

CHAPTER : III

SMRTI

(A) SMRTI - GENERAL INFORMATION

(B) THE EXTINCTION OF SMRTIS - CAUSES THEREOF

A. SMRTI - GENERAL INFORMATION

INTERPRETATION, EXPLANATION & DENOTATION OF THE TERM SMRTI :

The word 'smṛti' is derived from the root 'smṛ' (1.P.) to remember or to recollect & hence grammatically, it means - "remembrance or recollection".

Annambhaṭṭa defines the term smṛti, in his Tarkasaṅgraha. The knowledge is said to be of two kinds - namely smṛti & anubhava. The knowledge, which is produced by mental impressions alone, is smṛti¹. The mental impressions, which are the cause of recollection, are produced by apprehension. The object, perceived by the eyes, is reported to the mind & through the mind, it is reported to the soul. A kind of impression is produced in the mind. It remains there in a latent form. But when another object, similar to it, is perceived at another time, the earlier latent impression is aroused. This is known as smṛti, which is different from pratyabhijñā, as in the latter, the same object is perceived & the earlier perception of it, is awakened, while in smṛti, the objects remembered & seen are not identical, but similar. The Vaiśeṣikasūtra² (9/22) also defines the term smṛti, in a similar manner.

The smṛti is also defined in the Yogasūtra of Patañjali³ (I.11). Smṛti or memory is said to be the retention of the experienced objects. It is a kind of mental modification by which the experienced objects are not lost, but are retained in the mind.

The word smṛti is used in this very primary sense of actual remembrance or recollection in the earlier smṛti literature. For example, Gautama (I/I/1-2)⁴ & Manu (II/10)⁵ mention the "Smṛti of those, who know Veda" & Āpastamba (I/I/2)⁶ refers to "the consensus of those, who know veda" as a source of Dharma. Here at these places, the smṛti literature, in the form of Dharmasūtras & Dharmasāstras, is not referred to. But they refer to the living mass of sacred literature, in the form of reflective & thoughtful recollections or memories of the wise & the knowers of Veda, regarding the rules & regulations of Dharma, to be followed by the masses.

It is only in the later period, that the term smṛti is mostly used for that literature on Dharma, known as Dharmasūtras & Dharmasāstras, in which those recollections of the various vedic sages, were collected & traditionally handed down as a Dharmasūtra or a Dharmasāstra of a particular sage.

The vedic sages are said to have actually perceived⁷ the Divine words, which are known as Śruti (revelation), while they are also said to remember or recollect the precepts & rules of different sciences (sāstras), which are known as 'smṛti' (recollection).

It may be noted here that the words - pratyakṣa & anumāna occurring in the Vedantasūtras⁸ (1/3/28 & 3/2/24) are interpreted by the commentators (like Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Vallabhācārya etc.), as standing for śruti & smṛti respectively, as the former contains the directly revealed words, while the latter is

based upon recollections of facts, observed, during the state of trance.

WIDER & NARROWER SENSE :

The term smṛti is used in both wider & narrower senses. In its wider sense, it stands for a wide range of inspired literature, in which the remembered or recollected rules or precepts of different sciences (sāstras), are found. The word smṛti is thus used in contradistinction from śruti i.e. generally all the literature other than śruti is designated as smṛti. Thus in its wider sense, the word smṛti includes the six vedāṅgas, the smṛtis the Mahābhārata, works on Tantra, systems of Indian philosophy Jyotiṣa & Āyurveda.

In the narrower sense, the term is primarily used in case of the two kinds of works on Dharma, namely - the Dharmasūtras & Dharmasāstras (the metrical smṛtis); According to Manusmṛti⁹, Smṛti means Dharmasāstra. Sometimes a Dharma-sūtra is also called as smṛti, as in case of Viṣṇu-Dharma-sūtra, which is also known as Viṣṇusmṛti. Sometimes, it is also understood in a very restricted sense, of only 'the metrical smṛtis'. But it is definitely understood to be standing for both these classes of works, namely, the Dharmasūtras & Dharmasāstras, by one & all the commentators, & digest-writers. For them, both these classes of works are of equal authority, as smṛti-works.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF SMRTIS :

The smrtis are classified in various ways, as mentioned below :

(1) VEDAMŪLA - VEDABĀHYA :

The smrtis can be either Vedamūla, i.e. based upon Veda or Vedabāhya i.e. those that are not based upon the Veda, but based upon logic. The latter are violently criticised by Manu¹⁰. This classification of Smrtis is suggested by a verse in the Manusmṛti¹⁰.

