

Vaikhānasa-Dharma-Sūtra

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Meaning of the word 'dharma':

A comparison of the Sanskrit word dharma with its cognates as found in Gk. thermos, Lat. formus, OHG. warm, Mod.Ger. warm, A.S. wearm, Eng. therm/warm: Skt. gharmanas, gives the hypothetical common word PIE.* Ghormos.¹ The semantic and the phonological correspondences suggest parity in their basal meanings and indicate the aspirations of the common culture and goals of life. Thermometer denotes 'an instrument for measuring temperature inside the body' and warm-blooded is used in the sense of constant body-temperature as found in birds and mammals, which is normally higher than that of surrounding medium, and figuratively used with reference to humans in the sense of 'passionate, amorous, emotional' implying the rise in the thermal/warmness in the blood.² The celebrated grammarian Patañjali philosophises in an effective expression: hanyā ātmānam ātmā. ātmanā hanyate ātmā³. He himself explains the phrases in which one ātmā refers to the individual self represented by the physical body and manas 'transcendental mind' and the other ātmā refers to the soul encompassing the transcendental heart of each individual controlling the

transcendental mind. The transcendental mind, when controlled by the transcendental heart, becomes the same as the latter⁴ The soul (also called antarātman) is omnipresent and omnipotent while individual self (also called jīva) is confined to the transcendental mind (called manas) restricting its operation through the sense organs under the limitations of the body.⁵

The freedom of the body of each individual is again restricted by the society in which he domiciles. The social restrictions are further governed by the head of the state or the monarch. The head of the state or the monarch is expected to play the role of the omnipresent soul. Both the omnipresent soul and the individual self in the society influence individual's freedom as well as the group/groups through different rules which can range from taboo to cognizable offence. The rectification for violation of taboos are to be effected by imposing self-discipline (prāyaścitta) through self-imposed ordeal, while the cognizable offences are liable for punishment to be awarded by the head of the state or the king. By experiencing the punishment, each individual is exonerated from accruing sin effecting the life here and hereafter. The sin and merit are to be known by the experience of pain and pleasure respectively through the heat in the body. But the omnipresent ātman has a capacity in reserve to caution and reprimand the manas so that an individual turns himself as a best citizen in any given society under the beliefs of transmigration and rebirth, the foundations of the Indian culture.

The code of conduct applicable to both ethics and morals are necessarily to be promoted by every head of the state or the king time and again guaranteeing a social, secure and unbiased jurisprudential

governance. By this acceptance the governance of religion, its institutions and social justice fall under the jurisdiction of the state and the monarch can influence his citizens by persuasion and if needed by promulgation of law bringing ethics under the jurisdiction of cognizable offences. But the law cannot be operative in the freedom of each individual citizen inside his own family. The domestic rituals are performed by members of each family at their own option without trespassing the boundaries of their freedom, which is measured by tolerance exhibited by cooperation extended to the rules of the domiciliations in a village, town, capital, etc. These codes of domestic rituals are called gṛhya-sūtras, while the codes of conduct in the congregations of groups vis-a-vis family rituals are called dharma-sūtras.⁶ The gṛhya-sūtras are extracted from the congregational and collective group sacrifices by individualization of the Vedic rituals for the benefit of each individual or of his family. The rules of congregational and collective group sacrifices are extracted into the gṛhya-sūtras for the restricted operation in individual houses, while dharma-sūtras are for the wider operation in a given society. As the source for the lawmaker is the same for both the gṛhya-sūtras and dharma-sūtras, they are treated as one unit in contrast to the rules of congregational group sacrifices called śrauta-sūtras.

Interplay of the individual and the congregation:

The relationship between the individual and the society is very subtle and is defined through the three śrauta-sūtra, gṛhya-sūtra and dharma-sūtra texts determined by the ritualists and law givers taking into consideration of the changing situations and relation between the rulers and the citizens to be addressed for the betterment of humanity which is

identified as the devatā or Puruṣa, Vikhanasas belongs to the clan of fire worshippers in the āryan community advocating a congregational sacrifice with the collective effort of the society for the betterment by alleviation of grief and creation of happiness both here and hereafter. Thus the performance of sacrifices is a chosen path of Vikhanasas. Vikhanasas is addressing his own group and the non-āryan residents who are of course having some styles of traditions and beliefs. The conflict between the āryan and the non-āryan (also called dravidian) residents is addressed in a brief exposition which could serve as a charter or code of conduct to be followed by all citizens for the enhancement of happiness through the realisation of humanity. The code of conduct is not only for the āryans but also for all the residents by which one can question the state when the code is defied by groups or individuals. Therefore the dharma-sūtras speak the temper and mood of the rulers while the law books speak the acceptance by the citizens. The Vaikhānasa-gr̥hya-sūtras define the rituals to be followed by a citizen to be considered as an āryan and fulfill his individual desires by participating effectively in a given society which is defined by faiths, beliefs, traditions and rituals. The ritual is the begetter of language to the society. So the structure of each sūtra is a microcosm of a given society at a particular period and a particular point of locality.

Structure of the Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra:

The Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra is a part and parcel of the Vaikhānasa-gr̥hya-sūtra. The Vaikhānasa-gr̥hya-sūtra is divided into eleven praśnas (chapters), of which the first eight praśnas is the gr̥hya-sūtra, the following three praśnas, namely eighth, ninth, and tenth praśnas are the dharma-sūtra (466 aphorisms) and the last and the

eleventh is the pravara-sūtra (61 aphorisms), in which the gotras and pravaras of the Vaikhānasa sect of fire-worshippers are given for the benefit of identifying the genealogy of seers, mantras in the Taittirīya-śākhā of the Yajurveda. Each praśna is divided into khaṇḍas (paragraphs).

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The Vaikhānasa-gr̥hya-sūtra together with the Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra was published with the commentaries of Śrīnivāsa-makhi-Vedāntadeśika called Sūtra-tātparya-cintāmaṇi by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati in 1967 and of Nṛsimhavājapeya called Sūtra-bhāṣya under the title Vaikhānasa-smārta-sūtra in two parts in 1984 and 1985 by Vaikhānasa-Mahāmaṇḍali, Vijayawada and both the editions were edited by R. Parthasarathi Bhattacharya. W. Caland translated the work under the title Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra and published as Bibliotheca Indica Work No 251 in 1926. The Vaikhānasadharmasūtra was also published in the Trivandrum Sanskrit series, Trivandrum and its translation from Vijayanagaram.

