

CHAPTER VII

WHO WERE THE SHUDRAS ?

WHO were the Shudras if they were not a non-Aryan aboriginal race? This question must now be faced. The theory I venture to advance may be stated in the following three propositions:

- (1) The Shudras were Aryans.
- (2) The Shudras belonged to the Kshatriya class.
- (3) The Shudras were so important a class of Kshatriyas that some of the most eminent and powerful kings of the ancient Aryan communities were Shudras.

This thesis regarding the origin of the Shudras is a startling if not a revolutionary thesis. So startling it is that not many people will be ready to accept it, even though there may be enough evidence to support it. My obligation is to produce the evidence, leaving the people to judge its worth.

The primary piece of evidence on which this thesis rests is a passage which occurs in Verses 38-40 of Chapter 60 of the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata. It reads as follows :

“It has been heard by us that in the days of old a Shudra of the name of Paijavana gave a Dakshina (in his own sacrifice) consisting of a hundred thousand Purnapatras according to the ordinance called Aindragni.”

The important statements contained in this passage are three :

(1) that Paijavana was a Shudra, (2) that this Shudra Paijavana performed sacrifices, and (3) the Brahmins performed sacrifices for him and accepted Dakshina from him.

The passage quoted above is taken from Mr. Roy's edition of the Mahabharata. The first thing is to ascertain whether the text is accurate or whether there are any variant readings. As regards the authenticity of his text, this is what Mr. Roy¹ says :

¹ Quoted in Sukthankar Memorial Edition, Vol. I, pp. 43-44.

“As far as my edition is concerned it is substantially based on that of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, published about forty-five years ago under the superintendence of a few learned Pandits of Bengal aided, as I believe, by an English Orientalist of repute. Manuscripts had been procured from all parts of India (the South unexcepted) and these were carefully collated. Although edited with such care, I have not, however, slavishly followed the Society’s edition. I have compared it carefully with the Maharajah of Burdwan’s text in the Bengalee character which was edited with still greater care. About 18 manuscripts procured from different parts of India (the South not excepted) were carefully collated by the Burdwan Pandits before they admitted a single *sloka* as genuine.”

Prof. Sukthankar, the erudite editor of the critical edition of the Mahabharata, after examining many editions of the Mahabharata, concluded by saying that :¹

“The *editio princeps* (Calcutta—1856) remains the best edition of the Vulgate, after the lapse of nearly a century.”

Although the authenticity of Mr. Roy’s edition of the Mahabharata cannot be doubted, it would not be unreasonable if critics were to say that they would like to know what other manuscript support there is behind this text, which is made the basis of this new theory of the origin of the Shudras. In undertaking such an inquiry it is necessary to point to two considerations. One² is that there is no such thing as a Mahabharata manuscript in the sense of complete sets of manuscripts covering all the eighteen Parvans. Each Parvan is treated as a separate unit with the result that the number of copies of the different Parvans to be found differ by a vast margin. Consequently, the number of manuscripts to be taken as a basis for deciding which is the correct text must vary with each Parvan.

The second³ consideration to which attention must be drawn is the fact that the text of the Mahabharata has been handed down in two divergent forms; a Northern and a Southern recension, texts, typical of the Aryavarta and the Dakshinapatha.

It is obvious that an examination of manuscript support must be based upon collation from a fair number of manuscripts and a fair distribution of the manuscripts between the Northern and the Southern recensions. Bearing these considerations in mind, the results

1 Quoted in Sukthankar Memorial Edition, Vol. I, p. 131.

2 Sukthankar, op. cit., p. 14.

3 Ibid., pp. 9-42.

of the collation¹ of the text of *Shloka* 38 of the 60th chapter of the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata with which we are primarily concerned from different manuscripts is presented below :

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. शूद्रः पैजवनो नाम | (K) S |
| Shudrah Paijavano nama | |
| 2. शूद्रः पैलवनो नाम | (M/1:M/2) S |
| Shudrah Pailavano nama | |
| 3. शूद्रः यैलननो नाम | (M/3 : M/4) S |
| Shudrah Yailanano nama | |
| 4. शूद्रः यैजननो नाम | (F) |
| Shudrah Yaijanano nama | |
| 5. शूद्रोपि यजने नाम | (L) |
| Shudropi Yajane nama | |
| 6. शूद्रः पौंजलक नाम | (TC) S |
| Shudrah Paunjalka nama | |
| 7. शूद्धो वैभवो नाम | (G) N |
| Shuddho Vaibhavano nama | |
| 8. पुरा वैजवनो नाम | (A, D/2) |
| Pura Vaijavano nama | |
| 9. पुरा वैजननो नाम | (M) N |
| Pura Vaijanano nama | |

Here is the result of the collation of nine manuscripts. Are nine manuscripts enough for constituting a text which has a number of variant readings? It is true that the number of manuscripts taken for the critical edition of the different Parvans of the Mahabharata exceeds nine. For the entire Mahabharata the minimum number of manuscripts taken for constituting the text is only ten.² It cannot therefore be contended that nine is an insufficient number. The nine manuscripts fall into two geographical divisions, Northern and Southern. M1, M2, M3, M4 and TC belong to the Southern recension. A, M, G, D2 belong to the Northern recension. The selections of the manuscripts therefore satisfy the two tests which experts have laid down.

1 I am grateful to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute for allowing me to use their collation sheet. Letters in brackets indicate the index number given by the Institute to the manuscript. N or S indicate whether the manuscript comes from the North or South. K is Kumbhakonam.

