

EVOLUTION OF INDIAN POLITY

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To
The Hon'ble Dr. Sir ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE,
Sarasvati, Sastra-Vachaspati, Sambuddhagama-
Chakravarti,
Founder of Post-Graduate studies in the
Calcutta University
which have been the most powerful academical
incentive to original thought in India
of Modern times,
the following pages are dedicated,
as an humble tribute of unbounded admiration
for his Catholicity of heart and head knowing
no limitations of colour, creed, or caste in
welcoming knowledge from every
quarter and in encouraging learn-
ing in the poorest cottages as
well as in the proudest
palaces,
by
the grateful Author.

न सन्ति दोषा बिगुणा गुणा वा न सन्ति दोषानपह्नाय काव्ये ।
 गुणाः प्रशस्तुः प्रभवन्तु कीर्त्तये पतन्तु दोषा मम मूर्ध्नि वाढम् ॥
 इति प्रशास्त्रेऽत्र 'सर्' आद्यतोषमुखार्यनान्ने छतिरर्पितेयम् ।
 ततिस्त्रमानामिव निर्गुणऽपि सदाद्यतौषाय बुधाहताऽस्तु ॥

TRANSLATION OF THE VERSES

In no work are there defects without merits or merits without defects. Let the merits be to the credit of the Inspirer ; and let the defects heavily fall on my own head.

Thus this work, dedicated to the Inspirer, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, may prove acceptable to the learned and for the pleasure of the good (for good Asutosh) like a heap of flowers, though devoid of a string (quality).

PREFACE

This book contains the series of ten lectures delivered by me on the "Evolution of Indian Polity" under the Presidency of the Hon. Dr. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, President of the Council of the Post-Graduate Studies in Arts at the Calcutta University in the months of March and April 1919. The first stage in the evolution, as detailed in the first lecture, is found universal and as such it requires no additional proof. The Institution of Elective Monarchy of Bachelor kings begotten by priests on a family of queens or cows as they are called, is peculiar to India; and no other nation has as yet been found to have passed through the institution of bachelor kings to hereditary monarchy which forms the third stage in the evolution of Indian polity. In all these stages, the monarchical element seems to have been under the powers of the Peoples' Assembly composed of priests, nobles (Râjas), traders and Agriculturists (Vis). As stated in the Mîmansa Sûtras of Jaimini, the king had no power over land, and was entitled only to $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the produce.¹ Banishment or degradation of kings was one of the constitutional checks frequently employed for the prevention of the kings' extravagant proceedings and gambling and other vices.² The same constitutional check seems to have been employed even in the few Buddhist republics that prevailed side by side with monarchical institutions. What strikingly distinguishes India from the other contemporary nations in the application of such constitutional checks as banishment or degradation of tyrannical

¹ See Appendix C.

² Appendix A.

kings is its calm and peaceful procedure as contrasted with the bloody revolutions accompanied with horrible destruction of person and property in other nations. It is Atmamedha, also called *prāyopaveśa* or the vow of abstinence to death on the part of the people *en masse*¹ till the removal of the cause of their grievances.

[The fourth stage in the evolution seems to have been the Damma-Chakka or Empire of Righteousness of the Jainas and the Buddhists. The rise of Jainism and Buddhism in India is not merely a religious revolt against the Brāhmanic animal sacrifices but an indirect and persuasive appeal to Vedic kings to abstain from their bloody warfare and animal sacrifices. Unlike the French revolution and the American War of Independence for man's rights of equality, fraternity and liberty, the directly religious and indirectly political propaganda of the Jainas and the Buddhists proclaiming equality and fraternity of men and charity to man and beast alike on the socio-political side, and control of passions and renunciation of the world for Nirvana or final emancipation on the spiritual side has with no destruction of property and person converted India into a peaceful Damma-Chakka or Empire of Righteousness and moral law on the ruins of old Brāhmanic Institutions, swept off the land together with their direct privileges and prerogatives.] This Dhamma-Chakka is followed in its turn by the revival of old Dravidian monarchical institutions under the control of Brāhman priests and ministers and privileged castes, as desired by the politicians of the Kautilya period. The Andhras in Central India and the Pandyas, Cholas and Keralas in the South stood in as much need of the support of the Brāhmins for their revival as the latter in need of the support of the

Dravidians for the revival of their Vedic culture and institution. [In the Vedic and Brāhmanic literature the Aryan monarch figured as a Kshatra or soldier paid for with bali or tax in the form of agricultural produce for protection of person and property of the people against enemies. In the Buddhistic literature he was Gana-dasa¹ or servant of the Buddhist Sangha fed by 1/8th of the agricultural produce of the people. For his guilt, if any, he was liable to banishment, degradation or even the gallows. A monarch of such limited power could never be thought of as a reliable support of Brāhmanic culture just reviving or almost revived. The old Dravidians who had hitherto been regarded as Vrishalas or persons of Sūdra birth could scarcely afford shelter to Brāhmanic culture. It was therefore necessary to devise a new theory of monarchy and invest the Dravidian kings with the right of Sārvabhaumatva or power over all the land and people, as opposed to the old theory of the Mīmāṃsakas that the king has no right of ownership over land or people. A new theory of theocratic monarchy making the king's person divine and investing him with power over land and people in virtue of his building temples and setting up of idols of gods in the temples with rich endowments has been accordingly devised by the Bhatta school of the later Mīmāṃsakas (8th century onwards)] and is thus stated in the first Dīdhiti of the Rājadharmakautabha by Anantha-deva, son of Khandadeva, the author of Bhāttadīpika, on the Mīmāṃsa sūtras :—

“In the Śrībhāgavatha the king is said to acquire his right of ownership of land of all kinds (Sarvaprakāra bhūmisvamyā) only in virtue of his having set up idols of gods. ‘He acquires ownership of all the land in virtue of

his setting idols of gods, of the three worlds in virtue of his erecting a temple ; of the abode of Brahma in virtue of his making endowments for the worship of gods ; and he will attain equality with me (God Krishna) in virtue of his performances of the above three ? Likewise in the Vishnudharmottara :—' Kings desirous of attaining to heaven should in the Kali age set up new cities after erecting temples.' Here the word cities implies villages and fortified towns also. The verse quoted from the Bhāgavata lays down that a king who is desirous of acquiring ownership of the cities, villages, towns and the like, which he establishes, should at first erect temples. Whoever is desirous of acquiring such ownership in virtue of his being anointed as a king shall also erect palace and other buildings at first. Hence it is that in enumerating the duties of a king, the erection of temples, palaces and the like are enumerated first. In the verse of the Bhāgavata the king is said to acquire his ownership of all the land in virtue of his setting up idols of gods and temples. In this connection there crop up two alternatives : whether the word 'mahîpāla,' 'king' in the verse means a person who is already exercising his royal duties as stated in the *primâ facie* view in the Jaimini's Mîmāṃsā Sutra¹ or any other person of the ruling caste, as stated in the conclusion of the commentary on the same sutra ? It cannot be the first meaning, for in that case there can be no necessity for the anointment of such a person. Nor is the erection of temple, etc., the duty of a person who is already exercising his royal duties, for his exercise of his royal duties is dependent on his acquisition of that power in virtue of his erection of temples or the like. Nor can it be the second, i.e., any person of the ruling

¹ II. 3. 3.

caste, for in that case the construction of palaces and temples, etc., which can be undertaken by all, irrespective of caste and creed, would become a special duty of the Kshatriya caste. Not so; for though the erection of palaces and temples in general be undertaken by all, still, the construction of temples and palaces prior to the work of laying out cities, and villages can be regarded as a special duty of a person of Kshatriya caste in view of acquiring the right of sovereignty. In fact only such a person as is possessed of bravery, martial courage and other manly qualities befitting him to be a capable protector of people is taken as worthy of being anointed as a king. Hence like qualities such as bravery, courage, and capacity to protect, the construction of temples and other buildings befits a person to be a sovereign of the people."

{There is no doubt that this new theory of theocratic monarchy was universally accepted in India in mediaeval period. The existence of a great number of temples in the ruined capitals of ancient kings in India, especially in the Dekhan, proves it beyond doubt. It has been usual with historians to regard this form of monarchy as despotic. But I doubt whether the temple-builders of the mediaeval period were so despotic as they were believed to have been. As a matter of fact effective religious restraint and priestly domination seem to have been the characteristic features of Indian monarchies in general, and of mediaeval states in special. With this last step ends the evolution of Indian polity, having its growth arrested by Mahamadan conquest of India in the North, while in the South a number of Hindu kings vied with each other in establishing their sovereign rights by studding the land with temples. It is true that we regret to miss such sweet and bewitching words as Equality, Fraternity, Liberty,

Self-determination and the like in the political history of India. Yet I am inclined to believe that such religious and moral restraints as Self-denial, Conquest of the Six Passions, Preparation for Moksha or Nirvana by renunciation frequently preached to the prince and the poor alike were scarcely less powerful than the constitutional and legal checks of Western nations of modern times. How far the modern constitutional checks based more on utilitarian than ethical principles are preferable to religious or philosophical restraints which are applicable to all is a question yet to be decided. I

I shall be guilty of ingratitude if I close the preface without acknowledging my thankfulness to Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the President and Founder of Post-Graduate Studies in Arts in the Calcutta University, for his kind invitation to me at a great distance from Calcutta to read a series of lectures on subjects connected with the Arthashastra in that Institution which is unique and the only one of its kind in India. I confess that in my naturally ready response to his generous invitation, I have fallen far short of what was expected of me as the discoverer and translator of the Kautiliya Arthashastra. For this I beg to apologize to the worthy President of the Council of Post-Graduate Studies as well as to the world of scholars at large. My thanks are also due to the Senate of the Calcutta University for the publication of my lectures.

MYSORE,

The 10th September, 1920.

