Is Beef Eating Prescribed in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad?

Noteworthy importance has been attached to Raja Rajendralala Mitra's 'Beef in Ancient India', published as a booklet by Manisha Gourabha (Private) Ltd., Calcutta. On pages ii & iii of its 'Preface' a passage from the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad (6th Chapter, 4th Brahma, 11th kandikā), has been cited and interpreted as the 'eating of beef-preparation by a couple desirous of begetting a son learned in all the Vedas'. This verse is invariably quoted by almost all who support beef-eating in the Vedas. Shri Panduranga Vaman Kane, M.A., L.L.M., Advocate, High Court, Bombay, has also referred to it in Chapter XXII 'Bhojana—flesh-eating' of his 'History of Dharmāśāstra', Vol. II, Part II, published by the Hunsrākhar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. Later scholars like Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Honorary Head of the Department of History, Humsi Līyā Bhowan, Bombay, in the chapter 'Food and Drink', 'History and Culture of the Indian People', chapter XXI, page 577 have relied on Kane's History of Dharmāśāstra for supporting the contention of beef-eating. Shri A. B. Shah, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at the Universities of Poona and Bombay for about 20 years, now Director of Programme in India for the Congress for Cultural Freedom, author of 'Scientific Method & Planning for Democracy' and other essays, in the 'Introduction' to his book 'Cow Slaughter—Horns of a Dilemma', has emphatically supported beef-eating on the basis of the same controversial verse of the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad. This article intends to discuss this often-quoted verse. It reads as follows:

In the 'Preface' of the 'Beef in Ancient India', this verse has been translated into English as follows:

"And if a man wishes that a learned son should be born to him, a famous, a public man, a popular speaker, that he should know all the Vedas and that he should live to his full age, then after having prepared boiled rice with meat and butter, he and his wife should both eat, being fit to have offspring. The meat should be of a fullgrown or of an old bull."

Mr. Robert Earnest Hume, Ph.D., D. Theol., Professor of the History of Religions at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, has translated this verse in different words but the idea is the same, except that in place of 'full grown or old bull' he has interpreted the meat as 'either veal or beef'.

The controversial words are interpreted by the two authors as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rajendralala Mitra</th>
<th>Robert Earnest Hume</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māṁsaudanam</td>
<td>boiled rice and meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auksena</td>
<td>meat of a fullgrown bull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Årāśbhaṇa</td>
<td>meat of an old bull</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In English usage 'veal' is the flesh of a calf and beef that of a grown-up animal.

If it be accepted that rice with veal, meat of a full-grown or an old bull, cooked in butter, would beget a son, blessed with the learning of all the Vedas, then the Western people, who are almost all beef-eaters, should have all acquired this learning. Let us examine the interpretation of this verse in its appropriate context. The four verses immediately preceding the said controversial verse in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad read as follows:

स य हृदेनु पुष्को ने शुक्लो जात्रेयें बेदमर्मदीवती सर्वसमायुर्यादिति
श्रीरीत्वं पावियां शृंवर्षेत्त्र दशमनस्तेतीयात्मायाभिष्करी अग्निते हृदेनु
These four verses, according to all the translators, give dietary prescriptions for begetting progeny which is well versed in one or more Vedas as follows:

(i) For Rg. Veda; diet of rice and milk, mixed with ghee.
(ii) For Yajur. Veda; diet of rice and curd, mixed with ghee.
(iii) For Sāma Veda; diet of rice and water, mixed with ghee.
(iv) For Atharva Veda; diet of rice and beef, mixed with ghee.

The above verses do not indicate a diet of the meat of smaller animals like goat, sheep or others for acquiring a child proficient in one or two or three of the Vedas. Then how can it be justified that beef diet has been prescribed for begetting a son learned in the four Vedas, particularly for the Atharva Veda. Let us consider the question further and in greater detail.

Just as the English word 'flesh', besides meaning 'muscular tissues of an animal', also means 'soft pulpy part of fruits and vegetables' and 'meat', besides meaning 'flesh of an animal', also means 'anything eaten as food for nourishment', the Sanskrit word मामक also means 'soft pulpy part of fruits and vegetables, etc.' The readers can consult any Sanskrit dictionary. Similarly, the peel of a fruit is called skin; its hard part is called bone and fibres are called ligament or nerves etc.

'PRASTHAM KUMĀRIKĀ-MĀMSAM ĀNAYA' in Sanskrit could mean 'bring a seer of girl's flesh', but it means only 'bring a seer of the fleshy pith of the medicinal plant called कुमारिक (Hindi—ghikvār).

There are several words in Sanskrit which mean a particular animal or which refer to parts of their body, but primarily they are the names of medicinal plants.

Go-danti cow's-teeth; a kind of medicinal plant; yellow pumice (Monier-Williams); a white mineral substance (Monier-Williams).

Go-ksura cow's hoof; a medicine called кухер, Tiberius lanuginosus, sistrum (Monier-Williams).
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Go-sāve (cow's tongue; Ayurvedic medicine called gajwan or gojwan (its leaf is rough like cow's tongue); name of a plant Phlomis or Premna esculenta (Monier-Williams)).

Aṣā karaṇa (goat's ear; asana arjuna (आसन अर्जुन) tree whose parts are used in the preparation of medicine; the tree Terminalia Alata Tomentosa (Monier-Williams)).

Aṣā (she-goat; plant whose bulb resembles the udder of a goat (Monier-Williams)).

It would be blasphemy if one interprets these words only as parts of the body of a cow or goat or the animal itself.

The chapter VI-4 of the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad deals with the subject of begetting learned progeny according to one's own desire. The very first verse of this chapter is:

वनं वृक्षं दृविधं रसं, पृथिधिः आरेषुनां शिषयकं, वृक्षिनां

पुष्पां, पुष्पाणां काटनि, काटाना पुष्पं, पुष्पवस्त्र र्यं: ||

which means—

"Verily, of all created things here, earth is the essence; of earth, water is the essence; of water, medicinal plants are the essence; of medicinal plants, flowers are the essence; of flowers, fruits are the essence; of fruits, man is the essence; of man, semen is the essence.

In this chain from earth to semen (seed of the human species), no mention has been made of anything connected with animal flesh. The specification of the plant kingdom clearly indicates that high class semen needed to beget high class progeny, can be produced by fruits of medicinal plants only and not from any kind of animal flesh.

The word 'ākṣaṇa' is from 'Ukṣa'. It will be relevant here to quote the various meanings of this word from the famous Sanskrit-English Dictionary compiled by Monier-Williams. They are as follows:

(i) a bull (as impregnating the flock);
(ii) name of 'soma' (as sprinkling or scattering small drops);
(iii) one of the eight chief medicaments (ṭaṇha).

The word 'ārjabhena' is derived from the word 'ṭaṇha'. The said Dictionary renders this word as follows:

(i) a bull (as impregnating the flock);
(ii) a kind of medicinal plant (Suṣruta, Bhāva-Prakāśa);
(iii) Carpopogon Pruriens (Caraka).

The well-known Sanskrit-German Dictionary under the title Sanskrit-Woerterbuch published by the Imperial Academy of Sciences, St.-Petersburg in 1855, explains the word 'ukṣa' as dripping or trickling soma. The Dictionary has cited the word from various mantras 1.135.9, 9.83.2, 9.85.10, 9.86.43, 9.89.2, 9.95.4 of the Rg-Veda.

A few more meanings are ascribed to these two words, but they are not relevant here.

'SOMA' in Monier Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary is 'Juice of soma plant' where soma plant itself is said to be a climbing plant Sarcocesta Viminalis or Aesclepias Acida; a drug of supposed magical property. 'Soma' is interpreted as 'nectar' as well. Almost similar interpretations of the soma plant are given in other indigenous dictionaries also.

The concluding words of the above verse are 'āukṣaṇa va ṭaṇhena va', which stand for 'either ukṣa or ṭaṇha'. As such ukṣa and ṭaṇha must be two different things and not one and the same thing. According to the dictionaries, ukṣa does not mean 'go-avata' or calf, while both words ukṣa and ṭaṇha, if interpreted as an animal of the bovine species, will mean bull (as impregnating the flock) i.e. one and the same thing. Hence the word ukṣa and ṭaṇha, with the conjunctions 'either' and 'or', cannot mean one and the same thing i.e. bull (as impregnating the flock). By adding the conjunctions 'either ... or' to 'ukṣa' and 'ṭaṇha', the seer of the verse must have intended to represent two different things. In the field of medicine 'ukṣa' may also mean 'ṭaṇha', but with the words 'either and 'or' added with the words 'ukṣa' and 'ṭaṇha',
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Is Beef Eating Prescribed in the Bṛhadāranyaka Upanisad?

Commentary of Jagadguru Ādi-Saṅkaracārya

Jagadguru Ādi-Saṅkaracārya's Sanskrit Commentary on controversial kandikā 6.4.18 of Bṛhadāranyaka Upanisad, is often cited in favour of the prescription of beef. Some contend that it is evident from this commentary that even Jagadguru Ādi-Saṅkaracārya has accepted the prescription of partaking of rice cooked with beef for a couple desirous of begetting progeny well-versed in the four Vedas. The wording of the commentary is as follows:

"विविधं गोत्रो विमितं विवाहात इत्ययः। समितितः सम्मां गच्छती प्रमाण इत्ययः। पाणिके गयं पूर्वव्रतः। शुद्धिः पृथुप्रथो द्याया वाचं भाविता सलिलतः अर्थस्तु वाचो महितं तयः।"

मांससिद्धांगम नान्दिविशम्। तत्मांससिद्धांगमाधि-तेषा वा सांसेति। उक्तं सेवनसमग्रं पुनःस्वदेशाय मांसं। वधक्षतोपप्रभृविक वधक्षतोपपार्थ्यायं मांसम्।"

There is no difference of opinion about the translation of the first part of the commentary which is as follows:

"One whose importance is sung in varied ways is called vṛtta. Vṛtta i.e., renowned. Samitiṣṭhāma i.e., a fearless or undaunted person who attends the assembly of the learned. As learned has been specified separately in the text, the word samitiṣṭhāma has not been taken in the sense of a scholar or learned person. Suṣīrṣiṣṭā is affable in speech, speaker of charming expression, i.e., a coherent speaker endowed with satatkārīs".

The meaning of the latter part is as follows:

"Cooked rice mixed with māṇḍra is māṇḍramardana. The māṇḍra is further specified as : that of ukṣa, ukṣa is a purgant potent in impregnation; or that of a ṛṣabha of vṛtā exceeding that of ṛṣabha".

Among the various qualities of aṣṭa-varga or the eight medicinal, the most important are : bhrasṭha aphrodisiac ; śukra-janaka—semen-producing ; and bala-bardhaka—tonic.

It is further mentioned there that the 'ṣṛabha' medicine is found on Himalayan peaks. It is shaped like the horn of a bull.

From the several references quoted above as well as from verses 1, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of the same chapter of Bṛhadāranyaka Upanisad, it is amply clear that 'ukṣa' and 'ṛṣabha' in verse 18 can mean only two different medicinal plants referred to in Ayurvedic texts and not the meat of a calf or an ox (whether full-grown or old) in any case.
This is the literal meaning. Jagadguru Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya has not clarified whether it is the meat of an animal or whether it is the "māsā rasa i.e., fleshy part of medicinal fruits. In such a situation it has to be considered in the light of its context, whether the meat of an animal is appropriate here or the fleshy part of medicinal fruits. This will be clear by considering the signification of secana-samarthah puigavaḥ and of 'a ṛṣabha exceeding in vayas than that of ukṣā'. There is no difference of opinion about the meaning of secana-samarthah which is potent in impregnation. The meanings of the words ukṣā, puigava, ṛṣabha and vayas will have to be considered.

The meaning of ukṣā has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

The meanings of the word puigava are given by Monier Williams in his Sanskrit-English Dictionary p. 630, column 3 (lines 8-11 from bottom) as follows:

"a bull, a hero, eminent person, chief of, a kind of drug".

On their basis, the meaning of secana-samarthah puigavaḥ can be:

(i) a stud-bull potent in impregnation.
(ii) a hero potent in impregnation.
(iii) an eminent person potent in impregnation.
(iv) a chief potent in impregnation.
(v) a kind of drug potent in impregnation.

The herb potent in impregnation has been termed as vājikaraṇa or aphrodisiac in Ayurveda. Soma is also an aphrodisiac herb (a drug of supposed magical property) which is a favourite of the gods. According to Hindu scriptures one attains birth among the gods for enjoying the fruits of one's meritorious deeds. These include all enjoyments according to one's inclination or longings. The Purāṇas recount a number of legends of the amours of the gods enjoying the fruits of their meritorious deeds. Therefore, it is not surprising that the herbal juice of soma which is potent in impregnation, should have been such a favourite of the gods enjoying the fruits of their meritorious deeds. Now, the readers should themselves consider as to which

of the five meanings mentioned above will be more appropriate and in accordance with the context for ukuṣā secana-samarthah. Taking the contextual propriety into consideration, the meaning 'a herb (ukuṣā, i.e. soma juice) potent in impregnation' will be the most appropriate and relevant.

The meaning of 'tatah api adhika-vayāh' is 'one exceeding in vayas than that'. The base of vayāh is vayas. The meanings of the word vayās are given as under in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary, page 920, columns 2, 3:

(i) enjoyment, food, meal, oblation;
(ii) energy (both bodily and mental), strength, health, vigour, power, might;
(iii) vigorous age, youth, prime of life, any period of life, age.

Accordingly, tatah api adhika-vayāh will mean:

(i) more enjoyable than that;
(ii) more energetic than that;
(iii) more invigorating than that.

The meanings of ṛṣabha as given by Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary have been cited already. In the section on plants and herbs in the Amarākosa 2.116 it is rendered as ṛṣigī to ṛṣabha vayāh. The plant ṛṣigī is also called ṛṣabhā and ṛṣpa. This plant ṛṣigī is an aphrodisiac.

If we take it as the flesh of the bovine ṛṣabhā (bull) here, then the meaning of 'ṛṣabhā tatah api adhika-vayāh' will be the bovine ṛṣabhā who is older in age than the ukṣā capable of impregnating the bovine species'. But the reality of the situation is that the vigorous age for impregnation is growing youth and not the advancing age (declining youth). So this meaning does not fit in the context.

Taking the context into account ṛṣabhā tatah api adhika-vayāh will mean, 'a medicine of apāvarga called ṛṣabhā which is more
invigorating even than soma juice’. This medicine is often prescribed by Ayurvedic practitioners for frequent use by the rich to keep their sexual powers undiminished. The medicine of the aslavarga is an aphrodisiac which increases semen.

The prescription of beef is impossible, particularly because the bovine species is declared as inviolable in Vedas. There is no mention of meat in this section from its very first kandikā among the items which ultimately result in the best, purest stūṭīkā semen. And only the purest stūṭīkā semen is required for begetting progeny proficient in the Vedas. Therefore, in the present passage ukṣā and īṣabhā cannot signify the meat of animals, but they can only mean the fleshy part of pulp of pure medicinal fruits.

In none of the dictionaries do we find that the word ukṣā means ‘a stud-bull of younger age, potent in impregnation’ or that the word īṣabhā means ‘an older stud-bull potent in impregnation’. If we take that according to Jagadguru Adi-Saṅkarācārya, both the words ukṣā and īṣabhā mean stud bulls potent in impregnation, and one of them be younger while the other be older, then the words ukṣā and īṣabhā taken collectively, will mean, a bull of any age potent in impregnation.

If, in the mānasudana, the meat of a bull of any age, potent in impregnation had been intended then in the original Upāniṣad the wording would have been govaṁśa aukṣeṇa (bovine ukṣā) or govaṁśa āṣabhēṣṭa (bovine īṣabhā) and Jagadguru Adi-Saṅkarācārya, to make it clear beyond doubt that the meat of the stud-bull is intended, would also have written, secana-samarthāḥ govaṁśa-purūgavāha tadiyam māṁsam”.

Stud-bulls potent in impregnation are of a very high breed and also very rare. Their slaughter will never be desirable. Moreover, the original words in the text are aukṣeṇa va āṣabhēṣṭa va, that is, either of an ukṣā or of a īṣabhā. The use of the conjunctions ‘va……. va’ i.e. ‘either…… or’ itself indicates that ukṣā and īṣabhā are not the same, but distinctly different. Therefore, it is impossible that a highly learned personality like the Jagadguru Adi-Saṅkarācārya would interpret as a tautology the words ukṣā and īṣabhā signifying ‘a stud-bull as long as it is potent in impregnation’, when the contradistinctive conjunction ‘va…….va’ i.e. ‘either…… or’ is used to contrast the words ukṣā and īṣabhā. It is certain that ‘ukṣā secana-samarthāḥ purūgavāha’ as used in the commentary of Jagadguru Adi-Saṅkarācārya means an aphrodisiac drug, i.e. soma juice, and ‘tataḥ api adhikā-srayāḥ’ means the drug īṣabhā of the aslavarga, which is supposed to be more invigorating even than ukṣā i.e. soma juice’.
Were cows Slaughtered at King Rantideva's Place?

In the booklet 'Beef In Ancient India' by Raja Rajendralala Mitra, it is stated on page iii of the Preface that according to the Mahābhārata, 2000 cows used to be slaughtered every day at King Rantideva’s place to entertain guests. In support of this assertion the following verse has been quoted from Vana-parva, Chapter 207. Actually this verse is not found in Chapter 207, but occurs in Chapter 208 of the Chitrashala edition and in Chapter 199 of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute edition:

राजा महानसे पूँज़ रत्निकिष्क्य वै हिज़
हें सहस्रे तु राज्येते भूसूनामवह तदा
अह्वालति राज्येते हें सहस्रे गाढ़ा तथा

In this verse, interpreting the word vadhaye as ‘used to be slaughtered’, it is being propagated that 2000 cows and 2000 animals used to be slaughtered every day in the kitchen of King Rantideva. According to Pāṇini’s Sanskrit grammar, this cannot be the correct interpretation, which we will discuss later.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, in their renowned publication 'The History and Culture of the Indian People' whose General Editor is Shri R.C. Majumdar, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.A.S.B. has also stated in Vol. II, page 579 as follows:

"According to Mahābhārata, a King called Rantideva killed every day two thousand cattle and two thousand kine in order to dole out meat to the people."

They have neither quoted nor given a reference to the Mahābhārata in this respect. It appears that their ideas are also based on the above quoted verse. They must have also done so following in the footsteps of other persons without caring to study the full context, which is most unfair on the part of an institution like the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, whose publications carry weight with the general public.

This verse, along with a few more, is not available in all the editions of the Mahābhārata. Wherever this verse exists it is followed by another verse. The lines of this further verse read as follows:

समावेश तदो हानि रत्निकिष्क्य विलया: ।
अनुज्ज्ञा कीतिरस्वस्त्युप्त्य हिज्जच्छम ॥

It means: "O superior among Dvijas! King Rantideva earned unparalleled glory by serving guests with such meat."

Let us now consider the propriety of this verse.

Incompatibility of Rantideva’s Glory by Animal-Slaughter while Propagating Ahimsā

At this place in the Vana-parva of the Mahābhārata, a Dharma-vyādha, while giving discourse to a Kauśika Brāhmaṇa, discusses the merits of non-violence vis-a-vis violence. In the previous chapter he has preached non-violence as the greatest virtue in verse no. 74 of the Gita Press and Chitrashala edition and verse no. 69 of the Bhandarkar Institute edition. He has not quoted any historical incident as an example.

Taking into consideration the previous context of the subject, no sane person will admit that after preaching non-violence as the supreme religion in the previous chapter, and praising non-violence and decrying violence in the chapter under discussion, any historical example of attainment of fame by any king by practising violence by way of killing 2000 innocent animals and 2000 innocent cows every day, could be quoted by the Dharma-vyādha. The assertion that two thousand innocent cows and two thousand other innocent animals were slaughtered at King Rantideva’s place, is entirely baseless. In the Mahābhārata, there are several other testimonia which attest that this assertion has no foundation in fact, such as:
(1) In Mahābhārata, Anuśasana-parva, Chapter 115; in verse 63-67 of the Gita Press edition and verses 72-76 in the Chitrashala edition, names of various kings of ancient times are quoted, who were never addicted to any sort of meat-eating. Among them, the name of King Rantideva is also mentioned. These verses appear in Chapter 116 and are numbered 67 to 70 in the Bhandarkar Institute edition.

If Brāhmaṇas would have been served beef and/or ordinary meat at King Rantideva’s place, then the king himself would have taken beef and/or meat as prasādam, in which case his name would not have found place among kings who never took meat.

(2) Even if one insists that the text samāhāsam dodato hyannam is correct, then too, considering the special virtues of King Rantideva, which will be described later, māhsam cannot mean the meat of an animal body. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.7.1.3 the word mānsa is equivalent to and carries the same meaning as paramānnam—एतद हेतु परमानाम् यान्मानस्—and paramānnam according to the Sanskrit lexicom Amarakośa 2.7.24 is pāyasam prepared with the admixture of milk, rice and sugar—परमानाम तु पायसम्. Thus it would mean that King Rantideva earned fame by entertaining Brāhmaṇas with pāyasam and not with animal meat.

(3) If 2000 cows are killed every day, then 7,200,000 cows would have been killed in a year. If this had continued year after year, then the cow progeny would have gradually vanished from the earth. As such, from the practical point of view also, this does not appear to be justified.

(4) Again in the Mahābhārata (Gita Press and Chitrashala editions), Droṇa-parva, Chapter 67, Nārada is describing to King Śrījaya, the greatness of King Rantideva, wherein he has said that Rantideva made gifts to Brāhmaṇas out of his honest and just income in which thousands of ‘niṣka’ used to be given daily. There, a ‘niṣka’ is defined as equal to “1000 golden bulls and 100 cows as well as 108 gold coins with each bull”.

(5) In the Mahābhārata, Śanti-parva, Chapter 262, verse 47 in the Gita Press and Chitrashala editions and Chapter 254, verse 45 in the Bhandarkar Institute edition, it is stated:

अभ्यु इति गायं नाम क पता हनुमानम्

महेन्द्रकान्ताकुशलं वृं गायं वाशस्वेतः तु यह

meaning thereby that in Śruti the cow is referred to as agnya ‘not to be killed’; as such who can even think of killing a cow? He who kills a cow and/or a bull, commits a great sin.

Let the readers consider, whether it is consistent or possible for such a pious king to get 2000 innocent animals and 2000 innocent cows slaughtered in his kitchen for the entertainment of guests.

As the cow is inviolable (not to be killed) and also in view of the foregoing facts about King Rantideva in the Mahābhārata, no sensible person can believe the assertion of Raja Rajendralal Mitra in his English monograph, ‘Beef in Ancient India’ that two thousand innocent cows and two thousand other innocent animals were slaughtered to feed meat to guests.

Many persons, either being themselves ignorant of the Sanskrit language or not willing to take pains to consult the quoted passage in its context in the original books, take it for granted that a passage quoted by a famous person and announced publicly and published in the press, must be correct beyond doubt. But the facts are not so.
A Review of ‘Beef in Ancient India’

Misleading Views expressed by Shri Mukandi Lal, formerly Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of United Provinces, and by Rahul Sankrityayan

Recently, tendentious book ‘Cow Slaughter—Horns of a Dilemma’ has been published by Lallani Publishing House, which is edited by one Shri A.B. Shah, who has been Professor of Mathematics & Statistics for about 20 years at the Universities of Poona and Bombay and who is at present Director of Programmes in India for the Congress of Cultural Freedom. It contains similar irrelevant material. In this book, an article ‘Cow—Cult in India’ has been published, which is written by one Shri Mukandi Lal, an Oxford Graduate and a Barrister-at-Law, who was Deputy Speaker of the U.P. Legislative Assembly during the British period in the years 1927-30. The shallowness of personal knowledge of Shri Mukandi Lal is clear from his statement on page 31, wherein he has stated that the great Vaisnava saint Vallabhacharya translated the Bhagavata Purana in Hindi. Shri Vallabhacharya has written his commentary on the Bhagavata Purana in Sanskrit, which is entitled ‘Subodhini’. In this essay propagating cow-slaughter in the ancient period, Shri Mukandi Lal has quoted freely from Shri Rahul Sankrityayan’s, Hindi book Volgā se Gangā. He himself has not taken pains to consult the texts in the original. Let us discuss these quotations and also consider what Shri Rahul Sankrityayan has alleged.

In a foot-note to page 228 of his book, Rahul Sankrityayan has quoted three lines of two verses from the Drona-parva, Chapter 67. The first sloka and the first-half of the second sloka read as follows:

सांकति रतिदेव व मूतं संजय श्रुम ।

यह विश्वासाद्या आसन श्रुतं महात्मनमः ॥

युधानायामतान, विश्वासाकेष्यम्, परिवेक्षाका: ॥

These lines have been interpreted by Shri Rahul Sankrityayan and have been accepted as correct by Shri Mukandi Lal, that two thousand cooks were employed in the kitchen of King Rantideva to cook beef.

Were cows Slaughtered at King Rantideva’s Place?

Misleading Views of Shri Mukandi Lal

The number of cooks in the Sanskrit text is 200 thousands (dhī-lata-sahasra) and not two thousand. From these interpretations one can fathom the knowledge of Shri Rahul Sankrityayan and Mukandi Lal as regards Sanskrit. ‘To cook beef’ is not mentioned in these lines anywhere. Rahul Sankrityayan has cleverly omitted the latter half of the second sloka reading:

पश्वापकवेच दिवारावेच वराप्रमोक्तोपमम्।

All the four lines of the two verses quoted above are interpreted in the Gita Press edition as follows:

Nārada, explaining to King Srñjaya who was miserable due to the death of his young son, said:

‘O Srñjaya, it is said that Sāṅkṛti’s son Rantideva also could not live for ever, though that great king used to employ two lakh cooks in his kitchen, who prepared nectar-like meals both unfried (consisting of dal, rice, etc.) and fried (poori, kachori, sweets, vegetables, etc.) for Brāhmaṇa guests and used to serve them day and night’.

Later, two other lines of the same chapter reading as follows have been grossly misinterpreted by Rahul Sankrityayan:

तत्र स्म सुत्र: कृशशस्त्र स्मुस्मस्माकिकुरुक्तता: ॥

सूर्य भूतिपमाच्चव्रति नानं मासं वा धारा: ॥

Shri Rahul Sankrityayan has changed the word māṁsam meaning ‘month’ to māṁsam meaning ‘meat’ and interpreted these as follows:

“The number of guests used to increase to such an extent that due to shortage of meat, the cooks had to request them to accept more quantity of soup.”

The paraphrasing according to the correct text and its interpretation as given in the Gita Press edition are as follows:
"Sudhā (the cooks) sumeṣṭa-maṇiśuddhāḥ (wearing glittering and jewel-studded pendants) krojanīti śma (used to speak loudly) tatra there) (that) aśīṃdhyam (you all eat) bhūṣyātham (as much as possible) śīpaṃ (liquid preparations like dal, cury, etc.) yathā (a kind of which) nādyā (has not been prepared) māsām purā (since the last one month)."

In the second line of the above quoted verse of the Mahābhārata, Drōṇa-parva 67.2, the phrase varāṇam anuṣṭo pāmanam means that the food served to Brahmānas was high class, and tasted like nectar. The word varāṇam literally meaning ‘supreme food’ is equivalent to the word paramāṃman. The Sanskrit dictionary Amarakośa 2.7.74 says “paramāmman tu pāyasam (a preparation made by boiling rice in milk and then mixing sugar with it).” It has been discussed already. As such, the cows at King Rantideva’s kitchen could be present only for the supply of milk for making pāyasam and not to be slaughtered for beef. A slaughter-house, which is always so dirty, is never situated near a habitation and in no case near the kitchen or inside the kitchen. As such it is clear that in King Rantideva’s kitchen, neither cows nor other animals used to be slaughtered for serving beef or meat to the guests.

The above episode in the Drona-parva is narrated by Vyāsa-deva to console King Yuddhiṣṭhira, when he was in grief after the death of his nephew Abhimanyu. This episode is said to have been narrated by Devayānī Narada to King Śrījaya long long ago, when the latter was very miserable due to the death of his son. The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, considers this episode to be an interpolation and it has not included this in its critical edition of the Mahābhārata.

With the stanza commences the story of the sixteen Great Kings, which is found duplicate in the Drona-parva. The occasion in the Drōṇa-parva, the death of Abhimanyu, would lead one to suppose that these sixteen stories must have been first told in the Drona-parva and subsequently repeated in the Śāntiparva. But the fact seems to have been otherwise. There are also some variations in the names of the kings and in the sequence of the stories, as can be seen at a glance.

(Continued from previous page)

This episode is said to have been narrated briefly in the Śāntiparva by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to King Yuddhiṣṭhira, when he was in grief due to the destruction of practically his entire family. At this place (Śāntiparva, Chapter 29) verse 128 in both the Gita Press and Chitrashala editions, has a text identical with that of the above quoted verse “तत्र तम सुधाः... नात्र रथयां पूरा” with the difference that the word māsām in the last portion of the verse is māhāsam in the Chitrashala edition while in the Gita Press edition it is bhojyaṃ. The text of this verse with the word bhojyaṃ is admitted by Rahul Sankrityayan as well (see his Hindi book Volgā se Gangā, page 228, last line of the foot-note). The same verse appears in the edition of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in the Śāntiparva, Chapter 29, verse 120 and there also the reading is māḥāsam, but it is stated that in manuscript no. 198 of the Bombay Government Collection 1891-95, the reading of this word in the Kashmirian recension is bhojyaṃ. In the last part of the verse tatra śma sūḍā... the text māḥāsam is not relevant according to the principle of ahuḥkāśa paraṃ dharmāḥ. As such, the reading of this word either as māsām or as bhojyaṃ is the only correct text. So the fame of King Rantideva can never rest on the daily slaughter of 2000 innocent animals and 2000 innocent cows, but this can be by rearing them and giving them away in gifts.

True Facts of King Rantideva’s Glory as narrated in the Mahābhārata

In the Śāntiparva, the fame of King Rantideva is further sang in verse 7 of Chapter 292 in the Gita Press and Chitrashala editions and chapter 281 of the Bhandarkar Institute edition. There too, it is due to entertaining Rṣis with fruits and tubers and not with meat. The text is as follows.

(Continued from previous page)

As far as the Drona-parva text is concerned, since the Kautumr version omits the chapter altogether, it is obvious that there is a duplication from the Śāntiparva original, probably by one interested in glorifying the Bhāgavata. The Bhandarkar edition of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, Vol. 13, Śāntiparva Rājadharma, page 649 of the critical notes on chapter 29.
In the Mahābhārata Śāntiparva (Ṛṣiṣṭhīrā) chapter 29, Bhagavān Śri Kṛṣṇa narrates an episode to King Yudhiṣṭhira, grieved by the destruction of practically his entire family. Once upon a time this episode was narrated by Sage Nārada to King Śrījaya who was in grief due to his son’s death. Herein a number of ancient kings have been mentioned, who were highly endowed with Dharma, knowledge (jñāna), renunciation (vairāgya) and influence (ālivṛya) and who by their noble deeds had earned a good name but they too could not live for ever. Among those noble deeds which earned them a good name, there is no mention of the killing of animals or cows, but on the other hand, gift of cows has been clearly specified. King Rantideva’s name is also quoted there. Instances of the gift of cows are as follows (the verse numbers indicated below are of the Gita Press and Chitrashala editions, followed by those of the Bhandarkar Institute edition):

शत शतसहस्राणि व्रताणां हेमसालिनाम्।
गवां सहस्रानं दक्षिणामत्यकाचतुर्य॥ (34-35 ; 30)

This verse mentions the gift of a crore of cows and bulls with gold chains around their necks accompanied by thousands of servicemen by King Brhadāratha of the Aṅga country.

