

## CHAPTER - VI

### OATHS

Oaths and ordeals are two sets of trials accepted by the Dh.writers. The earlier writers do not speak of the ordeal. They give Śapathas.

Gautama recommends the use of Śapatha in the legal disputes while Āpastamba allows the divine methods (Daiva) to be used in cases of doubt.<sup>512</sup> Maskarin explains the word Śapathena used by Gautama as Kośādinā (trials like Kosa etc) while Ujjvalā explains the word 'Daivena' as 'Śapathena' at one place and as Taptamāśādinā at another. These explanations do not make any clear distinction between the oath and the ordeal.

Manu gives us various oaths. He includes the methods of fire and water under these oaths. SL on the contrary speak of Divyas in general and include various Śapathas under the Divyas. Viṣṇu recommends the use of various methods under the common head of Samayakriyā. He however appears to divide them into two sets - the methods coming under the first group are used for the lighter offences, while those in the other, for the severe charges.

Yāj. gives a list of five ordeals. He does not describe the Śapathas. His commentators however discuss the propriety of Kosa's inclusion in the list of ordeals given by Yāj.

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512. GDS 13.13, Āp.D.S.II.29.6

Kośa according to some should be taken as a Śapatha, while according to others it is a method coming on the border-line of the oath and the ordeal.

The first clear cut distinction between the oath and the ordeal is made by Nār. In ~~RE~~ 247 he mentions them individually and independently. In 248, he describes various oaths. Ordeal must be utilised for the grave charges while oath should be used for the inferior ones, he points out in 249.

Distinction between Oath and ordeal was thus getting crystallised by the time of Nār. Separate lists of oaths and ordeals were rather getting finalised. Nār. has already referred to the 'five ordeals'. He however added two methods more and Br. and Pit. made them nine. Thus the lists of oaths and ordeals were completed. The former brought under it methods like declaring truth etc. (Satyādayah) while the latter consisted of the nine methods i.e. from Dhātā to Dharmaja.

According to Māṇḍavya, Śapatha is two-fold. (1) Cold and (11) Hot. Cold Śapathas give results within 3.1/2 moons (nights) and days, while the hot śapathas give instant results. The incidents like the death of a son or wife or biting by a poisonous snake etc. indicate that the person has failed in the (cold) Śapatha.<sup>513</sup> It will appear that the cold and hot Śapathas referred to by Māṇḍavya correspond to the oath and ordeal respectively. [It is interesting to know, by the way, that the Iranian ordeals are also divided into two main groups -the cold and hot ordeals]<sup>514</sup>

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513. Māṇḍavya, 1-2.

514. ERE, Vol.IX p.525

The Anirdiṣṭakarṭṛkavacana points out that the Śapatha is twofold - the Daiva (based on fate) and the Divya (based on divine intervention). Divya gives instant results, while Daiva takes fourteen days to declare its verdict.<sup>515</sup>

We thus see that : (1) The older writers give only Śapathas. They do not mention any Divya (2) Writers like Āpastamba, SL call all of them as Divyas (i.e. the divine methods). (3) Viṣṇu calls them Samayakriyā. He however classifies them into two groups - Some used for higher purposes and others for the lighter ones. (4) Yāj. gives only Divyas i.e. trials used for grave charges (5) Writers like Nār., Br., Pit., distinguish these methods into two groups with two distinct names. i.e. the Śapatha and Divya. (6) Later writers like Māṇḍavya and others again prefer to call all these methods by general name of Śapatha and classify them into two sub-varieties i.e. hot and cold or Divya and Daiva.