R. S.

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EVOLUTION OF INDIAN POLITY

LECTURE I

TRIBAL STATE OF SOCIETY

It is chiefly to woman that man owes his civilisation. Such of her natural qualities as sweetness, beauty and love seem to have infused or awakened in him the qualities that are necessary for sociability. Taking advantage of the natural feeling of love which man has for woman, she seems to have brought him under her influence and taught him the art of extending that love first towards her own children and next to her distant blood-relations. While this is as much true of beasts and birds, the difference between beasts and birds on the one hand and man on the other lies in his retentive memory and his natural capacity to repeat in word and action the impressions made on his memory. This natural gift of memory and tongue would have enabled him to evolve under the influence of woman knowingly or unknowingly a kind of society congenial for the exercise of his natural talents. But the brute force which man has in common with beasts to acquire and carry off the object of his liking, whether woman or food, seems to have disturbed him very much in his conscious or unconscious attempt to live a social life with his woman or women and children. In the early stages of society man like a beast seems to have fought with man for woman or food.

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LECTURE I

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This kind of herd life seems to be as true of human society in its earliest stages as of beasts even now. It needs no proof that if human society once existed in such a rude and undeveloped form as this, it was in that stage maternal or matriarchical rather than paternal or patriarchal. At this stage of society it was not possible for children to recognise their father as easily as their mother who sucked, protected, and maintained them. The proof for this lies in the fact that children once went by their mother's name instead of by their father's name, a practice quite opposite to what now prevails. Words such as Daityas, sons of Diti, Vainateyas, sons of Vinatâ, Kâdraveyas, sons of Kadrû, Anjaneya, son of Anjanâ, Jâbala, son of Jâbalâ, and Jaratkâra, son of Jaratkâru are taken as indicative of the uncertainty of the real begetter and of the unsettled condition of the society which rendered promiscuity among women a necessary evil.¹ The Lâtyâyana Srauta Sûtra and the Nidâna Sûtra of the Sâma Veda furnish a still more reliable proof of promiscuity of early women than this. In I. 3, 17-19 the Lâtyâyana Srauta lays down that in Agnishtoma Sattrâ and other sacrifices the Subrahmanya priest should, while singing the Subrahmanya litany enumerate the names of the father, grandfather, and great-grand-father as well as of the son, grandson, and great-grand-son of the sacrificer. After inquiring after the reason for the enumeration of such names, the Nidâna Sutra (III. 8) says as follows :—

“Women are of disorderly conduct. He, the sacrificer, here before divine and human witnesses, declares after mounting the sacrificial car the names of those whose descendant he is as well as the names of those whom he

¹ Ency. Brit., Vol. IX, pp. 20-25.

calls his own descendants, lest King Soma may mount his car (and not come down)."

The Mahabharata furnishes a still clearer proof of this in the legend of Svetaketu (Adiparva, Chapter 128, Kumbhakona Edition) :—

"Formerly women were not confined in their houses and dependent on husbands and other relatives. They used to go about freely enjoying as best pleased them. They did not then adhere to their husbands faithfully and yet they were not regarded sinful, for that was the sanctioned custom of the times. That very custom is followed to this day by birds and beasts without any exhibition of jealousy. That practice, sanctioned by precedent, is applauded by great Rishis. The practice is yet regarded with respect amongst the Northern Kurns. Indeed, that custom, so lenient to women, has the sanction of antiquity. The present practice (of woman being confined to one husband for life) has been established but lately. I shall tell thee now in detail who established it and why. It has been heard by us that there was a great Rishi named Uddalaka. He had a son called Svetaketu who was also an ascetic of merit. The present virtuous practice was established by that Svetaketu in anger. Hear thou the reason for his anger. One day, in the presence of Svetaketu's father, a Brahmana came and holding Svetaketu's mother by the hand, told her—'Let us go.' Beholding his mother seized by the hand and taken away apparently by force, the son, moved by wrath, became very indignant. Seeing his son indignant Uddalaka addressed him and said,—“Be not angry, O Son! This is the practice sanctioned by antiquity. Women of all orders in this world are free. Just as cattle are situated so are human beings, too, within their respective orders. Svetaketu, however, disapproved of this custom and established

in the world the present practice both for men and women.

The conversation of Gautama with Satyakama Jabala about the uncertainty of the latter's parentage, as narrated in Chhandogya, IV. 4, 5, is another instance pointing to the same conclusion.

I shall have occasion to speak, in connection with the origin of Kshatriyas, of a Vedic institution of queens or cows with no marriage^ctie, a custom on which the peculiar custom of the Nairs of Malabar seems to have been founded. Among the Nairs the woman lives with her mother or brother or in other cases has a house of her own where she receives her husband. "No Nair knows his father, and every man looks upon his sister's children as his heirs." (Buchanan, II. 412).

These are strong evidences to prove that the family system among the Aryans of India or among their predecessors was of yore rather maternal or matriarchical than paternal or patriarchal and that it was due to the inability of woman to defend herself against her ravisher and a peculiar kind of moral sense on the part of men.

From this licentious or dissolute state of society in which safety of person and property was out of question, the next step in the evolution of society seems to have been the formation of a defensive and offensive^d union of men and women as a protective measure. A number of settlements or unions of men and women seems to have arisen in various places under a common appellation, Gana, Jana, or Kula. Each Gana or Jana seems to have adopted a different badge or banner of an animal, plant, or bird as its distinguishing mark, and as a device showing the superiority or inferiority in bravery of one Gana to the other. It is a strange coincidence that though widely separated from each other, different communities or tribes of men

appear to have adopted similar badges or totems as they are termed by ethnographers. The totem names of the North American tribes of Senecas are said to be wolf, bear, turtle, beaver, deer, snipe, heron, and hawk. The same names are said to prevail among other tribes known as Cayugas, Oneidas, Mohawks, and the rest.² The totem names that seem to have once prevailed among the Aryans of India are horse, elephant, goat, serpent, dog, cat, rat, cow, buffalo, tiger, deer, monkey, lion, mungoose, eagle, owl, crow, cock, peacock, banner, smoke, lion, dog, bull, ass, elephant, and the like.

There is reliable evidence to prove that the early Aryans were divided into as many tribes as are indicated by the names of the beasts, birds, and other objects mentioned above.* It is an immemorial custom with the Hindus generally that the suitability of a proposed marriage match should be based upon day, gene, and other astrological harmonies between the bride and the bridegroom. There are as many as twenty harmonies or Kûṭas, as they are called, to be ascertained, before the selection of a bride or bridegroom is declared acceptable. The most historically though not astrologically important Kûṭas or harmonies are the (1) Gaṇakûṭa, or tribe-harmony, (2) the Yonikûṭa or species-harmony, (3) the Pakshikûṭa or bird-harmony, (4) the Bhutakûṭa or elements harmony, (5) Ayakûṭa or prosperity harmony, (6) Varnakûṭa or class or caste harmony, and (7) Gotrakûṭa or family harmony. The way in which these harmonies are to be found out is thus explained in the Kālāmṛita (Chapter III).

Of the 27 stars, some nine stars are assigned to Devagāṇas or celestial tribes, some other nine to Rakshagāṇas or demon tribes, and the remaining nine to human

² *Ency. Brit.*, Vol. LX, p. 20.

tribes. It is ruled that if both the bride and the bridegroom have birth-stars belonging to the same tribe, they are said to have Gana-harmony. These birth-stars should never belong to inimical tribes such as demoniac and human, in which case the proposed match should be given up.

The Yonikûta or species-harmony is thus explained :—

The species are taken to be fourteen :—(1) horse, (2) elephant, (3) goat, (4) serpent, (5) dog, (6) cat, (7) rat, (8) cow, (9) buffalo, (10) tiger, (11) deer, (12) monkey, (13) lion, (14) mungoose. These together with their females are made 28. Of the 27 stars, made into 28 with the addition of the Abhijit, one star is assigned to each of the 28 species, male and female. It is ruled out that the couple should have their birth-stars belonging to the same species or such different species as are not naturally inimical to each other.

• Similarly to each of the five birds such as, eagle, owl, crow, cock, and peacock, some five and five stars are assigned and to the second and third bird one more star is also assigned to make up 27. If the couple are found to have such birth-stars as are assigned to the same bird, they are said to have bird-harmony.

Likewise the 27 stars are distinguished among the so-called five elements, earth, air, water, fire and ether. It is ruled that the birth-stars of the couple should belong to the same or friendly elements, but never to inimical elements.

To find out Ayakûta or prosperity-harmony, the astrologer is directed to proceed as follows :—

The eight cardinal points, East, South-East, South, South-West, West, North-West, North and North-East are designated by the names, flag, smoke, lion, dog, bull, ass, elephant and crow. Out of the 27 stars, three, three

stars are assigned to each of the cardinal points and the remaining three stars are added to the first three points, one to each, thus making up 27. The points with their names being marked on the circumference of a circle, the fifth point, counting from any initial point, is considered to be the enemy of the first. The birth-stars of the couple are considered to be in harmony, if they do not belong to inimical points.

The class or caste-harmony is thus explained :—

Some three zodiacal signs are assigned to Brahman class, some three to Kshatriya class, some three to Vaisya and the remaining three to Sudra. If the birth signs of the bride and bridegroom are of the same class, or if that of the bridegroom is of higher class than that of the bride, they are said to be in class-harmony.

The Gotra or family harmony is explained as follows :—

The progenitors of families are said to be seven : Marichi, Atri, Vasishtha, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu. The 28 stars with Abhijit are distributed among the 7 progenitors at 4 stars to each. The couple are said to be in family harmony, if their birth-stars belong to different families. -

Mere totemism in a good sense and astrology appear to be so inseparably mixed up that it is hardly possible to find out which gave the lead to the other. But as such totemic names, if they are totemic at all, are found among savage tribes of other nations with no connection with stars or zodiacal signs, it stands to reason to hold that they are of totemic origin, intended to sanction or prohibit marriage between persons of the same totem name and to acknowledge the duty to support in war or to revenge other members of the same name. And as civilization advanced and as tribes of different totems became amalgamated together by conquest or reconciliation, such totem names

as a cat-man, a rat-maid, might have still persisted in the retentive recollection of old men and women and might have led a shrewd astrologer to explain the totem name by connecting it with the birth date or birth star of the persons. That stars, days, months and hours of the day were of old designated by names of animals, plants, and other things, is clearly borne out by history.³ Thus there is reason to believe that though Kālamrita and other astronomical treatises are of recent date, still the totem names recorded in them are of prehistoric origin, traditionally handed down from generation to generation. Accordingly even in the Vedas mention seems to have been made of such totem names as 'Sigrū, horse-radish, and aja, goat'⁴ in connection with tribes. The way in which the sacrificer is directed in the Krishnayajurveda (VI. 6, 4, 17) to assign to the twelfth stake his enemy or a rat seems to imply the tendency of the times to designate a hostile tribe by the name, rat. The names of the eleven sacrificial animals, enumerated in the Krishnayajurveda (V. 5, 11, 49) may have some remote connection with totemic custom. Side by side with this regulation of marriages by totem names, as set forth in the first five harmonies mentioned above, there is also the institution of gotras or families on patriarchal basis, prohibiting the marriage of a woman of the same gotra, as well as of a woman descended from his paternal or maternal ancestors within the sixth degree.

