

CHAPTER – II

Rituals of the Education System

Rituals of the Education System :

Meaning of the word *Sam̐skāra* :

The word *Sam̐skāra* has been used to denote different meaning. In the Oxford English Dictionary, we find that the *Sam̐skāra* is a ceremony performed to purify from sin. The word *Sam̐skāra* is actually derived from *Sanskrit* root *Sam-√kr* + *ghañ* and the word is used to mean with different attributes. The *R̥gveda* defines it as purification¹. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* uses it in the sense of preparing or purifying havis (offering / oblation) for the Gods². *Jaimini* in his *Sūtra* has also used the word *Sam̐skāra* several times in the sense of purification. *Sābara*, the commentator on the *Jaiminisūtras*, explain the term as an act which makes certain thing or a person fit for some purpose³. The later school of thought the *Advaita Vedānta*, the *Naiyāyikas*, the *Vaiśeṣikas* and the works like *Tantravārtika* give their own explanation of the term *Sam̐skāra*. The *Mīmāṃsakas* also interpret it as the ceremonies for purification of the sacrificial materials. The *Advaita Vedānta* regards it as a false attribute of physical action to the soul. The *Naiyāyikas* used it to mean self- productive quality or faculty of impression which the *Vaiśeṣikas* recognised as one of the twenty four *guṇas*. The *Tantravārtika* states *Sam̐skāras* are those acts and rites that impart fitness. In the Classical Sanskrit literature, the word *Sam̐skāra* is used in the sense of education, cultivation, training, refinement, perfection,

¹ *Na sam̐skṛtaṁ pra mimīto gamiṣṭanti nunam̐śvinopastuteha |
divāvipitveōvasāgamista pratyavartim̐ daśuṣe śamavabiṣṭa ||RV.V.76,2.*

² *ŚR.B.I.1.4, 10.*

³ *Sam̐skāra nāma sa bhavati yasmijjāte padārthe bhavati yogyaḥ
kasyacidarthasya|Jaiminisūtra.III,1.3.*

grammatic purity, polishing⁴, embellishment, decoration and ornament, impression⁵, form, mould, operation⁶, the faculty recollection impression or the memory⁷, a purificatory rite, a sacred rite or ceremony⁸, consecration, sanctification and hallowing idea, notion and conception, effect of work, merit of action etc⁹. With this wide interpretation we find that the word *Sam̐skāra* is a socio religious rite by the performance of which the life is sanctified. The concept is that without these *Sam̐skāras* no one can lead a balanced social life.

Indian tradition gives a very high place for the *Sam̐skāra* to be performed at various stages of life. Without the performance of the *Sam̐skāras* none can claim to enter to that particular duty of a particular age. It is difficult to trace out when the *Sam̐skāras* were developed. But it would be said that when the community developed, the *Sam̐skāras* also developed simultaneously. It is not older than a community not very much younger, their existence is interdependent.

Like the source of a river, the *Sam̐skāras* began invisibly; then become visible in a very thin line. For instance, the *Ṛgveda* give references about the Wedding, the Funeral, the *Upanayana* and the Conception ceremony. But from the *Ṛgveda* we do not find any exact descriptions of these *Sam̐skāra*. In the *Ṛgveda* the *Upanayana Sam̐skāra* implication is found such as “he leads the life of a *Brahmacārin*, even adoring all the gods; he becomes a portion of the

⁴ *Prayuktasaṁskāra ivadhikarṁ babhau | Raghuvārṁśam. V.III.18.*

⁵ *Svabhāvasundaraṁ bastu na saṁskāramapekṣate | Abhijñānasakuntalam. VII.23.*

⁶ *Yannave bhājane lagnaḥ saṁskāro nānyatha bhabate | Hitopdeśa. I.8*

⁷ *Saṁskadijanyarṁ jāñarṁ smṛtiḥ | Tarkasaṁgraha.*

⁸ *Kāryaḥ sarīrasaṁskāraḥ pāvanaḥ pretye cheha cha | M.S.II.26.*

⁹ *Falānumeyā prārambhāḥ saṁskārā prāktanā iva | Raghuvārṁśam . V.I.20.*

gods; therefore *Bṛhaspati* obtained his wife (formerly) brought him by Soma, as the gods receiving an offering”¹⁰. From this little evidence we find that during the age, the *Upanayana* ceremony was prevalent in practice by it did not go by the name. Like that the *Ṛgveda* also do not contain any rules and regulation of the *Samskāra*. They were the incidental references. But from these references we gathered that during the age the manual of *Samskāras* were also prevalent in society.

In the contrast with the other *Samhitās*, the *Atharvaveda* supplies many information about the *Samskāra*. In almost every end of life, the *Atharvaveda* give information. A full hymn is devoted to praise the Vedic *Brahmacāri*¹¹.

The *Brāhmaṇas* give many references about the history of the *Samskāras*. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* mentioned the *Upanayana Samskāra*¹². The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* describe the word *Brahmacāri* (the condition of the life of the students)¹³. The word *Antevāsin* (living with the teacher) is used both the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Aitreya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁴.

The *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣats* concerned with philosophical speculations. But from the point of view of the educational *Samskāras* the *Upaniṣats* give references. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*¹⁵ gives description about the *Brahmacarya* period. From the story of *Satyakāma Jābāla* we find

¹⁰ *Brahmacāri carati veṣṭadvīṣaḥ sa devānāṁ bhavatyekamaṅgam|tena jāyāmanvavindad
bṛhaspatiḥ somena nūtāṁ juhaṁ na devāḥ||RV.X.109.5.*

¹¹ *Brahmacārīṣṇarṁśacartī rodasī ubhe tasmin devāḥ sarṁmanaso bhavanti.....|| A.V.XI.5.*

¹² *G.B.I.2, 1-8.*

¹³ *brahmacāriṇameva na prāyacchatso 'bravīdastu mahyamapyetasminnabhāgaōiti yāmeva rātri
samidhannāharātā iti tasmādyāyaṁ rātrimbrahmacārī samidhannāharatyāyūṣa eva tāmavadāya
vasati tasmād brahmacārī samidhamāharennedayuṣo 'vadāya vasānīti ||ŚR.B.XI.3.3, 1.*

¹⁴ *antevāsī va brahmacārī Ibid.V.1.5, 17; A.B.III.2.6.*

¹⁵ *Sa ha hāridrumataṁ gautamametyovāca brahmacaryaṁ bhagavati vatsyāmyupeyāṁ
bhagavantamiti|| Ch.U.IV. 4.3.*

reference in this respect. *Taittirīya Upaniṣat* gives many practical instructions about the students' life¹⁶. The sacred *Gāyatrī Mantra* is esoterically explained by *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat*. After the *Upanayana* ceremony teacher give instruction about the *Gāyatri* or *Sāvitrī*¹⁷.

The *Gr̥hyasūtra* give us exhaustive information about the *saṁskāras*. *Gr̥hyasūtras* generally begin with the “*Vivāha*” or marriage ceremony and go on describing the *Garbhādhana*, the *Puṁsavana*, the *Sīmantonayana*, the *Jātakarma*, the *Nāmakaraṇa*, the *Niṣkrammaṇa*, the *Annaprāśana*, the *Chūḍakaraṇa*, the *Upanayana*, and the *Sāmavartana*. All the *Saṁskāras* are minutely described in the *Gr̥hyasūtra*. From the *Gr̥hyasūtra* we find the direction for all sorts of usages, ceremonies, rites, customs and sacrifice of which were binding on the Hindu house holder.

The *Dharmasūtras* are closely connected with the *Gr̥hyasūtra*. In many times, the contents of the *Dharmasūtras* and the *Gr̥hyasūtras* overlap each other. The *Dharmasūtras* were mainly concerned with the customs of our daily life where as *Gr̥hyasūtras* describe the domestic rituals. The *Dharmasūtras* do not describe the rituals any kind. But from the *Āśrama- Dharmas* we find the

¹⁶ *Vedamanūcayācāryaōntevāsīnamanuśāsti | satyaṁ vada | Dharmam cara |svādhyāyanmā pramadaḥ |ācāryāya priyaṁ dhanamāhṛtya prajātantuṁ mā vyavcechetsīḥ |satyānna pramaditavyam | dharmānana pramaditavyam |kuśalānna pramaditavyam |bhutaiya na pramaditavyam | svādhāyaya pravacanābhyāṁ na pramaditavyam |devapitṛkāryārbhyāṁ na pramaditavyam|matṛdevo bhavo|pitṛdevo bhavo|ācārya devo bhavo|athitidevo bhavo |yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi tāni sevityāni |no itarāṇi | yanyasmākaṁ sucaritāni |tāni tvayopāsyāni no itorāṇi |ye ke cāsmachṛeyāṁso brāhmaṇaḥ teṣāṁ tvayāo 'sanena praśvasitavyam |śraddayā deyam |aśrddyahdeyam |śriyā deyam |hriyā deyam | bhiya deyam |sarṁvidā deyam |atha yadi te karmavicikitsā va vṛttavicikitsā vā syāt ||ye tatra brāhmaṇaḥ sarṁamrśinaḥ |yuktā āyuktāḥ | alūkṣā dharmākamāḥ syuḥ | ythā te teṣu varteran / tatha teṣu vartethāḥ |athabhyākhyateṣu ye tatra brhāmaṇaḥ sammrśinaḥ |yukta āyuktaḥ | alūkṣā dharmākamāḥ syuḥ |yatha te teṣu varteran |tathā teṣu vartethāḥ |eṣa ādeśaḥ | |eṣa upadeśḥ | eṣā vedopaniṣat| etadanuśānam | evamupāsitavyam |evamu caitadupāsyam | T.U.I.II*

¹⁷ *Sa yāmevāmūrṁ sāvitṛmanvāhaiṣaiva sā sa yasmā anvāha tasya prāṇāṁstrāyate||B.U.V.14.4.*

exhaustive descriptions of *Upanayana* ceremony. The *Dharmasūtras* also contain rules about the *Samāvartana* and the *Upākarma* ceremony.

Like the *Dharmasūtras*, the *Smṛtis* are also concerned with social conduct of men rather than rituals. But in *Smṛtis* we find references about the educational *saṃskāras*. The *Manusmṛti* discusses about the *Upanayana* and *Samāvartana*¹⁸. But some *Smṛtis* like *Nārada smṛti* entirely deal with the law. The main features of the *Smṛtis* as regard the *Saṃskāras* are that they mark the transition from Vedic to *Smārta* and *Paurāṇika Hinduism*.

The Epic also give some information about the *Saṃskāra*. But purely educational evidence of the *Saṃskāras*, however is very meagre in comparison with the sizes of the works. This is, of course due to the interest of the two epic lying mainly in the realm of action and not in that of thought.

For the study of *Saṃskāra*, the *Purāṇas* are also important. There are many identical descriptions of the topic relating to the *saṃskāras* in the *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas*. The *Purāṇas* deal with ceremonies, customs and usages and fasts and feasts of the Hindu and thus throw light on many of the *Saṃskāra*.

