Recapitulation:

It is observed that the Visnusūtra or Visnusmṛti or Vaisnāvadharmāsāstra bears certain peculiar qualities which are not found in other dharmaśāstra works.

The dharmaśātras are composed in terse aphoristic style which sometimes requires expositions in the form of commentaries. The Āpastamba dharmaśūtra and such works are good examples of this type of work. The language of this type of work is archaic to some extent. On the other hand the smṛti or dharmaśāstra works like the Manusamhitā, Yājñavalkya smṛti etc. are composed in classical poetry style easily intelligible to readers to a great extent. The Visnusmṛti is composed both in aphoristic and versified form.

We have seen innumerable verses from the Manusamhitā, Yājñavalkya smṛti and śrīmadbhagavadgītā are repeated ad verbatim in the Visnusmṛti (the verses are reproduced in ch. II of this dissertation). Sometimes what happens that some verses of these works are broken into sūtra form in the Visnusmṛti.
The dharmasūtra works such as the Āpastambadharmasūtra, Baudhāyana and the like have their direct relations with any of the vedic samhitās. But the smṛti works like the Manusamhitā, Yājñavalkyasmṛti, Nārasamṛti etc. do not owe their direct relations with any of the vedic samhitās though these works owe the authorities of the vedas. It is seen that the number of vedic mantras specially from the Kāṭhakaśamhitā is conspicuous in the Viṣṇusmṛti.

The ślokas found in the first, ninety ninth and the hundredth chapters are more classical than archaic and fine specimens of Sanskrit poetry full of emotion and sentiments.

The chapter hundred of the Viṣṇusmṛti describes the greatness and efficacy (Māhātmya) of the study of the book and the proper time and occasion for its recitation which accrues specific effects from such recitations. The chapter contains only five verses.

It is stated that it is pure, auspicious and it leads to longlife, fame, wealth, property and complete bliss. The Viṣṇusmṛti should be recited and heared as well as should cause to be recited and heard by others on such
occasions as the performance of the funeral ceremony (sraddha) for the attainment of bliss and happiness.  

It is seen in the chapter 96 a description of the human anatomy with minutest details which conform with that of modern medical science to a great extent. This description of human anatomy is also found in the Vajñavalkyamrti.

Different varieties of coins of different denominations are also enumerated.

The system of taxation is also well nigh regulated and balanced and the system of administration is decentralised. System of local self government is also permitted in this book.
The forms of punishment were severe including capital punishment for heinous crimes. Punishments were inflicted for causing harms to or killing of animals (wild and domestic), birds and for cutting and felling of trees as well as for destroying forests.

The mode of punishment seems to be severe perhaps to terrify and prevent the subjects from committing such crimes.

The king and other law enforcing agents took utmost care in discharging their duties and justice. Decentralisation of power to the lowest cadre and local self-government are also seen prevalent in those days. The administrative system was monarchical.

It seems that the Visnusmrta propagates the cult of Viṣṇu worship. It is also found that detailed description of the procedure of vāsudeva (viṣṇu) worship is given in the chapters 65 and 66. Dr. Bühler points out that the whole work appears to have been recast by an adherent of viṣṇu and that the final and the introductory chapters in particular are shown by their very style to have been composed by another author than the body of the work. Some of the scholars are of the opinion that the first and the ninety ninth chapters are later addition to the body of the work by some followers of Vaiṣṇavism.

2. Sacred Book of the East, Vol. VI.
There are some slokas in the **Visnusmrti** which are conspicuous to their leaning towards the Samkhya and Yoga philosophy.\(^3\)

The Karmaphala is also propounded in this book. The sufferings and births in different forms such as in the forms of different animals and birds (wild and domestic), trees etc. on this earth as an effect of deeds performed by a person in his previous life as well as the effects to be suffered in future are described in this book in details.\(^4\) It is stated that person suffers different ailments deseases in his next birth or births as a result of Karmaphala of his deeds performed in this life. In the same way he takes different forms of animals and birds in his next birth as a result of his deeds performed in this earth in his life. Different kinds of Naraka are also enumerated in this book. The Narakas are stated to be undergone by a person as an effect of his deeds performed by him on this earth.\(^5\)

The **Visnusmrti** describes the duties of the four castes and the four stages of life, twelve varieties of sons, different forms of marriages, devolution of properties among the copercinners and their respective shares. Some commodities

\(^3\) **Visnusmrti**, Ch. XC vi. 93-98 Ch. xc vii

\(^4\) **Visnusmrti**, Chs. XLIV, XLV.