2 Sukthankar, Vol. I, p. 14.

A scrutiny of the readings shows that :

- (1) there is a variation in the description of Paijavana;
- (2) there is a variation in the name of Paijavana;
- (3) of the nine texts, six agree in describing him as a Shudra. One describes him as Shuddha and two instead of speaking of the class to which he belonged refer to the time when he lived and use the word 'Pura';
- (4) with regard to the name, there is no agreement between any two of the nine manuscripts. Each gives a different reading.

Given this result, the question is what is the real text? Taking first the texts relating to the name, it is obvious that this is not a matter in which the question of meaning is involved. It does not raise any questions such as interpretation *versus* emendation or of giving preference to a reading which suggests how other readings might have arisen. The question is which is the correct name and which readings are scriptural blunders committed by the scribes. There seems to be no doubt that the correct text is Paijavana. It is supported by both the recensions, Southern as well as Northern. For Vaijavano in No.8 is the same as Paijavano. All the rest are variations which are due to the ignorance of the scribes in not being able to read the original copy correctly and then trying to constitute the text in their own way.

Turning to the description of Paijavana, the change from *Shudrah* to *Pura*, it must be granted, is not accidental. It appears to be deliberate. Why this change has occurred it is difficult to say categorically. Two things appear to be quite clear. In the first place, the change appears to be quite natural. In the second place, the change does not militate against the conclusion that Paijavana was a Shudra. The above conclusion will be obvious if the context, in which verses 38-40 occur, is borne in mind. The context will be clear from the following verses which precede them:

"The Shudra should never abandon his master whatever the nature or degree of the distress into which the latter may fall. If the master loses his wealth, he should with excessive zeal be supported by the Shudra servant. A Shudra cannot have any wealth that is his own. Whatever he possesses belongs to his master. Sacrifice has been laid down as a duty of the three other orders. It has been ordained for the Shudra also, O! Bharata. A Shudra however is not competent to utter *swaha* and *svadha* or any other *mantra*. For this reason, the Shudra, without observing the vows laid down in the Vedas, should worship the gods in minor sacrifices called *Pakayajnas*. The gift called Purnapatra is declared to be the *Dakshina* of such sacrifices."

Taking the verses 38 to 40 in the context of these verses preceding them, it becomes clear that the whole passage deals with the Shudra. The story of Paijavana is a mere illustration. Against this background, it is unnecessary to repeat the word 'Shudra' before Paijavana. This explains why the word Shudra does not occur before Paijavana in the two manuscripts. As to the reason for the use of the word *pura* in place of Shudra it must be remembered that the case of Paijavana had occurred in very ancient times. It was therefore quite natural for the scribe to feel that it was desirable to put this fact in express terms. The writer being aware that there was no necessity for describing Paijavana as Shudra since that was made clear from the context, it was not necessary to emphasize it. On the other hand, knowing that Paijavana had lived in very ancient times and that that fact was not made very clear from the context, the writer thought it more appropriate to add the word *Pura* which was necessary and omit the word *Shudrah* which having regard to the context was unnecessary.

If this explanation is well-founded, we may take it as well established that the person referred to in the passage in the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata is Paijavana and that this Paijavana was a Shudra.

II

The next question that falls due for consideration is the identification of Paijavana. Who is this Paijavana?

Yaska's Nirukta seems to give us a clue. In Nirukta ii. 24¹ *Yaska* Says:

"The seer Vishvamitra was the purohita of Sudas, the son of Pijavana, Vishvamitra, friend of all. All, moving together. Sudas a bountiful giver. *Paijavana*, son of Pijavana. Again *Pi-javana* one whose speed is enviable or whose gait is inimitable."

From *Yaska's* Nirukta we get two very important facts :

(1) Paijavana means son of Pijavana, and (2) the person who is the son of Paijavana is Sudas. With the help of *Yaska*, we are able to answer the question: who is Paijavana referred to in the passage in the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata? The answer is that Paijavana is simply another name for Sudas.

The next question is who is this Sudas and what do we know about him? A search in the Brahmanic literature discloses three persons

1 Lakshman Sarup, *The Nighantu and Nirukta*, pp. 35-36.

with the name Sudas. One Sudas is mentioned in the Rig Veda. His family particulars are given in the following stanzas of the Rig Veda :¹

1. *Rig Veda*, vii.18.21.—“Parashara, the destroyer of hundreds (of Rakshasas), and Vasishta, they who, devoted to thee, have glorified thee in every dwelling, neglect not the friendship of thee (their) benefactor; therefore prosperous days dawn upon the pious.”

2. *Rig Veda*, vii. 18.22.—“Praising the liberality of Sudas, the grandson of Devavata, the son of Paijavana, the donor of two hundred cows, and of two chariots with two wives, I, worthy (of the gift), circumambulate thee, Agni, like the ministrant priest in the chamber (of sacrifice)”

3. *Rig Veda*, vii.18.23.—“Four (horses), having golden trappings, going steadily on a difficult road, celebrated on the earth, the excellent and acceptable gifts (made) to me by Sudas, the son of Pijavana; bear me as a son (to obtain) food and progeny.”

4. *Rig Veda*, vii.18.24.—“The seven worlds praise (Sudas) as if he were Indra; him whose fame (spreads) through the spacious heaven and earth; who, munificent, has distributed (wealth) on every eminent person, and (for whom) the flowing (rivers) have destroyed Yudhyamadhi in war.”

