

literature bears out this impression: much stress is laid on descent from a Ṛṣi, and on purity of descent;⁹² but there is other evidence for the view that even a Brāhmaṇa need not be of pure lineage. Kavaṣa Ailūṣa is taunted with being the son of a Dāsī, 'slave woman,'⁹³ and Vatsa was accused of being a Śūdrā's son, but established his purity by walking unhurt through the flames of a fire ordeal.⁹⁴ He who is learned (*śuśrūvān*) is said to be a Brāhmaṇa, descended from a Ṛṣi (*ārṣeya*), in the Taittiriya Saṃhitā;⁹⁵ and Satyakāma, son of Jabālā, was accepted as a pupil by Hāridrumata Gautama, though he could not name his father.⁹⁶ The Kāthaka Saṃhitā⁹⁷ says that knowledge is all-important, not descent. But all this merely goes to show that there was a measure of laxity in the hereditary character of caste, not that it was not based on heredity. The Yajurveda Saṃhitās⁹⁸ recognize the illicit union of Ārya and Śūdrā, and *vice versa*: it is not unlikely that if illicit unions took place, legal marriage was quite possible. The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa,⁹⁹ indeed, recognizes such a case in that of Dīrghatamas, son of the slave girl Uśij, if we may adopt the description of Uśij given in the Bṛhaddevatā.¹⁰⁰ In a hymn of the Atharvaveda¹⁰¹ extreme claims are put

⁹² See Taittiriya Saṃhitā, vi. 6, 1, 4; Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, vii. 46; Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, i. 4, 4, 2; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, iv. 3, 4, 19; xii. 4, 4, 6; Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, xxv. 3, 17; Lātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, i. 1, 7; Kausika Sūtra, 67, etc. So one of the characteristics of a Brāhmaṇa given in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 5, 7, 1, is *brāhmaṇya*, which Weber, *op. cit.*, 10, 69, takes as referring to descent. *Brahma-putra* is a title of honour, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 4, 1, 2, 9; Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra, ii. 18, 12; Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, xii. 21, 1, 2; and to be born the son of a wise Brāhmaṇa is the highest fortune, Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, vi. 4, 29.

⁹³ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, ii. 19, 1; Kausitaki Brāhmaṇa, xii. 3. Cf. Weber, *op. cit.*, 2, 311; 9, 42, 44, 46.

⁹⁴ Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, xiv. 6, 6.

⁹⁵ vi. 6, 1, 4.

⁹⁶ Chāndogya Upaniṣad, vi. 4, 4; Weber, *op. cit.*, 1, 263. Cf. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 5, 4, 1.

⁹⁷ xxx. 1. Cf. Weber, *op. cit.*, 3, 462.

⁹⁸ Taittiriya Saṃhitā, vii. 4, 19, 3, 4; Kāthaka Saṃhitā, Āśvamedha, iv. 7; Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, xxiv. 30, 31. The word Ārya here must refer in all probability to any Āryan, not merely to a Vaiśya, Weber, *op. cit.*, 10, 6.

⁹⁹ xiv. 11, 17; Hopkins, *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 15, 56, n. But there is no mention here of Uśij being a slave.

¹⁰⁰ iv. 24, 25.

¹⁰¹ v. 17, 8, 9. See Muir, 1², 282, n. 76; Whitney, *Translation of the Atharvaveda*, 249. The exact sense is not clear, but the passage is intended to show in the strongest light the high position of the Brāhmaṇa.