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DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
HINDU POLITY AND POLITICAL THEORIES *Part 1*



BY

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Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India, and Kauṭilya—His  
Social Ideal and Political Theory.*

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PART I

From the earliest times to the growth of the Imperialistic Movement.

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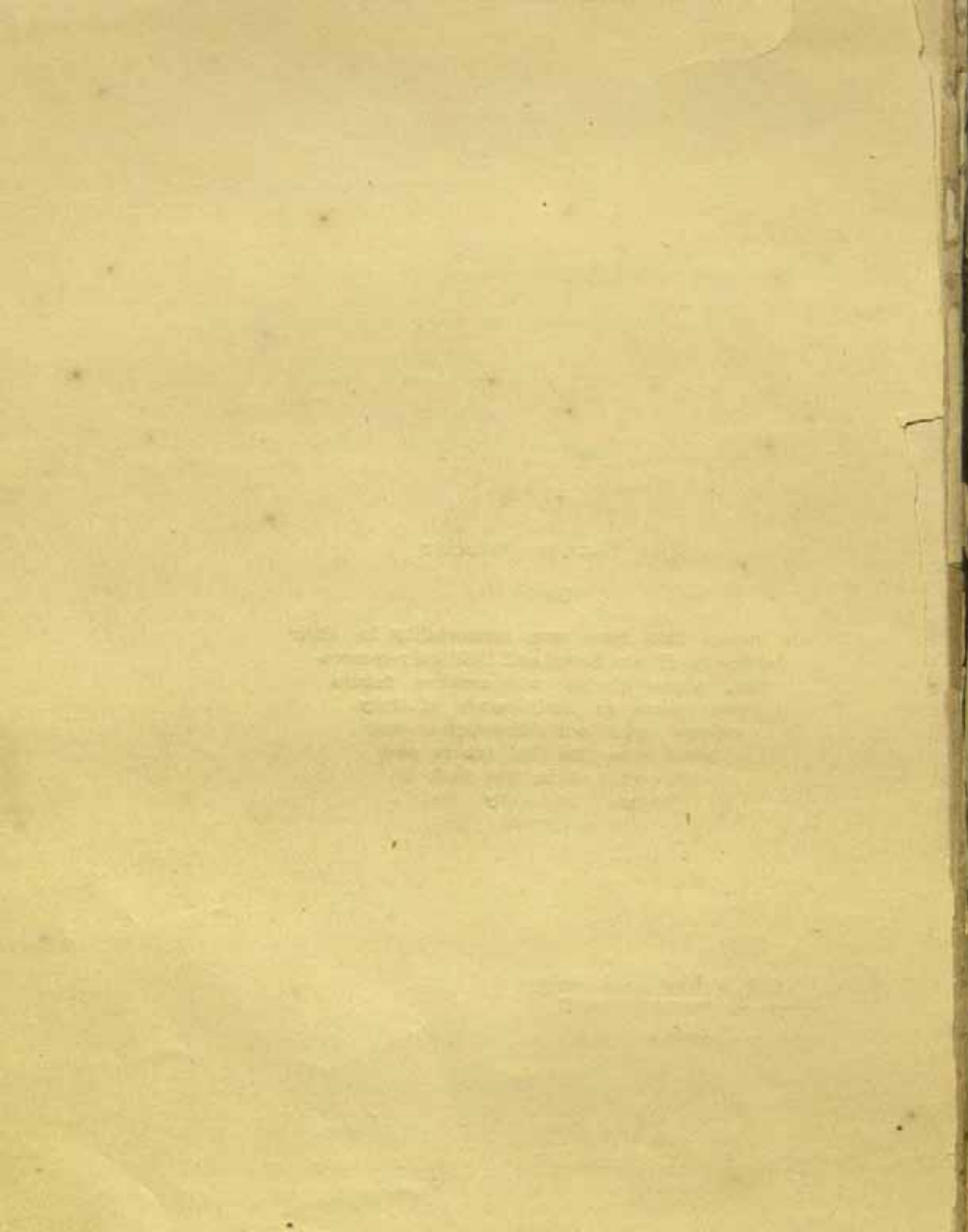
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To  
THE SACRED MEMORY  
OF

the heroes that have won immortality in their  
battles for Hindu Social and Political regenera-  
tion, whose glories will awaken future  
generations to their sense of duty,  
whose spirit will dispel fear and  
bring hope for the future and  
will guide all in the path of  
justice, humanity and  
progress.





## PREFACE

joining the Post Graduate teaching staff, I have had to devote my time to the study of the constitutional history of Hindu India, a subject in which my interest was created by the late Prof. J. N. Das Gupta, B.A. (Oxon), who was our teacher in the M.A. classes of the Presidency College. Since then, I had to associate myself with the Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History, and had to work with him in connection with the first series of lectures he delivered. I had also the good fortune of making the acquaintance of Mr. K. P. Jayaswal of Patna whose lectures on Hindu Polity marked practically a new era in the study of the political evolution of Ancient India.

While lecturing to my students, I prepared the manuscript of this book by an elaboration of a synopsis of lectures prepared for their guidance, in which I proposed to give them a brief outline of the political evolution of India, marking the different phases of development, along with the causes and circumstances that contributed to them. A number of such phases of evolution are clearly discernible. The earliest of these was one in which tribal democracy prevailed, and this was pre-eminently so for the Vedic period. Later on, there was a distinct tendency towards centralisation of authority and the growth of regal power, accompanied with a corresponding decay of popular authority. This tendency became stronger every day till from the VIth Century B.C., a movement for the unification of India was inaugurated. The movement for unity culminated in the Maurya Empire which after a time underwent dismemberment owing to various causes. After centuries of disruption there was the rise of the Gupta Empire. Since its downfall, a spirit of local separatism counteracted any further attempt at union and the struggle for dominion continued for ages. After the fall of the Gurjara-pratihāras, this came to be reduced to mere squabbles for dynastic pretensions and ultimately, the period of chivalric anarchy ended with the Mahomedan conquest.



In constructing an account of all these I have taken a consideration of the primitive institutions of the Aryas, then passed to the age of the Brāhmaṇas and of the sutras immediately before the rise of the Maurya Empire. Next, I have discussed the downfall of that Empire together with the effects of the foreign invasions which disturbed the normal evolution of political life and brought along with it the germs of new ideals and institutions. The reaction which followed and resulted in the rise of the Gupta Empire has been next discussed and then the other succeeding changes and modifications, all these being brought up to the eve of the Moslem conquest of India. Subsequent to that, I have attempted to prove the survival of Hindu institutions during the age of Mussalman rule as well as their modification at the hands of the conquerors. Properly speaking, an account of Hindu political life ought to end here, but, as that will not be complete without an account of the struggles against the foreign conquerors which led to the subsequent resurrection of the Hindus, several chapters have been added with a view to give an account of the successive revivals, the nature of the Hindu-Moslem problem during the earlier age of the Pathan rule, the ideals of the religious reformers like Nānak and Kavir, who looked to the problems of politics from the humanistic and universal point of view, and the dream of Chagatai Imperialism which manifested itself in the political principles of Akbar. This has been supplemented by a brief account of the policy of Aurangzeb and the consequent revolt and revival of the Hindus, till their dream of restoring the Empire was shattered by a new foreign conqueror.

My original intention was to discuss the evolution of Political Theories quite separately from the account of successive phases of political life, but, as this stands in the way of realising the inter-relation between political movements and theories fostered by them, and as it often makes us underrate the influence of one on the other, I have made it a point to discuss the lines of evolution during a particular period and to give an account of the political ideas of the period just after it. This, I hope, will be a better exposition and more helpful to all interested in the subject.

Both in connection with the survey of political development as well as that of political theories, I have laid emphasis on the evolutionary aspect of the subject matter. I have tried to make my own ideas clear by giving parallel illustrations from the history of other nations and these have been as a rule added at the end of chapters, separated from the general narrative. This has been done with the purpose that our ideas may not be confused by the analogy of developments elsewhere in which we find some elements of similarity but which owing to divergences of time, environment, or political instinct, never tally with one another. It is the more so in India where social and political development has been on lines quite different from those of the West and only a careful enquiry brings home to us the nature of this divergence,—so much so, that it is often difficult to render the ideas expressed by words of Indian vocabulary by using similar ones from the terminology of the West. The word *Polity*, for instance, never connotes the ideas contained in the word *Rāṣṭra* and it is doubtful whether the word *Rājya* can be safely rendered into English by the word *State*.

In regard to political theories—if we are permitted to use that word with reference to Indian speculations—our difficulties are even greater. We are liable not only to be misguided by the analogies of the West but suffer also from the error of rendering Indian words by common European equivalents. Western analogies often make us forget fundamental differences in our system and stand in the path of our representing ideas and concepts which gained ground in this country. As a result of this, it is difficult very often to be conscious of our own peculiarities and Indian workers in this subject do nothing but read Western ideas into our history.

In undertaking the preparation of this work, I have had the advantage of being preceded by a number of previous workers. Prominent among the works which have already appeared on this subject must be mentioned Mr. Jayaswal's *Hindu Polity*, a similar work by Dr. Narendra Nath Law, and the *First Series of Carmichael Lectures* by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar. Mr. Jayaswal's book is a pioneer work on the subject



and a store-house of valuable information for future workers. On many points there is room for difference of opinion, yet the work will hold its place for the amount of erudition displayed and the inspiring narrative of an idealistic historian. Dr. Law's book is also of great value, especially the chapters on Royalty and the fine retrospect appended towards the close. The *First Series of Carmichael Lectures*, will also be of great interest, for the sobriety of judgment displayed in it. In regard to Political Theories, we have the works of Mr. B. K. Sarkar and Dr. U. N. Ghosal, but it is unfortunate that I could not go through the more recent work by Dr. Hillebrandt on the subject.

For this publication, I am deeply indebted to my old friend Mr. P. C. Sen, M. Sc., who not only encouraged the idea of publishing it, but did everything possible to enable me to do the same. In spite of all this, however, the work has been delayed by the press and I regret to offer only the first part of it to my readers. The work had to meet with unforeseen difficulties and it will not be possible to offer the second part before the lapse of another six months. This part, which has already been taken in hand, will contain chapters on the Hindu concept of the State as well as on the principles of Indian social evolution and in regard to Hindu political ideal. A number of appendices will be added, discussing important points regarding ancient Indian Chronology, the principles of public administration and other allied matters.

July, 1927.

NARAYAN CHANDRA BANDYOPADHAYA

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## WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. **English Translation of the Cānakya Sūtras**—with notes and parallel passages from Hindu religious and ethical literature. Price Rs. 2/-
2. **Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India**, Vol. I.—From the earliest times to the rise of the Maurya Empire. (C. O. S.) Published by Dr. N. Law. Well-received by the Press and highly spoken of by Indian and European scholars. Pp. 307. Price Rs. 6/-
3. **Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories**, Vol. I.—From the earliest times to the rise of the Maurya Empire. Pp. 328. Price Rs. 8/-
4. **Katyayana-mata-sangraha**—A collection of the lost legal fragments of Kātyāyana, the law-giver. Calcutta University. Price 2/4.

*In the Press.*

1. **Kautilya**—Vol. II.
2. **Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories**—Vol. II.
3. **Social Life in India in the Maurya Age.**

*In preparation.*

**Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India**, Vol. II., including the rearranged contents of the first volume (to the close of the 13th century A. D.)

## Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India (Vol. I.)

### SOME OPINIONS

**Dr. Hermann Jacobi, Bonn.**—I have perused those chapters of your book which interest me more directly, and find that it gives an able exposition of the more important historical facts and the opinions of scholars on various problems, at the same time giving an unbiassed discussion of them.

**Dr. A. Berriedale Keith, Edinburgh.**—Your treatise brings together in a convenient and systematic form a large quantity of relevant material and, what is of special value, it displays a sobriety and soundness of judgment which afford every ground for anticipating that your further researches in this interesting topic will be important contribution to our knowledge of the fundamental factors of Indian Economic Life.

**Dr. Sten Konow, Oslo.**—It is a very interesting and a very great subject which you have taken up and it seems to me that you have approached it in a sound critical spirit \* \* \* I am glad that you are going to let us have a continuation of it and I hope that it will be at a comparatively early date.

**Dr. J. Tucci, Rome.**—I have read your book and have sent a review to be published in the Journal edited by our University. I appreciate very much the result of your researches which are such a combination of sound scholarship and deep insight into the historical and political evolution of India.

**Dr. Washburn Hopkins.**—Your first volume of Economic History of India is in my opinion a most excellent work and a good beginning for the whole of the series as you have planned, my only regret being that you have necessarily curtailed your exposition, so that it presents often the appearance of a resumé when a further discussion would have been welcome. I am glad to see that your views historically are so sober and so moderate. In the last few years, some of your countrymen have written works on the History of India, which cause astonishment and pain to the judicious historian. Your work is free of all such faults.

**Dr. Ganga Nath Jha, Allahabad.**—You have done full justice to the subject.



## ERRATA

Page	Incorrect	Correct
21	Milleneim	Millennium
22	Varuna	Varuna
23	Thillite	Hittite
40	व्रात	व्रात
53	सव्वा	सर्वा
55	व्रात	व्रात
57	वहु	वहु
78	पुथिव्या	पृथिव्या
88	देवी:	देवी:
159	व. यु:	व. यु:
160	वल	वल
162	वेराज्य	वेराज्य
196	अजविन्दु:	अजविन्दु:
"	विदेहानां	विदेहानां
241	Vahu	Bahu
313	व्राह्मण:	व्राह्मण:

Similar mistakes of व and व are to be found in some of the footnotes. These crept in in spite of the best efforts of the author because the distinction between व and व is hardly understood by the press-people especially in bilingual establishments. The more important of these have been noted here and the author craves the indulgence of generous readers for these errors.

*Index and bibliography are to be supplied at the end of the book when it is completed.*

## Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories

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BOOK ONE

PRELIMINARY

---

### Indian Political Evolution Compared with that of the West

THE history of India, like that of many countries of the West, affords us ample material for a comparative study of the political development of communities. Various causes and circumstances, however, prevent our realising it. The lack of a recorded history, the utter absence of a chronology, the quaint commixture of history with fable and myth—all stand in the way of our properly studying the evidences, however scanty, which are furnished by our early religious and political literature. We lose sight of real historical facts which in our eyes seem to merge in myths and these myths again pass into the domain of fable. Accustomed as we are to hear of the absence of free institutions in the East, we reconcile ourselves to our supposed inferiority in this respect and regard these as the exclusive patent of the West. We turn to Greece, to Rome, or to the countries of Northern and Western Europe for a study of free political institutions and regard our own countries as the birth-place and the peculiar habitation of despotic power.



All this, again, seems to receive ready confirmation from the evidences furnished by our later legal and religious literature. The later tendency to deify monarchy as a divine institution, the belief in kings being the mundane counterparts of the great gods, the stories of irresponsible exercise of authority by some despotic Hindu kings, described in later chronicles like that of Kashmere, the spirit of submission to authority, all go to prove the utter absence of free institutions as far as India was concerned. To all superficial observers the force of this evidence appears to be more than conclusive, and the average Indian accepts it without attempting to proceed further.

This, however, is hardly true and a careful study of the ancient Indian records places before us facts which not only prove the contrary but explain the causes of Indian political degeneration. India has passed through all trying vicissitudes of fortune. Beginning with that remote antiquity when the Indian Aryans were settled on the banks of the Indus and the Jumna, till the days when the triumphant might of conquering foreigners enslaved her people, she underwent successive commotions and turmoils, hardly known to other lands. The free communities of the earliest period were exposed to the hostile enemy or were assailed by the ambition of powerful chiefs. Racial differences or those of classes, also had their full play, and all these brought in successive modifications and changes. In the midst of these turmoils, in the midst of the conflict of parties or principles, in the midst of commotions succeeding one after the other, her social and political institutions were shaken to their very foundations. The earlier organisations of her people were modified. Society was repeatedly remodelled, governments were repeatedly reconstructed, and the older and simpler existence passed away.

Repeated foreign incursions led to anarchy, and anarchy paved the way for new social and political reconstruction. Every time, as the Indian tried to resuscitate the social order, he took more care to strengthen the executive power, as a bulwark against anarchy and foreign domination. The desire for protection of life and property, and an eagerness to ensure the continuance of the social order, made the people part with their liberty or the ancient right of self-government. Monarchy strengthened its hands. Repeated turmoils helped the princes to consolidate personal sovereignty and to subvert the ancient democracies. With the working of the process of consolidation the clans disappeared. The small states were all merged into considerable monarchies, which, on account of their size and internal diversity, became unwieldy for control by democratic popular assemblies. Social complexities and religious upheavals destroyed the homogeneity of the people, loosened the bonds of the tribe, and made the task easy for the growth of pure monarchies. Sacerdotalism, also, viewed the problem of political discipline from the standpoint of cosmic order, and extolled the rising monarchical authority.

A critical observer cannot fail to observe the working of these forces in the Madhyadeśa, even during the later Brāhmāṇa age. There, Royalty was extolled every day and in course of time came to be regarded as the true governmental system. Complexities in social and religious matters favoured its further development. Then came other changes. With the sixth century B.C., which saw the foundation of powerful empires elsewhere and which also saw social and intellectual commotions culminating in the rise of Buddhism, Jainism and other systems, powerful forces operated in favour of centralisation and absolutism.



The tide of Imperialism grew higher and higher. The working of the forces tending towards absolutism was associated with the movement for the unification of the country, and this culminated in the Great Empire of the Mauryas, which arose immediately with the Greek invasion of the Punjab. That vast edifice, which for a time stood as a bulwark against foreign aggression, was, however, short-lived and crumbled to dust with the inauguration of the theocratic propaganda of Aśoka.

India again fell a prey to foreign domination. Her fairest fields became the hunting ground of the savage races of Central Asia. The Bactrian, the Greek, the Scythian, the Parthian and the Kuśāna, successively poured into her plains, and dominated on her people till another upheaval contributed to the rise of the Empire of the Guptas. This, after a period of three centuries, was again assailed by foreign hordes and crumbled to dust. After the defeat of the Hunnish barbarians, rival powers struggled for supremacy. The country was more or less divided into a large number of principalities, some of which remained for ever local powers, while others struggled for Imperial hegemony. The differences of localities became prominent. Dynastic wars and conquests became the order of the day. As for the people, local autonomy and communal self-government more or less ensured the continuance of their life and prosperity. The rulers everywhere became free from popular control. The only checks that operated on them, were the limited character of their authority, the privileges of the sacerdotal or the military orders, or the chances and fears of successful popular risings. Politically, the people ceased to exist, their destinies were left to be moulded by their rulers. This became the general rule. In some of the principalities, the

arrogance of princes waxed higher and higher. The absence of constitutional checks to their authority enabled them to assume the role of irresponsible despots, and they often perpetrated tyrannies which disgrace the annals of any country.

From the above it would appear that India was not always the home of despotic authority. As we shall see very soon, the early Indian communities were as free and democratic as their brethren elsewhere. Then, gradually, their condition was changed. The same forces which operated in Greece and Rome or which subverted the free Teutonic institutions and helped the rise of the divine monarchies of the Middle Age, acted in India also. As a result of these, similar changes were brought in. Democracies gradually faded into insignificance. Limited royal authority made place for irresponsibility. The people ceased to be masters of their own destinies and became slaves of their rulers. Yet the history of Indian political institutions has something to speak on behalf of the genius and temperament of her people. For though there was a change, yet, Monarchy never became so irresponsible as in Europe after the Reformation. The king was venerated—his office was highly extolled—his functions were compared to those of the rulers of the universal forces—the Devas, yet the Indian people never accepted the king as the counterpart or the vicegerent of the omnipotent Deity. Nor did India ever see any Caesar cult as we find in the history of decayed Rome after the world conquest, and no prince dared to pretend to be invested with "the right divine of princes to govern wrong."

Monarchy was not the only form of government. Republics, too, existed—perhaps as numerous and as potent as in the Western world. Their history is lost to us. We have neither



detailed records of the vicissitudes of party fortune—or the services of eminent popular leaders. Yet, no one can deny their continued existence for ages or the true character of their pluralistic political discipline. When their history is properly studied, it will be found that they were not a whit inferior to those of the Western world. Indeed, some of them existed for as long a period as Athens at least. In some other cases, in spite of a lack of historical details, there is evidence enough to prove their continued existence for longer periods.

For a proper study, with a view to prove the above statements, we must begin with an examination of the early Aryan political institutions and note the influences of the environment, the political forces operating and the changes introduced, with the spread of the race over the plain of Āryāvarta. Next, we shall gradually note the social and political forces contributing not only towards the decay of primitive democratic institutions, but the evolution of a higher type of monarchy, descending in hereditary succession, though still retaining the fiction of popular election or choice. In this connection we shall proceed with a study of the Vedas and the Brāhmāṇas and take into account the confirmatory evidence of the Epics which, though repeatedly modified and rehandled, preserve a very old tradition.

After a study of these, we shall note the leading characteristics of each of the succeeding ages, observing the political forces working in them, and see how, after a period of conflict, monarchical power becomes supreme. After an historical survey of the evolution of Hindu polity, we shall pass on to a consideration of political theories and ideas which gained ground in India and which on their turn acted and reacted on the popular mind and

influenced the subsequent political life of the country. With a view to a systematic study of the above, we shall try to examine the character of social life, or find out the principles underlying the social evolution of India. The relation between social life and politics will be next considered, together with a history of political speculation in the country or the schools of political thought that gradually arose out of the teachings of socio-ethical discipline. We shall next pass on to the study of the Hindu concept of the state or its functions, and the duties which the Hindus ascribed to the governmental authority. These will be succeeded by an enquiry into the speculations relating to the origin of Society, of Sovereignty or of royal power. The Indian concept of law or the legal theory of Hindu kingship will then be discussed in detail. In a subsequent part we shall discuss the main principles on which Public Administration was carried on in India—the various branches of Administration and the machinery of governance.

In course of the survey of Hindu political theories, an attempt will be made to point out the leading features of Indian political evolution. At the same time, while we shall try to point out the similarity between Indian political theories and those of the West, we shall make it a point to mark those features which are peculiar and original to the Indian intellect. European scholars have often harped upon the deficiency of the Indian intellect in political speculation. Many have lamented it while admitting the excellence of Hindu philosophy. Some have gone so far as to say that India had no politics and the Indian genius was deficient inasmuch as the Indians cared little for material advancement. Here an attempt will be made to show that they were not lacking in interest in



matters relating to the affairs of the world, and devoted as much attention to the consideration of social and political matters as the Western thinkers of the middle ages or those succeeding them. They often attempted to solve supremely important social questions or topics of politics, and speculated on the origin of sovereignty—the relation between the state and the individual, the functions of Royalty or the social aspect of political life, as intelligently as the Western thinkers. In some cases it would appear that they prove their originality or superiority over their Western brethren.

## Sources of Indian Political History or of Thought

It is indeed our misfortune, that the Indian intellect, while it devoted its energies to the cause of Metaphysics and Philosophy, did nothing to preserve a systematic account of the whereabouts of the progenitors of the race. The Historic spirit, so prominent among the Semite or among the nations of the West, was deficient in the Indian Aryan. The difficulties of the historian wishing to construct a systematic record of the past is heightened by the absence of Epigraphic or Archæological records and monuments, which are so prominently lacking in India, till we come to the age of Aśoka, the Maurya Emperor, who made himself memorable to posterity by his fine instructive edicts and inscriptions in the cause of Buddhistic propaganda. The lack of these records is often due to the climate which preserves monuments of perishable materials but little, to the lack of stone or other imperishable materials in many places of the northern plain, or to the absence of the instinct or custom of preserving memorials to the dead, which still obtains in modern India.

We are, therefore, entirely dependent, so far as the earlier and from the point of view of political greatness, more glorious period, is concerned, upon literary records, some of which give us pictures of contemporary social life while some only preserve



non-contemporary traditions of past ages. Prominent among these latter are the Epics and Purāṇas or the various other types of literature, like the Jātakas originally based on the folklore of the country, but assimilated and preserved in the religious literature of some of the Indian religious sects. Of these literary records, chronologically, the Vedas are the earliest sources of Indian political history. They are, as is well-known to all, collections of hymns, addressed by the Indian seers and sages to the deities whom they worshipped. We do not know whether we have them in their original form, but as we have them, they are in the various Samhitā collections. Of these old Samhitā collections, we have at present a few coming down to us, by far the larger number of these having perished. Among these again, the Ṛig-Veda collection is supposed to represent the oldest material, though some scholars have often ascribed a greater antiquity to the Sāma hymns,<sup>o</sup> whose archaic language was attributed to their greater antiquity. Whether older collections of religious formulas or hymns existed is difficult to decide, but philological considerations make it clear that the Nivids or Nigadas, of which fragments occur in the Brāhmaṇas or are referred to in the hymns, were the predecessors of the highly polished and developed hymns of the Samhitās. The Ṛik-hymns, especially those of the tenth or last book, though mainly religious in their character, often throw some side-lights on the social and political life. The hymns seem to be familiar with the region of the *Sapta Sindhuval* and this extends in the east to the Yamunā, Gangā, and the Sarayu. Of the various Ṛik collections only one, the Sākala Śākhā, exists. The Sāma Veda, with the exception of a few

<sup>o</sup> Weber—History of Indian Literature pp. 9, & 64—65.

hymns, seems to be based on material mainly drawn from the Ṛik collection. Of the hymns which do not occur in the Ṛik we have nothing special to note, no new information being furnished. The various Yajus collections written partly in prose and partly in verse, the counterparts of many of which occur in the Ṛig-Veda, contain directions for the Adhvaryu priests who directed the sacrificial management. The Yajus collections throw new light on the socio-political condition of a greater part of Āryāvarta which by that time came under Aryan occupation. The Atharva hymns, in two great recensions, show a familiarity with the greater part of Āryāvarta extending from the borders of Gāndhāra to Aṅga and Magadha, and are supposed to be more modern, since many of the Atharva hymns seem to be based on those of the Ṛik. But the Atharva as well as the Yajus collections both contain very old material, often older than many Ṛik hymns.

It is difficult to determine the date of the Vedas. Orthodox Hindu tradition scoffs at any idea of fixing the chronological limits to the Divinely revealed (*Apauruṣeya*) hymns. The hymns themselves furnish us with no chronological data, except those that can be gathered from a linguistic or philological consideration, or some supposed astronomical data occurring in the hymns. From a consideration of these, however, different scholars have come to different conclusions. The late Lokamānya Bāla Gangādhara Tilak in his great work *Orion* tried to utilise these astronomical data and thereby sought to prove that some of the hymns of Ṛig-Veda existed as early as the 4000 B.C.\* Prof. Jacobi adheres to the view that the oldest Ṛik hymns

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\* Tilak. *Orion*—pp. 206–210.



existed as early as 4000 B.C. The late Dr. Martin Haug came to the conclusion that the Ṛik hymns were composed between 2000 and 1500 B.C., and at the same time he pointed out that the well-developed and polished Ṛig-Veda hymns were not the earliest compositions of the Vedic Aryans, but were preceded by the Nigādas, Nivīds and the Āhābs, fragments of which still exist in the Brāhmaṇas and which are referred to in the Vedic hymns themselves.\*

There is, however, another set of scholars who are in favour of bringing the age of the Ṛig-Veda hymns to a more modern, though still ancient age. Prominent among these may be mentioned the names of Dr. Oldenberg, Prof. A. B. Keith and Prof. Macdonnell. Oldenberg seems to believe that the Ṛig-Veda was composed about 1100 to 1000 B.C. while Keith and Macdonnell would refer the composition of the hymns to the period between 1400 and 1200 B.C.

While we cannot accept any of these views as representing the exact truth or even an approximate estimate of the date of the Vedas, we may possibly utilise some data furnished by orthodox historical traditions as recorded in the Epic or the Purāṇas. A detailed discussion of this is out of place here, but yet we may draw the attention of scholars to the fact that a comparison of the prominent names of the Ṛig-Vedic kings and those of the Kuru line as given in the Mahābhārata, shows that the Epic kernel is nothing but a traditional history of the latter part of the Vedic Age. This will receive confirmation if we compare the legends relating to heroes like Santanu and Devāpi, Dhṛtārāstra,

\* Haug's Introduction to the *Ait. Br.*; See also *Orion*, p. 206. Tilak holds the same view, and he assigns them to the period 6000—4000 B.C.

or *Parīkṣit* which occur in the *Ṛig-Veda* or the other *Sambhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*. Many of the Vedic patronymics occur in modified form in the Epic.

From these we may come to the conclusion that some of the hymns containing these common names were composed when the events in the *Mahābhārata* took place. In regard to the date of these latter, we may put our faith in the *paurāṇika* tradition about a fixed interval subsisting between the *Kurukṣetra* battle and the coronation of the *Nandas*. Though, there may be differences as to the length of above, we may take this to be 1015, a reasonable interval, which is borne out by the list of kings furnished by the *Purāṇas*. Elsewhere, the readers may find a detailed discussion but here we take it for granted that the *Kurukṣetra* battle took place in the 15th century B.C. A similar date is arrived at from the study of the data furnished by the recorded position of planets or supposed references to the contemporary equinoxial position in the Epic. From these we may come to the conclusion that portions of the *Ṛig-Veda* in their present form existed as early as the 17th or 18th century B.C. since we must make concession for the lapse of seven generations of which an account is given. The older hymns must have been composed prior to the age 2500-1700. For the *Nivids* and the *Nigadas*, fragments of which still exist, we must make allowance for another 500 years or more.

As regards the date of the *Brāhmaṇas*, it would be difficult to draw any line of demarcation between the

The *Brāhmaṇas* and the literature subsidiary to the *Veḍas*.

period of their composition and those of the hymns. The *Brāhmaṇas* often contain older materials than the mass of *Ṛig-Veda* hymns and probably



they underwent modification and their language was modernised to keep pace with the changes in the spoken dialect. Taken as a whole they may be regarded as belonging to a later period and this may be taken to extend from 1800 B.C. to 1000 B.C.

As to the literature subsidiary to the Vedas, e.g., the Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras or other allied literature, there is the same difficulty, though it is lessened by the fact that they are undoubtedly post-Vedic or post-Brāhmanic. In spite of this however occasionally the material utilised is very old. Their date may be taken to be pre-Buddhistic and to lie between 1200 B.C. to 700 B.C. The Dharmasūtras are certainly pre-Buddhistic, so far as the material is utilised or so far as the picture of social life is taken into consideration. In their present form they are certainly Pre-Kauṭilyan and as such existed prior to the fourth century B.C.

The next great literary source of evidence is the grammatical work of Pāṇini. The sūtras of that great writer throw much light on the political and social condition of contemporary India. Pāṇini's date is a disputed one. According to Dr. Goldstücker and Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, he must have flourished not later than the 7th century B.C. Other scholars, however, point to the use of the word *Yavana* (*Yavanād Lipyām Yavanāni*; IV. 1, 49.) and identifying the Yavanas with the Greeks, bring the date down to the 4th century B.C. when the Yavanas or the Greeks came to India. This lower date of Pāṇini is absolutely unacceptable. The bulk of the Sūtras are certainly pre-Buddhistic, though here and there we may have covert allusions to the sect founded by Mahāvīra or to that of Maṅkari Gosāla. The author of the sūtras must have thus lived not later than the seventh century B.C.

After Pāṇini, we come to the Buddhist canonical literature, which gives us much information as to the state of society or of political life in contemporary India. Though it is supposed by orthodox Buddhists that this literature is contemporaneous with the Great Buddha, yet internal evidence shows that this assumption is not borne out by facts. The tradition recorded might occasionally be taken to belong to the sixth century B.C., but the literature which has come down to us is certainly the result of successive redactions and modifications. The oldest material furnished by the literature is that contained in parts of the Vinaya Piṭaka, especially the Aṭṭaka and Pārāyana Vaggas. The bulk of the Nikāyas is not much older than the time of the Great Emperor Aśoka, who lived in the third century B.C. To the same period must belong the Mahānidāsa commentary and the Thera and Therī gāthās. The Jātakas which are but Buddhist adaptations or modifications of the folklore of pre-Buddhist India, comprise one mass of non-contemporary source of evidence. Though they were reduced to their present form in the sixth century A.D. in a place far removed from northern India, they contain glimpses of the social life of a very ancient period which is often pre-Buddhist. Occasionally, historical traditions find place in them which are contemporary with the Great Buddha.

The date of the Epics the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata presents similar difficulties. Based on immemorial traditions relating to the Solar and Lunar dynasties of Ayodhyā and Delhi, these in their present form, are the products of successive redactions or rehandlings. Each contains traditions and records belonging to the Vedic or Brāhmaṇic period, though in course of time later materials were



engrafted on them. Older books recording the tradition seem to have existed but these are now lost. They seem to have been reduced to their present form during a period which must be taken to extend from the sixth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D.

Next to all these, we have the evidence supplied by the Arthasāstra, the Manusamhitā and the metrical Smṛtis. The Arthasāstra which is professedly written by Kauṭilya, the Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, gives us a picture of social life and government in northern India during the fourth century B.C. This date of the work has been disputed by many European scholars on very flimsy grounds but these have been very ably met by a number of Indian scholars, and we may safely draw the conclusion that the Arthasāstra gives us pictures of social and political life of the fourth century B.C.\*

The Manusamhitā in its present form, belongs to the Suṅga-kāṇva period of Brahmanical re-action, while the other Smṛties belong to subsequent periods varying from the first to sixth century A.D. Thus the present Yāgyavalkya Smṛti must have been composed in the third century A.D. and contains directions bodily taken from the Arthasāstra. Viṣṇu belongs to the third or fourth century A.D. The fragments of Bṛhaspati or Kātyāyana approximately belong to the same age, while Nārada must be referred to a later period.

The Kāmandaka Nīti must have been composed not later than the fourth century A.D. The Śukra-nīti-sāra in its present

\* For these refutations see the articles of Dr. N. Law and R. Shama Sastry in the Calcutta Review, (1924-25); also K. P. Jayaswal—Hindu Polity.

form must have been written towards the close of the Hindu rule in India. (eighth or ninth century A.D.) In addition, we have later Nibandhas or works composed during the Mussalman occupation of India. The dates of these will be discussed in their proper place.

Archaeological records become plentiful from the time of the Emperor Aśoka. The rock and pillar edicts of the great emperor are the oldest extant of such records. As we pass on, these become more numerous both in Northern and in Southern India. The majority are dated, but some present difficulty as to their dates since the dates are often in eras unknown, or in regnal years. Coins, too often help us in deciding the age of kings. Occasionally the inscriptions, legends or figures on them throw much light on the political organisation or life of the country.

Last of all, we must take into consideration the foreign accounts of India. These, occasionally, come to our assistance and make up for the deficiency of the historical spirit of the Indians. The Greek accounts of Maurya India ascribed to the ambassador Megasthenes and now existing only in fragments, as well as the account of the travels of Fahian, Itsing or Hiuen Tsang, clear many important details of history and throw light on the picture of the otherwise unrecorded past.



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## Considerations as to the early history of the Vedic Aryans

NOTHING definite is known about the early history of the Aryans. We have neither historical records nor even authentic tradition which can throw any light as to the fact whether the Vedic Aryans were an autochthonous people or came from outside. Moreover, very little is known as to the date of the settlement of the race in the plains of Hindusthan or the valleys of the Indus. It is only when we come to the Vedic hymns that we find details about the social and political life of a well cultured race with a ready-made civilization far in advance of that among primitive peoples. The composers of the hymns call themselves Aryans in opposition to a people with whom they were in constant enmity and who are described in the hymns as a dark-skinned people with flat nose. Scholars hold different views on those two points. In the absence of authentic records or evidences they have relied mainly on inferences based upon circumstantial evidences and have attempted thereby to construct a history of the Vedic Aryan people. The philological affinity of the Sanskrit language with those of Western and Eastern Europe, furnished a clue to them. This similarity in language appeared to them to be due more or less to the racial affinity, which in the remote past existed between the forefathers of the Indian people, and the ancestors of the European nations.\* Gradually, this became the

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\* One of the earliest to popularise this theory was the late Prof. Max Müller in his lectures on the Science of Language and the Survey of Languages as early as 1860.

accepted opinion of western savants and they came to believe in the past existence of a race, e.g., the Indo-Europeans, comprising the forefathers of the Indian Aryans, the Iranians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Kelts, Teutons and the Slavs. The existence of such a race was not only proved by philological affinities, but was confirmed by the evidence of comparative mythology or of religion. The theory was propounded and elaborated in the hands<sup>\*</sup> of Pott, Lassen, Max Müller and a host of other eminent scholars who devoted their energies to the study of the Indo-European culture and philology. The existence in the remote past of such a race

Discussion as to the original home of the Indo-Europeans.

being almost regarded as certain, the Vedic Aryans came to be regarded as immigrants from outside to India, and some of these scholars devoted their energies to the finding out of the "Original Home" of the Indo-European peoples. At one time various regions of Asia, especially of Central Asia, were favoured more or less as the home of this people, though there were differences among the scholars as to the exact location of this original home. After a decade or two, a number of scholars came who

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<sup>\*</sup> Thus Adelung regarded Kashmir as the cradle of mankind. He was followed by J. G. Rhode who looked upon Bactria as the original home of the human race, and later on, Pott, Lassen, and Grimm, all expressed their adherence to the Central Asian theory. It was popularised by Max Müller, Pictet, and Schleicher (1847 to 1862).

The earliest to raise their voice against this Central Asian hypothesis were Latham (1851), Fick (1868), Benfey, Geiger (1871), and Cuno (1871). Cuno attempted moreover to demolish the assumption that Aryan blood was co-extensive with Aryan speech. He was followed by Schmidt whose new explanation as to the origin of the different languages, dealt a mortal blow to the old Migration theory. In 1880, Delbrück denied altogether the existence of a uniform Aryan speech. Though for some time the older hypothesis retained many adherents, yet scholars more and more came to favour the European origin of the Aryans. Prominent among these were F. Müller (1873), Pöschke (1878), Lindenschmit (1880), Schrader, and Penka.



favoured the view that the original home was in Europe and not in Asia.

Further enquiry brought in a greater divergence of opinion. Anthropologists, who during the earlier period of the history of the science, attached great importance to linguistic affinity as proving the connections of the races, more and more came to discard the view that race is intimately connected with language. Some of the pre-eminent among them recognised that the present races of the world are more or less mixed and that language is more often no sure test of race. Prominent among these were the French savants, Broca and Topinard, and of late these views are gaining ground day by day. The term Aryan, came to be regarded as merely one, forced into the domain of Anthropology, by philologists (see Hudden and Keave, p. 419).

While the scepticism of the anthropologist, and consequently of some philologists went on increasing, the labours of archaeologists came to be rewarded with hopes of success arising out of the surer data of inscribed monuments and remains of the races of the past. Excavations everywhere brought to light monuments and records, which put the scholars in a better position and enabled them to dispense with "*a priori*," hypotheses and assumptions and furnished them with new clues to the mystery of the past. Thus it was in Egypt, in Crete, and more recently in Western Asia. In Egypt the Tel-el Amarna letters were discovered as early as 1880. These remarkable documents threw new light on the races of Western Asia, and were soon followed by more interesting finds. Thus as early as the year 1905-6, the efforts of

New archaeological finds.

M. Winckler<sup>o</sup> led to the discovery of the remarkable records dug up at Boghaz Kyöi, the seat of the Hittite culture, and these brought to light accounts of races akin to the Vedic Aryan. They revealed the existence of races like the Mitanni or the Kassites, who in the second millenium B.C. were settled in various places in Western Asia. Each of these had a considerable civilisation, used metals, and had made a considerable advance in agriculture and the arts. The Kassites ruled in Babylonia which their leader Gandash captured in 1741 B.C. from the last monarch of the First Dynasty of Babylon.

The new conquerors of Babylon were of a different stock and undoubtedly belonged to the Indo-European race. They seem to have been Aryans and ruled as the ruling oligarchy in southern Mesopotamia for more than six centuries. Some of the names of princes of this race have come down to us and they

have been pronounced to be certainly Aryan,  
The Kassites.

and among their gods, we find names which  
point to their religion being closely connected with that of the Indian Aryans. Thus, their chief god was Suryash (Sūrya). Two other vedic deities figure among them. Thus the vedic Marut occurs as Maruttash. The word Bugash also denoting the God-head, seems to be akin to the vedic Bhaga.

In regard to the Mitanni, more interesting details have come to light. Not only have we in the Tel-el-Amarna records the names and doings of some of their kings, but we have among these records, the letter of a Mitannian king to a Pharaoh and also the story of marital relations existing between the kings of

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<sup>o</sup> Winckler published a summary of his findings in M. D. O. G. No. 35.



Egypt and the rulers of Mitanni.\* The names of many of the Mitanni kings have been found to be Aryan. One daughter of the Mitanni king Dušratta (Daśaratha ?) was married to Amenophis IV, and the latter had a son by this Mitanni wife Gilukhipa. This prince who styled himself Akhenaton, became a devoted worshipper of the sun god and discarded the old Egyptian rites.

The Mitanni

Another important record is in the form of a marriage treaty between the Hittite conqueror Shubbiliuma and Tushrutha's son Mattiuaza.† We have the enumeration of a large number of Aryan and semitic deities whose blessings are invoked. Of the deities of the former class, we have the names of the vedic Indra, Varuna, and the Nāsātya twins.

Closely connected with the Mitanni were the Harri or Arri, whose kings Artatama and Shutarna were the enemies of the former. The Harri also were Aryans, as they have been pronounced to be, from a consideration of some of their recorded names.

\* Winckler published a summary of his findings in M. D. O. G. No. 35 (1907) and again in O. L. Z. (1910). The entire text of the Hittite treaty was published in 1916 and a translation of it appeared in the American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature Vol. XXXVII. April, 1921.

† This remarkable document, consisting of 512 lines, remains yet undeciphered excepting the seven lines which are written in Babylonian cuneiform. This strange script has not yet been deciphered.

Tushratha was done to death by one of his sons, and thereupon Mitanni declined. A son of the late Mitanni king Mattiuaza won the favour of the Hittite king Shubbiliuma who restored him to his kingdom and gave him his daughter. Then, in connection with the marriage we have invocation of blessings in this treaty. The spirit of this treaty is also interesting, for Shubbiliuma allows his son-in-law freedom to take as many concubines as possible, but reserves for his daughter, the position of chief queen, while the right to succession is reserved for the child of his wife.

In regard to the Hittites themselves, their racial identity is yet far from being cleared. They seem to have contained diverse sections racially different among them and some of these were Aryan-speaking. Thus, more recently the researches of scholars have proved the existence of some of the Sanskrit odd numerals.\*

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\* e.g. *Aika, tryi, Panza* and *Satta*. It is to be noted that the in 's' *Satta* is not changed into 'h' as in the Iranian. These words occur along with a Sanskrit word *Vartana* in an inscription describing horse-dealers from the East. The horse was an animal the use of which was not known to the Egyptians or the Babylonians. The Egyptians knew the use of the horse from the Hyksos conquest. The Babylonian language had no word meaning horse. Later on, it was designated as the "ass of the East." See Jensen: *Sitzungsber preuss Akad.* p. 367, Sommer, *Boghazkyoi Studien* 4. also Hugo Winckler, *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft* cf. *cit.*]

Emil Forrer: *Z. D. M. G. Die acht Sprachen der Boghaz-kyoi inschriften*. This treaty was discovered by Winckler at Boghaz-kyoi in 1906. His partial translation came out in 1910 and in 1916.

For the full account of this treaty, see Luckenbill—*American Journal of Semitic languages*, 1921, Vol XXXVII April.



#### IV

### The Indo-Iranian Contact and Settlement in India

THE evidence thus furnished above is undoubtedly interesting, for, though it does not help in fully clearing up the racial identity of the vedic Aryans, or their original home, we may at least know that some sections of the vedic Aryans, or some of their close kinsmen were once roaming about Western Asia during the second and third milleniums B.C. and that some at least settled down to found monarchies in various regions, till they were displaced by other races.

The next historical evidence we have, is that supplied by the evidence of the sacred books of the Iranians. As proved by the late Dr. Martin Haug, Dr. R. L. Mitter and various other scholars, there was a strange similarity existing between the religion and ritual of Iranians and the vedic Aryans. This could not be merely accidental, and so far as our inference goes this close resemblance was due either to a common origin or a close contact in the remote past. It is not the place for discussing the question of racial affinity or contact in detail here, but this much is quite clear, that the two races were akin to one another, had lived in close proximity and had followed the same customs and had spoken almost the same language.

Later on, differences had arisen, and the two races had fallen apart. Ethnic and social divergences had widened the gulf of

differences. In the Iranian, elements of Median and probably of Elamite culture had penetrated. Perhaps some religious teacher gave a new turn and shape to these differences. The

dualistic metaphysics of Iran, which attributed  
*Iranians and Indians.*

the creation of the world to the two forces, e.g., of good and evil, arose, and consequently the Deva-worshipping Aryan came to regard the Asura-adoring Iranian as a bitter enemy. The two quarrelled and fought and after a bitter struggle separated, one migrated along the Kabul valley and descended into the Punjab and extended over the plain of Hindustan, the other remained in the old home and developed its own culture in the land of Iran.

Such, probably, was the history of the forefathers of the vedic Indians. We know not whether it may be regarded as true. The time is not yet come when we can pronounce the final word on the race history of the past. At present, our knowledge is not far from being contemptible. To unveil the mystery of the past, scholars are yet to work, to dig up the records of the hoary past which lie shrouded in mystery in the old centres of the Elamite or Median culture, as also in those of Sumer and Akkad. Then, and then only, will be cleared up the veil of mist and uncertainty which remote centuries have cast over vestiges of the past, which have survived in spite of the destructive forces of nature that have acted for ages.

In the next phase of history succeeding that of Indo-Iranian contact, we find the ancestors of the vedic Indians calling themselves Aryans (a term used by two races in history, e.g., the Iranians and the vedic Aryans) settled in India, priding in their hallowed land of the "Sapta-Sindhavaḥ," invoking the assistance of the gods against the enemies that menaced their



culture and constantly praying for prosperity, wealth, children and happiness. All these form the subject-matter of hymns composed by their sages and we have a large number of these coming down to us in collections embodying them and known as the Samhitās of the Vedas.

## V

### The Aryans and their Ethnic Environment

THE vedic records, as we have seen, tell us nothing about the original home of the Aryans nor do they give us a detailed account of the early tribes or clans, or their ruling families. It is only incidentally that the hymns give us occasional details of the social or political life of the people. From these we find a community divided into a number of tribes hardly settled over a fixed habitation, and constantly moving forward in search of new territory for colonisation and expansion. In the midst of this advance, constant wars were taking place between the advancing settlers and their enemies, the original owners of the soil. The latter, at least some sections of them, had attained a considerable culture, were organised in tribes, had forts of wood and stone, had bands of warriors to protect their own interests, and had accumulated gold and silver.

These fought with the new-comers, and the war continued with varying success on both sides. Ultimately, however, the new settlers became victorious. The conduct of the struggle is described in the Vedic hymns and though we have no systematic account, we have occasionally the names of the heroes on either side, and descriptions of important battles.

The enemies among whom vedic Aryans lived seem to have differed not only in colour and speech but also in manners and



religion. The hymns speak repeatedly of the Dāsas\* and Dasyus† and describe them in terms of contempt generally used by a conquering race to the conquered one. The words still survive in our literature and mean a slave or an outlaw. Some Vedic passages throw light on the ethnic characteristics of the earlier

Ethnic characteristics  
of the Aborigines.

racés with whom the Aryans had to fight. Thus, many of these describe the enemies as having been of dark complexion while others describe them as being of short stature, flat nosed (*anās*)‡ and of hostile speech (*mṛdhra-vāc*)§ Other passages constantly dwell upon the godlessness of the enemies, their faithless nature and their constant enmity. In many others passages Indra and the other gods of the Aryans are praised for having enslaved them or driven them to the hills.

Judging from all these we may come to the conclusion that these descriptions point to the existence of the Kol peoples or of

\* Dāsa.—The dāsas are also described as having their own forts (*Śārādīḥ puraḥ*) and their clans (*Viśaḥ*). Their religion was also different. See Vedic Index I. 357. The dāsas had considerable wealth. The leading dāsas mentioned are Ilbīsa, Cumuri Dhuni, Pipru Varcin and Śambara.

† Dasyu.—The origin of the word is doubtful, but it is quite clear that the term was applied to a race of hostile enemies. The Dasyus are mentioned in many places and are often described as *a karman* (rite-less R. V. X. 22.8) *a-devayu* (indifferent to the gods R. V. VIII. 70. 11) *a brahman*, *a-yajcan*, *a-vrata* or *anya-vrata* and *deva-pīṇu* (reviler of the gods.) See Vedic Index I. 347.

‡ Anās.—The meaning is quite clear. It means noseless and probably refers to the flat-nosed aborigines.

The use of these words is almost similar to that of the slave or serf applied by the victorious Teutons to the early Slavonians.

§ *Mṛdhra-vāc*.—The meaning is not quite clear. According to some, it meant men of hostile speech or unintelligent speech. The expression is used towards the aborigines, the Papis and even to the Aryan Purus (R. V. VII. 18-13.)



the pre-Dravidian substratum which even now forms the predominant element in the population of India.

While this is generally true as regards the mass of the pre-Aryan population, there is indeed unquestionable Vedic evidence proving that if the majority of the people were savages, there were communities of a different character altogether. Some of these seem to have undoubtedly attained a considerable civilisation and this fact is proved by the constant references in the Vedas to their cattle and gold which Aryans coveted. In more than one place, we find prayers to Indra that the devotees of that god might have all their gold, their cattle or the wealth they possessed. Such passages prove beyond doubt that at least some sections of the enemies were metal-using people, who owned herds of cattle and were civilized enough to know the value of gold and silver.

Civilized people prior to the Aryans.

In many other places we have references to the forts of these enemies and occasionally these are described as *āyasi* or made of iron. As we shall see later on, there existed leaders or kings among these people who had numerous forts and fighting men of their own and in the case of one of them, the non-Aryan chief *Śambara*,\* he proved a formidable foe to Divodāsa. Their alliance was coveted by many Aryan kings.

The question may now arise as to the identification of these civilised communities. There was indeed a time when the majority of the European scholars believed that the pre-Aryans were mere savages, but now that pre-historic studies are advancing a little, we have certain though hazy notions of

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\* Śambara.—Other such hostile chiefs are mentioned, e.g., Cumuri, Śusṇa, Pipru, Varcin and some others. Śambara is described as having had 100 forts. He was an enemy of Divo-dāsa, who gained the victory only with Indra's aid.



the existence of a pre-vedic civilisation in India. The following questions now arise :—

1. Who were these civilised peoples who lived in Northern India at the time of the Aryan settlement or prior to it?
2. Were they the forefathers of the Dravidians?
3. What was the influence which they exercised on the Aryan culture, especially on their political institutions?

It is difficult to give clear answers to these questions but many scholars have inclined to the view that the more civilised sections were Dravidians, while the rest belonged to the pre-Dravidian races of India. At the present time, philological and ethnological evidences go far to prove the existence of the Dravidians in Northern India in very early times. Not only have scholars detected the existence of isolated Dravidian-speaking communities like the Gonds or the Oraons in Northern India, but have come to the conclusion that even the Brahuis\* of distant Beluchistan are racially and linguistically a branch of the Dravidian people.† Over and above this, a number of Dravidian words have been detected in the Vedic and post-vedic Aryan speech.‡

Now, when we come to discuss the influence of pre-Aryan cultures upon the Aryans polity, we admit that it is quite possible

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\* Brahuis.—For a detailed account of the Brahuis of Beluchistan, who form a "Linguistic Island" in the midst of peoples speaking Indian or Iranoid tongues, see "The Brahui Language" by Denis Bray—pp. 8 to 19.

† Caldwell History of the Dravidian Language—pp. 567-79.

‡ M. Sylvain Levi's Article in *Journal Asiatique* (1924). See also Carmichael Lectures, series 1, chap 1.



and probable that such influences have been exerted both directly and indirectly. Whenever two races meet, they are sure to be influenced by each other. In India, as elsewhere, borrowings have taken place and the process is still going on. Some scholars,

Sumero-Dravidian  
contact.

however, go further than this and attempt to derive the culture of the Aryans entirely from the Dravidians. One of the first to propound such a theory in more recent times has been Mr. Hall, the author of "Ancient History of the Near East," who, in investigating the origin of the Sumerian culture, attempted to identify the originators of the Sumerian culture with the Dravidians. The latter, according to him, migrated to Sumeria, either by the land-route along the coast of Beluchistan and the Persian Gulf, or went thither by sea. Hall's theory is based more or less on the comparison of the ethnic type represented by the early Sumerian statues with the average facial type of the modern Dravidians. Mr. Hall went further than this and made the bold statement that the "Aryan Indian owed his civilisation and downfall to the Dravidians." (P. 174-footnote 3).

This theory, though bold and ingenious, however, rests on no solid foundation. The attempt to trace the origin of Indian culture is commendable, as well as that to establish a connection between India and Sumeria, two ancient centres of human culture, and this is suggested by many circumstantial evidences. Yet such bold explanations are hardly scientific. India has been an earlier centre of human culture than is ordinarily supposed to be. Very little has as yet been done to clear the history of past civilizations in India. Archaeological excavations in India are as yet very little advanced. More evidences are forthcoming and these may lead to more startling discoveries.



Thus, very recently, while the question of Dravidian influence was being hotly discussed, the excavations in the Punjab and in the Sind valley carried out by Mr. Sahani and Mr. R. D.

Recent sidelights.

Banerjee have proved the existence in the remote past (anterior to the Aryan settlement ?) of a civilised race whose remains consisting of pottery, both unglazed and glazed, figures of animals, clay-seals, coins, burial remains, pots and vessels of various descriptions, have come down to us. These point undoubtedly to the existence of a civilized people who lived many milleniums ago in the Indus Valley. To this must be added the evidences furnished by excavations in the Tinnevely district or those furnished by the megaliths which are found in so many places in the land of the Dravidian peoples of present-day India. These latter have been studied by eminent scholars like Brucefoote, Rea, Beddie and a number of other scholars. Moreover, a few years ago the labours of Mr. Yazdani of the H. E. H. the Nizam's Government have brought to light the existence of some queer marks on pre-historic pottery found in Rajgir and other places. These have been found to bear close resemblance to the script of the Minoans and other races who belonged, according to Sergi, to the great Eur-African race of the past.

It is idle to waste our time in discussing these, especially when we are examining the early history of Aryan political institutions. Precious and valuable as these remains are, they are sure to furnish a key to the mystery of races and of race-contacts in the pre-historic past. For a scientific enquiry we must wait and work patiently, refraining at the same time from bold and outlandish theories, without any reasonable foundation. Our conclusions must be soberly drawn, and must



rest on clear evidence. Any other theories, however ingenious, should be avoided.

Yet, unfortunately, such *a priori* theories are very common and often arise out of a desire to undermine the past greatness of a race now politically low. Regrettable as it is, this has often been the motive for such bold suggestions hardly based on facts. As for ourselves, while we admit the existence of civilized races in India in the past, we should be careful not to attach importance to such theories. Our knowledge of the past is now too insignificant, and to attempt such easy solutions would be boldness amounting almost to an enormity. Insurmountable difficulties stand in our way. First of all, we know nothing about the extent of civilisation of the early Dravidians. Their earliest records show a great influence of Aryan culture on those people while the extent of borrowing from them by the Aryans is very little, as is proved by the evidence of philology. Moreover, we know too little of the beginnings of Aryan culture and even if we believe for argument's sake that the Dravidians were a highly civilised people, it would be mere *Fluellen* logic to say that because the Dravidians were a civilised people, the Aryans owed everything to them.\*

Brilliant conjectures.

On the other hand, fair-mindedness and scholarly impartiality is sure to recognize that whatever might have been the locality or the origin of the Aryan culture, it had undoubtedly a continuous connection with a cultural-system existing in the hoary past. If we take the important culture-words of the Aryan vocabulary and examine them with the help of philology, the latter

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\* For a fuller discussion of the question see the Introduction to Caldwell's Grammar of the Dravidian Languages.



science will prove the existence of language or languages in which the same word occurs in the same or in modified form. Similarly, if we take the words denoting metals, family or kinship, the principal occupations or the chief implements—nowhere a single borrowing can be traced to the Dravidian—but we have counter-parts in the Avestan, the Greek, the Latin, the Teutonic or the Slavonic.

In one of the appendices added, such a comparison will be made to refute the theory of wholesale borrowings from the Dravidians. For the present we regard the theory of Hall and his followers as a piece of brilliant conjecture and refrain from answering the question “who borrowed from whom and to what extent.” We have very little means of giving a clear answer and we must wait for further materials.

## VI

### Aryan vs. Dravidian Ideals and Institutions

As the result of a critical comparison, we recognize, in the Aryan and the Dravidian, two different races with divergent cultures and our conclusion seems to receive confirmation from a study of the socio-political organisation or ideals of the two races. Such a process brings out very boldly the differences between the two peoples and the contrast appears more and more clear to us. These have subsisted and still subsist, in spite of centuries of action and interaction and in spite of the closest possible association. The political ideals as well as the social polity of the two races were different and it would appear from a contrast of the characteristics which still survive. Thus, the one stood for and even now clings to matriarchy, but the other rejects it with contempt and scorn. The Dravid, by nature more conservative and intolerant, sticks to his own institutions and to the practices of his social group with a tenacity entirely absent in the other race. In religion, equally imaginative, both worship the deified forces of nature, but while the Dravidian inclines more towards appeasing the malevolent forces of nature, the Aryan with his fondness for abstraction devotes himself more to a rationalistic explanation about the relations subsisting between the Deity and his created world. By nature the Dravidian is credulous and docile while the other is more liable to doubts and questions and given to metaphysical

Characteristics of the  
two races.



enquiries. In political life, the Dravidian adheres more to a communistic ideal. He relies less on the state, and more on the efforts of his group, while the Aryan inclines for support upon the central political authority. These are the more prominent characteristics which have survived to our own days. Of course, centuries of blending or association have undoubtedly modified the original state of affairs. Each has been influenced by the other. Each has yielded some of its own to the other. Each has imbibed something from the other. Yet centuries have failed to obliterate the past.

The struggle between the two races with so divergent ideals went on and before long the Aryan became the master (so far as northern India was concerned) of the other race, imparted something of his own culture to the conquered, yet not failing to assimilate something from the other. In the south the culture of the Dravidians retained its individuality, but with the advance of Brahmanical teachers and adventurers, the principles and ideals of the race were also wholly modified.

We have no direct historical account of the political institutions of either race. What was the relative position of the cultures of the two races in this respect must yet remain an open question. It is difficult to trace any direct influence of the Dravidian polity on the Aryan, but this much is quite clear that the presence of a race of cultured enemies modified the course of political development so far as the Aryans were concerned. The influence was partly direct and partly induced by opposition.

With those who regard the Aryans as mere savages but more hardy warriors and point to their martial qualities as the sole cause of their success, we do not agree. The Aryan was intellectually superior. Along with his intellectual qualities he

was a more successful warrior and owed his success equally to these warlike qualities and his higher military organisation. Not only was he an expert in the use of the bow, the arrow or the sword, but he knew the use of the horse and this made him formidable to his enemies. From the Rig-veda we have ample information on this.

We know, moreover, that to protect the body, armours and coats of mail were used. We have repeated mention of the *Khṛgala*, the *Kavaca*, the *Sīpra*, *Drāpi* or the *Piśaṅga*. These were generally of *Ayas* or the third metal which the Aryans used extensively.

To add to these, the Aryan warrior excelled in another branch of warfare, e g, the use of the horse and chariot. The use of cavalry in war as also of the war-chariot undoubtedly made him superior to the enemy. The chariot was freely used. It was covered with skin or hide of animals. Occasionally, it was covered with metallic plates to protect it from the enemy's weapon. The large use of the chariot caused the growth of a special body of craftsmen, the *Rathakāras*, who came to occupy a specially high social position. War also gave rise to the importance of the military class, the *Kṣatriyas*, as we shall see very soon.



## VII

### Constitution of Aryan Society and Socio-Economic Organisation

BEFORE we pass on to a study of the political institutions of the Vedic Aryans, we must make some further enquiries about the constitution and organisation of their society. Enquiries of this nature are of supreme importance in connection with the history of the evolution of political life, since political evolution depends to a large extent on the environment as well as social and economic organisation. Minute enquiries being out of place here, we shall merely confine ourselves to a discussion, firstly, as to whether the Vedic Aryans came and settled down in India in one and the same epoch or came in successive waves, and secondly—whether socially and politically they were a homogeneous people.

Homogeneity of the  
Aryans.

An answer to each of these questions is important but unfortunately lack of proper data makes our task difficult. In the absence of real history, we are compelled to depend either on the interpretation of tradition or on philological or ethnological considerations. As regards traditional (embodied in the Epic or in the purāṇas) accounts, we have in them no explicit references to successive immigrations or settlement in different batches. The traditional accounts, however full of absurdities or fanciful details, contain distinct hints about divergences existing among the great military families or dynasties that ruled in the country. Scholars have detected in these nothing but racial

differences. Mr. Pargiter, the most eminent authority on early Indian chronology, notes for instance, the traditional differences between the *Mānava* dynasties and those of the *Ailas*, and has come to the conclusion, that racially the *Mānavas*, the *Ailas*, and the *Saudyumnas* represent three different racial stocks. His arguments and explanations have been summarised in his more recent publication entitled "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition.\*" Other scholars have pointed out the clear-cut racial divergences between the two armies which fought on the plains of Kurukṣetra.

Similar theories have been of late developed by other scholars, but these are more or less conjectural and rest on very slender evidence. There are, however, some evidences, in our own literature, which clearly and unmistakably point to the existence of a gulf of differences between the earlier Aryans and batches of later settlers of the same race, who came to the country afterwards. It is needless to mention that we refer to the *Vrātyas* of whom we have so many references even in the Vedic literature, which records many of their social peculiarities, or those relating to manners and customs.

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\* Mr. Pargiter's theory is to be found in the XXVth chapter of his work, already cited. He identifies the *Ailas* with the Aryans proper, the *Saudyumnas* with the Mundas and the Mon-Khmer stock, and the *Mānavas* with the Dravidians. The Aryans (*Aila*—Aryan) according to him, entered India from the Mid-Himalayan region. His theory is summed up in pp. 287—302, and his chief arguments are summarised in p. 302.

At the same time he has propounded a new theory about the *Brāhmaṇas*. According to him, they were originally "connected with the non-Aryan peoples and were established among them when the *Ailas* entered. This is corroborated by the close connection that existed between them and the *Dāityas* *Dānavas* and *Asuras*, etc."



Further, it is well known to all students of Indian history or literature, that we have some details, relating to them in the Atharva Veda, in some of the Brāhmaṇas, and in the Śrauta Sūtras. In later times the Vrātyas\* came to be identified with those Aryans who neglected sacrificial performances or did not observe the sacramental rites. In the Brāhmaṇas, we have details of the ceremonies and rites for the reclamation of these people and incidentally we find a classification of the Vrātyas together with the causes of their social degradation.

The Pañca-vimśa Brāhmaṇa mentions the *hīna*, the *nindita* or the *nīca medhira* Vrātyas. (XVII. 1—4) while it characterises them as nomads averse to agriculture and commerce, and not observing the rules of *Brahmacarya*.† In the same book, we are again told, that their *grhapatis* were in the habit of wearing turbans (*uṣṇīṣa*), necklaces of silver (*rajata-niṣka*), carried bows (*jjāhroḍa*) and whips (*pratoda*), covered their bodies with black garments (*kṛṣṇaśa*), or with skins (*ajina*), or black and white dress (*kṛṣṇa-valakṣa*). They also had wagons covered with planks (*Vipatha*). Their subordinates also wore peculiar dresses and sandals.‡ The later sūtras add more particulars, but in these we are not interested.

\* The original meaning of Vrātya is difficult to find out. From two sūtras of Pāṇini (V. 2. 21. e.g. —ब्रावेन जीवति and V. 3. 113 e. d. —ब्रातृक् जीर् अस्त्रियाम्) it would appear that Vrātya was synonymous with Vrāta which Kāśikā explains as नानाजातीया अनियतव्रतय उत्सृष्टजीविनः सहा ब्राताः ।

† होना वा एते होयन्ते ये ब्रत्या प्रवसन्ति नहि ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति न कपिन्न वणिज्या etc.

Pañca. v. Br. XVII. 1. 2.

‡ उणीषञ्च प्रतीदय ज्याह्रोदय विपथञ्च फलकान्तौर्णः कण्णश्च वासः कण्णवल्ले अग्निने रजतोनिष्कसद मृह्यतः । Pañca. v. Br. XVII. 1. 14

बलुकान्ति दासतूपानीतरैषां इ ई दासनी उपानहो द्विषहिताम्यजितानि Pañca. v. Br. XVII. 1.15.

From their name, it would appear that the *Vrātyas* came in roving bands (*Vrāta*), and this meaning of the word has survived to the last in our classical literature. We have no further details about the locality of their settlement, but it is probable that they became more numerous in the region west of the *Sarasvatī*, and gradually were consecrated and taken into the fold of Aryan society.

But though most of them were received into the fold of Aryan-dom, the tradition of their previous social stigma survived, and we have evidences of this in the Epic and *paurāṇic* accounts. In the Epic, the *Yādavas* are repeatedly stigmatised as *Vrātyas*. Further, we have in the *Atharva Veda* some more descriptions of the *Vrātyas*, but the language is mystical and the *Vrātya* is identified with the deity. In some places, however, we have evidences of the *Vrātya* being still a wanderer, moving in his cart and wearing the *uṣṇīṣa*.

The real history of the *Vrātyas* is lost to us. But this much we can say, that during the age of the composition of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *sūtras* describing them, they were sections of the Aryans, still in a nomadic stage. Whether they were batches of earlier or later immigrants, it is difficult to decide, but it is significant to note, that some sections of the *Vrātyas* retained for a longer period their original non-monarchical institutions, as is proved by the history of the *Yādavas*, and of the *Licchavis*, who were *Vrātyas* if we believe in the tradition recorded in the *Manusmṛiti*.