Now the question is how these two customs of marriage, one based upon rational maternal family system and regulated by totem names of tribes, and the other connected with families established on patriarchal basis and indicative of an advanced form of society, are to be reconciled with each other. The answer is furnished by

³ Ency. Brit., Vol. XXIV, p. 798.

⁴ Rigveda, VII. 18, 19.

a guiding astrological verse commonly quoted by astrologers. It is as follows :—

“ Friendship between the lords of the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom is essential among the Brahmans ; regulation of marriage by gāṇa-harmony (as explained above) is essential among the Kshatriyas ; the distance of the birth-stars of the bride from that of the bridegroom (by about 180°) is important for the Vaisyas ; species-harmony (as explained above) is essential for the Sudras.”⁵

From this it can be safely inferred that the Sudras, a race different from the Aryans, were divided into a number of totemic tribes at war with each other and with families organised on maternal basis. It is probable that when they were taken into the Aryan fold rather by reconciliation than by sword by the invading Aryans, the latter had incorporated with their own many of their former's religious, social and political customs and that promiscuity of women, regulation of marriage by totemic names, and Niyoga or the custom of deputing a man to beget a son on an appointed wife were customs rather of the Sudras than of the Aryans. What were the other religious, social, and political customs of the Sudras which the Aryans had incorporated with their own is a question that seems to be a rich mine for explorers. Leaving this knotty question aside, it may, however, be presumed that when the Aryans invaded, India they consisted of families organised on a patriarchal basis, as vividly described by the following soul-stirring hymn of the Atharva-veda (III. 30) :—

“ Freedom from hate I bring to you, concord and unanimity.

⁵ See Kālmṛta, Chapter 3, verse 189.

1. Love one another as the cow loveth the calf that she hath borne.

2. One-minded with his mother let the son be loyal to his sire. Let the wife, calm and gentle, speak words sweet as honey to her lord.

3. 'No brother hate his brother, no sister to sister be unkind. Unanimous, with one intent, speak ye your speech in friendliness.

4. That spell through which gods sever not, nor ever bear each other hate.

That spell we lay upon your home, a bond of union for the men.

5. Intelligent, submissive, rest united, friendly and kind, bearing the yoke together.

Come speaking sweetly each one to the other. I make you one-intentioned and one-minded.

6. Let what drink, your share of food be common, together with one common bond I bind you.

Serve Agni, gathered round him like the spokes about the chariot nave.

7. With binding charm I make you all united, obeying one sole leader and one-minded. Even as the gods who watch and guard the Amrit at morn and eve may ye be kindly-hearted."

There is also philological evidence to prove that before the Aryans of India had separated from their brethren, the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts and others, they had arrived at a state of society in which families on a constitutional basis were firmly set up. The following list of words common to the three kindred languages Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, is a suitable evidence of the formation of

families on patriarchal basis and of a tribal or democratic form of Government :—

Sanskrit.	Greek.	Latin.	English.
pitar	pater	pater	father
matar	mater	mater	mother
bhratar	phratris	frater	brother
naptar	anēpsios	nepos	grandson
jamatar	gambros	gener	son-in-law
svasura	becura	gocer	father-in-law
widhava		vidua	widow
rajan		rex	king
rajni		regina	queen
patni	posis	potens	mistress honourable
padati	pezos	peditis	footman
rajata	arguros	argentum	silver
dama	domos	domos	house
vis or vesa	foikos	vicus	house, village
pur	polis		city
nau	nans	navis	ship
aritra	eretmos		oar.

From these and other words, too numerous to quote here, it may be safely inferred that the Aryans had already arrived at a state of society that settled itself in a city with a raja, tribal chief, but not a king, with padatis, footmen to guard the city and the agriculturists, carpenters, weavers, black-smiths, gold-smiths and others to work upon iron, silver and other metals. There is reason to believe that like the Greeks and the Romans who had no monarchical institution when they settled in Europe after leaving their original home, the Aryans of India had no monarchical organisation when they immigrated into India. The word Rajan which corresponds with Roman rex, chief, seems to have originally signified a chief or noble, but not a hereditary monarch. There are a few

passages in the Vedas in which Rajan means merely a chief or a noble which in a number of other passages is used in the sense of a hereditary monarch. This variation in its sense is evidently due to the evolution of kingship from an original tribal chieftainship. Western scholars are inclined to believe that the normal, though not universal form of Government in early India was that by kings, as might be expected in view of the fact that Aryan Indians were invaders in a hostile territory: a situation which, as in the case of the Aryan invaders of Greece and of the German invaders of England, resulted almost necessarily in strengthening the monarchical element of the constitution.⁶ 'It is also believed that the Vedic monarchy was sometimes hereditary and in others elective, though it is doubtful whether the election by the people was between the members of the royal family only or extended to members of all the noble clans.'⁷ But sovereign power, if monarchical, must be either hereditary or for life of the person elected as a monarch. Such does not seem to be the case with sovereign power in the early Vedic period. As will be seen later on, persons elected to it were frequently expelled and restored. Frequent attempts to perform sacrificial offerings and spells for the attainment of sovereign power by different persons indicate that sovereign power in the early Vedic period was certainly democratic and insecure, based as it was on the ever-changing popular will, as shown by the frequent attempts of elected chiefs to control the popular passion by spells and witchcraft. The anarchical disturbance due to the frequent election, expulsion and restoration of chiefs seems to have led the people to establish monarchical form

⁶ Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 210.

⁷ Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 211.

of government on a hereditary basis, as stated both in the *Kautiliya Arthasastra* and the *Mahabharata*.⁶ It is on the supposition of the evolution of hereditary monarchy out of an original democratic or tribal chieftainship that the use of the word *Rajan* both in the sense of a democratic leader and a hereditary king can find a satisfactory explanation. The following are the passages in which the word *Rajan* is used in the sense of a noble :—

“ He amplifies his lordly might, with nobles (*rajans*) he slays, even mid alarms he dwells secure.

In great or lesser fight none checks him, none subdues,—the wielder of the thunderbolt.” *Rig.*, I. 40, 8.

Here the word *rajabhih* in plural means many kings, if it be taken in that sense. There cannot possibly be no more than a king to fight under the leadership of *Indra*.

“ If in your dwelling, or at a noble’s, or at a *Brahman*’s, ye, *Indra* and *Agni*, holy ones, rejoice you,

Even from thence, ye mighty lords, come hither and drink libations of the flowing *Soma*.” *Rig.*, I. 108, 7.

As *Indra* and *Agni* are invoked to come and drink the libation of *Soma* in the sacrifice performed by a king, they cannot be thought of as lingering in another king’s dwelling.

“ O much invoked, may we subdue all famine and evil want with store of grain and cattle.

May we allied, as first in rank, with nobles obtain possessions by our own exertion.” *Rig.*, X. 42, 10.

There cannot be many kings with whom the priests can possibly ally themselves.

“ He who hath store of herbs at hand like nobles amid an assembly of men,—physician is that sage’s name, fiend-slayer, chaser of disease.” *Rig.*, X. 97, 6.

⁶ *Arthasastra*, p. 16. (English translation). *Mahabharata*, *Santi*, Chap. 66.

There cannot possibly be many kings attending an assembly of people. Hence the word *Rajanah* must mean nobles here.

"Seize, Agni, on thy power and firmly hold it : Contend thou with the friend by way of friendship. Placed in the centre of our fellow nobles, Agni flash forth, frequently invoked here." A. V., II. 6, 4.

There cannot be many fellow kings. The word *Sajata*, fellow or born together, is an epithet qualifying the word "*Rajnah*," nobles.

"Make me beloved among the gods, beloved among the nobles, make me dear to every one who sees and to Sudra and to Aryan man." A. V., XIX. 62, 1.

There cannot be many kings in his place to whom the singer wants to endear himself.

"Bestow splendour on our Brahmins ; bestow splendour on our nobles ; bestow splendour on our Vaisyas and Sudras ; bestow splendour over splendour on me."⁹

Here the sense of the word *Rajasu* can possibly be no other than nobles.

"Just as I speak in endearing terms to people, to Brahmins, nobles, Sudras, Aryans and even to my deadly foe, so may I become dear to gods, to the bestower of gifts ; may my desire be fulfilled and I may realise this."¹⁰

Here like the words *Brahmana*, *Sudra* and *Arya*, the *Rajanya* means a class but not an individual. Hence it must mean nobles as a class. (Krishna YajurVeda, I. 3, 6) Since there is reason to believe that individual ownership of land in severalty was an established custom of Vedic India, it follows that frequent attempt at sacrificial

⁹ Tait. S., V. 7, 6, 4. Vaj. S., 18, 48.

¹⁰ Tait. S., I. 3, 6. Vaj. S., 26, 2.

performance for the possession of a village (grama) and of a kingdom (rashtra) must necessarily be rather for its overlordship than for the possession of the land. The Krishnayajurveda refers to ownership of land in severalty as follows :—

“ He should make an offering to Indra and Agni on eleven potsherds who has a dispute about a field or with his neighbours.” II. 2, 2.

The following sacrifices are enjoined for the attainment of lordship over a village or a kingdom :—

“ He who desires a village should offer to the All-gods the sacrifice for taking possession. His equals are connected with All-gods ; verily he has recourse to the All-gods with their own share ; verily they subject his equals to him ; he becomes possessed of a village.”¹¹ (Krishna Yajus, II. 3, 10.)

