

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL STRUCTUREIntroduction

In any cultural study, the socio-psychological life of people plays the most important part; therefore, a study of society includes the study of man, the mode of his behaviour, the beliefs and superstitions, the customs and ideals, the position of women, the moral aspects and the behaviour patterns.

The caste system of India constitutes the social structure of Hinduism and the whole social relationship can be studied by a study of the caste-system which forms the core of stability, which orders the society essentially according to the function of different groups and which order is traditional, sacred and therefore presumptively changeless.¹

1 Oliver Cromwell Cox, Caste, Class and Race.

Various attempts have been made to define the caste but the scholars have found it difficult to define it in its entirety.² Dr. Ghurye remarks that inspite of the efforts of all the students of caste system we do not possess a real general definition of caste and it appears that any attempt at definition is bound to fail because of the complexity of the phenomenon.³ He notes the outstanding features of Hindu society as follows: (i) Segmental division of society, (ii) hierarchy with Brahmins at the apex, (iii) Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse (iv) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, (v) lack of choice of occupation, (vi) restrictions on marriage.⁴

Varna, Jāti and Caste

Before discussing the theory, of the origin of the four varnas, it is necessary to deal with the concepts of varna and jāti. Varna originally meant colour but as social term it meant order or class. Its origin can be traced to the vedas. In the Puruṣasūkta hymn (Rv.10) a picture of creation is given in which the parts of the great god from

2 For various definitions of caste, vide Dutt N.K., Origin and growth of caste in India, Vol.1, Ch.1.

3 Ghurye G.S., Caste and Class in India, P.1.

4 Ibid, PP.2-19; also vide Kane, HDS, Vol.II, PP.23.

which the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra emanated are given. This vedic theory was taken as a sanction for the permanent classification of society on a fourfold basis of Manu and other lawgivers and was rigidly followed by society. The varṇas were really the classifications of worldly occupation of man which are necessary for the well-being of society. Teachers and priests were called Brahmins, rulers and administrators kṣatriyas; farmers, merchants and bankers, vaiśyas, and artisans and labourers śūdras. These vocations were followed by people according to their ability and status. But they according to varṇa theory were not confined to any group of persons. Merit or liking alone entitled a man to follow a particular profession. Bhagavadgītā emphasized this interpretation of the varṇa -theory. To each varṇa or principal occupation a number of groups of persons or jātis came later to attach themselves, considering the following of any other occupation as prohibited or degraded work. This led to the subsequent identification of varṇa with certain jātis and not with others, though originally it was not so. This disappearance of varṇa theory based on the colour or kind of work or its merging into the jāti theory based on birth and boycott created the foundation of the Hinduism which is rigid in its social institutions and customs.

Thus the varna theory of society is not to be confused with the jāti system forming to-day the bed-rock of Hindu society and which is generally described by the term caste system. The word caste was first used by the Portuguese to denote the various jātis existing in India.⁵ The word 'Jāti' originates from the samskrit word 'Jan' to take birth, while the word 'varna' means colour. Varna also originates from 'Vr̥ṣ' 'to choose' meaning 'choice of vocation' but either way, it has nothing to do with the purely hereditary principle involved in the word 'Jāti'.⁶ The view that 'varna' and 'Jāti' are distinct and 'essentially independent', though by the reaction of principles on fact the two institutions may have become fused together later on was put forward by E.Senart⁷ and this is now the generally accepted opinion.

MM. Dr. P.V.Kane points out that the word Jāti in the sense of caste can be traced back at least to the time of Nirukta and that it hardly occurs in the sense of caste in the vedic literature.⁸ The word jāti implies the 'heredity connotation' while the word 'varna' implies the 'colour connotation', which was so strong that "when the classes came to be regularly

5 Dutt N.K., Op.Cit., P.1; P.Masson -oursel & others; Ancient India and Indian Civilization, P.78; J.A.Hutton: Caste in India, 2nd ed., 1951, PP. 47 ff.

6 Prabhu P.N., Hindu Social Organization, P.304.

7 Senart: Caste in India (Tr.by Ross, 1930), P.153.

8 Kane P.V., HDS., Vol.II, 55, Nirukta 12.13.

described as varnas, four different colours were assigned to the four classes by which their members were supposed to be distinguished."⁹

The Br. P. uses the terms 'varna', 'Jāti' and 'Jñāti' to mean the 'social order'. There is a reference to the ascription of the four colours to the four varnas when the Br. P. states that in the Sālmāladvīpa, the Brahmins were Kapila, the ksatriyas Aruṇa, the Vaiśyas Pīta or Yellow and the Sūdras black.¹⁰ Again it is said that in the Ekāmra-ksetra people of the varnas having white, yellow, red and black colours lived.¹¹

Theory of the origin of the four social orders

Various theories have been propounded by the scholars regarding the origin of the caste-system.¹² According to the Indian tradition¹³ the oldest reference about the

⁹ Ghurye G.S., Op.Cit., P.47; for discussion on the concept of varna and jāti, vide Srinivas M.N., 'Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India', PP.24 ff; Srinivas M.N., A.R.Wadia Essays in Philosophy presented in his honour, PP. 357. ff.

¹⁰ 20.30; The Mbh.(Cr.ed. 12.181.5) states that the colour of the Brahmin is white, of the ksatriyas red, of the vaiśyas yellow and of the sūdras black.

¹¹ 41.17, missing in 'ga'.

¹² Nesfield's occupational theory - 'A brief review of the caste system of the north-west provinces and Oudh(1885), Risley's Racial theory 'Tribes and Castes of Bengal' 1891 and people of India, 2nd ed.1915;Hutton J.H., Caste in India, PP. 128 ff.

¹³ Colebrooke: Miscellaneous Essays, i, P.309 note, MaxMüller Ancient Sanskrit literature, P.570.

origin of the four varṇas is found in the Puruṣasūkta (Rv.10.90.12) which is regarded as one of the late hymns. It states 'The Brāhmaṇa was his mouth, his arms were made into the Rājanya, his thighs were the Vaiśya, from his feet the śūdra was born,'¹⁴ and the same account is repeated in later works with slight modifications.

The Br. P. also assigns the origin of the four varṇas to the different limbs of lord Nārāyaṇa and accepts the theory of the four varṇas as enunciated in the Puruṣasūkta with the difference that 'Puruṣa' of the 'Puruṣasūkta' is transformed into 'Nārāyaṇa' in the Brahma purāṇa and the term 'Rājanya' of the RV. is transformed into 'kṣatra' in the Br. P.¹⁵ Again it is actually stated that lord Brahmā recited the Puruṣasūkta and Brahmins were created from his mouth, kṣatriyas from his arms, the Vaiśyas from his thighs and the śūdras from his feet.¹⁶

This passage has been allegorically interpreted to

14 Brown Norman W, JAOS 51, 108-118.

15 Brahma Vaktram Bhujau Kṣatram Ūrū me Saṁsritā viśah /
Pādaśūdra Bhavanti Vikramena kramena ca " 56.22,23.

16 Brāhmaṇastu mukhātṭasayābhavambāhoś'ca Kṣatriyāh /
urubhyām viśa eva ca - Pṛadhyām śūdraśca samjātaḥ 1.
161. 42,45-48.

imply a scheme of social stratification based on the principle of division of work, thus the brahmins who emanated from the mouth were to play the role of the preservers and the propagators of learning and instructors to humanity at large. The ksatriyas who sprang from arms, the symbol of strength and valour were duty-bound to protect the people. The creation of the vaisyas from the thighs signifies that he was to provide all the means of sustenance to the society while the sūdra who originated from the foot symbolised the fact that he was to serve the other three varṇas.¹⁷ "The whole social organisation is here conceived symbolically as one human being - the Body social - we may say with the limbs representing the social classes based on the principle of division of labour."¹⁸

The system of the four varṇas had taken such deep roots in the period when the Brāhmaṇa works were composed, that there are many vedic passages saying that it extended even to the gods,¹⁹ Agni and Brhaspati being the Brāhmaṇas among gods, Indra, Varuna, Soma, Yama being the ksatriyas, Vasus, Rudras, the Visve Devas and Maruts being the Viś, and

17 Prabhu P.N., Op.Cit., P.292.

18 Prabhu P.N., Op.Cit., P.292 - The Comments of Dr.Prabhu pertain to the passage of RV. 10.90.

19 Kane P.V., HDS, Vol. II, P.42.

Pūṣan being the sūdra.²⁰ The Br. P. also states that there were four varṇas among the gods and the members of all the four varṇas used to dine together (34.36). This means that the restrictions regarding food were not observed among the gods. Elsewhere lord Mahādeva is described as the progenitor of the four varṇas (40.66) and the ascriber of the dharmas to different varṇas (40.34).

The Br.P. further describes the varṇa system in the various dvīpas. Thus it states that from Plakṣadvīpa to Śākadvīpa, the dharma is divided into four parts according to the arrangement of varṇa and Āsrama (20.16). The Br. P. delineates the different names given to the four classes of the social ladder in the various dvīpas. Thus the four classes of the Plakṣadvīpa are called Āryakas, Kuravas, Vivisvas and Bhāvinas (20.17). The classes of the Śālmadvīpa having different colours have already been noted. The four varṇas of the Kuśadvīpa are Damins, Śusmins, Śhehas and Māndahas (20.39). The four varṇas of the Krauñcadvīpa are Puṣkalas, Puṣkarās, Dhanyas and Khyātas (20.53), and those of the Śākadvīpa are Magas, Magadhas, Mānasas and Mandagas (20.71) and in the Puṣkaradvīpa, the system of varṇa does not prevail (20.85).

20 Maitrāyaṇī Saṃ 1.10.13, Satapatha 14.4.2. 23-25, Br. Up. I.4.11-13, Kausitakī Br.9.5 & Ait.Br.34.5, Śāntiparva 208.23-25.

Elsewhere Lord Brahmā is described as the progenitor of the four varnas (223.8).

The Br.P. at one place mentions the duties of that are common to all the four classes. Thus it states that to hoard money for the maintenance of the servants, to approach one's wife at the appropriate time, to show kindness to all, to bear the duals of Sita and Uṣṇa, to remain holy and unegoistic, not to inflict pain on others, to speak sweetly to keep friendly feeling towards all, not to wish for anything and not to find faults with others - these are the highest and common duties for all the castes.²¹

Various types of theories regarding the origin and development of the four social orders seem to be found in the Epics and the Dharmasāstra literature and the current of this theorising activity is noticed in the Br. P. also when it states that the children belonging to one person were divided into various classes. Thus the descendants of king Gṛtsamada (13.64), ~~King Kasyapa~~ King Kasyapa (11.61) and the sage Angirasa (13.79) belonged to the four different social orders.

21 222.12-17; vide also Mbh. Anu. 141.61-79.

VARNA SYSTEM

Brahmins

The most remarkable feature in the mechanism of the Hindu society is the high position occupied in it by the Brahmins. They not only claim the almost divine honours as their birthright, but generally speaking, the other three classes readily submit to authority as a matter of course.²² The superiority of one caste over the other does not necessarily mean domination of one caste by the other. Once established it becomes a situation of mutual expectation and willing, almost happy, yielding of definite privileges and deference. The relationship is spontaneous.²³ As Dubois observes, "The Brahmin's superiority is inherent in himself, and it remains intact, no matter what his condition in life may be. Rich or Poor, unfortunate or prosperous, he always goes on the principle engraved in him that he is the most noble, the most excellent, and the most perfect of all created beings, that all the rest of mankind is infinitely beneath him, and that there is nothing in the world so sublime or so admirable as his customs and practices."²⁴

22 Bhattacharya J.N., Hindu Castes and Sects, P.19.

23 Oliver Cromwell Cox - Caste, Class and Race, P.15.

24 Abbe J.A. Dubois, Hindu manners, Customs and ceremonies, 3rd ed., P.304, also vide C.Boagle, Essays Sur le regime des castes, 3rd ed. P.4, and Charlotte V. & William H. Wiser, Behind mud walls, P.20.

The early Hindu literature dwells much on the pre-eminence of the Brahmins.²⁵ The Br. P. also notes the same sentiments when it states that the value of brahmins was greater than acquisition of the merit through practice of penance (35.48). Again it states that among all the varṇas, the Brahmin should be considered as the highest.²⁶ His superiority over the other three varṇas is stated as under. If a ksatriya produces corn without hurting the wealth of the brahmins, his sins are destroyed. If a vaiśya gives the corn remaining after the 1/6th portion allotted to king to the brahmins, he becomes free from all the sins. If a sūdra gives pure anna produced by himself to brahmins, he gets freedom from ~~sam~~ sins (218.12-26). The Br.P. notes a liberal attitude in letting the sūdras, give the food to the brahmins. Again it is said that a man gets success in life by bowing down to brahmins (194.4).

The Brahmins were so highly respected that if their life was in danger they were to be saved at any cost (35.48).

The MS states that a king should never slay a Brahmin, though convicted of all the possible crimes and a

25 MS. I.93-95, 98-101; IV.169; vide also Amarakośa Khaṇḍa II, Brahṃavarga 4.

26 (69.16); also note the remarkable reference, viz. Gururag-nīrdvijaṭinām varṇānām Brāhmaṇo Guruh (80.47).

king should not even form in his mind the idea of killing a priest.²⁷ The Br. P. states that a king should protect all the four castes but special attention should be paid to the brahmins. They should be paid the highest respect as they are higher than the lord Viṣṇu. By ignoring the brahmins, the kings lost their kula or family. This passage again shows that the Brahmin was considered to be so high that his status was taken to be superior to that of lord Viṣṇu (104.63-65).

Elsewhere it is stated that a Brahmin is very sacred and he is protected on all the sides by various gods. Thus it is said that his body is made up of iron, his feet are protected by Viṣṇu, his head by Janārdana, his hands by Varāha, his back by Kūrmarāt, his heart by kṛṣṇa, his fingers by Mṛga, his mouth by Vāgīśa, the eyes by Pakṣīga, and the ears by Vittiśa (167.27-30). Manu also states that Brahmins are to be worshipped and they are a supreme divinity.²⁸ The Br.P. states that they are the gods on earth.²⁹ The Br. P. shows the connection of brahmins with gods by noting that Kaśyapa

27 MS viii. 379-381.

28 cf. also Padma Purāṇa, Kriyā Yajñasāra, XX; Sarvathā Brāhmaṇāḥ Pūjyāḥ Paramam Daivatam hi tat | Br.P.IX, 318.

