



A very revered Teacher says "When one unacquainted with the noble doctrine of karma looks around him, and observes the inequalities of birth and fortune, of intellect and capacities ; when one sees honor paid to fools and profligates, on whom Fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues—far more deserving in every way—perishing of want and for lack of sympathy ; when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering, one's ears ringing and heart aching with cries of pain around him—the blessed knowledge of karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men as well as their supposed Creator.

Of all the terrible blasphemies and what are virtually accusations thrown at their God by the Monotheists, none is greater or more unpardonable than that almost always false humility which makes the presumably pious Christian assert, in the face of every evil and undeserved blow, that "Such is the will of God."

Dolts and hypocrites ! Blasphemers and impious Pharisees who speak in the same breath of the endless merciful love and care of their God and Creator for helpless man, and of that God *scourging the good, the very best of his creatures, bleeding them to death like an insatiable Moloch* ! Shall we be answered to this, in Congreve's words.

But who shall dare to tax Eternal Justice ?

Logic and simple common sense, we answer. If we are asked to believe in "Original sin," in *one* life *only* on this earth for every soul and in an anthropomorphic Deity, who seems to have created some men only for the pleasure of condemning them to eternal hell-fire—and this whether they be good or bad, says the Predestinarian—why should not every one of us who is endowed with reasoning powers, condemn in his turn such a villainous Deity? Life would become





Unbearable, if one had to believe in the God created by man's unclean fancy. Luckily, he exists only in human dogmas, and in the unhealthy imagination of some poets, who believe they have solved the problem by addressing him as,

Thou great mysterious power, who hast *involved*  
The pride of human wisdom, to *confound*  
The *daring scrutiny* and prove the *faith*  
Of thy *presuming* creatures!

Truly a robust "faith" is required to believe that it is "presumption" to question the justice of one, who creates helpless little man but to "perplex" him, and to test a "faith" with which that "power," moreover, may have forgotten, if not neglected, to endow him, as happens sometimes.

Compare this blind faith with the philosophical belief, based on every reasonable evidence and on life-experience, in Karma-Nemesis, or the Law of Retribution. This Law—whether conscious or unconscious—predestines nothing, and no one. It exists from and in Eternity, truly, for it is Eternity itself; and as such, since no act can be coequal with Eternity, it cannot be said to act, for it is Action itself. It is not the *wave* which drowns a man, but the *personal* action of the wretch who goes deliberately and places himself under the *impersonal* action of the laws that govern the *ocean's* motion. Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic Law adjusts the effects, which adjustment is not an act, but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigour. If it happens to dislocate the arm that tried to bend it out of its natural position, shall we say that it is the bough which broke our arm, or that our own folly has brought us to grief? Karma has never sought to destroy intellectual and individual liberty, like the God invented





by the Monotheists. It has not evolved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man ; nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who through study and meditation unveils its intricate paths, and throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of the labyrinth of life—is working for the good of his fellowmen. Karma is an Absolute and Eternal Law in the world of Manifestation ; and as there can only be one Absolute, as one eternal ever-present cause, believers in Karma cannot be regarded as Atheists or Materialists—still less as Fatalists, for Karma is one with the unknowable, of which it is an aspect, in its effects in the phenomenal world.—*Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, Vol II., pp. 317, 318 and 319.

The following extract represents the latest and the most clearly reasoned-out view of the question :—

We have now to consider how this Will, the hidden Power which has ever moved to activity though not yet controlling activity, slowly wins to freedom, that is to self-determination. In a moment we shall consider what is meant by this word “ freedom.”

Essentially and fundamentally free in its origin as the Power of the self, Will has become bound and limited in its attempts to master the matter into which the self had entered. We need not shrink from saying that matter masters the self, not the self matter, and this it does by virtue of the self regarding matter as himself, identifying himself with it ; as he wills through it, thinks through it, acts through it, it becomes to him verily himself, and deluded he cries: “ I am this !” and while it limits him and binds him, he, feeling it to be himself, cries: “ I am free.” Yet is this mastering of the self by matter but a temporary thing, for the matter is ever changing, coming and going,





impermanent, and is ever being shaped and unconsciously drawn round and rejected by the unfolding forces of the self, permanent amid the impermanent.

Let us come to the stage in human evolution in which memory has grown stronger than the instinctive out-going to the pleasant and withdrawing from the painful ; in which Intelligence rules Desire, and reason has triumphed over impulse. The result of the age-long evolution is to be reaped, and part of that result is freedom.

While the Will is expressing itself as Desire, determined in its direction by outside attractions, it is obviously not free, but very distinctly bound. Just as any living creature might be dragged by a force greater than its own force in a direction unchosen by it, so is the Will dragged away by the attraction of objects, pulled along the path which promises pleasure, which is agreeable to pursue ; it is not active as a Self-determined force, but, on the contrary, the Self is being dragged away by an external and compelling attraction.

No more vivid picture of the Self, under these conditions, can be given than that before quoted from an ancient Hindu Scripture, in which the Self is limned as the rider in a chariot, and the senses, attracted by pleasure-giving objects, are the ungovernable horses that carry away the chariot of the body and the helpless rider within it. Although the Will be the very Power of Self, so long as the self is being carried away by these unruly horses, he is emphatically bound and not free. It is idle to speak of a free will in a man who is the slave of the objects around him. He is ever in bondage, he can exercise no choice ; for, though we may think of such a one as choosing to follow the path along which attractions draw him, there is, in truth, no choice nor thought of choice. So long as attractions and repulsions determine the path, all talk of freedom is empty





and foolish. Even though a man feels himself as choosing the desirable object, the feeling of freedom is illusory, for he is dragged by the attractiveness of the object and the longing for pleasure in himself. He is as much, or as little, free as the iron is free to move to the magnet. The movement is determined by the strength of the magnet and the nature of the iron answering to its attraction.

To understand what we mean by freedom of the Will, we must clear away a preliminary difficulty which faces us in the word "choice." When we appear to be free to choose, does that so-called freedom of choice mean freedom of Will? Or is it not true to say that freedom of choice only means that no external force compels us to elect one or another of alternatives? But the important question that lies behind this is : "what makes us choose?" Whether we are free to act when we have chosen is a very different thing from whether we are "free" to choose, or whether the choice is determined by something that lies behind.

How often we hear it said as a proof of the freedom of the Will : "I am free to choose whether I will leave the room or not. I am free to choose whether I will drop this weight or not." But such argument is beside the question. No one denies the power of a person, physically unconstrained, to leave a room or to stay in it, to drop a weight or to uphold it. The interesting question is : "Why do I choose?" When we analyse the choice, we see that it is determined by motive, and the determinist argues : "Your muscles can uphold or drop the weight, but if there is a valuable and fragile article underneath, you will not choose to drop it. That which determines your choice not to drop it is the presence of that fragile object. Your choice is determined by motives, and the strongest motive directs it." The question is not : "Am I free to act?", but : "Am I free to will?" And we see clearly that the will is determined by the





strongest motive, and that, so far as that goes, the determinist is right.

In truth, this fact that the will is determined by the strongest motive is the basis of all organised society, of all law, of all penalty, of all responsibility, of all education. The man whose will is not thus determined is irresponsible, insane. He is a creature who cannot be appealed to, cannot be reasoned with, cannot be relied on, a person without reason, logic, or memory, without the attributes we regard as human. In law, a man is regarded as irresponsible when no motive sways him, when no ordinary reasons affect him ; he is insane, and is not amenable to legal penalties. A will which is an energy pointing in any direction, pushing to action without motive, without reason, without sense, might perhaps be called " free," but this is not what is meant by " freedom of the will." That will is determined by the strongest motive must be taken for granted in any sane discussion of the freedom of the will.

What then is meant by the freedom of the Will ? It can be but a conditioned, a relative freedom at most, for the separated Self is a part of a whole, and the whole must be greater than, must compel, all its parts. And this is true alike of the Self and of the bodies in which he is ensheathed. None questions that the bodies are in a realm of law, and move within law, can move but by law, and the freedom with which they move is but in relation to each other, and by virtue of the interplay of the countless forces which balance each other variously and endlessly, and in this variety and endlessness offer innumerable possibilities and thus a freedom of movement within a rigidity of bondage. And the Self also is in a realm of law, nay, is himself the very law, as being part of that nature which is the Being of all beings. No separated Self may escape from the Self which is all, and however freely he may move with regard to other





Separated Selves, he may not, cannot move outside the life which informs him, which is his nature and his law, in which he lives and moves. The parts constrain not the parts, the separated Selves constrain not the separated Selves ; but the whole constrains and controls the parts, the Self constrains and controls the Selves. Yet even here, since the Selves are the Self, freedom starts up from amid apparent bondage, and " none else compels ".

This freedom of a part as regards other parts while in bondage to the whole may be seen clearly in physical nature. We are parts of a world whirling through space and revolving also on its own axis turning eastwards ever. Of this we know naught, since its motion carries us with it, and all moves together and at once, and in one direction. Eastwards we turn with our world, and naught we can do will change our direction. Yet with regard to each other and to the places about us, we can move freely and change our relative positions. I may go to the west of a person or a place, though we are both whirling eastwards ceaselessly. And of the motion of a part with regard to a part I shall be conscious, small and slow as it is, while of the vast swift whirling that carries all parts eastwards and onwards ever, I shall be utterly unconscious, and shall say in my ignorance. " Behold, I have moved westwards." And the high Gods might laugh contemptuously at the ignorance of the fragment that speaks of the direction, of its motion were it not that they, being wise, know of the movements within the motion, and of the truth which is false and yet true.

And yet again may we see how the great Will works onwards undeviatingly along the path of evolution, and compels all to travel along that path, and still leaves to each to choose his method of going and the fashion of his unconscious working. For, the carrying out of that Will needs every fashion of working and every method





of going, and takes up and utilises all. A man shapes himself to a noble character, and nourishes lofty aspirations, and seeks ever to do loyal and faithful service to his fellows; then shall he be brought to birth where great opportunities cry aloud for workers, and the Will shall be wrought out by him in a nation that needs such helping and he shall fill a hero's part. The part is written by the great Author; the ability to fill it is of the man's own making. Or a man yields to every temptation and becomes apt to evil, and he uses ill such power as he has, and disregards mercy, justice and truth in petty ways and in daily life; then shall he be brought to birth where oppression is needed and cruelty, and ill ways, and the Will shall be wrought out by him also in a nation that is working out the results of an evil past, and he shall be of the weaklings that tyrannise cruelly and meanly and shame the nation that bears them. Again is the part written by the great Author, and the ability to fill it is of the man's own making. So work the little Wills within the great Will.

Seeing, then, that the Will is determined by motive, conditioned by the limits of the matter that enveils the separated Self, and by the Self whereof the Self exercising the Will is part—what mean we by the freedom of the Will? We mean, surely, that freedom is to be determined from within, bondage is to be determined from without; the Will is free, when the Self, willing to act, draws his motive for that volition from sources that lie within himself, and has not the motive acting upon him from sources outside.

And truly this is freedom, for the greater Self in which he moves is one with him: "I am that" and the vaster self in which moves that greater Self is one with that vaster, and says also: "I am That"! and so on and on, in huger and huger sweeps, if world-systems and universe-system be thought of; yet may the lowliest "I" that knows himself





turn inwards and not outwards, and know himself as one with the Inner Self, the Pratyagatma, the One, and therefore truly free. Looking outwards he is ever bound, though the limits of his bondage recede endlessly, unlimitedly; looking inwards he is ever free, for he is Brahman, the Eternal.

When a man is self-determined, then, we may say that the man is free, in every sense in which the word freedom is valuable, and his self-determination is not bondage, in any harassing sense of that word. That which in my innermost self I will to do, that to which none other forces me, that bears the mark which distinguishes between the free and the bound. How far in us, in this sense of the word freedom, can we say that our will is free? For the most part, but few of us can claim this freedom in any more than a small portion. Apart from the previously mentioned bondage to attractions and repulsions, we are bound within the channels made by our past thinkings, by our habits—most of all by our habits of thought—by the qualities and the absence of qualities brought over from past lives, by the strengths and the weaknesses that were born with us, by our education and our surroundings, by the imperious compulsions of our stage in evolution, our physical heredity and our national and racial traditions. Hence only a narrow path is left to us in which our will can run; it strikes itself ever against the past, which appears as walls in the present.

To all intents and purposes the will of us is not free. It is only in process of becoming free, and it will only be free when the self has utterly mastered his vehicles and uses them for his own purposes, when every vehicle is only a vehicle, completely responsive to his every impulse, and not a struggling animal, ill-broken, with desires of its own.

[This is only accomplished when the life of the self in-





terms the matter of his vehicles, instead of the downward striving elemental essence (i.e.) when the law of the spirit of life replaces the law of sin and death].

When the self has transcended ignorance, vanquishing the habits that are the marks of past ignorance, then is the self free, and then will be realised the meaning of the paradox, "in whose service is perfect freedom." For then will it be realised that separation is not, that the separated will is not, that, by virtue of our inherent Divinity, our will is part of the Divine will, and that it is which has given us throughout our long evolution the strength to carry on that evolution, and that the realisation of the unity of will is the realisation of freedom.

