

## CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

(The greatness of the holy ashes)

*Sūta said :—*

1. The ashes of auspicious nature are of two types. I shall explain their characteristics. Please listen attentively.

2. One is known as Mahābhasma (Great ashes) and the second is known as Svalpa (the little). The Mahābhasma is of various types.

3. It is of three types: Śrauta, (Vedic), Smārta (resulting from Smṛti rites) and Laukika (prepared from ordinary fire). The Svalpa is the ordinary ash which is of various forms.

4. The Śrauta and the Smārta ashes are to be used only by the twice-born. The Laukika can be used by every one.

5. Sages have said that the twice-born should apply the holy ashes repeating mantras. The others can simply apply without any mantra.

6. When dry cow-dung is reduced to ashes it is called Āgneya (fiery). O great sage, for the sake of Tripuṇḍra this ash can be used.

7. The ashes resulting from Agnihotra and other sacrificial rites shall be used for the Tripuṇḍra by men seeking intellect.

8. When the ashes are put on the forehead or smeared with water, the seven mantras “Agni<sup>155</sup>” etc. mentioned in the Jābālopaniṣad, shall be recited.

9. People of all varṇas and Āśramas shall put on Tripuṇḍra on the forehead or dust their bodies with the mantras mentioned in the Jābāla-Upaniṣad or if no mantra is used they shall do the same with reverence.

10. Dusting with the holy ashes and smearing the Tripuṇḍra in horizontal parallel lines shall not be

155. Compare Bhasmajābālopaniṣad. The mantras referred to are:

(1) अग्निरिति भस्म, (2) वायुरिति भस्म, (3) जलमिति भस्म, (4) स्थलमिति भस्म, (5) व्योमेति भस्म, (6) देवा भस्म, (7) ऋषयो भस्म ।