(2) DRSTĀRTHA, ADRSTĀRTHA ETC. :

The smrtis are also said to be of two kinds - (1) Drstārtha i.e. having drṣṭa - seen or tangible purpose (2) Adrstārtha - i.e. those having adrṣṭa -unseen or intangible purpose. This kind of twofold classification is implied in the following verse¹¹ from the Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari.

The Bhaviṣyapurāṇa¹², has three more divisions, over & above the two-fold division suggested by Bhartrhari. According to this classification, the smrtis are of five kinds (1) Drstārtha (2) Adrstārtha, (3) Drṣṭadrstārtha (4) Nyāyamūlā (5) Anuvādasṁṛti.

All these, except the Drstārthasṁṛti are based upon Veda i.e. they are Vedamūla. The Drstārtha sṁṛti is not based upon Veda & is said to have a 'Tangible purpose' (of wealth & pleasure). It deals with the topics, mentioned in the verses¹³, from the same Purāṇa. The Arthasāstra may be said to be a Drstārtha sṁṛti

(in its wider sense) from this point of view. The other smṛtis are said to be based upon Veda & have for their aim, some 'intangible' (adr̥ṣṭa) purpose (of dharma & mokṣa - duty & liberation). These other smṛtis are - (2) Adr̥ṣṭārthā (otherworldly), (3) Dr̥ṣṭādr̥ṣṭārthā (worldly as well as otherworldly), (4) Nyāyamūlā - (based upon maxims or universal rules), (5) Anuvādasṁṛti - seen by the sistas, the wise & the knowers of veda. These are also explained¹⁴ in the same purāṇa.

(3) SHRI GOVINDA DASA'S CLASSIFICATION :

Shri Govinda Dasa¹⁵ classifies the Smṛtis into seven groups, as mentioned below :

(1) Metrical redactions of Dharmasūtras, (2) Metrical redactions of Gr̥hyasūtras, (3) Composite metrical redactions of both, Dharma & Gr̥hyasūtras (4) Secondary redactions of the metrical Smṛtis (to this group belong Smṛtis, prefixed with Vṛddha, Br̥hat etc. & also the Smṛtis, those of Vyāsa, Dakṣa, Devala, Atri etc., which do not seem to have any connection with any vedic school (carana), (5) Later independent compilations - 'that is, works, not basing themselves on some particular Smṛti, for their inspiration, but ranging over a large field & making their own selections from them, like the Lohita-smṛti', (6) Sectarian forgeries, like the Br̥hat, Hārīta, Vasiṣṭha etc. (7) Supplimentary Smṛtis - like Br̥haspati-smṛti, which is a vārtika on Manu or Kātyāyana Smṛti, which may be a Vārtika, on Vājñavalkya.

(4) PROSE, VERSE & MIXED :

The stylistic feature of the Smṛti literature is that it has been handed down in prose, verse, & mixed prose & verse form. The Dharmasūtra of Gautama is completely in aphoristic prose style. While there are numerous metrical Smṛtis like those of Manu, Yājñavalkya etc. that are completely in verse form. But there are also some Dharmasūtras & Smṛtis, that contain both prose sūtras & verses also. Hence it is not quite unfair to believe that a mixed style was also current by the Smṛti literature, as the use of both - verses & prose-sūtras, are found.

