

## CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE  
 =====

Social and economic life of a people hold a mirror up to the society and a picture of the same can be had by a study of food and drink, dress and ornament, sports and pastimes, means of currency, occupations etc.

I. FOOD AND DRINKS

General :

It is quite well known that fruits are considered as one of the articles of food. In the MP, over and above their use in rites (62.9 etc.) they find a mention as one of the eatables. It is one of the articles of food for persons practising penance (7.4). Yayāti in the third stage of life lived on fruits and roots (35.2). It is also said

that when the sandhyāṃśa of the Kali age would be in the full swing, people would eat fruits and roots (144.82). From chapters on various religious vows, gifts etc. it is clear that various dishes of food were served to Brahmins on the occasion of the performance of the religious vows, gifts etc. (95.26 etc.). In 96.4, the phrase 'astādaśā<sup>1</sup> nām dhānyānām' occurs, but the eighteen varieties are not mentioned in the MP. The anna is said to be fourfold (100.23). The BG 15.14 also says that the anna is fourfold. In the MP the phrase 'ṣaḍrasabhojana'<sup>1</sup> occurs more than once. The ṣaḍrasas are sweet, bitter, pungent, astringent, sour and saline. In Rohiṇavarsa people are said to enjoy the ṣaḍrasabhojana (122.100). It is recommended that the ṣaḍrasabhojana should be served to Brahmins in the twelfth month of the performance of the Kotihoma (239.26). In 185.35 a ṣaḍrasabhikṣā is compared with ambrosia (185.35).

#### Non-vegetarian diet :

In the MP, there are references to non-vegetarian diet. The references to the use of meat, <sup>beef</sup>

1. Cf. MP 122.100; 123.44-45; 185.35; 239.26.

and flesh are traceable to the RV.<sup>2</sup> Animal-food was also eaten by the Indus Valley people.<sup>3</sup> In the MP it is said that the offering of flesh of different animals to manes at the time of śrāddha leads to their satisfaction for a particular period of time. (17.30 ff). This view of the MP is in consonance with that of the MS (3.268 ff) and a similar sentiment is also expressed by the VP.<sup>4</sup> The use of flesh in various rites is also referred to (93.20; 268.27-28 etc.). The demons are said to eat flesh (19.8; 153.141). In the VP, the demons and goblins, are called flesh-eaters.<sup>5</sup> In the MP there is a story of Kauśika's sons who ate the beef when oppressed by hunger, under the pretext of a śrāddha (20.5 ff). This story may suggest that a man may take non-vegetarian food under the stress of hunger, but he would like to have a religious sanction for it. In the former birth the king Puṣpavāhana could not get,

- 
2. Majumdar R.C. and Pusalkar A.D.,<sup>(Ed)</sup> The Vedic Age, p.393. For references from other works, vide Patil D.R., op.cit. pp. 214-215.
3. Majumdar R.C. and Pusalkar A.D.,<sup>(Ed)</sup> ibid., p. 174.
4. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 94.
5. Patil D.R., op.cit. p. 94.

one day, even meat for his food (100.13). It is significant to note that the king was a hunter in his former birth and it is a matter of common knowledge that the low caste people and even the cultured and westernised sector of the society eat meat even to-day.

The eating of fresh meat, fish and the drinking of wine in a dream are believed to be auspicious amongst other auspicious things (242.25). Elsewhere the sight of meat and fish is reckoned as auspicious on the eve of starting on an expedition (243.15). In the transitional period of the Kali age people are foretold to eat the flesh of deer, pigs, bulls and other wild animals and the people especially on the coastal lines to eat fish.<sup>6</sup> Incidentally Śiva's epithet 'piśita' may be noted (47.147). Turvasu was cursed by Yayāti to be a king of the land wherein the people indulged in flesh-eating (33.13).

In the MP, there is also noticeable<sup>a</sup> disfavourable trend towards meat-eating. It is considered a sin and the atonement for it is made in the

---

6. MP 144.74 ff; 144.74<sup>cd</sup> and 75<sup>ab</sup> missing in ga.

Kṛṣṇājīnadāna (206.16). The abandonment of meat-eating leads to the acquisition of the merit of the gift of a cow (101.35).

From the above survey it is clear that in the MP there are no traces of regular meat-eating except in the description of evils of the Kali age; on the contrary it looks down upon meat-eating. Its use finds permission in religious acts or under the religious pretext or in the non-Aryan sector.

Wine-drinking :

In the Rgvedic period, Surā was the popular drink extremely intoxicating as compared to the sacrificial drink Soma which was an invigorating beverage. Surā was distilled from grain. It is condemned as "leading people to crime and godlessness"<sup>7</sup>. In the MP, Surādevī is said to arise from the ocean at the time of its churning (250.3) and this suggests the apotheosis of the drink. Equally the madirā is personified and is said to emerge from the ocean on the above-mentioned occasion.

---

7. Majumdar R.C. and Pusalkar A.D.,<sup>(EA)</sup> ibid, p. 393.

She is a maddening beauty with long eyes (251.2). The Mairaya is another kind of intoxicating drink (120.26). The Yaksas are known to indulge in drink (19.8). The word 'apānabhūmi' (the place of carousal) occurs in the MP (e.g. 117.9; 139.32). In Tripura the musical notes were heard from the carousal halls (139.32). Purūravas saw flowers, celestial trees etc. felled down by nymphs in a carousal hall (117.9). Drinking-bouts also find a mention in the MP. Purūravas heard the musical notes of lutes when the nymphs were indulging in (120.31). Devayāni also indulged in bouts, bouts, when she went with her retinue to a forest for merry-making (30.3). It would be treading on slender grounds if the deductions were to be made from the above references as they pertain to the mythological domain .

Incidentally it may be mentioned that there is an injunction that a Surā should be offered to Asura in the Vāstudoṣopasa'mana rite (268.16) and also that Surā, Āsava and other spirits be stored in a fort (217.58).

There is a reference to the prohibition of wine to Brahmins as well as to drinking bouts in

8  
the NC.

The MP prohibits wine-drinking to Brahmins. Once Śukra was made to take the Surā mixed with the ashes of Kaca (25.39) and this incident<sup>ed</sup> to his pronouncement of the curse that if a foolish Brahmin would take wine, he would be bereft of Dharma, share the sin of Brahminicide and be despised in this as well as the yonder world (25.62,63).

It appears that the Surā was used as a drink, but it was believed to involve sin as can be surmised from a statement that the performance of the Phalasaptamīvrata would purge a man of such sins (76.12). Thus it is clear that the MP has a tendency to regard Surā as an evil and a similar sentiment is also expressed by the VP.<sup>9</sup>

Following is the information regarding the edible substances in the MP. They are generally

---

8. Jani A.N., A Critical Study of Śrīharsa's Naiṣadhiyacaritam, p. 220.

9. Patil D.R., op.cit. p. 212.

recommended as articles of gifts to Brahmins, as articles used in various rites and as dishes to be served to Brahmins on the occasion of the performance of various rites. Some of these are tabooed to a performer before or during the performance of a particular rite. The MP does not give details about the shape, preparation etc. of the various dishes, but merely mentions them by name.

Apūpa(ka) : (Cake, Guj. mālapudo) : One of the articles of gifts in certain rites (63.19 etc.). The word piṣṭāpūpa occurs in 63.19. The apūpaka is offered to Sugrīva in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.15). The pūpa made of ghee is also served to Brahmins on the occasion of certain rites e.g. the Koṭihoma (239.25). A pūpa made of guḍa is to be offered to Savitr in the Vāstusāmana (268.21).<sup>10</sup> This is also mentioned in the NC.

Aśokavartika (?) : This word occurs along with the other eatables (63.20). The word aśokavarti occurs in the Nalacampū of Trivikrama Bhatta.<sup>11</sup>

10. Jani A.N., op.cit. p. 216.

11. Cf. aśokavartinyo'sokavartih/Nalacampū p.19; Gode P.K., Some Notes on the History of Indian Dietetics with special reference to the history of Jalebi, New Indian Antiquary, Vol.VI, p.170, fn.3.

Canaka : (Chick-pea, Guj. cano) : One of the articles in worship (73.6), recommended for being stored in a fort (217.38). The gram-like grains have been discovered from the excavations at Mahes<sup>h</sup>v<sup>h</sup>vara, Navda Toli and this tends to suggest its high antiquity in India.

