

Viśvāmitra in the Kalpasūtras

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

The *ŚSS*, however, appear to be an exception in this connection. It devotes a major portion to the legend of Śunaśśepa's sacrifice and the important role played by Viśvāmitra in it.¹ 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. Viśvāmitra officiated as a *Hotṛ* priest in the said sacrifice (where Śunaśśepa was offered as a victim), Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha and Ayāśya being the other prominent priests. Śunaśśepa could not be sacrificed partly due to good offices of Viśvāmitra. 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 Viśvāmitras. These are as follows—

1. The Kuśikas² have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Daivarāta and Audala.³
2. Viśvāmitra, Devaśravas and Devataras—these are Śraumata—Kāma-

1. *ŚSS* XV. 17-57. Cf. also *AB* VII. 13-18.
2. According to the *BauŚS(p)* 31, the following are mentioned as the Kuśikas—Kuśikas, Pārṇajaṅghas, Vārakyas, Audaris, Māṇis, Br̥hadagnis, Ālavis, Āghattis, Āpadyapas, Antakas, Kāmantakas, Vāṣpakis, Cikitas, Lāmakāyanas, Śālāṅkāyanas, Sāṅkāyanas, Laukas, Gauras, Saugantis, Yamadūtas, Anabhimlātas, Tārakāyanas, Cauvalas, Jābālis, Yājñavalkyas, Vidaṇḍas, Bhauvanis, Saubabhravis, Aupadahānis, Audumbaris, Bhāristikis, Śyāmeyas, Caitreyas, Śālāvatas, Mayūras, Saumatyas, Citratantus, Manutantus, Mantus, others denoting the word 'Tantus' in the end, Bābhṛvyas, Kalāpas and Utsaris.
3. *BauŚS(P)* 31, *ĀpŚS* XXIV. 9. 2, *HirŚS* XXI. 3. 12.

kāyanas. They have the following three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Daivaśravas and Daivataraś.¹

3. The Katas² also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Kātya and Ātkīla.³

4. The Dhanañjayas⁴ have these three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas, and Dhānañjaya.

5. The Aghamarṣaṇa-Kuśikas have the following three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Āghamarṣaṇa and Kauśika.⁵

6. The Pūraṇa-Vāridhāpayantas have two *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra and Paurāṇa.⁶

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

8. The Aṣṭaka-Lohitas have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Āṣṭaka and Lauhita.⁸

9. The Raukṣaka-Raiṇavas have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Raukṣaka and Raiṇava.⁹

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

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

12. The Śālaṅkāyanas also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Śālaṅkāyana and Kauśika.¹²

1. BauŚS(P) 33, ĀpŚS XXIV. 9. 3, ĀśŚS XII. 14. 3.

2. Katas, Sairindhas, Karabhas, Vājāyanas, Saṁhiteyas, Kauṛṭyas, Śaiśireyas, Audumbarāyanas, Piṇḍagrīvas, Nārāyaṇas and Nārāṭyas—these are the Katas.

3. BauŚS(P) 35, ĀpŚS XX. 9. 11, HstŚS XXI. 3. 12, VśŚS XII. 14. 6.

4. The Dhānañjayas are Kārṭis, Āśvavatas, Tulabhyas, Saindhavāyanas, Uṣṭrākṣas and Mahākṣas.

5. BauŚS(P) 36, ĀpŚS XXIV. 9. 6, HirŚS XXI. 3. 12, ĀśŚS XII. 14. 4.

6. BauŚS 36, ĀpŚS XXIV. 9. 13, HirŚS XXI. 3. 12, ĀśŚS XII. 14. 6.

7. BauŚS(P) 40, ĀpŚS XXIV. 9. 9-10, HirŚS XXI. 3. 12, The ĀśŚS XII. 14. 5 and Daivarāta to this list.

8. BauŚS(P) 37, ĀpŚS XXIV. 14. 4.

9. BauŚS(P) 34. According to ĀpŚS XXIV. 9. 7-8 and HirŚS XXI. 3. 12, only two are there—Vaiśvāmitra and Āṣṭaka. According to ĀśŚS XII. 14. 4, the three *pravaras* are Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas and Āṣṭaka.

10. BauŚS(P) 34. According to ĀśŚS XII. 14. 6., the Raiṇas have three *pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Gāhina and Raiṇava.

11. BauŚS(P) 39.

12. ĀśŚS XII. 14. 4.

13. The Hiranyaretases have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Hiraṇya and Retas.¹

14. The Suvarṇaretases also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Sauvarṇa and Retas.²

15. The Kapotaretases have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra Kāpota and Retas.³

16. The Ghr̥ta-kaśīkas also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra. Gh̥rta and Kaśīka.⁴

17. The Śāṭhara-māṭharas also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Śāṭhara and Māṭhara.⁵

18. The Sāhula-māhulas have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Sāhula and Māhula.⁶

This is the picture of the *pravara* system of the Vaiśvāmitra in the *Sūtra* literature. The *Sūtras* refer to Vaiśvāmitra 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 *BauŚS* refers to the selection of the priests. It enjoins that *Adhvaryu* priest should be an Āṅgiras, the *Brahmā* priest should be a Vāsiṣṭha, the *Hotṛ* should be a Vaiśvāmitra and the *Udgātṛ* should be an Ayāśya.⁸ Again, in the context of the *Ṛṣi-ṣṭoma*, Viśvāmitra is connected with the seventeenth *stoma*.⁹

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

The *VaiŚS* mentions that four chief priests should be descendants of Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Āṅgiras and Ayāśya respectively, remaining twelve priests can

1. *Ibid*, XII. 14. 6.

2. *MāŚS* 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 Viśvāmitras, see JOHN BROUGH, *Early Brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara*. Cambridge, 1953, p. 35.

8. *ĀgGS*. I. 2. 2.

9. *BauŚS*. II. 3.

10. *Ibid* XVIII. 22.

be selected from among the Kaśyapas, Bharadvājas, Bhṛgu Aṅgīrasas. One authority says that *Hotṛ* should be a descendant of Viśvāmitra.¹

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

The *MiDa* mentions that because a Viśvāmitra should necessarily be a *Hotṛ* priest, therefore, the descendants of Bhṛgu, Śunaka and Vasiṣṭha 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

AB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
ĀgGS	Āgniveśya Gṛhya Sūtra.
ĀpŚS	Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra.
ĀśŚS	Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
BauŚS	Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
BauŚS (p)	Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra (pravara-Khaṇḍa)
HirŚS	Hiraṇyakeśi Śrauta Sūtra.
MāŚS	Mānava Śrauta Sūtra.
MiDa	Mīmāṃsā Darśana.
ŚŚS	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
TMB	Taṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇ.
VaiDS	Vaikhānasa Dharma Sūtra.
VaiGS	Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra.



1. ĀpŚS. XXII. 20. 2, ĀśŚS X. 2. 25, HirŚS XVII. 7. 12.

2. VaiŚS XII. 1.

3. VaiGS I. 4, VaiDS II. 13.

4. BhGS, III. 10.

5. MiDa VI. 6. 26.

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