

## CHAPTER II

# ASPECTS OF *DĪKṢĀ*

*Dikṣā* has different aspects such as the qualification of a preceptor, the disciple, the eligibility of aspirant, its classification, the appropriate (auspicious) time and rituals.

A definition helps two purposes. One is that it has to show the features of the object to be defined and the second to contrast it from other objects.

There are two ways of defining an object, firstly etymological and secondly conventional. For the word *dikṣā*, conventional meaning alone is available. But the *Āgamā* texts do not leave the word as it is without attempting at its derivation. The word *dikṣā* may be taken in its broad sense, as ‘beginning’, or ‘training’ or ‘instruction’. The word is split as ‘do’ and ‘kṣā’ in the *Pāñcarātra* texts.

It is surprising that while all the *Pāñcarātra* texts of the ratnatraya are silent over the exact definition of *dikṣā*, the *Lakṣmī Tantra* and smaller texts like the *Viṣṇu Samhitā* and the *Aniruddha Samhitā* offer the definitions. Most of these definitions are only functional. Of these, the *Lakṣmī Tantra* is a text of Kashmir origin and the influence of the Saiva *Āgama* and *Tantra* can be seen in its definition of *dikṣā*.

The *Lakṣmī Tantra*<sup>1</sup> derives this definition from ‘do’ (to cut), that is, to remove misery, (*klesa*) and ‘*kṣā*’ means helping the aspirant to see all positions. The same text offers another definition that when the root ‘do’ is taken in the sense to ‘destroy’ all the impurities and ‘*kṣā*’ offers the supreme position. According to *Viṣṇu Samhitā* the root mean giving success in all undertakings and *kṣā* removes all the difficulties and knots (*granthi*)<sup>2</sup>. But the sanskrit

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1. *Yad i vati kleśa- karmādīnī kṣayātyakhilam padam – def. 1. Kṣapayitvā malam sarvam dadāti ca param padam – def. 2 ch XLI, 5a - 6b. -Lakṣmī Tantra*
  2. *Dīyante siddhayah sarvāh kṣīyarte granthayopyatah dikṣātvamevaṁ dikṣāyah dharmādharmehrdatmanah. ViṣS ch X.2*

root 'do' does not have this sense of giving success and hence this interpretation may be unacceptable.

The word *dikṣā* cannot be derived at all according to the rules of Sanskrit Grammar. The attempt made in the *Āgamā* text is not satisfactory. It would be prudent to take the word as conventional in its denotation. The two important functions which the ritual *dikṣā* fulfil are the removal of all obstacles that hinder the path of spiritual progress of the aspirant and enables him to acquire the knowledge of the world.

## 2.1 SOME MORE DEFINITIONS OF DĪKṢĀ OF NON-VAIṢṆVA TEXTS

The *Kulārṇava tantra*<sup>1</sup> defines it as it provides a spiritual status by washing of all the sins. The *Śāradā Tilaka*<sup>2</sup> states,

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1. *divyabhāva pradānācca kṣālanāt kalmaṣasya ca dikṣā iti kathitā sadbhiḥ bhava bandha vimocanāt - (kulārṇava tantra) 17.51 - History of Dharmasāsthas Sec. VI ch. XXVI P: 1117*
  2. *dadyācca divya bhvam kṣṇuyāt dūritāni aot bhavet dikṣā - prapañca sāra V.2 Divyajñānam yatodadyāt kuryāt pāpasya samkṣayam, tasmāt dikṣeti samproktah desikaih tantra vidbhiḥ Śārādatilaka IV-2.*

“since it helps attain divine knowledge and destroy the sins, it is called as *dīkṣā* by the great teachers”.

## 2.2 *DĪKṢĀ* :

It could be administered to people who are grouped under wealthy and poor. Those who are wealthy could make use of *mahā maṇḍala*, like *cakrābja maṇḍala*. For a devotee who is not well to do homa is to be performed with either sesame and ghee .

## 2.3 TYPES OF *DĪKṢĀ* :

Mere words are to be used for him who is without wealth<sup>1</sup>.

This is also stated in the *Lakṣmī tantra*.

The *Jayākhyā Samhitā* offers few more classifications. *Sāmānya dīkṣa* is of three kinds namely *San̄kṣipta*, *Madhyamā* and *Ativistarā*.

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1. LT.XLI 9-10 also in JS.

#### 2.4 SAṄKṢIPTA

It can be said to be the *mantra* in the sense that *mantras* are used by themselves. The *Saṅkṣipta* kind offers to the aspirant enjoyment which would last for a short period.

#### 2.4 MADHYAMĀ

Its kind lasts for a longer time and shall be called *Madhyamā*. It offers enjoyment for a longer period. The more elaborate kind (*Ati Vistara*) offers pleasure which are endless. As a result of *homa* and *pūja* for an inexhaustible period, but all the three are alike in granting *apavarga*.

There is a *dīkṣā* of the special kind which are five fold. The first is intended for youngsters who have set their mind on *Viṣṇu* and who know the convention (*Samayajña*). The second is to be administered to devotees, maidens and *Putraka*. The *Sādhakas* are to be given the third kind and leads to *mokṣa* . The fourth kind offers proximity The fifth one is to be given to *Deśikas* and women .