“ They should be offered for one who desires the kingdom ; the Rashtrabhrits are the kingdom ; verily with the kingdom ; he wins the kingdom for him ; he becomes the kingdom ; they should be offered for oneself ; the Rashtrabhrits are the kingdom ; the people are the kingdom, cattle are the kingdom ; in that he becomes the highest, he is the kingdom. Verily with the kingdom he wins the kingdom, he becomes *the richest of his equals*. They should be offered for one who desires a village ; the Rashtrabhrits are the kingdom, *his fellows are the kingdom* ; he becomes possessed of a village. He offers on the dicing place ; verily on the dicing place *he wins his fellows for him ; being won they wait upon him*. They should be offered on the mouth of the chariot for him who desires force ; the Rashtrabhrits are the force ; verily by force he wins force for him ; he becomes possessed of force. They should be

¹¹ Compare Krishna Yaj., II. 2, 1. See also Appendix I.

offered for him who is expelled from his kingdom. To all his chariots he should say 'Be yoked'; verily he yokes the kingdom for him. The oblations of him whose realm is not in order are disordered. He should take off the right wheel of his chariot and offer in the box. So he puts in order his oblation; and the kingdom comes in order in accord with their coming into order." (Krishna Yaj., III. 4, 8.)

It is probable that recourse was had to dice-play and chariot-race to decide the claims of rival competitors for sovereign power over a village or kingdom. The statement that "on the dicing-place he wins his fellows and being won they wait upon him" found in above quotation confirms this view. The *Lātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (VIII. 11, 1) also prescribes the *Vajapeya* for whomsoever the Brahmans and the Rajans may place at their head. Both in the *Vajapeya* and the *Rajasuya* dice-play and chariot-race form an important part of the rite. In the *Rajasuya* sacrifice the king (to be elected) is made to step on a tiger skin, under which is placed a piece of levl representing the head of *Namuchi*, on which he tramples. He then performs a chariot-race with sixteen other chariots and plays or deputes his *Akshavapa*, dice-player; to play at dice for him. It appears that his election to the sovereign power over the kingdom depended on his success in the chariot-race or in the dice-play or in both. In addition to war as a means to decide the claims of contending parties for power or possession, wrestling combat, chariot-race, or dice-play between two representatives of the contending parties seems to have been looked upon of old as a peaceful means to settle the question at issue. The rule seems to have been the underlying factor of the dice-play which is said to have been undertaken by ancient kings such as *Nala* and his brother *Jayatsena* or *Pushkara* and

Yudhishtira and Duryodhana,¹² in the very presence of their electors, the people and the priests.

There is also evidence to believe that perhaps owing to difficulties in deciding the claims of rival claimants to sovereign power or other causes, some states continued to successfully manage their affairs even without a king. Zimmer is said to have found in some Vedic passages states having no kings. This is stated in the Vedic Index of Macdonell and Keith :—

“ Zimmer sees traces in one passage of the Rigveda that in times of peace there was no king in some states the members of the royal family holding equal rights. He compares this with the state of affairs in early Germany. But the passage merely shows that the nobles could be called Rajan and is not decisive for the sense ascribed to it by Zimmer. Of course this state of affairs is perfectly possible and is exemplified later in Buddhistic times.”¹³

The Rigveda passage referred to by him runs as follows :—

“ Where a Brahman meets with herbs like nobles in an assembly, he is called a physician fiend-slayer and chaser of disease.” X. 97, 6.

The Atharva Vedic passages which are believed by Zimmer to convey the same idea are I. 9 ; III. 4 ; and IV. 22.

1. “ May Indra, Pushan, Varuna, Mitra, Agni benignant gods, maintain this man in riches.

May the Adityas and the Visvadevas set and support this man in supremest lustre.

¹² Arthashastra, V. III, 3.

¹³ Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 216.

2. May light, O gods, be around him, Agni, the sun,
all that is bright and golden.

Prostrate beneath our feet his foes and rivals.

Uplift him to the loftiest cope off heaven.

3. 'Through that most mighty prayer, O Jatavedas,
wherewith thou brought milk to strengthen Indra,

Even therewith exalt this man, O Agni, and give him
highest rank among his fellows.

4. I have assumed this sacrifice, O Agni, their hopes,
Their glory and their riches' fulness.

Prostrate beneath our feet his foes and rivals

Uplift him to the loftiest cope of heaven."

A. V., I, 9.

This is clearly a sacrificial hymn or prayer to strengthen the claim of a candidate to sovereign power, whether strong or weak. It follows therefore that the state, to the lordship of which the candidate aspired, was in the meantime in a state of interregnum.

"To thee hath come the kingship with its splendour

On! shine as lord, sole ruler of the people.

King! let all regions of the heavens invite thee.

Here let men wait on thee and before thee. 1.

The tribesmen shall elect thee for the kingship,

These five celestial regions shall elect thee.

Rest on the height and top of kingly power; thence as a

Mighty man award us treasures 2.

Kinsmen, inviting thee, shall go to meet thee,

With thee go Agni as an active herald.

Let women and their sons be friendly minded.

Thou, mighty one, shalt see abundant tribute. 3.

First shall the Asvins, Varuna, and Mitra, the
 Universal gods, and Maruts call thee.
 Then turn thy mind to giving gifts of treasure,
 Thence, mighty one, distribute wealth among us. 4.

Speed to us hither from the farthest distance
 Propitious unto thee be Earth and Heaven.
 Even so hath Varuna, this King, asserted, he who
 Himself hath called thee: come thou hither. 5.

Pass to the tribes of men, O Indra, Indra.
 Thou with the Varuna hast been found accordant.
 To his own place this one (Agni) hath called thee, saying
 'Let him adore the gods and guide the Clansmen.' 6.

The bounteous paths in sundry forms and places,
 All in accord, have given thee room and comfort.
 Let all these in concert call thee hither.
 Live thy tenth decade here, a strong kind ruler." 7.

A. V., III. 4.

"Exalt and strengthen this my prince, O Indra,
 Make him sole lord and leader of the people.
 Scatter his foes, deliver all his rivals into his hand
 In struggles for precedence. 1.

Give him a share in village, kine, and horses
 And leave his enemy without a portion.
 Let him as king be head and chief of princes.
 Give up to him, O Indra, every foeman. 2.

Let him be treasure-lord of goodly treasures,
 Let him as king be master of the people.
 Grant unto him great power and might, O Indra,
 And strip his enemy of strength and vigour. 3.

Like milk kine yielding milk for warm libations,
 Shower, Heaven and Earth, on him full many a blessing.

May he as king be Indra's well-beloved,
The darling of the kine, the plants, and the cattle. 4.

I join in league with thee Victorious Indra,
With whom men conquer and are never defeated.
He shall make thee the folk's sole lord and leader
Shall make thee highest of all human rulers. 5.

Supreme art thou, beneath thee are thy rivals,
And all, O king, who were thine adversaries.
Sole lord and leader and allied with Indra, bring,
Conquer, thy foemen's goods and treasures. 6.

Consume, with lion aspect, all their hamlets, with
'Tiger' aspect, drive away thy foemen.
Sole Lord and leader and allied, with Indra,
Seize, conquer, thine enemies' possessions." 7.

In the first of these two hymns, the elected king seems to have been an outsider, as he was expected to "speed thither from farthest distance." In the second, the right of the elected king to a share in the village-produce, and kine and horses in accordance with the custom of the monarchical states of those times is already clearly specified. It follows therefore that in these two instances the states were of a republican pattern in government.

Still more conclusive is the evidence furnished by the Aitareya and Taittiriya Brahmanas about the existence of republics during the Vedic period ;—

"The Devas said, it is on account of our having no king that the Asuras defeat us. Let us elect a king. All consented. They elected Soma their king. Headed by King Soma, they were victorious in all directions." (Ait. Br., I. 14).

"The Devas and Asuras joined in battle. Then Prajapati concealed his eldest son Indra, lest he might be killed

by the mighty Asuras. Prahlada, the son of Kayadhu likewise concealed his son Virochana, lest he might be killed by the Devas. The Devas went to Prajapati and said : there can possibly be no battle for a state having no king (for its leader). They courted Indra to be their king with sacrifices." (Tait Br., I. 5, 9).

The Ambattha Suttanta of the Buddhists (I. 113) and the Arthasastra of Kautilya (XI. 1) refer in unmistakable terms to the existence of republics or corporations of warriors (Kshatriya Sreni) with the title of Rajans even so late as the Buddhistic period, when a greater portion of India was divided into a number of hereditary monarchical states.

Likewise both the Arthasastra (I. 13) and the Mahabharata (Rajadharma Parva, Chapter 67) speak of a period when the Aryans had no monarchical institutions, and elected Manu to be their king for the first time in their history.

Hence it may be safely asserted that when the Aryans invaded India, they were divided into a number of Ganas or Janas corresponding to the Roman Gens and Gentes and the Greek Genos, each Gens being a republic or democracy with no king, and that during the Vedic and Brahminic periods a number of the Janas passed into elective monarchies, while a few retained their republican form even so late as the Buddhist period.¹⁴

We have no reliable information as to what their economical and administrative condition was at the remote period. Still from what Hindu astrologers traditionally say of planetary constitution with reference to its influence on the economic and administrative condition of human society, some information may be gathered about the

¹⁴ Buddhist India by Rhys Davids, p. 19.

economical and administrative constitution of the republics. According to the astrologers the planetary world is believed to consist of nine primary Nayakas or lords, such as a king, minister, commander of the army, superintendent of crops, superintendent of grains, superintendent of barter (argha), superintendent of clouds, superintendent of liquids, and that of dry things. Then there are seven secondary leaders, as the lords of horses, of elephants, of cows, of sheep, of buffaloes, of camels, and of asses. Then a set of ten subordinate lords, such as lords of gods, of men, of wealth, of cloth, of gems, of women, of trees, of beasts, of goods, and of trade. Then follows a set of five, as lords of the treasury, of war, of ornaments, of edict (ajna) and of transactions. Then another set of five, as the lords of learning, of happiness, of counsel, of work, and of bravery. The division of these 36 lords into five groups is evidently an indication of successive later additions. Accordingly they may be reduced to nine, as (1) a lord of war, (2) a lord of crops, (3) one of grains, (4) one of trade and barter, (5) one of cattle and beasts, (6) one of water, (7) one of forests, (8) one of clothings and implements and (9) one of disputes (Vyavahara).