29 35.14, vide also Devāḥ Parokṣadevāḥ, pratyaksadevā Brāhmaṇāḥ | VIDS 19.20 Ete vai Devāḥ pratyakṣam yad brāhmaṇāḥ | Ts 1.7.31; vide Hazra R.C., Purāṇic records on Hindu rites & customs, P.258.

was the father of the Sun, Atri that of the Moon, Visvakarman
pared the lustre of the Sun and the aforesaid Kasyapa was the
father of fowls, beasts of pray, cows, vultures and hawks,
serpents and other reptiles, gods and demons and other semi-
divine beings (Adh.3).

The duties and privileges of the varṇas are dealt
with at length in the works on Dharmasāstra. The study of the
vedas, offering sacrifices and bestowing gifts are the duties
enjoined on all the first three castes,³⁰ Whereas teaching
the vedas, officiating at sacrifices and receiving the gifts
were the special privileges of the brahmins.

From the very early times the Brahmins were always
connected with the vedic studies. The Br.P. also emphasises
the importance of the vedic studies for the Brahmins and has
numerous references of a like nature. The study of vedas was
considered to be so important that at the completion of one's
merits in heaven, it was considered to be most lucky if one
gets a birth in the family of a brahmin and becomes well-versed

30 Dvijātīnāmadhyayanamijyā dānam | Brāhmanasyādhikāḥ
Pravacaneyāmanapratigrahaḥ | Pūrveṣu niyamastu | Rājñodhi-
kam rakṣaṇam sarvabhūtānām | Vaiśyasyādhikam kṛsīvanik
paśupālyakusīdam | GDS 10.1-3, 7, 50. vide also ADS 2.5.10.
5.8, BDS 1-10.2-5, VDS 2.13-19, VIDS 2.10-15, YS 1.118-119,
MS 1.88-90; 10.75, 79; Mark. 28.3-8.

in the four vedas as it was a pre-requisite to the acquirement of mokṣa (58.76,77). Besides, the vedas, the Brahmins should know the Itihāsa, Purāṇas, other śāstras and should cultivate interest for other vidyās like the Jyōtiṣśāstra and the Vāstavidyā. Thus the Br.P. states that the Brahmins of Auṇḍradōśa are well-versed in the vedas, and are the knowers of Itihāsa and purāṇa and are experts in all the śāstras (23.1-8). Again it is stated that the Brahmins of Puruṣottama-kṣetra recite the vedas with their Aṅgas, Pāda and Krama and they are also experts in all the śāstras (46.8-10). Further it is stated that the king Indradyumna called the brahmins expert in the Jyōtiṣśāstra, well-versed in the vedas and śāstras to find out the land proper for the temple-building (47.3). En Passant this shows the relationship between the king and Brahmins. Next it is said that the Brahmins well-versed in vedas, vedāṅgas and śāstras had gathered together for the performance of the sacrifice (47.30-32). Again it is stated that the Brahmins and Snātakas worship lord kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with various stotras, Yajus, Rks and Sāmans (51.40-41). It is laid down that in a pilgrimage the Brahmins should take a bath and do the japa with the injunction of veda (67.19-20). It was very necessary for a Brahmin to study the vedas and to know the Gāyatrī mantra by heart (107.4-15). The Brahmins were addicted to Svādhyāya and Vasatkāra (209.11).

Another duty prescribed for the Brahmins is to impart the teaching of the vedic lores "Whatever may have been the case in very remote times; from the times of the Brāhmaṇa literature and in the times of the Dharmaśāstras, teaching vedic literature was almost universally in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas."³¹ The Br. P. also states that the Brahmins imparted the vedic teachings. It is said that the Brahmins of the Aundradesa are known for the teaching profession (28.1-8).

The third duty and privilege incumbent on the Brahmins is to officiate as priests in the performance of the sacrifice. Sometimes the sacrifices used to last for many years. The Br. P. states that the sages had held a sacrifice in the Naimiṣāranya lasting for twelve years (I.69). While describing India, the Br. P. states that the Brahmins live in the middle part of the Bhāratavarṣa and follow the occupation of sacrifice (27.17-18). The Brahmins of Aundradesa are considered to be good for the performance of sacrifice and in performing Agnihotra and they worship the smārta agni (28.1-8). The Brahmin's connection with the antique institution of Fire-worship is traceable to the Indo-European period.³² In the Rv. also Agni is celebrated in

³¹ Kane P.V., HDS, Vol.II, P.108.

³² Keith A.B., The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads, HOS, Vol.XXXII, P.625 ff.

200 hymns.³³ The Br. P. also refers to the worship of domestic sacrificial fires, as stated above. The Brahmins of the Ekāmṛakakṣetra were experts in performing the Agnihotra and upāsanakriyā (46.8-10). The Brahmins who were experts in performing the sacrifices and clever in all the rites had gathered together for the performance of sacrifice in the Puruṣottamakṣetra (47.30-32). A Brahmin should perform the Agnihotra (107.7-8). His span of life is increased by performing the Agnikārya (107.4-15). Bharadvāja, the son of Āngirānandana Brhaspati performed great sacrifices for king Bharata. Before that, inspite of all his efforts, Bharata had no son. As a result of these sacrifices, he got 100 sons (13.59-60). For the references of other sacrifices vide the sections on 'sages' and 'sacrifice' in the chapters VI & VII on 'Mythology and 'Religion' respectively.

As regards the participation of Brahmins in political affairs, the Br. P. mentions the famous example of the unrighteous Vena who was dethroned by the Brahmins on account of his misbehaviour (Adh.4). "The Purohita or the chief priest was an indispensable appendage to the royalty of the period."³⁴ For the details regarding the status of Purohita, vide the Chapter XI on 'Political Structure'.

³³ Macdonell A.A., Vedic Mythology, P.88.

³⁴ Vyas S.N., The Caste system in the Rāmāyana age, JOI, Vol. III, No.2, Dec. 1953, P.117.

Again it appears that the right of officiating at sacrifices belonged to the Brahmins and the Brahmins obtained land from the ksatriyas for the performance of the sacrifice (168.3-5).

The third means of livelihood permitted to the brahmanas¹ was receiving gifts from a worthy or unblemished persons. The Br.P. states that after worshipping lord Jagannātha, one should worship the brahmins and should give them in dāna twelve cows, clothes, gold, umbrellas, shoes, and vessels of copper. Then the Brahmins should be given a dinner consisting of milk, sweet dishes, jaggery and ghee. The Brahmins should then be given twelve pots full of water and then one should give dakṣiṇā to them according to one's capacity (67.40-43). The annadāna given to brahmins is highly eulogised. It is stated that one whose annadāna is accepted by ten brahmins never falls in the category of birds and animals. The brahmins were given the dāna of gold, jewels, elephants, horses, etc. (44.4). If a brahmin engrossed in the vedic studies gives the food brought by bhikṣā to a brahmin² engrossed in svādhyāya in dāna he gets the prosperity and happiness in the world. A man who gives food in dāna obtained through justice to the brahmins who are the knowers of veda gets freedom from sins (218.12-26). One who gives dāna to Brahmins and food to cultured brahmins and śrotriyas

goes to Yamaloka (216.8).

It seems that the condition of the brahmins was very poor and the Br. P. also evidences the fact when it states that at the time of famine, the family of the sage Viśvāmitra was in such distress, that his wife wanted to sell her son in order to maintain herself (7.106). But a Brahmin who sold his son for the sake of maintenance was much abused by the others, and was called Brāhmaṇādhama (150.2).

Again, the Brahmins were called for the performance of vratas and other religious observances. Thus the brahmins of Aundradesa were considered to be experts for the performance of the ceremonies like śrāddha, dāna, marriage, sacrifice and others (28.1-8). The brahmins were called to give saṃskāras to a boy (111.9). It was believed that a Brahmin should always remain engrossed in giving dāna, performing sacrifice, practising penance and offering Agnihotra and tarpaṇa. For his maintenance, he should perform sacrifices and teach others. He should accept whatever is obtained through the performance of the sacrifice. It is the duty of the Brahmins to benefit others and not to harm anyone. It is the highest wealth of Brahmins to have friendship of all. He should approach his wife in the R̥tukāla alone and should consider cows, k jewels and things belonging to others as equal. (222.3-6).

Various types of Brahmins were called for a śrāddha and they were called the Paṅktipāvanas. The śrāddha should be performed by those who are restrained, learned, and intent on performing the Agnihotra, those who are the Trinācīketas (i.e. who study the three Anuvāks, viz. ayam vāv, yah' of the Trinācīketa in the kathasamhitā), the trisuparnas (i.e. those who study the anuvāk 'Brahmametu man' and perform the rites related to it), the knowers of vedas and their angas, the Trimadhus (i.e. those who study the rk 'Madhuvatah' and perform the Madhuvrata), the ācāryas, upādhyāyas, the knowers of the mandala brāhmaṇa and the purāṇas (220.110-115). The Brahmins should perform a śrāddha with the mantras following their own varṇa and the injunction of their own kula (220.304).

The treatment with which the brahmins ^{were} received shows the high esteem in which they were held. It is stated that the Brahmins called for the śrāddha should be respectfully propitiated, first the ācamana - water for sipping - should be offered to them. They should be offered a seat. After performing the śrāddha according to the rites, dinner should be given to them. Then they should be given a farewell with sweet speech, and one should go with them upto the door (220.121-124) & (I-8,9). It is stated that one who

hears the story of Veṇa after bowing down to Brahmins daily does not despair about what he has done and what he has not (4.27). A Grhastha is enjoined to be the resort of all the brahmins who study veda, take a bath in a tīrtha, go round the world for the tīrthayātrā, who have no house, who have not taken their food, and who sleep at the place where they are at the time of sunset. Such Brahmins should be respectfully honoured by him (222.33-36). In the sacrifice of king Indradyumna many brahmins took their dinner (46.23). Before taking a bath in the river, one should give a dinner to the brahmins (76.19). Before the performance of a sacrifice, the brahmins should be satisfied with a dinner (187.5 .58).

As regards the qualifications of Brahmins, it was believed that ~~it~~ it was very essential for a brahmin to have the saṃskāras like cūḍākarma, upanayana, vedādhyaṇa and those who did not study the vedas were considered to be sūdras even though by birth they were brahmins (111.7-8).

The anger of a Brahmin was much feared. The sages were capable of effective ~~of~~ cursing. Once Agni asked bhiksā from the king Kārtavīrya Arjuna and he gave the whole kingdom to him. In devouring the whole kingdom, Agni burnt the hermitage of the sage Vasiṣṭha, the son of Varuṇa and Vasiṣṭha cursed Kārtavīrya as he was the cause of the whole trouble, he would be killed by a brahmin and ultimately

Kartavīrya met his death at the hands of Parasurāma (93.190-197). When the sage Gautama saw that Indra had approached his wife Ahalyā in his absence, he cursed him to be a Sahasrākṣa (87.59). For other instances regarding Brahmins and curse, vide the section 'sages' in the chapter VI on 'Mythology'.

- The Brahmins belonged to various religious creeds. Thus it is said that the Brahmins of the Sālmadvīpa worshipped lord Viṣṇu in the form of Vāyu (20.30). Dami, the Brahmin-class of Kuṣadvīpa worshipped lord Janārdana in the form of Brahmā (20.39). The Brahmin class of Śākadvīpa worshipped lord Viṣṇu in the form of Sun (20.71,72). It was believed that those brahmins who worship the Sun with pure faith and devotion get the desired things and the highest status (28.37). Some brahmins worshipped lord Mahādeva (40.46) (74.50). Some others worshipped lord ~~Mahadeva~~ Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (51.40-41). It was a belief that the brahmins who devoted themselves to lord Nārāyaṇa get the highest siddhi (178.185,186), (226.14,15). In the worship of lord Nārāyaṇa twelve brahmins were invited and they were required to be proficient in the vedas, Itihāsa and purāṇas (67.36-37).

Strict rules were observed regarding the purification. The Br. P. states that on the death of someone in the family, a brahmin gets purified in ten days, a kṣatriya in twelve days, a

vaiśya in fifteen days and a śūdra in a month (220.63,64). During this period, the Brahmin should not perform either the dāna or homa and all the other three varnas also should not perform their own work (221.47,48).

The right conduct, viz. Sadācāra was always the behaviour pattern expected from the Brahmins. A brahmin who wants the right knowledge should always get it through the highest means of jñāna and sadācāra (122.166). The Brahmins are praised for the akaitavīrtti (171.36).

Such were the normal duties of the Brahmins. The Br. P. furnishes an instance when a brahmin followed the occupation of agriculture (91.2). In the times of distress, a brahmin was allowed to do the work of a ksatriya and a vaiśya but in normal times the karmasamkara should not be done (222.20). The rigidity of occupation according to caste is remarkable.

The Br. P. also provides information regarding the various gotras of the Brahmins. Thus it states that the sons of the sage Visvāmitra were Devarāta, Kati, Hiranyākṣa, Renu, Renuka, Samkṛti, Gālava, Mudgala, Madhucchanda, Jaya, Devala, Aṣṭaka, Kacchapa and Hārīta and the famous gotras of the Kausikas were Paṇiniś, Babhrus, Dhyānājapyas, Pārthivas, Devarātas, Sālankayanas, Bāskalās, Kṛhitas, Yamadūtas (according

to 'ga' ms. Yamabhūtas), and Karuṣakas (according to the ms. 'ga' Kārikayas) (10.61,62). The ms. 'ga' adds the gotras as under.: Sausravas, Kausikas, Saindhavāyanas, Devalas, Renus, Yājñavalkyas, Audumbaras, Ambubhiṣṇas, Avastāras, Kāyanacuculas, Śalavatyas, Hiranyāksas, Sāṅkrtis, Gālavas.