Some scholars like Max Muller¹⁶ & others, believe that the works in continuous anustubh metre followed sūtra works. This view is not admitted by Mm.P.V.Kane; while Prof.K.V.Rangasvami Aiyangar¹⁷ propounds even a third intermediate stage of mixed form of Smṛti literature. He observes, "that this form, was an intermediate stage in the transition to Smṛtis, which used verse alone, is denoted by the increasing number of verses, as compared with prose in Viṣṇusmṛti, which has nearly 550 verses, as compared, for example, with Vasisthasmṛti, which though smaller has over 200 verses. In the old sūtra-works, like those of Āpastamba & Kautilya, there is a sensible verse content, but it is relatively small in comparison with the prose". He also maintains that a Smṛti, wholly in verse & in the developed sloka form suggests a later stage in evolution, than one which is in prose & verse, & uses other old metres, besides the anustubh.

It may be remarked here that a slight glance at the literary form of works, like the caraka, the susruta etc., would convince one of the fact that such a mixed style was prevalent in the early Sanskrit literature & was naturally present in the smṛti literature.

5) SMṚTIS & UPASMṚTIS :

The smṛtis are also classified like purāṇas into two heads, namely - smṛtis & upasmṛtis. The names of the upasmṛtikāras (compilers of upasmṛtis) are mentioned in the verses¹⁸ from the vīramitrodaya.

6) PRIMARY & SECONDARY :

Shri J.R.Gharpure¹⁹ & Shri R.K.Agarwal²⁰ classify the smṛtis into two broad divisions - namely the primary & secondary smṛtis. Shri J.R.Gharpure includes the kalpasūtras & smṛtis, among the primary smṛtis, while by 'secondary smṛtis' he understands the commentaries on the primary smṛtis & the digests, based upon them.

While Dr.Buhler²¹ enumerates smṛtis of Aṅgiras, Atri, Dakṣa, Devala, Prajāpati, Yama, Likhita, Vyāsa, Saṅkha, Saṅkha-likhita, Vṛddha śātātapa, under the head of 'secondary redactions of metrical Dharmaśāstras'.

7) SĀTVIKA, RĀJASA, TĀMASA :

Like Purāṇas, smṛtis are also said to be of three kinds - i.e. Sātvika, Rājasa & Tāmasa smṛtis, in the Padma purāṇa²² (Uttarakhaṇḍa - 263.86 to 90).

(1) The sātvika smrtis are those of Vasistha, Harita, Vyasa, Parāśara, Bharadvāja & Kaśyapa. They are said to be auspicious & leading to liberation.

(2) The Rājasa smrtis, leading to heaven, are declared to be those of Yājñavalkya, Atri, Tittiri, Dakṣa, Kātyāyana & Viṣṇu.

(3) While the Tāmasa smrtis, leading to hell, are those of Gautama, Brhaspati, Saṁvarta, Yama, Śaṅkha & Uśanas.

Many important smrtis (e.g. those of Manu, Nārada, Devala etc.) are not taken into consideration, in this classification. Moreover, no reason is mentioned for their inclusion in a particular group. But the classification, at least, points out that there was an attempt (though not exhaustive), to classify smrtis into the above three-fold division.

8) AVAILABLE & LOST :

Numerous smrtis, ascribed to different vedic sages, are still available. They have also been published in several smrti-collections.²³

But it is also a fact that several smrtis, have been completely or partially lost. The names of different smrtikāras are enumerated in various lists²⁴. The digest-writers & commentators have also added many other names to these lists, to make the enumerations of smrtikāras, more exhaustive²⁵. If names of all such smrtikāras are collected, they would be "about one hundred"²⁶. The original works of numerous smrtikāras are not available. Moreover, among smrtis, that have been published in the smrti-collections, number of smrtis, are fragmentary or incomplete in their nature. The

nature & extent of such smrtis can be understood from the profuse quotations from them in the digests & commentaries on Dharmaśāstra literature. Devalasmṛti is also one of such smrtis, that are not completely available in their original form.

