



Tirtha Yatra - Pilgrimage to Holy Places

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Continuing the importance of Svadharma/Svakarma Vis-à-vis Tirthayatra

1. A person who has to undergo an expiation (for a sin) or who is a widower or who is a vana-prasthi may resort to pilgrimages
2. One may go to holy places with his Vedic fires or with his spouse; They become free from all sins and secures the best goal
3. One who wants to go pilgrimage should pay off their three debts, should provide maintenance for their wards and should consign his wife to their care



Following were prescribed by the ancient writers on Dharmasastra; No money was to be demanded by ferryman or by a toll officer to:

1. A Vedic student
2. A forest hermit
3. An ascetic
4. A pregnant woman and a pilgrim

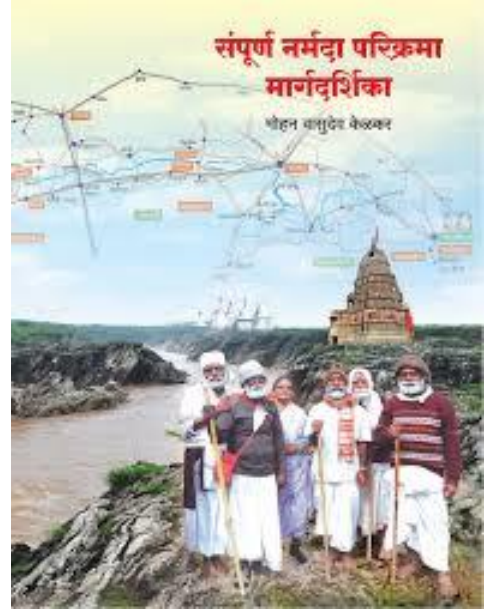
(It is interesting to note that, a friend of this write-up's composer is doing his Narmada parikrama and confirms the same)

But this was not followed universally by many kings. More writings are available on the levy;

1. (Rajatarangini) A tax was levied on Kashmiris for performing Sraddha at Gaya
2. King Siddharaja of Anahilavad (1095-1143 CE) levied a tax on pilgrims going to Somanatha. There was a claim that he had collected Rs.72 lakhs in one year and subsequently reduced the levy after a request was placed by his mother
3. A great writer Kavichandracharya took up the cause of Hindu pilgrims with King Shahjahan and requested to remit the tax for those who were visiting Prayag & Kasi.

People throughout India felt such relief at the remission of the tax that congratulatory letters and addresses poured upon Kavinchandracharya

4. In a copper plate inscription, it was mentioned that hoysala king Narasimha III had given grants to a village Hebbale to facilitate pilgrimage to Kasi and to God Srivisveswara for the purpose of enabling the pilgrims to visit Benares (including a larger tract of Karnataka, Telengana, Tulu, Gauda) and to pay off the tax levied by the Muslims kings



Reference – “The History Of Dharmasastra” – by Sri P.V.Kane