Of these, the duty of the lord of war is clear enough and it is he on whom lay the most important duty, the protection of the gens against enemies. The duty of the one of the two lords of crops and grains seems to have been the supervision of crops and harvests and protection of them from wild tribes and beasts. In the absence of currency it was not an easy task to settle the rate of barter of things and a separate officer seems to have been appointed for the purpose of fixing the rate, at which things had to be bartered. The lord of cattle had to lead the cattle of the gens as a whole to pasture and graze them and bring them back to the village in the

evening, as is still a custom in a number of villages even now. The duty of the lord of water was evidently the regulation of water of the village tank or lake, or river for drinking or irrigation of crops. The appointment of a lord of clothings and implements was of course for the purpose of giving facilities for the production of clothing and weaving and agricultural implements. Lastly it was the duty of the lord of disputes, to settle the civil disputes of the people and to punish the criminals, perhaps following the opinion of the village elders assembled in the public ground or hall on important cases. If there was a lord of learning in addition, he might have been the village priest whose business was, as still prevalent in a number of villages, to perform the sacrifices, to conduct the marriages, funerals and religious functions, to fix the time of sowing and reaping and to impart knowledge to the village boys. It need not be stated that all these officers were maintained, as they are even now, at the expense of the village as a whole.

Land was held in severalty¹⁵ and each family devoted itself to its agricultural or industrial pursuits severally. Hunting, fishing, collection of forest produce, repair of village tanks and other big projects were, as they are even now, carried out on communal or co-operative basis. Lending and borrowing of grains at interest was a prevalent custom. Division of parental property among the male children during or after the life of the father was an established custom even during the Vedic period.¹⁶ Caste was unknown, but the people were divided into four classes, the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and the Sudras. There was intermarriage among the classes, the lower class,

¹⁵ Tait. Samhita, II. 3, 1.✓

¹⁶ Tait Samhita, II. 6.1. See also Appendix II.

however, not being permitted to marry a maiden of an upper class. There was interdining among the four classes, the Sudras being employed as cooks. Gambling was a painful vice of the times. Even kings lost their kingdoms and even their wives by taking to gambling.

Such seems to be in brief the nature of the little republics of the Indian Aryans when they invaded and occupied the North Western parts of India. Whether this deserves the name of a republic or democracy or tribal state of society is a question that may be conveniently left to the taste of historians.

LECTURE II

ELECTIVE MONARCHY

The division of the Hindus originally into four classes, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas, and the Sudras and later into rigid castes bearing the same names is of Indian origin, as no trace of such division is found among the Greeks, the Romans, and other branches of the Indo-European race. It is true that the Aryans of the West, too, had their priests, warriors, traders, and husbandmen like their brethren of India, but still there was not among them such distinct classification of social grades which, with later restrictions as to *connubium* and *commensality*, easily passed into isolated castes. Nor are the class names Indo-European in origin. Even in some election hymns, the elected man is found designated not even as a Kshatriya, but merely as man by the use of the demonstrative pronoun 'this.' It is probable therefore that the word Kshatriya, protector from wounds, is a later Indian or Indo-Iranian word derived to designate a separate class of later formation. So long as no need was felt for the institution of a separate Kshatriya class to defend the hearth and home of the invading Aryans, the general term used to designate a king elected for life or for a definite period was Raja, noble, corresponding to the Roman *Res.* It is a historical fact admitted by almost all Western scholars that when the Aryans invaded India, their leaders were not monarchs, but brave warriors elected for the occasion.¹⁷ Such occasional election of a warrior to defend them against their external enemies, does not seem to have answered their purpose after they settled themselves in the country. They

¹⁷ Rig. X. 173. A.V., I. 9: Tait. Samhita, I. 8, 10.

seem to have felt the need for the election of a permanent chief to be at their head and carry on the internal administration of their settlements. This view is corroborated both by the Arthashastra and the Mahabharata. The Arthashastra says (I. 13) :—

“ People, suffering from anarchy as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish swallowing a small one, first elected Manu Vaivasvata to be their king and allotted one-sixth of the grains grown and one-tenth of the merchandise as sovereign dues.”¹⁸

How they elected their king, and whom they elected and for what period are questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered. It is probable that as dice-play and chariot race are found forming part of the coronation rite, the successful candidate in one or two of those games seems to be the one that was selected by the people for the coveted post.¹⁹ The statement made in the Rigveda (X. 34, 8) that the king himself pays homage and reveres the dice does not seem to mean a gamester's respect to an amusement. Though at a later period when hereditary monarchy was firmly established in the land, these two games in connection with the coronation rite of the kings had become merely symbolic, there is no reason to disbelieve that their connection with the rite originated from the custom of making the kingdom a reward for success in the games. Though the proffered prize in a chariot race was a thousand cattle (Rig., VI. 45), there is no reason to believe that the prize in all cases was of the same kind, but never a kingdom.²⁰

The trouble which an elected chief had to contend against seems to have been threefold : trouble due to

¹⁸ Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 20. Mahabharata, Rajadharma Parva, Chap. 67.

¹⁹ Tai. Samhita, I. 8, 10-11 and II. 2, 1.

²⁰ Rig., VIII. 70 and II. 31.

external foes or aboriginal people, and that due to his own kinsmen, and lastly his disagreement with the assembly of the people. In the earliest period when a separate Kshatriya class was not yet established, the only trouble which the elected chief or Raja had to contend against was the frequent attack of the Aryan settlements by the aboriginal people. In the course of time the Aryans seem to have got rid of this partly by conquering and enslaving the native tribes and partly by taking them into the Aryan fold by extending to them right of connubium and commensality. The employment of Sudras as cooks and servants in the houses of even the Aryan priests, the marriage²¹ of Sudra women by the Aryans, and the privilege,²² granted to the sons of Brahmans by Sudra wives, of becoming Brahmans and of exercising even priestly functions are historical instances of the conciliatory policy of the invaders. Even enslaved men and women of the Sudras seem to have been allowed to take part in the most solemn sacrifices of the Aryans. Milking the cows in sacrifices is a function entrusted to Sudras and the completion of the Gavam Ayana sacrifice is marked by the dancing of Sudra women. That at a later period of the history of the Aryans Sudras were allowed even the right of becoming kings in many of the Aryan kingdoms, is an undeniable historical fact. Why the Chandalas were not granted rights and privileges similar to those which the Sudras succeeded in getting from the Aryans, is a question that requires further investigation. It is however probable that they belonged to an earlier aboriginal race, too firmly inclined to its own wild and loathsome way of living.

²¹ Kalivarjya prakarana, Smritichandrika, Vol. I.

²² Lâtâyana Srautasutra, Dasapeya Sacrifice.

When the troubles due to aboriginal race were thus removed, the priestly class together with the people seem to have turned their attention to the question of electing a king. It was a question of internal administration. A skilful administrator, capable of governing the people in accordance with their customs, and with no domestic troubles of his own, was the one that was urgently needed. The priests seem to have thought that a bachelor king with no domestic ties of his own would best serve their purpose. Accordingly they seem to have established an institution of queens, on the eldest of whom it was, as will be shown later on, the duty of the chief priest to beget a prince. It appears that the prince had to live a celibate life and rule the kingdom in accordance with the wishes of the people's assembly. While this new departure removed the inherent difficulties of election, it seems to have occasioned some new troubles. There seems to have arisen a new class of princes or Kshatriyas, as they were called, and while the kinsmen of the ruling prince endeavoured to snatch the kingdom in the interests of some one else of their own class, the ruling princes themselves, one after another, seem to have been fighting with the priests for their own right of marriage and for hereditary monarchy. In some Aryan settlements the priests seem to have made a compromise with their rulers and set up hereditary monarchies while in others, the dispute between the priests and the rulers seems to have occasioned a civil war which, as will be seen later on, ended disastrously for the priests. These and other troubles of elective monarchy are clearly hinted, if not expressed, in the following election hymns of the Rigveda and Atharvaveda :—

“And they (the Asuras), like people who elect their rulers, have in abhorrence turned away from Vritra.”²²

²² Rig., X. 124, 8.

1. "Be with us ; I have chosen thee : stand steadfast and immoveable.

Let all the people wish for thee ; let not thy kingship fall away.

2. Be even here ; fall not away : be like a mountain unremoved.

Stand steadfast here like Indra's self, and hold the kingship in thy grasp.

3. This man hath Indra established, made secure by strong oblations' power.

May Soma speak a benison, and Brahmanaspati on him.

4. Firm is the sky and firm the earth, steadfast also are the hills.

Steadfast is all this living world, and steadfast is this king of men.

6. On constant Soma let us think with constant sacrificial gift.

And then may Indra make the *class bring tribute* unto thee alone." Rig., X. 173.

2. "Subduing those who rival us, subduing all malignities.

Withstand the man who menaces, withstand the man who angers us.

3. Soma and Savitar, the gods, have made thee a victorious king.

All elements have aided thee, to make thee general conqueror.

5. Slayer of rivals, rivalless, victorious, with royal sway, over these beings may I rule.

May I be sovereign of the folk." 24

The points to be noticed in these three hymns are (1) right of the people to elect, (2) the custom of collecting

24 Rigveda, X. 174. Compare A. V., VI. 87.

tribute or tax from the clans or people as contrasted from priests who were exempt from taxation, (3) and the trouble due to rivals.

"The Being lays the sap of life in beings : he hath become the sovereign lord of creatures.

Yama comes to this man's royal consecration : let him as king own and allow this kingdom.

2. Come forward, turn not back in scorn, strong guardian, slayer of *thy foes*.

Approach, O Gladdener of thy friends, the Gods have blessed and strengthened thee.

3. All waited on him as he came to meet them. He self-resplendent moves endued with glory.

That is the royal hero's lofty nature! he, manifold, hath gained immortal powers.

4. Stride forth to heaven's broad regions, thou, a tiger, on a tiger's skin.

Let all the *people* long for thee ; let heavenly floods be rich in milk.

5. Heaven's waters joyous in their milk, the waters of the middle air and those that earth containeth—

I with the gathered power and might of all these waters sprinkle thee.