The Brahma-hatyā was considered to be the greatest sin (123.54,74,157) and one who had killed a brahmin was considered to be unfit to be seen or touched by others (123.54). The sin of brahmin-murder can never be destroyed (123.74). As Indra had killed the brahmin Vṛtra, he had to conceal himself in a lotus-stalk for a thousand years (A.96). One could not rest in peace after committing the sin of Brahma-hatyā. He was ostracized. The expiation consisted in performing the asvamedha sacrifice whereupon he became a Lohagandhī (12.11-14). One who speaks sweetly on face but bites at the back, is inconsistent in thought and act, who is jealous, who abuses brahmins and shows false modesty is considered to be a Brahmaghātin. One who abuses the deities, the vedas, the adhyātmasāstras, and the brahmins is a Brahmaghātin (164.32-37). A kṣatriya who retreats from the battlefield and who abuses the brahmins incurs the sin of the murder of a brahmin (165.31-34). One who gets the vision of lord kṛṣṇa on facing the south becomes free from the sin of a brahmin-murder (65.83).

The status of a Brahmin was considered to be so high that his degradation from the status was a very serious affair. The Br. P. states that to attain Brahminhood is very difficult. A brahmin is a brahmin by his very nature. By committing sins, a brahmin slips from his path and even though born in the highest caste, degrades himself. One who maintains himself by adhering to the dharma proper for a brahmin gets the Brahmabhāva and one who giving up the brahminhood takes the dharma proper for kṣatriyas slips from the brahminhood and takes a birth among the kṣatriyas. A brahmin who through infatuation and greediness follows the dharma proper for a vaiśya gets the birth among the vaiśyas and thus degraded from his original position, he attains the sūdratva (223.12-19). The awareness of the higher value of character and learning to power and wealth is remarkable.

The Br. P. represents a drastic contrast between the conditions of a brahmin and that of a sūdra. Thus a brahmin who dies with the food of a sūdra in his belly, falls down from the Brahmāloka and becomes a sūdra. A brahmin gets the birth of him with whose food he maintains himself. One who gives up the brahminhood obtained by him naturally, who eats the uneatable, falls down from the brahminhood. A drunkard, a killer of the brahmins, a thief, a violator of vows, an unholy man, one not engrossed in svādhyāya, a sinner, a greedy person,

one not benefitting others, a kundasi, a seller of soma, one serving low people, one approaching the teacher's wife and abusing the teacher and one who discards and ignores a brahmin deteriorates from the position of a brahmin (223.24-32).

Again, a brahmin who acts badly and eats the food of mixed castes becomes a śūdra. The birth, the saṃskāra, the vedādhyaṇa and progeny - all these factors do not form the cause of the dvijatva but the main cause of the dvijatva is sadācāra. All people are considered to be brahmins by actions only. By the highest type of action, even a śūdra can attain brahminhood. The Brahmasvabhāva is common everywhere. Those who have a pure nature always give the satisfaction of a brahmin. Lord Brahmā himself has so ordained at the time of creation. A brahmin is a great moving kṣetra. A brahmin should always tread on the right path and should always remain satisfied. A brahmin who wants prosperity should go through Brahmamārga. Thus a brahmin who goes on the right path and performs Agnihotra gets the Brahmabhāva. A śūdra becomes a brahmin by the practice of dharma and a brahmin gets the śūdratva by following adharma (223.54-65). This shows the liberal attitude of the Brahma purāṇa towards the śūdras and the importance of the standards to be preserved by the brahmins. Further this also shows that according to the Brahma purāṇa

it is not the birth that distinguishes a brahmin from a
śūdra but it is the vṛtta that forms the marking line.³⁵

Kṣatriyas

The next class in the ladder of the social order consists of the kṣatṛīyas. The Br. P. provides the following information regarding the kṣatriyas. Just as it was the primary duty of the brahmins to perform sacrifice and study the vedas, similarly the kṣatriyas main duty consisted in fighting. They had to protect the subject by fighting against the evil factors. The Br. P. states that a kṣatriya should give dāna to brahmins and should worship gods with various sacrifices and should remain engrossed in the svādhyāya. He should maintain himself through the use of weapons and the protection of earth. But his main duty is the protection of earth, as his sacrifices are protected as a result of the fulfilment of his duty. A king is assigned ~~to~~ the duty of preserving the social order, punishing the wicked and maintaining the good, whereby he gets the desired results (222.6-10). The kṣatriyas who want kingship and want to have victory in the battlefield should bow down to king

35 Na yonirnāpi samskāro na śrutirnā ca saṃtatih |
Kāraṇāni dvijātvasya vṛttameva tu kāraṇam ||
Sarvo yam Brāhmaṇo loke vṛttena tu vidhiyate |
Vṛtte sthitasca sudro 'pe Brāhmaṇatvam ca gacchati ||
223.54-58.

Prthu (4.117-118). A ksatriya who retreats from the battlefield incurred the sin of brahmin-murder (165.31-34).

Among the various other duties mentioned for the ksatriyas, the Br. P. states that a king should protect the three varnas (104.63-65). A ksatriya should perform a śraddha following the rules of his own varna and injunctions of his own ~~varna~~ and kula accompanied by the recitation of the mantras (220.3,4). While describing India, the Br.P. states that the ksatriyas stay in the middle part of India and follow the occupation of fighting (27.17,18). In a pilgrimage, they should take a bath and do the japa with the recitation of the veda (67.19-20). This shows that the ksatriyas too like brahmins studied veda. Elsewhere they are mentioned along with the members of the other castes as witnessing the sacrifice conducted by the sages in the Naimiṣaranya (I.8-9). When a vaiśya gets a birth in the family of a ksatriya,³⁶ he gets good saṃskāras from his very birth. After the upanayana he should remain engrossed in the Brahmaçarya-vrata, give dāna occasionally, give dakṣiṇā and perform a sacrifice with great pomp, study vedas, worship the three fires viz. Āhavanīya and others with a desire to get heaven. If he is a king he should give dāna and protect the subjects. He

should speak truth, remain pure, practice righteousness, and ~~they~~ try for the trivarga, viz. Dharma, Artha and Kāma. He should restrain his mind and body and take the 1/6th part from the income of the subject. He should not enjoy the subjects of enjoyment according to his own desire but adhering to Dharma he should perform all his duties. He should approach his wife at the time of the Rtukāla, should observe a fast and should remain engrossed in the svādhyāya. He should always receive the three castes with a happy mind. He should always give food to sūdras and should not give vent to selfishness or desire. He should always keep the material ready for receiving the pitrs and guests. He should offer worship according to the proper rites and should give up his body in battle for the protection of brahmins. He should offer oblations with mantras. Thus following the Dharma proper for a kṣatriya, he becomes a brahmin in his next birth and studies the vedas. This passage throws good light over the duties and condition of kṣatriyas (223.37-53). As regards his duties in warfare, vide the Chapter XI on 'Political Structure'.

The Br. P. names various types of kṣatriyas. Thus it states that the class Kuru of Plakṣadvīpa is equivalent to the kṣatriya class (20.17). The kṣatriyas of the Sālmadvīpa possessed aruṇa colour (20.30), and those of the Kuśadvīpa were

called Suṣmī, those of the Krauñcadvīpa were called Puṣkara (20.53,54), and those of the Śākadvīpa were called Magadha (20.71,72).

The ksatriyas called Dhārṣṭakas and Kāruṣas were the sons of Dhṛṣṭa and Kāruṣa and they fought the battle vigorously (7.25,26,42). King Sagara got an āgneyāstra from the sage Aurva and defeated the ksatriyas called Tālajaṅghas, Kaikayas, Sakas, Pahnavaṣas, and Pāradaṣas (8.32). They lost their caste for rebelling against the descendants of king Hariscandra. The Br. P. gives the incident as follows. After having performed other Sagara's natal and rites and taught him all the vedas and provided him with a fiery missile, the sage Aurva enjoined king Sagara to slay the Haihayas. He then exterminated the Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojās, Pāradaṣas and Pahlavas. But when on the point of being slaughtered by Sagara, they took recourse to the sage Vasistha and fell down before him. Vasistha asked Sagara to restrain himself and Sagara released them after destroying their caste and making them change their customs. He released the Sakas after causing the half of their heads to be shaven and the Yavanas and Kambojas after having had their heads completely shaved. The Pāradaṣas were made to wear long hair, and the Pahlavas to wear beards. The Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Pāradaṣas, Pahlavas, Konisarpas, Mahīśakas, Darvas, Colas and Keralas had all been ksatriyas

but were deprived of their social and religious position by the great Sagara, according to the advice of Vasistha.³⁷ This leads to an inference that position in Āryan society was not originally wholly dependent on birth.

The five hundred sons of Rājī were called Rājeya ksatriyas (11.3). The descendants of the Ajamīdha dynasty were called the Ajamīdha and Somaka ksatriyas, those of Janamejaya were called the Janamejaya ksatriyas (13.101,125,203-204, 207) and those five sons of king Sibi, viz. Aṅga, Vaṅga, Suhma, Pundra and Kalinga were called the Bāleya ksatriyas (13.31).

The Br. P. states that normally a ksatriya should adhere to his own occupation but in abnormal times, a ksatriya may perform the work of a vaiśya or a śūdra but if he is not in distress, he should not perform a śūdra's work (222.18-20). It follows from this that in times of distress, a ksatriya might follow even a śūdra's avocation (220.18-20).

Further the Br. P. states that the ksatriyas of Kusadvīpa perform all the rites enjoined by the śāstras and worship lord Janārdana in the form of lord Brahmā to destroy their sins (20.39), those of the Śākadvīpa are devoted to Sun (20.71,72). In the ~~Uttarakalapradesa~~ Uttarakalapradesa, the ksatriyas

³⁷ Br. P., Adh. 8; Harivamśa XIV, 773-83.

are very peaceful, religious, addicted to their own karmans and have control over their senses (28,8,9). There are some kṣatriyas who lived in Ujjain and worship lord Mahādeva (43.30), (40.46). Some are the worshippers of lord kṛṣṇa and Balarama (66.10-12). This shows that they followed various religious creeds (66.10-12). It was believed that the kṣatriyas get the highest siddhi by devoting themselves to lord Nārāyaṇa (178.185-186).

As regards purification, the Br. P. states that on the death of someone in the family, a kṣatriya gets purified in twelve days and during that period, he should not perform his work (220.63,64), (221.147,158).

The value of right conduct was highly emphasized for a kṣatriya (220.63,64,147).

Vaiśyas

The terms used in the Br. P. to denote this order are vis' and vaiśya which are of vedic antiquity. The vaiśyas form the third order of the four classes. The Br. P. states that they reside in the middle part of India and follow the occupation of vāṇijya (27.17,18).

Various types of vaiśyas are mentioned. Thus those residing in Plakṣadvīpa were called the vivisvas (20.17),

those in the Śālmadvīpa possessed the yellow colour (20.30), those residing in Kusadvīpa were called Snehas (20.39), those of the Krauñcadvīpa were called Dhanyas (20.53,54) and those of Śakadvīpa were called Maṇasas (20.71,72).

Lord Brahmā has prescribed three means of maintenance for the vaiśyas, viz. cattle-breeding, mercantile and agriculture. The vaiśya should study the vedas, perform the sacrifices, give dāna, adhere to Dharma, and perform the Nitya and Naimittika Karmans (222.11-12). They were to give the 1/6th part of their income to the king (218.19-20). They are described as witnessing the sacrifice along with the members of other castes (I.8,9). They performed the śrāddhas with the recitation of mantras following the rules of their own varṇa and the injunctions of their own kula (220.3,4). They followed the king in the procession (44.27). In the place of a pilgrimage, the vaiśyas should take a bath and perform the rites according to the vedas (67.19-20). This shows that the vaiśyas possessed the knowledge of vedas.

The vaiśyas were allowed to perform the śrāddha with the accompaniment of vedic recital. They were to perform it following the rules of their own varṇa and the injunctions of their own family (220.3,4). This shows the participation of the vaiśyas in the religious activities.

On the death of someone in the family, a vaiśya remains unholy for 15 days and he is prohibited to perform his work during that period (220.63,64), (221.147,158).

The vaiśyas belonged to various religious creeds. Thus the vaiśyas of Sālmadvīpa worshipped lord Viṣṇu in the form of Vayu (20.30), those of the Kuśadvīpa perform all the rites enjoined by the sāstras and perform the sacrifices in honour of lord Brahmā to destroy their karmans (20.39); those of Śākadvīpa worship lord Viṣṇu in the form of Sun (20.71,72). Some other vaiśyas worship lord Mahādeva (40.46,136). Some others worship lord Nārāyaṇa, Nṛsiṃha and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (56.17-18), (65.9-10), (66.10-12). The vaiśyas get the highest siddhi by devoting themselves to lord Nārāyaṇa (178.185-186).

Stray references to the vaiśyas show that they were peaceful, religious, adhering to their own karmans and having control over their senses (28.8-9). In eschatological matters also, the vaiśyas do not seem to have suffered from any serious disabilities. The Br. P. states that they obtained the highest status if they worship Sun with pure faith and devotion (28.37) and Viṣṇu (226.14); and on hearing the Śiva-stuti composed by Dakṣa, they attained the Rudraloka (40.136).

The vaiśyas of the Ekāmrakakṣetra are said to follow their own Dharma (41.29), and some vaiśyas are described as living in Ujjain (43.30). They lived happily in the reign of king Daśaratha (123.6) and in the kingdom of Rāma, they respected the kṣatriyas (213.143). The vaiśyas who hoard wealth and adhere to Vaiśyavṛtti should bow down to king Pṛthu, the bestower of Vṛtti (4.120).

In ordinary circumstances, a vaiśya was enjoined to follow his own functions but in times of difficulty he was allowed to perform the functions of the śūdra (220.18-20).

Śūdras

The śūdras constitute the fourth step of the ladder forming the social structure. The Br. P. also like the famous Puruṣasūkta states that the śūdra was treated out of the feet of lord Nārāyaṇa (56.22,23) and it implied that he was lowest among the four classes and was bound to serve all the people.

The Br. P. states that there were different classes in different dvīpas corresponding to the śūdra class. Thus the śūdras were called Bhāvin, on Plakṣadvīpa (20.17), Māṇḍahas in the Kuśadvīpa (20.39), Khyātas in Krauñcadvīpa (20.53,54), Mandegas in the Sākadvīpa (20.71,72). The śūdras of the Sālmaladvīpa were black in colour (20.30).

