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THE SEMANTIC HISTORY OF DHARMA THE MIDDLE AND LATE VEDIC PERIODS

The studies of the term *dharmna* in the early vedic period by Paul Horsch and Joel Brereton in this volume¹ have shown that the term is used with relative frequency in the *Rg Veda* (67 times) with a somewhat broad semantic range including the cosmological, ritual, and ethical spheres. The frequency drops drastically in the other text from this period, the *Atharva Veda* (13 times), although maintaining a semantic range similar to the *Rg Veda*. Given the centrality of *dharmna* in later religious literature of India, both Brahmanical and Buddhist one would expect that the term gradually began to assume a central role in the religious vocabulary of the middle and late vedic period, represented by the Brāhmanas, Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads, and the Śrauta- and Gṛhya-sūtras, which together constitute a vast body of literature both in extent and in the variety of their topics and concerns.

A close study of the use of *dharmna* in these texts, however, demonstrates the opposite: *dharmna* was at best a marginal term and concept within the vocabulary of these texts, and it did not play a central role in the religious world depicted in them. On the one hand the frequency of its usage drops rather dramatically and, on the other, its semantic range becomes narrower, being restricted for the most part to Varuṇa and his earthly counterpart, the king. In the concluding postscript I will attempt to show how this specialized meaning of *dharmna* may have contributed to its further semantic development in its adoption and adaptation by Buddhism, by Aśoka and in the later Brahmanical literature.

THE YAJURVEDA SAMHITĀS

The Yajurveda Samhitas are the oldest texts we have after the *Rg Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*. I have examined all four extant Samhitas: *Mairvāyaṇī*, *Kāṭhaka*, *Taittirīya*, and *Vāgasaneyi*. The study of *dharmna*² in these texts is complicated by two factors: first, they

often cite verses from the *Rg Veda*; and second, because they are parallel recensions of the same ritual material, they frequently present the same passages. To determine the frequency of *dharmā* in the Yajurvedic vocabulary, therefore, I have discounted citations from the *Rg Veda* and counted only once the passages that are repeated almost verbatim in several of these Saṃhitās.

In the four Yajurveda Saṃhitās the term *dharmā* is found in 22 passages.³ Even this may be an overestimate because several of these occurrences are in stock phrases and epithets. Many of these refer to Varuṇa or Mitra-Varuṇa. Thus we have the recurrent phrase *dhruvēṇa dhārmajā* (“with firm/enduring *dharmā*”) with reference to Mitra-Varuṇa: *dyutānās tvā māruṭó minou mitrāvāruṇayor dhruvēṇa dhārmajā* – “May Dyutāna Māruta establish you in accordance with the enduring *dharmā* of Mitra and Varuṇa” (at the planting of the sacrificial post; *TS* 1.3.1.2; *MS* 1.2.11; *VS* 5.27). The same phrase is repeated in a different context: *vāruṇas tvā dhruvāraṭo dhūpayatu mitrāvāruṇau dhruvēṇa dhārmajā* – “May Varuṇa, whose commandment is upheld, perfume you with incense, may Mitra and Varuṇa, in accordance with their enduring *dharmā*” (at the perfuming of the pan; *MS* 4.9.1).⁴ And again: *mitrāvāruṇau tvottarati pari dhattān dhruvēṇa dhārmajā* – “May Mitra and Varuṇa lay you around in the north in accordance with their enduring *dharmā*” (at the laying of the enclosing sticks [*paridhā*]; *KS* 1.11; *TS* 1.1.11.2; *VS* 2.3; *ŚB* 1.3.4.4). The use of *dharmā* here closely agrees with its principal usage in the *Rg Veda*: *dharmā* is the institute or commandment of Varuṇa, an institute that is here said to be *dhruva*, firm and enduring. The *MS* (3.8.9) provides a commentary on the phrase:

mitrāvāruṇau dhruvēṇa dhārmajāti / mitrāni evāñāni dādhattā, vāruṇi kalpayati, vidhryati ca kṛditi vā eṣān prajāñān kṛpyati ca māyate, mitrāvāruṇau vai devāñāni dhārmadhārayau, dāivān vā etād dhārmāni adfāharātān /
 “Mitra and Varuṇa in accordance with their enduring *dharmā*. Mitra, indeed, holds it fast, and Varuṇa establishes it. For the upholding of these creatures and for their establishment, it is set up. Mitra and Varuṇa are clearly the ones who uphold *dharmā* among the gods. They have upheld here the divine *dharmā*”.

Note that the explanation clearly connects *dharmā* with its root *dhri*, to bear, to support, to uphold. The connection between *dhruva* and *dharmā* is evident also in a passage of the *KS* (35.7): *dhruvā dyaur dhruvā pṛthivī dhruvām viśvam itāni jagat / devā ha dharmajā dhruvā yajamānah pasūbhir dhruvah* – “The sky is enduring; the earth is enduring; this whole world is enduring. The gods are enduring through *dharmā*, and the sacrificer is enduring through the sacrificial animals”.⁵

The close connection between *dharmā* and Varuṇa within the Yajurveda Saṃhitās is most evident within the context of two rituals associated with kingship, the royal consecration (*rājāsīrya*) and the horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) performed by a king to enhance and proclaim his sovereignty.⁶ At the royal consecration the king is placed in close relationship to both Varuṇa and *dharmā*. Several cakes (*caru*) are offered to deities who are identified with various characteristics (*TS* 1.8.10.1): Agni is the lord of the house (*grīhpati*), Soma is the lord of the forest (*vanaspati*), Rudra is the lord of cattle (*pasupati*), and Bṛhaspati is the lord of speech (*vācaspati*). The last two are Mitra, characterized as *satya*, and Varuṇa, who is *dharmapati*, the lord of *dharmā*. In the parallel passage at *MS* 2.6.6 the wording is *mitrāya satyāsya pātaye . . . vāruṇāya dhārmasya pātaye* – “To Mitra the lord of truth; to Varuṇa the lord of *dharmā*”.⁷ Within the same context we have a mantra asking Savitr and other gods to stimulate the new king (*savitā tvā . . . suvatān*). Once gain the deities are given their distinctive characteristics (*TS* 1.8.10.2): *mitrah satyāñān vāruṇo dhārmapañān* (or in *MS dhārmāñān*).⁸ After this the new king is presented with the words: *esa vo bhavarā rājā* – “This, O Bharatas, is your king!” In the *MS* (2.6.8; 4.4.2), gods are invoked to make the new king an upholder of *dharmā*: *somā indro vāruṇo mitrō agnis té devā dharmadhīto dhārmam dhārayantu* – “Soma, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni – may these gods, the upholders of *dharmā*, uphold *dharmā*”: The *TS* (1.8.16.2) addresses the king, identifying him with Varuṇa: *vāruṇo ‘si satyadhārmā* – “You are Varuṇa, whose *dharmā* is true/real.” Here again we have the implicit statement that the epithet of Varuṇa as *satyadhārmā* is applicable to the king as well. Within the *Aśvamedha* rite also the same epithet is used with reference to the reins of Mitra and Varuṇa’s chariot: *yó vān rātha jyārañih sátyadhārmā mithucārantam upayāti dūśyām* – “You, whose chariot with straight reins and true/real *dharmā* draws near, frustrating him who acts falsely” (*MS* 3.16.5; *KS* 22.15; *TS* 4.7.15.2). In these and in other passages we will examine in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, the kingly power or *ksatra* is intimately connected with *dharmā*. In the same way as Varuṇa, the heavenly sovereign, his earthly counterpart is also *dharmapati*; the two are lords and upholders of *dharmā* in the cosmos and within society.

