

Āgñīstoma
5th day
(cont.).
Grahas
(cups).

is mixed up with some of the aforesaid waters and poured into the *āroṇa* pitcher through a strainer. A large number of *grahas* (cups) is drawn from the *soma*-juice either when streaming into the vessel or when deposited in it.

The sacrifice is regarded as *Prajāpati* with a human form, the components of which have been already mentioned as represented by the different parts of the larger altar and the enclosed hall. Some of the *grahas* symbolize the functions of these components, and some others the energies operating through some of them. Thus, the high altar is the nose of the Sacrifice, cart-shed head, four sounding-holes passages of the ears and nose, *Āhavanīya* fire mouth, *Āgnīdhṛīya* and *Mārjālīya* fires arms, *Sadas* belly, and *Gārhapatya* (old *Āhavanīya*) fires feet. The *upāṃśu-graha* is the out-breathing of the Sacrifice, *antaryāma*¹ in-breathing, *Aindravāyava* speech, *Maitrāvaruṇa* intelligence and will, *āsvina* hearing, *śukra* and *manthi* eyes, *āgrayana* trunk, *ukthya* vital air, and *vaiśvānara* and *dhruva* front and hind vital airs.² The meaning of the offerings of these cups to the different gods is to be understood in the light of the Vedic belief that 'Prajāpati, the world-man, or all-embracing Personality, is offered up anew in every sacrifice; and inasmuch as the very dismemberment of the Lord of Creatures, which took place at the archetypal sacrifice (of the *Puruṣa-sūkta* of the *Rg-Veda*, x. 90), was in itself the creation of the universe, so every sacrifice is also a repetition of that first creative act. Thus the periodical sacrifice is nothing else than a microcosmic representation of the ever-proceeding destruction and renewal of all cosmic life and matter.'³

Of the *grahas*, the *maitrāvaruṇa* is associated with a legend of political significance. At first, *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, representing the priesthood and nobility respectively, were disunited. The priesthood could stand without the nobility, but not the latter without the former. Hence *Varuṇa* asked *Mitra* for union, promising to give him the foremost place, and thence-

¹ The *upāṃśu* and *antaryāma-grahas* are offered immediately after preparation and the rest after the offering of *savanīya-purodāśas*.

² *S. Br.*, iv. 1. 1 to iv. 2. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, *S. B. E.*, xliii, p. xv.

forth succeeded in all his deeds, from which followed the moral that a *Kṣatriya* should always have a *Brāhmaṇa* to advise him, and without this, all his undertakings would be utter failures. Hence the king should always have a *Brāhmaṇa* in the person of the royal priest for his guidance.¹

After the performance of the *Viprud-homa*, an expiatory oblation for the *soma*-juice spilt during the pressing, the priests and the sacrificer proceed to the *cātūāla* (pit) where the *Bahispavamāna-stotra* is chanted. This *stotra* is mentioned as a ship bound heavenwards, the priests being its spars and oars. The *Agniṣtoma* victim is then killed for Agni and cooked from that time till the evening *soma*-feast. Five sacrificial dishes (*puroḍāśas*) are also offered to particular deities.

After the offerings of some of the aforesaid *grahas*, which take place next, the priest and the sacrificer drink *soma*-juice left in some of the *grahas*, and eat the *idā*; twelve libations are made to the deities of the seasons, followed by the recitation of the *Ājya-śāstra* and two more offerings of cups. The *Ājya-stotra* is next chanted. Those who take part in this ceremony drink the remnants of the *soma*-juice in the cups.²

The mid-day ceremonies are almost the same as those of the morning, with these noteworthy exceptions, that the libations (some being different) are fewer, a separate *stotra* is chanted in the *Sādas* and *dakṣiṇā-homas* performed for making the prescribed gifts to the priests.⁴

The evening rituals are almost like the morning, differences being marked in regard to the *grahas* chanting of the *Ārbhava-stotra*, slaughter of the victim already mentioned, offering of *caru* (rice-pap) to Soma and *ghee* to Gandharvas, who had no share in the *soma*-drinking, *Pātnīvata-graha* to Agni and *Tvaṣṭr*, recitation of the *Āgnimāruta-śāstra* and libation from the *Hariyojana-graha*.⁵

The *Agniṣtoma* is concluded with the offering of nine *Samīṣṭayajus* to bid farewell to the gods invited to the

¹ *S. Br.*, iv. 1. 4. 1-6.

Ibid., iv. 2. 5 to iv. 3. 2.

² The *Mahendra* cap drawn previously is offered at the last libation.

⁴ *S. Br.*, iv. 3. 3 to iv. 3. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iv. 3. 5 to iv. 4. 3.

Agniṣṭoma
5th day
(cont.).

sacrifice. This is followed by the *Avabhṛtha* bath, after which the sacrificer becomes as pure as a child, a rice-pap to Aditi as the concluding oblation, the *Udayaniyeṣṭi* like the *Prāyaṇīyeṣṭi* mentioned before, the offering of a barren cow (or a bullock) to Mitra and Varuṇa, the *Udavasāniyeṣṭi*, in which a cake is offered to Agni, and one or two other rituals.¹

This brief sketch of the *Agniṣṭoma* will serve to explain not only the *Pavitra* which constitutes the opening ritual of the *Rājasūya*, but also many other sacrifices of which it forms the basis, and which will be dealt with hereafter.

Rājasūya
(cont.).
Pūrṇāhuti.
Cakes to
Anumati,
Nirṛti,
Agni, and
Viṣṇu.

After the *Pavitra* comes the *pūrṇāhuti* (full offering), in which a libation is made of a spoonful of *ghee*. In this ritual, the sacrificer formally resolves to be consecrated to perform the *Rājasūya*. On the following day, a cake is offered to Anumati (the personified approval of the deities) praying her to approve of his consecration, and another cake to Nirṛti (the goddess of evil) for averting her displeasure. Agni and Viṣṇu receive cakes the next day for assenting to the consecration.²

Offerings
to Agni
and Soma,
and Indra
and Agni.
Āgraya-
neṣṭi.

On two successive days, Agni and Soma, and Indra and Agni, are given offerings, for gaining security from evil-doers from the first two, and vigour and energy from the next two deities.³ This offering of new grain is also intended to secure the assent of Indra, Agni, *Viśvedevas*, &c., to the consecration, and obtain healthy crops.⁴

Cātur-
māsya.

The four Seasonal Offerings next commence, the first of which is held on the full-moon of Phālguna, and the other three at intervals of four months each. During the intervals the ordinary half-month sacrifices (*Darśa-pūrṇa-māseṣṭi*) are performed daily, either alternating the Full-moon sacrifice with the New-moon, or holding the former on each day of the bright fortnights and the latter on each day of the dark ones. The first seasonal offering, called *Vaiśvadeva* (All-gods), is

¹ *Ś. Br.*, iv. 4. 4 to iv. 5. 2. I am thankful to Prof. Rāmendra Sundar Trivedi, M.A., P.R.S., for kindly letting me have the use of his thoughtful MS. notes in Bengali on *Agniṣṭoma*, which have enabled me to apportion the several rituals to the five days covered by the sacrifice.

² *Ibid.*, v. 2. 3. 1-6.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 2. 3. 7-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 2. 3. 9 and ii. 4. 3.

meant to secure the gods' approval to consecration by favouring the sacrificer with abundant food and creatures; the second, called *Varuṇapraghāsa*, is addressed to Varuṇa in order that he might express his assent by making the creatures free from blemish and disease. By the *Sākamedha*, i. e. the third seasonal offering made to Agni-Anīkavat (sharp-pointed Agni) and other gods, the sacrificer desires to have their assent through safety from his enemies, while by the last seasonal offering *Sunāsīrya* to Vāyu and Sūrya he seeks prosperity as an indication of their approval.¹

After the Seasonal offerings, which occupy a year, follow *Pañcāvattīya*, *Indraturīya*, and *Apāmārgahoma*—all intended to procure safety and security for the sacrificer, to enable him to perform the sacrifice unmolested. The first ritual consists in the offerings of 'fivefold cut ghee' to the five winds or breaths, the second in offerings to Agni, Varuṇa, Rudra, and Indra, and the third in the performance of a *homa* by the *apāmārga* plants to kill or drive away the fiends.²

The 'triply connected' offerings are (I) to Agni and Viṣṇu, Indra and Viṣṇu, and Viṣṇu for getting men, (II) to Agni and Pūṣan, Indra and Pūṣan, and Pūṣan for cattle, and (III) to Agni and Soma, Indra and Soma, and Soma for glory.

Here Agni is the giver, Viṣṇu guardian of men, Pūṣan protector of cattle, Soma glory, and Indra sacrificer.³

The oblations to Vaiśvānara and Varuṇa take place next, the first for abundance of food and creatures, and the second for making the creatures faultless.⁴

These offerings, constituting the next item, have a special political significance. These *Ratnins* are (i) commander of the army, (ii) *Purohita*, (iii) *Kṣatra*,⁵ (iv) queen, (v) *Sūta*,

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 2. 4. 1-4.

² *Ibid.*, v. 2. 5. 1-12.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 2. 4. 4-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 2. 5. 13-17.

⁵ *Kṣatra* corresponds to *Rājanya* in the *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, i. 8. 9. 1, and *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, i. 7. 3. 3. Eggeling has identified *kṣatra* with the abstract 'ruling power'. Profs. Macdonell and Keith (*V. I.*, ii. 199, 200) explain *Ratnin* by applying it to 'those people of the royal *entourage* in whose houses the *Ratnahavis* . . . was performed in the course of the *Rajasūya*'. The difficulty therefore lies in having (i) to consider *kṣatra* as a mere personification, and (ii) to apply the term to the king, who cannot belong to the 'royal *entourage*'.

Rājasthya
(cont.).

(vi) *Grāmañi*, (vii) *Kṣattri*, (viii) *Samgrahitṛ*, (ix) *Bhāgadugha*, (x) *Akṣāvāpa* and *Govikartana*, (xi) *Pālāgala*, (xii) *Pari-vṛkṣi*.¹

On the first day, the king goes to the house of the commander of the army and offers a cake to Agni-Anikavat (Agni being the commander of the gods),² thereby consecrating himself for the officer, and expressing the desire that the officer might be faithful to the king.

The remaining offerings are made on successive days at the houses of the respective persons concerned excepting *Kṣatra* [item (iii) in the above list], and *Akṣāvāpa* and *Govikartana* together [forming item (x)], for whom offerings are made at the royal palace. The recipients of the remaining oblations on the several occasions are as follows in the order of the aforesaid persons:—(ii) *Brhaspati*, [(i) Agni has been mentioned already], (iii) *Indra*, (iv) *Aditi*, (v) *Varuṇa*, (vi) *Maruts*, (vii) *Savitṛ*, (viii) *Aśvins*, (ix) *Pūṣan*, (x) *Rudra*, (xi) the way personified, (xii) *Nirṛti*. The intention of the sacrificer in all these rituals is to make the officers and others faithful to himself.³ The participation of the aforesaid persons in the ceremony and the application of the term 'king-makers' (*rājakarṭṛ*) to at least some of these are indicative of the deference paid to them by the king. Some of the *Ratnins* were perhaps representatives of the people or certain classes of the subjects, and the reason why their allegiance was an object of special attention with the king shows the political power resting in the hands either of themselves or the classes whom they represented.

Expiation. The contact of those⁴ 'unworthy of sacrifice' with the sacrifice creates evil which is removed by the next offerings to *Soma* and *Rudra*, and *Mitra* and *Brhaspati*.⁵

The Abhi-secanīya. The next rite *Abhisecanīya* (consecration) has as its im-

¹ The duties of the officers in this list have been detailed in a previous chapter 'Evolution of the Principal State-officials'.

² See Sāyana's commentary on *Ś. Br.*, v. 3. 1. 1.

³ *Ś. Br.*, v. 3. 1.

⁴ Sāyana specifies the "commander of the Army and others" as *Sādras*, and the "hunter and others", as of whatsoever low caste. *S. B. E.*, xii. 66 n. 1.

⁵ *Ś. Br.*, v. 3. 2.

mediate basis the *Ukthya* sacrifice, which is nothing but an *Agniṣṭoma* covering five days with these additional rituals, viz. the slaying of a second victim to Indra and Agni on the last day, the chanting of the *Ukthya-stotra* followed by the recitation of the *Ukthya-śastra*.¹ To develop this *Ukthya* sacrifice into the *Abhiṣecanīya*, certain rites are further added: after the preparation of the *Paśu-puroḍāśa* on the fourth day, offerings are made to the divine Quickeners, namely, Savitṛ Satyaprasava for quickening the king for powers of ruling, Agni Gṛhapati for making him the master of the house, Soma Vanaspati for plants, Bṛhaspati Vāc for speech, Indra Jyeṣṭha for excellence, Rudra Paśupati for cattle, Mītra Satya for the Brahman, Varuṇa Dharmapati for control over the law. The *Adhvaryu* utters *mantras* in which the above blessings are invoked upon the sacrificer. There is a passage in these *mantras* worthy of special note: 'This man, O ye people, is your king, Soma is the king of us *Brāhmaṇas*.' A difference is meant to be drawn between the king's ordinary subjects and the people of the *Brāhmaṇa* caste in regard to the king's control over them.²

Seventeen kinds of liquid are collected for the king's anointment, to be held at the mid-day *soma*-feast of the *Ukthya* sacrifice forming the basis of the *Abhiṣecanīya*. These are: (1) Water from the river Sarasvatī, (2) water drawn from amidst the ripples before and behind a man plunging into the water, (3) and (4) waters flowing with and against the current of a river, (5) overflowing water, (6) sea-water, (7) water from a whirlpool, (8) water from the stagnant portion of a river in a sunny spot, (9) rain falling during sunshine, (10) water from a pond, (11) well-water, (12) dew-drops, (13) honey, (14) embryonic waters of a calving cow, (15) milk, (16) clarified butter, and (17) water exposed to the sun-motes.³

Of these kinds of liquid, the first symbolizes speech, next three vigour, fifth abundance, sixth lordship, tenth allegiance of the people to the king, twelfth food, fourteenth to sixteenth cattle, and the last independence.