The *Lakṣmī Tāntra* has interesting features while dealing with *dikṣā*. *Dikṣās* is of three kinds namely gross(*Sthūla*), Subtle (*Sūkṣma*) and transcendental (*parā*). The *mantras* of *samkṣipta* kind has subtle elements, *pradhāna* and *Īśvara*, *Arikuśa* and others are to be selected to the five elements – ego, *buddhi*, *prakṛti*, and *Īśvara*. In the case of *madhyamā* kind of *dikṣā*, those who begin with subtle element have to be added to *Vistrta dikṣā*<sup>1</sup>.

The method of relating the *mantra* in the *viśeṣa dikṣa* to *tattvas* is much detailed. In the case of the first kind, “*viśvātmane nārayaṇāya namaḥ*” are to be related to the ego, *buddhi* and *prakṛti* respectively. In the second also, *hṛdaya*, *netra*, and *praṇava mantras* are to be related to the subtle elements, ego and god in the third kind. *Vibhava mantras* of *nṛṣimha*, *kapila* and *varāha* and eight *anga mantras* subtle *mantras* and *mūlamantra*, *Aniruddha*, *Pradyumna* and *Samkarṣana mantras*, *Vāsudeva* and *Satya* are to be

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1. LT XVI 12-49

related to subtle elements of smell, taste, colour, touch and sound. ego, *buddhi*, *pradhāna*, *Īśvara* respectively to *puruṣa*, *satya*, *acyuta*, and *Vāsudeva*. The four *tattvas* of *Aniruddha*, *Pradyumna*, *Samkarṣaṇa* partless god and goddess, *Nārayaṇa*.

Another kind of classification is intended for the four kinds of disciples *Samayi*, *Putraka*, *Sādhaka* and *Ācārya*. This method is not discussed, but seems to be elaborately treated elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. *Dīkṣā* which is given to the wealthy, those who have less wealth and those who are poverty stricken is called *Māntra*, as *mantra* are merely used in them<sup>2</sup>. Those pupils who are solely attached to enjoyment in life are to be given *Tattva dīkṣā* in which the *tattvas* are purified.

The *Aniruddha saṁhitā* defines *dīkṣā* as of two kinds:

1. *Śāstrartha dīkṣā*
2. *Mantra dīkṣā*

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1. Ibid 59-61, *deśika* could be taken to mean an *Ācārya* or who knows how to direct and conduct *dīkṣā*. It is to be noted here that the fourth class are not mentioned here but are implied. L.T XLI 8b)

2. *Angata* must be reference to the *Jayākhya* which treats this kind in ch XVII3 LT 32b

The first one is intended only for the spiritual class and introduces them to the *Pāñcarātra* system. The latter is to be administered to all others.<sup>1</sup> The *Īsvara samhitā*, follows the *Sattvata* and classifies *dīkṣā* into *Vibhava*, *vyūha* and *Sūkṣma* kinds.<sup>2</sup> The topic of *dīkṣā* appears to have been treated in the *Brahmarātrā* of *Sanatkumara samhitā* and in chapter IV of *Indrarātrā*.

This text fixes the time of the year when the members of the four castes and women could have *dīkṣā*. Conventions (*Samayas*) to be followed by those who receive *dīkṣā* have to observe are given in chapter VII of the *Indrarātrā* of this text which is not fully available and which is stated to have a chapter on *dīkṣā* could have treated this topic in fully.

The *Nārādīya Samhitā*,<sup>3</sup> *śrīpraśna samhitā*,<sup>4</sup> *Paramasamhitā*

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1. This is referred to *visks Indra* IV 10b-13
  2. The *Aniruddha Samhitā*
  3. Ch 7,9
  4. Ch 7

*Vaṣiṣṭha saṁhitā*,<sup>1</sup> *Viśvāmitrā saṁhitā*,<sup>2</sup> *Viṣvakṣena saṁhitā*<sup>3</sup> and *Śāṅḍilya saṁhitā*<sup>4</sup> contains chapters on *dīkṣa*. They cover only these topics which are elaborately given in the *Sattvata* and *Jayākhyā saṁhitās*<sup>5,6</sup>.

At the outset there are two broad divisions of *dīkṣā*.

1. Applicable to the object to be adored . They may be a form of God or more especially, the mantras which play a significant role, and
2. Related to the aspirant who are divided according to various factors-such as social status, birth in the higher or lower class of human being and so on.

*Vibhava Vyūha* and *Para (sūkṣma)* are the *dīkṣā* which come

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1. Ch8  
2. Ch 9  
3. Ch9  
4. Ch10  
5. Ch 8  
6. Ch5

under the first category. The *vyāpaka mantras*<sup>1</sup> are to be propitiated in this kind .Even one among these *mantras* could serve the purpose *Dvādaśākṣara* then *Aṣṭākṣara* and then *Mūlamantra*<sup>2</sup> are to be used here. This *dikṣā* offers final release (*mokṣa*)<sup>3</sup> .

*Vyūha* means division. The way of using the *mantras* is given a detailed treatment in the *Sāttvata Saṁhitā*<sup>4</sup> where *mantras* are shown to be distributed among the four *vyūha* deities and are propitiated. The same principle applies to *Brahma dikṣā*<sup>5</sup>. The *Vyāpakamantras* are to be adored in *Sūkṣma (Para) dikṣā*.

While making use of the *mantra* the syllables that constitutes the *mantra* have to be used individually., and also without them. The *avayava (aṅga) mantras* relate to *śiras, śikhā, kavaca, netra* and

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1. *Praṇava Dvādaśākṣkāra, Saḍakṣara, Viṣṇu gayatrī and tantrī* are the *vyāpaka mantras*.