The Br. P. provides reference to the 'sūdras which gives us an idea about their condition. They had gathered together with the members of other classes to witness the sacrifice conducted by the sages (I.8,9). This shows that their presence in the sacrifice was not considered to be unworthy, and that they were not banned from religious observance, though, of course, they are not mentioned here as performing the sacrifice. Again, it is said that the holy 'sūdras who desire the highest bliss in this world and who are engrossed in serving the three castes should worship king Prthu (4.121). This shows that their function was to serve the people of the other three castes and that they were considered fit to receive the highest bliss. The 'sūdras are also described as performing the sacrifice. Thus the 'sūdras of the Śālmadvīpa performed the sacrifices (20.30), those of the Kusadvīpa performed all the rites enjoined by the śāstras and also performed the sacrifices, those of Śākadvīpa also performed the śāstra-enjoined karmans (20.39,71,72). In the Utkalapradeśa, the 'sūdras were very religious, peaceful, adhered to their own karmans and restrained (28.8,9), (41.29). The Br. P. also states that they lived in Ujjain (43.30). The 'sūdras of the Puruṣottamakṣetra are said to adhere to their own Dharma (46.8). At one place, the Br. P. states that the snāna and

japa to be performed by the people of the first three varṇas should be accompanied by the vedic mantras whereas the snāna and japa to be performed by the women and sūdras should be done without the accompaniment of the vedic mantras (67.19). It is said that a brahmin who did not study the vedas was equal to a sūdra. This also shows that a sūdra was not allowed to study the vedas (110.7,8). This shows that they were banned from the vedic studies. In the region of king Daśaratha, they lived happily (123.6) and in the kingdom of Rāma, they served the first three varṇas (213.148).

As regards the performance of śrāddha, the Br.P. states that women and the sūdras should perform the śrāddha without kindling fire, performing sacrifice and reciting the mantras (220.4), (222.13,14). This is in consonance with the Dharmasāstras.³⁸

The longest period of impurification viz. of one month is attached to the sūdras; and they can resume their work after that period (220.63,64), (221.147,158).

As regards the duties of the sūdras, the Br.P. states that a sūdra should serve the twice-born and should maintain

³⁸ Kane P.V., MDS., Vol. II, PP.117 ff.

himself by buying and selling things or through architecture. He should give dana and perform the Pākayajñas without the mantras (222.13-14). This shows that besides serving the twice-born, a sūdra was allowed other means of maintenance.

The sūdras followed various religious creeds. Thus it is said that the sūdras of the Plakṣadvīpa worship lord Viṣṇu in the form of Vāyu, those of the Kuṣadvīpa worshipped lord Viṣṇu in the form of Brahmā, those of Sākadvīpa worshipped lord Viṣṇu in the form of Sun (20.30,39,71,72). The sūdras of the Utkalapradeśa also worshipped lord Sun and it is said that those who worship the Sun with pure faith and devotion got the desired things and the highest status (28.37). Again it is stated that the sūdras attain Rudraloka by hearing the stuti composed by Dakṣa in the honour of lord Śiva (40.46,136). The Br. P. again states that the sūdras who worship Nṛsiṃha get freedom from all the pains and obtain the status of gods, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Vidyādhara and other desired objects (58.61,62). Some other sūdras are said to have worshipped lord kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Subhadrā (66.10-12). The sūdras get the highest siddhi by devoting themselves to lord Nārāyaṇa (178.185-186), (226.14). Those pious sūdras who want prosperity should bow down to king Prthu (4.119).

The status of a sūdra is considered to be very low

and it is evidenced by the Br. P. when it states that one is sūdra by his very nature. If a brahmin follows the Karmans of a vaisya adhering to greediness and infatuation, he becomes a sūdra. If he is discarded by the caste, he falls down from the Brahmaloṅka and gets sūdratva. When a ksatriya or a vaisya performs an action proper for a sūdra, the condition of varṇa-saṃskāratva arises. Those who do not follow their own Karmans get sūdrahood (223.19-21).

Again, it is said that lord Brahmā himself has laid down that one should not take the food of a sūdra. A brahmin who dies with the food of sūdra in his belly obtains the condition of a sūdra even though he be an agnihotrin or a performer of sacrifices (223.22-25).

From the above account, it could be seen how base the sūdras were considered to be but at the same time the Br.P. shows a lenient attitude by providing for them the means to reach the elevated positions. Thus it states that a sūdra who purifying himself by knowledge, maintains himself by following his own Dharma gets the merit of that Dharma (223.20-22). Again, it states that a sūdra who performs all the actions according to the śāstric injunctions, who takes the food remaining after the reception of guests, who serves higher

people, never thinks ill of others, always treads on the right path, ~~never~~ receives gods and pitrs has a firm determination of receiving all the persons, has intercourse with the wife at the proper time and in the Ṛtukāla, dines punctually and takes the food remaining from that eaten by the learned men and the sages and never eats meat, gets the birth of a vaiśya (223.32-36). It is also said that a śūdra who passes the life according to the actions prescribed by the śāstras should be considered to be holier than the twice-born (223.54.58)

While describing India, the Br. P. states that the śūdras live in the middle of India and serve others (27.17,18).

Sub-castes and Occupations

Besides the four main varṇas, there were other professions and crafts even in the times of the Saṃhitās. MM. Dr. Kane observes that owing to the cultural development, division of labour arose and numerous arts and crafts came to be developed and they were in process of contributing to the complexity of the system by creating numerous sub-castes based upon such occupations and in the times of the saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas there were groups founded on occupations that had become castes or were in the process of developing into castes.³⁹

³⁹ Kane P.V., Vol.II, Part I, PP.44,48.

The Br. P. gives a long list of such groups based on the occupations. It does not throw light on the derivation of these groups but it seems that at the time of the Br.P. these groups had developed into fullfledged sub-castes. As numerous professions developed and as it became difficult to assign any particular derivation for groups of people, Manu (X.40), Vasistha (18.7) and the Anusāsana Parva (148.29) laid down that men's sub-caste was to be known from their actions and occupations. This shows that according to most writers castes in the times of the smrtis were predominantly occupational.⁴⁰ Besides, the castes having an occupational basis, the Br. P. enumerates many other sub-castes of mixed origin and other low castes. For the sake of convenience, the list in the Br. P. is arranged in an alphabetical order.:-

Ajapālah - A goat-herd. This suggests that people maintained themselves on cattle (44.32).

Antyaja - This word is applied to all low castes like the cāṇḍāla in Manu (IV.161), Atri (199) enumerates seven antyajās, viz. Rajaka (washerman), Carmakāra (worker in hides), Nata (dancer), Burudā (worker in bamboos), Kaivarta (fisherman), meda and bhilla.⁴¹

40 Ibid., P. 59.

41 For details, Ibid., PP.70-71.

The Br. P. states that lord Brahmā created the four principal castes, Antyajātas and Mlecchas. The word used here is Antyajāta and not Antyajā (45.35).

Antyāvasāyin or Antavasāyin - Manu separates 'Antyas' and 'Antyāvasāyins' and says that the Antyāvasāyin is the offspring of a caṇḍāla male from a Niṣāda female, that he is condemned even by the untouchables and stays in a cemetery (x.39). Vas.Dhṛ.S. 18.3 holds that the antyāvasāyin is the offspring of a sūdra from a vaiśya woman.⁴²

The Br. P. states that in Kaliyuga a brahmin would become an antyāvasāyin (230.12). Again it is said that on touching an antyāvasāyin, one should take a bath and purify himself by seeing the Sun (221.135,142).

Apāpakāraka - The reference here is to a cook who seems to be an expert in preparing apāpa, i.e. a kind of fine bread. This suggests that people used to serve as cooks even in those days.⁴³ (44.28 ff.).

Asikāra - Some followed the occupation of sword-making (44.37).

⁴² Ibid., P.71.

⁴³ This sub-caste is mentioned in an additional list provided by the ms. 'kha' mentioned in the Br.P. in the f.n. following the śl. 44.28....Now onwards all the sub-castes mentioned in this list will be indicated by ms. 'kha!.

Asmakuttaka - This occupation consists in breaking or bruising with a stone. It occurs in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.). It is mentioned in the yājñavalkyasmṛti also (III.49).

Astravikrayaka - Some followed the occupation of selling weapons (44.29).

Aurabhrika - One who maintains himself on the goats suffers in the Vahnijvāla hell (22.25). This was not considered to be a respectable occupation.

Bhisak - According to Usanas (26) he is the offspring of a clandestine union between a brahmin and a ksatriya girl and he maintains himself by studying the āyurveda in its eight parts, on astronomy, astrology and mathematics (verse 27). According to the Br. P. (quoted by Aparārka P.1171) he lives by surgery and by attending upon patients.⁴⁴ These words are not met with in the present edition, but the present Br. P. states that Dhanvantari, the Promulgator of the science of medicine, obtained the knowledge of Āyurveda from the sage Bharadvāja, divided it into eight parts and taught it to his pupils (11.38).

44 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P. 89-90.

Cāṇḍāla - According to Gautama (IV.15-16), Vās.Dh.S. (18.1), Baud.Dh.s.(I.9.7), Manu(X.12), Yājñavalkya (I.93) and Anuśāsana (48.11) he is a pratiloma caste sprung of a sūdra from a brāhmaṇa woman. He is the lowest among men (Manu X.12), beyond the pale of religious observances prescribed for the four varṇas and often spoken of in the same breadth with dogs and crows (e.g. Āp.Dh.s. 4.9.5, Gautama 15.25, Yaj.I.103).

The Br. P. devotes one whole adhyāya in describing a Cāṇḍāla who was a staunch devotee of Viṣṇu (A.227). There it is said that he maintained himself by 'Sadvṛtti' and was engrossed in serving others (227.2). Elsewhere it is stated that by practising righteousness, one gets birth as a cāṇḍāla (227.99). The meat brought by a cāṇḍāla is considered to be pure (221.127). One who offers a śrāddha by money obtained through injustice does not satisfy the ancestors suffering in the births of Cāṇḍāla, Pulkasa etc. (220.98).

Carmakāra - Atri enumerates Carmakāra as one of the seven antyajās.⁴⁵ According to Uśanas (4), he is the offspring of a sūdra from a ksatriya girl, whereas the verse 21 says that those sprung from a Vaidehaka and a brāhmaṇa girl subsist by working on hides. This name persists to this day as Cambhāra or Camāra.⁴⁶

45 Atri (199), Āṅgiras (Jivānanda ed.I; P.554), Yama (An.ed.) 33, Viṣṇu Dh.s. 51.8, Āpastamba 9.32, Parāśara (VI.44).

46 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.30.

The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Chāgaṇoṣaka - The Br. P. states that one who keeps goats suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.20).

Chedaka - The meaning seems to be a surgeon - one who cuts or operates (44.39).

Citrakāra - The painter is mentioned (44.36).

Dāhaka - The meaning seems to be one who cures the diseases by the application of a burning iron-rod etc. (44.39). Even at present this practice of curing the diseases is prevalent in the villages.

Dandakāra - One who prepares staffs or stōcks (44.37).

Devalaka - He is an attendant upon an idol and subsists on the offsprings made to it. The Br.P. mentions him among the Paṇḍitidūṣaka brahmins (220.134).

Dhanyavikrayin - Some people maintained themselves by selling corn (44.33).

Dūta - Some people worked as messengers, envoys or ambassadors (44.37).

Gajavaidya - There were the veterinary doctors specialised in curing the diseases of elephants (44.39).

Garuda - The dictionary meaning of 'Gārūḍika' is a charmer or a dealer in antidotes, either of which seems to have been meant here (44.35). The dictionary meaning of 'Garuḍa' is 'shaped like Garuḍa' or 'coming from or relating to Garuḍa'.⁴⁷ The Hindi translation of the Br. P. gives the meaning as 'an expert in Garuḍa lore'.⁴⁸

Gayaka - Some practised the art of singing as a livelihood (44.34).

Gopāla - The cowherds are mentioned along with others (44.32). They played an important part in the childhood of lord kṛṣṇa (A.180-212).

Govaidya - These veterinary doctors specialised in curing the diseases related to cows (44.39).

Grāmahantā - It is stated that one who kills the people of the whole village goes to Vaitaraṇī (22.23).

47 Monier Williams: A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, P.354.

48 Kalyana 'Saṅkṣipta Mārkaṇḍeya - Brahmapurāṇāṅka', Versa 21, January 1947, P.349.

Grāmavajaka - It is said that one who performs sacrifices for the whole village suffers in the Rudhirāṇḍha hell (22.22).

Gūḍavikrayika - Some people maintained themselves by selling gūḍa, i.e. the thick sugar formed into lumps by thickening of the juice of the sugarcane through boiling process (44.33).

Hamsaka - The meaning is not clear. As it is mentioned along with other occupations related to cattle-rearing, it may mean those who used to keep geese or swans (44.32).

Isukāra - Some people maintained themselves by preparing arrows. It is mentioned in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Javasahāra - The meaning is not clear. Either it is a complete word or it may be a combination of Javasa and Hāra or Jaya and Sahāra. According to Monier Williams 'Javasa' is a word though given in native lexicons, has not yet been met with in any published text.⁴⁹ The same is the case with the word 'Sahāra', though its meaning is given as a

49 Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.416.

species of mango-tree, it being probably a prākṛta form of Saha-kāra.⁵⁰ If the word 'Javasahāra' is an alternative for 'Yavasahāra', then an inference might be made that some people depended for their maintenance on good pasture (44.31).

Kaivarta - Manu (X.34) tells us that the inhabitants of Āryāvarta employ the name Kaivarta to denote the offspring of a nisāda from an ayogava woman, who is also called mārgava and dasa and who subsists by plying boats.⁵¹ The other view is that he is born of a prostitute by a kṣatrīya.⁵² The Br. P. states that a Kaivarta falls in the Rudhirāndha hell (22.21).

