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INDIAN POLITICAL THEORIES

The Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri Lectures, 1936-37.

BY

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It is a high privilege for an alumnus of the University to be called upon to deliver this course of lectures, associated, as they are, with the name of one whose ripe culture and many-sided experience have enabled him so consummately to fill the rôle of the unofficial ambassador of India.

Casting about for an appropriate subject, it occurred to me that it might be helpful, especially at this juncture, to gather and to collate some of the political and economic ideas that have been evolved in the India of the past. As early as 1928 when I was honoured by the University of Mysore with an invitation to deliver a lecture on Federation—a conception which was then only slowly emerging into life in India—I discovered a great deal of important and interesting material in our Nitisastras and our Puranas bearing on political life and political forms commonly supposed to have originated and undoubtedly developed vigorously in Western lands. It struck me then that a careful study of our sources would be of assistance not only to the student and the philosopher but also to the man of affairs. After all, it is very true, in the words of the poet, that each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth. Is it not also manifest that the ideas and ideals of each country as they progress from age to age have and indeed ought to have something racy in them and that in politics as well as in literature and the arts, nothing that is not evolved from within and is not in harmony with inherited as well as individual traditions will be characteristic or essentially fit to live? To-day, we are producing and putting to practical use new constitutions. New thoughts are thundering at our doors and while we shall do well, as throughout our history, ever to be tolerant and hospitable to fresh views, nevertheless, we must also be alive to the need for assimilating them with our own culture and we may as well imitate the wise gardener when, for improving the yield, he skil-

fully inserts a graft. It is with this object that I concluded that it is not a work of supererogation to bring together in short compass some of the multiform theories that have been adumbrated in our country during many centuries. A great French critic, Henri Taine, declared: "*Quand on veut comprendre un art, il faut regarder l'ame du public auquel il s'adressait.*" Although this was said of art, it is equally true of a nation's philosophy and politics that they are outward expressions of national culture and sentiment and they use the symbols best understood in the country of origin. They bespeak an acquaintance with national life and thought. Our political ideas are a function of our intellectual and civic life and it may not be out of place to remember that during many millennia we have had a succession of thinkers who, like the medieval Churchmen in Europe, were founders and partakers of what may accurately be called a University tradition and an educational system which in India as in Europe until recent times was based on and culminated in religious training but included also in its scope an attempt at universal research born of catholic sympathies and curiosities.

The term Upanishad meant etymologically sitting near a person and is the exact synonym of the French Seance or Session. The Upanishads represent the outcome of sittings or gatherings which took place in the hermitages and forests. They not only profoundly influenced Indian thought and through China and Persia, all Asiatic thought, but filtered to Europe through Persia, Arabia and Asia Minor and left their impress on Thales and Pythagoras and the Gnostics and Neo-platonists and through the Universities of the middle ages and through Machiavelli, Descartes, Spinoza and Schopenhauer have become part of most European culture. These latter have been the progenitors of much of our modern thought and much, in truth, of the recent speculations of Freud and Jung as to psycho-analysis recalls the processes of Yoga regimen. It must be recollected that the University of Nalanda, over two thousand years ago, as we know from recent researches and the curriculum of that University as outlined by Hiuen Tsang, was a real teaching institution with a wide outlook, although its function was primarily religious. It enabled the students, in the words of a recent writer, "to form each other and it performed a most important function, namely, learning the great art of living and helping to form an intelligent society." The comprehensiveness of the studies at Nalanda and Valabhi and Vikramasila as well as Kanchipura was not rivalled in the early Universities of the West, Paris, Bologna and Salerno.

Nalanda which flourished in the early years of the Christian era was visited by the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien and Hiuen Tsang and it not only attracted learned men from different parts but the members of the University had even academic costumes as all the Pandits wore a red cap with pointed peak and long lappets. So universal was the appeal of these seats of learning that a Buddhist scholar from Kanchipura, Acharya Dingnaga, was, it may be remembered, thus referred to by Kalidasa in *Meghasandesa* : ¹

‘ दिङ्नागानां पथि परिहरन् स्थूलहस्तावलेपान् ’

i.e. “avoiding the buffets of Dingnaga on the way.” The line has a double meaning and hints at the exploits of Dingnaga who was a contemporary and critic of Kalidasa and subjected him to attacks which provoked the great poet to sarcasm in the Dunciad style. Controversy was not in those days a gentle affair. This Dingnaga was also the father of medieval logic and he taught at this University. The influence of such institutions and seats of learning was far wider than is generally supposed. In the history of the English people, Green proves that it was owing to the influence of the Crusades that a new fervour of study sprang up in Europe by the contact with the more civilised East attained by travellers who brought back science and philosophy from the schools of Bagdad and Cordova into the early European seats of learning like Paris, Salerno and Bologna, which were the precursors of Oxford and Cambridge. These European Universities were therefore in effect the products of the learning which extended from Central Asia to Spain and had celebrated nuclei in Samarkand and Bokhara, Fez and Cordova. In Southern India, Kanchipura as the home of Sanskrit learning and Madura as the seat and centre of Tamilian culture also exercised a profound influence on world thought. It is in such abodes of culture as well as in the realistic university of actual life and in the courts of discerning monarchs that Nitisastras like those of Chanakya and Kamandaka and Sukra were produced. The tradition therefore of political discussion and speculation has been longstanding and widespread.

The lineage of ideas is indeed a marvellous thing to contemplate and in a most suggestive lecture delivered at the Calcutta University Institute by one who was an active politician of Ceylon as well as a profound scholar and man of religion, Sir P. Ramathanan, it was pointed out that in the *Harsha Charita* of Bana

1. *Meghasandesa*, I, 14.

occurs a passage relating to a royal visit paid in the seventh century A.D. to a Forest University. As the king approached the institution he left his suite behind and proceeded on foot attended by a few of his vassals. While still at a distance the king perceived a large number of "Buddhists from various provinces, perched in pillows, seated on rocks, dwelling in bowers of creepers, lying in thickets or in the shadow of branches, or squatting on the roots of trees—devotees dead to all passions, Jains in white robes, mendicants, ascetics, followers of Kapila, Lokayatikas (materialists), followers of Kanada (of the Atomic School), followers of Upanishads, students of legal institutions, students of the Puranas, adepts in sacrifices, adepts in grammar, followers of Pancharatra and others besides, all diligently following their own tenets, pondering, urging objections, raising doubts, resolving them, expounding etymologies and disputing, discussing and explaining most points".² Can there be a more thought-provoking and suggestive description of a true University with no exclusions and only preferences ?

It has been our good fortune to be brought into touch with the currents of Western thoughts and speculation and we have been under their influence for nearly a century in our Universities. Owing to our natural anxiety to utilise the new opportunities which have come to us, we have perhaps overlooked, if we have not disdained, our past traditions and history. There is a great danger of our not securing the full benefit of the newer culture for lack of proper assimilation. Should it not be our aim to build on the foundations of our own accumulated lore and inherited stock of capacities and temperament, a stately and enduring structure with the full aid of Western learning and science and thus to develop our own soul ? Especially is this process called for in the study and practice of politics, an art and a science more intimately connected with national aptitudes and national outlook than almost any other. What is in the bone cannot be eliminated and, as pointed out recently by a discerning thinker, the author of the "Dangerous Sea", one realises with a shock the cyclic character of life and of ideas. The French proverb "*plus ca change plus c'est la meme*" "the more it changes, the more essentially same it remains" is not a mere piece of blase cynicism. The whole history of the French Revolution, its rise and fall, and the dictatorship which followed it, as the author of the "Dangerous Sea"

indicates, constitute really a transplanted chapter of Roman history. The Fascists, the Spartacists and the Nazi revolution of our own times have also had their prototypes in the past. The curious student may also discover analogies between certain developments of communism at the present moment and similar phenomena which are observed by the compilers of the Puranas, not to mention incidents in the history of the later Roman Empire and the Middle Ages. It was in these so-called dark ages that there arose the idea of a League of Nations fulfilling the functions which were part of the programme of the Holy Roman Empire and which were elaborated by medieval theorists both regal and private who strove to bring about an effective policing of the nations. No nation building its future political habitation can afford to ignore its past racial culture or the lessons of its history. My endeavour, therefore, has been to try and to find out how far in the various departments of political and socio-economic theory we can get guidance from our own heritage of speculation and action. In this task which naturally involves considerable labour, I am immeasurably indebted to that well-known scholar of Travancore, Mahakavi Ullor S. Paramesvara Aiyar, who is largely responsible for enabling me to place these materials before the University, as also to my son C. R. Pattabhiraman. I was stimulated to perform this task after I read the scholarly analysis of the social and political life in the Vijayanagara Empire which we owe to the research of Dr. Saleatore and, later, it became necessary for me to deal with one aspect of the subject in its practical application when I was endeavouring, as Head of the Administration of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore and for reasons connected with the formulation and carrying out of His Highness' historic Temple Entry Proclamation, to discover the sources and methods of legislation in the old days. I then saw that the monarch who, in the Code of Manu, is described as embodying in himself the four ages, was understood by the medieval philosopher, Sukra, to be the maker of the age so that if customs, usages, and movements are not assimilated to the needs of the times the fault is said to lie in the king himself. Sukra avers that "the king is the maker of the age as the promulgator of duties and sins. He is the cause of the setting on foot of the customs and usages and hence is the cause or maker of the times". The same principle of politics and social legislation was enunciated by Bhishma in the Santiparva thus: "Whether it is the king that makes the age or the age that makes the king, is a question about which you should not entertain any doubt. The truth is that the king makes the age". As Dr. Saleatore aptly observes in the book

to which I have already alluded, national regeneration was regarded by the great kings of the Vijayanagara dynasty as achievable only when the Ruler created the proper environment both political and cultural. It is evident that other Rulers of whom there are records in our sacred and secular literature from which we can construct a fairly coherent political philosophy have adopted the same view—a view which may be made suitable to modern times and conditions. Beginning with the times prior to recorded history, we find as an indisputable fact that the evolution of what are termed Kerala Acharas is a conclusive proof of the flexibility of ancient law-givers and pristine laws. It is incontestable that there are laws, customs and observances prevalent among the Namputiris on the West coast which are not followed by the Brahmins of other parts of the present day, which furnish clear evidence that the Hindu Acharas or laws have been modified to suit special or local conditions. The form of marriage known as Sarvasvadanam which is not recognised by the Mitakshara, the adoption of a son in the Dvamushyayana form as the son of two fathers (the natural and the adopted), the difference in the custom regarding the marriage of girls, the absence of any rigid insistence on the early marriage of women under penalty of forfeiture of caste—obviously a later innovation in Hindu law forced on the people on account of foreign invasions and the insecurity of the times, the possibility of a woman remaining unmarried to the end of her days, the modification of the rule that every male should marry within his own caste in order to lead a Grhastha life, the importance given in worship and ritual to Tantras as distinguished from the Mantras,—all these and many other differences in social usages, etiquette and practices, relating to daily life which taken together distinguish the Acharas of Parasurama's country indicate that there was no crystallisation of social or even religious law and practice and that there was abundant scope for changes to meet altered situations and conditions. This policy was not confined to pre-historic ages but was followed even later, as was triumphantly demonstrated by what is historically known regarding Ramanuja's gospel and that of the Tenkalai saints by their adoption of Tamil as a concurrent sacred language with Sanskrit, their remodelling of the society of their days by virtue of a process of religious fusion and the consequent and inevitable unification of sects and communities. We notice attempts actively supported and fostered by the sacerdotal castes during the reign of the Vijayanagar kings for the purpose of bringing about State regulations enabling the Ruler to deal with problems of social growth and adaptation. It is

proved that the Brahmins of a prominent part of the Vijayanagar Empire went to the extent of seeking the active assistance of the State for implementing an agreement which they themselves had made for the purpose of dealing with the pernicious dowry system. In 1424-25 we learn that a concordat was arrived at by representatives of the Kannadika, Tamil, Telugu and Lata communities laying down that those who do not adopt *kanyadana*, that is, those who give away a girl after receiving gold and those who conclude a marriage after giving gold, shall be punished by the king. This document bears the signature of the great men of all branches of sacred studies in the kingdom.³

The author of the Sukraniti asserts that the Ruler has become a servant of the people getting his revenue as remuneration and that his sovereignty is for protection. It was from this point of view that the great Krishnadeva Raya set before himself the difficult task of the protection of what he considered to be the Hindu Dharma. The theories as to the division of responsibility as between the king and the ministers and the limitation on the authority of the king were very elaborately developed by the two Madhyama that flourished in Vijayanagar. The theories and forms of central government, the gubernatorial charges and the village administration which were, at least in Southern India, characterised by a remarkable spirit of co-operation and displayed great vigour in the local units were features that enabled the Vijayanagar kings to consolidate and maintain their empire. But what was most remarkable about these wise rulers and is most instructive to us at present was their attempt to bridge the gulf between the Hindus and the Mahomedans not only by promoting harmony between the royal houses professing these two religions but by the practice distinctly proclaimed and realistically developed by the Vijayanagar Emperors of enlisting Mahomedans in Hindu service and fostering the interests of Islam in that great Hindu Empire. To such an extent did this harmony go that when Aliya Rama Raya who flourished in the 16th century lost one of his sons, his wife stated to have adopted Sultan Ali Adil Shah as her son.⁴ Not only did the Hindu kings build mosques and entertain Muslims in their service but it is noticeable that the Vyasarayya Mutt received large donations from Mahomedan Rulers.

3. Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire, Volume II, p. 11

4. Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire, Volume I, pp. 407-408.

The Chola kings Rajadhiraja II and Kulottunga I also definitely laid down rules for the settlement of communal problems which then arose mainly with reference to marriages and on occasions when some of the so-called lower classes claimed equality with the higher classes as regards marriage, and certain honours and privileges.⁵ On some of these occasions the Hindu kings even appointed mediators vested with exceptional powers and privileges to deal with socio-religious problems.

According to our law-givers it is, in fact, not open to a king to take shelter under the plea that he is living in the Kali Yuga, the decadent age, and hence is unable to uphold the basic ideals based on righteousness. The Mahabharata explains, as has been indicated above, that it is the king that makes the age, and that the view that the age makes the king is incorrect.⁶

ORIGIN OF KINGSHIP

There are certain passages in ancient Hindu Literature pointing to a condition of society without a king. In the *Aitareya Brahmana*, it is stated : “ The Devas and the Asuras were fighting The Asuras defeated the Devas The Devas said : ‘ it is on account of our having no chief that the Asuras defeat us. Let us create a King ’. All agreed ”.⁷ The political evolution of Rgvedic India according to Radha Kumud Mookerji may be traced in the following ascending series of groups, *viz*, (1) the family (kula), (2) the village (grama), (3) the clan (vis), (4) the people (jana), and (5) the country (rashtra).⁸ A family was composed of several members living under a common head. An aggregate of several families made up a village. *Vis* was a larger formation

5. Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire, Vol II, pp. 192-193.

6. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 69 :

“ कालो वा कारणं राज्ञो राजा वा कालकारणम् ।

इति ते संशयो मा भूद् राजा कालस्य कारणम् ॥ ” ८९

7. Aitareya Brahmana (Anandasrama Edition), Book I, Chapter 3 :

“ देवासुरा वा एषु लोकेषु समयतन्तः तास्ततोऽसुरा अजयन् देवा अब्रुवन्, अराजतया वै नो जयन्ति ; राजानं करवामह इति ; तथेति । ”

8. R. K. Mookerji's Hindu Civilisation (1936), page 78. Mookerji is not sure who the *Vis* are. It seems to me that they are the bulk of the Aryans, excluding Brahmanas and Rajanyas.

implying settlement, while Jana was even a more comprehensive term, embracing as it did the entire population occupying a particular area which subsequently converted it into a *Rashtra* or State. Society in those days had to keep itself in constant readiness for combat not only to quell external aggression but also internal dissension, and the origin of the *Rajanya* (*Kshatriya*) class has to be traced to this circumstance. The invocation of the blessings of unseen powers through an adept agency was a necessary incident of that arrangement and this gave rise to the Brahmins as a distinct class. The bulk of the Aryan community not included in either of these categories were known as the *vis* or *Vaiśyas*, while the exigencies of conquest led to the absorption of numerous non-Aryans into the Aryan fold, who eventually became *Sudras*.

LATER THEORIES

The *Mahabharata* narrates the following story on the origin of kingship. In ancient days men were ruined in consequence of the prevalence of anarchy. They devoured one another as stronger fish devour the weaker ones in water. A few men then assembled together and agreed among themselves that the bombastic, the cruel, the voluptuous and the greedy among them should be renounced. That arrangement worked for some time. Seeing that it was also not satisfactory, they approached *Brahma* with a prayer to grant them a king. *Brahma* thereupon induced *Manu* to take up the kingship. The people agreed to pay certain taxes and prayed that in return the king should destroy their enemies to enable them to lead peaceful lives.⁹ *Bhishma*, who relates this incident to

9. *Mahabharata*, *Santi*, Chapter 67 :

“ अराजकाः प्रजाः पूर्वं विनेशुरिति नः श्रुतम् ।
 परस्परं भक्षयन्तो मत्स्या इव जले कृशान् ॥
 समेत्य तास्ततश्चक्रुः समयानिति नः श्रुतम् ।
 वाक्शूरो दण्डपरुषो यश्च स्यात् पारजायिकः ॥
 यः परस्वमथादद्यात् त्याज्या नस्तादृशा इति ।
 विश्वासार्थं च सर्वेषां वर्णानामविशेषतः ॥
 तास्तथा समयं कृत्वा समयेनावतस्थिरे ।
 सहितास्तास्तदा जम्मुसुखार्ताः पितामहम् ॥
 अनीश्वरा विनश्यामो भगवन्नीश्वरं दिश ।

Yudhishtira gives a slightly different version of the same in a previous chapter. He therein says that in the Krtayuga there were no sovereignty, no king, no punishment and no punisher, and that all men used to protect one another actuated by a sense of righteousness. They, however, soon found that this work was too much for them and became gradually a prey to error (Moha), greed (Lobha), desire (Kama) and lust (Raga). When such confusion set in and righteousness perished, men sought the help of Brahma who thereupon composed a stupendous treatise on the *purusharthas*, of which the works of Brhaspati, Sukra, etc., were but abridgments. The Devas then prayed for a king to rule over men and Vishnu created Virajas. Virajas, however, did not relish the kingship conferred on him, and Ananga, his great-grandson, became the first king of Bharatavarsha.¹⁰ Both these stories show,

यं पूजयेम सम्भूय यश्च नः प्रतिपालयेत् ॥
 तमब्रुवन् प्रजा मा भैः कर्तृनेनो गमिष्यति ।
 पशूनामधिपञ्चाशद्विरण्यस्य तथैव च ।
 धान्यस्य दशमं भागं दास्यामः कोशवर्धनम् ॥
 स त्वं जातबलो राजा दुष्प्रधर्षः प्रतापवान् ।
 सुखे धास्यसि नः सर्वान् कुबेर इव नैर्ऋतान् ॥ ” १७-२६

‘Matsyanyaya’ has been explained by many writers.

Kamandaka says :

“ परस्पराभिषतया जगतो भिन्नवर्त्मनः ।
 दण्डाभावे परिध्वंसी मात्स्यो न्यायः प्रवर्तते ॥ ”

Nitisara (Trivandrum Sanskrit Series) II, 40.

10. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 59 :

“ नैव राज्यं न राजासीन्नच दण्डो न दाण्डिकः ।
 धर्मेणैव प्रजाः सर्वा रक्षन्ति स्म परस्परम् ॥ १४
 पाल्यमानास्तथान्योन्यं नरा धर्मेण भारत ।
 खेदं परमुपाजग्मुस्ततस्तान् मोह आविशत् ॥ १५
 अथ देवाः समागम्य विष्णुमूचुः प्रजापतिम् ।
 एको योऽर्हति मर्त्येभ्यः श्रेष्ठघं वै तं समादिश ॥ ८७
 प्रजापतेः कर्दमस्य त्वनङ्गो नाम वै सुतः ।
 प्रजा रक्षयिता साधुर्दण्डनीतिविशारदः ॥ ९१

as also the passage cited from the Aitareya Brahmana, that the Aryans had no ruler in the olden days and that kingship with them was regarded as a comparatively late institution. There are certain passages in the Vedas pointing to the king's divine origin and this had become an accepted belief by the time Manu's Dharma-sastra was composed. Manu states that when men were without a king and dispersed through fear in all directions the Lord created a king for the protection of all of them and that the essence of the Dikpalas was used for his creation.¹¹

KING'S DIVINE ORIGIN

There is, however, no doubt that this was in reality a metaphorical description of the paramountcy of the monarch designed to enforce obedience from the subject. In a striking passage Kautalya says that the vulgar opponents of a king may be silenced by the argument that the duties of Indra (the rewarder) and Yama (the punisher) are blended in him and that whoever disregards him will be visited with divine punishment.¹²

The Buddhistic *Digha Nikaya* also says that mankind was righteous at the beginning and that on sinfulness gradually creeping into human society men selected one who was the most handsome, gracious and powerful among them and made him king. He was called Mahasammata because he was selected by the great.¹³ From a passage in the Aitareya Brahmana it is seen that the Puro-

11 Manu, Chapter VII:

“ अराजके हि लोकेऽस्मिन् विद्रुते सर्वतो भयात् ।
 रक्षार्थमस्य सर्वस्य राजानमसृजत् प्रभुः ॥
 इन्द्रानिलयमार्काणामग्नेश्च वरुणस्य च ।
 चन्द्रवितेशयोश्चैव मात्रा निर्हृत्य शाश्वतीः ॥ ३-४
 बालोऽपि नावमन्तव्यो मनुष्य इति भूमिपः ।
 महती देवता ह्येषा नररूपेण तिष्ठति ॥ ” ८

12. Kautalya's Arthasastra, Trivandrum Edition, Vol. I, pages 63-64.

“ मात्स्यन्यायाभिभूताः प्रजा मनुं वैवस्वतं राजानं चक्रिरे.....इन्द्रय-
 मस्थानमेतद् राजानः प्रत्यक्षहेडप्रसादाः । तानवमन्यमानं दैवोऽपि दण्डः स्पृशति।
 तस्माद् राजानो नावमन्तव्या इति क्षुद्रकान् प्रतिषेधयेत् । ”

13. D. R. Bhandarkar's Carmichael Lectures (1918), page 121.

hita took a promise from the king to the following effect at the time of the Mahabhisheka (great coronation) ceremony: "Between the night I am born and the night I die whatever good I might have done, my heaven, my life and my progeny, may I be deprived of, if I oppress you."¹⁴ The ritual of the Rajasuya sacrifice described in the *Satapatha Brahmana* requires that the king should take the consent of the earth in the following words: "Mother Prthvi, Injure me not, nor I thee."¹⁵ The commentator interprets this passage as meaning that the king and the country must enter into friendly relations with each other like son and mother. Somadeva in his *Nitivakyamrta* states that the king should recite a hymn every day to the following effect:

"I am protecting this cow (earth) which bears the milk of the four oceans, whose calf is Dharma, whose tail is enterprise, whose hoofs are Varna and Asrama, whose ears are Kama and Artha, whose horns are diplomacy and valour, whose eyes are truth and purity, and whose face is law. I shall not be patient with any one who injures her."¹⁶

Sukra who also propounds the theory of the divine origin of kings is careful to explain at the same time that they only resemble Indra and other Gods in the performance of certain functions.¹⁷

14. Aitareya Brahmana, Book VIII, Chap. 4:

"यां च रात्रीमजायेऽहं यां च प्रेतास्मि ; तदुभयमन्तरेणेष्टापूर्तं मे लोकं सुकृतमायुः प्रजां वृञ्जीथा यदि ते द्रुह्येयम् ।"

15. Satapatha Brahmana, V, iv, 11-11.

16. Nitivakyamrta (Jainagranthamala edition), Page 256:

"चतुःपयोधिपयोधरां धर्मवत्सवतीमुत्साहबालधिं वर्णाश्रमखुरां कामार्थ-श्रवणां नयप्रतापविषाणां सत्यशौचचक्षुषं न्यायमुखीमिमां गां गोपायामि ; तमहं मनसापि न सहे योऽपराध्येत् तस्यै इतीमं मन्त्रं समाधिस्थो जपेत् ।"