Along these lines of thought it is that some have found the ending of the age-long controversy between the "freedom" of the will and determinism, and, while recognising the truth battled for by determinism, have also preserved and justified the inherent feeling; "I am free, I am not bound." That idea of spontaneous energy, of forthgoing power from the inner recesses of our being, is based on the very essence of consciousness on the "I" which is the self, that self which, because divine, is free.—*A study in consciousness* by Annie Besant, pp. 411—423.

169. 13. A born chandala has a chance of raising himself in the scale of caste evolution; but, this chapter makes it plain that one, who degraded himself to the level of a chandala, has almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of his being reinstated.

171. 21. *Mushtiks*:—They are now called in India *Dombas* and are of the same race as the *Gypsies* of the west.

30. Q.—Viswamitra was a man of stern self-control and profound knowledge of the world. How was it then that he let loose his wrath upon those who spoke but the



fresh that it was against the rules for a kshatriya to conduct a sacrifice for a chandala?

A.—His enmity with Vasishtha and his ever-consuming desire to injure him in every way clouded his clear intellect and conscience; anger got the mastery over him, and he cursed away his hard-earned Thapas.

172. 31. *Came not*:—Because rites performed against the rules and by an unqualified person are as good as not gone through.

175. 31. *Trisanku*:—Trayyaruna, of the line of Ikshvaku, bore a son by name Satyavrata. He trod the path of evil, and one day turned upon his father and said, "Get away from here". But the poor old king asked meekly, "Where shall I go?" ; and the unnatural son thundered out "Go and rot with the dog-eating chandalas." The mild king wandered through the dark forests for years out of count. The heinous sin bore ample fruit in that Satyavrata's kingdom was devastated by famine and pestilence and drought for twelve years. Vasishtha, his guru, lifted not his little finger to relieve him from the misery and obloquy, deeming it a fitting punishment and penance for the sinner. Satyavrata was eventually obliged to leave his kingdom and led a miserable life near the haunts of the dog-eaters. It was then that Visvamitra left his wife and children there and repaired to the sea-shore to perform dread austerities. His wife sold away one of her sons to keep the others alive. Satyavrata came to know of this and gave back the son to the sorrowing mother and maintained them in comfort all through the famine. One day, after fruitless efforts to get meat for them, he chanced to espy a cow browsing near the hermitage of the holy Vasishtha; faint and confused with hunger and fatigue, he slew it outright and supported himself and Visvamitra's wife and children. Now, there were three deadly sins to his account—his filial atrocity,





slaying of his guru's cow and partaking of its meat without due religious rites ; hence, he was ever after named Trisanku (he who has in him the three germs of sin). Visvamitra came back from his thapas ; his joy and gratitude to Trisanku knew no bounds for his having so unselfishly and at such a terrible sacrifice maintained his wife and children. "Ask of me what thou wilt" said he with generous fervour. "Nothing, but that I might be allowed to call your Reverence my guru and priest." Visvamitra thereafter crowned him king and by his mighty thapas raised him to the mansions of the Shining Ones ; whereat, Vasishtha wondered greatly—*Vayupurana* 86, 88.

Trisanku, while a chandala, slew Vasishtha's cow. This added to his haughtiness and to his malignant efforts to do evil unto the sons of Vasishtha, resulted in his being endowed with two horns growing out of his head. When he fell from heaven, the water that flowed from his mouth became the river known as Karmanasa (between Benares and Behar). It is considered sinful for any one to bathe in its waters—*Tulasidas Ramayana*. I.

He was apprehensive that Visvamitra's family would not take meat at his hands ; so he hung deer's meat from the branches of a fig tree that grew near the waters of the Ganga—*Vishnupurana*. IV 3.

Trisanku abducted the princess that was promised in marriage to the king of Vidarbha. Vasishtha counselled his father to banish him from the kingdom ; and he lived with the chandalas thereafter. He had expected that Vasishtha would argue in his favour and urge that there was no illegality in his marrying a woman who had not become another man's wife, as he brought her away before the Sapthapadi or seven-step ceremony had taken place. But Vasishtha remained passive. So, with a grudge against him, he left the capital.—*Brahmapurana, Lingapurana, Harivamsa, Bharata* I. 71.





Thus, in accounting for the name of Trisanku, this story makes him a goghna, cow-killer, and beef-eater, in order at the same time to account for his having become, chandala. But with all this, he is made to go to heaven without anything being said of his fall. There seems therefore to be a paradox in this story as in all others connected with Vasishtha and Visvamitra. Trisanku's name Satyavrata reveals him as a knower of Brahman (Satyam, Truth, and as one who practised. It as his vrata, cherished object). His Queen Satyaratha, the vehicle of Truth, can only be Vidya or Sraddha, Knowledge or Faith. He rescues her from the grasp of worldliness and marries her himself. The result is that he goes to the forest and roams as a hunter, hunting the passions. Kama, Desire, is of two kinds, one worldly and selfish, the other, godly, that which longs for the state of the Infinite Atman ; and therefore Kamadhenu, the Cow of Desire, has two aspects, one as Avidya, the Aja of three colors, and the other as Vidya. Taking her in the former aspect, she is killed. Taking her in the latter aspect, she is eaten as the only food capable of removing the hunger for selfish desires, of not only Trisanku but also of the family of Visvamitra, the intimate friend of Vasishtha. Thus the three paradoxical sins are the three merits, which added to the merit of a religious Chandala or the drinker of the sacred Soma, enable Trisanku to go to heaven in his swarupa, the soul's real state, as the bodiless Infinite Self. A man who has deserved the favor of the father of the sacred Gayatri will not fall. He will become a Nakshatra permanent.—*Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology* by Narayan Iyengar Vol. I, pp. 109 and 110.

The Harivamsa, 76, Sloka 51, when describing the autumn, says that Agastya, the Star Canopus, travels in that Asa, direction (*i.e.*) the south which is Trisanku-charita (*i.e.*) in which Trisanku travels. This indicates Trisanku to be a sou-





ern constellation. The late Siddhanti Subrahmanya Sastri of Madras informed me, in January 1888, that Trisanku's loka, world, is a cluster of stars consisting of two big stars and several small ones situated to the south of Anuradha, which itself is in the dakshina-gola or southern half of the celestial globe, and that this cluster is in what is called Visvamitra's swarga. I was not able to gather in what old work this swarga is described; but as the learned Sastri's description gave me a general idea of the region of the cluster, it remained for me to find out, in or about that region, the *head downward* Trisanku of the Ramayana. An English work on astronomy had made me familiar with the Cross, and having gazed at it over and over, I consider that the swarga or heaven of Visvamitra consists of many of the stars of the constellation Centaurus *plus* the Cross; that the star Alpha Centauri, by reason of its being the biggest and brightest of the group, is our Rishi Visvamitra, shining brilliantly (*i.e.*,) performing tapas *in the south*, his place *in the north* being in the Great Bear along with Vasishtha and other Rishis; and that the head-downward Trisanku is the Cross plus two stars which are to the north of it and which according to Proctor's star Atlas, belong to the constellation Centaurus. The reason for taking Trisanku to be the protege of Alpha Centauri (Visvamitra), seems to be the proximity of these two to each other, the brightest star of the group being taken naturally to be the guru or priest. The accompanying plate shows the prominent stars of Trisanku and Visvamitra, marked *a* to *h*. The stars *a* to *f* (of which *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, form the Cross) represent the body of Trisanku and suggest beautifully the idea of a man hanging head-downwards, *a* the lowermost star being his head, *b* and *c* his two sides, *d* his navel, and *e* and *f*, the uppermost stars, his two legs. The star *g* is the Alpha Centauri. If, as I take it to be, it is Visvamitra, the bright star *h* near it may be viewed





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as though it is his outstretched hand commanding Trisanku not to fall down, but stop where he was even with his head, the star *a*, downwards (*i. e.*,) towards the south pole. The distance of *a* to the pole is about 27 degrees, and Trisanku, from head *a* to feet *e* and *f*, is a large constellation extending over 15 degrees north to south, from about the 48th to the 63rd degree south of the equator. As these stars *a* to *h* are almost opposite to the Great Bear in the north, they may fitly be called the Great Bear of the south.

As Trisanku is not far from the south pole, he describes a small circle diurnally in the sky while the stars on the equinoctial line describe a larger circle. Hence the saying that Visvamitra ordained other stars to rotate round Trisanku.—*Ib.* pp. 96, 97, and 98.

176. 8. *Pushkara* :—The district of Ajmere contains the holy theertha of Pushkara (*M. B. Vanaparva*. 82) with its most conspicuous temple of Brahma. It is five miles north-west of Ajmere. It has a sacred lake which is however said to be artificial. Its redundant waters are carried away by the rivers Sarasvathi and Luni or Lavana.—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Town, lake and place of pilgrimage in Ajmer-Merwara, Rajputana, about 7 miles in a south-westerly direction from Ajmer. Pushkar is the only town in India which contains a temple dedicated to Brahma, who here performed the sacrifice known as *Yagna*, whereby the lake of Pushkar became so holy, that the greatest sinner by bathing in it earns the delights of paradise. The town contains five principal temples, dedicated respectively to Brahma. Savithri, Badri Narain, Varaha, and Siva Atmateswara, Bathing ghats line the lake and most of the princely families of Rajputana have houses round the margin. No living thing may be put to death within the limits of the town. Great fair in October and November, attended by about





100,000 pilgrims, who bathe in the sacred lake. Large trade at the time in horses, camels, bullocks etc., etc. Population generally Brahmans. Ajmer is 615 miles from Bombay (Colaba) and 235 miles from Delhi by the Bombay-Baroda and Central India Railway.—*The Traveller's Companion*.

13. *Ambareesha*:—He is the seer of Rig Veda IX.98.

22. There is a long interval between the beginning of the sacrifice and the sending out of the consecrated horse to make the round of the earth.

177. 28. *Sold*:—The Scriptures prohibit the sale or the gift of children; but, it is allowable as a special case to sell a boy to complete a sacrifice, even as a family is preserved from extinction by the gift and adoption of a boy.

178. 10. *Brother*:—Kausiki or Satyavati, the sister of Viswamitra, was his mother.

180. 25. *Stern tapas*:—He cursed his sons and exhausted the merit of his previous tapas; so, he resolved not to give way to anger.

26. This episode is related in the Bahvricha Brahmana as connected with Harischandra; it is possible that Ambarisha here spoken of might be the same as he.—*Go*.

King Harischandra, son to Vedhas of Ikshwaku's line, had one hundred wives but no issue. Narada advised him to pray to Varuna for a child, and promised that the boy would be sacrificed to him. Accordingly Varuna granted his prayer, and a son was born to him whom he named Rohitha. Varuna claimed his promise. "The boy is impure" said Harischandra "during the ten days when he is in the place where he was born." Ten days passed away and Varuna claimed his promise. "A child is pure" replied the king "only after teething." There was teething and Varuna claimed his promise. "I pray that you wait till these milk teeth fall away" replied the king. The milk teeth fell off; and Varuna claimed his promise. "The





child will be pure when its teeth have grown again." His teeth grew again and Varuna claimed his promise. "A Kshatriya boy is pure only when he can carry his shield and put on his armour." Rohitha was old enough to put on his armour and carry his shield and Varuna claimed his promise. The king asked his son to consent to be sacrificed to Varuna ; but Rohitha refused and taking his bow ran away to the forests and lived there for a year. Varuna punished Harischandra by afflicting him with dropsy. Rohitha came to know of this and tried to come back; but Indra, disguised as an old Brahmana, prevented him and directed him to travel to holy shrines. During the sixth year of his stay in the forests, he came across the Rishi Ajeegartha, son of Suyavasa, a descendant of Angiras. Three sons had he, Sunah-puchha, Sunas-sepha and Suno-langoola. He purchased the second for a hundred cows, as the father would not part with the first son and the mother with the third. Rohitha took the victim to his father, who said to the God "Here is this man whom I am prepared to sacrifice to you". "All right" replied Varuna "a Brahmana is better than a Kshatriya", Then began the Rajasooya sacrifice, at which Visvamitra was the Hotha, Jamadagni the Adhwaryu, Vasishtha the Brahma and Ayasya the Udgatha. But, they found no one who would bind Sunas-sepha to the sacrificial post and slay him. Then his father Ajeegartha volunteered to do it for another two-hundred cows. He bound him and drew his sword when Sunas-sepha said to himself "They will certainly slay me as though I was an animal and not a human being like themselves. I shall pray to the mighty Gods." He called upon Varuna and other Gods and at last upon Ushas in three verses. The first loosened his bonds ; the second reduced the king's dropsy ; and the third set the victim free and restored his father to perfect health. Viswamitra adopted Sunas-sepha as his eldest son





and named him Devaratha or God-protected. The Sage and many sons Madhuchhandas, Rishabha, Renu, Ashtaka and others, 50 older than Madhuchhandas and 50 younger. The older sons did not like to give up their birth right in favour of Sunas-sepha, and were cursed by their father to become outcastes. They became Andhras, Pundras, Sabaras, Pulindas, Mushtikas and many other tribes, so that the descendants of Visvamitra turned out the worst of the Dasyus. The 50 younger brothers recognised Sunas-sepha as their elder brother—*Aithareya, Brahmana* ; *Bh IX. 7*. [The latter supplements the above thus :—Indra was gratified and presented unto him a golden chariot. Visvamitra, struck with his truthfulness, worth, and patience, imparted unto him Atma-vidya. The king merged his mind into the rudiments of the Earth (Prithivi-than-mathra), the Earth into water, the water into Fire, the Fire into the Air, the Air into the Akasa, the Akasa into the Ahankara, the Ahankara into the Mahat ; he meditated upon the last as the Self in its aspect of knowledge and passed beyond the portals of ignorance).