The relation of the *Vrātyas* to the other sections of the Vedic Aryans is equally unknown, and with the data at our disposal we cannot proceed any further. But if such records are lacking, philological considerations about the present



vernaculars of India throw light on ethnic differences. Structural differences exist between different groups of Indian vernaculars and these have been taken to point to racial differences. For such an enquiry into the vernaculars we are indebted to the labours of Sir George Grierson, the eminent philologist, who has compiled a *Linguistic Survey of India*.

As a result of his studies, Sir George has divided the Indian Vernacular languages now spoken by the people into two distinct groups,\* e.g.:

(1) The Outer Indo-Aryan Languages—comprising the Kashmīri, Lahīndī, Sindhī, Marāṭhī, Oṛiyā, Bengali, Bihārī, and the Assamese.

(2) The Inner Indo-Aryan Languages—comprising Western Hindī, Rājasthāni, Gujarāṭi, Punjābi, Pāhārī. In addition to these he recognises an Intermediate Indo-Aryan group, represented by Eastern Hindī, which falls on the borderland of the two and is the result of the fusion of the two groups.

According to Sir George the origin of diversities between the groups is due to their development at the hands of two groups of peoples, who settled in India during two different epochs, separated by at least several centuries.

The Outer Aryan languages, according to him, represent the dialectical varieties, which arose out of the decay of the language spoken by the earlier race of Aryan immigrants, who once spread over the whole

Grierson's theory.

\* Sir George Grierson's latest views on the subject are to be found in the "Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies," London, Vol. I. Pt. iii., 1920. Cf. also the Introductions to the various volumes on the *Linguistic Survey of India*. See also the "Imperial Gazetteer," Vol. I. pp. 359—402.

of Western and Northern India, prior to their displacement by another wave. This latter forced itself into the midst of the previous settlers, and with the growth of numbers, the earlier settlers were driven to the fringe-area.

Next to these philological findings, we get some more suggestions from the researches of Ethnologists. As is well-known to all, the anthropometric observations of Sir H. Risley, have resulted in the discrimination of the seven great physical types among the present population of the Indian Empire. Of these, if we except from our consideration the Turko-Iranian type of the North-Western border, the Mongoloid type of the Eastern Himalayas, and the pure Dravidian type of the Central Provinces and of the extreme South in general, we find four different types left viz., the Indo-Aryan type in the Punjab, Rajputana and Kashmir, the Aryo-Dravidian type of the United Provinces and the two other mixed types, viz., the Scythio-Dravidian type of Western India, and the Mongolo-Dravidian type of Lower Bengal. Leaving aside the last two types, we find that the ethnological records, as interpreted by Sir H. Risley, point to two distinct waves of Aryan immigration, the later wave settling in the United Provinces and mixing freely with the local ethnic element, and thereby giving rise to the Aryo-Dravidian type of the United Provinces.

Both the theories\* furnish us with important suggestions though it is impossible to accept them *in toto*. They are open

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\* In regard to the theory of Sir George Grierson, it has been objected to by many eminent Philologists, on phonetic as well as morphological grounds. Among these latter may be mentioned the names of Prof. Sten Konow, M. Jules Bloc and Prof. S. K. Chatterji. All of them are almost unanimous in holding that the common features which Sir George has found out as existing between languages of the two groups, are merely



to severe criticism, especially that of Sir Herbert Risley. First of all, the so-called Aryan type is purely conjectural and next to it Risley attached too great importance to the measurements. He believed in the almost unchangeable permanence of physical characteristics and neglected altogether the influence of the environment or the other influences of the locality of settlement. Moreover, as time goes on, the belief of scientists in physical characteristics, as the true and unerring test of race, is passing away, while many of them are tending to rely more on other factors. Thus, head-length and head-breadth as the true test of race has been practically discarded, complexion is admitted to be liable to variation with the climate, and scholars are becoming more and more alive to the necessity of studying the laws governing the issues of racial mixtures, or the variation of types with the locality of settlement. In accepting the conclusions of Risley we must take all these factors into consideration and be particularly cautious. For the real history of the movements and mixture of races, in the remote past, we are yet to work and wait.

The theories criticised.

Many anthropologists have of late disputed the views of Risley and some of them have recognized in the North Indian population a strain of the *Homo Alpinus*. Among these, we may mention the name of Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda, who, in his work "The Indo-Aryan Races" was the first to identify with success the great mass of high-caste Hindus of Northern and Eastern

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matters of coincidence, and they refer to their recent forms only. Furthermore, he has failed to note the existence of characteristics which languages of one of his proposed groups possess in common with those of the other. For a discussion of this view, we refer our readers to the work of our esteemed colleague, Dr. S. K. Chatterji, on the Bengali language, which is nearing its publication.



India with the Alpine branch of the Caucasian race, and his view has been accepted by many eminent anthropologists.\*

Next to these considerations about the different waves of Aryan immigration, we must enquire into the constitution of Aryan society from another point of view. As is well-known to all, the social organisation of India, from the days of the Vedas, has been characterised by the existence of clear-cut social divisions, which have hardened into what Europeans call caste. As a rule, western authors have denied the existence of social divisions in the Rigveda, and are almost unanimous in attributing the rise of these to gradual cultural and social evolution. They have explained away traditional references to caste in Vedic and post-vedic literature as later fabrications. By far the greater number of European scholars, prominent among whom are the names of Roth, Weber, Max Müller, Zimmer, Muir, Benfey, Aufrecht and Senart, identify themselves with this view. Some of them go so far as to deny the existence of caste in the Rig-vedic hymns and explain away the evidence of the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, as being late and unreliable. On the other hand, some eminent scholars like Kern, Haug, Ludwig and Oldenberg have maintained the existence of caste divisions even in the earliest period. Ludwig went even so far as to point out that the social organisation of the vedic period was not dissimilar to that which existed among the ancient Iranians, who were divided into the *Atharvas* (or the priests.—Comp. Vedic *Atharvas*),

\* The work of Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda is remarkable as the first systematic work on Indian Ethnology written by any Indian. His theory is ingenious and has been accepted by eminent European savants like Giuffrida Ruggeri, Haddon, and very recently by Dixon.



*Rathaesthas*, or the warriors the *Vāstriyas Fshouyants* and the *Huitis*.\*

It will be out of place here to enter into a discussion of the arguments advanced by either side, but by way of suggestion the following facts may be pointed out:—

(1) *Firstly*.—That apart from the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, we have references to a three-fold or four-fold division of the community in hymns which admittedly belong to the older stratum. This has also been recognized by the eminent authors of the *Vedic Index*.†

(2) *Secondly*.—The *Puruṣa Sūkta* is rather a theoretical exposition of a system which had already come into existence rather than an interpolation introduced with a view to create or give sanction to newly created artificial distinctions.‡

(3) *Thirdly*.—The word *Brāhmana* has been more than once used in some of the old hymns to mean a priest. Other such words, like *Arkiṇaḥ*, *Sominaḥ*, and *Gāyatriṇaḥ*, denoting diverse orders of priests, occur, and these clearly point to the development of a powerful priestly body even in the days of the earliest hymns §

(4) *Fourthly*.—The sacrificial art was more highly developed than is supposed to be and with its rise, the well-developed priesthood was advanced enough to undergo further sub-divisions in its ranks, apparently on the basis of division of duties. Some of

\* Ludwig—Der *Rigveda* III p. 243-4.

† (See *Vedic Index*, on *Varna*—R. V., I. 113—6 and R. V., VIII. 35. 16—18.)

‡ R. V., I. 164. 45; VI. 75.10; VII. 103. 1—8; X. 16.6; X. 71.8; X. 88.19 X. 90.12; X. 97.22; X. 109.4. etc.

§ See my *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India* I. pp. 90—95; also Haug's *Introduction to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

these priestly classes were very old, many of the names and designations of these priestly sections (e.g., the *Zota* and *Rathwi*) were common with the corresponding members of Iranian priesthood. Even the *Rig-Veda* (I. 162) mentions the *Hotā*, the *Adhvaryu*, *Pratiprasthātār Avayāj Agnimindha*, *Grāva-grāva*, and *Śamstar*.

(5) *Fifthly*.—As we proceed, we find distinct evidences pointing to the peculiar position and privileges not only of the priests, but of other orders.

(6) *Lastly*.—That with the advancement of the primitive ideas of social organisation, different duties are assigned to the various orders.

An examination of the above points makes it clear that the germs of what we now call caste, existed in the oldest period and gradually the system which we now have, evolved out of these. Whether the origin of the divisions is to be attributed to mere cultural evolution, or to the requirements of a society faced with eternal war, or that there were primary ethnic differences is another point which requires a close examination. Of course, a liberal interpretation of the tradition recorded in our literature goes to confirm the view that at least the two great orders *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Kṣatriyas*, had in them certain peculiarities, which point to a difference in the racial element rather than the diversities being the result of a long cultural evolution. These differences become more and more prominent to every intelligent observer as he tries to understand the genius or the temperament of the two great races that have by their co-operation or conflicts contributed so much to the greatness of India in the past. We have, properly speaking, no ethnological data, no remains of skulls, nor any



room for anthropometric speculations. But whatever is obtainable from literary sources has been R. P. Chanda's theory. utilised by an Indian scholar of no mean reputation as an anthropologist, Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda, who has propounded an ingenious theory about the original ethnic differences subsisting between the early *ṛṣi* families and those of the ruling tribes. His theory is partly based on *paurāṇika* tradition and is supported by evidences from earlier literature.\* Another great authority on early Indian History, Mr. Pargiter, is also inclined to ascribe a difference of origin to the Brāhmaṇas, though he would believe them to be a race of earlier settlers, who closely identified themselves with the pre-Aryan (non-*Aīla*) inhabitants. It is difficult to pronounce any clear opinion on either of these theories but what strikes us is almost overwhelming and makes us incline to the acceptance of a theory of racial difference. We have not only the traditional geneologies explaining differences of origin, the peculiar names of the original *ṛṣi* families as well as those of the ruling dynasties, but we are sure to note the difference in temperament and genius, and the splendid and conspicuous isolation in which the two races maintained themselves in spite of the closest

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\* For the arguments of Mr. Chanda see his *Indo-Aryan Races* pp. 18—25. The Epic, the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Purāṇas*, contain various traditions about the origin of the caste system. According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa*, the caste system was reduced to its present state by *Gṛtsamada Śaunaka*. (*Harivaṃśa*. Ch-29, also *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*-III.8-1.) In many of these accounts we hear of the *Kṣātropeta Brāhmaṇas*, e.g. men of the warrior families, who became Brahmins by adoption, or change of occupation. Similar accounts of the elevation of *Vaiśyas* are also recorded. The work of *Śaunaka*, too, refers to the distinction between the *Brahmaṛṣi* and the *Rājaraṣi* families. Mr. Chanda has cited Vedic and post-vedic texts, pointing to the difference of colour and hair characterising the members of the original *ṛṣi* families, and those of the warrior tribes.



possible association in intellectual pursuits and even blood-relationship.

Whatever might have been the original state of affairs, Aryan society came to be marked by the growth of distinct classes within its fold. The Brahmin and the Kṣatriya became more and more conspicuous and prominent, and raised themselves high above the average mass of settlers, the Viś or Viśaḥ.

Furthermore, from the recorded traditions it becomes almost clear that the two races fought between themselves for social supremacy. The rivalry between Viśvāmitra and Vaśiṣṭha is recorded even in the Rig-Veda. The Kauṣitakī Br. and some other works speak of the destruction of Vaśiṣṭha's children. (Kau. IV.) The seventh Pañcikā of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa records the quarrel, in the sacrifice of Viśvantara Sauśadma, who had excluded his hereditary priests the Śyāparyas. In addition to these, there are numerous legends and accounts in the Epic and the Purāṇas, which speak of wars between the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas. The story of the bloody feud between the Haihayas and the Bhṛguś, between Kārtavīrya Arjuna and Jāmadagnya, all speak of the bitter hostility between these two sections of the Aryan people. Ultimately, however, there was a compromise, the respective privileges of the two castes came to be recognized and the highest social position was allotted to the Brahmin. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa is one of the earliest authorities to mention the respective duties and privileges of the four castes. The Brahmin and the Kṣatriya, however, continued for long to form marriage-alliances and there remained for a long time a keen competition in the domain of intellectual pursuits. In many places of the Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, the relation between the Brahma



and the Kṣātra is discussed.\* Gradually, the position of the Brahmins was safeguarded and strengthened with the elevation of the *Purohita* to the position of an *alter ego* of the ruler.

To the Kṣatriyas was assigned, by virtue of their military prowess, the headship of the people. In this high position, they not only protected the people and ruled the country but also contributed to the intellectual advancement of the community by their philosophical speculations. Many of the fathers of Hindu philosophy belonged to this caste and they often taught Brāhmaṇa disciples.

The mass of common settlers came to be known by the name *Vaiśya* (from *Viś*—once applied to the whole body). Though endowed with some of the higher social and intellectual privileges, they came to occupy a lower social position.† They, however, continued to excel in the arts of life, and the Brāhmaṇas speak of their importance in social and also religious life.‡ According to some authorities

\* These are discussed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, in connection with the quarrel between *Viśvantara* and the *Śyāparaṇas*. The Brahmin is described as *ā-dāyī* (receiver of gifts), *ā-pāyī* (soma-drinker), *ā-vasyī* (seeker of food), and *yathā-kāma Prayāpyaḥ* (moving at will)—*प्राप्यकल्पन्ते पञ्चायानमनियन्ते आदाय्यावाप्यावसायी यथाकामं प्रयाप्यः* etc. (VII. 29.)

† वैश्यकल्पन्ते पञ्चायानमनियन्तेऽन्वस्य बलिहृदवन्वसाया यथाकामन्वयी etc.

The *Vaiśya* thus came to be regarded as tributary to another (the *Kṣatriya*), to be lived on by another and to be ruled over by another. (VII. 29. *Āl Br.*)

‡ द्वैविधः कल्पयितव्य इत्याहुताः कल्पमाना अनुमनुष्याविशः कल्पन् इति मन्वा विशः कल्पन्ते कल्पते यज्ञोऽपि etc., e.g., "They say the gods should be provided with *Vaiśyas*. For if the gods are provided with them, men will subsequently obtain them also. If all the *Vaiśyas* are in readiness, then the sacrifice is performed. With the influence of the astrology, certain gods, e.g., those living in *gayas*, like the *Vasus Rudras*, the *Ādityas*, the *Vīśvedevāḥ* and the *Muruts* were regarded as belonging\* to the *Vaiśya* caste.

they had their own peculiar sacrifices and many have attributed the origin of the *Vājapeya* to them.

The lowest position in society came to be occupied by the *Śūdras*, who were not unlike the serfs or the lowest class of the early Teutonic Society. European scholars have indentified them with the descendants of the subdued non-Aryans, who had been reduced to the position of slaves by their conquerors. This

The *Śūdras*.

view is rather far-fetched and hardly receives confirmation from indigenous evidences. The

*Śūdra* is clearly distinguished from the *Dāsa* or the *Dasyu*, which designate slaves or outlaws belonging to the aboriginal races. Moreover, the *Śūdra*, as we see from the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, was equally a member of Aryan Society. His social position was low, and the term *Śūdra* was often used as a term of reproach. Being a member of the degraded section of the Aryans, he was condemned to work and toil for the benefit of the upper classes. In the *Aitareya* passage (VII. 29), he is described as the servant of another and his life could be taken away by the *Rājanyas* at will.\*

Gradually, Aryan society was further modified by the growth of many more classes growing with the rise of the arts and crafts. The requirements of agriculture or of war, brought a tendency to division of labour and the craftsmen emerged out as separate bodies from the mass of the agriculturist population. Some of these, the *stī* or *upastī*, stood in close relation to the king. As the number of occupations multiplied, these added to the complexities of life and of interest, and the *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* craftsmen or labourers organised themselves in guilds.†

\* शुद्रकस्यैव प्रजायामनृजित्यन्तः प्रथमः कानीत्यादी यथाकाम वधः, etc.

† For a discussion of all these, see my "Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India," Vol. I, book II.



# VIII

## Socio-political divisions of the Aryans

HAVING discussed the constitution of Aryan society and the gradual evolution of classes we pass on to enquire into the organisation of the Aryan population or the basis of their political divisions.

In the earliest period of which we know but little, the Aryans seem to have been nomadic invading bands who constantly moved from one place to another. Gradually, they gave up their nomadic habits and settled down in the land they wrested from their enemies. In course of time, these regions became dotted with their settlements, which were known as the *Viś* (or *Viśaḥ*—the word originating from the very ancient root *Viś*—to enter or settle. The inhabitants of the settlements were known as *Viśaḥ*.

Many of these *Viśaḥ* came to be designated by the name of the locality or of the tribe to which they belonged. Thus, we hear of the *Triṇaskanda Viś* (R.V., I. 172. 3 *तृणस्कन्दस्य नु विशः परि वृद्धं सुदानवः\** etc.), which though explained in a different way by Sāyana is clearly a *Viś* called after the locality. In another place, we are told of the *Asiknī Viśaḥ* (R.V. VII. 5. 3. *त्वद्विया-विश आयवसिक्तोरसमना जङ्गतीर्भोजनानि*)† In other places we hear of

\* Sāyana interprets *Triṇaskanda* in quite a different way, e.g., *हे मरुतः सुदानवः..... तृणस्कन्दस्य तृणवृद्धनखभाषस्य पुण्ड्रमाषस्य वा मम विशः विशः पुत्रभत्यादिरुपाः प्रजाः* etc.

† Sāyana explains *असिक्तौ*; as meaning *असितवर्णौ राजस्य*;

*Viśah* called after the tribe to which they belonged, and as an example we may mention the *Viś* of the *Trtsus* (अभवच्च पुरणता वसिष्ठ आदितृत्सुना<sup>०</sup> विशो अग्रथन्त R.V., VII. 33. 6.) In many other places, the word is used rather in a general sense, and designates people in general. Thus, R.V., X. 11. 4 speaks of the *Ārya Viś* (यदौ विशो वृणते दक्षमार्या अग्नि होतारमघ धीरजायत). Similarly, R.V., IV. 28.4. speaks of the *Dasyu Viś*. In another place, we hear of the *Dāsa Viś* which is contrasted with the *Ārya Viś* (R.V., VI. 25.2.—आभिर्विष्ठा अभियुजो विषूचौरार्याय विशोऽव तारौर्दासीः)†

We have no further details of the *Viś* or its organisation. Our task is made difficult by various circumstances, the modification which the social fabric was rapidly undergoing being one of these. The rise of the Caste System was of immense influence, as we shall see very soon.

Each of these *Viśah* or settlements seems to have had a chief of its own, and this man dominated over the inhabitants of the settlement, either by virtue of his being the patriarchal head of the clan which had settled therein, or by virtue of his being vested with authority, by the people who recognized him as leader. Probably, different types of settlements existed and in some cases these belonged to men of the same blood. In these, the patriarch or the agnatic elder was also the the head of the settlement, the two offices vesting in the same person. Such settlements are

*Viśpati* or the head of the settlement. to be pre-supposed from the evidence of the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, which in more than one places describes *Viśah* as *Sajātas*. (Taitt. II. 1. 3. 2. 3. etc., or

<sup>०</sup> Śāyana does not explain वरुनाम् at all.

अभिःश्रुतिभिरेव..... सर्वेति विद्यमानाः दासीः वर्णानामुपसर्गविधौ विद्याः सज्जोः विप्रः प्रजाः आर्याय आदिकर्मकृतियजमानाय अवतारीः विनाग्रय—Śāyana.



of that passage of the Atharva Veda which mentions Visah along with the bāndhavaḥ (XV. 8. 2-3, A.-V.).

स विशः सवन्धूनमन्नाद्यमभ्युदतिष्ठत् । २

विशां चरे स सवन्धूनां चान्नस्य चान्नाद्यस्य च प्रियं धाम भवति य एवं वेद । ३

On the other hand, the separate existence of a *Viśpati* apart from the head of the family, is inferred from that Rig-Vedic passage in which a lover seeking his sweetheart at night, lulls to sleep, not only the father, the mother, the kinsmen, and other relations, and the dogs, but also the *Viśpati* (VII. 55. 5)

e.g. सस्तु माता सस्तु पिता सस्तु स्या सस्तु विशपतिः ।

ससन्तु सर्वे ज्ञातयः सत्वयमभितो जनः ॥<sup>१०</sup>

The eminent German scholar Zimmer, who was one of the earliest to study the social and political organisation of the Vedic peoples, regarded the *Viś* as a unit of military organisation and identified it with the *Gau* (*Pagus*) or Canton, into which the Teutonic peoples were divided, according to Tacitus. According to him, the division of the Vedic peoples was not merely geographical but a military one. The organised *Viśah* or the people, fought against their enemies under the leadership of the *Viś-pati*, who acted as the commander of that section of the tribal host.

Zimmer quotes a large number of passages to prove the above point. Thus, according to him R.V., II, 26. 3. clearly refers to this character of the *Viś* which is contrasted with *Jana*, *Janna* and *Putra*,<sup>†</sup> while the next passage cited clearly speaks

<sup>१०</sup> स सारमेय माता तदीया...सस्तु विशपतिर्जामाता यहा विशां जनानां पालको गृही...सपतु ॥

स इत्यनेन स विशा स जन्मना स पुत्रैर्वीर्यं भरते धना रुभिः (II. 26. 3) R. V.

of the fighting Viśaḥ (R.V., IV. 24. 4.).<sup>o</sup> Again, R.V., X. 84. 4 describes the host as divided in Viśaḥ.† To these cited by Zimmer, we may add the evidence of another passage, which though it does not confirm the fighting nature of the Viś, describes the army of the Maruts as having been divided into *Vrāta*, *Gaṇa* and *Sardha*‡

Many scholars have attempted to refute these views of Zimmer. Macdonnell and Keith have gone Military character of Viś discussed. deep into the question and having discussed the interpretation of the passages cited, they have come to the conclusion that "the rendering *Gau*, has therefore little foundation." (II. 307). Now, in regard to the real character of the Viśaḥ, it is difficult to pronounce any clear opinion since we must bear in mind that the hymns cited, mark an age of social and political transition. But, while differences must exist in regard to the acceptance of Zimmer's theory of the three-fold division of the people into *Jana*, *Viś* and *Grāma*, it will be difficult to deny that in those days, the Viś was a unit of military organisation. The passage R.V., V. 43. 1. about the Maruts throws more light on the point. Of the three divisions, the word *Vrāta* retained its old meaning of a fighting body for a long time (as would be clear from the evidence of Sanskrit lexicons and of commentaries to Pāṇini), and it is not improbable that owing to the constant enmity of the aborigines, each settlement had to be on its guard or to send a quota of soldiers to the tribal host.

<sup>o</sup> सं यद्विभोऽवदन्त युध्या आदिरो म इन्द्रयाने चभीके (R.V., IV. 24. 4).

† एकी बहुनामसि मन्यवीजितौ विज्रविश्रं युधये सं जिज्ञाषि (R.V., X. 84. 4).

‡ श्रधं श्रधं व एषा ज्ञातं ज्ञातं मयं मयं सुश्रुतिभिः (R.V., V. 53. 11).



Perhaps a lower sub-division of the *Viś* was the *Grāma* or the village. It was once a wandering body and we have even a tradition in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which speaks of Śaryāta Mānava wandering with his village.<sup>6</sup> A Rig-Vedic passage, too, goes to confirm the above view according to Zimmer.<sup>†</sup> But, gradually, the *Grāma* became a settled body, and comprised a number of families, who mainly engaged in agriculture. Furthermore, as agriculture became the chief occupation of the Vedic peoples, the *Grāma* became the basis of social life. The number of villages increased, the *Aranya* (which is contrasted with the *Grāma*, and was a sort of no man's land) was cleared, pastures and fields were extended and the activity of the people was directed to peaceful and settled ways of life. Roads were constructed to connect distant villages.

Lack of information stands in our way, when we try to ascertain the original basis of village life or its gradual development. We have no means of deciding whether originally the village was established on the basis of kinship or that its leader was the head of the agnatic group.

Among European scholars, Zimmer is inclined to take the *Grāma* as a clan standing mid-way between the tribe and the family. We have no explicit statement to prove such blood-relationship among villagers but it is not improbable that originally newly-settled villages were mostly peopled by men of the same family or that some villages arose out of the elaboration of the family of the original settler as well as his dependants

<sup>6</sup> See *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*—IV, 1, 5, 2-7.

<sup>†</sup> This passage describes the Bharatas as consisting of *Grāmas* seeking cows.

यद्वला भरताः सनरिषुर्गन्धुम इषित इदुक्तः ॥ R. V., III, 33, 11.

Sāyana explains गन्धुम् as वा जदकानि तरोदुमिच्छन् and वानी भरतानां सह; etc.

and servants. This type we can easily distinguish even in the later *Samhitās*. The *Taittiriya Samhitā* in many places gives us details about ceremonies which qualified men to become *Grāmins* or heads of villages, and in some places we are told of some such village-owners who rose to that position with the consent of *Sajātas* or *Samānas*.<sup>6</sup> The mention of these words clearly points to the existence of village-types in which kinship prevailed as the bond of unity. Probably, out of these the later caste-villages arose.

Agriculture early became the chief occupation of the people, as would appear from the general evidence of the Rig-Vedic hymns, as well as that of several words and passages. The innumerable prayers for rain, the adoration of *Śana* and *Sīra* (IV. 57), the use of the words *Kṛṣṭi* and *Carṣaṇi* to denote people in general, or the use of the words *Pañca Kṛṣṭayaḥ* or *Carṣaṇayaḥ* to denote the five great tribes clearly shows that agriculture had long become their chief occupation. Perhaps this knowledge of agriculture goes back to the Indo-Iranian period, as is proved by the similarity between *Yavam Kṛṣ* and *Yao Karesh*.<sup>†</sup> In those days, every householder was an agriculturist and the importance of that art in the eyes of the hymn-composers would appear from the advice given to the gambler—viz., not to gamble but to resort to agriculture “which was sure to grant wife, wealth and cattle.” (R.V. X. 34.13.)<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For a consideration of these see my “Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India.” Vol. I. pp. 104–8.

<sup>†</sup> For an enquiry as to the origin of agriculture, see my “Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India.” Vol. I. pp. 113–14.

<sup>‡</sup> यवेनां दीवः कृषिमिच्छन्तः विमं रमन्तः बहु सम्मानः ।  
तत्र गावः कितवः तत्र जाया तत्रे हि चरन्ते सवितायमर्चः ॥ R.V., X. 34. 13.



Agriculture being thus the chief occupation of the mass of the people, rights in land became definite.

Land tenure.

By the time of the Rig-Vedic hymns, there was hardly any trace of communal ownership found among primitive communities, except in the pasture or the *Aranya*. This has been recognized by almost all authorities including Baden Powell or the authors of the Vedic Index. The latter, however, go so far as to deny the existence of communal ownership even in the pasture.\* At the same time we do not find any indication of periodic allotments existing among the Teutons or among the village communities of modern Russia, Croatia or Slavonia.

At the head of the village, there was the *Grāmaṇī* or the head-man, whose functions or duties are, however, unknown. Zimmer would invest him with military functions owing to his close connection with the *Senānī* or the military commander (see *Altindisches Leben*, p. 171). In many places we find him taking a prominent part in the coronation ritual described in the *Brāhmaṇas*. He is one of the *Ratnins*, and is explained as the elected head of villages by our Indian commentators (e.g., ग्रामानाम् नेता).

The rights of the villagers or their duties to the head of the tribe are not clearly known. The evidence of the *Atharva Veda* clearly shows that the king was entitled only to a share of the village† (produce?). Whatever other rights the latter had are not clearly known and very little is known about the king being regarded as the owner of villages or of the soil. The main

\* For a summary of these arguments as well as my objections in the case of the pasture, see my "Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India," Vol. I. pp. 100—106.

† A. V. IV. 22.2—एवं भज यमि अन्नेषु गोषु निटं भज यो अमिची अय ।

trend of evidence, which hardly bears on the point directly, shows that the king was hardly regarded as the owner of the soil. The passages relating to the gift of *grāmas* by kings, or the elevation to the position of *Grāmin*, which raise a doubt to this, have been very intelligently explained by the authors of the Vedic Index who hold that "these most probably refer to the grant of regalia than to the grant of land as Teutonic parallels show." (Vedic Index I. 246.)

Leaving the question of blood-relationship an open one, we must regard the village as comprising a number of families or *Kulas*. These were under the control of the *Kulapas* or family-heads, either exercising the autocratic rights of a "*pater familias*" or acting as the manager of a coparcenary family group. Zimmer regards them as having been vested with the almost autocratic powers residing in a Roman "*pater familias*." Against this view there is clear evidence that, in India, the family-head, whether the father of children or the eldest of the agnatic group, had little of the powers of a Roman father and that in localities where the joint-family existed, the members were invested with rights of equal ownership or of enjoyment.\* There is another word to denote a village, e.g., *Vṛjana*, in which sense it is taken by Roth and other Vedic scholars. *Sāyaṇa*, in some places, makes it mean *Sangrāma* or battle. (See com. I. 51. 15.)

\* These points have been discussed already in my "Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India," Vol. I. pp. 104-5, in the sub-section entitled "Nature of Public Ownership." Here the reader will find arguments both for and against Zimmer's view. What is peculiar to India is the vested right which is thought to reside in the son as soon as he is born. This is amply illustrated by the story of *Nābhaneḍiṣṭha*.



## IX

### Highest political organisation. —The Jana or the tribe.

IF the *Grāma* was the smallest, the *Jana* was the highest political and social union among the Vedic communities. The word comes from a very ancient root which is found in many other Indo-European languages. It meant both an individual and a body of men claiming birth from a common ancestor. That it signified such a body is apparent from its use in the Rig Veda where we find almost all the important tribes of the Aryan Conquerors designated as “Janāsaḥ.” Thus, in III. 53. 12. of the Rig Veda, in which Viśvāmitra prays for the Bharatas, the latter are described as forming a Janāḥ\* (*Bhārataṃ Janam*). In another hymn by Kāṇva, in praise of gifts (R. V., VIII. 6.46—48), the Yādavas are described both as Yādava Jana or are designated in the plural (*yādvānām*), a practice supported by the rules of grammar† The word *Jana* is also applied to designate the five great divisions of the Aryan Conquerors (*Pañca-janāḥ* or *Janāsaḥ*.)

This Jana was intimately connected with the “Rājan” or the King. This would appear from the evidence of a number of passages. One of these, in course of a prayer, expressly asks for providing

Character of Jana.  
Its connection with the  
Rājan.

\* विश्वामित्राय रक्षति ब्रह्मेदं भारतं जनम् । R. V., III. 53. 12.

† शतमहं तिरिन्दिरे सङ्ख्यं पशोर्वादे । रावासि यावानाम् ।

द्वौणि शतान्वर्वातां सङ्ख्या दश गोनाम् । ददुष्वप्रजाय साधे ।

उदानट्ककुहो दिवमुशसतुयुजो ददत् । यवसा याव जनम् । VIII. 6.46—43.

the tribe with a king (R.V., V, 58. 4).<sup>\*</sup> In another, we find the king described as "Gopā Janasya,"<sup>†</sup> while in R.V., IX. 35. 5, Soma is described as "Gopati Janasya."<sup>‡</sup> Lastly, we have one passage in the tenth Maṇḍala, which throws more light on this point and establishes the closest possible relation between the king (Rājan) and the Jana. The hymn in question is R.V. X. 159 and in that we find a queen, Sacī Paulomī, uttering a magical formula for counteracting the influence of co-wives over her husband, to prevent any harm arising out of their influence, to retain the highest place in her husband's eyes, to enable her son to be the master some time afterwards, and to bestow honour on her daughter. The conjuration ends with the following utterance:—"I have displaced rival wives, risen superior to them and thereby I rule over this man and the Jana."<sup>§</sup> In another, a victorious king speaks of his success over enemies and his lordship over the *Jana*.||

\* ययं राजानमिदं जनाय विश्वतटं जनयथा यजत्राः । R.V., V. 58.4.

† कुविमां गोपां करसे जनस्य कुविद्राजानं सववदृत्रौपिन् । R.V., VI. 43.5.

‡ सोमं जनस्य गोपतिम् R.V., IX. 35.5.

§ मम पुत्राः शत्रुहृन्ऽद्यो मे दुहिता विराट् ॥

उताहमस्मि सञ्जया पत्यौ मे शीक उत्तमः ॥

येनेन्द्रो हविषा कल्पा भव दुस्तुत्तमः ।

इदं तदक्ति देवा असपत्ना किला मुवम् ॥

असपत्ना सपत्न्यौ जयन्त्वभिमुखौ ।

आवृक्षमन्यासां वर्चो राधो अस्थेयसाभिव ॥

समजैषमिमा अहं सपत्न्यौरभिमुखौ ।

यथाहमस्य विराजानि जनस्य च ॥ R.V., X. 159.

|| असपत्नः सपत्न्याभिराद्रो विवासहिः ।

यथाहमेवां सुतानां विराजानि जनस्य च ॥ R.V., X. 174.5.



The *Jana*, therefore, we may take to be the highest political union among the Aryan Conquerors, and we regard it to have been synonymous with the "tribe."

Zimmer took *Jana* to be identical with the tribe, and held that the *Jana*, as such, was the conglomeration of a number of *Viś* which he compared

Zimmer's Views. with the *Pagus* or *Gau* existing among the Teutons, as described by Tacitus. "Their number was in every case different, according to the size of a particular tribe, just as among the ancient Germans, the number of *Gaus* (or *Pagi*) which were combined together in a *Thinda* (civitas) was different." Furthermore, according to him "in a further sub-division came the village-ship the *Grāma* or *Vṛjana*" which was entirely the same as the ancient German *Vicus*. This village community again depended on the combination of individual families.

Thus far, we have proceeded in forming an estimate of the social polity of the Aryan peoples. In the present state of our knowledge, we cannot attempt to clear up further details, in spite of the fact that various points still remain which require further explanation. Thus, as we have said already, we know not how far the principle of blood-relationship acted as the bond of union among the tribe. Furthermore, we have to deal with the interpretation of the *Gotra*, which was a sub-division as old as the *Viś*, if not older. This *Gotra* division survived, entirely displaced the *Viś* by the time of the *Brāhmaṇas*, and later on became the basic principle in the formation of exogamous groups.

Various interpretations of this *Gotra* have been suggested.

The *Gotra*. Earlier philologists like Roth and Geldner thought it to mean either a cow-stable or the herd. These, however, hardly explain the real meaning or the

significance of the *Gotra*. The importance of the *Gotra*\* in India, specially among the Brahmins, is known to every student of Indian history or literature. According to Brahmanic theory, *Gotras* are derived from the common ancestor, who is very often a *Ṛṣi*, and is either a Brahmin by origin or by adoption. Later Brahmanical interpretation ascribes *Gotra* to Brahmins only, and explains the *Gotra* of other castes as being derived from their priests or preceptors. Whether it was originally a Brahmanic institution or not is difficult to decide, for we have reasons for believing that similar divisions based on agnatic kinship existed among the Greeks and the Romans.

Next, in regard to the *Janas* or tribes, we are not in a position to decide whether these were entirely homogeneous bodies, entirely based on descent from common ancestors enjoying perfect equality of rank and following a common tribal religion, or that the tribe had become a medley of different ranks and grades, prominent among whom were the ruler and his kinsmen, the priest and his relatives and the servile population. Our enquiries make us rather incline to the latter view, for we can easily see that the tribe was not, strictly speaking, confined to the descendants of a common ancestor, but constant additions and changes were being made by the principle of adoption or affiliation which was in vogue in India (as also in Rome and elsewhere). The royal families were adopting children from the priestly sections, while the priests, too, were adopting men of the ruling races. Such instances are found to have

\* For the importance of the *Gotras* see Chāndogya IV. iv. 1.; also Āsvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra and the Gṛhya Sūtras. In regard to the Kṣatriyas, Āsvalāyana expressly says that the princes derived their *Pravara* from their priests (e.g., पुरोहित-पवरो राजानम् )



been very common. We have Viśvāmitra adopting Śunaḥśepha, son of the Brahmin Ajigarta, while, according to Sāyaṇa, Śaunaka, an Āṅgirasa, became Gr̥tsamada by adoption. The Purāṇas and the Epic contain traditions about such adoptions in connection with the origin of the castes. (See Vedic Index I. p. 236.)

# X

## The Aryan Tribes and their Early History

It is difficult to write a systematic history of the Aryan tribes. Nothing definite is known about their original location or early activities. The Rig-Vedic hymns give us only occasional particulars relating to some of them or their princes, either in connection with prayers to deities or of praises of munificent princes by the recipients of gifts. In connection with these, we sometimes get details about the exploits of princes, the tribes connected with them or their enemies. Occasionally, the connection of princes to their tribes is explained clearly, while in many cases, princes are distinguished by patronymics, which give us a clue to their identification.

The following is a list of the tribes mentioned in the Vedic hymns, together with their location according to the Vedic Index and other authorities :—

In the extreme west and beyond the Indus were :—The Kambojas, Gandhāris, Alinas, Pakthas, Bhalānas and Viṣāṇins.

Immediately to the east of the Indus were :—The Arjikīyas, Śivas, Kekayas, Vṛcīvants and the Yadus (between Sindhu and Vitastā).

To the east of the Vitastā in the extreme hill region there were :—The Mahāvṛṣas, Uttara-Kurus and Uttara-Madras.

Between the Asiknī and the Paruṣṇī there were :—The Bālīhikas, and below them, the Druhyus, Turvaśas and the Anus.



To the east of the Śutudrī were :—The Bharata-Tṛtsus, the Pūrus, and the Pārāvatas, while south of the Dṛṣadvatī were the Sṛñjayas.

Further to the east and east of the Yamunā were :—The Uśīnaras, Vaśas, the Salvas, the Krivis—who in the days of the early Rig-Vedic hymns lay in the Indus region, but became later on the nucleus of the Pañcālas—and the Cedis.

South of the Dṛṣadvatī and the Yamunā were :—The Matsyas.

The following is a list of the Vedic tribes, together with a summary of details obtainable about them :—

*The Anus (Ānavas).*—At the time of the Rig-Veda they were living on the Paruṣṇī. In the Rig-Veda (I. 108.8), they are mentioned with the Yadus, Pūrus, Turvaśas and the Druhyus.

*The Ajas.*—The location of this tribe is extremely doubtful. They were defeated by Sudās along with the Śigrus and Yakṣus (R. V., VII. 18.19).

*The Alinas.*—They are mentioned in R. V., VII. 18.7. According to Roth, they were a sub-division of the Tṛtsus. They are mentioned along with the Pakthas, Bhalānas, Śivas and the Viśāpīns.

*The Ambaṣṭhyas.*—From the surname of a king in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, who seems to have been a great conqueror, we can presuppose the Ambaṣṭha tribe. (The Epic evidence proves them to have been a republican tribe, akin to similar tribes living in the Indus region).

*The Uśīnaras.*—We know no details about them from the Rik hymns, but in the Rig-Veda, Uśīnarānī (an Uśīnara

queen) is mentioned and there is a verse ascribed to one Śibi Uśīnara (X. 179). Later on, in the Ait. Br., they are associated with the Kuru-Pañcālas. In the Kauṣ-  
itakī Up., they are associated with the Kuru-Pañchālas and the Vaśas. The Gopatha Br. regards them as Northerners.

*The Kambojas.*—They are mentioned later but not in the Rig-Veda. The Vamśa Brāhmaṇa refers to their different language.

*The Krivis.*—They are mentioned in the Rig-Veda as settled on the Sindhu and the Asiknī (VIII. 20.24 and 22.12). A Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa tradition regards them as the originals of the Pañchālas, and we hear of a prince Kraivya Pañcāla. The name is lost in the Epic, probably owing to their being merged with the Pañcālas and Turvaśas.

*The Gandhāris.*—Are mentioned in the Rig-Veda, in a passage in which a woman praises the wool (R. V., I. 126.7) of that region. They are next mentioned in the Fever Hymn in A. V. (V. 22.14). Later on, they are spoken of in the Śrauta Sūtras. According to Zimmer, they were settled on the Kubhā.

*The Cedis.*—They are not mentioned prominently in the Rig-Veda but their king, Kaśu Caidya, is praised in a Dānastuti (R. V., VIII. 5.37.39). Later on, they are found to live very close to the Matsyas.

*The Turvaśas.*—They are prominently mentioned in the Rig-Veda and are closely associated with the Yadus, Anus, Pūrus, Druhyus. They are described as taking part against Sudās (R. V., VII. 18.6). In that battle,



the Anu and Druhyu kings are described as having been drowned but Yadu and Turvaśa escaped. In one passage of the Rig-Veda, the Turvaśa king appears as a praiser of Indra. Again, according to Griffith's interpretation of a passage, the Turvaśa and Yadu kings jointly defeated two princes, Arṇa and Arya Citraratha, on the Sarayu. Two passages seem to show a joint Yadu and Turvaśa attack on Divodāsa, father of Sudās. Later on, they became merged in the Pañcālās (Sat. Br. VIII. 5.4-16), and their contingent is described as accompanying the Pañcāla horse. They lived in the neighbourhood of the Paruṣṇī, but in course of time advanced from the west to the east.

*The Tṛtsus.*—They seem to have been helpers of king Sudās against the ten allied kings\* in the great battle on the Paruṣṇī and on the Yamunā. Their real identity has as yet not been determined. Ludwig identified the Tṛtsus with the Bharatas, while Oldenberg went so far as to hold that they were the priests of the Bharatas, and thereby tried to prove that they were identical with the Vāsiṣṭhas. In the absence of details it is difficult to identify them properly. Probably, they were intimately connected with the Bharatas, and coalescing with the Pūrus and other tribes, they formed the Kuru people. Some years ago, an Indian scholar†

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\* In that attack, the following tribes and rulers took part against king Sudās:—The Śimyas, Turvaśas, Druhyus, Kavaśas, Pūrus, Anus, Vaikarṇas, Yadus, Matsyas, Pakthas, Bhalānas, Alinas, Viṣāṇins, Śivas, Ajas, and the Yakṣus, together with the Princes Śambara and Bheda.

† See U. C. Batavyāla's "Veda-provesika."

tried to prove that the name Tṛtsu occurs in a modified form in the Epic list of the Puru kings as Tāṃsu. This, if accepted, would explain their connection with the Bharatas.

*The Druhyus.*—They are mentioned in the Rig-Veda several times, once along with the Yadus, Turvaśas, Anus and Pūrus. The Druhyu king fought against Sudās and was drowned, in the “ten kings’ battle.” Pūru and Druhyu occur in one passage (R.V., VI. 46.8). They were a north-western people and, according to an Epic tradition, were connected with Gāndhāra.

*The Pakthas.*—They are mentioned (Rig-Veda VII. 18.7), in the list of the tribes who fought against the Tṛtsus and the Bharatas. In three other passages a Paktha is mentioned and one of them is connected with Pūru Trasadasyu. In another passage connected with Turvāyana, he is described as a Paktha.

*The Parśus.*—In the Rig-Veda, Parśu Mānavi is mentioned (X. 86.3). Again, in one Dāuastuti hymn, the epithet Parśu occurs, and it is supposed to be identical with Tirindira. No more details are known though we have many conjectures.

*The Pārthavas.*—They are mentioned in R. V., VI. 27.8. Abhyāvartin Cayamāna, a Pārthava, is described as a great donor, and was a conqueror who subdued the the Varāśikhas.

*The Pārāvatas*—Were a people mentioned in two passages of the Rig-Veda (VIII. 34.18) They were a people on the Yamunā. In the Pañca-vimśa Br. (IX. 4.11) they are described as a people living on that river.



*The Pūrus.*—They are mentioned in the Rig-Veda and in one place (e.g., R. V., I. 108.8), their name occurs in connection with the other four tribes. In R.V., VII. 18.13, they appear as the enemies of the Tṛtsus. They were defeated by the Bharatas but were victorious over the aborigines. Among their great rulers, the Rig-Veda mentions the kings Pūrukutsa and Trasadasyu. Kuruśravaṇa, a Kuru king, is known as Trasadasyava, and this shows that the Kurus and Pūrus were closely related by inter-marriage. Their locality appears to have been east of the Sarasvatī. The Paurāṇika and Epic lists of Ayodhyā show the names Purukutsa and Trasadasyu.

*The Pṛithus.*—According to Ludwig, they were a tribe in alliance with the Paśus and were opposed to the Tṛtsu-Bharatas (R.V., VII. 83.1).

*The Vāhlikas.*—They were a Punjab tribe living in the north and closely connected with the Mujavantas and Mahāvṛṣas. Their first mention is in the Atharva Veda Fever Hymn.

*The Bharatas.*—They seem to have had the closest possible relation with the Tṛtsus. But the exact connection of the Bharatas and the Tṛtsus is very disputed. Oldenberg identifies the Tṛtsus with the Vasiṣṭhas, while we have Hille-Brandt's theory of the union of the two. Later on, the fame of the Bharatas increased with the conquests, and the greatness of kings like Bharata Dauṣṇanti or Śātānīka Sātrājita, who repeatedly performed the horse-sacrifice. In the Rig-Veda, they are prominent in connection with Sudās and the Tṛtsus. In the Brāhmaṇa age, they became prominent between the

Gaṅgā and the Yamunā, and became the principal element in the Kuru people.

*The Bhalānas.*—Were one of the tribes mentioned in the Rig-Veda (VII. 18). They fought against Sudās. Their original home, according to some scholars, was in Eastern Kabulistan (*compare* Bolan Pass).

*The Matsyas.*—They are mentioned in the Rig-Veda (VII. 18) and appear to have been the enemies of Sudās. Later on, in the Śatap. Br., we find a Matsya king Dvaivāta (Sat. Br. XIII. 5.4-9) performing an Aśvamedha sacrifice. They are not mentioned prominently in the Rig-Veda but we find them famous later on.

*The Madras.*—In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and in the Ait. Br., the two Madras are mentioned.

*The Mujavantas.*—They are not mentioned in the Rig-Veda, but the Atharva Veda describes them in connection with the Fever Hymn.

*The Yakṣus.*—They were a Rig-Vedic tribe inimical to the Tṛtsus (R. V., VII. 18). Some identify them with the Yadus.

*The Yadus.*—They were one of the five tribes often mentioned together. They are repeatedly mentioned in the Rig-Veda as allies with the Turvaśas against Sudās. According to R. V., VII. 18, the Yadu and Turvaśa kings, though defeated, escaped with their lives. According to one interpretation, though defeated by Sudās, the Yadus were victorious over Aṛṇa and Ārya Citraratha, two Aryan chiefs.

*The Ruśamas.*—They are twice mentioned in the Rig-Veda. A king of the Ruśamas—Rṇaṇcaya is mentioned as a



great giver. Kaurama, their king, is mentioned in the Atharva Veda.

*The Vaśas*—They are not mentioned in the Rig-Vedic hymns, but mentioned only in the Ait. Br. in the central region along with the Kuru-Pañcālas and Uśīnaras. They were also connected with the Matsyas.

*The Varaśikhas*.—They are probably mentioned in the Rig-Veda and in that book we find the account (VI. 27.4 and 5) of a tribe-leader or his tribe of this name, defeated by Abhyāvartin Cayamāna.

*The Viśāṇins*.—They were a tribe inimical to Sudās (R. V., VII. 18). No more details are known.

*The Vṛcīvantas*.—They were an Aryan tribe mentioned in the Rig-Veda, where we find them (R. V., VI. 27.5) conquered by Daivavāta Śṛṇjaya along with the Turvaśas. According to an account in the Pañca-vimśa Br. they struggled for sovereignty with the Jahnuś.

*The Vaikarṇas*.—They were a Rig-Vedic people. In the Rig-Veda (VII. 18), the clans of the Vaikarṇas were defeated by Sudās in the "ten kings' battle." The Mahābhārata mentions them.

*The Śigrus*.—They are mentioned in the Rig-Veda and were one of the enemy tribes against the Tṛtsus and Sudās (R. V., VII. 18).

*The Śimyas*.—They were a tribe who, according to Rig-Vedic evidence, were enemies fighting against Sudās (R. V., VII. 18).

*The Śivas*.—They were, according to the Rig-Veda (R. V., VII. 18), enemies who fought against Sudās along with the Alinas, Pakthas and the Bhalānas.

*The Śiṣṭas.*—They were a clan mentioned in the Rig-Veda in the Vāḷakhilya (VII. 53).

*The Śrñjayas.*—They were a tribe mentioned in the Rig-Veda. Two hymns (R.V., VI. 27.7 and IV, 15.4) mention a Śrñjaya king Daivavāta, as winning victories over the Turvaṣas and over Sāhadevya Somaka. We have a *Dānastuti* praising a Śrñjaya king Prastoka. There is some evidence to prove that this tribe was once closely associated with the Tṛtsus and were enemies of the Turvaṣas.

*The Somakas.*—They are found mentioned in the Rig-Veda, and their existence is to be presupposed from the patronymic Somaka of Sāhadevya defeated by Daivavāta.

As we shall see later on, only a few of this host of tribes became more prominent or powerful. The rest of them, like the Ajas, Alinas, Parśus, Pārthavas, Yakṣus Varasikhas, Viāṇins, Pakthṣas, Bhalānas, Śigrus, Śimyus, Śiṣṭas or the Vaikarṇas, remained unimportant for ever. These never gained any political importance. Of doubtfully Aryan peoples, we find the Kikaṭas mentioned in the Rig-Veda. As to the names of more such tribes, whether non-Aryans or the extreme border-scions of the Aryans, we hear more in the Brāhmaṇas and the later Saṃhitās. The Atharva Veda mentions the Aṅgas and Magadha, while Vaṅga is mentioned still later.

The later Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas mention many tribes of aboriginal peoples. The more important of these were the Andhras, Puṇḍras, Mutivas, Pulindas, and the Niṣādas.

In course of time, Aryan tribes multiplied either by new immigration or through settlements in new localities. Such



names are numerous, *e.g.*, Sparśus, Śūrasenas Śviknas, Śālvas, Śibi, the Satvant, the Vidarbhas, the Vaśas, the Jahṇus, the Videhas. Some of these tribes or tribal groups came to be designated by the locality of their settlement, *e.g.*, Prācyas, Nīcyas, Udīcyas or Apācyas.

Later on, many of the Aryan tribes, as we shall see, underwent changes in organisation and name. In the  
 Later tribes. Brāhmaṇas, we find a number of such modified or reconstituted tribes, which arose with the re-grouping of clans. Of these, we have the Kurus, Kāsis, Pāñchālas, Kośālas and Videhas, who became prominent later on. Many of the older tribes maintained their name and position while others like the Anus, Druhyus or Turvaśas, lost their name and identity even. They seem to have been merged into some of the new tribes rising into political importance.

Five among these tribes seem to have claimed the special  
 Prominence of five tribes. attention of the Rig-Vedic poets, *e.g.*, the Anus, the Pūrus, the Druhyus, the Yadus and the Turvaśas. They are not only mentioned more often but are frequently associated with each other. Many Vedic scholars incline to the view that the five are synonymous with the "five peoples" or, as they are called, *Pañca Janāḥ* or *Pañca Kṛtāyaḥ*. They reject the view of Sāyaṇa who identifies the five peoples with the four castes (*Vaṇas*) together with the Niṣādas, the explanation of the Aitāreya Brāhmaṇa (III. 31 and IV. 27) or of the Nirukta of Yāska where the five are identified either with the Gods, Men, Gandharvas, Apsaras and the Fathers, or the Gandharvas, Fathers, Gods, Asuras and Rākṣasas. Prominent among those who identified the "five peoples" with these five tribes, were Zimmer and Haug. Some scholars, like Hopkins, still combat



Zimmer's view. Anyhow, it is curious to find the five tribes associated closely, and this, coupled with the Epic Tradition that the five were descended from king Yayāti, throws an important suggestion as to their forming one particular branch of the Aryan people.

This close connection is apparent from a large number of Rig-Vedic passages. Thus, in one place all the five are mentioned together.\* In a second passage we find four tribes, *e.g.*, Anus, Turvaśas, Yadus and Druhyus, mentioned together.† Another passage mentions the Anus with the Druhyus.‡ Elsewhere, the close connection between the Yadus and the Turvaśas is apparent from compounds or expressions like Turvaśa-Yadu, Yadu-Turvaśa or Turvaśā-Yadū and Yadus-Turvasas (R.V., V. 31.8, I. 108.8. See Vedic Index note on Turvaśa.)§

By the time when the hymns were composed, the five had penetrated far into the Punjab and occupied various regions of that province. As mentioned already, the Druhyus, Turvaśas and Anus once occupied among themselves the doab between the Asikṇī and the Paruṣṇī. Then, the Yadus had the left lower part of the delta between the Sindhu and Vitastā, while the Pūrus had evidently crossed the Śutudrī.

In addition to these five, there were many more in the narrow valleys and doabs of the Punjab, and constant fights were going on. Many of these

\* R.V., I. 108.8. यदिन्द्राग्रौ यदुषु त्वंशेषु यदद्रुह्युष्वनुषु पुरुषु स्थः ।

† यद् द्रुह्यन्नि त्वंशेषु यदौ इवे वाभय मा गतम् R.V., VIII. 10.5.

‡ नि गन्धर्वोऽनवी द्रुह्यवय षटिः शता सुषुपुः षट् सङ्ख्या, etc., R.V., VII. 18.14.

§ Elsewhere in R.V., VIII. 39.8, we find mention of the *Sapta-mānavāḥ*. It is not clear what it means. The seven Indus tribes ?



tribes mentioned above, fought against Sudās, a powerful chief whose small army defeated a League of Ten Kings. To the north and west of the region occupied by the five tribes were a large number of other tribes whose location we have mentioned roughly. None of these, however, attained to any conspicuous position.

To the east of the region were a number of tribes who were destined to become more and more prominent as time went on.

Eastern advance.

In spite of a lack of connected history, we have clear indications that a struggle for political supremacy came to be waged among tribal leaders. Evidently, this struggle had begun earlier. In it two or three tribal groups were engaged and a number of rival dynasties had made themselves conspicuous. It is difficult to construct a systematic history of all these rival tribes or of the struggle among their ruling dynasties, but from the scattered isolated facts which can be gathered, we see clearly that this fighting had been going on over a wide area.

Thus, according to the R.V. (VI. 27.7, IV. 15.4), a Sṛñjaya king, Daivavātā, defeated Sāhadevya Somaka, carried his arms further, and won supremacy over the Vṛcīvantas (R.V., VI. 27.5) allied with the Turvaśas.

Rig-Vedic conquerors.

The Yadus made an attack on two chiefs, Arṇa and Arya-Citraratha, and these were killed in a battle on the Sarayu.

Another recorded tradition shows that a line of kings, whose names show them to have been akin to the Aikṣākas, were fighting against the neighbouring peoples. The earliest named of these was Durgaha. His son was Purukutsa, who seems to have been dispossessed of his throne

The Pūrukutaa line.



by an invasion but whose line was saved by the fortitude and activity of his wife, the Purukutsānī. Her son, Trusadasyu, the hero of a legend and the author of a hymn which makes him a half-god, attained celebrity and renown as a ruler and conqueror.

The Yadus and Turvaśas had maintained between themselves a close alliance, and their raid to the East and conquest of Arjuna and Ārya Citraratha has already been mentioned.

All these, however, had to face a new line of energetic rulers. The early history of this line is The rise of Sudās and Trtsus. unknown, but we hear of a Bharata prince, Divodāsa Atithigva, son of Vadhryaśva, gaining victories over the Yadus, Turvaśas and Paṇis and gaining fame as a sacrificer.

His son was probably Pijavana, and his grandson was Sudās, whom Rig-Vedic hymns connect with the Trtsus, whose origin is hardly explained. The Trtsus appear in Rig-Vedic accounts connected with Sudās who also gained over the support of the Bharatas. With the small support he thus gained, Sudās associated with himself the priests Biśvāmitra and (later on) a Vasiṣṭha. This spiritual support, together with his superior skill, made him invincible and he gained a series of victories over his enemies. The story of his successes is remarkable and forms a landmark in the early history of the Vedic tribes.

We have, in this case also, no connected narrative. But in the hymns composed by the priests Vasiṣṭha or Viśvāmitra we find his successes glorified, and his victory attributed to divine aid. We are told of two battles, one on the Paruṣṇī, and the other probably on the Yanunā. Of the first of these, well-known as the Dāśa-rājña or Ten King's Battle, we have Vasiṣṭha's description.



In R.V., III. 53.11, we have an account from Viśvāmitra referring to Sudās's conquest of the four quarters and the performance of Aśvamedha :  
Viśvāmitra's account.

*viz.*, उप॑ प्रेत॑ कु॒शिका॑श्चेत॒यध्व॑मश्वं रा॒ये प्र॑ मु॒ञ्चता॑ सु॒दासः॑

राजा॑ वृ॒त्रं जड॑न्त॒प्रागपा॑गु॒दग॑था य॒जति॑ वर॒ आ पृ॑थि॒व्याः ।

Vasistha's hymn is more explicit and gives more information. He begins by narrating all the gifts he gained from Sudās and incidentally gives us his ancestry. His father seems to have borne the name Pijavana, while his grandfather, Devavān.

Vasistha's praise.

हे नम॑र्दे॒वतः॑ श॒ते गो॑र्वा रथा॑ व॒धूम॑न्तां सु॒दासः॑ ।  
अ॒र्हन्न॑ग्ने पै॒जवन॑स्य दानं॒ होते॑व स॒द्म पर्ये॑मि रेभन् ॥ 22.

यस्य॑ अ॒वो रो॑दसी अ॒न्तर्बु॑र्वी शो॒णो शो॑णो वि॒वभा॑जा वि॒भक्ता॑ ।  
स॒मेदि॑न्द्रं न स्र॒वती॑ गृ॒णन्ति॑ नि यु॒ध्याम॑धि॒मशि॑शाद॒भौके॑ ॥ 24.

इ॒मं नरो॑ मरुतः स॒ञ्चतानु॑ दि॒वोदा॑सं न पि॒तरं॑ सु॒दासः॑ ।

अ॒वि॒ष्टना॑ पै॒जवन॑स्य के॒तं दू॒णाशं॑ च॒त्रम॑जरं दु॒वोयु॑ ॥ VII. 18. 22—25.

The same hymn throws further light on the humble circumstances from which Sudās had risen and his victory was compared with the victory of a goat over a lion, the cutting of a stake with a needle.

आ॒ग्ने॒ण चि॑त्त॒द्वेकं॑ च॒कार॑ सि॒ङ्घं चि॑त्ये॒त्वं ना॑ जघान ।

अ॒व स॒क्तौर्वि॑श्याव॒श्चदि॑न्द्रः प्राय॑ च्छ॒टवि॑शा भो॒जना॑ सु॒दासे॑ ॥

R.V., VII. 18.17.

Further, it gives us more details of the wars and conquests of Sudās. We hear of the attack of the Turvaśas, Druhyas and

of the Bhrgus (VII. 18.6), the death of four enemy kings, Śrutā, Kavadhā, Vṛddhā and Druhyu by drowning, the conquest by Sudās of the seven-walled forts of the enemy and the capture of the Ānava settlements (VII. 18.12—13). We hear also of Sudās's victory over the confederated Yadus (VII. 19.8) and over king Kavi, son of Cayamāna (VII. 18.8), over the two Vaikarṇas (VII. 18—10 and 11), over king Bheda (VII. 18.19) and the submission of the Ajas, Śigrus and Yakṣus.

In this way, Sudās became one of the earliest conquerors, and as such his name figures in the tradition recorded both in the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas.

Sudās's ancestry. The Epic and the Purāṇas, however, throw little light on his history. We hear nothing about the Tṛtsus, who are so inseparably connected with him, or about Divodāsa or Pijavana. His name itself does not occur in the Bhārata list\* in the Purāṇas. Consequently, we have the greatest difficulty in identifying him with any particular line, especially in relation to his recorded ancestry. For the present, we should not trouble ourselves with these knotty problems, which, though very important, do not stand in the way of our studying the political institutions of the Aryans.

In spite of continuous inter-tribal fighting, there is evidence to prove that the tribes were conscious of their kinship or their common descent. Thus, Tribes conscious of common origin. Manus was venerated as the founder of organised social life, the introducer of agriculture, or the kindling of fire and its

\* At the present time, it is difficult to identify Sudās or his line with any of the Epic or Paurāṇika dynasties. The name Sudās occurs both in the Ayodhyā and the North Pāñcāla lists. Mr. Pargiter is disposed to identify him with the North Pāñcālas (See "Indian Historical Tradition," pp. 7, 37, 100, etc.)



worship. A similar tradition exists about Pṛthi Vainya, and this was common among the tribes. Common, also, were the gods and deities worshipped by them. Many of the names from which a traditional descent of the tribes is claimed in the Epics or the Purāṇas occur in the Vedic hymns. Among these, we have Manu, the founder of the Paurāṇic Mānava dynasties, Ikṣāku Pururavāṇ and Ilā, the founders of the Paurāṇic Aila race, Āyu, Yayāti Nāhusya, Pūru and some Bhāratas.

Some of the tribes seem to have been closely associated with each other and probably in those days of constant warfare, tribal leagues and unions were formed either for the sake of self-preservation or for conquest. The close relation existing among the Anus, Pūrus, Druhyus, Yudus and Turvaśas, has already been narrated. This close relation is explained by the Epic writers, who make the five tribes descend from the common ancestor Yayāti.

Another instance of such tribal unions for political purposes was the 'League of Ten Kings' against Sudās. Not only Aryan tribes were taken in these leagues, but even non-Aryan peoples were called upon to join either side.

Before we pass on to an enquiry into the political institutions of the tribes, we must make some observations on the stage of political evolution attained by the Aryan communities. The generally accepted view is that the Rig-Vedic hymns reveal to us the sudden advent of a number of invading tribes into the Indus Valley. This, however, is not borne out by the Vedic evidence. The tribes had evidently been long settled in the country, and were advancing eastward. Constant fights were going on and in the

Nature of Vedic evidence.



midst of these, a number had succeeded in establishing their superiority over others. Lastly, it is also clear that the primitive tribal ideas of seclusion and local independence were giving place to imperialistic lust for expansion and conquest.

The bands of Aryan settlers were constantly advancing towards the east. By the time of the Tenth <sup>Centre of activity shifting to the east.</sup> Maṇḍala or of the Nadīstuti hymn, they had advanced as far east as the Yamunā, Gaṅgā and the Sarayu, and were not confined to the Punjab as many have supposed. The centre of political activity was fast shifting to the east and tribes like the Kurus or Bharatas, which become prominent in later history, were laying the foundations of their greatness, in the so-called Madhaydeśa.

NOTE.—It is yet to be ascertained whether these above divisions had reference to the whole folk or to the ruling Kṣatriyas only. The evidence of the Purāṇas or the Epic makes us incline to the latter view. In that case, the term tribe cannot be applied to some of these, which were rather the septs of the Kṣatriya ruling families. In regard to these, we ought to keep an open mind as yet.

The construction of a connected narrative from these isolated facts in the hymns is possible only with the help of the Epic and Paurāṇic dynastic lists. But the errors and contradictions of the various Purāṇas stand in our way.

In the light of Paurāṇic evidence, the struggle was confined to the various branches of the Pauravas, in which the other tribes joined. Sudās was a Pañcāla and a Bharata. His line became prominent for a time but its ascendancy ended with Sāhadeva Somaka, one of Sudās's successors. The Śrījāyas, another Pañcāla line, became powerful for a time and ultimately the Kurus became the dominant power.

In the light of the Purāṇas, Purukutsa and his line ought to be regarded as Aikṣākas. There is little evidence to connect Purukutsa with the Pūrus.





## Early Kingship

BY the time, even, of the oldest hymns of the Rig-Veda, kingship appears to have become almost universal among the Vedic tribes. Not only is royalty mentioned as existing among all of them but we have speculations as to its origin or importance.

✓ We have in the early Vedic literature two streams of tradition relating to the origin of Monarchy *i.e.* those relating to Manu and to Pṛthu Vaiṇya. The Vaivaśvata hymns\* speak of the services of Manu and incidentally throw a flood of light on the social conditions of the days preceding his election. To Manu was

\* According to R.V., I. 36.10, the gods brought fire for Manu, *e.g.*, यं ता देवासी मनवे दधुरिद्ध यजिष्ठं हव्यवाहन. The same idea is found in VIII, 19.21. *e.g.* ईले गिरा मनुर्हितं यं देवा दूतमरतिं त्वे रिरे ।. The idea of Manu as the first worshipper or organiser of social life occurs in VIII. 30.2, viz, इति स्तुतासी असया रिशादसी ये स्य चक्ष वि'श्व । मनोर्देवा यज्ञियासः । .....मा नः पथः पित्तान् मानवादधि दूरं नैट पवावतः ।

So is Manu described as the first performer of Sacrifice (VIII. 27.7).

The same hymn contains a prayer for protection from oppression and the establishment of fraternal union. (VIII. 27. 9 & 10).

वि नो देवासी अद्भुतोऽस्मिन् शर्म यच्छत ।

न यद्दूरादसवो नू चिदन्तितो वरुधमादधर्षति ॥ ९

अस्ति हि वः सजात्यं रिशादसी देवासी अस्त्रायम् ।

प्र णः पूर्वर्ध्ने सुविताय वीचत मच्च सुन्नाय नव्यसे ॥ १०।



attributed not only the great service of establishing peace among men, but also the invention of sacrifice, the introduction of fire and probably of agriculture. (See R.V., VIII. 27.15 and I. 36.10, VIII. 19.21.) The other tradition regarded Pṛthu as the earliest king among men. He, too, was credited with the invention of agriculture and was regarded as the first of anointed who performed the great service of ensuring peace among men.

Apart from these, there are other traditions in the Vedic literature, especially in the Brāhmaṇas, which (in addition to the two above) tell us something as to the origin of Monarchy. One of these, which is contained in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, not only throws light on the speculations of the age, but tells us something more. In that work, we are told of the coronation of Soma and Indra and the story of the latter's Mahābhiṣeka. In that account, we are told incidentally that the Devas and the Asuras were constantly fighting. Being repeatedly defeated, the Devas enquired of the causes of their failure. To their want of a leader was attributed their defeat and so they elected Indra as their king.