17. Sukranitisara, I, 73-77:

"भागभाग् रक्षणे दक्षो यथेन्द्रो नृपतिस्तथा ।

वायुर्गन्धस्य सदसत्कर्मणः प्रेरको नृपः ॥

धर्मप्रवर्तकोऽधर्मनाशकस्तमसो रविः ।

दुष्कर्मदण्डको राजा यमः स्याद् दण्डकृद् यमः ॥

अग्निः शुचिस्तथा राजा रक्षार्थं सर्वभागभुक् ।

SOME LIMITATIONS ON HEREDITARY SOVEREIGNTY

Although the early rulers were elected, kingship in course of time became hereditary. But some vestiges of popular control are still visible in epic and puranic literature. The story of Prthu, one of the greatest of the early kings of India, as narrated in Srimadbhagavata and Mahabharata, is worthy of note in this connection. Vena, a descendant of Ananga referred to already, was invested with regal power by Bhrgu and other sages, according to Bhagavata, when there was no king to govern men, although their choice was contrary to the will of the people. Vena, who like Charles I of England was a firm believer in the divine right of kings, and an atheist to boot, began to oppress his subjects. The sages thought that Vena was preying on his people as a serpent fed with milk bites the person who nourishes it and told him: "Righteousness is of supreme worth and compasses the welfare of the subjects. Do not suffer it to run to waste. If righteousness is lost, the kingdom and wealth of a king come to nought. The king who protects his people from thieves, etc., and gathers due tribute attains good fortune both in this world and the next." Vena turned a deaf ear to their entreaties, whereupon he was slain by them and Prthu was created out of his arms.¹⁸

पुण्यत्यपां रसैः सर्वं वरुणः स्वधनैर्नृपः ॥
करैश्चन्द्रो ह्लादयति राजा स्वगुणकर्मभिः ।
कोशानां रक्षणे दक्षः स्यान्निधीनां धनाधिपः ॥ ”

These functions may be summed up as follows:— (1) Levying taxes and fully protecting the subjects (Indra); establishing virtue and eradicating vice (Vayu); spreading Dharma and dispelling Adharma (Surya); impartial administration of justice (Yama); realisation of revenue for public protection (fire); expenditure of revenue for the good of the public (Varuna); procuring means for the delight of the people (Chandra); and security and increase of national wealth (Kubera). (Vide Dr. Balakrishna's paper on the Evolution of the State in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. III, page 324). Sukra further proceeds to compare the king with a father (endowing virtue), mother (pardoning offences and nourishing), preceptor (teaching good lessons), brother (taking his share from the people's wealth), friend (confidant), etc.

18. Srimadbhagavata (Kumbakonam edition), IV, Chapt. 14 :

“ प्रकृत्यसम्मतं वेनमभ्यषिञ्चन् पतिं भुवः ।
अराजकभयादेव कृतो राजाऽतदर्हणः । २
ततोऽप्यासीद्भयं त्वद्य कथं स्यात् स्वस्ति देहिनाम् ? ॥ ९

Prthu, according to the Mahabharata, asked the sages what he was expected to do, and on those assembled advising him that he should fearlessly perform all righteous acts, he promised to do so and became king.¹⁹ Other instances of the election of kings are also mentioned in the Mahabharata. Thus Kuru was elected on account of his virtue.²⁰ Again Janamejaya, although he was only a child, was installed as king by the people, on the death of Parikshit.²¹ Ordinarily the crown descended from father to the eldest son ; but if that son was a minor, if a younger son had to be preferred to an elder, if an heir-apparent had to be ordained, or if an interregnum had to be avoided by the appointment of a temporary ruler, the express consent of the people was imperative. The same was the case in the event of a king's desire to abdicate. Thus Devapi, although he was the eldest son of Prātūpa, was prevented by the people from succeeding him, as he was a leper, and Santanu had to be preferred by the father, much against his natural inclina-

राजन्नसाध्वमात्येभ्यश्चोरादिभ्यः प्रजा नृपः ।
 रक्षन् यथाबलिं गृह्णन्निह प्रेत्य च मोदते ॥ १७
 हन्यतां हन्यतामेष पापः प्रकृतिदारुणः ।
 नायमर्हत्यसद्वृत्तो नरदेववरासनम् ।
 इत्थं व्यवसिता हन्तुमृषयो रूढमन्यवः ।
 निजधनुर्हुङ्कृतैर्वेनं हतमच्युतनिन्दया” ॥ ३२-३४

In Harivamsa (V. 10) it is stated that the sages taunted Vena with the remark that he was acting contrary to the promise made by him at the time of his coronation.

19. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 59 :

“ यन्मां भवन्तो वक्ष्यन्ति कार्यमर्थसमन्वितम् ।
 तदहं वै करिष्यामि नात्र कार्या विचारणा ॥ १०२
 नियतो यत्र धर्मो वै तमशङ्कः समाचर ।
 प्रियाप्रिये परित्यज्य समः सर्वेषु जन्तुषु ॥ ” १०३-४

20. Mahabharata, Adiparva, Chapter 94 :

“ राजन्नेतं प्रजाः सर्वा धर्मज्ञ इति वत्रिरे ।
 तस्य नाम्नाभिविख्यातं पृथिव्यां कुरुजाङ्गलम् ॥ ” ४९

21. Mahabharata, Adiparva, Chapter 44 :

“ नृपं शिशुं तस्य सुतं प्रचक्रिरे समेत्य सर्वे पुरवासिनो जनाः । ” ६

tions.²² Dasaratha proposed the anointment of Srirama as Yuvaraja after taking the people into his confidence and discussing the question with them in all its bearings.²³ Of nothing were our ancestors more afraid than anarchy and the consequent prevalence of the law of the fish. This fear has been portrayed by Valmiki in his own matchless way in Chapter 67 of the Ayodhyakanda. As soon as the sages came to know of Dasaratha's death, they approached Vasishtha and requested him to elect a king forthwith. Vasishtha, however, thought that nothing could be lost by awaiting the arrival of Bharata from Kekaya and despatched swift-footed messengers for fetching him therefrom.²⁴ Kautalya says

22. Mahabharata, Udyogaparva, Chapter 148 :

“ तं ब्राह्मणाश्च वृद्धाश्च पौरजानपदैः सह ।

सर्वे निवारयामासुर्देवापेरभिषेचनम् ॥ २२-३

23. Ramayana (Kumbakonam edition), Ayodhyakanda :

“ नानानगरवास्तव्यान् पृथग् जानपदानपि ।

समानिनाय मेदिन्याः प्रधानान् पृथिवीपतीन् ॥ १-४५

यदीदं मेऽनुरूपार्थं मया साधु सुमन्त्रितम् ।

भवन्तो मेऽनुमन्यन्तां कथं वा करवाण्यहम् ॥

यद्यप्येषा मम प्रीतिर्हितमन्यद् विचिन्त्यताम् ॥ II. १५-१६

अनेकवर्षसाहस्रो वृद्धस्त्वमसि पार्थिव ।

स रामं युवराजानमभिषिञ्चस्व पार्थिवम् ॥ II. २१

अद्य प्रकृतयः सर्वास्त्वामिच्छन्ति नराधिपम् ।

अतस्त्वां युवराजानमभिषेक्ष्यामि पुत्रक ॥ ” IV. १६

24. Ramayana, Ayodhyakanda, Chapter 67 :

“ एते द्विजाः सहामात्यैः पृथग् वाचमुदीरयन् ।

वसिष्ठमेवाभिमुखाः श्रेष्ठं राजपुरोहितम् ॥ ४

इक्ष्वाकूणामिहाद्यैव कश्चिद् राजा विधोयताम् ।

अराजकं हि नो राष्ट्रं न विनाशमवाप्नुयात् ॥ ८

यथा ह्यनुदका नद्यो यथा वाप्यतृणं वनम् ।

अगोपाला यथा गावस्तथा राष्ट्रमराजकम् ॥ ” २९

Sukranitisara contains the observation that like Indrani who is never a widow, subjects should never be without a king :

“ यथा न विधवेन्द्राणी सर्वदा तु तथा प्रजाः ॥ ” I. ९५

that when a king dies in the land of an enemy, the chief minister should instal his son if he is possessed of amiable qualities, and if such a son cannot be had, even a bad prince, princess or even a pregnant woman, and tell the other ministers: "This is your pledge. Look to the father of this (boy) as well as to your own valour and descent; this (boy) is merely a flag, and yourselves are the lords; pray, how shall I act?", and that if he does so the other ministers will surely accede to his wish.²⁵ When Dhrtarashtra eventually decided to settle down in the forest he took the consent of the people.²⁶

CHECKS ON DESPOTISM

Apart from these rights which include the tacit assent of the people even in cases of regular succession, there were several other ways in which the king's possible leaning towards the exercise of unbridled authority was kept in check. In the first place, the right to oust an unrighteous king was emphasised although seldom exercised in practice in India. In the Anusasana Parva of the Mahabharata it is stated that a king who tells his people that he is their protector, but who does not or is unable to protect them, should be killed by his subjects in a body like a

25. Kautalya's Arthashastra, Vol. II, page 221.

“ राजपुत्रमात्मसम्पन्नं राज्ये स्थापयेत् । सम्पन्नाभावे व्यसनिनं कुमारं
राजकन्यां गर्भिणीं देवीं वा पुरस्कृत्य महामात्रान् सन्निपात्य ब्रूयात्
—अयं वो निक्षेपः; पितरमस्यावेक्षध्वं सत्त्वाभिजनमात्मनश्च ; ध्वज-
मात्रोऽयं; भवन्त एव स्वामिनः; कथं वा क्रियतामिति ॥ ”

26. Mahabharata, Asramavasaparva, Chapter VIII :

“ ततः प्रतीतमनसो ब्राह्मणाः कुरुजाङ्गलाः ।
क्षत्रियाश्चैव वैश्याश्च शूद्राश्चैव समाययुः ॥
ततो निष्क्रम्य नृपतिस्तस्मादन्तःपुरात् तदा ।
दृष्ट्वा तं जनं सर्वं सर्वाश्च प्रकृतीस्तथा ॥ ११-१२
अरण्यगमने बुद्धिर्गान्धारीसहितस्य मे ।
व्यासस्यानुमते राज्ञस्तथा कुन्तीसुतस्य मे ॥
भवन्तोऽप्यनुजानन्तु मा च वो भूद् विचारणा ॥ १७-१८

rabid dog.²⁷ In the Santiparva we come across a passage to the effect that a king who follows the advice of bad ministers and becomes a destroyer of righteousness deserves to be killed by his subjects with all his family.²⁸ The appellation 'Naradeva', a God among men, applied only to virtuous kings. Sukra, in his Nitisara, has stated that, while a virtuous king is a part of the gods, a vicious king is a part of the devils.²⁹ Manu says that a king who does not afford protection but receives his tax will soon sink into hell and that he takes upon himself all the foulness of all his people.³⁰

KING AND SUBJECT

The most common name used for a king in Sanskrit is Rajan. The Mahabharata says that seeing Prthu his subjects exclaimed

27 Mahabharata, Anusasanaparva, Chapter 61 :

“ अहं वो रक्षितेत्युक्त्वा यो न रक्षति भूमिपः ।
स संहत्य निहन्तव्यः श्रेव सोन्माद् आतुरः ॥ ” ३३

28. Mahabharata, Santiparva, Chapter 92 :

“ असत्पापिष्ठसचिवो वध्यो लोकस्य धर्महा ।
सहैव परिवारेण क्षिप्रमेवावसीदति ॥ ९

An unrighteous king need not be obeyed (Ibid., 96).