Sunas-sepha is generally supposed to be the seer of the seven sookthas from 24 to 30 of the Mandala I, Rig Veda IX. 3 ; but from internal evidence it is plain that the author was some other person unknown. Verses I, 24 and 25 are said to be recited by him when he was about to be sacrificed. The name of Sunas-sepha occurs in sooktha 24, which is the first of its group ; hence, the whole came to be known as the Sunas-sepha sookthas, which was wrongly understood to mean the hymns of which Sunas-sepha himself is the author. But a perusal of the following verses will, I trust, show that it is otherwise.

“ This is what they told me day and night ; this is what the desire of (my) heart says, viz., may that king Varuna, whom Sunas-sepha invoked when seized, liberate us—(verse 12 ).





For, Sunas-sepha, when seized and tied at the three places of the wood (the sacrificial post) invoked the Aditya (Varuna); may King Varuna, who is wise and never deceived, liberate him, may he loosen the bonds—(verse 13).

Varuna! We wish thy anger down by salutations..... O wise king, loosen (the bonds of) sins committed (by) us—(verse 14).

Varuna! Off from us loosen the upper bond, away the middle, and down the lower. And then O Aditya! may we sinless be in thy ordinance, and belong to Aditi—(verse 15.)

It seems to me that the poet uses Sunas-sepha as a simile, and prays for being liberated from the triple bonds of sin, just as Sunas-sepha was, from the triple bonds of the post. Another poet, in verse 7 of the second sooktha of the fifth Mandala called the Atreya-mandala, uses the same simile thus:—

“O Agni! you liberated the bound Sunas-sepha from the yopa (sacrificial post) ; for he prayed with fervour. Even so, Agni! loosen our bonds”.

In order to use the simile of Sunas-sepha in this manner, the poets of the Rig-veda must have had an older legend about him, and it is quite possible that that legend came down to the author of the Aithareya Brahmana, mixed up with the group of the seven sookthas in one of which Sunas-sepha is prominently mentioned and which, being called Sunas-sepha sookthas, gave rise to the idea that he was the seer of them all. Hence, he is tossed about from one god to and other in the order in which the Devathas occur in the sookthas themselves, with the consequent anomaly of his going to Agni twice.—*Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology* by Narayana Iyengar, Part I, pp. 115 and 116.

Vachaspathya explains Harischandra-pura to mean the Saubha-pura or Kha-pura or Gandharva-nagara. It may mean either the aerial cities of the Daityas and Asuras like





the Tripuras or an illusory appearance often observed in the sky which takes the form of a beautiful city with towers, mansions, groves, etc.

Visvamitra officiated at a sacrifice performed by Harischandra. The sacrificial fee due to the Rishi far exceeded the wealth in his treasury; so, he sold him his kingdom, his wife, his son, and himself. The gods were mightily pleased thereat, and took him unto their abodes and his subjects. Narada met him there and easily led him to recount the acts of merit that won for him the bright regions. Immediately was the king hurled head long down to the earth; but his deep remorse stayed him on the way and he and his subjects found a residence between the heaven and the earth. His town is sometimes visible in the sky and is named after him. Vasishtha came to know of the terrible persecutions which his disciple suffered at the hands of his old rival Visvamitra and the two Rishis carried on a long and bitter fight in the form of huge birds. The three worlds were about to be ruined thereby, when Brahma came there and reconciled them by instructing them in the science of Self. It was the very same that Vasishtha imparted long after to Sree Rama when the fit of despondency came upon him—*Markandeya-purana*, *Padma-purana*, *Vayu-purana*.

Harischandra was an ardent devotee of Siva; his wife Satyavati was an emanation of Jaya, one of the attendants on Durga, the spouse of Mahadeva.—*Siva-purana*.

181. 8. *Menaka*:—Ghrithachi is often substituted for her (*vide* V. R. IV. ).

187. 11. *Stern tapas*:—Clad in cloth made of grass and black deer-skin, Arjuna held his staff and began his stern course of tapas. At first, he ate the withered leaves fallen on the ground from the trees. In the first month he partook of fruits once in three nights; in the second month once in six nights; in the third month once





a fortnight; in the fourth month he lived upon air; he rested the weight of his body on his toes and stood with nothing to lean upon, his arms upraised over his head; his frequent baths made his hair yellow and streamed from him like flashes of lightning.—*M. B. Vana-parva*. 38.

188. 3 *Everything* :—The status of a Brahmana by birth and all the Samskaras incidental to it. This assured to him and to the three generations descended from him the much-coveted position.

9. *Wandered* :—The episode of Visvamitra teaches us that the greatness and glory of our guru is something unthinkable, in that he confers upon us supreme good; it is indescribably hard, nay, almost impossible, to uproot the rank weeds of love and hate in us; the status of a Brahmana is won only after the complete extirpation of the roots of desire and anger, and it is no light task; deliberate offence to the holy Ones is the direst curse that one could draw down on his head; and no acts of merit avail to counteract it.

189. 9. *Visvamitra*. He is the seer of Rig-veda III. 1 to 13, 25 to 54 and 57 to 63; IX. 67; X. 167. He officiated as Purohitha to king Sudasa and was richly rewarded by him. On his return, he came to the confluence of the two rivers Vipasa and Satadru and made them fordable by reciting Rig-veda III. 33.

Rishi Chyavana, of the line of Bhrigu, saw with the eye of spirit into the distant future that some Brahmanas of his race would follow the dharma of Kshatriyas and resolved to exterminate the clan of Kusika. Accordingly he repaired to the palace of king Kusika and said to him "I desire to live with you for a while." "Holy sir!" replied the king "I ever await your commands with pleasure." He paid him the honours of hospitality due to one of his rank and with his wife and retinue, stood humbly before him





with heads bent over folded palms. Said Chyavana "I desire not your kingdom, wealth, women, cattle, provinces or sacrificial materials. I mean to observe a vow and towards that end require you and your wife to wait upon me all through." The royal pair were overjoyed and expressed their sense of the great honour done them. They took Chyavana to a magnificent hall in their palace and said to him, "Lord ! This is at your disposal for ever. I and my wife will do our best to wait on you as long as you would allow it," The sun set while they were talking and Chyavana cried out "Let me have my dinner." At once the king placed before him whatever he wanted. But, Chyavana exclaimed "I wish to sleep"; and the king took him to his splendidly furnished bed-room and said, "Lord ! may it please you to take rest on this bed." "Well" replied the Rishi "None should rouse me until I awake of my own accord. You should see that you press my feet without a moment's respite." "Lord !" replied Kusika "Your commands be on our heads and eyes"; and he and his wife stood there day and night, constantly pressing the feet of Chyavana with hearts full of devotion and love to him. Chyavana slept on like a log for three weeks ; and all the time Kusika and his wife stood there without food, without sleep, oblivious to fatigue or weariness. Then Chyavana suddenly got up and walked out of the hall without noticing any one. The king and his wife were ready to drop with hunger and faintness ; but they readily followed him even as his own shadow. He cast no glance at them, but walked some distance and as suddenly vanished from their sight. Kusika fainted with grief ; his wife consoled him and they sought far and wide for their honor'd guest. With heavy hearts and heavier footsteps, they returned to their palace, only to find Chyavana sleeping peacefully on his bed. They stood speechless with surprise





and joy and waited on him, devotedly pressing his feet as before. But, Chyavana slept on right through another three weeks, and the royal pair served him as joyfully and as devotedly as on the first day. All on a sudden the Rishi got up and cried "Let me have my bath." Kusika brought a wonderful oil boiled and filtered one hundred times ; and they proceeded to anoint him therewith. Chyavana stayed them not ; but continued as indifferent and motionless as ever. Finding that their hearts were full of devotion and was not in the least ruffled by any breath of annoyance or dislike, he rose all on a sudden and entered his bath. At once they ran after him with bathing materials and proceeded to give him a bath, when he vanished from their sight. Yet their minds were serene and full of devotion. Some one informed them that the sage was sitting on the royal throne in the hall of audience, fresh from his bath and magnificently adorned with the crown jewels. They ran to him and humbly spoke in accents of joy "Holy sir ! It is long since you had your bath. An inviting dinner awaits you ; is it your command that we bring it to you ?" "Be it so" said Chyavana. Immediately a magnificent dinner such as are served to emperors and another set, as are offered to sages and ascetics, were placed before him ; a costly seat was arranged for him there, and hard by his bed was ready. The viands were covered with creamy white silk. But Chyavana reduced all that to ashes and vanished from view. But they never felt the least annoyance ; they stood there that day and night, silent, reverent and eagerly expectant. Costly food of every variety, seats, beds, bathing materials, clothes, ornaments and everything that the sage might be likely to call for, were ever ready, awaiting his least commands. The sage could never come upon a flaw in their conduct though he tried his best. "King !" cried he "seat me in your chariot and yoke yourself and your





wife to it ; you shall drag me where I list." " Lord ! " replied the king " Thrice-blessed am I. Shall I order my war-chariot or that used on ordinary occasions ? " " Nay " said Chyavana " get ready your war-chariot in which you enter in triumph into the capital of your enemies ; let it be duly adorned and furnished with all warlike materials ; and let the usual retinue accompany it." It was brought round with the king and the queen yoked to it. " What is your pleasure ? " asked Kusika in all humility. " Well " said Chyavana " Proceed gently that I may not be disturbed in the least. Call out your subjects to be present on the occasion. I mean to give away in no stinted measure such things as your subjects may desire ; see that nothing is amiss". The king ordered his ministers to carry out the Rishi's commands to the very letter ; gems, gold, silver, ornaments, lovely damsels, coin, seats, beds, kine, horses, camels, mules, elephants, chariots, dresses and everything that might be given away followed the chariot. The citizens were dumb-founded and cried out in fury " Alas ! alas ! what atrocity ! " There was a whip in the chariot ; it had three strings ; at the end of each was attached a sharp iron thorn hard as adamant. Chyavana handled it deftly and lashed the king and his wife unmercifully ; blood flowed in torrents down their faces and backs, hands and legs ; their flesh was torn to shreds. For fifty days and nights, no food nor water had passed their lips ; sleep they knew not ; their limbs were tottering with fatigue and weakness ; yet those devoted souls grieved not, showed not the least annoyance or irritation. On the contrary, their faces glowed brighter and their looks were more cheerful for all that. The beholders were consumed with rage and grief, but were prevented from rescuing their beloved king and queen from the hands of the cruel sage or from wreaking dread vengeance upon him, all through fear of his terrible curse.





But they whispered to themselves, "Utterly powerless are we to do anything in this affair, however uncontrollable may be our grief and rage. Yonder sage blinds us with his spiritual effulgence. Verily, inconceivable is the might engendered of thapas. Let that be. Unparalleled indeed is the utter patience of our king and no less the devotion of our queen. Behold how they drag the heavy chariot with bright faces and smiling looks." Chyavana found that Kusika and his wife were perfect in their reverence unto him, and gave away everything in the kingdom without let or stint; yet, he could not in the least produce a ripple in the calm serenity of their hearts.

And thus he tried most severely their devotion and firmness of heart; and finding that he had caught a Tartar, he gladly gave in. With unbounded admiration and love towards them, he sprang from the chariot, embraced them warmly and passed his hands over their limbs; when lo! their wounds, their sores, their fatigue and their weariness were things of the past. "Ask of me what you will; and it is yours to the utmost of my power" cried he. "Lord!" replied the king "you have conferred inestimable honor upon us by deigning to command us; what more could we desire?" "Now that I come to notice it" exclaimed Chyavana, "this is a lovely spot and holy. I mean to stay here some days and go through the observance of a vow. But you are weak and tired. Come to me to-morrow and I will see what I can do for you." "Nay, holy sir!" replied the king, "I humbly submit that I and my wife entertain in our hearts not even the slightest shadow of grief or irritation towards your noble self. You have been pleased to grant us the coveted privilege of serving you so long; and it has washed us pure and white of our sins. Nay, our youth, our beauty, our strength, our brilliance and our spiritual lustre are infinitely increased. My wife yonder is practically un-





recognizable; one would take her for an Apsaras of the world of Gods. We do not see on us the wounds caused by that dreadful whip. But nothing comes upon me as a surprise when I think upon your incalculable might and thapās." They took respectful leave of the sage and entered the city ; and their subjects knew no bounds to their joy and admiration of him. A happy night it was to them ; and the next day they betook themselves to where sat the sage of inscrutable acts. Meanwhile, the thickly wooded banks of the Ganga had been transformed by Chyavana's yogic might into a veritable abode of Indra, the ruler of Gods. Kusika and his wife beheld it with boundless surprise and entering the palace, they came upon the sage reclining on a splendid seat in a magnificent hall. At once he vanished from their sight and everything with him. They sought him out far and wide and discovered him in a distant part of that wood, seated in profound meditation upon the holy kusa grass. All at once the wood, the Apsarasas, the Gandharvas and the sage vanished from sight, and the banks of the Ganga were calm and silent as ever. The royal couple could not praise enough the illimiabie might and glory of Chyavana and could not enough congratulate themselves on the unique favor shown them in being allowed to wait upon the Rishi. Chyavana read their hearts, called them to him, and gave them his hearty blessings; he seated them by his side and consoled them for the unheard of trials they were made to undergo. " Terrible were the tests that I subjected you to and right gloriously have you come through them. I have not been able to find the slightest flaw in your acts, words or thoughts. What shall I do for you, ? " It is a standing wonder to us "said the king "that we have not been reduced to ashes even though we have been with you so long. The highest boon we could ever deserve was to escape from being annihilated, root and





branch, when we were set to entertain you as a guest. Now has my life borne good fruit. I have realized the supreme aims of life. But, may I crave to know why your holiness deigned to make use of my palace for a time? You slept unmoved in the same bed for thrice seven days; you vanished from our sight all on a sudden; you burst upon our view again; another three weeks you slept through unmoved; you disappeared even while we were preparing your bath; you reduced to ashes the costly dinner set before you; you yoked me and my wife to your chariot; you gave away untold wealth to all you met; you displayed your yogic might in the woods marvellously. What had you at heart in doing all this?" "Long ago" replied Chyavana "the gods were assembled in council and were discussing the future of humanity, when Brahma said to us 'There is to be a curious, blending of the brahmana and the kshatriya streams of energy in the line of Bhrigu'. I could hit upon no more effective means to prevent it than to annihilate your race. I came to you and to your wife and put you through the severest trials. Had you failed even in the slightest degree, it would have sealed your fate and that of your line, for my dread curse would have blasted it. But, you waited upon me even to my heart's content, joyfully, silently and reverently, without a murmur, without a shadow of irritation. The sight of my yogic might roused in your heart a thought of the comparative insignificance of kingly wealth and power. Hence, the third in descent from you will raise himself to the proud emience of a brahmana by his severe thapas. The worlds will stand in dread awe of him. The members of the line of Bhrigu will be entitled to perform for the kshatriyas all rites and ceremonies. But, the turn of the karmic wheel will bring about dissension between them. The Bhargavas will be exterminated. Later on, there will be born in the line of Bhrigu the