ताथति: प्रदेश म: स शिविरीश्चा राजपरवे। (42 : 37)

Gift of lakhs of cows by King Śibi in his yajña is prescribed in the above verse.

शतं गवां सहस्राणि शतशतसाराणि च। (115 : 108)
ताथारंग: प्रदाहाद्युपरस्सो मय:॥ (118 : 111)

In the above, lakhs of cows were donated by King Gaya.

The above verses describe gifts by King Rantideva amounting to thousands of Niśkas and thousands of cows. The word ālayabhyaṣa in the above verses does not mean violence, but means touching for the purpose of giving away.

In the whole of this chapter, several kings including King Rantideva are named, who earned fame and good name, but nowhere is it said that they did so by killing animals and/or cows.

Throughout the world, at places where violence (killing of animals) is not considered a sinful practice, there is not a single instance, where one could have earned fame and good name by killing living beings. Fame and good name is earned by bravery in battle, which may include killing of opponents, or by killing of undesirable characters which becomes necessary for the protection of innocent persons from their clutches. No other type of killing of living beings can earn fame and good name. In the episode of King Rantideva, neither instance of bravery in war nor protection of the helpless from undesirables is narrated as such. Killing of 2000 innocent animals and 2000 innocent cows cannot be the cause of his fame and good name, but this is possible by giving away cows as gifts, which is more logical.
At several places in the Mahābhārata "ahīnsā" is praised and "ahīnsā" is denounced (see quotations from the Mahābhārata under the caption "Non-violence is Supreme in Religious Scriptures"). In Anuṣṭaparva, Chapters 114, 115 and 116 of Gita Press edition and 115, 116 and 117 of Bhandarkar Research Institute edition are full of superiority of "Ahīnsā". Some verses therefrom are quoted below. The reference numbers of chapters and verses are from the Gita Press edition followed by the Bhandarkar Research Institute edition:

As the footprints of all other moving living-beings are engulfed in those of the elephant, even so all other religions are to be comprehended in ahīnsā.

Abstention from injury (ahīnsā) is the highest religion; it is again the highest penance; it is also the highest truths from which all duties proceed.

Abstention from cruelty (ahīnsā) is the highest religion.
Abstention from cruelty is the highest self-control.
Abstention from cruelty is the highest gift.
Abstention from cruelty is the highest penance.

Gifts made in all yajñas, ablutions performed in all sacred water, and the merits that one acquires from making all kinds of gifts mentioned in the scriptures—all these do not come up to abstention from cruelty (in point of the merit that attaches to it).

In the Mahābhārata, where ahīnsā is so much praised, it would not have been possible to praise the glory of King Rantideva therein, had there been killing of cows or other animals at his place.

Possible Reasons of Naming the River as Caramanvati

On page 277 of his Hindi book Vāgī sa Gaṅgā, Rahul Sankritiyayan has stated that from the undried raw hide of 2000 cows, which used to be killed every day in the kitchen of King Rantideva and stored there, liquids oozed out, which became a river which was named 'Caramanvati' due to its water being accumulated from the carcass (hide) of the cows. In support he has quoted the following verse in the footnote:

The verse is from chapter 29 of the Sāntiparva of the Mahābhārata, but the serial number of the verses differ in the editions of the Gita Press, Chitrashala and Bhandarkar Institute. We will discuss this verse and others appearing along with it. The whole context is quoted below. The serial numbers quoted against these verses are those given in the Gita Press edition;
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When a crowd of guests spent a night at the place of King Rantideva, the son of Sāśkṛti, then 20,100 cows used to be gifted to them by touch. (127)

The cooks, wearing polished and bright jewelled pendants, used to announce that all of you please eat liquid preparations (like dal, curry, etc.). The food prepared today is of very high order, the type of which has never been prepared before.

From these verses, it is amply clear that there was no animal killing at King Rantideva's place. If there would have been killing, then the animals would have never gone of their own accord to the yajña of King Rantideva, as stated in verse 122.

In the Shrimad-Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa VII. 15.10, it is stated:

Seeing one proceeding to propitiate the Lord through sacrifices conducted with material substances, animals grow apprehensive lest the merciless fellow, who is ignorant of the truth of the spirit and is (therefore) given to the (mere) gratification of his self, will surely kill them.

In the Rām-charit-mānas of Gosvami Tulsidas also it is stated:

meaning that birds and animals go to the sages, while they run away on seeing a hunter who entices and kills them.* The idea of animals

*On page 56, lines 19-23 of Urdu book "Abbas-al-Dīwān" (containing 11e hawwain of Muslim saints) which is translated from the Persian book "Farāba-ali-al-dīwān", an incident is narrated therein as follows:—

(Ayodhyā-kānda, between dohi 263 and 264)
Were Cows Slaughtered at King Rantideva's Place
Possible Reasons of Naming the River as Carmanvatī

Shri Sudhir Kumar Gupta has edited the Meghaduta of the great poet Kālidāsa, along with the commentary of Mallinātha and he has given a literal Hindi translation with detailed annotations. In his notes on the 49th stanza of Pūrva-megha, which relates to the fame of King Rantideva, he writes as follows which is translated below into English:

"In the Tāṇḍya-Brāhmaṇa 19.13.1: Nāmaḥ: Kṛṣṇa is explained as Abraham Gopal: Svārājyō yah: The word 'Rantideva' means 'he who returns among the learned, who rejoices, who is one in whom the learned rejoice', that is one who pleases scholars and hence is honoured by them. The word ranti occurs in this very sense in Yajur-Veda 22.19 (see Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa 13.1.6.2). Thus the suraḥbhitayādīmbha yajña, of the mighty king Rantideva who is honoured by the gods, is nothing else but the defence of his dominions. The river Carmanvatī symbolises his glory. Its very banks have evidenced the King's munificence, love of learning, heroism, and devotion to the welfare of his people. The word carmanvatī is formed as carman + vati + i. According to the Unadi-kośa 4.115 (Rish Dayanand's commentary, Ajmer, Vikrama era 1989) the word carman means chārti gacchati maṁ tuḥ caṁ "whereby one moves unto or attains glory that is carman". So, being denotive of the glory of Rantideva it is termed Carmanvatī.

It can be interpreted in another way also. In the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa 3.97.5 (Prāṇa śāhūṣṭraḥ) suraḥbhitayādīmbha yajña is interpreted as prāṇāh (Prāṇa). So suraḥbhitayādīmbha yajña (Prāṇa) is interpreted as tālaḥ śāhūṣṭraḥ Śāhūṣṭrah. This interpretation denotes the mighty valour of the great king Rantideva—which is not at all impossible.

Mr. Sadhuram has suggested another interpretation: the suraḥbhitayādīmbha yajña of agriculture, the daughter (śāhūṣṭraḥ) of the earth
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Aflording due facilities and protection for the crops of different seasons is verily ‘the gomedha yajña or the agricultural culture of the land’. This is also a plausible suggestion. It is possible that the great king Rantideva had rendered the Chambal region into a highly fertile area lush with greenery, during his rule replete with yajñas.

In all the passages where King Rantideva is mentioned in literature, there is no contextual relevance of cow-slaughter. Those who have alleged it to be cow-slaughter, that is due either to their misunderstanding or to some ulterior motive.

In Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary, two meanings of Carmanvati are given as follows:

(i) Name of a river flowing through Bundelkhand and merging in the Gaṅgā; modern name is Chambal.

(ii) Musā Sapientum. This is the technical term for banana or plantain tree in Botany. Musā is a synonym of Arabic mauzah and Sanskrit mocha.

The tract of land through which Chambal flows may have been covered with Musā Sapientum (banana trees) in ancient times and hence the river was named ‘Carmanvati’. It is possible that the cows meant for donation by King Rantideva used to graze in that tract of land and hence the name of the river ‘Carmanvati’ came to be associated with King Rantideva’s glory earned by donating cows. Be it as it may, this much is certain that the theory that the dripping of liquid from the hides of cows collected in King Rantideva’s kitchen caused a stream to flow from their carma (hide) which came to be known as Carmanvati—is baseless, and neither liquid dripping from a collected heap of hides can form a stream which could make a river like Chambal. As such, association of the name of the river Carmanvati with the glory of King Rantideva can not prove that cows used to be slaughtered in King Rantideva’s kitchen and their hides used to be stored there and the liquid dripping from these hides caused a stream, which came to be known as ‘Carmanvati’.

If the whole episode is carefully studied from beginning to end, it will be found that there is no relevance of slaughter of cows, but of course there certainly is a propriety in giving them away in gift.

Rantideva in the Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa

In the Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa 9.21, the legend of King Rantideva is narrated. Its resume follows:

King Rantideva was so generous that without caring for his own self and for his family, he used to offer every day to others whatever he had or used to get. Once it so happened that after remaining hungry for 48 days, he got some pāyasa (milk-rice preparation), pudding, etc. As soon as they sat for their meals, a Brāhmaṇa guest arrived, who appeared to King Rantideva as God incarnate. The King entertained him with due respect. When the Brāhmaṇa went away and the king and his family sat down at meals with the remaining food, a Sūdra guest arrived. The king gave part of the food to that guest. When the Sūdra guest went away, then another guest accompanied by a few dogs arrived and demanded food for his hungry dogs, and King Rantideva respectfully offered all the remaining food and honoured them as so many manifestations of God. Now only water was left with them which too would suffice only for one person. They were just on the verge of drinking that water after sharing it amongst themselves, when a thirsty cāndāla arrived and besought for water. The king felt pity on him and offered the whole water to him and prayed to the Creator as follows:

न कामयेद्व गतिःश्रवतमपरमात्मविद्येऽकामयेद्व गतिःश्रवतमपरमात्मविद्येऽ
अति पिप्पलिभवायमान्तसितो वेन महत्पुरुःकात् (भाग-मार्ग ६.२१.१३)

(Fields, 1979)
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I do not seek from the Lord the highest position attended with the eightfold Yogic power (Anima and so on) or even final beatitude (cessation of rebirth). Dwelling in their hearts (as the sufferer) I would (rather) undergo the suffering of all the embodied souls, so that (through such vicarious sufferings of mine) they may be relieved of misery. (Bhāgavata 9.21.12).

A person, who does not seek the kingdom of heaven, the highest position attended with the eightfold Yogic power or even beatitude, and who prays for vicarious suffering himself to relieve others of misery—how can such a person think of even causing harm to any living being, let alone the question of slaughtering innocent animals.

As pointed out earlier, Mahābhārata, Vanaprastha, chapter 20 deals with the subject of non-violence versus violence, and non-violence is established as a super virtue, and when no other historical example is quoted therein, it is incomprehensible how the episode of King Rantideva has been inserted there in a manner, which does not support the principle enunciated therein, but goes against it. In other words the principle established there is that non-violence is a super virtue and should be practised by all, violence is condemned as not worth to be practised. Hence the example of King Rantideva attaining high fame by slaughtering 2000 innocent animals and 2000 innocent cows every day in his kitchen for the entertainment of guests goes clearly against the context. As such it is more than certain that the verse referred to in the beginning of the article can never be authentic, and they are definitely interpolated. Some beef-eaters must have done so to misguide simple people. Śāntiparva, chapter 265, verse 9 supports this:

"Liquors, fish, mead, meat, spirits, rice cooked with sesamum (šan) seeds—all these have been inserted into yajña by the wicked people. Vedas have not prescribed their use in yajña." (Śāntiparva 265.9)

Correct Meaning of 'vadhye' According to Grammar

The meaning of the stanza cited by antagonists and quoted in the beginning of this study, should be considered in its due setting. The context preceding and succeeding in the same chapter as well as elsewhere in the Mahābhārata makes it clear that they never intended to convey the slaughter of two thousand innocent animals and two thousand innocent cows. In both the verses relevant to it, the word vadhate is used, which has been mistranslated as 'were killed' or 'used to be killed' by the protagonists of cow-slaughter. In Sanskrit grammar, vadh (वध) is not an independent root in the meaning of 'to kill'; to convey this, the root han (हन) is used. This is further corroborated by the Uddyota commentary on Mahābhārata (2.42.43) and by Śabdenduśekhara (3.1.133) nyuṭ treca (युusterity). The root han is substituted by vadh in certain cases. The rule according to Pāṇini 2.42.43 reads: hano vadhā liti luni ca (हनो वधा लिति लुणि च) It means that the root han is substituted by vadhā in the Benedictive (लिति) and also in the Aorist (लुणि). There are two types of liti (लिति)—the Potential Mood (विद्वितिन) and the Benedictive Mood (विद्वितिना). The root han is not substituted by vadhā in both types of liti (लिति), but only in the Benedictive, which is used for benediction or blessing. In Pāṇini's grammar, the aphorism substituting vadhā is preceded by the aphorism ārdhadānaka (आर्धदानक) This order of precedence in the Pāṇiniān technique means that vadhā will be substituted for the root han only in ārdhadānaka (आर्धदानक) which is a technical term for the perfect and benedictive. The substitution is not applicable to sārdhadānaka (सार्धदानक) or the entire verbal base. Thus, except these two, the Benedictive Mood and the Perfect Tense, nowhere is the root han replaced by vadhā. The form vadhate used in the Mahābhārata pertains to neither of these two paradigms. In them the conjugated forms will be avadhiti (आवधिति) and vadhiti (वधिति) By no stretch of imagination can there be the form vadhate in these two because vadhate is a form of the Present Tense. In this tense han is never replaced by vadhā. The forms of the Present run hanyate (हन्यते), hanyete (हन्यते) etc., as in an hanyate hanyamāne sarire (न हन्यते हन्यमाने सरीरे). Bhāgavat Gītā 2.20: here
the root han is used to convey the idea of killing. If vadha were substituted in the Present Tense, then the passage would have read: vadhyate vadhyate vadhy manganese sarire (न कावये कावम्याने शालरे). But it is known to everyone that it is not so. So the word vadhyate, occurring in the two verses of the Rantideva episode of the Mahabharata, cannot be considered to be an instance of the root han meaning 'to kill'. In Sanskrit grammar vadh in the sense of 'to kill' is not an independent root. As it cannot belong to the root han 'to kill', it is form of the root badha bondhane (ध बधने) meaning 'to tie, to bind'. In Sanskrit phonetics, b (बकः) and v (वकः) and r (रकः) and d (दकः) and l (लकः) are undifferentiated. That is b (ब) can be used instead of v (व) for b (ब), r (र) for d (द) and l (ल) for r (र). The interchange of these letters is a common phenomenon. In tune with the considerations of Sanskrit grammar and also keeping in view the context, the correct meaning of vadhyate can only be "are tied".

The word 'badhyate' is found in the chapter on marriage in Atharva-veda 14.1.26 and also in Rgveda 10.85.28 reading पल्लिकोप बन्धे where it is clearly interpreted even by Europeans as 'the husband is bound in bonds (of family life).

As such, the verse of Mahabharata under consideration would really mean that two thousand cattle used to be kept near the kitchen by chaining to the peg, so that their products like milk may be available readily even at odd times for the guests. The idea of keeping other 2000 animals may be for utilising them for transport of materials needed in the reception of guests.

Be it known that this verse is not found in all the editions of Mahabharata. As already explained, the Dharma-Vyadha while preaching to Kausika Brhamana on various subjects has not quoted any historical example. The dialogue between Dharma-Vyadha and Kausika Brhamana is spread over ten chapters in Vana-parva in verses approximating the number of days in a year, out of which about 20 verses recount the previous birth of Dharma-Vyadha and about three-quarters of a hundred relate to the queries by Kausika Brhamana. The balance of nearly 250 verses relates to the preaching by Dharma-Vyadha. Out of these, no historical example is quoted on any subject dealt with in the preaching. Quoting historical instances in preaching ahimsa (non-violence) is against the system of preaching by Dharma-Vyadha, particularly against the context of the subject as interpreted by the protagonists. Hence it is also not free from doubt, whether this verse is genuine or not.

Rantideva in the Meghaduta of the great poet Kālidāsa

The great poet Kālidāsa has also mentioned King Rantideva's glory in the prior part (Pūrva-megha) in a stanza, which is numbered as 45 in some editions and 48 or 49 in others. The text with the resolution of sandhi and English translation based on Shri M. R. Kale is quoted below:

1. उक्तवेऽरुपहः When you have gone over some distance,
2. आरज्ञात् after having waited on
3. पुनः 4. देवम् 5. श्रवणमथम् 6. उद्विद्याथा
7. स्निधवः 8. जलकल्याणाचार्यानां चौपापां
9. स्वामिनयोऽस्मात् मुद्रान्त: 10. सुरमितानां आदिममार्गानां
11. मानविनयोऽस्मात् 12. सुर्योदयस्य विपर्यायात् रिन्देवस्य कौनिमिः

(1. उक्तवेऽरुपहः) When you have gone over some distance,
(2. आरज्ञात्) after having waited on (3. पुनः 4. देवम्) the God
(5. श्रवणमथम्) born of Śara reeds, (6. मुद्राः) your path being left
(7. स्निधवः) by the pairs of Siddhas (8. स्वामिनयोऽस्मात्) bearing lances
(in their hands) (9. मानविनयोऽस्मात्) from fear of the drops of water,
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(10. संक्षेपात: you do hang down (and stop there) (11. मानकीत्वम्) to do honour (12. कौलिकू) to the glory (13. रत्निदेश्यो) of Rantideva (14. परिवारित) sprung (15. आलम्बनम्) from ALAMBHA (16. सुरिन्दलाम्) of cows (daughter of Surabhâ) and (17. चौवी) appearing on earth (18. चौतेष्या) in the form of a river.

Mallinâtha in his ‘Sânjivani’ commentary on Meghadûta has interpreted the portion “सुरिन्दलाम्बन आलम्बनं परिवारितं चौवी चौतेष्यं” as follows:

पुरा फिल रात्रि रत्निदेश्य सफलेन्द्रेकरूः
सम्पूर्वमिन्निभाश्वरमार्गी कानिष्ठी सहयमुः।

सा वर्णवाच्यायायं दत्त।

meaning thereby that:

(पुरा) In ancient times (फिल) verily (कानिष्ठी) a certain (नवी) river (सफलेन्द्रे) streamed out (रत्निदेश्य) of blood-trickling down (सम्पूर्वमिन्न) collected together (सहयमुः) in one place (सहयमुः) in the alambha of cows (रात्रि रत्निदेश्य) by King Rantideva. (सा) It (वर्णवाच्यायायं) became famous (दत्त) as Carmanvati.

The same portion has been commented upon by Madhava Shastri on page 18 of ‘Kâvyasâra-saṅgrahâ’ published by Sunderlal Jain, Punjab Sanskrit Pustakalaya, Lahore, 1929 as follows:

सुरिन्दलाम्बन्यां गावकारा यात्रां आलम्बनम् प्रश्रयं ततो जातां प्रश्रयं,
भूविं च प्रत्रात्मां च व्राहस्येन परिषां रुपान्तरं गताम।

The literal English translation of above would be as follows:

सुरिन्दलाम्बन्यां गावकारा: Cow; तातां their; आलम्बनम्—प्रश्रयं—sprinkling or spraying with water; ततो therefrom; जातां—प्रश्रयं—delivering; भूविं on earth; च and; प्रत्रात्मां—प्रवहस्येन in the form of a stream; परिषां—रुपान्तरं गताम having been transformed;

Were Cows Slaughtered at King Rantideva’s Place
Ratideva in Meghadûta

The running translation of the above would be as follows:

Sprinkling or spraying of cows with water delivered on earth and which has been transformed in the form of a stream.

Madhava Shastri has interpreted आलम्ब to mean prakśa that is sanctifying by means of water, which resulted in a stream. Sanctifying by sprinkling of water cannot result in a stream. The stream can only be possible if vast numbers of animals are sanctified by water spray bath. After such sanctifying he has also indicated killing of cows, which cannot be correct according to descriptions at several places in the Mahâbhârata and also according to their larger context, but so far the word आलम्ब is concerned, he has not directly interpreted it to mean violence (see the caption “Meaning of Alâhîyanta, Alâhîm etc.” in this chapter). Any sane person considering the episode without any prejudice would arrive at the only conclusion that according to the description of King Rantideva at several places in the Mahâbhârata and their respective contexts, violence by King Rantideva is not proved but gift of cows alone is proved which resulted in spreading his glory. (See the caption: ‘True facts of King Rantideva’s Glory as narrated in the Mahâbhârata’).

Killing of cow progeny is prohibited by Hindus as well as Christian scriptures. Muslim religion also prohibits beef eating. (See the caption ‘Cow-slaughter—Heinous crime in Manusmrti’, ‘Cow-slaughter—Heinous crime in Christianity’ and ‘Prohibition of Beef-eating in Islam under ‘Wore Cow-slaughter, Meat-Sacrifice and Meat-eating Prevalent in the Vedic Age’ ?). Therefore, no sane person will agree that heinous acts like cow-killing can be the cause of earning glory for King Rantideva. As such, the words आलम्ब in the Mahâbhârata and आलम्बha in the Meghadûta of the great poet Kâlidâsa cannot mean violence.

It is also worth noting that according to Mallinâtha’s commentary, trickling of blood drops from the heap of hides resulted in a flow of a
river which is famous by the name Carmavati. The basis of this appears to be a verse of the 29th Chapter of the Śān提पर्व of the Mahābhārata, which has been discussed earlier (see caption ‘Possible Reasons for Naming of the River as Carmavati’).

The readers may see that neither is there any mention of blood in the original text of the great poet Kālidāsa nor is there any justifiable basis in support of this. Such views of Mallinātha about the formation of the Carmavati river cannot be acceptable to any reasonable person.

Meanings of ‘Ālabhyaanta’, ‘Ālabhā’, etc.

In the Dhātupāṭha of Pāṇini’s grammar, *dulabha* prāpta (धुलभ्यं प्राप्त) occurs as root number 975 in the first conjugation called ‘bhvādi-gana’. Its conjugated form in the present tense third person singular is *labhate* (लभते). Pāṇini’s grammar stands out pre-eminent amongst all treatises in the depth of its insight; it surpasses all in importance and authoritativeness. According to this authentic work, the meaning of *labhate* (लभते) is none except the sense of ‘obtaining’ (प्राप्त). The science of grammar is vast—अनःपूर्व रक्षित विशेषाः. As such, to find out whether there is any other meaning of the root ‘labh’, we looked into other references and found that ‘labh’ also means प्राप्त that is urging, inciting, direction, command etc. This has been accepted by the Maitrīyani-saṁhitā, Sāyana-bhāṣya, Cāndravīyakaraṇa, Jānendravīyakaraṇa, Ķākṣīrtasvaṇi-Vīyakaraṇa, Kāntara-vīyakaraṇa, Śakataśvaṇi-Vīyakaraṇa and Hemacandra Vīyakaraṇa also. The Varanaseya Sanskrit University of Varanasi, which is considered the seat of Sanskrit learning in India, has published a Dhātupāṭha-saṁsiktā. There too, we do not find the root *labh* in the meaning of violence ‘hiṅsā’ by any stretch.

A Sanskrit scholar has stated:

“Some time before Pāṇini, the root *labh* had ceased to be used in its conjugated forms. Hence grammarians did not incorporate this root *labh* in the Dhātupāṭha lists. The words derived from the

*lambh* were correlated to the root *labh*, and hence both the words *slabh* and *slambha* came to mean the same. In fact, the meanings of both the roots *labh* and *lambh*, as well as of their derivatives, are different. The root *labh* has two meanings: (1) obtaining, and (2) touch. Likewise, the root *lambh* also has two meanings: (1) killing and (2) touching. The word *slabh* from the root *labh* and *slambha* from the root *lambh* are synonymous in the sense of ‘touching’. So much is certain that *labh* does not signify killing anywhere, and *lambh* does not mean ‘obtaining’.

The scholar does not cite a scriptural or historical proof in support of the above.

No dictionary gives the meaning of killing for *lambh*. In modern times no one has put so much hard effort as European savants in Sanskrit studies and in researches into the semantics of Sanskrit words. Had any word carried the sense of killing, then it could not have escaped their researches, because an objective of European scholars was to bring out and propagate that Hindu scriptures enjoin killing (hiṅsā).

Even according to all the meanings of the prefix *a* found in the different dictionaries, the roots *labh* or *lambh* with this prefix, that is *sabhabha* or *sambhabha*, cannot signify ‘killing’. Insipite, lexicographers have also given the meaning of killing both for *sabhabha* and *sambhabha*, which can be possible only in a conventional meaning. These lexicographers also give for both the words the following meanings:

‘to obtain, touch, take hold of, etc.’

which have nothing to do with killing. By virtue of their etymology *sabhabha* and *sambhabha* do not carry any meaning of killing, and as lexicons have still accepted ‘killing’ as their meaning, and as in some passages we come across the meaning of ‘killing’, in such a situation wherever these words occur, they should be rendered in a ‘killing’ or ‘non-killing’ meaning only after due consideration of the context.
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In Yajurveda 30.5, the word 'ālaṁbhā' means 'to obtain or receive', such as:

1. झुम्पे भाषणे आलमते
   For knowledge he obtains a knower (a wise man).

2. क्षत्रिय राजस्थान आलमते
   For heroism he obtains a hero.

3. जलायु सुते आलमते
   For dance he obtains a sūta.

4. धर्मस समाचार आलमते
   For dharma he receives a member of a religious congregation.

In the Smritis, Grihyasūtras, and allied texts ālambhana and ālabhate mean 'touching'; for example:

(i) In the Subodhini commentary on 'Mimāṃsā-darsāna' 2.3.17 it is stated: आलम्भनं श्रवणं मद्वित, that is ālambha is sparśa 'touching'.

(ii) In the duties of a Brahmacārī—

पर्यन्त स्त्रीणां च प्रेमणालम्भम्

"the brahmacārī should avoid looking at a woman or touching her." (Manu 2.179).

(iii) In the Upanayana ceremony—

व्यास्त्व (व्यास्तारूणी) दक्षिणांस अविष्णवं आलमते

"the teacher touches the heart of the brahmacārī" (Pāraskara-grhyasūtra 2.2.16).

(iv) In the marriage ceremony—

पर्यं वान्य दक्षिणांस अविष्णवं आलमते

"the bridegroom touches the heart of the bride with his hand over her right shoulder". (Pāraskara-grhyasūtra 1.3.8) etc. etc.

(v) The Bhāgavata-Mahāpurāṇa 11.5.13 also clearly testifies that in yajña, pātu-ālambana does not convey the meaning of 'killing':

यदु द्रामार्को विहितं खुरायास्त्वं पाएदलं न हैसा।

(व्रतप्रसाद 1.4.12)

"In yajña, the smelling of wine is prescribed, not its drinking. In yajña, the touching of an animal is enjoined not its killing."

(vi) The word स्पर्श that is 'touching' is used for दान gift as well. The great poet Kālidāsa has गो: कोटिक स्पर्शावत्र घोटाले in Raghuvrāhasā 2.49 where sparśayāt (स्पर्शयात्) means dānam (दान) —gift'.

Chapter 29 of the Śāntiparva (Rājadharana) of the Māhābhārata enumerates the names of kings who became famous by giving away cows in donation; hence the context of the word ālambhane in आलब्धन घरव नाता: of verse 127 of Gītā Press and Chitrashala editions and verse-119 of the edition of Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona, can mean only 'obtaining' (प्राप्ति) or 'touching' (स्पर्श) in relation to the donation of cows. Similarly the meaning of the word ālambha in donation of cows and of the great poet Kālidāsa also relates to the donation of cows and not their killing.
IS BEEF POSSIBLE IN MADHUPARKA?

Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra in his book ‘Beef in Ancient India’ and Pandurang Vaman Kane in his book ‘History of Dharmasastra’ Vol. II, Part I, Chapter 10 (Madhuparka and Other Usages); and Vol. II, Part II, Chapter 12 (Bhojana—Flesh-eating) have tried to prove that madhuparka contained meat and that too beef. Besides foreigners, a number of other Indian writers too have at times described and referred to it in their articles. Let us consider it.

Madhuparka in the Vedas

The famous Vedic scholar of modern times, the late Pandit Shripad Damodar Satavalekar writes in his Go-Janaka-Koila, Ancient Period, Vedic section, Part I:—

“Several people say that the rite of madhuparka is Vedic and meat is its essential ingredient. But the word madhuparka itself is not found in the Rgveda, Yajurveda and Samaveda; it is also not found in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. It occurs only once in the Atharvaveda Śāṁhitā. This mantra is:

यथा यथा: सोमपीये मधुपकः यथा यथा: । (Atharvaveda 10.3.21)
May I be blessed by the glory that dwells in the draught of soma and in madhuparka.

This is all that is found about madhuparka in all the four Śāṁhitās of the Vedas. Therefore it is not possible to ascertain as to what should be the ingredients of madhuparka, and what not. But this is a fact that whosoever claim that meat is a necessary ingredient of madhuparka, their viewpoint cannot be proved by the Vedic mantras. Beyond this, even in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, no text has any mention of madhuparka. Therefore it is impossible to prove by Vedic testimony that meat is necessary in the Vedic madhuparka.

Although the word madhuparka is not found in the Vedas anywhere else, yet the word madhupeya (मधुपेय) occurs. This too can be taken as its synonym. This is a good, delicious i.e., sweet drink, as it appears from the following mantra of Rgveda 6.44.21:—

Indeed is the drink, indeed the drink is a soma juice itself, to indicate which, the word ube is there in this very mantra. vr̥ṣabhaḥ (व्र̥षभ) in this mantra signify an ‘ox’.

In the last quartet of this mantra we find the words (स्वादस्य रसो मधुपेयो). They mean ‘sweet drink madhupeya’. But this is not any independent drink, it is the soma juice itself, to indicate which, the word ube is there in this very mantra. vr̥ṣabhaḥ (व्र̥षभ) in this mantra signify an ‘ox’.

Seeing these words, many seem to have conjectured the meat of an ox as an ingredient of madhupeya. But this mantra is in praise of god Indra and it means: ‘O, God Indra! thou art the giver of strength to earth, heavens, rivers, moveable and immovable, so come here at the time of drinking madhu.’ Though Mr. Griffith has translated it into English as: ‘Though art the bull of earth, the “bull” of heaven’; the meaning here is not ‘the bull’ but ‘the giver of strength’,—this need not be explained to those who comprehend the meanings inherent in English words. If anyone insists that as the two words vr̥ṣabhaḥ and madhupeya occur in this mantra, therefore meat of a bull is required in madhuparka, then his contention will not be credible because to thrust on the mantra a sense which is not therein—is not a learned person’s work.

Following are the meanings of vr̥ṣabhaḥ (व्र̥षभ) and vr̥ṣakarma (व्र̥षकर्म) found in the Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Monier-Williams:—
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(i) A strong or a potent man;

(ii) The chief of the class or any thing the most excellent or prominent or best of its kind.

— BULL (in Veda, epithet of various gods, as of Indra).

— Doing manly deeds as Indra (Rgveda).

