CHAPTER – 4

PARAŚURĀMA IN SANSKRIT CREATIVE AND ALLIED LITERATURE

THE MAHĀVĪRACARITA

The Mahāvīracarita of Bhavabhuti plays an important role among the Sanskrit dramas. Here in seven acts the dramatist describes the activities of Rāma, the son of Daśaratha up to his accession to the throne of Ayodhyā. Paraśurāma is presented in the second, the third and the fourth Acts. As we find in other dramas based on Rāmayāna, here also Paraśurāma is described as the pupil of Śiva.

It is found in the prelude that sage Visvāmitra had returned from Ayodhyā to his hermitage along with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the princes of Ayodhyā. They were invited by the king of Videha to his sacrifice. Kuśadhvaja, the brother of the king Janak came there with his two nieces namely Sītā and Urmilā. In the first Act, it is found that in the hermitage they met Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and fell in love with them respectively. At that time a messenger was sent by Rāvana to ask the hand of Sītā. Just then Tārakā, a female friend disturbed their meeting. As a result she was killed by Rāma. Viśvāmitra became pleased and gave to Rāma the yawn-producing, better known as soporific weapons with all their secrets of discharge and dissolution. After then Rāma came to know that to the
breaker of the Śiva’s divine bow, the hand of the Śītā had been given. Rāma fulfilled his desire to gain Śītā after breaking this bow easily.

The second Act began with the reflections of the Minister of Rāvana that was Mālyavān. Mālyavān knew about Śītā’s marriage with Rāma from Śurpanakhā, the sister of Rāvana. Mālyavān took it as an insult to Rāvana. So he resolved to excite Paraśurāma against Rāma for breaking his teacher’s bow.1 Immediately Paraśurāma came to the capital of Videha and asking for Rāma, who was detained for a moment by Śītā’s fear but now he should met his opponent. He at first allowed Rāma to draw his bow. But at that moment the chamberlain came and told that the queens wanted to see their son-in-law. So Paraśurāma allowed Rāma to visit them and closed the second Act.

In the third Act Paraśurāma’s anger was fully presented by the dramatist. Here it was seen that Vaśiṣṭha and Visvāmitra prevented Paraśurāma from fighting but became failure. Suddenly Satānanda, the family priest of Janaka entered and challenged that nobody could attack

1. Mālyavān -

\[
yadi prapadyet dhanuh pramāthaḥ śisyāyaḥ sambhorṇa titikste saḥ / 
ayodhāne cedubhayornighatāḥ samrāmbhayogādati hi priyam naḥ//
\]

MVC, II, 12

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the shadow of Janaka much less his son-in-law. Immediately started an anger conversation held in between Paraśurāma and Satānanda. According to Satānanda, Paraśurāma was not a Brahmin by nature. Paraśurāma became very angry and gave his angry speech. Then Janaka and Daśaratha came there to stop them but Paraśurāma was not to be put down. He determined to fight with Rāma. Though the story of this drama is taken from the Rāmāyana yet many scenes are Bhavabhuti’s own creation. The fight was not shown in the 4th Act of the drama. Only the victory of Rāma over his antagonist was announced. Here Paraśurāma gave his bow to Rāma before his departure for killing the demons of the Dandakā forest.

Paraśurāma’s visit to Mithilā is shown in many drama’s which are based on the Rāmāyana. This tradition is followed by Bhavabhuti also.

2. satānanda – are anaravan / niraparādhārāja kulakadan/ mahāpātakin/ Bibhatsakarmān / kāṇḍaprṣṭha / tvamasi kim brāhmaṇa eba ? aho mahābrāhmaṇaṇaṣyācāraḥ - mātureba śīrāscedo garvānāṁ cāpakarttānām/ rājañāṁ ca sabanasthānāṁ brahmahatyāsama vadhāḥ// III act, 19
3. āḥ svastibācaṇika / duṣṭa/ duṣṭa / api ca re ahalyāyāḥ putra/ aham tava kāṇḍaprṣṭhaḥ/ IV Act
4. ehi manye, rājaputra / Jamadagnyāṁ vijesyase nahi vijesyase / durdamo hi reṇukā nandanastnadantakah/ IV Act
THE PRASANNAṆARĀGHAVA