अथ चेच्छ्रयेदेनां मर्यादां क्षत्रियब्रुवः ।
असङ्ख्येयस्तदूर्ध्वं स्यादनादेयश्च संसदि ॥ ” ९-१०

29 Sukranitisara, I. 70 :

“ यो हि धर्मपरो राजा देवांशोऽन्यश्च रक्षसाम् ।
अंशभूतो धर्मलोपी प्रजापीडाकरो भवेत् ॥

The Mahabharata has a similar passage in Udyogaparva, Chapter 131 :

“ राजा चरति चेद्धर्मं देवत्वायैव कल्पते ।
स चेद्धर्मं चरति नरकायैव गच्छति ॥ ” १३

30. Manu, VIII. 307-08 :

“ योऽरक्षन् बलिमादत्ते करं शुल्कं च पार्थिवः ।
प्रतिभागं च दण्डं च स सद्यो नरकं व्रजेत् ॥
अरक्षितारं राजानं बलिषड्भागहारिणम् ।
तमाहुः सर्वलोकस्य समग्रमलहारकम् ॥ ”

“ we love him ”, and on account of their loving attachment he was called Rajan.³¹ Kalidasa expresses the same idea in *Raghuvamsa* when he states that Raghu’s appellation of Rajan became possessed of meaning when he made himself lovable to his subjects.³² If a king without doing violence to the dictates of righteousness does what is good to all his subjects he stands as firm as a rock,³³ and everybody thinks of him : “ He is mine ”. Manu says that he should behave towards his subjects as a father to his children.³⁴ Kalidasa expands this idea in *Raghuvamsa* when he says that Dilipa was the real father of his people because he led them along the path of righteousness, protecting and feeding them.³⁵ It is also stated in the Mahabharata that he is the best of kings in whose realm every subject moves fearlessly as a son in the house of his father.³⁶ From the constant comparison instituted between the

31. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 29 :

“ पृथु वैन्यं प्रजा दृष्ट्वा रक्ता स्मेति यद्ब्रुवन् ।
ततो राजेति नामास्य अनुरागादजायत ॥ ” १३९

The idea is repeated in Santi, Chapter 59, with reference to the same king :

“ रञ्जिताश्च प्रजाः सर्वास्तेन राजेति शब्दये । ” १२५

32. *Raghuvamsa*, IV :

“ यथा प्रह्लादनाच्चन्द्रः प्रतापात् तपनो यथा ।
तथैव सोऽभूदन्वर्थो राजा प्रकृतिरञ्जनात् ॥ ” १२

33. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 120 :

“ धर्माणामविरोधेन सर्वेषां प्रियमाचरेत् ।
ममायमिति राजा यः स पर्वत इवाचलः ॥ ” २५

34. *Manusmṛti* (Nirayagasara edition), Chapter VII, 80 :

‘ वर्तेत पितृवन्तृषु ’

35. *Raghuvamsa* :

“ प्रजानां विनयाधानाद् रक्षणाद् भरणादपि ।
स पिता पितरस्तासां केवलं जन्महेतवः ॥ १-२४

36. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 57 :

“ पुत्रा इव पितुर्गेहे विषये यस्य मानवाः ।
निर्भया विचरिष्यन्ति स राजा राजसत्तमः ॥ ” ३३

Kamandaka says that the king protects his people while the people cause him to thrive, and that the former is more important than the latter, since

king and a father in ancient works, some scholars have come to the hasty and unwarranted conclusion that his position was that of a benevolent despot. This is by no means correct. The actual conception was that the king should live for his subjects and not for himself. It is stated in the Markandeyapurana that the prince was entitled to enjoy himself only up to the moment when the sacred abhisheka water fell on his head.³⁷ How the king should conduct himself thereafter is well explained in the Mahabharata by the observation that just as a mother who, even not caring for the objects which she likes best, seeks the well-being of her child alone, so the king should sacrifice what he loves best for securing the well-being of his subjects.³⁸ The same idea is repeated in the Agnipurana.³⁹ In the Mahabharata it is stated that everywhere all the people from Brahmans to swains were more attached to Yudhishtira than to their own parents.⁴⁰ Kautalya says: "In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as

if the former were to disappear, the latter even if it existed would be an evil :

“ प्रजां संरक्षति नृपः सा वर्धयति पार्थिवम् ।
वर्धनाद् रक्षणं श्रेयस्तन्नाशेऽन्यत् सदप्यसत् ॥ ” १-१४

37. Markandeyapurana (Calcutta edition), Chapter 130 :

“ तावत् सुखं भूपतिर्जैर्भोगं प्राप्यते नृप ! ।
अभिषेकजलं यावन्न मूर्ध्नि विनिपात्यते ॥ ” २७

38. Mahabharata, Santi, 56 :

“ यथा हि गर्भिणी हित्वा स्वं प्रियं मनसाऽनुगम् ।
गर्भस्य हितमाधत्ते तथा राजाप्यसंशयम् ॥
वर्तितव्यं कुरुश्रेष्ठ सदा धर्मानुवर्तिना ।
स्वं प्रियं तु परित्यज्य यद्यल्लोकहितं भवेत् ॥ ” ४५-६

39. Agnipurana (Calcutta edition), Chapter 222 :

“ नित्यं राज्ञा तथा भाव्यं गर्भिणी सहर्धर्भिणी ।
यथा स्वं सुखमुत्सृज्य गर्भस्य सुखमावहेत् ॥ ” ८

40. Mahabharata, Sabha, Chapter 13 :

“ यत्र राजन् दश दिशः पितृतो मातृतस्तथा ।
अनुरक्ताः प्रजा आसन्नागोपाला द्विजातयः ॥ ” १८

good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.”⁴¹ In a touching scene in the Asramavasaparva of the Mahabharata, Dhrtarashtra on the eve of his departure for the forest informs the people assembled as follows. “I make over to you this Yudhishtira as a pledge ; I entrust you also as a pledge to Yudhishtira.”⁴² Elsewhere in the same work it is stated that the king is the best body of his subjects and the subjects the best body of their king.⁴³ The eternal duty of the king is to make his subjects happy.⁴⁴ If he performs the duty of protecting his subjects well no other penance or sacrifice is needed for him.⁴⁵ Manu says that a king who protects his subjects righteously and punishes the

41. Kautalya's Arthasastra, Vol. I, page 97 :

“ प्रजासुखे सुखं राज्ञः प्रजानां च हिते हितम् ।
नात्मप्रियं हितं राज्ञः प्रजानां तु प्रियं हितम् ॥ ”

42. Mahabharata, Asramavasa, Chapter 9 :

“ अवश्यमेव कर्तव्यमिति कृत्वा ब्रवीमि वः ।
एष न्यासो मया दत्तः सर्वेषां वो युधिष्ठिरः ॥
भवन्तोऽप्यस्य वीरस्य न्यासभूताः कृता मया । ” १३

43. Mahabharata, Santi 97 :

“ राजा प्रजानां प्रथमं शरीरं
प्रजाश्च राज्ञोऽप्रतिमं शरीरम् । ” ५९

In the Agnipurana, Chapter 220, it is stated that the king should do such acts as are liked by his subjects and desist from such acts as are likely to cause displeasure to them :

“ अनुरागकरं कर्म चरेज्जह्याद् विरागजम् ।
जनानुरागया लक्ष्म्या राजा स्याज्जनरञ्जनात् ॥ ” २४

Again it is emphasised in Chapter 224 of the same work that a king's kingship, kingdom and treasury are born of his people's love :

“ जनानुरागप्रभवा राज्ञो राज्यमहीश्रियः । ” ३४

44. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 57 :

“ लोकरञ्जनमेवात्र राज्ञां धर्मः सनातनः । ” ११

45. Ibid., Chapter 69 :

“ किं तस्य तपसा राज्ञः किं च तस्याध्वरैरपि ? ।
सुपालितप्रजो यः स्यात् सर्वधर्मविदेव सः ॥ ” ७३

wicked duly offers sacrifices at which lakhs are given as fees.⁴⁶ Kautalya expresses the same idea when he says : “ The religious vow of a king is his readiness for action ; the discharge of duties is the performance of his sacrifice ; and equal treatment of all is his offer of fee and ablution at consecration.⁴⁷ Somadeva also points out that the sacrifice to be performed by a king is the protection of his subjects and not the killing of animals (which is incidental to ordinary sacrifices) .⁴⁸

PROTECTION

“ Paripalanam ” or all-round protection is an expression embracing a very wide meaning. It is not merely the preservation of law and order. It is the administration of the State in such a degree of perfection as to enable the king and every one of his subjects to pursue undisturbed the paths of Dharma, Artha and Kama. The king himself is to be the exemplar of his subjects, since whatever Dharma is respected by him will be respected everywhere and since the subjects will generally like to move only along the path trodden by him.⁴⁹ Righteousness should therefore

46. Manu, VIII :

“ रक्षन् धर्मेण भूतानि राजा वध्यांश्च घातयन् ।
यजतेऽहरहर्यज्ञैः सहस्रशतदक्षिणैः ॥ ” ३०६

47. Kautalya's Arthashastra, Vol. I, page 97 :

“ राज्ञो हि व्रतमुत्थानं यज्ञः कार्यानुशासनम् ।
दक्षिणा वृत्तिसाम्यं च दीक्षितस्याभिषेचनम् ॥ ”

48. Nitivakyamrta, page 273 :

“ प्रजापालनं हि राज्ञो यज्ञो न पुनर्भूतानामालम्भः । ”

49. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 75 :

“ राज्ञा हि पूजितो धर्मस्ततः सर्वत्र पूज्यते ।
यद्यदाचरते राजा तत् प्रजानां हि रोचते ॥ ” ४

Kamandaka says that if a king discharges his duty justly he procures “ Trivarga ” for both himself and his subjects, but kills it otherwise :

“ न्यायप्रवृत्तो नृपतिरात्मानमथ च प्रजाः ।
त्रिवर्गेणोपसन्धत्ते निहन्ति ध्रुवमन्यथा ॥ ” I. १५

In Ramayana, Ayodhyakanda, Chapter 109, Srirama says :

“ यद्वृत्ताः सन्ति राजानस्तद्वृत्ताः सन्ति हि प्रजाः । ” ९

be first practised by him before he enforces it on his subjects. The king, according to the Mahabharata, was created in order that righteousness might emanate from him, and that if he was devoid of it, he should be called a Vrshala.⁵⁰ One becomes a king for advancing the cause of Dharma and not for acting capriciously. All creatures depend on Dharma, and Dharma depends on the king. He is therefore the true king who maintains Dharma.⁵¹ The question what is Dharma has been clearly answered in Chapter 109 of Santiparva. Dharma is what is conducive to the advancement of everybody, what prevents injury to everybody, and what is capable of upholding everybody. It need not be precisely what is stated in the Vedas, because everything has not been ordained in them.⁵²

50. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 90 .

“ उभौ लोकावभिप्रेक्ष्य राजानमृषयः स्वयम् ।
 असृजन् सुमहद् भूतमथ धर्मो भविष्यति ॥
 यस्मिन् धर्मो विराजेत तं राजानं प्रचक्षते ।
 यस्मिन् विलीयते धर्मस्तं देवा वृषलं विदुः ॥
 वृषो हि भगवान् धर्मो यस्तस्य कुरुते ह्यलम् ।
 वृषलं तं विदुर्देवास्तस्माद्धर्मं विवर्धयेत् ॥ ” १४-१६

Kamandaka says that the king should first practise self-content. He should then impose it on his ministers, next on his servants, next on his children, and lastly on his subjects :

“ आत्मानं प्रथमं राजा विनयेनोपपादयेत् ।
 ततोऽमात्यांस्ततो भृत्यांस्ततः पुत्रांस्ततः प्रजाः ॥ ” I. २३

This verse is repeated by Sukra (I. 93), who further says that a king's precept without practice is useless :

“ परोपदेशकुशलः केवलो न भवेन्नृपः । ”

51. Ibid :

“ धर्माय राजा भवति न कामकरणाय तु ।
 धर्मे तिष्ठन्ति भूतानि धर्मो राजनि तिष्ठति ।
 तं राजा साधु यः शास्ति स राजा पृथिवीपतिः ॥ ” ३-५

52. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 109 :

“ प्रभवार्थाय भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम् ।
 यः स्यात् प्रभवसंयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

ADMINISTRATION

From the earliest days of which we have any record, it seems obvious that the Indian village organization was always powerful and generally self-governing ; and, like the City States of Greece and of medieval Italy, these villages in India had often their own military equipment and officers. At the same time, it is equally clear that, just as obtained till recently under the Soviet Constitution and is easily discernible under cover of the authoritarian constitutions of Italy and Germany, an oligarchy or aristocracy under different forms, seemed always to force itself to the front in ancient and medieval India. This is not surprising for even in the highly individualistic polity of the United States of America the aristocracy of wealth and of commerce takes the place of the aristocracy of birth and military prowess in Egypt, Greece and Rome. Thus, even in the case of the many republics whose names and achievements are set out in the Vedic chronicles under the names of Vratas, Ganas and so forth, there was observable this system of elder statesmen and noblemen.

In certain places we find mention not only of ministers or Amatyas and Sachivas, but ministers are sometimes even called Rajakartarah in the Buddhistic texts as having been vested with power to elect a new king. The Mahabharata mentions in the Santiparva a list of 54 members, of a variety of Legislative Council, selected on a caste basis, in which there was less representation of the Brahmins and the warrior castes than that of the commercial men ; four Brahmins, eighteen Kshatriyas, twenty-one Vaisyas, three Sudras and eight ministers composed the body. The net result was that the warrior classes and the commercial classes if they did or could combine had the legislative authority and it is noticeable

धारणाद् धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मेण विधृताः प्रजाः ।

यः स्याद्धारणसंयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

श्रुतिर्धर्म इति ह्येके नेत्याहुरपरे जनाः ।

नच तत् प्रत्यसूयामो नहि सर्वं विधीयते ॥ ” १०-१३

Karnaparva (Chapter 69) also contains a passage to the effect that Dharma is so called because it upholds the people.

