

Śilpa's 'Rights' of Passage in Tradition

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There is no royal road to interpreting the 'rights' of passage of *śilpa* ('skill', craft) and *śilpin* ('artist', craftsman') for their journey in time and history is embedded in contradictions. These contradictions apparently grew out of the 'high' ritual and creative antecedents of the Vedic *śilpa* in its being a divine act of marvel and power or later in *Sutra*-s in the 'lowliness' of its being *vṛtti*-s 'occupations'. With one implication intruding upon the other or displacing it altogether, contradictions seem to have been legitimized by practice. The claims and counterclaims of its ascent or descent are encountered time and again in its mobility. So, in historicizing *śilpa* and *śilpin* and their 'rights' of passage, the modifications in it from sublime to commonplace or *vice versa* tend to reveal both—what was 'ascribed' or 'given' to them and what they came to 'acquire' or 'appropriate' in substance. A historical outline of *śilpa* and *śilpin* to define the changing perceptions about them may therefore be relevant here. So, first we take up the meanings of the term *śilpa* and its etymology and define the Vedic *śilpa*. And then we discuss its gradual transformation into *vṛtti*-s and what it implied and finally, its resurgence and resurrection as a *śāstra*, which seems to have completed the cycle of its transformations.

I

In its essence, the term *śilpa*, as it developed later, signifies visual arts and formalistic compositions flowing from it. It specially encompasses sculpture, painting, terracotta etc., representing a 're-constituted form' (e.g., *śilpāt pratimā jāyante, Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad*, I.5) in any medium—wood, stone,¹ metal, painting, clay or the like, the materials on or out of which an artist could create two- or three-dimensional images in celebration. *Śilpa* in tradition thus designates all kinds of art and craft and indeed envisages aesthetically crafted

structure(s) of form, which define the very soul of art in experience or its relish. The term has a rich history with a semantic multiplicity pervasive in its content. It encompasses within the ambit of its meaning anything creative, imitative, ideational or skilful, which in one sense or the other including analogy, involves dexterity of hand (*hasta*) or mind (*dhī*) or both. *Śilpa* also implies a technique, a ceremonial act, an artifact, indeed anything, which either leads to or is a tangible product of some craft, *kratu* and *māyā* included. It qualifies an experience or exercise whose product is endowed with *chandas* 'rhythm', and yet on occasions, it is beyond explanation and thereby a subject of wonder specially where it creates cosmic elements or illusions of reality without being it. To a great extent, in early Indian social history, *śilpas* are symptomatic of changes that mark a progressive transition of Indian society from egalitarian values to the state of differentiation in social status. In this respect, *śilpas* also indicate changes that mark transition of an agrarian system into the moulds of urbanization³ and, as *vṛtti*-s, they present a story of their stigmatization, despite the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*'s dictum about the purity of craftsmen's hand *nityam śuddhaḥ kāruhastah*.

Śilpa is a *karman* in the *Nighaṇṭu* (II.1). In its literal sense, as developed later, it relates to 'craft' or 'skill' and its efficiency in 'realizing a form' (*rūpa siddhi*) that implicates concerted learning by training, dedication and hard physical labour (*duṣkaratvenatikleśa-karatvāditi nipātanādrūpasiddhiḥ*).⁴ Later etymologies derive *śilpa* from the root *śila upadhāraṇe*, 'to learn or to practice' or, it is explained as 'imitative action repeatedly practiced or studied' (*śīlayati śīlaṅiti va śīlpam*). Devaraja Yajvan⁵ explains it as an act, which is 'repeatedly practiced or studied, such as: potter's act etc'. Or, as he says, 'that act can be explained as *śilpa*, which makes (its) doer reduced' (i.e., slim). It is so, 'because it (*śilpa*) is hard to accomplish and it subjects the doer to great suffering'. In that light, Devaraja Yajvan derives *śilpa* from the verb *sin-*, 'to make slim', 'to whet'. Alternatively, he derives *śilpa* from *śila upadhāraṇe* ('to learn' or 'to retain knowledge'), *śila samādhau* ('to concentrate') and *śin niśane* ('to sharpen' or 'to make slim'). The *Amarakośa* (II.10.35) explains it as *śila samādhau* and *śala gatau* ('to move'). Etymologically, therefore, *śilpa* implies an act that is hard to accomplish even as it requires great devotion, commitment and energy. Its practice is a tormenting exercise where the sheer effort of doing emaciates the doer but eventually, it does lead to realization of the intended 'form'. It also implies 'moving', i.e., moving towards the action or exercise of learning.

Though workable, these *post facto* derivations of the term *śilpa* yet seem to be inadequate in unravelling the totality and depth of implications that the term envisages. So, alternatively applying the rules of metathesis, VS Pathak following probably Mayrhofer, derive *śilpa* from the root *piś* (or *piśr*, 'to fashion') and its derivatives like *peśas* (*Rk.* II.3.6; VII.42.1), *supeśas* (*Rk.* VII.32.13), *piṃś* (*Rk.* X.184.1), *peśala* (*YV.* IX.8) *āpimśat* (*Rk.* X. 110.9) etc., which have meanings that are happily covered by the term *śilpa*. The derivatives of the Vedic *piś-*, signifying 'decoration', 'beautiful', and 'adornment' eminently correspond to *suśilpa* of the *Ṛgveda* (IX.5.6; X.70.6) and indicate the fit between the two.⁶

These different implications stand confirmed by the usage of the term in the early Vedic texts and also later. In its early occurrences *śilpa* figures both in the meaning of a Vedic *mantra* that is 'recited' (*śilpāni samśanti*, *Ait.Br.* VI.27) or, an act which is 'performed' or 'accomplished' (*śilpāni kriyanta*, *Kaus.Br.* XXV.12). It also occurs in the sense of *pratimā-pratikṛti* or *pratirūpa* (*Sat.Br.* III.2.1.5) or an 'image' (*Yaj.V.* IV.9) or 'counterpart', sometimes specific in colour e.g., 'variegated' or 'dappled' (*ibid.*, XXIX.58; XXIV.5). It implies a propensity or skill, instrumental in performance of an act (*Taitt.Sam.* II.7.15.4, *Kath.Sam.* XXXVII.8; *Taitt.Aran.* I.17). It signifies 'manifold forms' (*Sat.Br.* I.1.4.3) even as in certain contexts it is used as an honorific to designate a *ṛsi* e.g., Silpa Kasyapa (*Sat.Br.* XIV. 6.4. 33). In the *Samhitas* and *Brāhmaṇas*, *śilpa* qualifies divine acts or skill (*Ait.Br.* VI.27; *Taitt.Br.* III.3.2.1), and in that it supports the cosmic elements or brings them into being (*Kaus.Br.* XXIX.5; *Tandya MBr.* XIV.4.1-9). Thus contextually, the term *śilpa* in its early usage implies primarily an action and secondarily, a mysterious in-dwelling power: a key to generating an act. In both the situations it is always creative, sustaining or strengthening.

