

CHAPTER – IV

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE *VASIṢṬHA*

DHARMA-SŪTRA

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE VASIṢṬHA DHARMASŪTRA

Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra is the only *dharmasūtra* work belonging to the Ṛgveda. In the *Tantravārttika*, Kumārilabhaṭṭa says that the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* was studied by the followers of the Ṛgveda. Cf., *vasiṣṭham bahvṛcaireva* ¹. Thus, it can be said that traditionally, *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* has been associated with the Ṛgveda.

Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra is so far contrast with the characteristic features of the *dharmasūtra* works. Basically *dharmasūtras*, being part of complete *Kalpasūtras*, show close resemblance with *Gṛhyasūtras*, and while the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* do not reveal any such resemblance. We have, therefore, to fall back upon one of the two hypotheses, viz., either the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is the solitary remnant of a school that might have once possessed a complete *Kalpa* or that it was composed as an independent work on dharma and was subsequently seized upon by the students of the Ṛgveda, who had only *Śrauta* and *Gṛhya* sūtras of Āśvalāyana ².

STRUCTURE OF THE VASIṢṬHA DHARMASŪTRA:

The *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* has been printed several times. In the different editions, we have found different numbers of total chapters of this work. Likewise, the collection of Jivananda (Part II, pp. 456-496) contains only twenty chapters and a portion of the 21st chapter. Mr. M.N. Dutt (Calcutta, 1908) has also followed the same. On the other hand, *Ānandāśrama* collection of Smṛtis (1905, pp.187-231) and the edition of Dr. Führer in the B.S.Series

(1916) contain thirty chapters. According to Dr. Jolly, some manuscripts give only six or ten chapters of this work ³. In this research paper, we have followed the edition of Dr. A.A.Führer (1983).

The most specific point of this work is that in comparison with the other *dharmasūtra* works, the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* maintains a systematic arrangement of its contents. Basically *smṛtis* or *dharmasāstras* maintain such systematic order of their contents into three particular heads, viz., *Ācāra*, *Vyāvahāra* and *Prāyaścitta*. In the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*, from 1st to 14th chapters, we can see all the subject matters which are same with the *ācāra* portion of the *dharmasāstras*, as these chapters deal with the *saṃskāras*, different code of conduct of four stages of human lives, hospitality, rules for *śrāddha* etc. Next 15th to 19th, it deals with adoption, legal procedures, property rights, different types of sons, partition of estate, *Rājadharmā*, succession, taxes, criminal justice etc. Even the 16th chapter is started as *atha vyāvahārāḥ* (16.1). Next 20th to 28th chapters include grievous sins and their penances. Lastly, 29th and 30th chapters deal with significance of gift (*dāna*) and the excellence of *Brāhmiṇ* accordingly. Thus, from the 1st to 28th chapters all the subject matters, we can divide into three heads, viz., *Ācāra* (1st to 14th), *Vyāvahāra* (15th to 18th) and *Prāyaścitta* (20th to 28th). Therefore, it may be said that the structure of the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is more systematic than the other *dharmasūtra* works.

STYLE AND LANGUAGE:

As the dharmasūtras are a part of the *sūtra* literature, it should be in *sūtra* style. The traditional *sūtra* is very aptly described in the following well known lines:

alpākṣaramasandigdham
sāravad viśvatomukham |
astobhamanavadyam ca
sūtram sūtravido viduḥ ||

These characteristics of a *sūtra* apply to the prose passages of *Dharmasūtra* works. Macdonell has also opined that these sūtras are compendious treatises⁴. This remark tends to show that the style of all works of the *sūtra* class is uniform. This is, however, not strictly accurate. The Dharmasūtras are, no doubt, written in the terse aphoristic style. The same principle of anuvṛtti is, which characterises other branches of *sūtra* literature, particularly the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, is found in this class of sūtras also⁵. But the studied brevity of grammatical sūtras is not so widely found in the Dharmasūtras. In fact, the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is composed in prose intermixed with verse. Even, chapters 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th are entirely composed in verse, while other chapters like III.2-12; VI.1-13; XI.20-42 which contain many verses interposed between prose passages. Thus, we can say that the entire work of Vasiṣṭha is an amalgamation of prose and metrical forms.

Basically, the language, used in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is classical Sanskrit, although, it verily quotes several verses from *Rgveda* and other Vedic

samhitās and Brāhmaṇs. Thus, this work deals with both classical and Vedic Sanskrit languages.

VEDIC ORIGIN OF THE VASIṢṬHA DHARMASŪTRA:

The *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* quotes several verses from the *Ṛgveda* and other Vedic samhitās. As for instance *ṚV.*, I.21.5; I.124. 7; V.4.10; are occurred in sūtras 3rd, 16th and 4th respectively of the 17th chapter. Rather several hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, such as the *asyavāmīya* (*ṚV.*, I.164), *haviṣpāntīya* (*ṚV.*,X.88), *aghamarṣaṇa*(*ṚV.*, X.190) are referred to in the 26th chapter. Among the Brāhmaṇas, the *Aitareya* and *Śatapatha* are frequently cited. Especially several passages from the story of *Śunahśepa* in the *Aitareya* are quoted in the 26th chapter. Besides, the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* quotes several passages from the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, such as *VDS.* V.7,8 and XI.48 quote *TS.* II.5.1.2-6 and VI.3.10.5 respectively. *Vasiṣṭha* has also quoted *Ś.B.*, V.4.2.3. in the I.45. The *Vājasaneyaka* (*VDS.*XII.31 and XXIII.13) and the *Kāṭhaka* (*VDS.*XII.24 and XXX.5) are mentioned by name. The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* is quoted in *VDS.*XXIII,23. The Upaniṣads and *Vedānta* occur in XXII.9. *Vasiṣṭha* quotes a *gāthā* of the Bhāllavins from their *Nidāna* work about the extent of the home of Brahmanism, which is quoted by Baudhāyana in I.1.27. *Vasiṣṭha* speaks of the aṅgas of the Vedas in III.23 and XIII.7 and give their number is six (III.19). *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* are mentioned in XXVII.6. The science of words (i.e. grammar), of omens and portents, and of astrology and astronomy are referred to in X.20-21. *Vasiṣṭha* quotes a verse that states that the view holding the

