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DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

SCANNED



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C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page No</u>
<u>CHAPTER ONE</u> - Social system as found in the Vedic texts.	1
CHAPTER TWO - Society as found in the <u>Purānas</u>	107.
CHAPTER THREE - Society as found in the Epics.	182
CHAPTER FOUR - The social system as found in the texts of the Buddhists and the Jains and their comparison with the brahmanical texts.	244
CHAPTER FIVE - Society of the Medieval and Modern times.	277
CHAPTER SIX - Epilogue.	323
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	331

ABBREVIATIONS

AV	=	Atharva Veda
Agni p	=	Agni purāna
Ay Kanda	=	Ayodhyā Kānda
A.p	=	Ādi parvan
Brahma p	=	Brahma purāna
Brh p	=	Brahma purāna
Brahmānda p	=	Brahmānda purāna
Br Nāradya p	=	Brhan nāradya purāna
Bh p	=	Bhāgavata purāna
Bhār Vidyā Bh	=	Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhevan
Ch	=	Chapter
Garuda p	=	Garuda purāna
HS	=	Haridas Siddhanta Vagis
H.S.E.D.	=	Haridas Siddhanta Vagis Edition
HIS of Dh.S	=	History of Dharmasāstra
His of D.S.	=	History of Dharmasāstra
I.V.A.	=	India in the Vedic Age
K.P.	=	Karna parvan
Kurma p	=	Kurma purāna
MBh	=	Māhābharata
Mārkaṇḍeya p	=	Mārkaṇḍeya purāna
RV	=	Rg Veda
Sabha p	=	Sabha parvan
S.P	=	Śānti Parvan
S.R.L.G.S.	=	Social and Religious Life in the Gṛhya Sūtras
Saura p	=	Saura purāna
U.p	=	Udyoga parvan
Vāyu p	=	Vāyu purāna
Virāta p	=	Virāta parvan
Viṣṇu p	=	Viṣṇu purāna

P R E F A C E

I passed my M.A. Examination in 'Ancient Indian History And Culture' of the Calcutta University of 1973 held in 1975. Since January 1977 I have been carrying my research work under the supervision of Prof. Rabindra Kumar Siddhanta Sastri attached to the centre of advanced study in 'Ancient Indian History And Culture', University of Calcutta, The title of my thesis 'Development of Social System in India' was registered by the ~~Ph~~ Ph.D. committee (in Arts) of Calcutta University in early half of 1978.

I have utilised mostly the services of the following Libraries, (viz, The Samskrta Sâhitya Parshad, The Central Library of the Calcutta University, The Departmental Library of the centre of the the advanced study in 'Ancient Indian History And Culture', University of Calcutta, National Library Calcutta) etc.

I convey my sincere gratitude to my teacher Prof. Rabindra Kumar Siddhanta Sastri for rendering valuable guidance. I am also highly indebted to Prof. B.N. Mukherjee, our Carmichael Professor for offering some valuable advices and suggestions.

A B S T R A C T

This thesis entitled 'Development of Social System IN India' is inclusive of six chapters and a Bibliography. The first chapter is dealing with the social system as found in the vedic texts. The second chapter has highlighted the references to the social system as found in the Purāṇas. The third chapter deals with the society as found in the Epics.(i.e. the Rānāyana and the Mahābhārata.) The subject matter of the fourth chapter is the society as reflected in Buddhist and Jain literature. An attempt has also been made in this chapter to compare the data furnished by the Buddhist and Jain literature with those supplied by Brahmanical texts. The fifth chapter has discussed about the society of the Medieval and Modern times. The last chapter is an epilogue which includes certain pertinent observations on the subject.

This thesis treats the society as revealed in the literature. Attempts have been made to give new interpretations of several little noticed data. Several of the topics discussed in the chapters, have not yet been dealt with critically by other scholars.

C H A P T E R - 1

Social system as found in the vedic texts.

<u>Detailed Contents</u>		Page No.
1.	Synopsis of the chapter. ...	1
2.	Chronological order of the <u>Vedas</u> ...	2
3.	Family life of the Hindus in the Vedic age	7
4.	Caste System among the Hindus during the Vedic Age ...	12
5.	(a) Antiquity and characteristics of Hindu marriage. ...	35 - 38
	(b) Forms of Hindu Marriage ...	40
	(c) The system of marriage during the age of the <u>Vedas</u>	42
	(d) Polygamy in the Vedic period ...	51
	(e) Polyandry in the Vedic age ...	58
	(f) <u>Niyoga</u> (in the Vedic age) ...	62
	(g) Divorce in the Vedic age ...	71
	(h) Re-marriage of widows in the vedic age	75
	(i) The self-immolation of widows in the Vedic age ...	85
6.	The habit of food and drink of the Vedic Hindus ...	94
7.	Educational system in the Vedic age ...	100
8.	Dress and Decoration etc. of the Vedic Hks Indian. ...	104.

CHAPTER - I

Social system as found in the vedic texts.

It is very difficult to fix any particular date on which the social system originated in earth especially in India. The earliest literary documents available upto this date in this regard, are the Vedic texts which in their parts are divided into four books viz. Rk, Yajus, Sāman and Atharvan. Each Veda, again is divided into two parts namely Samhitā (poetry) and Brāhmaṇa (prose). The appendices of the Brāhmaṇas are called the Āraṇyakas, and the essence of these Āraṇyakas, are called the Upaniṣads. All these texts are included in the Vedic literature, and we shall deal with all these books to some extent for discussing the origin and development of the social system in India in the first chapter of this book.

rite of Pururavas, but was collected by Vyāsa at the end of the Drāpara Age. On the other hand, we find the name of the Atharvasīras, and the sacrificial rites mentioned in it, in several earlier books. In the Rāmāyana of Vālmīki, Daśaratha is found to be advised to perform a sacrificial rite, prescribed in the Atharvasīras for getting children. The modern historians on the other hand hold the Rgveda as the earliest, and the other Vedas of a later antiquity. Atharvaveda, according to them being the latest.

Before starting our discussions, we therefore should add a few lines, regarding the point as to which of the Vedas should be taken by us, for handling at first.

Atharvan has been mentioned in the Mundaka Upanisad (1.1) as the oldest of all the Rsis and the man to whom Vedic wisdom was imported by Lord Brahman for the first time. In the Rgveda,¹ on different occasions Atharvans and Angirasas are mentioned as the forefathers and Atharvan is further mentioned as the founder of the sacrificial fire (VI. 16.13). Indian scholars flourishing centuries before Christ² like Patañjali and those flourishing after Christ³, like Bhartṛhari had also remarked to that effect which can lead us to think that they had considered this Veda as the oldest book. Jayanta Bhatta⁴ of Kāśmīr has preceded so far as to opine clearly that this Veda was the foremost of all the Vedas. Besides these Indian scholars

of former centuries, the names of eminent European Indologists like Griffith⁵ and Whitney can also be taken into consideration in this context. They are of the opinion that the main body of the Atharva Vedic hymns was in existence at the time of the compilation of the Rgveda. This point has been thoroughly, discussed by my respected teacher Prof. R. K. Siddhantashastree in his Bengali book 'Sabdatattva' (Science and Philosophy of word) published from Calcutta in 1959 A.D.

Considering the aforesaid observations, we can think it justifiable that the major portion of the hymns of the Atharva^{va} are oldest than those of the Rgvedic hymns. But it is reasonable to hold that some portions of the Atharva-Vedic hymns, were later additions. (as Griffith and Whitney have pointed out).

Furthermore, we can also take into consideration the facts that a greater portion of the Atharvavedic hymns are dealing with the contents of the non-Aryan rituals which are considered by the scholars as having archaic origin than that of the Rgvedic hymns. It is well known that the final shape to the form of different Vedas was given by Vyāsa in the last century of the Drāpara Age, when some new texts were added to the Atharvaveda. It may not be unlikely that some more additions to the Atharvaveda were made at a more later date. In consideration of the above facts, we like to start our discussions with the Rgveda, the texts of which were undoubtedly free from any interpolation.

Foot Notes :

1. RV. X 14.6.
2. Vaidikā Khalvapi śanno devīrabhīstaye (Intro-
ductory mantra of the A.V.).
isē tvərjje tvā (Introductory verse of the
yayur veda)
Agni mīle purōhitam (Introductory ^{verse} of the RV)
Agna āyāhi Vītaye & (-Do- Sāmveda).
3. Atharvanāmangirasamī sāmnamrgyajusasya ca
yasminuccāvaca varnah
prthaksthitaparigrahaḥ
Vākyapadiya, Brahmakānda //
21st Śloka.
4. Tacca Caturdasamidam.
Tatra Vedāḥ catvārah prathamatharva - vedah
dvitīyah Rgvedah,
trītiyo yajurvedah, Caturthah Sāmavedah -
Nyāyamañjarī (Chaukhamba) -p2.
5. Introduction to the Atharvaveda - R. T. H.
Griffith.

5. The greater portion of the hymns are plainly shown both by the language and internal character to be of much later date than the general elements of the other historical Veda - however would not imply that the main body of the compilation of the Atharva hymns were not already in existence when the compilation of the R.V. took place.
(Griffith - Introduction to the AV.).

Family life of the Hindus in the Vedic age.

Our Vedic literature as well as the Smṛti and other religious texts are not so elaborate with regard to the picture of daily life of the common people of ancient India. The Purānas and the Epics are however, descriptive of the glories and achievements of the Kṣatriya kings as well as nobles and to some extent of the Brāhmaṇas. It is very hard therefore, to form any concrete idea about the family life of the Hindus during the days of the Vedas. We shall however, try to prepare a rough sketch on this context with the help of the available materials from the Vedic texts and the observations of different scholars in this respect.

It has been unanimously accepted by the scholars that the Vedic society was of patriarchal type. The father was always held as the Head of the family. When he was advanced in age, he had been replaced by his eldest son. He was normally sweet and kind to all the members of the family.

The scholars¹ are of the opinion that a Rgvedic verse (1. 116. 16) hints at the blindness of Rjāśva which was effected through the cruelty of his father and thereby testifies to the argument that Vedic Parents had not been affectionate and sympathetic to their children in any occasion. But we learn from the commentary of Sāyana (on the Rgveda) that this boy namely Rjāśva was involved

in a theft case. His father, being the king of that country, made trial of his son and subsequently the boy was sentenced to be made blind under the judgement of his royal father. The above is not therefore, a token of cruelty of average Vedic parents to their sons. Therefore, the opinion of the above learned scholar is not acceptable to us as a sustainable one we deem on the contrary the above incident to have been a scattered occurrence having had no link with the affection and love of average Vedic parents which they were accustomed to exhibit towards their children, as a matter of fact. We must not at the same time ignore the fact that the Vedic Hindus had been strict followers of discipline and morality and they did not even spare their own children in this context. The opinion of the learned editor of "The Vedic Age"² confirms our above observation.

Vedic Indians used to live under the same roof with their parents, wives, children, sisters, maid servants, grand children and other Kinsmen or relations. We get sufficient proof of this observation when we go through the different verses of marriage³ and gambler hymn⁴ of the Rgveda.⁵ The learned editors of "The Vedic Age" are of the opinion that the marriage hymn of the Rgveda speaks for the marriage of the eldest son of the family when his father has retired from the field of activity due to oldness or infirmity.

This view is however, hardly acceptable for want of adequate evidences. From the Dharmasūtras, Śrautasūtras and

Grhyasūtras we learn that, a young man belonging to a twice born caste, had to return home from the house of his teacher, at the age of twenty four, and it was held as his duty to marry at the same time. This joint family system had also been a remarkable feature of the Vedic society. The marriage hymn shows that the newly wedded wife was always welcome to her husband's family and she was asked to exercise her sweet control over the residing members of her father-in-law's house. It was perhaps the tendency of the Vedic Indians to live under the same roof of their joint family as long as they could continue and hence the opinion of the learned scholars⁶ who hold that the Vedic Hindus had a tendency to break up after living three generations together under the same shelter, cannot be considered justifiable for want of firm reasons in its support.⁷

Addiction to dice was strongly condemned by the Vedic society. We see after careful examination of the relevant verses of the gambler hymn⁸ of the RV. that the gambler had been living a miserable life, being deserted by his relations including his wife for his addiction to dice. We may therefore think it proper that the gambling was one of the sources of entertainment to the Hindus since the very beginning of their civilization and at the same time, it was condemned by almost every Hindu for its demerits.

It is also not easy to form any definite idea about the structure of building and apartments which had been in

existence in the Vedic age for want of adequate available materials. The scholars have, however formed some idea in this regard. We find from their observations⁹ that the houses of the Vedic Indians were made of wood and had consisted of several rooms, consisting of one drawing room and a fire place (Agni hotra). Available evidences point to the fact that the Vedic Indians were mostly inhabitants of villages. But Puras are often mentioned in the Vedic texts. It is therefore probable that the existence of cities was not unknown in the Vedic age, to the Hindus. Mention of brick built houses and brick built furnaces are also found. In the Kathopanishad we find mention of burnt bricks (istaka), thus testifying to the existence of Pucca houses.

While living at the house of his preceptor, a twice born boy was treated as a member of that family, having close relation with all its members, and holding the children of his preceptor and his brothers and sisters.

On the whole, this much can be said about the family life of the Vedic Indians that they were a people of refined taste and they had become able to build up a society of advanced character at the dawn of their civilisation which was quite unmatch for that age. But at the same time it would be unwise to compare their civilization with that of our present day society which is a contribution of modern science.

Foot Notes.

1. The relation of child and parent was clearly as a rule one of close affection for a father is regarded on the type of all that is good and kind. The chastisement of a gambler by his father may be deemed to be legitimate exercise of parental control, this cannot be said of the cruel act of his father in blinding Rijaeva at which the Rv ~~hints~~ hints.
= Rapson E.J. (Ed) - The Cambridge History of India - vol -1, P-80 (S. CHAND & CO. DELHI, 1955).
2. "The family discipline was strict is illustrated by the case of Rjasva who was deprived of his sight as a punishment by his father". (Rv. 1. 116. 16).
- The Vedic Age - Ed. by Majumdar R.C. Geoge Allen Unwen Ltd., London. 1952, Ch. XIX. p. 384.
3. Ibid. X. 85. 36. 42. 43, 46. etc.
4. Ibid. X. 34. 3. 4. etc.
5. Majumdar R.C. Dr. (Ed.) - The Vedic Age - P. 393. (Dharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay - 1959).
6. R. V. X. 85. 46.
7. Rapson E. J. (Ed) - The Cambridge History of India.
(V-I, P. 81. S. Chand & Co. Delhi, 1955).
8. R.V.X. 34. 3-4. 10 etc.
9. Roy Choudhuri H.C. Dutta K.K. & Majumdar R.C. - An Advanced History of India Ch.III. p. 31, (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1963).

Caste System among the Hindus during the Vedic age.

The Purusa hymn of the RV has spoken for the first time of the division of mankind into four distinct castes. The text of the verse is as under :

Brāhmanos̄ya mukhamāsīdbāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ /
Ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyaḥ padbhyām śūdro ajāyata //

R.V. X. 90.12.

The English translation of this verse appears as under :

"The Brāhmaṇa was his mouth, of both
 his arms was the Rājanya made.
 His thighs became the vaiśya from
 his feet the śūdra¹ was produced."

This verse has highlighted our idea about the origin of Hindu quadrupic caste division, i.e. Brāhmaṇa (Poet, Philosopher and Priest), Rājanya or Ksatriya (King and or warrior). Vaiśya (Agriculturist, trader, keeper of cattle etc.) also known as a common people and śūdra (Serf and servant). Unfortunately, the scholars are divided into opinion about the origin and development of Hindu caste system during the age of the Vedas. The learned authors of the Vedic Index have also discussed all these points. We find from their observation² that Zimmer holds that the caste

the system among Hindus originated during the later Vedic age. He furthermore holds that the Āryas while living near the Indus region and Punjab was ignorant of anything known as caste system. When they wandered further easternmost limit developed the, peculiar civilization of caste system. He is also of the same opinion with Muir³ about the points, that the term Brāhmaṇa is rare in the Rgveda, Kṣatriya appears scarcely while Rājanya, Vaiśya and Sūdra are only found in the Purusa-sūkta. He furthermore opines, that the term Brāhmaṇa does mean at first a poet, sage, and afterwards officiating priest, and afterwards a special class of priest, that this term sometimes denotes a priest by profession, and while in the alternative it stands for the meaning of something peculiar to the individual, designating a person distinguished to genius or virtue or specially chosen to receive divine inspiration. The view of Muir however, with regard to the definition of the term Brāhmaṇa alongwith its occupation is completely reverse and we wish to cite his arguments in this regard afterwards within the course of our current discussions. Zimmer has also remarked to the effect that the Hindu Caste system gradually developed from its Rgvedic primitive stage to that of the elaborate system which it possessed during the time of the compilation of the Yajurveda, and during this period, the Āryas had progressed further eastward.

This view of Zimmer and other scholars have always been controverted by another group of scholars such as, Hawg,

Ludwig, Kern, Goldner, Oldenberg etc.⁴

Let us now, try to combat the above arguments of the scholars like Zimmer and others who hold that Hindu caste system originated during the later Vedic age. Our foremost humble opinion is that they have not been able to justify their arguments with adequate facts and reasonable arguments. If the four castes did not exist in the early Vedic age, how then could those be mentioned in the RV. which according to the opinion of the Western scholars is ^{the} earliest of all the Vedas. This is furthermore to be noted here in this connection, that not only in the Purusa hymn, but also in many other parts (Mandalas) of the RV., the four different castes are mentioned by name.

Now, let us take up the opportunity of highlighting our arguments in favour of our opinion that Hindu caste system was in existence even in the early Vedic age.

And to begin with, we shall take note of the fact that the term Brāhmana⁵ which stands for a Brāhman and a Purohita⁶ has been off and on mentioned in the different earlier as well as later Mandalas of the RV. We learn after carefully going through the relevant Mandalas of the R.V., that though the term Brāhmana as according to the opinion of the scholars as we have already referred to, has carried the sense of a singer, yet there are many verses of the R.V. where this term is carrying the sense of a priest⁸. In fact this term has⁹ distinctly stood for the meaning of priesthood. The fact is

that the Brāhmanas had been the conductor of the sacrificial activities during the early Vedic age and that they had been the occupants of the chair of the Purohita since the early phase of Vedic civilization. And this was also obvious that the son of a Brāhmana was appointed a priest by the kings. The mention of the term, Brāhmana and Purohita in different Mandalas of the R.V. besides Purusa hymn pre-supposes the fact that the Priesthood had become hereditary to them since the dawn of Vedic civilization. The observation of Muir can be taken into account in this context. He remarks, Brahmana appears to be equivalent to "Brahmanputra the son of a Brahman (which as we have seen, occurs in II. 43. 2) and the employment of such a term seems necessarily to Pre-suppose that at the time when it began to become current, the function of a Brāhman, the priesthood had already become a profession.

The observation of V.M. Apte can be also taken into consideration in this context. While offering his comments on the term Brāhmana he observes "My contention is that the use of the word Brāhmana in the Purusasūkta verse as much as in the eight or nine hymns besides Purusa sūkta in the earlier as well as later portion of the Rgveda shows that the Priesthood was all along a profession and a hereditary order as is borne out by the use of the word Brahmanputra in 11.43. 2 (of the RV.)

The other three castes of the Hindu society besides Brāhmana, (i.e. Ksatriya, or Rājanya, Vaiśya and Sūdra)

have also been mentioned simultaneously in the Purusa hymn for the first time. Among them, Ksatriya¹² has its earlier mention as Ksatra or Ksatram in the Rgveda. And these earlier terms seem to have been used to identify the members of the ruling class in the truest sense of the term, as according to our consideration. 'Rājanya' has got its only mention in the Purusasūkta. But the term 'Rājan'¹³ has^{its} repeated mention in the earlier verses of the Rgveda. It is revealed after a careful examination of the relevant verses of the RV that the term Rājan must have been replaced by 'Rājanya' in the Purusa hymn and both the above two terms are identical in respect of their meaning (i.e. the king and or a member of the royal family, equal in status with that of the king).

Vaiśya, similarly has been mentioned for the first time in the Purusa hymn. But we are met with the mention of the term 'Viś'¹⁴ or 'Viśah'¹⁵ in the earlier portions of this Veda. These two terms are alternatives of Vaiśya as according to the opinion of the scholars. And this Viś or Viśah has represented the common people, as the scholars have thought of. These earlier verses of the different Mandalas of the RV, besides Purusa hymn point to the fact that these common people (so named by a section of the scholars) had been identified with the term 'Viś' or 'Viśya'^a and that they had adopted the profession of tending cattle, agricultural activities etc. V.M Apte observes :

"The third class collectively designated as the Viśah formed the bulk of the population. A member of this caste was the Vaiśya of the Purusa Sūkta (RV. X. 90). In the passage VIII. 35. 16-18, quoted already, it definitely means the third class of society devoted to the tending of cattle and the tiling of the soil".¹⁶

We do not find mention of the term 'Sūdra' anywhere in any earlier as well as later portion other than Purusa hymn of the RV. V.M. Apte¹⁷ has however thought it justified that the Sūdras were considered a negligible force within Hindu society in respect of status, importance etc. and hence it was felt unnecessary to mention them repeatedly in the different Mandalas of this Veda. Furthermore, we can cite below the remarks of the learned authors of Vedic Index¹⁸ in this context. They observe, "the term Sūdra would also cover the wild hill tribes which lived by hunting and fishing and many of which would acknowledge the superiority of the Aryan neighbours, it could in fact be applied to all beyond the pale of Aryan ^{the state}. V.M. Apte¹⁹ has however, put forward the argument that the verse 1.113.6 of the RV. distinctly refers to the functions of the four classes of the Hindu society (i.e. the Rājanya, the Brāhmana the Vaiśya and the Sūdra respectively). We shall however, discuss all these points in details later on. Mr. Apte²⁰ furthermore is of the opinion that the verse X.34.11 of the RV. has indicated to the existence of the surville population (i.e. fourth order Sūdra of the Hindus) in the truest sense of the term.

The existence of the three-fold or four-fold division of Hindu society has been hinted at in the verses (i.e. VIII. 35. 16-18) and (1.113.6) of the RV. First of all, let us take up the verses i.e. VIII. 35. 16-18 of the RV. where three fold division of mankind has been spoken of. The text of these verses are as under :

Viii, 35. 16 :

Brahma jinvatamuta jinvatam dhiyo hatam

raksāmsi sedhatamamivāh /

Sajosasā usasā sūryena ca somam

Sunvato Asvinā // 16 //

Ksatram jinvatamuta jinvatam nrnhatam

raksāmsi sedhatamamivāh /

Sajosasā usasā Sūryena ca Somam

Sunvato Asvinā // 17 //

Dhenūrjinvatamuta jinvatam Visó hatam

vaksāmsi Sedhatamamivāh /

Sajosasā usasā Sūryena ca somam

Sunvato Asvinā // 18 //

The English translation of these verses (as scholars have made) are as under :-

Viii.35.16 = Give spirit to our prayer and animate our thoughts, slay ye the Rāksasas and drive away disease.

Accordant of one mind with Sūrya and with Dawn.
the pressers, soma, Asvins, drink.

17 = Strengthen the ruling power, strengthen the men of war, slay ye the Rāksasas and drive away disease. Accordant of one mind, etc.

18 = Give strength unto the milk kine, give the people (the Viśah) strength, slay ye the Rāksasas and drive away disease. Accordant²¹ of one mind etc.

It reveals on examination of the above passage of the RV. that these verses (i.e. 16 to 18) have hinted at the three fold division of Hindu society. We also assess from them that hereditary assignment of profession has been adopted by the members of the three twice-born castes of the Āryas. V.M. Apte observes, "In my opinion this passage mentions the first three classes with the same differentiation of privileges and duties that is implied in the Puruṣasūkta passage which mentions all the four classes. That the names are different has no special significance because they vary not only in the Rgveda but also in the later Vedic texts which are admitted by all as recognizing the well-established four-fold division of society."²²

But there is one earlier verse of the RV which has spoken of the different modes of life of the members of the four castes of the Hindus. The text of this verse i.e. 1. 113. 6 of the RV is as under :-

1.113.6 :

Ksatrāya tvam śravase tvam mahiyā

istaye tvamarthamiva tvanityai /

Visadrśā jivitābhipracaksa usā

ajīgarbhuvanāni Viśvā // 6 //

The English translation of this verse appears
as under :

"One to high sway, one to exalted glory, one to
pursue his gain, and one his labour.

All to regard their different Vocations all moving
creatures hath the Dawn²³ awakened.

We think that here, in this verse, the four castes
have been distinctly pointed to, and respective professional
occupation of each of the four castes has been hinted at in the
above verse. This is also thought of to be justified that the
division of this professional occupation of the above caste
group of the Hindus has already become hereditary during this
early phase of Vedic civilization. V.M. Apte has however
remarked in this context. "The four different modes of life
referred to here are evidently those of the Rājanya, the
Brāhmana the Vaiśya and the Śūdra respectively ²⁴ And Vṛśala
in the Gambher hymn (the verse being X. 34. 11) of the RV
has represented the servile or fourth class Śūdra according to
his opinion. ²⁵

Now, all the above observations definitely speak for the existence of the four fold caste division of the Āryas in the early Vedic age. Furthermore, we may write a few words on the position of the Purohita and his influence over the king during the early Vedic days. The verse IV. 50. 7.9 and X.173 of the RV. may furthermore be taken into account in this context. The verse (IV. 50. 7. 9) indicates the relations of the members of the three twice-born castes. On examination of this verse we come to understand that the influence of the Brāhmaṇa over the king had been the same as we witness in the later Vedic literature where the power of the Purohita had been almost absolute over the king. The text of this passage (IV. 50. 7-9) of the R.V. is reproduced below with its English translation.

Sa idrājā pratijanyāni visvā suṣmeṇa
tarthāvabhi viryena /
Bṛhaspatiṃ yaḥ subhṛtaṃ vibharti valgūyati
vandate pūrvābhājan // 7 //
Sa it kṣeti sudhita okasi sve tasmā itā
pinvate visvadānīm /
tasmai viśaḥ svayamevā namante yasmin
Brahmā rājani pūrva eti // 8 //
Aprati to jayati saṃ dhanāni pratijanānyuta
yā sajanyā /
āvāśyave yo varivaḥ kṛnoti Brahmaṇe
rājā tamavanti devāḥ // 9 //

The English translation of the verse comes as under :

7. Surely that king by power and might heroic hath made him lord of all his foes' possessions. Who cherishes Brhaspati welltended adorns and worships him as foremost sharer.

8. In his own home he dwells in peace and comfort, to him for ever holy food flows richly. To him the people with free will pay homage, the king with whom the Brāhman hath precedence.²⁶

9. He unopposed, is master of the riches of his own subjects and of hostile people.

The gods uphold that king with their protection who helps the Brāhman when he seeks his favour.

Apte has opined in this regard "I do not think there is any material difference between the power of the Brāhman (Brhaspati) over the king as described in this passage and the power of the Purohita over a king which is associated in our minds with the later stages of fully developed caste system".²⁷

The passage X.173 of the RV is also dealing with the power of the Purohita and his influence over the king. We understand on careful perusal of its first verse that the Purohita had accompanied the king to the battlefield and encouraged him to fight out his enemies boldly. The translation of this verse is as under :

(X.173.1) "Be with us, I have chasen thee, stand stead fast and immovable, Let all the people wish for thee, let not thy kingship fall away.²⁸

The Indian scholars of former centuries (as V.M. Apte has observed²⁹) have employed this hymn in a battle content. V.M. Apte³⁰ thinks that the first verse or even the whole hymn has highlighted the power and influence of the Purohita and his ritual over the king. The verse (IV. 50.7-9) and the whole hymn X.173 of the R.V. then, as according to the opinion of the scholars, are speaking of the influence and power of the Purohita over a king and this is also understood that the Purohita or Brāhmana had been enjoying this supremacy since the down of Vedic civilization.

Again, we assess from the perusal of the hymn X.109 of the R.V. (which deals with the desertion and afterwards re-union of a Brāhmana wife with that of her husband) that an offence against a Brāhmana was considered a serious crime during the Rgvedic age alike Brahma-hatyā of later times, and scholars³¹ are also unanimous in this context. We furthermore, observe after careful persual of this hymn that Hindu married women, in the event of their being separated from their respective husbands, had the opportunity of being re-united with them and that divorce was not introduced in this early period of Hindu civilization.

Lastly, we may add a few more words on the possibility of Inter-Caste marriage during the early Vedic age among the

Hindus. As we understand after careful perusal of the relevant passage of the different Vedas, there was no such incident in favour of inter-caste union in those days. Our later vedic texts as well as the Purānas and especially the Mahābhārata have spoken of the happenings of such type of marriages in some of which the Hindu kings and Brāhmanas were involved. But one thing should be borne in mind in this connection, that inter-caste unions had not been the order of the day in the age of high antiquity or even in any age in India. Only when the kings were involved and in some cases of love affairs amongst others the intercaste union was tolerated by the society to some extent.

We can furthermore furnish the example of Viśvāmitra and Devāpi who had been officiating as priests in some of the rituals as is evident from a few verses of the R.V. and also from some other Sanskrit texts of a later date. These two persons are admitted to have their Khatriya origin. Mahābhārata³² identifies Devāpi as the elder brother of king Sāntanu who went to the woods for leading the life of a royal sage. But the Rg.veda does not speak of their Rājanya identity and this Veda categorises them as Brāhmana personnel out and out. We have witnessed in our Dharmaśāstras (especially in the Manu Smṛti) and Purānas and Epics that the kings alike Brāhmanas have been allowed to proceed towards forests to spend the rest of their lives as hermits. The kings were furthermore authorised by our later Vedic texts to

perform sacrificial activities like the of Brāhmanas and some of the Purānas and the Mahābhārata furnish the names of some of the Vedic kings who had spent the rest of their lives in the woods as royal sages.

The fact is that several Kṣatriya kings, and even some other members of the Kṣatriya families, in different ages, were elevated to the position of the Brāhmanas, and that after such elevation, these new Brāhmanas with their descendants were allowed to act like priests, because of their recognition in the Brāhmana fold. Dozens of evidences of this type are recorded in the Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata and such other Purānas. A few instances of a similar kind, are also found in the Epics. The Mahābhārata tells us that, Vitahavya, a king of the Haihaya family, after fleeing to the hermitage of Bhṛgu, in fear of Prataardana, the mighty king of Kāśī, was elevated to the position of a Brahmarsī.

Bhṛgavā canamātreṇa sa ca brahmarsitām gatah

Vitahavyo mahārāja brahmavādītvaṃ ca //

MBH (H.S.Ed) X.III. 29.57 (Anuśāsana Parvan).

The same authority has given a list of the Brāhmana descendants of the said Vitahavya, and we get the name of Śaunaka, the renowned interpreter of the Vedic texts, in the said list.

The learned authors of Vedic Index, however in this context have observed, "Viśvāmitra is the name of a Rṣi who

is mentioned in the Rg. Veda and to whom the third Mandala is attributed by tradition. In the Epic Viśvāmitra is represented as a king, who became a Brāhmaṇ. There is no trace of his kingship in the Rg. Veda, but the Nirukta, calls his father Kuśika a king But there is no real trace of this kingship of Viśvāmitra; it may probably be dismissed as a mere legend with no more foundation at most than that Viśvāmitra was of a family which once had been royal. But even this is doubtful.³³

The above observations of the learned scholars, apparently have no value. We must remember the following facts in this connection. The RV. or the other Vedas have never denied the original kingship of Viśvāmitra. In the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki and also in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas,³⁴ he has been described as a mighty ruler of the Kānyakubjā country. It is further said that, having been defeated by a Brāhmaṇa sage called Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra gave up his kingdom, performed penances for a long time, and thus secured Brāhmaṇhood. In absence of contrary evidences in the Vedas, we cannot deny the fact that Viśvāmitra was originally a Ksatriya king of the Kanyakubj country, and that he was admitted to the Brāhmaṇa fold, as a result of his hard meditation and penances.

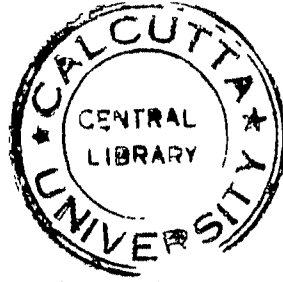
Let us now try to highlight the meaning of two terms, Ārya Varna³⁵ and Dāsa Varna.³⁶ So far as we understand after careful perusal of the relevant verses of the Rg. Veda, is that, this Ārya Varna might have meant the different categories of people belonging to ^{the} Āryan fold (and hence

by the application of this term the first three successive castes of the Hindus has been hinted at. On the contrary, the Dāsa Varna people might have meant the black skinned aborigines and hill tribe population who differed from the Āryas in respect of colour, culture, cult, etc. and were ever hostile to the Āryas. The Āryas called them Dāsas or Dasyus, as because they used to create disturbances to their sacrificial activities. These people might have been re-named as Rāksasas in the Vedic as well as later-Vedic and even in the Epic literature. They were perhaps vanguarded by the Āryas and were absorbed into their fourth order (i.e. along with ^{the} Sūdras) in due course of time. The Sūdras were perhaps also identified by the application of this term.

One more point should be taken into account in this context. The theory of scholars like Zimmer and others who hold that Āryas had been foreigners to India, dwelling near Indus region and adjoining territories during the dawn of Vedic civilization and that they moved further easternmost limit, has been controverted by another group of scholars who are of the opinion that India was the original ^{habitat} of the Āryas and that they had been residing near central India during the early Vedic age and from this place they moved further towards the easternmost limit. Evidences in favour of Indian origin of the Āryas, with strong arguments have been given by my teacher Shree R. Siddhatashastree in his book 'History of the Pre Kaliyuga India' published from Delhi in 1978.

Now, to sum up the above observations, we are free to state that the Hindu caste system had been in existence in India during the early Vedic age with its four-fold division. But at the same time, we are at par with the opinion of the learned authors of Vedic Index that the Hindu caste system had been gradually progressing and that it had not been possible for the Rg Vedic Indians to maintain the discipline of Caste system as had been in its form during the age of the Yajurveda. ^{The fact that} all the essential characteristics of Hindu caste system are heridity, pursuit of a common occupation and restriction on inter-marriage have been noticed in different hymns of the RV and AV as we have already discussed. And we have been able to justify our arguments to the effect that the performance of priestly functions of Viśvāmitra and Devāpi cannot go against our argument that the Rg Vedic India had been witnessing a four fold caste division of the Hindus.

We cannot ignore the evidences of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.11-13), which tells us in very clear language that at the early stage of human civilization there had not been any division of castes, but with the increase of population and the variety of their demands, the four castes namely Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra were created one after another. Of course, there are reasons to believe that all these four divisions had their existence at the time of compilation of the RV.



Our foregoing observations therefore make it clear that the Hindu caste system had been existing in the early Vedic age with its quadrupic division. The exact date of inception of this system among Hindus seems not clear to the scholars as there is no specific evidence available anywhere to form any concrete opinion as such. V.M. Apte has however opined³⁷ that Hindus had been foreigner people to India and that they had been residing jointly with the Inanians during the period of their migration into India and that they entered into India with their four fold division of caste. He furthermore remarks that this division of Caste had been the characteristics of the Āryas as well as Indo-Iranians that is why, the Iranians, were also divided into four grades of social institution. Priest (Āthra[̄]van), charioteer as the chief of warriors (Ratha[̄]star), tiller of the ground (Vāstrya) artisan (Huitay). This is not obligatory for us to be at par with all of the above observations of V.M. Apte, as because all of his aforesaid arguments do not come into the perview of our thesis. But one thing should be borne in mind in this context that V.M. Apte has admitted that the Āryas had been maintaining their quadrupic caste division during the early Rg. Vedic age. The only mention of the names of the four different castes in the Purusa hymn does not catagorically prove that Hindu caste system with its quadrupic division did not exist even in the early Vedic age. On the contrary, the Rg. Vedic verses of earlier partions besides Purusa hymn sufficiently

advocate for the existence of the three-fold and even four-fold division of the Hindu society. And the scholars, who deny any possibility of the existence of this system during the early Rg. Vedic age have mostly rested on fictitious arguments and do not stand on firm ground.

One interesting point of discussion is that in the description of the sacrificial section of white and black Yayurveda, the names of potter, shoemaker (Karmakāra), blacksmith (Karmakāra) chariotmaker (Rathakāra) have been mentioned. The right of Rathakāras to perform sacrificial activities has been acknowledged in different Srautasūtras and Dharmasūtras. Both white and black Yayurveda have ruled to that effect that due respect should be paid to the members of the above mixed castes by the king and Brāhmanas at the time of performing sacrifice (with the following mantras viz,)

Namo kulālebhyaḥ karmakārebhyaśca vo namaḥ

Namo rathibhyo rathakārebhyaśca vo namaḥ

It is clear therefore, from the foregoing observation, that even Vedic texts have acknowledged the existence of different mixed castes and that the Upper Caste Hindus had no adverse sentiment towards them. The detailed write up about their origin and assignment of vocational occupation in favour of them should be furnished in the 2nd and 3rd chapter of this book.

Foot Notes.

1. Translation by R.T.H. Griffith, The Hymns of the R.V. - Motilal Banarsidas - 1973.
2. Vedic Index. V.2. pp. 248-250. (London - 1912).
3. Muir J - Original Sanskrit Texts. Vol.I, Ch.III, p. 258 (2nd Ed. London - 1868.).
4. Vedic Index. V.II, pp. 250.
5. Brāhmana - 1.64. 45, VI, 75. 10, VII. 103.1, 7, 8, X.16.6, 71.8, 9, 88.19, 90.12, 97.22, 109 & etc. Vedic Index . V-II, p. 80-81. (Muir Sanskrit Texts - pp. 251, 257.).
6. Purohita - 1.1.1, 44.10.12, 11.24. 9. 111.2.8., 3.2, V.11. 2, VI. 70. 4 etc. - Vedic Index - V. 2. pp.5-8.
7. (RV. 1. 164. 34, 11, 2.6.VI. 26.7. VII. 33. 11, VIII.16. 77.1.85.3. 16, 34; 107.6. 117.7; etc.)

Muir-Original Sanskrit Texts - V-I. pp.244-46.
8. (R.V. 1.10.1; 33.9; 101.5; 108.7; 158.6; 11.59. 1; iv.50.8; v. 29.3, 31.4, 32.12, 40.8, 9; 58.2; (v.29. 3; 31.4; 32. 12; 40.8;) VII. 7.5; 42.1; VIII. 17. 2; 31.1; 32. 16; 33. 19; 45. 39; 77.5; 92.30; 96. 5; IX. 96. 6; 112.1; 113.6; X. 28.11; 71.11; 85.29; 145.3; (Original Sanskrit Texts - Muir pp. 246 - 51.

9. (R.V. 1.108.7; IV. 50.8; 9; VIII.7.20; 45. 39; 64. 7; 92. 30; IX. 112. 1; X 85.29; - Mxix - V. Index. V.2 p. 77.
10. Muir j - Original Sanskrit Texts - V.I. Ch. III. p. 259.
11. Apte V.M. -were castes formulated in the age of the R.V.P
Reprinted from the Bulletin of the Decan College Research
Inslyt. Vol.II, No. 1-2 (1938) p. 10.
12. R.V. - IV. 42.1, VII. 64.2, VIII. 25.8, X.109.3, VIII,
67. 1. Also see Apte - were castes R.g. Veda -
pp. 15 - 16.
13. R.V. 1.40.8, V.54.7, X.42.10 etc. (Rajan.)
14. R.V. - IV, 4.3, IV. 37.1, V.3.5, VI. 21.4, 42.5, VII.
56, 22, 61.3, 70.3, 10 & 13. X. 91. 2 etc. (Vis.).
15. R.V. IV. 50.8, VI. 8.4, VIII. 35. 18, X. 124.8, X.173.6,
A.V. - 11. 4.2, IV. 8.4, 22.1. 3.
16. Apte V.M. -were castes RV. P. 17.
17. Ibid., p. 12 & 13.
18. Vedic Index - V.2. p. 388.
19. P. 14 (Apte V.M -were castes RV).
20. Ibid. p. 14.
21. Translation by Giffith.
22. Apte -were Castes R.V. - P.11.

33. Translation of Giffith.
24.
& 25. Apte - were castes R.V. p. 14.
26. Translation of Giffith.
27. Apte were castes RV. p. 13.
28. Translation of Giffith.
29.
& 30. Apte - were castes R.V. p. 13.
31. Ibid., p. 13 - 14.
32. Mahābhārata (Haridas S.S. Ed. Cal.). Ādiparvan 90.56.
33. Vedic Index - V.2. pp. 310 - 12.
34. Rāmāyana (Goudiya Ed. Cal) - Ādikānda - 5367th Sarga.
Bharṇa Purāna - (Panchanan Tarakaratra Ed, Cal -
1316 B.S.) - X. 55 - 56.
35. Arya Varma. R.V. 111. 34. 9.
36. RV. VI. 25. 2.
37. Apte - were castes formulated RV. pp. 2-3,
6-7, 18-19 etc.

The Antiquity and Characteristics of a Hindu Marriage.

History of the origin of marriage is found in the Mahābhārata which will be discussed in details in a following chapter. Westermark¹ is of the opinion that marriage existed in every stage of human development and that "Human marriage² appears to be an inheritance from some ape-like ancestor". He has also discussed elaborately about its origin and antiquity in his^{book} 'The History of Human Marriage'².

As regards the origin of marriage, we must consider the following facts.

Like animals, Human beings also, since eternity had a strong desire to have sexual union. But men being more intelligent and more selfish than the animals desired to have the most beautiful and the most healthy girls as their partner, ~~this caused rivalry and bloodshed~~, often causing bloodshed and loss of life. As regards the women, they also, as a general rule desired to get the most healthy and handsome youth as their partner, thus causing rivalry and bloodshed amongst them. With the passing of time when society was formed in its primitive stage, the leading members framed rules creating the first stage of marriage. This view is further supported by several stories recorded in the Mahābhārata.

Now let us turn to our Smritis so as to have detailed information about this context. RV. and other Vedas are not descriptive about the pros and cons of this system. We find therefore no other alternative than to depend upon our law books for the purpose.

Manu has instructed a Brahmacarin to enter into the life of a Grhastha after finishing his Vedic study. The life of a Grhastha begins with the performance of his marriage rite and ceremony.

Regarding marriage, Manu⁴ is of the opinion that a twice born man should marry a maiden who is not a sapinda on the mother's side and not belongs to the same family of the father.

A twice-born man should marry a maiden of his own caste.⁵ He may take a second wife from a lower caste, if he so desires, but this second wife is not entitled to all the rights of his first wife. A Brāhmana or a Ksatriya was never allowed to have a Sūdra⁶ wife.

Taking a wife from a higher caste was strictly forbidden, and that from a lower caste was also discarded. Manu adds that when a twice born takes a Sūdra girl as his wife, he from that date should be treated as a Sūdra, and his progenies also should have the same fate.⁷

Manu has also discussed about the quality of a marriage-able girl and such other things. As the name of Manu is found

in all the four Vedas and as he is held as the earliest of the Indian kings, it is possible that the law prescribed by Manu had been in prevalence even in the Vedic days. As most of the Purānas and also the Epics have accepted the ruling of Manu, and as even in the Dharmasāstras Manu's codes are held as the foremost of all, these appear to have been prevalent at all times.

We therefore should speak in brief a few words about the prescriptions of Manu, regarding the quality of a marriageable girl.

Manu holds that a marriageable girl should be of handsome appearance, should be free from any bodily defects, should possess a moderate quantity of hair on her body and head and should have small teeth and soft limbs.⁸

Manu forbids to marry a maiden who is brotherless, who has no family introduction and who is sickly.⁹

Manu also prohibits to marry a ~~damsel~~ whose family does not observe the Vedic rites and studies and who is suffering from any infatious type of disease (such as Leprosy, epilepsy etc.).¹⁰

He¹¹ further prescribes that the ceremony of joining the hands (Pānigrahana) is performed in the event of marrying a woman of equal caste. But when a woman marries a man of a higher caste, she if belongs to the Ksatriya caste, should hold an arrow in her hand. If she is a Vaiśya, she should hold

^astick or cane (pratoda) and when belonging to the Sūdra 12 caste she should hold a portion of the bridegroom's garment.

Let us now conclude on the definition of Hindu marriage as according to the observation of Dr. Barnett, "The normal conditions of marriage for the three higher castes were identity of caste and difference of Gotra", that is to say a caste was sub-divided into a number of groups or gotras, each of which was supposed to be descended from a mythical or semi-mythical person, usually a Rsi or legendary saint and a man normally 'took for wife a girl' belonging to a gotra other than his own but forming a part of the same caste". 13

The Sanskrit term for marriage is Vivāha, derived from the affix VI and the root Vah (to carry, to protect, to feed), thus indicating that, just with the performance of a marriage, the groom took the full responsibility to feed, dress and protect his wife under all circumstances. As the bride was offered as a gift to her husband the latter apparently had some proprietary right on her, of course, he had no right to give her in marriage to another person again or to kill her, for which severe punishment was prescribed.

Foot Notes.

- 1 & 2. Westernmark. E - The History of Human Marriage - p.50.
3. (Mackmillan & Co. Ltd. 1901.)
3. Ibid. Ch.I and III. pp. 8-24 and p. 39-50.
4. Manusmriti - "asapindā ca yā mātur = asagotrā ca yā pituh".
- III/5.
5. Ibid. - III/12-13 (14).
6. na brāhmana-kṣatriyayor = ā padyapi he tisthatah.
Kasminsīd = api vrttānte sūdrā bhayopadisyate.
(Manu III 14).
7. hīnajātrīyaṃ mehā d = Udvahanto dvijātayaḥ.
kulānyeva nayantyaśu sasantānāni sūdratām" (Ibid. III 15)
8. Ibid. - III / 10.
9. Ibid. - III / 11.
10. Ibid. - III / 7.
11. Ibid. - III / 43.
12. "Śarah Ksatriyayā grāhyah pratodo vaiśya/kanyayā
vasanasya daśa grāhyā sūdrayatkrsta/devane (Ibid-III/44) -
13. Dr. Barnett - Antiquities of India - Ch. III. p. 142
(Reprint of Poothi Pustak - Cal - 1964.)

Forms of Hindu Marriage.

In the Manusmhitā and other works of later origin, eight different forms of marriage are mentioned with apt illustrations. It is not very clear whether all these forms had been in practice during the Vedic period or not. The eight forms of marriage found in the Dharmasāstras may be summarised as under :-

- (1) Brāhma. (2) Daiva (3) Ārsa (4) Gāndharva
(5) Prājāpatya (6) Āsura. (7) Rāksasa and (8) Paisāca.