This story is indeed a clue as to the earliest speculation relating to the causes and circumstances that gave rise to Monarchy.\*

While these speculations point to the recognition of the earliest king as the greatest benefactor or his evolution from the successful military chieftain, another theory of the origin of

The same traditions about Manu and Pṛthu are found in the Brāhmaṇas, e.g., मनुर्वेवस्वतो राजेऽग्रतः तस्य मनुष्या विश्वं and ऽयुर्वे वेणुो मनुष्याणाम् प्रथमोऽभिषिषेचि etc.

\* देवासुरा वा एष लोकेषु समयतन्...तांस्ततोऽसुरा अजयन्त. देवा अत्र वद्वराजतया वै नो जयन्ति राजानं करुणामह इति तथेति ते सोमं राजानमकुर्वन्ते सोमिन राजा सर्वा दिशीऽजयन्। Ait. Br. I. 14, 23; also the VIIIth Pañcika.

Monarchy may be suggested—i.e., Monarchy arose out of the elaborated authority of the Patriarchs or *Prajāpatīs*. This theory may receive support from passages, which speak of the aspirations of some sages like Viśvāmitrā who prayed for kingship. Some such passages have been interpreted to prove that in earlier periods, the tribes and clans lived under patriarchs. On examination, however, the evidence of such passages seems to be rather inconclusive, inasmuch as, the very prayer for kingship shows that the institution of Monarchy had gained ground already.

✓ Monarchy, as we have said, had become almost universal. Almost all the tribes like the Yadus, Pūrus, Anus, Druhyus or Turvaśas, had their own line of kings, and what proves the universal acceptance of the institution more is the fact, that, the rulers of the tribes are designated either by the name of the tribe itself or by some epithet derived from the tribe-name.\* Monarchy moreover, seems to have become confined to particular families, and this view is easily supported even by the meagre data supplied by the Rik hymns. Thus, in the case of Trasadasyu, we find that the kingship of his tribe had descended to him from his grandfather and in spite of his father having lost his throne through an enemy attack. In the case of Sudās, also, there is clear and unmistakable evidence that his family had been vested with ruling authority for three generations if not more.

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\* Thus, the Yadu king is simply described as Yadu, the king of the Turvaśas simply as Turvaśa. The Anu king is merely spoken of as Anu.

Epithets, like Caidya applied to king Kasu, Sṛjāya applied to Daivavāta, Uśinurāni applied to the queen of the Uśinaras, go to prove the very close connection between such princes and their tribes, and also, the almost universal character of Monarchy in the Rig-Vedic period.



Ordinarily, kingship seems to have been confined to a particular family, to the exclusion of outsiders. Prominence of the royal family. Purely hereditary descent from father to son according to the laws of primogeniture had not become the general principle in the oldest period. The pre-eminence of the ruling clan, and the vested rights of princes claiming descent from the same ancestor stood in the way of the establishment of autocracy. The people again, were a powerful and dominant factor standing in the way of an irresponsible exercise of authority. The state of affairs was however not uniform. In several tribes, the rights of all the other princes went to contribute towards the establishment of various forms of oligarchical government.

Zimmer believed in the existence of oligarchies. We have, however, no account of these oligarchies, and it is difficult to pronounce any definite opinion, since, the mass of Rig-Vedic hymns shows a fast transition to an advanced type of monarchy. The influence of various factors, including the ethnic environment, brought in changes, and affected the normal course of evolution and as such, various types of monarchy or oligarchy came into existence, as we shall see very soon.

In the Rig-Vedic hymns, we have no direct allusion to republican institutions. This, however, proves nothing to the contrary and we have reasons for believing that republicanism continued to exist and survived for a longer period among the tribes on the outer fringe, especially among the Vrātyas or those who did not directly come under the influence of the rising Sacerdotalism.

The main political forces which contributed to this almost universal acceptance of monarchy, were the migration of the tribes from the hilly or border regions to the plain, and the constant attacks of the hostile aborigines, to which the advancing tribes were exposed. A similar change is noticeable in the history of the Teutonic tribes. "War begat the king" has been the conclusion of eminent authorities on Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon history and what was true in the West, was not altogether negligible in the case of the Indian Aryans.

Monarchy, however, was as yet not established on a solid foundation, as far as the security or the permanence of royal authority or privilege was concerned. The chief obstacles to the irresponsible exercise of royal authority were:—

(a) the vested rights of the king's own kinsmen, who were ever ready to displace the ruling princes, by taking advantage of enemy attacks, or the discontent of the subjects. This importance of the royal kinsmen who remained "equals" to the king is to be inferred from various passages. These speak of *Rājanaḥ* by the side of king. In one passage, Yama is said to have his *Sabhāsada rājanaḥ* (A.V. III. 29).

(b) the alertness on the part of the people, ready to take up arms, whenever the king proved tyrannical or whenever his exactions injured them. They could at the same time be made use of by any ambitious prince, who could win them over with promises or caresses. In the body politic, the personal element predominated and personal relation between the king and the subject was the only political bond. The *Rāṣṭra* or the community was not considerable and as such, popular anger or discontent was fatal to the king.



Popular opinion, was thus a thing which the king was bound to take into consideration. As yet they had not sunk into the position of *Prajāh* (meaning both children and subjects, but originally meaning only the former) but were the free *Viśāh*.

The king, therefore, was bound to rely on the goodwill and support of both these elements. The influence of the former was immense and this is confirmed by the evidence of the hymns of the Rig-Veda or the Atharva Veda. The evidence of the former book is rather scanty, but when we come to the latter work, we find that the kinsmen of the king, his own relatives, together with a number of other important personages, had formed a body of men, who selected the ruling prince and probably guided his conduct. The following passages from the Atharva Veda fully illustrate our point. Thus, in one passage of the Atharva veda (I. 9, 3 & 4) the priest clearly invokes the help of Indra, Agni, Varuṇa and other gods to "prostrate beneath our feet the king's enemies and rivals and to exalt him high above his kinsmen."

e. g. स॒प॒त्न्या अ॒स्मद॒धरे भवन्त॑त्तमं॒ नाक॑ म॒धि रोह॑येमम् ।

तेन॑ त्वम॒ग्न इह॑ वर्ध॒येम॑ स॒जा॒तानां॑ अ॒ष्ट्य आ घ॑ह्नेनम् ॥

In a large number of hymns we find the same idea. Thus, in Atharva Veda, in another hymn (III. 4) on the occasion of royal inauguration, the king is told that the "tribesmen shall elect thee for kingship.....and that kinsmen (*Sajātāh*) inviting thee shall go to meet thee; with thee also will go Agni as an active herald."

e.g. त्वां वि॒शो वृ॒णतां॑ रा॒जाय॑ त्वामि॒माः प्र॒दिशः॑ प॒ञ्च दे॒वोः ।

अ॒च्छ त्वा यन्तु॑ इ॒विनः॑ स॒जा॒ता अ॒ग्नि दू॒तो अ॒जिरः॑ सं च॒राते॑ ॥

Atharva Veda III. 5, is more explicit and it mentions some of the prominent people who participated in the nomination of the king-elect to the people. These are mentioned in connection with the magical powers of the *Parṇa* amulet which was supposed to bring success to the king. Of those who are mentioned, are "sagacious builders of cars, clever and skilful artisans, the kings (*rājānah*), king-makers (*rāja-kṛtāḥ*), the *Sūtas* and the village-leaders" Cf.

ये धीवानो रथकाराः कर्माणा ये मनोषिणः ।  
 उपस्तीन् पर्णं मर्ह्यं त्वं सर्वान् कृण्वभितो जनान् ॥  
 ये राजानो राजकृतः सूता ग्रामस्थश्च ये ।  
 उपस्तीन् पर्णं मर्ह्यं त्वं सर्वान् कृण्वभितो जनान् ॥

A. V., III. 5, 6 & 7.

The *Rājakṛts* or *Rājakartārah* thus wielded immense influence and their support was vital to the king, inasmuch as this saved the king from rivals. This rivalry was so keen that we have charms and magical formulae uttered for its destruction, directed not only against those that were living but those yet unborn, as stated in the following :

अग्ने जातान् प्र णुदा मे सपत्नान् प्रत्यजातान् जातवेदो नुदस्व ।  
 अधस्पर्दं कृणुष्व ये घृतन्यवो नागसस्ते वयमदितये स्याम ॥

A. V., VII. 34

It is needless to multiply instances, for there are many more which can be cited to prove the existence and the influence of the Elders and king-electors. The importance of each of these is apparent. The *Grāmaṇī* represented public opinion, the *Sūta* represented the army, and the *Rathakāra* had



attained prominence owing to the importance of the chariot in war. Two more verses speak of the insecurity of the regal sway and the constant enmity of brothers or outsiders (A. V., I XXIX. and XXX.).

In the first of these (A. V., I. XXIX.), the king invokes the amulet (*mani*) to "increase the strength of regal sway, to put down all who menaced the king and to make him the sole ruler of the tribe." Cf.

तेनास्मान् ब्रह्मणस्पतेऽभिराधाय वर्धय ॥ १

अभिवृत्त्य सपत्नानभि या नो अरातयः ।

\* \* \* \* \*

राधाय मर्ह्यं बध्यतां सपत्नेभ्यः पराभुवे । ४

सपत्नक्षयणो वृषाभिराद्रो विषासहिः ।

यथाहमेषां वीराणां विराजानि जनस्य च ॥ ६

The next hymn clearly points to the enmity of brothers Rivalry and enmity in addition to that of outsiders when it prays of scions. that "let not death reach him from the hand of brothers, aliens or of other men." Cf.

i.e. मेमं सनाभिरुत वान्यनाभिर्मेमं प्रापत् पौरुषेयो वधो यः ॥

While this constant enmity of kinsmen and rivals made royal authority insecure, the king's tenure of office was also dependent on the acceptance or approbation of the tribesmen. This acceptance seems to have once partaken of the nature of a real popular election. There are indications, however, that gradually the people were being put in the background. Yet, even in the Rig-Veda there are

✓ Popular choice.

evidences that this popular choice and support was vital to the king, and innumerable hymns, passages or similes point to this importance of popular choice. Thus, in Rig-Veda X. 124. 8, we hear of the simile "like subjects choosing a king"—‘ता ई विशो न राजानं वृणाना बीभत्सुवो अप वृत्रादतिष्ठन्’

The celebrated Coronation Hymn of the Rig-Veda (X. 173) speaks of the acceptance of the king by the *Viśah*. The same occurs in the Atharva Veda with some modifications. (R.V., X. 173—A.V., VI. 87-88).

The priest thus addresses the king-elect :

"Come into our midst, remain steadfast and immoveable. (May) The people all like (welcome) you and may you not fall from thy position.

"Be ye steadfast here and may ye not come down. Remain here as firm as Indra and uphold the *Rāstra* (or the state). Indra held it fast with his offering of *havis*, for it, Soma and Brahmanaspati have said the same. Firm the heaven, firm the earth, firm the universe, firm the mountains—so firm be also this king of men (*Viśām*). Let the state held by you be firm through king

Evidence of the Coronation. Varuṇa, the Deva Bṛhaspati, Indra and Agni.

Steadfast in thy position, thou win over Soma by oblations of butter. Let Indra make you the sole gatherer of the tribute from thy people. (The last verse in the Atharva Vedic hymn means:—"Vanquish you firmly and without fail thy enemies. Let them be crushed under your feet. All the quarters unanimously welcome you and for firmness the Assembly *Samiti*) appoint you.") Cf.

आ त्वाहार्षमन्तरेधि ध्रुवस्तिष्ठाविचाचलिः ।

विशस्त्वा सर्वा वाञ्छन्तु मा त्वद्राष्ट्रमधि स्रशत् ॥



इ॒है॒धि॒ मा॒प॒ चो॒ष्टाः॒ पर्व॑त॒ इ॒वा॒वि॒चा॒चलिः॑ ।  
 इ॒न्द्र इ॒वे॒ह ध्रु॒वस्ति॒ष्ठे॒ह रा॒ष्ट्रमु॑ धारय ॥  
 इ॒ममिन्द्रो॑ अ॒दी॒धर॒हु॒वं ध्रु॒वेण॑ ह॒विषा॑ ।  
 त॒स्मै सो॒मो अ॒धि ब्र॒वत्त॒स्मा उ ब्र॒ह्मण॑स्यतिः ॥  
 ध्रु॒वा द्यौर्ध्रु॒वा पृथि॒वी ध्रु॒वासः॑ पर्व॒ता इ॒मे ।  
 ध्रु॒वं वि॒श्वमि॒दं जग॑द्भु॒वो रा॒जा वि॒शाम॑धम् ॥  
 ध्रु॒वं ते रा॒जा वरु॑णो ध्रु॒वं दे॒वो ब्र॒ह्मस्य॑तिः ।  
 ध्रु॒वं त इ॒न्द्रश्चा॒ग्निश्च॑ रा॒ष्ट्रं धा॒रय॑तां ध्रु॒वम् ॥  
 ध्रु॒वं ध्रु॒वेण॑ ह॒विषा॒भि सोमं॑ सृ॒शाम॑सि ।  
 अथो॒ त इ॒न्द्रः के॒वली॑र्वि॒शो वलि॑हृतस्करत् ॥  
 [ ध्रु॒वो द्यु॒तः प्र सृ॒णीहि॑ श॒तृच्छ्र॒व्यतो॑ऽध॒रान् पा॑दयस्व ।  
 सर्वा॒ दि॒शः संम॑नसः स॒ध्रौची॑र्ध्रु॒वाय॑ ते स॒मितिः॑ कल्प॒तामि॑ह ॥

(Variant of A.V., I.88.33.)

To this must be added the evidence we may gather from a large number of Atharva Vedic hymns. One has already been cited (e.g. III.\*4 of the Atharva Veda), in which the tribesmen are said to select the king (त्वां विशो वृणतां राज्याय). In many of these, the use of the root वृ (वृद्ध-वरणे) is indeed remarkable and points to a real selection rather than mere approval. Another, which seems to be a variant of a stanza taken from R.V., X. 173, prays that Indra may make all the

\* This hymn, A. V. III. 4. 4 & 6 contains the passage—

अग्निना त्वायै मित्रावरुणो भा विर्ये देवा मरुतस्त्वा जयन्तु ।

इन्द्रे नमः; परिहि सं जज्ञास्या वरुणैः स विद नः । .

In regard to the word Varunaib, Weber suggested that they were the electors from Vr. to elect.



tribesmen or subjects unanimous in their loyalty only to the king. Cf.

ध्रुवं ध्रुवेण हविषाव सोमं नयामसि ।

यथा न इन्द्र केवलीविशः संमनसस्करत् A.V., VII. 94.

In A. V. VI. 73, there is another hymn containing an invocation by the priest and also by the king afterwards to the clansmen and this shows how invaluable to the king was the allegiance of the subjects. We do not quote the whole but only the passages in which the clansmen are called upon to be "unanimous and loyal" and in which the king asks them to "stand firm and not to forsake him" and that in him might be their "sweet resting-place." Cf.

एह यातु करुणः मोमो अग्निर्वृहस्पतिर्वसुभिरेह यातु ।

अस्य श्रियमुपसंयात सर्व उग्रस्य चेत्तुः संमनसः सजाताः ॥ १

हहैव स्त माप याताध्यस्मत् पूषा परस्तादपथं वः कृणोतु ।

वास्तोस्पतिरनु वो जोहवीतु मयि सजाता रमतिर्वो अस्तु ॥ ३

The people, thus, had a voice in the selection of their king. People's voice in In the absence of details, it is impossible to the election of kings. form any idea as to how they exercised their authority, but whatever evidence we may gather enable us to come to the conclusion that not only were they in the habit of meeting for the purpose of royal election, but they asserted themselves whenever the king was in the wrong. On important occasions, they were called into the "Samiti" or the "Assembly"



and their opinion guided the king. Of this Assembly, we shall speak very soon. Already one passage has been cited in which the unanimity and the allegiance of the tribesmen assembled in the *Samiti* is prayed for.

Such, indeed, was the state of royalty—dependent on popular choice for its accession to office and dependent on popular allegiance for its continuance in authority. The position of the king was doubly insecure. He was assailed by his own rivals—by men of his own blood—of his own family and then occasionally by his own subjects. His life itself was constantly in danger. To protect him, we have again recourse to the protection of the gods; we have prayers for his long life and safety. Indeed, there is one hymn in the *Atharva Veda* which invokes the protection of the various gods, and of the *Vasus* specially, so that he may live long to the length of a hundred years and that "death may not reach him from the hands of brothers or aliens." The gods are requested to save him from "hundred modes of death." Moreover, as is clear, the idea of Treason had as yet not grown, and the king was no better than an ordinary individual.

In such a state of society, the king could neither claim divinity, nor had he any prerogatives. Legitimacy could not guard him against popular wrath and tyranny or unrighteousness meet death or deposition. Indeed we have charms and formulæ to save the king and prayers for the restoration of popular favour and even for restoring deposed kings.

Some of these hymns speak in clear terms that deposition of a king was often the result of popular wrath. Deosition of princes. In a later age, the composer of the *Kausika Sutra* embodied these hymns in that work, which contains spells and charms for removing ills of all description. In one of these we have the following prayer :

"Let Indra call thee hither to those people. Fly hither to these people as a falcon. (3)

May the hawk bring the man who must be summoned, from far away in alien land, an exile.

May both the Asvins make thy pathway easy. Come, and unite yourself with him, ye kinsmen. (4)

Let thine opponents call thee back. Thy friends have chosen thee again.

Indra and Agni, all the gods, have kept thy home amid the tribe. (5)

He who disputes our calling thee, be he a stranger or akin.

Drive him, O Indra, far away, and do thou bring this man to us." (6) [A. V. III. 3, from the 3rd verse to the end].

Here we give the text :

अ॒न्द्र॒य॒स्त्वा॒ रा॒जा॒ क॒रु॒णी॒ ह॒य॒तु॒ सोम॒स्त्वा॒ ह॒य॒तु॒ प॒र्व॒तेभ्यः॑ ।  
 इन्द्र॒स्त्वा॒ ह॒य॒तु॒ वि॒ड्भ्य॑ आ॒भ्यः॑ श्ये॒नो॒ भू॒त्वा॒ वि॒श आ॒ प॒ते॒मा ॥ ३  
 श्ये॒नो॒ ह॒व्यं॑ न॒य॒त्वा॒ पर॒स्माद॒न्य॒क्षे॒त्रे॒ अप॒रु॒द्र च॒रन्त॑म् ।  
 अ॒श्वि॒ना॒ प॒न्थां॑ कृ॒णु॒तां मु॒गं त॒ इ॒मं स॒जा॒ता अ॒भि॒सं॒वि॒श॒ध्व॒म ॥ ४  
 ह॒य॒न्तु॒ त्वा प्र॒ति॒ज॒नाः प्र॒ति मि॒त्रा अ॒वृ॒ष॒त ।  
 इन्द्रा॒ग्नी वि॒श्वे॒दे॒वास्ते॑ वि॒शि क्षो॒म॒दी॒ध॒रन् ॥ ५  
 य॒स्ते ह॒वं वि॒व॒दत् क॒जा॒तो य॒श्च नि॒ष्ट॒यः  
 अ॒पा॒ञ्च॒मिन्द्र॑ तं कृ॒त्याथे॒म मि॒हा॒व ग॒मय ॥ ६

The Kausika Sutra also uses A. V. III. 4 and I. 9 as charms for restoring deposed princes, as well as for the recovery of



popular allegiance. Specific instances of deposition are not known. Sayana attributes the deposition of Purukusta to a foreign attack. The epic tradition about the deposition of Vena does not occur, though Vena's name is mentioned.

But, if royalty in the early Vedic age was thus wanting in security and in the permanence of the allegiance of the people, there is clear indication that powerful factors were contributing to the consolidation of the king's position. A careful analysis of the coronation Hymns clearly shows that the priestly sections were harping on the necessity of the consolidation and permanence of regal authority and as such they were echoing the opinions of a large section of the people. Furthermore, owing to the influence of sacerdotalism, the regal office was gradually coming to be associated with more and more important functions. In the eyes of the priests and consequently of a large section of the people, the royal functions were but the terrestrial counterparts of those vested in the divine rulers of the universal forces. The anthropomorphic ideas, which had contributed to the conception of the *Devas* and their functions, were reacting again on the political concepts, which had given rise to the former.

Forces contributing towards the permanence of royal authority.

Sacerdotalism. Lastly, as we proceed, we find that the priests were not only harping on the parallelism between the duties of the king and of the *Devas*, but some of them were going so far as to regard the king as the master of the universe, and a parttaker of the tributes to the universal rulers.

In later Coronation Hymns we find the gradual progress of these ideas. In the Rig-Vedic Coronation Hymn (X. 173), the composer prays for an immovable position. His idea of a merely permanent fixed position is taken from *Dhruva* or the Pole-star. He harps on the immovable position of the heavens, the earth, the universe and of the mountains. He reminds the



king of the success of Indra, owing to his *havih*-offering, and prays to the divine rulers, Indra, Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati and Agni for the success of the king.

The Atharva-Vedic hymns go farther than this. They claim for the king many more privileges. In the Rig-Vedic hymns, there is the prayer that the king is to be the sole tax-gatherer, but in the following Atharva Vedic hymn, we have the prayer that the king might become "the head and chief of princes" (क्षत्राणामयमस्तु राजेन्द्रः), the sole "lord of the people" (विशां विश्वपतिरस्तु राजा), "sole treasure lord" (धनपतिर्धनानां), the beloved of Indra (इन्द्रप्रियः), the beloved of cattle, plant and animals (प्रियो गवामोषधीनां पशूनाम्), "folk's sole lord and leader and the best of all human rulers" (एकवृषं जनानामुत राज्ञामुत्तमं मानवानाम्). Lastly, the king is described as the "sole lord and friend of Indra who feeds on the people." (एकवृष इन्द्रसखा). Here, the hymn is quoted in full : Cf. IV. 22 :

इममिन्द्र वर्धय क्षत्रियं म इमं विश्वमेकवृषं कण्ठं त्वम् ।

निरमितानक्षुह्यस्य सर्वास्तान् रन्धयास्मा अहमुत्तरेषु ॥

एमं भज ग्रामे अश्वेषु गोषु निष्टं भज यो अमितो अस्य ।

वप क्षत्राणामयमस्तु राजेन्द्र शत्रुं रन्धय सर्वमस्मै ॥

अयमस्तु धनपतिर्धनानामयं विशां विश्वपतिरस्तु राजा ।

अस्मिन्निन्द्र महि वर्चांसि धेह्यवर्चसं कण्ठहि शत्रुमस्य ॥

अस्मै द्यावापृथिवी भूरि वामं दुहायां धर्मदुवे इव धेनू ।

अयं राजा प्रिय इन्द्रस्य भूयात् प्रियो गवामोषधीनां पशूनाम् ॥

युनजिम त उत्तरावन्तमिन्द्रं येन जयन्ति न पराजयन्ते ।

यस्त्वा करदेकवृषं जनानामुत राज्ञामुत्तमं मानवानाम् ॥

उत्तरस्वमधरे ते सपत्ना ये के च राजन् प्रतिशत्रवस्ते ।

एकवृष इन्द्रसखा जिगीवाज् कृत्यतामाभरा भोजनानि ॥



सिंहप्रतीको विशो अहि सर्वा व्याघ्रप्रतीको व बाधस्व शत्रून् ।  
एकवृष इन्द्रसखा जिगोवाज् कचूयतामा खिदा भोजनानि ।

Thus in these, while the king's privileges and prerogatives are increasing so as to make room for the universal conception of royal authority, he is described also as the "friend of Indra" (इन्द्रसखा). The next verse we quote, is not only characterised by a more comprehensive conception of royal power but it harps on the parallelism of royal duties with those of the gods, and describes the king as the "sole lord of the earth, of all existing things," "the crown and summit of mankind," the "one and only lord," the "chosen of Indra" and the "partaker of the gods." Owing to its importance we quote the verse in full.\* *i.e.* A.V., VI. 87 :

वृषेन्द्रस्य वृषा दिवो वृषा पृथिव्या अयम् ।  
वृषा विश्वस्य भूतस्य त्वमेकवृषो भव ॥  
समुद्र ईशे सवतामग्निः पृथिव्या वशी ।  
चन्द्रमा नक्षत्राणामोशे त्वमेकवृषो भव ॥  
सम्नाडस्य सुराणां ककुक्ष्यनुत्थाणाम् ।  
देवानामर्धभागसि त्वमेकवृषो भव ॥

✓ Kingship was thus continuously making advance in the direction of being clothed with more privileges and prerogatives. In the eyes of succeeding generations, the kingly office became more and more glorious and with it veneration for the holder of that office continuously

\* Indra, the king of gods, is similarly described [as the sole ruler (*Adhirāj*) of the divine tribes (*Daivi-vīśab*).



increased. Speaking from the political point of view, these proved to be the germs which developed into the conception of the universal and indivisible sovereign authority. While, speaking from another point of view, we may recognize in the last two hymns the germs which gradually developed into those ideas regarding the divine nature of royalty and its powers and functions.\*

\* This constant harping on the parallelism between the duties of kings and of the *Devas* is all that we get in the literature of Vedic hymns or the *Brāhmaṇas*. The glorification of the royal office is indeed remarkable, and it undoubtedly made a great influence on the Indian mind. But in spite of this, a divine theory never gained ground in the country except in certain localities. The king never became irresponsible to the people nor accountable to God only, as in Europe. He remained, a human personage, a servant of his people, whose immense duties outweighed the privileges and prerogatives of his office. We shall discuss all these points in the next part of the book.

In the meantime, we beg to point out that recently much has been made of these ideas and some scholars have tried to prove that in the eyes of Indians, the royal office was a divine institution. Among these we may mention Prof U. N. Ghosa, M.A., Ph.D., author of *Hindu Political Theories*. He relies on the evidence of R.V., IV. 42 where king Trasadasyu is alleged to describe himself as follows—"Two-fold is my kingdom, that of the whole Kṣatriya race, and all the immortals are ours. The gods associate me with the acts of Varuṇa. I rule over (those of) the proximate form of man. I am the king Varuṇa ; on me the gods bestow those principal energies, that are destructive of the Asuras ; They associate me with the worship of Varuṇa.....I am Indra, I am Varuṇa, I am those two in greatness. I am the vast, profound, beautiful heaven and earth.....I uphold heaven and earth." A careful examination of the hymn shows that the first six verses, ought to be taken as dedicated to king Varuṇa himself, rather than to the composer Trasadasyu, as has been done by Sāyaṇa (probably Trasadasyu in his trance identified himself with the god Varuṇa ; similar instances there are many—cf. Vāk Āmbhṛṇī composing the Devī-Sūkta.) and furthermore the translation of Wilson is not accurate.

Secondly—Even, if we believe in Sāyaṇa who attributes the first six verses to Trasadasyu, there is nothing to prove a divine character appertaining to royalty. Trasadasyu, while he harps on his own greatness as the ruler of men and gods and the upholder of Heaven and Earth, nowhere speaks of his eminence as having been due to his being a king. The truth is, that this king came to be regarded as a mythical



The influence of sacerdotalism and of the priestly order was immense. For their success, kings gradually came to depend on ritual and magic. The desire for divine aid is clearly indicated even by the evidence of the Rig-Veda (cf. Sūdas and the Vasisthas). As the simpler character of society was gradually modified, this desire for divine help became greater than ever, and this is clear from the Atharva-Vedic evidence. This last work contains charms, formulas, amulets and similar things of various description. All these point to the gradual decay of popular control of the administrative machinery and the growth of the privileges of the priestly classes, about whom we find so much in the Brāhmaṇas.

The king stood as the head of the body-politic. He was, in the words of our modern constitutional historians, a representative chief, who symbolised the unity and the sovereign dignity of the tribe. He was the war-lord of the tribe, and his primary duty was to ensure the safety of the tribal community by leading its armies and vanquishing the enemies. As such, he was a judge, who wielded the rod of punishment and chastised those who violated the customs of the tribe.

The protection of the people from foreign invasion and the chastisement of enemies of internal peace seem to have been

personage—a demi-god, owing his birth to the favour of Indra and Varuṇa, who were won over by the prayers of his mother Purukutsānī, as would appear from the ninth verse of the same hymn :

पुरुकुत्सानौ हि वामदाशद्व्यभिरिन्द्रावरुणा नमोभिः ।

अधाराजानं वसदस्य मया वदहणं ददयु रधदेवम् ॥

His birth and his successful career saved the royal family from ruin and so he came to be regarded as a demi-god—the incarnation both of Indra and Varuṇa.

not only the chief duties of the king but also his best qualifications to the royal office. This is amply proved by the evidence of Vedic hymns. In more than one place, the king is described as the protector of his people *Gopā Janasya* or *Gopati Janasya* and as such his military qualities are repeatedly extolled. In protection lay his chief duty. In many inaugural hymns, prayer is constantly offered so that his enemies may be prostrate beneath his feet (A.V. I. 9). In many places, he is described as a Kṣatriya (A.V. IV. 22) or protector *par excellence* in distress and in one passage we find that the newly elected king boasts of his having destroyed his enemies, and probably rests his claim to headship of the tribe on that success over the enemies of the community. (R.V., X. 174.5.)

असुपन्नः सपन्नहाभिराद्रो विषासुहिः ।

यथाहमेषां भूतानां विराजानि जनस्य च ॥

Furthermore, in the coronation ritual the king is identified with Indra—the war-god and the protector king of the Devas, and with Varuṇa the judge *par excellence* among the deities.

Whatever might have been the position of the king in relation to his followers, e.g., members of the royal family or his subjects, gradually, the sole authority of this individual over the members of the community and their affairs came to be recognized. Of his other functions and duties we find nowhere any detailed account either in the Rig-Veda or in the Atharva Veda. But the following points may be mentioned :—

(1) He was the leader of the community. The Coronation hymns of the Rig-Veda indeed speak of the king as the sole



leader of the *Rāṣṭra* or the community and pray for an unassailable steadfast position. The Yajus hymns on coronation and *Rājasūya* speak of the king's pre-eminent position and leadership of the community. They repeatedly call for the allegiance of the people to his authority, and speak of the king's headship of the "*Jāna-rājya*." \*

(2) He was the war-lord. The chief duty of the king was leadership in war. He was to lead his people both in offensive wars and also in repelling the attacks of foreign enemies. The early kings led raids within enemy territories. In the *Rājasūya* hymns he is described as *Purāṇa bhattā*. Moreover, in some of the coronation hymns the king is designated as *Sapatnahā* or vanquisher of enemies. These refer not only to the non-Aryan aborigines but to the Aryan enemies of the tribe owing allegiance to the king.

(3) As king, he had to act probably as a judge. The early *Samhitās* contain very little reference to the king's administration of justice, but we may presume from various circumstances the fact that the king was a judge. Thus, since, in many hymns the king is identified as the mundane counterpart of *Varuṇa*, the judge among gods, we may conclude that in all exceptional cases he presided over criminal cases and had, like *Varuṇa*, his spies, the *spāśas*, who watched over the conduct of men. The *Ugras* were probably the police officers appointed by the king—so were probably the *Jīvagṛbh*.

In difficult cases, the adjudication probably took place in his *Sabhā*, where the *Sabhāsadas* and *Sabhācaras* sat as assessors or judges. The *Athārva-Veda* speaks of the sixteen

\* इमं देवा असपतं सुवधं महते चक्राय महते जैष्ठाय महते जानराज्याय—etc., Vaj. Sam. IX. 40.



*Rājānaḥ* acting as the Sabhāsadas of king Yama. Nothing more is known of the judicial activity of kings from the Rig-Veda or the Atharva-Veda. From the evidence of a passage of the Kāṭhaka Samhitā (XXVII. 4), however we may infer the appointment of *Adhyakṣas* to try *Sūdras*.

On these points, the Brāhmaṇas furnish us with more important details. They speak of the king's wielding of the rod of punishment (Sat. Br. V. 4.4.7) and his protection of *Dharma*.

Nothing is known of the chief officials, he associated with himself in the government. A number of advisers and military chiefs would have sufficed for the early governmental machinery. But, in course of time, some men of importance were associated with the king. Over and above, there were the *Rājakṛts* or, *Rāja-kartāraḥ* of the Atharva Veda.\* That book (III. 5) associates with the king, as we have seen, the Rathakāras and Karmāras, who formed a class of men known as the *Sti* or *Upasti*. In addition, there were the electing chiefs, the *Sūta* and the *Grāmaṇīs*.\* The Rathakāras or Karmāras rose to importance owing to the fact that the chariot was an important thing in connection with the warfare of those days. The other mechanics were also invaluable owing to their great service in supplying accoutrements of war. The *Grāmaṇīs* represented the people of the locality of which they were the executive heads.

\* ये धीवानो रथकाराः कर्मारा ये मनौषिणः ।  
उपस्तीन् पणं मद्भ्यं त्वं सर्वान् कृण्वन्ति जनान् ॥  
ये राजानो राजकृतः सूता ग्रामन्यथ ये ।  
उपस्तीन् पणं मद्भ्यं त्वं सर्वान् कृण्वन्ति जनान् ॥



As we pass on to the Brāhmaṇa literature, we get more information as to the other officials attached to the Royal person. In course of time, the *Purohita* became an important personage. He was not only a royal chaplain, but a moral adviser of the king and acted as a mediator between a king and his people and between the king and the gods. In addition to these, there were the *Ratnins* who included the *Bhāgadugh* (collector of shares), the *Akṣavāpā* (dice-player), the *Sūta*, the *Grāmaṇi*, the *Senāni* (Commander of the Army), and the *Sangrahūtṛ* (the tax-collector). As we proceed, *Sacivas* and *Amātyas* come into prominence, and *Rājapurūṣas* are frequently mentioned. Apart from these, there were the members of the *Sabhā* (advisory body) of which we have already spoken.

As yet, there was no taxation in the proper sense of the word. The king's dignity was maintained by income arising from various sources. The king was entitled to the *Bali* or tribute of his subjects, as we know from the Coronation Hymn of the Rig-Veda (X. 173.8.) where prayer is offered so that *Bali* may be paid to him and to him only. In the Atharva-Veda, the king is granted "a share in villages, kine and horses" (A.V. IV. 22.1), showing that as yet he was not the sole land-owner of the community. Later on, however, royal power increased in this respect.

In the earliest period, the king was not regarded as the owner of the land belonging to the community. Yet, as we proceed downwards, we find the monarch endowed with such prerogatives as make him competent to make gift of villages. Of such gifts we have unmistakable evidences in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. This power of giving away villages has been interpreted by scholars (who

Royal ownership of land.



scent the existence of western feudal ideas) as being due to the fact that in theory the monarch was the owner of the land of the community.

This however, is neither supported by the evidence of the Vedic texts nor of the later Smṛti works. Indeed, as we shall see later on, this point has been discussed in detail, in the Sūtras of Jaimini and as a result of this discussion the conclusion is reached that land belongs not to the king, but to the man who tills it. Again, when we make a careful consideration of the theories underlying the principles of taxation, we always find the idea that the tribute paid to the king was not rent for the land but it was a tax out and out, paid to the king as his wages, which were granted to him in lieu of protection.

Consequently, we may explain away this right of gift by the king—

(1) as merely the grant of regalia—which did not affect the real rights of private individuals arising out of clearing and cultivation.

(2) or, these gifts may be described either as grants of uncultivated land or of those belonging to non-Aryan people over whom the donee installed himself as a nominal landlord enjoying certain rents and profits and exercising jurisdiction over the holders of real rights therein.

In lieu of the veneration and respect paid to the king, he was bound to further the interest of the community. The duties attached to the royal office according to the ideas of those days made it incumbent on the holder of the royal office to contribute actively to the welfare of the community. The *Rāṣṭra* idea, as it developed itself, emphasised upon the economic and social needs of the

Ideas about royal functions and duties.



people, and the king was to do everything to further these. His duties were not merely those of police but he was to look to the well-being of agriculture and to find out sustenance for his people. This is apparent from the following verse of the Yajurveda (IX.) Rājasūya ritual where the priest addresses the king as follows :—

इयं ते राट् । यन्तासि यमनो ध्रुवोऽसि धरुणः ।

क्षयै त्वा क्षेमाय त्वा रथ्यै त्वा पोषाय त्वा ॥

From what has been stated above, Vedic polity may thus be summarised as a political condition in which the governmental powers were distributed among a king, a Council and an Assembly of the people.\* It may thus be favourably compared with Freeman's Indo-Germanic polity.

We thus have in the Vedic king, the sole repository of the executive power, while the Sabhā was the advisory body. In this, as we shall see, the chiefs, the prominent members of the royal family, learned Brahmins, the Purohita and other notables had their place. The Vedic hymns themselves give us no information on the constitution of the Sabhā, but its constitution may be presumed from the evidence of later literature. The Rājakṛt, the Grāmanī, or the troop-leaders had presumably places in it. This is not unnatural and seems to be confirmed by the evidence of the constitution of other countries. Naturally, the king's counsellors should be his near kinsmen or

\* *Ref.*—Freeman's Comparative Politics, pp. 43—49. Sidgwick's Development of European Polity, p. 32. See also H. Spencer's Sociology—on Political Institutions Chap. V.

those in whom he could rely and to whom he entrusted the exercise of authority relating to the various branches of administration.

Last of all, as we shall see very soon, there was the *Samiti* which regularly met to express the popular approval of acts either mooted to it for acceptance or to join in state ceremonies. Some Atharva-Vedic passages suggest that the *Samiti* met either to elect the king or to approve of his ascending the throne. A popular gathering to accept the new king subsisted to the last days of Hindu independence.



## The Sabhā

FROM this account of the evolution of kingship, we pass on to a discussion of the character and constitutional position of those great public Assemblies in which the people met and expressed their opinion freely.

These were two in number :—(1) The Sabhā.

(2) The Samiti, which was also called by various other names e.g., *Samgati*, (R.V., X. 141.4) or *Samgrāma*. We take the Sabhā first.

The word Sabhā denoting an assembly occurs throughout the Vedic literature. Clearly it meant an assembly or gathering, as it continues to mean even in our own days. But unfortunately, details about its character and composition in the Vedic period are so scanty, that it is difficult to form any idea about it easily.

Indeed, this lack of details has given rise to differences of opinion among scholars. Hille-brandt came to the conclusion that the Sabhā and the Samiti were identical, Sabhā meaning the place of Assembly and the Samiti, the Assembly itself. Zimmer, on the other hand tried to identify the Sabhā, with the village on the evidence of a passage in the Vājasaneyī Samhitā (III 45 and XX. 17). in which prayer is offered to the gods for the expiation of sins that are committed in the village, the *Aranya* and the *Sabhā*.

Neither of these views, however, seem to be supported by the general evidence of Vedic literature or by passages in which the word Sabhā occurs.

Hillebrandts' view seems to fall to the ground, in as much as a passage of the Atharva-Veda, clearly describes the Sabhā and Samiti as two different bodies. This would appear from A.V. VIII, 12. 1. where Sabhā and Samiti are described as the two daughters of Prajāpati. (सभा च समितिश्चावतां प्रजापतेर्दुहितरौ संविदाने).

The two are again distinguished and mentioned side by side in A.V. VIII. 10. 5. and XII. 1. 56. Again, in the Atharva-Veda, in the Vṛātya hymns, we have the account of the origin of various bodies where the two are separately mentioned. Cf.

A.V., XV. 8 & 9. 2.

सोऽरभ्यत ततो राजन्योऽजायत ...स विशोनु व्यचलत् ।

तं सभा च समितिश्च सेना च सुरा चानुव्यचलन् । etc.

“He went away to the people, Sabhā and Samiti and Senā (army) and Surā followed him. He who hath this knowledge becomes the clear house of Sabhā, Samiti, Senā (army) and Surā (wine.)”

In another place, too, they are clearly mentioned side by side i.e. in A.V., VII. 1. 12.

We turn next to discuss the view of Zimmer that the Sabhā was the village-assembly. The two passages, cited by him to prove this connection, are found in Vaj. Sam. III. 45 and XX. 17. In both of these, prayers are offered to expiate various sins committed by men. The first passage runs as follows :—यद्गामे यदरक्षे यत्सभायां यदिन्द्रिये । यदेनश्चक्षमा वयमिदं तदव यजामहे स्वाहा । The second passage is practically the same as the previous one, though it is slightly modified (यद्गामे यदरक्षे यत्सभायां यदिन्द्रिये । यच्छ्रे यदर्यं यदेनश्चक्षमा वयं यदेकस्याधि धर्मणि तस्यावयजनमसि ।)



Trans.—“Each fault in village, or in wilderness, in Assemblages or corporeal sense ; each sinful Act, we have done to Śūdra or Ārya—or to either's disadvantage, even of that sin thou art the expiation.”

A careful consideration of this passage shows, that there is hardly anything to warrant a connection between the village and the *Sabhā*. We are no more justified in regarding the *Sabhā* as the village assembly, than we should be in holding it as the assembly of the *Aranya* or the wild. Evidently, what the reciter of the hymn meant is that expiation for sins be granted to him, for all sinful acts, in ordinary social life in the village in sport (in the *Aranyas*) or in Assemblies (*Sabhā*) during discussion, in addition to those caused by the frailty of senses. (“ग्रामे वसन्तो यदेनः पापं ग्रामोपद्रवरूपं चकम कृतवन्तः । तद्यारण्ये वसन्तो यदेनो मृगोपद्रवरूपं चकम । तथा सभायां स्थिता यदेनो महाजनतिस्कारादिकं चकम ।”) There is, moreover, hardly any Vedic passage which goes to support the views of Zimmer.

It is difficult, to determine the original character of this gathering. The word *Sabhā* (cf. Ind.-Eu. *Sebh-a*) is derived from a root, closely associated with O.E. *Sibb*, Ger. *Sippe*, Got. *Sibja* all meaning an association of the kin, tribe, family or the clan.

Probably, early *Sabhās* were of this type but later on, with further development the *Sabhā* became not only an association of kinsfolk but of men bound together either by ties of blood or of local contiguity. Consequently, it came to mean any kind of gathering, for religious purposes, for sport, or for discussion of local interest. In a state of society characterised by the free working of public opinion, gatherings for various purposes were very common and their existence is proved by references

to them in literature. Indeed, the Yajus Samhitā, repeatedly (see XVI. 24) speaks of Sabhās and Sabhāpatis. (नमः सभाभ्यः सभापतिभ्यः). R.V., X. 34. 6. speaks of the Sabhā as a dicing-assembly. (सभामिति कितवः पृच्छमानो जेष्यामीति तन्वा शुशुजानः। अक्षासो अस्य वि तिरन्ति कामं प्रतिदीवन् दधत आ क्षतानि ॥)

With these, however, we are not concerned and we try to determine the character of that Sabhā which held a conspicuous place in the political institutions of the community. This Sabhā, which we may designate as the *Political Council*, had hardly any connection with the village, but was a central aristocratic gathering associated with the king. This latter fact would appear later from the consideration of a large number of passages. A number of passages has been cited by Ludwig to prove the high social status of the members of the Sabhās.

1. Thus, in R.V. VIII. 4. 9, in praise to Indra, the priest says, "Oh Indra, your votaries are comely in appearance, they are rich in horses, chariots and kine; they receive wealth, and go to the Sabhā—the delight of all" (अश्वी रथी सुरूप इन्द्रोमां इदिन्द्र ते सखा। खात्रभाजा वयसा सचते सदा चन्द्रोयाति सभामुप ॥)

2. In X. 71. 10 (सर्वे नन्दन्ति यशसागतेन सभासाहेन सख्या सखायः) Yaśas acts as a friend and gives prominence in the assembly.

3. The third passage, e.g., VII. 1. 4. speaks of the assemblage of the Sujātas. (\* \* \* सुवीरासः शिशुचन्त द्युमन्तः। यत्रा नरः समासते सुजाताः ॥)

4. In A.V. XIX 57.2., in connection with the charm against evil dream, we are told that "Princes come together—presumably to make the assembly complete."

To these, again, the evidence of another passage may be added, i.e., of R.V., I. 91. 20, where Soma is spoken of as giving him who offers oblations, a son skilled in house affairs,



and prominent in the Sabhā and in sacrifice. (सोमो धेनुं सोमो धर्वन्तमाशुं सोमो वीरं कर्मण्यं ददाति । सादन्यं विदधा सभेयं पिबन्नबन्धं यो ददाशदस्मै ।)

While the evidence of these passages cannot be taken to be conclusive, they show at least that the Sabhā was not the rendezvous of men of all circumstances. Thus, *Sabheya*, is rather a term of distinction. We are further told that the rich men went to the Sabhā (VIII. 4. 9). Similarly, R.V., II. 24.13, speaks of *Sabheya Vipras*. (उताग्रिष्ठा षनु शृण्वन्ति वज्रयः सभेयो विप्रो भरते सती धना etc.)

Then, again, we come to a number of passages which prove an intimate connection of the Sabhā with the king rather than supporting Zimmer's contention that the Grāmaṇī presided over the Sabhā. True to say, this latter view is entirely the work of his own imagination. To turn to our point, the view that the king was intimately connected with the *Political Sabhā* is proved by the following passages—

(1) In the Chāndogya Upani, V. 3. 6, we find the Brāhmaṇa Gautama going to meet the king in his Sabhā. (स ह प्रातः सभाग उदेयाय तं होवाच etc.)

(2) Secondly in Chān. VIII. 14. 1, Prajāpati, the Lord of the universe is spoken of as having a Sabhā. (स चात्मा प्रजापतेः सभां वैश्वं प्रपद्ये etc.).

(3) The next important evidence connecting the king with the Sabhā, is furnished by the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa III. 3. 5. 14, where Soma is spoken of as an Emperor or Overlord holding a durbar or court to which under-kings are flocking together. (तस्य राजानः सभागाः)

The evidence of these passages clearly points to the fact, that apart from the various local Sabhās for purposes of meeting,

dice-play or merriment, there was the *Sabhā par excellence*—the political council which by the time of the later hymns and of the *Brāhmaṇas* came to be associated with the king. This *Sabhā* was evolved out of the changing political circumstances. As the king became the principal factor in the political system of the day, his person came to be associated with rich men of position and the elders whose counsel had so much weight and authority with the community. These formed his advising body and he came to be dependent on their advice and counsel. The evolution of this body was similar to that of the Council of Chiefs among the Teutons, to the Senate among the Romans and the Witanage mot among the Anglo-saxons.

The king could not do without the advice or the agreement of the members who spoke and hotly discussed proposals. This is clearly expressed by the tenor and spirit of A.V., VII. 12. which was presumably uttered by a king.

"In accord may *Prajāpati*'s two daughters *Sabhā* and *Samiti* protect me. May every man I meet, respect and aid me. Fair be my words, Oh! my fathers at the meetings.

2. We know thy name, Oh! Conference, thy name is interchange of talk; Let all the company who join the conference agree with me.

3. Of these men seated here, I make the splendour and the lore my own. Indra make me conspicuous in all this gathered company." [A.V., VII. 12. *Trans.* by Griffith].

While the *Sabhā* was the advisory body to the king, it had other functions too, which it continued to wield to the last days of Hindu Political existence. It acted as a Judicial Assembly. The members of the *Sabhā* acted as assessors, and it was presided over in a later age



by the king himself. The reflection of anthropomorphic ideas led people to credit Yama, the king and judge of the departed, with having a Sabhā and a number of Sabhāsadas. A. V., III. 29. 1, speaks of Yama's Sabhāsadas dividing among themselves 1/16 of hopes fulfilled or of pious deeds (of merit) done on the earth. A second passage of the same book, and of the same hymn extolling the Sabhā mentions the Sabhāsadas, while R. V. X. 71. 10 contains the following passage.

i.e. सर्वं नन्दन्ति यशसागतेन सभासाहेन मर्या मर्यायः।

किल्बिषस्युत् पितृषणिर्ह्वयामरं हितो भवति वाजिनाय ॥

The word किल्बिषस्युत् is worthy of note and shows the judicial character of the Sabhā, in as much as partiality or misconduct in a trial, made the Sabhya, a sinner. Again, the judicial capacity of the Sabhāsadas is further proved by the evidence of a

Its Judicial passage of the Vājasaneyī Samhitā. Thus, in Character. connection with Puruṣa-medha, a Sabhācara is sacrificed to Dharma (Vāj. XXX. 6: धर्माय सभाचरम्) or the Lord of Justice, (See also Tait. Br. III. 4. 2. 1.)

NOTE.—Vidatha.—The existence of councils like the Sabhā is also proved by other words. Of these, the Vidatha is of importance. The word, occurs in Rig-Veda in innumerable passages, but its meaning is disputed. Roth took it to mean an assembly for secular or religious ends or for war. Ludwig took it to mean an assembly of Maghavan and Brāhmanas. Zimmer took it in the sense of a smaller assembly than the Sabhā (Alt. Leb. 117). The authors of the Vedic Index (II. 206) entertain doubts in regard to this meaning. There are however passages in which the meaning "assembly" seems appropriate and Whitney has taken it in that sense (A. V., I. 13. 4)

One more passage of the Atharva Veda (XII. 1. 56), may be cited to prove that the Sabhā was distinct from the Samiti and it was an important gathering and not merely the Assembly hall. A. V., VIII. 10. also makes it clear. See Jayaswal Hindu Polity, pp. i. 21

i.e. ये यामा यदरण्यां याः सभा यचि मुमाम् ।

ये यामाः समितयस्तेषु चाह वदेम ते ॥

### III

#### The Samiti

APART from the *Sabhā*, which is thus proved to have been the advisory council of the selected few, there remained another important body—the *Samiti* which was also known by other names, *i.e.*, *Samṅati* or *Samgrāma*. The word is presumably derived from the root *इ* to go or come, along with the associative prefix *sam* which intensifies the act of assemblage. It occurs in innumerable places of the Rig-Veda and Atharva Veda, but references to it are fewer in later Vedic literature. We quote a few of the passages with a view to determine its character.

In many places the meaning is rather obscure. Thus, in R. V. I 95. 8. (सा देवताता समितिर्वभुव) the meaning is entirely metaphorical and hardly gives any clue to finding out its real character. In other passages the meaning is clearer.

Thus, in R.V, IX. 92. 6, the word though occurring in a simile gives us some idea as to its meaning a collective body. In this passage, king Soma is described as entering a vessel as the priest enters the house containing the sacrificial animal and as a king enters the Samiti. (परि सद्येव पशुमान्ति होता राजा न सत्यः समितीरियानः)

Similarly, in another passage (X. 97. 6) in connection with the healing powers of medicinal herbs, as applied by a *Vipra* the author of the hymn refers to the simile of kings coming to the Samiti. (यत्रौषधीः समम्मत राजानः समिताविव। त्वयः स उच्यते भिषग्यक्षोऽहमीवचातनः॥)



Two other passages are more explicit and show us the importance of the Samiti in the body politic.

Thus, in X. 166. 4, a victorious king praying for the destruction of enemies—speaks out “Superior I am, Oh! enemies, and I am come with an all-performing force (घान्ना) and will (take possession) conquer your minds, your actions (*Vrata* व्रतय) and your *Samiti* [अभिभूरहमागमं विश्वकर्मेण घान्ना । आ वक्षितमा वो व्रतमा वोऽहं समितिं ददे ॥]

The evidence of the last hymn of the Rig Veda is more interesting. There, in X. 191. 3, it shows us its real character and the importance of the business transacted there.

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानौ समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।

समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥

The last two *ricas*, of which the quoted one is one, are addressed to the god *Samgñāna*, or *union*. We render these as follows—

“Let the mantra of all be the same, mind and thoughts and deliberation be equal. I thus initiate ye to this unity and with (one mind and thought) oblations pray (to the deity).”

Hymns of the Atharva Veda throw more light on the Samiti and help us in determining its functions and character. Thus, in VII. 12, the Samiti along with the *Sabhā* is described as one of the two daughters of *Prajāpati*. (सभा च मा समितिश्चावतां प्रजापतेर्दुहितरौ संविदानि). The same hymn further describes the *Sabhā* and the *Samiti* as deliberative bodies where the opinion of the many was expressed and carried weight with the community.

The deliberative character of the Samiti is further proved by A.V., VIII. 10, 5 & 6. The whole hymn is addressed to the

glorification of the Virāj. There we hear of the Samiti and of polite and courtly men coming as guests to the Assembly.

Again, in XII. 1. 56, a hymn addressed to Pṛthivī in verse, her praise is said to be sung in all gatherings of men. Of these assemblages the Samiti is mentioned along with other such gatherings, viz., Sabhā and Samgrāma.

Furthermore, in the ninth hymn of the book known as the Vrātya book, we have the following account of origin of the Sabhā the Samiti, Senā and Surā, i.e., "He went away to the people. Sabhā, Senā, Surā and Samiti followed him etc."

Lastly, we come to the evidence of some other passages of the Atharva Veda. Of these, the first, A.V., VI. 88. shows the constitutional importance of the Samiti. After coronation, the priest utters the following in order that the king may be established on his throne and the Samiti be loyal to him.

ध्रुवा द्यौर्ध्रुवा पृथिवी ध्रुवं विश्वमिदं जगत् ।  
 ध्रुवासः पर्वता इमे ध्रुवो राजा विश्वामयम् ॥  
 ध्रुवं ते राजा वरुणो ध्रुवं देवो वृद्धस्यतिः ।  
 ध्रुवं त इन्द्रश्चान्निधं राष्ट्रं धारयतां ध्रुवम् ॥  
 ध्रुवोऽक्षुतः प्र मृणौहि शतृन्कृत्वयतोऽधरान् पादयस्व ।  
 सर्वा दशः संमनसः सध्रीचौर्ध्रुवाय ते समितिः कल्पतामिह ॥

"Firm unmoved do thou destroy thy enemies; make them, those that are thy enemies, fall below thee. Let all the quarters be like-minded and concordant. Let the Samiti here suit thee who art fixed."

The Samiti thus, was an Assembly of the people and accord with it was vitally important to the king. The further importance of the Samiti would be apparent from a consideration



of the hymn A.V., V. 19. In that hymn, a Brahmin priest is anathemising, the turbulence of the Vīṭahavyas and the Śrūjayas who in their pride of power wronged the Bhṛguś, destroyed their cattle and were destroyed in their turn. The Brahmin priest is there uttering a curse on those who destroy the cattle of Brahmins. There he constantly alludes to the catastrophe befalling the *Rāṣṭra* or the kingdom of tyrannical kṣatriya rulers. After enumerating all the horrors which befall these tyrants and their kingdom, he sums up by saying that "the rain of Mitrā-Varuṇa falls not on him who wrongs the priest. The *Samiti* (the popular gathering and hence loyalty) does not submit to him and he wins no friend to do his will." [ नास्मै समितः कल्पते न मित्रं नयते वशम् ].

A consideration of the evidence furnished by the passages cited above enables us to come to the following conclusion as regards the character of the *Samiti*.

(1) That it was a gathering of the whole folk of the community.

(2) It was the assembly of the *Rāṣṭra*.

(3) That it had a close connection with the Royal person and met on all important occasions like Royal coronation, in times of war—or national calamity. Probably, this *Samiti* was convened to elect and accept the king or to approve of his acts.

Something more remains yet to be said about the *Samiti*.

Its connection with *Saṃgrāma*. It is significant to note that about all our Indian commentators have taken the word

*Samiti* to mean war or battle-array. Thus, Sāyaṇa translates the word *Samiti* by युद्ध or संग्राम e.g. समितौ—संग्रामे (R V., X. 97.); समितिः—संग्रन्ति संगच्छन्ते युद्धाय चत्वेति संग्रामः (Com. on VII. 12.).

Yāska too, (I. ch. II) sometimes assigns to this word the meaning of battle (रणः...समितिः...संग्रामनामानि) though elsewhere,

he attaches the meaning of *Yagña*. (Bom. Ed. pp. 11.). The same idea of war is found in classical literature (*See* Amara. II. 8. 106) and in the *Mahābhārata* the gathering of princes on Yudhisṭhira's Rājasūya is called a *Samiti*.

Furthermore, it is curious to note in the hymn on the praise of the Earth (A.V. XII. 1) that the word stands side by side with the word *Samgrāma*, a word, which like the *Samiti* originally meant a gathering (e.g. of villages) but came to mean war in classical literature.

From these evidences, we may further come to the conclusion that probably the word *Samiti* was also applied to mean originally a war-array of the tribesmen. This view seems to gain ground from the comparative study of similar institutions in the early history of other communities. Its early military character may be favourably compared with that of other such assemblies in ancient History.

The freemen of the Homeric age assembled in military array, and decided important questions

Parallels from the history of other countries.

(Sidgewick P. 34—36). In the case of the Teutonic tribes, we have fuller accounts in the pages of Tacitus, where we are told that the armed freemen of the tribe assembled in a gathering and with them rested the real decision of peace and war. "If they disapproved" says Tacitus "they indicated their rejection by murmurs and groans. If they approved they clashed their spears." (Tacitus. *Germania*. 11.)

Likewise, in the case of the Romans, the Assembly was modelled on a military organisation, and thus arose the *Comitia Centuriata*, in which men retained the same place and position as in the army.



Nothing more can be gathered of the Samiti, except that, it was an assembly of freemen and had a recognized position in the body-politic. The later Samhitās give us no information and as we proceed onwards, the word Samiti is not mentioned at all. This may be due to the fact that during the later stages of development, when the states grew larger, and the power of

Decay of the Samiti. kings became fully established, the Samiti disappeared as an effective part of the administrative machinery. It was too large to be handled and at the same time the freemen found more interest in their local affairs rather than in those of the tribe. These came to be entrusted into the hands of the king, his ministers and the aristocratic Sabhā.

#### IV

### Imperialism and Conquest

THIS simple political ideal of the king elected by the people and governing according to their wishes however did not last long. Probably, the more recent hymns of the Rig-Veda saw the passing away of this *regime*. Free political institutions survived only in some localities, especially in the areas peopled by the so-called *Vrātyas*; Elsewhere, as in the central region, the complexities of social and political evolution, together with the influence of rising sacerdotalism led to a gradual political decay though masked by the recognition and retention of older forms and formulae. In other regions, especially in the East where the Aryan element became less and less, the ruling families easily turned themselves into irresponsible autocrats.

Imperialism and lust for conquest made itself felt day by day. The tribal ruler looked to war and conquest as the sources of his own power and yearned after a paramount position, beyond the limit of his own tribe. Partly goaded by greed and avarice, partly actuated by a desire for pre-eminence among equals and partly impelled by the ambition of freeing himself from the popular control, the king of the tribe launched into a career of conquest. The influence of this latter was immense and told heavily on the social and political fabric.



We find not only the germs of this imperialistic idea in the Rig-Vedic hymns but a clear evidence of the struggle for over-lordship. Details are lacking, but the hymns contain a number of words and facts, which clearly speak of higher types of sovereign power, for which the princes and chiefs fought. Of such, we have the word *Ekarāja* (Rig-Veda VIII. 37. 3) both in the Rig-Veda and in the Atharva, which meant nothing but a "sole ruler" dominating over a vast area. We have next the word *Samrāj* which meant according to the Brāhmaṇas, a higher type of sovereignty than that exercised by the ordinary king. As a result of the reflection of the anthropomorphic idea, this word is even applied to some of the divine rulers. Varuṇa especially is called a *Samrāt* more than once (R. V. III. 55. 7, 56—5; IV. 21. 1; VI. 27. 8; VIII. 19. 32.) The same word, as we shall see later on, occurs in the Vājasaneyī and the other Samhitās, (V, 32, XIII. 25, XX. 5).

In addition to this, we have another word, e.g. *Adhirāj* which in later literature, undoubtedly meant a suzerain ruler of higher authority. It occurs in the Rig-Veda (X. 128. 9) where the speaker claims higher sovereign power (वसवो रुद्रा आदित्या उपरिस्पृशं मोघं यत्तारमधिराजमक्रन्). The same word occurs, in the Atharva Veda (VI. 98. 1, IX. 10. 24), and in the Yajus Samhitās (Taitt. Sam.—II. 4. 14. 2; Maitrā. Sam. IV. 12. 3; Kāt. Sam.—VIII. 17.).

Apart from the mention of such words, we have the clearer evidence of the hymns themselves. From these we know of conquerors like Trasadasya, Daivavāta, Divodāsa, or Sudās who all tried to establish their authority over the neighbouring clans and tribes even in the earlier period.

Along with this Imperialism, came the growing influence of Sacerdotalism and its reaction on social and political development. The conquerors trusted in their military prowess but for a moral sanction of their deeds and a formal recognition, they turned to the priesthood the votaries of the divine powers. Great sacrifices were instituted or their character modified to suit the occasion. Of these, we have the Rājasūya which though not alluded to in the Rig-Veda, is mentioned in the Atharva, Yajus and the other Samhitās, the Aśvamedha which is clearly alluded to by the hymns of the Rig-Veda and a number of other such. We shall have occasion to discuss these in detail very soon.

The Sacrifices.





### The Brahmanic Evidence, New Kingdoms

AS we pass on gradually to the close of the Vedic Age, we find in the later Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas a clear evidence of a new phase of political evolution. Strictly speaking, there is no clear line of demarcation, separating the age of the Rik hymns from that of the later Samhitās or the Brāhmaṇas, and to speak of the age of hymns in contra-distinction to that of the Brāhmaṇas, will be something un-scientific. The Brāhmaṇas show but a continuity of development and contain very old materials, sometimes older than the hymns themselves.

From the evidence of the Brāhmaṇas, we know that the social fabric underwent momentous changes as the result of the accelerated working of those forces, the germs of which existed in the oldest period. At the same, time there was the fast modification of the political system, owing to the modification of the environment and the introduction of new factors therefrom. The importance of this age was remarkable. It was an epoch of conflicts and compromises that marked the transition from a simpler to a complex life. At the same time, political integration came through the channel of religion and in it were evolved those ideas and principles, which influenced the subsequent political development of the country but too deeply.

Momentous changes.



Gradually, the Aryans spread over a vast plain, the topography of which exerted an influence on their institutions and ideals. During their sojourn in the narrow cut-up valleys of the Punjab, the tribal spirit had subsisted but all this changed with the advance east-ward. The rich plain furnished an extensive field for expansion and the narrower ideals passed away. The various sections marched continually forward, till the spirit of movement died down into a settled life, but at the same time intensified the desire for imperial hegemony and conquest.

Then there were social changes of great importance. The germs of class distinction or those of race among the ruling sections developed into the system of caste and this was fostered by the desire for the preservation of racial purity and identity. In the midst of diverse peoples whom the conquerors found, this desire led to the formation of social grades with more or less clearly defined socio-economic duties assigned to each, the whole forming a federated social organisation. The ruling race, Brāhmanas and the Kṣatriyas asserted their supremacy over the others, but they had to yield to the priesthood deriving importance from their connection with the sacrificial art which exercised so great an influence on the minds of a primitive people. This success was not attained easily, but before it was recognised the prince and the priest fought and only after a bitter struggle the former was worsted. The mass of the peaceful Viś formed a separate order or caste, the ranks of the Śūdra were strengthened by the addition of new peoples, assimilated into the fold of Aryan society. Many such new peoples received a recognized place in Aryan society and were regarded as mixed castes.

It is not the place for dilating upon these in detail, but it is clear that the Brāhmaṇa age saw the final recognition of those principles which have influenced the later social evolution of India. All the castes came to be associated with different duties and occupations. The common privileges of the three higher castes came to be recognized, the social excellence of the Brāhmaṇa was admitted, the position of the mixed castes or those by adoption, was regulated and the mutual relation between the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya laid down. The origin of caste led to speculations which we find embodied in the Brāhmaṇas.

Racial expansion led to racial contacts, which were also fraught with momentous changes. In course of their eastern expansion, the Aryans met various peoples whose influence on them was undoubtedly great. The history of these races is lost and we have no means of studying their influence properly. But it meets the eye of every historian, that the eastern section of Aryan dom came to be distinguished by its peculiar excellence in intellectual life and a new type of political evolution. The East, especially the Kośala-Videha region, distinguished itself by its philosophy and its paternal imperialistic ideal. It produced its philosopher kings the Janakas, its sages like Yājñavalkya, Kapila and Āsuri, and in a later age, its Buddha, Mahāvira and Pārśvanātha and the other formulators of the intellectual and moral ideals of the Vṛātya Aryan.

With social changes, religion (if we are permitted to call it a religion) changed its character. Its chief interest centred round sacrifice and a maze of complicated rituals and rites. The age of mere humanistic

Changes in the character of Religion.



ideas and aspirations was gone. The place of child-like faith in the gods and their bounty was taken by a desire to understand the root-causes of Nature's great phenomena, the eternal changes and modifications, the sufferings and sorrows of man, the good and evils of human actions, the cravings for joy in life and the means of attaining them. The Organic Theory gained ground (as we may see from the ideas in the *Puruṣa-sūkta*) and the universe was regarded an organic whole, with a unity of purpose. The idea of universal order influenced this religion and sacrifice became its heart and soul. Everything was supposed to arise out of sacrifice, even the universal system—the races of men—the diversities of creation. Everything was interpreted in terms of the sacrifice. This sacrificial religion too marked a transition from simple faith in the gods to an effort for higher self-realisation through purity and intellectual excellence—through knowledge of the retribution of Karma, e.g. good and evil actions.

The sacrificial religion was accompanied by a complication of the sacrificial art, and the pre-eminence of the sacrificial priests. Even in politics, the influence of the latter was immense. From simple priests they rose to be the mediators between the king and the people, and between their rulers and those of the great universal system—the *devas*.

As the centre of political activity fast shifted to the East, the Madhyadeśa, for a time became the homeland of political activity and intellectual excellence. It became also the cradle of the sacrificial religion. It was in this region that a number of states with considerable territories were formed fringed by a number of outer states in the north, east, west and south. Gradually as we shall see, the East rose into prominence

These states arose mostly out of the older tribes and communities. In some cases, new states were formed by the settlement of clans and sections in the outer fringe area. But for the most part, these states arose with the re-grouping or re-arrangement of the old clans and sections. Arising partly through conquest and partly through association and assimilation, these new states were ruled, either by the old dynasties, or septs of the old ones who had proved their prowess over their kinsmen.