Dadhi : (Curd, Guj. dahim) : One of the eatable~~x~~ articles in the observance of rites (56.6; 60.34 etc.). The 'apakvadadhi' is referred to in 64.16 with the unheated milk. It is one of the articles which are recommended for being stored in a fort (217.58). This is also mentioned in the  
12  
NC.

Dadhyanna : S.V. Odana.

Dadhyodana : S.V. odana.

Dhānyaka : (Guj. dhānā, Hindi • dhaniyā (R.Tri. op.cit., p. 264). One of the constituents of the Saubhāgya octad (60.8). One of the articles in worship (62.9), but its use prohibited in certain rites to an observant, but permitted as a gift (63.16). Recommended for being stored in a fort (217.50).

---

12. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 216.

Gandhandana : ३.V. odana.

Ghārikā : (Guj. ghārī) : One of the objects of gifts in some rites (63.19).

Ghrta : (Guj. ghī) : One of the articles in worship (62.9) as well as an eatable at the time of performance of religious vows etc (55.20; 60.35 etc.).

Ghrtaudana : ३.V. odana.

Godhūma : (Wheat, Guj. ghaum) : One of the articles in worship (73.6) as well as of gifts (83.22).

Guda : (Molasses, Guj. gola) : One of the articles used in worship in certain rites (62.9), but its use prohibited to an observant in certain rites, but permitted as an article of gift (63.15); also one of the eatables (55.20).

Haritālaudana : ३.V. odana.

Iksu : (Sugar cane.) . One of the constituents of the Saubhāgya (60.8); article of gift (80.8) etc.

Indarī : It is an article of gift in the performance of the Rasakalyānīvrata (63.20). According to Monier Williams it is a kind of cake and he notes 'indali' as its alternant form.<sup>13</sup> Out of the five MSS of the MP at the Oriental Institute, Baroda, two MSS<sup>14</sup> read 'indaryo', the other two MSS<sup>15</sup> read 'pundayo', whereas the fifth MSS<sup>16</sup> reads 'pindaryo'. The latter two readings appear to be corrupt. The word 'indarī' occurs once in the MP. The idli and Dose are the two popular dishes in Karnatak and South India.<sup>17</sup> Incidentally it may be noted that the corresponding Sanskrit and Prakrit

- 
13. Monier Williams, The Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 164.
  14. Oriental Institute MS Accession No. 1070 (undated), Folio 111b; MS Accession No.2551 (undated), Folio 87a, Verse No.22.
  15. MS Accession No.287 (undated), Ch.62.20; MS Accession No. 9717 (dated Samvat 1884), Folio 123a, Verse No.21.
  16. MS Accession No.11463 (undated),Folio 90b.
  17. For the history of these dishes, vide Gode P.K., Studies in the History of Indian Dietetics - History of the Dishes, Idli and Dose between A.D. 1100 and 1900, Chatterji Jubilee Volume (Indian Linguistics Volume 16, November 1955), pp.226 ff., Narahari H.G., 'Idly' in Kannada Literature, Taraporewala Memorial Volume (Indian Linguistics, Vol. 17, June 1957), pp. 98 ff.

words for 'Idlī' are 'Idarikā' and 'Iddariyā'  
 18  
 respectively. The Marathi Dictionary Śabdakośā  
 by Y.R. Date and C.G. Karve (Vol. I - 1932, p.310)  
 records the word idarī-lī as a Canarese word and  
 explains it as a dish made of the fermented flour  
 of beans (udīda) and rice with salt etc. 19  
 From  
 the above-mentioned discussion it appears that  
 the dish idarī is identical with the 'idarikā'  
 i.e. with the dish Idli. Dr. P.K. Gode also  
 writes, "As matters stand I am inclined to believe  
 that the dish 'indarī' is identical with 'idarikā'".  
 20

Kodrava: (Guj. Kodarā): This turns tawny  
 when mixed with poison (219.26). It is a species  
 of gram eaten by the poor.

Krsarā: (Guj. Khīcaḍī, referēnce to a dish of  
 21  
 rice and pulse) : It is a dish of rice and sesamum.

---

18. Gode P.K., op.cit., pp. 227, 228.

19. Gode P.K., op.cit., p. 229.

20. Gode P.K., his letter dated 27th September, 1958.

21. Macdonell A.A., A Practical Sanskrit  
 Dictionary, p. 74.

In 69.28 the Kṛsarā cooked with the milk of a cow is mentioned as the dinner of an observant of the Bhīmadvādasīvrata and this is to be taken with ghee. It also constitutes an offering to certain deities in certain rite e.g. it is an offering to the Saturn in the Navagrahahomasānti (93.20). It is to be fed to Brahmins in certain rites (239.23). In the VP Hāridrakṛsara is mentioned in connection with the Piśācas and Kṛsara in combination with masūra is referred as a gift in śrāddha.<sup>22</sup>

Ksīra : The gokṣīra is one of the constituents of the Saubhāgya octad which had trickled down from the chest of Viṣṇu (60.9). It is a drink as well as an article of ritual (55.20; 60.27,35; 62.9). The milk of a cow is a drink and its use in various rites is often referred to (68.16; 69.32). It is also mentioned in the NC.<sup>23</sup>

Laddu : (Guj. lādu) : Article of gift (63.19) as well as an offering to certain deities in certain rites (239.24; 268.17,20). The ladduka is mentioned in the NC.<sup>24</sup>

---

22. Patil D.R., op.cit. p. 91.

23. Jani A.N., op.cit. p. 220.

24. Jani A.N., op.cit., p.217.

Lājā : (Parched grain) : Offering to Puṣan in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.13). The saktu-lājā is recommended in the VP as a gift in śrāddha.<sup>25</sup>

Laśūna : (Garlic) : This is prohibited to Brahmins and the punishment for violating this injunction is banishment (227.190).

Madhu : Article of gift, but prohibited to an observant in certain rites (63.15).

Māṃsaudana : s.v. Odana

Māṇḍa : (Scum of boiled rice) : One of the white sour things to be stored in a fort (217.58).

Māṇḍaka : It is a rice-gruel, a sort of pastry or baked flour.<sup>26</sup> In Hindi it is māṇḍā.<sup>27</sup> It is recommended as a gift in certain rites (63.19). To-day in Gujarat khāṇḍa-māṇḍā is a common menu at a caste-dinner. In the Vāṇakasaṃuccaya the different varieties of the māṇḍā e.g. āchāmāṇḍā, puraṇāmāṇḍā, kurakurāmāṇḍā etc. are referred to.<sup>28</sup> The māṇḍaka is mentioned in the NC.<sup>29</sup>

25. Patil D.R., op.cit. p. 91.

26. Monier Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 775.

27. R. Tri., op.cit. p. 173.

28. Sandesara B.J. (Ed.), Vāṇakasaṃuccaya, p.5.

29. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 218.

Māsa : (Bean) : The māsa, tila and kuśa owe their origin to the perspiration of Viṣṇu at the time of killing the demon Madhu (87.4). It is also used in ritual (83.24) as well as it is to be served to Brahmins in dinners on the occasion of performance of certain rites (239.36). It is also recommended for being stored in a fort (217.38).

Mudga : (Phaseolus Mungo, Guj. Maga) : Recommended for being stored in a fort (217.38).

Mudgandana : ŚrV. odana.

Navanīta : One of the white sour things to be stored in a fort. (217.58).

Odana : The ḍdana in combination with various other things is referred to in the MP. The gudaudana is an offering to the Sun in the Navagrahahomaśānti rite (93.19). In the VP it is mentioned in connection with Piśācas.<sup>30</sup> In Gujarati this is 'gol-bhāt'. The dadhyodana is an offering to Budha in <sup>the</sup> aforementioned rite (93.20) as well as to Pūtanā in the Vāstuśamana rite (268.29). In Gujarati, this corresponds to the 'dahim-bhāt'. The ghṛtaudana is an

---

30. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 90.

offering to Śukra in the Navagrahahomasānti (93.20), as well as to Śośa<sup>31</sup> and Mitra in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.17, 22). In Gujarati this corresponds to 'ghī-bhāt'. The citrandana constitutes an offering to Ketu in the Navagrahahomasānti (93.20). The canakaudana, piśitandana, gandhadana, <sup>mudgandana</sup> māmsandana and hāritālandana, ~~mudgandana~~, constitute offerings to Vitatha, Yama and Gandharva, Bhallāṭa, Vidārī and Indra respectively in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.13; 14, 18, 27-28, 22). The word 'dadhyanna' and 'dadhībhakta' stand for the 'dahim-bhāt' in Gujarati. This constitutes a gift or dinner to Brahmins in certain rites (56.9; 63.20; 239.25). The saṣtyodana is a dish to be served to Brahmins in the ninth month of the performance of the Koṭihoma (239.26). The word 'saṣti' stands for the sāthī type of rice. In the VP the odana is mentioned in connection with Piśācas and<sup>32</sup> recommended as gift in śrāddha.