¹ *Ibid.*, iv. 2. 3. 14 and *S. B. E.*, xli, p. xiv.

² *Ibid.*, v. 3. 3. This is repeated later on.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 3. 4.

Rājasūya
(*cont.*).

The liquids are mixed up and deposited in a vessel of *udumbara* wood representing vigour.

Pārtha
oblations.

Before the *Māhendra* cup is drawn at the midday *soma*-feast of the aforesaid *Ukthya* sacrifice, the ritual of anointing is inserted preceded by six *Pārtha* oblations, the last of which is given to *Brhaspati* representing priestly vigour. After the anointing, six *Pārtha* oblations to other divinities are again given, the first being offered to *Indra* identified with *Kṣatriya* vigour. The king, who is anointed between these two sets of *Pārtha* oblations, is thus encompassed by priestly and princely (*Kṣatriya*) vigours.¹

Dressing
and pro-
clamation.

The king then bathes dressed in the prescribed manner, and after bath wears another dress, takes from the *Adhvaryu* a bow and three arrows for protection, each act being accompanied with proper *mantras*. The deities and mortals are formally apprised of the anointing to be shortly held, and asked to approve of the same.²

Symbolic
conquest
of the four
quarters
and the
upper
region.

After the performance of the rite of putting a piece of copper into the mouth of a long-haired man as a charm against injuries specially from the mordacious creatures, the *ascension of the regions*, east, west, north, south, and the sky, takes place for procuring for the king supremacy in all those quarters.³

Anoint-
ment.

The king then stands on a tiger-skin previously spread before one of the *dhiṣṇyas* (hearths) called *Maitrāvaruṇa*, on the hind part of which a piece of lead is placed for being kicked off by him, thereby symbolically beating off the fiends. A piece of gold is put under the king's foot signifying that he takes thereby his stand on immortal life represented by gold. On his head is placed a plate of gold perforated with nine or one hundred holes, the first number implying the nine vital airs, and the second a hundred years of life. His two arms (standing for *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*) are then raised, signifying that the two gods have mounted a chariot—the king's body—and are seeing, as the *mantra* uttered on the occasion shows, *Aditi* and *Diti*, i.e. their own property and that of others.

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 3. 5. 4-9.

² *Ibid.*, v. 3. 5. 20-37.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 4. 1. 3-8. Cf. *Mitra, Indo-Aryans*, ii. pp. 40, 41.

Standing thus with up-stretched arms and facing the east, the king is besprinkled with water¹ by the *Adhvaryu*, or the royal priest, and also by the king's relations, a friendly *Kṣatriya*, and a *Vaiśya*, the appropriate *mantras* being uttered therewith.² The water on the king's body is rubbed by himself with the horn of a black antelope, thus supposed to be imbibing into his system the vigour in the water.³ The anointment over, the king takes three steps on the tiger-skin corresponding to Viṣṇu's three steps for the symbolic ascension of the three worlds—heaven, earth, and upper regions, thereby placing himself high above everything here. The remnants of the water are then poured by him into the *Brāhmaṇa's* vessel as an emblem of respect due to *Brāhmaṇas*. This vessel is given away to the king's dearest son to have the former's vigour perpetuated through the latter. The linking of vigours of the father and the son is completed by some oblations with *mantras*.⁴

The reason underlying the ritual of mimic cow-raid is that Varuṇa lost his vigour after consecration and recouped it from cows. Though the king does not actually lose his vigour on the present occasion, he suspects it to have vanished, and where can it go unless to his relative foremost of all? Hence, in this ritual he mounts a chariot yoked with four horses, drives to a place among the relative's hundred cows stationed on the north of the *Āhavanīya* fire, and touches one of them with the end of his bow, believing to be taking back thereby to himself his vigour. The stoppage of the chariot amongst the cows transfers the ownership of the cattle to the king. The king in return gives the relative a hundred cows or more, incapable as he is of committing forcible seizure.

The chariot is brought back to its place and four oblations are made to the four deities presiding over the different parts

Rājasiṃha
(cont.).

The mimic
cow-raid.

Conclusion
of cow-
raid.

¹ The seventeen kinds of water mixed in an *udumbara* vessel are divided into four parts in four buckets, the *Brāhmaṇa* sprinkling from the bucket of *palāśa* wood, the kinsmen of *udumbara*, the *Kṣatriya* of *nyagrodha*, and the *Vaiśya* of *śvāttha*. (*Ś. Br.*, v. 3. 5. 11-14.)

² Either now, or after the game of dice later on, the *Hotṛ* tells the story of *Sunahśepa*.

³ *Ś. Br.*, v. 4. 1. 9 to v. 4. 2. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 4. 2. 6-10.

Rājāsūya
(cont.).

of the vehicles, in order to render kingship favourably circumstanced in regard to prosperity and vigour, the nobility and the peasantry. While yet in the chariot the king puts on a pair of shoes of boar's skin with the object of having abundance of cattle, the principal item of wealth in those days, the legend connected with the boar being the basis of this ritual. Certain *mantras* are uttered to establish a friendly relation between the king and the earth, down upon which he now steps, followed by the charioteer, who jumps down on a place different from that trodden by his master. Two minor rites for conferring on the king long life, glory, and strength, conclude this ritual.¹

A throne of *khadira* wood is placed on the tiger-skin spread before the *Maitrāvaruṇa* hearth and mantled over with another piece of the same skin betokening increase of *Kṣatriya* power. The duties of the *Hotṛ* in this ceremony as detailed in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* deserve special mention. The term *Punarabhiṣeka* or second consecration is used in the *Brāhmaṇa* to stand for the ritual of *Abhiṣecanīya*, the first consecration (*Abhiṣeka*) of the king performing the *Rājāsūya* having taken place in connexion with his ordinary coronation. The duties and *mantras* of the *Hotṛ* in regard to the *Punarabhiṣeka* are given in a few chapters,² while those in regard to *Mahābhiṣeka*, in imitation of Indra's consecration, are given in certain other chapters.³ But it appears that they are to operate in unison at this stage of the *Abhiṣecanīya*. The two noteworthy features of the proceedings of the *Mahābhiṣeka* are (1) the oath⁴ administered to the king before he sits on the throne, and (2) the various kinds of supremacy that are desired to be attained by him and appear to have been the cherished objects of kingly aspirations.⁵ The oath is as follows: 'If I (the king) ever do you (the priest or perhaps the *Brāhmaṇas* generally) any harm, may I be deprived of all pious acts done by me from my birth till death, the spiritual worlds acquired by me, my religious merit, life, and offspring.'

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 4. 3.

² *Ibid.*, viii. 12-23.

³ *Ibid.*, viii. 15-19.

⁴ *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 5-11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, viii. 15.

The *Adhvaryu* recites a *mantra* in which the king is called *Rājarāja* 'upholder of the sacred law', upon which the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* expatiates by saying that he is so indeed 'because he is not capable of all and every speech nor of all and every deed, but that he should speak only what is right and do what is right; of that he as well as the *Śrotriya* (the *Brāhmaṇa* versed in sacred writ) is capable; for these two are the upholders of the sacred law among men.'¹

Five dice are handed over to the king to be thrown by him, different significations being attached to the results of castings, such as the king's victory in all the quarters or the dominance of the *Kali* age (representing the king) over the three other ages.²

The next rite crystallizes the idea that the king can do no wrong. The *Adhvaryu* and his assistants strike the king on the back with sticks (punishment), thereby putting him beyond the reach of judicial punishment.³

After the rites of *choosing a boon*, and *colloquy* between the *Brahman* priest and the king, is held the *passing round of the sacrificial sword*. The *Adhvaryu*, or the royal priest, makes over a wooden sword to the king with a *mantra*, thereby rendering the latter weaker than a *Brāhmaṇa* but stronger than his enemies. It is then handed over to the king's brother, who passes it on either to the *Sūta* (charioteer) or to *Sthapati*⁴ (governor of a district), who again transfers it to the *Grāmaṇī* (village-headman) to be taken over by a clansman (*sajāta*), each making his successor weaker than himself. This rite gives an insight into the order of precedence of several officials.⁵

One or two minor rites coming next conclude the *Abhiṣecanīya*.

After the five days of *Abhiṣecanīya* follows *Dasapeya*, in which are included ten *samsrpaḥ* oblations. The whole ritual,

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 4. 4. 5.

² *Ibid.*, v. 4. 4. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 4. 4. 7.

⁴ On the meaning see below.

⁵ *Ś. Br.* v. 4. 4. 15-19. The discrepancies between the description given here and that in the *Indo-Aryans*, vol. ii, are due to the reason that Dr. Mitra follows the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* and not the *Satapatha*.

Rājasūya
(cont.) occupying ten days, is intended to impart vigour to the king who takes part in its proceedings.¹

Pañcabila
offerings. The *Pañcabila-caru*, or offerings to several gods in five plates, are meant to remove from the king's mind any feeling of arrogance that might arise from his symbolic ascension of the regions, seasons, hymns, and metres.²

Oblations
of teams. The object of the *Prayujām* oblations is thus laid down in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*:³

'The anointed thereby yokes the seasons, and thus yoked those seasons draw him along, and he follows the seasons thus yoked.'

Hair-cutting. After a year is held the *Keśavapāṇīya*⁴ for cutting the hair of the king's head, which is allowed to grow during the interval after the consecration. The belief underlying the ceremony was that it was the hair of his head that imbibed first the vigour of the water sprinkled during the consecration, and if it was shaved the vigour would vanish. The present ritual, by clipping hair at the prescribed time, serves to preserve it.⁵

Vyūṣṭi-dvirātra
and
Kṣatra-dhṛti. The following two rituals, viz. *Vyūṣṭi-dvirātra* and *Kṣatra-dhṛti*⁶ are not mentioned in the *Śatapatha* because they involve no features different from the ordinary *soma* sacrifice. The former lasts for two nights and is meant to purge the king of all sins,⁷ while the latter, occupying a day, appears from its name to be a rite for the support of the king's power.⁸

The *Sautrāmaṇī*⁹ is then performed as an expiation for

¹ *S. Br.*, v. 4. 5. The *Daśapeya* is a modification of the *Agniṣṭoma* with the oblations added.

² *Ibid.*, v. 5. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 5. 2.

⁴ *Keśavapāṇīya* is a modification of *Atirātra*, which is again a modification of *Agniṣṭoma*.

⁵ *S. Br.*, v. 5. 3. The king is henceforth prohibited from shaving his hair and standing on the ground with bare feet.

⁶ *Kṣatra-dhṛti* is held a month after the *Vyūṣṭi-dvirātra*, which again comes off a month after *Keśavapāṇīya*.

⁷ See *Faṅcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xviii. 11, 11, for the object of the ritual.

⁸ The object of this ceremony is nowhere, so far as I see, expressly given.

⁹ This takes place a month after *Kṣatra-dhṛti* and is a combination of oblations with sacrifice of animals.

excesses in the drinking of soma-juice during the whole of the preceding period of the *Rājasūya*, followed by the closing oblation called *Traidhātavi*.¹

Rājasūya
(cont.).
Sautrā-
manī and
Traidhā-
tavi.

The description of the *Rājasūya* as given in the *Mahābhārata* does not detail the rituals, but lays down a condition precedent which makes it performable by very powerful kings after they have completed a *digvijaya*² (conquest of the quarters). The Vedic *Rājasūya* does not depend on any such condition, and can be celebrated even by petty kings. In the epic as well as later periods, therefore, the sacrifice must have been a source of great unrest, though of course it was, by the above restriction, of infrequent occurrence.

(C) (ii). *Vājapeya*. The rituals of the *Vājapeya*, performed, according to the *Satapatha*, by an emperor for installation to his imperial position, or by a *Brāhmaṇa* for inauguration to his supreme position as such are identical with those of the *Agniṣṭoma* with certain additions. The legend upon which this sacrifice is based is that, once upon a time, the gods and the *asuras*, both children of *Prajāpati* (the lord of creatures), tried to be supreme. Each *asura* in his arrogance thought himself supreme, and, as he recognized none superior to him, made offerings into his own mouth as the token of his presumption. Each god, on the other hand, made offerings to his fellows. *Prajāpati* for this reason sided with the gods, and the universe became theirs. But a rivalry set in among the gods, each of whom wanted to have *Prajāpati* or the universe all to himself. To set it at rest, they ran a race in which *Bṛhaspati* impelled by *Savitṛ* became the winner. This race furnished the nucleus of a sacrifice, namely, the *Vājapeya*, by which *Indra* sacrificed and became supreme. As *Bṛhaspati*

The
legend.

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 5. 4-5.

² *MBh.*, ii. 13. 47.

Yasmin sarvaṃ sambhāvati yaś ca sarvatra pūjyate,
yaś ca sarveśvaraḥ sa rājasūyam sa vindati.

See also *Ibid.*, 14. 68, 69 where the independence of *Jarāsandha*, who had imprisoned a number of princes, was considered as essential to the fulfilment of the condition precedent.

The *Kautiliya* makes no mention of the *Rājasūya* in connexion with the salaries of government servants, but gives no clue to the point under notice. *Kautiliya*, v. iii, p. 246.