6. The heavenly waters rich in milk have sprinkled thee with power and 'might to be the Gladdener of thy friends. May Savitar so fashion thee.

These, compassing the tiger, rouse the lion to great joy and bliss.

As strong floods purify the standing ocean,
So men adorn the leopard in the waters."

A. V., IV. 8.

"1. I win the love of Indra that his friend may reach yet higher state.

Increase, as rain the grass, *this man's dominion* and his lofty fame.

2. *Confirm the princely power* in him, Agni and Soma grant him wealth.

In all the circuit of his rule make him yet higher for your friend.²⁵

3. *The man who shows us enmity*, whether a stranger or akin,

Thou wilt give up entire to me who sacrifice and press the juice." (A. V., VI. 54.)

Observe the keen anxiety felt here for the security of the kingly power, due to enemies both internal and external.

"1. Firm is the sky, firm the earth, and firm is all this living world.

Firm are the mountains on their base and stedfast is this king of men.

2. Stedfast may Varuna the king, stedfast the god Brihaspati,

Stedfast may Indra, stedfast, too, may Agni keep thy stedfast reign.

3. Firm, never to be shaken, crush thy foemen, under thy feet lay those who strive against thee.

One-minded, true to thee be all the regions; faithful to thee, the firm, be this assembly." (A. V., VI. 88.)²⁶

The important point worthy of notice in the above hymn is the dependence of the kingly power on the faithfulness of the assembly.—

"1. Do ye. O Brahmanaspati, invest for royal sway this man—

With that wherewith the deities invested Savitar the god.

²⁵ Compare A. V., I. 9; and IV. 22.

²⁶ Compare A. V., VI. 88.

2. Invest this Indra for long life, invest him for great princely power,

That I may lead him on to eld, that he may watch his princedom long.

3. Invest this Soma for long life, invest him for great hearing power,

That I may lead him on to eld, that he may watch over hearing long.

4. For us, surround him, cover him with splendour,
Give him long life and death when age removes him.

This garment hath Brihaspati presented to Soma,
to the king, to wrap about him.

5. Advance to good old age! endue the mantle. Be
thou our *heifers' guard from imprecation* (Grishtinam abhisastipa).

Live thou a hundred full and plenteous autumns and
wrap thee in prosperity of riches.

6. Thou for our weal hast clothed thee in this garment,
thou hast become our *cow's sure guard from curses*
(Vasanam abhisastipa).

Live thou a hundred full and plenteous autumns:
thou living, fair thyself, shalt deal forth-treasures.

7. In every need, in every fray we call, as friends to
succour us, Indra the mightiest of all.

Gold coloured, undecaying, surrounded with heroes,
dwell, dying in old age, with people round thee.

8. This is the spoken word of Agni, Soma, Brihaspati,
and Savitar, and Indra." (A. V., XIX. 34.)

"Desiring bliss, at first, light-finding Rishis began
religious rite and holy fervour.

Thence energy was born, and might, and kingship;
So this man let gathered gods incline them."

A. V., XIX. 41.

While hymn No. 41 gives to the Rishis the credit of establishing elective monarchy, the other hymn (No. 24) seems to restrict the period of monarchy to the life of the elected individual, as clearly pointed out in verses 6 and 7. The people's call on the elected king to be their heifers' guard and the assumed consent of the king to be their cows' sure guard from curses is evidently a reference to the occasional condemnation of the institution of queens or cows on the part of a few elected kings. The motive for hurling imprecations on cows can have no satisfactory explanation unless cows are taken to mean queens, the mothers of the Kshatriyas. This question will, however, be discussed at length in connection with the origin of Kshatriyas later on. What is however meant by the imprecations and curses of the cows is the attempt of the bachelor kings to put an end to the institution of queens on whom the Brahmans had the right of begetting the ruling princes and the warrior Kshatriyas, and to establish hereditary monarchy in its stead by marrying themselves. So long as the Kshatriyas could not succeed in their attempt to set up hereditary monarchies, the ruling kings, though bachelors, were not free from troubles. While they had to contend on the one hand with their brother princes who seem to have made frequent attempts to evict the elected king and seize the throne, the trouble due to the dissatisfaction of the people on the other seems to have been also immense. This two-fold trouble is referred to in the following hymns of the Atharvaveda—

“1. This parna-amulet hath come, strong and destroying with its strength my rivals.

The power of the gods, the plants' sweet essence,

May it incite me ceaselessly with vigour.

2. O Parna-amulet, in me set firmly might and opulence.”

Within the compass of my rule may I be rooted and supreme.

That dear mysterious amulet which gods have set within the tree.

3. May the gods grant to me to wear together with extended life.

As gift, by Varuna instructed, Parna hath come, the mighty strength of Soma.

4. This would I, brightly shining, love and cherish for long life lasting through a hundred autumns.

5. The Parna-charm hath come to me for great security from ill.

That I may be exalted, yea, above the wealth of Aryaman.

6. Sagacious builders of the car, clever and skilful artisans,—

Make all the men on every side, Parna, obedient to my will.

7. "The nobles and makers of the kings, troopleaders, masters of the horse,

Make all the men on every side, Parna, obedient to my will.

Thou, Parna, art my body's guard, mān kin by birth to me a man.

With splendour of the circling year, I bind thee, on me, Amulet!" (A. V., III. 5.)

"We bend together all your (kinsmen's) minds, your vows and purposes we bend."

We bend together you who stand apart with hopes opposed to ours.

I with my spirit seize and hold your spirits.

Follow with thought and wish my thoughts and wishes.

I make your hearts the thralls of my dominion!

On me attendant come the way I guide you."

A. V., III. 8, 5-6.

"Unanimous, ye kinsmen, come united, come to the glory of this mighty guardian.

The inclination which your hearts have harboured, the purpose which hath occupied your spirits,

This I annul with sacrifice and butter.

In me be your sweet resting place, O Kinsmen.

Stand even here, forsake me not. Before us may

Pushan make your path unfit to travel."

A. V., VI. 73, 1-3.

"Close gathered be your bodies! be your minds and vows in unison!

Here present Brahmanaspati and Bhaga have assembled you.

Let there be union of your minds, let there be union of your hearts.

Al! that is troubled in your lot with this I mend and harmonize.

As, free from jealousy, the strong Adityas have been the Vasu's and Rudra's fellows,

So free from jealousy, Lord of three titles!

Cause thou *these people* here to be one-minded."

A. V., VI. 74.

"We bend your minds in unison, bend in harmony your hopes and plans.

You, there, who turn to sundered ways, we bend and bow in unison.

I with my spirit make your spirits captive!

These with their thoughts follow my thoughts and wishes.

I make your hearts submissive to mine orders;

Closely attending go where I precede you."

A. V., VI. 94.

"Subdue with conquering might his other *rivals, those yet unborn* repel, O Jatavedas.

For great felicity protect this kingdom, and in this man let all the gods be joyful."

A. V., VII. 35.

"To me hath this word given by Agni, fame, force and might, and strength and life and lustre.

May Agni, too, bestow on me three times a hundred manly powers.

For mighty strength, for action, I receive thee, for manly power, to last a hundred autumns.

For conquering strength, and energy and vigour.

I fasten thee, for chieftainship, for bearing royal dominion through a hundred autumns."²⁷

A. V., XIX. 37.

While it is clearly stated in these and other hymns that the troubles of the elected monarch were due to chariot-makers, artisans, troop leaders, masters of the horse, the king-makers or priests, his kinsmen, and lastly the people at large, there is no mention made in any of the hymns of troubles due to sons and wives, a lurking domestic danger, prevalent at a later period, as set forth in the Arthashastra of Kautilya.²⁸

The custom mentioned in A. V., XIX. 37 of fastening an amulet with the desire of making the kingship last through a hundred years points to the election of individuals to kingship only for life. This is confirmed also by the steps taken by the people to dethrone and banish an elected chief on account of his oppression and misgovernment. The banishment of an elected chief

²⁷ Cf. A. V., VI. 97; VII. 78; 96.

²⁸ Artha., Book I. Chaps. 17, 18, 20, 21.

and the restoration of an expelled king are thus alluded to in the following hymns of the Atharvaveda :—

“ This thunderbolt shall take its fill of order,
Scare life away and overthrow the kingdom,
Tear necks in pieces, rend the hopes asunder,
Even as the lord of might the neck of Vritra.

Down, down beneath the conqueror, let him not rise,
concealed in earth, but lie down-smitten, with the bolt.

Seek out the fierce oppressor, yea, strike only the
oppressor dead.

Down on the fierce oppressor's head strike at full length,
O thunderbolt.” (A. V., VI. 134.)

1. Loudly he roared. Here let him labour deftly.
Spread, Agni, over spacious earth and heaven.

Let Maruts who possess all treasures yoke thee. Bring
him who reverently paid oblations.

2. Though he be far away, let the red horses bring,
Indra, bring the sage to us and friendship,
Since with Sautramani the gods for him overpower
Gayatri, Brihati, and hymn of praises.

3. King Varuna call thee hither from the waters !
From hill, and mountains Soma call thee hither !
Let Indra call thee hither to these people.
Fly hither to these people as a falcon.

4. May the hawk bring the man who must be
summoned.

From far away, *in alien land, an exile.*

May both the Asvins make thy path-way easy.

Come and unite yourself with him, ye kinsmen.

5. Let thine opponents call thee back.

Thy friends have chosen thee again.

Indra and Agni, all the gods have kept thy home
amid the tribe.

He who disputes our calling thee, be he a stranger or akin,

Drive him, O Indra, far away, and do thou bring this man to us."²⁹ (A. V., III. 3.)

The Taittiriya Samhita also enjoins a sacrifice³⁰ for the purpose of averting an impending expulsion of a king as follows :—

“‘O Aditi, do thou confirm’; with these words he who is being expelled should take the foot-dust of him (who is expelling). ‘Aditi is this earth. Verily she confirms the kingdom for him.’” (II. 3. 1.)