A brief description of each of these eight forms of marriage :

(1) Brāhma :- In this form, the father of the bride himself used to invite a man of good character and learned in the Vedas, and hand over his daughter to this man as a gift (dāna), in the prescribed process after decking her with ornaments.

(2) Daiva :- In this form the father of the bride used to hand over his daughter as a gift after decking her with ornaments, to a priest who used to officiate at a sacrifice in course of its performance.

(3) Ārsa : This form used to include the gift of the daughter after receiving a pair or pairs of cattle from the bridegroom, according to the requirement of Dharma without any wish to sell the bride at all.
(Śāstric injunction)

(4) Gāndharva :- This springs from the mutual consent of the bride and the bridegroom originated from the passion of love and ^{their mutual} consent. In this form near relations of both the bride and bridegroom need not have a hand, though in most cases, final approval of the guardians were received.

(5) Prāiāpatva :- This form of marriage used to include the gift of the bride by her father to the bridegroom after decking her with ornaments duly honouring the bridegroom and blessing the couple with the mantra ^(incantation) i.e. "may both of you perform together your Dharma".

(6) Āsura :- In this form the bridegroom used to give money to the father or some near relation of the bride and in a sense used to purchase her, before marriage.

(7) Rākṣasa :- When a maiden had been forcibly taken away from her residence and she was weeping and crying aloud, all her relations were slain or wounded and their houses were burnt or broken, then it was called the Rākṣasa form of marriage.

(8) Paiśāca :- When a person used to reduce a girl stealthily while she was sleeping, or she was intoxicated or disordered in mind or was unconscious, then it was called the Paiśāca form of marriage. This form was considered most sinful of all the forms.

The System of Marriage during the age of the Vedas.

Manu and other smṛtikāras of later origin have defined as we have already pointed out, the Hindu marriage with its eight different forms. Vedic texts are not however, informative of the fact as to whether all of these forms had been in vogue even in the days of the Vedas or not. We learn from the Rg. Veda¹ that Vimada married after snatching the bride away perhaps forcibly from her parents and hence, this incidence may be accounted for as an example of Rāksasa form of wedding,² as scholars have already thought of. We may also think it probable that it had not been possible for Hindus at the dawn of their civilization to codify all of the above eight marital forms alike the later days when all their law books were written down. The chief two aspects of Hindu marriage i.e. Pānigrahana and santapadi of the present day had also been in existence even in the early Vedic days as we assess from the marriage hymn (X.85) of the R.V. Westermarck³ is however of the opinion that the grasping of hand had been one of the principal feature of wedding among different sections of the Āryas throughout the world since remote past. The dialogue hymn⁴ of the R.V. reveals that sexual or marital union in between brother and sister was strictly disapproved during the Vedic age. The proposal of Yamī in this hymn to be united in sexual intercourse with her brother Yama points to the fact that the Gāndharva form of wedding might have been in vogue in its primitive form during the Rg. Vedic age. We learn from

the Manusmṛiti and other later digests that Hindu marriage at the first instance should have taken place in between the bride and bridegroom of equal caste but that of different gotras. At the same time they should not be related to a certain extent as to their father's and that of mother's side respectively. But whether all these marital disciplines of our law books of Manu and other Smṛtikāras had also been in vogue even during the Vedic age or not seems not clear to us. The marriage hymn has beautifully laid down the marital procedure of Hindus during that archeic age. This hymn⁵ also hints at the existence of the system of dowry among the Vedic Indians. One more point is to be considered here in this connection that the existence of the rigid marital discipline among Hindus of later ages as we have already referred to, encourages us to think that these rules of wedlock might have also been prevailing (to some extent) even in the days of the Vedas.

One peculiar type of wedding is hinted at from the hymn of the R.V. (X.95). This took place in between king Pururavas and a nymph namely Urvaśī. She married him after imposing on certain terms and conditions and deserted the king after leading the life of wife with him for so many years on the plea that he had broken certain terms of their marriage. As we all know that the norms of Hindu marriage are not guided by condition or contract of any shape or form and the above form as such has been deemed contractual form of wedding by the scholars.⁶ Sri H. C. Sāstri however remarks in this context. "Marriage as a social institution had a sound footing in the period when

Rg. Vedic verses were composed".⁷ This episode of Pururavās and Urvasī is again noticed in the Brahma and Vāyu Purānas. We shall also however discuss about this again in our Puranic chapter. The authenticity of this episode according to some scholars is however questionable because of the fact that Pururavas had not been unanimously accepted by them as an Indian. King of high antiquity and on the contrary, he has been designated as a person of semi-mythical identity.⁸ But the geneology recorded in different Purānas and also in the Epics, and the interpretation of the Urvasi-Pururavas episode recorded by Yāska in his Nirukta, testify to the fact that Pururavas was a historical person, and his so-called love affairs with Urvasī is a mere allegory. For further details regarding the historicity of Pururavas, see chapter VII of R. Siddhantashastree's book 'History of the Pre Kaliyuga India'.

Furthermore, it is argued that Urvasī because of her being a nymph could not be guided by human laws as such. But this type of marriage having been regularly referred to by the Hindu texts of antiquity must have its bearing even upon an allegory. For ^{instance} _____, the Mahābhārata has cited one example of this type of marital union in between king Śāntanu and the goddess Gaṅgā. We shall also discuss about this issue when we shall step in to our chapter for Epics.

The scholars more or less think that the Vedic bride used to have been adult.⁹ We can humbly speak on the contrary, that the causes of the rare existence of aged unmarried girls at the houses of their fathers has been explained by Manu and other

Smrtikāras at a later date. Manu rules that it is better to keep a girl unmarried for the whole of her life than to give her to an unworthy husband. All the Smrtikāras rule that a girl must be given in marriage before completing the tenth year of her age. And in cases of failure, a dame should be allowed to select her own groom from ~~xxx~~ within her father's caste, just after completion of her twelfth year.

Regarding the point as to whether child marriage had been ⁿin vogue during the Vedic period or not, no clear evidence can be produced. In rare cases a girl is said to be spinster even in her advanced age but such cases are surely the exceptions. Child marriage has been preferred to in almost all the Dharmaśāstras and as such it may be presumed that this practice existed even in the Vedic age. We are met with certain verses ¹⁰ in the marriage hymn where we see that the newly wedded wife is attending her husband wherefrom the scholars ¹¹ are of the opinion that the Vedic bride was adult and that the consummation followed soon after the marriage ceremony was over. We can not however accept the opinion of the scholars who hold the aforesaid opinion with regard to the maturity of the Vedic bride in respect of age as because the above verses of the wedding hymn of the R.V. do not sufficiently advocate in favour of their argument already referred to above. Furthermore, we are met ¹² with the reference of Ghoṣā in the R.V. who remained unmarried at her father's house till to her mature age. There are also some ¹³ other verses (as Kane has thought of) in the R.V. which hints at the fact that the Vedic bride was matured enough to select

her own husband herself. But on the contrary, there are also indications in some other verses of this Veda¹⁴ to the effect that the tender aged girls were also given in marriage in those days. Let us then agree with Kane's¹⁵ observation that the system of marriage of both the adult as well as tender aged brides was in vogue during the Vedic days and that even some women remained spinster all along their lives.

This has not been possible to fix any particular date or period from when the Hindu system of wedlock had been introduced. Mahābhārata has however dealt with this issue to some extent in the Ādiparvan. We shall discuss this point when we shall examine the prevalence of the system of marriage during the age of the Epics in our third chapter. Westermarck has discussed about the origin of the system of marriage among mankind in general.¹⁵

Rg. vedic verses have hinted at in favour of the existence of polygamy as well as monogamy during the Vedic age. But they are silent about Polyandry. We shall however discuss about all these issues in this chapter afterwards. Marriage hymn speaks for the existence of monogamy during the Vedic age. Rg. Vedic verses have beautifully laid down the marital procedure which had been prevailing in those days. Let us reproduce the same here in brief. The bridegroom¹⁶ arrives at the house of the bride with his party. She is ready for him. (Dowry of cattle has been received by the bridegroom¹⁷). The proper ceremony commences, when the bridegroom grasps the hand of the bride.¹⁸ They have now

become the husband and wife. She is now taken in ¹⁹ a procession ²⁰ to the house of the bridegroom i.e. her husband. She is now asked to take charge of the household of her husband as its mistress. ²¹ She has also been requested to exercise her secret control over her father-in-law, mother-in-law, younger ²² brothers, sisters of her husband etc. We assess from the foregoing observation that the basic marital characteristics of the Hindus remain unchanged since the dawn of their civilization. This hymn might have indicated to the performance of the Prājanatya form of Hindu wedlock. Marriage hymn further points to the fact that the bridegroom came to marry from a distant place and also indicates that he might have got no blood relation with the bride.

References to monogamous union have been traced in the ²³ Rg. Vedic hymns beside the marriage hymn. This should not be out of place perhaps to quote the remarks of the learned authors of ^{the} ²⁴ Vedic Index with regard to the forms of the Hindu marriage, "It is not clear that either the father or the ^{the} mother controlled the marriage of a son or daughter of mature age though no doubt the parents or parent often arranged a suitable match. The marriage was frequently arranged through an intermediary, the ṣoṇ (Vara) Presumably after those concerned had in effect come to an agreement. The sale of a daughter was not unknown, but a certain amount of discredit ^e would seem to have attached to it and sons-in-law in such cases were sometimes stingy. On the other hand, dowries were not infrequently given, especially no doubt when damsels

suffered from bodily defects. Occasionally marriages by capture may have taken place, but only as knightly facts as when Vimada carried off Purumitra's daughter against her father's wish but very possibly with her own consent."

25

Kane has however observed with regard to the prevalence of different forms of marriage during the age of the R.V., that in the marriage hymn the Brāhma form has been hinted at, while in the verse 1.109.2 of the RV the Āsvra form is traceable, and the verses X.27.12 and 1.119.5 of the RV. point to the fact that Gāndharva form of wedlock had also been existing during the Rg. Vedic age. In the verse (V.61), the existence of Daiya form is assessed to some context.

In different verses of the Rg. Veda, in addition to the cloths and valuable ornaments to the bride, and cows to the groom loads of other kinds of dowries given by the bride's father to his daughter and her husband, are found to be described. When the bride happened to be a princess, hundreds of chariots and horses were also offered as dowries by the bride's father. Existence of this system through all the ages is further proved by the descriptions of dowries given by a bride's father to his daughter and her husband, recorded in the Purānas, Epics and other ancient books.

Foot Notes.

1. R.V. 1.112.19, 116.1, 117.20, etc.
2. Medic Index - V.I. p. 483.
3. Westermarck E.A. - Early Beliefs and their social influence
Ch. IX. pp. 131-32. (Macmillan Co. London. 1932).
4. R.V. X.10.
5. R.V. X. 85.
6. Sastri H.C. - The social Background of the forms of marriages
in Ancient India - Ch. III. pp. 143-144.
7. Ibid. pp. 138-39.
8. Vedic Index - V.2. p. 3.
9. Vedic Index - V.2, pp. 474-475.
Barnett L.D. - Antiquities of India. Ch. III. p. 144.
(Penthi Pustak).
10. Majumdar R.C. (Ed.) - The Vedic age - P. 392 (Bombay 1969).
10. RV. X. 85. 29.
11. Majumdar R.C. (Ed.) The Vedic Age. pp. 392-93.
12. R.V. X. 40.
13. R.V. X. 27.12. Also see Kane, History of Dharmasāstra
V.2, Pt.I, Ch.IX, p. 439.
14. R.V. X. 85.21. In this verse, a young man has been instructed
to marry a Vyakta girl, which appears to be the rule of time.
As regards the meaning of this term Vyakta, Sāyana tells us
that it stands for a girl who has not yet learnt to cover
her limbs with cloths. This view has been corroborated by the
injunction of different Dharmasāstras, such as Manu (IX.94),
Parāśara (VII. 6-9), Samvartta (Verse 68). Śankha (Verse.158)
and the like, every where a girl of eight or nine years
being preferred.

15. Kane. P.r - History of Dharmasāstra - V.2, p.1 -439-40.
16. Westermarck E - History of Human Marriage. Ch.
pp. 8 - 24.
17. H.V. X. 85. 13.
18. Ibid. X. 85. 36.
19. Ibid. X. 85. 36.
20. Ibid. X.85. 7-8, 20, 25-28, 42, 46 etc.
21. Ibid. X.85. 43, 46 etc.
22. X. 85. 26. 46.
23. Ibid. 1.124.7, IV. 3.2, etc.
24. Vedic Index - V-I, pp. 482-83. (We assess from the
1.117.20 of the R.V. that Vinada married a
tender aged girl).
25. Kane - History of Dharmasāstra - V.2, Pt. I, ch.IX.
p.525.

Polygamy in the Vedic period.

Polygamy, the term which means a husband possessing several women as his wives, is well known. But this should be borne in mind at the same time that there are more than two spouses and not that there is necessarily more than one wife, as scholars are of the opinion.¹ Polygamy is traceable in the Vedic hymns.² The ancient Hindu kings are said to have possessed four categories of wives in the like manner such as - Mahisī, Parivṛktā, Vāvātā and Pālāgalī.³ Mahisī or the first⁴ wife is believed to have been considered the chief among them. According to Zimmer polygamy was transformed into Monogamy⁵ in the Vedic period. Weber thinks that polygamy had been secondary during the days of the Vedas.⁶ Before we proceed to offer our comments on the opinions of the above learned scholars, we shall try to speak some more words about this system here in brief.

Polygamy had been found in existence among the uncivilized peoples like some Australian tribes and some African Bushmen⁷ and the tribes like them during the early half of this century.⁸ The system had also been prevailing among most of the civilized nations of the ancient times (such as Vedic Indians, Slaves, Tutons etc.).

The reasons for origin and development of this practice are many. As according to Westernmarck, man's desire to have more than one wife, the attraction of the female youth for

its beauty and charm over man, man's taste for variety, man's desire for offspring etc. are the causes of its growing popularity among civilized nations of the past. Different scholars⁹ have also made their scientific observations on the system of polygamy.¹⁰

So far as the Vedic Indians are concerned, they were in the habit of practising polygamy as we have already met with ample of references in support of this practice in the Rg. veda. But monogamy had been also in existence at the dawn of Hindu civilization. Say for example, we are met with the evidence in the first king of the Indian subcontinent, often mentioned in the Bhāgavada Purāna where we see that Manu¹¹ had a single wife Śatarūpā by name. On the other hand, we get support of the habit of polygamous marriage to have been in practice by the ancient Hindus from the instances of Dakṣa. Amongst the wives of Dakṣa, Prasūti, a daughter of Manu (Bh.P.IV.1 .1. Viṣṇu p. 1.7.17) and Asikni, a daughter of Pañcajana (Bh. p. VI. 4.51) were the most prominent. Dharma¹² and Kāśyapa¹³ also possessed several wives. We get however, the evidences of the polygamous marriage of the above earlier sages from our Puranic sources and that our Vedic texts are silent about this context. But these personnels can safely be regarded as had been in existence during the early Vedic age as because they have been mentioned also in the Vedas, and our Puranic literature point to the fact of their being in existence at the time when the Hindu civilisation had just taken its shape. But whether the aforesaid personnels were of historical identity, or not is a subject of dispute to scholars.

The prevalence of the system of the polygamy among Hindus in the Vedic age was perhaps because of their desire to have offsprings, as Westermarck has already pointed out. There are several references in the Vedic texts where we meet with the keen desire of Vedic Indians to have ample of male children. In the marriage hymn ¹⁴ prayers have been made to Indra to the effect that the husband should become a proud father of ten male children. The sacred Sāstras of the Hindus, ¹⁵ as Dr. Barnett has already observed are informative of their earnest desire for having male issue for continuity of family line as because according to the common belief of the Hindus (as Doctor Barnett has rightly observed) a sonless man goes to hell and his forefathers' ghosts are ^{destined} to eternal hunger and misery for absence of any one to feed them with pindas. Scholars are of the belief that this practice was prevailing among the ^{Brāhmanas} Rājanyas and nobles. ¹⁶ But this view can not be deemed plausible as because Vedic as well as other literary sources do not categorically endorse this. On the contrary, our Puranic texts speak for the prevalence of this practice among Brāhmanas also as we have already referred to above. Barren wives or wives who happened to produce daughters only, had been prescribed by Manu to be deserted for replacement by newer ones to produce offspring. We do not notice however any kind of such prescription recorded in the Vedic texts.

Marriage hymn (i.e. X.85) of the R.V. mainly aims at monogamous marriage. We have already discussed that Manu had also practised monogamy. He, believed by Hindus to have been in existence during the dawn of their civilization. This seems then certain that Indians had been in the habit of practising Monogamy since very earliest phase of their civilization. We cannot then accept the opinion of Zimmer that polygamy had been died out into monogamy in the Vedic age, as a sustainable one, as because we have already noticed that polygamy had been in existence side by side with monogamy from the examples of Rg.vedic sources. On the contrary Webers view that Polygamy had been a secondary one in the Rg.Vedic age is based on firm ground and hence we can accept his opinion as a plausible one.

Vedic Indians therefore rather preferred a polygamy than to die childless. But a Vedic husband did not perhaps always live a peaceful life with his wives as Rg.vedic hymns sometimes have pointed out. Westermarck has spoken of concubinage to have been in existence side by side with polygamy among the ancient peoples (such as Chinese, Japanese, Hebrews and the peoples like them). It was obvious that the first wife generally had been enjoying better position to some extent in comparison to other/wives as according to the opinion of the scholars but this does not imply that the remaining wives were of inferior status. Our Vedic texts do not distinctly cite

references in support of concubinage to have been in existence in those days, nor they are informative of the status, the several wives were enjoying of a polygamous marriage during the days of the Vedas. Our Dharmasāstras have also discussed in details about this system and we shall be able to collect so many of such type of references if we go through the thesis of Kane.²⁰

Foot Notes.

1. Westermarck E. - Marriage (1929 - London) - P. 59.
2. R.V. 1. 62.11, 71.1, 104.3, 105.8, 186.7,
VII.18.2, (VII.26.3), X.43.1, 101. 11 etc.
3. Vedic Index - V I (London) p. 478.
4. Ibid. p. 478.
5. Ibid.P. 479.
6. Ibid. p. 479.
7. Westermarck E. Marriage - Ch. IX. p. 59. (Modern knowledge
library, Ernest Benn, London 1929).
8. Ibid., p. 61.
9. Ibid. p. 63-64.
10. Lowie. H. Robert - Primitive society - Routledge & Kegan
Paul Ltd. London 1960. Ch. III. pp. 38-59.
11. Bhāgavata Purāna - IV. I.I.
12. Dharma married 13 daughters of Daksa. (Vishnu P. 1.7.
20 - 22).
13. It is admitted in most of the Purānas and Epics that
Kaśyapa had many wives, amongst whom Diti, Aditi, Kadru
and Vinatā were the most prominent.
14. R.V.X.35.45. 15. Barnett. - Antiquities of India
Ch. III - p. 146.
- 15.

16. Westernmarck, Marriage - Ch. IX. P. 61.
17. R.V. 1.105.8.
18. Westernmarck, Marriage Ch. IX. p. 60.
19. Vedic Index - V.I, p. 478. Westernmarck, Marriage.
Ch. IX. p. 60.
20. Kane History of Dharmasāstra - V.2. Pt.1. pp.50-53.

Polyandry in the Vedic age.

The scholars are unanimously of the opinion that this system was unknown in the Vedic society. Not a single Vedic verse speaks distinctly of the prevalence of this practice among the Vedic Hindus. This practice which means the marriage of one woman with several men is according to Westermarck, "a much rarer form of marriage than polygamy"¹. He further opines, "Specific cases of it have been found in various parts of the world but it is only in a few areas that polyandry is, as has been practised by a considerable number of the population"². This system has been observed by the scholars to have been in existence among the inhabitants of Tibet, Nilgiri Hills, Himalayan region, South India³ during the early quarters of this century. This practice had been in existence among Ceylonese till 1860 - the year when this practice was declared prohibited by the then British Governor⁴ within the jurisdiction of this Island.

Polyandry normally had been originated among mankind⁵ as according to the opinion of the scholars due to the "poverty and paucity of women"⁶. Another cause is to be considered as one numerical disproportion of sexes. There might have been economic motive behind the cause as to why this practice originated among human races.⁷ The prolonged absence of husband in the home due to his occupation might have been another cause of Polyandry to have been originated

among the Tibetans, Himalayans and some peoples in the Southern
 8
 India.

Westermarck has discussed different aspects of polyandry
 9
 in his thesis. We find from his observations that the nature
 of polyandry among Nyses of South India, ^{and} the Todas of Nilgiri
 Hills require special attention of the scholars. As in the
 case of the Nyses a girl before she attains puberty is married
 to a stranger and this stranger is not allowed to enjoy the
 privileges of a husband in the truest sense of the term and
 goes his way after receiving his customary fee. The girl is
 then free to enjoy sexual relations with several lovers. They
 contribute for her maintenance, but she does not live with
 them and her children. And in the case of the Todas of Nilgiris
 a girl when married to a man, becomes the wife of all the
 remaining brothers of that man simultaneously and if a brother
 is born to that man later on, she becomes also the wife of
 that baby. Till today the system prevails in the aborigines of
 the khasi hills in North Eastern India.

In the case of the polyandrous unions generally the
 husbands would have been brothers, but in alternative cases
 members of some clan or some generations used to marry one
 10
 woman jointly.

Scholars have ~~xxx~~ not been able so far as we gather, to
 fix any particular date for the origin of this practice among
 mankind. We find mention of the instance of ten Prācetas brothers
 who jointly married Vārksī in the Purānic texts and the
~~xxx~~ incident of the five Pāṇḍava brothers jointly marrying Draupadī

has been recorded in the Mahābhārata. One more incident of polyandry has been narrated by Yudhiṣṭhira in the Mahābhārata; but we do not get any textual support of this narration of Yudhiṣṭhira anywhere. We can then arrive at the conclusion that this system had always been rarely to be found among Indians in the former ages and this had been a later Vedic development in our country. But the fact must be admitted at the same time that polyandry had not been existing as a practice in archaic India. The incidents of polyandry as we referred to, will be discussed in details in some following chapters while dealing with the Purānas and the Epics.

11

The scholars think that one of the characteristics of the polyandrous marriage is that the first one among the husbands normally holds better position than that of the other husbands. It has also noticed in the case of a polygamy that the first wife is believed to enjoy superior status with regard to other wives. Hence the scholars have arrived at the decision that all these characteristics of the polygamous as well as polyandrous marriage point to the fact of the monogamous nature of marriage to have been in prevalence since its inception. This view however, can not be considered justifiable as because of absence of adequate reasons in support of this. This much can be said in this context that at the very early stage monogamy had been in existence side by side with polygamy and polyandry had been a later development. Scholars have also turned down the argument that there are vedic verses

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which point to the fact of the existence of polyandry during the age of the Vedas.

Foot Notes.

1. Westermarck E. - Marriage - (Earnest Benn Ltd. London -1929),
Ch.X. p. 67.
2. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 67.
3. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 67-68.
4. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 68.
5. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 69.
6. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 69.
7. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 69.
8. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 79.
9. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 68.
10. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 67.
11. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 69.
12. Ibid. Ch. X. p. 69.
13. Vedic Index. Vol.I, p. 479.

Niyoga (In the Vedic Age).

The earnest desire of the Primitive Hindus to have a male child for the continuity of their line and for performance of religious rites was the probable cause for which the Niyoga originated as a system among their society.

Manu is the first among the Smṛtikāras who have made some clear prescriptions about this practice though with strict restrictions.¹ We find from Kane's thesis² that Goutama, Vasīstha, Baudhāyana, Nārada and other law-givers are elaborate while in prescribing in details the pros and cons of this practice.³ All the smṛtikāras including Manu rule that in the event of the death of a husband being sonless, his widow could have cohabitation with her devara (younger brother) or as an alternative arrangement with any sagotra (one belonging to the same gotra) or sapinda (kinsmen) of her husband, or even with a Brāhmaṇa,⁴ until the birth of a son. Manu has moreover allowed the widow to continue the co-habitation till two male children were born. One thing seems not clear to us in this context. We learn from our foregoing observations that the birth of a son was the chief object of this system being coming into vogue. But what would have been the fate of a daughter if ~~was~~ born as a result of the application of this practice and whether there would have ~~not~~ been any bar in its application since a male child came into being after successively daughters were born, remains unknown to us till date.

Vedic texts are full of references where we see that earnest desire has been made to the gods for the birth of male children. We also come across the verse of the marriage hymn of the R. V.⁵ where prayers for procreating ten sons have been made to Indra.

⁶
Manu prescribes that the begetter (who should be as we have already observed, the devara of the widow or a Sagotra or a Sapinda of her husband) should approach the widow at night anointed with clarified butter. Manu⁷ furthermore rules that the widow should again observe her strict⁸ celibacy after the purpose of appointment is over. Manu claims the origin of this system to have been in the age when Venaruled king^A. We learn from Puranic and Epic sources that king Vena had been the father of king Prthu and the name of the latter king (Prthu) has been mentioned several times in the R. V. as a famous ancient Hindu king. We therefore can safely consider that this custom had been originated among the Hindus since the early Vedic age. But one thing should be borne in mind in this context that the identity of king Vena as referred to by Manu with that of the father of king Prthu, has not been accepted by most of the scholars as authentic as there is no explicit evidence which can substantiate the argument that king Prthu was the son of the⁹ above king Vena. Manu has further opined that during the early days of Hindu civilization this king (Vena) was responsible for confusion of castes and then the virtuous men

made arrangements for the introduction of this system to prevent Varna Sankara, (bastard child).

Furthermore, this is to be pointed out that this practice had not been favoured by the Brāhmanas (or the Smrtikāras) as Dr. Barnett has observed ; but had to accord their approval for the utmost necessity of the society, and as such, the Smrtikāras always guarded up this practice with several retrictions. But whether all these obligations were also in force during the age of the Vedas, is not very clear.

There is an opinion that, the term devara was a shortened form of dvitīya vara (lit. second husband) so called due to his right to co-habit with his elder brother's widow for procreating a son. If this view is accepted, then the custom of Niyoga may be held as having its existence even in the Vedic period.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the verse X. 40. 2 of the R.V. speaks for the existence of the system of widow-marriage during the Vedic age. Say for example the learned authors of Vedic Index observe :- "Another passage of the R.V. (i.e. X. 40. 2) clearly refers to the marriage of the widow and the husband's brother (devr) which constitutes what the Indians later know as Niyoga." ¹¹

N.K.Dutta observes, "No aversion expressed anywhere in the R.V. to the re-marriage of widowed woman. Probably the custom of a widow marrying the brother of her deceased husband was general, and hence the word devara literally meaning

second husband according to Yāska's Nirukṭa coming to denote woman's brother-in-law. This custom is again referred to in x. 40. 2 where a widow is said to draw her husband's brother in bed¹².

The arguments of the above learned scholars with regard to the interpretation of this verse (X. 40. 2) of the R.V., can not be considered sustainable as their arguments are lacking support of explicit evidences. But before we proceed to offer our comments, we shall try to examine the meaning of ^{the} aforesaid controversial verse of the R.V., (i.e. x. 40. 2).

The text of the verse x. 40. 2 of the R.V. appears as under :

"Kha stiddosā kuha vastorasvinā kuha bhīpitvam
karatah kuhasatuh /
Ka vām sayutrā vidhaveva devaram Maryam na yasā
krñute sadhastha ā " //

The English translation of the above verse comes as under :

"Where were ye Asvins, in the evening where at the morn? Where is your halting place? Where rest ye for the night? Who brings you homeward, as the widow bedward draws her husband's brother as the bride attracts the groom".¹³

This is understood after a careful perusal of this verse of the R.V. that the widow, (who is with all probability

childless as V.M. Apte observes), has been in the habit of co-habitation with her brother-in-law (devara) for the birth of a son and her devara has by no means become her husband in the truest sense of the term ^{as} we learn from Kane's thesis. ¹⁴ that ancient Hindu scholars (such as Vāsvārūpa, Medhātithi, etc.) had also been of the opinion that this verse rather refers to the system of Niyoga than widow-marriage. Modern scholars like V.M. Apte, the learned editors of the Vedic age and the like are also endorsing the views of our scholars of former centuries. As for example V.M. Apte writes, "x. 40. 2 mentions the circumstances in which a widow (in all probability childless) was to keep connection with her brother-in-law until the birth of a son". ¹⁵

V.M. Apte has referred ^π to Niyoga here though he has not spoken of this practice clearly.

The learned editors of 'The Vedic Age' observed,
 "R.V.X. 40.2 points to the practice of requiring a childless widow to co-habit with her brother-in-law until the birth of a son. This Niyoga is a kind of short-term levirate". ¹⁶

We therefore are at par so as to the opinion of the ancient as well as modern Hindu scholars as narrated above, and humbly hold that the above controversial verse (i.e. X. 40.2) of the R.V. speaks for the existence of the custom of Niyoga in the Vedic age and does not stand for the meaning of the system of widow marriage to have been in prevalence during the Vedic period. Otherwise, the drawal of husband's brother

to bed by the widow (as indicated in the aforesaid verse) would not have been compared to the attracting of groom by the bride.

Before drawing conclusion we want to speak a few more words on N.K.Dutta's aforesaid observation on the comments of Yāska regarding marriage of Hindu widows. Now, one thing seems clear in this context that devara has been performing temporarily the duties of a husband, as is understood on perusal of the above verse of the R.V. and hence Yāska might have been right as Sri Dutta has already referred to above in designating devara as dvitīyah varah. But this interpretation of devara as dvitīyah varah by Yāska can not be in any way, counted for the meaning that devara has become the second husband of the widow after marrying her. The fact is that this custom had always been the substitute for widow marriage in our country since the dawn of Hindu Civilization. The learned authors of the Vedic Index also admit that "This custom was hardly re-marriage in the strict sense since the brother might so far as ^{it} appears - be ^a ^{man} ¹⁷ already [^] married [^] himself".

The learned editor of "The Vedic Age" is also of the ¹⁸ opinion that the verses x. 18. 7-8 of the R.V. also speak for the existence of the custom of Niyoga during the age of the Vedas. But so far as we understand, these verses simply point to the custom of self-immolation of the widows and nothing else.

One categorical instance in favour of the prevalence of this system among vedic Indians is recorded in the chapters of the Mahābhārata¹⁹ where we see that Madayanti, the wife of king Saudāsa, had been in co-habitation with the sage Vasīṣṭha (with the consent of her husband) and as a result of which one son namely Asmaka was born. This king Saudāsa, as we all know, had been the son of king Sudāsa who has been unanimously accepted by the scholars as an early Vedic king. Hence this example of Niyoga referred to above can be counted as an evidence for its prevalence during the Vedic age.

Let us now conclude with the following lines which we quote from Kane, "It is better to say that Niyoga was a survival from the remote past, that gradually it became rarer and rarer till in the first centuries of the Christian era it came to be totally prohibited".²⁰

Foot Notes.

1. Manusmṛiti - IX / 59 (Prescribing the practice)
IX/65 (condemning the practice)
2. Kane P.V. - History of Dharmasāstra - V.2, P.T-1,
pp. 599-606.
3. Manusmṛiti - IX / 53, 60.
4. Ibid. XI / 61.
5. R.V. X. 85. 42, 45, etc.
6. Manusmṛiti - IX / 60.
7. Ibid. IX / 62.
8. Ibid. IX / 66.
9. Manusmṛiti - IX / 67-68.
10. Barnett - L.D. Dr. Antiquities of India. Ch. III. p.146.
(Punthi Pustak, Cal - 1964).
11. Vedic Index. V.I. P. 477. (London 1912).
12. Dutta N.K. - Origin & Growth of Caste in India. V.I.
pp. 72-73 (1930).
13. Translation by R.T.H. Giffith. (The Hymns of the R.V.).
- Motilal Banarsidas - Delhi - 1973.
14. Kane P.V. - History of Dharmasāstra. V.2, Pt.1, p .606
(Ch. XIII)

15. Apte V.M. - The social & Religious life in the
Gr̥hya-sūtras - Ch. II. - (Popular Book Defoet,
Bombay 1954) - p. 17.)
16. Majumder R.C. Dr. (ed) - The Vedic Age - (Bharatiya
Vidya Bharan, Bombay, 1969. P. 392.)
17. Vedic Index - V.1, p. 477.
18. Majumder R.C. Dr. (ed.) - The Vedic Age. p. 392.
19. Mehābhārata - Haridas Siddhanta vāgish; Ed. (Cal -
1338 B.S. Adiparva 116.22-23.)
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Divorce in the Vedic Age.

Divorce, the word which literally means the dissolution of the marriage tie, had been unknown to the ancient Hindus. This system is a current development in our country. Marriage, had always been considered by our forefathers as a sacrament. They used to believe that husband and wife, united once in marriage is united for the rest of their life. And hence, there should not have been any question related as to the dissolution of this tie. We are met with several incidents in our Purānas and Epics, where we see that wives were deserted by their husbands in some cases, but marriage tie was not disconnected. They had again been united after lapse of certain period of time. We shall be descriptive in details about such incidents when we shall step in to our next chapter. The marriage hymn of the R.V. is strongly expressive of the desire that marriage tie should not be disconnected at any cost. Manu has strongly advocated against any such occurrence which could have put an end to the continuity of the marriage tie. Our Dharmaśāstras have also fully endorsed the view of Manu. Scholars have not been able to cite any reference which can plead in favour of the prevalence of this system during the Vedic age.

If we deeply consider the view of Manu with regard to Hindu marriage, we see that he has been very strict in respect of the attitude of women to be shown towards their husbands. Say for example, Manu recommends for a married woman to be

always obedient to her husband during his life time and even after his death.¹ He further opines that a husband irrespective of any merit should always be worshipped² by his wife. He strongly forbids a woman to think even for a second marriage.³ He is declaring that no where a second husband is prescribed for a virtuous wife.⁴ Manu also recommends desertion of barren wives under certain circumstances.⁵ Manu has furthermore strictly spoken of against any possibility of Divorce.⁶ All these observations of Manu thus firmly speak for his unwillingness to support dissolution of the marriage tie under any circumstances. We learn from Kane's⁷ observation that our Dharmasāstras are also against this system very strictly.

The entire hymn (i.e. X.109) of the R.V. as has been observed by V.M. Apte⁸ is suggestive of the fact that any intention to make injury to the wife of a Brāhmana was considered a heinous crime in the Vedic age and that there are hints in this hymn of the arrangements which were considered to have been made for the re-union of a Brāhmana with his wife after their being separated for certain period of time. This hymn then is indicating to the fact that the Hindus did not like to dissolve their marriage tie under any circumstances even in the age of the Vedas.

We shall now cite some of the verses from our Vedic texts to endorse our view that the system of divorce was

quite unheard of to the Hindus during the days of the Vedas :

"Happy be thou and prosper with ~~thy~~ thy children here; be vigilant to ~~thy~~ rule thy household in this house. Closely unite thy body with this man thy lord. So shall ye, full of years, address your company."

"I take thy hand in mine for happy fortune that thou mayest reach old age with me thy husband Gods Aryaman, Dhruv, Savitr, Purandhri, have given thee to be my households' mistress. " "Be ye not parted, dwell ye here, reach the full time of human life. With son and grandsons sport and play rejoicing in your own abode" .

"O Bounteous Indra, make this bride blest in her sons and fortunate, vouchsafe to her ten sons and make her husband the eleventh man. " etc.

Foot Notes

1. Manusmṛiti - 5/151.
2. Ibid. V / 154.
3. Ibid. V / 157.
4. Ibid. V / 102.
5. Ibid. IX / 81.
6. Ibid. IX / 101, IX / 46 etc.
7. Kane P.V. - History of Dharmasāstra. V.2, Pt.1. pp.619-620.
8. Apte V.M. Were Caste formulated in the age of the R.V.? p.13.
9. R.V. X. 85. 27 (Translation by R.T.H. Griffith).
10. Ibid. X. 85. 36 (Translation by R.T.H. Griffith)
11. Ibid. X. 85. 42 (Translation by R.T.H. Griffith)
12. Ibid. X. 85. 45 (Translation by R.T.H. Griffith)

Re-marriage of widows in the Vedic age.

This is a controversial issue as to whether the system of widow marriage had been in existence in the Vedic days or not. Scholars are divided into opinion about its possibility of prevalence in India during the early phase of Ārya civilisation. Let us now speak here some more words about this system in brief.

We assure after going through carefully the relevant portions of ^{the} Vedas as well as ^{of the} later Vedic literature that the Hindus considered their marriage a sacrament throughout the ages and did not want its dissolution under any circumstances. Strong desire against dissolution of the marriage tie has been expressed in the marriage hymn. ¹ Manu ² has strongly advocated against such dissolution also. Our Digest writers mostly are endorsing the view of Manu. All these point to the fact that Hindus were against any possibility of dissolution of their marriage. ³ Manu has furthermore, clearly spoken against widow marriage. It has been prescribed in most of the Smṛitis that a widow should lead a life of strict celibacy after the death of her husband and that she should not be allowed to marry again after the death of her husband. If we carefully go through our literary documents of the remote past, we shall be able then to come to this conclusion that widow marriage was not a prevailing system in India throughout all the ages. Manu holds that ⁴ a girl should be given in marriage once only. He further opines while in prescribing the duties of a widow that "she

must never even mention the name of another man after her husband has died⁵". He is further of the opinion that "A virtuous wife who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste, reaches heaven like those chaste men though she may not have any son"⁶. Manu is firmly of the opinion that a virtuous woman should in no case marry for a second time.⁷ Manu strongly holds that there has not been any sanction in the sacred ~~Smriti~~ Sāstras of the Hindus in favour of this type of wedding⁸ (i.e. widow marriage). Manu is therefore as we see from his above observation completely against widow marriage.

But unfortunately scholars are not unanimous about the question as to whether the system of widow marriage had been in vogue during the Vedic period or not. Say for example the learned authors of the Vedic Index" observe "The re-marriage of a widow was apparently permitted. This seems originally to have taken the form of the marriage of the widow to the brother or other Kinsman of the deadman in order to produce children. At any rate the ceremony is generally alluded to in a funeral hymn of the R.V. (X.18.8) for the alternative explanation. Moreover another passage of the R.V. clearly refers to the marriage of the widow and the husband's brother (devara) which constitutes what the Indians later know as Nivoga".⁹

The learned authors of The Cambridge History of India opines, " It appears clearly in the burial ritual of the R.V. that the brother of the dead man should marry the widow. Probably only in cases where the dead man had no son and it

was therefore imperative that steps should be taken to secure offspring. ¹⁰ ".

Sri N.K. Dutta is of the opinion, " No aversion is expressed any where in the R.V. to the marriage of widowed women. Probably the custom of a widow marrying the brother of her deceased husband was general" ¹¹

Sri Dutta furthermore observes "when the dead body was going to be burnt or buried the dead man's brother seized the widow with the following verse, "arise! woman! thou art lying by one whose life is gone. Come to the world of living away from thy husband and become the wife of him who grasps thy hand and woos thee as a lover. ¹² Now on careful perusal of the above remarks of the learned scholars, it reveals that they have mostly been influenced by the view that the marriage of sonless widow with that of her devara, was in vogue during the age of the Vedas and that the verses X.18.8 and X.40.2 of the R.V. have been taken into consideration by the above scholars for their above purpose.

Now, we are to state here in response to the arguments of the above learned scholars as to whether the existence of the system of widow-marriage or co-habitation of a sonless widow with her devr (devara) or a near kinsman of her husband until the birth of a son which was known as Niyoga to ancient Hindus, had ever been in vogue in the Vedic India or not . The verse (X. 40. 2) of the R.V. speaks for the existence of the practice of Niyoga during the Vedic age according to our humble consideration. The existence of Niyoga among

Vedic Hindus has been high lighted by us in this chepter before hand.

Now as regards the verse (X.18.8) of the R.V. we are of the opinion that this verse deals with the funeral activities of the Vedic Indians where the widow as it seems, (with all probability, the mother of an infant child) is, while ascending the funeral pyre of her husband, being dissuaded by her relations in taking this fatal step reminding her of the duties she had to perform for the bringing up of her child. This custom of the self immolation of widows had also been in Vogue among the Āryas during the Vedic age as according to our humble observations. This verse (X. 18. 8) of the R.V. does not speak for prevalence of the system of Niyoga or widow marriage during the Vedic age as we have humbly opined before hand. This issue (i.e. the prevalence of the widow immolation during, the Vedic age) has been distinctly discussed by us in our foregoing observation on this issue. The above opinion of Shri Dutta that the term devr in the verse (i.e. X.18.8 of the R.V.) is dissuading the widow in taking the fatal step of self-immolation so as to marry her as an alternative explanation is considered unsustainable as his arguments are based on imagination and lacking support of explicit evidences.

This should be admitted therefore without any doubt that the system of the marriage of widows has not been supported by Vedic verses (i.e. X. 18.8 & X. 40. 2 of the R.V.) and that arguments of the aforesaid scholars who hold that the marriage of a sonless widow with that of her devr or a Kinsman of her

husband was a prevailing system in our country during the Vedic days is not tenable according to our humble observation. The translation of the verse (i.e. X.18.8) of the R.V. as has been made by Sri Dutta is not correct as to our consideration as because this interpretation does not bring out the proper sense of "Hastagrāvasya", "did hiṣastavedam" and "Patyurjanitvamabhi" and "Samyabhutha".

Furthermore, the learned authors of "Vedic Index" think that the verses (i.e. IX.5. 27-28) of the A.V. speak for the existence of the custom of widow-marriage during the age when Atharva-Vedic hymns were composed. They observe, "In the Atharva Veda a verse (i.e. IX. 5. 27-28) refers to a charm which would secure the re-union in the next world of a wife and her second husband. (Though as Delbrick thinks this very probably refers to a case in which the first husband was still alive but was impotent or had lost ^{his} ₁₃ caste). Before we proceed to offer any comment in response to the above remarks of the learned authors of "Vedic Index," let us try to examine the relevant verses (i.e. IX. 5. 27-28) of the A.V. to see whether they are informative of any meaning for the prevalence of the custom of the re-marriage of widows in any shape or form or not.

Now the text of the above verse (i.e. IX. 5. 27-28) of the A.V. appears as under :

"yā pūrvam patim vittvāsthanyam vindate param
pañcandanañca tavajam dadato na vi-yosatah
samāno loko bhavati punarbhuvāparah patih
yo=jam pañcaudanam daksinā-jyotisan dadāti".

Now in the third line of the verse the word Punarbhuvā appears and it is understood that both the ślokas are linked up with a punarbhū, the term which has been elaborately defined by Hindu Smṛtikāras of former ages. There are seven rajas categories of Punarbhū according to the interpretation of Kāśyapa. These seven kinds of Punarbhū (according to Kāśyapa) are viz, (1) the girl who has been promised in marriage, (2) one who was intended to be given, (3) one on whose wrist the auspicious band was tied by the bridegroom, (4) whose gift had been made with water (by the father), (5) whose hand was held by the bridegroom, (6) who went round the fire. (7) a girl who was born to ^aPunarbhū of any one of the above six kinds. Verses from the Dharmasāstras giving the above descriptions and divisions of the Punarbhūs have been quoted by Raghuraman2

in his Udvāhatattva, with the Sāstric injunction that no man should accept a Punarbhū belonging to any of the above categories as his wife. This point has been thoroughly discussed by my respected teacher Sri R. Siddhantashastri in his forthcoming book 'Early History of the Kali Age, pointing to the fact that the verse of the A.V. quoted above has reference to a Punarbhū and not to a widow.

Kane has also discussed about different categories of Punarbhū in his thesis. We gather from the observations of different Smṛitikāras as Kane has discussed in his thesis, (History of DhS - pp. 608 - 10) that they differed slightly so as to their interpretation of the term Punarbhū. The above ślokas of the A.V. (i.e. ix - 5 - 27 - 28) do not speak for the marriage of a widow, nor do the above verses of the A.V. (as it seems after a careful perusal of them) refer to any charm as the learned authors of "Vedic Index" think, to secure the reunion in the next world of a wife and her second husband. It seems certain that there has been prescription for sacrifices in these verses for purification of some sort of sin attached to the girl for her being remaining a Punarbhū. Kane is also not accepting Punarbhū here in the sense of a married widow. (Kane - History of Dh.S - V.2, p.1 - p. 615)

The English translation of the above verses of the A.V. (ix. S. 27-28) as has been made by Whitney is reproduced below:

27. Whoever having gained a former husband then gains another later one^s if they^{should} give a goat with five rice dishes they shall not be separated.

28. Her later husband comes to have the same world with her re-married spouse^s who gives a goat with five rice dishes, with the light of sacrificial gifts.¹⁴

The translation of this verse into English by Kane is as under :

"Whatever woman having first married one husband marries another, if they (two) offer a goat with five rice dishes, they would not be separated (from each other). The second husband secures the same world with his re-married wife when he offers a goat accompanied by five rice dishes and with the light of fees".¹⁵

But as in the original verse, the term Punarbhū is used, and as widow marriage has all along been strictly prohibited in all the sacred books of the Hindus, the aforesaid verses of the A.V. must have referenceto a Punarbhū only, and not to a widow. The penance prescribed in the verse, was meant for removing the sin incurred by marrying a Punarbhū, and for nothing else.

Hence the English translation of the above as has been made by Whitney and Kane is not acceptable to us. Kane has however opined in this context, "Here the word Punarbhū occurs. It is possible to hold that this may refer to the promise of a girl in marriage, subsequent death of the intended

bridegroom before the marriage ceremonies take place and then the best^owal of her on another. Whatever the meaning of Punarbhū here may be, it is clear that some sort of sin or inferiority attached to her and that such sin or opprobrium had to be removed by sacrifices".¹⁶ In fact the marriage of a Punarbhū with the younger brother of the intended bridegroom has been authorised (ix. 69) by Manu. It is obvious then that the marriage of the Ponarbhūs was not altogether prohibited in ancient India, but this type of wedlock had not been whole heartedly supported by the Smṛitīkāras like Kāśyapa and others. Dr. Barnett¹⁷ is of the opinion^{that} "There is no authority even in the Vedas that countenances the second marriage of a widow".

"We can safely state in conclusion therefore, that the Vedic texts did not sponsor widow-marriage".

The Hindu-widow marriage Act was however enacted in 1856 by the then legislature of India (East India Co.) Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar helped Britishers very much in enforcing the above Act in our country. We shall however, discuss all these points in our last chapter. With this, we are closing our current discussion on widow-marriage during the age of the Vedas and to stepping on ~~the~~ our next chapter so as to notice its further development.