Mighty Aurva whose wrath and energy could easily consume the worlds to ashes. Yet, he will be persuaded to place the fire of his anger in the mouth of the mare Badava that roams the depths of the ocean. His son Richeeka will be reverently served upon by the deities of the various weapons, human and divine, for such is the will of the Lord. His son Jamadagni will take unto wife your grand-child, who will beget of him a son blazing with the energy of the kshatriya. Gadhi, of your line, will delight in the possession of a son Visvamitra who will elevate himself to the high level of a Brahmarshi by his unparalleled thapas. Thus two women will be the means of a kshatriya and a brahmana being born out of their castes." "Holy sir!" replied Kusika "I consider it to be the mightiest boon that I have from you that my line is supremely honored ranking a Brahmarshi in it." They took respectful of the sage and returned to their city.—*M.B. Anusasana-parva* 8<sup>5</sup>-92.

As to the birth of Visvamitra vide note on *Parasurama* P. 215—10.

His capital was Mahodaya—*Kamba-ramayanam*.

King Sudasa was celebrating a sacrifice, during which Sakthi, the son of Vasishtha, deprived Visvamitra of his energy and speech. Then Palasti Jamadagni got down for him from the orb of the sun, the speech named Sasarpari. She was the daughter of the sun, imperishable and deathless; she had wings; she bellowed with mighty voice, destroying poverty and bestowing new life and glory on gods and men. She destroyed the evil spirit that obsessed Visvamitra. The sage was overjoyed at his release and cried out to his clansmen, the Kusikas "Draw near". The two hymns beginning with Sasarpari (Rig-veda III. 21, 22) express the unbounded gratitude of the favoured Rishi.—*Sayana's quotation from the commentary of Shadgurusishya to the Anukramanika of the Rig-veda*.





Rishabha was a son of Visvamitra—*Ib. id.* III. 13, 14.

Once upon a time Visvamitra was performing a very severe course of austerities, when the God of Dharma put him to a cruel test; he came down in the shape of Vasishtha and said "Friend ! Give me food or I die." Visvamitra, out of his generous heart, looked upon his mortal foe as the very god whom he adored and placed before him the best meal he could prepare. But, absorbed in it, he could not duly wait upon his honoured guest. Meanwhile, the other rishis supplied him with the food he seemed so much to need. So, when Visvamitra took to him the meal he had prepared steaming hot, his guest put it by and said "I do not want it. I have dined. Stay here,," and he vanished from view. But, Visvamitra, out of utter devotion to his guest, stood there rooted to the spot, and the food on his head ; the air was his only means of sustenance ; and his heart was ever centred upon his guest. A hundred years passed by and the God of Dharma came to him in the shape of Vasishtha. He beheld Visvamitra standing there motionless, in rapt devotion, with the food on his head ; and lo ! it was steaming hot and fresh as ever. The god was mightily pleased thereat and exclaimed, "Brahmarshi ! I cannot sufficiently admire your unparalleled devotion." At once, his kshatriyahood fell away from Visvamitra and he stood forth as a glorious Brahmarshi.—*M. B. Udyoga-parva* 106.

Indra sent Tilottama and not Menaka to spoil his thapas.—*Kamba-ramayanam*.

When the enmity of Visvamitra and Vasishtha was at its height, the former once said to himself, "I shall cause this river Sarasvati to bring here my foe, when I can very easily dispose of him. So he sent for the goddess of the river and ordered her to bring Vasishtha bound to him even where he was. Sarasvati was well-acquainted with





Visvamitra's power and evil intentions and no less with Vasishtha's innocence and might ; she went to Vasishtha and said, " Lord ! Visvamitra has ordered me to bring you bound unto him. He will curse me dreadfully if I disobey him ; and I cannot escape your curse if I do obey him. In my heart I cannot find if to cause you the slightest annoyance or harm. Find me a way out of this difficulty." "Nay" said Vasishtha, "have no anxiety on my account. Obey Visvamitra and save yourself from harm." "Then" said Sarasvathi to herself, "it now rests with me as a sacred duty to see that this Maharshi comes to no evil, who so readily sacrifices himself to save me." She came upon Vasishtha when he was absorbed in meditation on the river side, and washed him away to where Visvamitra was and told him of it. Visvamitra was beside himself with joy at having his enemy in his power so easily and sought for a possible weapon to kill Vasishtha. Sarasvathi was frightened by his black wrath and resolved to have no share in the awful crime. In a moment she swept away Vasishtha to the other side of the river ; she had obeyed the behests of Visvamitra to the very letter ; she had frustrated too well his evil plans ; she had saved the life of Vasishtha. But, Visvamitra was mad with rage and cried out, "Thou wretched river-goddess ! Know what it is to juggle with me. Your water shall be turned to blood and none but Rakshasas shall drink of you."—*M. B. Salya parva* 43.

Kalmashapada, of the line of Ikshvaku, was one day returning to his capital after a long and weary hunt, when he came across Sakthi, the son of Vasishtha, in a narrow road. They quarrelled about the right of way ; the king grew wroth and lashed at the sage with his whip. "Evil-minded wretch ! you dare to lay your whip on an innocent and peaceful ascetic, even like a Rakshasa devoid of pity ; verily you shall become a Rakshasa and feed upon





human flesh." The king trembled with fear and sought to appease the sage. Now, Visvamitra and Vasishtha were trying their very best to secure the king as their disciple. The former knew of this interesting incident, came to the spot and concealing his presence there, watched the turn of events. He had great doubts about Sakthi's firmness of purpose ; he may yield to the king's prayers. So, Visvamitra ordered a Rakshasa, by name Kinkara, to obsess the king, who set about to kill and eat Sakthi and the other sons of Vasishtha. Yet, the bereaved father remained calm and serene ; no shade of anger crossed his heart against his rival. He resolved to put an end to himself and fell headlong from mount Meru ; but the Spirit of the Earth was too weak to bear him and let him down all gently. He threw himself into the blazing fire ; but, the God of Fire was consumed with the spiritual radiance of the sage. Vasishtha flung himself into the deep sea with a heavy rock round his neck ; the Spirit of Waters cried out in pain, unable to bear the sage and gently deposited him on the shore. He next bound himself tight with strong cords and cast himself into a foaming torrent ; but, the Spirit of the River knew him well, and breaking asunder the cords that bound him, she brought him safe to the bank. Thereafter she was known as the *Vipasa*. Next he tried another eddying river ; it fled away from him in numerous directions, firmly convinced that the mighty God of Fire was consuming him ; thereafter she was called *Satadru*. Then, he came to know that Adrisyanti, the wife of Sakthi his son, had a boy in her womb and thought no more of making away with himself.—*M. B. Adiparva* 192, 193.

Once upon a time, at the Sandhi (junction) of the Treta and the Dwapara Yugas, a terrible draught fell on the land. Indra withheld the life-giving rains. Many





creatures human and otherwise died as they generally do at the fatal junction of the Yugas when they have grown too old. Jupiter began to move irregularly; the Moon moved towards the south with his orb reversed. The nights were dry and hot without the least suspicion of any dew or moisture; as far the clouds, they were a thing of the far past; the rivers ran low and slender. Lakes, tanks, wells, streams and torrents disappeared, afraid as it were of the terrible wrath of the offended Powers of nature. Everything was dry and parched; men met not together in counsel or friendly converse; sacrifices to the Gods and to the Fathers, the study of the Holy Scriptures were clean neglected; no one cared to till the iron ground or tend the starving kine; buying and selling, import and export, trade and barter became a memory; customs, usages, habits, traditions fell into disuse. The temples of the gods were deserted. Heaps of bones dotted the roads and bye-ways; ruined towns, burnt hamlets, falling houses formed a fit setting to the never-ceasing cries of pain, lamentations, howls and shrieks; robbers, wicked kings, and lawless adventurers united to depopulate the country; many fled away in affright to the jungles. There was nothing upon which the eye could rest for a while with delight—fanes of gods, men grown old with age and wisdom, star-eyed boys bursting with merriment and laughter, the low of cattle and the sweet bleating of lambs. The struggle for existence went on in dead earnest; the Brahmanas were almost exterminated and there was none to protect them. Duty, law, justice, sympathy, charity, and other kindly virtues shunned the dreadful earth where man lay in wait for his brother to feed upon him. The restrained sages abandoned their peaceful hermitages, their gods, their fires, their fasts and their vows, and roamed far and wide with hungry eyes.

Visvamitra, the wise and the iron-willed, succumbed



hunger and wandered far from his usual haunts. He was homeless and entirely neglectful of the worship due to the Holy Fires; wife and children were long ago left behind to take care of themselves; he fed upon what he could get, good and bad, pure and impure, permitted and prohibited. One day he came to where there was a small colony of outcast chandalas, cruel and carnivorous. Broken pots and pans, pieces of dog's flesh set out to dry, mouldering skeletons of pigs, asses and kine, announced the approach to their hamlet; skins of snakes adorned the huts as also the garlands and clothes that decked of late disgusting corpses; cocks crowed, asses brayed, pigs squealed, and pariah dogs barked in sweet unison to the harsh guttural sounds of the fighting chandalas, mad with drink and wrath; owls hooted invisible from groves where the dread village deities were worshipped with bloody sacrifices; iron bells clanged harsh with the swaying of the wind-tossed branches. Visvamitra, faint with hunger, entered the hamlet, eagerly seeking for something to eat. He went there to beg, but could come upon nothing in the shape of meat or food or fruits or roots. "Alas!" cried he, "I can do no more" and fell down from sheer exhaustion. "How shall I escape a useless death? What is the best thing I can do under the circumstances" thought he. Casting his eyes around him, he saw in a hut hard by, a piece of dog's flesh fallen on the ground along with the line on which it was hung up to dry. "Well" said he to himself, "I see no other way of keeping up the spark of life within me. I must even steal this welcome meat. A Brahmana may, if his life depends upon it, steal from his superiors, his equals and even his inferiors in times of dire distress. He should begin with the last; and I do but right in taking away this bit of flesh from these chandalas, who think lightly of slaying others. I do not see that stealing a thing is more sinful than





begging it from another. Yes, I am resolved to steal this meat." Sleep overcame him where he lay; and it was far into the midnight when he awoke. A heavy silence, dull and gloomy, fell upon the hamlet; and Visvamitra slowly and cautiously crept into the hut. A chandala lay there as if in deep slumber; blear-eyed, harsh-toned, hideous to see and cruel of heart, he almost startled the Rishi with his ominous tones of warning and menace. "What thief is it that move the line on which I have hung up my flesh to dry? I am wide awake, and you will find it so to your cost." Visvamitra felt his face burn with dire shame at that act of theft; he trembled with fear and said to the owner of the hut, "May your days be long on earth and happy. I am Visvamitra. I am dying of hunger. If you know me better, you will never seek to slay me." The words of the mighty Rishi electrified the chandala; he sprang towards the sage with streaming eyes and folded hands and cried, "Alas; Reverend sir! What would you here at this dead of night?" Visvamitra sought to appease him with gentle words and replied, "My life-breaths burn low; I am blind with hunger; I would even steal away this dog's meat. Hunger drives a man to unholy deeds; hunger knows not shame; hunger makes me commit this conscious crime; hence, I mean to take away this piece of flesh. Death stares me in the face. I am half demented, and worn with fatigue. I cannot distinguish between what might be eaten and what not. I do know the rules of conduct, of right and wrong; yet, I intend to steal this meat. You gave me no alms when I came to your abode; hence, my heart turned towards this sin. The God of fire is the first among the shining Ones. He is their dispenser of food. He is thrice holy though he consumes every thing pure and impure. I, a Brahmana, am no less potent than he; I walk in the way of Right; I may feed upon any thing."