5. *Rig Veda*, vii. 18.25.—“*Maruts*, leaders (of rites), attend upon this (prince) as you did upon Divodasa, the father of Sudas: favour the prayers of the devout son of Pijavana, and may his strength be unimpaired, undecaying.”

The two others are mentioned by the Vishnu Purana. One Sudas is mentioned in Chapter IV as the descendant of Sagara. The genealogical tree connecting this Sudas with Sagara is as follows:²

“Sumati, the daughter of Kasyapa and Kesini, the daughter of Raja Vidarbha, were the two wives of Sagara. Being without progeny, the king solicited the aid of the sage Aurva with great earnestness, and the Muni pronounced this boon, that one wife should bear one son, the upholder of his race, and the other should give birth to sixty thousand sons; and he left it to them to make their election. Kesini chose to have the single son; Sumati the multitude; and it came to pass in a short time that the former bore Asamanjas, a prince through whom the dynasty continued; and the daughter of Vinata (Sumati) had sixty thousand sons. The son of Asamanjas was Ansumat.

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The son of Ansumat was Dilipa; his son was Bhagiratha, who brought Ganga down to earth, whence she is called Bhagirathi. The son of Bhagiratha was Sruta; his son was Nabhaga; his son was Ambarisha; his son was Sindhudvipa; his son was Ayutashva; his son was Rituparna, the friend of Nala, skilled profoundly in dice. The son of Rituparna was Sarvakama; his son was Sudasa; his son was Saudasa, named also Mitrasaha.”

1 Wilson's *Rig Veda*, Vol. IV (Poona Reprint), p. 146.

2 Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*, pp. 377-380.

Another Sudas is mentioned in Chapter XIX as a descendant of Puru. The genealogical tree connecting this Sudas with Puru is as follows :¹

“The son of Puru was Janamejaya; his son was Prachinvat; his son was Pravira, his son was Manasyu; his son was Bhayada; his son was Sudhumna; his son was Bahugava; his son was Samyati; his son was Bhamyati; his son was Raudrashva, who had ten sons, Riteyu, Kaksheyu, Sthandileyu, Ghrityeu, Jaleyu, Sthaleyu, Dhaneyu, Vaneyu, and Vrateyu. The son of Riteyu was Rantinara whose sons were Tansu, Aprtiratha, and Dhruva. The son of the second of these was Kanva, and his son was Medhatithi, from whom the Kanvayana Brahmans are descended. Anila was the son of Tansu, and he had four sons, of whom Dushyanta was the elder. The son of Dushyanta was the emperor Bharata;...

Bharata had by different wives nine sons, but they were put to death by their own mothers, because Bharata remarked that they bore no resemblance to him, and the women were afraid that he would therefore desert them. The birth of his sons being thus unavailing, Bharata sacrificed to the Maruts, and they gave him Bharadvaja, the son of Brihaspati by Mamata the wife of Utathya,...

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He was also termed Vitatha, in allusion to the unprofitable (*vitatha*) birth of the sons of Bharata. The son of Vitatha was Bhavanmanyu; his sons were many, and amongst them the chief were Brihatkshatra, Mahavirya, Nara and Garga. The son of Nara was Sankriti; his sons were Ruchiradhi and Rantideva. The son of Garga was Sini; and their descendants called Gargyas and Sainyas, although Kshatriyas by birth, became Brahmans. The son of Mahavirya was Urukshaya, who had three sons, Trayyaruna, Pushkarin and Kapi, the last of whom became a Brahmin. The son of Brihatkshatra was Suhotra, whose son was Hastin, who founded the city of Hastinapur. The sons of Hastin were Ajamidha, Dvimidha and Purumidha. One son of Ajamidha was Kanva, whose son was Medhatithi, his other son was Brihadishu, whose son was Brihadvasu; his son was Brihatkarman; his son was Jayadratha, his son was Vishvajit, his son was Senajit, whose sons were Ruchirashva, Kasya, Dridhadhanush, and Vasahanu. The son of Ruchiraswa was Prithusena; his son was Para; his son was Nipa; he had a hundred sons, of whom Samara, the principal, was the ruler of Kampilya. Samara had three sons, Para, Sampara, Sadashva. The son of Para was Prithu; his son was Sukriti; his son was Vibhratra; his son was Anuha, who married Kritvi, the daughter of Shuka (the son of Vyasa), and had by her Brahmadatta; his son was Vishvaksena; his son was Udaksena; and his son was Bhallata.

The son of Dvimidha was Yavinara; his son was Dhritimat; his son was Satyadhriti; his son was Dridhanemi; his son was Suparshva; his son was Sumati; his son was Sannatimat; his son was Krita, to whom Hiranyanabha taught the philosophy of the Yoga, and he compiled twenty-four Sanhitas (or compendia) for the use of the eastern Brahmans, who study the Sama-Veda. The son of Krita was Ugrayudha, by whose prowess the Nipa race of Kshatriyas was destroyed; his son was Kshemya; his son was Suvira; his son was Nripanjaya; his son was Bahuratha. These were all called Pauravas.

1 Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*, pp. 447-456.

