

Alexandrian times and aftermath: Philosophical Understandings of the Indian and Greek Philosophers

Anil Kumar Singh *
Assistant Professor in Greek Studies
School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

ABSTRACT

Indians and Greeks came in direct contact after the arrival of Alexander in the North-West of India in 326 B.C. Many wise men accompanied him, including Pyrrhon, the father of Scepticism, Aristoboulos, Nearchos Onesicritus, etc., who studied Indian societal and philosophical thoughts and patterns and, after critically analyzing them, produced theories and perceptions about India and Indians. After Alexander returned back, he left a split empire, which was being ruled by Indo-Greek kings in north-west India, who sent Ambassadors like Megasthenes to the Royal court of Patliputra. Living in the heartland of India, Megasthenes did a deep study of Indian philosophical systems and tried to narrate them in his book "Indica". This research paper presents a study of Scepticism and its origin in Greek and Indian traditions, especially during the times of Pyrrhon, a companion of Alexander and views of Aristoboulos, Nearchos and Onesicritus about socio-philosophical systems in India. This study also presents a significant part of Megasthenes' reflections on the Indian thought process and its impact on the lives of others.

Keywords: Alexander, Scepticism, Pyrrhon, Aristoboulos, Nearchos, Onesicritus, Brahmanas, Megasthenes, Indian Philosophy, Socratic Method, Gymnosophists.

The philosopher Pyrrhon, who had probably accompanied Alexander to India, became the founder of the school of philosophy known as Skepticism. The Sceptics used the Socratic method to find out the fallacies in any belief and doubted whether knowledge of any sort was possible. Drawing our attention towards the contradictions found in various philosophies and deceptions inherent in sense perception, the Sceptics tried to establish that no positive knowledge was possible. According to Diogenes Laertios, Pyrrhon had encountered the Magis in Persia and gymnosophists in India. Diogenes further informs us that "Pyrrhon would withdraw from the world and live in solitude, rarely showing himself to his relatives; this he did because he had heard an Indian reproach Anaxarchos, telling him that he would never be able to teach others what is good as long as he attends dances in kings' courts" (Diog. Laert.,

* Author: Anil Kumar Singh

Email: anilksinghju@gmail.com

Received 22 November 2016; Accepted 28 April. 2017. Available online: 25 August 2017.

Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

[This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)



IX, 163). He had propounded a logical device known in philosophy as the tetralemma, i.e. to say about a phenomenon that it either is, or is not, or is and is not, or neither is nor is not. The principle of anekantavada, in Jain philosophy, stresses choice among seven predicates. In Greece, except for Scepticism, this type of judgment is apparently unknown. Furthermore, the nihilistic attitude towards knowledge in Skepticism also supports the theory of Jain influence. Paul Le Valley has tried to connect the four-cornered logic in Skepticism with the thought of Sanjaya Belatthiputta, who was probably an older contemporary of Buddha. A line of thought runs directly from Sanjay to Pyrrhon, and that line could only have passed through the gymnosophists.¹ Although before Alexander, there is no definite evidence of interaction between Indian and Greek culture, the possibility of cultural contact through the Achaemenan empire at that time cannot be ruled out. There were well-maintained royal roads linking the empire for swift movements of troops. This provided an opportunity not only for soldiers but also traders, administrators, and ascetic wanderers to come into contact with one another.² Travels to gain knowledge were greatly encouraged by the Greeks. All famous Greek philosophers were reported to have visited many oriental nations in search of knowledge. In fact, the word philosopher began to be used often in the context of travels to foreign lands.³ Orpheus, Pythagoras and many others appear to have travelled to the places where learned people lived. Quoting some Aristocrats,⁴ Some Indians also appear to have reached even the mainland, which was adjacent to the Achaemenian territory. In Athens, one of their groups had probably met Socrates and discussed philosophical matters with him.⁵ The land of Hellas was thus exposed towards the Orient, not accident. From the Indus at the Eastern end to Greece at the Western, there was one belt in the ancient world since the Bronze Age. We may call this belt Oriental Continuum. All main civilizations of the ancient world, like Indus, Bactria, Iran, Mesopotamia, Hittites, Hebrews, Phoenicians, Crete and Greece, which were joined to each other, developed on this very belt. When Greece becomes an integral part of the oriental world, it is not surprising to find similar things in India and Greece. Alexander's Companions: On Philosophers and the Brahmanas The first definite evidence of the meeting between Indian and Greek philosophers occurs with the advent of Alexander and his army men on Indian soil. The two gymnosophists with whom Alexander's companion Onesikritos conversed were Kalanos and Mandanis. Seeing that Onesikritos wore a mantle, a broad-rim hat and long boots, Kalanos laughed at him and said: "In former times the world was full of corn and barley, while now it is full of dust; the fountains then flowed, some with water and others with milk; Some with honey, wine or oil; but humanity by repletion and luxury became proud and insolent. Then

