

Paraśu in the Rigveda¹ and later² denotes the axe of the woodcutter. Of its form we know nothing. A red-hot axe was used in a form of ordeal (Divya) applied in accusations of theft.³ See also Paraśu.

¹ i. 127, 3; vii. 104, 21; x. 28, 8; 53, 9, etc.

² Av. iii. 19, 4; vii. 28, 1; xi. 9, 1; Kāthaka Saṃhitā, xii. 10; Satapatha

Brāhmaṇa, iii. 6, 4, 10; Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, ii. 35; Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, x. 1; Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad, ii. 11, etc.

³ Chāndogya Upaniṣad, vi. 16, 1.

Paraśvan. See Parasvant.

Parasvant denotes a large wild animal which Roth¹ conjectures to be the wild ass. It is mentioned in the Vṛṣākapi hymn² of the Rigveda, twice in the Atharvaveda,³ and in the list of victims at the Aśvamedha ('horse sacrifice') in the Yajurveda Saṃhitā,⁴ in all of which passages the sense of 'wild ass' is satisfactory. More doubtful is the meaning of the word *paraśvā(n)* in the Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad,⁵ where the commentary explains it as 'serpent.' It is, of course, quite possible that the word has nothing to do with *parasvant*. Bühler⁶ suggests connexion with the Pāli *palāsāda*, 'rhinoceros.'

¹ St. Petersburg Dictionary, s.v.

² x. 86, 18.

³ vi. 72, 2; xx. 131, 22.

⁴ Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā, iii. 14, 10; Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, xxiv. 8; Taittirīya Saṃhitā, v. 5, 21, 1, where the commentator takes it to be the wild buffalo.

⁵ i. 2.

⁶ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 48, 63; Keith, *Sāṃkhāyana Aranyaka*, 17, n. 1; *Aitareya Aranyaka*, 377, n. 1.

Cf Ludwig, Translation of the Rigveda, 2, 633; Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 86, 87; Whitney, Translation of the Atharvaveda, 335; Geldner, *Rigveda, Glossar*, 105.

Parā-vṛj is a term found in four passages of the Rigveda,¹ in all of which it refers to a person in a forlorn condition, while one² of them also speaks of him as going south. Sāyana's³ view that the word is a proper name is most unlikely, while Grassmann's⁴ explanation of it as 'cripple' is still less probable.

¹ i. 112, 8; ii. 13, 12; 15, 7; x. 61, 8.

² x. 61, 8.

³ On i. 112, 8, etc., cf. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 152.

⁴ Translation of the Rigveda, 1, 23, and cf. *Wörterbuch*, s.v.