The connection of *dharmā* to the royal and judicial sphere is nicely illustrated by one ritual detail. In the *Puruṣamedha*, the real or symbolic human sacrifice, different types of men are sacrificed to various deities. The kinds of men sacrificed to *dharmā* and its opposite

adharna are instructive: to *dharna*, a *sabhiḡga* (presumably, a man who participates at the royal audience hall where judicial proceedings are carried out), and to *adharna*,⁹ a deaf man (*badhira*), quite the opposite of the debater in the assembly hall (*VS* 30.6, 10; *TB* 3.4.1).

THE BRĀHMANAS

The corpus of the Brāhmanas is even more vast than the Yajurveda Samhitās. For this study I have chosen three: *Āitareya*, *Taittirīya*, and *Śatapatha*. Although paralleling the *Āitareya*, the *Kausītaki* does not use the term *dharna* at all.¹⁰ In the three Brāhmanas that are the focus of this study, the term *dharna* occurs independently a total of 11 times.¹¹ This is striking, especially because the Brāhmanas, unlike the Saṃhitās, contain a wide spectrum of material and address numerous issues, including ritual and ethical ones, pertaining to Brahmanical life. One would assume, *a priori*, that if *dharna* was a key concept that defined the Brahmanical view of the world and of human life, it would have been used more frequently and within a variety of contexts.

The term is used only once in the *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa*, and, significantly, here also it occurs within the context of the royal consecration (*vr̥ṣasṛya*). At *AB* 8.12–14 there is a description of the great anointing (*mahābhiseka*) of Indra as king by the gods, which is immediately followed at *AB* 8.15–23 by the anointing of the king. Clearly, the anointing of Indra provides the model for the anointing of the king. In both we have the following public proclamation of the sovereignty of Indra and the king, the former proclaimed by the Vis̥vedevas and the latter by the “king-makers”. (*vr̥ṣakarāvr̥ṣ*). The wording is identical in the two contexts with the exception of the audience addressed, gods (*devāḥ*) in the case of Indra and men (*janāḥ*) in the case of the king:

inam janā [devā] abhyuktośata sannatān sāmratyān bhogān bhogāpitarān svaratān svāratyān vītān varitryān paramesṭhīnān pāraneṣṭhīyān vr̥ṣān vr̥ṣāpitarān ksarān gān ksariyo jani vīśvasya bhīṣyādhipatir gāni vīśm atātān amitrātān kantāni br̥hmanānān gopitāni dharmasya gopitāniti. (*AB* 7.12, 17)

“Do ye proclaim him, O men [O gods], as overlord and overlordship, as paramount ruler and father of paramount rulers, as self ruler and self rule, as sovereign and sovereignty, as supreme lord and supreme lordship, as king and father of kings. The *ksara* (royal power) has been born, the *ksarīya* has been born, the sizerain of all creation has been born, the guardian of the commoners (*vīś*) has been born, the slayer of foes has been born, the guardian of *br̥hmanas* has been born, the guardian of *dharna* has been born.” (Tr. Keith with modification)

The proclamation reaches its climax with the announcement that Indra/king has been born through the right of consecration as the guardian of *dharna*. Here Indra has replaced Varuṇa, but the connection of the king to *dharna* is brought to the forefront.

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa dharna* occurs four times. In three of these *dharna* is closely associated with Varuṇa and with the overlord (*adhipati*). At *TB* 3.9.16.2, which is a commentary on *TS* 7.4.16 dealing with the horse sacrifice, the mantra of the *TS namó 'dhipataye* (“Homage to the overlord”) is interpreted by the *TB* as: *dharmo v' ādhipatiḥ, dhārmam evāvaruṇdhe* (“The overlord is *dharna*. He does, indeed, obtain *dharna*”). The person who is here identified with *ādhipatya* and with *dharna* is the king performing the horse sacrifice. In the *TS*, significantly, the mantra commented on by the *TB* comes at the end and climax of a longer mantra: “Homage to the king! Homage to Varuṇa! Homage to Prajāpati! Homage to the overlord!” Here *dharna* as the *adhipati* is placed last as the highest.

At *TB* 3.11.4.1 we have the common designation of Varuṇa as “Lord of *dharna*”. Indeed the juxtaposition of *Indrapati* and *dharnapatnī* (“wife of Indra” and “wife of *dharna*”) at *TB* 3.11.1.2C makes it likely that *dharna* here stands for Varuṇa, whose epithet is *dharnapati*.

In the voluminous *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, if we exclude the last section consisting of the *Brhadaranyaka Upaniṣad*, the term *dharna* occurs in just six passages. In one of the most significant statements regarding the relation between *dharna*, Varuṇa, and the king, the *Śatapatha* (5.3.3.9), within the context of the royal consecration (*vr̥ṣasṛya*), states:

athā vāruṇya dharnapataye / vāruṇān yavanāyān caruṇi nirvopati tād enaṃ vāruṇa evā dharnapatir dharmasya pātin karoti paramatā vai sá yó dharmasya pātir asad yó hā paramatān gācchati tin hi dhārna upayānti tāsnaḥ vāruṇya dharnapataye //

“Then to Varuṇa the lord of *dharna* he offers a cake made with barley. Thereby Varuṇa himself, the lord of *dharna*, makes him [the king] the lord of *dharna*. That, surely, is the highest state when one becomes the lord of *dharna*. For when someone attains the highest state, (people) come to him [in matters relating] to *dharna*. Therefore, to Varuṇa, the lord of *dharna*.”