prāmāṇya of the Vedas leads to perdition (XII.41). In *VDS*.II.8-11, we have found that the *Vidyāsūkta* in four verses that we meet with in the *Nirukta* II.4.

From the above mentioned, it is cleared that the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* has its origin in the Veda. More or less it includes all the Vedic works, but there is a question naturally raised, why was it adopted particularly by the Ṛgvedins as their *dharmasūtra* (as stated by Kumārila). The answer is obvious. Vasiṣṭha is mentioned by name in the *Dharmasūtra* several times. Vasiṣṭha is the greatest and the most famous name among the ancient sages of the *Ṛgveda*. The whole 7th *maṇḍala* contains 104 sūktas out of 1028 in the whole of the *Ṛgveda*, is ascribed to Vasiṣṭha (Maitrāvaruṇi). Vasiṣṭha belongs to the *Ṛgveda* and therefore, his work is followed by the Ṛgvedins, although, this work includes lots of passages and verses from the other Vedic Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas.

INTERPOLATIONS OF THE VASIṢṬHA DHARMASŪTRA:

There is a doubt about the authenticity of the whole text of the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* as the manuscripts contain different numbers of total chapters from 6-30, and as the text is hopelessly corrupt in several places⁶. *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* contains many verses which bear the impress of a comparatively late age. Chapters 25-29 are entirely in verse, while there are other chapters like III.2-12, VI.1-13, and XI.20-42 which contain many verses interposed between prose passages. It has therefore, been argued that the text of Vasiṣṭha was freely, particularly as regards the chapters at the end. But it may be said that the interpolations, whatever they may be, were made at a very early period.

It is because Mitākṣara quotes Vasiṣṭha by name in the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* about 80 times and the quotations are taken from almost every chapter from the first to the last⁷. Even Medhātithi quotes Vasiṣṭha over twenty times. The quotations are mostly taken from the 1st chapter to the 21st chapter. Only one quotation from the last few chapters i.e., XXVII.16 has been found in Medhātithi (on Manu XI.211) and that too is not quoted as Vasiṣṭha's, but is ascribed to 'others'. Viśvarūpa, who flourished about the first quarter of the 9th century, quotes Vasiṣṭha about thirty times in his commentary on the *Ācāra* and *Vyāvahāra* sections of *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*. Besides, several sūtras from the 1st, 4th, 10th and 11th chapters, he quotes here no less than 22 sūtras of the 20th chapter and 9 of the 21st. Moreover, sūtras 37 and 39 of the 23rd chapter are on *Yāj.S.,III.281-282*. The more remarkable point is that two verses (2-3) of the 28th chapter are ascribed to Vasiṣṭha and explained in detail on *Yāj.S.,III.256*, while *VDS.28.4* is quoted without the author's name. These facts make it certain that the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* contained in Viśvarūpa's day all the chapters from the first to the 23rd and also the 28th. But 25th to 27th, these three chapters may be of later addition. These three are also composed in the metrical forms.

Besides these, there are about forty verses that are common to the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* and the *Manusmṛti* and about a dozen verses which, though not strictly identical, are more or less similar. There are several prose sūtras of *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* which correspond to the verses of Manu almost word by word⁸. Therefore, both the *Manusmṛti* and *Vasiṣṭha*

Dharmasūtra have received later additions and further it is possible that the present *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is the work of someone who had received the teaching of Vasiṣṭha through a succession of teachers and disciples.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTENTS OF THE VASIṢṬHA

DHARMASŪTRA:

In some respects Vasiṣṭha's views are different from those of early writers like Gautama and Baudhāyana. Like Āpastamba, he mentions only six forms of marriages (I.28-29), *Brāhma*, *Daiva*, *Ārṣa*, *Gādharva*, *Kṣatra* and *Mānuṣa*. Vasiṣṭha did not mention the *Rākṣasa* and *Paiśāsa* forms of marriage, it may be inferred that they had ceased to be recognised by their time and that other sages enumerated them only because they appeared in ancient works and for the sake of completeness of treatment⁹. According to Vasiṣṭha, abduction does not constitute marriage. If a girl has been abducted by force, and not has been wedded with sacred texts, she may lawfully be given to another man; she is even like a maiden¹⁰. He allows *niyoga*¹¹ and the remarriage of child widow¹². But Vasiṣṭha prohibits the marriage of a *Brāhmaṇa* with a *Śūdra* woman (I.25-26) which is mostly contradictory with the view of Baudhāyana (I.8.2). He elaborates rules of adoption in the 15th chapter which are not found in Gautama, Baudhāyana and *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*. He speaks of documents as one of the three means of proof¹³, while Gautama, Āpastamba and Baudhāyana are silent on that point, but in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* 13.4, there appears to be a reference to documents. Taking all these things into consideration it may be said that Vasiṣṭha is later than Gautama, Āpastamba

and Baudhāyana, but much earlier than the beginning of the Christian era and may tentatively be assigned to the period between 300-100 B.C.¹⁴.

