

GYULA WOJTILLA

THE POSITION OF THE *KĪNĀŚAS*
IN INDIAN PEASANT SOCIETY¹

The word is first attested in the RV 4, 57, 8 and translated as *Pflüger* (ploughman) by both Grassmann² and Zimmer.³ This meaning is taken by Geldner.⁴ The variant *kīnāra* in RV 10, 106, 10 is of the same meanings.

In the entire corpus of Sanskrit literature the word has many more meanings. Monier-Williams lists the following meanings: 'a cultivator of the soil', 'niggard', N. of Yama, a kind of monkey, a kind of Rākṣasa and as mfn. 'killing animals' (or 'killing secretly').⁵ Apte adds to this list the following meanings: 'poor', 'indigent', 'small' and 'little'.⁶ Böhtlingk records also the meaning *Ackerknecht* (lit. ploughboy but rather farm labourer).⁷

¹ Sanskrit texts are generally quoted according to the DSC and the Titus Text Database. In other cases bibliographical references are given here in the footnotes. I would like to record my gratitude to my colleagues, Gergely Hidas, Csaba Dezső and Máté Itzész for the various help I received while preparing this paper.

² H. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda*. 6., überarbeitete und ergänzte Auflage von Maria Koziánka, Wiesbaden, 1996, p. 327.

³ H. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, Berlin, 1879, p. 237.

⁴ Geldner, F., *Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt*, I, Cambridge, Mass., 1951, p. 488.

⁵ M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1960, p. 285.

⁶ V. S. Apte: *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Vol. I, Revised and Enlarged, eds. P. K. Gode and C. G. Karve, Poona, 1957, p. 575.

⁷ O. Böhtlingk: *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch in kürzerer Fassung Zweiter Theil*, First Indian Edition, Delhi, 1991, p. 67.

According to Mayrhofer the etymology of the word is not clear.⁸ Kuiper thinks that its suffixation is characteristic of Dravidian languages.⁹ On the ground of suffixation Witzel also holds it as a word of non-Indo-European/Indo-Aryan origin and says further that the ‘largely pastoralist IAs...left the tedious job of the ploughman (*kīnāśa*) and farming in general...to the local people.’¹⁰

The social significance of the term in the Vedic age has properly been recognised by Maria Schetelich. She translates it as ‘*Bauer*’ (*peasant*)¹¹ and following Kuiper emphasizes the Aryan and pre-Aryan cultural synthesis at the level of material culture, i.e. agriculture.¹² On the other hand I think that the meaning ‘peasant’ is too broad.

Describing the agricultural production of the late-Vedic period, Mylius interprets the terms *kināśa* as ‘*Pflüger*’ (ploughman) and *sīrapati* as ‘*Pflugherr*’ (the owner of the plough). It is a pity that he does not qualify their social position or their relation to each other.

Mainly on the basis of the KA Alaev surmises that *kīnāśa* is a synonym of *karṣaka*, the general name for peasant, who is not a person with full powers.¹³

As these few instances show the term has yet to be assessed to the degree it clearly deserves. It is hoped that such a work will result in a useful contribution to the history of the rural society in early India. For this purpose a full survey of the passages where it can be attested may be in order.

⁸ M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*, Bd. I, Lieferung 5 (1989), p. 356.

⁹ F. B. J. Kuiper, *Aryans in the Rigveda*, Amsterdam-Atlanta, 1991, p. 45.

¹⁰ M. Witzel, “Indocentrism. Autochthonous Visions of Ancient India” Bryant, E. F. – Patton, L. L. (eds.) *The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History*. Oxford-New York 2005, p. 345.

¹¹ M. Schetelich, “Zu den landwirtschaftlichen Kenntnissen der vedischen Arya”, *Ethnographisch-Archäologischen Zeitschrift* 18 (1977), p. 209.

¹² M. Schetelich, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

¹³ L. B. Alaev, *Sel'skaya obščina v Severnoy Indii* [Village Community in Northern India], Moskva, 1981, p. 58.

RV 4, 57, 8. ab

*śunām naḥ phālā ví kṛṣantu bhūmiṃ śunām kīnāśā abhi
yantu vāhaiḥ.*

‘For prosperity let our plowshares till through the earth;
for prosperity let our plowmen advance with their draft
animals.’¹⁴

The verse well demonstrates the particular connexion
between the *kīnāśas* and the draft animals in agricultural work.