Zeus, indignant at this state of things, made all disappear and allotted to man a life of toil. When temperance, however and other virtues had disappeared once more in the world, an abundance of good things arose again. But at present, the condition of satiety and wantonness was approaching and threatened to do away with the existing state of things. Having spoken thus, Kalanos requested Onesikritos to strip off his clothes and lie naked on the same stones on which he lay, to listen to his discourse⁶" The passage as reflected above clearly corresponds to the Indian concept of the Yugas. Hesiod in Greece also refers to a similar concept. In fact, the conception is common to many religious beliefs and mythologies. Alexander's companions were perhaps the first to observe similarities between Indian and Greek philosophy. The Indian philosophical ideas, ascetic practices and vegetarianism reminded Onesikritos, the Greek thinkers like Pythagoras, Sokrates and Diogenes. Onesikritos himself was the disciple of Diogenes. The ideas of gymnosophists, as briefed by Mandanis to Onesikritos, are as follows:- "The best teaching is that which removes pleasure and pain from the soul; and that pain and toil differ, for the former is inimical to man and the latter friendly, since man trains the body for toil in order that his opinions may be strengthened, whereby he may put a stop to dissensions and be ready to give good advice to all, both in public and in private..." "After learning the similarities between Indian and Greek philosophy, Mandanis accepted the Greeks as wiser in general but found them otherwise in their preference for formal custom to nature. Mandanis remarked, "The best house is that which requires the least repairs⁷" Mandanis' statement that the best philosophy is that which frees the soul from both pain and pleasure is the most significant element in this passage. The emancipation of human beings from the bondage of Maya, i.e., the world of senses, by transcending pleasure and grief, one recovers the purity of the soul in Indian thought. The Greek counterpart of this thought is found in Plato's writings but more prominently in Neo-Platonism. Although the Indian elements are traceable in the ideas described above, they conform to the teachings of Diogenes. Brown⁸ thinks that Onesikritos had used this occasion to expound Cynic doctrine, while Wilcken⁹ opines that he understood the Indian ascetics as true Cynics. It is possible that in order to find support for the ideas of his master Diogenes, Onesikritos might have made a deliberate attempt to use the Indian ideas in his favour. It may also be postulated that Onesikritos' inability to understand the Indian philosophical attitude on account of the problem of interpreters led him to understand Indian asceticism as the Cynicism of the Greeks. One another companion of Alexander, Aristoboulos, describes the meeting between Indian philosophers and Onesikritos with some divergence. "Aristoboulos says that he saw two of the sophists at Taxila, both Brachmanes; and