Of the states the following are worthy of mention :—

(a) In the central region—

- (1) Kuru—modern district of Sirhind, with capital at Āsandīvant or Hastināpura.
- (2) Pañcāla—in the region of modern Rohilkhand.
- (3) Matsya—in the region of modern Jaypur.
- (4) Uśīnara—near the Kuru Country.

In the North—

- (5) Kośala—in the region of Oudh and Fyzabad.

In the East—

- (6) Kāśī—round the sacred city of Bārāṇasī.
- (7) Videha—in modern North Eastern Behar.
- (8) Aṅga—near modern Bhagulpur.
- (9) Magadha—South Behar.

In the South—

- (10) Cedi—in modern Bundelkund.
- (11) Śātvasas (or the Yadava confederation).
- (12) Vidarbha—near the Narmadā region.



In the North-west, there were the Uttara-Kuru, Uttara-Madra, Gandhāra, Kekaya, and a number of other states which maintained their old position and order. The Ambaṣṭhyas lay probably to the region of the Southern Indus.

*The Kingdom of the Kurus*—The most famous of such kingdoms was that of the Kurus which is first mentioned in the Atharva Veda, which sings the praise of Parikṣit Kauravya. Next, in the Epic literature, we find the prominence of the Kauravas who are described as Bhāratas or Pauravas. They were Pauravas being descended from Puru the youngest son of Yayāti. They were also Bhāratas, being descended from Bharata Dauṣṇanti, who gave his name to the ruling tribe and with their growing importance, to the whole country now known as India.

According to a tradition recorded in the 94th Chapter of the *Ādi-Parvan*, King Saṃvarana of the Puru line  
Rise of the Kurus.  
 son of Rkṣi was defeated by his Pañcāla scions and had to fly to the hilly region of the Indus. With the help of Vaśiṣṭha's prayers he gained success again, retrieved his lost fortune and his son Kuru founded a royal line in the celebrated Kurukṣetra. Of his many sons, were Parikṣit, (who had three sons *viz.* Kakṣasena, Ugrasena and Citrasena) and Janamejaya one of whose sons was Dhṛtarāṣṭra. The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were five and in his line arose Pratīpa and others. Pratīpa's three sons were Devāpi, Śāntanu and Bāhlika. This brings us to the events leading to the great war. After Śāntanu, we have as is well-known, Vicitravīrya who had two sons *e.g.*, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu, the last two giving birth to the heroes of the Bhārata war. Yudhiṣṭhira was followed by Parikṣit, and his successor was Janamejaya Pārikṣita.

The two dynastic lists (*i.e.* ch. 94 and 95) of the *Adi* vary considerably and there is wide divergence as to the order of princes or their relation to each other. But this does not prove that the names are imaginary since many of these names of the *Puru* or *Kuru* princes as recorded in the *Epic*, occur in *Vedic* literature. Thus, we have *Purūravas* Aila the founder of the

Kuru Princes in the Lunar race (R. V., X. 95; Śat. Br. XI. 5. 1. 1.), *Rigveda*.  
*Āyu* (R. V. I. 53. 10, and II. 14. 7), *Yajāti*  
*Nahūṣya* (R. V. I. 31. 17; X. 63. 1), *Pūru* (R. V., VII. 8. 4; 18, 13.), *Bharata* *Dauṣṇanti* (Śat. Br. XIII. 5. 4. 11-12), *Ajāmīdha* (R. V. IV. 44. 6), *Ṛkṣa* (R. V., VIII. 68. 15), *Kuru*, *Uccaiṣravas* (J. U. Br. III. 29), *Pratīpa* *Prātisūtvara* (A. V., XX. 129. 2), *Bālḥika* *Prātīpiya* (Śat. Br. XII. 9. 3. 3.), *Śāntanu* (R. V., X. 98), *Dhṛarāṣṭra* *Vaicitravīrya* (Kāt. Sam. X. 6.), *Parīkṣita* *Kauravya* (A. V., XX. 127-7 & 10) etc.

The *paurāṇika* lists however mention two *Parīkṣits*, one being the son of *Kuru* (and father of *Kakṣasena*, *Ugrasena* and *Śrutasena*) while the other flourished after the great *Bhārata* Battle. It is difficult to indentify the *Parīkṣit* of the *Atharva Veda* with either of the *Epic* kings of the same name. Probably, the second *Parīkṣit* has more claims to be identified with the *Vedic* *Parīkṣit*.\*

The *Kurus*, both according to *Vedic* and *Epic* evidence, were *Pauravas* as well as *Bhāratas*. They are very prominent in the *Brāhmaṇa* literature. This was due to the fact that in course of time, the line of *Kuru* became the most prominent to the exclusion of the other branches of the *Pauravas* who had

\* For arguments as to the identification, date and the early history of the *Parīkṣitas* see H. C. Roy Chowdhury "Political History of India from the Accession of *Parīkṣit* to the Coronation of *Bimbisāra*. Pp. 1-7.



once dominated over the other sections. European scholars see in the Kurus (*see* Oldenberg—Buddha, pp. 409—10) a fusion of the Tr̥tsus and Bharatas. But, if we believe in the Paurāṇic evidence and try to interpret the Vedic evidence in terms of the Paurāṇic, we find it clear that the Tr̥tsus and Bharatas were close kinsmen of the tribe or sept which came to be known as the Kurus<sup>\*</sup>

According to the Epic (I. 109 ch.), the Kuru kingdom lay between the Dr̥ṣadvatī and the Gaṅgā and comprised three districts e.g., Kuru, Kuru-jāṅgala and Kurukṣetra. According to the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka tradition, it was bounded by the Khāṇḍava forest on the south, the Tūrghna on the north and the Parīṇah on the west. The kingdom corresponded roughly speaking, to the modern Sirhind district (V I, I. 169—70) and was watered by the rivers Dr̥ṣadvatī Sarasvatī, Kauṣikī, Aruṇā, Apayā and also by the Pastyā according to Pischel (V. I, I. 170). There was also the lake Śaryāṇāvant, otherwise known as the Anyataḥ-plakṣā.

The Bhāratas of the Kuru line figure prominently in the Brāhmaṇa literature as the patrons of the sacred ritual, as well as great conquerors. Their greatness as the champions of orthodoxy is already hinted at in the Rig-Veda. The goddess

\* Sudās himself was undoubtedly a Bhārata. In Vasiṣṭha's hymn, he is described as the *naptā* of Devabhata, while we find in R V. (III. 23—2), Devaśravas and Devavāta described as Bharatas. The Tr̥tsus and Bharatas were probably different sections of the same family. Sudās, a scion of the Pāñcālā section became prominent for a time, but some time afterwards, this supremacy passed to the descendants of Kuru. From the accession to power of this rising section, the federated clans or tribes became known as the Kurus. That they were intimately connected in this way and that the different sections retained their identity to some extent is seen from the formula which was used in proclaiming the king-elect to the Bhārata people. See Vedic Index, II. p. 96.

Bhāratī seems to have been the presiding deity of the Bharatas, who were also connected with the sacred Sarasvatī.

Of the Bhārata conquerors, we find the names of many in the Brāhmaṇas. We find in the Śatapatha, that Bharata Dauḥṣanti, performed the Aśvamedha and he was inaugurated to higher kingship by Dīrghatamas Māmateya. Another, Śatānīka Sātrājita was consecrated by Somaśuśman Vājaratnāyana (See Ait. Br. VIII. 21—23, and Śat. Br. XIII 5 4).

While we get but little details about the early Kurus, the history of line from Parīkṣita becomes more clear. The Bhārata war round which centres the chief interest of the Epic narrative, is hardly mentioned in the later Vedic literature. But there are hints pointing to such an event and the absence of details about the war may be attributed to the fact that the war was but a struggle between two sections of the ruling race of the Kurus, one of which gained the upper hand with the help of the Pāṇcālas.

Parīkṣita was followed by Janamejaya, who figures in the Brāhmaṇas (Ait. Br. VIIX 34 and VIII. 21, Śat. Br. XIII. 5. 4 ; XI. 5. 5 13 ), as a great conqueror. He performed two horse-sacrifices, one with the help of the priest Indrota Daivāpi Śaunaka and another with Tura Kāvaseya as priest. His capital was the rich city of Āsandivant probably the same as Hastināpur. He conquered Takṣasilā and tried to exterminate the Takṣas, to avenge the death of his father at their hands and this probably found itself converted in mythical language into the celebrated Snake-sacrifice.

According to a Paurāṇic and Epic tradition, he came into conflict with the Brāhmaṇas headed by Vaisampāyana. According



to the account in the Matsya-purāṇa, the king had to abdicate and his son succeeded him but according to the Vāyu Purāṇa, the king perished as the result of the curse of the Brāhmaṇas. We have the repetition of this story in many of the later works. (See Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra, Ch. on *Indriya-jaya* and Kāmandaka. I. commentary of Śaṅkarārya.)

Janamejaya and his three brothers Bhimasena, Ugrasena and Śrutasena, seem to have been well-known to the Brāhmaṇa writers, and we have traditions about their horse-sacrifice (Śatap. Br. XIII. 5. 4. 3 and Sāṅkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra—XVI. 9. 7.) According to the Epic, Kakṣasena was one of his brothers. Next in succession to Janamejaya, according to the Purāṇas (Viṣṇu IV. 21.), were Śātānika, Aśvamedha, Adhisimākṣṇa, and Nicakṣu in whose reign the capital was transferred to Kauśāmbi. Probably twenty-fifth in descent from this prince was Kṣemaka, with whom the line of Kauśāmbi Kurus ended.

All of these names recorded in the Purāṇas do not occur in the Vedic literature. On the other hand, we find some new names of Kuru princes like Abhipratārin Kākṣaseni, Vṛddhadyumna Abhipratāriṇa and his son Rathagṛtsa.

There is reason for believing that in course of time the Kuru kingdom was divided into parts. For, in addition to the Kauśāmbi branch, there was probably another line which continued to rule at Indraprastha, and this is testified to by Buddhist tradition which speaks of princes of the Yudhiṭṭhila gotra ruling at Indrapattha. The Kauśāmbi princes were also Bhāratas.

The decline of the Kurus seems to be hinted at in the later Vedic literature. The Aitareya contains the prophecy of the expulsion of the Kurus and in the Chāndogya (I. 10), we hear

of the plight of the Kuru country owing to an invasion of locusts. Again, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (Br. up. III. 4.), we find that the sophists of the day discussed the question as to "whither the *Pārikṣitas* were gone," and this points to the decline of the Kurus.

*The kingdom of Pañcāla.*—[The land of the five tribes?] It was a kingdom, which comprised a large part of modern Rohilkhand, including the districts of Badoun, and Farrakabad. The *Pañcālas* seem to have evolved out of the Vedic *Krivis*, together with the fusion of the *Turvaśas* (whose contingent accompanied the sacrificial horse of Śoṇa *Sāstrāsāha* father of Koka Śat. XIII. 5. 4. 15 & 16), some of the *Sṛñjayas*, and the *Keśins*. That they comprised five distinct sections, is admitted by the *Purāṇas* and we are further told that the line of *Turvasu* being ended, the *Turvasus* merged with the *Bharatas*, probably the *Pañcālas*. In the Epic, the *Somakas* and *Sṛñjayas* are associated with *Drupada*. They were very intimately connected with the Kurus and this is confirmed by *Paurāṇika* evidence. According to these, the *Pañcālas* were *Bhāratas* and *Kauravas*, and were descended from *Haryaśva* a successor of *Ajāmīḍha*. According to *Brāhmanic* evidence, the association of the Kurus and the *Pañcālas* is more intimate and there is some hint even, as to their forming one confederation. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* speaks of kings of the *Kuru-Pañcālas*. Subsequently, they seem to have been dissociated from each other, but a relation of close intimacy and alliance remained. The Epic evidence shows this close relationship, though, it speaks of a Kuru attack on the *Pañcālas* (e.g. the attack of *Droṇa* and his *Kaurava* disciples and their attack on *Drupada*) ending in a partition of the *Pañcāla* kingdom. The division of the *Pañcāla* kingdom is



supported by the Purāṇas. The Pāṇcālas play a prominent part in the present Epic version of the great war and a Pāṇcāla prince led the armies opposed to that of the Kauravas. The Pāṇcāla country remained the stronghold of orthodox culture and some of its princes like Pravāhaṇa Jaivali distinguished themselves by their intellectual excellence. The Brāhmaṇa literature speaks of the excellence of the Brāhmaṇas of Pāṇcāla and of conquering Pāṇcāla rulers like Durmukha. (Ait. Br. VIII.).

*Kingdom of Uśīnara*.—It lay, probably, to the north or rather north-west of the Central region. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, they are found to live in the central region along with the Vaśas. In the Kauṣītaki. Up., they are also associated with the Kurus and the Vaśas (IV. 1), though the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa regarded them as northerners. The mention of Uśīnara rulers in the Rig-veda has already been stated. According to the Purāṇic evidence, they were a branch of the Ānavas, being descended from Anu. There were evidently two branches, one settling in the Punjab (identical with the Seboi of the Greeks) and the other somewhere further to the East.

*The Vaśas*.—They were rather an unimportant people connected with the Uśīnaras. They lived in the Central region where they are located by the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VIII. 14.)

*Kingdom of the Salvas or Śālvas*.—It also lay close to the Kuru country. It is more than once mentioned in the Brāhmaṇa literature. A Salva king Yaugandhari is mentioned in the Mantrapāṭha as leading his chariots on to the banks of the Yamunā. In the Epic (Virat. I. 12), the Śālvas and Yugandhara are mentioned together on the fringe of the Kuru realm. They appear as prominent fighters on the side of Duryodhana.

*Kingdom of the Śrñjayas.*—The kingdom of the Śrñjayas lay to the south of the Dṛṣadvatī. They were very closely allied to the Kurus and as such they are mentioned in the Rig-Veda. Some of the Śrñjaya princes like Daivavāta, or Sahadeva were conquerors of the earliest period. Prastoka was another Śrñjaya king of eminence. But the importance of the Śrñjayas ended with Sāhadevya. The Brāhmaṇas speak of their close connection with the Kurus. In the Śatapatha, Devabhāga Śrautārṣa was the Purohita of the Kurus and Śrñjayas. According to the same Brāhmaṇa, the people of the locality (Śat. Br. XII. 9. 3. 1.) drove out Duṣṭa-rītu Paumsāyana one of their kings from the hereditary "monarchy of ten generations," together with Revottaras Pāṭava Cakra Sthapati probably his minister.

*Kingdom of the Matsyas.*—As stated already, the Matsyas are mentioned in the Rig Veda. Probably, they occupied the region of Eastern Rajputana i.e., Alwar, Jaipur and Bharatpur. In the Śatapatha, Dhvasan Dvaitavana a Matsya king is mentioned as having performed Aśvamedha. (Śat. Br. XIII. 5. 4. 9.). The Matsyas played a prominent part in the great war.

*Kingdom of the Śūrasenas.*—It was established round the district of Mathurā. The Śūrasenas were great fighters and claimed kinship with the Yādavas. (See Pargiter. I. H. T. p. 170). They are prominently mentioned in the Epic, but very little is known about them from the Brāhmaṇa literature.

*Kingdom of the Cedis.*—It probably comprised the western districts of Bundelkhand. The Cedis were an old tribe mentioned as early as the Rig Vedic hymns. According to the Purāṇas, the rulers of Cedi kingdom were descended from a son of Kuru. Vasu, a prince fourth in succession from the last



named displaced the Yādavas and conquered the kingdom of Cedi. The Vāsava kings extended their influence over Magadha Karuṣa and some other kingdoms. In the days of the great war, the Cedi princes had attained prominence. Caidya Śiśupāla lost his life on the eve of Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya, as the result of a struggle with Śrīkṛṣṇa the Yādava elder and a renowned champion of freedom, to whom the *arghya* had been offered.

*The Sātvatas (Yādava).*—To the south of the Central region, there was the Confederation of the Yādavas. From the Vedic and Brāhmaṇic evidence, the Yādavas seem to have been driven out from the north by the Bhāratas and also by the Vāsavas of the Cedi Kingdom, according to the Paurāṇic evidence. Consequently, they migrated south from their original seat Mathurā. The Aitareya Br. places them in the south and the Śatapatha Br. contains the tradition of Bharata's defeat of the Yādavas and his carrying away of their Aśvamedha horses. The Sātvatas were divided into many septs and sections and some of their rulers had the title of Bhoja.

*Vidarbha.*—Perhaps allied to the Bhojas were the rulers of Vidarbha. The Aitareya Br. mentions a king Bhīma Vaidarbha.

#### THE KINGDOMS OF THE WEST:—

*Kekaya.*—The kingdom of Kekaya lay between the Kab river and the Beas. According to Paurāṇic evidence, the ruler of this country belonged to the Ānava family. Kekaya king Aśvapati attained celebrity as a philosopher according to the Śatapatha Br. (X. 61. 2) and the Chāṇa Up. (V. 11. 4), he was approached by a number of Brāhṃ scholars to have their doubts solved and he boasted of his being free from misers, drunkards, thieves or adulterers.

In the Rāmāyana, we find a King Aśvapati who was the ather in-law of Daśaratha and the maternal grand-father of Bharata. His son was Judhājit who called upon Rāma to conquer Takṣa and Puṣkala which was then in the hands of Gandharvas. According to the Rāmāyaṇic evidence, the capital of the Kekaya Kingdom was Rājagṛha Girivraja (II. 67 and 68).

*Madra.*—This kingdom was situated in the north central region of the Punjab, probably near the district of Sialkot. Very little of Madra is known through the Brāhmaṇa literature except that it was the native-land of sages like Kāpya Patañjala, teacher of Uddālaka Āruṇi (Br. up III. 7. 1). The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa speaks of the country of Uttara Madras, which was beyond the Himālayas (*Paraṇa Himavantaṃ*).

The Madras and their king Śalya, figure prominently in the Great Epic. Śalya fought on the side of the Kauravas and was killed. In the Karna-parva, we find Karna vehemently denouncing the manners and customs of the Madra people, fond of wine, beef and onions. Their women are described as having been without any restraint and without any moral sense. The capital of the Madra kingdom was Śākala, beyond the river Śatadru. According to the Brāhmaṇas, the Uttara Madras seem to have retained a non-monarchical constitution.

*Gandhāra.*—The kingdom of Gandhāra comprised some of the extreme north-western districts of the Punjab round Peshwar. As already mentioned, it was a wool-growing region the people of which was rather held in contempt by the men of the Central region. In the Chāndogya Up. (VI. 14), Uddālaka Āruṇi, mentions Gandhāra as an unknown region situated at a great distance. The evidence of the Śatapatha Br. (XI. 4. 1. 1) Purāṇ of the Kauṣītaki Br. (VII. 6) shows that it was in those of K



days a seat of great cultural activity frequented by Brāhmaṇa students. Takṣaśilā later on become a great educational centre, as is proved by the evidence of the Jātakas and other later works. The Gandhāra country included also the great city of Puskalāvati, of which we find mention in the Rāmāyaṇa and in the fragments of Greek travellers. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII. 34) mentions a prince Nagnajit Gandhāra who learned the use of substitutes for the drinking of Soma from Babbru Daivavṛddha.

#### KINGDOMS OF THE EAST—

*The Kingdom of Kāśi.*—Kāśi became a kingdom with a considerable territory. By the time of the Upaniṣads, many of its kings had attained celebrity. According to the Śat. Br. one of the Kāśi kings Dhṛtarāṣṭra was defeated by the Bhārata Sātrājita Śātānika. Ajātaśatru was another Kāśi king. Another Bhadrasena Ajātaśatrava was a contemporary of Uddālaka. Kāśya Jaivali was another famous king mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas and in the Upaniṣad literature. Where the Kāśis originated or how they separated is not yet clear. The Purāṇas connect the Kāśi dynasty with the Ailas, king Kaśa, the founder of the line being descended from a brother of Nahusa or Ayu. At the same time, they regard the Kāśi kings as descendents of the Aikṣākas in the female line through the daughter of Bāhu the father of Sagara. The Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads mention Kāśi kings like Dhṛtarāṣṭra (a Bharata) defeated by Śātānika Sātrājita, Ajatasatru a philosopher king engaged in disputes with opponents like Gārgya Bālāki and some of his successors like Ajātaśatrava. Of the names in the king-lists of the Purāṇas, nothing is known in the Vedic literature. In some passages we seem to have a clear reference to one Purohita

acting for the Kāśī, Kośala and Videha regions and the Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra mentions the Kāśīs and the Videhas together, while in the Gopatha Br. the Kāśīs are mentioned along with the Kośalas.

*Kośala*—Became a separate political entity very early. The state owed its origin to an Aikṣāka settlement in the reigion of modern Oudh. The antiquity of the Aikṣāka rulers is apparent from the repeated mention of Aikṣāka princes even in the Rig-Vedic hymns. As we have seen, the names of Vadlīryaśva, Purukutsa, and Trasadasyu all occur in the Purāṇas. Their lack of mention in the Brāhmaṇas was probably due to their separation from the region in which the religious literature of the Brāhmaṇas developed. It is only in the Rāmāyaṇa, that we find an early mention of Ayodhyā. The founders of Kośala seem to have been that branch which settled in the north-Eastern region and the Videhas are described as the descendants of Kośalas who under Māthava Videha (Sat. Br. I. 4. 1.) crossed the Sudānīrā and laid the foundation of Videha. The connection of Kośala and Videha is proved by the Rāmāyaṇic tradition of Rāma's marriage with Janaka's daughter. The connection of the Videhas and the Kāśīs with the Kośalas is also repeatedly mentioned in the later Vedic literature. At least one of the Kośala kings, Para Āṭṭāra Hairanyanābha is described in the Brāhmaṇas as performing the Aśvamedha. Many of the Kośala princes mentioned in the Purāṇas find place in the Vedic literature e.g. :—*Mandhātṛ Yauvanāśva*.—(Go. Br. I. 2. 10.), *Purukutsa*.—(See pp. 76 mentioned in the Rig-Veda), *Trasadasyu*.—(R. V., IV. 38. 1. ; VII 19, etc.), *Tryarūṇa*.—(R. V., V. 27. figuring as a great giver), *Triśanku*.—(mentioned in the Taittirīya Up 1. 10. 1.), *Hariscandra*.—(Aikṣāka mentioned in the Aitareya



Brāhmaṇa in connection with the story of Sunahśepha's attempted sacrifice), *Rohita*.—son of Hariscandra.—(See Ait. Br. VII. 13.). *Bhagtrathi*.—(Aitśāka mentioned in the Jaiminiya Up. Brāhmaṇa IV. 6. 1. 2), *Ambarīṣa*.—(mentioned in the Rig-Veda 1. 100. 17), *Ṛtuparna*.—(Baudhāyana Śr. Sūtra XX. 12.) *Hiranyānabha Kauśalya*.—(mentioned in Praśna Up. VI. 1 and Sān. Śr. Sū. XVI. 9 13), and *Para Ātmana Hairanyanabha* (mentioned in the Śatapatha Br. XIII. 5. 4. 4).—See H. C. Roy-Chowdhury, p. 50.

*The Kingdom of Videha*.—Videha was a kingdom to the east of Kośala and on the other side of the Sadānirā. It corresponded to modern Trihut. The Videhas are closely associated with the Kośalas and occasionally with the Kāśis. Their culture was derived from the Brahmins of the West and subsequent to that of Kośala. The Śat Br. attributes the establishment of the kingdom to Videgha Mātṛhava. The three seem to have been very closely associated as would appear from the Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra passage which speaks of one Jala Jātukarṇya as being the priest of the three. The ruling tribe in Videha who probably gained their name from the local people, were Aikṣākas of Kośala. The Purāṇas make them the descendants of Nimi son of Ikṣāku and the same account speaking of a sacrifice lasting for a thousand years, clearly hints at the late settlement of the Videhas. The name Nimi probably occurs in the Pañcaviṃśa Br. which mentions Nami Sāpya a Videha king. Later on, we hear of the fame of the rulers bearing the title of Janaka under whom Videha became a great centre of culture.

*The Kingdom of Aṅga*.—Aṅga also became a kingdom. In the Aitareya list of conquerors, Aṅga Vairocana is prominently mentioned. (Ait. VIII. 35).

## Politics and Ritualism

WHEN we pass on from the history of these states to a consideration of the evolution of political life described in the Brāhmaṇas, the first thing that meets our eyes is the commixture of religion and politics. Social complexities had changed the mentality and ideals of the people and while a desire for an orderly and regulated life dominated the minds of men, they became more and more alive to the ever-presence of agencies which though beyond the control of men, influenced their lives deeply.

As the primitive mind is alway swayed by fear, it invokes the blessing of the gods and tries to appease their anger. Gradually, formalities and practices are introduced to safeguard divine sanction for all acts and with it is evolved a code of ritual, which not only confines itself to the acts of the individual but embraces the actions of the community as a whole. Such a commixture of politics and religion is almost universal, and everywhere it marks the transition from primitive ideas of cosmology to a rational explanation of the relation of the forces and factors regulating the phenomenal world. India was not an exception to the general rule. Here, too, every act of social life was dominated by such beliefs and ideas. Politics came to be influenced by this ritual and the significance of political acts and functions changed. They came to be interpreted in terms of the ideas relating to the cosmical world and politics was dominated by ritualism.



Religion and ritualism overshadowed everything. The maze of ritual comprised diverse elements. It included rites for the propitiation of the gods, for securing to the governing authority a moral sanction and for regulating the relation between the upholder of law and order and his subjects. Political integration came through the channel of religion and ritualistic observances. As the universe was an organic whole, so in its imitation different duties and functions were attached to the various elements of the body-politic. Simultaneously, the relations between the gods, the king, the priest-hood and the classes of the population were defined and all these were welded together and their correlation defined. It is difficult to separate the line of political evolution from amidst much that is too indefinite for generalisation unless we study the religious aspect of politics, and when that is done, it will be possible to find out the leading features of the type of evolution which characterised the development of that age.

As the result of these influences, the aim and object of political life changed. Every social and political act came to have a close connection with the cosmica higher forces and factors. All authority was supposed to flow from the divine guardians of the universe. The king as the upholder of order was regarded as the counterpart of the gods and as his authority and functions partook of the nature of the former, a moral sanction for the acts and activities of the king was required. The purely human aspect of life was thus masked by other factors. The king's authority thus no longer depended on the people, but it was made to depend on the sanction of the higher universal rulers whom he represented. Charms and sympathetic magic were introduced. Symbols and symbolic observances were made part and parcel of ceremonies. New

meanings and interpretations were added. The aspect of political life was entirely changed. The conflict of classes passed away. The social out-look broadened and the germs of constitutionalism, with defined rights and duties for the various elements in the body-politic, came into being. The work was achieved through the agency of religion and ritual.

The installation or exercise of regal authority came to be associated with sacrifices and ceremonial. The king's accession was no longer complete with his choice by the elders, his proclamation and his acceptance by the whole people accompanied with the older and simpler ceremonial. But, to become a lawful ruler he required the full support of the gods and there arose elaborate ceremonies of inauguration, which not only conferred the sanction of the gods but the acceptance of the people. Of these, the earliest and simplest was the Abhiṣeka ceremony of which we have a description in the Taittiriya-Brāhmaṇa (II. 7. 15. & 16.). This work, according to Prof. Macdonnell, is older than the Aitareya, though Prof. Berriedale Keith holds with reason, the opposite view.

THE ABHISEKA CEREMONY—was the simplest of all inaugural performances. It began with a *homa* with seven mantras. The king was first of all supposed to be re-born as the son of the sacrificial priests (ऋषीणां पुत्रो अभिशस्तिषा चर्यं) and this fiction vested him with a sanctity which made his person inviolable to the people. Next, there were innumerable prayers for granting him an extensive kingdom and an efficient administration (सोवैर्हि देव प्रसवाय विदे । वर्मानमन्त्रे वरिमाणमन्त्रे । अथास्रभ्यं सवितः सर्वताता । दिवे दिव आसुवा मूरिपञ्चः). After this, the king was asked to be the guide of men and called upon to give an understanding to protect the good and punish the wicked (स राजा राज्यमनुमन्यता-



मिदम्.) Then there were prayers for the prosperity of cattle, the various castes of men and for Prajāpati's blessings on him (आयं भातु श्वसा पञ्च कृष्टोः । इन्द्र इव ज्येष्ठो भवतु प्रजावान्, etc.)

Then, the king was made to sit on a tiger-skin and Rig-Vedic hymns for the loyalty of subjects and the vesting of all spiritual powers were chanted. The king ascended a chariot and uttered the prayer that his kingdom might not hear the sound of enemy bows and that success might attend him always. (परि मा सेन्या घोषाः । ज्यानां वृक्षन्तु वृध्रवः । मेघिष्ठाः पिबमाना इह । मां गोपतिमभिसंविशन्तु ॥) He was next smeared over with unguents and embraced by friends, relations and Brāhmaṇas. Then, he was addressed by the Purohita as follows:—उदसावितु सूर्यः । उदिदं मामकं वचः । उदिहि देव सूर्य । सह वसुना मम । अहं वाचो विवाचनम् । मयि वागस्तु धर्षसि । यन्तु नदयो वर्षन्तु पर्जन्याः । सुपिप्पला श्रीषधयो भवन्तु । अन्नवतामोदनव तामामिचवताम् । एषां राजा भूयासम् ॥

["May the king be lustrous like the noon-day sun ;..... may he the noon-day sun attain prosperity ;...may the rivers be full, clouds rain in time, crops fructify ; may the king be the lord of a rich country flowing with milk and honey,"]

In the hymns uttered, the use of the words *prajāvan* and *pitre* is worthy of special note since it points to the growing idea of paternal duties being vested in the monarch.\*

THE RĀJASUYA.—Other inaugural ceremonies for conferring higher sovereign authority existed and these were performed on specified occasions. We take the Rājasūya first, reserved for

\* For details, see Tait. Br. II. 7. 15-17. and also Goldstücker's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Vol. I. p. 277. A summary of the details is to be found in Dr. N. Law's 'Hindu Polity,' chap. IX. on Religious Aspects. pp. 193-196.

great kings only. It was a complicated ceremony consisting of a long succession of ritualistic performances which covered a period of more than two years.

The succession of performances in it is described in the *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, and the *Śrauta Sūtras* of *Kātyāyana* and *Āśvalāyana*.

It included seven distinct sacrifices e.g.—

- (1) the opening *Agnistoma* which covered five days.  
In course of this, the *Dīkṣā* transformed the king into an embryo out of which a deity was to be born and a covenant was made between the king and the priests to avoid dissensions.
- (2) the *Abhiṣecantya* or consecration in which the principal elements were, the collection of seventeen kinds of liquids, *Pārtha* oblations, the formal proclamation of the king, the conquest, the anointment, the cow-raid, vesting of immunity and the handing over of the sacrificial sword.
- (3) the *Daśapeya* or the ceremony of drinking the Soma cup. This was succeeded after a year's interval by
- (4) the *Keśavapantya* or hair-cutting attended with an
- (5) *Atirātra* sacrifice.
- (6) the *Vyusti-dvirātra*, succeeded by
- (7) the *Kṣatradhṛti* or the wielding of the royal power.

This complicated ceremony was thus a compound of religious rites with social and political functions. The chief object



of these was to appease the gods, to have their blessings, to ward off evil and to give a moral sanction to the exercise of royal authority which was consubstantiated with the functions of the gods.

In course of this maze of ceremonial we find details about the growing political machinery and the prevailing political ideas. Thus, the *Ratnahaviṃśi* or "offerings to the jewels" reveal to us the early constitution of the king's council.—

The jewels were according to the Śatapatha Br. and other authorities :—

(1) The Commander of the army	...	सेनानी
(2) The Pontiff-adviser	...	पुरोहित
(3) The King	...	राजन् himself.
(4) { The Queen	} ...	महिषी
The Discarded Queen		
(5) The Messenger	...	सूत
(6) The Grāma-leaders	...	ग्रामणी
(7) The Chamberlain	...	चतु
(8) The Charioteer	...	संघडीढ
(9) The Carver or collector	...	भागदुघ्
(10) The Dice-keeper	...	अचावाप
(11) The Keeper of games and forests	...	गोविकर्त्तृ
(12) The Courier <sup>*</sup>	...	पालागल

\* Authorities differ as to the names of the jewels. In the Taitt. Br., Go-nikartapa and Pālāgala are omitted and the Rājanya is included. In the Maitrā. Sam., we find the Vaiśya-grāmaṇi and the Takṣa-Rathakārau. In the Kāṭhaka, there is some change. According to the Śatapatha Br., the king worshipped at the house of other queens whether discarded or belonging to lower caste e.g. the Vāvātā (the favourite), the Parivṛkti (discarded) and in the Aśvamedha, the Pālāgali took part.

The most important political function was the "Consolidation" of sovereignty which was vested in the king-elect. This, together with other allied ceremonies formed part of the *Abhiṣecanīya*. In connection with all these, too, we find a curious blending of ritual and state-functions. The ceremony which requires detailed description began with the offering of victims to Agni and Soma, and then further offerings were made to—(i). *Savitṛ Satyaprasava*. (ii). *Agni Gṛhapati*. (iii). *Soma Vanaspati*. (iv). *Bṛhaspati Vākpati*. (v). *Rudra Paśupati*. (vi). *Mitra Satya* (vii). *Varuṇa Dharmapati*.

After these offerings, the priest took hold of the king and uttered the formula "may *Savitṛ* quicken thee for ruling, *Agni* for house-holders, *Soma* for trees, *Bṛhaspati* for speech, *Indra* for lordship, *Rudra* for cattle, *Mitra* for truth and *Varuṇa* for the Lord of the Law."

The priest further uttered a sacred formula praying, "quicken him oh gods! to be unrivalled so as to be without an enemy, for chief-dom, for great lordship, for man-rule, for ruling over men, for *Indra's* energy,—him, the son of such and such man, the son of such and such woman, whatever be his parentage—of the people whose king he is." *e.g.*

इमं देवा असपत्नं सुवध्वं महते चक्राय महते जैष्ठ्याय महते जानराज्याय  
इन्द्रस्येन्द्रियाय इमममुष्यपुत्रममुष्यैपुत्रमस्यै विश एष वोऽमौ राजा सोमोऽस्माक  
ब्राह्मणानां राजा ।

The king was next sprinkled over with liquids of seventeen kinds, beginning with the water of *Sarasvatī*  
Sprinkling. and each time the formula was uttered

"Bestowers of kingship bestow kingship on N. N." After this, *Pārtha* oblations were offered, probably investing the king



with the position and authority of Pṛthī Vainya the *Heros Eponymos* who was the "first consecrated among men."

Then the king was sprinkled over by men after he had put on the consecrated garments. The sprinklers included a Brahmin, a Rājanya kinsman, a friendly king, and a Vaiśya who were clearly representatives of his subjects agreeing to his authority.

He then put on the royal silken robes. He was thereupon proclaimed and his vow of faithfulness (Satya-sava, Satya-dharma) was recorded. He was made to ascend the different regions *vis.* east, west, north south and then stepped on a tiger skin, on which was placed a piece of lead representing *Namuci's head*.

This was followed by the ceremony of Anointing with sacred formulæ, the process of anointing being supposed to confer Indra's vigour, glow of Agni, Sūrya's splendour, and Indra's energy. The king then became the chief of chiefs and the king of kings.

After this he stepped three paces, symbolic of Viṣṇu's three steps (e.g. *Vikrāmaṇa*, *Vikrānta* and *Krānta*). Thus having ascended the world, he became high over everything, and everything was below him. The priest then definitely reminded him of his functions and duties.—

Final acts of the  
coronation ceremony  
described.

e.g. इयं ते राट् । यन्तासि यमनो ध्रुवोऽसि धरुणः ।

कथं त्वा चेमाय त्वा रथ्ये त्वा पोषाय त्वा ॥

Then followed other rites symbolically representing older methods of attaining supremacy. One of these was the mimic cow-raïd in which the king was allowed to take away a herd of kine from the house of a friend. Next came the game of dice in which the king's victory showed his wisdom.

At the same time the king was made *Adaṇḍya*. The Adhvaryu struck him on the back and "thus guided him safely over judicial punishment (*Daṇḍa-vadha*)' and thence the king became free from judicial punishment.

Next, the king addressed the Brahmin priest and described him as savitr of true impulsion, Indra of true power, Varuṇa of true power, Indra mighty through the people, Rudra the most kindly.

Last of all, the wooden sacrificial sword was passed round; the Brahmin priest handed it over to the king; he passed it over to his brother who, in his turn, handed it over to the Sūta; from him it passed to the Sajāta and the Grāmaṇī and the sword ultimately came back to the king. The king received the homage of all who including Brāhmaṇas sat below.

THE VĀJAPEYA—Another sacrifice of importance was the *Vajapeya*. About its performance there are differences of opinion. According to the Kātyāyana Śraūta Sūtra, it was performed by a Samrāj, a prince of higher position than an ordinary king, while according to other authorities, it could be performed by any one.

In addition to the usual oblations and ceremonial performances, the chief distinguishing feature was the Chariot race in which the sacrificer, who belonged either to the priestly or the royal order, was allowed to carry off the palm. (Śat. Br. V. I. 5.). Then, after a long interval, the sacrificer ascended the top of the sacrificial post, while those assembled there, threw bags of salt at him. He then descended from it and trod upon a piece of gold placed on a goat skin and next sat upon a throne-seat. Another important rite was the fictitious Dice-play in which the king-elect was made to gain the



victory. We shall discuss the importance of all these later on. After further offerings the priest conferred upon him the superior ruler-ship of Brhaspati.

THE AINDRA-MAHĀBHĪSEKA.—Next, we have the *Aindra-Mahābhīseka* detailed in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, which mentions first of all the Pūnarābhīseka or the repetition of the Inauguration Ceremony. After describing this, it gives us the details and the importance of the Aindra-Mahābhīseka which was supposed to have originated in reminiscence of the election of Indra by the gods as their king in course of the struggle of the Devas against the Asuras (VIII. 12-14). The consequence of this Mahābhīseka was that it conferred on the king all the various types of sovereignty e.g. *Rājya*, *Sāmrājya*, *Mahārājya*, *Vairājya*, *Aikarājya* and ending with the *Sārbabhaumya* which conferred the highest type of Imperial authority over the whole region extending from the hills to the sea (चासमुद्रम् एकराट्). As in the case of the *Rājasūya* and the *Vājapeya*, this Mahābhīseka comprised a complicated ritual. But by far the most important ceremony of the whole was the oath which the priest administered to the prince. The king was made to take the oath "whatever pious works I might have done during the time which elapses from the day of my birth to the day of my death, all these together with my life, and my children, you would wrest from me, should I do you any harm."

The Oath

[e.g. याच्च रात्रौमजायेहं याच्च प्रेतास्मि तदुभयमन्तरेणेष्टापूर्तं मे लोकं सुकृतमायुः प्रजां वृज्जीयाः यदि ते दृष्टोऽयम्]

The importance of the ceremony as also of the oath will be discussed in their proper place. But incidentally, it may be

mentioned that the Aitareya tradition credited a number of princes (mentioned along with their priests) with the performance of this ceremony.

THE AŚVAMEDHA.—Next, we have the Aśva-medha which originated in the earliest period and came to be regarded later on as the greatest of all sacrifices. What was its original significance and purpose we do not know at present. But, this is quite clear that the ceremony of Aśvamedha was very old, and was performed by ancient suzerain monarchs (राजा सार्वभौमोऽश्वमेधेन यजेत). Its chief interest centred round the sacrificial horse which was made to traverse the whole neighbouring region and after its return slaughtered with ceremony. It began, according to the Yajurveda, with the investing of the sacrificer with the golden ornaments (Bk. XXII). The horse was then guarded and sprinkled over, followed by other symbolical rites. Some animal-offerings were then made to several deities including Savitr and Agni. The horse was eulogised and its protection invoked by whispering mantras in its ears. The king prayed for the prosperity of his kingdom and the community. After the

performance of these initial ceremonies, the horse was allowed to roam. During the year of its sojourn abroad, ceremonies were performed every day. In the eleventh month after the return of the horse, it was bathed and harnessed. A stable of Aśvattha wood was constructed and there it was fed on with barley. After the performance of all other requisite ceremonies, the horse was bedecked with jewels, and after some further rites slaughtered. After this, the dead body was circumbulated by the wife of the Yajamāna. After some more rites and



utterances of *mantras* the chief Queen was made to lie with the body with the object of facilitating the birth of a virtuous and vigorous son. Some obscene rites followed or intervened, which we may not describe in detail.

The horse sacrifice is described in detail in the Vāj. Sam. (XXII. to XXIV), in the Śatapathaṁ and in the Taitt. Br. (III. 8). Whatever might have been its original significance, it came to have an importance later on in the politics of the Brāhmaṇa and the post-Brāhmaṇa period. The horse in the Epic literature, became the symbol of a conquering king's sovereign authority, and in course of its roaming a man who held the horse was regarded as an enemy contesting his authority. This led to a war in which if victorious, the obstructor of the horse gained the position enjoyed by the conqueror who had let loose the horse. If, on the other hand, the conqueror proved victorious his supremacy remained unquestioned.

Of the various rites, the ceremony of sprinkling the horse requires examination. According to the Taitt. Br. (III. 8), the horse was sprinkled over in the West by the Adhvaryu accompanied by a hundred princes; by the Brahman standing to the North and accompanied by hundred Kṣatriyas; by the Hotṛ standing on the East (facing west) and accompanied by hundred "Leaders of villages," and by the Udgātṛ standing on the South and accompanied by hundred men of mixed castes. After a ceremonial bath and uttering of *mantras*, the horse was delivered to the care of a hundred princes clad in armour. Four hundred Chiefs were also made its guardians along with hundred Kṣatriyas on cars, accompanied by as many Śūdras and Vaiśyas.

The Aśvamedha was performed by great princes like Bharata, Durmukha and Atyarāti. Many repeatedly performed it, Bharata being credited with the performance of 133. horse-sacrifices.

A study of the above details clearly shows how sacerdotalism was making a bid for the establishment of an orderly sovereign authority, closely modelled on that which prevailed in the universal system. As the *Devas* were the universal rulers, and as the king was (transformed into) their mundane counterpart with similar rights and responsibilities vested in him, the co-operation of these powers was sure to bring all-sided prosperity to men. Sacrifice brought such a desired harmony, between the divine and human elements with the result that not only peace and order was maintained, but the forces and resources of nature came to the assistance of men. A faith in the ideal of happiness resulting from this co-operation is apparent from the king's prayers in the Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha. We quote one hymn connected with the latter (Vāj. Sam. XXII. 22).

"Oh ! Brāhman ! let there be born in the kingdom the Brāhmaṇa illustrious for religious knowledge ; let there be born the Rājanya heroic skilled archer, piercing with shafts mighty warrior ; the cow giving abundant milk ; the ox good at carrying ; the swift courser ; the industrious woman. May Parjanya send rain according to our desire. May our fruit bearing plants ripen. May acquisition and preservation of property be secured to us."

आ ब्रह्मन् ब्राह्मणो ब्रह्मवर्चसो जायतामराद्रे राजन्वः शूर इषव्योतिव्याधी  
महारथो जायताम् दोग्ध्री धेनुर्वोदानङ्गानाशः सप्तः पुरन्ध्रैर्योषाजिष्णूरधेष्टाः  
सभेयो युवास्व यजमानस्व वीरो जायताम् निकामे निकामे नः पर्जन्यो वर्धतु  
फलवत्यो न शोधधयः पशन्तां योगक्षेमो नः कल्पताम् ।



### III

## Political Evolution Constitutionalism

WHILE ritualism masked the social outlook, momentous changes influenced politics. Monarchy came to be established on a firm footing and the king came to enjoy a constitutional position, by virtue of well-defined functions and duties formally vested in him, rather than subsisting on the mere personal relation between him and his subjects, which was liable to disruption with the rise of strong rivals near him. Various causes and circumstances helped the elimination of the claims of rivals and kinsmen and it is easy to find a decided tendency towards the acceptance of the sole authority of the king together with the establishment of rules of hereditary succession. The religious literature gives us instances of such. For, in the *Pāñca Br.* in connection with *Dvirātra* ceremony, we are told that with the performance of this ritual by the *Kāpeyas*, the king of the *Caitrarathi* family became the sole ruler to the exclusion of his kinsmen (*Pāñca Br.* XX. 12. 5. e.g. एतेन वै चित्ररथं कापेया अयाजयंस्तमेकाकिनमन्नादस्याध्यक्षमकुर्वन् । तस्माच्चैत्ररथौनामेकः चक्षुषिर्जायते नुलम्ब इव द्वितीयः ). Lack of evidence stands in the way of our multiplying such instances, but the tendency is clear and unmistakable and we find ample confirmation from the ritual connected with royal inauguration which conferred sole ruling authority to the king.

The strengthening of royal authority was due to various other causes and circumstances. First of all, an aristocracy of blood and service grew up and supported the king's interest. All authority came to centre in the royal person and the old king-electors themselves, became dependents on royal will. Instead of Rājakṛts or Rājakartārah, they came to be termed Ratninaḥ or jewels round the throne. Some of them came to be distinguished by the name of Rajavīras (king's fighters or supporters) and figure prominently in the ritualistic performances associated with the Rājasūya or the Rād-yagña. We have described these in detail in connection with the Coronation ceremonial, but here we may repeat that the Ratninaḥ included some of the early officials in the royal entourage, while the Rājavīras comprised the king's brother, his sons, the Purohita, and the Queen, in addition to the Sūta, the Grāmaṇī, Kṣattr, and the Samgrahit. (see Pañca Br. XIX. 1. 4. अष्टौ वै वीरा राष्ट्रं समुदच्छन्ति, राजभ्राता च राजपुत्रश्च पुरोहितश्च महिषी च सूतश्च ग्रामणीश्च चत्ता च संग्रहीता चैते वीरा राष्ट्रं समुदच्छन्ति ।) Not to mention the Rājavīras, there also grew up an influential nobility who came to be known as the Rāja-mātras. They are mentioned in the Kauṣītaki Br. (XXII. 6) and in the Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra (XVII. 5. 3. 4.), but no details are known. We find also repeated mention of the Rājanya-vandhus or those to whom villages were granted.

Secondly, the king's position was strengthened by the alliance with the priestly bodies, whose importance we shall discuss later on. As there was a preponderance of ritual, (which characterises a period of transition from tribalism to a higher type of regal authority) kings came to lean on the support of the priesthood, since belief in the aid of the gods exercised an influence on the minds of men.



This introduced fundamental changes in political ideals and also modified the angle of vision so far as it related to political concepts. The chief ideal both in society and in politics was a regulated social existence, with well-defined duties and functions on the model of the universal system. Through the agency of ritual, the favour of the gods was assured to the king and as such, an amount of sanctity attached to his duties and functions. In lieu of this divine aid, the king was compelled to keep his pretensions within bound and to acknowledge subservience to the ministers of religion. The result of this mutual *rapprochement* was that, while the promise of divine aid ensured the loyalty of the people by clothing the royal person with a vestment of sanctity, the king in his turn was compelled to depend on the principles inculcated by the priest-hood and his irresponsibility was checked.

Monarchy came to be glorified. It was clothed with a higher moral sanction and became not only regal but sacerdotal. In the eyes of his subjects, the king's functions and duties partook of the nature of those vested in the divine rulers. As such, not only did he protect life and property, but performed sacrifices to win divine favour for his people. The *Rāṣṭrabhṛt* oblations clearly point to this spiritual function of the king and some passages speak of the king's protection of the *Rāṣṭra* by means of *Brahmacarya* and *Tapas*. (ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा राजा राष्ट्रं वे रक्षति, A. V., XI. V. 17).\*

\* According to the Brāhmanical theory, *Satya* and *Rta* as well as *Tapas* on the part of the Creator, caused the evolution of the universal system. Indra won his position and the gods their immortality by *Tapas* (R. V., X. 173 ; Taitt. Br. III. 12. 3. 1 ; Śat. Br. XI. 5. 8. 1 ; XII. 3. 4. 1.).

Furthermore, the king came to be regarded as the protector of Dharma and of the Brāhmanas as would appear from the formula uttered by the Rajākartaṛaṇ in proclaiming a newly consecrated king (e.g. “राजकर्तारो ब्रुः.....चतुर्योजनि विश्वस्यभूत-  
स्याधिपतिरजनि...विश्वामत्ताजनि अमित्राणां हन्ताऽजनि ब्राह्मणानां गोप्ताऽजनि धर्मस्य गोप्ताऽजनि etc. Ait. Br. VIII. 17).

THE PRIEST-HOOD.—While royalty was thus glorified and regal authority deified through priestly support, this brought the latter to the fore-front. The representative of the sacerdotal order, the Purohita came to the front rank of state-functionaries and Brāhmanas as a class came to be regarded with veneration and styled as mundane gods. (See Śatapatha II. 2. 2. 6, इया वै देवा देवाः अहैव देवा अथ ये ब्राह्मणाः....मनुष्यदेवास्तेषां ह्येधा...मनुष्यदेवानां ब्राह्मणानां etc.). This was due to their close connection with the ceremonial which brought moral sanction to royal authority and gave the anointed prince a sacred character. We have already alluded to the fiction of the king's becoming the son of the sacrificial priest and this shows the importance of the priest-hood.

THE PUROHITA.—The Purohita stood out fore-most and was regarded as the *alter ego* of the king. If the king was the counter-part of Indra and Varuṇa, he was the incarnation of Bṛhaspati and performed the Bṛhaspati-sava (Taitt. Br. II. 7. 1 स एष बृहस्पतिसवो बृहस्पतिरकामयत देवानां पुरोधामगच्छेयमिति । स एतेनाजयत स देवानां पुरोधामगच्छत् ॥). He was regarded as half of the king and his blessings brought victory in war. He appeased the gods and without him they did not accept food offered by a king (न ह वा अपुरोहितस्य राज्ञो देवा अन्नमदन्ति तस्माद्यज्यमानो राजा ब्राह्मणं पुरोदधीत ॥) At the intercession of the Purohita, the gods protected the kingdom (Ait. Br. VIII. 26 [तस्मै विश्व...तदाह ब्राह्मणे राजा तमवन्ति देवा etc.).



So a king was to consecrate a Purohita and this man was to be looked upon as the protector of the the kingdom (Rāṣṭragopa) who conferred energy, granted success and made the people loyal and prosperous. (यस्यैवं विद्वान् ब्राह्मणो राष्ट्रगोपः पुरोहितः क्षत्रेण क्षत्रं जयति वलेन वलमश्नुते यस्यैवं विद्वान् ब्राह्मणो राष्ट्रगोपः पुरोहितस्तस्मै विशः संजानते संमुखा एकमनसो यस्यैवं ब्राह्मणो विद्वान् राष्ट्रगोपः पुरोहितः । Ait. Br. VIII. 25).

The Purohita was thus not a mere priest. He represented moral authority and was an adviser on important affairs of state. He seems to have accompanied the king in battle on his chariot and it was he who on behalf of the common people adminstred the oath, both in the ordinary Coronation and in the Aindra-Mahābhiṣeka. As such, he was honoured by the king who accepted him as a superior and washed his feet in submission to his authority.

Privileges were conferred on him as well as on the Brāhmaṇas. His life was sacred, like the Tribunes in Rome. Transgression meant death or deposition to kings. As champion of the moral principle, he exercised co-ordinate authority with the king and he together with the Brāhmaṇas claimed abso- lution from regal authority which embraced everything else in this world. This would appear from the formula uttered by the Brāhmaṇas at the end of royal consecration that the king was lord of everything but in the ease of the Brāhmaṇas their king was the divine Soma (...सोमोऽस्माकं ब्राह्मणानां राजा ॥)

It was in the central region—the land of the Kurus and the Pañcālas, that this type of monarchy was gradually evolved. It was there that authority was regarded as being divine or moral rather than merely political. The tendency to irresponsibility was fully checked first, by the priests who exercised great influence.

Then, there remained the popular bodies who always asserted their rights carefully safe-guarded in the coronation ritual in which the priest exacted the oath. The king thus became a constitutional monarch only exercising authority limited by the law.

We have ample evidence pointing to the limited character of monarchy of this region. Thus, according to the evidence of the Brāhmaṇas, the great Parīkṣita suffered owing to his high-handedness towards the Brāhmaṇas and if we believe in the Epic tradition, this cost him his throne and probably his life. The Brāhmaṇas contain the tradition of the deposition of another prince—the Śrījaya Duṣtarita Paumsāyana who was expelled from his ancestral (daśa-puruṣika) domains along with his adviser Revottaras Pāṭava Cākraśthapati. Instances of such depositions are multiplied in the Epics. The Mahābhārata speaks of the deposition of a king of Kośala by his subjects while in the case of the Kurus, we hear of the constant interference of the people not only in matters of succession, but in all important affairs of state. Any violation of the king's duties to his subjects, made him fear popular risings ending in expulsion from the kingdom. In the next section, instances from the Epic will be multiplied with a view to show the popular character of the Kuru monarchy. Probably owing to this, the Kuru country was regarded as the home of constitutional rule and *Kuru-dharma* had a halo of sanctity round it.

In spite of this universal tendency towards the consolidation of constitutional authority, the evolution of the political life in other regions was not the same. In the East, a greater amount of authority was vested in monarchs, with whom were developed the ideals of Paternal monarchy and of Imperial rule. The kings of *Mithila* came to regard themselves as the fathers of their subjects



and took the significant title of Janaka (from *Jana* to give birth to; *Janaka*—a father). The Brāhmanas speak of the Samrāṭs or Emperors of the East.

The diversities of political evolution in the different regions of India find echo in one section of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VIII. 14). In that section we have an account of the elevation of Indra to the position of the highest Over-lord by the gods and incidentally a mention of the various styles and dignities which were conferred on the king of the Devas as well as on all human performers of the Aindra-Mahābhīṣeka. We are told that :—

“एतस्यां प्राच्यां दिशि ये केच प्राच्यानां राजानः साभ्राज्यायैव तेऽभिषिच्यन्ते  
सम्राड् इत्येनानभिषिक्तानाचक्षते ।....दक्षिणस्यां दिशि ये के च सत्वतां राजानः  
भौज्यायैव तेऽभिषिच्यन्ते—भोजित्येनानभिषिक्तानाचक्षते ।.....प्रतीच्यां दिशि ये  
के च नौच्यानां राजानो येऽपाच्यानां स्वाराज्यायैव तेऽभिषिच्यन्ते....स्वराडित्येनान  
भिषिक्तानाचक्षते.....उदीच्यां दिशि ये के च परेण हिमवन्तं जनपदा उत्तर  
कुरव उत्तरमद्रा इति वैराज्याय तेऽभिषिच्यन्ते...अस्यां ध्रुवायां मध्यमायां प्रतिष्ठायां  
दिशि ये के च कुरुपञ्चालानां राजानः सवशीशीनरानां राज्यायैव तेऽभिषिच्यन्ते” ॥

The meaning of this passage is clear though in regard to the technical terms denoting various types of sovereign authority, we find hardly any explanation excepting those furnished by the commentators who flourished at least two thousand years later. Its evidence may be summed up as follows :—

That in those days, (limited) king-ship flourished in the Central region i.e. the land of the Kurus, Pañcālas, Vāsas and Uśīnaras. In the Eastern region, Princes arrogated to themselves the dignity of Samrāṭ or a superior ruler. In the South, the rulers of the Satvatas called themselves *Bhojas* or Enjoyer-Protectors, while in the West, the chiefs and rulers styled themselves *Svarāṭs*. Lastly, in the extreme Northern regions

beyond the mountains, the people (Janapadāḥ) consecrated themselves into *Vairājya* sovereignty.

In regard to the last passage, the significance of the substitution of Janapada for Rājānaḥ attracted the attention of the late Dr. Martin Haug who found in it a clear reference to a kingless form of government. In regard to *Vairājya*, he pointed out that "two meanings can be given *e.g.* (1) without king (2) a very distinguished king. In this passage we must take it in the first meaning, for, here are *Janapadāḥ i.e.* the people in opposition to the king mentioned as *abhiṣikta, i.e.* inaugurated, while in all other passages of this chapter we find instead of them the *rājānaḥ* or kings." \*

This interpretation of *Vairājya* is significant in as much as it shows that republican states existed in the extreme northern fringe. We have however no clear details until we come to Pāṇini or literature subsequent to him. From the evidence of the Aitareya passage as well as that of similar ones in the Brāhmaṇic ritualistic literature, we hear of the following types of sovereign authority.

**Svārājya**—It probably meant the dignity of a *Svarāt*. A prince was a *Svarāt*, when he depended on nobody else. He was self-content or an autocrat, so far as his governing authority was concerned. (स्वनेव राजते—*sole-ruler*). This form of government prevailed among the *Apāchyas* and *Nīcyas* where

\* The meaning of *Virāj* will remain doubtful, the use of the prefix *vi*, may be due to two senses. It may mean an absence of regal authority or it may connote a higher type of sovereign authority. Indeed, in many later works *Virāt* appears as the term of honour applied to great kings. *Śrīkṛṣṇa* is called a *Virāt*, *Samrāt* and *Svarāt*. It may not be impossible that *Virāt* was originally the title of elected chiefs, but later on, the meaning underwent a change. Like the words *Cæsar* or *Imperator* (which titles were assumed by later kings) it also came to designate a powerful king.



oligarchic principles long survived. A Svarāt ruler was the first among equals and the evidence of the Taitt. Br., confirms it. (य एवं विद्वान् वाजपेयेन यजते । गच्छति स्वाराज्यं । अथ समानानां पर्येति । तिष्ठन्तेऽस्मै जौष्टाय. Tait. Br. 1. 3. 2. 2.)

Sāmrajya—Sāmrajya was a higher type of ruling authority. A prince became Samrāt if he was fully obeyed by all princes and people within his territorial jurisdiction. Sāmrajya later on came to signify an imperial overlordship especially in the East and the Mahābhārata evidence points to the highest sovereign authority being vested in such Lord Suzerains.

Bhaujya—It signified the dignity of a Bhoja or a ruler (enjoyer,—from an ancient root *Bhuj* originally meaning enjoyment, but later on coming to signify ruling authority) or Protector. Probably the Bhojas of early times were the baronial aristocracy of the South who had established themselves over a subject population from whom they collected taxes and tributes. This interpretation receives confirmation from later evidence. The Yādava princes assumed this title and one of the branches of the Yādavas was known as the Bhojas. Later evidence shows the existence of the Bhojas in the locality of Kathiwar-Guzerat in the third cen. B.C.

II. SOVEREIGNTY.—Next to the consolidation of royal power, ideas about the nature of the sovereign authority became more definite. From the primary war-lord and collector of *vali* or tribute, the king came to be regarded as a sovereign ruling over his people, the lord of the territory in which the people lived, of the material resources of the locality, the sole judge wielding the rod of punishment and the protector of Dharma.

(a) The idea of territorial sovereignty became prominent. It was the result of the final settling down of the tribes, and

the giving up of their nomadic habits, of which we find traces in the earlier literature. Tribal names gave rise to place-names and almost all the kingdoms came to have fixed boundaries. In the case of the Kuru country, we have a clear account of its territorial limits. Territorial epithets came to be applied to princes. We have innumerable instances of this in the Brāhmaṇic literature. A king Prātipīya of the Kuru family is described as Bālḥika (Sat. Br. XII. 9. 3. 3.); a second prince Bhīma is described Vaidarbha or ruler of the Vidarbha region; two other princes Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Ajātaśatru are designated Kāśya or ruler of the Kāśi kingdom; two princes of Kośala are described as Kauśalya *i.e.* Para Āṭnāra and Hairaṇyanābha. Such local epithets are very common and we find them applied even to ordinary people, to distinguish them from others of the same name. Thus Proti is called Kauśāmveya, Citra is called Gāṅgāyani, Āśvalāyana is called Kauśalya, while one more is called Naimiṣya. The importance of this conception of territorial sovereignty is also felt in the Coronation ritual. The king as we have seen, is made to ascend the quarters *i.e.*, the North, South, East and West, symbolic of his supremacy over these regions. Furthermore, as will be pointed out, the suzerain overlord's ideal of conquest embraced the whole region of the country then known extending from the hills to the sea.

(b). In regard to the newer ideas as to the nature of sovereignty, some further light is thrown by the Rājasūya ritual. As we have seen already, in the Abhisecanīya, the king was made to make offerings to Savitr Satyaprasava, Agni Gr̥hapati, Soma Vanaspati, Br̥haspati Vākpati, Rudra Paśupati, Mitra Satya, and Varuṇa Dharmapati, with a view to his investment with their



authority and functions. We need not stretch our imagination, but the text as well as the interpretation is so clear that it gives a full import of the ceremonies and their constitutional significance. The priest himself, thus addressed the king and prayed :—

“May Savitṛ quicken thee for ruling, Agni for householders, Soma for trees, Bṛhaspati for speech, Indra for lordship, Rudra for cattle, Mitra for truth and Varuṇa for the lord of the law.”

The meaning is apparent; the prince was vested with supreme ruling authority and this comprised the general over-lordship of the people, full governing authority, general superintendence over the plants and animals (*i.e.* agriculture and cattle) and the power of administering the laws as the Vicegerent of Lord Varuṇa, the divine Judge *par-excellence*. The consummation of investiture was attained by the king-elect's stepping over the tiger-skin (symbolic of his greatness and conquest of enemies; cf. the epithet *Vyāghrapratīka* p. 98), his investment with the wooden sacrificial sword symbolising regal and legal authority, his identification with Indra and Varuṇa, and the proclamation of his immunity from punishment (*Adanḍya*) which in those days made him free from the jealousy or intrigue of rivals and factions.

IMPERIALISM AND CONQUEST. — While Sovereign authority was thus consolidated, the princes of those ages directed their attention to conquest. Security at home freed their energies and these were devoted to exploits outside their own territorial limits. The desire for universal over-lordship floated before their eyes. This conquest, again, was not merely an act of military success, but came to be associated with religious ceremonies and sacrifices which gave it the stamp of

moral recognition. The conqueror who performed the Vājapeya or the Aśvamedha was not an ordinary mortal relying on brute force, but was one pre-eminent among men whose dignity approached that of Indra or the other divine rulers of this universe and as in the case of the latter, universal dominion over the whole of Aryan-dom "from the hills to the sea" was the aim of the victor. The types of imperial authority varied, though at the present moment we have little means of deciding the nature and character of the Suzerain's authority vested by the performance of the different rites. The only information is that supplied by the details of the religious literature which mention the different inaugural ceremonies for conferring varied types of authority. There was the ordinary Abhiṣeka or coronation of a king and over and above there were the Vājapeya, the Aśvamedha, the Puṇarābhiṣeka and the Aindra-Mahābhiṣeka all of which conferred higher sovereign power.

LIST OF CONQUERORS.—The Brāhmaṇas and the Śrauta Sūtras give us lists of such kings as aspired to universal dominion and attained it with the performance of the various rites and sacrifices.

According to the Aitareya Br., the following kings attained supreme headship by the performance of the Rājasūya and the Aindra-Mahābhiṣeka.

Name of kings :	country.	consecrating priest.
Janamejaya son of Parikṣit	Kuru	... Tura Kāvaṣeya
Śāryāta Mānava	... ..	... Cyavana Bhārgava
Śatānika Sātrājita	... Kuru	... Somaśuṣman
		... Vājaratnāyana
Āmvaṣṭhya	... ..	... Parvata and Nārada



Name of kings :	country.	consecrating priest.
Yadhāmsraus̥ṭhi of the race of Ugrasena	... Kuru	... Parvata and Narada
Viśvakarman of the race of Bhuvana	... ..	... Kaśyapa
Sudās Son of Pijavana	... Pañcāla (?)	Vasiṣṭha
Marutta, of the race of Avikṣit	... ..	... Samvarta Āṅgīrasa
Vairocana	... Aṅga	... Udamaya Ātreya
Bharata, son of Duṣṇanta	... Kuru	... Dīrghatamas Māmateya
Durmukha	... Pañcāla	... Bṛhaduktha
Atyarāti son of Janantapa...	... ..	... Sātyahavya Vasiṣṭha

In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, we have another list which is of Aśvamedhin kings. The kings who became universal monarchs were—

1. Janamejaya Pārikṣita whose priest was Indrota Daivāpi Śaunaka
2. Bhimasena Pārikṣita
3. Ugrasena „
4. Śrutasena „
5. Para Āṭnāra the Kośala king
6. Purukutsa the Ikṣāku king
7. Marutta Avikṣita the Āyogava king
8. Kraivya the Pañcāla king
9. Dhvasan Dvaitavana king of the Matsyas
10. Bharata Dauṣṇanti king of the Kurus
11. Rṣabha Yāgnātura
12. Sātrāsēha the Pañcāla king
13. Sātānika Sātrājita the Kuru king.

The list in the Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta is a little different. It mentions (XVI, 9) Janamejaya, Ugrasena, Bhīmasena, Śrutasena, R̥ṣabha Yāgnātura, Vaideha Albāra and Marutta Avikṣita.

We have details about such conquerors in the Epic and the Purāṇas. The Epic Mahābhārata (Dṛona. par.) gives us a list of sixteen kings *vis.* Marutta Avikṣita, Suhotra son of Atithi Bṛhadratha Aṅga, Sivi Auśīnara, Bharata, Rāma Son of Daśaratha, Bhagīratha, Dilīpa, Māndhātṛ, Yajāti, Ambarīṣa, Śaśavindu, Gaya, Rantideva, Sagara and Pṛthu.

The character of this imperialism was however different from that which later on ended in the unification of the whole country under one sceptre. These early conquerors, as a rule, remained satisfied with the acknowledgement of their sovereign authority and demanded of the conquered only tribute and service. Consequently, their imperialism was a compromise between universal monarchy to the exclusion of sub-ordinate princes and of full tribal independence. The annihilation of conquered princes was reserved for a later age and the newer Imperialism arose in the East.

RETROSPECT AND SUMMARY OF POLITICAL EVOLUTION.—Before we pass on to the next chapter, we must attempt to summarise the character of political evolution. The leading events in the political life of the later Vedic age were thus—

(1) The establishment of a consolidated royal authority strengthened by a military aristocracy and a priesthood.