In its propensities whether in regard to reciting *mantra-s*⁷ e.g. *śilpāni samśanti*, in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VI.27) or performing ritual acts or in supporting the cosmic elements or in other ways, *śilpa* seems to possess the basic appurtenances of a *śastra*. A formal validation of *śilpa* as *vidyā*, *vijñāna* and *śāstra* appeared much later when it came to be addressed variously in these terms. In the *Svacchandra Tantra* (XI.197), *śilpa* is conspicuous as a *tattva* (creative element) in primal creation: *śilpam siddhisandohalakṣaṇam*. And, Ksemendra commenting on it says that characterized by multitudes of power, like the earth, *śilpa* is a *tattva* in as much as it has, among other things, the power or propensity to attract and control.

These implications of the term *śilpa* repeatedly occur in the *Sāmhitas* and *Brāhmaṇas*. Let us examine the point in some details beginning with the Vedic *śilpa*. The *Brāhmaṇas* contain axiomatic statements on *śilpa* like 'whatever is brought forth measure to measure, form to form is *śilpa*' (*yadvai pratirūpam tacchilpam, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (III.1.5.5) or that '*śilpas*' are indeed a mode of self culture' (*āmasamskṛtir vāva śilpāni, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VI.27). We are also told that 'imitation of (*deva*) *śilpa* is accomplished by *anukṛti* (*śilpānām anumṛtiḥ śilpam adhigamyate, Ait.Br.VI.27*). The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* further says that '... a work of art is accomplished in him who knows thus, as to those works of art the *śilpas* are a perfection of self; verily by them the sacrificer perfects himself as composed of metres'. It would thus appear that among other things, manifesting the un-manifested is central to the process-product togetherness that constitutes *śilpa*. Several other passages in the *Brāhmaṇas* indicate that *śilpa* is, as it were, a source of extraordinary skill, energy or efficiency by which certain cosmic elements take their form, stay firm in their respective places and derive their support. Kasyapa (*Tat.Ar* I.71; *Kath.Sam.* XXXVII.9) creates stability in the *Sūryas* where the skill of power is implied. Bhatta Bhāskara Miśra explains this passage as invoking Kasyapa in whom *śilpa* is the propensity to create the universe (*jagat sṛṣṭi lakṣaṇam*). Besides Kasyapa, Prajapati and Indra also seem to be the repositories of *śilpa*. Prajapati is so by his own powers and Indra gets it conferred upon him by Prajapati.

Prajapati is supposed to be steeped in the skill and power of *śilpa*, for by it he created the cosmic order and, conferred supremacy to Indra over the *prajā*, 'beings' so that Indra like Prajapati became endowed with the same *śilpa* (*Tandya MBr.* XIV.4.3). With *śilpa*, Prajapati strengthened (*dṛṇhat*) the heaven, and made it 'shapely' (*dyām abhipiṁśyat*). With *śilpa* he expanded the speech (*vāc*) thoroughly. By *śilpa* the *Adityas* shine with enhanced brilliance so that Sun is seen in numerous rays. By *śilpa* again, Speech (*vacām*) is made complete (*ye bhīrvācam puṣkalebhikhyayat, Tāṇḍya Br.* II.7.5.3; *Kath.Sam.* XXXVII.9). The commentator emphasizes the implications of *śilpa* here in the sense of *yoga* (application), *bala* (capacity) and *sāmarthyā* (efficiency) by which the entire world is invested with form, even as from it the cosmic elements derive their origin and strength. Prajapati is its source and also the one who manipulates it and renders it active—thus a primal as well as the efficient cause of *śilpa*.

Śilpa also composes *prāṇa* (breath) in the *puruṣa* as the latter personifies sacrifice. It has the same efficiency in the *puruṣa* that breath has in a body: it enlivens it and activates it. As *prāṇa* it is same as *ātman* (body?) for the two are perpetually inseparable and rest in togetherness through-*śilpa* (*prāṇāstāni śilpāni puruṣo vai...Kaus.Br. XXV.12; Sankh.Br. XXV.12*). The *Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇa* here contemplates an organic unity between *puruṣa* and its counterpart, the sacrifice. *Puruṣa* is perceived both as the abode and the indwelling spirit, which together relate to its *āyatana*, *prāṇa* and *ātmā*. And *śilpa* is the principle that binds them all.

The centrality of *śilpa* is defined in reference to 'atmosphere' (*antarikṣa*) which too like *śilpa* stays in the middle, but unlike *śilpa* is bereft of a base or support (*atho antarikṣam vā yeṣa madhyamastrayaḥ anārambhaṇam idamantarikṣam pratiṣṭhānam. Silpeṣveva pratiṣṭhanto yanti*', *Kaus. Br. XXIX. 5*). The efficacy of *śilpa* lies in its being a support or base to the 'atmosphere' (so that it may not fall). So also, in its being a support to other verses (*Bṛhati* and *Prasthas*) lest they lose their efficacy when recited. It is a potent element in the triplets namely, song, dance and instrumental music in which it rests inherently even as it establishes them day by day (*śilpeṣveva tadahaṛṣṭiṣṭhanto yanti, Kaus.Br.XXIX.5*). Coming together of two conformable elements is also described as *śilpa* as for instance, when *Ṛk* is sung in musical metres of *Sāman*. In other words, when *Ṛk* joins *Sāman*, this coupling is described as *śilpa* (*ṛksāmayoḥ śilpe sthate, T.Saṃ.I.2.2.1; Maitr. Saṃ. I.22*). The coupling constitutes the togetherness of the two in the manner of *sandhi* of black and white colour as seen in an animal skin. This union *per se* indicates a replication of the sound into colour in the same manner as the *sandhi* of colours in skin, which in a way symbolises singing of a *Ṛk* mantra in a *Sāman* tune whereby the sound transforms into colours. And this is explained as *śilpa*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (I.1.4.3) reinforces the idea of such transformation while extolling a sacrifice where *śilpa* (manifold forms) is reposed in the varying colours of an antelope skin. *Śilpa* in the *Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇa* and *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa* (XXV.13) is a potential force which must rest unhindered (*nedacchāvācastha śilpamantaryāmi*). *Śilpa* even lends its grace to the maidens who 'growing like tender creepers go accomplished in the *śilpa* of Viśvedevas ('All Gods') for learning speech under the protection of their parents and teachers' (*Yajurveda XXIV.5*).