Ajamidha had a wife called Nilini, and by her he had a son named Nila; his son was Santi; his son was Susanti; his son was Purujanu; his son was Chakshu; his son was Haryashva, who had five sons Mudgala, Srinjaya, Brihadishu, Pravira, and Kampilya. Their father said, 'These my five (pancha) sons are able (alam) to protect the countries'; and hence they were termed the Panchalas. From Mudgala descended the Maudgalya Brahmins; he had also a son named Bahvashva, who had two children, twins, a son and daughter, Divodasa and Ahalya.

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The son of Divodasa was Mitrayu; his son was Chyavana; his son was Sudasa; his son was Saudasa, also called Sahadeva; his son was Somaka; he had a hundred sons, of whom Jantu was the eldest, and Prishata the youngest. The son of Prishata was Drupada; his son was Dhrishtadyumna; his son was Drishtaketu.

Another son of Ajamidha was named Riksha; his son was Samvarana; his son was Kuru, who gave his name to the holy district Kurukshetra; his sons were Sudhanush, Parikshit, and many others. The son of Sudhanush was Suhotra; his son was Chyavana; his son was Kritaka; his son was Uparichara the Vasu, who had seven children Brihadratha, Pratyagra, Kushamba, Mavella, Matsya, and others. The son of Brihadratha was Kusagra; his son was Rishabha; his son was Pushpavat; his son was Satyadhrita; his son was Sudhanvan; and his son was Jantu. Brihadratha had another son, who being born in two parts, which were put together (*sandhita*) by a female friend named Jara, he was denominated Jarasandha; his son was Sahadeva; his son was Somapi; his son was Srutasravasa, These were kings of Magadha."

The immediate ancestry of the three Sudasas is put below in parallel columns to facilitate the settlement of the question whether they are one or three different persons:

Status in Rig Veda			Sudas in Vishnu Purana	
VII, 18:22	VII, 18:23	VII, 18:25	In the Sagar Family	In the Puru Family
Devavata	Pijavana	Divodasa=	Ritupama	Bahvashva
		Pijavana		
Pijavana	Sudas		Sarvakama	Divodasa
Sudas		Sudas	Sudas	Mitrayu
			Saudasa =	Chyavana
			Mitrasaha	
				Sudas
				Saudasa
				Somaka

From the table two things are as clear as day-light. First is that neither Sudas mentioned in the Vishnu Purana has anything to do with the Sudas mentioned in the Rig Veda. The second point which is clear is that if the Paijavana mentioned in the Mahabharata can be identified with anybody who lived in ancient times it can only be with Sudas mentioned in Rig Veda who was called Paijavana because he was the son of Pijavana which was another name of Divodasa.¹

Fortunately for me my conclusion is the same as that of Prof. Weber. In commenting upon the passage in the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata on which my thesis is based Prof. Weber² says :

“Here the remarkable tradition is recorded that Paijavana, i.e., Sudas who was so famous for his sacrifices and who is celebrated in the Rig Veda as the patron of Vishvamitra and enemy of Vasishtha, was a Shudra.”

Prof. Weber unfortunately did not realize the full significance of this passage. This is another matter. It is enough for my purpose to find that he too thinks that the Paijavana of the Mahabharata is no other than Sudas of the Rig Veda.

III

What do we know about Sudas, the Paijavana?

The following particulars are available about him:

I. Sudas was neither Dasa nor Arya. Both the Dasas as well as the Aryas were his enemies.³ This means that he was a Vedic Aryan.

II. The father of Sudas was Divodasa. He seems to be the adopted son of Vadhryashva.⁴ Divodasa was a king. He fought many battles against Turvasas and Yadus,⁵ Shambara,⁶ Parava, and Karanja⁷ and

1 Some difficulty is felt about the genealogy of this Sudas in the *Rig Veda*, which is sought to be got over by identifying Devavata with Divodasa. This difficulty has mainly arisen because of the different texts of Stanzas 22, 23 and 25 which nobody seems to have cared to collect properly. Chitrava Shastri's edition of *Rig Veda* has Pijavana throughout. Satavalekar's edition has Paijavana throughout. Wilson has Paijavana in 22 and 23 and Pijavana in 25. Wilson's text seems to be accurate. For even Yaska has noticed the existence of the name Paijavana in his Nirukta which he endeavours to explain. If Wilson's text in 25 is taken as correct no difficulty can arise. Pijavana would then appear to be another name of Divodasa and Paijavana would be another name of Sudas.

2 Muir, Vol. 1, p. 366

3 Rig Veda, VII, 83. 1.

4 Rig Veda, IX, 61.2.

5 Rig Veda, VI. 61. 1; VII 19.8

6 Rig Veda, I. 130. 7

7 Rig Veda, I. 53. 10

Gungu.¹ There was a war between Turyavana and Divodasa and his allies Ayu and Kutsa. The victory went to Turyavana.²

It seems that at one time Indra was against him particularly in the battle of Turyavana. His purohita was Bharadvaja,³ to whom Divodasa gave many gifts.⁴ Bharadvaja seems to have played the part of a traitor by joining Turyavana against Divodasa.⁵

There is no reference to the mother of Sudas. But there is a reference to the wife of Sudas. His wife's name is given as Sudevi.⁶ It is said that the Ashvins procured her for Sudas.

III. Sudas was a king and his coronation ceremony was performed by the Brahma-rishi, Vasistha.

The Aitareya Brahmana gives the following list of the kings who had the Mahabhisheka ceremony performed and the name of the Purohita who officiated at it.⁷

"With this ceremony Sharyata, the son of Manu, was inaugurated by Chyavana, the son of Bhrigu. Thence Sharyata went conquering all over the earth, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse, and was even at the sacrificial session held by the gods, the house-father."

