

from Kaśyapa the gold platform was cut into pieces and the gold pieces were offered to brahmins.

When Kaśyapa got all the lands from Paraśurāma he said thus:—"Oh Rāma, you have given me all your land and it is not now proper for you to live in my soil. You can go to the south and live somewhere on the shores of the ocean there." Paraśurāma walked south and requested the ocean to give him some land to live. Varuṇa then asked him to throw a winnow into the ocean. There is a legend saying that it was a Paraśu that Paraśurāma threw. Paraśurāma threw the sieve (śūrpa) and the ocean gave way to land for a distance where the winnow fell from where he stood. This is the place Śūrparaka now known as Kerala. (Śūrpa=Winnowing basket). After giving this land also to the brahmins, Paraśurāma went and started doing penance at Mahendragiri. (Chapter 130, Ādi Parva; Chapter 117, Vana Parva and Chapter 49, Śānti Parva).

9) Other exploits of Paraśurāma.

(i) *Meets Śrī Rāma.* Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were returning to Ayodhyā from Mithilāpurī after the marriage along with the sage Vasiṣṭha through a deep forest when Paraśurāma blocked their way and addressing Śrī Rāma said thus, 'Oh Rāma, son of Daśaratha, I heard that you broke during the marriage of Sītā the great Śaiva bow of the palace of Janaka. It was a Śaiva bow and I have now come here to test your prowess. I am giving you a Vaiṣṇava bow now. Can you string this bow?'

Vasiṣṭha tried his best to pacify Paraśurāma. But Paraśurāma without heeding it started describing the story and greatness of the Śaiva bow and the Vaiṣṇava bow. (See under Vaiṣṇava bow). Then Śrī Rāma took the bow from Paraśurāma and started to string it. The brilliance of Śrī Rāma dazzled him and he stood dumbfounded at his skill. Paraśurāma was immensely pleased and he blessed Śrī Rāma. After that he went again to Mahendragiri to perform penance.

This same story is told in Kamba Rāmāyaṇa with some slight changes :—Paraśurāma did not like Śrī Rāma breaking the bow of his Guru Śiva. So an angered Paraśurāma blocked the way of Śrī Rāma and challenged him to string and take aim with the mighty Vaiṣṇava bow he (Paraśurāma) was carrying with him then. Śrī Rāma with perfect ease took the bow, strung it, and taking the missile asked Paraśurāma to show the target. Paraśurāma was astonished and was in a fix. The missile could destroy even the entire Universe. So Paraśurāma asked Rāma to aim at the accumulated tapobala (power accrued by penance) of his self and Rāma did so. Then Paraśurāma surrendered to Śrī Rāma the Vaiṣṇava bow and arrow and the Vaiṣṇava tejas (divine brilliance) in him. Paraśurāma after having carried out the purpose of his incarnation gave instructions to Śrī Rāma to continue the purpose of his incarnation and then after blessing Śrī Rāma went again to do penance at his holy āśrama.

This same story is told by the sage Lomaśa to the Pāṇḍavas during their exile in the forests. This story is much different from the previous ones: "When the fame that Śrī Rāma was the best of Kings spread far and wide Paraśurāma once went to see Śrī Rāma. Giving him the bow and arrow with which he had done the mass massacre of the Kṣatriyas he challenged

him to string it and take aim. With a smile Śrī Rāma did so and then Paraśurāma said Rāma should draw the string up to his ears. Śrī Rāma got angry and then on the face, which became fierce, by his anger, Paraśurāma saw besides himself, Āditya-Vasu-Rudras, Sādhya, Bālakhilyas, Devarṣis, oceans, mountains, the Vedas and all such things of this universe. Śrī Rāma sent out his missile from the bow. The whole universe was thrown into chaos. Thunder and lightning rocked the world. Heavy rains flooded the whole land space. Burning stars and meteors fell to the ground. Paraśurāma then knew that Śrī Rāma was the incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu and he stood bowing before him. Ashamed of his defeat he took leave of Śrī Rāma and went to Mahendragiri. When he reached there he found he had lost all his brilliance. Then the manes appeared and advised him to go and bathe in the river Vadhūsarā. Accordingly Paraśurāma went and bathed in the river and regained his lost brilliance. (Chapter 99, Vana Parva).

(ii) *Paraśurāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.* The Purāṇas describe two important occasions when Paraśurāma met Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The first meeting was at the mountain of Gomanta. Once Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with a view to enjoying the abundance of Nature went to the beautiful mountain of Gomanta and ascended to its top. On their way they met Paraśurāma engaged in penance there. They exchanged greetings and talked to each other for some time. Then Paraśurāma requested Śrī Kṛṣṇa to kill Śṛgālavāsudeva, King of Karavīra on the base of that mountain. Śrī Kṛṣṇa promised to do so and left the place carrying with him the blessings of the sage.

The second meeting was when Kṛṣṇa was going to the court of the Kauravas as a messenger of the Pāṇḍavas. On his way Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw a company of sages coming and, alighting from his chariot Kṛṣṇa talked with them. Paraśurāma who was in that company then embraced Kṛṣṇa and said that he should give a true picture of the situation to the Kauravas when he was conducting his mission. The sages blessed Kṛṣṇa and wished Kṛṣṇa all success in his mission. (Chapter 83, Udyoga Parva; 10th Skandha, Bhāgavata).

10) Other details.

(i) Paraśurāma along with a few other sages was present at the Sabhāpraveśa of Dharmaputra. (Śloka 11, Chapter 53, Sabhā Parva).

(ii) Paraśurāma was present at the court of the Kauravas when Śrī Kṛṣṇa was speaking to Dhṛtarāṣṭra on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. When the Kauravas did not reply the questions put by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Paraśurāma rose up to tell a story to illustrate the evils resulting from the arrogance of man. There was once a King called Dambhodbhava who was very arrogant because of his great strength. He wanted to diffuse his energy by fighting and laboured much to get good opponents and roamed about in search of fighters. One day the brahmins directed him to Naranārāyaṇas and accordingly Dambhodbhava went to their āśrama at Badarikā and challenged them for a fight. They refused to fight and yet the King showered arrows on them. Then the sages took a few blades of the iṣikā grass and threw them at him. They filled the sky as great missiles and the King begged to be pardoned and prostrated before the sages. They sent back the be-