Palāṇḍu : (Onion) : Brahmins are prohibited to take it and the punishment for violating this injunction is the banishment of a person concerned. (227.10).

31. V.l. Śeṣa-ga; Soma - ga and na.

32. Patil D.R., op.cit., p.91.

Pāyasa : It is an article of food prepared with or made of milk or rice boiled in milk. It also means an oblation of milk, rice and sugar. This constitutes an offering in certain religious vows etc. (7.25) as well as one of the articles of food served to Brahmins on the occasion of the performance of certain religious vows etc. (66.5). The Śarkarāpāyasa is offered to Aryaman in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.24). The ghr̥tapāyasa is mentioned as a menu of the dinner to Brahmins in 74.13; 77.8 etc., as well as an offering to Soma in 93.19. The pāyasa with ghee and honey is also a menu of a dinner to Brahmins (232.15). The word 'pāyasa' means 'khīra' and 'dūdhapāka' both in Gujarati.

Pinyāka : (Oil-cake) : Its sight is deemed inauspicious for a king on an occasion of starting on<sup>an</sup> expedition (243.5). It is referred to in the NC<sup>34</sup> and is recommended as food for Yogins.<sup>35</sup>

---

33. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 619.

34. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 219.

35. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 91.

Pisitandana : §.v. Odana.

Pista : (Sālika) : The flour of 'sāli' is to be offered to Bhaga in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.19). In the VP the 'pistaka' is recommended as a gift in <sup>36</sup>śrāddha.

Polikā : (Guj. polī) : It is offered to Aditi in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.19). The word 'polī' <sup>37</sup> also occurs in the Varnakasamuccaya.

Prsādāiyaka : It is ghee mixed with coagulated milk. It is one of the articles of food for an observant of a religious vow (60.35; 95.16).

Pūpa : §.v. Apūpa. In the VP it is stated as a good gift in <sup>38</sup>śrāddha.

Pūrikā : (Guj. pūrī) : It is one of the objects given in gift in certain rites (63.19). This is also offered to Śukra in the Guru-Śukra-pūjā (73.6) and to Diti in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.19).

---

36. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 91.

37. Cf. āchī polī ghī māṃ hi jhabolī phūm kaim marī phalasāī jāī / Varnakasamuccaya, p.186.

38. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 91.

Rāji : (Guj. rāi) : Its use is prohibited in certain rites to an observant but is recommended as a gift (63.15).

Saktu : (Guj. sāthavo) : It is a loosely ground meal especially of barley.<sup>39</sup> It is recommended as a gift in certain rites (64.15) and is offered to Vāyu in the Adbhutaśanti-upaskara-vaikṛtya-vi<sup>40</sup>thi. This constitutes the menu of a dinner of Brahmins in certain rites (239.26) as well as of that of an observant of certain religious vows etc.<sup>41</sup> It is also mentioned in the NC<sup>42</sup> and the VP<sup>43</sup>.

Samyāva : (Śiro) : It is a sort of cake of wheaten flour fried with ghee and milk and made up into an oblong form with sugar and spices.<sup>44</sup> This is an article of gift as well as an offering in certain religious vows etc. (63.19; 93.19; 239.24).

---

39. Macdonell A.A., A Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 327.

40. MP 236.5, missing in gha.

41. MP 65.5, missing in ca.

42. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 220.

43. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 91.

44. Monier Williams, ibid., p. 112.

Sarkarā : (Sugar) : Its use is prohibited in certain rites to an observant (63.17), but it is recommended as a gift (76.3). It is also mentioned in the NC.<sup>45</sup>

Sarpis : (Clarified butter, ghee) : This is mentioned as one of the articles or food as well as an offering to certain deities in certain rites (69.28, 32; 268.18). Another word for ghee is tūpa which is mentioned along with the word 'tandula' (101.50).

Sakulī : It is offered to Antarikṣa in the Vāstusāmana rite (268.12). Rāmā Pratap Tripathi renders it by 'pūdf' in Hindi.<sup>46</sup> This may probably represent jalebī in Gujarati.

Sauvira-odaka : (Sour gruel) : It is one of the white sour things to be stored in a fort (217.58).

---

45. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 220.

46. R. Tri., op.cit., p. 716.  
This is also identified with Jalebī. The word 'karna-sāskulī' is translated by 'karna-jalebī'. Gode P.K., Some Notes on the History of Indian Dietetics with special reference to the history of Jalebī, New Indian Antiquary, Vol. VI, p.172, fn. 10.

Sthālipāka : It is a dish of barley or rice boiled in milk. It is to be offered in fire as an oblation for seven days for pacifying a deity when it shows portentous changes, movements etc. in its image (230.11).

Tandula : (Rice) : The śāleya tandula is one of the articles of gifts in certain rites (55.18). The red śālīya tandula constitutes an offering to Sūrya and Rudra in the Saptamīvrata (68.16). The white tandula is also referred to in the MP as an article of gift in certain rites (73.2). The vr̥hi is mentioned as one of the objects of enjoyment along with the barley, gold, cattle and women (34.11).

Taila : (Oil) : Its use is prohibited to an observant in certain rites (63.15). There is a recommendation that all types of oil be stored in a fort. (217.35).

Takra : (Butter-milk mixed with an equal amount of water; Marathi tāk; Guj. chāśa) : This is recommended for being stored in a fort (217.58).

Tila : (Sesamum indicum) : This is an article of food and offering (56.6; 62.10). The black tila is referred to in 59.15. The tila is recommended for being stored in a fort (217.38).

Vataka : (Guj. Vadum) : Macdonell notes the word vatikā meaning a kind of perforated rice cake,<sup>47</sup> whereas a vadum is a preparation of bean-flour. A vataka is offered to Śukra in his worship (73.6). The kṣīravata is mentioned in the NC.<sup>48</sup>

Vrīhi : (Rice) : s.v. Tandula.

Vyañjana : (Pickles) : This gets dried up when it is mixed with poison (219.24). In the VP the kulmāṣa is mentioned with vyañjana as<sup>49</sup> good gift in śrāddha. The NC mentions the vegetarian as well as the non-vegetarian pickles, the latter is called<sup>50</sup> 'Temana'.

---

47. Macdonell A.A., op.cit., p. 267.

48. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 217.

49. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 91.

50. Jani A.N., op.cit., p. 219.

Yava : (Barley) : It is an article of offering to certain deities in certain rites (68.18 etc.). The word yāvaka (barley preparation) occurs in 268.14 and it is offered to Mrga in the Vāstuśamana rite (268.14). The yāvaka is recommended<sup>51</sup> as food for yogins.

Juices : Over and above the mention of various eatables, some juices are also mentioned. It is said that the people of Harivarṣa drink the juice of the sugar-cane (114.67). It is even a common drink of Indian<sup>s</sup> today. The inhabitants of Ilāvṛta are said to drink the juice of the jambū fruits (114.71), which has such a magical power that its drinker is never visited by old age, hunger, fatigue, pain etc (114.78). Angirases are said to be the drinkers of the Soma and also Dharmaratha, a descendant of Bali, is said to have drunk the Soma on the Viṣṇupadagiri in company with Śukra (48.93). It is needless to say that the Soma is highly extolled in the RV<sup>52</sup>

---

51. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 91. For references of some of the above eatables from different works, vide Patil D.R., op.cit., pp. 211 ff.

52. Griswold H.D., The Religion of the Rigveda, pp. 209 ff.

## II. DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

The study of costume is very important in the evaluation of the culture of any country. It is in a sense the outward index of the homogeneity and unity of a people or its reverse. Its importance is further enhanced when it is remembered that the sex-division which is one of the principles of social structure is apparently seen through the differences in dress.<sup>53</sup>

The Indian costume is regarded "as gravitational and concealing on the whole, the few anatomic traits with their revealing or suggestive effect being regarded as outlying and aberrant survivals or bare necessities. The manifest complexity must be considered to be the result of ethnic diversity and climatic variety which have not yet yielded to the gradually assimilative process of Indian culture."<sup>54</sup>

---

53.\*Cf. "The social structure, both as regards groups and institutions, can be seen to be based upon definite principles. Sex, age, locality and kinship are among the most fundamental of these in all human societies ... Consider the sex division. Men and women are marked off from each other by differences in dress, name and ordinary habits." Firth Raymond, Human Types, pp. 98-99.