The Prasannarāghanā is a famous Rāmāyanic play of Jayadeva. Paraśurāma is nicely presented in the 3rd and 4th Acts by the dramatist. Paraśurāma learned archery from his teacher Śiva whom he loved and respected very much. All kṣatriya kings were the great enemies of Paraśurāma. In the third Act it is found that Paraśurāma heard about Janaka’s decision about his daughter Sītā’s marriage. Janaka wanted to get Sītā married with a person who could break down Śiva’s bow. After hearing this, he immediately sent message to Janaka – “Janaka, you should avoid to break down Śiva’s bow. Otherwise I shall cut your neck by my axe”. But Janaka refused this message. As a result Paraśurāma reached in Janaka’s city and he thought that this is a big insult to him. He challenged all the kṣatriyas including Rāma. Here the author presents a

5. kasmaicid dehi kanyām narapatiśīśabe dirghamāyurlavasva
   vyābartsvapriyannaḥ puramathanadhanuhkarṣanālalapapāpāt/
   no cedanyoastupāyastava kalusamasīpanka saṅksalanāyā
   masmadvistāridhārāṇīcalavahalapayaḥ pūradūravagāhāḥ//
   PR, III. Act, 38

6. bānān ripuprānaharāṇ madiyān sarveopi yūyan sahitāḥ sahadham
   ibid, IV. Act
long conversation scene held among Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Paraśurāma. Rāma obediently talked with Paraśurāma. But Lakṣmaṇa’s words are found to be ironical. He wanted to say that Brāhmaṇas have only Brāhmanic power. They have no power of arms. Kṣatriyas have power of arms only. So their fight with Paraśurāma is meaningless. When Paraśurāma heard about it he invited Rāma for a fight. His anger is found bursting in his speech. But at last Paraśurāma realized that Rāma was not a simple human being, he was the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. So he checked his anger and blessed Rāma and went to the place of penance. From this drama, it comes to be known that though Paraśurāma was by nature very angry, he had the ability to control his anger at times. This

7. rāma – bhagavan, alamanena / durvinayapaṅkamalinīkrtamātmānam tāvatbhavacarananakhaṇaranataranginījalena kṣālayami / ibid, IV.Act
8. lakṣmaṇa – yasmadekagunam śarāsanamidam suvyoktamurvībhujā masmākām bhavatām punarnavagunam yojñaoapavītam balam. PR, III. Act, 25

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comes to be focused in the verse cited by Laksmana.10

**THE MEGHADŪTA**

The Meghadūta is a small lyrical poem of the great poet Kālidāsa. It is divided into two portions, viz. the Purvamegha and the Uttaramegha. Only in one verse of the Purvamegha, Kālidāsa mentions about Paraśurāma.11

Here it is described that a certain Yaksha had to undergo a punishment of banishment for neglect of his duty by his master Kubera. He takes up his abode on Rāmagiri in the Vindhya mountain. One day he saw a piece of cloud in the sky. Immediately he thought that the cloud would be a good messenger for him. So he requested the cloud to deliver his message to his beloved wife, who was in Alakā. He then suggested the

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10. laksmana - mourvī dhanustanuriyam ca vibharti mouṇjim vāṇāḥ
   kuśāḥ ca vilasanti kare sitāyāḥ /
   dhārojvalaḥ paraśuresa kamandaluḥ ca tad virasāntarasayoḥ kimayam'
   vikāraḥ //