Vasiṣṭha has also flourished some moral knowledge. He states humanity as the source of supreme pleasure. In the Vedic period a *Brāhmaṇa* attained his highest goal through performing the sacrifices. Thus Vasiṣṭha has compared the fire of a sacrifice with meditation, the firewood is truthfulness, the offering is patience, the *Sruva* spoon is modesty, the sacrificial cake is not causing injury to living beings and the priestly fee is the arduous gift of safety to all creatures¹⁵.

USE OF PECULIAR WORDS IN THE VASIṢṬHA DHARMASŪTRA:

The *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* contains a good number of peculiar words. Some of these words are not found in the standard Sanskrit lexicons. There are some words which, though found in other branches of Sanskrit literature are used in senses peculiar to these works alone. Therefore, we have noted the meaning of such words suggested by the commentators who sometimes suggest different meanings of the same words. Most of the peculiar words of the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* and their different meanings cited by various sources are given below –

1. Anūcāna : VDS.II.5; BDS.I.3.37; I.21.15; II.2.18; II.14.6;
II.10.9; ĀDS.II.17.22.

The word is not uncommon. But, it has been used in the following senses in Dharmasūtras:

- (i) According to Govindasvāmin, on *BDS.I.21.15*, *anūcāna* means one who has studied the Veda with its meaning and accessories.
- (ii) One who has studied one branch of the Veda with all its accessories¹⁶.
- (iii) One who has studied the three Vedas.
- (iv) One who studies a Veda with its accessories and teaches it¹⁷.
- (v) Patrick Olivelle has given the English meaning of the word *anūcāna* as ‘savant’ and George Buhler has given as one who teaches the Vedas (Under *VDS.II.5*).

2. Abhiśasta : *VDS.XIV.2*; *XXII.7*; *XXIII.37*; *GDS.II.42*; *ĀDS.I.3.25*; *I.24.6,15*; *I.28.17*; *I.29.8*; *II.2.6*; *BDS.I.11.33*.

- (i) One who commits a sin of the upapātaka class¹⁸.
- (ii) One who has been announced as the perpetrator of an offence real or imaginary¹⁹.
- (iii) A murderer of a Brāhmaṇa²⁰.
- (iv) A murderer of a kṣatriya or a Vaiśya who has studied Veda or is engaged in *Somayāga*²¹.
- (v) One who is degraded (*patita*)²².

3. Kālakavana : *VDS.I.8*; *BDS.I.2.10*.

- (i) Name of a mountain – SED
- (ii) Black forest – Buhler.

4. Kyāku : *VDS.XIV.33*
- (i) *ahicchatram chatrākam* – MB
 - (ii) *chatrākaḥ* – H.G., UĀ.
 - (iii) Mushroom

5. Kulāmkula : *VDS. XII.8; GDS.IX.53.*

From the interpretations, suggested by the different commentators, we may gather the following senses of the word :

- (i) One who goes from one house to another without any business.
- (ii) A stay at home fellow.
- (iii) One who goes from one family to another as in adoption²³.

6. Gorta : *VDS.XI.8; GDS.XVI.7; BDS.II.6.28*

- (i) *gartaśabdo ratha-śabdaḥ.*
- (ii) *avyakto vā dhvaniḥ* – MB.
- (iii) *garto rathaḥ* – HG.
- (iv) *adhomukha eva nimno bhūbhagaḥ garto bhavati-* GB.

From the remarks of the commentators the following senses of the words emerge :

- (i) Chariot
- (ii) Inarticulate sound
- (iii) Same as (i) and
- (iv) Hole

7. Gocarma : *VDS.XXIX.16; BDS.I.10.1; III.9.4.*

- (i) *gocarmamātra pramāṇam yatra gośatam āveṣṭayati-* GB.

- (ii) A particular measure of surface (a place large enough) for the range of 100 cows, one bull and their calves. – SED.
- (iii) A piece of land even as small as “cow hide” – Patrick Olivelle.
- (iv) A piece of land even “a bull’s hide”- Buhler.
8. Divākīrtya : *VDS.XIII.11*; *GDS.XVI.19*.
- (i) Barber – MB.
- (ii) *Caṇḍāla* – HG.
- (iii) Corpse or *Cāṇḍāla*- Buhler.
- (The word, preceded by *mahā*, means a text of the *Sāmaveda*.
Vide *BDS.III.10.11*).
9. Bhrūna : *VDS.XVII.71*; *GDS.XVII.11*; *BDS.IV.1.22*; *ĀDS.I.29.1*.
- (i) A Brāhmaṇa who has studied the Veda with its six accessories – UĀ.
- (ii) *Garbha* or foetus – HG.
- (iii) Fetus or foetus – Patrick Olivelle.
- (iv) An embryo- Buhler.
10. Mleccha : *VDS.VI.41*; *GDS.IX.17*.
- (i) *mlecchāḥ pārasikādayaḥ* – MB.
- (ii) *varṇāśrama dharmarahite deśe siṃhaladvipādaḥ ye vasanti* – HG.

From the remarks of the commentators the following senses of the word emerge :

- (i) Persian etc.
 - (ii) Those who live in Ceylon and such other places as are devoid of the caste system and the four stages of life.
 - (iii) Barbarian – Buhler
11. Rāmaka : *VDS.XVIII.4*
One born of the union of a *Vaiśya* and a female of the *Brāhmaṇa* – Buhler.
12. Vidala : *VDS.II.53; GDS.I.35*
(i) *mayurapakṣādiṣpannaḥ* - MB
(ii) *vetraveṇu- vidalādinirmitam, piccha- nirmitamityanye-*
HG.

