

of the river Narmadā and erecting a hermitage began 'tapas' (penance). Four sons, Rumaṅvān, Suhotra, Vasu and Viśvāvasu were born to Jamadagni by Reṅukā. (Brahmaṅḍa Purāṇa, Chapter 58).

4) *The birth of Paruśu rāma*. Because of the wickedness of the Kṣatriya Kings, the goddess Earth became miserable. She made a representation to Brahmā who took her to the sea of Milk and told Mahāviṣṇu everything. Mahāviṣṇu promised to take an incarnation as the son of Jamadagni and destroy all the wicked Kings. Accordingly Reṅukā gave birth to Paraśurāma, who was an incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu. (Brahmaṅḍa Purāṇa, Chapter 59).

5) *Jamadagni getting the bow of Viṣṇu*. Once the devas (gods) desired to know who, of Śiva and Viṣṇu was the more powerful. They informed Brahmā of their desire. Brahmā asked Viśvakarmā to make two tremendous bows. He gave one to Śiva and the other to Viṣṇu. The bow which Viṣṇu got was known as Vaiṣṇavacāpa and that which Śiva got was known as Śaivacāpa. After this Brahmā caused enmity between Śiva and Viṣṇu. A terrible battle ensued between Śiva and Viṣṇu. After a while the Śaivacāpa became less effective. At the request of the devas, the fight was stopped. The devas decided that Viṣṇu was superior to Śiva, in power. Śiva got angry at this decision and gave his bow to Devarāta Janaka, the King of Videha. It was this bow that Śrī Rāma broke at the marriage of Sitā.

Seeing that Śiva had given away his cāpa (bow) Mahāviṣṇu gave his bow to his devotee, the hermit Rēika. That Vaiṣṇava cāpa was given to Jamadagni by Rēika. Thus the famous Vaiṣṇava cāpa arrived at the hermitage of Jamadagni. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Bāla Kāṇḍa, Sarga 75).

6) *Renukā was killed*. Paraśurāma became fourteen years old. Jamadagni went to the forest to gather fruits, roots etc. After completing the cleansing work of the hermitage, leaving Paraśurāma in the forest, Reṅukā went to the bank of the river Narmadā (Revā) to fetch water. When she reached the river, Kārtavīryārjuna and his wives were playing in water. She waited for them to go. When they were gone she got into the river. But as the water was muddy because of the play, she walked a little to the east where there was pure water. She saw there Citraratha the King of Sālva playing with his wife in the water. How beautiful they were! She had never seen so beautiful a woman or so handsome a man. She stood there looking at them for a while. When she reached the hermitage with water, Jamadagni had already returned a long while ago. He had returned weary and tired of the heat of the midday-sun. He did not see his wife in the hermitage. He had been sitting very angry when Reṅukā returned with water. She put the pot down and bowed before her husband and told him the reason for her being late. When he heard the reason his anger blazed. He called his sons one by one and ordered them to kill her. But the four elder sons did not dare to execute his order saying that slaughter of a woman was a great sin. But Paraśurāma came forward and

by a cutting-arrow cut off the head of his mother. The father called the four sons who disobeyed him and cursed them thus :

"Since you have disobeyed the order of your father, because of your ignorance, you shall become foresters and live in forest."<sup>5</sup>

Being overwhelmed with sorrow at the death of his mother, Paraśurāma swooned and fell down. When his anger subsided, discretion dawned on Jamadagni. He aroused his son and took him on his lap and asked him what boon he wanted for having accomplished the unaccomplishable task. Paraśurāma's request was that his mother should be brought to life again. The hermit was pleased and he brought Reṅukā to life again. (Brahmaṅḍa Purāṇa, Chapter 60).

7) *The sun gave Jamadagni an umbrella and sandals*. See under the word Cerippu (Sandals).

8) *The temptation of Dharma*. See under the word 'Dharma' Para 6.

9) *Jamadagni was killed*. Once Kārtavīryārjuna, with his minister Candragupta and some attendants had been hunting in the forests on the banks of the river Narmadā. It was noon. The hunters grew tired of hunger and thirst. They came to the hermitage of Jamadagni. The hermit called his divine cow Suśilā and ordered her to give food to the King and his party. Within a few seconds meals were got ready for thousands of people. The King and his attendants had a feast. On their return journey the wonderful cow Suśilā was the subject of their talk. The King wanted to get the cow which possessed divine power. So he sent his minister Candragupta to the hermitage of Jamadagni with instructions to get the cow Suśilā in exchange for a crore of cows or even half of the kingdom. But the hermit was not prepared to give the cow. The minister and his men caught the cow by force and went away. The hermit, filled with grief, followed the party a long way through the forest, and requested Candragupta to return the cow. Candragupta got angry and struck him to death, and took the cow to the palace, in the capital city of Māhiṣmatī.

After waiting for a long time, Reṅukā started in search of her husband. She saw Jamadagni lying almost dead, in a pool of blood. She fell down and beating her breast cried aloud. Paraśurāma with Akṛtavraṇa and other disciples came there. When she saw her son Paraśurāma, she beat her breast twentyone times<sup>1</sup> and cried. Paraśurāma, took an oath that since his mother beat her breast twentyone times and cried, he would travel around twentyone times and put an end to the Kṣatriya Kings. After that they took the dead body of Jamadagni and placed it on fire, and began to sing the song of Viṣṇu. Then the hermit Śukra came by that way and with the help of Mṛtasañjivani brought Jamadagni to life again. The lost cow Suśilā also returned without her calf. (Brahmaṅḍa Purāṇa, Chapter 69; M.B. Śānti Parva, Chapter 49).

10) *Death of Jamadagni*. Paraśurāma and Akṛtavraṇa went to the city of Māhiṣmatī with the intention of bringing the calf of Suśilā back. They stood at the gate of the city and challenged Kārtavīryārjuna for a

<sup>1</sup> Seeing his mother beating her breast twentyone times, Bhārgava caught hold of her hands and said "Mother, stop afflicting your body. Don't be sorry. I am here to end your sorrow. Since you have beaten your breast twentyone times, I will annihilate the Kṣatriya Kings twentyone times." Bhārgava Rāma took an oath thus, to his mother.