It will thus appear that the words Śapatha, Divya and Samayakriyā are used by the Dh.writers more as general terms denoting both the types of methods. We have already seen that these words express different aspects of these methods. When one looks at these methods from the point of view of the 'divine intervention' contained in it, they become Divyas, while the essential character that binds the person in these trials is the curse or the imprecation. All these methods are based on the principle of conditional cursing. They thus

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515. Anirdiṣṭakarṭṛkavacana, 2.

become Śāpathas. The difference in various methods thus becomes merely formal i.e. a method may be mild or dreadful or may declare result immediately after the trial or after a lapse of time and may accordingly be classified as cold and hot or Daiva and Divya as the case may be. In the age of classification however, they were divided into distinct heads and extremists put them into water-tight compartments.

Straight way, we thus find, two views amongst these writers. Certain writers believe that there is no essential difference between the two types of methods. The R̥ṣis have often referred to them in a distinct way calling them Divya and Śāpatha, but the distinct mention in this way need not confuse us, they point out. 'The distinction between the two must be observed as one between the Brahmin and the Parivrājaka' observes Mit.<sup>516</sup>

Explaining the Simile, Sobodhinī points out that when you say 'invite the Brahmins,' the invitation is well extended to the Parivrājakas also, because they are not different from the Brahmins. In spite of this you add to it 'invite the Parivrājakas also', just to stress the importance of the Parivrājakas. Similarly, both Śāpathas and trials like Balance etc. are the Divyas no doubt, but Śāpathas are mentioned separately just to show that they in their own form

516. यद्यपि मानुषप्रमाणानिर्णयस्य निर्णायकं यत्तद्विव्यमिति लोकप्रासिद्ध्या  
शापथानां दिव्यत्वं तथापि कालान्तरानिर्णयानिमित्तत्वेन समनन्तरानिर्णयनिमित्तेभ्यो  
धरादिभ्यो दिव्येभ्यो भेदव्यवदेशो ब्राह्मणपरिव्राजकवत् ।

Mit. on Yāj. II. 96.

make a different type, but essentially both are the same.<sup>517</sup>

Authors of Divyātattva, Vyavahāracintāmaṇi, Smṛtisāra etc. have on the contrary expressed the view that the oath and ordeal are quite distinct from each other in every respect. They should not be mixed or taken together under any circumstances.

(1) We have seen above that Nār. has mentioned the oath and ordeal separately. Curiously enough, we find that he has mentioned the methods of fire and water in both the lists of oath and ordeal. Author of Smṛtisāra who advocates the distinction of the Oath and ordeal in general, points out here that methods of fire and water given in the list of oaths should obviously be taken as distinct and must not be mixed with the ordeals of fire and water. The ordeals of fire and water are the trials of higher order, used for grave charges and therefore they could never be enlisted alongwith inferior methods like that of Sukṛta. Oaths of fire and water according to him are thus different from the ordeals of fire and water.<sup>518</sup>

517. अयमर्थः । ब्राह्मणानामन्त्रयेत्युक्ते परिव्राजकेऽपि ब्राह्मणत्वस्याविशिष्टत्वात्तान्त्रि-  
-मन्त्रेऽपि प्राप्ते पुनः 'परिव्राजकमन्त्रयेति पृथगाभिधानं यथा परिव्राजकप्राधान्यार्थं  
तथाच तुलादीनां शपथानां सिद्धेऽपि दिव्यत्वे तुलादीभ्यः शपथानां पृथगाभिधानं  
काष्ठान्तरनिर्गमिनिमित्तत्वद्योतनार्थम् । subodhinaṁ on Mit. (पृ. ७६)

518. अग्नेः सुकृतादिभिरिति । अज्ञाग्नेर्मे नोपशम्यति, जलं समाकर्षिष्याति,  
इत्यग्निजलसंस्पर्शप्रक्षेपः । सुकृतशब्देन 'सकलं सुकृतं मे नश्यतीत्याभिधानमपेक्षितम्  
न त्वग्निजलं परीक्षाम् । तयोर्भेदाभियोगविषयत्वेन सुकृतसमाभिवाहारासंभवात् ।

Smṛtisāra quoted by DK p. 449.