11. prāleyādṛerūpatatamatikramya taṁstānuiśesā nahamsadvāram'
   bhṛgupatiyaśobratma yat krauṇcarandhrm/
   tenodīcīṁ diśamanusarestirigyāyāmaśobhī syāmaḥ pādo
   baliniyamanābhyudayat syeva viṣṇuḥ //

ibid, IV Act, 15

Meg. Purvamegha, 60

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route by which the cloud reach the city of Yakṣhas. In this description he mentions about Krauṇca mountain, the very path of glory of the most eminent of the Bhṛgus (Paraśurāma). An old legend about Paraśurāma is described in this portion. Once on the mountain Kailāśa, Paraśurāma was learning Dhanurvidyā from Lord Śiva. One day being jealous of the fame of Kārtikeya as the piercer of the Krauṇca mountain, Paraśurāma sent an arrow right through the mountain and the fissure made by it in the mountain ever remained as the memorial pillar of this deed of his power. It is historically said that, the fissure is the passage opened by Paraśurāma for himself on the occasion of his traveling southwards to destroy the Kṣatriyas. Here Paraśurāma is called Bhṛgupati because he is the most distinguished of the sons of Jamadagni.

THE ANARGHARĀGHAVA

The *Anargharāghava* is a drama in seven Acts, based on the story of the RM, by Murary, the son of Tanumati and Śrī Vardhamāna Bhatta of the Maudgalya family.

The first Act starts with a conversation between Vāmadeva and Daśaratha, which serves to introduce Viśvāmitra, who wants to hold a sacrifice in his hermitage. For the protection of the sacrifice from demons,
he went to Daśaratha and requested him to send Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to the hermitage. Daśaratha allowed Visvāmitra to take his sons with him.

In the third Act it is found that Janaka, the king of Mithilā arranged a Sayambara ceremony for his daughter Sītā. The two princes of Ayodhyā are introduced to the king by Visvāmitra, who urged Janaka to let Rāma try to bend the bow of Śiva. Then it is described that Rāma has won Sītā as breaking the bow. In this Act it is also described that Rāvana, the king of Lārīkā also tries to marry Sītā. But he became unsuccessful.

In the 4th Act Mālyavat describes the rising of the sun and his disappointment on Rāvana’s account. Śūrpanakhā arrived from Videhā and announces that Rāma married Sītā. She further told that she had heard of Paraśurāma’s approach to Mithilā. Here it is noticed that Paraśurāma did not come there at the instigation of Mālyavat as found in the Mahāvīracarita. The next scene starts with a long conversation held between Rāma and Paraśurāma. This scene reflects the humility of Rāma and the haughtiness of Paraśurāma. From this conversation it comes to be known that Paraśurāma had acquired the thorough knowledge of the Sāmaveda and Cāpavidyā, along with Kārtikeya, from Lord Śiva.13

13. sākam saktidharena tatrabhavato devāt bhavānipateh/
yah samyamñchamavāpa cāpa nigamam samyañci sāmāni ca //
AR, IV Act, 23
Thereafter the two Rāmas go forth to fight. Suddenly a voice comes out and says that Sītā is apprehensive that Rāma again draws the bow for a maiden prize and that he cannot draw it in vain. After hearing this Rāma and Paraśurāma immediately dissuade themselves from the fight.

**THE BHĀṬṬIKĀVYAM**

Bhaṭṭi was one of the best poets in the post Kālidāsa period. He wrote the Bhattikāvya in twenty two cantos. The story is taken from the Rāmāyaṇa. The same incident, found in the other Rāmāic works, is referred to here by Daśaratha. Paraśurāma appeared in front of Daśaratha when he went back to Ayodhya with his son and daughter-in-law. Here Bhaṭṭi had drawn a very terrible picture of Paraśurāma.14 Daśaratha knew about the strength of Paraśurāma. So he got nervous at the recollection of what Paraśurāma did in the past.15 Daśaratha requested Paraśurāma not to fight with his son. But out of pride he did not listen to it. At last Rāma with the help of Amogha Bāṇa shattered Paraśurāma’s pride.

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14. viśamkato vakṣasi bāṇapānih sampannataladvayasaḥ purastāt / bhīṣma dhanuṣmānopajānṇaratniraiti sma rāmaḥ pathi jāmadagnyah//

Bhaṭṭikāvyam, II Act, 50

15. anekaśo nirjitarājaklastvam pitṛnatāpsir nṛparaktatoyaiḥ / saṅkṣipya sanrambahamsadvipakṣi kāsthārbhakeasmistava rāma rāme //

ibid, 52
Valmiki placed Paraśurāma at the same time in the Rāmāyaṇa.