REFERENCES

- 1) Sarvavyavahāraheturbuddhirjñānam/ sā dvividhā smṛti¹anubhava¹sca/
Samskāramātrajanyam jñānam smṛti¹h/
- Tarkasaṅgraha (ed. Athalye^{y.v.} & Bodas
M.R., BORI, Poona, 1963), Sect. 34,
p. 21/22
- 2) Ātmamanaso¹h saṁyogaviśeṣāt¹ saṁskārācca smṛti¹h -
- Vaiśeṣika sūtra 9/22
- 3) Anubhūta¹viśayaśaṁpramoṣa¹h smṛti¹h
- Y.S. I. 11
- 4) Vedo dharmamūlam/ Tadvidā¹m ca smṛti¹śīle/
- G.D.S., I. I. 1-2
- 5) Vedo¹'khilo dharmamūlam smṛti¹śīle ca tadvidā¹m/
ācāra¹scaiva sād¹hūnāmātmanastuṣṭireva ca//
- Manu S. II. 10
- 6) Dharma¹jñāsamaya¹h pramāṇam
- A.D.S., I. I. 2
- 7) Śrutim paśyanti¹ munaya¹h smaranti ca tathā smṛti¹m/
tasmāt pramāṇamubhaya¹m pramāṇai¹h prāpita¹m bhuvi//
- ascribed to Manu by S.M. (V.I), P. 2.

8) (A) Śabda iti cennātaḥ prabhavāt, pratyakṣānumānābhyām/
- Bh.S.1/3/28

(B) Api ca saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām/
- Bh.S.3/2/24

9) Śrīṣṭistu vedo vijñeyo dharmasāstram tu vai smṛtiḥ/
- Manu.S.II.10

Cf. Smṛtistu dharmasamhitā/
- Amarakosa-I.VI.6

10) Yā vedabāhyāḥ smṛtayo yāśca kāśca kuḍṛṣṭayāḥ/
Sarvāstā niṣphalā pretya tamoniṣṭhā hi tāḥ smṛtāḥ/
- Manu.S.12/95

11) Smṛtayo bahurūpāśca ḍṛṣṭāḍṛṣṭaprayojanāḥ/
tamevāśritya liṅgebhyo vedavidbhiḥ prakalpitāḥ//
- Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari-Kāṇḍa 1
sloka 7

12) Ḍṛṣṭārthā tu smṛtiḥ kācidadrṣṭārthā tathāparā/
ḍṛṣṭāḍṛṣṭārtharūpānyā nyāyamulā tathāparā//
Anuvādasṁṛtistvanyā śiṣṭair ḍṛṣṭā tu pañcamī/
sarvā etā vedamulā ḍṛṣṭārthāḥ parī-^ahṛtya tu//
- Bhv.P. quoted in V.M. (P) 19 &
Bhāvaprādīpa com. on Vākyapadīya, p.10

13) Śaḍguṇasya prayojyasya prayogaḥ kāryagauravāt/
sāmādināmupāyanām yogo vyasaḥ samāstāḥ//

Adhyakṣāṇām ca nikṣepaḥ kaṇṭakāṇām nirūpanam/
drṣṭārthe'yaṁ smṛtiḥ proktā ṛṣibhiḥ garuḍātmaja//

- Ibid.

- 14) Sandhyopāstih sadā kārya sunomāṁsam na bhakṣayet/
adrṣṭārthā smṛtiḥ proktā ṛṣibhirjñānakovidaiḥ//
pālāsam dhārayed dāṇḍamubhayārtham vidurbudhāḥ/
Virodhe tu vikalpaḥ syāt japahomaśrutau yathā//
śrutau drṣṭam yathā kāryaṁ smṛtau tattādrṣam yadi/
anuktavādinī sā tu pārivrajyaṁ yathā grhāt//

- Bhv.P. quoted in V.M.P., p.19, &
Bhāvapradīpa, com.on Vakyaapadīya
pp.10 & 11 (reads nyāyamūlā
for Virodhe tu)

- 15) B.B., ed.by J.R.Gharpure, Introduction by Govinda Dasa,
Intro., pp.16-17.
- 16) H.D.S., Vol.I, Pt.I, p.15.
- 17) Brhaspatismṛti (Reconstructed) by Prof.K.V.Rangaswami Aiyangar,
Intro., p.93.
- 18) Cf.V.M.(P), pp.15-18 for lists of smṛtikāras.
Jābālirṇāciketāśca skando laugākṣikāśyapau/
Vyāsaḥ sanatkumāraśca śantanurjanakastathā//
Vyāghraḥ kṛtyāyanaścaiva jātukarṇyāḥ kapiñjalāḥ/
baudhāyanaśca kṇādo viśvāmitrastathāiva ca//
pathīnasirgobhilaścetyupasmṛtividhāyakāḥ//