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According to the 11th Praśna of the Vaikhānasa-gr̥hya-sūtra, which is also called Pravara-praśna, the progeny is also called by the progenitor. For example Śrīnivāsa-Bhṛgu was always called Bhṛgu and also Mārīca is called Marīci. There appears to be one Vikhanasas who was the ancestor to the descendant called Vikhanasas the author of the Vaikhānasa-gr̥hya-sūtra, because the Bodhāyana-dharma-sūtra (2.6.245: vānaprastho vaikhānasaśāstra-samudācāraḥ) mentions the Vaikhānasa-śāstra. Actually Vikhanasas has modeled his Dharma-sūtra on the basis of the Bodhāyana-kalpasūtra. Many explanations of the Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra are to be found in the Bodhāyana as the

latter was very brief and selective. For example for Bodhāyana nonvegetarian food can be offered and partaken by brāhmaṇas whereas Vikhanasas is very conservative and prohibits even eating together with nonvegetarians, except when he is a yogin or avadhūta who transcended the frontiers of the fourfold caste system. Or Vikhanasas could be an younger contemporary to Bodhāyana hailing from the same region of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam of course from different localities.

The first sūtra of the dharma-sūtra reads: atha varṇāśrama-dharmam (8.1.1.1) 'now (after completing the enunciation of rules for domestic rituals) the rules are ordained for balance of varṇa 'community' and āśrama 'period of life'. The last sūtra is: tasmāt brāhmaṇādyāḥ savarṇāyāṃ vidhivat putram utpādayeyuḥ ity āha bhagavān vikhanāḥ (10.3.15.26) ' the celebrated Vikhanasas ordains that each person who is defined as brāhmaṇa, etc. by birth should marry a women from the same caste and beget progeny (for peace in the society)'. Now in between the two sūtras, Vikhanasas gives dos and don'ts to carve a decent society and special rules to accommodate the custom trespassers too. The trespassers are also our beloved valuable citizens who should be provided with a guarantee of some livelihood. So institution of marriage is the determinant of an individual in a given society. Each individual, male or female, gets released from the parents at marriage and hence he/she has to face the consequences, and this is the idea behind the svayaṃvara 'choosing a spouse' by a man/woman. How the society accepts an individual is a great concern. So, the linear representation of a man in the society is:

Premarriage < marriage > postmarriage - wood- - recluse of
from birth householder lander everywhere
up to educa- with wife with wife or
tion anywhere

Vikhanasas discusses the dharma 'bearing the balance' in different situations against the background of the Bodhāyana- dharma-sūtra. As the scheme of this work is to preserve the clan clean and unpolluted by avoidance of unacceptable matches of marriage.

A bird's-eye-view of the Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra can be presented as follows:

EIGHTH PRAŚNA IN GR̥HYA-SŪTRA = FIRST PRAŚNA IN DHARMASŪTRA

(Here the four numbers denote serially, serial number of the praśna of the Gr̥hya-sūtra, serial number of the praśna in the Dharma-sūtra, the serial number of the khaṇḍa in each praśna in the Dharma-sūtra and the total number of sūtras in each khaṇḍa)

8.1.1.1-13 Enumeration of four castes and their respective professions.

8.1.2.1-12 Four periods of life for a brahmin, the code and conduct of a brahmacārin,

8.1. 3.1- 7 Four types of brahmacārins, based on their goals.

8.1. 4. 1-4 Shifting of a brahmacārin to a householder by marriage through some rituals.

- 8.1. 5.1- 6 Four types of householders on account of their aspirations and occupations.
- 8.1. 6. 1-6 Ritualistic duties to be performed by a householder together with his wife.
- 8.1.7. 1-8 Two types of woodlanders, those who move from brahmacarya and those who turn from the householder.
- 8.1. 8.1-13 Enumeration of various types of woodlanders who are from brahmacarya.
- 8.1.9. 1-15 Enumeration of four types of bhikṣus. The sannyāsin is called bhikṣu.
- 8.1.10.1-10 A special category called yogin is recognised beyond the fixed four castes of the āryan society in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam.
- 8.1.11.1-30 Description of one of the types of yogins called ekārṣya and their difference with the other type of yogin.

NINTH PRAŚNA IN GR̥HYA-SŪTRA = SECOND PRAŚNA IN DHARMASŪTRA

9. 2.1. 1-9 Prescription of the śrāmaṇaka fire ritual by a woodlander.
9. 2. 2.1-7 Procedure of the śrāmaṇaka ritual.
9. 2. 3.1-6 Declaration of the offering of the oblations by the woodlander's wife in the śrāmaṇaka ritual.
9. 2. 4. 1-6 Raising and kindling of the śrāmaṇaka fire altar.
9. 2.5.1-11 Duties of the woodlander and his wife in the third period.
9. 2. 6. 1-4 The fourth period of sannyāsa and enumeration of its types. Qualifications to shift to the fourth period of 'recluse'.
- 9.2.7.1-7 Procedure of initiation to sannyāsa.
- 9.2.8.1-6 Discarding the paraphernalia of the woodlander fixing

liberation as the target of the fourth period.

9.2. 9.1-10 Definition of dharma and its general rules governing the etiquettes and ethics.

9.2.10.1-12 Internal purification of the self. Rules of conduct for a recluse continued.

9.2.11.1-10 Reverence to be shown to the members of the family and of the society and occasions of external impurity.

9. 2.12.1-6 Occasions of disruption to the Vedic recitations, and special occasions when the Veda is to be recited.

9. 2.13.1-7 Procedure of midday bath in a flowing river.

9. 2.14.1-16 Procedure of midday bath in a tank or at a well and on partaking food.

9. 2.15.1-11 Restrictions on partaking food, pure, impure and prohibited foods.

TENTH PRAŚNA IN GR̥HYA-SŪTRA = THIRD PRAŚNA IN DHARMASŪTRA

10. 3.1.1-17 Code of conduct to be observed by a householder inside the house (in private life).

10. 3.2.1- 20 Etiquettes and ethics common to all citizens to be observed in the society (in public life).