In sum, conceptually, Vedic *śilpa* signifies an extraordinary

potential, a sanctifying principle, a supportive, sustaining and strengthening force, a skill endowed with a sense of wonder for its creative essence, and sometimes a propensity 'divine' in character which remains sanctified even in its emulation. It is also a quality, which 'cultures the self'. It is a rhythm that tunes the performer into its harmony. By *śilpa* the divine personages create and strengthen the cosmic forces, and by it a transmutation is brought about in the different and disparate phenomenon. Its centrality in the different phenomena or elements e.g., sacrifices, *puruṣa*, *prāṇa*, *ātman*, *antarikṣa* etc., is basic to its conceptual substance. As an ingenuous generative principle it exists amorphous merely in the idea or notion of it, simply by itself. When resorted to, it turns into boundless energy, which fills the Universe with *antarikṣa*, extends the earth, strengthens the Sun and differentiates the *viśvarūpa* (all forms). It is the principle by which the non-manifest is rendered manifest and the manifest derives its corporeality and colours. It manifests the basic forms of arts e.g., song, dance, music, colour and plastic arts but is also identified with the quality of 'beauty' and 'effulgence' that may qualify its manifestation. It is an instrument in the hands of Prajapati, Śilpa Kaśyapa, Indra, Devas and an Acchavac priest. All in all, *śilpa* is a product and also a process that sanctifies and enlivens the former and rests there as its very *prāṇa*.

II

But *śilpa* did not remain permanently ensconced in its original Vedic ambience. Its exalted character was diametrically reversed in the *Dharmasūtras* (c.500-200 BC), where it is found relegated to the category of 'occupation' (*vṛtti*) generally assigned to Śūdras, thus heralding its development in a different trajectory. The vexing and waning of *śilpa* into the highs and lows, between 'knowledge'⁸ on one hand and occupations (*vṛtti*) on the other became the leitmotif of its later development till the Middle Ages. Such a dramatic reversal in the fortune of *śilpa* is apparent in *Āpastamba Smṛti* (V.3), Gautama and later in Manu besides others. Such ascription continued even in the Purāṇas as in the *Agni Purāṇa* (151.9) which says that 'service to the twice-borns and all kinds of arts and crafts—these are the means of living of the śūdras (*śūdrasya dvijasusṛūṣā sarvaśilpāni cāpyatha*).

Crafts and their categories had started proliferating during the later Vedic period. The *Vājasneyi Saṃhitā* (XXX.6.21) and the

Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (III.4.2.7) mention many of them e.g. chariot makers, carpenters, potters, smiths, jewellers, herdsman etc. Among these, the *rathakāras* and *takṣans* were important as they occur in the list of the *ratnins* who, according to *Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā* (II.6.5), anointed a king. Later, they were relegated to the level of *śūdras*. For instance, *takṣan* are *śūdra* and equivalent in status to smith (*ayaskāra*) in the *Mahābhāṣya* on Panini (II.4.10). Uṣanas enumerate them as of *pratiloma* order, born of a Brahmana female and a Sucaka male.⁹ However, a total devaluation of *śilpa* had still not come about till at least the fourth century BC as *śilpa* still denoted a kind of 'ceremonial act' in the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (VIII.4.5-8; IX.10.11, 11.2). Such ambivalence about the status of *śilpa* continued even later.

As for *śilpin*, 'artisan', the term came into vogue with Paṇini¹⁰ (c.400 BC) in reference to arts and crafts e.g., dancing, music and the crafts like those of a barber and potter. The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* mentions crafts such as pottery-making, carpentry, dying, dress-making, along with those concerning gems and metals like gold, silver, tin and iron.¹¹ He classifies *śilpins* into the categories of 'village craftsmen' (*grāma-śilpin*) and the 'accomplished craftsmen' (*rāja-śilpin*).¹² The role of *śilpa* as *vṛtti* is quite apparent in these references. Such artisans may have been on rise economically and some of them even paid taxes to the state.¹³ But, their crafts did not command respectability. For instance, Yajñavalkya (III.42) recommends *śilpa* as one of the ten sources of livelihood only in times of distress. *Śilpa* had indeed turned into *vṛtti* which are explained in the texts as a source of livelihood (*teṣāṃ tad vartanād vṛttiruchyate*).¹⁴ The *śilpins* pursuing many such occupations for living have often been reviled in the *Dharmasūtras* apparently because those *vṛttis* were considered polluting in character. Apastamba (I.6.18.18) ordains that food offered by a physician, a hunter, a surgeon, a fowler, an unfaithful wife, a eunuch, a *gaṇa*, and a *śilpin* must not be eaten. According to Gautama (XVII.7, 17), a Brāhmaṇa may accept food from a trader who is not a *śilpin* but he must not accept it either from a *śilpin* or from an unchaste woman, a criminal, a carpenter, a surgeon and such other persons. The *Dharmasāstras* similarly exhibit contempt for *śilpa* and *śilpin* and impart a low status to the different occupational classes in social hierarchy. For instance, Manu disallows certain *vṛttis* to the twice-born but grudgingly concedes that these *vṛttis* may be practiced by them during the exceptional times of distress. These 'low' occupations consisted of *vidyā*, *śilpa*, *bhṛta sevā*, *vipaṇan* and *kṛṣi*.¹⁵

The reference to *vidyā* here is interesting and it may perhaps refer to non-scriptural (anti-scriptural?) knowledge. We will return to *vidyā* later.

The situation was no different in the Buddhism where in early texts, *sippaṃ* is found split into *hīna* (low), *puṭhu* (ordinary) and *ukkaṭṭha* (higher) categories of which the first two bear similarity with the Dharmasastra-ic lists. The *Suttavibhanga* describes *nalakāra sippaṃ* (basket making), *kumbhakāra sippaṃ* (potter's craft), *pesakāra sippaṃ* (weaving), *cammakāra sippaṃ* (leather craft), and *nahāpita sippaṃ* (barbers' craft) which are 'disdained' as 'low' crafts. The other crafts like *muddā* (counting on fingers), *ganaṇā* (accounting) and *lekhā* (writing) were not 'disdained' and belonged to the category of 'high' crafts.¹⁶ Even those occupations which once enjoyed a respectable status came to be included among the vocations of the people of 'low birth' (*hīna jāti*) as early as 5th or 4th century BC in Buddhist texts. For instance, *rathakāra* is sometimes equated with *cammakāra*, both considered 'low', the former by 'birth' and the latter so by 'occupation'.¹⁷

These passages when compared to those on *śilpa* in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Samhitās* indicate a colossal change engendered into the earlier glorifying perceptions about *śilpa*. The first hint of *śilpas'* relegation to a lower status is encountered in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII.1.2-4, VII.2.1) where the text lists different *vidyās* starting with the Vedas. It then relegates *devajana vidyā* (consisting of dancing, music and singing) to the bottom impervious of the fact that these accomplishments are designated as *śilpas* in the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* (XXIV.5).