2. *Mūlamantra* is a *mantra* relating to the particular deities in whose honour it is to be used.

3. SS XIX 108-169 See com on P9. 405-406.

4. SSVIIIX15 ref. Naraśmṛha mantra ibid XVI 26.

5. Ibid 176

*astra* (heart, head tuft, armour, eye and weapon.) When the *anga mantras* are not available for those *mantras* which have no *anga*, the *Praṇava* could be used<sup>1</sup>.

Under the second category the following kinds are brought. *Adhivāsa dīkṣa*<sup>2</sup>, a method of preparing a place for worshipping (devotees of God).<sup>3</sup> Solitary enjoyment and both are the purposes for *dīkṣā*,<sup>4</sup> *Caturmya* ( group of the four *vyūha deities*.) to be adorned which offers enjoyment through six qualities-*sāḍguna*.

## 2.6 QUALIFICATION OF A PRECEPTOR

### ĀCĀRYA

The *ācārya* who is qualified to teach and initiate a pupil plays a vital role in the process of *dīkṣā*. A preceptor ever required to serve this purpose, is known as '*guru*'. The preceptor should be endowed with

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1 SS XIX 171-174

2 *Ibid bhaktānāmadhivāsārtham kṣaparigrahamācaret* SS XVIII 4 SS XIX4

3 *Ibid* 179.

4 JS XVI – 4b-b1

all characteristics expected of his kind . He should be a person of spiritual birth, well versed in *Vedas*, performing the six duties prescribed for the five different times in a day<sup>1</sup>. He must be pure in nature, thought word and deed. As for the Acarya of *Pāncarātra* system is concerned he must have mastered the knowledge concerning the significances of that system. He must follow the austerity of silence and must have worked hard constantly in mastering and in the repetition of the syllables constituting the *mantras*.

The *Ahirbhadhnya Saṁhitā* expects the preceptor as to have known the realities, as treated in the *Veda* and *Vedānta*. He must know the methods of selecting the matter<sup>2</sup>, devoted to good deeds,

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1. They are *abhigamana*, *upādāna*, *ijya*, *ārādhana*, *svādhyāya* and *yoga* see appendix for more detail.

2. See AhS XX.1-7:

*vedavedāntatattvajñō vidyāsthānavicakṣaṇaḥ |*  
*ūhāpohavidhānājñō daivapitryakriyāparaḥ || 1*  
*avaktā cāpavādānām akartā pāpakarmaṇām |*  
*amatsarī parotkarṣe paradulḥke gṛhṇāparaḥ || 2*  
*dayavān sarvabhūtesu hr̥ṣṭaḥ parasuḥ |*  
*punyaṣu muditāyukta upeksāvān kuvuddhiṣu || 3*  
*tapahsamtosaśaucāḍḍhyo yogasvādhyāyatatparaḥ |*  
*pāncarātravidhānājñas tantrāntaravicakṣaṇaḥ || 4*  
*tantrānām antarajñas ca mantrānām kṛtyatattvavit |*  
*padavākyapramāṇājñō hetuvādvicakṣaṇaḥ || 5*  
*sāmānyasyāpavādasya vettā yantravicakṣaṇaḥ |*  
*kuṇḍamaṇḍalabhedajñas kriyākāravicakṣaṇaḥ || 6*  
*adhyaṭmajñānakūśalaḥ sānto dānto jitendriyaḥ |*  
*sadanvavāyasambhūta ācāryō nāma vaiṣṇavaḥ || 7*

especially relating to God and the ancestors. He must be away from blaming others and should not commit sinful deeds. He must be free from envy at others. He must have eminence and be compassionate towards all in distress. He should be fully engrossed in the prescribed religious observances. Contented and pure, he must be devoted to meditation. He should have studied the *vedas*, and knowledgeable in the rules of *Pāncarātra*. He should also know the practical side of the *tantras*. He must be well versed in grammar, *mīmāmsa* and *nyāya*. He must be well trained in argument and skilled in knowing the principle of the general rules with exceptions. He must be trained in making *yantras*, and be aware of the differences between fire, pitcher<sup>1</sup> and *maṇḍala*<sup>2</sup>. He must be conversant with the factors leading to acts and their training, and skilled in the revival of the soul. He must be calm, and have self control. He must have been born in a good family and a staunch *vaiṣṇava*<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Pitcher, a vessel made of earthenware for holding or pouring liquid.
  2. *Maṇḍala* :- Lit. 'circle', a design motif used to concentrate the divine power during worship, a seat or instructional device used in *dīkṣā*, used in constructing *mantraś*, a large design used to plot out a tract of land or part of these to determine the exact location of the deity's placement. H. Daniel Smith.
  3. *AhS Ch.XX 1-7*

Further, he should be skilled in applying sixteen *nyāsās*<sup>1</sup> and knows different *siddhāntas*<sup>2</sup>. He should be straight-forward, sympathetic, true in speech, and should be of good countenance. He must be serving elders, teaching all beings alike and should do mental worship and free from all calumny. He must have undergone *dīkṣā* in *chakrābjamaṇḍala*<sup>3</sup>. He may be a *brahmacārin*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*. He may be a brahmin *vaṭu*<sup>4</sup> (youth) or old man<sup>5</sup>.

It is a different kind of *brahmacarya celibacy* found in the *Sanatkumārasaṁhitā*<sup>6</sup> which enumerates what an *acārya* should not do. It advises the deeds in which he shall indulge and those he has to avoid. He shall not do any despicable act. He shall not misappropriate the temple funds. He shall not eat *nirmālya*<sup>7</sup>.