"With this ceremony Samasushama, the son of Vajaratna, inaugurated Shatanika, the son of Satrajit. Thence Shatanika went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse."

"With this ceremony Parvata and Narada inaugurated Ambashthya. Thence Ambashthya went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse."

"With this ceremony Parvata and Narada inaugurated Yudhamasraushti, the son of Ugrasena. Thence Yudhamasraushti went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse."

"With this inauguration ceremony Kashyapa inaugurated Vishva-karma, the son of Bhuvana. Thence Vishvakarma went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse."

"They say that the earth sang to Vishvakarma the following stanza:

'No mortal is allowed to give me away (as donation).⁸ O, Vishva-karma, thou hast given me, (therefore) I shall plunge into the midst of the sea. In vain was thy promise made to Kashyapa."

"With this ceremony Vasistha inaugurated Sudas, the son of Pijavana. Thence Sudas went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse."

1 Rig Veda, X. 48

2 Rig Veda, I. 53, 8; VI. 18. 13

3 Rig Veda, I. 116. 18.

4 Rig Veda, VI. 16. 5.

5 Rig Veda, VI. 18. 13.

6 Rig Veda, I. 112. 19.

7 Martin Haug, Vol. II, pp. 523-524.

8 The king had promised the whole earth as gift to his officiating priest.

“With this inauguration ceremony Samvarta, the son of Angiras, inaugurated Maruta, the son of Avikshit. Thence Maruta went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse.”

In this list there is a specific mention of Sudas and of his coronation having been performed by Vasishtha.

Sudas was the hero in the famous Dasharajna Yuddha or the battle of the ten kings described in the *Rig Veda*. References to this famous battle occur in the various Suktas of the Seventh Mandala of the Rig Veda.

Sukta 83 says:

4. “Indra and Varuna, you protected Sudas, overwhelming the yet unassailed Bheda with your fatal weapons; hear the prayers of these Tritsus in time of battle, so that my ministration may have borne them fruit.”

6. “Both (Sudas and the Tritsus) call upon you two, (Indra and Varuna), in combats for the acquirement of wealth, when you defend Sudas, together with the Tritsus, when attacked by the ten Rajas.”

7. “The ten confederated irreligious Rajas did not prevail, Indra and Varuna, against Sudas; the praise of the leaders (of rites), the offerers of sacrificial food, was fruitful; the gods were present at their sacrifices.”

9. “One of you destroys enemies in battle, the other ever protects religious observances; we invoke you, showerers (of benefits), with praises; bestow upon us, Indra and Varuna, felicity.”

Sukta 33 says :

2. “Disgracing (Pashadyumna), they brought from afar the fierce Indra, when drinking the ladle of Soma at his sacrifice, to (receive) the libation (of Sudas); Indra hastened from the effused Soma of Pashadyumna, the son of Yayata, to the Vasishthas.”

3. “In the same manner was he, (Sudas), enabled by them easily to cross the Sindhu river; in the same manner, through them he easily slew his foes; so in like manner, Vasishthas, through your prayers, did Indra defend Sudas in the war with the ten kings.”

“Suffering from thirst, soliciting (rain), supported (by the Tritsus) in the war with the ten Rajas, (the Vasishthas) made Indra radiant as the sun; Indra heard (the praises) of Vasishtha glorifying him, and bestowed a spacious region on the Tritsus.”

Sukta 19 says :

3. “Undaunted (Indra), thou hast protected with all thy protections Sudas, the offerer of oblations; thou hast protected, in battles with enemies for the possession of the earth, TRASADASYU, the son of PURUKUTSA, and PURU.”

6. “Thy favours, Indra, to Sudas, the donor (of offerings), the presenter of oblations, are infinite; showerer (of benefits) I yoke for thee (thy vigorous) steeds; may our prayers, reach thee who art mighty, to whom many rites are addressed.”

Sukta 18 of the Seventh Mandala says :

5. “The adorable Indra made the well-known deep waters (of the Parushni)

fordable for Sudas, and converted the vehement awakening imprecation of the sacrificer into the calumny of the rivers."

6. "TURVASHA, who was preceding (at solen rites), diligent in sacrifice, (went to Sudas) for wealth; but like fishes restricted (to the element of water), the Bhrigus and Druhyus quickly assailed them; of these two everywhere going, the friend (of Sudas, Indra) rescued his friend."

7. "Those who dress the oblation, those who pronounce auspicious words, those who abstain from penance, those who bear horns (in their hands), those who bestow happiness (on the world by sacrifice), glorify that Indra, who recovered the cattle of the Arya from the plunderers, who slew the enemies in battle."

8. "The evil-disposed and stupid (enemies of Sudas), crossing the humble Parushni river, have broken down its banks; but he by his greatness pervades the earth, and KAVI, the son of CHAYAMANA, like a falling victim, sleeps (in death)."

9. "The waters followed their regular course to the Parushni, nor (wandered) beyond it; the quick course (of the king) came to the accessible places, and INDRA made the idly-talking enemies, with their numerous progeny, subject among them (to Sudas)."

10. "They who ride on parti-coloured cattle, (the Maruts), despatched by PRISHNI, and recalling the engagement made by them with their friend (Indra), came like cattle from the pasturage, when left without a herdsman; the exulting Niyut steeds brought them quickly (against the foe)."