that the elder had his head shaved, but the younger had long hair; both of them were surrounded by their disciples and that when not otherwise engaged they spent their time in the market place; and in respect of their being public counselors, they received great honours, and had the privilege of taking without payment whatever they wished that is offered for sale; and that any one whom they accosted poured over them sesame oil, in such profusion that it flowed down over their eyes; and that since quantities of honey and sesame were put out for sale, they made cakes of it and subsisted free of charge; and that they came up to the table of Alexander, ate dinner standing, and taught him a lesson in endurance by retiring to a place nearby, where the elder fell to the ground on his back and endured the sun's rays and the rains (for it was now raining, since the spring of the year had begun); and that the younger stood on one leg holding aloft in both hands a log about three cubits in length, and when one leg tired he changed the support to the other and kept this up all day long; and that the younger showed a far greater self-mastery than the elder; for although the younger followed the king a short distance he soon turned back again towards home, and when the king went after him, the man bade him to come himself if he wanted anything of him; but that the elder accompanied the king to the end of his days, and in staying with him dressed in a different style and altered his whole mode of life. When some reproached him for so doing, he answered that he had completed the forty years of asceticism which he had promised to observe. Alexander gave presents to his children¹⁰. There are certain discrepancies between Onesikritos and Aristoboulos's accounts of Alexander's meeting with the Indian philosophers. Onesikritos knew Mandanis as the older one, but according to Aristoboulos, Kalanos, who had accompanied the emperor, was the older one. Onesikritos' account, as preserved by Plutarch¹¹, mentions that Onesikritos was sent to persuade the Sophists to come to court, which Megasthenes¹², as quoted by Strabo, also mentions. We find that, like Onesikritos, Aristoboulos was not much interested in philosophy. Being a civil engineer, he was more interested in technical things. His description is only the external side of Indian asceticism, not their ideas. The Greek authors refer to all Indian ascetics as 'Brachmanes' although there were also Buddhist or Jain ascetics in a greater number. The followers of Alexander had not recognized the division of the Hindu society in Punjab, as was observed by Megasthenes in the kingdom of Magadha, which ruled over the country. However, the Brahmanas were very much recognizable in Alexandrian accounts. They appear in Alexander's story in diverse roles, mainly as a group or community who were in a position to be troublesome to Alexander or as a group of 'wise men' who impressed him greatly. The two roles of the Brahmanas were clearly noticed by Nearchos, who informs that some took part in

political life and attended the king as counsellors, while the others were engaged in the study of nature¹³. In an account of probably Ptolemy where the Brahmanas were shown as leading the revolt of Mousikanos and Sambos, they appear as warriors.¹⁴ The division made by Nearchos "resembles the distinction later made by Megasthenes, who separated Brahmanas from other philosophers but made it clear that the Brahmanas were an extensive group which professed the entire range of philosophy including metaphysics". These two diverse roles are not incompatible. The Greek sources are in agreement with the Indian evidence. Many of the important dynasties in ancient India, like those of Sungas, Kanvas, Satavahanas, etc., were of the Brahmanas. In Rigveda, the priest was shown as taking an active interest in political affairs, thus appearing as a forerunner of the Brahmana statesman¹⁵. Even in the middle age, Brahmanas continued to play the role of military protector. Monasteries belonging to them were known as Akharas, which were schools of martial arts, and monk armies had fought the successive waves of Afghan invaders¹⁶. The companions of Alexander did not grasp the fact that the Brahmanas formed a caste in their own right, the first of the Vamas, and that Brahmanas might be found in a broad spectrum of occupations. They were scholars, philosophers and priests, but also might serve as regular troops. The stress on occupation obscured the appreciation of caste. Nearchos' statement that along with the Brahmanas, their women were also studying philosophy and leading an ascetic life may be corroborated with early evidences of the Vedic age which refer to women seer philosophers and teachers of the Vedic Shakhas. In the Brahadaranyaka Upanisad, Gargi interrogates Yajnavalkya on the prime cause of creation and several other subjects and defends strongly her point of view. Such scholarly women were classed as Brahmavadinis. They were eligible for the Upanayana and had devoted their whole life to the study of philosophy and practising asceticism. During the presence of Alexander and his army men in India, the Brahmavadinis may be few, but the Buddhist nuns were prominently represented. As the Greeks were not able to differentiate between Brahmavadinis and Buddhist nuns, Nearchos' women¹⁷ of Brahmanas may also be referring to Buddhist nuns. Buddha was forced to acknowledge the fact that women were capable of Arhatship. A large number of references in Therigatha, the Jatakas, and in the Pali canon itself are indicative of the higher state the nuns had attained so as to consider them capable of teaching Dharma to the public at large. We may, therefore, believe that at least in the field of Dharma, if not socially, the concepts of equality and freedom of women were theoretically acknowledged, which itself was by no means a small achievement. Megasthenes on Religion, Philosophy and the Lives of Brahmanas Megasthenes noted the seven classes in India, which included sophists or

philosophers, farmers, hunters and herders, craftsmen and traders, soldiers, overseers, and councillors, i.e. the assessors of the king¹⁸. No one was allowed to marry out of his group to exchange one's profession or trade for another or to follow more than one business. In Strabo's version of Megasthenes, the philosopher was made an exception to these rules on account of his superior merit, but in Arrian's version, it was quoted that since sophists led a very hard life, a person from any class could be included among them. The sense in Strabo is that any occupation was open to a sophist, while in Arrian, anyone could become a sophist.¹⁹