But some poets like Tulsidāsa placed him immediately just after breaking down the bow.

**THE CAMPŪRĀMĀYAṆA**

The Campūrāmāyaṇa of Bhoja is a very popular work in Sanskrit literature. It is based on the Rāmāyaṇa. In he Bālakāṇḍa, there is found the plight met with Paraśurāma in the hands of Rāma by challenging him in a battle.16 This little information about Paraśurāma only is there in the Campūrāmāyaṇa.

**THE VIGHNEŚAJANMODAYA**

This is a play authored by Gaurikānta, one of the famous authors of Kāvyā and Jyotisā from Assam. The subject matter is taken from the Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa. Paraśurāma’s war with Kārtavīrya was described in the third Act. Herein is found a detailed description of Paraśurāma’s earning power from Śiva. Again the war held in between Ganeśa and Paraśurāma was dramatically presented by the author.

16. nunam janena purūse mahati prayukta māgaḥ param tadānurupa phalam prasūte /

kṛtva raghūdhahagateḥ kṣanamantrāyam yadbhārgavah paragater-vihartin' prapede // CR, Bālakāṇḍa, 115
THE HANUMANNĀṬAKA

The Hanumannāṭaka (HN) was written by Dāmodara Miśra in the memory of Hanumān. This drama contains 14 Acts and 579 slokas. The story is based on the RM. The first Act contains the description of Sītā’s Svayamvara, the conversation between Janaka and the priest of Rāvaṇa, breaking the bow of Śiva, the episode of Paraśurāma, finally the marriage of Rāma.

It is found in the story of the first Act that, the priest whom Rāvaṇa sent to Mithilā for Sītā’s Svayamvara conveyed that Rāvaṇa had wanted to marry Sītā, without breaking down the bow of Śiva. Because of Rāvaṇa’s immense strength, it was rather a very easy task to break this bow but as a descendent of Śiva, he did not want to do so. But Janaka refused to accept this proposal. Then Rāma broke Śiva’s bow. After hearing the sound of the broken bow, Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni became very angry and immediately reached the site of Sītā’s Svayamvara. In this scene, the dramatist has presented a nice description of the fearful

17. guroḥ śambhordhanurna cet cūrṇatāṁi nayati kṣṇāt, HN, 1st Act, 14
appearance of Paraśurāma.\textsuperscript{18} Paraśurāma was as if the fire of arising at the
time of the great deluge. Then there is found a description of the axe of
Paraśurāma. It was said that the axe could annihilate people of all ages for
twenty one times, and took bath in the river filled with the blood of those
Kṣatriyas.\textsuperscript{19} Then a severe verbal duel held in between Rāma and
Paraśurāma. Paraśurāma challenged Rāma to break Viṣṇu’s bow.\textsuperscript{20} At the

\begin{quote}
18. Lākṣmaṇa – Jamadagnyastrutā yadvairā vadhanuḥ kolāhalamarsmū-
cchitaḥ pralayamāruto dibhūtakalpāntanalaḥ pradīptarosānalaḥ /
cudācumbitakam kapatramabhitastunīdvayam prāṭhao
bhasmasnigdhapavitralāñcitamuro dhatte tvacanī ravravīm/
bhauñjyā mekhalayā niyantrimamgo vāsaścamaṇījīsthkam
panau kārmukasākṣasūtravalyam daṇḍoaparaḥ paipplaḥ //
\textit{1st Act, 29}

19. yena trṣaptakṛtvo nṟpavahalavāṃsāṃśaṅśikapamkṛghbhāreakari
bhūricyūtarūdhirasaridvāri pureabhisekah /
yasya strībālavṛddhāvadhi nidhanavidhau nirdayo viśrutoasau
rājanyoccāmsakūtkathanapuratadghoradharah kuṭhāraḥ //
\textit{ibid, 1st Act, 33}

20. rājanyakapradhanasādhanamasmaṇākārṣakārṇuka
midamī garuḍadhajasya.
\textit{Ibid, 45.}
end Parasurama came to know that Rama was not an ordinary human being. He was an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. So he gave his strength to Rama and freed himself from his whole sin.