(2) Since the Oaths are mentioned separately and are not included in the list of ordeals such as Balance etc., they are to be considered as different. The Oaths cannot be the ordeals. As such, the preliminaries to be observed before undergoing the ordeal such as observing fast, or coming for trial with wet clothes on (after the purificatory bath) etc. should not be observed in oaths. A simpler procedure should be followed before taking an oath i.e. the person should simply take bath or sip water - points of Vyavahāracintāmaṇi.<sup>519</sup>

This view - based on the distinct classification of the oath and ordeal - is however strongly refuted by VP since the oath and ordeal are essentially same, there should not be any distinction between the preliminaries of the two sorts of methods or say - the preliminaries of ordeals should be extended in the cases of oaths. The views expressed by Smṛtisāra and Vyavahāracintāmaṇi that both the methods should be taken as separate because they are mentioned separately cannot simply be accepted because, the Pre-Nārada writers have already accepted the oaths and ordeals as one. The list of Balance etc. (i.e. of ordeals) should be explained to be only illustrative (and not exhaustive). Oath ~~called~~ could thus be included in the ordeal. Moreover, the attributes of ordeal as mentioned by these writers apply to the oaths also. Otherwise

519. अत्र शपथानां दिव्याभिन्नतयोपन्यासाद्व्यापारिगणनान्न दिव्यमतो न दिव्यधर्माणामुपन्यासाद्विनासस्त्वादीनामन्वयः । किंतु शौचार्थं स्नानाचमनादिमात्र-  
-स्येति द्रष्टव्यम् । Vyavahāracintāmaṇi quoted by DK p. 441

the definition of the ordeal must be considered as incomplete.<sup>520</sup>

It will thus appear that there is no essential difference between the Oath and the ordeal. Saving the views expressed by the extremists who divide them into water-tight compartments, the Dh.writers in general have accepted them as one. In fact, it may be noted that the extreme views referred to above are developed by few later digests. The original Smṛtikāras have neither mentioned nor even hinted at such water-tight distinction between the two, on the contrary, we find that writers like Māṇḍavya have tried to clear out every confusion by showing them as two species, Śapatha is the genus—the Uṣma and Śīta or Divya and Daiva are the species.

We have already seen above that Viṣṇu has suggested the classification of various Samayakriyās into two groups i.e. those used for the light offences and others for the severe

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520. अत्र शपथानामपि दिव्यत्वादुपवासादिसाधारणादिव्यावेधिरत्रातिदेश्यम् ।  
यत्तु स्मृतितत्त्वव्यनहारचिन्तामणिकाराभ्यां शपथानां दिव्यभेदेऽनुपग्यासाद्  
धरादिमध्ये परिगणनाभावाच्च न दिव्येति कर्तव्यतायाः अतिदेश इत्युक्तम् ।  
तदप्यसत् । पूर्वमारदादिवचनैः शपथानामपि दिव्यत्वस्योक्तत्वात्, धरादिपारि-  
गणनवाक्यस्योपलक्षणत्वेन व्याख्यातत्वाच्च । किञ्च त्वदुक्तदिव्यलक्षणस्यापि  
सत्त्वाच्च त्वमापि तेषां दिव्यत्वमङ्गीकर्तव्यम् । अन्यथा तल्लक्षणमव्याप्तं स्यात् ।  
तस्मात् शपथानामपि दिव्यत्वादस्येव दिव्यधर्मातिदेश इत्युक्तम् ।

VP. p.221

charges, while Nār. expressed it as a point of distinction between the Oath and the Ordeal.

Kāt. who elaborates more on the evidential value and other legal aspects of the divine proofs, makes a single statement distinguishing the two. 'The person who does not get any royal or divine ~~eka~~ calamity within a period of a fortnight from the execution of the test must be considered pure in the test, he points out.<sup>521</sup>

Manu also points out that a person who does not get immediate calamity is declared pure by the oath. Medhātithi explains the word 'immediate' as a period of 14 days.<sup>522</sup> While according to Vijñānesvara, the period may vary from one night to three or five nights or even more.<sup>523</sup>

It has been pointed out above that the Kosa falls on the border-line of the oath and the ordeal. 'In spite of the fact that it does not decide the dispute immediately after the trial as the ordeals do, it has been included in the latter simply because it is used for a greater purpose. The important points that distinguish the oath and ordeal can thus be summarised.