RV 10, 106, 10.

*āraṅgaréva mādhu érayethe sāraghéva gave nīcīnabāre
kīnāreva svédam āsiṣvidānā kṣāmevorjā sūyavasāt
sacethe.*

‘Like *āraṅgara* you produce (the milk) in the cow whose
opening is below, as bees produce honey, like plowmen
sweating out their sweat. Like earth, (a cow) that feeds
on good pasture, you are accompanied by
nourishment.’¹⁵

This verse finely illustrates that ploughing is very hard work
and that the ploughmen earn their life by the sweat of their
brow.

AV 4, 11, 10

*padbhiḥ sedim avakrāmannirarāṃ irāṃ jāṅghābhir
utkhidān*

śrámeṇānaḍvān kīlālam kīnāśāś cābhigacchataḥ

‘With the feet treading down debility (*sedī*), with his
thighs (*jāṅghā*) extracting (*út-khid*) refreshing drink –
with weariness go the draft-ox and the plowmen unto
sweet drink.’¹⁶

¹⁴ *The Rigveda. The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, Vol.I, trans. by S. W. Jamison and J. P. Brereton, Oxford, 2014, p. 643.

¹⁵ *The Rigveda*, Vol. III, p. 1570.

¹⁶ *Atharva-Veda-Saṃhitā* trans. by W. D. Whitney, Vol. I, Indian Edition, Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1962, p. 166.

AV 6, 30, 1 = AVP 19, 24. 4 = MB 2, 1, 16 (the later begins with *etam u tyam* instead of *devā* 'imam of the AV or AVP)

*devā imāṃ mādhunā sāmyutaṃ yávaṃ sarasvatyām ádhi
mañāv acakṛṣuḥ
indra āsīt sīrapatiḥ śatakratuḥ kīnāśā āsan marūtaḥ
sudā'navah.*

'This barley, combined with honey, the gods plowed much on the Sarasvatī, in behalf of Manu (?) [in my reading: for Manu]; Indra, of a hundred abilities, was furrow-master [in my reading: 'the owner of the plough']; the liberal (? *sudānu* [in my reading: 'abundantly bestowing']) Maruts, were the plowmen (*kīnāśa*).'¹⁷

AVP 12, 3, 9- 11.¹⁸

*anaḍuhān pṛṣṭivahān vahatān vahar? āpṛṇām
kīnāśasya samam tvedād? indrarāśir ajāyata.
yadi kīnāśas sasveda śirastas tanvaṃ pari
apāṃ gāva iva tṛṣyantīndrarāśiṃ so [a]śnute.
yadi kīnāśaṃ sīrapatir daṇḍena hantu manyutaḥ
yadi kiṃ ca khalvaṃ sadānvāindrarāśā udāhṛtam.*

The passage is hopelessly corrupt. It can anyhow be made out from the context that here a ploughman and an ox seem are at work on the threshing ground. (cf. verse 5: *khale*) As a result of their work, a heap of Indra's corn has been accumulated. For the hard work the ploughman sweats from his head to his body (?). He eats some grain from the heap of the furrow-master. The latter may angrily smite him with a stick.

TS 4, 2, 5-6.

*sunām naḥ phālā ví tudantu bhūmiṃ śunām kīnāśā' abhi
yantu vāhā'n.*

'With prosperity may the ploughmen go round the yokes [in my reading 'round the draft-animals']'.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Atharva-veda-Saṃhitā*, Vol. I, p. 302.

¹⁸ *Atharvaveda of the Paippalādas* ed. by Raghu Vira, New Delhi, 1979.

¹⁹ *The Veda of the Black Yajus School Entitled Taittiriya Saṃhitā* trans. by A. B. Keith, Part 2, Cambridge Mass. 1914, p. 315.

VS 30, 11.

*ármebhyó hastipám javāyāśvapám puṣṭyai gopālam
vīryāyā'vipālam téjase 'japālam irāyai kīnāśm kīlālāya
surākārām bhadrāya grhapām śrēyase vittadhām
ādhyakṣyāyānuṣattāram.*

‘For Eye-diseases an elephant-keeper; for Speed a horse-keeper; for Nourishment a cowherd; for Manliness a shepherd; for Keeness a goatherd; for Refreshment a ploughman; for Sweet Beverage a preparer of Surā; for Weal a house-guard [in my reading: for prosperity a master of the house]; for Well-being a possessor of wealth; for Supervision a doorkeeper’s [a charioteer’s] attendant.’²⁰

This enumeration of victims dedicated to various deities and abstraction at human sacrifice. Mahīdhara (16th c. A.D.) in his commentary explains *kīnāśa* for *karṣaka* (ploughman, cultivator).