Thus it is proved that there is no mention of madhuparka in the Vedas except in one passage in the Atharvaveda. Madhuparka is mentioned in the Rgveda. The ingredients of madhuparka are not specified anywhere in the Vedas. The name only indicates that it is something sweet. Therefore it cannot be proved from the Vedas that there is any possibility of any type of meat in madhuparka according to the Vedas. Let us now consider as to what are the ingredients of madhuparka according to the other texts.

Ingredients of Madhuparka

Madhuparka has been prescribed for special honoured guests who have come from far-off places. Wherever the ingredients of madhuparka have been described in the scriptures, nowhere has meat been included in them. Curd, ghee, milk, honey and candy-sugar are the main constituents of madhuparka. Some have not taken all of them but mentioned only a few of them. In some sources, parched barley powder (sattu) has also been mentioned as one of the ingredients of madhuparka.

Now let us see what are the ingredients of madhuparka in the various texts:

1. TANTRASĀRA (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, November 1938, Chapter I: page 53):

   वायष्यं दिप्युछिमधुपरकं विद्वृत्यः

   “Wise men prescribe the mixture of ghee, curd and honey in madhuparka.”

The same has been quoted in Šabda-kalpadruma (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1961, Part III, page 599, column 2) while explaining the word madhuparka.

2. At the same place in Šabda-kalpadruma in the meanings of madhuparka, the following has been quoted from the KĀLIKĀ-PURĀṆA, chapter 7

   द्रिचिस लपिर्वं द्रिचिस्व नित्यायद्विभवः

   “Curd, ghee, milk, honey and candy-sugar—all these five constitute madhuparka which satisfies all the gods.”


   कोषाप्राणे सामायुक्तं ददिम्मुखुमेत्यलयम्

   मधुपरकां विशेषं समायुक्तं स्वतः नित्यायद्विभवः

   “The preparation with curd, honey and ghee in a bronze vessel is called madhuparka.”

4. ĀŚVALĀYANA-GRHYA-SŪTRA 1.24.5.6

   द्रविति मध्वानीय, लपिर्वं मध्वानां

   “One should mix curd and honey, and ghee if honey is not available.”

5. PĀRAŚKARA-GRHYA-SŪTRA chapter on marriage, 1.3.5

   आहार्यं विद्वें वार्ष ददिम्मुखुमेत्यमातेवतः

   मधुपरकं ददिम्मुखुमेत्यमयित्तं कायम्यं कायेन

After describing other items in the first line, the ingredients of madhuparka have been detailed in the second line:

“Madhuparka is made of curd, honey and ghee in a bronze vessel covered with a bronze lid.”
8. VĂRĂHA-GRHYA-SŪTRA 12.4

The celebrant should come for worship with mixture of honey and curd in a bronze vessel or in a camasa vessel shaped like the praṇīta covered with a big lid, along with the sipping water.

7. ĀPASTAMIYA-DHARMA-SŪTRA 2.4.8.8, 9

Curd and honey should be prepared by mixing curd and honey or by mixing milk and honey, and if they are not available, water should be mixed with honey.

8. BAUDHĀYNA-GRHYA-SŪTRA 1.2.10—13

In sūtra 9, bringing of madhu has been described. In sūtras 10 to 13 the ingredients to be mixed with honey have been described as follows:

“if curd or milk is mixed with honey, it is called divīnt (दिविंत).”

“if the third ingredient ghee is added, it is called trīṭ (त्रित).”

“by mixing the second ingredient i.e. if firstly milk has been mixed then curd and if firstly curd has been mixed then by mixing milk, it is called caturvṛt (चत्वर्वर्त).”

9. JAIMNIYA-GRHYA-SŪTRA 1.19

“Curd and honey are mixed in it. With curd it is called dādhamantra (दाद्हमान्त्र) ; with water it is termed udāmantha (उदामान्त्र) and with milk it is designated as payayā (पायया).”

10. HIRANYAKESI-GRHYA-SŪTRA 1.12.10

The text of Hiranyakesi-grhya-sūtra was neither available with any book seller nor in any library. But its evidence was found in the German book: ‘Ritual Literatur Vedische Opfer und Zauber’ by Alfred Hillebrandt, published by Verlag von Karl. J. Trübner, Strassburg, in 1897. It is cited below in the original German, with an interlinear English word-for-word translation:

Hierauf folgt die Darbietung des Spulwassers und des Madhuparka.

This comprises the offering of rinsing water and of Madhuparka.

Dieser besteht nach Hiranyakesi 1.12.10 aus drei

These comprise according to Hiranyakesi 1.12.10 of three

oder fünf Bestandteilen, nämlich dādhi, madhu, ghrta

or five components, namely curd, honey, ghee which can be

oder fünf Bestandteilen, nämlich dādhi, madhu, ghrta

mixed with water and saktus (flour of barley, parched in hot sand).

According to Hiranyakesi 1.12.10—firstly water should be offered

for washing and then madhuparka which contains three or five
ingredients—curd, honey and ghee; to which water and groats of barley meal (sakti) can be added.


(i) A mixture of honey;

(ii) An offering of honey and milk;

(iii) A respectful offering to a guest, or to the bridegroom on his arrival at the door of the father of the bride, sometimes consisting of equal parts of curd, honey and clarified butter.

At other places too wherever the ingredients of madhuparka have been detailed, what to talk of beef, there is not even the slightest indication of meat. When meat has nowhere been included in the ingredients of madhuparka, then how is it alleged that meat is essential in madhuparka or that there can be no madhuparka without meat. The most essential ingredient of madhuparka is honey, without which there can be no madhuparka. Only the Āśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra prescribes that ghee can be taken if honey is not available, nowhere else such a prescription has been made; though other ingredients in place of milk, curd or ghee have been prescribed. Āpastamba-dharma-sūtra has even prescribed that if neither milk nor curd is available, then madhuparka can be prepared by mixing honey in water. It is not understandable as to how the Āśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra has accepted madhuparka without meat when the name madhuparka itself indicates the essentiality of honey in it. There appears to be some transgression. It is probably due to a pressing occasion when some followers of Āśvalāyana must have ruled in a hurry that ghee could be mixed in place of honey when it is not available, to avoid inconvenience of waiting to the guest. From that very time onwards the followers of Āśvalāyana would have recognised the convention of mixing ghee in place of honey when it was not available. Whatever it be, meat is not mentioned anywhere in the ingredients of madhuparka, in spite of ransacking searches.

The descriptions of the ingredients of madhuparka in the various scriptures prove that there is not even an inkling of meat in madhuparka. So it is firmly proved that madhuparka contains no meat. Whichever passages are referred to as prescribing meat in madhuparka, such as:

1. नामांसो मथुरको भवति भवितः (Āśvalāyana-Gṛhya-Sūtra 1.24.26)

2. न विवास्मांसोपति: सवात्। (Pāraskara-Gṛhya-Sūtra 1.3.29)

3. मथुरकं च यज्ञं च पितृदेवनस्तमिः। अश्रेष्ठ पशुधो हि ज्योत्सवयन्। (Manu 5.41)

will be discussed later on.

Impracticability of Beef in the Reception of a Guest with Madhuparka

The rites of receiving an honourable guest with madhuparka have been detailed in the Āśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra 1.24 and Pāraskara-grhya-sūtra 1.3. Only on the basis of these two grhya-sūtras, people opine that meat (beef) is essential in madhuparka. Let us now consider the possibility of meat in madhuparka according to the rites described in them.

The sequence of rites given in these grhya-sūtras is as follows:

1. Offering of a seat and its acceptance;
2. Offering of water for washing the feet;
3. Offering of arghya (अर्घ्यं) and its acceptance;
4. Offering of sipping water (ācamanīya) and its acceptance;
5. Accepting madhuparka, mixing it with the thumb and third finger, sprinkling madhuparka in the four directions by these
very fingers, taking madhuparka thrice from its middle by these very fingers, and leaving the residue.

6. Cleaning the mouth by sipping water.

The rites up to here are almost identical in the Āśvalāyana and Pāraskara-grhya-sūtras. Till this place there is no point for difference of opinion. Hereafter interpretations differ, which will be discussed separately according to both the grhya-sūtras in the forthcoming sections. Here it will suffice to point out that there is no mention of meat in the ingredients of madhuparka, nor is meat mentioned till the completion of the rite by cleansing the mouth with sipping water. When a guest arrives, all the rites in the chain of his honoured reception by madhuparka are performed one after the other in a regular sequence and without interruption. There is no waiting for any length of time. Therefore, it does not seem possible that a cow could be slaughtered instantaneously, her meat taken out, be cooked, be mixed with madhuparka and then it could be served to the guest. It takes a long time to slaughter a cow, to extract her meat and then to cook it. It does not seem possible that an honoured guest was required to wait for such a long time. The followers of Āśvalāyana do not let an honourable guest wait even for honey and hence accept ghee in its place.

Moreover, a guest cannot consume the entire meat of a cow. The quantity of madhuparka for the occasion can permit only a fraction of an ounce of meat in it. How can it be desirable to slaughter a cow for such a little quantity of meat? Therefore, when a cow is brought after the guest has partaken of madhuparka and has cleansed his mouth by sipping water, her bringing in can be either for gifting her to the guest, or for offering instantaneously drawn milk to the guest for which he will not have to wait.

Gift of a Cow in Madhuparka

Some scriptures specifically prescribe that a cow should be gifted in madhuparka.

\[\text{Is Beef Possible in Madhuparka?} \]

\[\text{Gift of a Cow in Madhuparka} \]

1. Aruna-smṛti, chapter 1, (published by Mansukhrani Mor, 5, Clive Row, Calcutta):

\[
\text{शशकम्मण्य ते देवनुर्ण देवनुर्मण्मण्मण्णिं || १११ ||}
\text{श्रवणितविविमते वा होमार्ण दुःखाया या ||}
\text{मद्यपक्ष सा छोटा ते छोटा: कल्लितये य || ११२ ||}
\text{ददर्ता: सब्रां हिन्दो चिन्द्रमा, प्रतिग्रृहयुवा वल्लय ||}
\text{न स पचिये निषिद्ध प्रयासमिष्यान्तः || ११२ ||}
\]

"As there is no effect of water on a lotus leaf, similarly sin does not affect a learned dwija who accepts a cow gifted at the time of a yajña, in a religious performance, on performing expiation rites, for offerings (homa), for regaining his lost health, in the rites of madhuparka, and on fulfilment of desire (karma-siddhi)."

2. Manu-smṛti 3.3 :

\[
\text{तै प्रतितं स्वच्छमण्म श्रमात्यहर पितुः: ||}
\text{श्रवणितं रत आसिनमार्दितमाः गव्या ||}
\]

"Being justly applauded for his strict performance of his duty, and having received from his natural or spiritual father the sacred gift of the Vedas, let him on an elegant bed, decked with a garland of flowers, and let his father honour him before his nuptials with the present of a cow according to the Madhuparka rite." (Translated by Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra in ‘Beef in Ancient India’)

Manu-smṛti 3.119, 120 prescribes that ordained person who has finished his studies should be honoured by madhuparka and Manu-smṛti 3.3 prescribes that a cow should be gifted to such an ordained one; and in the succeeding stanzas he has been permitted to marry an auspicious girl. It is clear from this that an ordained brāhmaṇa should first be honoured with madhuparka along with an offer of a cow. Probably its reason is that one who has been physically weakened by the hard labours of studies and by performing the strict duties of a
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brahmaceri should increase his vigour and regain his health by drinking cow's milk before marriage so that he may be able to carry on with married life without adverse effect.

3. The following sūtras of the Apastamba-dharma-sūtra 2.4.8 are also indicative of the offering or gifting of a cow:

(i) गोमुखपक्षां बेदायत्याय:
   "One who studies the Vedas is eligible to a cow and madhuparka." (5)

(ii) आचायायस्तिवेले क्षेत्रवान राज हिति परिसंस्कर्तौपतिष्यांस्या
   गोमुखपक्षसंवच—
   "A teacher, priest, father-in-law, king—if they come once a year they should be offered a cow and madhuparka."

Immediately after these sūtras follows the enumeration of the ingredients of madhuparka:

शिष्म मधुस्तूर्त मधुपक्ष: पत्रो च मधुसंस्कृतम् | बमाविक्षुद्धम ||
If the sense of a 'cow' would have been its beef, then it would have surely been included in the enumeration of ingredients. Evidently therefore, only the gifting of a cow is desired in these sūtras.

Historical Examples of the Gift of a Cow with Madhuparka

Let us now look into the historical examples of madhuparka, wherein only the gift of a cow is mentioned and not serving its beef after immediate slaughter.

Vālmikiya Rāmāyana:

(a) When Śri Rāma went to Bharadvāja Muni, he (Bharadvāja Muni) gave a reception to Śri Rāma by offering madhuparka and a cow in gift.

तथं तद्व च भवन्त श्रुत्य राजसूत्रस्य धीमत: ।
बप्पवत्र धमित्सा गामथुख्मुखः ततः ॥
(Ayodhya-kānda 54.17)

(b) Pious Bharadvāja Muni after hearing highly intellects Prince Śri Rāma, offered him water for washing feet and hands and then offered arghya (madhuparka) and also a cow in gift.

(b) On the arrival of Mahārṣi Agastya and others Lord Śri Rāma also offered them madhuparka in reception along with a cow in gift.

इतर भ्रात्राय चाचाचाचार च चिन्तामणितः।
पारित्थायन्तिर्भर्तो गम निशेष च साठि ॥
(Uttara-kānda 1.13)

meaning—On arrival of those great sages, Śri Rāma Candra got up and stood before them with folded hands and then worshipped them with high esteem by offering water for washing their feet and hands and by offering arghya (madhuparka) and a cow in gift to each of them.

Mahābhārata:

(a) When Śri Nārada presented himself in the assembly of King Yudhishṭhira, the King received him with madhuparka rite and with the gift of a cow.

गान वेदमधुपक्ष च सम्प्रदायादिवेश च।
अवेयात्सक लशेष स्वाम्भासितं धार्मिकं ॥
(Sabhā-parva 5.15)

meaning—The king, conversant with religious observances & duties, worshipped them in the prescribed manner by offering water (for washing feet and hands), madhuparka and a cow in gift and pleased them by fulfilling all their desires.

(b) When Lord Śri Kṛṣṇa arrived in the assembly of Kauravas, a cow was gifted to Him in His reception by madhuparka rites:

अश्य गाम मधुपक्ष च जज्ञायते ।
उपजह्वयाशिवाय च तत्तादप्रविषयः ॥
(Udyoga-parva 80.199)
meaning—The priests of Dhrtarāstra presented water, madhuparka and a high breed cow for the receipt of Bhagavān Janārdana.

(c) When Lord Śri Kṛṣṇa came to Duryodhana’s place, there too the gift of a cow with madhuparka is mentioned:

ततो गां मधुपरकं बायुद्धं जनानिने।
निशिर्वामास तदा गृहाँ राज्यं च कौरिये॥

(Udyoga-parva 91.9,10)

meaning—Kururāja (Duryodhana) offered water, madhuparka, cow and his palace and kingdom on the occasion.

Srimad-Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa:

(a) When Akrūra arrived in Brajā, Lord Kṛṣṇa received him with madhuparka rite and presented a cow in gift.

पुरुष्यां स्वागते तथे निबद्ध च बराहसमु।
प्रकाश्य विचित्रविना पादी मधुपरकोहिष्ठमहर्ष्ट॥
निबद्ध गां वातितिये संवाह श्रान्तमाह्र॥
अन्न वेदाङ्गं मेभे अध्योपास्तत्र विषमु॥

(Srimad-Bhāgavata 10.38.38-39)

meaning—Then, enquiring about his safe arrival and giving him an excellent seat, Balarāma washed his feet with due ceremony and fetched (for him) an offering called madhuparka (consisting of honey, clarified butter and curds). Again, bestowing on the guest a cow and massaging him, weary as he was, the almighty Lord respectfully and with (great) reverence brought (for him) pure food endowed with manifold excellences.

(b) When Kaurava honoured Balarāma with madhuparka rite, there too, a cow was presented.

Is Beef Possible in Madhuparka?

Historical Examples of Gift of a Cow

ततो संगम यथान्तरं गायाप्रति च स्वरूपदन।
नेवाय तत्रतमाक्षा: प्रणमम् शिरसा वल्मु॥

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.68.19)

meaning—They received Balarāma with due honours and offered Him arghya and a cow; and such of them as knew His greatness saluted Him with their heads (bent low).

(c) When Sudāma visited Dvārakā, the reception to him included, the gift of a cow, even though reception by madhuparka rites is not clearly specified:

धूपः सुरसिन्धुं प्रतिपालपतिसु।
अर्च्छावशेष नामव्रतु गां च स्थायततायं॥

(Srimad-Bhāgavata 10.80.22)

meaning—Having joyfully worshipped His friend with scented fumes and rows of lights, and offering him betel-leaf seasoned with catechu, lime, areca-nut parings and cloves etc. and a cow, the Lord greeted the Brāhmaṇa with sweet words.

(d) On his arrival at the place of Bahulāśva in Janakaṇura, when Lord Kṛṣṇa was given a reception with madhuparka rite, gift of a cow is very explicit:

लक्ष्मायामवरकुष्ठद्वारस्यायणः॥

(Srimad-Bhāgavata 10.86.29)

meaning—King Bahulāśva sprinkled that all-purifying water on his head and on his relatives and worshipped the Lord as well as the divine sages by offering them sandal-paste, flowers, textiles, ornaments, scented fumes, lights, oblations of water, cow and oxen.
Brahma-vaiivarta-purana, Sri Krishna Janma-khand:

(a) On the arrival of Garg Muni at the name-giving ceremony at Nanda Bhavan, he was offered cow alongwith madhuparka. (13.10)

(b) When Uddhava reached Vraevana and came to the house of Nanda, then Yasodha and Rohini welcomed him with madhuparka alongwith the offering of a cow. (92.13)

(c) When Garga went to Vasudeva, then he (Vasudeva) honoured him with madhuparka and the offering of a cow. (99.4)

(d) When Lord Krishna went to the Great Sage Sandipani for studies, then the Sage honoured him with madhuparka and a cow. (102.4)

(e) King Bhismaka offered madhuparka and a cow in honour of Lord Krishna. (107.93)

Several similar examples can be found in the other Puranas. But there is not a single instance, wherein beef or any other kind of meat

Is Beef Possible in Madhuparka?
Avalaya-Grihya-Sutra

Pandurang Vaman Kane in his book ‘History of Dharmastra’ Vol. II, Part I, Chapter 10, page 543, lines 22-23 says——‘the procedure of madhuparka is set out in the Avalaya-Grihya-sutra 124’, which is correct. In the ingredients of madhuparka it prescribes a mixture of curd and honey and if honey is not available then ghee can be mixed. This has been described before. There is no difference of opinion regarding the subsequent rites described and in their interpretation. After partaking of madhuparka and rinsing the mouth with sipping water, the subsequent rites are described by Panduranga Vaman Kane as follows on page 545, lines 3-8:

“When he has sipped water, they announce to him the cow. Having muttered the words ‘destroyed is my sin, my sin is destroyed’, he says ‘Om, do it’, if he desired to have the cow killed; if he is desirous of letting her go, he mutters the verse (Rig VIII, 101, 15) the mother of Rudras and daughter of Vasus and says ‘let her go’.

The original sutras are:

Aavatokraya gaa bhaavate || 23 ||
Hato me pravma me hata haiti aapitaan ksatetra kararitam || 24 ||

Its simple, straight-forward and word-to-word meaning is:

“‘Aavatokraya (When the mouth has been rinsed with sipping water) gaa bhaavate (a cow is gifted), me (my) pravma (sin) hata (is destroyed) haiti (thus) aapitaan (uttering) (pronouncing Om) ksatetra (thus he says) ksatetra (do it) kararitam, (if he wants to get it done).
In the contents of Aśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra with the commentary of Garga Narayana published in 1893 by Jivanand Vidyasagar, No. 2, Ramanath Mazumdar Street, Calcutta, the heading of this 23rd sūtra has been given as आक्षेपविद्यायः गीतः मात्र, which means 'gift of cow after rinsing mouth with sipping water', which has been interpreted by Pandurang Vaman Kane as 'they announce to him the cow'.

The meaning of the word kuruta (कुरुत) in the 24th sūtra has been taken by Pandurang Vaman Kane as 'do it' that is 'perform the duty that should be done' but it is not understandable wherefrom he has inserted later on 'if he desires to have it killed'. When the madhuparka has been taken, the mouth has been purified with sipping water, and the cow has been announced for gift, then the reply comes: 'I accept it preceded by Om, the rite of gift be performed, and if it is not acceptable then the following sūtra prescribes that the mantra of Rgveda VIII.101.15 should be pronounced:

माता गदाणि दुधिता वस्मानम्—हि जिता जिंगोस्मुर्जनेतुस्यश्च ॥२॥

"He mutters: 'The mother of Rudras and the daughter of Vasus' and says: 'Let her go' (to her place as I will not take her along). This mantra is also not suited to this context. We shall discuss it later. The sense 'if he desires to have the cow killed' is nowhere in the original sūtra. It is understandable that the cow was gifted after all the rites of welcome were effected i.e. offering of water for washing the feet, offering scented water for cleaning hands, offering and acceptance of madhuparka, and the purification of mouth with sipping water but it is hard even to imagine her slaughter.

After it, Pandurang Vaman Kane writes on page 545, lines 8-9: 'Let the madhuparka not be without flesh', which seems to be the meaning of the last sūtra of Aśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra 1.24.

नामांको मुद्धको भवति भवति ॥२॥

*Has the prescriptions of Scriptures regarding it under the heading 'Gift of a Cow in Madhuparka'.

In the present day printed texts, this sūtra is found which is interpreted by the supporters of meat-eaters as Madhuparka is not devoid of flesh. The sandhi can be resolved in two ways, giving two interpretations: (1) Madhuparka is never devoid of flesh; and (2) Madhuparka is never with flesh, which will be discussed in details later on. ‘Madhuparka is never devoid of flesh’ is not relevant.

In the madhuparka rite, curd and honey or curd and ghee have been prescribed as its ingredients and there is not even an inkling of flesh. After the rite of madhuparka has been completed, which means that after the mouth has been rinsed with sipping water taking madhuparka and if then the guest mutters Om and says 'kill it' and the madhuparka is not without flesh—these things can neither be reconciled because of the sequence of their occurrence and nor are they correct as a matter of principle. If flesh would have been essential in madhuparka, then it would have been mentioned among the ingredients of madhuparka and the announcement of the offering of the cow would have been before the offering and acceptance of madhuparka and if the guest would have had a longing for madhuparka with flesh, he would have muttered Om and said 'do (kill) it' before accepting madhuparka. Then madhuparka would have been prepared, offered, accepted and the mouth rinsed with sipping water. Therefore, it is certain that the announcement of the offering of cow is only for gift and if the guest does not like to take along the cow, he can say 'let her go to her place, I will not take her'. It is impossible to fancy the presence of flesh in madhuparka, because when a guest who has already arrived at one's door has to be honoured, there is not so much scope of time that a cow be slaughtered, her flesh extracted and then be cooked. Therefore, the fancy that Madhuparka is never without meat is entirely unjustified and improper. It cannot be conceded that such a point would not have occurred to a jurist of the stature of Pandurang Vaman Kane (M.A., L.L.M., Advocate). It is a different thing that he should knowingly close his eyes to it with some other end in view and that he should try to conceal it even from other people for the attainment of his objective.
Let us now consider Āśvalāyana-grhīya-sūtra 1.24.25 which is incongruent and which we had promised to discuss later on:

माता स्त्राणों दुहिता वस्त्रायम् इति अचैतवेषुवनस्तिस्तुन्द्रयामि ||

It means that the leaving or taking away of the cow may be permitted by uttering the mantra ‘माता रुद्राधिनि’ . This is the Rgveda mantra VIII.101.15 and its full text is as follows:

माता स्त्राणों दुहिता मयो दुहिता वस्त्रायम्यः नांकिम्।
प्र नु वोक्ष विबिक्षिते जनाय मा गमनानम् अदिति चिनित्॥

Its word-to-word meaning is:

स्त्राणा माता (mother of the brave Maruts who make the enemies wail), दुहिता (the daughter of Vasus), आदिवत्वा स्वस्ता (sister of the sons of Aditi) and अदिति नांकिम् (the focal point of ambrosia is the cow, therefore) विबिक्षिते जनाय (to the wise man) प्र नु (I announce) मा चिनित् (do not kill) अनाय अदिति मा (the innocent and inviolable cow). Here aditi has double meaning—one which has been given above and the other अदिति i.e., one who produces consumables like milk, curd, butter ghee etc. Both the meanings are appropriate and acceptable. मा गमनान (do not kill the cow—this is injunction of the Veda contained in this mantra.


How impossible a conjecture it is and in total contradiction to the injunction of the above Vedic mantra that after the completion of the rites of madhuparka, the guest by muttering the sacred Om should say: do it (kill it) if he (the honoured guest, who has been offered madhuparka and who has completed the madhuparka ceremony) desires to have the cow killed. Then imagine how improbable it is to mention that नामांको सूघिकोण्ड माति (the madhuparka is never without meat) when the madhuparka rites have been completed without meat.

Besides the above reasons, another point deserves consideration, i.e., when the madhuparka rites have been completed, is it desirable to feed uncooked meat of an instantaneously slaughtered cow to the guest? Even if it is accepted that the cow is killed then and there and that uncooked flesh is served, then has it to be enquired from an honoured guest whether he will eat a certain thing or not? Whatever is the best, is put before an honoured guest and it is up to him to accept it if he so desires or to leave it if he does not relish it.

Furthermore, even at present, people who take meat, never like the heinous act of slaughtering an animal in their presence. Slaughtering is done only where they cannot witness it and hence meat comes for the consumption of these meat-eating people belonging to a civilised society. Then how can one imagine something contradictory to this generality and that too about the great saints and sages dwelling in the forests?

Therefore, if the meaning of Āśvalāyana-grhīya-sūtra 1.24.26 नामांको सूघिकोण्ड माति be taken as ‘there is no madhuparka without animal flesh’, then it will be contrary to the context and because of its being unsuitable, it can never be relevant to the sense. Therefore, it will have to be accepted as an interpolation. Other interpretations of this sūtra are given below:

1. नामांको सूघिकोण्ड माति the sandhi of नामांको can also be resolved as न + आमांको. By resolution in this manner, the prefix आ in आमांको may be taken in the following sense according to Amarakosh 3.3.239:

आर्कियोपत्र-परिवाच्यो सीमायो धातुयोगे। इसका विकल्प वाच्यो अवश्य अवश्य विवाच्यो धातुयोगे।

It means that the prefix आ is used in the senses of little, pervading, limitation and addition to the root.

The meaning of आमांको of नामांको सूघिकोण्ड माति will be ‘pervaded with flesh’ and its sense comes to ‘containing flesh’ only. The whole sūtra will mean सूघिकोण्ड आमांको माति madhuparka is not pervaded with—not containing i.e., devoid of flesh.
This clarifies and removes any misapprehension that the cow was brought for killing. So it is explicitly pointed out that *madhuparka* is never with meat. The bringing in of the cow is not for slaughter, but for offering or giving away. If the guest desires to take away the gifted cow he says ‘Om, do it’ and if he does not want to take her away, he says ‘let her go’.

2. Pandit Dinanath Sastri, in his book ‘Sanatana-Dharmāloka’ Vol. 6, pages 337-338, has interpreted the word *māhāsa* (माहस) in relation to *madhuparka* as under :

> “The above-stated ingredients of *madhuparka* should be (माल) i.e. rich in fats, nourishing and should not be devoid of substance. To the word *māhāsa* (माहस), has been suffixed in accordance with धनाथयुष्म (Aṣṭādhyāyī 5.2.127) in the sense of ‘with, together’ and it gives the meaning of ‘rich in fats’.

This meaning is also relevant to the present context. In practice it means that the milk and curd used in *madhuparka* should not be that from which butter or cream has been extracted. Milk or curd from which butter, cream has been extracted will neither be rich in fats, nor delicious and tasty, nor well nourishing, rather it will be devoid of substance. Only good things should be used for an honoured guest and not things devoid of substance.

3. Pandit Madhavacharya Sastri has interpreted the word *māhāsa* (माहस) on page 39 of the ‘Removal of Doubts’ Number (राजनीतिक अन्तः) of his monthly magazine ‘Lokāloka’ (published by Madhava Pustakalaya, Dharmadham, Kamla Nagar, Delhi-7). There he says that in the context of *madhuparka*, *māhāsa* (माहस) means the fleshy part of fruits, kernels of dry fruits like almonds etc., fresh newly milked warm milk, or substantial milk-products thickened by boiling and sweetened like चवकी, लोया, तिलर, etc. This meaning is also not irrelevant as it is not contradictory to principles. Incongruence, if any, is that fruits, etc. are not mentioned anywhere in the ingredients of *madhuparka*, but curd and milk do figure among the ingredients and newly-milked fresh warm milk of a cow is desirable to remove the fatigue of the honoured guest.

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These discussions make it clear that there is no place even for any surmise of animal-flesh in *madhuparka*.

**Pāraskara-Gṛhya-Sūtra**

In continuance of the aforesaid description of the rites, the cow is mentioned only after *madhuparka* has been taken and the mouth has been purified with sipping water. Mention of a cow after the *madhuparka* has been taken, clearly indicates that there is no possibility of beef in *madhuparka*.

Mr. E. W. Hopkins writes about *madhuparka* in the “Cambridge History of India” Vol. I Chapter 10, page 208 (second edition, 1962, published by S. Chand & Co., Delhi) :

> “But it is an old rite of hospitality to kill a cow for a guest and as a matter of form, each honoured guest is actually offered a cow.”

Mr. E. W. Hopkins further continues :

> “The host says to the guest, holding the knife ready to slay the cow that he has the cow for him but the guest is directed to say—

> “Mother of Rudras, daughter of Vasus, sister of Adityas, Navel of immortality (is she), do not kill the guiltless cow; she is (earth itself), Aditi the goddess.” I speak to them that understand.

He adds, “My sin has been killed and that of so and so, let her go and eat grass.” But if he really wants to have her eaten, he says, “I kill my sin and the sin of so and so, (in killing her);” and though in many cases, the offer of the cow is thus plainly a formal piece of etiquette, yet the offering to the guest was not complete without flesh of some sort; and it is clear from the formulas, any of the worthiest guests might demand cow’s death.”

Such a statement seems to be based on Pāraskara-grhya-sūtra 1.3.26 which reads :

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**वाचात्मकाय शास्मावध शैलिति ब्रह्म**

It means that after the guest has taken *madhuparka* and rinsed his mouth with sipping water, holding the *ādau* (आदात) the host says...
Is Beef Possible in Madhuparka?

Pāraskara-Gṛhya-Sūtra

The verbal noun from the root jās (जास) has the form जास in the accusative singular which means 'to an object of controlling'. With reference to one whom the Government has sentenced to death, the meaning of the word जास can be taken as a knife or a sword, but here the meaning 'knife' or 'sword' does not fit in.