521. Kāt. 463.

522. सिद्धं च तुरीया वा अहोव्यवधिः । Medhātithi on Manu 8-115.

523. कालमियमस्य एकरात्रमारभ्य त्रिरात्रपर्यन्तं, त्रिरात्रमारभ्य पञ्चरात्रपर्यन्तं, एकरात्रप्रभृतित्वं कार्यलाघवगौरवापेक्षया द्रष्टव्यम् । Mit. on Yāj. II: 113



- (i) Oath is used for light offences. Ordeal is used for grave charges.
- (ii) Condition of Avaṣṭambha is not necessary for the oath, while an ordeal cannot be resorted to unless an Avaṣṭambha is assured.
- (iii) Result in an oath is declared after a lapse of time, while the ordeal gives its result soon after the trial.

The ordeal is in fact based on and developed from the oath. The word Śāpatha denotes a curse or an imprecation (√Śāp+athan). The earliest example of a Śāpatha quoted by the Indian tradition was that of Vasiṣṭha who said that he would die, if he were a witch (Yātudhāna). Medhātithi explains a Śāpatha as follows :- 'It is a verbal declaration of the form that if I do such and such, I get such and such evil'. Nandapāṇḍita and Vācaspatimīśra also give similar explanations.<sup>524</sup> It is interesting to see that the concept of oath as it is clear from the example of Vasiṣṭha and from the explanations given above, resembles very much with the explanation given by the modern writers. Westermarck for example explains an oath in the same way as Medhātithi and Nandapāṇḍita do.<sup>525</sup>

524. ॐ ननु यद्यहमेवं कुर्याम्, तदिरमाविष्टमाप्नुयामिति संकीर्तनाक्रिया शपथः ।

(i) शपथो नाम यदीदं मयोक्तमेतदन्यथा चेत् पातकी स्याम् Medhātithi on Manu 8.113  
इत्यादिकथनम् । Nandapāṇḍita quoted by DK p 435.

(ii) सत्येन शपथेद् 'यद्येतन्मया कृतं तदा सत्यातिक्रमणजन्यपापभागहं स्यामिति वारयेत् । Vyavahāracintāmaṇi quoted by DK p 437

Explaining the provision made by Gautama regarding the use of Śapatha in the legal disputes, Maskarin clearly points out that a Śapatha should essentially be divided into two categories i.e. the legal Śapatha (used for Vyavahāra) and the popular Śapatha.<sup>526</sup> Both are effective in their own spheres. The point is also referred to by Westermarck 'The ethical significance of the oath is throughout personal responsibility. As such, it is pre-eminently fitted for legal use and has thus always figured conspicuously in the legal process of all races, it is still in the highest civilization a formal guarantee of truthfulness, in courts and ordinary social intercourse', he points out.<sup>527</sup>

Development of oath to ordeal can be ~~be~~ noted as follows- Oath was originally taken on self-initiative. It was just a verbal declaration made by the person, but later on the oath was conducted. The person was required to go to some temple or the assembly of learned Brahmins or the Court of the King. In the next stage, we find that the oath was taken on some object or was accompanied by some physical action.(e.g. the oaths of taking Dūrvā grass in hand or touching the head of Son or Wife). The oath was thus getting more and more physical. A small procedure was added to it. Ordeal is nothing else but physical oath - concrete oath in which the physical test or the physical danger was raised par excellence. 'The majority of ordeals are concrete oaths taken by the accused party and