10. 3.3.1-13 Restrictions on the use of various articles inside and outside the sacrifice.

10. 3.4.1-13 Avoidance of impure acts and objects. Purificatory procedures to sanctify the articles especially used in sacrifices.

10. 3.5.1-14 Freedom, restrictions and prohibitions for woodlanders.

10.3.6.1-11 Daily bath and code of conduct of a bhikṣu.

10.3.7.1-14 Sobriety of a sannyāsin.

10.3.8.1-7 Dispensation of the corporal body of the sannyāsin after his demise.

10.3.9.1-6 Nārāyaṇa-bali - a great ritual of unifying the sannyāsin with the Puruṣa who is identified with Nārāyaṇa - the seer of the Puruṣa-sūkta hymn (RV.10.90).

10.3.10.1-8 Funeral rites of a sannyāsin with libation and burnt ghee oblations.

10.3.11.1-15 The obverse and inverse intercaste marriages. (After explaining the code of conduct from birth to the fall of the corporal body of all the people belonging to their respective castes, Vikhanasas directs his attention to the obverse and inverse intercaste marriages.)

10.3.12.1-19 Classification of pure castes 10.3.13. 1-22 Recognition and reorganisation of caste structure resulting from obverse and inverse marriages between couples of different castes. Lists of new castes and their professions assured by the state.

10.3.14.1- 25 -do- continued

10.3.15. 1-27 -do- continued

ELEVENTH PRAŚNA IN GR̥HYA-SŪTRA CALLED PRAVARA-PRAŚNA

11.1. 12 Use of pravara and gotra in sacrificial rituals.

11.2. 7 Classification of the number of persons grouped in the pravaras - five membered pravaras.

11.3. 9 Enumeration of three membered pravaras.

11. 4. 7 Enumeration of three membered pravaras continued.

11.5. 5 Enumeration of three membered pravaras continued.

11.6.4 Enumeration of single membered pravara of Vāsiṣṭhās.

11.7. 5 Enumeration of three membered pravaras continued.

11.8.12 Enumeration of three membered pravaras continued.

ANNOTATIONS

In as small as 527 aphorisms Vikhanasas gives instructions to the so called fire-worshipping āryans, who are actually nonresidents. as to how they are to protect themselves on the one hand and how they should accommodate themselves with the native non-āryans/ dravidians of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam to consolidate and stabilise the new dynasty of Pallavas. The Tamil literature of Saṅgam period and the psalms sung by the Āḷvārs during that period in the anthology called Nālāyira-Divya-Prabandha give a picture of strife they have faced in the process of āryanisation. The aphorisms are more of a defence strategy for themselves in their circles rather than general rules of the state.

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8.1.1-13: In conformity with the Puruṣa-sūkta, the castes are four, namely, brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra. First three castes are governed by the domestic rituals. The brāhmaṇa shall live on learning, teaching, performing sacrifices for himself and for others, giving and taking donations. The kṣatriya and vaiśya perform sacrifices, read Veda and give donations. The kṣatriya lives on ruling the land, punishing the wicked and enter in warfare to protect the land from enemies. The vaiśya lives on protection of cattle, increases immovable assets of land and invests the movable assets in trade of commodities. The śūdras live on serving the three castes and cultivation of land, maintenance of cattle

farms. The brāhmaṇa has four periods of life (āśrama) namely, brahmacārin (student of Vedic studies), gr̥hastha (householder), vānaprastha (woodlander) and bhikṣu (recluse), while the kṣatriya has the first three, and vaiśya has only first two periods and śūdra has only one period of householder. They can of course, be the institutor of temple and participate in congregational temple worship and protection of temple.

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Vikhanasas is defining the āryan society of the Pallava king Skandavarman who took the tribal land of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam from the Śātavāhana rulers at their decline. The king has to make friends with the natives and ensure a greater security of life to all residents. Skandavarman took a privilege of āryanising the local god and to build a temple at the hill station on Tirumala in the midst of dense forest. So he gave several concessions to the tribes living there by assuring an active participation in the temple worship besides providing jobs of maintaining the temple. This historical development was recorded by Śrīnivāsa-Bhṛgu, one of the priests at the temple of Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara during the ninth century A.D., i.e. after five to six centuries after the establishment of the Pallava dynasty. First and foremost concern of Vikhanasas is to give a charter of his constitution on behalf of his king. As a recluse he can definitely speak openly for a popular government. So Vikhanasas has recognised a yogin who is not governed by rules spoken of in his own book. The yogin is above a bhiṣu. Bhikṣu is a begger of liberation for himself and a begger of food for the society. Bhikṣu can himself grow as a yogin who goes beyond the caste system. Therefore the hill station Tirumala is made a paradise for yogins and bhikṣus. Hence the Lord is called Yoga-Veṅkaṭeśa 'Yogin's Lord of the mountain Veṅkaṭa'.

Therefore special features are assigned to the yoga-mūrti 'statue of yogic deity' in Vaikhānasa temple architecture.

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8.1.9.1-15: Bhikṣu 'recluse' aspiring liberation from the cycle of birth lives on begging (without any attachment to his family) and is of four types called kuṭīcaka, bahūdaka, haṃsa and paramahaṃsa. The kuṭīcaka like Gautama, Bhāradvāja, Yājñavalkya and Hārīta, lives in a hermitage, partakes only eight morsels of food, acquires the knowledge of yoga and practices (as a means) and prays for liberation only. The bahūdaka also prays for liberation, but he holds triple staff and a water jar, wears clothes coloured with orange pigment, lives in the houses of the brahmarṣis and of other pious persons (of the same temperament), eats food, avoiding meat, salt, and stale, obtained by begging from only seven houses. The haṃsa recluse is one who does not stay more than a day in a village or more than five days in a town, sustains himself on the urine and excreta of the cow or who fasts for a month or who restricts the quantity of food according to the increase or decrease of moonlight in the night (which is named nityacāndrāyaṇa-vrata) and aspires to be on move from place to place. The paramahaṃsa resides under the shade of a tree, or in a deserted house or a burial ground with or without garments on body. This definition is exclusively based on the influence of the Buddhist and Jain monks. Therefore the paramahaṃsas do not have any difference of actions as of merit and demerit, difference between false and truth, pure and impure (as pure heart or impure heart). Therefore whomsoever he sees is equal to himself and he has no difference in cognition of a lump or a stone or a gold-piece and hence he begs from houses of all castes.