The *Maitri Upaniṣad*¹⁸ (VII.8) contains a discourse to princes on 'hindrances to the sacred knowledge' (*jñānopasargas*) with an exhortation that 'mingling of heavenly with un-heavenly is the root cause of the delusion or false doctrine' where 'fools stick to the clump of grass'. Interestingly, those who 'ceaselessly practiced *śilpa* for living' (*nityaśilpopajivinaḥ*) figure in this category and stand denounced with contempt and disparagement and branded as 'unworthy of heaven' (*asvargyaḥ?*) and 'thieves' (*taskara*). It is to be noted that *śilpins* so denounced here are clubbed together with those who were 'ceaselessly hilarious' (*nityapramudita*) those 'ceaselessly peregrinating' (*nityaprasavita*), 'ceaselessly begging' (*nityayācanaka*). Town-beggars, pupils of Śūdras and those Śūdra who are proficient in *śāstras*, (*purāyacaka ayājyayājakaḥ śūdrasiyaḥ śūdrāśca śāstravidvānsaḥ*) also figure in this 'hate-list'.

The enumeration goes on further to include *cāṭa* (mercenaries?), *jaṭa*, *naṭa* (jugglers), *bhaṭa* (warriors), religious mendicants, stage artists, those engaged in royal service, degraded and outcasts (*cāṭajaṭanaṭappravrajitarangāvatarino rājakarmāṇi patitādayaḥ*).

Also included in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* list are those who claimed controlling (*śamayām*) demigods like Yakṣa etc. Or, those like the *kaṣāyakundalin* and *kāpālikas* and those others who 'wish to encounter the Vedicists by (offering) false devices of arguments, (or by) cheating and magic' (*vr̥thātarkadṛṣṭāntakuhakendra-jālairvoidikeṣu paristhatumicchati*). The *Maitrī Upaniṣad* ordains that one should not live with such people for they are openly thieves and unfit for heaven (*prakāśabhūtā te vai taskarā asvargyaḥ*). The contempt for and condemnation of *śilpins* along with the others of the category expressly stems from the argument of the *Upaniṣad* (VII.7-8) that these (heretical) groups were 'no-soul' theorists. The explicit statement about their abilities as 'learned in *śāstras*' may not be missed in this despise and condemnation. Obviously, these groups of people seem to have earned the encomium of *Maitrī Upaniṣad* because they did not conform to the Vedic beliefs and temper specially, in their doctrine of *ātman* and, whatever they professed was supposed to be a hindrance to true (Vedic) knowledge. The intensity and tenor of criticism and intolerance here is exceptional. But the criticism of *śilpin* in it is significant in elucidating that they now belonged to a group, which professed a counter-ideology that was not in tune with Vedic temper.

A fairly strong and learned socio-philosophical tradition encompassing Buddhism, Jainism, Ajivikas, the Carvakas and Lokayata, besides other minor faiths, had crystallized by 500 BC. And, they were all questioning philosophical premises of the erstwhile Vedic beliefs. Those upholding *śilpa* including the *śilpins* apparently became a part of this newly emerging tradition to earn a condemnation from the orthodoxy for being heretical to the Vedic tradition. The non-Vedic socio-philosophical systems were however, offering alternative arguments about the entire question of *ātman* and alternative ways of life and thought. Some of these systems, Buddhism for instance, sometimes exalted *śilpa* and rejected the Vedas jettisoning the latter merely as 'training' even as they questioned Vedic learning. Lokayata, which is clubbed with *śilpa* in the *Udāna*¹⁹, similarly professed different views in respect of life, heaven, rituals, pain and pleasure. *Śilpa* and *śilpins*' proximity with these groups, as indicated in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* above and in the

Udāna and other Buddhist texts may have led to their devaluation and relegation to the level of *vṛttis* assigned to Sudras, shorn of their Vedic glory.

Since 'no-soul' (*anātma*) belief figures among the reasons for criticizing the despised groups in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, the condemnation may implicate the heretical systems which upheld it. Buddhism, Lokayata, Carvaka, the protagonists of *śilpa* and other minor heterodox systems would appear to be a part of this category. In any case, *śilpa* and *śilpins* stood denigrated in the later-and post-Vedic society and the situation seems to have continued from Sutras to Smṛtis and Purāṇas and even in the Buddhist texts with a conspicuous ambivalence till they were resurrected appropriately in the Middle Ages.²¹

III

Like the proverbial phoenix *śilpa* and *śilpins* got resurrected soon enough and ultimately burgeoned forth into prominence. In this resurgence their earlier moorings especially as *vidyā*, *vijñāna* and *śāstra* were used to their advantage. We had earlier drawn attention to *śilpa*'s connection with *vidyā* and we may now discuss this connection. *Śilpa*'s validity as 'knowledge'—even a kind of knowledge not in tune with theoretical temper of orthodoxy, as evidenced in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*—may not be doubted. Its exalted pedigree as we saw earlier could be traced back to the *Ṛgveda*. Its resurrection was posited in the enunciation in the *Milinda Pañho* (see below), its devaluation as *vṛtti* in Paṇini, Patanjali and *Dharmasāstras* notwithstanding.

A quick survey of changing perceptions about the highs and lows of *śilpa* seems to indicate that roots of artists' devaluation or valorization lay in these formulations. Since the early Vedic times, its association with creativity had received a ritual anchorage *per se* as the very act of its application was supposed to be sustaining and sacred in nature. Later, perhaps in its association with Lokayata—the two, as we saw earlier, are found clubbed together—*śilpins* probably fabricated an epistemology upholding 'direct perception' (*pratyakṣa*) as a singular source of knowledge. They valorized *dhyāna*, *sādhana* and *bhāvarūpa*,²² the essential grids of experience, which *śilpins*' skill turned into directly perceived reality. Such enunciation tends to establish artist as 'materialists' espousing a traditionally validated materialistic and epistemological doctrine of *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* for their pragmatic philosophy in creating art

forms. An indirect confirmation of this is provided by its togetherness with the Lokayata in the *Udāna*²³ along with other vocations. These points may explain reasons for devaluation of *śilpa* to certain extent even as they underscore the basis of antagonism between the contesting traditions where one upheld the *Ātman* and others *śilpa*.²⁴ In fact, in the early Buddhism, in the category of knowledge in the *Milinda Pañho* (150 BC), *śilpa* is supposed to compose the entire knowledge and the Vedas are marginalized to the level of mere 'training' (*Veda sikkhāni nāma, avasesāni sippāni sippaṃ*). In the same text, *śilpa* is supposed to lead to liberation (*nibbāna*). The discussions on *sippa* vis-à-vis *nibbāna* here exemplify that the former in essence is like the latter. Its *pūrvabhāga* may be mingled with pain and anguish but ultimately, as in *nibbāna* so also in *sippa* bliss is absolute: it not being 'mixed' with anguish.²⁶ *Śilpa* has a respectable place in this enunciation.

The texts like the *Milinda Pañho* and *Śilpaprakāśa* acknowledge *śilpa* in terms of a *vidyā*²⁷ that empowers its practitioner towards absolute bliss (*nirvāṇa*) or 'liberation' (*mukti*). The discourse on what constituted *śikṣā* and what *vidyā* or *sāstra* or whether *śilpa* was within or outside their domain bears out the undercurrents of transformation crafted by *śilpins* in their favour, which eventually came to have canonical sanction. For instance, we have such claims made in the Ratanpur inscription of Vahara where a *śilpin* proclaims his expertise in *śilpavidyā*.²⁸ They also assumed the title *vijñānika*.