(2) Political integration through ritual and religion and the regulation of the functions of the various elements in the body-politic.



- (3) Definition of the functions of sovereign authority.
- (4) Desire for the establishment of universal overlordship.

All these have been described in detail, but something requires to be said about the influence of the priest-hood and the compromise it brought about.

The priestly families who gained a recognized position in politics, presumably cast their influence on the side of the *de facto* ruler. That was something the importance of which could not be minimised. In our own days Clericalism is a force in Europe and the authority and voice of the priests and bishops still predominates in many countries. In the Middle ages or the Dark ages, it was greater. It was they who ruled the minds of men. They made and unmade princes and humbled their proudest opponents to the dust. They introduced order in life. They advised the princes, they spurred the people on to the cause of rational movements, humanism and progress. Science and democracy have knelled the death-knell of priest-craft but in spite of it, they are yet a potent force in civilised Europe, which nobody can neglect.

In India the art or the ideal of the priestly class had a deeper influence. It instilled in the minds of the common people a veneration for royalty and a faith in social self-realisation through the ruling sovereign. The anointed of Indra and Varuna wielding their functions was one who could not be dis-obeyed, since disobedience without cause was sure to bring the vengeance

Need of ritual; power and continuance of allegiance guaranteed. of the angry rulers of the universe. Sacerdotalism thus inculcated obedience and led to the permanence of allegiance so long as the king injured neither in life nor limb and so long as he preserved the prosperity of the community.

Again, while regal authority was glorified and defined, the ruler of the people was put within checks. His Oath reminded him of his pledge to govern according to accepted rules of conduct and constantly inculcated upon him the duty of carrying out his part of the compact entered into with the solemn approval of the divine rulers. While this relation between the governor and the governed was thus laid down, the social and political outlook widened. The conflict of classes or the war of sections passed into the back-ground and a social consciousness came into being characterised by a subjective veneration for the interest of the whole. Last of all, there emerged that longing for the establishment of universal rule which was but the manifestation of the desire to realise organic unity so far as it related to political life.

Sacerdotalism thus, introduced new ideas and principles and masked the real character of the impending change. It hid from the popular attention the fact that active popular control was decaying. In spite of this, it got approval from the people since it eliminated to a large extent the elements of violence and disturbance. Probably, the mass of the peaceful *Vis* welcomed its influence. Chances of war or disputes for the throne became less common and the ordinary people profiting by it thought it their duty more to obey than to question.

While the priest-hood became the exponents of a regulated social ideal which they promulgated and the safety of which they safe-guarded from regal violence, their position in the political machinery was defined and limitations were put on them. The *concordat* which was thus established between the two ruling principles, neutralised the grave consequences of the superiority of the other. The priestly ideal put a check to tyranny. At the



same time the evils of a theocracy were averted. The priests themselves became excluded from the chance of gaining political power. On this head, the discussion in the Aitareya Br. is interesting and shows how the relation of Brahma and Kṣattrā were conceived in those days. The two were regarded as the complements of each other. Their conflict was fatal to the king and the Rāṣṭra. To the priest-hood was assigned a position of moral superiority, though in the body-politic royalty was vested with the highest powers and privileges. The priest in the Coronation sacrifice sat below the king. The latter in his turn was made to take the oath from the priest.

The compromise thus arrived at was significant and remarkable in the history of the political evolution of India. It brought to a close the conflict of two opposite principles as well as the jarring interests and ideals of two sets of people, viz. the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas, who by their conflicts and co-operation have done much to evolve the various aspects of Indian culture. The race of hardy warriors, who yearned after uncontrolled dominion, deified power and sovereign authority and sought the welfare of the community through its agency. Opposed to them were the sacerdotal caste the Brāhmaṇas who felt more for the individual and looked for his emancipation through his own activity. They idolised law and order and opposed violent changes. The two thus closely connected, represented conflicting principles. The one stood for dominion and expansion, the other for systematisation and order. The one thought for the community as a whole, the other felt for the individual. The one stood for collectivism the other for individual effort; the one for obedience, the other for self-realisation, the one for the will, the other for reason. The Kṣatriya ruler yearned for his

sovereignty "indivisible and absolute" while the priest contended for the total emancipation of society from politics. As a result of this conflict of the two peoples and the subsequent compromise, a regulated constitutional life came into being.

The evolution of this *regime*, marked the end of that primitive stage of political life characterised by lawlessness and indiscriminate popular interference in everything. The decay of this popular domination is easily proved by the absence of the mention of the *Samitis* or the *Samgrāmas* and the corresponding importance of the *Sabhā* or the *Pariṣat*. The authority of kings legalised by the sanction of the gods through sacrifice, was consolidated by the alliance of the priesthood. Conquest beyond the limits of his state also strengthened the position of an ambitious king.

Yet in spite of this, kings never became irresponsible. For if ritual safe-guarded their position, it did not confer thereby irresponsibility or government according to will. The king never became superior to law and in the small states of those days, public opinion expressed itself freely. Tyranny or arbitrary conduct made the king lose their sympathy and ultimately their allegiance. We have given one or two instances of the expulsion of kings. This right of expelling kings on the part of the people is also apparent from the ritual for the restoration of deposed monarchs.

Furthermore, in spite of the consolidation of regal authority, real sovereignty seems to have remained vested ultimately in the people and their acceptance retained its old importance. Owing to the influence of the new ideas or the preponderance of ritualism, popular election and acceptance took a new form. They became part and parcel of the ceremony of inauguration.



The formal proclamation and acceptance by the people through the sprinkling ceremony remained as important as ever. More-over, the constant presence of popular representatives in all inaugurations shows the importance of the people. In the Rājsūya, we find not only the Grāmanī, but also the representatives of the various orders. In the Aśvamedha, too, the class representatives remained present during the consecration of the horse and its guardians were also selected out of them. This clearly shows the importance of public opinion. In truth, the change was more of form than of principle. The people retained their right which they exercised once to its very letter. But as complexities had arisen and as it was impossible to consult the opinion of all individuals, their participation in election and choice tended to take a ritualistic form. They were to remain present and at the same time they were to signify their approval by sprinkling water on the head of the new-elected instead of the practice of sounding "yes" or "no" or by clash of arms, as in the case of other nations of antiquity. How arose this practice of sprinkling will ever remain a mystery. The water with which the sprinkling was done, had also its significance since it comprised the water of rivers and seas sacred to the people and a mixture of these symbolised the sovereignty of the king over those regions.

Similar significance attached to the other ceremonies e.g, the Chariot-race, the Cow raid and the Dice-play. They show the retention of older tests for recognising the king's superiority in valour and physical prowess. His excellence in the Cow-raid, showed in him those qualifications which distinguished the early chiefs in the cattle forays. The Chariot-race too was important

since it served as a means of testing the military qualities of the king. In India it seems to have been often resorted to for the settlement of disputes. Even the gods, if we are to believe in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa resorted to it to settle disputes and the victor was declared the winner. Similarly, the victor in the fictitious chariot-race was regarded as the fittest man for kingship. The Dice-play showed the sagacity of the new king.

NOTE —It would be difficult to find out exact parallels of the ideas and rituals found in the Brāhmaṇa literature, but instances may be cited to show similar developments in the history of other communities. The influence of cosmic beliefs on political organisation is found everywhere in the ancient world. In Egypt, the king was the embodiment of *Ra* and his mundane counter-part, and politics was intimately connected with religious beliefs and ceremonial. In the ancient Sumerian cities, the *Patesis* combined the functions of royalty and priesthood. Similar was the case in Ancient Greece where monarchy in the Heroic period was more divine than regal or political. Though changes were gradually introduced through the uprising of the popular element, much of the older ceremonial survived. Among the Molossians, there survived the custom of consolidating the relation between the king and his people by a sacrifice to Zeus, after which the king and the people swore to respect each other's rights. (Greenidge G. C. H., p. 151). The Romans too, regarded *Imperium* as something flowing from the gods and its exercise required divine sanction. Even after the fall of monarchy, this idea survived. Among the Hebrews, the king was supposed to exercise the authority which was vested in him by God and there existed the idea of a double covenant between the Almighty and the king and between the king and the people. Remnants of these ideas survived during the Middle Ages. Modern progress had put an end to many of these ideas in the nineteenth century, but we often find echoes of it in the utterances of some princes. The accession to office whether of Kings or of Presidents is often associated with Divine service and a complicated ritual. The king's oath even now retains its importance in many countries, especially in England. The oath remained of vital importance in the Spartan constitution where it was interchanged every month between the kings and the Ephors.





### The Mahābhārata Evidence

THE history of the later vedic age can well be gathered from the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana, for, as we have said already, the Epics ought to be regarded as the traditional history of that remote period. We take the Mahābhārata first.

*General political condition of India.*—The original historical kernel of the great Epic gives us a detailed account of the Kuru rulers of that time and incidentally furnishes us with a contemporary general account of Indian states and clans. It is with this only that we are concerned but before attempting to show the amount of popular authority and control over their princes or their government, we may survey the political condition of India about the time of the Great War. From an analysis of the Epic evidence we know that:—

(1). The whole of Northern India was divided into a number of states more or less independent as far as internal government was concerned, but acknowledging the suzerainty of the paramount power of the day.

(2). That the Madhyadeśa or the region round the Kuru country was regarded as the intellectual and cultural centre of the Aryans. The manners and customs of people of the western border i.e. those of the Madras and the Vāhikas, were looked down upon by the people of the

Political life in  
different regions.



Central region. On the other hand, Eastern India was regarded as the land of the Śūdras *par excellence*, and this is apparent from the denunciation of Aṅga by the king of Madra. Aṅga, Vāṅga and the coastal regions are described in more than one place as being ruled by *mleccha* princes. In addition to these, some of the ruling Kṣatriya families of the border region were regarded as Vrātyas. Prominent among them were the Yādavas, the ruling race in the extreme south who had a sort of oligarchic ruling confederation.

(3). The form of government varied. In the west, the old Aryan tribal principle was supreme and there were numerous petty states either ruled by local princes guided in all matters by popular opinion or were democratic republics. In the central region *e.g.* in the land of the Kurus and the Matsyas the rulers were princes in name only. In the Kuru country, this popular sovereignty was so great that it is difficult to form easily an impression as to whether the government can be described as a monarchy at all. It is only in the east that the princes had a greater chance of ruling irresponsibly. The large number of wild tribes differing from each other in language, religion, race and temperament, the large number of elephants (a potent instrument in ancient warfare) found there in abundance, the cheapness of other materials required for a fighting force all made it easy for the eastern princes to raise large armies with which to rule absolutely without even consulting the opinion of their subjects. The Aryan settlers were few and these consisted mainly of the ruling families and their hereditary officials, and hence there was no opposition from them. This made not only absolutism possible but fostered a lust for dominion

Eastern Imperialism.

outside the tribal territory which was the limit of domination in the west and centre of India. To these, again, must be attributed the fact that the East was the land where the later type of imperialism took its rise—an imperialism which meant something more than mere suzerainty and was nothing less than universal rule to the exclusion of local princes and absolutism to its utmost limit.

In such a state of affairs, Jarāsandha, the Magadha king thought of pursuing a policy of "blood and iron." He had many allies, the most prominent of whom were Vāsudeva, the king of Puṇḍra and Vāṅga, Bhagadatta of Kāmarūpa, and a number of central Indian rulers including the Cedi Śiśupāla and some of the Bhojas.

Having thus given a survey of political development, we proceed to cite evidence from the great Epic to show the extent of popular sovereignty in those days. As regards the central region, we take the Kuru country and describe its history in detail, because the Mahābhārata records mainly the traditional history of that country. As to other states, we have only some passing reference or some occasional details only when we are on the eve of the great war. Under the circumstances, lack of information prevents us from giving details as to most of these except the Kurus.

For the South, we must confine ourselves to the detailed description of the Yādava constitution and narrate some instances from Yādava history as recorded in the Epic to prove our point.

Lastly, we must conclude by giving some details as to the tribal republics which retained their democratic constitution in the various parts of the country. These, as a rule flourished



in the frontier regions to the west and north or in the secluded areas. In the *Mahābhārata*, these states are described as *Gaṇas*. Of these, we shall only give a list, and this will be supplemented later on by short historical notices on each of them. But, before we pass on to the other subjects, we must make some attempt to describe the general characteristics of these republics e.g.

(a) They were outside the influence of the political forces, which operated in the *Madhyadeśa*.

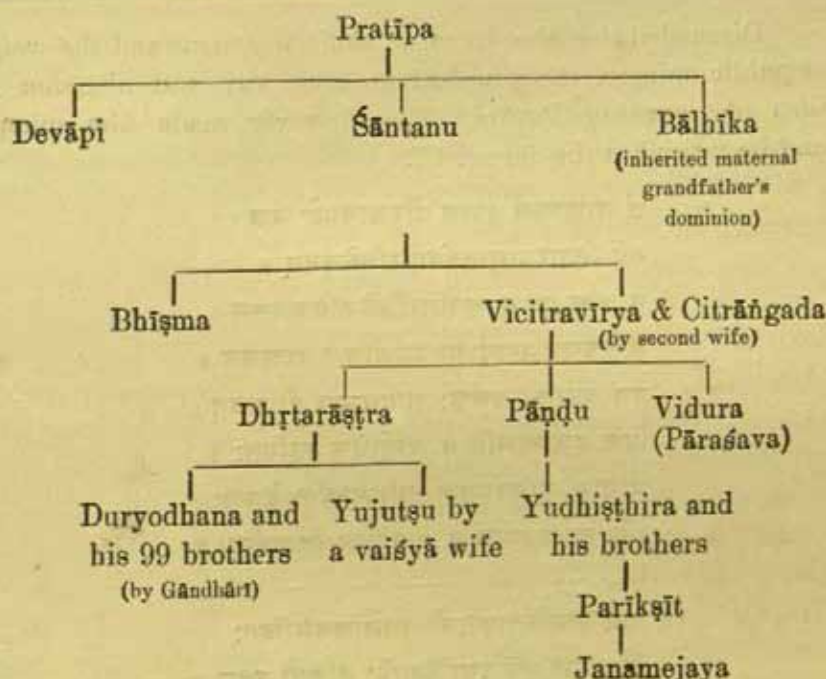
(b) They were dominated by some particular tribe or by members of one caste.

The *Mālavas*, *Yaudheyas*, *Trigartas* and some other *Gaṇas* were mainly *Kṣatriyas*. The *Vāṭadhāṇas* and the *Mādhyamakeyas* were *Brāhmaṇa* *gaṇas*, while the *Grāmaṇīyas* of the Indus region and the *Ābhīras* on the bank of the *Sarasvatī* were *Śūdras* by caste.

### The Kuru Country.

To all readers of the *Mahābhārata* it would be apparent that the epic is primarily the history of the Kuru country. From the historical kernel which now forms only a small fraction of the vast encyclopædia, we have the following traditional account of the reign of five generations of the royal family.\*

\* A complete history of the Kuru line of kings as well as the relation of the Kurus to the earlier Vedic tribes has already been attempted. We hold that the *Mahābhārata* is nothing but the traditional history of the Vedic period and we have tried to establish our point already. In a paper entitled "Early Indian Chronology" an attempt will be made to identify the rulers of the Kuru line as given in the *Mahābhārata* (*Adiparva*, Chs. 24 & 95) with the princes, who are found in the *Rgveda* and the other *Saṃhitās*.



Now, from the account recorded in the great Epic, we find that in the reign of each of these kings we have some constitutional events of importance to record and from these we can form an idea as to the extent of popular sovereignty. The earliest of these Pratīpa had three sons *e.g.* Devāpi, Bāhlika, and Śāntanu. Devāpi suffered from some skin disease. When old, the king thought of installing Devāpi on the throne and made preparations for his investiture. Thereupon, the Brahmins, the elders, the rural people, and the citizens prevented him. They approached him and said that though the eldest prince was worthy and otherwise agreeable, he suffered from skin disease and hence he was not acceptable to the gods.



Dissuaded by the force of their argument and the weight of public opinion, the king had to give way and abandon the idea of crowning Devāpi. This however made him unhappy and he retired to the forest. Cf.

तं ब्राह्मणाश्च वृद्धाश्च पौरजानपदैः सह ।  
 सर्वं निवारयामासुर्देवापेरभिषेचनम् ॥  
 स तच्छ्रुत्वा तु नृपतिरभिषेकनिवारणम् ।  
 अश्रुकण्ठोऽभवद्राजा पर्यशीचत चात्मजम् ॥  
 एवं वदान्यो धर्मज्ञः सत्यसन्धश्च सोऽभवत् ।  
 प्रियः प्रजानामपि स त्वग्दोषेण प्रदूषितः ॥  
 हीनाङ्गं पृथिवीपालं नाभिनन्दन्ति देवताः ।  
 इति कृत्वा नृपश्चेष्टं प्रत्येषधन् द्विजर्षभाः ॥

.....  
 ततः प्रव्यधिताङ्गोऽसौ पुत्रशोकसमन्वितः ।  
 निवारितं नृपं दृष्ट्वा देवापिः संश्रितो वनम् ॥  
 वाञ्छीको मातुलकूलं तक्त्वा राज्यं समाश्रितः ।  
 पितृण् भ्रातृन् परित्यज्य प्राप्तवान् परमृद्धिमत् ॥  
 वाञ्छीकेन त्वनुज्ञातः शान्तनुर्लोकविश्रुतः ।  
 पितर्युपरते राजन् राजाऽराज्यमकारयत् ॥

Udyoga ch. 149.

On his withdrawal, the second son Bālīka became king for a time, but he too abdicated in favour of his younger brother Śāntanu who was crowned king by the people and the magnates.

Śāntanu's reign otherwise uneventful was marked towards its end by an event of constitutional importance. It was the

voluntary abdication of his only legitimate son and heir to the throne, the celebrated Bhīṣma. The king being smitten with love for the daughter of a fisherman, and yet not daring to accept her on account of the hard terms proposed by the father of the girl, who insisted on the stipulation that the son of his daughter by the king would be the heir to the throne to the exclusion of the virtuous Bhīṣma, was in a difficult position. The dutiful son, to fulfil his father's wishes, boldly went to the fisherman and asked him to bestow his daughter on the king and to remove all objections on his part, he voluntarily renounced his claim to the throne in a *Sabhā* in the presence of the members. The story is given in the *Ādi-parva*, *ch. Cī*. The whole transaction, we are told took place in the presence of the members of the *Sabhā*.

Śāntanu by this marriage had two sons Citrāṅgada and Vicitravīrya. The elder succeeded as king but soon he was killed in a war with the Gandharvas. The faithful Bhīṣma acted as the regent of the state, serving the cause of his minor young brother and administered the state according to the counsel of his jealous step-mother Satyawatī. Bhīṣma signalised his devotion by acquiring three brides for his step-brother Vicitravīrya (see *Ādi*, *ch. 96*). One of these brides, Ambā, was however sent back to her own kinsmen on account of her entreaties that she had chosen the king of the Saubhas as her lord. This however proved a great misfortune for her. The king of the Saubhas rejected her since she was the victory prize of another, according to the custom of those days. Rejected by both the parties, she in revenge implored the assistance of Rāma Jāmadagnya—the great champion of militant brahminism, to come and persuade Bhīṣma to take her for one of



his brothers. This being refused the two decided to appeal to the supreme arbitration of force and fought for several days.

The combat ended in a draw. The rest of the events is narrated in the Ādi-parva. But here again we meet with another event of constitutional importance which though not mentioned in the Ādi parva is incidentally narrated in the Udyoga-parva which seems to have preserved the true historical account. In the 147th chapter of that Parva, we have an account of the history of the Kuru country recorded by Bhīṣma himself. From that we know that Vicitravīrya who succeeded Śāntanu was too fond of women and consequently fell a victim to Yakṣmā (Phthisis) consumption and at the same time the Kuru country being invaded by the terrible Brahmin warrior, Paraśurāma the king was banished by the citizens. (रामभयादेव नागरैर्विप्रवासितः)

Next, a pestilence broke out and carried away a large number of inhabitants and only a small portion of the population survived. There was no king, the government fell into disorder and the misery of the people knew no bounds. Thereupon the people headed by the elders approached Bhīṣma the rightful heir to the throne. They together with Kāli, the wife of Śāntanu (step-mother of Bhīṣma) besought the worthy prince to take up the reins of government and to save the country from destruction.

This however Bhīṣma refused. He reminded them of his vow (which he had taken before the assembly) of celibacy and of renunciation and persuaded the queen-mother to allow the widowed queens of the late sovereign to raise issue by the practice of *Niyoga*.

Of these three sons, the eldest Dhṛtarāstra was not eligible for kingship as he was blind (Udyoga, ch. 147, v. 33.). Vidura too, was excluded being born of a slave-girl. Pāṇḍu thus became king though for a time Bhīṣma acted as the real ruler of the country. He however soon forsook the world and with his wives spent his time in the forest, making over his kingdom to his blind elder brother though this point is not clear in the account of the *Adi-parva* (ch. 119). The story of the handing over of the kingdom to his brother by Pāṇḍu is again put in the 148th chapter of the *Udyoga-parva* in the mouth of Bhāradvāja. There Droṇa, the speaker, makes the statement that the people had accepted Dhṛtarāstra as king.

The blind Dhṛtarāstra thus became the next king. His claims rested partly on his brother's abdication and gift and on popular sanction. Probably, this popular support enabled him to rule, for there existed a section of elders, who never recognised him as king (Udyoga, ch. 147).

It would appear from the following *ślokas* that Dhṛtarāstra held the throne by virtue of his brother's abdication, and acceptance by the people. Some of the Kuru elders like Droṇa regarded Dhṛtarāstra as a rightful king though they never thought of this as constituting a bar to the succession of the Pāṇḍavas. But others like Bhīṣma regarded Dhṛtarāstra as a mere figure-head representing royalty and sought to further the cause of the young prince Yudhiṣṭhira the son of Pāṇḍu to the exclusion of Dhṛtarāstra's sons. The views of Droṇa are found in the following verses:—cf.

तथा पाण्डुर्नरपतिः सत्यसन्धो जितेन्द्रियः ।

राजा कुरुणां धर्मात्मा सुवतः सुसमाहितः । ३



जिष्ठाया राज्यमददत् धृतराष्ट्राय धीमते ।

यवीयसे तथा क्षत्रे कुरुवंशविवर्त्तनः ॥

ततः सर्वाः प्रजास्तात धृतराष्ट्रं जनेश्वरम् ।

अन्वपद्यन्त विधिवद् यथा पाण्डुं जनाधिपम् ॥

Udyoga ch. 148.

Bhīṣma's opinion regarding Duryodhana's claim is found in his admonition to that prince in the midst of the assembly of Bhārata elders and allies summoned to settle the dispute about the succession to the Kuru kingdom.

अन्धः करुणहीनत्वान्न वै राजा पिता तव ।

राजा तु पाण्डुरभवत् महात्मा लोकविश्रुतः ॥

स राजा तस्य ते पुत्राः पितुर्दायाद्वहारिणः ।

मा तात कलहं कार्षी राज्यस्यार्धं प्रदीयताम् ॥

Udyo. ch. 147.

ज्येष्ठः प्रभ्रंशितो राज्याद्वीनाङ्ग इति भारत ॥

पाण्डुस्तु राज्यं सम्प्राप्तः कनौयानपिसन्नृपः ॥

विनाशि तस्य पुत्राणामिदं राज्यमरिन्दम ॥

अराजपुत्रो ह्यस्वामी परस्व' हर्तुमिच्छसि ॥ Udyo. ch. 149.

Elsewhere, the Mahābhārata (Udyoga, ch. 147) gives us another account of the Kuru state and this throws a flood of light on the events and their importance. In it, Bhīṣma narrates before the assembly the whole story from his own abdication and determination to serve his step-brother. Incidentally, we are further told that Vicitravīrya was excluded from the kingdom by his people, and on his exile the people approached Bhīṣma (tadābhya-

dhāvanmāmeva prajāḥ kṣudhbhayapīḍitāḥ—Udyo., ch. 147–25) and requested him to ascend the throne which but for his voluntary renunciation was his and told him that it was the will of the people that he should become king for the benefit of the people : cf.

ततो रामेन समरे हृन्दयुद्धसुपागमम् ।  
 स हि रामभयादेभिर्नागरैर्विप्रवासितः ॥  
 दारैर्वप्यतिपक्तश्च यक्ष्माणं समपद्यत ।  
 यदा त्वराजके राष्ट्रे न ववर्ष सुरेश्वरः ॥  
 तदाभ्यधावन्मामिव प्रजाः क्षुब्धयपौडिताः ॥  
 प्रजा ऊचुः—उपचीणाः प्रजाः सर्वा राजा भव भवाय नः ।  
 ईतीः प्रनुद भद्रं ते शान्तनोः कुलवर्द्धणः ॥  
 पीडयन्ते ते प्रजाः सर्वा व्याधिभिर्भृशदारुणैः ।  
 अत्यावशिष्टा गाङ्गेय ताः परित्वातुमर्हसि ॥  
 आधीन् प्रणुद वीर त्वं प्रजा धर्मेन पालय ।  
 त्वयि जीवति मा राष्ट्रं विनाशमुपगच्छतु ॥  
 .....  
 ततः पौरा महाराज माता काली च मे शुभा ॥  
 भृत्याः पुरोहिताचार्याः ब्राह्मणाश्च बहुश्रुताः ।  
 मामुत्तुर्भृशसन्तप्ता भव राजेति सन्ततम् ॥

The people who approached Bhīṣma included the Pauras or the townsmen (or burghers), the office-bearers of the state the priests and the Brāhmaṇas. Their appeal fell on deaf ears and Bhīṣma true to his principles, refused to violate his oath. The story shows clearly how the people took upon themselves the task of filling the throne, and the language too is free from ambiguity.



However, matters soon came to a head. The sons of Pāṇḍu grew up to manhood ; their virtues attracted the people to their side and they began to speak openly for the accession of the Pāṇḍava prince to the throne. This was galling to Duryodhana the eldest of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons and he related to his father the story of the great popularity of the Pāṇḍavas (Ādi, 141, 32-38). As the people wanted the Pāṇḍavas to be their rulers in place of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana asked his father to banish the five brothers to the city of Vāraṇāvatā, thus removing them from the eyes of the citizens.

This however was a step which the old king did not disapprove. But he feared the consequences of the step, which might lead to a revolution, in which the people were sure to take the side of the virtuous Yudhiṣṭhira. The king feared for his own life and the lives of his sons, who were sure to fall victims to popular fury, and he expressed his apprehension clearly in the following words :—

भृता हि पाण्डुनामात्मा वलं च सततं भृतम् ।

भृताः पुत्राश्च पौत्राश्च तेषामपि विशेषतः ॥

ते पुरा सक्तृतास्तात ! पाण्डुना नागरा जनाः ।

कथं युधिष्ठिरस्यार्थं न नो हन्युः स्वाम्भवान् ॥ Ādi. ch. 142.

This popular clamour for the young Pāṇḍava princes made the old king dread the consequences of ousting the Pāṇḍava princes from the state and consequently Duryodhana had recourse to the stratagem of sending them away to Vāraṇāvatā to be burnt down along with the inflammable house prepared by the royal conspirators. Their miraculous escape, their success at the *Svayamvara* of Draupadī, and their marriage are

well-known to all Indian readers of the Epic. At length, when the news of their success reached the ears of the old king, he along with his old ministers had the princes restored to their royal position, which was sanctioned by the legal right of inheritance and the force of popular choice (प्रकृतौनामनुमते पदे स्थास्यन्ति पाण्डवाः। Ādi., 204—11). Here too the language is significant. The Pāṇḍavas are described as being established by virtue of popular choice. Their restoration however was short-lived.

Events did not pass smoothly. The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who seemed to have based their claims upon the regency of their blind father, sanctioned by the handing over of authority to him by Pāṇḍu on the eve of his abdication, did not relish the prospect of the Pāṇḍavas' succession to the throne and remained constantly on the alert to dispossess them through force or fraud. They invited them to a dice-play, in which the Pāṇḍavas lost everything.\* Restored once more, they again yielded to the temptation of a re-play, lost every thing and departed, consenting to live as hermits for twelve years with another year's life *incognito*. When at the end of that period, they returned and claimed their inheritance. This was refused by their opponents and thereupon the parties had recourse to the supreme arbitration of might. Both allied themselves with friendly kings and India was divided into two great camps. All this together with the history of the war is too well-known to be

\* This dice-play was of great significance. As we all know, it was customary for princes during their coronation to prove their worth by success in a dice-play. Probably, this has been utilised by the Epic poet. Again, this dice-play does not show that the rulers could transfer everything at their will but that they merely staked their own rights which did not affect the liberties of the people.



narrated here, particularly because the subsequent history is of no use to us.

Soon the great war was over. The Pāṇḍavas alone survived and the eldest of them became *de facto* ruler of the state by right of conquest. The old blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra retired to the forest, but not before he had given an account of his rule to the Kuru community, both as a regent and a *de facto* ruler who had remained the titular head of the state for so long a period. Weak, weary, and worn out in body and mind, he craved pardon from his people for the sins of his sons; recounted the past history of the Kuru monarchy, explained the circumstances in which the crown had been forced upon him, expressed his present inability to govern, and sorrowfully sought their permission to leave for the forest. At the same time, he handed over the reins of lawful authority to Yudhiṣṭhira, in whose hands were placed the fortunes of his subjects. The whole account is given in the eighth and ninth chapters of the Aśrama-vāsika Parva which preserves the farewell utterances of the blind king at a meeting of the Pauras and Jānapadas of all castes not excluding the Śūdras (Aś., VIII, & IX). The whole account of this parting speech of the old king deserves our best attention. The king's speech is uttered in a spirit of conciliation: cf.

उवाच मतिमान् राजा धृतराष्ट्रो विशाम्यते ।

भवन्तः कुरवश्चैव चिरकालं सहोषिताः ॥

परस्परस्य सुहृदः परस्परहिते रताः ॥

.....  
अस्माकं भवतां चैव येयं प्रीतिर्हि शास्वती ।

न च सान्धेषु देशेषु राज्ञामिति मतिर्मम ॥

शान्तोऽस्मि वयसानेन तथा पुत्रविनाकृतः ।  
 उपवासकृशश्चास्मि गान्धारी सहितोऽनघाः ॥  
 .....  
 शान्तनुः पालयामास यथाबद्धसुधामिमाम् ।  
 तथा विचित्रवीर्यश्च भौष्मेन परिपालितः ॥  
 पालयामास वस्तात विदितार्थी न संशयः ।  
 यथा च पाण्डुर्भ्राता मे दयितो भवतामभूत् ॥  
 स चापि पालयामास यथावत्तच्च वेत्स्य ह ।  
 मया च भवतां सम्यक् शृणुषा या कृतानघाः ॥  
 असम्यग्वा'महाभागस्तत् चन्तव्यमतन्द्रिते ।  
 .....  
 तन्नया साधु वापोदं यदि वासाधु वै कृतम् ।  
 तदो हृदि न कर्त्तव्यं मया वदोऽयमञ्जलिः ॥  
 वदोऽयं हतपुत्रोऽयं दुःखितोऽयं नराधिपः ।  
 पूर्वरात्रां च पुत्रोऽयं इति कृत्वानुजानय ॥

These are not the words of a tyrant haughtily dictating terms to his subjects cowed with fear of despotic authority. They are on the other hand, the words of a popular monarch who had ever leaned on popular support and who on the approaching close of his career was rendering an account of himself to the people in tones of affection and regret. Many of the words uttered by him are significant. Repeated apologies are offered; the next successor Yudhiṣṭhira is placed in the hands of the and is referred to as a *nāyasa* or deposit, while the



the kingdom is described as a trust (*nyāsa*) in the hands of Yudhiṣṭhira.

युधिष्ठिरो महातेजा भवतः पालयिष्यति ॥

अवश्यमेव वक्तव्यमिति कृत्वा ब्रवीमि वः ।

एष न्यासो मया दत्तः सर्वेषां वो युधिष्ठिरः ॥

भवन्तोऽस्य च वीरस्य न्यासभुताः कृता मया ॥

Lastly, after saying that he never offended them, (Śl. 15—18.) he seeks permission to retire to the forest.

On the retirement of the old king, Yudhiṣṭhira the head of the Pāṇḍava brothers, was accepted as king and he governed well. After his retirement along with his brothers, Parīkṣit, the grandson of Arjuna, was raised to the throne with the consent of the people and on his death his son Janamejaya was crowned king by the citizens, the ministers, and the Rāja-purohita cf.

ततो नृपे तच्चकते जसा हते प्रयुज्य सर्वाः परलोकसत्क्रियाः ।

शचिर्हि जो राजपुरोहितस्तदा तथैव ते तस्य नृपस्य मन्त्रिणः ।

नृपं शिशुं तस्य सुतं प्रचक्रिरे समेत्य सर्वे पुरवासिनो जना ॥

(Ādi ch. 44, 5.)

From the evidences summarised above, we may come to the conclusion that in the Kuru country popular elective royalty was the established form of Government. These kings, though they could claim the right of succession by virtue of their being heirs of past rulers, were at the same time entirely dependent on the people. The latter exercised their right of

choice and election and without their support, the king could not think of carrying on government irresponsibly.

*The popular bodies*—The people thus remained supreme. In the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, we repeatedly hear of organised popular bodies like the *Pauras* and the *Jānapadas*. But, beyond this we do not know any details about them i.e. their constitution, franchise, or mode of exercise of their powers. Everything concerning them has been lost. But it is not impossible to recognize that the *Pauras* were the burghers, who derived their importance from their residence in the capital and also from their guilds and other organisations, which were common in India from the close of the Vedic age proper. It is significant to note that they are everywhere collectively designated as *Pura-vāsinaḥ*, *Paurāḥ*, or *Nāgarāḥ*. The *Jānapadas* also seem to have been organised bodies. In later times, such organisations of Śrenis, Pūgas or Samavāyas for various purposes developed into self-governing institutions,\* which are described in the Smṛtis. Details are lacking, not because they had neither organisation nor legal rights, but because their existence and influence were so well-known that none of the law-givers took care to explain them.

*The King as custodian of popular rights*—The king thus ruled not by virtue of divine privileges, but by popular consent. The tributes he got from his subjects, were not spent for his own luxury but for doing good to his subjects. Such was the

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\* The first to draw attention to these self-governing bodies was my father the late Pandit Rai B. C. Sastri Bahadur, whose article on the Municipal Institutions in Ancient India was published in 1898 in the Journal of the Buddhist Text Society. Recently, the political aspect of same subject has been discussed in detail by Mr. K. P. Jayaswal in his "Hindu Polity."



duty attached to the royal office from the days of the Vedas downwards. The king was merely a custodian of his people's money and the Epic thinkers are almost unanimous in holding this opinion. Thus, when the sage Gālava offered to a king the girl Mādhavī in consideration of the payment of a heavy *śulka*, the king expressed his inability and said— "Whatever accrues to me from my people is not for my enjoyment, but belongs to the people (*paura-jānapadārtham*). A king who spends this money for his own pleasure, is neither able to achieve dharma or fame, nor gets any benefit after death." Later on, in the Jātakas, we find an echo of the same idea. Thus, in the Tailapātra Jātaka, the king tempted by the Yakṣiṇī formally reminded the latter that he had no control over his subjects; he was simply empowered to chastise the wicked.

In lieu of his services to the people, the king received taxes which were regarded as his *wages*. Such an idea was a heritage from the old Vedic times and was fostered by the influence of the Social Contract theory, which arose towards the close of the that period and was elaborated by the Epic thinkers. The rights of kings were thus far from being absolute and in more than one place, taxes are designated as mere *wages* (*vetana*).

*Tyrranicide or deposition of wicked kings* :—Thrones of despotic princes were insecure. Irresponsible rule or high-handedness often made subjects rise in revolt and they put an end to despotism. Tyrannicide was common, and the political thinkers of the Mahābhārata prescribed the death of the despot as the only remedy for tyranny. In more than one place, we have passages which call upon the people to put their vicious rulers to death. Nay, in some passages it is regarded as a duty (Śānti, ch. 67 वसुधापिष्ठसचिवो वध्यो लोकस्य धर्महा ।). In one such

passage, which is preserved in the midst of verses lauding the various kinds of gifts, we are told "that a king who failed to protect his subjects from oppression by robbers or enemies, or under whose rule people starved or women were dishonoured, deserved death in the hands of the people, as if he were a mad dog." cf.

धिक् तस्य जीवितं राज्ञो राष्ट्रे यस्यावसीदति ।  
 द्विजोऽन्यो वा मनुष्योऽपि शिविराह वचो यथा ॥  
 यस्य न्न विषये राज्ञः स्नातकः सीदति क्षुधा ।  
 अहमिति तद्वाट् विन्दते सह राजकम् ॥ ३०  
 क्रोशन्त्यो यस्य वै राट्पाद्विप्लवो तरसा स्त्रियः ।  
 क्रोशतो पतिपुत्रानां मृतोऽसौ न च जीवति ॥ ३१  
 अरक्षितारं हर्तारं विप्रोसारमनायकम् ।  
 तं वै राजकलिं हन्तुः प्रजाः सन्नद्धा निर्घृणम् ॥ ३२  
 अहं वो रक्षितेयुक्ता यो न रक्षति भूमिपः ।  
 स संहत्य निहन्तव्यः श्वेव सोऽन्माद भ्रातुरः ॥ ३३

Anu. ch. 61.

As to instances of deposition of kings, we have in the *Aśva-medha parva*, the account of the deposition of king Khaninetra of Oudh (*Aśva.*, ch. 4). Elsewhere we have accounts of the downfall of the *Daṇḍakas* (*Daṇḍakānāṃ mahadrājyaṃ Aurveṇaikena nipātitaṃ*), the deposition of Arjuna Kārtavīrya, of Aila, and of king *Dambhodbhava*, who despised and maltreated the brahmins. Some more scattered accounts of deposed tyrants are found, and most of these names of such ill-fated tyrants occur in later literature. But, by far the most important is a traditional list of ill-fated kings as brought destruction on their race



by their sins and in this list we find the names of most of the princes mentioned by Kauṭilya in his chapter on 'Indriya-jaya,' (who were not identified by Dr. Shamasastry). In course of the debate before the Bhārata war, Bhīma mentions them (Ud., 74, 13-17) ch. :—

उद्योग च. 74. अष्टादशमे राजानः etc.

हैहयानामुदावर्त्तो नीपानां जनमेजयः ।

वहुलस्तालजङ्गानां कृमीणामुदतो वसुः ॥

अजविन्दुः सुवीरानां सुराष्ट्रानां रुषर्द्धिकः ।

अकञ्जय वल्मीकानां चीनानां धौतमूलकः ॥

हययीवो विदेहानां वरयुध महीजसाम् ।

वाहुः सुन्दरवेगानां दीप्ताक्षाणां पुरुरवाः ॥

सहजश्रेदिमत्स्यानां प्रवीरानां वृषध्वजः ।

धारणचन्द्रवत्सानां मुकुटानां विगाहनः ॥

शमय नन्दिवेगानामित्येते कुलपांसनाः ।

Only Karāla Vaideha's name mentioned in the Kauṭīliya and in Pali tradition, is not in the list. In a chapter of the Mahā-bhārata, he is described as a pious king discussing the Sāṃkhya doctrine with Pāṇcāśikha, one of the earliest expounders of the system. His name however occurs in the Buddhacarita.\*

*Other forms of government:*—But while we have nothing more about Northern India, we have interesting side-lights on the Yādavas, which enable us to know something of another type of government which existed in the south where that tribe of sturdy fighters ruled. In the days of the great war,

\* कर्णविदेहपतेरुवाच तत्राज्ञासक्यकामम् ।

अथापि अस्मभ्यं न ज्ञानं तस्याजसन्धयम् ॥ *Buddhacarita*, iv, 80.

the Yādavas were not regarded as Kṣatriyas of pure Aryan blood but as Vrātyas. So said Bhūriśravas to Arjuna who following the advice of Kṛṣṇa had cut off his hands, while he was about to smite his rival Sātyaki.<sup>6</sup> He reproached Arjuna for following the advice of Kṛṣṇa, and attributed his misdeeds to his connection with the Yādavas, whom he described as not only wicked and perverted by nature but also Vrātyas. Moreover, it is well-known to all students of the Mahābhārata that there prevailed among them not only marriage with first cousins, but also other customs which did not find place among the true Aryans.

From the Epic, we learn that the Yādavas had a peculiar republican constitution. They were a Confederation of several independent clans and comprised among others the Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis, and Kukuras among them. Each clan was ruled by its hereditary chief, but the government of the whole confederation was vested in an assembly of the chiefs who exercised independent local jurisdiction. This assembly was under an officer called Sabhāpati, who in times of emergency summoned the Yādava princes and Elders to assemble in the Sabhā. (Sabhā-parva ch. 220, 10-13). It was the Sabhāpati who summoned the Yādavas to arms by beat of drums and communicated to them the tidings of Subhadrā's abduction by Arjuna:

The Confederation as a whole, had no king in the ordinary sense of the word but had an elected chief who acted as the President. The affairs of the state were managed by the body of Elders whose voice was supreme. Vāsudeva or Śrīkṛṣṇa, regarded later on as the incarnation of God himself, was one of

\* Droṇa P., xlii, 15.



the elders. In ch. 81, śloka 25 of the Śānti Parva, he is described as one of the Saṅgha mukhyas of the Yādava Saṅgha and is warned by Nārada to guard against dissensions in the Saṅgha as this was sure to destroy the Confederation. These chiefs, however, seem to have retained autonomous jurisdiction over their own subjects and tribesmen. Their independence is to be inferred from the following passage which describes the chiefs of the Yādavas, Kukuras, and Bhojas as *lokeśvaras* or "rulers of men themselves," cf.

यादवाः कुकुरा भोजा सर्वे चान्यकट्वण्यः ।

तय्यासक्ता महाबाहो लोका लोकेश्वराश्च ये ॥

But, while they retained local jurisdiction and ruling authority, they were not crowned kings in the strict sense of the word. This would appear from śl. 29, ch. XXXVII, of the Sabhā-parva, where, in course of the dispute regarding the *arghya*, the Cedi Śiśupāla takes exception to the selection of Śrīkṛṣṇa on the ground that he was not worthy of that high honour as he neither came of a royal family (a-rāja), nor had ever been crowned king. cf.

क्षौवि दारक्रिया यादव् चम्बे च रूपदर्शनम् ।

अराजो राजवत् पूजा तथा तैश्चरिसूदन ॥

*Republicanism and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.*—Before we conclude our account of the Yādavas, we must say something of Śrīkṛṣṇa undoubtedly the central figure in the present version of the Epic narrative. Great as a religious teacher and equally prominent in war and politics, Śrīkṛṣṇa today is regarded as an incarnation of the Deity. His political career and teachings as described

in the Epic, show him to be worthy of that reverence, with which India invokes his name and no account of the Mahābhārata politics will be complete, unless we attempt to set forth the main outlines of his policy or the part he played in the political life of contemporary India. Here we summarize his activities during the three important phases of his career :—

(1). By birth, Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva was a Vṛṣṇi prince and a scion of the ruling Yādava Kṣātriyas. The efforts of his earlier life were devoted to the destruction of the power of Kāṁsa who had usurped the headship of the Yādavas and was trying to perpetuate absolute power, in league with a number of eastern princes *i.e.* Jarāsandha and his allies *viz.* Bhagadatta of Kāmarupa, Vakra of Karuṣa and Puṇḍra Vāsudeva, lord of Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and the Kirātas. This league was joined by some Kṣātriya princes like the Cedi Śiśupāla and Bhīṣmaka and this compelled some of Kṣātriya princes to move westward. The Yādavas like the princes of the Śurasenas, Śalvas, Pāṇaccaras, South Pañcāla and East Kośala, had to move and they retired to the fortified city of Kuśasthali, and to Dvārāvati.

(2). After his success against Kāṁsa whom he killed, he set up Kāṁsa's father Ugrasena as the elected President of the confederacy and tried to re-organise the Yādavas. He directed his energies against Jarāsandha (whose daughter Kāṁsa had married) and tried to free India from the consequences of his policy of 'blood and iron.' It was the practice of the latter to uproot all local monarchs and to imprison or slaughter them. He and his allies had thus become a menace to the Kṣātriyas of the west and so Kṛṣṇa revived the "Kṣātriya League" composed of the Ailas and the Ikṣvākus and called upon Yudhiṣṭhira to



perform a Rājasūya, a preliminary step to which would be the overthrow of Jarāsandha. The latter was despatched more by stratagem than force and his son Sahadeva was put on the throne of Magadha.

(3). The last phase of Kṛṣṇa's life was devoted to the settlement of the dispute between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. He tried his best to win over or persuade Duryodhana to a policy of conciliation but failed. Duryodhana did not only not listen to his counsels of moderation but went so far as to attempt the imprisonment of Kṛṣṇa.

In the Assembly which met on the eve of the Bhārata war, when all efforts at mediation or compromise failed, Kṛṣṇa delivered a number of speeches in which he called upon the Kuru elders to avoid a fratricidal war. His arguments won over most of them to his views, but even then Duryodhana proved obdurate. Thereupon Kṛṣṇa delivered his final address and called upon the Kurus to act on the principle of sacrificing the disturbing elements in the royal family for the general good. He asked them to follow the example of the Yādavas by arresting Duryodhana and his counsellors and thus to restore peace. Udyo. ch. 128.

*c.f.* प्रत्यक्षमेतद्भवतां यद्वक्ष्यामि हितं वचः ।

भवतामानुकूल्येन यदि रोचेत भारताः ॥

भोजराजस्य वृद्धस्य दुराचारोऽज्ञानात्मवान् ।

जीवतः पितुरैश्वर्यं हृत्वा मृत्युवशं गतः ॥

उग्रसेनसुतः कंसः परित्यक्तः स बान्धवै ।

ज्जातीणां हितकामेन मया शस्तो महासूचि ॥

आहुकः पुनरस्माभिर्ज्जातिभिश्चापि सत्कृतः ।

उग्रसेनः कृतो राजा भोजराज्यस्य वरुणः ॥

कंसमेकं परित्यज्य कुलार्थं सर्वथादवाः ।  
 सन्भूय सुखमेधन्ते भारतान्धकहृणयः ॥  
 तथा दुर्योधनं कणे शकुनिं चापि सीवलं ।  
 वहा दुःशासनश्चापि पाण्डवेभ्यः प्रयच्छत ॥  
 त्यजेत् कुलार्थं पुरुषं ग्रामस्यार्थं कुलं त्यजेत् ।  
 ग्रामं जनपदस्यार्थं आत्मार्यं पृथिवीं त्यजेत् ॥  
 राजन् दुर्योधनं वहा ततः संशम्य पाण्डवैः ।  
 तत्कृते न विनश्येयुः क्षत्रियाः क्षत्रियर्षभ ॥

*The Democratic Ganas*—Next to these limited monarchies, oligarchical confederations and despotic states, we have a large number of Ganas the administrative machinery of which is so well described in ch. CVII of the Śāntiparva and which has been so ably explained and interpreted by Mr. Jayaswal. We find mention of a large number of these Ganas in chapters describing wars or conquests and incidentally we have some real geographical and political data throwing light on the political life of the country.

The more important of these Ganas were :—

- |                                                                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. The Yaudheyas.                                                                 | 4. The Audumvaras.        |
| 2. The Mālavas.                                                                   | 5. The Vṛṣṇis & Andhakas. |
| 3. The Śivis. They are mentioned along with the Trigartas, Ambaṣṭhas and Mālavas. | 6. The Vātadhānas         |
|                                                                                   | 7. The Mādhyamakeyas.     |
|                                                                                   | 8. The Trigartas.         |
|                                                                                   | 9. The Ambaṣṭhas.         |

For a detailed discussion of Gaṇa government, our readers are referred to the Mahābhārata or the pages of Mr. Jayaswal's book. Here we may simply summarise their



leading features, *e.g.* (a) These Gaṇas were aggregates of kulas and gotras and were dominated by men of the same caste or family (कुलेन सदृशाः सर्वे जाताः च सदृशा स्तथा ॥). They seem moreover to have been democratic bodies.

(b) Sovereignty was vested in the people. All had equal rights and burdens, participated in public matters and bore arms in war.

(c) There was a body of Mukhyas or Gaṇottamāḥ who ruled these Corporations. All measures required popular approval though on certain matters requiring secrecy, the leaders deliberated in secret and then took public sanction.

*Summary of the evidences furnished by the Mahābhārata kernel.*—When we summarise the above evidence of the Mahābhārata kernel, we further find that—

(i) In the Yādava country and in the land of the Vāhikas a non-monarchical form of government existed. The Yādavas formed a republican Confederacy of small clans, each clan having its hereditary chief, but the affairs of the corporation were entrusted not to one particular hereditary monarch, but to a body of elected Elders or Saṅgha-mukhyas.

(ii) In the secluded nooks and corners or in fastnesses, Gaṇa states existed and in these there were democratic popular constitutions.

(iii) The East, especially the land of Magadha had become the centre of an Imperialistic movement, the nature and character of which was entirely different.

(iv) In the land of the Kurus, Pāñcālas, Matsyas and most other regions of Madhyadeśa, monarchy of the type described in the Brāhmaṇa literature, was the accepted form of government.

(v) In these states of the Madhyadeśa, the Sabhā voiced public opinion. The *Pauras* and *Jānapadas* were all-powerful bodies which could not be barred even from talking of the deposition of a *de facto* ruler.

(vi) Ministers though royal servants, relied on public support also. Indeed, *Paura-jānapada-priya* is an almost permanent epithet throughout the Mahābhārata. One Epic passage is more significant and speaks of a king proclaiming the chosen minister in his Sabhā (instance of Kaṅka *i.e.* Yudhiṣṭhira in disguise, in the country of Virāt.)

*Political Tendencies.*—Moreover, the Mahābhārata tradition gives us hints as to the main political tendencies of the day. Of these, the two following are worth mention :—

(I) *The Magadha Imperialistic movement* :—This was a new thing in politics. The attempt of Jarāsandha to uproot all monarchs, to put them to death and to unify the whole country was a new departure from old politics. The mention of Magadha is indeed significant. For, as we shall see later on, this was the region where all subsequent empires *i.e.* those of the Śāisunāgas, Nandas, Mauryas, Guptas, and lastly the Pālas originated.

(II) *The counter-movement of Republicanism* :—Of this the greatest champion was Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Yādava elder. His views and aims have already been given.

*Real popular control.*—The most important point, which no historian of this Epic fails to observe is that though monarchy was gradually making its advance in the central region, yet the ruler was not as yet irresponsible or free from real popular control. Interferences in matters of succession are significant in themselves and we find such interferences on the part of the people in most cases. In the case of Śāntanu, his father was made



to bow before popular opposition. In the case of his son Bhīṣma, the young prince made his renunciation before the Sabhā. In the case of the next generation, Vicitra-vīrya was indeed allowed to become king, but he was exiled on account of his addiction to women, and Bhīṣma was called upon to ascend the throne. Next, Pāṇḍu became the ruler and on abdication handed over power to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. The latter accepted this office and his acceptance being ratified by the people became a real king. The question as to who would be successor gave rise to a difference in the public opinion and two parties were formed, *i.e.*

(a) One of these regarded Dhṛtarāṣṭra as a true king, on account of his (i) brother's gift (ii) and the subsequent ratification by the people. (b) The other party clearly regarded him as a usurper, and the sentiments of that party were voiced by Bhīṣma.

Though for a time the creation of two different seats postponed a civil war, yet the popularity of the Pāṇḍavas, made Dhṛtarāṣṭra always alive to the dangers of a popular rising.

This peculiar nature of the Kuru constitution is worth noticing. There is monarchy indeed, but the "anointed" was more of a mandatory of the people than an irresponsible tyrant. Indeed, the last words of the old Dhṛtarāṣṭra addressed to the Kuru multitudes reveal to us the real character of the monarchy, when the old king speaks of leaving Yudhiṣṭhira as a "nyāsa" or deposit in the hands of the people and of entrusting Yudhiṣṭhira with the noble duty of protecting the people. Such being the prevailing idea, in all cases of succession to the throne, the people assembled and selected their kings. This has been proved in the case of Śāntanu, Vichitravīrya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Parīkṣita, Janāmejaya and his successors

*Checks on regal authority.*—Furthermore, in the Mahābbārata, we find evidences which confirm some leading features of the political life described in the Brāhmaṇic literature. The limited authority of kings of the Kuru line, the deposition of unrighteous rulers and the constant vigilance on the part of the Pauras and Jānapadas against kingly high-handedness have already been narrated. Next, we pass on to point out some more facts, to show not only this parallelism, but also the existence of some constitutional checks on regal authority. Of these we may mention the following :—

- (1) The constitutional limitations imposed on regal authority, by the king's Coronation Oath.
- (2) Checks on ministers and their moral liability to look to popular interests.
- (3) Existence of the popular element in the Royal Council.
- (4) Prevailing political ideas, which inspite of the influence of sacerdotalism or of paternalism recognized the ultimate sovereignty of the people and regarded the king as the custodian of popular interests who received tribute and allegiance in lieu of righteous rule. The moral right of revolution was also supposed to reside in the people.

The royal oath, at the time of coronation was the most important of the constitutional limitations. In (ch. LIX. of) the Śāntiparvan, we have the traditional account of Vena's deposition by the *Rsis* and the birth and inauguration of Prthu and incidentally we have mention of the oath taken by him at the instance of the *Devas* :—*cf.*

स्तमुचुस्तददेवास्ते ते चैव परमर्षयः ।

नियतो यत्र धर्मो वै तमशङ्कः समाचर । १०३



.....  
 प्रतिज्ञाञ्चाधिरोहस्य मनसा कर्मणा गिरा ।  
 पालयिष्याम्यहं भौमं ब्रह्म इत्येव चासक्तः ॥ १०६  
 यद्यात्र धर्मो नित्योक्तो दण्डनोतिव्यपाश्रयः ।  
 तमशङ्कः करिष्यामि स्त्रवशो न कदाचन ॥ १०७  
 अदण्डा मे द्विजाद्येति प्रतिजानोहि हे विभो ।  
 लोकश्च सङ्गरात् कृत्स्नं वातास्मीति परन्तप ॥ १०८

This oath limited the scope of regal activity to the protection of the people, maintenance of law and order, respect for social privileges and the punishment of wrong-doers only. The importance of this coronation oath imposing obligations on the king is echoed by many parables of the Mahābhārata. To quote one of many such, we find in the story of Nṛga (Anuśāsana ch. LXX.), that Yama reminded the king that his punishment was due to his non performance of his Oath of protection (रक्षितास्मीति चोक्तं ते प्रतिज्ञा चानृता तव । ब्राह्मणस्यैवादानाद्विधस्ते व्यतिक्रमः ॥ २३)

Other limitations existed, *viz.*, the king's subservience to the laws equally with his subjects, his inability to impose extra taxes at will and his obligation to carry out the duties entrusted to him. As the Śānti-parva expressly says (ch. LXXXVII—26-33) extra taxes could be imposed only with popular sanction.

*Ministers.*—Next to the oath, there was the activity of the ministers and the weight of public opinion expressed in the Sabhā, which on important occasions the elders and prominent men of all castes attended. We find even women of position like Kuntī and Gāndhārī giving their advice. Ministers though royal servants were morally responsible to the people. Pre-eminent among the minister-advisers was the Purohita, who

according to the Śāntiparva shared with the king his functions and merits (तस्य धर्मस्य सर्वस्य भागी राजपुरोहितः । LXXII. 18.). Then came the Brāhmaṇa advisers, whose opinion had a great weight in as much as their position and life was safe-guarded by their immunities. The position of the Purohita would appear from the pre-eminence of Vasiṣṭha in the administration of Ayodhyā after Daśaratha's death and even of Dhaumya (a man of less repute and wanting in strong personality) who is entrusted with the regency and the safety of the capital along with Yuyutsu in the Āśramavāśika parvan.\* (युयुत्सुश्च महातेजा धौम्यश्चैव पुरोहितः । युधिष्ठिरस्य वचनात् पुरयुषिं प्रचक्रतुः ॥ XXIII. 15 Duryodhana also consulted his priests whenever he wanted to raise money.

*Caste representation in the Council.*—Not to speak of the influence of the Brāhmaṇas, the weight of the ministerial council was augmented by the presence of ministers of other castes who represented the opinion of their respective social groups. The chapters of the Rājadharmas speak of eight mantriṇah (not specified by name, but including, the Śuklāmātya, Senāpati, Pratibhāra, Śīrorakṣa, Dāta and Sāndhivigrahika. See Śānti Ch. LXXXV.) and specifically mentions in addition, the Council of Amātyas comprising four Brahmins, eight Kṣatriyas, twenty-one Vaiśyas, three Śūdras and one Sūta. cf.

वक्ष्यामि तु यथा मातगान् यादृशांश्च करिष्यसि । ६  
चतुरो ब्राह्मणान् वैद्यान् प्रगल्भान् स्नातकान् शुचीन् ।  
क्षत्रियांश्च तथा चाष्टौ वलिनः शस्त्रपाणिनः ॥ ७  
वैश्यान् विष्णेन सम्पन्नानेकविंशतिसंख्यया ।  
त्रिंशं शूद्रान् विनीतांश्च शुचीन् कर्मणि पूर्वके ॥ ८  
अष्टाभिश्च गुणैर्युक्तं सत्तं पौराणिकं तथा ॥

\* See N. Law. Hindu Polity pp. 27. Ch. on the State Council.



The relation between the two bodies is rather meagre, but evidently, the consultation was made with the eight *mantriṇaḥ* and then the proposed measures were given out to the Council for opinion (अष्टानां मन्त्रिणां मध्ये मन्त्रं राजोपधारयेत् । ततः सम्प्रेषयेद्वाङ्मे राष्ट्रीयाय च दर्शयेत् ॥). The reference to Śūdra ministers should not be regarded merely as an instance of idealism but it was a fact since we find caste representatives already in the Brāhmaṇas in connection with all the inaugural ceremonies. The Mahābhārata gives us instances of ministers of lower caste like Vidura, and Yuyutsu. Not to speak of ministers of lower caste, any one maintaining order and protecting life and property was allowed due reverence. (शूद्रो वा यदि वाऽप्यन्यः सर्वथा मानमर्हति । 38—LXXVIII. Śānti.)

They were morally liable for giving right advice to the king (if we are to believe in the Epic evidence). Various causes and circumstances stood in the way of the growth of a legal responsibility in such an early period but in spite of this, the prevailing political ideas fastened moral responsibility on the ministers and this appears from passages the meaning of which is very clear. In one place, we are told that unrighteous ministers go to hell and in another, it is laid down that they deserve death in the hands of the people (कार्यवधिकृताः सम्मगकुर्वन्तो नृपानुगाः । आत्मानं पुरतः कृत्वा यान्वयः सङ्घपार्ष्णिवाः ॥ 17—cf. LXXXV, Śānti; and असत्यापिष्ठसचिवो वध्मो लौकस्य धर्मज्ञा ॥). There are evidences to prove that ministers who were appointed by the kings were some times proclaimed to the people (cf. the account of Virāṭa's proclamation of Yudhiṣṭhira in his Sabhā).

This simpler state of political life and the popular character of monarchy thus receives ample confirmation from the tradition of the Epic kernel. We have seen how limited the

authority of kings was in those days ; how they always feared the anger of their subjects and how government though vested in the king depended mainly on the opinion of the people. The states were small and the various popular bodies were efficient in checking royal high-handed-ness. The Assemblies of the city or of the country remained active and always imposed their will on their rulers. This state of affairs will receive some more confirmation if we analyse the prevailing political ideas of those days. The idea of a contract subsisting between the ruler and the ruled, the conception of kings as guardians of the public interest, the belief that the tax paid to the king was but his wages, all go to prove the existence of popular sovereignty and of limited monarchy. For the present, however, we refrain from any detailed discussion of these, since, the ideas found in the Rāja-dharma chapters are mingled with some others which belong to a later age. The super-position of varied strata of thought and speculation stand in the way of utilising this material with reference to this period. We reserve a fuller discussion of these for the next chapter, in which we shall enter into an analysis of the political condition which preceded the gradual decay of popular sovereignty and the rise of pure monarchy.



## Rāmāyanic Evidence

THE picture of political conditions furnished by the Rāmāyaṇa is absolutely the same as we get in the Epic kernel, the former depicting rather a more primitive political life. Ayodhyā was like the Kuru kingdom, a monarchy ruled by the Aikṣāka princes with whom the royal office was hereditary. But in spite of this, the rulers were far from being irresponsible. They depended on the advice and counsel of their Purohitas and Amātyas, and on all important occasions, the popular bodies exercised their rights. The Pauras, the Jānapadas, and the leaders of castes and guilds were potent factors in the administrative system. Their voice was supreme and the king was bound to take their advice on all important affairs of state. The Rājakṛts or king-makers who are repeatedly mentioned in the Atharva Veda and the Brāhmaṇas figure prominently in the Rāmāyaṇa. We have innumerable instances to prove the truth of the above statements. Thus, we find Daśaratha consulting his subjects i.e. the Brāhmaṇas, Bala-mukhyas, Pauras and Jānapadas (Ayo. II. 19-20 ब्रह्मणा बलमुख्याश्च पौरजानपदेः सह ।) before coming to a decision about the Yauvarājya of Rāma (Ayo. ch. IV.). We find them all eagerly awaiting the Yauvarājya of Rāma (Ayo. ch. XIV XV) and on the death of the king, they gathered with a view to the restoration of order in the kingdom, at the instance of the sage Vasiṣṭha (Ayo. ch. LXXXI). Again, the Naigamāḥ and Nāgarikāḥ accompanied Bharata in his mission to find Rāma

(Ayo. LXXXII) and they called upon him to assume kingship (Ayo CXI). Finally, when Rāma returned from the war victorious, the people e.g. the Pauras, Jānapadas, the Śreṇi-mukhyas and the Elders welcomed him. (Laṅkā. ch. CXXIX).

While these instances show popular participation in all important affairs of state, some more may be cited to show the amount of authority they exercised. From these it would be clear, that it was within their rights to expel wicked princes, to fill up the throne if there were any vacancy caused by abnormal circumstances, or to appoint a Regent to fill the throne.

Of the expulsion of a wicked prince at the instance of the people, we have the story of the exile of Asamañjāḥ (see Bāla. XXXVIII). The full story of his expulsion is given in the XXXVIth chapter of the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa where the Mahāmātra Siddhārtha gives a true account in order to refute the views of Kaikeyī that the king could expel his eldest son if he so wished. The true cause of Asamañja's banishment was that, the prince used to drown the children of his father's subjects in the Sarayu. Hence the people asked the king to punish him and the latter following their advice discarded him. *cf.*

असमञ्जो गृहीत्वा तु क्रोडतः पथि दारकान् ।

सरयुं प्रक्षिपन्नपुंस् रमते तेन दुर्मतिः ।

तं दृष्ट्वा नागराः सर्वे क्रुद्धा राजानमब्रवीत् ।

असमञ्जं वृणोष्वैकमस्मान् वा राष्ट्रवर्धनः ॥

स तासां वचः श्रुत्वा प्रकृतौनां नराधिपः ।

तं त्वत्वाजाहितं पुत्रं तासां प्रियचिकीर्षया ॥

As to an instance of the election of a king by the people, we have the account of the election of Amśumān, who was raised



to the throne by the people on the death of his predecessor Sagara. *cf.*

कालधर्मकृते राम सगरे प्रकृतोजनाः ।

राजानं रोचयामासुरंशमन्तं सुधार्मिकम् ॥

The election of a king was thus evidently within their powers and we find that on the death of Daśaratha, while Bharata was absent, some of the Rājakartāraḥ proposed the election of any other Aikṣāku prince to the throne. *cf.*

समेत्य राजकर्तारः सभामौयुद्धिंजातयः ॥ २

इच्छाकृणामिहादैव कश्चिद्राजा विधीयताम् ॥

अराजकं हि नो राष्ट्रं विनाशं समवाप्नुयात् ॥ ८

Of these proposals, one is indeed very interesting *i.e.* Vaśiṣṭha's resolution to place Sitā on the vacant throne of her exiled husband. *cf.*

अनुठास्यति रामस्य सोता प्रकृतमासनम् । २३

प्राप्ता हि दाराः सर्वेषां दारसंयहवर्त्तिणाम् ।

आत्मेयमिति रामस्य पालयिष्यति मेदिनौम् ॥ २४

The people thus were everything; the Rājakartāraḥ wielded immense influence and royalty depended on the good-will of the subjects.

NOTE.—This picture of Epic political life marks the transition from primitive polity to the limited constitutional monarchies preceding the Imperial movement of later ages. It is characterised by popular sovereignty and the subservience of monarchy to popular opinion. Kings had not as yet freed themselves from popular control. The states were small and they can be compared favourably with the city states of Greece or Italy in the Vth or VIth century B.C. or even earlier. Effective checks on royalty existed. First

of all, there were the Kṣatriya kinsmen of the king who formed the fighting militia and then there were the priestly classes whose social immunities placed them at a great advantage. The common people too had their guilds or associations and they asserted their opinion on all important questions of the day.

The primitive character of the Mahābhārata polity ought to be taken into account in discussing the date of the present redaction of the great historical work. European scholars are as a rule disposed to regard the whole Mahābhārata as a late production, simply because they find mention of a few words in the Epic like the *Dindra* (*Harivaṃsa*) or some tribe-names like the Sakas, Pahlavas, Yavanas, Cīnas or Tuṣāras. The occurrence of these words show indeed, a later handling but they do not prove that the whole Parva or chapter containing the word was composed during a late period. The most reasonable view should be to hold that these words crept in through a late writer or scribe, who interpolated the political and geographical data of his own age, to complete the narratives and descriptions of the Epic chapters. The simple political life of the Epic is sufficient to prove its antiquity, for in a later age, when popular government was a thing of the past no one would have strained his imagination to impose a character of antiquity on the picture of contemporary political life.