ŚB 7, 2, 2, 9.

*sá dakṣiṇārdhénāgné
ántareṇa pariśrītaḥ prācīm prathamām sītām kṛṣati
śunam suphālā vikṛṣantu bhūmim śunam kīnāśā
'bhīyantu vāhairīti śunam śunamīti yadvai sāmṛddham
tāchunam sāmardhayatyēva nāmetāt.*

‘On the right (south) side of the altar, he ploughs first a furrow eastwards inside the enclosing-stones, with (Vâg. S. XII, 69; Rik S. IV, 57, 8). “Right luckily may the plough-shares plough up the ground, luckily the tillers ply with their oxen!” — “luckily — luckily, “ he says, “for what is successful that is lucky:” he thus makes it (the furrow) successful.’²¹

²⁰ *The Texts of the White Yajurveda* trans. by R. T. H. Griffith, Benares, 1899, p. 258.

²¹ *The Śatapatha-Brāhmana According to the Text of the Mādhyandina School* trans. by J. Eggeling, Part III, Oxford, 1894, pp. 327-328.

Rvi. 2, 75.

*brāhmaṇānbhojayedatra kīnāśā~ścaiva bhojayet
apramattaḥ śāntiparaḥ svayameva kṛṣiṃ vrajet.*

‘At this place (*atra*), one should feed Brāhmaṇas and the cultivators. Being vigilant and intent on pacificatory ceremonies, one should proceed oneself to the cultivation.’²²

The verse belongs to a group of verses describing the ceremonies at the commencement of agricultural work. The owner of the field (*kṣetrapati*) makes offering to various deities, to the plough, the corn and the furrow, feeds the officiating *brāhmaṇas*, and for quite practical reasons the ploughmen he had employed for work. Feeding counts as a payment in kind in traditional rural India.²³

MBh 5, 35, 41.²⁴

*sravapragrahaṇo vrātyaḥ kīnāśāścārthavānapi
rakṣetyuktaśca yo hiṃsyātsarve brahmāhaṇaiḥ samāḥ.*

‘A man who takes everything for himself, who has lost caste through non-observance of the ten principal *samskāras*, a rich ploughman, who is ready to kill when he is told “protect” — these all are like Brahmin-murderers.’ (Gy. Wojtilla’s translation)

The point is here is that a rich ploughman must be a great sinner. It may look like a paradox. No wonder that the Citraśālā edition reads *ātmavān* (self-possessed) for *arthavān*. At any rate the verse represent a very much unfriendly approach to ploughmen. Last but not least it cannot fully be ruled out that *kīnāśa* means here ‘a niggard’. A rich niggard is really worth being regarded as such a great sinner.

²² M. B.Bhat, *Vedic Tantrism. A Study of Rgvidhāna of Śaunaka with Text and Translation*, Delhi-Varanasi-Patna 1987, pp. 228 and 326.

²³ Cf. KA 2, 24, 28 and in generally V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, Second Edition, Varanasi, 1963, p. 101.

²⁴ *The Mahābhārata*. Text as Constituted in its Critical Edition, Vols. I-IV, Poona, 1972-175.

MBh 13, 3359.²⁵

na vadhārthaṃ pradātavyā (dhenuḥ) na kīnāśe na nāstike.

‘The cow should never be given for slaughter, to a *kīnāśa* and to an atheist.’ (Gy. Wojtilla’s translation)

This verse is missing from the critical edition. Following Apte, who gives also the meaning ‘butcher’²⁶ it is tempting to translate here *kīnāśa* as ‘butcher’. As we have already seen the *kīnāśa* carries out hard work and not being the owner of the draft-animal he disregards its extreme strain. A similar idea occurs in verse 96 of the KP where a cultivator who employs two bulls in cultivation is called a cow-killer (*gavāśin*, lit. ‘one who eats cow’). Nevertheless, it would also be conceivable to me that one slaughter has nothing to do with a *kīnāśa* or an atheist.

