

GEOGRAPHY OF THE MANU SAMHITA (The Laws of Manu)

107. In this (work) the sacred law has been fully stated as well as the good and bad qualities of (human) actions and the immemorial rule of conduct, (to be followed) by all the four castes (varna). 108. The rule of conduct is transcendent law, whether it be taught in the revealed texts or in the sacred tradition; hence a twice-born man who possesses regard for himself, should be always careful to (follow) it. 109. A Brahmana who departs from the rule of conduct, does not reap the fruit of the Veda, but he who duly follows it, will obtain the full reward. 110. The sages who saw that the sacred law is thus grounded on the rule of conduct, have taken good conduct to be the most excellent root of all austerity. 111. The creation of the universe, the rule of the sacraments, the ordinances of studentship, and the respectful behaviour (towards Gurus), the most excellent rule of bathing (on return from the teacher's house), 112. (The law of) marriage and the description of the (various) marriage-rites, the regulations for the great sacrifices and the eternal rule of the funeral sacrifices, 113. The description of the modes of (gaining) subsistence and the duties of a Snataka, (the rules regarding) lawful and forbidden food, the purification of men and of things, 114. The laws concerning women, (the law) of hermits, (the manner of gaining) final emancipation and (of) renouncing the world, the whole duty of a king and the manner of deciding lawsuits, 115. The rules for the examination of witnesses, the laws concerning husband and wife, the law of (inheritance and) division, (the law concerning) gambling and the removal of (men noxious like) thorns, 116. (The law concerning) the behaviour of Vaisyas and Sudras, the origin of the mixed castes, the law for all castes in times of distress and the law of penances, 117. The threefold course of transmigrations, the result of (good or bad) actions, (the manner of attaining) supreme bliss and the examination of the good and bad qualities of actions, 118. The primeval laws of countries, of castes (gati), of families, and the rules concerning heretics and companies (of traders and the like)- (all that) Manu has declared in these Institutes. 119. As Manu, in reply to my questions, formerly promulgated these Institutes, even so learn ye also the (whole work) from me.

Chapter II

1. Learn that sacred law which is followed by men learned (in the Veda) and assented to in their hearts by the virtuous, who are ever exempt from hatred and inordinate affection. 2. To act solely from a desire for rewards is not laudable, yet an exemption from that desire is not (to be found) in this (world): for on (that) desire is grounded the study of the Veda and the performance of the actions, prescribed by the Veda. 3. The desire (for rewards), indeed, has its root in the conception that an act can yield them, and in consequence of (that) conception sacrifices are performed; vows and the laws prescribing restraints are all stated to be kept through the idea that they will bear fruit. 4. Not a single act here (below) appears ever to be done by a man free from desire; for whatever (man) does, it is

(the result of) the impulse of desire. 5. He who persists in discharging these (-prescribed duties-) in the right manner, reaches the deathless state and even in this (life) obtains (the fulfilment of) all the desires that he may have conceived. 6. The whole Veda is the (first) source of the sacred law, next the tradition and the virtuous conduct of those who know the (Veda further), also the customs of holy men, and (finally) self-satisfaction. 7. Whatever law has been ordained for any (person) by Manu, that has been fully declared in the Veda: for that (sage was) omniscient. 8. But a learned man after fully scrutinising all this with the eye of knowledge, should, in accordance with the authority of the revealed texts, be intent on (the performance of) his duties. 9. For that man who obeys the law prescribed in the revealed texts and in the sacred tradition, gains fame in this (world) and after death unsurpassable bliss. 10. But by Sruti (revelation) is meant the Veda, and by Smriti (tradition) the Institutes of the sacred law: those two must not be called into question in any matter, since from those two the sacred law shone forth. 11. Every twice-born man, who, relying on the Institutes of dialectics, treats with contempt those two sources (of the law), must be cast out by the virtuous, as an atheist and a scorner of the Veda. 12. The Veda, the sacred tradition, the customs of virtuous men, and one's own pleasure, they declare to be visibly the fourfold means of defining the sacred law. 13. The knowledge of the sacred law is prescribed for those who are not given to the acquisition of wealth and to the gratification of their desires; to those who seek the knowledge of the sacred law the supreme authority is the revelation (Sruti). 14. But when two sacred texts (Sruti) are conflicting, both are held to be law; for both are pronounced by the wise (to be) valid law. 15. (Thus) the (Agnihotra) sacrifice may be (optionally) performed, at any time after the sun has risen, before he has risen, or when neither sun nor stars are visible; that (is declared) by Vedic texts. 16. Know that he for whom (the performance of) the ceremonies beginning with the rite of impregnation (Garbhadhana) and ending with the funeral rite (Antyeshti) is prescribed, while sacred formulas are being recited, is entitled (to study) these Institutes, but no other man whatsoever.