11. "The hero INDRA created the Maruts (for the assistance of the Raja), who, ambitious of fame, slew one and twenty of the men on the two banks (of the Parushni), as a well looking priest lops the sacred grass in the chamber of sacrifice."

12. "Thou, the bearer of the thunderbolt, didst drown SHRUTA, KAVASHA, VRIDDHA, and afterwards DRUHYU in the waters; for they, Indra, who are devoted to thee, and glorify thee, preferring thy friendship, enjoy it."

13. "Indra, in his might, quickly demolished all their strongholds, and their seven (kinds of) cities; he has given the dwelling of the son of ANU to TRITSU; may we, (by propitiating), (Indra) conquer in battle the ill-speaking man."

14. "The warriors of the ANUS and DRUHYUS, intending (to carry off the) cattle, (hostile) to the pious (SUDAS), perished to the number of sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty; such are all the glorious acts of INDRA."

15. "These hostile Tritsus, ignorantly contending with INDRA, fled, routed as rapidly as rivers on a downward course, and being discomfited abandoned all their possessions to SUDAS."

16. "INDRA has scattered over the earth the hostile rival of the hero (SUDAS), the senior of INDRA, the appropriator of the oblation; INDRA has baffled the wrath of the wrathful enemy, and the (foe) advancing on the way (against SUDAS) has taken the path of flight."

17. "INDRA has effected a valuable (donation) by a pauper; he has slain an old lion by a goat; he has cut the angles of the sacrificial post with a needle; he has given all the spoils (of the enemy) to SUDAS."

18. "Thy numerous enemies, INDRA, have been reduced to subjugation; effect at some time or other the subjugation of the turbulent BHEDA, who holds men

praising thee as guilty of wickedness; hurl, INDRA, thy sharp thunderbolt against him.”

19. “The dwellers on the Yamuna and Tritsus glorified INDRA when he killed BHEDA in battle; the Ajas, the Shigrus, the Yakshas. offered to him as a sacrifice the heads of the horses killed in the combat.”

20. “Thy favours, INDRA, and thy bounties, whether old or new, cannot be counted like the (recurring) dawns; thou hast slain DEVAKA, the son of MANYAMANA and of thine own will hast cast down SHAMBARA from the vast (mountain).”

In this battle the kings who fought against Sudas were:¹ (1) Shinyu, (2) Turvasha, (3) Druhyu, (4) Kavasha, (5) Puru, (6) Anu, (7) Bheda, (8) Shambara, (9) Vaikarna, (10) another Vaikarna, (11) Yadu, (12) Matsya, (13) Paktha, (14) Bhalanas, (15) Aleena, (16) Vishanin, (17) Aja, (18) Shiva, (19) Shigru, (20) Yakshu, (21) Yudhyamadhi, (22) Yadva, (23) Devaka Manyamana, (24) Chayamana Kavi, (25) Sutuka, (26) Uchatha, (27) Shmta, (28) Vriddha, (29) Manyu, and (30) Prithu.

Obviously, the war was a much bigger war than its name indicates. The war must have been a very great event in the history of the Indo-Aryans. No wonder the victorious Sudas became a great hero of his time.² We do not know what exactly led to this war. Some indication is given by Rig Veda, vii.83.7, where the kings arrayed against Sudas are described as irreligious which suggests that it was probably a religious war.

IV. Sayanacharya, as well as tradition, declare the following hymns of the Rig Veda to have had the under-mentioned kings for their rishis :

“Vitahavya (or Bharadvaja) x.9, Sindhudvipa, son of Ambarisha (or Trisiras, son of Tvashtri) x.75, Sindhukshit, son of Priyamedha; x.133, Sudas, son of Pijavana; x.134, Mandhatri, son of Yuvanasa; x.179, Sibi, son of Usinara, Pratardana, son of Divodasa and king of Kasi, and Vasumanas, son of Rohidasva; and x.148 is declared to have had Prithi Vainya.”

It will be noticed that in this list there occurs the name of Sudas as a composer of Vedic hymns.

V. Sudas performed Ashvamedha Yajna. There is reference to this in Rig Veda, iii.53.

9. “The great *RISHI*, the generator of the gods, attracted by the deities, the

1 The list is taken from Chitrava Shastri's *Prachin Charitra Kosh*, p. 624. There is no unanimity whether all the names are of kings. Sayanacharya says that 13-16 are names of the Purohitas. There is also doubt about 27-29.

2 The name of Sudas occurs in the Rig Veda in 27 places. It shows what a great hero he must have been regarded by the Vedic people.

overlooker of the leaders (at holy rites), VISHVA-MITRA arrested the watery stream when he sacrificed for SUDAS; INDRA with the *Kushikas*, was pleased.”

11. “Approach, *Kushikas*, the steed of SUDAS; animate (him), and let him loose to (win) riches (for the raja); for the king (of the gods), has slain VRITRA in the East, in the West, in the North, therefore let (SUDAS) worship him in the best (regions) of the earth.”