“ धारणाद्धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः । ”

The Brhadaranyakopanishad (I. iv) states distinctly that Dharma is the king of kings and that there is nothing higher than Dharma :

“ तदेतत् क्षत्रस्य क्षत्रं यद् धर्मस्तस्माद् धर्मात् परं नास्ति । ” १४

that those at the top and the bottom of the social ladder namely the Brahmins and the Sudras had very small representation. In actual fact we learn that the warriors and traders served as a mutual counterpoise. The Executive Council or the inner council consisted of eight Amatyas whose functions and portfolios are described in the Ayodhyakanda of the Ramayana and the Santiparva of the Mahabharata.

When we pass away from the earliest times, monarchy became more and more civil in character and was neither based on the patriarchal theory nor on military primacy. Whatever the effect of such a teaching was and however little the teaching was followed in ancient times (or in the modern days of disarmament conferences), we find to our astonishment that Brhaspati has laid down that a king should, as far as possible, refrain from war for annexing territories. Moreover, consultation of popular opinion was a live feature of the post-Vedic kingship. At the time of the coronation, subjects were consulted as well as feudatory chiefs and princes.⁵³ Kingship therefore partook in those days the nature of a quasi-constitutional monarchy. In the south of India, we have a fairly complete account of administration by the kings in the Chola days and they, like their contemporaries in the north, ruled through an elaborate secretariat organisation with eight heads of departments; but the main feature of governments in the south was the very healthy development and organisation of village assemblies which were the nuclei of governmental activity. These assemblies had both consultative and executive functions and were in charge of temples and charities, collected the taxes, managed the tanks and were in charge even of currency operations. They worked through committees which were of an elective character and it is remarkable that not only do their rules lay down knowledge of business and honesty as requisite for membership but they also insist on property qualification and emphasise that the relatives of dishonest officers were to be disqualified from membership. These "Nadus" were aggregated in Kottams and Mandalams which became provinces in the Chola empire.

That bureaucracy throughout the ages develops along similar lines is evident from the elaborate rules as to privilege leave con-

53. Ramayana, Ayodhyakanda, 1, 45 :

“ नानानगरवास्तव्यान् पृथग् जानपदानपि । ”

tained in the Sukranitisara and as to pensions and compassionate allowances in the case of premature death of officers. Indian diplomacy, it may be added, did not overlook cypher writing and codes and largely used espionage as described elaborately by Kautalya.

TAXATION

Sukra says that tax is the price for protection paid by the subjects to the king who is only their servant, though he appears to be their lord.⁵⁴ The king has to openly admit this position when he addresses his army on the eve of a battle, as may be seen from an observation of Kautalya when he says: "I am a paid servant like yourselves; this country is to be enjoyed by me together with you; you have to strike the enemy specified by me."⁵⁵ Markandeyapurana also contains a passage to the effect that the tax received by a king is the salary drawn by him for protecting his subjects.⁵⁶ Manu says that the king derives not only one-sixth of the tax in grain but also of the righteousness and unrighteousness of his subjects.⁵⁷

In order that the subjects might pursue their occupations peacefully and earn a sufficient competence for pursuing the other two Purusharthas included in Trivarga, it was imperative that the tax imposed on them should not be heavy. In the Mahabharata it is observed: "A king should milk his kingdom

54. Sukranitisara, I. 188 :

“ स्वभागभृत्या दास्यत्वे प्रजानां च नृपः कृतः ।
ब्रह्मणा स्वामिरूपस्तु पालनार्थं हि सर्वदा ॥ ”

55. Kautalya's Arthashastra, Vol. III, Page 115 :

“ तुल्यवेतनोऽस्मि, भवद्भिः सहभोग्यमिदं राज्यं ; मयाभिहितः
परोऽभिहन्तव्यः । ”

56. Markandeyapurana, Chapter 69 :

“ त्वं रक्षिता नो नृपते ! षड्भागादानवेतनः ।
धर्मस्य तेन निश्चिन्ताः स्वपन्ति मनुजा निशि ॥ ” २४

57. Manu VIII, 304 :

“ सर्वतो धर्मषड्भागो राज्ञो भवति रक्षतः ।
अधर्मादपि षड्भागो भवत्यस्य ह्यरक्षतः ॥ ”

like a bee collecting honey from trees. He should act like the cow-herd who takes milk from a cow without injuring her udder and without starving the calf. He should, like the leech, take in the blood mildly. He should treat his subjects like a tigress carrying her cubs, touching them with her teeth but never biting them. He should behave like a mouse which although it has sharp and pointed teeth nibbles at the feet of sleeping animals in such a manner as to keep them unaware of it.”⁵⁸ Again it is laid down that the tax should vary according to the capacity of the tax-payer. No tax should be levied without determining the outturn and the amount of labour needed for production, because no one can be expected to work without incentive.

SOME DUTIES OF THE KING

The Kachchit Sargas of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana contain numerous suggestive allusions to the duties of kings. Thus in the Mahabharata, Narada asks Yudhishtira whether agriculturists were being kept away, whether all men were not being allowed to approach the king without fear as if he were their father and mother, whether the cultivators were not contented, whether for purposes of irrigation large tanks filled with water were not being maintained at convenient distances, whether loans of seed-grain were not being advanced to agriculturists, whether officers in charge of the municipal and military departments, as also those of trade, agriculture and justice, were not working in unison, and whether villages were not being converted into towns and hamlets into villages.⁵⁹

58. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 88 :

“ मधुदोहं दुहेद् राष्ट्रं भ्रमरा इव पादपम् ।
वत्सापेक्षी दुहेच्चैव स्तनांश्च न निकुट्टयेत् ॥
जलौकावत् पिबेद् राष्ट्रं मृदुनैव नराधिपः ।
व्याघ्रीव च हरेत् पुत्रान् सन्दशेन्न च पीडयेत् ॥
यथा शल्यकवानाखुः पदं धूनयते सदा ।
अतीक्षणेनाभ्युपायेन तथा राष्ट्रं समापिबेत् ॥ ” ४-६

59. Mahabharata, Sabhaparva, Chapter V :

“ कच्चिदर्थेन वा धर्मं धर्मेणार्थमथापि वा ।
उभौ वा प्रीतिसारेण न कामेन प्रबाधसे ? ॥ १९

Kautalya mentions Utsavas and Samajas as popular institutions to be encouraged by the king.⁶⁰

DANDA OR PUNISHMENT

The protection of subjects necessarily involves, as a correlative, the punishment of the wicked. There were very few cases of theft in ancient India. That is due to the fact that thieves were brought to book and the stolen property recovered promptly. Otherwise the king had to make good the value of that property from the State coffers. Even so late a writer as Vijnanesvara emphasised this duty.⁶¹

Ibn Battuta, the well-known Muhammadan traveller, referring to the conditions prevailing in Kerala in the second quarter of the 14th century, writes: "On this road which, as we have said, extends for a two months' march, there is not a foot of ground but

कच्चित् त्वमेव सर्वस्याः पृथिव्याः पृथिवीपते ! ।
 समश्चानभिश्ङ्क्यश्च यथा माता यथा पिता ? ॥ ५६
 कच्चिन्न चोरैर्लुब्धैर्वा कुमारैः स्त्रीबलेन वा ।
 त्वया वा पीड्यते राष्ट्रं? कच्चित् तुष्टाः कृषीवलाः? ॥
 कच्चिद् राष्ट्रे तटागानि पूर्णानि च बृहन्ति च ।
 भागशो विनिविष्टानि ? न कृषिर्देवमातृका ? ॥
 कच्चिन्न बीजं भक्तं च कर्षकस्यावसीदति ।
 पादिकं च शतं वृद्ध्या ददास्युणमनुग्रहम् ?
 कच्चिच्छूराः कृतप्रज्ञाः पञ्च पञ्चस्वनुष्ठिताः ।
 क्षेमं कुर्वन्ति संहत्य राजन् जनपदे तव ?
 कच्चिन्नगरगुप्त्यर्थं ग्रामा नगरवत् कृताः ।
 ग्रामवच्च कृता घोषास्ते च सर्वे त्वदर्पणाः ॥ ” ७६-८१

60 “ यात्रासमाजोत्सवप्रवहणानि च दशवर्गिकाधिष्ठितानि गच्छेत् । ”

Kaut. I. p. 108 :

61 “यदा त्वन्यतोऽपहृतं द्रव्यं दापयितुं न शक्नोति तदा स्वकोशादेव राजा दद्यात् । चोरहृतमवजित्य यथास्थानं गमयेत्, स्वकोशाद् वा दद्यादिति गौतमस्मरणात् । ”

is cultivated. . . . I have never seen a safer road than this, for they put to death anyone who steals a single nut, and if any fruit falls no one picks it up but the owner. Indeed we sometimes met infidels during the night on this road, and when they saw us they stood aside to let us pass. . . . In the Mulaybar (Malabar) lands, there are twelve infidel sultans ; some of them strong with armies numbering fifty thousand men and others weak with armies of three thousand. Yet there is no discord whatever between them, and the strong does not desire to seize the possessions of the weak. At the boundary of the territories of each Ruler there is a wooden gateway on which is engraved the name of the ruler whose territories begin at that point. This is called the " Gate of Security " of such and such a prince." 62

A king should neither be too lenient nor too severe, but administer such punishment as may be deemed fit and proper. Kautalya says : " Whosoever imposes severe punishment becomes repulsive to the people while he who imposes mild punishment becomes contemptible. But whoever imposes punishment as deserved will be respected." 63 In the Mahabharata it is stated : " Although the most impregnable fortress of a king is the love of his subjects and it is therefore essential that he should be merciful, if he is always forgiving, the lowest of men may guide him as a mahout an elephant. Nor should he be ferocious. He should be like the vernal sun, neither too hot nor too cold." 64

This aphorism is very like what a medieval monarch demanded of a king, namely that he should not be too salty lest he be spit out

62. Ibn Battuta's Travels, translated by H. A. R. Gibb, p. 232.

63. Kautalya, Vol. I, page 33 :

“ तीक्ष्णदण्डो हि भूतानामुद्वेजनीयः ; मृदुदण्डः परिभूयते ; यथार्हदण्डः पूज्यः । ”

64. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 56 :

“ दुर्गेषु च महाराज षट्सु ये शास्त्रनिश्चिताः ।
सर्वदुर्गेषु मन्यन्ते नरदुर्गं सुदुस्तरम् ॥ ३५
क्षममाणं नृपं नित्यं नीचः परिभवेज्जनः ।
हस्तियन्ता गजस्येव शिर एवारुरुक्षति ॥
तस्मान्नैव मृदुर्नित्यं तीक्ष्णो नैव भवेन्नृपः ।
वासन्तार्कं इव श्रीमान् न शीतो न च घर्मदः ॥ ३९-४०

nor too sweet lest he be swallowed. Markandeyapurana says that the Kshatriyas take up arms in order that the oppressed may not weep or wail.⁶⁵ This part of the subject may well be concluded with the following amusing observation made in the Mahabharata, viz., "These six persons should be abandoned like a leaky boat on the sea, viz., a teacher who does not teach, a priest who does not study the scriptures, a king who does not afford protection, a wife who utters disagreeable words, a cowherd who wishes to live in a village and a barber who desires to live in a forest."⁶⁶

KING AND MINISTERS

The activities of the State covered a very wide range. As observed by Dr. Beni Prasad: "While there was much which had been fashioned by other associations and on which the State could only set its *imprimatur*, the seal of its force, there was much else which it essayed to perform by means of its own resources. From time to time it elected to propagate Dharma, to inculcate and enforce morality, to maintain or improve the social order, to encourage learning, education and art, to subsidise various academies, to regulate industry and commerce, to foster agriculture, to relieve the distress from famine and other calamities, to establish hospitals, rest houses, charity halls, etc. All this it essayed to do in addition to its primary functions of defence, order and justice."⁶⁷ The seven constituent elements of the State were (i) the king (Svami), (ii) the ministers (Amatyas), (iii) allies (Suhrat), (iv) treasure (Kosa), (v) territory (Rashtra),

65. Markandeyapurana, Chapter 114 :

“ क्षत्रियैर्घार्यते शस्त्रं नार्तशब्दो भवेदिति । ” ३६

Kalidasa expresses the same idea in Abhignasakuntala, Act 1 :

“ आर्तत्राणाय वः शस्त्रं न प्रहर्तुमनागसि । ” १०

66. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 57 :

“ षडेतान् पुरुषो जह्याद् भिन्नां नावमिवार्णवे ।

अप्रवक्तारमाचार्यमनधीयानमृत्विजम् ॥

अरक्षितारं राजानं भार्यो चाप्रियवादिनीम् ।

ग्रामकामं च गोपालं वनकामं च नापितम् ॥ ”

67. The State in Ancient India, page 505.

(vi) fortress (Durga) and army (Bala).⁶⁸ The ministers form an important and indispensable part of this constitution. The Mahabharata says that it is impossible for a king to look after all his duties and that hence he should devolve his duties on his ministers.⁶⁹ Kautalya also points out : "Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence a king should employ ministers and hear their opinion."⁷⁰ Kautalya draws a distinction between Amatyas (Officers) and Mantrins (Councillors). Manu says that the king may appoint seven or eight ministers who are learned in the sciences, heroes skilled in the use of arms, descended from noble families and well-trying. It is impossible for one man to discharge even an easy duty singly and much less the duties relating to kingship. The king should there-

68. Manu varies the list slightly and substitutes capital (pura) for fortress, but really there is no difference, since what he means is a town enclosed by a fortress, as explained by Kullukabhata :

“ स्वाम्यमात्यौ पुरं राष्ट्र* कोशदण्डौ सुहृत् तथा ।
सप्त प्रकृतयो ह्येताः सप्ताङ्गं राज्यमुच्यते ॥ ” XI. २९४

Kulluka :

“ पुरं राज्ञः कृतदुर्गनिवासनगरं.....
दण्डो हस्त्यश्वरथपादादात्म । ”

Their interconnection is explained by Sukra in a beautiful passage which means that the king is the root of the State, the councillors are the trunks, the commanders are the branches, the troops are the leaves and flowers, the subjects are the fruits and the lands are the seeds :

(Sukranitisara, v. 12).