Number of *Saṃskāras* :

The Vedic literature refers only four *saṃskāras*, the conception, the initiation, the marriage and the last rite¹⁹. The *Gṛhyasūtra* give a long list of the *Saṃskāras*. The *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* mentions eleven *Saṃskāras*, the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* and the *Vārāha Gṛhyasūtra* mention thirteen *Saṃskāra* each. The *Dharmasūtras* whose province was to discuss law and

¹⁸ M.S.II.36; III.4

¹⁹ RV. III.8,4-5; X.14,16,18;X.85; X.183,184; A.V.XI.5.

customs, do not refer all the *Samṣkāra* in detail, but they lay down rules about some *Samṣkāras*. The *Smṛtis* also differ in number of *Samṣkāras*. According to *Manu*, they are – *Garbhādhāna*, *Puṃsavana*, *Sīmantonnyana*, *Jātakarma*, *Nāmdheya*, *Niṣkramaṇa*, *Annaprāsana*, *Cuḍākarana*, *Upanayana*, *Keśānta*, *Samāvartana*, *Vivāha* and *Śamaśāna*²⁰. The *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* preserves the same list except the *Keśānta*²¹. The later *Smṛti* refer *Śoḍaśa Samṣkāras* viz.—
Garbhādhana (Conception), *Puṃsavana* (Quickening a male child), *Sīmantonnyana* (Hair-parting), *Jātakarma* (Birth Ceremonies), *Nāmakaraṇa* (Name giving), *Niṣkramaṇa* (First outing), *Annaprāsana* (First feeding with the solid food), *Chuḍākarana* (Tonsure Ceremony), *Karṇavedha* (Boring the ears), *Vidyārambha* (learning of alphabet), *Upanayana* (Investiture with the sacred thread), *Vedārambha*, *Keśānta* (Shaving of beard) or *Godāna*, *Samāvartana* or *Snāna* (End of Studentship), *Vivāha* (marriage), and *Antyeṣṭi* (Funeral rite).

These *Śoḍaśa Samṣkāra* were performed on the person of an individual, either by mother before nativity, or on the male child after birth. They conditioned his life. But of these the *Samṣkāras*, the main educational *Samṣkāra* were – the *Vidyārambha Samṣkāra*, the *Upanayana*, the *Vedārambha*, the *Keśānta* and the *Samāvartana Samṣkāra*. Of these educational *Samṣkāras* the *Upanayana* and the *Samāvartana* have been observed all through the ages. But the *Vidyārambha*, the *Keśānta* and the *Vedārambha* have not been observed all through the ages. Whereas

²⁰ *Niṣekādi śamaśānānto mantrairyasyodīto vidhiḥ |M.S.II.16; 26 ;29*

ṣaṭtrimśadāvīkārṇ caryāṃ gurau traivedikārṇ vratam.....guruṇānumataḥ snātvā samāvṛtto yathāvidhi|Ibid.III.1-4.

²¹ *Yāj.S.II.*

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, *Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa*, *Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* and the *Bhavabhuti's Uttararāmacarita* give little bit information about the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra*. Some authorities mentioned that through this *Saṁskāra*, a boy started his educational life.

I) *The Vidyārambha Saṁskāra :*

The *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* is the first educational *Saṁskāra* of pupils' life. From this *Saṁskāra*, a child started to receive education. This *Saṁskāra* is also described by some authorities as – *Akṣarārambha*, *Akṣaravīkarana* and *Akṣarālekhana*²². As its name suggests that, this *Saṁskāra* was started when the alphabets were utilised for writing purpose.

The *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* is not go back to hoary antiquity. All the *Vedas*, the *Gṛhyasūtras*, the *Dharmasūtras* and the early *Smṛtis* do not mention this *Saṁskāra*. But the *Vīramitrodaya Saṁskāraprakāśa*, the *Smṛtichandrikā*, and the commentary of *Aparārka* on the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* give the detail description about this *Saṁskāra*. P.V. Kane in his book 'The History of *Dharmaśāstra*' referred that though the *Veda*, the *Gṛhyasūtra*, the *Dharmasūtras* do not give any information about the *Saṁskāra* but in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Pūraṇa* mention about *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra*. P.V.Kane also wrote that in *Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa*, *Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* and the *Bhavabhuti's Uttararāmacarita* give little bit information about the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra*²³.

²² *Virāmitrodaya, Saṁskāra Parakāśa*., Vol.I, Chowkamba Sanskrit Series, Beneras,1906, P.321.

²³ *Kane.P.V, History of Dharmaśāstra*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Bombay, 1962, P.440.

The authorities which describe and prescribe the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* are as late as the second millennium of Christian era. It is very strange that the *Gr̥hyasūtras* and the *Dharmasūtras* give detail description about the insignificant occasion like first outing and first feeding but they pass over the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra*, which marks the beginning of primary education of a child and it was the very important occasion of a child life. This omission could not be by mistake. Because, in the early time everybody was ignorant about the art of writing or it may be said during those days anything written was not regarded as pure. For, we find in the *Tantra Vārttika of Kumārila* as – “that knowledge of truth is worthless which has been acquired from the *Veda*, if the *Veda* has not been rightly comprehended or if it has been learnt from writing”²⁴. It is said that if letter was necessary for learning, it was not considered as pure education. So in that time, education of children began with the memorising of the sacred hymns without the help of writing. Therefore, there was no necessity for instituting another *Saṁskāra* for celebrating the learning alphabet.

Later on, literature becomes very complicated because different commentaries on different *Śāstras* were written. The standard of grammar became rigid. Then this rich literature had become impossible to retain only by memorising. So, to preserve the treasure of learning alphabets were invented and the art of writing was known. And people were also curious to know the treasure of learning. So a new *Saṁskāra (Vidyārambha)* was introduced to start

²⁴ *Kumarila Bhaṭṭa, Tantravarttika, I.3*

the primary education of a child. After this new *Vidyārambha*, the *Upanayana* could not mark the beginning of primary education. It was performed at the beginning of secondary education. And the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* was performed at the commencement of primary education.

This late recognition of this *Saṁskāra* was probably due to the fact that for a long time, the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* followed that of *Chūḍākaraṇa* or tonsure ceremony²⁵. According to *Kautilya's Arthaśāstra*, the education of a Prince began at the time of tonsure ceremony²⁶. The *Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśam* also supports this supposition because Prince *Raghu* learnt his alphabet after his tonsure ceremony²⁷. In the *Bhavabuti's Uttarāmacarita*, we find that the Sage *Vālmīki* started the education of *Kuśa* and *Lava* after their tonsure ceremony²⁸. There was one more factor which facilitated the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* with *Chūḍakarana* Ceremony. The *Chūḍakarana* Ceremony was performed between the fourth and fifth year of a Child and the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* was also performed in the fifth and seventh year of a Child. Both the *Saṁskāra* were performed together. The Number, nature and time of the tonsure ceremony were same as that of *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra*. So it was natural that in early time, when the tonsure ceremony was performed, the Primary education of a Child should be commenced.

Age :

²⁵ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.4.

²⁶ *Bṛttacaulakarmā lipiṁ saṁkhyānaṁ copayūñjīta* | *Arthaśāstra*, I.2.

²⁷ *sa vṛttacūlaścalakāpakṣakai* *liperyathāvadgrhaṇena vaṅmayam* | *Raghuvamśam*, III, 28.

²⁸ [*Lavakuśayoah*] *nibṛttchaulkrmaṇośca tyostrayīvarjmitarāstistro vidyāḥ sāvdhānena mansā pariniṣṭāpitāḥ* | *Uttarāmacarita Act II*.

In the fifth year of a Child, the *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra* was performed. The *Ṣoḍasa Saṁskāra*vidhi referred “*panchame saptame vaṁvde*” that means, it should be performed in the fifth or the seventh year of a Child²⁹. But if the ritual had to be postponed on account of some unavoidable reason, then it must be performed before the *Upanayana* Ceremony. The *Uttarāyana (Mārgaśīrsa to Jyeṣṭha)* was selected for the performance of this *Saṁskāra*. Those days were very auspicious for the performance of *Vidyārambha Saṁskāra*. But the month from *Āṣāḍha* to *Kārtika* were prohibited for this *Saṁskāra* because in this time Lord *Viṣṇu* was supposed to be sleeping.

The Ceremonies :

In the auspicious day of *Uttarāyana* a Child commence his first study. In this day the Child was required to bath with scented water. Then he wears white cloth and writes fifty letters with the help of Silver or Gold pen. He worships *Vināyaka, Sarasvatī* and his family God. The young boy offer *Homa* in fire with *ghee* and separately he offer *Naivedya* of *Guda* and *Ladoo* (sweets). In the ceremony, the teacher first takes his seat towards east and boy facing towards west. Then he recites the six syllable *mantra*- “*Om! Namaḥ Śivāya*”. After this the Child worships the teacher, and he write fifty letters (three times) beginning ‘*A*’ and ending with ‘*Jñā*’. He also recites the letters in three times. In the end, the young boy gives some presents to his teacher. He also gives sacrificial fee to the *Brāhmaṇas*. In return, they blessed the Child³⁰.

²⁹ *Sarma, Bhimasena Sarma. The Ṣoḍasa Saṁskāra*vidhi, *Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi.*

³⁰ *Yājñavalkya Smṛti, ed. by Panshikar Wsudev Laxman shastri, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 2003. P.53.*

2) The *Upanayana* :

The *Upanayana Saṁskāra* marks the beginning of Secondary education. After the Child had received Primary education, he entered in to Secondary class. In this time a Child is to perform the *Upanayana Saṁskāra*. This *Saṁskāra* is variously named. It is called *Upāyana*, *Upanāyan Mauñjibandhana*, *Baṭukaraṇa* and *Vratibandha*³¹. As its name suggests, this *Saṁskāra* was more cultural and natural. It had a very high status in society. All the three *Varṇas* are required to perform the *Upanayana Saṁskāra*.

The *Upanayana Saṁskāra* is of hoary antiquity. All the *Śāstras* describe the *Upanayana Saṁskāra* in their own way. The *R̥gveda*, III, 8.4 and 5 mentioned a student who had just performed the *Upanayana* Ceremony. In *R̥gveda*, X.109.5 passage we also find the word *Brahmacarya*³². Though the *R̥gveda* did not explicitly refer to the *Upanayana* ceremony, but the significance of *Upanayana* ceremony was most beautifully set forth in the *Atharvaveda*³³. The *Atharvaveda* mentioned that the Vedic student is called 'Brahmacāri' and the teacher is called 'Ācārya'. The *Upanayana* was regarded as the Second or Spiritual birth of the student. His physical birth he owes from his parents who give him only body. But the birth which the teacher procures for him through *Sāvitrī*, it is his Spiritual birth. The spiritual birth grants the student immortality and spiritual vigour. He became *dvija* or twice born *Brāhmaṇa*. The initiation was performed in simple way in Vedic period. In the time of initiation: "The teacher, taking him in charge, makes the student an

³¹ *aptame navame vopāyanam* ||M.G.S.22, 1;
dvitīyaṁ mauñjivandane |M.S.II.169.