From the remarks of the commentators the following senses are come out –

- (i) Made of feathers of peacock, etc.
 - (ii) Made of cane, bamboo etc.
 - (iii) Chips of bamboo – Buhler.
13. Viṣṭapa : *VDS.XVII.5; ĀDS.I.23.8*
(i) *viṣṭape vigatasantāpakṣamane brahmaṇi-* UĀ., meaning a *Brāhmaṇa* who is free from pain.
(ii) Heaven – Buhler.

14. Vaira : *VDS.VI.24; ĀDS.I.24.1*
- (i) *Pāpaṁ* – GB., means sin.
- (ii) Grudges – Buhler
15. Śaṅkha-puṣpī : *VDS.XXVII.11; BDS.II.1.21*
- samudratīre latāviśeṣaḥ* – GB, a kind of creeper on the sea-shore.
16. Sandhinī : *VDS.XIV.34; ĀDS.I.17.23; GDS.XVII.23*
- (i) *yā garbhiṇī dughde* – UĀ, H.G.
- (ii) *ekāṁ velāmantarikṛtya duhyate vatsāntareṇa vā-* MB.

Meanings, an animal that –

- (a) gives milk while big with young.
- (b) is milched after one *velā* (time of milching)
- (c) is milched with the calf of another animal.

NO UNIFORMITY OF THE TEXTS :

The text on the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* preserved in different editions is not uniform. It is therefore necessary to examine the nature of the differences among the extant versions of the same work. Such an examination will enable us to see the variations of the same text in the different versions that have come down to us. Now we will examine the total number of passages within each chapter in the Führer's edition and the *Ānandāśrama* edition on the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*.

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Führer's edn.</u>	<u>Ānandāśrama edn.</u>
I	46	46
II	50	55
III	71	64
IV	38	31
V	10	16
VI	44	40
VII	17	12
VIII	17	17
IX	12	9
X	31	24
XI	79	59
XII	47	45
XIII	61	28
XIV	48	38
XV	21	17
XVI	37	32
XVII	87	78
XVIII	18	16
XIX	48	34
XX	47	52
XXI	33	36
XXII	16	10

XXIII	47	43
XXIV	7	8
XXV	13	13
XXVI	19	20
XXVII	21	21
XXVIII	22	22
XXIX	21	22
XXX	11	12

Similar – 5

Difference - 25

From the above mention list it can be said that chapter wise the total number of passages is so for difference in each edition. Hence, it seems that these two editions represent two distinct traditions.

GENUINE AND SPURIOUS :

Certain features of the extant works on *dharmasūtra* raise suspicion about the genuineness of some portions of them. These are : (a) repetitions of the same passages, sometimes with slight variations within the same work; (b) occurrence of the same or closely similar, passages in different works. These certain features have been found in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* also. However it may be noted that some of such passages, especially certain verses among them introduced by such remarks as ‘*atha udāharanti*’ might be borrowed from a common source. Thus, the necessity and importance of a

collection of such passages are obvious. Therefore, we note as many as of these passages have come to our notice in the course of our present studies.

(a) Repetitions of the same or closely similar passages within the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* are cited below.

(i) V.5, is same with XXVIII.4 (second line). Cf. *māsi māsi rajo hyāsām duskr̥tānyapakarṣati* |

(ii) XI.78 is repeated in XXIII.40. cf. *aśvamedhāvabhṛtham vā gacchet* (VDS.XI.78; XXIII.40)

(b) Occurrence of the same or closely similar passages of the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* with the different works.

(i)	<i>Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra</i>	<i>Gautama Dharmasūtra</i>
	III.49	I.31
	III.37	I.47
	IX.10	III.27
	IX.1-3	III.32-34
	IV.24-26	XIV.6-8
	Chap. XXII	Chapt. XIX

(ii)	<i>Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra</i>	<i>Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra</i>
	III.5	I.1.10
	XXVIII.8	I.9.2
	II.41	I.10.24
	III.10	I.10.28
	II.1	I.16.1

II.5	I.21.15
VII.9	II.3.36
VI.20	II.13.8
VI.21	II.13.9
XXII.10	I.2.18
XI.28	II.15.11
XXVII.11	IV.3.8
XXVII.17	IV.5.30
XIV.24	I.9.9
III.60	I.8.2
XVII.73	IV.1.17
XXVI.4	IV.1.29
X.2	II.17.30
XXIII.32	I.8.47
III.5	I.1.10
XXV.5	IV.1.25
III.20	I.1.8
XXVII.13	IV.5.11
XXVII.20	II.1.7
III.10	I.10.28
III.6	I.1.12
III.18	I.18.12
XVII.86	I.2.14

	XXV.4	IV.1.24
	V.3	II.3.46
	XVII.5	II.16.6
	XXV.10	IV.1.27
	XXIII.31	I.11.39
	XVII.73	IV.1.17
	XI.27	II.13.10
	XXVIII.4	II.4.4
	XXVII.9	II.2.23
	II.6	I.3.7
	XXV.13	IV.1.28
	XVII.74	IV.1.18
	XXVIII.4	II.4.5
(iii)	<i>Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra</i>	<i>Manusmṛti</i>
	IV.6	V.41
	III.60	V.109
	VIII.7	III.102
	XVI.33	VIII.93
	XIX.44	VIII.317
	XVIII.17	IX.127
	III.5	XII.114
	XVII.17	IX.127
	XVI.18	VIII.149