Foot Notes

1. R.V. X.85. 27, 35, 42, 45 etc.
2. Mamsmriti - V/162, ix/46, ix/101 etc.
3. Ibid. v/157, v/160, ix/65.
4. Ibid. ix/47.
5. Ibid. v/157.
6. Ibid. v/160.
7. v/162.
8. Ibid. ix/65.
9. Vedic Index - V.1, pp.476-77.
10. Rapson J - The Cambridge History of India (Schard & Co. Delhi Ed.) - p. 80.
11. Dull N.K - The Origin & Growth of Caste in India (London & 1930 Ed) of V.I. p. 72-73.
12. Vedic Index, V.I. p. 477.
13. Translation by Whitney W.D. in Alharvaveda Samhitā V.2. Motilal Banarsidas - 1971.
14. By Kane in his History of Dharmasāstras. V.2, Pt. 1, p.615.
15. Kane - History of Dh.S. V.2. Pt.-1, pp.615.
16. Barnett - Antiquity of India - Punthi Pustak (1964) p. 143-44.

the
The Self-immolation of widows in the Vedic Age.

The Self-immolation of widows in the funeral Pyre of their deceased husbands - a custom or a rite which is now a subject of academic interest to Indians, since this practice has been declared illegal and a crime punishable by the courts of law under section 1 of the Reg. XVII of 1829 passed by the then Governor General Lord William Bentinck and his Council on 4.12.1829 within the jurisdiction of British India.¹

The Scholars are of belief that this custom had its origin from the oldest religious views and superstitious practices of mankind in general. We get proofs of burning of widows in their husband's funeral pyres, from the ancient history of Greeks, Slavs, Germans and the races like them.²

Before we open discussions on the issue of the prevalence of the custom of self-immolation of widows in the days of the Vedas, we should try to speak a few words about this practice in brief.

The ladies who used to immolate themselves in the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands are usually mentioned as Sati by the foreign people. But this Sanskrit term Sati literally means a lady with real existence. This term is generally used by Indian People to indicate a pious woman who has whole hearted devotion to her husband. It had always been the opinion of the Hindu Smrtikāras (the law givers) that the only duty of a married woman is to serve and propitiate her husband under all circumstances.

In prescribing the duties of women, Manu, holds that a law-abiding lady could under no circumstances, marry ~~for~~ for a second time.³ He further holds that a widow like a Brahmacārin (male celibate) is competent to attain heaven after her death, even if she is childless, provided she lives a life of strict celibacy after the death of her husband.⁴ While in prescribing the duties of a widow, Manu opines that a widow should rather die of starvation, than to think for a second marriage.⁵ Manu thus, recommends for a widow to lead a life of strict-celibacy, but he is silent about her self-immolation in the funeral Pyre of her husband. We find the earliest mention of it in the Visnusāhitā, where it has been prescribed :- After the death of her husband, a widow either should lead a life of strict-celibacy,⁶ or she should ascend his funeral Pyre after his death.

Some scholars are of the opinion that this custom was confined to aristocratic Kṣatriya families. Dr. L.D. Barnett⁷ and Dr. R.C. Majumder, champion this view.⁸ But Kane has discussed in his thesis that Uśanas was of the opinion that a Brāhmana widow should only immolate herself in the same funeral Pyre of her husband (and that if her husband cremated elsewhere in a foreign land, she should not burn her in a separate Pyre.)

The burning of widow along with the dead body of her husband in the same funeral pyre is called Sahamarana or Sahagamana or Anvārohana. But when she hears of the death of her husband and his cremation, elsewhere in a foreign land, and she decides to be burnt in a separate pyre along with any moments of her husband, this case may be taken as Anumarana.⁹

The ancient Hindu Sāstras promised rewards for the self-immolation of widows as follows - the lady ^{thus} ~~such~~ immolated herself, is sure to attain heaven accompanied by her husband. Even if the husband is a sinner, deserving eternal hell, his Pious wife, ascending the funeral pyre of her husband, purifies him of the sin. Such a self-immolated wife dwells in heaven for an unimaginably long period of 3½ crores of years with her husband without being separated from him for a single moment. ¹⁰

Mitāksara, is of the opinion that any widow, irrespective of any caste she belongs to, from Brāhmana to Gandāla, is free to immolate herself in her husband's funeral Pyre, provided she is ^{neither} ~~not~~ pregnant ^{nor} ~~if~~ she has a young child at her husband's death. We learn from the Bṛhaspati Smṛiti that a widow, who has ¹¹ a tender aged child or who is pregnant, or who has not attained the age of puberty or who is in her monthly course, should not mount the funeral pyre of her husband. ¹²

Let us now, try to deal with the matter i.e. whether the custom of the self-immolation of widows was in existence in the Vedic period or not.

But before we proceed to examine the relevant verses of the Rg Veda and Atharvaveda which are considered to have been related to the custom of the self-immolation of widows, we should take up the example from the Bhāgavata Purāna in support of the custom. We see from this Purāna, that when king Mitrasaha, a predecessor of king Daśaratha of Ayodhyā, and the son of

king Sudāsa killed a Brāhmana, the poor wife of that Brāhmana mounted the funeral pyre of her husband after throwing a curse on the king.¹³ We find mention of the name of king Sudāsa several times in the Rg. Veda as a famous king. He fought successfully against the confederacy of ten kings. This incident^{therefore} may be referred to as an example of self immolation of the Vedic age.

Different scholars hold the view that the custom of self immolation of widows had not been in existence in the days of the Vedas. Say for example, the learned authors of ^{the} Vedic Index of Names and Subjects¹⁴ observe, "The Rg. Veda does not contemplate the custom anywhere. The custom of Suttē would therefore, appear during the Vedic age to have been in abeyance, at least as a general rule."¹⁵ Dr. A. S. Altikar is of the opinion^{that} "Nor is it (i.e. this custom) referred to in the funeral Hymns of the Rg. Veda, where it would certainly have been mentioned if it had been in existence".

¹⁶ Kane observes that "the verse Rg. x. 18. 8 symbolically describes what even in the days of ^{that} Rg. Veda it was probably only a tradition, viz. that in hoary antiquity a wife burnt herself with her husband. In the times of the Rg. Veda that practice had altogether ceased, but a symbolical imitation of it had come into vogue. viz, that the wife lay near the corpse in the crematory and then she was asked to get up and was told that by following her husband to the very doors of death, she had fulfilled all that was expected of her and that she should return".

The opinions of the above learned scholars, with regard to the prevalence of the custom of the burning of widows in their husbands' funeral pyres, in the days of the Vedas, can not be considered sustainable as there is no explicit evidence in support of their views. We are met with two verses (i.e. x.18.7 and x. 18. 8) in the funeral hymn of the Rg. Veda. of which both the verses are also found in the funeral hymn of the Atharvaveda as XVIII. 3. 57 & XVIII. 3.2. respectively. The actual meaning of the mantra i.e. X.18.7 is :- Let these women who are not widows and who have good husbands sit down with clarified butter used as collyrium, may the wives who are tearless free from diseases and wearing fine Jewels (cloths) occupy the seat in front. ¹⁷ (first). It seems that this mantra is uttered to the deceased man's household and not to the widows at all, and these unwidowed young ladies are invited to assemble near the dead body before it is consigned to fire. This verse as is understood does not indicate burning of any widow. But the verse X 18.8 of the Rg. Veda which is as under:-

Udīrsva nāryābhī jīvalokaṃ
gatāsmetamupasesa chi
Hastagrāvasya didhisosta vedam
Paturjanitvamabhi samvabhutha.

The English translation of this verse comes as under :-
 Women : arise yourself towards the world of living : You lie down near this departed. (husband) : Come this year wifehood

of the husband who (formerly) held your hand and who loved you, has been fulfilled.¹⁸

The meaning of this verse however comes according to the interpretation of Sāyana as : O Woman : you are lying by the side of your dead husband. This your husband, has produced offspring on you after seizing your hand (in marriage) and he is existing in this world as your son. Therefore, you come back to this world of living "According to the instructions of the Āyālavāna Gr. Sūtra the brother-in-law of the widow or some one else who can be the representative of her husband or a pupil or an aged servant should make the widow rise from the funeral pyre of her husband after reciting this verse.¹⁹

This is understood on perusal of this verse, that the widow who is ascending the funeral pyre of her dead husband, is being dissuaded by her relations in taking this fatal step pointing to her infant son who required her nursing and reminding her that even according to the Sāstras, nursing of such a minor son amounts to the nursing of her husband himself. Therefore we see that in the Vedic age, the widows were free to mount the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands, but at the same time they were discouraged by their relations to take the fatal step of self immolation. There were several restrictions with regard to this custom and Vedic Indians as a general rule did not like their women to be burnt along with their husband's dead bodies.

In conclusion we can humbly state that in the Vedic age the custom of self immolation of widows was in existence, but the instances were very rare. No incidence of this is recorded in the Vedic texts. On the contrary, we are met with the verses in R.V. and Atharva Vedas, where it is observed that the widows who have come to mount their husband's funeral Pyre, are being dissuaded by their relations in taking the fatal step of self immolation.

It is therefore apparent that, the Hindus of the Vedic age, tender hearted, as they had been, disliked the self-immolation of their widows; but at the same time, they refrained from applying force upon a widow, determined to burn herself with the corpse of her husband, which they did due to their democratic ideas, not to interfere with the personal affairs of others. They cannot be blamed for the reason that, every attempt excepting force had been applied by them for saving the life of the wretched widow. Their sacred law went to a further extent prohibiting self-immolation of any widow having an infant child or being in her monthly course.

Foot Notes.

1. Kane P.V.- History of Dharmasāstra. vol.II, pt.1, p.624.
2. Kane P.V.- History of Dharmasāstra. Vol.II, pt 1.p.625.
3. Manusmṛti - 5/162.
4. Ibid. 5/160.
5. Ibid. 5/157.
6. Mṛte bhartari brahmcnaryyam tadanvāronanam vā, viṣṇu Smṛti - 25/14.
7. Burnett L.D.Dr. Antiquities of India -(Puntni Pustak-
Cal-1964,)Ch.111,p.147. Majumder R.C. (Ed.) The vedic
Age. p.392.
8. Kane - History of Dharmasāstra. v.11, pt. 1. p.627.
9. Kane -P.V. -History of Dharmasāstra - V.II, pt.1,p627-628.
10. Parāśarsaṃhitā - 1V. 28-29, Daksasasaṃhitā- IV.19.20-Also
see "Satis in Ancient India" by Shri R.K.Siddhanta Sastri
published in Sept. 1974 issue of the Calcutta monthly
"The Mother". P.14.
11. Kane P.V. History of D.S.V. II. pt. 1 .P-631.
12. Ibid. p.633.
13. Bhagavata Purāna - IX. 9.36.
14. Vedic Index - Vol, p. 488-89.
15. Dr.Altekar - The position of women in Hindu civilisation
p.17. (Ch.IV)-(Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi -1962.)
16. Kane P.V.-History of Dharmasāstra - VII, p.1, p.619.
17. Translation by Kane P.V.- History of Dharmasāstras. Vol.II.
pt, I, p.617.

18. Translation by Kane P.V. - History of Dharmasāstra,
Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 617.
19. Tamutthapayeddevarah patisthaniyo antevasi.
jaraddaso vodirsva naryābhi jibalokameti // Āśvslāyana.
Gr̥haya-sūtra - IV. 2. 18. - Quoted by R. Siddhanta-
sastree (The Mother, September 1974).

The Habit of Food and Drink of the Vedic Hindus.

Like those of examples of dress and decoration, there are also scattered references recorded in the Vedic texts, from which we can form almost a rough observation on the habit of the food and drink of the Vedic Hindus. Scholars¹ have also made observations on the same context. Considering all these we can safely state that Yava was the food grain which was ground into flour by the Vedic Āryas and was mixed with milk or curd and finally was made into cakes which formed one of the main aspects of dietary of the Indians during the Vedic age. But whether this yava of the Vedic times had been the yava of the later Vedic age or not² or was a generic term commonly used for any sort of food grain³ seems not clear to us. Vedic verses clearly refers to the fact that the milk was used in much quantities by the Hindus and that they liked to drink it warm coming fresh from the cow. It has been held by the scholars that the Indians in the days of the Vedas liked to eat fruits and vegetables in much quantities. It is also believed that ghṛta (clarified butter) was also used by the Hindus in those days.

Meat was also eaten by the Vedic Hindus. It is generally believed by the scholars that they ate the meat of the animals like sheep, goat etc. being slaughtered at the sacrifices. But we differ from the opinion of the scholars who hold that beef was also eaten by the Hindus in those days.

say for example, the learned authors of "Vedic Index" observe : "The term Athithigha⁸ probably means slaying⁴ cows for guests". They observe further more, "The marriage ceremony was accompanied by the slaying⁵ of oxen, clearly for food. Moreover the ritual of the cremation of the dead required the slaughter of a cow as an essential part⁶ the flesh being used to envelope the dead body. V.M. Apte observes, "Meat was eaten. The flesh of the ox, the sheep and the goat being commonly used. P. L. Bhārgava holds, "On special occasions such as the visit of an honoured guest even beef was eaten. Since the cow was considered a very valued possession and called aghnya (not to be killed) it was only the ox (Uksān) or the barren cow (Vasā) that was killed for beef as is clear from the epithet Uksāna or Vasānna⁷ being given to Agni.

But before offering any comment, let us furnish first of all the relevant verses from the Vedic texts which can firmly advocate in favour of our opinion that the slaughter of cows or oxen was never introduced among ancient Hindus in any age.

Rg Veda proclaims, "cow doing no harm to anybody, should⁸ neither be killed nor hurt under any circumstances".

Yajur Veda instructs the king of the country to inflict capital punishment to⁹ the killer of a cow".

Atharvaveda prescribes that the death sentence be inflicted upon¹⁰ the killer of a cow to be effected with a blunt wapon made of lead. "

The other party argues that in verse VIII. 86. 14 of the RV Uksān, meaning 'Ox' has been said to be cooked and eaten up by the Vedic poets. But the fact is the reverse. The relative portion of the verse may be translated as under "This man cooks fifteen to twenty Uksāns every day for me, and I nourish my body taking them as my food". No sane man can believe that a man could eat and digest the meat of so many oxen at a time everyday. The term uksān having its other meanings also, therefore should be taken here in the sense of a nourishing vegetable like the potato of the modern time, 15 or 20 of which might be eaten up and digested by a man.

These scholars further argue that the ^{term} goghna used occasionally in the Vedic texts and also in the phonetics of Pāṇini points to ^{the} custom of feeding the guests with the meat of a cow.

This is to be borne in mind in this context that the formation of the word goghna vide Pāṇini's rule ¹¹ (dāśa - goghnan sampradāne) shows that the term goghna means : he to whom a cow is donated. (sampradāne). And if the term sampradāne used by Pāṇini in the above aphorism, be accepted in the sense of killing, then we are free to explain the term Kanyā Sampradāne (Marriage) as killing and feeding of the bride for the satisfaction of the groom, which is absurd. These facts have been discussed more elaborately, by R. Siddhantashastree in his forthcoming book 'Early History of the Kali Age'.

The argument that the term Vrsa ^{is} sometimes mentioned to be eaten, goes in favour of cow killing and beef eating, is also futile. The term Vrsa is often used as 'strong' and sometimes as nourishing. In the former sense it is used as an adjective of different gods such as Indra, Varuna and the Firegod, and in the latter sense it is used to indicate some nourishing food, such as fruits milk, ghee etc. innumerable evidences of this type are 'found even in the RV.'

It is clear therefore, from our foregoing observations that the sentiment of the Vedic Hindus was completely against any sort of cow-killing for the purpose of eating. And if the Hindus considered cow a very valued possession as we learn from the verses of the Rg. Veda we have referred to above just now, how it had been possible for the Vedic Indians at the same time to slaughter cows or oxen, seems not clear to us. Our Puranic and Epic texts also speak firmly against ^{the} slaughter of ~~the~~ cattle. This is almost however a topic of keen controversy, as to whether the habit of Indians in using beef during the Vedic or even the later Vedic days had been in existence at all or not.

Soma was a drink of the Rg. Vedic India which had been extracted from the soma plant, grew in the Munjavat mountain (as has been mentioned in the ninth mandala of the R.V.) and had been used for the sacrificial purpose. Its juice was normally mixed with honey, or milk or curd and was offered in the memory of the gods and pitrs. V.M. Apte observes, "It appears almost exclusively in the R.V. as a sacrificial drink must once have

been a popular, mildly imbrating drink".¹² The entire ninth maṇḍala of the R.V. has been ascribed to the different formalities connected with this drink. Vedic verses also hint at the preparation of Surā, a kind of intoxicating drink being consumed by the Hindus. Occasionally as it has been condemned for its demerits.¹³

Foot Notes.

1. Scholars of repute have written numerous books inclusive of the discussions on the habit of food and drink of the Vedic Indians. Three of such books as referred to above are named below with the names of authors :-
 - (i) Majumder R.C. Dr. (ed) - The Vedic age - Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan - Bombay (1969) pp. 396-397.
 - (ii) Apte V.M. - Social and Religious life in the Gr. Sūtras. The popular Book Depot - Bombay (1954) - pp. 95 - 96.
 - (iii) Bhargava P.L. Dr. - India in the Vedic Age - Upper India Publishing House (1971) - Lucknow - pp. 247-248.
2. Apte V.M. - S. R. L. G.S. - P. 96.
3. Bhargava P.L. Dr. I. V.A. - p. 248.
4. Kith & Macdonell - Vedic Index of Names and subjects (1912) V.2 - (John Marry,) London - p.145.
5. Ibid. p. 147.
6. Apte - V.M. S.R.L. G.S. - p. 95.
7. Bhargava P.L. Dr. I, V.A. p. 248.
8. R.V. - VIII. 101. 15.
9. Yajurveda - 30. 18.
10. A.V. 1. 16.4.
11. Pāṇini - 3.4. 73.
12. Apte. V.M. S.R.L. G.S. Ch.IX. p. 96.
13. R.V. - VII. 86.6.

Educational System in the Vedic Age.

Since time immemorial there had been a tradition amongst the Hindus that, while meeting a deity a king or one's preceptor (or Guru), one would not go there empty handed. They believed that if fruits were offered to such superiors at the time of his first visit, then such a visit would be fruitful. The following verse, which is wellknown to the religious section of the Hindus may be quoted in this connection.

"riktapānir na gacchettu rājānaṃ devotāṃ gurūn
naimittikañca vaidyañca, phelena phalanādiset ".

[One should not meet a king, a deity, his spiritual teacher, a fore teller or a physician, empty handed. He must offer some fruits, if he intends to get a good result.]

Hence, when a boy would go to meet his prospective teacher, he would take with him some fruits to be offered at the time of his visit.

From different Vedic sources, especially from the Chāndogyaopaniṣad we further know that the prospective student not only took fruits with him, but he would take some faggots as well. As collection of faggots in those days was a hard work, the students were expected to supply faggot to their gurus, with whom they had to live for a long time. We further learn from different sources that even after starting their study, the students used to collect faggots from the woods, and also they helped their guru with other menial works.

The ~~same~~ episode of Nārada and Sanat Kumar ^{as found in the} Chāndyogya ^{as recorded in} Upaniṣad, the story of Uddālanka and Svetaketu, ^{different} Purānas, MBH and Upaniṣada deserves special mention in this context.

We learn from the Chāndyogya Upaniṣad that Nārada, determined to start his educational career under the guidance of Sanat Kumar, visited him along with faggots, fruits etc. at the first instance. Our scriptures of antiquity reveal that the pupils had to undergo a life of strict discipline in the house of their gurus. Even a prince, while in his stay at the house of his preceptor as a pupil, was bound to tend cattle, under the instruction of his preceptor. We came to know furthermore from the Upaniṣads, Purānas and also from the Mbh, that Uddālaka when had been a pupil protected the cornfield of his guru from the massacre because of the fact that the rampert was overflowed with the heavy pressure of water of a near by canal, by throwing himself physically on the broken rampert for several hours. Let us now examine the relevant Vedic Verses so as to find out the development of educational system during those days.

The details of educational system prevailing during the days of the Vedas, is not known to the scholars. But the frog hymn of the RV confirms our impression to the effect that the discipline of the education as a system had also been in existence even in the age of the RV. frog Hymn compares the crooking of the Frog with the chorus vocal of the pupils reciting the verses of the Vedas at the house of their preceptor

In this hymn the term 'Brahmacārin' has been used. Vedic texts are not informative about the point as to whether only the texts of the Vedas had been the subject of study of the students or otherwise different categories of subjects (other than the Vedas)³ had also been taught to the pupils by their Gurus. AV has also mentioned the term Brahmacārin to mean a religious student. The method of imparting instruction was definitely oral as we assess from the Frog hymn. Kane⁴ has ~~remarked~~ remarked in this context, "Oral instruction was the cheapest and most accurate method of imparting ~~learning~~ learning. In ancient times writing materials were not easily available and written texts could not be handed easily and would have been extremely costly. Therefore the method of oral instruction was resorted to and having been followed by the lapse of thousands of years it has been persisted⁵ into the present day". We learn from Kane's thesis that in archaic India, the father was the pivot of the education of his child and that he had been enjoying the status of acāryya (Guru) in this context. But this system was changed however, with the passing of time and the students were used to send to the house of their ~~preceptor~~ preceptor for living under the same roof with him for the purpose of education.

One interesting point of discussion is that the Frog hymn is suggestive of the fact that the pupils used to live with their preceptor and receive training orally from him. Furthermore the term Brahmacārin has been used in this hymn. We all know that the Śrauta Sūtras, Dharmasūtra and Dharmasāstras Purānas have furnished the details

of the educational system of the later Vedic India wherein the student has been described as a Brahmacārin. We all know that Brahmacārin had to undergo the Upanayana ceremony before commencing his career as a Vedic student (or Brahmacārin) ~~the~~ furthermore a twice-born was only entitled to wear the sacred thread and begin his career as a Vedic student. We shall ^{make} detailed discussion about this context ~~we shall make~~ in the 2nd chapter of this book. This is not unjust for us then to formulate the idea that the essential features of the later Vedic educational system must have been in existence even in the early vedic age.

Foot Notes.

1. RV. VII.103.1, 5 etc.
2. Ibid. VII. 103.5.
3. A.V. VI.103.2, XI.5 etc.
4. Kane - His of Dhs. V.2, pt.1, ch.VII, p. 348.
5. Ibid. Ch.VII, pp. 321-22.

Dress, Decoration and cultural activities of
the Vedic Hindus.

It has been unanimously admitted by the scholars that the Indians in the Vedic Age, normally had worn two types of garments, one upper garment (adhivāsas) and one under garment (vāsas). In addition, to these the use of another special type of under garment (mvi) was also in vogue in the later days. Their dress was as it seems, made of sheep's skin and of barks of trees. The female dancers perhaps used embroidered garment known as paśas². Aristocratic personnel³ perhaps used woollen garments and mantle decorated with gold. Scholars think that the Vedic Hindus liked to be dressed up well. Vedic Indians in those days knew the arrangement of hair in different coils, after when the same was oiled and then combed. As for instance, we can refer to the Rg. Vedic⁴ verse wherein the arrangement of the hair of the Vasiṣṭhas in four coils has been spoken of. A maiden is stated to have her hair arranged in four coils in another verse of the RV⁵. Shaving has been referred to in a verse of the RV⁶. The Vedic texts also point to the fact that the Vedic Indians used to keep beared and ~~mustache~~ mustache etc. we learn from the RV⁷ that the use of necklace made of gold was in vogue in those days. A kind of ornament namely Khādi has been spoken of in a Rg. Vedic verse. According to Sāyana however, this term (mentioned in RV. V. 53.4) stands for bangles (Kaṭaka) Necklaces made of gold and garland are mentioned in the same

verse of the RV. Rings and golden chains are referred to in another Rg Vedic Verse. It seems that the use of ornaments made of gems was in vogue in those days. To put on garlands on special occasions had been a fashion to the Vedic Hindus.⁸ We do not know the fact as to whether Vedic Hindus also put on ornaments made of metals like silver, bronze etc. We should also admit the fact that to put on ornaments was a fashion for both men and women. Whether the commoners of the Vedic age had been able to put on costly ornaments is still not known to us.

Let us now speak a few more words on the cultural aptitude of the Vedic people. Scriptures of the Vedic age reveal to us the fact that Chariot race had been a favourite sport of the aristocrate Hindus. Addiction of Vedic Hindus to the Dice-game has been spoken of —————> in this chapter before hand. Hunting had also been a favourite pasttime of them.

Vedic Indians possessed special skill/ⁱⁿ handling musical instruments. The Vedic texts (as a whole) signify the love and devotion of them towards music. They also possessed special aptitude towards the field of drama. The hymns of the Rg Veda (i.e. X.10, X.95) are full of dramatic elements. It seems that Vedic Hindus must have possessed the idea of composing drama in its primitive form. We can not form any definite idea about the fact that whether the acting of drama and the platform for performance (i.e. stage) had also been known to the Vedic Hindus in those days or not.

Foot Notes.

1. Majumder R.C. (E) - The Vedic Age (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay) - p. 397.
- ~~2x R.V. I. 92. 4-5, II. 3. 6 etc.~~
- 1a. Apti V.M. - ~~Sanskrit~~ Social and Religious life in the Grhyasūtras ch.V - p.54 (The popular book Depot, Bombay, 1954).
2. R.V. I. 92. 4-5, II. 3. 6 etc.
3. Majumdar R.C. (E) - The Vedic Age (Bhar. Vidya. Bh) : p. 397.
4. R.V. VII. 33.1.
5. Ibid. X. 114.3.
6. Ibid. X. 142. 4.
7. Ibid. VII. 56.13.
8. Ibid. IV. 38.6, V. 53.4 etc.

CHAPTER - II
Society as found in the Purānas.
Detailed Contents

This chapter is divided into the following aspects of social system supported by the references as found in the texts of the Purānas and the Upa-purānas.

		<u>Page No.</u>
I.	Introductory Notes ...	108
I.	The family Life ...	110
II.	The system of marriage. ...	114
	(a) The Polygamy ...	126
	(b) The Polyandry ...	131
	(c) <u>Niyoga</u> ...	134
	(d) Divorce ...	136
	(e) Re-marriage of widows ...	139
	(f) Self immolation of widows ...	148
III.	Educational system ...	155
IV.	<u>Caturāśrama</u> ...	158
V.	The Music and Artistic Activities...	164
VI.	Food and Drink ...	167
VII.	The Caste System. ...	170

C H A P T E R - II
Society as found in the Purānas.
Introductory Notes.

It is well known that the Purānas are eighteen in number, their names are as follows : (1) Brahma (2) Padma (3) Viṣṇu (4) Śiva (5) Linga (6) Garuda (7) Nārāyaṇa (8) Bhāvagata (9) Agni (10) Skanda (11) Bhaviṣya (12) Brahma vaivartta (13) Mārkaṇḍeya (14) Vāmana (15) Varāha (16) Matsya (17) Kūrma and (18) Brahmāṇḍa. (Bhāgavata XII. 7. 23-24). There are also 18 Upapurānas. All these bear ample evidences of social and other structures of the Hindu society in the Purānic age.

Though several scholars have made attempts to place the said Purānas in chronological order, their attempts apparently have met with failure, because there are immense evidences even in the Purānas themselves to falsify their views. Even in the Chāndogyaopaniṣad (ch. 7, section 1) Purānas are mentioned. Mr. Perciter therefore has expressed his view that one Purāna existed since time immemorial, though according to him division in the Purānic literature was a later creation. The late Prof. J. N. Banerjee in his book Purānic and Tantic Religion (Published by the University of Calcutta in 1966) has quoted a verse from the Svargāraṇaparvan of the Mahābhārata, in which Purānas have been said as 18 in number.

śravanād
"Aṣṭādaśa purāṇāṇāṃ yad bhavet phalam /
tat phalam labhate nīnam vaiṣṇavo nātra saṁśayaḥ //

(XVIII. 6. 97)

It is therefore clear that all the 18 Purānas had been in existence even at the time of composition of the Mahābhārata. The very term Purāna itself indicates that Purānas (lit. Old) are very ancient books. In consideration of the above facts, we do not like to fix any date for any of the Purānas, and as such, the information gathered from the Purānas will be taken simply for the sake of information, without considering their chronological order.

The Family Life.

We have discussed in our first chapter that the Vedic Indians used to lead a life of patriarchal nature and most of the Aryan population were residing in the villages. But the names of towns were not unknown to them. They used to live in the houses made of wood and other alike materials. The Vedic Indians used to live under the same roof with their father, mother, wife, children, grand children etc. The father was normally ~~usually~~ the head of the family. When he was advanced in age, he was normally replaced by his eldest son. The family discipline had to be maintained by the Vedic people.

We do not find any reference in the Purānic or Upapurānic texts which can lead us to think that the family life as was witnessed in the Vedic age, had since been changed in the days of the Purānas. From the geneology of the kings and also of the Brāhmanas we know full well that, father was the head of the society, having full control over all the members of his family. Eldest son, as a general rule inherited the property with the responsibility of feeding, clothing and educating his younger brothers and sisters and also his mother, step mothers if any, and the other members of the family. In case of having his unmarried sisters the elder brother had to find out suitable grooms for them and give them in marriage with a youth of his own status and belonging to his own caste. At the time of emergency, the father asked his sons and the husband his wife

to earn their livelihood even with menial labour, and which is found^{even} in the case of the dethroned king Haris'chandra, who sent his wife Śaivyā and his son Rohitāśva to serve as servants at the house of a Brāhmaṇa. It seems certain that the system of maintaining family discipline as we witness from the Vedic texts had also been the same in the days of the Purānas. We notice from the example of Pātāla Khaṇḍa of the Padmapurāna that Bharata handed over the guardianship of the kingdom of Ayodhyā to his elder brother Rāma, when the letter returned from his banishment after the lapse of 14 years.¹

Bharata did not agree to be the king of Ayodhyā depriving his elder brother, who was nominated as future king by his father Daśaratha. So, when Rāma went to the forest for fulfilment of certain promise of his father, Bharata considering him as a representative of Rāma, made the government run during the period of Rāma's banishment. This episode proves that younger brothers had deep respect and love for their elders and they did not go to supersede their elders in any respect. We further notice that the decision of father was final in almost all the family affairs. Yet in some cases some reverse incidents happened. To illustrate this, we can take up the example of king Yayāti, when he suddenly became infirm and stricken with old age as a result of the curse of Śukra the priest of the Asuras. He requested his every son one by one to exchange their youth with ~~that~~ ^{own} of his² old age. None but his youngest son Puru agreed to the father's proposal. As a result, the disloyal sons were cursed by Yayāti, and Puru was made crown king by him.³ Vāyu

and Linga Purānas also confirm this.⁴ The scholars may be divided into opinion about the historicity of the above reference, but this evidence very clearly speaks for the devotion and warm love of sons to their parents in any context which they possessed during the age of the Purānas. Disloyal sons were severally punished by their fathers. We get support of this in the Vāyu Purāna when we see that king Ikṣhāku, a predecessor of king Rāma of Ayodhyā abandoned his son Bikukṣi for some sort of misdeed of the latter.⁵ Daughters in their early age were given in marriage by their father or elder brother, as known from the Śiva and other Purānas, and after their marriage they were held as members of the family of their husband. Even after their marriage, the maidens had their natural right to visit the house of their father or brothers, at which, they were cordially received like the present time.

The picture of the living standard of the common people in the Āryan fold has not been sketched in the Purānic texts. It is therefore hard to form any definite idea about their class as a whole.

Foot Notes.

1. Padma purāna, Pātāla Khandā 11.3.9., 10-18, 20-55. etc.
(Panchanan Tarkasatra 1310 B.S. Cal).
2. Matsya Purāna - 33 - 25 - 30, (Panchanan Tarkasatra -
Cal. 1316 B.S.) Viṣṇu Purāna-IV.1.3-6. (Baroda Basak Ed,
1277BS, Cal)
3. Matsya Purāna - 34 - 13, 19 - 25 etc.
4. Vāyu Purāna - (Panchanan Tarkaratna Ed. 1317 B.S. Cal)-ch- 93
Līngapurāna- Book-1, ch-67. (ed. by Panchanan Tarkaratna
and others 1310 B.S. Cal.)
5. Vāyupurāna - (Panchanan) - Ch. 88.

The System of marriage.

We have discussed already in the first chapter that the Vedic texts do not denote distinctly whether all the eight forms of marriage as laid down by our Dharmasāstras had been in existence in the vedic age or not. We also witness that the Purānic texts are not clear in respect of the prevalence of all these eight forms. Of the eight forms of marriage ~~prescribed~~ prescribed by our Sāstras, Manu condemns the Paisāca and the Āsura forms. - (Manu III/25).

The marriage ceremony of Rukmini¹, the daughter of the king Bhīṣmaka of ^{the} vidarbha^{country}, who was forcibly carried away by Kṛiṣṇa in the event of her being handed over to Śiśupala, the king of Cedi in marriage, and subsequently he married her, may be compared to the Rākṣasa form of marriage. We are also met with the incident of the carrying away of the daughter of Duryōdhana, belonging to Kuru's race by Sāmba the son of Kṛiṣṇa forcibly from the hall of her Svayamvara and marrying her, which may also be compared to the Rākṣasa form of marriage.² It has been recorded in the Agnipurāna that Bhīṣma forcibly carried away ^{three} ~~three~~ daughters of the king of Kāśī, ^{Ambā} Ambikā and Ambālikā by name, from the hall of their Svayamvara forcibly, after vanquishing the rival kings.³

Young Kṣatriya dames had every liberty to select their husbands from among the princes and kings assembled at the hall of Svayamvara, when they had attained the age of puberty

This practice of Svayamvara had been continued till to the very early medieval period in India. There are some instances of Svayamvara recorded in the Purānic texts. Brahmapurāna of Pārvati who selected Śiva as her Lord from the Hall of Svayamvara.⁴

⁵
Sivapurānas is descriptive of the Svayamvara of princess Śrīmatī, the daughter of the king Śilanidhi. The above two instances of Svayamvara may be considered as one of mythical identify, but they do confirm the assumption that this system of Svayamvara had been a prevailing system in India during the Purānic age.

⁶
Manu has advocated in favour of anuloma intercaste marriage and ruled against protiloma form of union. Dharmasāstras and also the Purānic texts have in this regard incontrovertibly obeyed Manu. We are referring below two anuloma inter caste unions where in the Kṣatriya princess and Brāhmaṇas were involved. Say for example, Padmapurana⁷ narrates the incident of the inter-caste-marriage of the daughter of king Manu with the sage Cyavana. We learn from the Purānas like Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata as well, that Sukanyā, the daughter of king Saryyāti (the son of king Manu), was given in marriage to the old sage Cyavana.

.....
..... The sage wanted to marry the princess out of his own accord. We are met with the episode of the inter-caste-marriage in between the daughter of king Manu and the Rsi⁸ Kardama. Here we see that the princess had been willing to marry the sage and she was handed over to the sage in marriage by her parents along with the

valuable presents, ornaments and precious clothes etc. We can also take up the example of the inter-caste marriage of Devayānī the daughter of sage Śukra the Priest of the Asuras with king Yayāti, which has been described as an abnormal marriage between Yayāti and Devayānī.

This marriage is an instance of Pratiloma marriage. As such any such marriage was strictly forbidden by the sacred injunctions of our Smritis. Yayāti did not agree to marry her at the first instance. But as the king took her hand, due to unavoidable circumstances and there was no alternative, he had to agree at the end. Finally the king solicited the opinion of her father who gave consent on the ground that as because Devayānī had whole heartedly wanted Yayāti to marry, therefore, there would have been no sin incurred in Yayāti's marrying her. We should also consider another point in this connection that Devyānī once fell into a well accidentally and Yayāti rescued her by grasping her hand. It had been the common belief within the Hindu society in those days that if a man happened to catch hold of the hand of an unmarried damsel, he must have to marry her afterwards. This was perhaps another reason, for which Devyānī insisted on king yayati in marrying her. The King was hesitating at first as because this would have been an example of protiloma union, strongly disapproved by the society. It is, therefore, understood that love affairs, were the causes of a few forbidden types of marriage, and these were approved even

unintentionally by the society when a king was involved in such love affair. We learn from the Purānas, that Princess Renukā was married to the sage Jamadagni (the son of Rieṅka) and that Rieṅka himself was married to Satyavatī, the daughter of king Gāchi (Brl. p. 10.518, 29). This seems probable further that ability and quality had been taken into consideration by a maiden, while selecting a person as her life's mate out of love.

Inter-caste marriage resulted out of the reason other than love affairs was not spared by the society and severe punishment was prescribed for this sort of act. We come across the incident of prince Nābhāga's forcibly carrying away of a Vaiśya maiden out of passion as a result of which he had been degraded to the rank of a Vaiśya.¹⁴

A peculiar type of marriage has been recorded in the Purānic texts. This type can be compared to that of a contractual type as there are certain terms and conditions behind the happening of this form of marriage and failure to fulfil any of the terms can lead to the dissolution of the marriage tie. The episode of Pururavas and Ūrvaśī can be taken into consideration in this respect. Pururavas married Ūrvaśī under certain terms and conditions which were imposed upon him by Ūrvaśī and she deserted the king instantly after lapse of many years of their leading a life of husband and wife on the plea that he had broken certain terms of their marriage. This episode is recorded in some of the Purānas.¹⁵ And this type of marriage can be deemed as the contractual form of marriage. We have, however, discussed about this form of marriage in

between Pururavas and Ūrvaśī in our Vedic chapter as because there is mention of this in the Rgveda.¹⁶ One point is specially noticeable in this connection that Ūrvaśī was a nymph not bound by the human law. As we do not find even a single instance of such a contractual marriage between a human pair, this system can not be held to have been admitted in the human society either in the Vedic or in the Purānic age. The fact that the Ūrvaśī Pururavas affairs is an allegory has already been mentioned in the foregoing chapter.

Side by side of instances of women remaining unmarried till to the matured age, there are in some of the Purānas,¹⁷ prescriptions of the tender aged girls to be given in marriage. Dr. L.D. Barnett has observed in this context that, Custom of taking wives from lower castes led to a scarcity of suitors for demsels of higher rank and made fathers anxious to secure husbands for their daughters on the earlier possible occasion the custom of marrying children arose very early probably in the first instance among the highest castes and ^{it} gradually spread. In consequence the child bride remained after the marriage - rites in her father's house until puberty"¹⁸ This observation is not acceptable to the orthodox Hindus, according to whom child marriage was introduced simply for preserving sanctity and pure blood of the families concerned. If a girl remains unmarried for years together after her puberty, then there may be chances of her being polluted, but when she entered the inner appartment of her husband's family, she could not fall victim to such chances. If her marriage was performed before her puberty, then and then only she could

have such a protection just after her puberty. This argument of the orthodox section of Hindus appears to be quite reasonable.

The argument of Dr. Barnett appears to be unreasonable for another reason that, child marriage was existant especially amongst the upper class Hindus who were not permitted to take a lower caste maiden without taking a wife from their own caste. As the boys were allowed to marry more than one girl even from their own caste, no seartity of groom in the upper castes could ariss.

Poly^gamy had been the rule in the Purānic age. We have witnessed the existence of this system in the days of the Vedas also, but it gradually spread. Widely in the purānic period. Polygamy had been mostly practised by the Rājanyas and then the Brāhmans. We shall discuss about this separately in this chapter.

Women enjoyed almost equal status with ^{t the} males. They had every liberty to select their own husbands in the event of their being remained unmarried after attaining the age of puberty. The Rājanya dames were allowed to select their own husbands from among the princes, and kings assembled at the hall of syavamvara. Devayānī was a maiden of matured age, when she proposed ¹⁹ ~~kaca~~ for marrying her. He, however, ~~xxxx~~ ²⁰ refused her proposal on the plea that as she was the daughter of his preceptor, she was as like as one of his sisters ²¹ ~~to his~~ and as such she was not considered fit to be wedded by him. ~~and~~ We may therefore, think it certain that the Purānic Hindus

paid every respect to their preceptors and the daughters of them were considered as sisters to their pupils. The system of dowry is also noticed in the Siva purāna.²²

Different purānas have dealt with the aspects connected with several angles of marriage.²³ Purānas have laid down in this context, what categories of dames are to be wedded, and what categories are not to be wedded²⁴ etc. They also recommend²⁵ desertion of wives under certain circumstances. But there is no prescription for the dissolution of marriage tie under any circumstances in any of the Purānas.²⁶ Varāha Purāna narrates that the prince of Kosāla abandoned, his wife, the princess of Prāgyotisapura for some reasons but their marriage was not dissolved and they were united again after a lapse of certain period of time.

Besides polygamous marriage, the Monogamy had also been prescribed in some of the Purānas. This may be then certain that the aristocratic Ksatriya families as well as a section of the Brāhmanas were habituated in taking more than one wife. It is apparent that excepting very few cases, every body belonging to any of the four castes observed the system of monogamy. There was no bar to a ~~man~~ wealthy Śūdra to have more than one wife from his own caste. Besides, according to the

instructions of our Dharmasāstras, Brāhmanas and Kṣatriyas were allowed to marry more than one maiden.

Pānigrahanasamkārah savarnāsūpadisyate /

Asavarnāsvayan jñeyo vidhirudvāhakarmani // 43

Śarah Kshatriyayā grāhyah pratodo vaiśyakanyayā /

Vasanasya dasā grāhyā Śūdrayotkrṣṭavedane // 44

(Mānava Dharma Sāstra III, 43-44, Jolly J (Ed), London.1887.

It has been prescribed in the Purānas²⁷ that a dame should not be related to the bridegroom five generations from her mother's side and seven generation from her father's side both preceding and following. It has also been laid down in the Garuḍapurāna²⁸ that a marriageable maiden should be handed over in marriage by her father or paternal grand-father or her uterine brother or any alike relation. We see that Garuḍa Purāna²⁹ has discouraged any system permitting the re-marriage of widows. Of the eight forms of marriage (as Garuḍa purāna stated) first four Daiva, Brahma, Ārsa and Prājāpatya have been recommended to be performed by the Brāhmanas i.e. Gāndhava and Rākṣasa for the Kṣatriyas and Āsura for the Vaiśyas. The Paiśāca form has been condemned by the Purānas (as the most condemnable form) and it has been prescribed for the Śūdras only.

Agnipurāna³⁰ has prescribed that a Brāhmana could wed four wives, i.e. one from his own caste and the other three from successive lower castes, a Kṣatriya similarly could wed three maidens in the like manner, a Vaiśya could take two and a Śūdra could wed only a maiden of his own caste .

Of course anybody was free to take plurality of wives from his own caste. This is understood on perusal of the above verse of the Agnipurāna that during this time the Hindus allowed the marriage of a member of any of the twice-born caste with a Śūdra woman, a union which was strongly forbidden by Manu in the ~~xxx~~ earlier age. ³¹ But as the son of a Brāhmana through his Śūdra wife was termed Pārasava, such a marriage was certainly discouraged. Manu however, opined afterwards that a Brāhmana or a Ksatriya or a vaisya male at first should marry a girl of his own caste and afterwards he could marry maidens of successive lower castes if he so desired (111/12). But the wife belonging to his own caste should participate in religious and sacrificial ceremonies with him which was denied to his lower caste wives. ³² This opinion of Manu has been fully endorsed by the above verse of the Agni-purāna (i.e. 154.1). But the Garudapurāna ³³ is allowing a Brāhmana to wed three maidens. One from his own caste and the other two from the successive two twice-born castes. The Ksatriyas were similarly authorised to marry two and the vaisyas and the Śūdras to marry one dame of their respective caste only. This Purāna strongly forbids union of a male of higher caste with a lady of Śūdra caste, and vice versa. The anuloma inter-caste union was allowed by the Purānic texts with the strong disapproval for pratiloma unions. We may think it justifiable that during the age of the Agnipurāna the Smrtikāras (law-givers) had allowed the members of the twice-born order to marry the Śūdra women. But when union of the Śūdra females with the

twice-born men resulted into the origin of so many mixed castes and as a result of which so many problems arose, the Smṛitikāras (the law givers) had to alter their previous opinion to the effect that the union of a member of the twice-born caste with a Sūdra female should not be approved. They further tried to give a check on the tendency of the inter caste marriage of the members of the twice-born people, perhaps with the prescription that a wife belonging to a lower caste should not be allowed to participate in the religious and ceremonial activities with her husband. Other reasons for introduction of the amloma inter-caste marriage have already been shown above.

It is further noticeable that even the amloma intercaste marriage, was strictly forbidden after commencement of the Kali Age, and these rules are recorded in the Ādipurāna. Even a scholar like Raghunandana, admitted the authority of such rules, which he has quoted from the Ādipurāna in his Udvāhatattva.

The women who happened to become widows, in those days were prescribed to lead a life of strict celibacy by most of our Smṛitikāras, and we have discussed about them in our foregoing chapter as well as in this chapter. The lament of a widow of tender age as recorded in the Vismipurāna (Book -1, ch-15) Points to the fact that the fate of a minor widow in the Hindu society was not perhaps always a sweet one. This point we have discussed again at page 142. the tender aged girls were used to be hard over a marriage in the Puranic age.

Foot Notes.

1. Brahma purāna - (Panchanan Tarkaratna) 1316 B.S. - Cal.
199. 1-12. Vishnu P. - V.26. Śrīmad Bhāgavata - X. 53.
51-57, X-54. 1-8, 50-60, etc.
2. Brahma-Purāna - 203.4. Visnu P - V.35 Śrīmad Bhāgavath X.68.1 et
3. Agnipurāna - XIII. 5 - (Panchanan - 1316 B.S. Cal).
4. Brahma purāna - 36, 1-26, 52-53, etc.
5. Śiva purāna - Rudra Samhitā. Section- 1, ch - 3. 28.1-3.
6. Manu Samhitā - III. 12.
7. Padmapurāna -(Panchanan) Pātāla Khaṇḍa- VI. 132-133.,
8. Śrīmad Bhāgavata - III. XXII. 14-19, 20-24.
9. Matsya Purāna - (Panchanan) Chapter 30.
10. Ibid. XXX. 18. 20.
11. Ibid. XXX. 17. 19. 21-22, 27.
12. Ibid. XXX. 25-26. 33.
13. Ibid. XXX. 32, 34-36.
14. Mārkaṇḍeya purāna - 113. 22-37, 114. 1-5.
15. Brahma purāna - X. 1-9, 10 (1st chapter Vāgu - purāna -
91st chapter.
16. Rg. Veda - X. 95.
17. Garuda purāna. 95th chapter. (Panchanan - 1314 B.S. Cal)
18. Barnett L.D. - Antiquities of India p.144 (Puthi Pustak, Cal).
19. Matsya P. - 25. 27.
20. Ibid. XXVI. 2-5, 9-11.
21. Ibid. XXVI. 6-8. 12-16, 18-20 etc.

