

One day Śaryāti with his wives and children came to that forest for a picnic. Sukanyā, daughter of King Śaryāti, along with her companions separated from the King and roamed about in the forest making merry. They soon came to the place where Cyavana sat doing penance. There was an unusual radiance around the heap of earth they saw there and Sukanyā out of curiosity started striking down the earth. Then from inside came Cyavana's voice advising her not to crumble down the earth as she was doing. Sukanyā ignored the advice and searched for the source of the voice. She then saw two points of glow and taking a thorn gave two pricks at those points and left the place with her companions.

Those glow-points were the eyes of Cyavana and Cyavana felt insufferable pain when his eyes were thus pierced through. But he neither became angry nor cursed the girl who did this havoc. Cyavana went on with his penance. But soon the country of Śaryāti began to experience the bad effects of this evil-deed. People one by one in the beginning and then the whole lot were disabled from passing either urine or faeces. From men and women the disease spread to the animals also. The country was in a chaos and the subjects flocked to the palace to complain to the King. Śaryāti knew that somebody must have in some way tormented Cyavana and enquired of each and everyone of his subjects. Whether anybody had knowingly or unknowingly given pain to Cyavana. Nobody had done so and the King was worried. Then Sukanyā ran to her father and confessed what she had done. The King ran immediately to the place where Cyavana was doing penance and striking down the earth prostrated before the sage who was sitting there sad and miserable. The King apologised to Cyavana and requested him to pardon his daughter.

Cyavana then told the King that it was enough if he gave his daughter in marriage to him in expiation of the harm done. The King was shocked to hear this for Cyavana was not only ugly but now blind also. The King returned to the palace sad and worried and there was gloom over the whole palace. But Sukanyā approached her father and agreed to be the wife of Cyavana. The problem was solved and the King with great reluctance took his daughter to the forests and gave her in marriage to Cyavana.

4) *Cyavana attains eternal youth.* It was the time when Indra had banned Somapāna (drinking of the yāga wine) to the Aśvinīdevas. Discontented at this they roamed about in the forests and soon came to the neighbourhood of the āśrama of Cyavana.

Sukanyā after becoming the wife of Cyavana did all she could to make her husband comfortable and happy. She would collect very sweet and tasty fruit from the forests and give him. She would bathe him in hot water. After arranging all the materials needed for the morning rites like yava, sesame, darbha and water, she would take her husband to the place of the pūjā leading him by hand. When the morning pūjā was over she would seat him in a suitable place and give him rice and fruits. After the meals she would give him pan to chew. Only after doing all these would she go to do her daily rites and that too only after obtaining her husband's permission. She would finish her routine in no time to come back to her husband to see whether he was in need of anything. Then she would make arrangements for the evening pūjā and after the pūjā was over she would give

him his dinner. She would eat only what was left by her husband. At night she would spread a soft bedding and lull him to sleep. Then she would take a nap lying at the foot of her husband. During summer she would fan him and during winter she would make fire to give him heat. Early morning she would take him to a distant place for his excretion and after washing him would seat him in a suitable place for cleaning his teeth and face. Then the routine would start with great devotion again.

One day Sukanyā was returning from the river after her bath and on the way she came across the Aśvinīdevas. They were astounded to see such a beautiful damsel in the forest and they accosted her and requested her to select one of them as her husband. Knowing her identity they advised her to forsake her old and blind husband and come and live with one of them. She flew into a fury when she heard her husband spoken of so slightly and by logical argument convinced them the error of their request. Then they told her thus: "You are aware we are the physicians of the devas. We can give back eyesight to your husband and make him as beautiful as one of us. We will then appear before you as three lovely young men identical in appearance and then you must select one among the three as your husband."

Sukanyā was immensely pleased as well as surprised to hear the offer and was eager to see her husband young and beautiful. But the last condition frightened her. Anyhow she promised to give a reply after consulting her husband and ran to the āśrama to tell her husband the news. Cyavana advised her to accept the offer of the Aśvinīdevas and Sukanyā ran back to the Aśvinīdevas and brought them to her husband accepting their terms. The Aśvinīdevas took the aged and blind Cyavana along with them to the river nearby and the three plunged into the river. When they rose up after a dip the three emerged as young, lovely and charming triplets difficult to be distinguished from one another. When Sukanyā stood before the three to select her real husband she prayed to her goddess and the Devī gave her the power to identify Cyavana and so she correctly chose him from the three. (Saptama Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

5) *Cyavana defeated Indra.* Immensely pleased at regaining his eyesight and youth Cyavana asked the Aśvinīdevas what they wanted. The Aśvinīdevas replied that Indra had banned wine to them and they would like to have the ban lifted. Cyavana Mahārṣi immediately commenced a Somayāga to which were invited all the devas and the Aśvinīdevas also. When Indra saw the Aśvinīdevas standing to partake of the Soma wine he was furious and objected to the wine being given to them. Cyavana dissented and a fight ensued between Indra and Cyavana. Indra raised his weapon 'Vajrāyudha' to strike at Cyavana and then Cyavana made all his limbs go stiff. He then raised from the sacrificial fire a fiendish demon called Mada to kill the devas. All those present were frightened by this demon and they ran away. But Indra could not run for his limbs were stiff. Standing there he prayed to his preceptor Bṛhaspati for help and Bṛhaspati advised Indra to surrender to Cyavana. Indra bowed his head before Cyavana and prayed to be excused. Cyavana was pleased and withdrawing the demon tore him into four pieces and threw one each into Dice, Hunting, Wine and Women. The devas and Aśvinīdevas then went back to heaven. (Saptama Skandha, Devī