XIII.48	II.145
XI.25	III.225
XXVII.13	XI.212
VIII.7	III.102
VI.18	V.136
X.5	II.83
VI.19	V.137
XXVI.16	XI.34
XIX.44	VIII.317
XXVII.13	XI.212
XXVII.12	XII.101
XXVII.8	IV.14
VI.43	XII.109
VI.19	V.137
XI.35	III.235
XIV.24	V.127
XVI.31	VIII.159
VI.6	IV.157
II.48	VIII.142
XXVI.16	XI.34
XVI.33	VIII.93
X.21	VI.50
VI.42	IV.177

XXVIII.4	XII.101
XVIII.14	IV.80
XXX.7	VI.84
II.6	II.171
IV.7	V.48
XIX.48	V.93
X.21	VI.50
XXVII.7	XI.245
XIX.45	VIII.318
VIII.8	III.103
XI.28	III.126
V.3	IX.3
XVII.5	IX.137
VI.11	IV.52
XVI.31	VIII.159
XI.27	III.125
III.59	V.123
II.3	II.169
VI.13	IV.51
XXVII.2	XII.101
VIII.15	VI.90
XVIII.15	IV.81
XI.32	III.237

	XXVI.10	II.86
	III.2	II.168
	XIX.45	VIII.318
	XVI.18	VIII.149
	XXVIII.8	V.130
	XX.18	XI.151
	XXVII.7	XI.245
	XXVII.8	IV.14
	VI.8	IV.158
	III.59	V.123
	III.2	II.168
	XI.28	III.126
	VI.8	IV.158
	XXVI.10	II.86
	III.5	XII.144
(iv)	<i>Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra</i>	<i>Viṣṇudharmasūtra</i>
	XIV.24	XXIII.47
	III.60	XXII.92
	VIII.7	LXVII.34
	III.4	I.19
	III.17	V.189
	XI.24	LXXXI.23
	XXVI.9	LV.19

	XVII.1	XV.45
	X.5	LV.17
	VIII.14	LIX.28
	XXVII.13	XXIII.58
	XXVIII.15	LVI.27
	IV.7	LI.71
	XVII.5	XV.46
	XX.31	XX.31
	IV.6	LI.64
	II.9	XXIX.10
	XI.32	LXXXI.20
	III.60	XXII.92
	VI.8	LXXI.92
	XIV.13	LVII.13
	VI.8	LXXI.92
	XXVI.10	LV.19
	XXV.13	LV.9
(v)	<i>Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra</i>	<i>Āpastamba Dharmasūtra</i>
	XIX.44	I.19.15
	VI.20/21	II.9.13
	XIV.16	I.19.13
	XIV.19	I.19.14
	XIV.18	I.19.13

THE FLORA AND FAUNA IN THE *VASIṢṬHA DHARMASŪTRA* :

The dharmasūtras are a rich store house of information regarding various kinds of trees and plants, flowers and foliage, beasts and birds, mammals, reptiles and others. We propose to collect the names of flora and fauna as found in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*. In doing the same we shall piece together all the information that can be collected from texts of different *dharmasūtra* works.

FLORA :

Although there is no classification of the flora in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* as such, yet a broad classification of the trees and plants into (i) *Vanaspati* and (ii) *Oṣadhi* is found in the contents of other dharmasūtras.

Now the names of the trees and plants as found in *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* are mentioned below :

- (i) Bilva : *VDS*. XXVII.12
- (ii) Dhānya : *VDS*.II.45 (grain)
- (iii) Gr̥ṅjana : *VDS*.XIV.33 (onion)
- (iv) Haridrā : *VDS*.XI.66
- (v) Kuśa : *VDS*.XXVII.12
- (vi) Kyāku : *VDS*.XIV.33, *GDS*.XVII.30 (mushroom)
- (vii) Laśuna : *VDS*.XIV.33; *GDS*.XVII.30 (garlic)
- (viii) Muñja : *VDS*.XI.58; *ĀDS*.I.2.33, 35; I.21.1; *BDS*.I.3.14. (A griddle made of *muñja* grass, is prescribed for a *Brahmacārin* of the *Brāhmaṇa* class).

- (ix) Nyagrodha : *VDS.XI.53; ĀDS.I.2.38*. It is one of the trees with the wood of which the staff of a *Kṣatriya Brahmacārin* is to be made.
- (x) Padma : *VDS.XXVII.12*;
- (xi) Palāśa : *VDS.XI.52, XXVII.12; ĀDS.I.2.38; GDS.I.24*.
- (xii) Palāṇḍu : *VDS.XIV.33; ĀDS.I.17.26* (Onion)
- (xiii) Tila : *VDS.II.39; GDS.VII.20, XV.26, XIX.17; BDS.II.2.13, 14, 18, II.6.2, II.15.4, IV.6.4, IV.7.9; ĀDS.I.20.13, I.26.15, I.27.1, II.16.22, II.20.1*, (Sesame).
- (xiv) Udumbara : *VDS.XI.54, XXVII.12; ĀDS.I.2.38*

The staff of a *Vaiśya Brahmacārin* is to be made with this tree. According *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* (XXVII.12), it is to be used in preparing *kvātha* (decoction) which is to be taken by one who commits certain kinds of sin.

FAUNA :

The various animals, mentioned in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* may be classified as follows (a) Beasts (b) Birds (c) fish and other aquatic animals.