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1. & 2 see Appendix. 25 and 31

3. See Appendix See Diagram IV

4. One who is below sixteen years is called *vaṭu*.

5. Pād ksiya XXIV – 1-17

6. SKS-ch IX

7. Food flowers, garland, sandal paste which are – offered to gods on the previous day.

Anything that is offered to God shall not be given to him who is not a *dikṣita*. He shall not violate the principles of worship nor can become a *sanyāsin*. He shall not take food from another's house nor touched by others. There are certain prohibited places where he shall not live. Ever he shall have the mark of the weapons of *Viṣṇu*.

He should avoid sleep during daytime. Those who are spiritually born alone shall be the *Ācārya* for all classes. If a member of the higher birth is not available, then he who is next in the descending order, shall be chosen<sup>1</sup>.

## 2.7 ĀCĀRYA

The *Pāñcarātra* tradition does not classify the *Ācārya* like the disciple. The case of the disciple is not the same. Those who are admitted into studentship under an *Ācārya* are bound to be of varying degrees of calibre. They have to ascend to the position of *Ācārya* through stages .

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1. Food, flowers, garland, sandal paste which are used or offered to god *SKS*. 48b to 49 a. See *SKS. Indra rātra IX*. 13.

An Ācārya is different from his name sake who is to train his pupils. A *Sādhaka* becomes an Ācārya by the potency of the *mantras* and also by the grace of his *Guru*. After the *abhiṣeka* he becomes an Ācārya. He should spend the quarter of the money. He should honour his *Guru* by doing *pūja* to him and also to God. He should see that his *guru* is satisfied with devotion and *pūjā*. When the *pūja* is completed all the materials which are left over of the *yaga* must be offered to *Agni*. He has to learn all his duties from his *Guru* and should feel responsible for everything. The doubts of the devotees should be cleared by an Ācārya according to the *sāstras*.

He must not be selfish and be greedy. He should not use his influences on others, must do what they request, whoever comes for help and advice in the same manner as he does to others. He must be one who is afraid, or obedient or loving. He must do the *yāga* to all according to *sāstras* knowing their wants.

People knowingly or unknowingly commit mistakes. To avoid this, a *homa* should be performed. If a person has done injustice to someone and regrets it, *Prāyaścitta homa* should be performed. He should not discriminate between male and female in imparting certain instructions, he should teach the *Vaikhānasa vaiṣṇava* too. The *pūjā* is done to free ourselves from this world and reach God. The *Ācārya* must tell as how to prepare the fire altar and *maṇḍala*, the weapons of God like, conch, discus, mace and an idol made out of metal or clay. The disciple must be taught all these things and the preceptor should teach him diagrammatically, so that he can understand. God is installed in temple with the help of *mantras*. Semi-divine beings are also installed. All types of people can visit the temple. In order to make them *Vaiṣṇavaite* all arrangements must be made. To do this act one must follow the *guru's* advice and help with devotees. *Pitr homa* should be performed so that people are happy. The *Śiṣyas* must be treated well so that they become happy. He must advice people who are ignorant of *sāstras*. He must explain and satisfy all.

*Ābhiṣeka* for all the four pupils is not mentioned in any *Pāñcarātra* except in the *Jayākhyā*. He cites a passage from *tāntra* in support of his interpretation. The commentator observes that these may be gradation of *Abhiṣeka* for each one according to the *Jayākhyā*.

The following texts treat topic of *Ācārya*

1. *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā* ch. 20, 1-7 *Ācāryalakṣaṇa*
2. *Aniruddha Saṁhitā* ch. 3 *Ācāryalakṣaṇa*
3. *Kapīñjala Saṁhitā* ch. I; 33, ch II: 1- 8
4. *Pārameśvara Saṁhitā*
5. *Pādma Saṁhitā caryāpāda* ch. 7 *maṇḍalādhā<sup>γ</sup>ḥācāryābhiṣeka<sup>ṛ</sup>*
6. *Pārāśara Saṁhitā* ch VII 22-23
7. *Puruṣottama Sāṁhitā* ch II, 4-8, XXII: 5, 69
8. *Mārkaṇḍeya Saṁhitā* XII: 1-14, Laks XXI 30-36
9. *Lakṣmī Tantra* ch. 21 *guruśiṣyalakṣaṇa*
10. *Śāndilyasaṁhita* 1. VI: 69-70, ii ii : 272;
11. *Sanatkumārasaṁhitā indrarātra* ch. 9 *Ācāryalakṣaṇa*
12. *Hayaśīrṣa Saṁhitā* “Ad” 11, 12-18, 111; 1-17 (comp) IV: 1.9

## 2.8 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE

Any intelligent person desirous of acquiring knowledge should observe the practice of the elders and approach them with all humility to learn. The Hindu tradition enjoins this practice from time immemorial. The preceptor is to be approached as the first and foremost guide in regard to spiritual realisation and anything related to it<sup>1</sup>. The pre-eminent position enjoyed by an *Ācārya* in Indian tradition is of something extraordinary and almost all traditions agree on this issue. As the traits of a noble teacher are laid down in the *śāstras*, in the same way the definition of a *śiṣya* also is mentioned in them. The person who approaches the *Ācārya* is designated as *antevāsin* and *chātra*.