22. Sivapurāna - Rudra saṁhitā. Section 2, Chapter-19.
23. Viṣṇupurāna - Book 3, Chapter 10. Agnipurāna -154th ch.
Nāradiyapurāna - 24th ch. Garadapurana -95th ch.
24. Viṣṇupurāna - Book 3, Ch. 10
Nāradiyapurāna 24. 1-13, etc.
25. Nāradiyapurāna - 24.14-15.
26. Varāhapurāna - 126th ch. (Panchanan- 1316 B.S.Cal).
- 27 to 29 - Garudapurāna 95th ch.
30. Agnipurāna - 154.1
31. Manu Smṛiti - III/14, III/15 - 19.
32. Ibid - IX/86.
33. Garudapurāna - 95.6
34. "dvi jānāmasavarnāsu kanyāsūpyamastathā - quoted by
Raghunandana in his Udvāhotattva.

The Polygamy

Polygamy during the age of the Purānas

The texts of the Purānas and Upanurānas¹ are however, descriptive to some extent, king Uttānapāda of hoary antiquity according to the Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purānas had two queens. King Sagara² had two wives, namely Sumati and Kesinī. King Daśaratha³ of the Ikṣhāku family of Ayodhyā also possessed at least three wives, namely, Kausalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā. Furthermore, king Pāṇdu⁴ possessed two wives, named Kuntī and Mādrī. All the above references of Polygamous unions have also been supported by Epic sources. The above evidences can easily be multiplied if we wish to utilise the Purānic references furthermore. In fact, it is apparent that this type of wedding was not denounced during the age of high antiquity in India and also in civilized nations throughlout the world. We have however discussed ~~about~~ about different aspects of Polygamous union in details in our first chapter. One more point is to be highlighted here in this connection, viz. the earnest desire of living creators ^{belonging to both the} sexes to live jointly on permanent arrangement and to enjoy sexual pleasure might have resulted into so many problems in the remote part. With a view to avoid these problems, these primitive creatures might have felt it an utmost necessity to give their sexual relation a normal shape and consequently the marriage as a system originated as such. To procreate offspring for continuity of the line should have also been one of the principal causes of the origin of marriage which trend we specially notice with regard to origin

of this system among the Hindus. Our foregoing observation then point ~~a~~ to the fact that the monogamous nature of wedlock had been introduced first of all among mankind. With the passing of time however, gradually the rich as well as aristocratic personnels preferred to polygamy and this system had been existing side by side with monogamy. Now, as for the Hindus, so far as we gather from their literature of antiquity, that they practised monogamy and mostly the Rājanyas and a sections of the Brāhmanas were accustomed to the practice of polygamy.

The Puranic sources supply us the materials in favour of existence of monogamous marriage among the ancient Hindus. Dakṣa⁵ Prajāpati practised bigamy, his wives being Prasūti and Asiknī by name. Dakṣa Prajāpati may be identified with one of the mythical personalities, but one thing should be taken into account simultaneously in this context that the Hindus practised bigamy even during the primitive stage of their civilization, the view which is supported by the above Purānic references. So many instances of polygamous union has been recorded in the Mahābhārata. We shall discuss all these evidences in our third chapter. Purānic instances of polygamy has also been supported by Epic sources.

We are however, willing to speak a few more words about the prevalence of this practice in the Purānic age. We have already discussed just now that kings like Uttānapāda, Sagara, Daśaratha, Pāndu and the ~~forest~~ sage Kāśyapa and Dakṣaprajāpati practised polygamy. Our Puranic literature reveals that they

secured their wives from among their own castes only. Besides these instances of polygamous marriages of men and women of the same caste, there are references in the Puranic texts wherein the anuloma inter-caste unions have been recommended. We all know the fact however that the anuloma inter-caste union is a later-Vedic regularisation. Both the Agni and the Garuda Purānas prescribe this form of ~~xxx~~ wedlock. Agni-Purāna prescribes that a Brāhmana is free to marry one maiden from his own caste first of all, and there after three dames, one each from successive lower Castes. A Ksatriya could similarly wed/^{three} ladies in the like manner and a Vaiśya also could practice bigamy. But a Śūdra was not authorised to marry any woman of the three twice-born castes. He had however, no bar in practising polygamy within his own caste. Garuda Purāna on the contrary, approves anuloma union in between the members of three twice-born castes only, and strongly forbids the union of any of the members of the twice-born (dvija) orders with that of a Śūdra. We have discussed the above points in the chapter before hand.

Further more, Manu and Yājñabalkya, the foremost of the Smṛtikāras rule that a Brāhmana or a Ksatriya should never take a Sudra girl as his wife, even in his bad days. Manu, rules that when a Brāhmana takes a Śūdra girl as his wife, he is polluted with sin, and becoming the father of her child, he falls from his caste. The privilege of participation in the religious and sacrificial ceremonius was only preserved for the wife of the same caste of the husband and this was denied to

the wives of the lower castes. Though the Anuloma marriage (groom belonging to the upper caste and bride to the lower caste) under the above circumstances was approved, the pratiloma marriage was strictly forbidden. We must add a few words as to why the Smrtis and the Purānas took to such a view.

By education, morality and good behaviour a Brāhmana in those days was superior to one belonging to any of the three other castes. A Ksatriya, though inferior to a Brāhman, was superior to one belonging to the two other castes. As regards a Vaisya, he was inferior to the two upper castes but superior to a Sūdra, and a Sūdra was inferior to all the three other castes. The leaders of the Hindu society had an idea to raise the standard of all. A wife, as a general rule was dominated by her husband. Hence when a son was born to a lower caste woman by an upper caste man, he was expected to have merits and other qualities superior to that of his mother's caste. On the other hand, when an upper caste woman was married to a lower caste man, and gave birth to a son, the boy was often found to have qualities even, inferior to those of his father's caste. Hence for upgrading the standard of the society, Anuloma inter caste marriage was approved, with strong prohibition to the reverse kind of marriage.

But relation in between co-wives was not always a sweet one. Visnu and Bhāgavata Purāna narrate one such incident where we see that the step-mother of Dhruva, Suruci by name did not like him, and that one day she bitterly rebuked him

in the presence of his father (king Uttarapada) on the plea of some negligible offence. It is mentioned in different Purānas that the step mother of Sagara mixed poison with the food of his mother, during the time of her pregnancy, and as a result there of she untimely gave birth to the child for which the name Sagara was given to him. Due to the lowmindedness of his step mother Kaikeyī Rāma had to be exiled for a certain period of time (in the forest) and this had been recorded in different Purānas. Different aspects of matrimonial procedure of our marriage has been dealt with in our Vedic Chapter.

Foot Notes.

1. Vishnu purāna - I.X.1. 3-5.
2. Ibid. IV. 4.1.
3. Agni purāna - V. 4-5.
4. Ibid. 13th ch.
5. Brahma purāna (Pancanan - 1316 B.S. Cal) 2nd ch.
Vishnu purāna - 1.15.

Polyandry

This system was unknown to the Vedic people. We are met with only two examples of Polyandry in the Puranic texts, viz. the incident of the marriage of Mārisā with the ten Pracetasas who were the sons of king Prācīnvanhi, which is recorded in the Brahma¹ as well as in the Viṣṇu Purāna.²

Agni purāna narrates the incident of five Pāṇḍava brothers jointly marrying Draupadī.³ Puranic chapters are silent about prevalence of this custom save except these two references, probably for the reason that the Āryas did not favour this custom at all, and as such this was really not practised in the Purānic society in India. This system has not been encouraged in the Purānas either Dr. L.D. Barnett observes "The custom of polyandry, in which a woman is taken as the common wife of a number of brothers or similar group, has always prevailed in some parts of India, notably the Dravidian South and certain regions of the Himalaya and was known to the early legists. This practice was always strongly opposed by the ancient Brāhmanas. There is no evidence that it was ever limited to the races outside the Aryan pale".⁴

This we can also add before drawing conclusion on this issue that the Mārkaṇḍeyapurāna⁵ has also spoken of Draupadī and her marriage with the five Pāṇavas, but while dealing with this, it has been tried to give it a shape of mythology.

We cannot ignore the fact that, king Prācīnavarhi took a foreign girl as his wife, whom he brought after conquering a country on the other side of the sea. This girl in the Viṣṇupurāna (1. 14. 5) is called Savarnā, apparently for having her exceptional fair complexion. For suppressing the real identity of her father, she was called a daughter of the sea (samudratanayā).

Samudratanayāyantu Krtadāro mahīpatih /

Mahatastamamah pāre savarnāyā mahīpate ! //

After Prācīnavarhi's death, the people of India refused to accept the said lady's sons as their king and war broke out. The ten princes, fled to the country of their maternal useless and returned/ with a new army. It is apparent that they received help from some hill tribes of India, and for satisfying these hill tribes they took a hill girl as their wife. This interpretation has been given by R. Siddhantashastree in his book 'History of the Prākaliyuga India' (Ch. Four) (Inter India Publications, Delhi, 1977). Finally when treaty was signed, the people accepted the ten brothers and their non-Aryan wife as their king and queen, for which they declared the former as sons of the Pracetasas, and the latter as a daughter of trees.

As regards Draupadī having her five husbands, this also was against the popular tradition of the country, for this act, the Pāṇḍavas had to raise anger of Duryodhana and others. It was for this reason that the Pāṇḍavas with their wife

Draupadī had to live in banishment for 13 years, and even after that to fight such a fierce battle that all the sons of Draupadī were killed.

Under the circumstances, we cannot hold poly^andry as a practice, prevalent in ancient India at any time. We have however tried to discuss about the different aspects of this practice keeping in view the opinion of modern scholars on this topic, in our first chapter.

Foot Notes.

1. Brahma Purāna - 11. 45.
2. Viṣṇu Purāna - 1.15
3. Agni Purāna - XIII. 14. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna - fifth chapter.
4. Barnett L.D. Dr. - "Antiquities of India" - Ch. III. p.145.
5. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna - fifth chapter.

Niyoga

We have already discussed in details about the origin and the successive characteristics and prevalence of Niyoga in our first chapter. Therefore, we are not going to discuss the same again right now. We have observed that the Niyoga has been favoured by a verse of the Rgveda.¹ The Agnipurāna is descriptive of the prevalence of this system. We see that when Vicitravīrya (belonging to the Kuru dynasty) died ~~childless~~ childless, Vyāsa be-got offsprings on his widows namely Ambikā and Ambālikā on the request of his mother Satyavati.² The five sons of Pāndu, (the brother of the Kuru king Dhrtarāstra) were born as a result of co-habitation of different gods (Devas) with his queens namely Kuntī and Mādrī respectively.³ But Bṛhannāradya purāna denounces this custom for the Kali age.⁴ Ādipurāna also records similar injunctions (Ādipurāna quoted by Raghunandana in his udvāhatattva), while Garuda purāna prescribed that the younger brother (i.e. Devara) or Sagotra or a Saninda relation of a man who dies childless, might beget an offspring on his wife with the permission of his elders. The child such born, should belong to the legal husband of the woman. Our Smrtikāras have held the same opinion with regard to the birth of a son as a result of application of this custom

Manu refers this practice. (IX 59), though he was not in favour of its enforcement. It seems that though this

practice had been in existence in the Purānic age, the law-givers of this age also were divided in their opinion about tendering moral support in favour of it. But obviously the Hindu society felt necessity for continuation of this practice which might reasonably discourage the widows for having a second husband.

Foot Notes.

1. Rgveda - X. 40. 2.
2. Agni Purāna - (Panchanan) XIII.8
3. Ibid. XIII, 9-10.
4. Brihan-nāradya purāna - 22. 13. 16.
5. Garuda Purāna - 96th ch.
(Panchanan)

D i v o r c e

While discussing about the above issue in the first chapter, we have opined that there was no existence of the system of divorce in the Vedic age. We have noticed in vedic hymns¹ that strong desire has been expressed against the dissolution of the marriage tie. We further see in the Purānic texts too that there had been no possibility of existence of divorce in any shape or form during this age. In some of the Purānas², there are examples of some stray happenings where the wife has been deserted by her husband. Varāhapurāna narrates the episode of desertion of the wife of a prince of Kosāla (his wife being the princess of Prōgyotisapura). The prince however took back his wife again and their marriage did not meet an end at anytime. How much authentic the above episode historically is, we do not know; but one thing seems clear in this context, that the Hindus did not practice this custom (i.e. Divorce) even in the Purānic age. Our Dharmasāstras have not ruled in favour of this system. We can think it proper therefore, that this system had not been in existence in the Purānic age too. It seems proper that divorce had not been one of the characteristics of the Hindu/marriage in the age of the Vedas and the Purānas. We shall however, try to discuss about the prevalence of this system in the successive ages when we shall proceed to our following chapters. Before drawing conclusion we think it better to highlight some remarks of Manu with regard to the relation of husband and wife in the remote past.

Manu while describing the duties of a husband and his wife, opines that "Let mutual fidelity (between husband and wife) continue till death; this in brief may be understood to be the highest Dharma of man and wife"³. He further holds, that "neither by sale, nor by desertion the wife should be deserted by her husband; we understand that this is the law ordained by the creator in former times "⁴ Manu, as we see therefore is strictly against the dissolution of the marriage tie. Much has been said while discussing the prevalence of this issue in the Vedic age.

Besides, the aforesaid example of Varāha purāna, we can also cite another two such evidences of desertion of wives by their husbands in our country in the age of high antiquity. First of all, we can take up the episode of the illicit connection of Soma, the son of Atarī, with ~~the~~ Tārā, the wife of Brhaspati. Tara was forcibly carried away by Soma from the residence of Brhaspati. She was however, again united with Brhaspati after the lapse of so many years. This incident has been referred to by the Brahma⁵ and some other Purānas. Another instance of such type has been furnished by some of the Purānas when we see that Ahalyā was abandoned by her husband Goutama for the reasons of her illicit connection with Indra, the king of the Devas (gods). She was reunited with her husband after a long time. To accept the authenticity of the aforesaid evidences may be a subject of controversy among scholars, but one thing seems clear in this context, that divorce was not

introduced among the Hindus in any age and that the Hindus always considered this marriage a sacrament and that they never wanted its dissolution under any circumstances.

Foot Notes.

1. R.V. - X. 85
2. Varāha purāna - 126th Ch. _____
3. Manu - IX. 101 . 2.
4. Ibid. - IX. 46
5. Brahma purāna - 9th ch. _____

Re-Marriage of widows.

We have tried to discuss in details about the prevalence of the custom of Re-marriage of widows amongst Hindus in the days of the Vedas in our forgoing chapter. The views of Mann have been taken into consideration while dealing with the above issue in that chapter. Different controversial verses of the RK and Atharva Vedas put forward by a section of scholars in support of their views that the Hindu widows happened to be re-married in the Vedic age, have also been illustrated suitably. We have tried to prove last of all that there had not been in existence any system which permitted the re-marriage of Hindu widows during that age. We are now opening the same discussions in this chapter right now as to wheather the said system during the Puranic age had been prevailing or not.

While going through the relevant chapters of the Agnipurāna we are met with a verse which is narrated as under :

"naste mrte pravrajite klive ca patite patau
pañcasvāpatsu nārīnām patiranyo vidhiyate"¹

This verse is seen in the Nārada and Porāsara² Somhitās also, as according to the discussion of Kane in his thesis, hence its authority cannot be denied.

A section of scholars (of whom Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was one) had interpreted the meaning of this verse

as under. A woman is permitted to secure another husband under the following five calamities :

(1) When her husband is unheard of (2) On his death (3) on his becoming a Sannyāsin (4) on his becoming impotent and (5) On his being a patita. (fallen person). Mahendra Nath Dutta Śāstri in his English translation of the Agnipurāna³ and Panānan Tarkaratna in his Bengali interpretation of the same Purāna⁴ followed process of translation as of Pandit Iswar Chandra. But there is another group of scholars who do not accept the above interpretation. They are of the opinion that the word in the first line of this verse is 'apati' meaning iṣat-pati or partially husband and not pati as the said scholars think. According to their interpretation this verse stands for the following meaning - A woman might be permitted to marry again, under the said five calamities of her 'apati', with whom her marriage rite had not ^{been} completed. The fact must be considered in this connection that according to the rule of Pānini and also of other Sanskrit grammarians, the Sanskrit term pati (husband) in the seventh case-ending, singular number becomes patyau, and under no circumstances it can be 'patay' as the said scholars have claimed. According to the grammarians, only when the term Pati is compounded with another word, it can have a similar form as is found in the verse. The orthodox scholars, therefore appear to be quite justified, when they claim that the term Pati in the noṣ-tatpuruṣa compound became apati (iṣat Pati) with whom husband and wife relation has not been lawfully completed,

and that this word apati in the seventh case ending singular number became apatau, which when joined with the rule of euphony (sandhi) became Patite = Patau as found in the verse quoted above.

Further, in the Smṛti literature we find that even when in any of the aforesaid five different calamities a betrothed girl takes a different man as her husband, she is held to be unholy, and the householders are advised not to take such a bride in their family. Such a girl is termed Punarbhū, and according to the Smṛtikāras the punarbhūs are of seven categories. Kāśyapa has also endorsed their views. These seven types of punarbhū have already been mentioned with their various definitions in the foregoing chapter. We shall try to understand the definition of 'Apati' or 'Iṣat Pati' in this context. The Sanskrit term 'Anati' or 'Iṣat Pati' literally means a person who has obtained same rights on the husbandship of a maiden, though he has not become a complete husband as because the samskāra (vedic rite) of marriage has not been performed, till that time, and he could not be united with the girl.

Kāśyapa is of the opinion, that in the Apati (or Iṣat Pati) under any of the aforesaid five calamities, her actual marriage with some other person should result into the total disruption of her family. These views of the Smṛtikāras point to the fact that they did not want to entertain any sort of claim in favour of the widow re-marriage. The opinion of Manu can be taken into consideration in the

context of the re-marriage of widows. Manu strongly holds that there should not be any scope for the re-marriage of widows.

Our Purānic texts do not exhibit any reference in support of widows' marriage. We are met with some instances in the Purānas⁶ where it has been observed that the wives were deserted by their husbands in some cases, but all these do not indicate the dissolution of the marriage tie. There is one ~~episode~~ episode recorded in the Viṣṇu purāna⁷ where we see that a tender aged widow laments for her miserable conditions as because of her being a girl widow, but there is no prescription for her re-marriage recorded anywhere in this Purāna as a matter of fact. Moreover, the incidents of desertion of wives by their husbands which has already been referred to above by us, do not indicate the possibilities of these wives being married again. Different Purānic chapters moreover, speak firmly against the re-marriage of dames. The relevant chapter of the Agnipurāna (i.e. 154th ch.) which includes the verse we have already considered with regard to the possibility of the widow re-marriage (i.e. 154 - 5) also includes a verse which stands for the meaning that a dome is to be given in marriage once only.⁸ Garudapurāna also confirms this. Then how this Purāna again could advocate for widows' re-marriage? It seems probable therefore that the relevant verse of the Agnipurāna (i.e. 154 - 5) permits the re-marriage of dames under five calamities who happened to be promised in marriage to a person with whom really the Saṅskāra of marriage had not been fully performed.

Here the word seems to be apati and not pati and as such remarriage of widows in the proper sense of the term, cannot be held as approved.

Before we close our discussions on this issue, we should try to discuss something about the opinion of Manu on the custom of the re-marriage of widows. Manu while prescribing the duties of a widow firmly holds that nowhere is a second husband declared for a virtuous woman⁹. Manu further holds that "A widow should rather live on leaves, roots and fruits but under no circumstances she should think for a second marriage after the death of her husband"¹⁰, while speaking about the duties of husband and wife, Manu observes, "In the procedure of marriage, there is no declaration about the re-marriage of widows"¹¹. Manu further declares that a maiden can be given only once"¹². We can quote another line from Manu which speaks "Vedic mantras and pānigrahaṇa are applicable to maidens (unmarried girls) only"¹³. On examining the various remarks of Manu which are referred to above, we become confident that he was completely against widow's re-marriage. He rather thinks of widows' leading a life of strict celibacy as is evident from his aforesaid remarks.

Viṣṇu saṁhitā (also known as Viṣṇu Smṛiti) while dealing with the lot of a widow, prescribes, "After the death of her husband a widow either should lead a life of strict celibacy or she should ascend the funeral pyre of her husband after his death"¹⁴. Viṣṇu Saṁhitā is also therefore, against the re-marriage of widows.

There are other law givers who are also not endorsing any view in support of widow-marriage. We are not quoting them in this place as because they have not said anything original than that of Manu. There might have been some incidents in the former ages of widows ~~being marriage~~ again or deserted by their first husband, and living with a stranger for a certain period and again returning to her former husband, but all these stories support some sorts of incidents of ~~an~~ adultery, and they do not point to the fact that widow-remarriage was a prevailing or approved custom in our country about some thousand years back.

We may also take the opportunity of speaking a few words about the duties of a wife in the event of her husband had gone abroad for some years after marriage. Kane also has discussed about this in his thesis. We gather from him that Nārada prescribes for wives to be resorted to another man after waiting for a certain number of years. ¹⁵ Brāhmaṇa widows had to wait for a comparatively longer period than that of the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya wives. Manu and Vasīṣṭha also have prescribed a certain period for the wives to wait for the return of their husbands, but they are silent about the duties of the wives in the event of their husbands not returning to them. Having an eye on the rules of Manu and other Smṛti and Purāna texts, we may reasonably say that the rules cited by Kane were meant for the apatis and not for the husbands. As there are many evidences of self-immolation of the widows in different Purānas and not even a single instance of widow re-marriage, we must admit the

fact that, widow re-marriage in its proper sense had never been sanctioned by the Purānas.

In a verse the Agnipurāna reads. "Mrte tu devare daivāt tadabhāve Yathechayā" (154. 6 -). Mahendra Nath Dutta Sāstrī has interpreted this in the following way :
 "The widow of a man can marry the brother of her husband, if living and willing to take her as his wife, while in the alternative she ^{may} marry whomsoever she pleases".

Sri Panchanan Tarkaratna in his Bengali translation of this Purāna has ~~it~~ followed the same process of interpretation. As the above quoted Sanskrit text is directly connected with the verse 'naste mrte pravrajite.' etc. it must have its reference to apati and not with the husband (pati) in its proper sense.

Moreover, this appears to be a case of Niyoga, which is different from marriage. When a man dies untimely without any child, his widow, in those days was permitted to have a son by a younger brother of her deceased husband. When such man died without having any brother, his widow, if she so desired might get a child from any other respectable man, for preserving the line of her husband. For this purpose, no marriage rite was necessary. It is further ruled by Manu and other Smṛtikāras that, just after her conception the widow should observe her strict sanctity under all circumstances. The elaborate discussion about the pros and cons of Niyoga has been made by us in the

1st chapter of this book and also in this chapter before hand. The process of interpretation of the aforesaid verse as followed by Sri Mahendra Nath Dutt Shastri and Sri Panchanan Tarkaratna therefore, according to our consideration is not correct and it does not carry out the proper essence of the verse. In conclusion, we can also refer to the Brahma vaivarta purāna wherein strict rules have been prescribed for a widow in the context of her leading the life of celibasy and self denial after her husband's demise,¹⁶ without permitting her to think for having a second husband.

FOOT NOTES

1. Agnipurāna - 154.5
2. Kane P.V. - History of Dharma Sāstra - V.2-PI-I ch XIV pp. 610-11 (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Poona, 1941).
3. Bengali translation of Agnipurāna edited by Sri Panchanan Tarkaratna in 1316 B.S. from Calcutta.
4. Prose English translation of the Agnipurāna by Sri Mahendra Nath Dutt Shastri published from Chavkhamba publication Varanasi in 1967. The translation of the above verse is seen in 153rd ch. of the translated Agnipurana into English by Sri Datt Shastri.
5. Vācādattā manodattā kṛta kautuka - maṅgalā ndaka - sparśitā yā ca yā ca pānigrhitikā agnim parigatā yā ca Punarbhūprābhavā ca yā ityetaḥ kāśyapanoktā dahanti kulamagnivat kāśyapa smṛti.

6. We learn from the Varāhapurāna that a prince of Kosala married the princess of prayyatisapura and afterwards he deserted her for some reasons. They were again re-united after the lapse of certain period of time and that their marriage was not dissolved (Varāha purāna - 126th ch. Pancanan Tarkaratna Ed. Cal.).
7. Bhagevan' bālavaidhavyād vrthājanmāhamīdrśī mandabhagyā samutpannā visama ca jagatpate
= Visnupurāna - 1.15.63.
8. Sakrt kanyā pradatavyā - Agnipurāna - 154.3.
9. Manusmṛti - V.162.
10. Ibid. V. 157.
11. Ibid. IV. 65.
12. Ibid. IX. 47.
13. Ibid. VIII. 226.
14. Mṛte bhartari brahmacaryyam tadenvārohanamvā -
Visnu Samhitā - - 25.14.
15. Kane History of Dharma - sāstra - V.2 - P.I. Ch.XIV.
p.p.612-613.
16. Brahma-vaivarta purāna - Srikr̥ṣṇa Janma Khanda - 83.92-103.

Self Immolation of widows

While dealing with this issue in our first chapter, we have discussed that there has not been any reference recorded in the vedic texts which can prove forcible burning of the widows alongwith the corpses of their respective husbands in the same funeral pyre. The fact has been shown in the foregoing chapter that there is not any injunction in the Vedic texts in support of such a forcible burning of widows. On the contrary the widows were dissuaded by their relations from such a fatal step. We have also observed in our foregoing chapter that not only the females of Rājanya families but also the ladies of the Brāhmaṇa caste used to immolate themselves along with their husband's dead bodies. Let us now open our discussions on the prevalence of this custom in the Purāṇic age.

There are several instances of widows observing this custom recorded in the Purāṇic texts. We are met with the incidents of the dearest wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa such as Rohini¹ and seven others, who burnt themselves along with the dead body of their beloved, after Kṛṣṇa's demise. This information is recorded in the relevant chapter of the Brahma-Purāṇa.¹ The same information is found in the Bhāgavata and Viṣṇu² Purāṇas as well. These Purāṇas further reveal that the wives of Balarāma inclusive of Rohini also entered the funeral pyre with the dead body of their husband (Bh.P.XI.31.20 also Brh.P. 212,3). Viṣṇu purāṇa also confirms this story³ Linga Purāṇa mentions this very briefly.⁴ The Bhāgavata Purāṇa Further describes that all the daughters-in-law of

Kṛṣṇa also immolated⁵ themselves with the dead bodies of their respective husbands. Viṣṇupurāṇa narrates the story of queen Śaivyā who immolated⁶ herself in the funeral pyre of her husband king Śatadhānuṣ. When the renowned emperor Pṛthu died, his queen Arci Devī also did the same.⁷ This incident may be referred back for an instance of self-immolation in the Vedic age as king Pṛthu has been named several times in the R.Ṛ. One more instance of widows' self-immolation is gathered from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa where we see that the widow of a Brāhmin burnt herself along with the dead body of her husband when he was killed by king Mitrasaha who was the son of king Sudāsa⁸ of Ayodhyā belonging to the Vedic days.

All these instances prove that the widows belonging to the Kshatriya and Brāhmaṇa castes used to mount their husbands' funeral pyres if they so liked, and such an action has its support in the Smṛti texts as well. None of the Purāṇas records even a single instance of forcible burning of widows, or even of any other innocent Person, and forcible burning is not supported by any text, whether the Vedas, Smṛtis, Purāṇas or Epics. We come across the references in the Brahma Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas ^{where we see} that all the wives of Kṛṣṇa did not burnt themselves following his death. Most of them chose⁰ to survive and only those who were very dear to him burnt themselves along with his dead body.

Different Dharmasāstras imposed several restrictions on the burning of widows. They have prescribed that the mother of an infant child, the lady who has been in her monthly course

or a girl who has not attained the age of puberty should not mount their husband's funeral Pyres. This has also been endorsed by the Brihannāradiya Purāna.⁹ There are references also in the other Purānas in support of these prescriptions. The Padmapurāna reveals that a Brāhmaṇa lady, who was mounting her husband's funeral pyre after when he was killed by a Sūdra, was dissuaded by the preceptor of her husband from taking this fatal step because of her being pregnant at that time.¹⁰ We further see that when king Bāhu, the son of king Vrka of Iksāku family breathed his last, his junior queen while about to ascend his funeral pyre was dissuaded by the Sage Aurva as¹¹ for the same reason.

We are met with the reverse incidents in the other Purānas as well. Agnipurāna is informative of the happening of king Pāṇdu's death which was followed by his junior queen Mādri's self immolation. Mādri had at the time of her immolation,¹² been the mother of two children. According to the Mahābhārata (Haridas Siddhanta Vagish's edition) at the time of Pāṇdu's death Mādri's two sons were 13 and 12 years of age respectively. Hence she did not disobey the Śāstic injunction which forbids such an action for the mother of a child of less than 5 years. Skanda Purāna narrates the story of the self-immolation of the wife of the sage Dadhīci. The widow of the great sage, Subarcā by name, breathed her last soon after the death of her husband, as because she could not have perhaps put up¹³ with the burden of the grief of the demise of her husband.

The duties of widow in the event of her mounting funeral Pyre has been prescribed in the Purānic texts. The good effects

of observing this custom by the widows has also been narrated by the Purānic chapters. We see that the widow of a Brāhmaṇa, Abhayā by name, immolated herself after her husband was burnt. She was rather encouraged by the sage Nārada who narrated before her the merits of burning of a widow following the death of her husband.¹⁴ We further notice that she moved round the fire thrice, distributed fruits, clothes perfumes, and ornaments among the married woman assembled around her (to witness her self immolation) and addressed to gods to witness her courage of entering into fire following her departed husband.¹⁶

This is a case of Anumohana as because her husband was burnt beforehand and she followed him in a separate pyre.¹⁷ When in the Brahma and the Bhāgavata Purānas we find several wives of Balarāma and ~~Kṛṣṇa~~ Kṛṣṇavāsudeva to have immolated themselves, it is obvious that all other ladies burnt themselves, in a separate pyre, because immolation of more than one wife with the corpses of their husbands is prohibited in the Sāstras.

The Purānic texts do not also record in lump of cases of self immolation of widows. This custom was optional to the widows and we get only references of Ladies belonging to Brāhmin and Kṣatriya castes observing this custom in the texts of the Purānas and Upapurānas.

Brahma vaivarta purāna¹⁸ narrates that Remikā, the mother of Parasurāma and the wife of sage Jamadagni resolved

to immolate herself in the funeral pyre of her husband after hearing ~~Rxxx~~ the news of the slaughter of her husband by king Kārtavīryya. But as she was on her fourth day of her monthly course, she obtained the permission of sage Bhṛgu in the context of her above decision. Bhṛgu in this context had spoken of the merits of this practice. According to him, ¹⁹ a lady who immolates herself in the funeral pyre of her husband brings her husband to heaven along with her, just as a snake charmer brings a snake out of its hole in a forest, and that she dwells in heaven accompanying him for such an unimaginatory longer period as that of the reign of fourteen Indras.

²⁰
This Purāṇa further prescribes that a widow who is pregnant or who is in her monthly course, or who is of loose character (Kulātā) or who is suffering from an infectious type of disease (such as leprosy) or who is not devoted to her husband, or who is not wellbehaved, if and even when ascends the funeral pyre of her husband, fails to unite with him in heaven after her such ^a self immolation.

Accordingly Renukā in the presence of her son Parāśu-rāma and other relations ascended the funeral pyre, and was ²¹ consumed by fire.

The argument put forward by a group of scholars that the rich Hindus of ancient time introduced the custom of widow immolation, so that the property of the deceased person might go to his brothers or even to his other kins or relations. But

this idea having its support nowhere in our ancient literature must be considered as a baseless imagination. Immolation of a widow, has been prescribed specially for the Brāhmaṇa community, (mṛtāṃ bharttāraṃ = āliṅva brāhmaṇai vahnimāviśet/Vyāsa - saṃhitā II. 53) and it is well known that the Brāhmaṇa community, since eternity had been the financially poorest of all the human communities in this subcontinent. Even when, a few years ago, Andhra and some other South Indian states, innumera-
 ted the different sections of people with their financial status, Brāhmaṇas were found to be the poorest section. It is absurd that the poorest section of the people, who liked to remain the poorest, introduced the cruel custom of killing their own women for grabbing her husband's property. Moreover, the widows who immolated themselves in the funeral pyre of their respective husbands, often had their grown up sons who were the natural inheritors of her husband's property. Further more, as in almost all the cases, the widow ready for self immolation was requested by her near relations not to take to such a fatal step, and as the alternative for her leading a life of celibacy was prescribed in the Sāstras, the idea of forcible or purposeful immolation of the widows appears to be ridiculous.

Foot Notes

1. Brahma Purāna - 212.2. - Bh.P. (Gupta Press, Gorakhpur ed)
X 1.31.20.
2. Br. P. 212.3.BL.P. XI. 31. 20.
3. Visnu purāna - V. 23. 1-3
Bh. P. XI.310 18-20.
4. Linga purāna - 1. 69. 88. 91
5. Bhāgavata p. - XI. 31. 19.30.
6. Visnu purāna - III. 18.20
7. Bhāgavata P. IV. 23. 22.
8. Ibid. IX./36.
9. Kane PV - History of Dharmasāstra - V.2 - Ch. XV. P. 633
10. Padma purāna - Uttam Khanda - 210.2
11. Visnu purāna - IV. 3.2. Brahma p. - VII.39
12. Agnipurāna - XIII. 9 - 10.
13. Skanda purāna - Mahesvara Khanda XVII. 13-14.
14. Padma purāna Pātāla Khanda 65.61, 67-69 etc.
- 15.
16. Ibid. - 65 - 88, 95.
17. Ibid. 65. 96.
18. Brahma Vaivarta purāna - Ganapati Khanda (Mathura Nath
Tarkaratna Ed, Cal-1290 BS). 28.1-3
19. x Ibid. 28.5-6.
20. Ibid. 28. 5-6.
21. Ibid. 28. 41-43.

Educational System

The detailed discussion about the prevalence of the above system in the Vedic age has been made by us in the 1st chapter of this book. The Purānic chapters supply us detailed description of this system. The description of the daily life of a student has been given in many of the Purānas. Viṣṇu Purāna also elucidates this point. Viṣṇu Purāna prescribes that a student should go to the house of his preceptor (Guru) (after he had gone through the initiation ceremony) with a fixed mind. He should be engaged in the services of his Guru with purified mind and soul, study the Vedas under his guidance after performing his daily rites with a fixed mind. He should salute his preceptor when he had been standing, should follow him when he had been moving and should take his seat like a subordinate person when his Guru would take his seat. He should study the Vedas according to the pleasure of his Guru. He should be out for begging with the permission of his preceptor and live on what he had received from begging. He should collect flowers, Kuśa and water every morning for his Guru.

He should return his home with the permission of his preceptor after paying his dakṣinās (fees) after when he had finished his study of the Vedas (Viṣṇu P-111.9.1-7). They were taught by their teachers on the texts of the Vedas, Vedāngas and other sacred books, such as the science of archery, with its secret (applications), Āyurveda (the medical science), the science of astrology and astronomy etc. We find Ṛāca's¹ stay in his preceptors (Śukra's) house

as a disciple and to undergo the life of a Brahmacārin. Krishna and Balarāma had to undergo the initiation rites and ceremony after which they had been sent to the Muni (sage) Sandīpani for being educated. We should not forget the fact that ²the twice born boys ~~could~~ possessed the right ~~to~~ to become a Vedic student ^{only} (Brahmacārin).

We see in the Bhāgavata Purāna that Krishna and Balarāma, on the day they had become snātakas, went to their preceptor Sandīpani for paying him some sort of dakṣiṇā.³

On the whole, the students had to live with their teacher (preceptor) while engaged in their studies. They had to lead a life of strict discipline as student. The Sūdras had no right to study the Vedas. Brāhmanas were initiated generally at the age of eight, Ksatriyas at the age of eleven and the Vaiśyas at the age of twelve or as customary to their families. The age of initiation has been fixed for a Brāhmana 8 to 16 years, that of a Kshatriya 11 - 22 years and for a Vaiśya 12 - 24 years (Br. Nāradya P. 23.11-13). These rules were taken from the Manusmṛti (chapter 2) , as can easily be understood.

We shall notice its further development in our next chapters.

Furthermore, this system has also been narrated in the Bhāgavata Purāna and some other Purānas as well.⁶

Majority of the Purānas have dealt with the procedure of the system of Education prevailing in the Purānic age. We are mentioning below a few of them:-

1. Brahma Purāna - 222. 25 - 28.
2. Viṣṇu - 111. IX. 1-7.
3. Mārkaṇḍeya - 28th ch.
4. Kūrma - 2nd ch.
5. Br. Nāradaīya - 23rd ch.
6. Garuḍa - 94th ch.
7. Saura - (Panchanan - 1316 B.S. Cal.) - 27th ch.
(Upa Purāna)

Foot Notes

1. Matsya Purāna - 25 & 26th ch. etc.
2. Ghṛgavata - X.45 (26-34, 35 - 44 etc.)
3. Ibid. - X. 45. 35.
4. Garuḍa Purāna - 94th ch. (94. 22)
5. Bhāgavatap - Book 7, Ch. 12.

Caturāśrama

Before we proceed to elaborate our discussion on this issue during the purānic age, we may try to speak some more words ~~also~~ about this system in brief.

While after a careful study of the different Mantras of the RK. and the Atharva Vedas. we see that the word Brahmacārin was known to the RK. and Atharva Vedic people. The word gṛhanatya which has been in the marriage hymn, is formed with the term gṛhanati meaning a house holder or houseowner. This word points to the fact that the stage of Gṛhastha of the caturāśrama was familiar to the Vedic people. But Vedic texts do not exhibit any other conception about Vānaprastha or Samnyāsa or Parivrājaka (or Pravrajita). But simply due to absence of these words in the original texts of the Vedas. we cannot rightly hold that Vānaprastha and Samnyāsa āśramas had not been in practice in those days. Social system of the Vedic age has been recorded in the Dharmasūtras, Srautasūtras Gṛhyasūtras, and the ~~Sūtra~~ Smṛtisamhitās, each of which furnishes ample evidence in support of the existence of the above four āśramas in the Vedic times. Several Dharma śāstras speak of Caturāśrama. But all of them are not at par in mentioning the names of the caturāśrama chronologically. Say for example, Ap.Dh. Śāstra speaks of four āśramas in the manner viz. the stage of house holder, staying in the teachers house, the stage of being a mini, the stage of being a forest dweller. ³ Gautama also prescribes the names of the four āśramas such as, Brahmacārin, Gṛhastha, Bhikṣu and Vaikhānasa or Vānaprastha. ⁴ But Vasīṣṭha Dh. S. names the four āśramas as Brahmacārin, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha and Parivrājaka. ⁵

Manu has described in details different aspects of the Caturāśrama. He is of the opinion that the total span of human life (which is one hundred years according to him) is to be divided into four equal parts. He has also described each stage of four āśramas carefully. Brakmacārin Grhastha, Vānaprastha and Sanṛyāsīn are the names of the four parts of life as stated by Manu. The description of each of the four parts of life of a twice born people is almost the same as is seen in the Purānic chapters dealing with the details of caturāśrama.

This is to be noted here in this connection that in almost all the Vedas as well as in the Dharmaśāstras and Purānas the second part, the life of a Grhastha has been considered to be the most important and valuable, while comparing with the other three parts of Caturāśrama.

Kane has discussed in his thesis, that āśrama, has been taken from śramā to exert, to labour and it etymologically means a stage, in which one exerts oneself. But the term Āśrama in fact has been formed with the root śrama, labour, with the affix a meaning less, before it, thus indicating a position in which one could live with less labour.

Caturāśrama or the four stages of life are the most remarkable aspects of the social system existing during the later Vedic, as well as Purānic age. The Vedic texts exhibit stray references to the prevalence of this system in those days. This system according to some authorities did not take concrete shape in the days of the Vedas. But existence of the term

Brahmacārin in the RK and Atharva Vedas, and also the duties of a house holder as well as a Sannyāsin found in the Brāhmaṇas, upanisadas and Dharmaśāstras indicate that all the four Āśramas viz. Brahmacarya Gārhasthya, Bānaprastha and Sannyāsa had been prevailing even in the Vedic age. In the age of the Purānas this Caturāśrama had become almost the order of the day. But this system in toto was not obligatory to the Hindus. Any twice-born man was permitted to remain in the status of the Grhastha (householder) after he had finished his studies as Brahmacārin and he could not have entered the third stage of this system i.e. Bānaprastha or the fourth stage that of a ~~Sannyāsa~~ Sannyāsin. This Caturāśrama had been open to the people of twice born order and not to the Sūdras for whom only the gārhasthya āśrama was prescribed . The description of this system is found almost in every Purāna. Of these four stages we have just discussed about the first stage (i.e. Brahmacārin) in our discussion about the system of education prevailing in the Purānic age. These four stages can be briefly described as under; the member of a twice born order should enter into first stage of this system i.e. Brahmacarya, after he had initiated himself with the sacred thread. The age of initiation was different for each of ^{the upper} three castes, (i.e. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya). The Purānas follow the injunctions of Manu that the age for Upanayana (initiation with the sacred thread) of a Brāhmaṇa should be from 8 to 16, for a Kṣatriya from 11 to 22 and for a Vaiśya from 12 to 24 years (see Manu ch. 2). For exceptionally maritorious boys the same rite might be performed at the age of 5, 6 and 8 respectively. While leading the life of a Brahmacārin, a student had to live with his preceptor under the same roof.

He had to tend the cattle, to fetch alms for sacrificial fire and to beg for his livelihood and to take meal with his Guru's (Preceptor's) permission. He had been taught the Vedas, and allied subjects by his preceptor orally. It has been held by a section of the scholars that the system of writing had not been introduced upto this age. After being well conversant with the knowledge in the different branches of the Vedas, and its allied subjects viz. Vedāngas etc. the students used to take leave from their Gurus, after when they had finished their studies. Then the student entered into the life of a Grhastha which would begin with his marriage. While leading the life of a Grhastha he had to be kind and generous to all men, irrespective of caste and creed and even to all beasts and birds. He had to offer libations in the memory of his pitrs and gods. When the Grhastha had become advanced in age, he normally handed over the charge of his family in the hands of his eldest son and proceeded towards forest for leading the life of a Vānaprastha, while in the forest, he would sleep on the ground, live on fruits, flowers and roots of the forest, would offer libations to the gods and Pitrs. He had to live a life of strict discipline, and to wear a skin or bark of trees. At the fourth or final stage, the Bānaprastha used to become a Sannyāsin or a Bhikṣu or a Pravrajita i.e. a wandering beggar. He did not stay long at any particular place, lived on begging and ate once a day, had to wear skins only, and made his soul entirely devoted to gods. He renounced every association, engaged himself in sacred studies

and had absolute control over his senses. Thus "with calm indifference waiting for death to release his soul from its last prison of bodily incarnation."⁸ Grhasthāśrama has been considered as the best of all the four āśramas,⁹ because it is the house holders who produce food and clothes to the members of all other Āśramas.

The above picture of the Caturāśrama has been portrayed in almost all the relevant chapters of the Purānas. We furnish below the list of few of the Purānas containing the vivid description of Caturāśrama: namely - (i) Brahma P - 222nd ch (22-56). (ii) Viṣṇu P - III.9.1-13. (iii) Garuda P - 96th ch. (iv) Br. Nārādīya P - 23rd ch. (v) Mārkaṇḍeya P. 28th ch. 15-22. (vi) Kurma P - 2nd ch. (vii) Soura (ups) P - 27th ch. We do not however, get any specific reference in the Purānas which can point to the fact that a member of any twice-born caste had entered into the successive stage of Brahmacārin and ending his life as a Sannyāsin, and we can not therefore refute the argument of Dr. L.D. Barnett, That, "the details of this scheme seem rather to savour of theory". "The four stages have never been generally observed. A considerable number of Brāhmanas, and even of Ksatriyas went through the noviciate of study, and a few Brāhmanas still do so and the condition of the householder among most of the higher castes is usually regarded in a religious light, and often ends in withdrawal into the ascetic life. But the distinction between the settled hermit or Vanaprastha and the vagabond Bhikṣu seems arbitrary and rests, as far as we know, upon no basis of real fact."¹⁰ But we

should not forget the fact that, not only amongst the Hindus, but in all the religious communities of the world, a tendency to refrain from religious activities is found in every country. Vedic Hinduism being strictly disciplined refrainment from the practice of Caturasrama in Vedic and Puranic India, practically had been exceptions, rather than a common rule.

Foot Notes

1. History of Dharmasastra - PV Rane - V2 p. I.P. 419.
2. RV. X. 85. 36 Also see the History of Dharmasastras by Kane. V-2. Pt-I. p.418.
3. 11.9.21.1. Also see History of Dharmasastras - p.416.
4. 111. 2. See Kane - History of Dh. S.P. 416.
5. Vasistha Dh. S. VII 1.2 - See Kane - V 2, p.1. p.417.
6. Manu has elaborately described about the 1st part in ch.II. 70-249, 2nd Part. in Ch. III and a portion of Ch.IV - Banaprastha in ch. VI. 1-2, Sannyasin - VI. 33-91.
7. Kane P.V. - History of Dharmasastra V2. Pt.1 Ch.VIII. p.425.
8. Barnett L.D. - Antiquities of India - (Puthipustak, Calcutta. p. 158).
9. Brahma Purana - 222, 32.
10. Burnett - Antiquities of India - pp. 158-59.

The Music and Artistic Activities.

We have discussed in our Vedic chapter that Vedic Indians had possessed the knowledge of using musical instruments and were conversant with the knowledge of music both vocal and instrumental. While in the Purānic age, the Indians had further developed their skill with regard to the aptitude towards music both vocal and instrumental. The companions of Śiva had performed musical activities after the marriage ceremony of Śiva was over.¹ We see in the Lingapurāna that Nārada had overcome so many troubles in becoming an expert in the field of music with the help of instruments. He had always been possessing, special skill in handling a vinā (lyre).² Several Purānic chapters reveal that Indians had been well acquainted with the use of musical instruments and they were able to perform dramatic and dancing activities with special skill.³ The Viṣṇupurāna⁴ declares music as a part of Lord Viṣṇu himself, and the dramatic performance as a giver of three vargas viz. piety, wealth and desired objects.⁵ We notice the reverse effects of being addicted to dice, as king Nala of the Niṣadha country and Yudhiṣṭhira^h of Indraprastha lost their everything as a result of their playing at dice with Puṣkara and Śakuni respectively. Agnipurāna⁶ gives a vivid description of Yudhiṣṭhira's dice playing.⁷

The Tāndava dance of Śiva, is famous for its magnificent artistic aptitude. Whatever allegory is attached to the

aforesaid examples cited from different Purānas, may be a topic of controversy among scholars, but all these evidences (already referred to above by us) do not weaken our argument to that effect that Hindus possessed special aptitude in the field of dance and music even in the age of the Purānas.

We can conclude ~~that~~ that the Hindus had become able to develop their artistic skill in the field of music, ~~and~~ dance and dramatic activities in the Purānic age than that of the days of the Vedas.