Śilpa indeed figures as *vidyā* both by that designation which is accorded to it and by implications. The idea of knowledge (and learning by practice) is implicit in the term *śilpa*. The nature and kind of this knowledge and the elements that may constitute it are, as we said earlier, spelled out axiomatically in the *Aitareya* (VI.27) and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (III.2.1.5) and in the *Milinda Pañho*. In an early usage of the term, *śilpa* in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VI.27), is evocative of knowledge (*ya evam veda*) that 'cultures the self' (*ātmanam samskurute*). Sāyaṇa, commenting upon the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, lists two kinds of *śilpas*—*devaśilpa* and *mānuṣa śilpa*,³⁰ the latter being the former's counterpart by imitation (*anukaraṇa*)—the 'knowledge' of which transforms such a 'knower' into one who is accomplished in *śilpa*. Occurring in conjunction with *veda* (from the root *vid*, 'to know') and endowed with the quality of 'high' art in the sense that it is supposed to be in 'rhythm' with itself (*chandomayaṃ*), *śilpa* is projected as something that only an accomplished 'knower' would 'know'.³¹

A meditative quest to apprehend a knowable entity—a quest that by intuitive cognition renders the seeker himself knowledgeable (*ya u cainam evam veda*), is one of the common refrains in the *Upaniṣads* and *Brāhmaṇas*. A transition of this cognition into the category of *vidyā* thus is regulated by the fact that thereby it satisfies the conditions of 'true vision' (*samyag darśana*) and 'face-to-faceness' (*sakṣātakaraṇa*). Śāṅkara sets these conditions to validate *vidyā* as such in his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* (III.3.14 and III.3.59). He argues that a *vidyā* rests on *dhyāna* (meditation) as its antecedent to afford a 'true vision' (*ādhyāna pūrvakāya samyagdarśanaye*) and it leads to 'the immediate perception of the worshipped object' (*asam phalaṃ upāsyaviśayasākṣātakaraṇam*³²). These may be regarded as the essential conditions whose inherence would turn an experience into a *vidyā*. In the *Upaniṣads*, the term *vidyā* indeed characterizes meditative exercise related to ritual acts of esoteric or symbolic orientation that tend to become objects of contemplation (*dhyāna, upāsana*³³) which are the essential ingredients of *śilpa*.³⁴ The *Upaniṣads* explain *vidyā* in terms of 'special knowledge related to Brahman' (*Brahmavidyā*). Sāyana, commenting on the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI.5.6.8) takes it in the sense of philosophical systems. But in common parlance, 'combined with specific substantives, it designates various sciences or crafts.'³⁵

Eventually, *vidyā* came to have both epistemological and spiritual connotations; the former evincing the proofs of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) and the latter tied up with 'salvation', its emancipating character ensconced in its efficacy in securing that path. So whatever be the *vidyā* a recipe for liberation was always built into it—*sā vidyā yā vimuktaye* or, as in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (VII.9)—*vidyayā'mṛtamaśnute*.

By the time of the *Chāṅdogya Upaniṣad* a fairly large list of *vidyās* had received a sanction in religious as well as secular fields. Tradition differentiates them into many categories (*vividhā*) e.g., *parā* and *aparā*, *arthakarī*, *tridhātu*, *sanjīvanī* etc. *Vidyā* is a source of knowledge to the wise (*vidyā sādhorjñanāya*) and a source of enlightenment (*Vidyā. Sā'pi dvividhā bodhābodha svabhāva bhedāt*) but it rests in *Vac* (*sarvāsām vidyānām vāgekāyanam*). It makes its knower distinctive (*vidyato puruṣo viśeṣo bhavati*).³⁶ Its all-winning quality is described in the *Sarasvatī Śāstra*, which eulogizes it as *deśakāla pariccheda sarvadā sarvamohinī* even as it is supposed to be primarily located in analytical reasoning (*vimarśarūpiṇī vidyā*).³⁷

The number and implications of the term *vidyā* seem to vary in different texts.³⁸ And *śilpa* often seems to be a part of it. We saw above that in the sense of 're-constituted form', it figures as 'knowledge' in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. What is *devajana vidyā* in the *Chāndogya* (VII.1.2-4, VII.2.1), is *śilpa* in the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* consisting of dance, singing and instrumental music (*nṛtya, gīta* and *vādita*). It is thus safe to assume that *śilpa*'s status as a specific knowledge has a hoary antiquity. As in early texts so also later, *śilpa*-and-*vidyā* connection seems to have continued unabated. As *vidyā*, *śilpa* stands supreme even as it affords pleasure (*śilpavidyā sadā sreṣṭhā sarvadānandadāyika, Śilpaprakāśa*, II.730). The *Vākpadyam* (I.117) similarly regards certain values as supreme as these are best expressed through *śilpa*.³⁹ And, interestingly, according to the *Śilpaprakāśa* (I. 561) *śilpavidyā* is supportive of regional modes and inflexions (*śilpavidyā deśānusāriṇī*).⁴⁰

Śilpa eventually came to acquire the label of *śāstra* with artists claiming its knowledge and expertise. And this development marks the final rehabilitation of *śilpa*. This transformation happened in many ways. For instance, it was achieved by incorporation of this knowledge in the *Purāṇas*⁴¹, both early and late. Or, its further inclusion in the *Āgamas*⁴² and *Samhitās* (e.g. *Jayākhyā, Padma, Pauṣkara, Pañcarātra, Parameśvara* etc), composed in north and south India. This entire development was phenomenal in constantly evolving ever-new categories of forms and their different typologies. Apart from this, other significant texts for instance, *Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra* were also composed on art and architecture which have a divine or ṛṣi-c authority by proxy as the text claims a received wisdom from Brahma which Visvakarma shared with his four sons—Jaya, Vijaya, Siddhartha and Aparajita. Some of these texts, *Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad* for instance, seem to belong exclusively to *śilpa-vidyā* tradition. It may be assumed that in these texts whether exclusively devoted to *śilpa* or to other aspects of particular theologies, the materials on architecture and iconography came from *śilpins*.

Many *śilpa* texts seem to have been composed by the *śilpins* themselves⁴³ for they fundamentally appear like practical manuals of *lakṣaṇa*, measures (*tālamāna*), *pramaṇas*, fit for working out the images or monuments of different kinds. The language or the text in these works is grammatically indefensible and needs exhaustive corrections, which indicates their character as manuals. We also have the texts like the *Citralakṣaṇa* of Nagnajit, a name that has Vedic

antiquity, containing a dialogue between Brahma and Nagnajit that seems to accord a divine sanction to iconographic practice.