The brahmaṇas have four periods through their life while kṣatriyas have three and vaiśyas have two periods. By saying so excluding brahmaṇas, all the other castes, have no eligibility to move to sannyāsa period and the vaiśya cannot even have the woodlander period.

The merit of observing the rules of dharma is of two types, namely desire oriented (as in the observance of the gṛhya-rules) or undesirous. Undesirous execution of dharma is to do the act which is ordained in this book without expectancy of any material gain. Then it is called merit. The undesirous action is again of two types as motivated and unmotivated. The great sages do not court the motivated undesirous action, for it brings down the religious merit already accrued resulting in rebirth and also diseases to the body. By unmotivated undesirous action after knowing the transitoriness of the terrestrial, the atmospheric and the celestial worlds and that there is nothing else other than the supreme soul and by breaking away the bondage of encumbrances created by the association of wife after acquiring control over senses through yogic practices of uniting the inner self with the supreme self . And finally leaving the corporal body, he enters into the satiating eternal bliss like a flow of ambrosia and shining like a beacon of light (inside the heart). This is the final goal of life (and also the message of this book).

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8.1.10,1-10: Yogins who practice to unite the manas with the ātman are of three types, namely sāraṅga, ekārṣya and visaraka. The yoga is based on the principle of identity between the individual finite self and the omnipresent infinite soul. Sāraṅga is a practitioner who runs freely like a deer to reach the experience of identity. They are again of four types

namely, the anirodhaka, nirodhaka, mārḡaga and vimārḡaga, on the basis of the maturity of their mental state.

The anirodhaka is one who moves freely in this world experiencing identity of his self with Viṣṇu 'one who pervades everywhere' (i.e.ātman). Therefore they need not practice any more yoga or yāga. The nirodhaka is of a lower cadre in which the practitioner has to practice sixteen types of yogic practices comprising aṣṭāṅga-yoga 'eight-fold yoga comprising yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, and samādhi and their eight subdivisions (as detailed in the yoga treatises). The mārḡaga is one who practices the six types of yoga excluding the first two, yama and niyama. The vimārḡaga is one who follows meticulously all the eight paths of yoga as ordained in the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali. The visaraka is of multiple types based on polytheistic practices.

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8.1.11.1-30: The ekārṣya-yogin is of five types, namely dūraga, adūraga, bhrūmadhyaga, asambhakta and sambhakta, on the basis of the mode of practice. The word ṛṣi in ekārṣya denotes a mantra or a hymn which is used in meditation and also the teacher who cognized it; e.g. gāyatṛī is a mantra and Viśvāmitra is a seer who pronounced his experience in words and handed over to the practitioners. Similarly the Puruṣa-sūkta in the Ṛgveda (RV.10.90) and in the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka (3.13) as seen by the seer Nārāyaṇa and its recast - the Nārāyaṇa-sūkta in the Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad (13.1-2) are the ṛṣis. Thus it denotes a particular Vedic recension of the four Vedas obtained through the birth from the parentage. Thus Vikhanasas is having the Taittirīya-śākhā of the Yajurveda as the ṛṣi on the basis of which he made his kalpa-sūtra

and moulded himself as a yogin. Thus he introduced the aṣṭāṅga-yoga in his order of discipline. He explains in detail the procedure of practice in 8.1.11.4-20 which has become his brand. Through the practice of control of breath and the transcendental mind (manas), the practitioner enters into the solar plexus (āditya) through the piṅgala nerve and joins himself with Puruṣa who is residing there. Then along with that Puruṣa he enters into the lunar plexus and joins with the Puruṣa who is residing there. With the energy received there he enters into the energy (vidyut) plexus and joins with the Puruṣa. The energy there is like a flash of lightning in thunder. It is like entering into the atmospheric region. From there, energised with that flash of light he enters in succession into the celestial Vaikuṅṭha. In later period after the introduction of haṭha-yoga the whole process was scientifically presented as serpent-power and ṣaṭ-cakras. To express in other words, it can be retold as follows. The union of the individual self with the universal self through the effort of the individual self (however transient it be and limited in dimension). There itself he experiences the destruction of the whole universe and finds himself as omnipresent like the ether. It means the individual self merges with Puruṣa from whom the whole universe is evolved. Thus the yogin has to practice till Puruṣa is experienced as a mere existence without any adjuncts. Without moving his mind or body the practitioner realises the liberation and hence he is called adūraga. In another method of uniting the individual self with the universal soul, the practitioner takes his manas, with five vital airs inside the body, energising with mere existence which is like fire/lightening in the middle of his eyebrows and again recedes to the old position through the piṅgala nerve. Because of the movement of the manas to the middle of the eyebrows, the practitioner is called bhrūmadhyaga. The asamhaktā practitioner is one

who meditates with the manas on Puruṣa. In meditation he hears by recollection the Vedic hymn of Nārāyaṇa- sūkta. He sees a configured Puruṣa. He cognizes the smell of earth which is a product of Puruṣa. He salutes by raising his hands in meditation. Therefore there is no Brahman as an outside entity from the practitioner's ātman. Conversely there is nothing other than Brahman i.e. 'omnipresent ātman'. Failing to realise this truth the practitioners find polytheism and meditate upon various gods. Hence such a practitioner is called virasaga. This theory of polytheism was created by Prajāpati himself to confound even the seers. Then what a pity for the normal human beings. No one should entertain polytheistic ideas. By shunning the polytheistic ideas they are really willing to unite the individual self with the universal soul. Therefore to sum up some say that the universal soul in the transcendental heart (hṛdaya) itself is Puruṣa vouched in the Puruṣa-sūkta in the Ṛgveda and in the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka and retold as Nārāyaṇa-sūkta in the Mahā-nārāyaṇopaniṣad. Some opine that there is nothing else called dhyāna other than performing actions as ordained and it is the embodiment of dhyāna. One has to try to attain liberation through performance of action in the form of sacrifices. Therefore those who aspire liberation only in this birth should not follow the path of visaraka. To bridge the gap between the practice of meditation and practice of rituals, Vikhanasas concludes that the practitioner shall start with the performance of rituals assuming the existence of the distinguishable godhead, and end up in meditation on the ātman, the unqualified Brahman.