The meaning of Pāraskara-gṛhya-sūtra 1.3:

इसाधि। मधुपर्का दनं दनित रुपर्का दनित्यारामायानस्य नाकिना।

which has already been considered under the heading 'Āśvalyānaga-grhya-sūtra'. Only the 28th sūtra is slightly different, whose simple and straightforward meaning is given hereunder for the information of our readers, wherein the mention of ‘leaving the cow for grazing’ also proves that the cow was meant for gifting. The meaning of 28th sūtra is:

(अधि वधि) (िसिसूहे) he desires to leave her (िरवान) he should say—(मार्ग च) mine and (अमृत च) his i.e. host’s (िरवान) has ended, (अंत उक्तान) yes, leave her. (िरवान अन्त) let her graze.

The meaning of नामां नामां अर्घ्यं स्नानं

(1) न तु पुः अर्मानौ अर्घ्यं स्नानं.

(2) न तु पुः अर्मानौ अर्घ्यं स्नानं.
The meaning in the first case is: 'Madhuparka (आद्यः) never devoid of flesh (अमांस:)', while in the second case the meaning is: 'Madhuparka (आद्यः) never contains flesh (अमांस).'

The coherence and incoherence of both these renderings together with the meaning of māṅsa (मांस) as fleshy fruit have been discussed under Āśvalāyana-grhya-sūtra.

Vasistha-Dharma-Sūtra, Śāṅkhāyana-Grhya-Sūtra

Pandurang Vaman Kane writes in his 'History of Dharmásāstra', Vol. 2, Part II, Chapter 22, 'Bhojana and Flesh-eating', on page 778, lines 22-24:

"Manu (V. 27-44) at first contains a permission to kill animals only in Madhuparka, in sacrifice (yajña) and in rites for gods and men and on no other occasion. This is same as Vasiṣṭha IV.6 Viṣṇu-dharma-sūtra 51.64, Śāṅkhāyana-grhya-sūtra II.16.1, (Śāṅkhāyana-grhya-sūtra reads सोमे for वर्ष)."

In the extant Manu-smṛti, meat in madhuparka has been mentioned only in 5.41 which has been considered under the heading "Manu-smṛti." The very same text is also found in the extant Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra (Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sāstra or Vasiṣṭha-smṛti) 4.6 and in Śāṅkhāyana-grhya-sūtra 2.16.1:

मुक्यक्रोऽथ यवः न हित्वात्विद्विधवितमसः
अविभवाय एवं हित्याराध्यमायनविदमः

It has not been separately and specifically prescribed in the Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra or the Śāṅkhāyana-grhya-sūtra that animal-slaughter is permitted in madhuparka, yajña and rites of the manes and gods and nowhere else; but it has been quoted in passing as an opinion of Manu.

As has been proved under the heading 'Manu-smṛti', the above-mentioned stanza cannot be that of the Manu-smṛti 5.41. Moreover an independent prescription of this intent is found nowhere else in the Manu-smṛti. Therefore, it is also proved that the citing of such a stanza from the Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra or Śāṅkhāyana-grhya-sūtra or from another scriptural text by Pandurang Vaman Kane is not genuine but imaginary and spurious, specially when such a specific prescription is not available elsewhere in the Manu-smṛti.

In the fourth chapter of the Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra, the seventh stanza after the sixth one reads:

नागवा प्राणिनां हिवा मांसमुत्पश्चते क्षयितः
न व वृत्तिवर्ण: स्वार्थंतत्सामायाने क्रयः

This stanza tallies with Manu-smṛti 5.48: only the fourth quartet differs. Here it is तत्सामाय: कोऽहुः: which means that 'violence in a yajña is considered non-violence,' while the Manu-smṛti reads तत्सामाय: विवर्जितं which means 'therefore, one should avoid meat.' The text of this stanza of the Manu-smṛti is valid by virtue of its being in conformity with the Vedas; and the reading of Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra is invalid being against the Vedas.

Baudhāyana-Grhya-Sūtra

Pandurang Vaman Kane, in his book 'History of Dharmāsāstra', Vol. 2 Part I, chapter 10, Madhuparka & other Usages' page 545, lines 32-37, writes:

"The Baudhāyana-grhya-sūtra says (I.2.51-54) that when the cow is let off, the flesh of a goat or ram may be offered, or some forest flesh (of a deer etc.) may be offered, as there can be no madhuparka without flesh or if one is unable to offer flesh, one may cook ground grain."

The original reading of these Śūtras is as under:

नमक्षयोऽष्टयां श्रेप्तं बास्तवस्ते ॥११॥
अरस्वयं वा मांसमुत्पश्चते ॥१२॥
न त्वासमायः स्वार्थं तत्सामायाने ॥१३॥
अश्च रत्नः शरां दशिकाने ॥१४॥

Is Beef Possible in Madhuparka?
Baudhāyana-Grhya-Sūtra
According to the Baudhāyana-grhyā-sūtra, honey, curd, milk, ghee and water—only these five are the ingredients of madhuparka. It has been discussed already that meat has not been mentioned in the ingredients of madhuparka, neither there is any scope for serving meat after slaughtering an animal within the time for the rites of welcoming a guest (it takes even more time in bringing the meat of a wild animal, like deer etc. after hunting it), and nor is meat desirable according to the principle. Therefore, the contention that madhuparka is not without meat is incorrect and unfounded. If there can be no madhuparka without meat, then why a prescription of offering 'cooked ground grain'? This affirms that the contention that madhuparka cannot be without meat is not true.

Mānava-Gṛhya-Sūtra

Pandurang Vaman Kane, in his 'History of Dharma-śāstra' Vol. 2, part I, chapter 10, 'Madhuparka & other Usages', page 545, lines 28-31, writes:

"Mānava-grhyā-sūtra 19.2.2 says that the Veda declares that the Madhuparka must not be without flesh and so it recommends that if the cow is let loose, goat's meat or Pāyasa (rice cooked in milk) may be offered."

The original sūtra reads:

पशुं पायसं वा कार्येषु नामांसो मधुपक्षम हि हत्वा हि:

Shri Bhimsen Sharma, editor of the monthly 'Brāhmaṇa-sarvasva' (published by Satyavrata Sharma Dwivedi, printed by Veda Prakashara Press, available from Sanatana Dharma Pustakalaya, Etawah, pages 19-20) has translated it into Hindi, which can be rendered into English as follows:

"One should offer madhuparka with milk-rice pudding (pāyasa) which is symbolic of cattle; as milk is a part or product of cattle, they are casually present therein. It is written in Śruti that madhuparka is not without meat, so when milk-rice pudding has been prepared and milk being part of cattle, words of the Śruti are fulfilled."

Under the heading 'Madhuparka in the Vedas' on page 94 it has already been pointed out that according to Pandit Shripad Damedar Satavalekar even the word madhuparka is not found in the Vedas. The author or commentator of Mānava-grhyā-sūtra has not quoted any Vedic mantra; therefore, it is not a fact that the Vedas mention that there is no madhuparka without meat. If māhātā (माहात्मा) is interpreted to be a pudding (पायस) prepared by admixing milk obtained from cattle and rice, then this will not be acceptable to the propagators of meat and if they accept it then we have no objection because it involves no violence. Even in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.7.1.3 meat (māhātā) has been termed paramānā (paramānā) and according to Amarakosa 2.7.24 paramānā (paramānā) is a synonym of pāyasa (पायस) or a pudding of milk and rice with sugar added to it (दास्यमावा मधुपायस). But it takes time in preparing a milk-rice pudding (pāyasa). Such a scope of time does not exist in the madhuparka rites; and therefore, it seems more appropriate that instead of milk-rice pudding (pāyasa) fresh warm milk was served. In the original text of the Mānava-grhyā-sūtra, there is no mention of the meat of a he-goat as alleged by Pandurang Vaman Kane, and wherefrom he got this he alone knows.

Manu-Smṛti

On page 6 of his afore-mentioned 'Beef in Ancient India' Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra mentions:

"Being justly applauded for his strict performance of his duty, and having received from his natural or spiritual father the sacred gift of the Vedas, let him on an elegant bed, decked with a garland of flowers, and let his father honour him, before his nuptials, with the present of a cow, according to the madhuparka rite."

There is no difference of opinion here. Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra writes further:

"In a subsequent passage (Manu III.119-120) he (Manu) recommends the madhuparka or the 'honeyed meal' with
beef for the reception of kings and other great dignitaries." 

The stanzas of Manu-smṛti (3.119-120) read:

राजा च अभिव्यक्ति कियो दोषम यज्ञिणोः।
सत्तायां जनान्य न लघु भीतरः।

In the above first stanza it has been said that a king, priest, graduate teacher, son-in-law, father-in-law and maternal uncle should be honoured by madhuparka if they come once a year. In the second stanza it has been said that a king and a scholar of Vedas should be honoured by madhuparka whenever they are present at the performance of yajña. In both these stanzas honouring by madhuparka has been mentioned, but there is no inking of beef anywhere in them. We are at a loss to understand wherefrom Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra or others, whoever they may be, scent beef in these stanza while citing them.

On page 29 of the same book, Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra writes:

"Āśvalāyana emphatically ordains that no Madhuparka should be celebrated without flesh."

This has already been discussed at length under the heading 'Ingredients of Madhuparka', 'Practicability of Beef in Reception of Guest with Madhuparka' and 'Āśvalāyana-grhyā-sūtra'.

Pandurang Vaman Kane writes in his 'History of Dharma-sāstra', Vol. 2, Part 2, Chapter 22 'Bhojana and Flesh-eating':

"Manu (V.41) contains a permission to kill animals only in madhuparka and in sacrifice (yajña) and rites for gods and manes and no other occasions."

The text of the above-mentioned stanza in the Manu-smṛti editions available now-a-days reads:

It seems that the above quoted stanza is the basis for the following attribution in the Cambridge History of India, Vol. I Chapter X (by E. W. Hopkins), page 208, (2nd edition of 1962, published by S. Chand & Co., Delhi):

"The general rule in this regard is that attributed to Manu— "Animals may be killed (so said Manu) at the Madhuparka and soma sacrifice (yajña) and at the rites for manes and gods."

As proved on the basis of arguments given above, this stanza should not belong to the Manu-smṛti and hence this statement is also baseless.

The aforesaid stanza 5.41 of the Manu-smṛti is not authentic as is proved by the statement made by Bhīma-pitāmaha while preaching duties to Mahārāja Yudhīśhṭira. The stanza reads as follows in the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata:

श्वेतकथ्यमहाकारापि विशिष्टतिः सूर्यविष्णुः।
कामकारानि विशिष्टतिः संविष्णुः।

(Gitapress 265.5 ; Bhandarkar 207.31)
meaning—Holy Manu has prescribed ahimsā (non-violence) only in all performances. Out of their selfish desires, i.e. induced by the desire of eating meat and pretending that slaying of animals in yajña is not ahimsā (violence), people slaughter animals on the outer altar of the yajña.

In the same fifth Chapter of Manu-smṛti, the 27th stanza reads:

प्राक्तिकः महावेंमांसं वर्णाणाः व कामायनः ।
यथाविष्कृतं नियुक्तमुः प्राणामर्धावात्ये ||

Its correct word-to-word meaning in prose order is as under:

(प्राणामय अत्रवे) At the time of impending death (पुंसै) only (i.e. only when death is imminent and under no other circumstance), (च) and (हस्तारामना कामायना) at the desire of—by the permission of Brahmanas (i.e. the Brahmanas feel that it is essential for the person to live, then only), (नियुक्त) directed (स्वाविष्कृत) according to the rites, (धारित) one may take (मनुष्य) meat (प्राक्तिक) which has been sanctified (but under no other circumstance or in no other way).

It is clear that meat can be taken by those, whose death is imminent and who do not want to give up life, as on the non-availability of cereals during famine or in some fatal disease when no other cure is possible, but in no other circumstances is the taking of meat prescribed. According to this prescription of Manu also, meat is not possible in Madhopurka.

The following stanzas are also from the fifth Chapter of Manu-smṛti:

यो हिस्तावति मूर्तानि हिनस्तायस्यामुच्चास्या ।
स जीवस्य मुत्ति व जल्वितुस्तुमाप्ते ||

"He who slays innocuous beings with the intention of one's own pleasure, attains happiness neither in this world nor in the world hereafter." (45)

यो कम्यतवचसाक्षी क्रियानि न विकारः ।
स सर्वत्र हिन्द्रेण्: सुकुम्रस्यामस्तुपृति ||

"He who does not seek to keep the animals under detention, to slay or to cause suffering to them, and who desires the good of all, attains endless bliss." (46)

यो हितयस्य यथक्षुरे चैव कारति यथा ।
तरास्ते यथाविषयते यो हिषात् न किंचित् ||

"He who does not injure or slay anyone, whatever he wants, whatever he thinks of, whatsoever he fixes his mind on, he attains all that without any effort." (47)

नात्तवा प्राणायार्को हिस्त वाङ्करपर्वतवते किंचित् ।
न व प्राणिवाचः स्पर्शस्नामां श्रवणेऽविकेत्ये ||

"Flesh can never be obtained without slaughtering a living creature. As animal-slaughter cannot cause attainment of heaven, so one should abstain from meat." (48)

समुस्पत्ति व मांसस्य वय्यवही न देहिनाम् ।
प्रस्रीकृतं नित्येऽस्मांस्या महाश्चात् ||

"One should abstain from eating all kinds of flesh having well considered the origin of flesh and the cruelty of fettering and slaying animals." (49)

न महाश्चात् यो मांसस्य विन्दं हिंसा पिण्यायतः ।
स ठोके प्रयत्नां याति स्वाधिष्ठन्ता न तपोऽस्ते ||

"(ए) He who (न महाश्चात्) does not eat (मांसस्य) meat (हिंसा) disregarding (विन्द) the rule of (what is edible and what is not) like a (पिण्यात्) pilica, that is, a person who does not follow the pilicas who disregard all the rules of what is to be
eaten and what is not to be eaten. (से) he (से: यात्रा यात्रा) becomes
dear (से: के) to all (से) and (ने) he is not (से: बैलों) tormented
(अट्ठार्थ) by diseases. (50)

अभ्यस्ता विशिष्टता निवस्ता कविकरी।
संकल्पर बोधात न जानकर यहाँ: 115.31।

"He who permits slaughter, he who cuts it into bits, he who kills
it, he who buys or sells it, he who cooks it, he who serves it, and
he who eats it—all these are slayers (butchers)." (51)

प्रेयाणं धारणं यो यथेष्ठ शर्म समा।
पानांति न बाह्यकरण: पुष्पकेतं समु: 115.4।

"He who performs an Āsavadha yajña annually during a hundred
years and he who does not eat meat altogether, both obtain
the similar reward for their respective merits." (53)

चतुर्दशमादेपने न अभिज्ञात मृत्यु: 
वन न तत्कलबोधाति यमानप्रमित्त्वान: 115.4।

"By taking fruits and roots and the food fit for ascetics, one does
not gain the reward which is attained by entirely giving up
meat." (54)

मो स महामित्राणिषु मम मांसामुहैम्यम।
वर्तमानस्य मांसस्य प्रत्यांत मनोरीप्यः 115.5।

"Those who are ignorant of this real धर्म and, though wicked
and haughty, account themselves virtuous, kill animals without
any feeling of remorse or fear of punishment, and are devoured
by those very animals in their next birth, (Srimad Bhāgavata XL.5.14)
When venerable Nārada gave a glimpse of such retributions, King Prācinabrāhiṇi was enlightened; he gave up yajñas with violence and went away to perform penances.

How can the slaughter of animals be justified in madhuparka and in rites of the manes and gods in face of such historical truth?

Uttara-Rāma-Carita

Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra writes on page 3 of his above quoted booklet 'Beef in Ancient India':

"The passage in which Vālmiki's preparation for the reception of Vasiṣṭha is described in Uttara-Rāma-carita, is so remarkable, that I need not offer any apology to quote it entire. The scene is laid in front of hermitage of Vālmiki....."

After this he has given the running sense of that passage from the play Uttara-Rāma-Carita, which need not be quoted. Let us consider the original text itself.

Bhavabhūti's 'Uttara-Rāma-Carita' is a drama in which the sentiment of pathos (karaṇā) dominates. It relates to the renouncing of Sitā Mahārāni by Lord Śrī Rāma sometime after his coronation. The plot is not based on any ancient history but it has been supplemented by a number of fancies. It has been considered excusable to add imaginative fancies even in a historical play to augment its aesthetic appeal. But fancies which mar the aesthetic sentiment and which are contrary to the scriptures cannot be considered pardonable. The playwright sends off the preceptor Vasiṣṭha, his wife Arundhati and Kauśalyā, the mother of Śrī Rāma, to the twelve-year yajña.

the hermitage of Rāyaśrīṅga before Lord Śrī Rāma renounces Sitā Mahārāni who is pregnant, so that no elders may be present to hinder renouncing of Sitā Mahārāni. This event is not supported by any Purāṇa. This fancy can be held pardonable till here.

After about twelve years, on their return journey, they stop at the hermitage of Vālmiki.

Report of the renouncing of Sitā Mahārāni spreads like lightning in all directions. Grieved at it, King Janaka, the father of Sitā Mahārāni takes up the third āśrama of Vānaprastha and goes for penance to the forest, hermitage of Candradvīpa. At the time when Holy Vasiṣṭha, along with Arundhati and the Royal Mother Kauśalyā, reaches the hermitage of Vālmiki, King Janaka also comes there to meet his friend Vālmiki after interrupting his penances.

Sitā Mahārāni was pregnant and about to give birth before her renunciation. Readers may themselves consider how appropriate and justified is the dramatist's innovation to send away the mother-in-law, Royal Mother Kauśalyā, to a far-off place leaving behind her daughter-in-law Sitā Mahārāni in such a state; then to keep Kauśalyā there for twelve years, to deprive her of the likely pleasure at the birth of grand sons, to make all of them reside for twelve years at the hermitage of Rāyaśrīṅga even after the renouncing of Sitā Mahārāni by her husband had become known to all. It is not found possible even today in a society over-whelmed by modern civilization.

In such a situation of bereavement, the reception with beefy madhuparka by sage Vālmiki in his hermitage, Janaka refusing the beefy madhuparka and the great sage Vasiṣṭha accepting the beefy madhuparka,—can all these innovations in the plot be said to promote the sentiment of karaṇā or pathos, to further which this play has been written? If such are the imaginations of Bhavabhūti, then it hardly spells well of his genius; and if somebody has interpolated it later, then he has committed an unexcusable and heinous crime. It has also to be noted that when Lord Rāma arrives there, he has not been
welcomed with madhuparka in compliance with the injunction of the scriptures.

Even today Western oriented people will not like intoxicants or meat in such an agonising situation; then readers may themselves judge how debased and vile is the conjuring up of getting beefy madhuparka accepted by Sage Vasishtha at the sorrowful occasion of the sad renunciation of Sita Maharanhi and when her father, King Janaka, is present in that very hermitage.

Once when a lion had attacked the Nandini cow of the great sage Vasishtha, King Dilipa, an ancestor of Sri Rama, was ready to offer his life to the lion to save that cow. It is an impossible fancy that the hereditary royal preceptor of such a dynasty as of the Raghus, the great sage Vasishtha, should accept beef and that too at a time of grief and sorrow.

Because the incident is imaginary, therefore getting beefy madhuparka served to sage Vasishtha by sage Valmiki and getting it accepted, is also imaginary and unreal. Therefore, it is proved that the incident of madhuparka with beef freshly obtained by slaying a cow, in the fourth act of the Uttara-Rama-Carita is imaginary and false and it is not a historical truth.

The above incident is presented by two disciples of Valmiki as a comic interlude. Readers may themselves judge as to what is the value as to the reality of a comic. Furthermore, it has already been discussed above that there is no possibility of meat in the ingredients of madhuparka or in the madhuparka rites.

Mahavira-Carita

Further Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra tries to prove beef in madhuparka from the Mahavira-Carita of Bhabhuti. Let us now consider it too.

Bhabhuti's Mahavira-Carita is the anterior story of Lord Rama. The sage Vivasvmitra took Rama and Lakshmana for protecting his...
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faced. After some heroic utterances, Rāma goes inside for the marriage ceremony. Vasistha and Viśvāmitra try to pacify Parasurāma. Daśaratha gets ready to face Parasurāma, when his anger is not pacified. After the marriage-rites are over, Rāma comes there, defeats Parasurāma, who then goes away.

Mantharā, the maid-servant of Kaikeyī comes to Rāma with a letter of Kaikeyī from Ayodhya. In the letter, Kaikeyī reminds of two boons given to her, and in this context expresses her wish that Rāma should go in exile for fourteen years together with Lakṣmana and Sītā and that Bharata should get the throne.

Lord Rāma goes to his father Daśaratha and seeks permission to go in exile. From Janakapura itself Rāma, along with Sītā and Lakṣmana, goes to the forest leaving behind all the relatives, including Yudhājīta the brother of Kaikeyī. On the insistence of Bharata, Rāma leaves for him his golden sandals sent by Śārabhaṅga.

Bharata, after establishing the sandals of Śrī Rāma at Nandigrāma, starts following the directions of Śrī Rāma. With Lakṣmana and Sītā, Rāma reaches Dandakāranya, killing Virādha and other demons, passing through Cīrakūṭa and meeting sages on his way. Khara, Dūṣāna, Triśīra etc., 14000 demons are killed by him on the way. Jaṭāyu is wounded in an encounter with Rāvana while he is carrying away Sītā.

From the narration of Bharata's going to Nandigrāma upto here is covered by an interlude.

Rāma meets Jaṭāyu who informs him of the kidnapping of Sītā and passes away. Then comes Śrāmanā with a letter of Viṣvāmitra seeking refuge and Viṣvāmitra surrenders himself for asylum. Afterwards takes place the meeting with Bali, who challenges to encounter, in which he is killed by Rāma, leaving his kingdom etc. to Sugriva.

Is Beef Possible in Mahāpurakṣa?

Mahāvīra-Carita

"Laṅka is ablaze. Tṛjata informs Mālyavān about the death of Aksayakumāra. Kumbhaṅkarna is awakened. Battle ensues. In the fight, Laṅka becomes unconscious. Lakṣmana regains consciousness by the herb Sājñjivani. Meghanāda, Kumbhaṅkarna and others are killed. The fire-ordeal of Sītā takes place.

All this has been told in conversation in the form of an interlude.

"Lord Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmana return to Ayodhya by an aeroplane. All meet in re-union and Rāma is crowned King."

We can imagine from the above plot as to how imaginary it is and how different from the historical facts in the Purāṇas.

On page 5 of his above quoted book 'Beef in Ancient India', Rāja Rajendra Lala Mitra mentions beef in the Mahāvīra-carita:

"Vasistha, in his turn, likewise, slaughtered the 'fattened-calf' when entertaining Viśvāmitra, Janaka, Śatānanda, Jāmadagnya and other sages and friends, and in the Mahāvīra-carita, when pacifying Jāmadagnya, tempted him by saying, 'The heifer is ready for sacrifice, and the food is cooked in ghee. Thou art a learned man, come to the house of the learned; favour us (by joining in the entertainment).'

In support, the original stanza of the third act of the Mahāvīra-carita has been quoted there in a footnote:

संवर्ण्ये चतुर्स्तरी सरिष्यमन्गले प्रयत्ने।
ध्रुविद्रिहर्षानागायोद्धिः उपस्धुः॥

It seems that वसिष्ठे चतुर्स्तरी has been taken here as 'the heifer is ready for sacrifice'. Rāja Rajendra Lala Mitra has said before that Vasistha slaughtered a fattened calf to entertain Viśvāmitra, Janaka, Śatānanda, Jāmadagnya, other sages and friends. In this stanza
there is nowhere mentioned that a fattened calf was slaughtered, and in the Mahāvira-carita there is no such indication anywhere before or after this stanza. It is not clear, wherefrom Raja Rajendra Lal Mitra has brought in 'the slaughter of a fattened calf'. Later on he says 'the heifer is ready for sacrifice i.e., slaughter'. These two statements in his text, that is (1) Vasiṣṭha slaughtered the fattened calf and (2) the heifer is ready for sacrifice, that is for slaughter, are contradictory. In this way such people try to confuse simple folk by making such absurd antithetical statements.

In the above context, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra try to pacify Parasurāma, and in the original text their words are:

रष्यपूर्ववकः सपनशान्मस्त्रेयांप्रेयमप्रेयोः सखा
येन चैरिय विक्षिण बलुमति कीर्तिन शानकनिः
मधुपक् वधयस्त मित्रां अवघभवेत्:।
सोंचं त्वं तन्यशिष्यं परिष्टो राजा श्रम याते॥
तविदर्म शुक्लकलहानं हि वाचस्

"The aged King Dāsaratha, who has become a friend of Indra by performing yajñās, by constructing temples and by vanquishing enemies, who has become famous on earth as a good King like the divine King Indra in heaven, with whom we are allied and who is a scion of the Solar Race, moved by affection for his son, he requests you to be calm. So give up this futile quarrel."

We have already discussed the stanza cited by Raja Rajendra Lal Mitra in support of his contention in a footnote of his book. Neither is there any mention in the Mahāvira-carita that Vasiṣṭha slaughtered a fattened calf for Viśvāmitra. Janaka, Satānanda, Jigmėṣa, other sages and friends, nor is there any mention of the entertainment of them all by Vasiṣṭha.

The above quoted संस्कृती etc. (Mahāvira-carita 3.2) occurs just after उद्विद्वितिया् etc. (Mahāvira-carita 3.1) which is being addressed by Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra to 'Jāmadagnya Parasurāma. Earlier King Janaka has expressed:—

ऋनिष्यमतितिविद्वन्द्वः पायामधुपक्त
तदु व मधुपक्त: कल्याणतः चतुष्प्रयां।१ (२.४४)

That is, if he is a rṣi (sage), he may be offered a seat, pāḍya (water for washing his feet) and arghya (water for cleaning hands) and be honoured by offering madhuparka, fit for a śrotriya. The expression samijnayate vatsatari 'संज्ञायते व वस्तरायी' etc, is in the context of honouring with madhuparka rite. It has already been discussed and proved that there is no possibility of any kind of animal flesh in madhuparka. Prescription of the gift of a cow with madhuparka is also indicated in the scriptures. In the phrase referred to samijnayate (संज्ञायते) is a word which may mean violence (हिंसा) as well as non-violence (a-hiṃsa). In the Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Monier-Williams, page 1133, column 3, samijnapaṇa is interpreted as 'causing agreement or harmony; killing a sacrificial animal'. In Atharva-veda 6.74.1-2 samijnapaṇa has the former meaning:

स व पुष्यतात तन्वं सं मनोतिस समुः वत॥
सं चोर्य व्रजप्रणयतिमया सं वो अजीमान्त॥
संधव्यं वो मनसंपिर्यं संधव्यं हृद॥
अयो भगवद् वर्ध्यं तेन संध्वप्रम् व॥

Ralph T. H. Griffith, in his translation of the Hymns of the Atharva-veda, published by Master Khelari Lal & Sons, Varanasi, third edition (1962, page 285) has translated these mantras as follows:—

"Close gathered be your bodies:
be your minds and vows in unison."

Here present Brahmanspati and Bhaga have assembled you.
Let there be union of your minds,
let there be union of your hearts:
All that is troubled in your lot with this
I mend and harmonize."
Supporters of beef-eating interpret the words ‘saṃñapya vatsatār’ as ‘the heifer is ready for sacrifice’. As there is neither gomeda as another similar yajña performance, interpreting ‘saṃñapya’ as ‘killing a sacrificial animal’ is not possible according to Monier-Williams’ Dictionary. As the scriptures prescribe the gift of a cow in madhuparka rites, there are historical examples of the gift of a cow in reception with madhuparka, there is not a single historical example of beef served with madhuparka, and as the meat-eaters even these days would not accept raw meat with madhuparka obtained by slaughter on the spot and as there is no possibility of any kind of meat in madhuparka as discussed and proved earlier, the only justified interpretation of the words ‘saṃñapya vatsatār’ would be offering a heifer in gift to Jāmadagnya, Parasurāma and thus making their union and harmony. The whole stanza can be translated as follows:

(क्षतरिति) The heifer (कस्मरि) is offered to you as a gift. (अन्तः)
Dishes (पथते) are being cooked (सपितिः) in ghee. (श्रोतिः)
O Śrotiśā! (आगामिः) you have come (श्रोतिणयानु) to the house of a śrotiśā, (जुस्तः न) Please favour us by accepting our hospitality.

Let the readers decide themselves as to which is the appropriate interpretation with reference to the context of the subject.

How surprising and shocking it is that men like Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra who are considered well-read and learned, should lead astray these simple countrymen, who respect their learning, by such imaginary concoctions and by twisting them according to their fancy. His reasons have been enunciated very clearly in the ‘Introduction’ of India so mislead the people that beef was taken in ancient India.

In his ‘History of Dharmaśāstra’, Vol. II, Part 2, page 750, lines 8-17, in the Chapter on Nṛyajña, or Manuṣya-yajña P. V. Kane writes:

“Yājñavalkya-Smṛti 1.109 also says that a big ox or a goat was to be kept apart for a guest learned in Veda. But the commentary Mitākṣara on Yājñavalkya-Smṛti and other medieval writers to whom flesh-eating was an anathema and an unspreakable sin for a Brahmana remark that an ox or a goat was to be understood as set apart for the guest to flatter him (with the words ‘this ox is yours’) just as one says in humility ‘all this house is yours’ and that the ox or goat was not meant to be given in gift or to be killed since it would be impossible to find an ox each time a śrotiśā guest comes.”

The relevant stanza of the Yājñavalkya-Smṛti 1.109 occurs in the section on the duties of a householder within the chapter on conduct (देशाः). It runs as follows:

महोक्षम् महाजान् ताद्रोतिमयोपक्षेत्।
सतिनमात्तस्यन्त व्यवहो भोजनं सुलतं वचः॥ (याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृति 1.109)

It simply means:

“One should offer a big bull or a big goat before a guest who is versed in the Vedas (śrotiśā). (Thereafter) one should welcome him (with pīdya, arghya, ācamana, a seat etc.). (After he has taken his seat) one should sit down near him: give him delicious food and speak pleasant words.”

In the aforesaid stanza, the original Sanskrit word for offering a big bull or a big goat is upakālpa, which is conjugated from the root klō (क्लो) with the prefix a-.
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The meaning of ‘upa-khet (उप-केत्)’ in Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary, page 195 column 3 is:

- to be fit for: to be ready at hand
- to serve as: to lead to
- to become: to take the shape or form of
- to become: to be
- to equip: to procure
- to allot: to assign
- to turn towards: to impart
- to assume: to suppose

It carries no nuisance of hikati or killing. It is clear that it does not even imply the killing of these animals and setting the guest with their meat. A istriya, i.e. a guest versed in the Vedas, is entertained with madhuparka—thus it is specified in the succeeding stanza number 110. In this context, either in the preceding or succeeding stanzas, there is no mention of offering meat with madhuparka, and nowhere is there any reference to killing.

It proves that animal meat of any kind is not required in madhuparka.

The commentators opine that a big bull (mahokta) or a big goat (mahéja) is brought before a guest, which is just a part of etiquette wherein the host as a matter of courtesy says that this is your house; this thing is yours, etc., etc. In fact, they are not intended to be presented to the guest. New guests, learned in the Vedas, visited people now and then, and if a big bull or a big goat were presented to every one of them, where could one obtain so many big bulls or big goats. Nor, does the original stanza convey such an intention. But, it is simple enough to understand that one who has the means may present the things enjoined, and one who does not possess the means to do so, he need neither offer them nor give them away.