17. That land, created by the gods, which lies between the two divine rivers Sarasvati and Drishadvati, the (sages) call Brahnavarta. 18. The custom handed down in regular succession (since time immemorial) among the (four chief) castes (varna) and the mixed (races) of that country, is called the conduct of virtuous men. 19. The plain of the Kurus, the (country of the) Matsyas, Pankalas, and Surasenakas, these (form), indeed, the country of the Brahmarshis (Brahmanical sages, which ranks) immediately after Brahnavarta. 20. From a Brahmana, born in that country, let all men on earth learn their several usages. 21. That (country) which (lies) between the Himavat and the Vindhya (mountains) to the east of Prayaga and to the west of Vinasana (the place where the river Sarasvati disappears) is called Madhyadesa (the central region). 22. But (the tract) between those two mountains (just mentioned), which (extends) as far as the eastern and the western oceans, the wise call Aryavarta (the country of the Aryans). 23. That land where the black antelope naturally roams, one must know to be fit for the performance of sacrifices; (the tract) different from

that (is) the country of the Mlekkhas (barbarians). 24. Let twice-born men seek to dwell in those (above- mentioned countries); but a Sudra, distressed for subsistence, may reside anywhere.

25. Thus has the origin of the sacred law been succinctly described to you and the origin of this universe; learn (now) the duties of the castes (varna). 26. With holy rites, prescribed by the Veda, must the ceremony on conception and other sacraments be performed for twice-born men, which sanctify the body and purify (from sin) in this (life) and after death. 27. By burnt oblations during (the mother's) pregnancy, by the Gatakarman (the ceremony after birth), the Kauda (tonsure), and the Maungibandhana (the tying of the sacred girdle of Munga grass) is the taint, derived from both parents, removed from twice-born men. 28. By the study of the Veda, by vows, by burnt oblations, by (the recitation of) sacred texts, by the (acquisition of the) threefold sacred science, by offering (to the gods, Rishis, and manes), by (the procreation of) sons, by the great sacrifices, and by (Srauta) rites this (human) body is made fit for (union with) Brahman. 29. Before the navel-string is cut, the Gatakarman (birth-rite) must be performed for a male (child); and while sacred formulas are being recited, he must be fed with gold, honey, and butter. 30. But let (the father perform or) cause to be performed the Namadheya (the rite of naming the child), on the tenth or twelfth (day after birth), or on a lucky lunar day, in a lucky muhurta, under an auspicious constellation. 31. Let (the first part of) a Brahmana's name (denote something) auspicious, a Kshatriya's be connected with power, and a Vaisya's with wealth, but a Sudra's (express something) contemptible. 32. (The second part of) a Brahmana's (name) shall be (a word) implying happiness, of a Kshatriya's (a word) implying protection, of a Vaisya's (a term) expressive of thriving, and of a Sudra's (an expression) denoting service. 33. The names of women should be easy to pronounce, not imply anything dreadful, possess a plain meaning, be pleasing and auspicious, end in long vowels, and contain a word of benediction. 34. In the fourth month the Nishkramana (the first leaving of the house) of the child should be performed, in the sixth month the Annaprasana (first feeding with rice), and optionally (any other) auspicious ceremony required by (the custom of) the family. 35. According to the teaching of the revealed texts, the Kudakarman (tonsure) must be performed, for the sake of spiritual merit, by all twice-born men in the first or third year. 36. In the eighth year after conception, one should perform the initiation (upanayana) of a Brahmana, in the eleventh after conception (that) of a Kshatriya, but in the twelfth that of a Vaisya. 37. (The initiation) of a Brahmana who desires proficiency in sacred learning should take place in the fifth (year after conception), (that) of a Kshatriya who wishes to become powerful in the sixth, (and that) of a Vaisya who longs for (success in his) business in the eighth. 38. The (time for the) Savitri (initiation) of a Brahmana does not pass until the completion of the sixteenth year (after conception), of a Kshatriya until the completion of the twenty-second, and of a Vaisya until the completion of the twenty-fourth. 39. After those (periods men of) these three (castes) who have not received the sacrament at the proper time, become Vratyas (outcasts), excluded from the Savitri (initiation) and despised by the Aryans. 40. With such