**THE VRDDHAHĀRITASAMHIṬṬĀ**

In the *Vṛddhahāritisamhitā*, the names of the incarnations viz Matsya, Kurma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Rāma, Balabhadra, Kṛṣṇa, Kalki, Hayagrīva, Bhārgava, Parasurāma and Buddha are found in detailed form. But the worship of Buddha and Bhārgava is strictly prohibited.²¹

**THE RENUKĀTANTRA**

Bhagavatī Renukā is one of the Daśamahāvidyā. She is a form of Chinnamastā, the fifth daśamahāvidyā. Chinnamastā is the presiding deity of Yogīs. Most of the devotees of Renukā are found in South India.

According to the Purāṇas, the followers of Jamadagni blamed the character of his wife Renukā. Then following the order of Jamadagni, Paraśurāma chopped off the head of his mother Renukā. But later on, the holiness of Renukā came out from her neck in the form of a holy light. This holy light is worshipped as Śri Renukā.

In the *Renukātantra*, some activities of Paraśurāma like killing

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²¹ nārcayed bhārgavāṇi buddham sarvatrāpi ca karmāsu

*Vṛddhahāritisamhitā*, 141, 42

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of Kṣatriyas, chopping off the head of his mother and again returning of his mother’s life etc. are mentioned. Here it is also found that Paraśurāma on Mondays always goes to Kāśikā, in Paurnāmāsī to Prayāga in solar eclips to Kurukṣetra. It is also said that the devotees of Paraśurāma would get success in their life if they pray the mantras of this tantra śāstra in three times in a day.

THE CAMPŪRĀMĀYAṆA

The Campūrāmāyaṇa of Bhoja is a very popular work among the Campūkāvyas in Sanskrit literature. This is an incomplete work, as the author wrote up to the end of the Sundarakānda only. The subsequent Kānda has been supplemented by Lakṣmaṇasūri.

22. ādyo rāma jāmadagnyaḥ ksatriyānām kulāntakaḥ/
parasuvadhadharodāta mātrhā māṭṛjīvakaḥ //

23. somavāre kāśikāyām gayāyām pitṛpakṣake/ sūṣara ke paurnāmāsyām
prayāge tu mrge ravau /sūryagrahe kurūkṣetre rāme gacchati sarvadā
Reṇukātantram, Paraśurāmatantram

24. etanināmāni ṭṛsandhyāṁ yaḥ paṭhet naraḥ
nāpamṛtyum na daridrayaṁ na ca vamsaksayo bhavet
srimatparaśurāmasya gāyatryeśā mahādbhuta
rājyakṛt kalibhūpānāṁ sarvatantresu gopitā //

ibid

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In the *Bālakāṇḍa*, the poet narrates the story of Parasurāma in the same way which is commonly found in the Kāvyas, based on the *Rāmāyana*. Visvāmitra, hearing about the *Svayamvara* of Sītā, the daughter of Janaka, started for his palace with Rāma and Laksmana. In the *Svayamvara* assembly Rāma was given a bow by Janaka which was given to him by Lord Śiva. It was broken by Rāma and Sītā was married to Rāma as per Janala’s promise. While returning from Mithilā, Rāma met Parasurāma who was in a very dangerous look.25 The poet depicts Dāsarathi Rāma more as a *yuddhavrā* in the *Campūrāmāyana*. Therefore, quite naturally, it is found that he could easily vanquish Parasurāma in a duel of strength, when Parasurāma challenged him for fight. With the help of the weapon named *Āmogha* Rāma stopped the way to heaven of Parasurāma after his death.26

25. atha daśarathah tanayaiḥ saha krtavahairvidehabhyah pratinivarta-
mānah sanivartasamayasamujjambhitahutawahaduhsaharosam
bhīṣaṇadurvāraparākramam ... bhārgavam munim’ramamadrāksīt /
C.R. *Bālakāṇḍa*

26. tatatatsaṇamamahogena rāghavaih śarena bhārgavasya svargati
rurodha-
ibid, *Bālakāṇḍa*
The Parāśurāmakalpasūtram is a book which is based on Śrīvidyā or Tripurasundarī. This book gives the information about the worship of Tripurasundarī and bears some philosophical discussions on this particular matter. Parāśurāma is known as the author of this book. But here a question arises as to the identity of this Parāśurāma. In the puspikā of the first part of this book it is found that Parāśurāma, the son of Jamadagni and Reṇukā is the author. So it is proved from these lines that the 5th incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu is the author of this book. The same lines about the author are repeated at the end of the Parāśurāmakalpasūtram.