Kamsvakāra - Nārada (Rnadhāna 274) and Viṣṇu Dh.s. (X.4) mention him in connection with the balance ordeal. He is the modern 'Kamsārā' (in Gujarati) and 'Kamsāra' (in Marathi) dealing with vessels. The Br.P. mentions him along with others (44.36).

Karmakāra - Viṣṇu Dh.s.(51.14) mentions this caste. It is most probably the same as Karmāra. But Śaṅkha (Prose) /Karmakāra and Karmāra.⁵³ The Br.P. mentions quoted by Aparārka, P.115 mentions in the same passage / 'Karmakāra' in the regular list (44.37) but mentions 'Karmāra'

50 Ibid., P.1196.

51 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.79.

52 Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.311.

53 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.75.

in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.). It cannot be decided whether the Br.P. considers both of them to be identical or separate classes.

Karmāra - It is mentioned in vedic literature. Manu also mentions it (IV.215). In Bengal, the Lohar is a scheduled caste.⁵⁴ The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Karnin - The Br. P. states that one who prepares karni, a type of an arrow, suffers in Visasana hell (22.16).

Kāsthavikrayaka - Some people maintained themselves by selling wood (44.29).

Kathaka - A professional story-teller. He may belong to the category of bard or panegyrist (44.34).

Kausakāra - The meaning seems to be one who prepares silken garments from silk-worms (44.36).

Kavi - There were some who were experts in composing various types of poems (Kavayah Kāvyakartārah Nānakāvyavisāradāh) (44.35).

Kāvastha - The word Kāvastha does not occur in the ancient Dharmasūtras of Gautama, Āpastamba, Baudhāyana,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Vasiṣṭha, nor in the Manusmṛti. In the first centuries of the christian era the Kāyastha was merely an officer and the word was possibly derived from or is a Sanskrit approximation of some foreign word for an officer, though in some parts of the country the Kāyasthas also had come to form a caste in medieval times.⁵⁵ The Br. P. mentions them along with the Mallas, Dūtas and others (44.37).

Kesakāra - There were some people who followed the occupation of hair-dressing. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Kesaravikrayin - It means one who sells the mane of a lion or horse.⁵⁶ The Br.P. states that one who sells kesara suffers in the taptaloha hell (22.11).⁵⁷

Khadgakāra - Some people followed the occupation of preparing swords. It is mentioned in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.). Elsewhere it is said that a khadgakartā suffers in the Viśasana hell (22.16,17).

Kuhakājivin - One who maintains himself on wild cocks. The Br. P. states that a Kuhakājivin suffers in the

55 Kane P.V., Ibid., P.76.

56 Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.310.

57 The reading of the ms. 'ga', viz. 'Kesarivikrayī' seems to be better, which would mean 'one who sells lions'.

Asipatravana hell.⁵⁸ The Hindi translation takes the word to mean 'magician'.⁵⁹

Kukkutaposa - The Br. P. states that one who maintains the Kukkūtas or Cocks suffers in the Krmipūya hell (22.20).

Kumbhakāra - Pāṇini mentions it in the gana kulālādi (Pāṇ. IV.3.118). Uśanas (32-33) says that he is the offspring of a clandestine union of a brahmin with a vaiśya female. Devala quoted in Parāśara Mādhaviya (II.1.P.431) includes the potter among the sūdras.⁶⁰ He is called 'Kumbhāra' in Gujarati. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.)

Kundakāra - The meaning of the word Kunda is given as a 'turner's lathe' and that of 'Kundakāra' as a turner.⁶¹ Therefore, it seems that some people maintained themselves by turning lathes. Even at present the sharpening of iron razors and knives is done on the turner's lathe. The Br.P. mentions it along with others (44.36).

58 22.24, missing in the ms. 'kha'.

59 Kalyāṇa, Op.Cit., P.313.

60 Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.78.

61 Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.291.

Kundāśī - One who is supported by an adulterine.⁶²
 According to Manu (III.174) a Kunda is the offspring of a clandestine intercourse between a married brāhmaṇa woman whose husband is living and a brāhmaṇa male.⁶³ The Br. P. states that a Kundāśī brahmin falls down from his high status (223.30). Again it is stated that a 'Kundāśī' falls in the Rudhirāndha hell (22.21)⁶⁴

Lāksavikretā - The Br. P. states that one who sells Lākṣā, i.e. a kind of red dye or lac obtained from the conchine-al or a similar insect as well as from the resin of a particular tree⁶⁵ suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.19).

Lāvajīva - One who maintains himself in the bird called Lāva or quails is called a Lāvajīva (44.38).

Lavanajīvin - One who maintains himself by selling salt (44.33). The Br. P. also states that a Lavanavikretā, i.e. one who sells salt suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.19).

Lohakāra - Nārada recommends utilising the services of an ironsmith who is so by caste in the fire ordeal.⁶⁶ The

⁶² Monier Williams, Ibid., PP. 289-90.

⁶³ Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.98.

⁶⁴ The Hindi translation of the Br.P., Op.Cit., translates the word 'Kundāśī' as 'Dogalekā anna khānevalā'.

⁶⁵ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.899.

⁶⁶ Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.94.

Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Lubdhaka - The Lubdhaka is the same as Vyāḍha mentioned by Sumantu in Aparārka P. 1176. The Br. P. mentions the hunter jarā at whose hands lord kṛṣṇa met his death (211.5). The Br. P. also identifies the Vyāḍha and the Lubdhaka (80.6,27).

Madhuhā - A madhuhā or one who destroys the bee-hives suffers in the Vaitaraṇī (22.23).

Mādhvīvikrayaka - The Br. P. states that one who sell Mādhvī, i.e. a kind of intoxicating liquor suffers in the taptaloha hell (22.11).

Magadha - The opinion is divided among the scholars regarding his origin. Usanas (7-8) says that he becomes the bandin of brahmins and kṣatriyas, he maintains himself by lauding or as a messenger or servant of a vaiśya. Pāṇini (IV.1.70) derives the word Māgadha from the country Māgadha, but apparently not in the sense of a caste.⁶⁷ The Br. P. states that along with the Sūta, the Māgadha too was created from the sacrifice at the time of king Prthu's birth and they were requested to eulogise king Prthu but as they did not know about Prthu's greatness they were asked to eulogise king

⁶⁷ Ibid., PP. 90-91.

Prthu as he would be in the future and from that time onwards they were employed to bestow blessings. They are called 'Bandins' and the country Magadha was given to them (4.61-68).

Mahisika - The Br. P. states that one who maintains himself on buffaloes suffers in the Rudhirāndha hell (22.21).

Mālākāra - The Vedavyāsaśmṛti (I.10-11) includes the Mālākāra among the śūdras along with barbarians, potters and others.⁶⁸ The Br. P. mentions the maker of garlands in the list of the ms. 'kha' (14.28 ff.).

Malla - Manu (X.22) states that it is another name of Jhalla. He is a wrestler or boxer by profession and is the offspring of an outcaste ksatriya by a ksatriya female who was previously the wife of another sub-caste.⁶⁹ The Br. P. mentions him along with the Dūtas, Kāyasthas and others (44.37).

Māmsavikretā - The Br. P. states that one who sells flesh or meat suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.19). He is ~~again~~ again referred to (44.33).

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 76.

⁶⁹ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., p.793.

Maṅgalapāṭhaka - A blessing-reciter. There were some people who were professional well-wishers or panegyrists (44.34).

Manikāra - According to Uśanas (39.40) he is the offspring of a clandestine union between a kṣatriya male and a vaiśya female and he gains his livelihood by working on beads, by performing pearls and dealing in coral and conches. According to the sūtasamhitā he is the clandestine offspring of a vaiśya male from a vaiśya female. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Mārijāraṇaśaka - The Br. P. states that one who maintains cats goes to the Kṛmipūya hell (22.20).

Matsyavikrayin - Some people maintained themselves by selling fish. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.). According to Uśanas (44), a Matsya-bandhaka is an offspring of a takṣaka from a kṣatriya woman.

Meṣapāla - Some people were shepherds (44.32).

Mleccha - According to the sūtasamhitā he is the offspring of a clandestine union of a brahmin woman and a vaiśya male.⁷⁰ The Br. P. states that lord Brahmā created the Mlecchas along with the four castes and others (45.35).

⁷⁰ Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.92.

Mrgapāla - Some people maintained themselves by rearing animals or deer (44.32).

Mrgavyādha - It is stated that a hunter suffers in the Vahnijvāla hell (22.25).

Mrgayu - The Br. P. includes the hunter among the Paṅktidūśaka brahmins and prohibits him from being invited at a śraddha ceremony (220.135).

Mrgonajivin - There were some people who maintained themselves on animals (44.38).

Mudgākāra - The meaning of the word 'mudga' is 'Phaselous mungo', 'a cover' or a kind of sea-bird.⁷¹ The meaning of the word Mudgākāra seems to be one who makes covers or lids. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Nakṣatrasūcaka - The Br. P. states that a Nakṣatrasūcaka, i.e. a star-indicator or an astrologer suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.18). Elsewhere he is included among the paṅktidūśaka brahmins (220.134). Both these examples show that an astrologer was not considered to be a respectable man by profession.

⁷¹ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.822.

Nāpita - A barber. Usanas (32.34) and Vaikhānasa (X.12) say that he is the offspring of a clandestine affair between a brāhmaṇa male and a vaiśya female. Parāśara (XI.21) says that the offspring of a brahmin from a śūdra girl is called Dāsa if saṃskāras are performed on him, but if they are not performed he becomes a Nāpita. There is a difference of opinion among the śāstrakāras regarding the meaning of Nāpita to be either ūrdhvanāpita or the adhonāpita.⁷² The Br. P. mentions him along with others (44.32).

Naravaidya - A doctor (44.39).

Nartaka - According to Usanas he is the offspring of a rāñjaka from a vaiśya woman and his profession is that of a singer. Brhaspati quoted in Parāśara Mādhaviya (II. Part I, P.380) separately mentions in the same verse Nata and Nartaka.⁷³ The Br.P. mentions him along with singer, Maṅgalapāthaka, Sailāsa and others (44.34). At one place the Br. P. mentions Natas and Nartakas together (47.67).

Nata - He is one of the seven Antyajas. Hārita quoted by Aparārka (P.279) distinguishes between Nata and Sailāsa and Aparārka remarks that Nata is a specific caste while Sailāsa though not a nata by caste makes his living by

72 Kane P.V., Op. Cit., P. 85.

73 Ibid., P.85.

gōing on the stage.⁷⁴ The Br. P. states that the Natas, Nartakas and those expert in singing came to celebrate the sacrifice of king Indradyumna (47.67).

Nisāda - Opinion is divided as regards the origin of the varna Nisāda.⁷⁵ The Br. P. states that the Nisādas, dark and dwarfish, were produced from the left hand of king Vena and they dwelt on the Vindhya (4.43-47). The Vāyu Purāṇa (Vol.II, Ch.I, 120-121) and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (IV.14.42 ff.) tell the same story.

Pakṣyupajīvin - Some people maintained themselves on birds (44.38).

Parākāra - The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.). The meaning is not clear.

Parvakāra - The word 'Parvakāra' is taken to mean 'making arrows' or 'putting on a fine dress' whereas the word 'Parvakārin' is taken to mean one who for the sake of gain performs on common days such ceremonies as should be performed only on festivals.⁷⁶ The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.). Elsewhere he is included among the Paṅktidūśaka brahmins (220.134).

⁷⁵ Ibid., PP. 86-87.

⁷⁶ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.609.

Patravikrayin - Some people maintained themselves by selling leaves (44.31).

Pavaka - The meaning seems to be one whose occupation is to purify metals like gold, silver, etc. (44.36).

Phalavikrayin - Some people maintained themselves by selling fruit (44.31).

Pulkasa - According to the Baud.Dh.S. (I.9.14) and Manu (X.18) he is the offspring of a Nisāda male from a śūdra female. Opinion is divided among the śāstrakāras about his origin.⁷⁷ The Br. P. refers to Pulkasa along with cāṇḍāla (240.31). Elsewhere it is stated that one who offers śrāddha with the money obtained through injustice does not satisfy his ancestors suffering in the birth of a Pulkasa (220.98).

Puranarthavisārada - There were some people who were proficient in explaining the meaning of the purāṇas (44.34).

Rājabhata - The Br. P. states that one who kills a Rājabhata suffers in the Taptakumbha hell. The 'Rājabhata' here seems to mean 'the royal messenger'. (22.10).

⁷⁷ Ibid., PP. 88-89.

Rajaka - According to Vaikhānas (X.15) and the Sūtasamhitā he is the offspring of a Pulkasa or a Vaideha from a brāhmaṇa woman, while according to Usānas (18) he is the offspring of a Pulkasa male from a vaiśya girl. Dhobi is a scheduled caste in U.P., Bihar and C.P. in Bengal.⁷⁸ The Br. P. mentions it along with others (44.31).

Raṅgopajīvin - One who maintains himself on colour. Here it may mean either a dyer or a painter (44.30). According to Usānas (19) a Rañjaka or a dyer is an offspring of a clandestine union of a śūdra male and a kṣatriya female.⁷⁹ The Br. P. states that a Raṅgopajīvin suffers in the Rudhirāndha hell (22.21,22).

Rasavikretā - The Br. P. states that one who sells Rasa , i.e. syrup or liquor seller or a dealer in essence or spices suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.18,19).

Ratnadūṣavitā - One who spoils the jewels or scratches them suffers in the Kṛmibhaksya hell (22.19).

Ratnaparīksaka - There were some people who were experts in discriminating the various qualities and types of jewels (44.35).

⁷⁸ Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.93.

⁷⁹ Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.94.

Rupakāra - The meaning is 'dyer', one who gives form or colour to the cloth (44.38).

Ruthaka - The Br. P. mentions it along with others (44.36). The meaning is not clear.

Sailūṣa - Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra 51.13, Manu IV.214, Hārita quoted by Aparārka P.279, distinguish him from Raṅgāvatārī and the Br. P. (quoted by Aparārka P.1178) defines him as one who finds out employment for naṭas,⁸⁰ and also defines the Raṅgāvatārīn as a nāṭa who goes on the stage for livelihood and who introduces various changes in his appearance and dress.⁸¹ Both these definitions are not met with in the present Br. P. but it mentions Sailūṣa along with others (44.34).