MaS 9, 150.²⁷

kīnāśo govṛṣo yānamalaṃkāraśca veśma ca viprasyauddhāritaṃ deyamekāśśaśca pradhānataḥ.

‘The ploughman, the stud bull, the vehicle, the ornament, and the house is to be given to the Brahmin as his pre-emptive share, as well as one share from the best property.’

This article which belongs to the rules governing the order of inheritance of sons of a Brahmin born by wives from the four *varṇas* and recommends that the ploughman should go to the eldest son is not without problems. R. S. Sharma thinks that it may refer to a situation where ‘cultivators were attached to the family lands’ and ‘although division of landed property is not explicitly recommended by Manu, it is difficult to think of cultivators in isolation from the land they tilled.’ The single example is a Pallava Prākṛt copper charter of about A.D. 250-350 which transfers sharecropper to a beneficiary along with the

²⁵ *The Mahābhārata*, ed. by N. Siromani and N. Gopāla, Calcutta, 1834-1839.

²⁶ V. S. Apte: *op. cit.*, p. 575.

²⁷ *Mānavadharmasāstra* ed. and trans. by P. Olivelle, New York, 2005.

land. Therefore Sharma assumes that the allied provision in Manu cannot be earlier.²⁸ It is a pity that this date is too late in comparison with the generally accepted dating of the MaS, i.e., between the first c. B.C and second c. A.D.

A further problem is that this idea is completely missing from the other law books and in the single parallel passage in the MBh 13, 47, 11, referred to by G. Bühler²⁹ omits *kīnāśa* from the list. Instead of *kīnāśo govṛṣo* it reads *lakṣaṇyo govṛṣo* which clearly means 'a stud bull having good marks.' Book 13 of the MBh fully packed with juridical passages belongs to the latest parts of the MBh. At any rate, this statement either later or earlier than that of Manu, certainly contradicts the viewpoint adopted by Manu.

NāS 2, (159a), 163 ab, (169).

(*na praṣṭavyāś...*)

prāgdṛṣṭadośaśailūṣaviṣajīvyahitūṇḍikāḥ

garadāgnidakīnāśaśūdrāputropapātīkāḥ

...cety asākṣinaḥ.

'(None of the following should be questioned)... a known criminal, a dancer, one who sells poison, a snake catcher, a poisoner, an arsonist, a share-cropper, the son of a śūdra woman, a minor sinner. (All these are disqualified as witnesses).'³⁰

On the authority of Asahāya's commentary (7th -8th century A.D.) *kīnāśa* means *śūdra* or a 'miser'. Following him R. S. Sharma has the term as '*śūdra* peasant'.³¹ This is all right as far as it goes. However, I feel the need of a more nuanced interpretation of this notion.

²⁸ R. S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, Second Revised Edition, Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1980, p.329.

²⁹ *The Laws of Manu*, trans. by G. Bühler, Oxford, 1886, p. 570.

³⁰ *The Nārada-smṛiti* Critical Edition and Translation R. W. Lariviere, Delhi, 2003, pp. 321-322.

³¹ R. S. Sharma, *Śūdras*, pp. 257-258.

According to the KāKS,³² an agricultural treatise some parts of which certainly go back to the early medieval period, the science of agriculture was particularly studied by the *śūdras* (verse 681). Verse 211b, however, definitely states that ‘for the most part the *śūdras* as hired workers (*bhr̥tya*) are known in the villages.’ In the tale 47 of the Śs,³³ a text to be dated from a period before the 13th century, we meet Halapāla who is a *bhr̥tya* (a hired worker) who is ploughing in Pūrṇapāla’s field. It is another question whether share-croppers might have belonged to the *śūdra varṇa* in Asahāya’ times. But it is not sure that a *kīnāśa* was regarded as a *śūdra* in the NS. Although the KA 2, 1, 2 says that ‘he (i.e. the king) should settle villages with mostly Śūdra agriculturists [*śūdrakarṣaka*].’,³⁴ agriculturists (*karṣaka*) living in the king’s realm are not necessary *śūdras*. The KA 6, 1, 8 enlists the exemplary qualities of the countryside: ‘...containing agricultural workers with a good work ethic [*karmaśīlakarṣaka*] and landlords who are prudent; populated mainly by the lower social classes [*abaliśasvāmyavaravarṇaprāya*]; and with people who are loyal and honest.’³⁵ According to Kangle the phrase *avaravarṇa* primarily refers to the *śūdras*.³⁶ Since the *karṣakas* are either *śūdras* they are not *kṣetrikas*, i.e. owners of the land in the KA, rather people employed by others or settled on the land by the king similarly to the *kīnāśas* they cannot be called simply peasants. All in all, Lariviere has exactly translated it as ‘share-cropper’.