The pupil should be calm by nature, intelligent and devoid of anger and avarice. The disciple should take bath and worship

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1. *tadvijñānartham gurumevabhigacchet - Muṇḍ. Up.*

God at the appropriate hour. He shall ever endeavour to serve the *Guru*, devoted to Brahmins and fire. He should perform the *homa* to Gods and worship offering libations of water, with the *mantras*. Born of a noble family he shall be wise and straight forward. He may be of any caste but devoted to supreme God. Disciplined, he shall attend to the *Vratas* (observations). This restricts the selection of disciples to the twice born, refined in temperament and devoted to his family duties. This indicates that apart from the unmarried persons, householders are also eligible for *dikṣā*. He must be clear about the activities done or not done by him good or bad, and confess it to the preceptor without concealing anything.

The disciple must follow the path of *dharma*. He should perform his enjoined duties towards God, manes, and guests. He must know all about the *vedas*<sup>1</sup> and has a good knowledge of almost all subjects. He must do the *Pañcakāla pūjā* and must perform his

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1 *Brahmayajña*-studying and teaching of the *vedas*

daily duties in the order it was taught to him by his *Guru*. He must attend to the five obligatory sacrifices *Pitṛyajña*<sup>1</sup>, *Devayajña*<sup>2</sup>, *Bhūtajajña*<sup>3</sup>, *Nṛyajña*<sup>4</sup>. He must possess a tranquill mind and remain unperturbed even on tempting or provoking occasions. He must possess self-control and the qualities like truthfulness, chastity and non-violence (*ahimsā*). He must always aim perfection and reject trifle things. His thought should be pure so that his presence should make everything pure.

He must possess *Maitrī* (friendship), *Karuṇā* (sympathy) *Muditā* (happiness), *Upekṣā* (disregard to material enjoyment). He should not have passion for women. He should not utter harsh words.

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1. *Pitṛ yajña*-offering *tarpaṇa* to one's dead ancestors
  2. *Devatājajña*-Performing sacrifices for God.
  3. *Bhūtajajña*-offering *bali* or food to spirits to demon gods.
  4. *Nṛyajña* –serving guests with dedication these five are considered as the household duties (*Pancayajña*.)

The pupil's daily duties start from the time he gets up in the early morning. He recites sacred *mantras*, performs *sñana*, (ablution), *agnipūjā* and other such ceremonies. He must visit the temple periodically. He should perform the *nyāsa* rituals(*mānasapūjā*) and actual *pūjā* s<sup>1</sup>.

The disciple confesses himself to the preceptor about his belongings. He must not use the mantra for mundane benefits. It should be used for the welfare of the three worlds, government, kings etc, and not for destructions. Thus for instance the *Sudarśana-mantra*<sup>2</sup> which has been concentrated in the disciple's body must be carefully used so that its presence is maintained and protects the world.

After prostrating at the feet, the pupil should answer the question of the *Guru* clearly and politely. The *Guru* should approach only to seek advice. The shoes must be taken off before entering a holy or sacred place.

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1 See *Lakṣmī Tantra* 21,27 LT.Ch XXVII 21-27.  
2 See AHS. *Samhitā*, AhS Ch XVI.

He can be an academic person, be a warrior, or a commercial or a menial class of the society, or a person living in the forest or a physician or a beggar.

The pupil must be tested for three years by the preceptor; he must tell all the defects he has committed and this could be rectified if he is initiated into the *Pāñcarātra* system by performing *Cakrābijamaṇḍala dīkṣā*<sup>1</sup>.

The *pāñcarātra* texts enjoin *dīkṣā* to be performed in the *cakrābja maṇḍala*<sup>2</sup>. It shall be coloured with white for *Kṣatriya* red for *vaiśya* and black for the fourth class. The *mantra* is referred only



1. cf. *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā* Ch.20.  
*Īśvara Saṁhitā*  
*Pauskara Saṁhitā* 1 Ch  
*Viśvāmitra Saṁhitā* Ch3  
*Sanatakumāra Saṁhitā* Ch v11  
*Brahmarātra* Ch II  
*Indrarātra* Ch VIII  
*Sāttvata Saṁhitā* Ch.1
2. *Pād. caryā* VII 85.

in the *Pādma samhitā*<sup>1</sup>. How it shall be drawn is given in the *Pauṣkara samhitā*<sup>2</sup> Other texts do not mention any *maṇḍala*.

However, the *Jayākhyā samhitā* and the *Lakṣmī tantra* it enjoin *mahāmaṇḍalayāga* for *dikṣā* to such persons and it called *Mahāmaṇḍalyāga*<sup>3</sup>. A sacrifice is to be done in that *Mahāmaṇḍala*. The word *mahāmaṇḍala* may mean big or long *maṇḍala*. This is stated in the *Pauṣkara samhitā*. This text enumerates the names of twenty five *maṇḍalas* and other names which are not referred to as *maṇḍalas* but as *yāga*. Among them *cakrābjalakṣaṇa* and *Navanābha* are simply mentioned.<sup>4</sup> Among the two the latter is stated to be as *mahāyāga*<sup>5</sup>. It is also stated in the Chapter II of the text that the *cakrābja* and *Navanābha* are also called *Mahā* and thus *Mahāmaṇḍalayāga* referred to in *Jayākhyā* and *Pādma* texts be must be *Navanābha maṇḍala*.

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1. *Ibid.* VII 88
  2. *Pauṣ.* I 21.
  3. *Pauṣ.* VIII, and XIX 77
  4. *Ibid*
  5. *Ibid*

The disciple must satisfy that what he utters is true, he may give it in writing or produce some witnesses or arrange some sort of ordeal to establish his word.