Therefore there are eleven types of brāhmaṇas, namely four types of brahmacārins, four types of householders, and three types of recluses who are bereft of wives (8.1.131).

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9. 2.1. 1-9 to 9. 2. 4. 1-6: Vikhanasas allotted five khaṇḍas to describe the salient features of the śrāmaṇakāgni-ritual to be performed in third period by a woodlander. In a forest, or in a secluded place on the bank of a river, the man passing through the third period has to arrange a hermitage and move to the hermitage along with his wife with all the required paraphernalia of utensils, etc. The code of conduct of the woodlander forms an exclusive contribution of Vikhanasas to accommodate Buddhist and Jain traditions and also extending some privileges to women in sacrifices. So Bodhāyana- dharmasūtra, 2.6.16 reads: vānaprastho vaikānasaśāstra- samudācāraḥ. ... śrāmaṇakenāgnim ādhāya..., testifying that the śrāmaṇakāgni ritual and code of conduct for a woodlander is a special contribution of Vikhanasas. Vikhanasas compares and contrasts the śrāmaṇakāgni ritual with the darsapūrṇamāsa for clear comprehension and significance of this fire altar. The śrāmaṇaka fire altar, in all respects of measurements, is the same as the sabhya fire altar. But the difference is that this fire altar is raised only in the obser- vation of the woodlander period and the wife of the woodlander is also allowed to offer oblations independently and hold a staff of two bamboo sticks tied together in the same size of the length of the hair on her crown. She is considered as a female ascetic.

What is the authority for creation of this special fire altar apart from five altars of sacrifice? Very interestingly Vikhanasas shows the authority in Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī: tapasām śramaṇam etanmūlaṃ tasmād etadvidhānam enam agniṃ ca śrāmaṇakam ity āhuḥ (9.2.5.11). Pāṇini reads: kumāraḥ śramaṇādibhiḥ (Pāṇ. 2.1.70) ordaining the formation of a karmadhāraya compound of kumārī (fem.) with the group of words

śramaṇā, parivrājikā (fem.), etc. Here śramaṇā and parivrājikā refer to the lady monks of the Jaina and Buddhistic order. So Bodhāyana reads: parivrājakaḥ parityajya banbhūn aparigrahaḥ parivrajed yathāvadhi, 2.6.18, 'parivrājaka discards all relatives and lives on moving from place to place in the society without accepting anything from others'. When the words kumārī and śramaṇī are combined as an adjectival compound both should have relation through action. The rule Pāṇ. 6.2.26: kumāraś ca, ordaining the retention of the original accent to the compound also suggests that it is in the jurisdiction of the Vedic sacrifice. So kumārī shall be connected to the sacrifice on the one hand and she shall be an ascetic in practice on the other. The words parivājikā and śramaṇā are used by the Buddhists and Jains when women were given entrance into their hermitages. Kālidāsa introduces a female religious mendicant Kauśikā in his Mālavikāgnimitra. Hence to find a suitable independent place for a wife of a forest-sacrificer, a separate fire altar is designed on the same pattern of the sabhya altar for exclusive use of a wife and also along with her woodlander husband. She is conferred the status of brahmacāriṇī with a staff of two bamboo sticks in the length of her hair on the crown. While yajñopavīta 'sacred thread' is an insignia of sacrifice, daṇḍa 'a staff of bamboo stick' is also added to it (10.3.1.1) as an insignia for a woodlander's wife (9.2.3.1-3). The staff in hand of the wife of a woodlander differentiates her from the śramaṇas of other religions. With this Vikhanasas recognises the existence of women force in the Vedic fold as ascetics who completed all obligations along with her husband in the householder status and became brahmacāriṇīs with rights to offer burnt ghee oblations into the srāmaṇaka fire altar with the same hymns of prājapatya, etc. rituals. It speaks of the influence of other systems in the Toṇḍamaṇḍala.

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The words vānaprastha, mauni, muni, bhikṣuka, sannyāsin and yogin are used in their derivative conventional senses signifying personal achievements of the practitioner. The period of woodlander can be taken up by a bachelor or a householder. The bachelor turned woodlander has a greater freedom and hence on the basis of the practice he is classified severally as kālāśika, uddaṇḍasaṃvṛtta, aśmakuṭṭa, ugraphalin, dantolūkhalika, uñchavṛttika, sandaṃśanavṛttika, kapotavṛttika, mṛgacārika, hastādāyin, śailaphalakhādin, arkadagdhāśin, bailvāśin, kusumāśin, pāṇḍupatrāśin, kālāntarabhōjin, ekakālika, catuṣkālīka, kaṇṭakaśāyin, vīrāsanaśāyin, pañcāgni-madhyāśāyin, dhūmāśin, pāṣāṇaśāyin, abhyavakāśin, udakumbha-vāsin, maunin, avākchiras, sūryapratimukha, ūrdhvabāhuka, (adho-mukha), ekapādasthitata, etc. (8.1.8.1). By advancement of age and achievements in practice they ascend to the next period of bhikṣu. So he practices silence as a prelude to bhikṣu. But he begs arms and also offers burnt ghee oblations in fire, while maintaining silence (laukikāgnau samidho hutvā bhikṣānnaṃ medhāpradaṃ śuddhaṃ maunī bhūñjīta, 9.2.12.15). He has no social and professional obligations, either to the house or to the society (cf. 10.3.5.9,p. 1028). So the words muni and yati describe the fringe area between the woodlander and the recluse. The yogin is one who is beyond the bracketed system of four castes. He is of great value to the society, because he breaks the barriers of caste and transcends to a very high value in life (8.1.11. 1-19).

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10.3.8.1-4 to 10.3.10,1-8: Disposal of the body of the bhikṣu is a very important ritual to be performed by his son (if he is a householder or woodlander in second and third periods) or by a disciple (if he is from the

first period) by which his ātman merges with his source - the primordial Puruṣa.

