

THE LAWS OF MANU

TRANSLATED

WITH EXTRACTS FROM SEVEN COMMENTARIES

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Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1886

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417. A Brâhmaṇa may confidently seize the goods of (his) Sûdra (slave); for, as that (slave) can have no property, his master may take his possessions.

418. (The king) should carefully compel Vaisyas and Sûdras to perform the work (prescribed) for them; for if these two (castes) swerved from their duties, they would throw this (whole) world into confusion.

419. Let him daily look after the completion of his undertakings, his beasts of burden, and carriages, (the collection of) his revenues and the disbursements, his mines and his treasury.

420. A king who thus brings to a conclusion all the legal business enumerated above, and removes all sin, reaches the highest state (of bliss).

CHAPTER IX.

1. I will now propound the eternal laws for a husband and his wife who keep to the path of duty, whether they be united or separated.

2. Day and night women must be kept in depend-

417. 'Confidently' means according to Medh., Nâr., and Nand. 'without fearing that he commits the sin of accepting a present from a Sûdra.'

419. Karmântân, 'the completion of his undertakings' (Kull., Râgh.), means according to Medh., Gov., and Nand. 'the works,' i. e. 'agriculture, offices for collecting tolls and duties, and so forth' (Medh., Gov.), according to Nâr. 'the workshops, e. g. for making arms.' The last explanation is perhaps the best.

IX. 1. According to Medh., Gov., and Kull. the duties of husband and wife are placed in the section on civil and criminal law, because the king can and even is bound to enforce their observance by punishments, if either of the two raises a complaint. 'Separated,' i. e. 'when the husband is absent or dead' (Nâr., Râgh.).

2-3. Gaut. XVIII, 1; Vas. V, 1-2; Baudh. II, 3, 44-45; Vi. V, 1-2; Yâgñ. I, 85.

ence by the males (of) their (families), and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control.

3. Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence.

4. Reprehensible is the father who gives not (his daughter in marriage) at the proper time; reprehensible is the husband who approaches not (his wife in due season), and reprehensible is the son who does not protect his mother after her husband has died.

5. Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families.

6. Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives.

7. He who carefully guards his wife, preserves (the purity of) his offspring, virtuous conduct, his family, himself, and his (means of acquiring) merit.

2. 'Must be kept under one's control,' i. e. 'they must be restrained from their vicious attachment' (*âtmano vâse sthâpyâ yathâ na sa-gyante*), (*Nâr.*)

4. *Yâgñ. I, 64.* 'At the proper time,' i. e. before she is marriageable; see *Gaut. XVIII, 21*; *Vas. XVII, 67-71*. 'The husband,' see *Baudh. IV, 1, 17-19*, and above, *III, 45*. After this verse *K.* inserts another, not mentioned by the commentators, 'If the wife is guarded, the (purity of the) offspring is secured thereby; if the (purity of the) offspring is secured, oneself is secure.'

6. *Yâgñ. I, 81.* 'Weak husbands,' i. e. 'blind, lame, or poor ones, &c.' (*Kull., Râgh.*).

7. 'His family,' i. e. 'his ancestors,' because legitimate sons alone can offer the *Srâddhas* (*Medh., Gov., Kull.*), or 'his relatives,' because adultery brings dishonour (*Medh., Râgh.*), or 'the position of the

8. The husband, after conception by his wife, becomes an embryo and is born again of her; for that is the wifehood of a wife (*gâyâ*), that he is born (*gâyate*) again by her.

9. As the male is to whom a wife cleaves, even so is the son whom she brings forth; let him therefore carefully guard his wife, in order to keep his offspring pure.

10. No man can completely guard women by force; but they can be guarded by the employment of the (following) expedients:

11. Let the (husband) employ his (wife) in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in keeping (everything) clean, in (the fulfilment of) religious duties, in the preparation of his food, and in looking after the household utensils.

12. Women, confined in the house under trustworthy and obedient servants, are not (well) guarded; but those who of their own accord keep guard over themselves, are well guarded.

13. Drinking (spirituous liquor), associating with wicked people, separation from the husband, rambling abroad, sleeping (at unseasonable hours), and dwelling in other men's houses, are the six causes of the ruin of women.

family' (*Nâr.*), or 'his property' (*Râgh.*). 'Himself,' i. e. 'because legitimate children alone can offer the *Śrâddhas*' (*Gov.*, *Kull.*, *Râgh.*), or 'because an adulteress and her paramour are likely to attempt his life' (*Medh.*). 'His (means of acquiring) merit,' i. e. 'because the husband of an adulteress is not entitled to kindle the sacred fire' (*Gov.*, *Kull.*, *Râgh.*). *Nâr.* says, 'his duty (as a householder).'

8. *Yâgñ.* I, 56. The idea is taken from the Veda; see e.g. *Aitareya-brâhmana* VII, 13, to which *Kull.* refers.

13. 'Associating with wicked people,' i. e. 'with other unfaithful wives' (*Nâr.*), or 'with adulterers' (*Râgh.*).