Here we get a clearer picture as to what the author of the *Śatapatha* means by *dharna*, certainly clearer than the texts we have examined thus far. It has to do with matters regarding which people come to the king and must refer principally to legal disputes. *Dharna* is thus placed squarely within the public realm of law and social norms that must be overseen by the king. We can now understand why the king

is the *dharmapati*, in the same way as Varuṇa, the sovereign who oversees the cosmic *dharmā*. Perhaps this was the meaning generally attached to *dharmā* during the middle vedic period and underlies the statements on *dharmā* in other texts that we have examined.

Another significant passage occurs within a creation story, a passage that throws further light on the meaning of *dharmā* for the author of the *ŚB*. After Prajāpati was born, he created four gods: Agni, Indra, Soma, and Parameṣṭhin. These five deities then observe the four directions. Our passage deals with the north (*ŚB* 11.1.6.24):

*atthodetm̄ dīśam apaśyan / tām āpo 'kurvatopainān̄ itāh kurvīmāhīi tam̄ dhāman
akurvata dhāma vā āpas tāmād yademañi lokān̄ āpa āgdechanti sāvvan̄ evedāni
yathādharmān̄ bhavatȳ it̄ha yadāȳs̄t̄ir̄ bhāvati bāh̄yān̄ eva tar̄ly dāh̄lyasa ādatie
dhāmo hȳ āpah̄ //*

“Then they saw the northern direction. They made it waters. ‘Let us improve it from here,’ they said. They made it *dharmā*. The waters, surely, are *dharmā*. Therefore, when waters come to this world, all this becomes in accordance with *dharmā*. But when there is no rain, then the stronger indeed seizes the weaker ones, for the waters are *dharmā*’.

This passage further supports the meaning of *dharmā* as social order founded on law. The argument here corresponds to the “law of the fish” (*matsyanyāya*) of later Dharmasāstras. Here, however, there is no mention of a king or the lack of a king; it is the natural phenomena of abundance created by water and famine created by drought that bring about adherence to and deviation from *dharmā*. The assurance of timely rain, however, is very much a function of kingship, and Varuṇa is closely associated with water. Indeed, as Insler has recently pointed out, the royal consecration (*rājāsūya*) initially may have been an annual ritual conducted during the winter solstice to assure the timely progress of the seasons and the timely arrival of rain.¹²

At *ŚB* 13.4.3.14 it is Indra who is identified with *dharmā*, but even here note the connection between *dharmā* and Indra as king of the gods: *dharmā indro rājētȳ it̄ha tāsya devā vīśah̄* – “Indra the king is *dharmā*, he says; his people are the gods”.

The *Satapatha* also uses the negative *adharmā* twice in the sense of something done contrary to law or the natural order of things. At *ŚB* 3.7.3.7 the author in refuting an opponent’s view about how to bind the sacrificial animal. He says that doing it the opponent’s way “would be as if he intended to do an *adharmā* stealthily” (*yathādharmam̄ tiraścāh̄ā cikt̄r̄set*). Likewise at *ŚB* 5.2.4.13 with reference to the Dakṣiṇā cow that draws a cart (*anadhāt̄*), it says: *yāt̄*

strī sañ vāhati ādharmena tād asyai vāruṇān̄ rūpān̄ – “In that, while she is a female she draws contrary to *dharmā*, that is her Varuṇa form”.¹³ In both these instances, *adharmā* appears to indicate an activity that is either against the rule, whether it is ritual or natural.

An unexpected and possibly a new connotation of *dharmā* as either a specific attribute or a right/obligation is found at *ŚB* 11.5.7.1, a passage in praise of *svādhyāya*, vedic study, through which a man becomes independent and wealthy, and by which his intelligence grows (*prajñāvardh̄ti*). Such a Brahmin is said to acquire four *dharmas* and people serve him with four other *dharmas*:

*prajñā vār̄dhamānā caturo dharmān̄ brāhmaṇān̄ abhinispād̄kyati brāhmaṇyan̄
pratiṅpacar̄yān̄ yāso lokapakt̄im̄, lokān̄ pācyamānās̄ catir̄bhir̄ dhāman̄ brāhmaṇān̄
bhūnak̄tȳ arcd̄yā ca dānena cājyevāyāȳ cānadh̄yātayā ca /*

“The growing intelligence brings to the Brahmin four *dharmas*: Brahmanical stature, fitting deportment, fame, and ‘cooking’ the world.¹⁴ The world, as it is being ‘cooked’, gratifies the Brahmin with four *dharmas* – with veneration, with gifts, with the condition of not being oppressed and of not being subject to capital punishment.

There appears to be a semantic development here from “law” or “the way things are or should be” to specific attributes that characterize a particular entity.¹⁵ The four *dharmas* of the world *vis-ā-vis* the Brahmin, indeed, can be seen as legal privileges granted by society to the Brahmin class.

Except for this last passage, the Brāhmaṇas do not expand the semantic range of *dharmā* in a significant way. It remains closely associated with Varuṇa and with the royal power of the king. We detect, however, more clearly that *dharmā* has acquired the primary meaning of law and order within society, a law that is hypostatized into an abstract entity as *dharmā* that stands above and gives legitimacy to *ksatra*, the ruling power of the king.

THE ĀRANYAKAS

The term *dharmā* occurs only three times in the Āraṇyakas, twice in the *Taittirīya* and once in the *Itihareya*. They do not add much to the semantics of *dharmā*.

At *ĀĀ* 2.1.7, within a section that describes the creation of the world through the organs of the Puruṣa, we have a statement that again connects *dharmā* with Varuṇa and with water: *varuṇo 'sya prajān̄ dharmena dād̄hāra* – “Varuṇa supported his offspring through *dharmā*”.

The *Taittirīya* passages are brief. At *TĀ* 2.19.1 various cosmic entities or categories are homologized with various parts of a *Sisumāra* (alligator or porpoise). Here *dharma* is said to be the crown of its head (*mūṛ-dhāman*). At *TĀ* 4.42.5 we have a list of divine categories that begins with *śrī* and end with *dharma*. The incorporation of *dharma* into lists of cosmic categories becomes a common feature in late vedic texts, and in these lists *dharma* is most often placed last as the highest of the categories.

