Visvamitra in the Kalpasutras

Dr. Umesh Chandra Sharma, M. A., Ph. D.,
Senior Research Fellow, Centre of Advanced Study
in Sanskrit, University of Poona.

Poona—7.

The Sūtras, as it is quite natural, generally provide important data about the gotra and pravara system among the Viśvamitras. They have devoted a considerably large portion for the Viśvamitras who occupy a significant place in our national and cultural history.

The ŚŚŚ, however, appear to be an exception in this connection. It devotes a major portion to the legend of Śunaśsepa's sacrifice and the important role played by Viśvamitra in it. The narration runs parallel to that of the AB. The language and the style are also the same. It is certainly a repetition from the latter except minor verbal differences here and there which are of no importance. Viśvamitra officiated as a Hotṛ priest in the said sacrifice (where Śunaśsepa was offered as a victim), Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha and Ayāśya being the other prominent priests. Śunaśsepa could not be sacrificed partly due to good offices of Viśvamitra. He adopted him as his own son and accorded to him the highest place among his sons. He was called Devarāta after this and became a famous Kuśika.

The Sūtras deal in detail with the gotra and the pravara systems of the family of the Viśvamitras. These are as follows—

1. The Kuśikas have three ṛṭi-pravaras—Viśvamitra, Daivarāta and Audala.
2. Viśvamitra, Devaśravas and Devataras—these are Śraumata—Kāma-

1. ŚŚŚ XV. 17-57. Cf. also AB VII. 13-18.
2. According to the BauŚŚ(p) 31, the following are mentioned as the Kuśikas—Kuśikas, Pārṇajaṅghas, Vārakyas, Audarīs, Mānis, Bhṛhadagnis, Ālavis, Āghaṭṭis, Āparityas, Antakas, Kāmantakas, Vāṃpakas, Cikitas, Lāmakāyanas, Śālaṅkāyanas, Sāṅkāyanas, Laukas, Gauras, Saugantis, Yamadūtas, Anabhi-mātatas, Tārakāyanas, Cauvalas, Jābālis, Yājñavalkyas, Vidaṅdas. Bhauvanis, Saubabhravis, Aupadahanis, Audumbaris, Bṛhariṣṭikis, Śyāmeyas, Caitreyas, Śālāvatas, Mayūras, Saumatyas, Citratantus, Manutantus, Manus, others denoting the word ‘Tantus’ in the end, Bābhṛvyas, Kalāpas and Utsaris.
kāyanas. They have the following three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Daivaśravas and Daivataras.¹

3. The Katas² also have three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Kātya and Ātkila.³

4. The Dhanaṇḍayās⁴ have these three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas, and Dhanaṇḍaya.

5. The Aghamārṣaṇa-Kuśikas have the following three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Aghamārṣaṇa and Kauśika.⁵

6. The Pūrṇa-Varidhāpayantas have two rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra and Paurāṇa.⁶

7. The Ajas also have three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas and Ājya.⁷

8. The Aṣṭaka-Lohitas have three rṣi-pravaras Vaiśvāmitra, Āṣṭaka and Lauhita.⁸

9. The Rauksaṇa-Raiṇavas have three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Rauksaṇa and Raiṇava.⁹

10. The Indra-Kauśikas also have three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Aindra and Kauśika.¹⁰

11. The Rauhiṇas have three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas and Rauhiṇa.¹¹

12. The Śalaṅkāyanaś also have three rṣi-pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Śalaṅkāyana and Kauśika.¹²

¹ Bauṣṭ(B) 33, Apṣ XXIV. 9. 3, AiśS XII. 14. 3.
² Katas, Sairindhas, Karabhas, Vājayanās, Sainhiteyas, Kaukrtyas. Śaiśireyas, Audumbarāyanas, Piṇḍagṛivas, Nārāyaṇas and Nārātyas—these are the Katas.
³ Bauṣṭ(B) 35, Apṣ XX. 9. 11, HaṭṭS XXI. 3. 12, ViśS XII. 14. 6.
⁴ The Dhanaṇḍayās are Kārtis, Āśvavatas, Tulabhyas. Saindhavāyanas, Uṣṭrākṣas and Mahākṣas.
⁵ Bauṣṭ(B) 36, Apṣ XXIV. 9. 12, HiraS XXI. 3. 12, AiśS XII. 14. 4.
⁷ Bauṣṭ(B) 40, Apṣ XXIV. 9. 9-10, HiraS XXI. 3. 12, The AiśS XII. 14. 5 and Daivarata to this list.
⁸ Bauṣṭ(B) 37. Apṣ XXIV. 14. 4.
⁹ Bauṣṭ(B) 34. According to Apṣ XXIV. 9. 7-8 and HiraS XXI. 3. 12, only two are there—Vaiśvāmitra and Aṣṭaka. According to AiśS XII. 14. 4, the three pravaras are Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas and Aṣṭaka.
¹⁰ Bauṣṭ(B) 34. According to AiśS LII. 14. 6., the Ṛṇus have three pravaras—Vaiśvāmitra, Gāhina and Raiṇava.
¹¹ Bauṣṭ(B) 39.
¹² AiśS XII. 14. 4.