Ak. 3, 3, 215

kīnāśaḥ kṣudra-karṣakayoḥ triṣu.

³² *Kāśyapīyakṣisūkti. A Sanskrit Work on Agriculture* Edited with an Introductory Study by Gy. Wojtilla, Wiesbaden, 2010.

³³ *Der Textus ornatior der Śukasaptati* kritisch herausgegeben von R. Schmidt, München, 1898,

³⁴ *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India, Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra*, A New Annotated Translation by P. Olivelle, Oxford, 2013, p.99.

³⁵ King, Governance, p. 271.

³⁶ *The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*, Part II, An English Translation with Critical and Explanatory Notes by R. P. Kangle, second edition, Bombay, 1972, p. 315.

It has the following meanings: Yama, small, a cultivator, a slayer of cattle and an ape.³⁷

It is almost impossible to see anything common in these meanings. Under special circumstances a ploughman, though innocently, can figuratively be called a 'slayer of cattle'. The adjective 'small' may indicate the low social position of the *kīnāśa*.

BhāP 3, 30, 13.

*evam svabharaṇākālpaṃ tatkalaatrādayastathā
nādrīyante yathā pūrvaṃ kīnāśā iva gojaram.*

'Seeing him unable to support them as aforesaid, his wife and others treat him not with the same respect as before, even as the miserly cultivators do not accord the treatment to their old and worn-out oxen.'³⁸

This rather terse description points to the miserable state of the ploughmen and how they treat the draft animals. However, for this behaviour they cannot fully to be blamed since they are not the owners and at the same time they are compelled to work hard for their earning a life.

Vaik. 7, 5, 23a³⁹

kīnāśo rakṣasi yame kadarye karṣake

'a demon', Yama, 'a miserable man', 'a cultivator' (Gy. Wojtilla's translation)

NS p. 27.⁴⁰

kīnāśaḥ karṣake drṣṭaḥ

'*kīnāśa* is understood as a ploughman.' (Gy. Wojtilla's translation)

³⁷ *Amara's Nāmalingānuśāsanam* Critically Edited with Introduction and English Equivalents for Each Word by N. G. Sardesai and D. G. Padhye, second edition, Poona, 1969.

³⁸ *Srīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* (With Sanskrit text and English translation) by C. L. Goswami, Part I, Gorakhpur, 1971.

³⁹ *Vaijayanīkoṣa of Yādavaprakāśa* ed. by Haragovinda Śāstrī, Varanasi, 1971.

⁴⁰ *Nānārthasaṃgraha of Ajayapāla*, ed. by T. R. Chintamani, Madras, 1937.

Kkt. 11, p. 90.⁴¹

kīnāśaḥ kṛṣīvalaḥ

‘*kīnāśa* is a cultivator / ploughman’ (Gy. Wojtilla’s translation)

Mk. 164/19.⁴²

kīnāśaḥ karṣakakṣudropāṃśughātiṣu

‘a ploughman, a niggard, a secretly killer, Yama’. (Gy. Wojtilla’s translation)

Anam. 95 *kīnāśa*: ‘poor, Yama, Rākṣasa, ploughing’.⁴³

The meaning ‘poor’ seems to be a natural state of a ploughman, while the interpretation ‘ploughing’ seems to be arbitrary. I translate it as ‘a ploughman’.

MBhN 12, 140, 21.⁴⁴

yaḥ kīnāśaḥ śataṃ nivartanāni bhūmeḥ karṣati tena

viṣṭirūpeṇa rājakīyam api nivartana-daśakam

karṣanīyaṃ svīyavad rakṣanīyaṃ ca.

‘Which ploughman ploughs one hundred *nivartanas* of land that should plough in the form of forced labour (unpaid labour) ten *nivartanas* of the royal land and should protect it as his own.’ (Gy. Wojtilla’s translation)

According to Alaev⁴⁵ it is obvious that the fulfilment of forced labour is connected with lower social status and indicates that the person in question lacks full powers.