Now we come to words of politeness and courtesy. This is the practice to this very day. Whenever a guest comes, courteous sentences are spoken, such as ‘this is your house, please make yourself free and comfortable; such and such a thing is yours, you may feel free to use anything you like’ etc., etc.

Whether the offering of a big bull or a big goat is significant or not, will be considered further on.

The alleged offering of a big bull or a big goat to a guest also occurs in the Śatapatha-Brahmana etc. It may also be taken up for discussion.

In the same section on Nyaya or Māmura-yājña of his “History of Dharmāśāstra”, Vol. II, Part 2, chapter 21, page 750, lines 6-7, P. V. Kane writes:

“The Śatapatha shows that an ox or a goat was cooked for a guest, either a King or a Brāhmaṇa (III. 4.3.2.).”

Its original text is as follows:

अथ वह्मातारतिव नाम। अतिशिव एव एतस्यामच्छिन्ति वस्तोष।
कौलस्तोत्रम् एतत्वम् राशी वा प्रास्थानाविव महोहं वा महार्ज वा
पञ्चतद्ध मातव एविदेववाणामेवन्तस्मि एतदार्तिव तत्वोति।

(सतपाभाराण 3.4.3.2)

Some people translate the verb pceit (प्चेत्) in this passage as ‘cooking on fire’. The common meaning of pceit is ‘cooking on fire’. But what is the sense intended here has to be discussed.

According to Chapter 318 of the Śantipaṣa of the Mahābhārata, Yājñavalkya obtained the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa from Śrīrya. Through such a revelation he must have authored the Yājñavalkya-Sūtra. Thus there should be consonance in both the works in the matter of honouring a guest with a big bull or a big goat. Pandit Dinamath Sharma Shastri has discussed this question at length in the sixth volume of his Hindi book Śri-Saṅataṇa-Dharmakā’ on pages 333-334 and pages 342-343.
It is translated below in extenso:

"The meaning of pacē in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa is not 'cooking', but it is 'presenting; offering' (vyaktikārāṇa, व्यक्तिकारण). Here the root is pacē vyaktikārāṇa (पच म्यालकारण) of the first conjugation, set, and ātmānepadā. In the Bālamāragīmā commentary (editions of Guruprasad Dhāsūṭī of the Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office) it is said: pacēyeke (पचेयेके) i.e., there is also the variant pacē (पचे) of the root pacē (पच). It signifies to present vyaktikārāṇa. This meaning proves the identical intention of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa and the Yājñavalkya-Smṛti. Now the question arises that while the aforesaid root is ātmānepadā, in the Śatapatha it is not ātmānepadā. In this context it should be noted that the ātmānepadā is not obligatory by the rule anudātā tvalakṣeṇam ātmānepadam anītām (अनुदात त्वलक्षेण आत्मानेपदम अनिताम). Hereby, it is not ātmānepadā in the Śatapatha or it can also be an ārka or aberrational usage.

Our meaning is attested by other texts also.* In the mantra ukṣaṇaṃ prabhān āpacendant (उक्षण प्रभान अपचन्त) (Rgveda 1.164.43) the root pacē has been commented upon by Sāyāna as

उक्षणं सततं सेवकं तोममु श्रेयितं अपचनं
पवायत्वार्यान्द्रेण तिर्यग्यायं करोत्यतः
| स च किरासमामयचण्डः अत श्रीमित्यायु सर्वापदित्वायं हि यथं |

*This interpretation of the root pacē (पचे) is confirmed by the Madhavāyya-dhāta-vṛtti of Sāyāna Prācīnacārī Prākāshīn, Vārāṇasī, 1964, root no. 107 of the bhāvādi-gāna (शब्दावली) 1.86-87 pacē vyaktikārāṇa (पचे व्यक्तिकारण). At the end it is stated:

पच इति दूवं तथा भारमानोऽववम, यदाहु अतिक्रमिकोऽवमादायुः अवमादायुः पणेष पवेः, पवेः व्यक्तिकारणे हि ताम्मात्ताते तु वर्णावली उदक्तो अववायमविद्यते हस्तक्षणरुपादतो तोऽवमादायुः. चित्तो गोत्राविद्यमादिनां हि तथात्त्र व्यक्तिकारणे हि पद्ध्यायाः प्रथमोपयो तथात्त्र व्यक्तिकारणे हि पद्ध्यायाः प्रथमोपयो तथात्त्र व्यक्तिकारणे हि पद्ध्यायाः प्रथमोपयो

(Contd. to next page bottom)
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So it appears to be appropriate in the Brāhmaṇa too i.e. to prepare Soma for the guest. Or ukṣāj is also the tuberous plant śābha. The names of this plant are all synonyms of śābha or bull. Because of its succulence, the plant ukṣāj is one of the medicinals for long life (Rṣi-nighantu, sarga 5). There the following synonyms are given for it: śābha; ukṣāj; ganah; śābhab. Aja also means ajamadda or common carroway. Mahāpā means the big carroway. It is probable that these medicinals were offered to a guest after food, as a digestive or invigorating tonic. Or, there is the sentence अजा गीतस्तानां साधनामां in the third story of the Kākolakṣya section of the Pañcatantra, and the stanza:

वीजेश्वरू मण्ड्यातमिति वै वृक्षकी वृक्षे
अबन्धलालिनो चांगो हत्तमहं द्वारा

(म. म. शाल्तितिपर्व ३३७.४)

In the Mahābhārata (Śāntiparva 337.4), the word aja is clearly stated to mean 'seven-year-old rice'.

The cooking of such rice, or of the śābha tuber, or of Soma-juice, might have been intended here.

If we do not accept the aforesaid meanings and insist it to mean that a great bull (mahukṣa) or great goat (mahāpā) were slaughtered and their meat was cooked on fire, then it would be against Vedic principles and thus it will be without sanction and invalid.

The Vaishātha-dharma-sūtra 4.8 also refers to the reception of a guest by a mahukṣa or a mahāpā. अजर्जु वायुस्वायम् राजस्वाय ज्ञानवाय महुक्षा यथा महापात व परेत्यक्ता अयात्तिष्ठ तु कर्तव्यति. After the foregoing discussion, it is not necessary to discuss it over again. Some maintain that the preceding stanzas refer to meat in madhūpāka and to killing in ajija, but we have discussed it at length under the caption of 'Vaishātha-dharma-sūtra and Śāṅkhāyana-grhyasūtra' in this chapter.

Is Beef Possible in Madhūpāka?

Mahāpā, Mahājām and Vehatam in the Reception to a Guest

In his "History of Dharmaśāstra", Vol. 2, Part I, in the section on Madhūpāka in Chapter 10, page 542; lines 6-10, P. V. Kane writes:

"It appears that the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa II.4, when it says that if the ruler of men comes as a guest or anyone else deserving of honour comes, people kill a bull or a cow (that has contracted a habit of abortion) refers to madhūpāka, though that word is not actually used."

The original text of this sentence of Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa III.9 is quoted there in a footnote:

तयबवादे मनुष्यारज आयात्मीमथिनाप्रवाहिति उक्षाणी वा वृक्षकी वृक्षे

It is further stated that this is cited by Medhātithi on Manu-Smṛti 3.119 and by Haradatta on Gautama-dharma-sūtra 17.30.

In Vol. II, Part 2, in the Section on Nṛṣyaḥ or Maunija-yajña in Chapter 21, page 750, lines 6-8 of the same work, P. V. Kane writes:

"Vide also Aitareya Brāhmaṇa II.4, for the offering of an ox or a barren cow to king or another deserving person coming as a guest."

We have already discussed Manu-Smṛti 3.119 under caption 'Manu-smṛti'. It is clear beyond doubt that there is no reference to meat therein, and the question of beef does not arise at all.

In the Gautama-dharma-sūtra 2.8 prohibited foods are listed. The 30th sūtra reads वे्नवर्तीं च which simply means that the cow (dhotra) and the bullock (anaduth) are also among prohibitive items and should not be eaten. This does not prove the presence of meat or beef in madhūpāka.
The citation of Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa III.4 in a footnote by P. V. Kane is the 15th pada and the whole reads:

अतिं मध्य्यि गोष्ठ महाजनोत्तर स्वरुप भागावत-समाना हर्षुक्षमा या वे त्रत् या त्रत्त्रल्य एवेनयात्रा पत्रकितक सावधान त्रत्त्रल्य देवाना पंशु।

Earlier, it has been established that the word pacet (पक्ष) occurring in a similar context in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa corresponds to apakalpayet in the Yājñavalkya-smṛti. Now we have to consider if kṣadante occurring in this context of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa also corresponds to it. In his Hindi book, 'Sri-Sanātana-Dharmāloka,' Vol. 6, pages 360-374, Pandit Dinanath Sharma Shastri has discussed it at length. Hereunder are a few quotations:

"Now we have to consider the root kṣad. The cited Brāhmaṇa passage means: 'If a king or a celebrated śāstra comes, then the kṣadānta of a bull or cow should be effectuated in his honour.' The root kṣad does not occur in Panini's Dhātupātha. So we cannot know its meaning therefrom. But we find it in the Unādi (Pañcaapadi) sūtra, trm-tena kānti-kṣadāntaṁ vibhajayāṁ sikhāyaṁ cānitaṁ.

(तन्त्रविश-शिष्य-वाच्य: संबंधाय चालिनी) (2.94 : 25.1)

So it is clearly a root derived from the sūtras. But its meaning is not clear even from the sūtras. (page 362)

"In the Nighantu 2.8 where roots signifying 'to eat' are listed, there is no mention of kṣad—this fact should be noted. In 2.19, which is a list of roots meaning 'to kill', the root kṣad is not mentioned—it should also be noted." (page 363)

"Now we should look into the usage of the root kṣad in the mantras of the Rgveda Saṁhitā and also consult the commentary of Sāyana on the relevant passage. We should explore the meaning assigned to it by ancient scholars." (page 363)

"The following passage of the Mahābhāṣya 1.3.1 is well known:

अनेकार्थार्थिः अथो भक्ति च सब्यसति। त्यज्य यथा वाचनम् प्रकाशलेखम्

॥

So it is possible that a single root can have two opposite meanings, e.g., the root sthā means 'to stay' and 'to move.' Then, if for contextual propriety we take an unspecified meaning of a root, then it will not be against grammatical considerations." (pages 363-364)

"Thus, bhaksya (consuming) also means 'to make use of', 'to employ', or 'to accept!'," (page 364)

"In Rgveda 1.25.18 Ācārya Sāyana has written: हिते विन:—वाचनम् मतोऽवरं अन्तर्विद्यते यथा। तद्विन्द्रात्मकं विन्द्रात्मकं सहाय्यम्।

If the root kṣad means 'to eat', does this meaning apply to the Rgvedic Brāhmaṇa passage उच्चाय वहन वा खाते? Then it will mean: They eat a bull or a vahata on the arrival of a king or a śāstra. But is this meaning applicable here? If we translate it this way, then it will refer not to its partaking by the guest but the eating of the vahata by the host himself. Haridatta has prohibited its eating by anyone other than the guest. If we take kṣad in the meaning 'to accept', then it will mean 'they accept the cow or the bull,' i.e., 'they bring them for the guest'—this is a relevant meaning. (pages 364-365)

"In the Unādi, where a Rgvedic Brāhmaṇa passage is cited to illustrate the usage of the root kṣad, there kṣadānta means neither 'to hack to pieces' nor 'to eat'. The meaning 'to hack to pieces' would be most inappropriate;" (page 365)

"Hikaśā also refers to 'goading' (किषक). In the Nirukta 1.3.2 hasta has been explained as (हन्ते प्राकृतिक). Here the meaning of hasta is 'to goad' and not to kill or deprive of life. Kṣasti in the sense 10"
of a charioteer (Atharva-veda 5.7.14; 9.11.1) also refers to the pouding of the chariot's horse, and not to its killing. While bringing a cow or bull to a guest, it had to be goaded and this was its hībtā. (Page 366)

"When the root kṣad can have a third meaning besides 'to hack to pieces', 'to eat' as pointed out above, then this sūtra-occuring root can have other meanings too. Views of other learned people should also be taken into consideration in this context," (Page 366)

"While explaining the word kṣadma Skandavāmi writes: "कष्ठो (सात)""). The same view is held by Devarājaja-vajjā on Nirukta 1.12.3: स्कर्यां हेती मदल, जतायो ध्यानं दिक्तिकसेविति। Thus the passage can mean—When the guest comes, he should steady the cow or the bull; this meaning is also relevant here. The author of the Subdhānī derives kṣadma meaning 'water' from the root कष (सात) हेत्वा हिंसिता। In कष्ठति, -हिना पितासामुञ्ञं तथा अन्नातिनात न दुःखन, the root signifies 'going', as the killing of the un-killable cow (aghnājya) was not possible. Kṣadma can mean अविनाशित्वं गा यस्मातीत्ति, i.e. 'they take the cow near the guest'—a meaning which is also relevant here. One who is dearly loved is never killed, and he certainly is brought near." (Page 367)

"While explaining the word kṣatā in his Sudā-Vyākhyā on the Amarakośa, Bhānuji-Dikṣita, the son of Bhāttoji-Dikṣita, writes: तु मैरेमी सीत्र: (2.8.59). Here the root kṣad has been rendered as 'closing'—saṃvaraṇa. He accepts the same meaning in the word kṣatṛṭya (2.8.1). Swami Dayananda has also accepted the same meaning in his Uṇādi-koṣa." (Pages 367-368)

"Bhānuji-Dikṣita has explained kṣatā in Amarakośa 2.10.3 as दृष्टि, दृष्टि दृष्टि, दृष्टि समुपहुँ. Here the meaning of the root kṣad is indicated as 'bringing up'. As the killing of the unkillable cow (aghnājya) and of the un-killable bull (aghnā) is impossible, the cow and bull were brought up for being donated to a guest—this can also be relevant. In the śrāvaṇa sentence, the locative case can be considered to be used in the meaning of 'by reason of', 'for'. (Page 368)

The foregoing investigations prove that the root kṣad has many meanings, and it does not mean only 'to kill' or 'to eat'. A meaning that is appropriate to the context and one which does not go against the accepted principles, that meaning alone is correct in that context, and not any other meaning. If गायत्री, is a case of transferred meaning, then in गायत्री सहीपतस्तर्ति, it would not be correct to take it in a transferred sense as in the previous case, though there is no technical impropriety. In the Kusumāṇjali 3.12, Udayana Aśārya holds the same view:

हतात्त्वाया अतात्त्वाया न भाष्यं हायात्त्वायस्वतः।
वधार्यत्वं वैचूति तत्त्वात्त्वतेष्वत प्रकृतिः॥ (कुसुमाण्डली 31.2)

I.e. in the case of a logical connection no other signification is required; in the event of an incongruity another meaning appropriate to the context has to be sought. Hence, when the incongruity of killing an aghnā or one who is not to be killed arises, we have to seek a meaning that suits the context." (Pages 368-369)

"The readers should consider another piece of evidence from the Vedas and Sāyana's commentary thereon, which clearly fortifies our interpretation. In the Rgveda 6.13.2 हतात्त्वाया तेषु, kṣatā is a derivative of the root kṣad. Sāyana comments:

हतात्त्वाया वा क्षत्तः—क्षत्तित्वं भावयति।

Here Sāyana has clearly stated that the root kṣad means 'to give'. It merits consideration as to why Sāyana has translated the root kṣad as 'to give' against his own statement that kṣad is primarily used in the sense of 'killing'. It is clear that here 'killing' is not pertinent, hence the meaning 'giving away'. If it is so, then in the passage of the Atharvaveda Brāhmaṇa too, the 'giving of a cow or of a bull (aghnā—not to be killed) is intended. It is but natural, as the killing of one who is not to be killed is a contradiction. On setting out for a journey, the meaning of saṃdharvam ānaya as 'bring salt' would be unwise, 'bring a horse' alone would be the relevant meaning.
Hence, in the sentence यहाँ वेहता वा क्षदते of the र्गवेद ब्राह्मणस, the meaning ‘he gives a bull or a cow’ alone is proved and pertinent. Thus its identity with the महोष्ट वा महाल्या वा श्रीभिषिकाजयिकणकर्षित of the यज्ञवल्क्यस्मृति (1.5.199) is established. Upakalpa also means ‘donating’.

The Mitakṣarā realised the impossibility of such a big donation, and hence it interpreted it as a polite offer by words alone, in honour of the guest. It is indeed impossible to donate bulls every time. How can a person have so many of them? But here an ordinary cow and an ordinary bull are enjoined—hence there is no incongruity even in donating.

The meaning of vehata as a miscarriage cow is not appropriate here, because such cows cannot always be obtained."

(pages 369-370)

"In this way, by these authoritative proofs it has been settled that in महोष्ट प्रेतः, it means ‘he should present’ and in यहाँ वेहता it means ‘he should donate’. Here the root ksad means ‘to donate’. When the root ksad in the sense of ‘to donate’ is attested by the Vedas, Sāyana also corroborates it, and all the scriptures from the Vedas downwards are replete with the glorious praises of ‘donating a cow’, then this meaning alone is correct from all points of view; it alone is appropriate.” (pages 370-371)

"Scholars misunderstood the root ksad as ‘to kill’, ‘to eat’ because they did not find it in the Dhātupātha where the meaning of roots are given. Instead, they came across khad (अद स्त्रियेऽस्मायां च, चाहै भवते) and they imposed the meanings of khad on the root ksad. Whatever be the meaning of the root khad of the Dhātupātha, it does not follow that the sautra root with ksad means the same. When the root ksad is attested in the meaning ‘to donate’, and this meaning is also appropriate; when the eating or killing of a cow and bull is prohibited and censured in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa; when Vedas and other scriptures are full of the glories of donating a cow; when Sage Yajñavalkya of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Yajñavalkya-smṛti
desires the donation or presenting of a cow or bull in maḥaparka; when in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka which is the 14th book (kṣaṇa) of the Šatapatha, Yajñavalkya clearly wants to perpetuate the cows महोष्ट वा क्षदते (14.6.1.4 ; 11.6.3.2), then the unanimity of all these authorities proves that in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa passage too ksadana means the donation of a cow or a bull.” (pages 371-372)

In the reception to a guest, after the offering of pādyā or arghya, etc., several Grihya-sūtras and Dharma-sūtras prescribe the maḥaparka and along with it the giving of a cow is also enjoined. The offering of a big bull or a big goat occurs only in the Yajñavalkya-smṛti and Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra, but there is no reference to a miscarriage cow (vehata). Its relevance is not clear. In the Šatapatha and Aitareya Brāhmaṇas, there is no imperative injunction, but there it is stated as an illustration that as on the arrival of a human king or of a learned Brāhmaṇa, one would महोष्ट वा महाल्या वा पेते (Śatapatha) या वेहता वा शदते (Aitareya), likewise one should duly offer all the courtesies to King Soma who has arrived as a guest. It means that the followers of Yajñavalkya used to present a mahokya or a mahāja in the reception to a guest along with pādyā, arghya, maḥaparka, etc. If this is correct, then the intention of the Šatapatha and Aitareya Brāhmaṇas regarding the mahokya or mahāja is probably the same as that of Yajñavalkya-smṛti or the Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra; for such a reference has not been found in any other book. Then how can it be that the word pācet in the Šatapatha-Brāhmaṇa and ksadante in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa carry the sense of killing (hasta) when the meaning of Yajñavalkya-smṛti is clearly of non-killing? Hence those who impart the sense of killing to pācet or ksadante, they do so without considering the context, which is altogether inappropriate.

Another point also deserves consideration. Ukṣā is a bull for breeding. High pedigree stud bulls are very few in number. Everyone does not own such a bull. One stud bull suffices for a village. If a krūrtiya guest does not own several cows, the presentation of a stud bull will be of no use to him, and the host giver will render
great disservice to the community of cows. Thus, bringing a big stud-bull for presentation to a guest in his reception, does not make sense, and much less so killing it. Bringing a stud-bull to receive a king also makes no sense, because the king normally owns several cows along with proportionate number of bulls in a royal cow-stall.

If we try to translate ukṣa as a draught bull, then such a meaning is not attested by usage. The word for a draught bull is anośah. Secondly, if one does not present so many and such heavy things to a guest as to require a bull to carry them, then one cannot understand the propriety of such a presentation. If the bull presented is intended for agricultural purposes, it may be appropriate for a śrotrīya, but not for a king.

The presentation of a big goat can be only for carrying burden, but that too does not seem to be proper.

It is likely that महाउँ वा महाजाव वा has a spiritual signification, which has not been elucidated so far. Scholars should investigate it.

It is certain that the महाउँ वा महाजाव वा are not intended to be slaughtered. Those who try to force such a meaning, they are in the wrong.

**Meaning of Goghna-tithiḥ**

Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra quotes Colebrooke in his aforesaid book 'Beef in Ancient India', page 5, lines 20-24:

"Colebrooke noticed the subject in his essay on 'the Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus', in which he says, "it seems to have been ancietly the custom to slay a cow on this occasion (the reception of a guest), and a guest was therefore called GOGHNA or cow-killer."

Goghnaḥ (गोघनः) has been explained as गौहिन्याते तभी गौहिनः. There is no scope for difference of opinion in this etymology. There certainly is difference in the interpretation of हन्याते. Those, who propagate beef-eating, find it handy and interpret goghnaḥ (गोघनः) as 'the killer of a cow', inspite of the fact that they are aware of the multiple meanings of the root han:

हन—हिन्याते: | तेस्त्रेष्योषोऽयाः:—शान्तं, गमनं, प्राप्तिवैठि।

Besides the meaning 'to kill', the root हन in हन्याते also means 'to multiply'; to go; to move; to obtain; to attain; to get; to touch; to come into contact; etc. (see the Sanskrit-English dictionaries of Monier-Williams and V. S. Apte). But they do not wish to take these meanings into account because by them their main purpose of the propagation of beef-eating is not served. According to the previous discussions, when any possibility of beef or any other kind of meat cannot be proved in the madhuparka rites to entertain a guest, but what can be proved is the gifting of a cow, then it is clear that the meanings of goghnaḥ (गोघनः) can only be—one who 'touches' the cow for accepting her in gift and by drinking her milk; or one who 'multiplies' the number of his cows by taking the cow in gift, etc.

According to the Dhātupāṭha (धातुपाट) of Ācārya Pāṇini which reads हन हिसागोऽयाः: the meanings of the root han (हन) are hināsa (violenice) and gati (movement). Gati (गति) has three meanings:
(i) jñāna (learning); (ii) gamana (going or moving); and (iii) prāpti (obtaining, attaining, getting). The meaning of हन्याते in महाउँ वा महाजाव वा is गत्याते, प्राप्तिवैठि i.e. 'attained, obtained'.

Scriptural proof has been adduced under the heading 'Gift of a Cow in Madhuparka', which makes it clear that there can be no other meaning of goghnaḥ (गोघनः) except 'one who gets a cow in gift', or 'one who takes a cow with him after obtaining her in gift'.

Pāṇini's sūtra दानामोहो तत्सम्प्रदायः 3.4.73 also makes it clear that the words दान and गोधन are formed irregularly in the sense of the dative (सम्प्रदार्य). If the dative case (चतुर्दी) alone had been intended here, i.e. if the aim had been to convey that the cow was killed for a guest, then the word सम्प्रदाय वा would not have been used, but हन्याते would have been employed instead, i.e. an indeclinable (अक्षय) indicative of
the dative case would have been used. But, as it is phrased सम्प्रदायिनी, the only sense expressed here is that of gifting. Therefore, the correct and genuine signification of गोपनुतितिः: is ‘a person to whom a cow is gifted’.

The word हस्तनन्द्व occurs in the mantra beginning अद्धित्रिण मैदोः in the Rgveda and Yajurveda. Its meaning has been given in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary on page 1295, column 1, as follows:

हस्तनन्द्व—a kind of hand-guard (protecting the hand in archery RV).

When the word (हस्तनन्द्व) hastaghna can mean ‘a kind of hand-guard’ then why can the meaning of गोपनुतितिः: not be ‘a guest who protects a cow’?

The meaning of अतिथिनिगाह (अतिथिनिगाह:) and अतिथिघ्व (अतिथिघ्व)

Under the sub-heading 'Food and Drink' in Chapter 19 'Social and Economic Conditions' of 'The History and Culture of the Indian People', Vol. I, The Vedic Age, page 393, lines 20-22, Dr. V. M. Apte mentions the expression अतिथिनिगाह (अतिथिनिगाह:) and asserts that its only meaning is that the cow was slaughtered for a guest. In support he cites Rgveda 10.68.3.

Macleodell and Keith also write under the entry मानस in the Vedic Index, part II, page 145:

"the name अतिथिघ्व probably means 'slaughtering cows for guests'. (Bloomfield, American Journal of Philology, 17.426; Journal of the American Oriental Society, 16, cxxiv. Cf. अतिथिनिगाह ‘cows fit for guests’, R.V.x.68.3)."

Prof. Bloomfield has also written on the problem in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 16 (1896), page cxxiv line 12 to page cxxv line 6, in the proceedings of the American Oriental Society's meeting in New York N.Y. on March 29th, 30th and 31st

1894. Item No. 17 "On the group of Vedic Words ending in gva and gvin":

"The proper name अतिथिघ्व has so far as is known, never been translated. Grassmann's gva 'going' does not yield appreciable sense.

If we analyse structurally अतिथिघ्व a 'he who has or offers a cow for the guest', 'he who is hospitable', we have a normal compound, normal sense, and a valuable glimpse of Vedic house-practices, known hitherto only by the Brāhmaṇas and Śūtras. At the arghya ceremony, which is performed on the arrival of an honoured guest, the 'preparation' of a cow is the central feature. The technical expression is gāṁ kurāte: see CGS. i.15.1; AGS, i.24.30.31; PGS, i.3.26.30; Gobh. iv.10.1; ApGS, 13.15; HGS, i.13.10; ApDhS, ii.4.8.5. In TS, vi.1.10.1 the ceremony goes by the name go-argha. There is no reason why this simple and natural practice should not be reflected by the hymns, and it comports with the character of अतिथिघ्व as a generous giver; cf. vi.47.22; x.48.8; i.130.7; also similar statements in reference to descendants of अतिथिघ्व in viii.68.16.17. The adjective अतिथिघ्व is a hapax legomenon in RV. x.68.3; it occurs in the expression अतिथिघ्व gāṁ; and, whatever it may mean, it suggests forcibly the proper name in question. The rendering of अतिथिघ्व by 'wandering', as given by the Petersburg lexicons and Grassmann, is based upon the supposed etymology (root at 'wander'), and reflects the vagueness usual with such interpretations. Ludwig's translation (972) 'wie gaste kommand' is a compromise between the etymology and the ordinary meaning of अतिथिघ्व. The passage in question reads: Bhṛṣpati has divided out like barley from bushels the (rain-) cows propitious to the priests, fit for guests (atithin), strong, desirable, beautiful in colour, faultless in form, after having conquered them from the clouds. The proper name अतिथिघ्व-a means therefore precisely one who has अतिथिघ्व-gāṁ.

Prof. Bloomfield gives the technical term अत घ के देव for the 'preparation of a cow' in the arghya rites; and in support thereof he has cited a number of sūtra texts. The expression अत घ के देव is not
found in those sūtra texts. It is just possible that the references of Gṛhya-sūtras through oversight are not correctly recorded and/or printed or the wordings in place of गा कुर्क्षेत may slightly differ in the original texts; for example: Āśvalāyana-grhīya-sūtra 1.24.23 reads अक्षरोदयः गवः गवी; Gobhila-grhīya-sūtra reads मुखः गवः दर्शयनापशालदिवसैं; and Gobhila-grhīya-sūtra 4.10.19 and 4.10.23; Āpastambiya-Dharma-sūtra 2.4.8.5 reads गोमुनिक्तः गवदहकः; These passages have already been discussed under the headings ‘Paraskara-grhīya-sūtra and Āśvalāyana-grhīya-sūtra’.

Prof. Bloomfield has taken Atithīghya अतिठिग्य as the proper name of a person who is described as a noble generous giver, and he has cited Rgveda 6.47.22 (6.4.4.22), 10.48.8 (10.4.6.8) and 1.130.7 (1.19.4.7) in support. In the English translations of these mantras Griffith and Wilson have also taken it as the name of a person and not as ‘cow-slaughterer’; their English translations are as quoted below:

RV. 6.47.22 (6.4.4.20)

Griffith: Out of the bounty, Indra, hath Prastoka bestowed ten coffers and ten mettled horses. We have received in turn from Divodāsa Šambara’s wealth, the gift of Atithīghya.

Wilson: Prastoka has given to thy worshipper, Indra, ten purses of gold, and ten horses, and we have accepted this treasure from Divodāsa, the spoil won by Atithīghya from Šambara.

RV. 10.48.8 (10.4.6.8)

Griffith: Against the Guṅgus I made Atithīghya strong, and kept him mid the folk like Vṛtra-conquering strength: when I won glory in the great foe-slaying fight, in battle where Karṇīja fell, and Parnaya.

Wilson: I prepared Atithīghya for (the protection of) the Guṅgus, I asphed him, the destroyer of enemies, as sustance amongst the people; when I gained renown in the great Vṛtra-battle, in which Parnaya and Karṇīja were slain.

RV. 1.130.7 (1.19.4.7)

Griffith: For Puru thou hast shattered, Indra, ninety forts, for Divodāsa thy boon servant with thy bolt, O Dancer, for thy worshipper.

For Atithīghya he, the Strong, brought Šambara from the mountain down.

Distributing the mighty treasure with his strength, parting all treasures with his strength.

Wilson: For Puru, the giver of offerings, for the mighty Divodāsa; thou, Indra the dancer (with delight in battle), hast destroyed ninety cities, dancer (in battle), thou hast destroyed them with (thy thunderbolt) for (the sake of) the giver of offerings. For (the sake of) Atithīghya, the fierce (Indra) hurled Šambara from off the mountain bestowing (upon the prince) immense treasure, (acquired) by (his) prowess; all kinds of wealth (acquired) by (his) prowess.

The meaning of the word atithīghya (अतिठिग्य) has been given in Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary as under:

‘To whom guests should go’

Besides this, no other meaning has been given. There is not even the slightest inkling of cow-slaughter in this meaning. Therefore, the noun atithīghya (अतिठिग्य) can never imply ‘to slaughter a cow for a guest’; or ‘a guest who gets a cow slaughtered’.

Shri Kanhaiyalal Maniklal Munshi, Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, in his Hindi novel ‘Lopāsmudra’, page 34, lines 16-17 has indicated Atithīghya as a particular person and has interpreted this word as ‘one who serves beef to a guest’, while Prof. Bloomfield.
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After analysing this word structurally atithi-gv-a has interpreted it as 'he who has or offers a cow for the guest' or 'he who is hospitable' and Munier-Williams has interpreted it in his Dictionary as 'to whom guest should go'. Shri K. M. Munshi in interpreting it as 'one who serves beef to a guest' has given neither any etymology nor other testimony nor has atithiga been shown in the story as actually serving beef to a guest. When a person of the standing of Shri K. M. Munshi propagates in this manner, then there is no wonder if ordinary public is misled.

Those who insist to find cow-slaughter in atithiga (अतिथिनिः) and atithinir gāh (अतिथिनिः गाह) are clearly prejudiced. The basis of their prejudice is the predilection of Western scholars like Keith, Macdonell and others who are insistent in their efforts to prove that the Aryans were uncivilized.