Vājapeya (cont.). was the *Purohita* of the gods, and Indra a divine *Kṣatriya*, both *Brāhmaṇas* and *Kṣatriyas* are eligible for the performance of the sacrifice.¹

Grahas. After some preparatory rites for some days, the rituals of the first four days of the *Agniṣṭoma*² are celebrated on as many days, followed by the performances of the fifth day, among which are found these additions or differences: With the morning pressing of *soma*-plants are drawn the *amśu-graha*, *Agniṣṭoma-grahas* up to the *āgrayaṇa*, three *Prṣṭhya*-, *Ṣoḍaśi*-, five *Vājapeya*-, seventeen *soma*-, *surā*-, and, *madhu*- and *Ukṭhya*- and *dhiruva-grahas* for various objects such as long life, superiority, winning the worlds, truth, prosperity, and light. With the exception of the *soma*-, *surā*-, and *madhu-grahas*, which are used at the mid-day *soma*-feast, the rest are offered and drunk along with the evening ceremonies.³

Victims. The principal animal victims are four, to which are added eighteen subsidiary ones, namely, a spotted sterile cow (the earth piebald with vegetation) offered to the Maruts representing the peasants, for ensuring the supply of food in the kingdom, and seventeen goats of a particular description offered to Prajāpati for the same purpose.⁴

At mid-day, before the *Māhendra* cup is drawn, takes place the chariot-race, the sacrificer competing with sixteen rivals. The sacrificer's chariot is taken from its stand to the north-eastern part of the *Mahāvēdi*, four horses to be harnessed to it are sprinkled with water accompanied with *mantras* in order that they might win the race for their master. A rice-pap is prepared for *Brhaspati*, the winner of the first race of this kind, and taken to the horses to be smelled by them for the same purpose. The *Brahman* stands on a cart-wheel fixed to a post and sings a *Sāman* to gain for his client the air-world, the terrestrial world being left to be won by the chariot-race. Seventeen drums put in a row from the *Āgnīdhra* hearth westwards are beaten for making an auspicious sound favourable to the sacrificer's purpose. A post

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 1. 1. 1-11.

² For description of the *Agniṣṭoma*, see the first portion of the section on the *Rājasūya*.

³ *Ś. Br.*, v. 1. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 1. 3.

is fixed at the end of seventeen arrows' range to indicate the farthest limit of the racecourse. The sacrificer prays to Savitr for impulsion and mounts his chariot, as also do his sixteen rivals. During the race the *Adhvaryu* utters *mantras* addressed to the horses of the sacrificer's chariot. The cars run up to the post round which they turn and come back in such a way that the sacrificer happens to be the first to reach the altar. It is this winning of the chariot-race by the sacrificer as an emperor (or by a *Brāhmaṇa* recognized as supreme by virtue of his qualities inborn and acquired) that formally proclaims and installs him to the high position that has been already his by general consent. The horses are made to smell again the *Bārhaspatya* rice-pap with the thought that the establishment of the sacrificer's superiority upon the terrestrial world is now an accomplished fact. The *Adhvaryu* and the sacrificer next put the *madhu-graha* previously mentioned in the hand of a *Vaiśya* or *Kṣatriya* competitor in the race, who in turn makes it over to the *Brahman*, while the *Neṣṭṛ* (an assistant of the *Adhvaryu*) a *surā* cup in the hand of the same person. By the former rite, the recipient obtains long life and other benefits, and by the latter the sacrificer is imbued with 'truth, prosperity, and light', leaving with the *Kṣatriya* or *Vaiśya* 'untruth, misery, and darkness, but enjoyment of all benefits'.¹

It is supposed by some authorities that the *Vājapeya* sacrifice grew very probably out of the 'chariot racing transformed into a ceremony which by sympathetic magic secures the success of the sacrificer'.²

After twelve *Āpti* and six *Kṛpti* offerings on the *Āhavanīya* fire for procuring for the sacrificer all that the twelve months of the year and the six seasons can bestow, the sacrificer climbs up a ladder put against the post at the end of the racecourse, followed by his wife, who has been led up to the place by the *Neṣṭṛ*. The company of the wife is intended to make the sacrificer complete by addition to him of one-half of his own self. A lump of wheaten dough fixed on the post as its head-piece is then touched by him with the *mantra*, 'We

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 1. 4 and 5.

² *V. I.* ii. 281.

Vājapeya
(cont.).

have gone to the light, O ye gods,' the touching of the dough symbolizing the obtainment of food and drink that give him the strength to reach the supreme goal. He then rises over the post by the measure of his head saying, 'We have become immortal,' whereby he wins the celestial world. Then he adds 'Ours be your power, ours your manhood and intelligence, ours be your energies', for by the *Vājapeya*, the celebrant obtains Prajāpati, who is everything here. Seventeen packets of *Asvattha* leaves containing salt are thrown up to him by the *Vaiśyas* to indicate that they would never fail as agents for supply of food. Homage is then made by him to Mother Earth in order that she might not shake him off. A goat's skin with a gold coin on it is spread by the *Adhvaryu* for the sacrificer to step upon after descending from the ladder. Gold being the symbol of immortality, the sacrificer is supposed to take his stand on immortal life by this ritual.¹

Sprinkling.

A throne of udumbara wood is placed behind the *Āhavanīya* fire in front of the cart-shed, and a goat's skin is spread on it.² The sacrificer is seated on the throne with this *mantra* uttered by the *Adhvaryu*, 'Thou art the ruler, the ruling lord! Thou art firm, and steadfast! (I seat) Thee for the tilling! Thee for peaceful dwelling! Thee for wealth! Thee for thrift!'³ The *Bārhaspatya* pap is now given to *Bṛhaspati*, but its *Sviṣṭakṛt* is left to be offered later on after the *ujjiti* oblations. Several kinds of food are brought to the sacrificer to be tested by him, and those that are not brought are to be eschewed by him through life.⁴ Out of these articles are offered with formulas seven *Vājaprasavaniya* oblations to increase his strength. The remnants are sprinkled on the sacrificer with a *mantra* which declares his supremacy and entrusts him to the protection of the deities. This is followed by the *ujjiti* oblations which are supposed to give him control upon life, men, three worlds, cattle, five regions, six seasons, seven kinds of domestic animals, &c., in short *Prajāpati* himself. After one or two other rites, the *Māhendra* cup is drawn, and while the *Prṣṭha-stotra* is chanted, to be followed

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 2. 1. 1-21.

² *Ibid.*, v. 2. 1. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 2. 1. 22-4.

⁴ Authorities differ as to this point.

by the recitation of its *Śastra*, the sacrificer comes down from the throne and attends to the chanting and recitation.¹

(C) (iii). *Aśvamedha*. It is agreed on all hands in the Vedic texts that the performer of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice should be a *Kṣatriya* king. The achievement of the political object of assertion of power no doubt required that he should be very powerful, but this requirement is not expressly mentioned in several of the aforesaid texts. The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* clearly points out 'Let him who holds royal sway perform the horse-sacrifice; for, verily, whosoever performs the horse-sacrifice, without possessing power, is poured (swept) away. . . . Were unfriendly men to get hold of the horse, his sacrifice would be cut in twain',² and the warning thus conveyed is also found in the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*.³ The *Sūtra* of this work gives rather a vague definition of the eligibility by laying down that it can be celebrated by a *sārvabhauma* (king ruling the whole land) as well as by an *asārvabhauma* (king not ruling the whole land). The rest of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Sūtras* named in the following paragraph are silent on any distinctive qualities other than what has been mentioned at the outset. Prof. Eggeling⁴ elucidates the point by remarking that the performance of the sacrifice involved assertion of political authority which was possible only for a monarch of undisputed supremacy able to face with confidence the risk of humiliation; for the entrance of the sacrificial horse into a neighbouring territory implied a challenge to its king. The necessity of having a hundred royal princes to guard the horse while ranging about perhaps indicates the wide political influence of the sacrificer.

Over and above the implied object of asserting political supremacy, various other objects were kept in view and believed to be achieved by the sacrifice. Wealth, strength, male progeny, and freedom from sins are prayed for in a hymn of the *R̥g-Veda*⁵ relating thereto. The characteristics of the sacrifice according to the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*⁶ as interpreted by

¹ *Ś. Br.*, v. 2. 2.

² *Ibid.*, xiii. 1. 6. 3.

³ *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, iii. 8. 9. 4.

⁴ *S. B. E.*, xliv, pp. xv, xxviii.

⁵ *R̥g-Veda*, i. 162. 22.

⁶ *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, iii. 9. 19.

*Aśva-
medha*
(cont.).

Sāyana are (1) the presence of all kinds of riches in the kingdom, (2) the existence of all sorts of welfare, (3) abundant food, (4) abundance of yields from cattle, (5) its continuous flow of benefits, (6) its specially abundant benefits, (7) its steadiness, (8) its glory, (9) its power to produce fame for the *Brāhmaṇas* of the country, (10) its power to remove sins, and the corresponding ability of every *Kṣatriya* in the kingdom to kill the enemy, (11) its power to ensure long life, and (12) to secure acquisition of property by the subjects and preservation thereof; according to the *Śatapatha*,¹ fulfilment of all desires and attainment of all attainments, while its *Sūkta*² as well as that³ of the *R̥g-Veda* mentions the former alone.

The *Aśva-
medha*, a
three-days
Soma-
sacrifice.

The *Aśvamedha* occupies in fact one year and a fortnight, but is regarded notwithstanding as a *triduum*,⁴ the last three days covering the essential rituals proper and the preceding period the preparations.

Prepara-
tions.

The preliminaries commence either in summer or in spring, but preferably in the latter season six or seven days before the full moon of *Phālguna*. The four chief priests meet together and eat a mess of rice prepared by one of them. The king and four of his wives pass the night in the sacrificial hall with self-restraint intending to reach successfully the end of the preparatory year. This is followed by the morning offering and

Mess of
rice.
Night
ritual.

Oblations.

pūrṇāhuti (full-offering) by the *Adhvaryu* and oblations to Agni (mouth of the sacrifice) and Pūṣan (overlord of roads), the objects of which are the accomplishment of the sacrificer's desires and the safety of the sacrificial horse while roaming for a year to follow.⁵ The horse possessing supreme excellence and other prescribed qualities is tied up with a rope of *darbha* grass twelve or thirteen cubits long with proper *mantras* and sprinkled with water to make it acceptable to the gods; while the water is dripping from its body, a rite is performed for

Sprinkling
of the
sacrificial
horse.

¹ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 4. 1. 1.

² *Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xx. 1.

³ *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xvi. 1. 1.

⁴ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 4. 1. 1; *Pañcavimśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xxi. 4; *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xvi. 1. 1. Cf. *Rām.*, i. 14. 40, and *MBh.*, xiv. 88. 13, in which the sacrifice is mentioned as an *ahina*, i.e. belonging to a class of sacrifices that last for two to twelve days.

⁵ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 4. 1.

averting seizure of the horse by enemies during its year's journey. In this rite a dog is put under the horse and killed.¹ *Atva-medha (cont.).*

Three offerings are made the next morning to Savitṛ Prasavitr, Savitṛ Āsavitr, and Savitṛ Satyaprasava for speeding the sacrifice, the fore-offerings attached thereto being succeeded by songs sung by a *Brāhmaṇa* to the accompaniment of a lute played by himself. These songs, like the bardic recitations, related the past liberalities of the king now celebrating the *Aśvamedha*, and the sacrifices performed by him. *Savitṛ offerings.*

The horse is then brought to the grounds in front of the sacrificial hall and let loose among a hundred worn-out horses to be guarded by four hundred armed men, namely, a hundred princes clad in armour, a hundred warriors with swords, a hundred sons of heralds and headmen with quivers and arrows, and a hundred sons of attendants and charioteers. The *Adhvaryu* with the sacrificer, just before letting it loose, whispers into its right ear certain *mantras*, in which the horse is lauded and entrusted to the care of the guardian deities of the quarters and the four classes of human guardians of the four regions just enumerated. The duties of these human guards are not only to protect the horse, but also to keep it away from waters suitable for bathing, and mares. It was believed that the successful accomplishment of these duties by the hundred princes for the prescribed period of a year made them kings, while their failure in this respect deprived them of this high position and made them mere nobles and peasants instead.² A number of *Stokīya* and forty-nine *Prakrama* oblations (addressed to the different qualities of the horse) are then made in order to make up for the wear and tear that it, as an object of offering to the gods, will undergo before it is sacrificed.³ *Horse let loose; whispering; and oblations.*

The horse set at large is to roam about in whichever direction it likes, without the slightest restraint being put upon its will. It is supposed that the oblations offered daily for a year at the sacrificial hall operate as the chain that brings it back to the sacrificial grounds at the end of its journey. These oblations are offered to the same as those already described, namely, to Savitṛ Prasavitr, Savitṛ Āsavitr, and Savitṛ Satyaprasava, *Roaming of the horse.*

¹ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 1. 2.

² *Ibid.*, xiii. 4. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, xiii. 1. 3.

*Asva-
medha
(cont.).*

The re-
volving
legends.

Savitṛ being here regarded as the earth, the bounds of which the horse cannot cross. These rituals are accompanied as formerly with the songs of the lute-player.¹

The *Hotṛ*, after the oblations, takes his seat upon a cushion wrought of gold threads, surrounded by the sacrificer, the *Brahman*, the *Udgātṛ*, seated on similar cushions, and the *Adhvaryu* on a gold stool or slab. Addressed by the *Adhvaryu*, the *Hotṛ* tells the above listeners as well as some householders unlearned in the scriptures the first *Pariplava* (revolving) legend about King Manu Vaivasvata, whose subjects were Men and during whose rule the *Ṛk* formulas were the *Veda*. Thus saying the *Hotṛ* goes over a hymn of the *Ṛk*. On nine successive days the *Hotṛ* relates nine legends about (1) King Yama Vaivasvata whose subjects were the Fathers, and the *Yajus* formulas the *Veda*; (2) King Varuṇa Āditya, whose people were *Gandharvas*, and the *Atharvans* the *Veda*; (3) King Soma Vaiṣṇava, whose people were *Apsaras*, and the *Āngiras* the *Veda*; (4) King Arbuda Kādraveya, who ruled over *Snakes*, *Sarpa-vidyā* (science of snakes) being the *Veda*; (5) King Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, ruling over the *Rakṣas*, the *Devajana-vidyā* (demonology) being the *Veda*; (6) King Asita Dhānva, lord of the *Asuras*, magic being the *Veda*; (7) King Matsya Sāmmada, having *Water-dwellers* as his subjects, the *Itihāsa* being the *Veda*; (8) King Tārksya Vaipaśyata, whose people are the *Birds*, the *Purāṇa* being the *Veda*; (9) King Dharma Indra, ruling over the gods, the *Sāman* (chant-texts) being the *Veda*.