The sportive dance of Kṛṣṇa with the milk-women of Braja with an illustrious movements is known as Rāsaliḷā which has beautifully been narrated in some of the Purānas especially in the Bhāgavata.

The relevant chapter of the Agnipurāna (i.e. 341st ch.) which is descriptive of various sorts of dramatic definitions and their applications, may be taken into account in this context.

It is clear therefore that during the Puranic age, the Indians were able to develop their artistic activities to such an extent which was not possible for them during the Vedic age. The Vedic verses are not fully descriptive of the artistic activities of the Indo-Āryans. There are stray and scattered mention of these activities in the Vedic mantras, whereas there are elaborate chapters in the Purānas which deal with in details about these finer activities of the Indians. The

tribal Aryan settlers in the days of the Vedas had little to do in the field of artistic activities. But they have become well experienced in this field when we see them in the Purānic age.

Foot Notes.

1. Śhiva purāna - Rudrasaṁhitā III. 53. 12.
2. Linga purāna 11.3. 4-6, 57-63, 67-68, 99-104. etc.
3. Agni purāna.
4. Kāvālāpāśea ve kecid gītakāvyakhilāni ca śabdāmūrttidharasvaite Viṣṇeramsā mahāt manah.
- Viṣṇu purāna - quoted by Viśvanāth in the first chapter of his Sāhitva darpana (Nirṇayasāgan Press, 1936) Ch. I. p.6.
5. Trivargasādhanam nātvam - Agnipurāna, quoted by Viśvanātha (Loc cit).
6. Agni purāna - XIII 19-20.
7. Linga purāna - 1. 106. 25 - 26.
8. Brahma purāna - 189. 13 - 45.
Viṣṇu purāna - V. X. III. V. 10. 3
9. Bhāgavata purāna - X. 29 - 33 (in 5 chapters).

Food and Drink

There is no detailed chapter in any of the Purānas dealing with the diet of the Hindus in the Purānic age. There are some stray references in some of the chapters which may lead us to formulate some ideas about the nature of food and drink, of the Hindus in these days. We may safely assume that there had been no change in the habit of the Āryas with regard to their diet in the Purānic age than that ~~was~~ found in the Vedic period. We however, do not see the mention of the name of some juice in the Purānic chapters which had been very much dear to the Āryas in the days of the Vedas. It might have been that by the passing of centuries the Āryas became less interested to this juice or perhaps it became rare to ~~be~~ found in this age. We can assume that the Indians of the Purānic age were habituated in taking rice, wheat, barley, fruits, meat, milk etc. The use of rice was much familiar. The rice was boiled and then eaten. There are some chapters ~~in~~ in the Purānas which prescribe the meat of animals and birds to be taken by the Hindus and the meat of animals as well as birds which are not recommended to¹ be taken by the Hindus. We have found too the chapters in the Manu Smṛti where Manu has prescribed the meat of birds and animals which could have taken by the Hindus ¹ in these days, and there are mention of the meat of birds and animals which were considered not to be eaten by men. While giving a list of the prescribed food stuffs. Viṣṇu Purāna (III.16) counts the following : Food

boiled with ghee, fish which are not forbidden, meat of hare, goat, ram, stags and wild boar, milk of cow and the milk-made food, yava, priyangu, godhūma, rice, tila (sesame), different kinds of pulse such as mudga, māsa etc. (but the pulse of masura is forbidden), and vegetables barring onions etc. The name of honey has also been mentioned, we do not notice the mention of the name of some juice as one of intoxicated drinks. It seems that Surā as an intoxicating drink had been consumed by the Hindus of the Purānic age, but at the same time it was denounced for its demerits, and Brāhmanas were forbidden to drink surā as we learn from the Matsya purāna.²

Brahmanurāna strongly forbids injury of any sort to be done to the cows.³

The slaughter of ^acow was considered a heinous crime by the society and we see that Prṣadhra, a son of king Mama was cursed (punished) to the effect of being degraded to the rank of a Śūdra by his teacher as because Prṣadhra killed his āśrama cow accidentally.⁴

The cooked food in the event of its being touched by a Śūdra has been prescribed by the Garuda and other Purānas to be abandoned. This prescription proves that the Śūdras were considered untouchable before the eyes of the society during this age. But a section of the Śūdras who followed the rules of the sacred books (Vedas, Smrtis and Purānas),

surrendered, before the Brāhmanas and as such several Sūdra tribes namely Dāsa, Gopa Nāpita etc. were not considered⁶ untouchable. Milk was also consumed by the Hindus in much quantities in those days. Pāyasa, Piṣṭaka (cake) Sūpāna (rice boiled jointly with pulse) and different foodstuff fried in ghee are mentioned on different occasions. We do not find any reference in the Purānic texts which can indicate the existence of beef-eating by the Hindus, instead hard punishment for beef eating and cow killing is found to be mentioned, in the Purānas as well as in the Dharmasāstras. It seems probable that the cow was still considered to be aghnya in the days of the Purānas. This fact is supported by Prṣadhra's punishment for killing a cow even unwillingly as already mentioned.

Foot Notes.

1. Manu Smṛti - V/5 to V/57.
2. Matsya purāna - 25. 62 - 63.
3. Brahmapurāna - 221.26
4. Prṣadhrastu guru-govadhāt sūdratvam agamat =
Viṣṇupurāna IV.1.13.
Mārkaṇḍeya purāna - 90.11.4-8, 9-10 etc. 112,th ch.
Bhāgavatapurāna - IX.2. 3-9.
- 5&6. Garudapurāna - 96. 65-66.

The Caste System

While discussing this issue in our first chapter, we have tried to prove that the caste system in the Hindu society had its distinct shape in the Rg.Vedic age. The famous Purusa Sūkta (X.90) of the Rg.Veda however, has spoken for the first time of the division of mankind into four distinct caste groups namely Brāhmana, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra. We have discussed in the first chapter that the priest ^{hood} became hereditary. And the members of the other three castes had also been loyal to their respective prescribed professions. There are evidences in support of our above views in the Rg.Vedic hymns. We have also said in our vedic chapter that some stray references to inter caste marriage do not point to the fact that Vedic society was castless.

Now, on opening discussions on the caste system in the Puranic age amongst ^{the} Hindus, we see that this system had become more rigid. The Brāhmanas were considered superior to others. They had become the supreme force in explaining the laws of Sāstras with regard to discipline of caste division. The kings had been considered to be the guardian of Hindu society. They had to take steps as soon as they were reported about the happening of any unpleasant incident arising out of any disrespect to caste rules. The inter caste marriages were strictly disapproved. If a member of any superior caste wanted to marry a maiden of any lower caste, he then might have been reduced to the rank of the lower caste of the

maiden he wanted to marry.² The love union of ^{the} Brāhmanas and the Kṣatriyas had not been looked down upon. This is evident in the case of Yayāti's marriage with Devayāni.³ There are some other references of marriages among the Brāhmanas and Kṣatriyas in the Purānic texts and these cases have been discussed while dealing with the issue of marriage in this chapter.

Some of the Purānas are descriptive of the duties and occupation assigned to each of the four castes by the Smṛtikāras. The brief description of this distribution is as under:-

The Brāhmanas were considered to be the best and foremost of the four castes and were required to study the Vedas, teach Brahmacārins,⁴ and conduct performance of the sacrifices. They were allowed to take up the professions of the Kṣatriyas and that of the Vaiśyas in the event of emergency, but they were forbidden to take up the professions of a Śūdra.

The Kṣatriyas were allowed to live on arms. Their duty was to study the Vedas, to protect the honest and to punish the wicked.⁵ They were further allowed to take up the profession of a Vaiśya in the emergent time; but were not authorised to take up the profession of a Śūdra.

The Vaiśyas were permitted to study the Vedas, to tend the cattle and be engaged in agriculture. They had to take up the profession of a Kṣatriya when situation so demanded, but were never allowed to act like a Brāhmaṇa or a Śūdra. Brahmapurāna⁶ however is in favour of a Vaiśya to take up the profession of a Śūdra during emergency. The Śūdras were to

be engaged in handicraft and to serve the three twice-born people. A Brāhmaṇa, in general, has been forbidden to take to the profession of a Sūdra, but there is a lonely prescription in the Brhannāradiyapurāna to the effect that he may do the same at the time of emergency only (227.30).

Moreover, the Brāhmaṇas were allowed to receive gifts from the members of the three twice-born castes. The Sūdras were also authorised to extend gifts. A Brāhmaṇa was forbidden to take up any sort of service which is inferior to his status. We are however, furnishing below detailed list of the names of the majority of the Purānas and Upa-purānas, furnishing injunctions so as to the duties and occupations of the members of the Hindu quadrupic caste division.

The details of these Purānas are :

<u>Brahma</u>	- 222nd ch.
<u>Viṣṇu</u>	- 1. (6th ch).
<u>Kūrna</u>	- 2nd ch.
<u>Vāya</u>	- Eighth ch.
<u>Brahmānda</u>	- Eighth ch.
<u>Nāradiya</u>	- 22nd ch.
<u>Agni</u>	- 151st ch.
<u>Garuda</u>	- 96th ch.
<u>Saura (Upa)</u>	- 27th ch. etc.

(Panchanan - 1316 - Cal) Slaughter of a Brāhmaṇa (Brahma hatyā) had also been considered as one of the gravest crimes in the Purānic age. Balarāma, had to undertake strict penance as because of his killing^a Sūta, who was explaining

8

Śāstras at the time of his being slaughtered by Balarāma. The fact that the slaughter of Brāhminas was made even in the days of the Purānas, is supported by the above Purānic references. There are instances that, by committing the crime of killing a Brāhmaṇa, even an emperor had to give up his throne and be exiled. King Janamejaya I, of the Lunar dynasty conquered the whole world, and was ready to perform a horse sacrifice. But he committed the crime of Brahmahatyā by killing a Brāhmaṇa, and for this offence had to sacrifice his ~~right~~ right upon the throne and go to exile. He, according to different Purānas (i.e. Viṣṇu, Bhāvagata, Matsya etc.) was the son and successor of Puru and the Brāhmaṇa youth whom he killed, according to the Harivamśa, belonged to the family of Garga.

To kill a ruling king was held as more heinous than the crime of Brahmahatyā, Rājño mūrdhātīśiktasyo Vadho brahma-vadhā guruh Bhāgavata. P. IX, . 15. Parāsurāma killed the ruling king of his country, and even after capturing the throne, he had to be exiled and also to perform hard penances for removing this sin. (Bhāgavata P. Book IX Chapters 15-16.).

9

The relevant chapters of the Garuḍa Purāna have discussed in details about the origin of sub-castes as a result of cross union of members of different castes. Manu, however, had already discussed about this in his famous law book. Let us now discuss about this issue here in brief : (As according to the injunctions of Garuḍa Purāna).

The chart given below explains the above formula of mixed castes :

<u>caste of the Father</u>	<u>Caste of the mother</u>	<u>Identity of the Child</u>
<u>Brāhmana</u>	<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Mūrdhāviṣikta</u>
<u>Brāhmana</u>	<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Amvaṣṭha</u>
<u>Brāhmana</u>	<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Niṣāda or Parvata</u>
<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Māhiṣya</u>
<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Karāṇa</u>
<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Brāhmana</u>	<u>Sūta</u>
<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Brāhmana</u>	<u>Vaiḍeḥa</u>
<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Brāhmana</u>	<u>Caṇḍāla</u>
<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Māgadha</u>
<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Kṣetrabana</u>
<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Ayogava</u>
<u>Māhiṣya</u>	<u>Karāṇa</u>	<u>Rathakāra</u>

These mixed castes have been condemned and dejected by the Garuḍa Purāṇa . And this Purāṇa has highly spoken of in favour of the members of the three twice-born castes.

We learn from the Brahma Purāṇa that the caste system had been well established in the Purāṇic age.¹⁰ The origin of caste system has also been discussed in the Viṣṇu and Kūrma purāṇas¹¹ where it has been said that the four castes originated from the mouth, arms, thighs and the feet respectively of the Virāṭ R̥ṣi Puruṣa or Brahman.¹² Vāyapurāṇa has stated that the Hindu society was castless at the dawn of their civilization i.e. in the Satya Yuga. But the Lord of creation felt it necessary afterwards to divide the mankind into four distinct

castes. Those who were honest and sincere and strict follower of truth were made known as Brāhmanas, the persons who were full of energy and personality were called Ksatriyas, the energetic section of the people were made known as Vaisíyas and the remaining section of the people were designated as Sūdras.

The duties of each of the four castes had also been distinctly categorised such as Brāhmanas were entrusted with the task of receiving gifts, and reading and teaching the lessons of the Vedas. The Ksatriyas were entrusted with the duties of fighting, governing people. Tending cattle, trading and agriculture had been allotted to the Vaisíyas, and the Sūdras had been left to serve the three twice born people and allowed to live on handicrafts.

Whereas we see on perusal of the relevant chapter of the Brahmānda Purāna¹³ that social system among the Hindus was created at the end of the Satya Yuga. Brahma divided then into four distinct sections and duties, and occupations were assigned to them by him. Gradually the duties and occupations assigned to each caste had become hereditary.

Brahmāndapurāna lays down that caste division took shape and became hereditary in the Tretā Age. Orthodox Hindus also believe that the Rgveda was composed in this age. It is then admitted by a section of the Hindus that the Rgvedic age introduced caste system in the Indian Society. Other Puranas excepting the Vāyu and the Brahmānda however, have not discussed

about the cause of origin of caste system as we see in these two Purānas. Further discussion on the development of caste system may be made in the next chapter.

Agni Purāna¹⁴ also deals with the problem of children born of cross union of the members of different castes. The picture of the origin of the Mixed castes is illustrated (after Agnipurāna) with the help of the following chart :

<u>Caste of the father</u>	<u>Caste of the Mother</u>	<u>Identity of the Child</u>
<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u>	<u>Caṇḍāla</u>
<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u>	<u>Sūta</u>
<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u>	<u>Devala</u>
<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Pukkasa</u>
<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Kṣatriya</u>	<u>Māgadha</u>
<u>Śūdra</u>	<u>Vaiśya</u>	<u>Ayogara.</u>

The duties assigned to the members of some of ^{the} sub-castes ¹⁵ have also been stated in the Agnipurāna. This Purāna prescribes for the members of the caṇḍāla community to execute the death sentence on the criminals convicted by the courts of law. They should collect the wearing garments of the dead persons brought to the cremation ground. The members of the Devala caste should take to their livelihood as guarding the female apartments. The members of the Sūta community should be engaged in the services of the royal stable or similar profession, Pukkasa should take up the profession of killing beasts and birds etc.

A member of the Ayogava community should earn his livelihood as one of the performers of the royal theatres and ¹⁶ also by Handicrafts. The caṇḍālas should reside outside the

towns or villages and should be considered as untouchables and all contacts with them should be carefully avoided. We have discussed in our first chapter that caste system had been well established among Hindus in the Rg. Vedic period and also observed that priesthood had become hereditary to the Brāhminas during this age. Kingship had also been hereditary to the Rājanyas, and tending cattle and agriculture to the Vaiśyas. The Āryans considered Sūdras a negligible section of their society and hence they did not wish to mention them repeatedly in the hymns of the Rg. Veda. We further observe, while on examination of the relevant chapters of the different Purānas that caste system had become further developed and disciplined than that of the Vedic age. Duties of different castes have been distinctly prescribed in most of the Purānas which is absent in the Vedic texts. The incidents of inter caste marriage are rarely found in the Purānic texts.

Even in the RV. which according to the modern historians is the earliest of all the Vedas, references to the kings Pururavas (reigning from Pralishthanapura on the site of the modern Allahabad), Divodāsa (reigning from Kasi), Sṛñjaya (reigning from Viśāṣā, the later Vaisāli in modern Bihar) Yudu (reigning from a city situated on the site of the later Māhis^mṣati in South India) and the like are mentioned, and the Mahābhārata (Book I, Ch. 89) tells us that the Aryan settlement was built for the first time in the valley of the five rivers by king Samvarana of the Lunar dynasty who, after

being defeated by the king of the Pañcāla country had to flee from his own capital in central India and take shelter in the forest on the bank of the Indus. Furthermore, Vālmīki in his Rāmāyana (1.5.6) tells us that Manu, the first Indian king founded the city of Ayodhyā on the bank of the river Sarayū in central India and ruled from it. But the modern historians ignore these evidences and hold that the forefathers of the Indian Āryas came to this sub-continent from a foreign land.

But in the case of the Purānic texts, there are clearer evidences that, in this age, the Hindus were living in the wide areas covering almost the entire northern India, and even some portions of Southern India. Regarding the caste system also, there are very clear evidences in the Purānas that all the four castes had been in existence and that there was also a fifth class having different sub-castes in it. (such as Pukkasa, Vena, Niṣāda, Carmakāra etc.).

The power of Purohita (priest) seems to have been supreme, even over the king in the religious matters as has already been noticed in the days of the Vedas. There are some references in some of the Purānas (such as Brahma, Agni etc.) which point to the fact that the Purohitas had been holding absolute control over the king with regard to political as well as religious matters.

We may presume after careful perusal of the relevant verses of the Purānas and Upapurānas that the influence of the Purohita over the king remained unchanged since the days of the

Vedas and down to the Purānic age. But we do not find detailed discussions in this context. The texts of the Epics (specially the Mahābhārata) have highlighted the position of Purohita to much extent. We shall discuss this in our Epic chapter. The supremacy of Purohita over the monarch had also been a remarkable feature of the social system during the days of the Purānas. This should be added furthermore, that this supremacy became more absolute than that of the days of the Vedas, during these later period.

Furthermore, the question of the origin of the mixed castes has elaborately been dealt with by Manu in his famous law book. He has first of all, discussed about the origin of the mixed castes (X. 1-68). He then proceeded to illustrate the points as to what the occupation should be assigned to the members of each of the four castes and that of the sub castes (x 75-114). The texts of the Purānas and the Epics have mostly been influenced by Manu; but they are not so elaborate. The detailed discussion about the origin of mixed castes and assignment of professional occupation of the members of each of the castes and mixed castes has not been made in the texts to the Purānas and the Epics to such a long extent as found in the Manusmṛiti. This is also understandable that the marriages of Anuloma and Pratiloma categories used to take place even in the days of the Vedas. As a result of which it had not been possible to designate the fate of the children born of such cross unions. All these obviously became burning problems before the Hindu society of that remote past. And as the first and the foremost

of the Hindu Smṛtikāras (law givers), Manu was bound to find out permanent solutions of these problems. This is also noticeable that Manu while approving Anuloma unions firmly opined in favour of the marriages within the members of the twice-born castes (x.69). He opines that in ^{an} Anuloma union, where an Aryan male and Non-Aryan female is involved, the children born of them should be considered as Āryans and when Pratiloma union in between an Āryan woman and Non-Aryan male takes place, the issues resulted from such unions should be considered as non-Āryans (x.67). He holds furthermore that an offspring, born of the union in between an Ārya father and non-Āryan mother and vice-versa is not entitled to sacraments. (x.68). It is apparent from the above prescriptions of Manu that he did not like at all that the Āryans should be united with Sūdras in marriage in any shape or form. In fact, he was completely against any sexual alliances of the members of the three twice born caste with the Sūdras, no matter whether it had been legal or illegal. But these efforts of Manu as we understand were not totally fruitful and the mixture of Āryan and non-Āryan blood continued till to the age of the Epics too, though in very rare cases.

Foot Notes

1. Br. Nāradiya Purāṇa 226 (Panchanan Tarkaratna, Cal-1316 B.S
2. We learn from the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa that Prince Nābhāga had been degraded to the rank of a Vaiśya as because he married a Vaiśya girl forcibly (Mārkaṇḍeya - 113th ch. 114. 1-2, etc.)

3. Matsya (Panchanan) - 300 31st ch.
4. Brāhmanas to take up, the professions of Kṣatriya and or Vaiśya during emergency (Brahma P. 222. 19)
5. Kṣatriyas for Vaiśya during emergency. (Brahma - 222.19)
6. Vaiśya to act as ^{as} Sūdra in the like situation as of Foot Note 5. (Brahma P. - 222. 19).
7. Padmapurāna Pātāla Khaṇḍa - 1V.160
8. Bhāgavata P. X. 7-8, Mārkaṇḍeya P. VI - 23 - 29 etc.
9. Garuḍa P. (Panchanan) 96. 1-5.
10. Brahma - 1.8.
11. Viṣṇu P. 1.6. Text 6-7.
12. Kūrma P. - 11, 25.
12. Vāyū P - (Panchanan - 1317 B.S. Cal) VIII. 160-168).
13. Brahmāṇḍa P (Panchanan - 1315 B.S. Cal) Eighth Ch.
14. Agni P. - 151 st ch.
15. Agni P. - 151 st ch.
16. Agni P. - 151 st ch.

CHAPTER - III
Society as found in the Epics.
Detailed Contents

This chapter deals with the following aspects of social system as is assessed from the texts of the Epics (i.e. Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata).

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Name of the topic.</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1.	Which of the two Epics is earlier ...	183
2.	Family Life ...	187
3.	Marriage ...	190
	(a) Polygamy ...	200
	(b) Re-marriage of widows ...	204
	(c) Self Immolation of widows ...	207
	(d) <u>Niyoga</u> ...	211
	(e) Divorces ...	215
	(f) Polyandry ...	217
4.	Caste system ...	219
5.	Educational system ...	229
6.	<u>Caturāsrama</u> ...	232
7.	Dress and decoration ...	236
8.	Food and Drink ...	238
9.	Music and Artistic Activities ...	241

CHAPTER -III

Society as found in the EpicsWhich of the two Epic is earlier?

The modern scholars are divided in their opinion regarding the date of composition of both the Epics Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. We shall now try to discuss the above fact in the light of the observation of Shri R. K. Siddhantasastri from the Introduction of (~~already published in a Scientific~~ ~~weekly "Datta" in several instalments.~~) of his fourth coming book entitled "Detailed Index to the proper names and other important names in Vālmiki's Rāmāyana ¹ .

The fact has been incontrovertibly accepted by the scholars that in the list of the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu Rāma is counted as seventh and Kṛṣṇa (or Balarāma) as eighth in Chronological order. Furthermore Rāmāyana was composed by Vālmiki during the lifetime of Rāma and was recited for the first time on the occasion of Rāma's Aśvamedha ritual. This testifies to the fact that Rāmāyana is preceded by the Mbh.

The entire Rāmāyana is narrated in brief in the Vanaparvan of the Mbh. But on the contrary, not even a single reference to the Mbh is found in any chapter of the Rāmāyana. This is also an argument in favour of the earlier composition of the Rāmāyana.

The arguments of the scholars who are of the opinion that Mbh preceded Rāmāyana are furnished as follows :

- (a) That the name of Buddha has been mentioned in the Rāmāyana.
- (b) That the style of composition of the Rāmāyana is of superior nature than that of the Mbh.
- (c) That Rāma is held as an imitation of Balarāma of the Mbh, and
- (d) that the story of Rāma is an imitation of the Daśaratha-Jātaka of the Buddhists.

Let us now try to controvert the above arguments. In the first place, this much we can say, that the term Buddha is an interpolation into the Rāmāyana. We can furthermore add, that the term Buddha might have been used to indicate a preacher of the doctrine in which Buddhi (intelligence) has been held as the soul of a living creature. The fact must be admitted that the term Tathāgata had been in vogue in the long past and that Nirvāna as a doctrine has never been accepted by the Hindu philosophers as a living theory in any age.

Again so far as the style of composition of the Rāmāyana is concerned, this should not be out of place to mention here that the Rāmāyana, as we have discussed above is the composition of Valmiki alone. On the other hand Mbh is a team work and was compiled under the supervision of the sage Vyāsa. The fact must be admitted at the same time that the efforts of an individual scholar should have been of superior quality and for this reason the Rāmāyana of Valmiki has become an excellent output in comparison to Mahābhārata edited by Vyāsa.

We learn from different Purānic sources that Brhadbala (who was killed in the Bhārata war) had been a descendant of

Rama and according to the research of R. Siddhantashastree as recorded in his book 'History of the Prekalivuga India'² this Bṛhadbala flourished 42 generations after Rāma. The argument therefore, that Rāma was a contemporary of the Pāṇḍavas or that he was junior to them and that he had been an imitation of Balarāma the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa, the principal hero of the Mbh does not appear to have based on solid ground.

The argument that Rāmāyana is an ~~old~~ absorption of the Buddhist Daśaratha Jātaka is completely erroneous. The fact is known to all scholars that Daśaratha-Jātaka which was composed several centuries after ^{Buddha's} Parinirvāna is a much later composition than the Rāmāyana, which, according to Vālmiki was composed during the lifetime of Rāma, Daśarathi. The Buddhists as we all know, Possessed a normal displeasure for the Hindu scriptures, and this was the obvious reason as to why they distorted the character of Rāma while composing the Daśaratha-Jātaka as a whole.

The above scholars often argue, that the system of self immolation had not been introduced among the Hindu widows during the age of the Rāmāyana, but it was in vogue during the later epic age (i.e. in the age of the Mbh). They further argue, that the Hindus during the period of the Mbh, had been able to occupy the larger territories than their forefathers did during the previous ages (inclusive of the period of the composition of Rāmāyana.)

The above two arguments also, can be combated on the following grounds viz. in the first instance, so as to the

point of self-immolation is concerned this is to be stated in reply, that this system had been in prevalence among archaic Hindus since the Vedic days (which point we have discussed in our 1st ch) we further learn from the Rāmāyana, that queen Kauśalyā was determined to ascend the pile of her dead husband, king Daśaratha, but subsequently was dissuaded by the royal priest Vaśiṣṭha. (this shall be discussed however in details, in this ch. afterwards).

Furthermore, we learn from our Purānic and epic sources that the Hindu kings at the age of high antiquity (such as Manu, Māndhātṛ, Priyavṛta, Saṃvarana etc) had extended their boundaries of ~~the~~ their kingdoms to the furthest point of our motherland and even in some cases, they won over and absorbed foreign countries within the domain of their kingdoms. Detailed history of these events are recorded in the "History of the Pre-Kaliyuga India" of R. Siddhantashastree with apt evidences.

In the light of the above observation, we arrive at the conclusion that the Rāmāyana of Valmīki preceded Mahābhārata, so far as their date of composition is concerned. We shall therefore follow the above principle with regard to the utilisation of the materials of both the Epics.

Foot Notes.

1. Shri Siddhantasastri R.K. - "Detailed index to the proper nouns and other important names in Vālmīki's Rāmāyana - published in a Calcutta weekly 'Truth' (in several instalments).
2. Inter India Publication, New Delhi 1977, price Rs. 75/-

Family Life.

We have made detailed discussion about the family life of the Indians in the ages of high antiquity in the first and second chapter of this book. We learn from the texts of the Epic that the basic characteristics of this life of the Hindus had been the same alike their pattern of life in the previous ages. The father had been still the head of the family in the truest sense of the term. The eldest son was considered his representative and that he was ready to share the worries and anxieties of his father under all circumstances. Thus we see that Rāma¹ had to accept exile for showing honour to certain previous promise of his father. The younger ones had the habit of showing honour to their elders and they never disregarded them even to the last extent. Bharata, decided to represent Rāma in discharging his administrative duties towards the people of Ayodhyā after Rāma's refusal to return to his kingdom; but in no case he agreed to ascend the throne of Ayodhyā superseding Rāma.² We learn from the examples of the Pāṇḍava³ Brothers that they were ready to go to the forest in exile and ask their common wife Draupadī to serve as the maid-servant of the Kauravas only because their eldest brother Yudhiṣṭhira made promises to the above effect at the time of Yudhiṣṭhira's defeat at the dice-game.

The relation in between the subjects and the monarch was very warm and sweet. They used to take part actively in any kind of social affairs whether it was good or bad. Rāmāyana⁴ informs

us that king Daśaratha solicited the consent of his subjects with regard to his decision to nominate Rāma as the crown king of Ayodhyā. The Brāhmanas and the commoners of Ayodhyā tried their level best so as to dissuade Rāma from his promise to accept the ~~undesirable~~ undesirable banishment, although with no effect. (Rāmāyanam Gōudīya-ed, ^{kānda} Ayodhyā, 43rd Sarga), Dhṛtarāstra ⁵ solicited the permission of his subjects to proceed towards forest for spending the rest of his life. On the other hand, the subjects belonging to each of the quadrupic caste division of the Hindus, took part actively in the funeral procession of King Pāṇḍu. ⁶ When Yudhiṣṭhira ⁷ ascended the throne after vanquishing the Kauravas in the great Kurukṣetra war, his subjects came to pay their homage to him. Further more, we learn from the Mbh (VanaparvanCh. I) that when the Pāṇḍavas were proceeding towards the forest for living in exile, their subjects were very much eager to share the worries and anxieties of the Pāṇḍavas with a desire to live jointly with them in the forest. Some Brāhmanas finally accompanied the Pāṇḍavas to the forest and they lived with them inside the forest upto the expiry of their term of banishment. We should not forget the name of Bhīṣma, ⁸ the eldest son of king Śāntanu of Hastināpura who sacrificed his claim on the throne and promised to remain unmarried throughout his life for bringing about the peace and happiness in the life of his father.

It is needless to mention here in this context that the picture of the life of the common people has not been portrayed

in the chapters of the Epics. We can also assess the fact that Hindus in the epic age had been living the joint family life following the foot steps of ^{their} predecessors, whose conduct and behaviour are recorded in the vedic and Purānic chapters.

var Foot Notes.

1. Rāmāyana (Amares^h Thakur - Gaudīya Ed. Cal) Ayodhyā Kānda - 16th Sarga.
2. Ibid (Gaudīya) several chapters (i.e. from 80th Sarga and onward.
3. MBH. (H.S. Ed) - Sabhā Parvan 57, 58, 62 and 63rd ch. etc.
4. Rāmāyana (Gaudīya Ed.) Ay. Kānda 2nd Sarga.
5. MBH. (H.S. Ed.) - Āsramic Parvan- 10th to 12th ch.
6. Ibid. (HS) Ādi Parvan- 12 1st ch.
7. MBH (HS) Sānti Parvan 40th ch.
8. Ibid. (HS) Ādi Parvan- 94th ch.

M a r r i a g e

should
We [^] not forget the fact that the Hindu marriage in details has been discussed by us in the preceding chapters of this thesis. We shall not therefore, make, any repetition of them instantly.

¹
Mbh. has elucidated the different lawful forms of Hindu marriage. But the explanation of Mbh is based on the codes of Manu. We may therefore state that this Epic has endorsed the views of Manu with regard to marital norms of the Hindus in toto. We do not therefore, highlight all these points right now. In brief, the first four forms of ^{the} Hindu marriage (i.e. Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa and Prājāpatya) have been ruled for the Brāhmanas, the Gāndharva, Rākṣasa and the mixed form Gāndharva-Rākṣasa for the Ksatriyas, Āsura for the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras respectively. The Paiśāca form has been condemned by the Epic. The Ksatriyas have been recommended to be wedded under any of the aforesaid forms excepting Paiśāca. Mbh furthermore, has highly recommended the first three forms of marriage for all, (i.e. Brāhma, Daiva and Prājāpatya).

²
Mbh rules that a husband is worthy to be designated as bhartr and also as Patī or Pālaka (because of the fact that he shares the responsibility of her maintenance in the trust sense of the term). Mbh. ³ in addition has requoted the injunction of Manu to the effect that a woman in the different stages of her life has to depend on her father, her husband and

her son respectively and that she is never fit for complete freedom. We learn from the statement of queen Bhadrā⁴ too, that the fate of a Hindu widow was a miserable one even in the age of high antiquity. All these point to the fact, that the Hindu married woman in ancient times had not enjoyed any economic freedom and that they were solely dependant on their maleguardians in respect of their maintenance. As all the sacred scriptures of the Hindus were composed by the most impartial and highminded sages, one must consider the reason as to why complete freedom was denied to the Hindu womenfolk. The sexual urge is so powerful that it may mislead any man or woman at any time, causing irreparable loss of honour to any woman, whether married or unmarried. The wisest sages of India, therefore, thought it necessary to keep the womanfolk under the protection of the males, so as to help both the folk to live a normal, life and protecting the women from possible dangers. We should simultaneously, consider the rules of the sage Dirghatamas⁵ in this context. Dirghatamas made injunction to the effect that a married woman should be solely dependant on her husband from the socio-economic point of view, and not to mix with^{any} youth unrelated to her, even in the time of misery.

We learn from the Mbh.⁶ furthermore that the sage Svetaketu introduced first of all, the marital discipline among married Hindu women in the remote past. He ruled that thence forth the married women should be devoted to their husbands only

and that the husbands in return, should not desert their faithful wives at any time.

The story of Svetaketu deserves special mention in this context. He was surprised to see his mother accompanying a youth other than her husband to satisfy the sexual urge of the latter and his father did not oppose to this act, only due to a favourable social custom of the time. Svetaketu was very much shocked at this incident. When he came to the position of a social leader, he managed to implement a fresh law, prohibiting a woman to have more than one husband during her lifetime. It is difficult to ascertain however, as to whether Polyandry had been prevailing in the Hindu society during this age or not. ⁷ Mbh states that before Svetaketu had framed the aforesaid marital rule, the married women were completely reckless having sexual union with any other man, even in presence of their respective husbands, who were morally and legally bound to feed and clothe them.

We learn from the Rāmāyana of Vālmīki, that the adopted daughter of king Janaka of the Videha country, was a child of six years only at the time of her marriage with Rāma, a boy, not completing 16th year of age. On the same day, all the three other younger brothers of Rāma were wedded to three other princesses younger than Sītā. The fact that Rāma at that time did not complete 16th year, is confirmed from Daśa-⁸ rathas statement to Viśvāmitra, and also from Sītā's ⁹ statement for to the disguised Rāvana in forest, that after for living 12 years jointly with her husband at his abode at Ayodhyā, she had a

accompanied Rāma to the forest at her 18th year of age, and that Rāma had been a youth of 25 years at that time. Sitā disclosed the same fact to Hanumat at the Aśoka forest. The above is the evidence of existence of the marriage of tender aged women (below the age of puberty) in the Epic Age. Both the Epics have cited the examples of anuloma union. The Polygamous as well as Monogamous unions have also been detailed by the Epics. The existence of the dowry has been witnessed in the fully developed form during those days. It is interesting to note that the basic characteristic of a Hindu marriage, which we have noticed in the marriage hymn of the R.V. as well as A.V. and also in the Purānic texts, had also remained unchanged even in the days of the Epics.

We have planned to discuss about Polygamous marriage separately. Let us now add a few words on the monogamous marriage. Both the Rāmāyana and the MBh are informative about the prevalence of this system in those days, say for example the Rāmāyana¹⁰ states that the sons of king Daśaratha of Ayodhyā practised monogamy. MBh¹¹ narrates that king Dhṛtarāstra¹² practised monogamy. Similarly king Nala¹³ also possessed a single wife. Abhimanyu, the son of the third Pāndava Arjuna married the daughter of king Virāta of Matsya deśa, and none else.

Several sages such as Agastya¹⁴, Reika¹⁵, Jamadagni,¹⁶ Cyavana¹⁷ etc all practised monogamy, as we assess from the MBh.

Several instances of anuloma union has been highlighted by the MBh. These are the union of the men and women of the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya castes respectively. The sages, we have just mentioned above, have married Kṣatriya dames. We have discussed vividly about this type of wedlock in the previous chapters, hence we need not re-furnish all these points here again. The only instance of Protuloma union (i.e. the marriage of king Yayāti and Devayāni) has been spoken of in the MBh. but we have discussed about this instance already in our second chapter, vividly.

The Epics have mostly exemplified the Rākṣasa, Āsura, Gāndharva and Prājāpatya form of Hindu wedlock. Say for example, the marriage¹⁹ of Dusmanta and Sakuntalā can be considered as one of the Gāndharva form. The wedlock of king Vicitravīrya²⁰ of Hastināpur with Ambikā and Ambālikā, daughters of the king of Kāśī (who were forcibly carried away from their hall of svayamvara by Bhīṣma) can be considered as the Rākṣasa form of wedding. Subhadra, the daughter of the Yādava king Vāsudeva,²¹ was married by the third Pāṇḍava Arjuna in the mixed form of ^{the} Gāndharva Rākṣasa. The marriages²² of king Dhṛtarāṣṭra with Gāndhārī, the daughter of king Subala of Gāndhāra deśa,²³ and of Abhimanyu with Uttarā, can be held as the Prājāpatya form of wedding.

Some examples of Svayamvara has also been mentioned in the chapters of the Epics. We have clearly defined this

form in our 2nd chapter. MBh²⁴ states that svayamvara has been the best form of wedlock for the Kṣatriyas. Kuntī²⁵ the daughter of^{the} Yādava king Śūra (the father of Vasudeva) and also a step daughter of king Kuntibhoja, selected Pāṇdu and Damayantī^{26a} selected Nala as their respective husbands at the hall of their Svayamvara. The marriage of Satyavatī²⁷, the daughter of king Gādhi of Kānyakubja with Reika and the marriage²⁸ of Mādri, the sister of king Śalya of the Madra country, with Pāṇdu, can be regarded as the Āsura form. We all know the Hindu marriage as a sacrament and indissolvable by human action. But we learn from the Epics that some marriages in those days were guided by certain terms and conditions. Say for example, Rāma²⁹ married Sītā after fulfilling certain terms and conditions of her father by shooting an arrow from a large and heavy bow. Sāntanu³⁰ married Gangā after satisfying certain terms of her and she deserted the king after lapse of so many years on the plea that he had broken the terms of their marriage. This second example can not be accepted as a historical fact because Gangā had been described as a goddess in the M Bh. Arjuna³¹ had to marry Draupadī from the hall of her Svayamvara after fulfilling certain terms of her father, king Drupada of Pāñcāla. The marriage³² of Arjuna with Citrāngadā, the daughter of^{the} Manipura king Citravāhana was also guided by certain conditions. Last of all, the marriage³³ of Sāntanu with Satyavatī, the step daughter of the Dāsa king, was also guided by certain terms.

The wedding of upper caste Hindus with the aborigines of India also has been recorded in the MBH.³⁴ the marriage

of the second Pāṇḍava Bhīma with Hidimvā may be cited as an example. Hidimvā, though described as a demoness (Rākṣasī) apparently was a non-Ayan girl. Ulupī the daughter of a Nāga king, also appears to be of the same kind, who was accepted by Arjuna as one of his wives. It is not clear as to whether this last kind of wedding had been a regular one during the age of the Epics or not.

We learn further from the passages of the Epics, that dowry had been a regular custom in those days. We have already noticed its prevalence in the Vedic age (which point we have discussed in our first chapter). We learn from the MBh. ³⁵ that king Drupada presented to the Pāṇḍava brothers, valuable ornaments (of precious Jewels and gold), chariots, horses, youthful maidens at the marriage ceremony of his daughter Draupadī. At the marriage ³⁶ ceremony of Uttarā and Abhimanyu, valuable gifts, ornaments of solid gold, youthful maid, servants, horses cattle and chariots etc were presented to the bride-groom by the king Virāṭa, the father of the bride. Similar presentations were offered to Arjuna ³⁷ by the Yādavas in the event of his marrying Subhadrā.

Furthermore from the announcement of Dhṛtarāṣṭra ³⁸ to make arrangements for the funeral formalities of self immolation of Mādri together with the corpse of her husband king Pāṇḍu under strict seclusion, and that the strong objection of Draupadī ³⁹ to be driven before the assembly after when Yudhiṣṭhira was defeated at the dice-game of the Kauravas (when she was so ordered to comply by Duryodhana) we gather the impression that strict seclusion was maintained in respect

of the movements of the married women in the age of the later Epic.

The R.V. and the other vedas tell us that a man himself if born as his own son through his own wife. The same idea was propagated by Manu in his Saṃhitā (IX.8) and it is fully endorsed by the Mahābhārata⁴⁰ and also in the Virāṭaparvan according to which the wife is called Jāyā for this reason. In fact, the elucidation of the wife-hood, as has been ruled in the Manusāṃhitā in its ninth ch., has almost laid down in the Ādiparvan (88th ch.). It appears sustainable, that the women, especially the wife has always been considered by the ancient Hindus as useful and vital element towards the purpose of the augmentation of their population. This role of married women has been highlighted in different chapters of this Epic and this is just like the prescriptions of Manu. Furthermore, in the same chapter of the Mahābhārata⁴¹ the duty of a pious wife to immolate herself in the funeral pile of her husband has also been hinted ^{at} though the alternative of living a sacred life of complete celibacy was also in vogue, as evident from several illustrations already mentioned above. This Epic however confirms the prevalence of this custom among the widows of aristocrate Hindus of those days, which we shall discuss afterwards.

The conversation of Sākuntalā with king Duṣmanta in his royal court,⁴² in the event of her being refused by the later^t

to be accepted as his wife, points to the fact that she was well versed in the Śāstric knowledge of the Hindus. This also confirms the impression that the arrangement for education of the unmarried Hindu women in archaic India, was proper and appropriate even in their parental abode.

Foot Notes

1. Mahābhārata (HS. Ed. Cal), Ādiparvan 87.14-15, 16-19, 96
11 - 16 etc.
2. MBH (HS Ed) Śāntiparvan 260.3.
3. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 87.7 (Also see Manuśāhitā - V/148
G IX/3).
4. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 115th Ch.5. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan- 98.
33-34.
6. Ibid (HS) 116. 18-19.
7. Ibid. (HS) 116. 4-5, 13-15 etc.
8. Rāmāyana (Gandīya Ed. Cal) Ādikānda - 23.2)
9. Ibid (Goudīya). Āranya Kānda 54th Sarga.
10. Ibid (Goudīya) Ādikānda _____ 73rd,
75th Sarga etc.
11. MBH (HS) Ādiparvan 104th ch.
12. Ibid (HS) Vanaparvan 47th ch. (47.40).
13. Ibid (HS) Virātaparvan 67th ch. (67.34).
14. Ibid (HS) Vanaparvan 81. 1-8.
15. Ibid (HS) Vanaparvan 96.21-29.
16. Ibid (HS) Vanaparvan 97.2
17. Ibid (HS) Vanaparvan 101. 36-38, 48-51 etc.

18. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 69th ch.
19. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 87th Ch.
20. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 90.67, & 96th ch. etc.
21. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan (Subhadrā Harana) 213. 6-7, 8 etc.
& 214.13 etc.
22. Same as Foot Note 11.
23. Vide Foot Note 13.
24. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 96.16
25. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 106.9
26. Ibid (HS) Vanaparvan 47.25-28 etc.
27. Ibid. (HS) Vanaparvan 96.18-29 etc.
28. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 107th ch.
29. Rāmāyana (Goudīya) - Ādikānda 69² 70th Sarga.
30. MH (HS) Ādiparvan 92nd ch.
31. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 181.
32. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 208.15-27 etc.
33. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 94th and 95.
34. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 149th ch.
35. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 131.24-26 etc.
36. Ibid (HS) Virāṭaparva 67. 36
37. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 214. 44-55.
38. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 121.3.
39. Ibid (HS) Sabhāparvan 64th ch.
40. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 88.37
41. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 88.46
42. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 88th Ch.

Polygamy

The prevalence of this system among Vedic and Purānic Hindus has been elaborately discussed by us in the first and second chapters of this book. Similarly, we notice its existence even in the days of the Epics. Say for example, Rāmāyana¹ narrates that king Sagara of Ayodhyā had two wives, namely, Keśinī and Sumati. ~~This~~ This (example of Sagara's practising Biogamy) is also referred to in the Viṣṇu and other Purānas) Rāmāyana also states that king Daśaratha (a successor of king Sagara) practised polygamy. The number of his wives according to the Rāmāyana was three hundred and a half. He had however, three prominent queens², namely, Kauśalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā the former being the seniormost of them. Similar instances are found in the Mahābhārata too, viz. king Śāntanu (of Hastīnāpur) practised Biogamy³, his wives being Gaṅgā and Satyavatī by name. Gaṅgā however, has been identified as a goddess in this Epic and Śāntanu married Satyavatī after the former had deserted him. The historical fact probably was that Gaṅgā was so called because of being a princess of the Gaṅgā country lying over the valley of the river Gaṅgā. This is supported by the fact that Kauśalyā, Kaikeyī, Kuntī, Mādri and even Pārvatī was so called due to their being the princess of the respective countries called Kośala, Kekaya, Kunta, Madra and Parvata. The son and Grandson of king Śāntanu, namely, Vicitravīrya and Pāṇḍu⁴ respectively, also practised Biogamy. The names of the queens of the former king (i.e. Vicitravīrya) were Ambikā

and Ambālikā, while the wives⁵ of the latter monarch were namely Kuntī and Mādri. Besides, Karṇa⁶ and the third Pāṇḍava Arjuna⁷ are stated to have possessed plurality of wives, in this Epic. King Somaka who performed a human sacrifice with his only son Jantu as the victim according to the MBh.⁸ had one hundred queens we do not want to multiply these examples furthermore from the texts of the Epics.

We further notice that some of the Brāhmanas practised polygamy in long past. The names of Dakṣa Prajāpati, Kaśyapa, Yājñavalkya and such others may be taken into account in this context. They have been referred to in the texts of the Purānas too. But we learn from the Epics that the Brāhmanas as a general rule practised monogamy in those days. The fact that Rāma, the monarch of Ayodhyā, did not take a second wife even after the death of his queen Sītā, confirms our impression that the Ksatriyas too preferred to monogamy in the age of the Epics. We may therefore, arrive at the right conclusion that the Brāhmanas as well as Ksatriyas were monogamous by nature and that on certain occasions some of them preferred to polygamy. The examples of monogamous marriage have been put forward by us beforehand. The Mahābhārata⁹ has discussed about the anuloma and patiloma⁷ inter-caste union, and has approved the former form of wedlock in between the members of twice-born castes only. The possibility of the Pratiloma¹⁰ union has been condemned by this Epic. We should not forget the fact that the above two types of Hindu marriage have been highlighted by us in the second chapter of this book.

We should not ignore the point that in a polygamous union the wife belonging to the same caste of the husband had all along enjoyed the full status of the lawful wife (i.e. Dharmapatnī). The wives taken from the other lower castes were turned as Kāmapatnī with lower status. The common people rarely took more than one wife, at a time in those days.

The texts of the Epics are not vocal about the fact as to whether the Rājanyas of those days were in the habit of keeping concubines at their possessions or not.

In a polygamous union, the relation in between the co-wives were not always a happy one. Such examples are furnished by both the Epics. We learn from the Rāmāyana¹¹ that Rāma had to abandon his throne and was exiled for a long period of fourteen years due to the conspiracy of his step-mother Kaikeyī. Mahābhārata¹² on the other hand states that Kuntī was suspicious about the attitude of Mādri towards her. She accused the latter openly for the untimely demise of their common husband. The instance of Sagara's being born untimely with prison, applied to his mother by her co-wife as illustrated in the previous chapter is found to be mentioned in both the Epics as well.