The expression atithinir gāh (अतिथिनिः गाह) occurs in Rgveda 10.68.3 whose meaning has been clarified by Bloomfield in the Journal of the American Oriental Society. The original mantra reads:

शाप्याः अतिथिनिः गाहे । सावर्णाः अनवाराहसः ।
उवेछा वियस्याः नियमं उरे सविस्तिः सिद्धिव्यः ॥

(रग्वेद १०.६८.३)

After resolution of the sandhis this will read as follows:

8 10 11 12 13
सावर्णाः, अतिथिनिः, गाहे; सावर्णाः, अनवाराहसः;
1 15 2 7 3 5
इत्यस्याः, पवेश्याः, विन्याः, नियमं, गाहे, सविस्तिः.
4 6 1
एव, सिद्धिव्यः ॥

The literal meaning of this as given by Prof. Bloomfield in the Journal of the American Oriental Society is as follows:

(1. अतिथिनिः) Bhṛṣaṣṭi (2. सिद्धिः) has divided out (4. गाहे) like (3. नियमं) barley (6. सविस्तिः) from the bushes (7. सावर्णाः)

The word atithini (अतिथिनिः) can be formed only by adding the possessive suffix-ini. Meanings with the possessive suffix can be 'with a guest'; 'one whose the guests are'; 'one for whom the guests come'; 'one who is useful to guests' etc. and the cow can be useful to the guests only by her milk, curd, ghee etc. If one contends that she can also be useful by her beef, then she will be useful only once for a guest and it will become impossible for a man of common status to slaughter a new cow every time he receives a guest. Reception of guests is as important to a common man as it is to an affluent person.

H. H. Wilson has translated it as under:

"Bṛhaspati brings unto (the gods), after extricating them from the mountains, the cows that are the yielders of pure (milk), ever in motion, the objects of search and of desire, well-coloured and of unexceptionable form, (as men bring) barley from the granaries." (RV. x.5.8.3.)

And Ralph T. H. Griffith has translated it as follows:

"Bṛhaspati, having won them from the mountains, strewed down, like barley out of winnowing-baskets, the vigorous wandering cows who aid the pious, desired of all, of blameless form, well-coloured."

In both these English translations of the Rgveda mantra, no-where is there any indication that the words atithi-nir and gāh suggest the meaning of 'a guest who causes the slaughter of a cow'. Bloomfield's interpretation of the words atithiga and atithinir-gāh in the Journal of the American Oriental Society also does not indicate even a remote hint of cow-slaughter and to the contrary he has taken them as proper names.
Taking into account all these considerations, attihininggāh will mean 'cows fit for guests', i.e. for serving them with milk, yoghurt, ghee, etc., and attihingā will mean 'the person to whom a guest should go', i.e. a host whose hospitality with milk products a guest should accept.

Culinary Impossibility of Mixing Meat with Madhuparka

Late Pt. Shridār Damodar Sātavalekar has written in the section on Madhuparka, in his 'Go-Jñāna-Koṣa, Ancient Period Vedic Section, Part I', which is translated below:

"We do not know it fully as none in our family has ever tasted meat, as we have been strict vegetarians. Even then we have enquired from our non-vegetarian friends who have informed us that no preparation of meat is prepared with honey or candy-sugar. Whatever preparations of meat are, they are all salted and spiced. If this is true, then how can madhuparka be prepared with meat? Because it is madhuparka, i.e. it is a sweet preparation mixed (७६) with honey (७७६). Nothing is prepared from meat by mixing it with honey or candy-sugar, but meat is always mixed with salt and spices."

To verify its truth, we wrote and enquired from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition; and a number of hoteliers. Their replies are reproduced hereunder:

Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition, Pusa, New Delhi-12 writes in its letter No. ICT/PA/2/69/192, dated 28-1-69:

"No popular or famous dishes have been prepared so far out of meat and sugar in classical French, Indian or English cookery. Of course, this does not mean that the sweet meat preparations cannot be prepared, but the problem that has to be faced is the consumer's acceptability and market potentiality."

It is clear from the above that no sweet dish is prepared with meat. If prepared, consumers will not relish it and it will be difficult to sell it.

Hotel Oberoi Intercontinental, Wellesley Road, New Delhi-11 writes in its letter dated 11-2-1969:

"I would like to point out that no sweet meat preparations made by us and whatsoever no meat is used for our dessert preparations."

From this also it is evident that no sweet is prepared with meat; meat is not mixed in any sweet dish; and meat preparations are only salted and spiced. An honoured guest is entertained only by serving what is most delicious and what he likes best. When in the refinement of culinary art there is no sweet dish prepared with or from meat, then how is it possible that meat should have been added to madhuparka at the reception of an honoured guest?

Some people add a little sugar to salted spiced vegetable preparations, but it cannot be maintained on this basis that vegetable preparations are sweet. Nobody will relish vegetables prepared with sugar alone. In the same way if somebody perchance adds a little sugar to salted and spiced meat preparations, then they do not become meat containing sweets. Salt or spices are not mentioned among the ingredients of madhuparka. In such circumstances, mixing of meat in madhuparka will be a sweet meat preparation devoid of salt and spices which has neither been seen nor heard of so far. Then it is beyond comprehension, how an honoured guest would relish the addition of meat to madhuparka. If we apply our minds seriously, then the mixing of meat in madhuparka is impossible.

Madhuparka System in Siberia

Doctor Lokesh Chandra, Director of Saraswati Vihar (International Academy of Indian Culture), New Delhi, and son of late Dr. Raghuvira,
the well-known Indologist, has given an instance of his experience with madhuparka, which is narrated below in his own words:

"Deep in the heart of Eastern Siberia lies the Aginsky Monastery which has been renowned for its inexhaustible manuscript resources and unparalleled scholarship. Till the thirties of our century it continued the academic and spiritual traditions of the Nalanda University. On the midnight of 14/15 June 1967 we reached this Aginsky Monastery, a legend for those who have taken interest in Eastern Siberia, in her thought and her deep traditions. For the first time in our life we were received in national style with madhuparka comprising of yoghurt (dahi), milk and honey in silver spoons from silver vessels."

This shows that even meat-eaters of Russian Siberia do not include any kind of meat in madhuparka and as such it is beyond doubt that there is not even an inkling of meat in madhuparka and the statement that madhuparka is never without meat is baseless and wrong.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above considerations that there is no possibility of mixing meat in madhuparka. Due to shortage of time, even the possibility of preparing milk-rice-pudding (पालक) then and there and serving it to entertain the guest is rather slight. It may be possible that parched barley (sattu) besides milk, curd and ghee was mixed with madhuparka as is prescribed in Baudhāyana-grhya-sūtra 1.2.54 (ढाकती विद्यमान सविधायेगु) and Hiranyakeli-grhya-sūtra 1.12.10. Even nowadays in the countryside of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, guests coming from far-off places at summer time are served with parched barley (sattu) dissolved in water mixed with sugar.

WERE COW-SLAUGHTER, MEAT SACRIFICE AND MEAT-EATING PREVALENT IN THE VEDIC AGE?

By constant propaganda it has been dinned into the minds of several people that during the Vedic age killing was a part of yajña, even cows were slaughtered, beef and other kinds of meat were commonly eaten, and the total prohibition of killing (ahāra) came into vogue in the Buddhist and Jain period. It is true that before the Buddhist and Jain period, by misunderstanding, killing became prevalent among people to some measure, but it is totally false that in the Vedic age there was killing in yajña, or meat-eating prevalent. A number of people think that the cow is considered agha (अघा) 'un-killable' in the Vedas, but there is no prohibition regarding the killing of other animals and hence animals were slaughtered in the yajñas—this assumption also is false.

The high respect accorded to the cow in Vedic times has been described in details by the late Pandit Shiripad Damodar Satavalekar in his Go-jāna-kośa (published by the Svadhyaya Mandal, Amadnagar, P.O. Pardi, Dist. Balsar, Gujarat), by Pandit Dinkar Sharma in his Śrī-sanatan-dhiarmāloka, and by Pandit Dharmadas Vidya-vacaspatt in his Vedon kā Yathārthā Svarūpa (published by the Gurukul Kangri University). A few extracts are being cited here which clearly prove that in Vedic times there was neither cow-slaughter, nor beef-eating, nor the killing of other animals and the eating of their meat. Those who want to go into greater details they should study the three works just referred to.

The Inviolability of the Cow

By a careful reflection of the Vedic mantras it becomes clear that the cow is inviolable. This has been spoken of in a number of ways in the Vedic mantras. In the Veda, the very name of 'a cow and bull' is agha (अघा). It means 'inviolable'. Whose name itself is 'inviolable', its cutting up or slaughter is impossible. Veda words are full of meaning, they are significant, and intrinsically relevant.
Therefore whose name is aghnya or 'inviolable', its slaughter is impossible in Vedic times. And without slaughter, the offering of beef is altogether impossible. The hypothesis of the slaughter of cows and the offering of beef in gomeda are all figments without any foundation.

Thus the word go has several meanings like, cow, her milk, her yoghurt, her butter, her sour-milk, her ghee, her urine, her dung, her hide, her hair, her bone, etc. In the Veda it is used chiefly in the sense of 'milk' and 'ghee'. This is specially to be borne in mind.

The literal meaning of this mañitra is: 'mix (sriñita श्रीनित ्त) soma (matsaram मातसारम्) with the cows (gobhiti गोभिति)'. The words literally convey that mix the whole of soma with a whole cow. But here it means: 'mix soma-juice with the milk of a cow'. Here the whole has been used for its part. Milk is a part of the cow, and a part of soma is its juice. Hence the mixing of these two parts alone is intended. Such was the idiom of Vedic speech. It is a mode of language. If this mode is understood then no doubt remains.

If in this mantra we do not translate the word go as 'cow’s milk', and interpret it as 'mix soma with a cow', then it has no congruency of meaning, because soma cannot be mixed with a cow by any means. The cow is a long and broad animal species, and soma is the juice of a creeper. How can they be mixed? Soma cannot be mixed with a living cow, nor with a whole dead cow. If the proponents of cow-slaughter and beef were still to insist that 'soma can be mixed with the flesh of a cow after slaughtering her', then we shall have to set aside the real meaning of gau as a cow, but we will have to understand it in the secondary meaning of 'beef' as a figurative extension. In such a situation when we have to give up the real meaning of the word gau मी as 'cow' and we are compelled to resort to its subsidiary meaning of 'beef', then why should we not take gau मी as meaning 'cow’s milk', which will be easier to mix with soma juice. Those who interpret it as 'beef' they will have to go to the length of taking it as the meat of a dead cow. It will be easier and more beneficent than that if we interpret it as 'the milk of a living cow'. Because the principle is that the closer the subsidiary meaning to its primary the better it is to that extent.

The Primary Principle of the Veda

The primary principle of the Veda is to view all beings in friendly compassion. So we can say that those who saw all beings with friendly love, how could they slaughter others for their stomach? Friendly love will lead to the dedication of one’s own life for others, and it is impossible that the loved one is slaughtered for the stomach. The primary principle of the Veda is exemplified by the following:

1. मित्रम् मा चतुर्व द्वारिणि भूतानि स्मौहि सामीहिष्मामेः
   May all beings behold me with the eyes of a friend.

2. मित्रम् चतुर्व द्वारिणि समीहिष्मामेः (मेवार्यण संहिता 4.6.27)
   Behold all with the eyes of a friend. (Maitrayanī Sāhhitā 4.9.27)

3. धीर: पशुतां भूतासम् (अर्धवेद 15.1.4)
   May I be dear to all animals. (Athravaveda 17.1.4)

4. हेते हेते मा मित्रम् मा चतुर्व द्वारिणि भूतानि समीहिष्मामेः
   O Dispeller of all pangs and ignorance (he) strengthen me (हेते मा). May all beings (समीहिष्मामेः) regard (समीहिष्मामेः) me (हेते मा).
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with the eye of a friend (भिजेजय वस्त्रा). May I regard (आ कैर) all beings (वृक्ष दिन) with the eye of a friend. (भिजेजय वस्त्रा) May all of us regard (साधीनाइ) each other with the eye of a friend (भिजेजय वस्त्रा) (Yajurveda 36.18).

This is the commandment of the Veda. Here it admonishes us not only to regard all men with the eye of a friend, but the entire gamut of sentient beings. Then should one kill one’s friend, for one’s stomach. If he is to be killed, then where is the friendly eye. The Vedic people who followed the prime principle of the Veda to regard all beings or the entire sentient world with the eye of a friend, could never even imagine to slaughter them to eat. So it will have to be accepted that due to some extraneous causes meat-eating intruded into the Aryans. The natural diet of the Aryans was vegetarian.

In the Bhāgavata-mahāpurāṇa 7.14.9 we find the same assertion:

मृत्युमार्गस्य किं अलगः प्रमुखतामः।
आत्मा ज्ञाति जीवानां ते जीवानां जीवानां
(व्रतमोह 3.14.6)

“Deer, camel, donkey, monkey, rats, creeping animals, birds, and flies—one should consider them like one’s own sons; what difference is there between them and the sons?” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavata 7.14.9)

नेतृत्व मरी चर्चा सदासंबन्धिताः।
विषाला वेददेव मृत्यु विषाला असीपालेजः 
(व्रतमोह 5.14.6)

“For men seeking true piety there is no other such virtue as abstinence from violence to living beings, perpetrated through mind, speech and body.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavata 7.15.8)

Ahiṁśā in the Veda

The Veda enjoins the non-killing not of the cow alone, but it calls upon the non-killing of all the bipeds and quadrupeds. The prime

principle of the Veda is to view all beings with the eye of a friend. Consider the following supporting passages:

नॉमाण्ड्रय पुष्प । पाणि । यजुर्वेद 12.1
मा हीरिस्य नात्र च । यजुर्वेद 12.12
अति । मा हीरिस्य । यजुर्वेद 13.45
अबि । मा हीरिस्य । यजुर्वेद 13.44
द्रम । मा हिस्सितपारेष पहुँच । यजुर्वेद 13.47
इम । मा हिस्सितमुन । यजुर्वेद 13.45
消化वृणिकार्य । मा हिस्सितम । यजुर्वेद 13.47
मा हिस्सित । पुष्पम । यजुर्वेद 13.47
मा हिस्सित । पुष्पम । यजुर्वेद 13.47
मा हिस्सित । पुष्पम । यजुर्वेद 13.47
मा हिस्सित । पुष्पम । यजुर्वेद 13.47

“Do not kill any of the creatures, like the horse, goat, bipeds, quadrupeds, wool-giving animals and human beings.” Reading these mantras along with those propounding the principle of the friendly eye, the Vedic admonition of non-killing (ahīṁśā) will become apparently clear. View the generality of sentient beings with a friendly eye, and never kill them—this is the admonition of the Veda to men. Insipid of such a clear injunction, Europeans constrain to think that non-killing (ahīṁśā) was not so strict in the Veda as it became in later times.

Pandit Dharmadeva Vidya-vachaspati has given a clear exposition of non-killing (ahīṁśā) in the Vedas on pages 498-499 of his book Vedaon kā Yathārthśrī Smrītī (published by the Gurusūk Kangri Haridwar). A few extracts from it are cited below.

श्रीमाण्डलमुनिमाण्डलमुनि, मा हिस्सिताः प्रजा। यजुर्वेद 12.32.

“May you be illumined by the mighty rays of knowledge (श्रीमाण्डलमुनि माण्डलमुनि) and may you not kill (मा हिस्सित) the creatures (प्रजा) by your body (तन्व)”. (Yajurveda 12.32).
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Vedic Names of the Cow

\[\text{Vedic Names of the Cow}\]

"Those noble souls who practise meditation and other yogic ways, who are ever careful about all beings, who protect all animals, they also care for our spiritual progress. They always take care that our behaviour does not afflict any animal." (Atharva-Veda 19.48.5).

"May I be dear to the animals". (Atharvaveda 17.4)

One who protects the animals, and regards them with a kindly heart, he alone can be dear to them, and not one who slaughters them—this is quite clear.

It may be added to, that the totally complete and singularly unqualified non-killing (ahiṃsā) propagated by the Jains and Buddhists is not found in such a degree in the Veda, but it is unreasonable to say that the principle of non-killing (ahiṃsā) did not exist in the Veda. The Veda preaches ahiṃsā alone as the common norm of behavior, but in special circumstances like war it does not enjoin to refrain from killing. Veda enjoins ahiṃsā of a type in which killing necessitated by a great national war is not ruled out. But should one desire to kill others for his stomach, such killing is not permitted by the Veda. The readers should clearly bear this difference in mind. In fact, it is the Vedas alone that propound the true principle of non-killing (ahiṃsā). So the Aryas who follow the Veda try to save the insects moving on the road, and if some are crushed by oversight that horrifies them and they recede back uttering 'Rām Rām—Rām Rām' in repentance, and they also safeguard sparrows and pigeons who lay eggs in their houses.

A number of modern scholars think that in the Vedic age the cow was surely killed at gomeđha. They adduce in proof that the kalvarjya sections prohibit gomeđha in this Kali-age. But they entirely forget that in the Zend Avesta scriptures of the Parsis, there is surely no cow-slaughter in the gomez yajña which is equivalent to the Vedic gomeđha, and in their soma-yajña also there is no slaughter, but the juice of the soma creeper alone is used. European scholars make a comparative study, but as soon as comparative studies prove ahiṃsā they give up this basis. When the gomez yajña of the Parsis can be accomplished without cow-slaughter, then why not the gomeđha of the Vedic Aryans.

Medha does not imply killing or slaughter at all. For instance we may cite the words grhma-medha (ग्रह्मेत्र) and pita-medha (पितामेत्र) just as honouring the father is intended in pati-medha (पितामेत्र), and just as sanitary and other conditions of well-being of a house are explicitly predominant in grhma-medha (ग्रह्मेत्र), likewise in gomeđha too honouring the cow and the preservation of her health were naturally desired. Manu has also said:

\[\text{Manu says:} \]

| Aṣṭāṣṭa śāstra: \text{पितामेत्रेन त्यथा} |
| होमो वैदो वैदिकोनो यूपोदेशितिधिपुरुषम || (मनुस्मृति 3.70) |

"Teaching is brahma-yajña (ब्रह्मयज्ञ), pleasing the parents is piti-medha (पितामेत्र), offering of homa is deva-yajña (देवयज्ञ) offering of food to worms and insects is bhāta-yajña (भातयज्ञ), and honouring the guests is ni-yajña—nara-medha (नरयज्ञ—नरमेध)". (Manu 3.70)

Vedic Names of the Cow

The Vedic lexicon Nghanṭu gives nine synonyms of the cow. Out of them the following three bear the meaning 'not to be killed'.

1. aghnya (अघ्ण्य) = not to be killed.
2. ahi (अही) = not to be killed.
3. aditi (अदिति) = not to be cut to pieces.

These three synonyms clearly indicate that the cow should not be slaughtered. First we showed that the names of yajñas imply non-killing (ahiṃsā), now we see that the synonyms of the cow show the
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The intrinsic meaning of the synonyms of the cow itself proclaims that the cow is holy, and therefore she should never be slaughtered. The same meaning is the basis of a stanza in the Mahābhārata:

अण्या इति गवां नाम क जना हस्तावंति।
महाभारताद्वारमेव गायो वस्तुल मुः तु यः॥ (P.1.4.90)

"The very name of the cows is aghnya that is the cow is not to be slaughtered. Then who can slay them. Those who kill a cow or a bull, they commit a most heinous crime."

(Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva 262.47)

Synonyms of Yajña

From among the synonyms of yajña, the word adhvara (अध्वर) occurs in several mantras of the Veda. Its very meaning is 'non-killing'. The word dhvāra (ध्वार) denotes killing (धरा हिस्सा तदनात्र यत्र स अध्वार), it is prohibited by the word a-dhvara. The presence of the word a-dhvara meaning 'non-killing' among the synonyms of yajña proves that any type of killing is not appropriate in a yajña or medha. The word medha (मेध) has three meanings: 'increasing intelligence', 'attending on', and 'killing'. The word medha has a nuance of killing, but it also signifies 'increasing; attending'. Thus the etymological meanings of gomeda (गोमेध) can be: (1) increasing the cows, (2) attending the cows, and (3) killing the cows. The readers themselves should consider which of the three meanings is intended. By association with the word a-dhvara (अध्वर) 'non-killing' for a yajña the idea of cow-killing has to be discarded, and the other two meanings remain. Rearing the cows, multiplying them, and eugenic cow-breeding is meant by 'attending the cows'. All these are comprehended by gomeda (गोमेध) but not cow-killing; this is clear even by considering just the synonyms of yajña.

Prohibition of Cow-Slaughter

गाय मा हिस्त्रितित्व विरागमुः॥ ४३ ॥
पूर्ण हुहामातित्व अजनयः मा हिस्तः॥ ४४ ॥ (मघुव १३)

The cow is illustrious and inviolable, therefore do not slay her (Yajurveda 13.43). The cow is inviolable and she yields ghee for the people, therefore do not slay the cow, (Yajurveda 13.45).

Thus, slaughter of cows is prohibited, it is a clear injunction against killing them.

The Incomparable Cow

The Veda enjoins that for everything else there is a comparison, but the cow is beyond comparison; so many are the benefits conferred by her on man. For it, see the following mantra:

ब्रह्म सर्वान्सं भोग्यितिः समुद्राणं सर:॥
इत्यो पूर्वमे सर्वसंक गोऽमली न विचारे॥ (पूर्व २३ ५८)

"The effulgence of knowledge can be compared to the sun, the Heavens (वृक्ष) can be compared to the sea, the earth is vast, yet Indra is vaster than her, but the cow cannot be compared to anything."

(Yajurveda 23.48)

Behold! how the Vedas describe the loftiness of the cow. Though the word gau (गौ) is used for the earth also, but in the above mantra the word gau (गौ) stands for the cow alone, and the passage expresses its (cow's) incomparability in so many words.

Advantages of the Cow

दुहामातीत्व पागो अस्यं सर्वती महः सरणाचूँ॥
(२ ज्ञ. १६४. २३)

"May this inviolable cow yield milk for both the Avins, and may she prosper for our great good fortune" (Rg. 1.164.27). In this mantra it is said that may the inviolable cow prosper (सस्यं सर्वातितत्वात्मक) this mantra deserves careful reflection. Mr. Griffith translates it as 'and may she prosper to our high advantage'. When this mantra proves that the increase of cows leads to the growth of our fortune, then whence arises the possibility of slaughtering the cow?
The numerical increase of the cow and the enhancement of its quality leads to numerous advantages for man—this has been propounded by the Veda without reservations and in several ways. Such great importance was attached to the cow in Vedic times. So we can say that in Vedic times efforts of the pious were directed to the improvement of the cow. Also see Rg-veda 1.164.40:

"May the cow eat the best of grass, may she be blessed, and by her may we also be blessed with wealth. O inviolable cow (अच्छी)! ever feed on grass (पुर्त अदि) and coming back (आ-चरती) drink pure water (पुरे तालय विश)."

What the cow should be fed has been clearly spoken of in the mantra. The cow should eat grass alone, and when a cow is kept there should be such arrangements as she gets the best grass. Milk obtained from a cow that eats the best grass and drinks pure water—that alone is health-bestowing for man. The milk which is obtained from a cow fed on fried dishes, grains, decaying produce and human excreta, etc.—that cannot be so wholesome.

The following mantra is noteworthy in this respect:

पालतीनामरोपनी सावस्यप्रणवस्य यात्तिनामस्यावयः।
नागस्यस्यस्यवर्णी: शर्म्ये द्वैगुणाभृत्ता:॥ (अयावे १.७६)।

"All the herbs that inviolable cows feed on, and all those on which goats and sheep feed, may all of them increase your well-being." Griffith has translated the word aghnīya (अघन्या) as 'whom none may slay'. If the word aghnīya (अघन्या) standing for the 'cow' has this meaning, and her slaughter is not proper then on what basis did European scholars opine that beef-eating was prevalent among the Aryans?

Animals in Yajña

Whatever man offered to the gods in yajña, that he ate himself—on this basis European scholars have written:

"The usual food of the Vedic Indian, as far as flesh was concerned, can be gathered from the list of sacrificial victims; what man ate he presented to gods—i.e. the sheep, the goat and the ox" (Vedic Index, Vol. II, page 147, lines 10-13).

It means that all the offered animals were slaughtered and eaten. It appears from what follows in the Vedic Index that according to the Europeans the horse was killed at avalemtha, but they have specified that the Vedic Aryans mostly did not eat horse-meat. It is really considerate of the Europeans that they have spared the Aryans from eating horse-meat. Because of the general European belief that what was offered at yajña was eaten, and that the horse was slaughtered at yajña, it was difficult for the Aryans to be spared from it. But in the book ‘Vedic Index’ it is clearly stated that horse-meat was not eaten—so we tender them our thanks.

If Europeans concede the exceptions that inspire of human sacrifice at narmedha (नर्मेद) human meat was not consumed, and inspire of the sacrifice of a horse at avalemtha, horse-meat also was not eaten, then what objection do they have to accept the fact that the flesh of other animals was also not paitaken of. Now remains the question of animal-offering in the Vedic yajña. Under the sub-head ‘Aikś (non-violence) in the Veda’ and ‘Synonyms of Yajña’, we have come to the conclusion that in the Vedic yajña there was no slaughter or offering of animals; and as a general rule violence to all beings is forbidden in the Vedas.

According to Ralph T. H. Griffith’s translation, Atharva-Veda provides that:

(i) "Horses are the grains; Oxen the winnowed rice-grains; grains the husks (अवयः: कण्णा, ग्रस्तसकुक्स, मग्ना स्मुदा)"
The grains of corn have now become a cow; the sesamum her calf (उर्वा शंकरूप खलोम्सातिलोम्बवृक्ष) 18.4.32."

The above quotations indicate that wherever prescriptions of oblation of cow are apparent, there they mean only corn (barley), rice, sesamum etc. and not animal flesh.

According to Mimāṃsā-darsāna—वेदवाच्यविद्वकन्त सब्रज्ञन इति धूलपंचने नायतिलोिन्य 10.3.65—a Brähmana takes away a cow or horse as a gift (दक्षिना) just as he does in the case of gold dakṣīṇā. This proves that in yajña, cows and horses were assembled for giving away to Brähmanas in dakṣīṇā.

**Cattle Exhibitions at Yajña**

Here it must be pointed out that the meaning ‘to come together’ of the root medhī (मेधी) is supported by several episdoes of yajñas in the Mahābhārata. For instance, in the Asvamedha-parva of the Mahābhārata it is narrated as follows: (The references of chapter and verse numbers are from Gita Press edition followed by Bhandarkar Research Institute edition).

**Meat Sacrifice**

Whether meat should be used in the yajña or not is a different matter. Our opinion is that yajñas were without meat, but for argument’s sake if we consider yajñas with meat, then we will come to know that the modern altar (vedi—वैद्य) of the yajña is two-fold:

1. पूर्व altar, and
2. उत्तर altar.

In the पूर्व altar there were several altars in which only grain was offered, and meat is never mentioned. Meat is said to be offered only in the उत्तर altar. If the two adjectives of altar, पूर्व and उत्तर, are understood as ‘ancient times’ (पूर्व-काल) and ‘later times’ (उत्तर-काल), then it is clearly proved that only grains were offered on the ancient (पूर्व) altar, and meat began to be offered on the later (उत्तर) altar.

The altar on which meat is offered nowadays, that is the later altar. Uttara-vedi clearly means the altar that came into vogue in later times, i.e. in the ancient yajñas, this altar did not exist at all. The altars which existed in ancient times, the पूर्व (ancient) altars, are still found. In the पूर्व altar only pure grain is offered, and meat is offered on the उत्तर altar. Not only that, but first the offering of grains was completely finished on the पूर्व altars, and then offering on the meat-altar started. Meat is never offered in the early part of the yajña, only grains are offered, and in the later days of yajña meat is offered in the उत्तर altar.
If it is clearly proved that in very ancient times, the yajña was performed at ārāṇa altars on which only grains were offered, and the offering of later times comprised of the offering of meat at the ārāṇa altar. If somebody insists that meat yajñas were prevalent during the period of the Brāhmaṇas, then he will have to agree to the fact that this was not the vogue in ancient times and only meat-less yajñas were prevalent in those days.

If meat yajñas began in later times, it was to prevent meat-greedy men of sinister nature to continue this disposition. With this end in view it must have been ordained that if meat has to be eaten then partake of it only in yajñas, so as to save daily slaughter. This seems to be the intent of the following stanza of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa 11.21.29:


Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Udhava—

"Not knowing My implicit view, if sensuous men find pleasure in violence, then they should indulge in it only in yajña".

From the above it is clear that it is not a general injunction. It has been ordained only for the purpose of putting a curb on sensuous pleasures and not as a general injunction to duty.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has said further:


"People who find enjoyment in violence, out of wickedness and for the gratification of their pleasures they slaughter animals, offer the meat in yajñas, and thereby make a pretence of worshipping the gods, manes and rulers of evil spirit.

Śrīmad-Bhāgawata has stated clearly earlier also that animals killed in sacrifice take their revenge by devouring their killer in the next birth:


"Those who are ignorant of this real Dharma (that is in yajña, the touching of animal is enjoined—not its killing—) are wicked and therefore account themselves virtuous, kill animals without any feeling of remorse or fear of punishment, and are devoured by those very animals in their next birth." (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 11.5.14)

In the Mahābhārata also, which is considered as a fifth Veda, animal killing is prohibited in yajña:


The wretch among men who, pretending to follow the path of religious rites and yajñas laid down in the Veda, would kill living creatures from greed of its flesh would certainly go to hell.

Persons indulging in ‘meat sacrifice’ were considered so low, that it was prohibited even to take food from their house:


"Persons who live on flesh cannot follow the path of righteousness. Therefore, if you desire to follow my path, then abide in me, death cannot come to me."

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.21.4)
A Review of 'Beef in Ancient India'

O most righteous souls! Indeed anyone eating the food cooked in the house even of a householder consecrated for a yajña other than one involving animal slaughter and different from the one known by the name Sautramani is not defiled (thereby).

(Srimad Bhagavata X.23.8)

Kalivarjya Section

Some people assert that in the kali-varjya section, alvamedha, gomeda, etc. are prohibited in the Kali age, therefore before this prohibition alvamedha and gomeda were performed, and horse-meat was eaten at alvamedha and beef during gomeda.

Now the question arises who has written this kali-varjya section, and in which text is it incorporated? Is this found in a respectable authoritative work? This is not found in the respectable authoritative smrti works, therefore we cannot arrive at any special and potent conclusion from such an imaginary section.

The second point is that everything becomes clear when the chronology of the kali-varjya section is fixed. According to us, the kalivarjya section has been written within the last 700-800 years. Therefore this cannot regulate the entire past preceding it. Here too, there is the aforesaid defect of chronological incongruency.

Besides, if we accede that in the kalivarjya section, alvamedha and gomeda are prohibited, even then we cannot come to know of the Vedic rites of alvamedha or gomeda. It can only prove that before the writing of the kalivarjya section, meat yajnas were performed.