THE UPANIṢADS

The Upanisads are the texts where we would expect to find a sustained treatment of *dharma*, given that a central theme in these documents is human activity and knowledge leading to an ultimate state beyond death. That, however, is not the case. In the four early prose Upanisads¹⁶ – *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, and *Aitareya* (in which the term does not occur at all) – the term occurs in just nine passages. Even more importantly, there is no sustained focus on the term as it applies to living a righteous life, except perhaps in *ChU* 2.23.1 and *TU* 1.11.1.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, which constitutes the last portion of the ŚB, the term occurs in four passages. Significantly, it occurs only once in the central Yājñavalkya-kāṇḍa (*BU* 3–4), which forms the oldest core of the Upanisad. At 4.4.5, in a passage demonstrating that the *ānman* is made up of everything, there is a long list of categories. In this list, *ānman* is said to be made up of various categories and their opposites: *tejomayo 'tejomayāḥ kāmamayo 'kāmanayāḥ krodhagamno 'krodhamayāḥ dharmamayo 'dharmaṃmayāḥ sarvaṃmayāḥ* – “made of light and the lightless, made of desire and the desireless, made of anger and the angerless, made of *dharma* and *adhama*, made of everything”. We are not told what *dharma* means here, except that it must have been viewed as occupying the highest position within the list, because after it the author simply says *sarvaṃmayāḥ*.

The most sustained treatment of *dharma* is found in *BU* 1.4.14 within the context of a creation myth. In the beginning this world was only *brahman*. Because it was single, the author says, it “did not become fully developed” (*na vyabhartat*). *Brahman* then goes about creating “the ruling power” (*ksatira*), including the gods, then the

Vaiśya class, and finally the Śūdra class. After each creation, the author repeats the refrain *na vyabhartat*, “it still did not become fully developed.” As the final act of creation that made *brahman* fully develop and reach its full potential, it created *dharma*:

taschreyo rīpaṃ atyasṛjāta dharmam / tad etat kṣatrasya kṣatiraṃ yad dharmah / tasmād dharmāt pariraṃ nāsti / aho abarītyān barītyāṅsaṃ āśanṣate dharmena / yatāḥ rājātvaṃ / yo vai sa dharmah satyaṃ vai tat / tasmāt satyaṃ vadātān aḥur dharmam vadātīti / dharmam vā vadātāni satyaṃ vadātīti / etad dhy evaiad ubhayaḥ bhavati / “So it created *dharma*, a form superior to and surpassing itself. And *dharma* is here the ruling power standing above the ruling power. Hence there is nothing higher than *dharma*. Therefore, a weaker man makes demands of a stronger man by appealing to *dharma*, just as one does by appealing to a king. Now, *dharma* is nothing but the truth. Therefore, when a man speaks the truth, people say that he speaks *dharma*; and when a man speaks *dharma*, people say that he speaks the truth. They are really the same thing.”

This passage echoes two other significant passages of the ŚB that we have examined: 5.3.3.9, which presents *dharma* as the highest, something to which people go to settle disputes, and 11.1.6.24, which speaks of the stronger seizing the weak when there is the absence of *dharma*. In the *BU* passage, however, *dharma* is made the very essence of *ksatira*, the ruling power. A weaker man can take on even a stronger opponent by resorting to *dharma* in exactly the same way as he can by resorting to the king. I think the subtext here is litigation. A weaker man can drag a stronger man to the king’s court. As in many other vedic texts, *dharma* here is not only placed side by side with *satya*, truth, but is said to be identical with it.¹⁷ The significant point in this passage for our study is that, as in the Brāhmaṇas, here also *dharma* is associated with the legal and regal spheres.

The other occurrence of *dharma* in the first chapter (*BU* 1.5.23) is in a *śloka* cited in support of the pre-eminence of breath over other faculties:

*yataś codeṭi sīṅyāḥ astāni yatra ca gacchati /
tāni devaś cakṛte dharmam sa evādyā sa u śva* //
“From which the sun rises, and into which it sets: the gods make it *dharma*. It is the same today and tomorrow.”

The author of the *BU* comments after the first half-verse: *prāṇād vā esa udeṭi prāṇe 'stam eti* – “From breath, indeed, does it rise, and into breath it sets”. The meaning of *dharma* here is unclear and the commentarial section of the text does not deal with this term. It appears likely that for the author of the *BU dharma* was the highest principle, and he equates it with breath/wind, which is here presented

as the highest faculty, breath with respect to *adhyātma* and wind with respect to *adhidāivata*. In the original setting of this verse, however, *dharma* may have been viewed as the ultimate institute/status/commandment that is responsible for the regular rising and setting of the sun, a meaning familiar from the *Rg Veda*.

Finally, in the Madhukāṇḍa (*BU* 2.5.11) where all cosmic categories are said to be honey, *dharma* occurs just before *satya*. The connection between these two terms is the only thing remarkable about this occurrence; nothing is said that would permit us to understand what *dharma* meant for the author.

The Chāndogya

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, in which the term occurs in three passages, does not have a single extended discussion of *dharma*. The first time the term occurs is at 2.1.4. The context is the veneration of *sāman* as *sādhu* (good). The section concludes: *sa ya etad evam vidvān sādhu sāmey upāste 'bhvyāśo ha yad enam sādhanō dharmā ā ca gaccheyur upa ca nameyur* – “When someone knows this and venerates the *Sāman* chant as good, he can certainly expect that good *dharma*s will come his way and fall to his share”. The meaning of *dharma* in this context is quite unclear, but it may have the meaning of qualities, attributes, or simply things, somewhat similar to its usage we examined in *ŚB* 11.5.7.1.

In an eulogy of speech (*vāc*) at 7.2.1 we have another occurrence of *dharma* in a long list of things that speech makes known from the *Rg Veda* down to worms, moths, and ants: *dharmam cādharman ca satyam cāntam ca sādhu cāsādhu ca* – “*dharma* and *adharma*, truth and untruth, good and non-good.” Here *dharma* is juxtaposed with *satya* and *sādhu*. The first pair we have seen elsewhere; and I think that for the author of the *ChU satya* and *sādhu* may be concepts that are closely related. Here again we get the negative *adharma*.

The final and the most significant occurrence of *dharma* in the *Chāndogya* is in the famous passage on *dharmaskandhas* (2.23.1):¹⁸

trayo dharmaskandhāḥ / vajñā 'dhyayanam dānam iti prathamah / tapa eva dūtīyāh / brahmacāry acāryakulavāsi trītyāh /

“There are three types of persons whose torso is *dharmā*.¹⁹ The first is the one who pursues sacrifice, vedic recitation, and gift-giving. The second is the one who is devoted to austerity. Third is a celibate student of the *Veda* living at his teacher’s house.”

It is clear that in this passage *dharma* specifically refers to modes of religious life, probably to the life of a Brahmanical householder, an

ascetic, and a vedic student. Here for the first time in vedic literature we have an unambiguous passage that uses *dharma* in a way very close to its usage in the later *Dharmaśāstras*.