Sometimes the sanction is *ṛṣic*. The *citrasūtra's* (*Viṣṇudharmottara*) enunciations about *śilpa* start with a dialogue between the sage Markandeya and king Vajra and develop into a canon of iconography where *lakṣaṇas* are the means to concretize the forms—even those forms that may be un-manifestible (*etaddhi tasyāpratimasya rūpamtaveritam rūpa jaganmayasya...*). Image making is mentioned there in terms of 'fashioning the forms' (*rūpa nirmāṇam*) 'in order that this making may ever conform to *śāstra*' (*yasmātsannihita nityam śāstravat sā kṛtirbhavet*).⁴⁴ In view of all these exhortations about *śāstra* we may briefly examine as to what it is like for a *vidyā* or *vijñāna* to be perceived as a *śāstra*? Implications might be significant for, *śāstra* is generally understood in the sense of 'cultural grammar' that would have a prescriptive as well as a regulatory authority offering legitimacy to cultural practices.

Śāstra seems to occupy a higher plane than *vidyā* as it leads to realization of *dharma* in its jurisdiction relating to different fields whether rituals, image making, poetry or other domains. It offers 'expansive vision of everything' (*sarvasya locanam*), 'dispels doubts' (*aneka samśayocchedi*) and 'makes the hidden meaning perceivable' (*parokṣārtha darśakam*).⁴⁵ In the *Amarakośa* (III.179) *śāstra* is explained as 'command' (*nideśa*), or authoritative knowledge or a book (*nideśa granthayoḥ śāstram*): in specifics, the works on philosophy e.g., those of Gautama, Kanada, Kapila, Patanjali Vyasa and Jaimini.⁴⁶ It has a legislative authority not open to challenge for it is supposed to have an unhindered sway. In tradition the validity of *śāstra* lies in its theoretical primordially as *vidyā*, which receives a 'practical instantiation' in its practice. Taking into account Katyayana's dictum *śāstreṇa dharma niyamaḥ* it may be said that '*śāstra* provides a constraint on behaviour in accordance with a *priori* assessment of the correct way of acting.'⁴⁷ And, its authority was binding. Whatever be the contingency, whether the Vindhyas might split or the winds of annihilation (*pralaya*) might blow, the wise were supposed to stick to the path of *śāstra* and *guru*.⁴⁸

If *śilpa* is indeed a *śāstra*,⁴⁹ as the texts sometimes assert, the question about the rules it seeks to establish besides the modality of *śāstra*-ic rules and the claims of its authority need being addressed here, in brief. On these points its axiomatic formulations e.g. 'it cultures the self' or '*śilpa* is where *pratirūpa* is' or, '*anukaraṇa*⁵⁰ is

its basis' (*śilpānām, anukṛtiḥ śilpamadhiḡamyate*) seem to fix its rules. The formulations about *anukaraṇa*, *lakṣaṇa*, *rūpa* (or, *bhavarūpa*), *dhyāna*, *sādhana* seems to define its modality. The Vedic texts we quoted in the beginning and the *arcā*- and *kriyāpādas* of the Āgamas and *Sāmhitas* define its authority. But significantly, *śilpa śāstras* despite what they might say about the rules, also seem to allow freedom of action to its practitioners. A freedom tempered by the dictates of a *guru* is conceded in the *Śilpaprakāśa* (II. 465) where he is supposed to play with forms (*śilpī kṛīdati tatraiva gurorajñānusārataḥ*). According to *Śilpaprakāśa* (I. 511) though the 'command of *śāstra* (*śāstra nirdeśa*) is binding yet *śilpin* may create a figure according to his imagination (*manojña*). Similarly, in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (*pratima lakṣaṇa*, 85.80b) in delineating a god, adherence to its canonical prescriptions is mandatory. Yet, it is conceded that the erudite artist should 'represent them by discriminating appropriately their respective functions in terms of the *śāstra*': *budhyā teṣām karmayogam yathāvat śāstram dr̥ṣṭvā te tu kāryā budhena*.⁵¹ *Śāstra* seems to be reckoned indirectly here for without its appropriate knowledge an artist might not possibly be able to discriminate!

Like all the *vidyās* and *śāstra*, adherence to their rules promises deliverance from the miseries of this world. The point has been made time and again in the *śilpa* texts. For instance, the *Śilpaprakāśa* (II.730) proclaims that 'by *śilpa-siddhi* one attains freedom from the cycle of birth and re-birth. The same text (II. 805) further says that "of all the *śāstras*, the *śilpa śāstra* taught by Viśvakarmā is the highest" and that its practice, i.e. building a monument (*kīrti*), 'liberates' even as it bestows all *siddhis*. This is quite in conformity with the assertions in the *Milinda Pañho*, quoted earlier, where the 'bliss' of practicing *śilpa* is compared to that of *nirvāṇa*.

Thus there is reason to believe that the cycle of modifications in the status of *śilpa* and *śilpin* continually altered their identity. Hierarchies seem to have developed in their rank and substance. But modifications became instrumental in crafting ideological premises for their eventual ascendancy guaranteeing them an alternative future, a future devised, crafted, wrought and assured by artists exclusively for themselves. This may have stood against the *Dharmaśāstra*-ic prescriptions that devalued crafts and their practitioners. But these prescriptions were rendered ineffective for, the future which artists crafted for them ultimately prevailed. This future was absolute as it assured them both release and liberation

through an alternative spirituality regardless of social, ritual and spiritual constraints. How artists did this is another story that must wait for some other occasion.

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NOTES

1. Baumer, Bettina (2002), pp.28-37.
2. Śilpaprakāśa I.5, 6a: śilpavidyā tu mahatī tanmadhye pañcādhottamā, dārupāṣāṇalauhaṅca svarṇa lekhyā tathaiṣa ca. The skills that constitute śilpa figure in the Śukranīti (IV.3.84-90) in its list of sixty-four kalās. The text (IV.3.84) also says that 'making of the pots of clay, wood, stone and metal are four different arts; painting too is an art'.
3. Misra (1988), pp.145-167.
4. *Ibid.*, p.145, according to the comm. by Devaraja Yajvan.
5. See his comm. on *Nighantu* II.1.
6. Myrhofer also draws attention to the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European connections of the root *pis-* (Vedic), *paes* (Avesta), *pingo* and *peik* (Latin), *pikros* (Greek), *peig* (German) and *feh* (Gothic). Everywhere, the derivatives mean 'embroidering', 'colouring', 'sketching', and 'adornment', which sense is conveyed by *śilpa* in as much as it implies these and qualifies 'beautiful'. Cf. Myrhofer (1976), pp.267, 288-9, 312, 342 f.
7. This seems to mark the beginnings of *śilpa* as *śāstra*. It may be pointed out that the word *śilpa* is used to denote 'śilpa verses' as a particular kind of *śāstra* or a hymn of a highly artificial character recited on the sixth day of the Pṛṣṭhya Sadaha at the Visvajit sacrifices. In this ritual context, *śāstra* means recitation of some Vedic mantras by the *hota* and his assistants. And, singing, as an accompaniment to the *grahas* at the Soma libation, is not involved in its ritual context. Imitation of the Vedic mantras is to be noticed in this *śāstra* and for that reason (of *anukaraṇa*) it is called *śilpa*.