The peaceful and quiet performances of necessary sacrifices in accordance with the belief of those times to celebrate the grand events of the election of a new king or of the restoration of an exiled king clearly indicates that it was no revolutionary act attended with bloodshed. Nor is there any reason to suppose that kingship during the Vedic period, whether elective or hereditary, was quite insecure and that no king's life was safe. Considering the frequent election of kings to vacancies caused by death or expulsion of elected chiefs on account of their unfitness, the election and restoration hymns that are still preserved in the Vedas appear to be too few. To interpret them as a sure sign of the insecurity of royal power is to forget the necessity which the invading Aryans had for showing their united front against the hostile aboriginal tribes. The spells, charms, and sacrifices, performed by chiefs to recover their lost sovereignty or the loyal affection of their kinsmen or of the people at large point rather to the natural administrative difficulty of the times than to tyrannical designs of the royal clans or to the

²⁹ Compare A. V., I. 29 and III. 4.

³⁰ For having recourse to sacrifice as a political weapon, see Appendix I.

turbulent nature of the people. So long as the kings made no attempt to establish hereditary monarchies in the place of elective monarchy of the early period, they could rely on the strong support of the priests and the people against their clansmen. It is only at a later period of the history of the Aryans in India that we hear of a terrible internecine civil war between the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas, as illustrated by the conflict between Visvamitra and Vasishtha and Parasurama and the Kartaviryas. By that time the Aryans seem to have succeeded in so firmly establishing themselves in the land and in so skillfully and carefully solving the race-question by taking the aboriginal Sudras into the Aryan fold, extending to them the right of connubium and commensalism that there was no alien race-question at the time of the civil war to make the situation worse for the Aryans. It follows, therefore, that royal power was neither insecure nor elective sometimes and hereditary at others, as Macdonell and Keith are inclined to believe.³¹

It was quite secure and was quite powerful to show its united front to the hostile Dasyus or natives so as to Aryanise them partly by conquest and partly by conciliatory measures. It was also elective and of the same constitutional type that is still prevalent in the South Indian States of Travancore and Cochin, of which it is, as will be seen later on, the source. This elective monarchy continued till it was set aside by hereditary monarchy somewhere about the times of Visvamitra and Parasurama.³²

³¹ Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 811.

³² 1700 B. C. (See Gavam Ayana, the Vedic Era.)

LECTURE III

THE ORIGIN OF THE KSHATRIYAS

Before going to read my paper on the Origin of the Kshatriyas, I think it necessary to draw your attention to some of the important points noted in my paper on "The Evolution of Castes," which I read in the Mythic Society at Bangalore some years ago.

I. The most important point to which I want to draw your attention is the meaning of the word caste. Caste means a social exclusiveness with reference to diet and marriage. So long as a Hindu, whether a Brāhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya or Sudra, observes his social or communal rules about the articles of diet he eats and about the woman he marries, he is regarded to maintain his caste and to lose it the moment he infringes the rules of dietary and marriage. Birth and rituals are secondary, for there is evidence to prove that the offspring of Brahmins and non-Brahman women used to become Brahmins and that religious rites were changed from time to time.

Even now all that people care to know about a man's observance of his caste is where he eats and what he eats and whom he has married. These two things are visible while birth and observance of rituals are invisible. The Lords and Commons of England, now two classes, will become two castes the moment they cease to intermarry and interdine with each other.

II. The next point to be noticed is that the Hindus of the pre-Buddhistic period had no such rules of diet and marriage as prevented them from interdining

and intermarrying with other people. Animal food and liquor also formed part of their diet.³³

They married women of other races also. Usually a Brahman had four wives corresponding to the four classes; Kshatriya, three; Vaisya, two; and a Sudra one or many of his own class. They all employed Sudra cooks in their houses. Sons begotten by Brahmans on non-Brahman women were free to exercise the functions of Brahmans.³⁴ Hence the words, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras were names of classes rather than of castes during the pre-Buddhist period.

III. With the appearance of Buddhism, all this changed. Though Buddhism did not preach caste, it vehemently denounced certain customs, the disappearance of which brought about caste into existence. It denounced flesh-eating and plurality of wives and denied Nirvana to those who were addicted to animal sacrifices, flesh-eating and sexual indulgence. The Brahmans gave up those two condemned customs and, as a result, formed themselves into castes mainly with the intention of keeping up their dietary and marriage rules. The other classes, too, followed them and formed separate castes.

This is the summary of my paper on the evolution of castes and as the second part of that paper has important bearing on the subject under consideration, I am going to read it before you once more.

If words have their own biography to tell, as Professor Max Muller once put it, there are some Vedic words and hymns that appear to tell a tale different from what later Puranic writers took them to mean. The words that appear to have played an important

³³ Vide Apastamba.

³⁴ Vide L  t  y  na, IX. 2, 6 and Apastamba, II. 5, 11.

part in the history of the origin of the Kshatriya class are (1) Brahmajâya, (2) Brahmagavi, (3) Vasa, (4) Prisni, (5) Go, and (6) Kâmadhenu. Of these the first five are Vedic and the last Puranic. The literal meaning of the first word 'Brahmajâya' is the wife of a Brahman or priest, and it is used in that sense both in the Rigveda (X. 109) and the Atharvaveda. (V. 17). Her abduction by a Kshatriya or rather a Kshatriya King and her subsequent restoration to her husband, the priest, form the subject matter of the two hymns in which that word occurs.

The word 'Brahmagavi' means the cow of a Brahman or priest and is used in that sense in the fifth hymn of the twelfth Kanda of the Atharvaveda.

The word 'Vasa,' a barren or powerful cow, as interpreted by Sayana and others, is found in the fourth hymn of the twelfth Kanda of the same Veda.

The word 'Go,' a Brahman's or priest's cow, is found in the eighteenth and nineteenth hymns of the fifth Kanda of the Atharvaveda. The disastrous consequences that would befall a Kshatriya or King, if he were to rob a priest of his cow, are elaborately described in these four hymns.

The word 'Prisni,' a wonderful cow, occurs in the eleventh hymn of the fifth Kanda of the Atharvaveda, and the subject matter of that hymn is a conversation between Varuna and an Atharvan priest about the possession of a wonderful cow bestowed by the former on the latter.

The story of a terrible war between Visvamitra, a Puranic King, who is said to have become a Brahman by the performance of a penance, and Vasishta, a Vedic priest, on account of the latter's Kâmadhenu or desire-giving cow which Visvamitra is said to have attempted to take for himself by force is elaborately described in all the Puranas. Likewise the story of the destruction of King

Kartavirya and his family and also of other Kshatriyas by Parasurama to avenge the death of his father Jamadagni who was murdered by Kartavirya for the sake of the priest's cow is found in almost all the Puranas. Almost all oriental scholars have followed Sayana in taking the words, Brahmagavi, Vasa, Prisni, Go, and Kamadhenu to mean a cow of extraordinary powers in the possession of such famous Vedic priests as Vasishtha, Jamadagni, and others. But line 33 of the fourth hymn of the fifth Kanda of the Atharvaveda, where Vasa or a cow is said to be the mother of a Rajanya or King, seems to suggest that the so-called cow is not a quadruped beast but a woman, the same as Brahmajaya or a priest's wife whose abduction by Kshatriyas seems to have been the cause of a number of feuds between the Brahmans on the one hand and the Kshatriyas on the other. If reliance can be placed upon this plain interpretation of the word, Vasa, and if it can be extended to all the cow-hymns, then what has hitherto appeared to be an inexplicable myth resolves itself into a credible historical episode, evidencing an institution or custom, the like of which is still prevalent in what is called the land of Parasurama, *i.e.*, the States of Travancore and Cochin. The peculiar Vedic custom that can be based upon this interpretation and which has become extinct outside the States of Travancore and Cochin appears to have been somewhat as follows :—

There seems to have been an institution of women, called Brahmajayas, Brahmagavis, Vasas or Cows, whom the priests had the exclusive privilege to marry. The Kshatriya class seems to have been the result of the union of these women with the Brahman priests. The eldest son of the high priest and the chief Brahmajaya seems to have been invested with ruling powers while the sons of other priests and other Brahmajayas formed a band of

soldiers or militia. Neither the king nor the soldiers seem to have been allowed to marry. The fifth verse of the Brahmajaya hymn where a bachelor is said to have restored to Brihaspati or the chief priest, his consort seems to suggest the above idea. The kings of several states seem to have protested against this custom and themselves married the Brahmajayas or Brahmagavis. This breach of custom on the part of the Kshatriyas apparently brought about the occasional feuds between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, as implied by the Brahmajaya and other hymns. The war between Visvamitra and Vasishta as well as that between Parasurama and Kartavirya seem to have been due to the same cause. Visvamitra seems to have fought for the right of Kshatriyas to marry and appears to have brought about the marriage of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrugna with the foster daughters of Janaka and his brother, as a pretext against this custom. This violation of the custom on the part of Visvamitra seems to have provoked Parasurama and led him to wage war with Rama and his brothers on their way to Ayodhya after the marriage. It is probable that Parasurama, the champion of the Brahmins, failed in his attempt to subdue the Kshatriyas and to re-establish the privileged custom of the priestly class. It is also probable, though partly contrary to the Puranic version of the story, that being defeated and driven out by the victorious Kshatriyas, he came with a few followers to the west-coast of South India and set up a colony there, perpetuating the old custom, which is still prevalent in Travancore and Cochin and which is attributed to him. It appears that the ruling kings in these two states are princes begotten by a family or sect of Brahmin priests on a successive line of princesses or queens like the Vedic Brahmajayas whose male issues were originally, though not now, obliged to live a celibate life with ruling

powers, while the female issues became the queens of the state in succession. There is no marriage system among the Nayars, nor do the women confine themselves to a single husband. The Brahmans in these states are called Nambudris and they observe the Vedic customs. The following extracts, taken out from Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* and Gopal Panikar's *Malabar and its Folk*, corroborate the above facts :—

“As recorded in the *Keralamahatmya*, tradition traces the Nambudris to Ahikshetra, whence Parasurama invited Brahmans to settle in his newly reclaimed territory. In view of preventing the invited settlers from relinquishing it he is said to have introduced, on the advice of the sage Narada, certain deep and distinctive changes in their personal, domestic, and communal institutions.”³⁵

“Writing in the eighteenth century, Hamilton observes that the Nambudris are the first in both capacities of Church and State, and some of them are Popes, being sovereign princes in both.”³⁶