³² *Brahmacāri carita veveṣādviṣaḥ* |R̥V.X.109.5; *Ibid*.III.8,4-5.

³³ A.V.XI.V.

embryo within; he bears him in his belly three nights; the Gods gather unto him to see him when born”³⁴. The student wore sacred griddle (*mekhalā*) put on the deer skin (the *Ajina*), kept long beard, practiced austerity, collected fuel and offered them in the sacred fire:”. The Vedic student goes kindled with fuel, clothing himself in the black antelope skin³⁵. The Vedic student also begged alms³⁶. In this way the *Upanayana* Ceremony was completed in Vedic period. Later this ceremony becomes more crucial. The authorities performed this ceremony very strictly. But all the characteristics which describe in the *Vedas* were re- appeared in the later Vedic period.

During the later Vedic period the procedure of the initiation ceremony was going to be fixed. All the persons (who go to perform *Upanayana*) should follow the same procedure. If anyone violated this rule then he was not able to become a *bramacāri*. The whole *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* gives a graphic picture of the initiated students³⁷. Regarding this initiation the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* remarks that –“The teacher lays his right hand on the head of the pupil whereby he become pregnant with him and then in the third night the embryo issues out of the teacher and, being taught the *Sāvitrī* obtain true *Brāhmin* hood³⁸. This is the spiritual regeneration. ‘He is like a divine creature born from his teachers’ mouth’³⁹. The spiritual significance of this initiation ceremony was set forth when the student formally declare that- “May I enter upon *Bramacarya*; let me

³⁴ *Ācāryo upanayamāno brhamacāriṇaṁ kṛṇute garbhamantaḥ | Taṁ rātrīstistra udare bibharti taṁ jātaṁ draṣṭumabhisamṇanti devāḥ || A.V.XI.5.3.*

³⁵ *Bramacāryeti samidhā samiddhaḥ kārṣṇaṁ vasāno dīkṣito dīrgaśmśruḥ | Ibid.XI.5.6.*

³⁶ *Imāṁ bhumiṁ pṛthivīm brahmācārī bhikṣamā jabhāra prathamō divaṁ ca | Ibid XI.5.9*

³⁷ *ŚR.B.XI.5.4.*

³⁸ *Tadapi ślokaṅgāyanti | ācāryo garbhī bhabati hastamādhāya dakṣiṇantṛṭiyasyāthaṁ sa jāyate sāvitrīyā saha brāhmaṇa iti||Ibid.XI.5.4.12*

³⁹ *Prajāstāni mukhato janayate. ŚR.B.XI.5.4.17.*

be a *Bramacārin*⁴⁰. After this the teacher makes enquiry in to his name, his birth and family. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*⁴¹ we find that *Satyakāma Jābāla* going to *Gautama Hāridrumata* said to him: “I wish to become a *Brahmacārin* with you, Sir May I come to You Sir?” He said to me: Of what family are you, my friend?” The manner of the enquiry shows that it was made in a very indulgent fashion and the uncertainty admitted as a bar to the teachers’ acceptance of the pupil. In the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, similarly, the teachers’ asks the name of the intending pupil and then accepts him⁴².

The *Sūtra* period introduces a new type of social, religious and political condition in the Society. The *Sūtras* do not introduce any innovation; they only continue the older traditions of society, which is started from the Vedic age. So it in that time, the *Samskāra* become fully established because they sum up the entire previous developments and codify pre- existing tradition, unwritten laws and customs as indicated in the Sacred text. Actually, the *Grhyasūtras* gives us exhaustive information about the rite of the *Upanayana Samskāra*. The *Grhyasūtra* minutely describe all the rules and regulations of the *Upanayana Samskāra*. So, the *Sūtras* developed the ritualistic side of the *Samskāra*. The *Dharmasūtras* and the *Smṛti* do not contribute anything to the ritual proper. They supplied social side of the *Samskāra* and gave full information and discussion about the *Samskāra*.

Eligibility of an Initiate : the consideration of *Varṇa* and Age :

⁴⁰ *Brahmacāryamāgāmityāh* | *Ibid.XI.5.4.1*

⁴¹ *Sa ha hāridrumataṁ gautamametyovāca brahmacaryaṁ bhagavati vatsyāmyupeyārṇ bhagavantamiti*|| *Ch.U.IV.4.4.3*;

taṁ hovāca kirṅgotro nu somyāsīti.....|| *Ibid.IV.4.4.3.4*

⁴² *ko nāmāsīti prajāpatirvai* || *ŚR.B.XI.5.4.1.*

Varṇa :

The three Upper *Varṇas*, the *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* were eligible for the *Upanayana* or initiation ceremony. These three *Varṇa* also get the opportunity to study the *Vedas*. They were classified as *Divaj*. Because they were considered to get a second birth at the time of *Upanayana*. The *Śūdras* were not eligible for *Upanayana* Ceremony. They were considered as *ekjāti*⁴³. But in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat* we find the story of *Satyakāma Jābāla*. *Satyakāma Jābāla* was not able to establish his *Varṇa*⁴⁴. But when he asked for the study of the *Vedas* from *Ṛṣi Gautama*, then *Gautama* was not angry with him. He was impressed by his frankness. It appears that in the time of the *Upaniṣat*, the Society relaxed the rule to uphold the sanctity of truth. We also find many similar stories, in the *Mahābhārata*. *Vidura* was a *Dāsī's* son but he was well versed in the *Vedas* and also known for his philosophy⁴⁵. From the above stories we also understand that, in the ancient period, paternal status was important and maternal status was also receive importance. That's why *Satyakāma Jābāla* and *Vidura* easily learnt the Vedic education. They are not considered as outcaste and were divested of the right to perform the initiation ceremony.

But it may be noted that some authorities prescribe that six *anulomas* were eligible for the performance of the *Upanayana* ceremony. The

⁴³ *Śūdraścaturthā varṇaḥ | ekjātiḥ| G.D.S.X.4.9-51.*

⁴⁴ *Sa hovāca nāhametadveda vo yadgotrahaham.....Ch.U.IV.4.4.4.*

⁴⁵ *Saptathirtha Sastri Sukumay Bhattacarjee, Mahabharater Samaj, Viswa Bharati gavesana prakasan Samiti, Shantiniketan, Kolkata, 1983, P.124.*

*Mausamhitā*⁴⁶ basically prescribe that six *anulomas* were able to perform the *Upanayana* and related rituals. But all the authorities were not unanimous in this respect. But the *Baudhāyana Gr̥hyasūtra* and other authorities permits, *Rathakāra* to take participation in *Śrauta* rite. That means that *Rathakāra* was able to perform the *Upanayana* ceremony⁴⁷. The *Baudhāyana Gr̥hyasūtra* here follows the Vedic traditions. The Vedic ritual in certain cases admitted, *Śūdras* were able to perform the *Upanayana* ceremony. In the *Ṛgveda* we also find the stanza 9/112/3 that though the members of the same family, the son was Physician and the father was a Panegyrist⁴⁸. There was no caste distinction at all. But during the age it is also mention that whenever a boy is presented for initiation to a teacher, the later makes inquiry about his parentage; *Gotra* and *Varṇa*. If the teacher is satisfied with the answer then he recite a *mantra* addressing to *Vāyu* and *Āditya* for praying the goodness of initiation and thereby declaring him free from all evils.

Age :

Age was another consideration, which determines the eligibility of an initiate. The authorities are however, not unanimous with regard to the age of a student at the time of the performance of his *Upanayana Saṁskāra*. The age differed according to his *Varṇa*, but here there is no uniformity amongst the authors. Usually *Upanayana* should be performed in the eighth year in case of *Brāhmaṇa*, in the eleventh year in case of *Kṣatriya* and in the twelve year in

⁴⁶ *Sajātijāntarajāḥ ṣaṭ sūtā dvijadharmināḥ | M.S.X.41.*

⁴⁷ *B.G.S.II.5.5.*

⁴⁸ *Kārurahaṁ tato bhiṣagupalaprakṣiṇī nanā |
nānādhiyo vasuyavo 'nu gāiva tashimendrāyendo pari strava || ṚV.IX.112.3.*

case of *Vaiśya*⁴⁹. But it should be performed in between 8 and 16 in the case of *Brāhmaṇa*, between 11 and 23 in case of *Kṣatriya* and between 12 and 24 in case of *Vaiśya*. It is also noted that if they crossed the maximum age limit, they become *Patita- Sāvitrīkās* i.e., they lost their right of learning *Sāvitrī*⁵⁰. For such person no sacrifice could be performed. *Manu*⁵¹ also calls them *vrātyā* with whom there can be no “*Brahma Samantha*”, relationship by learning or religion. Most of the *Gṛhyasūtras* are of the opinion that maximum age limit of the three *Varṇas* should not expire to perform the *Upanayana* ceremony. Actually the authorities do not attach any particular rule for these ages. Some authorities prescribe the 8 to 16 is suitable for *Upanayana*. The age limit varies with reference to particular reasons. For a *Brāhmaṇa* whose aim is *Brahmavarchasa*, the age of *Upanayana* is five. For a *kṣatriya* whose aim of life is to increase the power and life, the age should be twelve. A *Vaiśya* whose ambition in life is the attainment of prosperity in agriculture and other pursuits should perform his *Upanayana* at the age of fourteen⁵².

Several authorities prescribe that a *Brāhmaṇa* boy should perform *Upanayana Saṁskāra* in early age. They think that the *Brāhmaṇa* by profession engaged in *Aja* (Sacrifice), *Yajñapan* (Performance of Sacrifice), the Vedic studies and teaching. Their profession encouraged them to spiritual studies, and it was thus but natural for a *Brāhmaṇa* boy to aim at the attainment

⁴⁹ *Garbhāṣṭamehavde kūrbitā brāhmaṇasyopnāyanam | Garbhādekādaśe rājño garbhātu dvādaśe biśaḥ || M.S.II.36.*

⁵⁰ *Āṣoḍaśād brāhmaṇasyanatītaḥ kālāḥ | ā dvāvīṁśatikṣatriyasyā caturviśadvaiśyasyat urdhva patitasāvitrīkā bhavanti | Ā.G.S.I.19.5-6.*

⁵¹ *Sāvitrīpatitā vrātyā bhavantyāryavigarhitāḥ||M.S.II.39.*

⁵² *Aṣṭame āyuskārṇ nabame tejaskārṇ.....trayodaśe medhākārṇ caturdaśe puṣṭikārṇ.....ṣoḍaśe sarvakāmam | B.G.S II.5.5.*

of spiritual splendor. For this reason some authorities prescribe, *Brāhmaṇa* boy should be given the *Upanayana* at the age of five. Another point is that the *Brāhmaṇa* boys generally do not leave his home for education. His studies commonly began under his father. Therefore his *Upanayana Saṃskāra* at an early age of five was quite understandable. But in case of *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* boy, they had to leave their home for education. So, in the early age of 8th year of a child was inconvenient to them. On the other hand, *Brāhmaṇa* boys' education was confined to Vedic and allied studies because their further prospect depend on the knowledge of Vedic lore. But the profession of *Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśys* was different. They had to specialize in military art and administration and commerce and agriculture respectively. So, these two classes were not required to pass the same courses of studies as *Brāhmaṇa* student. That is why, the authorities prescribe different age limit for the different *Varṇas* of students⁵³.