VI. Sudas was known for charity to the Brahmins who called him Atithigva (the doyen) of Philanthrophists. How the Brahmins have praised him for his philanthropy appears from the following references in the Rig Veda:

i.47.6. “O, impetuous Ashvins, possessing wealth in your car, bring sustenance to Sudas. Send to us from the (aerial) ocean, or the sky, the riches which are much coveted.”

i.63.7. “Thou didst then, O,thundering Indra, war against, and shatter, the seven cities for Purukutsa, when thou, O king, didst without effort hurl away distress from Sudas like a bunch of grass, and bestow wealth on Puru.”

i. 112.19. “Come, O Ashvins, with those succours whereby ye brought glorious power to Sudas.”

vii.19.3. “Though, O fierce Indra, hast impetuously protected Sudas, who offered oblations, with every kind of succour. Thou hast preserved Trasadasyu the son of Purukutsa, and Puru in his conquest of land and in his slaughter of enemies.”

vii.20.2 “Indra growing in force slays Vritra; the hero protects him who praises him; he makes room for Sudas (or the liberal sacrificer- Sayana); he gives riches repeatedly to his worshippers.”

vii.25.3. “Let a hundred succours come to Sudas, a thousand desirable (gifts) and prosperity. Destroy the weapon of the murderous. Confer renown and wealth on us.”

vii.32.10. “No one can oppose or stop the chariot of Sudas. He whom Indra, whom the Marutas, protect, walks in a pasture filled with cattle.”

vii.53.3. “And ye, O, Heaven and Earth, have many gifts of wealth for Sudas.”

vii.60.8. “Since Aditi, Mitra, and Varuna, afford secure protection to Sudas (or the liberal man), bestowing on him offspring—may we not, O mighty deities, commit any offence against the gods ... May Aryaman rid us of our enemies. (Grant) ye vigorous gods, a wide space to Sudas.”

These are the biographical bits regarding Paijavana referred to in the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata gleaned from the most authentic source, namely, the Rig Veda. From the Rig Veda, we know that his real name was Sudas, that he was a Kshatriya. He was more than a Kshatriya. He was a king and a mighty king. To this, the Mahabharata adds a fresh and a new detail, namely that he was a Shudra. A Shudra to be an Aryan, a Shudra to be a Kshatriya and a Shudra to be a king!! Can there be a greater revelation? Can there be anything more revolutionary?

This search for biographical details may be closed with a discussion of three important questions: Was Sudas an Aryan? If Sudas is an Aryan what is the tribe to which he belonged? If Sudas is a Shudra, what does Shudra signify?

It might be well to begin with the second. For the determination of this question it is possible to derive some assistance from certain reference in the Rig Veda. The Rig Veda mentions many tribes, most important of which are Tritsus, Bharatas, Turvasas, Durhyus, Yadus, Purus and Anus. But according to the references in the Rig Veda there are only three with whom Sudas was connected. They are Purus, Tritsus and the Bharatas. It is enough to confine ourselves to these three and to find out if possible to which of these tribes he belonged. The most important stanzas bearing on the relation between Tritsus and Sudas are the Rig Veda, i.63.7; i. 130.7; vii.18.15; vii.33.5; vii.33.6; vii.83.4, 6.

In i.63,7, Divodasa is spoken of as the king of the Purus and in i. 130.7, Divodasa is spoken of as Paurve, i.e., belonging to the Purus.

Rig Veda, vii.18.15 and vii.83.6, suggest that Sudas was not a Tritsu. The first suggests that Sudas raided the camp of Tritsus who ran away and Sudas took possession of their wealth. The second suggests that Tritsus and Sudas were on one side in the war against the ten kings, but they are shown as separate. But in vii.35.5 and in vii.83.4, Sudas becomes fully identified with Tritsus; indeed, in the former Sudas becomes a king of the Tritsus.

On this question of the relation between the Tritsus and the Bharatas and between them and Sudas, we have as our evidence Rig Veda, vii.33.6 and v. 16.4, 6, 19. According to the first, Tritsus are the same as the Bharatas. According to the second, Divodasa the father of Sudas is spoken of as belonging to the Bharatas.

From these references one thing is certain that the Purus, Tritsus and Bharatas were either different branches of one and the same folk or that they were different tribes, who in the course of time became one people, folk. This is not impossible. The only question is: assuming they were different, to whom did Sudas originally belong? To the Purus, the Tritsus or to the Bharatas? Having regard to the connection of the Purus and the Bharatas with Divodasa, his father, it seems natural to suppose that Sudas originally belonged either to the Purus or to the Bharatas—which, it is difficult to say.

Whether he belonged to the Purus or not, there is no doubt that Sudas belonged to the Bharatas if regard is had to the fact that his

father Divodasa is spoken of as belonging to the Bharatas. The next question, is: who were these Bharatas and whether they are the people after whom India got the name Bharata Bhumi or the land of the Bharatas. This question is important because most people are not aware of the true facts. When Hindus talk of the Bharatas they have in mind the Daushyanti Bharatas, Bharatas descended from Dushyanta and Shakuntala and who fought the war which is described in the Mahabharata. Not only are they not aware of any other Bharatas but they believe that the name Bharata Bhumi which was given to India was given after the Daushyanti Bharatas.

There are two Bharatas quite distinct from each other. One tribe of the Bharatas are the Bharatas of the Rig Veda, who were descended from Manu and to whom Sudas belonged. The other tribe of Bharatas are the Daushyanti Bharatas. What is more important is that if India has been named Bharata Bhumi it is after the Bharatas of the Rig Veda and not after the Daushyanti Bharatas. This is made clear by the following stanzas from the Bhagavata Purana:¹

प्रियंवदो नाम सुतो मनोः स्वायंभुवस्य ह ।

तस्याग्नीध्रस्ततो नाभिर्ऋषभश्च सुतस्ततः ॥

अवतीर्ण पुत्रशतं तस्यासीद्रह्यपारगम् ।

तेषां वै भरतो ज्येष्ठो नारायणपरायणः ।

विख्यातं वर्षमेतद्वन्मात्मा भारतमुत्तमम् ॥

“Manu, the son of Syavambhu, had a son named Priyamvada; his son was Agnidhra; his son was Nabhi; he had a son Rishabha. He had a hundred sons born to him, all learned in the Veda; of them, Bharata was the eldest, devoted to Narayana, by whose name this excellent land is known as Bharata.”