*Chandala* :—“ Holy sage ! I pray you to listen to me and having listened, do that which will take away in no wise from the duties of your order. Allow me to remind you, though all unworthy, of what your order ought to practise. The dog is the most unclean and the lowest of all animals ; and its thigh is the most unclean of its limbs. Reverend sir ! You do not act right ; this is food all unmeet for your pure lips ; and to steal it from a chandala, to whom it rightly belongs, makes the crime more hideous. Think of some other means to keep you alive. Your hankering for this dog’s meat will, of a surety, consume the merit you have laid by. It is the unique privilege of a man of intelligence to tread the path of virtue. You stand first among those who know the intricacies of right and wrong. You should not swerve from the Law ; you should not bring confusion into it. ”

*Vis.* :—“ It is an age since any sustenance has passed my lips. I see no other way to keep myself alive. It is but the instinct of self-preservation that drives me to adopt any means, however questionable. Then it is time enough to attend to my duties. The warrior-caste follow Indra and the Brahmanas take Agni as their model. The God of fire in his aspect of the Holy Writ is the source of my strength. I mean to allay the pangs of hunger. No one should neglect the means to keep his body in good working order so long as he has to use it ; and certainly life is more useful than death. A dead man can observe no law, can discharge no duties. I do desire to live and do mean to feed upon this unclean meat, knowing full well that it is so. You must permit me. Again I tell you that if I remain alive, I can observe the law ; I can easily free myself from any impurity or sin that might dog me hereby, by rigid austerities and stern penance.”

*Ch.* :—“ I doubt whether this piece of flesh will keep





your life going or lengthen your days upon earth. Surely, you do not mean to say that this is akin to the Amrita, the Waters of Immortality. Go, beg some other more likely food. Turn your heart away from this unclean object. A dog is no fit thing for a Brahmana to touch."

*Vis.* :—"I am convinced that in this dreadful time of famine, I can find nothing better to eat ; nor have I the wherewithal to buy it. Famished, helpless, and despairing, this dog's meat is sweeter to me and more precious than your nectar."

*Ch.* :—"Of the creatures that have five nails, only five are prescribed as food in the case of the first three castes. If you acknowledge the authority of the Sastras, turn your heart and feet away from this place."

*Vis.* :—"Hunger goaded Agastya to feed upon the Asura Vathapi. I am in distress. My mind is a blank. I can not keep my hands away from this means of sustenance."

*Ch.* :—"Your reverence will do well to look out for some other likelier food. I will not have you commit this sin here. Surely, this is all unworthy of you. But, if it seems to you right and reasonable, I will not stand in your way."

*Vis.* :—"Great Rishis like Agastya are our ideals of conduct ; and I do but follow their example. This dog's meat is to me holier and more worthy to be eaten than any other thing."

*Ch.* :—"The example of the unrighteous can never form the eternal law of life. I would not have you deceive yourself by sophistry into committing this heinous sin."

*Vis.* :—"A Rishi can never do anything that is sinful or degrading ; I see no difference between a dog and a deer ; hence, I intend to feed upon this."

*Ch.* :—"Agastya was entreated by others to save countless Brahmanas, and in consequence he ate up Vathapi ; he was not drawn to it by desire ; and he did right and it





is no sin. Surely the Brahmanas are to be protected at any cost."

*Vis.* :—"I am a Brahmana and this my body is my best friend, very dear to me and worthy of all attention. So I see no harm in taking away this meat to feed it. My heart shrinks not from this apparently wicked act."

*Ch.* :—"Dear life should even be sacrificed when it is placed against defiling oneself by eating of unclean things. Such self-restrained souls abide in glory in the mansions of light; their desires are omnipotent; and all this, because they put virtue above hunger."

*Vis.* :—"You say true that such a right turn of mind brings one bright fame in the life to come. But I am alive and deprived of food, can never observe the duties of my order. I keep the vows and am always self-controlled. It is a prime duty to keep up this body upon which are built all my hopes of leading a right life here and hereafter. Hence, I mean to feed on this unclean meat. It is generally understood that greater merit accrues to him who goes deep into the question of what benefits a soul most and acts accordingly. But, even if I feed upon this with no clear views upon the above, I am not likely to degrade myself to your level, who feed upon dog's meat without the slightest glimmering of any knowledge about the self."

*Ch.* :—"It seems to me that you should not give way to this temptation. Hence, I emphatically disapprove and condemn your act; you are a Brahmana fallen into evil ways."

*Vis.* :—"Well, frogs croak unceasingly in the water; but, kine drink of it, all unmindful of their loud protests. It is not given to you to expound the mysteries of law. Be not lured into self-glorification."

*Ch.* :—"Holy Brahmana! know me as your friend and





ence I grieve for you; I almost pity you. Let not desire lead your footsteps into sin; stand this test like a man and set your eye on the right."

*Vis.* :—" You call yourself my friend; if you wish me well, hasten to save me from impending death. My eyes are open to the mystery of Self. Hand me over the piece of flesh."

*Ch.* :—" It goes against my heart to give you this unclean thing; besides, I deprive myself of the means of life. I, the giver and you, the receiver, are equally defiled."

*Vis.* :—" Fear not. This sinful act will keep me living and I can very easily throw away any taint that might cling to me. The path of virtue is ever open to me if I am alive. Which do you choose, my life or my death?"

*Ch.* :—" One's conscience is the best judge in matters of duty. You know better which is more sinful. Methinks he would stick at nothing who regards dog's meat as fit to eat."

*Vis.* :—" It is sinful verily to steal an unclean thing and eat of it; but there is an exception to the rule if it is a question of life or death. No great value is to be attached to the Sastras prohibiting such a diet. It is harmless to any being and free from the sin of untruth; but it is likely to be condemned."

*Ch.* :—" If you base your act on the supreme desire to live, neither the Vedas, nor the conduct of the wise ones could form your standard. Then, I see no use in taking so much trouble to discriminate between eatables and non-eatables."

*Vis.* :—" Surely, eating of prohibited food is not as sinful as taking away the life of another. It is laid down that indulgence in strong drinks degrades a man; but it is only mandatory. Now, I do acknowledge that this sin is on a level with sexual offences, but not so serious as to degrade





a man from the status of a Brahmana past all repair. It but takes away a little of the store of merit acquired."

Ch. :—"Well, I have done my best. This is a foul place, a chandala's abode ; it is dog's meat that you are after ; out of greediness, you are bent upon stealing it from a low out-caste who refuses to part with it. I wash my hands of it, and hold you and you alone responsible for the consequences ; and they are not very pleasant to a man of intelligence and probity."

Visvamitra finding that he had nothing to prevent him, grabbed at the haunch of dog's meat and went back to where his wife and children lay in the woods, desiring to give them a share of it. He then set about to cook it and duly offered it to Indra, to Agni and to the other bright gods ; for, even in that dire necessity he would not swerve from the duties of his order. Immediately the sky was black with rain-laden clouds and Indra cooled the parched earth with welcome showers, rendering back sweet life and energy to plants, animals and men. Visvamitra, the typical Brahmana, fed not of the dog's meat, for it was washed away in the flood ; but the gods and the Fathers were pleased thereat. It was nothing to him to free himself from any taint that might have clung to him by that sinful act.—*M. B. Santiparva*, 141.

Vasishtha or Apava, the son of Varuna, was engaged in meditation on mount Meru. One day Devarshis, Devas and the Vasus came down to his hermitage and roamed among its holy groves. Nandini, the calf of Surabhi the Cow of Plenty, was grazing quietly under a tree ; the wife of Dyau, one of the Vasus, pointed it out to her husband curious to know all about it. "He who drinks of its milk" explained Dyau "will preserve joyful youth for ten thousand years." "Now that I remember it" said she "I have a very dear friend on earth by name Jithavathi, the daughter





of Useenara. I would have her drink of its milk and enjoy undying youth. You will secure it for me at any cost." Dyau, the uxorious husband, could not refuse her, and his brother Vasus helped him to steal the calf. Later on, Vasishtha sought for it in vain, and coming to know what transpired, cursed the Vasus to be born on earth as men. They entreated him to mitigate the sentence. "Well" said he "the others will come back within a year; but Dyau will have to remain on earth very long, a spotless celibate all his life. He will be a paragon of learning, wisdom, valour and devotion." And he was known on earth as Bheeshma. *Ib. Adiparva. 106.*

Kandu, a sage of restrained self, was engaged in stern austerities on the banks of the Gomati. Indra was afraid of a rival who might dispossess him of his kingdom and sent Pramlocha, the Apsaras, to lure him away. Kandu fell under the spell of her beauty and witcheries, and they passed a hundred and fifty years in a sweet dream of delirious love. One day, she bowed low before him and said, "Lord! it is very long since I came down to you. Have I your leave to go?" "Nay" said he "stay with me yet a while"; for, he could not bear to live away from her. And so, time after time; and she yielded, in mortal dread of his anger and curses. Long after, one fine evening, Kandu suddenly got up and hastened out of the hermitage "Whither away, my Lord!" queried his love. "Light of mine eyes!" replied the sage "the bright sun hangs low in the west. It is time to offer the evening prayers; and it entails grievous sin to omit them." Pramlocha clapped her hands in high glee "Ho! Ho! And the sun sets, is it? It seems you compute your days by something higher than the standard of the gods and the fathers." "My love!" said the sage, "I saw you here on the banks of this river this morning and took you to my abode. And now it is sunset. I do not





see anything wonderful in this. I do not see anything to excite your laughter," Said Pramlocha "I am glad you remember that I came here of a morning. But years past count have gone by ; and it is sunset but not the first." Kandu stood aghast with amaze. "Well, is it so very long since you came unto me ?" "Holy sir, only nine hundred and seven years, six months and three days by mortal count." "What ! it seems to me but a day since I saw you; and a large portion of it is yet to be gone through. Do you speak true, or is it a pleasant jest ?" "Reverend sir ! would I dream of uttering an untruth unto you, the soul of innocence and virtue ? Besides, have you not laid your commands on me to that effect?" Kandu was almost beside himself with grief and shame. "Alas ! I am lost. I have destroyed the glorious edifice of stern tapas that I have patiently built up through years of effort. I have thrown away the precious treasure that wise and holy men value so high. Some one has sent this siren here to beguile me from my tapas. I practised stern self-control to attain the glorious heights of divine wisdom which the waves of hunger and thirst, pain and pleasure, old age and death reach not. Some one has got at my secret and has laid his axe at the root of success. A single spark of the deadly fire of desire is potent enough to consume to ashes the hard-won knowledge that leads us to the feet of Him whom the Holy Scriptures glorify. Desire is the shortest and the pleasantest road to hell. Thou, vile creature ! Avaunt ! Well have you done the behests of him that sent you. But, I do not think it just to consume you with the fire of my wrath, as I am tempted to do. Walking seven steps with another is ample basis for friendship to build itself upon. And we have been together for years past count. I will not harm you, the partner of my joy and shame. Why, I see not how you are to blame for it. I am but a fool to vent my





anger upon you. Somebody kick me from here to the ends of the world as an idiot who cannot think right and eschew evil." *V. P. I. 15.*

Sindhudweepa, Devaṇī, Arshtishena and Visvamisra, all of royal blood, raised themselves to the coveted eminence of Brahmanas. It was during the Kritayuga and the hermitage of Rishi Usangu was sanctified by their presence.—*M. B. Salyaparva 40.*

Once upon a time, Matanga, the son of a Brahmana, was sent by his father to conduct a sacrifice, and, on the way, he struck furiously on its neck the young mule that was yoked to his carriage. The fond mother observed it and consoled the calf saying "Grieve not, my Child. It is only a Chandala that hits you, for, a Brahmana would not be so cruel, he the friend of every living thing. This young man but proclaims his low birth." Matanga sprang down in dread and fear and with humble entreaty besought the mule to explain his words. "Thou, soul of mercy! How do you know me for a Chandala born? What low-caste wretch shall I call my father?" And to him replied the mule "Your mother, in a fit of intoxication, bore you to a low barber, even a Soodra. You are a Chandala and are miles away from Brahmanahood." Matanga went back to his father, told him the dreadful news and sought the dark forests to free himself from the vile taint and attain the status of a Brahmana. The very gods quaked in terror at his consuming energy. Indra appeared to him times out of number and said, "You fool! you will simply kill yourself. You are and you will be miles and miles away from Brahmanahood." For numberless decades did Matanga persevere with grim obstinacy in spite of Indra's warnings. "Beware" said Indra to him again and again, "you are setting yourself against the law. A born Chandala, you will never become a Brahmana in this body. The Jeeva passes





incalculable ages in the elemental kingdoms as Bhootha, Pretha, Pisacha, Sakini, Dakini, Koosmanda, etc.; then, he gradually passes through the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. He is then individualised and reaches the human levels. For thousands of years, he occupies the bodies of low out-castes, Chandalas, Pulkasas and others. A thousand births there and he becomes a Soodra. Under ordinary conditions thirty births in a Soodra body bring him up to the level of a Vaisya. Sixty births as a Vaisya elevate him to the rank of a Kshatriya. Sixty births as a Kshatriya lift him to the very lowest levels of Brahmanahood. Two hundred births in that, promote him to the class of Brahmanas that live by the profession of arms. Three hundred births therein qualify him to be born as a Brahmana, who is allowed to recite and meditate upon the potent manthras. Four hundred of such births convert him into a Brahmana who studies the Holy Scriptures with the eye of wisdom. But, joy and sorrow, desire and hate, pride and lust, fiercely attack the Brahmana in his early days. If he triumphs over them, he reaches the heights of knowledge and power and bliss; if he goes under, he falls, even to the lowest births, like an over ripe fruit." Again and again came the warning; but as often did Matanga persisted in his mad endeavour. In the end, he gave up from sheer exhaustion and Indra granted him the powers of taking any form he liked and roaming through the worlds at his will. Women pay respect to him and worship as Chandodeva, and invoke him during joyful rites. Such is Brahmanahood, hard to attain.—*M. B. Anusasanika-parva* 3, 4, 5.