The Ceremonies :

When the Sun was in the Northern hemisphere, an auspicious day was fixed for performing the *Upanayana Saṃskāra*. But in case of *Vaiśya* initiate, the Sun must be on the Southern hemisphere⁵⁴. Some of the authorities prescribe different season for different castes. According to *Baudhāyana Grhyasūtra*, the *Upanayana* of a *Brāhmaṇa* was performed in Spring, of a *Kṣatriya* in Summer, of a *Vaiśya* in Autumn and of a *Rathakāra* in Rainy season. It also allows all of them to perform the *Upanayana Saṃskāra* in

⁵³ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P 17.

⁵⁴ P.G.S II.2.

spring⁵⁵. The selection of the seasons for different castes, it appears was not without meaning. From the *Gṛhyasūtra* we learn that the different season symbolized the temperament and occupation of the different castes. The moderation of Spring symbolized the moderate life of a *Brāhmaṇa*; the heat of Summer season represented the strength of a *Kṣatriya*; the autumn season suggested the wealth and prosperity of *Vaiśyas* and the easy time of rains indicated facility of *Rathakāra*. Later on, the *Jyotiṣa – Śāstra* opined that the general rule for *Upanayana saṁskāra* for all castes should be performed in the five months from *Māgha*⁵⁶. The *Jyotiṣa – Śāstra* also defines the significance of these months and also explains the suitability for the performance of the *Upanayana* ceremony. An initiate who performs the *Upanayana* in the month of *Māgha*, he obtains wealth; in *Phālguna*, he acquires intelligence; in *Vaiśākha* he attains all hand of enjoyments; in *Jyeṣṭha* he became wise and great and in *Āṣāḍha*, he becomes a great conqueror of enemies and a famous *paṇḍita*. In addition to that, if an initiate who does not perform the *Upanayana Saṁskāra* in proper time then he falls from his *Aryan* status. Social thinkers realized that nothing that can be done in subsequent life to make up the deficiency wrought by the neglect of education at proper time.

Preparation for the actual Ceremony :

- 1) **Preparation:** Before the actual *Upanayana* ceremony, a colorful canopy was setup for the occasion under which the ceremony was performed. A day

⁵⁵ *Vasante brāhmaṇamupanayītia grīṣme rājanyarṇ śaradi vaiśyārṇ varṣāsu rathakāramiti | sarvāneva vā vasante |B.G.S.II.5.6.*

⁵⁶ *Mookerji, R.K. Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist), Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P .175.*

before the actual ceremony, many preliminary religious functions were took place. For the success of the aim of *Upanayana* ceremony these religious functions were very important. In this day, the most auspicious *God Gaṇeśa* and several other goddesses like *Śrī, Lakṣmi, Dhṛti, Medhā, Puṣṭi, Śraddhā* and *Sarasvatī* were worshipped. For the performance of this religious function an initiate was both physically and mentally purified. On the previous night the candidates' body was stained with a yellow substance. A silver ring was tucked to the top knot of his head. Thereafter, he was ordered to spend the whole night in absolute silence. These religious functions were very mystic and very interesting rite which prepared the candidate for the *Upanayana* ceremony. The Yellowish substance was of symbolic significance giving impression of embryonic atmosphere, with the absolute silence making the performer a speechless child for the formation of a new life to acquire knowledge.

- 2) **The Joint meal with the Mother :** The next morning, the boy share food with his mother in same dish, they ate together for the last time. Before the bath, this procedure is very unusual in *Hindu Saṃskāra*. But it was the rule that before the *Upanayana* ceremony the joint meal procedure should be arranged. Dr. Altekar observed that it marked the end of irregular life of a child⁵⁷. Because before this procedure the child was depended to his parents. But after this he had to depend on his own self. He was no longer an irresponsible child; he had to lead a life systematically. This procedure was very sad and touching ceremony for the *Hindu* society. It expressed deep

⁵⁷ A.S.Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P 19.

affection of the mother for her child. After this, the mother and the son, as a rule never took joint meal. He was separated from her for a long time. The mother could not enjoy his company during this period. After the mother's feast, a number of young men were entertained. This was perhaps, the farewell given to the playmates of the candidate, as he was going to enter upon a new life in hermitage of his teacher.

The Ritual of the Ceremony :

- 1) **The Sacrificial Bath :** After the feast, the candidate's parents took the child to the canopy, which was already setup. Under the canopy the sacrificial fire was burning in the altar for the purpose of the ceremony. The boy sat nearby the fire. The food was offered to the *Brāhmaṇas*. Thereafter the ceremony began. Then the boy was shaved. If the boy was performed the *Cuḍākarāṇa* ceremony, then he was simply shaved by barber. But if he was not performed the *Cuḍākarāṇa* ceremony then the ceremony was postponed till now. He was performed all the sacrificial functions which was related to *Cuḍākarāṇa* ceremony. When the all sacrificial functions were finished then the boy was bathed. Bathing was one of the most essential rites. Before the *Upanayana* bathing was necessary. Because bathing purified the body as well as the mind of the performer.
- 2) **The *Kaupīna* :** When the sacrificial bath was over, the boy approached the *Ācārya*. He went near the *Ācārya* because he likes to become a *Brahmacāri*. Then he expresses his intention in front of his preceptor and

says: “I have come hither for the sake of studentship. I will be a student”⁵⁸. Then the *Ācārya* offered him a *Kaupīna* (a piece of cloth) to cover his private parts and the upper and the lower garments with the verse : “ In the way in which *Brhaspati* put the garment of immortality on *Indra*, thus I put this garment on thee, for the sake of long life of old age, of strength, of splendour⁵⁹. These garments were very important because it is the social behaviour or decorum of Hindus that if any one engaged in a religious ceremony, then his upper part of the body should be covered with a piece of cloth. However, according to the *Āpastamba* and the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtras*, the garments offered were to be woven just before the *Samskāra*⁶⁰. Some authorities prescribe clothes made of different stuffs for different castes. According to the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*, the garments of a *Brāhmaṇa* student made of *Śaṇa* (hemp); that of *Kṣatriya* of *Kṣauma* (silk); and that of *Vaiśya* of *Kutapa* (the *kuśa grass*)⁶¹. These garments were of different colours according to *Varṇas* of a student, e.g. the colour for the *Brāhmaṇas* was *Kāsāya* (Raddish), for the *Kṣatriya Māñjistha* (Dyed with madder), and for the *Vaiśyas Hāridra* (Yellow)⁶². As an option, Cotton garments of white colour were prescribed for all the *Varṇas*⁶³. This white colour garment symbolizing the purity of life. Different garments

⁵⁸ *Pañcādagnekhashthāpya brahmacaryamāgāmirta vācaryāta brahmcāryasānīti ca* ||*P.G.S.II.6-9.*

⁵⁹ *Athena vāsaḥ paridhāpayati yenendrāya bṛhaspatirvāsaḥ paryadhādamṛtaṁ te tvā paridhāmyāyuṣe dīrdhāyutvaya valāya varcasa iti* || *Ibid.II.2.10.*

⁶⁰ *Vāsaḥ sadyakṛttottam* ||*B.G.S.II.5.11; Āp.G.S.IV.10.10.*

⁶¹ *Śāṅakṣaumacāirakutapā* ||*G.D.S.I.17.18.*

⁶² *kaṣṭhāyaṁ ca-eke vastram upadiśanti* || *māñjiṣṭhaṁ rājanyasya* || *hāridraṁ vaiśyasya* || *Āp.G.S.I.1.2.41; I.1.3.1-2.*

⁶³ *Sarveṣāṁ kārṣāsam vāōvikṛtam* ||*G.D.S.I.17.18.*

were prescribed for different castes. But at present, the above distinction had vanished. All the twice born were offered *Hāridra* or Yellow garment.

- 3) **The Girdle (*Mekhalā*)** : The next step in the ceremony was that the student wore the girdle or *mekhalā*. It was the outfit of a student. The Preceptor offered him this outfit (girdle or *mekhalā*). This girdle was the common garment of the student at the time of the *Upanayana* ceremony. Like the *Kaupīna*, this girdle was also made of different stuff for different castes. The girdle of the *Brāhmaṇa* student was made of *Muñja* grass; that of *kṣatriya* of the *Murva* fibers (bowstring) and that of the *Vaiśya*, of hemp threads⁶⁴. This girdle was made of triple cord. It was originally support the *Kaupīna*. The triple cord symbolized that the student always encircled by the three *Vedas*. The *Ācārya* tied this girdle round the waist of student with the *mantra*: “Here has come to me, keeping away evil words, purifying mankind as a purifier, clothing herself by power of inhalation and exhalation, with strength, this sisterly Goddess, the blessed girdle” or with, “A young well attired, dressed, come hither. He, being born, becomes glorious wise Sages extol him devout ones, turning their minds to Gods⁶⁵.
- 4) **The *Ajina*** : The *Ajina*, second outfit of a student. It was presented to the pupil by teacher. The *Ajina* was the skin of an antelope or gazelle⁶⁶. It was the upper garment of the student. The authorities of ancient India

⁶⁴ *Mauñjī trivṛt samā ślakṣna kāryā viprasya mekhalā|kṣatriyasya tu maurvī jyā vaiśyasya śaṇatāntavī||M.S.II.42.*

⁶⁵ *Mekhlārṇ badnīte |īyarṇ duruktārṇ paribādhamānā varṇa pavitrārṇ punatī ma āgāt | prāṇāpānābhyārṇ valamādadhānā svasā devī subhagā mekhaleyamiti | yuvāsuvāsāḥ parivīta āgātsa u śrayānbhavati jāyamānaḥ | tarṇ dhīrāsaḥ kavaya unnayanti svādhyo manasā devayanta iti vā ||P.G.S.II.2.8-13.*

⁶⁶ *Parāmitrān dundubhinā harinasyājinen ca | A.V.V.21.7.*

prescribed different *Ajina* or deer skin for different *varṇas* of student. The *Pāraskara Gr̥hyasūtra*, the *Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra* and the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*⁶⁷ stated that the upper garment for a *Brāhmaṇa* student should be of the skin of an antelope; for *Kṣatriya* of skin of a *Ruru* or spotted deer; and for *Vaiśya* of the Cow skin. But if the skin of these animals was not available, then all the *Varṇas* of student wore the Cow's skin. The Cow's skin was easily available. That is why; it was general option for all. In the first half of ancient India, the *Ajina* was used as an upper garment of the student. Later, it was utilized for a seat because the cotton garment was supplied in place of deer skin or the *Ajina*. During the ancient period, the skins were found in abundance. The whole country was covered with the forest. But when the forests were slowly cleared, then the skins were found in limited. So, the cotton clothes were used in place of deer skin.

