

Śūdra is the designation of the fourth caste in the Vedic state (see *Varṇa*). It is quite unknown in the *Rigveda* except in the *Puruṣasūkta*¹ ('hymn of man') in the tenth Maṇḍala, where is the earliest version of the origin of the castes the Śūdra for the first time appears. The *Rigveda*, on the other hand, knows *Dasyu* and *Dāsa*, both as aborigines independent of Āryan control and as subjugated slaves: it is reasonable to reckon the Śūdra of the later texts as belonging to the aborigines who had been reduced to subjection by the Āryans. Strictly speaking, the defeated aborigines must have been regarded as slaves, but it is obvious that, except on occasions when most of the men were slain, which may have occurred quite often, there must have remained too many of them to be used as slaves of individual owners. The villages of the aborigines must have continued to subsist, but under Āryan lordship and control: there may be this amount of truth in Baden Powell's theory, which practically traced all the early cultivating villages in India to Dravidian origin. On the other hand, the term Śūdra would also cover the wild hill tribes which lived by hunting and fishing, and many of which would acknowledge the superiority of their Āryan neighbours: it could, in fact, be applied to all beyond the pale of the Āryan state.

This view of the Śūdra suits adequately the Vedic references to his condition, which would not apply adequately to domestic slaves only. The Śūdra is continually opposed to the Āryan,² and the colour of the Śūdra is compared with that of the Āryan,³ just as his ways are so contrasted.⁴ The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,⁵ in its account of the castes, declares that the

¹ x. 90, 12. See Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, i², 8 et seq.

² Av. iv. 20, 4; xix. 32, 8; 62, 1; Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, xiv. 30; xxiii. 30, 31; Taittirīya Saṃhitā, iv. 2, 10, 2; vii. 4, 19, 3; Kāthaka Saṃhitā, Aśva-medha, iv. 7; xvii. 5; Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā, ii. 8, 6; iii. 13, 1, etc. See also *Ārya* and *Ārya*. In Taittirīya Saṃhitā, i. 8, 3, 1; Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, xx. 17; Kāthaka Saṃhitā, xxxviii. 5. Śūdra is opposed to Ārya.

³ Kāthaka Saṃhitā, xxxiv. 5; Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, v. 5. 17. Cf. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, vi. 4, 4. 9; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, i. 4. 25; Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, viii. 4, 5; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, i. 2, 6, 7; Weber, *Indische Studien*, 10, 4; Muir, *op. cit.*, i², 140; Mahābhārata, xii. 188, 5.

⁴ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, vii. 17, 3. 4; Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, xv. 24.

⁵ vii. 29, 4; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, i², 439.