54. Ghurye G.S., Indian Costume, p. 16.

N u d i t y :

Even in modern times, there are primitive tribes who move naked e.g. the Nuer of Nilotic Sudan. Śiva is described as digvāsas, having the garments in form of quarters i.e. nude (154.331). His ganas are also said to be nude (154.533). In the VP Śiva is also described as naked.<sup>55</sup> It is also laid down that an image of Kālikā be made nude (261.37). It is to be noted that the references to nudity in the MP are mythological in nature.

Bark and Skin garments :

Skin garments were known to the Rgvedic people. The Maruts wear deer skins and a muni (10.136.2) is clad in skins or soiled garments.<sup>56</sup>

The Asuras are said to have put on the bark garments and practised penance, when Śukra left them for acquiring the miraculous powers (47.77). In the VP, also, the Asuras are said to have donned the bark garments under the same circumstances.<sup>57</sup>

---

55. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 85.

56. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D. (Ed.),  
The Vedic Age, p. 393.

57. Patil D.R., op.cit., pp. 85-86.

In this connection the observations of Dr. D.R. Patil may be applied here: "This may make us infer that these were not the clothes of the ordinary people,"<sup>58</sup> but of the ascetics and hermits. In 156.9 Pārvatī is described as having put on the bark of a tree when she practised penance.

Elsewhere in the description of the full swing of the Kali age it is said that the people would put on the bark garments (144.83). The VP also notes the use of the bark garments in the Kali age.<sup>59</sup> In south-east Asia bark garments are used even today. In Gujarat in the middle ages bark garments were used and a sample of the same is preserved in the Pandya Vastragrha at Patan, North Gujarat.

In the MP there are also references to hide garments. It is said that in the sandhyāmsa period of the Kali age people would don the strips of cloth and hides of black antelopes (144.72).

---

58. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 86.

59. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 85.

Elsewhere also (273.33) people in the Kali age are foretold to put on strips of cloth, leaves and hide garments.<sup>60</sup> The hide of a black antelope is a sacred object of gift and the MP devotes the Chapter 206 to the gift of a hide of a black antelope.<sup>60</sup> Amongst the other gifts cherished by the manes is a gift of hide of a black antelope (204.11). Śiva is often described as the wearer of an elephant-hide.<sup>61</sup> Some of the attendants of Śiva are said to be decked in skin-garments (154.533). Even in modern times, the use of hide garments in primitive tribes is not unknown.

Kinds of cloth and various garments:

Various types of cloth and garments are referred to in the MP; of course, they are not numerous. Urvaśī is said to have put on a very fine red garment (201.26).

Kauśeya : It is a type of silk made from cocoons.<sup>62</sup> Some of the attendants of Śiva are said to have put on the garments of kauśeya (154.533).

---

60. For details, vide Moti Chandra, Prāchīna Bharatiya Vēsha-Bhusha, pp.11-12.

61. MP 181.14; 183.8; cf. Meghadūta 39.

62. Cf. Kṛmeh kauśeyam iva / Varnakasamuccaya (Ed. by Sandesara B.J.), p.8; For details vide Moti Chandra, op.cit., pp.27-28,56,95.

After the transformation of her complexion, Pārvatī is described as having put on the yellow kauṣeya garment (157.14). It is also referred to in 265.16, where it is enjoined that it should be given in a gift for being placed on the head of an image. This word also occurs in 277.9.

Aṃsuka : It is a type of silk made from cocoons (silk-worm).<sup>63</sup> In the MP 206.13, the aṃsuka studded with gems is referred to. The cīnāṃsuka is referred to in 154.276. According to the Brhat-Kalpasūtra-Bhāṣya (4.3661), it is explained as 'Kosikārākhyah kṛmih tasmāj jātam' or 'Cīnānāma-<sup>64</sup> janapadaḥ tatra yaḥ slakṣṇataraṇaḥ tasmāj jātam' i.e. it is a cloth made from a worm Kosikāra by name or cloth made from smooth silk from a janapada Cīnā by name. The cīnāṃsuka is said to be white or shining (154.276). The aṃsuka of yellow colour is referred to in 162.34.

---

63. For details vide Agrawala V.S., Harṣacarita, Eka Sāṃskṛtike Adhyayana, p. 78; Moti Chandra, op.cit., pp. 148, 153, 154.

64. Moti Chandra, op.cit., p. 148, for details vide ibid, pp. 148-149.

Dukūla : According to the Amarakośa 2.6.113<sup>65</sup> the word dukūla is a synonym of kṣauma. The poison Kālakūṭa personified is described as decked in yellow dukūla (250.15). The word dukūlapaṭṭa occurs in 265.15, 18. Incidentally it may be noted Bāna uses the alternant form 'dugūla' in his Harsacarita.<sup>66</sup>

Āvika : Literally the word means the woollen cloth made of sheep's wool. In 206.5 it is enumerated in the list of articles of ritual of the Kṛṣṇājina-pradāna. In BrU 2.3.6 the āvika cloth is referred to.<sup>67</sup>

Kambala : The Nepal Kambala is referred to in the MP 22.86 where it is styled as Kutapas.

---

65. For details vide Moti Chandra, op.cit., pp.54-55; Agrawala V.S., op.cit., pp. 76-77. The Varnaka-samuccaya (p.121) describes it as 'kṛmikulād dukūlam iva', whereas it is said to be made of the strands ( ) of the bark of the Dukūla tree (Moti Chandra, op.cit., p. 54).

66. Agrawala V.S., op.cit., p. 77.

67. Vide Moti Chandra, op.cit., p. 10.

The Bhingist<sup>68</sup> is a Nepalese Kambala made of eight pieces. It is black in colour and protects one from rain. The word kambala occurs in MP 191.18<sup>69</sup> where it is recommended for gift.

Kārpāsa : The use of cotton clothes dates back to the period of the Indus Valley civilisation. The word kārpāsa does not occur in the Saṃhitās as well as in the Brs. The earliest reference to it is found in the Āsvalāyana-śrauta-sūtra (2.3.4.17) and the Lātyāyana-śrauta-sūtra (2.6.1; 9.2.14).<sup>70</sup> The word kārpāsa occurs in the MP. 265.18.

Costume as it figures in the MP :<sup>71</sup>

Head-dress : One of the words for head-dress is usnīṣa (turban) which is of the Atharvavedic antiquity.<sup>72</sup> In the MP the usnīṣa of Brahmā is

68. Kautilya's Arthasastra (Tr. by Shamasastri), p.90; Moti Chandra, op.cit., p. 53.

69. For details about kambala vide Moti Chandra, op.cit., pp.10, 28 ff., 51-52, 58, 97. The Varnakāśānuccaya (pp.121,181,188 etc.) mentions a ratnakambala.

70. Moti Chandra, op.cit., pp. 14, 26 ff.

71. For costume as it figures in Sanskrit & Prakrit Literature, vide Ghurye G.S., op.cit., Appendix pp.227 ff.

72. AV 15.2.1, vide also Moti Chandra, op.cit., pp. 19 ff.

described as white (170.10). The white clouds are said to constitute the turban of the Himalayas (117.5), whereas the word 'uṣṇīsin' is the epithet of Śiva (47.130), suggesting thereby that Śiva wears a turban on his head, possibly, in the form of his matted hair. Another word for head-dress is mukuta (diadem). A diadem studded with jewels is referred to in 150.102. At times the sun and the moon are said to be the diadem of the Himalayas (117.5). In 119.34 it is said that the garland of the Santāna flowers constituted Viṣṇu's diadem. In the chapter on the Sārasvatavrata, it is enjoined that śikhara should be given in gift along with other articles of gifts (66.14). The word 'śikhara' is rendered as 'head-ornament' by JA<sup>73</sup> and as 'crest-jewel' by the English translator of the MP.<sup>74</sup> The word kirīṭa also occurs in the MP (135.7 etc.)