- 5) **The *Daṇḍa* or Staff :** Next the *Ācārya* was given the Staff or *Daṇḍa* to his students. This *Daṇḍa* or staff had its spiritual meaning. Different authorities prescribed that; it was the symbol of a traveler because the students were the travelers on the long road of knowledge. That is why, when the student accepting it, the student prayed that he might reach safely the end of his long journey safely and happily. One authority prescribed that it was the symbol of a watchman. Where the *Aparārka* on the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* gives a materialistic view that, it was the weapon of

⁶⁷ *Aiṇeyamaḥjanamuntarīyaṁ brāhmaṇasya | raukhar̥ta rājanyasya | ājar̥m gavyar̥m vā vaiśasya | sarveṣāṁ vā gavyamasati pradhāntvat | P.G.S.II.5.17.20; Ā.G.S.I.19.8; B.D.S.II.5.16.*

Brahmacāri. When the student went out in forest to collect firewood, in darkness or unknown places like a tank or in river, this *Daṇḍa* make himself confident and self reliant⁶⁸. Different types of trees were necessary to make this *Daṇḍa*. Each *Varṇa* of students were not able to use other *Varṇas* staff. So, different trees mentioned for different *Varṇas* of students. It is stated that the staff of *Brāhmaṇa* should be *Palāśa* wood; that of a *Kṣatriya* of *Udumbara* wood; and that of *Vaiśya* of Bilva wood⁶⁹. The *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* give different view that the *Palāśa* for the *Brāhmaṇa*, the Bilva for the *Kṣatriya* and the *Udumbara* for the *Vaiśya*. But it is also noted that the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* mention that if the wood was not available then all could use all kinds of wood⁷⁰. The *Daṇḍa*, which was used by the different students, had its own size. All the *Varṇas* of student not use the same length of staff. So, according to the *Varṇa* of the student, the length of the staff was also fixed. The length of the staff of a *Brāhmaṇa* student should reach the hair of his hand; that of *Kṣatriya* his forehead; and that of *Vaiśya*, the tip of his nose⁷¹. The *Gautama Dharmasūtra*⁷² prescribed that the staff should be a perfect. It should not be damaged or eaten by any worm or broken by any means. *Manu*⁷³ also suggests the same tips with slight variation. *Manu* says that, staff should be

⁶⁸ *Daṇḍājīnopavītāni mekhalārṇ caiva dhārayet* ||*Yāj.S.II.29*

⁶⁹ *Pālāśo brāhmaṇasya audumbaraḥ kṣtriyasya bailvo vaiśyasya* |*Ā.G.S.I.19.13.*

⁷⁰ *Pālāśo brāhmaṇasya daṇḍaḥ|bailvo rājanyasya| aaudumbaro vaiśyasya | Sarve vā sarveśām* ||*P.G.S.II.5.25-28.*

⁷¹ *Keśasarṇmito brāhmaṇasya | lalāṭasārṇmitaḥ kṣtriyasya ghrāṇasarṇmito vaiśyasya*|*Ā.G.S.I.19.13.*

⁷² *Apīḍitā yupavaktāsalkā iti* |*G.D.S.I.26.*

⁷³ *Keśāntiko brāhmaṇasya daṇḍaḥ kāryaḥ pramāṇataḥ.....Anudvegakarā nṛṇāṇ satvco nāgnidūṣitāḥ*||*M.S.II.46-47.*

straight, without any blemish, fine to look and unhurt by fire. But if the staff was broken then the student had to undergo a penance.

6) **The *Yajñopavīta* (the Sacred Thread)** : When the preliminaries of the ritual were over, the teacher offered him the *Yajñopavīta*. This *Yajñopavīta* was the one of the most essential part of sacrifice. All the twice born pupil were worn this *Yajñopavīta*. This *Yajñopavīta* was the witness to the ceremony performed. When the teacher offered *Yajñopavīta* to his student, he recites a verse, asking for strength, long life and illumination for the boy, because he enters upon a long *Sattra*, where he finds many obstacles⁷⁴. In this time the student looked at the sun (as he was going to be initiated) and the teacher offered him the *Yajñopavīta*. The deer skin was used as *Yajñopavīta* in early time. But later, the cotton cords become the *Yajñopavīta*. Different cotton cords were prescribed for different castes. The *Yajñopavīta* of a *Brāhmaṇa* was cotton of *kārpāsa* thread, that of a *Kṣatriya* was hempen thread, and that of a *Vaiśya* was a goat skin or linen thread⁷⁵. This *Yajñopavīta* was made of three threads (*tantu*) of nine strands well twisted to each thread. These nine threads are consecrated to the following nine deities who impart to them their own potency viz, (1) *Om̐kara* (2) *Agni* (3) *Nāga* (4) *Soma* (5) *Pitṛi* (6) *Prajāpati* (7) *Vāyu* (8) *Sūrya* (9) All Gods together. The mode of wearing the *Yajñopavīta* was that the student raised the right hand and put his head in to the *Upavīta* (the

⁷⁴ *Yājñopavītaṁ paramaṁ pavitraṁ prajāpateryats hajarṁ purastāt | Āyusṣyamagraṁ pratimuñca śubhraṁ yajñopvītaṁ balamāstu tejah || P.G.S.II.2.11.*

⁷⁵ *Kārpāsamupavītaṁ syādviprasyordhavṛtaṁ trivṛt | Śāṅhasūtramayaṁ rājño vaiśyasyāvikasautrikam || M.S.II.44.*

Sacred thread) suspending it on his left shoulder in such a manner that it hung on his right side.

7) Standing Stone : The next element in the *Samskāra* is symbolic one, the boy was asked to stand on the stone. The stone is the symbol of strength. That is why, the student was asked to stand on the stone, with this words: “Set the foot on this stone; like a stone be steady; set the enemies down; turn away the enemies”. The early scriptures describe that the purpose of this rite was to make the student strong or unyielding in his physique and character. This stone also delivered a good sermon to the student that the firmness of determination and strength of a character are the most essential needs of a successful student career.

8) Taking the Charge : After this, the real acceptance of the student began. The student coming near the *Ācārya* said, “I have come here for a *Brahmacāri*”. Thereafter the teacher made an enquiry of his name. The teacher asks: “Whose pupil are thou? The student answers: Yours. The Preceptor corrects: *Indras*’s pupil are thou; *Agni* (fire) is thy teacher: I am thy teacher N.N⁷⁶. After taking the charge of the student, the teacher delivers, the following commandment : “ A student art thou ; drink water ; do thy work ; do not sleep during day time ; keep silence ; be obedient to the teacher and study the Vedas ; fetch alms morning and evening ; morning and evening put fuel in to the fire ; observe *Brahmacary* for twelve years or

⁷⁶ *āthainamāha Kasya brahmacāryāsīti | bhavata ityucyumana indrasya brahmacāryarsyagnarācāryastavāhamā cāryastavāsaviti |P.G.S.II.3.*

till the Vedas are learned⁷⁷. These commandments are also found in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* explains: “sip water. Water doubtless means ambrosia: “Sip ambrosia” is thus what he means. Do thy work. Work doubtless means vigour; “exert vigour” is what he tells him. Put fuel in to the fire. “Enkindle thy mind with fire, with holy luster”, that is what he thereby tells him. Do not sleep. “Do not die” that is what he thereby says to him etc⁷⁸.

9) The *Sāvitrī Vrata* or the teaching of *Sāvitrī Mantra* : Next, the most sacred *Sāvitrī Mantra* was taught by the student. On account of its metre, this *Sāvitrī mantra* is popularly known as *Gāyatri mantra*. Every house holder had to recite this *mantra* in morning and evening. The initiate starts his career by taking on the *Sāvitrī vrata* as a part of the *Upanayana* ceremony. The initiate could recite this *mantra* on that day but if he could not recite on that day then after one year, six month, twenty four days, twelve days or three days later, he could be recited the *Sāvitrī mantra*⁷⁹. The teacher looking at the face of the initiate and uttered the *Sāvitrī mantra*, “Let us adore the supremacy of that divine Sun, the God head, who illuminates all, who recreates all from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, who we invoke to direct our understandings right in our

⁷⁷ *Brahmacāryasyapo 'śāna karma kuru divā mā svāpsirācāryadhīno vedamdhiṣva.....sāyaṁ prātaḥ samidhamādadyāt||Ā.G.S.I.22.2-6.*

⁷⁸ *Brahmacāryasītyāha|brahamaṇa evainantatparidadātyapo 'śānetyamṛtaṁ vā āpo 'mṛtamśānetyevainantadāha karma kurviti vīryaṁ vai karma vīryaṁkurvityevainantadāha samidhamādhehīti samītsvātmānantajasā brahmacaryasenetyevainantadāha mā suṣuthā itina kañcanārttimārcachti na sa ya evaṁ veda ||ŚR.B.XI.5.4.5.*

⁷⁹ *P.G.S.II.3.6.*

progress towards holy seat”⁸⁰. The earlier authorities prescribe all the three *Varṇas* are allowed to recite the same *Sāvitrī mantra* to the sun⁸¹. But later authorities abolished this rule, and prescribe different *mantra* for different *Varṇas* of students. To a *Brāhmaṇa*⁸², the *Ācārya* recited the *Sāvitrī mantra* in *Gāyatrī* metre, which belongs to *Viśvāmitra*; to a *Kṣatriya* in *Trishṭuba*, which belongs to *Hiraṇyastūpa*, and to *Vaiśya* in *Jagatī* which belongs to *Vāmadeva* or *Hiraṇyastūpa*. The teaching of the *Sāvitrī mantra* symbolized the second birth of the child, as the teacher was regarded as father and *Sāvitrī*, the mother of the child. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we find that the teacher himself supposed to have conceived the child: “By lying his right hands on (The pupil), the teacher becomes pregnant with him: in the third night he is born as a *Brāhmaṇa* with the *Sāvitrī*”⁸³. The teaching of *Sāvitrī mantra* was very important for the student life. For successful and brilliant career, health wealth, good memory are necessary, but more important than them all is a student must be creative and stimulative intellect. And the *Sāvitrī mantra* has the power to stimulate and develop the mind of the student.