Saktuvikrayin - Some people maintained themselves by selling barley-meal (44.33).

Sakunī - One who maintains himself by showing omens goes to the Rudhirāndha hell (22.22).

Sandha - The Br. P. states that one should purify himself after seeing a eunuch (221.142).

⁸⁰ Vṛttyānveṣī naṭānām tu sa tu sailūṣakah smṛtaḥ)
Brahma Purāṇa quoted by Aparārka, P.1178.

⁸¹ Br. P. quoted by Aparārka, P.1178, vide Kane, P.97.

Sarakartā - The Br. P. states that one who prepares arrows suffers in the Vedhaka hell (22.16).

Silpin - Some people were artisans and craftsmen. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Somavikrayin - The Br. P. states that one who sells Soma, i.e. Somarasa suffers in the Rudhirāṇḍha hell (22,22). Again it is stated that a Somavikrayī brahmin falls down from the status of his high birth (223.30). Elsewhere the Somavikrayin is included among the paṅktidūṣaka brahmins (220.132).

Sragvikrayin - Some people maintained themselves by selling garlands. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.30 ff.).

Surādhūtopajivin - Some people maintained themselves by distilling spirituous liquor or wine, i.e. by keeping taverns (44.37). Viṣṇu Dh.S. 51.15, Manu IV.216, Yāj. II.48 and the Brahma purāṇa (quoted by Aparārka P.1177) mention the Saundika or wine-seller⁸² but the word is not met within the present Br. P.

⁸² Kane P.V., Op.Cit., P.97.

Sūta - According to Gautama (IV.15), Baud.Dh.S. (I.9.9), Vas. (18.6), Kautilya (III.7), Manu (X.11), Nārada (Strīpumsa 110), Viṣṇu Dh.S. (16.6), Yāj. (I.93) and Sūta-saṁhitā, he is a pratiloma sprung from a kṣatriya male and a brāhmaṇa woman. Kautilya is careful to add that the sūta who figures in the purāṇas as the reciter is quite different from this.⁸³ The Br. P. states that the sūtas were created from sauti - the sacrificial altar - in order to praise the good deeds of king Prthu and they were given the region Anūpadesa (4.60-67).

Svadhākara - Some people followed the occupation of making axes or knives. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Svapāka - He is one of the Antyajās. According to the Baud. Dh. S. (I.9.12), Kautilya (III.7), he is the offspring of an ugra male from a female of the kṣatra sub-caste, while according to Manu (X.19) he is the offspring of a kṣatra male from an ugra female. Vaik. (X.15) and Sūtasamhitā say that he is the offspring of a cāṇḍāla male and a brāhmaṇa female while according to Uśanas (11) he is the offspring of a cāṇḍāla male from a vaiśya woman.⁸⁴ The

⁸³ Ibid., P.98.

⁸⁴ Ibid., P.97.

Br. P. states that as Satyavrata, king Trayyārūna's son, carried away a maiden from her wedding hall he was abandoned by his father and was asked to live with the svapakas (7.97-103). The Svapāka is again mentioned along with the cāṇḍāla and Pulkasa (240.31).

Svapoṣaka - It is stated that one who maintains dogs suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.20).

Svarṇakāra - According to Viṣṇu Dh.S. (X.4) and Nārada (Bṛhadāra 274) a goldsmith or a dealer in bronze or a bania who was to examine the balance in the balance ordeal. Manu (IX.292) condemns him as the worst of all rogues. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Tailapāṭhaka - The meaning is not clear. The Br. P. mentions it along with others (44.38).

Tailavikrayaka - Some maintained themselves by selling oil (44.30).

Taittirika - There were some people who maintained themselves by catching partridges (44.38).

Tāmbulipāṇmaiīvin - One who maintains himself by selling betels. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.30).

Tāmrakāra - According to Uśanas (14), a copper-smith is the offspring of an ayogava from a brāhmaṇa woman. The Br. P. mentions it along with others (44.36).

Tantuvāya - The weaver is mentioned in the Viṣṇu Dh. S. (51.13) and Saṅkha quoted by Aparārka P.1175. He is regarded as a sūdra by the Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini II.4.10 and as excluded from sacrificial rites. The Br. P. mentions him along with others (44.38).

Tilavikreta - It is stated that one who sells sesamum suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.19).

Toyavikrayaka - Some people maintained themselves by selling water. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Tṛṇavikrayaka - Some people maintained themselves by selling grass (44.29).

Tumbikāra - One who prepares gourds. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Ugra - According to Manu (X.9), Baudhāyana Dh.S. (I.9.5), Kauṭilya III.7, Yājñavalkya I.92, and Anusāsana 48.7 he is an anuloma offspring of a ksatriya male from a sūdra woman while according to Uśanas (verse 41) he is the

offspring of the union of a brahmin with a sūdra woman.⁸⁵
 The Ugra, according to Manu X.9 is of cruel or rude conduct and employment, as killing or catching snakes, etc., but according to the tantras he is an encomiast or bard.⁸⁶ The Br. P. states that one should not take food from an Ugra (223.223.23). (23).

Vadhyapāla - The Br. P. states that a Vadhyapāla, i.e. one who keeps watch over the animals and victims to be killed suffers in the Taptaloka hell (22.11). The Br. P. (quoted by Aparārka, P.1177) states that a śūnika or śaunika i.e. a butcher is a 'Puṣumāraka'. But it is not found in the present Br. P.

Vāhaka - One who does the business of a carrier or a porter. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Vaidya - The doctors were there (44.39).

Varāhaṇosaka - The Br. P. states that one who maintains boars suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.20).

Vārdhusi - The Br. P. includes a Vārdhusi or the usurer among the paṅktidūṣaka brahmins (220.132).

⁸⁵ For details vide Kane, Op.Cit., PP.73-74.

⁸⁶ Monier Williams, Op.Cit., P.172.

Vārtika - One who maintains himself on 'Vārtika' or 'quails' (44.38).

Vastrasūcaka - According to Uśanas (V.43) he is an anuloma born of the marriage of a vaiśya male from a sūdra female and 'Sūcika' according to Vaikhāṇasa (X.15) and Uśanas (V.22) is a pratiloma, offspring of a Vaidehaka from a kṣatriya woman and engages in the work of sewing with a needle. Saucika, according to the lexicon of Amara, is the same as Tunnavaṃśa and the Br. P. quoted by Aparārka (P.1178) also equates sūci with Tunnavaṃśa.⁸⁷ Though this reference is not found in the present Br. P., there is a reference to 'Vastrasūcaka' meaning a tailor (44.32). Elsewhere the Br. P. states that a sūci suffers in the Rudhirāṇḍha hell (22.21).

Vastravikrayaka - One who sells clothes (44.30).

Vedavikrayaka - One who sells vedas suffers in Sabala hell (22.13).

Vetrakāra - There were some people who made things from reed. The Br. P. mentions it in the list of the ms. 'kha' (44.28 ff.).

Vihāṅgaposaka - The Br. P. states that one who maintains the birds suffers in the Kṛmipūya hell (22.20).

⁸⁷ Kane P.V., O.Cit., P.98.

Viśaghna - Those who are skilled in destroying or counteracting the effects of poison (44.35).

Vrksavaiḍya - One who is an expert in the science related to trees (44.39).

Vyādha - The Br. P. describes a hunter who was a staunch devotee of lord Śiva (A.169). He is the same as Lubdhaka. See 'Lubdhaka'.

Vyokāra - There were some people who followed the occupation of blacksmiths (44.36).

Social Mobility

The phenomenon of the mixed caste is one of the important topics connected with the discussion of varṇa. The word varṇasamkara means mixture of castes by intermarriages.⁸⁸ The Br. P. does not throw much light on the varṇasamkara brought about by the inter-caste marriages but it deals at length with the Jātyukarṣa or Jātyupakarṣa based on the mode of behaviour that one follows in life.

The Br. P. starts the discussion by raising the questions as to by the performance of which type of actions

⁸⁸ Macdonell A.A., A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, P.271.

does a brahmin, or a kṣatriya, or a vaiśya or a śūdra can be changed to the three castes other than its own. How can Dharma be directed into the pratiloma direction? (223.3,7-11).

The answers given to the above doubts form the views of the Brahma purāṇa regarding the Jatyutkarsa and the Jayaparkarsa of the people. Thus it states that the Brahmins, the kṣatriyas, the vaiśyas and the śūdras get their respective status by their very nature. If a brahmin commits sins, he slips from his status and deteriorates. A brahmin who maintains himself by following his own duty gets the Brahmabhāva but one who abandoning the brahminhood follows the duties apropos to a kṣatriya gets birth among the kṣatriyas. If brahmin adhering to greediness and moha follows the duties of the vaiśya, he gets birth among the vaiśyas and if he performs actions proper to a śūdra he becomes a śūdra. After slipping off from his own caste, he falls down from the Brahmaloḥa too and after suffering in hell gets a birth among the śūdras. Similarly, if the kṣatriya and vaiśya also maintain themselves by following the duties proper to a śūdra, they too become śūdras (223.12-20).

A brahmin who dies with the food of a śūdra in his belly becomes a śūdra. A brahmin gets that birth by whose food he maintains himself. A brahmin who ignores the duties

proper to a brahmin and eats the uneatables falls from his high status (223.24-26).

A sūdra who performs all the actions according to the sāstric injunctions, who takes the food remaining after the réception of his guests, who serves the higher classes, never thinks evil of others, always treads the right path, worships the gods and brahmins, is always ready to give reception to all the people, has intercourse with his wife in the R̥tukāla, dines punctually and eats the food remaining after that eaten by the learned men and the sages, never eats meat, gets the birth of a vaiśya (223.32-36).

A vaiśya who being truthful, Nirdvandva, expert in Sāmaveda, being holy and addicted to svādhyāya performs sacrifices, does not see faults of others, eats twice a day, who controlling the diet has become desireless and void of Ahaṁkāra and who performing the Agnihotra, eats the remaining portion of the food after the performance of the sacrifice becomes a kṣatriya (223.37-41).

After getting the birth of a kṣatriya he gets good saṁskāras by his very birth. After upanayana he remains engrossed in the observance of the Brahmaçaryavrata, He gives dāna, performs sacrifices and studying the vedas, performs

the three rites of the three sacrificial fires, viz. Āhavanīya and others with a view to attain heaven. If he is a king he should give dāna, maintain the subject righteously, remain truthful, follow the Trivarga, viz. Dharma, Artha and Kāma, control the senses, take just the 1/6th portion of the income of the subject, approach his wife during the Rtukāla, observe fasts regularly, receive guests, should always be ready to feed the śūdras, worship gods, pitrs and guests, give bhikṣā to the Bhikṣus, should perform the Agnihotra twice a day and give up his life in battle for the protection of cows and brahmins. Thus by performing the three types of sacrificial fires and becomes in another birth a brahmin well-versed in the vedas. Thus by performing higher types of actions one gets a birth in the higher category. And even if a brahmin by birth eats the food of the mixed castes he becomes a śūdra (223.42-56).

Thus it is neither the birth, the saṃskāras, the study of vedas or the progeny that is the cause of the birth in the category of a brahmin but the main reason of brahminhood is sadācāra (223.56,57).

A brahmin who did not study the vedas was considered to be equal to a śūdra (111.7,8).

Thus the Br. P. represents a stage when efforts were

made to raise the status of the group on the social ladder by diverse means e.g. by what Dr. M.N.Srinivas calls the Sanskritizing of one's ritual process or by westernizing some modes of life.⁸⁹

Besides the above discussion, the Br.P. ~~xx~~ provides some instances of social mobility which are of absorbing interest as they are reminiscent of a stage when the rules of caste movement were lax and naturally these instances date back to an early period.⁹⁰

Prṣadhra, a kṣatriya, was cursed to be a sūdra by his preceptor as a punishment for his sinful act of killing the cow (7.43). The kṣatriya, brahmins also present a notable instance of social mobility for they were real brahmins with the kṣatriya status superadded. There is no suggestion that there was any difficulty in the assumption of brahminhood in such cases.⁹¹ The Br. P. states that two sons of Nābhāga and Ariṣṭa though vaiśyas became brahmins (7.42). There are abundant instances of kings becoming Ṛsis without any difficulty and that was tantamount to becoming brahmins.⁹² The

89 Srinivas M.N.: Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, PP.30-31; vide also 'A note on Sanskritization and westernization'. The Far Eastern Quarterly, Vol.XV, No.4, August 1956, PP. 481-496; Ghurye G.S., Caste and Class in India, Ch.VII.

90 Kantawala S.G., Op.Cit., P.156.

91 AIHT, PP.244-245.

92 Ibid., P.244.

Br. P. states that Viśvāmitra attained the covetable status of a Brahmarṣi by the power of his severe penance (10.54-56). Elsewhere it is stated that two sons of Nābhāga and Ariṣṭa though vaiśyas became brahmins (7.42).

These instances suggests that various processes such as penance, curse adoption, etc. brought about this phenomenon. The process of penance sometimes brought about an upward movement, the target in this case was the attainment of the much coveted status of a brahmin, while the process of curse led to the degradation of a person concerned to an abominable status of a sūdra as a result of his censurable and diabolical deeds.⁹³

The system of the Āśramas

The word Āśrama is originally derived from the root 'śram' to exert oneself and therefore it may mean (i) a place where exertions are performed and (ii) the action of performing such exertions.⁹⁴ The Āśramas then are to be regarded as resting places during one's journey on the way to final liberation which is the final aim of life, each of the Āśramas constituting a stage of life in which the individual

93/ Kantawala S.G., Op.Cit., PP. 157-58.