He must not influence the teacher for his personal gain. He must tell what position he holds in the family so that the preceptor will know about the disciple's obligation to the family, financial transactions, inheritance, legal position etc. In case he has any problem in the above mentioned matters, he must get clearance from a *Vaiṣṇava* since they uphold *dharma*.

The candidate for initiation must have a purity of parentage on the female side. This is referred to as *Yonīśuddhi*. There are some candidates, who by virtue of their class of origin, area of birth etc., can have control and discipline of their body. That is *varṇaśuddhi*, *deśaśuddhi*, *dehaśuddhi*, and *kriyā śuddhi*.

He must render service to the *Guru* throughout his career. He must respect cows, assembly of sages and preceptors relatives. He should respect *Viṣṇu's* conch and discus and never sit on them or use them carelessly. He should use fresh flowers for *pūjā*.

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## 2.9 ŚIṢYAS ARE CLASSIFIED UNDER DIFFERENT CATEGORIES<sup>1</sup>

**Lingin:** He shall beg for alms and take a limited food and wear the emblem of conch, disc, club, bow, *śrīvatsa*<sup>2</sup>, *kaustubha*<sup>3</sup> and *garuḍa*<sup>4</sup>.

**Śiṣya:** The pupil is generally referred to as *śiṣya*. The word *śiṣya* means one who is to be taught. It is derived from the root *śās* to direct. One who has not learnt anything is to be taught and hence in the above sense, the word *śiṣya* is used. He is also called as *antevāsin* meaning one who lives near the house of the preceptor or one who is ever near the preceptor, ready to carry out the work entrusted to him by the teacher. He is *chātra* as he protects the teacher from evil like an umbrella.

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1. Vide SKS ch.V.

2. Amole on the chest of *Viṣṇu*.

3. Name of the jewel of *Viṣṇu* adorning his chest..

4. Name of a bird, a vehicle of *Viṣṇu*.

He does not reveal his master's weaknesses to any one<sup>1</sup>. He is also known as *mānavaka*<sup>2</sup>. Yet the name *śiṣya* alone is used everywhere. He is the one who takes limited food with alms, ever under the control of the preceptor, pleases the teacher by rendering a service to him, worships *Viṣṇu* and does not attend any other work.

For the purpose of initiation the *Pāñcarāta* – system classifies the pupils. They are in the following order as *Samayin*, *Putraka*, *Sādhaka*, and *Ācārya*.

This classification it must be noted is made only in the JS and not in any other *Pāñcarātra* texts . However this classification seemed to have been accepted by othe texts too as they enjoin the four stages of the process of *dīkṣā* but with different names. The successive stages are superior to the earlier stages.

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1. cf-chātrā-ādibhyah-nah-Aṣṭādhyāyi IV,VI 63

2. JS XVI:2b,16vb,27<sup>th</sup> JS XXI 186 b

*Samayin*, is a pupil who shall have abiding faith in the *mantras*, unmarried and having control over his senses. He is to be true in his word, clever, bold, unperturbed and endowed with the sense of modesty and faith and be intelligent. He is to be steadfast in his observances. He shall be pure and devoted to worship. He should please his preceptor. Doing good rites, he is to be of clear nature. The JS provides the following definition.

“A *brahmacārin* is a person who has control over his sense organs. He is highly devoted to the secret *mantras*. He must speak the truth, be intelligent, steadfast in his mind and involve himself to the religious duties. Practising austerities, he must be a person of high discipline and be devoted to his teacher. He must perform the routine auspicious duties without fail. Possessing a good frame of mind, he must converse with others in a pleasing manner. Irrespective of his economical status he must perform sacrifices, only by collecting money and materials from the public and thus he must please and satisfy his preceptor. Devoted to Lord *Viṣṇu* he must listen and abide by the rules and regulations of the *sāstras*, relating to

Lord *Viṣṇu*. He must protect and preserve all the discipline related to the *mantras* by recollecting the meaning properly. The form of *Viṣṇu* as possessed the conch, discus, mace and lotus must be worshipped with proper sign ( *mudras*) on the twelfth day (of every fortnight) without fire ritual. He must possess a conduct of high excellence. At the time of difficulty or needy times, he must protect the house of the preceptor. The disciple who adores the *guru* again and again of the aforesaid nature is known as *samayajña*. Spotting and knowing such a disciple the teacher should fulfil the expectations for the purpose to which he has approached him. For gaining knowledge from the teacher the student must endure all inconveniences. On the whole, a *samayajna* is faithful to the sect, but no authority to do important rites.

***Putraka:***

The second stage of *śiṣya* is *Putraka*, wherein the aspirant is accepted as an authority <sup>in</sup> some important rites. The religious ceremony involving *Putraka* is elaborate.

In this stage, the aspirant learns the *mantras*, the practical aspect of rituals and other related matters of t ntric worship<sup>1</sup>. He is not allowed to worship in the sacrificial fire and do *tarpana*<sup>2</sup>.

### **S dhaka:**

*S dhaka* knows the nature of the *mantras* and skilled in reading the *T ntri* texts and ever devoted to worship of God and trained in the *mantras* of *T ntri*. The *s dhaka* does all his work through worshipping God<sup>3</sup>. An * c rya* expounds the *mantra* of *t ntra* and *Samhit s* and offers the sacraments to his disciples<sup>4</sup>. *S dhakas* and * c ryas* are the best among them.

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1. JS

2. S.S.XX 11-35.

3. Ibid 125

4. ibid 124 Sacrament here means *P ncasamsk ras*.