10) The *Bhikṣā* (Alms): With this formal initiation having been over, the teacher offered him a bowl to collect alms or advised him to beg. On the day of the *Upanayana*, he begged from only those who would not refuse

⁸⁰ *Tatsaviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt | RV.III.62.10*

⁸¹ *Sarveṣāṁ vā gāyatrīm || Ibid.II.3.10.*

⁸² *Gāyatrī brāhmaṇāyānubrayādāgne yo vai brāhmaṇa iti sruteḥ|triṣṭubharṭa rājanyasya |jagatīm vaiśayasya| Ibid.II.3.7-9.*

⁸³ *Ācārya garbhī bhavati hastamādhāya dkṣiṇanatatrṭiyasyātham sa jāyate sāvitrayā ||ŚR.B.XI.5.4.12.*

his request. He first bag from his mother, then sister and other relative. They were generously given alms for the initiate⁸⁴. The *Sūtras* and the *Smṛti* lay down the rules of begging. While begging, a *Brāhmaṇa* initiate addressed the lady of the house with the words: ‘*bhavati ! bhikṣāṁ dehi*’; a *Kṣatriya*, ‘*bhikṣāṁ bhavati ! dehi*’ ; and a *Vaiśya*, ‘ *bhikṣāṁ dehi bhavti* ’⁸⁵. After having collected alms, the initiate offered the collected alms to his teacher. The teacher accepted the alms. Then the initiate, with the permission of his *ācārya*, partake some food from his teacher. The *ācārya* give necessary food from his student with the satisfaction⁸⁶.

- 11) **The *Trirātra-Vrata* and the *Medhājana-Vrata*** : With the begging for alms, the *Upanayana* ceremony was over, but at the end of the initiation ceremony, the initiate had to perform *Trirātra vrata* and *Medhājana vrata*. The *Trirātra vrata* was a ceremony, where a *Brahmacāri* was required to observe for three days. According to some authorities⁸⁷, this *Trirātra vrata* could be extended to twelve days or one year. But basically the initiate had to perform *Trirātra vrata* for three days. In the beginning the *Trirātra vrata* was a hard training. During this period the initiate had to live on special food. He was not to eat pungent or saline or milk food. He had to sleep on the ground. He was not to take honey or meat. He was forbidden to sleep in day time. He was also forbidden to take wine. After

⁸⁴ *Mātaraṁ vā svasāraṁ vā māturvā bhaginīṁ nijām |
bhikṣeta bhikṣāṁ prathamāṁ yā caināṁ na vimānayet ||M.S.II.50.*

⁸⁵ *Bhavatpūrvaṁ caredaibhakṣamupnīto dvijottamaḥ |
Bhavanmadhyanttu rājanyo vaiśyasttu bhavaduttaram || Ibid.II.49.*

⁸⁶ *Samāhṛtya tu tadvaikṣāṁ yāvdamnamamāyayā ||
Nivadya guravehaśnīyādācamya prāṇamukhaḥ śuciḥ|| Ibid.II.51.*

⁸⁷ *Ata urdhvamakṣāralavaṇāśī brahmacāryadhaḥ śāyī trirātraṁ
dvādaśarātraṁ saṁvatsaraṁ vā |Ā.G.S.I.22.17.*

observing the vow for three days, the *Medhājana vrata* was performed⁸⁸. The *Medhājana* ritual was performed in order to embrace the divine help to sharpening the memory, intellect and grasping power of the student. On the fourth day, the initiate went with his *ācārya* to a *Palāśa* tree. Three sthandilas were prepared to the north or east of the *Palāśa* tree, and on these trees, *Pranava (Om)*. *Śrāddhā* and *Medhā* were invoked and worshipped with unguents, flowers and lamp. *Pranava* worshipped with the formula: ‘*Yaśchandasāmṛṣabho*’ to ‘*Śrutam me go pāya*’⁸⁹; ‘*Śrāddhā*’, with the trymn ‘*Śrāddhayāgnih*’ etc⁹⁰; and *Medhā* with the *anāvaka* : *Medhāvi* etc⁹¹. After having worshipped *Pranava*, *Śrāddhā*, and *Medhā*, the initiate deposited his staff at the foot of the *Palāśa* and took another staff. Thereafter, he returned home with his *ācārya*. In modern time, a similar type of ceremony is performed under the Marathi name ‘*Palāśuta*’. The significance of this ritual was that it was meant for the production of intelligence. By performing it one could get intellect to grasp the Vedic knowledge. One who desires success in learning should worship with a view of stimulating talent. This *Medhājana vrata* marked the end of the initiation.

Minor Ritual During Brahmacharya Period :

In the Student life, two types of minor rituals were very important. One at the beginning of initial stage and the second is at the end of middle stage

⁸⁸ *Caritavratāya medhājananam karoti*||ĀGS.I.22.18.

⁸⁹ *T.U.I.4.1.*

⁹⁰ *RV.X.151.*

⁹¹ *T.A.X.39.*

education. These two types of rituals had to be performed by the student in his student life. But during the *Brahmacarya* period, the student also performed some other rituals like *Upākarma* or *Śrāvaṇī* ritual and *Utsarjana* ritual.

1. ***Upākarma* ritual** : *Upākarma* ritual was the function to inaugurate a session. At the commencement of rainy season, this ritual was performed. Both the teacher and the students performed this ritual. The *Upākarma* ritual was also called *Śrāvaṇī* ritual because it was conducted once a year during the month of *Śrāvaṇa* (July to August)⁹². This ritual was very simple. The different authorities performed this ritual in their own style. But the central idea is common to all viz. in very opening day, the teachers and the students paid tribute and gratitude to the literary celebrity and intellectual giants of the past. They also offered oblations to their sacrificial deities. For paying tribute to the celebrities of the past and offered oblation to their deities, it aroused ambition in the mind of young scholar and they started their labour with great hope. Thus according to the *Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra*⁹³, the school of *Ṛgveda* worshipped *Sāvitrī*, *Śraddhā*, *Medhā*, *Prajña*, *Dhāraṇā* and the *Ṛsis* of the *Veda*, and then recited the first and the last stanzas of the ten *maṇḍalas* of the *Ṛgveda*, offering oblation of curds and *Saktu* to *Agni*. The school of *Yajurveda* first offered oblations to the sacrificial deities for success in the performance of sacrifices in which they wanted to specialize, and then they invoked the

⁹² *Śrāvanyāṁ prauṣṭapdyāṁ vāhapyupākṛtya yathāvidhi | yuktschandāṁsyadhīyīta māsān viprohardva pañcamān ||M.S.IV.95.*

⁹³ *Atha svādhayāmdhīyīta ṛcho yajurṁsi sāmānyatharvaṅgiraso.....namo vāce namo vacasptaye namo viṣṇave mahate karomi iti||Ā.G.S.III.3*

deities of the *Samhitās* and their *Rṣis*. Next the four *Vedic Samhitās* viz. the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda* together with *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa* to receive the respectful tribute to living generation. In this connection, the school of *Yajurveda* also paid their homage to the memory of scholars who had built up their studies: *Krishna Dvaipāyana*, *Vaiśampāyana*, *Tittri*, *Ātreya*, *Kaunḍinya*, the *Vṛittikāra*, *Baudhāyana*, the *Pravachanakāra*, *Āpastamba* the *Sūtrakara*, and also to *Satyashaḍha*, *Hiraṇyakśin*, *Vājasaneyā*, *Yājñavalkya*, *Bhāradvāja* and *Agnivaśya*. All these celebrated scholars were paying tribute in the opening day of the School. For this ritual the students were inspired to see the worth successors of the past and they create the sense of responsibility in learning and started their education with great hope.

- 1) ***Utsarjana Ceremony:*** *Utsarjana* ceremony was the annual dispersal or closure ceremony⁹⁴. This ceremony was performed at the end of the session. In the sixth day of *Pauṣh* or the first day of *Māgha* (January – February), this ceremony was performed. Like the *Upākarma* ritual, the *Utsarjana* ceremony also follows the same procedure. In the last day of the session, the students were paid tribute and respect to the literary celebrate and the intellectual giants. The students also paid respect to their worthy successors before the end of the session.
- 2) **The *Samāvartana* or Convocation Ceremony :** At the end of the formal studentship, the *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed. This ceremony marked the termination of the formal education life. This ceremony was

⁹⁴ *Etadutsajanam* || *Ā.G.S.III.V.23*.

also called *Snāna* because bathing formed the most prominent item of the *Saṃskāra*. During the *Brahmacarya* period, the students live in a divine contact. So, before entered in to the ordinary life, he had to put off divine influence, otherwise he pollute the divine attributes. So, the *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed on the completion of the formal studentship.

Like the *Upanayana* ceremony, the *Samāvartana* ceremony is also go back hoary antiquity. All the authorities basically the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Upaniṣats*, the *Sūtras* and the *Smṛti* elaborately describe the Convocation ceremony. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Taittirīya Upaniṣat* describe the teacher's farewell addressed to the students⁹⁵. In this address, the teacher gives advice to his students that when enter in to a new life, he should follow this rule and regulation: "Say what is true! Do thy duty! Do not neglect the study of the Veda! After presenting gifts to thy teacher, take care that the thread of thy race be not broken! Do not swerve from truth, from duty! Do not neglect your health! Do not neglect your worldly prosperity! Do not neglect the learning and the teaching of the Veda!

"Do not neglect the (Sacrificial) works due to the Gods and the manes!

Let thy mother be to thee like unto a God! Let thy father be to thee like unto a

⁹⁵ *Vedamanūchyācāryohantevāsinamanuśāsti | satyaṃ vada | Dharmam cara |svādhyāyanmā pramadaḥ |ācāryāya priyaṃ dhanamārtya prajātantrī mā vyavcachetsīḥ |satyānna pramditavyam | dharmānna pramaditavyam |kuśalānna pramaditavyam |bhūtaiya na pramaditavyam | svādhyaya pravachanābhyāṃ na pramaditavyam |devapṛkārābhyāṃ na pramaditavyam |matṛdevo bhavo |pṛdevo bhavo |ācāryadevo bhavo |athitidevo bhavo |yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi |tani sevityāni |no itarāṇi | yanyasmākaṃ sucaritāni |tāni tvayopāsyāni || no itorāṇi |ye ke chāsmacchreyāṃso brāhmaṇaḥ | teṣāṃ tvayāsanena praśvasitavyam |śraddayā deyam |āsraddyāhadeyam |śriyā deyam |hriyā deyam | bhīyā deyam |sarṃvidā deyam |atha yadi te karmavicikitsā vā vṛttavicikitsā va syāt ||ye tatra brāhmaṇaḥ sammarśinaḥ |yuktā āyuktāḥ | alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ | ytha te tatra varteran | tathā tatra vartethāḥ |athābhyākhyateṣu ye tatra brhāmaṇaḥ sammarśinaḥ |yuktā āyuktāḥ | alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ |yathā te teṣu varteran |tathā teṣu vartethāḥ |eṣa ādeśaḥ | |eṣa upadeśḥ | eṣā vedopaniṣat| etadanuśānam | evamupāsitavyam |evamu caitadupāsyam | T.U.I.11;ŚR.B.XI.3.3.7.*

God! Let the guests be to thee like unto a God! Whatever action are blameless, those should be regarded, not others. Whatever good works have been performed by us those should be observed by thee”—

“Not others. There are some *Brāhmins* better than we. Those you should show proper reverence. Whatever is given should be given with faith, with joy, with modesty, with fear and form a sense of duty. If there be any doubt in the mind with regard to any sacred act or with regard to conduct”—

“In that case conduct thyself as *Brāhmaṇas* who possess good judgment conduct themselves therein, whether they be appointed or not, as long as they are not to severe, but devoted to duty. And with regard to thing that are doubtful as *Brāhmanis* who possess good judgment conduct themselves therein , whether they are appointed or not, as long as they are not to severe, but devoted to duty”.