“He is perhaps, as his measurements seem to prove, the truest Aryan in Southern India, and not only physically, but in his customs, habits and ceremonies which are so welded into him that forsake them he cannot, if he would.”³⁷

“Every Nambudri is, theoretically, a life-long student of the Vedas.”³⁸

“The eldest son alone marries. Should a Nambudri's eldest son die, the next marries and so on. Women join the family of their husband and to this too her children belongIf there is no male member, the Sarvasvâdanam

³⁵ *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. V, p. 154.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 160

marriage is performed by which a man of another family is brought into the family and married to a daughter of it, who, after the manner of the "appointed daughter" of old Hindu Law, hands on the property through her children."³⁹

"An exception to this general rule of inheritance is that seventeen families of Payanmur in North Malabar follow the Marumakkattayam system of inheritance through the female line. The other Nambudris look askance at these, and neither marry nor dine with them. It is supposed that they are not pure bred, having Kshatriya blood in their veins."⁴⁰

"Hamilton, writing concerning Malabar at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, says, that 'when the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambudri or chief priest has enjoyed her, and, if he pleases, may have three nights of her company, because the first fruit of her nuptials must be an holy oblation to the god he worships, and some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the clergy the same tribute, but the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the priest's place themselves.'"⁴¹

"The Nambudris call themselves Arya Brahmanas. Their legendary transmigration to Malabar from Northern India is doubtless true. There is by far the purest form of the Vedic Brahmanism to be met with in Southern India. A complete account of the religion of the Nambudris cannot be given in these pages. The Nambudri's life is a round of sacrifices, the last of which is the burning of

³⁹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. V, p. 176.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

his body on the funeral pyre. When the Nambudri has no male issue, he performs the Putrakameshti or Karmavipâka Prâyaschittam Yâgams or sacrifices to obtain it."⁴²

"According to the Brahman tradition, the Nayar caste is the result of union between the Nambudris with Deva, Gandharva, and Rakshasa women introduced by Parasurama; and this tradition embodies the undoubted fact that the caste by its practice of hypergamy has had very large infusion of Aryan blood."⁴³

"The original Nayars were undoubtedly a military body, holding lands and serving as a militia, but the present Nayar caste includes persons who, by hereditary occupation, are traders, artisans, oil mongers palanquin bearers, and even barbers and washermen."⁴⁴

"They (the Brahmans) are the lords of the soil, possessing large powers for oppression and domination over the labouring classes, the Nayars. All the domestic concerns of the Nayars, all their social intercourses, all their liberty of thought and action are regulated by the arbitrary will of the Brahman priests. Not one of them, in their true capacity, is allowed to move his little finger except on consultation with the Brahman priests; and disobedience to their orders is often visited with their displeasure and the resulting deprivation of their means of livelihood and banishment from society."⁴⁵

"The Aryan Brahmans, when they came into the country, had the same social organisation as exists among their successors to-day. Their laws strictly ordain that only the eldest member of the household shall be left free to enter into lawful wedlock with a woman of their caste, the

⁴² Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. V, *Ibid*, p. 235.

⁴³ p. 211.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 284.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 284.

younger members being left to shift for themselves in this matter. In ancient times the only asylum which these latter could find in the existing state of their social circumstances was in the Nayar families which settled round about them. It should, in this connection, be remembered that the Brahmans formed an aristocratic order, and as such they were the exclusive custodians and expositors of the law. Naturally enough, too large numbers of Brahman younger sons who were looking about for wives, turned to the Nayar families and began to enter into illegitimate unions of the nature of concubinage. Now the sanctity of formal and religious marriages was incompatible with looseness and degradation involved in these illegitimate unions; and Brahman ingenuity discovered a ready means of getting over the difficulty by a social prohibition of valid marriages among the Nayars, which would otherwise have prejudicially interfered with their conjugal destinies."⁴⁶

In order to show how far the Vedic hymns 'Brahmajaya,' 'Brahmagavi,' 'Vasa,' 'Prisni,' and 'Go,' convey ideas analogous with the customs observed in Malabar from time immemorial, I have quoted below those hymns together with their English rendering, as made by the late Ralph T. H. Griffith. All that is to be borne in mind for the clear understanding of the hymns is that the word cow is not a quadruped beast, but a metaphorical expression meaning a woman belonging to an institute of women under the power of the priestly class, for there is no evidence to believe that the Kshatriyas were cattle-lifters and that they robbed the Brahmans, their own priests, of their few cows when they had before them the

⁴⁶ Malabar and its Folk, by Gopal Panikar, 2nd edition, pp. 12 and 36.

precious and invaluable wealth of the early settlers of India, compared with which the value of the poor Brahman's cows was quite insignificant. Nor is there any evidence to believe that the Brahman's gave expression to such furious and abominable threats and curses on the Kshatriyas and their kingdom for the sake of a cow or a number of cows while, on the contrary, they received as presents from the kings several cows on occasions like sacrifices and coronations of kings, as explicitly stated in a number of Vedic hymns.

The hymn on the Brahmajaya (Rigveda, X. 109 and Atharvaveda, V. 17) runs as follows :—

"1. 'These first, the boundless sea, and Matarisvan, fierce-glowing fire, the strong, the Bliss-bestower, and heavenly floods, first born by holy order, exclaimed against the outrage on a Brahman.'⁴⁷

2. King Soma first of all, without reluctance, made restitution of the Brahman's consort. Mitra and Varuna were the inviters : Agni as Hotar took her hand and led her.⁴⁸

3. The man, her pledge, must by the hand be taken when he hath cried. She is a Brahman's consort. She stayed not for a herald to conduct her : thus is the kingdom of a ruler guarded.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The subject of the hymn, parts of which are taken from Rigveda X. 109, is the abduction by a Kshatriya of a Brahman's wife, and her subsequent restoration to her husband. The Rigveda hymn contains only seven stanzas, concluding with stanza 11 of the Atharvaveda hymn. Sea: The ocean of air. Matarisvan: probably wind. Fire: Agni. The Strong: Indra. Bliss-bestower: Soma. Outrage on a Brahman: Brahma's sin according to Sayana.—See note on stanza 5.

⁴⁸ Were the inviters: acted as interceders, or match-makers at the renewed marriage.

⁴⁹ Her pledge: her sponsor. Thus: by observing justice and causing the abducted wife to be restored. These three stanzas correspond, with slight variations, to stanzas 1-3 of the Rigveda hymn.

4. She whom they call the star with loosened tresses, descending as a misfortune on the village, the Brahman's consort, she disturbs the kingdom where hath appeared the hare with fiery flashing.⁵⁰

5. Active in duty serves the *Brahmachari*: he is a member of the God's own body. Through him Brihaspati obtained his consort, as the gods gained the ladle brought by Soma.⁵¹

6. Thus spake of her those of old, seven Rishis, who sat them down to their austere devotion. Dire is a Brahman's wife led home by others; in the supremest heaven she plants confusion.⁵²

7. When infants die, untimely born, when herds of cattle waste away, when heroes strike each other dead, the Brahman's wife destroyeth them.

8. Even if ten former husbands,—none a Brahman—had espoused a dame, and then a Brahman took her hand, he is her husband, only he.

⁵⁰ The real cause of the misfortune attributed to meteoric influence is some disrespect shown to a Brahman's wife. Hare with fiery flashing: Some meteoric phenomenon.

⁵¹ Rigveda, X. 109, 5. *Brahmachari*: a youth in the first stage of a Brahman's religious life; a religious student. *Brihaspati*: that is, the injured Brahman; *Brihaspati* representing the sacerdotal class. The ladle, *juhum*, which Professor Ludwig takes to be the lady's name: 'Juhu, O Gods, conducted home by Soma.' The meaning is obscure. A legend quoted by Sayana says that Juhu or Vak, the wife of Brihaspati who is identified with Brahma, had been deserted by her husband. The gods then consulted together as to the means of expiating his sin, and restored her to her husband. The legend has evidently grown out of the misunderstanding of the ancient hymn.

⁵² Stanza 4 of Rigveda hymn. Seven Rishis: celebrated saints, sages and inspired seers of ancient times, Bharadvaja, Kaasyapa, Gotama, Atri, Vasishtha, Visvamitra, and Jamadagni.

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9. Not Vaisya, not Rajanya, no, the Brahman is indeed her lord. This Surya in his course proclaims to the five races of mankind.⁵³

10. So then the gods restored her, so men gave the woman back again. Princes who kept their promises restored the Brahman's wedded wife.⁵⁴

11. Having restored the Brahman's wife, and freed themselves, with God's aid, from sin, they shared the fullness of the earth and won themselves extended sway.⁵⁵

12. No lovely wife brings her dower in hundreds, rests upon his bed, within whose kingdom is detained, through want of sense, a Brahman's wife.⁵⁶

⁵³ Rajanya : Man of the military and princely class : Kshatriya

⁵⁴ Stanza 6 of the Rigveda hymn.

⁵⁵ Stanza 7 of the Rigveda hymn.

⁵⁶ Muir observes at the end of his translation of the non-Rigveda portion of the hymn (O. S. Texts, I., p. 281) : "This hymn appears to show that, however extravagant the pretensions of the Brahmins were in other respects, they had, even at the comparatively late period when it was composed, but little regard to the purity of the sacerdotal blood, as they not only intermarried with women of their own order, or even with women who had previously lived single, but were in the habit of forming unions with the widows of Rajanyas or Vaisyas, if they did not even take possession of the wives of such men while they were alive. Even if we suppose these women to have belonged to priestly families, this would only show that it was no uncommon thing for females of that class to be married to Rajanyas or Vaisyas—a fact which would, of course, imply that the caste system was either laxly observed, or only beginning to be introduced among the Indians of the earlier Vedic age. That, agreeably to ancient tradition, Brahmins intermarried Rajanya women at the period in question, is also distinctly shown by the story of the Rishi Ohyavana and Sukanya, daughter of Saryata, narrated in the Satapatha Brahmana, and quoted in my paper entitled 'Contributions to a knowledge of Vedic Mythology,' No. II, in the Journal of the Asiatic Society for 1866, p. 11 ff. See also the stories of the Rishi Syenasva, who married the daughter of King Rathaviti, as told by the commentator on Rigveda, V. 61, and given in Professor Wilson's translation, Vol. III, p. 344.