526. कर्मग्रहणं व्यवहारान्वयं औक्तिकव्यवहार-संदेहे शपथस्यानुपवेशोऽर्थम् ।

Maskarin quoted by DK p 429

527. ERE, Vol.IX p.430.

the self-imprecation is realised immediately. According to Gustave Glotz ordeal was an Oath in action.<sup>528</sup>

Discussing the role played by divination in the-se tests it has been observed elsewhere (Chapter VIII) that what is really important in these tests is the imprecation. We find that the Dh.writers have also ultimately stressed the same point by showing Daiva or Divya as the varieties of Sapatha. Westermarck makes following observation in this respect. 'The essence of ordeal is oath, though the fact is obscured by the unfair incidence of the physical result. Hindu theory recognised the essential connection. The word sapatha connotes Oath and ordeal'.<sup>529</sup>

Following points regarding oaths are discussed in the Dh.works.

(A) Consequences for perjury -

Manu has warned persons against taking a false oath. 'A wise person should not take a false oath even for a trifling matter. If he does so, he is ruined in this world as well as in the world after death'. A(8.111).

Explaining the stanza, Medhātithi points out that perjury is an offence - whether you indulge in it for a higher purpose or for a trifling matter (such as stealing gold etc.) is immaterial. If you do it for some higher purpose, the offence gets magnified. The fault of taking a false oath ruins

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528. Gustave Glotz, ' PLI p.625.

529. ERE, Vol.IX.p.434.

the person - here or hereafter. Perjury brings him defamation in this world. Secondly it being a cognisable offence, if that perjury is proved by some other proof, the person becomes punishable under law. The offence ruins him in the other world in the sense that he will have to go to the hell after death.<sup>530</sup>

Yama also cautions the persons against taking false oath. 'When a person takes false oath, that connects with killing of any life(Kiṭa), the person thus connects himself with the fault of telling lie as well as with the imprecation which is implied.

Vyavahārācintāmaṇi explains this as following : The word Kiṭa here means any animate being. When, for example, a person says that 'If I have done such and such thing, I commit the fault of killing a Brahmin,' he really gets himself connected with a fault of killing a brahmin.<sup>531</sup>

DT agrees with Vyavahārācintāmaṇi as far as the explanation of the word Kiṭa is concerned, but adds to say that, it may be even the most inferior creature (and not necessarily a Brahmin) and he is undoubtedly connected with the offence of killing the creature.<sup>532</sup>

530. मिथ्याशपथे फलान्वानमेतत् । वृथाऽन्यथाऽसत्यामिति यावत् । तत्र अपाहिणमाणा-  
सुवर्णादिद्रव्यजाल्यपेक्षोऽनृतशपथदोषोऽन्यथाशपथे स्वल्पे, गरीयासि कार्ये गौरवादाधिकतरो  
दोषोऽस्येव । प्रेत्य नाशो नरकमिह महदयशः । प्रमाणान्तरे ज्ञाते तु राजदण्डः ।

Medhātithi on Manus 8.111

531 Yama, 1.

कीटयदं प्राणिमात्रोपलक्षणम् । तेन यथैतन्नया कृतं तदा मम ब्रह्मवध इत्यादौ शपथोक्ते  
कर्तुः ब्रह्मवधभागीता भवतीत्यर्थः । (Vyavahārācintāmaṇi quote) by DK p 442.

532 कीटस्येति प्राणिमात्रोपलक्षणं तेन प्राणिमोऽत्यन्तानुपयुक्तस्यापि वधसंयुक्तः शपथोऽनर्थ-  
हेतुस्तद्वधपापेन मृथाशपथकर्ता युज्यत इत्यर्थः । D T. p. 613.

According to VP, the explanation of the word Kīṭa given by the two digests is not satisfactory. They take the word Kīṭa as illustrative but what is important is not the animal but getting connected with the offence of killing it. (Vadha-saṃyutam) which should be taken here as illustrative. Thus, what is meant is that the person gets himself involved in whichever offences he refers to in the oath by the way of imprecation - howsoever trifling the offence might be.<sup>533</sup>

(B) Punishment for taking false oath -

Yāj. recommends a fine of 100 panas for one who takes false oath(Yāj.II.236).