The Taittirīya

In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad dharmā* occurs in a passage at the end of the first chapter (*śikṣāvallī*), a passage that appears very much like a remnant of an old *Gr̥hyasūtra* dealing with the instruction of a vedic student and his return home after his residence at his teacher’s house. In his parting words to the student (*TU* 1.11.1), the teacher tells him: *satyam vada / dharmam cara* (“Speak the truth. Practice *dharmā*”). This is the first time in the vedic literature that the verb *√car* is used with reference to *dharmā*, indicating that here the term is used in its classical *Dharmaśāstric* meaning. Note, however, that *satya* is closely associated with *dharmā*.

In the same passage (*TU* 1.11.4) authoritative Brahmins, whose behavior is presented as a model to the young student, are characterized as *dharmakāmah* (devoted to or loving *dharmā*).

THE ŚRAUTASŪTRAS

The dates of the numerous *Śrautasūtras* are uncertain, but at least some of them are probably from a pre-Buddhist period and overlap with some of the later vedic texts. Although they are not viewed as part of the vedic canon, they continue the tradition of the *Brahmanas* in providing rules and explanations of the vedic rituals.

In the 10 *Śrautasūtras* I have examined, the term *dharmā* occurs in 39 passages.²⁰ In all but a handful of them, however, *dharmā* does not have the meaning found in either the earlier vedic texts or the later *Dharmaśāstras*. It appears that the expert scholastic tradition focusing on the ritual developed a very special meaning of *dharmā* that was restricted to this tradition. Within this specialized meaning, *dharmā* refers to the specific ritual rules or ritual details of a rite. Many of these passages deal with how *dharmas*, taken as ritual details, are extended from ritual archetypes, such as the *Darśapūrnamāsa* (New- and Full-moon) sacrifice to others that are modeled after it. Thus, for example, the *BhāṅSr* (1.1.9) states the general principle: *taitraiso 'tyentapradeśo ye kecana paurṇamāsīm anāvāsyān vā dharmā anāvahyāmvyanta ubhayatriva te kṛiyante* – “In this connection, this is the general rule. The characteristics

(*dharmāṅhi*) which have been prescribed in connection with the full-moon day or the new-moon day without specification hold good with reference to both” (Tr. Kashikar). In a more specific case, the *Bhar-Śr* (6.1.5) states: *sarveṣv iṣṭipāśubandheṣu dārśāpauruṇamāsikā dharmā amūyanti* – “The *dharmas* of the New-moon and the Full-moon sacrifices are carried over into the *iṣṭi* and animal sacrifices.”

It is significant that this meaning of *dharmā* is absent in the vocabulary of the vedic texts, including the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanisads. This specialized and technical meaning probably developed within the expert tradition devoted to ritual that produced both the Śrautasūtras and the later Mīmāṃsā texts.

The compound *svadharmā*, interestingly, is also used with a similar meaning; here it refers to the fact that a particular rite has its own ritual details (*dharmas*) specific and limited to it and not taken over from or extended to other rites.²¹ This meaning is quite similar to the use of *dharmā* we saw at *ŚB* 11.5.7.1 and *ChU* 2.1.4.

The only passage where the term appears to have a Dharmasāstric meaning is *Bhar-Śr* 9.18.4, where the question is how to tell whether an oblation is defiled: *katham dūṣṭam havir vidyāt / yad āryāṅgān dharmajñānān dharmakāmānān abhojanīyaṅ na tena devān yajeta* (“How does one know a defiled oblation? What Āryas who know *dharmā* and who love *dharmā* consider unfit to be eaten, with that he should not make an offering to the gods”). As in the *TU*, here also we have the term *dharmakāmā* with the additional phrase *dharmajñā*, compounds that become commonplace in the Dharmasāstras.

Apart from the specialized meaning of *dharmā* as ritual details or characteristics²² that may be transferred between rites, the term does not play a central role in these ritual texts.

THE GRHYASŪTRAS

Even though many of the Grhyasūtras date from a period after the rise of Buddhism, some of them may be earlier. It is in these texts devoted to the life and rituals of a Brahmin household, however, that we would expect the term *dharmā* to play a central role, as it does, for example, in the parallel texts of the Dharmasūtras. That, however, is not the case. In the Grhyasūtras that can claim some antiquity²³ the term occurs only six times, and two of these (*ŚānGr* 3.3.7; *PārGr* 3.4.18) deal with a ritual connected with the building of a house. There we have a mantra that identifies *dharmā* with the main post of the house: *dharmā sthānarājāḥ*.

In another ritual context, this time the offering of the Vaiśvadeva oblation, the *Kīṅka Grhyasūtra* (54.6) enjoins an offering to *dharmā* and *adharmā* at the door: *dharmādharmayor dvāre*. Here too positive and the negative forms are taken as deities or cosmic principles, just as in the Upanisads.

Only in three passages do we have a usage similar to that found in the Dharmasāstras. At *ŚānGr* 2.16.2 we have the refrain *iti dharmo vidhīyate* in a verse that closely resembles *MDh* 3.110. The six ślokas in this *khaṇḍa* appear to be taken from a Dharmā text. In the *BauGr* (3.3.31) we have the term *dhārmika* with a very classical meaning used in the instruction to the student who has completed his studentship: *vatasamṛpiau vedasamṛpiau vā gurvadaśṣṭānān āhared dhārmiko yathāśakti* – “At the end of the observances or at the end of (the study of) the Veda, the *dhārmika* (student) should bring a gift to the teacher according to his ability.” And, finally, in *ĀśGr* (1.7.1) we have a passage very reminiscent of Dharmasāstras: *atha khalūccācā jan-apatadharmā grāmadharmāś ca lān vivāhe pratīyāi* – “Now, manifold are the *dharmas* of regions and the *dharmas* of villages. One should observe these at a marriage.” Here *dharmā* clearly refers to customs and local norms, a meaning that is identical to the Dharmasāstric concept of *dharmā*.

CONCLUDING POSTSCRIPT

This somewhat brief though comprehensive survey of the use of *dharmā* in texts roughly belonging to the middle and late vedic period (around 800–400 BCE, although some of the individual texts and passages may be from a later period), shows that in the early texts of this period, especially the Brāhmaṇas and the early Upanisads, the term is used most frequently with reference to Varuṇa and the king. It is likely that *dharmā* was part of the specialized vocabulary associated with royalty, especially because of its frequent use within the royal consecration (*ṛgajayaj*). In all likelihood, *dharmā* referred to social order and the laws of society that the king was obligated to enforce. *Dharmā* thus becomes an abstract concept and entity, a cosmic force that stands above the king; it is called *kṣatrasya kṣatram*, the power behind the royal power.²⁴ This hypostatization of *dharmā* is carried on in other texts, when *dharmā* and *adharmā* are considered deities or cosmic categories.