94 ERE, Vol.II, P.128 - Article of Deussen on the Āśramas.

has to train himself for a certain period, and exert himself within the circuit of the same in order to qualify himself for the next.⁹⁵

Different views have been held regarding the number of Āśramas in initial stages of its development. Dr.P.M.Modi bases his arguments on CHU (2.23.1) and Manu smṛti (2.230; 7.78) and comes to the conclusion that in the beginning there were three Āśramas,⁹⁶ and from the same passage Prof.R.D. Ranade infers the firmly-laid-out foundations of the future Āśrama system.⁹⁷ Dr.Kene finds a somewhat obscure reference to the four Āśramas in the AB 33.11⁹⁸ and Prof.Dēussen states that the oldest passage which names all the four Āśramas in their correct order is Jābāla up. 4.⁹⁹ Prof. Altekar concludes that "the system of the four Āśramas, Brahmacharya, Gr̥hastha, Vānaprastha and Samnyāsa, is no doubt now regarded as a very early and ancient feature of Hinduism, but its early history is shrouded in mystery. It is extremely doubtful

95 Prabhu P.W., Hindu Social Organization, P.83.

96 Modi P.M., Development of the system of Āśramas; Proc. and Trans. of the Seventh All India Oriental Conference, Baroda, December, 1933 (1935), PP. 315-316.

97 Ranade R.D., A Constructive survey of Upaniṣadic philosophy, PP.60-61.

98 HDS., Vol.II, PP. 420-421.

99 ERE, Op.Cit., P.129.

whether the system was developed in the vedic age."¹⁰⁰

According to Hindu view of life, the highest aim of mankind is not to be found in this worldly existence but in the world beyond and the whole of life of an individual is a kind of schooling and self-discipline; and during the course of this schooling he has to pass through four stages called the Āśramas; and the Hindu theory of the four puruṣārthas is given concrete expression in the Hindu scheme of āśramas. Thus in the Brahmācaryāśrama it provides healthy restraint on the instinctive and impulsive life of man, and as Deussen says "it offers the opportunity in the stage of Grhastha to enjoy life, and by enjoying it to convince oneself of its futility. It then, in an advanced stage, in the stage of Vanaprastha, tends to a systematic morification of sensuality and it describes the Sanyāsin a man who, approaching the end of his days, has become free from all worldly fetters and is best prepared for departure."¹⁰¹

In consonance with the Dharmaśāstra writers, the

¹⁰⁰ Altekar A.S., The Āśrama system; Ghurye Felicitation Volume, P.183, According to Dr.N.W.Law who substantiated Dr.Jacobi's view, 'the four stages of life were well developed at the time of the older upaniṣads and the mutual relations between them had been fixed before that period' . The Antiquity of the four stages of life (Āśramas) IA, Vol.52 (1923), P.272; vide also Kantawala S.G., Op.Cit., Ch.II.

¹⁰¹ ERE, Op.Cit., P.131.

Br. P. also expounds the four-fold system of the Āśramas.

It states that in the Sākadvīpa, the varṇāśrama system is followed (20.16) and in the Puṣkaradvīpa it is not followed (20.85). It also states that in the Kaliyuga,

people would be degraded from varṇa and āśrama.¹⁰² The nomenclature as employed in the Br. P. to denote the persons in the different stages of life is as follows.:-

(i) Brahmācārī	-	A student
(ii) Grhastha	-	A house-holder.
(iii) Vānaprastha	-	A forest-hermit.
(iv) Bhikṣu or Yati	-	An ascetic.

(i) The Stage of a Brahmācārī

An individual enters upon the first stage of life on the performance of initiation rites called upanayana (22.22). Upanayana initiates man into the disciplined life and that is why it is an important ceremony in the life of a twice-born.¹⁰³ Then he has to reside at the teacher's house to study the vedas where he has to lead a disciplined life with good behaviour. He should bow down to the teacher and to his daily round of duties. He should perform the Sūrya-worship and the Agnihotra on both the Sandhyās. If

¹⁰² 229.10; cf. also Mat. 144.73.

¹⁰³ Kapadia K.M., Marriage and Family in India, P. 27.

the teacher remains standing, he should also stand and if the teacher goes somewhere, he should follow him, if the teacher sits, he should occupy a lower position. He should never act contrary to the wishes of the teacher and with his permission, he should study the vedas. He should take a bath before the teacher takes it and should bring samidh and water for him and after completing the studies should give the Gurudakṣiṇā and with the permission of the teacher he should enter the Grhasthāśrama (222.22-25). The stage of studentship is marked by the rapid growth of the body, emotional instability, the development of sexual functions and the stimulation of sexual activities, It is a period of storm and stress of impulsiveness of strong self-expression.¹⁰⁴ Thus this brilliant scheme of Āśramas provided a healthy check towards a balanced development of an adolescent.

The Stage of a Grhastha

After gaining the rich equipment of the stage of the Brahmachārin, one should enter the stage of a Grhastha. The Br. P. emphatically states that though all the four āśramas are the doors of karman, still the Grhasthāśrama is the best one among the four and by following its duties, one

104 Kapadia K.M., Op.Cit., P.31.

gains enjoyment as well as liberation (88.15). The Mbh. also states that asceticism is attainable by leading the life of a householder upon which the proper order of everything depends and that the life of a householder is very superior and sacred and gives due scope for success (Mbh. Śāntiparva 11,2 & 21). The smṛtis also bestow the highest praise upon this āśrama, and states that all the āśramas subsist by receiving support from the Grhastha and since men in the three other āśramas are daily supported by the householder with sacred knowledge and food, his is the leading āśrama.¹⁰⁵

After completing the stage of a Brahmachārin, one should marry according to the proper rites and should earn money in accordance with one's karmans. He should then *offer* after worship^{to} the pitṛs by performing śrāddha, to gods by the performance of sacrifice, to guests by food, to munis by svādhyāya and to Prajāpati by the progeny (220.29,30). This in main corresponds to the concept of the Pañcamahāyajñas which is referred to as early as the ŚB (11.5.6.1) and the Tai A. (2.10). According to Manu these five Mahāyajñas were offered to Brahman, ~~was~~ pitṛs, gods, bhūtas and men and Brahman was satisfied by the recitation of the vedas, pitṛs by tarpana or śrāddha, gods by the burnt oblation, bhūtas by

¹⁰⁵ Manu iii. 78,79; vi. 89, 90.

bali offerings and men by reception of guests. This concept of the Pañcamahāyajña widened the field of social duties by reorienting the purpose of Yajña and incorporating new Yajñas to men and to the bhūtas in the older concept of three debts, viz. that to sages, gods and manes.¹⁰⁶

He should offer an oblation to Viśvedevas in the honour of all the beings and should always speak truth. A Grhastha is the support of parivrāds and Brahmacārins who maintain themselves on bhikṣā and therefore too the Grhasthāśrama is considered to be the best stage.¹⁰⁷ A Grhastha is the resort of all such Brāhmins who study veda, take a bath at a holy place, go round the world for tīrthayātrā, who have no house, who have not taken food, and who reside at the place where they are at the time of sunset. He should always welcome such brahmins with sweet speech. They should be given a seat and a bed and should be provided with food. A guest who returns from the house of a Grhastha disappointed takes away with him the merit of the Grhastha. A Grhastha should not ignore others, should not be egoistic, should not gossip about others, should not inflict pain on others, and should not speak harsh words. One who observes all these rules

¹⁰⁶ Kapadia K.M., Op.Cit., P.32; cf. Mbh. Śānti 12.184.13 (Cr.ed.).

¹⁰⁷ 222.32; cf. Mbh. Śānti 12.184.10-12 (Cr.ed.); for other references vide Bühler, SBE, Vol.XXV, P.87.

strictly, becomes free from all the bondages and goes to the highest world (220.30-38).

A Grhastha should perform the worship of gods, manes and guests with ~~xxx kma~~ havya, kavya and food. He should satisfy all the beings, family, animals, birds, ants, bhiksus, travellers, and good brahmins. He should always act with righteousness and should try to attain liberation, the final puruṣārtha by following the paths of Dharma, Artha and Kāma. He should keep one-fourth of his income for spending over the other-worldly affairs, half of the income should be spent in the maintenance of one's own self and in the performance of the nitya and naimittika karmans and the fourth part should be kept aside as stable income. This shows how economy was valued even in those days and money was spent according to the purpose it served (221.1-11). The Br.P. provides a list of commands to be observed by a Grhastha as he has to behave righteously, according to sadācāra (A.221). See section 'Popular Superstitions' of the chapter V on 'Social and Economic Life'. The Grhastha's life thus is a life of selfless service and dedication of his best and utmost for his elders, children, wife and other members of his family, his dependants and strangers through his acts of fulfilling his social obligation.¹⁰⁸

108 Prabhu, Op.Cit., P.98.

The Stage of a Vānaprastha

An individual in this third stage gives up his fields of Artha and Kama by leaving his near and dear ones, his family, his village and by abandoning his belongings and possessions, he now goes out in the forest, where by meditation and service of others, he trains himself up for the execution of the final yajña that awaits his soul ^{passing} in the last āśrama.

The Br. P. states that when a Grhastha reaches old age, he should ask his sons to protect his wife or he should take his wife with him to the forest. There he should eat leaves, roots and fruits and should lie on the ground (222.39,40). As this stage was a preparation of final renunciation of family ties and social relations, he was asked to satisfy his hunger by the roots and fruits available in the forest and in course of time by whatever accidentally fell within his reach and still later by water or air.¹⁰⁹ He had to minimise his physical needs and thus he was asked to wear a cloth made up of leather or grass and he was neither to cut his hair ~~and~~ nor shave. He should consider all the beings as guests. He should take a bath thrice a day. He should worship the deities, perform the sacrifices, honour the

109 Kapadia K.M., Op.Cit., P.34.

guests, offer the oblations and maintain himself on begging the alms. He may apply the oil of wild vegetables to his body. His main function consists in practising penance and the suffering of duels like Sita and uṣṇa. A Vānaprastha who thus acts according to the proper rules extinguishes all his sins and gets the external worlds (220.39-45). Thus the life of a hermit is a life dedicated to the pursuit of the welfare of the community as a disinterested and detached individual and at the same time it was a life of inquiry and searchings, a life devoted to meditation and contemplation, to realize the true being of oneself.¹¹⁰

The Stage of a Bhikṣu or a Yati

With the equipment of the above three stages, one has to enter on the last stage, the life of an ascetic. This last āśrama provides the fullest opportunities for the self-expression and self-expansion consisting of a complete offering of the self wherein the self, out of a will and purpose to be perfect, surrenders all that was nearest and dearest to his lower ego, in order that thereby and thereafter he may be enabled to be one with the real self, the Ātman.¹¹¹

110 Kapadia K.M., Op.Cit., P.35.

111 Prabhu P.N., Op.Cit., P.99.

The Br. P. states that a Bhikṣu should give up attachment for sons, wealth and affection. Being free from envy, he should enter the fourth āśrama. He should give up all the actions belonging to the three castes and should have equal feelings for friend as well as for ~~the~~ and for all the beings. He should harm neither the Jarāyuja nor the andaja even mentally. He should not stay for more than a day in a village and for more than five nights in a city. He should neither be attached nor be cruel with the birds. He should go to beg the alms in noble families at the time when the members have been extinguished and when the people have finished their meals, let ~~he~~ him not be sorry when he obtains nothing, nor rejoice when he gets something. Let him accept so much only as will sustain life. He should never be addicted to passions. Let him not have much reception because on getting much reception, an ascetic though free from other bondages, binds himself. An ascetic should move at all the places giving up kāma, anger, egoism, greediness and infatuation. One who moves on earth giving a promise of fearlessness to others never incurs fear for himself. One who establishes agnihotra in himself and who keeps the food in the form of haviṣya in his mouth goes to the highest worlds. A brahmin who observes this mokṣa-āśrama according to the rites prescribed in sāstras goes to the peaceful and brilliant

Brahmaloka like the fire lighted without fuel.¹¹² Thus now fully realizing the peace and meaning of the self in the midst of saṁsāra he brings himself face to face with the final aim of all existence, viz. mokṣa, in this last āśrama.¹¹³

Besides the above, the Br. P. mentions the people of the four āśramas as witnessing the sacrifice conducted in the Naimiṣāranya (I.8,9), Puruṣottamakṣetra (47.32) and in connection with kṛṣṇa-worship (65.9,10,17) and Sun-worship (30.54).

And as MM.Dr. P.V.Kane states 'the theory of varṇa dealt with man as a member of the Āryan society and laid down what his rights, functions, privileges, responsibilities and duties were as a member of that society. It was addressed to man in the mass. The theory of āśramas addressed itself to the individual. It tells him what his spiritual goal is, how he is to order his life and what preparations are required to attain that goal. The theory of Āśramas was truly a sublime conception¹¹⁴ and Deussen highly appreciates it as one which the entire history of mankind has not produced much that approaches the grandeur to this thought¹¹⁵ and as

¹¹² (223.49-57), cf. also Manu (6.41 ff.).

¹¹³ Prabhu P.N., Op.Cit., P.99.

¹¹⁴ Kane P.V., MDS., Vol.II, P.423.

¹¹⁵ Deussen P., The Philosophy of the Upanisads, (Tr.by Geden, 1906), P.367.

Dr. Prabhu puts it 'The two organisations of the Āśrama and the varṇa, which, to put it briefly, refer to the problems of the nurture and the nature of man, rightly serve as the corner-stones of the Hindu theory of social organisation and ~~that~~ that the scheme of ~~work~~ ~~or~~ the āśramas as thought out by the Hindus is a unique contribution in the whole history of the social thought of the world, without even a parallel to it in any other thought system, excepting perhaps, to some extent, in Plato's the Republic.'¹¹⁶

System of Education

After examining the varṇa system and the āśrama-system it is necessary to examine the system of education which influences life in its formative period, viz. the Brahmacharyāśrama.

As Penunzio states "The primary function of the educational system is to transmit a knowledge of the forms and skills society regards as indispensable to its survival and improvement. That system regularises the knowledge transmitting activity, inculcates the folkways and the mores, trains the young to fit into the established cultural scheme, aims to aid the individual in the development of personality and aptitudes, sets forth the broad lines which the society

¹¹⁶ Prabhu P.N., Op.Cit., P.75.

believes must be followed in order to survive and improve.¹¹⁷

When, however, we proceed to discuss the conception and aims of education, we use the term in its narrower sense as denoting the instruction and training which a youth receives during his studenthood before he settles down to his career or profession.¹¹⁸

The Br. P. does not throw light on all the aspects of education, but a rough picture of the educational system of the Brahmanical type can be obtained by gathering the stray references from the Br. P.