(C) Grades of Oaths in accordance with the value of the offence-

Oaths are also arranged according to the value of the offence.

Viṣṇu has already given the value for which oaths like Dūrvākara, Tilakara, etc. are conducted(Vide Ch.IV).

According to Hārīta, the oath of telling truth(Satya-vacanam) should be conducted for one Niṣka, touching the feet (of revered person) for two Niṣkas, oath of flowers (or of merits) for the offence valued to be little less than 3 Niṣkas and Kośa for the offence beyond this(i.e. more than 3 Niṣkas).<sup>534</sup>

(D) Result declared through a Śāpatha

An important aspect that distinguishes an oath from ordeal is the way in which it declares the result. We have already seen

533. कीदृशेति यज्जन्तुवधेऽल्पदोषस्तस्योपलक्षणम् । तेनात्यन्तानुपयुक्तकीयादीनामपि वधसंयुक्तः शपथोऽनर्थहेतुः । VP. P. 221

534. Hārīta, 1,

that the ordeal declares the guilt or innocence of the person as soon as the trial ends, but the Śāpatha declares result after a lapse of some time. Severe calamities such as meeting some disease, or death of some relative or heavy loss of cattle, corn or wealth - befall the person within the recommended period if the person undergoing the trial is guilty. Rules indicating the types of calamities or the period within which they are expected to befall are much the same as those discussed in the discussion of the Kosa ordeal (Vide Ch.V).

¶ (E) Procedure common to all oaths

We have seen above two views regarding the oath and the ordeal. Those who believe that the oath and ordeal are essentially the same, recommend the same common purificatory rites to be observed by the person in both the cases i.e. the person undergoing the trial should observe fast, take bath with clothes on and present himself for the trial at early Sunrise. Those who distinguish the two sorts of trials, do not recommend the extension (atidesā) of these preliminaries of ordeals to the oaths. According to them taking bath and sipping water should only suffice as a purificatory rite for an oath. Similarly general rites such as invoking Dharma etc. need not be followed in an oath.

Various Oaths discussed by the Dh. Writers may be described as follows :-

(1) VĪṢṆU has given oaths of Dūrvākara, Tilakara, Rajatakara, Suvarṇakara and Siroddhṛtamahīkara. These oaths are taken for minor offences. The person taking oath should take any of these

objects i.e. Dūrvāgrass, Sesame, Silver piece or a golden piece in his hand and swear on it. In Śiroddhṛtamahīkara, he should swear on the lump of clay dug out by a ploughshare.

(2) Oaths to be taken by the persons of various castes, such as the oath of truth etc - these are recommended by various writers e.g. Manu, Nār., Br. and others.<sup>535</sup>

(a) Oath of Truth - This is recommended for a Brahmin. According to Medhātithi, the accused Brahmin should say, 'whatever I say, is the truth, I ~~may~~ swear by my truth, the good deeds of piety achieved by me by following the truth would be lost to me.' According~~ly~~ to Mit., the Brahmin must be simply warned that if he told lie, he was liable to lose whatever truth he gained or earned in life. The oath is recommended for an inferior Brahmin only, points out Vivādacandra.<sup>536</sup>

(b) Oath of Vehicle or Weapon - This is recommended for a Kṣatriya. A Kṣatriya should swear by his vehicle or weapon and say that they would be rendered futile if whatever he said were not true.