On each of these days the additional listeners are similar to or belong to the same class as the subjects of the various kings, namely, (1) householders unlearned in the scriptures as already pointed out, (2) old men, (3) handsome youths, (4) handsome maidens, (5) snake-charmers with snakes, (6) evil-doers such as robbers, (7) usurers, (8) fishermen with fish, (9) bird-catchers (or knowers of the science of birds) with birds, and (10) learned *śrotriya*s (theologians) accepting no gifts. Likewise the *Hotṛ* reads a hymn of the *Ṛg-Veda* on the first day, a chapter (*anuvāka*) of the *Yajur-Veda* on the second, a section (*parvan*) of the

¹ Ś. Br., xiii. 4. 2. 6-17.

Atharvan, the *Āṅgiras*, the *Sarpa-vidyā*, the *Devajana-vidyā* <sup>Atva-
médha
(cont.)</sup> on the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth respectively, performs some magic trick on the seventh, tells some *Itihāsa*, and some *Purāṇa* on the eighth and ninth respectively, and repeats a decade of the *Sāman* on the tenth.¹

Lute-players sing of the sacrificer every day, associated with the righteous kings of yore, just after these rites. The ten days on which the ten legends are related form a cycle, which is repeated thirty-six times during the year the horse is abroad. Each of the different gods or mythic personages is regarded as king on each successive day, with the special class of beings as his subjects and the particular texts² as the *Veda*.

The telling of these legends, says the *Śatapatha*, covers 'all royalties, all regions, all *Vedas*, all gods, all beings; and, verily, for whomsoever the *Hotṛ*, knowing this, tells this revolving legend, or whosoever ever knows this, attains to fellowship and communion with these royalties, gains the sovereign rule and lordship over all people, secures for himself all the *Vedas*, and, by gratifying the gods, finally establishes himself on all beings.'³

The *Dhṛti* oblations made, like those to *Savitṛ*, at the sacrificial hall every evening for a year, are believed to give the sacrificial horse safe-dwellings at night.⁴ Dhṛti
oblations.

Having noticed the rituals connected with the roaming of the horse and the belief in their control and benign influence upon the animal as well as the benefits accruing to the sacrificer and others, let us turn to the practical complement of these rituals. The horse is let loose in the company of a hundred other horses, and though there is a *formal prohibition to put restraint upon the will of the former* as regards the course of its roaming, *the latter can be freely managed*. This may have been a good expedient for keeping the sacrificial horse within

¹ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 4. 3. 1-14.

² 'Regarding the form and nature of some of the specified texts such as the *Sarpavidyā*, *Devajanavidyā*, *Asuravidyā*, we really know next to nothing. . . . Even regarding *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* . . . additional knowledge would by no means be unwelcome. . . . The legends related would seem to have been, as a rule, of the simplest possible description.' Eggeing, *S. B. E.*, xiv, pp. xxxi, xxxii.

³ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 4. 3. 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii. 1. 4. 3.

*Aśva-
medha*
(*cont.*).

desirable bounds and giving the intended turns to its course.¹ The guards watching it have to spend every night at the dwelling of a carpenter all along their journey. This injunction may be easily practised so long as they do not cross the limits of the sacrificer's domain, but may present difficulties in foreign territories.²

The
challenge.

Not merely the entrance of the horse upon a foreign territory is a challenge to its sovereign, but also the mere release of the horse is a challenge to any one that ventures to capture it and frustrate the object of the sacrificer by defeating him and his people in the fights that ensue. But, as it is not practicable, as a rule, for any of the sacrificer's subjects to take upon himself the risk and its fatal results, or for a rival king to use his forces successfully within the sacrificer's territory, the horse is practically secure so long as it does not go beyond its limits; nevertheless the mere release³ of the horse is as much a challenge as its setting foot upon a foreign soil. In view of the restraint put in practice upon the roamings of the steed, its course was perhaps made to suit the particular purposes with which the horse-sacrifice was performed on particular occasions. If the obtainment of children were the object, it was not necessary to allow it to enter a foreign territory, where needless carnage might be the consequence. Daśaratha's horse-sacrifice⁴ for the above purpose is described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* with so little emphasis upon the wanderings of the horse that it might well be taken as lending colour to the above inference. When the assertion of sovereign authority was in view, the wanderings were made to assume a different character. The sacred animal had to pass through those States upon which the sacrificer's suzerainty was intended to be asserted, for its roamings within a limited area round the sacrificial grounds could not have achieved the desired ends. Should the

¹ In the description of Yudhisthira's *Aśvamedha*, the horse is called *kāmacara* (i.e. roamer at will—*MBh.*, xiv. 83. 2) but the previous *śloka* uses the causative verb *cārayāmāsa* (caused it to proceed), which may show that the injunction of non-restraint was not literally followed.

² *Ś. Br.*, xii. 4. 2. 17, and Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, xlv, p. xxx.

³ The details of the *Aśvamedha* in the late Sanskrit work the *Jaimini Bhārata* speak of a written challenge put upon the head of the horse.

⁴ *Rām.*, i. 14.

practical direction of the rangings of the steed be admitted, *Āśvamedha* (cont.), as it should be, though from the orthodox point of view it was either ignored or not believed and attributed to the influence of the ritual, we get a clue to the solution of the question as to how the horse could be managed while 'wandering at will', and made to return to the sacrificial hall neither a day sooner nor a day later than the prescribed period. Had the steed set free by Yudhiṣṭhira for his *Āśvamedha* been permitted to stray within a few miles of Indraprastha, the intention of having the formal submission of the numbers of princes upon whom the imperial sway was sought to be yoked would have been rendered nugatory. It was looked upon as a cowardice and a sign of submission on the part of a king not to take up the challenge implied in the progress of the horse through his State, and those kings that captured the horse to keep off the stain upon their bravery paid for it dearly. The king of Manipura, the capital of Kalinga, was put to shame by Arjuna for not opposing him like a true *Kṣatriya*.¹ Thus the horse-sacrifice, when performed for assertion of political power, evoked bloody opposition, and proved to be a prolific source of unrest to the many kingdoms that had to draw the sword in order to preserve their independence.

Just after a year from the release of the horse is held the initiation (*Dikṣā*) of the sacrificer. The object of this ritual is the same as that of the *Agniṣṭoma* already dealt with. The ceremony lasts for seven days, of which the first six are spent in the daily offering of four *Audagrabhaṇas* (elevatory) and three *Vaiśvadeva* oblations for the upholding of the *Āśvamedha*. The *Dikṣaṇīyesti* of the *Agniṣṭoma* is performed on the seventh day with an increase in the number of the aforesaid daily offerings, which are followed by one or two rites of the *Agniṣṭoma*. After this, some *mantras* are uttered praying for the birth of *Brāhmaṇas* with spiritual lustre; for *Kṣatriyas*, heroic, skilled in archery, mighty, car-fighters, and good shots; for well-favoured women, victorious warriors, blitheful youths; for milch cows, draught oxen, swift racers, and rain whenever wanted; and for an heroic son to be born to the sacrificer.² In

¹ *MBh.*, xiv. 79-81.

² *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 1. 7-9.

*Atva-
medha*
(cont.).

the evening the lute-players, whose work continued for a whole year and ceased just before the commencement of the *Dikṣā* ceremony, are again called upon to sing of the sacrificer along with the gods in order that he might share the same world with the gods. These songs are repeated on the three *upasad* days of the *Agniṣṭoma* of which this *Dikṣā* is the beginning and also on the succeeding days up to the end of the sacrifice. On each of the three *upasad* days, forming, as it does, a part of the *Aśvamedha*, animal victims are offered, the third day having a larger number of victims than is usual in the *Agniṣṭoma*.¹

First *Soma*-
day.

The *upasad* days are succeeded by the three days that make the *Aśvamedha* a triduum. The rituals of the first are identical with those of the last day of the *Agniṣṭoma* except for the manner of chanting hymns, number of victims quieted, and food-oblations (*Anna-komas*).

Second
Soma-day.

The second *Soma*-day is the most important in view of the ceremonies it involves. Like the preceding *Soma*-day modelled on the last day of the ordinary *Agniṣṭoma*, this *Soma*-day is a modification of the last day of the ordinary *Ukṛthyā*, to which the following are the additions:—When the *Bahiṣpavamāna Stotra* is chanted, the sacrificial horse is taken to the place of chanting. Its sniffing or turning on the occasion is interpreted as a token that the sacrifice has been successful.² The *Hotṛ* then sings the merits of the horse, which is yoked to a chariot along with three other horses. The sacrificial horse is identified with the Sun—a conception to which the roaming of the horse for a year was but a corollary corresponding to the annual course of the Sun. The present harnessing of the animal to the chariot is meant to put the sacrificer in the leading of the Sun, i.e. the horse for the gaining of the heavenly world. The animal is anointed and decorated by the wives of the sacrificer, after which the horses are driven to an adjacent pond where certain *mantras* are uttered by the sacrificer. After their return to the sacrificial ground, a theological colloquy is held between the

¹ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 4. 4. 2-4, and *S. B. E.*, xliv. 372, n. 1.

² *Ibid.*, xiii. 2. 3 and xiii. 5. 1. 16.

Brahman and the *Hotṛ* sitting face to face with the central sacrificial stake in the middle, to imbue the sacrificer with fiery spirit and spiritual lustre.¹ *Atva-medha (cont.).*

The number of animal victims in this sacrifice is very large. Two classes of these should be distinguished, namely, those that are killed and those that are symbolically sacrificed by fire being taken round them, the former numbering 349 and the latter 260.² The sacrificial horse with sixteen other animals is tied to the central stake while to the different parts of the body of the horse are leashed twelve similar victims called *Paryaṅgas* (circum-corporal). In each of the twenty interspaces between the stakes is placed a set of thirteen wild victims. The sacrificial horse is compared to a chieftain, the *Paryaṅgas* to heralds and headmen, and the other victims to the peasantry. The tying of the *Paryaṅgas* to the different parts of the body of the horse serves to make the heralds and headmen subservient to the chieftain or the sacrificer. The killing³ of the staked animals was believed to exert beneficent influences on the means of communication, demarcation of villages, and the attempt to ward off bears, tigers, thieves, murderers, and robbers, even in the forest, but the slaughter of the wild victims would have produced the opposite results. But as the sacrifice could not be complete without the slaughter, symbolic slaying was resorted to as the *via media*.

The staked victims included domestic animals of various descriptions, viz. horse, goat, sheep, antelope, cow, and such-like, while those in the interspaces might well be said to have ranged from the biggest born of earth to the tiniest worm that crept the ground, from the tawny lion, scaly crocodile, and treacherous serpent of sinuous trace to the soft-cooing dove and liveried peacock, from the dwellers of the deep or burrows to the rangers of the densest forests or the highest hill-tops. The sacrificial ground assumed at this time the appearance of

¹ *Ibid.*, xiii. 2. 6 and xiii. 5. 1. 16-17.

² The *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, xxiv, names the various gods to whom these 609 victims are dedicated.

³ Slaughtering-knives of three different metals—gold, copper, and iron—were used to kill the horse, the *paryaṅgas*, and the other staked victims respectively.

*Aśva-
medha*
(cont.).

a well-stocked menagerie that could have regaled the eyes of a zoologist or an ornithologist. As all these creatures, some of which were rare or difficult to entrap, had to be preserved alive, a good deal of care and money must have been spent for the purpose.¹ The sacrificial horse and other animals are sprinkled with water with the utterance of appropriate formulas. The *Adhrigu* litany addressed to the slaughterers is recited by the *Hotṛ* and a cloth and a big upper cloth with a piece of gold on them are spread on the ground under the horse for slaying it thereon. Three oblations are made at the time of quieting,² after which the wives of the sacrificer turn round the horse nine times and fan it, the object being to make amends for the slaughter and put nine vital airs into themselves. Next follows a ceremony in which the four wives of the sacrificer, a damsel, and the principal priests take part. The sacrificial horse is looked upon as *Prajāpati*, the lord of creatures, and the place where it is lying as heaven. The object of the ceremony is to bestow fertility on the sacrificer's principal wife, who takes the chief part on the occasion.³ Prof. Eggeling⁴ says that this was evidently a primitive custom that had nothing to do with Vedic religion and was distasteful to the author of the *Brāhmaṇa*, as evinced both by the brief way in which it has been referred to, and by the symbolic explanations attached to the formulas and colloquies; but it was too firmly established in popular practice to be excluded from the sacrifice. Decorum does not permit me to give here its details, which may be gathered from the references noted below.⁵

Post-
quieting
ceremony
with its
colloquy.

Knife-
paths.

Knife-paths (*aśi-patha*) are then prepared by the wives of the sacrificer by means of needles of gold, silver, and copper. They are intended to serve the sacrificer as bridges to the heavenly world and secure for him people and royal power, the needles standing for the people and the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice itself the royal power.⁶

¹ See *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, xxiv. 20-40.

² The slaughtering of the other animals bound to the sacrificial stakes takes place next.

³ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 2. 7 and 8. 1-4.

⁴ *S. B. E.* xliv. 322 n.

⁵ *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, xxiii. 18-32; *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 2. 8 and xiii. 2. 9.

⁶ *Ś. Br.*, xiii. 2. 10.

The priests repair to the *Sadas*, where they take their seats and enter into a theological colloquy of which only four questions are asked and answered at this place. It is resumed in front of the *Havirdhāna* shed, where the priests remove and adds the sacrificer to their company. Here the rest of the questions, five in number, are asked and answered.¹

Atva-medha
(cont.).
Theological
colloquy.

After the drawing and offering of the first *Mahiman* (greatness) cup to *Prajāpati* by the *Adhvaryu* in the *Havirdhāna* shed for conferring greatness upon the sacrificer, the cooked omentum and gravy oblations are made to the deities in an order about which there are differences of opinion. They are favoured by the offering of the second *Mahiman* cup to *Prajāpati*.²

Mahiman
cups and
omentum
and gravy
offerings.

Among the additions to the rituals of the *Ukthya* sacrifice performed on this most important day of the *Āsvamedha*, none other worthy of note are left to be mentioned than the large numbers of oblations such as the three sets of *Aranye-nūcya*, two to *Dṛath*, six called *Dvipadā* and the *Sviṣṭākṛt*.³

Other
oblations.