Once upon a time, there lived a king, Veethahavya by name, of the line of Saryathi, the son of Vaivasvata Manu. His sons attacked and slew Haryasva, king of Kasi; again they came on and drove away from his kingdom Sudeva, the son of Haryasva. Divodasa, the son of Sudeva, fought long





and fiercely with his enemies, but was vanquished and took refuge with Rishi Bharadvaja. Him the king entreated for a son to wipe away the black stain that lay on his line. Bharadvaja performed for the suppliant the rite known as Puthrakameshti and Pratardana was born unto him. Through the yogic might of the sage, he attained the age of thirteen as soon as he was born; and was endowed with extraordinary strength, knowledge, wisdom and energy. In fact, all the powers in the world abode in him. Divodasa sent his son to exterminate the enemies of his race. Pratardana found it child's play to lay low the heads of the sons of Veethahavya; the father, in wild affright, fled for refuge to the hermitage of Bhrigu. The Rishi promised him protection and gave him a place among his disciples. Soon after, Pratardana was there in hot pursuit and reverently requested to be announced to the sage as desirous of seeing him. Bhrigu met him without the premises and accorded to him due hospitality. "What can I do for you, my son?" asked he. "Reverend sir!" replied Pratardana "Veethahavya, my enemy, has come here. His sons have despoiled my kingdom, have robbed me of my treasures and have slain my kith and kin. Give him over to my righteous vengeance. It is a sacred duty that I owe my ancestors." But Bhrigu answered him all calmly "I do not remember to have any Kshatriya in our midst. There are none but Brahmanas here." Pratardana bowed low and laughed gently. "Give me leave to go away and may I find your heart ever warm towards me. But, you have won for me an unparalleled victory, though all unconsciously. Veethahavya yonder, has renounced his caste through fear of me." Thus Bhrigu, out of his inconceivable might, raised Veethahavya to the envied rank of a Brahmana. His son Gritsamada and after him many of his line, were high-souled Brahmanas and Rishis. *M. B. Anusanikaparva* 8.





Visvamitra is one of the Saptharshis of this Vaivashvatha Manvanthara along with Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama and Bharadvaja.—V. P. III. I.

*The greatness of Visvamitra.*

1. His wrath consumed to ashes the hundred sons of Rishi Vasishtha.

2. On another occasion there arose from his anger countless Bhootas, Prethas, Pisachas and Rakshasas.

3. He adorned the famous line of the Kusikas in which numerous Rishis had their birth.

4. Sunas-sepha, son of Richeeka, was about to be offered as a victim during the sacrifice of King Ambareesha. Visvamitra taught him two mighty verses that saved him from a horrible death. (They are found in Rig Veda, Ashtaka I, Adhyaya 2, Varga 12; Yajurveda, Kanda II, Prapathaka, Anuvaka 11; *Ib*, Kanda III, Prapathaka 4, Anuvaka 11. They form a portion of the Gayathri Upasthana mantras recited by the twice-born during their evening prayers).

5. Harischandra propitiated the gods by his sacrifices and was in consequences adopted by Visvamitra as his son.

6. Fifty of his sons would not render due reverence to Devaratha, another adopted son of his, (formerly Sunas-sepha) and were cursed to become Chandalas in consequence.

7. He raised Trisanku aloft to the abode of the gods even in his physical body, and created new worlds for his sake.

8. The river Kausiki, sacred to the gods and the Rishis, is his sister.

9. Rambha (Panchachooda) who tried to beguile him from his tapas, was cursed to become a senseless block of stone.

10. Vasishtha, out of dread of this Rishi, threw himself bound into the river Vipasa.

11. He officiated as Purohit to Trisanku and the sons





of Vasishtha cursed him in consequence to feed upon dog's meat. Accordingly, during a dreadful famine, he was about to eat of it, when Indra, out of the great love and regard he had for him, made away with it in the guise of a hawk. The curse was over and he lauded high Indra, his benefactor, who sent down the welcome rains. Visvamitra is the Regent of the star that shines between Dhruva the Pole-star and the Saptharishis, the Great Bear.—*M. B. Anusandhikā-parva* 6.

The sons of Dhrishtha, the fifth son of Vaivasvatha Manu, were born Kshatriyas, but raised themselves to the rank of Brahmanas. Agni-vesya of the line of Narishyantha, the seventh son, gave birth to the Agnivesyayana Brahmanas. Nabhaga son of Dishta, the fourth son of Ikshvaku, was degraded to be a Vaisya by his karma—*Bh. IX* 2.

34. *Safe custody* :—

Then Janaka violated his trust in setting it up as a prize and Rama was equally wrong in having broken it. So, it is more reasonable to infer that it was given him to worship and to use in destroying his enemies. "Mahadeva was pleased with him and gave Janaka the wonderful bow with which he destroyed his enemies"—*Kurma purana* 21. "I set up this bow as a prize which Mahadeva gave me out of his grace"—*Padma purana, Kalpanthara Ramayana*.

190. *Daksha* :—He came out of the thumb of Brahma, and was one of the Manasaputras. He married Prasoothi, the daughter of Swayambhuva Manu. Of his daughters, Murthi married Dharma and was the mother of the Rishis Nara and Narayana; Swaha married Agni and was the mother of Pavaka, Pavamana and Suchi; Swadha married the Pithris and gave birth to Vayuna and Dhoorini; Sathi married Siva. Again, during the Chakshusha Manvanthara, he was born as the son of the Prachethasas and Marisha. He married Asikni, and was the father of ten thousand Haryasvas, thou-





sand Sabalasvas and sixty daughters. Ten were married to Dharma, two to Bhootha, two to Angiras, two to Krisasva, four to Tharksha, twenty-seven to Soma and thirteen to Kasyapa.—*Bh. IV. 1.*

Rudra has two sides—terrible and good. The Satharudreeya speaks of his terrible aspects, which are the fearful Rudhras. But his good aspect is praised as—“*ya te Rudra siva tanu aghorapakasini*”—that good aspect of thine, Rudra, which is not terrible and which does not be token harm”. From this his Siva-thanu arose, his puranic name Siva. Likewise his name Sankara, the doer of good, is found in the Rig Veda I. 43, 6. “*Sam Nah karat*—may he do good to us.” His aspect as Agni Swishtakrit is honor'd with the choicest of oblations. But as Rudra, his bhaga or sacrificial share is the Samsrava of the manthin cup of the Soma juice (Taittireeya Samhitha, III. 1. 9) and Akhu mouse, (*Ib.* I. 8. 6.). The latter is to be understood as a cake first placed on the mud dug up by the mouse. The Samsrava is said to be the spray splashed about when, the Soma creeper is being beaten and pressed to fill the manthin cup, the contents of which are held up for Chanda and Marka, but offered to Indra. The above Samhitha speaks of it thus :—“Rudra ! To thee is this share which thou desired to have. Enjoy it”. “The Gods excluded Rudra from the sacrifice ; he pierced it with an arrow. They propitiated him and he became Agni Swishtakrit or he who makes the rite of ours well sacrificed. That portion of the sacrifice which was pierced by Rudra is Rudreeya, terrible ;—by eating a bit of it Pooshan lost his teeth and ever afterwards, an oblation of flour is made to him ; by eating of it Bhaga had his eyes burnt, so they say Bhaga is blind.—*Taittireeya Samhitha* II. 6, 8, 3, *Sathapatha Brahmana* I, 7, 4, 5.

The Prajapathis performed a Yagna, when the Devas and the Rishis graced the occasion with their presence.





Daksha entered the assembly and all rose to receive him except Brahma and Siva. Daksha saluted his father Brahma and with his permission took his seat. But he was so mortified by the conduct of Siva, that he could not contain himself and indignantly broke forth thus :—" Rishis, Devas and Agni ! Behold this disgraceful conduct of Siva, my son-in-law, nay, my disciple. This senseless fellow would not trouble himself so much as rise up and receive me. He has no sense of respect or disrespect, of purity or impurity. He is utterly untouched by injunctions and prohibitions. Know you what he does ? He roams about the burning grounds, with his Bhoothas, Prethas and Pisachas at his heels, now laughing, now weeping ; the ashes of the dead lie in thick layers on his body and their bones hang round his neck and arms as ornaments. He calls himself Siva (Auspicious) ; but Asiva (Inauspicious) would suit him better ; he is ever intoxicated and his companions are the unclean and senseless Bhoothas. I obeyed the orders of Brahma in giving him my daughter to wife, and have I not reason to curse the day ?" Siva sat on unmoved. Daksha continued his stream of invectives and ended by cursing him. " This vilest of Devas shall not have a share in the offerings made to Indra, Upendra and others during the holy sacrifices." In wild rage he rushed from the hall of sacrifice.

Nandi, the chief companion of Siva, would not tamely put up with the gross and wanton insult offered to his master. In angry tones he hurled back the unkind words of Daksha and reproved such of the audience as expressed their approbation of it. " Siva bears ill-will to none ; rather Daksha who sees harm where there is none. It is only the ignorant that follow Daksha and blame Siva. He sees no difference between the body and the soul ; hence he shall be as fond of women as a beast and shall be blessed with a goat's head as a sign of it. He confounds truth and false-





hood and publicly insults Siva. Those who follow him shall not go beyond the Karma-kanda and shall be eternally whirled along the cycle of births and deaths; they shall have no scruples and shall eat of anything, pure or impure; they shall make a living out of their learning, their observances, and their austerities. Their riches, their body and their senses shall be all in all to them. They shall beg from door to door."

Bhrigu, the leader of the Brahmanas present, threw back the curses of Nandi on the followers of Siva. "His followers shall be opposed to the holy scriptures and be known as Pashandas. Their purity shall be sullied and their understanding clouded; coated with ashes and adorned with garlands of bones and matted hair, they shall frequent places where the wine cup goes round. The Vedas lay down the approved path for all time, and the Rishis of old followed their injunctions. The divine Janardana is their root. You shall only attain to where the Tamasic Siva reigns the Lord of Bhoothas and Pisachas." Thereupon Siva and his followers left the place and the Prajapathis conducted the sacrifice for a thousand years.

Some time after, Brahma made Daksha the chief of the Prajapathis and his pride knew no bounds. He resolved to celebrate the sacrifice known as the Brihaspathi yagna and to it he invited all except Siva and his wife Sati. She heard of the grand preparations made by her father, and was impatient to witness the yagna; and much against his will, Siva yielded to her importunities. She went to the sacrificial hall of her father, Siva's followers accompanying her. Daksha would not recognise her, nor was any share set apart in the sacrifice for Rudra. Her mother and her sisters alone dared to offer a welcome. Furious with rage, she turned to her father and said "Siva knows no enemy; all are the same to him. But, you alone





are conspicuous by your envy of his virtues. The evil things you have attributed to him exist but in your imagination; for, the gods and the Rishis know it and still worship him. Well, a dutiful wife must not hear her husband calumniated. If she is strong enough, she must pull out the tongue of the rogue by the roots, or if possible, kill him; if not, she must close her ears against the slander and leave the place; best she puts an end to herself. I am ashamed to keep this body that you gave me. I shall free myself from this taint of connexion with you" and she threw herself into the fire. There was a great uproar and her attendants were ready to spring at the throats of her enemies, when Bhrigu, who acted as the chief priest, invoked the Ribhus; they in no time dispersed the ghostly followers of Siva.

Narada was at hand to carry the news to Rudra, who bit his lips in anger, and plucking out a tuft of matted hair from his head, dashed it down on the earth. Veerabhadrar the terrible, rose out of it. His huge body was dark as the clouds and blotted the high heavens from view. He had one thousand hands, three eyes blazing like the sun, terrible teeth and locks of hair bright as fire. A garland of human skulls hung round his neck and curious weapons flashed in his hands. "What are they behests, Lord!" cried he. "Lead my followers to where proud Daksha sits and destroy him and his yagna" ordered Siva. In Daksha's hall of sacrifice, the priests, the Brahmanas and their wives saw coming afar from the north a huge cloud of dust; and upon the heels of it rushed Veerabhadra and his ghostly army, some brown, some yellow, some like huge sea-monsters, some with no form and all terrible to look at. They pulled down the buildings, put out the fires, broke the implements of sacrifice and scattered them around; they defiled the place; they hunted the Rishis and Devas, and





frightened their women. Maniman caught hold of Bhrigu and tied him fast like a sheep, while Veerabhadra plucked out his beard. Chandeesa captured Soorya; Nandi captured Bhaga and pulled out his eyes, for, he had often glanced at Daksha in encouragement. Pooshan bared his teeth in uproarious laughter, while Daksha was holding forth against Siva; but Veerabhadra pulled out his teeth one by one. Daksha was caught in the iron grip of Veerabhadra, who tried to sever his head, but in vain. At last, he found the task easier with the sacrificial implements. His work over, he departed with his followers for Kailasa.