Upper-garment : (Uttarāsāṅga, uttariya) :  
Vīraka is said to have put on an uttarāsāṅga (154.542). The Himālaya is said to have its uttariya in the form of clouds (117.4). Vīraka is said to

---

73. JA, mP, Vol. I, p. 487.

74. SBH, Vol. XVII, Pt. I, P. 199.

have put on the lambottariya (long upper garment) (154.232). In the list of various effects that would take place on a person guilty of administering poison to a king is mentioned the slipping of his uttariya (219.12).

Lower-garment: (adhovasana): The Himālayaṣ is said to have a lower garment in the form of the dark Devadāru forest (117.4).

Bodice, Jacket : (kañcuka) : It is enjoined that the image of the goddess Śrī is to be fashioned by decking it with a kañcuka (261.42). A kañcuka studded with gold is recommended as a gift to maids in the Saṣṭhīvrata (101.27). Guj. kañcavo, kañcalī.

Long-coat, Jacket: (Male) - (Colaka) : It is directed that the body of the sun should be covered with a colaka (261.4)

75

Ornaments as they figure in the MP :

In the MP the names of various ornaments occur without their details. There are some references in the MP from it may be gathered that

---

75. For information regarding ornaments in the VP and other sources, vide Patil D.R., op.cit., pp. 87 ff; 208 ff.

ornaments were made of gold (58.16; 148.86). In 106.41 it is said that ladies were adorned with gold. Some ornaments are said to produce a (jingling) sound (177.34). The ornaments were given in gift to Brahmins on the occasion of the performance of various rites (58.16-17; 60.30). A necklace of pearls is referred to 162.34.

The following is the alphabetical list of ornaments : --

76

Anḡada : (Bracelet on the upper arm) : It is an ornament that is tied on an arm (179.49). It appears as one of the ornaments of Viṣṇu (119.35). This is also said to produce a jingling sound (176.49).

A Keyūra (bracelet) is worn on the upper arm by both the sexes.<sup>77</sup> It is said to adorn the hand of Viṣṇu (119.30,34). It is tied on the hand, and is golden (150.73) or may be studded with jewels (150.80). In 150.234, it is said to be set in with the padmarāga.

---

76. Macdonell A.A., A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, p. 4.

77. Macdonell A.A., op.cit., p. 74.

A Kataka (bracelet) is referred to in several places in the MP (58.16; 59.14; 69.45; 70.45). It is also said to be made of gold (93.108). A Kataka worn by demons was made of gold, silver, iron or studded with gems (136.29).

Anguli(ya) : (Ring) : It is mentioned in several places in the MP (e.g. 58.17; 59.14; 69.45; 70.45; 119.35).

Hemakakṣa : In the MP it figures as a golden waistband (girdle) for an elephant.<sup>78</sup>

Hemasūtra(ka) : (Golden-necklace) : It is referred to in several places in the MP (59.14; 69.45; 70.45). Cf. the Gujarati word 'doro'.

Jāmbūnada : It is an ornament of gold for the gods in Jambūdvīpa (114.79).

Kāñci : It is a small girdle generally adorned with bells (106.39; 139.41). It is also said to be studded with gems which were kept together by a string (139.43). It also produced a shrill sound

---

78. MP 212.18, missing in ka and kha.

when tossed (139.39). The girdle (rasanā) of Bāṇa was a bejewelled one (187.22). Nṛsimha had put on a śronīśūtra (179.49). A mekhalā is said to produce a murmuring sound and the Asura beauties are said to wear them (139.34). In one place (139.37) it is said to be made of gold. The girdle of Pārvatī was made of the darbha grass and her garments were of bark, when she proceeded for penance (154.308). Vīraka had also put on a girdle of the muñja grass (154.542)

Kanthasūtra : (Necklace) : It is referred to in 93.108. Cf. the Gujarati word 'doro'.

Karnāṅguli : (Ear-ring) : It is referred to in 93.108.

Karnottama : Vāsuki was a Karnottama of Lord Śiva on the occasion of his marriage ceremony (154.444). The word 'karnāvatama' occurs in the Harṣacarita. Rājyaśrī had put on the karnāvatama at the time of her marriage ceremony.<sup>79</sup>

Kataka : s.v. Aṅgada.

Keyūra : s.v. Āṅgada.

Kuṇḍala : (Ear-ring) : Devayānī had worn ear-rings studded with polished gems (27.17). Elsewhere they are said to be made of gold (58.16; 136.38). The maṇi-kuṇḍala is also referred to in 153.220. It is also described as shining (161.72, 82).

Lambābharana : This is referred to in the MP 176.56. This may probably refer to a pendent. The <sup>80</sup>pralamba and prālamba may be akin to a lambābharana. The word 'muktā prālamba' occurs in the <sup>81</sup>Kādambarī.

Maṇibandha : The knee of Viṣṇu was adorned with a maṇibandha (119.32). This reminds one of a gulpha-nūpura put on by a woman who was proceeding towards Puṣpabhūti who stopped from killing

---

80. Monier Williams, op.cit., pp. 689, 702.

81. Agrawala V.S., Kādambarī, A Cultural Study (Hindi), pp. 62, 397.

the serpent Śrīkaṇṭha on seeing the sacred thread  
 82  
 on him.

Mekhala : s.v. Kāñcī.

Nūpura : (Anklet) : This is referred to in several places in the MP (106.39; 116.12). In 139.34 it is said to produce a murmuring sound whereas in 180.39 it is said to produce a pleasing sound. They were made of gold (180.39).

Incidentally, it may also be noted <sup>that</sup> on the occasion of different rites garments, garlands etc. of different hues e.g. white, red etc. were used (58.20; 62.20; 179.52). The garlands of flowers often figure as ornaments (58.20).

'Vastramālyānulepana' or 'sūklamālyānulepana' is a common expression (66.15; 67.18).

Coiffure : The discussion on ornaments leads to the consideration of the art of hair-dressing

82. गुल्फानुपुत्राखिलानुपुत्रतया स्थितनिबिडकटकावलि-बन्धनादेव  
 परिश्रयागतां स्त्रियमपश्यत् / Harṣacarita of Bāna, p.53.

This gulpha-nūpura is seen on a female image (of the Kushan period) from Maholi village near Mathura (vide *Journal of India Society of Oriental Art*, Calcutta, 1938; Agrawala V.S., op.cit., Plate 6, Figure 31.)

as it tends to the enhancement of one's beauty. It is quite well-known that in modern times various styles of hair-dressing are being developed and in ancient times also various styles of hair-dressing were developed.<sup>83</sup>

It is a general practice that ladies tie their braids on their heads. Tāraka is said to be the loosener of the braids of hair of the consorts of gods (147.18). It is to be noted that the word used here is dhammilla. In the dhammilla style of hair-dressing the hair were tied up in heavy braids as it is seen from a picture of a beloved drawn in the 17th cave of Ajanta.<sup>84</sup> Kārtikeya is described as having the lalita-cūdākalāpa (159.41) and Siva as kapardin i.e. hair dressed in the form of a shell (250.33) and else<sup>where</sup> he is also said to have the braid of hair tied up and tawny like fire (250.54).

---

83. Altekar A.S., The Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation, pp. 360-361; *ibid*, Plate VIII.

84. Agrawala V.S., *op.cit.*, p. 96, *vide also ibid*, Plate 14, Picture 53.

At times a chaplet (śekhara) was also worn on the head. One of the nymphs who were sporting romantically in company with their lovers and who were also observed by Purūrvas<sup>a</sup> had put on a chaplet on the head woven by her lover (120.7-8). This reminds one of the 'venīś' (chaplet) put on by ladies on their braid of hair. A chaplet of lotuses is referred to in 158.39. The crescent moon is said to form a chaplet on Śiva's head (181.8). The word śekhara is a head-ornament different from the mauli and cūdāmaṇi.<sup>85</sup>

#### Toilettng and Cosmetics :

In modern times there are various ways of toilette and personal hygiene and ancient India also had its own ways and means for the same.

The nymphs are said to apply the alaktaka dye to their feet (117.6). Tāraka is described as having applied the black aloe wood paste to his limbs (148.28). A hema-salākā (golden stick) was used for applying collyrium to the trees in the Vṛkṣotsava rite (59.6). The application of white

---

85. Agrawala V.S., op.cit., p. 401.

sandal by a performer of a rite was one of the prerequisites (58.20 etc.). The ointment is also referred to 66.15. The Himālaya is said to have sandal as the unguent for its body (117.6). The paste of red arsenic was applied by Vīraka to his face (154.542). Unguents in general were also applied by the Asura beauties (139.41) and elsewhere (139.30) it is said that the gosīrṣa and haricandana were applied on the breasts by them. The seven oceans worked as a mirror for Śiva at the time of his dressing for his marriage-procession (154.447). A circular mirror is also referred to as a toilet-thing in 139.27. Incidentally it may also be noted that fans (55.22) and mirrors (57.18) figure as articles of gift.