The rituals of the last day of the *Āsvamedha* are the same as those of the last day of an *Atirātra* sacrifice except the larger number (about twenty-four) of bovine victims,⁴ and a few additions to the concluding rituals such as the oblation offered on the head of a deformed person during the purificatory bath of the sacrificer, preparation of the twelve messes of rice for the priests, gifts to the *ṛtviks*, and seizure of twenty-one barren cows.⁵

Last day
of the
Āsva-
medha.

The sacrifice practically comes to a close with the performance of the rituals of this day, but as a supplement six animal victims are offered by the sacrificer to each of the six seasons during the next year.⁶

¹ *Ibid.*, xiii. 5. 2. 11-22. To give an idea of the dialogues, I put below two questions and answers: *Question*. 'Who is it that walketh singly?' *Answer*. 'Sūrya (the sun) walketh singly.' *Question*. 'Whose light is there equal to the sun?' *Answer*. 'The Brahman is the light equal to the sun.' See *S. Br.*, xiii. 5. 2. 12, 13.

² *Ibid.*, xiii. 5. 2. 23 and 5. 3. 1-7.

³ *Ibid.*, xiii. 3. 4-5 and 6. 1-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii. 3. 2. 3 and 5. 3. 11. I have left out of account in my descriptions as a rule the many *śastras* and *stotras* with their varied tunes and arrangements.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii. 3. 6. 5 and 7, and xiii. 5. 4. 24-7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xiii. 5. 4. 28.

Brhas-
patisava.
Objectives
and
eligibility.

(C) (iv) (a). *Brhaspatisava*. The objectives for the performance of the sacrifice are:—(1) The installation of a qualified *Brāhmaṇa* to the office of the royal priest.¹ (2) The formal declaration of the supremacy of a *Brāhmaṇa* who is regarded as fit for such a position by the kings and *Brāhmaṇas*.² (3) The acquisition of strength and spiritual lustre by a *Brāhmaṇa*.³ (4) The attainment of prosperity by a *Vaiśya* according to one of the *Śrauta-Sūtras*.⁴ (5) The installation of a *Sthapati* (Governor of a district)⁵ to his office.⁶

In some of the texts, as already pointed out, the *Vājapeya* is mentioned as an adjunct to the *Brhaspatisava*,⁷ the *Śatapatha*⁸ merging the latter in the former. The *Sūtra*⁹ of the *Śatapatha* does not follow the *Brāhmaṇa* in this respect, prescribing that the *Brhaspatisava* is performed a fortnight before and after the *Vājapeya*.

Principal
ritual.

The *Brhaspatisava*, as usual, lasts only for a day, its principal ritual being the sprinkling of the performer with *ghee* (a symbol of strength) while seated on the skin of a black antelope.¹⁰

Prthivisa.

(b) The *Prthivisa* takes its name from its first performer, *Prthi*, son of *Vena*. The object achieved by this *sava* is the attainment of supremacy upon all beings, including men. A few rites of the *Rājasūya* compose this sacrifice.¹¹

Rād-yajña.

(c) The celebration of the *Rād-yajña*¹² was intended to

¹ *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 7. 1. 2; *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xvii. 11. 4 and 5.

² *Lātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, viii. 7. 4.

³ *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xv. 4. 1 and 2.

⁴ *Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xxii. 25. 1.

⁵ According to Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*; cf. *V.I.*, ii. 486.

⁶ *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xvii. 11. 6; *Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xxii. 7. 6. The *Brāhmaṇa* calls it *Sthapatisava*, in view of its particular purpose on the occasion.

⁷ *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xv. 4. 1; *Āśvalāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, ix. 9. 1.

⁸ *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, v. 2. 1. 19.

⁹ *Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xiv. 2.

¹⁰ *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 7. 1. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 7. 5, with Śāyana's commentary.

¹² *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xix. 7. 1-4.

restore¹ a deposed king to his kingdom, or procure the allegiance of the refractory subjects to a reigning king. The noteworthy ritual of this ceremony is the *Abhiṣeka*, in which the celebrant is surrounded by the eight *Vīras* and sprinkled, the *Vīras* being (1) king's brother, (2) king's son, (3) royal priest, (4) queen, (5) *Sūta* (charioteer), (6) *Grāmaṇi* (village headman), (7) *Kṣattr* (gate-keeper according to Sāyaṇa), and (8) *Samgrahitṛ* (collector-general).

(C) (v). *Rājyābhiṣeka* (coronation). The *Nītimayūkha*,² a late Sanskrit work, gives details of the ceremony, according to the *Gopātha-Brahmaṇa* of the *Atharva-Veda*, as also particulars not dependent on its authority. The existence of the coronation can be traced much earlier than the *Gopātha-Brahmaṇa*. The *Taittirīya-Brahmaṇa*³ gives its details as an independent performance in three sections which are separate from those devoted to the *Rājasūya*. Wilson and Goldstücker observe that 'the rites of the *Abhiṣeka*, which is not part of a *Rājasūya* sacrifice, but a ceremony performed at a king's accession to the throne, are similar to, but not identical with, those of the *Punarabhiṣeka*; they are founded on the proceedings which took place when Indra was consecrated by the gods as their supreme ruler, and which forms the subject of the thirty-eighth chapter of the *Aitareya-Brahmaṇa*'.⁴ If the *Taittirīya-Brahmaṇa* be older than the *Aitareya*, as Prof. Macdonell⁵ suggests, then the similarity between the

Rāj-yajña
(cont.).

Corona-
tion.

¹ Hymn 3 of the *Atharva-Veda*, iii, which is used with the one next following, has also for its object the restoration of a king. Hymns 87 and 88 of book vi of the same *Veda* are directed towards establishing a king in sovereignty.

² *Nītimayūkha*, by Nīlakantha Bhaṭṭa (MS. in A. S. B.), p. 3. The discourse on coronation in the *Phārata-rahasya* (in Bengali) by Rāmadāsa Sena cites a short passage from the *Gopātha-Brahmaṇa* without any reference to its location in the *Brahmaṇa*. I could not trace it either in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, or the Bombay edition of the work. I do not understand why, unless the passage has eluded my search, it should be omitted in the editions.

³ *Taittirīya-Brahmaṇa*, ii. 7. 15-17. *Rg-Veda*, x. 173 and 174 refer to rites for securing the king in his office by the propitiation of certain deities. It is not clear whether they have any connexion with the coronation, if any, prevailing at that time.

⁴ Goldstücker's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 277, under *Abhiṣeka*. Sāyaṇa styles the *Taittirīya* ceremony 'sacrificial and not mundane'.

⁵ Prof. A. Macdonell's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 203; the

Corona-
tion (cont.).

Abhiṣeka and the *Punarabhiṣeka* cannot be taken as indicative of the derivation of the one from the other. The *Abhiṣeka* appears therefore to have been an independent ceremony existing side by side with the *Rājastūya*. The *Abhiṣeka* as detailed in the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* begins with seven *mantras* to be uttered by the priest for performing a *Homa* before the ritual of sprinkling takes place. The first *mantra* speaks of the prince's re-birth as the son of the *ṛtviks* (sacrificial priests), with his vigour immensely increased by his symbolic entrance into the *Homa* fire and exit therefrom, and wishes him capability to keep his subjects from sinful ways. The second wishes him an extended kingdom, a stout physique for its efficient administration, and a good supply of cattle for the performance of the sacrifices. The third wishes him to be the guide of men, and wants him to solemnly say that he would protect the good and punish the wicked. The fourth and fifth invoke blessing on him for prosperity, while the sixth and seventh for the glorification of the castes by his power, the prosperity of his subjects, and the extension of Prajāpati's protection to him.

Homa.

In these *mantras*, two points are noteworthy: (i) The belief of the prince's re-birth as the son of the sacrificial priests; which appears akin to the re-birth of the twice-born by the *upanayana* sacrament for their initiation into the study of the Vedas. The prince as it were becomes a totally different being, with his faculties and physical vigour renewed and increased for the discharge of the new duties that the assumption of kingly office will devolve upon him. Such a belief perhaps made the performance of the coronation ceremony an imperative necessity to every prince; for, otherwise, in the estimation of the people, the prince will stand bare of the 'kingly fitness' which he omits to formally bestow upon himself by the ceremonial, and for which no natural capabilities of the prince, however great, could perhaps be an adequate substitute. After the death of a king or after his retirement, some time must have elapsed before the coronation

opposite view is taken by Prof. Berriedale Keith, *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, pp. xcvi ff.; *Rgveda Brāhmaṇas*, pp. 45 ff.

rituals could be performed by his successor; and hence, the question naturally suggests itself whether the latter could exercise the rights and duties of a full-fledged king immediately after the end of the previous régime without formally going through the ceremony. In the case of the initiation sacrament, the uninitiated boy had no right to the acquisition of sacred lore before he went through the necessary rite; but not so, perhaps, in the case of the coronation ceremony, as will appear from evidence later on. (ii) The solemn assertion by the prince, which looks very much like the *coronation oath*, to protect the good and punish the wicked, that is to say, the paramount duties of the protection of life and property of his subjects and an impartial administration of justice.

After the performance of the *Homa*, a tiger-skin is spread, sprinkling with the *mantra* 'Thou art the sky, thou art the earth', and the prince is seated thereon. The priests bless him saying, 'May you be unconquerable, may the various quarters protect you, may your subjects be loyal, and may the kingdom never slip away from your rule', and sprinkle him with water in which barley and *dūrvā* grass have been steeped—the ritual being accompanied with blessings.

The prince is then asked to repair to and ascend a chariot ^{Ascending a car.} standing before the *Āhavaniya* fire of the sacrificial ground where the ceremony is taking place, appropriate benedictory formulas (some of which are repetitions of those used in the sprinkling ceremony) being uttered during the time. The object of this ascension of the car appears from the last formula addressed to the chariot to be a symbolic expression of the desire that the prince might achieve success in his rule. The king next prays the royal priest to help him by a faithful discharge of his duties that serve to keep the realm free from danger, and contribute to its well-being. He then asks the charioteer to sit on the car and hold the reins. The king then recites to the effect, 'May I never hear within my dominion the sound of bows of my enemies coveting my kingdom, may that harsh sound change into a sweet one by making the hostile army friendly'.

The *Brāhmaṇas* as well as the king's friends and relations ^{Smiling.}

Corona-
tion (cont.).

embrace him, after which his body is smeared with unguents. At this time, the king has to look towards the sun and the royal priest addresses him thus⁴. 'May this king be lustrous like the noonday sun; may my blessings be likewise powerful in their effects; may you (king),—glorious sun, attain prosperity by my blessings; may my words be in a special degree discriminatory of right and wrong; may my blessings be firm in their efficacy; may the rivers (in the kingdom) be full, clouds rain in time, and crops fructify; may the king be the lord of a rich country veritably flowing with milk and honey.'

Hair-
cutting.

After oblations to the fire intended for the *kesins*, i. e. Agni, Vāyu, and Sūrya, the king is asked to sit on a throne of *udumbara* wood, when the *Purohita* says, 'O king, subdue your enemies completely. Now that I have finished the consecration bearing the two names of *Vasini*¹ and *Ugrā*,² pay fees to the *Purohita*. May you attain long life and be freed from Varuṇa's snares'. Then the priest shaves the king's head with a *mantra*, which indicates that it is an imitation of what Prajāpati had done for Soma and Varuṇa. The hair is collected on a tuft of *kuśa* grass, serving thereby to preserve the king's strength.³ The king is then anointed with a mixture of milk and *ghee* with the same object in view, with a formula which asks the *Āsvins* to have the king's beauty devoted entirely to the queens.

References
to corona-
tion in the
Epics.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* speak of a few coronations of princes: the former mentions those of (1) Sugrīva,⁴ (2) Vibhīṣaṇa,⁵ (3) Rāma,⁶ (4) Kuśa and Lava,⁷ (5) Aṅgada and Candraketu,⁸ (6) Śatrughṇa's sons Subāhu and Śatrughātīn,⁹ and the latter those of (1) Janamejaya,¹⁰ (2) Vicitravīrya,¹¹ (3) Puru,¹² (4) Yudhiṣṭhira,¹³ (5) Śarabha, son of Śiśupāla,¹⁴ and

¹ & ² Called *Vasini* because the ceremony is believed to bring the subjects under the king's control, and *Ugrā* because it effects the subjugation of enemies.

³ A similar belief is noticed in connexion with the *ketavapaṇīya* ritual of the *Rājasūya*.

⁴ *Rām.*, iv. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vi. 112.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vi. 128, and vii. 63.

⁷ & ⁸ *Ibid.*, vi. 107.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁹ *MBh.*, i. 44.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹² *Ibid.*, xii. 40.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 45.

(6) Parikṣit.¹ Full ritual details are given nowhere in the epics. The common features of the rituals, so far as we can gather them from their fragmentary descriptions in the first-named epic, are the collection of waters from seas and rivers in gold pitchers, the sprinkling of them on the prince seated on a throne, the crowning, and the prince's gifts to Brāhmaṇas, while their distinguishing features are (1) the performance of a *Homa* (in Sugrīva's coronation), (2) presents offered by the subjects to the prince (e.g. in Vibhīṣaṇa's coronation), (3) presents offered by the prince (as in Rāma's coronation), (4) a difference as to persons who sprinkle water, and (5) a difference as to those who put the crown on his head.

The *Mahābhārata* furnishes some details of the ceremony of only one prince, Yudhiṣṭhira, who sat on a throne made of gold surrounded by others seated likewise. To begin with, he touched white flowers, auspicious symbols (*svastikas*), unhusked barley-corns, earth, gold, silver, and jewels. Auspicious articles, such as earth, gold, gems, and other things necessary for the coronation² were brought by the subjects, who came there headed by the priest. Jars made of gold, *udumbara* wood, silver, and earth, and full of water, as well as flowers, fried rice, *kuśa* grass, cow's milk, *śamī*, *pippala* and *palāśa* wood, honey, *ghee*, ladles of *udumbara* wood, and conches decked with gold were there for the ceremony. The royal priest, Dhaumya, made an altar sloping north and east and marked with the necessary signs. The prince with his consort Draupadī was then seated upon a firm and effulgent stool called *sarvatophhadra*² covered with tiger-skin, and Dhaumya poured libations of *ghee* upon fire with appropriate *mantras*. Kṛṣṇa poured water from a sanctified conch upon the prince's head, as also Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the subjects. The presents brought by the people were formally accepted by Yudhiṣṭhira, who in turn honoured them with presents in profusion and gave a thousand *niṣkas* to the *Brāhmaṇas* who uttered benedictions for his welfare.