Sannyāsins are of two types, namely anāhitāgnis who have not kindled perpetual fire of sacrifice according to śrauta-sūtras in the second period, and āhitāgnis who have performed sacrifices by kindling sacrificial fire in their previous periods. The son or some body bundles the deceased body of the sannyāsin in hay grass and ties it to wood with the twined rope of darbha grass. The corpse is taken with the help of brāhmaṇas on their shoulders or by any carriage to a bed of a river which flows to the sea or the sandy riverine bank. A pit is dug so deep that it is not in the reach of jackals or any another animal or bird. The body is bathed with the gāyatrī-mantra and laid in the pit in a seated or recumbent position. Then his triple staff is put in his right hand with the Vaiṣṇava hymns, the string of darbha grass (with which his body was tied to the wood) in his left hand and sips of pure water are offered in his mouth with the hymn 'dasya pāre rajasa'. Then his begging bowl is placed on the belly with the sāvitṛī-mantra and the saffron cloths, the vessel used for collection of clay and the water jar with the hymn 'bhūmir bhūmiḥ' on the genitals and then the pit is closed with sand. This is the burial procedure which is prescribed for the anāhitāgni-sannyāsin.

Whereas in the case of an āhitāgni-sannyāsin firstly the fire lodged in the transcendental heart at the time of renunciation ceremony is invoked by his son or disciple into the ātman of the corpse. The corpse is to be brought to the sandy shore, etc. as prescribed earlier. After bathing with gāyatrī-mantra, the domestic fire is kindled and the son invokes in the sacrificial fire the ātman with 'upāvaroha' and the mixture of ghee

and milk is put into his mouth with the hymn 'pavitram te'. The remaining rites of laying the staff, etc. are done as prescribed for the anāhāgni-sannyāsin. Then the corpse is burnt in the fire on the bank with the hymns prescribed in the brahma-medha and piṭṛ-medha. This is the cremation procedure prescribed for the āhitāgni. In both the cases there is no impurity to be observed by the family members and hence the rituals like offering bali-piṇḍa, dāna, ekoddiṣṭa-śrāddha, etc. are not to be performed. Instead a ritual called Nārāyaṇa-bali is to be performed. Bodhāyana and Vikhanasas explain the procedure by which the ātman of the sannyāsin is merged with the primordial Puruṣa, so that he shall not return again to the terrestrial region. Thus Vikhanasas advocates the ascendance of a householder to a sannyāsin.

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10.3.11.1-22 to 11.1-8: Vikhanasas sees the need for identification and perpetuation of purity of the clan without disturbing the fabric of the existing social order, and conservation of the Vedic tradition, which is considered as indispensable even in a distant land of Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam, far away from the main land of āryāvarta. To link with the proto-āryan community and to remember and cherish the migration to the south, he introduces the identification of groups of vaikhānasas, through the system of gotra and pravara. This was already established in tradition in the āryāvarta as Pāṇini attests its existence in his grammatical sūtras. He sees the institution of the marriage as the backbone for the perpetuation of the balance in the society. Vikhanasas draws his source to a clan of fire-worshippers in āryan community, according to which the fire is the medium to connect each individual to the society and also to the deities of the terrestrial, atmospheric and celestial regions. The fire

ritual provides facility to migrate to any place of choice. This section called Pravara-praśna is the eleventh chapter of the Vaikhānasa-gr̥hyasūtra running in eight khaṇḍas (with 61 aphorisms). This is in fact an elucidation of what is said in 10.3.11 to 10.3.15. The clan comprises of progenitors (gotra) and the most prominent descendants (pra-vara) of each progenitor. The progenitors and the prominent descendants are of the same value and hence at every sacrificial ritual they are to be remembered along with the hymns seen by them (11.1. 3). The progenitors are eight comprising a group of seven-seers Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha and Kāśyapa, and Agastya, the eighth, who is considered as responsible for the migration of āryans into south India. These eight progenitors and the celebrated descendants are grouped into several combinations with the inclusion of three or five or only one without any inclusion. The participation of each descendant governed by gotra may be of different assignments in the sacrifice. He can officiate as a hotṛ or an adhvaryu. Hotṛ invokes the deity at the sacrificial fire while adhvaryu offers the burnt ghee oblations. Three membered pravara is most popular and single membered pravara is exceptional with Vāsiṣṭha, who can function as hotṛ and adhvaryu as Vasiṣṭha did (11.6.1). Hotṛ is a priest of the Ṛgveda and adhvaryu is a priest of the Yajurveda. The status enjoyed by Vasiṣṭha or Vāsiṣṭha is very significant by its derivative sense. The Ṛgveda is the fundamental and the Yajurveda is its operational extension.

This particular arrangement of classification of the pravara and gotra in fire sacrifices is also extended to the household institution of marriage. The marriage between same gotra is absolutely prohibited and any violation may lead to a taboo to a cognizable offence effecting

profession and inheritance. Thus Vikhanasas aims to protect the Veda and the fabric of the society in Tonḍamaṇḍalam.

APPRAISAL

The impressiveness and impact of the Vaikhānasa-dharma- sūtra is seen in the Abhijñāna-Śākuntala of Kālidāsa. The first act is set in the woodland hermitage of Kaṇva who was depicted as a Vaikhānasa seer (vaikhānasaṃ kim anayā vratam ā pradānāt, I. 24) of Kāśyapa-gotra and through the behaviour of Duṣyanta the poet depicts the adaptation of this dharma as a model in the Deccan, representing the last phases of the Śātavāhana rule and the ascending phase of the Pallavas. The sage Kaṇva is a naiṣṭhika-brahmacārin (kāśyapaḥ sāśvate brahmaṇi sthita iti prakāśaḥ, 1. 22) and is a permanent woodlander with a hermitage in the the forest (araṇyaukasaḥ, 4. 6). He was performing all the time sacrifices in the fire-altar:

amī vediṃ paritaḥ kṛptadhiṣṇyāḥ,
samidvantaḥ prāntasaṃstīṇadarbhāḥ/
apaghnanto duritaṃ havyagandhair
vaitānas tvāṃ vahnayaḥ pāvayantu// (4.8)

From this it can be inferred that a naiṣṭhika-brahmacārin can be a woodlander and a yogin, but he need not be a recluse (bhikṣu).