\(^5\) **Visnusmrti**, Ch. XLIII
are stated in the book that are not allowed to be shared. These things are the clothes, ornaments one is wearing, sweets etc. (Kṛtānna), servants, water reservoirs in the form of wells etc., paths (pracārah-grham pravesamārgaḥ), books and so on.6

The chapters of the Viṣṇusmṛti are not uniform in length. The fifth chapter is the longest containing 197 aphorisms (183 in prose and 14 in verse). The shortest chapters are more than one. The chapters 34, 39, 40, 42 and 76 have two aphorisms each (one in prose and one in verse). Almost all the chapters have one or more verses at the end of the chapter but the chapters 54 and 96 have a verse in the middle of each of these two chapters. The chapters 1, 99 and 100 are composed wholly in verse. On the other hand the chapter 74 is composed in prose without any verse. It is seen that in some chapters namely chapters 48 and 73 the complete vedic mantra is quoted.7 Some hymns or mantras are

6. Viṣṇusmṛti. Ch. XVIII/44
7. Brahma devānāṃ padāvī kavinā
   mrṣirviprāṇāṃ mahīṣo mrghāṇāṃ/
   syeno grdhraṇāṃ svadhitīrvanāṇāṃ
   somaḥ pavitramatyeti rebhan // 48/6
   snātāḥ pitā bhavata yuyamāpo asmakamudare yavāḥ /
   tā asmabhyamanamīvā ayakṣmā anāgasaḥ
   santu deviramṛtān rtavṛdhah // 48/6

Contd...
quoted by their initial words (pratikas) in chapters 65 and 67. On the other hand we find in chapter 56 some hymns and mantras are referred by their conventional names viz. Aghamārṣaṇa, Pāvamāṇī, Kuśmāṇḍi etc. The verse 44 of chapter 15, verse 78 of chapter 51 and the verse 15 of chapter 97 respectively give the derivations following the etymological meanings of the words putra, māmsa and puruṣa.

Contd.

dātārā no 'bhirvārdhantām Vedaṁ santatiārva ca / śraddhā ca no mā vyagmadbahu dēyām ca no 'stu // 73/28
annām ca no bahu bhavedatithimścā labhemāhī / yācitāraścā naḥ santu mā ca yāciṃsa kāmcana // 73/30

8. āpo hi śṛṣti tisṛbhīrarghyam nimedayet // hiranyavarnā iti catasṛbhīḥ pāḍyam // 65/3-13
ambā namāsīti, dūlā nāmāsīti, nītānī
nāmāsīti, cupunīkā nāmāsīti sarvāsām // 67/7

9. aghamāraṇaṁ, daivakṛtam, sūddhavatyaḥ, taratsamandiyam,
kūśmāṇḍyaḥ, pāvamāṇyaḥ, durgāsāvitri, pādastomāḥ,
candrasāma, abliṃgam, gosūktam, śatārudriyam, atharvasīraḥ,
trisuparṇam, puruṣasūktam ca // 56/3-26

10. punnāmno narakādyaśmāt pitaram trāyate sutaḥ /
tasmāt putra iti proktaḥ svayameva svayambhuvā // 15/44
māṁ sa bhaksayitāmutra yasya māṁsamihādmyaham /
etanmāṁsasya māṁsatvāṁ pravadanti maniśīnaḥ // 51/73
purasamākramya sakalam śete yasmāmaiḥaprabhuḥ /
tasmāt puruṣa ityevam procyate tattvacintakaiḥ // 97/15
The scholars are of opinion that the *Visnuṣmrī* is related to the *kātha śākhā* of the caraka school of the *kṛṣṇa-yajurveda*. It is stated in the *Vaijayanti* that *Visnuṣmrī* belongs to the *kātha śākhā*. Many hymns are cited in the *Visnuṣmrī* from the *kāthaka-grhyasūtra* which is also known as *Laugāksigṛhyasūtra*. It is stated that *kāthaka-grhyasūtra* is also called *caraka-grhyasūtra* or *cāraṇya-grhyasūtra*. It is stated that the *yajurveda* had 86 divisions and *caraka* was one of them. The *caraka* had twelve subdivisions. *Caraka* is one of the names of Vaiśampāyana, the propounder of


the Yajurveda. It might be probable that the twelve subdivisions have originated from the disciples of Vaisāmāṇyana, and hence known as Carakas.

Several verses occurring in the Visnusmṛti are found occurring in several purānas, viz. Vāyu, Matsya, Brahma and other purānas. The Procedure of the worship of vāsudeva, described in the Visnusmṛti is similar to that of the Viṣṇudharmottara.

The Visnusmṛti resembles the Gautamadharmaśūtra to a great extent in style and in treatment of the subject matters. Some sutras of the Visnusmṛti in chapter 56 are found in the Śāṅkhasmṛti also. Almost all the Smṛti nibandhas and digest such as the Krtyakalpataru, Smṛticandrīkā, Vīramitrodaya and so on refer to the Visnusmṛti. The Visnusmṛti won great popularity as many famous authors of the mediaeval period have profusely referred to and quoted passages from the Visnusmṛti in their works.

It may perhaps be said that the study of the Visnusmṛti has relevancy in modern days also as we find in this book discussions on coins, local self government, rights and duties

15. Caraka iti vaisāmāṇyasyākhyā / tat sambandhena
    sarve tadantevasināḥ carakā ityucyante /
of the people of different castes and stages of life, taxation and the system of revenue, systems of atonement and punishment for different crimes and so on and so forth. The Visnu-smṛti may perhaps be called a dharmaśāstra, nītīśāstra, arthaśāstra and yogaśāstra.