(a) Beasts :

- (1) Aja : *VDS.XIV.35, XXVIII.9; GDS.VII.15, XII.22, XVII.21, BDS.I.12.4, II.3.9, II.6.34*.
- (2) Anaḍuha : *VDS.VI.21, XIV.45, 46; GDS.VII.15, XIII.29, XVII.28, XXII.23; BDS.I.19.5,6*.

According to revered Vasiṣṭha, *medhya-anḍuha* may be eaten. The word ‘Medhya’ literary means ‘fit for sacrifice’. GB describes this animal as an *anovahanakṣamah pungavaḥ*, i.e., an ox capable of drawing a cast.

(3) Aśva : *VDS.XXVI.17, XXVIII.9; GDS.VII.15, XIII.16,21, XIX.17; BDS.I.10.29, I.19.8, II.3.9, II.6.34, III.10.15.*

(4) Dardura : *VDS.XXI.24.* (A frog).

The sin, caused by killing it, is to be expiated by penance accompanied by some gift.

(5) Dhenu : *VDS.XIV.45, 46; GDS.VII.15, XIII.29, XVII.28; BDS.I.19.5, 6; III.4.5, III.8.19; ĀDS.I.17.24,30; I.26.1; I.31,11.*

Baudhāyana opines that its killing make a man to heavy *prāyaścitta*. Āpastamba condemns its killing without proper reason. The milk of *dhenu*, within ten days of calving, is a prohibited food. According to Āpastamba and Vasiṣṭha, its flesh can be eaten on the authority of the Vājasaneyins.

(6) *Eka-śapha* : *VDS.II.28; GDS.XVII.22, 26, XXVIII.13; BDS.I.12.11*

eka-khurāḥ vaḍavādayaḥ – MB.

eka-khurā aśvādayaḥ – GB.

The milk of one-hoofed animals is regarded as undrinkable.

(7) Gavaya : *VDS.XIV.41, 43; ĀDS.I.17.29; Vi.DS.80.9.*

gosadrśaḥ paśuḥ- UĀ.

According to Āpastamba its flesh can be eaten. But Vasiṣṭha mentions it as one of the kind of fish that cannot be eaten.

(8) Godhā : *VDS.XIV.39; GDS.XVII.25; BDS.I.12.5, ĀDS.I.17.37. kṛkalāsākṛtirmahākāyā* – UĀ.

Among the beasts with five nails the flesh of the Godhā can be eaten.

(9) Hastī : *VDS.III.11; BDS.I.1.11.* (Elephant)

(10) Khaḍga : *VDS.XIV.47; BDS.I.12.5; GDS.XVII.25; ĀDS.I.17.37 śṛṅgamṛga* – MB

mṛgaviśeṣaḥ, yasya śṛṅgaṃ tailabhājanam - UĀ

Among five toed animals, its flesh is prohibited by Baudhāyana. On the other hand Āpastamba, however its flesh can be eaten. Vasiṣṭha refers to the difference of opinion on the prohibition of the flesh of this animal.

(11) Mahiṣa : *VDS.XIV.35, BDS.I,12.6, II.2.5; GDS.XII.21.*

It is one of the two-hoofed animals whose flesh can be eaten. The rearing of she-buffaloes for livelihood constitutes a sin of the *upapātaka*. The milk of a she buffalo, within ten days of its calving, is condemned as a drink.

(12) Mārjāra : *VDS.XXI.24, XXIII.29; GDS.I.64.*

The sin resulting from its killing can be expiated by *kṛcchra* for twelve nights and some gifts. Students, engaged in study

between whom a cat passes are to abstain from food for one day and one night.

(13) Mūsaka : *VDS.XXI.24; GDS.XXII.21*

The *prāyaścitta* for killing it is the same as that for killing a *mārjāra*.

(14) Nakula : *VDS.XXI.24, XXIII.29; GDS.I.64, XXII.21; BDS.I.19.8; ĀDS.I.25.14*

Prāyaścitta is the same as that in the case of *mārjāra*.

Vasiṣṭha prescribes fasting for one day and one night to be undergone by a student engaged in study between whom this animal passes.

(15) Pañca-nakha : *VDS.XIV.39; GDS.XVII.25; BDS.I.12.5; ĀDS.I.17.37.*

The dharmasūtras do not give an exhaustive list of animals included in this class. The following are the explanation of this word given by commentators:

(i) *srgāla-vānarādayaḥ* - MB

(ii) *nara-vānara-mārjārādayaḥ* - UĀ

It may be noted that Baudhāyana appears to include only the following animals in this class: Svāviṭ Godhā, Śaśa, Śalyaka, Kacchapa and Khaḍga.

(16) Porcupine : It is one of the five toed animals whose flesh can be eaten.

(17) Pṛṣata (or pṛṣat) : *VDS.XXI.23, BDS.I.12.6*

It is one of the two hoofed animals whose flesh can be eaten.

(18) Śarabha : VDS.XIV.43; ĀDS.I.1

Its flesh is prohibited to eat.

(19) Sarpa : VDS.XXI.24; GDS.I.64, XXII.27.

The *prāyaścitta* for killing it is the same as that for killing a *mānjāra* (supra).

(20) Śalyaka (or Śaryaka) : VDS.XIV.39; BDS.I.12.5; ĀDS.I.17.37; GDS.XVII.25.

According to commentators of different works the meaning of this word is as follows :

(i) *varāhaviśeṣaḥ* – GB.

(ii) *yasya carmaṇā tanutrāṇam kriyate* – UĀ.

(iii) *kaṇṭakavarāha* – MB.