Foot Notes.

1. Rāmāyana - (Āgāudīya Ed Cal) - Ādikāṇḍa - 40th Sarga. ~~xxx~~
2. Ibid. Ādikāṇḍa 13th, 15th Sarga etc.
3. MBH - (HS. Ed. - Cal) Ādiparvan 90, 60, 62, 92nd and 95. 1-2 etc.

4. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 90.67, 93th ch etc.
5. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan 106.9, 107th ch. etc.
6. Ibid. (HS) Strī Parvan 27, 26-27 etc.
7. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 208. 213, 214 ch. etc.
8. Ibid (HS) Vānaparvan ch 127-128.
9. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana, Parvan 20. 7-9.
10. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana Parvan 20-9-11.
11. Rāmāyana (G.E Gal) Ayodhyā Kānda 16th Sarga.
12. MBh (HS) Ādiparvan 118. 27-28, 119, 20-21.

Re-marriage of widows.

This topic has been highlighted by us in our previous chapters. Both the Epics are totally silent about the prevalence of this custom during those days. We must also remember the fact that Damayanti, who became totally hopeless about the whereabouts of her husband, king Nala of the Nisadha country, Planned to announce her re-marriage with the hope, that such an announcement must bring back her husband to her paternal abode, in the Vidarbha country, where she had been living after her desertion by her husband. Her father, the king of Vidarbha, did not whole heartedly support her above plan. We find details of this in the Vanaparvan of the Mh.¹ This trick of Damayanti, as we can guess, was not at all a token of widow-marriage during this age. This was simply a trick not approved by the existing law or even by the society when Damayanti disclosed her plan to her father, he rebuked her for promoting such an illegal idea of widow-marriage. When he was convinced that such a trick was the only way to see his daughter re-united with her husband, he finally, though with reluctance, allowed her to work out her plan. We learn furthermore from the Mh.² that Rtuvarna the king of Ayodhya with the disguised Nala as his chariot-driver came to Vidarbha with the hope of keeping Damayanti as his concubine and not as his lawful wife and that this plan of Damayanti was fruitful to have her husband back to her.

Both the Epics, however, narrate episodes of the desertion of wives by their husbands. The Rāmāyana³ states the episode of queen Sītā's desertion by her husband Rāma after her return from Laṅkā. We further notice that ladies like Damayantī and Sītā, even after their desertion, remained completely faithful to their respective husband and that they were ultimately re-united with them, and that their social status was never hampered for this reason. The reason for the banishment of Sītā, however, had been a different one. Hindu married women in these days, were followers of high morality and they never cherished even an ~~inkxofxthx~~ idea of their re-marriage under any circumstances. We have already observed beforehand that several thousand Kaurava women remained widows throughout their lives after the Kurukṣetra war. The countless women belonging to the Yadu, Vrsni and Andhaka tribes became widows when the civil war among the broke out, but all the widows remained as such through out the rest of their life.

We have observed before hand too, that ^{the} sage Dīrghatamas enacted a distinct law against widow-marriage in the days of high antiquity.

It is therefore apparent that widow-marriage in the truest sense of the term did not exist even in the days of the Epics in our country. The non-existence of this system in the Pre-Epic-age, has already been discussed by us in the ~~xxxx~~ previous chapters of this volume.

Foot Notes.

1. (N.B: Desertion of Damayanti by Nala MBH (HS) - Vana parvan- 51st ch. Damayanti's trick to announce her re-marriage - MBH (HS) - Vana Parvan- 57th ch. Damayanti's re-union with Nala - MBH - (HS) Vanaparvan- 62nd ch.)
2. MBH (HS) - Vanaparvan- 57th ch.
3. Rāmāyana (Gouḍiya) - Uttarkānda - 50th Sarga.

Self Immolation of the widows.

Elaborate discussions about the prevalence of this custom in the ancient India has been made by us in our first and 2nd chapters. The texts of the Epics also furnish some examples of self-immolation of the widows in those days. We learn from the passages of the Epics that decision about sacrificing one's own life in the funeral pile of the deceased husband was completely optional to the widows of those days. The texts of the Epics furnish the examples (mostly) of the Ksatriya women who dared to enter the funeral pyres of their respective husbands. But as the Dharmaśāstras prescribe that a Brāhmana widow should prefer to immolate herself embracing the corpse of her husband in his funeral Pyre existence of self-immolation of the Brāhmana widows in the epic age can not be denied. But we should not ignore the fact that there is not any single reference recorded in the ancient scriptures of the Hindus which can point to the fact that this custom was also observed by the lower-caste people of India in the ancient times.

Rāmāyana¹ is descriptive of the fact that queen Kausalyā wanted to mount the funeral pile of her departed husband but she was dissuaded by the family priest Vasistha, under whose instruction the queen was forcibly carried away from the bed of the corpse and was confined in a single room.² When Vālin,³ the monkey king of Kiṣkindhyā was killed by Rāma, his queen Tārā, wanted to ascend his pile, but subsequently she changed her opinion on the request of her son Angada and others.

This is hard to form any definite impression about the fact that whether the non-Aryans were influenced by the norm and customs of the Hindus of those days, or whether this had been any indigeneous custom of a different type of the Hindus other than observing celibacy after the death of one's husband. Our archaic scriptures do not cite even a single reference in favour of the observance of this rite by the non-Aryans. ⁴ MBh states that when lord Kṛṣṇa died, his favourite wives such as Rukmiṇī, Jāmbōvalī and a few other, all chose to sacrifice their lives in respective separate piles as because Lord Kṛṣṇa was burnt beforehand in a separate pyre. The dearest wives (inclusive of Devakī) ⁵ Vasudava (the father of Kṛṣṇa) ~~xx~~ also did the same. ⁶ On the other hand, the sixteen thousand wives of Kṛṣṇa choose to survive and they accompanied by there grand son called Vajra proceeded towards Indraprastha under the guidance of 'Arjuna'. ⁷ Satyabhāmā and other wives of Kṛṣṇa retired into the forest for spending the rest of their lives in meditation. The wives of ⁸ Akrūra also proceeded towards ^{the} forest with the some purpose. ⁹ MBh furthermore states that the widows of the warriors and kings of the Kurukṣetra war did not enter the funeral piles of their husbands. They on the other hand, remained widows and helped in performance of the Srāddha and other connected rites for pleasing the souls of their departed husbands. The above examples are enough to testify to our argument that to observe the formalities of this custom was completely optional to the widows of those days, which is supported by the sacred injunction that, a widow may either immolate herself in the funeral pyre of her husband or live a life of strict celibacy.

10
MBh. furnishes the reference to the self-immolation of a Brāhmana widow after when her husband was killed by king Kalmāspāda or Soudāsa, the son of king Sudāsa of the Vedic days. We have discussed about this in our previous chapters. The texts of the Epics are silent about self-immolation of the Brāhmana widows off and on. Our Dharmasāstras have however allowed Brāhmana widows to ascend the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. We have witnessed the observance of this custom by them in the scriptures of the later Vedic age. (inclusive of the purānas). It is apparent therefore that the Brāhmana widows in the age of the Epics too did not abstain themselves from observing this rite. This was however optional to them also, as is evident from the instance of Kṛpī¹¹ who was seen mourning bitterly with dislevelled hair at the slaughter of her husband, Dronā, the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas at the Kuruksetra war and was helping in the performance of the funeral activities of her husband instead.

Foot Notes.

1. Rāmāyana (Goudiya Ed. Cal) Ayodhyā Kānda 68th Sarga.
2. Ibid. Ayodhyākānda. 68.44 - 46
Ayodra Kanda.
3. Ibid. (Goudiya Ed) Kiskindhya Kānda. 21st Sarga (29-32) etc.
4. Mausala Parvan. 7. 24. Mahābhārata (HS) Cal.
5. Ibid (HS) Mausala Parvan 7.24.
6. Ibid (HS) Mausala Parvan 7.38.

7. Ibid (HS) Mausala Parvan 7.85
8. Ibid (HS) Mausala Parva 7.83.
9. Ibid (HS) Strī Parvan 27th ch.
10. Ibid (HS) Ādi Parvan 175. 8 - 22.
11. Ibid (HS) Strīparvan 23.34-35, 37, Śāntiparvan.
423 etc.

N i y o g a

The prevalence of this practice in the age of the Epic has been fully actailed in the passages of the MBh. We have discussed suitably press and cons of this practice in our first chapter of this book. ¹ MBh has almost quoted the rules of Manu while explaining the merit and eligibility to observe this practice. We have however explained all these points in our first chapter. This Epic ² has often considered the Kṣetrajā children (born through application of this practice) to be equal in status with the aurasa (direct) children when the latter did not exist. We learn from the passages of the MBh ³ that the begotter in every case (of Niyoga) should have been a person belonging to the same caste or a caste superior than that of the caste of the begottee, but in no case the begotter ^t should have been a person of lower caste.

The references to the observance of this custom by the Epic Indians has been recorded in the passages of the MBh. Thus we are met with the incident of the co-habitation of sage ⁴ Dīrghatamas with the queen of king Bali as a result of which several male children were born. This also points to the origin of this custom at the age of high antiquity in India (as because ^{the} sage Dīrghatamas is believed to have been ⁵ belonging to the Vedic age) sage Vyāsa was born through Satyavati (afterwards the queen of king Śāntanu) by the sage Parāśara when the former was an un-married dame. When king

Vicitravīryya, of the Kuru family died childless, Vyāsa⁶ begot⁷ Dhṛtarāstra through his senior queen Ambikā and Pāṇḍu through his Junior queen Ambālikā. These are also referred to in the Agni Purāna, which point we have discussed in our second chapter. Vidura⁸ was born through a Śūdra maid-servant of queen Ambikā by Vyāsa in the same manner when the maid-servant was sent in lieu of the afraid queen.

All the five Pāṇḍava brothers were born in the like manner. On the request of king Pāṇḍu, who became impotent untimely following the curse of a sage, his queens, namely Kuntī and Mādri⁹ invited different gods who begot the first three Pāṇḍavas Yudhisthira, Bhīma and Arjuna through Kuntī and the remaining two¹⁰ (Nakula and Sahadeva) through the Junior queen Mādri. The above is hardly acceptable from the historical point of view as sexual union between gods and human beings appears to be impossible. But inspite of the above stories, the Pāṇḍava brothers were unanimously accepted as the lawful sons of Pāṇḍu and their Kṣātrāja caste was also admitted.

One peculiar reference to this practice is recorded also in the MBh. This is the episode¹¹ of the co-habitation of the corpse of king Byuhitāśva with his queen Bhadrā.

¹² MBh furthermore narrates the episode of ^{the} sage Vasistha's co-habitation with queen Madayantī of king Saudāśa as a result of which Asmaka was born. This incident testifies to our argument that this custom had been in prevalence among ^{the} Indians even in the days of the Vedas. We have referred to this in our first chapter also.

We learn in addition (from the MBh) that when
 13
 Panasurāma tried to exterminate the Ksatriyas (as a caste),
 their widows approached the Brāhmanas for co-habitation so as
 to keep continuity of their line.

We all know that Manu ruled to the effect
 that two should be the maximum number of male children begotten
 through the application of this practice (Manu - IX 61); while
 the MBh states :-

"Nātascaturtham prasavamāpatsvapi Vadantā^yta |

atah param svairinī syāt pañcane vandhakī bhavet" #Ādi:117.81

Therefore this practice was considered very essential
 in the event of the husband's becoming impotent or a wife being
 widowed at an early age, without begetting any child and the
 Epic Age witnessed its fully developed form in India.

Foot Notes

1. MBh (HS.Ed) Ādi P. 98th, 114th & 116th Ch. etc.
2. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan114. 37.
3. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan114. 38.
4. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan98th Ch.
5. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan81th ch.
6. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvan100th ch.

7. Same as F.N. 6.
8. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvanī 100. 27-32 etc.
9. Ibid (HS) Ādi Parvanī 17th ch.
10. Ibid (HS) Ā.P. 118th ch.
11. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvanī 115th ch.
12. Ibid (HS) Ādi Parvanī 16. 22-23.
13. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvanī 93th Ch.

D i v o r c e

The scholars are unanimous about the fact that divorce was not a characteristic of the ~~wak~~ wedlock of the ancient Hindus. We have thoroughly highlighted this point in our foregoing chapter. We can not ignore the fact that the texts of the Epics too are ignorant about the existence of this system. The fact must be admitted that the desertion of wives by their husbands had been a custom of the Hindus since the primitive stage of their civilization as is learnt from the Vedic and Purānic texts. Example of temporary separation of the wives from their husbands appears to be a sort of punishment for purification of the wives from some crime committed by them knowingly or otherwise. Epics too, furnish a few more examples of the aforesaid form, say for example, Sītā¹ was exiled~~from~~ by her husband Rāma in a forest near the hermitage of Vālmīki wherefrom she was again withdrawn by Rama after the lapse of certain period of time. Ahāyā², as we learn from the epic, was abandoned by her husband Gaṇṭama for adultery, but she was again accepted by her husband after a certain period of time and that their marriage was not dissolved.

The duties of a pious wife as has been detailed in the passages of the MBh³ are:

(1) A virtuous wife, should not be displeased with her husband, if her husband would dare to desert her. She should remain ever faithful to her husband even during the period of her desertion.

(2) A pious wife, should not mind for unpleasant behaviour she would receive from her husband.

When Rāma, while in his banishment went to the hermitage of the sage Atri, his wife Anasū^y advised Sītā to remain ever faithful and chaste to her husband under all circumstances. Sītā, in reply, fully endorsed the statement of Anasū^y. The fact that the married women in general had been devoted to their respective husbands is supported by the above reference of Rāmāyana⁴. Therefore, Divorce had been an unthinkable custom to the epic Hindus.

Ādiparvan^a of the MBh has detailed the duties of husband and wife. The aforesaid references have already been mentioned by us elsewhere in this chapter.

Foot Notes

1. Rāmāyana (Goudīya) - Uttarākāṇḍa 50th Sarga.
2. Ibid (Gaudīya *) - Ādikāṇḍa - 49th and 50th Sarga.
3. Mahābhārata (HS, Cal) Vāna Parvash 60, 63-66.
4. Rāmāyana (Goudīya) - Aranya Kāṇḍa - 2nd & 3rd Sarga.

Polyandry.

A solitary example of Polyandry is found in detail in the MBh in which Draupadī, the daughter of the Pāncāla king Drupada is found to have her five husbands at a time.

We learn from the ¹MBh that the third Pāṇḍava Arjuna in the disguise of a Brāhmana won over princess Draupadī from the hall of her svayamvara after fulfilling certain terms and conditions of king Drupada and vanquishing the rival kings. Accidentally she was asked by her husband's mother Kuntī², to be shared commonly by her five sons. Draupadī's ³gurdians were not ready to accept that proposal. Accordingly the opinion of the sage Vyāsa⁴ was solicited by the Pāṇḍavas. He however consented⁵ to this proposal of (Polyandrous) wedding (of the Pāṇḍavas) on the basis of⁶ mythology. This is revealed from the consequent arguments⁶ of the Pāṇḍavas and the sage Vyāsa with king Drupada that this type of marriage had not at all been practised at any time by the Hindus excepting two solitary cases of long past. We have suitably discussed the above point in our second chapter. Furthermore, the ⁷MBh furnishes two more references of polyandry in India at the age of high antiquity, viz, (a) the marriage of one Brāhmana woman called Jatilā belonging to the Gautama family with seven sages. But no textual or confirmation of any other kind we receive from any other source till date.

(b) The marriage of Vārkṣhī with ten Pracetas brothers which reference has been suitably highlighted by us in the 2nd chapter of this book.

We are closing our discussion on Polyandry of epic age right now.

Foot Notes

1. MBh (HS. Ed) Ādiparvaṁ181st ch. (181, 17-18, 20, 21, 26-28 etc.).
2. Ibid (HS) Ādi Parvaṁ184. 2.
3. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvaṁ188 & 189th ch.
4. Ibid (HS) Ādibarvaṁ189th ch.
5. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvaṁ189, 190 & 191th ch.
6. Ibid (HS) 1+5) Ādiparvaṁ188-189 and 191st ch.
7. Ibid (HS) Ādiparvaṁ189. 1-15.

Caste System

The Hindu caste system and its gradual development have been discussed by us elaborately in our previous chapters. Nothing is therefore left to discuss anew just now. We are accordingly, discussing about the caste system which we witness in the passages of the Epics.

In the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki not only the existence of the four castes but their rigidity also is found to be firmly established. Rāma was held as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, apparently for his being a strong supporter and protector of the caste system as quoted from the verse.

"cātur varṇyaṅca lokesmin sve sve
dharme niyoksyati" 1. 1. 79

[We will establish the four castes on a firmer footing, for performing the duties preserved for these respective castes]

while eulogising the Rāmāyana as a sacred book, Valmiki tells us that people belonging to each of the four different castes would be blessed to secure their desired objects by reciting the verses of this epic as a routine duty. He adds that the daily recitation of this epic would make a Brāhmana an Orator, a Kṣatriya, a sovereign king a Vaiśya, a rich trader and a Śūdra, a venerable man.

Pathan dvijo vagrsabhatvamiyāt
Ksatrānvayo bhūmipatitvamiyāt
Vanigjanah panyaphalatvamiyāc
Srñvan hi sūdropi mahatvamiyāt

(Rāmāyana - Goudīya - Ādikanda - 1.110)

The quadrupic division of mankind has further been narrated in the Rāmāyana in the like manner :-

"Sirasō Brāhmana yātā Ūrasah ksatriyā bhuvī;
Jātāscāpyuruto vaisyāh sūdrānām janma, pādatah //

(Rāmāyana - Goudīya - Aranya Kānda - 20.31)

Rāmāyana further informs us that the learned Brāhmanas in those days were held in such a high regard that even the sovereign kings used to bow down at their feet and obey their instructions. Dasārātha, the sovereign king of Āyodhyā, had to send his young sons Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to fight against the most notorious demons against his will, simply to please the sage Viśvāmitra. Rāma and Bharata, on different occasions, bowed down at the feet of the sage Bharadvāja at Prayāga and received instructions from him. Rāma during the period of his exile met most of the renowned hermits viz. Sutikṣṇa, Śarabhaṅga and the like with due respect, bowed down at their feet, and received advice and blessings from them.

Rāmāyana further informs us that the Brāhmanas of those days used to keep various types of weapons with them and they were expert in the use of such weapons. Thus we see, that

Sagara, while a young boy, learnt the use of arms from the sage Aurva. Visvāmitra, the ruling king of the country called Kānyakubja, though at the command of a large army, was completely defeated by the sage Vaśiṣṭha. Parśurāma, a descendant of the sage Bhr̥gu, defeated and killed all the Kṣatriya kings of his time. It is, therefore apparent that the Brāhmaṇas of the Epic age, though as a general rule, were engaged in study and meditation, they could fight gallantly and successfully at the time of necessity. The Kṣatriyas in general, were regardful and loyal to the Brāhmaṇas and the Vaiśyas and the Sūdras as a general rule were the strict followers of their respective duties furnished in the Śāstras. Any attempt to violate the caste rules at the time of the Rāmāyaṇa brought in death sentence to the offender, as is evident from the fate of Śambuka, (a Sūdra), who was beheaded by Rāma, for a ~~similar~~ similar offence.

MBh further, is descriptive of the origin of Hindu caste system. Say for example, Lord Kṛṣṇa discusses about this with Arjuna, just before the commencement of the Kurukṣetra war with the help of the following verse :

Cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam

Guna-Karma-Vibhāgaśah (1).

Here the Lord says that the four castes with the rules furnished for each of them, were framed by His own self. This indicates the fact that the caste system in the hoary past originated in India as a natural development, responsibility of which lies with the Lord Almighty and to no one else.

This reminds us the process of its creation as recorded in the Vedic texts and discussed by us in the first chapter of this thesis.

MBh has given some information in another verse in which responsibility of the creation of the four castes has been attributed to Lord Brāhman.

The verse is as follows :

"Brāhmanā Brahmanah srstā mukhāt

Ksatrañca vāhutah;

Urubhyāmatha vaiśyā vai Śūdrāh

padbhayāmiti śrutih !

Origin of the Hindu caste system has been spoken of in another verse of the MBh :

'mukhato brāhmano jātah vāhujah

ksatriyah ~~am~~ smutah

Urujāh dhanino rājan !

pādayoh paricārakāh

Brāhmana was created from the mouth (of the Lord), Ksatriya from His arms, the rich (Vaiśya) from His thighs and the Paricāraka (Śūdra) from Him feet. This is practically a translation of a verse of the Purusasūkta hymn of the R.V. (X.90) already discussed in the 1st chapter of this book.

The professional gradation for the members of the quadrupic caste division of the Hindus as has been stated in

the MBh is as follows :

The ⁴Brāhmanas are authorised to perform sacrifices themselves and also on behalf of their disciples (Yajamānas), to extend charities, to visit holy places and to teach the boys (of the twice-born order).

⁵They should purify themselves with the help of the performances of ten categories of samskāras (such as Jātakarman etc), they should have thorough grasp on the vedic literature they should possess good moral character, they should be devoted to the truth and should be popular. They should in addition, possess such qualities like softness, kindness, tenderness etc and be engaged in meditation. They should furthermore, be harmless all along to every human being.

We have already mentioned before hand, that the Brāhmanas in the early Epic age possessed special aptitude in the use of arms. They retained this ability also in the later Epic age. MBh has furnished the names of a few Brāhmanas viz. Drona, Kṛpa, Aśvathāman, etc. who had been remarkable personalities in the field of conducting war and use of arms.

⁶The Ksatriyas are similarly authorised to make gifts, to perform sacrifices and to study the Vedas. They should neither be engaged in the task of teaching the pupils, nor receive gift of any kind from anybody, nor act as a priest. They should govern their subjects, should collect taxes from them in return and should be pious people.

The Vaiśyas on the other hand, as MBh⁷ rules, should be engaged in trading, farming and dairy business. They should study the Vedas and be friendly to all especially to the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas.

Last of all, the Sūdras,⁸ are to serve the members of the three upper castes. Study of the Vedas and performance of sacrifices are denounced for them.

The origin of mixed castes and assignment of labour to them has been illustrated by us in the second chapter of this book.

MBh⁹ has also cited the names of the mixed castes such as Murdhābhisikta, Ambastha, Ugra, Vaideha, Pukkaśa, stera, Mśāda, Sūta, Māgadha, Karana, Vrātya, Candāla etc. But their division of labour has not been mentioned thoroughly in this Epic.

We learn furthermore from the passages of this Epic,¹⁰ that at the very outset, there was no division of caste, but the entire mankind because of being created by Lord Brahman could be reasonably termed as Brāhma or Brāhmaṇa and that the division of caste came into being one after another on some x later date.

As regards the complexion of four different castes, the MBh² tells us that the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra were generally of white, red, yellow and dark colour respectively.

MBh¹² furthermore states that the Kṣatriyas at the earliest phase were quarrelsome, fond of properties, angry, and

courageous, and the Vaiśyas were devoted to agriculture and tending of cattle. The Śūdras on the contrary, according to the same authority were liars, engaged in the activities associated with violence and greed~~y~~ and they in fact were servants of all the upper caste Hindus.

The members of the quadrupic caste-division of the Hindu society, as we assess from the passages of the MBh, had been living in peaceful friendly relation side by side during those days. But we must remember this at the same time that the caste rules in those days were very strict and the upper caste brides never liked to marry a lower class man even when he had been highly meritorious. Draupadī's ¹³ denial to marry Karna can be referred to in this context. Karna, as we all know, had been a rival of Arjuna in regard to win over Draupadī from the hall of her Svayamvara. But she announced openly her unwillingness to marry Karna because of the fact ~~xx~~ that he was believed to have been belonging to the mixed Sūta caste.

¹⁴
The superiority and quality of the Brāhmaṇas, who had been considered to be the highest caste in the Hindu society, has been referred to in the passages of the MBh.

The power of the Purohita, alike the Vedic and Purāṇic age had been absolute and supreme. Vasīṣṭha was the family priest of king Daśaratha, and also of his son Rāma after Daśaratha's death. He was also a minister in the royal court, and his advice was solicited in every case whether political social or religious, and his decision was finally carried out by the crown. Dharmya,

similarly, had been the purohita (priest) of the Pāṇḍavas. He was the conductor of every important religious as well as social function on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. Thus we see that he conducted the marriage ceremony of Draupadī¹⁵ with^{the} five Pāṇḍavas, he had been the Purohita (or one of the hotrs) at the Rājasuya¹⁶ sacrifice, he conducted the Śrāddha¹⁸ ceremony of the heroes who were killed at the Āra Bharata war and so on.¹⁹ MBh has laid down the qualities which a Brāhmaṇa must possess at the time of his appointment as a Purohita (priest) and subsequently during the period of his holding this high office. Obviously, the son of a Brāhmaṇa was appointed a Purohita by the crown and the same rule was effective in the appointment of ministers as well. The reason probably was that every priest and also every minister had to be a highly learned and experienced man having the traditional high qualities and high parentage. Thus we find in the Rāmāyana that most of the priests of Daśaratha viz, Vaśiṣṭha, Vānādeva and Jaimini etc were also working as his ministers. These sages have been described as rājakartārah (the framers of the king) and it was these sages who selected Bharata as their king after Daśaratha's death. In the MBh also we find, Dhanmya, Sudharman (the Purohita of the Kauravas) and the like were all Brāhmaṇas by birth and each of them acted simultaneously as a priest and as a minister.

There are clear evidences in the Rāmāyana²⁰ wherefrom we learn that the outcastes (caṇḍālas) were never allowed to enter the hall or even to come to the places of a sacrificial

rite. The fact that the upper class Hindus never took boiled food or dinner from the Sūdras and not even unboiled food from any out caste, is further known from the affairs of Rāma and Bharata, at the Srīngaverapura. Guhaka, the king of Srīngaverapura came forward to entertain Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and offered various types of food and drinks to them. But they refused to receive the same from Guhaka on the ground of their having born in a high class Kṣatriya family. Lakṣmaṇa personally fetched water from the Gaṅgā and both the brothers along with Sītā passed the whole night simply with the drinking of the above and without taking any food. ²¹ When Bharata came to the above place in search of Rāma, Guhaka again came forward with food and drink to entertain him. Bharata enquired as to what his elder brother did. When Guhaka disclosed the fact, Bharata told him, that he also was not authorised to do the reverse.

Foot Notes.

1. MBH (H.S)-BHĪṢMAPARVA- 28.13. BHĀGAVADGĪTĀ -FOURTH CH.
2. Ibid (HS) Karna Parvan 26.34.
3. Ibid (HS) Śānti Parvan 289.6
4. Ibid (HS) Udyoga Parvan 29.23., Karna Parvan 26.36
5. Ibid (HS) Śānti Parvan 182. 2-4. Udyoga Parvan 29. 24-25.
6. Ibid (HS) Karna Parvan 26.37, Śānti Parvan 182.5

7. Ibid (HS) U.P. 29. 26. K.P. 26.37.
8. Ibid (HS) U.P. 29.27
K.P. 26.38. S.P. 182.7
9. Ibid (HS) S.P. 289. 8-9.
10. Ibid (HS) S.P. 181.10
11. Ibid (HS) S.P. 181.5.
12. Ibid (HS) Sāntiparva 181.11-13.
13. Ibid. (HS) Ādiparvan 180. 23.
14. Ibid (HS) Vana Parvan 108th ch.
15. Ibid (HS) Ā.P. 191st ch.
16. Ibid. (HS) Sabhā Parvan 32.28.
17. Loc. cit.
18. Ibid (HS) Strī Parvan 23rd 27th ch. etc.
19. Ibid (HS) Ā.P. 163. 73-80.
20. Rāmāyana Baroda Ed. III. 54.18
21. Ibid. Baroda Ed. II. 44. 24-26

Educational System

We have discussed about the possibility of the prevalence of this system in the Vedic age in our first chapter. Detailed Prescription about this system has been observed in most of the Purānas.

We learn from the passages of the MBh that this system, alike the purānic days, was prescribed for the boys of twice born¹ order only. That is why, when Ekalavya, the son of the Misādhā king Hiranyadhanyas went to Drona for being admitted as a pupil of him to become an expert in the field of archery with its applications, he was refused by Drona on the plea that a boy belonging to mixed inferior caste (Like Misāda) had no access to be mixed up with the boys of Rājanya families. The description of the daily life of a Brahmacārin (in the MBh) is the same alike the purānic rules. We are therefore, laying down here a brief outline of this system as it has been described in the passages of the Epics (i.e. MBh).

2

According to this Epic,² the pupil (after being initiated with the sacred thread) should remain under the same roof with his preceptor. He should ~~not~~ salute his guru (preceptor) everyday, should take lessons from him with a pure and conscious mind. He should consider his preceptor like his own parents and should never express any sign of disrespect towards him. The pupil should try to save his guru even in the exchange of his own wealth and life. The pupil should worship the gods including the Sun and the Fire god and should take his bath thrice a day.

He should live on begging and deposit ~~everything~~ everything he receives from begging to his guru. He should eat the food given to him by his preceptor. It is obvious that the Vedic study had been a must to the Brahmacārin. But it is apparent that other categories of ^{pupils} ~~disciples~~ also were taught by their gurus. A pupil was expected to honour the wife and the children of his guru in the like manner as of his guru.

The references to aforesaid system have been pointed at in the passages of the Epics. Rāmāyana ² is descriptive of the fact that Bharata received his education during his stay at the house of his ~~maternal~~ maternal uncle. He received necessary training in the painting, mathematics, the science of archery and other religious scriptures, ethics, the art of music etc. and different types of art, in addition to Veda and Vedāngas under the guidance of experienced teachers.

One more point is to be noted here in this connection is that according to the injunctions of our religious scriptures prior to the Epic age, the Brāhmanas were authorised to take weapons and fight with the tyrant kings who were cruel and torturous to their subjects. Thus we see that the Brāhmanas in the Pre-Epic and also in the Epic age fought against many oppressor and tyrant kings. In fact the Brāhmanas fought against foreign invaders also in those days. Some Brāhmanas (such as Krpa, Droṇa, Aśvathāman) were famous for their aptitude and efficiency in the science of archery (both in theory and practice). The former two were appointed as the instructors of this art for the Kauravas

and the Pāṇḍavas. There are several references of the above kind recorded in the Epics. We are not mentioning all of them here.

The pupil while leaving the house of his preceptor after completion of his studies, had to pay due remuneration^{er} to his Guru (preceptor). The preceptor managed his livelihood only from this type of remunerations, received from his pupils.

We learn from the MBh⁴ that Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu during the period of their study had to live the life of a Brahmacārin. They studied the subjects like Vedas, Vedāṅgas, History, Purānas and Ethics etc. They also became experts in the science of archery both in theory and practice. The use of the weapons like Gadā and sword and the driving of elephant, horae etc, were not unknown to them.

Foot Notes.

1. MBh. (HS. Ed) - Ādi Parvan 128. 40-41.
2. Ibid (HS) Udyoga Parvan - 44th ch. (9-15 etc).
3. Sānti Parvan - 184th ch.
3. Rāmāyana) Gouḍīya Ed) - Ādikanda 80th Sarga.
4. Mbh (H.Ed) Ādiparva. 103. 18 - 20.

Catūrāśrama.

The detailed discussions about this practice have been made by us in the first and second chapters of this book. It has become clear to us from our above writing that this system had been in existence in India long before the Epic age.

Our Epics are also vocal about the prevalence of this system in those days. We find elaborate discussions about this in the passages of the MBh. We have also noticed the vivid description about this practice in most of the Purānic texts and have re-quoted them in the second chapter of this volume. We therefore, shall be brief so as to its narration in this chapter. In the first stage,¹ a lad of twice-born order had to begin his studies in the house of his preceptor after he had initiated with the sacred thread. We are not going to re-state the essential features of this system right now, as because we have elucidated this issue in due course of our discussions already made before hand.

A Brahmacārin had to return his home after he had completed his studies. He then became a grhastha² or a married person. A grhastha had to be generous and noble to all the living creatures. He should earn his livelihood through some honest means. He had been authorised to be engaged in any sort of service ~~or~~ or business etc. He was authorised to sale gold even.³ MBh rules to the effect that a grhastha should provide with food and other essential materials to a Brahmacārin, a

Vānaprastha or even to a Samyāsīn on demand. This āśrama therefore is considered to be the best of all the āśramas. He should speak to any of the above personalities, (when coming to meet him), in a sweet tone, should behave gently and respectfully with him etc.

4
The grhastha (house holder) had to make regular arrangements for sacrifices at his home, he should perform Śrāddha rites to please the souls of his ancestors, and make arrangements for Sāstric discussions in his house. Last of all, obviously, he should become a proud father and hence the continuity of the line should become a real one in practice. All the aforesaid activities of the grhastha ⁵ used to have been the causes for the pleasure of the gods, the ancestors, sages, prajāpati and so on.

6
There was no bar for a grhastha to lead a lavish and luxurious life, regular arrangement for any sort of entertainment has not been denounced for him even. In addition, he had been authorised to make fullest enjoyment of the life in the truest sense of the term.

The third āśrama or the life of the Vānaprastha is almost like the same as we find in the Purānic chapters. We need not refurnish these once again here. MBh ⁷ adds furthermore, that a Vānaprastha should perform agnihotras daily, should wear hide of animals, should visit holy places, fountains and rivers etc., should avoid meat-eating, should exercise yogas and so on.

The description of the life of a parivrājaka in the MBh is also alike as we have found in the Purānic texts. ⁸ MBh rules furthermore, that a parivrājaka should normally spend five nights in a city and only a night in a village, should be a guest in the house of any twice born man, engaged in honest professions. He should be indifferent in respect of greed, anger, pride, meanness, passion etc.

MBh has referred to some examples of the life in the above āśrama. Thus we see, that Satyavatī⁹, the widow of King Śāntanu, decided to lead the life of a Vānaprastha, accompanying her two daughter-in-laws Ambikā and Ambālikā by name under the instructions of her son Vyāsā¹⁰, the sage. King Dhṛtarāstra also became a Vānaprastha after the Kurukṣetra war was over, along with Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, his only wife Gāndhārī, Vidura and Sañjaya.

¹¹
MBh states,

"Esa evā para dharmo rājarsinām yudhisthira !
sanare vā bhavemrtyurvane vā vidhi pūrvakam.

i.e. this is the compulsion for the kings (or it is the best of all the dhamas to them instead), that either they should sacrifice their lives in war, or they should spend the remaining part of their life (if living) in the forest (as a hermit).

But scriptures like Ādipurāna etc. have denounced this practice for the Kali age (as stated by Raghunandana in his Udvāhatattva).

Foot Notes.

1. MBh (HS.Ed) - Śānti Parvan 184th ch. (9.10, 12 etc.).
2. Ibid. (HS) S.P. 184. 16-17.
3. Ibid (HS) S.P. 184. 17-22 etc.
4.
&
5. Ibid. (HS) S.P. 184.25.
6. Ibid (HS) S.P. 184.29.
7. Ibid. (HS) S.P. 185. 1-2 etc.
8. Ibid (HS) S.P. 185. 5-9.
9. Ibid (HS) A.P. 122. 5-12 etc.
10. Ibid. (HS) Āśrama - Vāsika paravan 10th to 12th ch.
11. Ibid (HS) Āśrama Vāsika Parvan. VI . 12.

Dress and Decoration.

We have taken into consideration the habit of wearing the dress and ornaments of the Vedic Hindus in our first chapter. This is also understood that the use of golden ornaments and pearls, jewels etc. had been known to the Indians since the Vedic days.

Our texts of the Epics too have elucidated this point. ¹ MBh narrates that aristocratic Hindu women in this age were wearing ornaments viz, Kundalas, manis and gems (earnings), bangles (made of conch), keyūras, garlands (made of gold), etc. The aristocratic Indians in those days (both men and women) were fond of wearing ornaments. The ornaments made of diamonds, gold, pearls, jewels etc. have been referred to. The ² use of garlands, perfumes, pearls etc. had been in vogue in this age.

The use of two sets of garments viz. an upper garment and a lower and also an under garment was known to the Hindus since the inception of their civilization. In addition, the ³ MBH states that the aristocrats put on turbans (uṣṇīṣa) on their head. The clothes made of jute has been referred to. ⁴ The Ksatriya women often wore transparent clothes.

⁵ Rāmāyana is informative of the various categories of musical instruments viz, Vīṇā, Paṭaha, Mrdāṅga, Venu, Paṇava, dindima, Gomṛukha, Turyya, Pithikā, Karatāla, Kāṁsyatāla etc.

Different kinds of ornaments such as tilaka, kundala, hāra,
~~etc.~~ vaiduryya, himaśūtra, nūpura, valava and garland etc. -
 are also mentioned in the above epic.

Golden necklace, different catagories of Sādi, golden
 kundalas, manī and gems, ornaments for the breast etc, have been
 referred to in the ⁷MBh.

Foot Notes.

1. MBh (HS. Ed.) - Virāta Purān 15.2
2. Ibid (HS) Virāta Purāna 20.20.
3. Ibid. (HS) Virāta Purāna 15th ch.
4. Ibid (HS) A.P. 119th ch.
5. Rāmāyana - (Goudāya) Sundara Ed. - 14th Sarga.
6. &
7. MBh (HS) A.P. 87. 2-3.

Food and Drink.

Different chapters of both the Epics reveal that rice was generally cooked and then eaten by the Hindus. Milk was consumed in much quantities by them during the age of the Epics. It is apparent that almost every Hindu in those days possessed cattle. Surā was an intoxicating drink. Hindus (aristocratic) were often addicted to this. In a grand festival, the participants, used to drink Surā off and on. Mahābhārata¹ narrates that the Jadus, Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis were intoxicated at their annual re-union ceremony which was held under the basement of the mountain of Raivataka. Women belonging to the Rajanya families also were habitual drunkards. The reference to queen Sudeśnā's lust for surā from the Mahābhārata² confirms our above impression. Meat was generally eaten by the Hindus in a grand occasion. Animals³ like Varāha, chāga (goat), meṣa (sheep) mrga (deer) etc. were usually slaughtered in that festival and their flesh was cooked and then eaten by the Hindus. In fact, the aristocratic Kṣatriyas were accustomed to meat eating as we learn from the passages of the Epics. But cow-slaughter was strongly disliked⁴ by the Hindus of those days. Mahābhārata⁴ has specially highlighted this point. We all know the fact that in Vedic India and afterwards (i.e. Prior to the Epic age) the meat of the animals slaughtered at the sacrifices were eaten by the Hindus. There is no adverse remark recorded in any of the texts of the Epics which can speak that this practice was discontinued in the Epic-age.

Several chapters of the Anusāsanaparvan of the MBh deal with the utility and praise of the Kine, in which everybody was strictly forbidden to kill or even hunt a cow whether male or female. Killer of a cow is destined to fall in a heinous hell and accept severe punishment there, right after his death, for a long period of years equal in number with the hair, the slaughtered cow had on its body.⁵

The general belief that king Rantideva killed cows in his sacrificial rite is belied by the description of the MBh, where the said king is said to have slaughtered animals both grānyas (collected from villages) and vanyas (caught from the woods). This cannot prove cow killing.

⁶ MBh has allowed the Hindus of the three upper castes to interdine. But ⁷ MBh has forbidden any dvija (twice born Hindu) to interdine with a Sūdra. ⁸ MBh has furthermore, forbidden any dvija to take up the profession of a Sūdra and to interdine with such an upper caste Hindu has been condemned by this epic. Brāhmanas are not authorised to interdine with any killer of a cow killer of a Brāhmana drunkard and or any ^{er} p^{er}son who has enjoyed sexual pleasure with the wife of his guru ⁹ (preceptor). Any honest man should not interdine with any physician, wanton woman or an artist.¹⁰

Last of all, the Brāhmanas are forbidden to act as a professional physician, warrior teacher, worshipper of god, astrologer etc. and to interdine with any such Brāhmana has been condemned by the MBh. Any lowest man should not furthermore,

interdine with a teacher who has been receiving salaries or
 wages for his services.¹²

Foot Notes.

1. MBh (HS.Ed) - A.P. (Subhadra Harana) - 212.7.9. etc.
2. Ibid (HS) Virata Parvan- 14th ch. (~~67.27~~), 67.27.
3. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana Parvan- 59 [64-68] etc.
4. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana Parvan- 59 [64-68] etc.
5. Yāvanti^{ta}sya nomāni tāvad varsāni majjati.
6. MBh (HS) Anusāsana parvan- 113. 2-4.
7. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana parvan- 113. 5-7.
8. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana parvan- 113.10.
9. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana parvan- 113.18.
10. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana parvan- 113.14.
11. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana Parvan 113.11-12.
12. Ibid (HS) Anusāsana Parvan 113.15

Music and Artistic Activities

or

Music and Source of Entertainments.

We have spoken a few words on the above topic in our forgoing chapters. We can not ignore the fact that the Indians possessed special aptitude towards the field of cultural activities in the age of high antiquity. The names of the different categories of musical instruments such as, Vinā Pataha, Mrdāṅga, Venu, Panava, Dindima, Gomukha, Turyya, Pithika, flute, Karatāla, Karṁsyatāla etc. Different kinds of ornaments such as Tilaka, Kundala, Hāra, Vaidurya, Hemasūtra, Mūpura, Valaya etc. have been referred to in this epic ¹Paradise has been mentioned for several times. Both the ²Epics specially the ³MBh is vocal in this regard. Rāmāyana and this Epic narrates the names of different categories of musical instruments viz. conch, ḥeri Panava, Ānaka (Karkaca), Gomukha, etc. The mode of their operation and application has not been mentioned there. This is also assessed, that at a grand festival, the dancers, story tellers and actors used to perform their respective professional aptitudes. Thus we see, that the above personalities were present at the svayanvara of Draupadī, ³ at the marriage ceremony of Uttarā, the daughter of the king of Matsya country ⁴ and also at the annual re-union ceremony of the Jads, ⁵ Vṛṣṇis, and Andhakaṣ under the basement of the mountain Raivataka.

We have not perhaps forgotten the fact that playing at dice was in vogue among the Hindus even during the days of the Vedas as is evident from the hymns of the R.V. ⁶ MBh has often spoken of the demerits of this game. We learn from this Epic that Nala, the king of the Nisadha country, had lost his everything due to his defeat at the dice game with Puskara. ⁷ Judhishthira too, lost his everything due to his defeat at the dice game with ⁸ Sakuni, the maternal uncle and representative of Duryodhana. MBh furthermore narrates that, when asked by Virāta the king of the Matsya country to play at dice with him, Judhishthira, then residing in his court in disguise of a Brāhmana, advised the king not to do so, pointing to the ill fate of ~~the~~ Judhishthira. But Virāta compelled him to play at dice and during the game, the king was so agitated that he stroke the disguised Judhishthira with a dicestone causing bloodshed from his nose.

It is therefore clear that the demerits of this game was duly felt by the wise people at the time of the MBh resulting into its gradual decay. Apparently for this reason, excepting the Mrcchakatika of Śūdraka, and other few dramas, dice game is found to be abandoned in all the Sanskrit dramas of later date.

Another point of discussion is that repeated mention of the actors has been made in the above contexts of the MBh. But name of any full fledged drama has not been mentioned in any of these Epics. Considering many other aspects, this is

practical to think that drama in its proper form had been composed during this time circle; but due to some natural or political calamities, were lost or destroyed in the later period.

Foot Notes.

1. Ramayana Gandīya - Sondarā Kānda - 14th Sarga.
2. MBh (HS. Ed) V.P. 67. 26. Bhīsmā P. 43.3.
3. Ibid (HS) A.P. 178.28
4. Ibid (HS) V.P. 67.28.
5. Ibid (HS) A.P. (Subhadrā Harana) 212.4.
6. Ibid (HS) Vana Pervaṅ 49th ch.
7. Ibid (HS) Saṅbhā P. (57th, 58th, 62nd, 73rd ch. etc.).
8. Ibid. (HS) Virāta P. - 63rd ch.

CHAPTER - IV

The social system as found in the texts of the Buddhists and Jain and their comparison with the Brahmanical text.

Detailed Contents:

		<u>Page No.</u>
1. Introductory Notes	...	245
2. Marriage	...	250
3. Caste System	...	255
4. Education	...	262
5. Food and drink	...	266
6. Dress and decoration	...	270

C H A P T E R - I V

The social system as found in the texts of the Buddhists
and the Jain and their comparison with the Brahmanical texts.

Introductory Notes

This chapter of our thesis will deal with the pattern of society which is assessed from the literary documents available from different texts of both the Buddhists and Jains. At the same time, we shall try to compare them with that of the references mostly of the Hindūs which we have already observed in our foregoing chapters.

To begin with, let us try to gather somewhat a rough idea about the Buddhist and the Jain texts.

The scholars are unanimous in the context that the sacred literature of the Buddhists has been written in Pāli, Māgadhi and other dialects. Of them, the Pāli texts have almost survived in its entirety. This literature consists of three Pitakas (lit. baskets) and known to the mankind as Tipitaka (in Pāli) or tripitaka (in Sanskrit). These Pitakas are viz, Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma. The Vinaya Pitaka codifies the rules and regulations of the Buddhist Sanghas and for the observance of the Bhiksus and nuns in their day to-day life.

This Pitaka consists of the following texts :

- (1) Pathimokkha ; (2) Sutta; (3) Khandhaka
and (4) Parivāra.

The Sutta Pitaka deals with the ethical principles of the Buddha's teaching. This Pitaka ~~compr~~ comprises of the following texts, also known as Nikāyas, viz. (1) Dīgha (2) Majjhima (3) Samjukta (4) Anguttara and (5) Khurddaka.

Abhidhamma Pitaka : This is almost of the alike nature of the ~~nikāyas~~ Sutta Pitaka. This Pitaka is composed in the form of questions and answers. Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of the following seven books, viz. (1) Dhammasaṅgani (2) Vibhaṅga (3) Kathākathu (4) Puggala Parāṃtti (5) Dhālukathā (6) Jamaka (7) Patthāna.

There is also in existence a great bulk of non-canonical literature composed in Pāli, Sanskrit and other dialects. (This is furthermore noticeable in this context that the references mostly from the canonical texts of both the Buddhists and Jains, have been utilised by us for the purpose of our discussion in this chapter.) Let us now add here a few more words about the literature of the Jains. They are divided into two major social grades Śvetāmvaras or those who wrap themselves in white (clothes) and Digambaras i.e. those who are wrapped in air (who are naked.) The Śvetāmvaras possess a vast literature designated as canonical and non-canonical literature. This ~~re~~ canonical literature is composed in Prākṛit. The canonical literature of the Śvetāmvaras comprises of eleven Āṅgas (or limbs of the body religion) and fourteen books called Puṇvas (Sanskrit Purva) which books are now lost, and it is believed that these 14 Puṇvas (or Purvas) formed a twelfth Āṅga.