Perfumes, Incense etc. :

The guggula is said to be the best incense (59.6). At times the ghee and guggula are jointly referred to as incense (264.30 etc.). The gandha and dhūpa are often referred to in the chapters on various rites (69.27; 74.11 etc.).

Fumigation in houses with sarsapa (mustard), elavālukā etc. is said to destroy the effects of

poison in houses and as its consequence insects, reptiles and frogs cannot find a place in such houses (218.16-17). For driving away serpents from houses fumigation with cotton and bones of serpents is recommended (219.6).

### III. CUSTOMS AND CONVENTIONS

Custom is in a sense the "imitation of ancestors"<sup>86</sup>. It is a group of procedure that has gradually emerged without express enactment, without any constituted authority to declare and to apply it, to safeguard it. It is sustained by common acceptance.<sup>87</sup> Further it is a mode of conduct of the group itself, as a group, and every custom is in consequence adjusted to the others which the group observes. It is a part of a complex of determinate relationship<sup>88</sup> sustained and guarded by group. It plays an important role in the regulation of the behaviour

---

86. Tarde Gabriel, Laws of Imitation, Ch. VII, as quoted by Mac Iver and Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis, p. 181.

87. Mac Iver R.M. and Page C.H., op.cit., p. 176.

88. Mac Iver R.M., and Page C.H., op.cit., p. 195.

of an individual. The force of custom is so powerful that one finds it difficult to violate and transgress it because it is in a sense indoctrinated in an individual since his childhood as it is the part of social heritage. In the MP one comes across some customs and conventions some of which are seen operative even in modern times. Guests were received with the arghya and pādya and seats were offered to them (24.16 ff). Over and above the warm reception accorded to the guests food and drink were offered to them (34.5), for a guest was believed to be the Lord to all good men (37.13). The non-observance of this custom may result into the pronouncement of curse (61.33). A Brahmin was saluted with folded hands on his arrival (30.29,31), e.g. Yayāti saluted Bhārgava with his folded hands and stood humbly before him (30.29). The hands may be folded even on the head (167.46). Respect may be shown by bowing down with all limbs i.e. by sāsṭāṅga praṇāma (175.64). It appears that when a person was pleased with some body, he would touch the limbs of the person concerned, e.g. Śiva touched the limbs of Sukra when he was pleased with his penance and appeared before him (47.170).

The eternal feeling of the human heart viz. to take the arrival of the distinguished guests as an occasion of great joy finds an expression in the cheerful and sentimental words that are uttered by various characters in the MP (103.18 etc.). The custom that on the arrival of a guest the host would get up and receive him (103.5; 154.13) is even in force in modern times.

Before a deity a person would bow down with his knee and head on the ground (119.39). A person would be solicited or requested by bending on one's knee (154.1, 259, 390 etc.).

The parental affection found a visible expression in the kissing of the cheek of their child or asking it to sit on their lap (154.555) or smelling their head (154.556) or embracing their child (188.32,41; 214.13). Some of these modes of expression of parental affection are even prevalent now-a-days.

It is a matter of common knowledge that every society has its particular modes of address and in the event of its violation a spirited person would

be enraged. In the MP e.g. when the sage Mārkaṇḍeya was addressed by his name by the Lord, he was all wrath and roared out ~~which~~ that person was who cherished to embrace death by such an irreverent mode (167.40).

It is also observed that when an audience was sought with some great personage, he was informed about it and the permission was sought by his attendant and then a visitor was ushered in his presence (250.25). This age-old custom is even operative in modern times.

It is also noticed that people used to apply oil to their bodies before bath (115.12), but this practice was believed to be harmful during the period of the observance of rites (115.13 etc.).

It is even a custom in modern times that when some thing is to be pointed out, it is done so with the index-finger. The same method was followed by the sons of Sarmisthā in pointing at the king Yayāti when they were asked by Devayānī as to who was their biological father (32.15). The common practice that the ground should be purified before

any religious act is commenced is also referred to in the MP, but Avimukta is believed to be an exception to this (184.45).

In one place Indra exhorts his fellow-gods to worship the presiding deities of the weapons at the time of making preparations for war against Tāraka(148.78). This may refer to the custom of worshipping the presiding deities of the weapons to earn their favour at the time of the preliminaries for war.

#### IV. POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS

As long as a society has a particular texture of customs and conventions woven around it and is inherent in it, it would be idle to dream of a society immune from superstitions, because, at times, these customs and conventions develop a web of superstitions which in turn try to enforce the former's operation. This may be illustrated by a custom referred to above viz. that when a guest was to be received with the pādya, arghya (24.16 ff), food and drink (34.5). This was more

enforced when a belief was set rolling by stating that he was the 'Lord' (37.13). This belief would get strengthened when irascible persons would pronounce a curse in the event of its violation (61.33) and <sup>especially when</sup> ~~if the~~ curse ~~to~~ would be effective.

The belief that serpents live on air is indirectly referred to in the MP. <sup>89</sup> They are also believed to be controllable by incantations (135.61). A belief also runs that gods only and not the mortals are capable of understanding the language of ants (21.23). It is even a common belief in modern times that the lakes, the lotus-ponds, the rivers etc. are the haunting places of the pretas (departed souls) wandering in search of food. This is alluded to in the MP (141.68 ff). The belief in the existence of the bhūtas (ghosts), rākṣasas (demons), piśācas (goblins), vaiṭālas appears to be very strong from the fact that a king is advised to keep precautionary and preventive measures to annul their influences (217.85; 218.36). Moreover the medicines in the nature of decoctions

---

89. MP 19.8; cf. Śrīharṣa's Naiṣadhacarita 4.10.

made of rare herbs and roots show how people were fully superstitious, afraid of poisons and demons<sup>90</sup> in those days..

The belief in the doctrine of transmigration<sup>91</sup> is also met with in the MP. The belief in various omens and portents, dreams and other symptoms is testified by various chapters dealing with them<sup>92</sup> along with their pacificatory rites.

Water touched with the recitation<sup>of</sup> mantras is believed to be efficacious in fulfilling one's desire. Devāvṛdha who was issueless performed austerities and sacrifice and touched the river Parṇāsā with the recitation of the mantras and it became favourable(44.52).

Good deeds performed in sacred places are believed to work as relieving agencies to persons in times of stress (150. 216-217).

---

90. Dikshitar V.R.R., The Matsya Purāṇa, A Study, p. 77.

91. Vide section on Doctrine of Transmigration in ch. VI.

92. Cf. MP Chs. 228-238; 241-243; 131.25 ff; 159.30 ff; 163.34 ff; 188.12 ff.

The dreams may be pleasant or frightening (131.19; 134.11). En passant it may also be noted that at times in dreams one got inspiration from preternatural objects for things to be done or heard the divine speech (21.25 ff; 120.42 ff). The transitory nature of things seen in a dream is also suggested in the MP (129.26). Professor V.R.R. Dikshitar remarks that "the mention may be made of the significance the Purāna attaches to dreams and their effects, suggesting an age of crude astrology and consequently of superstitious ideas and beliefs reminding us of the *kananul* in the vogue in the ancient Tamil land."<sup>93</sup>

It is a common belief that if a person remembers God at the time of his death, he would be liberated. It is stated in the MP that if a person on the death-bed remembers Hari, he would depart to *vaiṣṇavapura* (82.27).

The notion that when a divinity is born on the earth, people feel a sense of relief and joy

---

93. Dikshitar V.R.R., op.cit., p. 46, on dreams vide ERE, Vol. V (1951), pp. 28 ff.

which is also experienced by the inmates of the hell finds an expression in MP (154.97-98).

The belief in the efficacy of mantras which is traceable to the Brāhmaṇa literature finds a reference in the MP. It is stated that offerings made to manes with due mantras reach them unfailingly and a simile of a calf searching its mother lost in many a cow is given to explain this (141.76).

Some of the rivers are believed to possess purifying powers, e.g. the Narmadā is believed to purify a person by its very sight and destroy the sins (186.11 etc.) and even that of the Brahmanicide (186.55). The Sarasvatī is said to purify a person within three days, the Yamunā in seven days whereas the Ganges immediately (186.11). Baths at sacred places are believed to be capable of destroying even the most heinous crimes like the Brahmanicide and also to lead to the acquisition of merits (190.10, 11; 191.26, 51 etc.).