Yajnas of the Brhma and Sutra texts show additions and subtractions as compared to the yajnas of the period of the Vedic mantras. Certain items are not found in the yajna of the mantra-samhitas, but they have been inserted later on. The reason is that in the pura altar, meat was not employed in offering, and in the offerings of the utara altar, that is in the yajna ritual of later insertions, meat offering was employed. It was a custom of the times when the manual of yajna ritual was composed. The Vedic usage is only that which has been prescribed in the metrical mantra portions. Therefore, we ask as to which Vedic mantra proves that the cow was slaughtered in the Vedic gomeda; if there is even a single mantra, let anyone bring it forward. Gone are the days of accepting statements without proof. We know that now-a-days several scholars acquiesce into the contention that cows were slaughtered during gomeda, but here the question is not the status of persons who accept it; the scholars or the non-scholars. Here we have to consider as to what is attested by the Vedic mantras and what is not attested—this is the question here and it is this that we have to consider.

Punishment for Eating Meat

Those who eat meat, such carnivores have been termed yudhina (violent person of a fiendish disposition) by the Veda and it enjoins punishment to them:

यो परिश्रवणं कचिद समझक्ते यो अश्रव्य वध्यम धान्यायम।
यो अध्याया भर्तरि श्रीरमने तेन श्रीपाणि हरसायि द्वस्य।

(आद्वेद X.10.8.19)

“One who partakes of human flesh, the flesh of a horse or of another animal, and deprives others of milk by slaughtering cows, O king, if such a fiend does not desist by other means, then even cut off his head by your powers, this is the ultimate punishment which can be inflicted on him.”

य आयं मांलन्द्विति परिश्रवणे च ये कचिद॥
गर्भान खाद्यनि केशवालानिति नाश्यामसि॥ (वर्गे ६.१.२३)

It is said in this mantra of the (Atharva-Veda VIII.6.23) that those who eat uncooked flesh, who eat meat cooked by men, who eat eggs that are embryos, do away with this evil addiction of theirs.

This very clearly proves that in the Vedas there is prohibition of meat-eating.
Evidence of The Mahābhārata

Sure pravrittaṃ yede tu kapiṃ.  
(P. Bh. Shānti 265.9; 257.9)

Liquors, fish, ined, meat, spirits, rice cooked with sesameum (oil) seeds—all these have been inserted into yajña by the wicked people. Vedas have not prescribed their use in yajña.

(Mahābhārata, Sańti-parva 265.9; 257.9)

Vaiṣṇavī prakāŚitā ।  
Azhōrāni vajrāni ।  
Netāh māṃ sahitā ।  
Aham kriyāti ।  
(P. Bh. Shānti 337.4-5; 324.4-5)

Yajña should be performed with seeds—this is the Vedic tradition. Aja are a variety of seeds, therefore it is not proper to slaughter be-goats. Wherever there is animal-slaughter in yajñas, that is not the way of good men.

(Mahābhārata, Sańti-parva 337.4-5; 324.4-5)

Heinousness of Cow-Slaughter in the Manu-Smṛti

A Śvapya ।  
Pitarā ।  
Mātṛa ।  
(Aśvām ।  
Māhātmā ।  
(P. Bh. 4.162)

Heinousness of Cow-Slaughter in Christianity

'He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man.' (Isaiah 66/3)

According to English dictionaries, the word ‘ox’ stands for the male and female species of the bovine family.

Prohibition of Beef in Islam

Al-Ghazzāli (1058-1111 A.D.) was one of the most brilliant philosophers of Islam. At the age of 28, he headed the Institute of Islam at Baghdad. His chief book, ‘Ihya Ulum ul-Din’—The Revival of Religious Sciences’ is respected as highly as the Quran. Its Urdu translation has been published by the Navalshahore Press, Lucknow under the title Mazākul Arafīn. In its 1955 edition (part 2, page 23, lines 17-19 the detrimental effects of beef, and the virtues of the ghee and milk of a cow are stated as follows:

—the meat of a cow is disease (marz), its milk is health (lajfa) and its ghee is medicine (dava).
THE MEANING OF UKŚĀNNĀ AND VAŚĀNNĀ AND THE BARRENNESS OF THE VAŚĀ COW

In the 'Vedic Index', Vol. 2, page 145, under the caption 'Mārga', Macdonell and Keith have written:—

"The eating of flesh appears as something quite regular in the Vedic texts, which show no trace of the doctrine of āhimsā, or abstaining from injury to animal. For example, the ritual offering of flesh contemplates that the gods will eat it, and again the Brāhmaṇas ate the offerings.

(Foot note: So Agni is called eater of ox and cow in RV. VIII.43.11)

A similar assertion has been made by V.S. Apte in Chapter 19, page 389 of 'The Vedic Age', which has been quoted above under the heading of 'Cow killing and Beef in the Marriage Ceremony'.

The Blinded Taddhita or the Use of the Whole for the Part

The late Pandit Shripad Damodar Satavalekar has explained the system of the Blinded Taddhita (lupta-taddhita prakriya) on page 13 of the first part of the Vedic Section of his Go-jñāna-kośa:

"There are some Vedic mantras where the word-meaning seems to convey a strange sense, for example:

गौमि: श्रीणित मत्सरस्। (Rgveda IX.46.4)

Its word-meaning is: Cook or mix (irinīta) soma (matsaram) with cows (gobhiḥ). Prima facie, people are misled to interpret it as an injunction to cook or to mix soma with beef. This misapprehension arises due to the ignorance of grammar. If one is fully conversant with the taddhita affixes, then this error does not arise. Regarding it Ācārya Yāska has said in the Nirukta 2.5:—

When there is at taddhita affix, the whole is used for a part. For example, in gobhīr irinīta matsaram, the word gau means milk. In this connection, it is well-worth to notice what Yāska has elaborated elsewhere too:—

"अष्टं दुह्लातो अन्यास्ततो गवि इत्यख्विन्यथावधानमः।
अधापि चर्मच श्रेष्ठम् च 'गौमि: स्तन्त्रो असि वायव्यस्य हि रघुवन्तः।
अधापि स्नायु च श्रेष्ठम् च 'गौमि: स्तन्त्रा पतितिः प्रकाशं
हर्षवर्त्तिः॥ १ ॥ १॥

उष्णस्वरूपो गिर्रत्स्वरूपः। गगन सतातिति, अयो च गगन गवत्तीतति कुटिति।
'वृद्धो वृद्धो तिन्ततामीमयुध्मोत्तवोः प्रकाशां पुप्पलक्षः।
(Nirukta 2.5)

Here Ācārya Yāska has cited three Vedic mantras and has given meanings of the word go as 'hide, gluten, ligament, and bow-string'—in all of them a part is denoted by the whole.

Arthur Anthony Macdonell and Arthur Berriedale Keith have also accepted it on page 234, Volume I of the 'Vedic Index':—

"The term go is often applied to express the products of the cow. It frequently means the milk, but rarely the flesh of the animal. In many passages it designates leather used as the material of various objects, as a bowstring, or a sling, or things to fasten part of the chariot, or reins, or the lash of a whip."

Instead of saying 'the eyes see', it is said that 'man sees'. Similarly, for cow products like milk, yoghurt (dāhi), ghee, hide, gluten, ligaments and the string made of ligaments—for all of them—the Veda uses one and in such cases, the meaning should be arrived at by the word gau.
context. For the convenience of our readers we will cite an instance
of each.—

अतिर दुर्गतो अध्यासते गवि || (Rg. X.94.9)

"Draining (dhanantah) the soma (anijum) they sit (adhyasate) on
the hide (gavi)."

Ralph T. H. Griffith has also translated it in the same way,
taking gavi to mean 'hide', "draining the stalk they sit upon the Ox's
hide."

See further :—

भनिष्टे च चर्चारे हि भूमि अन्नसाधिता प्रत्यक्षः सुवीरः।
गोष्ठि सन्नद्धि असि बीडळस्वास्याता ने जयतु जेटवानिः॥

(Rg. VI.47.26)

"O chariot fashioned out of the tree (vanaspate) ! be (bhuyah)
strong in your parts (vidyangá), be our mate to carry us across
(pratárayah), being full of brave heroes (suvarah). Compact with
(sanaddhah) straps of leather (gobhih) show forth thy strength
(vidyasram), and may thy rider (te ásthára) with thevincible foe
(jétváni jáyatu)."

In this mantra, the whole denotes the part in two cases :

(1) the word go denotes the straps of leather, and

(2) the word vanaspate refers to the chariot made of the wood
of a tree. Just as the tree is lumbered into wood, and the wood is
manufactured into a chariot, so the hide is derived from the cow
and string from the hide. Similarly, the cow produces milk, milk
curdles into yoghurt, the yoghurt yields butter, and butter is boiled
to ghee—for this reason the word go is used metaphorically for all
these products.

Now let us go on to another illustration :—

सुफां बदने गूढ़ो अध्यास्ति गवि सन्नद्धि पदि प्रत्यक्षः।

(Rg. VI.75.11)

"This arrow is dressed (vaste) in fine feathers (suparam), its
tip (danta) is made out of deer bone (mrgah), it is strongly fastened
with fine threads of cow-hide (gobhih sannaddhah) and when launched
(prasáta) it strikes (patati) the enemy."

In this mantra also there are two instances where the whole denotes
the part. The word mrga 'deer' expresses the bone of a deer. Instead
of saying 'the bone of a deer' only the elliptic expression 'deer' is used.
Further on, the leather straps are expressed by gobhih. This word has
also been used elliptically for the 'strips of cow-hide'.

Also refer to the following mantra of Rigveda X.27.22 :—

बुधे बुधे नियतात्साधिता वधे यापने पुष्पवणुः॥

"The bowstring made of cowhide (gauh) strung (niyata) on every
bow made of wood (vriksha vriksha) resounds (uniyata) and the
arrows with bird-feathers (vayah) which consume men, i.e. strike
them to death (púrúsádah) fall (prapatik) in the ranks of enemies."

In this mantra, three words exemplify the semantics of 'a whole for
a part':—

(1) vrikṣa 'tree' means a bow made from the wood of a tree.
(2) gau 'cow' denotes the bowstring made of cow-hide.
(3) vayah 'birds' stands for arrows with bird-feathers.

From the afore-mentioned examples the readers must have
understood that in the Vedic style the whole stands for its part.
If this principle had been only applicable to the word gau 'cow', then
one could have objected to it as an over-straining, but this is found
in the case of other words also. Over 2500 years ago, Āchārya Yāska has also said the same, and his examples are tabulated below:

1. vanaspātī 'tree' stands for a chariot made of the wood of a tree.
2. ṛkṣa 'tree' stands for a bow made of the wood of a tree.
3. gau 'cow' stands for its milk, ghee and others.
4. gau 'cow' stands for its hide, hide-products etc.
5. gau 'cow' stands for string, bag, etc. made from its hide.
6. mrga 'deer' stands for weapon made from its bones.
7. vṛṣṭa 'birds' stands for the arrows made from the feathers of the birds.

Several instances can be cited, but here we have confined ourselves only to those quoted by Āchārya Yāska. These will clarify to our readers that this is the Vedic style. As such the word gau (cow) used in Vedas or elsewhere as oblation material for yajña indicates milk, ghee etc. obtained from a cow.

The Meaning of Vaśānna

Now we have to consider the meaning of the words ukṣānna and vaśānna which are the epithets of Agni. Europeans surmise that ukṣānna means 'meat of the bull' and vaśānna is 'beef'. The Europeans opine that because these words occur for Agni (fire) in the Vedas, meat was offered in the fire and it was also consumed. If human food is inferred from the synonyms of fire, then the fire is termed viśvād which means 'one who eats all' as in Rgveda VIII.44.26:

युष्मानं विश्वपतिः किं विश्वादः युष्मेषस्मृति: ।
अभिनं पुरुषामयिः समस्तति: ॥

"I glorify with noble ideals Agni, the youthful, Lord of the Universe, sage who eats all viśvād, and who stirs much."

In this mantra, the word viśvād has been used for Agni. Agni eats all (विश्व), hence man ate everything; it is improper to conclude from it that men of the Vedic age were omnivorous. Agni eats all, it consumes whatever is put into it, but how does it prove that man also necessarily consumed all these things.

Faggots of seven kinds of trees were offered into the fire, but how does this lead to the conclusion that Vedic Aryans ate the wood of the seven trees of mango, catechu, wood-apple, Bilu frondosa, banyan, Calotropis gigantea. Such a procedure of deductions would be disastrous. Hence it would be improper to deduce from the words ukṣānna and vaśānna, which are found in the Rgveda, that Vedic Aryans ate meat of the bull and beef.

We have already explained before, the principle that the whole is used for its part. In accordance with it, the word vaśānna means 'the Agni which consumes milk, ghee and other produce from the cow.' Other similar examples are:

In Rgveda I.137.1 there are gośīrāh and gauśīrāh. They are adjectives of soma. Their literal meaning is 'mixed (irūra) with cow (go), and again mixed (aśīrāh) with cow (go). In both of them the word go 'cow' occurs, and here no one interprets it as beef, but as 'milk of a cow'. Mr. Griffith has translated the word gośīrāh as 'bent with milk'. It is known to all that a very pleasant drink was prepared by mixing cow's milk with soma.

Āchārya Sāyana comments on the words gośīrāh and gauśīrāh as follows:

विकारे प्रकृतिः । परोम: । भिदिता: ।
गोमिः क्षेरे: आशिरो । भिदिता: । संजाता: ॥ (Rg. 1.137.1-2)

To wit, here the word go 'cow' has been understood as 'milk' and soma is mixed therewith—so it is said here.
Things mixed with Soma and the meaning of Uksānna

The following products used to be mixed with soma according to information contained in the Vedic mantras:

1. Gādārī vṛddhārṇava: *Sōma mixed with cow’s milk* (R.V. I.137.1)
2. Gādārī śrīśrītā: *Sōma mixed with cow’s milk* (R.V. I.137.1)
3. Dādhyārī dādhyārṇava: *Sōma mixed with curd of cow-milk* (R.V. I.137.2)
4. Yādārī vājārṇava: *Sōma mixed with flour made from parched barley* (R.V. I.187.9)
5. Trāṣārī vṛddhārṇava: *Sōma mixed with milk, curds and parched grain*—Griffith (R.V. V.27.5)
6. Rasārī rasārṇava: *Sōma mixed with juices* (R.V. III.48.1)

From the above it is clear as to which products were mixed with soma. This should be particularly borne in mind by the readers that nowhere is there any reference to the mixing of flesh or blood with soma.

In the Veda, soma is also termed uktā. The root meaning of the word uktā is ‘one who sprinkles’. Drops of juice drip from soma—hence it is called uktā. At first, soma juice is offered at the former altar (पूजावाह) and then it is offered at the latter altar (पूजावाह). Hence, soma is the food of fire—this is the meaning of the word uktā soma—‘one whose food is soma’. The meaning ‘bull’ is not intended here, because meat of the bull is never offered at havan. Hence, meat of the bull is offered into the fire.

For a comprehensive discussion of the meaning of uktā as ‘soma’, see the chapter on ‘Is Beef eating Prescribed in the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upanishad?’

This evidence proves that the terms uktā soma and vaisāna for fire do not mean ‘one who eats the flesh of a bullock or of a vaisā cow’, but it means that ‘one who consumes products obtained from a bullock or a vaisā cow’ as for instance:

- uktā or soma —the fire that consumes soma juice; or
- uktā or bull —the fire that consumes grain produced through agriculture by bullock; or
- uktā or bull —the fire that consumes grain which imparts energy like that of a bull; and
- vaisā vaisātha —the fire that consumes milk-rice-pudding, ghee or other produce from the milk of a vaisā cow.

On page 929, column 2 of the Sanskrit-English Dictionary by Monier-Williams, vaisā ( vaisā ) is translated as “will, wish, desire RV. etc., etc.”, vaisā anu or anu vaisā “according to wish or will”.

The meaning of Rgveda VIII.43.11

Those who translate the terms uktā soma and vaisāna as fire that eats bullock’s flesh or beef, they cite Rgveda VIII.43.11 to prove their contention. The original mantra is as follows:

उक्तानाय वायानाय सोमपुष्टाय केवले स्तोत्रेष्विवमानवे।

It has been translated into Hindi by Pandit Jayadeva Sharma, Vidyalankar, Mimāṃsā-Tirtha and a commentator on all the four Vedas. Its English version is given below:

1. Let us adore and perceive (विद्यम्) with Vedic mantras (सोमपुष्टि) the soul (द्वार आत्मा) that is eternal like the fire (अन्नम्), that consumes food capable of procreating (उक्तानाय), that enjoys food as it desires (वायानाय), and that is of the nature of vigorous and verve (सोमपुष्टाय).
Barrenness of the Vaśā Cow

The late Pandit Shriprad Damodar Satawalkar has discussed this topic on page 78-80 of his book *Gujjāna-kolā* (Ancient Period Vedic Section, Vol. II). Its English version is given below:

In Classical Sanskrit, "Vaśā" means a barren cow. By interpreting these hymns as such under the impression that they pertain to barren cows, many people have gone to the extent that barren cows were slaughtered and different parts of her body were offered at the *yajña*. In our opinion it is excessive overdoing in interpretation. First of all we should examine whether in these hymns the word *vaśā* conveys the meaning of a barren cow or of a milch cow. Let us consider the following verses from the *Atharva Veda*:

**ATHARVA VEDA X.10**

1. वहां सहस्राधार अवदानिति ॥ ॥

We praise the *vaśā* cow which gives us milk in a thousand streams. (4)

2. वहां कंसाय वहां हीरार वहां कोपार अधि पूर्व अस्मिति ॥ ॥

For the *vaśā* cow a hundred keepers and a hundred milkers stand ready with a hundred milk vessels. (5)

3. देशानाचा यथा ॥ ॥

The giver of milk as food is the *vaśā* cow. (6)

4. अयोध्या अयोध्या ॥ ॥

Theadder of the *vaśā* cow symbolises the rain-cloud. (7)

5. चुः श्रां बही अप्रकाशम इति ॥ ॥

O *vaśā* cow! you pour milk. (8)

6. ते पू श्रां अहरश्च इति ॥ ॥

Milk of the *vaśā* cow has been extracted. (10)

7. ते श्रां अहरश्च ब्रह्म पारेंछु रश्चति ॥ ॥

After milking the *vaśā* cow, its milk has been stored in three vessels. (11)

8. तं गर्भं सप्तवन्नः अस्तुतिः ॥ सक्षु हि तामाः यमेकःश्चरति ॥ ॥

When the cow which generally does not conceive becomes pregnant, all get frightened. (23)

9. रेताम अमव्राश्चान्या ॥ पृविकुत कुरियम् ॥ ॥

The semen of *vaśā* cow is her milk, ambrosia-like. (29)

10. वशाय दुधपावनसत्त्वा वसवच वे ॥ ॥

The Śādhyas and Vasus have drunk the milk of the *vaśā* cow in *yajña*. (30)

11. वशाय दुधप शास्त्रा वसवच वे ॥ तेजे् प्रस्तावोऽवयो अश्वया उपाले ॥ ॥

When the Śādhyas and Vasus have taken the milk of the *vaśā* cow, they praise her milk alone in Heaven. (31)

12. एतातिने हुस्ते पूतमात्र उपाले ॥ ॥

Some milk this cow, while others look after its ghee. (32)

**ATHARVA VEDA XII.4**

13. उमयेन अस्त्रे हुस्ते ॥ ॥

This cow gives milk through both udder and teats. (18)
If it is accepted that the vaśā cow, without giving progeny, provides milk in such a large quantity, then it will also have to be accepted that only a very few fortunate persons are blessed with such a cow. Such cows surely cannot be had in numbers. In no circumstances, can a man think of destroying such a rare animal. Even in foreign countries where beef is eaten without any scruples and restrictions, even there if one were to get such a cow by good luck, one would protect and maintain her by all means and in no circumstances will allow her slaughter. As such, those who try to establish that the vaśā cow used to be slaughtered in the Vedic period are altogether in the wrong. Not to speak of the slaughter of the vaśā cow, even the killing of an ordinary cow in the Vedic period cannot be established according to the Vedas.

Keeping his self-interest and financial gain in view, even a butcher will not like to kill a cow having such qualities, but on the other hand he will protect her and will always benefit himself from her milk etc.
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in the Marriage Ceremony?

In the first volume of the History of the Indian People, entitled *The Vedic Age*, published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London under the auspices of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, Dr. V. M. Apte has written in the 19th chapter on 'Social and Economic Conditions', (Second edition, 1952) under the caption: "Marriage and the Position of Women" (page 389).

"A hymn in RV (X. 85)—which may be called the wedding hymn—gives us some idea of the oldest marriage ritual. The bridegroom and party proceed to the bride's house (X. 17.1), where the well-adorned bride remains ready (IV. 58.9) to join the marriage-feast. The guests are entertained with the flesh of cows killed on the occasion (X. 83.13). The ceremony proper now commences. The bridegroom grasps the hand of the bride and leads her round the fire (X. 85. 36, 38). These two acts constitute the essence of the marriage and the bridegroom is now the husband who takes her by hand (hasta-grā̃thāḥ X. 18.8). The bridegroom next takes the bride home in a car, in a wedding procession (X. 85.7, 8, 10, 24-27, 42). Then follows the consummation which is signified chiefly by the purification of the bride's garment (X. 85. 28-30, 35)."

Thereafter Dr. Apte writes on page 393 under the caption: "Food and Drink" (page 393):—

"The cow receives the epithet *agnyā* (not to be killed) in the Rgveda, and is otherwise a very valued possession. It is difficult to reconcile this with the eating of beef, but we may get some explanation if we remember the following:

(i) Firstly, it was the flesh of the ox rather than of the cow that was eaten; a distinction was definitely made.

(ii) The flesh of the cow was (if at all) eaten at the sacrifices only, and it is well known that one sacrifices one's dearest possession to please the gods.

(iii) Even in the Rgveda, only *vālās* (barren cows) were sacrificed. For example, Agni is called in VIII.43.11 as *vaiśānava*.

The expression *aṭṭhākṛit ṣaḥ* (cows fit for guests) in X.68.3 implies the same distinction."

In the Vedic Index, Vol. 2, page 145, Arthur Anthony Macdonell and Arthur Berriedale Keith have stated:

"The marriage ceremony was accompanied by the slaying of oxen, clearly for food."

Before taking into consideration the 13th mantra of the 85th sūkta of the tenth mandala of the Rgveda, on the basis of which the aforementioned scholars have alleged beef in the marriage ceremony, it would be in the fitness of things that all the mantras of the 85th sūkta be considered for the appropriate setting of the whole situation.

Explanation of Rgveda IV.58.9

Dr. Apte alleges that according to Rgveda IV.58.9 as the bridegroom's party reaches the house of the bride, she is well-adorned and keeps ready to join the marriage-feast. The mantra reads:

कन्याय वहनमेतत्वा उ अध्यजना अभि चाकश्च शीमाः

यथा कोम खुप्पते यथा यथो गुनस्य धारा अभि तद्धर्ते

The padapāṭhas or break-up of the constituent words is as follows:

कन्या, यथा, वहनम, पत्तय, उ, अध्यजना, अभि, चाकश्चेन, विशीमाः,

यथा, कोम, खुप्पते, यथा, यथो, गुनस्य, धारा, अभि, तद्धर्ते

We have looked up all these words in the Sanskrit English dictionaries.
A Review of ‘Beef in Ancient India’

of Monier-Williams and V. S. Apte. None of these words means a ‘feast’.

The word meaning of the mantra is as follows:

कक्षि हि — As the girls
कल्य आबन्ध — having adorned themselves with ornaments
वधु पदन्ति — are resplendent
सूक्ष्म एवं — while going for marriage

Likewise:

(Physical meaning)
कस्म संमुच्छते— where the soma-yajña is conducted.
कस्म वस: — where the yajña takes place
तथा — there
सन्तभवान — I see the shining
अभिन्नामापिः — streams of ghee.

(Spiritual significance)
where there are disciples of noble virtues.
where there is the yajña of intellectual give-and-take
there
I envision or experience
the uninterrupted flow of the expression of knowledge which is like the fast-flowing ghee, i.e.,
illuminated knowledge is visualised.

This is an allegorical mantra, and there is not even a remote inkling of a beef feast.

H. H. Wilson has translated this mantra into English and there is not even a far-fetched allusion to a beef-feast. His translation is quoted below:

Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriage
Explanation of Rgveda IV.58.9

“I contemplate these streams of ghee as they flow from where the soma is effused, where the sacrifice (is solemnized), as maidens decorating themselves with unguents to go to the bridegroom”. (RV. IV.5.13.9)

Ralph T. H. Griffith has referred to the bridal feast in the English translation of this mantra, but there is no reference to beef. His complete translation is as under:

“As maidens deck themselves with gay adornment to join the bridal feast, I now behold them,

Where Soma flows and sacrifice is ready, thither the streams of holy oil are running.”

In the English-Sanskrit dictionaries of Monier-Williams and V. S. Apte, the following Sanskrit equivalents are given for ‘feast’: सत्किया, सहमोजन, सम्मोजन, उतस्मानसम्मार: परमान्नलसम्मार:, विशिष्टान्नम्मार:.

How this meaning ‘of joining the marriage feast’ has been inserted by Dr. V. M. Apte in ‘The Vedic Age’ or other authors into this mantra, cannot be comprehended.

Dr. V. M. Apte writes that it was the flesh of the ox rather than of the cow that was eaten, because the cow has been termed agnys (अग्न्या) ‘one who is not to be killed’, and she is also a valued possession. According to him, the bulls are not valued wealth, and thus they are not referred to as the inviolable in the Vedas. But this is a misunderstanding on his part. The late Pandit Shripad Damodar Satavalekar has discussed it at length in his Go jhāna-kosā, Vedic section, part 2, on pages 8-9 of the Introduction. It is cited below in our English translation:
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriage

Meaning of Rgveda X.85

The inviolability of the bull

The word agnaya (अग्नया) is used for the cow, likewise the term agnaya (अग्नया) is applied to the bull. Therefore, like the cow, the bull too is to be protected, looked after and inviolable. See Atharva Veda 9.4.

शक्तिवशे रघुनिति हनि चक्रुषा
धृतिः चेत सर्वायुः सप्त राजमुनि
वाः पाटितसि: ||17||

हर्वाण च दयाना न नैरुपक्तयान्य: ||18||

विनियित विशाशे ते देवा यो प्राणाद्वा अप्सरमात्स्वहोति ||17||

That lord of the cows, the inviolable (agnaya-अग्नय) that is, the bull, he listens to good tidings with his ears, he banishes famine by his eyes, he chases away the demons with his horns. He worships with a hundred yajñas, the fires do not consume (agnayah na dvanit) him (agni, the bull). All the gods promote him who offers (a janah) the bull (janah) to the Brahma.

In the above mantra, the following points deserve attention:

1. The bull is termed agnaya (अग्नय) which means 'not to be killed'.
2. The donation of a bull to a Brahmana is equivalent to a hundred yajñas (mantra 18). Such is the importance of the protection, bringing up and donation of a bull.
3. The fires do not consume him, such is the importance of a bull (mantra 18).
4. The bull does not hear untoward speech, because all only praise him (mantra 17).
5. The bull does away the horrors of famine (avarti hanti cakṣuṣā). The bull eliminates famine by agriculture (mantra 17).

By perusing the above Atharva-vedic description of the bull, the readers will realise the utility of the bull, so who will dare to slaughter him for filling up his stomach and who would be willing to invite famine thereby. If the bull averts famine, it is necessary to keep him well-guarded.

Dr. V. S. Apte has written: "The flesh of the cow was (if at all) eaten at the sacrifices only, and it is well known that one sacrifices one’s dearest possession to please the gods." It should be known that to sentient being the dearest is one’s own body; so if offering of life has to be made to please the gods, the dearest possession that is one’s own body should be offered. It is his misunderstanding that the gods are pleased by the offering of a cow. See its detailed discussion under the caption: ‘Were Cow-Slaughter, Meat Sacrifice and Meat-Eating Prevalent in the Vedic Age?’

Hereafter Apte writes that according to the Rgveda a barren (śād) cow was offered, because in Rgveda VIII.43.11 Agni is called śādā. By this he means that the food of agni is śād, therefore, a barren (śād) cow was slaughtered and its flesh offered in havan. To consider the Vedic śād cow to be barren is due to ignorance. For its correct interpretation see the caption: ‘The meaning of Uṃśāna and Vapāna and Barrenness of the śād cow’.

Still further, Dr. Apte asserts that the expression atithinir gu (Rgveda 10.68.3) also implies the same. See its detailed discussion under the sub-caption: ‘The Meaning of Atithinirgha and Atithiva of the caption: ‘Is Beef Possible in Madhuparka?’

The meaning of Rgveda X.85

Now we will consider the relevance of cow-slaughter and beef in the marriage ceremony. It has been discussed by the late Pandit Shripad Damodar Satavalekar in his Gṛyāṅga-kola Vedic Section. Part I, pages 16-20. It is quoted below in our English translation. The following mantra is cited in support:

The meaning of Rgveda X.85
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriage
Meaning of Rgveda X.85

While considering these mantras the readers should bear in mind that it is an allegorical description of the marriage of Suryā (सूर्य) the Daughter of the Sun, to the Moon. Its meaning is:

Earth is sustained by Truth: by Surya (सूर्य) are the heavens sustained. By verity the Adityas stand secure, and Soma stands in heaven—चुलोक (1); Intellectual power was the pillow of her couch, sight was the unguent for her eyes: All the objects from the earth to the heavens were her treasure when bride Surya (सूर्य) went unto her Lord. (7); Mantras were the cross-bars of the chariot, Kurira-metre decked it; The bridesmen were the Twin Aśvin, Agni led them all. (8); Soma was he who wood the bride, groomsmen were both the Aśvin, when the Sun-god Savitā, bestowed his willing Suryā (सूर्य) on her Lords. (9); Her Mind was the bridal car; the covering thereof was heaven; the two white steers drew it, when Surya (सूर्य) approached her husband's home. (10); The two bulls were kept steady in place by the mantras of the Rig and Sāma Vedas. The two ears were the two chariot wheels; stationary and moving were the path in the heavens. (11); Clean as thou wentest, were thy wheels; the ṛṣī breath was the axle of the chariot. Seated on such a chariot fashioned of the Mind, Suryā (सूर्य) proceeds to her Lord. (12); Savitā gave a bountiful dowry to Suryā (सूर्य). She moved forward. This is the time of the Mahā constellation when the cows are sent as dowry (Europeans have interpreted it as cows are slain during the Mahā constellation), that is, the rays of the sun reach the moon and in the Phāluni constellation (अर्जुन्योष परस्यपय) the moon Soma is wedded to Suryā. (13); O ye twin Aśvin, when you came to Surya's wedding on a three-wheeled chariot, where was the one chariot wheel of yours? Where stood ye for the command?
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriages
Meaning of Rgveda X,85

| Unguent for the eyes | sight | (Mantra 7) |
| Treasure | all the objects | (Mantra 8) |
| Crossbars of the chariot | Mantras | (Mantra 9) |
| Shine of the chariot | Metres of the mantras | (Mantra 10) |
| Groomsmen of the bride | The twin Āśvins | (Mantra 11) |
| Herald | Agni | |
| The two wheels of the chariot | The two ears | (Mantra 12) |

Dr. Wilson has translated the expression aghāsu hanyante gāvah as 'the cows are whipped along', which is a bit better than Griffith, Whitney and others who have understood it as 'the cows are slaughtered' which is a grave blunder as is clear from the whole context. The meanings of the mantras as we have given above are also accepted by the Europeans; they differ only in the slaughter of cows. In fact, now it is not necessary to go into further details. Yet, we will elaborate the allegory of the bridal chariot to make it clearly intelligible to the readers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL (in worldly usage)</th>
<th>DEIFIC (in the universe)</th>
<th>METAPHYSICAL (in the body)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father of the bride</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>The Supreme father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride</td>
<td>Suryā (Light of the Sun)</td>
<td>Intellective power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridegroom</td>
<td>Soma</td>
<td>Spirit (ātāma) endowed with the 16 degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groomsmen of the bride</td>
<td>Twin Āśvins</td>
<td>Inhalation and Exhalation</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the bridal party</td>
<td>Agni in the fore</td>
<td>Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unguent in the eyes</td>
<td>Scenes</td>
<td>Sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridal treasure</td>
<td>All the objects</td>
<td>All the parts of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows</td>
<td>Rays</td>
<td>Senses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriage

Use of the root 'Han' with the word 'Go'

To kill; To multiply; To go.