There is no doubt that the classical meaning of *dharmā* is encountered in a few passages of the Upanisads, Śrautasūtras, and

Grhyasūtras. But the rarity of these passages makes one suspect that they reflect the ideology of a later period when *dharma* had come to define the very essence of the Brahmanical way of life.

The question, then, is how did this term become transformed from a somewhat marginal and specialized context of the middle vedic texts to becoming the central concept within Brahmanical religious vocabulary, generating an entire genre of expert treatises, the Dharmasūtras? How did the meaning of *dharma* change from its earlier limited applications to defining the proper religious life both in Brahmanism and in Buddhism?

Now, it is entirely possible that the evolution was gradual and internal to the Brahmanical tradition. Within this scenario, it was the Buddhists who borrowed the fully developed concept from the Brahmanical sources. There are several reasons why this is unlikely, the most significant of which is the fact that in texts that can be dated with some confidence to a pre-Buddhist period *dharma* does not occupy a central role within the religious vocabulary; the term does not appear still to have acquired the meaning that would enable theologians to define the good religious life as *dharma*.

I will here only summarize the conclusions I have drawn in an earlier paper on the subject (Olivelle, forthcoming). My hypothesis is that the Buddha²⁵ borrowed *dharma* as he did many other royal symbols to locate and articulate his new religion. Buddha's own ascribed pedigree makes him an heir to the throne. Prognosticators predicted that he will be a world-conquering (*cakravartin*) king or an enlightened being. Both the Buddha and other founders of new religions during this period are called *jina*, the conqueror. The Buddha's doctrine is compared to a wheel, a metonym for the war chariot and conquest; and his first sermon is the *dhammacakrapravartanasthira*, "the Sūtra that set the wheel of *dharma* rolling". The Buddha's teaching is *śāsana*, the counterpart of a royal edit. These are all clearly royal symbols used, deliberately I think, to define a new ascetic group and a new religious ideology. Within this context, I think, we can see how *dharma*, which was called *ksatrasya ksātram*, the divine principle that gave legitimacy and meaning to a worldly ruler, the term associated with the divine sovereign Varuṇa, would be a natural choice to define the new dispensation, the new truth (*satya*) that the enlightened one had discovered. If this hypothesis is correct, then it was within early Buddhism that *dharma* changed from being a peripheral concept to becoming a central and key theological concept defining the Buddhist religion. Within this transformation, there must

have been a semantic development; *dharma* becomes increasingly ethicized within the primarily ethical religion of Buddhism. It came to define the good and righteous life and the truth (*satya*) the Buddha discovered which made such a life possible.

Another factor probably influenced the term's ascendancy in the religious vocabulary of India. The use of *dharma* within a single new religion could be ignored. It's use as the central concept in defining a new imperial ideology, the ethical ideology of the Maurya empire articulated by Aśoka in his edicts, could not be ignored even by the scholastic Brahmins working within the vedic *śāikhā*. In his brief edicts, Aśoka uses the term about 111 times (excluding the repetitions found in the multiple versions of the same edit).²⁶ This number stands in sharp contrast to the numbers we have examined in the much more vast literature of the middle and late vedic periods. It is very likely that Aśoka's use of *dharma* is mediated by its use within Buddhism. Aśoka not only gives pride of place to *dharma*, he also defines it in completely ethical terms. In Rock Edict 3, for example, he instructs his ministers to teach the *dharma* in the following words: "Obedience to mother and father is good (*sādhu*). Giving (*dāna*) to friends, acquaintances, and relatives, and to Brāhmanas and Śramanas is good. Not killing is good. Spending little and possessing little is good."²⁷ He uses *dharma* most frequently as the first member of compounds; for him everything is *dharmaic*: so he calls his edicts *dhammadīpi*, and his pilgrimage *dhammadayātrā*. I have counted 31 such compounds used by Aśoka.²⁸

How did all this affect the Brahmanical community? Clearly the Aśokan reforms displaced the Brahmin's "special relationship" with the royal power; now there are two equal religious groups worthy of honor and vying for influence and patronage: *śramaṇa-brāhmaṇa*, in the compound used and possibly coined by Aśoka. The influence of the historical memory of this period is possibly reflected in Brahmanical literature of the following centuries.²⁹

The term and the concept *dharma* acquired a prominence and centrality through both Buddhism and the Aśokan imperial theology that was impossible to ignore. My hypothesis is that the emergence of the Dharmasūtric literature, first in the form of prose *sūtras* and then in metrical treatises beginning with Manu, was a direct consequence of Buddhist and Aśokan reforms. That a *śāstra*, an expert tradition of knowledge, be devoted to *dharma* would seem improbable from its marginal use within the theologies expressed in the middle and late vedic texts. Further, as Wezler and Latriviere in their

studies in this volume have demonstrated, there is a deep divide between what Wezler calls “vedic *dharmā*” and “Dharmaśāstric *dharmā*”. The latter is based squarely on “custom”, the traditional customs, usages, and practices viewed as authoritative within the Brahmanical communities. Historically, I think, this happened because the Brahmanical experts reflecting on this new *dharmā* that defined one’s religious, ethical, and social life had to find sources that would provide access to such a *dharmā*; in other words, they had to find a *pramāṇa*, an authoritative means of knowing *dharmā*.

The Buddhists had already formulated just such a *pramāṇa*, and that was the “words of the Buddha” (*buddhavacana*). Only the *ipsissima verba* of the Enlightened One could give us access to the truth, to *dharmā*. The Brahmanical tradition already had such an infallible *pramāṇa*, the Veda. It was natural, therefore, for the expert tradition of Dharmaśāstra to proclaim that the Veda is the *pramāṇa* or the *mūla* (root) of *dharmā*. This, however, was abstract theory and theology; it was Mīmāṃsā. In reality, however, the Veda has little to say about *dharmā* in its new and expanded meaning. The “real” source of *dharmā*, as Wezler and Lariviere have pointed out, was custom: the *smṛiti* (memory) and *ācāra* (practice) of cultured, learned, and virtuous Brahmins, who came to be designated as *śiṣya*.

This brings up the issue of the dates of the earliest *śāstras* on *dharmā*, the Dharmasūtras. The earliest reference to such texts is in Katyāyana’s *Vārttika* 39 on Pāṇini 1.2.38, which uses the term *dharmasāstra*. Patañjali refers to “authors of Dharmasūtras” (*dharmasūtrakārtāḥ*) in the plural twice in his *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini 1.1.47 (p. 115), and 5.1.119 (p. 365). This would correspond to my estimate that the earliest Dharmasūtras do not date earlier than the 3rd century BCE.