Megasthenes recognized the supremacy of philosophers in dignity and honour.²⁰ He presented them in their two primary roles. One was their customary priestly function, for which they were receiving valuable gifts in requital of such services²¹ while in the other appeared as adviser of the state for various matters. They predicted such things as the seasons of the year and any calamity which may befall the state, such as droughts, diseases, and other topics capable of profiting the hearers. He also draws our attention to a tradition of calling the general assembly of philosophers at the king's gate at the beginning of the New Year. There, they publicly predicted subjects which could be helpful in the state. The one giving false information thrice was condemned to be silent for the rest of his life²². For the privileges of the Brahmana, he said that they were relieved from all public duties, which may be binding for the other classes.²³ In return for his helpful advice given to the state, the philosopher-guide was exempted from tribute and taxes.²⁴

The philosophers were divided by Megasthenes into two classes: Brachmanes and Garmanes. Brachmanes, according to Megasthenes, enjoyed fairer repute, for they were more consistent in their dogmas. He spoke about the first two stages of the life of a Brahmana, i.e., of studentship and a married family man.²⁵ Of the Garmanes, i.e., the second kind of philosopher, Megasthenes wrote that those who were held in most honour were called Hylobioi. Although they lived in the forest, they were not cut off from society, for Megasthenes reported that the kings used to come to consult them on various problems. Next to Hylobioi among Garmanes were the physicians, who lived in society and obtained their food consisting of rice and barley meal from the householders, presumably for their valuable medical services, rendered free of charge. These two groups practised fortitude, both by undergoing active toil and by their endurance of them. They could stay in one posture all day long without moving.²⁶ Next to Garmanes were diviners and sorcerers who were adept in the death rites, and lived on begging. Megasthenes' Brachmanes, no doubt, refers to the Brahmanas while the word Garmanes should

have been Sarmanes, i.e. Sanskrit Sramana, which is used for the Buddhist monks,²⁷ but in Megasthenes' context most likely refers to ascetics as a class in general irrespective of their religious sect. Before Megasthenes, such distinction between the Brahmanas engaged in worldly affairs and those leading a life of an ascetic was already noted by Nearchos.²⁸

The evidence on the Indian side also confirms this division made by the Greeks. For example, the inscriptions of Ashoka speak about such division.²⁹ The word Hylobioi is a literal translation of Vanaprastha, "dweller in the wood", which is the usual designation of the third stage in the four-fold division of Hindu life.³⁰ The Greek accounts have actually mixed up the various classes of ascetics. It is not clearly shown whether they described the ascetics of the last two stages of Hindu life, or members of regular monastic establishments, like Buddhist and Jain mendicants. Many of the statements made by Megasthenes for the philosophers are confirmed in the Brahmanical texts. All Hindu texts recognize their supremacy. He has been recognized as a great divinity in human form, and every respect, the Brahmana demanded precedence, honour, and worship. His traditional role of officiating sacrifices and getting a fee in return was truly observed by Megasthenes.³¹ Regarding the role of Brahmanas as the advisers to the king, Manu stated that the king should consider their opinions as most distinguished³² and as an imperishable treasure for him.³³ He should learn from them the threefold sciences of the Government, dialectics and the soul,³⁴ and worship them on account of their purity and the knowledge of the Vedas³⁵. In Manusmriti, the Brahmanas appear not only as mere advisers but as high officers like a judge,³⁶ prime ministers,³⁷ assessors,³⁸ members of the Dharma Parishad³⁹ (Religious Council) and the standing legal commission in the administration were all filled up by them. Megasthenes' report that the philosophers were exempted from taxes in return for their services to the state is confirmed by the Dharma Sashtras, which recommended the exemption on the ground that their actions were an adequate contribution.⁴⁰ The observation that the Brahmanas were exempted from the barrier of craft-exclusiveness finds mention in the Hindu law texts also, to violate the restrictions was against the ideal⁴¹, but in actual practice, they were employed in many important government posts, and several royal families were of Brahmana origin. The Brahmanas engaged in activities like teaching, future telling, or officiating sacrifices of family men, but they did not have enough means of subsistence several times. The varied religious activity of ancient India did not provide a livelihood for more than a few of the Brahmanas.⁴² The Smriti literature contains a special section on "duty when in distress (Apad-dharma), which carefully defines what a man may legitimately do when he