The Devas went up to Brahma and poured forth their complaints to him. "It was not unknown to me" said he "what would take place; and I and Vishnu kept ourselves aloof in consequence. You did wrong in not allowing Siva to participate in the sacrificial offerings. Know you not that the dread Lord of the universe is your master and mine?" He betook himself with the Devas to where Siva sat deep meditation for the good of the universe, under a huge banyan tree in mount Kailasa. "Pardon, Lord of all, your children who have unwittingly gone against you and the Law. The eyes of Bhaga, the head of Bhrigu, the teeth of Pooshan and the life of Daksha, let these be restored. Grant it that the yagna be completed. May the gods and the Rishis be relieved of the pain of broken limbs. From this day, the remnants of the sacrificial offerings are yours." Siva smiled gently and said, "Nay, Daksha is but a child, and I have clean forgotten that he ever showed me any disrespect. But, I have to drag back the unwary feet of my children from the dark paths of Maya. Daksha's head is burnt up; he shall have the head of a goat instead. Bhaga shall see his sacrificial offerings through the eyes of Mithra. Poosha shall be offered cakes made of flour and in company





with other Devas, he shall make use of the sacrificer's teeth. The Devas and the Rishis shall have their broken limbs set right ; but, those who have lost them shall use the arms of the Aswins and the hands of Poosha. Bhrigu too shall be given a goat's head." The gods thanked Siva and reverently invited him to the sacrifice. Brahma came too and Daksha, with unclouded eyes, rendered due worship to Siva. At the end of the yagna appeared Vishnu to accept his share of the offerings, and said, "Daksha ! It is only through ignorance that men see any difference between myself and Siva. We are one, I, Siva and Brahma. We assume different names and forms to create, sustain and destroy the Universe."—*Bh. IV 2.*

The gods and the Rishis were going up to Daksha's sacrifice, when Uma said to her spouse "How is it you go not?" "The gods have ruled it that I have no share of the sacrificial offerings." "I am grieved beyond expression that you, the god of gods and the embodiment of all perfections, should be so insulted." Sankara left her there in charge of Nandi and proceeded straight to the hall of sacrifice and destroyed it. Sacrifice sprang into the sky as a deer and Rudra followed it in hot pursuit. A drop of sweat fell from his forehead ; and out from it sprang a dreadful Being, short, with blazing eyes, dark hue and green beard and dressed in flaming red. It was covered all over with hair. In a moment, the Deity of Sacrifice was reduced to ashes and the Terror chased the Gods and the Rishis. Brahma intervened and calmed down the anger of Siva. "Lord ! These have been punished enough and will not be in a hurry to deny you a share of the sacrificial offerings. This terrible Being you have created shall live on earth as Fever. Dissipate its might ; else the worlds will be one hideous ruin." The heat in the head of the elephants, benzoin (Sila jathu), the green scum on the water, the skin





of snakes, the foot-disease of cattle, saline soil, the incrustation on the eyes of cattle, the throat-disease of horses, the crests of peacocks, the eye-diseases of cuckoos, the bilious diseases of sheep, the hiccough of parrots, the exhaustion of tigers, and the fever among men are manifestations of the energy of the dire Being—*M. B. Santiparva*, 289.

Dadheechi saw that Siva came not to the sacrifice of Daksha and said in anger to those around "This rite shall come to no good, for, you honor not the Lord Siva. You do it out of ignorance; but who can ward off the arrows of Fate?" He looked with the eye of spirit and saw Siva and Parvati seated on the mount Kailasa, with Narada hard by. He soon came to know what was about to happen, and was glad of it. The gods were unshaken in their resolve not to invite Rudra. Said the sage "It is no less than the sin of Brahminicide to refuse worship to those that deserve it, as also to offer it to those that deserve it not. The God of gods will surely come here and I await to see what will become of you." Exclaimed Daksha "There are eleven Rudras with matted hair and them I know. Who is this Maheswara, this Rudra all new?" "I see" replied Dadheechi "that you are all bent upon not inviting Mahesa. I know none that stands above him. And you are surely seeking the ruin of your own sacrifice." "Then" said Daksha "behold, I make an offering in this golden vessel to Vishnu, the God of gods. He is omnipotent and no other." At the same time Parvati said to Siva "Dear lord! What would you advise me to observe if I want you to secure a share in the sacrificial offerings? To whom should I address my prayers," "To none other" replied Siva "but myself." "Is it even so?" rejoined Parvati, "I never knew a husband that did not brag before his wife." "Nay, my dear!" broke in Siva "Say not so. Wait while I put forth my might." Veerabhadra was created and Uma went forth with him in the guise of Bhadrakali.—*Ib.* 290.





The trident launched by Siva destroyed the sacrifice of Daksha and advanced upon the Rishis Nara Narayana who were in deep meditation in their hermitage at Badari. It dashed itself fiercely against the broad breast of Narayana and his hair turned green; hence one of his names *Munjakesa*. He, with a mighty snort, drove it back powerless to Siva, Mahadeva, in furious wrath, rushed at the Rishis. Narayana caught him round his neck and it turned black. He plucked a blade of the sacred grass and converted it into a dreadful axe which he threw at Siva. It was shattered to pieces; hence Narayana was called *Khandaparasu* (broken-axe). And thus they went on until the worlds grew mad with fear. Whereupon, Brahma, the Ancient, came down and implored them to desist. "Sankara! doer of good! It ill becomes you to forget your trust and ruin it. These martial weapons are not meet for such hands as yours. The supreme Brahman has chosen to manifest Itself in one of Its aspects as Nara and Narayana. Through Its grace I came into being. You are eternal, but you came into manifestation from his Anger (force of Disintegration). Let us reverence this manifestation of the Brahman and let the worlds rest in peace." Rudra calmed down and honor'd Narayana, who said to him with a smile "He who knows you, knows me. He who reverences you, reverences me. There is not the slightest difference between us. It is foolish to think otherwise. The mark of your trident on my breast shall ever shine as the beautiful mole Sreevatsa and the black band on your throat caused by the pressure of my arms will add to your lustre and give you the name of *Sreekantha*.—*Ib.* 352.

The Devas and the Rishis propitiate him by reciting the *Sata-rudreeya*—*M. B. Anusanicaparva* 265.

During the Devayuga, the gods performed a sacrifice as enjoined by the Vedas. They knew not Rudra aright





and reserved no portion for him of the offerings. Now, sacrifice is of various kinds *Loka yagna* (seeking the esteem and good regard of the world); *Kriya yagna*, (the sixteen sacraments); *Griha yagna* (Agnihothra and such as require the assistance of a wife); *Panchabhootha yagna* (the happiness arising from the objects of the senses); of these four was the world formed. To destroy the second and the third enjoined by the Sastras, Siva made a fearful bow of the first and the last, sixty hands in length. Vashat-kara was its string..... Having thus routed the Devas and the Rishis, Rudra laughed at them and stood with bent bow to prevent them from coming back. Then the Goddess of speech, invoked by the Devas, cut away the bowstring and the huge bow straightened itself. Siva was thus disarmed and the Devas approached him with sacrificial offerings and implored his forgiveness. Rudra grew calm and placed his anger in the ocean, where it drinks the briny deep always.—*M. B. Saupthikaparva* 18.

Brihaspathi induced Daksha to perform a horse-sacrifice. Rudra was to have a share of it, as he and Nandi performed Samitra, (killing the sacrificial animal.) But being denied his share, Rudra, Nandi and their ghostly troops destroyed the sacrifice and shattered it day and night. The bow and an arrow given him by Brahma stood Rudra in good stead on the occasion. The Sacrifice ran to Brahma for protection with its heart transfixed by Siva's arrow. Then Brahma said to him "Thou shalt stand in the sky at the head of the stars and in the high company of Rudra and Soma. Eternal thou shalt be, and the Star of stars (Mrigasiras)." Then Rudra and Vishnu shot an arrow at each other; but neither was in any way the worse for it. Vishnu, in his joy, clasped his arms round Rudra's neck and cried "Pardon me. Thou art indeed without beginning or end. Thou art the Great Teacher.





“You art above karma;” and Rudra's neck grew black thereby. Nandi struck Vishnu on the head with the bow Pinaka; but Vishnu stood perfectly composed and with a look, deprived Nandi of all power of motion. In the end, Vishnu prescribed a share in the sacrifice to Rudra and made whole the shattered Sacrifice. The blood which flowed from the wounded deer is still seen at day-break.—*Hari vamsa*, 222.

Daksha brings Vishnu from the Swetha-dweepa and makes him his Yagna-purusha—*Kasi khanda*.

17. *Seetha* :—Seetha, meaning the furrow, is a Vedic Goddess. Rig Veda IV, 57 is devoted to the agricultural deities; verses 6 and 7 praise Seetha as follows, “Auspicious Seetha! Be present. We glorify thee that thou mayest be propitious to us. That thou mayest yield us abundant fruit.” The Yajur Veda has four stanzas about Seetha to be recited when drawing four furrows at the ceremony of preparing the sacrificial ground.

The *Taittireeya Brahmana* II. 3. 10, has the following passage about the bewitching effect of adorning the face with the Sthagara alankara, on performing a certain sacrificial rite:—Prajapathi created king Soma. The three Vedas were created after him. Soma held them in the palm of his hand. Then Seetha Savithri the daughter of Savitha, became enamoured of king Soma, who however loved another damsel named Sraddha (faith). Seetha went to her father Prajapathi and said, “Salutation to thee! I approach thee and seek thy help. I love king Soma but he loves Sraddha.” Prajapathi prepared the Sthagara alankara for her and adorned her face with it, having performed a certain rite to give it effect (refer to the original). Seeing her thus enchantingly beautiful Soma said to her “Live with me.” “Nay” said she “tell me a source of happiness. Tell me what you have in your hands.” He handed over to her





the three Vedas. So, women wish to get happiness. He who wishes to become loveable or whom one may wish to become so, the prescribed rite shall be performed over him and his face decorated with the Sthagara alankara.

In this story the father Prajapathi seems to be the same as Savitha, from whom Seetha derives her patronymic Savi-thri. Sraddha is another daughter of the Sun or Savitha (*Satha patha Brahmana* XI vii. 3, 11. (*Sraddha vai sooryasya duhita*). Savitha gives his daughter Soorya in marriage to the moon (*Sankhayana Brahmana* 18, 1, *Niruktha* 12, 8). All the asterisms are Prajapathi's daughters wedded to the Moon, who however is very fond of one of them Aldebaran (Rohini). They complained to their father and Soma was punished with the disease of consumption during the dark fortnight. (*Taittiriya Samhitha*, II iii, 5). Sraddha, whom the moon of our story loves in preference to Seetha, may well be taken as Rohini, who seems to have had several names in the Vedic literature, Rohini, Soorya, Sraddha, Ahalya, etc., . . . . . Seetha, the wife of Rama, seems to be identical with the Vedic Seetha, in spite of the change she has undergone in the Ramayana. There are three indications of the identity:—

1. According to *Ramayana* VII. 17, Seetha was formerly Vedavathi, daughter of Kusadhwaja, the son of Brihaspathi. She was so named because her father was ever reciting the Vedas and she was born as his Vedic speech embodied. She sat in austere tapas, resolved to marry none but Vishnu. But, when Ravana laid his foul hands upon her, she threw herself into the fire, crying that she would be born again and become his fate. She came down again as Seetha, the wife of Rama and her abduction by Ravana was the cause of his death. Though Seetha's father Savitha is changed into Kusadhwaja, her name Vedavathi indicates her identity with the Vedic





Seetha, the repository of the three Vedas. Brihaspathi himself, the Lord of words, is made the grandfather of this speech embodied as a girl.

2. Anasooya, the wife of Athri, meets Seetha during her voluntary exile in the forests and decorates her with divine ornaments and gives her an *angaraga*, a charming ointment for the body. The incident of the Sthagara alankara is reproduced.

3. Seetha is found in the ground when Janaka (Seeradhvaja) ploughs it before a sacrifice. As the Seetha manthras are recited when preparing the sacrificial ground, Seetha's marvellous birth from that ground indicates her to be the Vedic goddess herself.

But, it does not follow that because the Vedic goddess is reproduced in a changed manner in Seetha, her Vedic husband, the Moon, is reproduced in our Rama. This perhaps might have been if the Vedic literature always spoke of Seetha as the wife of the Moon. But it is not so. In Paraskara Grihya Soothra of the Sukla-Yajur Veda are incorporated certain mantras for Seetha yagna, sacrifice to Seetha on the field and in them Seetha is invoked as the wife of Indra :—"Indra's wife Seetha, I invoke, in whose substance dwells the prosperity of all Vedic and worldly works. May she not abandon me in whatever work I do. Swaha! I invoke at this sacrifice the firm One rich in horses rich in cows, rich in delight, who indefatigably supports living beings, who is the field wreathed with threshing floors. May she not abandon me Swaha !" ...Janaka, her father, is aptly surnamed Seeradhwaja, one who has the plough as his banner, a fit name for the Goddess found in the furrow.