This shows to what illustrious line of kings this Shudra Sudas belonged.

The next thing to find out is whether Sudas was an Aryan. The Bharatas were of course Aryans and therefore Sudas must have been an Aryan. If reference is had to Rig Veda, vii. 18.7, this connection with the Tritsus to the Aryans seems to throw some doubt on his Aryan origin. This stanza says that Indra rescued the cows of the Aryas from the Tritsus and killed the Tritsus, thereby suggesting that the Tritsus were the enemies of the Aryas. Griffiths is very much perturbed by the Tritsus being shown as non-Aryans which is the result of a literal translation of the stanza, and to avoid it he

1 Quoted by Vaidya in *Mahabharatacha Upasamhara*, p. 200.

understands cows to mean comrade.¹ This of course is unnecessary if one bears in mind that the Rig Veda Contains the story of two sorts of Aryas, whether differing in race or religion, it is difficult to say. Interpreted in the light of this fact, all that the stanza means is that at the time when it was written the Tritsus had not become Aryans by religion. It does not mean that they were not Aryans by race. It is therefore indisputable that Sudas, whether taken as a Bharata or as a Tritsu was an Aryan.

And now to the last question, though it is by no means the least. What does Shudra signify? In the light of this new discovery that Sudas was a Shudra, the word now stands in a totally different light. To old scholars to whom the word was just the name of a servile and aboriginal class this new discovery must come as a surprise for which their past researches cannot possibly furnish an answer. As for myself, I am in no better position. The reason is that the social organization of the Vedic Aryans has yet to be studied. We know from the study of primitive societies that they are organized in groups and they act as groups. The groups are of various sorts. There are clans, phratries, moieties and tribes. In some cases, the tribe is the primary unit, in others it is the clan, in others the phratry. In some cases tribes are sub-divided into clans. In other cases there are no clans. It is a single clanless tribe.

The clan embraces the descendants of a single ancestor held together by a sense of common descent. Clans often become associated through common social and ceremonial interests into major units, called phratries or brotherhoods of clans. The bond within the phratry may be relatively loose, that is, the association may not imply more than an informal feeling of preferential friendship. The phratry may become a moiety in which each clan is recognized as part of one of two major units. But moieties may occur without any sub-division, that is, the entire clan may consist of two clans. All these organizations whether it is a clan, a phratry, a moiety or a tribe, are all based on the tie of kinship.

The Vedic Aryans had no doubt some such forms of social organization. That is clear from the nomenclature. As pointed out by Prof. Senart :²

1 His rendering is "yet to the Tritsus come the Aryu's comrade, through love of spoil and heros' war, to lead them."

2 'Castes in India' by Emile Senart, p. 192.

“The Vedic hymns are all too indefinite concerning the details of external and social life. We at least see from them that the Aryan population was divided into a number of tribes or small peoples (*janas*), subdivided into clans united by the ties of kinship (*visas*), which in their turn were split up into families. The terminology of the Rig Veda, is in this respect somewhat indecisive, but the general fact is clear. *Sajata*, that is to say, ‘kinsman’ or ‘fellow in *Jati*,’ of race, seems in the Atharva-Veda to denote fellow in clan (*vis*), *Jana*, which assumes a wider significance, recalls the Avestic equivalent of the clan, the *zantu*, and the *jati* or caste. A series of terms, *vra*, *vrijana*, *vraja*, *vrata*, appear to be synonyms or subdivisions either of the clan or of the tribes. The Aryan population then lived, at the epoch to which the hymns refer, under the rule of an organization dominated by the traditions of the tribe and the lower or similar groupings. The very variety of names indicates that this organization was somewhat unsettled.”

We have, however, no information to determine which of these corresponds to the clan, which to the phratry and which to the tribe.¹ That being so, it is difficult to say whether Shudra was the name of a clan, a phratry or a tribe. It is, however, interesting to refer to the view of Prof. Weber when he comments on the passage from the Satapatha Brahmana (i. 1.4.12) where it says that different modes of address should be adopted inviting the sacrificer to proceed with the sacrifice, addressing him as ‘come’ if he is a Brahmin, ‘hasten hither’ if he is a Kshatriya, ‘hasten hither’ if he is a Vaishya and ‘run hither’ if he is a Shudra. Prof. Weber says :²

“The entire passage is of great importance, as it shows (in opposition to what Roth says in the first Volume of this Journal, p.83) that the Shudras were then admitted to the holy sacrifices of the Aryans, and understood their speech, even if they did not speak it. The latter point cannot certainly be assumed as a necessary consequence, but it is highly probable and I consequently incline to the view of those who regard the Shudras as an Aryan tribe which immigrated into India before the others.”

His conclusion that the Shudras were Aryans hits the nail squarely on the head. The only point of doubt is whether the Shudras were a tribe. That they were Aryans and Kshatriyas is beyond doubt.

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1 What we called Aryan tribes appear to be a phratry in view of their changing alliances.

2 Muir. Vol. I, p. 366.