cannot earn a living by the profession normally followed by his class, and by these provisions Brahmanas and people of other castes also might pursue all manner of trades and professions.⁴³ The Buddhist texts show that caste was not rigidly tried to craft in those days.⁴⁴ In Megasthenes' statement of accepting only the Brahmanas as an exception, we may say that the fact of comparatively more relaxation provided to Brahmanas than the other castes drew his attention only towards them.

The statement in Arrian's version of Megasthenes that anyone could be accommodated in the class of sophists was true only when by sophist we mean an ascetic, not a Brahmana,⁴⁵ for the Indian sources attest that it was a common understanding that from any class a man could go forth, abandoning his home, and join a sect of wandering disputants or ascetics. Many of these ascetics were highly esteemed, and Megasthenes was in accordance with the Indian evidence when he spoke about their role as an adviser to the king on various state matters.⁴⁶ It is also important to mention Megasthenes's statement on the custom of self-immolation among the Brahmanas, as was done by Kalanos in the period of Alexander. Megasthenes condemned the custom and described the prevalent Indian view that the traveller had learnt. Referring to the views of his days on Kalanos and Alexander, Megasthenes informed that Kalanos was not liked as he was greedy and accepted the gifts from Alexander. Such behaviour was undesirable for the Brahmanas, for they were free from all passions. On the other hand, Mandanis was praised by the Indians because he did not visit the "son of Zeus despite all the allurements if he complied and threats of punishment if he refused. He wanted none of the gifts of a man whose desire nothing could satiate. As far as his threats, he feared them not for if he lived, India would supply him with enough food, and if he died, he would be delivered from the body of flesh afflicted with age and would be translated to a better and a purer life.⁴⁷ Megasthenes speaks of the absence of slavery in India⁴⁸, but at another place, while explaining the polygamy among the Brahmanas, he writes that they married many wives in order to have numerous children; for from many wives, the number of earnest children would be greater; and since they had no enslaved people, it was necessary for them to provide for more service from children.⁴⁹ It is quite evident from this passage that the Indian type of slavery was known to Megasthenes, for if there had been a complete absence of it, the specific reference to Brahmanas' disadvantage only was irrelevant. The spiritual outlook of the Indians, as described by Megasthenes, may be known from his following account, which is connected with the Brahmanas. It runs as follows: "They (Brahmanas) converse more about death than anything else, for they believe that the life

here is, as it were, that of a babe still in the womb and that death, to those who have devoted themselves to philosophy, is birth into the true life, that is, the happy life; and that they, therefore, discipline themselves most of all to be ready for death; and that they believe that nothing that happens to mankind is good or bad, for otherwise some would not be grieved and others delighted by the same things, both having dream-like notions and that the same persons cannot at one time be grieved and then in turn change and be delighted by the same things." ⁵⁰

The essence that had sustained Indian civilization was reported here. The eternal problem of problems, the mystery of death, was solved once and for all in the Upanishadic philosophy of India. The whole riddle of life after death was beautifully explained in the Kathopanishad through a series of dialogues between a little boy, Nachiketa, and Yama, the ruler of the other world. The gist of it is that in addition to the body, which we all see, there is a soul (Atman) which is distinct from, and independent of, the organs, sensory and motor, from the mind in its two-fold aspect of vague consideration and determination (manas and buddhi), and the vital force with its different functions; that the soul, being immaterial and uncreated, is indestructible and as such outlives the body; that it usually has three states waking, dream, and deep sleep; that it goes after death to different worlds, high and low, according to its past work and knowledge, and may return to this world. The limitations of the soul are only for a time, that is, if it is under the spell of ignorance, which, again, is self-imposed; that it is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, and is essentially identical with God or Brahman". These are, in a nutshell, the ideas of all the Upanishads, solving the mystery after death. ⁵¹

