

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 *ŚŚS*, 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 Ayāsyā 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. *ŚŚS* 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, Brhadagnis, Ālavis, Āghaṭṭis, Āpadyapas, Antakas, Kāmantakas, Vāṣpakis, Cikitas, Lāmakāyanas, Śālāṅkāyanas, Sāṅkāyanas, Laukas, Gauras, Saugantis, Yamadūtas, Anabhimlātas, Tārakāyanas, Cauvalas, Jābālis, Yājñavalkyas, Viḍaṇḍas, Bhauvanis, Saubabhravis, Aupadahanis, Audumbaris, Bhāriṣṭikis, 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 Daivataras.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 Aghamaṣṇa-Kuśikas have the following three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra, Āghamaṣṇa and Kauśika.⁵

6. The Pūraṇa-Vāridhāpayantas have two *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmitra and Pauraṇa.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, Kaukrtyas, Śaiśireyas, Audumbarāyanas, Piṇḍagrīvas, Nārāyaṇas and Nārātyas—these are the Katas.

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

4. The Dhānañjayas are Kārīṣis, 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 Aṣṭaka. According to *ĀśŚS* XII. 14. 4. the three *pravaras* are Vaiśvāmitra, Mādhucchandas and Aṣṭaka.

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

11. *BauŚS(P)* 39.

12. *ĀśŚS* XII. 14. 4.

13. The Hiranyaretases have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmītra, Hiranyā and Retas.¹

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

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

16. The Ghṛta-kaśīkas also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmītra. Ghṛta and Kaśīka.⁴

17. The Śāthara-mātharas also have three *ṛṣi-pravaras*—Vaiśvāmītra, Śāthara and Māthara.⁵

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

This is the picture of the *pravara* system of the Vaiśvāmītra in the *Sūtra* literature. The *Sūtras* refer to Vaiśvāmītra 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 Vaiśvāmītra and the *Udgātṛ* should be an Ayāśya.⁸ Again, in the context of the *Ṛṣi-ṣṭoma*, Viśvāmītra 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 Viśvāmītra.¹⁰ It has been stated in the *TNB* (XXI. 12. 1-4) that Viśvāmītra 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 Viśvāmītras, 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, Bhṛguś Anīrases. 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 *Vaiśvāmitra* 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	Hiranyakeśi Śrauta Sūtra.
MāŚS	Mānava Śrauta Sūtra.
MiDa	Mīmāṃsā Darśana.
ŚŚS	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
TMB	Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa.
VaiDS	Vaikhāṇasa Dharma Sūtra.
VaiGS	Vaikhāṇasa 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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