- V.M.(P).p.18

- 19) J.R.Gharpure, Hindu Law, p.18 & 22.
 20) R.K.Agarwala, Hindu Law, revised by U.P.D.Kesari, p.11.
 21) Jown D.Mayne, A Treatise of Hindu Law & Usage, p.20.

22) Vāsistham caiva hārītam vyāsam pārāsaram tathā/
 bhāradvājam kāsyaṇam ca sātṛikā muktidāḥ subhāḥ//
 Yājñavalkyaṇ tathā''treyaṇ taittiriaṇ dākṣameva ca/
 kātyaṇaṇ vaiaṇavaṇ ca rājaśāḥ svargadā subhāḥ//
 Gaṇtaṇ bārhaṇpatyaṇ ca sāṇhvartaṇ ca yaṇaṇ smṛtaṇ/
 sāṇkhyaṇ causaṇaṇsaṇ deva tāmāśā niraṇapraḍāḥ//
 Kimaṇtra baḥuṇokṇena purāṇeṇsu smṛtiṇsvapi/
 Tāmāśā niraṇayāiva varjaṇyettāṇ vicakṣaṇaḥ//

- P.P.Uttarakhaṇḍa, 263.86-90

(Āṇaṇdāśrama ed.);

P.P.Calcutta edition, Uttarakhaṇḍa

236/22-26 reaḍs māṇavaṇ yājñavaṇkyāṇ

Cāpyātreyaṇ dākṣameva ca for Yājñavaṇkyāṇ tathā etc.

- Sabdakalpadrūma, Vol.V, p.464, reaḍs

Cyāvaṇaṇ yājñavaṇkyāṇ ca ātreyaṇ dākṣameva ca/ for

Yājñavaṇkyāṇ tathā etc. & Sāṇkhyaṇ for Sāṇkhyaṇ.

- 23) Cf.Pt.I, Sect.I, Ch.I, n.3.
 24) Cf.Pt.I, Sect.I, Ch.II-C-n.5, 6, 7 & p.3 for details.
 25) Cf.Pt.I, Sect.I, Ch.II-C-n.8-11.
 26) H.D.S.-Vol.I, Pt.I, p.304.

B. THE EXINCTION OF SMRTIS : CAUSES THEREOF

The digests & commentaries on Dharmasāstra, contain plentiful quotations from numerous smrtis. It was previously mentioned that the original texts of many of them have been completely or partially lost. The original text of Devalasmṛti is also not at all available & has become extinct. Hence the reasons for the extinction of smrtis are considered here.

GENERAL REASONS :

(1) In ancient India, there was an oral method for the transmission of knowledge. But due to the gradual degradation in the merit & competency of the students¹, the original knowledge might have been gradually lost by being not transferred. The foreign invasions & war etc. also interrupted the oral transmission of knowledge.

(2) There was scarcity of all kinds of writing material. The emphasis was given upon memorizing a particular treatise & reading or copying a manuscript was not generally encouraged².

(3) During foreign invasions, numerous libraries & manuscript-collections were destroyed by the invaders. When there was foreign rule, the study & propagation of ancient texts was diminishing, due to the absence of royal patronage.

(4) The Mahābhārata & the Purāṇas, absorbed almost all material, relating to the smṛti-topics. Hence, there was reluctance &

negligence towards the study & preservation of smṛtis, as the purpose of the latter was served by the Mahābhārata & the Purāṇas, which had obtained tremendous popularity among the people at large.