The offering of one's limbs after lopping them off to the birds in Prayāga enables one to command worship and honour in the Somaloka and after

degradation from this region one is born as a religious minded king on this earth. He enjoys many types of pleasure and repairs again to Prayāga (107.17). If a person breaks down his legs with a stone in Avimukta and dies there, he goes to the region of Śiva (181.23). If a person entered the fire in Avimukta according to due ritual, he would secure emancipation (lit. enter the mouth of Śiva) (183.77). It is also believed that the very recitation or hearing of the greatness of sacred places leads to liberation (106.1, 20 etc.). The literature of the Gupta period contains repeated references to the belief in omens, portents and the life prevalent among the people in all walks of life.<sup>94</sup>

#### V. SPORTS, PASTIMES AND FESTIVITIES

Human soul craves for diversion and relaxation after a heavy and monotonous task and this craving finds out various means for diversion. There are several ways of diversion in a society and the following are met with in the MP.

---

94. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D. (Ed.),  
The Classical Age, p. 574.

The game of ball is referred to in 160.4. References to erotic sports are not wanting in the MP. The Ch. 209 depicts the sylvan beauty and the erotic gestures displayed by animals etc. The scene is indeed excitant of love. In 139.22 ff there is the delineation of the erotic sports of the Asuras of the city of Tripura and in 120.1 ff that of the Gandharvas with the nymphs. References to the domestication of birds, encaging and their cracklings are met with in the MP (135.62; 154, 518 ff; 188.47). The Indus valley people also kept birds as pets.

References to hunting as a pastime of kings are met with in the MP (27.4; 45.6, 11; 50.11). Gambling as a pastime<sup>95</sup> appears to be alluded to in the MP. Nimi used to play dice with his wives (61.32) and Śiva too with Pārvatī (154.520). There is an instruction that a royal employee should show his smartness or expertness in gambling (216.8). The antiquity of the pastime of gambling is as old as the RV (10.34).

---

95. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D. (Ed.),  
The Vedic Age, p. 177.

Moreover water-sports (170.20; 158.29 etc.), plucking of flowers (120.3; 201.25), pleasure-sports on the mountains (120.35), visits to gardens and baths there (27.4; 180.28 etc.), swings (139.39, 41) and grounds for swings (139.43) are also alluded to in the MP.

A toy made of gems (or studded with gems) is alluded to when Menā tells Pārvatī that if she would bow down to Nārada, she would get a toy made of (studded with) gems (154.140). Tvaṣṭā presented to Skanda a cock which can assume any form at its will as a toy (159.10). The wooden horses are also referred to in 188.11. They are said to have laughed loudly when Siva discharged an arrow at Tripura (188.11); probably this may refer to the toy-horses in the houses of Asuras.

The colophon of the Ch. 139 reads 'Tripura-Kaumudī' and describes the erotic sports of the Asuras in the moonlit night. Can this refer to the so-called Kaumudī-mahotsava? The Mudrārākṣasa of Viśākhadatta refers to this festival in Act III. This festival was celebrated in ancient times on

the full-moon day of the month of Kārttika. It was a moon-light festival. Kumuda or kumud denotes a night-lotus. The lotus-flowers in general bloom luxuriantly in the Śarad season. The month of Kārttika in particular is favourable to the blossoming of kumuda flowers. According to some authorities like the author of the Sarasvatī-Kaṇṭhābharana, Yasodhara, Virabhadra, Jagaddhara, this is identified with the Āsvayujī. In the Mudrārākṣasa it is the Kārttika full moon festival<sup>96</sup> that is alluded to.

It is significant to note that a king is prohibited from attending a devotsava (215.74).

#### VI. WEIGHTS, MEASUREMENTS AND NUMISMATIC DATA

In the MP there are stray references to various terms referring to different units of weights, measurements and to coins. As there is no description of these things, the comparative study is not entered upon but merely the data available in the MP

---

96. Dhruva K.H. (Ed.), Mudrārākṣasa, Notes pp. 114-115.

is noted here.

Units of Weights :

The following are the words denoting the various units of weights :--

Bhāra : (82.5 etc.). It is a weight equal to 2000 Palas of gold = 20 Tulās.<sup>97</sup>

Drona : (83.12 etc.). It is a weight equal to 34 seers.<sup>98</sup>

It is a measure of capacity = 4 Ādhakas = 16 Puṣṭakalas = 128 Kuñcis = 1024 Muṣṭis or = 200 Palas = 1/20 Kumbha; or = 1/16 Khārī = 4 Ādhakas, or = 2 Ādhakas = 1/2 Sūrpa = 64 Seers.<sup>99</sup>

Kṛsnala : (227.9 etc.). It is the black-berry of the plant Abrus precatorius used as a weight (the average weight being one or two grains). It is also the coin of the same weight. It is also a piece of gold of the same weight.<sup>100</sup> In the MP the

- 
97. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 753.  
 98. R. Tri. op. cit., p. 205, fn. 2.  
 99. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 502.  
 100. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 308.

reference appears to a coin. In 227.152 a Kṛṣṇala of gold is referred to.

Māsa : (227.98 etc.). It is a particular weight of gold = 5 Kṛṣṇalas = 1/10 Suvarna. The weight in common use is said to be 17 grains troy.<sup>101</sup>

Māsaka : (227.7 etc.). It is a particular weight of gold equal to 7 or 8 Guñjās and according to some it is equal to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  grains.<sup>102</sup> It is either of gold (227.7, 146, 156) or of silver (227.89).

Pala : (76.3; 86.2 etc.). It is a particular weight equal to 4 Karṣas = 1/100 Tulā.<sup>103</sup>

Prastha : (55.18; 66.11; 70.43 etc.). It is a weight and measure of capacity = 32 Palas, or =  $\frac{1}{4}$  Ādhakas; or = 16 Palas = 4 Kuḍavas =  $\frac{1}{4}$  Ādhaka, or = 2 Sarāvas = 6 Palas or 1/16 Drona.<sup>104</sup>

---

101. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 814.

102. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 814.

103. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 603.

104. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 699.

Suvarṇa : (227.8 etc.). It is a particular weight of gold equal to one Karṣa = 16 Māṣas = 80 Raktikās = about 175 grains troy. It is also a gold coin.<sup>105</sup>

Numismatic Data :

In the history of money various things e.g. cows, goats, comries, gold, silver etc. have acted as means of currency and now-a-days we have the paper currency.

The following are the words found in the MP denoting the various coins :--

Kapardikā : (119.11). It is quite well known that it was a means of currency in ancient times and the references to it as a currency are available in the Sanskrit literature; but the word, here, does not denote a coin.

Kārsāpāna : (227.79 etc.). It is a coin or weight of different values. It weighs a Karṣa. If it is of gold, its weight is equal to 16 Māṣas;

---

105. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 1236.

if it is of silver, it is equal to 16 Paṇas or 1280 Cowries; if it is of copper, it is equal to 80 Raktikās or about 176 grains, but according to some it is equal to 1 Paṇa of Cowries or 80 Cowries.<sup>106</sup> A Kārṣa is a weight of gold or silver equal to 16 Māṣas = 80 Rattis =  $\frac{1}{4}$  Pala =  $\frac{1}{400}$  of Tulā = 176 grains troy in common use. Eight Rattis are given to the Māṣa and then the Karṣa is, then, about <sup>107</sup> 280 grains troy.

Kṛsnā : Vide s.v. units of weights.

Niska : (77.11; 227.86 etc.). It is a particular coin varying in value at different times. It is equal to 1 Dīnāra of 32 small or 16 large Rattis, = 1 Karṣa or Suvarṇa of 16 Māṣas = 1 Pala of 4 or 5 Suvarṇas = 1 larger Pala or Dīnāra variously reckoned at 108 or 150 Suvarṇas = 4 Māṣas = 16 Dramnas; also it is a weight of silver of <sup>108</sup> 4 Suvarṇas. In the RV it stands for a gold

106. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 276.

107. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 259-260.

108. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 562.

ornament worn on the neck as well as for a sort  
of currency.<sup>109</sup> In the later Vedic period it had  
become a unit of value in addition to the old-  
time unit, the cow.<sup>110</sup>

Pana : (227.14 etc.). It is a weight of  
copper used as a coin = 20 Māṣas = 4 Kākinīs.<sup>111</sup>  
According to JA, it is a 'Paisā'.<sup>112</sup> The word  
Panika also occurs in 227.195.