Most of the features of the coronation as found in the epics

¹ *Ibid.*, xvii. 1.

² Cf. *Yukti-kalpa-taru* (edited by Paṇḍit Īśvar Candra Śāstrī), *śāmān-yāsanoddeśa*, p. 56, ślk. 402.

Corona-
tion (cont.).
Corona-
tion in the
*Agni-
Purāṇa*.
Main
divisions.

have been reproduced in the *Agni-Purāṇa*¹ which, as usual with the *Purāṇas*, adds to them new rituals making the whole ceremony much more elaborate. The main divisions of the ceremony may be marked out into (1) *Aindri Śānti* on a day previous to that of *Abhiṣeka*. (2) (On the *Abhiṣeka* day) (a) Performance of *Homa*; (b) symbolic bathing (i. e. touching the prince's body with earth brought from various places—*mṛttikā-suāna*); (c) sprinkling of liquids on the prince by ministers; (d) sprinkling of liquids by Ṛg-Vedic and Sāma-Vedic *Brāhmaṇas*, and the royal priest; (e) sprinkling of water through a pitcher (perforated with a hundred holes) by the royal priest; (f) rites by the Yajur-Vedic and Atharva-Vedic *Brāhmaṇas*; (g) seeing auspicious things; (h) crowning; (i) presentation of officials to the prince; (j) payment of fees to *Brāhmaṇas* and coronation feast; (k) royal procession through the metropolis; (l) return of the procession to the royal palace and gifts to the people.

If the reigning king instals his successor on the throne just before his retirement, he may have the *Abhiṣeka* performed under his auspices on a day prescribed as appropriate for the purpose. If, however, he dies without performing this ceremony for his successor, the *Agni-Purāṇa*² allows for the latter a provisional *Abhiṣeka* which can be celebrated irrespective of the auspicious or inauspicious nature of the day on which it is held. The reason for such a provision is obvious: the formal vesting of regal powers in the prince in order to enable him to discharge kingly duties cannot be long postponed; for such postponement may lead to difficulties. The rituals of the ceremony are succinctly mentioned as symbolic bathing of the prince with sesamum and white mustard at which the royal priest and the astrologer officiate; the hailing of the prince with the cry of victory, after which he sits on a *śhadrāsana*, proclaims safety for his subjects, and issues order to his officers for releasing prisoners. The coronation, whether performed under the

¹ *Agni-Purāṇa*, ccxviii, ccxix.

² The *Agni-Purāṇa*, ccxviii, devotes vv. 5 and 6 to this provisional *Abhiṣeka*, and the real meaning of the passage can easily elude the reader unless light be focussed on it from other works, such as the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*, ii. 18.

supervision of the retiring king or, in the case of his death, after the provisional coronation, has to be held on an auspicious day which is fixed in accordance with recommendations of the texts¹ on the subject.

The details of the aforesaid main divisions are :—The *Agni-Purāṇa* does not furnish the ritual of the *Aindrī-Sānti* which, however, are given in later works like the *Nītimayūkha*,² which may be summarized thus : After the formal declaration of the king's intention to perform the *Sānti*, the officiating priests are formally entrusted with these duties :—A *Vedi* (altar) is constructed and upon it a *Mahāvedi* (great altar) on which three lines are drawn on sand, a cavity is made and refilled with sand, earth is bowed to, and fire is ignited. A gold, silver, or copper pitcher full of water is covered with a piece of cloth, and an image of Indra made of gold is placed on two eight-leaved lotuses drawn on the cloth. This is followed by offerings to Indra, five oblations to fire, and the seating of the *Brahman* priest who with the *Hotṛ* next engages in the offering of the following oblations, viz. eight to the four cardinal points, and seventeen to Agni and other deities, followed by *samyddhi*, *sannati*, *upastīrya*, *svīṣṭakṛt*, *prāyaścittātma*, *saṁsthiti*, *saṁāna*, and *saṁśrāva-bhāga* *Homas*. Then follow offerings to the ten presiding deities of the ten quarters of heavens, and to demons of various descriptions. The *pūrṇāhuti* comes next, and then the throwing of the remnants of *Homa-fire* into holy water. In the concluding rite of *Sānti* for averting evil, the king with his consort, relatives, and ministers is sprinkled by the *Hotṛ* with water from the *Sānti* pitcher. Then both the king and the queen take a bath in water mixed with herbs, wear white dresses and garlands, and smear their bodies with the paste of white sandal. Gifts are made to the priests, and the gold image of Indra after symbolic relinquishment is given to *Ācārya*. The whole ceremony is then brought to a close by the feasting of *Brāhmaṇas*.

¹ See, for instance, *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*, il. 16. 5-14; Goldstücker's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* refers to *Jyotiṣaratnamālā* and *Mūhūrtacintāmaṇi* on this point.

² *Nīti-mayūkha* (MS. in A. S. B.), pp. 4-10. Minor details and *mantras* have been omitted in the above summary.

Corona-
tion (cont.).

• The object of this ritual is no doubt the welfare of the king, implying that of his relatives, officials, and subjects, but the central idea in it is the coronation of Indra, the king of the gods. We have seen in connexion with the *Rājasūya* that the *mantras* for the *Punarabhiṣeka* are uttered in unison with those of the *Aindra-mahābhiṣeka*, which goes upon the supposition that the king of the gods was installed on his throne in remote antiquity with the selfsame *mantras* which appear in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* in connexion with the *Aindra-mahābhiṣeka*, and which, when uttered at the *Punarabhiṣeka*, ensure the special well-being of the subject of the *Punarabhiṣeka*. In the coronation ceremony with which we are now dealing, much more prominence is given to the idea by devoting a special day with its special rituals to Indra, who is worshipped to make the coronation of the mortal king as much fraught with potentialities for good as his own coronation was in the remote past.

The
Abhiṣeka
Day. Pre-
liminaries.

On an auspicious day fixed for the *Abhiṣeka*, the king has formally to declare his intention (*saṃkalpa*) to perform the *Abhiṣeka*.

Homa.

(a) After the ignition of fire¹ and the offering of seventeen oblations as previously mentioned in connexion with *Aindri Śānti*, the *Purohita* has to perform *Homas* with five sets of *Atharva-Veda mantras*, viz. *śarma-varma*, *svastyayana*, *āyusya*, *abhayā*, and *aparājitā*, which are intended to secure for the king welfare for himself personally and his kingdom. On the southern side of the *Homa* fire is kept a gold pitcher (*sampā-tavān kalāsa*) in which are deposited the residues of offerings. *Brāhmaṇas* learned in the *Vedas* as well as *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya*, and *Śūdra* ministers are honoured with presents and seated at the place where the ceremony is to take place. The royal priest, who has to fast on that day, puts on a garland and a turban, and enters into the bathing-house, where he has to put nine gold pitchers with waters from various places of pilgrimage as well as an

¹ Certain characteristics of the flame of this fire, such as brightness like melted gold, resemblance to *svastika* mark, &c., were regarded as portents for good or evil.

earthen pitcher with water, a gold pitcher with *ghee*, a silver pitcher with milk, a copper pitcher with curds, and an earthen pitcher with water, in which *kusa* grass has been soaked. A gold pitcher with a hundred perforations as also an earthen pitcher filled with water from a well and the four seas are also to be there.

(b) The prince is then bathed symbolically with various descriptions of soil. This bathing consists in touching his head with soil from the top of a hill, ears with that from the top of an ant-hill, face with that from a temple of Viṣṇu, neck with that from a temple of Indra, chest with that from a royal palace, right arm with that dug up by an elephant by its tusks, left arm with that dug up by a bull by its horns, back with that from a lake, belly with that from a confluence of rivers, sides with that from the banks of a river, waist with that from the door of a brothel, thighs with that from a sacrificial ground, knees with that from a cowshed, shanks with that from a horse-stable, and feet with that from the wheel of a chariot.¹ This ceremony is concluded by the final ablution of his head with *pañcagavya* (a mixture of milk, curds, clarified butter, and cow's urine and dung).

(c) Four vessels made of gold, silver, copper, and earth are filled respectively with clarified butter, milk, curd, and water. The *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya*, and *Śūdra* ministers take the gold, silver, copper, and earthen vessels in succession and sprinkle their contents on the prince's head from the east, south, west, and north respectively.

(d) After the ministers, a Ṛg-Vedic *Brāhmaṇa* sprinkles honey and a Sāma-Vedic *Brāhmaṇa* water (in which *kusa* grass has been immersed) upon the prince's head. The royal priest commits the sacrificial fire to the care of the *Sadasyas* (assistants), and sprinkles from the aforesaid *sampātavān* pitcher, with the *mantras*¹ that were uttered in connexion with Anointment forming part of the *abhiṣecanīya* of the *Rājasūya*.

¹ The *Agni-Purāṇa* (ccxviii. 22) speaks of these *mantras*. That they are borrowed from the *Rājasūya* ceremony is not clear from this *śloka*, but appears to be so from works like the *Nītimayūkha*. Had the first verse of the couplet commenced with the words *rā asūyābhiṣeke ca* instead of with *rājatrīyābhiṣeke cha*, the meaning would have been clearer.

Coronation (cont.). Rite with the perforated pitcher. (e) The prince is then taken to the base of the altar and seated upon a *bhādrāsana*. The royal priest sprinkles water on his head through a gold¹ jar perforated with a hundred holes, uttering 'yā oṣadhīḥ, &c.'² as also perfumed liquids, and water in which flowers, seeds, gems, and *kuśa* grass have been dipped, with the recitation of other formulas.³

Rites by the Yajur-Vedic and Atharva-Vedic *Brāhmaṇas*. (f) The Yajur- and Atharva-Vedic *Brāhmaṇas* touch with *rocana* (yellow pigment) the prince's head and throat with the *mantra*, 'Gandhadvārā, &c.'³ This rite is brought to a close by the assembled *Brāhmaṇas* sprinkling on the prince's head water brought from various sacred places.⁴ *

Seeing auspicious things. (g) Auspicious things such as a jar filled with water, chowry, fan, mirror, clarified butter, and herbs are brought before the prince, music is played (eulogistic songs being sung by the bards, and Vedic psalms chanted by the *Brāhmaṇas*).⁵

Crowning. (h) The royal priest, in the meantime, makes offerings of milk and honey to the divinities and sits on a chair covered with a tiger's skin. So seated he binds the prince's head with a fillet and puts on it the crown, with the formulas⁶ *Dhruvā dyauḥ, &c.*, an English rendering of which is given below :

'Firm is the heaven, firm is the earth; firm are these mountains, firm is this entire world, so may this king of men be firm.'

¹ See *RV.*, x. 97.

² Some explanatory details have been taken from the *Nitimayūkha*. The formulae referred to have been borrowed as follows:

(i) 'Oṣadhyah pratigbhñita puṣpavatiḥ &c.' *VS.*, xi. 48.

(ii) 'Āsuh sisāno &c.' *RV.*, x. 103. 1.

³ *RV. Khila*, v. 87. 9.

⁴ According to the *Nitimayūkha* (MS. pp. 2 and 11) not only the *Brāhmaṇas* but also the assembled *Kṣatriyas*, *Vaiśyas*, *Śūdras*, and persons of mixed castes sprinkle water as above.

⁵ *Nitimayūkha* (MS.), pp. 2 and 11. The work puts after the above rite the sprinkling of propitiatory water (*sāntijala*) from the *sampātavan* pitcher by the astrologer. This rite is accompanied by the utterance of a long *mantra*, 'surās tvām abhiśāntu' etc., of about 180 ślokaś addressed to the gods, heavenly bodies, clouds, continents, hills and mountains, places of pilgrimage, sacred rivers, birds, horses, elephants, universal monarchs of yore, ascetics, *Vedas*, fourteen branches of learning, weapons, supernatural beings, in short to quite a string of divine, natural, or supernatural forces with powers for good or evil, in order that they might all be propitiated to the prince about to be crowned. The location of the *mantra* in the ceremony is not manifest in the *Agni-Purāṇa*, but has been indicated by works like the *Nitimayūkha*.

'May the royal Varuṇa, the divine Bṛhaspati, may Indra and Agni ever give stability to thy kingdom.'

Coronation (cont.).

'With a constant oblation we handle the constant Soma; therefore may Indra render thy subject people payers of (their) taxes.'¹

The throne-seat,² on which the prince is next seated, is covered with the skins of five animals, bull, cat, wolf, lion, and tiger. A symbolic meaning, not given in the texts, was no doubt attached to the spreading of these skins one over another. The tiger-skin, as has been seen in connexion with a previous ritual, indicated kingly power.

(i) The *Agni-Purāṇa* next speaks of the *Pratīhāra* presenting officials to the king. It is added by the *Nitimayūkha* that distinguished townsmen, merchants, and other subjects are also admitted to this honour.

Presentation of officials.

(j, k, and l). *The king now presents the royal priest and the astrologer with cows, goats, sheep, houses, &c., and honours the other *Brāhmaṇas* with similar gifts and a sumptuous feast. After going round the sacrificial fire and saluting the *Guru* and one or two minor rituals, he sits on a sanctified horse, but gets down the next moment to sit on the state-elephant similarly sanctified, and rides through the principal thoroughfares of the metropolis amid a gorgeous procession. After return to his palace, he accepts the presents made by his subjects, whom he receives with honour and entertains to a feast. Presents in return are also made by the king to his subjects.

Payment of fees to the Brāhmaṇas, procession and feasts.

It will not be out of place to recount succinctly the principal features of the English coronation of the past in order to show the degree of parallelism between it and that of the Hindus. The early English coronation had many features found in those of other European countries in the past, and may, for this reason, be taken for our purposes as a type of the early European coronations generally:³

European coronation.