US 5, 56. It means ‘the tiller of the soil.’⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Kṛtyakalpataru of Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara, XI, Rājadharmā-kāṇḍa*, ed. by K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, Baroda, 1943.

⁴² *Medinī Kośa of Śrī Medinīkara*, ed. by J. Ś. Hoshing, Varanasi, 1968.

⁴³ *Harṣakīrti’ Anekārthanāmamālā* edited and rendered into English by C. Vogel, Göttingen, 1981, p. 151. (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. I. Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1981, Nr.6)

⁴⁴ Lallanji Gopal, *Economic Life in Northern India*, Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1965, p. 28. fn.2.

⁴⁵ L. B. Alaev, *Sel’skaya obščina*, p. 89.

⁴⁶ V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, p. 195.

Conclusions

1. The history of the word with a meaning 'ploughman' spans near three thousand years.
2. The references in chronological order show a peculiar distribution out of the twenty one occurrences nine belongs to the Vedic literature.
3. References according to topics are edifying: the nine early ones represent religious literature; three belong to the MBh; three are from works on law; five are from lexicography and only one is from a religious work.
4. The etymology of the word is not clear. It is certainly of non Indo-Aryan origin, however, any inference of ethnical belongings would be farfetched. It is plausible that it denoted originally those ploughmen who formed part of the non-Aryan speaking population in Northern India. The absence of the expected terms of Indo-Aryan derivation such as *karṣaka*, *krṣaka*, *krṣivāla* do not appear in Vedic texts.

Later this plausible connotation fully disappeared. Developments of the term in Middle-Indic, and Modern-Indo-Aryan are totally missing. Words for 'ploughman' in Tamil are not of this word group.

5. The basic meaning of the word is 'ploughman'; however, it gains various connotations in the different ages.

From the Vedic texts a nuanced picture emerges. The *kīnāśa* has a hard work, always sweating with the exhausted draft-animals and is thirsty. The plough and the draft-animal are not his own, they are owned by the *sīrapati* (the owner of the plough), who treat him harsh and beats him. He seems to be a farm labourer. On the authority of the Rvi he must be feed by the owner of the field. Likely, it is part of his wage, a widespread custom in India. He cannot be called a peasant with full powers.

The MBh passages are rather ambiguous, however. a possible reading is that he cannot be rich, and not being the owner he relentlessly drives the draft-animals.

As to the assumption has been advanced by Alaev there are pros and contras.

The Sbh., a text which is partly contemporary with the KA gives a vivid description of ploughmen and the draft animals in a village visited by the would-to-be Buddha and his father. It reads thus.⁴⁷

*paśyati kārṣakān uddhūtaśiraskān sphuṭitapāṇipādān
 rajasāvaccūrṇitagātrān balīvardāṃś ca
 pratodavikṣataśarirān rudhirāvasiktapṛṣṭhakaṭipradeśān
 kṣutpipāśāśramoparudhyamānaprāṇān
 pratataniśvāśoparudhyamānahṛdayān
 yutaḡotpīḍanapragaḍitavraṇapūyaśonitān
 makṣikākṛmisaṅghātabhaksyamānaskandhaprāṇān
 halayogavilikhitacaraṇān
 lālāśiṅghānakaprasrutamukhanāsān
 daṃśamaśakacarmapāṇakīrṇān.*

‘(The *bodhisattva*) saw ploughmen whose turbans had been shaken off, whose hands and feet were cracked, their limbs covered with blood, and oxen with bodies wounded by the goad, backs and flanks sprinkled with blood, breathing impeded by hunger, thirst and exhaustion, hearts troubled by continuous gasping, with purulent blood oozing from the wounds caused by the chafing of the yoke, the energy of their shoulders being devoured by swarms of flies and worms, they feet scraped by attachment to the plough, mouths and noses streaming with saliva and mucus, skin and vital organs covered with gnats and mosquitos.’ (Gy. Wojtilla’s translation)⁴⁸

These *kārṣakas* with the oxen strikingly resemble of the poor *kīnāśas* with their draft animals. Beside that the Sanskrit lexicons take *kīnāśa* and *karṣaka* (= *kārṣaka*) as synonyms. It is true these works are much later than the KA.