Suvarna : Vide s.v. units of weights.

Units of Measurement of Distance :

The references to Yojanas are very common in  
geographical chapters. In the VP also the refe-  
rences to yojanas are very common on chapters on  
geographical data.<sup>113</sup>

In the MP the following words are met with  
denoting the various units of measurements of  
distance :--

- 
109. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D.(Ed.),  
The Vedic Age, pp. 394, 396.  
110. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D.(Ed.),  
The Vedic Age, p. 461.  
111. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 580.  
112. JA, mp, Vol. III, p. 932.  
113. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 97.

Āṅgula (-li) : (1.19; 16.24; 55.21 etc.).

It is a measure equal to eight barley coras;  
twelve āṅgulas make a vitasti or a span and  
twenty-four āṅgulas make a hasta or a cubit.<sup>114</sup>

Aratni : (58.15; 69.39; 253.13 etc.).

Vide s.v. Ratni.

Dhanus : (119.20; 227.24). It is a measure  
of length equal to 4 hastas or 1/2000 Gavyūti.<sup>115</sup>

Hasta : (1.20; 58.6; 69.36, 37 etc.). It is  
a measure of length from the elbow to the tip of  
the middle finger. It is equal to 24 āṅgulas or  
about 18 inches.<sup>116</sup>

Kara : (69.36, etc.). It is a measure of  
length equal to the breadth of twenty-four thumbs.<sup>117</sup>

Kiksu : (173.16). It is a kind of linear  
measure = hasta or kara = 24 thumbs' breadths.<sup>118</sup>  
1/400 Nalva.

---

114. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 8.

115. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 509.

116. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 1294.

117. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 253.

118. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 284.

Krosa : (119.6 etc.). It is a measure of distance = 1000 Daṇḍas = 4000 Hastas =  $\frac{1}{4}$  Yojana; according to others, it is equal to 2000 Daṇḍas = 8000 Hastas =  $\frac{1}{2}$  Gavyūti.

Nalva : (119.4). It is a measurement of distance equal to 400 (or 104?) cubits or is either 52 or 200 yards.

Nivartana : (283,14). It is a measure of land equal to 20 rods or 200 cubits or 40,000 Hastas square.

Ratni : (16.25; 58.7; 253.16 etc.). It is a corrupt form of aratni. It is a measure of length equal to the distance from the elbow to the end of the closed fist, cubit.

---

119. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 322.

120. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 530.

121. Macdonell A.A., A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, p. 137.

122. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 560.

123. Monier Williams, op.cit. p. 865.  
Cf. the Siddhanta-kaumudī on the Unāḍi Sūtra 4.2, baddhamuṣṭhiḥ karo ratniḥ so'ratniḥ pras-rtāṅguliḥ / According to this there is a distinction between a ratni and an aratni; the former is a measure of length equal to a Kara with a closed fist, the latter is equal to a Kara with fingers unfolded.

Tāla : (145.10 etc.). It is the space between the thumb and the middle finger stretched respectively.  
124

Vitasti : (58.8 etc.). It is a measurement of length equal to 12 *Āṅgulas*. It is a long span between the extended thumb and little finger or the distance between the wrist and the tip of the fingers and said to be equal to 12 *Āṅgulas* or about  
125  
9 inches.

Vyāma : (153.93 etc.). It is a measurement of two extended arms (= 5 *Aratnis*).  
126

Yojana : (1.23; 11.46; 38.15; etc.). It is a measure of distance some times regarded as equal to 4 or 5 *English miles*; but more correctly it is equal to 4 *Krosās* or about 9 miles; according to other calculations it is equal to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  *English miles* and  
127  
according to some it is equal to 8 *Krosās*.

---

124. SBH Vol. XVII, Pt. 2, p. 303.

125. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 962.

126. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 1038.

127. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 858.

The MP 258.17 gives the following table of measurements :--

8 trasareṇus	=	1 vālāgra <sup>128</sup>
8 vālāgras	=	1 likhyā
8 likhyās	=	1 yūkā
8 yūkās	=	1 yava
8 yavas	=	1 aṅguli
12 aṅgulis	=	1 mukha.

A Trasareṇu is a particle of dust that is clearly seen in the rays of the sun entering through the lattices (258.17). A similar table occurs in the VP which in addition notes that 10 Mahāsthūlas = Bhūtādisthūla; 10 Bhūtādisthūla = Paramāṇu; 8 Paramā-<sup>129</sup>ṇus = Trasareṇu. The VP also gives some idea about the various units of measurements of distances to each other. The table is as follows :-

8 Aṅgulas = Pradesa(?); 12 Aṅgulas = Vitasti;  
 21 Aṅgulas = Ratni; 2 Ratnis or 42 Aṅgulas = Kikṣu;  
 24 Aṅgulas = Hasta; 4 Hastas = Dhanus; 2000 Dhanus = Gavyūti; 8000 Dhanus = Yojana.

128. The VP reads Likṣā. (Patil D.R., op.cit., p.79).

129. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 79.

The different units of measurements noted above<sup>130</sup> also occur in the VP. The table in the MP bears resemblance with that of Kauṭilya, but it is not so much elaborate as Kauṭilya's;<sup>131</sup> but the table in the VP is "more elaborate in regard to minute measurements of distance than Kauṭilya and probably shows traces of later age."<sup>132</sup>

#### VII. AGRICULTURE AND OTHER OCCUPATIONS

"Agriculture made real headway during the Rigvedic age, although the practice of ploughing can be traced back to Ind~~o~~-Iranian times."<sup>133</sup> In the MP it is said that Vaisyas were devoted to agriculture in the Kṛta age (165.3). There are also similes from agriculture, viz. the blowing of the sages to Śiva, when they had been to him

---

130. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 79. For information about the different units of measurements from various works vide Patil D.R., op.cit., pp.203-204.

131. Kauṭilya, Arthaśāstra, Book 2, Ch.20; Shamashastry's Translation, p. 117.

132. Patil D.R., op.cit., p. 204.

133. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D. (Ed.), The Vedic Age, p. 395.

to move the proposal for marriage with Umā, is compared to the bowing of a husbandman for sowing the handful of good seeds for good fruits in the irrigated field (154.404). Incidentally this also suggests that the art of irrigation was also known. Irrigation was even known to the R̥gv̥edic people.<sup>134</sup> The surging up of the dead demons is compared with that (i.e. sprouting up) of the corn sprinkled by water (136.49). The people of Puṣkaradvīpa are said not to follow the occupation of farming (123.23).

Pr̥thu is associated with the invention of agriculture.<sup>135</sup> The episode of the milching of

---

134. Majumdar R.C. & Pusalkar A.D. (Ed.),  
The Vedic Age, p. 395.

135. Pr̥thur apy avadaḥ vākyam īpsitam dehi suvrate/  
sarvasya jagataḥ śīghram sthāvarasya carasya ca//  
tathāiva sā' pravīd bhūmir dudoha sa narādhipaḥ/  
svake pāṇau Pr̥thur vatsam kṛtvā Svāyambhuvam  
annam abhavaḥ chuddham prajā jīvanti yena vai/  
MP 10.14-16.

136

the earth also occurs in the VP.

The occupations of the four Varnas are already noted in Chapter II. The following occupations are alluded to in the MP :--

Goldsmithy (92.24; 227.184), icon-making (Chs. 258-261, 263), house-building and temple building (architecture),<sup>137</sup> laundry (192.20; 217.155), pottery (124.72; 125.52), cattle-breeding (123.23),<sup>138</sup> slaughtering.

---

136. Patil D.R., op.cit., pp. 29, 134.

In the words of V.R. Karandikar "it was he who started argiculture on a commercial scale." Narmadā Valley Civilisation, Proceedings and Transactions of the Seventh All-India Oriental Conference, Baroda 1933 (1935), p. 266. He interprets the episode of the milching of the earth as symbolising the selection of the profession and his chase after the earth in the form of a cow as a tour of investigation in order to find out the various means adopted by the people all over the country to secure food. (ibid, p. 266 ff).

137. MP. Chs. 252-257; 269-270; Dikshitar V.R.R., The Matsya Purāna - A Study, Ch. IV, pp. 101 ff.

138. MP 153.217; but ga and ña read 'pasūpālāḥ' for the ASS reading 'pasumārah'.