“Thus conduct thyself. This is my admonition. This is the teaching. This is the true purport (*Upaniṣat*) of the *Veda*—this is the command. Thus should this be observed”.

This farewell address to the students has no change in the *Sūtra* period or the later *Sūtra* period. Even in the modern time, when the Convocation ceremony is held, the Chancellor also gives this advice to his students.

Age :

It is very difficult to say, at what age the *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed because our authorities do not prescribe any definite age limit for

the *Sam̄skāra*⁹⁶. The longest period of *Brahmacarya* was forty-eight years, allowing twelve years for the study of each *Veda*. The smaller period stopped at eighteen, twenty-four and thirty-six years according to the circumstances of the students and his parents. The last but one period was the most common type of *Brahmacarya* and in the majority cases education finished at twenty-four. So in most of the case *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed in the age of twenty-four but upper age limit was forty-eight years⁹⁷.

Eligibility for the *Samāvartana* :

The *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśyas* were eligible for the *Samāvartana* ceremony. They were performed the *Upanayana*. So they were allowed to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony. But this ceremony was originally performed in case of those who had finished his entire course of studies. If any *Dvija* had not finished his entire course of studies then he was not allowed to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony. And in other case, those students, who simply memorized the text of the *Vedas*, without understanding the meaning and without following the rules and regulations prescribed for a *Brahmacāri*, then he was also excluded from the right of performance of *Samāvartana* ceremony. Only those students who had finished their education were allowed to take bath and performed the Convocation ceremony⁹⁸. These students were called *Snātaka*. The origin of the term *Snātaka* may be inferred from such passage of the *Brāhmaṇa* as ‘one should not bag any more after the last bath⁹⁹’.

⁹⁶ *dvādaśakeōpyeke | guruṇāōnujñātaḥ ||P.G.S.II.6.2.3.*

⁹⁷ *tathā vratena-aṣṭācatvāriṃśat parīmāṇena|Āp.G.S.I.11.30.2.*

⁹⁸ *vidyayā snāti-ity eke || Āp.G.S.I.11.30.1*

⁹⁹ *Na ha vai snātvā bhikṣeta | ŚR.B.XI.3.3.7.*

That is to say, begging was prohibited for the householder, and the injunction was judicious and logical considering economic set up of the Society. However in the opinion of the *Gṛhyasūtra*, there were three types of *Snātaka*. The first was that of *Vidyā Snātakas* (who had completed their entire course of studies but not the full term *Brahmacarya*). The second type was that of *Vrata Snātakas* (who had observed all the vows and spent the full period of *Brahmacarya* at the house of the guru but had not finished the full course of studies). And the last type was *Vidyā-vrata Snātakas* (who had finished their full course of studies and observed all the vows)¹⁰⁰. They were also called *Ubaya-Snātaka* because they finished their entire course of studies. And they were also the best students. These *Snātakas* were also called the *Upakurvāṇa Brahmacāri* and the *Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāri*. The *Upakurvāṇa Brahmacāri* was those who had finished their education and returned from their *Gurukula* and become full fledged house holder. The *Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāri*, who observed permanent celibacy and resided in his preceptor's house¹⁰¹. Both types of *Brahmacārin* were allowed to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony.

The Ceremonies :

The *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed in a very simple way. After the permission of his teacher, a student was allowed to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony. The permission is provided by the students' giving *gurudakṣina*, the proper fee to the preceptor¹⁰². If the pupil is unable to give

¹⁰⁰ *Trayaḥ snātakā bhavanti vidyāsnātako vratasnātaka vidyāvratasnātako iti | P.G.S.II.5.33.*

¹⁰¹ *Yadi tvātyantikarṇ vāsarṇ rocayeta guruḥ kule | M.S.II.243;*

naiṣṭhiko brahmacārī tu vasedācāryasarṇnidhau| Yāj.S.II.49.

¹⁰² *Vidyānte gurumarthena nimantraya kṛtvānujñātasya vā snānam ||Ā.G.S.III.9.4;*

gurudakṣina, he should at least go to him for his permission. The teacher would never mind about the *gurudakṣina*. He is satisfied with his merits. The ancient scriptures write that, “Earth in the seven continents is not sufficient for the *gurudakṣina*”. Because the status of the *guru* in ancient India was very high. The teacher gives all his knowledge, love and affection to his students. So for a student, it is unable to give proper *gurudakṣina*. But it is rule that when he leaves, he should honour him and give some acceptable presents. However an auspicious day was selected to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony. In this day, the student was required to shut himself in a room throughout the morning. It was a very strange procedure. But according to the *Bhāradvāja Gṛhyasūtra*, it was done, so that the sun may not be insulted by the superior luster of the *Snātaka*, as the former shines only with the light borrowed from the later¹⁰³. The student then came out of his room at the midday, shaved his head and beard and cut off all marks of his studentship. Then he followed the bath accompanied with number of luxuries like—powder, perfumes and ground sandal wood. The teacher himself offers these luxuries to his students. He also thrown his upper and lower garments, the griddle (*mekhalā*), the skin (*ajina*), the *daṇḍa* (staff) etc. These were the external signs of a *Brahmacarya*. After the bath, he becomes *Snātaka* and wears new clothes, ornaments, garland, callyrium, turban, umbrella and shoes. Thereafter a *Homa* was performed and the hope was expressed that the *Snātaka* would get plenty of students to teach. Then the *Madhūpark* was offered by the teacher, which is the mixture of ghee

*na purvaṁ gurave kinchidupakurvīt dharmavit | snāsyarṁsattu guruṇajñāpṭh śaktyā
gurvathmāhreta ||M.S.II.245.*

¹⁰³ *Etadahāḥ snātānāṁ ha vā eṣa etatejasā tapati tasmādenametadaharnābhitapreta ||Bh.G.S.II.6.*

and honey, indication a great honour, for it was for a few e.g., king, teacher, a son-in-law etc¹⁰⁴. Dressed with new dress the student would proceed in a Chariot or an Elephant, to the nearest learned assembly. Where he was formally introduced as competent scholar by his teacher and which recognizes his merits and learning, so that he comes out as a worthy scholar¹⁰⁵.

A critical survey of education in ancient India shows that, those students, who had completed their education received very high status in a society. So the *Gr̥hyasūtra* assert that a *Snātaka* was a powerful personality because he had completed his education¹⁰⁶.

But, unfortunately at present, the whole ceremonies are performed in very simple way. Without the proper procedure, these ceremonies are performed. So the proper tastes of the ceremonies are decreases and the people forgot the actual ceremony.

Buddhist Educational Rituals :

The Buddhist system was also characterized by some educational rituals. The significance of ritual was not neglected in Buddhist education system. Because, the Buddhism was born in the womb of Hinduism. So the several principle and basic tenets of Hinduism were preserved in Buddhism. Buddhism can thus rightly be regarded as one of the phases of Hinduism. Whatever little difference seems to underlay both the religion is based on Lord Buddha's certain opinions concerning religion. So the different rituals like initiation,

¹⁰⁴ *Saḍardhyā bhavanti | ācārya r̥tvigavaivahno raja priyaḥ snātaka iti | P.G.S.I.3.1.*

¹⁰⁵ *Āp.D.S. I.11.5-6.*

¹⁰⁶ *Mahdvai bhutar̥ṇ snātako bhavatīti vjñayate || Ā.G.S.III.9.8.*

convocation were closely connected with Brahmanical initiation, convocation as described above.

The Buddhist educational rituals are *Pabbaja* (initial ordination) and *Upasampadā* (final ordination). These were the main educational rituals in Buddhist education system. The Buddhist Order follow the same line of the Brahmanical initiation of studentship as described above. Like the Brahmanical system, the Buddhist novice also approached the teacher for instruction. And the teacher also did necessary enquiry and then he received him as a student.

1) ***Pabbaja*** :

The first step of Buddhist initiation was called *Pravrajyā* or going forth¹⁰⁷. It was the preparatory ordination for education in Buddhist system of education. It was equivalent to the *Upanayana* ceremony. The candidates, those who performed the *Pabbaja* ceremony, had to leave all the visible marks of his previous life when he was admitted in to the order. It was the first step of “going forth” for the ultimate “going out of his Worldliness”. Through the performance of this *Pabbaja* ceremony a child would enter the Order as a ‘*Sāmaṇera*’, or ‘*Pabbajit*’ i.e. novice and receive education.

Eligibility of a Novice—the consideration of *Varṇa* and Age :

***Varṇa* :**

Caste distinction did not come in the way of Buddhist Order. All the *Varṇas* equally perform the *Pabbaja* ceremony and enter in to the Order. Because in the words of *Buddha* held that just as all the rivers by merging in to the Ocean became one with it, in the similar way different castes became one

¹⁰⁷ *Mahāvagga.I.69.*

after being admitted to the Order¹⁰⁸. But it should however be remembered that a person belonging to non Buddhist religious Order could only be admitted in to the *Samgha* after they had gone through a probationary period of four months and behaved themselves properly during the period¹⁰⁹. In the other way there were also some restrictions to the admissibility to the Order. The first restriction was that, without the consent of the parents, a child was ineligible to take admission in to the Order. The second restriction was that a person who had physically defects such as serious sickness or bodily deformities and infectious diseases as leprosy, boils, itches or consumption and the like were also not allowed to take admission in to the Order. Serious moral defects were also a bar to take admission in to the Order. Confirmed criminals, matricides or shameless persons were also kept out in to the Order. Similarly persons who furtively attached themselves to the Order were also not allowed to take admission in to the Order¹¹⁰.

Age :

In the very early age, a child was to perform the *Pabbaja* ceremony. As we already mentioned that the Buddhist system of education follows the Brahmanical rules and regulation. So with the very little variation or improvement, they also follow the same rules and regulation which were made for a *Brahmacāri*. As the Brahmanical system, the minimum age limit was

¹⁰⁸ *Gaṅgā Yamunā aciravatī sarabū mahī tā mahāsamuddam pattā jahanti purnimāni nāmagottāni mahāsamuddo eva saṁkharū gacchanti.....khattiyā brāhmaṇā vessā suddā te tathāgataoavedite dhammavinaye agārasmā anagāriyam pabbajitva..... ||Cullavāgga IX.I.4.*

¹⁰⁹ *Mahāvagga.I.38.*

¹¹⁰ *Na bhikkhavi pañcahi ābādhehi phutttho pabbājetabbo. Ibid.I.39.7. Titthiyapakhantakupajjhāyena up.,tiracchānagatupajjhāyena up.,mātughatakupajjhāyena o.,pitughātakupajjhāyeneup.,arahantaghātakupajjhāyena up.,bhikkuni dūsakupajjhāyena up.,saṁghabhadakupajjhāyena up.,lohituppādupajjhāyena up.Ibid.I.69,4;.*

fixed for initiation. In the same way, in Buddhist Order, a child below the eighth years was not accepted by Order. So in the eighth year, the boy was allowed to perform the *Pabbaja* ceremony¹¹¹.