If this historical reconstruction is accepted, then we will have another tool to date early Indian texts: those that reflected a developed meaning of *dharmā* and give it a central role in their theology and vocabulary must be assigned to a date at least after the development of Buddhist doctrine, if not after the proclamation of Aśoka’s imperial ideology. We have already seen some such passages in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, as well as some of the *Gṛhyasūtras*. The dates of these texts, or at least the time when these passages were incorporated into them, may have to be rethought.

The same may be said for the grammarians Yāska and Pāṇini, who also use *dharmā* in ways that indicate a highly developed and expanded concept. In Yāska’s *Nirukta*, for example, we have the use of

the verb $\sqrt{\text{car}}$ with reference to *dharmā* in the story of Devapī and Śantanu: *adharmanas tvayā caritaḥ* – “You have done an *adharmā*” (2.10).³⁰ Then there is a verse that looks very much like a Dharmaśāstric verse asserting the right of daughters to inherit property (3.4): *aviśeṣeṇa putrāṇāṃ dāyo bhavati dharmataḥ / mithunāṃ viśargādau manuh svāyaṃbhavo ‘bravī’* // – “In accordance with *dharmā* the partition of inheritance is done among male and female children no differently from the sons”.³¹ Given that Yāska has been subject to later redactorial activities, it is unclear whether these usages are original. Pāṇini also, who is generally assigned to around 400 BCE, in several *sūtras* gives derivatives of *dharmā* that show the word to have a classical meaning. Thus in *sūtra* 4.4.41 he indicates the derivative *dhārmika* in the sense of *dharmam carati*. In *sūtra* 4.4.91, he shows that the affix *yai* comes after *dharmā* (i.e. *dharmayai*) in the sense of *dharmeṇa prāpyam* (obtainable by *dharmā*) and in the very next *sūtra* shows that the same affix can be used with *dharmā* to mean *dharmād anapeṭam* (not deviating from *dharmā*).³² These terms and usages must have been derived from or at least mediated by the spoken Sanskrit of the time (*bhāṣā*) rather than directly from the vedic vocabulary. If with von Hinüber and Falk³³ we date Pāṇini 350–300 BCE, his use of *dharmā* would be quite explicable within the hypothesis I have presented.

The period we have examined was probably a watershed in the semantic development of *dharmā*. Once the term became the central concept defining a civilization, this development accelerated. Other studies in this volume discuss aspects of its semantic range. It is, however, important to recognize that words do not exist in a vacuum; they are used by individuals and groups that have their own histories and interests and that change the meanings of words as they use them. Philology must not simply look at the web but at the spider also. The analysis of words thus can give significant and unique insights not just into human language but into human history. Given its centrality in Indian discourse, a close study of *dharmā* has the potential to reveal interesting and hitherto unknown contours of ancient Indian history.

NOTES

¹ See also Wilman-Grabowska (1934).

² In this study of the middle vedic texts, I have discounted the difference between the old neuter form *dharmam* and the newer thematic stem *dharmā*. In texts of

this period there does not appear to be any semantic difference between the two forms.

³ MS 1.1.8; 1, 2, 11; 1.5.4, 11; 1.11.1; 2.6.6, 8; 2.8.8; 3.16.5 (75, 77); 4.12.6; KS 1.11; 8.7; 35.7; TS 1.8.14.1; 1.8.16.2; 3.2.8.1; VS 10.29; 20.9, 17; 30.6; 38.19.

⁴ Other texts with parallel passages omit *dhr̥ivēna dharmāna*: TS 4.1.6.1; KS 16.5; VS 11.60; SB 6.5.3.10. I have adopted the translation from Bretton (1981: 55), as also his translation of *dhr̥ivēna dharmānā* in other places.

⁵ The first half-verse is RV 10.173.4. The second half-verse is not found elsewhere.

⁶ For an examination of kingship, see Rau 1957, 90–95.

⁷ See also KS 15.6–7; VS 10.4, 6–9, 16, 18; TB 1.7.6; ŚB 5.3.4.27; 5.3.5.16–37; 5.4.1.15.

⁸ On these passages where *dharmā* is connected to the king, see Rau 1957: 90–96.

⁹ This is the earliest occurrence of the negative *adharmā* in the vedic literature.

¹⁰ According to Vishva Bandhu's *Vedic Word-Concordance* (Hoshiarpur, 1973), *dharmā* occurs in 11 passages of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* and once in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*.

¹¹ Here also I have eliminated citations from the Samhitās, which are for the most part mantras for ritual recitations.

¹² Stanly Insler's paper "The Function of the Varuṇa Hymns of the Rg veda" at the Third International Vedic Workshop, Leiden, May 29–June 2, 2002. See the story of Devāpi and Santanu in the *Bṛhaddevatā* (8.2): when a transgression against *dharmā* occurred (here the younger brother becoming king in place of the older) the realm got no rain for 12 years.

¹³ It is unclear why acting in an *adharmic* way makes her connected with Varuṇa; one would have expected the opposite. However, even here we have the correlation between Varuṇa and *dharmā*.

¹⁴ Eggebjerg, following Śāyana, takes this expression to mean "perfecting of the people".

¹⁵ We can see how such an extension may have influenced also the ritual meaning of *dharmā* as a peculiarity or ritual detail of a particular rite and especially the later Buddhist Abhidharma meaning of *dharmā* as particles of the ultimately real, that which makes something that thing (*svabhāva*), which parallels the ritual use of *śradhdharmā* in the Śrautasūtras that we will examine below.

¹⁶ I am not including the later Upaniṣad in this study because they are probably later than the rise of Buddhism and the early Dharmasūtras. The term is found in *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 2.1–2; *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.21; 2.13, 14; 4.14; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.6.

¹⁷ See the earlier connection of Mitra with *satya* and Varuṇa with *dharmā*. The connection between *dharmā* and *satya* continues into the classical period: see MDh 1.81. Their connection is also apparent within the context of judicial proceedings, especially in the context of witnesses who speak the truth: see MDh 8.14, 74, 80–8.

¹⁸ For a detailed study of this passage, see Olivelle (1996).

¹⁹ As I have explained in my previous study (Olivelle, 1996), I take the compound *dharmaskandilāḥ* as a Bahuvrīhi. Traditionally, it has been taken as a Tatpuruṣa and translated "divisions of *dharmā*".