On the contrary there is the total absence of the word in the KA and in its commentaries, while the KA after all abounds in terms related to various categories of cultivators. It gives also

⁴⁷ *Saṅghabhedavastu* ed. by R. Gnoli, Roma 1977, p. 75.

⁴⁸ Special thanks go to Prof. Richard Gombrich for checking and generously correcting my English rendering.

food to mind that the term can be attested in the MaS a text which has a lot of common ideas with the KA and which stands chronologically close to it.

The MaS and NāS suggest that he is a person who either lacks personal freedom or is deprived from certain rights.

The lexicons clearly refer to their occupation and their low position (*kṣudra*) in society.

There is nothing against it that *kīnāśas* can be regarded as *śūdras* in the early medieval times.

The testimony of the MBhN is of great importance. The *kīnāśa* who has to do forced labour (*viṣṭi*) may be called 'a bondman' in the sense of the term known from European feudalism.

6. To sum up, the term denotes a 'ploughman', who is generally poor, indigent, in many cases less than an ordinary 'ploughman' (*karṣaka*, *kṛṣivāla*). It is perhaps not by an accident that Hindi *kisān* which generally means 'peasant' does not go back to it.

7. The analysis of the other meanings than 'ploughman' is out of scope of the recent study. However, three brief remarks seem to be in order: they occur in classical Sanskrit narrative literature and the Sanskrit lexicons datable from the early medieval times; almost all have a negative connotation.

This strange view appears also in the *sūtra* 534 of the *Uṇādigaṇavṛti* by Hemacandra (1088-1172)⁴⁹

*lubdhaḥ kīnāśaḥ syāt kīnāśopy ucyate kṛtaghnaś ca
yośnāty āmaṃ māṃsaṃ sa ca kīnāśo yamaś caiva.*

'The *kīnāśa* may be a hunter, and also an ungrateful man is called *kīnāśa*. He is also a *kīnāśa* who eats raw flesh, and even so Yama' (the god of death) (Gy. Wojtilla's trans.)

⁴⁹ Quoted from: T. Zachariae, *Die indischen Wörterbücher (Kośa)*, Strassburg, 1897, p. 5.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ak.	Amarasiṃha: Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana / Amarakośa 6 th c. A.D.
Anam	Dhanañjaya: Anekārthanāmamālā before 1160-1200 A.D.
AV	(Śaunakīyā) Atharvavedasaṃhitā 1000-850 A.D.
AVP	(Atharvaveda-) Paippalādasamhitā 1000-850 A.D.
BhāP	Bhāgavatapurāṇa 10 th c. A.D.
KA	Kauṭilya: Arthaśāstra 2 nd -3 rd c. A.D with an earlier core
KāKS	Kāśyapīyakṛṣisūkti not before 700 A.D with later interpolations
Kkt.	Lakṣmīdhara Bhaṭṭa: Kṛtyakalpataru 1114-1154 A.D.
KP	Kṛṣiparāśara before 11 th c. A.D.
MaS	Manusmṛti / Mānavadharmasāstra 2 nd c. B.C.-2 nd c. A.D.
MB	Mantrabrāhmaṇa 850- 650 B.C.
MBh	Mahābhārata 5 th c. B.C.-4 th c. A.D.
MBhN	Nīlakaṇṭhī Ṭikā (ad MBH) / Nīlakaṇṭha: Bhāratabhāvadīpa 17 th c. A.D.
Mk.	Medinīkara: Medinīkośa 13 th c. A.D.
NāS	Nāradasmṛti 2 nd c.-7 th c. A.D.
NS	Ajayapāla: Nānārthasaṃgraha not after 1100 A.D.
RV	R̥gvedasaṃhitā 1200-100 B.C.
Rvi.	R̥gvidhāna 500-300 B.C.
ŚB	Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, Mādhyandina-Recension c 800-650 B.C
Sbh.	Saṅghabhedavastu first centuries A.D.
Śs.	Śukasaptati, Textus ornatior before the 13 th c. A.D.
TS	Taittirīyasaṃhitā c. 650 B.C.
US	Uṇādisūtra of uncertain age
VS	Vājasaneyīsaṃhitā, Mādhyandina-Recension before 850 B.C.
Vaik.	Yādavaprakāśa: Vaijayantīkośa ca. 1050 A.D.