This should be taken into account simultaneously in this context that both the sects of the Jains term their sacred books as Siddhānta or Anga. Both the sects are unanimous in calling the twelve Angas i.e. limbs (of the body of the religion), i.e. the first and most important part of their canon. The Śvetāmvara Siddhānta is widely introduced to the scholars.

This is to be mentioned here in this context that ¹ Winternitz has discussed elaborately about the history of the literature of both of the Buddhists and Jains. The authenticity of Jain canonical texts also has been discussed by him. ²

The brief description of it (according to him) is as under :-

The twelve Angas. - (1) Āyāraṅga Sutta. (2) Sūyagadama. (3) Thānaṅga (4) Saṃvāyāṅga. (5) Bhagavati Vyāhapanatti. (6) Nayādhammakahāo. (7) Uvāsagadasāo (8) Antagada dasāo (9) Anuttaravavāyadasāo (10) Panhāvāgaranain (11) Vivāgasuyan (12) Dithivāya.

The twelve Upāngas or Uvāngas (i.e. secondary limbs). (1) Uvavāya (2) Rāya Pasenaiya (3) Jivābhigana (4) Pamavanā (5) Sānapannatti (6) Jambuddivapannatti (7) Carada Pannatti (8) Mirayāvalī (9) Kappāvadaṅṅāsāo (10) Pupphāo (11) Pupphaculīo (12) Vanhidasāo (Vanhidasao).

(The ten paimas. Scattered pieces) : (1) Caṅsarara. (2) Āurapaccakkhāna (3) Bhattaaparinnā (4) Santhāra (5) Tandulaveyāliya (6) Camdaviijhaya. (7) Devindatthoa

8 Ganivijjā, (9) Mahāpaccakkhaṇa. (10) Viratthasa.

The six chāya Suttas. (1) Nisāha (2) Mahāniṣa
(3) Vavahara (4) Ayāradasāo. (5) Kappa. (6) Pañcakappa. (has
got several other names).

Individual texts. (1) ~~Rakhi~~ Nandi Sutta (2) Anuogadāra.

Four Mūḍā suttas. (1) Uttarajjhayā (2) Āvassaya
(3) Dasaveyāliya. (4) Pindanijutti.

The scholars however are not definite about the exact
chronology of the above Canonical texts excepting that of the
Angas.

The canonical texts of the Digamvaras, as the scholars
think are of a secondary nature. Eliot⁴ observes, "The canon of
the Digamvaras, which is less well known is said to be chiefly
in Sanskrit and according to tradition was codified by Puṣpa
Datta in the 2nd cet. A.D., but appears to be readily posterior
to the Śvetāmvara scriptures. It is divided into four sections
called Vedas and treating respectively of history, cosmology,
philosophy and rules of life".

As regards the antiquity of the scriptures of the afore-
said two sects. Eliot⁵ observes, "Though all books of the Jain
canon contain ancient matter, yet they seem, as compositions
considerably later than the Older parts of the Buddhist
Tripitaka". Winternitz⁶ remarks in this context, (as follows).

The Digamvaras of the present day have in addition, a "Secondary canon" which might perhaps be more correctly termed a substitute Canon and which they also describe as the four Vedas. This Canon consists of a number of important texts of later times".

These texts should be grouped as under ⁷ :

(1) Prathamāyoga legendary work inclusive of the Purānas. Different Jain Purānas, as well have mostly utilised in support of our discussions on the different aspects of Jain social system, are part and parcel of this. Viz. Padma, Harivamsā, (Trisastilaksana). Mahā Purāna, Uttarapurāna Ādipurāna etc.

(2) Karanānyaga cosmological works. Surya - Prajāpati, candra - Prajāpati, Jayadhavalā etc.

(3) Dravyānyoga - Philosophical works of Kunda Tattvārthadhigama-sūtra of Umasvati and Aptamināmsā of Samantabhadres with all commentaries.

(4) Caramānyoga - Actual works. Mutācara and Trivarna-cāra ^{of} Vattakera and Ratnakārānda - Srāvakācāra of Samanta Bhadra.

M a r r i a g e

It seems on perusal of the Jain scriptures that they allowed both tender aged as well as maidens of matured age to be handed over in marriage. Nothing can be said definitely for want of adequate evidence. The rules of Manu⁸ has been adopted by them to fix up some of their marital norms.

The Buddhists⁹ too, used to arrange their marriage through an intermediary, the social status of the parents of the groom would have been of superior status than that of the parents of the bride, and the father of the bride would have to pay some sort of dowry etc.

It is very difficult to state whether the Buddhists would have been influenced by the marital formula of the Hindus or not, because of the fact that the Buddhist texts do not shed much light on the aforesaid context.

The Buddhist scriptures represent the fact that the Buddhist society witnessed polygamy like that of the Hindus. But at the same time monogamy also had been practised by them. The causes for being clinged to polygamy, had not been detailed by the Buddhist texts. But as we have already seen above, the Hindu texts on the contrary, have highlighted the cause for taking plurality of wives. Manu has ruled in favour of desertion of some unholy wives and of practising polygamy as an alternative though monogamy has been accepted as an ideal. There

are references in favour of monogamous and that of Polygamous¹⁰ wedlock in the scriptures of the Buddhists. Say for example, the Brāhmaṇ Muhagovinda practised Polygamy. Uggaguhapati also possessed plurality of wives. As for the instances of monogamous unions, the Buddhist texts are also vocal. Nakula Pati, suppiya Upasaka, sudima Kalandaka, Rāja Munḍa a Śeṭhi of Rājagaha and men like them practised monogamy.

We have discussed in the preceding chapters of this book about the jealousy of the co-wives (in a Polygamous union) in the different ages in archaic India. Buddhist texts are also vocal in this context. We come to know from the references of the Buddhist scriptures that in the Buddhist society too, the co-wives did not off and on, maintain a sweet relation in between them we learn from the Buddhist scriptures¹¹ that a co-wife was able to poison her senior partner. In fact, the jealousy among co-wives is a regular occurrence among the civilized nations throughout the world in every age.

12

There are some references recorded in the scriptures disapproving any possibility of the marriage of widows. According to these texts, a house-hold wife (the mother of Nakula) firmly assures her sick husband ~~that~~ that she should not marry again (if he dies untimely following his sickness) under any circumstances. In other three occurrences, wherein, Buddha, Sudhima and Rathapala are stated to have become monks, their wives did not marry again but remained within their households. It is believed by the scholars that the Buddhists did not allow Divorce within them. One of the

four wives (the senior most one) of the Uggaguhapati,¹³
 chose to re-marry with the consent of her husband in the
 event of his becoming a monk. Dr. Wagle¹⁴ thinks that the
 aristocratic as well as reputed families did not allow their
 widows to be married again. Considering the devotion and
 faithfulness, the married women possessed in respect of their
 attitude towards their husbands, we deem it sustainable that
 the Buddhist widows did not practise re-marriage in those
 ages. Moreover, we have observed beforehand that the Buddhists
 and the Jains (as are of the offshoot of Hinduism) have
 mostly adapted the essence of the merits of the Hindu Philosophy.
 And as we have already observed in our previous chapters that
 the Hindus as a principle did not practise widow-marriage in
 any age, this might also be certain therefore that the Buddhist
 society too, did not like to encourage this system within their
 fold.

We learn from the Buddhist scriptures, that adultery was
 not unknown in the Buddhist society.

¹⁵
 Two such instances can be furnished below. In the first
 place a household wife is stated to have become pregnant and in
 the second instance committing adultery of a Licchavi married
 woman has been narrated. To sum^{up} the discussion about the marital
 process of the Buddhists, we can safely announce that their
 scriptures have mostly been influenced by the injunctions of the
 Hindu Smṛ̥tikāras and that the Buddhists could not have been
 able to chalk out fundamental principles of their own in respect
 of their procedure for wedlock.

We have already pointed out, that the Buddhist text did not categorically point out alike the Hindus, several forms of wedlock. But Dr. Wagle¹⁶ has pointed out that there had been existing within them some ten types of marital procedure. These types are according to him are as below.

(i) When a damsel is taken in lieu of money, (ii) when a damsel chooses to live with a man out of her own sweet will, (iii) when a person delivers some sort of money so as to marry her (iv) In the event of delivering clothes to a lady (v) In the event of handing over to marriage, the oblation of water is performed (vi) the handing over of a female slave in marriage (vii) of a female servant (viii) The marriage of a girl having been captured in a raid. (ix) The marriage of a girl who had been temporarily living with a stranger. (x) In addition, Wagle¹⁷ has also put forward the examples of three more forms of wedding of the Buddhists. The Buddhists too like that of the Hindus have often spoken of the existence of three fold social division i.e. Kṣatriya, Brāhmana and gṛhapati. It is therefore obvious that the fourth order i.e. Sūdra has all along been thought of a negligible section of the society by the Hindu as well as by the Buddhist scriptures. It is needless to mention the fact that the Buddhists and the Jains did not introduce or encourage the custom of widow-burning (sati or the self-immolation of widows) like that of the Hindus. The very essence of this custom is completely ~~reverse~~ reverse to that of the Buddhists in respect of their religious point of view. But as we all know ~~that~~ that the Jains allow religious

Suicide to the strict followers of their faith and as such a very few of their women were permitted to sacrifice their lives in the mourning of their husbands at a later age. But this sacrifice of the life of a widow in no case, can be compared with the practice of Satī of the Hindus in the truest sense of the term.

Jains have followed the principles of the Hindus in the event of handing over a bride in marriage to the bridegroom. That is, normally, the father, the brother, or any other lawful guardian of a Jain bride tied her hands with those of the bridegroom at the time of her marriage. They have in fact absorbed the injunctions of Manu (111/5-11 etc.) in this context. The Jains have ruled in favour of the Amlomā inter caste marriage and condemned protilomā form of wedlock. They have denounced any marital union with the Sūdras. They didn't even like to interdine with the Sūdras. Their scriptures have cited some examples of inter caste marriages. Say for example. The minister Teygliputta married a Goldsmiths daughter. King Jiyas^attu married a painter's daughter. ¹⁸ Probably the girls married in this way were treated as concubines.

But such few examples appear to be the exceptional cases. The Jains like the Hindus, did not like to draw an end to the marriage tie. It seems that the system of divorce was a recent development among them. We do not get any definite proof which can testify to any argument that the system of widow-marriage had been in vogue, among them. As we all know that the Jains consider mokṣa (salvation) as the chief obtainable aim of their life, and as such they do not give so much stress on the

marital union of men and women. This is the main reason for which the system of Niyoga had not been introduced among them. The Jains like ~~the~~ the Hindus preferred to Polygamous union. The associate aspects of this system have been elucidated by us in our first chapter of this volume. There are numerous references of Polygamous union recorded in the Jain texts. We shall furnish the names of the kings like Bharata, Wikrama-jasa and the Seniya¹⁹ who also practised Polygamy. The custom of polyandry is unheard of among them. The Jains rather preferred to the Prājāpatya, Gāndharva, Āsura and Svayamvara forms of wedlock, as we assess from their scriptures. It seems that the system of dowry had also been in existence among them like the Hindus.

²⁰
Jain scriptures tell us that one king of Vārāṇasī presented one thousand villages, one hundred elephants, plenty of treasure, one lakh of foot soldiers and ten thousand horses in the marriage ceremony of his son-in-law.

Thus we understand, that the marital system of the Jains is a complete absorption from the Hindu system of wedlock.

The Gotra and Provāra principle, other associate aspects of their marriage are completely alike the Hindus. Marital system in details has however been discussed by us in the first two chapters of this book.

Caste System

We shall try to discuss about this issue (i.e. Caste System) right now. But one thing should be kept in mind before proceeding to highlight this topic that the essence of the aforesaid two religions rests on their hatred, revolting tendency and challenging attitude against the Brāhmanas as a caste. The Buddhist texts therefore, while admitting the quadrapic caste division of the Hindus in toto, have arranged their grades as under :- Kṣatriya, Brāhmana, Vaiśya and Sūdra. That is, they have placed Kṣatriyas in the foremost position and the Brāhmanas have been ranked next to the Kṣatriyas. And as because Buddha had been the son of a Kṣatriya noble or feudal lord, the warrior caste has been considered by the Buddhist scriptures as the most superior of all the four castes. The Jātaka texts also enumerate the identifications of some mixed castes and sub-castes. Buddhist scriptures thus reveal that the Kṣatriyas had also been habituated in adopting the profession of potter, reed-worker, garland maker, cook etc. A Vaiśya similarly is stated to have adopted the profession of a potter, tailor etc. Jātakas have also furnished the examples that the Brāhmanas have adopted ten-fold occupations which had not been approved by the Hindu Sāstras to be taken up by their Brāhmanas.

The Jains have mentioned a four-fold division of caste within their Society, like that of the Hindus. It has been laid down in their scriptures that :

"Manusyajātirekaiva jātināmodayodbhavā,

Vr̥tibhedā hi tadbhedāt cāturvidhyamihāsnute //

Brāhmaṇā vrajasaṁskārāt ksatriyāḥ śāstradhāranād

Vanijo=arthārjjanānyāyāt sūdrā nyagvrtti²³-saṁsrayāt //

English translation :-

'Jātis' Nāma-karana is responsible for coming into existence of the mankind. The human society was divided into four different caste groups (i.e. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra) according to the vocation they followed to earn their livelihood. Thus, who observed vows were made known as the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas preferred to live on weapons, Vaiśyas were earning wealth by adopting honest means and those who were sticking to humble professions were made known as the Sūdras.

The remarkable feature of the Jain Caste-system is that they do not think like the Hindus that heredity should be one of the main aspects of caste-division within their fold. A person belonging to any caste, has had the liberty to adopt any profession he likes, and there should not have been any debate as to whether if he would have been able to take up the profession of his own choice from the ethical point of views or not. The Jain scriptures, on the other hand, have highly spoken of about the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas therefore, have not been disregarded by the Jains.

We should not forget to remember the points, that the Jains do practice, though not so widely the habit of prohibition of Inter-dining within their different sections of society.

This has also been admitted by the scholars incontrovertibly that the men of different Hindu castes were free to adopt any occupation of any (superior or inferior) status without any possibility of deterioration of their social importance during this period. Practically, manifold accounts, gathered from the scriptures of the Buddhists, and the Jains, and the observations of the contemporary native as well as foreign writers reveal that Higher caste Hindus were preferring to occupations which had not been permitted by their Sástras to be adopted by them during the period of our review. Roughly different modern scholars have held that the question of origin of sub-castes or mixed castes during the early centuries B.C. can not be only solved in the light of the theory of the origin of the inferior mixed castes by the Hindu law-givers of earlier centuries based on the cross-unions in between the Higher and Lower Hindu Castes and vice-versa. We are unable however, to accept the above opinion of the learned modern scholars. Our humble opinion on the contrary is that the mixed inferior castes of our country during the period under review originated as a result of the violation of caste discipline in respect of the adoption of profession by different Higher as well as Lower caste Hindus, absorption of foreign elements within the Hindu blood and gradual

development of new guilds or organisations sticking to manifold occupations on the one hand and hereditary engagement of the already existing different inferior caste in different vocations (ruled by the Sāstras of the Hindus) on the other. There might have been another reason for the violation of the caste rules during this age. And this reason should be the political change which India had witnessed during the close of the Epic age, when different religious teachers introduced new faiths within this country, challenging the supremacy and the intellectual leadership of the Brāhmanas and conversion of different Hindu monarchs to these new beliefs, the reason which directly or indirectly encouraged the Hindus of different castes to violate and disobey the Śāstric injunctions during this period. But on the whole, the occupational arrangement of different castes of the Hindus through the ages survived and remained unhurt. Hindu religion and social system in fact, did not get any royal patronage during this age under review.

Last of all, we should also consider the following points discussed by the modern scholars about the different aspects of the caste system as has been furnished by the Buddhist and the Jain scriptures. Dr. Wagle ²⁴ has also highlighted the caste division among the Buddhists in the light of the occupational gradation. We assess from their observations too, that caste and occupation were not inter linked during the period of our review.

The engagement of ^{the} Brahmanas in (ten) occupations against rules as has been enumerated by the learned editors of "The Age of Imperial Unity" ²⁵ is as follows :-

1. Physicians, carrying sacks, filled with medicinal roots and herbs.
2. Servants and carriage - drivers.
3. Tax collectors.
4. Diggers of soil in the garb of an ascetic.
5. Sellers of fruits, sweets and the like.
6. Farmers.
7. Priests (interpreter of canons).
8. Armed policemen, engaged in the services alike that of the Gopas and Nishādas.
9. Hermits often engaged in the task of killing hores, fish, tortoises and the like and
10. The bathroom attendants of the kings etc.

The Pāli texts of the Buddhists also speak of Hīna Jātis (or low-tribes) who were graded socially below the four established castes of the Hindu society. They are such as cart makers, barbers, potters, weavers, leather workers. Some of the above have been described as living outside the Āryan fold. Five hīnajātis have been referred to by the texts, ²⁶ namely, Candāla, vara, Niṣkāda, Rathakāra and Pukkasa. The Rathakāras however, have not been considered as lower caste (hīnajāti) within the Hindu society. Hindu Dharma-sūtras

and Śrauta-sūtras have spoken of their superior status. They had also possessed the right of performing sacrificial activities. The Śrauta-sūtra of Āpastamya has specially ruled in this respect. The Buddhist scriptures including ^{the} Jātakas ²⁷ have also told of the Brāhmanas preferring to several occupations against the rules such as, cultivators, craftsman, messengers, cattle-traders, architects farmers, tillers, hunters, traders, carpenters, weavers and even snake-charmers etc. But we are doubtful about their authenticity. However, the Buddhist and the Jain sources have also pointed out that the Brāhmanas had been engaged in the services of the crown such as ministers, ambassadors or as priests and or lived the life entirely of a ²⁸ hermit, living in the forest outside the reach of the city.

This is known to all of us, that Hindu religion suffered a serious set back during the later period of our review. Different monarchs who had been the followers of the Buddhist faith, imposed several restrictions on the religious activities of the Hindus. As a result of which the Brāhmanas were oppressed, their sacrificial activities were totally denounced. But we can not help indicating one point in this respect that, the Buddhist sovereigns, who issued proclamations to the effect that the (system of) violence to living creatures should be forbidden throughout their kingdoms, they at the sametime, were not so ~~xxx~~ much strict in respect of the slaughter of animals in the royal kitchen. One of the rock edicts ²⁹ of the Emperor Asoka testifies to our above impression. The above reasons might

have forced the Brāhmanas to adopt different catagories of occupations which were not ruled in their Śāstras to be adopted by them.

If the testimony of the Buddhist texts that the Brāhmanas under the Buddhist rules used to act as tillers of land, craftsmen and even weavers, and snake charmers be held as correct, then this would surely mean that, due to extreme financial hardship imposed on them, they were compelled to earn their livelihood in the above way. The fact that the talent and merit of the Brāhmanas remained unimpaired even during the Buddhist Age, is evident from the testimony of the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien who visited India around 400 A.D. Fa-Hien in his account tells us that there was a Brāhmana minister called Rādhāsūyāmin at Asoka's court, who used to wash his hands even in the court, when under any circumstances he had to touch the body of his emperor, and that this he did for removing uncleanness, caused by the unholy touch of the Buddhist Emperor. We are further told that, Asoka the Emperor had to tolerate this insult of his own, simply for seeking intellectual help from the said Brāhmana, who was held as the wisest man of his time.

E d u c a t i o n

We shall now try to write a few words about the system of education which we gather from the texts of the Buddhists. We have already noticed in our previous discussions, that the house of the Gurus (Gurugrha) had been the pivot of the Hindu educational system. When we turn to the Buddhist scriptures, we see that they have spoken of the Buddhist pupils collectively educated in the institutions known as the Saṅghas or the Vihāras. The life of the Buddhist pupils was divided into two varieties namely, (1) Prabrajyā and (2) Upāsada. Normally a boy of fifteen was allowed to adopt the life of Pravrajyā and a twenty years old person was eligible for admission to the life ~~of~~ of an Upāsada. The life of the pupils in the Saṅghas, however, was of a strict discipline. This is also normally assessed from the Buddhist scriptures that the Upādhyāyas and the Ācāryyas were appointed to administer the life of the Bhikṣus in the Saṅghas. The pupils like the Brahmacārins of the Hindus were to look after the case and amenities of their teachers, and the teachers for themselves used to take every care for the educational guidance of their pupils. The training apparently was imparted orally. According to some of the modern scholars, one more speciality of the Buddhist educational system was that they did not want to refuse pupils of lower castes for admission to their institutions. But whether this is a fact or not, deserves consideration. All the renowned Buddhist teachers are found to have their origin in the upper castes especially in the Brāhmaṇa and the Ksatriya castes. We do not find any Buddhist teacher having

his law origin. We have already noticed in our foregoing chapters that in the Hindu society only the boys of the twice-born order, were allowed to be admitted as pupils into their preceptors' houses for studying the sacred scriptures.

The Jātakas too, speak of the educational system during the primitive stage of Buddhist Civilization. They have considered Benares and taxila as the famous centres of their education. The Buddhist texts also inform us about the fact that the Buddhist educational system included manifold subjects to be studied by the pupils. These subjects were mostly alike the subjects taught by the Gurus of the Hindus to their pupils. The following subjects were to be studied by the pupils belonging to the Brāhmana caste, the four Vedas, six Vedāngas, Purānas, Itihāsa, lexicography, prosody, phonology, verses, grammar, etymology, astronomy, astrology and the like other subjects. A Ksatriya boy on the other hand was entrusted with the task of being acquainted with the thorough knowledge of war. They had to acquire thorough knowledge about the whereabouts and special characteristics of the elephants, horses, bows etc. A Vaisya and a Sūdra boy had to learn the subjects like husbandry, and the art of cattle and that of merchandising etc.

The learned editors of The Age of Imperial Unity³¹ have observed, "Monks were graded for study in the monastery. Their instruction comprised giving of recitation, holding examination, making exhortation and explaining Dharma. There was also specialisation in different branches of Buddhist canon. The different classes of monks were lodged in separate hostels

lest their mixing up should cause disturbance to their different studies."

For imparting necessary instructions to the Pupils - there were two categories of teachers in the Buddhist institutions, namely Upādhyāya and Ācāryya. The Tibetan texts also speak for two categories of the Upādhyāyas and five categories of the Ācāryyas. The Upādhyāyas were :

1. He who confers probrajyā.
2. He who confers Upāsada to the pupils.

The five categories of Ācāryyas were :

1. He who advises about Śramana.
2. He who taught important matters.
3. He who taught morals.
4. He who confers Nisraya.
5. He who looks after the studies of the Śāstras.

The Upādhyāya normally looked after the pupils' study of the Śāstras and doctrines and the Ācāryya of his life and conduct. He was ~~ask~~ often described as a Karmācāryya.

There were arrangements for imparting training on different categories of vocational trades in the Buddhist Vihāras in those days. The pupils were also trained in the architectural art.

The educational system of the Jains had been mostly alike that of the Hindus. The pupil had to take his lessons

from his teacher. He used to live with his teacher jointly under the same roof. The course of study was also alike the Hindu system. The Jain pupil had to study the Vedas and its associated literature, Purānas, six Upāngas, etc. and ^{the} like subjects, viz. grammar, logic, Philosophy etc., etc. Benares, Pāṭaliputra, Śrāvastī and Paitṭhāna have been mentioned as the famous centres of learning in the Jain texts. In fact, the Jains educational system had mostly been influenced by the Hindu ideals.

Food and Drink

We have discussed beforehand about the food habit of the Hindus in different ages in our previous chapters. Buddhist and Jain texts too discuss about the dietary during their past ages. Buddhist³² (Vinaya) texts refer to the articles of food, such as, rice, honey, rice-milk, butter, fruits, meat, fish etc. They also speak of different products of the cow, viz. milk, ghrta, curds, butter and butter milk etc. This is believed by a section of the scholars that beef was also taken by the Indians in those days. We are however, unable to accept this view as correct as because they have not produced explicit evidences in support of their opinion. This is also assessed, that the Indians in those days were addicted to different kinds of fruit - juice³³ (such as of grapes, honey, different kinds of fruits). The use of surā as an intoxicating drink as it seems, had been in Vogue in those days.

The Jain texts on the other hand are expressive of their strong hatred against any sort of himsā (violence) to be done or made to any living creature. Their food habit was developed keeping in view the above injunctions of their Śāstras. That is why, they abstain from eating different kinds of food grains and vegetables, such as potatoes, onions, garlic, carrot, root etc. They also were habituated in taking food during the day time only according to the injunctions of their śāstras. This they did, with their sole object that no living creature, how much small it might be, should be devoured unseen

by them due to absence of day light, or due to their attraction by a burning lamp at night.

This system was present even amongst a section of the Buddhist monks. We know from our practical experience that a section of the Buddhist monks, till today do not take any solid food after 12 O' clock, which apparently is a legacy of their former habit of the above type.

We have already observed in our foregoing chapters that the Hindus used to eat the meat of the animals being slaughtered at their sacrifices. We have furthermore observed that during the age of the Epics the aristocratic Hindus liked to eat meat on some special occasions. During the age of the Epics therefore, the habit of eating meat had become more popular to the Hindus than that of the previous ages. To slaughter any living creature for eating purpose, has been strongly denounced for both of the Buddhists and Jains by their religious texts.

We should not ignore the fact at the sametime that the principle of non-violence or ahimsa was adopted by the Hindu society in its primitive age. Hindu religion did not encourage violence to living creatures during the glorious stage of their civilization. Our later-Vedic literature is also vocal in this aspect. In fact, the slaughter of animals at the sacrifices were not the order of the day. Brāhmanas are strictly vegeterians throughout the ages in different parts of India. Majority section of the Hindus till now-a-days, do not like

to take non-vegetarian meal. Slaughter of animals for the purpose of eating was rarely to be found in archaic India. Considering all these points, we must admit the fact that the Jain and the Buddhists adopted the Principle of ahimsā from the Vedic Hinduism.

It is obvious that they were not accustomed to the drinking of surā obeying their textual injunctions. This dislike towards wine also was not a new adoption. From the earliest Smṛti texts (Manu Saṃhitā etc) every where in the Hindu scriptures drinking wine has been denounced as one of the gravest offence. Manu prescribes that, when a twice born drinks wine, he should embrace the death penalty by drinking a particular quantity of red hot wine.

Surām pitvā dvijo mohadagnivarnām surām piveti /
Tajā sva kāye nirdagdhe muchyate kilviśāttatah // 91

Mānavadhamasāstra XI.91

Even in the Tantra literature drinking wine, excepting for the purpose of concentrating one's mind to meditation, has been held as a serious offence. It is prescribed in the Tantras that, if a Hindu belonging to any of the four castes, drinks wine violating the above rule, he is sure to lose his caste, and be discarded as an outcaste.

Kalautu Bhāratevarse narā Bhāratavāsinaḥ /

Gr̥he gr̥he surām pītṛvā varṇabhraṣṭā bhavantiḥ //

(quoted in the Prānatoṣanī tantra).

Hence, we may rightly observe that, most of the above principle of morality had been accepted by the Buddhists and Jains from the Hindu scriptures. This is unwise to speak however definitely about the point as to whether the followers of the above two faiths might have changed their food habit gradually through the ages or not.

Dress and Ornaments.

We have already observed in our previous chapters, that the Hindus during their archaic age of ~~an~~ civilization, were also accustomed with the use of two sets of garments, and aristocratic Hindus even preferred to covering their heads with turbans. The chapters of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata are detailed with regard to the description of the dress and ornaments of the Hindus in those days. Our Vedic verses have pointed to the fact that the ornaments made of gold, and enriched with precious Jewels stones etc. had also been worn by the Āryas during the age of the Vedas. Buddhist and Jain scriptures, the records of the contemporary Greek writers, and the sculptural representation, help us in formulating a general idea of the dress and ornaments of the Indians of the period under review. The records of the Greek writers ³⁴ show that the Indians used to put on an under and an upper garment. This under garment would cover the lower portion of the body and the upper garment would serve the purpose of using a cāḍara. This cāḍara has been preferred to by a section of the people of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the other parts of India of the modern times. The Buddhist ³⁵ texts also refer to so many kinds of girdless, being used for the purpose of fastening the cloth at the waist. The ³⁶ Vinaya texts of the Buddhists also mention the various ways of the arrangement of the under garments, worn by the Indian people during this age.

The sculptural representation of this period points out that the upper portion of the body of women during these early centuries following the birth of Buddha was not generally covered with clothes and that the bosom and the navel of the women were fully revealed and lastly they did not use veil. Whatever might have been the real position of the women during this age (i.e. whether they used veils while going out doors, or whether the nudity was a common practice or not) (which) is a question of controversy among scholars now-a-days, but we want to add a few more words here in this context right now.

The scholars have opined unanimously that ^{the} Vedic women moved about freely. The veiling system was not in vogue among them. But we learn from our Epic literature that the married Hindu women did not enjoy such liberty as like of the women of preceeding ages and had to follow certain restrictions in the event of the their moving out of doors. (The proposal of Dhṛtarāṣṭra ^{to burn the corpse of Madri along} with that of Pāṇḍu, (her husband) under strict seclusion and that the vigorous objection of Draupadī to be dragged rudely to the assembly hall of the Kauravas as because she was ekavastrā (single clothed) which point we have discussed above, are enough to testify to our above argument.

Gradually, the Hindu, especially the married women during the succeeding ages, had to observe seclusion to a certain degree in the context of their out-of-door movements. The Pardah system, in the truest sense of the term, which has been the one of the characteristic of the Muslim social system had never been introduced among Hindus in any age.

We must at the same time admit the fact that the married women in the archaic India observed seclusion in the truest sense of the term. The unmarried Hindu damsels did not use veils while in their out of door movements. In addition to our aforesaid examples of Mādri and Draupadī, we can also cite the example of Śakuntalā who used veil during her journey to the abode of king Duṣmanta (her husband), from the hermitage of Kanva (her step father). But her two other unmarried women companions, namely, Priyāvadā and Anasūyā were unveiled. On the other hand Sulabhā, a female hermit moved freely from one kingdom to another, and even while having her discourse at the court of king Janaka of the ~~Veda~~ Vedeha country, she did not put any veil on her face. Ātreyī a female student walked alone from Citrakūṭa to the Dandaka forest for studying under Agastya and some other sages, and she never put any veil over her face. There are further examples of seclusion of the married women in the texts of the Epics. It is apparent that the Jains and the Buddhists simply followed the footsteps of the Hindus of the by gone days in this connection, without any change. The modern scholars have come to the conclusion that the strict Pardāh system of the Muslims of India might have been an influenced of Hindu social norms upon them.

So far as the question of the nudity is concerned, we are sure that the Hindus did not, under any circumstances, encourage this. The Jain and the Buddhists too as we can assess, were not whole hearted supporters of nudity of their women-folk. The sculptural evidences of the nudity of women

as we have just referred to above, might have been the pictures of dancing girls or of prostitutes, but they do not represent the picture of nude Jain or Buddhist women, as according to our humble observation.

Furthermore the scholars have thought it justifiable that the manufacture and use of silk, linen and wool along with cotton had also been in vogue among Indian people during this period under review. The mention of silken cloth has been made in the literary works of Kalidāsa. We shall then admit the fact that use of silken garments had been in vogue among Indians even in the 1st century B.C. We should not also ignore the fact that scholars are divided into their opinions in fixing up the date of Kalidāsa. Some of them claim that he belonged to the 1st century B.C. while the remaining section of them demand, that ~~the~~ he flourished in the 4th or 5th century A.D. Kalidāsa himself, on the other hand has vividly mentioned about his date in one of his poetic work. Jyotirvidābharana composed by Kalidāsa in the Kaliyuga Era 3068, corresponding to 33 or 34 B.C. This description of his ownself, confirms our impression that he was existing in the 1st Century B.C. Vinaya texts have also spoken of the existence of the weaving craft. The male gradually gave up the habit of weaving ornaments while the women gave up their weaving head-dress.

So far as the dress habit of the Buddhists is concerned, we have nothing to speak anew. Their habit of clothing had been the same as those of the Hindus. Only the Buddhist monks

differed in this context. They normally wore a cotton or silken robe, which was tied around the waist with the help of a girdle. Their habit of wearing ornaments had been the same alike the Hindus.

Foot Notes.

1. Wint^{er}nitz. M. has discussed about the historicity of the Jain and Buddhist literature in his book entitled History of Indian Literature - V.2, Sec. IV. ^{pp, 1-595} -[^]Manshi Ram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1972, first published in 1933 by the Calcutta University.
2. Ibid. p. 428-478.
3. Ibid. p. 430.
4. Eliot Hindusim & Buddhism - V.1. Edward Arnold & Co. London (1921), Ch. VI. p. 117.
5. Ibid. Ch. VI, p. 117.
6. Wint^{er}nitz Hist of Indian Lit. V.2, Sec. IV, p. 474.
7. Ibid. Sec. IV. p. 474.
8. Mam - 111/5-11.
9. Wagle N. Society at the time of the Buddha (Popular Prakashan, Bombay - 1966). Ch. IV. p. 87.
10. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 88.
11. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 89.
12. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 89.
13. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 89.
14. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 89.
15. Ibid. Ch. IV. P. 91.

16. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 98.
17. Ibid. Ch. IV. p. 98-100.
18. Jain J.C. - Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canons - Bombay - 1947, p. 155-156.
19. Jain J.C. - Life in Ancient Indian as depicted in the Jain Canons - Bombay - 1947, p. 161.
20. Jain J.C. - Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canons - Bombay, p. 157.
21. & 22. Majumdar R.C. (ed) - The Age of Imperial Unity (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay - 1960) Ch. XXI. P. 548.
23. Ādi Purāna (Parva) - 38.45-46. Also see Sangava V.A.- Jaina Community - A social survey - (Popular Book Depot, Bombay 1959), p. 67.
24. Wagh-Society at the time of the Buddha - (Popular Bombay) ch.V - PP.134-158.
25. Majumdar R.C. (ed) - The Age of Imperial Unity (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)- Bombay, Ch. XXI, p. 548.
26. Ibid. Ch. XXI. pp. 548-549.
27. Ibid. Ch. XXI. p. 548.
28. Ibid. Ch. XXI. p. 548.

29. "yadā ayam dhamma lipi likhitā
tā evaprāṇā ārabhate sūpāthā dvō morā eko mago /
so pīmagō na dhuvō
eti pi trī prāṇā pāchāno āravisarō" (Lines 10-12)
 - Rock edict ~~at~~ (Girnar version) pp. ~~411-416~~. Sirkar D.C.
 - Select Inscriptions on Indian History & Civilization.
 V-I. (2nd ed) 1965, Calcutta University.
30. Majumder R.C. (Ed) - The Age of Imperial unity - Bombay
 ch. XXII. p. 586.
31. Ibid. Ch. XXI, p. 591.
32. Ibid. Ch. XXII. P. 577.
33. Ibid Ch. XXII. p. 578.
34. Ibid. Ch. XXI. p. 571.
35. Ibid. Ch. XXI. p. 572.
36. Ibid. Ch. XXI. p. 572.

CHAPTER - V.Society of the Medieval and Modern times.Detailed ContentsPage No.

	Introductory Notes	...	...	278
1.	Family Life	...	...	279
2.	Caste system	...	...	282
3.	The system of Marriage	...	...	295
4.	Sati	...	...	301
5.	Education	...	...	307
6.	The position of Women	...	...	313
7.	The Manners, customs & ceremonies	...	...	315
8.	Food and drink	...	...	318
9.	Dress	...	...	320
10	Conclusion	...	...	323

CHAPTER - V.Society of the Medieval and Modern times:Introductory Notes

In the previous chapters of our thesis, we have tried to highlight the different aspects of social system as had been in prevalence in India in the age of antiquity. Among these chapters, the first three have dealt with the problems connected with the Hindu social system in respect of its development throughout the archaic ages. In the brief fourth chapter, we have tried to make a comparative study of the Buddhist and Jain society with that of the Hindus, keeping in view the injunctions of the sacred texts of the aforesaid religions in this context. Now, the instant chapter is the conclusive one of our thesis. We shall try to speak a few more words in this chapter about the patterns of social system which existed in our country during the medieval period and is existing in the modern times, we want to make one point clear in this context that, our current chapter will also be a brief one alike the foregoing (fourth) chapter. One thing should be kept in mind in this context, that, pattern of society which had been in existence in India in past ages, have had no similarity with the society which is prevailing in this country since the beginning of the Medieval age and down to the modern times. Naturally, we shall try to have a birds eye view of the structure of society which is in existence in our motherland since about eight hundred years back.

Family life.

We have tried to draw in a rough sketch, a picture of the family life of the ancient Hindus in our preceding first three chapters. The aristocrates (irrespective of Hindu and Muslim fold), used to live a life of luxury and ease. The commoners in those days (such as workmen, peasants shepkeepers etc.) lived the life of distress and misery. The ancient Joint family system had obviously been in existence during this period of our review. The Muslims too, it is certain, lived under a joint mass. The basic principles of joint family life remained unchanged. But with the settlement of British in our country as our masters and subsequent influence of western civilization upon ours, the traditional joint family system of this country gradually faced a sudden collapse. As a result of which the families of our country mostly in the urban areas now-a-days have become unitarians, consisting of husband, wife and their children. The parents and elders have no place in these families like those of preceding centuries. Economy, must have been the alternative cause for such breaking up of families. For multiple reasons the majority of the people of our country have become immoral now-a-days. But we can not forget the fact at the same time, that high moral had been the chief characteristic of our countrymen in the age of antiquity, which point we have elucidated in our foregoing chapters. Last of all, we wish to speak a few more words about the Muslim society as it had been in the Medieval age. As we all know, the structure of the Muslim society is not alike

the Hindus. But at the same time, we can not ignore the fact that an attempt to draw a penpicture of the Indian social system of this age, should remain incomplete without the description of the social structure of the Muslims of India during this age. We should also remember the following fact simultaneously that the Mohammedans were largely influenced by ~~that~~ ~~of~~ the norms of the Hindu society during the period of our review.

It is known to all, that the Muslims had not possessed any caste discipline like that of the Hindus in any age. But the Mohammadans coming from Persia, Turk, Afganisthan and Arab, were hostile within themselves and were never willing to hand over their daughters in marriage to Muslims of lower rank. Their marriage, funeral ceremonies etc, were largely influenced by the respective social festivities of the Hindus. Iban Batuta has laid down in details the description of the marriage ceremony of a Saiyad noble Suf-ud-din with a sister of Sultan Mohmad Tuglug. He ¹ ² has also given an account of the barial procession of his departed daughter. The above two incidences reveal that the Muslims had mostly been influenced by the norms of the Hindu religion even during those days. This is the view of our modern historians. An impartial study of the Muslim society of the world, on the other hand shows that the pride of aristocracy barring matrimonial relations of the common peoples. The Muslims according to old Arab traditions were habituated in marrying their near

relations which is completely unthought of in the Hindu society in any age. Muslims allow Divorce which was also not possible in respect of Hindu wedlock even during this age.

Re-marriage of widows had been in vogue among them. The aristocratic Muslims mostly practised polygamy. Sati had not been a fashion of Muslim society in any age. ^{Some of the} Hindus also fashioned their dress habit mostly in the manner of the Muslims. Tight trousers and tight cloak along with a loose shirt (this dress style) is believed to have been adopted by the Rājputs from their Muslim neighbours. Strict seclusion of women had all along been the characteristic of the Muslims. This strict seclusion was unknown to the other Muslim countries of Asia during this period. The scholars³ believe that the strict pardāh system of the Muslims in India might have developed due to the peculiar social conditions in India prevailing during this age.

The Muslim society was headed by the Sultan or Emperor and was succeeded by the nobles, people of an average income group and the commoners. The Nobles used to live in palatial building and were surrounded by a large number of slaves (male and female) eunuchs, attendants, followers etc. They lived a life of ~~luxury~~ luxury and pomp. Below them, were the people who derived income either from land holdings or ~~in~~ from royal exchequer in return of their services rendered to the Monarch. They were often designated as District officers, collectors, postmasters, Judges etc. They also lived a life

of ease and comfort. We have elsewhere spoken of about the daily life of the common people which had been of poverty and paucity. This is also an interesting point of discussion that the aristocratic Muslim families had been in existence all along in the Muslim countries as well.

Caste System

In our proceeding chapters, we have discussed about the origin and successive development of the Hindu caste system throughout the ages.

We are considering right now, the caste division among Hindus during the Medieval age. There are some scriptures, believed by the scholars to have been composed, during our early period under review (i.e. in the Medieval age). The authors belonging to different schools in different parts of India composed these scriptures. We find detailed discussions in this respect in The Delhi Sultanate, say for example, Grhastharatnākara and other works of Chandesvara, Viyāciñ-māni and other works of Vāchaspati Misra were those of the composition of ^{the} Mithila school. Similarly Madanaratnapradīpa (also had different identifications) and Madanapārijāla of Viśveśvara Bhatta were the authorities of the Benares school. The school of Bengal contributed Dīpakalikā and other works by Śūlapāni. So far as the Southern school is concerned we

are to refer here the Parāśara-Mādhava and other works of Mādhavācāryya. There had been similar commentators such as Dalapati and Pratāparudra. All these texts were composed (as believed by the scholars) within 1300 to 1550 A.D.

As we have already spoken of in our previous chapters that the Hindu society was divided into four principal castes (i.e. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Sūdra) and later a section of sub-castes and mixed castes was added to this. We have also observed above, that the members of the three upper castes were allowed to inter-change their respective professions during emergency. In addition, the diviation of the Brāhmaṇas from their Śāstric prescribed occupation and the adoption of various form of occupations by the members of the above quadru-pic division of the Hindus has also been noticed by us in the preceding chapters.

The Smṛtis of the medieval India, we have referred to above, have ruled that the Brāhmaṇas might take up the agriculture as a source of their earning livelihood during the period of their financial difficulties. The Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas were allowed to remain in their traditional occupations though during their financial difficulties they were allowed to take to some other professions, barring a few only. A section of the Sūdras have been designated as good Sūdras (Sacchūdras), to whom a few special rights were granted. Some of our modern scholars think that amongst the special privileges granted to the Sacchūdras, cooking and touching of food for the Brāhmaṇas were included. But the

commentators of the Smṛtis do not admit this. According to them the good Sūdras were simply allowed to catch water, prepare uncooked food and stay ~~xx~~ inside the temple with out touching the deity or his symble.

All the authors appear to be ⁵ ~~unanimous~~ unanimous in prescribing that all the different types of twice born order should strictly refrain from taking food, living ^{in the} / same house and receiving sastric instructions from the Sūdras. The Sūdras ⁶ are not allowed to study the Vedas and other sacred books, directly interpreting the Vedic texts, to perform sacrificial rites and pūjās of some particular types, but they are allowed to listen to the recitation of the Sāstric lessons and perform Pūjās and sacrificial rites through some Brāhmaṇa priests as ⁷ their substitutes. Penances have been prescribed by our authors in the event of a twice-born man coming in contact with a Caṇḍāla (out-caste). Punishment for Brahmahatyā ⁸ (killing a Brāhmaṇa) has also been ruled with severily.

At the same time, we should also remember the fact that the Vedic texts have all along been held as the Supreme authorities to the Hindus in their religious and socio-religious matters. As the Bible to the christians and quaran to the Muslims, similar are the Vedic texts to the Hindus. Hence, no Smṛtikāra of any age had or has the right to change the Vedic instructions. What they have recorded in the later Smṛti texts, were nothing but the émmargency works, approved by the Vedic texts, for protecting the life of the people. We should

further remember. the fact that during the period of compilation of the scriptures we have referred to above, India was already mostly under the Muslim rule. To what extent therefore the above injunctions of our scriptures were in force within the Hindu society in the Muslim India is a question of dispute to us. The Vijayanagar kingdom has revealed a system of its own. Next to the Brāhmaṇas in this kingdom in social order the following may be named viz. Chettis (merchants) Vīra Panchālas (artisans), Kaikkolas (weavers), and barbers. The lowest of all the castes were the candālas (out castes) Dombāras (Jugglers and sooth-sayers) Yugis, Maravaras etc. The Brāhmaṇas were receiving traditional high respect from the king and the arristocrates in the kingdom of Vijayanagara in those days.

At the very beginning of the Muslim rule in India, the rulers were much enthusiastic to abolish the caste system of the Hindus, so that they might be converted to Islam. But even after repeated persecutions and killing, the mighty rulers failed to do so. During the Mughal reign a fresh thought arose in the mind of the rulers to judge impartially the merits and demerits of the caste system prevalent in the Hindu society. After thorough investigation and judgement, Humāyun, the second Mughal emperor, came to the conclusion that the caste system of the Hindus was highly beneficial to the society, and as such he divided the Muslims in three classes, in imilation of the upper three classes of the Hindus. Thus a priest class, a warrior class, and a third class comprising the other Muslims were created. The emperor officially announced his arguments ^{and} findings

in favour of creating such a caste or class system amongst the Muslims. These have been discussed in detail by Khandamir in his Hūmāyan - Nāmā, of which the relevant portion has been translated into English by Sir, H.M. Elliot and Prof. John Dowson in their "History of India".

The Hindu caste system with all its groups and sub-divisions as we have referred to above, remained unchanged even centuries succeeding the period we have just reviewed. In the meantime the Muslims were overthrown of political supremacy in India and British became the supreme boss of Indian people. As a result of the close contact with the essence of Western Civilization through the English literature, the social reformers in India became very much eager to introduce some remarkable changes in this age-old system. During the close of the mediæval period and at the beginning of the 19th century, new complications were added to this all-age continued system (throughout India). In respect of Bengal Kulinism can be taken into account in this context. This issue however, will be dealt with by us in this chapter later on, when we shall discuss about the system of marriage. As a result of the efforts of these reformers, some Associations were founded to deal with the issue of the abolition of caste system in the right earnest. Indian National social conference was founded in 1887. Continuous efforts were made through different conferences in between 1904 and 1928, practically no success was achieved towards its abolition. In 1928, the social conference resolved to that effect, "This conference is of opinion that the present caste-system is a great obstacle

to the unification of the Hindu society, and therefore resolves that its abolition should be expedited (a) by encouraging true inter-dining (b) promoting inter-caste-marriage (c) by removing untouchability and all disabilities arising therefrom wherever they exist.¹⁰ Before any achievement was made towards the abolition of this system after adopting the above resolution by the social conference, Mahātmā Gāndhī announced his support in favour of the traditional Varnāśrama Dharma. He had not been in support of inter-marriage and inter-dining too. No remarkable achievement was made towards the abolition of this system.