REASONS IN PARTICULAR :

(1) These are the general reasons for the extinction of smṛtis, but in spite of them, the original texts of numerous smṛtis, were available, even upto the period of early digests & commentaries, which incorporated extensive material, in the form of sūtras & ślokas from them. The commentaries & digests like the Kṛtyakalpataru, Aparārka's commentary on Yājñavalkya, the Caturvargacintāmaṇi, the Smṛti-candrikā, Parāśaramādhaviya are very much comprehensive (& were later on known as ākaraṅgranthas). They dealt with almost all the aspects of dharma, treated in the smṛtis. They not only incorporated profuse quotations from various smṛtis, on all the varied topics of Dharmasāstra, but also tried to give their own decisions in case of conflicting statements & controversial points.

(2) These works on Dharmasāstra, became very much popular in the society & gained a place in the educational system. These were not only studied, but were preserved & handed down through proper manuscripts. Thus with the advent of these extensive works, the original texts of smṛtis, had lost their significance & the study & propagation of them came to be neglected, as the necessary quotations from them were available in the Nibandhas.

(3) Moreover, the subsequent writers, relied upon the comprehensive works of Hemādri, Madhava etc. & composed their works,

on the basis of the quotations, available in their works. They do not seem to have cared to consult the original texts of smṛtikāras, quoted by them. The result was that the original texts of numerous smṛtis were gradually lost, due to the negligence towards their study & preservation. This extinction of smṛtis must have occurred in the period earlier than 16th cent.A.D., because the writers like Raghunandana, Kamalākaraḥṭṭa, Mitramisra etc. did not have the original texts of numerous smṛtis before them & relied mostly upon Hemādri, Mādhava etc. for the quotations from some extinct smṛtis. This can be understood from the statements, they make, while quoting the verses from the extinct smṛtis from the works of earlier writers. For example, Raghunandana³ clearly shows his indebtedness to the Gr̥hastharatnākara for a quotation of Devala, with the phrase - 'Gr̥hastharatnākare Devalah'. Such statements⁴ of indebtedness are quite frequent in the Nirṇayasindhu of Kamalākaraḥṭṭa. The fact that they do not make such assertions, while quoting from the texts of the extant smṛtis like Manu, Yājñavalkya etc., reflects that the original texts of some smṛtis, were no more existing, during their period.

CONCLUSION :

The absorption of smṛti-material by the Nibandhas, the non-inclusion of most of the original smṛtis, in the educational system, consequent negligence towards the study, propagation & preservation of them, in the subsequent period, & the reliance of the later writers mainly upon the works of their predecessors - these are the reasons, that led towards the extinction of some smṛtis.

However, fortunately enough, profuse quotations from the extinct smrtis are available in the digests & commentaries on Dharmasāstra, on the basis of which scholars have tried to reconstruct the lost texts. Here is also such an attempt to reconstruct likewise the lost text of Devalasmṛti.

REFERENCES

- 1) Cf. Vidyayaiva samam kāmam martavyam brahmavādinā/
āpadyapi hi ghorāyām na tvenāmirine vapet//

- Manu.S.II.113

- 2) Pustakapratyayādhītam nādhītam gurusannidhau/
bhrājate na sabhāmadhye jāra garbha iva striyah//
Vedavikrayinaścaiva vedānānām caiva dūṣakāḥ/
vedānām lekhinaścaiva te vai nirayagāminah//
Dyūtam pustakasusrūṣā nāṭakāsaktireva ca/
striyastandrī ca nidrā ca vidyāvighnakarāṇi śat//

- Quoted by Mm.F.V.Kane in H.D.S.

Vol.II, Pt. I, pp.348-349, n.842-844.

Pustakasthā tu yā vidyā parahastagatam dhanam/
kāryakāle samutpanne na sā vidyā na taddhanam//

- Subhāṣitaratnabhaṇḍagāraṃ -Prakarana
3, Sloka 413, p.162.

- 3) P.T., p.509, Cf. also ^{8.505} - 'Ācāramādhaviyadhṛtadevalavacanam'
Cf. also S.T.II-Vya.T, p.214 - "Dānasāgare devalah" .

- 4) N.S., pp.20,20,82 - Aparārke devalah, pp.23,35 - Mādhaviye
devalah, pp.32,187 - Hemādrau devalah - pp.32,33,173 -
Madanaratne devalah, p.288 - Candrikāyām devalah.