But in this context, a big controversy has come into existence. Some critics believe that Parāśurāma the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu can in no way be the author of this text. According to them one Kaulācārya, Parāśurāma by name wrote this book. In order to impose some sort of grave coatings, the author has been called as such.

27. iti śrī reṇukagarvasambhūta duṣṭaśatriyakutāntaka śrī bhārgavo-
pādhyāya jāmadagnya mahādevapradhānaśisya mahākaulācārya
śrīmatparāśurāmakaṇṭtau kalpasūtre diḳṣāvidhirnāma prathamāḥ
khaṇḍāḥ //
Among the devotees of Tripurasundari, the name of Parašurāma is very famous. The devotion of Tripurasundari is nothing but the rituals practised in Kaulācāra. According to the Mahādeva Śāstrī, a famous writer, Parašurāmakalpasūtram is the most systematic book among the books which are based on the devotion of Tripurasundari.28 The Parašurāmakalpasūtram is divided into ten Khaṇḍas or parts viz. –

1\(^{st}\) part : Dīkṣāvidhi
2\(^{nd}\) part : Gananayāka paddhati
3\(^{rd}\) part : Śrikrama
4\(^{th}\) part : Lalitākrama
5\(^{th}\) part : Lalitānavāranapujā
6\(^{th}\) part : Śyāmākrama
7\(^{th}\) part : Vārāhikrama
8\(^{th}\) part : Parākrama
9\(^{th}\) part : Homavidhi
10\(^{th}\) part : Sarvasādhāraṇaṅkrama

Again this book is divided into five Patalas. One pātala covers two parts. Parašurāmakalpasūtram is mainly related to yoga. Therefore, it

can rightly be derived that Paraśurāma, the incarnation of the Lord, is being presented herewith as a great performer or practitioner of yoga.

**THE TRIPURĀRAHASYAM**

Sumedhā, the student of Paraśurāma was the writer of the *Tripurārahasyam*. This was a book related to tantra and based on the conversation held in between Dattātreya and Paraśurāma. With the help of the *Paraśurāmakalpasūtram* and the Dattasanāhitā, the writer discussed about the warship of Tripurā. According to *Tripurārahasya*, Paraśurāma went to Dattātreya for his mental peace. Because he was very upset to see the power of Rāma Dāśarathī and he thought that Dattātreya could help him. Dattātreya advised him to warship Tripurā for twelve years. Here

29. ityatrisūnurāṇst bhāṛgaveṇa prasannadhīḥ /

matvā yogyaṃ prāṣnajātam pravaktumupacakrame //

rāma buddhimatāṁ śṛṣṭha nūnam śṛṣṭi śṛṣṭi tatpadaṁ /

sadhvīmarṣaparo yastvamato gyātum prabhāvitaḥ //

etadeva hi tat śaṁtipāto yatsadhvīmarṣanam/

bhagavatsaṁtipātena bina kaḥ śreyā āpṇuyāt //

The *Tripurārahasya, jñānakhandam*, Chapter 15, 20, 21, 22
Dattatreya gave his valuable advice to Paraśurāma.²⁰

30. rāma yaḥ paripūrṇātmā visramo vai samāsthitāḥ /
   tasya ekadeśatābhrāntikṛtamākāśadhāṣanam // Ibid, Chapter 18; 104
   nirvikalpanī pūrṇarūpamī vijñānamī muktināmakam /
   rāma tyajātra sandehamī vikalpasya vivarjane // Ibid, 119.