Orthodox Hindus always opposed to any such proposal. Inter-caste-marriage and inter-dining had never got any practical support from the upper caste Hindus. Hindu caste system is still existing with its principal essentials in India. The Brāhmaṇas are still on the top of this system and owe respect from other caste-Hindus (to some extent) still now-a-days. But the ancient characteristics and occupations ruled by ^{the} Sāstras for the respective caste-group are totally absent during the modern times. But one thing should be remembered at the same time that the upper caste do not like at all to favour inter-caste-marriage and inter-dining. In urban areas, in hostels, restaurants, social and ceremonial parties, inter-dining can not be objected. Inter-caste-marriages are also taking place quite off and on. Although these type of marriages are not performed at random and the wedded couples have had to face great social hindrances consequently. In fact, the muslims in India according to the census report of 1911, are divided into so many sub castes. The members of this

sub-castes possess strong hatred to one another. This is why they do not like to inter-dine and even use the same burial ground for the purpose of ~~burial~~ cremation.

Moreover besides the two major grades of the christians namely the Catholics and the Protestants, there are also numerous sub-sects among them. (vide Truth - Vol.48, No.37, dt.16.1.81, p. 589).

We should remember the fact in this connection that revolt of a section of the people against the caste system originated in remote antiquity, and it raised its ugly face in every age, causing immense ~~hardship~~ hardship and bloodshed to the peace-loving people of this subcontinent. So far as we know, ~~this~~ this revolt was made for the first time, by a mighty king called Hiranyakasipu, the son and successor of the royal sage Kaśyapa, who according to Sir Alexander Cunningham (Vide his ancient Geography of India), reigned from his capital Kaśyapapura, at the site of the modern Mullan. After giving up his faith in the Vedic religion, Hiranyakasipu renamed his capital city after his own name and issued orders to all his subjects neither to study the Vedic texts nor to perform any religions rite, prescribed in the said texts. He further instructed all his subjects to throw away their sacred thread and give up all symbols of the Varmāśrama religion. But the religion of the Hindus since time immemorial being known as Varmāśrama Dharma, caste-system was a part and parcel of it. So, the people did not obey the said order of their king.

When Hiranyakasipu learnt from his spies the fact that his order was disobeyed, he became furious and sent his vast

army with a strict command that, anybody found to wear a sacred thread should be killed, and his house should be burnt every book of the Vedas and other sacred scriptures should be burnt and performers of the sacrificial rites should be massacred and the villages or towns where such rites took place should be totally burnt. All the cows helping the sacrificers with milk and ghee should be killed out right. His command in the language of the Bhāgavatapurāna runs as follows :

yatra yatra dviḥā gavo vedā varnāśramakriyā
tam tam janapadam yāta sandīpayata vṛścāta.

- Bhāgavata purāna (Gita Press, Gorakhpur) VII. 2.12.

This command of the mighty emperor was executed without delay and millions of people were killed, with thousands of villages, hundreds of cities burnt, and millions of cows killed. But ultimately the tyrant himself was killed, and the varnāśrama Dharma was re-established under the rule of his dutiful son Prathada.

During the Buddhist and Muslim rule attempts were made to abolish the caste-system but with little effect. Though Mahavira and Gautama made attempts to abolish caste-system, their own followers were divided into a number of castes. Even the Indian Muslims are found to be divided into several caste-like classes. The late Prof. Nihar Ranjan Roy, a front line historian of the modern time while delivering a lecture at the Bose Institute in Calcutta rightly observed : "Islam does not subscribe to caste but its adherents in India are divided into no less than 50 castes,

11
according to the last census.

All the Hindu sages were unanimous on the point that unless one strictly follows the rules of caste-system, one cannot be held as a true Hindu. Caitanya, Rāmakṛṣṇa and all other Hindu saints of the modern time also followed these rules during their life time, as we know from the Caitanyacaritāmṛta, Caitanya-Bhāgavata, Sree Sree Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta and such other books. Even the late Swami Vivekānanda was a staunch supporter of the caste-system, as we know from his different lectures delivered at Kumbhākenam and such other places, and recorded in the Bengali book "Bharatē Vivekānanda", now out of print.

On February 6, 1897, while Swami Vivekananda was going to Madras from Chingalput, a correspondent of the English Daily 'The Hindu' met him in a compartment of the train and asked a few questions. The reply given by the Swamiji was published in the same paper.

On the occasion of the birth centenary of the Swamiji, the said paper, in its issue of January 16, 1963 reprinted the aforesaid statement of the Swamiji. In reply to one question the Swamiji observed "I do not propose any levelling of castes. Caste is a good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow".

The Late Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is regarded as the father of modern India. In the periodical called 'Young India' he, on different occasions expressed his strong support for caste-system. Let us quote below a few remarks of Mr. Gandhi.

"The caste-system has in my opinion a scientific basis. Reason does not revolt against it. It has disadvantages and it has also its advantages. I can find no reason for its abolition" ¹²

"I do regard Varnāśrama as a healthy division of work. There is no question with me of superiority and inferiority. It is purely a question of duty" ¹³

"Varna is not a mere institution made by man; but it is a law discovered by him. It cannot therefore be set aside" ¹⁴

Amongst the western scholars also we find several impartial persons of high intellect who eulogised the caste-system of the Hindus and held that it was the back-bone of the Hindu society and if the Hindu religion be held as an edifice, the four castes may rightly be held as its four strong pillars. For instance, we may mention the names of Sir Henry cotton, Sydney Low, Dr. Annie Besant, Abbe Dubois V.A. Smith, Dr. Hutton, S.C. Bill and others. Dr. Annie Besant Praized caste-system even in her address as the President of the India National Congress. Late Mr. Basanatakumar Chattopadhyaya in his book "Modern Age and Sanatan Dharma" ¹⁵ has quoted all the relevant observations of the said scholars.

The Hindu Depressed castes, or the mixed and inferior castes who were often denounced by the Śāstras, (also known as untouchables) formed almost one-fifth of the Hindu population. A complaint is generally made upon the upper caste Hindus, that they were reluctant in respect of the uplift of the status of the untouchables

But, from the sacred books of the Hindus, we know that, the leaders of the Hindu society left no stone unturned in their attempt for giving a higher social status to the so-called untouchables. The Purānic verse, "candālo=pi divyaśreṣṭho haribhakti-parāyaṇah" "An out caste, having devotion to lord Hari (the Supreme God) should be respected like the best of the Brāhmanas. From the Mahābhārata we know that a Brāhmaṇa called Jājali was sent to Banaras for receiving religious instructions from an out caste called Tulādhāra, simply for the reason that the latter was a devotee of the Supreme God. It is a fact that majority of the outcastes were denounced as untouchable, but this had to be done, because of their nefarious activities and extreme uncleanness. Due to the dirt of devotus amongst the out castes in the medieval period, the high caste Hindus denounced them as a whole as untouchables. But during the years when Muslim league refused the claim of the caste Hindus to the effect that the untouchables were also a part and parcel of the Hindu society, and this allegation had been endorsed by the then census commissioner of India, the caste Hindu leaders became alarmed at the situation and began to think for the social uplift of them, and a change in the society.

In fact, well before Gandhiji's activities on the improvement of the social conditions of the Depressed castes, several social reformers worked hard for the betterment of their social status. During the period from the close of the 19th century to the first quarter of this century, several Associations (viz. Depressed class Mission, Depressed class Mission Society

of India, depressed class Mission society of Madras etc.) were formed to look after the benefits of the Depressed castes. Several schools were founded for imparting education among them. The demands were raised to the effect that the civil rights like entry to temples, use of public wells, admission to schools, the use of public roads etc should not be denied to the untouchables. The Depressed class people on the contrary, became conscious of their rights and Privileges and they began to manipulate the caste Hindus to achieve their demands. They themselves formed two major Associations of their own namely, the All India Depressed classed Association and the All India Depressed classes Federation.

We do not want to continue a detailed discussion on the problems of the untouchables as because this is not the motive of our thesis. We therefore, want to be brief right now in order to draw a thorough sketch about the picture of the social condition of the untouchables.

Indian National Congress took up the issue of the social uplift of the untouchables at the right earnest. They resolved to the effect at their 33rd Annual session held in Calcutta in 1917. Several efforts were made from the various corners to throw open the doors of Hindu temples before the untouchables, and it was urged also that the public wells and public schools should be thrown open to them. Some success was achieved so far in this regard ultimately. In the meantime Gandhiji took up the issue of the untouchables as one of his aims to attain swarāj. In 1932, All India Anti-untouchability league was founded with its

headquarters in Delhi. This name was subsequently changed to Harijan Sevak Sangha, Gandhiji was closely connected with this Sangha. This Association did a lot for the betterment of the social conditions of the Depressed classes.

We should remember here the fact that the efforts for the uplift of the day to day conditions of the depressed classes were mostly done through the efforts of the caste Hindus. But the progress was undoubtedly slow as because it was not easy to turndown the system or abolish the rites and customs which had been continuing through over 3000years in our country. Several effective measures were adopted by the Indian National Congress ~~so a whole~~ to cope up with that purpose.

After the Independence of India is achieved, our National Govt. are also trying whole heartedly for upgrading their social and economic status. Several attempts have been made from the side of the public exchequer to uplift their social standard as a whole. Facilities are reserved for them in respect of higher education in every faculty of Arts, Science, Medical training, Engineering etc. They are also getting training (free of cost * for preparing themselves in the All India services. But total achievement unfortunately in return is very poor.

The System of Marriage.

We have seen the gradual development of Hindu marriage in first three chapters of the instant volume. Most of our ancient authors as we all know ruled in favour of ^{the} anuloma marriage. But Yajñabalkya clearly expressed his view that he was not in favour of ^a "Brāhmaṇa" having ^a Sūdra wife. Our archaic smṛtikāras had been of the opinion that a Brāhmaṇa if desired to have more than one wife, should marry a maiden of his own caste at first and after that he might marry for his sexual pleasure, one or more wives from the Kṣatriya and Vaisya community. Some of the Smṛtikāras even allowed a Sūdra girl for a Brāhmaṇa, but not below that. This Anuloma type of marriage was denounced by all the above Smṛtikāras, prescribing that the children begotten by an upper class man through ~~xx~~ his lower class wife should have the caste of their mother, and not of their father. The digest writers of the medieval India have endorsed the above rules of the Smṛtikāras of the former ages regarding inter caste marriage. But a few of them have included intercaste marriage in the list of forbidden practices for the Kali age.

The authors of the aforesaid Smṛtis of the medieval India have also laid down the different norms of Hindu wedlock during this age. But they have said nothing anew than that of our original Smṛtis. We therefore do not want to make

any
 detailed discussion about the above points right now. In short,
 these Smritis have recommended ^{the aged girls} tender to be given in marriage.
 They have endorsed the views of the archaic Smritis in respect
 of the gotra and prōvra principles of marriage. They ruled
 against widow-marriage. They have also discussed about the
 marriage of a Punarbhū.

The chief characteristic of Hindu wedlock as we have
 discussed above, had been in continuance in our country for the
 succeeding centuries. As we all know that in the 19th century
 throughout, the Indian thinkers thought seriously about so many
 demerits of the then existing social system and were trying their
 level best to waive out these defects from the heart of the society.
 They were at par with the opinion of Mahadev Gavind Ranade who
 has observed "there was an ideal Hindu society in the old days
 but evils crept in during a period of depression when in panic
 and weakness a compromise was made with the brute forces of
 ignorance and superstition."¹⁷

The more prominent of these evils were (according to
 them) the widow-hood and the custom of Sati.

The fate of the Hindu widows was very much miserable as
 according to the opinion of the then social reformers. It is a
 fact that childmarriage was in existence during this period of
 our review and so many of these tenderaged girls were married to
 very aged persons in most of the cases. In the event of the
 death of their old husbands, the fate of these girl widows became
 very deplorable. The widows in those days, had to undergo a life
 of strict celibacy and self-denial. Many of the widows

belonging to the higher castes in addition, used to sacrifice their lives in the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands. The rite of kulinism was in vogue in Bengal in those days. According to this custom a Kulīna Brāhmaṇa could marry a multiple number of girls, with the death of a Kulīna a considerable number of damsels used to become widows in those days. The social reformers (headed by Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar) were pressing hard on the then British rulers (East India Co) to legalise the marriage of widows.

Pandit Iswar Chandra advanced Sāstric supports in favour of his arguments for enactment of widow-marriage Act. We have however, shown in our second chapter as to how Iswar Chandra had wrongly interpreted the appropriate Sāstric verse to testify to his argument in support of widow wedlock. The East India Co. however, legalised the marriage of Hindu widows through an enactment entitled Hindu widows re-marriage Act passed on 26.7.1856; notwithstanding any custom or interpretation of the Hindu law to the country.

This Act further ensures that children born of such marriage are legitimate. But the enforcement of the above act did not make any substantial progress in our country till date.

We have covered up almost the chief aspects of marriage, as it has been in existence among Hindus in India from the medieval period and down to our era. The dowry was also in existence among the Hindus throughout the ages and even is in vogue among present day Indians. Though Vigourous efforts

have been made to eradicate this from the heart of the Hindu society throughout the past centuries and even an Act has been passed by our present day Govt. denouncing this system, no substantial progress has been made so far towards its abolition. We have noticed beforehand, that the Muslims were also addicted to this practice. In fact, the majority of the civilized people throughout the world are accustomed to this practice in any shape or form in every age. But we must at the same time can not appreciate any excess vigour and selfishness which developed around this practice a century or more ago in our country and succeeding years.

The Mughal Emperors were accustomed to take rich dowries in their social functions. It had taken the shape of an evil act among ^{the} Hindus even from the medieval age and upto the 19th century. Different contemporary writers have spoken of its demerits. Its denouncing characteristics have been noticed throughout the centuries immediately succeeding the Medieval Age. Modern day Bengali writers (i.e. Rabindra Nath, Sarat Chandra and so on) have strongly represented against this system in their writings. We wish to add here a few more lines on the system of dowry right now.

As we have all noticed before hand, that this system had been even in Vogue among Vedic Hindus. Rg. Vedic verse has spoken of its existence in those days. In Purānic and Epic India dowry had been a regular practice among the Hindus. We have also observed the relations of the bride were gladly presenting different kinds of valuable gifts at the marriage ceremony. We

have however, discussed all these points in our previous chapters. One thing is understood from our above observation that dowry had been a voluntary custom among archaic Hindus and that any demerit of it had not been witnessed in ancient India. In fact, this had been a common belief of the ancient bridal relatives that all that they had been presenting to their wedded damsels these all were their token of love and affection to her and so also to the wedded couple and his family. We can not also ignore the fact at the same time that as because the Hindu married women were denied any share in their paternal property that had been why, their parents used to present valuable gifts at the marriage ceremony of their daughters so as to compensate the loss of their damsels in this regard. All these causes were perhaps, the probable courses for origin of dowry among Hindu society we therefore cannot outright reject dowry as an evil practice, considering the above points.

It has all along been an obligatory rule with the parents of a bride, that they were to give only, and not to take anything from their wedded daughter or even from her husband or his parents. But when the married daughter gave birth to a male child, her parents do not object to take food at her house, on the ground that the new born male child has a right upon his father's property, and his ~~maternal~~ maternal grand parents have no bar to take food from him.

The system of childmarriage which had been in vogue among Hindus even in this century, has been abolished through an

Regarding the utility of the intercaste marriage, two vertically opposite views are existing in the Hindu society till to day. The political leaders on the one hand hold it highly beneficial for the society; the Hindu religious leaders on the other hand hold it as a policy dangerous for the society. Both parties have strong arguments in favour of them.

S a t i

Elaborate discussions about the custom of Satī have been made by us in our preceding chapters of this book.

We learn from the contemporary foreign writers of the age that the practice ~~of~~ even according to them was optional, that the permission of a Muslim high official was necessary with regard to the observance of this rite etc. This rite was disapproved by the Mughal Emperors. Akbar and Jāhāngīr took special initiative in this respect. The Foreign writers like Nicolo conts and Decarte Barbosa have left a vivid account of the observance of this practice by a large number of wives and female slaves who sacrificed their lives in the burning piles of their husbands and masters respectively in the Vijayanagara kingdom in the beginning of the 16th century.

The custom of sati was steadily encouraged among the Hindu widows in those days (i.e. late Medieval age). The statistics

of the observance of this rite in the Bengal Presidency can be taken into consideration in this context. In 1815, three hundred seventy eight widows practised this rite. The number of self immolated widows in 1816 was 442, in 1817 it was 707 and in 1818 it was 839. After 1818, this was averaged five and six hundred a year till the year of its prohibition i.e. 1829. We should not also forget the fact that besides the efforts of Mughal emperors, the Portuguese administrator in Goa, Danes at Serampore, Dutche at Chinsura and French at Chandannagar tried to forbid this rite. We have witnessed in our preceding chapters that the Hindus did not coerce their widows to observe this rite. But they did not, on the contrary react against the hearts' desire of their womenfolk in respect of the observance of this custom. There might have been several causes for wider prevalence of this custom within Bengal Presidency in those days. Some scholars think (such as Kane) that allurements of the prospect of inheriting widows' property (the Bengali widows obtained that ~~right~~ right already under Dāyabhāga) must have induced their relatives to insist on this custom. Rājā Rāmmohan Ray who had also taken the prominent role towards the abolition of Sati had represented to the then British rulers (in August 1818) to that effect that a majority of the widows observing this rite in Bengal had been coerced by their relatives to perform Sati. This is not easy to arrive at any definite conclusion in this regard for want of adequate evidence. The East India Co, however, had been slowly, but steadily taking steps towards the prohibition of this rite. In 1812, 1815 and 1817 several acts were passed discouraging

Sati. The act of 1812 (circulated in 1813) forbade intoxication, drugging or any other means to insist on a widow to perform this rite against her will. By the acts of 1815 and 1817, the District Magistrates were asked to send the annual return of the cases of Sati, the relatives were required to obtain previous permission of the appropriate authorities with the presence of a police officer at the time of its performance. Furthermore a widow below the age of 16, was also exempted from the burden of observance of this rite. At last on 4.12.1828, Lord William Bentinck declared this practice as illegal and a crime punishable under the rules of law within the jurisdiction of British India.

We may also add the following lines in course of our discussion on the custom of Sati. The social reformers of the 19th century (headed by Rājā Rāmmohan Roy) argued to the effect that majority of the widows observing this rite since centuries preceding the year of abolition of this rite, were coerced to perform Sati. But another section of scholars hold that widows were always at liberty to decide whether they should sacrifice their lives at the piles of their departed husbands or not in every age. Therefore, the question of applying force for performance of Sati, does not arise at all, according to their observation. We get however, ample evidences from the pages of history throughout the ages where we see that widows, voluntarily sacrificed their lives in the piles of their dead husbands. 21
Say for example, we learn from the Cambridge History of India (V-I) that the junior wife of a Indian general, sacrificed her

life out of her own accord at the funeral pile of her husband. ²²
Harsacarita narrates that queen Yasómatī the wife ^{of} Prabhākaravar-
dhanā and mother of the renounced king Harsavardhana sacrificed
her life willingly in the burning fire when her husband was at
his death bed. ²³ Rājataranginā of Kalhana also furnishes some
examples of voluntary self immolation of different queens of
Kāśmīr. In addition, we get two such evidences of 1829 one from
the report of Sir William ²⁴ Sleemann, wherein the voluntary self-
immolation of an aged widow in Jabalpur has been detailed and
other from Lord Frederick Haliday, the then collector of
Hughen Luaulinant Governor of Bengal, describing the sacrifice
of life of a young widow, in the burning fire out of her own
accord. The widows in the above two cases, were dissuaded by
the aforesaid Britishers, from taking such fatal steps, but with
no result. There are also innumerable evidences of voluntary,
self-immolation of the widows in the burning fire along with the
carpses of their husbands in every century preceding its aboli-
tion, i.e. in 1829. (We get detailed write-up in this regard from
the accounts of Kaṭṭhā Śarit Sāgara (Translated by C. H. Tawney
- V-IV, London 1925, Appendix i, pp. 267-70.) We can not say
therefore, that the widows as a general rule were, forced to
sacrifice their lives in their husbands funeral piles. This custom
can not be termed as an evil practice on the merit of the afore-
said observation. If in some cases, force was applied, then these
were of barbarism, and can not be spoken highly of about them.
There was adequate law in the country to punish such criminals.

"Lord Bentinck", as Edward Thompson writes, after a
careful canvassing of all authorities, determined, largely on his

own initiative to abolish this rite"²⁵. But this rite was observed by the Hindus in the native States after its prohibition in British India for so many years. This custom of Sati, therefore, met its end (having been continued in our country through the ages*) during the early half of the 19th century. The reformers tried their level best to ban this rite. The orthodox Hindus however, were not supporting its abolition. Thompson observes, "Government was unhappy about the terrible prevalence of the rite in Bengal, and was constantly consulting its officials as to whether it could be safely abolished, and Hindu Pandits as to whether it was regarded²⁶ as commanded rather than merely recommended in their sacred books." This should not be perhaps out of place to speak a few words about the mode of observance of this rite in the different parts of India during the period of our review. Barial of widows was in vogue in Telegu Districts of South India. Drowning was also its another form. As regards burning, in South India, in Orissa and often in Bengal, the widows used to sacrifice their lives in a burning pit, a few feet below the surrounding ground. In Western India, the widow had to sit within a grass hut with her dead husband and she herself applied the torch inside the hut. And the burning of widow along with the corpse of her husband was in vogue in the Northern India including Bengal. While Thompson observes, "However brave, many of the women who died were I forget, for the moment the countless unwilling and terrified victims the world has seen no more ignoble. Selfishness than²⁷ that which demanded such worship and sacrifice to the male". Kane writes on the contrary, "Modern India does not justify the

practice of Sati but it is a warped mentality that rebukes modern Indians for expressing admiration and reverence for the cool and unfaltering courage of Indian women in becoming Satis or performing the Jawhar for cherishing their ideals of womanly conduct. If Englishmen can feel pride in their ancestors who grabbed one-fourth of the world's surface or if Frenchmen can feel pride in the deeds of their Emperor Napoleon who tried to enslave the whole of Europe and yet are not held up to ridicule or rebuke, there is no reason why poor Indians can not express admiration for the sacrifices which their women made in the past though they may condemn the institution itself which demanded such terrible sacrifice and suffering." The abolition of this rite through enactment of legislative law did not however result into any general commotion of the Indian people.

The observance of the same rite by the Rājput~~s~~ widows (Jawhar is the common name) during the centuries immediately preceeding the abolition of Sati deserve special mention in this context. Several widows of a deceased Rāṇā used to sacrifice their lives in the burning fire.

We can not also ignore the fact that Rabindra Nath (Vide Rabindra Rachanabali, Vividha Prasanga - V - 5, p. 441) has highly appreciated the attitude of Indian women who dared to sacrifice their lives at the burning piles of their departed husbands in the past. This is to be mentioned here in this context, that in the past years even reports of self immolation of Indian widows have been published in the news papers.

E d u c a t i o n

Normally, Benares, Nadia, Taxila, Mathura, Mithila, Tirhut, Paithan, Karhad, Multan and Shirhind etc. were the famous centres of learning for the Hindus in India in Medieval age. When ^a Hindu boy was able to read the texts, it is believed that he was entrusted with the study of the Rāmāyana or the Purānas. The subjects like Purānas, Upaniṣads, and other Śāstras like the Vedas, Vedāntas, Logic, law, astronomy, grammar and poetry were taught to the Hindu pupils. As we all know, that the Hindu scriptures have forbidden the teachers to receive any monthly or regularly payment from the pupils, hence the Hindu educational institutions were solely dependent on the endowment of the rich people even during the Medieval age.

The teachers were highly respected by the pupils. The traditional system of residing of the pupils with their teachers under the same roof, had been in continuance even in this age, Normally, the primary education of a boy was started in the talas attached to the temples. After completion of the primary education, the students used to move for the places where the institutions for higher education were in existence, the names of those centres we have already referred to above. The names of the same of the eminent Hindu scholars such as Vāsudeva Sarvabhauma, Raghunath Śiromani and Raghunandana may be mentioned in this connection. Sirhind was famous for its institution imparting training on Āyurvedic studies. Scholars have arrived at the conclusion after studying carefully the available literary records of this age that there had been provisions for the post-graduate studies.

The students often used to engage themselves in the research work and obtained doctorate degrees after successful completion of the same (under the guidance of an experienced teacher). The educational system of the Mahammadans had started from the Maktab attached to mosques. The Muslim children were to begin their studies with the reading of quaran. After this, they had to take their lessons from the works of the poets of repute of their community. Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Jawnpore, Gujarat, Sialkoat and Ahmedabad etc. were all famous as centres of Muslim learning. The Mughul Emperors were also lovers of the culture. They too often patronized for the construction of new Institutions of learning.

There were also in existence several libraries throughout the country. Mādrāsās or Makhtabes normally possessed libraries of their own. Arristocrates and nobles had also the tendencies of keeping their own libraries. Besides, kings and Emperors were not strangers to this fashion.

The education for womenfolk was not totally denied. This is assessed that the girls used to go to the primary institutions with the boys and receive the preliminary education from there. But there was no arrangement for women in respect of their higher education. The women of the arristocratic families were receiving necessary education under the guidance of experienced tutors. The ladies of the Rājput families and the Zamindars of Bengal were not illeterates. We must remember the fact that there are hardly sufficient evidences obtainable from contemporary literary documents as well as ~~any~~ epigraphic records wherefrom

we can form any definite idea about the educational system prevailing during the period under review. We have to base on therefore, the scanty available sources, mostly literature, to arrive at our aforesaid conclusion.

To begin with the system of Education of the present era, we must admit the fact that since the colonisation of our mother land under the British sovereign, the standard of education has gradually become westernised.

The British Govt. (the East India Co.) sponsored the traditional native Institutions, but soon they arranged for implementation of the system of education of their own. English oriented institutions were set up for imparting teaching on Western subjects. The Missionaries took a leading part in this regard. The eminent Indian thinkers of the 19th century were also advocating for wide circulation of English oriented education. In a letter forwarded to the then Governor-General Lord Amherst in Dec. 1823, Rāmmohan Roy urged very much for early implementation of English education. As a result, schools to teach English were founded in Calcutta and neighbouring areas since 1800 A.D. and onwards. Hindu College was founded in 1817. The subjects taught in these schools besides English literature were Grammar, mathematics, astronomy, geography, Chemistry (both practical and theoretical), history (ancient and Modern), painting, handwriting, several arts and crafts etc.

After Lord Bentinck's declaration to the effect that thenceforth the British authorities in India should spend money

solely on the English education alone, paved the way for the modern setup of education in India. Bentinck resolved on 7.3.1835 that. "The great object of the British Govt. ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone!"²⁹

Gradually, in the following years, new schools and colleges were founded to carry on the above purpose of the Govt. Later on three Universities (Calcutta, Bombay and Madras) were set up in 1857. The business of each of these Universities were to be managed by a Chancellor and a Senate consisting of the Vice-Chancellor and Fellows who were in the Govt. Each of these Universities possessed at starting the four faculties viz. Arts-science, Law, Medicine and Engg. These Universities were the affiliating and examining bodies. The teaching was generally held mainly in three categories of colleges, viz. Govt. missionary and private. Some schools and colleges had also vice versa arrangement of classes. At the beginning, the Bombay and Madras Universities used to control the sphere of higher education within the territorial jurisdiction of the respective presidencies and the native states of Western and Southern India. The jurisdiction of the Calcutta University in this regard had been extended over the whole of Northern India, the central provinces and the British Burma. The setting up of new universities in the succeeding years Jeopardised the dominion of the above three Universities in respect of the sphere of higher education which they had been enjoying so long. The system of the now-a-days

education may be described at a length, i.e. the continuity of the system existing in 19th century India with some addition and alteration. The students usually are admitted into the colleges after their successful completion of the school studies and passing the final examination thereof. Having been graduated ~~in~~ themselves in any of the three spheres namely, Arts, Commerce and Science, they take admission in any of the M.A. course in the University. Having obtained the degree, any student may continue his studies further and undertake research work under the guidance of an able supervisor. After the successful completion of his research work, a student obtains the Doctorate Degree. The medium of imparting teaching to the students has become their mother tongue upto the graduation and the steps are being taken to extend the above facilities upto the level of Doctorate Degree. There are separate arrangements for training in Engineering, Law, Medicine etc.

The arrangement of education for the womenfolk is steadily advancing. To make regular arrangement for imparting higher education towards the weaker sex had been almost unthought of in the 19th century. There was however continuous effort to achieve success in this respect. The Missionaries and persons of intellect, whether Indian or European, took lead in this regard. Success to some extent was achieved so far. Girls schools ^{and colleges} were set up in Calcutta and neighbouring districts. There is no bar for the womenfolk to receive primary or higher education now-a-days. They are achieving also remarkable success in every sphere of education, making competitions openly with the male students. The learned

editor of the struggle for freedom observes, "It is not easy to reconcile the two aims namely.

(1) to make the education of girls similar to that of boys in every respect, and

(2) to fit the girls for the home and married life.

Perhaps the real solution is to make alternative provisions, as far as possible, for achieving both the aims and leave the option to the girl or her family".³⁰

Efforts has furthermore been made for the education of Muslims and the Hindu Depressed classes in the preceeding years. Our national Govt. are doing their best for the progress in the field of education in respect of the students of the depressed classes. But no remarkable success has been achieved so far in this context.

The Position of women.

The gradual deterioration in respect of the privileges towards the social status of Hindu women has been discussed by us in the preceding chapters of our thesis.

The ~~Muz~~ Muslims always maintained strict seclusion within their own society everywhere they settled to rule or reside, normally, the Mohammadans in India after their advent, introduced the same policy in respect of their woman folk. Hindus followed Muslims in this regard and veiling to a greater extent was introduced among aristocratic Hindus. But this seclusion was not so rigid alike the Muslims. We have noticed ~~xxx~~ beforehand that the married women even in the epic age used to put a veil over their head, but the unmarried girls never did this. During the Muslim rule a considerable number of Muslim officials and military men became a danger to the Hindu women whether married or unmarried. After repeated experience of such a danger, the leaders of the Hindu society felt it urgently necessary to hide the beauty of their women and girls from those criminals, and they started confining their women inside the house, and veil them while going outside. Re-marriage of widows, devorce, etc had been in practice among Mohammadans, but all these systems had not been in vogue among the Hindus (even in this age). Just like the preceding ages, the practice of self immolation of widows was in vogue among the Hindus. Some foreign writers have given their own description of the performance of this rite among the Hindus. It is noticeable in this context that during the Mughal times, permission of a Government officer was

necessary for the performance of Sati, which we have discussed elaborately before hand.

Monogamy had been the fashion of the majority of Hindus with a few exception of aristocrats who preferred to Polygamy. Child marriage was in vogue among the Hindus. Muslim nobles too, on the other hand practised Polygamy. There was no social as well as religious restriction on the way of their performing this practice. But Monogamy was not discarded by them. The Mohammadan ladies retained their right on their father's and husband's property. On the contrary, the Hindu ladies were allowed maintenance only.

The Hindu womenfolk had lost their social freedom of the previous ages and became solely dependant on their gardians. This subjection took its complete shape in the nineteenth and also in the beginning of this century when their social freedom was completely unthought of.

The Digests of the medieval age have discussed in details about the women's right on their nearest relations' property. One should consider the reason as to why unlike the Muslim women, the Hindu women were denied their proprietary right to their father's property. A Muslim woman might be divorced by her husband at any time, and thus be compelled to return to her father's house. On the other hand, a Hindu was never authorised to divorce his wife. He was ~~compelled~~ compelled by his religious and social rules to feed, dress and protect his wife, whether he liked her or not. So, a Hindu girl, during the life time of her husband had no reason to return to her father's house permanently.

Women's authority to Vedic learning, and wearing sacred thread had been denounced by the Smṛitis of this age.

The Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.

We learn from the records of the contemporary literature that the members of both the communities observed their rites and ceremonies mostly in the like manner as they are observed now-a-days. Hindus normally observed the Nāma-Karaṇa, Chudā-Karaṇa, Upanayana ~~and~~ Vivāha and certain other rites especially ^{including} the funeral rites. The Muslims on the other hand celebrated the birth of a child with due formalities. They also used to observe the name giving ceremony alike the Hindus. The Sunnat ceremony was observed with great pomp and colour in those days. But Akbar was not a whole hearted supporter of this practice.

The funeral rites were also performed by both the communities. Hindus normally burnt the corpse and collected the bones from the cremation ground ^{and} after a certain period of time ~~and~~ would throw the same ~~in the Ganges~~ in the Ganges, after the same being washed in the milk. During the period of mourning, which normally was 11 days for the Brāhmaṇas, 13 days for Kṣatriyas, 16 days for the vaiśyas and 31 days for the lowest (order) of the quadrupic division (i.e. Sūdras), according to the rules of Dharmaśāstras, the Hindus used to abstain themselves from ~~the~~ shaving, cutting the hair, wearing gorgeous dress,

sleeping on comfortable beds etc. At the end of the mourning, the relatives used to present some offering to the heir of the deceased. But most of the non-Brāhmanas, now-a-days especially in Bengal, observe the mourning for their deceased relations only for 15 days. Some other communities (i.e. the Vaidya) which in the alternative follow the norms of the Brāhmanas in the context, observe celibacy and other hard rules for 11 days like the Brāhmanas.

The Muslims too, observed the funeral rites of their own. They used to bury the dead body after its being decorated with flowers and perfumes. Their mourning continued generally for forty days. During this period, they too like the Hindus, abstained from dainty dishes and busurious dress. After the period of mourning was over, the luxurious of the dead used to visit the grave and distribute food, money and clothes to the poor and heirs of the deceased. A special Śrāddha ceremony of the Hindus in its proper sense (as abserved by the contemporary writers) was performed after expiry of a year from the date of the death of their relatives, which practice had been in existence from ~~the days of yore~~ ~~time immemorial~~ and it exists till to-day.

We shall now try to speak a few words about the ceremonies and customs of Hindus and Muslims prevailing during the Medieval age in India. We shall not also forget to remember the fact that most of the under-mentioned ceremonies are existing in the same manner as they were observed in the period of our review.

First of all, we are trying to highlight some of the

principal festivities of the Hindus in those days. The learned editors of the Mughal Empire ³¹⁷ has spoken elaborately about all the Principal festivities of the Hindus and Muslims of those days. We learn from their discussions that Sívarātri or the festival of Lord Śiva which was observed with all solemnities by the Hindus. Akbar, used to show special interest about this and took part activity in this ceremony of the Hindus. Similarly important was the festival of Rākhīvandhana. Mughal Emperors, (like Akbar, Jāhāngīr) were also admirers of this ceremony. Hūmāyun showed special interest to the Tulā Dān or the weighing ceremony of the Hindus. The above-mentioned ceremonies were also given a place in the court calendar by the Mughul Emperors. Holi, Dasera and Dīpāvalī or Dewālī had also been the remarkable festivities of the Hindus in those days. Mainly fire works were discharged in the Dīpāvalī. Akbar was an warm admirer of this festival. Govardhan Pūjā was one of the remarkable festivities of the Hindus.

Among the Chief festivities of the Muslims of those days, mention may be made of Shab-i-Barat, Maharram, Ide-i-Malad, Id-UI-~~Far~~ Feter, Id-UI-Zoha etc. Most of the Mughal Emperors, took active part in many of the above festivities. Many of the above festivities excepting Muharram were celebrated through the decoration of the houses of the Muslims, exchange of sweets and charity among relatives and poor, illumination, discharge of fire works etc. Muharram was on the other hand observed amidst mourning.

Neuzoz (the birth day celebration of the ruling Monarch), Mina or fancy Bazar etc. Were the festivals which were observed through pomp and magnificence by the Muslims.

Food and Drink.

Khichuri (rice boiled with pulse) had been the major food of the ordinary people till some time back in different provinces. They took it warm along with some butter. But during the last decades butter became extremely costly and dāl (pulse) also has become a precious thing, thus compelling the ordinary people to give up this habit and depend mainly upon roṭī (bread). The rich men on the otherhand, were accustomed with dainty and delicious dishes, we gather from the reports of the contemporary foreign writers that the Āmirs (rich) of those days were habituated in taking their daily meal accompanying their followers.

On the contrary, the Gujarātis were fond of rice and curd, rice formed the chief dietary of the Indian people in those days of the East and South. The North Indians generally liked to have preparations from wheat, Bazra or Jowar. The Hindus are believed to have been generally vegeterians. The Mohammedans were normally fond of delicious dishes such as of Birriani, puddings etc. contemporary writers also furnished the list of daily dietary of the aristocrats of those days. Several types of sweets, such as Haluā, pudding, rice mixed with almonds and raisings was also normally taken by the Indian people of those days.

The Smṛ̥tis of this age (i.e. Madana-Pāriyeāta, Grhastha-
etc
Ratnākara, Parāsāra, Mādhava) have ruled in favour of meat eating with the consent of the Brāhmaṇas. They have also not allowed the

Brāhmaṇas to eat meat at a Śrāddha ceremony, but the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas are exempted to follow such restrictions. The Smṛtis in addition, have disallowed the Brāhmaṇas to drink any intoxicating drink. The members of the three successive lower castes were however allowed some concessions. Especially, the Sūdras were ~~not~~ exempted from any obligation in respect of drinking any intoxicating liquar.

We learn from the contemporary historical records that the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas of the Mārāṭhās³² were vegeterians and they disliked wine very much (The Batutah confirms this). The Brāhmaṇas at the Vijayanagara empire also were vegeterians as Barbasa³³ says.

This food habit of the Indian people, of the medieval age met its gradual change from the beginning of the present era. It is also known to all of us that the adverse economic condition became the principal cause for the change in the food habit of the Indians of the modern times. On the whole, the general food habit of the Indians within the different region of this country is alike ~~the same~~ of the preceding^g age. But majority of the Indians can not afford protein food in much quantities alike their forefathers because of the fact that their purse do not permit this. The rich Indians of modern times alike the aristocrats of the past centuries could arrange their daily diet according to their desire. The modern age however has introduced so many public restaurants, hotels, confl^etineries etc. where delicious dishes of different catagories (both vegetarian and non-vegetarian) along with various kinds of sweets are being sold to the customers on cash price. Adulteration has become the burning

problem of the Modern India every kind of food now-a-days has lost its genuine value as a result of which the Indians have lost the unique physique of their forefathers and have become mainly dependant on medicine. Govt are totally failure in respect of the fixing up of ^{price} ~~the~~ line and the punishment to the dishonest businessmen.

D r e s s .

We have seen in our previous chapters, that the Indians generally used one upper and one under garment. The rich people had been accustomed with the use of costly garments and they too wore ornaments of precious gems and alike materials. The male persons gradually gave up the habit of wearing ornaments and the women ceased to wear the head-dress instead.

When we come to discuss about the dress habit of Indians, during the medieval age, we see that any of the common people whether he is a Hindu or Muslim, generally wore a cotton under-garment often known as Langotta, langot in Bengal (which was tied round the waist). In the winter the commons of Northern India, usually put on small coats of rough wool. They too put turbans to protect their head from heat and cold. Rich people used to wear luxurious dresses in any climatic condition. They also used ~~shallowers~~ shallowers and Breeches (tight pants). The shirts and small waist coats were also worn by them. As an upper garment, the use of a long coat was also in vogue. The rich people also carried shawls of wool over their shoulders.

The turban or the head-wear was put on by both the Hindus and the Muslims. The Mughal emperors were very much particular about the fashion of their dress. To be dressed with arms was the fashion of the age for the people. The dress of the womanfolk was indeed simple. The rich Muslim ladies put on shallowers, ghāgrā, shirts and a piece of costly cotton known as dopāttā for their head. Hindu womenfolk after put on sāḍī, a small jacket, ghāgrā and a dopāttā. (as head wear). The Muslim ladies covered their bodies (while going out doors) with borkha from head to foot. The men and women of both the communities (generally rich) used shoes (turkish in ~~xt~~ style) and the use of costly shoes enriched with the jewels, and made of velvet etc. was also in vogue.

This dress habit of the Indian people had been in vogue during the medieval age. But this habit gradually met a remarkable change with the advent of British in India. We became almost totally influenced by their fashions of dress after when they became our supreme political boss. The use of European dress (shirt, pant, coat, hat etc.) had been adopted by the Indian people. The dress habit of the native people of both the communities on the other hand faced evolution of the age. The Hindus became generally accustomed with the use of Dhotis, Pānjābi etc. The head wear is being given up by the Hindus in different parts of India (especially in Bengal). The Hindu womenfolk wear sāḍī. The Muslims normally put on Pājāmā, Pānjābi, dhoti etc. One thing is to be noticed here in this context is that the Hindus and Muslims mostly have adopted the dress habit of the Western people and that they have interchanged their own fashion of

dress among their own respective communities. The womenfolk of both the communities were habituated in wearing ornaments made of precious gems, gold, ruby, pearl, diamond etc. The use of ornaments for the ear (earring) neck (necklace), upper portion of the arm (armband), wrist (chunī, chud, etc.) Payals (ghagra) etc. was in vogue in those days. The womenfolk of the mediaval age. ~~_____~~, liked to put on bulky ornaments for almost every limb of their body. The male personnel on the other hand, practically gave up the habit of wearing ornaments. The Hindus (especially, the Rājputs) put on earrings and rings for the finger (and the bracelet also.) Mughal Emperors liked to be enriched with heavy jewellery on special occasions. This habit of wearing ornaments for men and womenfolk continued till to the early twentieth century. After then, gradually obviously due to economic reasons, this habit was changed remarkably. The womenfolk, of our country, excepting few fortunate ones now-a-days, cannot afford to put on costly ornaments. But to put on ornaments daily has become absurd for the ladies now-a-days because of the apprehension for the decoits and other social disorders of our country.

Let us now take the opportunity of speaking a few more words on the social condition of the womenfolk of the present day India.

We have observed in our foregoing chapters that during the age of the Vedas Hindu women, both married and un-married, enjoyed absolute social freedom. But in the later Vedic age, the married Hindu women had to observe reclusion whenever necessary. The absolute social freedom of the unmarried ladies however, was not Jeopardised in the succeeding ages. During the Muslim rule and afterwards (upto the early quarter of this century *) social freedom of a Hindu woman, (no matter whether she was married or un-married) was completely unthought of .

After the partition and independence of our mother land the situation has become completely changed. Both the political and social leaders have pleaded in favour of the absolute socio-economic freedom of the Hindu women-folk. Several measures have been adopted by our national Govt. to help the Indian ladies so as to fight out the above social hindrances.

As a result of which, the Indian ladies now-a-days, are coming out of the inner apartments of their houses and taking part equally with their male colleagues in every sphere of activity. Majority of them, are not economically dependent upon others.

On the other hand, this socio-economic freedom of our weaker-sex now-a-days, has created so many problems too. We have observed above that almost every urban family in modern India, has become unitarian. The picture of the rural India is also alike the cities. As became the ladies in most of the cases are earning their, bread in the sweat of their brow, and as such they are not accepting the supremacy of their husbands in their domestic lives. In fact, the injunctions of the archaic smritis about the relation of husband and wife and so on are totally disobeyed by present day Indians.

We should not also ignore the fact, that due to extreme financial hardship and hopeless economic condition, the guardians of the ordinary middle class families are not becoming able to arrange marriage of ~~the~~ their grown-up damsels. The depressive pecuniary structure of the present day indian economy, , and growing unemployment problem, are forcing the Indian youth to remain unmarried upto their latest possible age. The utility of marriage and the peace in domestic life have become meaningless in our present day country. The injunctions of the sacred scriptures of archaic India, regarding marriage, as we have seen above have become totally observed due to the extreme callousness of our present day ~~leaders~~ leaders.

This is to be mentioned here in this connection that due to late marriage so many problems are arising as a matter of fact. Corruption and social evils are also originating as a result of

the wedding of men and women at their decaying youth.
Love-unions are becoming failures in most of the cases.
For the above reasons, most of the present day Indians are
becoming out of nerve and victim of medicines.

We have witnessed in the foregoing chapters of this book that Hindu society stood on a firm footing in ancient times. The Brāhmanas were considered the superiors to other caste Hindus. The Kṣatriyas were on the other hand considered the ruling class. The archaic smritis framed the rules regarding the guidelines of social life and their injunctions were carried out in controv-
tibly by every Hindu. When Muslims became our supreme boss, they wanted to abolish the varṇāśrama dharma of the Hindus with a view to convert them into the faith of Islam. In fact from the 12th century and afterwards the essential rules of Hindu social system had been constantly dissolved by the rulers of India. Hindu Varṇāśrama dharma, as we have noticed above, had lost royal patronage from the close of the Epic age.

We all know the fact, that our Motherland has become independent in 1947 having been divided into two sovereign states, India and Pakistan. Pakistan has again been sub-divided into two dominions Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1971.

As a natural rule, the upper caste Hindu are not getting any special privilege in free India. Inter-dining, inter caste marriage is openly encouraged by our both political and social leaders. The lower caste Hindus are getting every facility to group their socio-economic status. The Sanātan Varṇāśrama dharma

along with other social essentials of the Hindu religion does not get any official support. Polygamy, child marriage etc. has been abolished through enactment of legislature law in free India. We have noticed above that self immolation of the caste Hindu widows was prohibited in 1829 by the Britishers. We have observed above too that men and women are and to be united in the marriage ~~the~~ at the ~~p~~ fragend of their yough. Many social evils as a matter of fact are originating for the above reasons Sastric rules regarding occupation of the Hindus are not at all followed up in the modern times.

Our humble opinion is that it is unwise to deny the equal rights and privileges to the so called upper class Hindus, many whom in fact are poorer even than the poorest of the so called depressed people. The fact that the Brāhmanas form the poorest class of the Indian people has been found out through the economic census conducted by the govts of Andhra and Tamilland a few years ago. We however should not look ~~down~~ upon the members of the so called depressed classes who have enjoyed special favour for last 35 years. But our contention is that they should no longer be treated as specially favoured classes, at the cost of the economically depressed upperclass Hindus, especially of the Brāhmanas. The so called Harijans in fact are not depressed economically, but they are depressed in culture, cleanliness, decency and highmidedness. If we desire their real uplift, attempts should be made for making they equiped with all sorts of decemcy cleandiness and other merits of civilization so that they may cope with very modern trend of social life. We have observed above however that progress in this respect is very poor. Any

decision in respect of any modification or change in social norms should be left for ~~xxx~~ consideration of the Hindus of different castes themselves and should not be made obligatory to them instead through enactment of civil laws. The causes for the late marriages should be wiped out from the hearts of the society and steps should also be taken simultaneously to that effect so that the desire to remain unmarried all the life (a trend which is noticed among a major section of youth of both the sexes). Should be discouraged forthwith.

Foot Notes.

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4. Ibid. Ch. XVII. pp. 574-75.
5. Ibid. Ch. XVII. pp. 578-79.
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27. Ibid, p.128.
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33. Ibid, Ch.XVII, p.601.

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