

Śveta-ketu Āruṇeya¹ ('descendant of Āruṇa') or Uddālaka² ('son of Uddālaka') is mentioned repeatedly in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. In the Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad³ he appears as Śvetaketu, son of Āruṇi, and as a Gautama. In the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa⁴ he is quoted as an authority on the vexed question of the duty of the Sadasya, or the seventeenth priest, at the ritual of the Kauṣītakins, to notify errors in the sacrifice; Āruṇi, his father, is also cited. He was a person of some originality, for he insisted on eating honey despite the general prohibition of the use of that delicacy by Brahmacārins or religious students.⁵ He was a contemporary of, and was instructed by the Pañcāla king Pravāhaṇa Jaivala.⁶ He was also a contemporary of Janaka, of Videha, and figured among the Brahmin disputants at his court.⁷ A story is told of him in the Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra:⁸ Jala Jātūkarnya was lucky enough to become the Purohita of three peoples or kings, of Kāśī, Kosala, and Videha. Seeing this, Śvetaketu felt annoyed and reproached his father with his excessive devotion to sacrifice, which merely enriched and glorified others, not himself. His father replied, forbidding him to speak thus: he had learned the true method of sacrificing, and his ambition in life had been to discuss it with every Brahmin.

All the references to Śvetaketu belong to the latest period of Vedic literature. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra⁹ should refer to him as an Avara, or

¹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 2, 7, 12; 5, 4, 18; 6, 2, 1; xii. 2, 1, 9; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, iii. 7, 1; vi. 1, 1 (Mādhyamdina = vi. 2, 1 Kāṇva); Chāndogya Upaniṣad, v. 3, 1; vi. 1, 1; 8, 1.

² Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, iii. 4, 3, 13; iv. 2, 5, 14.

³ i. 1.

⁴ xxvi. 4.

⁵ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 5, 4, 18.

⁶ Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, vi. 1, 1 (Mādhyamdina = vi. 2, 1 Kāṇva); Chāndogya Upaniṣad, v. 3, 1.

⁷ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 6, 2, 1 (it is to be noted that he came upon

Janaka when travelling about with some other Brahmins: he was never settled in the Videha country, but was clearly a Kuru-Pañcāla, like his father); Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, iii. 7, 1, where he shares the usual fate of defeat in argument by Yājñavalkya.

⁸ xvi. 27, 6 *et seq.* The exact sense of *kytsnake brahmabandhau vyajijnāsi* is not quite certain. But Āruṇi seems to assert the love of knowledge, not of material advantages accruing to the Purohita, to have been his concern in life.

⁹ i. 2, 5, 4-6.