

Dadhichi

Dadhichi, also known as **Dadhyancha** or **Dadhyanga**, is a central character in Hinduism. **Dadhichi** is primarily known for sacrificing his life so the Devas, or benevolent celestial beings, could make the weapon called "vajra" from his bones. After being driven out from Svarga, or heaven, by the serpent king Vritra, the Devas needed a powerful weapon to aid their fight. By making use of the vajra, made from the sage Dadhichi's bones, the Devas defeated the Asura and reclaimed heaven.

Dadhyancha or **Dadhyanga** in Sanskrit is a conjunction of two words Dadhya (curd) + anch (parts), which means "body parts taking strength from Curd." The name Dadhichi is a deteriorated form of **Dadhyanga** or **Dadhyancha**, as pointed out by famous ancient Sanskrit scholar Panini in his work *Ashtaadhyaii*.

By defeating Vritra, the personification of drought, the Deva also released water to the living beings who were innocent victims of the evil Asura. By helping the Deva defeat the Asura through his sacrifice, Dadhichi became revered among the Rishi, or Hindu sages, for his selflessness. Dadhichi symbolizes the notion that no sacrifice is too great in order to help defend the defenseless from evil. This symbolization has inspired the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest military award for gallantry, which is most often posthumously awarded to soldiers who show exceptional courage in battle.

Dadhichi is also known as an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva. After Shiva was separated from Shakti, a goddess personifying the sacred feminine, he went to a forest to live in seclusion as a Rishi. The annual festival of Maha Shivratri marks the first time Lord Shiva appeared as a Rishi to his devotees, including Dadhichi and his disciples, who had been offering prayers to Shiva.

In the Bhagavata Purana, Dadhichi was the son of the sage Atharvan and his wife Chiti. Atharvan is said to be the author of Atharvaveda, which is one of the four Vedas (a collection of texts upon which the Hindu religion is based). Chitti was the daughter of the sage Kardam. The Dadhich Brahmins, a Brahmin clan primarily found in Rajasthan, later migrating to other parts of the world, claim to be his descendants.

The names of Dadhichi's wife and son were Swarcha and Pippalada, respectively. Pippalada was a rishi associated with the Pippalada school of thought in Hinduism, he is known for creating the Praśna Upanishad. Dadhichi had established his ashram in Misrikh, in Naimisharanya near Lucknow, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.^[2] Naimisharanya is cited in all of the puranas as the location of his ashram, which is still in existence. The current place of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad is also one of the ancient sites of his ashram. In Ancient India, sages often traveled long distances. It may be that he stayed near Sabarmati River for some time. The popular legend about Dahod also says that Sage Dadhichi once meditated at the banks of Dudhimati river in Dahod.^[3] Dudhimati is name of his sister , on whose name a 4th Century old temple exists in Naguar, Rajasthan as Dadhimati Mata Temple. His name is found in the 1st mandala of the Rigveda (Bhagavata Purana, Srimad Devi Bhagavatam and in the Puranas.^[4] Dadhichi is mentioned also in the various hymns (Richas – Suktas) of Rigveda.^[5]

Dadhichi
 <div>60 भारत INDIA MAHARSHI DADHICHI 1988 महर्षि दधीचि</div>
In-universe information
Gender Male
Family <u>Atharvan</u> (father) <u>Pippalada</u> (Son)
Spouse <u>Suvarchas</u> ^[1]

Dadhichi is believed to have written the "Narayana Kavacham", a famous hymn in southern India, sung for power and peace.

Dadhich Brahmins are descendants of Maharishi Dadhichi. Their deity is Dadhimathi, who was sister of Maharishi Dadhichi. "[Dadhichi Vansh Vriksh](http://dadhich.com/vansh_vriksha.htm)" (http://dadhich.com/vansh_vriksha.htm).