(21) Śaśa : VDS.XIV.39; GDS.XVII.25; BDS.I.12.5; ĀDS.I.17.37.

Its flesh can be eaten.

(22) Sūkara (or Śūkara) : VDS.VI.27, XIV.47, XXIII.30; GDS.XVII.27, XXIII.6; BDS.I.12.3, III.6.7; ĀDS.I.17.29. (*grāmya sūkara*).

Āpastamba and Baudhāyana prohibit to eat the flesh of *grāmyasūkara*. But Vasiṣṭha appears to refer to the existence of differences of opinion on the edibility of the flesh of a boar not living in the village (*agrāmyasūkara*).

(23) Śvā : VDS.III.45, XI.9, XXI.24, XXIII.29.30, 31, 33; GDS.I.64, XIV.30, XV.24, XVI.8, XXII.14, 21; BDS.I.6.4, I.9.2,

I.11.34, 37,39, I.14.15, II.6.34, III.6.7; *ĀDS*.I.10.19, I.15.16, I.16.30, I.21.15, I.28.21, II.17.20. (Dog).

The passing of a dog between students, engaged in study and its bark cause cessation of study. Its touch is supposed to defile not only places and articles, but also men. But it is considered to be pure in a hunting excursion. Its skin is to be worn by one expiation the sin of *bhṛṇahatyā*.

(24) Śvāviṭ (or śvāvit) :

VDS.XIV.39; *GDS*.XVII.25; *BDS*.I.12.5; *ĀDS*.I.17.37.

(i) *uluka* – MB (owl).

(ii) *svāviṭ kalpako yasya carmaṇā tanu-trāṇam kriyate* –
HG.

(iii) *śvasadrśaḥ mṛgaḥ* – GB.

(iv) *varāhaviśeṣaḥ* – UĀ (A kind of boar).

It is one of the five-toed beasts whose flesh can be eaten.

(25) Uṣṭra : *VDS*.XIV.40; *GDS*.XII.20, XVII.22, XXIII.5;
ĀDS.I.17.23, 29; *BDS*.I.12.11.

The milk and flesh of this animal are prohibited as drink and food respectively.

(26) Vasta : *VDS*.XI.63, XXI.23; *GDS*.I.18; *ĀDS*.I.36

(i) *Chāga* - UĀ

Its skin is to be used as an upper garment by a *Brahmacārin* of the Vaiśya caste.

(27) Vehat : *VDS*.XXI.22.

The gift of this animal forms part of the expiatory rite consequent upon the killing of a cow.

(b) Birds :

(1) Vikira, Viskira or Viveskira : *VDS.XIV.48; ĀDS.I.17.32; BDS.I.12.7.*

This bird eats insects, corns etc. after scratching them with their legs. cf. UĀ. I.17.32- *pādābhyām vikiryā kiṭadhānyādi ye bhakṣayanti* |

(2) Baka : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32*

It is one of the birds whose flesh cannot be eaten.

(3) Balākā : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32*

Though it is used in the same context of the same *sūtra*, it seems to have been a different bird.

(4) Bhāsa : *VDS.XIV.48, XXIII.30; BDS.I.19.8; ĀDS.I.17.35, I.25.14.*

(i) *śyenākṛtiḥ pīna-tuṇḍaḥ* – UĀ

(ii) *gṛdhraviśeṣaḥ* – Ibid.

It is one of the birds whose flesh is prohibited to eat. The *prāyaścitta* for killing it is the same as that for murdering a *Śūdra*.

(5) Cakravāka : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.26; BDS.I.19.8;*

ĀDS.I.17.35, I.25.14 mithunacarah – UĀ.

The sin for killing it is equivalent to that for killing a Bhāsa. Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(6) Caṭaka : *VDS.XIV.48.*

Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(7) Dārvāghaṭa : *VDS.XIV.48.*

It is probably the wood- pecker. Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(8) Gr̥dhra : *VDS.XIV.48, XXIII.30; GDS.XVII.27*

Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(9) Haṁsa : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.26; BDS.I.19.8;*

ĀDS.I.17.35, I.25.14.

The *prāyaścitta* for killing it is the same as that for the murder of a *Śūdra*. Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(10) Hārita : *VDS.XIV.48.*

Its flesh is prohibited as food.

(11) Jālapāda : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.33*

It flesh cannot be eaten, according to Gautama. The word literally means ‘web-footed’.

(12) Kāka : *VDS.XXIII.30; GDS.XVII.27, XXII.21;*

BDS.I.19.8.

Its killing necessitates the *prāyaścitta* equal to that for killing a *Śūdra*. Its touch is supposed to defile objects. Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(13) Kalaviṅka : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.26.*

grāmacaṭaka - M.B., H.G. Its flesh is forbidden.

(14) Kaṅka : *VDS.XIV.48, XXIII.30; GDS.XVII.27.*

(Heron- by Monier Williams).

Its flesh prohibited for the purpose of food.

(15) Kapota : *VDS.XIV.48; BDS.I.12.7*

According to Baudhāyana, it can be eaten. But Vasiṣṭha prohibits pāṇḍukapota.

(16) Khañjarīta : *VDS.XIV.48*

Its flesh cannot be eaten. Same as Khañjana (wagtail)

(17) Kokila : *VDS.XIV.48.*

Its flesh is prohibited as food.

(18) Krakara : *VDS.XIV.48.*

It flesh is not edible.

(19) Krauñca : *VDS.XIV.48; ĀDS.I.17.36*

(i) *mithunacara* - UĀ (Moving in pair)

(ii) A kind of curlew - MW.

Its flesh is prohibited to eat.