From this philosophy, it should not be misunderstood that in ancient India, a commoner was indifferent to the joys of life and material welfare. Maintaining a healthy balance in life was desirable, and Dharma (spirituality), Artha (wealth), and Kama (happiness), called Trivarga, were regarded as the three ends in life which were equally to be pursued without giving undesirable attention to any one of them. Kautilya said that if any of these ends were pursued in excess, it would be detrimental to the other two. A fourth, Moksa (emancipation), was added later and had been the ideal of life in ancient India.

Notes and References:

1. Paul Le Valley, "What did the Gymnosophists Believe', *Yavanika*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1992, Bareilly, ISGARS, pp. 61-84.
2. Permanent military colonies spread over the empire, and we have evidence of an Indian colony in Mesopotamia (K. Karttunen, *India in Early Greek Literature*, Finnish Oriental Society, Helsinki, 1989, p. 49).
3. Herodotus, I, 30, Trans. By George Rawlinson, John Murray, London, 1862
4. Aristocrates (Plutarch, Lycurgus, Ch. 4) in C. Muller's *Fragmenta Historiarum Graecorum* (Paris, 1878) vol. IV, p.333.
5. Aristoxenos in C. Mueller' op. cit, vol. II, p. 81, Frag. 31 (Euseb., Pre. Ev. XI, 3).
6. Onesikritos, No. 134, F. 17a (Strabo, XV, 1, 64, Trans. By Horace Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library)
7. Ibid, 17a (Strabo, XV, 1, 65).
8. T. S. Brown, *Onesicritus: A Study in Hellenistic Historiography*, 1949, Berkeley, pp 39.
9. Ulrich Wilcken, "Alexander der Grosse und die Indischen Gymnosophisten" in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1923, Phil. Hist, Klasse, Berlin, pp. 150-183.
10. Aristoboulos, No. 139, F. 41 (Strabo, XV, 1, 61).
11. F. 17b (Plutarch, Alexander, LXV).
12. Megasthenes, No. 715, F. 34 (Strabo, XV, 1, 68). See T. Brown, op.cit., p. 46 and L. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 1960, New York, p. 99.
13. Nearchos, No. 133, F. 23 (Strabo, XV, 1, 66)
14. Arrian (from Ptolemy), *Anabasis* (VI, 16, 3-5 & XVII, 2). The passages have been attributed to Ptolemy by W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, vol. II, Cambridge, 1948, p. 36.
15. A. B. Keith, *Cambridge History of India*, Chapter IV, 1922, pp. 95-96.
16. See R.S. Tripathi's remark in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVI, 1940, p. 558.
17. Nearch., No. 133, F. 23 (Strabo, XV, 1, 66)
18. No. 715, F. 4 (II, 40-41); F. 19a (Arr. Ind., 11-12); F. 19b (Strabo, XV, 1, 39-41; 45-49)
19. F. 19b (Strabo, XV, 1, 49); F. 19a (Arrian, *Indica*, XII, 8-9)
20. F.4 (Diod. II, 40, 1); F. 19a (Arr. Ind., XI, 2); F. 19b (Strabo, XV, 1, 39).
21. F. 4 (Diod. II, 40,2); F. 19a (op. cit.); F. 19b (op. cit.).
22. F. 4 (Diod II, 40, 2-3); F. 19a (Arr. Ind., XI, 4-5); F. 19 (Strabo, XV, 1, 39).
23. F. 4 (Diod., 40, 1).
24. F. 19b (Strabo, XV, 1, 39).