One of the earliest to recognize the popular character of the Epic polity is Dr. Washburn Hopkins, whose valuable contributions on the Epic are too well known to be mentioned here. He has tried to prove the democratic character of the Kuru state and has recognized the importance of the people in the administration. He has also emphasised upon the point that the people chose their kings and participated in royal coronations and thereby ratified their election. He has also discussed the importance of the Sabha (*Ger. Sippe*). His views are summarised in his article on "The position of the ruling caste in India." See *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. XIII. pp. 57-372.





**Political Divisions****Monarchies and Republics**

FROM the Epic account of political life in the later Vedic age, we pass on to the political evolution during the period elapsing from the close of the Vedic age to the sixth cen. B. C., which saw the beginning of that great movement culminating in the union of the whole of Northern India into a powerful Empire.

The history of the period yet remains obscure. We have neither proper land-marks separating it from the later Vedic Age, nor clear records stating the succession of dynasties or the unbroken chronological relation of princes to their successors or predecessors. While we lack such a connected and systematic chronological account, the material at our disposal is not insufficient for a study of the political evolution during this period.

The chief evidence at our disposal is that furnished by the Brāhmaṇic sūtras and the Upaniṣads which comprise older traditions, together with those of a subsequent age. Of the sūtras, those of Pāṇini the grammarian are of great importance and throw light on the contemporary geographical and political divisions of the country. The next great sources of evidence on the period are those furnished by the canonical literature of the Buddhists, of which we have but a late redaction, the folklore of the post-vedic period preserved in the form of the Jātaka stories by the Buddhist monks who utilised them for the



teaching of the laity, the dynastic lists though perverted and distorted, preserved in the Purāṇas and the picture of social and political life in the Dharmasūtras which we may take to be Pre-kauṭilyan if not entirely Pre-Buddhistic. As the result of a careful study, we can glean many important historical facts and these enable us to attempt a picture of political evolution during this long and dark period.

The bulk of geographical data is mainly obtainable from the chapters of Pāṇini dealing with suffixes (*taddhita*) which are added to place or tribe names.\* Pāṇini, who clearly appears to have been a native of the modern Peshwar district, is more familiar with the North-Western regions of India, than the countries and divisions of the extreme East or South.†

But by far, more interesting light is thrown by some of his Sūtras in which Pāṇini mentions the existence of Sanghas and the political Corporations of fighting people (*ayudhajet Saṅghas*).

\* The exact date of Pāṇini is yet to be found out. In earlier pages we have simply accepted the views of Goldstücker which was supported by the late Dr. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar. The accepted date of VIIIth cen. B.C. nearly approaches the truth. Pāṇini was certainly not familiar with Buddhism, but seems to have been acquainted with some of the earlier wandering sects. Here again, a great difficulty arises, since, monkish writers have introduced confusion by making the founders of these sects synchronous with the founder of their religion, with a view to narrate the defeat of the former by their own teacher.

† Of the extreme westerly regions, we find mention of Kamboja (IV. 1. 175), Gandhāra (IV. 1. 199), the Sindhu region (IV. 3. 93), Takṣaśilā (IV. 3. 93), the Vāhikas (V. 3. 114, IV. 2. 117), the Madras (IV. 2. 131 and 108), the Trigartas (IV. 1. 111; V. 3. 116), the Sauvīras (IV. 1. 148, IV. 2. 76) and Kapisa (IV. 2. 99).

Of the Central region, the following appear in his sūtras prominently e.g. the Kūrus (IV. 1. 176, 172), Salyas (IV. 1. 169), Kosala (IV. 1. 171), Kāśi (IV. 2. 116), Uśīnara (IV. 2. 118) and Yugandhara (IV. 1. 173).

Of Eastern countries, he mentions Magadha (IV. 1. 170), Kāśi (IV. 1. 170), the Vṛjī (IV. 2. 131), while in connection with the South he mentions Kacchā (IV. 2. 126 and 133) Avānti (IV. 1. 176), Aśvaka (IV. 1. 173), the Andhakas and the Vṛjī (IV. 1. 114).

IV. 3. 91). He specifically notes the Vāhikas, the Yaudheyas and the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis (V. iii. 113—117 and V. I 21). Details about the method of government in these states are not known, with the exception that some of them were ruled by local saṅghas or republican corporations, the rest remaining under kings, since there is no evidence to the contrary. Fuller information, though of the nature of legends is obtainable from the early Pāli suttas which are supposed to retain the sayings of the Buddha and thus to describe a state of affairs contemporary with that great teacher. More details of the same nature are preserved in the Jātakas, but how far they are reliable is yet to be decided, since, according to many eminent Buddhist scholars they bear the stamp of subsequent handling and modification.

As pointed out by the late Prof. Rhys Davids the Buddhist canonical literature represented by the Aṅguttara Nikāya, as well as some of the Jātakas repeatedly speak of the "Solasa Mahājanapadāni" or the sixteen states. Probably, this is an echo of the state of affairs which existed long prior to the VIth century. The sixteen states are as follows :—

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Kāsi          | 9. Kuru                |
| 2. Kosala        | 10. Pañcāla            |
| 3. Aṅga          | 11. Maccha (Matsya)    |
| 4. Magadha       | 12. Sūrasena           |
| 5. Vajji         | 13. Assaka (or Aśmaka) |
| 6. Malla         | 14. Avanti             |
| 7. Ceti (Cedi)   | 15. Gandhāra           |
| 8. Vamśa (Vatsa) | 16. Kamboja            |

This list of states however, should not be regarded as exhaustive. The Jains who seem to have been familiar with



other parts of India vary this list of sixteen states and mention Vaṅga, Malaya, Mālava, Accha, Koccha (Kaccha), Lāḍha (Rāḍha), and Sambhuttala (Suhma). This list of the Bhagavatī-sutta is thus very suggestive, since the existence of some of the kingdoms not occurring in the Buddhist stock-list is proved by occasional references to them in the Canon. Vaṅga thus appears in the compound Vaṅgantaputta, an epithet applied to the sage Upasena. Some of the Epic chapters mention Vaṅga, Aṅga, Kāmarupa and Suhma, though in many accounts the princes of these regions are described as Mlecchas. The existence of Kaliṅga, Bharu (Jāt. 213) and the settlement of Dantapura is proved by the evidence of the Buddhist canon. The oldest Buddhist commentaries, the Mahānidāsa and Cullānidāsa throw more light and mention Tamali (Tamluk, proving the existence of Suhma), Bharukaccha and various other regions, which were already in existence for a long time undoubtedly. Then, there were the non-Aryan Yakṣa states mentioned in the Buddhist books and prominent of these was the state of Ālavi.

With the exception of some states on the western and the eastern fringe which were republics, by far the larger number of those mentioned above were ruled by kings. Some of these kingdoms again were very old and their existence has then traced in the Vedic hymns or the Brāhmaṇas. Here we give concise accounts of the political changes that took place in them :—

*The Kuru kingdom* :—The Kuru kingdom, which once held the premier place among the Aryan states, evidently declined. But, the tradition of the Kurus was continued and we find references to Princes of Yudhiṣṭhira gotra (Yudhiṣṭhila-gotta) ruling in Indraprastha (Indrapattha—see Jāts. 276, 413, 515, etc.). Two princes e.g. Dhanañjaya and Sutasoma, are mentioned

by name and the name of the Epic adviser Vidura also appears. The tradition of the righteousness of the Kuru Kings appears in the Kurudharma Jātaka, where the king, his mother, the Queen, the Purohita, the Rajju-grāhaka, the Amātya, the Śreṣṭhi, the Droṇa-māpaka, the Mahāmātra and even the Gaṇikā are all described as performing Kurudharma. This shows that in spite of the decay of the Kurus, their past greatness and righteous conduct made their name hallowed and in the Jātaka alluded to, we find the king of Kāśi asking his advice as to the ways of warding off a famine. Probably, the country was split up in to a number of principalities, and its greatness was lost. The Jains mention a line of Kurus ruling at Isukāra (S. B. E. XLV. 62)

*The Kāśi Kingdom*—The kingdom of Kāśi, existed as an independent country prior to the VIth century, when it was absorbed by Kośala. Its kings even aspired to the position of Emperors (Mahāvagga. X. 2. 3.), but evidence shows its gradual decay. The kings of Kośala who were once insignificant compared with those of Kāśi, waged a continuous war against the latter. (see Jāt. 151 Rājāvavāda, also nos. 282, 428, 536). According to some Jātakas (336) and the Mahāvagga, Kośala was even once a part of Kāśi, and according to another Jātaka, (no. 207) the Kāśi king had made even the king of Potali as his tributary. The older line of Kāśi kings came to be supplanted by another dynasty of kings who took the title of Brahmadatta. These kings are repeatedly mentioned in the Jātakas. The Matsya Purāṇa (Ch. 271) and the Mahābhārata (Sabhā VIII. 22) mention one hundred Brahmadattas (H. Dev. in Car. Lec. I.)

Later on, the kings of Kośala became powerful and annexed Kāśi. In the Vaḍḍhaki-sūkara Jātaka, we find the grant of Kāsigāma by Mahākośala to his daughter Kośala-devī on her



marriage as "bath and perfume money" (*mahākosala duhitaram Kosaladeviṃ dadamāno tassa nahāpana-cunnamulam* etc. *Jāt.* 283). According to some tradition in the Buddhist Canonical literature, these attacks on Kāśi were made by Vaṅka, Dabhasena and Kampa, the last named being the actual conqueror (*Bud. Ind.* p. 25; *Vin.* I. 342; also *Jātakas* already referred to).

*Pañcāla*.—The history of Pañcāla from the Bhārata war to the seventh cen. B. C. is rather obscure. According to the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, twentyfive kings ruled till the rise of Māgadha imperialism but names and details are rather scanty. The *Jātaka* tradition, too, does not come to our help in clearing this obscure period. The *Jātakas* merely preserve traditions relating to the struggle between the Kurus and the Pañcālas for the possession of North Pañcāla. According to some *Jātakas*, Uttara Pañcāla was part of the Kuru kingdom while according to others it was an independent unit with capital at Kāmpilya (*see Jāts.* 323, 408, 513 and 520). Of Pañcāla kings, we have the names of Durmukha (*see Jāt.* 408 and 541) with his capital at Kāmpilya and he is made a contemporary with Karaṇḍu of Kalinga and Nimi of Videha. Another prince named Brahmadata Culina is mentioned in the (*Jāt.* 546, *Utt. Sūtra*; *Rāmāyaṇa* I. 33; *see H. C. Ray Chaudhury P. H.*—p. 70.)

The *Vāyu Purāṇa* simply makes the statement that twenty-five Pañcāla kings reigned, probably before the rise of the Magadha Emperors

*The Kingdom of Kośala*.—Kośala remained for a long time under the Aikṣvākus. About thirty kings of this line from Brhadbala, contemporary of the Great war ruled in Kośala and with these princes the Śākya claimed kinship. Its earliest capital was Ayodhyā; thence the seat was transferred to Sāketa

and lastly to Śrāvastī. Śrāvastī was one of the great cities of North India in the VIIIth century B.C.

The family of Mahākośala who became predominant, ruled over an extensive territory including the Kāśī kingdom and the territory of the Śākya. The Kośala kings of this line were powerful rulers and granted a large number of villages to learned Brāhmaṇa *mahāsālas*, who held them on condition of teaching, study and spiritual service. In the sixth century B. C. the ruler was Prasenajit, the brother-in-law of the Magadha king Bimbisāra. He was a pious ruler and frequently visited the Buddha. He was in his eighteenth year when he was deposed by his son Virūdhaka the child of Vāsava-khattiyā, with the assistance of the unscrupulous Dīgha-kārāyana. It was in the reign of the latter that Kośala declined and was annexed to Magadha.

*The Kingdom of Magadha:—*This kingdom remained under the Bārhadrathas. According to the Viṣṇu, the last Bārhadrartha was killed by Sunika his minister, and with him began the Pradyota dynasty, which with five kings ruled for 138 years (?) This was supplanted according to the Purāṇas by the Śaisunāgas (this is not supported by Ceylonese tradition). Fourth in descent from Śīsūnāga was Bimbisāra, who appears to have been an elder contemporary of the Buddha. Under him and his son Ajātāśatru, as we shall see the Magadha monarchy, [was] launched into a career of imperialism. Its rulers conquered the adjacent kingdom of Aṅga and Bimbisāra by his marriage with Kosala-devī (Mahākosala's daughter) received the kingdom of Kāśī as her *pin-money*. Magadha gradually became the greatest of Indian principalities and it came to possess a standing army of immense strength. In the next chapter we shall relate the story of the unification of Northern India by the Magadha kings.



*Kingdom of Aṅga*:—This kingdom of which we find an earlier reference in the Brāhmaṇas, had its capital at Campā otherwise known as Mālinī. In the Vāyu (Ch. 99.) and the Matsya Purāṇas, we have a dynastic list of its princes but the names cannot be verified owing to lack of details from other sources. The Buddhist texts mention Queen Gaggarā of Campā who built a great lake. The Jains mention a king Dadhivāhana, his daughter Candanā and the invasion of Campā by the king of Kauśāmbī. Aṅga was once a powerful kingdom and if we believe in the testimony of some Jātakas, it once extended its sway over Magadha, since the Vidhura-Paṇḍita Jātaka speaks of Rājagṛha as a city of Aṅga. Another Jātaka (Gūṭha-prāṇa), however speaks of the two as being adjacent countries. Probably, in the middle of the VIth cen. B.C. Aṅga was annexed to Magadha. It was conquered by Bimbisāra Śreṇika, the son of Bhaṭṭiya but the city of Campā retained its prosperity even in the days of Buddha. (N. Dey.—J. A. S. B. 1914.)

*The Kingdom of Videha*:—This kingdom founded by the Ikṣvākus attained great prosperity. According to the Purāṇas, it came to be called by the name of Mithilā after Mithi. The Purāṇas furnish a long list of the Janakas of Mithilā. Probably Nimi took the title of Janaka. Twenty-first in descent from him was Śīradhvaja whose daughter Sitā was the wife of Rāma. The last king of the line was thirty-eighth in descent from the founder and his name was Kṛti. The names of the kings in the dynastic lists in the Vāyu (ch. 89) and the Viṣṇu (IV. 5.) substantially agree, but they do not occur in the Brāhmaṇas, with the exception of a Janaka who is described in the Śatapatha as a Samrāt. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. mentions one Janaka prominently and he figures as a philosopher-king

whose court was frequented by Kuru-pāñcāla Brahmins prominent among whom was the celebrated Yājñavalkya.

Though details are lacking, the long line of the Janakas and their political and intellectual superiority is testified to by tradition. Their names are preserved in folklore and as such, a number of Janakas figure in the Jātakas. We hear of Makhādeva Janaka (*see* Nimi Jāt.; Majjhima N. II. 74-83) and Mahā-janaka. (Jāt. no. 559; *see* Bud. Ind. p. 26). Some Janakas figure in Jain tradition. When and how the Janaka line ended is difficult to determine, but the disruption of the kingdom took place before the rise of Jainism and Buddhism. The country once under the sway of the kings of Mithilā, seem to have come under a number of clans, who had evidently asserted themselves on the break-up of the monarchy of the Janakas. These clans were organised into two prominent non-monarchical federations *e.g.* the Vajjis and the Mallas. Their leagues were organised in order to repel the aggression of neighbouring kings.

*The Vajji and Malla*:—The Vajjis comprised eight clans, (eight kulas) prominent of whom were the Videhas with Mithilā (mod. Janakpur) as their capital, the Licchavis of Vaiśālī (mod. Besarh), Vājjis proper and the Jñātrkas with their headquarters at Vaiśālī. Other clans existed in the locality and they included the Bhaggas of Sumsumāra, Bulis of Allakappa, Kālāmas of Kesaputta, Koliyas of Rāmagāma, Sākiyas of Kapilavastu and the Moriyas of Pippalivana.

The names of these clans remain inseparably connected with the early history of the Jain and Buddhist religions. Buddha was the son of Rājā Śuddhodana of Kapilavastu, while the Jñātrikas produced Siddhārtha and Mahāvira.



The ruling members of these clans seem to have been Kṣatriyas and Aikṣvākus. This is proved not only by their own claims, but by the evidence of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Purāṇas, and of later Brāhmaṇical tradition. The Rāmāyaṇa preserves the tradition of the Vaiśāla kings being descended from Viśāla son of Ikṣvāku, while two Purāṇas *i.e.* Vāyu (ch. 86) and Viṣṇu (IV. 1) trace the royal line from Nābhāka, brother of Ikṣvāku.

The Mallas had a similar confederation, though they seem to have been originally under a monarchical constitution. The Jains speak of nine Malla princes banded in a league. Their important strong-holds were at Pāvā and Kusinārā.

*The Kingdom of Vatsa* :—It was a kingdom with capital at Kauśāmbī. The ruling family belonged to a branch of the Bhāratas. The name Vatsa was derived from the conquest of the region round Kauśāmbī by Vatsa son of Pratardana, king of Kāśi (for this war against the Vīṭahavyas and the mention of Vatsa *see* Mahā. Anusā ch. 30). According to the Purāṇas, the Kuru line was transferred to Kauśāmbī at the time of Nicakṣu. Probably, in this same line flourished king Udayana, the hero of a cycle of so many legends, who was contemporary with Bimbisāra and Caṇḍa Pradyota of Avanti. The Vatsas in the VIth century were powerful kings and extended their power over the Bhaggas of Sumpsumāra hill (Car. Lec. P. 63; Jāt. no. 353).

*Matsya* :—The history of the Matsya kingdom about the VIIth century is very obscure. Probably, it had been annexed to some other powerful kingdom. In the Epic, we have repeated mention of the Matsya country (Sabhā 30) and king Virāṭa is a conspicuous figure. In the Epic, as also in later literature the customs and manners of the Matsyas are praised.

*The Kingdom of Āsmaka* :—The kingdom of Āsmaka lay in the south, on the bank of the Godāvarī, along with the sister kingdom of Mūlaka. A Vāyu Purāṇa tradition attributes the origin of the princes of Āsmaka and Mūlaka, to the Ikṣvāku line. Nothing more is recorded in Brāhmaṇical literature. According to the evidence of the Buddhist literature, the capital of Āsmaka was Potana or Potali (for further details see Car. Lec. I. P. 53-54).

*Avanti* :—It became a powerful kingdom in the sixth and seventh centuries B. C. The early history of this kingdom is obscure. The Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas seem to distinguish between two kingdoms with capitals at Ujjayini and Māhiṣmatī. Māhiṣmatī was ruled by the Haihaya Yādavas who conquered the Nāgas. Kārttavīrya was a great conqueror. In the Epic, (Sabhā. ch. 31) we find that Nila the king of Māhiṣmatī was conquered by Sahadeva. Avanti according to the Matsya Purāṇa probably owed its name to Avanti a son of Kārttavīrya (ch. 43). In the Epic, Avanti was under two joint rulers Vinda and Annvinda. The later history of these kingdoms, just preceding the sixth century is obscure. Probably, after the fall of the older line, the dynasty of Pradyota took its place. Pradyota was a powerful king, the rival and later on the father-in-law of Udayana. He figures prominently in the Buddhist tradition and was contemporaneous with the founder of the Buddhist religion.

*Kaliṅga* :—The kingdom of Kaliṅga came to be established before the seventh century B. C. The Canonical tradition mentions Dantapura on the Kaliṅga coast and the Kaliṅgārañña. The Jātakas mention king Karaṇḍu. The Epic, mentions Kaliṅga and its prince Ketumān who fought on the side of Duryodhana.

*Gandhāra* :—The kingdom of Gandhāra seems to have retained its existence, though we have no details about its



ruling dynasty. The Mahābhārata mentions Gandhāra kings like Subala the father of Gāndhārī or his son Śakuni who played so important a part in the history of the Bhārata war. Several Jātakas preserve details of traditional history of Gandhāra. Takṣaśilā its capital, is mentioned in the Epic and figures prominently in the Jātakas which describe it as a great educational centre and the home of learned Ācāryas, frequented by students from Eastern and central India. The Kumbhakāra Jātaka preserves the tradition of the Gandhāra king Nagnajit (Śat. Br. VII. 1. 4. 10) whose name occurs in the Prākṛt form as Naggaji. The jains too, mention him as a historical person and describe him as one of the earliest converts to their religion.

*Kamboja* :—Kamboja, which is hardly described as an independent kingdom in Vedic literature, was another principality on the north western frontier, situated closely to Gandhāra. The Epic mentions it repeatedly. It was conquered by Arjuna along with the Daradas. (Sabhā. ch. 17) and again by Karna on behalf of Duryodhana and seems to have had its capital at Rājapura (Droṇa. ch. IV.). In the Epic, the productions of Kāamboja e.g. woolen textiles and horses are mentioned in more than one place. The Jātakas mention Kamboja in more than one place and in one Jātaka (Jāt. no. 543.), the savage customs of the Kāambojas are denounced.

*Other states and tribes* :—The above is a list only of the more important kingdoms and ought not to be regarded as exhaustive. For, in the Epic, we find in addition to these a large number of kingdoms or independent republican tribes. The chapters describing the conquests of Yudhiṣṭhira, in connection with his Rājāsūya (Sabhā. Ch. 25-32), his Aśvamedha

(Ch. 73-83) and the conquests of Karna on behalf of Duryodhana (see Vana. ch. 253; Droṇa. Ch. 4) are full of important geographical data. Unfortunately however these chapters are often full of anachronism and show so clear evidence of later additions, that in the opinion of European scholars, it would but justify the utter rejection of their evidence. But, in spite of this, it must be admitted that they show the utilisation of older materials and the existence many of the tribes or states is confirmed by later literature. Here we mention some of the more prominent of these:—

In the north-western region, there were—Kaśmīra, various local *Gaṇas*, Daradas, Abhisāra, Kāmbojā, Uttara Kāmboja, Hāṭaka, and Uttara-kuru; in the central region, Daśārṇa, Śālva, Yogandbara; in the East—Malla, Vatsa-blūmi, Bharga, Niṣāda, Puṇḍra, Vaṅga, Tāmralipta, Suhma, Pra-suhma, Prāgjyotiṣa.

In the south, there were the Aparā-Matsyas, Pataccaras,\* Niṣāda tribes in *Gaṇas*, Avanti under dual kings, the Bhoja Confederation, South and Eastern Kosalas, Kaliṅga, the Pulindas, Māhiṣmati, Surāṣṭra, Bhojākāṭaka, Bharukaccha, Kaccha, Daṇḍaka, Andhra, Pāṇḍya, Kerala and the various Mlecchas peoples living on the coast.

In the border region on the west, along the Indus, there were a large number of republican *Gaṇas* e.g. the Sibis, Trigartas (elsewhere they are described as being under king Suśarmā), Ambaṣṭhas, Mālavas, Kṣudraka-mālavas, Mādhyamakeyas and Vāṭadhāṇas (Brāhmaṇa *Gaṇas*), Audumbaras, the Śūdras and Ābhīras on the Sarasvatī, the Grāmanīyāḥ of Sindhu, the Sauvīras.<sup>6</sup>

\* It is difficult to ascertain exactly the period in which these states or tribes came into existence. The Epic evidence loses much of its value from the fact that later additions were made to the older chronological and geographical data. The evidence of the Jātaka tradition or that of the Buddhist Canonical literature suffers from the



As we have seen already, with the influence of various political causes, monarchy had been gaining ground in the central region. In the outlying regions, republics continued to exist.

*Regal Administration:*—In the monarchical states, real political allegiance had fairly developed and displaced the older tribal bond. The sole executive authority was vested in the king who was the protector of all his subjects irrespective of caste or birth. He was the head of the state, collected taxes and tributes, administered justice, fought against foreign enemies and looked to the material welfare of his subjects. Evidences as to the functions of royalty and the way of their exercise by kings is

same defects. The account of the Mahā-janapadas belongs undoubtedly to a very early period which we may take to have been pre-Buddhistic. But, in regard to some more data found in the Canon or the Jātakas, later additions certainly crept in in view of the fact that the present version of the Canon is not earlier than the 3rd cen. B.C. while the Jātaka'-attha-kathā which has come down to us is not older than the 4th Cen. A. D. This non-contemporary character of the Jātakas has been admitted even by Mr. Rhys Davids who cannot be reproached for any bias against the antiquity of the early Buddhist literature. The Jātakas thus mention in addition to these, the kingdom of Bharu (Bhuru Jāt. 213), Dantapura in the Kaliṅga coast (Kurudhamma Jāt-276), the city of Devāravati (Ghata and Adipta 454, 546), city of Raurava in Sauvira, Potali (Jāt. 207, 301) the region of Godāvari, Dappaka forest, Mahipsaka kingdom and the river Kanhavennā (Sarabhsaga and Saṅkhapata-Jāt. 522 and 524), the Drāvida kingdom with the port of Kavirāpattana and the adjacent islands of Nāga and Kāra (Akitti Jāt. 480).

In spite of this, however, we have admitted the evidence of the Epic and Jātaka traditions since the existence of many of these tribes and states is confirmed by the evidence of Greeks in India in the IVth cen. B. C. Not to speak of the kingdoms or tribes of North India, the Greeks mention not only the Ambastai, the Oxydrakoi, the Molloi, the Siboi, the Soviras and other tribes on the border. Evidently, these states had already a long existence and did not come into existence all on a sudden. At the same time, the Greeks seem to have been familiar with many details relating to South India which they apparently derived from the northern Indians. This shows that the southern states like the Pāṇdyas or Andhras were already in existence and hence they must be taken to belong to the VIth or VIIth, century B.C. at least, if not earlier.

indeed very scanty, but when we take in to account the information gleaned from the Upaniṣads, the Buddhist canon, the Jātaka tradition or the Dharmasūtras we can attempt a picture of the political life of that period which preceded the great Imperialistic movement culminating in the unification of the whole country under the Mauryas in the fourth cen. B.C.

The king ruled the country with the help of his ministers and consulted public opinion on all important occasions. As to the former, they seem to have

The Council.

formed a Council which was variously known as the *Sabhā* or the *Pariṣat*. The *Sabhā* by this time was an aristocratic body in which wisemen, royal relations office-bearers or popular leaders, had their place. The character of the *Pariṣat* cannot be determined exactly, but most probably it was similar to the *Sabhā* and was an aristocratic body. In the Upaniṣads, we find the *Pariṣat* repeatedly mentioned and it seems to have been closely connected with the king and frequented by wise men who often entered into political or philosophical discussions (*Pariṣat*—*Pari*=*Gr. Peri*—round, and *sad*=to sit—a meeting).

The ministers of state were gradually evolved out of the personal companions and associates of the king whom we have already found in the *Brāhmaṇas*. In course of time, their functions came to be defined. Prominent among these, were the *Purohita*, the *Senāpati*, the collector of taxes, the treasurer and a host of other officials. Very little is known about these in the Upaniṣads, but the Jātakas which preserve traditional accounts about real life mention a large number of officials, including the *Purohita*, the *Artha-dharmānuśāsaka*, or *Sarvārtha-cintaka*, the *Viniścayama-hāmātya*, the *Senāpati*, the *Arghakāraka*, the *Bhāṇḍāgārika*, the

The ministers and officers of state.



Śreṣṭhī, the Rajjuka, the Droṇa-māpaka, the Hiraṇyaka, the Sārathī, and the Dvaupārika. In addition to these, there were minor officials like those in charge of elephants, elephant-trainers, collectors of taxes, officers in charge of villages, physicians, etc. The Kurudharma Jātaka gives prominence to only a few *e.g.* the Purohita, the Rajju-grāhaka, the Sārathī, the Śreṣṭhī, the Droṇa-māpaka, the Dauvārika and includes the Gaṇikā along with these. (see Jāts. 5, 25, 158, 218, 276, 318; also the Introduction to Rai Sahib's I. C. Ghose's Ben. tran. of Jāt. Vol. II.).

As in the Brāhmaṇas, the highest place among these advisers was probably occupied by the Purohita. He was not only a priest and spiritual guide, but also advised the king on *Artha* and *Dharma*. By sacrifices and prayers he averted evil and performed rites and sacraments. He advised kings on important matters and in more than one place he is described as *Artha-dharmānuśāsaka* or *Dharmānuśāsaka*.

In some Jātakas, we find the Purohita performing judicial functions (Jāt. 511 & 542). The office of the Purohita was often hereditary and descended from father to son (Jāts. 120, 163, 411, 422). The Dharmasūtras also speak of the high office of the Purohita. According to them, he seems to have been associated with the king in the administration of justice and was liable to fast or penance along with the king, if there was miscarriage of justice. Some Jātakas mention an *Amātya* as the highest officer of the realm advising the king on *Dharma* and *Artha*; (Jāt. 25, 195); elsewhere (158), we find a *Sarvārthacintaka* doing these services.

The *Senāpati* was the commander of the armed forces and had under him minor commanders. The *Viniścayāmātya* was a criminal officer and combined police and judicial functions,

the Arghakāra was the Court-valuer who ascertained the price of purchases made on behalf of the king (Jāt. 5). The Rajju-grāhaka (*lit.* officer carrying a measuring rope) was both a surveyor and a criminal magistrate, the Śreṣṭhi was the Banker, the Hiranyaka was the Treasurer, the Droṇa-māpaka was the officer who ascertained the royal share of corn and exacted it, while the Bhāṇḍāgārika was the officer in charge of the royal stores. The Sārathī and Dvauvārika derived importance from their close association with the royal person and ranked as Amātyas. The Dvauvārika was in charge of the palace-gate and hence wielded immense influence. The Chatra-grāha and Asigrāha similarly held high rank. Village headmen were appointed by the king and Codakas apprehended criminals. There were others who enjoyed the income of villages and these included Purohitas, Mahāsāla Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas warriors. These officers performed their various duties. A fairly well developed administration system had thus come into existence.

*Judicial Machinery* :—Justice was administered in the name of the king. He was the highest judge in civil and criminal matters. In regard to the latter, the idea of the violation of the 'king's peace' had gained ground. This would appear from the interpretation of the 'Rājadūta' and the taking of the king's name to dissuade a culprit from wrong-doing. In the absence of a fully developed machinery for judicial administration, local officials and corporate bodies possessed minor jurisdiction. Beginning with the Grāmabhojaka, cases on appeal were tried by the Senāpati (Jāt. 220) Purohita (511, 542), the Uparāja (542) and ultimately by the king. The Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta mentions two other judicial officers among the Licchavis e.g. the Atthakulaka and Suttadbāra.



*Judicial Administration* :—Further and more interesting light is thrown upon the system of Judicial administration by the Dharma-sūtras. First of all, they show in clear terms the participation of public bodies and elders in the administration of Justice. With the king, indeed, the final decision lay, but he was not absolute. His Purohita advised on points of law and the facts were judged by the Sabhāsadas selected from Brāhmaṇas or the elders of towns or guilds. Moral liability to do justice attached to all of them. The king and the Purohita had to purify themselves in case of miscarriage of justice and the Sabhāsadas too were supposed to incur divine punishment if they failed to give out the true and impartial judgment.

Next, they show the evolution of a legal system. It grew out partly through the recognition of principles guiding the conduct of the various castes, their duties and privileges in the social scale, the acceptance of the old customary laws regulating marriage, inheritance and sonship, the recognition of the validity of caste-laws and guild laws, the laying down of rules as regards evidence and procedure and in criminal cases, the establishment of regulations relating to punishment or fines in lieu of murder or injury.

*The Royal office*.—The Royal office was hereditary and generally passed from father to son. Succession to the throne was often disputed and wars took place between rival brothers. To obviate these obstacles to peace, there arose the practice of selecting the heir and making him *Yuvarāja* as we know from the Rāmāyaṇa and other Brāhmaṇical books. The Jātakas speak repeatedly of the institution of *Uparāja* (see Jāt. 50, 338, and 415) which is also found in the Mahābhārata. Generally, the eldest son of the king became

Uparāja, though we find instances of younger brothers holding this position (Jāt. 6, 181, 228), and if the king was childless, the Uparāja during the reign of his elder brother became king.

But inspite of this, dynastic troubles caused unhappiness in the royal family and consequently in the kingdom. As we approach the close of the period, we find the evidence of such evils befalling kingdoms. Polygamy which existed even in the Vedic period, became almost universal and with the growth of royal power, kings came to have larger harems filled with intriguing co-wives or ambitious concubines (*see* Jāts. 561, 472, 531). These became sources of considerable trouble. The unfilial conduct of sons often caused great anxiety to their royal fathers and the Jātakas contain innumerable instances of rebellious sons and rebellious queens. We have at least one instance of a queen intriguing against her royal husband (Jāt. 416), while instances of rebellious sons are many (*cf.* Ajātaśatru in Jāt. 150; and Virudhaka in Jāt. 465; also 338 and 373). Jealous fathers, too, feared the manly vigour, virtue or popularity of their sons and often exiled them (*cf.* Jāt. 193, 234; for exile of Uparājas—Jāt. 181, 320, etc.), or otherwise removed them from the capital. Probably owing to all this, the conduct of princes to their children or the methods of keeping sons under control became the theme of unscrupulous kings or their more unscrupulous courtiers and theorists. The views of these people are embodied in the Arthasāstra and the latter work when carefully analysed shows a continuity of development both of the Art of government as well as of the principles of king-craft which found favour in an age of unscrupulousness.



On the extinction of the royal family or if the throne was otherwise made vacant, the king's near relatives filled the throne subject to being accepted by the people. A son-in-law (Jāt. 292) or a near relation married to the king's daughter was often chosen (Jāts. 126, 539). The Kuśa Jātaka (531) contains an account which hints at the existence of the practice of raising a son by *niyoga*. Otherwise, the throne was filled up by an elected popular nominee. We have innumerable instances of such elections to the royal office. Some Jātakas contain (e.g. 371, 445, 529, 539) a description of the ceremonial of election in which the Purohita took a pre-eminent part. After a due proclamation, the royal chariot carrying the insignia of royalty and drawn by four white horses was driven through the streets followed by the army. The Purohita or the Elders chose the king-elect according to his qualities or his bodily signs which betrayed his greatness.

According to some other Jātakas, such elections were made at the instance of the Elders and the Amātyas. Generally Kṣātriyas of good family were chosen, but caste was not a bar to this election to royal office, for, in at least two Jātakas (73 and 432), we find Brāhmaṇas elected to the royal office. In another Jātaka (Nigrodha, 445), we find a low-caste man chosen king. (See I. C. Ghose's. Intro. to Ben. trans. of Jātaka, Vol. II).

When kings proved tyrannical, subjects often rose in revolt and expelled or killed the tyrant (Jāts.—73, 194, 432). The throne was then regarded as vacant "since the king had broken the solemn covenant between him and the people." Sovereignty being vested in the people, their right to make a new king revived and they filled his place by a new election.

As to the relation of kings to their subjects, the evidence of the Jātakas is rather conflicting and shows a commixture of idealism arising out of popular veneration for a righteous king and of realistic tales of royal tyranny. In some Jātakas, we have traditions relating to righteous kings doing their best for the people, building granaries for times of disaster, watching over their welfare and sacrificing every thing for them. Some went so far as to wander about in disguise to know the real condition of their subjects [Rājovāda Jāt., 141; and Nānāchanda, 281]. For such kings, the people had reverence in return and they were looked upon as if they were gods. Many Jātakas contain the idea that an audience of the king brought religious merit (Dāta, 260). Similarly, we have the idea that in the kingdom of a righteous king, rainfall was regular and the gods were kind to the people (cf. Jāts. Maṇicora, 194; Kurudhamma, 276) and *vice versa*. The Kurudhamma Jātaka shows how owing to the influence of these ideas, the virtuous king of the Kurus was approached by the Kaliṅga ruler wishing to learn the secret of his kingdom's prosperity.

On the other hand, we have innumerable stories of unrighteous kings (cf. Jāt. Bhṛgu, 213; Taṇḍulanāli, 5; Dhammaddhaja, 620; Khantivādi, 313; Culla-dhammapāla, 358; Cetiya 422; Rathalaṭṭhi, 332) taking bribes, drinking wine, exacting heavy taxes (Mahāpiṅgala, 240; Gaṇḍatindu, 520) or unjustly punishing and torturing subjects to death. Such kings often received support from their ministers and even from the Purohita.

The remedy of such tyranny was naturally a popular revolt of which we have innumerable examples. These revolts were



not only physically necessary but were justified by the prevailing political ideas, namely,

- (1) That king-ship arose out of a contract between the subjects and the ruler chosen by them.
- (2) That the sovereign rights of the king were limited to the protection of subjects and punishment of wrong-doers and he was bound by the law.

The idea of election is found in the Ulūka Jātaka (270), while the second idea is found in the Telapatta Jātaka (96), where the king admonishes the Yakṣinī. We shall discuss these in detail in their proper place.

The people, according to the Jātaka evidence, maintained their rights and privileges for a long time. They derived their importance partly from their number and partly from their organisations and also from the fact that in the small states the administrative machinery was not yet divorced from popular participation. The popular bodies were of various kinds and comprised mainly the corporate unions which sprang up towards the close of the Vedic period and which were known by various names which still subsist in our literature. Prominent among these, were the Śreṇis (or Seniyo), and the Pūgas which were guilds of craftsmen or lower class labourers. Almost all the arts and crafts were organised into such guilds. Each of these had a central organisation, probably a common fund, an elected leader Jetṭhaka or Grāmaṇika, and a body of Elders. In the canonical literature including the Jātakas, we have a traditional list of *eighteen crafts*, though the number towards the close was certainly greater than that.\* Mutual help against powerful

\* For a detailed description of these see my *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, Vol. I., Bk. III.

antagonists was the chief aim of these bodies and they came to wield very great influence in the growing city-life of the day.

Wealthy merchants, too, had their associations and the Śreṣṭhis wielded considerable influence in the royal councils. The Śreṣṭhis who held a dominating position in the financial world, had a recognized place in society and the king consulted their opinion. Their exact relation to their royal masters is not yet clearly known, but it is quite clear that in all states the Mahāśreṣṭhis (along with the Culla or Anuśreṣṭhis) occupied a position of great influence.

While these bodies represented the interests of capital craft, occupation, or labour, there were other bodies which claimed importance from other considerations. These were the representatives of local public interests. Of these, the more important were the Village-communities which continued for a long time to enjoy local authority and considerable administrative powers within the local area. They were the smallest social and political units of the state-fabric which had been in existence even in the Vedic period. They were ruled over by headmen or Grāmaṇīs chosen by the villagers together with a number of village people who acted as assistants. They administered the village, maintained local peace, decided boundary-disputes or small civil and criminal suits, acted as guardians of infants and widows, and raised funds for the maintenance of local schools, works of local utility or for the preservation of local sanitation. They often recruited men from amongst themselves to fight bands of robbers or raised funds for feeding people in times of famine. The properties of local gods or those dedicated to the public good were also entrusted to them.



Their opinion was often taken into consideration by kings, and the Mahāvagga contains the story of Seniyo Bimbisāra consulting eighty-thousand Grāma-leaders. The Culla Suta-soma Jātaka similarly speaks of a king's 80000 councillors, probably village-elders. Some very important details are furnished by the fifth chapter of the Sabhāparvan of the Epic. There we find Nārada asking Yudhiṣṭhira as to whether the "*Pañca*" were busy with their work. The *Pañca* was clearly the fore-runner of the modern *Panchayet* of the village and according to the commentator, comprised five village officials, *e.g.* the Samāhartā or village tax-collector, Samvidhātā, the Prasāstā, and Lekhaka and the Sākṣī.

Kings of those days could not but respect their rights and privileges. Local laws and customs were recognized and the customs of guilds of craftsmen were also regarded as valid. This is confirmed not only by the Jātakas but also by the Darmasūtras. Gautama expressly speaks of the customs and practices of artisans, shepherds and usurers. This local self-government was a prominent feature of ancient Indian life. Gradually, however, favoured by circumstances, kings extended their authority over these bodies and many Jātakas show that the Gāmahojakas had come to be regarded as officers of the king.

The close of this period saw the gradual extension of royal authority. A number of forces and factors contributed to it. We shall discuss this topic in detail in a later section in which we shall describe the rise of the "New Monarchies" towards the beginning of the VIth century B.C.

Gradual extension of royal power.

## Republics and Republicanism

HAVING given a general survey of the progress of monarchy from the close of the Vedic period, we pass on to the subject of republics about which ample information is available during this period. The history of these republics is an interesting study and shows the gradual evolution of pluralistic political discipline as opposed to the deification of authority vested in a single individual. It is difficult to determine whether republics were evolved out of monarchies, as some eminent writer has supposed. The best and most reasonable view would be perhaps to hold that the germs of the non-monarchical form of government lay in the institutions of the past and as time went on these not only survived but were strengthened in certain localities while in the Central region, sacerdotalism strengthened the basis of the monistic political discipline. As we have already seen, the early Vedic tribes and clans were organised on the basis of blood relationship. The members of the group retained their independence and local governing authority, though owing allegiance to chiefs belonging to a certain family. With the spirit of war and conquest, well-constituted sub-divisions of such organisations came into existence and they are well known in Vedic literature, e.g. *Gaṇa*, *Vrāta*, *Śardha* and *Viśah*. With change of circumstances, the *Viś* changed its character and allegiance to hereditary chiefs developed into



monarchical discipline. In regions which remained outside the influence of the social and religious changes, the older character of social life and organisation survived and in course of time, many more corporate bodies like the *Gaṇa*, *Śreṇī* or *Pāga* came into existence for purposes of social or economic activity. The wandering bands of philosophers and sophists also came to have their own *Saṅghas*, as we know from the traditions relating to the rise of Buddhism and Jainism.<sup>6</sup>

The *Sūtras* of Pāṇini throw a flood of light on such bodies and in the work of that eminent grammarian we find a number of words to denote them. They are *Gaṇa*, *Pāga*, *Saṅgha* and *Vrāta* and meant "associations or aggregates of the many" applied to men and sometimes figuratively to animals. Of these, the word *Vrāta* retained its old Vedic significance of a fighting band, while *Pāga* had the meaning of an association for purposes of commercial or economic activity. *Saṅgha* and *Gaṇa* which also had the primary meaning of "aggregate" or "union" came to be applied to unions or "associations" of various descriptions.

In the work of Pāṇini, the two words *Gaṇa* and *Saṅgha* appear in a number of *Sūtras*. Thus, in one of them we have the rule for the abnormal formation of the words *Saṅgha* and *Udgha* in the sense of *Gaṇa* or *Samāha* or for eulogy. Here

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Jayaswal thinks that in the days of Pāṇini, the religious *Saṅgha* was not in existence. There is, however, no evidence to prove it. On the other hand, the general evidence of the *Sūtras* or the examples furnished by the commentators proves rather the contrary. The *Saṅgha* was not an institution invented by the Buddha but all religious fraternities of the period were organised into such bodies. They were inaugurated with a view to preserve the cultural and spiritual tradition in the followers rather than depend wholly on one individual (cf. Buddha's exhortation to Ānanda at the time of his death, *mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*.) who was supposed to act as the spiritual leader in succession to the original founder.

Saṅgha is clearly equated with Gaṇa.\* In another sūtra which lays down the rule for the formation of the words *Nikāya* and *Nicaya*, we find the word *Saṅgha* used in the sense of a collection of men or animals.† The same meaning of "collection" or "aggregation" appears from two other sūtras where *Saṅgha* is used along with the words *Vahu*, *Gaṇa* and *Pūga*.‡ Lastly, in one more sūtra, we have the rule for the formation of new words from nominal prefixes in the sense of a group or association, mark or body.§ No more information as to the meaning of the word is available, though Mr. Jayaswal thinks that the last sūtra shows the existence of badges and marks distinguishing the *Saṅghas*.||

\*Pāṇini III. iii. 86. सङ्घो वौ गणप्रशंसयोः—The rule laid down is that *Saṅgha* is an abnormal form in place of *Saṅghāta* and means *Gaṇa*. *Udgha* is a term of praise. As examples we have in *Kāśikā* सङ्घः पशूनाम् उद्घो मनुष्यः । गणप्रशंसयोरिति किं—सङ्घातः ।

† सङ्घे चानोत्तराधये III. iii. 42. As examples of collections for which the word *saṅgha* is used, we have the words मिश्रकनिषयः, शूकरनिषयः ।

‡ Pāṇini V. ii. 52. बहुपुनगणसंघस्य तिगुक् । As examples we have the words बहुतिथि, पुनतिथि, सङ्घतिथिः ।

The same sense of collection appears from V. I. 58 and its commentary in the *Mahābhāṣya* as *Patāñjali* says 'सङ्घः समूहः सत्तदायः' *Kaiyaṭa* is clearer and says सामान्यं न प्राणिनामप्राणिनाम् सत्तदायः संघः ।

§ Pāṇini IV. iii. 127. सङ्घादलक्षणेऽप्यञ्जसञ्ज्ञान्मयः । The *Kāśikā* comments on it as follows :—सङ्घादिषु प्रत्ययार्थविशेषणोपपन्नाद् यजन्नाद् इजन्नाच्च प्रातिपदिकादप्यु भवति, तस्येदमित्येतद्विनिषयो । पूर्वस्य दुज्जोऽपवादः । घोषयइत्यमरकृतम् । तेन वैयर्थ्यायथासंभवं न भवति । यजन्नाद् वेदः सङ्घः, वेदोद्भूतः वेदं लक्ष्यं वेदोच्चेष्टः । यजन्नाद् गार्गः सङ्घः, गार्गोद्भूतः, गार्गं लक्ष्यं गार्गो घोषः । ... अङ्गलक्षणादयोः को विशेषः लक्ष्यं लक्ष्यभूतस्यैव चिह्नभूतं सः ; यथा विद्याविदानाम् अङ्गत्वं स्यादित्यस्योपि स्यादौना सं न भवति ।

|| This however is not justified by the evidence of the Sūtra, the Vārtika or the example furnished by the *Kāśikā*. Excepting the mere juxtaposition of the three words, there is nothing which supports the view of Mr. Jayaswal. The commentators are unanimous in holding the opinion that the *ay* suffix is applied to derive words of the sense of a corporation, a mark, or a body. For Jayaswal's views, see pp. 42-44.



The exact connotation of *Gaṇa* in Pāṇini is thus difficult to find out. Clearly, from its general sense of collection the idea of a corporate body is apparent but not the technical political sense. Mr. Jayaswal thinks that the term "*Gaṇa* signified the form of Government. *Saṅgha* on the other hand, signified the state." But this interpretation has hardly any foundation or justification. Pāṇini equates *Saṅgha* with *Gaṇa* and both seem to be used to mean a collection or association of the many. Later authorities hold the same opinion and use the two words in the same sense. As for the technical sense, the two evidently meant corporate bodies or unions, and the explanation given in chapter CVII of the *Śānti-parva* shows the same thing, as far so *gaṇa* is concerned. With the meagre data at our disposal, it is difficult to distinguish the two clearly or to find out the technical sense which each of them had in that period. Probably, there were technical differences, but these passed away and even in early Buddhist literature, we find these two terms used rather loosely. For, in these works as well as in the *Milinda-pañha*, the six great religious teachers, e.g. Buddha, Gosāla, Mahāvīra, Ajita, Sāñjaya and Kāśyapa are called both *Saṅghis* and *Gaṇis*. Probably, the most reasonable view would be to take *Gaṇas* as the primary unions composed of families of the same kindred while a *Saṅgha* is to be regarded as an aggregate of such *Gaṇas*.

Many European scholars have translated the word *Gaṇa* by the English equivalent of 'tribe'. This meaning applied irrespective of the time of use is rather confusing and requires a correction to which Mr. Jayaswal has drawn our attention (p. 29). It may or may not be that the early *Gaṇas* were based on a real or supposed bond of kinship, but as time went on, their original character was modified and they came to be organised on different lines.

The early Vaiśya Gaṇas were organised groups mainly of near relatives for co-operative purposes. Similar were the Gaṇas mentioned repeatedly in the Yajus Samhitās. Later on, the principle of affiliation on the basis of common objective or purpose, changed the original aspect of Gaṇas. Such has been the history of all such organisations. The European guilds or corporations, too, show a similar change in character.

While we have no more details about the organisation of the Gaṇas and Saṅghas, Pāṇini tells us something about another class of Saṅghas and gives us details about the locality where they existed. These are the Āyudhajīvi Saṅghas of the Vāhika country or the region of the hills.\* In four or five sūtras† the importance of which was pointed out by Mr. Jayaswal, we have mention of these bodies. From a study of his sūtras, we know that the following were the more important of these Āyudha-jīvins.

- (1) The Vāhikas of western Punjab.
- (2) The Republicans of the Hills.
- (3) The Vṛkas.
- (4) The Dāmanī and others.
- (5) The group of six in the Trigarta country.
- (6) The Parśus and others.
- (7) The Yaudheyas and others.
- (8) And probably the various sections of the Audumbaras

\* Pāṇini V. 3. 113-117. अतश्च फलोर्विद्वान् ; (114) आयुधजीविषह्राद आह्. वाहीविषह्राद आह्. राजन् ॥ ; (115) इकाद् टेयश्च ; (116) दामन्नादि विवर्णपटाश्च, इः ; (117) पर्वदि योधिद्यादिभ्य इन्धजो आयुधजीविभ्यश्च इः पर्वते ।

† See K. P. Jayaswal p. 35 Vol. I.



The Vāhikas were the people who inhabited the western Punjab and whom we find so opprobriously denounced by Karna in course of his dispute with Śalya, king of Madra. Very little is known of the Vrkas but their name 'wolf' is suggestive of their ferocity in war. Of the Dāmanī and their kindred very little is known. The Trigartas figure repeatedly in the chapters on Conquest in the Mahābhārata. Probably, they occupied the hill regions of northern Punjab. In the *Parsu* (Parśu—axe), we may clearly recognize that old Vedic tribe of the same name. The famous Yaudheyas retained their independence and military prowess for more than ten centuries as will be shown later on. They also retained to a great extent, their non-monarchical character for a long period. The list of these is clearly not exhaustive, neither can we expect such an exhaustive enumeration from a grammarian whose business was to find rules for the various suffixes applied to designate men of different localities or following diverse occupations. More details about these western border republics come forth when real history dawns with the invasion of India by Alexander, the greatest conqueror of antiquity. The commentators, however, give us many examples to illustrate the rules and thus give us the names of some of these republics. The names of the Mālavas, Kṣudrakas and a host of such others whom we had already found in the Epic appear in the Kāśikā and the same book preserves an old verse (quoted out first by Mr. Jayaswal) which gives us the names of the six military Republics of the Trigarta group.

† The Kāśikā comments as follows :—

विमर्षः पट्टी दीर्घा ते विमर्षपट्टा इत्युच्यते । तेषु चैवं कृतिः—  
 चातुर्विंशत्यं पट्टास्तु कौशलोपरमदाण्डको ।  
 कौशिकिजालमानिष ज्ञातुगुहोदय आनदिः ॥

Nothing further is known about these peoples except that they were chiefly addicted to the pursuit of arms. In this respect, they may be compared to some extent with the military orders of medieval Europe, who remained for a long time the bulwark against the invasions of the Slavs in central Europe, and later, on against the Turks in Syria and the Levant. The names of the Teutonic Knights of the Sword, or the Templars and Hospitallers are too well known to be repeated here. No more details are known about these peoples excepting that they were mainly composed of Kṣatriya fighters, though men of other castes like Brahmins or traders were affiliated into their respective states. This has been ably pointed out by Mr. Jayaswal who has substantiated his point by illustrations from the Kāśikā. (Jayaswal, p. 34, 35). Some exceptions, however, may be taken to his views. Thus, while it is admissible that members of other castes were admitted in their territories, there are reasons for holding that the ruling organisation was mainly one of the fighting peoples. This would appear from the evidence of some of the sūtras quoted by Mr. Jayaswal himself which lay down rules for the formation of words denoting membership of a particular tribe or state, through affiliation or allegiance to the local Kṣatriya rulers. The three or four sūtras which throw important side-light on this point, show clearly that a distinction was made between the ruling clan and the affiliated population.\*

\*Three sūtras bear on this important point e.g. IV. i. 168—जनपदस्य नाम्नां अत्रिवाद् अञ्, IV. 2. 124—जनपदस्य नाम्नां अत्रिवाद् अञ्; and IV. iii. 100 which is taken along with the general rule of this particular section e.g. IV. iii. 95 अत्रिवाद्. In IV. iii. 100, we have the rule जनपदिनां जनपदस्य सर्वे जनपदिनः समाजस्येन वदुवचने । The first sūtra lays down that the suffix अञ् is to be added (to designate a descendant) to the name of a country which also designates a Kṣatriya tribe. When this word designates a kṣatriya tribe but not a country the suffix is अञ् and there is a difference in the accent. The Vārtika of Kātyāyana adds a further



Apart from these Āyudha-jīvi Saṅghas which flourished in the extreme West, Pāṇini seems to have been familiar with other such political organisations, which existed in the South and in the East. Of these we have no details in his sūtras but there are clearer evidences from other sources. *e.g.*

- (1) The Vṛjis
  - (2) The Bhargas
  - (3) The Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis
  - (4) The Rājanyas.
- } in the East
- } in the South.

To these Mr. Jayaswal adds the Mahārājas and the Madras (p. 39). Of the Bhargas and Vṛjis, we shall speak very soon and give detailed accounts in connection with the republican clans of which we have clear accounts in the Jain and Buddhist Canon. Of the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis, we have given an account so far as it is available from the Epic, but some more interesting particulars are available from the sūtras of Pāṇini, if their interpretation by Mr. Jayaswal is accepted. They are mentioned in two sūtras of Pāṇini and in one of them we find a hint that they had a "joint federal constitution in which the Executive authority was vested in two Rājanyas with their respective *Vargas*."\* Although the evidence cited is rather scanty, there is ample reason for partly accepting Mr. Jayaswal's views (*see* Hindu Polity, pp. 39-41.; also appendix A. part I.)

condition that the same suffix may be added to denote a king (as opposed to a saṅgha चण्डिकादिभिराज्ञां बहुवचनैवापेक्षितं). The second sūtra lays down the rule for adding वृज. The third sūtra prescribes the addition of suffixes in the sense of one owing allegiance to a king if the prince-denoting word have in the plural the same form as the kingdom-denoting word. The Kāśikā (V. iii. 114.) clearly distinguishes between the form राज्ञ्य applicable to a Brahmin from राज्ञ्य applied to a member of the Kṣatriya gaṇa.

In regard to the Mahārajas, it is not difficult to accept Mr. Jayaswal's views, though in one place the commentators explain "Mahārajikas" as a group of Gaṇa-devatās devoted to Kuvera. The term Rājanya, as we shall see, seems to have been used in the sense of the ruling Kṣattriya oligarchy which in those days ruled over a portion of Western India. The case of the Madras is open to grave doubts, since Pāṇini furnishes no clue to their constitution in his days.

Though Pāṇini is silent as regards the republics on the Eastern fringe, yet we are fortunate in having some details about them from the canonical literature of Buddhism and Jainism which arose in that locality and the founders of which were closely connected with the rulers of these states. Perhaps, the first to give a detailed account of these Eastern republics, was the late Prof. Rhys Davids, who in his *Buddhist India* supplied us with a clear account of these together with their system of administration. The republican states in that locality had sprung up with the dissolution of the Videhan Monarchy. The following is a list of them, e.g.

(1) The Śākya with their capital at Kapilavastu; they occupied the area of the modern Gorakhpur district.

(2) The Koliyas of Rāmagrāma.

(3) The Licchavis with their capital, at Vaiśālī. Their territory was round modern Besarh in the district of Muzaffarpur.

(4) The Videhas with their capital at Mithilā, which is included in the modern Dvarbhanga district.

(5 & 6) The two sections of the Mallas with their capitals at Kusinārā and Pāvā. They covered a large area.

(7) The Moriyas of Pippalivana.

(8) The Bulis of Allakappa.

(9) The Bhaggas of Sumsumāra hill.



The majority of these republican states remained obscure, but the Śākya, Licchavis and the Mallas gained celebrity on account of their close connection with the founders of the Jain and Buddhist religions. A picture of the administrative system in these republics is to be found in the pages of Mr. Rhys Davids's *Buddhist India* (pp. 21-22). In each, there was a central Assembly which was located in the Mote Hall where all questions of public concern were discussed. After discussion, the points at issue were put to vote and the opinion of the majority decided everything. The Governmental authority was vested in a Rājā who was more of an elected President than a hereditary monarch. Under him were officials who had distinguishing uniforms and different duties.

*The Licchavis.*—We now proceed to discuss the constitution of the Licchavis of Vaisālī. In regard to these people, our information is mainly furnished by tradition recorded in the early Buddhist Canonical literature, including canonical commentaries, and the Jātakas. The Mahāparinibbānasuttanta records some historical traditions about these powerful clans, but we have little details. In the Jātakas, however, we find the Licchavis mentioned several times. Thus, in the introduction to the Ekappaṇṇa Jātaka, we are told that in Vesālī, the city of the Licchavis, there were always seven thousand seven hundred and seven kings (rājāno) to govern the state and a like number of viceroys (uparāja), generals (senāpati), and treasurers (Ekappaṇṇa Jātaka 149). In the Cullakālīṅga Jātaka (301), we find the same tradition recorded together with the interesting statement that "tradition says that the Licchavis of the ruling family to the number of 7,707 had their abode at Vaiśālī and all of them were given to argument and disputation." (e. g., Vesālī-nagare Licchavirajinaṃ sattasaḥassāni sattasatāni satta ca Licchavi vasimsu. Te sabbe pi paripucchā-vitakkā' hesum, etc.).

Again, the Bhaddasāla Jātaka (no. 465) recording a tradition speaks of "the tank in Vaiśālī city whence the family of kings got water for the ceremonial sprinkling on the occasion of their coronation." It was covered with an iron net so that not even a bird could get through. And we further learn that the tank was closely guarded. (Vesālinagare gaṇarāja-kulāraṃ abhiseka-maṅgala-pokkharani, etc). The Licchavi princes regarded the use of the water of this tank as a peculiar privilege of their own and they severely resented any violation of the sacredness of the tank by anybody else than their own community. Consequently, the same story relates, when the general of the king of Kosala violated the sacredness of the tank by bathing his wife in it, the Licchavis were furious with anger and sent five hundred of their own community to pursue him.

In addition to these we have something more about the Licchavis in the Aṭṭha-kathā. From this, we know that they had a peculiar system of judicial administration in which a criminal case was tried by successive judicial tribunals, presided over by officers with various judicial powers. The first to try it was the Vinicchaya-mahāmacca and next to him were the Vohārikas and the Suttadharas and above them were the Aṭṭahkuṇḍaka, the Senāpati and the Uparāja. All these could acquit the guilty but as a rule they had to send him to the next higher tribunal. The highest tribunal was that of the Rājā who had the right to convict the accused and pass sentence on him according to the Pāveni-potthaka or the Book of Precedents.

We have some more information about the Licchavis from the literature of the Jains. According to them, the founder of their religion, Mahāvīra was related to the Licchavis of Vaiśālī through his mother Trisālā whose brother Ceṭaka was



called "King of Vaiśālī." In Jain books we have traces of the curious government of the Licchavis, for in the Nirayāvali-sutta it is related that king Cetaṅga whom Ajātaśatru prepared to attack, called together the "eighteen kings," of Kāśi and Kosala, the Licchavi and Mallavi. Again, on the death of Mahāvīra, the "eighteen confederate kings of Kāśi and Kosala" did honour to him.

As to the composition of the Licchavi Assembly, we have no more information except that it was a deliberative body in which all questions relating to the affairs of state were fully discussed and decided by the voice of the majority. This is proved by some of the passages quoted above, as also by that well-known passage in the Mahāpariṇibbānasutta in which the Great Buddha laid down the conditions under which the Vajjians "would prosper and not decline." The occasion on which the sermon was uttered by the Buddha, arose when Ajātaśatru, King of Magadha, determined upon destroying the Vajjians, sent his minister, the Brahmin Vassakāra, to him to take his advice on the point. When that Brahmin had delivered the message, the Blessed One enquired of Ānanda whether he was aware that the Vajjians hold "full and frequent assemblies." Ānanda having replied in the affirmative, the Buddha laid down the conditions of their success which are mentioned in the Mahāpariṇibbāna.

The evidence of the passages quoted above goes to prove without doubt that the constitution of the Licchavis was not of the ordinary monarchical type. It was on the other hand a 'Saṅgha' or to explain in clearer terms it was a republican federation of small states, the chiefs of which met in a Central Assembly to discuss affairs relating to the whole confederation. The number of these petty chiefs, who are all called Rājāno, is not known. The number

7,707 occurring in the preambles of the Jātakas may be dismissed as being purely imaginary.

Now, as to these petty principalities which formed the confederation, there is no doubt that they were ruled by the Licchavi chiefs themselves. This is proved by the fact that each of them had his Uparājas, Senāpatis and other officers. They ruled, moreover, by hereditary right. Their sons were called Kumāras (as mentioned in the Ekappaṇṇa Jātaka) and moreover, they formed an exclusive body—a ruling caste with rights and privileges, which they jealously guarded as their own, as would appear from the story of the sacred tank of Vaiśālī quoted above.

These considerations will prove beyond doubt that the Licchavi constitution was oligarchic, *i. e.*, it was of a type in which political power was vested in a privileged class or community.

There are, however, some scholars, who go farther than this and believe in a democratic character of the Licchavi constitution. Their theory is based partly upon the supposition that among the Licchavis, political power was enjoyed by men of all classes and castes and the democratic constitution of the Licchavis was the model from which the Buddhist Saṅgha was copied by the Blessed One. These scholars further believe that as such the constitution and procedure of the Licchavi Assembly, was similar to that followed in the Saṅgha.

Now, in regard to the first assumption, there is no ground for believing that men of all classes and castes enjoyed equal political power. From the Buddhist books where we have more information about the Sākiyas, we know that there were settlements of other castes in the locality—(the Brahmin settlement of Khomadussa for example) but they are never described as enjoying a place in the Deliberation Hall. Pokkhara-sādi when he goes to Kapila-



vatthu finds only the Sākiyas deliberating in the Mote Hall. On another occasion, Suddhodana is described as talking to the council of the Sākiya nobles. From these, we may safely presume that, as in the case of the Sākiyas, political authority at Vesālī was in the hands of the Licchavis only, the affiliated population of other castes being excluded from it.

As to the Buddhist Saṅgha, there can be no doubt that it was founded upon democratic principles. The first to notice this, were Dr. Oldenberg and Prof. Rhys Davids. The latter in his Hibbert Lecture delivered in 1881 (in which he had to illustrate some points in the history of Indian Buddhism) remarked that "the Order was a kind of republic in which all proceedings were settled by resolutions agreed upon in regular meetings of its members which were held subject to the observance of certain established regulations and the use of certain forms of words. These forms and the resolutions passed were called *Kammavācās*." (See Rhys Davids H. L., 1881, pp. 38-40.)

The democratic character of the Buddhist Order is further illustrated by the fact that in addition to the rules and resolutions we further learn from the *Mahāvagga* and the *Culavagga*, that (1) the Buddhist Saṅgha had a body of rules regarding the forms of resolutions to be moved in the Assembly (XI—1—4. IV—2—2.)

(2). There was a rule of quorum (M. V. IX—3,2).

(3). In cases of difference of opinion, the sense of the Assembly was decided by the votes of the majority. There were methods prescribed for the counting of votes and voting by ballot was known. (C. V. IV. 9—IV—14—26).

(4). Complicated matters were referred to the decision of committees (C. V. IV.—14-24).

(5). Lastly, definite rules seem to have existed regarding such matters as the votes of absentees.

These are facts supported by evidence but as to the contention that the Political Saṅgha was the prototype of the Licchavi Saṅgha and that the procedure followed in the Political Assembly was the same as the Buddhist Order, the following observations may be put forward :

(i) Firstly, there is nothing to prove that the procedure in the Political Saṅgha was the same as in the religious order. As to the Political Saṅgha we have absolutely no details and the supposed resemblance is purely conjectural.

(ii) Secondly, there was a wide gulf of difference between the great religious order and the political assembly of the oligarchs. Undoubtedly, as Prof. Rhys Davids observed, "the Saṅgha was a kind of republic—an assembly of men, united in a common purpose, and living under a common discipline." But, the men who composed it were quite different from those of the ordinary world. They had snapped up the last link with the world, they followed no occupations, and were practically communists in respect of the belongings which they were allowed to retain by the Master.

(iii) Lastly, it is doubtful whether it was copied entirely from the Political Saṅgha. In forming a religious congregation there was every chance that the Buddha would organize it on democratic lines. As a scion of the republicans of Kapilavastu it would be natural for him to organise it on democratic principles. But with all these, we must take into account the fact that a religious fraternity in its infancy is always sure to be evolved on democratic lines. Such has been the case with many of the religious orders of the world. In India, other Saṅghas, too, existed in Buddha's



time.\* The early Christians, too, had their gatherings, their elected bishops, and the early Mahomedans had as well, devised a democratic system. In more recent times, the Khalsa was organised on democratic lines. Yet none of these had anything to copy from. The Christians had the ideal of the universal Empire of Rome and the originator of the Khalsa had nothing but the centralised Mogul Empire to follow.

Consequently, we believe that it would be but going too far to say that the Licchavis were as democratic as the Buddhist order. They in fact, formed an oligarchical confederation. The chiefs ruled their own domains by hereditary right but as regards the whole Confederation, the Assembly settled the affairs. The chiefs enjoyed hereditary privileges and this receives confirmation from the evidence of the *Arthaśāstra*. The *Rājaśabdins*, mentioned there apparently formed a privileged body of hereditary nobles composing the Assembly, while the *Śaṅgha-mukhyas* were elected office-bearers from amongst them.

In this respect there is also a similarity between the Yādava Confederacy and the Licchavi Confederation.

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\* In the *Sāmanaphala-sutta*, the six great teachers of the sixth century B. C. are all described as *śāghīṇo*, *gigīṇo* and *gandhāriṇo*.

### Great Events and Movements of the VIth Cen. B. C.

The sixth century before Christ, so remarkable in the intellectual and political history of the world, was no less so in the political history of India. Indian life was at once subjected to extraneous forces and commotion from within. For, while the imperialistic movement dawned in the east, western India covered by the local republics and tribal principalities was invaded by the most powerful foreign enemy of the day. At the same time, the Magadha-Videha region saw the greatest social and religious upheaval of antiquity. Before we pass on to a discussion of the second, we must describe the Persian invasion.

