



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester

SUBJECT: HISTORY - I

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Lecture-27



Kinship, Caste and Class

Social Differentiation

Rules of Marriage

Jati

Jati, also spelled **jat**, caste, in Hindu society. The term is derived from the Sanskrit jāta, “born” or “brought into existence,” and indicates a form of existence determined by birth. In Indian philosophy, jati (genus) describes any group of things that have generic characteristics in common. Sociologically, jati has come to be used universally to indicate a caste group among Hindus.

Although the lawgivers of the traditional Hindu codes (Dharma-shastras) themselves tend to treat *jatis* as varnas (social classes) and try to account on other occasions for jatis as products of alliances between the four *varnas* (Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras) and their descendants, a sharp distinction should be made between jati as a limited regional endogamous group of families and varna as a universal all-Indian model of social class. The official Hindu view gives second place to jati as an aberration of varna.

In different parts of India, certain caste groups have sought respectability within the varna system by claiming membership in a particular varna. Typical and most successful was the claim of the Rajputs that they were the Kshatriyas, or nobles, of the second varna, and, to reinforce their claim, they invented a new lineage (Agnikula, the dynasty of Fire) to coexist side by side with the Solar and Lunar lineages of ancient times. Those people classified among the Scheduled Castes (also called Dalits; formerly “untouchables”) have adopted caste habits of conduct and sought the status of Shudra (the lowest *varna*) to escape from their pitiable condition.

Gotra

In Hindu culture, the term **gotra** is considered to be equivalent to lineage. It broadly refers to people who are descendants in an unbroken male line from a common male ancestor or patriline. Generally the gotra forms an exogamous unit, with the marriage within the same gotra being prohibited by custom, being regarded as incest. The name of the gotra can be used as a surname, but it is different from a surname and is strictly maintained because of its importance in marriages among Hindus, especially among the higher castes. Pāṇini defines gotra for grammatical purposes as apatyam pautraprabhrti gotram, which means “the word gotra denotes the progeny (of a sage) beginning with the son's son.” When a person says “I am Vipparla-gotra”, he means that he traces his descent from the ancient sage Vipparla by unbroken male descent.

According to the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad Gautama and Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, Vashishtha and Kaśhyapa and Shandilya are seven sages (also known as saptarishi); the progeny of these seven sages are declared to be gotras. This enumeration of seven primary gotras seems to have been known to Pāṇini. The offspring (apatya) of these seven are gotras and others than these are called gotrāvayava

One who follows the system defined by three sages defines himself as tri-a-rishaye. Similarly, for five sages, it is pancha-rishaye, and for seven sages, it is sapta-rishaye.

There exists another theory about gotra: sons and disciples of a sage would have the same gotra; it is believed that they possess similar thought and philosophy. People of the same gotra can be found across different castes. Each Gotra comprises pravaras.

MCQ

a. **“Sangrihitri”**, during the Vedic age was

- a) Purohit
- b) Commander of Militia
- c) Treasurer
- d) Officer of Fort

2. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Jainism recognized the existence of the gods but placed them lower than the Jina
- 2. Jainism did not condemn the varna system

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. ‘Basadis’ in Jainism refer to the temple of Tirthankaras
- 2. Although Jainism did not receive much patronage from kings as the Buddhism, yet its art and architecture was rich than that of Buddhists

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only 1 b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Jainism and Buddhism differ in their approach with regard to

- 1. Prescription of strict austere life and penance
- 2. Accepting the existence of soul
- 3. Belief in the theory of Karma
- 4. Accepting the existence of God

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

Codes:

- a) 1, 2 and 4 b) 2, 3 and 4
- c) 1 and 3 d) Only 1

5. Which of the following is wrong in context of Mahavira and Jainism?

- a) Mahavira was born in 540 BC in Kundagrama near Vaishali
- b) His father Siddhartha was the head of Jnatrika clan
- c) His mother Trishala, was the daughter of the Lichchhavi Chief Chetaka
- d) Mahavira attained Kaivalya at the age