9.8 : अगरचन्द नाहटा अभिनन्दन-ग्रन्थ
13. The Hiranyaksetras have three ṛṣi-pravaras—Vaiśāmitra, Hiraṇyaka and Retas.¹
14. The Suvarṇaretas also have three ṛṣi-pravaras—Vaiśāmitra, Sauvarna and Retas.²
15. The Kapotaretas have three ṛṣi-pravaras—Vaiśāmitra Kāpoṭa and Retas.³
16. The Gṛha-kauśikas also have three ṛṣi-pravaras—Vaiśāmitra, Gṛhita and Kauśika.⁴
17. The Śaṭhara-māṭharas also have three ṛṣi-pravaras—Vaiśāmitra, Śaṭhara and Māṭhara.⁵
18. The Sāhula-mahulas have three ṛṣi-pravaras—Vaiśāmitra, Sāhula and Māhula.⁶

This is the picture of the pravara system of the Vaiśāmitra in the Śūtra literature. The Śūtras refer to Vaiśāmitra in other connections also. In the ĀgGS, he is mentioned among the Saptarṣis, the others being Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha and Kaśyapa. The context is the Adhyāya-Utsarjanam (leave after completion of studies). In this rite seats are prepared by the student for the above-mentioned ṛṣis.⁷

The BauŚŚ refers to the selection of the priests. It enjoins that Adhvaryu priest should be an Āṅgiras, the Brahmā priest should be a Vasiṣṭha, the Hotṛ should be a Vaiśāmitra and the Udgātṛ should be an Ayaśya.⁸ Again, in the context of the ṛṣi-stoma, Viśāmitra is connected with the seventeenth stoma.⁹

It has been prescribed in the Śūtra texts that a person desiring victory over enemies should perform the rite known as ‘Saṅjaya’ of Viśāmitra.¹⁰ It has been stated in the TNB (XXI. 12. 1-4) that Viśāmitra performed this four-day rite, defeated his rivals with its grace and got kingdom.

The VaiŚŚ mentions that four chief priests should be descendants of Vasiṣṭha, Bharata, Āṅgiras and Ayaśya respectively, remaining twelve priests can

1. Ibid, XII. 14. 6.
2. MāŚŚ XI. 8. 5. 17.
3. Ibid. XI. 8. 5. 18.
4. Ibid. XI. 8. 5. 19.
5. Ibid. XI. 8. 5. 20.
6. Ibid. XI. 8. 5. 31.
7. Ibid. XI. 8. 5. 22, 23. For the exhaustive list of the pravaras of the Viśavmitras, see JOHN BROUGH, Early Brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara. Cambridge, 1953, p. 35.
8. ĀgGS. 1. 2. 2.
10. Ibid XVIII. 22.
be selected from among the Kaśyapas, Bharadvājas, Bhṛgus Aṅgirasas. One authority says that Hotṛ should be a descendant of Viśvāmitra.¹

A tarpana should be made to Viśvāmitra after daily bath according to the VaiGS and VaiDS.² In connection with the upakarana-visarjana, Viśvāmitra is prayed.³

The MiDa mentions that because a Vaiśvāmitra should necessarily be a Hotṛ priest, therefore, the descendants of Bhṛgu, Śunaka and Vasīśtha do not have the right to be appointed as Hotṛ priests.⁴

Thus, it can be said in conclusion, that the Viśvāmitra family is one of the most important families of ancient India. There were several gotras and pravaras among the Viśvāmitras. It has been prescribed in the Kalpasūtras that a descendant of Viśvāmitra should officiate as Hotṛ priest in the sacrifices. Some of the gotras and pravaras of Viśvāmitra pravara system are followed among the Brāhmaṇa families of the present day India also. For instance the surname ‘Kauśika’ is applied by some of north Indian Brāhmaṇas.

Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Aitareya Brāhmaṇa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ĀgGS</td>
<td>Āgniveśya Ghyya Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>ĀpŚS</td>
<td>Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>ĀŚŚS</td>
<td>Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>BauŚS</td>
<td>Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>BauŚS (p)</td>
<td>Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra  (pravara-Khaṇḍa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HirŚŚ</td>
<td>Hiranyakēśi Śrauta Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>MaŚŚ</td>
<td>Mānava Śrauta Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>MiDa</td>
<td>Mīmāṃsā Darśana</td>
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<td>ŚŚS</td>
<td>Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>TMB</td>
<td>Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇ ārya</td>
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<tr>
<td>VaiDS</td>
<td>Vaikhānasa Dharma Sūtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>VaiGS</td>
<td>Vaikhānasa Ghyya Sūtra</td>
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¹ ĀpŚS. XXII. 20. 2, ĀŚŚS X. 2. 25, HirŚŚ XVII. 7. 12.
² VaiŚŚ XII. 1.
⁴ BhGS, III. 10.
⁵ MiDa VI. 6. 26.

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