The Persian invasion took place in the reign of Cyrus, the founder of that great empire which stretched from the borders of India to the home of the Græco-Mediterranean culture. Cyrus's first attempt to conquer India through Gedrosia was unsuccessful according to Strabo, but he seems to have been more successful in the Kabul valley. After 516 B. C. Darius's officer, Scylax, led a naval expedition through the Kabul and Indus rivers. As a result of this and other subsequent invasions, the region of Sind and western Punjab came to be constituted into the twentieth satrapy of the Persian Empire and we find the Hindus along with the Gandarians mentioned in the *Naksh-i-Rastam* inscription. This satrapy, the richest of all in the Empire, paid a tribute of 360 Talents



(£1,000,000) a year and Indian soldiers, clad in cotton and armed with bows and iron-tipped arrows, formed part of the army of the Great King which fought the Greeks. (see V. Smith pp. 35-36; McCrindle's *Ancient India* pp. 4-5; Herodotus VII 65; VIII 13; IX 19).

Probably, the Persians did not destroy the local tribes and states, but exacted tributes and military contingents. For this latter purpose, political officers and residents visited the different localities, but otherwise the local system of government was not interfered with. It may also be surmised that the non-monarchical form of government was also fostered by this foreign invasion which precluded any chance of Magadha Imperialism extending its sway there at an early date.

(ii). *Religious propaganda*.—While the foreign enemy was making its headway in the border provinces, a great social and intellectual commotion was shaking the very foundations of social life in the homeland of the Eastern Aryan-dom. For a long time the Brāhmanic religion of sacrifice had become an anomaly. The spirit of awe and wonder had passed away. The complicated ritual had lost its charms; men forgot its significance and meaning, and its own votaries doubted its efficacy. Abstract speculation came into being and men enquired into the root causes of the phenomenal world, its diversities, the relations of men with nature and the causes that led to diversities in individual life. The doctrine of *karma* and of *rebirth* or *metempsychosis* according to good or evil actions in life gained ground. Pleasure in life or its perpetuation with sacrifice lost its charms and a hankering for self-realisation took its place.

The movement took a new turn in the East. In the days of the Upaniṣads, the court of the Janakas had already become a



great sophistic school. Here, Yājñavalkya propounded his philosophical teachings based on a synthesis of the past with newer ideas and interpretations of the same. Next came Kapila with his metaphysics of Dualism. Many more teachers arose but their history is lost. Only a few nick-names have survived of these exponents or occasionally some perverted accounts of their doctrines or distorted versions of their life have reached us.

With continued speculation, pessimism came. The social aspect of life was at a discount. The *Tāpasas* retired to the wilderness while the *Śramaṇas* or *Parivrājakas* formed orders of wandering ascetics who took upon themselves the duty of calling men from the evils of sensual existence and teaching the ways of salvation. Many were the wandering sects that came into existence in that remarkable age. It is our misfortune that no history properly speaking of this remarkable period has reached us and we mainly depend upon some stray facts or distorted traditions about them preserved in the annals of the orders which have survived. Of the surviving sects, only two *e.g.* Buddhism and Jainism assumed greater importance. Other systems gradually decayed and their doctrines or disciplines were forgotten. But the history of the two great systems is closely connected with the political history of the period.

*Buddhism and other monastic religions and their influence on politics.*—The influence of this socio-religious upheaval was great. It acted and reacted on life and ultimately the latent energies tiberated, affected politics. The commotion and convulsion it brought about, shook the very foundations of political existence, though as to the exact nature of the influences, there must remain room for differences of opinion. The material at our disposal is scanty and moreover it is difficult to understand the political teachings of the great teachers, if they had any.



But to the historian one prominent fact is noticeable, *e. g.*, that the rise of Buddhism and the other monastic systems is synchronous with the growth of administrative centralisation and imperial absolutism. Paradoxical as the statement may at first appear, its truth is borne out by the history of subsequent political developments. Thus, at the time of the Great Buddha we find northern India divided into a large number of states, some of which were monarchical while the rest were more or less democratic or republican. With the advancing tide of conquest and imperial domination some of the states mentioned in the list, had already lost their political existence. Aṅga had been annexed by Magadha and Kāśi the home of Ajātaśatru and of the Brahma-dattas of the Jātakas, had become a part and parcel of the Kośala kingdom and its revenues were for the time settled on the Kosala bride of Bimbisāra. The Kurus the Pañcālas and the Matsyas still existed as separate kingdoms, but had lost their political importance.

Then within a century, the imperialistic movement assumed greater strength and the face of the country was entirely changed. Hardly had the Buddha closed his eyes, when his kinsmen the Sākiyas were exterminated as a race and within a short time, the rising power of Maghada destroyed the political importance of the Licchavis—that sturdy race of republicans whose history is so closely bound up with that of early Jainism and Buddhism. Gradually, one by one the small tribal democracies and later on the greater principalities like Kośala and Avanti all disappeared to make room for the extension of the Magadhan monarchy, which like an all-absorbing *Leviathan* swallowed up its weaker neighbours and became under Kauṭilya and Candragupta, the mightiest empire of the day.

This is indeed something paradoxical and to explain it is to solve one of the greatest riddles of History. Naturally, a scion of

republican oligarchs, Buddha was far from being one who believed in monarchy. He believed in the government of clan elders and his views are summarised in the address to Ānanda on the eve of Vassakāra's visit with a mission from Ajātaśatru. This sympathy for clan government in place of one-man rule, coupled with his efforts for the intellectual regeneration of the masses, has naturally led many scholars to think that Buddha was a champion of democracy in politics. In support of this, these men further point out that the Buddhist Saṅgha was fully democratic and contained the principles of self-governing life. It was open to the admission of all without any distinction of caste or tribe and its members were brethren equal in all respects. Every question was discussed in the meetings of the Saṅgha and the line of action taken was that determined by the voice of the majority.

These points, however, while they go to prove without doubt the democratic character of the Buddhist Saṅgha fail to explain the synchronism of the rise of absolutism and rather point to conclusions other than that supported by facts. Coming to an explanation of this we find that the error of those who believe in the contribution of Buddhism to the cause of democracy, lies in their misconceptions and confusions regarding the real teachings of Buddha. Undoubtedly, the teachings of Buddha had a great scope for social equality but even then these did not constitute any democratic political ideal.

The examination of the character of the Saṅgha proves this. First of all, it was not intended for those who were members of society but for men who disavowed the necessity of a social life and left their homes to prepare themselves for the final dissolution. They lived a communistic life, as befitted those who had given up all connections with the world.



Secondly, the creation of the Saṅgha was no novelty and does not mark any democratic innovation. It was not the first of its kind in India. The other great leaders of wanderers were also founders of Saṅghas. Ajita Kesakamvali, Gosāla, Vellāṭhiputta, Purana Kassapa, the Nāṭaputta all had similar organisations. Some of these were in fact more democratic, since they admitted slaves. Furthermore, there is one thing to be borne in mind. That under similar circumstances, the formation of a Saṅgha by the earliest adherants of a new teacher, was the only alternative which could safeguard these new believers from the hatred and persecution of the rest. For his own part Buddha did not wish to brush away the past or to figure as a propagandist for democracy or advocated violent changes. Order was his highest ideal and in more than one place, he tried to show that this was attainable by men if they followed those principles which underlie the exercise of authority (*Dhammo rañño rājā*). Indeed, there are two important passages (*Cakkavatti-siha-nāda Sutta*, *Dialogues Vol. II. part III*; and *Raja Vagga Anguttara Nikaya III*) where he gives us the conditions of success in a monarchical rule.\*

Next, we have reason for coming to the conclusion that the Buddha did nothing for democracy in politics. He meddled neither in society nor politics. His sympathies were for the good of the people and for their good government. Beyond this, he did not pronounce anything more. Moreover, all his sympathies and ideals were but heritages of the past. It was nothing more than a longing for the continuance of the system in which he had been born and bred up. The republicanism of the Licchavi oligarchs was

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\* For this I am indebted to my learned friend Dr. B. M. Barua, M. A., D. Litt, of the Palī Department of Post-Graduate Teaching.

something which Buddha inherited from the past. He or his teachings had nothing to do with its origin or creation.

A careful analysis thus shows that Buddhism contained in it nothing of democratic political teaching. If any teachings it had so far as politics was concerned, they did not affect society directly. On the other hand, the influence of its teachings were not without consequences. It affected the mentality of the people. It changed their ideals of life ; it affected society by its action and the re-action it brought. The reasons why the teachings of Buddhism failed to stem the tide of absolutism but rather furthered the cause of the latter, are not far to seek.

First of all, the attempt to curtail the privileges of the higher orders especially the religious supremacy of the Brahmins who were the natural leaders of the people in their opposition to royal absolutism, removed some obstacles to the growth of despotic power. In ancient India, as in all primitive societies, the priest and the military nobility had been the sole checks to the irresponsibility of monarchs. The teachings of Buddha undermined the priestly position. His universal religion broke the cohesion of tribes and clans. The priest and the noble both lost their importance and thus absolutism had its enemies destroyed. Similar has been the case in Europe. The teachings of Luther fostered the cause of the absolutism of Princes and paved the way for their "divine right." Pure monarchy has often been the offspring of democratic teachings in religion.

(2) Secondly, it diverted popular attention from the arena of politics to that of religion. This again was something which helped the cause of absolutism. The master's teachings were misunderstood and misrepresented. They did mischief in society and also to the individual. Pessimism took a deeper hold. The



meaning of life was forgotten. The world came to be conceived as the home of eternal sorrow and life meant but its perpetuation for cycles of existence yet to come. Rather than face it, men shunned life itself. They feared the world. They scoffed at the joys of existence. They despised life and prayed for its dissolution. This longing for annihilation bore bitter fruit. It brought nanition in life, and death in politics.

(3) Lastly, as the newly enfranchised masses lacking in political instincts were not powerful enough to check the growing power of their kings, the latter became more powerful day by day.

*Reaction and the rise of Arthaśāstra Schools*—The preachings of the reformers were fraught with grave consequences. The lower orders rose everywhere. The sacred traditions of the past became the object of ridicule with shaved-head monks. The privileged classes became alarmed for the safety of their birthright and they saw with disdain the progress of new ideas. Everything seemed topsyturvy—men scoffing at the joys of existence, women rejecting the overtures of affection or love and all mocking at the world.\*

The excess of rigorism bore bitter fruit. Gradually, a reaction set in. New teachers appeared, who inveighed against the unsocial tendencies of the age. They interpreted human life in terms of man's natural desires, his social objectives and his higher spiritual aims. According to them, every thing was closely related and the

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\* A systematic history of this remarkable period is lost but the main social tendencies may be clearly discerned in some of the literature of the day. In the Canon, we find Māra re preaching Buddha for his attempt to destroy social life. In the Therīgāthā we find remarkable unsocial tendencies of the women of the day e.g. aversion to marriage or fear of child-birth. Some of the accounts of the Theris show the evils of monasticism. We find husbands leaving their wives and children and daughters leaving the home and in one case a nun even marries her father. The author contributed an article on this in the Sanskrit Bhārati (1923).

sacrifice of one was prejudicial to the other. Social life was in their eyes, the basis of everything and they tried to restore its foundations. The ideals of the past were re-invoked—conservatism became the creed of the day. The older life of freedom and its absence of restraint was forgotten. A harder routine was introduced. Women lost their social position. Early marriage was inculcated and asceticism came to be looked down with disfavour.

In the domain of politics, the Arthasāstra school arose with vigour. It gave a decidedly higher place to the attainment of desires in life and inculcated the necessity of acquisitions. Some of the Arthasāstra teachers, neglected morality altogether and advocated the cause of a strong monarchy at the cost of war and intrigue. The older idealism in politics passed away and the concept of a state on the basis of a strong military power came into existence. An age of moral irresponsibility dawned—materialism reawakened and the past ideals of a pluralistic political discipline vanished away.

*The Arthasāstra school.*—The great event of the close of the period was the rise of thinkers of this school. The Arthasāstra writers represented a strong current of intellectualism directed towards the solution of man's social and ethical problems—his aims in life how best to attain them and the correlation of individual interests with that of the social group as a whole. The aims of human existence were analysed by contemporary thinkers and its objectives were analysed into the four great categories or the *Caturvarga* of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mōṣka*. *Dharma* in its stricter sense represented the normal order of passions and hankerings together with the duties commensurate with a moral and social existence; *Artha* signified the objectives which men strive to attain in the material basis for existence; *Kāma* represented the biological



element at the root of life, its maintenance and continuance by virtue of the propagation of the species, while *Mokṣa* connotated the attainment of delivery from the clutches of desires and hankerings of the world.

Each of these led to speculations and thus gave rise to treatises on the four great objectives. As to the works on *Mokṣa* or *Kāma* proper, we are not directly concerned but the *Dharma-sūtras* which take *Dharma* in its wider sense, and *Arthaśāstras* claim our attention. Both were based on ancient traditions—handed down from teacher to pupil in succession. The early history of the *Arthaśāstra* is lost but later tradition regarded it as the descendent of the *Artha Veda* attached to the *Rik* or the *Atharva Vedic* schools.\* Its important branches comprised the study of agriculture, commerce cattle-rearing and other allied subjects. But by far important and closely related to each was the more important subject of the art of governance for kings and the ways and means of attaining sovereign authority based on the realisation of the four-fold objective, e. g. *alabdha-lābha-labdha-pari-rakṣaṇam*, *rakṣita-vivardhanam* and *tīrtha-pratipādaṇam*.

The history of the rise of *Arthaśāstra* schools is rather obscure. But, they seem to have been fairly in existence as organised bodies in the VIth century B. C. for, if we believe in the antiquity of canonical tradition, we have in the *Brahmajāla sūtra*, the denunciation by Buddha of the Brahmins engaged in king-craft, the art of war and peace and the various other allied topics which all point to the growth of king-craft. The name of one *Arthaśāstra* teacher—*Dīgha*

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\* For a history of the *Arthaśāstra* school and its branches, see my *Economic life and progress in Ancient India* (Vol. I Bk. I. Ch. ii.)

Kārāyana occurs in the Buddhist literature as that of the king-maker who deposed old Pasenadi in favour of his son Virudhava.

The two chief points of interest with the history of the Arthaśāstras are first of all, (1) their close connection with older tradition and occasionally to some of the gods. In the absence of a real history we are mainly to depend on later evidence *i. e.* of the Kauṭīliya and some texts which we find in the Epic (Śānti. Ch. 59). According to Epic tradition, the earliest work on Daṇḍanīti was composed by Prajāpati or Brahman to guide men. That book comprising 100,000 chapters was abridged by the gods Indra and Śiva. The next redactions were made by Bṛhaspati, Manu, and Śukra. All these names occur in the Epic (Ch. 58. Śāntiparva) and also in the Kauṭīliya, which mentions Śiva as Viśālākṣa, Indra as Vāhudantiputra, Bṛhaspati as the founder of the Bārhaspatya school and Śukra as the founder of the Auśanasa school. The mention of the two gods Indra and Śiva is significant and points to the early association of some of the Arthaśāstra schools with the votaries of these gods. Probably, as in the case of different schools of Sanskrit grammar, the early speculators of this science of polity distinguished themselves by their devotion to one or other of these deities.\*

In the hands of subsequent thinkers some of these gave rise to well-developed schools of thought like those of the Mānavāḥ Bārhaspatyāḥ, Auśanasāḥ Pārāśarāḥ, or the Āmbhiyāḥ, whose names we find recorded in the Kauṭīliya. Individual teachers also appeared. In the absence of proper history, we have only their

\* The story of the origin of the Māheśvāra school of grammar and the victory of Pāṇini a votary of Śiva, over his rival who excelled in the Aindra school is known to everybody. The close association of different branches of study with particular gods and the patronage of the Muses over certain branches of learning amongst the Greeks is too well-known to be repeated here.



nick-names and for explanation we depend entirely on tradition. Thus, we have Kaunapadanta (big-toothed), identified by the Trikāṇḍaśeṣa with Bhīṣma, Piśuna identified with the sage Nārada, Vātavyādhi (suffering from *Vāta*) identified with Udhava, Bhāradvāja identified with the Kaurava commander Droṇa, (since the recorded views of Bhāradvāja on the unscrupulous aims of an *amātya* tally so clearly with those attributed by Karna in the Sabhāparva to that Brahmin warrior). In addition to these heroes of the Epic, other authors or practical politicians existed and prominent among them were Dīrgha Cārāyana, the unscrupulous adviser of Pasenadi's son, Ghoṭamukha whose name occurs in the Vātsyāyana, and of Kātyāyana whom the Bṛhat-kathā legend makes a minister of the Nandas and thus a probable elder contemporary of Kauṭilya in the IVth century B. C.\*

The close association of the Epic heroes with the Arthaśāstra schools is really worthy of note and shows how the later formulators of the Arthaśāstra doctrine closely followed on the footsteps of the former. Probably, in course of time, the events of the Epic narrative as well as the deeds and sayings of the great heroes, became a sort of guiding principle with succeeding generations. Their ideas or the principles they formulated lived in the floating tradition of the past and subsequent authors took them in the light of a guiding canon. This vast literature has not come down to us in its original, but rather distorted and misarranged, its contents have found way into the Rājadharmā chapters of the Great Epic. In the absence of all other authorities, the Epic should be regarded as the main source supplying us with the oldest materials

\* The identification of these Arthaśāstra authors in the Kauṭilya has already been attempted by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar (in his first series of Carmichael Lectures) with whom I had the honour of being associated as an assistant. The credit of identifying Ghoṭamukha and Kārāyana, belongs to my friend Dr. B. M. Barua (See Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy.)

regarding the views and principles of the most ancient formulators of the Arthaśāstras.\*\*

Secondly, the way in which the Arthaśāstra writers view the problems of politics is also an interesting study. First of all, they seem to be interested mainly in the socio-economic problems of man and though they follow the older traditions about the duties of rulers to their subjects, they neglect the sacerdotalistic principles which we find in the Brāhmaṇas. The happiness of man in society and that through the governmental functions of the king is their main ideal and in attempting to formulate means for its realisation they take regal authority as the primary basis of social existence.

In common with the Epic thinkers, they postulate a condition of anarchy in the absence of a common superior and make coercive authority as the basis of all governments. Men actuated by greed or passion try to tyrannize over the weak and as such the latter are made to suffer. To end such a state of war and violence, regal authority is absolutely necessary and this authority they derive when the sole coercive power is vested in the king. This belief in the coercive authority makes them regard the science as that of *Danḍanīti* or the science of "proper co-ercion." We shall discuss this in detail in connection with the social ideals of Kautilya.

#### THE NEW MONARCHIES.

While the Arthaśāstra school was fairly on its way to development, the character of monarchy changed. Partly with the influence

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\*\* The relation between the Kautilya material and the Epic is in itself an interesting study. In a paper on the Political Speculations in the Epic, I have discussed this point and have tried to prove how Kautilya largely utilised materials which are found in the Epic. Whole verses and passages occurring in both the works appear identical. But, Kautilya shows a great advancement over the Epic writers both in method as well as in the elaboration of his ideas.



of the new ideas, partly aided by the re-action which followed the monastic propaganda, regal authority and its character changed. A new type of centralised monarchy came into existence. The last vestiges of tribal polity or of the semi-constitutional monarchies were swept away. Tribal boundaries or traditions were swept away and big kingdoms took their place. Conquest brought into the hands of the conqueror vast areas full of natural resources. The forests separating the tribal settlements, the rivers, which were often regarded as "*res communes*" all passed into the hands of the conqueror together with the mines and other sources of natural wealth. The personal domains of the conquered added to the resources of the victor. With enormous resources at their disposal, kings became free from popular control. The spy system (the germs of which might have existed in the earliest days) became a primary political institution and the ranks of spies were swelled by members belonging or pretending to belong to the various religious orders. As we have already pointed out long ago, in the days of Prasenajit, this vast machinery of espionage was already in existence.\*

Great standing armies came into existence and on this head we have the evidence of the IVth century Greek writers who speak of the vast armaments of Maghadha, and of the Andhras, the Kalingas and the Pāndyas. Extra taxes came to be levied by kings and new sources of income were constantly added. This last point we shall discuss in the next section.†

\* My article on the spy system in Ancient India, though perverted and distorted through the negligence of the editorial staff of the *Dacca Review*, was published in 1920. There the passage from the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (p. 79) was cited showing the early employment of men in the garb of religious wanderers.

† For the gradual evolution of taxation see my *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India* Vol I. pp. 278—284.

### **Early Political thought.**

The period immediately preceding the imperialistic movement was also remarkable for the beginnings of political speculation properly so called. As the Upaniṣads saw the dawn of Metaphysical enquiry, evinced by the eagerness to find out the root causes of the universal phenomena or the relation of the latter to the joys and sufferings of the individual, so, speculation was directed towards the finding out of the principles which were calculated to ensure the happiness of men in society. From the close of the Vedic age, an idealistic picture of happiness arising out of the regulation of the functions of the different elements of society floated before the eyes of men. Gradually, the influence of the ideal of order based on that of the great universal system became less, and abstract enquiry was directed towards the socio-ethical problems of mankind.

The ideal of Dharma in its wider and moral sense enshrouded the minds of men and speculation was directed towards the realisation of that moral order. This concept of Dharma is unique in the history of Indian intellectual and moral progress and connoted as it does even now a world of ideas from the primary principles guiding human conduct to the ideal state of moral self-realisation so far as the individual is concerned. In its wider sense it embraced the

The Dharma ideal.



totality of principles and precepts which conduce best to the happiness of men in this life and that beyond. It is difficult to find a single word in western vocabulary which connotes the same idea. Its nearest approach so far as its ethical aspect is concerned is made by the French word *droit* and the German word *recht*. The earliest exponents of the ethical aspect of Dharma are the Dharmasūtras which seem to base their precepts on those handed down by the canonical tradition of the Vedic Schools. In these ancient works, the political aspect of social discipline is rather merged in the disciplinary canon which regulates the life of the individual in the various aspects of human existence. The Dharmasūtras, being the handiwork of the Brāhmaṇa teachers, know more of the individual or the diverse sections of men than the political whole. The king comes in only as an individual in privileged position and burdened with great social duties. The Brāhmaṇa also comes in as enjoying an extraordinary position so far as the social organisation is concerned. The sūtras profess moreover to lay down the guiding principles of different classes of men on whose co-operation the social good as well as the spiritual happiness of men depend. As such, they contain not only chapters on the duties of men of different castes with reference to their diverse stages of life or means of livelihood, purity of conduct, penance for sins (*Prāyascitta*), but lay down the rules of inheritance of property, judicial trials, the duties of kings and various other topics.

While this is the character of the Dharmasūtras, the Epic chapters discuss practically the same topics but they lay, a greater stress on the duties of the king, since from the point of view of social solidarity, the authority of the king was the basis of everything. The glori-

fication of Rājadharmā by the writers on polity shows their mentality and the peculiar angle of vision from which they view the problems of individual and social welfare. In the Rājadharmā chapters, we have the synthesis of different schools of thought as well as the superposition of diverse strata of speculations. But, in spite of this, the further importance of the Rājadharmā chapters lies in the fact, that they show a decided tendency towards the separation of ethics from the sacerdotal canon and in some chapters we find even a tendency towards the separation of politics from the traditional lines of ethical enquiry. In some chapters, we find a deeper enquiry, and a determination to go to the root of social existence with a view to explain the evolution of social order from the standpoint of human desires for self-realisation and the natural obstacles to them. The Epic, properly speaking, is practically the only work which contains a summary of Hindu political speculation and shows us the turn of mind that led to these. Our misfortune however lies in the fact that the present version of the Epic not only contains later interpolations but also shows a careless handling of diverse strata of thoughts and ideals.

While such is the importance of the Epic, the Buddhist canon, specially the Jātakas, supply us with materials which though not exposing to us the dissertations and speculations of the lawgiver or the theorist, gives an insight into the popular mentality of those early times, their ideas as to what the legitimate functions of royalty should be, what they thought to be just and what they regarded as encroachments on their legitimate privileges. The Jātakas supply us with sufficient information as to real life, while the disciplinary chapters of the Vinaya or the saying of the Buddha

Ideal of discipline in  
in the Buddhist canon.



reveal to us the Buddhistic ideal as to Dharma and its realisation both in society and politics through individual discipline or the disciplinary model of the monastic community. As such, from these sections of the canon we find an idea as to the earlier conceptions of the nature of pluralistic discipline, though a political discipline properly so called was not evolved by the greatest of the non-Brahmanical teachers of the 6th century B. C.

*Evolution of ideas relating to the origin of Social life.*

As we have said already, the Dharmasūtras follow closely upon the older canonical tradition, which again hold the revealed Vedas as the primary sources of all knowledge. In the body of the Śruti texts, however, there is very little which can be called political speculation. But the germs exist there. We have not only attempts at the explanation of the origin of the universe with its diverse sections of human and brute creation, but some crude ideas as to the

Germs of Political  
thought in the Vedic  
literature.

services and functions of the political organisation or its head, the king. Creation, as we have seen was a great natural process attributed to sacrifice (R. V. X. 90. Puruṣa Sūkta), or *Tapas* on the part of Prajāpati and to the great and eternal principles of *Rta* and *Satya*. While this represents the early attempts at finding out the abstract root-causes of the manifestations of the created world, we have also two popular traditions about the early services of royalty, i.e., those relating to *Manu* and *Pṛthu*.

As time went on, dissertations about these abstract principles gave place to the emanance of the ethical ideal, and an attempt to explain the principles of good government. The Dharma idea came to the forefront. The king was regarded as the protector of Dharma (धर्मस्य नाता. Ait. Br. VIII. 26) and Dharma in the Śata-

patha Brāhmaṇa was equated with truth (*satya*). Moreover, the place of Dharma in human existence was defined and the same passage of the said Brāhmaṇa explained Dharma as those "*principles of justice* whereby the weak maintain themselves against the strong with the help of the king"\* With the Brāhmaṇa authors, this Dharma was thus something which may be taken to embody the primary principles of justice and equity, though it is nowhere discussed and explained till we come to a later age†. For our purpose, however, we must note that the above passage contains the germs which were later on elaborated into definite social and ethical ideas. First of all we find that it postulated that certain rights belong to all and secondly, the application of the principles of Dharma by the king safeguards the rights of the weak against the aggressions of the more powerful.

This Dharma idea which has cast so great an influence upon Indian social and moral evolution, predominates in the Dharma-sūtras, though these books do not explain the meaning or character of Dharma except that it leads to the happiness of men in this life and that beyond :  
(अथातः पुरुषनिःश्रेयसायं धर्मजिज्ञासा । ज्ञात्वा चानुतिष्ठन् धार्मिकः । प्रशस्यतमो भवति लोके प्रेत्य च स्वर्गलोकं समश्नुते—Vasiṣṭha I. i. 1-3). They

\* स मेव ज्यमन्तश्चेदपमव्यस्रत धर्मे तदेतत् चतस्र चत्वं सङ्गमः  
तस्माद्भर्ता परतरं नास्त्यधी अवलोक्यान् वलीयसिमांशते धर्मेव यथा  
राशे चैव स धर्मः सत्यं वै तत्तस्मात्सत्यं वदन्मातृधर्मं  
वदतीति धर्म वा वदन् सत्यं वदतीत्ये तद्वै वेतदुभयं भवति ॥

Br. Ar. Up. I, IV. 14—Sata. Br. XIV. iv. 2, 23.

† Attempts at the definition of Dharma come only with the founders of philosophical schools like Kanāda or Jaimini. The former takes Dharma to mean यतीभ्युदयनिषेधसंमितिः स धर्मः and thus emphasises upon the moral and also the ethical aspect of it. But Jaimini goes to the root of all human desires and explains Dharma as चीदनालक्षणीयं धर्मः



then go to discuss the sources of Dharma and derive it from the Śruti, the Smṛti and the conduct of the Śiṣṭas.\*

Beyond this, the Dharmasūtras go no further. They give us neither definition nor abstract ideas, but postulate the existence of certain duties and obligations inherent in men of all castes and occupations. Moreover, they seem to hint at the existence of certain legal relations between the king and his subjects. These we shall discuss in their proper place.

But, while the Dharmasūtras are silent, there is evidence to prove that the root-ideas came to be elaborated in the hands of a set of subsequent thinkers whose views are found recorded in traditions which we find in the Epic or in the Buddhist canon. They evidently analysed the older Dharma concept and tried to come to a logical sequel as to the consequences of the absence of Dharma and the enforcement of its principles by the king. They speculated on the state of affairs when the king or the upholder of Dharma was non-existent. Probably, a divergence of opinion existed. Some made Dharma primordial and self-existing, identical with *Rta* and *Satya* and emanating with creation, while others made Dharma intimately connected with the origin of social order and the royal office. Consequently, two divergent theories as to the state of nature were arrived at.

According to one set of thinkers, Dharma existed as early as the beginning of the creation but not the king. In their eyes, the condition of existence in

Two theories of the  
State of Nature.

\* See Vāśiṣṭha Bodhāyana and Gautama Dharmasūtras. According to Vāśiṣṭha  
श्रुतिश्च त्रिविधो धर्मः ; तदन्तर्गते मित्राचारः प्रमाणम् ।—Vāśiṣṭha I. 1 ; उपदिष्टो धर्मः प्रतिवेदः । आर्तो  
द्वितीयः । तदन्तर्गते मित्राः प्रमाणम् ।—Bodhā, I. 1 ; वेदो धर्मसूत्रं तदिदं च कृतिमोक्ष  
—Gautama. ; धर्मग्रन्थस्य प्रमाणम् । वेदाश्च । Āpastamba ; Āpastamba in his work gives a higher  
place to the canon of the wise and next mentions the Vedas.

such a state of affairs was one of ideal happiness. "Men ruled themselves" they believed "by Dharma and respected each others' rights, though there was no king, no punishment or chastiser."\*

This ideal state however did not last long. Error assailed the judgment of men and they became greedy, coveting others' wives and property. Society being on the verge of dissolution† the gods approached the Grandsire and he gave them a complete code of laws for the guidance of mankind. Later on, Viṣṇu gave them one of his *mānasa-putras*—Virajā as the first king of men. One of his successors accepted the duties of a king and some of his descendents ruled rightly. But, when one of them, Veṇa, became a tyrant, he was killed by the Ṛṣis and on their performing a sacrifice with the tyrant's body, Pṛthu sprang up from its right arm. He agreed to rule righteously and took an oath to that effect. Thus royalty was established and its duties, as also those of the various sections of mankind were laid down.

The formulators of the other theory started with the assumption that in the state of Nature, neither the king nor the precepts of

\* Mahā. Śānti. ch. 59.

निवृत्तं नरव्याघ्रं यत् सर्वमशेषतः ।  
यदा राज्यं सृष्ट्यग्रमादौ कृतमुनेऽभवत् ॥  
नेव राज्यं न राजासीत् न दण्डो न दण्डिकः ।  
धर्मैव प्रजाः स्वर्गः रक्षन्ति च परस्परम् ॥  
† पाण्डमानास्त्वान्योन्व नरा धर्मैव भारत ।  
खेटं परदुपाजम् कृतमाद्यौ च आविशत् ॥  
ते मोक्षवशमापन्ना मनुजा मनुजैर्मम ।  
प्रतिपत्तिमोक्षाय धर्मोपासनमवशत् ॥  
महावीरं प्रतिपत्तौ च मोक्षवशा नरास्तथा ।

लोभस्य वशमापन्नाः सर्वे भरतसत्तम ॥  
अप्राप्तस्वामिभये तु कुर्वन्तो मनुजैस्ततः ।  
कामो नामापरस्परं प्रव्यपद्यत वै प्रभो ॥  
तस्मिन् कामवशं घातान् रामो नामाभिसंभूजत् ।  
रक्षाय नाम्यजानन् कर्वाकौट्यं युधिष्ठिर ॥  
अवग्याहमनं चैव वाप्यावाप्यं तथैव च ।  
मत्स्याभिर्यं च राजेन्द्र दीपादीपं च नाव्यजन् ॥  
किञ्च ते नरखेदि वै तज्जप्य चैव ननाम ह ।  
नाशाच्च तज्जप्यो राजन् धर्मो नाशनवागमन् ॥

Mahā. Śān. Ch. LIX.



Dharma were existent. The result was that there existed a state of war. Society was non-existent; men devoured each other as *big fish devour weaker ones of the same species*. The more powerful snatched away other's property or abducted women. This rule of might almost led to the extinction of mankind and they laid down certain regulative conventions (*samayān*) to exclude or punish the wicked. Next, they approached Brahman and prayed for a king who was to protect them in lieu of accepting their allegiance and tributes of corn, gold and other things.\* Manu though refusing at first, became the first king of men.

The two theories are remarkable in the history of Indian political thought. They are clearly based on the two Vedic traditions already referred to *i. e.* those relating to Prthu and Manu and though they differ in analysing human nature and thereby postulate two different states of Nature, they come practically to the same conclusion. They both hold—

(a) that kingship is necessary for the existence of society

(b) the absence of regal authority leads to violence.

(c) the king, though he is vested with power and authority must be within proper limits.

[(d) Another point of agreement between them lies in the interference of the gods, this being due to the fact that the Indian mind could not free itself from older religious ideas.]

\* अराजकाः प्रजाः पूर्वं विनिवृत्तिरिति नः श्रुतम् ।

परस्परं मन्त्रयन्तो मन्त्रा इव जले जगन् ॥

समैव तासतश्चक्रुः समयानिति नः श्रुतम् ।

वाक्शूरो दण्डपरमो यद्येतात् पारजायिकः ॥

यः परस्मिन्वाद्येनान् जगन्वा नन्वाहृषा इति ।

विद्यासाधयं सर्वेषां वर्णानामविशेषतः ॥

तासां च समर्थं कृत्वा समवेनावतसिरे ॥

सद्वितास्तासदा जगत्सुखासीः पितानहम् ।

अमौखरा विमर्शामी भगवदौखरं दिश ॥

यं पूजयेन् सन्धयं यद्य नः प्रतिदानयेत् ।

Mahā, Śānti, Ch. LXVII.

But The main point of conflict of the two theories lies in the fact, that in the first, kingship is regarded as a divine institution, though later on, the king's rights were put within bounds and he was compelled to take the oath, while the second theory regards kingship as a human institution valued only for its utility.

It is difficult to decide as to which of the two theories is older. But, it, is quite clear that the second theory is intimately connected with the Vedic tradition about Manu and his services to mankind. In later times, its influence on the evolution of Indian political thought was very great. For, we find in this theory a number of ideas which were so commonly accepted and to which we have references throughout our literature. The chief points of interest about it are :—

- (a) that a state of war existed in the absence of a king.
- (b) the earliest king ruled by virtue of popular choice. Sovereignty thus lies with the people and they can expel a tyrant and elect a new king.
- (c) the king's rights arise by virtue of a bilateral contract between the people and the former.

The first of these predominant ideas is exemplified by the description of *Mātsya-nyāya* which occurs throughout the length and breadth of our literature. Not only do we find the mention of the word in innumerable places, but, we have descriptions of it in the *Rāmāyaṇa*,\* the *Mahābhārata*, the *Kauṭīliya*, the *Smṛtis* and even in many poetical works.

\* We shall discuss these in their proper place, but here we may show something from the two Epics. The conception of *Mātsya-nyāya* is prominent in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. As we have seen already, the Ikṣvāku elders proposed to elect a prince in place of Rāma who had departed to the forest, on the ground that "the country might not go to rack and ruin owing to *mātsya-nyāya*." We have a number of long passages in which the consequences of anarchy are discussed (See. *Ayō*, ch. 67 śl. 4-29 ; and ch. 67 śl. 31-32) The idea of big fish swallowing up smaller ones finds place almost everywhere.



The Mahābhārata gives us in innumerable places harrowing descriptions of the evils of anarchy in the absence of a king.—The main points in these descriptions are that they harp on the following *e.g.*—

(a) In such a condition, the strong claim every thing. Two unite against one and rob and despoil him. The weak invariably suffer.

(b) The weak are enslaved ( अदासः क्रियते दासः )

(c) Women are snatched away and violated ( झियन्ते च बलात् स्त्रियः and हरेयुर्वलवन्तोऽपि दुर्वलानां परिग्रहान् । )

(d) The idea of private property or of ownership passes away ( ममेदमिति लोकेऽस्मिन्नभवेत् सम्परिग्रहः )

(e) With the passing away of private ownership or marriage, social ties cease to exist ( न विवाहो समाजो वा यदि राजा न पालयेत् ॥ )

(f) Hence, individual efforts or socio-economic activity ceases ( न योनिदोषो वर्तते न कृषिर्न वणिक्पथः )

(g) All primary social institutions being thus violated, social existence ceases.\*

Such being the consequences of a kingless régime, a ruler is according to them absolutely necessary to maintain the primary

\* The two best descriptions of anarchy are found in the 67th and 68th chapter of the Śānti parva. For their importance we give the following extracts *e.g.*

न धनाधीनं न दाराधेयं न विषामराजकम् ॥	अदासः क्रियते दासः झियन्ते च बलात्स्त्रियः ।
प्रौढते हि हरन् पापः परवित्तमराजके ।	एतस्मात् कारणाद्देवाः प्रजापालान् प्रवर्तिरे ॥
यदास्य उद्धरन्त्यन्ते तदा राजानमिच्छति ॥	राजा चैव भवेद्भोके पृथिव्यां दण्डधारकः ।
पापा अपि तदा क्षेमं न लभन्ते कदाचन ।	अस्मिन् सम्यगिति वा भवत्यन् दुर्वलं बलवत्तराः ॥
पुत्रस्य हि द्वौ हरतो बलीय बह्वीऽपरे ॥	

Mahā. Śān. LXVII 67.

Again

राजमूलो महाप्राज्ञ धर्मो लोकस्य सत्यते ।	प्रजा राजभवादीव न खादन्ति परस्परम् ॥
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\* \* \* \* \*

(contd.)

institutions and to protect the subjects. Kingship being thus an institution of so vital importance, the people naturally elect a king of their own. The earliest king was Manu who at first refused to assume royalty owing to the sinful nature of man. But upon this, the people agreed to grant him a fixed share of the produce of their labour and part of their hoarded wealth.

This theory which was of gradual evolution, gained ground very early. In the Epic, it seems to have been evolved out of the traditions relating to Manu. Its influence however was very great and we find it even in folklore or in traditions recorded in the Buddhist literature. In the Aggañña Suttanta we find the account of the creation of universe and incidentally we are told as to the election of the Mahā-sammata by the people, who raised him to that high office to "punish the wicked and reward the virtuous". To maintain his position he was allowed a share of the paddy from the people. He was called Rājan since he delighted all (Rañjeti) his subjects (see Aggañña suttanta ; Dīgha Nikāya Vol. III. sec. 27).

This theory of the original elective character of royalty was also connected with the belief that the taxes paid to the king was but his remuneration for his services of protection and justice.

यथा जगदये राजन् भूतानि मन्त्रियैवोः ।

अन्धे तमसि मज्जे पुरपञ्चलाः परस्परम् ॥

यथा जगदके मज्जा निराकन्दे विहङ्गमाः ।

विहरेयुर्गन्धकाः विहङ्गमाः पुनः पुनः ॥

• • • • •

एवमेव विना राज्ञा विलम्बे पुरिमा मजाः ।

अन्धे तमसि मज्जे पुरगोपाः पश्ये यथा ॥

ममदमिति लोकऽश्विन्न भवेत् सम्परिवृष्टः ।

• • • • •

हरिदुर्बलवलीऽपि दुर्बलानीं परिवृष्टान्

हन्तुम्यायच्छमानां च यदि राजा न पालयेत् ॥

न दारः न च पुत्रः स्यात् न धर्मः न प्ररिचक्षः ॥

न सोमिदीदी वपंत न जपिनं न चिक्पयः ।

न विवाहाः समाजाः वा यदि राजा न पालयेत् ॥

Mahā, Sānti, Ch. 68.



Both in the sixty-seventh chapter of the Epic and in the Aggañña Suttanta\* we find this as the necessary corollary to the hypothesis that royalty arose in a compact or contract between the ruler and the ruled. In the Buddhist account, the people are made to chose the Mahāsammata and in lieu of his services they agree among themselves to pay a share of the paddy. In the Epic account however, the people enter into communication with Manu the king-elect after laying down certain conventions for their own guidance. They lay down the terms of the contract and this seems to have been a bi-lateral one with rights and duties on either side *e.g.*

- (a) on the part of the king, he was to protect the people
- (b) on the part of the people, they were to obey him, and in lieu of his services they were to grant him 1-50 of cattle and gold, 1-10 of the produce of fields etc. together with the handsomest damsel.

This idea that the taxes paid to the king was his wages, is found throughout our literature. In the epic Mahābhārata, we are expressly told that the king was to maintain peace and justice and receive as his wages, the "sixth part" or the valī as his "wages" (*vetana*) or his "remuneration for protection" (*tāsāmevābhiguptaye*)† Furthermore, a king who failed to protect or administer

\* Mr. Ghosal the author of Hindu Political theories is loath to use the term contract and applies the word compact to this understanding between the ruler and ruled which gave rise to monarchy. Furthermore, he sees in the Aggañña Suttanta account the real and the earliest formulation of a social contract theory.

† आदित्य वल्लभाय प्रणमः कुहलन्दन ।

स बह्मानसवि प्राज्ञतामामिवाभिगुतये ॥ शान्ति—६१२५

also वल्लभसेन युक्तेन दण्डेनाद्यापराधिनान् ।

प्राज्ञानीतेन लिखे वा वितनेन धनान्नमम् ॥ do ७१।१०

properly, was regarded as a "thief"\* stealing the "sixth part" unrighteously. As a result of this, we find repeated mention of the epithet "*Vali-śatbhāga-taskara*" applied to unrighteous kings. Again, in the *Ādi-parva*, (Ch. 213) we find an infuriated Brāhmin (who was invoking the aid of Arjuna) expressly reminding Arjuna that a prince failing to protect his subjects was a thief who† stole the "sixth part". How old these ideas are is to be ascertained from the fact that the *Dharmasūtras* which are certainly pre-Buddhistic, show clear evidence of their influence. Gautama clearly says that the king "receives part of the produce of fields and tolls on articles *since he protected all these*."‡ *Bodhāyana* also says that the king was to protect *with the sixth part as his wages*,§ while *Vaśiṣṭha* grants the sixth part of the

- \* अशोभारच राजानो बलिपङ्कभागतस्करः ।  
समसोवाप्यदातारस्ते वे निरयमानिनः ॥ Anu—Ch. 28.  
आदाय बलिपङ्कभागं यो राष्ट्रं नाभिरक्षति ।  
प्रतिगृह्णाति तत्पापं चतुर्विंशतिभिरभिरः ॥ Śānti Ch. 211. 12.  
बलिपङ्कभागस्तुल्यं वार्षिकं समुपयोजयेत् ।  
न रक्षति प्रजाः सम्यक् यः स पापिवतस्करः ॥  
दत्ताभयं यः स्वयमेव राजा न तत्प्रमाणं कुर्वते ऽवलोकमान् ।  
स सर्वलोकादुपलभ्य पापं सोऽधमं बुद्धिर्निरयं प्रयाति ॥ Ch. 139. Śānti.  
† त्रिवर्षे धने तस्मिन् राज्ञः शोधमुच्छ्रितः ।  
आगत्य स्वाख्यवप्रत्यं सद्विभक्तं स पाण्डवान् ॥  
त्रिवर्षे शोधनं चतुर्वर्षे रक्षितं तदात्मनिः ।  
प्रसन्नं चाग्रहिययादभ्यधावत पाण्डवाः ॥  
अरक्षितारं राजानं बलिपङ्कभागहारिणम् ।  
तमाहुः सर्वलोकास्तु समस्तं पापहारिणम् ॥ Ādi. Ch. 213.

‡ राघे बलिदानम् कर्षयैर्दशमष्टमं पठं वा पयदिरण्यवीरयेके पञ्चाशद्वारान् विभक्तिमानः  
युष्मै पण्ये मूलफलपुत्रीपयमधुनाऽवलयोऽनानां पठं तद्वक्ष्यमस्मिन्नात् तेषु तु निव्ययुक्तं स्यात् ।  
Gautama. (Ch.—X.) Gautama whose work is not later than the 5th Cen. B. C., closely follows the Epic tradition which is represented by the 67th ch. of the *Śāntiparva*.

§ पङ्कभागतो राजा रक्षेत् प्रजाम् । Ch. XVI. *Bodhāyana*.



wealth of his subjects to the king on condition of his protecting them according to *Dharma*.\*

While the Epic and the Dharmasūtras are unanimous in holding regal rights as arising out of contract, there are other important facts which point to the contractual nature of royal rights. Even in very ancient times, the Epic and the early law-books lay down the maxim that the king was to make good the loss of his subjects caused by thieves and robbers. This clearly confirms the contractual nature of regal rights; for, if we believe rights as arising out of king's sovereign majesty, then this provision would not have found place in the Epic or in subsequent legal texts like those of Kautilya, Yāgñavalkya and even Nārada and Kātyāyana.

Having discussed the ideas about the origin of sovereign authority, we pass on to examine the character of regal functions. The chief point about regal majesty was the vesting of sole coercive authority in the king. The Epic writers are almost unanimous in holding that coercion was the basis of social organisation and discuss the reasons why it was introduced. In the sections discussing the state of nature, we find speculations as to the consequences of the absence of coercion and we find pictures of the dissolution of social life owing to the activity of the strong over the weak. In addition to these, we have at least one chapter which gives us a parable relating to the origin of coercion. This is in the form of a dialogue between king Vasuhoma of Aṅga and Māndhātṛ. We are told that in the sacrifice of Kṣupa, there was the disappearance of Daṇḍa and as a result of it, all social conventions were violated and a state of war and social anarchy took place. The laws of marriage and property were violated with disastrous consequences. So

\* राजा तु धर्मेनानुशासन् षष्ठमंशं लभितुं धनस्य ।

Vasīṣṭha I.

Danḍa was created by Rudra and Danḍa-nīti composed by Sarasvatī.\* Though mixed with fable, the chief ethical principles which the Epic thinkers take into consideration are not difficult to find out. Firstly, without coercion the weak are bound to suffer and all social conventions including the Vedic discipline and all other moral relations are likely to be swept away.† Secondly, this coercive jurisdiction cannot be vested in ordinary subjects since this would but result in the dominance of the same principle i.e. tyranny‡ of the strong over the weak. The chastisement of the wicked is recognized to be of supreme necessity.

Hence, all coercive authority is to be vested in the king who is to act impartially and administer the laws, with a view to maintain the life, property and discipline of his subjects (प्रजा विनयरक्षार्थं धर्मस्यात्मा सनातनः ।). Danḍa preserves the four orders and defines the limit of the activity of individuals and castes.‡

Danḍa or coercion was thus conceived to be the basis of Rājya or political society. The Epic thinkers in common with the thinkers of the modern age, regarded it as the primary principle in the evolution of the state. Its establishment was, according to them, also marked by the simultaneous evolution of the idea of justice, and justice

\* तस्मिन्महिं न चापि प्रजानां सङ्घरोऽभवत् ।  
नेव चायं नचाकार्यं भोज्याभोज्यं न विद्यते ॥  
पैशपेयं कुतः मित्रि हिंसलि का परस्परम् ।  
गन्धागन्धं तदानीनौत् स्वं परस्वं च नै समम् ॥  
परस्परं विलुप्यन्ति सारनीया यथामिषम् ।  
अवतान् वज्रिणो प्रलि निर्वैर्वादनवर्षत ॥

See. Śānti Ch. 122.

† मज्झिमो दण्डनीती कृतार्था सर्वे धर्मा प्रत्यवेयुर्विबुद्धाः ॥ (27-28). Śānti, Ch. 63.

‡ यदा निवर्त्यते पापा दण्डनीत्या महाकविः ।

तदा धर्मो न चक्रे सङ्गतः प्रायतः परः ॥ Śānti—Ch. 65-27.

§ दण्डनीतिः मधुमेधपातुर्वैर् नित्यव्यति ।

प्रयुक्ता म्यामिना सम्यग्धर्मेभ्यो नियच्छति ॥ Sl. 76.

लोकस्य सौमनस्यो मर्षादा लोकमाविनी ।

सम्बद्धनीता दण्डनीतिर्यथा माता यथा पिता ॥ Śānti Ch. 69 ; Sl. 103.



was regarded as the upholder of society. The jurisdiction of the king extended over all and no one could claim freedom from it.\*

Coercion being thus essential to the exercise of regal authority, the king required guidance in the matter of properly exercising his coercive jurisdiction. The canon laid down for his guidance were not of his own creation but existed apart from him. The Epic thinkers attribute a divine origin to these primary laws and principles and they ascribe them either to Brahman (see Ch. 59 Śānti) or to Sarasvatī (Ch. 122 Śānti). These came to be known as Daṇḍanīti, a name often applied to the art of government by the Epic and the Arthasāstra thinkers. The original work by Brahman being too voluminous, successive redactions were made.†

While Epic thinkers attribute to Daṇḍanīti a divine origin, the Dharmasūtra writers make them part and parcel of the divinely

\* दण्डः संरक्षते धर्मं तथैवार्थे नराधिप ।  
 कामं संरक्षते दण्डस्त्रिवर्गो दण्ड उच्यते ॥  
 राजदण्डभयादिके पापाः पापं न कुर्वते ।  
 धर्मदण्डभयादिके परलोकभयादपि ॥  
 परस्परभयादिके पापाः पापं न कुर्वते ।  
 दण्डस्यैव भयादिके न स्वादन्ति परस्परम् ॥ Śānti—Ch. 15.  
 सप्तप्रकति चाष्टाङ्गं प्ररौरमिह यद्विदुः ।  
 राज्यस्य दण्डमेवाङ्गं दण्डः प्रभव एव च ॥  
 ईश्वरेण प्रयत्नं न कारणात् चतियस्य च ।  
 दण्डो दत्तः समानात्मा दण्डोद्दीर्घं सनातनम् ॥  
 माता पिता च भ्राता च भार्या चैव पुरोहितः ।  
 नादण्डो विद्यते राज्ञो यः स्वधर्मेण तिष्ठति ॥ (Śānti—Ch. 121 śl. 60.)

† Of such writers on Daṇḍanīti, we have the names of the god Śiva or Viśālākṣa, Indra who composed the Vāhūdantaka redaction, Brhaspati and Śukra. (Ch. 59. Śāntiparva). Elsewhere, (Ch. 58) we find the names of Śiva, Indra, Śukra, Brhaspati, Bhāradvāja, Prācetasā Manu, and Bhagavān Gāurāśirah.

originated Dharma, the primary source of which is to be found in the revealed *Sruti*. We have quoted the views of the Dharma-sūtra writers. The Epic authors do not enter into discussions as to the nature or origin of Dharma, though they lay down concrete maxims for the guidance of individuals of various castes and belonging to diverse states of existence. But, in the absence of all such dissertations, their views may be easily understood from the parable of the two sages Śaṅkha and Likhita\* in the Śāntiparva (Ch. 23). Likhita, the younger brother, had eaten some fruits from his brother's trees in his absence. This the elder brother regarded as theft and told him to go to the king and ask the latter to punish him. The king hesitated at first but as the Brāhmaṇa demanded punishment, he had to pass sentence—mutilation of his hands, and had it inflicted on him. Afterwards he returned to the elder brother and at his behest bathed in the river near by. A miracle took place and the young Brahmin regained his hands.

The story illustrates the Brāhmaṇical concept of law and its functions in the political world. Dharma, according to them, is self-existent and upholds the universe; in its concrete and social aspect, it comprises the sum-total of rules guiding the relations subsisting between individuals and their functions relating to the whole. Its various functions depend on the position of the individual in society. The transgression of Dharma leads to the disruption of harmonious relations in the universal system and as such brings in a state of discord. In social life, such discord produces evil and to avoid such discords, punishments are necessary, since thereby the normality of relations is restored. In political life, it is the duty

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\* Reputed to have been the formulators of the highest and best code for moral discipline, Śaṅkha and Likhita are mentioned even in the Buddhist canon.



of the king to look to the normality of relations and as such by administering punishment he restores social equilibrium. His main duty is to enforce the laws which exist apart from his authority.

Upon this point, the dialogue between the two brothers throws some further side-light. The younger who had suffered from mutilation, feared that the elder brother might hurl his anathema on the king for his mutilation and asked him to forgive the latter. But the elder sage rather smiled and explained to him that punishment had cured both of them from sin. (धर्मस्तु ते व्यतिक्रान्तस्तस्ते निष्कृतिः कृता ॥ ३८ ) Again, when the latter had regained his hands by a miracle, he wondered why his purification had not taken place prior to his punishment, and to this the reply was that he was not the wielder of punishment and that the king by inflicting punishment had freed himself from the sin arising out of the miscarriage of justice, together with the man who committed the wrong as well as his fathers. e.g.

किन्तु नाहं त्वया पूतः पूर्वमेव महायूते ।

यस्य ते तपसो वीर्यमौट्शं द्विजसत्तम ॥

शङ्ख उवाच—

एवमेतन्मया कार्यं नाहं दण्डधरस्तव ।

स च पूतो नरपतिस्त्वं चापि पिबिभिः सह ॥ ४३-४४ ।

The Dharmasūtras practically show the same concept of Law and as such they make law above king and above society. The king, according to them, was to wield the rod of punishment and if there was any miscarriage of justice or escape of culprit, the king was not only to make good the loss but to perform penance.\* The

\* See Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra Ch. XIX. and XX.

स्वधर्मो राज्ञः—पावनं भूतानां तस्यानुष्ठानात् सिद्धिः ।.....तस्मात् गार्हस्थ्यनेयमिदेषु पुरोहितं दद्यात् । ब्रह्मपुरोहितं राष्ट्रमुन्नोतीति ।.....राजा चतुरो वर्णान् स्वधर्मे स्थापयेत् तेष्वपचरत्सु दण्डं धारयेत् । दण्डस्तु देशकालवयोविद्यास्थानविशेषेर्हि साकोशयोः कल्पाः । आगमादुपानाह ।

king's punishment removed all sin\*, and even when a sinful act was committed in secret the Divine king Varuṇa remained the ultimate punisher.† The same duty of penance attached to the Purohita‡ who continued to be regarded as the moral guardian of the realm.

The above conception of law was thus not merely sacerdotal, but had a strong æsthetic background as in the case of the Greek ideal of law. Unlike the Roman idea, the multitude had nothing to do with its formulation or interpretation. As the Hellenes regarded law as the emanation of the juridical will of the gods, so, in India, law was the part and parcel of the great principles guiding the universal phenomena. The multitude had nothing to do with it and its interpretation depended on the rational faculty of the wise, learned in the sacred traditions of the past.§ As such the Brāhmaṇa had the best claim for legal interpretation, while the administration of law was vested in the king. The idea of such a *concordat* existing between the Brāhmaṇa and the

(Śāntiparva Ch. 36 al. 15)

\* राजमिधं तदव्यक्तं कृत्वा पापानि मानवाः ।  
निर्मलाः स्वर्गमाप्स्यन्ति सन्तः सुकृतिनो यथा ॥  
अथादिं च यथा मादिं पन्थो भार्यावधारिणि ।  
पुरो विध्यथ याज्यथ सोमो राजनि किलिषम् ॥

† सुवरात्मवतो ज्ञाना ज्ञाना राजा दुरात्मनाम् ।  
अथ प्रच्छन्नपापानां ज्ञाना वेवस्ततो यमः ॥

‡ दण्डोत्सर्गे राजेकराचमुपपद्येत् । विराजं पुरोहितः । जज्ञमदण्डदण्डने पुरोहितः । विराजं राजा

§ Again अत्रतानाममन्त्राणां जातिमावोपजौविनाम् ।

सद्वचनः समेतानां परिषत्तं न विद्यते ॥

यददन्ति तमीमूढा मुक्ता धर्ममजानतः ।

तत्पापं ब्रतधा भूत्वा तद्वक्तृष्वभिगच्छति ॥

अतारो वा तयो वापि यं ब्रुवन्मपारणाः ।

स धर्म इति विप्रो बो जेतरेषां सद्वचनः ॥ Vāṣiṣṭha Ch. III.



Kṣattriya ruler came into existence in the days of the Brāhmaṇas, (supra 172).\*

Regal authority being of so vital importance, royalty and the office of the king came to be glorified. The Glorification of Royalty. Śāntiparva chapters contain dissertations on the importance of kingship and explain the social and ethical reasons which call upon men to respect the sovereign majesty of the king, though he was but an ordinary individual of flesh and blood like his subjects. In these, clearly, two currents of thought are discernible. *e. g.*

- (a) that of thinkers who explain the social and ethical necessity of kingship,
- and (b) the idealistic subjectivity of those who continue the older tradition relating to the king's parallelism with the divine rulers.

The first set of thinkers seem to regard royalty as a human institution, but venerate the office and functions of a king on account of his manifold services to mankind. Their views are mainly to be found in the 67th and 68th chapters of the Śāntiparva. They harp on the state of affairs in the absence of the king's coercive authority and give us pictures of the Mātsya-nyāya which we have already described in detail.† The views of the next set of

\* वयो वर्षो ब्राह्मणस्य निद्देशेन वत्सरम् । ब्राह्मणो धर्मान् प्रवृथात् । राजा चतुर्विधात् ।

Vaśiṣṭha Ch. I.

† In Ch. 68, we have a dialogue between king Vasumanā of Kośala and Brhaspati. Vasumanā asked how men prosper and to this Brhaspati gives his ethical reasons. *e. g.*

केन भूताति वर्धन्ते खयं गच्छन्ति केन वा ।

कमचन्तो महाप्राज्ञ सुखमव्ययमाप्नुयुः ॥

वृद्धस्यतिष्ठवाच—राजमूलो महाप्राज्ञ धर्मो लोकस्य लक्ष्यते ।

प्रजा राजमयादिव न खादन्ति परस्परम् ॥ Ch. 68.

अराजकेषु राष्ट्रेषु धर्मो न व्यवतिष्ठते ।

परस्परं खादन्ति सर्वेषां धिगराजकम् ॥ Ch. 67.

thinkers will be discussed presently but though they look from a different standpoint, all are unanimous in holding that regal authority and functions are the very basis of human existence and prosperity. Their views in reality are but an elaboration of the ideas we find already in the Brāhmaṇas and in the Upaniṣads (see pp. 172,). Here we give a summing up of the excellence of Rājadharmā according to the first set of thinkers : *e. g.*

यथा राजन् हस्तिपदे पदानि संलीयन्ते सर्वसत्त्वोद्भवानि ।  
 एवं धर्मान् राजधर्मेषु सर्वान् सर्वावस्थं सम्प्रलीनान्निबोध ॥  
 अल्पाश्रयानल्पफलान् वदन्ति धर्मानन्यान् धर्मविदो मनुष्याः ।  
 महाश्रयं बहुकल्याणकरं क्षात्रं धर्मं नेतरं प्रादुरार्याः ॥  
 सर्वे धर्मा राजधर्मप्रधानाः सर्वे वर्णाः पात्स्यमाना भवन्ति ।  
 सर्वस्वागो राजधर्मेषु राजस्त्वागं धर्मश्चादुरार्या पुराणम् ॥  
 मजेक्ष्यो दण्डनीतो हतायां सर्वे धर्माः प्रक्षयेयुर्विवुधाः ।  
 सर्वे धर्माश्चाश्रमाणां हताः स्युः क्षात्रे त्यक्ते राजधर्मं पुराणे ॥  
 सर्वे त्यागा राजधर्मेषु दृष्टाः सर्वा दीक्षा राजधर्मेषु चोक्ताः ।  
 सर्वा विद्या राजधर्मेषु युक्ताः सर्वे लोका राजधर्मं प्रविष्टाः ॥  
 यथा जीवाः प्राकृतैर्वध्यमाना धर्मश्रुतानामुपपीडनाय ।  
 एवं धर्मा राजधर्मैर्विद्युक्ताः सञ्चिन्वन्तो नाद्रियन्ते स्वधर्मम् ॥

Sānti. ch. 63.

The glorification of royalty is found in innumerable other passages. In another passage, its excellence is set forth in terms of the fruition of the objectives of life—*cf.*

सर्वस्य जीवलोकस्य राजधर्मः परायणम् ॥  
 त्रिवर्गो हि समासक्तो राजधर्मेषु कौरव ।  
 मोक्षधर्मश्च विस्मृतः सकलोऽत्र समाहितः ॥  
 यथा हि रज्जयोऽश्वस्य हिरदस्याङ्गुयो यथा ।  
 नरेन्द्रो धर्मलोकस्य तथा प्रयत्नं स्मृतम् ॥

In the Indra and Māndhātṛ dialogue, the god of the devas



describes Rājadharmā as the earliest and first of all Dharmas and sums up by saying that :—

चात्रो धर्मो ह्यादिदेवात् प्रवृत्तः पश्चादन्ये शेषभूताश्च धर्माः ।  
अस्मिन् धर्म सर्वधर्माः प्रविष्टास्तस्माद्भिर्भेदमिमं वदन्ति ॥  
नष्टा धर्माः शतधा शास्त्रतास्ते चात्रेण धर्मेण पुनः प्रवृद्धाः ।  
युगे युगे ह्यादिधर्माः प्रवृत्ता लोकज्येष्ठं चात्रधर्मं वदन्ति ॥

The glorification of royalty developed also on different lines. A set of thinkers mainly relied on the sacerdotal traditions of the past and developed the ideas which we have already found in the Atharva-Vedic hymns and the Brāhmaṇas. Evidently, they looked to the various aspects of royalty from the point of view of universal discipline and harped on the parallelism between the duties of the mundane ruler and those of the divine guardians of the universe—the *devas*. The king's five great functions were compared to those of Agni, Āditya, Mr̥tyu, Vaiśravaṇa and Yama.\* Others compared the regal functions to those of the father, mother, the guru, the Goptā,

\* कुरुते पञ्चरूपाणि कालयुक्तानि यः सदा ।  
भवत्यसिक्तवादित्यो मृत्युर्वैश्रवणो यमः ॥  
यदा ह्यासौ दत्तः पापान् दहत्युग्रं तेजसा  
मिथोपचरितो राजा तदा भवति पावकः ॥  
यदा पश्यति चारेण सर्वभूतानि भूमिपः ।  
लेमश्च कृत्वा व्रजति तदा भवति भास्करः ॥  
अथ चैव यदा क्रुद्धः बिभोति शतशी नरान् ।  
स पुत्रपौत्रान् सामात्यांस्तदा भवति सोऽलकः ॥  
यदा तु धनधाराभिसर्पयत्युपकारिणः ।  
आच्छिनति च रत्नानि विविधान्युपकारिणाम् ॥  
श्रियं ददाति कलौचित् कक्षाच्चिदपकर्षति ।  
तदा वैश्रवणो राजा लोके भवति भूमिपः ॥

Agni, Vaiśravaṇa, the god of wealth and Yama.\* Innumerable such passages are found in the Śāntiparva and it is impossible to quote all of them. In some of these not only the excellence of royalty highly lauded, but the thinkers inculcate absolute obedience to rulers and point out the consequences of insults to regal authority. Again, while a set of thinkers dwells upon the consequences of regal displeasure, others speak of the sin that arises out of insults to the king.† Thus, in the dialogue between Māndhātṛ and Indra, the latter not only dwells upon the evils of the absence of regal discipline but goes so far as to say that Dharma is based on regal administration, and if any one insults the king, the food offered by him to the ancestors or the gods are not accepted by them.‡ The essence of royalty in their eyes is the same as that of the gods and hence the gods, too, honour the king.§ On the basis of these ideas, some thinkers go still farther and inculcate obedience on the ground that the king, though he exists in a human form, has in him the higher essence of divinity *e. g.*

न हि जालवमन्तव्यो मनुष्य इति भूमिपः : ।

महती देवता ह्येषा नररूपेण तिष्ठति ॥

This last verse claims importance from various considerations. First of all, it marks an important enunciation of the essence of royalty and, as such, this verse occurs in many of the later Smṛti collections like the Manu Samhitā. Secondly, many scholars of our

\* माता पिता गुरुर्गोत्रा बहिर्विषयव्यो यमः ।

सप्त राज्ञो गृह्यानेतान् मनुराष्ट्रं प्रजापतिः ॥

† यदा निवर्तते पापी दण्डनीत्या मन्त्रात्मभिः ।

तदा धर्मो न भङ्गते सदमृतः प्रावतः परः ॥

‡ सर्वलोकगुरुष्वेव राजानं योऽवमन्यते ।

न तस्य दण्डं न ह्येतं न यादं भङ्गते कश्चित् ॥ २४

§ मानुषाणामपिपतिं देवभूतं सनातनम् ।

देवापि नावमन्यन्ते धर्मज्ञानं नरेधरम् ॥



own day, have wrongly interpreted this verse and on the basis of such misinterpretations have propounded the theory that in ancient India, kingship was regarded as a divine institution\* and the holder of the regal office was regarded as a god.