¹ *RV.*, x. 173. 4-6 (translation by Prof. H. H. Wilson).

² The *Mānasāra*, as quoted in Goldstücker's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (p. 284, under *Abhiṣeka*), names two officers *sthāpati* and *sthāpaka* taking part in a function not detailed in the texts used above. The queen is also mentioned as sitting on a throne along with the king.

³ For the following information on the European coronation, see

Corona-
tion (cont.).

(1) The prince, attended by a large number of nobles and government officers, made a stately progress to the Tower of London, where he resided a day or two to dub as Knights of the Bath a number of candidates who had to perform vigil and other rites preparatory to this honour.

(2) Amid a solemn and gorgeous procession in which the new Knights of the Bath, nobles, government officers, and clergymen occupied the particular positions allotted to them, the prince under various marks of honour displayed by the citizens rode to Westminster Hall on the day previous to the day of coronation.

(3) Next morning, the nobles and others, marshalled according to their respective ranks, accompanied the prince to the adjacent Westminster Abbey, some of the regalia¹ being carried by certain persons having title to this honour.

Recogni-
tion.

(4) The first rite performed within the Hall was Recognition, in which the Archbishop declared to the people assembled there the prince's rightful claim to the throne and asked them whether they were ready to give their assent thereto. * In this rite were laid the traces of development of coronation from an earlier form of election.

First
oblation.

(5) Next came the First Oblation, the essence of which was the rite in which a 'pall of cloth of gold, and an ingot of gold of a pound weight', received by the prince from the Lord High Chamberlain, were made over to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who placed them on the altar.

Service of
the day.

(6) In the Proper Service of the Day, prayers were said for blessings upon the prince.

Oath.

(7) At the conclusion of the sermon forming part of the previous rite, the Coronation Oath was administered by the Archbishop. The prince swore to govern the kingdom according to the established laws and usages, administer justice tempered with mercy, and uphold the religion of the

Chapters on Coronations, author not mentioned; *Glory of Regality*, by Arthur Taylor; and *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition, under 'coronation'.

¹ The principal regalia are: St. Edward's Chair, St. Edward's Crown, Crowns and Circlets, Orb with the Cross, Sceptre with the Cross, St. Edward's Staff, Ampulla, Ivory Rod, Chalice, Paten, Swords, Rings, Spurs, Curtana (or pointless sword of mercy), and the Bible.

land, and the rights and privileges of the members of the church. *Coronation (cont.).*

(8) The Dean of Westminster anointed, with oil from the Ampulla, the palms of the prince's hands, his chest, shoulders, arms, and the crown of his head. *Anointing.*

(9) The next rite consists in investing the prince with vestments, girdle, buskins, sandals, spurs, sword, &c., which were made over to him on this occasion. Two noteworthy features of this function are that the Archbishop (*a*) while passing the sword to the prince requested him to protect the church, people, widows, orphans, restore things gone to decay and maintain those that were restored; and (*b*) while delivering to him the Orb with the Cross, he uttered the formula, 'Receive this . . . Orb, and remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of God, and that no one can happily reign upon earth, who hath not received his authority from heaven'. At the time of Augustus, the Roman emperor, the Orb was regarded as the symbol of universal dominion. The Cross was affixed to it by Constantine the Great, signifying that universal dominion was but possible by faith.¹ *Investing.*

(10) The Archbishop assisted by other clergymen put the Crown on the head of the prince seated on St. Edward's Chair, saying, 'God crown thee with a crown of glory and righteousness, with the honour and virtue of fortitude, that (thou) by (our ministry having) a right faith and manifold fruits of good works, thou mayest obtain the crown of an everlasting kingdom, by the gift of Him whose kingdom endureth for ever. Amen'. *Crowning.*

(11) The sovereign was invested with the Ring of faith, held the Sceptre of kingly power, the Rod of virtue and equity, and the Bible. He then received the Archbishop's Benediction in appropriate words. *Delivery of the Ring, Sceptre, Rod, and the Bible. Benediction.*

(12) The sovereign was conducted to the throne by the Archbishop, who was followed by the bishops and great officers of state. After he was seated on the throne, the Archbishop delivered an exhortation and took the Oath of Fealty. This Oath was also taken by the bishops and the premier Duke, *Enthroning and Homage.*

¹ *Chapters on Coronations*, pp. 27, 118.

Coronation (cont.).

Marquess, Earl, Viscount, and Baron, each of them representing himself and the rest of his rank. During the performance of the Homage, medals of gold and silver struck for the occasion were thrown among the people, and if there were any general pardon, it was read publicly by the Lord Chancellor.¹

Holy Communion and Second Oblation.

(13) In the Holy Communion, the sovereign advanced towards the altar after the commencement of the Communion Service and made an offering of bread and wine. Then a wedge of gold, called a mark, weighing eight ounces was received by the Archbishop from the sovereign and laid upon the altar. This constituted the second oblation.

The sovereign then returned to Westminster Hall attended by the clergy and others marshalled as before.

Coronation Feast.

(14) A noticeable feature of the Coronation Feast held in the Westminster Hall was the proclamation of a challenge to the effect that if any one dared deny the rightful claim of the present sovereign to the throne, he was a liar and false traitor, and the Champion was there to fight a duel with him to prove the falsity of his assertion. The Champion threw down his gauntlet, which after a short time was taken up by the herald. Until the completion of the arrangements for the feast, the sovereign reposed in the Court of Wards. Several tables were placed in the Hall, the royal table being set on a raised platform. Special duties in connexion with this feast were allotted to special officers or noblemen: the royal table, for instance, was covered by the sergeant and gentleman of the ewery; the first course of hot meat was served up with the combined assistance of the sergeant of the silver scullery, and two gentlemen-at-arms or two Knights of the Bath, and other dishes were brought with a procession composed of several officers. A full delineation of this coronation being outside the scope of this Section, details of this as well as other functions, which may have value for other purposes, have been omitted.

In the evening were held a general illumination, a display

¹ The rites in which the Queen Consort took part have been omitted.

of fireworks in Hyde Park, the principal theatres being opened free to the public. Coronation (cont.).

The features common to the two systems of coronation of India and Europe may now be summed up. The commonness is due in some instances to the very nature of the ceremony, and in others, to other causes. Common features.

Both the systems are endued with a religious character, difference lying only in the degree. In the one, God, His Son, and the Holy Ghost were solicited by prayers and offerings to bless the sovereign and secure the welfare of his kingdom, while in the other, the divinities, together with various natural and supernatural forces credited with powers for good or evil, were for the same purpose entreated or propitiated through a multiplicity of prayers, offerings, and other religious rites.

The coronation of the Hindus, in its later form, lost all traces of its connexion with the elective principle pointed out in a previous chapter¹ to have been operative in the epic period, in which it could be traced in the *recognition* forming part of the installation ceremony. In the European form of coronation, it was traceable in the formulary of election, expunged in later times, as also in particular functions incorporated in the coronations of various European countries pointing to some form of election as their origin, e.g. the practice of elevating a sovereign on a shield among the later Romans, and the custom of having stone circles to serve as seats for electors and a large stone in the centre for the sovereign.²

The practice of taking an Oath to protect the people and perform other regal duties existed in the Hindu coronation, as evidenced by the *Taittiriya-Brāhmaṇa*, but it disappeared later on. Therefore, the similarity of the European and the Indian systems in this respect is not found all along their respective lines of development.

Smearing with unguents in the Indian type may be taken to correspond with anointing in the Western, sprinkling of liquids obtaining greater prominence in the former.

¹ See the chapter, 'Forms and Types of States'.

² See *Chapters on Coronation*, chap. i, and chap. ix, p. 99.

Corona-
tion (cont.).

* Crowning, blessing for universal dominion, presentation of nobles and officials, jail-delivery, stately progress through the metropolis, feast and the devotion of a day or two to a ceremony preliminary to the coronation proper may also be regarded as points of similarity between the two types.

Degree of
antiquity
of the
ceremony.

(C) (v). (b). *Yauvarājyābhiṣeka*. It is in the epic period that we find the first mention of the ceremony for the inauguration of the crown-prince. Prof. Goldstücker is doubtful as to whether this ceremony is hinted at in the passage of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*¹ relating to the 'king-makers' (*rājakartārah*) in the chapter on the *Mahābhiṣeka*. These 'king-makers' refer, in the *Atharva-Veda*² and the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*,³ to 'those who, not themselves kings, aided in the consecration of the king'. According to Sāyaṇa's commentary on the aforesaid passage of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, the king's father is one of the king-makers, and this was a ground for Prof. Goldstücker's doubt whether the ceremony in which the father took part might be that for the installation of a crown-prince.⁴ A closer examination would, however, make it clear that such a doubt is baseless, for the following reasons:

(1) The *Mahābhiṣeka* is not an independent ceremony, and the chapter devoted to it is meant to bring out that, in days of yore, the *Abhiṣeka* of Indra (called *Mahābhiṣeka*) took place on certain lines with certain *mantras* followed later on by several emperors of antiquity on the occasion of the celebration of the *Rājasūya*, and if these rituals and *mantras* are woven into the *Punarabhiṣeka* (i. e. the second *Abhiṣeka*, the first having been performed at the time of installation to a simple kingship) of the celebrant of a *Rājasūya* of later times, they will be of great efficacy.

(2) The inclusion of the king's father in the list of king-makers by Sāyaṇa is not borne out by the Vedic texts themselves.

¹ *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 17. 5.

² *AV.*, iii. 5. 7.

³ *S. Br.*, iii. 4. 1. 7 and xiii. 2. 2. 18. See *V. I.*, ii. 210.

⁴ See Goldstücker's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, under '*Abhiṣeka*', p. 282.

(3) The presence of the father in any installation ceremony cannot of itself raise the presumption that the son performing the ceremony must needs be a crown-prince, for, first, the father might not at all have been a king, and possessing therefore no kingdom to which he could choose his son as successor; and secondly, he might be retiring from his regal position, making his son a full-fledged king by the ceremony.

(4) The question of installation to crown-princship cannot rise at all in view of the setting, in which the king-makers are mentioned, namely, the delineation of the rites and formulas of Indra's *Mahābhīṣeka* intended to be woven into the *Punarabhīṣeka* of the *Rājasūya*.

Hence, there is at present no evidence by which the ceremony of the installation of the crown-prince can be traced to the Vedic period.

References are found in the Epics to the *Yauvarājyābhīṣeka* of Rāma,¹ Aṅgada,² Bharata,³ Yudhiṣṭhira,⁴ Bhīṣma,⁵ Bhīma,⁶ and Satyavat.⁷

Yauvarājyābhīṣeka
(cont.).

References
to the
ceremony.

Details of the ceremony are not forthcoming from any of the works consulted by me. The *Rāmāyaṇa* furnishes a short account of the preparations made for Rāma's *Yauvarājyābhīṣeka*, but as they are not perhaps exhaustive, we cannot draw from them any correct inference as to either the things needed for the ceremony or the rituals and functions in which they were used. The short account is, however, striking in that it does not include water or soil brought from various places, which form a prominent feature of the coronation ceremony and as such receive the first attention in the preparations for Rāma's coronation.⁸

There was no restriction as to the age at which a successor to a sovereign was installed as the crown-prince. Rāma was twenty-five⁹ years old at the time of his proposed installation to crown-princship, and Bharata about forty¹⁰ when he was so installed; both Yudhiṣṭhira and Satyavat were young¹¹

No age-limit.

¹ *Rām.*, ii. 3. 1 ff.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 26. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, vi. 128. 93.

⁴ *MBh.*, i. 139. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 100. 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xii. 41. 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. 298. 11.

⁸ *Rām.*, vi. 128. 48-57.

⁹ *Ibid.*, iii. 47. 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, i. 18.

¹¹ *MBh.*, i. 141. 27; iii. 293. 25.

Yauvarājyābhīṣeka
(cont.).

when they went through the ceremony, but Bhīma was far more advanced in years when he became a crown-prince. There was, therefore, no hard and fast age-limit for this ceremony, though it seems to have been the usual practice for the king to choose his successor as soon as the latter completed the prescribed period of studies and was ready to share as crown-prince the responsibilities of a ruler.

Yauvarājyābhīṣeka
whether
a bar to
Rājyābhīṣeka;
restoration
to lost
kingdom
an occasion
for a
fresh coronation.

No instances are forthcoming to show whether *Yauvarājyābhīṣeka* was a bar to the subsequent celebration of the coronation ceremony when the crown-prince became the king. Yudhiṣṭhira's coronation after the recovery of his kingdom and subsequent to his *Yauvarājyābhīṣeka* cannot be taken as a case in point, in view of its merger in that of restoration to a lost kingdom.¹ That the recovery of a lost kingdom was an occasion for a fresh coronation stands clear from the case of Dyumutsena.² Prof. Goldstücker inclines to the view that the performance of the *Yauvarājyābhīṣeka* 'held good for the inauguration of the prince at his accession to the throne, after the father's death, since no mention is made, in the epic poems, of a repetition of the ceremony. The object of the inauguration of a prince as *Yuvarāja* is to secure to him the right of succession, and, besides the advantages supposed to arise from the religious ceremony, as mentioned before, a share in the government, or perhaps all the privileges of a reigning king. For when Daśaratha intends to make his son Rāma a *Yuvarāja*, he addresses him with these words (in the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* ³): 'Rāma, I am old; . . . To-day, all my subjects want thee for their king; therefore, my son, I shall inaugurate thee as junior king'.⁴ In the above argument, stress is laid on the words spoken by Daśaratha to the effect that the subjects wanted Rāma as their king (*narādhipa*), but the force of the very next words uttered by him, viz. 'therefore, my son, I shall inaugurate thee as junior king', is ignored. Whatever Daśaratha might have said on the occasion, the ceremony was nothing else than *Yauvarājyābhīṣeka* and should be viewed as such.

¹ *MBh.*, xii. 40.

² *Ibid.* iii. 298. 11.

³ *Rām.*, ii. 4.

⁴ Goldstücker's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, under *Abhiṣeka*, p. 282.