²⁰ These exclude the occurrence of the term in citations of mantras from the Samhitās. Āpastamba, 19.21.4, 16; 21.3.3, 10; Āśvalāyana, 10.5.15; 10.7.9; Baudhāyana, 24.37; 27.24; Bhāradvāja, 1.1.9; 6.15.5; 7, 12; 7.6.7; 9.18.3; Hiranyakeśin, 3.8.24; 32.40, 41, 44, 46, 47; 13.4.27; 16.1.23; 22.4.2, 6; Kātyāyana, 1.8.7; 4.3.19; 5.8.17; 9.5.10; Lāṭyāyana, 7.7.19; Śāṅkhāyana, 4.5.13; 7.15.16–7; 9.26.2; 16.18.5; Vādhūla, 11.6.7–8, 24; and Vārāha 1.1.1.68, 70; 1.2.4.9.

²¹ See ApS. 19.21.16; HirŚr 3.8.40; 22.4.6; BarŚr 6.15.12.

²² This meaning did not disappear after the Śrautasūtras. We find it used with precisely the same meaning in the *Pārva-Nṛmāṅśā Śātra* 2.1.9–10.

²³ I have omitted the *Paikhanava* and the *Āgñiveśaya*, which clearly belong to a much later date.

²⁴ On the use of such expressions, also found in *satyaśya satyam*, see H. Oertel, *Zum altindischen Ausdruckswerkzeugtypus satyaśya satyam* "das Wahre des Wahren" = "die Quintessenz des Wahren." Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung, Jahrgang 1937, Heft 3. Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1937.

²⁵ I use "Buddha" as a shorthand for the early Buddhists. What the historical Buddha actually taught is impossible to determine, because we have only one lens to view it and that is the Buddhist texts written, revised, edited over centuries.

²⁶ Number of occurrences are given within parentheses: Rook edicts I (2); III (1); IV (10); V (10); VI (1); VIII (3); IX (5); X (2); XI (5); XII (2); XIII (11); XIV (1); XV (2); Pillar edicts I (8); II (3); IV (3); VI (3); VII (30); Minor rock edict I (4 only in Gujarat version); II (1); III (3); IV (1). The last is in the trilingual edict with Aramaic and Greek translations. The Aramaic equivalent of *dharmā* given by Aśoka is "gsyṭ" and the Greek is "eusebia". John Huebnergard (personal communication) takes the root 9st means "(be) true, truth". The form gsyṭ is a substantivized adjective, "what is true". This term thus corresponds to *satya* with which, as we have seen, *dharmā* is often paired and sometimes identified. The Greek term may mean something like piety and reverence towards gods. According to Paul Woodruff (personal communication) there may be a connection between *eusebia* and kingship. Augustus is Latin for Sebastos, which is used in connection with Hellenistic kingship. In classical usage, *sebein* is used for respecting monarchs and *eusebein* for relations with the gods. As the line between kings and gods was blurred in the Hellenistic era, so was this rather soft distinction. A tantalizing possibility is that Aśoka's use of *dharmā* may, in fact, have been influenced by Hellenistic or Persian royal vocabularies.

²⁷ According to the Girnar version: *sādhu mātarī ca pitarī ca susrītā nīrasanīstutañātmanī bhāṅjanasamānānī sādhu dāmanī prajānānī sādhu anīrānibho appavyatā appabhāṅiyatā sādhu*.

²⁸ Here is the list of these compounds: *dharmakāmatā*, *dharmaguṇa*, *dharmaghoṣa*, *dharmacarana* (*calana*), *dharmatūṅha*, *dharmadāna*, *dharmāhilitāna*, *dharmānīyana*, *dharmānūgaha*, *dharmānūpaṅgati*, *dharmānūsati*, *dharmānūsātā*, *dharmānūsātā*, *dharmānūpadāna*, *dharmānūpacūcha*, *dharmānūpadyātānī*, *dharmānūpekṣā*, *dharmānūngata*, *dharmānūnānātā*, *dharmānūyātā*, *dharmānūyuta*, *dharmānūdipi*, *dharmānūvā* / *śīlana*, *dharmānūvijaya*, *dharmānūvidhī*, *dharmānūvata*, *dharmānūsampanidha*, *dharmānūsamvibhāga*, *dharmānūsanistava*, *dharmānūstavana*, *dharmānūsusūṣa*. For further details about Aśoka's use of *dharmā*, see Olivelle, (forthcoming) and Thapar (1997).

²⁹ Historical memory is not the same as historical accuracy. The historical memory of Aśoka was different among different groups; the Buddhists generally have a very positive view of Aśoka and his work, while the press is not entirely favorable to Aśoka in the Brahmanical tradition. With regard to the possible influence of such historical memory in shaping later Brahmanical literature, see James Fitzgerald, *The Mahābhārata: 11. The Book of Women*, 12. *The Book of Pious*, vol. 7. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004; and Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharmā King*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

³⁰ The story is also found in *Bṛhaddevatā*, where we find the expression *dharmānyatīkrama*, "transgression of *dharmā*" (8.3).

³¹ See also *Nirukta*, 6.19; 8.10; 12.13. In chapter 14, generally considered to be a later addition, we also have similar use of *dharmā*: 14.6, 14.

- ²² See also Pāṇini 4.4.47 and 6.2.65 for *dharmyam*, and 4.2.46 for *dharmava*. See also 5.2.132; 5.4.124.
- ²³ Oskar von Hinüber, *Der Beginn der Schrift und frühe Schriftlichkeit in Indien* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1989), p. 34; Harry Falk, *Schrift im alten Indien: ein Forschungsbericht mit Anmerkungen* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1992), p. 304.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ĀĀ	<i>Aitareya Āraṇyaka</i>
ĀB	<i>Āitareya Brāhmaṇa</i>
ĀpŚr	<i>Āpastamba Śrautasūtra</i>
ĀŚGr	<i>Āśvalayana Gṛhyasūtra</i>
BauGr	<i>Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra</i>
BharŚr	<i>Bharadvāja Śrautasūtra</i>
BU	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i>
ChU	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>
HirŚr	<i>Hiranyakeśi Śrautasūtra</i>
KS	<i>Kāthaka Saṁhitā</i>
MDh	<i>Mānava Dharmasāstra</i>
MS	<i>Maitrīyaṅ Saṁhitā</i>
PāGr	<i>Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra</i>
RV	<i>Rg Veda</i>
ŚānGr	<i>Śaṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra</i>
ŚB	<i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i>
TĀ	<i>Taittirīya Āraṇyaka</i>
TB	<i>Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa</i>
TS	<i>Taittirīya Saṁhitā</i>

TU *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*
 VS *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*
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