(i) Position and duties of the Student

The period of studentship was looked upon not only as a time of learning, but as a time of rigorous discipline.¹¹⁹ The Upaniṣads provide instances where no teaching was given for several years after studentship had begun, though they may be exceptional cases.¹²⁰ The Br. P. states that a student who comes from a good family, adheres to righteousness, engrossed in serving the elders, self-reliant, clever in

117 Penunzio, C., Major Social Institutions, P. 242.

118 Altekar A.S., Education in Ancient India, P.4.

119 Keay F.E.: Indian Education in ancient and later times, P.20.

120 Upakosala in Ch. Up. IV.10.1,2; Satyakāma in chānd up. IV.4.5; also vide Das Santosh Kumar; The education system of the ancient Hindus, PP. 73-78.

grasping and speaks truth is a good student (121.9,10) but the accompanying remarks that such a student can be available as a result of great merit, shows that the general standard of students did not remain so high. The secret doctrines^e were considered to be highly purificatory and therefore were not to be given to any Tom and Harry. They were not to be given to one who is impure, mean-minded, who has no pupil, who does not observe any mows, who is ungrateful and who is not a well-wisher (4.2.5).

The conditions and duties of studentship were residence in the teacher's house, tending the sacred fires, begging the alms, tending the teacher's house, serving the teacher by word, mind and deed and others of a similar type.¹²¹ The Br. P. also lays down the same duties as can be seen from a description of the Brahmacharyaśrama (222.21-25). For further details vide the previous section on the system of Āśramas.

Though, equal opportunities were offered to all students, still ugliness in form tended to deprive a person from enjoying all the facilities, and an ugly student was very ashamed to study with his co-students (107.3-4).

Position and importance of Teacher

The success and achievements of an educational

¹²¹ Das, Ibid., PP. 78-84.

system depend to a large extent on the ideals that animate the teacher and student, the qualifications of the teacher, the position that was accorded to him in the society and the nature of relationship that existed between him and his students, have a vital bearing on the success or failure of the educational system.

Since the earliest times India has attached great importance to the teacher. He is to be venerated and worshipped, honoured and respected and his command is never to be disobeyed. The Br. P. also assigns a very high position to the teacher. Before starting any work, one used to bow down to god and teacher (I.28,29). When the teacher comes, a seat should be offered to him (221.31). Without a good teacher, it was very difficult to achieve anything.¹²² Again it is stated that out of many teachers, one who bestows knowledge is great.¹²³ Further it is stated that the Vyāsas in the future would be created to establish the authority of vedas, to abolish unrighteousness, to benefit the worlds, to achieve Dharma, Artha and Kāma, to decide the meaning of purāṇa, smṛti, veda and Dharmasāstra (158.31-35).

122 Na Siddhiḥ kvāpi keśamcidvinā sadguruṇā yataḥ | 158.21

123 Guravaḥ santi bahavasteṣāṃ jñānaprado mahān | 158.26.

The exaltation of the teacher was raised to such a position of reverence that he was worshipped by the pupil. If any wrong had been done either to him or to his possessions, the student was cursed. Thus the Br. P. notes that Prṣadhra, a ksatriya, was cursed to become a śūdra as he killed the cow of his teacher (7.43).

One should never act contrary to the wishes of the teacher (221.30-31). The Br. P. furnishes an instance how the lives of some people were saved by their taking resort to the teacher of the enemy. Thus on Vasiṣṭha's advice, king Sagara refrained from killing his enemies and released them after minor punishments (8.47). Again it is stated that one who abuses a teacher becomes degraded from the high status (223.31).

The Dharmasāstras lay down various rules regarding the respect due from a pupil to a teacher. The Br. P. also states that if the teacher remains standing, he also should stand, if the teacher walks, the students should follow and if he sits, the student should occupy a lower seat (222.21-25). The Āpṛastamba Dharma śāstra also lays down that a student should occupy a seat lower than the teacher.¹²⁴ He was not to contradict his teacher, was to bring samidh and water for

¹²⁴ Āpṛastamba, I.1.

the teacher, was not to take bath before his teacher and was to take his food brought by begging after his teacher's permission (221.21-25).

The teacher on his part was under the sacred obligation to fulfill his duty towards the pupil. He was to love his student as his own son and should not withhold any part of the teaching of the sacred science from him.¹²⁵ The Br. P. also states that the relationship between a teacher and pupil was that between a father and a son or between an elder brother and younger one.¹²⁶ If a teacher showed partiality for some student, it was considered to be a bad trait. A teacher should consider his student as his own son and if his son studies along with the other students, the teacher should not be partial to him.¹²⁷

Many students used to live under their teachers' roofs, and the affection which existed between the teacher and the taught must have often led to matrimonial connections. Later writers have prohibited a marriage with one's teacher's daughter but earlier practice seems to have been different. The Br. P. states that the sage Bharadvaja after teaching his

¹²⁵ Apastamba I.2.

¹²⁶ Bhrātṛmuvatputravaccāpi śiṣyāḥ syāttu Gurorḥ sadā / 121.17.

¹²⁷ Gurunāṃ nedamucitam vaiṣaṇyaṃ putraśiṣyayorḥ - 95.8.

student Kāṭha all the rules asked him to marry his ugly sister Revatī. At first Kāṭha vehemently protested against this relationship saying that the relationship between a teacher and pupil was like a father and son or an elder brother and younger brother and considering from that point of view Revatī was just like a sister to him. But Bharadvāja forced him to marry Revatī saying that it was his command and would be considered as Dakṣiṇā to the teacher from the student. From the above anecdote, it can be surmised that the student married the teacher's sister though through no desire of his own, for the simple reason that he did not wish to displease his teacher (A.121).

At the same time, the Br. P. states that to approach one's teacher's wife is a great sin (81.20). Candṛa was cursed by Brhaspati to be crooked as he carried away his wife Tārā (152.23). Dr. Altekar aptly remarks that the rule must have been intended to prevent complications likely to arise in practice, when many students used to live and board with their teachers.¹²⁸

The qualifications of the teachers were that they were well-versed in Itihāsa, purāṇa, veda, vedāṅga and sarvasāstras (I.28-29).

¹²⁸ Altekar A.S., Ancient Indian Education, P.76.

Duration of the Course

There is general unanimity among the smṛti-writers that the vedic education should extend over a period of 12 years.¹²⁹ Though the Br. P. does not throw much light on the duration of the course, it states that Kātha came to study different vidyās when he was sixteen years old and learnt purāṇas, vedas, smṛtis and Dharmasthānas (121.7-10). Again, kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are said to have grasped the whole Dhanurveda within sixty-four days but this seems to be an exceptional case. It is stated that they had already known all the lore before hand but in order to fulfill the general rules of the world they had gone to study under the sage Sandipani and the sage himself was astonished on seeing them learning Dhanurveda so quickly and considered their act to be superhuman (195.12-22).

Fees

There was no fixed scale of monthly or sessional fees prescribed for the students of the different grades or classes in ancient India. It was the duty of the teachers to teach all qualified students free whether they be rich or poor and according to the Hindu theory the teacher's honorarium

¹²⁹ Ibid., P.107.

becomes payable only when the whole course was over.¹³⁰

The Br. P. also states that one should give dakṣiṇā to the Guru at any cost. Even if the teacher desires an impossible thing, it should be given to him. One who after studying from the teacher does not satisfy him with the things he desires suffers in hell for an endless period,¹³¹ observing this rule, the sage Bharadvāja took advantage of his student Katha and asked him to marry his ugly sister Revati by way of paying the Gurudakṣiṇā as noted before (A.121). The Br. P. furnishes another instance where an impossible thing is asked for by the teacher from the students by way of dakṣiṇā. Thus it is stated that when the sage Sāṇḍīpani realised that kṛṣṇa and Balarama were extraordinary students as they had learnt the whole Dhanurveda with all its secrets within merely sixty-four days and that the knowledge of the astras was grasped by them in one hearing, the sage asked them to enliven his dead son who was carried away by the demon Pañcajana. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama fulfilled their teacher's wish by accomplishing the act with their superhuman powers (194.19-31).

130 Altekar A.S., Ibid., PP. 66-68.

131 Iccheyam dakṣiṇām dātum Guro tava manahpriyam
Vadasva durlābham va'pi Guro tubhyam namo'stu te "
Vidyām prāpyāpi ye mohātsvaguroḥ paritoṣṭkam
na prayacchanti nirayam te yāntyacandratarakam "
121.14,15.

The Gurukula System

The Gurukula system which necessitated the stay of the student away from his home at the house of a teacher or in a boarding house of established reputation, was one of the most important features of ancient Indian education.¹³²

The Br. P. states that the student should begin to live under the supervision of his teacher after his upanayana (95.3-8). Again the rules which require the student to rise earlier and take bath earlier than the teacher, to show him ~~the~~ alms gathered at midday and to attend to the night service of his agnihotra, as noted above, also show that the student was normally living at the house of his teacher.

Direct, personal and continuous contact with a teacher of noble character naturally produces great effect on the mind of the scholar during the pliable period of childhood and adolescence.¹³³ The Br. P. notes an instance how a student was saved from complete deterioration by the teacher due to his personal care. Mahī, the wife of a brahmin Dhṛtavrata kept her son Sanjāta at the hermitage of the sage Gālava and became a prostitute. Unfortunately, when Sanjāta came of age, he enjoyed with the prostitute not

132 Altekar A.S., Education in Ancient India, P.30.

133 Altekar A.S., Ibid., P.32.

knowing that she was his own mother. This illicit connection had a strange effect on his physical appearance. In the morning when he was going to the river, he was looking diseased and puss and blood were flowing from his body whereas after taking bath, he was shining like the Sun. Sanjāta himself was not aware of the change in his outward appearance but when the sage Gālava noticed his dual forms, he called him and inquired carefully about his daily routine asking direct questions as to where he was going, what he was doing, what he was eating, what was the name of his wife, etc. Sanjāta thereupon inquired the prostitute as to who she was and when they knew their real relationship they expiated (A.92). This shows what a deep influence a teacher could create over a student's mind and how carefully he could observe the student if he stays near him for the whole period of studenthood.

The Br. P. notes the following hermitages of educational importance. The most important of such hermitages was that of the Naimiṣa, a forest which was like a University. The Br. P. states that the ascetics living at Naimiṣāranya were engaged in a sacrifice lasting for twelve years and held discourses on religious, philosophical and scientific topics.¹³⁴ The other hermitages of importance

¹³⁴ A.1, for details regarding Hermitages vide Mookerji R.K., Ancient Indian Education, PP. 333-335.

were those of the sages Vasistha (8.45), Visvāmitra (7.105), Aurva (8.49), Sāndīpani (194.19), Gālava (92.4), Bharadvāja (121.9), Vālmiki (154.13) and Uttanka (7.61).

Courses of study, priestly and vocational

The curriculum is intimately connected with the achievements and aspirations of a people. Changes in the curriculum are inevitable with the changes in the outlook of life and with the development of new branches of knowledge.

We can get an idea as to how the system of education had developed from the references to the numerous vidyas mentioned in the Br. P. The Br. P. states that the students used to be taught vedas, vedāṅgas, purāṇas, sāstras, Itihāsas, Āgamas and Dharmasāstras (42.40-41), (43.35,88), (22.6), (44.10-12), (65.18). People in general also used to hear the purāṇas, Itihāsas, vedas with their aṅgas, kāvyas, sāstras, kathās, etc. (46.12). There is a reference to yogavidyā by the power of which a person can be carried from one place to another (206.5).

Dhanurveda was considered to be a very high type of lore. Rāma, the son of the sage Jamadagni, was an expert in Dhanurveda (10.53). King Indradyumna (43.3), Candramā, Atri's son (152.2), kṛṣṇa and Balarama (195.21) also are said

to be experts in Dhanurveda. In the curriculum arranged for kings, Dhanurveda was considered to be of primary importance (127.3). A prince's education consisted of Dhanurveda Astravidyā, śastravidyā and śāstras (104.32). Again it is said that a king was expected to be proficient in chariot-driving, elephant-riding and throwing the arrows (111.19).

People studied medicine. The names of various diseases like Headache (śiroroga). A catarrh or cold (pratisyāya), fever (jvara), an acute pain or rheumatism (śūla), a fistula in the anus or pudendum (Bhagandara), a disease of spleen (Gulma), swelling or intumescence (śvayathuḥ), Asthama (śvāsa), cold (śardi), eye-disease (Akṣiroga), Dysentary (Atisāra), leprosy (Kuṣṭhāṅga),¹³⁵ are referred to which show that the science of medicine, had highly developed. Elsewhere the diseases ~~were~~ like headache (Śirṣaroga), akṣiroga, dantaśūla, Galagraha, Jalodara, atisāra, gaṇḍamāla, vicarcika, śvitrakuṭha, Agnidagdha, śidhma, and apasmāra (223.5,6) and gaṇḍapindaka (53.47) are mentioned. It is said that Dhanvantarī¹ king Dhanu's son, who was a god incarnate in human form, learnt the science of Āyurveda from the sage Bharadvāja and dividing the science

135 The meanings of the various Sanskrit words are given from V.S.Apte's 'The Practical Sanskrit - English Dictionary'.

into eight parts, taught it to his pupils (11.36,39). Even at present a proficient doctor is colloquially called Dhanvantari. Again, it is said that one offering a grādha in Varuna nakṣatra gets success in medicine (220.42).

Again about the Jyotiṣvidyā it is said that the sage Garga knew the whole Jyotiṣvidyā by worshipping Śeṣanāga (21.26-27).

Various other vidyās are referred to. It is said that the sage Viśvāmitra taught to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the Māheśvarī Mahāvidyā, Dhanurvidyā, Śāstravidyā, astravidyā, Rathavidyā, Laukikīvidyā, (chariot-driving), the science of elephants, Asvavidyā, Gadāvidyā and how to recite and release the mantras (123.97,98). Duryodhana is said to have obtained the knowledge of the Gadāvidyā from Balarāma (17.28). The hundred sons of king Kuvalāśva are said to be proficient in all the lores (7.57).

The Br. P. does not throw light on the varied aspects of education like punishments, holidays, method of teaching and others.