(C) (v). (c). *Inauguration of the Commander-in-Chief.*⁷ Inauguration of the Commander-in-Chief. References to this ceremony are found in the *Mahābhārata* in connexion with the inaugurations of Bhīṣma,¹ Droṇa,² Karna,³ Śalya,⁴ and Aśvatthāman,⁵ as the military heads of the Kaurava army. This inauguration ceremony is modelled on that of Kārttikeya,⁶ the Commander-in-Chief of the gods, whose inauguration again followed in some respects the still earlier *Rājyābhīṣeka* of Varuṇa,⁷ the water-god. Details of the ceremony aggregated from the several descriptions are scanty. Those that are expressly mentioned are oblation to the *Homa*-fire,⁸ seating of the Commander on an appropriate seat, sprinkling of water⁹ on his head from a vessel, the utterance of the big formula '*surās tvām abhiṣiñcantu, &c.*'⁹ which happens to be the same as that used in the coronation ceremony just before crowning and gifts of coins, bullion, cows, cloths, &c., to *Bṛāhmanas*. It is superfluous to mention that the rituals were accompanied with music, eulogies sung by bards, and joyous and benedictory ejaculations. The inauguration of the several commanders-in-chief mentioned above was performed on the battle-field. In times of peace the same ceremony is likely to have been celebrated on the occasion of the assumption of his office by the commander-in-chief. It is probable that in the former case the exigencies of the situation compelled a curtailment or abridgement of the rituals which could be allowed to be in their full form in times of peace.

RÉSUMÉ

If the mental constitution of the Hindus contained in its composition a preponderance of religious or other beliefs which left their impress upon their polity, vague surmises as to their quantity ought to be replaced by an exact estimate.)

¹ *MBh.*, v. 155. 26-32.

² *Ibid.*, vii. 5. 39-43.

³ *Ibid.*, viii. 1. 11, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ix. 1. 6, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 65. 36-43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 45. 1 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 45. 22.

⁸ In the legend, the water of the Sarasvatī was sprinkled on Kārttikeya from a golden jar.

⁹ In the legend of Kārttikeya's inauguration to generalship, the above formula was not recited at all; the deities named in the formula personally appeared before him to take part in the sprinkling.

*Résumé
(cont.).*

Surmises on this subject, difficult as it is, can hit the truth but rarely, and are very often made the ground either for wholesale condemnation or indiscriminate eulogy of the whole system of ancient Hindu polity. The only means to avoid this pitfall is to take a comprehensive survey of the various ways in which the beliefs of the Hindus influenced their political system. Such a survey has been attempted in the several sections of this chapter with a view to focussing light on the various branches of the subject and facilitating reasoning relating thereto by supplying the facts which might be used as a basis for drawing correct inferences. It has been seen that the fourfold division of caste which emerged so early among the Hindus, perhaps through religious exigencies, and which branched out into quite a number of ramifications later on, has through the whole history of their polity stood out as a rock, determining more than any other factor the entire structure of their public administration. The general eligibility of the members of the second caste to kingship, the placing of the *Brāhmaṇa* in the highest rank of the social, and by reason of that, in many respects, of the political hierarchy, the gradation of rights and privileges according to the particular positions of the people in their caste framework, resulting in a differential treatment even in the administration of justice to them, the gradual deification of the king and the *Brāhmaṇa* by magnifying step by step the respect due to them socially and politically, the mutual public relations between the king and the castes or among the castes themselves, are the principal results issuing from the caste-system supplying the framework of the polity. It is difficult to strike a balance between the net advantages and disadvantages of such a system of polity, especially in view of the fact that the period of which we are speaking is a long one, during which the beliefs themselves as well as the numbers of their adherents underwent changes which introduced factors varying the actual net results of its working, or its subjective estimate by particular classes of citizens. If an implicit faith was placed in the beliefs by the majority of the people—and it is not unreasonable to suppose that there was such a period at least in pre-

Buddhistic times—many of the aforesaid points in the ancient Hindu body-politic which might appear as unjust, productive of evil, and subversive of political peace and happiness in the present dry light of reason, cannot have appeared as such to the people immediately affected by the system. But even after making allowance for a difference in the angles of vision of the present and the past, it would be erroneous to put nothing but advantages on its credit side and no disadvantages on its debit. Beliefs served no doubt, to a great extent, to dull the edges of those features that otherwise would have been keenly felt; but it should be borne in mind that, while on the one hand the degree of this belief was not uniformly deep in all classes and sects of the people, the working out of the letter and spirit of the customs and regulations of the system in actual practice must have, as in all times, their own drawbacks which also varied the effects of their operation in different times and localities. If we leave out of account these complications, confine ourselves only to the already recorded features and provisions as they appear from the Sanskrit works, including the law-codes and works on polity, and judge them by the state in which the majority of the people must have been under an administration faithfully reflecting in practice the features and provisions as they stand, assuming this majority to be partisans of the politico-religious beliefs and conceptions enumerated already—looking, for instance, upon the king and the *Brāhmaṇas* as deities but with responsibilities, for breaches of which there were both secular and religious sanctions, and considering their own caste positions and the relative treatment meted out to them at the hands of the State (e.g. in the levying of taxes, infliction of punishments, acquisition of learning, appointment to state offices, collection of wealth, &c.) as inevitably issuing from their own actions in their present and previous births—we can safely draw the inference that the working of the system could, so far as its religious aspect is concerned, bring contentment to the majority of the citizens. But if they had only partial or no faith in the beliefs, they would no doubt have resented government by laws that required in them

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a frame of mind without which they could not live contented. In the history of India there were periods when people with shaken or no faith in these beliefs were in the majority, and in such circumstances we have perhaps no reason to think that the discredited provisions of the Hindu law-codes of Manu and others were forcefully imposed upon the unwilling majority without modifications or, if necessary, radical changes. If, however, such a forcible imposition took place at any time, the case of the majority thus yoked against their will and faith must have been hard indeed. Changes in early Indian laws to adapt them to altered circumstances were not a new phenomenon in early times in spite of the conservative character of the Indians. Faith in the creeds forming the fundamentals of the laws was a *sine qua non* for their cheerful reception by the subjects on the one hand, and also for serving, on the other, as a safeguard against abuse of power by those placed in positions of authority. Given this faith, the whole machinery of administration might have worked well—perhaps, in many respects, much more smoothly than those governments in which reason and not faith supplies its wheels; but take away the faith, and the whole apparatus would be out of gear. Many of the numberless points of friction that crop up frequently between the different groups of interests or between the government and the people of the present day could not in those days arise at all, and the few that did arise met with ready solvents in appeals to faith and its composites, or to readjustments of interests seen in a light not uncoloured by faith in its various shapes. The Hindu religion, it should be remembered, was not a collection of creeds with certain fundamental rules of conduct superadded. It supplied not merely articles of creed but complete codes of conduct, moral, physical, social, and so forth, intended to regulate not merely the faith but also the details of conduct of every individual within its fold. The rules of conduct laid down were either suggested by, or at least were in general harmony with, the creeds, and hence the elements of faith permeated more or less the whole life and conduct of the individual units composing the society upon which they

operated. The political actions were not outside their pur- *Resume*
 view, and the ways they were influenced by religion, as already *(cont.)*
 shown, were very various and far-reaching. The main dis-
 tinguishing feature of the Hindu polity was the caste-system,
 which, with its later ramifications, was assimilated into the body-
 politic and became the principal cause of the diffusion of the
 politico-religious ideas with which the duties and the mutual
 relations of the members of the castes were intimately asso-
 ciated. It was this caste-system that made the members of
 the second caste, as a rule, eligible to kingship and segregated
 them for devotion, life-long and hereditary, to their onerous
 military duties. The members of the two other higher castes
 could generally participate in the higher administrative duties,
 though rare instances of *Śūdras* filling up government posts
 are met with in Sanskrit literature. There was hardly a
 country in which the people did not come to be classed into
 more or less sharply divided groups, ranking one above
 another by intelligence, riches, faith, profession, power, and
 so forth. The features that distinguished, in this respect, the
 ancient Hindus from other peoples were that the most
 important groups, by being reduced into castes, became, as
 evidenced, in the law-codes, much more rigid than those in
 any other country with a more or less rigid location of each
 in the caste scale and with defined political and other rights
 and privileges of each. Points of advantage arguing judicious
 choice may be adduced for the primary divisions of the society
 for social, political, and other purposes into four castes; but
 the multiplication of these divisions into numerous subdivisions,
 each more or less rigid and stereotyped—though it may
 receive favour with many Hindus even of the present day—
 proved, as it has done at present, a source of weakness to the
 whole body-politic, each sub-caste being a fresh centre with
 its own particular interests of various kinds, with its strong
 likes and dislikes, and with its surrounding rigid wall of
 partition that hinders a real and practical identification of its
 own self with that of the other castes and sub-castes, and with
 the broader self of the whole body-politic. The early caste
 divisions, so long as they were small in number, might have

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(*cont.*).

proved a source of strength to the whole society. It may be argued in opposition that the numerous functional castes, by ministering to particular branches of skilled labour or artizanship, did much good to the country from the economic standpoint, but what was an economic benefit for a time contained within itself the seeds of political bane.

The Atharva-Vedic rituals are an index to the frame of mind of the people who performed them for political purposes. There was hardly, in ancient times, a country in which the people were completely free from the mental proclivities betokened by the ritual practices, which in themselves are harmless so long as they do not prove an obstacle to the performance of political duties or are not carried out for baneful and mischievous objects. Astrology, as we have also seen, played an important part not only in fixing the auspicious times for political actions, but also in giving rise to the idea of the dependence of the affairs of human life upon the heavenly luminaries, which in its extreme form stops the spring of actions by deepening fatalism. The Hindu lawgivers and statesmen saw this danger and tried to counteract it by preaching the doctrine that human effort was superior to fate, and that exertion could make benign a malignant fate. But the mental current, set aflow in ancient times, could not be completely stemmed, judging from its efforts in the political and other fields of action of the Hindus in later times. This defect was perhaps shared by the Hindus in common with their brother nations of the East, and it was this that made Burke refer to it in his own brilliant way: 'The Eastern politicians never do anything without the opinion of the astrologers on the fortunate moment. They are in the right if they can do no better; for the opinion of fortune is something towards commanding it. Statesmen of a more judicious prescience look for the fortunate moment too; but they seek it, not in the conjunctions and oppositions of planets, but in the conjunctions and oppositions of men and things. They form their almanack.'¹ The striking *śloka*s in which Kautilya tried to check the said mental tendencies of

¹ Burke's Letter to a Member of the National Assembly, 1791.

his fellow countrymen are well worthy of being memorized by their present descendants :

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(cont.).*

‘Nakṣatram atipṛcchantam bālam artho ‘tivarate.

Artho hy arthasya nakṣatram kiṃ kariṣyanti tārakāḥ.

Sādhanāḥ prāpnuvanty arthān narā yatnaśatair api,

Arthair arthāḥ prabadhyante gajāḥ pratigajair iva.’¹

(Wealth passes away from the simpletons who consult the stars too much. For wealth is the star of wealth; what can the constellations do? People by energy can secure wealth even after a hundred attempts. It is wealth that captures wealth, as hostile elephants elephants.) In early times, no fixed boundaries were recognized as marking out the respective provinces of law, politics, religion, &c., and in spite of their mutual connexion in certain respects, there were chances, unless they were carefully avoided, of attribution of occurrences in one of them to wrongly supposed causes in another. As illustrations of this mis-attribution, we may refer to the two legends, one in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the other in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*.² In the former, a *Brāhmaṇa* accused Rāmacandra of remissness in his regal duties for the reason that his son died a premature death. Rāmacandra consulted his councillors, who attributed the occurrence of the premature death of the *Brāhmaṇa* boy to the making of penance by a *Sūdra* within Rāma’s kingdom—a practice not allowed by the *śāstra*; for *Sūdras* were not eligible to perform penances for the attainment of their objects.³ The instance in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* is similar: a *Brāhmaṇa* accused the king of Dwārakā of breaches of regal duties for the death of his infant son.³

Trials by ordeals in courts of justice may be cited as another instance of how an incident belonging to the province of law or morals was supposed to be capable of causing a physical phenomenon to be used as a conclusive evidence of guilt.

The practising of the magical rituals of the *Atharva-Veda*, as well as other such rituals, is as much an evidence of the

¹ *Kauṣīṭhya*, IX. iv, p. 349.

² *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, x. 89. 21-2.

³ *Rām.*, vii. 73-6.

Résumé
(cont.).

mental cast of the people as it was at the same time an agency that helped the above mis-attribution of an effect to a wrong cause. The illustrations serve also to show that the duties of a sovereign of the times were much more onerous than now in view of the fact that he was held responsible for many things besides what may be called purely political questions.

Regarding the more or less elaborate ceremonials, two only engage our attention as sources of political disturbances. I mean the *Rājasūya* and the *Aśvamedha*. They were, however, of infrequent occurrence, for, of those that were performed, only a few were intended for the acquisition of political suzerainty.

The end of the State, in its later full-fledged form, as already pointed out, stood influenced by religious ideas.

There are the aspects of polity in which it was influenced by the beliefs of the people. The criticisms of this polity in connexion with this résumé have been made in view of these aspects alone, and not in view of the whole polity, though remarks of a general nature have sometimes been necessitated in the course of the criticisms. It must not be supposed that, as beliefs influenced the polity in so many ways, there was no scope left for the Hindus for actions free from the above influences. On the other hand, there were wide and various fields of political actions in which the Hindus showed considerable judgement and acumen, undeflected by the force of beliefs. There were, again, many political deeds which they performed much more smoothly and efficiently under the influences of religious beliefs than perhaps could have been done otherwise. In spite of the political errors and aberrations, therefore, the Hindus could claim to their credit many political actions that were far in advance of their age or can well bear comparison with their similars in modern times. These actions, which should be detailed in their appropriate places, need not be enumerated at present. Suffice it to say, that the religious aspects of polity summed up in this chapter had both advantages and disadvantages, and, mere aspects as they are, they should not be mistaken for the whole of polity.

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