*Taitireeya-Aranyaka* I. 1. 5 relates the following story :—

"Rudra stood resting his head on the end of his bended bow. One end of it was in the sky and the other rested on the earth. Indra assumed the form of ants, and cut off the





bowstring. The staff took away his head ; and it is the same as is seen in the colours of the cloud as the rainbow. This is the bow of Samyu the son of Brihaspathi. This is the bow of Rudra"...Seetha may be compared to the Rig Vedic Saranyu, the daughter of Thwashta, the wife of the Sun-Vivaswan and the mother of the Aswins. The whole world assembles to witness the wedding of Thwashta's daughter, who being made Savarna, of the same colour as that of her husband and hidden from the gaze of the mortals, is given to Vivasvan ; but she disappears leaving behind the Asvins to whom she had given birth. She might be the same as Saranyu. This recalls the incident of beautifying the appearance of Seetha Savithri by the application of the Sthagara to induce the Moon to marry her. But in the post-vedic time of the Brihad devatha, the legend of the Rig-veda about Saranyu was so transformed as to make the woman that was made Savarna to be Saranyu's substitute, of the same form and colour as herself left by her with her husband at the time of her disappearance from him. In the *Ramayana*, gods and men assemble to witness Seetha's ordeal and reunion with Rama ; but, she disappears leaving behind her twin-sons, while her substitute, consisting of the swarna or golden image of her, may be compared with Saranyu's substitute Savarna of the story of the Brihad devatha. ....In days subsequent to the age of the *Ramayana* strange stories have arisen, one set of them to the effect that Seetha was the sister of Rama, who, in marrying her, married his own sister ; and the other that Seetha was the daughter of Ravana, who in abducting her, abducted his own daughter. About twenty years ago, I heard from Honnali Gururayacharya, an old pensioned Pauranika of the late Maharajah Krishna Raja Udayar of Mysore, the following three stories, to which I add one more which is current in this part of the country, the Mysore State :—





Seetha, the incarnation of the Goddess Lakshmi, was the daughter of Dasaratha and sister of Rama. King Janaka obtained her as a gift from Dasaratha, who warned him that she would disappear if allowed to touch the ground. So Janaka always kept her on a raised seat of wood. But, one day, Rishi Jajali came to his palace and as there was no one else to welcome him, she stepped down and forthwith disappeared into the earth. Seven years afterwards she was found in it when Janaka ploughed the ground for his sacrifice. She was not then recognised as the daughter of Dasaratha and Rama married her. —*Uttara Vasishtha purana* ; *Skandottara purana*.

2. Ravana was given six crores of years to live by Brahma, who attended on him every day and gave out the astrological aspect of it in connexion with him. Once he had to wait long at the palace gate without being announced. Narada managed to get in anyhow and told Ravana that he had lost three-fourth of his life period by having made Brahma wait at his palace gate ; and that what remained will be destroyed if he abducted a damsel who had married her brother. Now Ravana knew not that Seetha was the sister of Rama and carried her away to his ruin.—*Bhargava purana*.

3. Once upon a time Narada and Thumburu, the divine singers, went to Swetha-dweepa to give a concert before Narayana. Thumburu was graciously welcomed and readily admitted, but Narada was coldly left outside. Just then Lakshmi entered the hall in state and her attendants hustled Narada aside to make way for her. His cup of wrath was full and he cursed Lakshmi to be born as the daughter of an Asura. So, she became the child of Ravana and Mandodari. Narada advised Ravana to cast away the child as she was his Fate. Ravana threw her into the sea and the waves washed her into Sruthamala, a river in Janaka's kingdom. The Sun-





god. placed her in a lotus there and adored her for nine months. Janaka prayed to the sun for issue and received Seetha from him. So, Ravana abducted his own daughter all unknowingly.—*Maudgalya Ramayana; Adb. R.*

4. The Devas were cruelly oppressed by Ravana and began a sacrifice to bring forth an immortal Being that could slay the tyrant. They were to offer a pot of Amritha as an oblation into the fire. Narada told Ravana of it, but represented that the Devas desired to create a venomous being to kill him and meant to offer therefor a pot of the deadliest venom; for he did not want Ravana to become immortal by drinking of the Amritha. Ravana dispersed the Devas, destroyed the sacrifice and brought the vessel of Amritha to Lanka. He left it in the charge of his wife Mandodari, warning her against the Devas who will risk everything to recover it. Some time after, she was so much disgusted with the inconstancy of Ravana that she resolved to do away with herself and quaffed the deadly poison of the Devas. But, lo! she felt healthier and more cheerful than ever, and gave birth to a beautiful girl, whom, in her fear of being upbraided by her husband, she cast into the sea.—*Adb. R.*

Valmeeki gives us no information about the ultimate origin of Seetha, except that she was found in the sacrificial ground by Janaka. This might have been worked out from the identity of the Seetha of the *Taitt. Brahmana* with the Seetha of the *Ramayana*. Prajapathi or Savitha is the father of Seetha; also of the Moon and of Sraddha whom he loves later on. So, she marries her brother. We have seen that Seetha is made to be the wife of Indra, who is a solar god. According to the Subrahmanya litany Indra is called Ahalya-jara the lover of Ahalya. Another version of the same formula calls him Swasur-jara, the lover of his sister. The solar





god Poosha is also styled Swasur-jara (R. V, VI, 55. 1 and 5). Ambika, the spouse of Rudra, is called his sister (*Taitt-Samhitha*. I. 8, 6, 1) Prajapathi is said to have conceived an illicit love towards his own daughter.....

A Vaidic Brahmin of Sringeri, the seat of Sri Sankaracharya's matha in the State of Mysore, paid a visit to me in 1874 or 1875 and recited on the occasion verse 3 of R. V. X. 3 as a blessing. He quoted a Niruktha thereon, which interprets the verse to mean the whole story of the Ramayana in brief.

A few years afterwards, a Vaidic Brahmin from a far off Telugu country recited the same verse and the Niruktha on it as a blessing...The verse is in a hymn to Agni and is rendered by Griffith thus:—"Attendant on the blessed dame, the blessed hath come: the lover followeth his sister. Agni far-spreading with conspicuous lustre, hath compassed night with whitely shining garments". The original for night is Rama, for in the Vedas the word Rama as a proper noun is interpreted to mean dark-coloured or black. Sayana explains the verse as follows:—"The blessed is Agni, while the blessed dame is his own light or the Dawn, attended by whom he comes from the Garhapathya to the Ahavaneeya site. Then the same Agni who is Jara in the sense of *Satroonam Farayitha*, the destroyer of his enemies, approaches the same dame, who is *Swasri* either in the sense of one who moves by herself, or of sister to him. Likewise, he stands and shines with his bright light encompassing or overpowering the darkness of night at the time of the evening *Homa* rite". As the Garhapathya and Ahavaneeya are respectively the western and eastern fires, what Sayana means seems to be this:—Agni, present in the Garhapathya fire at the time of the evening worship, is fancied to go round to the Ahavaneeya fire to receive the morning worship, when he is attended by the Dawn or when he is fancied to have approached her; and





then he goes back to receive the evening worship shining brightly in the Garhapathya fire, as in battling with and conquering the darkness of night.....The only other place where the word Rama occurs in the R.V. is X. 93. 14 where it is certainly used as a proper name of a famous Asura or heroic being. It appears to me that the Niruktha on the above verse, which is against Sayana's interpretation, was composed by taking the Rama of it to mean the Rama of the Ramayana and by reading the epic into it thus :—"The blessed is Rama and the blessed dame is Seetha. Attended by her, he goes first to the hermitage of Bharadwaja and later on to the forest by his father's command. Then, Ravana the unlawful lover of Seetha, whom, as the Mother of the Universe, he should have looked upon as if she were his sister, approaches to abduct her. Then the bridge is thrown across the sea ; Ravana is slain ; Seetha goes through the fire ordeal ; Agni took her up and declared her pure. He stood about Rama shining with brilliant colors." Even if we reject the Niruktha as spurious, the verse itself is worthy of note, in that it praises the Deity thereof as the lover of his sister.

There are four Buddhist stories, all of which have some resemblance to the Ramayana ; in three of them, the princes wed their sisters, while the last, called the Dasaratha Jataka, is a Buddhist version of the story of Rama, who is said to have married his sister Seetha.

1. Brahmadata, king of Varanasi, exiled his sons Maheemsasaka and Chanda to protect them from the intrigues of their step-mother, to whom he had granted permission to choose anything she might wish. But, her son Soorya refused the kingdom which she chose for him and joined the two brothers in their exile. While wandering in the Himalayan forests, a Rakshasa under the god Veesavana dragged down into a pond Chanda and Soorya,





who did not know Buddha's law; but the eldest brother Maheemsasaka, who knew the law, procured their release by answering all the questions put by the Rakshasa. On the death of the king the three brothers returned home; the eldest succeeded to the throne, Chanda became the heir-apparent and Soorya the commander.—*Buddhaghosha's Commentary on the Dhammapada.*

2. The Ikshwaku king Ambashtha Raja sent into exile his four sons and five daughters by his first wife to please the second. The young princes lived in the forests and married their sisters to provide a mutual safeguard against the degeneration of their race by unworthy alliances; and they installed their elder sister Priya as their mother. After a time she is stricken with leprosy and removed to another part of the forest. Rama has been compelled to resort to the forests by leprosy but had since recovered. He meets her, cures her and marries her.—*Buddhaghosha's commentary on the Sutra Nipatha.*

3. King Okaku had five consorts named Hastha Chittha, Janthu, Palini and Visakha. By Hastha he had four sons, Okaka-mukho, Karakando, Hatthinako, and Nipuro, and five daughters, Piya, Supia, Ananda, Sananda, Veethasena. On the death of Hastha, the king married a lovely and youthful princess and had by her a son named Janthu, who on the fifth day of his birth was presented to the king. So very delighted was he that he allowed her to choose any boon she liked from him. She chose the crown for her own son. The king fretted and frowned, but was obliged to grant the wish in honour of his word. He exiled the four sons of his first wife with a large army and eight officers of the state, telling his sons to come back on his demise and succeed to the throne. Their five sisters accompanied them voluntarily, followed by great crowds of sympathising people. On the first day,





multitude marched one yojana, on the second two, on the third three. The princes concluded that it was quite unworthy of them to deprive another Rajah of his territory; so they marched to the frontier of the Himalayas and built a city name Kapilavastu, because the spot was sanctified by its proximity to the hermitage of Kapila, who was no other than the Bodhisatwa himself in a former birth. He left the Brahmin family and assumed a sacerdotal character among the Rishis. On the advise of his counsellors, the princes avoided unequal matrimonial alliances by marrying their four sisters, while the eldest was treated as their mother. Their father was informed of it and broke forth into joyful exclamations to his courtiers. "My friends ! Most assuredly my sons are Sakyas (supremely able)". Gautama Buddha is called Sakya as he was born in the line of these four princes.—*Turnour's* Introduction to the *Mahavamsa*.

4. Dasaratha, king of Varanasi, had two sons Ramapandita and Lakshmana and a daughter Seethadevi. After the death of their mother, the king married a second wife who begot a son named Bharata. She instigated the king to exile the elder princes for twelve years and Seetha went with them to the Himalayas of her own accord. Lakshmana and Seetha treated Rama as their father and brought him herbs and fruits. The astrologers had told Dasaratha that he would die precisely in twelve years; but he died in his ninth year. Bharata refused to be installed as king and went to the forest to bring Rama back. Lakshmana and Seetha wept bitterly on hearing of their father's death, but Rama was all unmoved. He consoled Bharata and refused to return until the three remaining years were over. Bharata, Lakshmana and Seetha were sent back, taking with them Rama's shoes made of grass which the ministers placed on the throne. Whenever they committed an act of injustice, the shoes struck each other.





sharply. At the end of the three years Rama returned to Varanasi and was crowned as king with Seetha as his consort. He reigned for sixteen thousand years and went to heaven.—*Dasaratha Jataka*.

Professor Lassen accounts as follows for the absence of the abduction of Seetha and the war of the Rakshasas. It was necessary to identify Rama of the Dasartha Jataka with Gautama Buddha in all his previous births; the popular story of Rama is changed to suit the mild character of Buddha, who, though a Kshatriya, never waged war, but gave up the world and became a pious sage. The Rama of the Jataka is a vegetarian, living on roots and herbs, and is such a rigid sage as not to grieve for the death of his own father. But the Rama of the Ramayana has the greatest affection for his father, weeps like a child on hearing of his death, and performs Sraddha to him, according to the ancient Aryan custom, with the flesh of *ena*, a kind of black antelope; and he is described as subsisting not only upon roots and herbs in his exile, but also upon the flesh of game killed in the jungle. The extremely mild character of Buddhism is clearly shadowed forth in story No. 3, in which it is said that a new city was built in the wilderness to prevent the infliction of pain involved in subduing other kings and appropriating their territory. Such an ideal can never view war with favour. The Lanka war in the south having thus had to be avoided, the exiled Rama is stated to have gone to the Himalayan jungles in the north, to which the exiled Pandavas of the other great epic, the Mahabharata, go.

Mr. J. D. Mayne, in his *Hindu Law and Usage* 5th Ed. p. 92, refers to the custom in ancient times of the incestuous marriages of Sakya princes with their sisters. Buddha himself is called Sakya-simha, and it is probable that Buddhism absorbed a large number of the Sakyas who founded their own dynasty, and that in these Buddhist