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Legends

Dadhichi is associated with many Hindu legends and is sometimes portrayed as having a horse's head.^[6]

Ashwashira – The One With The Horse's Head

Dadhichi is said to have been a master of a Vedic art known as Brahmavidya (Madhu Vidya) that would enable one to attain immortality.^[4] Indra, the King of the Devas, felt his position was insecure with such power in the hands of a mortal man, especially one with as much power as Dadhichi possessed by virtue of being a rishi. Indra was also against the Ashwini twins (Gods of Medicines) learning Brahmavidya and swore that he would behead the one who taught them the art.^[2] However the Ashwini twins wished to learn this art and devised a plan to protect Dadhichi from Indra's power. They learned the art from Dadhichi and thereafter cut off his head, preserving it and replacing the original head with one from a horse. Indra, blinded by wrath, beheaded the horse-headed sage and left. The Ashwini twins then replaced Dadhichi original head to the beheaded body and revived Dadhichi with the Madhuvidya that he had taught them. This was how the sage came to be called Ashvashira – The One with the Horse's head.^[2]



King of Deities Indra pray to Dadhichi to give his spinal cord to make a thunderbolt

Defeating Kshuva and Indra

Once Dadhichi and a king named Kshuva, a devotee of Vishnu, got into an argument over superiority of Kings over Brahmans and vice versa. Dadhichi punched Kshuva and Kshuva attacked Dadhichi with Thunderbolt. The injured sage was treated by Shukracharya. Dadhichi then did heavy penance to Lord Shiva who granted him three boons:- 1. He will never be Humiliated 2. He could never be killed 3. His bones will become as hard as a Diamond. Dadhichi returned to Kshuva and this time he defeated him. When Kshuva

asked Lord Vishnu for help, the latter tried to trick Dadhichi. Dadhichi discovered the ruse, and attacked with the Trishula, upon which, all deities except for Lord Vishnu fled the scene.^{[7][8]} In spite of this hostility, Dadhichi had utmost respect for Lord Vishnu. When the demigods approached Dadhichi for his bones in their struggle against Vritra, Dadhichi readily agreed hearing that they have been sent by the Lord Vishnu.

Indra and Vritra – The Tale of the Vajrayudha

Indra, the King of the Devas, was once driven out of Devaloka by an asura named Vritra. This asura was the recipient of a boon which made him invulnerable to any known weapon. This Demon, Vritra, also stole all the water in the world for his own use and for that of his Demon army. He did this so that all other living beings would die of thirst and hunger, leaving no Human or God alive to challenge his place in Heaven. Indra, who had lost all hope of recovering his kingdom, went to seek the aid of Vishnu. Vishnu revealed to Indra that only weapons made from the thunder-containing (called in Sanskrit as Vajra) diamond bones of the sage Dadhichi could kill Vritra.^{[9][10][11]} Indra and the other Devas therefore approached the sage, whom Indra had once beheaded, and asked him for his aid in defeating Vritra. Dadhichi acceded to the Devas' request, but said that he wished that he had time to go on a pilgrimage to all the holy rivers before he gave up his life for them.^[2] Indra then brought all the water of the holy rivers together at Naimisharanya,^[2] thereby allowing the sage to have his wish fulfilled without a further loss of time. Dadhichi then went into a deep meditative state and released his life force from his body. The celestial Kamadhenu Calf then licked and removed the flesh from his bones, after which the Devas fashioned the Vajrayudha (Thunderbolt) from his spine and made numerous other weapons. This weapon was then used to kill the asura, allowing Indra to reclaim his place as the king of devaloka and releasing the water for all living beings.

Another version of the story exists where Dadhichi was asked to safeguard the weapons of the devas, as they were unable to match the arcane arts being employed by the asuras to obtain them. Dadhichi is said to have kept at the task for a very long time and, finally tiring of the job, is said to have dissolved the weapons in sacred water, which he then drank.^[12] The devas returned some time later and asked him to return their weapons so that they might defeat the asuras, headed by Vritra, once and for all. Dadhichi, however, told them of what he had done and informed them that their weapons were now a part of his bones. Realizing that his bones were the only way by which the devas could defeat the asuras, he willingly gave his life in a pit of mystical flames that he summoned with the power of his austerities.^[12] Brahma is then said to have fashioned a large number of weapons from Dadhichi's bones, including the Vajrayudha, which was fashioned from his spine. The devas are then said to have defeated the asuras using the weapons thus created.

Other legends

Various other legends are associated with Dadhichi. Dadhichi is said to have been the first to leave from Daksha's yagna when he realized that Shiva had not been invited due to spite.^[13] The mantra or incantation for Devi Hinglaj is attributed to Dadhichi. To save some Kshatriya children from being killed by Parshurama, Dadhichi hid them inside the temple of Hinglaj and created the incantation of Hinglaj to protect them from Parshurama's wrath.

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