(20) Kukkuṭa : *VDS.XIV.48* (with 'grāmya' as prefixed)
XXIII.30; GDS.XVII.27; ĀDS.I.17.32, I.21.15; BDS.I.12.3,
I.16.8.12, I.17.14

Some texts prohibit this bird categorically, while others apply this prohibition only to kukkuṭas of the village and not of the forest.

(21) Kurara : *VDS.XIV.48.* (osprey, eagle - MW)

Its flesh is prohibited.

(22) Madgu : VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32.

(i) *jalanimajjanaśīlah* - MB

(ii) Diver – bird - MW

Its flesh is prohibited.

(23) Māndhāla : VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32

(i) *vāggadaḥ* - MB

(ii) Flying fox - MW

Its flesh can be eaten.

(24) Naktam̐cara : VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32.

(i) *ulūkādayaḥ* - MB

Its flesh is prohibited.

(25) Pārāvata : VDS.XIV.48; XXIII.30

It is included in the list of the bird whose flesh cannot be eaten.

(26) Plava : VDS.XIV; GDS.XVII.26; ĀDS.I.17.33

(i) *śakatabilaḥ* - MB

(ii) *śakatabalakhya bakviśeṣaḥ* - UĀ.

Its flesh is prohibited.

(27) Railātāka : VDS.XIV.48

Its flesh cannot be eaten.

(28) Sāraṅga : VDS.XIV.48.

Its flesh is prohibited.

(29) Sārikā : VDS.XIV.48.

Its flesh is not to be eaten.

(30) Śuka : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32*

Its flesh is prohibited.

(31) Śyena : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.27; BDS.III.3.6*

Its flesh is not to be eaten.

(32) Tiṭṭibha : *VDS.XIV.48; GDS.XVII.32*

tiṭṭibhaśābdanukaraṇaśīlaḥ - MB.

Its flesh is prohibited.

(33) Ulūka : *VDS.XXIII.30; ĀDS.I.10.19; BDS.I.19.8*

The screech of this bird, when heard by students engaged in study, causes cessation of study. The expiatory rite for killing this is the same as that for murdering a Śūdra.

Its flesh is prohibited.

(34) Vāyasa :

VDS.XI.9, XIV.48; BDS.I.6.4; I.14.15; ĀDS.I.25.14.

Its touch is supposed to defile things. The *prāyaścitta* for killing it is the same as that for murdering a Śūdra.

Its flesh is prohibited.

(c) Fish and other aquatic animals :

Various kinds of fish, mentioned in the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*, may be roughly classified as *Vikṛtarūpa* (misshaped) and *Avikṛtarūpa* (regular shaped). It is interesting to point out that from certain passages of the *Dharmasūtra* works, the word *matsya*

appears to have been used to denote not only fish, but also other aquatic animals. Cf. *VDS.XIV.41*.

matsyānām vā cetagavayaśiśumāranakrakulīrāḥ |

1. Ceta : *VDS.XIV.41; ĀDS.I.17.38*.

It is included in the list of the fishes which cannot be eaten.

2. Gavaya : *VDS.XIV.41*

It is not allowed to be eaten.

3. Kacchapa : *VDS.XIV.39; GDS.XVII.25; BDS.I.12.5; ĀDS.I.17.37*.

It is allowed to be eaten.

4. Kulīra : *VDS.XIV.41*

It is prohibited to eat.

5. Nakra : *VDS.XIV.41*

It is prohibited.

6. Sarpa-śirṣa : *VDS.XIV.42*

A fish having the head like that of a serpent, it cannot be eaten.

7. Śiśumāra : *VDS.XIV.41*

The Gangetic porpoise or dolphin - MW

Its flesh is not allowed to be eaten.

CONCLUSION:

Though the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is included in the *Dharmasūtra* class of works, it bears some characteristic features which are fully contrasted with the same as the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* is an independent work, it does not

show any relevance with the Gṛhyasūtras of *Ṛgveda*. It is composed in prose intermixed with verses. Even chapter 25th to 28th, all these are written in verse. Therefore, this work can be designated as the *Dharmaśāstra*²⁴. Vasiṣṭha has also called his own work as *Dharmaśāstra* (24.6). In this work, several verses and prose passages have been quoted from different Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas. Thus, it can be stated that this work is originally an eclectic work an independent character and it does not at first attach itself to the *Ṛgveda*.

12. Ibid., XVII.74.

*pāṅigrāhe mṛte bālā kevalam mantrasamskr̥tā |
sā cedakṣatayoniḥ syātpunaḥ samskāramarhatī ||*

13. Ibid., XVI.10-15.

14. See Kane,P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol.I. p.105.

15. VDS.XXX.8,

*dhyānāhniḥ satyopacayanam kṣāntyāhutīḥ
sruvam hr̥ḥ puroḍāsamahimsā santoṣo |
yūpaḥ kṛcchram bhūtebhyobhayadākṣiṇyamiti
kṛtvā kratu mānasam yāti kṣayam budhaḥ ||*

16. Govindasvāmin on *BDS*.I.3.37.

17. Haradatta on *ĀDS*.II.17.22.

18. Haradatta under *GDS*.II.42.

19. Haradatta under Ibid., XVII.15.

20. Haradatta under *ĀDS*.I.21.8.

21. Haradatta under Ibid., I.24.6.

22. Haradatta under Ibid., I.29.8.

23. See Kane,P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol.-II, part-I, p.- 413, fn.
985.

24. Banerjee,S.C., *Dharmasūtras: A Study in Their Origin and
Development*, p.5.