“ राज्यवृक्षस्य नृपतिर्मूलं ; स्कन्धाश्च मन्त्रिणः ।
शाखाः सेनाधिपाः ; सेनाः पल्लवाः कुसुमानि च ।
प्रजाः फलानि ; भूभागा बीजं ; भूमिः प्रकल्पिता ॥ ”

69. Mahabharata, Santi, 93 :

“ नैतान्येकेन शक्यानि सातत्येनानुवीक्षितुम् ।
तेषु सर्वं प्रतिष्ठाप्य राजा भुङ्क्ते चिरं महीम् ॥ ” २६

70. Kautalya's Arthasastra, Vol. I, page 40 :

सहायसाध्यं राजत्वं ; चक्रमेकं न वर्तते ; ।
कुर्वीत सचिवांस्तस्मात् तेषां च शृणुयान्मतम् ”

fore hold deliberations with his ministers, ascertain each minister's opinion separately as also their conjoint opinion and then decide upon the course that may be the best. He should also appoint as many other officers as may be needed for the due transaction of business and see that they are honest, wise, firm, etc.⁷¹ Numerous other qualifications for ministers are enumerated in the Mahabharata and the Agnipurana.⁷² The Mahabharata says that a king who is angry at the advice tendered by a well-wisher, merely because his views are not to his taste, and who does not follow the conduct of the wise, deviates from the duty of a Kshatriya.⁷³ Kautilya states that a cabinet of ministers may consist of as many members as the needs of a kingdom call for, that they should start what is not begun, complete what is commenced, improve upon what has been accomplished, and enforce strict obedience to orders. He further observes that one thousand sages form Indra's cabinet of ministers and hence he is called Sahasraksha although he has

71. Manu, VII :

मौलान् शास्त्रविदः शूरान् लब्धलक्षान् कुलोद्भवान् ।
 सचिवान् सप्त चाष्टौ वा प्रकुर्वीत परीक्षितान् ॥
 अपि यत् सुकरं कर्म तदप्येकेन दुष्करम् ; ।
 विशेषतोऽसहायेन; किन्तु राज्यं महोदयम् ? ॥ ५४-५५
 तैः सार्धं चिन्तयेन्नित्यं.....
 तेषां स्वं स्वमभिप्रायमुपलभ्य पृथक् पृथक् ।
 समस्तानां च कार्येषु विदध्याद्धितमात्मनः ॥ ५७
 अन्यानपि प्रकुर्वीत शुचीन् प्राज्ञानवस्थितान् ।
 सम्यगर्थसमाहर्तुनमात्यान् सुपरीक्षितान् ॥ ” ६०

72. Agnipurana, Chapter 238.

73. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 93 :

“ योऽर्थकामस्य वचनं प्रातिकूल्यान्न मृष्यते ।
 शृणोति प्रातिकूल्यानि सर्वदा विमना इव ॥
 अग्राम्यचरितां वृत्तिं यो न सेवेत सर्वदा ।
 जितानामजितानां च क्षत्रधर्मादपैति सः ॥ ” २९-३०

only two eyes.⁷⁴ Somadeva insists on ministers giving correct advice to kings although for the time being such advice may be distasteful to them. His commentator quotes a Smrtikara, Bhaguri, who is of the opinion that the minister who represents what ought to be done as untruth and what ought not to be done as truth is his enemy, though he puts on a minister's appearance. He asks : " When a child refuses to drink milk, are not slaps given on its cheek ? " ⁷⁵ The king should not have one or even two ministers ; three should be the lowest number of members of his cabinet.⁷⁶ At the same time he should himself look into matters affecting his subjects.⁷⁷ Somadeva advises the king not to act against the advice of his ministers.⁷⁸ He should not create a situa-

74. Kautalya's Arthasastra, Vol. I, page 76 :

“ यथासामर्थ्यमिति कौटल्यः.....अकृतारम्भमारब्धानुष्ठानमनु-
ष्ठितविशेषं नियोगसम्पदं च कर्मणां कुर्युः.....इन्द्रस्य हि मन्त्रिपरिषद-
षीणां सहस्रं ; स तच्चक्षुः ; तस्मादिमं द्यक्षं सहस्राक्षमाहुः । ”

75. Nitivakyamrta, page 123 :

“ स मन्त्री शत्रुर्यो नृपेच्छयाऽकार्यमपि कार्यरूपतयानुशास्ति । ”

Bhaguri : (Ibid., page 123)

“ अकृत्यं सत्यरूपं च सत्यं चाकृत्यसंज्ञितम् ।

निवेदयति भूपस्य स वैरी मन्त्रिरूपधृक् ॥ ”

“ वरं स्वामिनो दुःखं ; न पुनरकार्योपदेशेन तद्विनाशः पीयूषमपिबतो
बालस्य किं न क्रियते कपोलहननम् ? । ”

76. Ibid., page 127 :

‘ एको मन्त्री न कर्तव्यः ; एको हि मन्त्री निरवग्रहश्चरति मुह्यति च
कार्येषु कृच्छ्रेषु । द्वावपि मन्त्रिणौ न कार्यौ ; द्वौ मन्त्रिणौ संहतौ राज्यं विनाशो
यतः ॥ ’

77. Ibid., page 182.

“ प्रजाकार्यं स्वयमेव पश्येत् । ”

78. Ibid., page 124 :

“ स खलु नो राजा यो मन्त्रिणोऽतिक्रम्य वर्तेत । ”

The commentator quotes a verse from the Smrtikara Bharadvaja, in sup-
port of this position :

“ यो राजा मन्त्रिणां वाक्यं न करोति हितैषिणाम् ।

न स तिष्ठेच्चिरं राज्ये पितृपैतामहेऽपिच ॥ ”

tion in which the country would rise against him, because, of all dangers to which he is liable, prakrtikopa or the anger of ministers, servants, etc., is the most formidable.⁷⁹ He should, says the Mahabharata, employ each of his officers in such work as he is fit to perform and act in unison with them, as the string of a musical instrument with its respective notes.⁸⁰

FEUDALISM

Even in the Vedic days there were gradations among the kings importing some kind of paramountcy or a feudal integration. The expressions Virat, Sarvabhauma and Samrat occurring in the Rgveda indicate this. But even more significant than these gradations or hierarchies is the mention of Svarat who, after having renounced the glories of conquest, was concentrated on peace and the consultation of peaceful activities. This thesis has been developed with great acumen by Mr. S. V. Venkatesvara in his *Indian Culture through the Ages* where he cites a passage : “ Ayam Indro raja ; ayam Indrodhirajah ; asau Indrah svarat.”⁸¹

The expressions “ Panchajanah ” and “ Saptajanah ” that occur in the Vedas are now taken to signify a combination of federation of peoples either monarchical or quasi-republican in character.

One of the most remarkable features apparent in the indigenous systems of administration was the recognition of the rights of conquered kings. After annexation it is laid down that local rights and usages should be respected. Samudragupta always openly proclaimed that whenever he conquered any territory, the defeated king was, after submission, restored to his place and power. Raghuvamsa, in fact, says that the king of Kalinga, who was defeated by Raghu, only lost his wealth but not his country.⁸²

79. Ibid : page 157 :

“ सर्वकोपेभ्यः प्रकृतिकोपो गरीयान् । ”

80. Mahabharata, Santi, Chap. 120.

“ अथ दृष्ट्वा नियुक्तानि स्वानुरूपेषु कर्मसु ।
सर्वोस्ताननुवर्तेत स्वरांस्त्रयीरिवायता ॥ ” २४

81. Taittiriya Samhita, II, 6.

82. Raghuvamsa, IV, 43 :

“ गृहीतप्रतिमुक्तस्य स धर्मविजयी नृपः ।
श्रियं महेन्द्रनाथस्य जहार न तु मेदिनीम् ॥ ”

The conception of a super-state or Empire loomed large even in Vedic times. According to the Gopatha Brahmana, one became a Rajan by performing the Rajasuya, Samrat the Vajapeya, Svarat the Asvamedha, Virat the Purushamedha, and Sarvarat the Sarvamedha sacrifice.⁸³ The ideal to be followed by Rajanyas as described in the Aitareya Brahmana is to win all victories, find all worlds, attain superiority (Sreshthata) pre-eminence (Pratishtha) and supremacy (Paramata) over all kings, achieve overlordship (Samrajya), paramount rule (Bhaujya), undivided rule (Svarajya), sovereignty (Vairajya), supreme authority (Parameshthya), kingship (Rajya), great kingship (Maharajya), and suzerainty (Adhipatya) encompassing all, and to be the ruler of all territory (Sarvabhauma), the sole single ruler (Ekarat) of the earth up to the limits of the ocean.⁸⁴ Sukra describes Samantas as those who derive a revenue of one to three lakhs of rupees, Mandalikas four to ten lakhs, Rajans ten to twenty lakhs, Maharajas twenty-one to fifty lakhs, Svarats fifty-one to one hundred lakhs, Samrats one to ten crores, Virats eleven to fifty crores and Sarvabhaumas above fifty-one crores.⁸⁵ Several rulers sometimes selected the most powerful among them as overlord and became subordinates to him, as when Sisupala became the commander-in-chief of the forces of Jarasandha, and Dantavakra and others became his vassals.⁸⁶ Sometimes new kingdoms were created for the

83. Mookerji's Hindu Civilisation, p. 98.

84. Aitareya Brahmana, Book VIII, Chapter 4 :

“ स य इच्छेदेवंवित् क्षत्रियोऽहं सर्वा जितीर्जयेयमहं सर्वान् लोकान् विन्देयम् ; अहं सर्वेषां राज्ञां श्रेष्ठ्यमतिष्ठां परमतां गच्छेयं साम्राज्यं भोज्यं स्वाराज्यं वैराज्यं पारमेष्ठ्यं राज्यं महाराज्यमाधिपत्यम् ; अहं समन्तपर्यायी स्यां सार्वभौमः सार्वायुष आन्तादा परार्धात् पृथिव्यै समुद्रपर्यन्ताया एकराडिति स न विचिकित्सेत् स ब्रूयात् ॥ ”

85. Sukranitisara, I, 184-86 :

“ सामन्तः स नृपः प्रोक्तो यावल्लक्षत्रयावधि ।
तदूर्ध्वं दशलक्षान्तो नृपो माण्डलिकः स्मृतः ॥
तदूर्ध्वं तु भवेद् राजा यावद् विंशतिलक्षकः ।
पञ्चाशलक्षपर्यन्तो महाराजः प्रकीर्तितः ॥
ततस्तु कोटिपर्यन्तः स्वराट् सम्राट् ततः परम् ॥ ”

