

Śyāvāśva is the name of a man mentioned several times in the Rigveda.¹ The Anukramaṇī (Index) assigns to him a series of hymns in the fifth, eighth, and ninth books.² In one of the hymns³ Śyāvāśva mentions, apparently as his patrons, Taranta (a son of Vidadaśva) and Purumīḥa, as well as Rathavīti. On this hymn is based a legend found in the Bṛhaddevata,⁴ that he was the son of Arcanānas, who was sacrificing for Rathavīti Dālbhya. The father was anxious to obtain the king's daughter for his son in marriage; but though the father was willing, his wife insisted on her son-in-law being a Ṛṣi. The father and son, repulsed, were returning home, when they met on the way Taranta and Purumīḥa, former patrons of the father. These showed him respect, while Taranta's wife, Śaśiyasī, presented Śyāvāśva with much wealth. The son was then fortunate enough to meet the Maruts in the forest, and praised them, thus becoming a seer. As a result the king himself ultimately offered his daughter to Śyāvāśva. Sieg⁵ seeks to show that this legend is presupposed in the Rigveda; but it is difficult to accept this view, since the references in the Rigveda are very obscure, and Śaśiyasī is probably no more than an epithet.⁶ That there is some Itihāsa at the back of the hymn is clear: what it is can hardly now be determined.

Śyāvāśva's obtaining gifts from Vaidadaśvi is referred to also in the Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra.⁷ His name occurs in the Atharvaveda⁸ in two lists of persons, of which the former includes Purumīḥa, the latter also Arcanānas and Atri. A Sāman is ascribed to him in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa,⁹ and he is perhaps referred to in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.¹⁰ In the

¹ v. 52, 1; 61, 5. 9 (Syāva, a short form of the name, is here used); 81, 5; viii. 35, 19; 36, 7; 37, 7; 38, 8.

² v. 52-61; 81; 82; viii. 35-38; ix. 32.
³ v. 61.

⁴ v. 49 et seq. See also Śaḍguruśiṣya on Anukramaṇī to Rv. v. 61 (ed. Macdonell, p. 117 et seq.); Sāyaṇa on Rv. v. 61, 17-19; Nītimañjarī in Sieg, *Die Sagenstoffe des Rgveda*, 50 et seq.

⁵ *Op. cit.*; 50-60. Cf. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 3, 148.

⁶ v. 61, 6. The word is taken as

an epithet by Roth, *St. Petersburg Dictionary*, s.v., and by Weber, *Episches im vedischen Ritual*, 27.

⁷ xvi. 11, 7-9.

⁸ iv. 29, 4; xviii. 3, 15.

⁹ viii. 5, 9. Weber, *Episches im vedischen Ritual*, 27, n. 4, bases on this an improbable conjecture that he was a Kṣatriya.

¹⁰ i. 11, 2. But cf. Sieg, *op. cit.*, 61, n. 4, who takes the word adjectivally, as in Av. vi. 2, 15. Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, xiv. 13, 26.