The readers will find these meanings in every dictionary. If the readers take these meanings into account, then the meaning of the expression

अवासु हन्यन्ते गावहिण्यो: पुष्वते

in the mantra (even leaving out the allegory) will be clear,

(अवासु) at the time of the Maghā constellation
(गावहिण्यो:) the cows (हन्यन्ते) are driven along, and
(पुष्वते:) during the Phālguni constellation
(पुष्वते:) the marriage takes place.

Dr. Wilson has taken only this meaning. Besides the allegorical interpretation, as a matter of fact on a cursory glance too, this is the straight-forward meaning. Though the well-known meaning of the root han is 'to kill', yet the other significance of 'to move' has not become obsolete. If we take it to mean 'to multiply', then the expression gāvah hanyante will mean 'the number of cows is multiplied', the cows are multiplied two-fold or four-fold. When a marriage takes place, several people collect together and to offer them milk, cows are collected and brought from place to place and thus their numbers are augmented. See how perfectly and naturally this interpretation suits the context. A meaning which will conform to the concept of inviolability of the cow inherent in the word aghaṣṭ and which will suit the context, that meaning alone will be correct and appropriate.

Besides, it will be clear from the tabulation that the cows of the physical plane, are the rays in the deific, and the sensory powers on the metaphysical plane. In case of doubt, the meaning should be determined by recourse to other areas of semantic usage. On them being a doubt as to the meaning on the physical plane, i.e. in worldly practice, whether the cows should be slaughtered or not during marriage,

Use of the root 'Han' with the word 'Go'

The word go (गो:) refers to the rays of the sun; this is beyond doubt. In kṣaya the root is han. The great grammarian Pāṇini, in sūtra 2.2.23 it means 'killing' and 'moving'. In the dictionaries, this
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriage

Use of the root ‘Han’ with the word ‘Go’

The root ‘han’—Marathi हन (han)—means to prod with a stick, i.e., a cowherd leads the cows by a stick in whichever direction he wants to take them. So this is also the signification of the word hanana. If we take this meaning of the root han, then hanyante gāvah would mean that the cowherds prod the cows to the desired direction. In the context of the marriage, they bring them together and take them to the desired destination.

Whichever alternative we accept, this much is clear that the killing of cows is not intended. Ācārya Sāyana also does not translate it as killing, मन्यन्ति न बलौ गावः हनयने तत्काल्रे प्रलेख्यम्, i.e. at the time of the magha constellation the cows are driven to their destination being prodded on with sticks. The cows starting from the house of the Sun are guided on the correct way to the house of the Moon. The purport of the commentary of Sāyana is that the sun god gave cows as dowry to his daughter at her marriage. To bring the cows to the house of the moon the cowherd of the sun drive them along, and is necessary to keep them on the correct path they prod them with sticks and finally the cows reach the house of soma, and at the time of the phalguni constellation the daughter of the sun is wedded to the moon. If we accept the meaning of ‘killing of cows’, then the dowry would be annihilated and the would be son-in-law would be angered, and the marriage would be interrupted. So the meaning of ‘killing’ does not apply here.

In whatever manner we consider the passage, it will be evident that cow-slaughter is not meant here. Inspite of all this European scholars have written on the basis of this mantra that ‘the marriage ceremony was accompanied by slaying of oxen, clearly for food’. It is really astonishing how they jot down their imagination without considering the context. The Europeans may indulge in fancy, but we should arrive at a rendering after due consideration of the context. As we have seen in the above mantra in no way does cow-slaughter fit in the context, yet Europeans are bent upon presenting this mantra as an evidence of beef-eating. Can there be a bigger blunder?
Was there Cow-Slaughter & Beef in Marriage?

Use of the root 'han' with the word 'go'

9. han—to give up; to abandon.
10. han—to obstruct.

Ten meanings of the root han are given in dictionaries. Which of them are applicable to the ancient Vedic mantras, can be decided only after considering their relevancy to the context. If the root han is interpreted as 'to kill' wherever it occurs, that would become nonsensical.

Conclusion

Those scholars who have tried to show on the basis of Rig-Veda that the cow-slaughter was resorted to for feasting the bride-groom party, have picked up stray mantras from here and there without any coherence. They have tried to mislead the people by their academic standing or by the importance of their status. The bride is set to be elegantly adorned and dressed to be taken to participate in the bridal feast of the fourth Mandala of the Rig-Veda, and in the remote tenth Mandala it is alleged that the marriage party is feasted on beef. While unconnected and far removed, both of them are allegorical descriptions as has been shown earlier. Those scholars whose intellect runs over to cover such unrelated statements, far removed from each other, it is beyond comprehension that their intelligence is unable to see the reality of facts. Undoubtedly, they have moulded their researches being motivated by special considerations. This is amply attested and it must have become evident to our readers by the clarifications offered in this essay.
Was the Cow Killed at Cremation?

Raja Rajendralal Mitra writes on page 2 lines 4-6 of his booklet "Beef in Ancient India":

"A supply of beef was deemed an absolute necessity by pious Hindus in their journey from this world to another world, and a cow was invariably killed to be burnt with the dead."

He has further referred the readers to his article 'Funeral Ceremonies of Ancient Hindus'. On ransacking, we found it in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol. XXXIX, Part I, No. IV of 1870. It was delivered as a speech in November 1870. In lines 3-10 of page 251 it is stated:—

"The Aranyakas, after arranging the sacrificial vessels, gives the mantra for covering the corpse with the raw hide of the cow, which should be entire with head, hair and feet, the hairy side being kept upper-most. The mantra for the purpose is addressed to the hide: 'Cuiras, carefully protect this body from the light of Agni; envelop it with thy thick fat and marrow; holding this impudent Agni, desirous of seeing and consuming it by his vigour, allow him not to go astray.'"

The mantra of the Aranyakas referred to above is the 7th mantra of the 16th sukta of the 10th mandala of the Rgveda.

In lines 7-9 of page 147 of the 'Vedic Index', Vol. II, it is asserted:—

"The ritual of cremation of the dead required the slaughter of a cow as an essential part: the flesh being used to envelope the dead body."

The late Pt. Shrīpād Dāmodar Sātavalekar has discussed this passage at length on pages 4-5 of the Introduction to his 'Go-jiāṇākosa', ancient sector, Vedic section, part II, under the heading 'Antya Yajñā'. It is quoted below in extenso in our English translation:—

"According to Vedic tradition the whole life of man is a great yajñā. To devote one's entire life to the good of all is a yajñā, and death of the human person is the final offering. When the final offering, i.e. the offering of one's body, is effected, that is the completion of the life-long yajñā. The readers should note the loftiness of the conception of a life pervaded by yajñā. In the Vedic tradition, cremation is not mere reduction of the body to ashes, but it is the final yajñā, and being the last offering it is the consummating yajñā. The body is offered into the flaming fires; from this point of view the offering of flesh i.e. one's entire body—into fire is in accord with Vedic dharma. But can this be termed a yajñā with meat? Now-a-days a meat sacrifice means the offering of the flesh of a horse, a cow, or a bull. This is quite different from the final offering or cremation. In this ultimate act, the offering of the human body or of another body, is not meant to be eaten. As the dead body has not to be kept in the house, it is burnt and this is termed the last yajñā. So if one says that meat is used in yajñā it is true in a way, but what is intended and understood by it—that is not the truth. So we say that inspire of fire being named kavyāda 'consuming flesh or corpse' it does not prove the eating of animal flesh. Fire was so termed because of the cremation of dead bodies in the Vedic age. As a matter of course, men die, their corpses are cremated. In war, horses, bulls and other animals die in battle along with men—all of them were cremated in Vedic times. The readers can judge from this custom that though fire is called kavyāda, it in no way proves the eating of meat:

अनेवर्म परि गोभिरयांस्ति स प्रोणुऽयांवस्ता मेतसा च ।

नेत्त्रा सूनुर्वसस्त्र तह पार्वती द्वियुप्तमयोऽयांकै॥

(Rg. X.16.7)

Here the word gobbhik is used. Europeans have surmised from it that the corpse was covered with beef, and for it, they deem cow-slaughter to be essential. Several Indian scholars also think likewise.
Here it has to be taken into consideration that the word gobhit is in the plural, and according to Sanskrit grammar, plural means 'at least three cows'. If a human corpse has to be covered with flesh, will it require three cows as minimum? If this rite has to be accomplished with beef, will one cow not suffice? The body of a cow is three-to-four times the human body, so the covering of the corpse of one human being will not require at least three or more cows.

This will draw the attention of our readers to the fact that something else is intended. By the word gau (गौ) are intended milk, yoghurt (योगर्त), ghee, hide, etc. This is accepted even by Europeans. So we must find out for which product three or more cows can be required during cremation, and what is it that cannot be effected by one cow alone.

Flesh, hide, lard, etc. can be obtained in sufficient quantity from one cow. So ghee alone is the product which will have to be obtained from more than three cows. It is essential to smear the corpse with ghee before putting it on the fire. Those who perform havan they know well that ghee is poured over oblation-materials before they are offered into the fire. So also the kindling faggots are soaked in ghee before being put into the fire. In the final havan when the body, the consummating faggot is offered into the fire, will ghee not be required? Now-a-days ghee required for properly soaking the faggots is not available, so they are just sprinkled over with a few drops. In the Vedic age when there was no dearth of ghee, it is no wonder that the dead body was well anointed with ghee, the body that was the faggot offering par excellence into the ultimate yajna. The ghee also allays poison. When the corpse burns, poisonous air fills the atmosphere; to cleanse it the more the ghee the better, and more and more necessary it is. The atmosphere is purified by it. According to Vedic custom, the quantity of ghee used for cremation was equal to the weight of the body. Now-a-days the Hindus make 5 to 10 tolas suffice for this rite.

To comprehend 'gau' as meaning ghee produced from a cow, is not new. It is accepted by all. Inspite of this, it is amazing how one can surmise the slaughter of a cow by the mantra under discussion.

The attention of scholars has not been drawn to the plural form of gau, or they have intentionally overlooked it, hence this non-sensical rendering—this is clear and evident.

The detailed consideration of this mantra also proves that in the Vedic age there was no idea of slaughtering either a milk-cow or a vais cow.
WAS A RED BULLOCK SLAIN FOR ITS HIDE AT THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASIONS OF MARRIAGE AND ROYAL CONSECRATION?

In ‘Cow-Slaughter—Horns of a Dilemma’, edited by Śri A. B. Shah, Śri Mukandi Lal has written under the caption: ‘Cow Cult in India’ on page 18:

“Slaughter of cows on ceremonial occasions was considered auspicious in ancient India. The bride and bridegroom were to sit on the raw skin of a red bull before the altar. The skin must have been of the red bull sacrificed on the occasion of the marriage ceremony to feed the guests.”

He continues further:

“Similarly, on the occasion of the coronation of kings, the raw skin of a red bull was placed under the seat of the king to be anointed. Probably the king had to sit on fresh cow hide to perform the ceremony.”

We have already introduced Messrs. A. B. Shah and Mukandi Lal and have given an assessment of the depth of their knowledge under the heading “Were Cows slaughtered at King Rantideva’s Place?” It is not necessary to repeat it here.

Śri Mukandi Lal has not referred to the Dharmaśāstras wherever the above facts are cited. It appears that he has no personal knowledge of their source and neither did he find it necessary to go into their details. His sole objective seems to be to do propaganda for cow-slaughter somehow or the other, making use of the stature of his position. Whatever it be, it is necessary to clarify the points raised by him in trying to mislead the common man, so that false apprehensions are removed.

Was a Red Bull-Hide Obtained by Slaughter at a Marriage Ceremony?

For cow-slaughter in a marriage ceremony and for serving beef to guests during a marriage feast, see the heading ‘Was There Cow-Slaughter and Beef in the Marriage Ceremony?’

The contention of Śri Mukandi Lal is that beef was served to guests at marriage, and for it a red bull was slaughtered then and there and the raw hide of the red bull was used as a seat for the bride and groom. Such a raw hide was also used at the coronation ceremony as a seat for the King to be coronated. Let the readers consider how practicable it is that a red bull was slain just after the arrival of the groom’s party; its raw hide was utilized for seating the bride and groom and a similar fresh raw hide was employed as the seat for a King to be coronated and to serve the meat of that red bull to guests in the groom’s party? The fresh raw hide of a red bullock slain instantaneously will be dripping with blood and its flesh will be oozing, which is a horrid sight. It will be smelling horrible. Is it possible that such an item fits in the festive decorations of a marriage or of a royal consecration? Inspite of this, men like Mukandi Lal try to mislead people by such impossible fantasies without a proper analysis of the whole situation, taking undue advantage of the stature of their position.

In recent times, Pandurang Vaman Kane has made a detailed study of the Dharmaśāstras. Its results have been incorporated in his book ‘History of Dharmaśāstras’. From the description given in its Vol. 2, part 1, page 530, under the caption ‘Ceremonies of Marriage’, it is clear that according to the Sūtras, only the bride is seated on a bullock-hide and that too when she comes to the bridegroom’s house after the performance of the due departure ceremony. On that occasion the groom makes a few offerings in the marital fire. All the gṛhya- sūtras we have been able to gather, prove this very situation. Thus it clearly proves as false and unfounded the contention of Mukandi Lal that a bullock was slain then and there by the bride’s party in
All the ghyas-stra texts are not available now-a-days. After
attempts in vain, we have been able to consult Avadhuta, Kathaka,
Vardha, Bhadraya, Sandhara, and Sandhara.

War a Red Bull-Bull? Sutra for Marriage and Royal Ceremonies?

Sankhaliya: ghyas-stra —

1. Madhukaraghyas-stra: 1.8.9

2. Gobindaghyas-stra: 2.13

3. Vardhaghyas-stra: (Gorewad’s Oriental Series No. VIII.


5. Banbhaghyas-stra: 1.8.10

6. Banbhaghyas-stra: 1.8.10

7. Gautamaghyas-stra: 433 (284)
Was a Red Bullock Slain for Marriage and Royal Consecration?

The Meaning of Anaduh and Gocarma

to consummate certain rites after reaching the house of her in-laws after the marriage ceremonies.

The meanings of the word rohita (रोहित) in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary are as follows:

(i) a red deer ;
(ii) a red mare ;
(iii) a red or chestnut horse.

So the meaning of रोहिते कर्मणि can also mean the hide of a red, deer, red mare or a red horse.

The Meaning of Anaduh and Gocarma

According to the texts of Baudhāyana, Pāraskara and Bṛhadāya gṛhya-sūtras given above, where अन्दुरूपजा रोहिते कर्मणि उपवेषायति occurs, it is followed by इह गाऊऽ निदितढ्, इह अकश्च: इह पुष्प: which means 'may the cows (oxen) sit here, here the horses, here men'. In Sanskrit the word gau also connotes a bullock. It can mean that on the return of the marriage party the bullocks yoked to the chariots may also sit, i.e. remain there, there also the horses, there the people, i.e. the groom's party. How can the sitting area of the hide of a bullock or deer accommodate so many bullocks, horses and men? To make the sentence इह गाऊऽ निदितढ्, इह अकश्च: इह पुष्प: significant, what can be the intent of the Pāraskara-gṛhya-sūtra अन्दुरूपजा अकश्च: इह गाऊऽ रोहिते कर्मणि उपवेषायति? This ought to be well-considered. Its correct interpretation has been given by Pt. Dinanath Sastri Sarasvati in his Sanatan-Dharmāloko, Vol. 6, pages 436-440 whose resume is given below:

1. According to the Ranti-koia, the word anaduh (अन्दुरूप) signifies the main residence or the gaiety room in the marriage pavilion. The etymology of the word anaduh (अन्दुरूप) is अन्दुः क्षिति-ऽति अन्दुरूप. So the meaning of anaduh (अन्दुरूप) given by the Ranti-koia is correct as being the main residence which bears the chariot in the form of husband and wife.
Was a Red Bullock Slain for Marriage and Royal Consolation?  
The Meaning of Anadah and Gocarna  

The Vācaspatya lexicon says अनुद्ध आसन्नदेशार्थी which means that the word anadah (अनुद्ध) is used to connote 'an adjacent place' etc. This refers to the gaiety room near the marriage pavilion, where it is appropriate to seat the bride, or the groom and the bride together.

2. रोहिते बलिन can also mean 'red hide' and also 'the hide of a red deer, or red horse or mare'. A deer-skin seat has been in vogue for ceremonial sitting. Thus the meaning of the sentence अनुद्धे आसारे अनुद्धे रोहिते बलिने उपवेशयनानि in Pāraskara grhya-sūtra 1.8.10 according to the two preceding interpretations will be : (उपवेशयनानि) he seats (her) (रोहिते) on deer-hide (अनुद्धे) in a covered (आसारे) building (अनुद्धे) in the gaiety room near the marriage pavilion.

3. The hide of a bullock is also termed go-carma (गोचर्म 'bovine hide'). Let us now consider the various meanings of go-carma (गोचर्म).

The technical senses of go-carma are as follows:

(a) In the Mitākṣara commentary of the Yajñavalkya-smṛti :—

दशशतन दण्डेन ब्रह्म दण्डिनिवर्तनम्। दश तात्त्विक गोचर्म

i.e. 'ten hands make a rod (हंड), 30 rods a nivartana (निवर्तन). A land area of ten such nivartanas is termed a go-carma (गोचर्म).

The meaning of nivartana in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary, page 560, column 1 is as follows :

"a measure of land 20 rods or 200 cubits or 40,000 square hastas".

The counterpart of the English word 'rod' in Sanskrit is danda (हंड). The English word 'cubit' is defined in an English dictionary as the measure from the elbow to the end of the middle finger which is 18 to 22 inches. An English dictionary defines the length of 'rod' as 5.1/2 yards or 16.1/2 feet, which is approximately ten hands. In the Yajñavalkya-smṛti too a 'rod' (danda) has been reckoned as 'ten hands' which tallies with the English dictionary. According to the Yajñavalkya-smṛti a nivartana is 30 rods long × 30 rods wide area of land, i.e. 300 hands × 300 hands = 90,000 sq. hands. But, according to the Sanskrit English Dictionary of Monier-Williams, a nivartana is 20 rods or 200 hands, i.e. 200 hands long × 200 hands wide = 40,000 square hands.

(b) Gṛhya-saṁgraha 1.39 :

प्रशस्त्वकस्तियः यथा गावः विष्ठितं स्वमणयः

वात्सल्य-प्रत्यतानां गोचर्म हि संतितः सङ्कितः।

that is, an area in which 100 bulls and cows can sit with their calves, that is termed gocarma (गोचर्म).

The Candra-kānta-bhāṣya comments on the above :—

गावं शतं चूर्णस्वेतं यथा तिलेक्ष्यत्रित्रात्।

एक्क गोचरं मात्र तथ ग्राहवृद्धिविद्धो जनः।

that is, where a 100 cows and bullocks can sit without restrictive restraints, that land-area is termed gocarma (गोचर्म) by those conversant with the Vedas.

(c) The lexicon Padmacandra-kośa defines it on page 136 as a measurement of land 100 yards long and about 3 yards wide.

(d) It is stated in the 9th stanza of the Brhaspati-smṛti :—

स्वयं गोचरं तु त्यं स्वत्तित्वतित्रित्रात्।

वात्सल्य-प्रत्यतानां तद्य गोचरं हि स्वमणयः॥

i.e. where 1000 cows and bulls can sit comfortably with their calves, that measure of land is termed a gocarma (गोचर्म).

The measurements of gocarma given in the Sanskrit English Dictionary of Monier-Williams on page 364, column 3 are as follows :—
A Review of 'Beef in Ancient India'

(i) A particular measure of surface—a place large enough for the range of 100 cows, one bull and their calves: Gṛhya-sūtras;

(ii) or a place 10 times as large: Parāśara-smṛti;

(iii) a place 300 feet long by 10 feet broad: Wilson;

(iv) or a place 30 Dandas long by 1 Danda and 7 Hastas broad: Brhasp (Mahābhārata xiii, 3121 Sch.).

Thus, gocarma (गोचर्म) means a land area where, according to the Gṛhya-saṁgraha, a 100 cows and bulls can sit along with their calves, or according to the Brhaspati-smṛti where a 1000 cows and bulls can be accommodated along with their calves. These meanings are appropriate to the context, because where चामणि उपवेश्यति is prescribed, there it is also enjoined that हृत गात्रि निपीदति, हृत अवायः; हृत पृथ्वी: i.e. 'may the cows sit here, here the horses and here men'. If we take the connotation of an animal-hide, then how can a hide accommodate all the numerous chariot-bullocks, horses and men assembled for the marriage ceremony? The aforesaid technical meaning alone is appropriate to the context as it refers to a measure of land which can be occupied by cows and others. So sometimes a meaning based on the etymology alone becomes irrelevant and absurd; only a signification arrived at after due consideration of the context can be faultless. Thus, it will mean:—at the groom's house, near the marriage pavilion, there should be an area of land which is sufficient to accommodate all the bullocks yoked to chariots, riding horses, and all the people who have arrived for the grand occasion, and where there is a seat of red deer-hide for the bride in the illuminated gaiety room.

In his article, Mukandi Lal opines that at a royal consecration the king had to sit on a fresh and raw skin of a red bull. Just as the technical meaning of gocarma (गोचर्म) alone is relevant in a marriage ceremony, likewise the same meaning is appropriate to the ceremony of a royal consecration, because during a coronation too, there is a multitudinous crowd as at a marriage.

Hide Seat in a Royal Consecration

It has not been possible to trace a text which details the rites that are performed when a king ascends the throne. In the consecration, during a rajasūya yajña, a seat of bullock-hide is referred to here and there, but there is no reference that a fresh and raw hide should be obtained by slaying the animal then and there. Now we will consider all the descriptions that we have found.

Johannes Cornelis Heesterman has written a book 'The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration', wherein it is said on page 106, chapter 13, paragraph 1:

"The union will be administered to the King while standing up a tiger skin."

(At Mahābhīṣṇa, described by Kauśika Sūtra, likewise a tiger skin is used (17, 13). At the Laghyavīṣṇu, however, a bull's hide is used (17,3).)

Besides the tiger skin, Āpastamba-srautasūtra and Vārasaṁ-srautasūtra prescribe also a throne of khadira or Udāmbhara on which the tiger skin is to be fastened. The other authorities do not use a throne at the union. The actual enthronement takes place later, after the chariot drive."

According to Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary, khadira (क्षदिर) means:

Acacia Catechu (having very hard wood, the resin of which is used in medicine called Catechu, Khayar, Terra japoena) page 336, column 3.
and *udumbara* (उदुम्बर) means:

The tree Ficus Glomerata. page 196, column 3:

In the above cited texts, there is not even a hint that tiger-skin or bullock-hide was obtained by slaying them then and there, and it was a raw hide. It may be possible that a new (unused) skin-seat that it was necessary for the royal coronation. Consecrations are not of daily occurrence: they take place once in an age, for which a new skin has never been used for any purpose can be preserved, and such an un-used new skin can be used for the coronation ceremony. A new skin does not mean a raw skin obtained by slaying the animal and there. A skin which has never been used for any purpose and which has been kept in a store-house, is a new skin. Whichever *śrauta-sūtra* could be found and wherever a hide-seat is referred to, all such passages are cited below in original for Sanskrit-knowledge of readers, so that it may become clear that a new hide-seat does not mean a raw skin which has been obtained by slaying the animal at that very moment:

1. Āpastamba-śrauta 18.15.5.:

अष्टोष्टतिवर्णिणिः कार्कियंग्रहेण बालस्तंत्री प्रतिलाभः सोमस्वय निकृष्ठितः नययो शाल्वद्वम् प्राचीनग्रामस्वामस्वस्वद्वमास्तिव प्रमाणं निरर्थिति विशेषयः प्राचीनादिलित्तिति शाल्वद्वम् हेतुस्य निरंतरलित्तिति

This description agrees with that given in J. C. Heesterman's 'The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration' as to the type of wood used for the throne.

2. Kātyāyana-śūtra 15.5.1:

महत्तमान्यात प्राताप्पण्य ज्वाराचर्मस्वतूनाति सोमस्वय निविर्विषति

3. Baidhāyana-śrauta-śūtra 12.10:

शय वाजमानाथम शाल्वद्वम्प्राचीनग्रामस्वामस्वस्वद्वमास्तिव प्रमाणं

4. Vārāha-śrauta-śūtra 3.2.43:

सोमस्वय निविर्विषति व्यायामस्य विवेकसामास्तिव प्रमाणं

The throne used by Kings is called a *śīhāsana* (शीताश्ना) which means 'lions seat', or 'a seat made of a lion skin'. In the *śrauta-sūtras*, the seat of tiger-skin is referred to frequently. In his book 'The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration', J. C. Heesterman says that according to the Kauśika-śūtra a bull's hide was used at the minor consecration (laghu abhiṣeka) of a king, which can be correct. We could not have access to the original text of the Kauśika-śūtra. Yet, this much is clear that there is no context which proves that bull-hide was raw and it was obtained from a bull slain instantaneously.
Was Yājñavalkya used to ‘Aṁśala’ Beef?

Macdonell and Keith have written as follows in the Vedic Index, Part 2, page 145, under the entry ‘Māṁsa’:

“The great sage Yājñavalkya was wont to eat the meat of milch cows and bullocks (aṁśanuśa) if only it was aṁśala (‘firm’ or ‘tender’) (Satapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.1.2.21)”

Following them blindly, and without going into the crux of the situation, a number of Indians have started humming their tune.

This has been discussed at length by Pandit Dinanath Śastri Sārāvat in his Sanātana-Dharmāloka, Part 6, pages 375-380. Here below follows a gist of his arguments for the benefit of our readers. The original text of Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa 3.1.2.21 is:

अत्यापि (शालाक्रेश-कठः) अश्वाताकालिकः अत्र अश्वन कथ्व । िवमाह -प्रेय-प्रेयो श्रावा विकख, अन्द्रु, सम्भविन्य संबन्धितायम् ।

Sāyana Ācārya has very clearly translated the two words as ‘cows’ milk’ and ‘food procured from farming with a bullock’. There is no mention of any kind of flesh.

Yājñavalkya is not a householder for whom fasting would have been obligatory. He is a chaplain. Fasting in a yajña has been prescribed for a householder. So Yājñavalkya in his capacity of a chaplain says:

अत्यापि एव अंतस्त्र वेळू अवधि हित ।

“I can eat what is aṁśala (अंसल).” Alternatively it can also be understood as follows: In the opinion of Yājñavalkya if the performer of a yajña totally abstains from eating and as the yajña lasts for a long period, he will become emaciated and then he will not be able to perform the yajña. To keep up his bodily needs, he will have to eat.
DID AGASTYA SLAY A HUNDRED BULLS?

Macdonell and Keith have written as follows in the Vedic Index, Part 2, page 145 under the entry 'Māhāsa'.

"The slaughter of a hundred bulls (ukjān) was credited to one sacrificer. Agastya. (Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa 2.7.11.1; Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa 21.14.5)."

The English translation of Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa 2.7.11.1 is given below with all the original Sanskrit words in parentheses:

"((�गस्त्य) Agastya (प्रोक्तः) performed the prokṣaṇa (उष्णः) of the bulls (हस्त्रस्य) for the Maruts, (इन्द्रः) Indra (आदि तन्न) carried them away. (ते) They the Maruts (अयोध्य) came upon him (वत्रम) with their vajras (उज्जव) uplifted. (अगस्त्य वे) Agastya (इन्द्रः च) and Indra (आयमवातः) pacified (तन्न) them (क्यासुमैदेन) with the Ṛgvedic hymn beginning kayādubha (शास्त्राः) When they were calmed down (उपायः) he called (तन्न) them (सदि) the (क्यासुमैदेन) kayādubhya hymn (भवति) is (शास्त्राः) for pacifying."

Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, also known as Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa, 21.14.5 is cited below in its English translation with the original Sanskrit words in parentheses:

"((�गस्त्य वे) Agastya verily (प्रोक्तः) consecrated by sprinkling (उष्णः) the bulls (हस्त्रस्य) for the Maruts (अयोध्य) He bound (तन्न) them (इन्द्राः) for Indra. (ते) They (अयोध्य) fell upon (आदिवास्य) him taking up (वत्रम) the vajra, (ते) He Agastya (अयोध्य) saw (प्रोक्तः) this (क्यासुमैदेन) kayādubhya hymn. (तन्न) By it (अयोध्य) he pacified (the anger of the Maruts)."

something. So Yājñavalkya opines that even as a performer of the yajña I can eat what is āhāra (अहार). And those householders who follow him can also partake of such viuhtals.

The antagonists have translated āhāra (अहार) of the cow and bullock as 'tender flesh', which is not relevant in any manner. The flesh of young cows and bullocks is not tender; only the flesh of a calf is tender. In this context the calf is neither mentioned in the original passage nor in the statements of the antagonist.

The word āhāra (अहार) does not mean 'the flesh of an animal'. According to sūtra 5.2.98 of Pāṇini वस्त्रसाम्यं कामवले it means 'nourishing, strength-bestowing'. In Amarakośa 2.6.44 also it has been translated as मांसद्रोहम: which means 'āhāra is Māṁsa'. Māṁsa (मांस) does not apply to flesh (māṁsa). Māṁsa is used for cream and sweets therefrom, fresh and dry fruits and such other nourishing edibles. It is clear that the word āhāra (अहार) does not refer to 'animal flesh'. There is no basis or authority for translating āhāra (अहार) as 'tender flesh'. The correct and genuine meaning of āhāra is 'nourishing' or 'strength-giving'.

So in his capacity as a chaplain or as performer of a yajña, Yājñavalkya can partake of milk or milk-products like butter, cream, cream-sweets, or milk-rice pudding (krīḍ), and his followers can also do likewise. And if these be forbidden, they can take strength-giving fruits, both fresh and dry, which are not produced from a cow (dhenu देनु) or from cultivation with a bullock (anādīक अनादीक:); and this will sustain the prohibitive injunction of the Sarapatha Brāhmaṇa शरपाठ धनु-अनामहयो: न अनीयाहुः.'
In the Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Monier-Williams *proksana* has been translated as ‘consecration by sprinkling’. The context clearly indicates that consecration cannot be for violence. In the Vedas, the bovine family has been declared inviolable in every way. Yet beef-gluttons see cow-slaughter everywhere as a lascivious person sees only a woman whether awake or asleep. When the cow-family is unkillable under all circumstances, then there is no hinderance in accepting consecration by sprinkling for gifting.