25. F. 33 (Strabo, XV, 1, 59).
26. F. 33 (Strabo, XV, 1, 60).
27. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*, Vol. VI, 1901, Westminster, p. 65, n.1.
28. Nearchos, No. 133, F. 23 (Strabo, XV, 1, 66)
29. Rock edict no. XIII, *Corpus Inscrptions Indicarum*, vol. 1., Edited by E. Hultzsch, Oxford, 1925
30. As society was divided into four classes in Brahmanical India, the life of the individual was divided into four stages. These four stages, according to ancient texts, were Brahmacharin, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasin. When an Aryan had put on the sacred thread at the end of his childhood, he became a Brahmacharin, leading a celibate and austere life as a student at the home of his teacher; next having mastered the Vedas or part of them, he returned to his paternal home and was married, becoming a householder (*grahastha*); when well advanced in middle age, he left his home for the forest to become a hermit (*Vanaprastha*); by meditation and penance he freed his soul from material things, until at least, a significantly older man, he left his hermitage and became a homeless wanderer (Sanyasin), with all his earthly ties broken.
31. Manu states the 6 acts of Brahmacharin (X, 75) out of which three (sacrificing for others, teaching, and accepting gifts from pure men) he recognized his means of subsistence (X, 76). Further, we see Manu (XI, 38-40) emphasizing the inevitability of the sacrificial fee. In VIII, 208-10, he described the rules regarding the payment and distribution of sacrificial fees.
32. Manu, VII, 58; Yagnavalkya, I, 311.
33. Manu, VII, 82-89; Yagnavalkya, I, 314.
34. Manu, VII, 43; Gautama, XI, 3; Yajna valkya, I, 310.
35. Manu, VII, 38; Visnu Smrti, III, 77.
36. Manu, VIII, 9. Also see Gautama, XIII, 36; Vasistha, XVI, 2; Visnu, III, 73; Yajnavalkya, II, 3.
37. Manu, VII, 58; Yajnavalkya, I, 31, 1.
38. Manu, VIII, 10, 11.
39. Manu, VIII, 20 & XII, 110 ff; Gautama, XXVIII, 49; Baudhayana I, 1, 7,9.
40. Manu, VII, 133-136; Apastamba II, 26, 10; 25, 11; Gautama, X, 9; Vasistha, XIX, 23; Visnu, III, 26, 79.
41. A Brahmacharin lost his status if he violated the restrictions prescribed as to food and gifts, occupation or profession (Manu, III, 150-166).
42. A.B. Keith (*Camb. Hist. of India*, Vol. I, pp. 122-28) writes, "We can distinguish in this period two classes of Brahmanas, the priests, who, as Purohitas of the king or belonging to his entourage took part in the vast sacrifices, some of them lasting for at least a year, which they offered for their masters and the priests of the village, who lived a humble and more restricted existence, except when they might be called on to serve at the sacrifice instituted by some rich

noble or merchant. In both cases, the priest was, in the long run, at the mercy of the political power of the king".

43. Manu, X, 81-130. For references to parallels of Manu in other Indian sources, see Sacred Books of the East Series, vol. XXV, pp. 574-75.

44. The Jatakas refer to Brahmanas pursuing the following callings: tillage, tending cattle, trade, hunting, carpentry, weaving, policing of caravans, archery, driving of carriages and even snake charming; the Vasettha Sutta refers to Brahmanas working as cultivators, artisans, messengers, sacrificers and landlords. In the Jatakas Kshatriyas are also referred to working successively as a potter, basket-maker, reed-worker, garland-maker and cook (Jataka, V, 290).

45. The references to 'hardest of all' and their uneasy lives' for sophists in Arrian's version of Megasthenes (F. 19a Arr. Ind., XI) undoubtedly show to mean ascetics.

46. Mbh. XII, 86, 26. The Mahabharata says, "The king should, with attentive care, inform the ascetics (within his dominions) of the state of his self, of all his measures, and of the kingdom and should always behave with humility in their presence. The king should place his wealth in charge of an ascetic and should take wisdom from him" (P.C. Roy's translation, The Mahabharata, vol, VIII, pp. 197-98).

47. Meg., F. 34 (Strabo, V, 1, 68).

48. Meg., F. 32 (Strabo, XV, 1, 54); F. 6 (Arr. Ind. X, 8).

49. Meg., F. 33 (Strabo, XV, 159). 50. Ibid.

51. S.K. Chatterjee (Edited), *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, 1958 (Rep., 1975), pp. 355-56.