As we have said, these passages arose out of an elaboration of the sacerdotalistic traditions. For a truer interpretation of the

\* It is needless to examine this theory in detail because it is beyond the scope of a volume like this. But, before we pass on to other topics we beg to point out the main sources of error and misinterpretation which give rise to such a theory. First of all, the passage itself has been mistranslated and the spirit of the author misunderstood. What the composer of the verse meant, was that the king should not be insulted like an ordinary individual, since, though he was a man, his essence was higher than that of ordinary men. Here, the word *nara-rūpa* claims importance and shows that he is spoken of as being in reality a man. The other element of the king if the *rūpa* or outward form is taken away is *divine*. Secondly, the word *deva* or *devatā* does not connote the same idea as the word "God" in the Christian vocabulary. The Devas of Indian conception were but embodiments of the beneficent aspect or functions of nature. They are neither omniscient nor all-powerful as the Hebrew or Christian God. In the Vedic conceptions we find such personifications. They the *Gāthī* was a devotee of the *Dadhikrā* or the horse which was regarded as a *devatā*. Similarly, hunger or anger was personified as a god (*deva*). Later on, the Devas came to be regarded as the guardians of the various aspects of nature who presided over the working of the great laws underlying the natural phenomena. The Buddhists and Jains regarded the Devas as the servants of the Jinas and Buddhas. In course of time, as the higher philosophical systems were evolved, the gods who once occupied the chief attention of men, dwindled into insignificance, but, in the minds of a pantheistic people, their concept continued to exert some influence. Even now this still survives, as shown by our peculiar mode of expression. In our own days, a Hindu lady regards her husband as a *devatā*; so, a man's father stands to him in the relation of a *devatā*. Even now, the cow in its essence is regarded as a *devatā*. From these examples it will be clear that the word *deva* or *devatā* signifies nothing but the idealistic personification of a beneficent spirit. No question of divinity in essence or element is involved. The husband being regarded as a *devatā*, it does not mean that he is something of divine creation while the wife is of mundane or devilish origin. The error of our Indian scholars and researchers lies in the fact that owing to the intellectual tyranny of a politically superior race, they fail to bear in mind the wide gulf of difference which exists between the ethical and metaphysical concepts of the Indians and those of the westerners dominated by the influence of semitic monotheism. The Europeans translate *deva* by the word "God" and the Indian scholars follow suit. The ignorance of the former may be tolerated but that of the latter amounts to an unpardonable offence.

underlying idea we are not to go beyond the Rājadharmaparvan itself and its best explanation is given in the 90th and 91st chapters of the same book, where the sage Utathya explains to Māndhātṛ the essence of royalty. Clearly, the sage attributes the origin of regal authority to the ethical and social necessities of mankind. In common with many other thinkers, he harps on the consequences of anarchy and prominently mentions the abolition of private property, disruption of sexual discipline and the other attendant evils arising out of anarchy. According to him, Prajāpati created *dharma* for the prosperity of living beings (प्रमवार्ये हि भूतानां धर्मः सृष्टः स्वयंभुवा) and *Dharma* is the highest of all institutions (धर्मः श्रेष्ठतरः स्मृतः). The importance of the king lies in his capacity and functions for maintaining *dharma* and not for furthering his own ends. cf.

धर्माय राजा भवति न कामकरणाय तु ।

साम्बातरिति जानौहि राजा लोकस्य रक्षिता ॥

Accordingly, a king who maintained *dharma* was to be conceived (as beneficent as) a *deva*, but he who followed the path of *adharma* was sure to go to hell. cf.

राजा चरति चेद्धर्मं देवत्वायैव कल्पते ।

स चेद्धर्मं चरति नरकायैव गच्छति ॥

It is further pointed out that on the king's conduct depended every thing. [Practically] He was the creator (of social life) and [its] destroyer (राजैव कर्त्ता भूतानां राजैव हि विनाशकः ।)

The above explanation attributed to Utathya thus makes it clear that the glorification of the regal office was due to his great services and not to any inherent divine essence in him. Furthermore, this hyperbole of a comparison with divinity has something peculiarly Indian about it and does not make the king's essence something which may be regarded as superhuman.



Another important factor which proves the utter weakness of the Divine theory is furnished by the views of thinkers who justify the expulsion or destruction of a tyrant. The Epic thinkers are unanimous in denouncing the unlawful exercise of authority and condemn the high-handedness of a despot. The 59th chapter furnishes us with the traditional account of the destruction of Veṇa, the earliest tyrant. The unknown author of the 61st chapter of the Anuśāsana condemns a tyrant as a *Rājakali* and calls upon people to put him to death "as if he were a mad dog" ( स मंहत्य निहन्तव्यः श्वेव सोऽस्माद भ्रातुरः ). Bāmadeva, whose dialogue with king Vasumanāḥ is given in Ch. 92 of the Śāntiparva, endorses the same view and denounces a tyrant transgressing Dharma as fit to be killed by the people ( असत्पापिष्ठसचिवो बध्यो लोकस्य धर्महा ). This doctrine of tyrannicide could neither have existed nor could it have been so boldly enunciated if kingship was regarded as divine.

Tyrannicide is naturally inconsistent with the divine conception of kingship, and its justification comes only in an age in which duties and responsibilities on either side are postulated. On the other hand, the influence of a theory of divine origin would but lead to the inculcation of the king's inviolability and obedience to his authority, irrespective of the manner of discharge of his functions. In the Middle Ages, when the Divine theory was enunciated by the despots of Europe, some of them like James I. denounced opposition to their authority as something blasphemical. On the contrary, the end of despotism was synchronous with the almost universal acceptance of the theories of Social Contract, as explained by Locke and Rousseau. Hence, we are but justified in drawing the following conclusions :

- (1) Hindu kingship was not a divine institution. The righteous king was venerated as a beneficent spirit

and was often spoken of as a *deva*, though this did not by any means characterise kingship as something divine no more than the other institutions or created objects.

- (2) It was, on the other hand, something which was supposed to have arisen out of a popular election. A contractual relation was supposed to subsist between the king and his subjects with rights and duties on either side.
- (3) The Hindu idea of kingship postulated some active rights and obligations, both political and moral, vested in the king. He was bound to perform certain active duties to his subjects, to further their material prosperity and to help in their higher self-realisation.

Of these, protection was the foremost. The primary word used by the Epic thinkers to denote protection is *Rakṣaṇam*, which was regarded as the cream of regal duties ( राजधर्मात् नवनीतम् ). The king was to fight foreign enemies

The king's duties. and those inside. The importance of *rakṣaṇa* was so great that kings who failed to protect the life or property of their subjects were denounced as being unfit for the regal office. Protection was his greatest religious merit and failure to do so his worst sin. In many passages, we find similes comparing such rulers with things useless\*

- \* यद्धं तान् पुंस्वी जज्ञाद्विद्वां नावमिवाश्वे ।  
 यद्वतारमाचार्यमनधौमानवलिङ्गम् ॥  
 अरक्षितारश्च राजानं मर्यादाभियवादिनीम् ।  
 दानकामश्च मोषार्थं वनकामश्च नापितम् ॥

Again—

किं तैर्बलशुद्धो नीक्षाः किं क्षिप्ता बाणदुग्धया ।  
 बन्धवा भार्याया कोट्यः कोट्यैः राजाश्वरथता ॥  
 यथा राक्षसो हन्ती यथा चर्ममयो बभूव ।  
 यथा ज्ञानयैः यच्छी वा पावै क्षिप्तं यक्षोपरम् ॥  
 एवं विद्रोहनशीवानो राजा यश्च न रक्षितः ।  
 मेघो न वर्धते यश्च सूर्यश्च ते निरव्ययः ॥



or entirely devoid of the qualities naturally supposed to exist in them. As such, a king incapable of protecting his subjects is placed in the same category as a sterile wife, a barren field, a milkless cow and a Brāhmaṇa without learning.

The capacity to protect was the highest qualification. Protection was his greatest religious merit and failure to do so his worst sin.\* As such, any one who saved the people from anarchy, was a lawful ruler whom the people were bound to obey. Furthermore, the selection of a king was the primary duty of a community or state as well as of all individuals.†

This protection again did not merely comprise police duties. The king was to do everything for the material and moral welfare of his people. In regard to this economic aspect, we find in the Epic an elaboration of the ideas which we have already found in the Vedic and Brāhmaṇic literature. He was to help men of all classes and castes for the realisation of their earthly aims. He was to protect Brāhmaṇas and Snātakas. Their moral degradation or starvation was a sin which assailed the king (Śānti. Ch. 76 and 77).‡ He was

- \* यदङ्गा कुरुते पापमरुचन् भयतः प्रजाः ।  
 राजा वर्षसहस्रेण तस्यान्तमधिगच्छति ॥  
 यदङ्गा कुरुते धर्मे प्रजा धर्मेण पालयन् ।  
 दशवर्षसहस्राणि तस्य भुङ्क्ते फलं दिवि ॥  
 स्त्रिष्टिः स्वधीतिः सुतपा लोकान् जयति यावतः ।  
 चणेन तानवाप्नोति प्रजा धर्मेण पालयन् ॥

- † राजानं प्रथमं विन्देत्ततो भार्यां ततो धनम् ।  
 राजन्यसति लोकस्य कुतो भार्या कुतो धनम् ॥

also राष्ट्रस्येव कृत्यतमं राज्ञ एवाभिषेचनम् ।

- ‡ यस्य च विषये राजन् स्त्री भवति वै द्विजः ।  
 राज्ञ एवापरार्धं तं मन्यन्ते तद्विदो जनाः ॥  
 अहत्या यो भवेत् स्त्री नो वेदविदः स्नातककथा ।  
 राजन् स राजा भर्ता इति वेदविदो विदुः ॥

to act as the patron and guardian of agriculturists by maintaining tanks, constructing waterways (so as not to make the agriculturist entirely dependent on rain), supplying corn and seed to the

husbandmen or lending money at a nominal rate of interest. (Sabhā. Ch. V. mentions the

rate of one per cent). He was to act as the protector of Vārttā.\* In times of distress he was to do everything possible for the suffering people. Moreover, he was always to extend his special protection to the infirm, the aged, the widow, and the minor, and to feed them.†

As protection of property was one of his primary duties, he was bound to make good the loss of his subjects who suffered from the oppression of thieves and robbers.‡ He was to grant even-handed justice to all and punish wrong-doers even if they were his nearest relations. Failure to do justice was sure to obstruct the king's passage to heaven.

By his activities, the king was not only required to further the material aspects of life, but he was also to protect *Dharma*. This does not mean that he

Moral guardian of the community.

- \* कचिद्राष्ट्रे तङ्गामानि पुष्पानि ब्रह्मन्ति च ।  
भगवतो विनिविष्टानि न कचिदेवमाहका ॥  
कचिन्न भक्तं बोजय्य कथं कस्यावसौदति ।  
प्रत्येकस्य शतं ब्रह्मा ददाद्यात्तमनुययम् ॥  
कचित् स्मृत्युत्तिता ताव वाचा ते साधुभिर्जनैः ।  
वाचां वा स श्रियस्ताव श्रीकोट्यं सुखमेवते ॥
- † कचिन्नृपातोन् मुहुन् लहान् वशिजः शिखिनः पितान् ।  
अभोजनमनुययानि धनधान्यं न दुर्मितान् ॥  
रूपवानामहहानां विधवानाञ्च योपितान् ।  
योग्यैर्मय्य हस्तिष्व निलमैव प्रकल्पयेत् ॥
- ‡ प्रत्याहृतं समक्यं साधनं चौरैर्हृतं यदि ।  
तत्सक्रीमान् प्रदेयं स्यात् अमरं नोपलौकिकतः ॥
- § व्यवहारलोपे चरतेः कुतः स्वर्गः कुतो वयः ॥



was the ecclesiastical or religious head or that he was empowered to lay down religious doctrines or codes of discipline, but that he was to wield the rod of punishment and to exert actively with a view to preserve the fundamental principles of social morality. He was to see that the different sections followed their occupations, that there was no clash of their interests and that men preserved the right line of conduct. The king's duty of preserving Dharma is well illustrated by the story of the Kekaya king, Aśvapati, who when attacked by a demon, told him that he had nothing to fear from him, since, in his realm Dharma was well-preserved. As such, he was freed by the demon (Śānti. Ch. 77\*) who also praised his conduct highly.

This duty of protecting dharma exercised so a great an influence on the minds of the people that there gained ground the idea of a moral (though contractual) relationship between the king and his subjects. According to the evidence of innumerable passages of the Epic, the king became entitled to a fourth part of the religious merit of his subjects (of all classes, including the Brāhmaṇa) and *vice versa* he was liable to suffer from the sins of his subjects to the extent of one fourth.† The Dharmasūtra of Gautama also seems to hold the same idea. (धर्मस्योऽशमाक् भवति Gau. XI.)

Concept of a higher relation between king and community.

- \* न मे लो नो जनपदे न कदर्यो न मद्यपः ।  
नानाङ्गिताग्रिणीयञ्चा मामकान्तरमाविशः ॥
- † यं यं धर्मं चरन्तीह प्रजा राजा सुरचिताः ।  
चतुर्थे तस्य धर्मस्य राजा भारत विन्दति ॥  
यदधीते यद्वदति यन्नुहोति यदुर्वति ।  
राजा चतुर्थेभाक् तस्य प्रजा धर्मेण पालयन् ॥  
यद्राष्ट्रेऽकुशलं किञ्चिद्राजो रक्षयतः प्रजाः ।  
चतुर्थे तस्य पापस्य राजा भारत विन्दति ॥

With such onerous duties and moral obligations, the king was really speaking nothing but a custodian of his people's good and lived entirely for their prosperity. Momentous responsibilities lay on his shoulders, with no amount of privileges or rights of enjoyment commensurate with his labours or duties. He was bound by oath to protect his subjects\* and to regard himself as the custodian of popular wealth, which he had no right to spend† for his own enjoyment. Such was the noble idealism which dominated the Hindu concept of kingship. The Epic thinkers employ various similes to denote the type or the exercise of regal authority. Some describe him as a father, a mother, or a guru, and liken him to the great gods ruling the universal system. In one of these the king is described as a mother with a child in the womb. As she nourishes the child with her own vital elements and takes the utmost care for its safety so the king is to live for the good of his subjects.‡

In other places, the king is constantly likened to the father of his subjects, and he is called upon to perform the duties of a father to his children. This concept of a paternal regal authority§, as we

\* cf. ch. 59. of the Śāntiparvan, already referred to gives us the oath taken by Pṛthu.

† So Says the Auśīnara king to the sage Gālava

पौरजानपदायैनु ममार्थं नाकभोजनः ।

कामतो हि धनं राजा पारकं यः प्रयच्छति ॥

न स धर्मेन धर्मायन् युज्यते यश्च न च । Udy. ch. 118. 12-4.

‡ भवितव्यं सदा राजा गर्भिणीव हृदयमिषा ।

यथा हि गर्भिणी क्लृप्ता स्वं प्रियं मनसोऽनुवम् ।

गर्भस्य हितमाधत्ते तथा राजाऽयमेव यम् ॥ Śānti. ch. 56. 45.

§ पृथ्वत् पाल्यमानानि राजधर्मेण पार्थिवैः ।

कीदृक् भूतानि सर्वाणि चरन्ते नाव संशयः ॥

पुत्रा इव पितुर्गृहे विपद्ये यस्य मानवाः ।

निर्भया विचरिष्यन्ति स राजा राजसूयमः ॥

For an account of this paternal concept of royalty, see my paper on the "Governmental Ideals of Ancient India." (Calcutta Review 1922).



know already, had its germs in some of the Vedic coronation hymns. Those ideas were elaborated in the eastern monarchies and we find them further developed at the hands of the Arthaśāstra writers like Kauṭilya, and in a later age the noblest exponent of the paternal ideal was the Emperor Aśoka himself.

### *Social and Legal Theory of Hindu Kingship.*

The intimate relationship subsisting between a king and the life and prosperity of his subjects or the all-absorbing character of regal functions did not end merely in these dissertations setting forth the closest possible ties between the two. The thinkers of the day who reflected the social consciousness of the people, postulated the existence of the closest possible bonds which subsisted between the ruler of the community and his people. They harped on the fact that the exercise of regal functions led to the normal fruition of the aims and the objectives of individuals in all spheres of existence. A social existence meant to them a free scope to the individuals' efforts and as such it was supposed that a natural relationship independent of political allegiance subsisted between the king and the community.

Consequently, there arose what we may call a social theory of kingship which looked to the king as the natural *guardian* and *patron of all*. He was everybody's protector, everybody's preceptor and supplied all that men could expect from a father or a near kinsman. We may say that the king was not only a "*parens patriae*" (in the words of foreign jurists,) but there subsisted a real moral and spiritual bond between him and his subjects. The influence of such a theory is found in the Dharmasūtras and the early precepts of

the Smrtis show the extent of popular veneration and regard for the monarch.

The king not only received a place of honour and precedence in all meetings and assemblies but he could like a Śrotriya claim that hospitality in households which was offered to the nearest of kin. The bull or the goat was slain for his entertainment and the *arghya* offered to him. ( षडर्घाह्नी भवन्ति । ऋत्विग्विवाहो-  
राजापिष्टव्यन्नातकमातुलाय—Vaśiṣṭha. Ch. XI. 1-2). Honour was shown to him and as in the case of a father, he was not addressed by name ( नाम चास्य वर्ज्येद्राजः ). The king's death caused *aśauca* to all and even the Brāhmaṇa showed reverence by suspending his sacred studies (see Gau. Ch. XVI on *anadhyāya* ). Thinkers of the Dharma school also regarded it as a sin to slander a king. Treason against him or his assassination came to be regarded as a great sin. All the Dharma-sūtras mention regicide as a *mahā-pātaka* and a son is called upon not only to forsake a regicide father but also not to perform his obsequies ( त्वजेत् पितरं  
राजघातकम्—see Gautama, Ch. XXII).

A number of thinkers discussed the king's importance from the legal point of view and harped on the legal consequences of the suspension of his authority. According to Vaśiṣṭha, interest on loans stopped on the death of the king. Unfortunately, we know but little about the other legal consequences of the king's death but all the Dharmasūtra authorities are unanimous in vesting the king with the following legal privileges of which we have counter-parts almost everywhere in the world :

(a) The king was immune from trial or judicial punishment.

(b) He could not be made a witness in a law court. (चत्वारो  
वर्णाः पुत्रिणः साक्षिणः स्वरन्त्य-योत्रियराजन्यप्रव्रजितमानुषहीनेभ्यः ।)



- (c) His properties could not be enjoyed by others and adverse prescription could give no title to such a holder. cf.

आधिः सीमा बालधनं निक्षेपोपनिधिः स्त्रियः ।

राजस्वं श्रोत्रियस्वं च न भोगेन प्रणश्यति ॥ *Vaśiṣṭha*.

- (d) He was entitled to all treasure-troves and lost articles. All properties without heir passed to him by escheat except Brāhmaṇa's property. (See *Gau. X*; *Bodh. I. 10. 16* etc. प्रणष्टस्वामिकं रिक्त्यं भ्रात्राह्वयस्य राजा हरत् सम्वत्सरं परिपाल्य ।.....अदायादकं राजाहरत् । )

### Theory of Taxation

From the evidence furnished by the literature of the period, we find also the evolution of the general principles of taxation. Kings of this period did not depend entirely on the share of booty or the *Vali* paid by his subjects. The accepted principle was that all members of the community were liable to pay tax and this was in lieu of the king's great services to the community. We have discussed the theory of taxation earlier, but, here we give details about the sources of royal income, which are mentioned in the Epic (Ch. 67) as well as in the *Dharma-sūtras* especially in that of *Gautama*. The principal taxes were the following :

Taxation.

\* The main sources of information on this head is supplied by the *Rājadharmā-parva* (Ch. 67) and the *Dharma-sūtra* of *Gautama*.

the Epic passage says :—पशूनामधिपचाशत् हिरण्यस्य तथैव च ।

धान्यस्य दशमं भागं दास्याम कोपवर्धनः ॥

*Gautama* (ch. X) expressly says सौर्यामिकं वित्तं वाहनन्तु राज्ञः...राज्ञे वलिदानं कर्षकैर्दशमम-  
ष्टमं षष्ठं वा पशुहिरण्यधीरप्येके, पचाशद्भागान् विंशतिभागः शुल्कः पण्ये, मूलफलपुष्पौषधमधुमांसद्वयस्य नानां  
षष्ठं तद्रक्षणमर्हति । तेषु तु नित्ययुक्तः स्यादधिकेन वृत्तिः । शिल्पिनो मासि मास्येकैकं कर्म  
कर्तुरेतेनात्मोपजीविना व्याख्याताः ।

- (a) Tax on the produce of land. This varied according to various authorities. According to Baudhāyana, the king was entitled to  $\frac{1}{6}$ . Vāśiṣṭha holds the same opinion, but Gautama mentions  $\frac{1}{10}$ ,  $\frac{1}{8}$  or  $\frac{1}{6}$  as the share of the king, thus partly echoing the Epic tradition which mentions  $\frac{1}{10}$ th as the royal share. This royal share was accepted in kind and in the Jātakas we find the Droṇa-māpaka taking it in the name of the king.
- (b) Tax on hoarded wealth or gold. The nature of this tax is very difficult to determine. Probably it was a tax on the hoarded wealth and not on the annual income.
- (c) Tax on animals or other productions including fruits, roots, animal-produce, flowers, honey, etc.
- (f) Tax on ferries maintained by the king.
- (d) Tax on articles of merchandise. The earliest references to it are in Gautama and Bodhāyana. Gautama lays down  $\frac{1}{10}$ th as the duty on merchandise. Bodhāyana specifies it as Sāmudra-śulka and regards  $\frac{1}{10}$  as the royal share; also on other articles.\*
- (e) Tax on artisans.—The earliest reference to it is in Gautama who mentions the king's right to compel workmen to work for him once a month.

Buddhistic books give us no details. The Dīgha Nikāya passage on Royal election (Aggañña Suttanta) mentions merely a "part of the paddy." The Jātakas give us no further details except

\* सामुद्रशुल्काः ; परं वपमुद्धृत्य दमपणं श्रुतं । अथैवामपि साराज्यदेषामुपहृत्य धर्मं प्रकल्पयेत्—  
धर्मं शुल्कमवधारयेत् ।



that the Droṇamāpakas exacted a share of the produce (see p. 320 and 276) and they seem to support the view that the king could enhance taxes. These books show further that lost articles went to the king, merchandise was taxed by him and there existed an excise duty on liquor (See Kulāvaka Jāt. 31). This excise duty was known as the Chāṭikahāpaṇa and it was continued under the Mauryas and their successors. Duty on merchandise as well as tax on vendors was levied at the gates (see Mahāummagga Jātaka, 546). Regal power in taxation appears to have been increasing. The Jātakas further show (see Suruci, no. 489) that contributions were levied on the birth of an heir—in the shape of a paṇa as price of milk for the royal baby (Khīramūla). This was clearly the forerunner of the 'Utsaṅga' tax in the Arthāśāstra. (See I. C. Ghosh's *Introd. to Beng. trans. Jāt. Vol. II*).

Exemptions from taxation were granted to individuals under certain circumstances and to some classes in the enjoyment of privileges. On this head we have details both in Āpastamba and Vasiṣṭha.\* They concur in granting immunity from taxation to Śrotriya, women, minors, students, tāpasas or ascetics and blind, deaf or dumb persons. Śūdras engaged in service are exempted by Āpastamba, while Vasiṣṭha exempts artisans, beggars, ascetics, those earning less than one kārṣāpaṇa, and those who earn by exploiting natural sources like rivers, forests or rocks. He cites a Mānava verse to justify this.†

\* Āpastamba II.10. अक्षरः श्रानियः । सर्ववर्णानां च स्त्रियः । कुमाराय प्राग्व्यञ्जनेभ्यः । ये च विद्यायां वसन्ति, तपस्विनो ये धनपराः । शुद्धय पादावनेका । अन्त्यसूक्तविरोमादिद्वय । etc.

† also Vasiṣṭha Chapter XIX. अक्षरः श्रानियो राजपुमाननायो प्रजितवालहहतुरुषप्रजाताः । नदीवनकचदाहशैलोपमोगा निक्कराः सुः । शुल्के मानवञ्चापि श्लोकमुदाहरन्ति ।

‡ न मित्रकायापणमसि शुल्के ।

न शिल्पहतौ न शिशौ न दूते ॥

न भैत्यलम्बे न हुतावशेषे ।

न श्रानियो प्रजिते न यज्ञे ॥

*Royal qualities qualifications and duties.*—Royalty being of so great importance to the community, the Epic, the Dharmaśūtras and the Jātakas all concur in holding up an ideal of righteousness before the king and inculcate on him certain virtues which were the *sine qua non* of royal success and the consequent happiness of the people in the kingdom. The Epic and the Brāhmanical texts which look to the problems of politics from the point of the ruler, thus lay down the following qualities and virtues of the king :—

(a) He should be ever active. The virtues of activity or *Uthāna* for the good of the realm are narrated in many chapters (see. 56-57, Śānti). Ever active, he was to fight for the “fourfold” objective.\*

(b) He should be mindful of the people’s good and make all efforts to please them (रञ्जनकाम्यया). The Epic (Ch. 58) derives the word *rājan* from *rañjana* or pleasing ( रञ्जिताश्च प्रजाः सर्वास्तेन राजति चोच्यते ) and this is confirmed by the Buddhist tradition.

(c) He should protect life and property. He should be impartial in putting down public enemies and in punishing criminals. The Epic cites the instance of the banishment of Prince Asamañjāh (Ch. 57 Śānti.) by his father.

(d) He should administer justice impartially and not be too hard in inflicting punishment. Proper punishment should be awarded by him (Śānti. Ch. 69† Ādi. Ch. 220, Śānti. 140) and only to the guilty.

\* This is narrated in the dialogue between Bharadvāja and the Sauvira Satruñjaya. The four are mentioned as follows:—

अलम्ब्य सर्वं विद्या सर्वं केन विवर्तेते । वदितं पालितं केन पालितं प्रचयेत् कथम् ॥

† नित्यमुद्यतदण्डः स्यात् निर्व्यं विद्वत्पौरुषः ।

अविद्वद्भिः किद्रुदमौ च परेषां विभवाभुवः ॥

नित्यमुद्यतदण्डश्च भद्रमुदितो जनः ।

तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि दण्डेनैव प्रस्थापयेत् ॥

एवं दण्डं प्रयच्छन्ति पण्डितास्तत्तदर्थिनः ।

तस्माद्वतुष्टये तस्मिन् दण्डः प्रधानं लभ्यते ॥ S’ān. ch. 140.



(e) He should be guided by the accepted canon of moral and political discipline and respect the laws of Āśrama and Varna. He should control himself, not give way to excesses of Vyāsana nor covet others' wealth or women.

(f) He should follow the advice of his Purohita, learned Brāhmaṇas and advisers.

(g) He should not impose unjust or heavy taxes, nor exact additional ones\* (Sānti. ch. 71) without public sanction† (Ch. 87--88)

(h) He should consult his ministers, watch public opinion (Ch. 84-86) and keep his deliberations absolutely secret.

(i) He should maintain the Śrotīya, orphan and the widow and help all his subjects in times of distress. He should protect and encourage Vārttā or agriculture, industry and commerce.

(j) He should employ spies to watch over the conduct of his officials and his people. (चारनेत्रः प्रजावेक्षो धर्मार्थकुशलः सदा । Ch. 118) and thereby gauge public opinion.

(k) He should strengthen himself by making friends with neighbouring kings and keep his military forces ready for eventualities, and also take care to have his treasury filled. ‡

\* मधुदोहं दुष्टेन्द्राङ्गं भमरा इव पादपम् ।  
वत्सापेक्षी दुष्टैश्च वत्सनाथ न विकुड्येत् ॥  
अलीकावत् पिबद्राङ्गं सुदुर्गं नराधिपः ।  
व्याघ्रीव च हरैत् पुवान् सन्देशेन च पीडयेत् ॥ S'ān. ce. 88.

† अरयो मे समुत्थाय बहुभिर्दंष्ट्रभिः सह ।  
इदमात्मवधायैव राष्ट्रमिच्छन्ति बाधितुम् ॥  
अस्यामापदि घोरार्थां सम्प्राप्ते दारुणे भये ।  
परिवाणाय भवतः प्रार्थयिष्ये घनानि वः ॥ S'ān. ch. 87.

‡ अवलस्य कुतः कोशी अकोशस्य कुतो वलम् ।  
अवलस्य कुतो राज्यमराजः त्रीर्भवेत् कुतः ॥  
तस्मात् कोशं वलं मित्रमस्य राजा विवर्धयेत् ।  
ह्येनकोर्धं हि राजानमवजानन्ति मानवाः ॥ S'ān. ch. 133.

(l) When enemies threaten, he should fight and be ready to lay down even his life for his people.\* When the enemy is too strong and fighting would be futile, he shall make peace by submitting. (संययेत् वैतर्सेनं वृत्तिं ; see. Ch.113, 130, 131).

The fine idealism of these Dharma writers who look at these problems from the point view of the ruler is something worthy of note. They dwell on the services of the king and make regal authority the pivot of social existence and progress. In so doing, they harp more on the limitations to the exercise of regal functions, than the privileges and rights of the king. The king was evidently to live for the common good. That was to be the highest objective of his existence, and thereby he had the way to Heaven open to him as through the highest penance and virtue. We quote the following passage of the Śāntiparva in which a king's life is likened to a great and life-long sacrifice which leads to the highest Heaven (See Śānti. Ch. 25. the story of Senājit).

दौक्षां राष्ट्रः संयुगे युद्धमाहुर्योगं राज्ये दण्डनीत्याश्च सम्यक् ।  
 वित्तत्यागो दक्षिणानाश्च यज्ञे सम्यग्दानं पावनानीति विद्यात् ॥  
 रक्षन् राज्यं बुद्धिपूर्वं नयेन सन्त्यक्तात्मा यज्ञशीलो महात्मा ।  
 सर्वान्लोकान् धर्मदृष्ट्या चरंश्चाप्यृष्टुं देहात्मोदते देवल्लोके ॥  
 जित्वा संश्रामान् पालयित्वा च राष्ट्रं सीमं पौत्वा वर्धयित्वा प्रजाय ।  
 युक्त्वा दण्डं धारयित्वा प्रजानां युजे क्षीणो मोदते देवल्लोके ।  
 सम्यग्वेदान् प्राप्य शास्त्रास्त्रधीत्य सम्यग्राज्यं पालयित्वा च राजा ।  
 चातुर्वर्ण्यं स्थापयित्वा स्वधर्मं पूतात्मा वै मोदते देवल्लोके ॥  
 यस्य वृत्तिं नमस्यन्ति स्वर्गस्वस्थापि मानवाः ।  
 पौरजानपदामात्माः स राजा राजसत्तमः ॥

\* अधर्मः अविद्यस्यैव यन्त्रापामर्यं भवेत् ।  
 अविद्यतेन देहेन प्रलयं योऽधिगच्छति ॥  
 अविद्यो नास्ति तत्कर्म प्रशंसन्ति पुराविदः ।  
 न गच्छेत् मर्यं तात अविद्यानां प्रशंसते ॥ S'ān. dh. 97.



*The Concept of the Rāstrā and its Ends.*

While speculation was directed towards the definition of royal duties and functions, the abstract conception of the *rāstrā* or the politically organised community also became developed. The *rāstrā* was conceived as a political whole comprising different elements or limbs closely related to each other and working harmoniously in a common purpose. The general idea was that there were "Seven Limbs" (*saptāṅga rājya*—Ch. 122. sec. 8); elsewhere, a *rāstrā* was supposed to have seven *Prakṛtis* and some regarded it as having had eight limbs *i. e.*, the seven in addition to *Danḍa* which was the source of sovereignty and political power (सप्तप्रकृति चाष्टाङ्गं शरीरमिह यद्विदुः । राज्यस्य दण्डमेवाङ्गं दण्डः प्रभव एव च ॥ Ch. 121. sl. 47).

The aggregate of these Seven *viz.*, the king, the ministry, the treasury, the army, the territory or *rāstrā* in its limited sense, the fortifications and defensive organisations and the ally (*mitra*), made the state. Of these again, a differentiation was made between the king, the sole head of the executive and judicial authority and the *rāstrā* which comprised the other six. They were supposed to depend for safety on each other and it was their duty to help each other in distress (परस्परं हि संरक्षा राज्ञा राष्ट्रेण चापदि । नित्यमेव हि कर्त्तव्या एष धर्मः सनातनः ॥ Ch. 130 sl. 30). A corporate conception of the *rāstrā* is also found in some of the Epic chapters, where *Bhīṣma* speaks of the duties of the *rāstrā* (राष्ट्रस्यैतत् कृत्यतमं राज्ञ एवाभिषेचनम् ॥ Ch. 67. sl. 1 and 2).

The Epic thinkers are unanimous in regarding the *rāstrā* or the state as a great means to the realisation of the highest end. To them, the individual was an end in himself and his self-realisation was the highest goal of

Ends of the State.

social existence. His aims in life comprised the Caturvarga of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. These four were interdependent and the last i. e. *mokṣa* depended on the proper realisation of the worldly prospects of life. For all these, the individual depended on political discipline. ( सर्वस्य जीवलोकस्य राजधर्मः परायणम् ॥ विवर्गो हि समासक्तो राजधर्मेषु कौरव । मोक्षधर्मश्च विव्यष्टः सकलोऽपि समाहितः ॥ ) As such, the ends of the state were both economic as well as moral.

### *Economic Considerations.*

The consideration of the economic basis of the state proceeded on the lines of the past. The germs which we find in the ancient Vedic coronation hymns were elaborated into those conceptions which made *Pālana* or finding out of sustenance for the classes and individuals in distress, the highest duty of the head of the state. It came to be recognised that a state could not subsist unless the material prospects of the people were well considered. Society was moreover looked upon as an organism which depended on the co-operation of the different classes and sections. And so, came those considerations for the mutual economic relations of the various sections together with the remunerations of the working sections. The Hindu state was thus more social than political like many of the states of the ancient world, and existed for the harmony of classes and the material happiness of its members.

Both in the *Dharmasūtras* as well as in the *Epic* chapters, we find speculation directed to the above end. The *Dharmasūtras* contain passages which denounce capitalistic tyranny and try to fix rates of interest, regulate caste-duties or the relations between master and labourer. The *Epic* contains passages which seem to lay down a rude scale of remuneration for working men.\* It

\* For this, see my *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India* Vol I. pp. 306—7.



would be out of place to enter into detailed discussions on these heads here, but these clearly show as to what they thought about the ends of the state. Economic considerations in the ancient works show clearly that they were not unmindful of the "economic basis of the state" and anticipated many of the problems which in our modern age are absorbing the attentions of the greatest thinkers.

More than this, in that hoary antiquity, thinkers were not wanting who tried to ease the relation between capitalist and labourer, by allotting to the latter a specific share of the productions of his exertions. A very old Epic passage (which is also quoted by Kaṭilya in his *Arthāśāstra*) thus lays down the share of the labourer in the absence of contracts:—

ब्राह्मणाय च राज्ञे च सर्वाः परिददे प्रजाः ।

तस्य वृत्तिं प्रवक्ष्यामि यच्च तस्योपजीवनम् ॥

षष्ठामिकां पिवेद्देनं शताच्च मिथुनं हरत् ।

लब्ध्वाच्च सप्तमं भागं तथा शृङ्गे कला खरे ॥

सस्यानां सर्ववैजानामेवा साम्बत्सरी भूतिः ॥

Next to these political and economic aspects, many <sup>Sacerdotal character of the rāṣṭra.</sup> thinkers harped on the sacerdotal and moral character of the rāṣṭra. From the later Vedic age, the abstract ethical conception of Dharma came to play a prominent part in the social-ideal of the Indian thinkers. Dharma in their eyes uphe'd the universe and comprised the natural duties of mankind or its sections taken separately in relation to the social-whole. It was regarded as the basic principle in the evolution of the various aspects of the phenomenal world. Applied to mankind or its different sections, Dharma

comprised that body of rules and precepts of life which, if obeyed, conduced to man's happiness (both mundane and spiritual) and prosperity. Dharma, as such, was the basic element in the maintenance of the moral order of the *rāṣṭra* and the head of the state was under an obligation to maintain it.

The Epic chapters constantly harp on this Dharma ideal and give it a high place; though, generally speaking, the Rājā-dharma writers take Dharma in its concrete legal sense and make it synonymous with law. In some chapters we find the influence of this older idealism, and in one of them the king is said to discharge his obligations to Dharma by his righteous conduct. (Sānti Ch. 56—  
आदाविव कुरुष्वेष्ट राज्ञा रत्ननकाभ्यया । \*\* आनृष्टं याति धर्मस्य लोकेन च समर्च्यते ॥१३॥ )

Owing to the influence of the moral ideal, the Brāhmaṇa occupied a remarkable position in the body-politic. He held co-ordinate authority with the king and saved the people by his spiritual services. Thus, the Gautama Dharmasūtra expressly states that the Brāhmaṇa and the king are the upholders of the *rāṣṭra*. Vasiṣṭha also holds the same view and, in explaining the Brāhmaṇa's exemption from taxation, attributes it to his services of spiritual protection and benefit. ( ब्राह्मण आपद उद्धरति ब्राह्मणो वेदमाख्यं करोति तस्मात् ब्राह्मणोऽनाद्यः । ) Consequently, his immunities are similar to those enjoyed by the king and his privileges are greater than that of the former, since, he was the 'protector of moral life, the expounder of the mysteries of Dharma and his *tapas* brought peace to society.'

The roots of Brāhmanical predominance are to be found in the Brāhmaṇa literature. The growth of the Dharma ideal strengthened it further. The Brāhmaṇa become the expounder of Dharma while the king was its physical protector. So, for the safety and



prosperity of the kingdom, the closest possible co-operation between the two was a vital necessity. The ideas in the Brāhmaṇas were elaborated with a view to regulate the relations between the king and the Brāhmaṇas, and this is beautifully summarised in a passage of the 78th Chapter of the Rājadharmā in which we have a dissertation on the interdependence of the two respective elements.

ब्रह्मैव सन्नियन्तु स्यात् क्षत्रं हि ब्रह्मसम्भवम् ॥

अङ्गोऽग्निर्ब्रह्मतः क्षत्रं अश्मनो लोहमुत्थितम् ॥

तेषां सर्वत्रागं तेजः स्वासु योनिषु शाम्यति ॥

यदा हिनत्ययोऽश्मानमग्निश्चापोभिगच्छति ।

क्षत्रं च ब्राह्मणं द्वेष्टि तदा नश्यन्ति ते त्रयः ॥

This passage shows the interdependence of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣātriya, and advocates a compromise between the extreme claims of the rival elements. As such, we find a synthesis of the Dharma idealism with the political aspirations of the ruling section.

The privileges of the Brāhmaṇa learned in the Vedas were many. *e. g.* (a) immunity from taxation (b) immunity from punishment. The Dharmaśāstras are unanimous in holding that corporaal punishment should not be awarded to a Brāhmaṇa. This is too well known to be repeated here. (c) His legal privileges comprised—non-attendance at court as a witness and the immunity of Brāhmaṇas' property from royal escheat or adverse prescription. In case of lapse of heir, the Brāhmaṇa's property passed to his kinsmen or even fellow-students, while treasure-troves discovered by him passed entirely to him. (d) Socially, he claimed the right of way before the king, while his right of hospitality preceded that of the king. Most of the Dharmaśāstras attach these immunities and privileges to the śrotiṛya, though, Vasiṣṭha uses the word Brāhmaṇa in the same sense. In the Rājadharmā, Bhiṣma denies these privileges to the Brāhmaṇas who followed lower occupations. (See Ch. 76. Text)

नम्रकर्मविहीना ये कदर्या ब्रह्मवात्सवाः ।

एते शुद्रसमा राजन् ब्राह्मणानां भवन्त्युत ॥

अथोचिया सर्वे एव सर्वे चानादित्ययः ।

तान् सर्वान् चार्मिको राजा वलिं विटिं च कारयेत् ।

Vasiṣṭha also denounces begging Brāhmaṇas as thieves.

But, there are passages in which we find the extremes of Brāhmanical claims made under the influence of the Dharma ideal. The Brāhmanais made the protector of the universe and the owner of everything by virtue of his closest possible connection with Dharma. Of.

ब्राह्मणो जायमानो हि पृथिव्यामधिजायते ।

इश्वरः सर्वभूतानां धर्मकोशस्य गुप्तये ॥

\* \* \* \* \*

विप्रस्य सर्वमेवैतत् यत् किञ्चिज्जगतीगतम् ।

ज्येष्ठेनाभिजनेनैव तद्धर्मकुशला विदुः ॥

स्वमेव ब्राह्मणो भुङ्क्ते स्वं वस्ते स्वं ददाति च ।

गुरुहि सर्ववर्णानां ज्येष्ठः श्रेष्ठश्च वै द्विजः ॥

पत्यभावे यथैव स्त्री देवं कुरुते पतिम् ।

आनन्तर्यात्तया चतुर्ं पृथिवी कुरुते पतिम् ॥

This constant extolling of the position and privilege of the Brāhmanas and their description as mundane gods was not the only sequel to the elaboration of the Brāhmanical Dharma ideal. This latter gave rise also to abnormal conceptions as to the possibility of governance with a moral ideal and without any coercive authority. The rule of Dharma came to be the ideal condition of human excellence and consequently, the highest stage of man's moral self-realisation. The influence of this idea is apparent not only in the conception of the primeval state of nature characterised by the absence of a coercive authority but also in the dream of an ideal social existence in which individuals were to be freed from coercion or punishment and the object of the latter is to be attained by penance and moral regeneration.



In regard to this, we have ample traces of a current of speculation in this direction. The evidence of the 59th chapter shows clearly that the thinkers of the Dharma school regarded the earliest condition of man as having been free from coercive authority. (See *supra* pp. 276 नैव राज्यं न राजासीत् न दण्डो न दाण्डिकः । धर्मैरेव प्रजाः सर्वा रक्षन्ति स्म परस्परम् ॥ etc.) In another place of the Rājadharmā, (ch. 88) we find further a mutilated tradition that the earliest king Manu had made the rule that none should be punished or taxed. (न केन चिद्याचित्तयः कश्चित् किञ्चिदनापदि । इति व्यवस्था भूतानां पुरस्तात् अनुना कृता ॥ Ch. 88—Sl. 16.) But, by far the most important sidelight thrown on the same subject is that furnished by a dialogue between king Dyumatsena and his son Satyavān. The 266th chapter which contains the dialogue, begins with the son's protest against the execution of criminals brought before and condemned by the father. The son explains in the clearest possible terms that the execution of men under no circumstances could be called Dharma.\* On the father's reply that without the coercion of criminals, the social existence will be jeopardised, the son's rejoinder points out the evils of punishment and the consequent miseries of the punished man's near kinsmen. The latter also emphasises the point, that through discipline and training, criminals might turn out pious men and their progeny might prove virtuous.†

\* अद्याहृतं व्याजहार सत्यवानिति नः श्रुतम् ।

वधाशोभनीयमानेषु पितुरेवानुशासनात् ।

अधर्मतां याति धर्मो यात्यधर्मस्य धर्मताम् ।

वधो नाम भवेद्धर्मो नैतद्विहितमर्हति ॥

† असाधुस्यैव पुत्रस्य लभते शीलमेकदा ।

साधोयापि असाधुभ्यः शोभना जायते प्रजाः ॥

न मूलघातः कर्तव्यो नैव धर्मः सनातनः ॥

A ruler should thus try to discipline himself, first\* and those of his subjects who show aberrations of conduct should be placed at the disposal of the Brāhmaṇas and especially the Purohita†

Towards the close of the chapter, the dialogue turns mainly on the necessity of exercising mercy and forgiveness to the erring sections of the community, and the plea for a noncoercive government is rather masked by that of ahimsā and the futility of excessive punishments.

But, while such an ideal could not be developed or accepted for the people as a whole, an anarchistic idealism gained ground with the Brāhmaṇas so far as their own community was concerned. They had long claimed *Soma* as their king, and had inculcated the doctrine of their immunity from all corporeal punishments. This however, did not mean merely a selfish fighting for privilege, for, horrible penances of self-mortification came to be substituted for punishment in crimes and sins. The Karma theory contributed to its elaboration. For, since, there was no redemption except through actual suffering, the absolution from regal chastisement could not ease the sufferings of the soul in lives yet to come. Hence penance was necessary, in as much as, it freed men from sufferings which were the necessary consequences of violation of Dharma.

This Prāyaścitta doctrine which is formulated in the Dharma-sūtras and is elaborated in the later Samhitās  
Philosophic Anarchy. open to us a remarkable chapter in the history of human speculations, so far as man's early ethical concepts are concerned. At the same time, it shows the boldness of that

\* आत्मैवादी निवृत्तान्दो दुष्कृतं सन्निवृत्तता ।

† सर्वे एव तथो वशीः क्षात्री राज्ञावबन्धनः ॥



idealism which culminated in conceiving man as the highest end in himself and his self-realisation through his own efforts without the intervention of the crude discipline of the coercive state. In this respect, the ancient Indians anticipated many of the problems before some of the advanced thinkers of our own day.

That this idealism made a great influence on the Brāhmaṇic mind is confirmed by many stray references to the ideal "A-rājaka" or 'non-ruler' society in the Epic literature. Not to speak of the ideal State of Nature which floated before the eyes Indians, there is at least one reference to such a state of affairs being spoken of as actually existing. This is furnished by a chapter of the Udyoga parva, in which Duryodhana in emphasising the necessity of having a commander over the whole army, cites the story of the misfortune of the Brāhmaṇas fighting against the Kṣatriyas. The former had no king or leader, but had the Brahmadanḍa as the symbol of unity and fought against their enemies. Being defeated, they become wiser, elected a leader, and thus won the victory.\*

Having attempted a survey of the political ideas in the Dharma-sūtras and the two Epics, we pass on to an enquiry into the Political ideas which are found in the Buddhist canon. To speak in a few words, the Canon including the folk-lore literature of the Jātakas, shows almost the same ideas as are found in the literature of the orthodox section of Brāhmaṇism. Such a thing we should naturally expect, in as much as, it would be a serious misconception to regard

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\* Mr. Jayasval in his *Hindu Polity* cites the conception of the State of Nature in Chap. 59 of the Rājadharmas, as an instance of the Arājaka constitutions. Many scholars have repudiated this as merely a piece of unhistorical speculation. But, though this example may not be one to the point, yet the instances or the passages cited in this section go to point towards the fact that an ideal of philosophic anarchism was formulated by some of Hindu political thinkers. They thus had anticipated many of the extreme thinkers of our own day.

the teachings of Buddhism as something extraneous to the spirit of Indian culture and tradition. In that remarkable age, India produced a host of metaphysical expounders who differed not only in their mode of enquiry but also in their conclusions. Buddha was such a teacher and his views are not entirely in conflict with those of contemporary thinkers—Brāhmanical and non-Brāhmanical. Any hard and fast creed had not arisen by that time and if there was any unity, it was in the social ideals or traditions. In regard to these latter, Buddha was never a revolutionary or tried to brush away the past. He was merely a reformer who wished to widen the social outlook and protested against the monopolies then claimed by the Brahmins. In doing so, again, his criticisms were directed more towards pointing out the discrepancies between abstract principles and the contemporary practices than to create a new state of affairs.

In the Canon, we find replicas of the ideas in the Epic as regards the origin of social existence or the evolution of political society. The tradition about the "State of Nature" is similiar to that found in ch. 59 of the Rājadharmā. Originally, the natural state of man was an ideal one, but, when aberrations of conduct arose, conventions were laid down and the Mahāsammata was elected by the people. The Jātakas, too, contain echoes of the same idea. The Māndhātā Jātaka speaks of the Mahāsammata or the "chosen of all" as having been the first king in the oldest kalpa (Jāt no 208). Similarly, the Ulūka Jātaka speaks of the election of kings by men and other animals and shows thereby the influence of the theory of regal election. The belief that the tax paid to the king was in lieu of his services of protection and just rule, is also found in Aggañña Suttanta (cf. Śānti Ch. 67).

Next, as to the scope and functions of regal authority, the



literature of Buddhism, echoes the same ideas as in the Epic and the Dharmasūtras. A king's functions according to the ideas in the Jātakas, were limited to the chastisement of wrongdoers and he was in no way absolute. Thus, when the Yakṣiṇī in the Telapatta (no 96) Jātaka asked for absolute dominion over the king's realm and his subjects, the king plainly reminded her that "as his own self was not the full master in his realm or over all his subjects and as his jurisdiction extended only over those who transgressed his authority or violated the laws, he had no power to grant such an authority". Next, the king was supposed to rule according to law and following the sacred Canon. It was also his duty and his interest to please his subjects. This idea is made clear by the preamble to the Rājovāda Jātaka (no 151) which though it betrays some evidence of monkish handling, clearly lays down that a king ruling righteously goes to heaven (*dhammena samena aṭṭa-vinicchayam nāma kusalam saggamaggo esa etc.*—preamble to Jāt. no 151). The same Jātaka gives a description of the righteous Kosala king and tells us that owing to his good rule, the law courts were empty and that the king used to wander about at night to hear public opinion. The same story also emphasises the king's endowment with the tenfold regal qualities. (*e. g. dāna, sīla parityāga, akrodha, avihiṃsā, kṣānti, ārjava mārḍava, tapas and abirodhana*. See note on the Jāt. by I. C. Ghosh, Ben. Trans.). Moreover, in the Jātakas as in the Epic we find the idea that a king's virtues brought good to his subjects. This is exemplified by the Kurudhamma Jātaka (no 276), where the Kālīṅga king whose realm suffers from famine, poverty and pestilence, seeks the secret of a realm's prosperity from the virtuous Kuru king. The latter's prosperity is attributed to his performance of the *kurudhamma*. At the same time, we

find as in the Epic, the converse of this idea *i. e.* the people suffering for the sins of their king. The Bharu Jātaka amply illustrates it (no. 213). For the sins of the king, the whole realm of Bharu perished, and the idea is very clearly expressed in the following passage and the verse attached to the Manicora Jātaka (e. g. "sace hi rājā adhammico hoti devo akāle vassati, kāle na vassati chātaka-bhayam rogabhayam satthabhyān ti imāni tīpi bhayani upagatān eva hontiti. etc ; the same occurs in the Kelisila Jāt. no 202). While a bad king is denounced, it was believed by the people that the righteous king was the representative of the gods and the sight of such a king caused religious merit. (Dūta. no. 60). The Mahāsvapna Jātaka (no. 77) also connects royal unrighteousness with the decay of the people.\*

Again, misconceptions remain in regard to the political teachings of Buddhism. Many scholars believe Buddhism to have been associated with the pluralistic political discipline. At first sight, the Saṅgha organisation leads men to incline to this view. But, a careful examination shows that this is merely an outcome of the association of Buddhism with the non-monarchical tribes of the Eastern borderland, and that their republicanism was but a heritage of the past. The Buddha's sympathies were indeed for the system in which he was born and bred, as is illustrated by his determination to prevent the murderous designs of Virūdhava against his kinsmen,

\* Dr. Ghosal gives a decidedly higher place to Buddhist political speculation and attributes the formulation of the Social Contract theory to Buddhist canonists. Evidently, this view is the outcome of a belief that the Canon is older than the Epic tradition. But, this supposition is absolutely without any foundation. The Brāhmanical theories in the Epic show a continuity of development and the germs of the two theories of a state of nature connect themselves with two old Vedic traditions. The truth is that as the result of speculations, such a theory about the origin of government had gained ground long ago, but the Buddhist author twisted it to his own advantage and connected it with the Mahāsammatā.



but, this does not show a political ideal, but feelings of humanity and a natural sympathy for the traditions of the past.

Later on, as Buddhism grew into a great religious system, its system of organisation came to be modelled more and more on the Empire which was growing so fast. The Saṅgha itself was conceived as a great Dharma Empire. The Buddha was its Cakravartin, the Agraśrāvaka Sāriputta and Moggallāyana were turned into the Dharma-senāpati and Amātya respectively. Ānanda was conceived as the Dharma-bhāṇḍāgārika and so on. The Dharma idea, as enunciated by the Tathāgata acted on the universal political idea of the Empire and the latter reacted on it. The offspring of these two agents was the Imperialistic Dharma ideal of the Emperor Aśoka.

The above summary of the political and ethical speculations of the ancients shows a peculiar line of development, and this should be taken into consideration when we try to compare the political thought of the Indian with that of mediaeval or ancient Europe.

The political thought of Europe was evolved out of the synthesis of the original ideas inherited from the Graeco-Roman; with those cosmic ideas inherent in the Hebraic teachings which came to Europe with the preaching of christianity.

Early in the Dark Ages, the ideal of pluralistic discipline in the city-state evolved by Hellenic political genius, or that of popular government based on the existence of rights and obligations on the part of the ruler and ruled, as conceived by the formulators of *Jus naturale*, went down before the conception of the omnipotent authority of the deified Emperor of Rome. With the establishment of the feudalistic régime and the enunciation of the salvation of mankind through the working of the dual discipline of the Church and the Empire, regal authority came to be associated with a moral sanction though for

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Western Political  
thought."

the time being, the "Divine Right" idea was non-existent and popular bodies continued to exercise their functions while turbulent nobles repudiated the claim of monarchs to allegiance. In course of the struggle between the Papacy and the Empire, philosophers and divines like Thomas Aquinas fell back on the traditions of Roman law and formulated the idea of Natural Law being the basis of civil society. At the same time, devout churchmen struggled to prove the excellence of papal authority, while the adherents of the Empire emphasised the divine sanction associated with the Empire.

Gradually, politics was freed from the influence of religion and with Bodin and Machiavelli, the modern theory of the political sovereignty of the state and its concept from the secular standpoint came to be formulated. About the same time, another set of thinkers, advocating regal irresponsibility, harped on the divine right of kings, now freed from Papal authority through the Reformation. Partly with the opposition of orthodox churchmen and partly with the theocratic idealism of the Calvinists, these extreme theorists of divine right were attacked by men like Languet, Buchanan, Bellarmine and Mariana, who all attributed the rise of regal authority to the people's will and a mutual pact. In the next generation of political thinkers, we find a conflict between this divine right vested in kings (through patriarchal succession from Adam) and the theory of popular election of kings justifying tyrannicide when kings ruled unrighteously. In course of this conflict, when despotic regal authority came into clash with the interests and aspirations of the people, a number of thinkers propounded the origin of society in a contract between the ruler and the ruled. Hobbes who followed Hooker regarded the state of nature as one of war. This



state of war necessitated the laying down of conventions amongst the people and the establishment of a common superior who was to exercise authority, though he was no party to a binding contract with the people. Authority once vested in the king was indivisible and perpetual unless his conduct led to anarchy which alone justified revolution on the part of the subjects for their self-preservation.

Influenced by circumstances, Hobbes showed a preference for monarchy and its authority. His successor Locke, on the contrary, portrayed a state of nature which was an ideal condition of equality and freedom in which men were governed by the natural law of reason. But, as this "state was full of fears and dangers," men renounced, according to Locke, natural liberty in favour of civil liberty. Gradually, a legislative authority was erected and the best men were elected to rulership. Thus, according to him, the legislative power of sovereigns was a fiduciary power for certain ends and was liable to removal in case of its arbitrary exercise. These theories held ground for a time and under their influence many publicists of Europe cried 'back to nature.' The Encyclopedists like Montesquieu, however, advocated a moderate constitutional *regime*. But as circumstances never became favourable for reform, it was reserved for Rousseau with his idealistic and deductive method to reformulate the '*Contrat social*' with a view to prove the entire dependence of regal authority upon popular choice and the real rule of the people.

The history of Hindu political speculation, similarly, shows a conflict and ultimate synthesis of several currents and counter-currents of ideas. The different angles of vision of the thinkers who looked at these problems from the ethical or the sacerdotal point of view, have been discussed and

we have summarised the different theories arising out of their peculiar ways of viewing the problems. In the earlier stages of Indian speculation, this sacerdotal influence was very great and politics was intimately connected with religion, (as we have seen in connection with the ideas contained in the Brāhmaṇas). Gradually, as the horizon cleared, the ethical and social needs of man claimed greater attention and there came a tendency to look to these problems independently. This took place in the same age which saw the metaphysical speculations relating to the universal phenomena, and the same amount of abstraction was directed towards the solution of socio-ethical problems. The influence of these is found in the speculations about the origin of sovereignty, the need of a king and the concept of a 'state of nature', which existed prior to the establishment of regal authority. These, show indeed, a parallelism of development so far as India and Mediaeval Europe are concerned.

On many points, we have little of essential differences. The indian thinkers grappled with the same problems and anticipated the solution which medieval theorists attempted centuries later. The speculations about the necessity of a common superior led them to postulate a State of Nature. The concept of a 'state of nature' has had its parallel in Europe, for, as we know, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau all made it the basis of their political theories.

As the conceptions of Hobbes materially differed from those of Locke, ever so the two Indian concepts regarding this 'natural condition' differed from each other. Hobbes' theory of a state of nature is almost the same as we find in the 67th chapter of the Śānti-parva, which regards the condition of man in a natural state, as one of war. The theory of Locke is nearly similar to that of the propounders of the Dharma ideal. In Ch. 59, again,



in formulating the importance of *Danḍa* as the basis of state, Hindu thinkers anticipated many of their brethren of the modern age.

While we find a clear parallelism, there is enough room for noting differences in the line of thought between Indian thinkers and those of the West. In most chapters relating to the origin and exercise of sovereign authority, we find Indian thinkers interposing the agency of the divine rulers, showing thereby the close dependence of political ideas on those relating to the universal system. This peculiarity is clearly noticeable as well as the fact that religion and the peculiar cosmic ideas made a deeper influence in India so far as the ethical ideas were concerned. Life with the Indian was not an end in itself but it was a mere phase in a greater existence. Its pleasures and pains were the after-effects of *Karma* in previous births, and its future, too, was determined by the good or evil done in its duration. Thus, the influence of the philosophical ideas of rebirth and *Karma* widened the ethical outlook of the Indian and connected it closely with the world unknown. The ideas in regard to the latter were different from those that gained ground in Europe where, only the material aspects of the present existence was taken into consideration. Then, again, the divine agents remained ever-present in the Indian mind and made the deepest impression in spite of the growth of a higher philosophy which directed itself towards the conception of the absolute. While these gave a peculiar turn to Indian political speculation, diversity in social evolution gave rise to certain principles which have exercised their influence even to this day.

First of all, the Indian believed in a social existence which depended for its smooth working on the harmonious co-operation of sections, mutually inter-dependent, but not enjoying the same and equal social status. The castes

which composed the social structure were but parts of the same organisation, though their functions and status were not the same. Equality in social matters never became the ideal with Indian thinkers and they never emphasised the attainment of this

Some important principles underlying socio-political evolution.

ideal. This was partly due to the fact that a composite society grew out of a social federation of races and tribes whose ethnic divergences and cultural differences made unification impossible. Such a type of social existence became popular in view of the fact that it ensured the socio-economic cooperation of sections and avoided at the same time the race-war which would have been the necessary consequences of a hankering after a homogenous social structure. The Indian mind never yearned after equality but delighted in diversities. Caste has had undoubtedly its defects, but, its leading beneficial features have been ignored by western thinkers. A detailed discussion on this head will be out of place here, but, anyhow it is easy to understand that in India equality never became a political necessity. The Indian conceived certain rights common to all including the members of the most degraded sections but believed at the same time in diversities of evolution through higher intelligence or effort. The right to exist, to have family or property, or a claim to royal protection, belonged to the Śūdra equally with the Brahmin or the prince, but beyond that, there remained scope for diversity of progress and advancement. Furthermore, inequality never stood in the path of political association or social co-operation and the diversities of social condition or status were easily explained through the theories of Karma and rebirth. Hence, a strife of classes was eliminated and the composite federated social structure continued to be lauded.



Secondly, such a social concept was not without influence on the aim and scope of political life, as well as the organisation of the political machinery. A society composed of diverse ethnic elements required for its normal working a strong executive authority and a set of fundamental principles to guide the actions of the ruler. As such, regal authority was erected on a stronger basis and monarchy became the ideal of Hindu political philosophers. But, at the same time, the holder of the regal office was subjected to the fundamental laws of the disciplinary canon, both political and social. The scope of popular activity in matters of legislation was also narrowed down. Laws were allowed to evolve gradually and their interpretation was vested not in the multitude but in the wise exponents of real social opinion.\* Within their own folds, communities had the fullest scope for democratic social life, and their customs were regarded as valid. In social and economic matters too, the representatives of the different sections had their recognised place. But, the fundamental principles guiding social life as a whole were kept out of the reach of the multitude. Thus, the internal autonomy of the different sections was maintained while revolutionary changes were prevented.

Thirdly, the elevation of the Brāhmaṇa to the highest social position eliminated the timocratic basis of political superiority which we find in Europe from the days of the Solonian democracy

\* अत्रतानाममन्त्राणां जातिमावीपञ्चोविनाम् ।

सहस्रशः समेतानां परिषत्त्वं न विद्यते ॥

यददन्ति तमोमूढा मूर्खो धर्ममजानतः ।

तन्पापं शतधा भूत्वा तद्वक्तृणां घनिच्छति ॥

चत्वारो वा द्वयो वापि यं ब्रूयुर्वेदपारमः ।

स धर्म इति विज्ञेयो नेतरेषां सहस्रशः ॥



to the middle of the last century. In India, wealth never became the standard or sole basis of political franchise.

Finally, the crude political discipline never came to be regarded as the *summum bonum* of existence. Man was not a means as in the speculations of Europe, but, he was the highest end in himself. It was for his self-realisation that the state was conceived as a means to that higher end. The state and its discipline extended over the whole of man's economic or material activity, but, beyond that, the self-disciplined individual was left to himself to work his own salvation. Religion or intellectual advancement never came within the scope of political discipline. Elsewhere, we shall discuss these points in detail.

*Note*—Before passing on to the next section, we beg to draw the attention of readers to a few facts relating to the political speculation of the Epic thinkers. As a rule, they view the problems of politics from the standpoint of the rulers. Yet, a careful study of the various chapters show that they conceived of certain fundamental rights naturally vesting in the people, if we are allowed to use the word right in that sense.

These were, socially, the right to exist, the right to hold and maintain family, the right to own lawfully-earned property, and the right to look after his own self-realisation both material and spiritual. The right of self-defence was also vested in the individual and as such, the murder of an assailant even if he were a prince or a Brahmin was not punishable.

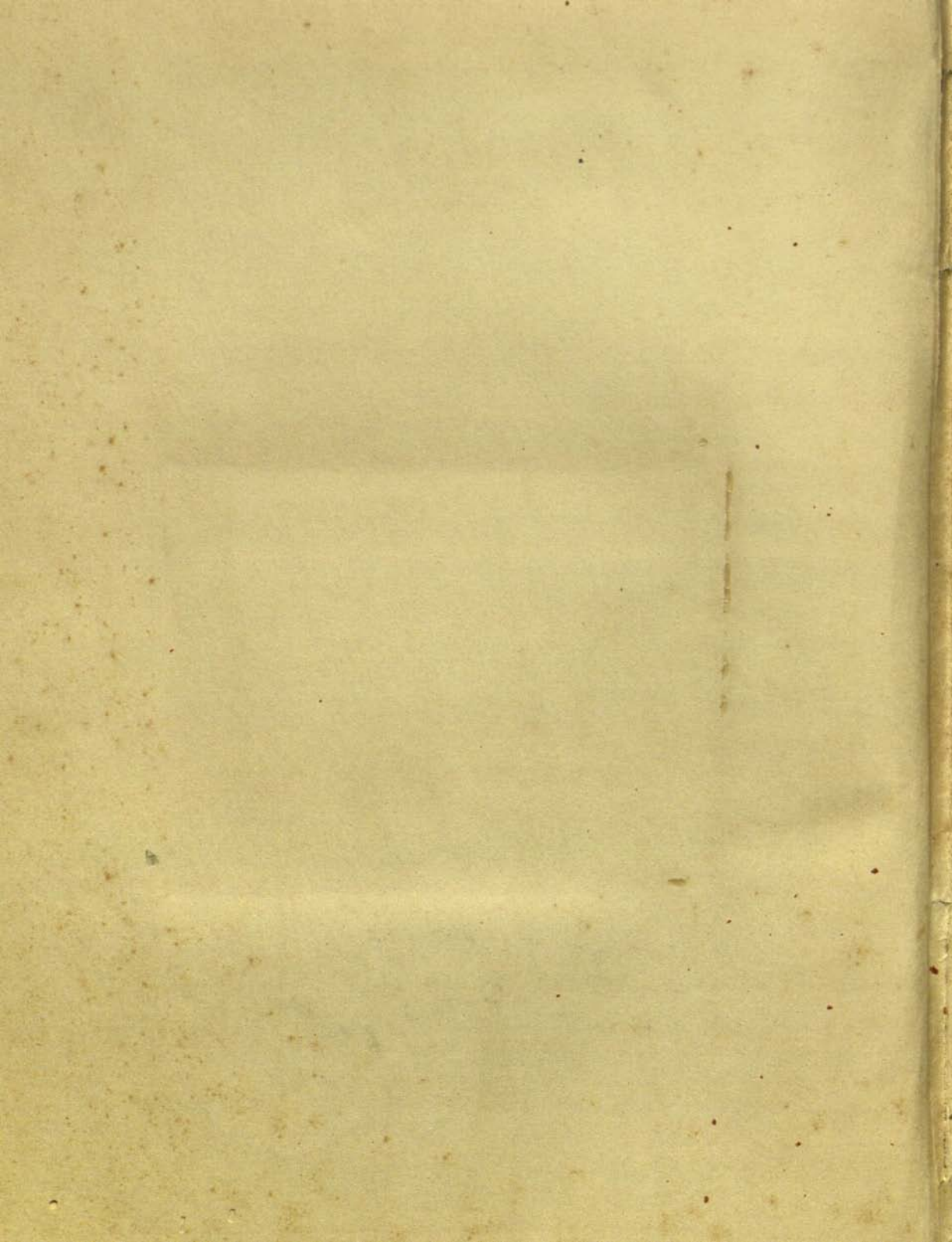
The king as the head of the state was to ensure these rights and to extend his protection to all. He was to deal out justice with impartiality to all his subjects. Failure to do this made him not only morally culpable but he was liable to removal by the people, in whom resided the 'moral right of revolution.' This would appear from the views of the extreme champions of popular right like Bāmadeva or the author of the *Anuśāsana* passage already referred to. The doctrine of tyrannicide held ground in India also, and the views of Indian thinkers may be compared with those of Mariana and others in Europe.

Regal power was subjected to many limitations, and these checks may be summarised follows :—

- (1) The king was equally subject to the law and was not vested with law-making power.
- (2) He had no right of arbitrary taxation. He was not the owner of land and could not impose arbitrary punishments.
- (3) Justice was ensured by the existence of assessors in all law-suits. They determined the guilt, while the king simply passed sentence and executed it.
- (4) In the small democratic states, there was always a strong public opinion and men of all castes and sections had their laws recognised. Their opinion and men of force, and if we are to believe in the Epic, caste-representatives were a potent seats in the Regal Council.







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