86. Mahabharata, Sabha, Chapter 14.

sake of royal favourites as when Karna was made the king of Anga by Suyodhana.⁸⁷ During Digvijaya all that the conquering hero desired was that his suzerainty should be respected and there was no other kind of subjugation. There were also other grounds than valour on which a king was accepted as a suzerain of many. The Mahabharata says that the king Yauvanasvi became a Samrat by the remission of taxes, Bhagiratha by giving protection, Kartavirya by his austere life, Bharata by victory and Marutta by advancing the prosperity of his subjects, and that Srikrishna advised Yudhishtira that he should aim at Samrajya from not one, but all those points of view.⁸⁸ Sisupala himself went to Indraprastha to attend the Rajasuya of Yudhishtira not because he was really conquered by the Pandavas, but because he thought that Yudhishtira deserved that honour by reason of his righteousness.⁸⁹ The duties of a dependent king are thus enumerated in the Arthasastra: "He should behave like a servant to his master by serving the protector's occasional needs. Forts and other defensive works, celebration of marriages in his household, installation of the heir-apparent, purchase of horses, capture of elephants, construction of covert places for battle, marching against enemies and holding sports—all these he should undertake only with the permission of his protector On all occasions of worshipping God and offering prayers, he should cause the people to pray for the long life of his protector."⁹⁰

87. Ibid., Adiparva, Chapter 139

88. Ibid., Sabha, Chapter 15 :

“ हित्वा करान् यौवनाश्विः पालनाच्च भगीरथः ।
 कार्तवीर्यस्तपोवीर्याद् बलान्तु भरतो विभुः ॥
 ऋद्ध्य मरुतस्तान् पञ्च सम्राजस्त्वनुशुश्रुमः ।
 साम्राज्यमिच्छतस्ते तु सर्वाकारं युधिष्ठिर ॥ ” १५-१६

89 Ibid., Chapter 37 :

वयं तु न भयादस्य कौन्तेयस्य महात्मनः ।
 प्रयच्छामः करान् सर्वे न लोभान्न च सान्त्वनात् ॥
 अस्य धर्मप्रवृत्तस्य पार्थिवत्वं चिकीर्षितः ।
 करानस्मै प्रयच्छामः सोऽयमस्मान्न मन्यते ॥ ” १९-२०

90. Kautalya's Arthasastra, Vol. II, p. 341 :

“ लब्धसंश्रयः सामयाचारिकवद् भर्तरि वर्तेत । दुर्गादीनि च कर्माण्यावा

FEDERATION

This feudalism was more or less of the federal type. The Mandala was a circle of States, generally twelve in number, some of which had not full sovereign powers. In this connection some observations made by Dr. Beni Prasad as a result of his close study of ancient Hindu States are worthy of quotation. He says: "The State in ancient India was not unitary in the strict sense of the term. It was saturated through and through with the principles of what for convenience may be called federalism and feudalism. They are only meant to imply that as a general rule, a Hindu kingdom comprised a number of feudatories who enjoyed varying degree of autonomy, that they might have themselves sub-feudatories of a similar status under them and so to the third, fourth or fifth degree. A big empire was partly a series of alliances, partly a series of relationships of suzerainty and vassalage and partly an area of directly administered territory. The high-sounding 'Digvijayas' could only lead to such a result on a large or small scale. The tie which held an empire together was not very strong. Under every regime, suzerain or feudal, the village was the ultimate unit of society. Finally there were a number of associations and corporations, religious, economic and social, which enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy. Sovereignty *de facto* was diffused among all these organisations and influences which supported them."⁹¹

Of the republican organisations, it is necessary only to mention the Sakyas of Kapilavastu whose leader was elected by the people and who was delegated with powers of administration. In Panini several republics are mentioned amongst whom, as pointed out by Mr. Venkatesvara, there was even a separation of powers, the judiciary from the military and executive as amongst the Lichchavis, for instance, who flourished in the Vajra country with their capital at Vaisali.

About the time of Megasthenes who was a contemporary of Alexander the Great, there were many republics in India, two of which attracted the special notice of the Greeks—the Audeyas and the Ambashthas—and the Brahmins themselves seem to have

हविवाहपुत्राभिषेकाश्वपण्यहस्तिग्रहणसत्रयात्राविहारगमनानि चानुज्ञातः कुर्वीत ।
दैवतस्वस्तिवाचनेषु तत्परा आशिषो वाचयेत् ॥ ”

91. The State in Ancient India, pp. 504-5.

founded a republic of their own as observed by Appollonios of Tyana.

Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji points out : " The administration of the Mauryan empire was possible because it did not cherish the ambition of setting up a centralised government consciously legislating for and controlling the life of every part of that vast whole, but aimed only at an elastic system of federalism or corporation in which were incorporated along with the central government at the metropolis, as parts of the same system, the indigenous local administrations. The essence of this imperial system was thus a recognition of local autonomy at the expense of the authority of the central government, which was physically unfit to assert itself except by its enforced affiliation to the pre-existing system of local Government.."⁹² There are also passages in the ancient texts leading to the inference that our ancestors were not for the wholesale destruction of alien nations. Kamandaka says that peace may be concluded by Aryan kings even with non-Aryan because by such alliance an Arya can never become a non-Arya even in times of calamity.⁹³

NON-MONARCHICAL STATES

Hitherto we have been speaking of monarchical States. There were also certain States in ancient India which were non-monarchical. Sangha, according to Panini, was the designation given to a combination of people organised for a specific purpose.⁹⁴ From one of Katyayana's Vartikas it is seen that there were monarchical and non-monarchical States in his time⁹⁵ (3rd century B.C.).

92. Local Government in Ancient India (1919), p 10.

93. Kamandaka's Nitisara, Chapter IX :

सत्यार्यो धार्मिकानार्यो भ्रातृसङ्घातवान् बली ।
अनेकविजयी चेति सन्धेयाः सप्त कीर्तिताः ॥
सत्योऽनुपालयन् सत्यं सन्धितो नैति विक्रियाम् ।
प्राणबाधेष्वपि व्यक्तमार्यो नायात्यनार्यताम् ॥

94. Panini's Ashtadhyayi, III, 3. 86 :

“ सङ्घोद्धौ गणप्रशंसयोः । ”

95. Ibid., IV. I. 166 :

“ जनपदशब्दात् क्षत्रियाद्ञ् । ”

Katyayana states :

“ क्षत्रियादेरोजात् सङ्घप्रतिषेधार्थम् । ”

Kautalya speaks of two classes of corporations, Kshatriyasrenis who lived by agriculture, trade and arms, and Rajasabdopajivins. While the Kambojas and the Saurashttras came under the former category, the Lichchhivikas, Vrajikas, Mallakas, Madras, Kukuras, Kurus, Panchalas, etc., fell under the latter class.⁹⁶ The Andhakas and the Vrishnis, to which latter corporation Srikrishna belonged, also came under the latter category. From a Buddhistic work, *Avadanasataka* (C. 100 B.C.), quoted by D. R. Bhandarkar, it is seen that some States in Madhyadesa were ruled by kings and others by Ganas.⁹⁷ Gana was the technical name ordinarily given to a political sangha. A Gana was drawn from various Rajakulas and the heads of these Rajakulas formed the Gana.⁹⁸ The real power of the Ganas was nevertheless vested in the Ganamukhyas who were the chiefs of the Gana, composed of two, three or five members, according to Brhaspati, who were both able and willing to look after the welfare of the whole community.⁹⁹ The Lichchavis referred to already formed a confederation of Ganas. They were in power from the seventh to the fourth century B.C. They recognised no distinction as between them and each of them was in a position to feel that he was a king.¹⁰⁰ In the days of Gautama Buddha they were noted for their high national character. As stated in the Mahabharata, however, it was essential for the success of such States that there should be no internal dissensions

96. Kautalya's Arthashastra, Volume III, p. 144 :

“ काम्बोजसुराष्ट्रक्षत्रियश्रेण्यादयो वार्ताशस्त्रोपजीविनः ; लिच्छिविकव्रजिक-
मल्लकमद्रकुकुरकुरुपाञ्चालादयो राजशब्दोपजीविनः । ”

97. D. R. Bhandarkar's Carmichael Lectures, p. 147 :

“ केचिद् देशा गणाधीनाः केचिद् राजाधीनाः । ”

98. Katyayana, the Smrtikara, says :

“ कुलानां तु समूहस्तु गणः स्यात् परिकीर्तितः । ”

99. Vivadaratnakara, p. 179 :

“ सर्वकार्ये प्रवीणाश्च कर्तव्याश्च महत्तमाः ।

द्वौ त्रयः पञ्च वा कार्याः समूहहितवादिनः ॥

कर्तव्यं वचनं तेषां ग्रामश्रेणिगणादिभिः ॥ ”

100. Lalitavistara, Calcutta Edn., p. 23 :

“ एकैक एव मन्येत अहं राजा, अहं राजेति । ”

among the Ganamukhyas.¹⁰¹ Kautalya also emphasises the need for internal harmony and for vigilance against foes who may sow seeds of discord among them.¹⁰² In course of time the Ganas became an easy prey to Ekaraja invaders on account of such discords. Sukra is positive that Ekaraja rule alone is beneficial to society, and that if a king has several sons, the eldest among them should succeed to the throne, provided that he is not deaf, dumb or blind, a leper or a eunuch, in which case his younger brother or brother's son may become ruler. A kingdom should on no account be partitioned.¹⁰³

It is an agreeable feature of ancient India that the fissiparous tendencies which, later on, manifested themselves in the form of personal jealousy amongst the rulers, racial and communal jealousies amongst the people and religious dissensions subsequent to the stream of foreign conquests, were singularly rare in the earlier days. At the same time, from the Vedas we learn that the Samiti

101. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 107.

“ कुलेषु कलहा जाताः कुलवृद्धैरुपेक्षिताः ।
गोत्रस्य नाशं कुर्वन्ति गणभेदस्य कारणम् ॥ २७
भेदाच्चैव प्रधानाच्च भिद्यन्ते रिपुभिर्गणाः ।
तस्मात् सङ्घात एवाहुर्गणानां शरणं महत् ॥ ” ३१

102 Kautalya's Arthasastra, Vol III Page 152 :

“ सङ्घाश्चाप्येवमेकराजादेतेभ्योऽतिसन्धानेभ्यो रक्षयेयुः । ”
“ सङ्घमुख्यश्च सङ्घेषु न्यायवृत्तिहितः प्रियः ।
दान्तो युक्तजनस्तिष्ठेत् सर्वचित्तानुवर्तकः ॥ ”

103. Sukranitisara I :

सदैकनायकं राज्यं कुर्यान्न बहुनायकम् ।
राजकुले तु बहवः पुरुषा यदि सन्ति हि ।
तेषु ज्येष्ठो भवेद् राजा शेषास्तत्कार्यसाधकाः । ३४०-४२
ज्येष्ठोऽपि बधिरः कुष्ठी मूकोऽन्धः षण्ड एव यः ।
स राज्याहो भवेन्नैव भ्राता तत्पुत्र एव हि ॥ ३४३
राज्यविभजनाच्छ्रेयो न भूपानां भवेत् खलु ।
अल्पीकृतं विभागेन राज्यं शत्रुर्जिघृक्षति ॥ ” ३४६

was an active political body sometimes enjoying royal patronage and not unoften full of discussion and controversy. There are prayers invoking the assistance of the unseen powers for conducting the deliberations with wisdom and helping to the formulation of unanimous resolutions; and the Atharva Veda, in fact, contains special charms and spells to secure unanimity. It is perhaps a pity that those charms and spells are neither invoked nor efficacious at the present moment. The Samiti then and the smaller Sabha which was a kind of quasi-executive body as well as the various Parishats which were attended by women as well as men and were gathered together for the purpose of sport or educational, social or religious purposes and the Sadas which was entirely religious in character, were all symptomatic of the active social life of those days. In addition, of course, there were professional and caste guilds and what almost takes one's breath away is the existence of an assembly of ladies who are described in the Taittiriya Samhita of having discussed women's problems and women's rights and obligations in those days.

In the days of the epics, it is obvious that there were city corporations, merchant guilds and Sanghas. There were popular leaders who were evidently as articulate as the leaders of to-day who were called ग्रामघोषमहत्तराः, the principal men in Gramas and Ghoshas.

Both in the Buddhist and post-Buddhist times, city life and village life were very vigorous and there was developed even a theory of progressive scaled taxation by way of a tax on surpluses or by way of analogy to the present supertax. By the time of Kautilya, all these systems became highly evolved, the king leading a very strenuous and active life and elaborate regulations being promulgated down with regard to the ministry and the various departments of the State, the Central Government alone having eighteen departments or Tirthas, and rules being laid down for survey and settlement as well as remissions of revenue as we find in the time of Asoka as well as periodical tours and inspections to keep in touch with local Governments.