Even though Vikhanasas at length pleaded for the fourth period of bhikṣuka/sannyāsin there are no evidences of that this class came into vogue during his own life time in the Vaikhānassa community. Even in bidding farewell to Śākuntalā, he counsels that she can be back to his hermitage only after fulfilling all charges of house-wife and handing over

the kingdom to her son along with her husband as a woodlander (vānaprastha); c.f.

bhūtvā cirāya caturantamahīsaptnī
dauṣyantim apratirathaṃ tanayaṃ niveśya/
bhartrā tadarpitakuṭumbabhareṇa sārdhaṃ
śānte kariṣyasi padaṃ punar āśrame 'smin// (4. 20)

(see also: 4.18)

Kālidāsa echos the concept of Vikhanasas in the role of the institution of marriage vis-a-vis restriction of society and freedom of its members; cf.

abhijanavato bhartuḥ ślāghye sthitā gṛhiṇīpade
vibhavagurubhiḥ kṛtyais tasya pratikṣaṇam ākulā/
tanayam acirāt prācivārkaṃ prasūya ca pāvanaṃ
mama virahajāṃ vatse! na tvaṃ śucaṃ gaṇayiṣyasi// (4.19)

In other words Vikhanasas feels the institution of marriage is a state's subject and the head of the state has to decide case after case in the interests of the society and the laws of inheritance. So his counsel is to prohibit the freedom of marriage to the individual excluding the selection of their spouse. In this connection the movement of woodlander to recluse or sannyāsin is not considered as a possibility. A brahmacārin can choose to be a householder and end up with woodlander along with his wife, or he can skip the marriage and settle down as a woodlander or a sannyāsin and serve the society to the best of his capacity.

Because of the influence of Buddhist and Jaina monks who were moving freely in the Toṇḍamaṇḍalam, Vikhanasas pleaded for the avadhūta-stage which is considered as higher to the paramahṃsa-

sannyāsin, deviating from the normal definition for the paramahaṃsa in other texts. All the inmates in the hermitage are tuned to the ascetic atmosphere and as an exception Śakuntalā got agitated for the first time on seeing Duṣyanata (kiṃ nu khalv imaṃ prekṣya tapovanavirodhino vikārasya gamanīyāsmi saṃvṛttā ,1. 22).

Balance between religion and philosophy:

Vikhanasas was prudent, practical and foresighted path-finder in introducing the Vedic sacrificial religion which was already shrouded by the philosophical doctrine based on the recognition of the reality of ātman through the practice of yoga in a non-āryan land. The path of āryanisation is not so soft to manoeuvre. So following the leads given by Śaunaka in his Ṛgvidhāna and Bodhāyana in his Gṛhya-sūtra, Vikhanasas introduced in his Gṛhya-sūtra image worship of Viṣṇu as an invariable and obligatory daily ritual for a householder. So he concludes his mission in fixing goals of life:

saguṇe brahmaṇi buddhiṃ niveśya paścāt nirghuṇaṃ
brahmāśritya mokṣe nityaṃ yatnaṃ kuryād iti vijñāyate,

Vaikhānasa-dharmasūtra, 8.1.11.30.

"An aspirant of liberation should start his spiritual practice with the worship of the devisable and finite form of Brahman (as in image of Viṣṇu) and switch over to formless infinite Brahman by constant practice".

Bhṛgu's biographical description (in the Prakīrṇādhikāra, 37) indicates that the socio-political situations in Toṇ·amaṇ·alam were not smooth or happy in the early years of the Pallava dynasty. Hence to motivate people towards the state and spirituality as a part of one's own

life, much stress was paid on the congregational temple worship with a rider that one has to perform his own duty and slowly pave his path towards the realisation of Brahman.Cf. :

nityaṃ śrutismṛty udiṭaṃ karma kurvan manovākkāya-
karmabhiḥ śanaiḥ dharmaṃ samācaratīti vijñāyate,

Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra, 9.2.15.11.

Taking this lead Bhṛgu developed the science of temple worship centered on worship of the image of Viṣṇu.⁷

* * * * *

Firstly, Vikhanasas opines that every individual slowly increases his/her merit by restraint of the manas, sensory organs of perception like speech and in active involvement in congregational activities of the society. The word dharma refers to actions a person performs in different periods of life in association with his family members of wife, son, etc., or himself independently and in different professional groups, accruing invisible religious merit from such actions. So dharma is also used also for charity where the passive recipients remain as known as well as unknown to the dispenser.

Secondly Vikhanasas pleaded for the movement of the householder to the period of woodlander with śrāmaṇakāgni-ritual and to sannyāsa. He took keen interest to impress upon the benefits in sannyāsa, he describes the procedure of cremation of the body of the sannyāsin. But there are no evidences of any householder moving to the third and the fourth periods in the Vaikhānasa priest community since Bhṛgu established his system of temple worship apart from the Pāñcarātra mode of worship. To ensure the introduction of the

śrāmaṇakāgni ritual in the temple worship, Bhṛgu advocated that a preceptor-priest shall compulsarily be an āgahitāgni, by which he gets qualified to take śrāmaṇakāgni into the temple ritual.⁸ But by reasons of hereditary rights no one likes to move to third period of woodlander.⁹ But to take the śrāmakāgni to the temple, Bhṛgu relaxed Vikhanasa's injunction, as an exception, by allowing the householder-āhitāgni to kindle it. In temple worship there is no woman participant and hence the priest's wife has no role to play at śrāmaṇakāgni altar. Thus all the efforts of Vikhanasas became futile to establish the fourth period in the priest community. Perhaps Vikhanasas might have taken sannyāsa and risen to the state of a yogin and revered as Bhagavān. He should have established an office to oversee and validate all the rituals in the temple, just as a Brahmā priest of the Atharva-Veda oversees the sacrificial ritual performed by priests of other Vedas.¹⁰ By this reason the universal domestic rules to be followed by all the followers of the Taittirīya-śākhā in the Toṇḍamaṇḍalam got reduced to restricted operation among the temple priest community. The temple worship was promoted by several Vaikhānasas, so much that the temple-priestcraft became their hereditary right.¹¹ By this the universal applicability of the Yajurveda to all the people of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam came to be reduced to a sectarian religious system.

