

informs us, they claimed a share of the remnants of the Buddha's body on the ground that they were kṣatriyas like the Buddha himself: "The Exalted one was a kṣatriya and so are we. We are worthy to receive a portion of relics of the Exalted one". We get many other similar instances.²¹⁸ We find that both the Śākya (to whose race the Buddha belonged) and the Licchavis are described as progenies of brother and sister unions. Like the Śākya, the Licchavis are also described as kṣatriyas.²¹⁹ Manu speaks of the Licchavis as kṣatriyas, though of the Vrātya variety.²²⁰ Regarding the Vrātyas, Manu says: 'Those (sons) whom the twice-born have by the wives of equal caste, but who, not fulfilling their sacred duties, are excluded from the initiation to *Sāvitrī*, one must designate by the appellation vrātyas'.²²¹

We know that Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, was the very kin of the Licchavis and that he had many followers among the residents of Vaiśālī, even among the highest officers. Then again, between the sixth century B.C. and 200 B.C., the earliest estimated date of the Manusmṛti,²²² the Licchavis had won the good graces of the Buddha as well as of the followers of the religion he preached. During this long interval, when the two great 'heretic' faiths flourished in their country, the Licchavis might not have been particular to the ceremonies and practices that the regulations of the orthodox brāhmaṇas required. 'Hence we can understand how Manu, the great brāhmaṇa law-giver came to refer to the Licchavis as Vrātyas'.²²³ But Gokhale²²⁴ takes the term kṣatriya in this context to mean representative of political power rather than a specific caste in the brahminical hierarchy and from the word *Vrātya* infers that they were outside the pale of the brahminical civilization.

Scholars have divergent views about the connotation of the word 'Vrātya'.²²⁵ Charpentier described the Vrātyas, as a band of people not governed by the rules of caste, probably representing the worst elements of Indian society,—the thief, the robber, the drunken one, etc. But Keith rejected this view by pointing out that Manu's reference to the *Rājanya Vrātyas*, e.g. Licchavis and Mallas (X.22) has no value for Vedic times.²²⁶ Haver in his article 'Der Vrātya' derives 'Vrātya'