men, if they have not been purified according to the rule, let no Brahmana ever, even in times of distress, form a connection either through the Veda or by marriage. 41. Let students, according to the order (of their castes), wear (as upper dresses) the skins of black antelopes, spotted deer, and he-goats, and (lower garments) made of hemp, flax or wool. 42. The girdle of a Brahmana shall consist of a of a triple cord of Munga grass, smooth and soft; (that) of a Kshatriya, of a bowstring, made of Murva fibres; (that) of a Vaisya, of hempen threads. 43. If Munga grass (and so forth) be not procurable, (the girdles) may be made of Kusa, Asmantaka, and Balbaga (fibres), with a single threefold knot, or with three or five (knots according to the custom of the family). 44. The sacrificial string of a Brahmana shall be made of cotton, (shall be) twisted to the right, (and consist) of three threads, that of a Kshatriya of hempen threads, (and) that of a Vaisya of woollen threads. 45. A Brahmana shall (carry), according to the sacred law, a staff of Bilva or Palasa; a Kshatriya, of Vata or Khadira; (and) a Vaisya, of Pilu or Udumbara. 46. The staff of a Brahmana shall be made of such length as to reach the end of his hair; that of a Kshatriya, to reach his forehead; (and) that of a Vaisya, to reach (the tip of his) nose. 47. Let all the staves be straight, without a blemish, handsome to look at, not likely to terrify men, with their bark perfect, unhurt by fire. 48. Having taken a staff according to his choice, having worshipped the sun and walked round the fire, turning his right hand towards it, (the student) should beg alms according to the prescribed rule. 49. An initiated Brahmana should beg, beginning (his request with the word) lady (bhavati); a Kshatriya, placing (the word) lady in the middle, but a Vaisya, placing it at the end (of the formula). 50. Let him first beg food of his mother, or of his sister, or of his own maternal aunt, or of (some other) female who will not disgrace him (by a refusal). 51. Having collected as much food as is required (from several persons), and having announced it without guile to his teacher, let him eat, turning his face towards the east, and having purified himself by sipping water. 52. (His meal will procure) long life, if he eats facing the east; fame, if he turns to the south; prosperity, if he turns to the west; truthfulness, if he faces the east. 53. Let a twice-born man always eat his food with concentrated mind, after performing an ablution; and after he has eaten, let him duly cleanse himself with water and sprinkle the cavities (of his head). 54. Let him always worship his food, and eat it without contempt; when he sees it, let him rejoice, show a pleased face, and pray that he may always obtain it. 55. Food, that is always worshipped, gives strength and manly vigour; but eaten irreverently, it destroys them both. 56. Let him not give to any man what he leaves, and beware of eating between (the two meal-times); let him not over-eat himself, nor go anywhere without having purified himself (after his meal). 57. Excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame, and to (bliss in) heaven; it prevents (the acquisition of) spiritual merit, and is odious among men; one ought, for these reasons, to avoid it carefully. 58. Let a Brahmana always sip water out of the part of the hand (tirtha) sacred to Brahman, or out of that sacred to Ka (Pragapati), or out of (that) sacred to the gods, never out of that sacred to the manes. 59. They call (the part) at the root of the thumb the tirtha sacred to Brahman, that at the root of the (little) finger (the tirtha) sacred to Ka (Pragapati), (that) at the tips (of the fingers, the tirtha) sacred to the gods, and

that below (between the index and the thumb, the tirtha) sacred to the manes. 60. Let him first sip water thrice; next twice wipe his mouth; and, lastly, touch with water the cavities (of the head), (the seat of) the soul and the head. 61. He who knows the sacred law and seeks purity shall always perform the rite of sipping with water neither hot nor frothy, with the (prescribed) tirtha, in a lonely place, and turning to the east or to the north. 62. A Brahmana is purified by water that reaches his heart, a Kshatriya by water reaching his throat, a Vaisya by water taken into his mouth, (and) a Sudra by water touched with the extremity (of his lips). 63. A twice-born man is called upavitin when his right arm is raised (and the sacrificial string or the dress, passed under it, rests on the left shoulder); (when his left (arm) is raised (and the string, or the dress, passed under it, rests on the right shoulder, he is called) prakinavitin; and nivitin when it hangs down (straight) from the neck. 64. His girdle, the skin (which serves as his upper garment), his staff, his sacrificial thread, (and) his water-pot he must throw into water, when they have been damaged, and take others, reciting sacred formulas. 65. (The ceremony called) Ke-santa (clipping the hair) is ordained for a Brahmana in the sixteenth year (from conception); for a Kshatriya, in the twenty-second; and for a Vaisya, two (years) later than that. 66. This whole series (of ceremonies) must be performed for females (also), in order to sanctify the body, at the proper time and in the proper order, but without (the recitation of) sacred texts. 67. The nuptial ceremony is stated to be the Vedic sacrament for women (and to be equal to the initiation), serving the husband (equivalent to) the residence in (the house of the) teacher, and the household duties (the same) as the (daily) worship of the sacred fire.

68. Thus has been described the rule for the initiation of the twice-born, which indicates a (new) birth, and sanctifies; learn (now) to what duties they must afterwards apply themselves. 69. Having performed the (rite of) initiation, the teacher must first instruct the (pupil) in (the rules of) personal purification, of conduct, of the fire-worship, and of the twilight devotions. 70. But (a student) who is about to begin the Study (of the Veda), shall receive instruction, after he has sipped water in accordance with the Institutes (of the sacred law), has made the Brahmangali, (has put on) a clean dress, and has brought his organs under due control. 71. At the beginning and at the end of (a lesson in the) Veda he must always clasp both the feet of his teacher, (and) he must study, joining his hands; that is called the Brahmangali (joining the palms for the sake of the Veda). 72. With crossed hands he must clasp (the feet) of the teacher, and touch the left (foot) with his left (hand), the right (foot) with his right (hand). 73. But to him who is about to begin studying, the teacher always unwearied, must say: Ho, recite! He shall leave off (when the teacher says): Let a stoppage take place! 74. Let him always pronounce the syllable Om at the beginning and at the end of (a lesson in) the Veda; (for) unless the syllable Om precede (the lesson) will slip away (from him), and unless it follow it will fade away. 75. Seated on (blades of Kusa grass) with their points to the east, purified by Pavitras (blades of Kusa grass), and sanctified by three suppressions of the breath (Pranayama), he is worthy (to pronounce) the syllable Om.