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By recognising a separate category of yogins apart from the brāhmaṇa-sannyāsins, Vikhanasas acknowledges other category of practitioners, who ascend to a higher order of respect in the society and obtain social status of being honoured and worshipped by conferring sainthood without any reference to their caste and creed. The Pallavas, who are foreigners have embraced āryan culture of sacrifice and also

started the temple worship where all yogins of any caste can participate without any reference to a priest community. The Pallava ruler Skandavarman himself established the Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple in process of āryanisation, through which the ritual of Vedic origin was introduced supplementing with local traditions. He was a contemporary to the earlier Āḷvārs who sang psalms in glory of the Lord in Tamil. The process of compromise and synthesis between āryan and drāviṭa traditions is accepted by both the āryans and dravidians and it is attested by absorption of certain native customs like worship of snakes and wearing snake-shaped ornaments called nāgābharaṇas to the neck, to the shoulders and to the head. For example a head-gear called nāgacūlika is prescribed for Rāhu and Ketu in temple iconography. Similarly both the first range of the Tirumala mountain and its presiding deity are called Śeṣādri as much as Veṅkaṭa/Veṅkaṭādri - its another range where the temple of the presiding deity Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara is built by Skandavarman. By the practice of referring to a person by his gotra or pra-vara Skandavarman came to be remembered in the praise of the Lord as bharadvāja-pratiṣṭhāvān¹² 'Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara who was consecrated by the descendant of Bharadvāja'.

As the natives claim themselves to be of the Nāga tribe, the prefixing or suffixing of nāga in the names of deities as Nāga-rāja, etc. are found for the associate deities in temple. The tradition was so much percolated and preserved even today that no household is found in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam without at least one member of each family is named after the synonyms of nāga. Thus the sacrificial fire worship of Bharadvāja, Bhāradvāja, Bhṛgu, Bhārgava, Aṅgiras, Mārīca, Marīci, etc. was inseparably blended with the snake worship in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam.

Taking stock of socio-political situations Bhṛgu in c. 870 A.D. evolved a new system of priestcraft de novo called Bhagavacchāstra in cooperation of his collegiates Atri, Marīci and Kāśyapa in consensus with the Pallava and the Bāṇarāya rulers, in which the Vedic sacrifice and the recitation of hymns from the Vedas were emphatically introduced. The system was honoured by the following dynasties who ruled over Toṇḍamaṇḍalam.

Thus the sacrificial tradition subsumed in the Bodhāyana and Vaikhānasa Kalpa-sūtras were well preserved both in theory and practice, of course with many modifications demanded by changing times. This development cautions that every one should be ready to accept the dichotomy between mārgī and deśī and welcome any change which is likely to promote humanity and universal happiness.

REFERENCES

1. M. Srimannarayana Murti, An Introduction to Sanskrit Linguistics, p. 107, 130. D.K. Publications, Delhi-7.
2. Oxford Illustrated Dictionary, ed. by J. Coulson, 1962.
3. hanye ātmānam ātmā. ātmanā hanyate ātmeti. kaḥ punar ātmānaṃ hanti; ko vātmanā hanyate. ātmanā hanyate ātmeti. punar ātmānaṃ hanti ko vātmanā hanyate. dvāv ātmānāv - antarātmā śarīrātmā ca. antarātmā tat karma karoti yena śarīrātmā sukhaduḥkhe anubhavati. śarīrātmā tat karma karoti yena antarātmā sukhaduḥkhe anubhavati. MB. 3.1.87, p. 66

(BORI ed, vol. 2)

Cf. also: hanty ātmānam ; ghātayaty ātmā, MB. 1.3.67, p. 292

(BORI ed. vol. 1).

4. satām hi sandehapadeṣu vastuṣu

pramāṇam antaḥkaraṇapravṛttayaḥ, Abhijñāna-śākuntala, I. 20.

5. M. Srimannarayana Murti, 'Language and Mind in Grammatical Tradition', in: ed. K.S. Prasad, Language and Mind. vol. 2 - The Classical Indian Perspective, Decent Books, Delhi, 2008. p. 170.

6. dharmyaṃ sadācāram, Vaikhānasa-dharma-sūtra, 9.2.9,p.1010.

7. sākāre 'smin kṛtā pūjā stutir vā dhyānam eva vā/

vidhinā śāstradr̥ṣṭena tasminn eva kṛtā bhavet//

Bṛghu's Prakīrṇādhikāra, 37.144.

8. vaikhānasena sūtreṇa niṣekādikriyānvitān/

viprān vedavidaḥ śuddhān mantrakalpavicakṣaṇān/

vidhijñānān āhitāgnīṃś ca nārāyaṇaparāyaṇān//

Khilādhikāra, 2. 38-39.

9. pāramparyakramāyātaṃ guruvaryopadeśitam/

Vāsādhikāra, 1.84

10. Bodhāyana recognises the professional ritualist ācārya to oversee the domestic sacrificial rituals as parallel to brahmā in the śrauta sacrifices; cf. ācāryo vai brahmeti, Bodhāyana-gṛhya-sūtra, 3.2 2.

Taking lead of Bodhāyana, Bhṛgu recognises two levels of top ritualists in the temple priestcraft, namely ācārya and arcaka along with others as associates as attendants who are brahmaṇas belonging to the Vaikhānasa-sūtra; cf.

ācāryās cārcakās caiva ṛtvajo balivāhakāḥ/
mantradīpapradatātārah pācakāḥ paricārakāḥ/
vaikhānasasūtreṇa niṣekādikriyānvitāḥ//
vedavedāṅgatattvajñā brāhmaṇā adhikāriṇaḥ//
Yajñādhikāra, 51. 32-34.

11. vaikhānasam tapaśśīlam nityahomaparāyaṇam/
pāramparyāgatam śiṣṭam doṣair anyair vivarjitam//
vipram taṃ varayitvā tu yācayet sampūjya ca/
Yajñādhikāra, 2.2-3.

pāramparyakramāgatam guruvaryopadeśitam/
mantrakalpaviśeṣajñam vaikhānasam imaṃśucim/
ananyadevatābhaktam vaiṣṇavam viṣṇubhaktidam/
ācāryam varayet pūrvam// Vāsādhikāra, 1. 84-96.

12. The poet of the 14th century remembers the chronology in his Śrī Veṅkaṭeśa-sahasranāma-stotra, 155: bharadvājapraṭiṣṭhāvān.