The conduct of all these are briefly explained in *ślokas*<sup>1</sup>.

The treatment of the above topic seem to differ much from what is found treated in the *sātvata* and *Jayākhya samhitās*. Whether the practices form a part of an earlier treatment of the *Pāñcarātra* and introduced later or not remains to be seen.

A Sādhaka should approach the *guru* with supreme devotion and render service to him. He should be endowed with all noble qualities and possess a highly devoted mind. Performing the rituals enjoined in the *śāstras*, he must be devoted to *Viṣṇu*. In order to attain the accomplishment of *mantras*, he must perform sacrificial rituals again and again. Getting consecrated and permitted (by the elders) he must go to the temple of *Nārāyaṇa* that is not disturbed by others. He must keep himself away from the relatives, more specifically from wicked persons. He should not think about happiness or unhappiness, good or bad, loss or gain. He must not

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1 Pād.S IV203,33-201-202a.

reveal what he is doing. The place he chooses must be very sacred. He should not have relatives or friends when performing *yāga*. He should call people who are interested in studying the *veda*. The mind should be free from despondency and persons who come to the house must be happy. The place of study must be well guarded and purified. The pupil should sit on the covered seat and feel comfortable and happy and perform the *japa*. During meditation he may relax for sometime but he should continue it after a small gap with *hr̥daya mantra*. He must eat the *charu*, a sacrificial offering or fruits. He may consume vegetable roots and milk. He may go round and collect food for his appetite. He may eat rice or cereal but must not take salt. He must feel satisfied and feel contented with his food. After his lunch he must start doing *japa* again. He must do the *japa* every day at the fixed time, and should never give up the routine. While getting up from the bed, his thought should be on Lord *Nārāyaṇa*. He must first keep his left leg on the ground while getting up from the bed.

Moving far away from the *maṇḍala*, he must cover the body with cloth without looking at the sky, he must complete his ablutions and later, he must do *ācamana*. After brushing the teeth he must bath and should chant *Gāyatrī mantra*. Finally he retires back to the *Yāgaśāla* and perform *pūja* with flowers and meditate on God in his heart for one *muhūrta*. After this, he has to bathe again as before.

1. He should continuously practice *japa* till the end of the day. In the evening he should do *sandhyā pūjā* after bath. At the end of the day and after seeing the stars, he should have his food and finally go to bed. He sleeps on the ground, where the ground is soft and clean. He must get up in the latter part of the night and do *pūja* and *japa*, to *Nārāyaṇa* because the Lord has helped him to perform the above duties without any obstacles. He must offer *pūja* to the invisible Gods also who has helped him to complete the *pūja* successfully.<sup>1</sup> A person who performs the *pūja*

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1. SS - often a brief description XXII, he should work for the world not for his own development. XXII 43a.

according to *śāstra* in the aforesaid manner is called *sādhaka*. If he is disturbed while performing the *pūja*, he should not leave the *pūja*. This is called *tat vrata*<sup>1</sup>. He must not roam telling everyone about his activities.

This should be kept as a secret. The *mantra* taught by *Guru* should be kept secret so that the power of the *mantra* is not lost. *Mantras* should be kept in mind. *Guru* and God should be made happy, by following the *śāstra*. A person having these qualities is called the highest qualified brahmin.

*Ūpāsaka*: is one who does not attend to any other work and worships God three times a day<sup>2</sup>. He is interested in *japa*<sup>3</sup> and *Homa*<sup>4</sup> and studying *vedas* that are assigned to him by the preceptor

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1. JS XVII sloka # 46 to 62....XVII 39a
  2. At sunrise noon and sunset.
  3. Repeating the syllable of mantra mostly in silence.
  4. Offering of oblation in the fire.

and takes bath at three times<sup>1</sup> and meditates the Lord by uttering *aṣṭākṣara mantra* and follows the preceptor in all respects<sup>2</sup>.

The next category of initiates are known as *Gṛhasthas*. Here also there are four kinds. House holders who are eligible to get *dīkṣā* are

1. Vratin
2. Gṛhastha
3. Ādhya
4. Ācārya

1. **Vratins:** He who devotes himself to observances *Vṛata*, and fasts, regularly worships God, joins his wife during non-prohibited periods, takes limited food, eats at night,) has his senses controlled and does *japa* of *Mūlamantra*<sup>3</sup>. He studies the *Samhitā*<sup>4</sup> and gives sustenance to the people. He is strict in his observances.

2. **Gṛhastha :** He is the one who observes *Vṛata* and fasts and he is interested doing worship to God . He studies *Samhitā* texts, that is, *Pāñcarātra* texts.

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1. Three *soma* obligations are offered (or) in the morning, noon and evening

2. JS. VII -14a

3. Aṣṭākṣara and Dvādaśākṣara and Mūlamantra.

4. The word *Samhitā* shall mean the collection of verses of Veda.

3. *Ādhya*: He is the one who is ever interested in playing the role of hosts. He is free from lust and anger and offers food to others and doing charity; giving food to others. He performs sacred rites on full moon day and is interested in conducting festivals of God.
4. *Ācārya*: He is a person who gives sustenance to devotees of God. He is interested in worshiping God, skilled in doing consecration *pratiṣṭhā* and other practical aspects of the system both in *Vaidika* and *Tāntrika*. He does the rituals at all times, he is free from anger, and shows favour to his disciples.

