhyu, and Anudruhyu, with the same request, but all of them in turn refused to oblige him. Even though Yayāti promised to return the youthfulness to them after a thousand years, they refused to exchange it for his old age. Yayāti in his anger, cursed Yadu that his progeny would never become Kings. Turvasu's family would be completely destroyed and Druhyu would float down the river, with unfulfilled desires and faded prosperity. Pūru wholeheartedly accepted his father's old age in exchange for his youth and went to the forest. From that day Yayāti began his reign with a cheerful heart. (M.B. Ādi parva, Chapters 84 and 85).

In Padma Purāṇa, there is a slightly different version about the way in which Yayāti fell a victim to the infirmities of old age. It is as follows:—Seeing the rigorous observance of Yayāti's virtuous life, Devendra began to be alarmed at the thought that he might be dislodged from his place. He called his charioteer Mātali and ordered him to bring Yayāti with him to Indraloka.

When Mātali failed in his mission, Devendra sent some Gandharvas to enact the drama of "Vāmanāvātāra" before Yayāti. Enchanted by the charm and performance of Rati on the stage, the King became irresistibly fascinated by the female sex.

Once the Rākṣasi named Jarā and Madana got access to Yayāti's body. While in that state, one day he went to the forest for hunting. There he happened to meet a beautiful girl named "Aśrubindumati". From her companion-maid, Viśālā, the King came to know of her history. Viśālā said to Yayāti—"Long ago when Kāma-deva was burnt Rati was in deep grief. The gods were moved to pity by her tears and they restored Kāma to life. Rati who was extremely happy, began to shed tears of joy. A beautiful girl was born from the tears which fell from her left eye. This maid who is standing before you is that girl. She is now looking for a suitable person for her Svayamvara." On hearing this story the King expressed his desire to marry her. Aśrubindumati agreed to become his wife on condition that he exchanged his old age with some young person for his youthfulness.

Yayāti returned to his palace and asked each of his sons to give him his youth. Pūru alone fulfilled his father's desire. After this Yayāti married Aśrubindumati. But he was compelled to submit to another condition also, that he should not maintain any contact with his other wives. Devayānī and Śarmiṣṭhā naturally, became distressed and furious when they saw Yayāti and Aśrubindumati as husband and wife. So Yayāti asked Yadu to kill both of them. But Yadu refused to obey him. Yayāti who became angry at this, cursed his son that one of his descendants would marry his uncle's daughter and become heir to his mother's wealth.

After some time, on Menakā's advice, Aśrubindumati urged Yayāti to go on a visit to Heaven. So he entrusted his kingdom to Pūru and went to Vaikuṅṭha.

5) *Yayāti's reign.* The Purāṇas describe Yayāti as a noble and eminent King. Some of the events which took place during his reign and which deserve special praise, are given below:

(i) *Gift of cows.* Once when King Yayāti was in the company of his subjects, a Brāhmaṇa approached him with a request for Gurudakṣiṇā. At once Yayāti gave him a gift of 1,000 cows. (M.B. Vana Parva, Chapter 195).

(ii) *Yayāti and Gālava.* See para 6 under Gālava.

(iii) *His end.* After a thousand years, Yayāti handed over his kingship to Pūru and went to the forest. He spent many years living in Bhṛgutuṅga in the company of sages, and feeding on fruits, roots, etc. and in the end died in the forest and attained Heaven.

(iv) *Yayāti's fall from Heaven.* Yayāti remained in Heaven for many years. Once he insulted the Devas, Indra and other gods and kings in the divine assembly. The gods looked at one another, wondering who this proud fellow was. They asked how this man reached Heaven without renouncing his pride. In the meantime Yayāti lost his balance and fell down from Heaven to the earth. While descending, he prayed that he should fall in the midst of good men.

Just at this time, four kings named Pratardana, Vasumanas, Śibi and Aṣṭaka were performing a Yāga in Naimiṣāraṇya. Yayāti happened to fall head downwards into their midst. But since they caught him in