VILLAGE LIFE

The village was the unit of ancient Hindu society, since agriculture was the main occupation followed by the people. The desertion of villages in favour of town life was viewed with dis-

favour by Smrtikaras. "Let him avoid going into towns",¹⁰⁴ says Apastamba, while Baudhayana says: "It is impossible for one to attain salvation who lives in a town covered with dust".¹⁰⁵ While towns were enclosed by high walls, villages had no such artificial enclosure. Rules have been laid down by Kautalya for the formation of new villages. He states: "Either by inducing foreigners to immigrate or by causing thickly populated centres of his own kingdom to send forth the excess population, the king may construct villages either on new sites or on old ruins. Villages consisting each of not less than a hundred families and of not more than five hundred families of agriculturists, mainly of the Sudra caste, with boundaries extending as far as a krosa (2,250 yards) or two and capable of protecting each other, shall be formed."¹⁰⁶ R. K. Mookerji correctly remarks: "India presents the rare and remarkable phenomenon of the State and the society co-existing apart from, and in some degree of independence of, each other as distinct and separate units or entities, as independent centres of national, popular and collective life and activity."¹⁰⁷

GUILDS

Guilds of various kinds were formed. Puga was an association of men of different castes who, having no fixed means of livelihood, united themselves for the pursuit of wealth and pleasure, while Vrāta was an association of such men living by bodily labour or violence. Sreni was an assembly of persons following a com-

104. Apastamba's Dharmasutra, I, 32:

“ नगरप्रवेशनानि च वर्जयेत् । ” २१

105. Baudhayana's Dharmasutra, II. 3:

“ पुरेणुकुण्ठितशरीरस्तत्परिपूर्णनेत्रवदनश्च नगरे वसन् सुनियतात्मा सिद्धिमवाप्स्यतीति न तदस्ति । ” ५३

106. Kautalya's Arthasastra, Vol. I, p. 109.

“ भूतपूर्वमभूतपूर्वं वा जनपदं परदेशापवाहनेन स्वदेशाभिष्यन्दवमनेन वा निवेशयेत् । शूद्रकर्षप्रायं कुलशतावरं पञ्चशतकुलपरं ग्रामं क्रोशद्विक्रोशशीमान-मन्योन्यारक्षं निवेशयेत् । ”

107. R. K. Mookerji's Local Government in Ancient India, p. 3.

mon craft or trading in a common commodity.¹⁰⁸ Arts and crafts were generally the occupation of Sudras. Each craft had its own separate centre in the village. Merchant guilds were a later growth than craft guilds. Each guild had its own economic, administrative, social and municipal functions to perform. Elaborate rules guided the procedure relating to election and conduct of business. As regards apprenticeship, Narada, the Smrtikara, says that if a young man wishes to be initiated into his craft he should go with the sanction of his relatives to a master-craftsman and live with him, the duration of the apprentice course being fixed beforehand, that the latter should teach him in his own house, feed him and treat him like his own son, and that even if his instruction is completed before the stipulated period the apprentice should continue to live in the master's house and leave him only at the end of that period after paying remuneration.¹⁰⁹ Gautama states that the special laws of countries, castes and families which are not opposed to the sacred texts have also legal authority, and that cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders and artisans are

108. Kasika on Panini, V. 3. 112 and 113 :

“ नानाजातीया अनियतवृत्तयोऽर्थकामप्रधानाः सङ्घाः पूगाः, नानाजातीया अनियतवृत्तय उत्सेधजीविनः सङ्घा व्राताः । ”

Katyayana says :

“ एकेन शिल्पेन पण्येन वा ये जीवन्ति तेषां समूहः श्रेणिः । ”

109. Narada V :

“ स्वशिल्पमिच्छन्नाहर्तुं बान्धवानामनुज्ञया ।
 आचार्यस्य वसेदन्ते कालं कृत्वा सुनिश्चितम् ॥
 आचार्यः शिक्षयेदेनं स्वगृहे दत्तभोजनम् ।
 न चान्यत् कारयेत् कर्म पुत्रवच्च समाचरेत् ॥
 शिक्षयन्तमदुष्टं य आचार्यं सम्परित्यजेत् ।
 बलाद् वासयितव्यः स्याद् वधबन्धौ तु सोऽर्हति ॥
 शिक्षितोऽपि कृतं कालमन्तेवासी समाप्नुयात् ।
 तत्र कर्म च यत् कुर्यादाचार्यस्यैव तत् फलम् ॥
 गृहीतशिल्पः समये कृत्वा चाचार्यदक्षिणाम् ।
 शक्तितश्चानुमान्यैनमन्तेवासी निवर्तते ॥ ” १६-२०

authorised to lay down laws for their respective guilds.¹¹⁰ The king was bound to obey these laws and give his decisions in accordance with them.¹¹¹ He was also obliged to see that the members of the guilds themselves did not break these laws.¹¹² In the Mahabharata the Kekaya king asks the demon why he should possess him when he has obeyed all special and local customs.¹¹³ The State at the same time was competent to interfere when the guilds formed combinations prejudicial to corporate life, armed themselves without sufficient cause, quarrelled with one another, took steps which implied hostility to the king, wasted public money, etc.¹¹⁴ New guilds could not be established without the sanction of the State,¹¹⁵ and even changes in the constitution of existing

110. Gautama's Dharmasastra, II, 2, 20-21 :

“ देशजातिकुलधर्माश्चाम्नायैरविरुद्धाः प्रमाणं ; कर्षकवणिक्पशुपालकुसीदि कारवः स्वे स्वे वर्गे । ”

111. Manu, VIII, 41 :

“ जातिजानपदान् धर्मान् श्रेणीधर्माश्च धर्मवित् ।
समीक्ष्य कुलधर्माश्च स्वधर्मं प्रतिपादयेत् ॥ ”

112. Yajnavalkya, II, 34 :

“ कुलानि जातीः श्रेणीश्च गणान् जनपदांस्तथा ।
स्वधर्मचलितान् राजा विनीय स्थापयेत् पथि ॥ ”

113. Mahabharata, Santi, Chapter 77 :

“ कुलदेशादिधर्माणां ग्रथितानां यथाविधि ।
अव्युच्छेत्तास्मि सर्वेषां मामकान्तरमाविशः ॥ ” १९

114. Narada :

“ मिथः सङ्घातकरणमहेतौ शस्त्रधारणम् ।
परस्परपघातं च तेषां राजा न मर्षयेत् ॥
प्रतिकूलं च यद् राज्ञः प्रकृत्यवमतं च यत् ।
बाधकं च यदर्थानां तत् तेभ्यो विनिवर्तयेत् ॥ ”

115. Sukranitisara, I :

“ नवं समाजनियमं निर्णयं जातिदूषणम् ।
मनसापि न कुर्वन्तु स्वामिद्रोहं तथैव च ॥ ” ३०५

guilds required the sanction of the king.¹¹⁶ The village assemblies were also invested with certain municipal functions, as already stated. These functions are stated by Brhaspati to be the maintenance and improvement of public halls, water-sheds, temples, tanks and gardens, poor relief and alleviation of distress in times of scarcity.¹¹⁷ Thus the purposes for which such corporations were brought into existence embraced a wide variety of useful public activity.

I have now completed a rapid and necessarily imperfect survey of some of the political ideas and theories that were evolved and obtained currency at various periods of Indian history. To summarise, they point to a continued tradition of a strong central government where the king was a real factor to be counted with and not a *roi fai ne ant*. His authority and powers were however exercised after constant consultation with a ministry and through heads of departments whose jurisdiction was extensive and who, under wise kings, were always encouraged to speak their minds. Kingship was mainly hereditary but often elective. The pulse of the public was felt not only through the espionage system of those days but also by means of assemblies which, especially in the south of India, flourished in great abundance and with much vigour. Provincial or rather local autonomy was, however, the main feature of Hindu India and the essence of Government lay in the formation and functioning of village groups, taxing themselves, expending their revenues on works of public utility and governing themselves. Political speculation was active and the theory of a compact with the king, the idea that taxation is the return for good administration and protection, the formulation of the need for a cabinet system of Government with *Dharma or vox populi* as the ultimate sanction—these were some of the conspicuous features of Indian polity. The resort to popular opinion

116. Yajnavalkya, II :

“ श्रेणिनैगमपाषण्डिगणानामप्ययं विधिः ।

भेदं चैषां नृपो रक्षेत् पूर्वपङ्क्तिं च पालयेत् ॥ ” १९६

117. Brhaspati :

सभाप्रपादेवगृहत्तागारामसंस्कृतिः ।

तथानाथदरिद्राणां संस्कारो यजनक्रिया ॥

कुलायननिरोधश्च कार्यमस्माभिरंशतः ॥ ”

was in the nature of a referendum as in Switzerland, a referendum which on two occasions, namely, when Dasaratha took the fateful decision regarding Rama's exile and when Rama put aside Sita, seemed to have been very articulate and very powerful. The old dispensation was outwardly and in later theory and practice actually unfettered and autocratic but nevertheless, by reason of the grant of complete local freedom and the practice of what, in effect, was a form of State socialism, the king acted as being ever in the great task-master's eye—the task-master being what was indifferently called Dharma or the voice of the people, which latter, when it expressed itself, was clear and unequivocal. Popular gatherings, if the Atharva Veda furnishes an accurate picture, were full of life but at the same time animated by a lively desire to achieve concord.¹¹⁸ The greatest contribution to posterity made by the Hindu tradition was the broadmindedness of sympathy and the toleration of different view-points exhibited almost alone in India amongst the civilised communities of the earlier days. When Egypt persecuted and hounded out the Jews, when racial and communal conflicts disfigured the history of Babylon and Nineveh, when, later on, we see that the slav states in Greece and Rome formed the basis of those marvellous cultures and when in the medieval ages the baiting of Jews alternated with the baiting of Roman Catholics by Protestants and *vice versa*, we had the spectacle in India of unflinching hospitality to foreign religions and foreign cultures. It would be unfair and inaccurate not to mention that the Buddhists and Jains suffered many pains and penalties especially in the south of India; but which country can show anything like the treatment of the Parsees who, flying from oppression in their own country of Persia, asked for and obtained succour of the wise west-coast king to whose protection and active encouragement of their faith and tradition, the Parsees ultimately owe their dominant position in the India of to-day? Which country can furnish a parallel to what happened in Travancore under

118.

“ अन्यो अन्यस्मै बलु वदन्त एत
सभ्रीचीनान् वः संमनसस्कृणोमि ।
समानी प्रपा सह वोऽन्नभागः
समाने योक्ते सह वो युनज्मि ॥ ”

(Kanda 3, sukta 30, RK. 5-6).

the rule of extremely conservative and religious-minded monarchs ? From the days when Christian congregations were split into innumerable and warring factions owing to the Arian controversy at the Council of Nicaea and the question of images, the Chera kings of Travancore gave a wholehearted welcome to the followers of the Eastern Church whose Patriarch of Antioch even now boasts of a larger following in Malabar than perhaps anywhere else in the world ? Which king outside India has surpassed the monarchs of Travancore and Malabar who conferred sacerdotal honours, presents, lands and dignities on the ministers, bishops and Arch-bishops of the Christian Church with the result that to-day the largest Christian population in India is found in the State of Travancore ? Which ruler in the world's chequered history has enunciated in more moving and powerful language than is found in the Edicts of Asoka the Great, the principles of tolerance and comprehension of differing creeds and ideals co-existing with a spiritual urge towards the consolidation and regeneration of the Ruler's own faith ? Such have been the marks and the characteristics of Indian civilisation not only at its peak points but through the centuries until recently and it is not too much to say that the recent Proclamation of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore has an authentic Hindu background and lineage. Can this instinct of universality, this understanding of all points of view and the feeling that the realisation of the Supreme must connote a sympathy with and a reconciliation of many forms of thought and belief be better expressed than in the words of Tayumanavar in his Hymn to Parvati :

“ நதியுண்ட கடலெனச் சமயத்தையுண்டபர ஞானவானந்தவொளியே ” 119

“ The light and bliss of supreme knowledge that envelopes and absorbs all forms of belief and thought as the ocean absorbs all rivers ? ”

In Rock Edict 12, the Emperor Asoka declares that he does reverence to men of all sects whether ascetics or house-holders and he adds that he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own



119. Compare Kalidasa :

“ बहुधाप्यागमैभिन्नाः पन्थानः सिद्धिहेतवः ।
त्वय्येव निपतन्त्योधा जाह्नवीया इवार्णवे ॥ ”

Raghuvamsa, X, 26.

with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality, by such conduct inflicts the severest injury to his own sect; and he ends the Edict with these ever memorable words: "Concord is the supreme good".

‘ समवाय एव साधुः’

May this spirit of concord animate our social and political life in the exacting years ahead of us!