(c) Oath of cow, corn and cattle - A Vaiśya should swear on these objects and say that they would be of no use

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535. Manu 8.113, Nār. 248, Br. 32

536. (i) सत्येन शपे सत्यानिबन्धनोऽयं धर्मो वा मे निष्फलः स्यादिति। (Medhātithi on Manu 8.113) (ii) ब्राह्मणमन्यथा ब्रुवतः सत्यं मे नाश्नस्यतीति शपयेत्। (Mit. on Yāj. II.73) (iii) सत्येन शपयेद्विप्रमिति, अपकृष्टब्राह्मणविषयम्। उत्कृष्टस्य गौतमेन शपथनिषेधात् Vivādacandra quoted by DK p.437

to him if whatever he said were not true.

(d) Oath of Sins - A Sūdra should swear by all the sins. He should declare that if whatever he said were not true, he would accrue all the sins.

A Brahmin should simply declare the truth, A Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya should touch the things mentioned in (b) and (c) and swear on them and a Sūdra should do all the three i.e. orally declare the truth, touch any of the things mentioned and also swear on them.

(3) Oaths of fire, water and good deeds(Sukṛta) -

Oaths of fire and water as explained by Smṛtisāra are as follows :-

(a) Oath of fire - The accused person must put his hand in fire and say that the fire will not be cool to him(if whatever he said were lie).

(b) Oath of water - The accused person must put his hand in the water and say that the water will not drag him(if whatever he said were lie).

(c) Oath of Sukṛta - The accused person should declare that all the good deeds(or merits achieved) by him would be lost to him, if whatever he said were lie.<sup>537</sup>

Sukranīti describes an oath of Sukṛata and Duṣkṛta in which person swears by the truth and declares that he would lose(the merits of) all the good deeds done by him and would get (the evils) of the bad deeds.<sup>538</sup>

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537. Vide f.n.518.

538. Sukra 7.138



(4) Oath of touching the head of Son or Wife -

This oath is given by Manu(8.114). In this oath the accused person is required to tell the truth by touching the head of his son or wife. Nār. includes touching the head of a friend also.<sup>539</sup> Nār. and Br. recommend touching the feet of Guru(Teacher) or father, while according to Sukranīti he may touch the feet of any respectable person. Sukranīti also gives the oath of touching wealth.<sup>540</sup>

The person should perform the act of touching by his right hand. Kāt gives a general rule in this connection. Unless there are any specific instructions, whenever a person is asked to do something, he must do it, by his right limb.<sup>541</sup>

(5) Miscellaneous Oaths<sup>542</sup>(a) Taking on head a copy of the Holy book -

This oath is particularly used in solving boundary disputes. As it is explained by the Smṛticintāmaṇi, the person should take a copy of Harivaṁśa on his head and show the boundary. He should address the Book as follows :- 'Bhārata is the essence of all the Purāṇas' and Harivaṁśa is the essence of Bhārata. Therefore, Oh Harivaṁśa! establish yourself firmly in favour of truth'.

It has been pointed out that this oath may result into severe consequences. It may result in the loss of the family (Vāṁśanāśa) of the person who undergoes it wrongfully.

539. स्मृशोच्छिंशंसि पुत्राणां दाराणां सुहृदस्तथा । आभियोगेषु सर्वेषु कोशपातमथापि वा ।

Nār. quoted by Mit(4aj. II 96

540. Sukra-IV 737

541. Kāt. 462.

542. Saṁkārṇadivyaṇi, I.

(b) Taking the water of Ganges in hand :

The oath is taken by taking the water of Ganges in hands. The consequence that is warned here is the loss of whole family (i.e. family with all the relatives).

(c) Touching or taking into hand the images of god -

The person is required to touch or take into hand the Holy stone known as Sāligrāma or the image of Durgā. This oath is also supposed to have very severe consequences. Persons are advised in general not to undergo this oath.

(d) Oath of Iṣṭāpūrtapradāna

In this oath, the person is required to offer his merits acquired by sacrifices and charity.<sup>543</sup>

(e) Oath of flowers (Puṣpa) -

Nothing is known about this oath, except its name.<sup>544</sup>

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543. SL,3.

544. Hārīta,1.