The third division is *Vānaprasthās*, that is, those dwelling in forest. This is also sub-divided into four kinds:

1. *Vaikhānasas* 2. *Tāntrins* 3. *Guru* 4. *Niṣkalas*.

1. *Vaikhānasa*<sup>1</sup>: He has his wife and children living with him in the *āśram* or home. He has his senses controlled. He gives lectures

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1. *Vaikhānasā* must be the one who is strict in his observances of rules of *Vānaprasthas*---*Śrinivāsācāryas* comm. AS I VII-12  
And also JS XXII 13b-14a. It is worthy to note that these ancient *Pāñcarātra* text reveal a healthy reference to the *Vaikhānasa* who are not targeted for any attack.

about the *Samhitās* to people. He sleeps on the floor or on deer skin. He is ever devoted to *Viṣṇu*. He devotes himself to acquiring knowledge and in doing meditation.

2. *Tāntrin*: He is a kind of *vānaprastha* who lives on decent food(*agrāmya*), worships God on the three *sandhyas* and does *japa* and *homa* merely with the *saṁhitā mantras*. He wears bark garments and deer's hide. He lies on *darbha* grass only.

3. *Guru*: He takes bath at three *savanas*, takes bulbous roots and fruits and ever devoted to deep thought mum. He does not stay always in fixed place. He visits the holy places, great devotee of *viṣṇu* and meditates upon *viṣṇu*. He knows the real sense of *Dvādaśākṣara*. He wears tree bark and deer hide. He is *niṣkala*. He is ever devoted to the *Aṣṭākṣara mantra* and eats at nights only, firm in his observances, contend with what he gets by chance and is beyond three pairs and is free from jealousy. He wears tree barks and deers hide.

*Yatis* are divided into four kinds:

1. *Bhikṣuka* 2. *Sanyāsin* 3. *Bhagavāns* 4. *Prabhus*

1. *Bhikṣuka*: *Hamsas* bear the *śankha* and *cakra* mark on the shoulders and has a single *daṇḍa* stick of office. The latter two carry three *daṇḍas* of office and bears the *cakra* and the other carries the *garuḍa* banner. They are devoted to God. They are in pursuit of God. He wears red colour dress and has no passion. He must have tuft of hair and sacred thread in his shoulders.

2. *Sanyāsin* / *Paramahamsas* has no hair and no thread on his shoulder. He must collect food by alms and eat.

3. *Bhagavān*: He has *cakra* and *śankha*. He receives the food in a piece of cloth. He has no vessels. He can have *kamandala*. He has three *daṇḍa*, He keeps it together . He must cover the *daṇḍa* while going out. He will do *japa* and *mūlamantra*. He will be moving allover the world.

4. *Prabhus:* He has all the features above mentioned for the pupils, *Aṣṭākṣara*. He holds a little staff and holds a flag containing the figure of *Garuḍa*. He worships the Lord through *sāttvic- yoga*<sup>1</sup>. Those who belong to all these orders (*āśrama*) correspond to *samayin*, *Putraka*, *sadhaka* and *Ācārya*<sup>2</sup>. When a person becomes a *sanyasi* the ancestors for seven generation get *mokṣa*<sup>3</sup>. Those who undergo *dikṣā* should live according to the specified convention.

## 2.10 THE ELIGIBILITY OF AN ASPIRANT

A deserving disciple, lives in the abode of the preceptor for a long time with a sense of detachment <sup>अवि</sup>rem<sup>अवि</sup> unaffected by the occurrence in the surroundings. Such a person will have to live with the *Guru*. By way of expectation, he should take *Brahmakūrca*

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1. Vide Patanjali's yoga Śāstra.  
2. JS XVI-118.  
3. Ibid 86b.

*pañcagavya*<sup>1</sup> This will abandon him of all sins done before.  
Apprehending known sins, he must undergo *narasimha dikṣā*<sup>2</sup>.

The *Pāñcarātra Āgama* classifies the pupils who are taken up for training under four heads, *samayā*, *putraka*, *sādhaka* and *ācārya*. *Hamsas* bear the *śankha* and *cakra* mark on the shoulders and has a single *daṇḍa* stick of office. The latter two carry three *daṇḍas* of office and bears the *cakra* and the other carries the *garuḍa* banner.

They are devoted to God. They are in pursuit of God. He wears red colour dress and has no passion. He must have tuft of hair and sacred thread in his shoulders.

This is to be noted that the *Pāñcarātrā āgama* allows all people to get training under the system for the purposes of worship. The fourth class and women are also permitted to have

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1. see appendix 28  
2. SS XVI 26 also Vide infra p :109

*pāncasamskāra* and then *dīkṣā*<sup>1</sup>. The *śattvata samhitā* and *iśvarā samhita* following it use the word *siśu*<sup>2</sup> as eligible for ordainment. *Siśu* is a boy below eight years of age. Perhaps could be ordained as *sanyasin* soon after *upanayana*.

*Brāhmaṇaḥ Kṣatriyo Vaiśyaḥ Śūdrova svapadasthitaḥ |*  
*brahmacāri gr̥hastho va kṛtakṛtyo yathāvidhi*  
*Vānaprastha bhikṣāṣīnarī vā sadvivekinī |*  
*dhīraḥ avaccaḥ susantuṣṭastattva darśana Kāñkṣitaḥ*  
*Bandhuvargaparityāgi utsāhi niścayānvitaḥ||*

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1. SKS Brahma, Ch.I, 2d:s

2. ibid Ch.V, 4cd, 5a, b.ṣ