Śilpa thus is the imitation of chanting the Vedic *mantras* or hymns, and it becomes *śāstra* in the context of the *Ṛgvedic* Brāhmaṇas while in the context of the *Samavedic* Brāhmaṇas it becomes *stotra*.

8. *Vidyā*, *vijñāna* and *śāstra* constitute categories of knowledge independent of *śilpa*. Sometimes they identify with *śilpa* and merge into it or, on occasions, the one graduates into the other or even reverts to its moorings regardless of occasional claims of their reciprocity or conjunction. So, to understand the quality of such conjunction and disjunction it may be necessary to analyze these different terms in their independent domains. Like *śilpa*, these terms e.g., *vidyā*, *vijñāna* and *śāstra* have an operative value in conformity with their independent and autonomous domains. In qualifying *śilpa* they respectively valorized each other in that convergence. This was so because *śilpa* in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Samhitās* stood a sanctified, sacrosanct entity, highly edified for its inherent powers and potential, which more or less canonized it. This edification was rendered more efficacious as a result of investiture of the qualities of *vidyā*, *vijñāna* and *śāstra* into it. Those terms of value may not represent immutable categories of 'knowledge' or action (*karma*) but the fact that they figure in discourse on *dharma*, *dhyāna*, *darśana*, *sākṣātakarāṇa* etc lends credence to them.
9. Cf. Kane (1941), Vol. II (1), p. 82-83.
10. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, VI.2.62 and also Patanjali IV. 4.55.
11. Cf. Agrawal (1955), pp. 229-35.
12. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, vii.
13. Cf. Manu, VII.138; Gautama X.31; Viṣṇu 32. According to Vaśiṣṭha Dhs. (XIX.28) in lieu of taxes they could work for one day in a month for the king. The *Arthasāstra* (IV.1.2) refers to *kāruśasitārah* and *śavittakāru*. The former implies master artisans with assistants working under them (in a workshop) who could be entrusted with the materials for work. *Śavittakāru* may refer to an artisan who worked on their own and dealt directly with the customers. Cf., Kangle, (rep.1992), Vol. II, p.254, fn. 2.
14. *Baudhāyana Dharmaśāstra* IX.6.1. The *Sarvadarśana samgraha* defines *vṛtti* as *annārjanopāyām vṛttayaḥ*, Cf. Bohtlingk and Roth (Rep.1966) sv. *vṛtti* for such and other meanings of the term.
15. Chattopadhyaya (1977: 220). In the *Nilāmata Purāṇa* (V.522) *karmajivins* and *śilpins* are assigned to *Sudra varṇa*; the latter included weaver, carpenter, goldsmith, silversmith, blacksmith who commanded respect and exchanged gifts with the higher *varṇas* during the Mahīmāna celebrations. They worshipped their tools in the temple of Durga. Dharmasastra allowed them to ply the trade of *vaiśyas*. cf. Ghai (1968), pp. 86,87.
16. Cf. Horner (1943-63), Vol. II, p.176. The *Dīgha Nikāya* distinguishes between the kinds of low birth and low occupations. Cf. Horner op.cit p.173 fn. 7.
17. Cf. Horner (1942-63), *The Book of Discipline* Vol. II, (London), p.173 fn.7.

18. Limaye, and Vadekar, eds., (1958): 355.
19. *Udāna*, p. 31-32. It lists the higher *śilpas* (*sippanam agam*) where Lokayata besides *kāvya* and writing, figures among the 'foremost *śilpas*'. *Udāna* (III.9) says: "*asippa jīvī laghu atthakāmo yatindriyo sabbadhivippamutto/ anokasāri amamo nīraso hatvā maram eka carosa bhikkhu, ti.*
20. The inclusion of *śilpins* in the group marks a phenomenal transformation of *śilpa* from its earlier exalted ambience. Certain reservations may still be there in such modification. Even though the *śilpa* and Lokāyata are clubbed together in the *Udāna*, *śilpa's* conjunction with *ātman* has a different orientation in earlier texts. For instance, the duo have a togetherness in the *Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇa* (XXV.12: *ātmā vai pṛṣṭhyāni pṛāṇāḥ śilpāni*) which says that "the *pṛṣṭhas* are *atman*, the *śilpas* are the breaths; assuredly the two are not separable". But, condemnation of *śilpin* in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* would indicate changes that must have happened as *śilpa* covered new ground and acquired other connotations.
21. Cf. Misra (1984: 65-72).
22. V.1 *bhāvasyāropanam rūpakarmāṇi*; III.1 *rūpasya bhāvo mukhyaḥ*; V. 12 *tiryag rekhāyām rūpāṅgabhāvaḥ prakāṭo bhavaṭi*; III.4 *rūpasaubhāgād dhyāna bhāvo jāyate*; III.14 *dhyānaprayoge rūpa sauṣṭhavamspaṣṭam bhavati*; *śilpa rūpasya sādhanam*. For *bhāvarūpa*, *ibid.*, pp. 23, 25,82,111,125,128,140,150.
23. Cf. *Udāna*, pp. 31-32 where the list consists of *hasti-*, *asva-*, *ratha-*, *dhanu-*, *tharu-*, *muddā-*, *ganānā-*, *lekhā-*, *kāvya-*, *Lokāyata-* and *khattavidya- śilpas*.
24. In the Buddhism, the *sippa* besides *kula* and *kamma*, rather than *varṇa* and *jāti* were the fundamental markers of status. Cf. Uma Chakravarty (1971): 111.
25. Misra (1988), p. 155.
26. In the *Milinda Pañho* the discussion starts with a statement: '*acariyanam nam sippavantanam sippasukham namati*', Is there bliss in a craft for those teachers? The answer is given in affirmative. But again there is a query whether this bliss in a craft is not mixed with anguish? Because, pursuing a *śilpa* means mortifying one's body by rising up in *abhivādana* to *ācārya*, fetching water, sweeping house, providing tooth sticks and water for rinsing etc, accepting left over food for eating, messaging and bathing the *ācārya*, total surrender to him, taking hard bed to sleep, and bad food to eat, which all try the body. This, we are told, is certainly not bliss! In answer, it is said that this is only the *pubba bhaga* of *sippa pariyesana* and that after the teachers have sought a craft with anguish ... they experience the bliss of craft. And this bliss is unmixed with anguish (*sippasukham dukkhena amissam*). We are told that 'this bliss in a craft is one thing, anguish another' (*annam tam sippa sukham annam dukkhanti*), just as *nibbāna* is entirely blissful and is not mixed with anguish – *ekanta sukham nibbānam na dukkhena missam, annamdukkham annam nibbānanti*. Cf *Milinda Pañho*, p. 315.

27. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol.III, p.158 where we are told as to how in craft the Buddha 'may learn to know with ease: *sippesu vajja caranesu kammesu – kathamvijaneyya lahuti?* Parents are similarly advised to minister their child to *sikṣā* of *śilpa* asnd teachers are supposed to teach *śilpa* to their pupils *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p.189. In the *Majjhima Nikaya*, ed., Trenckner (1979), Vol.II, p. 94, an apprentice is supposed to learn *sippa* only if he is without any disability of body and mind.
28. V.V.Mirashi (1955): 556-557 where Chitaku, a master craftsman, is described as *pancavidyā mahodadhi* and expert in *yantravidyā* which is described as *mahavidyā*. Chitaku is '*vidyāpati-gambhīra*' and his brother Mandana is a '*śāstrajapī*' as well as an expert in *Jyotiṣa śāstra*.
29. Cf.R.N.Misra (1975), 40,67,53,54,71,72. A Khajuraho Stone Inscription describes Chiccha, a master artist, who built a temple at Khajuraho as '*viññāna viśvakartā*' Cf *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p.146, verse 60. Other expert craftsmen in arts i.e. the *viññānikas* are also mentioned for instance, Jalhana and Uheno who were *viññānikas* of the Chandellas in central India, Cf. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol XXI, *JASB*, XLVII part I, p. 73, *Indian Antiquary* Vol 16, pp.202-207. *Viññāna* is defined as *niravaśeṣaśāstraviṣayam granthato'rthataśca siddhijñānam*, Bohtlingk and Roth (Rep.1966) sv *vijnana*
30. For a discussion on these two categories cf. Misra (2002), 62-63.
31. The situation changed in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (VII.8) where *śilpins* as many others are condemned for "mingling heavenly with unheavenly" which was supposed to be the root cause of delusion and false doctrine" that they professed.
32. Aiyar (1989), 1-2, *Dhyāna* and *upāsana* are the essential ingredients of *vidyā* in the Upaniṣads. But as Raghavan (*intro.* in Aiyer 1989: xxi-xxii) remarks, "sometimes the name *vidyā* goes down to lesser material, and sometimes it soars up so as to refer to actual descriptions of the Brahman itself... thus bearing similarity to the term *yoga*... Some (*vidyās*) take their name from the *ālambana* or specific objects or symbols used for the contemplation, some the place or the divine being within which the *upāsaka* is asked to direct his contemplation, some the person figuring in the teaching, some the mode of contemplation and so on."
33. V. Raghavan, in Aiyar (1989), *intro.* iii-xxiii.
34. See note 22 above on the *Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad*.
35. Benjamin Walker (1968), 555, Walker further says that "knowledge is not treated merely as an epistemological factor in philosophy but is regarded as a base element in the path of salvation, for knowledge can break the cycle of *samsārā* (birth-death-rebirth)... The emancipatory character of knowledge is evident in its lesser and more commonplace spheres."
36. Cf Bohtlingk and Roth (Rep.1966), sv.vidya
37. I owe these references to Professor G.C. Pande.
38. *Kena Up.*12; *Chandogya* I.1.10, IV.9.3, 14.1; V.3.7; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* I.5.6,

- II.4.10, IV.4.2, 10; *Isa* 10-11 (*vidyayāmṛtamaśnute*), *Taittirīya* I.3.3 (*vidyā sandhiḥ*), III.6.1 (*bhārgavī vāruṇī vidyā*); *Kaṭha* II.4, VI. 18; *Śvet*, V.1 (*ksaram tvavidya hyamrtam tu vidyā*); *Maitrī* VI.4; *Muṇḍaka* I.1.4; *Praśna* I.10; *Gītā* X.12 *adhyātmavidyā vidyānām*. For the term *vidyā* in the *Atharvaveda*, *Brahmanas* and *Saṃhitas*, cf. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, sv. *Vidyā*.
39. ... *sarvavidyā śilpānām kalānām copabandhini*... *Vidyā*, *śilpa* and *kalā* occur together in this extract from the *Vākpaḍīyam*.
40. While a *sūtradhāra* Chitaku is described as *vidyāpati gambhīra*, his brother Mandana was a *śāstrajapī* who was also an expert in the *vyomaśāstra*. Cf. Mirashi (1955), pp. 556-7
41. E.g., *Matsya*, *Vāyu*, *Varāha*, *Agni*, *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇās*, for instance.
42. E.g., *Kamikāgama*, *Kāraṇāgama*, *Aṃśumadbhedāgama*, *Īśānaśiva Gurudeva Paddhati* etc.
43. E.g., *Rūpamaṇḍana*, *Vāstusāra* of Thakkura Pheru, *Bhuvan Pradīpa*, *Śilpa Prakāsa*, *Śilpasāriṇī*.
44. Bhattacharya (1991: 1), verse 1.
45. *Śāstra* has a Vedic antiquity and the word can be traced back to the *Ṛgveda* VIII.33.16. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is explained as *susūksmārtha*. It is also interpreted as follows: *yaccanukulametasya tacca śāstram prakīrtitam, yato'nyo granthavistāro naiva śāstra kuvartma tat*. Cf. Bohtlingk and Roth (Rep 1962) sv *śāstra*
46. The *granthas* implied are those of Gautama, Kanada, Kapila, Patanjali, Vyasa and Jaimini. Cf. Deshmukh, C.D. (1985), 16.
47. Katyayana is quoted by Patanjali, Cf. Bhargava Shastri Joshi, ed. (1951: 65). In *Mīmamsā*, *śāstra* is a set of infallible rules, which makes *dharma* known to us, something not knowable otherwise. The *śāstra*-ic rules may be *dr̥ṣṭārtha* and *adr̥ṣṭārtha* (evident and non-evident) but the practice of those rules is mandatory. Cf. Sheldon Pollock (1987).
48. *Api sphutati Vindhyaḍrau vaī vā pralayānile, guruśāstronugo mārgaḥ parityajyo na dhīmatām, Laghu Yogavāśiṣṭa*, VI.5.45, quoted by Sheldon Pollock, op.cit.
49. *Śukranīti* (IV.3.58) regards *śilpa* as a *śāstra*: *prāsāda pratimārāma-grhavāpyādi samskr̥tiḥ kathitā yatra tat śilpaśāstramuktam mahar̥ṣibhiḥ* Also, *ibid.* IV.3.26. In the same text II.160-162 we have reference to a *śilpaśāstrajña*. *Ibid.* IV.3.26, IV.2.29, IV.2.58.
50. *Anukaraṇa* as a mode is exalted in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and later in the *Kavyasastras* where Sankuka, Abhinavagupta and others interpret it significantly. In Sayana, *anukaraṇa* is supposed to bring about the duality in *śilpa* one relating to the divine category and the other to its anthropomorphic counterpart. For *anukaraṇa* and its value in art, cf., Misra (1994: 105-106).
51. Bhattacharya (1991:260).