The Ceremonies :

Pabbaja was a period of novitiate. In this time a child would go to his preceptor and with folded hand uttered these words: “May, I Lord, remain the ‘going forth’. “I desired, O My Lord, according to thy teaching and thy direction, to walk in the *Brahmacarya*”. Then the Preceptor used to pronounce the following word: “Come hither, O Monk the doctrine is duly preached; walk in the *Brahmacārya* to put an end to all sorrow”¹¹². The boy then take the Oath of three Refuges three times: “I take refuge in the *Buddha*. I take refuge in the Dhamma. I take refuge in the Order”¹¹³. The boy was now accepted as a student. He became full fledged ‘*Samaṇera*’ or ‘*Pabbajita*’. The boy also had to clad in Saffron uniform (Yellow robe) and abide by the ten educational commandments i.e., he had to refrain from the following misconducts viz.— killing a being, theft, unlawful sexual misconduct, speaking false, taking intoxicating drinks, eating after midday, attending dance- music and visiting shows, using garland, scents and ointments, sleeping on high beds, and accepting gold and silver¹¹⁴. After taking the Ten Commandments, the *Pabbaja*

¹¹¹ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.396.

¹¹² *Vinaya Piṭaka I*, P 12.

¹¹³ *buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, saṃghaṃsaraṇaṃ gacchāmi*. *Mahāvagga I.12. 4*.

¹¹⁴ *Kāsāyāni vattāni acchādapetva. Mahāvagga.I.12.3; Anujānāmi bhikkhave sāmaṇerā naṃdasaikkhāpadani.....imāni dasa sikkhāpadani imesu ca sāmaṇerehi sikkhitun ti* ||*Ibid*.I.56.

ceremony was over and the novice was committed to care of his preceptor who brought him till he was fit for the higher ordination.

Upasampadā :

Upasampadā was the final ordination in Buddhist system. It was equivalent to *Samāvartana* ceremony. But the philosophies behind the *Samāvartana* and *Upasampadā* were however different. The former was termination of formal education for entry in to the second cycle of *Chatūrāśram* i.e., family life, while the later was the termination of formal education for admission in to the Order as a full fledged Monk. The *Upasampadā* exercised lifelong binding upon the Monk. But the *Samāvartana* not give any binding upon the *Brahmacāri*. The Brahmanical education adduces the example of lifelong *Brahmacāri (Nasiṣṭhiksa)*; but they are few and far between. If anyone not likes to continue his education, then after the Convocation ceremony he was able to enter in to the family life. But Buddhists on the other hand, impose lifelong restriction upon the Monks. If woman too were admitted to the Order of Monkhood, this discipline was imposed upon them as well. But if any Monk wanted to withdraw himself from the *Samgha*, the procedure was simple and easy. Any Monk under the circumstances of breaking the solemn pledge or falling a victim to worldly temptation was liable to expelled from the Holly order for life time. He had to make a declaration of his weakness before a witness not necessarily a Monk¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁵ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P. 402.

Age :

A person between fifteen and twenty years of age could perform the final ordination or *Upasampadā*. Because the period between the two ordination was not continued beyond the twentieth year of the postulant. But in case of the postulant being previously a member of another monastic Order, then the period of novitiate was however reduced to four months¹¹⁶.

Eligibility for the *Upasampadā* :

The Buddhist Monastery was open to all courses and not merely to the three twice born. But in case of *Upasampadā* or final ordination, then after go through the *Pabbaja* ceremony, a person was allowed to perform *Upasampadā* ceremony. But in case he was suffered from diseases, have serious moral defects and confirmed criminals, shameless person, then he was not allowed to performed the final ordination¹¹⁷.

The Ceremonies :

After the twelve years of education, a novice was allowed to perform the final ordination. He was now learned competent *bhikṣu*, who had completed twelve years of education. So he must enter in to the *Samgha* as full fledged Monk to continue his education. The *Upasampadā* was performed before the entire *saṃgha*. The procedure of this final ordination was laid down as follows: During the *Upasampadā* ceremony a ten special members of assemblies were convened. When this assembly gives the permission then the actual ceremony was started. First the individual teacher presented the student before the house

¹¹⁶ *So haṃ bhante saṃgham cattāro mase parivāsarṃ yācāmiti. Mahāvagga I.38.3.*

¹¹⁷ *Na bhikkhivā anuppajjhāyāho upasampādatabbo. Ibid.I.69.*

and prayed for *Upasampadā*¹¹⁸: “Let the *Samgha*, reverend Sirs, hear me. N.N. desires to receive the *Upasampadā* ordination from venerable N.N (i.e. with the venerable N.N. as his *Upajjhāya*); he has been instructed by me. If the *Samgha* is ready, let N.N come”. On the permission being granted, the candidate appeared before the assembly, adjusted his upper robe so as to cover one shoulder, saluted the feet of the *Bhikṣu* with his head, sat down squatting, raised his joined hands and thrice uttered this formula: ‘I ask the *Samgha*, reverend Sirs, for the *Upasampadā* ordination : might the *Samgha* reverend Sirs, draw me out (of the sinful world) out of compassion towards me.”

Then the learned competent *bhikṣu* moved the following resolution¹¹⁹: “Let the *Samgha*, reverend Sirs, hear me. This person N.N. desires to receive the *Upasampadā* ordination from the venerable N.N. If the *Samgha* is ready, let me ask N.N. about the disqualifications.” Permission being granted as follows¹²⁰:

“Do you hear, N.N. This is the time for you to speak the truth and to say that which is. When I ask you before the assembly about that which is, you ought, if it is so, to answer ‘It is’ ; if it is not so, you ought to answer ‘It is not’ .

Then followed the string questions¹²¹: “Are you afflicted with the following diseases? Leprosy, boils, dry leprosy, consumption, fits? Are you a

¹¹⁸ *Suṇātu me bhante saṅgo.....yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ saṅgho itthannāmaṃ upasampādeyya itthannāmena upajjhāyena* || *Mahāvāgga.I.28.4.*

Tena Upasampadāpekkhena Saṅgham.....dutiyaṃ pi yacitabbo- la tatiyaṃ pi yācitabo-la-// Ibid I.29.2.

¹¹⁹ *Vyatte na bhukkunā paṭibaleṇa nāpetabbo.....yadi saṅghassa pattakallaṃ saṅgho itthannāmaṃ upasampādeyya itthannāmena upajjhāyena* || *Ibid.I.29.3.*

¹²⁰ *Sunasi itthannama.....ma kho vitthasi, ma kho ahosi* || *Ibid.I.76.7.*

¹²¹ *Santi te evarūpā ābādhā kuṭṭam gaṇḍo kilāso soso apamāro.....kirinnāmo si, konāmo te upajjhāyo ’ti* || *Mahāvāgga.I.76.1.*

man? Are you a male? Are you free man? Have you no debts? Are you not in the royal service? Have you father and mother given their consent? Are you full twenty years old? Are your alms bowl and your robes in due state? What is your name? What is your *Upajjhāya*'s name ?

After satisfactory answers were received, a learned competent *bhikṣu* proclaimed the following *ñatti* before the *Samṅha*¹²²: “Let the *Samṅha* reverend Sirs, hear me. This person N.N. desires to receive the *Upasampadā* ordination from the venerable N.N; he is free from the disqualifications; his alms- bowls and robes are in due state. N.N asks the *Samṅha* for the *Upasampadā* ordination with N.N. as *Upajjhāya*. If the *Samṅha* is ready, let the *Samṅha* confer on N.N. the *Upasampadā* ordination with N.N. as *Upajjhāya*”.

“Let the *Samṅha*, reverend Sirs, hear me. This person N.N. desires to receive the *upasampadā* ordination from the venerable N.N. The *Samṅha* confers on N.N. the *Upasampadā* ordination with an *Upajjhāya*. Let any one of the venerable brethren who is in favour of the *Upasampadā* ordination of N.N. with N.N, as *Upajjhāya* be silent and anyone who is not in favour of it, speak.”

‘And for the second time I thus speak to you: Let the *Samṅha* etc. (as before).

‘And for the third time I thus speak to you: Let the *Samṅha* etc. (as before).

¹²² *Vyattena bhikkhunā paṭibaleṇa samṅho ñāpetabbo.....esā ñatti || Ibid I.76.10.*

“N.N. has received the *Upasampadā* ordination from the *Samgha* with N.N. as *Upajjhāya*. The *Samgha* is in favour of it, therefore it is silent. Thus I understand.”¹²³

As soon as the ceremony of ordination was over, the newly ordained Monk carefully taught the four Requisites (*nissayā*) and the four Interdicts (*akaraṇīyāni*) of the monastic life. The four Requisites (*nissayā*)¹²⁴ were:-

- a. A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, eat the food collected in the alms bowl only;
- b. A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, wear the robes made of rags collected;
- c. A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, lodge at the foot of a tree; and
- d. A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, use the Cow urine as medicine.

The four Interdicts (*akaraṇīyāni*)¹²⁵ were :

- a) A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, ought to abstain from all sexual intercourse even with an animal.

¹²³ *Suṇātu me bhante saṃgho.....khama saṃghassa, tasmā tuṇhī, evam etaṃ dhārayāmīti || Mahāvagga.I.28.5-6.*

¹²⁴ *Anujanamī bhikkhave upasampadentena cattaro nissaye acikkhitum.....aitrekalabho sappi navanitam telam madhu phanitam ti || Ibid.I.30.4.*

¹²⁵ *Upasampanna bhikkhunā methuno dhanmo na paṭisevitabbo antamso triracchānagataya pi|| Ibid I.78.2.*

Upasampanna bhikkhunā adinnaṃ theyyasamkhātam na ādāttabbaṃ antamaso tiṇasalākam upādāya|| Ibid. I.78.3.

Upasampanna bhikkhunā sañcicca pāṇo jīvitaṃ hovoropetabbo antamaso kunthakipilliakam upādāya|| Ibid. I.78.4.

Upasampanna bhikkhunā uttarimanussadhammo na ullapitabbo antamaso suñṇāgāre abhiramāmīti|| Ibid. I.78.5.

- b) A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, ought to abstain from taking what is not given to him and from theft, even at of a blade of grass
- c) A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, ought not intentionally to destroy the life of any being down to a worm or an ant.
- d) A *Bhikṣu* who has received the *Upasampadā* ordination, ought not to attribute to himself any super human condition.

In this way the Buddhist *Upasampadā* or final ordination was completed.